

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT
THE SOUTH-WEST TOWER,
HEALTH CENTRE GROUNDS**

COWBRIDGE

Report 2010/07

**Client:
Cowbridge Charter Trust,
Town Walls sub-committee**

Report prepared by

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To the memory of Luke Millar, Cowbridge Charter Trust, Town Walls sub-committee, who, since our first encounter in 2005 during the Grammar School excavation, always believed that archaeological research could complement the documentary sources: he decided to excavate the wall in search of historical truth. Sadly Luke departed in June 2010, before he could read the results of this report, the last piece of archaeological investigation on the Cowbridge Town Walls that he had instigated.

CONTENTS

1. SUMMARY
2. INTRODUCTION
3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
4. METHODOLOGY
5. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION
6. THE FINDS
- 1 DISCUSSION
- 2 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
10. REFERENCES
- 11 APPENDICES
 - 1 Summary list of contexts

ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover illustration The Town Walls sub-committee volunteers at work

Figure 1: Location plan

Figure 2: Position of the archaeological watching brief and excavation areas

Figure 3: Cowbridge: plan of the town defences (Spurgeon 2001, 180)

Figure 4: location plan of the 2007 evaluation areas (CAC 2007, fig. 2)

Figure 5: T1, plan of the foundation of the medieval wall (CAC 2007, fig. 3)

Figure 6: The south-west tower before excavation

Figure 7: East-west section across the south-west tower

Figure 8: The south-west tower after removal of the topsoil

Figure 9: The south-west tower after excavation on fill 06

Figure 10: North-south section across the south-west tower

Figure 11: The south-west tower and the excavated area of the raised walkway

Figure 12: North-south section across the raised walkway

Figure 13: East-west sections across the raised walkway

Figure 14: Internal elevations of the south-west tower

Figure 15: Sections along the town defences and across the raised walkway

Figure 16: Plan and section of the blocked passage

Figure 17: Plan and section of boundary wall 28

Figure 18: The lines of the medieval wall and of the upstanding Town Walls

Plate 1: T1 the medieval foundation from the east (CAC 2007, pl. 4)

Plate 2: T1, the clay bank and the medieval foundations (CAC 2007, pl. 9)

Plate 3: T1, the foundations of the medieval wall from the north (CAC 2007, pl. 10)

Plate 4: TP1, the base of the upstanding wall from the north (CAC 2007, pl. 15)

Plate 5: TP2, the medieval wall foundations below the upstanding wall from the north (CAC 2007, pl. 16)

Plate 6, TP3, the medieval wall foundations below the upstanding wall from the north (CAC 2007, pl. 18)

Plate 7, TP3, the medieval wall foundations below the upstanding wall from the east (CAC 2007, pl. 19)

Plate 8: The south west tower and the summer-house from the south-west

Plate 9: Remains of the gravel render on the external summer-house wall from the east

Plate 10: Repaired section in the eastern summer-house wall from the east

Plate 11: The south-west tower after removal of the topsoil from the south

Plate 12: The fill 06 in the south-west tower from the west

Plate 13: The summer-house wall 01 above the fill 06 from the west

Plate 14: The foundation 10 below the eastern summer-house wall from the east

Plate 15: The junction of the south-west tower and the Town wall from the east

Plate 16: South-east corner of the tower from the north

Plate 17: North-east corner of the tower from the south

Plate 18: the southern revetment wall in the tower from the north

Plate 19: the northern revetment wall in the tower from the south

Plate 20: The south and north-west sections of the medieval wall from the east

Plate 21: The south section of the medieval wall from the north

Plate 22: The north-west section of the medieval wall from the east

Plate 23: The medieval wall in the northern passage below the raised walkway

Plate 24: The passage from the east

Plate 25: The test pit from the south

Plate 26: The retaining wall of the raised walkway from the north

Plate 27: The medieval wall behind the boundary wall 28 from the north-east

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1. Summary

Cardiff Archaeological Consultants carried out an archaeological watching brief and excavations during extensive cleaning and repair works on the south-west and north-east section of the Town Walls, Cowbridge. The repair works were commissioned by the Vale of Glamorgan Council and realised by the Town Walls sub-committee of the Cowbridge Charter Trust. The watching brief recorded the stratigraphy behind the boundary wall at the north end of the raised walkway or terrace. Excavation were carried out in and in front of the south-west tower and revealed its internal structure and the preserved line of the medieval wall. The excavations validate the results of the 2007 evaluation and confirm that 18th- or 19th-century landscaping work had obliterated a large section of the medieval walls while preserving others below its rebuilt sections. A small test pit was recorded in the central blocked passage and confirmed the presence of several layers of recent made-up deposit.

2. Introduction

2.1 The site that forms the subject of this report is located in the south-west tower and along the eastern face of the northern section of the Town Wall in the grounds of the Health Centre, Cowbridge (area centred at NGR SS 99250 74635 to SS 99290 74605). The excavated areas are located within the medieval wall west of Church Street, leading through the South Gate to the main medieval administrative centre of Llanblethian Castle. The whole of the evaluation area is over 240 sq metres in extent (Figures 1 and 2).

2.2 Cardiff Archaeological Consultants were commissioned to carry out an archaeological watching brief and excavations for the Cowbridge Charter Trust, Town Walls sub-committee during the cleaning and repair work to the town walls commissioned by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

2.3 The town of Cowbridge is located centrally in the Vale of Glamorgan, in the valley of the Thaw River, at a point on the river which facilitates a crossing point. The site of the town is surrounded by low hills and is therefore sheltered, the agricultural quality of the land being relatively rich. These attributes place Cowbridge in a favourable position for settlement and exploitation.

There is very little evidence for prehistoric activity within the Vale of Glamorgan until the Neolithic and Bronze Age, when evidence from the area is predominantly in the form of burials. The Neolithic evidence within the Cowbridge vicinity is not great, although some examples of chambered tombs of a type known as Cotswold Severn, from

the extent or their distribution, exist in the Vale. Bronze Age evidence is rather more widespread, again mainly funerary remains in the form of cairns, although the nature of finds such as a knife, palstaves and axe heads that are known from the Cowbridge area suggest settlements existed at that time (Robinson 1980).

During the Iron Age, the nature of the archaeological remains, in contrast to the earlier periods, consists of settlement or ritual deposits. In the upland area of Glamorgan, small hut circles and enclosures tend to be the common settlement type, although in the lower lying Vale larger hillforts and enclosures are predominant. The hillfort of Caer Dynnaf lies to the west of Cowbridge and encloses an area of c 3.8ha, while Llanquian Wood to the east encloses 2.2ha. These may indicate an ordered society at the time when the tribal group known as the Silures occupied the lowland area of South Wales and opposed the Roman occupation.

The Roman invasion of South Wales, which commenced in the late 40s AD, gathered momentum in the 70s with the establishment of the road system across South Wales and the legionary fortress at Caerleon (*Isca*), manned by the Legio II Augusta. The road system linked a series of forts, which in Glamorgan comprised Cardiff, Gelligaer, Penydarren, Neath, Loughor and Coelbren. It has been suggested that Cowbridge is the location of the fort known as Bovium, mentioned in Iter XII of the Antonine Itinerary. The main road running through the centre of the town of Cowbridge is the Roman road linking the Roman fortress of Caerleon with Carmarthen. Major excavations in Cowbridge over the last twenty years have revealed considerable evidence of Roman occupation, and the remain of structures including a bath house to the north of the main road which appears to be of military design have been recorded (Parkhouse and Evans 1996). Although heavily disturbed by the construction and expansion of the medieval town, Romano-British remains have also been located along the High Street and Westgate, including a bronze fibula found on the other side of the Broad Shoard.

During a watching brief at 34 and 35 Westgate a number of Romano-British features were uncovered, expanding the area of Roman discoveries to the south of High Street (Cardiff Archaeological Consultants, September 2004).

In the Vale of Glamorgan, the fertile lower lying land was being exploited as a number of farmstead and villas were established. Llantwit Major, Moulton and Whitton are all within 10km of Cowbridge and the farmstead at Llanfrynach is less than 2km from Cowbridge. The Roman occupation of this area lasted until the fifth century AD, although any continuity of settlement or ordered society is tenuous until the medieval period.

Following the Norman invasion, the Cowbridge area became part of the Lordship of Glamorgan during the latter part of the 11th century. Robert Fitzhamon established a capital at Cardiff and the lordship extended from the River Rhymney initially to the Ogmere River, then to the River Tawe, and north covering the lowland vale. Boroughs, defended towns, markets, churches, fairs and castles were all founded during a period of rapid urban growth. Towns were created and laid out with plots known as burgages, held

by burgesses who paid rent to the lord, thereby becoming a great source of wealth for the ruling class.

During the medieval period, when the area came under the control of Richard de Clare, Cowbridge's earliest phase was planned and laid out in burgage plots with originally about 59 burgages spread along both sides of the Roman road. The burgages were long narrow rectangular plots of land with the narrow end at the street frontage and the plot extending away from the road. Normally buildings were located on the street frontage with garden or working areas behind. Llanblethian Castle, to the south-west of Cowbridge, provided the focus of defence for the area, as there was no castle in Cowbridge itself. This appears to have been a deliberate choice and the town was probably planned as a purely commercial venture (Soulsby 1983). The church of the Holy Cross was originally the chapel of ease to the parish church, which was at Llanblethian. It is unlikely that the church predated the town's first charter in 1254 (Evans 1998). The walls around the town enclose an area of approximately 30 acres, and although there is no documentary evidence for their construction, they are likely have been in existence before the 13th century. The town expanded rapidly in planned units to the east and west of the walled zone and during the latter part of the 13th century the number of burgages in Cowbridge is estimated as being 230.

2.6 In the recent monograph *Excavations in Cowbridge, South Glamorgan, 1977-88* (Parkhouse and Evans 1996) a detailed synthesis is given of the archaeological works carried out on the Roman, medieval and post-medieval sites in Cowbridge.

2.6.1 Roman Cowbridge

The Roman settlement of Cowbridge is located on the Roman road between Cardiff and Neath and seems to have been developed in the vicinity of the road, although many of the excavated features were not aligned on the road (Parkhouse and Evans in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 233).

A clear picture of Cowbridge during the Roman period is still difficult to draw with precision. Several elements (catapult bolt, helmet piece and the bath house) found in some of the sites excavated seem to indicate a military origin or at least an official one (Parkhouse and Evans in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 234).

Most of the recent excavations were conducted north of North Road, beyond the wall of the medieval town and in Hopyard Meadow at the western extremity of the town.

Bear Field

Excavations carried out between 1979 and 1984 revealed a series of drainage gullies and ditches probably associated with light buildings. The finds suggest an occupation starting

in the 2nd century AD and finishing in the second half of the 3rd century AD. A series of ten flues were also excavated. Dating evidence shows that they were out of use by the middle of the 4th century AD (Evans in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 4-40).

Bear Barn

A similar series of gullies, pits, postholes and stakeholes to those found in Bear Field was excavated in 1981 (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 41-44).

Arthur John Car Park

Nine hundred square metres were excavated in 1981 and revealed an early 2nd century AD Roman bath building. The building was composed of a linear unit of five rooms (Reinhentyp plan) together with three side rooms. A *praefurnium* and ancillary room were later added then replaced in turn by a large *praefurnium*. Two T-shaped kilns were found north of the bath building. Four burials were also found on this site. These later features seem to indicate some continuity during Roman time. (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 45-72).

83 High Street (Woodstock House)

Part of a building dated to the 3rd century AD constructed on rubble-filled foundation trenches was uncovered and excavated (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 73).

77 High Street

A number of linear gullies and undiagnostic pits dating from the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD were excavated (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 74-79).

75 High Street

A late 1st-century AD Roman road ditch and a rubbish pit with two associated buildings were discovered during the 1977 excavation of the 'Old Brewery'. One of the buildings was founded on sleeper beams and the other on stone wall footings. After destruction of the two buildings around 160 AD, a minor road setting off from the main thoroughfare occupies the land until the second half of the 4th century AD. The road ditch is the earliest known Roman feature in Cowbridge (Allen and Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 80-90).

61 High Street (Midland Bank)

Excavations conducted during 1981/82 revealed a large Romano-British ditch with a width in excess of 5 metres and depth in excess of 1 metre. Dating evidence suggests that it was filled quite rapidly, after being open for some time, during the latter half of the 2nd century AD (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 91-102).

Hopyard Meadow

Two Romano-British ditches, a series of postholes and the eroded remains of a wall footing were excavated on this large plot at the west end of the town. Among the large quantity of Roman pottery recovered from the fill of the ditches, a sandstone lion sculpture is the most remarkable find. The finds evidence indicate a date around the middle of the 4th century AD for the backfilling of the ditches but the lion sculpture could indicate the presence of nearby cemetery during the 2nd century AD (Marvell in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 110-124).

Shortland, Westgate

Three silver *Urbs Roma* coins (c 330-335) and other Romano-British finds were found (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 124).

Westgate

A layer of Roman deposit was found during the digging of a service pit. A fibula found at the turn of the century is probably from the same site (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, pp.124).

Old Hall, High Street

A metre of Roman deposit was observed in the early 1970s (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 124).

73 High Street

The cutting of a cable trench permitted the recording of a layer of Roman deposit at a depth of 1 metre below the existing ground. This layer was followed from the edge of the High Street to the northern wall of the town (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 124).

57 High Street:

A number of foundation trenches were examined and revealed a layer of Roman deposit containing building debris (ceramic and sandstone roof tile) overlain by another layer of Roman deposit (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 125).

2.6.2 Medieval and post-medieval Cowbridge:

After a hiatus of nine centuries following the end of the Roman settlement, the town started a rapid period of development when it received its first charter in 1254 from Sir

Richard Clare who founded the borough in the 1240s after he took possession of the lordship of Tal-y-Fan and the manor of Llanblethian (James and Francis 1979, 24, 32). The market town grew rapidly inside its stone wall and the 59 burgesses in residence in 1262-3 rose to 233 in 1295. Around 1300 Cowbridge was one of the largest and most flourishing towns in Wales, only superseded by Cardiff (James and Francis 1979, 33). Cowbridge continue to enjoy a lesser degree of prosperity in the later 15th century and until the early 20th century relied on the basic trade and wealth generated by the trade of livestock and produce of the markets and fairs (James and Francis 1979, 47-48).

The area of the medieval town affected by the different archaeological operation is small. Part of thirteen burgage plots were excavated but interpretation of the results was difficult as the size of the areas studied was restricted (Parkhouse and Evans 1996,).

Bear Barn

A group of agricultural buildings and stable probably originated during the 18th century with the construction of a barn. Other buildings were subsequently added (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 44).

83 High Street (Woodstock House)

Several post-medieval pits were uncovered under the modern superficial layers. On the western edge of the site the remains of the medieval town wall were excavated. A short length of a medieval gully was also studied (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 73-74).

77 High Street

The corner of a medieval limestone and clay wall was found in the south-eastern corner of the excavation. A small post-medieval cobbled courtyard overlay the medieval features (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 76-79).

75 High Street

A 14th-century rectangular building (16.7m x 7.6m) with some evidence of internal arrangements was excavated. The building was then modified and altered during the 18th century. A well of drystone construction dating from the medieval and post-medieval periods was found in the north-east corner of the site (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 88-89).

61 High Street (Midland Bank)

A large 13th-century waterlogged pit was excavated. The main feature was a section 3.6m long of the medieval defence with its associated ditch. The wall was 1.8m thick and

survived to a height of 2.3m. An abutment for a bridge spanning the ditch outside the north gate was also identified. The remains of a large medieval building with internal wall and clay floor constructed parallel with and adjacent to the road leading from the High Street to the north gate were excavated (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 93-109).

Hopyard Meadow

One of the rare medieval sites excavated outside the perimeter of the town wall, it revealed a large ditch and two contemporary buildings and two rubble-filled pits. The site was later occupied during the post-medieval period (boundary bank and gullies) and subsequently occupied in the west end of the eastern property by a building with associated latrine, a possible 'nailer's shop and garden', still standing in the early 20th century (Marvell in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 114-123).

45 and 47 High Street (Verity's Court)

Thirteenth- or 14th-century pottery was discovered on the line of the town defence. The line of the inner edge of the town ditch was also recorded (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 125).

41 High Street

Vestiges of the town wall were observed 'fossilised' in one of the property boundaries (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 125).

27 High Street

The foundation wall of the northern end of a medieval building was excavated (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 125).

63 High Street (The Bear Hotel)

Believed to be the oldest medieval building in the town, the Bear Hotel was formerly a town house. The Bear Hotel was probably a three-unit, lateral chimney, hall-house of the late medieval period (Figure 3), later converted into a storeyed house. To the north of the house, and linked with it by later addition, is a formerly detached structure probably of medieval date (RCAHMW 1986, 144-145). A limited excavation in 1979 at the rear of the hotel revealed a cross section of the medieval town wall. Beneath the foundation of the wall a layer of Romano-British date was uncovered (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, pp.124-125). The building was converted to an inn during the 16th century and in the late 17th century was a posting house run by the Bradleys, a renowned South Wales coaching family (Leijerstam 1992, 41). The 1979 excavation also revealed the presence of a mid 19th century building and cobbled floor, probably a stable block for the posting house. Other similar 19th-century structures were observed during excavations on the site

of the Bear Hotel car park north of North Road at the rear of the hotel (Parkhouse in Parkhouse and Evans 1996, 124-125).

Back of the Institute (Behind Town Hall)

The removal of the topsoil at the back of the Institute (now demolished) revealed the lower course of the north section of the town wall. The masonry was reported to have been 8ft (2.13m) wide and yellow clay bonded. The external side of the wall presented a considerable batter and was faced with dressed stone (Evans 1914, 304)

2.7 The Town Walls

If the date of the foundation of the town is no longer doubtful, the history and development of the Cowbridge town walls remain unclear. C.J. Spurgeon in 2001 reviewed the question and suggested that the walls were built when the borough was founded in 1254 (Spurgeon 2001, 179). Using Robinson's (Robinson 1982) estimation of the number of burgages plots inside the walled area and their rate of growth, Spurgeon deduced that extra-mural settlement may have been necessary as early as 1269 (Spurgeon 2001, 179). The construction of the walls should then be attributed to Richard de Clare rather than Gilbert II. The town walls enclosed a pentagonal area of 5.50 hectares (Robinson 1980, 45) with its course reasonably well established (Figure 3). The wall was fronted by a ditch 8m wide (Soulsby 1983, 115) probably holding water (Spurgeon 2001, 183). Excavation on the site of the Midland Bank (See above 61 High Street) revealed part of the ditch of which the last section was filled after 1853 (Soulsby 1983, 115). Four gates gave access to the town of which only the south still stand. The north gate may have been already ruined by the end of the first half of the 16th century (Spurgeon 2001, 183). The two main gates in the east and west remained the principal entry points of the main road in the town until the mid-18th century (Robinson 1980, 47). The west gate was demolished in 1754 and the east gate survived only a few more years until it was removed between 1768 and 1775 (Robinson 1980, 47).

If the plan of the town walls seems to be now well established, its original dimensions have been extrapolated from the rare sections excavated and from the surviving south-west section. In 1999 Marches Archaeology (Marches Archaeology 1999) surveyed the standing sections of the Town Walls and reviewed the published evidences. The preserved sections of the wall were between 2.30m (Midland bank) and 3.6m (West wall) high and the width between 1.80m (Midland bank) and 2.13m (Back of Institute). Apart from the south gates, the report also identified several section of the surviving wall as original or rebuilt on the medieval foundations:

West of south gate

First 30m completely rebuilt, next 18m rebuilt on the medieval foundation, next 22m original (3.60m high x 1.80m wide with external batter), 12m rebuilt on medieval

foundation and the remaining 27.5 m leading to the south-west tower are original. The lower battered section of the tower is also deemed original with the upper part having received the walls of an 18th century summerhouse.

North of the south-west tower

40m is mostly original with a terrace built against its internal side and added crenellations. Next 30m completely rebuilt and a 15m section is integrated into the fabric of the former Masons Arms (now a restaurant), itself a medieval building.

The results of the non-intrusive survey of the walls by Marches Archaeology was incorporated in Spurgeon's description of the Cowbridge walls (Spurgeon 2001, 186-187) and constituted the latest published appraisal of the structure.

Since the publication of Spurgeon's paper on the medieval town defence in Glamorgan, Cardiff Archaeological Consultants conducted a series of excavation on the south section of the wall located between the south-west tower and the south-east tower.

The former Grammar School

The first excavations were carried out in 2006 in the garden of the former Grammar School and in the Boot House, a post-medieval building abutting the south gate (report forthcoming). The excavations below the floor of the boot house revealed that the foundation of the medieval wall extended 1.30m inward. The fabric of the wall was similar to the one described in the excavation of the north section of wall, i.e. dressed limestone blocks with clay bounding. To the east of the Boot House the medieval wall had been demolished and all the stone removed. Its line was marked only by the dark fill of the robber trench leading to the south-east bastion on the same course as the modern boundary wall. Artefacts recovered from the trench suggest a date in the second half of the 18th century for its fill.

Health Centre Grounds

In 2007, another opportunity was provided for Cardiff Archaeological Consultants to investigate the south section of the wall from the west wall of the newly renovated Physic garden to the south-west tower in the ground of the Health Centre (Cardiff Archaeological Consultants 2007). Four areas, T1, TP1, TP2, and TP3 were evaluated (Figure 4). The first one in front of the 19th-century boundary wall immediately west of the Physic Garden showed that the foundation of the medieval wall was of similar fabric to that uncovered in the former Grammar School Boot House. The stepped foundations projected 1.80m to the north and were built against a clay bank. The width remains constant until it meets the upstanding section of the wall deemed to be original (Figure 5, Plates 1 to 3).

The next evaluation area to the west, TP1 (Figure 4), was cut at the base of the section of the wall identified as original in the 1999 survey (Marches Archaeology 1999). The

excavations revealed that the base of the existing wall rested on a possible construction layer and that it overlaps the foundation of the medieval wall uncovered in T1 (Plate 4).

TP2 was excavated further along the same section of the wall (Figure 4) and clearly shows that the upstanding wall has been built on the remains of the medieval wall. The lower course of the wall is not tied in and a gap between the two walls is clearly visible (Plate 5). The stones of the modern wall are bonded with beige to light brown lime mortar in contrast to the clay-bonded medieval stonework. The difference in the quality of the stonework is also evident. A halfpenny of George III (1760-1820) probably issued in 1775 found in the construction layer 1 could indicate that the construction of the upstanding wall took place in the late 18th century. A residual rim sherd of a Roman amphora type Dressel 20 was discovered in the same context.

The result of the excavations of TP3 (Figure 4) confirms and completes the information from the two previous test pits. The same stratigraphical sequence is observed and the overlap of the two walls is even more evident (Plates 6 and 7). The fabric of the foundation of the medieval wall 03 is also similar to the one in test pit 2 and its base lies at a height of 28.14m OD. The position of the medieval wall, 0.50m to the north of the line of the later upstanding wall also clearly demonstrates that its line of the latter diverges from that of the original medieval wall. This also explains why the foundations of the medieval wall do not show below the wall 02, as they are in a recessed position due to the diverging lines of the walls.

The results of the 2006 and 2007 excavations clearly demonstrate the limitations of the 1999 non-intrusive survey of the south section of the Town Walls. The sections of the wall thought to be the original medieval wall have probably been partly rebuilt on the medieval foundations but following a different line, as shown by the overlap of the two structures in TP1 to 3. Doubt also needs to be cast on the medieval attribution of the last section of upstanding wall leading to the south-west tower.

4 Methodology

4.1 The archaeological watching brief and excavations were carried out during the extensive cleaning and repair works on the south-west and north-east section of the Town Walls. It was focused on three main areas: the south-west tower, the boundary wall at the north end of the raised walkway and the blocked passage below the raised walkway (Figure 2). After removal of the overgrown vegetation in the south-west tower, it was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.70m in order to create a public access to the tower remains. The section behind the boundary wall was recorded before reconstruction. The test pit in the blocked passage was hand excavated and recorded. All excavation and cleaning was to the required professional standard so as to establish the character, distribution, limits and relative importance of features and layers.

4.2 All archaeological contexts were recorded using a continuous numbered context system on *pro forma* context sheets (as previously submitted to GGAT). The Museum of London Archaeological Service's manual (Spence 1990, prepared in 1990 by the then Dept. of Urban Archaeology) was used during the recording of the features.

4.3 Written, drawn and photographic records to an appropriate level of detail were made including context sheets, a site diary, three-dimensional field drawings and survey data. Plans and section drawings were at a scale of 1:20. The drawings were cross-referenced to fixed boundaries on the relevant OS plan.

4.4 The watching brief and excavation were conducted on an *had hoc* basis by Jean-Yves Robic between the November 2009 and April 2010

5 The archaeological watching brief and excavation

5.1 The south west tower:

In the 1999 appraisal of the walls, the battered lower section of the south-west tower was described as part of the original medieval defences with a polygonal 18th-century summer-house built on its upper course (Plate 8). The raised walkway or terrace constructed against its internal side was also noted and attributed by Spurgeon with the summer-house to a phase of landscaping of the grounds of Old Hall (Spurgeon 2001, 186), residence of the Edmondson family.

After removal of the over-grown vegetation in and around the south-west tower, the plan of the polygonal summer-house (01) became evident (Figure 6). Nine narrow walls 0.54m wide rest recessed on the base of the medieval tower (Figure 7). A fireplace is set in the western wall and was flanked by two openings of which the southern one had been blocked. The walls were constructed coursed limestone rubble bonded with a lime mortar and survived to a height of 1.10m. The external face still shows patches of the original calcite gravel render (Plate 9) noted by Spurgeon (Spurgeon 2001, 186). Two sections in the south and north sides have probably been rebuilt and are also recessed in the original summer-house wall (Plate 10). Several repointing phases were also noted on the internal stonework.

The excavation of the topsoil layer (00) to the base of the summer-house walls uncovered the internal structure of the medieval tower and the east side of the summer-house (Figure 8, Plate 11). The east wall of the summer-house was built on a bed of brown lime mortar (02) and was bounded with a white lime mortar. Patches of the same brown lime mortar (02) were recorded at the base and below other sections of the summer-house and above the internal stone fill (04) of the medieval tower (Figure 8). The floor level of the summer-house probably stood just above the mortar bed (02) but no traces of it had survived. It is possible to envisage a flagstone floor that was removed with the roof structure when the summer-house was abandoned.

The internal structure of the medieval tower consisted of a limestone rubble and brown clay fill (04) with an internal U-shaped faced revetment (Figure 8). The medieval walls were 1.90m to 2.20m wide. The internal area was 3m east-west by 2m north south with a rounded side to the west. This space was filled by a layer of fairly loose limestone rubble and light brown clayey soil (06) to the top of the faced revetment (Figure 7, Plate 12). Excavation of the fill layer 06 confirmed that the east wall of the summer-house was later than its deposition and that the tower was open on its eastern side (Figures 7, 9 and 10, Plate 13). Below the eastern wall of the summer-house a layer of dark brown soil (07) overlay a line of stones (10) set in a bed of brown lime mortar (08) similar to 02 (Plate 14). This was interpreted as a bridging foundation between the north and south side of the medieval tower to support the eastern wall of the summerhouse over the loose fill (06).

The stones and mortar were removed and the fill 06 was further excavated to the east in the raised walkway (Figures 11, 12 and 13). The junction of the internal revetment wall of the tower with the south and north section of the Town Walls was uncovered (Plate 15). The south revetment wall joins the south section of the wall at an angle of 125° while the north revetment joins the wall at 115°. Both joints were formed by large shaped cornerstones and indicate that the tower and the wall are part of the same construction phase (Plates 16 and 17). The internal revetment wall was carefully constructed with faced blocks of limestone put to courses and clay bonded (Figure 14). A corresponding square gap in the stonework is visible in the south and north elevations (Plates 18 and 19) and could have received a beam to support a wooden platform or an internal wooden scaffolding structure. The excavation was terminated at a depth of 0.70m without reaching the base of the revetment wall. The near-natural fill 06 was constant throughout and only produced a small quantity of animal bones. The outer edge of the town defences were followed and recorded to the south and north (Figures 13 and 15, Plate 20). The south section of the medieval wall was followed for 2m and was terminated by straight edges (17) bounded with yellow-brown lime mortar (Plate 21). In front of the wall a section 1.30m long of an offset wall (18) was recorded. The wall was 0.70m wide and made of limestone blocks bonded with white lime mortar. Its eastern end continued below the topsoil and it probably forms the external side of the raised walkway built against the remains of the inside edge of the town defences. To the north the medieval wall was also recorded for nearly 2m (Plate 22) and seems to have lost its upper courses below a recent backfill layer (15) and a sterile light brown clay layer (14). No evidence for an external retaining wall was found on this side and it is likely that the medieval wall was in better condition and acted as the retaining wall. This was confirmed by the observation of the line of the medieval wall in the northern passage through the raised walkway (Figure 2, Plate 23). The width of the Town walls is 1.60m on the northern section and in excess of 2.4m on the southern section assuming that the outer face is medieval.

5.2 The blocked passage

The outer retaining wall (11) of the raised walkway is pierced by a wide passage (2.80m) over a stone arch and flanked by two square pillars (Figures 2 and 16, Plate 24). The passage is now blocked by a breeze-block wall on the Health Centre side and only marked

in the outer face of the town walls by the remains of a short section of its arch. A couple of blocks were removed to attempt an inspection of the internal structure of the passage. Disappointingly it is filled to roof height with breeze blocks and further exploration was abandoned.

A small test pit 0.80m x 0.90m was hand excavated at the base of the northern pillar. Below the topsoil (00) a thick layer of black soil with recent building rubble (12) is recorded to the top of the pillar's footings (Figure 16, section 06, Plate 25). Below this a 0.36m thick of fine black soil (13) was recorded and interpreted as buried topsoil. The nature and recent date of the building rubble found in the upper layer 12 and the breeze block wall obstructing the passage indicate that it was probably blocked and the ground level raised during the construction of the Health Centre in 1973-74 (Newman 1995, 333).

5.3 The northern boundary wall

At the northern end of the raised walkway a wall orientated east-west marked the boundary with the back yard of the former Masons Arms (Figure 2). Part of the wall (28) had collapsed and a large section was dismantled prior to reconstruction. This provided an opportunity to record the stratigraphy behind the boundary wall.

The structure of the raised walkway with its retaining wall (23/24) and its brown soil and stones fill (26) was clearly identified (Plate 26). The upper section of eastern retaining wall 24 was partly rebuilt from both side (25) and the same white lime mortar (21) used to re-establish the level. It is likely that this took place in recent times during the construction or refurbishment of the flight of steps leading to the north end of the raised walkway. Wall 29 with its cement mortar was the remains of another modern repair to the boundary wall.

Behind the western end of the boundary wall 28 a section of a stone wall 1.40 m wide and 1.40m high (27) was probably the remains of the medieval town walls buried below the raised walkway (Plate 27). The wall end had been re-pointed with a brown lime mortar similar to the mortar of wall 28 and could indicate an attempt to stabilise the medieval wall before the construction of the boundary wall.

6 The finds

A very small quantity of finds was recovered from the topsoil layer 00 inside the south-west tower. They mainly consisted of 18th- to 19th-century coarse ware, blue and white transfer-printed ware and a fragment of dark green glass bottle.

The fill of the internal area of the tower (06) produced only a small quantity of animal bones, some of which may have been introduced into the loose stony fill by rodents.

Test pit 1 in the blocked passage only uncovered recent building rubble. No finds were retained.

7 Discussion

7.1 While the limited extent of the areas excavated or recorded and the lack of dating evidence in the stratified deposits restrict the scope for interpretation, the results confirm the observations of the 2007 evaluation.

7.2 The 2007 evaluation had clearly demonstrated that the foundations of the medieval town walls were well preserved on its north side in the grounds of the Cowbridge Health Centre. The base of the foundations was recorded at a near constant height, between 28.14m and 28.24m OD. Its fabric seems to comprise the same elongated limestone blocks built to course against an internal clay bank in all the areas excavated.

The work also demonstrated that the upstanding south section of the town wall, from the west of the Physic Garden wall to the western tower, once considered to have been the remains of the 13th-century town walls, is in fact a partial 18th-century rebuild. The diverging lines of the two walls observed on its north side put in doubt the date of the south-western tower as it seem to align more with the 18th-century wall than the medieval one.

7.3 The excavations in the south-west tower and on the raised walkway allowed the unravelling of the evolution and chronology of this area. It is probable that an important landscaping phase took place at the time or after the demolition of the west gate in 1754 in the garden of Old Hall. The garden encompassed all of the actual Health Centre grounds and the car parking area to the south of the wall between the cottage near the south gate and the Butts pond alongside the south west tower (1843 Tithe Map and Apportionment). Most of the south-west section of the south town walls, the south-west tower and some 30m of the west town walls are located within the Edmondes estate. The south wall, certainly partly ruined, was rebuilt on its foundations, keeping the external line and some of the original masonry but altering the internal line to reduce its width and re-shape the internal layout. The south-west tower was backfilled and the raised walkway constructed behind a new retaining wall to give access to the summer-house constructed on the medieval stonework of the tower. The summer-house closes the tower and gives it a circular shape. The mock crenellations on the north-west section of the wall were probably added at the same time, nicely setting off the re-modelling of the remains of the town defences.

7.4 The section recorded behind the boundary wall at the north end of the raised walkway only serves to confirm that a large section of the medieval wall has been preserved below the raised walkway and was perhaps in a better state of repair than the south wall. It also shows that the continuation of the wall to the north is not original and that only the lower courses or the foundations have been preserved below the former Masons Arms yard floor or maybe in the building itself.

8 Conclusions

8.1 The excavation and watching brief have demonstrated that the archaeological resource is well preserved over a large part of the study area. The preserved height of the south-west tower and the returning sections of the wall stands at 31.42m, some 3.2m above the base of the medieval foundations recorded in 2007. Even given the constraint of a limited excavation the results are important. The evidence recorded confirmed that the upstanding south section of the town wall, from the west of the Physic Garden wall to the western tower, formerly considered to have been the remains of the 13th-century town walls, is in fact a 18th-century rebuild along the original external line but following a new internal line straddling the medieval foundations. The diverging lines of the two walls have again been exposed and the attribution of the south-west tower to the medieval period been established (Figure 18). The 18th-century rebuild may have tried to preserve some of the original aspect of the medieval wall especially in the southern section but it also gave it a new romantic touch by adding the mock crenellations on its north-west section. The raised walkway and battlements were misinterpreted by some authors as being of medieval date (Richards 1956, 14). The limited depth of the excavation does not allow a definitive interpretation of the morphology of the town defences. Nevertheless it is possible to suggest that a wooden fighting platform may have run along the internal side of the wall and may also have provided the south-west tower with one or two floors.

The absence of dating evidence is regrettable but the similar morphology of the sections of the wall recorded from the Boot House in the Grammar School to the south-west tower would seem to indicate that the wall was built in a relatively short time as part as a coordinated program.

8.2 If the line and chronology of the south wall has now been established, the lack of dating evidence is a major shortfall of the archaeological investigations. If the opportunity arises in the near future, a number of sections of the town ditch should be excavated to its base, with the hope of providing dating evidence. It would also be of value to excavate the south-east tower to compare its internal morphology with the south-west one and augment the gathering data on the medieval town defences.

9 Acknowledgements

The author is pleased to acknowledge the help Peter Jones of Vale consultancy, of Luke Millar, Cowbridge Charter Trust, Town Walls sub committee, Nick Lloyd, Conservation Officer at the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Kelvin Dark of Kinsale Stone Co and his staff for their help and support during the excavation and of Mike Ponsford, CAC, for editing this report.

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Appendix 1: A Summary List of Contexts

No	Location	Description	Relationship	Note
00	All areas	Top soil		Modern
01	Tower	Summer-house walls	Over 03	18th century
02	Tower	Light brown lime mortar	Over 03	18th century
03	Tower	Medieval tower ²	Under 01, 02	13th century
04	Tower	Clay and stone core	In 03	13th century
05	not used			
06	Tower	Stone and clay backfill	Under 00	18th century
07	Tower	Dark Brown soil	Under 01	18th century
08	Tower	Brown lime mortar =02?	Under 07	18th century
09	Tower	White lime mortar (repair ?)	In 01	18th century?
10	Tower	Foundation for wall 01?	Under 01	18th century
11	Passage	retaining wall	over 00	18th century
12	Passage	Modern building rubble	Under 00	20 th century
13	Passage	Buried topsoil ?	Under 12	Modern
14	Tower	Light brown clay, backfill	Under 00, 15	18/19th century?
15	Tower	brown soil, backfill	Under 00	18/19th century?
16	Tower	Grey lime mortar, repair		19th century
17	Tower	East end of wall 03, re-pointed	Under 00	18th century
18	Tower	South retaining wall	Under 00	18th century
19	Boundary	Modern paving slab	Over 20	20th century
20	Boundary	Concrete bedding layer for 19	Under 19	20th century
21	Boundary	Stone rubble and white lime mortar	Under 19, 00	20th century?
22	Boundary	Brown clay with stone, backfill	Under 21	20th century?
23	Boundary	Upper section of wall 11, repaired	Over 24	19/20th century?
24	Boundary	Lower section of wall 11	Under 23	18th century
25	Boundary	Sub-circular cut, repair to 23	Under 00	20th century?
26	Boundary	Brown soil with stones,	Fill of 11	18th century
27	Boundary	Medieval town wall	In26	13th century
28	Boundary	East-west boundary wall		Post medieval?
29	Boundary	Cemented wall, repair to 28?	Over 28	20th century
30	Boundary	Pocket of pea gravel	In 26	Modern ?



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Centre Coordinates: 299323 174627

National Grid sheet reference at centre of this Siteplan: SS9974

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Figure 1: Location plan

 Excavations and watching brief areas

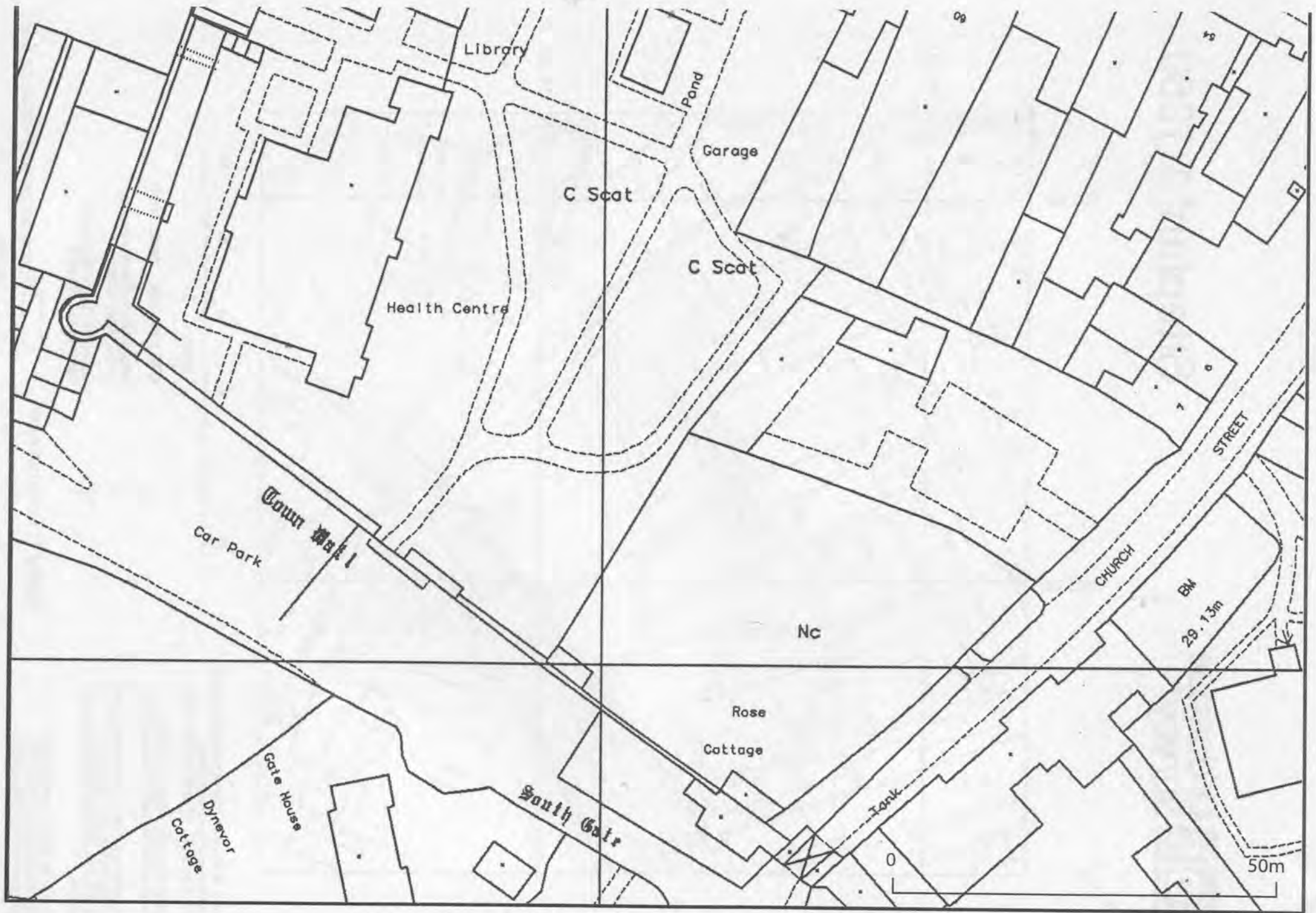


Figure 2: Position of the archaeological watching brief and excavation areas

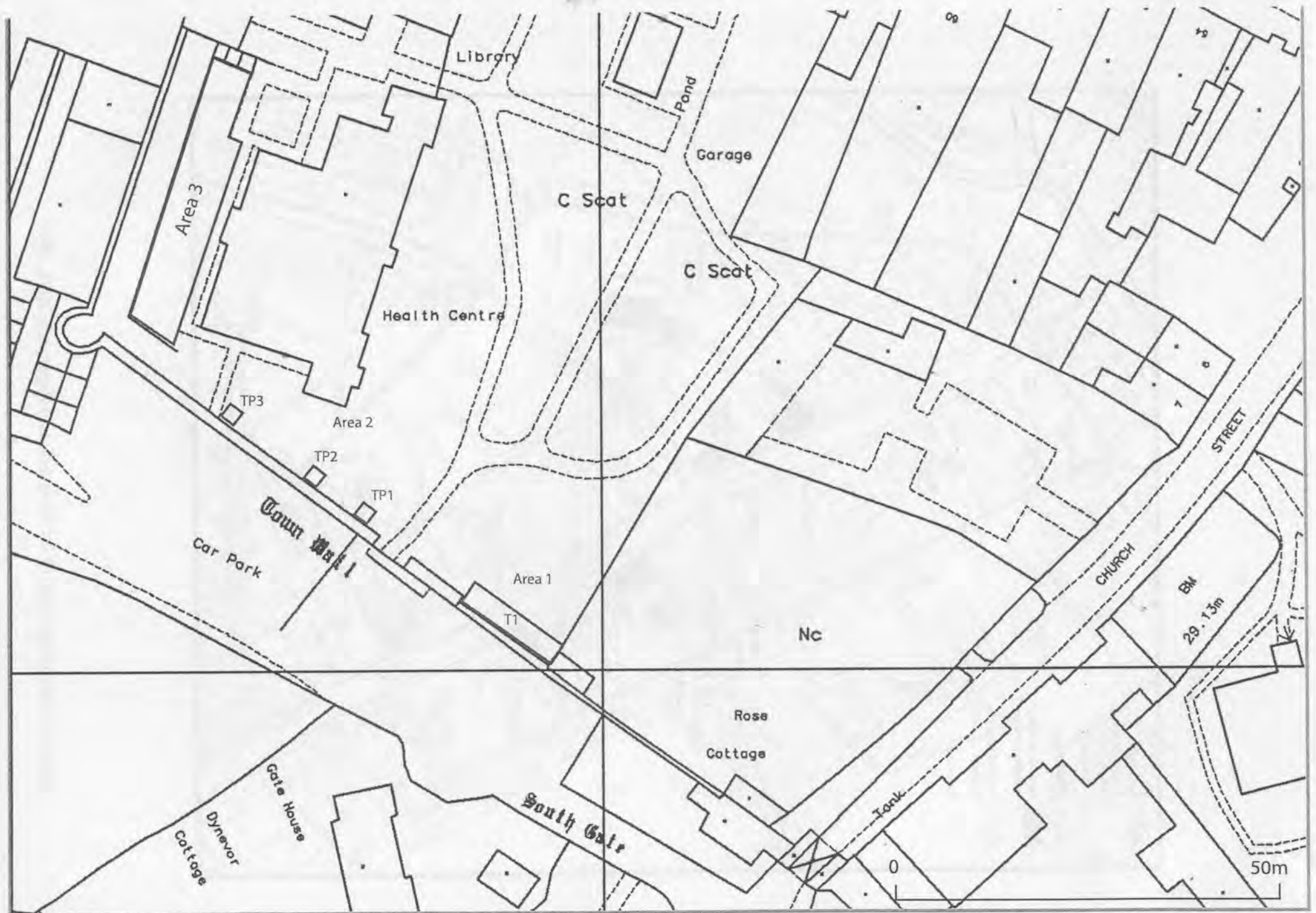


Figure 4: Location plan of the 2007 evaluation areas (CAC 2007, fig. 2)

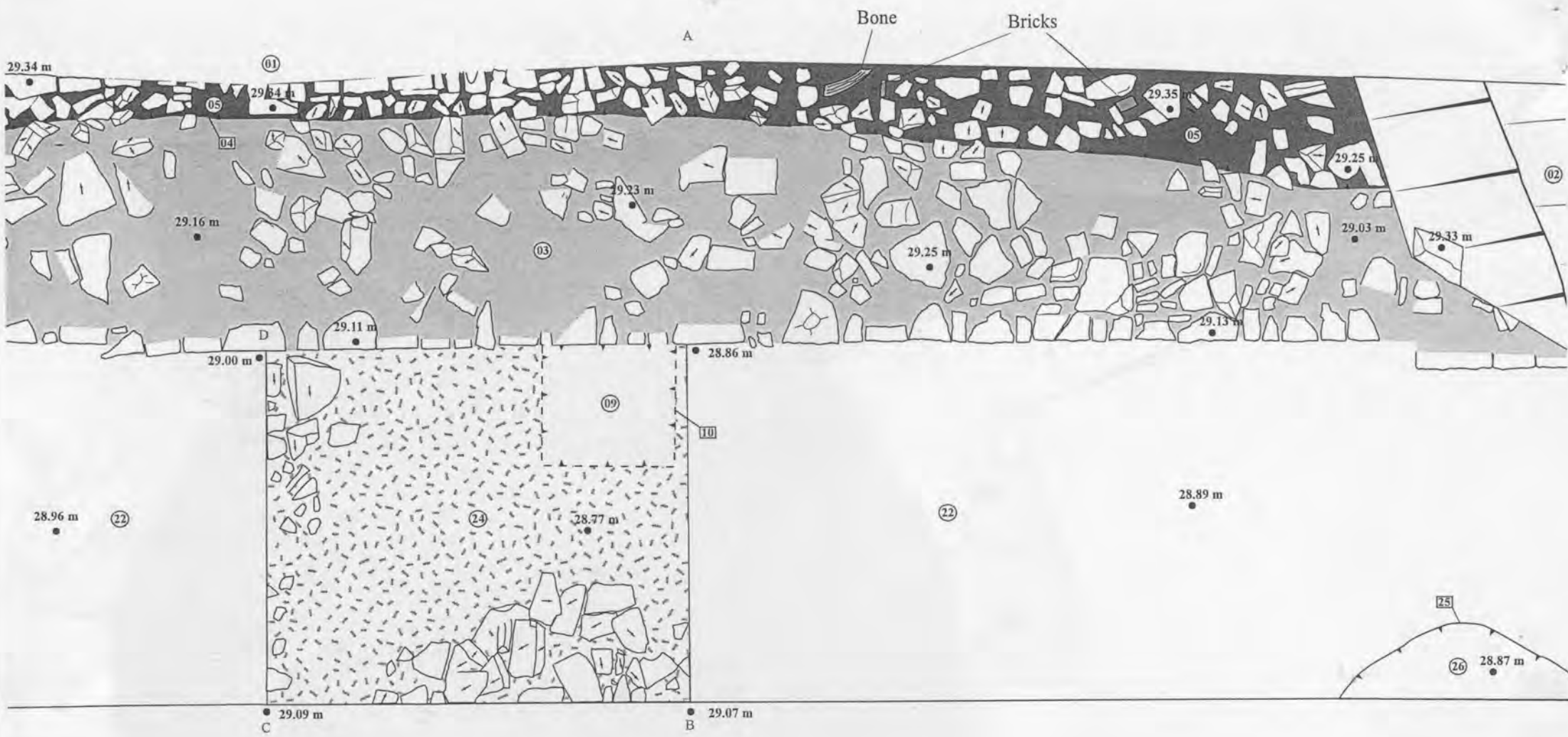
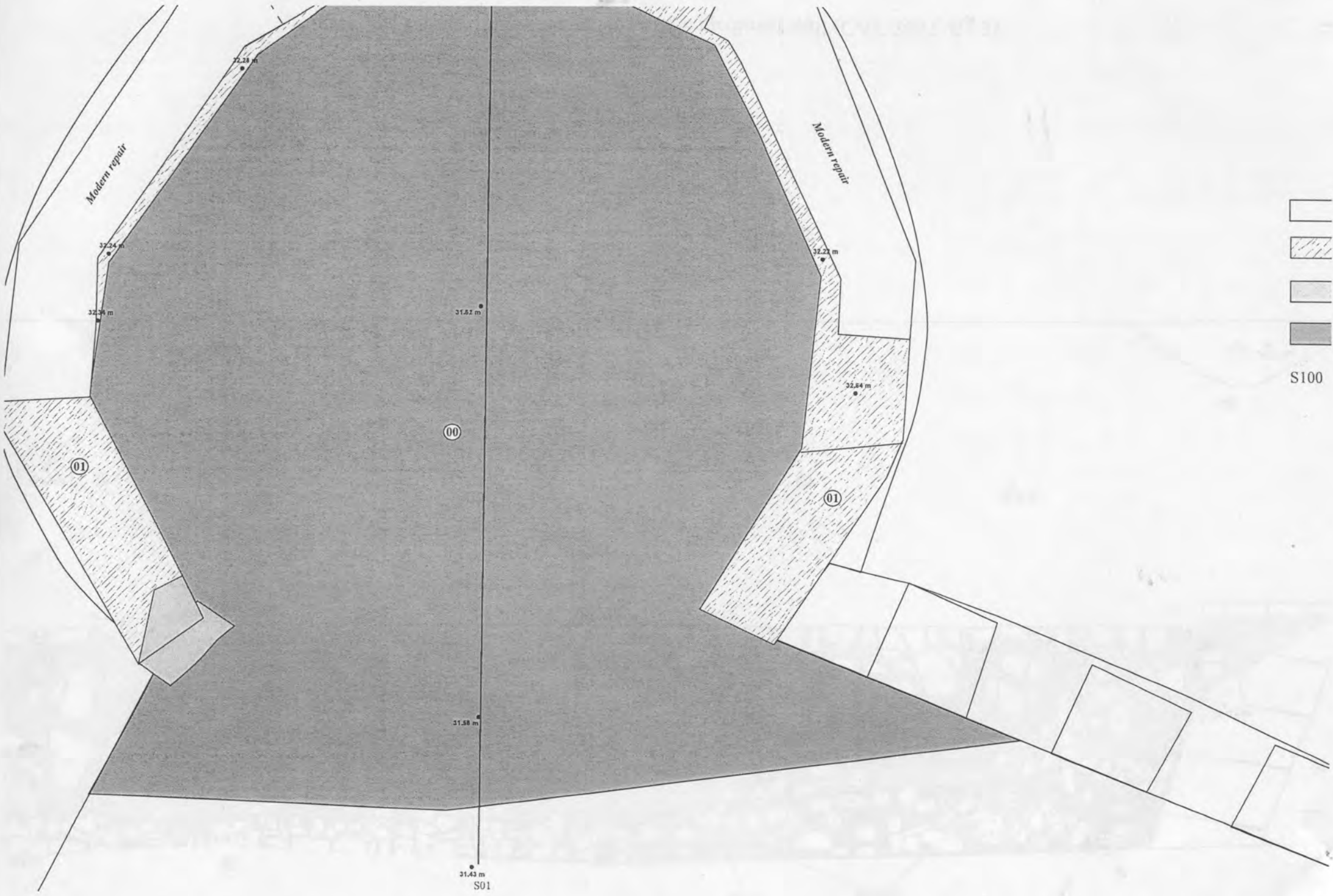
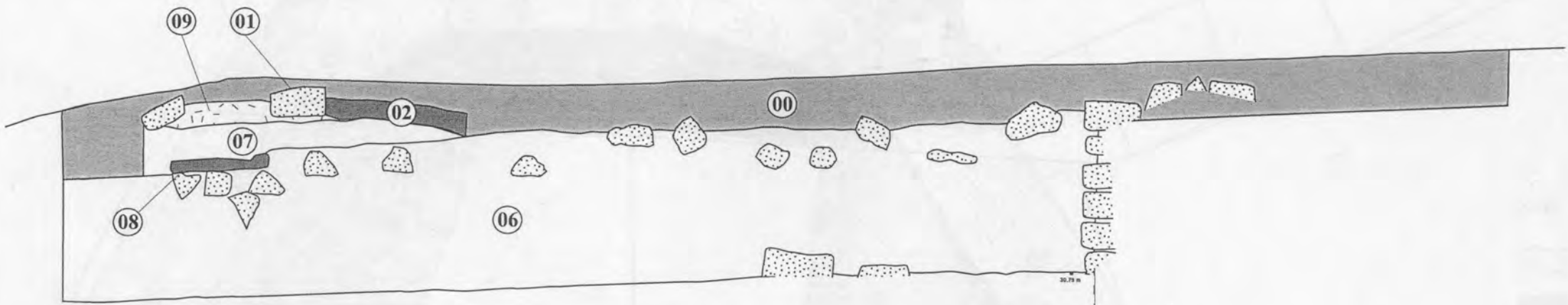


Figure 5: T1, plan of the foundations of the medieval wall (CAC 2007, fig.3)



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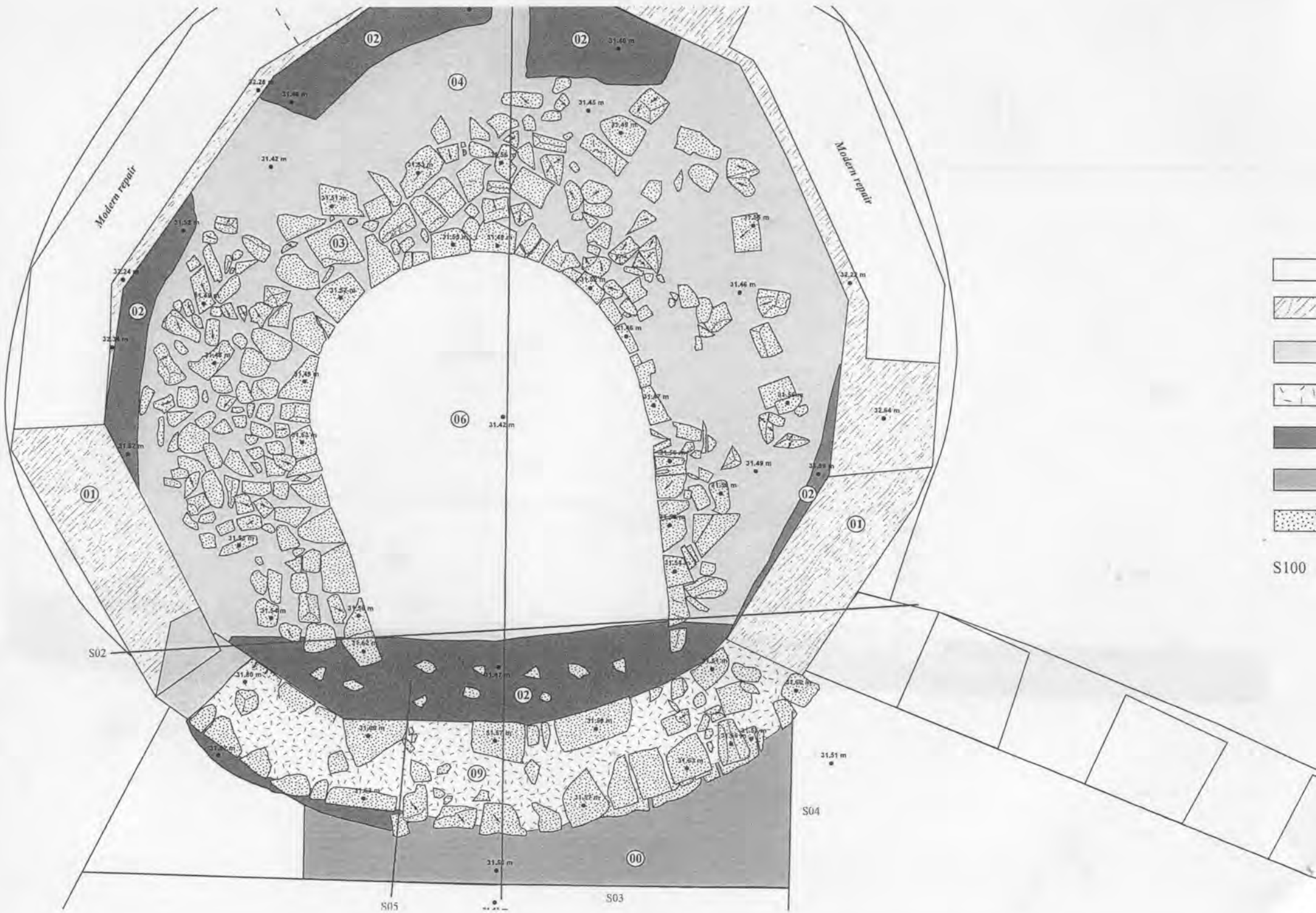
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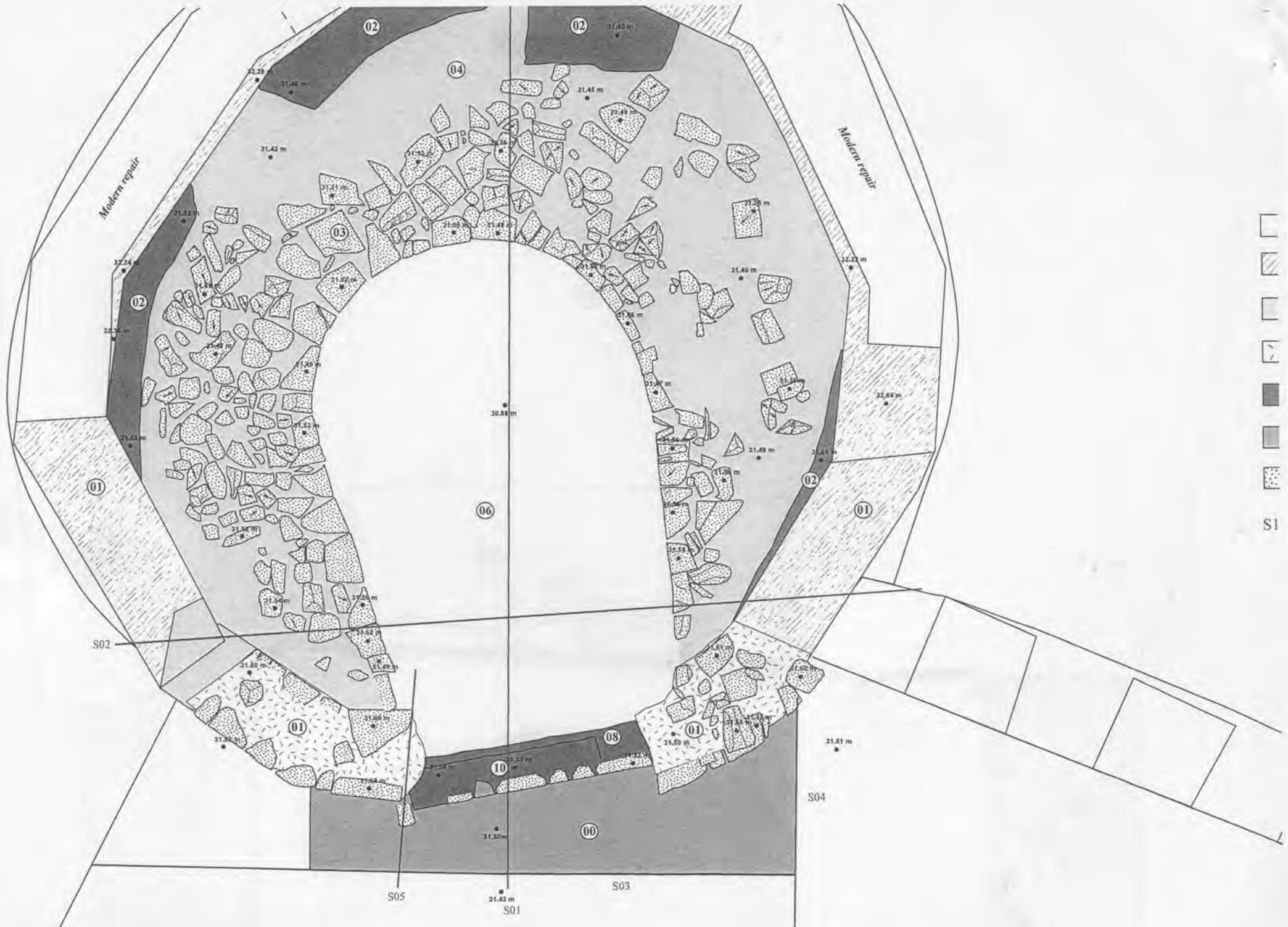
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S1

Modern repair

Modern repair

S02

S04

S05

S01

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01

06

01

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10

00

08

01

32.28 m

31.46 m

31.42 m

31.52 m

32.24 m

32.30 m

31.51 m

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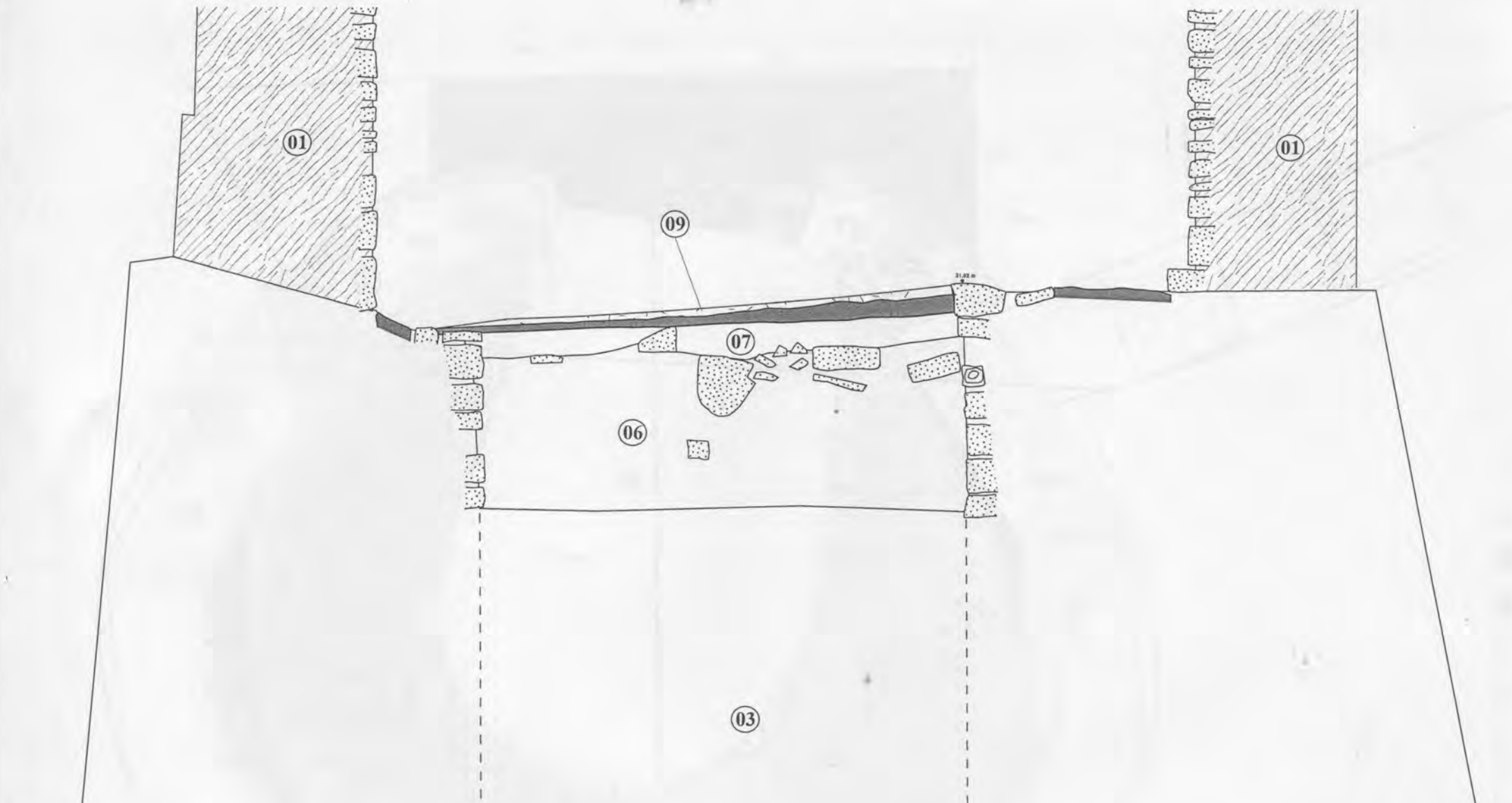
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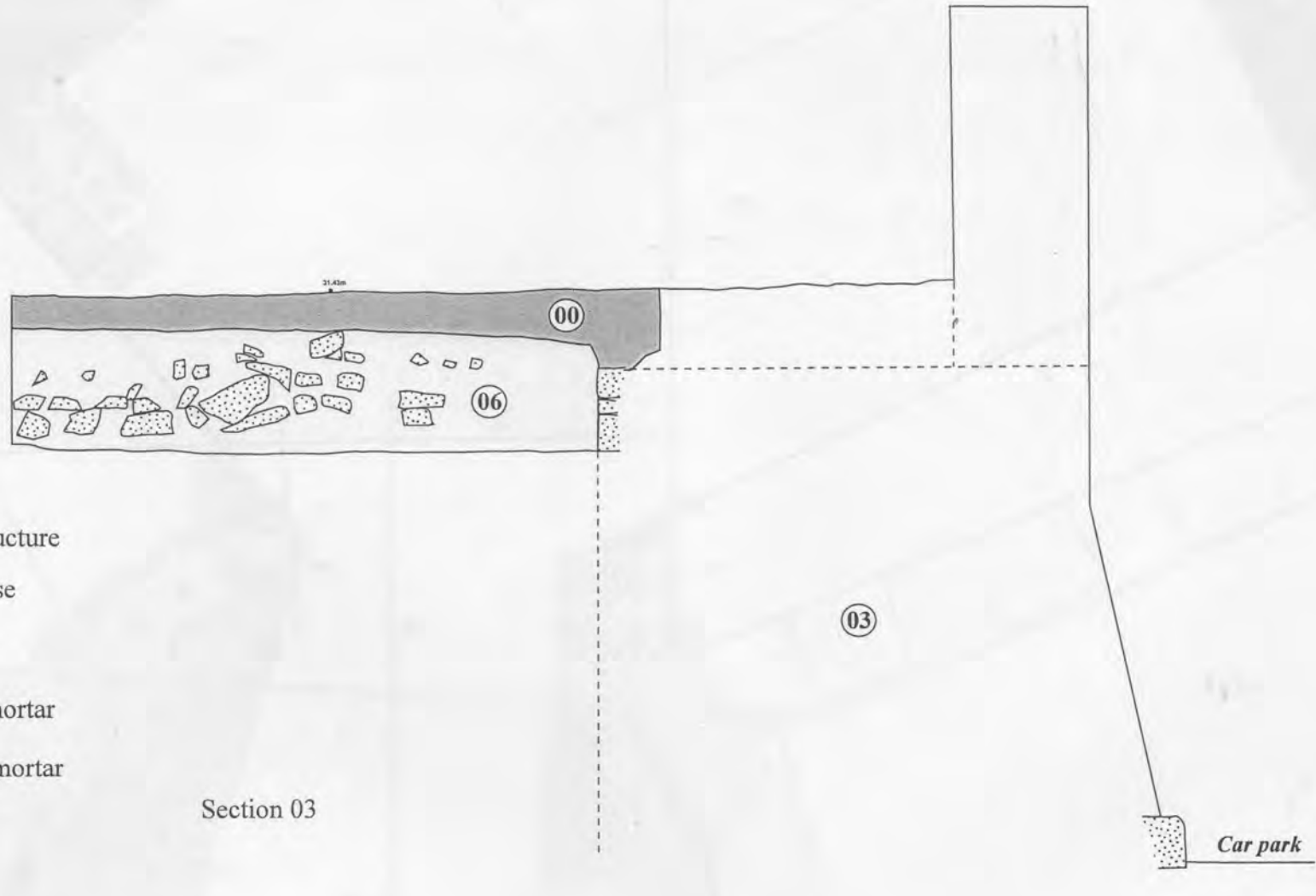
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



31.82 m



ket

Section 02



-  Medieval structure
-  Summer house
-  2010 repairs
-  White lime mortar
-  Brown lime mortar
-  Topsoil
-  Stone

Section 03

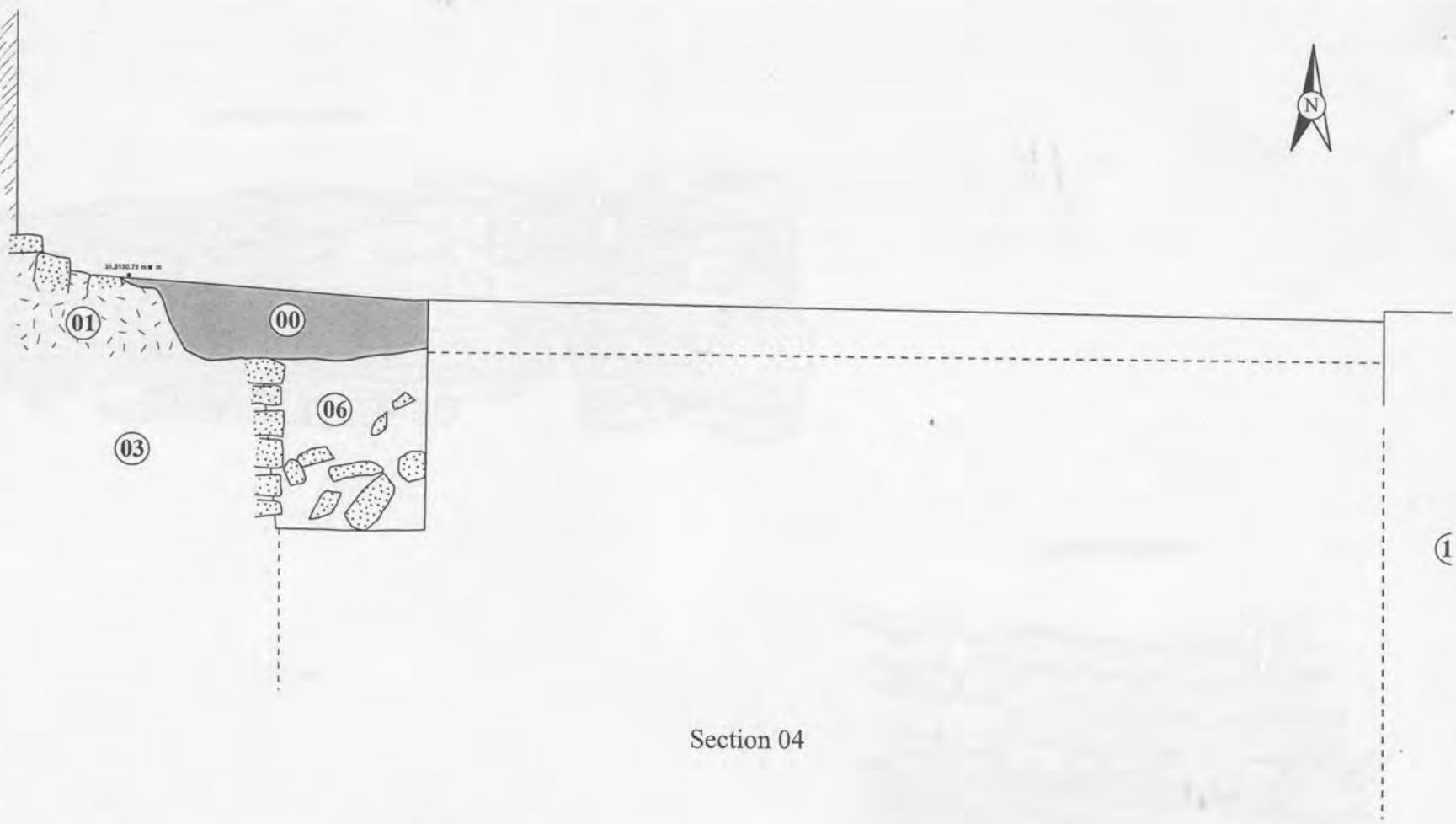
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Figure 12: North-south section across the raised walkway

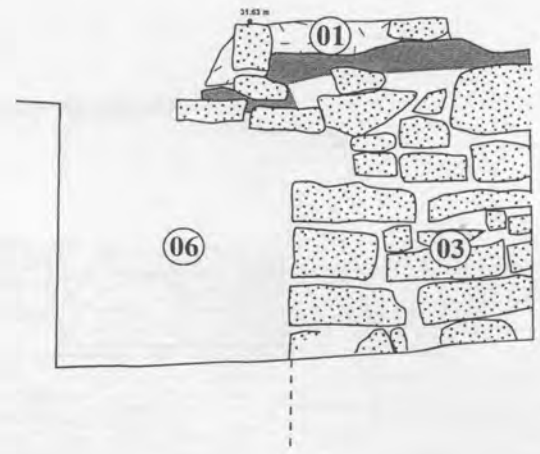
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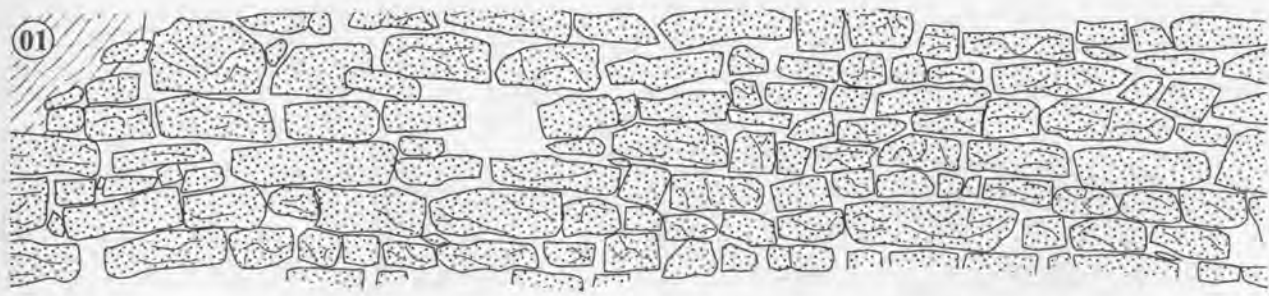


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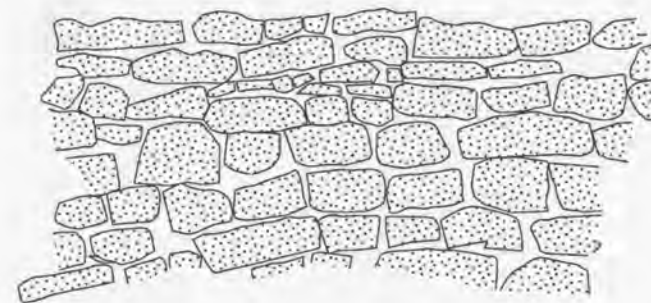


Section 04

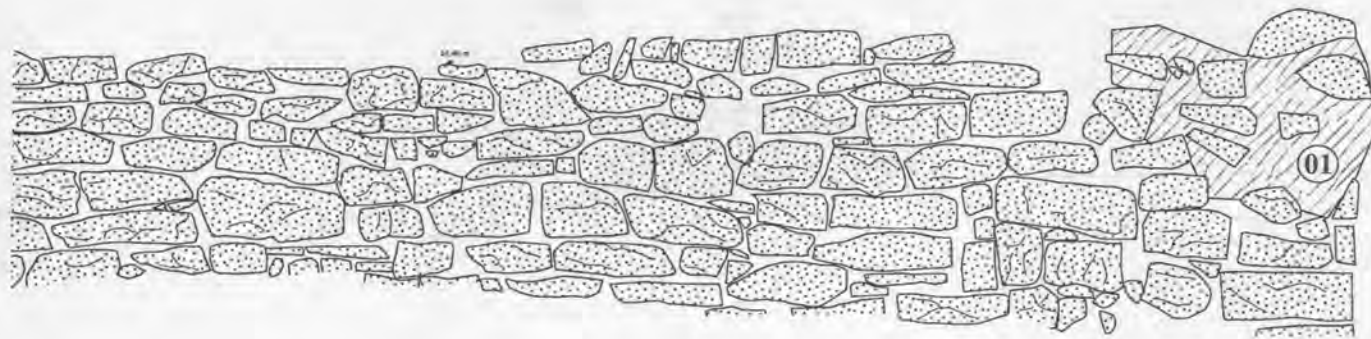




South elevation



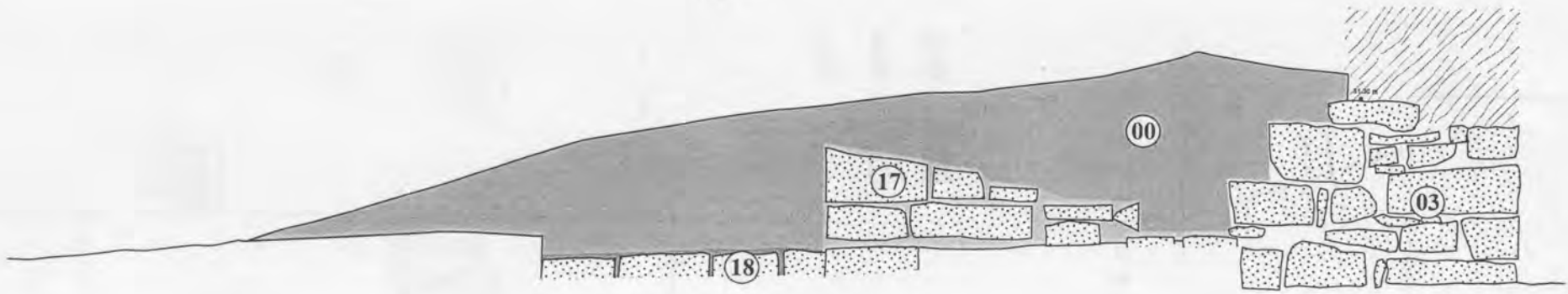
West elevation



North elevation

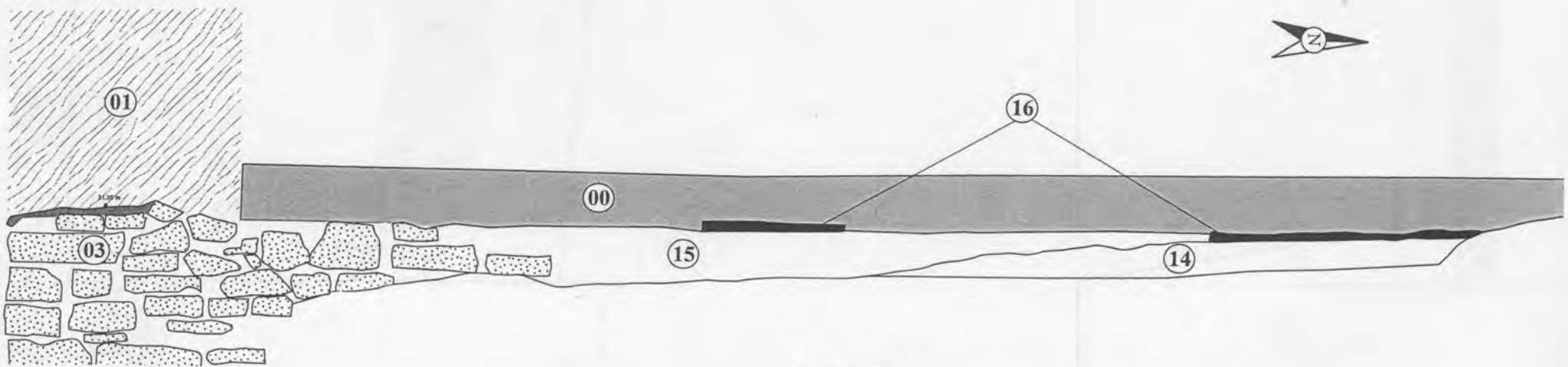
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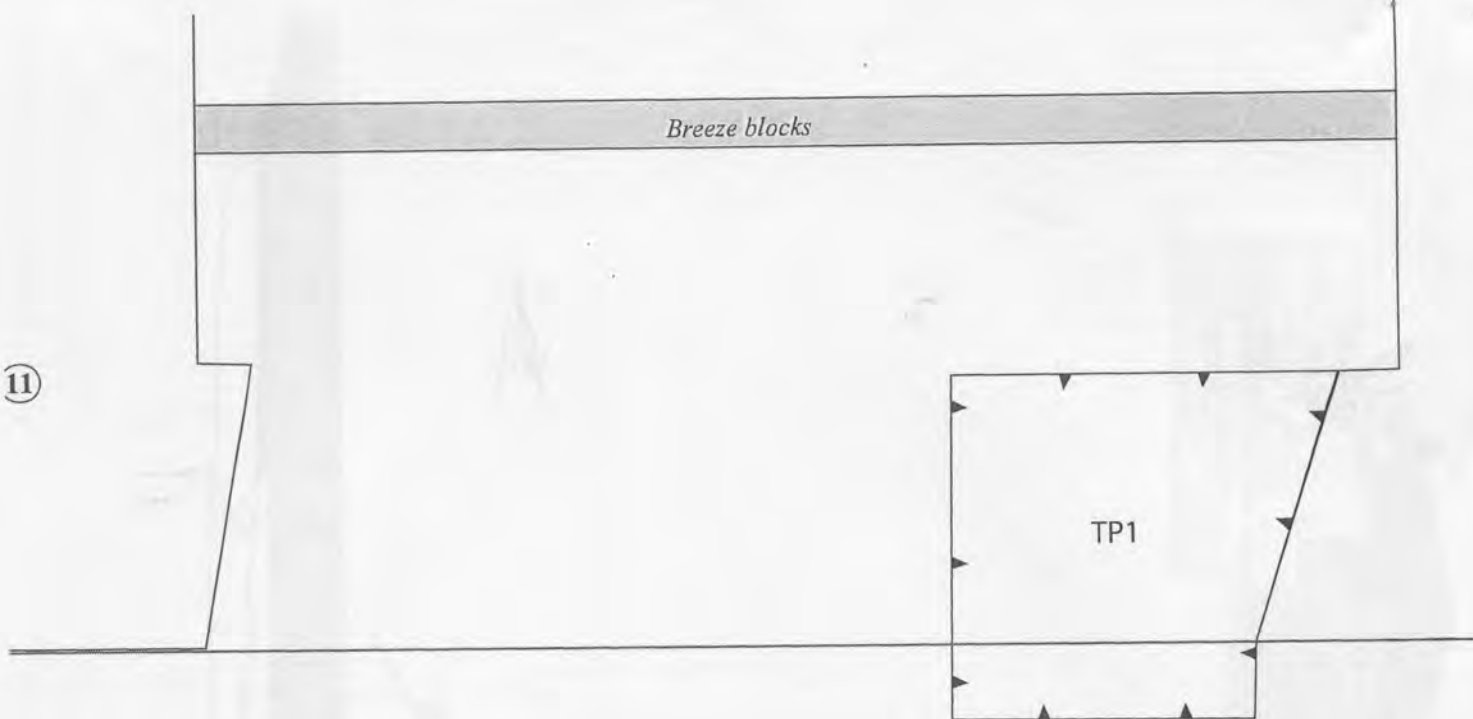
Section 07



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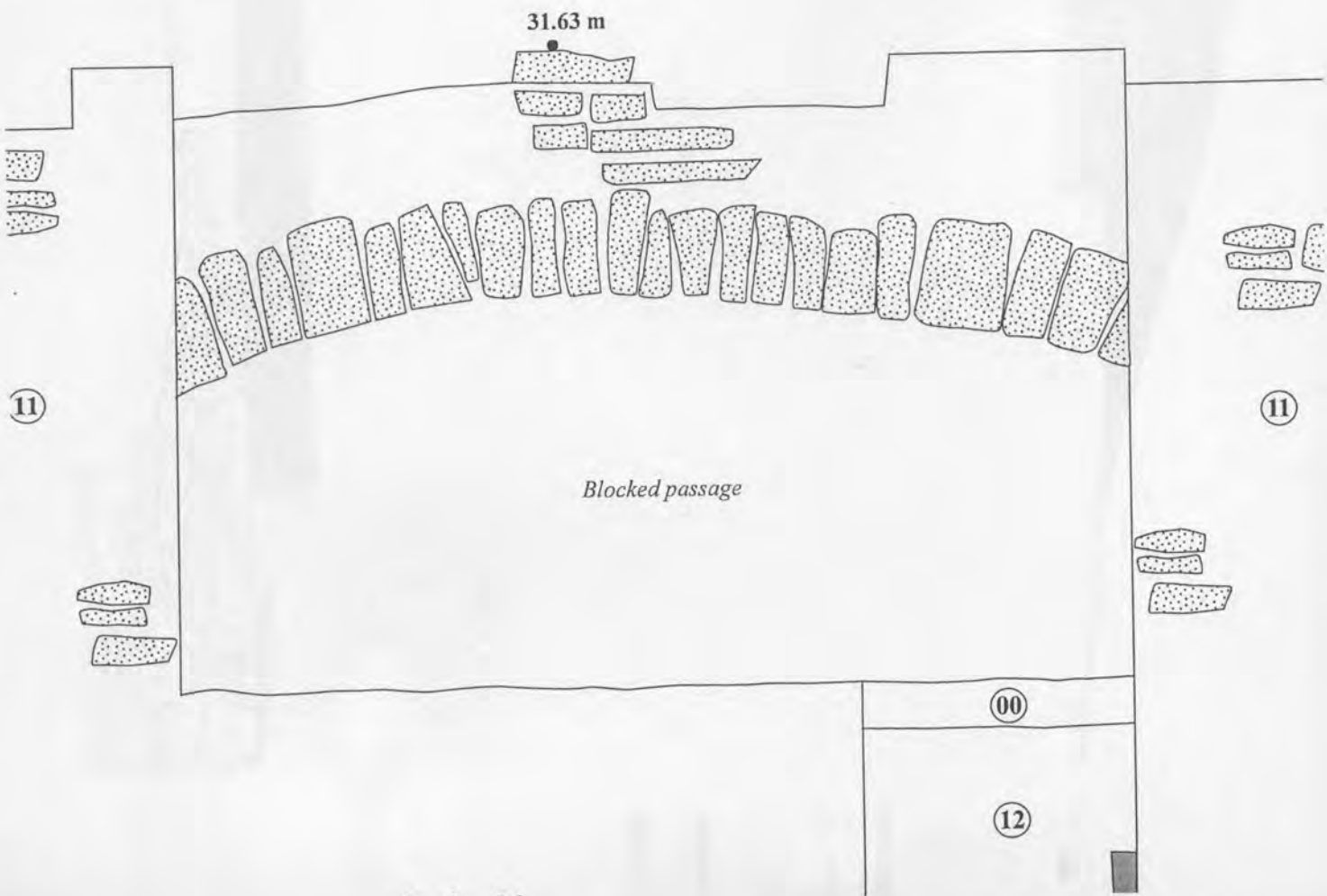


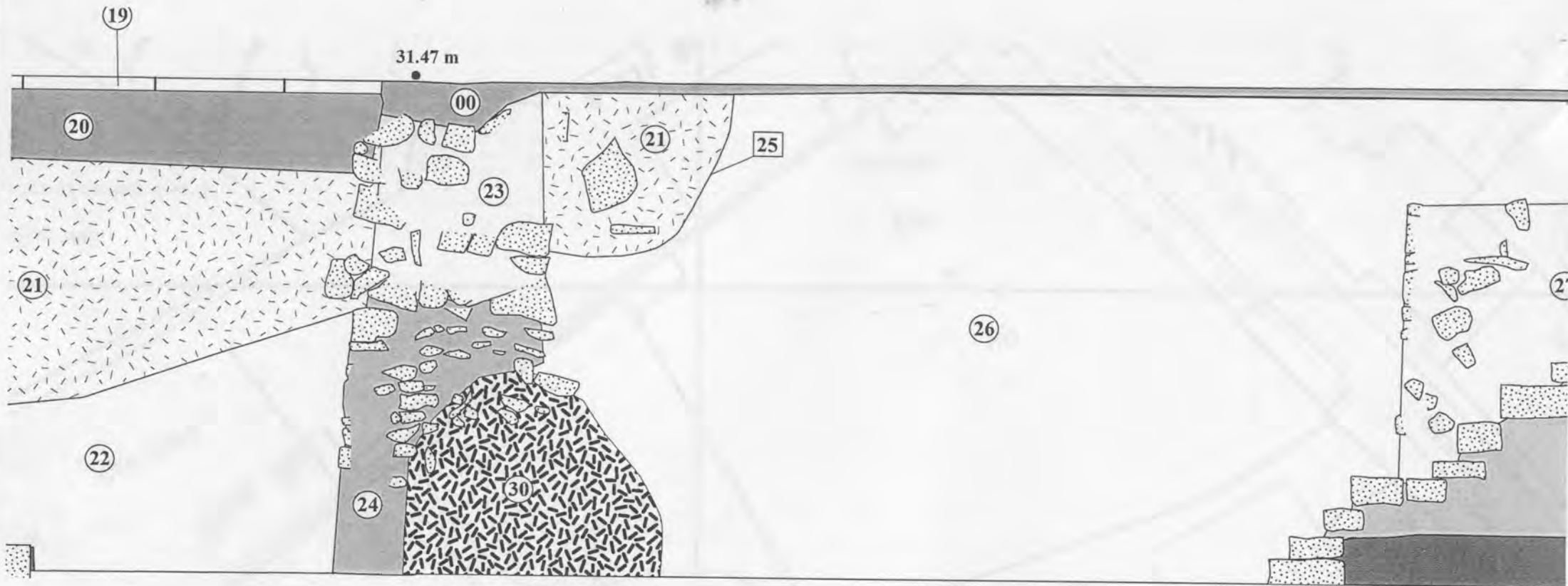
Section 08

11

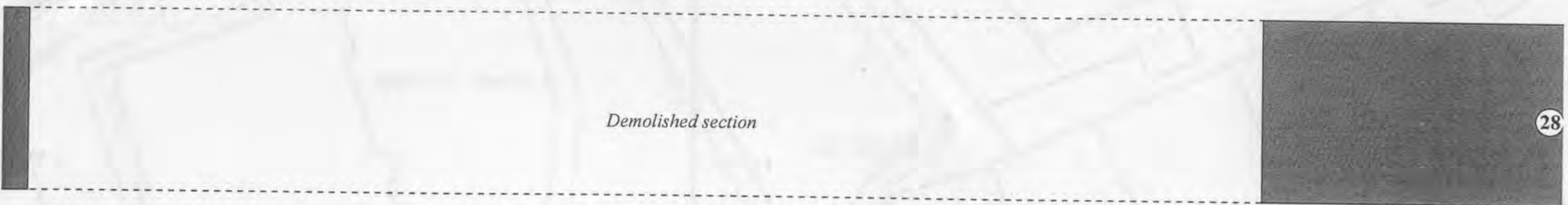


-  Brick
-  Stone
- S100 Section

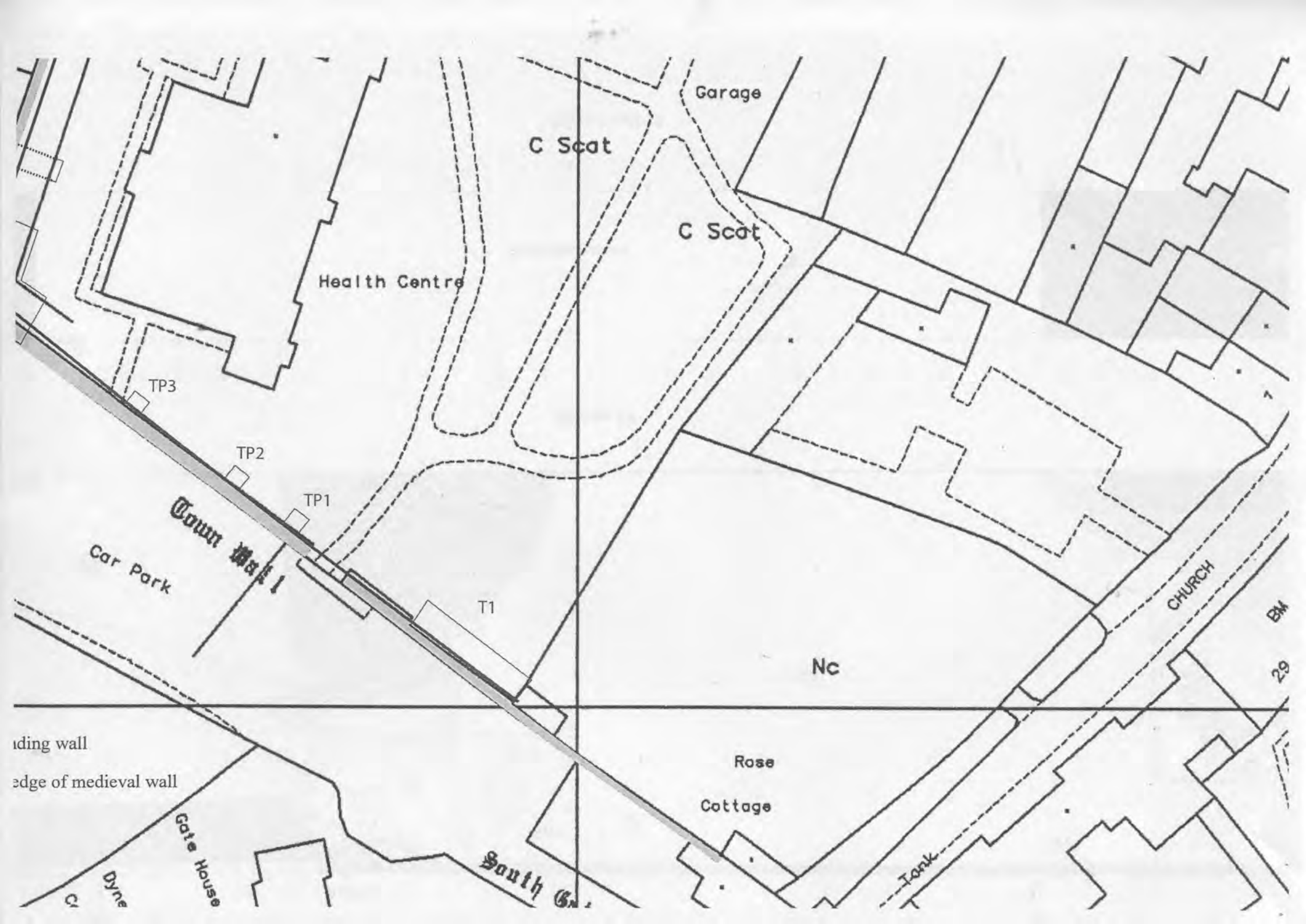




Section 09



Plan of wall 28



Garage

C Scot

C Scot

Health Centre

TP3

TP2

TP1

Car Park

Down Wall

T1

NC

CHURCH

BM

29

existing wall

edge of medieval wall

Rose

Cottage

Gate House

South Wall

Tank

Dyne



Plate 1: T1, the medieval foundations from the east (CAC 2007, pl.4)

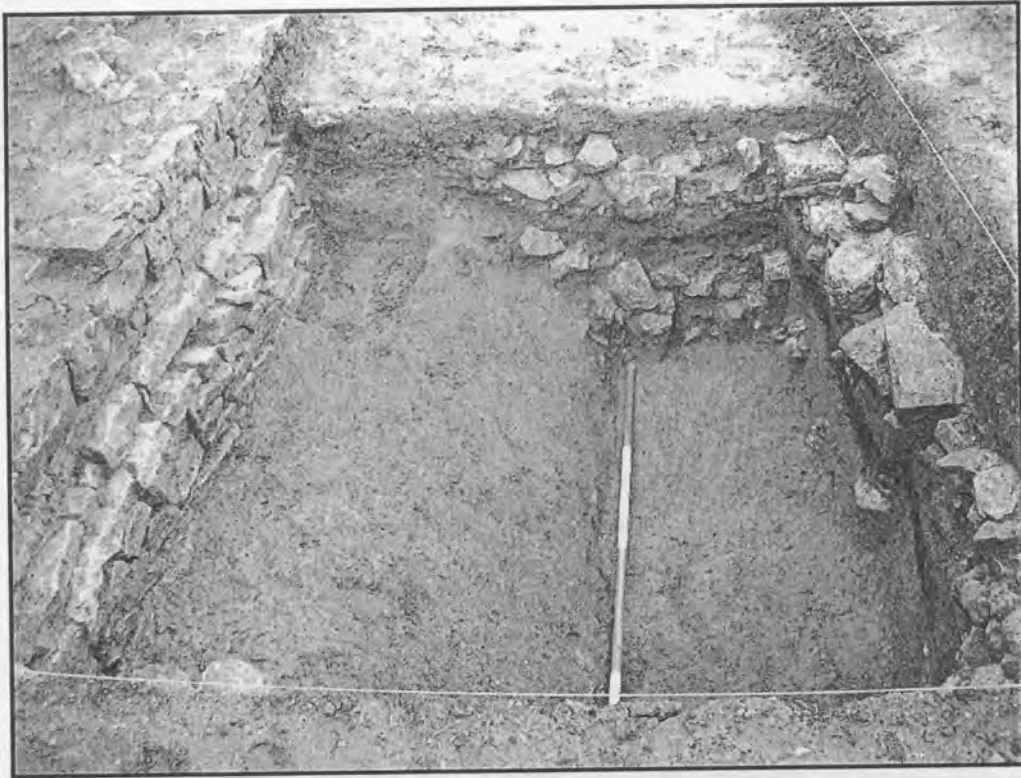


Plate 2: T1, the clay bank and the medieval foundations from the east (CAC 2007, pl.9)

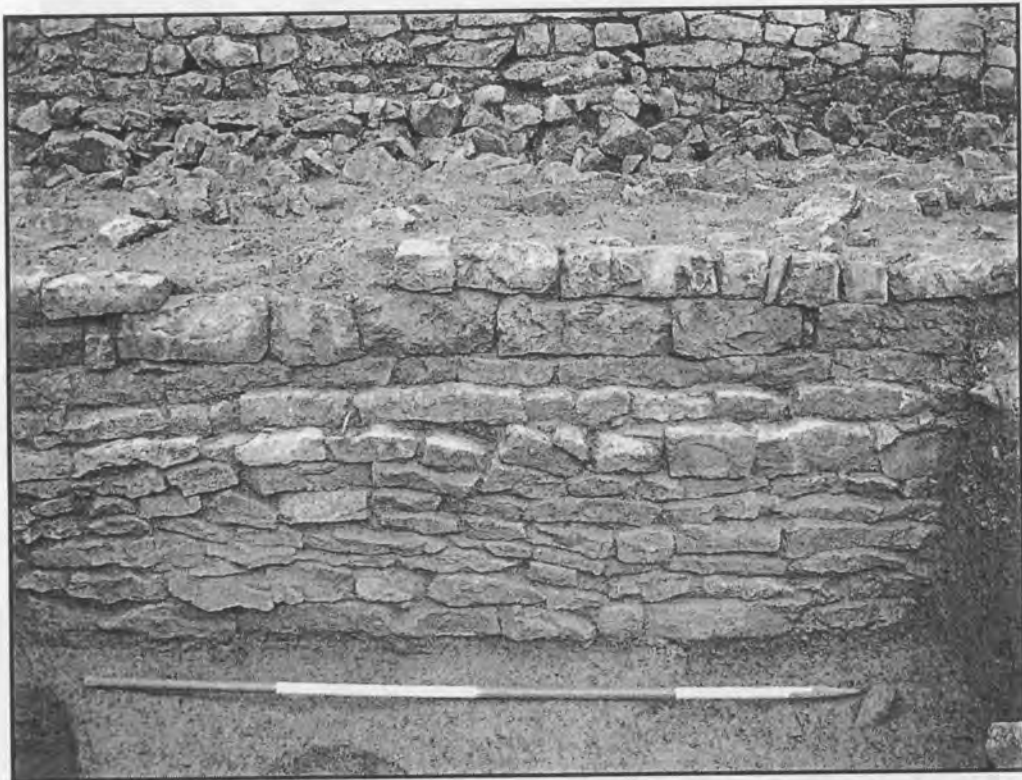


Plate 3: T1, the foundations of the medieval wall from the north (CAC 2007, pl.10)

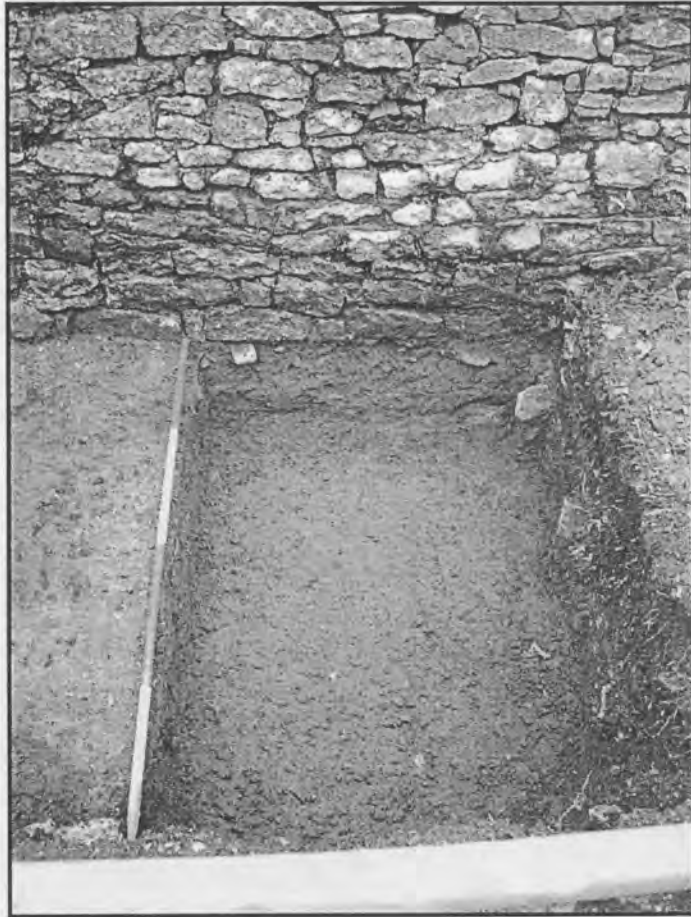


Plate 4: TP1, the base of the upstanding wall from the north
(CAC 2007, pl.15)



Plate 5: TP2, the medieval wall below
the 18th century wall from the north (CAC 2007, pl.16)



Plate 6: TP3, the medieval wall foundations below the upstanding wall from the north (CAC 2007, pl.18)

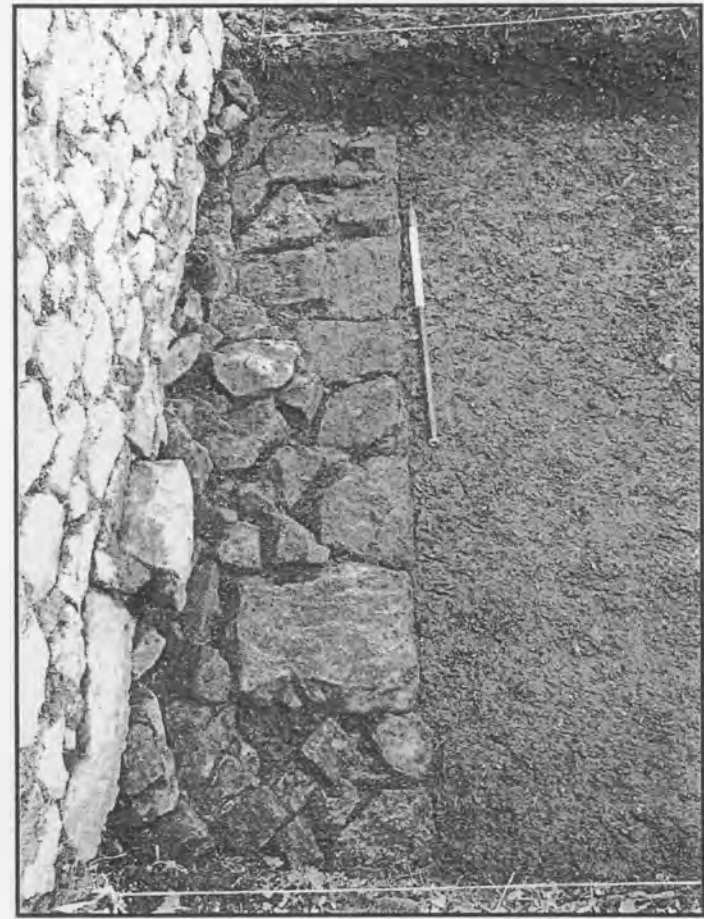


Plate 7: TP3, the medieval wall foundations below the upstanding wall from the east (CAC 2007, pl.19)



Plate 8: The south west tower and the summer-house from the south-west



Plate 9: Remains of the gravel render on the external summer-house wall from the east



Plate 10: Repaired section in the eastern summer-house wall from the east

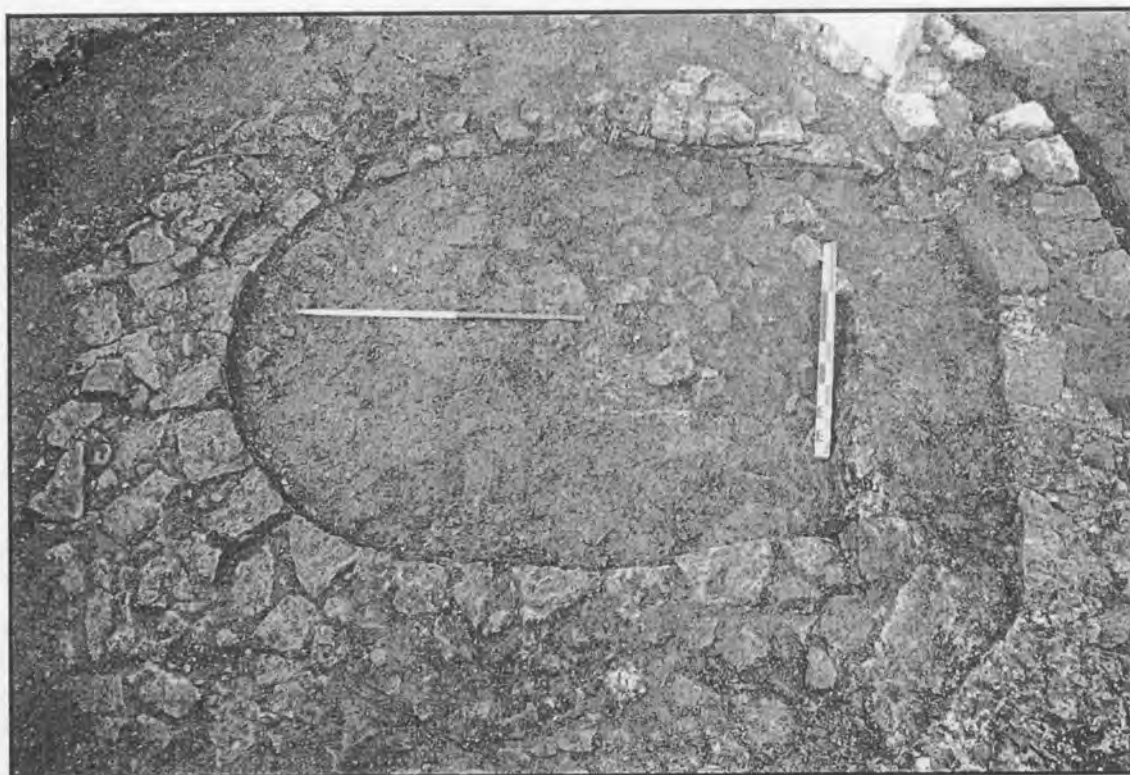


Plate 11: The south-west tower after removal of the topsoil from the south



Plate12: The fill 06 in the south-west tower from the west



Plate 13: The summer-house wall 01 above the fill 06 from the west

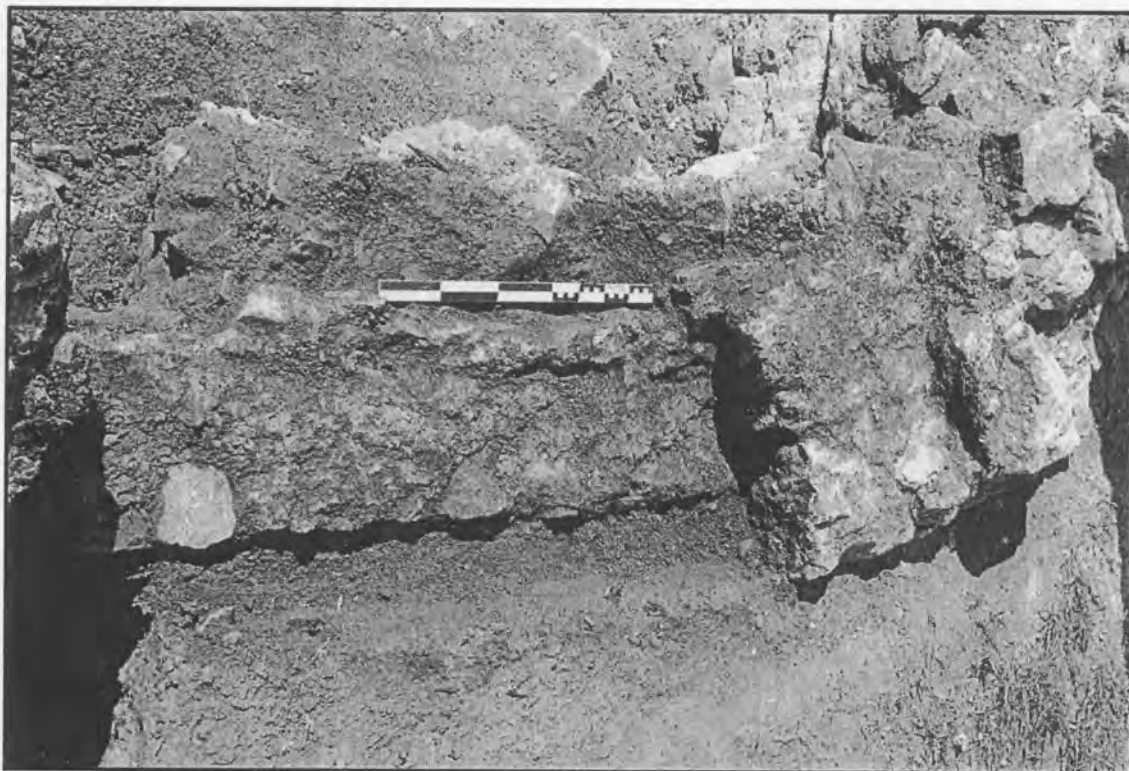


Plate 14: The foundation 10 below the eastern summer-house wall from the east

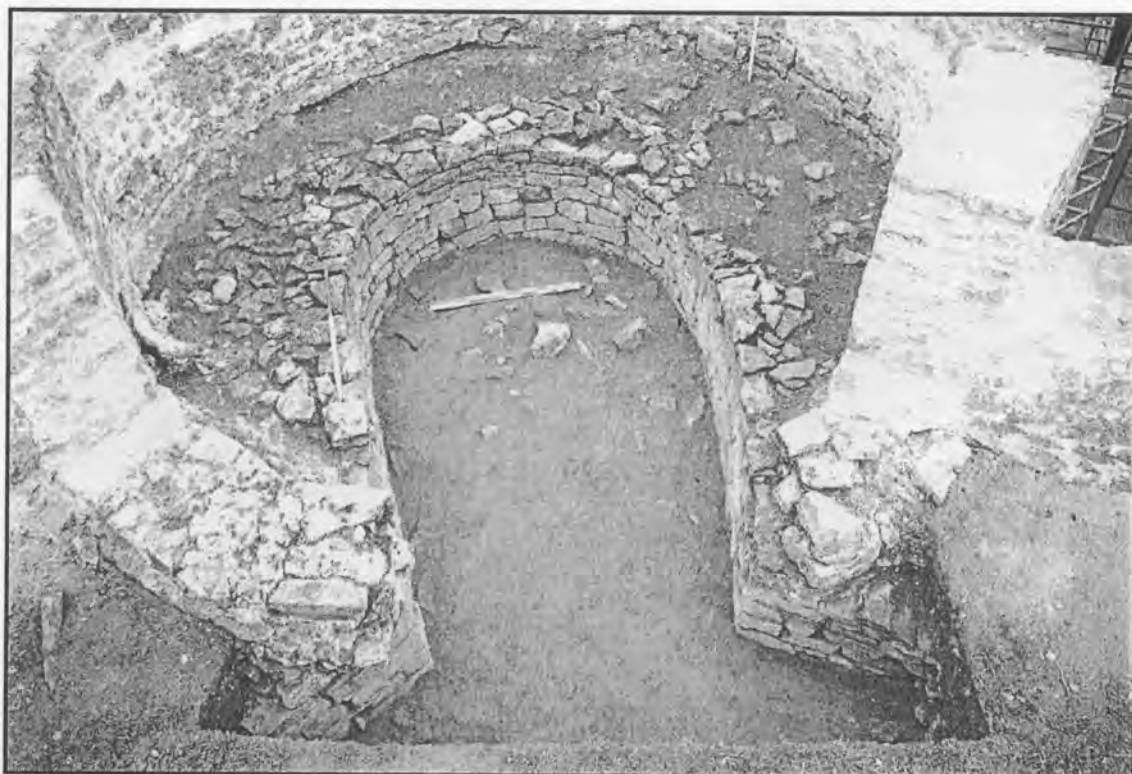


Plate 15: The junction of the south-west tower and the Town wall from the east



Plate 16: South-east corner of the tower from the north



Plate 17: North-east corner of the tower from the south

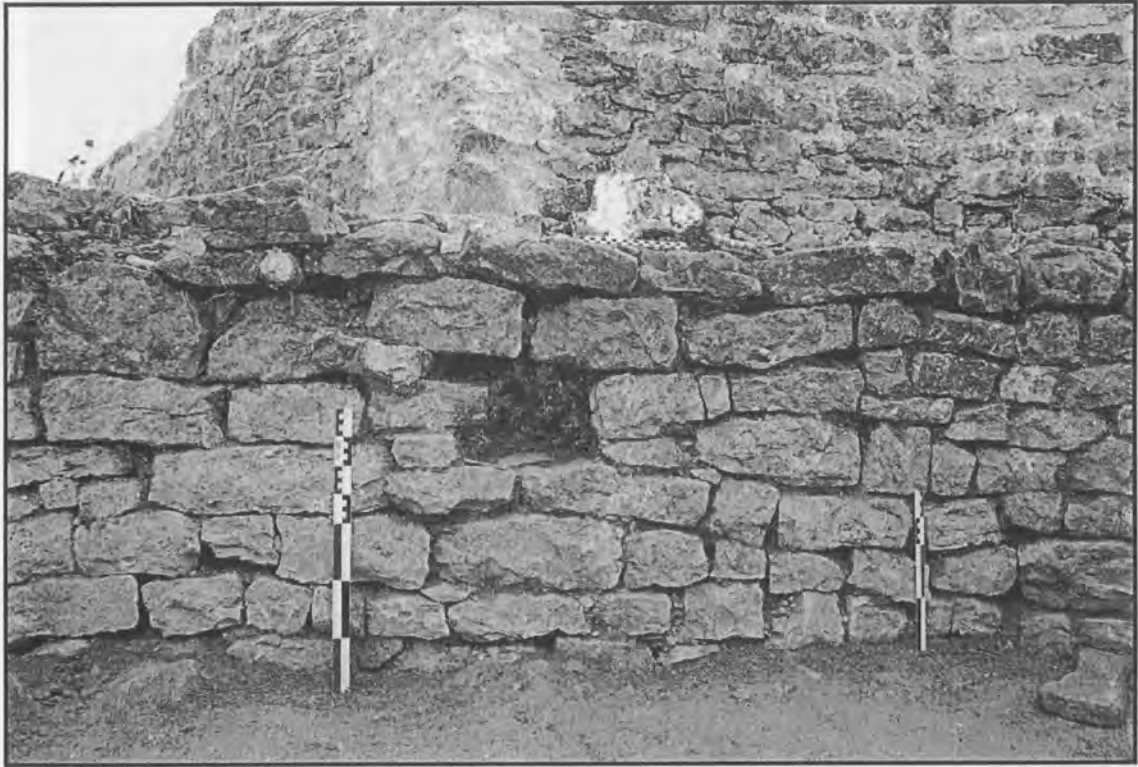


Plate 18: the southern revetment wall in the tower from the north



Plate 19: the northern revetment wall in the tower from the south



Plate 20: The south and north-west sections of the medieval wall from the east

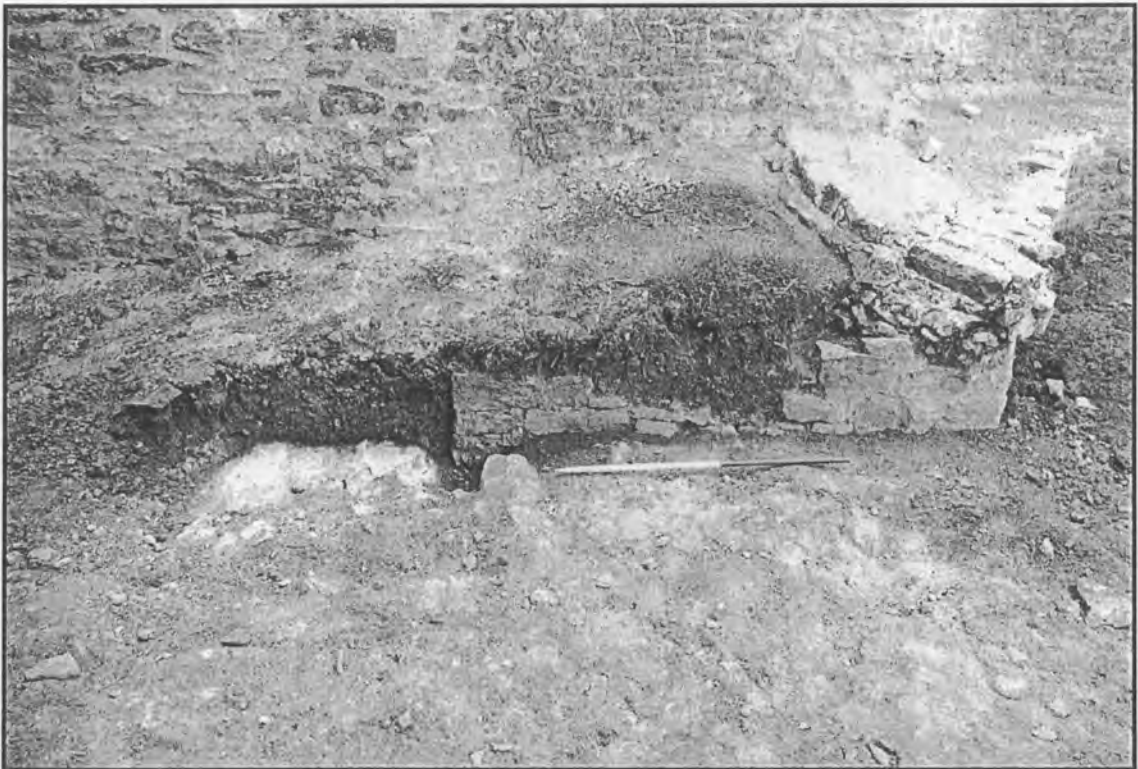


Plate 21: The south section of the medieval wall from the north

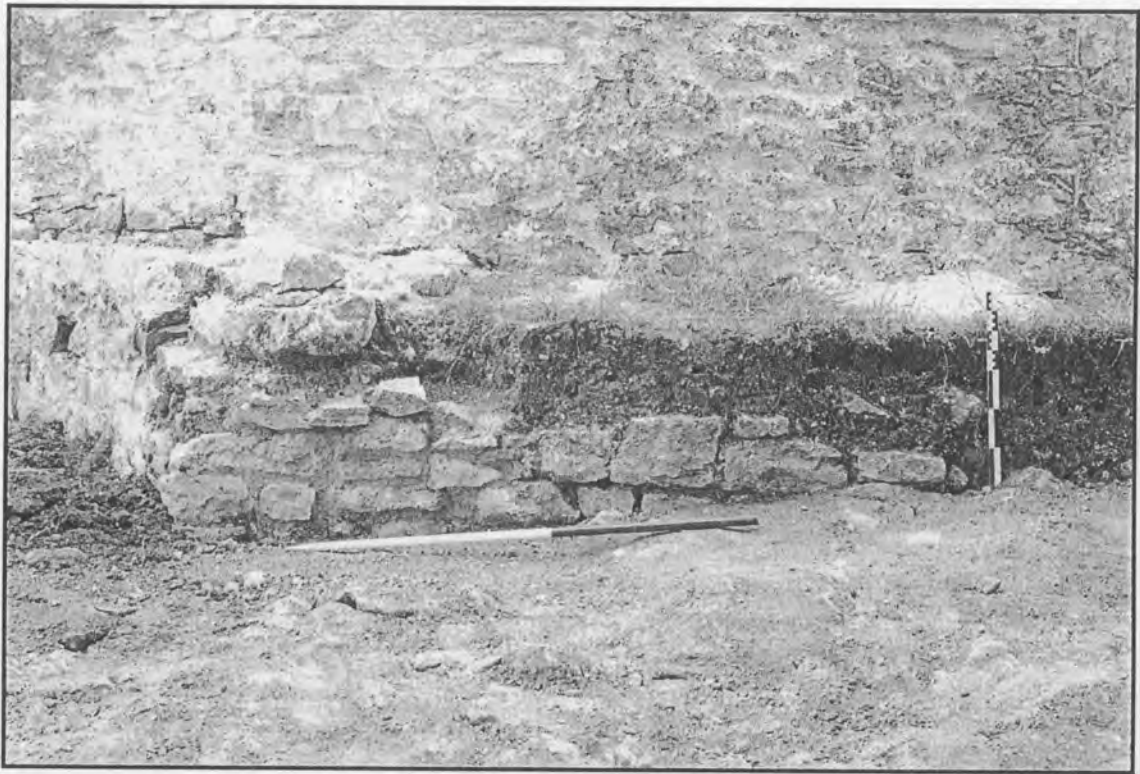


Plate 22: The north-west section of the medieval wall from the east



Plate 23: The medieval wall in the northern passage below the raised walkway



Plate 24: The passage from the east



Plate 25: The test pit from the south



Plate 26: The retaining wall of the raised walkway from the north



Plate 27: The medieval wall behind the boundary wall 28 from the north-east