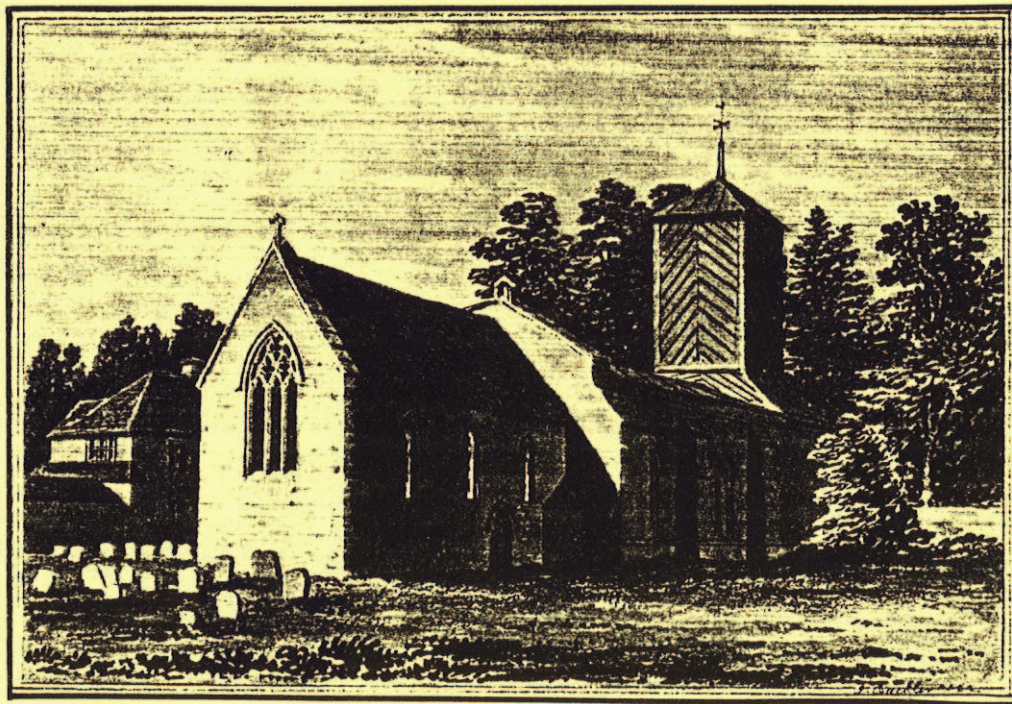


The Coach House, Waterperry House, Waterperry, Oxon.

NGR SP 6295 0634

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeological Unit
January 1997

THE COACH HOUSE
WATERPERRY HOUSE
WATERPERRY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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[The Coach House Waterperry (WAHCH) Watching Brief Report]

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

NGR SP 6295 0634

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Date: 10 JANUARY
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Date: 22 January 1997
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OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

JANUARY 1997

1. Summary

- 1.1. *A Watching Brief was carried at the Coach House, Waterperry, on two lengths of replacement churchyard wall. No significant archaeological deposits were revealed. A few pieces of tile, glass, claypipe and a some of Post Medieval sherds were recovered.*

2. Introduction

- 2.1. On the 2nd and 3rd of January 1997 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a Watching Brief on behalf of Waterperry House in accordance with a Faculty granted by the Diocesan Advisory Committee in respect of rebuilding two short lengths of churchyard wall (Fig. 2). The Watching Brief was carried out in accordance with standard OAU procedures.

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1. The Church of St Mary and Waterperry House are located to the northeast of Waterperry village which lies seven miles northeast of Oxford. The Coach House is North of the Church and Manor (Fig. 1).
- 3.2. St Mary's Church has Saxon fabric within it; a substantial and prosperous settlement, belonging to Robert D'Oyly (Lord of Oxford), is recorded at Waterperry in the Domesday Survey (AD 1086). By the 13th century the settlement had grown more prosperous. Three manors are recorded in the parish along with a large freeholding belonging to Osney Abbey (VCH v, 295-309). This might suggest that since the population had been so large that burials around the church might extend beyond the present limits of the churchyard. Hearth tax returns of the 17th-century show an impoverished parish. The church roof was ruinous in 1520. It is possible that as the Cursons, who owned Waterperry House in the 17th-century, were Catholic and made Waterperry a Catholic centre that the use of St Mary's declined.
- 3.3. St Mary's Church has Saxon, early 13th-century and early 14th-century fabric and was restored in the 1840's (VCH, 306-9, Pevsner 826-8). Waterperry House was rebuilt in 1713 but incorporates a 17th-century wing. The house was altered in the 1820's (VCH, 296 and Pevsner, 828). Many of the outbuildings in the curtilage of Waterperry House are 18th century in date. Most of these buildings are listed and the northern churchyard wall is included for group value.

4. The aim of the Watching Brief.

- 4.1. To preserve by record any archaeological remains (if present) which would be removed by the construction within the development area.
- 4.2. If significant archaeological remains are discovered the OAU would signal to all parties that an archaeological find has been made, for which the resources allocated were not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- 4.3. To make available the results of the investigation.

5. Method

- 5.1. The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) visited the site twice to monitor the dismantling of the old walls and the hand excavation of the foundation trenches for the new walls. A record was made of the dismantling of the old limestone wall and foundations and the hand excavation of the new foundation trenches. The construction work was carried out by volunteers from the School of Economic Science.

6. Results:

- 6.1. Both short lengths of wall **3** and **6** were aligned east-west on the southern wall of the Coach House. Both foundation trenches for the new walls were excavated beyond the bases of old walls and all of the old foundations removed. A single layer of soil was cut by the old foundations trenches. Neither the bottom of this layer nor the natural subsoil were observed.
- 6.2. To the south-west of the Coach House (Fig. 2) the construction trench **2** of the old wall cut soil layer **4** (a grey brown silt loam with mortar grit and small stone pieces) which was over 1 m deep. The foundation trench measured 4.5 m long and was 0.75 m wide and c1 m deep. It contained a foundation comprising limestone **3** bonded with a yellow/grey sandy mortar. Layer **1** was the fill of trench **2** around the stones of the wall. Foundation **3** abutted both the Coach House wall to the east and the southern return of the churchyard wall to the west (Figs 3 and 4).
- 6.3. To the south-east of the Coach House (Fig. 2) the construction trench **5** of the old wall cut soil layer **4** (which was over 0.65 m deep). The foundation trench measured 2.5 m long and was 0.6 m wide and 0.65 m deep. It contained a limestone foundation **6** held together with a yellow/grey sandy mortar. Foundation **6** abutted the Coach House wall to the west. 18th-century finds were recovered from layer **1** around the stones of the wall.

7. Conclusion

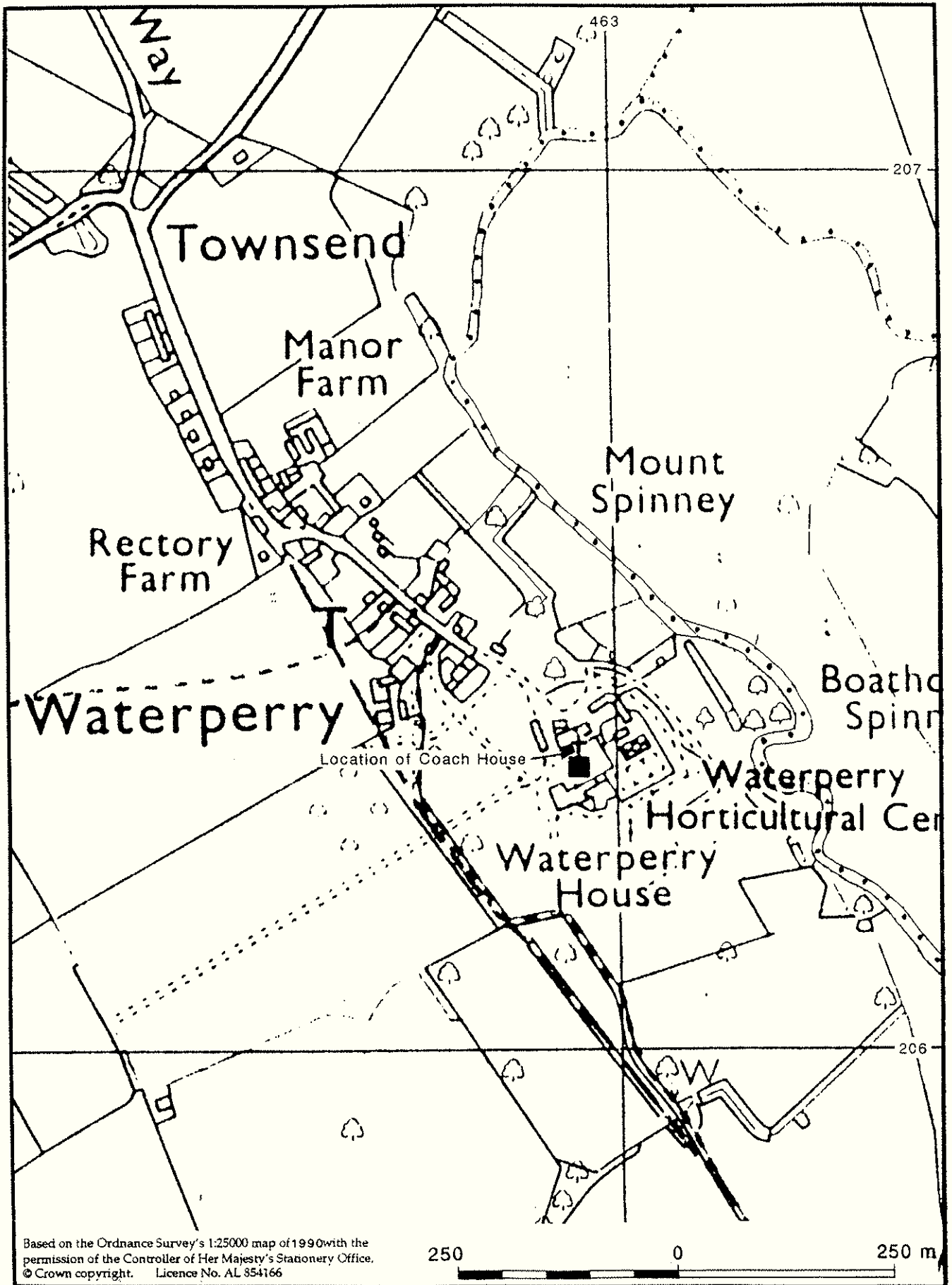
- 7.1. Both short lengths of wall to the southeast and southwest abutted the Coach House. The Coach House is a later addition to the north of the Church and Manor (as the Coach House is not a listed building) and appears to have been inserted through the northern churchyard boundary wall. The cover illustration, an engraving dated to 1822, does not show the north-south boundary wall to the west of the church. It is probable that the churchyard walls are later than 1822. Although sherds of 18th-century pottery were recovered from the backfill around the walls these may be residual. Perhaps the wall was added when the church was restored in the 1840's. No human bone or other material was recovered from the deep soil seen in the sides of the foundation trenches to suggest that the churchyard had extended beyond its present boundary.

8. Bibliography and references

Pevsner, Buildings of England: Oxfordshire 826-828

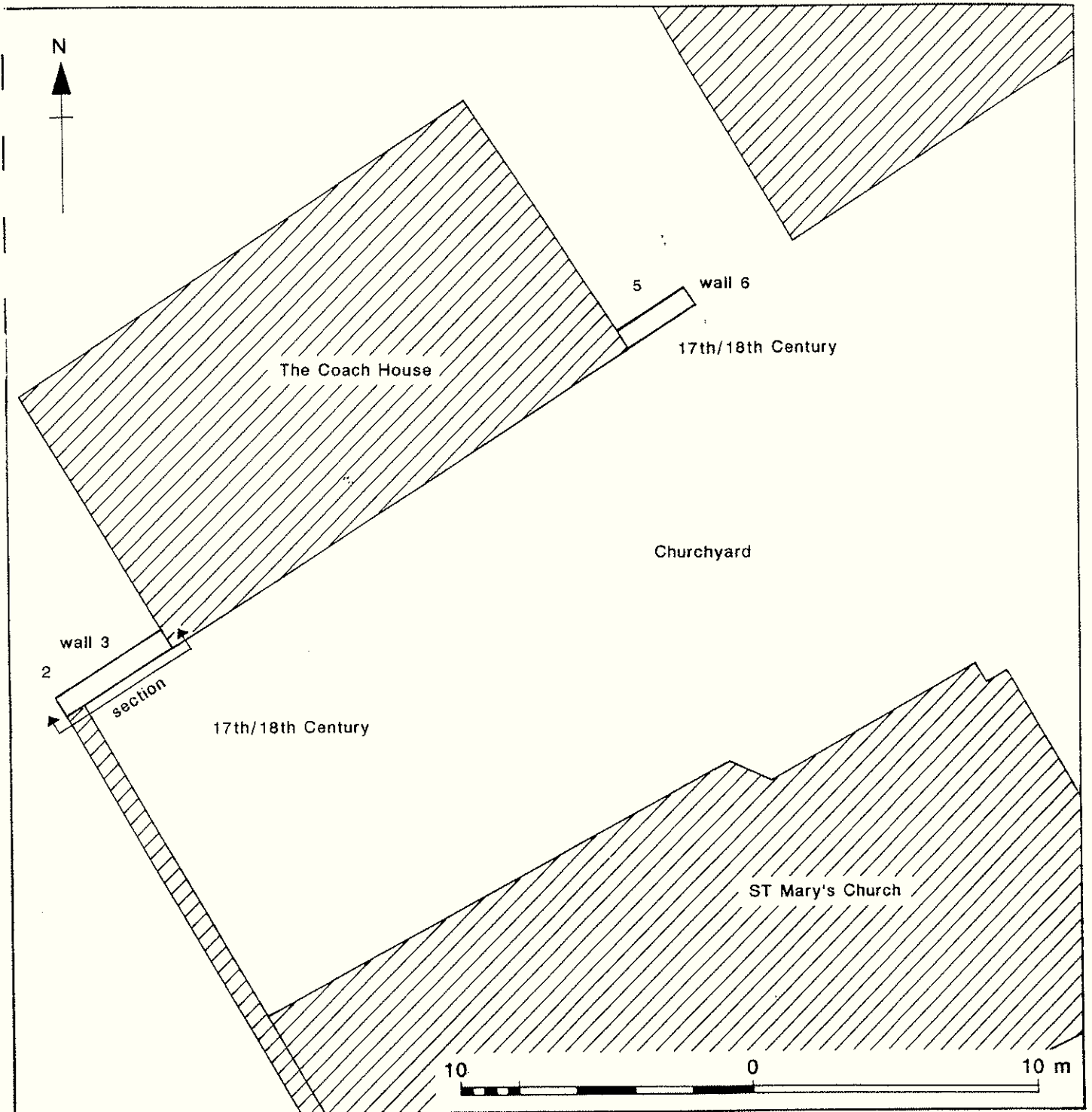
Victoria County History: Oxfordshire V, 295-307

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992)



Location of site

figure 1



Location of wall foundation trenches

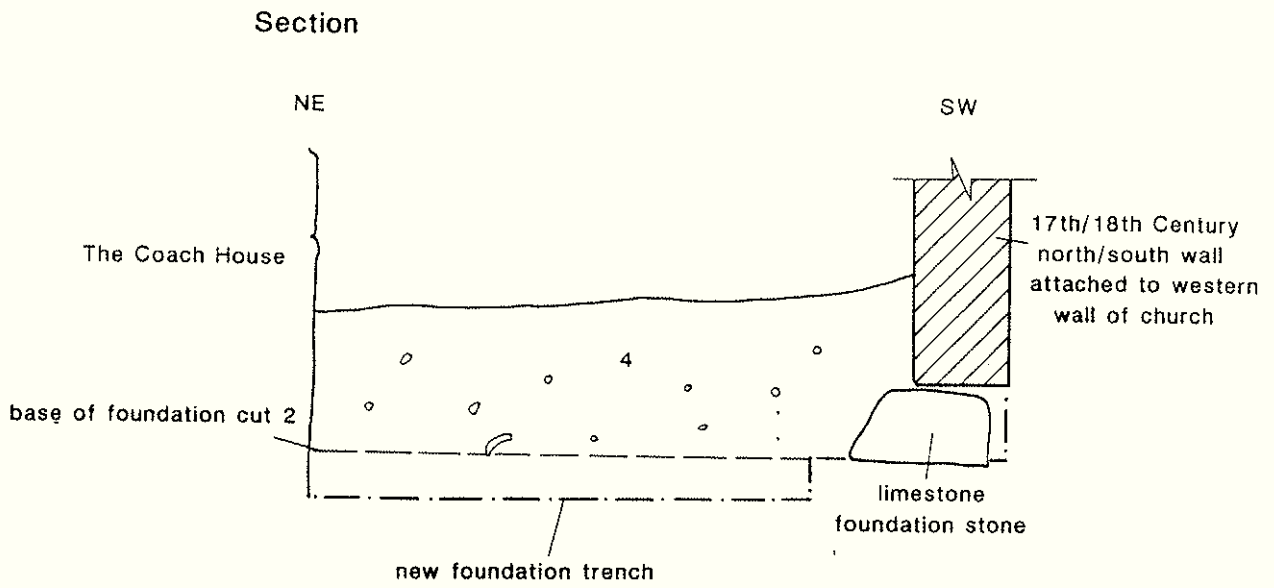


figure 3

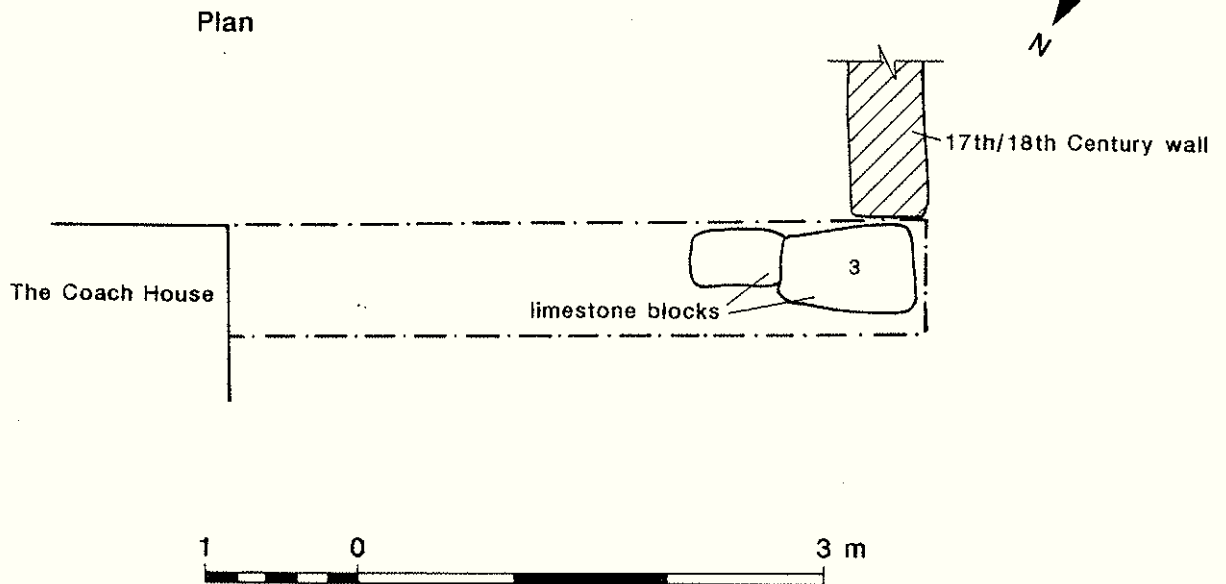


figure 4

Section and plan of foundation wall construction trench



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