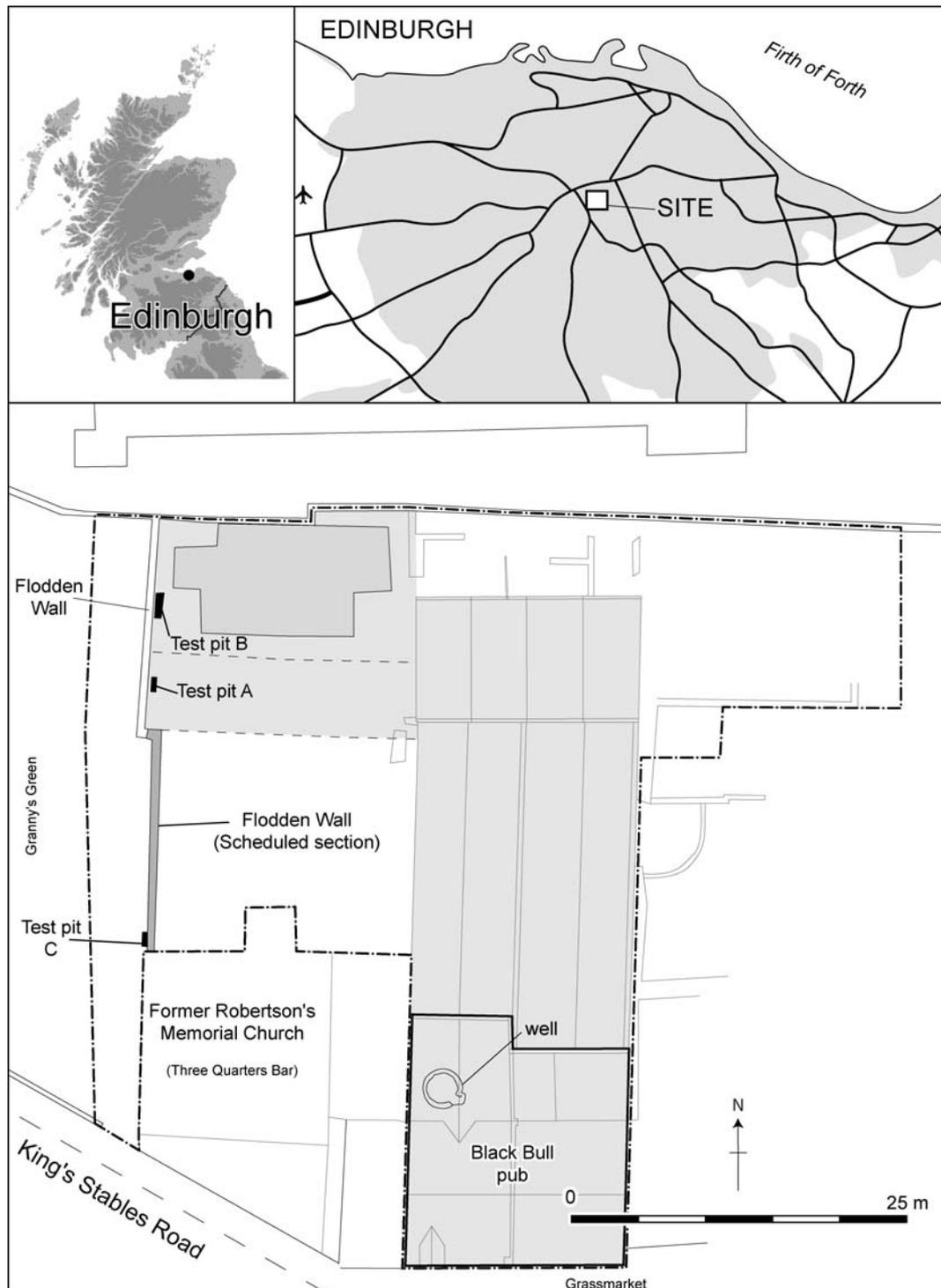


2 Introduction by John A Lawson and David Reed

Situated at the south-eastern foot of Castle Hill, the new Scottish Dance Base, opened in the summer of 2001, occupies the north-western corner of Edinburgh's medieval Grassmarket. The development,

which started in 1998, saw the extensive refurbishment of the Black Bull public house along with the rest of the properties forming nos. 14–16 Grassmarket. The new dance studios were constructed to



Illus 2 Grassmarket 1998–2001: site location map



Illus 3 Working shot along the top of the Flodden Wall and the Phase 2 & 3 walls, facing south at the south-east corner of the Dance Base site

the rear of these buildings, partially within the gutted interior of a late 18th-century former tenement/warehouse, with extensive new construction across the north of the site. As part of the development there was also a requirement to provide an alternative access route to and from the rear of the complex. This was to be achieved by the construction of a new vennel along the eastern side of Granny's Green linking Johnston Terrace with the Grassmarket to the south (Illus 2).

The construction of the new vennel would involve the demolition and subsequent rebuilding of the upper section of the site's western boundary wall, which faced out onto Granny's Green. The foundations of this wall were known to overlie the remains of the Flodden Wall, a scheduled ancient monument (AMH 3012; NGR NT 252 733), which from the early 16th century formed part of the capital's town defences. However prior to the work reported here, the extent and condition of this stretch of the Flodden Wall were not fully understood. The key aims of the project were to try and chart the extent of any original fabric and to trace the urban development history associated with this part of the Flodden Wall.

As stated above the development scheme involved work affecting a scheduled section of Edinburgh's Flodden Wall, running from the north-western

corner of the Grassmarket. Accordingly Scheduled Monument Consent was required from Historic Scotland before work could commence. This was subsequently granted with the condition that an archaeological watching brief and historic building survey be undertaken to record any new sections of the Wall exposed, either during consolidation work or as a result of the construction of the new vennel running along the western side of the Wall. The opportunity was also undertaken to widen the historic building survey to include the exposed elevations of the Wall occurring within the development area. The Project Archive will be deposited in due course with the National Monuments Record of Scotland in Edinburgh; the location of the finds will be determined by Historic Scotland's Finds Disposal Panel.

2.1 Methodology

2.1.1 Building Survey

The programme of historic building recording ran concurrently with an archaeological watching brief during construction works (Illus 3). Because of delays in the construction programme the full programme of building recording on the Wall was not carried out until the winter of 2000/2001 and coincided with the construction of the new vennel. The survey work comprised a detailed photographic survey and scaled plan and elevation drawings of the sections of Wall exposed during development.

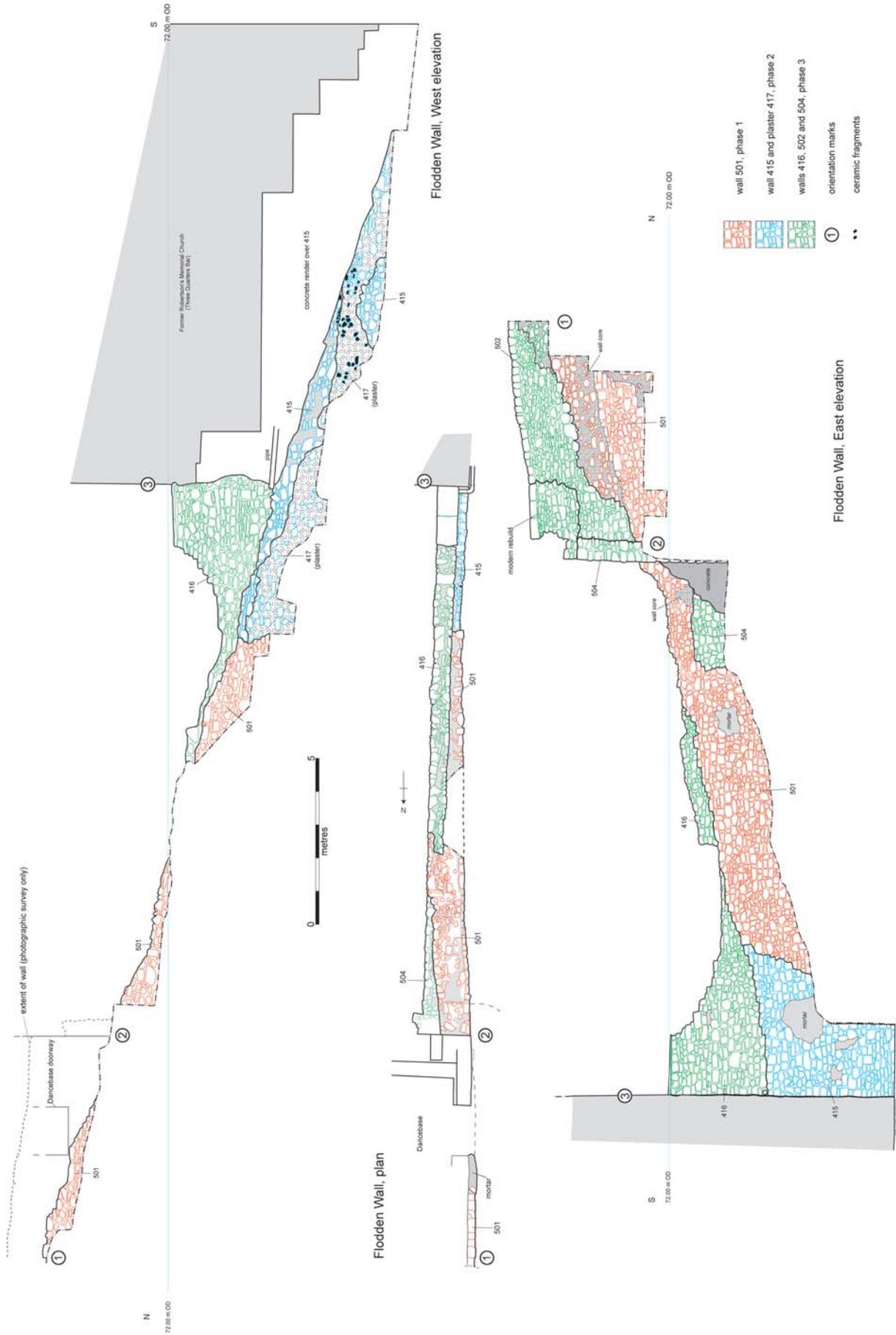
A separate photographic survey was undertaken of the late 18th-century tenement situated to the east of the Wall, prior to its part-demolition and conversion to form the main dance studios. The results of this work remain in the project archive.

2.1.2 Excavation

Preliminary work in 1998 involved the excavation of three engineering test pits (Illus 2: A, B & C) against the eastern and western faces of the Flodden Wall. The purpose of these pits was to establish and identify the possible depth of the Wall while also investigating the nature of the deposits accumulated against both sides.

Test Pit A was 0.70m square and was excavated to a depth of 1.4m. Test Pit B situated 4m north of Test Pit A, measured 2.1m (north south) by 0.70m (east west). This test pit was located at the break between the upper and middle terraces and was excavated to a depth of 1.5m. Test Pit C located adjacent to the west face of the Wall measured 0.70 m square and was excavated to a depth of 2 m below the existing ground surface (Illus 7).

In addition an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the construction of the new vennel running along the Wall's western face and also during ground-breaking works to the east of the Wall, during



Illus 4 Plan and Elevations (west and east sides) of the Flodden Wall at the Dance Base site



Illus 5 West-facing elevation of the Flodden Wall and the Phase 2 & 3 walls, to the north of the site

the construction of the Scottish Dance Base and the refurbishment of the Black Bull public house.

2.2 Previous Work on the Flodden Wall

Since the late 1930s fieldwork on the Flodden Wall represented by the Royal Commission Inventory (RCAHMS 1951, 120–21), little additional work has

been done on Edinburgh's medieval and later defences. The 15th-century King's Wall was encountered in the High Street excavations of 1973 (Schofield 1978, 181). A surviving stretch of Flodden Wall up to 2.15m high was recorded at Chambers Street in 1973 (Tabraham 1973) and the east wall of a building considered to have been put to use as part of the Flodden Wall was excavated at St Mary's Street in 1974 (Holmes 1980, 162).