

DOVER (KE)

The Heritage Centre, Dover

Part 2 Archaeological Assessment

**Oxford Archaeological Unit
January 1989**

THE HERITAGE CENTRE - DOVER

Part 2 Archaeological Assessment

Introduction

An extension to the assessment of November 1988 was undertaken in response to requests for more detailed archaeological information.

Four trenches were excavated to locate precisely the Saxon Shore fort wall in the SE of the site, the presence and position of the bastion of the Saxon Shore fort in the SW of the site and the condition and position of the Classis Britannica walls in the NW of the site.

Summary

The Saxon Shore fort wall was located in both trenches in the E of the site and was found to lie slightly N of the line predicted.

The bastion in the SW of the site was present and piles will have to be moved to avoid it.

Part of the N perimeter wall of the Classis Britannica II fort was located in the NW, and running roughly parallel to it, the N wall of a contemporary barrack block. Beneath these, at right angles, was the footing of a Classis Britannica I fort structure. The walls here are not well preserved. The central pile of the new building should miss these walls.

Trenches 7 and 8 (Fig 1 & 2)

It became desirable to pinpoint more exactly the position of the Saxon Shore fort wall in the E of the development site. The variable compaction of the ground in this area meant that the building may have to sit on piles and not a raft as previously envisaged.

Two trenches were excavated in the lower car park through the backfill of previous archaeological excavations.

In trench 7 the Saxon Shore fort wall was located at 5.93m OD. It was faced externally with chalk blocks 0.15 x 0.20m in size but the facing did not survive internally. Only 0.80m of the wall was exposed.

In trench 8 the facing (of chalk blocks 0.10m-0.15m in size) did survive internally, though only 0.28m was uncovered. Part of the external face also existed. A large, roughly faced limestone block sat on a course of flint. This was cut away to the E. The maximum height of the wall was 5.68m OD.

The location of these two sections of wall enabled us to be more precise about the position of the Saxon Shore fort wall. It ran slightly further N than we had predicted.

Trench 9 (Fig 3)

A bastion in the SW corner of the development site is marked on the published plans but as it was not within known areas of excavation and is not designated as having been seen on these plans it was unclear whether its existence was real or conjecture. Also it was essential to know its exact position, several piles had been positioned here.

Trench 9, large, irregular and stepped hole because of loose soil, was excavated. This area had been excavated before and the bastion did exist. None of the Saxon Shore fort wall survived to our excavation level; probably it had been robbed away. This had left the bastion, clearly a later addition, standing free where it would have abutted the wall. Five courses of the facing of the E part of the bastion were seen; the top course was of tile and the others of fairly flat tufa slabs 0.08m-0.10m high and from 0.15m-0.40m wide. This was cut away by a pipe trench. The core of the bastion was chalk rubble and flint nodules in hard cream mortar. The maximum height of the bastion was 10.12 m.

Trench 10 (Fig 4)

The survival to a high level of walls of the Classis Britannica fort in the NW of the site has led to a revision of the scheme. It is proposed to house and display these remains below the theatre which will be supported by a single central pile. Thus it was crucial to be exact about the archaeology in the area of this pile. The condition of the walls within the display area was also of interest.

The N perimeter wall of the Classis Britannica II fort was located at a maximum height of 9.57m OD, the facing being at 9.27m OD. Only the inner face was exposed. Two to three courses of face chalk blocks survived, the blocks being generally 0.10m x 0.15m in size. The mortar core of the wall was very loose and sandy. Running roughly parallel to it, 2.80m away, was the N wall of a barrack block. It was 0.48m wide and cut away to the E by a later pit. It was fairly rough and only had a reasonable

In trench 8 the facing (of chalk blocks 0.10m-0.15m in size) did survive internally, though only 0.28m was uncovered. Part of the external face also existed. A large, roughly faced limestone block sat on a course of flint. This was cut away to the E. The maximum height of the wall was 5.68m OD.

The location of these two sections of wall enabled us to be more precise about the position of the Saxon Shore fort wall. It ran slightly further N than we had predicted.

Trench 9 (Fig 3)

A bastion in the SW corner of the development site is marked on the published plans but as it was not within known areas of excavation and is not designated as having been seen on these plans it was unclear whether its existence was real or conjecture. Also it was essential to know its exact position, several piles had been positioned here.

Trench 9, large, irregular and stepped hole because of loose soil, was excavated. This area had been excavated before and the bastion did exist. None of the Saxon Shore fort wall survived to our excavation level; probably it had been robbed away. This had left the bastion, clearly a later addition, standing free where it would have abutted the wall. Five courses of the facing of the E part of the bastion were seen; the top course was of tile and the others of fairly flat tufa slabs 0.08m-0.10m high and from 0.15m-0.40m wide. This was cut away by a pipe trench. The core of the bastion was chalk rubble and flint nodules in hard cream mortar. The maximum height of the bastion was 10.12 m.

Trench 10 (Fig 4)

The survival to a high level of walls of the Classis Britannica fort in the NW of the site has led to a revision of the scheme. It is proposed to house and display these remains below the theatre which will be supported by a single central pile. Thus it was crucial to be exact about the archaeology in the area of this pile. The condition of the walls within the display area was also of interest.

The N perimeter wall of the Classis Britannica II fort was located at a maximum height of 9.57m OD, the facing being at 9.27m OD. Only the inner face was exposed. Two to three courses of face chalk blocks survived, the blocks being generally 0.10m x 0.15m in size. The mortar core of the wall was very loose and sandy. Running roughly parallel to it, 2.80m away, was the N wall of a barrack block. It was 0.48m wide and cut away to the E by a later pit. It was fairly rough and only had a reasonable

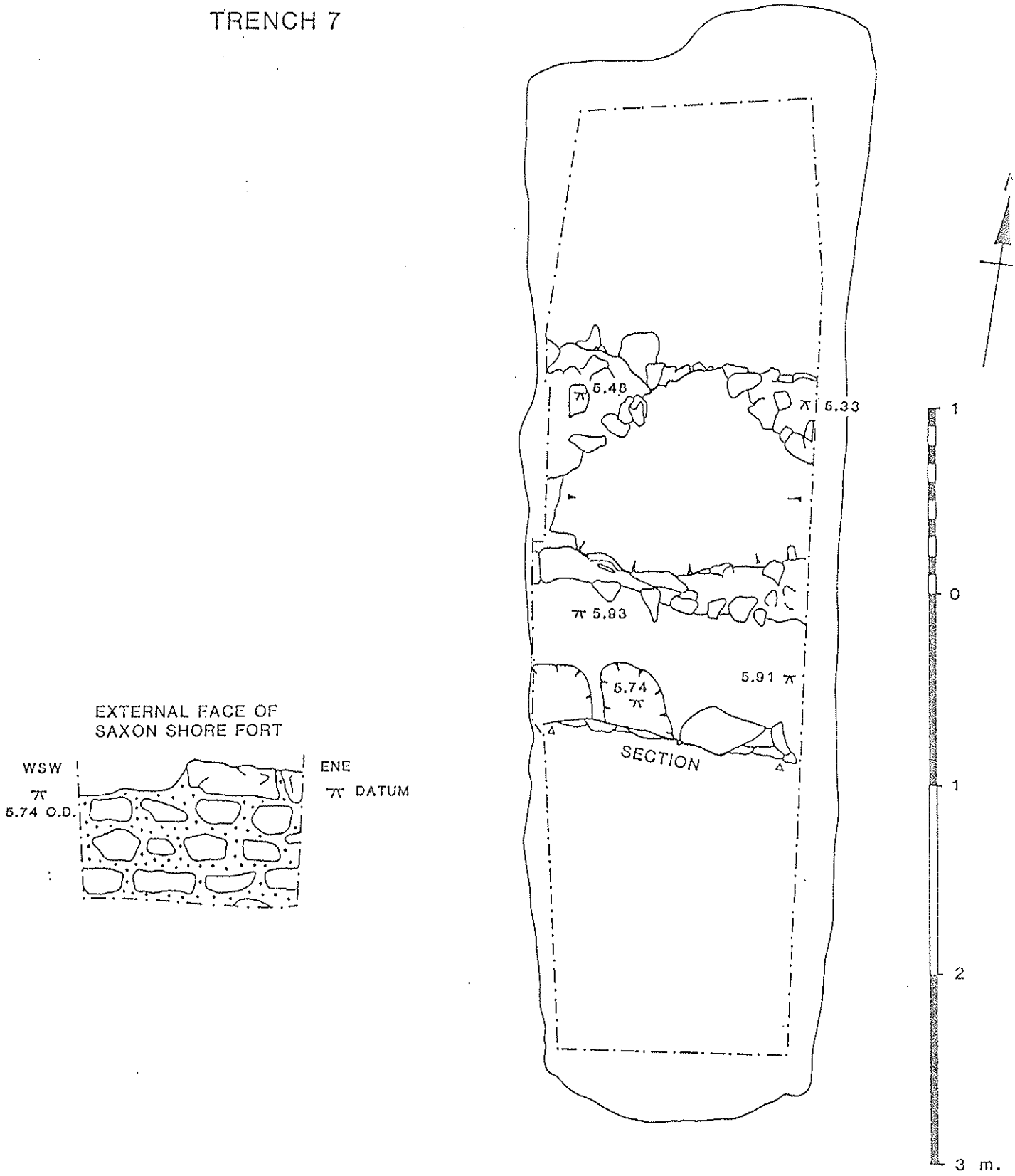
face to the N (external) side where a maximum of five courses remained up to 9.47m OD. It, too, was constructed of chalk blocks. In the W-E section of the excavation, on the S edge of the pit, a small part of a cross wall of this building was observed.

Running NNW-SSE below these walls was the footing of a wall of the Classis Britannica I fort. This was a cross wall of a large building running roughly E-W which lay outside the Classis Britannica I fort. The N wall of this building was obscured by the Classis Britannica II perimeter wall. The footing was of rammed chalk, 0.14m of which remained. It had been cut away to the S, ? for the Classis Britannica II barrack wall, though its line was still clearly visible.

The excavation demonstrated that all these walls had been left in situ, though it is suspected that sections may have been cut through in places. The preservation of the walls in this central area is not good, and, as elsewhere, medieval and later activity has been destructive. The best survival of archaeology will be to the W of here. To the E the walls have been cut away by the Saxon Shore fort terrace and it is hoped that this has already been noted by the design team. The central pile should miss these walls.

Gill Hey
February 1989

TRENCH 7

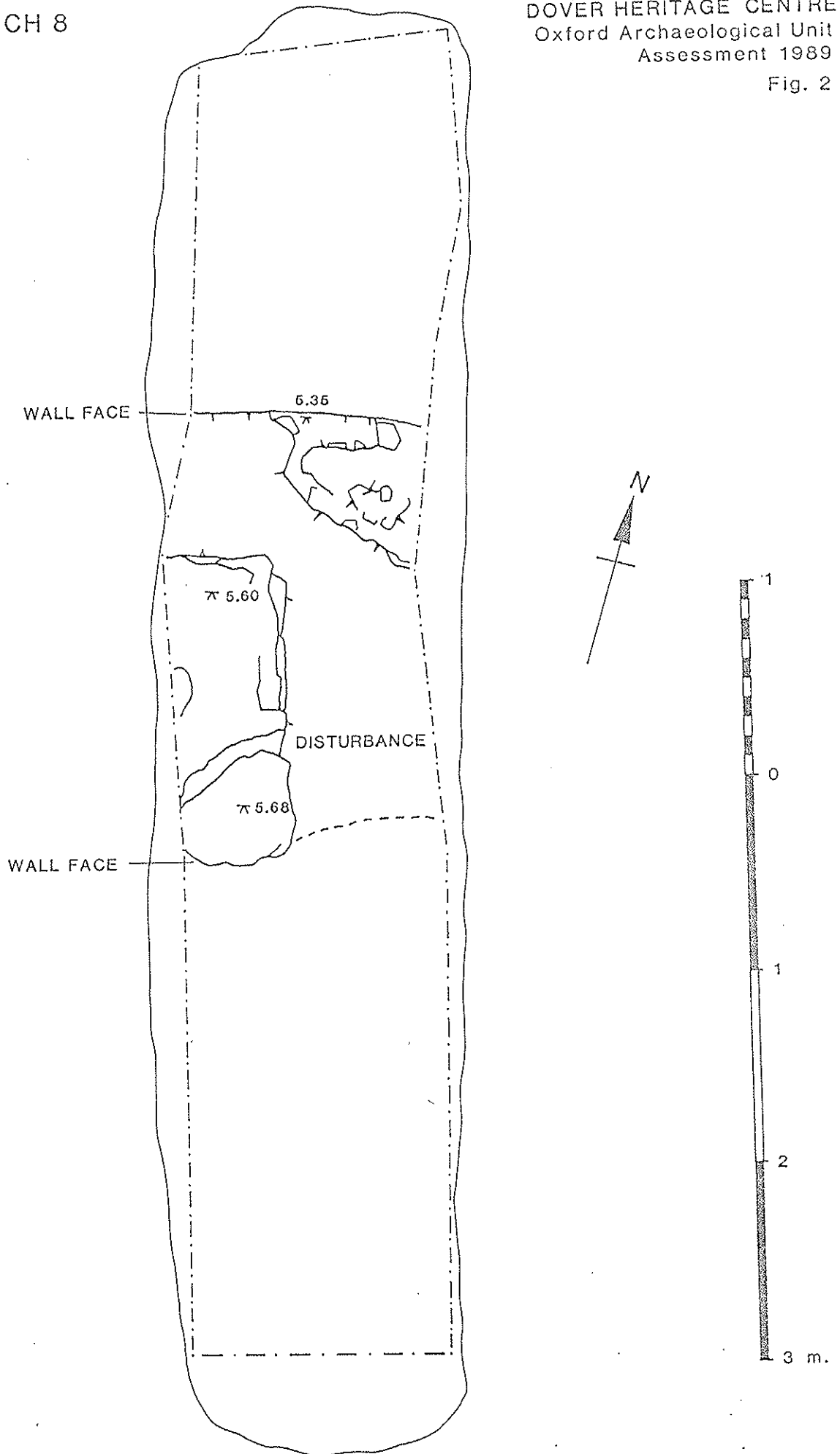


DOVER HERITAGE CENTRE Oxford Archaeological Unit Assessment 1989
Fig. 1

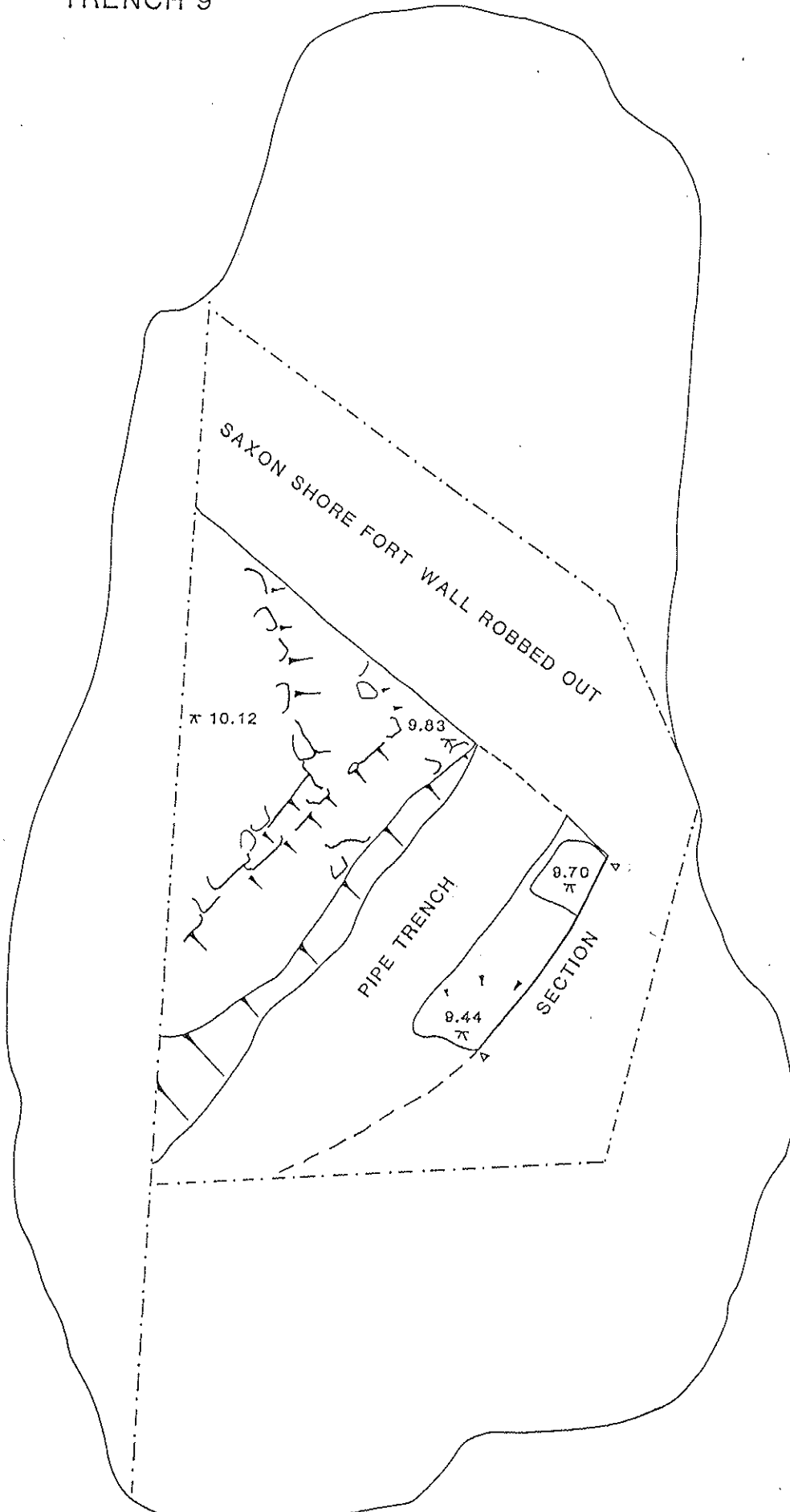
TRENCH 8

DOVER HERITAGE CENTRE
Oxford Archaeological Unit
Assessment 1989

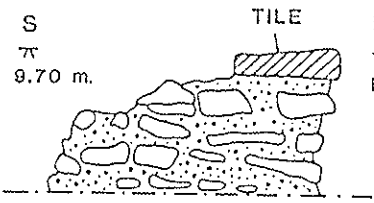
Fig. 2



TRENCH 9



FACE OF BASTION



MORTAR

