



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST REPORT

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| SITE ADDRESS | Plant borders, Dean's Park, York | | |
| CLIENT NAME | Dean and Chapter of York Minster | | |
| YAT PROJECT # | 5299 | YAT REPORT # | 2010/4 |
| MUSEUM ACCESSION # | n/a | GRID REFERENCE | SE 6027 5222 |
| PLANNING REFERENCE # | n/a | AAI OPS NOTICE # | n/a |

INTRODUCTION

On 1st -2nd February 2010 a watching brief was undertaken by YAT of the machine removal of soil from a flower-bed adjacent to a limestone wall which forms the western boundary of Dean's Park, York. The soil was removed using a mechanical mini-digger, and will be replaced with fresh imported soil prior to the planting a new rose bushes. The works followed on from the excavation of seven small test trenches excavated by YAT in November 2009.

The area was formerly occupied by buildings known as Arthur Ingram's Mansion, which are thought to have stood between the Purey Cust buildings and the north side of the cathedral nave. Ingram's buildings have never been definitively located. To the north of the park a palace of the 12th century archbishops is known to have stood, part of which remains above ground and now forms part of a war memorial. Dean's Park is also a candidate for the position of the original Anglian cathedral, although no archaeological evidence for this has ever been found.

The planting-bed is 20m north-west of the cathedral, and is c.45m long and up to 2.45m wide (Figure 1). It is aligned north-south along the foot of a substantial limestone ashlar wall that forms the eastern wall of the Lodge buildings and a gateway into the courtyard of the Purey Cust hospital. The area in front of the gateway was kept the original size and shape of the previous flower bed, i.e. 1.4m wide; the soil in this area was removed to a depth of c.0.15m. It will be infilled with a hard-standing forming the base for a new memorial seat. To either side the gateway, the trench was wider so that the flower beds would have curving eastern edges (previously the edges had been parallel to the limestone wall). The maximum width of the trench to the north of the gateway was 2.15m, while the trench to the south of the gateway was up to 2.45m wide (Figure 2). Excavation in both trenches was to a maximum depth of 0.46m BGL (below ground level). Excavation ceased where archaeological deposits were uncovered (at c. 0.45m BGL). The southernmost 11.5m of the trench was only excavated to a depth of 0.15m as this area is to be used for shallower rooting plants. Contexts were numbered from 8000 onwards to avoid duplicating numbers allocated during the 2009 works.

The overall location is given on Figure 1, while Figures 2-3 show the trenches in more detail.

RESULTS

THE TRENCH TO THE SOUTH OF THE PUREY-CUST GATEWAY

The earliest deposits encountered were the remains of three walls (Figure 3) the upper surface of which were all at c.0.44m BGL, which was almost the maximum depth required for excavation of 0.46m; the decision was taken to excavate only to the top of these walls.

The northernmost wall, Context 8004, was aligned north-east to south-west and was 1.08m long and 0.42m wide. The wall comprised two blocks of limestone 0.50 x 0.40m in area and 0.48 x 0.42m in area respectively. The two blocks were bonded with a coarse yellow mortar. Both blocks were carefully dressed on the north-western facing elevation, but were of irregular shape on the south-eastern elevation, suggesting that the north-western side was the original exterior. It is unclear what form the south-eastern elevation took originally, as this face was sealed by demolition material

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implying that it had been robbed away. There was some hint of wear on the north-western edge of the westernmost stone, perhaps hinting that this could have been a doorway or sill, however, this was far from clear. A small area was cleared adjacent to the western edge of the south-westernmost block which revealed that the block was 0.19m high with claw tooling and a small area of mortar present on the south-western face of the block; it was unclear if this mortar was bonding material or an adjacent (now missing) block of stone or a mortar surface which could imply that this was the original termination of the wall. It was also clear that this block represented an upper course of stonework and that there was a lower course of stonework beneath. The north-eastern end of the wall had been destroyed by a later intrusion (Context 8009).

The second wall, Context 8005, was also aligned north-east to south-west and was c.0.8m south of wall 8004. This wall was 1.20m long and 0.24m wide and was made from roughly squared limestone blocks ranging from 0.25 x 0.1 x 0.8m to 0.16 x 0.17 x 0.10m in size, bonded with a coarse white lime mortar. Some of these blocks were discoloured pink/red due to burning. The pattern of the burning indicated that the stones had been re-used from elsewhere rather than being burnt *in-situ*. There was no discernable difference in the facing of the north-western and south-eastern facing sections. The south-western end of the wall had been destroyed by a later intrusion (8002), and it was unclear if the north-eastern end had been destroyed by robbing or not. A small area was cleared adjacent to the south-eastern elevation which showed that the wall continued for a depth of 0.23m and that there was a mortar surface adjacent to the wall at this point. It is unclear if this represents a mortar floor or a spread of demolition material. As this mortar surface was beneath the excavation-depth required it was not possible to investigate further.

The third wall, Context 8006, was also aligned north-east to south-west and was 0.75m wide and 1.80m in length. The south-eastern end had been destroyed by a later wall foundation cut (Context 8002), and the north-eastern end continued beyond the limits of excavation. Context 8006 was a portion of wall core, with no clear facing stones visible, though there was a hint of these at a slightly lower depth on the north-western elevation. The wall core comprised limestone rubble up to 0.1 x 0.1 x 0.08m in size set in a hard white lime based mortar.

The three walls were sealed by a large deposit of rubble (Context 8010) which presumably resulted from the demolition of all three walls. In the area to the south of 8005 this rubble was entirely of limestone and mortar while to the north of 8005 there was some 13-16th century plain tile, 14-16th century brick and 16-18th century brick mixed into the limestone rubble. It is clear from the results of the test trenches excavated in November 2009 that Context 8010 continued southwards for the entire length of the flower bed; the southernmost 11.5m of this deposit was not exposed in the present works as this area was not excavated to sufficient depth. Within the demolition rubble was one larger block of stone, Context 8003, which was originally seen in the November excavation work. This stone was 0.5 x 0.3m in size and had clearly been randomly tipped within the demolition material.

Context 2008 was truncated by the foundation trench of the present limestone wall at the western side of Dean's Park. The foundation trench (Context 8002) was up to 0.5m wide, but the depth is unknown as it continued beyond the depth-limits of excavation. The trench was infilled with mixed mid-brown sandy-silt, limestone fragments up to 0.03 x 0.03m in size and brick fragments (Context 8001).

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Sealing the southern portion of 8010 was a deposit of sandy mortar (Context 8011) up to 1m wide and up to 0.1m thick; this was clearly of modern date and this seems to have been used to cap the underlying rubble deposits. This deposit was visible over the eastern half of the trench.

Truncating 8010 and 8011 was a modern services pipe trench. The trench (Context 8009) was up to 0.3m wide and contained a yellow plastic pipe c.0.1m in diameter (Context 8007). The trench was infilled with mid brown slightly gravelly sand (Context 8008). The top of the pipe was c.0.4m BGL.

The uppermost 0.30m of deposits (Context 8000) across the entire trench was the horticultural soil of the present flower beds.

THE TRENCH TO THE ADJACENT OF THE PUREY-CUST GATEWAY

Context 8000 continued across this area to the maximum depth excavated, i.e. 0.15m. No features of archaeological interest were seen, due to the shallower excavation in this area.

THE TRENCH TO THE NORTH OF THE PUREY-CUST GATEWAY

The earliest deposit reached was Context 8010, the upper surface of which was seen over the southernmost 2m of this trench at c.0.3m BGL. It is unclear if this deposit petered out on the northern side, or was sloping downwards beyond the depth-limits of the present excavations. A modern flower bed edging (Context 8012) of limestone blocks 0.25 x 0.15 x 0.10m in size, bedded on mortar, had been inserted around the original 1.35m wide flower bed. The uppermost deposit encountered was Context 8000 which was up to 0.46m thick.

CONCLUSION

Within the excavation area there are the remains of three walls. Unfortunately no dating evidence was recovered with any of the walls, so it is unclear if they are of medieval or post-medieval date. The three walls appeared to be on marginally different alignments, though all were aligned broadly north-east to south-west. Without full excavation it is difficult to know if these structures represent internal or external building walls, or how they relate to one another chronologically.

The alignment of these walls is strikingly different to that of York Minster, but does seem to relate to other surviving and excavated structures in the area. Both the Minster Library and a portion of arcade from the 12th century Archbishop's Palace located in Dean's Park to the north-east (and now in use as a war memorial) are on a north-east to south-west alignment. The Minster library is within the former chapel of the archbishop's palace and incorporates some 12th century fabric. Landscaping in the 1970's immediately adjacent to the northern side of the York Minster nave revealed the remains of the Archbishop's Gate and St. Sepulchre Chapel both of which were aligned on a north-west to south-east axis; i.e. possibly forming a range at right angles to the Archbishop's Palace (I. Milsted pers. comm.) . A post-medieval building known as Arthur Ingrams Mansion is also thought to have been located in the vicinity, though possibly slightly to the south of the present investigation. Ingram's Mansion probably incorporated the remains of earlier medieval buildings within its fabric. The mansion was finally demolished in the early 19th century. The walls uncovered in the watching brief could relate to any of these structures, but further excavation would be required

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to clarify their date and function.

The walls are sealed by a sequence of dumps of limestone, mortar and brick rubble, which are clearly demolition dumps; the upper surface of which is at around 0.2-0.3m BGL. It is unclear precisely when this demolition occurred, though it was clearly of post-medieval date at the earliest as 16-18th century brick was present within the dumped material; this may suggest the dumping relates to the demolition of Ingram's Mansion and subsequent landscaping of the area. Modern deposits seen included a spread of sandy mortar, a flower-bed edging wall and a services pipe.



Plate 1 The northern limits of Context 8010, facing south, scale unit 0.1m

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Plate 2 Context 8000 adjacent to the Purey Cust gateway, facing south, scale unit 0.1m



Plate 3 Context 8011 and services trench fill 8007-8, facing south, scale unit 0.1m

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Plate 4 Context 8011 and services trench fill 8007-8 ,facing south, scale unit 0.1m

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Plate 5 Contexts 8004 (foreground), 8005 (mid-ground), 8006 (adjacent to machine bucket), and services pipe 8007 (along the left hand side of the trench), scale unit 0.1m

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Plate 6 Context 8003, scale unit 0.1m



Plate 7 Context 8004, scale unit 0.1m

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Plate 8 The south-western end of Context 8004, facing north-east, scale unit 0.1m



Plate 9 Context 8005, facing south, scale unit 0.1m

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Plate 10 Detail of burning on the north-western elevation of Context 8005, scale unit 0.1m



Plate 11 Detail of mortar deposit to the south of Context 8005, scale unit 0.1m

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Plate 12 Context 8006, facing south, scale unit 0.1m

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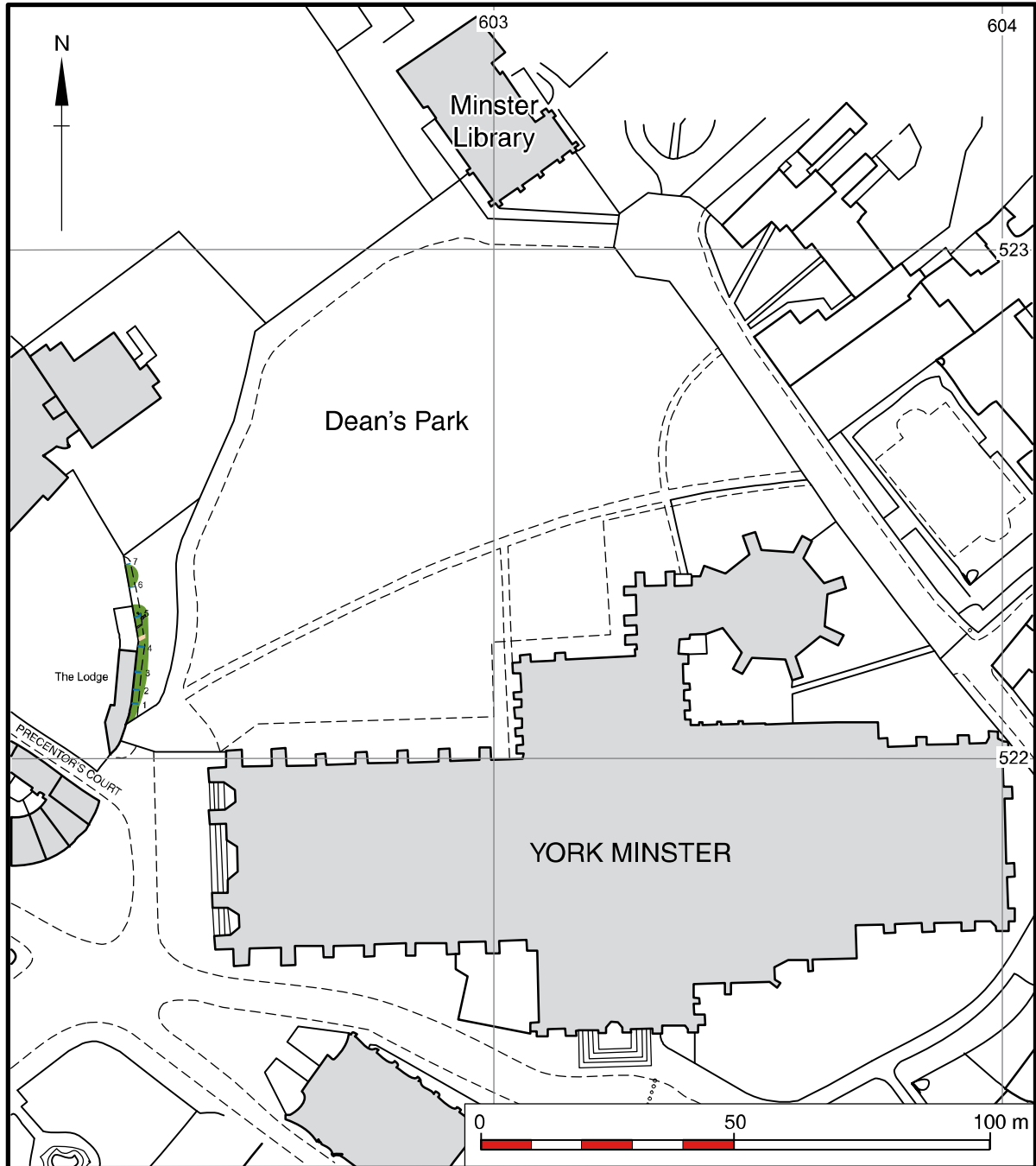


Figure 1 Location of the watching brief

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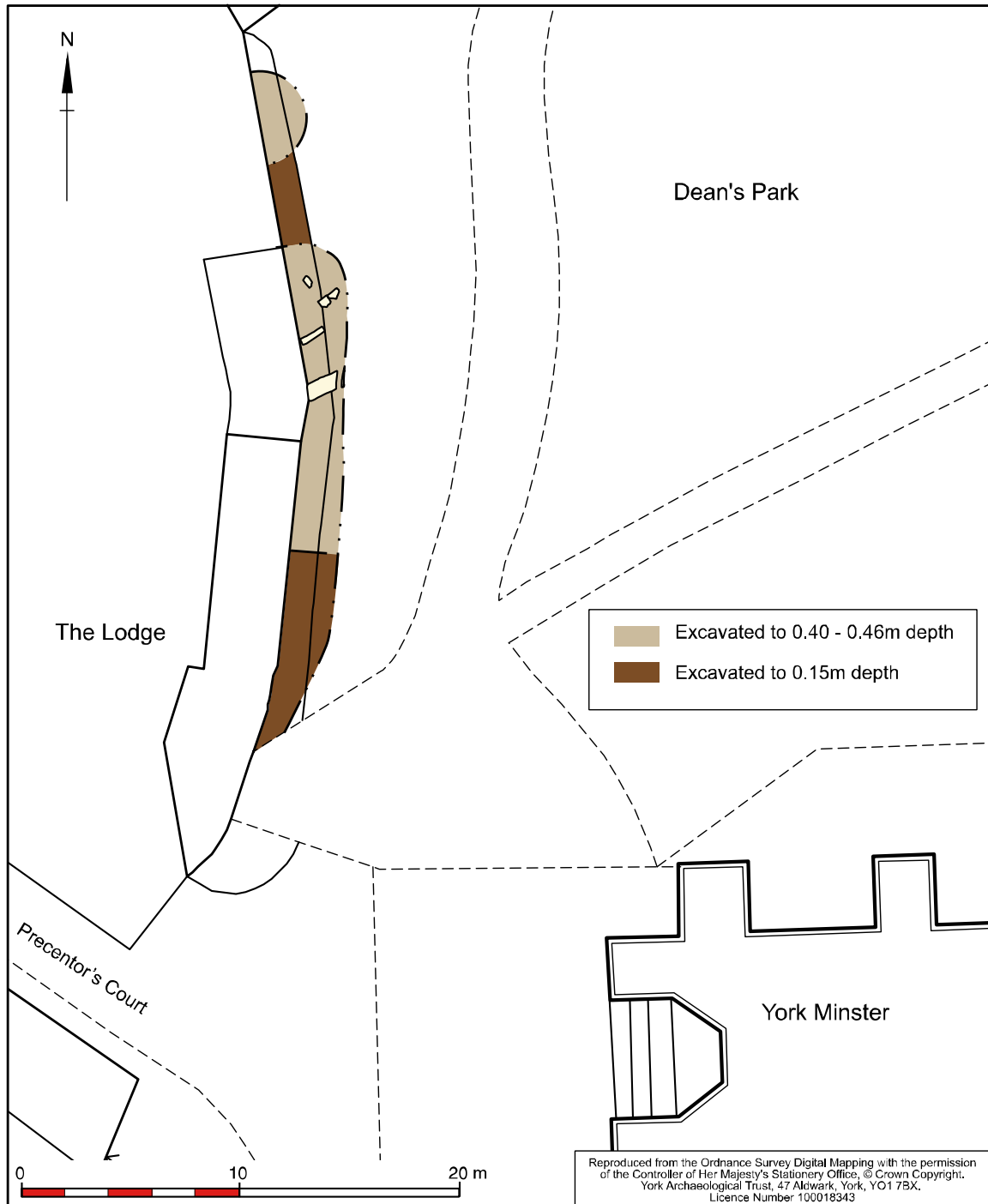


Figure 2 Detailed location plan

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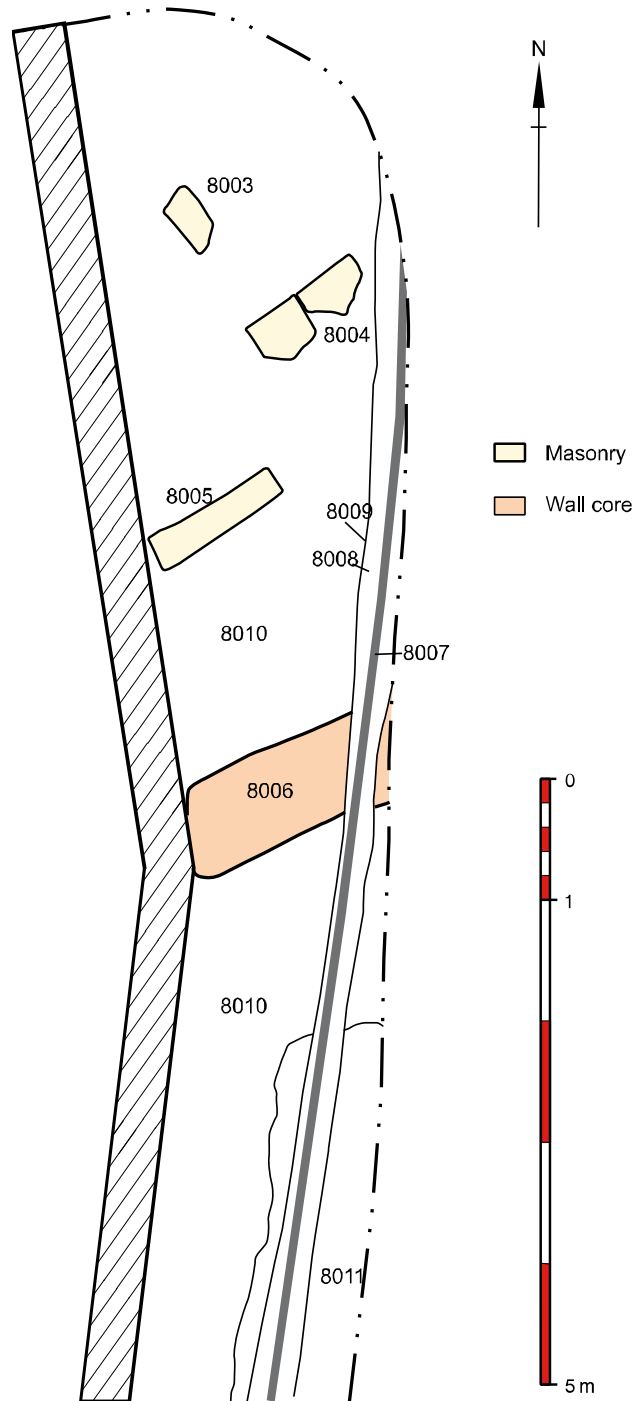


Figure 3 The excavated remains

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