

SIDDINGTON TITHE BARN,
GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

compiled by
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for
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and
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SUMMARY

Limited excavation work was carried out by Cotswold Archaeological Trust at Siddington Tithe Barn in advance of drainage works related to the renovation of its northern porch.

Floor levels within the two ground floor rooms of the porch were hand excavated to specified depths, for the insertion of a damp proof coursing, and revealed the existence of a clay-filled ditch, 2.70 m wide and some 1.00 m deep, running parallel with the tithe barn, and containing ceramics of thirteenth to fourteenth century date. After the ditch went out of use the medieval north porch was subsequently constructed, cutting into the ditch fill. An unmortared section of limestone walling was subsequently inserted beside the ditch, cut into the natural alluvial gravels. Although undated it is possible this structure may relate to the medieval north porch. At a later, undated, phase in the development of the porch a mortared masonry structure was built over the earlier stonework, consisting of a series of stone walls and hearth structure with associated cinder deposits. This structure was later disturbed and partially robbed, presumably when the most recent tile floor was inserted.

Service trenches were dug adjacent to the north porch and in an area immediately to the north. These revealed more of the medieval ditch as well the presence of a number of posthole and pit features cut into the natural gravels, some of which yielded material dating to the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. A section of original barn wall was uncovered, revealing that the original thirteenth century barn originally carried on further west. A series of post medieval/early modern garden path and yard surfaces were also excavated, associated with the present north porch. To the west of the building the footings and walls of a previously unknown wing were uncovered. East of the north porch the cess-pit of the existing outbuilding was uncovered along with evidence of an earlier alignment of the present churchyard boundary wall. All of the northern trenches contained early modern rubbish pits and heavily disturbed soils.

The southerly service trenches, either side of the south porch, revealed medieval soil layers, stone tile waste, Post-Medieval yard surfaces and walling and an early modern brick built structure of uncertain function but possibly some form of processing area. At the start of excavations a stone lined well was discovered under the westerly buttress of the porch and of uncertain date.

Despite the limited nature of the excavations a considerable quantity of medieval and later occupation evidence was recovered; the importance of existing scheduled monument protection was reaffirmed and further future research areas were highlighted.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This report presents the results of an archaeological excavation (CAT Job No.0174) at Siddington Tithe Barn, Gloucestershire (NGR : SP035002, County No.494). The work was carried out in advance of drainage works associated with the renovation of the north porch residence (no.22) and involved the digging of a number of pipe trenches, small open-area excavation for a water storage tank and soakaway and the lowering of internal floor levels for the insertion of damp proof coursing.

This area of Siddington parish (figure 1) has long been recognised as archaeologically sensitive and is therefore protected as part of a scheduled monument, County Monument no.475.

In accordance with the Ancient Monument and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended) Scheduled Monument Consent was applied for and received from the Department of the Environment (Ref: HSD9/2/1113 pt.7).

The excavation was commissioned by Ferguson Mann Architects of Royal Colonnade, 18 Great George St, Bristol on behalf of the British Historic Buildings Trust. The work was carried out by COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST under the supervision of Senior Field Officer Neil Holbrook and Site Supervisor Alistair Barber between August 28th and October 28th 1991. All archive material has been deposited with the Corinium Museum, Park Street, Cirencester under the accession number 1991/550.

The general aim of the archaeological excavation was to remove and effectively sterilise archaeological deposits from the proposed line of the pipe trenches, from the present ground surface to specified depths, and in doing so to provide high-quality archaeological data from direct observation of the below ground deposits.

The specific aims of the archaeological excavation were:-

[a] to determine the depth, thickness and depositional history of the archaeological deposits within the study area.

[b] to determine their quality of survival and potential for the recovery of archaeologically informative data, i.e, artefactual, ecofactual, environmental and structural evidence.

[c] to integrate the results of [a] and [b] with existing knowledge of the development of the study area.

This report is intended to present a factual statement on the

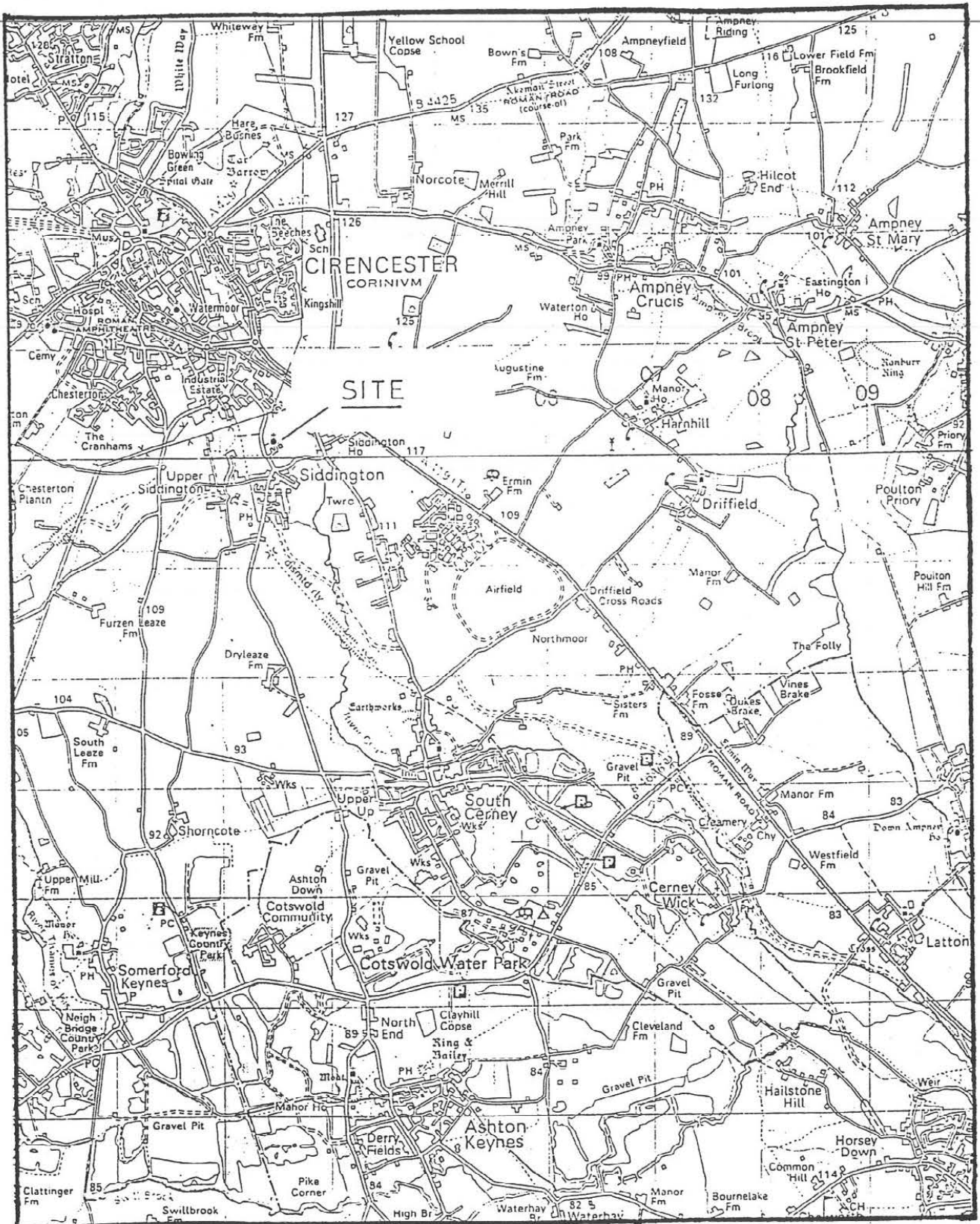


Fig.1 General location map showing Siddington parish and study area.

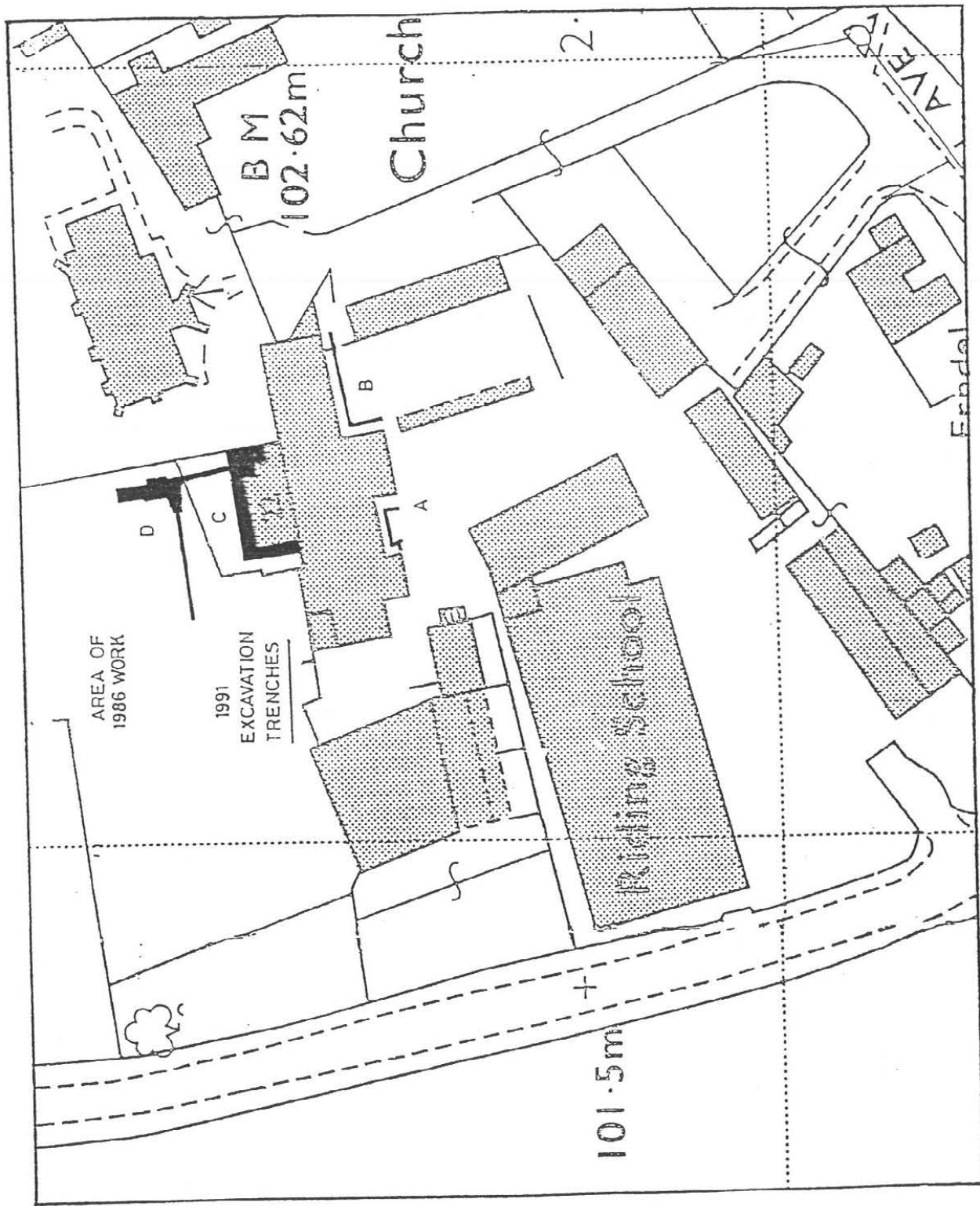


Fig. 2 Location map showing position of 1991 excavations in relation to Siddington Tithe Barn, St. Peter's Church and the Talland Riding School.

archaeological stratigraphy encountered, to supplement research undertaken by Ferguson Mann Architects into the architectural development of the barn, rather than to seek to synthesise these separate strands of enquiry.

1.2 The Site

The study area (figure 1) lies some 1.8 kilometres to the south-east of the centre of Cirencester on a plain comprised of alluvial gravel drift geology; ground level rising from around 100.9-101.8 m above Ordnance Datum around the study area to some 125 m at Chesterton to the north-west and to about 107 m at Preston Forty to the north-east.

The site is bounded by the Cirencester to Siddington road to the west, Church Avenue and Church Farm to the south and east and by pasture fields to the north (figure 2). The study area is part of the extensive Bathurst estate and is utilised by the Talland School of Equitation for stabling, storage, car parking, teaching and associated functions.

After a year long programme of restoration work funded by English Heritage the medieval barn was recently reopened by the Chairman of English Heritage, Lord Montague of Beaulieu, who handed responsibility for the barn back to Lady Apsley and the Bathurst Estate. The barn is once again being used for storage by the riding school.

2 EXCAVATION METHODS, DATA RETRIEVAL AND RECORDING

2.1 Excavation Methods

All trenches were hand excavated to the specified maximum depths of proposed disturbance. Pipe laying and reinstatement of the site was subsequently undertaken under the supervision of Ferguson Mann Architects.

While open the trenches were fenced as appropriate and marked with European standard safety signs.

All levels were taken with a Sokkisha c40 level from the St. Peters church benchmark with a value of 102.64 m A.O.D. A series of five temporary bench marks were utilised across the site, their positions and values described at the start of section 5.

2.2 Data Retrieval and Recording

All recording of sub-surface deposits was by use of the standard C.A.T system. In this, all definable archaeological levels i.e, a layer of soil, a pit, a wall, etc are assigned a unique number called a 'context' number. A number of contexts, such as the different layers of silting that make up the fill of a ditch, can be combined to create a 'feature', which also receives its own unique number. A feature can be positive (i.e, upstanding like a wall), or negative (i.e, cut into the ground like a pit). All the relevant attributes and definitions of a context are entered onto a standard recording form thus allowing for identification of a context within the spatial and temporal framework of the site's stratigraphy.

In addition to the context and feature records, a recorded finds index locates important artifacts to their context of origin, and a drawings index and photographic index supplement the basic written record while also providing a crosscheck on relationships. All material recovered during the course of excavation was labelled and coded.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The known archaeological resource.

The present excavations lie within a discrete area of archaeological interest; containing Siddington Tithe Barn, St.Peters church and late medieval settlement identified by earlier archaeological work (see section 4.2 below).The church of St.Peter has a number of Norman features, such as the south doorway and a tall, cylindrical font. There are also some later Perpendicular features. The Langley chapel forms the North aisle of the church and was built c.1470 by Edward Langley (1450 - 1500) the son of Walter Langley and Isabel Pole, the latter a descendant of Geoffrey Langley, lord of the manor of Siddington St.Peter (or Lower Siddington) in the time of Henry III or Edward I.

Accessible cartographic evidence (Viner,1991) gives no map or plan records of the study area before c.1778 where an ink/water-colour map of the 'manor and parishes of Siddingtons in the county of Gloucester' records an area of open water to the east of the church, believed to correlate with an account by Rudder (1779) of a large mansion house near the church 'long since razed to the ground, and nothing remains to show where it stood, but part of the moat with which it was surrounded'.

Siddington Tithe Barn is the subject of ongoing architectural research into its origins and development. Dendrochronological dating of roof timbers within the main barn have provided accurate dates around the mid twelfth century. Study of the lapjoints used within the frames indicates a type of carpentry peculiar to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, possibly imported by the Normans at the Conquest and of a type at Siddington (the visible notch form) which Hewett (1971) states went out of use sometime before 1220 AD. The westerly barn is a late addition as is the western buttress of the south porch (thought to be nineteenth century in origin) and the existing northern porch is an alteration and extension of the original medieval precursor.

As Hewett has stated there is evidence that the barn passed into the ownership of the Knights Hospitallers, the charitable, religious division of the Knights Templar military order. The latter received the barn as a gift, probably during the opening decade of the thirteenth century, and is thought to have been used as a preceptory. The history and architectural development of the barn is the subject of ongoing research, and this report simply presents a factual statement of archaeological deposits encountered, rather than aiming to synthesise them in a detailed manner with architectural and documentary research into the barn.

Although possessing an obvious medieval focus the study area

also held the potential for the recovery of earlier artefactual and structural remains.

Siddington parish contains a number of important sites of Romano-British date identified from aerial photography and from surface collection of ploughsoil finds. Sites have been listed by Leech (1977) and Saville (1980) as part of a wider investigation of Upper Thames Valley sites by the Committee for Rescue archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset (CRAAGS). Siddington tithe barn lies only 1 km south of the town wall of Roman Corinium, 1.4 km north-east of a 12 ha Romano-British settlement at Worms Farm adjacent to Ermine Street, and less than 2 km north-east of a number of undated and Romano-British sites, including enclosures, ring ditches, trackways and spreads of occupation debris indicative of small settlements.

Clearly the Siddington area was actively occupied in Roman times, and the likelihood of recovering some Romano-British evidence from the present excavations could not be discounted; particularly given the Roman pottery, coinage and other material recovered by the Oxford Archaeological Unit during their 1986 investigations nearby.

Further areas of archaeological interest lie close to the church and barn, again of medieval and later date. The Gloucestershire sites and monuments record notes the presence of water-meadows (SP03930005, SMR no.9847) and Siddington Mill (SP037000200, SMR no.494) nearby as well as two post-medieval constructions, the railway (SP03220000 - SP04500500, SMR no 4944) and Thames and Severn Canal (SP023014 - SP030000, SMR no.2086)

The areas immediately adjacent to the barn were therefore considered to be potentially archaeologically sensitive. Roman occupation evidence might be recovered as, possibly, might traces of Anglo-Saxon material (given for example a residual sherd identified by the O.A.U as Saxon pottery) or early Norman evidence to indicate some form of precursor to the known thirteenth century focus.

The excavations also presented a limited opportunity to test whether evidence of medieval activity survives immediately outside of the barn and whether occupation evidence would be continuous through to use as a its maltings history and twentieth century conversion into a residence. Above all it was important to establish to what degree archaeological stratigraphy survives undisturbed adjacent to the barn (given Oxford Archaeological Unit findings that nineteenth century pitting was widespread).

3.2 The Oxford Archaeological Unit Riding Arena excavations in 1986.

The most specific, detailed archaeological information about the study area has come from excavations in advance of construction of the present riding arena and car park in 1986 (figure 3). Oxford Archaeological Unit recorded the existence of a substantial area of medieval and later occupation, though much of the site was found to be disturbed by extensive early modern pitting.

A large area, some 60m square, was commercially stripped of its turf and topsoil before levelling and construction of the arena. An earthwork was noted running east west across the southern edge of the area and under the churchyard wall. This low bank has been interpreted as a medieval plough headland and contained pottery of later twelfth to thirteenth century date.

A later limestone cobbled trackway was found to utilise this feature, the surface being bounded by two partially surviving stone walls. To the south of the trackway a cobbled yard surface of likely Post-Medieval date was noted, bounded by a stone wall to the west and by the tithe barn to the south. Finds recovered north of wall 1 of the east-west trackway were of medieval date with thirteenth to fifteenth century material over the cobbled surface and eleventh to thirteenth century beneath.

The walled east-west track had been broken through, perhaps when a later north-south route from the barn to the fields to the north was established, where it still survives in earthwork form.

Extensive nineteenth and twentieth century rubbish pits were encountered, at least some of them associated with Victorian repairs to the church. Trenches south of the stripped area, closer to the location of the present excavations, revealed nineteenth century yard surfaces disturbed by pitting.

4 THE EXCAVATIONS

4.1 Interior of the north porch (trenches E and F)

4.1.1 Trench E (W. ground floor room)

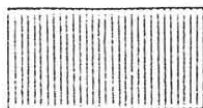
Cut into the natural orange-buff alluvial gravels (21) a linear ditch feature [154] with fill (131) was encountered running on an east-west alignment parallel with the barn. The ditch feature (figures 4 and 20) appeared to fan out in the eastern half of the room. This was at first thought simply to be due to a wide trench for the insertion of the early modern waterpipe, but the identical nature of the fill to the rest of the ditch material, and its considerable depth beneath the pipe may represent a greater complexity of the ditch form in this area. Within trench C immediately to the east and west of the porch the ditch was found to continue on its east-west alignment, some 0.70m from the original barn wall.

The profile of the ditch was established to the east of the north porch and was found at this point to possess a slightly irregular, shallow V - shaped profile. The ditch was c.2.70m wide at the start of the cut narrowing to c.0.75m at its base, and approximately 1.0m deep. Throughout trenches C, E and F the ditch contained an orange-brown gravelly-clay fill. Where half-sectioned for identification of its profile the fill was found to be entirely homogeneous, with no trace of separate siltings or evidence of recutting. It seems likely that the ditch was not open for very long before filling with clay-loam.

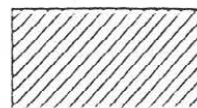
Artefactual material was recovered along its full identified length, the clay fill containing quantities of Minety ware tile and pottery indicating that the ditch went out of use during or after the late thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries. The ditch fill was later cut through during the construction of the eastern wall of the original north porch; believed to be of medieval date, corresponding with the sole recovery of Minety ware tile from the fill (194) of its construction trench [193]. The placement of the limestone walling (168) of trench F, discussed presently, respected the presence of a relatively soft ditch fill and was cautiously positioned adjacent to it.

Overlying the ditch fill (131) in trench E was a thick foundation layer (130) for the most recent floor surface (129), consisting of a compact but friable yellow, sandy matrix, containing occasional Post-Medieval brick fragments, on which the tile and paviour surface was bedded. Archaeological supervision of the lifting of this floor was carried out following the compilation of a drawn and photographic record.

Yellow clay



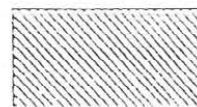
Loam



Brown clay



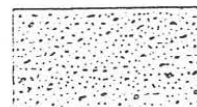
Mortar



Grey clay



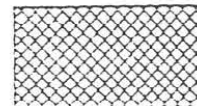
Gravel



Yellow silt



Burnt earth



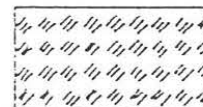
Brown silt



Charcoal



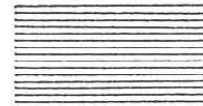
Grey silt



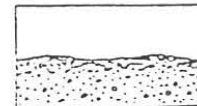
Mortar surface



Clayey sods



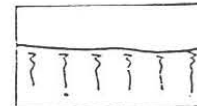
Gravel surface



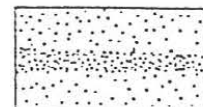
Turves



Modern turf



Sandy soil



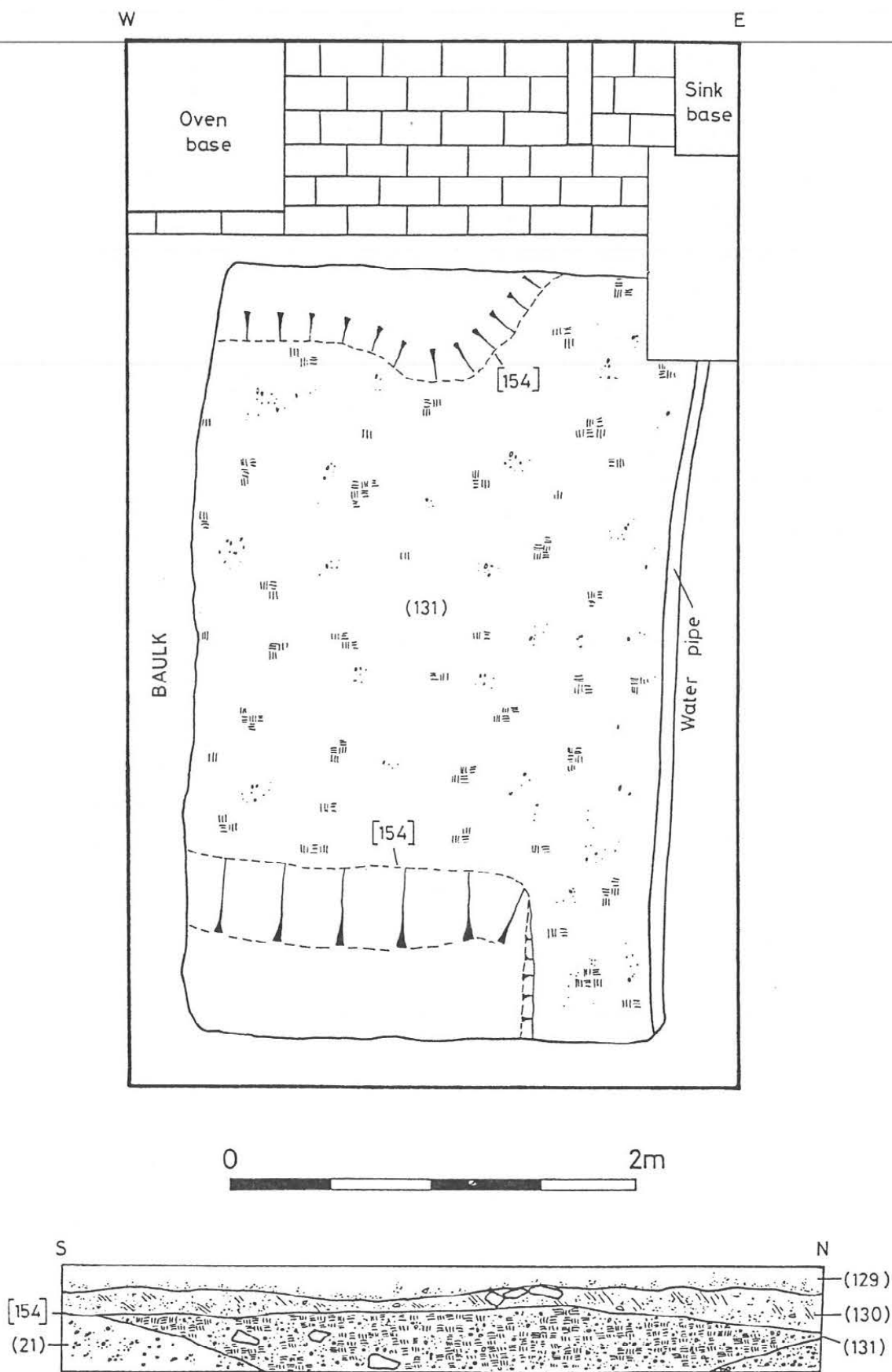


Fig.4 Trench E. 1:20 plan/section of medieval ditch [154].

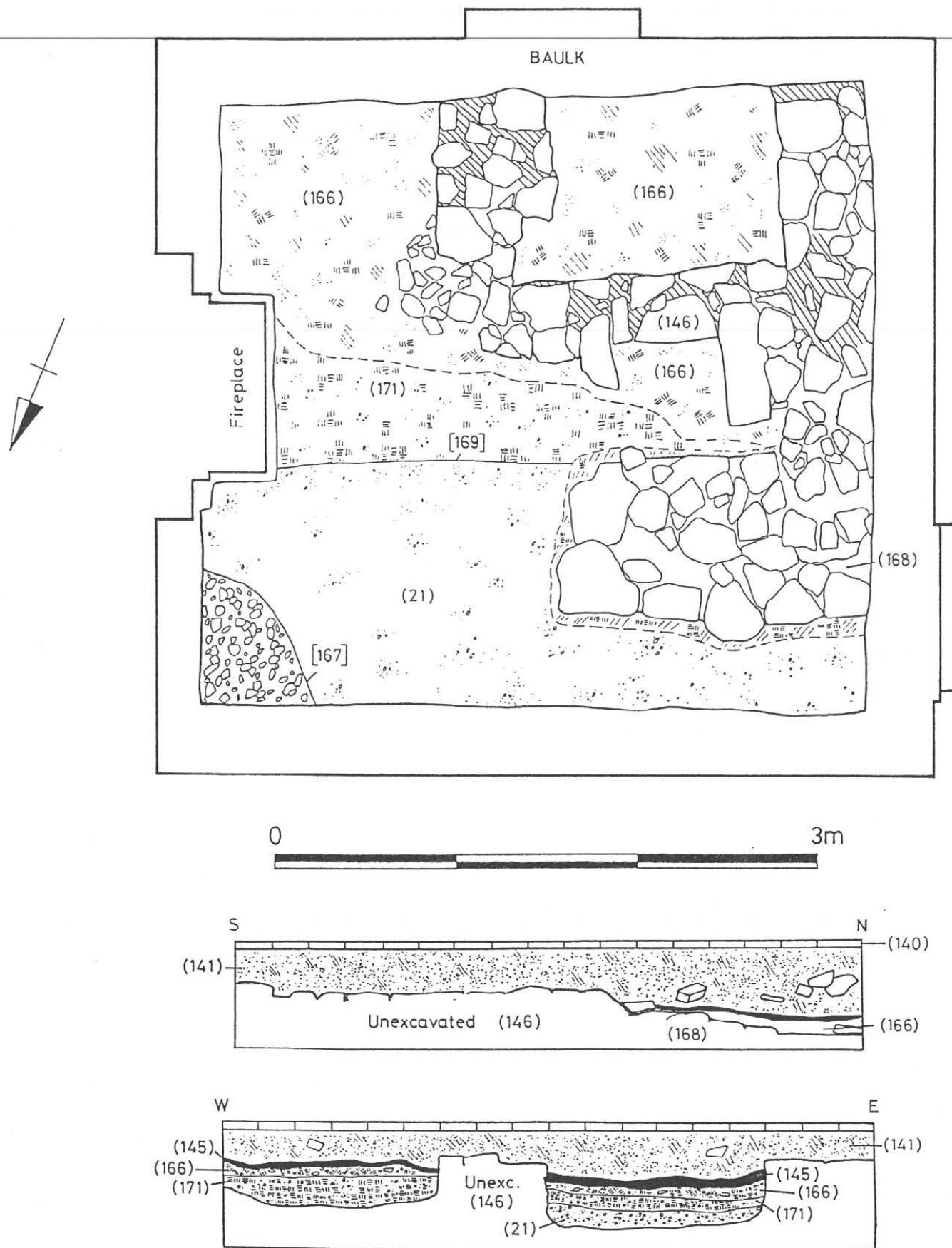


Fig.5 Trench F. 1:20 plan/sections of medieval ditch [169], fill (171), and later stone structural remains (146) and (168).

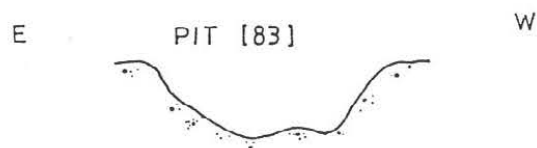
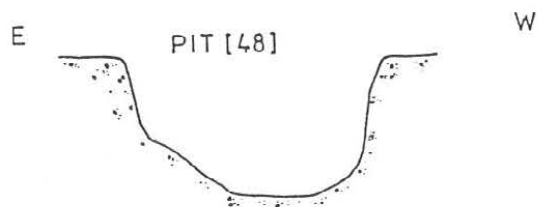
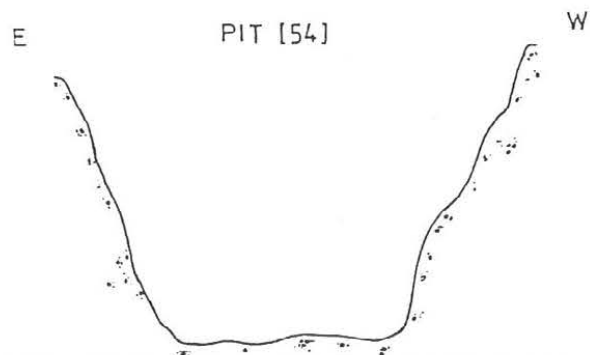


Fig.8 Trench C. 1:20 profiles of pits [54], [48] and [83].

the earlier O.A.U excavation work, at a relatively shallow depth; generally within 0.70-0.80m of the present ground surface. Cut into the gravels were a number of archaeological features as well as a considerable extent of shallow disturbances caused by animal burrowing, which made a small number of trace features difficult to interpret.

The medieval ditch feature located within the interior rooms (trenches E and F) was also found either side of the north porch, coded here as [195], continuing the same alignment (figure 6) and with a matching, uniform, gravelly-clay fill (196, figure 7) containing late thirteenth/ early fourteenth century Minety ridge-tile fragments from a previously unidentified ceramic-tile roofing, almost certainly of the barn.

To the south of the ditch and a mere 0.75m from it was encountered a length of limestone walling (163), 0.90-1.00m wide, running east - west and indicating that the medieval barn originally continued westward, under the present western bay of later date (figures 6 and 20). This new information confirms suspicions (Munby 1989) that the surviving five bay medieval barn was originally longer, with more bays to the west. The full extent of the original barn remains unclear and barns of this date varied considerably in size, the smallest of three bays and the largest surviving barn, Frocester Court (dating from about 1300), of thirteen bays (Munby, op.cit.).

North of the ditch a small number of certain and probable medieval features were noted. Several circular rubbish pits were uncovered immediately to the north of the ditch.

Pit [54] was some 1.80 m in diameter and 1.15 m deep and contained a series of fills, a brown loamy-gravel (55), a thin spread of limestone (73), a gravelly clay-loam fill (81) and a loose gravelly-loam layer (82) at its base (figures 6 and 8). Very little artefactual material was recovered from the pit and it seems likely that it contained organic material which has decayed completely. The upper fill (55) contained a small number of late thirteenth/ early fourteenth century Minety sherds and a single Bath variant sherd.

A series of smaller pits [48], [83], [85] and [91] were also noted (figures 6 and 8) cut into the gravels and all filled with identical brown gravelly-clay fills, none providing artefactual evidence for dating; although a medieval date similar to that of pit [54] is inferred. Certainly we can envisage an area immediately beyond the zone delimited by the ditch being used for the disposal of waste within pits.

Several clear postholes were noted. Immediately to the north of the medieval ditch, west of the north porch, four postholes were noted, sealed below Post-Medieval footings material and

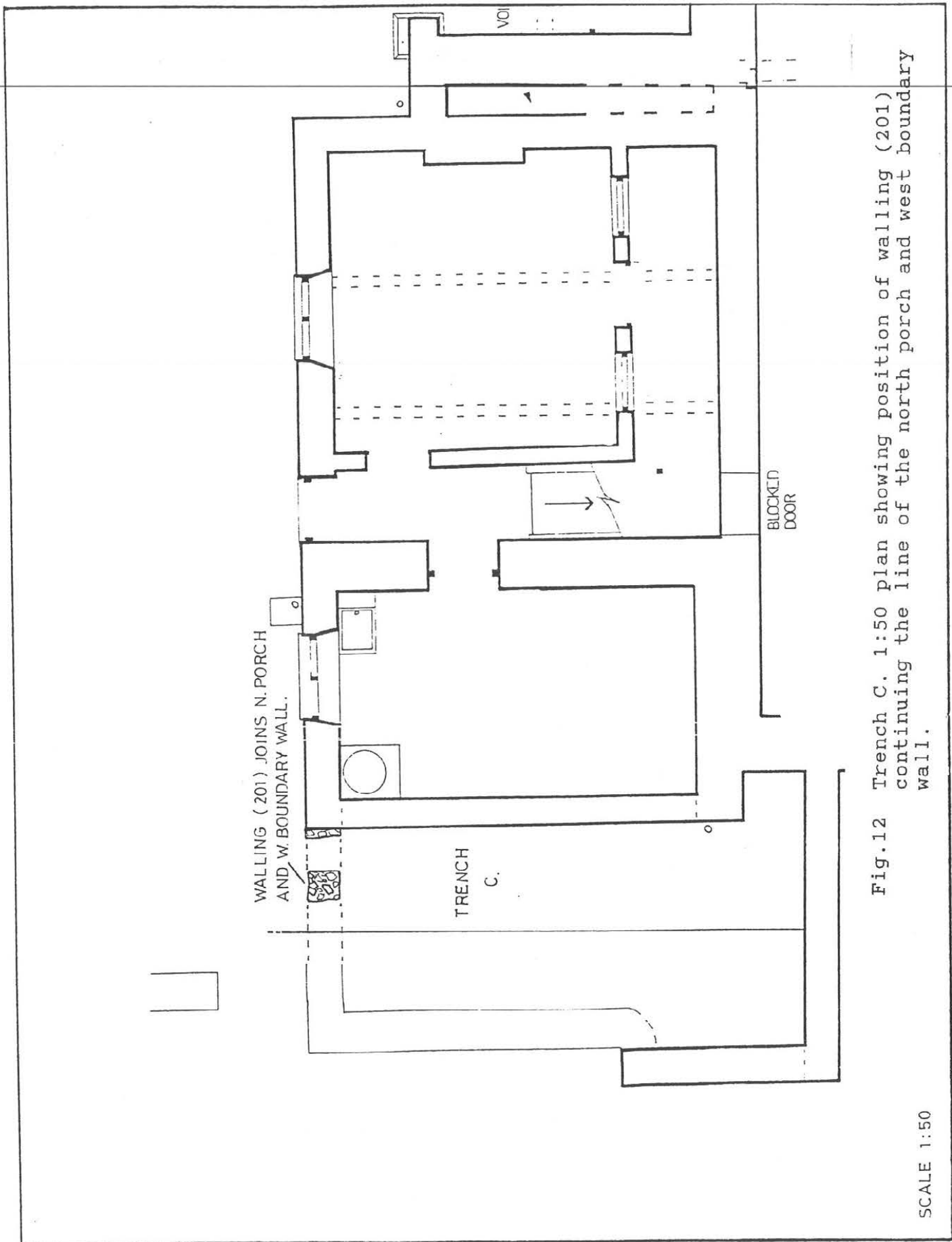


Fig.12 Trench C. 1:50 plan showing position of walling (201) continuing the line of the north porch and west boundary wall.

SCALE 1:50

surfaces (figure 6).

Posthole [207] contained a padstone base, surrounding stone packing and Minety ware sherds and might be linked to undated posthole [51] nearby, also with a padstone base. Posthole [247] was cut through by a similar loam-filled, stone-packed posthole [203], also containing late C13th/ early C14th pottery, which seems likely to have formed its replacement, perhaps supporting fencing along the line of the ditch.

Several clear postholes were also noted further north within trenches C and D namely [86], [87], [99], [172], [174], [178], [180] and [183], all unfortunately undatable, along with two slight, possible manmade features [66] and [95] (figure 9). Given the limited nature of the excavations and the absence of datable material, no discernible patterning, clear phasing or interpretation of these features could be established.

Subsequently the area around and north of the north porch underwent considerable development. The medieval north porch underwent alteration and development into its present form, the extension being built straight onto natural gravels (21) and filled medieval pits, and in its late Post-Medieval history was utilised as a maltings and as a residence until the early twentieth century when the porch was last inhabited. Evidence relating to these post medieval phases was encountered, with a series of yard/path surfaces and related postholes for timber structures or fencing, discussed later.

Following the disuse of the medieval ditch skirting the original barn, the construction of the north porch was undertaken. At the east end of the present porch (figure 6) a construction scoop/trench [193] for the buttress of the medieval porch was noted cutting into the natural gravels, and containing one fragment of Minety tile. The main eastern wall of the porch was sited in a foundation trench dug deep into the soft ditch fill, and was built right against the edge of its construction trench such that it was not clearly distinguishable from the ditch fill (196) upon excavation.

Also to the east of the porch a cess pit was uncovered (figure 10). It was associated with the still-standing outbuilding, cut through a loamy-clay deposit (46), containing eighteenth to nineteenth century ceramics and residual medieval pottery, and was covered by a loam deposit which banked up against the present churchyard wall. The cess-pit (71) was constructed from unmortared limestone within a cut [69] which cut into the medieval ditch fill (196). A single dark loam fill (70) within the soak-away was noted, containing profuse quantities of early modern ceramics, bone, metal and glass.

Excavation in the eastern side of trench C also revealed that

the present churchyard wall footings rest on a poor limestone and soil band over a second earlier churchyard wall, which runs on a slightly different alignment; indeed running back eastwards under the present wall. This earlier wall was built on a now buried loam soil (128) which only survives beneath the wall and which yielded no dating evidence. This original loam soil had been almost entirely terraced away up to the face of the wall and replaced later by a dumping of layer (46) and subsequently by loam topsoil (1) which formed a low bank running beside the wall as far north as the east - west boundary wall of the cottage garden.

Aside from the earlier wall no ancient churchyard boundaries were discovered and the present limit of the churchyard appears to be its maximum westward encroachment since its formation. No burials were encountered during the excavation and only two human fingerbones were found, within trenches B and D, to suggest previous disturbances of inhumations.

West of the north porch a number of sections of masonry walling (201), (202) and (203) running east-west were revealed, all firmly set into the present western wall of the porch (figures 10-12) and pointing to a previously unrecorded western extension to the porch. Wall (201) appeared as two surviving lengths, some 0.60 and 0.12 m long and 0.50 m wide. Wall (202) survived also as two lengths, one 0.80 m long and one 0.30 m long, both approximately 0.35 m wide. Wall (208) was some 0.85 m long and 0.20 m wide. These walls were associated with footings consisting of a spread of limestone rubble set in a weak mortar mix. Either side of wall (202), and an integral part of the rubble/mortar footings (164) were two narrow slots or channels, both approximately 0.18m wide and 0.16m deep, filled with loam deposits (199) and (200), whose function remains uncertain but which may perhaps have acted as vents drawing hot air out from the maltings, or as supports for inserted ? structural timbers.

The northernmost E-W wall (201) continues the line of the north face of the porch and appears to form part of the existing, above-ground westerly wall which runs north-south back to abutt the north porch of the adjoining barn (figure 12). Observation of the northern section of this wall shows it contains a large quoin stone amongst the coursing.

At the south extent of the footings the core of the original barn wall (163) was altered by the addition of facing courses (160) made from smaller stones, acting to continue the line of the south west corner of the porch (figure 10) and against which a series of large limestone flagstones (159) were set, creating a paved area between the adjoining later barn and the north porch wing, which would have required access to be kept clean.

It currently remains unclear whether this western extension

of the porch was inserted against the eastern wall of the adjoining, ~~Post-Medieval barn's porch~~, or whether as seems more likely, the later barn porch abutted the western wall of the extension. This operation would have served to effectively close off what would originally have been an accessible paved area between the north porch extension and the north wall of the adjoining barn.

To the north of the porch a rough limestone cobbled surface (75) was noted (figure 14), sealing earlier, undated, posthole traces, and containing a high proportion of waste tile material, probably derived from a previous repair to the barn roof. The yard surface sealed a thin loam deposit (136) containing eighteenth to nineteenth century pottery; and was subsequently cut through by two deep rubbish pits [132] and [209] (figure 15) also containing only broadly datable eighteenth to nineteenth century material. The rubbish pits are very similar to those identified by the Oxford Archaeological Unit during their excavation work in 1986, and highlights extensive Victorian disturbance north of the barn.

Immediately north of the porch a series of cobbled ? yard and later garden path surfaces were recovered (figure 13). Surface (53) survived in patches and sealed the medieval pit and posthole features described earlier. It consisted of a compact spread of irregular limestone fragments set in a gritty loam soil, containing eighteenth to nineteenth century ceramics, and was later cut through for the insertion of a number of postholes [17] [19] [22] [24] [56] and [63] also dating to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Posthole [63] contained one residual sherd of medieval Minety ware tile.

This yard surface and associated postholes was subsequently sealed by a compact layer of redeposited alluvial gravels (10), containing eighteenth to nineteenth century pottery, in turn cut by a series of postholes [11], [13], [15] and [28]. These features were all later sealed by a spread of cinders (31), forming a new path surface over the same area.

Postholes [26] and [36] were then inserted, before being overlain by the latest and narrower garden path (30) containing only broadly datable (eighteenth to nineteenth century Ashton Keynes wares) pottery and residual sixteenth to seventeenth century German stonewares; and which consisted of a gravel and limestone hardcore layer bounded by pitched limestone kerbing on either side, marking the beginning of the garden itself.

This surface (30) was cut by [34] and [38] for the installation of the existing connected drainage pipes and drain which were covered by a thick layer of dark loam soil (1), the current ground surface, in which was set a square of concrete paving immediately outside of the north porch doorway as the most

recent path. Loam topsoil (1) contained a broad range of pottery, ranging from sixteenth to seventeenth century German stoneware to eighteenth to nineteenth century Ashton Keynes wares and early modern china.

Subsequent to the dismantling/demolition of the western extension of the porch two episodes of disturbance to the rubble footings and walls occurred (figure 10). An early modern bottle/tin dump [6] and drainage pipeline [4], installed at the same time as [34] and [38] above, cut through the footing remains (164,165), and were later sealed by a series of modern loam and gravel deposits containing profuse quantities of eighteenth to nineteenth century pottery, glass and iron. These deposits were sealed by the most recent loam overburden deposits.

4.3 Southern services (trenches A and B)

4.3.1 Trench A. W.of south porch

Trench A involved the excavation of a narrow pipe trench 1.0m south and west of the barn and porch, to a specified depth. Despite the very constricted nature of the trench and the consequent problems of interpreting deposits therein, an interesting sequence of deposits were encountered (figures 16,17,20).

Cut into the natural alluvial gravels (122) two sections of a curving vertical cut [123,124] were found, filled with a brown gravelly-clay (125) containing several large irregular pieces of limestone, possibly derived from earlier walling nearby. At the commencement of excavation work, through partial collapse of its covering topsoil creating a small cavity, the existence of a stonelined well running under the western buttress of the south porch had already been noted; and the curving cuts were immediately recognised as the edge of a cone for the construction of the well.

The upper clay fill (125) of the shaft lapped over the edge of the cut, and was overlain by a thin lens of grey-green clay (121) containing a quantity of medieval roof tile and pottery. Minety ware ridge tile and cooking pot fragments were recovered, dating to the late thirteenth to early fourteenth century, along with one probable sherd of Newbury B ware, also with a wide date range between the mid twelfth and late fourteenth century. It is uncertain whether this could be an in-situ deposit or whether the material is residual, disturbed and redeposited during the construction/packing of the well.

Observation through the narrow void over the well showed the presence of several thin lengths of wood and a ? iron pipe running down into the bottom of the well. Although predating the

western buttress, thought to be of nineteenth century date, of the porch, it remains unclear when the well was constructed and how recently it was utilised. The proximity of the well to the main barn is somewhat surprising and any opportunity to investigate the extent of the well and its stratigraphic relationship to the barn and porch would be useful. The position of the well in relation to the buttress is tentatively marked on figure 16, however specific investigation would be required to clarify the precise diameter and position of the well edge and construction shaft, and the stratigraphic relationship of the well with the main barn and south porch.

Overlying the clay packing fill of the well was a thick, homogeneous band of broken stone roof tile (120) within a clean dark loam soil matrix, some 0.40 m thick. No artefactual material was found within this layer and it may represent a single episode of repair to the barn roof. This band was subsequently covered by a thin layer of loam soil and early modern rubbish (119) dating to the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries and forming the present ground level to the west of the porch.

4.3.2 Trench B. E. of south porch

A second length of narrow pipe trench (figures 18-20) was excavated east of the south porch, 1.0m from the barn and porch and running through the gate entrance from Church Avenue. This trench was also excavated to a limited depth, level with the interior of the barn. Natural alluvial gravels were not found within the trench.

At the base of the trench a series of deposits of probable medieval date were noted. Layer (239) was noted at the base of the trench but not investigated beyond initial cleaning. It consisted of a creamy-buff mortary, sandy soil and might represent a layer of medieval builder's debris. Layers (232) and (233) above both consisted of grey-brown gritty, stony clay-loam soils containing quantities of medieval Minety tile and pot fragments (late thirteenth-early fourteenth century), animal bone and several ? intrusive post-medieval pot sherds (eighteenth to nineteenth century) from the slightly disturbed upper horizon of these layers.

Cut into layers (232) and (233) and penetrating to beyond the excavated depth was a Post-Medieval wall (229) running approximately north-south across the trench. The wall, some 0.50 m wide, was unmortared and consisted of large, mainly flat limestone slabs set in a loose matrix of loamy sand.

Dismantling the wall section within the trench revealed some datable material within its core, residual Minety ware tile fragments, bone and one section of clay pipe stem giving only a

broad date for its construction during or after the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. Set against the wall was a near vertically pitched limestone yard surface (115), bedded on a thin gravel layer (231), and with an associated field drain (118). No finds were recovered from this surface. The 1884 Ordnance Survey 25" First Edition map shows a curving boundary running from the east side of the south porch back to the south wall of the barn, probably representing the position of wall (229) and associated cobbled area.

In the eastern section of the trench the clay-loam deposit (232) was overlain by a thin (undated) layer of clean mortar (236) and by a light brown sandy-loam soil (237) also undated. Inserted into the top of this layer was a small area of large pitched limestone (235) which may have provided footings for or surface outside of the adjacent farm building.

The cobbled surface (115) was cut through by [113] for the construction of a brick-built structure (126) (figure 19) of which a sloping, ramp edge and horizontal base was showing within the trench. the southern edge of the structure had been partially robbed, bricks having been prised free from their mortared matrix and reused elsewhere. The structure was later covered by a fill of dark loam soil (112) containing profuse quantities of eighteenth to twentieth century china, glass, slate and brick as well as a series of three limestone ridge capping stones likely to have come from the barn. Given the very limited area exposed the precise function of the structure is unclear but it is likely to have had an agricultural function, perhaps as a sluice or drain.

After the filling of the brick built structure a series of gravel and loam deposits (238) (234) and (111), containing residual seventeenth to twentieth century pottery were deposited to bring ground level to its present height.

5 SUMMARY OF RECORDED INFORMATION

5.1 Trench A

The tables below give the average depth and thickness of the archaeological stratigraphy for each of the trenches A - F. In some cases the stratigraphic units may be deeper than indicated due to negative features (e.g, pits) cutting downwards from that level into the earlier contexts below. Levels are also given for specific features where thought helpful.

	max/min thickness (metres)	O.D Height (metres)
Trench A		
TBM 2		
Max Depth:	-	100.410
Min Depth:	-	100.945
Modern:	0.04 - 0.06	top 101.180 - 101.470
Post-Medieval/Medieval: (layers undated)	0.40 - 0.80	top 100.695 - 100.525
Natural Gravels:	-	top 100.695 - 100.905
Top of well cut [123]:	-	100.780
Top of well cut [124]:	-	100.570
Base of well:	-	c.99.480
Water table:	-	c.99.550
Top course of well:	-	c.101.065

Trench B

TBM 2

Max Depth:	-	100.700
Min Depth:	-	100.750
Modern:	0.06 - 0.25	101.444 - 101.840
Post Medieval:	0.35 - 0.50	101.210 - 101.970
Medieval:	0.18 - 0.40	100.500 - 100.750
Natural Gravels:		Not present at exc.depth.
Top of cobbling (115):	-	101.385 - 101.470
Top of wall (229):	-	101.600

Top of structure (126):	-	101.420
Base of structure (126):	-	100.950

Trenches C and D combined
TBM 2

	max/min thickness (metres)	O.D Height (metres)
Trenches C and D		
Max Depth:	-	99.600
Min Depth:	-	100.916
Trench C		
Modern:	0.20 - 0.90	101.700-101.960
Post-Medieval:	0.25 - 0.70	101.060-101.700
Medieval:	0.15 - 1.15	99.600-101.19
Natural Gravels:	-	101.060
Trench D		
Modern:	0.25	100.750-100.916
Post-Medieval:	0.30 - 0.40	100.750- 99.600
Medieval:	-	-
Natural Gravels:	-	100.844-100.916
Top of ditch cut [196] east of porch:		
		101.190
Base of medieval ditch, fill (195), 1/2 sectioned:		
		100.200
Base of pit [48]:		
		100.200
Base of pit [54]:		
		99.600
Base of pit [83]:		
		100.490
Top of surface (53):		
		100.705 - 100.825
Top of surface (10):		
		100.907 - 100.942
Top of surface (31):		
		101.400
Top of surface (30):		
		101.560
Top of wall core (163):		
		101.012 - 101.090
Top of alteration (160):		
		101.285
Top of flagstones (159):		
		101.198
Base of cess pit (70):		
		100.620
Top of cess pit (70):		
		101.040
Top of cobbled yard surface (75):		
		101.005 - 101.240

Trench E
TBM 3

Max Depth:	-	100.595
Min Depth:	-	100.886
Modern/	0.06	101.040 - 101.200

Post-Medieval:		
Medieval:	0.36	100.360 - 100.800
Natural Gravels:	-	100.739 - 100.886
Top of ditch cut [154]:	-	100.900
Top of (130):	-	101.020
Top of modern floor (129):	-	101.200

Trench F	max/min thickness	O.D Height
TBM 3	(metres)	(metres)
Max Depth:	-	100.727
Min Depth:	-	100.999
Modern /	0.22 - 0.42	101.000
Post-Medieval:		- 101.042
? Medieval:	0.15	100.010 - 100.160
Natural Gravels:	-	top 100.790
Top of ditch cut [169]:	-	100.770
Top of cobbling (167):	-	100.855
Top of wall/hearth (146):	-	101.017
Base of wall/hearth (146):	-	100.817
Top of wall (168):	-	100.804
Base of wall (168):	-	100.702
Top of clay floor (166):	-	100.768
Top of (141):	-	101.036
Top of modern floor (140):	-	101.042

TBM 1 value:	102.045	Grid peg beside churchyard wall.
TBM 2	" : 101.425	Painted cross, yard wall, s. of barn.
TBM 3	" : 101.185	Painted cross, corridor of n. porch.
TBM 4	" : 101.425	Painted cross, beside s. porch.
TBM 5	" : 102.445	Masonry beside churchyard wall.

St. Peters church benchmark value: 102.620 m A.O.D

6 CONCLUSIONS

Despite the inevitably limited nature of the excavations a considerable yield of new archaeological information on the history and development of the site was obtained, confirming the importance of existing scheduled monument protection and identifying stratigraphy at risk from any future groundworks.

Whilst no features or artefacts were discovered datable to before the construction of the thirteenth century barn, it was confirmed that the medieval barn originally possessed further bays extending westward of the surviving medieval section. Any future opportunity to trace through limited evaluation trenching the full extent of the western bays would be helpful in understanding the original design of the building. Quantities of Minety ware ridge-tile fragments recovered in medieval and residual contexts add to our understanding of the manner in which the thirteenth century barn was roofed. The barn was also found to have been skirted along its northern side by a previously unknown drainage ditch, beyond which some traces of domestic activity was highlighted, in the form of rubbish pitting and posthole evidence, perhaps from fencing and/or timber structures.

Surprisingly no features datable to the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries were uncovered, despite the continuing late medieval focus around St. Peter's church and the possible manor house site surviving on cartographic sources until the nineteenth century. Such layers may have been wholly removed at a later stage in the occupation of the site.

Within the north porch, hearth activity was identified; perhaps relating to the maltings history of the barn along with an earlier section of robbed walling possibly relating to the medieval porch. To the north of the porch, Post-Medieval yard and path surfaces were noted, cut by nineteenth century rubbish pits and tying in with similar evidence uncovered by previous excavations in 1986. West of the north porch important evidence of a western extension was highlighted.

Although interpretation of deposits south of the barn was difficult, given the narrowness of the trenches and lack of a connecting relationship with the barn, it is nevertheless clear that important medieval deposits survive in this area; overlain by Post-Medieval yarding and a brick-built structure of uncertain function.

In conclusion, excavations successfully countered the potential loss of archaeological deposits involved in the groundworks, adding considerably to our understanding of the site's development and fully confirming the need for continuing scheduled monument protection of deposits.

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APPENDIX

FINDS REGISTER

Ceramics

Key: A.K = Ashton Keynes type.
G.Stoneware = German Stoneware.

1991/550

<u>Trench/Context</u>	<u>Fabric types present/date range.</u>
C/1	C16/17 G.Stoneware, C18/19 A.K ware and C18-20 china.
C/2	C18/19 A.K ware.
C/3	C18/19 A.K ware and drainpipe.
C/7	C18/19 A.K ware.
C/9	C18/19 china.
C/10	C18/19 A.K ware.
C/29	C18/19 A.K ware.
C/30	C16/17 G.Stoneware and C18/19 A.K ware.
C/46	Minety ware, Newbury B ware, C18/19 A.K ware and C19 china.
C/53	C18/19 A.K ware.
C/55	Minety ware and Bath variant.
C/57	? C18/19 A.K ware.
C/61	C18/19 A.K ware.
C/64	Minety ware.
C/67	C18/19 A.K ware.
D/31	C17 Staffordshire slipware, C17 G.Stoneware, C18 creamware china and C18/19 A.K ware.
D/74	Newbury B, Minety and ?Bath variant. C18/19 A.K ware, C16/17 G.Stoneware, C18/19 china.
D/75	Minety ware and C18/19 A.K ware.
D/76	Minety ware, C18/19 A.K ware and C18/19 flowerpot.
B/111	C18/19 A.K ware, C17 German Stoneware and C18/19 china.
B/112	C18 - 20 china.
A/119	C18/19 A.K ware and C18/19 china.
A/121	Minety ware and ?Newbury B ware.
E/131	Minety ware.
D/135	C18/19 A.K ware.
D/136	C18/19 A.K ware.
D/139	Newbury B ware, C18/19 A.K ware.
F/141	C18/19 A.K ware and china.
F/142	C18/19 A.K ware and china.
F/143	C18/19 A.K ware and china.
D/149	C18/19 A.K ware and china.
D/150	C18/19 A.K ware and china.

1991/550

Finds Register : Ceramics continued.

Trench/Context	Fabric types present/date range
C/162	C18/19 A.K ware.
C/164	Minety ware and C18/19 A.K ware.
C/165	C18/19 A.K ware.
F/166	C18/19 A.K ware and china.
F/167	C18/19 A.K ware and china.
C/194	Minety ware.
C/196	Minety ware and C18/19 A.K ware.
C/198	Minety ware and C18/19 A.K ware.
C/200	C18/19 A.K ware.
C/204	Minety ware.
C/206	Minety ware.
D/212	C18/19 A.K ware and china.
D/214	Minety ware.
D/227	C18/19 china.
D/228	Bath variant and C18/19 clay pipe.
B/229	Minety ware and C18/19 clay pipe.
B/231	Minety ware.
B/232	Minety ware.
B/233	Minety ware and C18/19 A.K ware.

1991/550

FINDS REGISTER

Recorded Finds

Trench/Context	Description
C/1/1	China rose.
C/1/2	Brass button.
C/1/3	Lead ?token frag.
C/1/4	Bronze stud.
C/1/5	Glass marble.
C/1/6	Lead ?offcut.
C/1/7	Graphite ?battery cores.
C/3/8	Clay pipe bowl, 'Derry Castle' inscription.
C/9/9	Fe padlock.
C/42/10	Lead washer.
C/46/11	Clay pipe bowl, decorated.
C/50/12	Cu spoon.
D/74/13	Glass marble.
D/74/14	1978 2p piece.
D/74/15	Clay pipe stem, decorated.
D/74/16	Cu spoon.
D/74/17	1949 halfpence.
D/74/18	Bronze stud.
D/74/19	Fe spoon.
D/74/20	Bronze lighter.
D/76/21	Bronze door knocker.
A/119/22	Flint flake.
D/143/23	Bone ? chess piece.
D/152/24	Fe key.
F/166/25	Bronze stud.
B/233/26	Fe knife.
C/136/27	Whetstone frag.
D/214/28	Whetstone frag.
B/112/29	Human phalange bone.

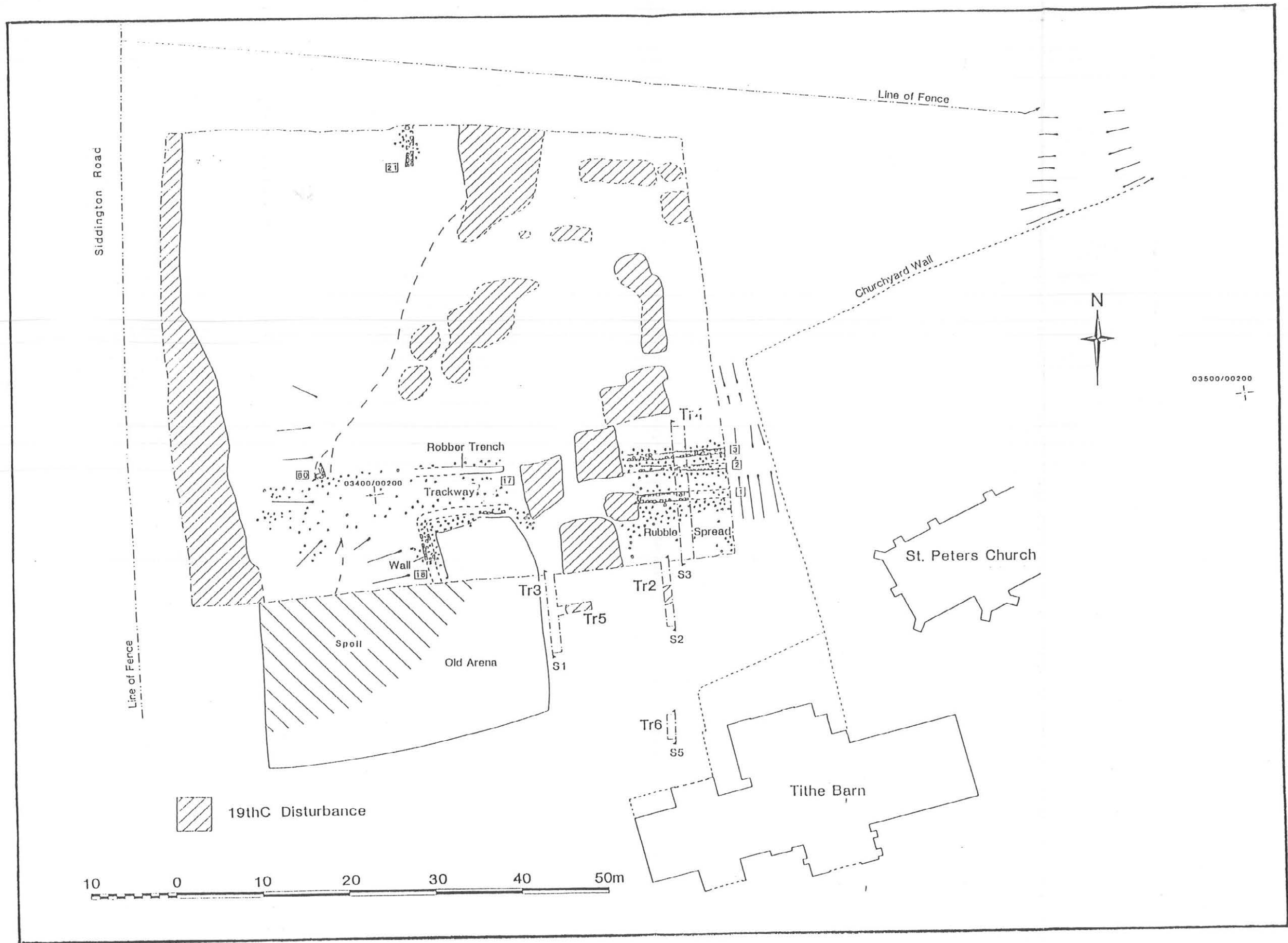


Fig.3 Plan showing location of Oxford Archaeological Unit excavation trenches, 1986, and main archaeological features recovered.

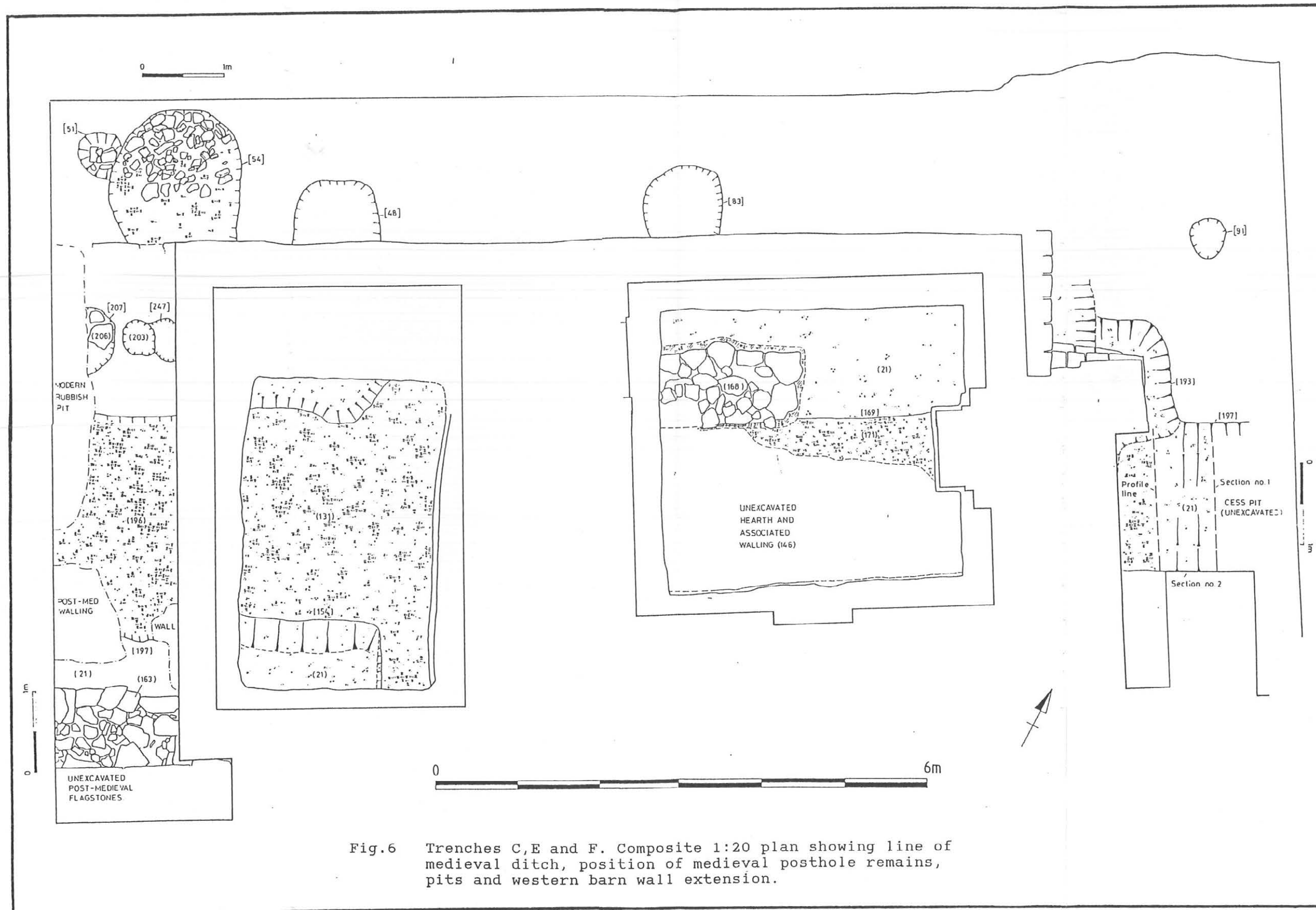


Fig.6 Trenches C,E and F. Composite 1:20 plan showing line of medieval ditch, position of medieval posthole remains, pits and western barn wall extension.

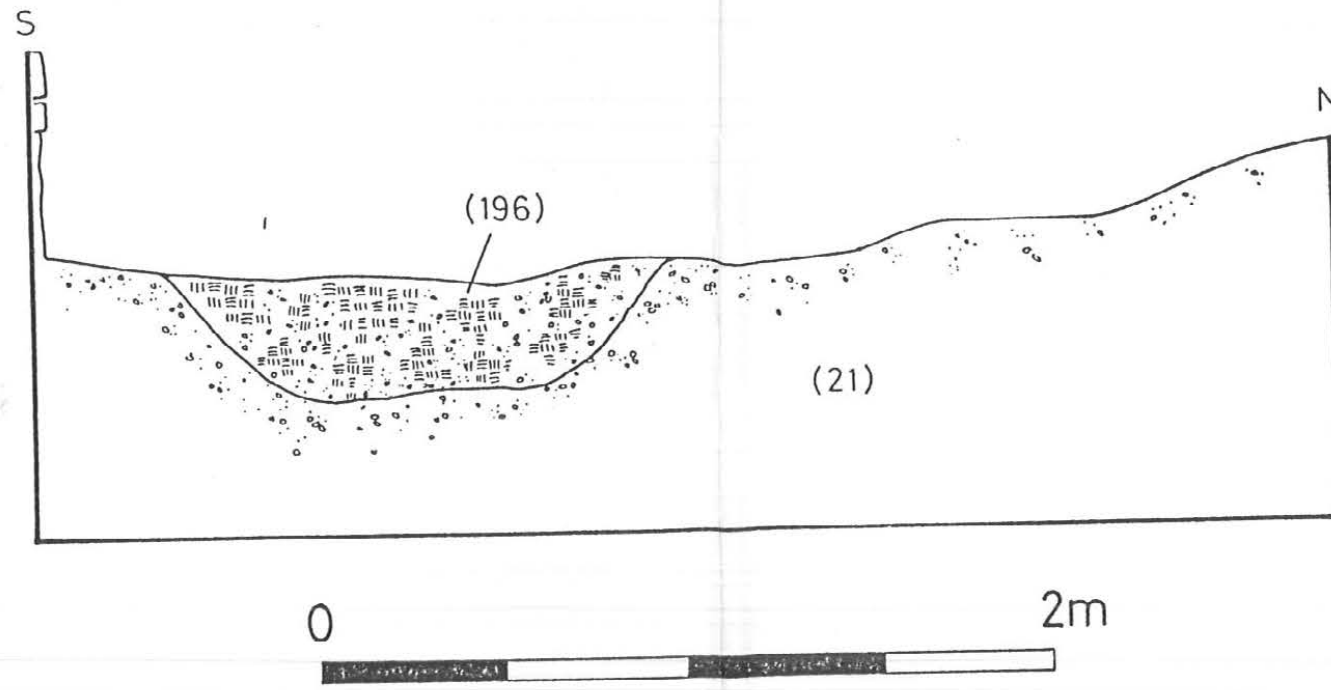


Fig.7a Profile through half-sectioned ditch.

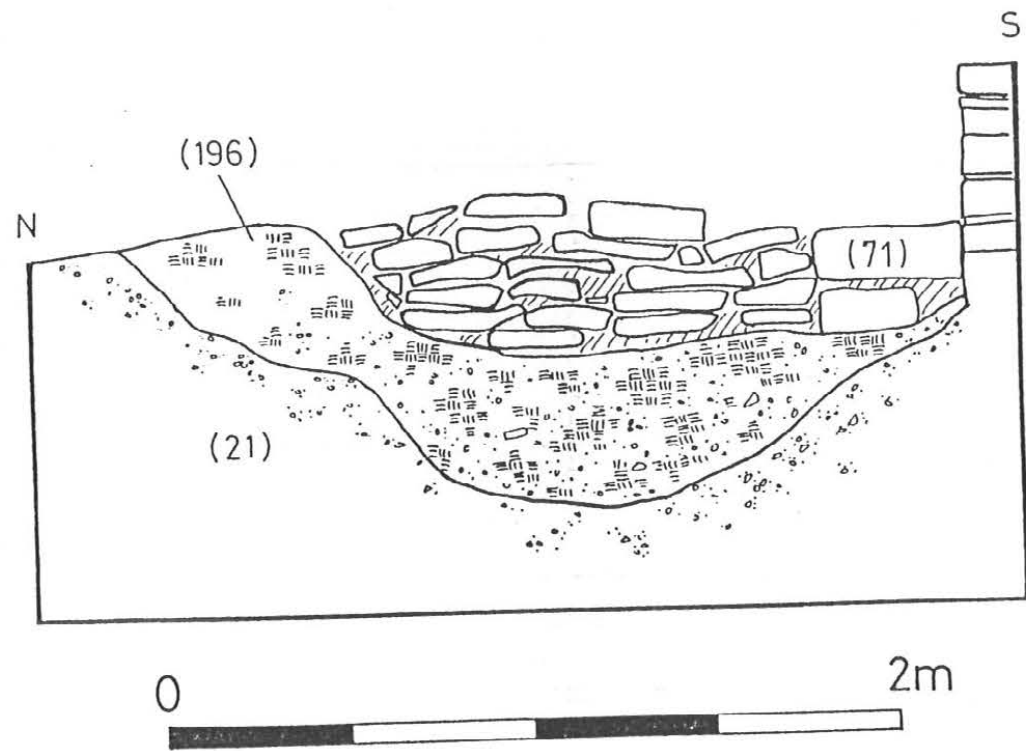


Fig.7b Section 1.

Fig.7c Section 2.

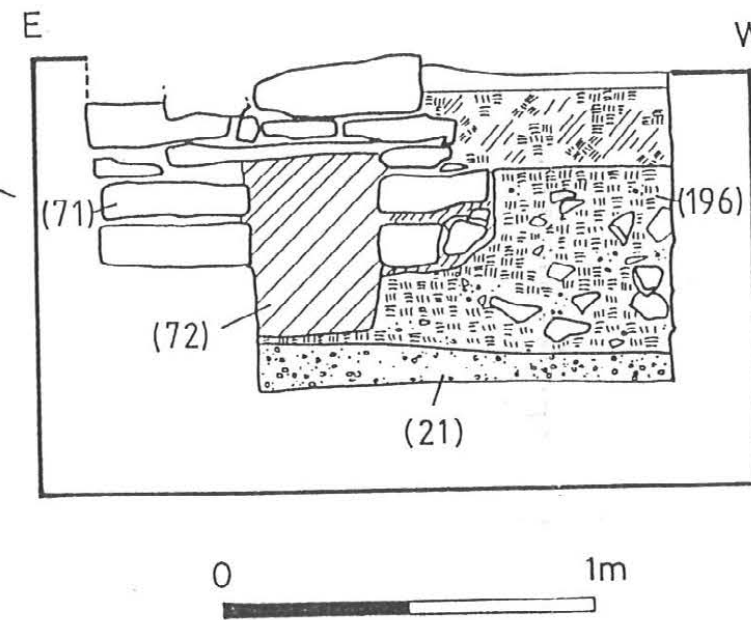


Fig.7 Trench C. 1:20 plan showing profile of half-sectioned ditch (fig.7a), sections 1 and 2 (figs.7b and 7c) showing cess pit structure within ditch fill (196).

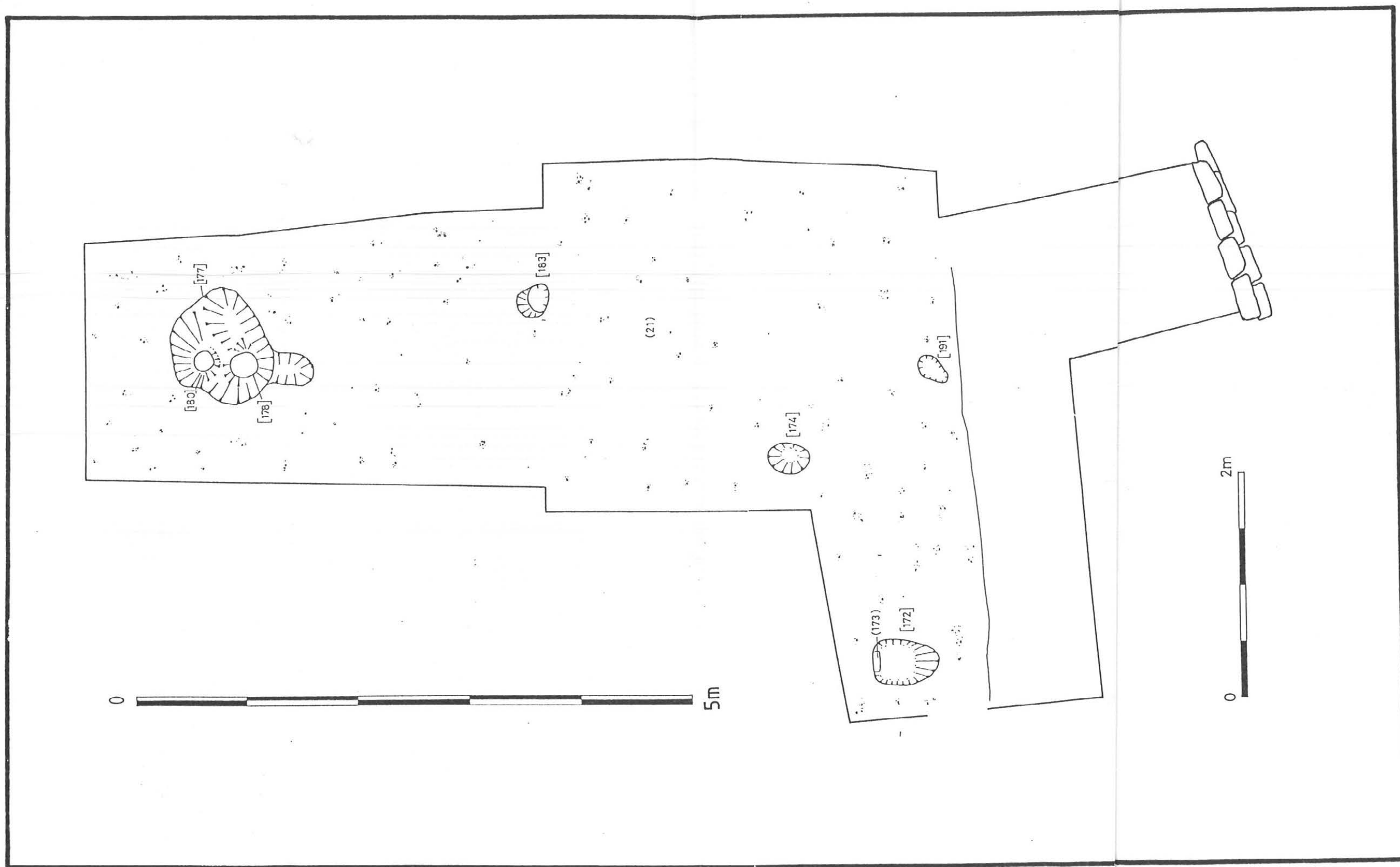


Fig.9 Trench D. 1:20 plan showing position of undated postholes beneath cobbled surface (75).

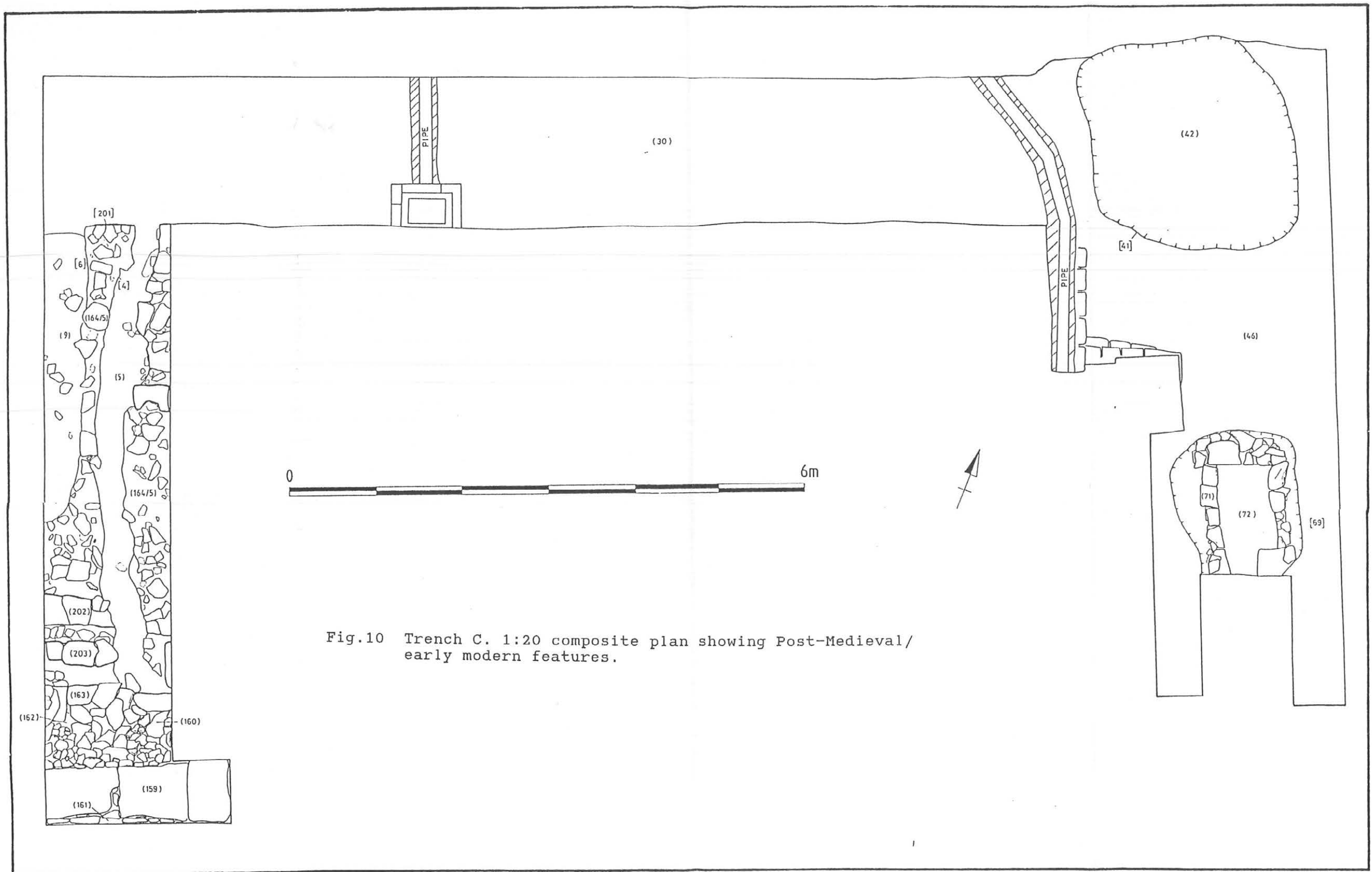


Fig.10 Trench C. 1:20 composite plan showing Post-Medieval/early modern features.

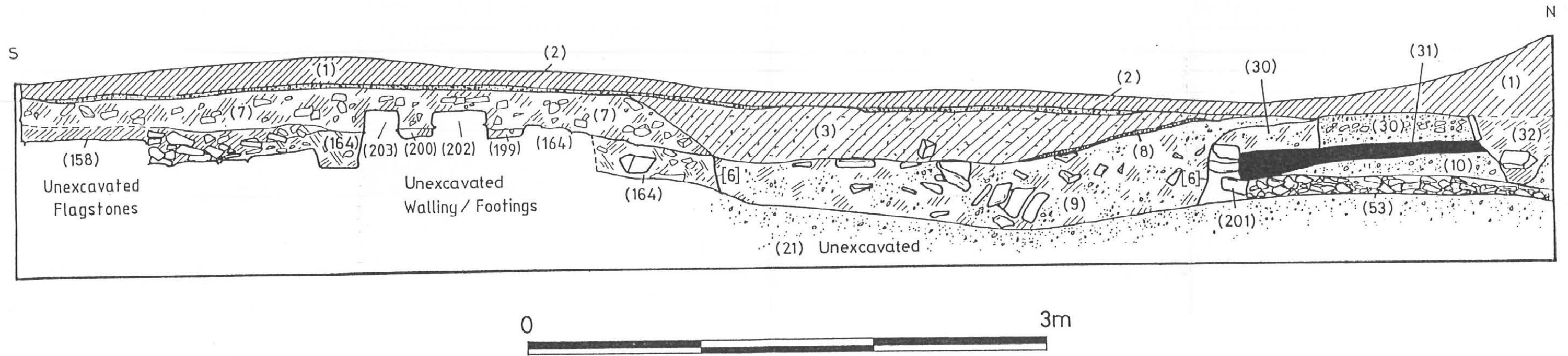


Fig.11 Trench C. 1:20 section showing Post-Medieval/early modern features.

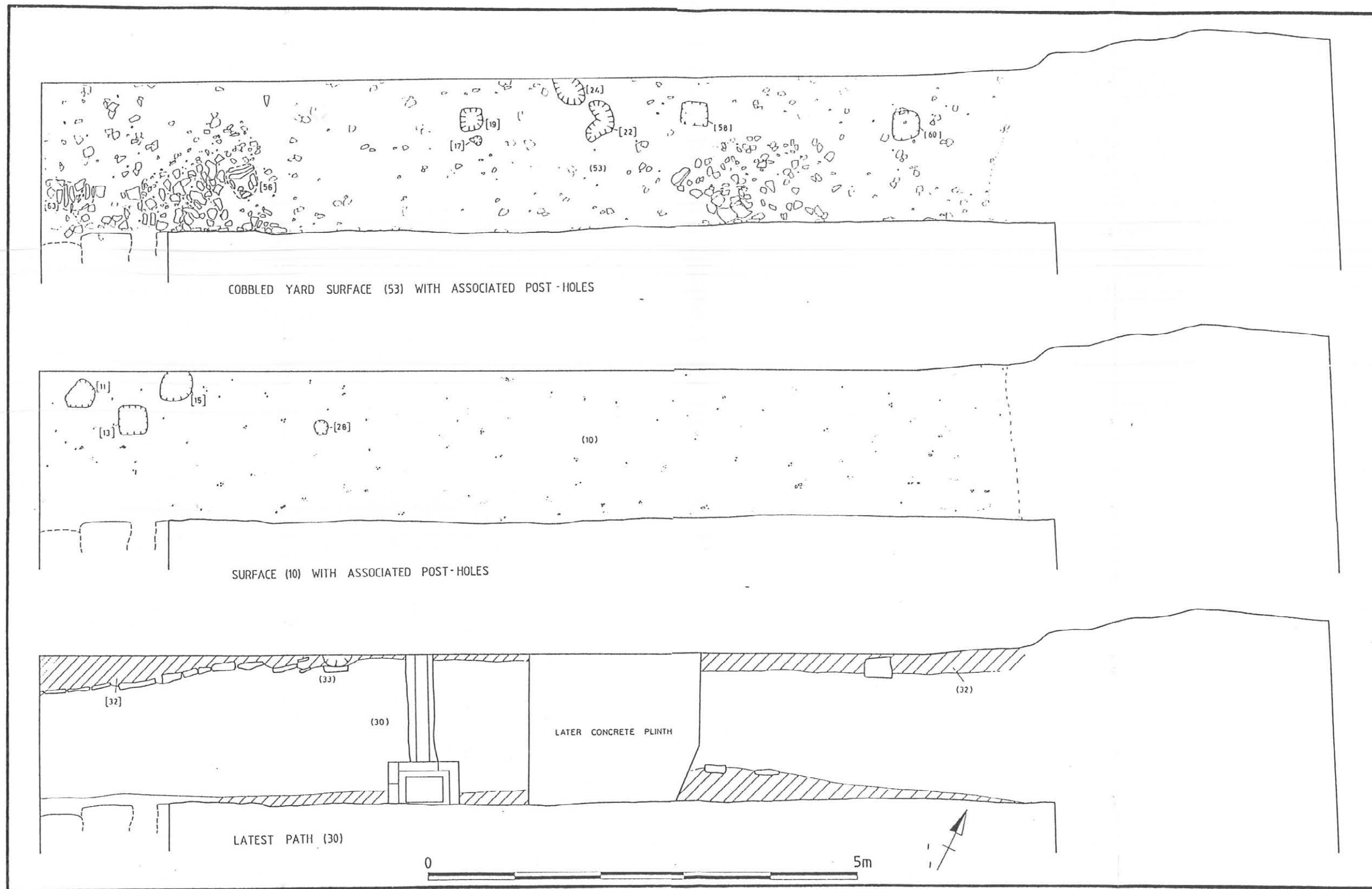


Fig.13 Trench C. 1:20 plans showing sequence of Post-Medieval/early modern yard/path surfaces and associated postholes.

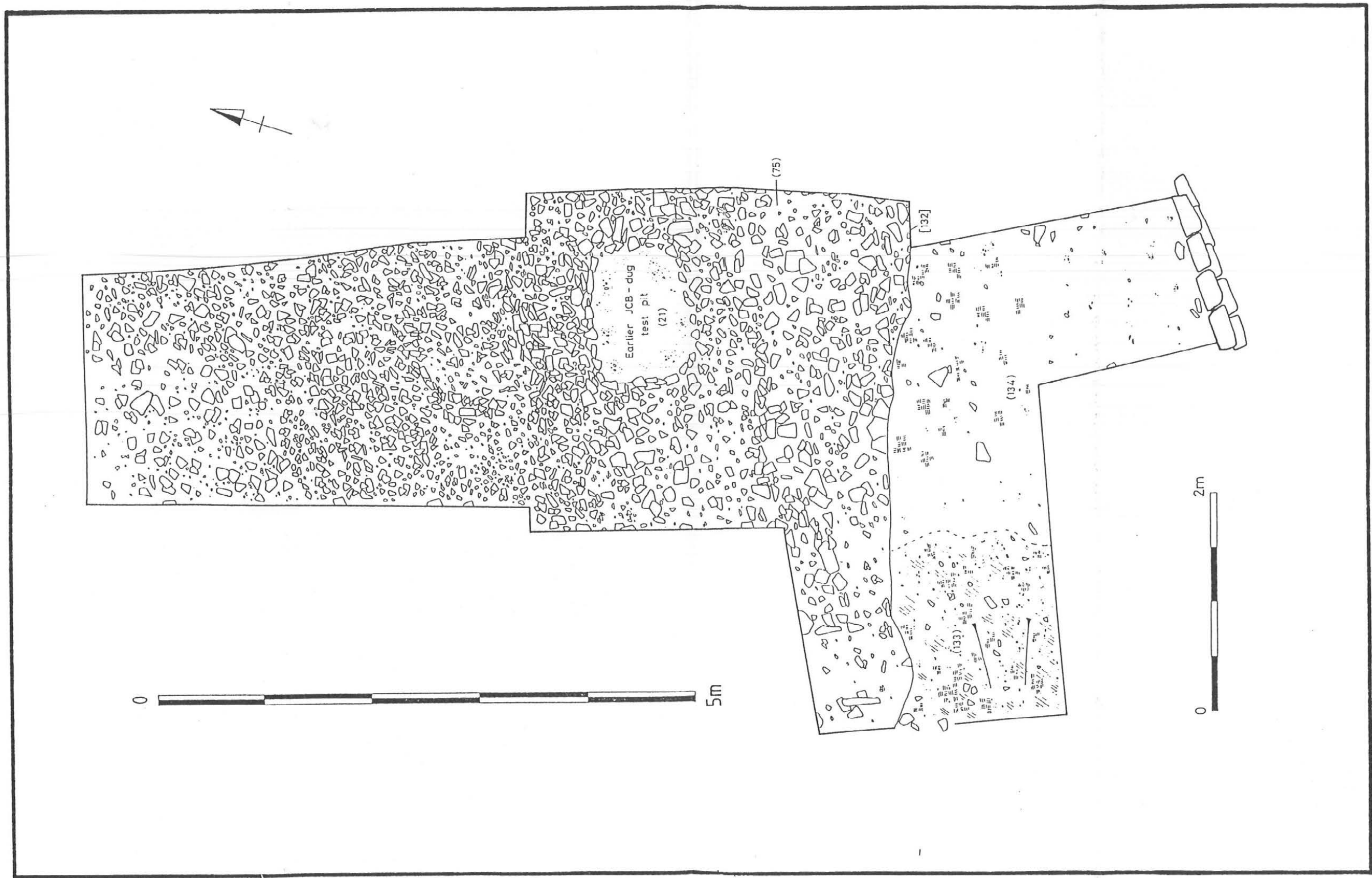


Fig.14 Trench D. 1:20 plan showing Post-Medieval cobbled yard surface (75).

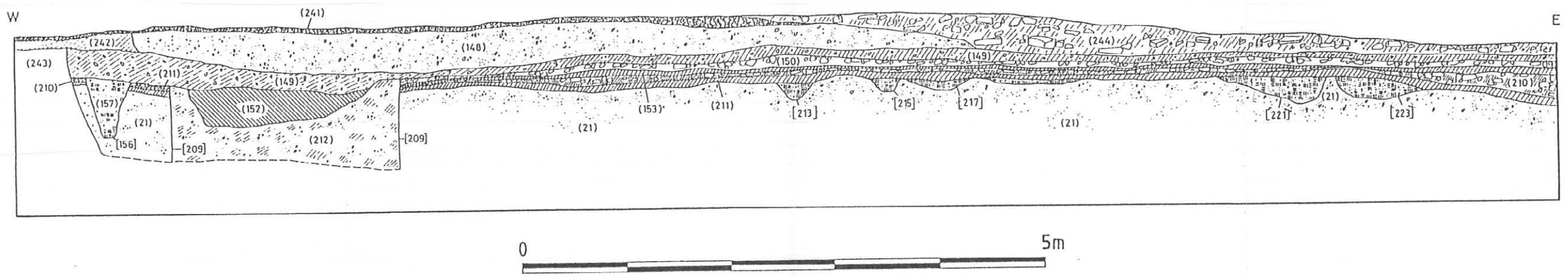


Fig.15 Trench D. 1:20 section showing late pitting [209].

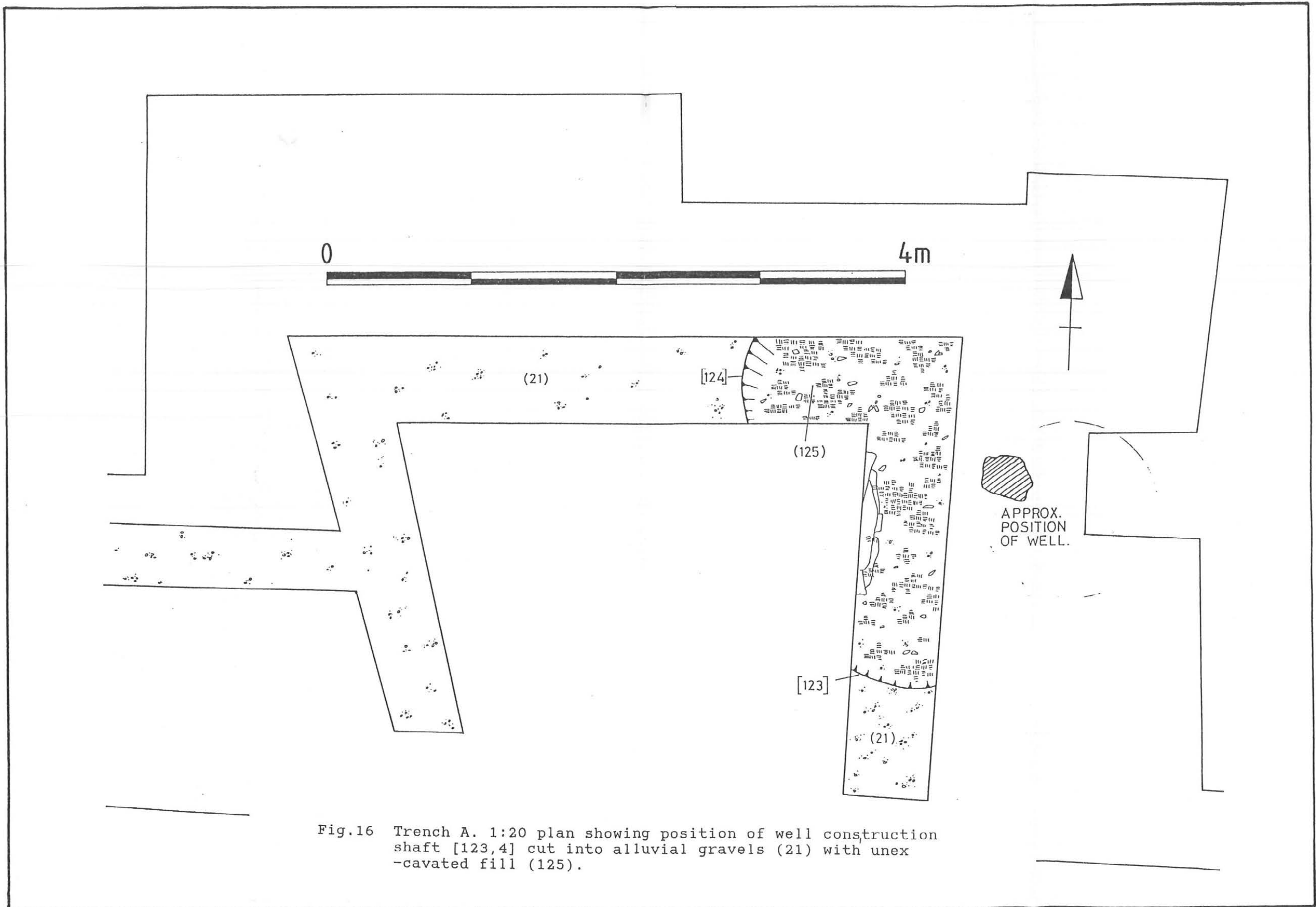


Fig.16 Trench A. 1:20 plan showing position of well construction shaft [123,4] cut into alluvial gravels (21) with unexcavated fill (125).

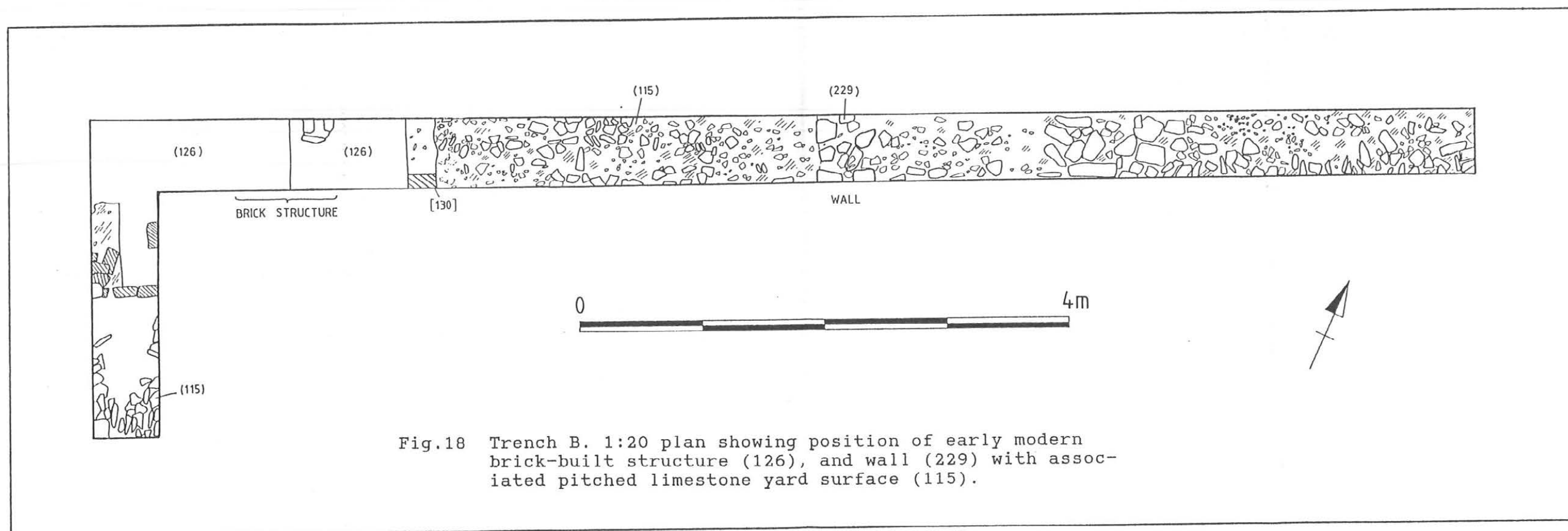


Fig.18 Trench B. 1:20 plan showing position of early modern brick-built structure (126), and wall (229) with associated pitched limestone yard surface (115).

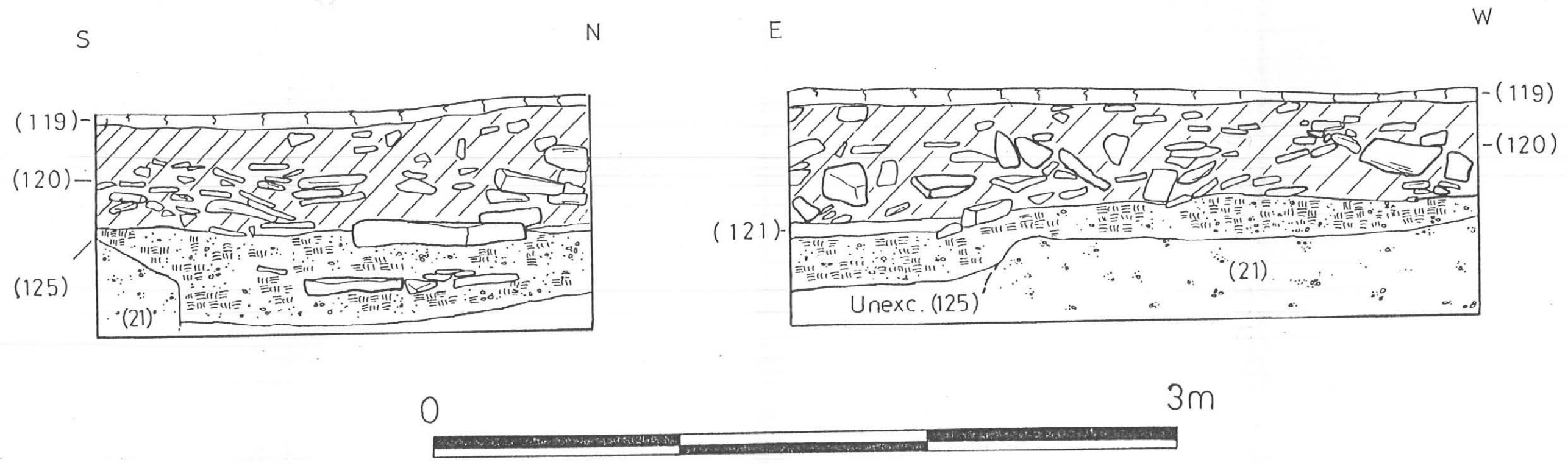


Fig.17 Trench A. 1:20 section showing thick loam/tile fragment build-up over well construction-shaft fill [125].

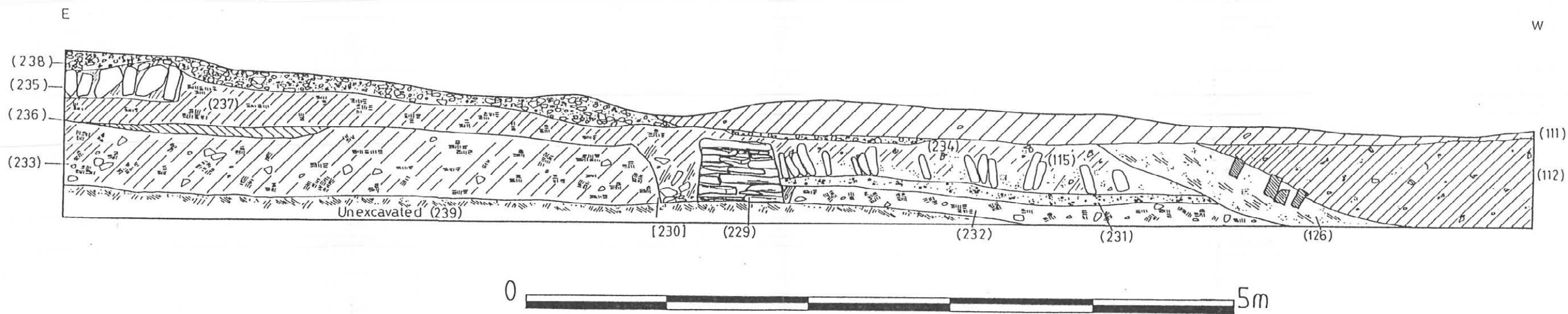


Fig.19 Trench B. 1:20 section showing structure (126), wall (229), cobbled surface (115) and associated features.