

HAVERFORDWEST CASTLE MUSEUM HAVERFORDWEST PEMBROKESHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



Report prepared
By
Cambria Archaeology
For
Haverfordwest Castle Museum



CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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**HAVERFORDWEST CASTLE MUSEUM
HAVERFORDWEST, PEMBROKESHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in advance of a proposed museum extension within the inner ward of Haverfordwest Castle. It was established that archaeological deposits lay not far below the ground surface. Part of a medieval wall, possibly belonging to the inner gatehouse, was found. In addition features from the later gaol were also uncovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project commission

This evaluation was undertaken in advance of a proposed extension at the rear of the Castle Museum, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire (NGR SM95331572). Haverfordwest Museum commissioned Cambria Archaeology to produce specifications for evaluation of the archaeology in the development area, to obtain the necessary Scheduled Monument Consent from Cadw on their behalf, and to undertake the trial excavation.

1.2 Scope of the project

The project was designed to record any archaeological features or deposits encountered in the trial excavations. Excavation was limited by the Scheduled Monument Consent to the top of any archaeological deposits, and also by health and safety considerations.

1.3 Report outline

This report describes the physical environment of the site (Section 2) before summarising the watching brief results and the conclusions based on those results (Section 3).

1.4 Abbreviations

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

1.5 Datum heights

All heights on drawings have been calculated to Ordnance Datum (OD), based upon the benchmark of 28.53m OD on the castle entrance gatepost. These have been rounded up to the nearest 0.01m. Although every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of these readings they should not be relied upon for planning purposes.

1.6 Archive Deposition

Cambria Archaeology will hold the project archive until deposition with Pembrokeshire Museum Service can be arranged.

2. THE SITE

2.1 Location

The site is located to the rear, east side, of the Castle Museum which is in the former Prison Governors House (Fig. 1) and is likely to be on the site of the castle's inner ward gatehouse (Fig. 2). The proposed extension is 17.5m long, 6.5m wide with an overhanging roof extending the width to a total of 9m. Most of the site was level grass and a small bit of a garden border. There were some restrictions on where test trenches could be excavated as there was a back porch on the museum and a concrete apron adjacent to part of the back wall. Furthermore there was a garden bench on a concrete stand that formerly housed the distribution point for the castle floodlighting. There was no plan showing the routing of the floodlight cabling.

2.2 Site History

It is not intended to go into the history of the castle in any depth here as it is outside of the scope and scale of this project. To a great extent its history has been covered by Cathcart King (1999) and Freeman (1999).

The Castle sits on a promontory of brown sandstone overlooking the highest navigable point of the Western Cleddau river and probably the lowest fordable location, which has been bridged since medieval times, and is therefore of obvious strategic importance. The land falls steeply on all but the west side.

It is possible that this promontory was used as an Iron Age defensive position. Carew Castle most certainly has such an earlier defence and one is also postulated for Pembroke Castle (Ludlow. *Pers. Comm.*).

The castle was founded soon after 1108, and there was one attack on the town, which was stopped at the castle gates. In 1289-90 the castle had substantial sums of money spent on it by Queen Eleanor, wife of Edward I, and it is likely that the curtain wall and towers existed by this time. By 1577 the castle was in ruins. Like many castles it also functioned as a gaol, utilising its existing buildings. In 1780 a purpose built gaol was constructed in the castle, but by 1803 this was found to be less than adequate. During this period 415 prisoners of war, from the failed French invasion of 1797 were held temporarily within the castle, and a few French prisoners were held there in 1813. A new gaol was constructed by 1820; there followed some alterations before it was closed finally in 1878.

"Extensive" excavation in 1914 was reported on the site of this proposed museum extension in The Pembroke County Guardian 10/7/1914, but no formal report of this work can be found:

"In the quadrangle immediately behind the police inspector's house the ground was opened to a depth of 13 feet, with a view to finding a supposed underground passage which fell in 43 years ago. The exact spot was located, and the earthenware jar containing a paper recording the circumstances was found, and read as follows:- To future explorers: William Saunders, Esq., governor of this gaol for over five years, and explored the cavity this paper will be found, on January 19, 1871. Supposed to be the cellar of the castle in its original splendour in the 12th century. Deposited by Warder Eynon Morgan. Prison staff: William Saunders, Esq., governors; Warders George Davies, Eynon Morgan,

Thomas Watkins; matron Emma Brown; assistant Martha Woodbine.
Number of prisoners: males 17, females 4, infants 2.

No passage exists there but a recess measuring eight feet by seven and about three feet deep formed by a solid mass of grouted masonry lying against rock on three sides; beneath this there is rubbish and black mud, through which a five foot bar was thrust down without touching anything solid. In front of this two thick walls forming a triangle were found, the apex being just in front of the inner wall of the old prison shown on the plan. Further excavations at this point were abandoned as there was considerable danger of the sides caving in. No objects except animal bones were found....."

The buildings were then utilised by the Police until 1963, after which much of the old prison buildings were demolished. The site became for a time the county museum, before this was moved to Scolton Manor, while the town museum remains in the Old Prison Governors House. Some of the inner ward has been landscaped to reveal the footing of the inner ward buildings on the east and south sides with the rest of the area laid to level grass, with only the top of the castle well showing.

3. SUMMARY OF WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

3.1 Methodology

The evaluation commenced on 14 January 2008. The weather had been exceptionally wet prior to this date. The conditions were exacerbated by further rain during the time on site and one of the down pipes from the Museum building draining onto the grass.

Three trenches (Fig. 3 and Plate 1), 2m wide by 5m long, were laid out approximately on the line of the south, east, and north walls of the proposed new extension. The turf was hand stripped and positioned so that it could be replaced in the same order. The area and the trenches were also scanned with a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT); this established that there was a live cable running across the middle of the southern trench (Trench 1) and also near the western end of the north trench (Trench 3). The north trench was therefore extended eastwards so as to miss the cable. There were also indications of a number of other non-live services but it was not possible to plot these to any great degree as the generator could not be placed far enough away from the CAT but still cover these pipes or cables.

On the second day the de-turfed trenches were excavated using the backhoe of a JCB machine with a toothless 80cm wide bucket. The material was removed down to the top of the archaeological deposits, the top of the natural bedrock or the maximum depth allowed under Health and Safety. The trenches were then cleaned and further excavated by hand as necessary. The Cadw inspector visited the site and was satisfied with the location and depth of the trenches, but asked for a plan of the inner ward gaol buildings in relation to the development.

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Trench 1 (Figs. 4 and 5; Plates 2, 3, 4 and 5)

This trench was aligned roughly west-east.

The earliest feature encountered was part of a north-south wall (111). Only one face of this wall could be revealed as later features and electricity cables prohibited further excavation to the west (Plate 2). This wall must have been at least 0.9m wide and survived to over 1m high as it extended below the level excavated. It was a stone wall and bonded with a hard off white/yellowish mortar. The east side was of faced stone with the remains of a relieving arch (Plate 3). The lack of weathering on this face suggests that it may have been internal rather than external. This wall had been cut on its west side by feature 110 and truncated by an east-west drain (117); both of these features are probably much later.

There was no dating evidence from the lower fill (109) of cut feature 110. There may have been a higher fill (108) but this could be the fill for a later cut feature for a modern copper pipe (not numbered).

In the northwest corner there was a lump of masonry (112) bonded with a similar mortar to that of wall (111). Again this was cut (116) for the much later drain.

The space between the wall (111) and the masonry (112) contained a number of deposits (103 – 107; Fig.5). One of these deposits (106) produced two sherds of medieval pottery, but the deposits above this were machine excavated.

The lower of these deposits (105 and 106) were cut by the construction trench (116) for a drain (117). It is likely that the deposit above (104) was also cut through for this drain construction, as was possibly the layer above (103), but in this case it is far from certain.

This drain (117) was unexcavated and lay mainly under the southern edge of the trench. It was built of mortared stone, with a 0.36m wide channel. This channel was still partly open but its depth could not be ascertained without excavation. The channel was capped with very large flat stones.

The construction trench (116) for drain 117 was infilled with layer 114 (Fig 5 north-south section; Plate 4), the upper western part of which contained fragments of sheet iron and plain brick, although this may be later disturbance. Fill (114) was itself cut by a later feature (118), which was filled with loose large slates and soil (113: Fig. 5a; Plate 4). Above this was topsoil and turf (102).

In the western half of the trench was a brick and concrete step, probably Victorian or later. This had been cut by the concrete footings for wooden fence posts. These posts extended for the length of the trench and were also in Trenches 2 and 3. These late features were not separately numbered.

The topsoil in the western half of the trench had been cut for electricity cables. These cable trenches were not easily discernible and were not numbered separately.

3.2.2 Trench 2 (Figs. 6 and 7; Plates 6 and 7)

The earliest layers were at either end of the trench, and were very similar, both containing a lot of crushed mortar (159 and 162).

Above the southern layer (159) there was a thick deposit of rubble and mortar (165) that was possibly a continuation of deposit 159. The upper portion of layer 165 had been cut by a construction trench (167) for a small stone drain with stone capping (170). In the lower part of 167 was a shallow fill (171), which appeared to have been laid to level up the base of the trench for the construction of drain 170.

Drain 170 had been cut on its west side by a large feature (172), which also extended into the deposit below (165) and around its north side. It may also have cut the mortary deposit (162) at the north end of the trench.

Filling 172 were a number of silty clay deposits, which whilst being virtually being indistinguishable during machine excavation did exhibit differences in the sections if the trench (Fig. 7a, b and c). The main fill (158) contained a fragment of a Victorian tile. Overlying 158, and only visible in the east-facing section (Fig. 7a) was a layer of mortar and rubble (157), which had been cut by small pit filled with several ash-rich layers (153-156).

Cut feature 172 and its fills appeared to relate to 19th century landscaping of the site.

The topsoil and turf (152) covering trench 2 was cut by a very shallow trench, 0.1m deep, for an electricity cable.

3.2.3 Trench 3 (Figs. 8 and 9; Plates 8 and 9)

The brown sandstone bedrock (213) was encountered at 0.25m below the ground surface. The bedrock was partially overlain by a shallow layer, up to 80mm deep, of re-deposited natural subsoil (208), on which there was a thin lens of mortar (207).

The earliest feature encountered appeared have been a shallow posthole (210), cut 60mm into the bedrock, with a greyish brown silty clay fill (209). This produced no dating evidence.

There were two water pipe trenches heading towards a well located to the east of the trench. The earliest of these (206 and fill 205) emerged from the south section and then turned to the east. The north-south part of this trench contained part of a lead water pipe, but this had been robbed from the east-west length. This pipe trench was covered with a layer (202) containing black coal ash and mortar. Cutting this layer (202) in the southeast corner was the other pipe trench (204 and fill 203), which also contained a lead pipe.

Along the northern edge of the trench were the remains of a cavity brick wall (212). This was cut by concrete filled postholes for the wooden posts also recorded in Trenches 1 and 2. Trench 3 was covered with a thin layer of topsoil and turf (201).

3.2.4 Finds

A few unstratified finds were recovered from trench 1 (101) and trench 2 (151) and from two other contexts (106 and 158) and are listed in appendix 1. The pottery would all appear to be re-deposited, and therefore has not been examined by an expert at this stage and all interpretations are provisional. The earliest sherd of pottery may be from the twelfth century and, along with a few other later sherds, is likely to be of North Devon Gravel Tempered Ware or the local equivalent.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Trench 1

The north-south wall (111) contained a relieving arch, probably either because of a weakness in the foundations or to take the stress off a doorway to the south. This wall may be part of the rear wall of the inner gatehouse of the medieval castle, but without more extensive excavation this interpretation must remain tentative.

The masonry (112) would appear to be from a collapsed wall and the impression is that any facing stones had been robbed, presumably for reuse. The infill layers (104 to 107) between the wall (111) and the masonry (112) are probably all post-medieval, although two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered.

Drain (117), while lacking direct dating evidence, is almost certainly post-medieval, possibly serving the latrines in the southwest corner of the old trial yard (Fig. 1).

The concrete steps at the west end of the trench may date to the time when the building was the prison governor's house, but is more likely, given the style of brick, to be date from the period when the building was used as the police house.

In the top of the infill (114) of the construction trench (116) for drain 117 was a cut (118) that appeared to be very recent and is likely to have been for the consolidation of a wall just to the south of the trench.

4.2 Trench 2

The mortary deposits (159, 162 and 165) and the drain (170) are likely to be post-medieval. These appeared to have been cut by feature 172 in the Victorian period or later. These deposits were apparently extending below the 1.4m depth of the trench. The cut (172) may be due to the archaeological investigations by the governor of the gaol in 1871 or those in 1914.

4.3 Trench 3

The bedrock was encountered at a surprisingly high level, given that it was not found in the other two trenches. The single posthole (210) may be of some antiquity given that there was no ash in the fill (209) as there was in the fills (203 and 205) of both of the water pipe trenches (204 and 206). The cavity brick wall (212) is quite late and probably mid 20th century.

4.4 General

It is apparent that there is a considerable difference in the depth of deposits on the site. In trench 3 the bedrock was found at a uniform depth of about 0.25m below the ground surface (29.59m OD), whereas the bases of Trenches 2 and 3 were still on made ground (28.47m OD and 28.64m OD respectively). Also evident is the shallow depth at which archaeological features occur, as with the step and the top of the medieval wall (111) in Trench 1 at less than 0.25m below the current ground surface (29.70m OD).

From the account of the 1914 excavations it can be seen that bedrock was not found after digging 13 feet down to the cavity previously discovered in 1871 and then a further 5 feet of silt at least below this. It would seem likely that this was

in an undercroft or cellar the base of which will be at least 5m below the ground surface below (25.00m OD).

Unfortunately the location of the gaol passage and the passage to the wheelhouse behind the Governor's house (Fig. 1) were missed as the position of the evaluation trenches was heavily influenced by the floodlight cables. However, for the purposes of new construction it would be best to consider that there are some remains of these passages and they are likely to be close to the ground surface.

Any construction on this part of the site will therefore encounter a number of archaeological features of some considerable importance at a very shallow depth. It is also evident that some features are, in places, likely to be of some considerable depth, of at least 5 metres.

5. CONCLUSION

This evaluation has confirmed that archaeological features survive just below the ground surface. The bedrock in the north of the site is also not far below the current ground surface, but further south there appears to be a large drop, probably into former cellars relating to the castle. Therefore, it is probable there will be considerable archaeological implications for the development of this site.

6. SOURCES

Cathcart King D J (1999) 'Haverfordwest Castle c.1110-1577' in Miles D *A History of Haverfordwest*. Llandysul: Gomer Press

Freeman M (1999) 'Haverfordwest Castle c.1577-1964' in Miles D *A History of Haverfordwest*. Llandysul: Gomer Press

Pembrokeshire Record Office for plans and information on the gaol

The Pembroke County Guardian 10 July 1914

APPENDIX 1: FINDS

101

- 2 Codd bottles:
 - 1 Tenby & Pembroke Dock – bottom half
 - 1 R. Lewis & Co Fishguard – almost complete plus glass marble
- Glass:
 - 1 base of rectangular bottle
 - 1 glass marble (from Codd Bottle)
- Clay pipe stem frag
- Pottery:
 - 1 sherd stoneware light brown glaze, 19-20th century
- 1 oyster shell
- 2 bone frags

106

- Pottery
 - 1 Rim sherd, unglazed Jar. Medieval could be as early as 12th century
 - 1 Rim sherd light partial glaze NDGTW? Medieval. Probably late medieval
- 1 oyster shell
- 2 bone frags

151

- Pottery (dates from late medieval to recent)
 - 1 base sherd NDGTW? Late med/post med
 - 1 body sherd NDGTW? Late med/post med
 - 1 body sherd red fabric, internal light brown glaze 19-20th century
 - 1 rim sherd earthenware 19-20th Century?
 - 1 body sherd red fabric with rare flint? inclusions. Internal glaze of green/brown. Post-medieval?
- China
 - 1 white rim sherd
 - 2 blue and white rim sherds
- 2 clay pipe stems
- 1 glass base
- 1 iron nail
- 2 oyster shells
- 1 cu alloy object – Victorian or later

158

- 1 large fragment of roof tile – Victorian?

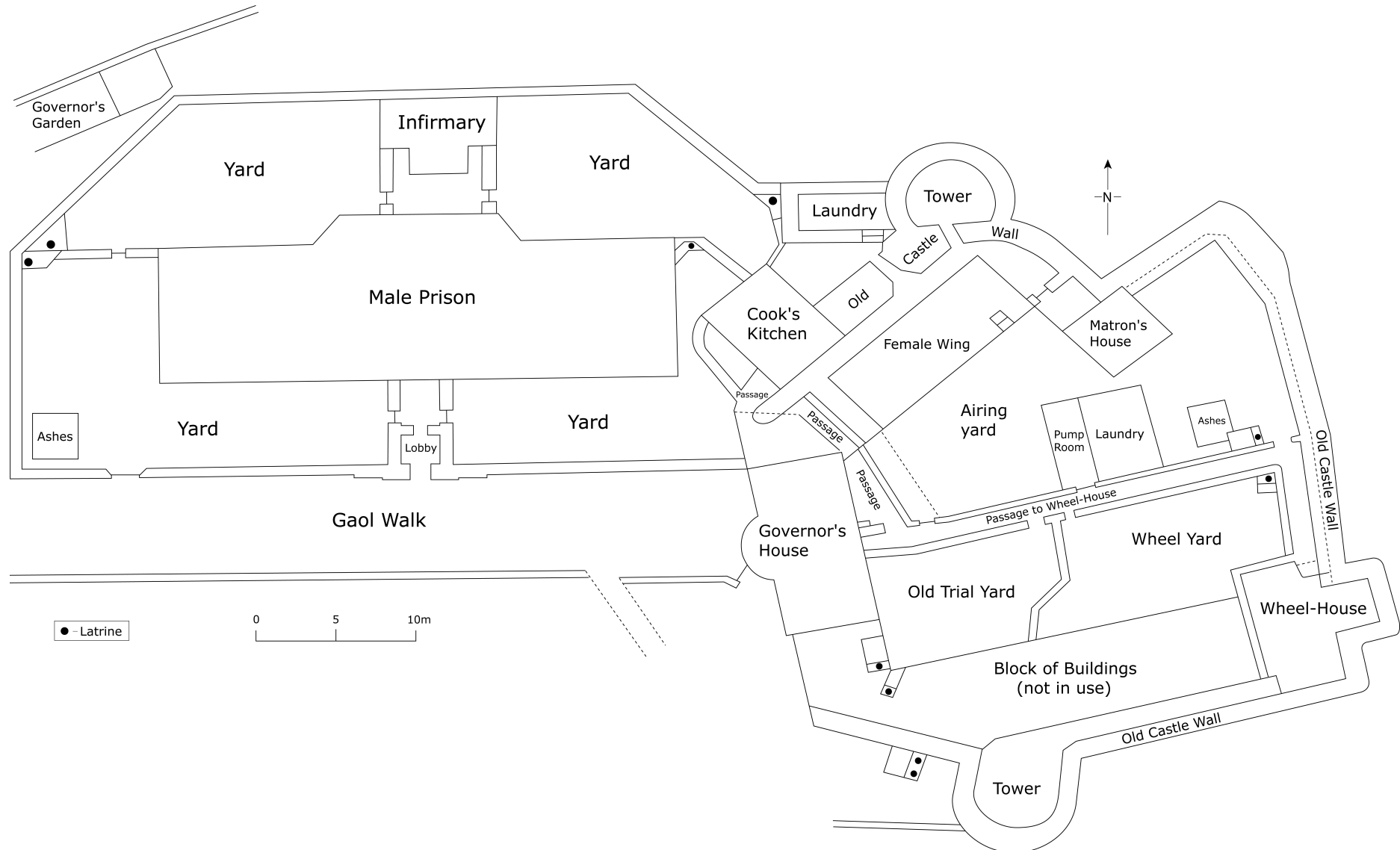


Figure 1: The later prison within Haverfordwest Castle. Redrawn from map held in Haverfordwest Record Office

Haverfordwest Castle 1577

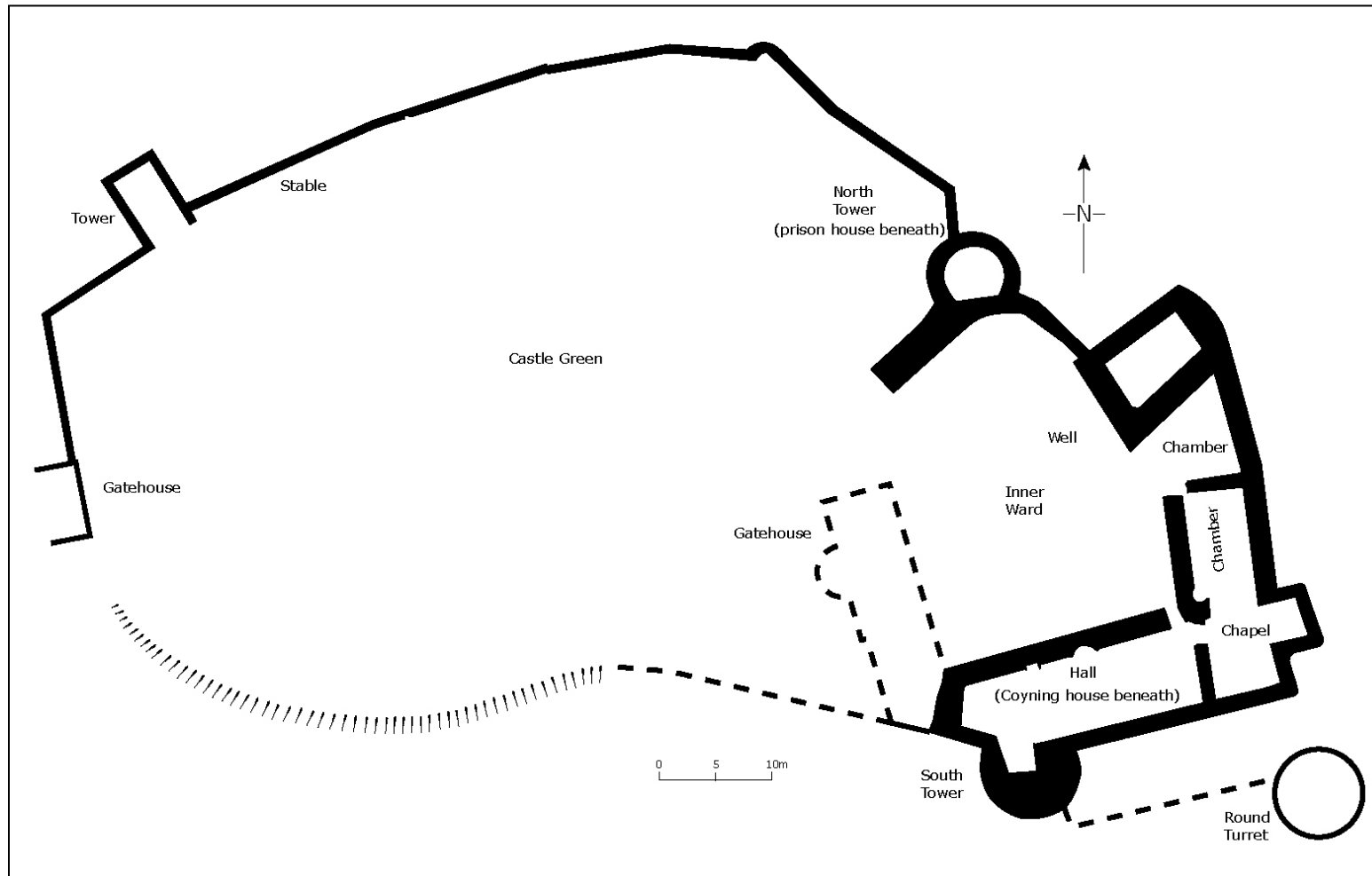


Figure 2: The Haverfordwest Castle Inner and Outer Wards. From Cathcart King (1999)

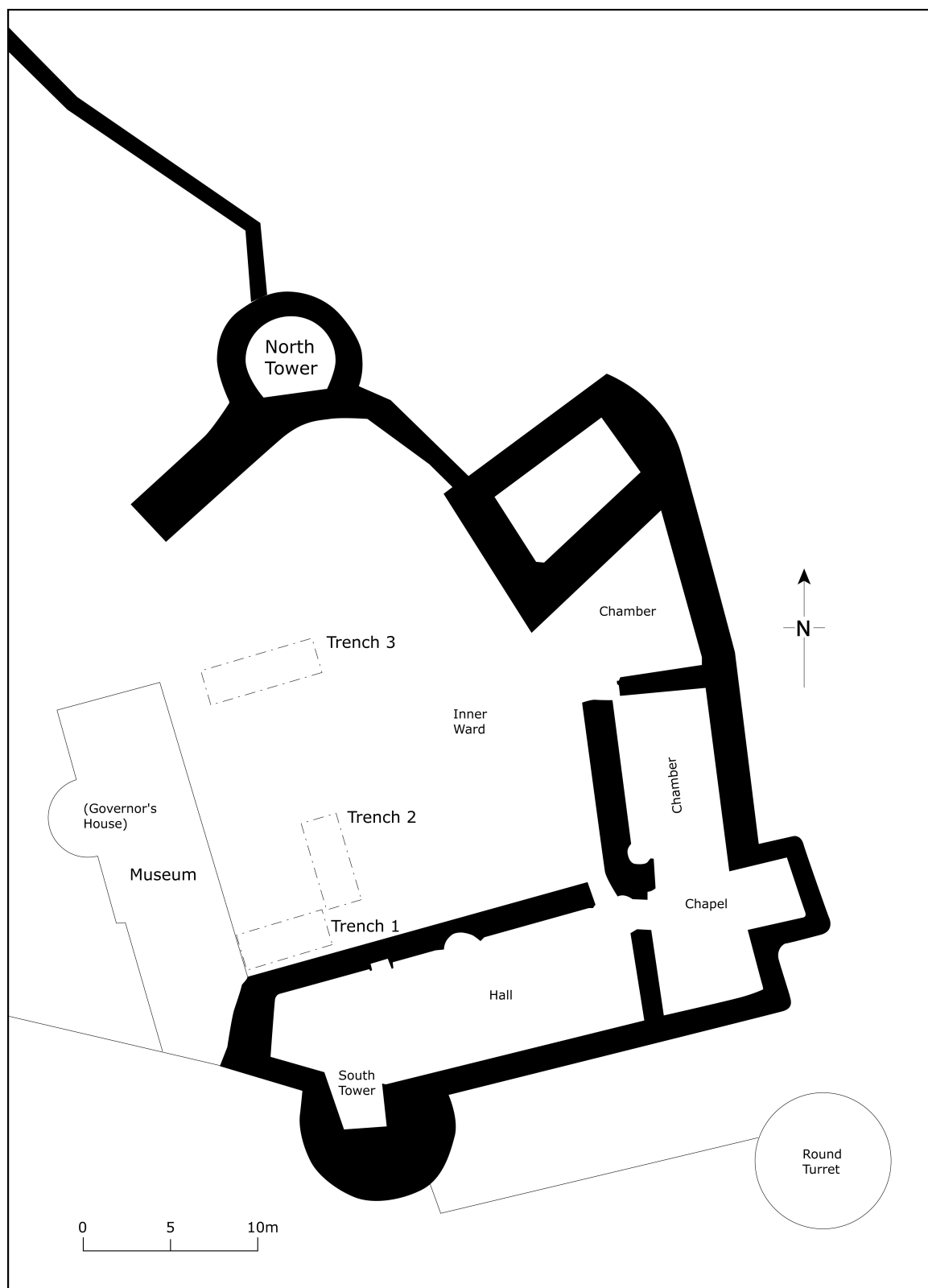


Figure 3: Location of evaluation trenches in inner ward

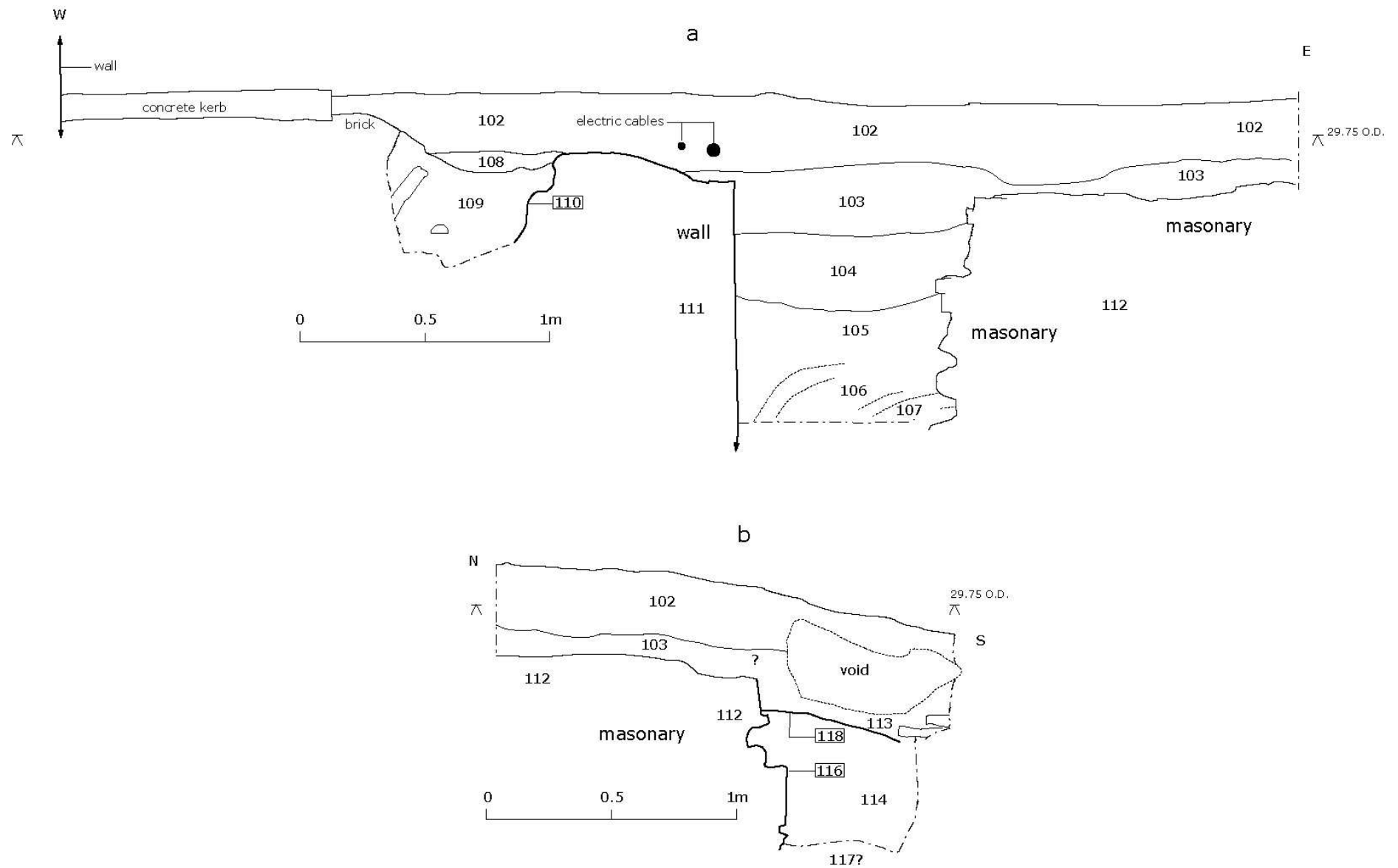


Figure 5: Trench 1. North and east main sections

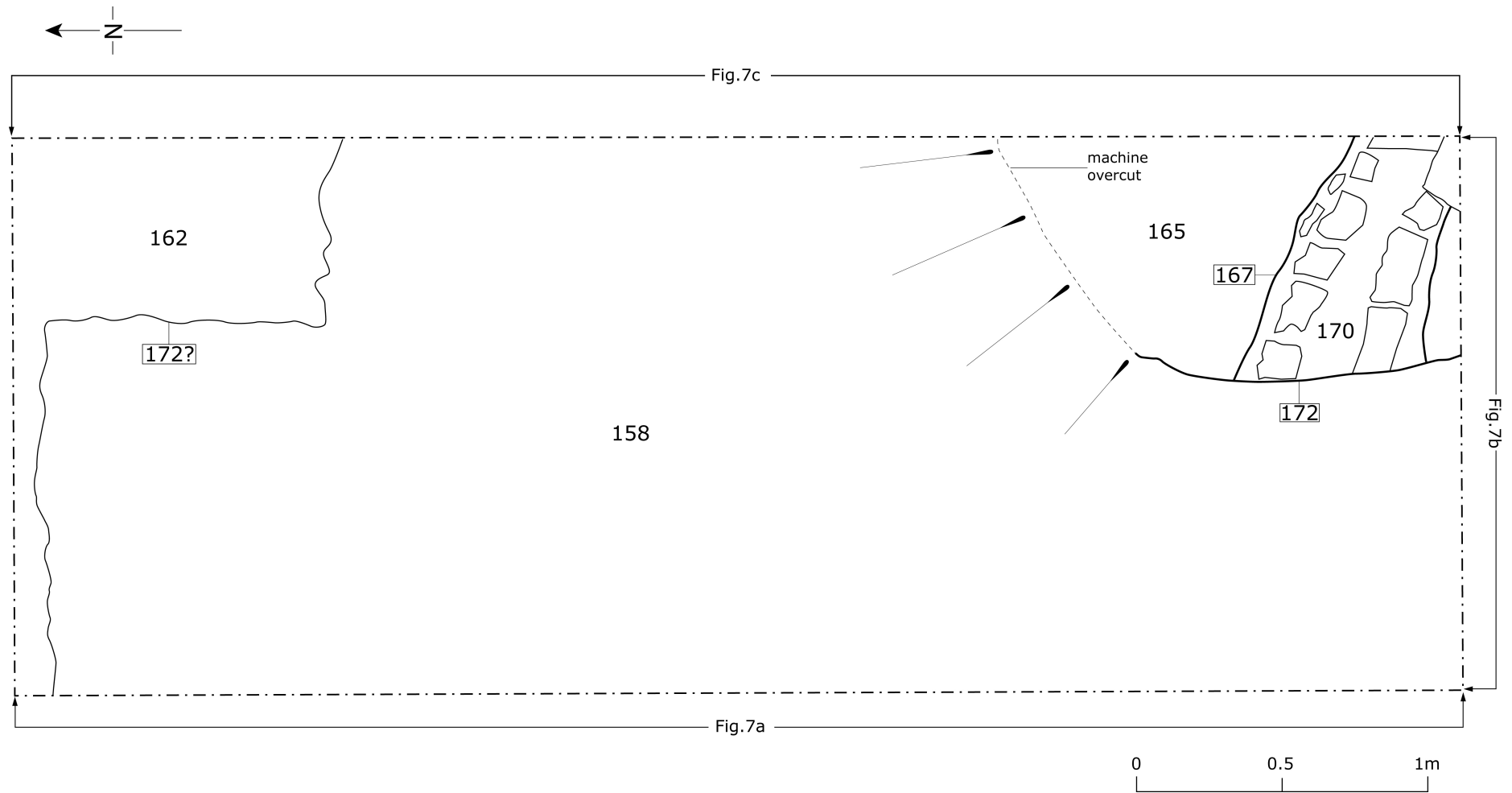


Figure 6: Trench 2. Plan

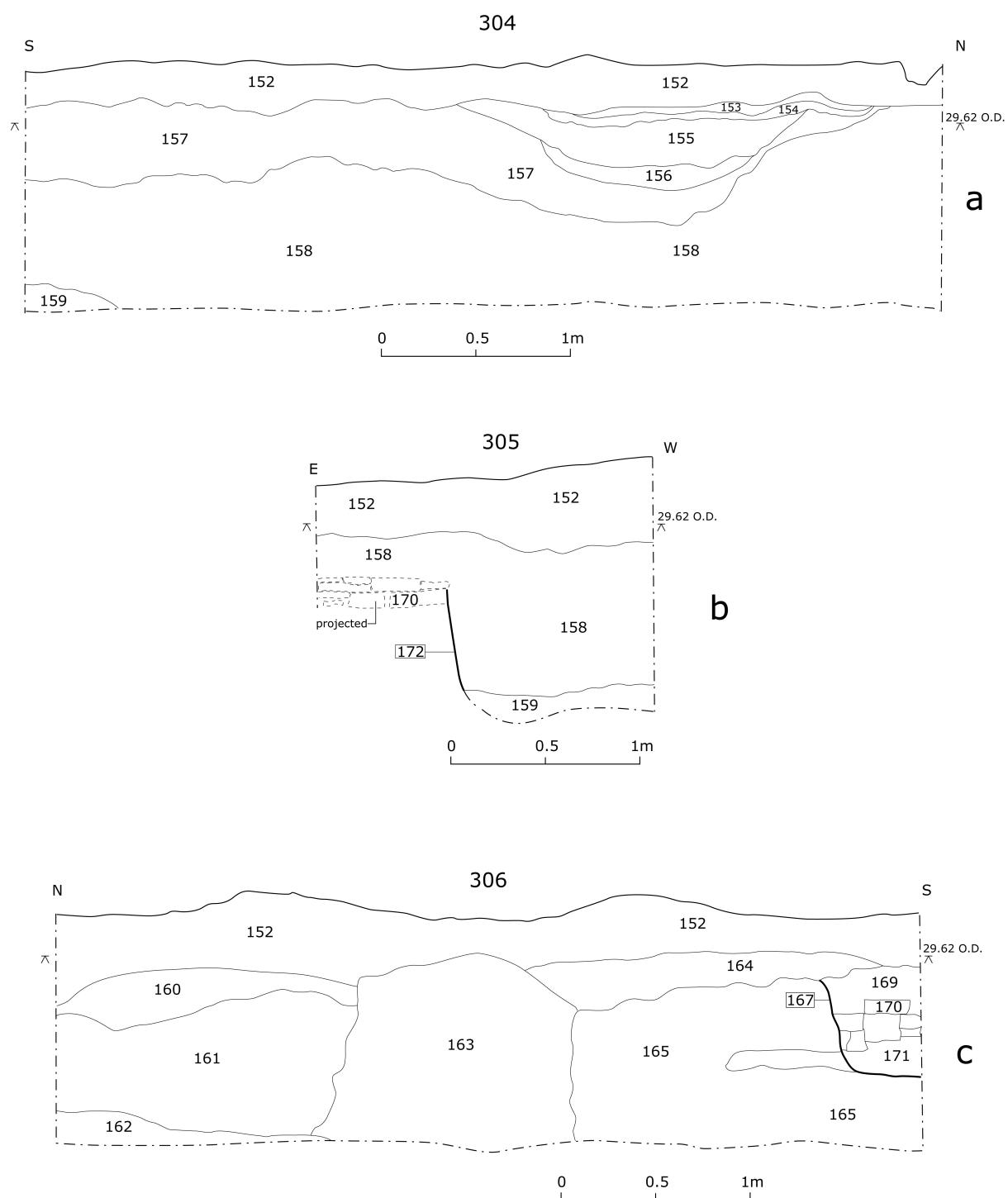


Figure 7: Trench 2. Sections

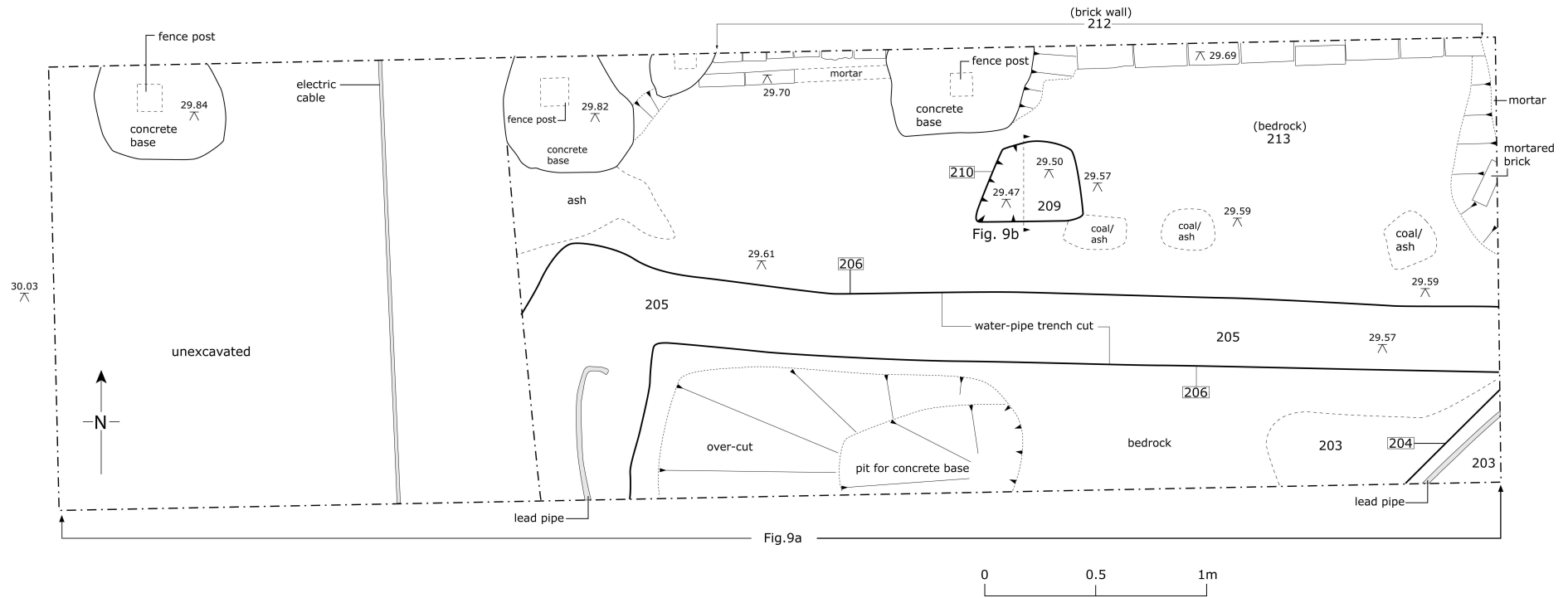


Figure 8: Trench 3. Plan

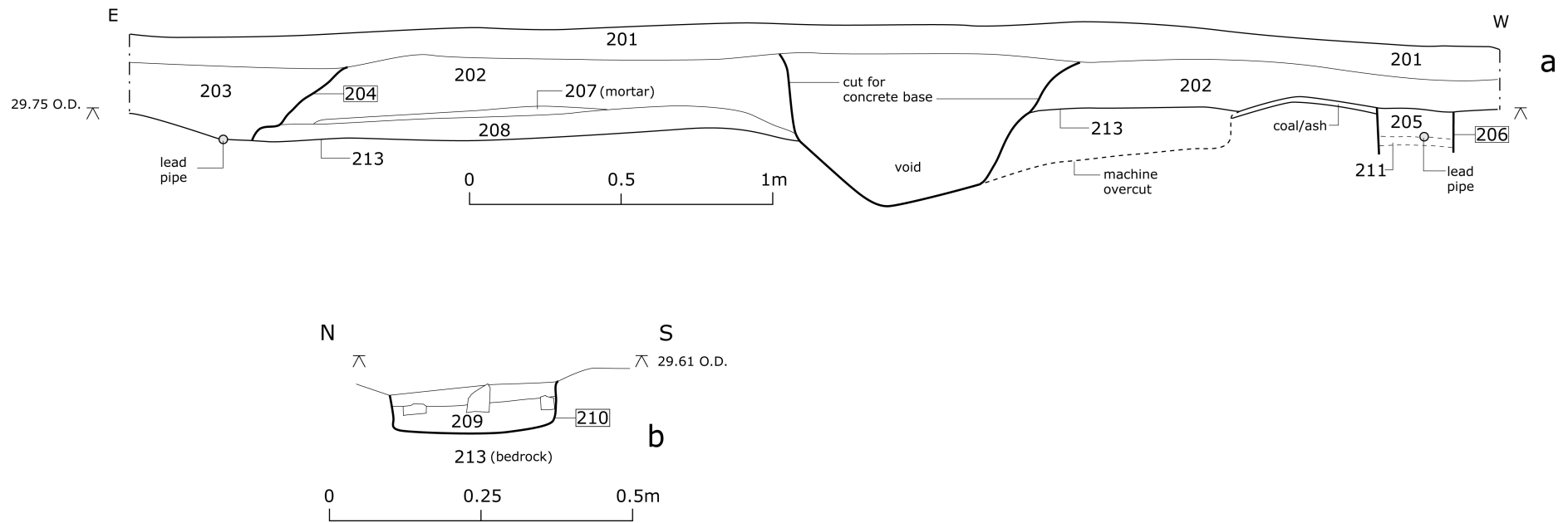


Figure 9: Trench 3. Main south section and section across posthole 110



Plate 1: Location of trenches



Plate 2: Trench 1 View W. Scales 0.5m and 1m



Plate 3: Trench 1, detail of medieval wall 111. View W. Scale 1m



Plate 4: Trench 1, detail of medieval wall 111 and masonry 112. View N. Scale 1m



Plate 5: Trench 1. View 23. Scale 1m

Plate 6: Trench 2, showing drain 170, centre right. View E. Scale 1m

Plate 7: Trench 2, showing drain 170, left. View S. Scale 1m

Plate 8: Trench 3, general view. View W

Plate 9: Trench 2, general view. View S. Scale 1m

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Position: Senior Archaeologist

Signature Date

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Position: Head of Field Services

Signature Date

As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or presentation of this report