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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT EASTBURY MANOR

BARKING, ESSEX

JULY 2003

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
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STAFF

Project Manager:	Steve Parry MA, MIFA
Fieldwork:	Simon Carlyle MSc, PIFA
	and Peter Cinquini BSc
Text:	Simon Carlyle
Finds:	Simon Carlyle
Illustrations:	Hari Anne Jacklin MA

QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by:	Adam Yates		7/10/03
Verified by:	Pat Chapman	P Chapman	4/10/03
Approved by:	Steve Parry	SD Parry	7/10/03

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING SURVEY AND WATCHING BRIEF AT EASTBURY MANOR BARKING, ESSEX JULY 2003

Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook an archaeological recording survey and watching brief at Eastbury Manor, Barking, Essex, during the renovation of the Grade 1 Listed south wall of the West Garden. The archaeological work comprised the recording of the garden wall, followed by a watching brief as the wall was being dismantled and during the excavation of a new foundation trench. The wall is to be rebuilt in the same position but to an increased height, using the original bricks and reclaimed bricks of a similar type from the locality. The works were undertaken on behalf of the National Trust.

The wall was shown to have had shallow footings, resting on a foundation of compacted hoggin set in a foundation trench. No evidence was found to date the construction of the wall, but its fabric suggests that it is probably broadly contemporary with the Elizabethan house and dates to the second half of the 16th century.

There was a single phase of original construction, followed by a number of subsequent alterations, including the removal of the upper c 2m of the wall and the addition of buttresses to the south side. These were carried out in an effort to counter the lean of the wall to the south, probably brought about by weak foundations and the higher ground level in the West Garden exerting pressure against the base of the wall. Pictorial evidence suggests that buttresses had been built to support the wall prior to the 1780s, and that the wall was lowered and replacement buttresses added some time after c 1850. The buttress nearest the house, the east end of the wall and the steps appear to have been rebuilt, probably in the late 19th or early 20th century, following the insertion of a sewer or drain. A number of minor repairs have also been made to the wall during the 20th century, to replace damaged or missing bricks. There were remains of a wooden trellis or screen at the west end of the wall and the wooden gate at the east end is of recent date, probably no more than ten years old.

Patches of limewash may relate to a building shown on early maps, although no direct evidence was found for this structure. No other archaeological remains or artefacts were seen.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological recording survey and watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during the renovation of a Grade 1 Listed garden wall at Eastbury Manor House, Barking, Essex (Fig 1; NGR TQ 457 838). The work was carried out between 2nd and 21st July 2003, on behalf of the National Trust.

Eastbury Manor is a Grade 1 Listed Elizabethan property that is owned by the National Trust

and leased to the Borough of Barking and Dagenham. At present the house is used as a community centre for educational purposes and exhibitions. The Borough is seeking to further improve parts of the house and grounds so that the range of activities can be increased.

One aspect of the improvement comprises the restoration of the gardens into a form more in keeping with the style of the Elizabethan house. Part of this work included the dismantling of the south wall of the West Garden, which was in a parlous state, and its reconstruction to an increased height on a new foundation.

The objectives of the investigation, as outlined in the Brief issued by Gary Marshall, National Trust Archaeologist, Thames and Solent Region, on 14th May 2003 (NT 2003), were:

- to compile a fully drawn and photographed record of the wall prior to dismantling
- to determine as closely as possible the date for the construction of the wall and the various phases incorporated in its construction, including the buttresses on the south elevation
- to determine the historic relationship of the wall to the gardens and the buildings at Eastbury (both standing buildings and those shown on historic maps)
- to maintain a watching brief during the dismantling of the wall and over any intrusive works below ground level
- to produce an illustrated report describing the results of the recording exercise and the watching brief.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The general site lies at approximately 5m above Ordnance Datum and is situated on fairly level ground, which slopes almost imperceptibly to the south. The underlying geology comprises post-Anglian, pre-Devensian sand and gravel of the Floodplain Terrace (BGS 1996).

2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The rectangular west garden measures 17m x 23m and is bounded to the south and west by brick walls, to the east by the west wall of the manor house and to the north by a gravel path (Fig 2). At present the garden has a formal design comprising gravel paths and beds planted with culinary herbs and other plants typically found in a kitchen garden. There are also a number of small trees, and a lead fountain and ornamental tank in the centre of the garden.

The south wall of the garden is possibly contemporary with the construction of the house in the 1570s, although it is not shown on a plan of the 1660s and first appears on a plan of 1737. Evidence for the layout of the garden is shown on the 1737 plan, and on the First Edition 25"

Ordnance Survey map of 1862, which shows the area bordered by a perimeter path and divided into two unequal parts. The northern section appears to be planted with trees and shrubs, the southern part is apparently lawn bordered by planted beds. On the 2nd edition 25" Ordnance Survey map of 1897 the whole area is blank with no indication of planting or paths.

Previous archaeological work in the garden was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 2001, comprising geophysical and topographical surveys followed by trial excavation. This showed that the garden had been deeply cultivated during the 19th century, and that no earlier remains relating to the original layout of the garden survived (NA 2001).

3 METHODOLOGY

All work was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (1994, revised 1999), the *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (1996, revised 1999) and the IFA *Code of Conduct* (1985, revised 2000).

3.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING SURVEY

A drawn record of the north and south elevations of the wall was made at a scale of 1:20, showing the outlines of the wall, the phases of construction/repair incorporated in its structure, and details such as areas of limewash, fixings and construction techniques. The adjoining modern gate and gateposts were included in the drawing. Two representative sections were drawn through the full height of the wall from the base of the new foundation trench to the coping of the old wall. One of these sections recorded the construction of one of the buttresses on the south elevation

A photographic record of the wall was carried out using 35mm black and white and colour transparency film. A systematic sequence of overlapping, square on photographs was made of both elevations of the wall, using suitable scales and rectification markers. Additional photographs of details such as fittings, bonding, coping and construction techniques were also taken, as well as general shots of the wall.

A system of Type Codes was used for each brick and bonding fabric type recorded in the structure of the wall. The use of Type Codes facilitated in identifying the phases of construction/repair of the wall. A separate system of context numbers (continuous with those used in the watching brief) was used to record fixtures and fittings.

3.2 WATCHING BRIEF

A watching brief was maintained during the dismantling of the wall and the excavation of a new foundation trench for a concrete footing. All groundwork/soil removal was monitored by an archaeologist. A longitudinal section was drawn at 1:20 to illustrate the stratigraphy revealed by the excavation. Further information revealed by the excavation of the new foundation trench

was added to the wall profiles drawn previously. All significant archaeological deposits identified were recorded on *pro forma* recording sheets and sampled sufficiently to determine their date and character. A photographic record was maintained in 35mm black and white and colour transparency film.

4 RESULTS

4.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING SURVEY

Prior to it being dismantled, the wall was 19.6m long (excluding the gateway), 2.1m high (from the base of the foundation course to the top of the concrete coping) and approximately 0.55m thick (Plate 1). It was supported on its south side by four brick buttresses, which had been built to counter a significant lean to the south, probably caused by weak foundations and the pressure exerted against the base of the wall by the higher ground level on the northern side (Plate 2). The south and north elevations of the wall are shown in Figures 3 and 4 respectively, and show the types and combinations of brick and mortar/cement used in its construction and repair. Representative sections through the wall are shown in Figure 5.

Close study of the wall revealed that it was constructed from a single type of brick, with four different types of brick being used for minor repairs and construction of the buttresses. The brick types were as follows:

I. Light pinkish red to orangey red in colour, with a sandy fabric containing very occasional inclusions (fine, round to sub-angular pebbles, mostly flint). Unfrogged and hand-made, with a slightly irregular appearance, possibly caused by warping during the firing process. The upper five courses, and random bricks in lower courses of the wall, were light to mid purplish brown in colour and were slightly harder than the more reddish bricks, but they were essentially the same type. The variation in colour and hardness was probably caused by different firing conditions between batches. These bricks were used for the main body of the wall. Average size: 245 x 115 x 55mm.

II. Mid to dark brownish red in colour, fabric less sandy than Type I, with occasional to moderate inclusions (fine to medium, round to sub-angular pebbles, mostly flint). Unfrogged, regular in shape and probably machine-made. They were used to build three of the buttresses. Average size: 220 x 100 x 60mm.

III. Light to mid reddish orange in colour, with a sandy fabric containing very occasional inclusions (fine, round to sub-angular pebbles, mostly flint). Unfrogged, regular in shape and probably machine-made. They were used for minor repairs to the surface of the wall. Average size: 215 x 100 x 60mm.

IV. Light to mid orangey red in colour, with a sandy fabric and no inclusions. Unfrogged, regular in shape and probably machine-made. They were used to repair the east end of the wall and construct the buttress adjacent and to the west of the gateway. Average size: 220 x 100 x 60mm.

V. Mid orangey red in colour, with a hard, brittle, non-sandy fabric and no inclusions.

Unfrogged, regular in shape with a smooth surface texture. These were machine-made engineering bricks, used for minor repairs to the surface of the wall. Average size: 210 x 100 x 60mm.

Also recorded were the six different types of mortar used in the construction and repair of the wall. These were as follows:

A. Moderately hard, light yellowish white sandy mortar with occasional fine pebbles. The pointing was loose and crusty, and tended to a light greyish white colour at the surface of the wall, with black encrustations on the lower courses. This mortar was used in the original construction of the wall.

B. Hard, light orangey yellow sandy mortar with moderate fine and very occasional medium pebbles. Pointing was loose and crusty in places. This mortar was used in the original construction of the wall, on the lower courses at the western end. Variations in the colour and hardness of Type A and Type B mortar are probably due to variations in the mix/source of lime and sand between batches, or variations in ground conditions below and behind the wall.

C. Hard, light greyish white sandy cement with frequent fine and very occasional medium pebbles. The pointing was weathered, but in moderately good condition. This cement was used in the construction of three of the buttresses and in the bedding of the upper two courses of brick.

D. Hard, light greyish yellow sandy cement with very occasional fine pebbles. It had been used for the recent repointing of lower courses of the wall at its eastern end, and for some brick replacement work.

E. Hard, light yellowish grey sandy cement with very occasional fine pebbles. Pointing in good condition. This cement was used to construct the buttress nearest the house and to rebuild the east end of the wall by the gateway.

F. Hard mid grey sandy cement with frequent fine pebbles. Pointing in very good condition. It had been used for some brick replacement work to the surface of the wall.

The coping was formed from a bed of concrete, approximately 0.2m thick (half-round in section), applied directly to the top of the wall. It was reinforced with at least two iron tie rods running along its length.

The four brick buttresses on the south face were bedded on concrete foundation pads and were weakly keyed into the brickwork of the wall (Plate 3). As noted above, the buttress nearest the house was rebuilt at a later date, probably in the late 19th or early 20th century (Plate 4).

On the south elevation, near the centre of the wall, there were traces of limewash (Plate 5). One small patch covered an area of roughly 0.3m^2, a larger patch covered an area of approximately 3.1m^2. From the thickness of the flakes, this part of the wall appears to have been limewashed a number of times.

At the west end of the wall there were two opposing vertical wooden battens (15 and 16) on

either side of the wall, secured by two corroded iron bolts (17 and 18) that passed through the full thickness of the wall. Two further rusty bolts (19 and 20) nearby suggest the position of two further battens, now missing. A modern wooden gate (21) was fitted in the gateway at the east end of the wall.

4.2 WATCHING BRIEF

The new foundation trench was cut along the line of the old wall, from the west wall of the manor house to the corner junction with the west wall of the garden. It was approximately 21m long, 1.1m wide and up to 1.8m deep below ground level in the West Garden. Due to the drop in ground level to the south of the old wall, the north facing section was only *c* 1.5m deep below the ground surface. The water table occurred at *c* 3.5m above OD and flooded the base of the trench at its western end.

The natural substrate (14), a loose, fine-coarse, poorly sorted gravel in a coarse reddish brown silty sand matrix, occurred at a depth of *c* 1.2m below ground level in the West Garden (*c* 4.3m above OD).

Cut into the natural gravel and following the line of the old wall was the original foundation trench. It comprised a linear ditch [13], *c* 0.6m deep, with a broad concave profile, filled with a sterile, compacted mid yellowish brown sandy silt (12) with moderate to frequent pebbles and occasional orangey brown sandy mottles (hoggin). The foundation trench was visible along its length in both north and south facing sections of the new foundation trench, although it had been truncated by modern services at the eastern end. The full width of the foundation trench could not be determined as its edges lay beyond the limits of the new foundation trench. However, part of the northern edge was uncovered in Trench 3 of the earlier evaluation (NA 2001), giving an estimated width of *c* 2m.

Built directly on top of the fill of the original foundation trench was the wall (22). In places there were patches of mortar and crushed brick, probably put down to provide a level base for the courses of brickwork.

Cutting the fill of the foundation trench and post-dating the construction of the wall were a number of service trenches for water and sewage pipes and electricity cables. These were largely confined to the eastern end of the new foundation trench, close to the house, and had caused significant disturbance and truncation to earlier remains. The service trenches had presumably been burrowed underneath the wall and the pipes and cables fed through, although close to the house by the gate it is likely that gateway steps were taken up when the sewers were put in.

Abutting the wall on either side was topsoil (3), a mid greyish brown sandy silt containing brick fragments, roots, charcoal flecks and sherds of 18th and 19th century pottery and glass. It varied in thickness between 0.26m and 0.52m, and was of a greater thickness to the north of the garden wall. The increased thickness of the topsoil within the West Garden is probably due to the input of organic material, such as compost and kitchen waste, into the soil.

The topsoil in the garden was buried by a layer of coarse gravel in a mid grey silty matrix (2), topped with a thin layer of fine-coarse gravel in a mid orangey brown clayey silt matrix (1). This material, which had a combined thickness of approximately 0.4m, was probably put down

as part of the current programme of alterations to the garden.

5 *POTTERY AND GLASS*

All of the pottery and glass was collected during the excavation of the new foundation trench; the entire assemblage derived from the buried topsoil horizon (3) and is largely modern in date. Only a representative sample of the assemblage was temporarily retained to date and characterize the deposit. The assemblage included:

- Wine bottle base, hand-made, late 18th/early19th century
- Base of blue glass bottle, machine-made, marked "…RIGAN" on one edge, and "…NEWER" on the other, late 19th/early 20th century
- Underglazed blue transfer printed earthenware, tureen lid, post 1850
- English bone china, 18th to 19th century
- Unglazed earthenware (flower pots), 19th/20th century

All of the above material is typical of general domestic waste, and was disposed of at a time when the status of the garden had diminished from a formal pleasure garden in the 16th and 17th centuries to a kitchen garden in modern times.

6 *INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS*

The original wall had a shallow footing, resting on a foundation of compacted hoggin set in a foundation trench at a level immediately below the topsoil. Presumably the foundation was dug to stabilise the ground for the construction of the wall, as the underlying substrate comprised loose sand and gravel and the wall would have subsided sooner if it had been built directly on this surface.

The first course of bricks was laid directly on the hoggin, although pads of mortar and crushed brick were used in places where the surface of the hoggin was uneven. The wall was then constructed to its original specifications.

No evidence was recovered to provide a date for the construction of the wall, although a visual comparison of the fabric of the bricks and mortar with those used in the construction of the house suggests that the garden wall is broadly contemporary. It therefore probably dates to the end of the 16th century, when the original formal garden was designed and laid out.

Despite the best efforts of the original builders to provide a stable footing for the wall, it eventually began to develop a lean to the south, probably due to weak foundations and the pressure exerted by the build-up of soil to the base of the wall in the garden. Pictorial evidence, from a number of engravings dating to the late 18th and 19th century (Figs 7 and 8), suggests that the wall had began to lean by the late 18th century, if not sooner, and a large buttress is clearly depicted at the east end of the wall. At this time the wall is shown to be standing to its full height, the top of the wall level with the transom of the adjacent, south-facing ground floor window. A doorway is shown leading through the wall in the position of

the modern gateway. The original wall was probably *c* 2m higher than the surviving wall prior to it being dismantled.

Although pictorial evidence should be treated cautiously, the general consensus in the details depicted in the engravings, combined with the results of the archaeological recording survey of the wall, indicates that the wall was probably lowered in the second half of the 19th century, or in the early 20th century. This was probably done to counter further subsidence; however, the primary motive for lowering the wall may have been less pragmatic, and it may have been done to open up the view from the ground floor of the house to the south-west. It is possible that this work was carried out in 1875, when essential repairs were made to the property (Hunt, 2003).

With the upper part of the wall removed, some of the original bricks were reused to relay the upper two courses to provide a stable base for the coping. The concrete coping may have been added at this time, or may have been applied later, to replace an intermediate coping that no longer survives.

Similarity in the type of cement used in the upper two courses of brickwork and three of the buttresses suggest that the buttresses were added when the height of the wall was reduced, replacing any earlier buttresses. In addition to the pictorial evidence mentioned above, the use of cement as opposed to mortar indicates a modern date for the buttresses and the upper courses of the wall. Portland Cement was patented in 1824, but did not begin to gain widespread use until the 1850s. It was used concurrently with lime mortar until it eventually superseded lime mortar in the early 20th century (del Strother, 2003).

No evidence was found for the building shown on early maps abutting the south face of the wall at its western end. This structure may have been timber built and so has left few traces in the archaeological record. However, the patches of limewash recorded on the wall in this area may be related to this building, assuming the garden wall was used as an integral part of the structure.

The two vertical wooden battens and fixings for two further battens are probably the remains of a screen or a trellis for climbing plants, that originally stood above the line of the wall. No other fixtures or fittings were recorded, other than the wooden gate, which is entirely modern.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

The engravings shown in Figures 7 and 8 were taken from *Eastbury Manor House, Outline Conservation Plan for the House*, prepared by Richard Griffiths Architects in June 2000

Northamptonshire Archaeology
A service of Northamptonshire County Council

29th October 2003

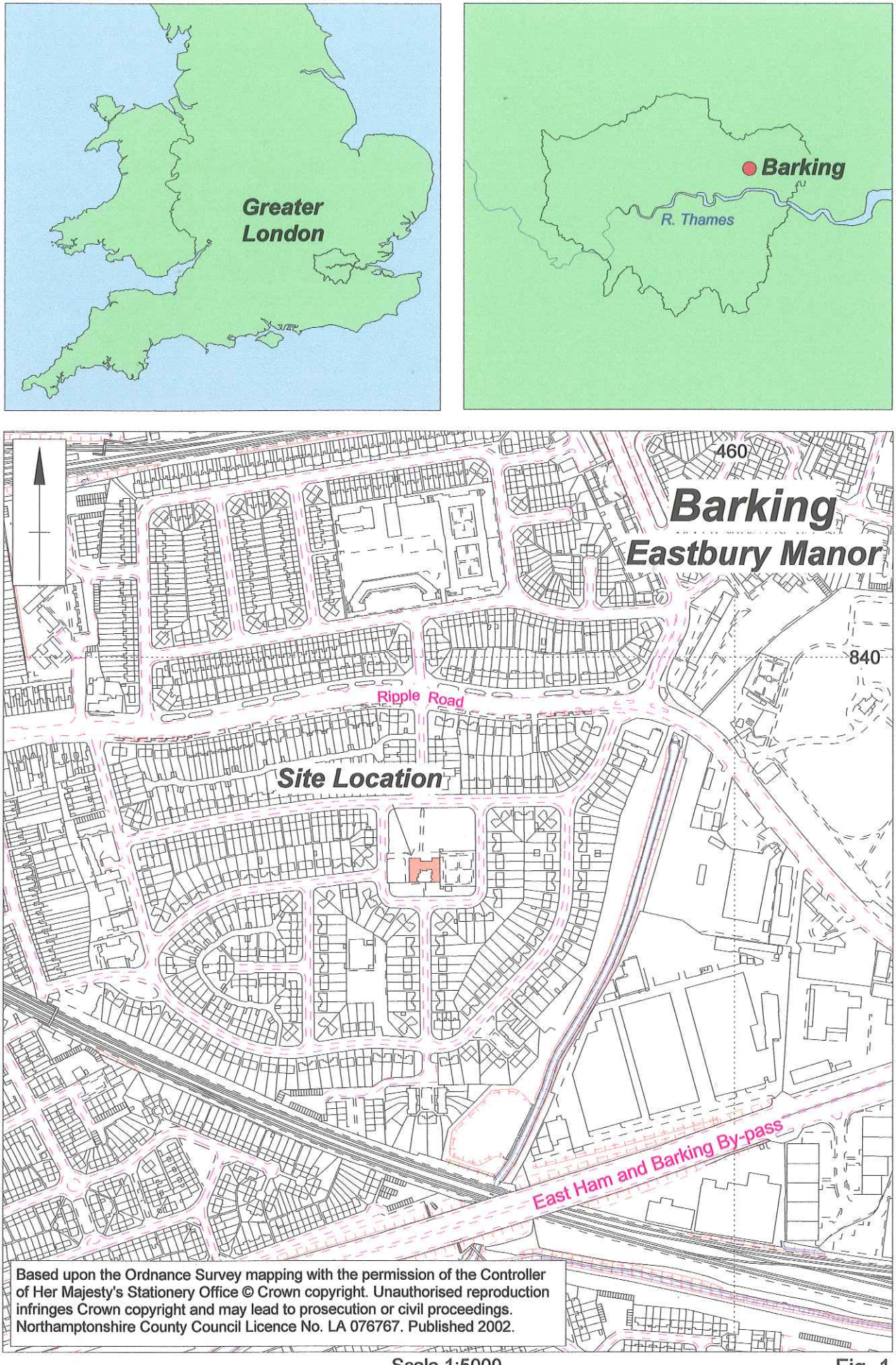
A1. TABLE OF CONTEXTS AND FEATURES

ABBREVIATIONS

Cardinal Points (e.g. N-S, north to south)
L.o.E. Limit of excavation
Context [**] identifies the cut
Dimensions given as length x width x depth
All measurements in metres (m) or millimetres (mm)
occ. occasional; mod. moderate; freq. frequent

Context no.	Feature type	Description
1	Gravel surface	Fine-coarse gravel in a mid orangey brown clayey silt matrix. Up to 0.12m thick. Overlay 2.
2	Hardcore sub-base	Coarse gravel in a mid grey silty matrix. Approximately 0.30m thick, petered out towards E end of new foundation trench, near gate. Overlay 3.
3	Buried topsoil	Mid greyish brown sandy silt with mod. fine to co. pebbles, occ. brick fragments, roots, charcoal flecks and sherds of 19th century china and glass. Varied in thickness between 0.26m and 0.52m.
4	Backfill	Mid-dark greyish brown sandy silt with mod. fine to co. pebbles, occ. brick fragments, roots, charcoal flecks and sherds of 19th century china and glass. Up to 0.33m thick. Cut by 11, overlay 5.
5	Backfill of sewer trench	Mid greyish brown sandy silt with mod. fine to co. pebbles, freq. brick fragments and occ. sherds of 19th century china and glass. Covered intact salt glazed sewer pipe. Not fully excavated. Approx. 0.6m thick and occurred at E end of new foundation trench. No defined cut for trench, relationship with 6 and 7 uncertain.
6	Brick pad?	Horizontal arrangement of four bricks in south facing section only. Dark brownish red bricks, slightly sandy fabric, unfrogged, single course, unmortared. Probably cut by [11], relationship with 5 uncertain, overlay 7.
7	Clay pad	Band of firm yellowish brown clay, in S facing section only, underlying 6. Approx. 0.10m thick and 0.68m wide. Overlay 12.
8 [9]	Service trench	Linear cut, aligned N-S, with steep sides (*c* 80°) and a flat base. Visible in both sections. 1.1+ x 0.5 x 0.22m. Contained an iron pipe, still *in situ*, dia. *c* 40mm. Backfilled with mid-dark greyish brown sandy silt with occ. fine to co. pebbles, brick fragments, cinders and charcoal flecks. Cut 12.
10 [11]	Sewer trench	Linear cut, aligned N-S, with steep sides (*c* 70°) and a flat base. Visible in both sections. 1.1+ x 1.25 x 0.48m. Contained a salt glazed sewer pipe, still *in situ*, dia. *c* 200mm. Backfilled with mid-dark greyish brown sandy silt with mod. fine to co. pebbles, occ. brick and tile fragments, cinders and charcoal flecks. Cut 4.
12 [13]	Foundation trench of wall	Linear cut, aligned E-W, exposed by excavation of new foundation trench. Visible along its length in both sections of new foundation trench, though truncated by modern services at E end. Had a broad concave profile, edges of cut extending beyond the limits of the trench. *c* 19.0 x 1.1+ x 0.6m. Filled with a sterile, mid yellowish brown sandy silt with mod-freq. pebbles and occ. orangey brown sandy mottles (hoggin). Cut 14.
14	Natural substrate	Loose, fine-coarse, poorly sorted gravel in a coarse reddish brown silty sand matrix. Water table occurred at *c* 3.5m above OD.
15	Wooden batten	Almost vertical length of timber attached to south face of wall with corroded iron bolts 17 and 18. Top of batten broken off, suggesting that it was once of greater length. 1.18 x 0.05 x 0.03m.
16	Wooden batten	Vertical length of timber attached to north face of wall with corroded iron bolts 17 and 18. Batten ends square. 0.66 x 0.06 x 0.03m.

Context no.	Feature type	Description
17	Iron bolt	Corroded iron bolt running through wall, securing battens 15 and 16 to wall surface on either side. Head of bolt on south face of wall, nut and washer on north face. 0.40m directly above 18.
18	Iron bolt	Corroded iron bolt running through wall, securing battens 15 and 16 to wall surface on either side. Head of bolt on south face of wall, nut and washer on north face. Situated 0.40m directly below 17.
19	Iron bolt	Corroded iron bolt running through wall, head of bolt on south face of wall, nut and washer on north face. Situated 0.44m directly above 20.
20	Iron bolt	Corroded iron bolt running through wall, head of bolt on south face of wall, nut and washer on north face. Situated 0.44m directly below 19.
21	Wooden gate	Modern wooden gate, made from vertical wooden slats attached to a Z-frame. Overall dimensions 1.22 x 1.05m.
22	Wall	South wall of West Garden. 19.6m long (excluding gateway), 1.8m high (from base of foundation course to top of coping) and *c* 0.55m thick. See main text for further details.



Scale 1:5000

Fig. 1

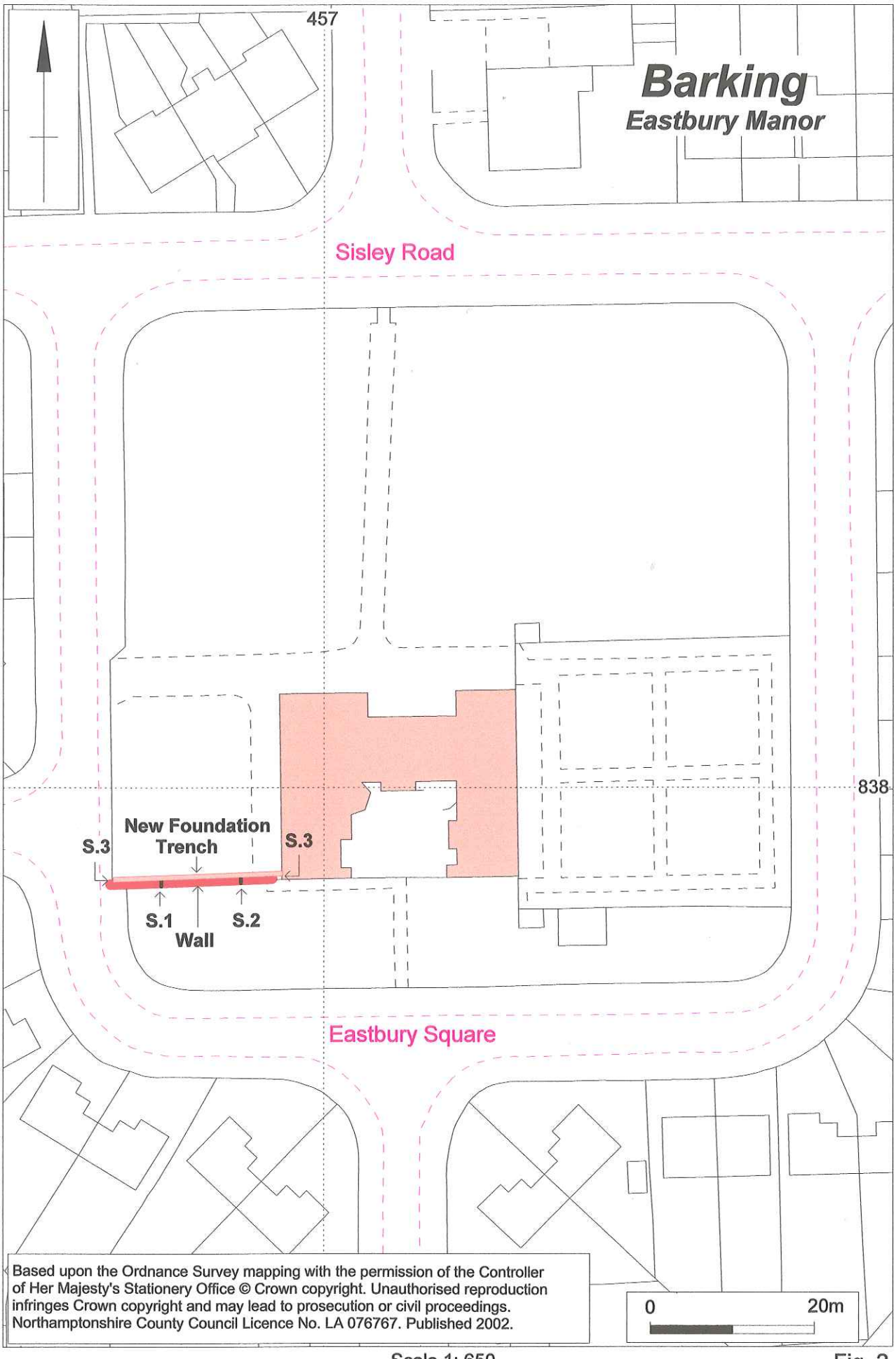


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Fig. 2

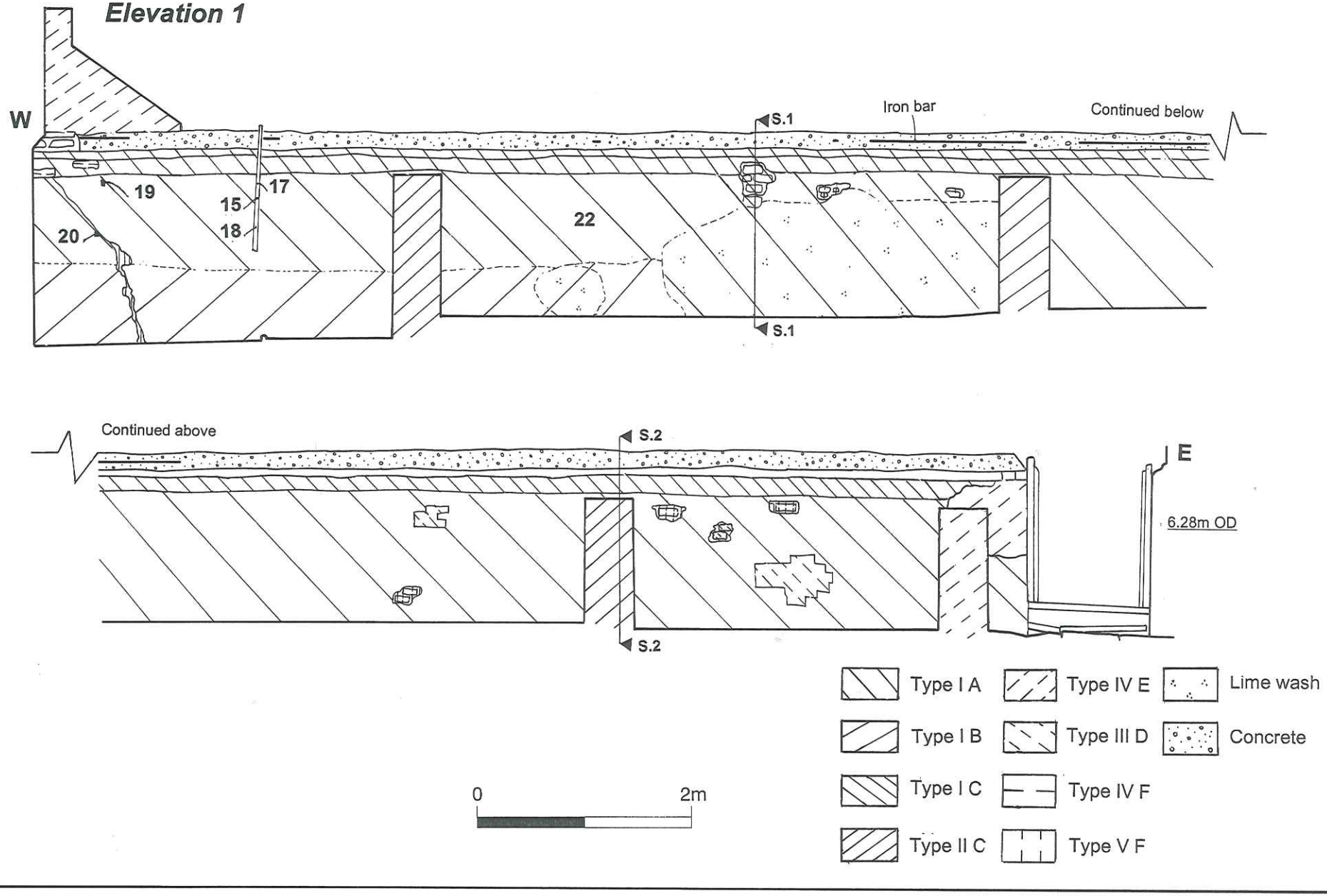

Elevation 1
W
S.1
Iron bar
Continued below
19
15
17
18
20
22
S.1
Continued above
S.2
E
6.28m OD
S.2
0
2m
Type I A
Type I B
Type I C
Type II C
Type IV E
Type III D
Type IV F
Type V F
Lime wash
Concrete

Fig. 3

Elevation 2

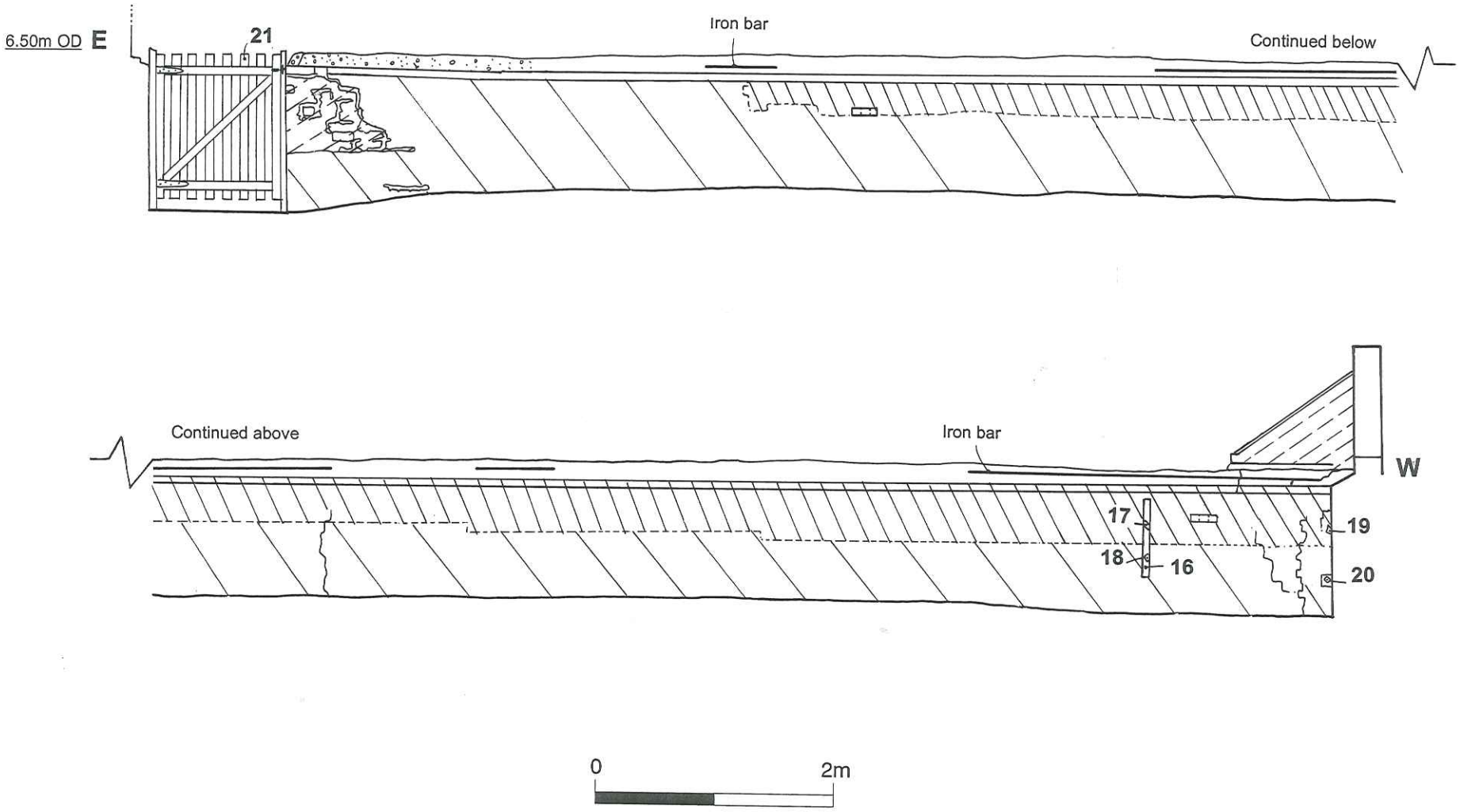


Fig.4

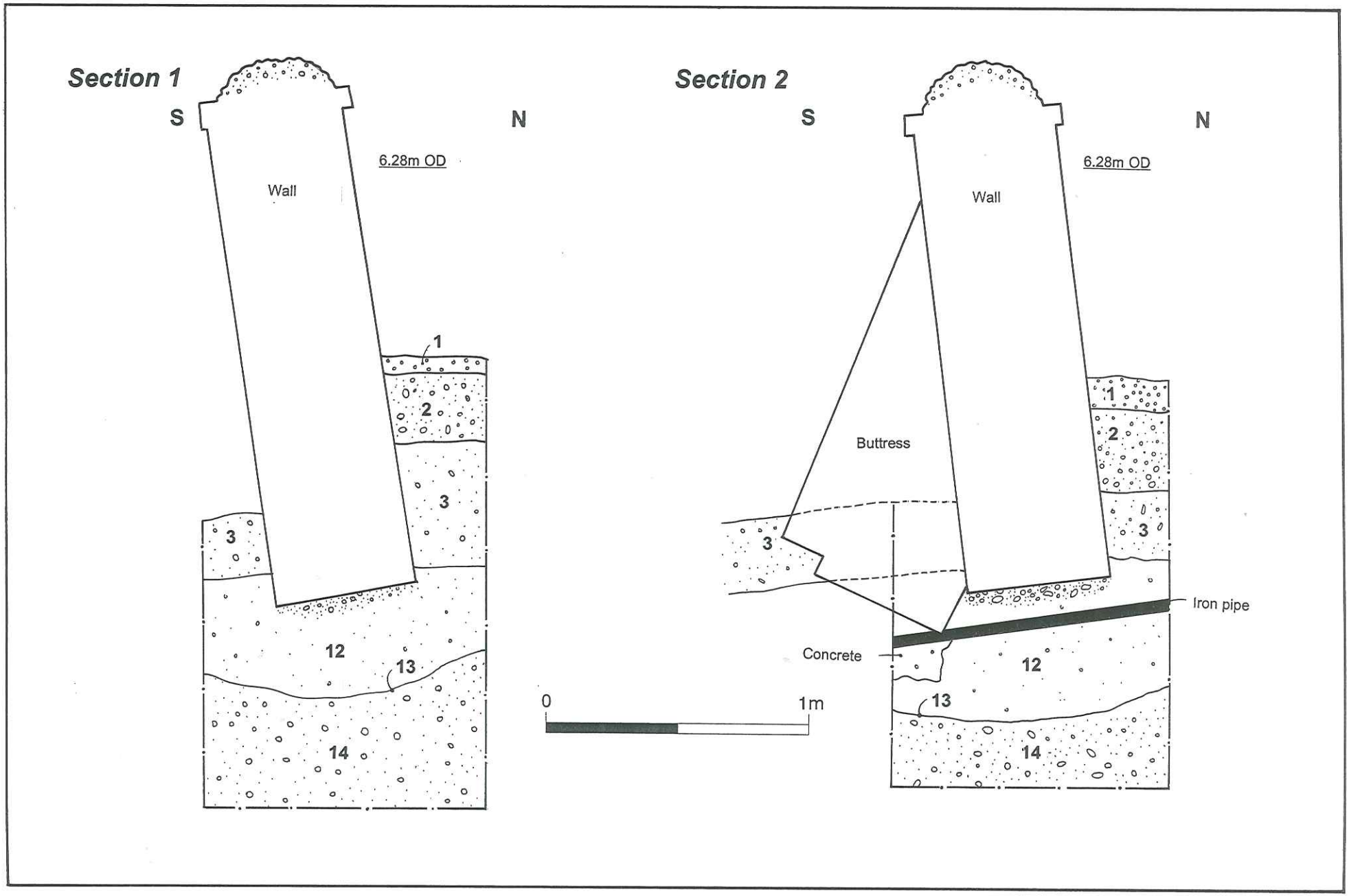

Section 1
S
N
6.28m OD
Wall
1
2
3
3
12
13
14
Section 2
S
N
6.28m OD
Wall
Buttress
1
2
3
3
Iron pipe
Concrete
12
13
14
0
1m

Fig.5

Section 3

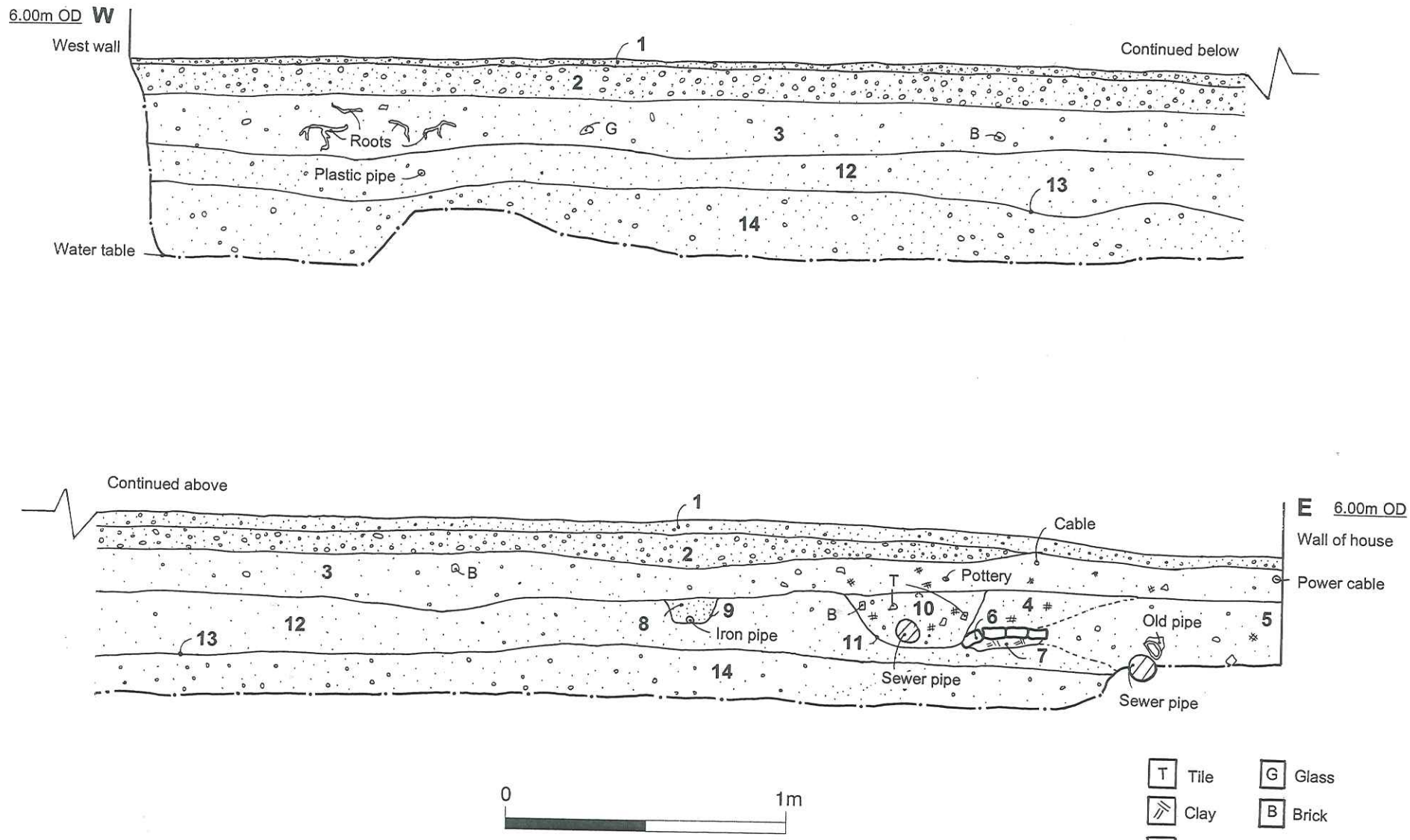
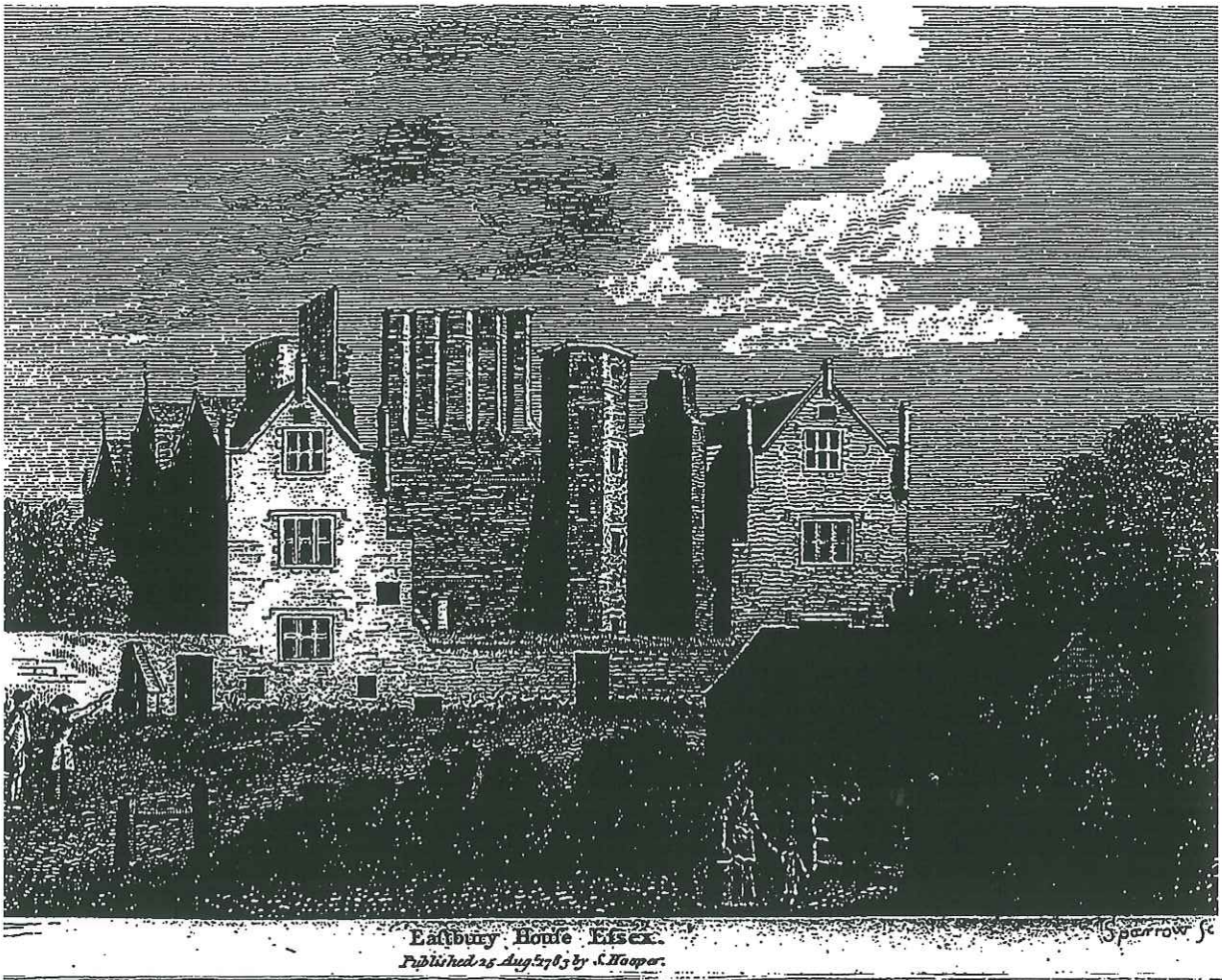
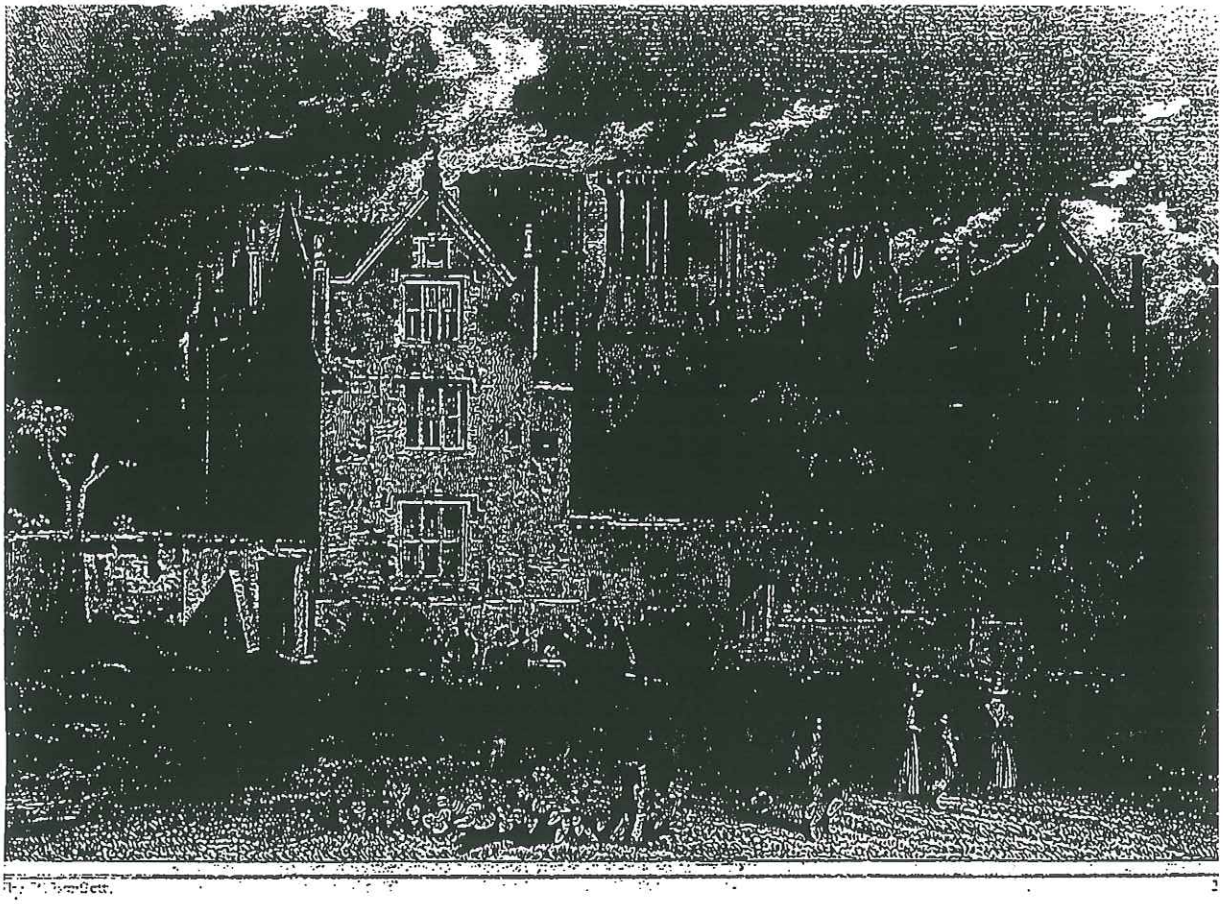


Fig. 6


Eastbury House Essex.
Published 25 Aug.t 1785 by S.t Hooper.
Sparrow Sc.


EASTBURY HOUSE.

Fig. 7



SOUTH VIEW OF EASTBURY HOUSE, NEAR BARKING,

ESSEX.

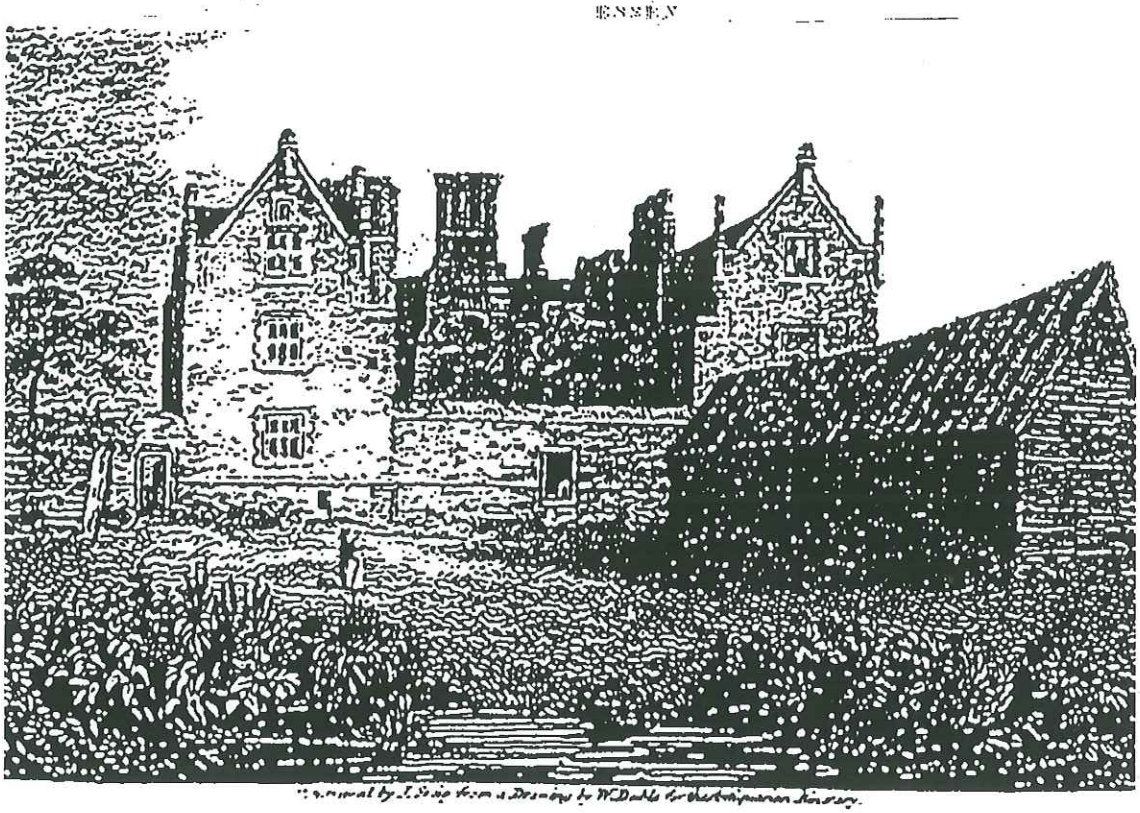


Fig. 8

Plate 1

Plate 2

Plate 3

Plate 4

Plate 5

Plate 6

Northamptonshire County Council
Environment Directorate

Northamptonshire Archaeology
2 Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BE

Tel: 01604 700493/4
Fax: 01604 702822