

Home Park

North Boundary Wall

Hampton Court Palace



Historic Building Recording



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Home Park North Boundary Wall, Hampton Court Palace

Building Survey Client Report

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Home Park North Boundary Wall, Hampton Court Palace

Summary

In September 2008, Oxford Archaeology carried out building recording and watching brief works within the Home Park North Boundary Wall at Hampton Court Palace. The work was commissioned by Historic Royal Palaces in advance of some alterations to the historic structure. The proposed alterations involved the removal of part of the wall, both above and below the ground, in order to open a new gateway to provide an easier access to this part of Home Park and preserving an older gateway to the west.

The foundation of the wall was exposed using a mechanical digger and the recording and archaeological investigation produced a record of the wall including the foundations, comprising of elevations, section, description and photographic archive.

The land forming Home Park was originally enclosed by Cardinal Wolsey, probably using timber palings, to form parkland for the new palace. Documentary evidence tells us how Henry VIII used the area surveyed as part of a course for hunting hares. Later bricks walls replaced the timber palings and the wall surveyed was constructed in the mid 18th century, probably as part of ongoing works enclosing and maintaining the Royal Stud. Later small structures were built onto the wall forming paddocks for the Royal stud complex. These have since been removed, however the adjacent wall south face has scars and holes showing their location.

Hampton Court Palace is clearly among the most significant historical sites in the country and the current project has provided an opportunity to carry out recording of one of the lesser known parts of the estate.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by Historic Royal Palaces to provide a record of a section of the north boundary wall of Home Park at Hampton Court Palace.
- 1.1.2 The wall is a long structure which runs parallel to the current Hampton Court road to the east of the main Palace. This section is going to be demolished in order to open a new gateway which will allow transportation access into Home Park particularly during events. The opening of this gateway would avoid the necessity for dismantling and remounting of a nearby set of ornamental gates which are currently used during events and thus preserve the historic entrance.
- 1.1.3 Hampton Court Palace is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Surrey No. 83) and is of outstanding national importance.

1.2 Aims and objectives

- 1.2.1 The two main aims of the work were to produce an archive record of the wall and to provide an indication of its date and phasing. In addition, Oxford Archaeology investigated and recorded the form of foundations of the wall as well as the damage that these might have suffered due to the proximity of the adjacent chestnut trees' roots.
- 1.2.2 The work did not aim to produce a brick-by-brick recording of the wall, but to show the main features of the section of the structure that will be demolished.

1.3 Methodology

- 1.3.1 The recording of the wall was carried out on September 29th 2008 by Rafael Martinez-Jausoro from the Oxford Archaeology Buildings Department. The method of recording was carried out in agreement with William Page, Surveyor of Fabric at Hampton Court Palace.
- 1.3.2 The excavation was done mechanically with a mini-digger driven by a professional operator and supervised at all times by Oxford Archaeology staff. These trenches were excavated against the wall's southern face in order to show the foundations and allow a full recording of the whole structure from the bottom to the top. The cleaning process was completed manually with trowel and brush in order to get a clearer picture for the drawn, descriptive and photographic recording. Once the investigation and survey work was finished, the trenches were backfilled.
- 1.3.3 The recording process comprised three principal elements. The *photographic survey* consisted of general shots and specific details and was undertaken using 35mm black and white print film and with a digital camera. A 0.5m scale was used where appropriate.
- 1.3.4 The *drawn survey* focused on the two parts of wall whose foundations were exposed by the mini-digger as the rest of the section is regular and featureless. The drawings were done on archivally stable permatrace at a scale of 1:20.
- 1.3.5 The *descriptive survey* complemented the other two records and added further analytical and descriptive detail.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The building of a Royal Palace

- 2.1.1 The Knights Hospitallers acquired the manor of Hampton in 1236 and used the land as a grange. Lord Daubney purchased the lease for Hampton Court in 1495 and began buildings works to create an estate of some importance. Cardinal Wolsey acquired the lease of Hampton Court in 1514 and amongst the earliest works was the construction of base court between 1514-1522. When Henry VIII acquired Hampton Court from Wolsey in 1529 he continued the rebuilding and expansion of the Palace on a grand scale.
- 2.1.2 Later monarchs continued to rebuild and expand the palace most notably in the late 17th century when Christopher Wren demolished a large part of the Tudor palace and rebuilt it in a baroque style for William and Mary. Hampton Court remained a Royal residence until 1838 when Queen Victoria opened the gardens and state apartments to the public.

2.2 Home Park north boundary wall

- 2.2.1 A large area which had previously been used as open grazing land was enclosed as a park during the 16th century, probably by Wolsey using timber palings (Thurley 2003, 97). Henry VIII constructed walls along the present Hampton Court Road which separates Bushy Park from Home Park and probably along the line of the north boundary wall which forms the subject of the current study. We know that in 1547 the ground to the south of the wall surveyed was part of the 'Course'. As a result of this enclosing, the Course became a suitable showground for deer coursing with greyhounds. With a tapering shape, a standing was built at the widest end so spectators could view the sport. The House Park which was located to the south of the course was used to hold fallow deer. The parks were described in 1592 by John Norden as 'two parkes, the one of Deare, the other of hares, both invironed with wals of bricke, the south side of the Deare parke, excepted, which is paled and invironed with the Thamise' (Thurley 2003, 97).
- 2.2.2 The Royal stud was begun by William III and housed in paddocks and stables on both sides of the Kingston Road. The stud was maintained by later monarchs and eventually expanded by George IV in 1812 (Victoria County History) and included 17 paddocks in Home Park. Henry Sayer's plan of 1841 (Fig 3) shows these paddocks had stables built at intervals along the wall, with enclosures running southwards and separated by some sort of fences or enclosing walls.

3 STRUCTURE DESCRIPTION AND FIELDWORK

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The wall runs along the south side of Hampton Court road, to the east of the Palace, and forms the northern boundary wall of Home Park to the south. The western half of the wall is orientated broadly west to east while the eastern half turns slightly northwards to run from SW to NE. It is in the western half where the gateway will be opened and where the survey was undertaken (Plate 1). The location of the proposed opening in the wall is c.500 m to the north-east of Hampton Court Palace.

3.2 General description of wall

- 3.2.1 The wall is a brick built plain structure with some ornamental gateways further to the west from the spot where the new gateway will be opened. The main fabric is approximately 0.44m thick and 4m high from the bottom of the foundations to the top.

- The level of the ground is different at each side of the wall with the south face approximately 2.74m high above the ground whereas the north face is 2.24m. (Fig. 4)
- 3.2.2 The wall has a 0.24m wide brick coping three courses high in a stretcher bond (Plate 2). The brick coping extends out from the face of the wall but returns to a squared apex at the top. The coping bricks are cut to form a flat angled surface.
- 3.2.3 The main section of the wall is 2.15m high, excluding the brick coping and the plinth (Plate 3). It consists of 28 courses of yellow/rose coloured bricks laid in Flemish bond. However, the apparent colour of the bricks on the south face is changeable due to the wearing and any adjacent vegetation. The lower 0.5m (including the plinth described in 3.2.4) and the upper 1.5m (including the coping described above) have abundant lichens on them whereas the middle part presents a colour closer to the original. These variations are due to the sunlight they receive: the bottom is covered by high grass and the top by the shade of the thick trees, being only the middle part exposed to the sun, which stops the lichen from growing. Therefore, these changes of colour are not likely to represent different phases.
- 3.2.4 The plinth is 0.65m wide, about half brick thicker on both north and south sides (Plate 5). The top brick is cut to slope down gradually to match the depth of the plinth. The brick type is the same as for the main construction, however the bricks are laid in English bond. It rises about 4 or 5 courses from the soil, depending on the slightly irregular ground level. The foundation level construction is described below in § 3.3.
- 3.2.5 The bricks used in the wall construction are approximately 0.21m long, 0.1m wide and 0.66m high. The colour varies from a pale yellow and pale rose to darker yellow and rose. It has a greyish white coloured lime mortar which was solid to the touch. The brick size, mortar and colour suggests that the wall is constructed of 'London' stock bricks dating to the mid 18th century (Type O on Daphne Ford's Brick Typology).
- 3.2.6 The wall has some marks including later inserted holes, grooves and scars (Plates 5 & 6). The holes are cut into the primary phase brickwork and most have some timber and darker grey mortar set within and the scars were also cut into the primary brickwork. It is likely that these probably relate to the paddocks and stables built for the expansion of the Royal Stud by George VI. The plan of Hampton Court by Henry Sayer (1841) clearly shows the paddocks with buildings adjoining the wall.
- 3.2.7 On the north side of the wall and not visible from the side in which the intervention was done, there are also some stretches of wall framed by buttresses. These buttresses are 0.58m wide and they are 2.63m one from the other (Plate 7). The south face of these sections of wall between the buttresses present yellow bricks and they look more recent than the rest. They are all out of the boundaries of the section surveyed.

3.3 Trenching investigation

- 3.3.1 The section of wall selected for the location of the gateway is approximately at the half way point of the western section of the whole northern boundary wall. (described above in 3.1.1). Since the precise location had not yet been decided, a length of c.17m was marked as suitable for the survey by William Page (Surveyor of Fabric). The western point of this length is located at c.47m from a secondary wall to the west running north-south and abutting the northern boundary wall.
- 3.3.2 Two locations were marked within the 17m length to dig the trenches. The first of them was located at 55.1m from the wall previously mentioned to the west, (8.1m from the initial point of the 17 m length) and it was 1.7m long (Fig. 5). The second trench was a distance of 2.4m from the first, being located at 59.2m from the wall to the west, at

12.2m from the initial point of the extension and it was 1.9m long (Fig. 6). These locations were selected to carry out the excavation as there is a clearing in the row of trees adjacent to the wall. The minor presence of roots would make the exploratory work easier and quicker, and it is also more likely that this area would be used for the new gate as it would preserve the trees within the park boundary.

- 3.3.3 The trenches were excavated down to approximately 1.5m below the ground level on the south side (Plates 8 & 9). Once the process of excavation was finished, the full height of the plinth and the foundation of the wall were fully exposed. Once the recording process was finished, the trenches were filled back as requested.
- 3.3.4 The plinth and foundation are 1.2m high consisting of 13 courses with the top 9 courses of the plinth laid in an English bond. The 4 courses of the foundations project half a brick from the face and they are laid in header bond. The brickwork rests on a layer of ceramic building material and rubble of a light red colour. It appeared to be solid while it was compacted in the wall but once it fell off from the foundations it was clearly a loose and friable material. The bottom of this layer is quite irregular although in general is 0.4m thick (which is included in the overall 4 m measurement given for the height of the above and below-ground wall). Therefore, the portion of wall buried including foundations is 1.25m on the southern side and 1.75m on the northern side.
- 3.3.5 The structure rests on a light brown layer of sandy clay of thin grain and few inclusions. Two animal bones were found as well as occasional stones, the biggest of them having an approximate measurement of 0.15 x 0.10 x 0.5m. This sandy clay could have been deposited prior to the building of the wall. A much harder and compact layer with abundant gravel was underneath at a depth of 1.45m below the ground level on the south side. This layer was not excavated and it is likely to be the intact natural subsoil.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1.1 In September 2008 Oxford Archaeology undertook a building survey in Home Park at Hampton Court Palace. This work aimed to record a wall as well as providing some conclusions about its phasing and date. A section of the wall will be removed to open a gateway which will give an easy access to Home Park from the north.
- 4.1.2 The investigation involved some mechanical excavation to expose the whole structure including the foundations. It revealed the different constructive parts of the wall with different thickness and different bonds as well as rubble on which the structure rests.
- 4.1.3 The brick type and bond suggests the wall dates to the mid 18th century with no obvious evidence found for earlier boundary structures. No evidences of phasing or later structures abutting the wall were found within the section studied however adjacent sections preserve features such as later inserted holes and scars of what probably were enclosures connected to the Royal Stud in the 19th century.

Rafael Martinez-Jausoro

February 2009

APPENDIX A BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location

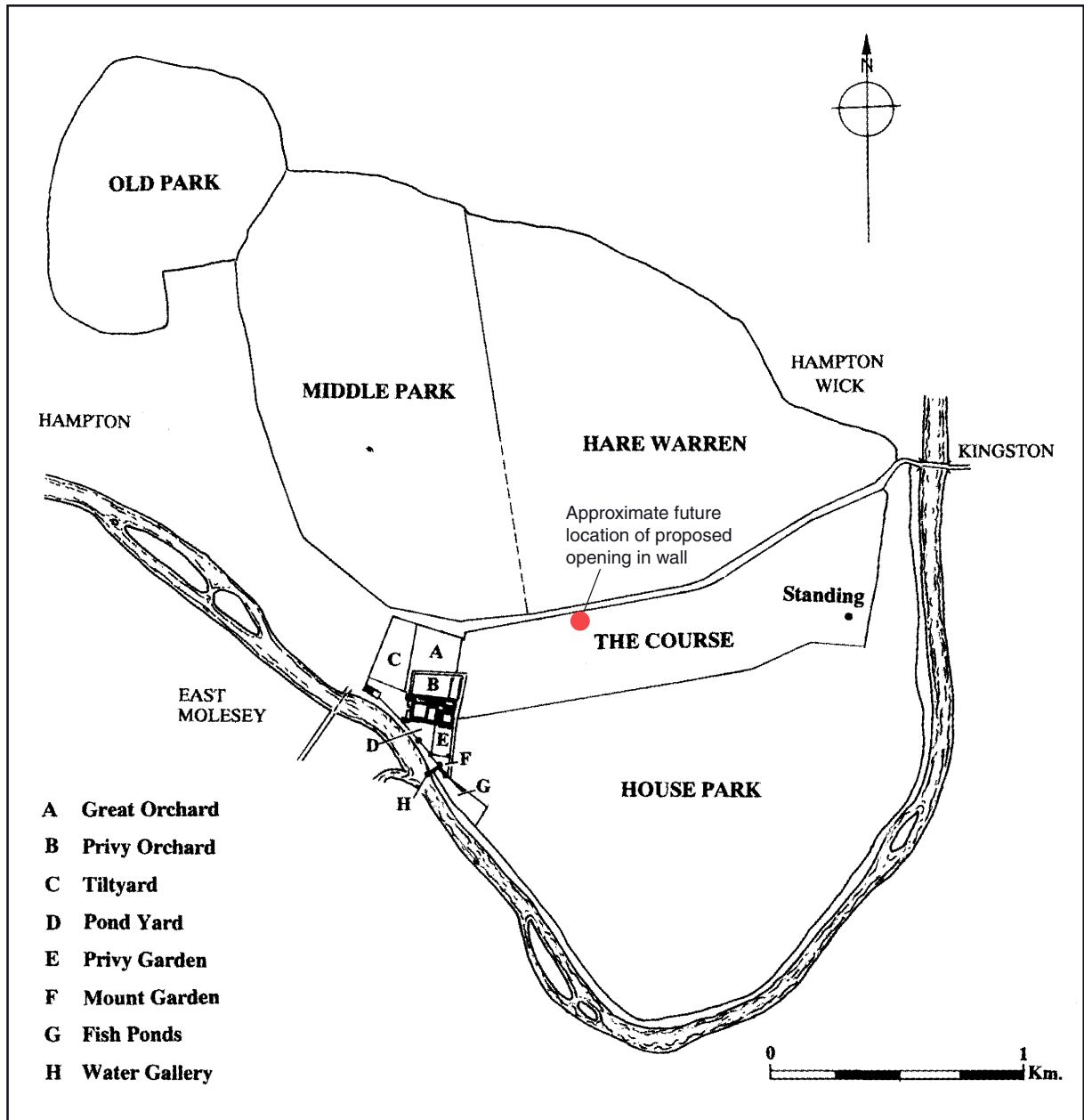


Figure 2 : Plan of the Hampton Court Estate, 1547

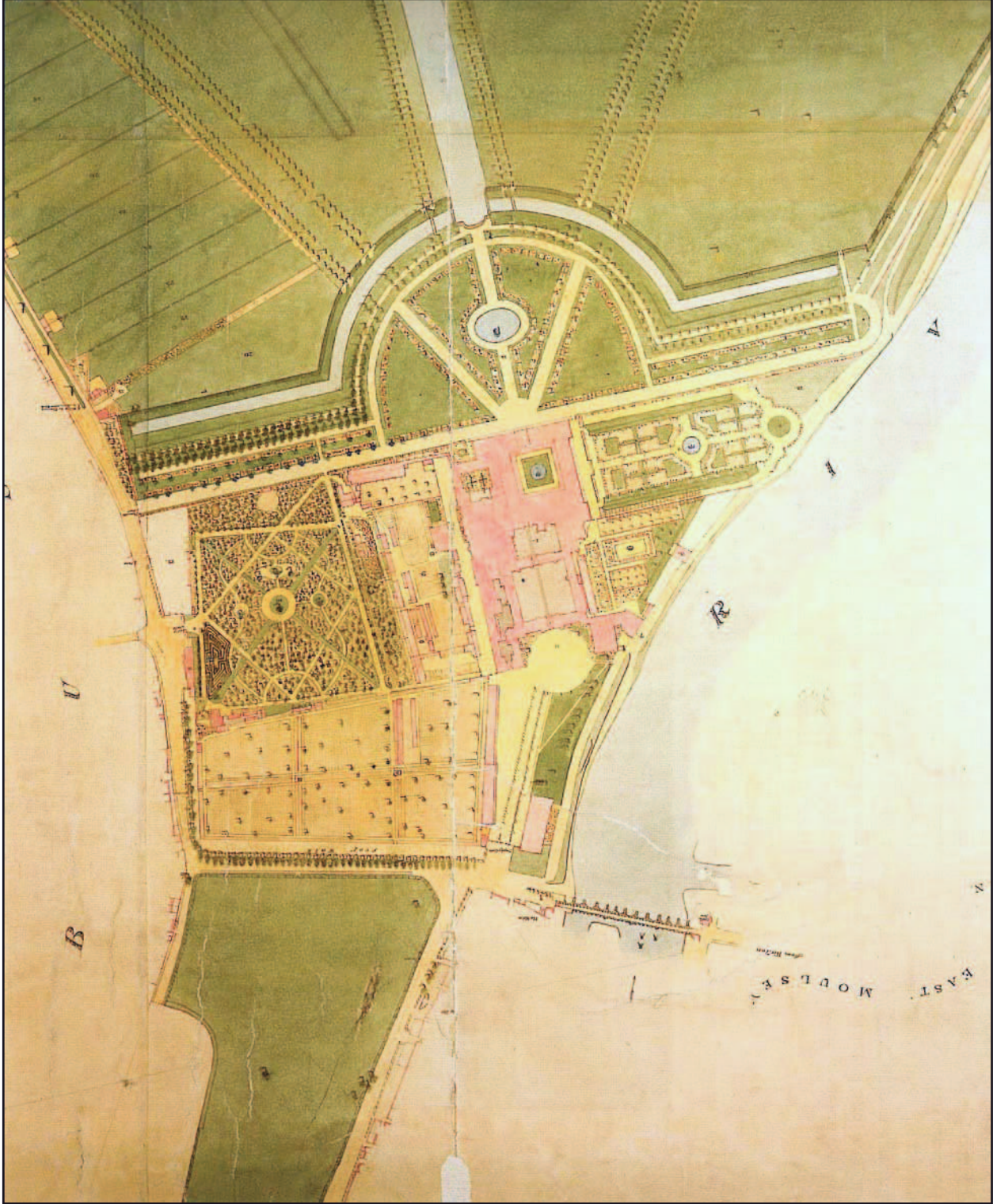


Figure 3 : Detail of plan by Henry Sayer (1841). The Royal Stud paddocks are shown on the top left corner of page

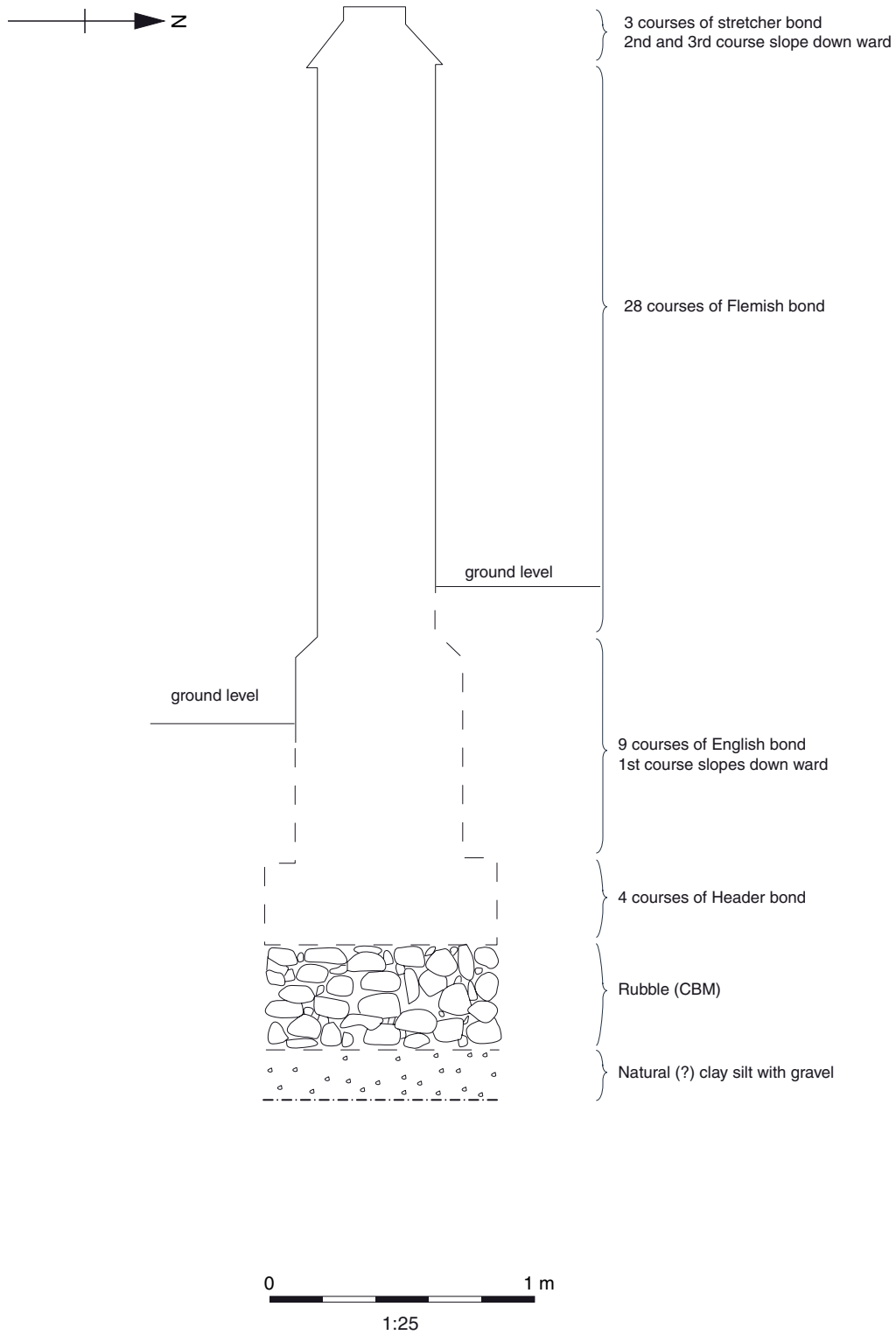


Figure 4 : Section of the wall redrawn from sketch SK01 supplied by Gilmore Hankey Kirke Architects

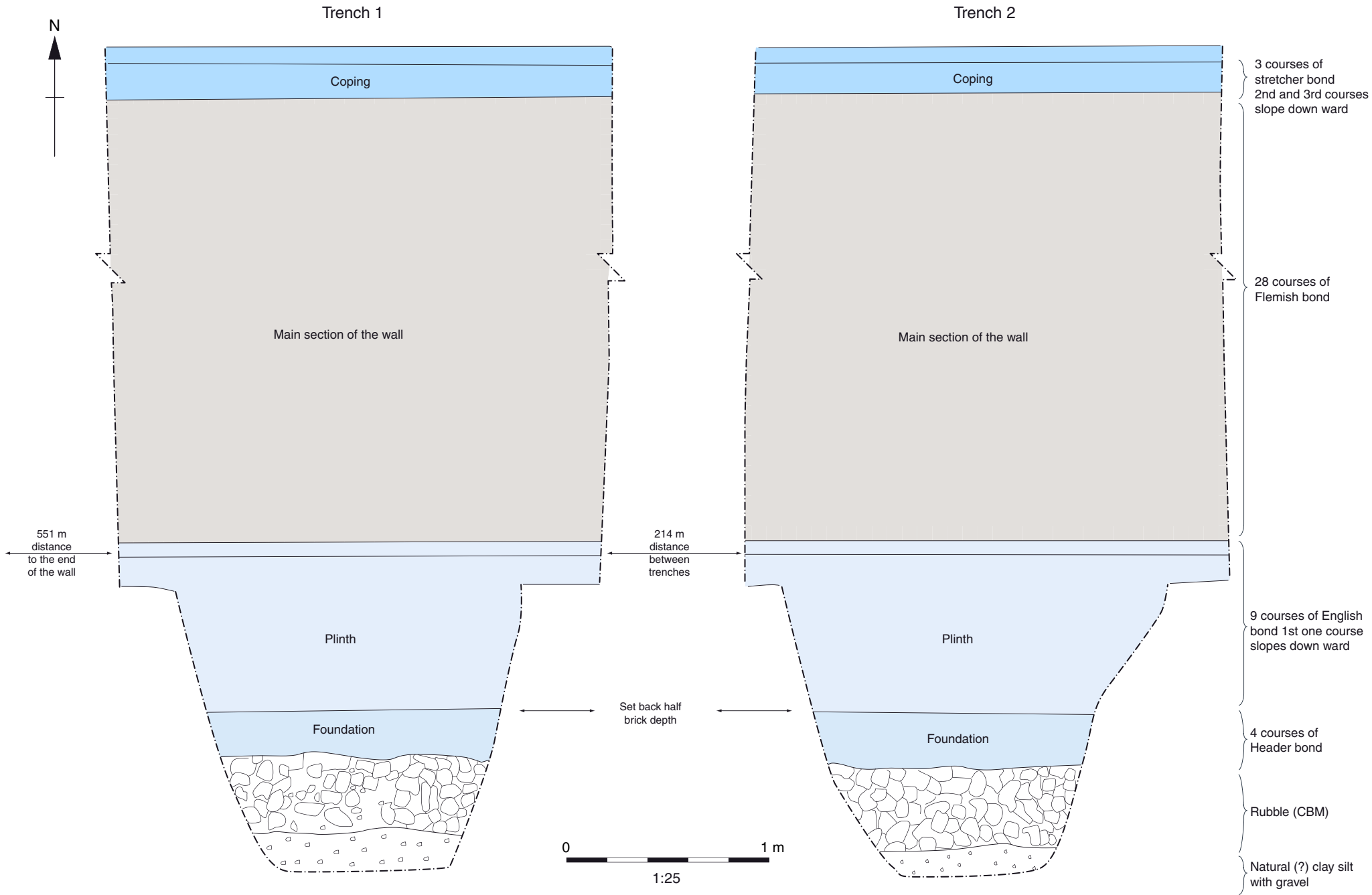


Figure 5 : Trenches 1 and 2 and elevation of the wall



Plate 1 : General view of the section facing south



Plate 2 : Brick coping detail (south face)

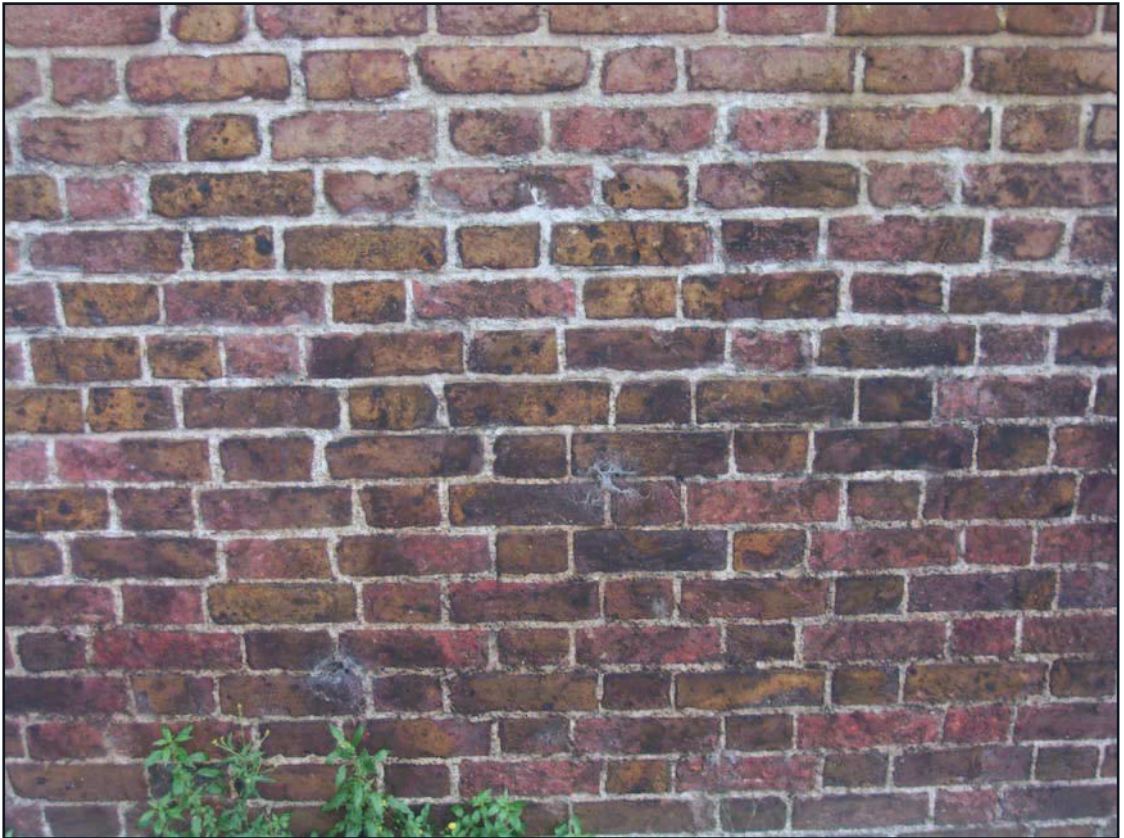


Plate 3 : Main fabric (south face)

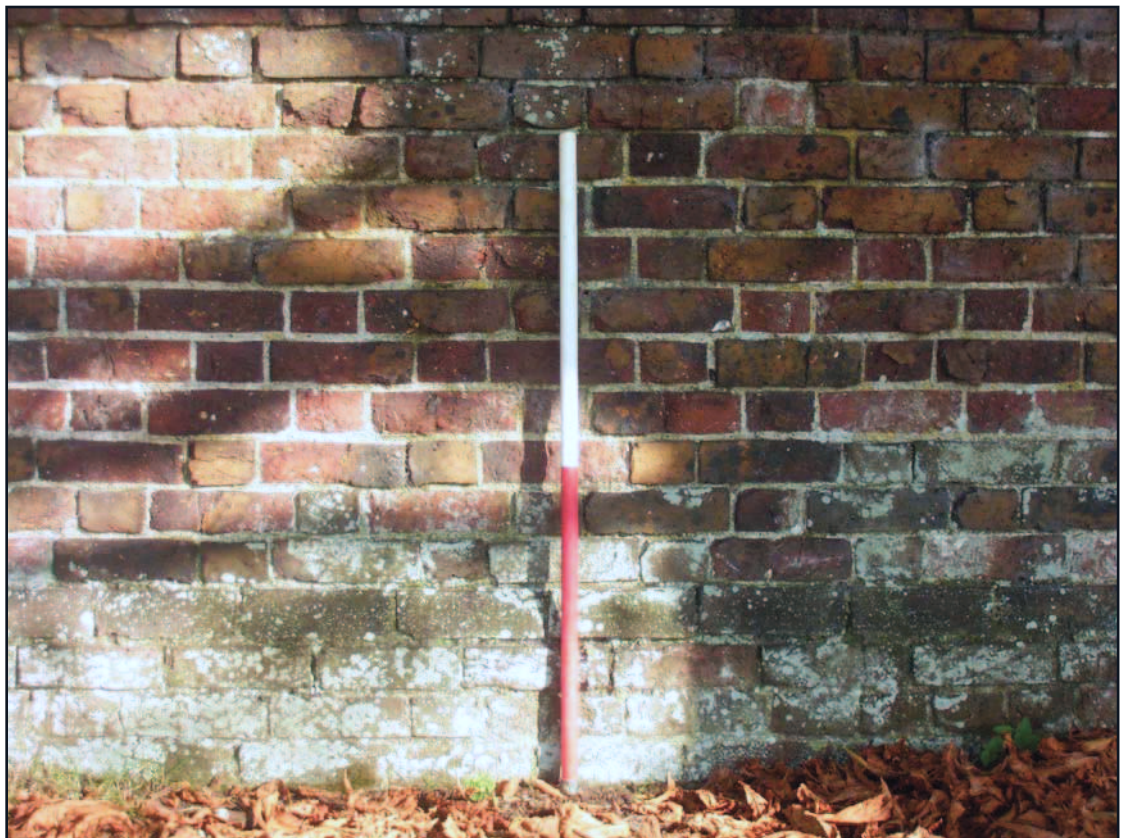


Plate 4 : Base of south facing wall showing plinth



Plate 5 : Later inserted hole (south face).



Plate 6 : Scar from later inserted wall (south face)



Plate 7 : Buttresses on the north face



Plate 8 : Foundations in Trench 1



Plate 9 : Foundations in Trench 2



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