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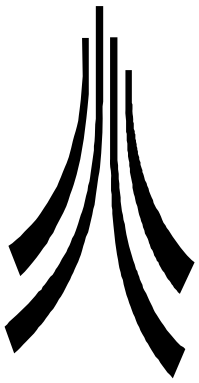

March 2001

PIPEWELLGATE
GATESHEAD
TYNE AND WEAR

Evaluation Report

Commissioned by: Leftbank Properties Ltd and Padgett Lavender Associates

Pipewellgate, Gateshead
Tyne and Wear

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Report no 2000-2001/057/AUA8092

Checked by Project Manager. ..... Date
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March 2001

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The evaluation was undertaken by Sean Jackson, Charles Rickaby and Matt Town. John Nolan (Northern Counties Archaeological Services) provided an overview and advice in the course of the evaluation. The report was compiled by Matt Town and John Nolan. The finds were assessed by Chris Howard-Davis, and the drawings were produced by Andi Scott, the report being edited by Jamie Quartermaine and Rachel Newman. The overall project management was undertaken by Jamie Quartermaine.

SUMMARY

Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) was commissioned by Padgett Lavender Associates and Leftbank Properties Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a site which is proposed for the construction of a public house to the south-east of Pipewellgate, Gateshead (NGR NZ 252 636). The work was undertaken in January 2001, in accordance with a project design compiled by LUAU and a project brief by the Tyne and Wear County Archaeologist.

Pipewellgate is known from documentary sources to date to at least the late medieval period, though it is quite possible that there was earlier settlement on the site. As the area rose in importance, through its position adjacent to the medieval Tyne Bridge, so the water-front began to be developed and a number of tenements were built up along the street. By the post-medieval period, the site was increasingly developed, with the creation of a number of industrial manufactories in the area, and the expansion of the settlement. The nineteenth century saw the street decline in importance with the opening of the High Level Bridge, and by the 1930s a programme of slum clearance led to the removal of most of the houses. An assessment by the Archaeological Practice, University of Newcastle, has already outlined the importance of the site, and recent work to the north, west and east of the site has also recovered a number of features of archaeological significance.

Two trenches were excavated, adjacent and at right angles to the street frontage. A number of archaeological features were noted in both trenches, directly beneath the hardcore for the car-park on the site. Trench 1 yielded a post-medieval well and a section of foundation for a wall, directly overlying and cutting into natural deposits. Trench 2 yielded similar stone-work, comprising sizable blocks of sandstone rubble, also likely to be a wall foundation. Medieval ceramics (mid-thirteenth to fourteenth century) were found in association with both walls.

The evaluation has demonstrated limited survival of medieval remains, which, coupled with the results of the earlier assessment, has demonstrated that there is the potential for archaeology within the study area. It is therefore recommended that a watching brief be undertaken, if it is established that the trenches for the proposed ground beams of the new build have an impact upon the archaeological resource.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

1.1.1 A planning application by Padgett Lavender Associates for the construction of a public house on land, presently used as a car-park, to the south-east of Pipewellgate, Gateshead (NGR NZ 252 636), had been approved by the Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council. The proposed development affects an area which is thought to contain some density of medieval archaeology; consequently, the Tyne and Wear County Archaeologist recommended that an evaluation of the site be undertaken prior to groundworks associated with the construction of the foundations for the public house.

1.1.2 A brief for the archaeological works (*Appendix 1*) was supplied by the Tyne and Wear County Archaeologist to Padgett Lavender Associates. Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) was approached to tender for the works and a project design for the task was submitted in May 2000 (*Appendix 2*). Following its formal acceptance, LUAU was contracted to carry out the evaluation, which was undertaken in January 2001.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 LOCATION

2.1.1 Modern Pipewellgate is a narrow lane on the south bank of the Tyne, running west from the Swing Bridge towards Redheugh, at the foot of the southern river escarpment, bounded by the Rabbit Banks on the south and the Tyne on the north. It lies within the Bridges Conservation Area.

2.1.2 The area has been partially terraced into the bank to the south-east, with a brick wall revetting this terrace. To the north-east, the site is demarcated by Bankwell Stairs, which run down to the north-west from Bankwell Lane (now closed). The south-west edge lies adjacent to one of the piers for the High Level Bridge.

2.2 GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1 The geological background of Gateshead consists of drift deposits of glacial clay between 10m and 30m thick, overlying a bedrock of Carboniferous Sandstone, which contains interleaving seams of coal. The drift deposits have been cut by drainage channels, leading to the steep-sided banks of the Tyne on which Newcastle and Gateshead developed. The quaysides on both sides of the river have been reclaimed and are artificially high (University of Newcastle Archaeological Practice 1998).

2.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.3.1 ***Prehistoric:*** little prehistoric material has been recovered from the area. Bronze swords and a spearhead were recovered in the nineteenth century from dredging in the River Tyne (University of Newcastle Archaeological Practice 1998), and some prehistoric features and pottery, of probable Iron Age date, were found during recent excavations on the west side of Bottle Bank (LUAU/NCAS forthcoming).

2.3.2 ***Roman:*** Roman activity is well known on both sides of the Tyne and a Roman bridge is thought to have stood approximately on the position of the medieval Tyne Bridge, now the site of the late-nineteenth century Swing Bridge, though there is as yet no concrete evidence to support this (University of Newcastle Archaeological Practice 1998). On the north side of the river, on the site of the Castle, are the remains of the fort of *Pons Aelius* which protected the river crossing. On the south side of the river, and almost opposite the fort, extensive Roman remains have been uncovered between Bottle Bank and Bankwell Lane, consisting of inter-cutting ditches, part of a road, fragmentary remains of buildings and other structural features (LUAU/NCAS forthcoming). There is some evidence for Hadrianic activity at *Pons Aelius*, which appears to have been extensively rebuilt in stone in the Antonine period, though the majority of finds from both here and Bottle Bank fall into the range from the mid second to late third centuries AD, which suggests that they were contemporary.

2.3.2 ***Early Medieval:*** there is little evidence for the early medieval period in Gateshead, and nothing can be related to Pipewellgate. The Venerable Bede's somewhat ambiguous reference to '*Utta, a well-known priest and Abbot of Gateshead*' in his '*Ecclesiastical History of the English Peoples*' (Colgrave and

Mynors 1969) has prompted speculation that there may have been an Anglo-Saxon monastic settlement in the area. The street name 'Bottle Bank', which is derived from the Anglo-Saxon '*botl*' meaning buildings, again suggests some form of occupation at this period (University of Newcastle Archaeological Practice 1998); however, apart from a few fragments of putatively early medieval pottery found at Oakwellgate in 1999 (ARCUS forthcoming), no other evidence for the existence or nature of early medieval occupation has been found.

2.3.3 ***Medieval Pipewellgate:*** the origin of the Pipewellgate name is obscure. Fields to the south and south-west were known from the fifteenth century as the Pipe-hills or Pape-hills (Manders 1973, 25), and there is traditionally an association with conduits bringing water into the town. There is no connection with the clay tobacco pipe making industry, for which Gateshead became noted in the late seventeenth century.

2.3.4 Firm documentary references to the area, later known as Pipewellgate, begin in the twelfth century, with a grant of land from the (Tyne) bridge end westwards by Bishop Hugh de Puiset of Durham to Thorold of London. Thorold's son was subsequently engaged in clearing land from the waste (*op cit, 6*). By the mid fourteenth century this estate seems to have become an independent township under control of the Gategang family, Alan Gategang being referred to in 1348 as the *'Lord of Pipewellgate'*; it is not clear, however, if the street name was in use by this date. Another reference to a *'bailiff of Pipewellgate'* in 1349, and descriptions from as late as 1539 of 'Pipewellgate' and 'Gateshead near Pipewellgate' (*ibid*) support the interpretation that the area enjoyed a high level of administrative independence (University of Newcastle Archaeological Practice 1998).

2.3.5 Pipewellgate street itself probably originated as a track along the highest part of the Tyne foreshore and close to the foot of the escarpment, where it was not inundated at high tide. This is thought to have been the pattern on the north side of the river, where the street called the Close emerged in the thirteenth century (Fraser *et al* 1994). On the north side of Pipewellgate street the river foreshore was probably reclaimed at the same time and was subsequently built upon. As with the Close, the later waterfront development was influenced by the Tyne Bridge at the east end of the street. The low and narrow arches of the bridge, which formed the only river crossing until the nineteenth century, precluded sea-going shipping from reaching further west, and the principal quays on the north and south side of the river developed east of the bridge.

2.3.6 Staiths were being built in Pipewellgate in 1349, marking the beginning of the development of the Gateshead waterfront west of the bridge (Manders 1973, 6). It is likely that these staiths belonged to tenements on the south side of the street, since deeds from the fourteenth and fifteenth centurues refer to land extending from the Bishop's 'heddyke' across the '*via regia*' to the 'grondebb' of the Tyne' (Tyne and Wear Sites and Monuments Record No. 293). The 'head dyke' demarcated the boundary of the Bishop's estate and may have followed the line of modern Rabbit Banks Road at the top of the escarpment to the south-west. The street, which emerged in the medieval period, was narrow, being no more than 8' wide along its 330 yard length. Physical expansion on the south side of the road was constrained by the small area of level ground available between the street and

the foot of the escarpment, and in the following centuries buildings rapidly climbed the slope above on a series of terraces.

2.3.7 ***Post-Medieval:*** by the eighteenth century cartographic information shows that the south side of Pipewellgate was already densely occupied, with buildings and gardens mounting the slope above (Corbridge 1723, Thompson 1746, Hutton 1770/2). Little evidence exists for the nature of these properties, though mid-late nineteenth century photographs show that many of the houses fronting the street on the south side were two storied and that some were entirely stone built. The ranges running southward up the escarpment were sometimes of simple timber-framed construction, and may be as late as the second half of the seventeenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century Pipewellgate was becoming synonymous with squalor, the narrow, poorly ventilated and overcrowded conditions encouraging the spread of 'fever', which in 1790 *'committed considerable havock* (sic) *amongst the poor'* (Manders 1973, 177).

2.3.8 Conditions worsened rapidly in the nineteenth century as the population of Gateshead expanded to serve the growing number of industries on both sides of the Tyne. In 1834 Pipewellgate was described as *'an inconveniently narrow and dirty street'* (Mackenzie and Ross 1834, 99). Tenements and alehouse lay side-by-side with industries, including tobacco-pipe manufactories, two foundries, a blacking factory, a whiting and colour manufactory, a glue factory, a skinnery and a flint glass works. Narrow stairs such as Bankwell Stairs ran alongside the ranges which climbed the bank to the rear of the frontage, where single rooms were being let as tenements. In 1835 there were ten lodging houses, in one of which, the Poor Law Enquiry Commission was informed, were found *'34 persons, chiefly Irish, - 1 child lying dead - the whole party drinking spirits'.* There were no sewers and human and animal waste, together with *'the washings of tripe shops',* was thrown into the street (Manders 1973, 178, 181).

2.3.9 In 1843 the dingy tenements were crammed with 2,040 people, served by just three privies, and the area had a mortality rate of 1 in 30, close to that of Liverpool, which had the highest in the country at that time. The houses clinging to the escarpment were described in 1849 as *'damp and ill-ventilated, and the inhabitants generally are a very dirty class'* (*op cit*, 179, 163). The crowded south side of Pipewellgate was the area of Gateshead principally affected by the cholera outbreaks of 1831, with the highest number of deaths occurring there; this was repeated in 1849. The latter outbreak was brought to the town by a tramp staying in Williams's lodging house in Pipewellgate (*op cit*, 180).

2.3.10 By the mid-nineteenth century Pipewellgate was recognised by the authorities as a slum area. With the construction of the High Level Bridge in 1849 much of the north/south traffic, which had formerly supported the area, began to bypass the thoroughfare and the street declined in importance, with many houses falling into ruin (University of Newcastle Archaeological Practice 1998). The dereliction continued into the early years of the twentieth century, with the opening of the Tyne Bridge pulling even more traffic away from the area. Much of Pipewellgate was subject to slum clearance between 1932 and 1936, and by the 1940 OS map all trace of buildings had vanished from the south of the street (OS 1940; University of Newcastle Archaeological Practice 1998). The cleared embankments were landscaped in 1969 (*ibid*).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 PROJECT DESIGN

3.1.1 A project design (*Appendix 2*) was submitted by LUAU in response to a request from Padgett Lavender Associates for an archaeological evaluation of a site on Pipewellgate. It was designed in accordance with a project brief (*Appendix 1*) by David Heslop, Tyne and Wear County Archaeologist.

3.1.2 The project design provided for two evaluation trenches extending over the site of the proposed development. Where practicable this project design was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and generally accepted best practice.

3.2 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 The two trial trenches, each approximately 4.0m in length by 3.6m in width, were excavated mechanically using a toothless ditching bucket to a maximum depth of 1.8m, under archaeological supervision. The first encountered archaeological deposits were manually cleaned and excavated. All excavation, whether by machine or by hand, was carried out stratigraphically. In each trench a sondage was cut to establish the natural subsoils.

3.2.2 The recording methods employed by LUAU accord with those recommended by English Heritage's Centre for Archaeology. Recording was in the form of *pro forma* Context Sheets for each of the features identified, together with accompanying hand-drawn plans and sections as appropriate. A photographic record, in both black and white and colour, was maintained and the finds recovered were bagged and recorded by context.

3.2.3 The position of each trench was recorded using a total station and data-logger. The digital survey data were transferred, via DXF file format, into a CAD system. The archaeological detail was drawn up in the field with respect to field plots of the survey data and these edits were then transferred onto the raw survey data within the CAD system.

3.2.4 All artefactual material was processed in accordance with LUAU standard practice and has been fully catalogued and prepared for deposition with the final archive.

3.3 ARCHIVE

3.3.1 A full archive of the evaluation programme has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The paper archive will be deposited with the County Record Office. In addition, a copy of the report will be forwarded to the Tyne and Wear Sites and Monuments Record. The finds will be deposited with the Tyne and Wear Museums.

4. RESULTS

4.1 EVALUATION TRENCHES

4.1.1 Two trenches were excavated in the area of the proposed development, immediately to the south-east of and adjacent to Pipewellgate street frontage (Fig 2), running approximately at right-angles to the street, and aligned north-west/south-east.

4.1.2 ***Trench 1:*** Trench 1 was machine-excavated, and measured 4.0m by 3.6m. The upper *c*0.8m of excavation was through modern car-park surfacing and make-up, [100], which consisted of a block paving surface for the car-park, bedded into a coarse-grained gritty sandy deposit, and this overlay a layer of orange compacted hardcore. Beneath the hardcore was a deposit of natural clay and orangey brown sand banding, [104], at a depth of between 0.8m and 0.71m, which appeared to be glacial in origin. As specified in the project design (*Appendix 2*), a sondage was excavated in the centre of the trench through this deposit, to a depth of 1.8m below the ground level, to confirm that it was naturally deposited. The sondage clearly showed the banding to some depth, the sequence of which appeared entirely consistent with natural deposition.

4.1.3 Two archaeological features were encountered during excavation, both cut into natural subsoil [104]. One feature was a post-medieval brick-lined well, with a line of compacted stone rubble which was probably associated. The well was constructed in an oval cut, [105], measuring approximately 1.0m by 1.05m, and had been water-proofed using a dark brown black clay loam, [106], containing poorly sorted degraded sandstone, lime mortar and gravel particles. The well lining, [107], was constructed of laterally placed hand-made bricks set into the clay lining. The well had been back-filled with a blackish brown clay silt deposit [101] containing fragments of brick and stone rubble, which suggests that once it had gone out of use, it was subsequently demolished. The well was probably abandoned some time in the late nineteenth century, as the plot is shown as vacant by the time of the Second Edition OS map of 1896 (University of Newcastle Archaeological Practice 1998). The well could not be excavated for health and safety reasons.

4.1.4 The second feature consisted of a line of compacted small to large sub-angular sandstone rubble, [102], set within a roughly rectangular cut, [108], measuring 1.4m by 1m; the upper level of the feature was 0.76m below ground level. The stones were set into the cut within a brownish red silty clay matrix, [103]. The stones appeared to have been deliberately laid and were probably the footings of a wall, or the remains of a robbed-out wall. The destruction of this wall occurred at the same time as the back-filling of the well as the stones were overlain by the same dark silver-grey black compacted silty clay, [101], probably demolition waste, that also filled the well. A single sherd of mid thirteenth- to fourteenth-century pottery was recovered (*Section 4.2*) within the stones of the wall. No other features or finds were noted in the trench.

4.1.5 ***Trench 2:*** the second trench was also machine-excavated, and measured 4.0m by 3.6m. The upper *c*0.80m of excavation was through modern car-park surfacing and make-up, [200]. As in Trench 1, this deposit consisted of a block paving surface bedded into a coarse-grained gritty sand, above a layer of orange

compacted hardcore. Beneath the hardcore was a deposit of greyish brown sticky silty clay, [202], containing bands of mid-yellow brown silty sand. As specified in the Project Design (*Appendix 2*), in the centre of the trench a sondage was excavated into this deposit to a depth of 1.8m below ground level, in order to demonstrate that this was of natural origin. Fragments of coal and degraded sandstone occurred throughout the deposit, which was archaeologically sterile and appeared to be a natural clay though it was unclear whether this was from fluvial deposition or of glacial origin. The sondage revealed a mass of carboniferous sandstone, [203], outcropping at the base of the trench, and sloping gradually down to the north-west at an angle of approximately 20°. At the request of the Tyne and Wear County Archaeologist (D Heslop *pers comm*), a machine-cut section was excavated into this deposit which confirmed that it was natural bedrock.

4.1.6 Only one archaeological feature was encountered, which cut into natural clay, [202], and was immediately beneath the hardcore of the car-park construction. This was the remains of a single course of sandstone rubble wall foundation, [201], running east to west across the centre of the trench. It was at least 3.6m in length, and extended into both the east and the west sections of the trench; it was 0.8m in width and 0.75m below ground level. There was little evidence of bonding material around any of the stones. Below the stonework was a well-stratified sherd of mid-thirteenth- to fourteenth- century pottery (*Section 4.2*), which suggests that the wall was of a similar date to that encountered in Trench 1. Overlying the wall was a compacted layer of blackish silt, [204], similar to [101] in Trench 1, containing brick fragments and nineteenth century pottery; this was again possibly demolition waste.

4.2 THE FINDS

4.2.1 ***Finds Summary:*** early finds were recovered from both wall foundations [102] and [201]. The single large and unabraded jug fragment from [102] is clearly medieval in date, probably mid thirteenth-fourteenth century. The smaller, but equally unabraded, fragment of pottery from [201] falls within the same date range, but were potentially residual within this context, since it also produced clay pipe.

Context	Description
102	One fragment fine, sandy, with incompletely reduced fabric. It is a wall sherd from near the base of a jug. It has small splashes of yellowish glaze.
201	One small fragment medium-fine, sandy, salmon-pink oxidised fabric. It is a wall sherd from near the neck of a jug. It has drips of light green glaze, possibly over a thin white slip.
201	One stem fragment clay pipe.
201	One small fragment butchered bone.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 DISCUSSION

5.1.1 No evidence for prehistoric, Roman or early medieval occupation or land use was found in the evaluation. This may in part be a consequence of the severe localised truncation of archaeological deposits and features within the site. It is also possible, however, that this part of the pre-reclamation river foreshore, lying at the foot of a steep escarpment, was not favoured for significant levels of occupation until the later medieval period. Roman activity may have been confined to the top of the escarpment and to the east of the site (LUAU / NCAS forthcoming).

5.1.2 Wall [201] in Trench 2 is likely to be the rear wall of a medieval tenement and seems to correspond to the rear wall of the front building of plot 293 on Thomas Oliver's map of 1830. The line of the wall can be seen on both the 1st and the 2nd edition Ordnance Surveys of 1857 and 1896. Rubble foundation [102] in Trench 1 appears to lie within the footprint of a building shown on Oliver (1830, plot 337) and on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (1857) and may be part of an internal wall. Both features produced sherds of mid thirteenth to fourteenth century pottery, suggesting that the structures were of medieval origin, possibly belonging to the earliest phases of development of Pipewellgate, although there had clearly been some disturbance or modification to wall [201] since a fragment of clay pipe was also found. Well [107] in Trench 1 was, on map evidence, also an internal feature. It seems too narrow to have been used with a bucket and winch and may, in view of its relatively late date, have been surmounted by a pump.

5.1.3 These few features provide evidence for the domestic buildings which formerly occupied the site, and their likely date range from medieval (thirteenth to fourteenth century) to nineteenth century. This evidence, along with that from documentary sources, demonstrates the development and ultimate decline of Pipewellgate.

5.2 IMPACT

5.2.1 The evaluation showed that the development will impact on an archaeological resource that has only limited survival, as most features and deposits of archaeological interest appear to have been removed during the landscaping and terracing associated with the insertion of the car-park into the side of the hill.

5.2.2 The results are in stark contrast to an evaluation undertaken in 1998 to the east of Bankwell Stairs, approximately 20m to the east of Trench 2, which encountered medieval dumping below several phases of medieval and post-medieval occupation (Archaeological Practice University of Newcastle 1998). In contrast, this evaluation shows that only a thin archaeological horizon survives immediately beneath the hardcore for the car-park, and as much degraded cut features, comprising the base of structural features such as walls and a well. The proposed insertion of mini-piles for the foundations of the proposed building will have only a limited effect on the deposits encountered.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 Despite the paucity of the archaeological remains, the evaluation has nevertheless demonstrated that late medieval features do survive cutting the natural subsoil. As the proposed building will have pile foundations, which will minimise any sub-surface disturbance and little of the site will be affected; however, there is a potential that the trenches for the ground beams will have an impact upon the extant early deposits. It is therefore recommended that it should be established whether the proposed construction techniques be investigated will have an impact upon the archaeological resource, which at its highest is 0.71m below ground level. If there is a potential impact, then a watching brief should be implemented during the excavation of the trenches for the ground beams.

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APPENDIX 1
PROJECT BRIEF

APPENDIX 2
PROJECT DESIGN

APPENDIX 3
CONTEXT SUMMARY

Context Number	Trench Number	Category	Form
100	1	Deposit	Overburden
101	1	Deposit	Layer- demolition
102	1	Structure	Wall
103	1	Deposit	Clay Fill of [108]
104	1	Deposit	Natural clay and sand
105	1	Cut	For Well [107]
106	1	Deposit	Well-lining
107	1	Structure	Well
108	1	Cut	For Wall [102]
200	2	Deposit	Overburden
201	2	Structure	Wall
202	2	Deposit	Layer – natural
203	2	Deposit	Bedrock - natural
204	2	Deposit	Layer of Blackish silt

ILLUSTRATIONS

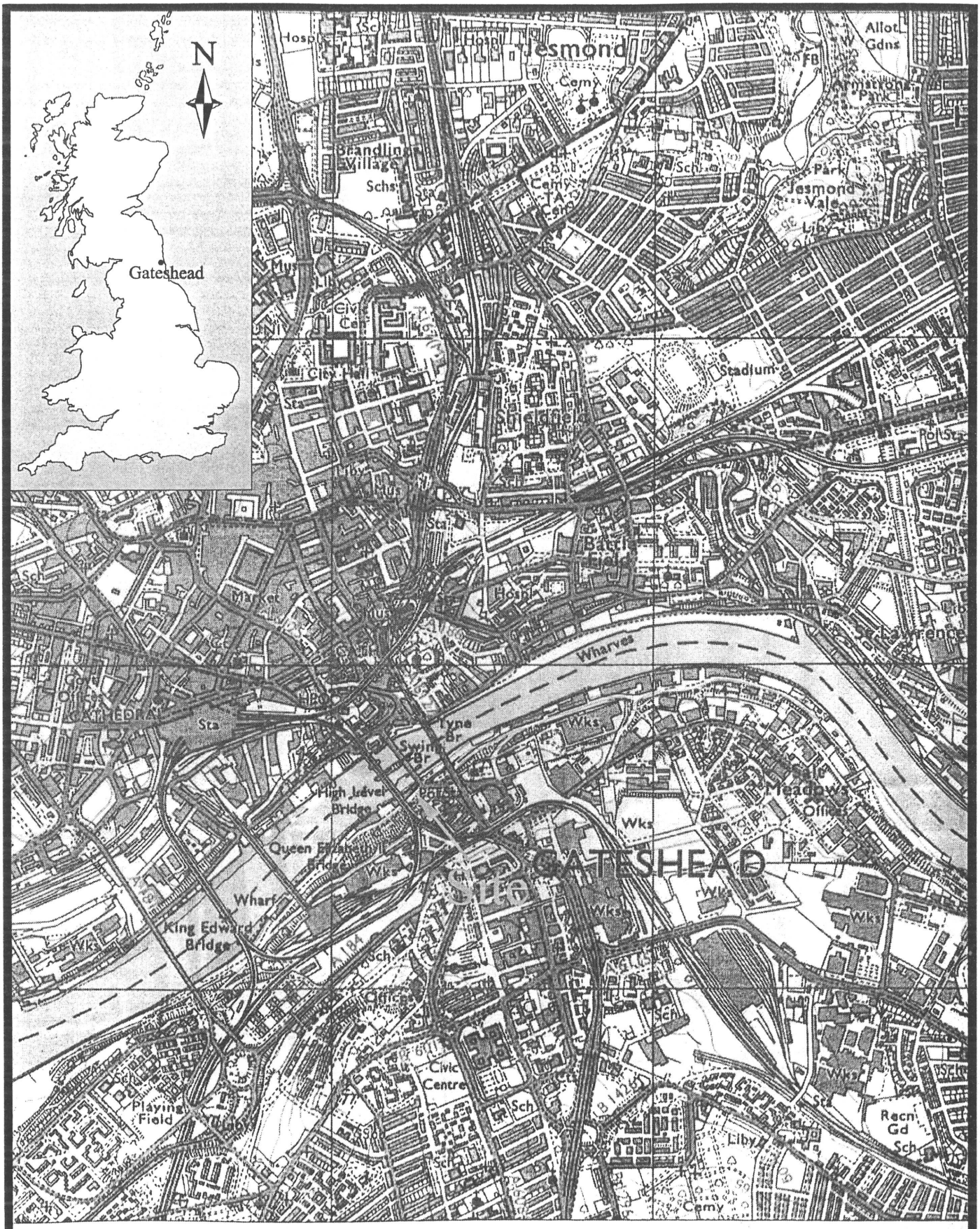

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Figure 1: Pipewellgate Location Map

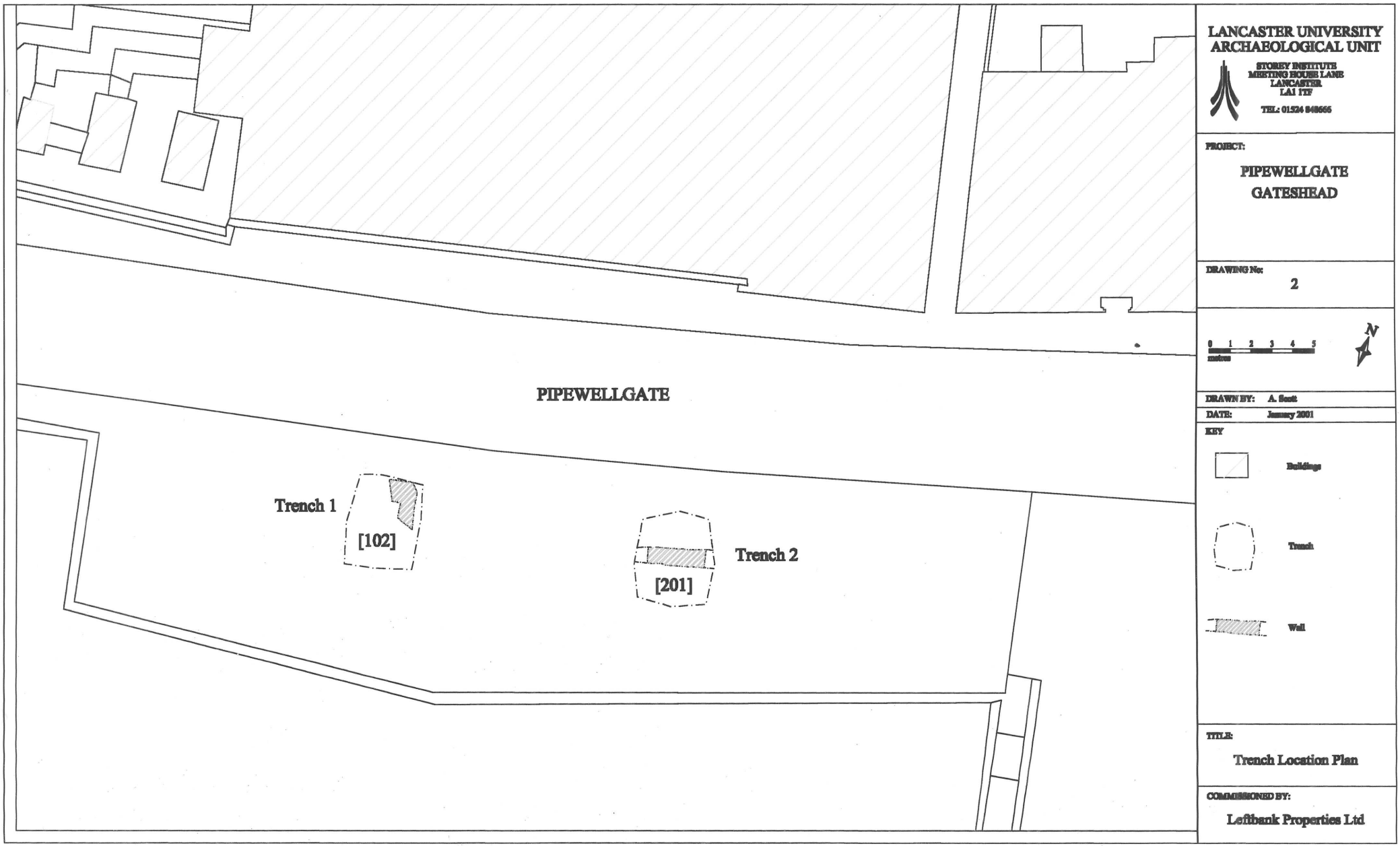

Figure 2 : Trench Location Plan

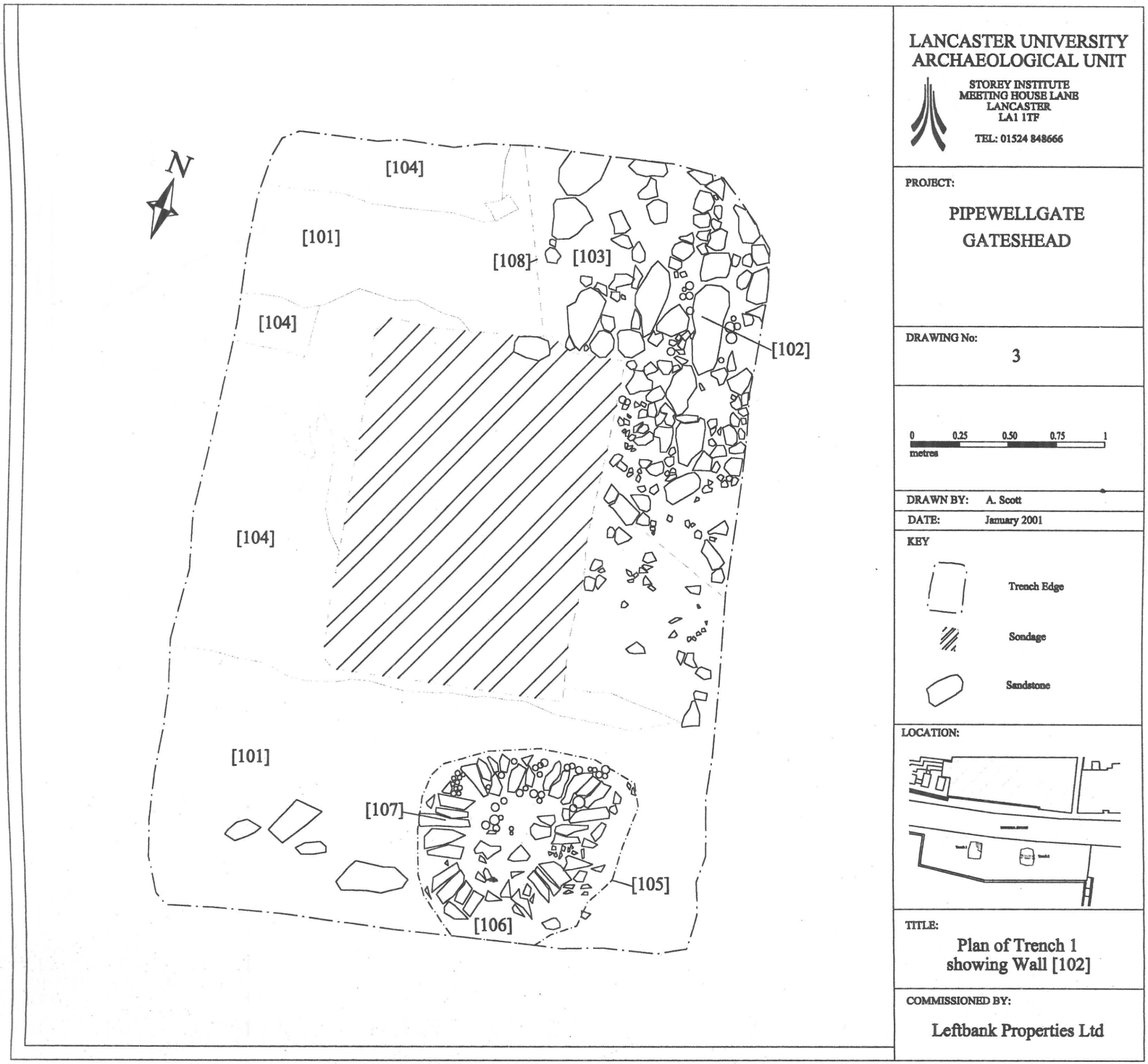

Figure 3: Plan of Trench 1 Showing Wall [102]

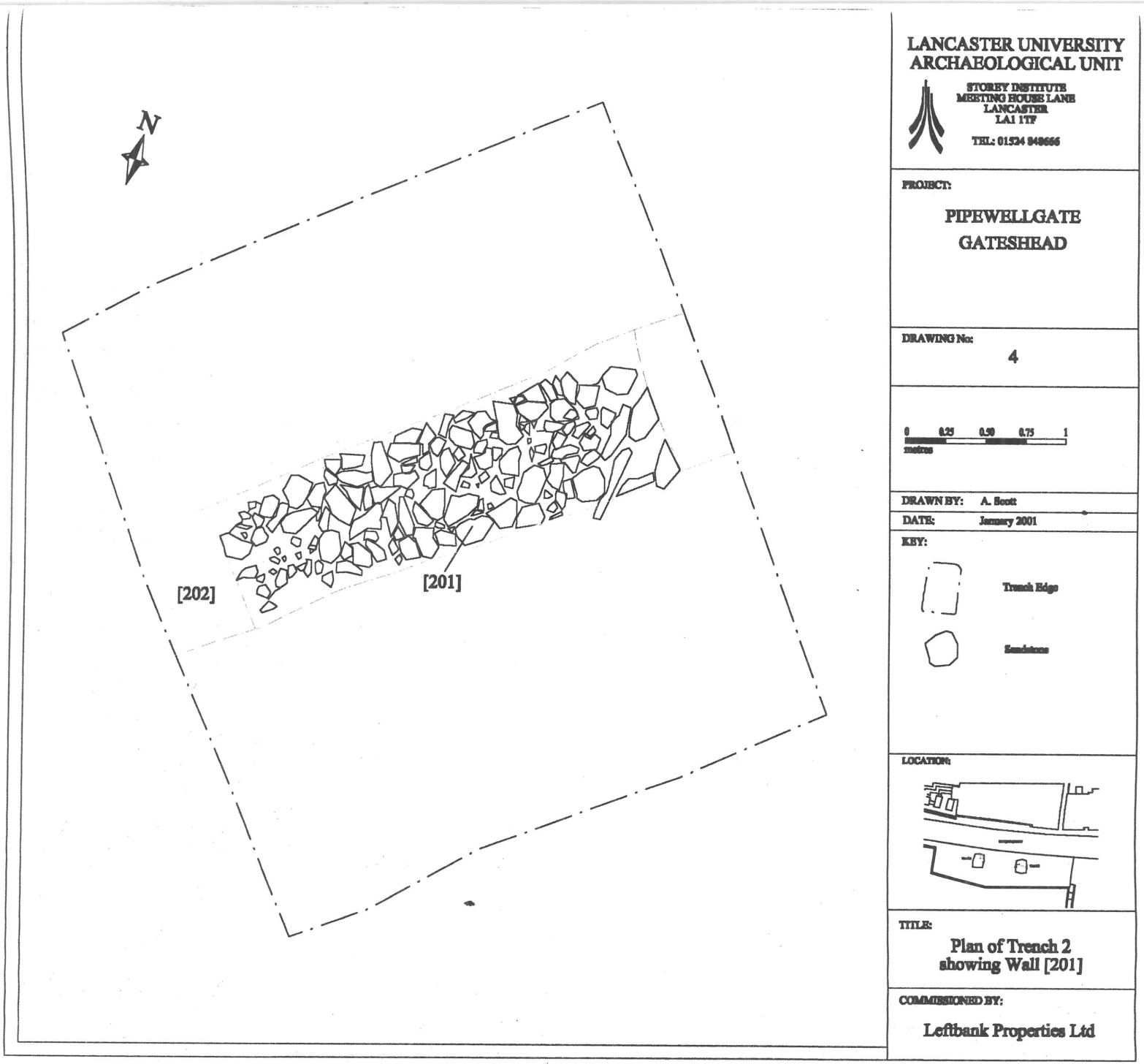

Figure 4: Plan of Trench 2 Showing Wall [201]

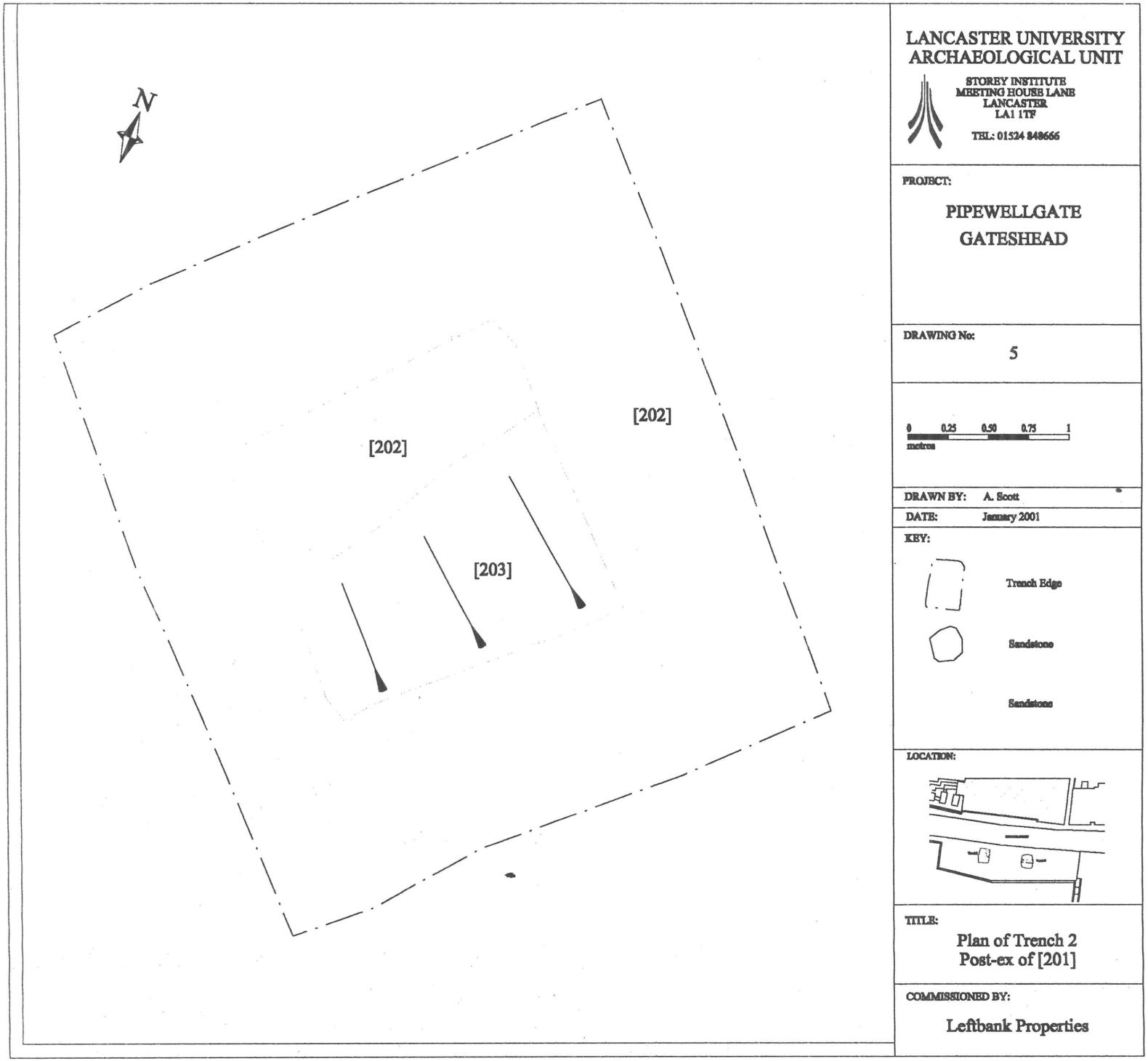

Figure 5: Post-Excavation Plan of Trench 2

PLATES

Plate 1: Trench 2, Wall [201] – looking west

Plate 2: Trench 1 Nineteenth century well [107] - looking east

Plate 3 Trench 2 Post-excavation looking south-east