

Ankerwycke Priory,  
Wraysbury, Berkshire.

An archaeological evaluation  
for Berkshire County Council, Department  
of Highways and Planning

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An archaeological evaluation.

Report 93/1

by Steve Ford

### Introduction

Thames Valley Archaeological Services were instructed to carry out this evaluation by Ms Anne Upson of Department of Highways and Planning, Berkshire County Council.

Scheduled Monument Consent was granted to the County Council under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 section 2 to investigate the condition of the upstanding walls of the priory.

This information was to be used as a part of the County Councils strategy for the future management of the site including its opening up for public access.

### Method

Three trenches were dug by hand as shown in Fig. 3. The trenches were typically of 1 m. width and 2-3 m. length. The specification for the work was to excavate deposits of overburden and tumble so as to allow an assessment to be made of the condition of the walls prior to conservation work. As such these deposits were only to be removed down to the top of in situ archaeological deposits.

### Results

#### Trench A

This trench was 3.1m long and was located at right angles across a mound located on the RCHME plan of the site (Fig. 3). Unexpected depths of deposits were encountered. It showed that the mound was a wall upstanding for at least 2 m. and was 1.2 m. wide (Figs. 4 and 5) (Plate 1). As elsewhere on the site, the wall was built of chalk blocks, with well-faced deposits for 1.5 m of height. At the base of the trench on the eastern side, less well-faced stone work jutting out slightly from the wall was probably the top of the foundations. The end of the wall was finished with a brick built pier which was butted onto the part constructed of chalk.

All of the excavated deposits were of overburden and tumble with two phases of deposition visible separated by an old topsoil. Apart from masonry fragments (brick, tile, chalk, sandstone), finds included a few fragments of glass and sherds of Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery.

The trench on the western side of the wall showed that the original wall had been refaced by brick, probably in the 19th century. The foundations were not reached on this side but the refaced brickwork presumably had been dug down to this level.

#### Trench B

This trench was 2 m. long dug midway along the the east-west orientated wall on the northern side (Fig. 4). A similar sequence to trench A was observed with deep deposits of overburden and tumble in two phases encountered again (Fig. 5).

At least 2 m. of wall was upstanding with well-faced work existing for 1.5 m. The base of the trench comprised an in-situ tiled floor. Some of the tiles were missing (Plate 2). No further excavation took place below this level and the depth of the foundations was not determined.

Finds of Post-Medieval pottery, glass and iron were found in addition to masonry fragments.

#### Trench C

This trench was dug in two phases which resulted in its L-shaped plan. The trench was located midway along the north-south orientated wall and on its west side (Fig. 3). The wall was shown to be well-faced for a 2 m. depth below the ground surface at which point the foundation course was located (Fig. 4)

Several layers were observed in the section which differed from that seen in trenches A and B, in particular with much less coarse chalk rubble. The basal deposits comprised a dark layer of mixed tile, brick, stone and chalk rubble (6) which could be the original backfill of a foundation trench. Above this in succession were layers mainly comprising chalk rubble (5), a humic sandy loam (3), a calcareous silty clay (2) and topsoil (Fig. 6).

Set into the top of layer 3 was a small mortared brick and chalk structure. This was not further excavated. A gravel spread (4) was also observed at the same level.

# BERKSHIRE

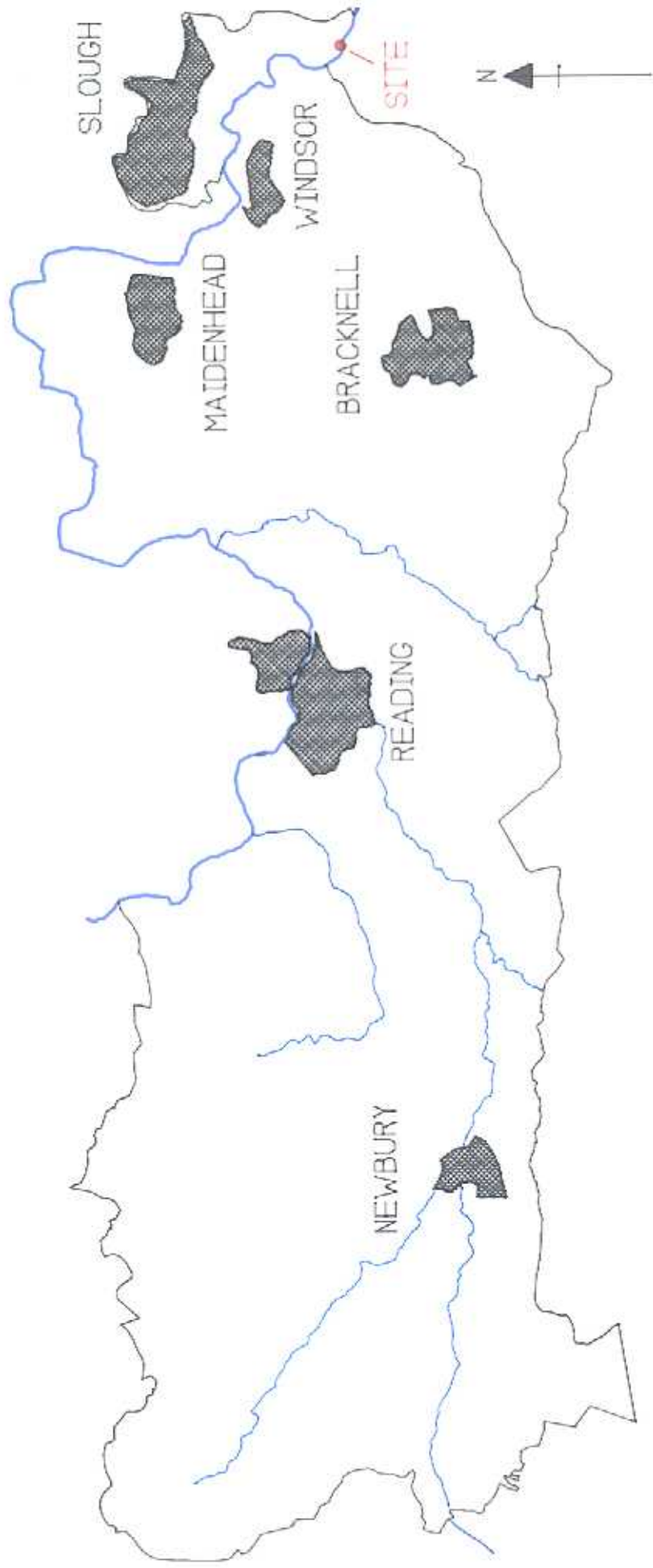


Figure 1. Location of site within county

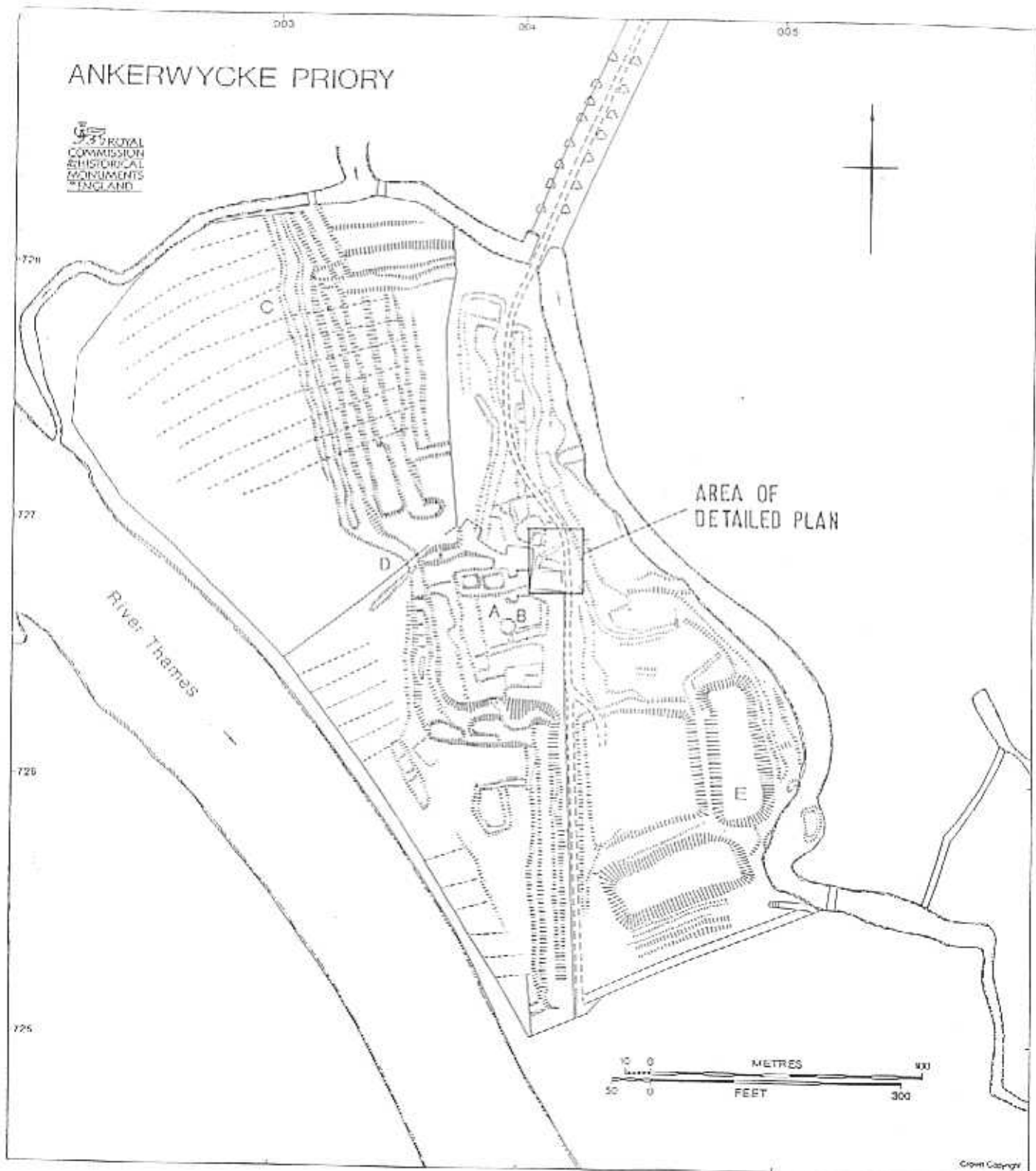


Figure 2. Royal Commission Plan of Ankerwycke Priory showing the location of the trenches.

Ankerwycke Priory 1993

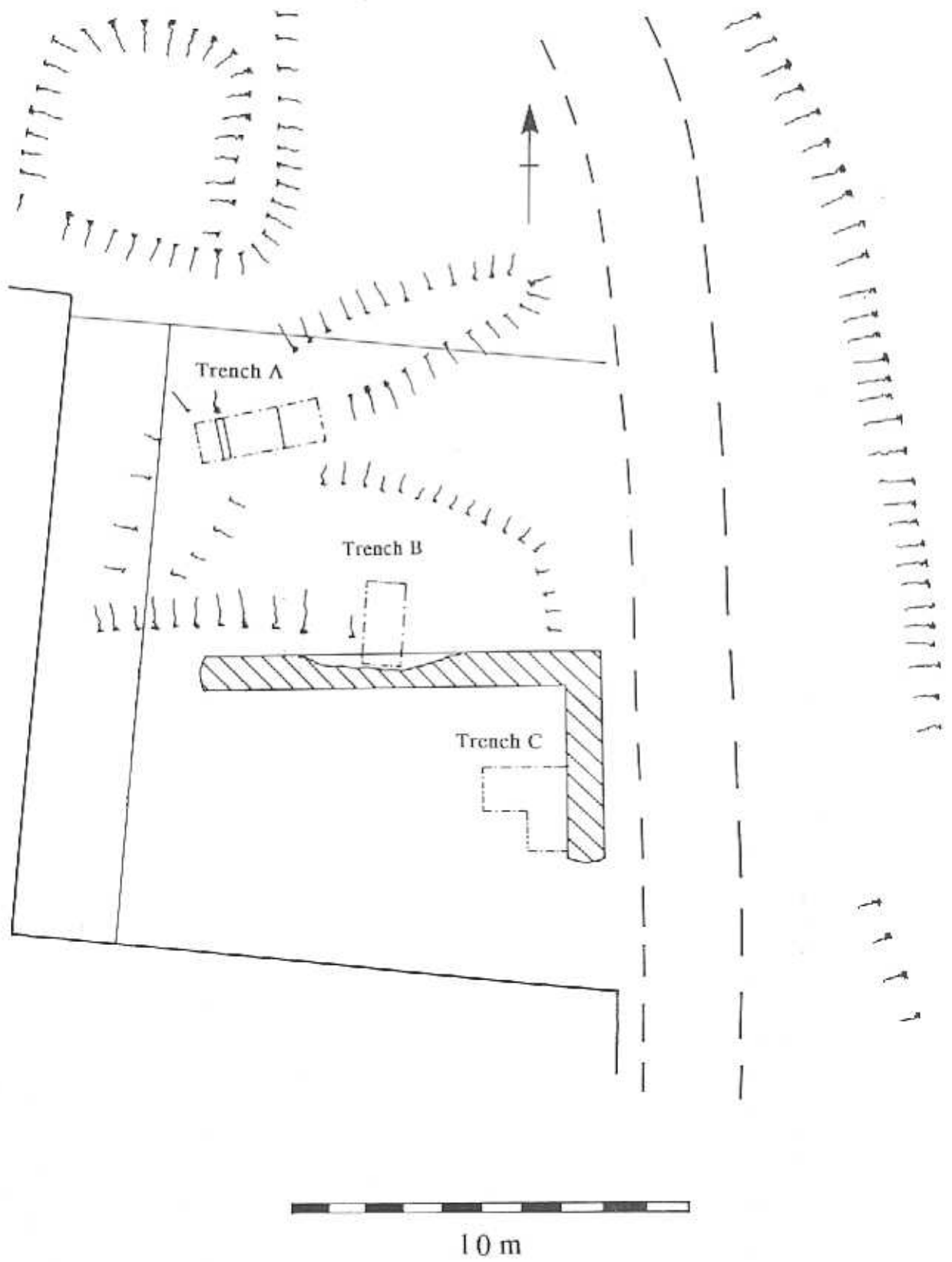


Figure 3. Location of trenches.

# Ankerwycke Priory 1993

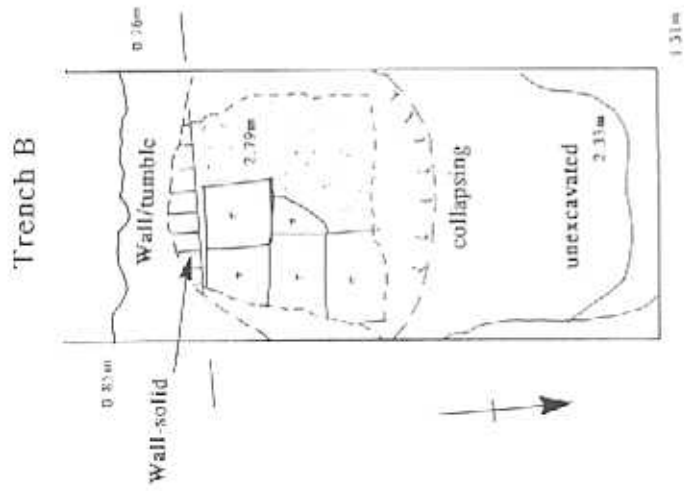
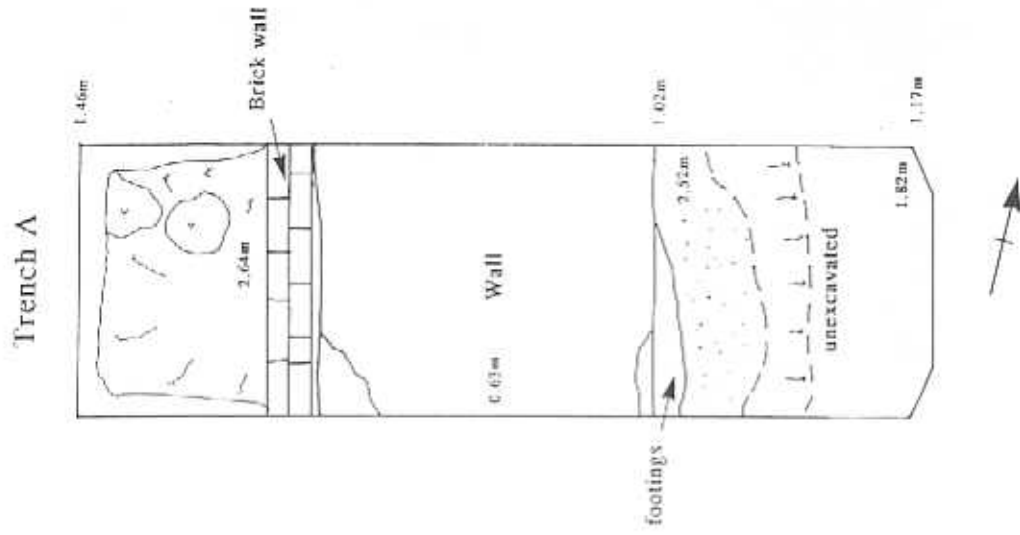
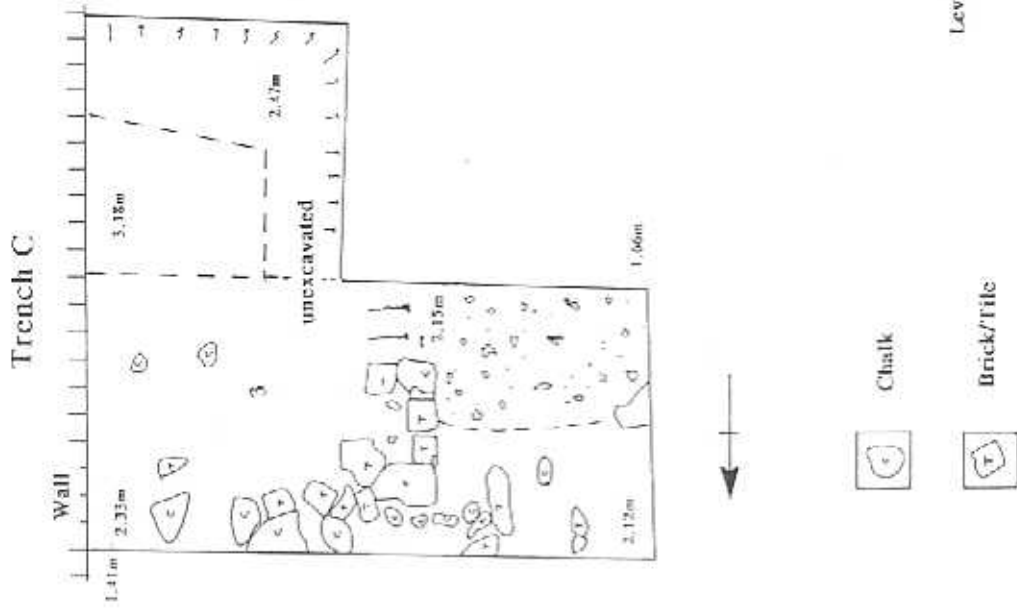


Figure 4. Plans of trenches.

# Ankerwycke Priory 1993

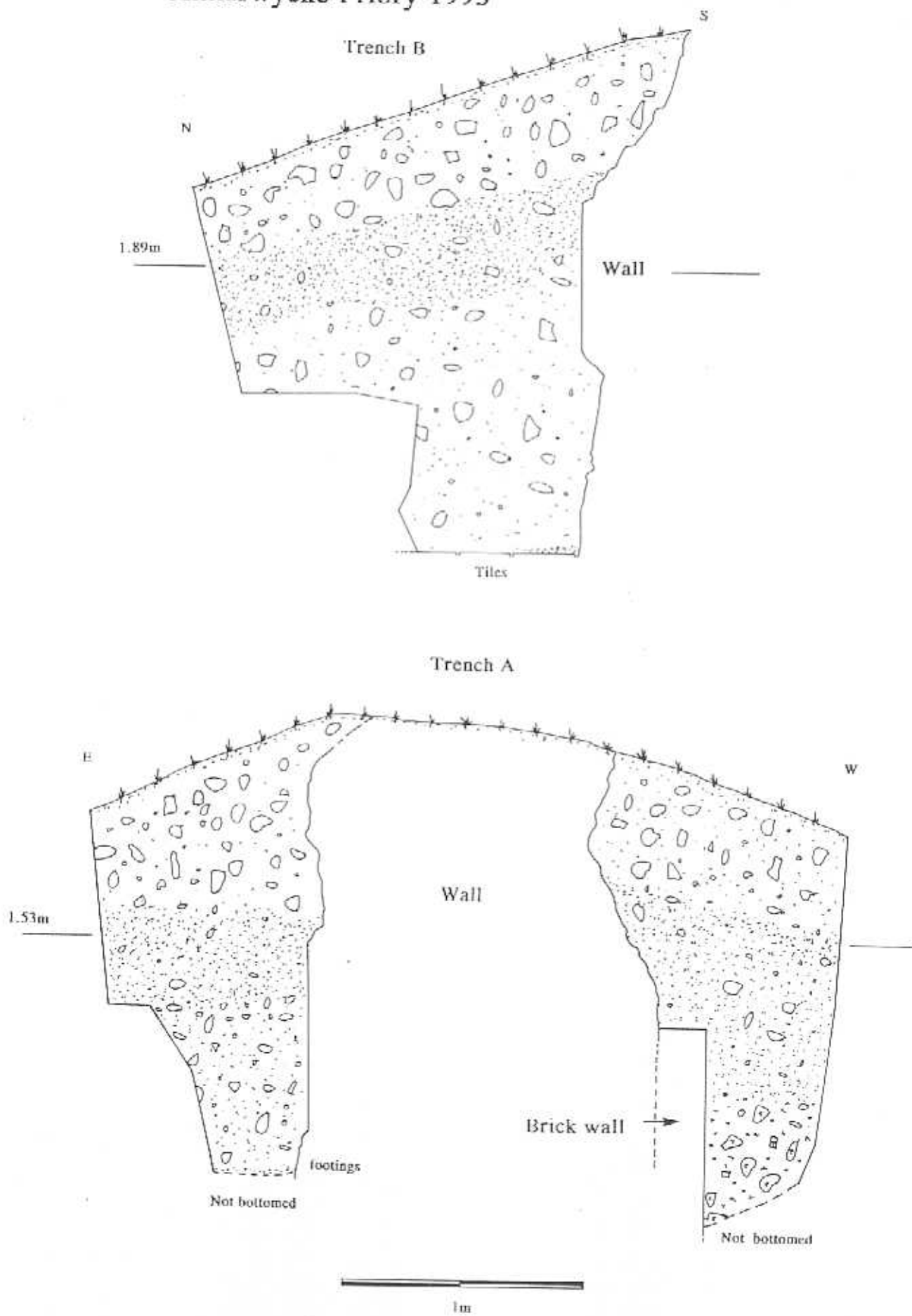


Figure 5. Sections, Trenches A and B.

# Ankerwycke Priory 1993

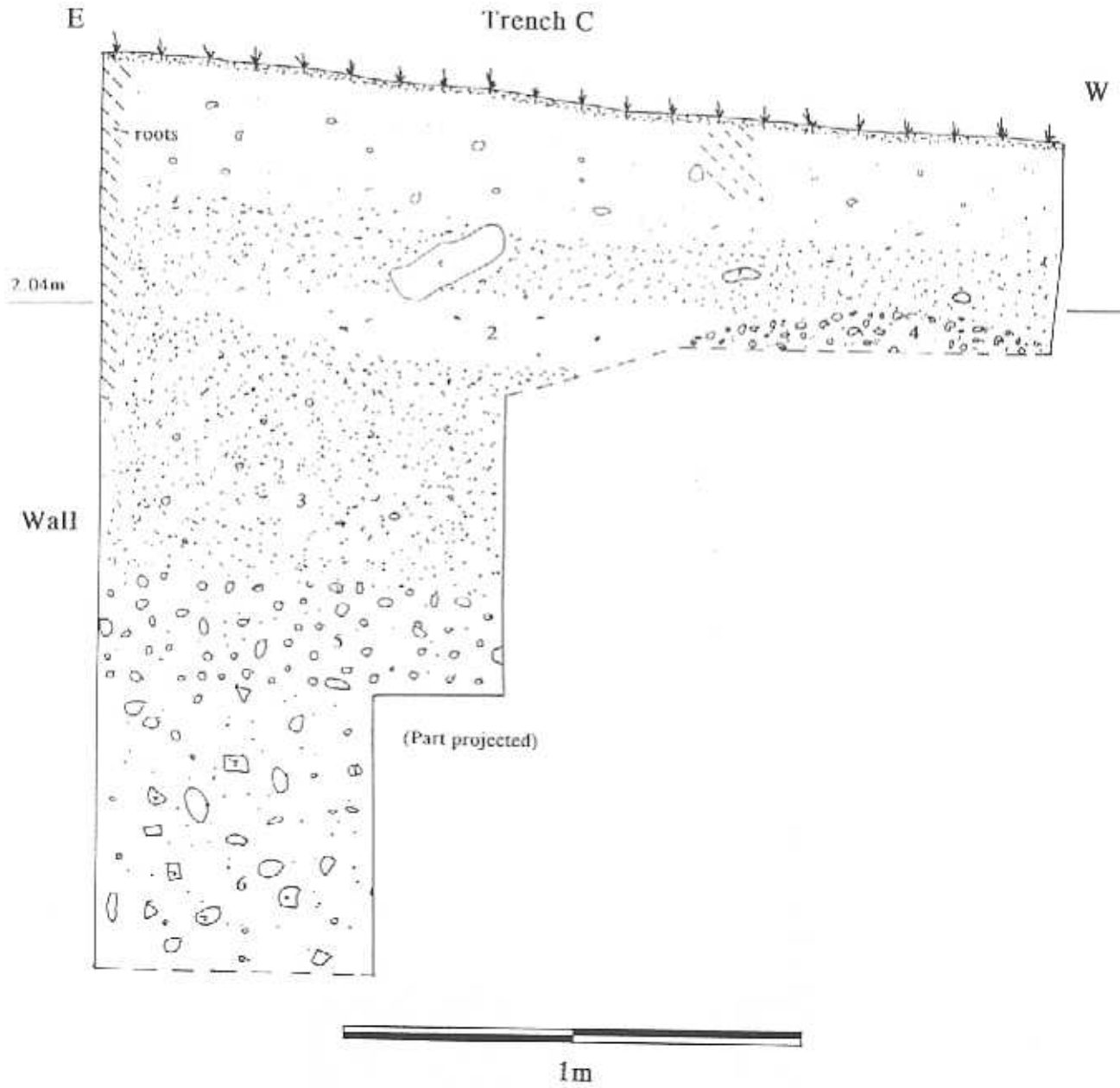


Figure 6 Section, Trench C.



Plate 1 Ankerwyke Priory 1993. Detail of Trench A (eastern side of wall).



Plate 2 Ankerwyke Priory 1993. Trench B looking south showing tiled floor.