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CONWY SEWERAGE AND
SEWAGE DISPOSAL SCHEME
INVESTIGATIONS IN CASTLE SQUARE



Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Ltd

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd Cyf

CONWY SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL SCHEME
INVESTIGATIONS IN CASTLE SQUARE

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for Gwynedd Archaeological Trust 1992

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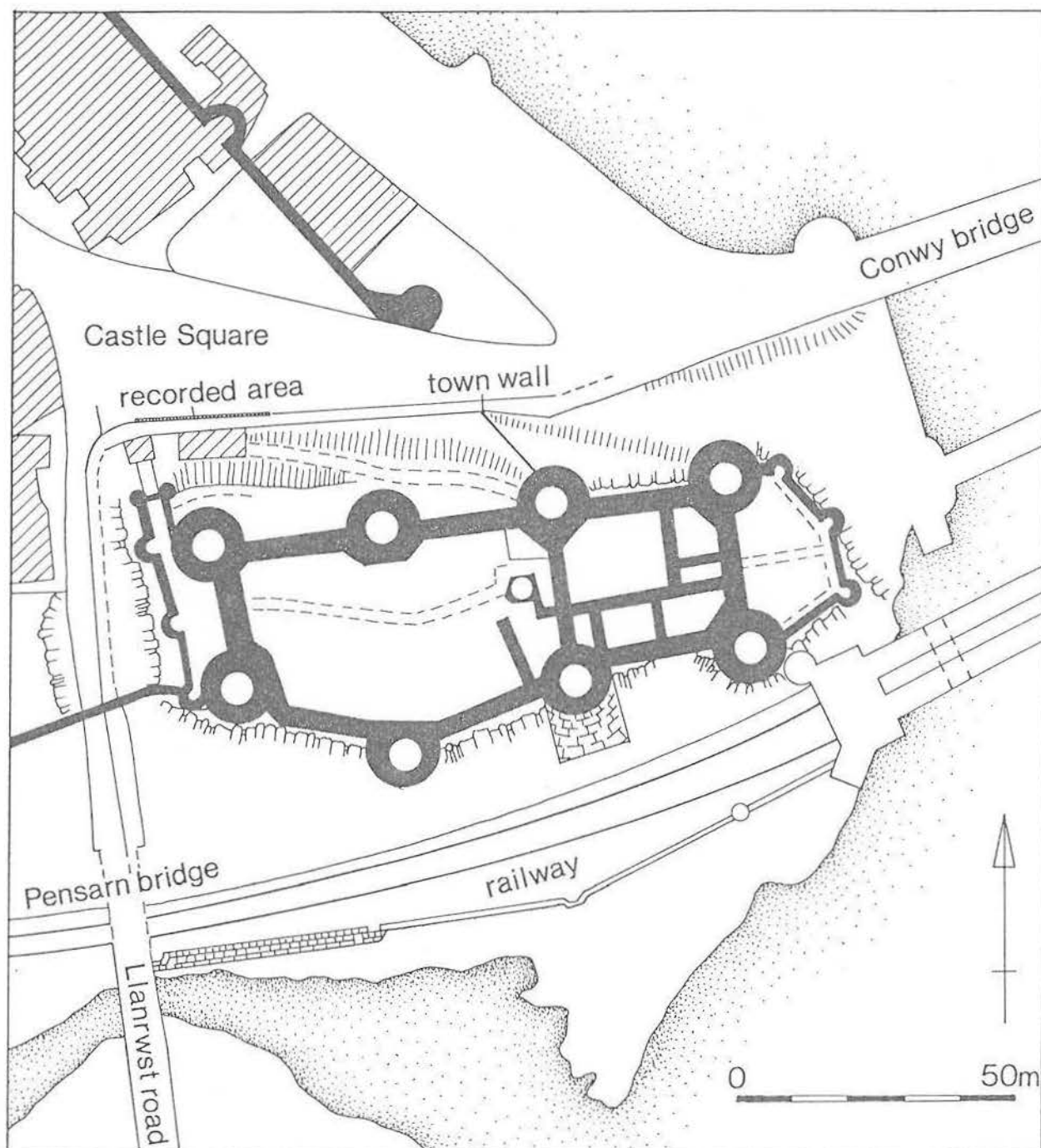


Fig.1 General Location Map

INTRODUCTION

As part of Welsh Water's continuing sewage disposal scheme within the town of Conwy, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust were asked to conduct a watching brief during the laying of a series of pipes along :

- (i) Part of Llanrwst Road, under Pensarn Bridge to Castle Square
- (ii) Castle Square to Conwy Bridge

The excavation work was contracted to DJ Construction by Welsh Water's Engineering and Environmental Consultants Wallace Evans, and the work was carried out in February and March 1992.

BRIEF

The general working agreement between Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) and Welsh Water was as follows :

Provisions were to be made for GAT to record any archaeological / stratigraphic features revealed during the excavation of the trenches.

METHOD

The excavated trenches were 1.5m - 2m wide with depth ranging between 1m and 3m depending on the nature of the bedrock. Occasional bedrock outcrops near the surface resulted in much of the trench, around Pensarn Bridge especially, having to be drilled.

RESULTS

(i) Llanrwst Road and Pensarn Bridge to Castle Square

This trench was dominated by bedrock outcrop, very often lying just under the surface of the road. In areas, the trench was excavated along the same route chosen for previously laid service pipes. This meant that most of the stratigraphy in the Llanrwst Road trench consisted of active and disused service pipes as well as modern cuts and backfill for these pipes. No archaeological features were found along the length of this trench.

(ii) Castle Square to Conwy Bridge

This trench measured up to 50m in length, 1.5m wide, and ran eastwards near the north face of the castle. Due to ongoing excavation of the trench, it was decided to examine the portion which lay in front of the western end of the north castle wall. This 24m long section (Fig. 2), was examined following the laying of the pipe and prior to backfilling (Plates 1 and 2). The majority of the trench was approximately 0.80m deep, increasing to 1.5m deep where the bedrock had been drilled at the extreme west side of the section.

Initial examination of the 24m long section revealed no apparent archaeological features. However, it was decided to draw the section accurately since it was equally important to gain an insight into the general stratigraphy of this part of Castle Square whilst given the opportunity. The section was drawn to a scale of 1:20 and photographed. The stratigraphy of the 24m long north facing section was as follows :

The initial 0.10m in depth consisted of a uniform dark grey, stone filled concrete - the road surface, 001. This overlaid a 0.07m - 0.10m thick black tarmac, 002. Context 003 laid mainly below 002 and consisted of a 0.10m thick dark brown / black sandy fill, compacted with small angular stones, and functioned as a levelling fill for the road above it. Context 003 did not extend fully across the 24m section, but petered out towards the extreme west of the section

extend fully across the 24m section, but petered out towards the extreme west of the section butting against bedrock outcrop 009. Further, on the west side of the section, 002 and 003 sandwiched an additional fill, 008, which comprised of yellow gritty sand, 0.05m in thickness, containing approximately 40% of packed and small angular stones. Context 008 was seen as an additional fill for the road on this west side. Beneath 003, context 004 was a 0.20m thick lens of light yellow / white gritty sand, containing intermittent substantial angular rocks (approximately 0.20 - 0.25 in diameter). This fill was very similar to 008 and probably served the same function. As with 003, context 004 butted against the outcropping bedrock on the extreme west side of the section. Beneath 004 at the eastern-most 3.5m of the trench lay a 0.5m thick fill of dark brown sand filled with thin slabs of shattered slate. Towards the middle of the section, an isolated 1m wide and 0.5m thick layer of modern concrete, 006, cut into 003, 004 and 007. Context 007 formed the probable natural and consisted of dark brown silty sand, containing up to 20% of small angular stones (approximately 0.05m in diameter.) Context 007 was a maximum of 0.40m in depth towards the east side, but was butted against the prementioned bedrock on the extreme west side.

The extreme west end of the trench crossed the line of the stone ramp that originally led from the castle draw bridge northwards into Castle Square. At this point, bedrock lay immediately below the road surface, and any evidence for the ramp had long since disappeared (Plate 3).

While the trench was being extended eastwards towards Conwy Bridge however, traces of the town wall (which had also been reduced to enable the construction of the modern road) again leading from the north face of the castle, could be seen in the section (Plate 4). The wall was represented by a 2m wide cut in the section and consisted of heavily disturbed angular rocks / boulders. The foundation trench for the town wall was at least 1m deep and extended below the base of the trench.

CONCLUSIONS

The absence of archaeological features (apart from traces of the town wall) in Castle Square was beneficial in one way in that the nature of the upper levels of the stratigraphy, in this particular area at least, has been established.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funding from Welsh Water is gratefully acknowledged, as is the co-operation of Wallace Evans Engineering and Environmental Consultants and DJ Construction Contractors.

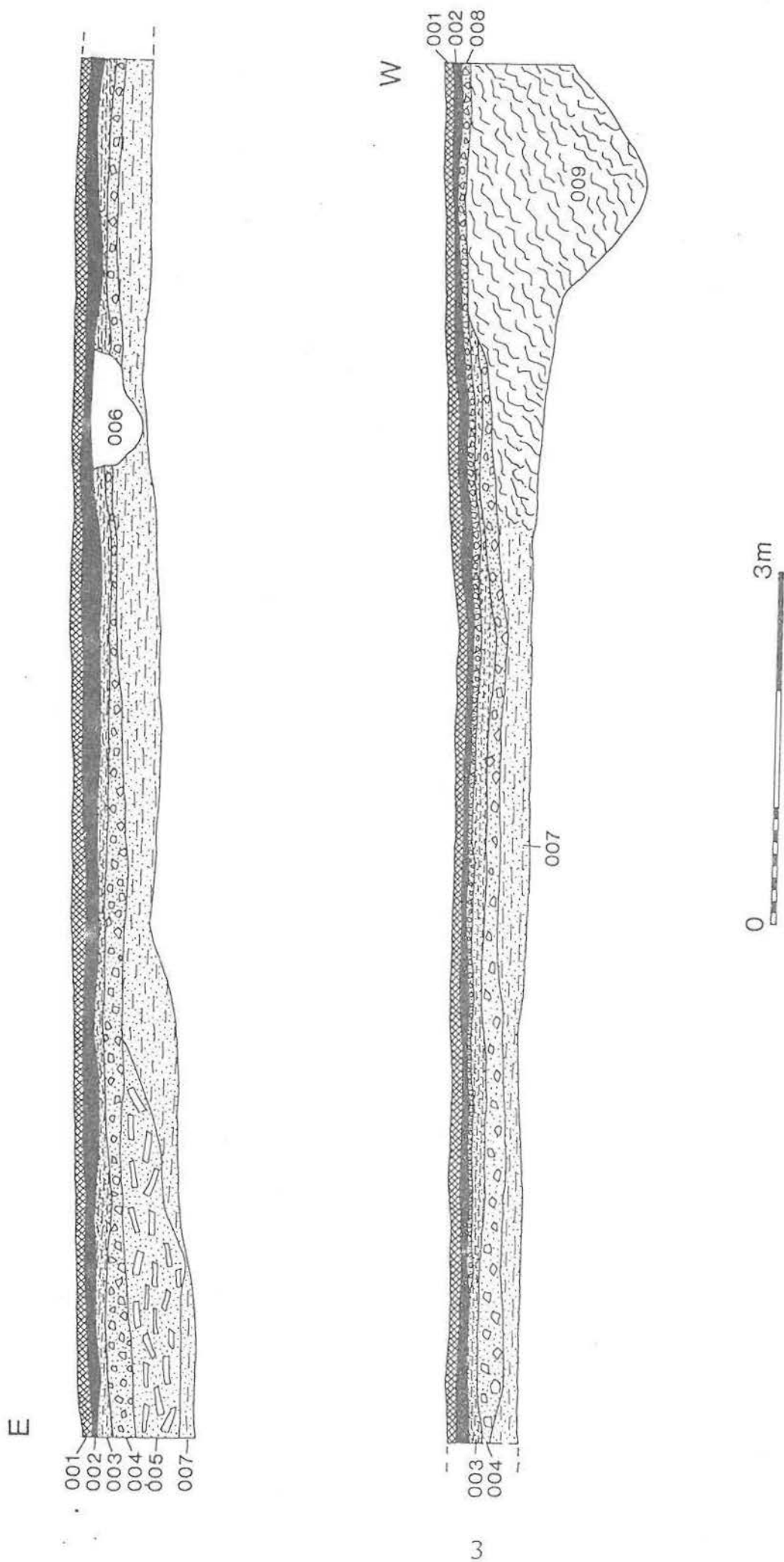


Fig.2 North Facing Section Of Recorded Area

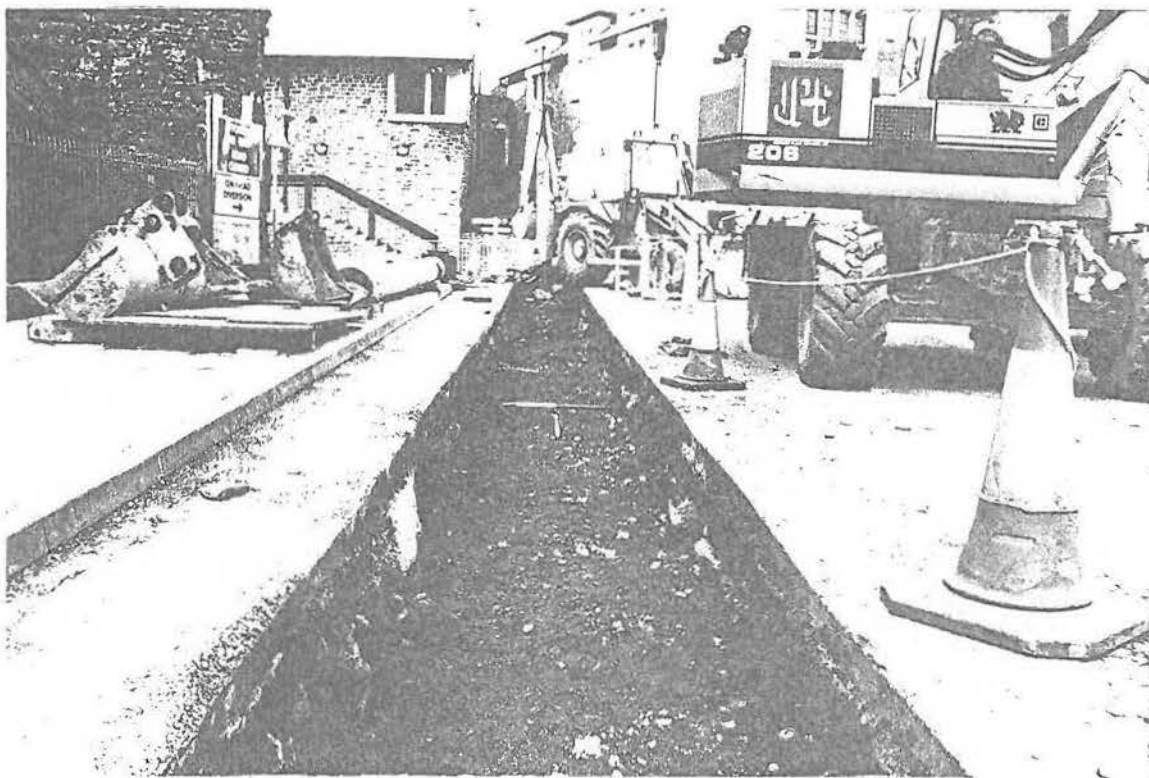


Plate 1. General View Of Recorded Section (from east)

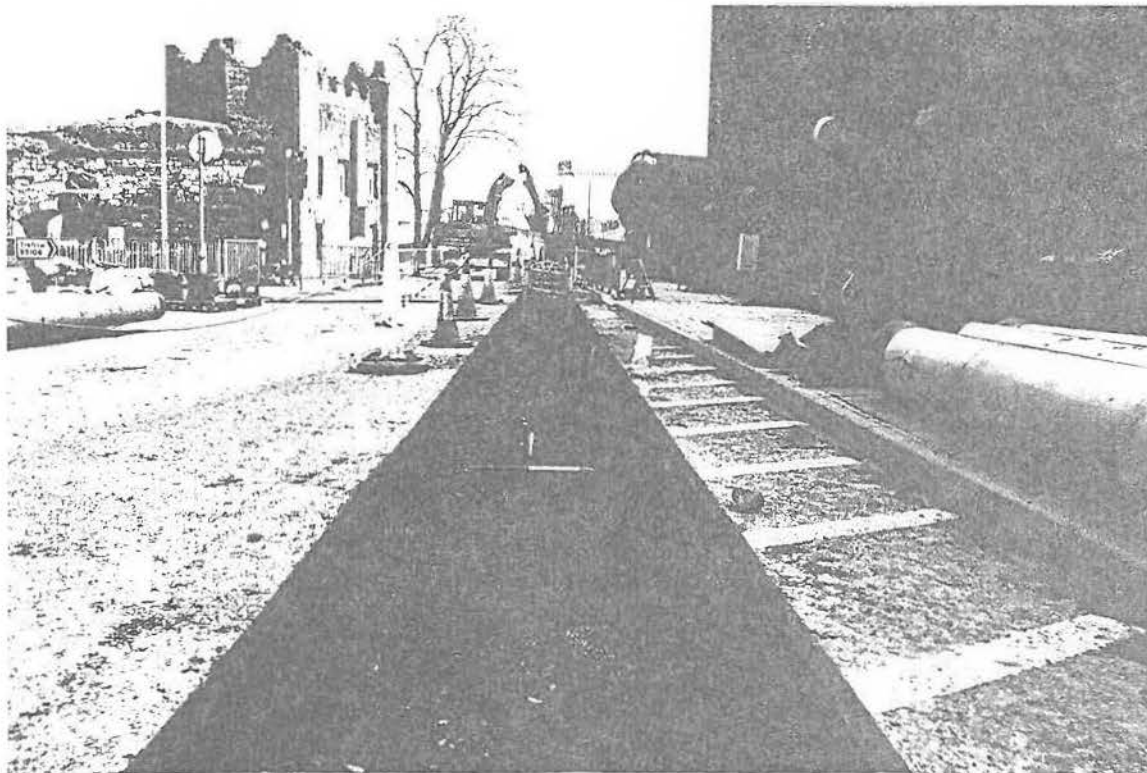


Plate 2. General View Of Recorded Section (from west)

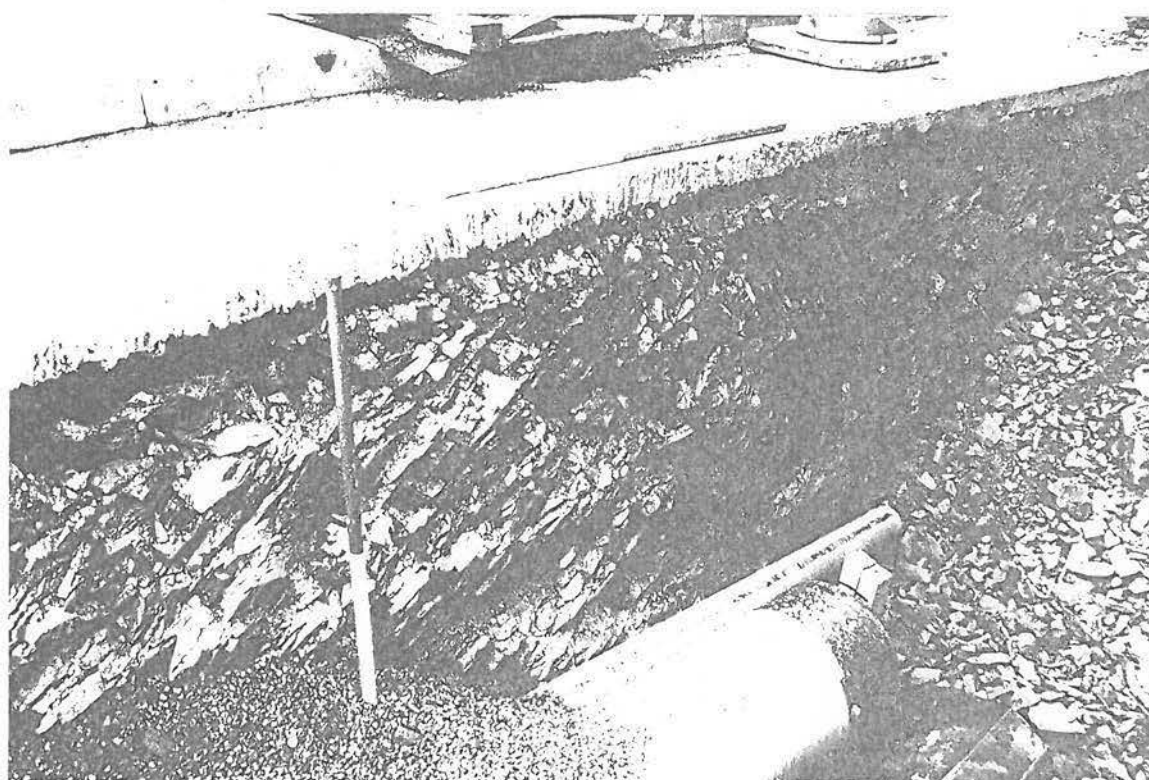


Plate 3. Bedrock Outcrop At West End Of Recorded Trench (south facing)



Plate 4. View Of Town Wall Foundations (south facing)

