

HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS



HAN 41 March 1983

WOOLHOPE CLUB
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION

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**HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS
WOOLHOPE CLUB
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No. 41 March 1983

EDITORIAL

The last programme of field days ran from November 1982 until February this year and fortunately none were cancelled because of adverse weather conditions. The visit to the Roman Baths site in February was on a bitterly cold day and it was no wonder the Romans took such trouble to heat their ablutionary amenities. We are very grateful to Mr & Mrs. Moore, the landowners, for permission to view the site, and also to Frank Atwell who managed the site excavation and came along to point out the various features. His report incorporated in this News with his permission and the good offices of Norman Reeves, a member of the Club who worked on the site, will be of considerable interest to all. The original drawing of the site foundations had to be reduced, and the scale shown is reduced accordingly.

Rosamund Skelton is getting her report on the Llandaff Charter boundaries together and we look forward to incorporating this in a future edition.

Ron Shoesmith has produced an index of main items in all the past copies of the News and it is expected to be made available to Members of the Group.

The Annual General Meeting at the Golden Eagle Restaurant, Hereford was attended by a representative group and the officers and committee were elected en block. The balance sheet was healthy, assets being £179.00. I must express my thanks to the contributors, also Richard Kay the Assistant Editor, and the typists without whose invaluable help the News could not be produced.

C E Attfield

PROGRAMME MARCH-SEPTEMBER 1983

Sunday 20 th March	Examination of ring of oak trees on White Hill and Weston Beggard area. Leader R Kay.	Meet at Shucknall Spout, 11.00 am
Sunday 24 th April	Inspection of round barrows, Roman Fort, dams and mills. Joint Leaders R Kay and Mary Thomas.	Meet at Rhydspence Inn, 11.00 am
Sunday 22 nd May	Examination of tramway and Bowleston Court Mound. Leader Mary Thomas.	Meet at Station Approach, Pontrilas, 11.00 am
Sunday 26 th June	Visit to Whitecastle, examination of moated site near Llantilio village, Motte and Bailey at Penrhos.	Meeting at Whitecastle, 11.00 am
July/August	No meetings.	
Saturday 3 rd September	Barbecue at home of Mary Thomas, Hillside, Abbeydore, 7.00 pm. Bring a bottle and something to barbecue.	

Note:

1. In case of bad weather contact the leader or a Committee member. List of Committee and telephone numbers is included in the News.
2. Guests are welcome.
3. Members are advised to wear suitable clothing and footwear and to bring food and hot drinks.
4. Due to unforeseen circumstances the programme may have to be changed at short notice.

**INTERIM REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS IN THE NORTH-WESTERN CORNER OF THE WALLED TOWN DURING 1981-82 (THE TESCO DEVELOPMENT)
With kind acknowledgements to Mr R Shoesmith, Director of Excavations, and the City of Hereford Archaeology Committee**

Introduction

For almost ten years, the north-western corner of the walled city of Hereford has been used as a temporary car park with Bewell House, a Grade 2* listed building, standing in a semi-derelict condition in the middle. Various proposals have been made in the past to develop this area but it was only in June 1981 that the Tesco Group of Companies submitted a plan which was acceptable.

The development will include both underground and surface car parking, the erection of a retail store with ancillary facilities, cafe/offices, bus station, public toilets and provision of landscaped areas. Bewell House will be preserved and restored within the development scheme and the City Wall will be restored and extended to give a visual sense of enclosure to the whole site as seen from the ring road.

The Tesco Group of Companies agreed to fund archaeological research on the site as part of a Section 52 agreement with the City Council. The funds available were sufficient to examine several areas of the site and will also cover post-excavation costs. The time available to carry out the archaeological research was limited to the period allocated for site clearance works and within this programme individual sites had to be completed to various deadlines. An extension of time was eventually granted on the final area due to persistent bad weather. The excavations took place during the period from November 1981 to February 1982, and the main areas were enclosed in a large scaffolding and plastic sheet cover.

Only a limited time was available between the final agreement with Tesco's and the start of the project so the archaeological team had to be recruited from the local employment exchange and trained as work proceeded on the site. The day-by-day organisation of the site and the recording was supervised by Martin Boulton, and Helen Ashworth was responsible for processing the finds.

An area, now underneath the ring road to the west of the Tesco development site, was excavated in 1968. This produced evidence of occupation from the early 11th century onwards and indicated the presence of a gravel defensive bank, pre-dating the City Wall and probably constructed in the late 12th century. In the same year the foundations of a bastion tower, now also lost under the ring road, were also examined. In 1971, the gravel rampart was examined in greater detail in the grounds of the Liberal Club, and evidence was again found for pre-defensive activity. Three years later, in 1974/5, an area was examined to the north of Bewell House. Pre-defensive ditches and gullies, probably of two periods, are considered to represent boundaries of long, narrow plots fronting on to the line of Edgar Street during the 11th and 12th centuries. The date of the gravel defensive bank was confirmed as late 12th century and traces of a possible timber tower, associated with the defences, were exposed. During the 13th century the area was occupied by a grain drying

oven and a timber building, and property boundaries of a later date were found to be associated with the line of Bewell Street (Shoesmith, 1982 forthcoming). In 1976, a trial excavation to the south of Bewell House and close to Bewell Street (Plan 1) produced some evidence for occupation from the late 11th century but other trial trenches in the middle of the development site were completely disturbed by 19th century cultivation.

Before the 1981 excavations commenced, the previous excavation records were studied in detail, and documentary research was undertaken to establish the various uses to which the development area had been put during the last 250 years. This research indicated areas which had previously been cellared and provided much information about the Hereford Brewery which had occupied a major part of the area since the early 19th century.

Three areas were eventually selected for excavation, one associated with the rampart and the other two along the frontage of Bewell Street. The archaeological levels in all three sites were due to be totally destroyed during the proposed development and the sites along Bewell Street were the only areas left along this line where 19th century cellars had not already destroyed all the archaeological evidence. It is hoped that some parts of the tail of the defensive rampart will be preserved along the northern perimeter of the site on completion of the development, but within the main part of the site all archaeological levels have now been removed in the excavation of the underground car park.

One display which has already been mounted in the City Museum has attracted some considerable local interest. This included finds from the Brewery use of the site, including many bottles and stone jars of 19th and early 20th century date.

The interim reports which follow are based on a provisional flow diagram which has been compiled from the excavation records and from a preliminary examination of the pottery by Alan Vince of the Museum of London. Details may be changed after the full examination and analysis of the 400 individual layers and features, the 18,000 pieces of bone, the 8,000 fragments of pottery and the 429 special finds, including coins, buckles, thimbles, pins, combs, etc, has been undertaken.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our most grateful thanks to the Tesco Group of Companies, and especially to the Executive Director, Kerrin Malone, who provided much help and assistance. The site architects were the Wigley Fox Partnership of Cardiff, and their co-operation, especially including the help and assistance given by Keith Williams, went a long way to ensuring the success of the archaeological work. The main contractor on site, Espley Tyas Ltd, through their agent Tom Newman, loaned tools and equipment and provided water, electricity and telephone in our temporary offices in Bewell House. Some twenty people took part in the archaeological work, often in atrocious conditions, and to them we are especially grateful.

Area 1 (He81C: SO 50774014) The gravel embankment (Fig 1)

The new access road to the development from the Edgar Street roundabout cut through the line of the Medieval city wall and the earlier gravel rampart. The access had to be constructed before the earth-moving operations could start and two weeks were allocated for archaeological examination. A trench was dug by machine through the defensive line and an area to the west, about 3m by 5m, was excavated by hand. The lowest archaeological level consisted of a featureless layer of soil which was sealed by the tail of the gravel rampart. It contained only one pottery sherd (cooking pot - fabric A3: late 12th or early 13th century). Of the defences, only the tail of the gravel rampart survived in the area examined.

To the north, the main part of the rampart and the city wall had both been destroyed by later service trenches. At the rear of the rampart there were two rubbish pits of 13th century date. This area was rather disappointing and did not provide any further dating

evidence for the pre-defensive occupation as had been observed previously in areas to both east and west.

Area 2 (He81D SO 50774006) Bewell Street frontage (Figs 1 and 2)

A machine was used to establish the cellared areas known to be present along this part of Bewell Street. The cellars were partly emptied and the brick sides removed to examine the surviving sections of the earlier deposits. An area some 15m by 12m centred on the old brewery access was finally chosen for excavation. The archaeological levels were damaged by several 19th and 20th century drains but six main phases of occupation were identified although the earlier phases 1-3 were very fragmentary.

Phase 1: 10th and/or 11th century

Several small postholes were found cut into the subsoil in the south-western corner of the area excavated. They were sealed by a layer of re-deposited subsoil which had a blackened surface. Three trenches (1696, 1697 and 1698), running roughly east-west, were filled with a similar material. The trenches could have been dug to hold building timbers but there was no indication of post positions. The trenches had not been open long for there was no sign of silting. A fourth trench (1653) had a similar fill mixed with some iron slag, but its stratigraphic relationship with the others was uncertain and it contained no dateable find. Trench 1629 may also be associated with this phase.

Phase 2: 12th century

A deep post trench (1637, 1645 and 1648) with probably two phases of post positions, was found on exactly the same alignment as the building line of phase 6. This was evidently the front of a timber building of 12th and possibly 13th century date. To the south of the trench, and under the line of the modern Bewell Street, were two layers of laid pebble gravel, each with a compacted surface. These metallated surfaces are interpreted as the first laid street to be found on this site. To the north of the post trench there were several small pits or postholes but they could not be identified with buildings.

Phase 3: 13th to 15th centuries

Several pits, two hearths – one very well constructed from sandstone ashlar – and two fragments of stone wall are ascribed to this broad occupation phase. Bewell Street was re-surfaced with small pebbles laid on a gravel base.

Phase 4: Late 16th century

Two half-timbered buildings were constructed on stone footings – the only part to survive – along the Bewell Street frontage. Several large pits and open hearths suggest that these buildings were, in part at least, used as workshops.

Phase 5: Early 18th century

The phase 4 buildings were demolished in the early 18th century and the whole area examined became covered with a black, ashy soil layer.

Phase 6: 19th and 20th centuries

The area became part of the Hereford Brewery and was used as the entrance to the main access road into the works. Cellars were dug on either side and the road was laid with stone setts. This was the period during which most damage was caused to the archaeological levels on the site.

Area 3 (He81E: SO 50734006) Bewell Street frontage (Figs 1, 3 and 4)

The trial excavation in 1976 had exposed a series of gullies, of 11th and 12th century date, running across the area from east to west. Together with two hearths, the gullies were sealed by a metallised surface which apparently continued, in use, possibly as a roadway or courtyard, until the 14th century. The later periods were represented, by a clay floor of 16th century date and a number of 17th century pits.

The 1976 area was too small to identify features so in 1981 it was extended to the west, the new area being some 11m by 8m. The area to the east of the trial excavation had been destroyed by Brewery cellars and to the west of the new area levels had been extensively damaged during construction works for the ring road in 1968-9. The complex stratigraphy of the trial excavation could not be directly related to the new area due to a series of large 17th and 18th century pits which had been dug between the two areas. Relationships will only be established when the pottery from both excavations has been fully examined and more precise dates have been established for the individual features.

Phase 1: Pre-10th century

The earliest feature on the site was a well compacted layer of pebbles and gravel which had been laid on top of the undisturbed clayey-gravel of the site after stripping the topsoil. This cobbled surface (1832 - Fig 3) covered the southern half of the site and pre-dated the late Saxon occupation of phases 2-4. There were no occupation layers which could be associated with this cobbling and the layer was not identified in either the trial area or in area 2. The cobbled surface is assumed to be a yard area, possibly associated with buildings which once stood to the west or south of the area, and of an unknown but pre-10th century date.

Phase 2: Pre-mid 10th century

The cobbled surface of phase 1 was sealed with a clean soil layer which survived to a depth of 0.3m in the south-east corner of the area excavated. This layer was similar to the subsoil of the site and must have taken some considerable time to accumulate. There were no finds within this layer which could be dated.

Phase 3: Pre-mid 10th century

A gully (1865) which cut through the phase 2 level and ran east-west was associated with a spread of charcoal and burnt clay (1866/7) to the north. The charcoal and clay spread was cut by a series of small rectilinear pits (1869) which may have been associated with a building. A second gully, 1872, also cut the phase 2 soil layer and was filled with a similar material to 1865.

North of 1865, a third gully, 1859, also ran east-west and cut the phase 2 soil layers, but this had distinct silting layers and must have been open for some time.

All the features of phase 3 were sealed by a soil layer of identical nature to that of phase 2.

These gullies could be property boundaries of more than one period – this is especially the case with 1859, which was open for some time. They may, however, be associated with buildings, either used for primitive drainage or as post trenches. Only two sherds of pottery were found associated with the phase 3 features, both from gully 1859. They were both Stamford ware cooking pot fragments (Hereford fabric E1) which are likely to be early imports to the area before pottery was in common use and being made locally.

Phase 4: 10th and 11th centuries

The main feature of this phase was a large pit (1823) which cut through the phase 1 metallated surface and the phase 2 soil level. The spoil from the pit was dumped to the west (layer 1852) and a clay and charcoal layer (1797) was spread on top of this spoil and down the edges of the pit. The pit was eventually filled and a second pit, 1825, was dug and also eventually filled. A hearth, 1835, was also built on a cobbled base during this period. This is the earliest phase with pottery present in any quantity. The various types present enable date ranges to be suggested for the different features. Thus the earliest feature in phase 4, pit 1823, contained over 30 sherds of Hereford Fabric G1 (Chester-type ware) and no other pottery, whilst other layers and features within this phase contained a mixture of fabrics including G1, D1 (made in the Cotswold area) and E1 (made in Stamford, Lincs), indicating a slightly later date in the range.

Phase 5: 12th century

A number of small pits and postholes were dug early in this period but eventually the whole area was covered with a metallated surface. This surface was also found in the trial excavation, again sealing 12th century features. The surface above the deep phase 4 pit, 1823, had subsided into the pit fill and the level had been made up with a mixed soil and gravel containing many bovine horn cores.

Phase 6: 13th and 14th centuries

A building with stone footings covered most of the area excavated (Fig 4). An internal stone drain led off to the south but the front wall was not found, being to the south of the area excavated. The floors of the building were laid on a gravel make-up and consisted of two levels of clay, each with a blackened surface.

Phase 7: 15th or early 16th century

The building of phase 6 apparently fell into disuse and was demolished down to its foundations. There was no evidence to show that it was replaced.

Phase 8: Late 16th and 17th centuries

Occasional pits were dug in the area excavated, but for most of this period the area was apparently under cultivation.

Phase 9: 18th and 19th centuries

Bewell House was built in the first quarter of the 18th century and the grounds extended into the area excavated. The property boundary was established as a series of void postholes, sealed with the footings of a stone wall and aligned with a similar feature on the 1974 excavation to the north of Bewell House. The area became the stables and coach house for Bewell House, and traces of internal walls and drains were found of this final occupation phase.

Conclusions

The excavation of area 1 unfortunately did not produce any new information about the gravel defensive rampart and the layers sealed underneath it, mainly due to the poor preservation in this particular area. Previous excavations, and observations made during the machine clearance for the new access road, indicate that the rampart is in a much better state of preservation to both east and west of this site and it is hoped that some stretches can be preserved. The rampart extends underneath Wall Street but it must be accepted that there has been substantial damage along the street by service trenches. The line of the city wall was established in a small trial excavation several months before the main work started and it is understood that the line will be indicated in the surface of the access road. To the west

of the access the wall will be completely rebuilt following the line dictated by the course of the ring road. To the east, the surviving parts of the city wall will be repaired and the wall heightened where necessary to provide a sense of enclosure. Care will be taken to ensure that the original fragments of the city wall can be identified.

The excavations along Bewell Street (areas 2 and 3) were of much greater interest and have produced a large amount of material which will need to be fully studied before final conclusions can be made and the two sites can be fully integrated with each other to produce a more complete picture of the development of Bewell Street as part of the city.

The earliest trace of occupation, in area 3, consisting of a well-laid cobbled surface is problematical in terms of both function and date. It was sealed by two aceramic pre-mid 10th century phases, one of which consisted of some 0.3m of soil build-up, and it must thus be substantially earlier than the 10th century. Periods of occupation before pottery was in common use in Hereford have been established in the Victoria Street and Berrington Street areas (Shoemith 1982, forthcoming) where 8th century dates have been suggested. The Bewell Street features are, however the first to be identified in this part of the city, at a substantial distance from the original nucleus around the cathedral.

The earliest known defences of the city were probably built in the middle part of the 9th century and by the middle of the 10th century they comprised a massive stone wall fronting a turf and clay rampart, with its northern line along East Street and West Street. The present excavations and those of 1974 and 1968 have shown that the city had extended substantially beyond its Saxon defences by the 11th century, with buildings fronting onto the lines of Bewell Street and Edgar Street. Bewell Street may then have been of more importance than its present appearance suggests. It is considered that the shops which now separate Bewell Street and Eign Gate represent market colonisation of the centre of what was originally a broad thoroughfare used for temporary stalls on market days. Thus buildings on the north side of Bewell Street would have fronted onto the market area.

Hereford was apparently only poorly defended in the 11th and 12th centuries with much of the population living outside the Saxon walls. This situation was changed at the end of the 12th century, when a new defensive bank and ditch was constructed which enclosed the whole of the northern development area. By this time Bewell Street had a cobbled surface with timber buildings to the north (area 2) and a large metalled yard further west (area 3). By the middle of the 13th century, when the city walls were being constructed, half-timbered buildings on stone footings were present on Bewell Street. These buildings had many alterations and additions, and were re-built from time to time during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, although some areas apparently reverted to cultivation, possibly with buildings set well back from the street frontage. Early in the 18th century several properties were amalgamated, the site was cleared and Bewell House was built as a substantial town residence. Small shops, workshops and inns filled the rest of Bewell Street and one of these gradually grew to become the Hereford Imperial Brewery, finally occupying a large part of the site and using Bewell House as a residence for its manager.

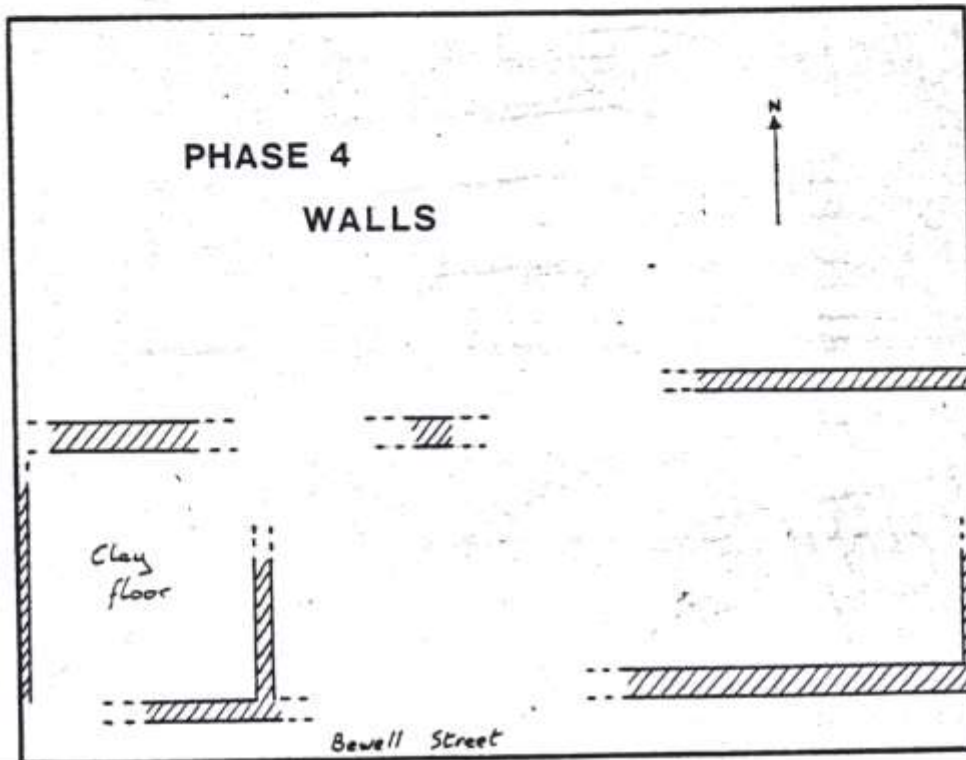
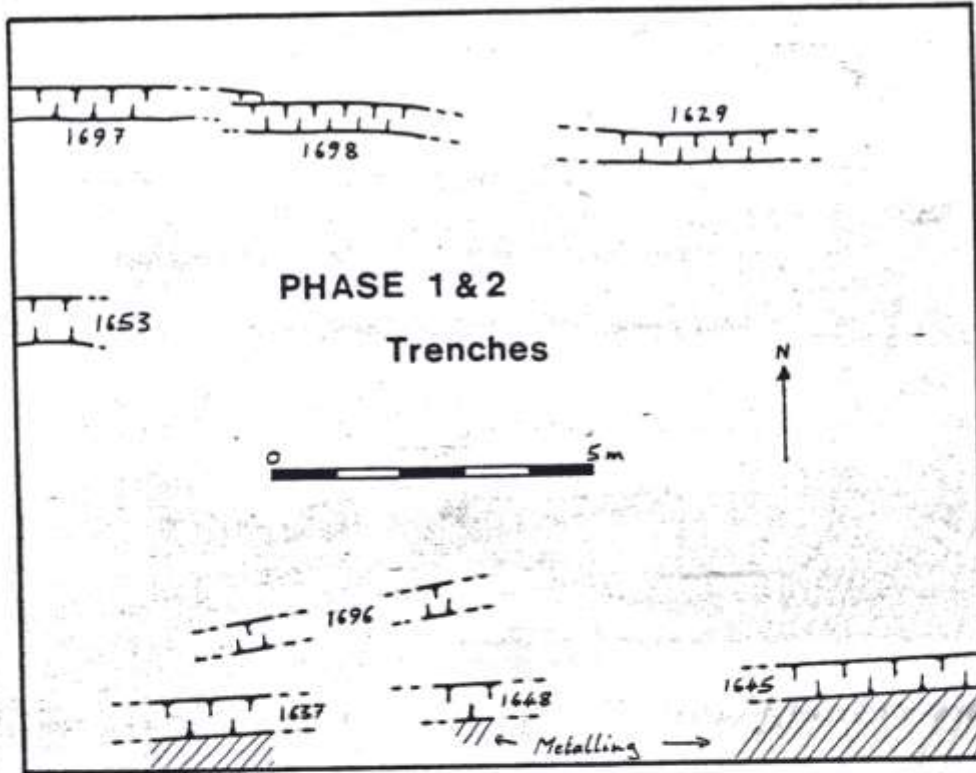
Future Work

During the next few months most of the finds from the excavations will be examined by specialists who will classify them and prepare reports. Some fragile finds may have to be conserved, and x-rays may be needed.

The final report can only be written when these stages have been completed, and it is estimated that this will take place during the winter of 1982-83.

**R Shoemith
M G Boulton
City of Hereford Archaeology Committee, March 1982**

Area 2



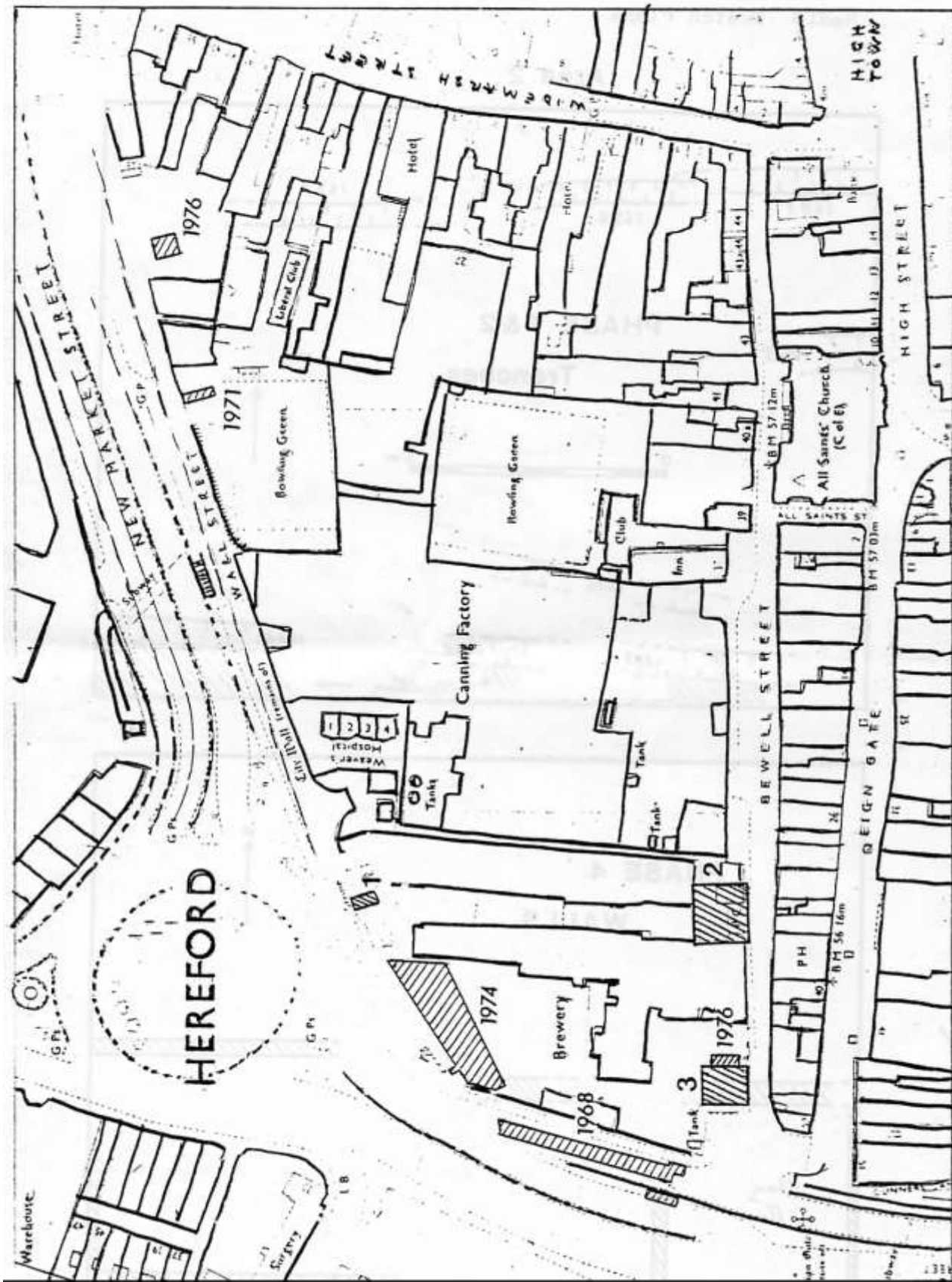


Fig 1

Area 3

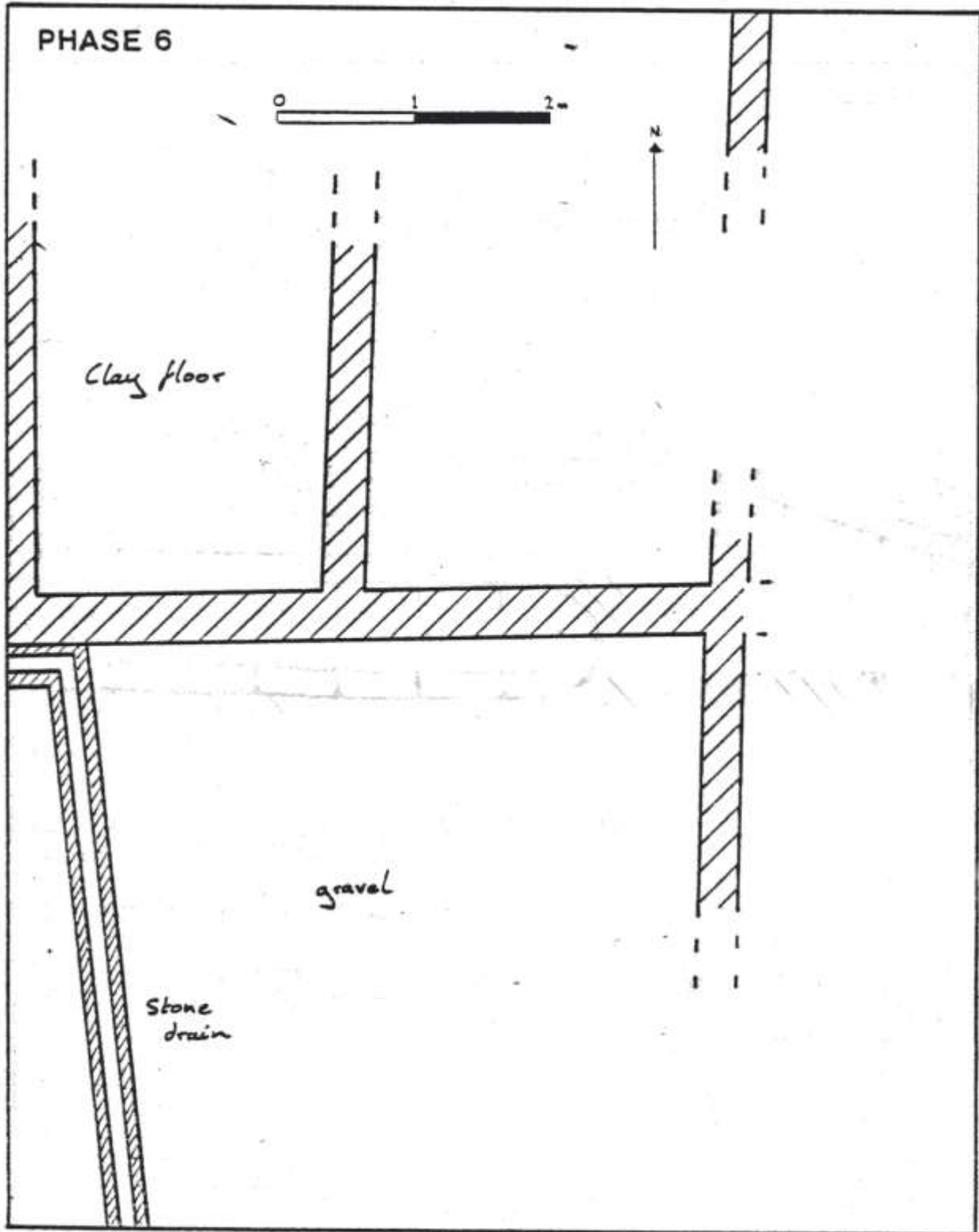


Fig 4

Area 3

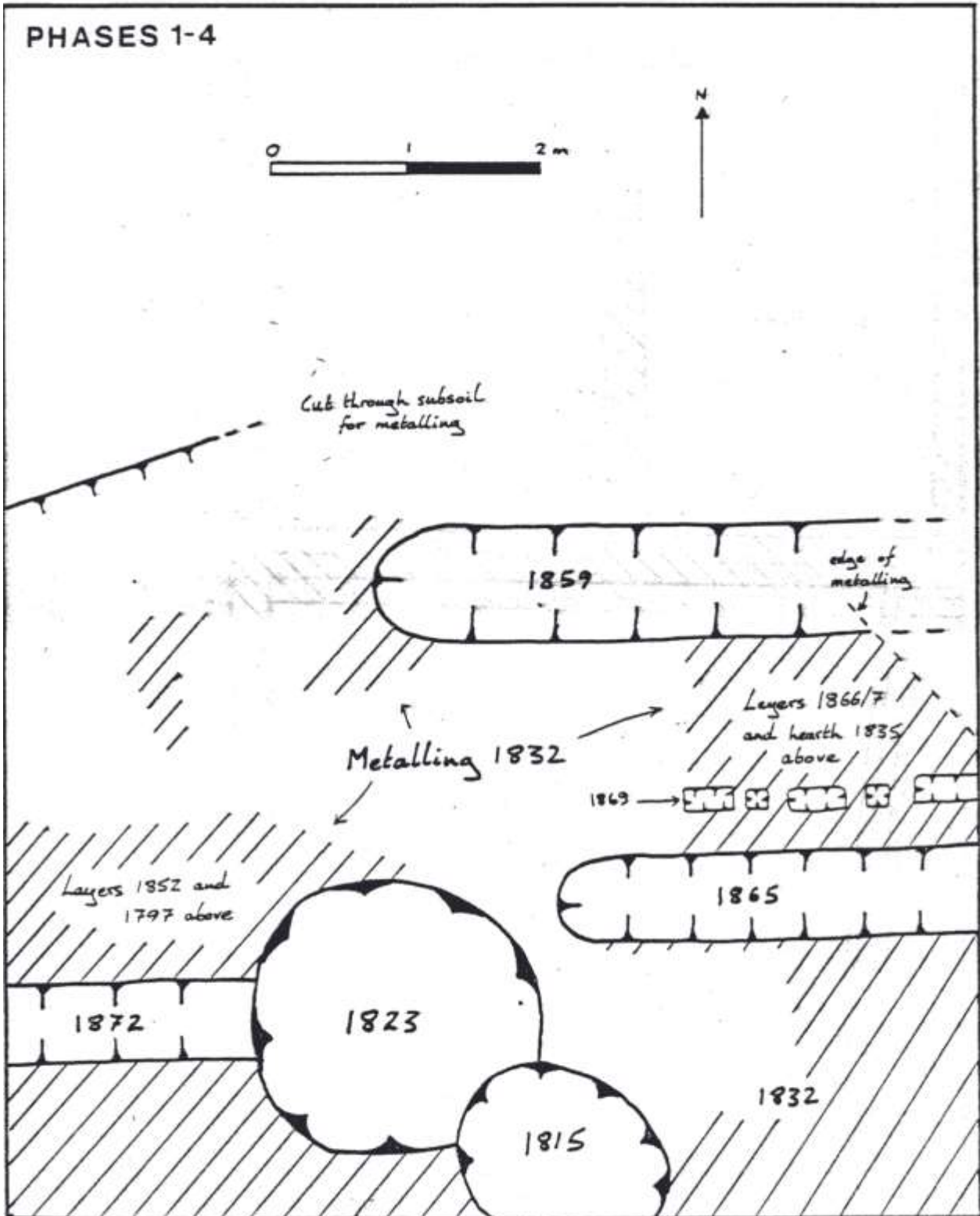


Fig 3

Mr Norman Reeves, a member of the WNFC, kindly sent me the following note in April last year, and in the July sent a copy of Frank Attwell's notes on the excavations, which Frank is agreeable to be included in the ARS News. We are most grateful for these contributions.

Editor

STONECHESTER, STRETFORD (SO 526 583)

In 1970 Mrs Moore, a student of the author, told him that a field on her husband's farm of Stretfordbury was named Stonechester. The name suggested Roman origin, and as it lay at a crossing of the Roman road from Blackwardine to Stockton Cross, and in a prominent position, this seemed likely. He resolved to investigate the site. Finding no tell-tale sherds or other artefacts on the surface, he caused a 25 ft trial trench to be dug across a point where subterranean masonry was suspected. The result of this dig was inconclusive, as was reported in the Woolhope Club's Transactions in 1971 (p. 282).

In 1981, Mr Frank Atwell, who had done some excavation at Blackwardine in 1975 (Woolhope Transactions 1975 p. 340), became convinced that Mr Reeves' hunch was correct, and offered to prove it, if given the chance.

Thanks to the owner, Mr Roger Moore, permission was granted to him to do some trial digging. Mr Atwell quickly revealed extensive masonry 30-40 cm below the surface. A series of rooms with underfloor heating, hypocaust piles and flue tiles, suggested a bath establishment. Coins and pottery fragments, melted quantities of lead, and many nails amply demonstrated the 'Romany' of the site.

It is still uncertain whether the buildings were of military or of civil origin, but the former seems more likely.

The five identifiable coins, examined by Martin Rhodes of the Hereford Museum, were these:-

1. Aes 4 of the House of Constantine, 300-350 AD. Obverse depicts Chi Rho symbol.
2. Definitely of 4th/early 5th century AD, probably of House of Constantine. Too damaged to identify with accuracy.
3. Aes 3 of Valentinian I or II, 364-392 AD.
4. Barbarous radiate. The profile is similar to that of Carausius, 287-293 AD. Dates imitated copy of this emperor.
5. Aes 2 of Constantine the Great, 307-337 AD. Too worn to identify further.

The few coins found indicate a late Roman period for the site.

Among the pottery fragments found, Mrs Joanna Bird, an expert on Roman pottery, identified examples of the following:-

1. Dorset black burnished ware
2. Oxfordshire ware, specimens copying DR36 and DR38. All these of the second half of the third to the fourth centuries.
3. Severn Valley ware (?).
4. Locally produced grey ware.
5. A reddish-brown pot, probably of local manufacture.
6. A fragment of an Oxfordshire colour-coated beaker, of mid-third to fourth centuries.

N C Reeves

REPORT ON THE ROMAN BATH-HOUSE, STRETFORDBURY, NEAR LEOMINSTER, HEREFORDSHIRE, 1981

By Frank Attwell

The site, which lies on a level spur of land, is bounded north and south by streams and is directly west of the Roman road that runs northwards from Stoke Prior, about one mile distant (SO 526583).

The area in which the complex is situated is also a level tract of land, rectangular in shape, some four acres in extent, and sloping away from the site to all points of the compass, excepting to the east, where it is overlooked by rising ground.

The bath-house, approximately 126 metres due west of the modern road, was constructed on and just below the western incline of the land.

The field name of the site is Stonechester, an appellation which may not be without a certain significance, particularly since it has not been ungenerous in the past concerning the discovery of Roman artefacts such as coins and potsherds.

In view of these discoveries (kind permission having been obtained from the landowners), a minor excavation was undertaken in order to determine the precise nature of the site. Several trenches were dug across a suspected area and these revealed wall foundations easily recognisable as of Roman origin.

As investigations progressed, it soon became obvious that the area concealed a large and complicated infra-structure, a rough plan of which has now been prepared. Unfortunately much of the structure has been subjected to stone robbing, an activity which even included the footings themselves.

As a consequence, examination of the wall lines proved to be a very difficult undertaking. Nevertheless, it was just possible to reach the successful conclusion eventually attained.

A series of trenches was then excavated across the various enclosures. These, upon completion, allowed an assessment as to the origin and use of the buildings.

In general, the complex consisted of three rectangular buildings, all adjoining and running parallel to one another on a north-south axis. These buildings are prefixed 'A', 'B' and 'C' on plan 2.

BUILDING 'A': consisted of two rooms and a corridor entrance connected to Building B2. Both rooms, and the passageway, contained hypocausts served by a furnace positioned at the south-easterly end of the building. The pilae, that had supported the floors of the chambers, were constructed of square red tile.

Once again, however, severity of stone robbing precluded accurate height measurements from base to floor level.

BUILDING 'B': fortunately, most of the foundations that had supported this building remain intact. A large channelled hypocaust system, fed by a fire-box at its northern end, is shown on Plan 2. It may be noted that the entire floor area would have been covered by stone slabs.

BUILDING 'C': This building was entirely timber-framed, excepting for the dividing wall separating the two buildings - see Plan 2. The floor area was also stone slabbed, but was not heated.

Details of Building 'A' and its Use **Caldarium and Tepidarium (Plan 1)**

The building was of stone and concrete, little timber, in deference to the serious fire risks involved, being used in its construction.

Materials used in such a building are obviously subjected to fluctuations of heat varying from the extreme, and should not, in consequence, be liable to change under the pressure of the opposing stresses of expansion and contraction.

Timber roof trusses, for example, would not expand or contract *pari passu* the surrounding masonry, thus producing structural faults in an otherwise substantial building.

Fire risk, of course, was the primary concern and it was usual, therefore, to isolate this type of construction. Examples, however, of bath-houses actually attached to villa complexes have been found, and some excavated forts show that such an establishment was placed inside the defences.

The positioning of the building on the ground sloping away from the usual complex may have been designed to assist in the flooding of the system in case of emergency. The excavation was able to prove that such an occurrence had taken place on several occasions.

The building was divided into three separate chambers with inter-connecting hypocausts, each served by a single furnace. This furnace was entrusted with the dual purpose of supplying hot water to the bath and heat below the floor area which was then circulated within the system, finally to be drawn up wall flues and expelled through the eaves.

It will be noticed from the diagram that the furnace is projected from the main wall, to which it is married. This arrangement consisted of twin parallel walls constructed of alternative courses of brick and stone, the hearth being of red clay tile supported by stone slabs.

The entire construction would have been arched over and a hot water tank, made from copper or bronze, suspended above it and fed by a cistern positioned close by. The over-floor itself was supported by brick *pilae*.

The wall remnants consisted of mortar-bonded stone, roughly squared and dressed on the face side only, the wall core being of mortar and rubble infill. The stone of local extraction, of which there is an abundance in the area, is a rather porous, grey limestone, the mortar being of a lime base constituent, yellowish-brown in colour.

It will be noted that the position of the furnace is unusual and would have been more suitably placed at the south wall, thus facilitating the drawing of heat directly through the system. In such a position, however, and provided we accept that the only entry into the system was via the furnace aperture, it would have been difficult to flood the complex because of the gradient.

It is perfectly clear, therefore, that the positioning of the furnace at the east wall served the dual purpose of flooding the system quickly and effectively cooling the building at the same time.

Although the bathing procedures of the Roman era are more or less completely understood, a resume of these might well be of some assistance in the understanding of the drawings contained in this report.

A Roman bath-house usually consisted of four separate rooms, which may be designated as under:-

The *APODYTERIUM*, or changing room, led to a cold bathroom - the *FRIDGIDARIUM*. Beyond this was the *TEPIDARIUM*, or warm room, the sequence ending with the hot room, or *CALDARIUM*, which contained the hot bath. This would, with obvious logic, be situated next to the furnace which supplied the whole system with heat.

Although the excavation of this building produced no actual dateable evidence, it was possible to determine its usage. The remains of a concrete bath, discarded when the building was demolished, were discovered. Missing sections, bearing in mind that the entire area of this room was not excavated may very well be found in the immediate vicinity.

The section recovered proved to be a large part of the base and this, since a substantial section of the concrete over-floor still adhered to it, clearly showed that it had once been placed upon it.

From this evidence, we were also able to establish the construction methods used in the building of the floor. Furthermore, the bath remnant was removed from an area adjacent to the furnace wall aperture, thus indicating that the bath was probably positioned very near to that furnace and supplied with hot water. We can say, therefore, with some certainty that this room was the CALDARIUM.

It should be realised that the south wall of this room was approximately double the width of the other walls. It is suggested this was due to the installation of a sill supporting a bench seat of stone slabs.

Building 'B' Frigidarium and Ancillary Rooms

Although no detailed excavation was carried out on this building, the determination of its dimensions and probable usage was considered to be of some importance. The wall lines, therefore, were exposed, an operation which revealed that the building had once contained a large channelled hypocaust system. At the northern end, a small room, which could have housed a cold bath, projects out beyond the main wall-line to the structure. It was then decided to excavate the central channel along its entire length, a procedure that produced quantities of flue tile, wood ash and broken stone slates.

The positioning of the flue tiles indicates that heat from the system was emitted directly into the room through vents cut in the floor immediately above the channel. It also seems fairly certain that heat was supplied by means of a charcoal fire which would have been capable of producing a constant temperature to the room above. In addition, the stone walls would absorb heat, this being gradually released, even when the fire had been extinguished, thus ensuring the room was warm over a long period.

The building was divided by a partition wall that separated the main room from the furnace room and the fuel store. The fire box, that fed the system, was situated at the north wall. The small room, which had probably contained the cold bath, was offset to facilitate the central positioning of the fire box. It is interesting to note that a more efficient and convenient method of stoking both fires would have been to house both the furnace and the fire box in the same area. Unfortunately, as was the case here, these items were situated at opposing ends of the building.

It would seem, therefore, that Building 'A' was an addition to the complex, a supposition borne out by the differences in the method of construction, especially with regard to the materials used. Flue tiles for example showed that at least three separate hands had been at work in their manufacture. Particularly noticeable is the scratch keying on the tile faces. This is illustrated and shows various styles of application.

Furthermore, it would not have been possible to change the position of the fire box without considerable alteration. A simple movement of the fire box would have had an adverse effect on the efficiency of the system and indeed, rendered it useless.

From a combination of these facts, we may certainly believe that the building was an addition to Building 'B'. We should also consider the possibility of the furnace room having been an integral part of an earlier bath complex. Such a conclusion may be reached if we believe that Building 'B' was not enlarged to facilitate the furnace installation. The building itself would have contained more than one single room designed for bathing. Possibly the furnace room once contained the original hot room, the building embracing a rather spartan bath arrangement prior to the addition of Building 'A'.

The alterations and enlargements may indicate that a change of occupation had taken place. The immediate effect of this, particularly if the complex was a military establishment, would follow upon the different requirements of a new tenancy. An ingoing garrison would not hesitate to adapt the buildings to suit their own specific needs and ideas.

Building 'C' Bath Basilica

The foundations of this building were traced and examined. The method of construction consisted of a simple trench packed with six neat rows of flat stone laid on edge at an approximately angle of 5 degrees. These were then blinded with mortar to produce a flat base.

A timber building, divided into several small rooms (possibly latrines), must once have stood at the south end. No dateable evidence was found, but it was probably the bath basilica.

The Demolition Area of Building 'A'

From the trenches, and details of a below ground kiln excavated across the building, we were able to assess the approximate date of its demolition.

We cannot, however, either determine the period of usage as a bath-house, precisely when it was erected as an addition to Building 'B' or even when the remaining buildings actually ceased to exist as some form of habitation.

The entire area within the wall lines contained masses of concrete, plaster, and tufa rubble which had been packed down and roughly levelled. Almost everything else had received appropriate attention from the demolishers, including the brick pilae but excluding the base tiles, which in many cases were found to be intact and in their original positions.

The pilae brick was also inspected, but failed to reveal anything whatsoever in the way of potters' marks, or any other indications as to origin.

From 'A2', close to the doorway with 'A3', a discovered but shattered tufa lintel was subsequently reconstructed and its dimensions are illustrated herein.

Nearby was a semi-circular stone slab that had once supported a door-post, and undecorated wall plaster fragments from the area proved that the reveals of the door itself had been provided with chamfered edges. To the west of the doorway, a ground kiln was uncovered.

From the junction wall of Room A2, seventy-two pieces of painted wall plaster were recovered. Of these, thirty-five carried geometric designs within a wide border from at least two decorated panels. Some pieces, indeed, still show random splashes of colour.

This feature, of course, is of the utmost interest and in due process is very likely to be the subject of forensic analysis in order to determine its composition.

Reverting to the remains of the bath, materials useful enough to have justified demolition would have been the stone slabs covering the floor area. The bath itself, of little real use and difficult to remove without considerable damage, was eventually smashed and thrown into the room foundations, the inside facing downwards.

It was here, at the bottom of the bath, that fossilised algae were found. This fascinating circumstance seems to imply that the bath, its purpose suddenly terminated and still containing a certain amount of water, had then stood for some considerable time.

Subjected to the elements, no sign of the rubble or plaster particles that one would clearly expect if the building had gradually deteriorated could be found in company with the algae fossils.

Kiln Construction (Plan 3)

The area was excavated through the demolition line to the cobbled base, where a packed clay had been laid. The sides were then reinforced with stone, roughly placed and without being mortar bonded.

The draw tunnel was facing to the north, terminating at a fire box fed from the side. This area produced the first of several potsherds – probably originating from the kiln. In the due processes of time the kiln, obviously, would become obsolete and the resultant space cleared and infilled with rubble. Some part of the supporting wall was also pushed inwards.

Careful examination of the stonework enclosing the kiln showed considerable signs of burning. The clay base was fused to the cobbles, and the structures surrounding the area

were strongly impregnated with wood ash that had been washed from the surface by percolation through the infill.

To the north of the kiln, a large cache of potters clay, together with several coins and potsherds, was found. Above this point, only two stratified levels could be observed. It should be borne in mind, however, that ploughing may have eliminated any previously existent layers.

An experiment carried out with the potters clay produced a simple vessel, which was fired in the oven kiln. The completed product closely matched the discovered sherds, a fact which seems to imply that these were also manufactured by the same kiln.

I confess that although I am not a potter by trade, I found it quite a simple task to fire and produce a serviceable vessel. Any statement, therefore, which seems to indicate that, after a specified date, pottery could not have been produced by Romano-British inhabitants, should be dismissed.

I now believe that only Building 'A' of the complex was levelled, the remaining buildings being occupied with the manufacture of pottery. Coins and potsherds, suggest that the demolition stage of 'A' took place at some time during the later part of the fourth century AD. The datable evidence in this case, however, is far from being conclusive and could very well be much earlier than the one suggested.

Summary

I have now carried out exhaustive searches in the area in order to find any parent building to which the bath-house should belong. Unfortunately, this part of the investigation failed to find any stone foundation in the immediate vicinity. We may, nevertheless, surely indulge in a little conjecture by supposing that the site is of military origin, a possibility not belied by its geographical position.

During the course of the investigations outlined in the previous paragraph, two large stone slabs, both dressed and of a considerable weight, were discovered. Upon closer inspection, the smaller slab revealed the incisure of a cup and ring upon its underside. This mark, a type of megalithic art, its meaning not really understood, is apparently connected with Bronze Age burials or stone circles.

Such evidence, of course, very strongly suggests that the site is extremely ancient, and worthy of a much closer investigation.

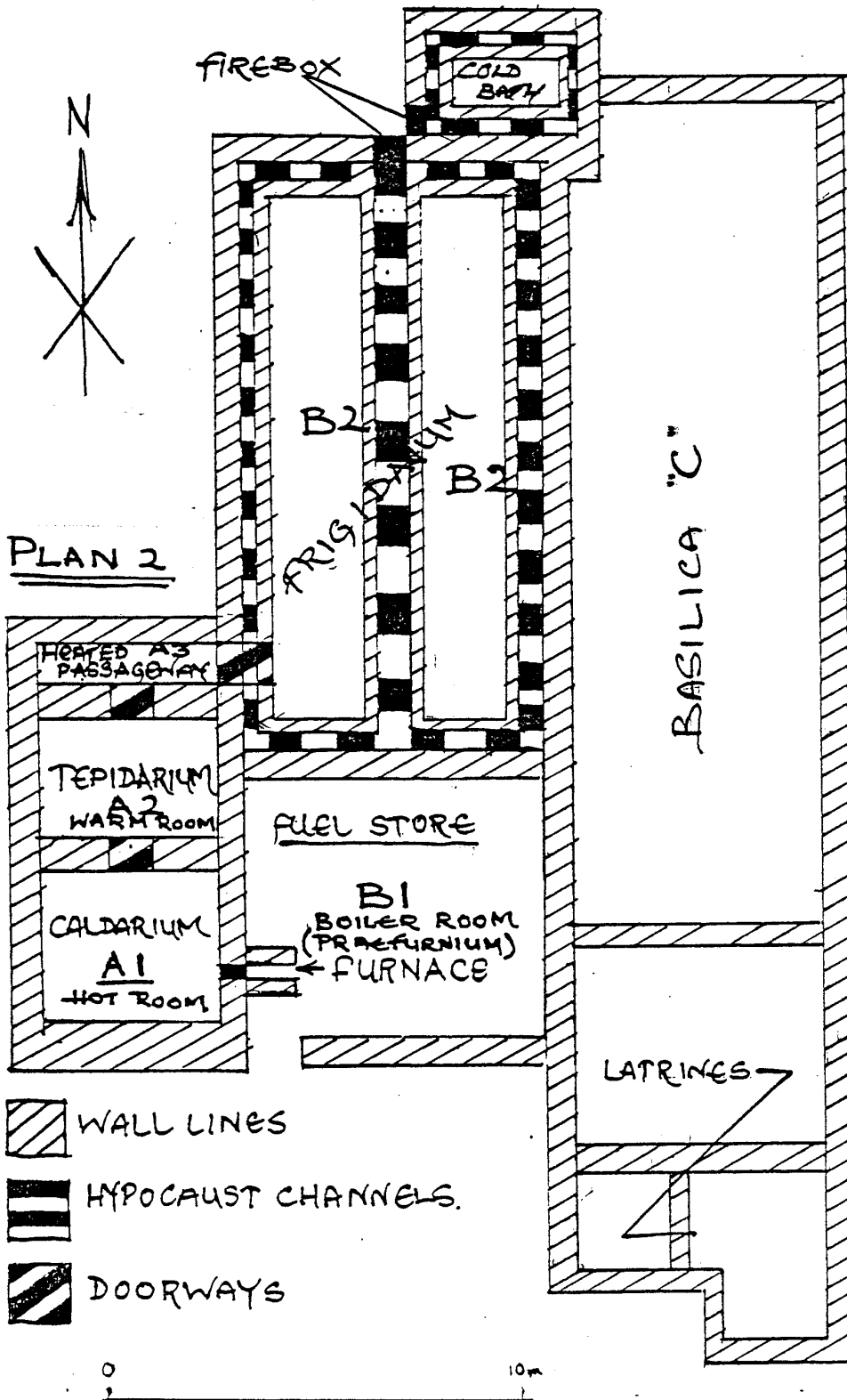
If, en passant, we may consider the possibility of a small fort once standing upon this site then, clearly, it must have been constructed of timber. A bath-house, however, because of its designated use, could not really have existed unless it was built of stone. It is also interesting to note the resemblance in layout of this bath-house to those of several excavated forts in Wales and the West Country and its comparability in size to bath-houses at Gelligaer and Caerhun.

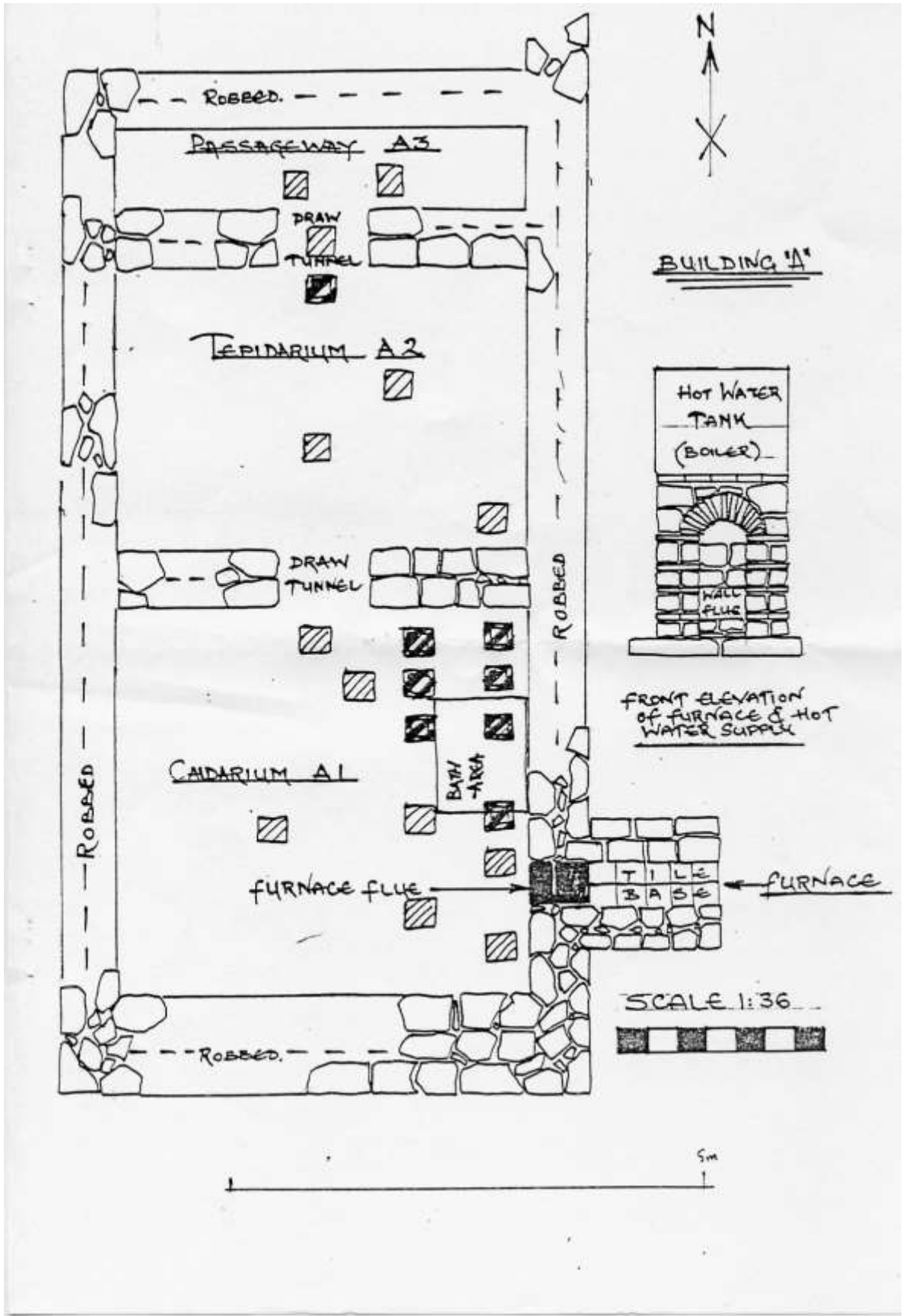
The present excavation was carried out under adverse conditions, and it must be considered as unfortunate that further investigation during the summer months (not objected to by the landowners) was not possible.

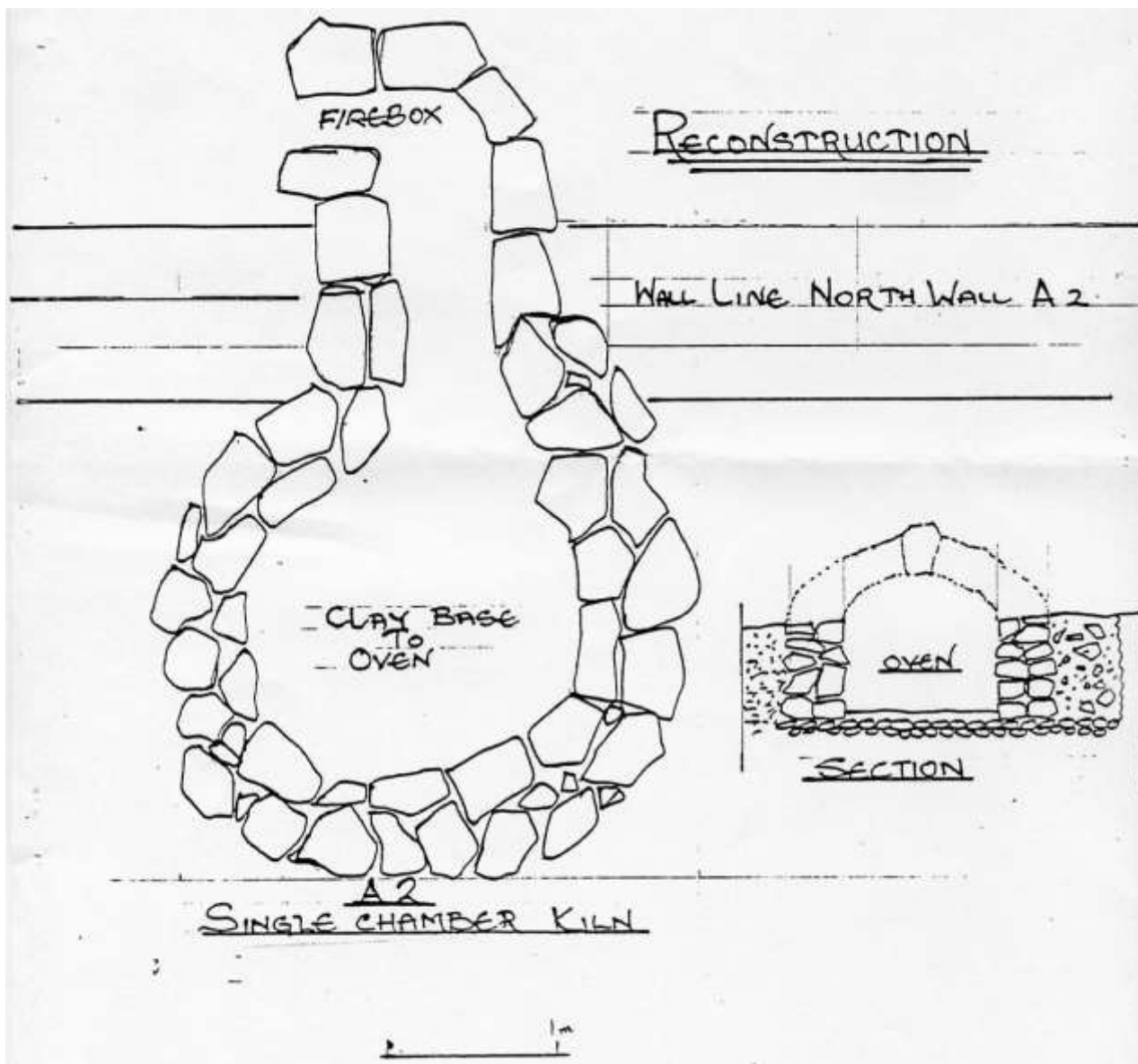
I can only hope, therefore, that the discoveries made so far will not only serve to inspire a full-time dig in the future, but adequately protect the site until such an event actually does take place.

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ROMAN BATH HOUSE STRETFORDBURY HFDs







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