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# Peebles

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## Location and topography (*illus 1*) by *D R Perry*

The former royal burgh of Peebles is situated in the Tweed Valley, at the confluence of the River Tweed and the Eddleston Water, where two major routes converged at the lowest crossing point of the Eddleston Water and the lowest bridging point of the Tweed before Berwick. The valleys of these two rivers provided access north to Edinburgh (21 miles), west to Glasgow (54 miles) and east to Berwick (71 miles). Within the acute angle formed by the confluence the ground rises abruptly to form a promontory (164.59 m above sea-level). This ridge, by deflecting the Eddleston Water from its direct course, has resulted in the unusual effect of the two rivers flowing in opposite directions a short distance from each other (*illus 29*).

Old Town (known as such since at least the 15th and 16th centuries [*Renwick 1903a*, 22, 78]), the traditional site of the earliest settlement at Peebles and the location of the parish church, occupies a low, undulating ridge (rising westwards from 161.24 m to 167.64 m above sea-level) on the north side of the Tweed, to the west of the Eddleston Water. The promontory at the confluence of these rivers was occupied by the royal castle, in front of which developed the medieval burgh along the narrow ridged peninsula occupied by High Street. This formed an excellent defensive position, between the Eddleston Water and the River Tweed.

Two crossings over the Eddleston Water link the old and the new towns: at Cuddy Bridge into High Street and at Trie or Tree Bridge into Bridgegate. High Street occupies the crest of the ridge with property backlands sloping down on either side to the Eddleston Water on the north and to the flood plain of the Tweed on the south. Northgate leads north to Edinburgh and Eastgate, formerly Crossgate, eastwards. At the west end of the High Street the Tweed is crossed by a 15th-century stone bridge on the route along the south side of the Tweed to the early royal centres at Traquair and Selkirk.

## Historical background by *D R Perry*

Although settlement in the area around Peebles dates to prehistoric times, it is not known when it began at Peebles itself. An Early Christian stone, possibly dating to the late 7th or early 8th century, incised with a cross and inscribed *NEITANO SACERDOS* (Neitan the priest or bishop), was found built into a garden wall in Old Town in 1932 (*Steer 1969*). Another stone, found in 1261 on the site of the

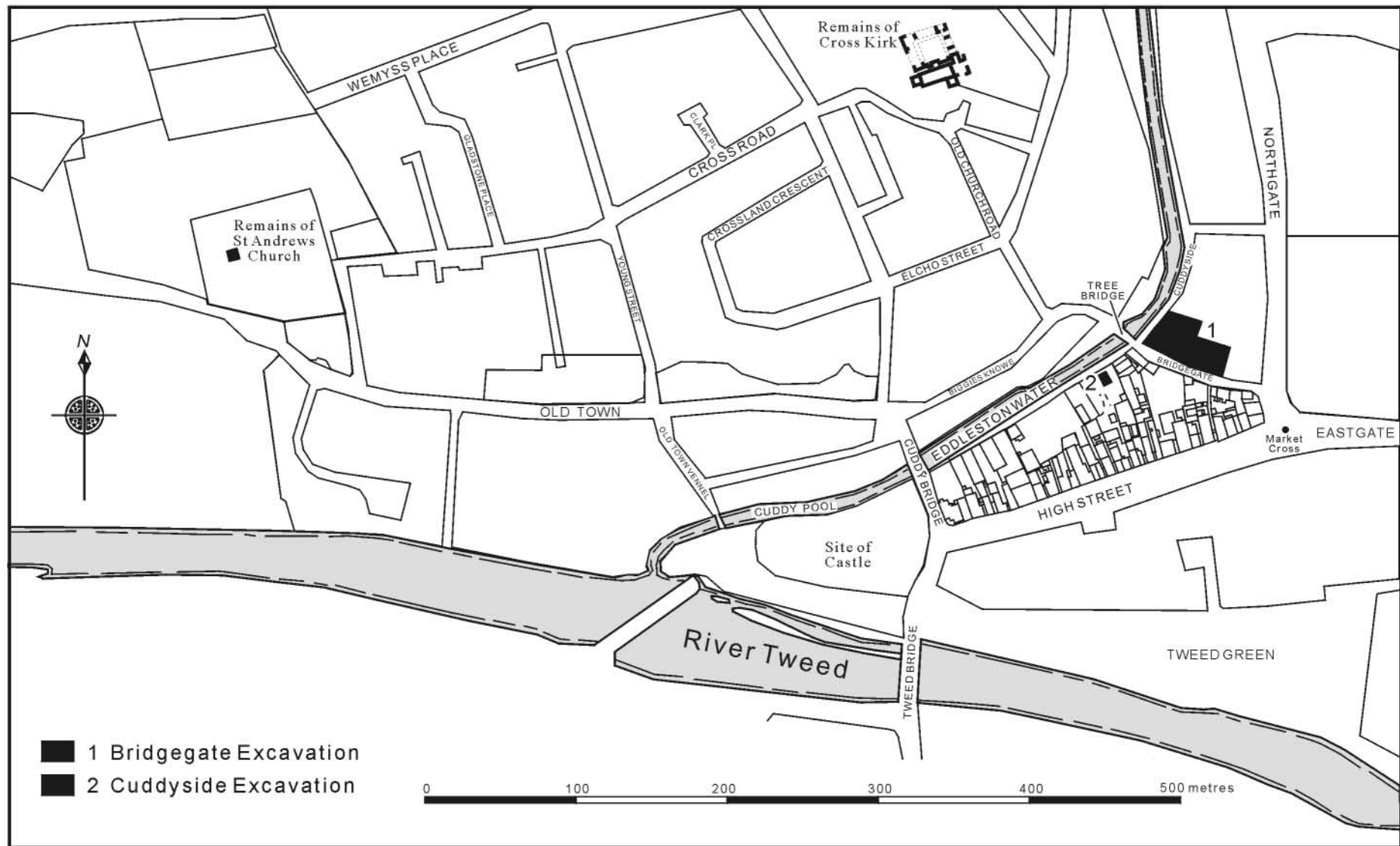
Cross Kirk, was said to have been inscribed *LOCUS SANCTI NICOLAI EPISCOPI* (place of holy Nicholas, bishop). Certainly the first stone, and possibly the latter as well if it is genuine, could indicate that Peebles was an early centre of Christianity, even the site of a bishopric, before the 12th century. The parish church, St Andrew's, along with a carucate of land, was confirmed as an ancient possession of Glasgow Cathedral by David I (1124–53) before he became king (*Barrow 1999*, no 15).

However Peebles owes its foundation as a royal burgh to David I (1124–1153), in whose reign it is first recorded as a burgh. Between 1152 and 1153 he assigned 10 shillings from the burgh fermes to the chapel of the castle of Peebles for the perpetual celebration of masses in memory of his son, Earl Henry, who may have died in Peebles (*RRS*, i, 24 and no 172). The royal castle was situated on the promontory at the confluence of the Eddleston Water and the River Tweed, and Peebles became an important royal centre where David I, Malcolm IV (1153–65) and William the Lion (1165–1214) issued charters. The town no doubt owes its initial prosperity to the emergence of the castle as a royal centre.

The creation of the royal castle on the promontory was the probable cause for the town to shift its focus across the Eddleston Water to the more defensible position on the ridge between the Eddleston Water and the Tweed. In 1466 the burgh was divided into four quarters, High Street, Crossgate, Northgate and Bridgegate, with 'beyond the Watter' (ie, Old Town) a separate area (*Buchan 1925*, 16). The two parts of the town were linked by two bridges. High Street became the main market street with Eastgate (formerly Crossgate) leading to the east, Northgate leading towards Edinburgh, and Bridgegate descending to one of the two bridges across the Eddleston.

Being so close to the border with England, the town suffered several times from invading armies, one of the last being in 1549. However it was not until 1570 that a defensive wall was ordered to be constructed around the east and north sides of the town, 'contenand four elnis heich half ane elne ground and all thre fute half of brede, with block houssis as efferis in places convenient' (*Chambers 1872*, 321). In 1572 the wall was ordered to be extended along the north-west and south sides of the town, with possible flood defences against the Eddleston and Tweed (*ibid*, 337 and 350). The wall stood until the mid 18th century when it fell into disrepair, coinciding with a period of economic decline in the burgh.

At the end of the 17th century the burgh entered into a period of economic decline which continued into the first half of the 18th century when the town



Illus 29 Trenches location, Peebles

council sold off some of the town's common lands to pay debts. The second half of the 18th century saw a rise in population and the start of a period of economic expansion in the textile industry which continued into the 19th century.

## Bridgegate

This street derives its name from the Tree Bridge, originally a timber structure: in 1488 two trees were given 'to the brig at the tolboith end' (Renwick 1912, 18 n1). The present excavation covered three properties, of which the central one, on 13 January 1487/8, was described as the 'land of umquill Symon Patrikson, lyand in the Briggait of Peblis, on the north syd of the samyn, betuix the land of David Dinwidy on the est part and the tolboith on the west' (ibid, 316). Ownership of the properties has been traced in research in published and unpublished burgh records of the mid 16th century and from the late 17th century to the present day by members of the MSC scheme.

Of the three properties, the western one was occupied by the tolbooth from the mid 15th century till the late 17th or early 18th century. The eastern one seems to have been occupied by an almshouse in the mid 16th century. In 1545 a property,

belonging to John Kirkwood and Helen Forthit his spouse, was defined as lying 'betwix the lande pertenand to the chapellon of Sanct Martyne alter, callit the halmieshous, on the este pairt and the tolbutth on the west' (Renwick 1903b, 11). On 16 April 1550 the property lying on the north side of Bridgegate, to the west of the 'Almoushous' was described as 'thon beand byrnt be our auld inimies of Ynglond' (ibid, 33). In 1823 (Wood 1823b) the former almshouse was occupied by the Post Office. From cartographic evidence this building, dating from medieval times (see Excavation Report, below), remained in use throughout the 19th century until it was replaced by a cinema in this present century. The adjoining property to the west was occupied by a building from the late 18th century to the early 20th century (Armstrong 1775; Wood 1823b; OS 1856, 1897, 1906). The building was still standing in 1949 but had been demolished by 1964 (OS 1949, 1965a).

## Previous work

In 1977 a small excavation was carried out on the site of the castle (Ewart and Murray 1980). No excavation has been carried out in Old Town, although an Early Christian stone was found there.

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## 4 Bridgegate, Peebles, 1985–87

*by P J Dixon and D R Perry*

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### Introduction (illus 29)

The excavations at Bridgegate, Peebles (NGR NT 2520 4053) were carried out in advance of the Cuddyside II development. Permission to excavate was obtained from Tweeddale District Council who had acquired the site in preparation for a housing development by Eildon Housing Association. The existing buildings were demolished in the summer of 1985 and excavations by the Border Burghs Archaeology Project, sponsored by Borders Architects Group and funded by the Manpower Services Commission under the Community Programme, were undertaken between September 1985 and November 1986, and again in the summer of 1987.

It was hoped that the excavation would reveal information on the tolbooth of Peebles, which is supposed to have occupied various sites within the burgh, including the westernmost plot on the north side of Bridgegate. It was also possible that the Bridgegate site might reveal part of the 16th-century town wall and, perhaps, the remains of the barmkin defence of the Bridgegate Port. Evidence might also be forthcoming of the domestic conditions in medieval Peebles, eg, building materials and methods of construction, material possessions, diet and industrial technology.

### The site

The site measured 50 m east to west and 15–20 m north to south and was divided into three plots or properties, of which the easternmost, Plot A, was occupied by a cinema until 1985 and the westernmost, Plot C, beside the river, by Wallace's engineering workshop. Plot B in the middle was a gap site. Delays in the acquisition of further properties for the development allowed the Border Burghs Archaeology Project to conduct two seasons of work on the site although, when initial clearance was begun in September 1985, this was not anticipated. Consequently, the excavation was from the beginning conducted against a background of imminent development, firstly in spring 1986 and then in spring 1987. This uncertainty introduced an element of haste which, with hindsight, was unnecessary. Furthermore, the MSC policy made it impossible to maintain the same supervisory staff throughout the excavation and, consequently, there were three successive site supervisors (Michael Parker: September 1985 to August 1986; Philip Francis: September to October 1986; Susan Fretwell:

November 1986 and summer 1987) under the direction of the Project Manager, Piers Dixon. This did not make for ideal conditions of recording and it was the lot of the Project Manager to provide the continuity needed to bring the site to report stage.

After the demolition of the standing structures, which had deep foundations right down to subsoil, none of the baulk sections were worthy of record, consisting mainly of rubble, or, in the case of the Plot C, a depth of about 1 m of 18th- and 19th-century garden soil, through which the late 19th-century factory foundations were cut. On several occasions sondage trenches were dug in order to assess the depth, nature and quality of the deposits remaining, since it was anticipated that not all the site could be excavated during the 1986 season.

The subsoil at this riverside location was essentially a gravel river terrace, which sloped steeply 4 m from east to west, down to the river flood-plain, where the deposits were a mixture of yellow-brown sandy clays, thick blue clay, rich in organic matter and weathered boulders typical of alluvial deposits. In places there was a layer of alluvial brown silts, presumably from flood deposits.

### The stratigraphy

For the purposes of describing the stratigraphy the site has been divided into three plots which appear to relate to the medieval and subsequent property boundaries. Only in Phase 1, when no properties were evident, is the stratigraphy for the site as a whole considered. The properties are designated A, B, C from east to west (see [illus 30](#)). A strip, 5 m wide, at the extreme eastern end of the site had been bulldozed down to the natural gravel and was excluded from the archaeological excavation. The property divisions are marked by walls which may be referred to in the descriptions of either plot.

The main structural phases and their broad periods are as follows:

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|---------|--|
| Phase 1 | Pre-occupation use of the site, rubbish disposal etc. 12th–13th centuries.   |
| Phase 2 | Delimitation of the properties and construction of stone houses in Plots A and C; alterations to, and demolition of, house in Plot C (Phases 2A, 2B). 13th–14th centuries. |
| Phase 3 | Construction of tolbooth in Plot C and stone house in Plot B; alterations to tolbooth (Phases 3A, 3B); demolition of tolbooth  |

- and house in Plot B (Phase 3C). 15th–18th centuries.
- Phase 4 Garden use of Plot C; new house in Plot B; Post Office use of house in Plot A. 18th–19th centuries.
- Phase 5 Construction of factory in Plot C and cinema in Plot A. 20th century.

## Documentary evidence

The tolbooth was the most important civic building of a medieval burgh, being the place where tolls, dues and customs were collected as well as being the seat of the town council and burgh court and serving as a prison (Stell 1981, 445).

The tolbooth of Peebles is first recorded on 31 July 1458 when John Lilley became surety for Andro Cady of 10 shillings for the tolbooth. On 3 November 1460 Dic Bulle was allowed 11 shillings for his labour on the tolbooth ‘sa that he be besy and ger the werk be endyt’ (Chambers 1872, 128 and 138). It is assumed that these references are to the construction of a new tolbooth, rather than repairs to an existing one. The tolbooth was located on the north side of Bridgegate, at the western end, or foot, of the street, beside the Tree Bridge and Bridgegate Port. Its situation there, rather than in the market area of High Street, is an indication of the importance of Bridgegate as a major access to the burgh, where customs, etc could be collected.

References in the burgh records to the tolbooth make mention of repairs and furnishings, as well as other uses for the building. On 21 June 1561 James Douchell was ordered to hand over the keys of the west vault under the tolbooth in order that ‘pure folkis, decrepit bedellis’ be received there, and he was warned to ‘red his holis within certane dayis that the ledder now in the saidis hoiles may be esy tane furth of the same’ (ibid, 272). Douchell was evidently using pits in the vault for tanning leather. The use of the vault below the tolbooth for the poor may have been to replace the almshouse to the east (see above). The tolbooth was also the location of the burgh school from at least 1555 till a flood in 1631 (Renwick 1912, 214, 326). The building had a slate roof (Chambers 1872, 291; Renwick 1910, 204) and glazed windows (Renwick 1912, 170), and a green table cloth was purchased for the tolbooth table in 1670 (Renwick 1910, 81). A ‘pulpit’ was erected inside the tolbooth in 1655 (ibid, 197) and, after the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, a board with the royal and the burgh coats of arms was set up in the tolbooth (ibid, 201).

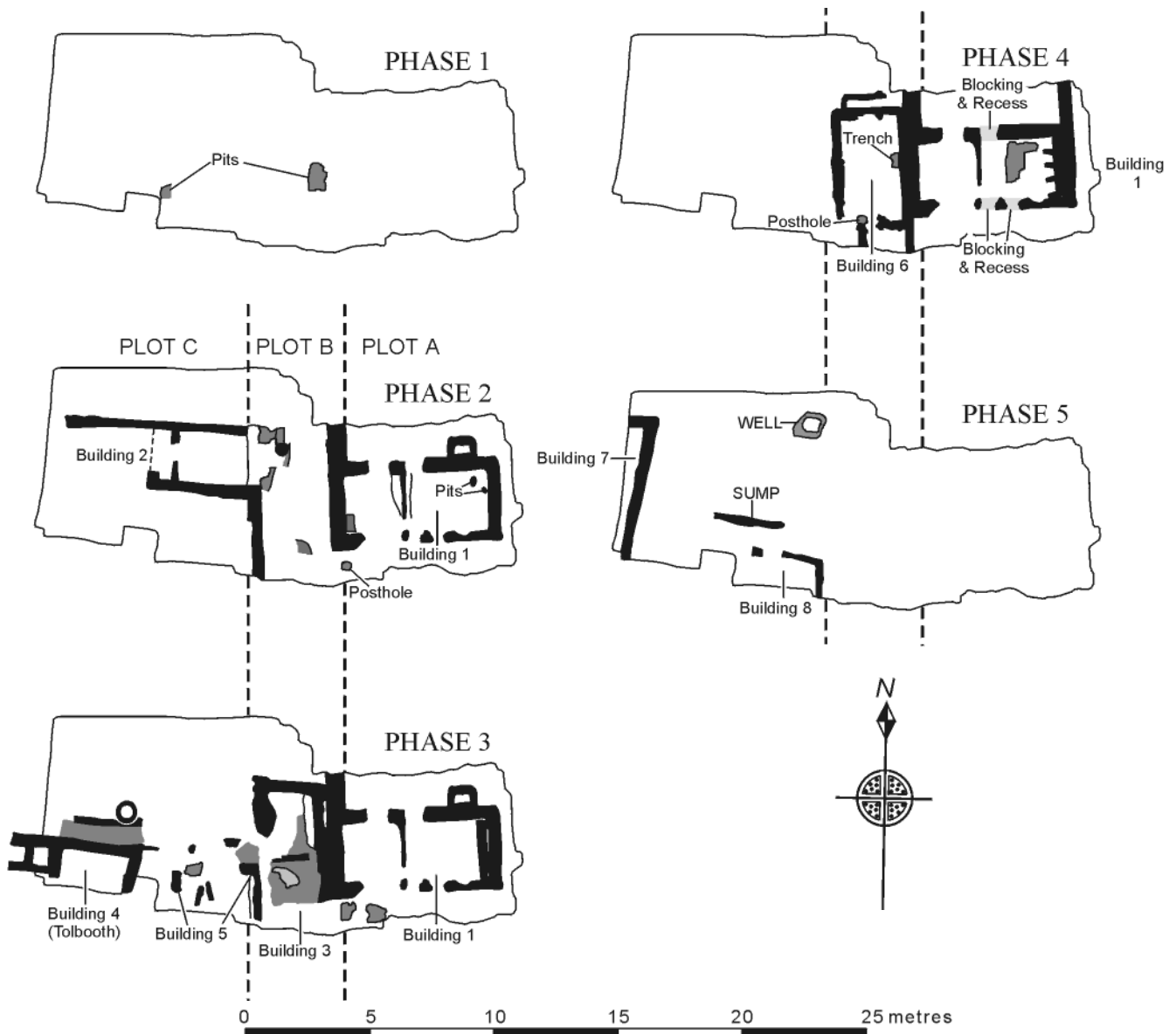
It is not clear when the building was abandoned but no evidence was found by the project’s researchers to support Buchan’s claim (1925, 186–7) that the tolbooth in Bridgegate was replaced by a new tolbooth on the north side of High Street in 1631, presumably as a result of a flood in that year affecting Bridgegate. On the contrary, it is clear that the tolbooth was still located in Bridgegate in

1691. The confusion may be due to the Council’s purchase of the ‘grit hous’ of James Tuedie in 1631 between the north side of High Street and south side of Bridgegate, which it later sold in 1644 (Renwick 1912, 317–9). A reference in August 1631 to the ‘reparatioun of ane flesche mercat in the clois of the new tolbuith’ (Buchan 1925, 186) may indicate the intention behind this purchase, or to the reconstruction of the earlier tolbooth. Repairs to the tolbooth (unlocated) were carried out in 1638–9, 1644 and 1647 (ibid, 243–5, 319 and 320). However on 11 November 1691 an annual rent of £6–2s–4d was granted to Adam Stoppard from the two houses and yard (sic) of John Young and Janet his spouse ‘lying in the Bridgegate of Peebles, betwixt the tolbuith upon the west, John Dickson’s yeard upon the east and north and the high street [ie, public road of Bridgegate] upon the south’. It is possible that the tolbooth remained in Bridgegate until a new town house was erected on the south side of High Street in 1753. (The tolbooth indicated on Armstrong’s plan of 1775 is probably the jail, for which a vault belonging to Lord Elliock was purchased in that year [Gourlay and Turner 1978, 10].) On 17 August 1785 James Eumond acquired from the burgh magistrates ‘All and whole that piece of waste ground upon which the old Tolbooth stood lying at the foot of the Bridgegate of Peebles and which measures about eighty four square yards, and now inclosed upon the south by a stone and lyme dyke’. The property remained vacant until the second half of the 19th century, when buildings were erected on its west and east sides and along the street frontage around an open yard (OS 1897). These buildings remained, with alterations, until the demolition prior to the excavation. The site is now occupied by Provost Walker’s Court (OS 1995).

### *Phase 1 (12th–13th centuries) (illus 30)*

The western part of the site prior to its development was initially occupied by reed marsh on the evidence of botanical samples taken from the alluvial deposits (Brian Moffat pers comm). From the 12th–13th centuries the site began to be used for the deposition of rubbish, which became incorporated into the alluvial deposits as revealed in the sondages on the north side of the site. In the central part of the site, at the base of the gravel terrace, these deposits were notable for the presence of quantities of charcoal, hammerscale and slag to a depth of 0.35 m over an area of at least 3.5 m by 4 m. The hammerscale and slag suggest the presence of early metalworking industry in the burgh.

Elsewhere, at least two pits were identified but not fully excavated. One, an irregular oblong in shape, was cut into the gravel slope of the river terrace. The other was a sub-rectangular pit, over 0.2 m in depth, cut into the alluvial sands and gravels and filled with green sand with charcoal flecks.



*Illus 30* Bridgewater, Peebles, schematic phase plans

### **Phase 2 – 13th–early 14th centuries (*illus 30*)**

#### *Plot A*

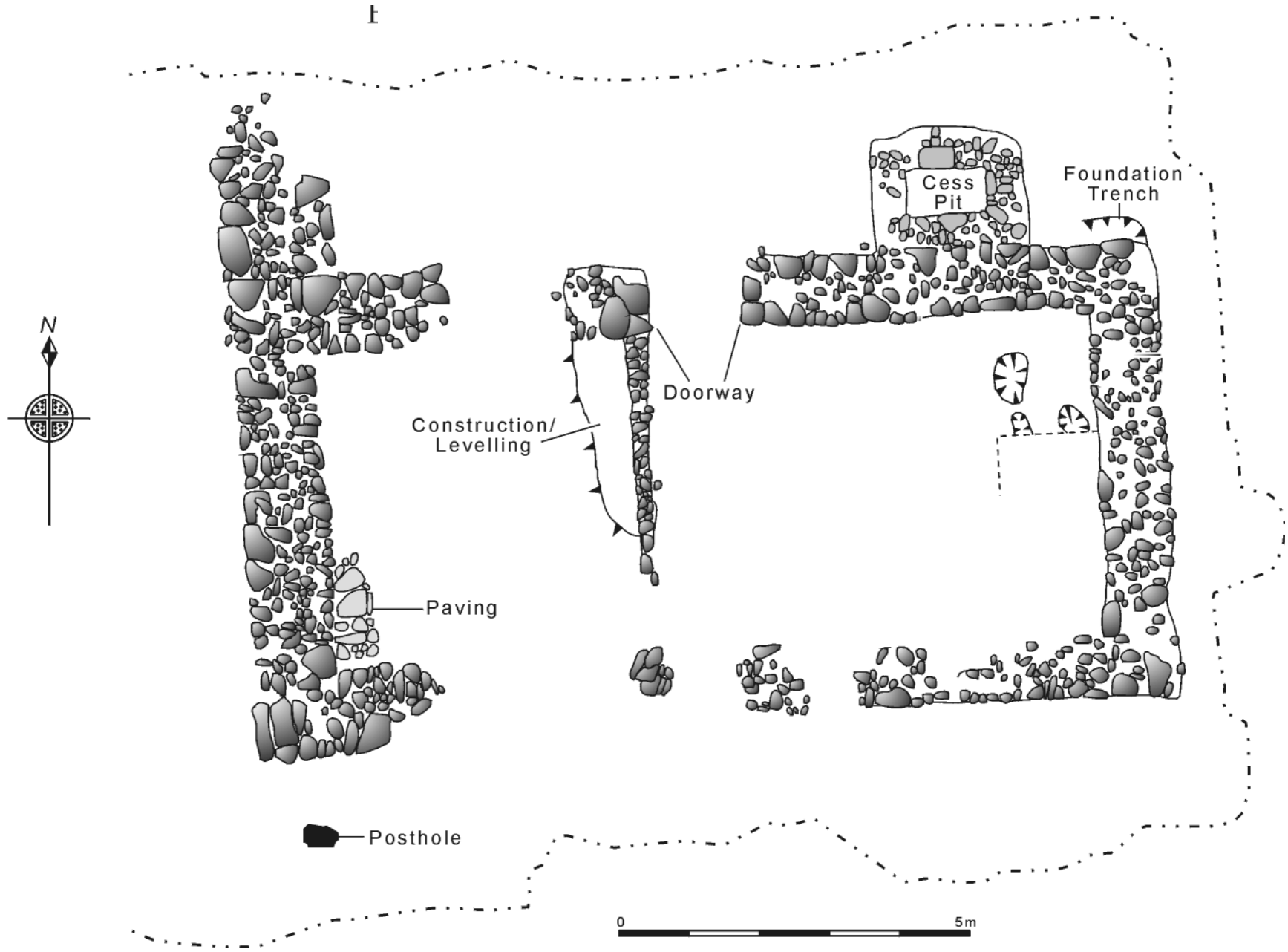
#### *Building 1 (*illus 31* and *32*)*

At the east end of the site were the substantial foundations of a stone-built structure, Building 1, measuring 13 m by 6.5 m externally or 11 m by 4.4 m internally. Although it could date back to the primary phase of occupation, since there were no earlier features, it is best attributed to this phase, as placing it later would make the Plots B and C sequence difficult to maintain.

Of the four walls, only the two end walls, to east and west, survived intact, the north and south walls being fragmentary. Set centrally in the north and south walls were opposing doorways, 1.25 m wide,

although no dressed stones survived. All the walls were of roughly coursed, weathered whin rubble (medium and large sized stones, sometimes split), bonded with a very coarse sandy mortar.

The foundations of the west wall were set in a trench, 0.65 m deep and 1.8 m wide, and comprised large boulders and redeposited natural. Above them was the wall, measuring 6.7 m long and 1.15 m wide. The trench was backfilled with dark brown and black silt with stones and gravel. At each end were the remains of north and south return walls, 3 m and 2.5 m in length respectively. The east wall was set in a trench, 0.6 m deep, cut into the terraced subsoil, and was 6.5 m long and 1 m wide. The north and south walls were for the most part 1 m in width, except at the west end where they were 1.1 m and 1.2 m wide respectively. That the west end was more



*Illus 31 Bridgegate, Peebles, Building 1*



*Illus 32 Bridgewater, Peebles, view of Building 1 from west, with cross-wall in centre and east wall in background*

deeply founded and wider than the east end could be due to functional differences, but it is more likely that the westward slope of the river terrace necessitated deeper and stronger foundations.

To provide a level floor in the sloping ground, a step down had been terraced to a depth of 0.6 m into the natural gravel, 4.8 m from the west wall. This step was in line with the opposing doorways in the north and south walls and was revetted to the east with a wall, 0.3 m wide and 0.3 m high, bonded into the north wall. The north side of the terrace was revetted with the north wall of the building. (Because of later disturbance, the south side of the terrace was not apparent.) This internal wall is unlikely to have been a structural element in itself because of its size, but might have provided support for a timber partition, dividing the building into two unequal rooms and forming the side of a passage. A gap, about 1 m wide, between the internal wall and the south wall was probably a doorway between two rooms.

Later disturbance had removed virtually all internal features on the east side of the passage and on much of the west side as well. Nevertheless, three pits in the north-east corner of the east room survived in the subsoil below the later wall inserted against the east end of the building (see Phase 3; only a short section of the north end of this wall was excavated). The Phase 3 reduction of the ground level had obscured the original shape and, therefore, the function of these features. The northernmost pit, measured 0.65 m by 0.45 m across and 0.16 m in depth. The southern pit was 0.4 m by 0.2 m across but, at only 0.05 m deep, was severely truncated. Its

fill consisted of fine silty sand with charcoal flecks and slag fragments. (Slag deposits are evident elsewhere on the site in Phases 1 and 2 in Plots B and C.) The eastern pit was only partially excavated: it was 0.4 m by 0.4 m across and 0.25 m in depth, with a V-shaped profile. It was filled with a gravelly, clayey silt. Their purpose is unclear, although they may have been settings for scaffolding during construction, if they did not pre-date the building and belong to Phase 1.

In the west room a fragment of paving survived at the south-west corner along with a construction, levelling or floor deposit at the north-east corner, composed of brown sand and gravel with mortar flecks and patches of brown silt. These two features were at a similar height and it is reasonable, then, to consider that they were in contemporary use.

At the south-west corner of the building, 0.75 m in front of it, was an oval posthole, 0.6 m by 0.4 m across and 0.2 m deep. It was stone-packed and capable of taking a post 0.15–0.20 m diameter. Its shallow depth may have been due to later truncation of this area (see Phase 3).

Abutting the north-west corner of the building was a short length of a stone wall, 1.6 m wide and 0.9 m high, serving as a boundary wall. This wall overlay a shallow deposit of charcoal, but this is most likely to be construction deposit rather than an earlier occupation deposit. Attached to the north wall of the building was a rectangular, stone-lined pit (*illus 33*), 0.75 m deep, with lime mortar and gravel at the bottom. On the evidence of its fill, the pit went out of use in the late 18th century (see Phase 3).



*Illus 33 Bridgegate, Peebles, view of latrine pit of Building 1 from west*

Excavation of the pit revealed a difference between the bonding of the lining of the pit, dark brown silty soil with a few pebbles, from the bonding of the adjacent north wall of Building 1, a 'dirty' gravel. The pit undercut the base of the wall and must have been constructed before the wall. It probably served as a garderobe pit, but there was no conclusive evidence of the date of the construction of the pit, except that it was a primary feature of the building.

#### *Plot B (illus 30, 34)*

The laying out of Plot C to the west curtailed the indiscriminate dumping of rubbish on the riverside but did not altogether end it, since the area between that property and Plot A continued to have charcoal and slag dumped on it, but in an orderly manner for levelling. This followed the extensive dumping of gravel on the area between the two properties. It is this dumping which places the construction of Building 1 in a medieval context, since it butts against the west wall of that building and its associated boundary wall. The depth of the dump varied but was up to 0.45 m. Its surface made a gently sloping area between the two walls, which fell from east to west by about 0.3 m over 4 m. The lower part of the layer was notably less gravelly and may have been the remains of a natural soil profile consisting of yellowish-brown silt.

A thick layer (0.25 m) of charcoal and lumps of slag in a dark brown silt was deposited over the gravel. In

places this layer included lenses of orange-yellow clayey silt and medium sized stones with occasional fragments of baked clay or daub, but there was no evidence of any structural element in the deposit. Magnetic testing of dried samples revealed a substantial proportion of iron fragments which may be scales from smithing. However the layer has all the appearance of a dump, not of a smithy on site. Neither the 'burnt' layer nor the gravel layer was visible in the north baulk, due to truncation by later activity. The levelling of this plot would have provided a suitable environment for its domestic use, but there are few signs of this, apart from a stone hearth on the surface of the 'burnt' layers. The hearth, 1.5 m by 1.2 m, consisted of an irregular group of flat whinstones and associated evidence of heat, ie, reddening of the layer underneath.

Extending into the southern limit of excavation was the edge of a depression, 0.2 m deep, in the gravel dump. It measured 1.5 m across and was filled with some large and medium sized stones in an orange and tan-brown, fine, silty matrix on the east side, but with charcoal-rich silt on the west side. It is possible that it was merely levelling above the subsidence of an underlying, unexcavated cut in the gravel subsoil, although it may be the edge of a larger feature lying beyond the limit of excavation.

At the north-west corner of the plot a pit, 1 m deep, had been dug through the 'burnt' layer. Its northern extent was not revealed, since it ran into the northern limit of excavation, although it appeared to be narrowing to a butt end. It was at least 5 m long,



*Illus 34 Bridgegate, Peebles, Building 2, Phase 1*

and 2.3 m wide with a broad, V-shaped profile and a rounded base. Its fill was a mixture of the two layers it was cut through, that is, a charcoal-rich layer with lenses of orange-brown silt under a gravel layer. The southern end of the pit was separated from the northern end by an east/west sondage, 1 m wide, cut through the dumped layers in Plot B, and underlay the east edge of the boundary wall between Plots B and C. Nevertheless, that it was part of the same pit is shown by its fill, the same 'burnt' deposit of charcoal, hammerscale and slag found in the 'burnt' layer, through which the northern end was cut. The full extent of this feature is similar to the width of Building 2 in Plot C and may relate to its construction: it was probably part of the robbing of the original boundary, before the rebuilding to incorporate the east gable of the building.

After this pit was filled in, a depression, up to 0.4 m deep, was left in the surface. At its base was an elliptical pit, 1.0 m by 0.75 m across and 0.5 m deep. It had vertical sides and a flat base and was filled with gravels and lenses of burnt material. Its function was not determined. The depression was then filled in and levelled up with mixed gravel and 'burnt' deposits of charcoal and clay.

Two small postholes were cut through the dumped layer of 'burnt' material, 0.5 m apart, alongside the boundary wall between Plots B and C. The northern posthole was sub-rectangular, measuring 0.4 m by 0.25 m and 0.45 m in depth; the southern posthole extended into the southern limit of excavation and was 0.25 m across and 0.35 m deep. The former was V-shaped in profile with a flat bottom, the latter U-shaped. No other postholes were found and their purpose is unknown.

### *Plot C (illus 30)*

#### *Building 2 (illus 34–36)*

The western property at this period was marked by the construction of stone boundary walls, defining the property to the north and east, in the angle of which was constructed Building 2.

A roughly coursed wall on east/west alignment was neatly faced on its south side and bonded with light brown silt in its basal courses, but with yellow-brown sandy mortar in places in its upper surviving course. The wall was 15 m long, 0.6 m high and varied in width from 0.5 m to 1 m. Its north side was roughly faced so that the material it revetted, brown gravel, was probably laid at the time of construction. This dump was 0.6 m thick and may have been deposited to improve the strength of the wall and to secure it against the potential damage from river action. This is confirmed by the extent of the dump, which covered the whole area between the boundary wall and the northern limit of excavation. Its surface lay directly under the post-medieval topsoil and probably marks the ground level of the area until the 18th century when it became part of a garden.

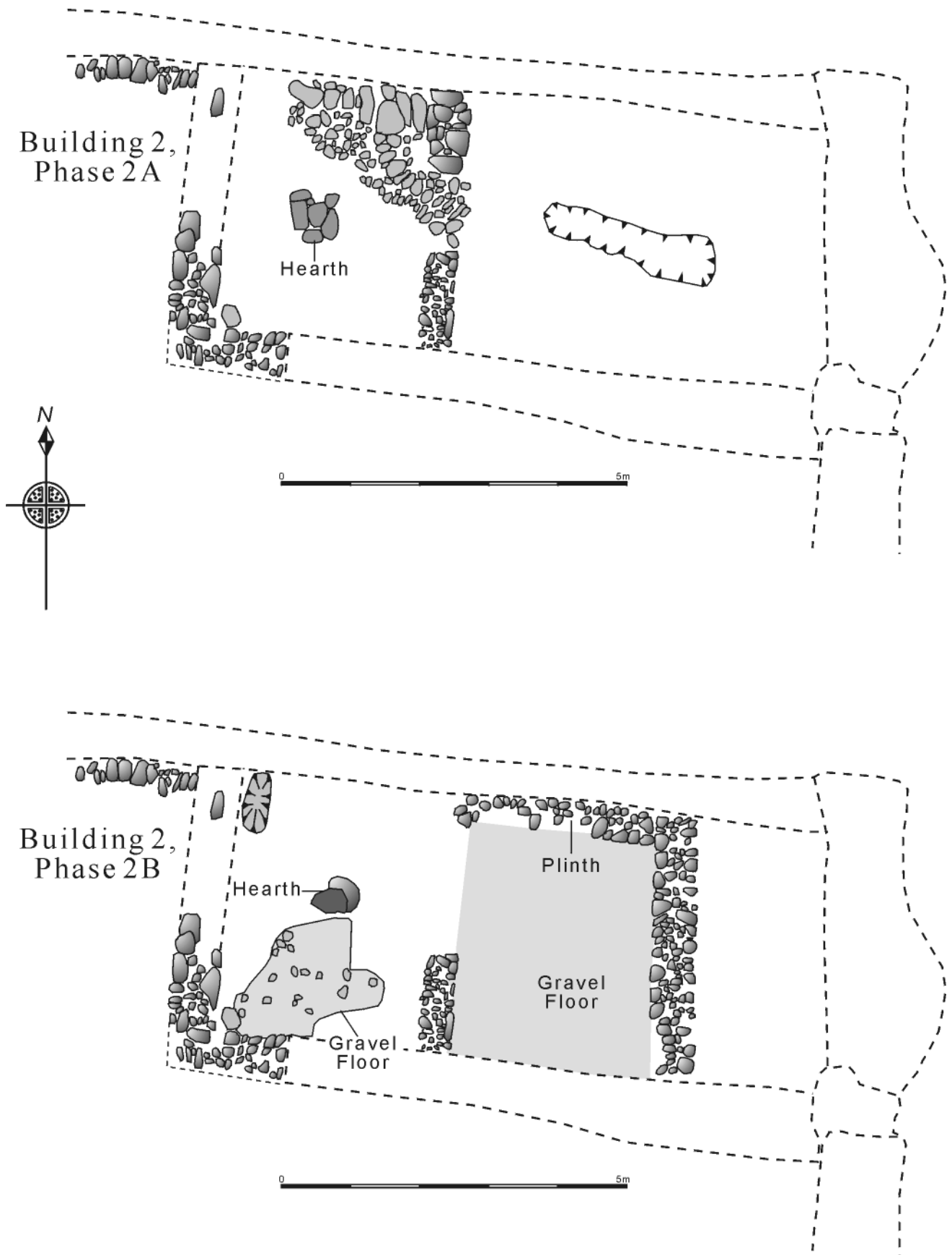
On the south side of the wall, at its east end, was a return wall on north/south alignment, although a section 4 m long had been robbed, so that the connection had gone. This wall, which was faced on both sides, was set in a foundation trench cut into the sloping ground to the east. The wall was bonded with light greyish-brown silt in its basal courses and coarse, yellowish-brown sandy mortar above the foundations. Like Building 1, it was constructed of roughly coursed, river-washed whinstone boulders. It had a distinct batter, measuring 0.9 m wide at the top to 1.25 m at its base. It may be that this was to deal with the weight of the uphill material, which was dumped to the east of the wall in Plot B to level it for use (see above).

Within the angle of these walls was Building 2, whose south wall butted against the east boundary wall, but whose west wall was largely robbed. It was noticeable that the foundations of the eastern boundary wall had a break in alignment where it was butted by the south wall of Building 2, although this was not visible higher up due to robbing. A short length (0.9 m) of wall, slightly offset to the west (illus 34), was all that survived of a rebuilt section of the boundary wall. The implication is that Building 2 was added after the boundary wall was built and that it required rebuilding of that part of the wall forming the gable from the ground.

This building measured 8 m long by 5 m wide, or 6.25 m by 4 m internally, half the size of the building in Plot A. The south wall was faced on its north side but not on its south side. The surviving fragment of the west wall (1 m wide) was faced on both sides and evidently butted the northern boundary wall, since no sign of a joint was observed. These walls were generally built of roughly shaped, medium sized, river-washed stones, bonded with dark greyish-brown silt, very like the matrix of the layer deposited to its south. However traces of coarse sandy mortar were observed bonding some of the remaining upper stones of the wall. As little of the upper courses of this building survived, it is difficult to know how the building was entered or what its superstructure was like.

The building was also divided into two unequal parts by the insertion of a partition wall on north/south alignment, in which was a door, 1.3 m wide. This wall was set only a few centimetres into the subsoil and was characterised by the use of large orthostatic whinstones and dark greyish-brown silt bonding material. The door was offset from the centre to the north by about 0.5 m. The smaller, western room would have been little more than a cupboard, 1 m wide. However the west end may have provided access to the building, since any other direction of entrance would have required steps down into the building. The small room could have served some kind of storage-cum-lobby purpose. Alternatively, the partition was constructed entirely as part of the extension of the building (see below).

No flooring material was found but, if there were any, it would have lain directly on subsoil or over the



*Illus 35* Bridgiate, Peebles, Building 2, Phases 2A and 2B



*Illus 36 Bridgegate, Peebles, view of Building 2, Phase 2B from west*

slag- and charcoal-rich layers of Phase 1 which preceded the enclosure of the property. The interior of the building was only partially excavated, but the ground level inside the building sloped upwards from west to east, particularly so at the east end. Since it was close to the water table, it may have been prone to flooding unless the water table was lower in the 13th and 14th centuries. This would also account for some of the alterations which took place during its use. The lack of preserved organic material suggests that temporary flooding was the problem not a rise in the water table.

To the south of Building 2 a layer of brown silt with gravel had been deposited at the time of construction.

The building went through at least two structural sub-phases (*illus 35*). The extension of the building, by removing the west wall and building a new one of much coarser construction 2 m to the west, was designed to give more space. Significantly, as part of this alteration the internal floor was raised 0.3 m with dark grey sandy silt after the end wall was removed. Then a silty clay layer was laid over it in the western room as far as the edge of a paved area of flat whinstones. This paving occupied a triangular area, measuring 2.6 m by 2.3 m, formed by the partition wall and the north wall, and extended into the doorway of the partition, which must thus have continued in use. Set almost centrally within the western room was a hearth of similar stones, measuring 0.7 m by 0.6 m.

In the larger eastern room a linear sump on an east/west axis (2.6 m long, 0.7 m wide and 0.36 m deep) was dug into the levelling dump, filled with rubble and covered with a similar soil to the surrounding layer. All this, and especially the silty clay sealing layer, suggests both a concern to counter the effects of damp and flooding and a domestic usage.

The new west wall was built upon these levelling deposits, themselves packed with medium sized stones in the area of the wall as a kind of foundation. The new wall was constructed with large, irregular, river-washed boulders and a core of medium sized stones, but without the care to make a neat face as in the original structure. Only a short length, 1.6 m, of the new west wall face survived robbing. It was 0.75 m wide and stood one course high. This section survived because it was incorporated in the footings of the later tolbooth path and well (see Phase 3). The rubble core of the westward extension for the south wall remained, but the facings had been robbed. Outside the line of the new west wall a further section of paved stones was encountered alongside the northern boundary wall, which may suggest a path and, possibly, a door in the end wall.

Building 2 went through a further change (*illus 35*), in which the floor was raised yet again, by the addition of a gravel layer. This covered the old floor of the eastern room to a depth of about 0.25 m and incorporated a dump of medium sized rubble in the south-east corner of the building. This may have been demolition rubble. A new partition replaced the

previous one, 1.8 m from the eastern boundary line. It was composed of irregular, large and medium sized whin rubble, but had no visible gap for a door. The wall was 0.6 m wide, faced on both sides, but only one course high, and may have been the base for a timber partition. The dump of rubble referred to above in the gravel dump at this end may be indicative of building alterations at this time. Inside this new room a low stone plinth ran along the side of the north wall. The plinth was bonded with the same yellowish-brown, fine, gravelly silt as the new wall with which it was contemporary.

In the west room a layer of yellow silty clay, up to c 0.15 m thick, and covering an area 3 m by 3.8 m, sealed the western or damp end of the building. Set into it, almost above the earlier hearth, was another hearth of stone slabs, 0.5 m by 0.4 m in extent. Under and around the slabs was evidence of burning *in situ*. An irregular spread of gravel, c 0.1 m thick, occupied an area about 2 m across to the south of the hearth and appears to have been part of a floor. Just inside the west wall, at the corner with the north wall, was an oval posthole, measuring 0.85 m by 0.35 m and 0.5 m deep. It was sealed by the infill of the robber trench of the west wall, and could have taken a post at least 0.30 m across. However no clear function for the post could be deduced.

This last sub-phase ended with the complete demolition of Building 2 down to the existing ground level and with much of the rubble from the building being deposited over the area of the interior. The eastern limit of the demolition rubble respected the line of the eastern boundary wall. It may, therefore, be inferred that this wall remained standing when demolition took place and was robbed later. The west end wall was robbed to its base leaving a robber trench, 0.75 m deep, while the post in the north-west corner was removed.

### **Phase 3 – 15th–18th centuries (illus 30)**

This phase is marked chiefly by the construction and use of Building 4 (the tolbooth) in Plot C. The middle plot (B) was occupied by Building 3, a domestic structure, during this period. Building 1 in Plot A remained in use. The end of the phase is marked by the demolition of Buildings 3 and 4, although this was not done at the same time.

#### *Plot A*

##### **Building 1 (illus 30)**

Little activity in this plot is definitely attributable to this phase. This is partly because of the stratigraphic dislocation of the east end of the site and partly because few deposits are closely datable to the late medieval period.

The interior of the building was terraced to a depth of 0.2 m, probably for a paved floor. At the same time the east wall was thickened with the insertion of a

stone wall bonded with brown silt, 4.5 m long and 0.80 m wide. It was probably to support a chimney stack at first floor level.

In front of the building at its west end, was a terraced area, 4.5 m wide, which, despite later disturbance, must have been cut back in the medieval period. It contained two deposits of coal and coal-dust in a brown silt, presumably the remains of a fuel dump.

#### *Plot B*

##### **Building 3 (illus 37 and 38)**

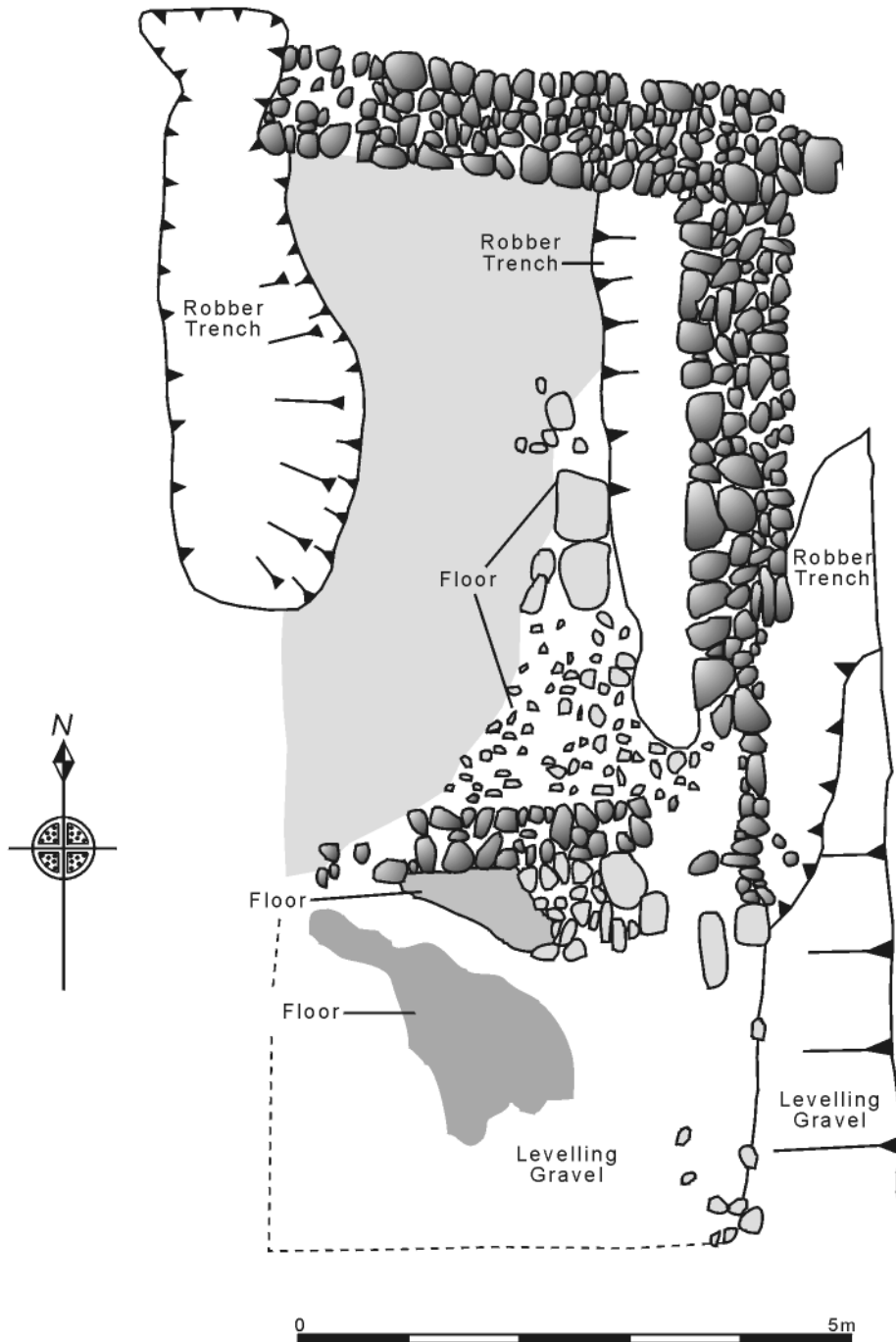
This plot was permanently defined as a property and Building 3 was constructed.

A new stone wall defined the northern limit of the property. It was cut through the charcoal-rich dumps of Phase 2. This wall, 5 m long and 1 m wide, was on roughly the same axis as the north boundary wall of Plot C, from whose robbed corner it extended as far as the west boundary wall of Plot A. The wall was built of large and medium sized whinstone rubble, bonded with gravelly, sandy mortar. It survived barely 0.2 m above the Phase 2 dumps, but its foundations, although no definite trench was found, were between 0.3 m and 0.5 m deep and, 1 m from the junction with the corner of the Plot C walls, were stepped down 0.15 m, probably to take account of the soft fill of the underlying robbing or construction pit of Building 2 (see Phase 2, Plot B). This foundation suggests a wall capable of standing to a considerable height.

The southern part of the plot was covered by extensive layers of gravel, probably flooring or levelling. Here, in a sondage near the street frontage, the gravel subsoil was evidently terraced to make a building platform. Above the hearth of Phase 2 was a similar levelling deposit. Above these levelling deposits of gravel was constructed Building 3.

The east wall butted against the northern boundary wall, but, unlike that wall, had no foundations and was constructed directly upon the layers underneath. The new wall was similar to the northern boundary in width, at about 1 m, and was bonded with yellowish-brown, gritty, sandy silt mortar. It comprised a continuous wall, 5 m long, with a few medium sized stones, which were probably part of it, about 1 m further to the south. It had been completely robbed beyond that point. All the same, it is reasonable to assume that the wall ran to the front of the site and, with the western boundary wall with Plot C, formed a building just under 4 m wide internally and about 10 m long.

Near the southern surviving end of this east wall was a narrow partition wall on an east/west axis, 3 m long and 0.5 m wide, set against the north side of a trench, 0.30 m deep and 1 m wide. Its junction with both the Plot C boundary wall to the west and the east wall had not survived, with the result that there was no proven relationship with either. However the partition wall was stratigraphically coeval with, and



*Illus 37 Bridgegate, Peebles, Building 3*

had a similar matrix to, that of the east wall of the building, ie, yellow silty sand.

The floor of the north room was made up of a thick dump (0.3 m) of gravel and, in places, large stones with roughly flat surfaces, whilst a similar dump of gravel was present on the south side of the partition. This building appears to have been a sizeable town house, whose gable faced onto the street.

At the end of the medieval period (c 1600) Building 3, for whatever reason, was demolished. On either side of the east wall of the building were linear cuts,

one parallel to the wall, the other diagonally between the wall and the eastern boundary wall. These were possibly robber trenches. The robbing was very thorough and little tumble was evident. The demolition and robbing of the northern end of the boundary wall with Plot C probably occurred at the same time, although it could have been a later event, since there was very little of the gravel floor of Building 3 in the backfill of the robber trench. The west wall was robbed right down to its basal course, the robber trench being filled mainly with dark brown silts and



*Illus 38 Bridgegate, Peebles, view of Building 3 from north*

deposits derived from the earlier make-ups and floors (charcoal-rich deposits or yellow clayey silt).

The whole area of Plot B was overlain to a depth of about 0.3 m by a series of dumped layers, which comprised smooth-textured, yellow-brown clayey silts, light brown silts with mortar fragments, gravel and charcoal and dark brown silts with similar inclusions over the top, as well as a mixture of all three. This last layer was probably a levelling relating to the construction of the next structural phase. Such was the nature of these layers that the most likely explanation of them is that they represent a levelling up of the plot to cover the previous structural

remains and to raise the ground surface level with the street. The clayey silts were natural subsoil deposits, acquired presumably from another part of the riverside, whereas the brown silts would appear to be typical of the overlying soils and could be the result of a period of disuse of the site, whilst the gravel element could come either from demolition or from imported metallurgy material, which in either case could serve as a yard surface. The light brown silts were similar to the general spread of post-occupation silts across Plot C, which formed a non-humic horizon of a garden soil (see Phase 4). The deposits are notable for the lack of post-medieval

artefacts, except clay pipe fragments in one of the dumped layers and the overlying layer. The evidence either way is indicative of a gap in the occupation of the plot.

### *Plot C*

#### *Building 4 – The Tolbooth (illus 39 and 40)*

The tolbooth (Building 4), in structural terms did not differ significantly from Building 1 in Plot A. It was constructed of large and medium, river-washed, whin boulders, split to make a face, and bonded with coarse, orange-brown sandy mortar. The walls were generally 0.9 m wide, where facing stones survived (the exact face of the east wall was not always evident); in places there was only a rough basal course, particularly at the north-east corner, where some extra large boulders had been used for foundation. Indeed, demolition had been very thorough, leaving very little rubble or tumble, except in the infill of the pits of the final phase of the west end (see below). In all, an area of the building, 12 m east/west by 4 m north/south, was uncovered during the excavation. (A subsequent watching brief during construction work for the new development, in June and July 1989 by the Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust, revealed the south, or front, wall of the building under Bridgegate.) In all, the tolbooth was some 5 m wide. The west wall was not found in either the excavation or watching brief.

A wide trench was cut for the northern side of the building. It was revetted to the north by a wall of roughly shaped whin rubble, and to the south by the north wall of the building. Between these two walls was a deposit of dark brown silt, which overlay the stone packing of the foundation for the tolbooth and contained late medieval green glazed pottery. (A similar small patch of brown silt overlay the rubble infill of the foundation trench of the east wall and may have been part of the bedding material for the cobbling which, evidently, covered the area to the east of the tolbooth.) Above that, and extending the length of the outside of the north wall of the tolbooth, a cobbled path had been laid in a sandy gravel layer, 0.1 m thick. The path sloped down towards the river and had a camber on it to aid run off. On the inside of the walls, the infill of the foundation trenches was a mixture of sandy silt and rubble stones. As no section was dug through the walls, little further can be said about their construction. Coeval with the construction of the path and revetment wall, a well was cut on its north side to a depth of 0.85 m. Its pit was 1.6 m across and stone-lined to give an opening 1 m in diameter. At the base was a mixture of yellow clayey silt and brown silt with gravel, stones and mortar to a depth of 0.15 m. This may have been an intended base but it is possible that it is at least partly formed of demolition rubbish as were the upper fills.

The eastern interior of the building was covered by yellow-cream sandy clay with mortar fragments and charcoal lenses, generally only 0.05 m deep, but up to

0.1 m deep in places. This lay directly on the subsoil and may have acted as a seal-cum-floor. Set on the clay was a partition wall, dividing the interior of the building into two rooms. The wall was well constructed of large, roughly-shaped, river-washed boulders for facing with a smaller rubble core, bonded with dark brown silty clay with fragmentary traces of lime mortar on the surface. It was 1 m wide and survived only one substantial course high (0.35 m). Such a wall was structural and could have divided the building in two at both ground floor and first floor. Lack of time precluded complete examination of the partition.

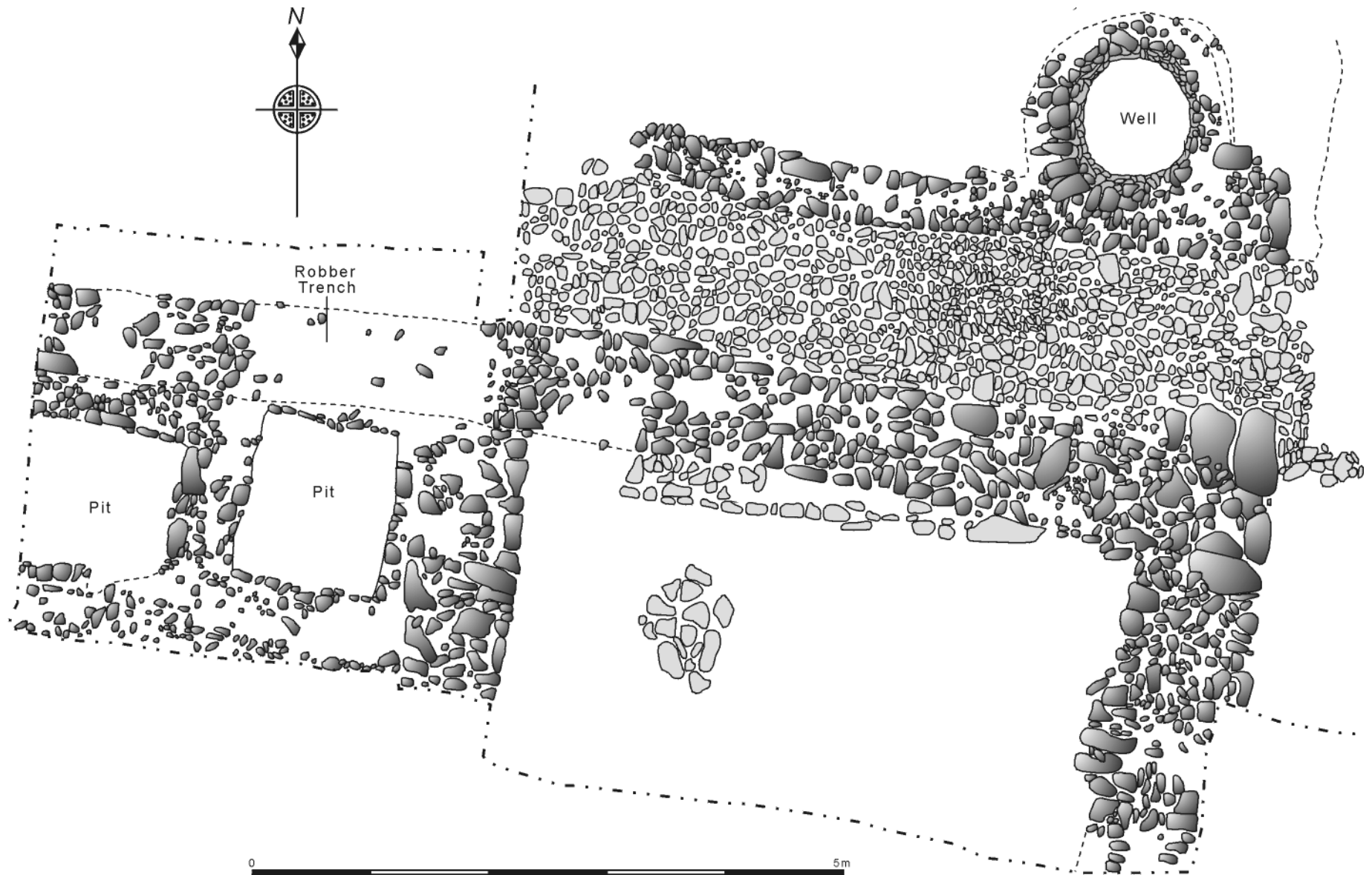
Three successive floor layers were encountered in the east room of the tolbooth. The intrusion of a 19th-century wall along the east side of the partition wall had cut through the upper two layers and an associated stone plinth, thus removing any direct relationship with the partition (see plans), but the earliest floor appeared to butt against it.

The earliest floor was 0.2 m thick and consisted of yellowish-brown silty clay with large quantities of medium sized stones, particularly around the edges of the room, and mortar fragments (the 19th-century wall also partly cut into this deposit). On top of this stony layer was a stone plinth, about 0.4 m wide and 0.20 m high, which was built along the north wall, but becoming narrower towards the east end. It is not clear what it supported, but it could have provided seating. Butting against this plinth was a second floor, composed of fine, mid-brown, silty sand, which became thinner and richer in charcoal towards the east wall, but had a maximum depth of 0.15 m and included lenses of pink, clayey silt and dark greyish-brown, sandy silt adjacent to the stone plinth. Also above the earliest floor was yellow sandy clay, distinct from, but possibly part of the secondary floor.

A brown gravel and sand layer, about 0.05 m thick, marked the last floor of the east room. On this floor a group of flat stones were found in the middle of the room, covering an area 1 m by 0.75 m. This is interpreted as a hearth, but, as there was a lack of charcoal, ash or signs of heat indicative of a hearth, it may have served as a plinth supporting a pillar or internal fitting.

The floor sequence in the western room is not clear because the stone pits, constructed in the latest phase of the building, had destroyed much of the interior in this room. Two deposits of fine sandy clay, one bounded by the partition wall, were the earliest identifiable features of the west room. Above them were patches of fine gravel and orange sand. These layers were only evident in a strip, 1 m wide, along the south side of the excavation, and could not be fully examined. Another patch of gravelly sand may be a repair of this floor. These gravels parallel the gravel floor on the east side of the partition.

The final use of the west room was marked by a complete transformation as two plaster- and stone-lined pits were constructed, which cut away all the floor levels except the strip referred to above (the



*Illus 39 Bridgewater, Peebles, Building 4 (Tolbooth)*



*Illus 40 Bridgegate, Peebles, view of Building 4 from south-east (before extension of excavation to reveal stone pits)*

west side of the western pit was recorded during the watching brief in 1989.) A single construction cut held both pits. The packing behind the stone and plaster lining was whin rubble, above which were the remains of a closely constructed, cobble floor of split whinstones. The roughly rectangular pits measured 1.35 m by 1.2 m and were 0.75 m deep. They were cut into the blue-grey clay subsoil and quickly filled with water after being emptied; for the whole time they were open, they remained flooded. This suggests that it was intentional and that they were used for washing or soaking, as part of the tanning process taking place in 1561 (see Documentary Evidence, above).

When the pits went out of use, the cobble flooring was robbed and the north wall of the building at this end was demolished and robbed, the trench being infilled with sandy mortar. Rubble from the demolition of the walls was tipped into the pits until they were level with the ground. The rubble included pottery dating to the late 18th century, which may indicate that the western room of the tolbooth was in use later than the rest of the structure. On the other hand, an intrusive 19th-century pit was cut down into the loose rubble infill of the western pit, which may thus have become contaminated. A layer of sandy loam, rubble and mortar overlay all of these demolition deposits. The differing sequence of the west end of the building from the east indicates that it could have continued in use into the 18th century.

Outside the tolbooth, the cobbled path was replaced by a gravel path, 0.2 m thick, in which was set a stone-lined and stone-capped drain (not illustrated), which ran along the full length of the north wall. About 4 m from the east end a branch drain ran into the main one. This arm ran north/south across the full width of the path and was of similar construction to the main drain. Both drains were filled with brown silt.

Above the east end of the path were a number of rubble deposits from the demolition, including several stone roof slates. The absence of this material at the west end (see above) may indicate a differing process of demolition.

#### *Courtyard (illus 30)*

The area to the east of the tolbooth was an open yard as far as the eastern boundary wall, which continued in use from the previous phase. An extensive, but patchy, spread of gravel formed the yard surface. Other patches of gravel and cobbling to its north probably represent the continuation of the path on the north side of the tolbooth. One of these patches lay between a kerb of medium sized stones on an east/west axis on its north side and Building 5 to the south.

#### *Building 5 (illus 41 and 42)*

To the east of the tolbooth were the foundations of Building 5, built against the east boundary wall.



*Illus 41 Bridgegate, Peebles, Building 5*



*Illus 42 Bridgegate, Peebles, view of Building 5 from west*

This wall continued in use from the previous phase and was increased in with by 0.5 m on its west side by the addition of a new wall face based on a substantial foundation plinth. Only a fragment of the north wall survived, 1 m long and 0.75 m wide, similar in build to the thickening of the east wall. The wall was set in a shallow trench, in which was a thin layer of yellowish-brown silt. Patches of similar material were found for 5 m west of the surviving stub end, suggesting that the wall may have continued at least that far. No definite west wall was found, although a shallow, flat-bottomed trench, 0.25 m deep, extending into the southern limit of excavation, may represent its foundation or robbing. It was filled with cobbles and gravel in brown, clayey silt. If this was the west wall, the structure would have had a length of about 7.8 m externally and 5.7 m internally.

Inside this building, situated over the gravel deposits, were three features which may relate to it. A narrow wall fragment, 1.4 m long and 0.4 m wide, extended into the southern limit of excavation. This may have been a partition wall within the structure, although its axis, roughly NNE/SSW was not exactly parallel with the building axis and it appeared in plan to have been slightly curvilinear. To its east, on a NNW/SSE axis, was a stone-lined drain, 1.2 m long and 0.3 m wide, which also entered the southern limit of excavation. Some 2 m east of the drain was a pit, lined by stones set on edge on its east and south sides, and measuring 0.6 m by 0.4 m. It may have been a storage pit, although it was not excavated.

Whatever this structure was, it had been almost completely robbed. Its occupation may have been connected with the functions of the tolbooth since it was stratigraphically coeval with that building. A deposit of dark brown silt with much charcoal, window glass and some lumps of slag covered a triangular area of about 4 m across and about 0.1 m thick in the area formerly occupied by this building. This appears to have been a post-occupation silting mixed partly with debris from demolition.

#### ***Phase 4 – 18th and 19th centuries (illus 30)***

##### *Plot A*

##### ***Building 1 (illus 30)***

In the early 19th century Building 1 became the Post Office. Its demolition, to make way for the construction of the cinema in the 20th century, probably removed much of the evidence for this phase when the building underwent several alterations. These alterations are marked by mortar-rich brown silts covering much of the eastern end of the building, probably construction or make-up deposits, and a pit, probably a mortar-mixer, that was cut into the natural gravel. The pit, 0.95 m deep, had vertical sides and a flat base. It contained lime mortar-rich silt, not unlike the construction or make-up layers.

The back door was blocked up to form a recess or cupboard, 0.5 m deep. This recess was plastered on

two occasions, at the same time as the north wall, which also had traces of two plaster coats. The base of the recess was covered with a mortar and brown silt layer, probably a solum, on which was a layer of brown powdery decayed wood. There was a gap of 0.05 m between the surface of this layer and the plaster, which gives an indication of the thickness of the timber floor surface. Subsequently, the recess was filled in completely with mortared rubble. Similarly, the front door was blocked at this time with orange-brown, sandy, mortared rubble. The location of the new front entrance did not survive demolition.

A fireplace and a recess were constructed against the east wall by the addition of three stone projections to the wall. The former underwent many alterations. In its first phase, the fireplace measured 1.05 m at its opening, reducing to 0.75 m at the back, and was 0.6 m deep. It was paved with flat slabs, which extended 0.7 m into the room. It is possible that the paving was not laid down at one time, as it comprised red sandstone slabs immediately in front of the fireplace, 0.25 m into the room, and blue-grey slabs extending a further 0.45 m to the west. The eastern edge of these latter slabs was rebated to contain the red slabs, while along the western edge was a wooden beam. Furthermore, the red slabs were bedded on mortar, whereas the inner slabs and the blue-grey slabs were set on rubble and dark brown silt, from which was recovered a coin of George III. Traces of two layers of plaster, corresponding to those in the north wall and its blocked door recess, were observed at the back and sides of the fireplace recess: these were applied after the paving of the hearth. There were two further phases of the fireplace: an inner setting of mortared, re-used paving stones, forming an opening 0.3 m wide and 0.4 m deep, and an outer brick lining around an opening 0.3 m wide and 0.2 m deep. Between the red slabs and the base of the fireplace were two upright pieces of iron, probably the remains of a grate.

Contemporary with the fireplace was a recess situated on its north side. The opening of the recess was 0.9 m across and was squared not splayed, but it was 0.6 m deep, like the fireplace. A narrow strip of timber lined the southern jamb of the recess, possibly indicating a timber-lined cupboard. The whole unit, comprising fireplace and recess, was 2.8 m wide and had the effect of creating two further recesses on either side. There was no evidence of any special use of either. The southern recess was splayed on its south side where it met the wall. This latter splay was of lime-bonded, whin rubble construction, similar to two recesses in the south wall (see below). (It is possible that, in fact, the fireplace had originally, in the 17th or early 18th century, been much wider, occupying the whole southern end of the east wall, as far as the splayed corner with the south wall, giving a width of some 2 m, before being reduced in size, possibly in the later 18th or early 19th century, to 1.05 m, by the addition of a new south jamb.)

The south wall had two recesses, probably for windows, both with splayed openings, 1 m and 1.05 m wide, and 0.5 m deep. Their facings of whin rubble were bonded with lime mortar, which differentiated them from the original construction of the building.

The evidence for the flooring of the building is contradictory. The traces of decayed wood in the blocked north doorway, together with the timber found edging the paved area in front of the fireplace, suggest a timber floor. However the paving slabs in front of the fireplace, together with the re-used slabs in a secondary phase of the fireplace (see above), suggest a paved floor. The possibility remains that both types of flooring were used, though which is the earlier is unclear.

It is not clear how access to the yard at the rear was obtained after the blocking of the back door, unless a second door to the west was built which has not survived. The cess-pit at the back of the house (see Phase 2) may well have been infilled at this time, since the backyard was levelled and made into a terrace, the cut for which disturbed the foundation trench of the north wall of the building. The east side of this terrace was revetted by a wall of whinstone rubble, 0.8 m high, bonded with brown silty earth. The infill of the revetment contained late 18th-century material, suggesting that the levelled yard evidently dates to the early 19th century. There is some evidence that the yard surface was lower than the base of the north wall of the building, since both the latter's foundation stones and the gravel underneath were visible to a depth of about 0.2 m. This evidence for a lowering of the ground surface is best explained as being part of the same action in which the revetment was constructed and cess-pit truncated and filled in. The blocking of the rear door of the building, which included creamware potsherds in its make-up, indicates that the original access to the yard from the building at this point was closed at this period.

Attached to the south-west corner of Building 1 was a boundary wall with Plot B. It was constructed on a plinth of earth and stone and faced with rough-cast plaster, similar to that on the outside of the west wall of the building. From cartographic evidence ([Armstrong 1775](#)), by 1775 an extension had been built on to the south front of the building at the west side. This boundary wall, together with a terraced edge some 4 m to the east, probably represents this extension.

### *Plot B*

#### *Building 6 (illus 30)*

The period of abandonment represented by the brown silts at the end of Phase 3 was followed, before the end of the 18th century, by the construction of a new house, measuring 8 m by 4.5 m. The walls were built on top of the dumped layers, but trenches were dug for the foundations of the north and west walls.

The walls of this house were constructed of whin rubble bonded with lime mortar and, consequently, better constructed than the medieval structures: this is illustrated by these walls being narrower (between 0.40 m and 0.70 m) than the medieval walls. The west wall was built along the east side of the demolished boundary wall with Plot C. This may indicate that the line of the property was still known and respected. There was a gap of 2.5 m between the south end of the west wall and the end of the south wall. In the middle of this gap was the north end of another wall, on a north/south axis, extending into the southern limit of excavation. This provided two gaps of 1 m, which were entrances, one external, the other internal into an adjoining room to the south. The east wall of this room was formed by the boundary wall with Plot A. The room was 3.1 m wide and probably as long, on the basis of the present street line.

As far as internal features of the main room are concerned, a fireplace was evident in the middle of the rear wall, 1.2 m wide, with a right jamb jutting 0.4 m into the room. West of the fireplace the wall was thicker (0.7 m) than to the east (0.4 m), so that there was no jamb as such visible. It is possible that this extra thickness provided space for a cupboard; or the wall to the east of the fireplace may have contained a cupboard. Three metres from the north wall, the east wall was cut by a shallow trench, 1 m long and 1 m wide, at right angles to the wall. This probably represents the robbing of a stone partition wall across the room. Opposite it, in the west wall, were a slight thickening of the wall (about 0.1 m) and two small recesses of similar depth, 0.4 m apart and 0.15 m wide. These features were presumably the bonding holes for the partition. The north-west corner of the building incorporated a large sandstone trough in its foundations.

Just over 1 m south of the door into the house, a small, oval posthole, 0.3 m in diameter and c 0.2 m deep, lay 0.15 m west of the front extension wall.

Subsequently, a narrow shed was added to the outside of the north wall. A narrow, lime-mortared, whinstone rubble wall, 0.25 m wide and 0.5 m high, enclosed an area 4.5 m long by 0.7 m wide with a door of similar width, 0.5 m from its east end. It appears to have served as a coal shed.

Cartographic evidence ([Armstrong 1775](#)) suggests that there was an extension on the west side of the building, but no archaeological evidence for this was found. By the early 19th century ([Wood 1823b](#)) this extension had been demolished.

#### *Plot C (illus 30)*

After the demolition of Building 4 (tolbooth) and its related structures, the whole plot was left open and by the mid 19th century was being used as a garden (OS 1858a). The lower soil horizon from this phase was light brown, sandy clayey loam with some small pebbles and mortar fragments as well as quantities

of domestic rubbish of the 18th and 19th centuries. This was overlain by a garden topsoil of dark brown silty loam.

### *Phase 5 – 20th century (illus 30)*

#### *Plot A*

The post office was demolished and replaced by a cinema in about 1920. Several of the modern pits were the result of construction work relating to this building. This work also had the effect of dislocating the east end from the west end, making interpretation of this part of the site particularly difficult. The demolition of the cinema and its concrete foundations in 1985 was the final act, removing all structural trace of the cinema.

#### *Plot B*

Building 6 was also demolished in the early 20th century, its site remaining open ground, which was concreted over.

#### *Plot C*

At the end of the 19th century an engineering workshop was constructed on this site. The foundations were all cut through the garden soil and the underlying soils which had accumulated above the tolbooth site.

The workshop consisted of two main buildings, one facing along Cuddyside (Building 7) and the other fronting Bridgegate (Building 8), on either side of a gate into the workshop yard which was still evident in 1985.

Building 7 was represented by a north/south wall with a westward return at its north end. It measured about 12–13 m long and about 6 m and had walls 0.75–0.9 m wide, of whin rubble bonded with lime mortar. The foundations extended down to subsoil, 1 m below.

Only the north-east corner of Building 8 survived. The east wall was composed of two adjoining north/south walls, 2.5 m overall length, with a westward return wall at its north end, 2.5 m long. A pillar plinth partly supported the north wall, 1.5 m west of the other section. The walls of this were less substantial (0.5 m wide) than those of Building 7, although they were just as deeply founded. The foundations of the west wall of the building did not survive demolition.

Parallel with Building 8, and 2 m north of it, was a rubble-filled drainage sump, 5.5 m long and 0.6 m wide. It is also probable that the stone-lined and capped well at the back of this plot, with a lead pipe for pumping out the water, belongs to this phase of occupation, since it, too, cut through the garden soil.

## Discussion

The excavation was successful in confirming the site of the 15th-century tolbooth at the west end of the site. Alterations in the line of the street frontage resulted in its south and west walls now lying under the public highway (part of the south wall was observed in a watching brief in 1989). This also meant that no trace of the town wall, which on documentary grounds is thought to run along Cuddyside, was revealed, nor any of the predecessors to these defences, the Bridgegate Port and its barmkin. The other important aspect of the site was the opportunity to examine three properties on a main thoroughfare of the royal burgh, especially the opportunity to examine a street frontage, which had not been disturbed by cellars. It is the location of substantial stone-built medieval houses (Buildings 1–5) which makes this excavation of particular value in our understanding of medieval urban landscapes.

On the eastern property (A) only one building needs consideration. The 19th-century Post Office began life as a merchant's house in the medieval period, that is to say, certainly prior to Building 3 on the middle plot (B) in the late 14th or early 15th century. The medieval antiquity of Building 1 was not appreciated at first, since the cinema demolition and, presumably, its construction had divided the east from the west end. The east end could be definitely attributed to the 18th century or earlier, since a coin of 1799 was found under the hearth of the inserted 19th-century fireplace (see Phase 4). At the west end, both the west wall and the property boundary wall, which extended northwards from it, pre-date all the dumped layers to the west in Plot B (see Phase 2). This only establishes a relative date. In absolute terms, all that can be said is that the pottery present in the earliest layers of Plot B (post-dating the construction of Building 1) was predominantly Scottish White Gritty Ware that may be placed in a broad 12th to 14th century bracket. This might place these two structures (Buildings 1 and 3) as early as the later 12th century or as late as the 14th century, although it would be rash to place a date much earlier than the latter part of this period on Building 1.

With its deep-cut, 1 m wide, solid foundations, the building was designed to stand to more than one storey. The strength of its structure, its internal divisions, the cross-passage and garderobe pit all indicate a different kind of social structure from the other houses on the site. These suggest a type of medieval building which would be appropriate for a merchant, the passage providing access from the street to storerooms and workshops in the rear (the doors, at 1.25 m wide, were certainly substantial enough for carriage of goods). Its affinities are with stone-built medieval merchants' houses in England if not Scotland. In size it is large enough for a merchant's house, comparing well in size with late 12th-century houses in English towns like Norwich or Lincoln (Jones 1980). Stone-built houses of such

size, with mid-walled passages, have been noted in Linlithgow (G Stell pers comm), but probably not as early as the English examples, and there is no reason to place Building 1 any earlier than the 14th century, although an earlier date would be possible.

The cross-passage (1.25 m wide), halfway along the length of the building, divided it into two rooms at ground floor level. Both rooms were 5 m long by 4 m wide, but no evidence survived to indicate function, except that no original fireplace was evident at ground floor level. There was, therefore, presumably first floor domestic accommodation. A secondary thickening to the wall of the east end may have been for the base of a fireplace at first floor level (see Phase 3). The analogies for the functions of such a building would place workshops in the ground floor and living quarters above, an interpretation which the garderobe pit would support.

Several medieval urban stone buildings have been excavated in Scotland recently. Although three stone-built structures were found at Perth High Street Excavation, none could be securely dated to the medieval period, all being under modern demolition rubble, although the earliest could date to c 1300 (Bogdan 1992, 6). At Marketgate/Ladybridge, Arbroath, a stone building of about 1400, also interpreted as a wealthy merchant's house, survived into the late 18th or early 19th century (Falconer 1995). Also in Arbroath, a stone building fronting the east side of High Street, probably dating not later than the 15th century, was excavated in 1997 (Perry 1999). At Murraygate/Panmure Street, Dundee a sequence of stone houses, dating from the 13th to the 15th centuries, was found in three adjoining properties; one of the buildings was probably gable-end on to the street as with Building 3 at Bridgegate (Brown and Roy 2000).

The middle property (B) apparently remained open during the initial occupation in Phase 2, possibly as access to the river for dumping rubbish. However at about the time the tolbooth was built, in Phase 3, a stone house (Building 3), measuring about 10 m by 3.8 m internally, was erected on a north/south axis. Unlike the other buildings, its gable would have fronted the street but, from the lack of deep foundations, it may not have stood more than a single storey in height. It was partitioned into two roughly equal parts. The loss of most of the floor levels makes interpretation of the function of the building difficult. However the division into two parts appears to echo the divisions of Buildings 1 in Plot A (above) and 2 in Plot C (below).

The site of the tolbooth, Plot C, was an open river flood-plain prior to being enclosed and built upon, probably in the 13th century. The use of the riverside for rubbish disposal was a common feature of medieval towns and this one was no exception (the river would have carried much of it away). The development of the site must then have curtailed rubbish disposal in this convenient location.

Building 2 does not appear to have been in any sense an imposing building and it is odd that it was

set at the rear rather than the front of the property. This stone-walled house measured 8 m by 4 m internally in its initial phase, with a small entrance lobby to the west. In its second phase it was lengthened (by 2 m) and subdivided, with the smaller, western room (3 m) becoming a living room based around a hearth. Few clues were available as to the use of the longer room (5.5 m). Finally, the longer room was shortened by 2.5 m, but the basic division into two was maintained. The dumping of gravel to the north of the building and the successive raising of the floor levels in the house are indicative of the perennial flooding of the site. (The tolbooth floor was similarly raised during its occupation.) The squared ends of the structure and the rebuilding of that part of the property wall which formed its east end suggest a stone-built, gable-ended house. The hearths in the western room suggest that it was open to the roof and, therefore, of one storey only.

The tolbooth itself, Building 4, was evidently an imposing stone structure, over 12 m long by 5 m wide, with foundations of sufficient strength (1 m wide, of well built, mortared stone) for at least two storeys in height, ie, a basement of two rooms, first floor and possibly attic rooms, with a roof of stone

slates at the time of demolition. Dating evidence suggests that the west end of the building was maintained as a workshop, with stone-lined washing tanks, into the 18th century. The dating evidence of the coin sequence (see [Table 2](#)) suggests that the second floor layer of the east room dates to the second quarter of the 17th century. The group of coins found in the final floor of the building would place the date of abandonment in or after the late 17th century. The other finds are consonant with this, but for a single intrusive sherd of 19th-century pottery, which could have derived from the construction of the late 19th-century factory (Buildings 7 and 8).

The building stood within a large plot (c 15 m by 20 m) and possessed its own source of water, other than the nearby Eddleston Water, from a well, situated beside a cobbled path into which a drain was later inserted: presumably, as at Wester Kelso near the Tweed ([Dixon and Perry](#), above), to avoid carrying water over even a short distance to the workshops in the basement. The rest of the plot was occupied by a garden area to the rear and vestigial evidence for another stone building (Building 5), between it and the property boundary. This building also had a cobbled path along its rear.