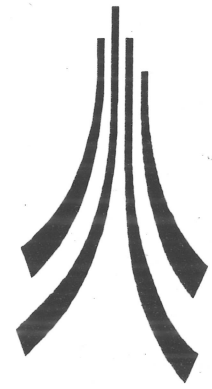


**LANCASTER**  
UNIVERSITY  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**  
UNIT



December 1995

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**HALSALL HALL**  
**LANCASHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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Commissioned and funded by:

**Construction 2010**

Halsall Hall  
Halsall  
Lancashire

---

Archaeological Watching Brief

Checked by Project Manager.

..... Date

Passed for submission to client.

..... Date

ã Lancaster University Archaeological Unit  
Storey Institute  
Meeting House Lane  
Lancaster  
LA1 1TH

December 1995



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Thanks go to Don Cassidy, and his site foreman for their assistance during the watching brief, to John Hinchliffe for providing additional information, and also to Peter Iles the County Archaeological Curator for his input to the project. This report was compiled by Peter Redmayne.

*Watching Brief recording*  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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An architectural watching brief was carried out at Halsall Hall, Lancashire between June and September 1995 by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU). The aim of the watching brief was to record plans, and internal and external elevations of the building by hand measured survey based on supplied architects drawings, and to monitor the excavation of service trenches.

The development was well advanced when the watching brief was started, a large amount of the original fabric either had been removed or substantially altered, which severely restricted the recording programme. Some plans and elevations, produced by Richard Clarke (Architects) dating from 1984, were used as a base and provided significant detail in areas impacted by the development prior to the present programme. Further information was also drawn from an earlier survey and excavation carried out by Jennifer Lewis in 1984.

The main feature revealed by the watching brief of the service trenches was a deep culvert cut 2m into the bedrock, which had previously been recorded in the 1984 excavations.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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An architectural watching brief was carried out by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) at Halsall Hall, Lancashire between June and September 1995. A brief (Appendix 1) was originally produced by Lancaster University Heritage Planning Consultancy in December 1994 which provided for the detailed recording of the building in advance of the development. On 2nd May a watching brief was requested by Christopher Rogers and Associates for works but by this time the development was well advanced, and there was an understanding with the West Lancs. District Council Conservation Officer that the archaeological specifications needed to be amended to accommodate the new situation. In discussions between the architect (Chris Rodgers and Associates 28th & 15th June), the West Lancs. District Council Conservation Officer (22nd June), the Lancashire Archaeological Curator, the developer (Construction (2010) Ltd) and LUAU, updated specifications were compiled and were incorporated within the LUAU project design dated 3rd July 1995 (Appendix 2). The project design was accepted by the West Lancashire District Planning Officer and the Lancashire Archaeological Curator (Mr P Iles). The present programme of archaeological works was commissioned by Construction (2010) Ltd and was undertaken in accordance with the agreed project design.

The objectives of the watching brief were to provide an appropriate and accurate archaeological record of the site, and was undertaken by means of a hand measured survey using supplied architects drawings as a base, a comprehensive photographic record, the recording of features exposed during the excavation of service trenches, and fabric analysis.

It was only possible to produce six internal elevations rather than the eight stipulated in the project design because the building had been extensively altered prior to the watching brief; only two instead of the specified three elevations could be drawn in bay 5 and only one of the two specified elevations in bay 4 were available for drawing. However, this was off-set by the production of an extra cellar plan (fig 5), a second floor plan (fig 4) and two cross sections through the cellars (fig 15). Although the illustrations have been reproduced at a scale to fit the A4 format of the report, they are held on a CAD system and can be produced at the scales stated in the project design. All work was produced to a professional standard in accordance with current IFA and English Heritage Guidelines (*The management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition 1991).

### 1.1 Background

An historical and archaeological assessment of the site was carried out by Jennifer Lewis (Lewis 1987), who recommended that further research into the site should be undertaken. A precis of the history of the site from her report is given below, and other information is included in the main part of the report.

Halsall Hall (Fig 1) is a grade 2\* listed building located in the village of Halsall in

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Lancashire, five kilometres north-west of the market town of Ormskirk (SD 36781012). The hall is built on bunter sandstone which is locally overlain by a thin layer of boulder clay and Shirdley Hill Sand. The site known as Halsall Hall has been described since the late eighteenth century but the manor of Halsall is documented from as early as the Norman Conquest in 1066, and later became part of the barony of Warrington. Local tradition suggests that Halsall Hall replaced an earlier manor house situated to the north of the village church. Ploughing of the field immediately to the north of the hall, earlier this century, revealed loose masonry and building foundations including some sections of window tracery supposedly of a fifteenth century date (Lewis 1987).

The present structure is a narrow, five bay building of two storeys with an attic space, and is constructed of brick with sandstone detailing for the plinth quoins and windows. It overlies two rock cut cellars which appear to relate to an earlier structure.

To the rear is a range of farm outbuildings comprising a bakehouse, pigsties barns, and other units.

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## 2. THE WATCHING BRIEF

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### 2.1 Condition of the structure.

By the time the watching brief commenced, the development of the site was well advanced; the interior had been completely gutted, and many of the windows and doors had been repositioned, with some new ones inserted, and substantial sections of the main elevations had been completely rebuilt. This meant that the architectural watching brief was necessary to record all remaining original features before they were destroyed by further development.

Some of the supplied drawings on which the recording was to be based were found to be inaccurate, but a set of more accurate plan and elevation drawings were made available by J Hinchliffe, relating to a proposed development of the building in 1985. These showed the original state of the building at that date, and allowed for a more complete analysis than would otherwise have been possible. In the text the building is described in terms of five bays, which are numbered sequentially from the south.

### 2.2 Methodology

Internal and external elevation drawings, and plans were recorded by hand measured survey and annotated onto the supplied drawings, this data was subsequently transferred onto a CAD system, along with further information from the 1985 drawings. Sections of service trenches were cleaned by hand and features were located onto the supplied ground plan by trilateration.

### 2.3 External Elevations

#### 2.3.1 *Front (East) elevation*

The facade (Fig 4) of the building has a central bay with equally proportioned wings to either side, the building was constructed in brick with windows, doors and quoins of sandstone. There was a continuous projecting stone course across the full width of the facade between the first and second floor levels. The roof was of stone slates, the roof was hipped at the southern end, while the north end was gabled. There were three brick built chimneys, one was above the line of the partition wall between bays one and two, the second above the wall between bays two and three, and the third above the partition between bays four and five.

Bays one and two had centrally placed doorways with pairs of three light mullion windows to either side, and pairs of tall, four light sash windows at first floor level. The central bay (bay three) projects slightly from the main east face, it originally had a pair of large, six light, sash windows which extended beyond the level of the first floor of the bays to either side. The top of the bay was gabled with a centrally placed window consisting of an arched four light section in the centre with rectangular two light sections to either side.



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Bay four had an identical arrangement to bays one and two, while bay five had a central doorway with two tall six light sash windows to either side. As in bay three these windows intruded into the first floor level.

It is uncertain whether the sash and mullion type windows are contemporary, there is internal evidence that before the final conversion of the building into a hall bays three and four had two floor levels. This suggests that the tall windows were inserted when the floors of these bays were removed during their conversion into the dining room and ballroom of the later hall.

### 2.3.2 *North and South elevations*

The north gable (Fig 5) had a tall centrally placed arched window, to either side of which is faint evidence of blockings, there was also a small square four light window at first floor level.

The south elevation (Fig 5) had a single, slightly off centre, four light sash window at ground floor level with a pair of tall, four-light sash windows lighting the first floor with brick relieving arches above. The projecting stone course continued across the full width of the wall.

### 2.3.3 *West (rear) Elevation*

Similarly to the east elevation bays one and two (Fig 6). It had centrally placed doors at the rear, bay one had two small sash windows at ground floor level, and a further four light sash lighting the first floor. There was also a blocked up doorway to the north of the northern window. Bay two had pairs of three light mullion windows at ground and first floor level. Bay three was lit by two three light mullion windows at ground floor level, but had no doorway or first floor window. Bay four had a door offset from the centre with a three light mullion lighting the ground floor but no first floor window. Bay five had a three light mullion lighting the ground floor, and a small four light sash at first floor level and a doorway offset to the south.

A bakehouse was built against the wall of the northern bay, and the mullion window was probably blocked up at the same time as this was constructed. To the south of the bakehouse an open stone paved veranda was constructed using alternating stone and cast iron columns to support the roof. At the south end of the veranda was a timber framed conservatory with a tiled floor. A small porch was added to the rear of bay one, which may have involved the shortening of the window to the north of the doorway.

## 2.4 **Internal Elevations**

As previously mentioned the whole of the building had been gutted before the watching brief commenced, and the conversion of the two southern bays was by this time almost completed. The 1985 ground floor plan (Fig 2) shows that in the latest phase of occupation the bay one was internally divided into a kitchen in the southern part with a morning room to the north. The doorway at the front was

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blocked up, and access was from the porch at the rear of the building. There was access to bay two to the north (marked as the dining room) via a passageway at the rear of the kitchen.

The front part of bay two was partitioned off with two flights of stairs, one to a first floor landing, and the second to a cellar below bay one. There are two blocked up doorways at either end of the north elevation of the bay, with a blocking (probably of a fireplace) in the centre. Above the western door is a blocked three light mullion window (Fig 7), and the 1984 first floor plan (Fig 3) marks a similar sized blocking above the northern doorway marked 'built up openings window and door'. The upper part of these two bays contained four bedrooms and a bathroom accessed from the landing at the front of the northern bay, which also had a stair to the attic at its northern end.

The central bay (annotated "Drawing Room" 1984) appears to have had no first floor in the final phase of occupation. There is a blocking, possibly of a fireplace, in the centre of the south wall (Fig 8), as well as the blocked mullion window and other blocking already mentioned, this wall is also noticeably thicker than the other internal walls. The west wall is butt jointed at its southern end, and there was also a blocked ground floor doorway at the eastern end of the north elevation.

The dividing wall between bays four and five had been completely rebuilt in breeze block as part of the development, however the 1984 plan (Fig 2) shows bay four as a stone flagged entrance hall entered from the doorway in the north elevation, with a north/south partition dividing the hallway from the western third of the bay. The wall dividing bays four and five had two doorways (one at either end, the eastern one shown as Blocked up on the 1984 plan) with a central fireplace. The wall between bays three and four (Fig 9) had a staircase to a first floor landing at the western end, and a doorway giving access to the central bay at the northern end, below the staircase were stone steps giving access to a cellar. There was a doorway towards the northern end of the west elevation of bay 4 (Fig 10) with two tiers of mullion windows towards the southern end, there was also a sash window above the doorway with a blocking below. There is also a blocking adjacent to the doorway which may represent the position of a now removed mullion window.

Bay five is marked as "ballroom" on the 1985 plan, and similarly to bay three had only an attic level and no first floor in the latest phase. The Ballroom was entered through a doorway at the western end of the south wall which also had a central fireplace, and blocked door at the eastern end. The doorway in the east wall is blocked, and the two blockings (Fig 11) evident in the west gable are much clearer than on the outside.

## **2.5 The Cellars**

There are two cellars below the building, one below bay one, and the second below bay four. The southern cellar (Fig 12) is divided into two parts and is orientated east/west. Each part consists of a series of rock cut steps descending to a central channel, the two channels are linked in the centre, the channel of the western part

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of the cellar continues to the north before turning to the west and running into a sump beyond the west wall of the hall. The cellars were originally entered from spiral steps which have been truncated by the foundations of the eastern wall of the hall. The steps led to a level rock cut platform to the north. The platform is at a higher level than the cellar to the south and has a small channel cut into the floor running into the western channel of the cellar. The cellar has a brick vaulted ceiling, while the ceiling of the platform is formed by the joists of the floor above.

The northern cellar (Figs 13 and 14), is entered down a series of stone steps. It is also cut into the bedrock, and has a brick arched ceiling similar to that in the southern cellar. There is an arched window in the west side, which is divided into two lights. The frame is made of apparently re-used moulded stones, the stone shaft between the two lights of the window is a re-used section of a projecting hood moulding, while the north side of the frame is constructed from a re-used section of window jamb with an internal splay. A further re-used section of window jamb with a glazing slot was built into the north wall of the cellar.

## **2.6 Service Trenches**

The original ground surface of the site had been truncated during the building works, the service trenches generally showed a thin section of sandy soil overlying the bedrock, the only significant feature identified was a deep channel cut into the bedrock towards the eastern edge of the site, the channel was cut to a depth of 2m and was approximately 1m wide. At the base a narrower channel 0.6m wide and 0.2m deep had been cut and then capped with substantial stone flags, after which the cut had been backfilled. The channel was still running with water, and an attempt to trace its course was made by the contractor using a coloured dye.

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### 3. CONCLUSIONS

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The excavations undertaken by Jennifer Lewis demonstrated the existence of stratified deposits associated with an earlier building on the site, which lay immediately to the east of the two southern bays. The stone culvert seen at the eastern edge of the site was recorded adjacent to the stone cut tanks with which it might have been associated. It was unfortunate that the area to the east of the hall was truncated during the development as this almost certainly removed most of the surviving stratigraphy, and probably accounts for the lack of features seen in the service trenches. After the disuse of this building the rock cut tanks and channels were constructed, the function of the tanks is still uncertain, however it seems likely that it was a water related activity such as textile manufacture or tanning. The tanks went out of use in the late 17th century and were partially backfilled with demolition material from a brick and stone building.

The present building dates from after 1765, and was probably constructed as a series of dwellings by Col. Morduant, the then owner of the manor, for workers involved in the spinning and weaving industry. This may have been a two phase construction, with bays one and two constructed first followed by the construction of a further three bays. The doorways in the east elevation (Fig 4), show that the units had individual entrances, with the exception of bay three. However this doorway was probably destroyed during the remodeling of the facade in the final phase. Possible evidence for the remodeling is the thickness of the partition wall between units two and three, the blocked first floor mullion window in the north wall of the second bay, and the butt join in the in the rear wall of unit three. The blocked mullion window was obviously originally in an outer wall, and lit the upper floor of bay two, the blocking at the northern end of this wall may have contained a second window. When the building was extended to five bays this window was completely removed and a doorway inserted in its place, (Fig 8) giving access to the first floor level in bay three. It is possible bay three had an entrance door in the east wall, matching the other bays but any evidence for this is now gone.

The evidence from the 1985 plan (Fig 3) showing a blocked first floor doorway at the eastern end of the partition between bays four and five, suggests that bay five originally had two floors. Evidence from a tithe map suggests that the blockings in the north wall were both doorways, one giving access to a now demolished outbuilding, and the second to a pathway (Lewis 1987).

The final phase was the conversion of the five separate units into a large private dwelling, possibly in the late 18th century, when it became known as Halsall Hall. This involved the removal of the floors in bays three and five to create a dining room and a ballroom, with pairs of tall six light sash windows. The front access doorways to units one and five were probably blocked off, leaving those to bays two and three as the main means of access. Other internal doors were probably also blocked, and the central part of the facade may have been remodeled to give the building a more elegant appearance. The first floor sash windows in bays one three and five may also have been subsequently inserted possibly replacing mullions.

The structures attached to the rear wall may be later additions, and most of the farm buildings to the rear are built of relatively modern brick, and may indicate a change of use from a hall to a farmhouse, which was the final use of the building prior to the present development.

In her 1987 report Jennifer Lewis raises the question whether the building contained both factory workshops, and accommodation. The recent survey found no evidence of any workshops which may mean that the original building was purely for workers accommodation; however the building had been so extensively altered by the time the watching brief started that the earlier use of parts of the building as workshops cannot be entirely discounted.

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#### 4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Farrer, W and Brownbill, J A (eds.) *The Victoria history of the County of Lancashire, Vol 3.*

Lewis, J 1987 *Halsall Hall, Lancashire, an historical and archaeological assessment,*

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## 5. ILLUSTRATIONS

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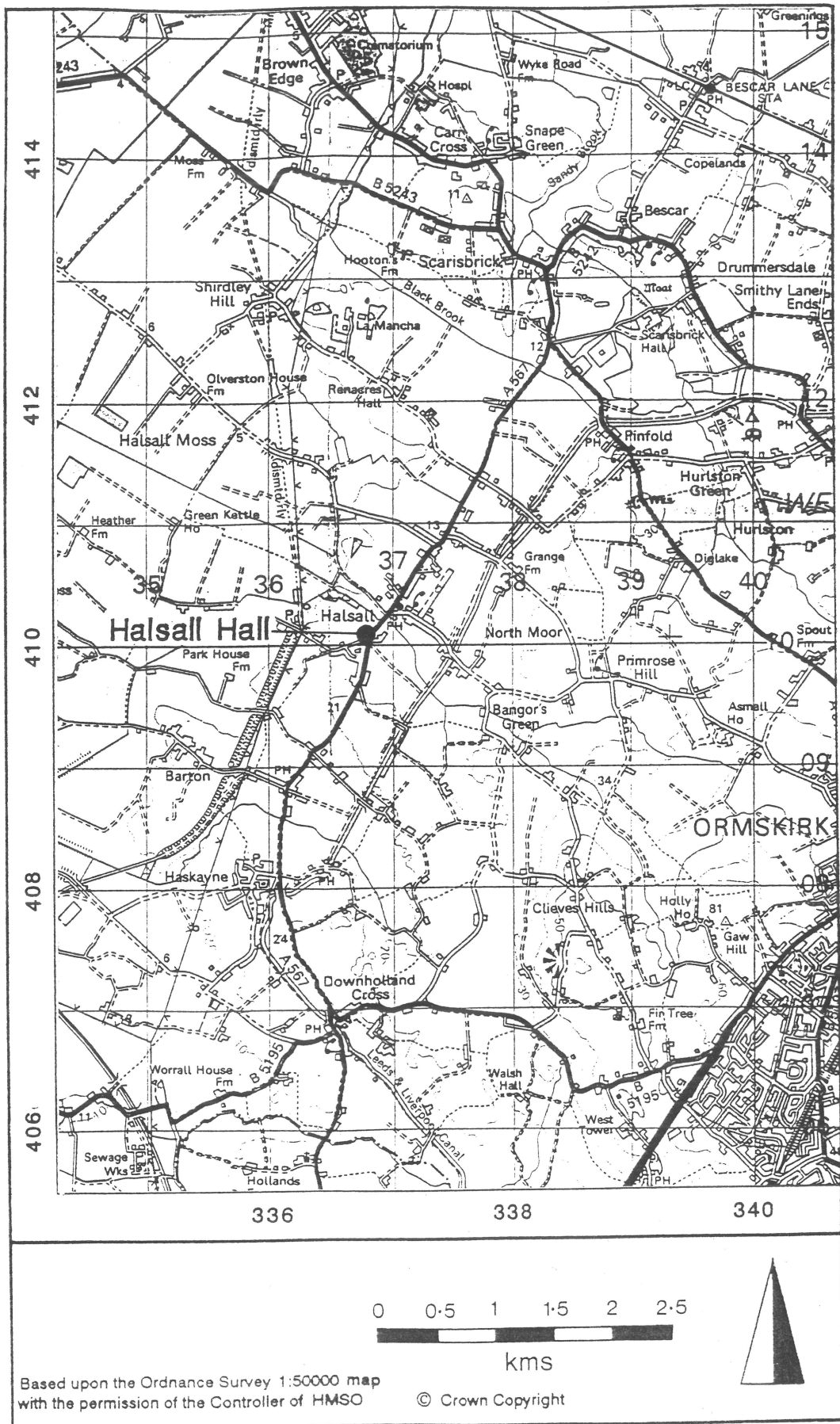
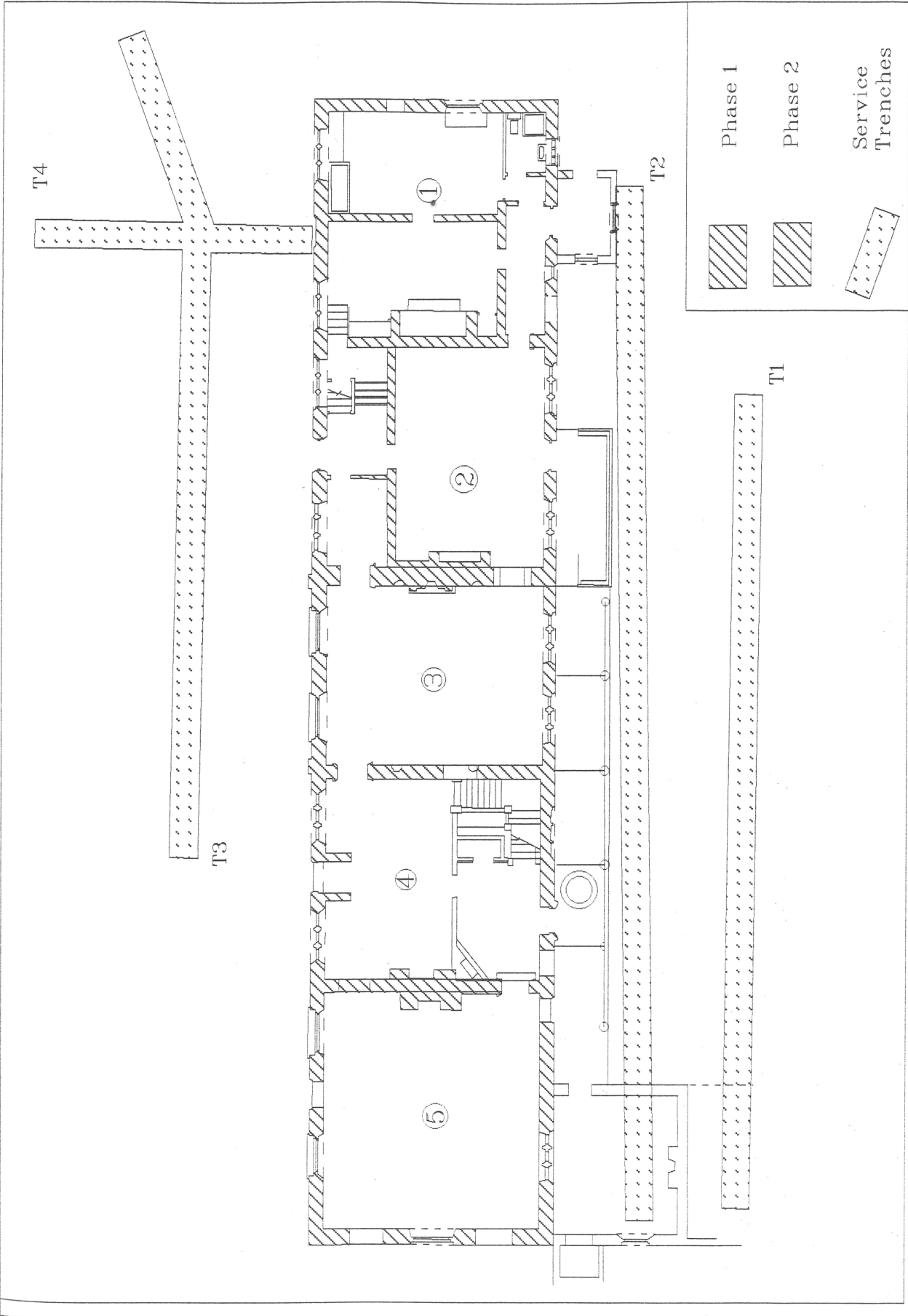


Fig.1 Location map

## Key to CAD Figures

	Oldest phase brickwork
	First phase of blocking
	Second phase of blocking
	Wood
	Breeze Block
	Concrete
	Slate
	Plaster
	Daub
	Modern red brickwork
	Modern grey brickwork
	Dressed stone
	Undressed stone
	External walls
	Floors
	Trusses & roofs
	RSJs
	Bedrock
	Debris

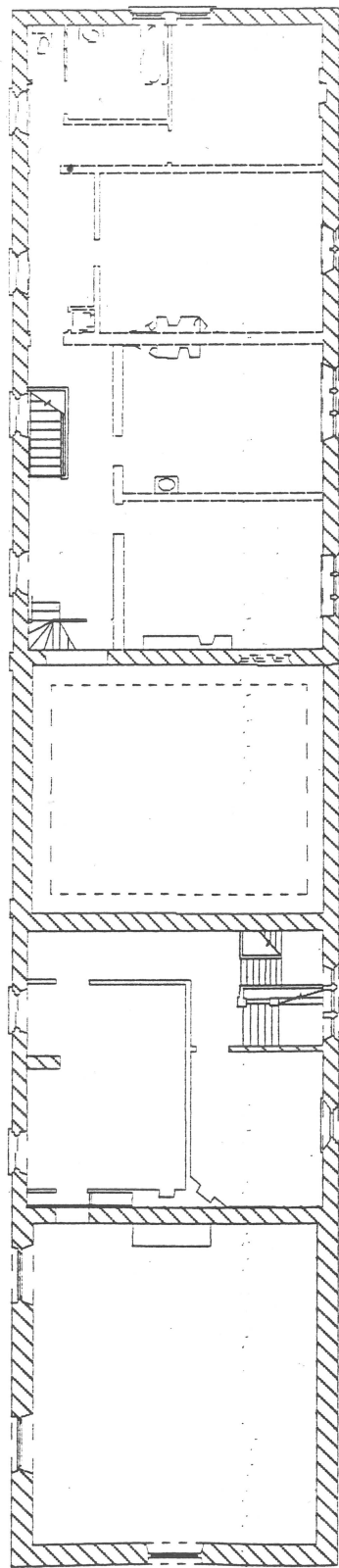


Phase 1

Phase 2

Service Trenches

<b>HALSALL HALL</b> Ground Floor Plan	PLAN NAME Ground Floor Plan	LOAU Copyright 1986 Adapted from Hibbard Clarke 1884		DRAWN BY PR JQ CW DATE 12-1985	SCALE 1:150 SHEET NO. 2
	LANCASTER UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT				



<b>HALSALL HALL</b>	PLAN NAME <b>First Floor Plan</b>	LNUU Copyright 1995 Adapted from Robert Currie 1986		DRAWN BY <b>PR JQ CW</b>	SCALE: 1:150
				DATE <b>12-1995</b>	SHEET NO. <b>3</b>

# HALSALL HALL

PLAN NAME  
**First Floor Plan**

LNUU Copyright 1995  
Adapted from Robert Currie 1986

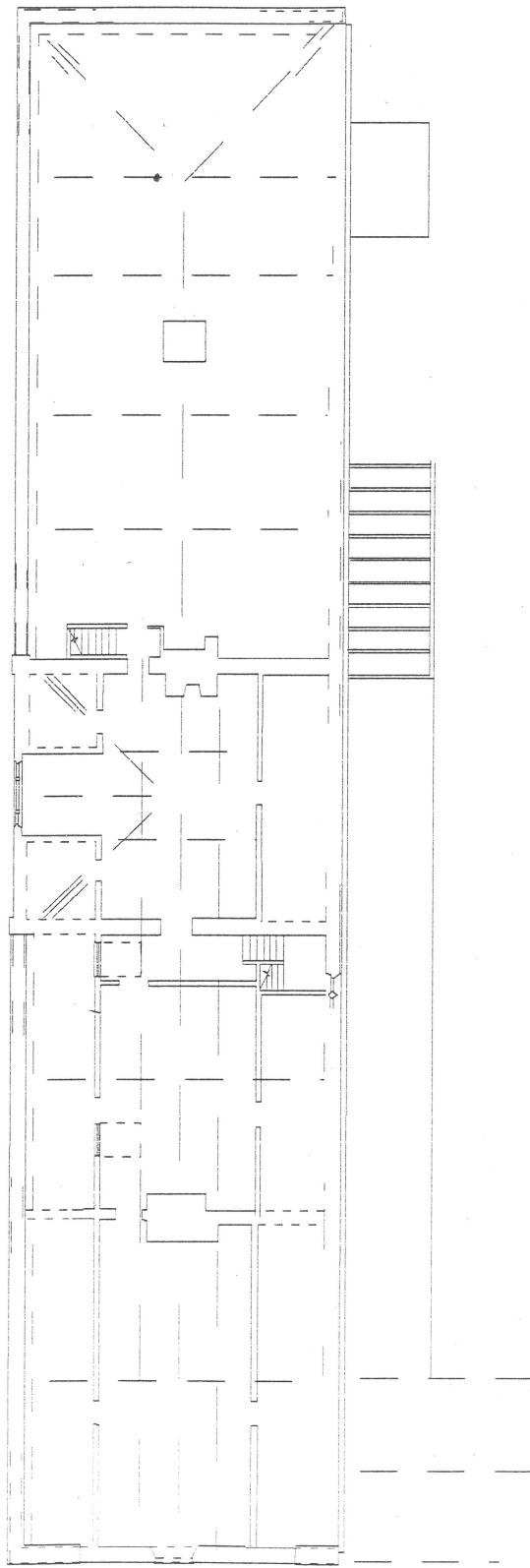


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**PR JQ CW**

DATE  
**12-1995**

SCALE: 1:150

SHEET NO. **3**



# HALSALL HALL

PLAN NAME  
Second Floor Plan

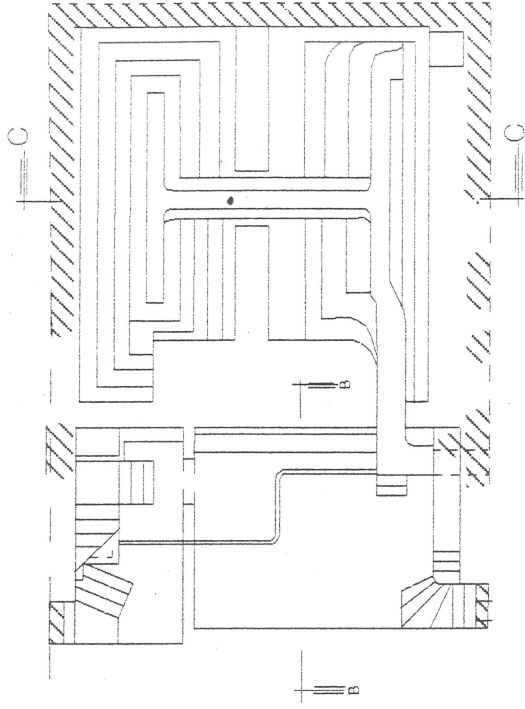
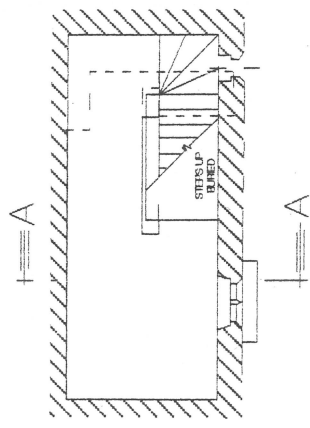
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Adapted from Richard Clarke 1984



DRAWN BY PR JQ CW  
DATE 12-1995

SCALE 1:150  
SUBSET NO. 4

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT



# HALSALL HALL

PLAN NAME  
Cellar Plan

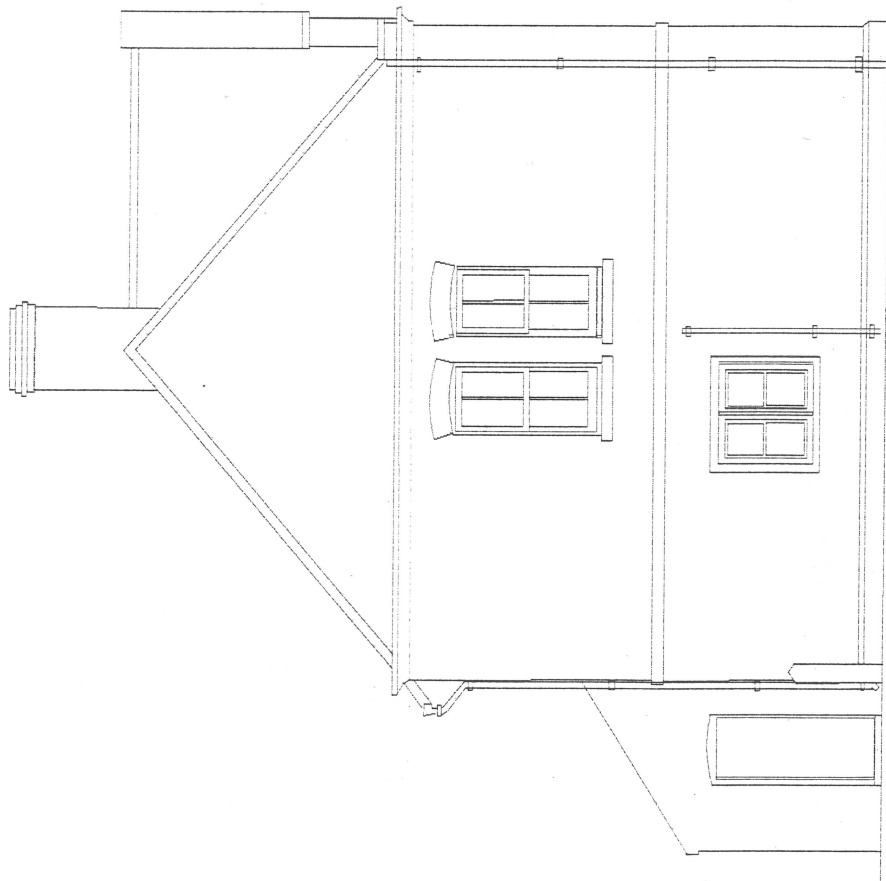
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SCALE 1:150

SHEET NO. 5



# HALSALL HALL

PLAN NAME

South External Elevation, South Face

LOAU Copyright 1986

Adapted from Richard Clarke 1984

25m

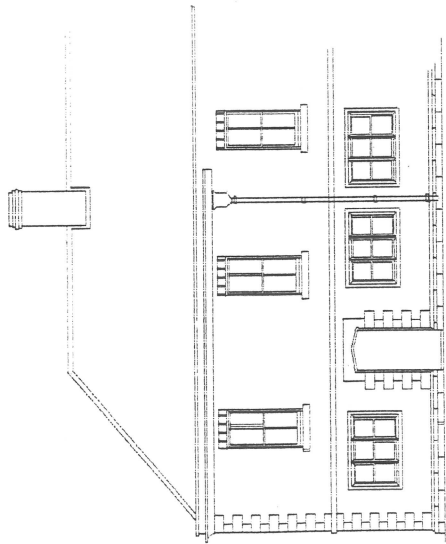
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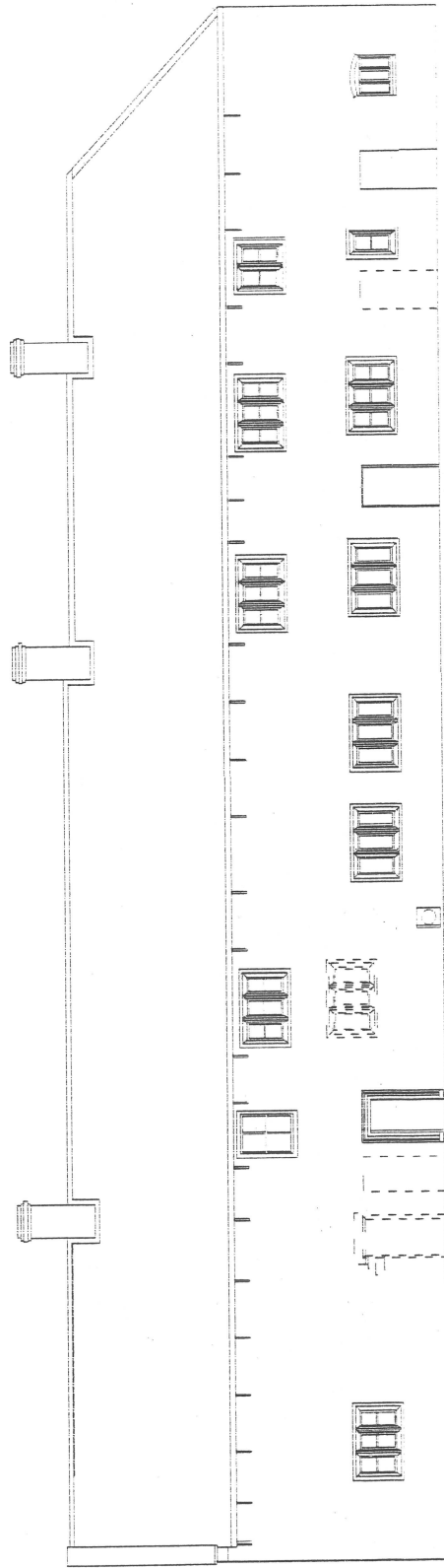
SCALE 1/25

SHEET NO. 6

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT



East Elevation, southern corner



West Elevation

# HALSALL HALL

PLAN NAME  
West and East External Elevations

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5m

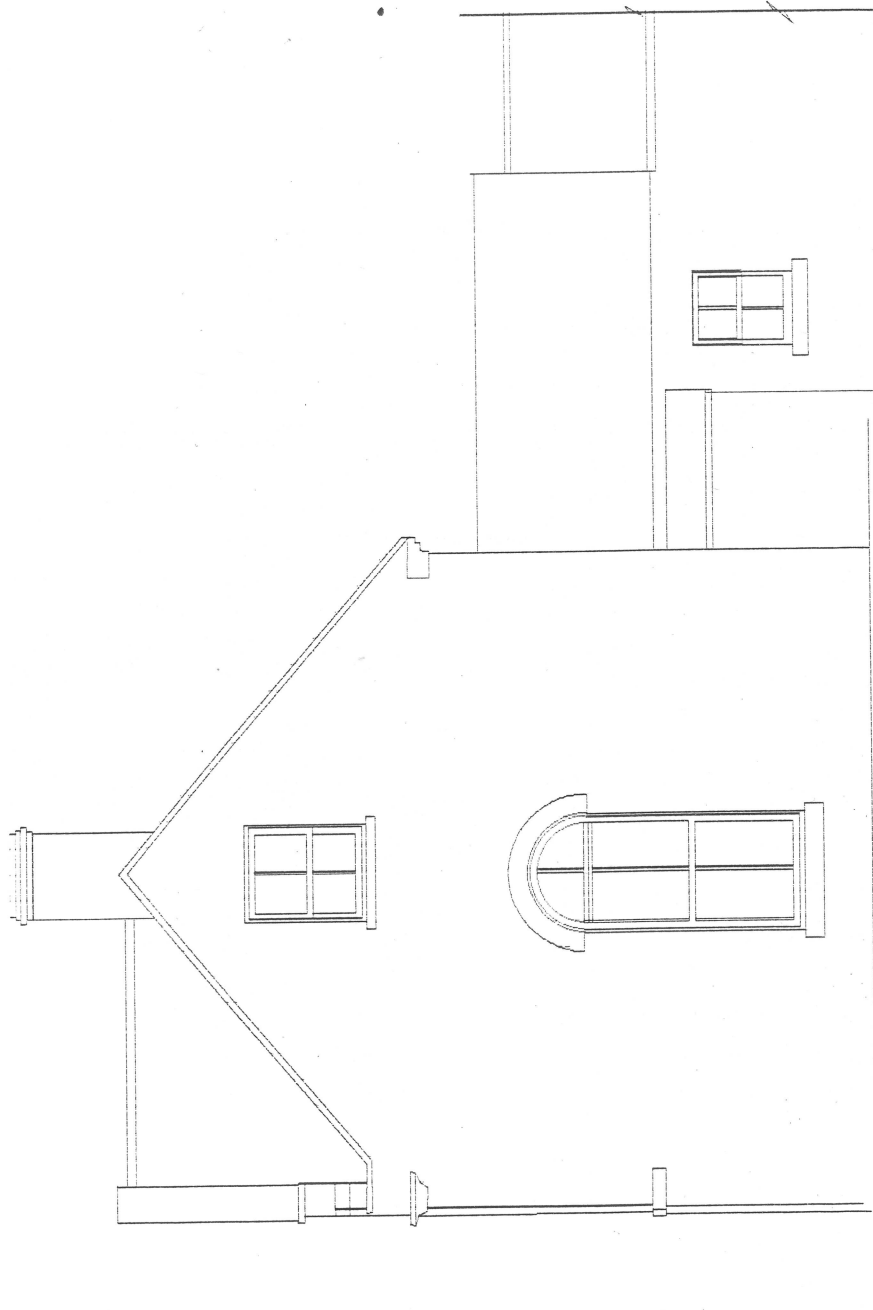
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DATE 12-1985

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LANCASTER UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

SHEET No. 7





# HALSALL HALL

PLAN NAME  
North External Elevation, North Face

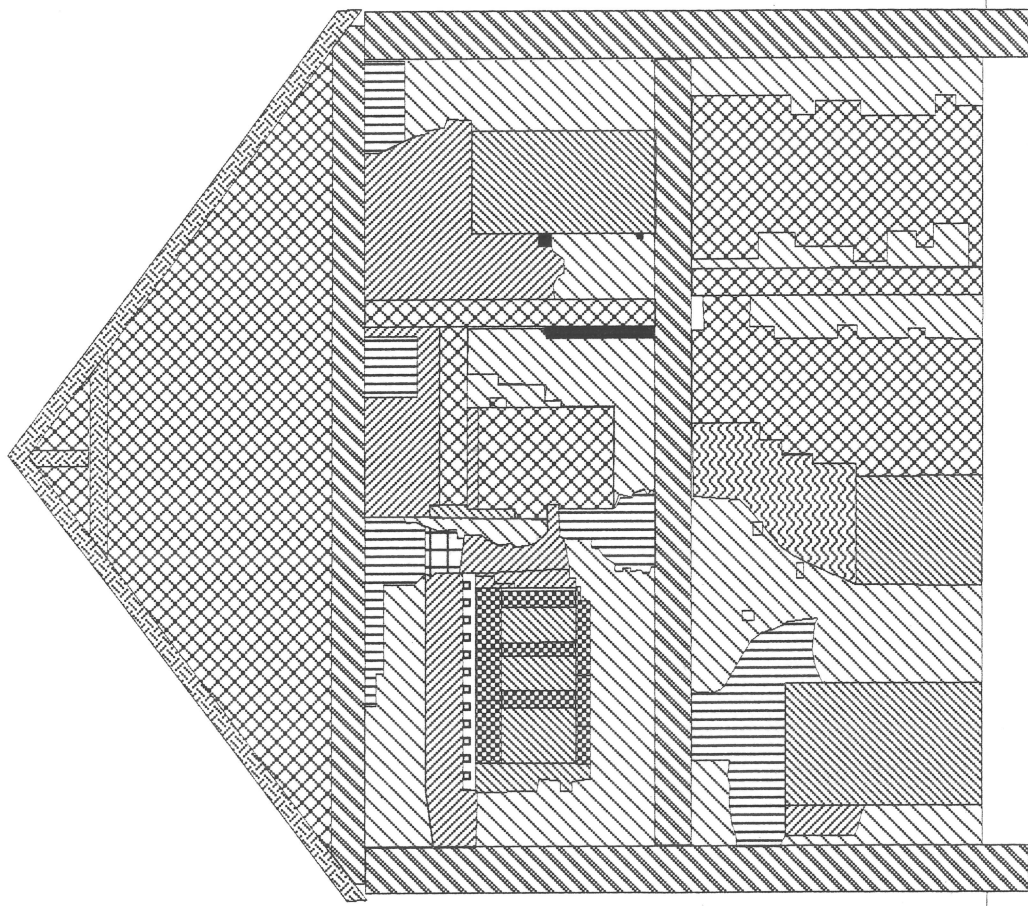
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DATE 12-1985

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SCALE 1/75

DRAWN BY PR JQ CW

DATE 12-1995

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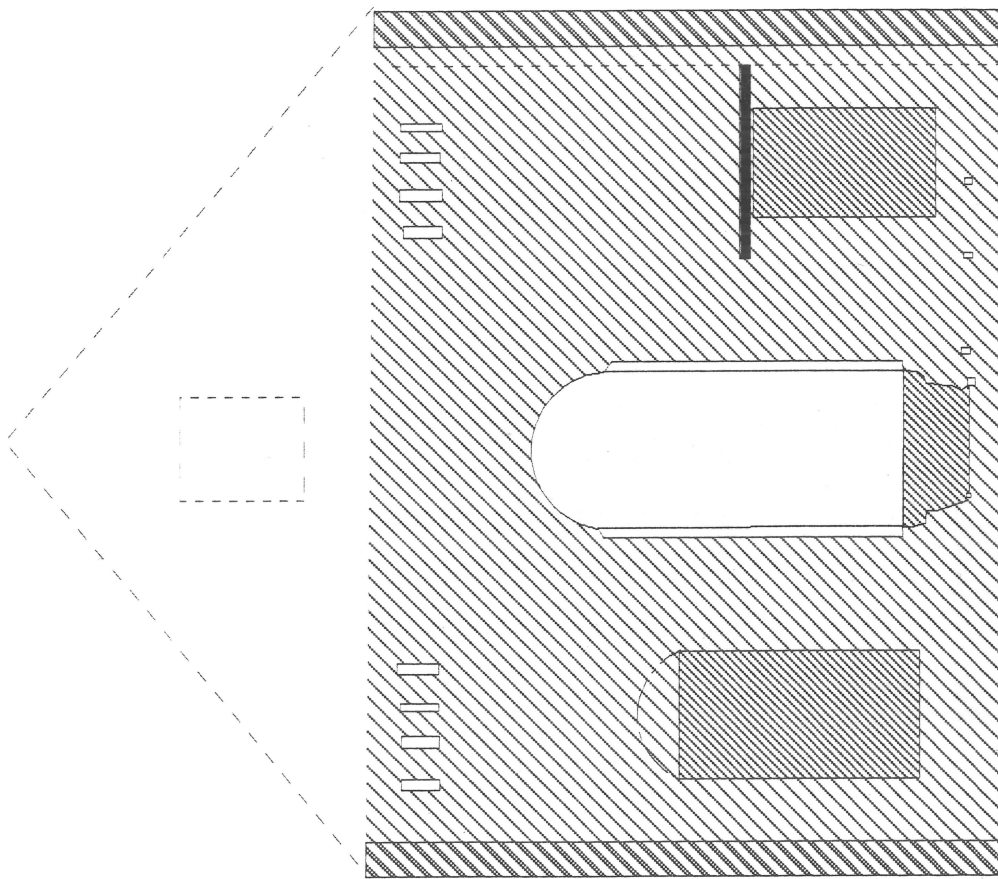
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PLAN NAME

North internal elevation  
bay 2

# HALSALL HALL



SCALE 1/75

DRAWN BY PR JQ CW

DATE 12-1995



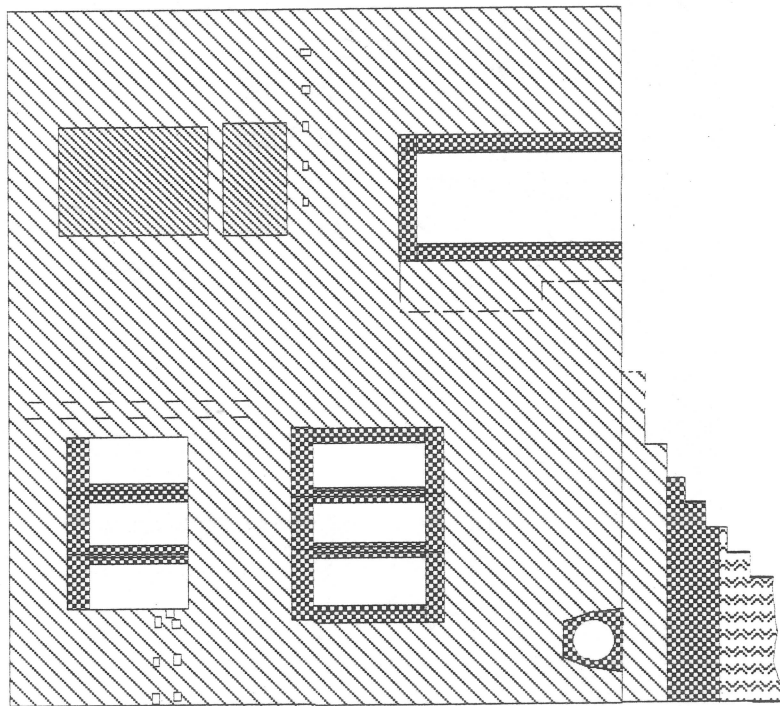
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PLAN NAME  
North internal elevation  
bay 5

HALSALL HALL

SHEET NO. 10

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# HALSALL HALL

PLAN NAME  
West internal elevation  
south face, bay 5

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Adapted from Richard Clark 1984

2m

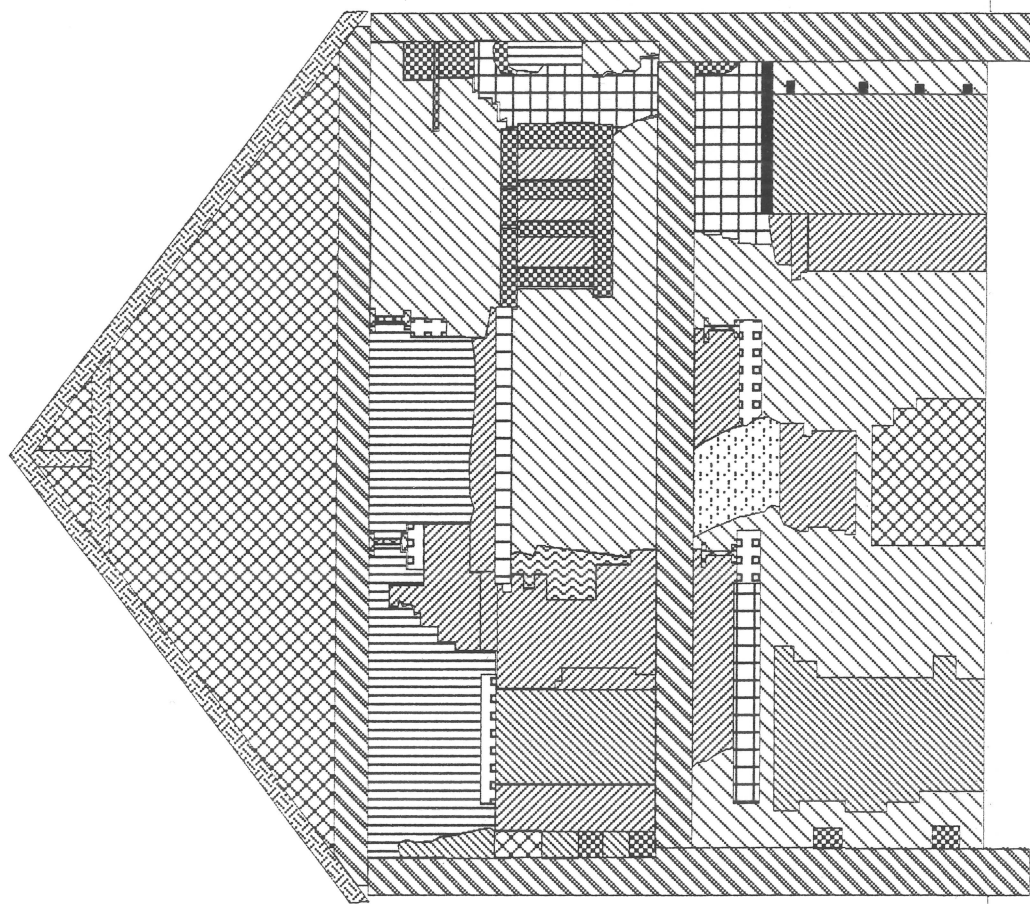


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SCALE 1/75

SHEET NO. 11

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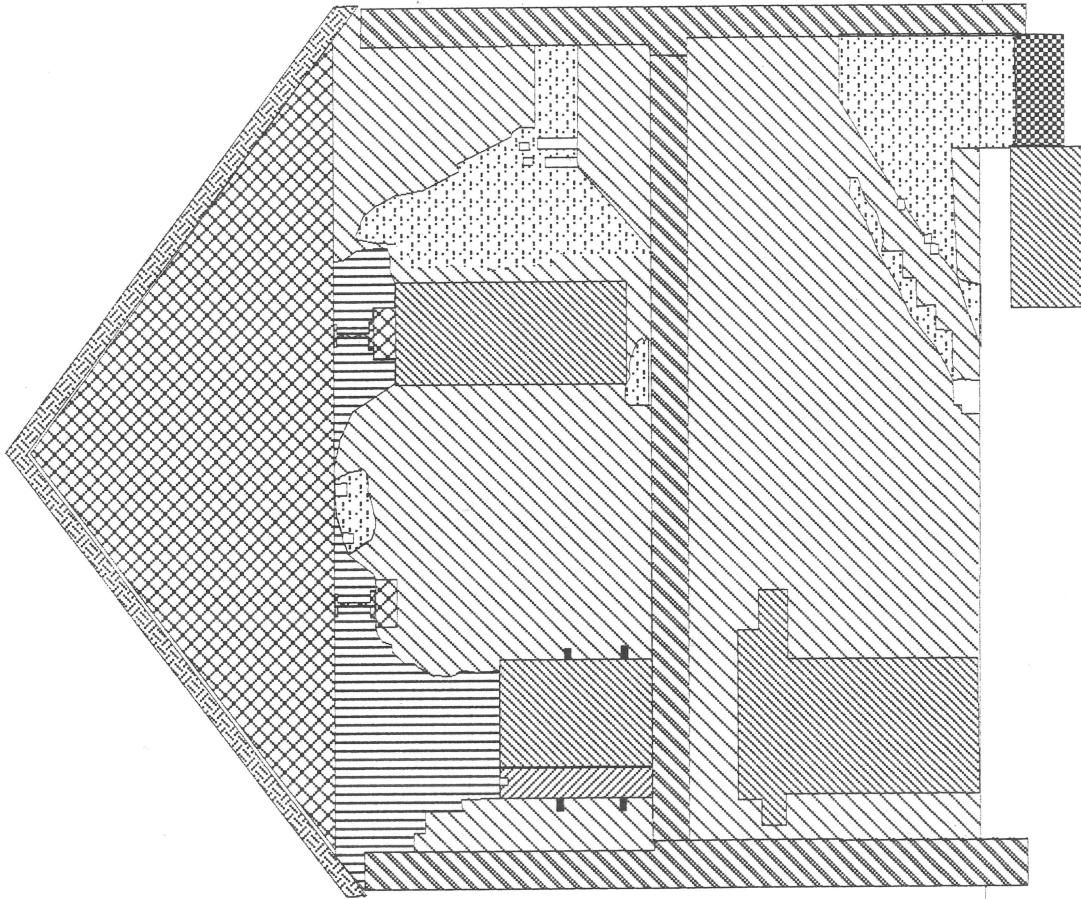
PLAN NAME  
 South internal elevation  
 north face, bay 3


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 Adapted from Richard Clark's 1984

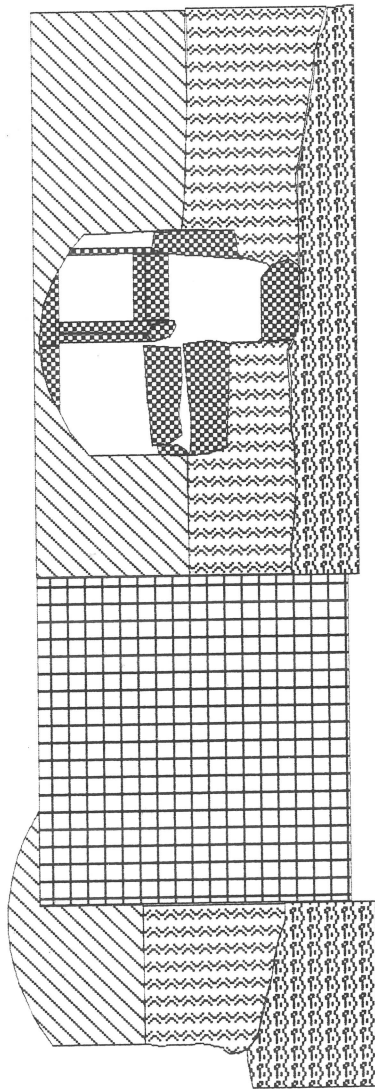


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 DATE 12-1995  
 LANCASTER UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

SCALE 1:75  
 SHEET No. 12



<h1 style="margin: 0;">HALSALL HALL</h1>	PLAN NAME South internal elevation north face, bay 4		LDUJ Copyright 1995 Adapted from Richard Clark 1984	2m 	DRAWN BY PR JQ CW DATE 12-1985	SCALE 1/75 SHEET NO. 13
	LANCASTER UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT					



# HALSALL HALL

PLAN NAME  
North cellar west internal  
elevation, east face

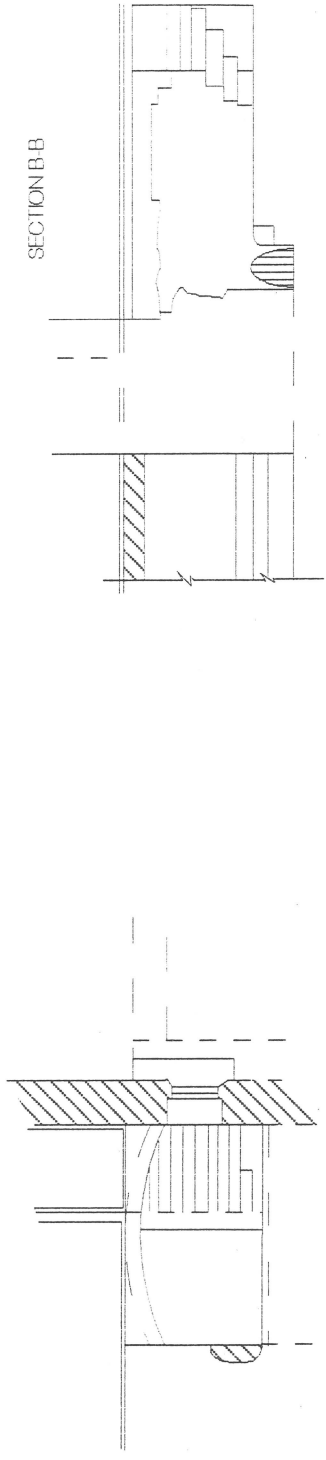
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DATE 12-1995

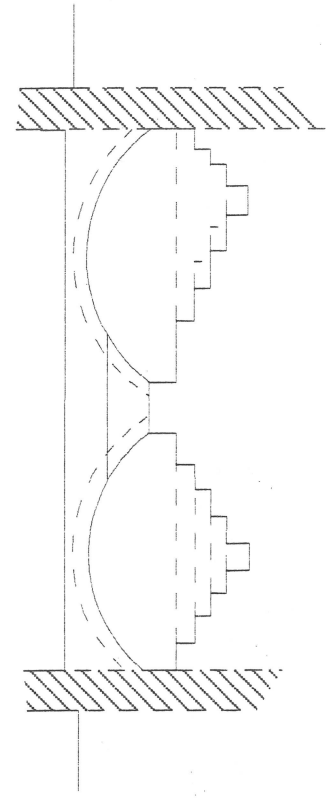
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SECTION A-A

SECTION C-C



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APPENDIX 1 PROJECT BRIEF

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APPENDIX 2 PROJECT DESIGN

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