

6 Argyle Street, Dornoch

Building Recording and Archaeological Evaluation

Report



Site Number	AN4
OS Grid Reference	NH 8003 8965
Author	Pete Higgins
Date Produced	13 August 2010
Date revised	4 September 2010

Photograph is of east elevation of building

Non-technical summary

Matthew Tulley, of Jackson Bridge, Holmfirth, commissioned Archaeology North Ltd of Dornoch to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at 6 Argyle Street, Dornoch, to inform decisions on planning permission to construct a new dwelling. A standard building recording survey was also commissioned on a building which would be demolished as part of the development.

Three trenches were opened by machine, and a number of modern features plotted, including several in the vicinity of the barn which may be remnants of postholes from unknown structures. A wide linear feature containing a modern service pipe is on the alignment of a former property boundary.

The building had been used for several purposes, possibly including as a domicile, and later as a byre before its present function as a store. The original structure was much lower than the existing building, though on the same footprint, and appears to have been open to the north. Several types of stone were used in different phases. One internal face of a doorway quoin had been carved and signed 'James Munro, Mason', and two re-used stone carvings had been inserted on the same wall.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Highland Council required a programme of archaeological works as a condition of planning consent for demolition and construction works at 6 Argyle Street, Dornoch.
- 1.2. This project was designed to characterise and record the archaeological resource on the site. It comprised a desk-based assessment of the known archaeological resource, recording of a barn proposed for demolition, a field evaluation by trial trenching, and the production and dissemination of this report.
- 1.3. An online digital version of this report may be found on the OASIS website at <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/formctl.cfm?oid=archaeol21-81016>.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

- 2.1. To minimise possible delays or costs to the development by integrating archaeological works with the project.
- 2.2. To identify, so far as is possible, the nature, extent, date, state of preservation and significance of the archaeological resource of the site, and to preserve this either *in situ* or by record.
- 2.3. To propose arrangements for the safeguarding where possible, and recording where necessary of any archaeological features or finds identified.
- 2.4. To analyse and report on the findings of the investigations in line with local and national guidelines and requirements.

3. SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION, AND BACKGOUND INFORMATION

- 3.1. The site lies between numbers 6 and 7 Argyle Street, Dornoch, Sutherland at OS reference NH 8003 8965, see figures 1, 2 and 24. It lies within the Dornoch Conservation Area in an area developed as housing in the 19th century.

- 3.2. The site is bounded to the east by a stone wall fronting Argyle Street, to the north by 7 Argyle Street, and to the west by a hedge. To the south lies no. 6 Argyle Street - a building which is contemporary with the byre - together with a later building, 'The Coach House'.
- 3.3. The byre lies between the site and the property to the south, see figure 23.
- 3.4. The British Geological Survey shows the superficial geology of the site to be gravels, sands and silts comprising raised marine deposits of the Devensian Age (73,000BP to 10,000BP).
- 3.5. The development consists of demolition of the existing byre together with part of a stone boundary wall, and construction of a dwelling house with associated services.
- 3.6. Fieldwork was undertaken by Pete Higgins and Anne Johnston. Desk-based and post-excavation work was completed by Pete Higgins, Sue Higgins and Anne Johnston.

4. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

- 4.1. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)¹, Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP)², and Planning Advice Note 42 (PAN 42)³ regulate the way archaeological matters are dealt with during the planning process. There is an assumption in favour of preservation *in situ*, although preservation *by record* may be deemed sufficient by the planning authority, in this case Highland Council, advised by their in-house Archaeology Unit.
- 4.2. The Highland Council Structure Plan 2001⁴ sets out the ways Highland Council implements the above policies. Those relevant include Identifying and Regulating the Use of Archaeological Sites, (BC1) Archaeological Heritage Areas, (BC3) the Integration of Environmental and Community Interests (G5), and the Conservation and Promotion of the Highland Heritage (G6).
- 4.3. Archaeology North Ltd follows the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA). Quality of work is assured both through adherence to the standards of the IFA and through internal monitoring.

5. DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

Examination of data-bases held by the organisations listed in Appendix I revealed no record of archaeological features, artefacts or scheduled ancient monuments on, or in the immediate vicinity of, the byre under investigation. The building lies to the rear of the house known as 6 Argyle Street; neither it, nor the houses to the north and south (7 Argyle Street [Rose Cottage] and 5 Argyle Street are listed buildings. The site lies within the Dornoch Conservation Area, designated as such in 1974, but outwith the area described in the 1982 Burgh Survey as being of potential archaeological interest.⁵ The latter forms the most comprehensive survey of the development of the town although its authors concluded that 'virtually nothing is known of either the origins or the development of early medieval Dornoch. The lack of artefactual evidence and the fact that no recorded archaeological investigation has

¹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/02/03132605/0>

² <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/shep-july-2009.pdf>

³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1994/01/17081/21711>

⁴ <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/structureplan/thehighlandstructureplan.htm>

⁵ Simpson A.J., and Stevenson S., 1982, [Historic Dornoch: the archaeological implications of development](#).

been carried out in the burgh, place an unfair dependency on the surviving documentary evidence which is not in itself comprehensive⁶. Although several, unrelated, archaeological investigations have been undertaken in the last 20 years there is much still to be learned about burgh morphology. In 2007 an archaeological evaluation of an area lying within Bishopsfield, 1km to the northeast of the site, uncovered no archaeological features or artefacts⁷. Significantly, with the exception of work carried out on the architectural histories of the cathedral and associated Bishop's Palace, only one recent evaluation has centred on a standing building; that of Mitchell's Chemist on the High Street. The current investigation thus affords a rare opportunity to record a standing, vernacular building lying in the immediate hinterland of the burgh.

Documentary Background

Although the desk-based assessment revealed no site-specific indications of past land use, settlement or human activity, it serves to place the site in the wider context of the development of the Dornoch area. A shell midden uncovered at Earl's Cross Road, standing stones and the presence of hut circles in Camore woods attest to prehistoric activity spanning several millennia and it can be assumed that the area which later came to support a small medieval community once formed part of a rich hinterland for these groups of people. That there developed a strong Pictish presence on the southern banks of the Dornoch Firth is seen in the surviving symbol stones of the region and it has been suggested that, in the 6th century, the Irish missionary St Finbarr may have established a monastic community in the area of Dornoch now known as Schoolhill⁸. Whether or not a settlement of any note existed at the time of early Norse activity in the region is unclear. The Dornoch area, so close to the communication route along and across the firth proved attractive to the settlers, although artefactual evidence is scant. The presence of Norse settlement names together with a scattering of topographical terms speak of a strong and lasting influence.

Firm documentary evidence for the existence of a burgh community comes only in the early 13th century, with Bishop Gilbert Moravia's relocation of the diocesan seat of Caithness from Hallkirk to Dornoch and the start of building work on Dornoch Cathedral. The ecclesiastical settlement undoubtedly provided an obvious nucleus around which a community could develop. In addition to the Cathedral, built of local sandstone, and the Bishop's Palace Gilbert's church officers were provided with a stone house, land and an income⁹. The Bishop's lands lay to the east and south-east of the Dornoch Burn which formed the eastern boundary of the burgh. To the north of the burgh, the extant 'Earl's Cross' is said to lie on the boundary line between Gilbert's church lands and those of the 1st Earl of Sutherland. Despite the fact that the Bishop's lands were transferred to the Earl of Sutherland in 1559, the name Bishopsfield is retained to this day and it is within this area that the site lies.

The transfer of the burgh title from ecclesiastical burgh to Burgh of Barony was not reflected in either economic growth or changes in the size or geographical extent of

⁶Ibid., p.10

⁷ Highland Council's Historic Environment Record (HER) Evaluation Record no. ID [EHG 1651](#)

⁸Hook, Michael, 2005, *A History of the Royal Burgh of Dornoch*, p.3

⁹Ibid., p.10

the community: this was to come only in the 17th century when Charles I granted Dornoch the status of Royal Burgh in 1628. Although superiority of the community was now held of the crown rather than of the Earl, a caveat inserted in the charter reserved the Earl's 'hereditary property rights over....lands of Dornoch and over all buildings and other outsets within the burgh to be held....in the same manner of holding as that by which the same are now held and possessed'¹⁰. The charter of 1628 allowed the burgh to assume a monopoly of trade and no doubt granted legal sanction to economic activities already being carried but records show an isolated and impoverished community, lacking a harbour and effective means of communications, suffering from poor sanitation and lack of reliable water supply. As late as 1784, when Dornoch is first shown on a Sutherland estate plan, the burgh is seen barely to have expanded beyond a cluster of dwellings spreading out from the cathedral with Bishopsfield still delineated as lying firmly beyond the eastern boundary marked by the Dornoch Burn.

The earliest map of Dornoch per se, dating to 1811¹¹, indicates that by this date the town had begun grow along an east-west axis... This reflects a programme of improvements made as a result on an injection of money received by Lord Stafford (husband of the Countess of Sutherland) from his English estates, starting around 1803. This map also shows clearly the line of the route north which started at Schoolhill and the presence of two two-storey houses which can be identified as (listed buildings) 1 and 2 Argyle Street today¹². The line of Argyle Street itself is also marked, running to the front of the buildings. The earliest town plan, Aitken's Estate Plan of 1826¹³ is a detailed plan drawn for the Sutherland estates showing the position and ownership of every building in the town pertaining to the estate (Aitken 1828). Whilst this plan shows no building on the site undergoing investigation it does, for the first time, provide a comprehensive overview of the size and extent of the community at this date. Further cartographic evidence for the expanse of the burgh eastwards comes from 1832 and a plan drawn up in connection with the establishment of parliamentary boundaries.¹⁴ The accompanying report indicates, however, that little had changed for the better despite Stafford's reforms the author reporting that '[Dornoch] is a place of no importance having no trade or manufacture and no harbour. It has been declining for several years and does not appear to give any probability of change for the better.' Unlike Aitken's Survey, concerned only with Sutherland Estate's properties this report lists a total 116 houses in the town 1831.

By the time of the first Ordnance Survey of the area, in 1874¹⁵ Argyle Street is marked branching off from Schoolhill and extending northwards. This map also provides the first representation of three enclosed plots, see figure 10, with roofed buildings on the street frontage, at the northern end of the street and shows clearly the byre under investigation at right angles to the street frontage. The northernmost plot appears to be almost of double the width to the two plots to its south and also shows an unroofed building on the street frontage. The implication is that this wider plot was later subdivided, the four plots eventually becoming known as nos 4-7 Argyle

¹⁰Ibid., p.25

¹¹National Library of Scotland, Plan of Dornoch, 1811

¹²[MHG16735](#) and [MHG16741](#); [HB24623](#)

¹³Sutherland Estates, Plan of Dornoch, 1826.

¹⁴National Library of Scotland, 1832, [Map of Parliamentary Boundaries](#)

¹⁵Ordnance Survey 1st edition map of Sutherland ([sheet CXIII](#)) surveyed 1874, published 1879.

Street with the byre lying within the feu of no. 7, as is seen on the 1906 Ordnance Survey map¹⁶. Title to the byre was acquired by the owners of No 6 Argyle Street in the mid-20th century. Lying outside burgh legislation and within land still in the hands of the Sutherland Estates it appears that these plots functioned as crofts. No 4. Argyle Street still retains the name 'The Croft' although no.7 is now known as Rose Cottage. The owner of the latter in the early 20th century is remembered as having used the byre in connection with a small dairy business and market garden which operated prior to WWII, the dairy building lying to the rear of the house.

The street itself was named in 1891 when all thoroughfares in Dornoch were given names. Following the erection of Grange House to the immediate north-east of the site, the upper portion of the road which now ran from the square in the centre of town up to the house, became known as Grange Road; the lower portion retaining the name Argyle Street. The beginning of the 20th century saw further expansion to the north-east of the burgh with the building of the Railway Hotel in 1902 and the extension of Grange Road to accommodate the erection of substantial houses for summer visitors now flocking to enjoy Dornoch's new status as tourist destination.

The years after WW1 saw the building of two adjacent council estates and the laying out of MacDonald Road which ran to the rear of the Argyle Street properties. In 1974 Dornoch Conservation Area was designated in recognition of the area's architectural and historic interest. In essence its boundary defines the extent of the late 19th/early 20th-century burgh with the site lying just within the north-eastern perimeter.

The above summary is gleaned from printed sources and from material viewed online. An analysis of pertinent entries in the Sutherland Estate papers held in the National Library of Scotland, and of the valuation rolls for Dornoch Burgh from 1855-1930 held in the National Archives of Scotland could provide additional detail relating to the occupants of the croft houses on Argyle Street. This in turn might throw more light on the history of the byre.

6. BUILDING RECORDING

- 6.1. *Building Recording.* A standard building survey was carried out in accordance with the HCAU development guidance¹⁷. A representative selection of the photographs and drawings appear in this report, but most are on a CD accompanying this report.
- 6.2. The building is a single storey stone structure with lime mortar bonding and cement mortar repairs. The roof is modern, see figure 3.
- 6.3. Study of the building revealed several phases of construction and use, see figures 18-22. Since parts of the structure and fabric were obscured by whitewash these phases are best treated as provisional.

¹⁶Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1906

¹⁷ <http://her.highland.gov.uk/SingleResult.aspx?uid=%27THG3%27>

6.4. Where a building element could belong to more than one phase, it has been placed in the latest possible phase. The fabric is of several stone types; local quarrying has a long history, and continues today, but little work has so far been done on establishing dates of working and types of stone produced from each quarry, so provenance of the stone for this building is uncertain. The existing door and window fittings and furniture are of mixed date and may well have been re-used; for this reason they have not been included in the phasing exercise.

7. PHASING – BUILDING RECORDING

7.1. **Phase 1. Mid 19th century.** The first phase of construction is of yellow sandstone (Y in the illustrations), almost certainly quarried locally, at one of the quarries located to the east of the site. The stones are generally roughly squared, although some quoins are better shaped; no other sandstone is present, and no granite. Bonding is lime mortar; galletting is with the same stone.

The 0.55m thick walls stood some 1.9m high, with gable ends to 3.9 metres; the roof was pitched.

A window in the west elevation, and a window and door in the east elevation are probably from this period. They are all simple rectangular openings, with no splay. The external lintels of the windows are of yellow sandstone, as are the quoins.

Diagonal tooling is visible on some stones, notably on the window lintels. The internal lintels do not appear to have survived, but if local custom was followed they were probably of wood.

The building at this stage is similar to other examples locally, and is almost certainly intended as a byre, with just two small windows and a single door. Given the low height of the walls the roof space was probably not floored.

The cobbled floor may well date from this phase; it slopes very gently down from west to east and from south to north, towards the door present in this phase. No dung channel was noted, but this may have been replaced by the later concrete channel, see phase 3.

7.2. **Phase 2. Late 19th century.** In this phase the roof is raised, the walls increasing in height to 2.8m and the gable ends to 4.9m. Red, dark red and grey sand stone, and granite, are all used, together with some probably re-used yellow sandstone. The provenance of the later sandstones is uncertain. Bonding is of lime mortar.

The gable walls of this phase are c0.4m thick, leaving an offset visible internally. Another window is inserted in the east elevation, together with another door, both with at least one side splayed. The first phase window in the east elevation is partly rebuilt, with pecked grey sandstone inserted in the southern jamb, forming a splay on that side; the northern jamb is untouched.

The external lintels of the windows and doors of this phase are of thin blocks of dark red sandstone, often with diagonal tooling. Corner quoins are of mixed dark red sandstone and grey sandstone, although some re-used yellow sandstone is present.

The internal lintels are of tapered timber; it is possible the taper results from splitting rather than sawing wood, but whitewash obscures possible confirmatory marks.

A concrete floor appears to have been laid, although only small remnants survive along the bases of the walls in and in corners.

Three stones of unusual shape have been placed in this phase (figures 4 & 5). All are located at approximately the same height and distance from corners, and two (in the

north end of the east and west elevations) are opposite each other. The third stone is in a similar position in the south end of the west elevation, but its possible corresponding partner in the east elevation is largely obscured by cement mortar and harling. These stones appear notched in their upper surface, as though to accept sloping timber, and they are likely to be gable stones relocated from the gable end to the side elevations, presumably during this phase.

- 7.3. **Phase 3. Late 19th century** The concrete floor is removed, and a concrete dung channel, with pierced iron plate as drain cover, is inserted into the exposed cobbles; the upper surface of the channel is level with that of the cobbles. Two voids just above the offset in the north internal elevation may have been made to receive stout timbers, and may indicate a partial floor inserted. Short lengths of ceramic pipe are inserted at eaves height for ventilation. Vertical marks on the west internal elevation show where partitions were made, dividing the building into stalls, the walls are whitewashed. Two re-used carved stones are inserted in the north end of the east elevation, and an existing quoin of the first phase door is also carved. The carved quoin bears the signature of a James Munro, Mason. The stone appears to have been carved in situ and thus post-dates the erection of the building.
- 7.4. **Phase 4. Late 20th century** A lean-to structure is erected against the south elevation, sealed with mastic, and small pieces of wood are inserted in various locations externally, probably for plant supports. A coal store is constructed in the north-west corner. If a partial floor formed part of Phase 3, it is now removed. A painted graffiti in the south-east corner states ‘Dan wis here 1984’, made by the husband of Mrs MacPherson of 6 Argyle Street.

8. TRIAL TRENCHING.

- 8.1. **Methodology.** Three small machine-dug trenches were opened under the supervision of an archaeologist in the locations shown on figure 25. Trenches 1 & 2 measured 2m x 2m; trench 3 measured 1.7m x 9.5m. The total area excavated was thus 25sqm, representing 5.75% of the total site area of 435sq.
- 8.2. Trench 1 was positioned to investigate the frontage along Argyle Street, and possibly also pick up any activity associated with the former dairy, Rose Cottage. Trench 2 was located to investigate the footings of the byre. Trench 3 was laid out to cross two low rises in the lawn, which appeared to be possible building platforms, to investigate the former property boundary shown on the 1874 map, see figure 11, and to investigate the area to the rear of the former dairy at neighbouring Rose Cottage (7 Argyle Street).
- 8.3. The initial intention had been to open a fourth trench, measuring 2 x 2m, along the Argyle Street frontage, but this was abandoned in favour of extending Trench 3 to investigate the features in the west of that trench.
- 8.4. Contexts were numbered according to the trench in which they were recorded, thus the topsoil appears as 1 in trench 1, 201 in trench 2 and 301 in trench 3.
- 8.5. All trench sides and bottoms were cleaned by hand. All discrete features were half-sectioned, except for the features in the western end of trench 3, where only sufficient were excavated to establish their form. A sondage was cut across the

western part of the large linear feature, **304**, in trench 3. Written, drawn and photographic records were made. The spoil was scanned for finds.

- 8.6. A selective finds retention policy was adopted; only a representative sample of finds being retained from topsoil and modern fills, sufficient to establish the date and nature of the finds.
- 8.7. Finds were washed, quantified and identified; a brief analysis was made of their nature and significance.

9. FINDS AND PHASING – TRIAL TRENCHING

9.1. Finds

The finds (see Table 2) were all 19th century or later, and serve to date at least one of the cluster of features in the west end of T3. The assemblage is fairly typical of domestic land use for this period. Worthy of note are the presence of deer and of shellfish, possibly indicating a degree of procuring of food by the residents rather than simply bought-in food; and the numerous butchery marks on the animal bones from **305**.

9.2. Phasing

PHASE A The earliest phase was represented by the natural deposits. All are consistent with being raised marine deposits, see paragraph 3.4, and comprised:

- a) Brown sand with occasional cockle and winkle shells, **2**, **207**, and **302**. This layer appeared continuous over much of the site, with the exception of the western part of trench 3.
- b) Brown sand without shells, **303**, found below a) in the north part of trench 3. It seems likely that it occurred in a similar relationship in other areas.
- c) Yellow sand, without shells, **306**. This was found only in the western end of trench 3, although later informal explorations by local children revealed it below the cobbles in the byre. The trenches did not reveal its relationships with a) and b).

9.3. PHASE B This phase encompasses all evidence between the Phase A and the Modern era, Phase C, and thus corresponds with Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the building recording. It is characterised by layer **203**, a spread of trampled lime mortar surrounding the byre and, because it is assumed to be associated with the construction of that building, this phase is dated to the earlier half of the 19th century. It is possible, however, that **203** is associated with the upward extension of the byre, *Phase 2* above, and is thus mid to late 19th century.

9.4. PHASE C This phase includes all the other contexts, which for the main part appear to be associated with garden use; it is Modern in date and corresponds to *Phase 4* of the building recording. The contexts fall into four groupings, not intercutting and with few finds:

A. The large Modern service trench, **304**, with its fill, **305**.

B. The group of features in the west end of trench 3. These are **307**, **309**, **311**, **313**, **315**, and **317**. All appeared heavily truncated, and were filled with fills indistinguishable from each other.

C. All other contexts. These include **3** and **4**, a modern feature apparently dug to dispose of an unwanted ceramic toilet; the paths beside the byre, comprising **202**, a cinder path, and **205**, a brick path, at right angles to **202**; a soak away, **204**, and its fill, **206**, located at the southeast corner of the byre, and positioned below traces of a downpipe; and the topsoil, **1**, **201** and **301**, a well-mixed and fertile garden soil.

Table 1. Context descriptions and relationships

Context	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Earlier than	Later than	Phase
1	Topsoil; well mixed garden soil	>2.00	>2.00	0.27	NA	4	3
2	Natural: sand with cockle and winkle shells	>2.00	>2.00	>0.18	3	UE	1
3	Irregular cut	0.41	0.38	>0.25	4	2	3
4	Fill of 3	0.41	0.38	>0.25	1	3	3
201	Topsoil; well mixed garden soil	>2	>2	0.10	NA	206	3
202	Cinder path	1.00	1.00	0.17	204	203	3
203	Construction layer	>2.00	>2.00	0.36	202	207	2
204	Cut for soak away at corner of building	0.57	0.38	0.17	206	202	3
205	Brick path	0.86	0.50	0.16	201	203	3
206	Fill of 204	0.57	0.38	0.17	201	204	3
207	Natural: sand with cockle and winkle shells	>2.00	>2.00	>0.10	204	UE	1
301	Topsoil; well mixed garden soil	>9.00	>1.70	0.39	UE	305; 308; 310; 312; 314; 316; 318	3
302	Natural: sand with cockle and winkle shells	>3.30	>1.70	0.22	301	303	1
303	Natural; as 302 but with no shells	>1.00	>1.70	>0.30	302	UE	1
304	Very wide cut with gently sloping sides; service trench	4.60	>1.70	0.42	305	302; 306	3
305	Fill of 304 ;	4.60	>1.70	0.42	301	304	3

	contains ceramic service pipe						
306	Natural; yellow sand in south end of T3	>3.06	>1.70	>0.30	304; 307; 309; 311; 313; 315; 317	UE	1
307	Sub-circular, sloping-bottomed feature	0.62	0.36	0.26	308	306	3
308	Dark grey brown fill of 307	0.62	0.36	0.26	301	307	3
309	Sub-rectangular, flat-bottomed feature	0.35	0.23	0.22	310	306	3
310	Dark grey brown fill of 309	0.35	0.23	0.22	301	309	3
311	Sub-circular, flat-bottomed feature	0.28	0.22	0.12	313	306	3
312	Dark grey brown fill of 311	0.28	0.22	0.12	301	311	3
313	Sub-square feature	0.22	0.24	UE	314	306	3
314	Dark grey brown fill of 313	0.22	0.24	UE	301	313	3
315	Sub-square feature	0.21	0.17	UE	316	306	3
316	Dark grey brown fill of 315	0.21	0.17	UE	301	315	3
317	Irregular feature	>0.42	>0.11	UE	318	306	3
318	Dark grey brown fill of 317	>0.42	>0.11	UE	301	317	3

Table 2 Finds

Context	Material	Find name	Quantity	Comments
201	Pottery	Fragment	1	Refined earthenware; body sherd
		Fragment	1	Refined earthenware; rim sherd
		Fragments	2	Stoneware; body sherd
		Fragment	1	Stoneware – part of rim and shoulder of wide mouthed jar
	Iron	Fragments	2	Flat cast iron plate, edge turned up
	Animal bone	Fragment	1	Distal end of bird bone; chicken sized
206	Glass	Bottle	1	Small clear bottle, mould made, hexagonal. 3 sides ribbed, 3 plain.
305	Glass	Fragment	1	Brown bottle body sherd
	Shell	Fragment	1	Large whelk shell, broken. <i>Neptunea antiqua</i> , a whelk confined to northern Britain.

	Animal bone	Fragments	1	Cow radius, unfused epiphyses, sawn butchery marks on proximal end
			1	Deer tibia, unfused epiphyses, sawn butchery marks on proximal end
			1	Humerus, sheep/goat, unfused epiphysis proximal end, broken distal end; Chopping and skinning marks.
			2	Mandibles, sheep/goat, no teeth
			2	Chicken-sized bird femurs, one left, one right
			2	Chicken-sized bird metatarsals, one left, one right
			1	Chicken-sized bird sternum, broken
			2	Chicken-sized bird pelvis (lumbosacral) plus one fragment
			1	Chicken-sized bird scapula, broken proximal end
			2	Chicken-sized bird clavicle fragments
			7	Chicken-sized bird bone fragments, miscellaneous
308	Iron	Nail	1	Small flat-headed nail

10. DISCUSSION

10.1 The byre.

- 10.1.1. The byre as first built was a low building with a steeply pitched roof, two windows and a door in the east elevation and one window in the west elevation. Its contrasts with other, larger local byres, which have storage in their roof spaces, and it is possible that the upward extension of the byre in Phase 2 was intended mainly to add storage space. The extension was accomplished by removal of the roof, partial demolition of the upper part so of the wall, remodelling of the northernmost window in the east elevation, and probably the moving of gable stones from the gable ends to the east and west sides. It has been suggested (M Tulley, pers comm) that they were moved to provide a firm base for the raising of the walls, being placed between quoin at the level of the raise.
- 10.1.2. This represents a considerable amount of work, and it is not known whether tenant or landlord bore the costs both of original construction and later alteration. It may be, in light of the stated occupation of the lessee, William Munro, see below, that he undertook most of the work involved in Phase 2 himself. Although again it is not possible to establish dates for this or subsequent phases, the use of cement suggests they occurred in the late 19th century date, or later.
- 10.1.3. The building resulting from the Phase 2 alterations had two doors and three windows on the east elevation, and a further window on the west elevation. Most local byres have a single door, and fewer and smaller windows. However, an exception appears to be another small byre at Seaview Farm, Hilton of Embo, opposite a farmstead (HER MHG20863), which has a similar number of piercings, and which oral evidence states was used as a dwelling (John Leslie, pers comm). It is thus possible that the byre at 6 Argyle Street was also used a dwelling during Phase 2. The covering of the cobbles with a concrete floor but possibly no dung channel reinforces this view. The surviving dung channel appears to have been inserted later, in Phase 3, when the concrete floor was removed, stall partitions were inserted, and the building appears to revert to use as a byre.
- 10.1.4. The three carved stones in the internal east elevation comprise two inserted, re-used monumental stones and a quoin, already in situ when carved and signed 'James Munro'. A William Munro is listed in burgh records held at Historylinks Museum as leasing a building lot in Dornoch in 1885 and is recorded as still working in 1905 (Dornoch Burgh records, Leases 2004, held in Historylinks Museum). There is nothing, however, to link him definitively with the Argyle Street site. The census return for 1901, which for the first time lists the streets and house numbers of the burgh's inhabitants provides the first firm evidence that a mason lived, and presumably worked, at 7 Argyle Street. David Munro, aged 48, gives his occupation as mason. He is also listed in the census of 1891. None of David's three sons were named James but it is possible that James Munro was David's father or brother. The 1930 valuation roll for the burgh¹⁸ which records the residents of Argyle Street but does not identify street numbers or house names lists a byre as the property of a Kenneth Macgregor, from which entry it may be assumed that the Munro family were no longer resident on the street.

¹⁸Highland Council Archives CS/4/2/29

10.2. The Trial Trenching

- 10.2.1. The topsoil, identified as 1, **201** and **301**, was a thick, very well mixed and highly humic topsoil. This topsoil was effectively identical to that across the rest of the site, although the humic content was higher in Trench 1, which lay in a vegetable plot.
- 10.2.2. Trench 2 found evidence of garden paths, **202** and **205**, together with a construction layer, **203** and soakaway, **204**. The latter were presumably associated with the byre, and the presence of cement mortar dates **203** to later than *Phase 1*.
- 10.2.3. The service trench, **305**, in trench 3 seems overly large for the purpose ascribed to it, and coincides with the eastern property boundary shown on the 1874 map. Other property boundaries in the vicinity of the site are defined with stone walls and **305** is therefore interpreted as a robber trench, dug to remove a stone wall. No sign of a recut was noted, and it is possible that the service pipe was laid in the open robber trench.
- 10.2.4. The features in the western end of trench 3 are filled by fills indistinguishable from each other, suggesting a contemporaneous origin. The fills have a very slightly lower humic content than the topsoil, and all the features are truncated. No silting was noted in any of the features. This is consistent with the features being back-filled, soon after cutting, with garden topsoil. The back-filling would have occurred at a point sufficiently long ago to allow the topsoil to diverge from the fills by more intensive cultivation (increased humic content) but sufficiently recent for the divergence to be small. All these features have the same stratigraphic relationships, similar dimensions, are of similar depth, and only differ in their plans. Three – **309**, **313**, and **315** – are rectilinear in plan, have flat bases, and are probably post-holes. The other three – **307**, **311**, and **317** – are less regular in plan and have sloping bases, a shape common to planting holes for small rooted plants. Since the features are effectively filled with cultivated topsoil, lie within an area not known to be used for any purpose other than as a garden, and are explicable in terms of gardening, they are assumed to be garden features.
- 10.2.5. The only dating evidence recovered consisted of a single flat-headed nail of mid to late 20th century type from the base of **307**, providing a secure dating for that feature, and by extension of the reasoning above, for the other features.

11. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1.1. The trial trenching did not identify any backlands activity associated with the dairy at 7 Argyle Street, but did locate probable modern garden features. No trace of any activity predating the 19th century was found, and given the documentary evidence it is unlikely that the site was used for anything other than agriculture prior to the construction of the recorded building.
- 11.1.2. The building recording demonstrated at least four phases of construction and use, including possible use as a domicile. If this is correct, the building is of some significance, since no similar building has been recorded to the same degree in or around Dornoch.
- 11.1.3. It is understood that the building is to be demolished stone by stone and the material re-used in the construction of a new building fronting Argyle Street. In view of the relative importance of the building it is recommended that the demolition works be the subject of a watching brief by an archaeologist. The watching brief should aim at confirming or denying the conclusions reached in this report.

Appendix I

The Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HER). <http://her.highland.gov.uk>
The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), Canmore... www.rcahms.gov.uk
Historic Scotland. www.historic-scotland.gov.uk
Am Baile, The Highland Council's learning and resource archive. www.ambaile.org.uk
National Library of Scotland. www.nls.uk

Bibliography

Dornoch Burgh Records. History Links Museum.
Leases 2004 316.0040 parts 1 & 2

A Plan of Lonemore of Dornoch, 1783, surveyed by David Aitken for the Sutherland Estates.
History Links Museum, Dornoch
Plan of Dornoch, 1811, National Library of Scotland
Sutherland Estate Plan of Dornoch, 1826. Copy extract held in History Links Museum, Dornoch
Sketch map of Dornoch 1843. Copy extract held in History Links Museum, Dornoch
Map of Parliamentary Boundaries, 1832, National Library of Scotland.
Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6" to the mile, Sutherland, sheet CXIII surveyed 1874, published 1879
Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1906
Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 1974

- Bentick, C.D., 1926, Dornoch Cathedral and Parish
Bethune, J., 1791-99, 'Parish of Dornoch' in Old Statistical Account Vol 8
Hook, Michael, 2005, A History of the Royal Burgh of Dornoch, History Links Museum, Dornoch
Kennedy, A., 1845, 'Parish of Dornoch' in New Statistical Account Vol.15
Simpson A.J., and Stevenson S., 1982, *Historic Dornoch: the archaeological implications of development*. Glasgow University Archaeology Department

Copyright. Copyright of this report rests with Archaeology North Ltd with all rights reserved; excepting that information deposited with the HCAU may freely be copied without reference to Archaeology North Ltd for the purpose of study or development control in respect of the planning process.

ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1 The site within Dornoch
- 2 Site location
- 3 East elevation of building
- 4 Shaped stone in north end of east elevation
- 5 Shaped stone in north end of west elevation
- 6 Internal south elevation, showing raised gable and differing stonework
- 7 Northern end of east elevation, internal, showing carved quoin (see figure 7) and re-used stonework.
- 8 Carved quoin by westernmost door in north elevation, internal. Inscription reads 'James Munro, Mason'.
- 9 North elevation. The building in the right foreground is The Coach House
- 10 The site on the OS 1st edition map, surveyed 1874. Site area outlined in red
- 11 Trenches and features plotted on 1874 map to illustrate the coincidence of feature 304 in T3 with the eastern property boundary
- 12 Trench 1 excavated
- 13 Trench 2 Excavated.
- 14 Plans of trenches 1 and 2
- 15 Trench 3 Excavated
- 16 Plan of trench 3
- 17 West end of Trench 3, showing cluster of postholes

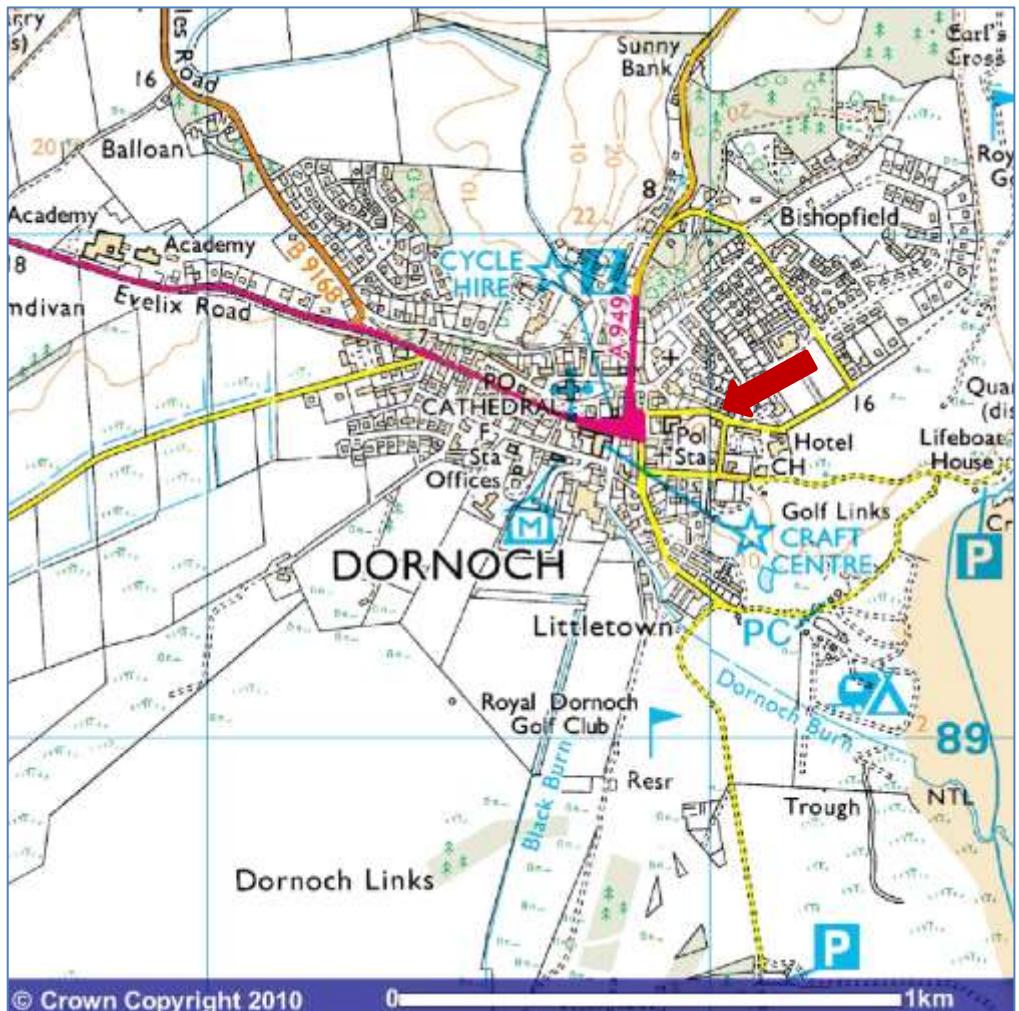


Figure 1 The site within Dornoch



Figure 2 Site location



Figure 3 East elevation of building. Scales 2 x 2m.



Figure 4 Shaped stone in north end of east elevation



Figure 5 Shaped stone in north end of west elevation



Figure 6 Internal south elevation, showing raised gable and differing stonework



Figure 7 Scales 2 x 2m



Figure 8 Carved quoin by westernmost door in north elevation, internal. Inscription reads 'James Munro, Mason'.
Scale 1m



Figure 9 North elevation. The building in the right foreground is The Coach House

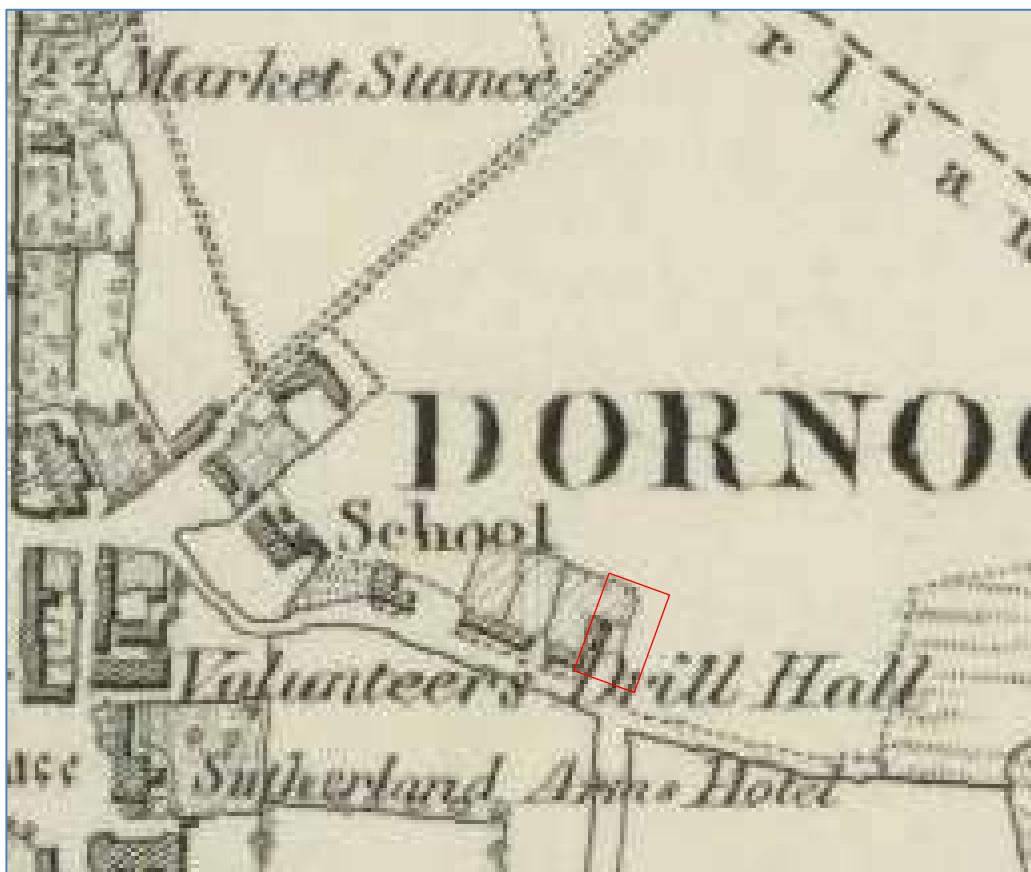


Figure 10 The site on the OS 1st edition map, surveyed 1874. Site area outlined in red.

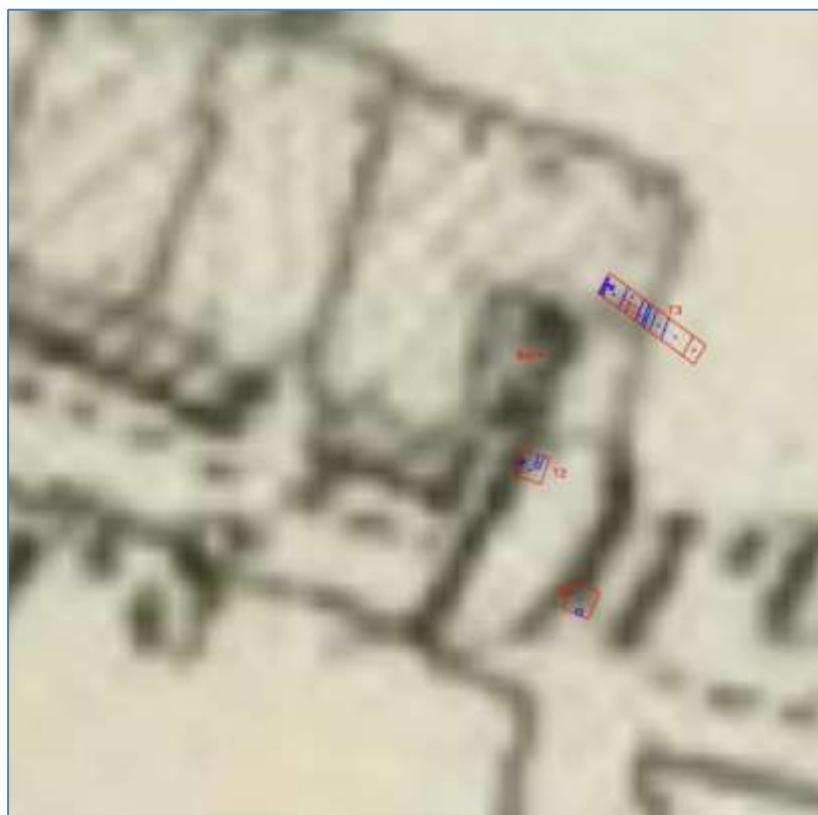




Figure 12 Trench 1 excavated. Scale 2 x 1m



Figure 13 Trench 2 Excavated. Scale 1 x 1m

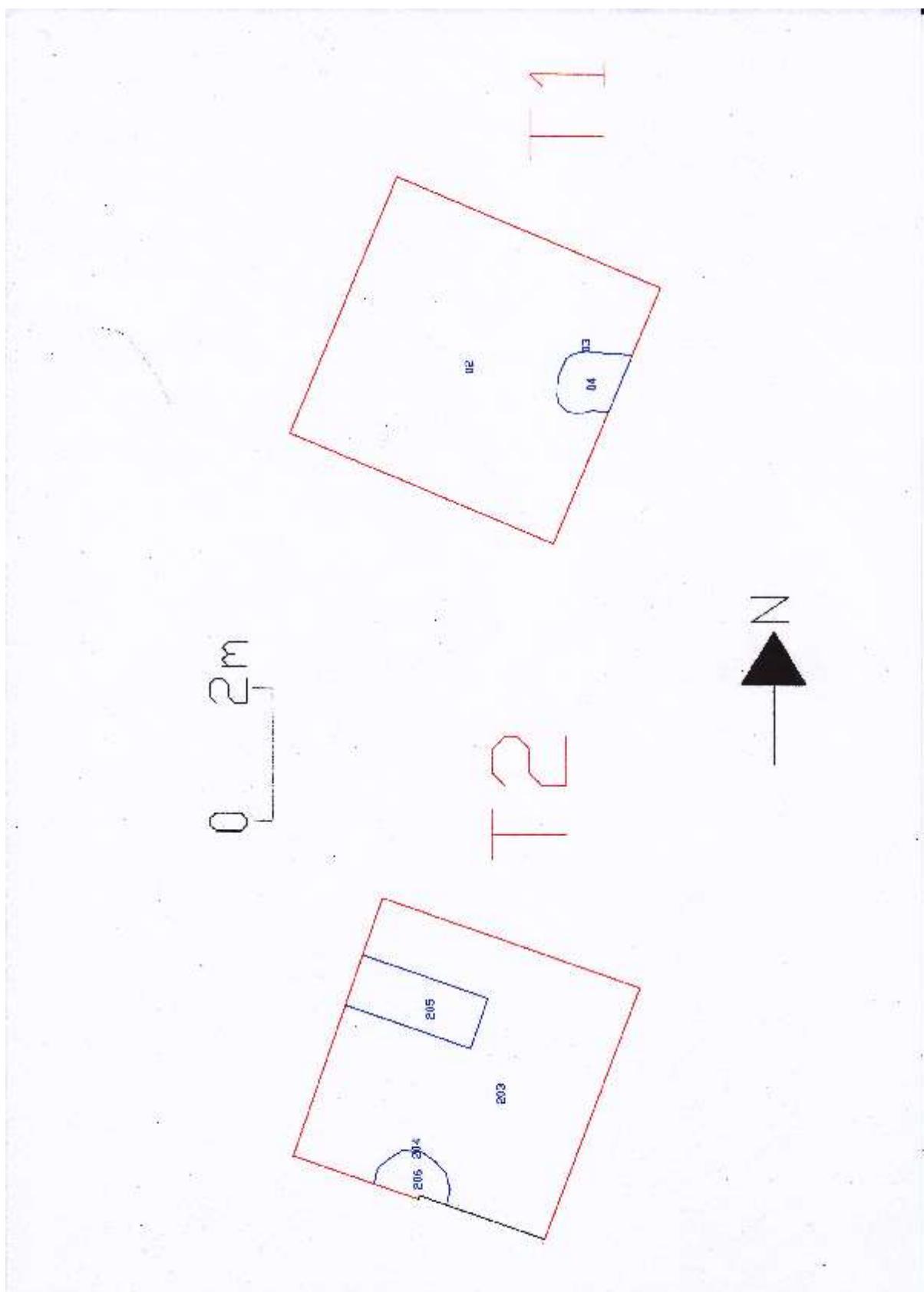


Figure 14. Plans of trenches 1 and 2

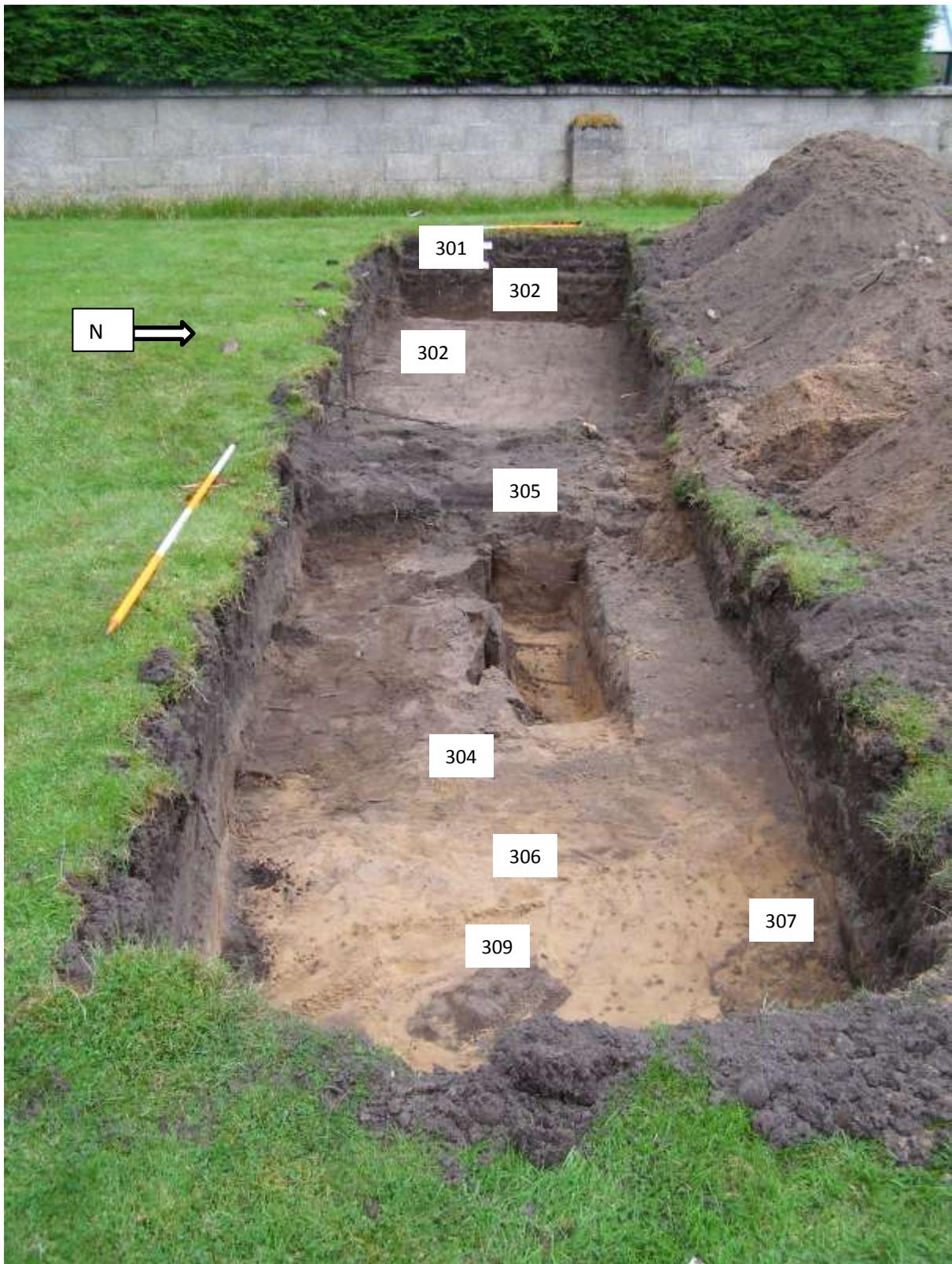


Figure 15 Trench 3 Excavated. Scale 1 x 2m

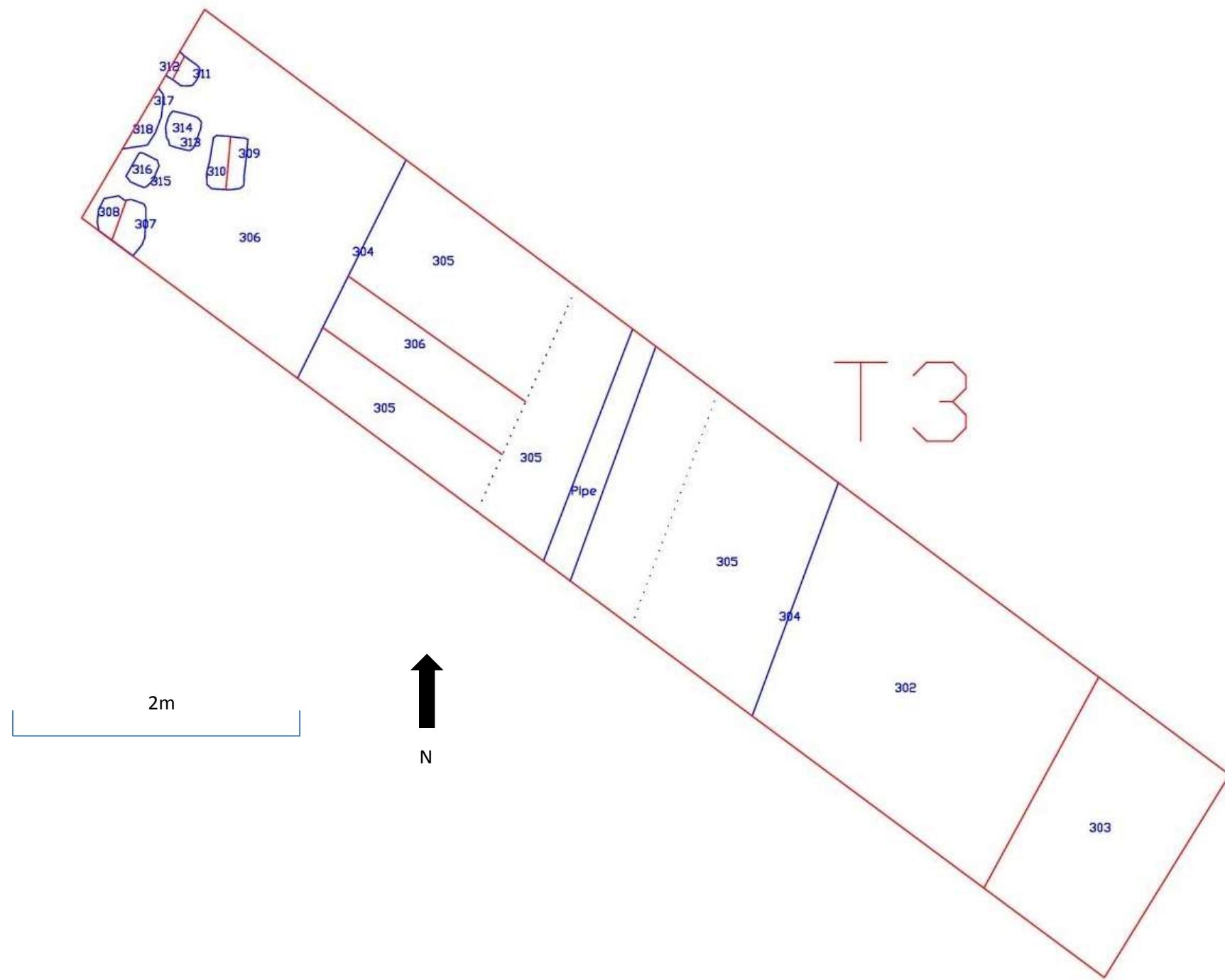


Figure 16 Plan of trench 3



Figure 17 West end of Trench 3, showing cluster of postholes Scale 1m

Key to building recording illustrations

Stone types

Y	Yellow sandstone
R	Red sandstone
D R	Dark red sandstone
Grey	Grey sandstone
G	Granite

Stone tooling

Diag	Diagonal tooling marks
Pecked	Pecking marks, as for keying harling

Datum

Dashed horizontal line is the datum line, at 17.82m aOD

Phases

Phase 1	Red
Phase 2	Green
Phase 3	Blue
Phase 4	Magenta

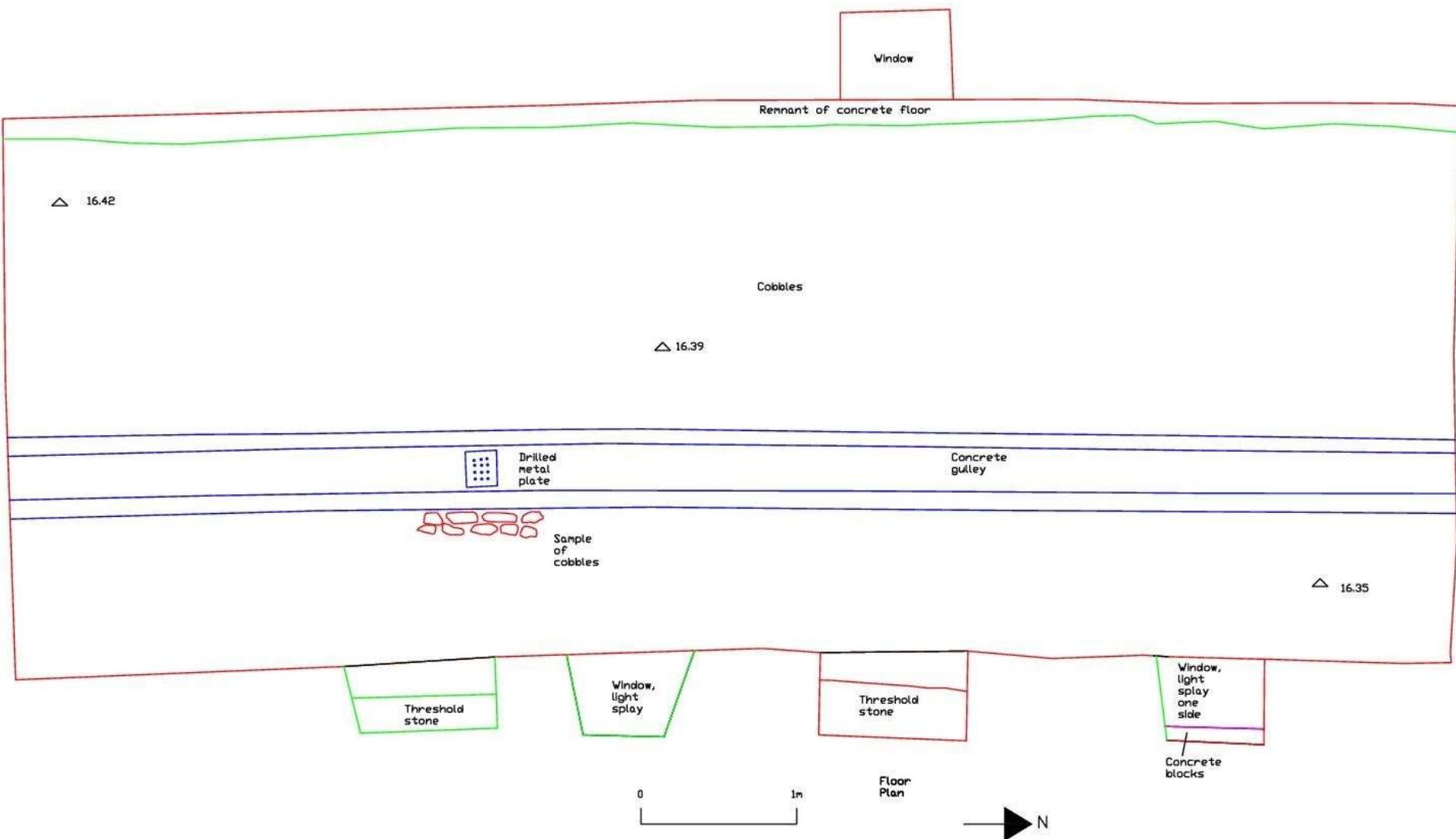


Figure 38 Floor plan

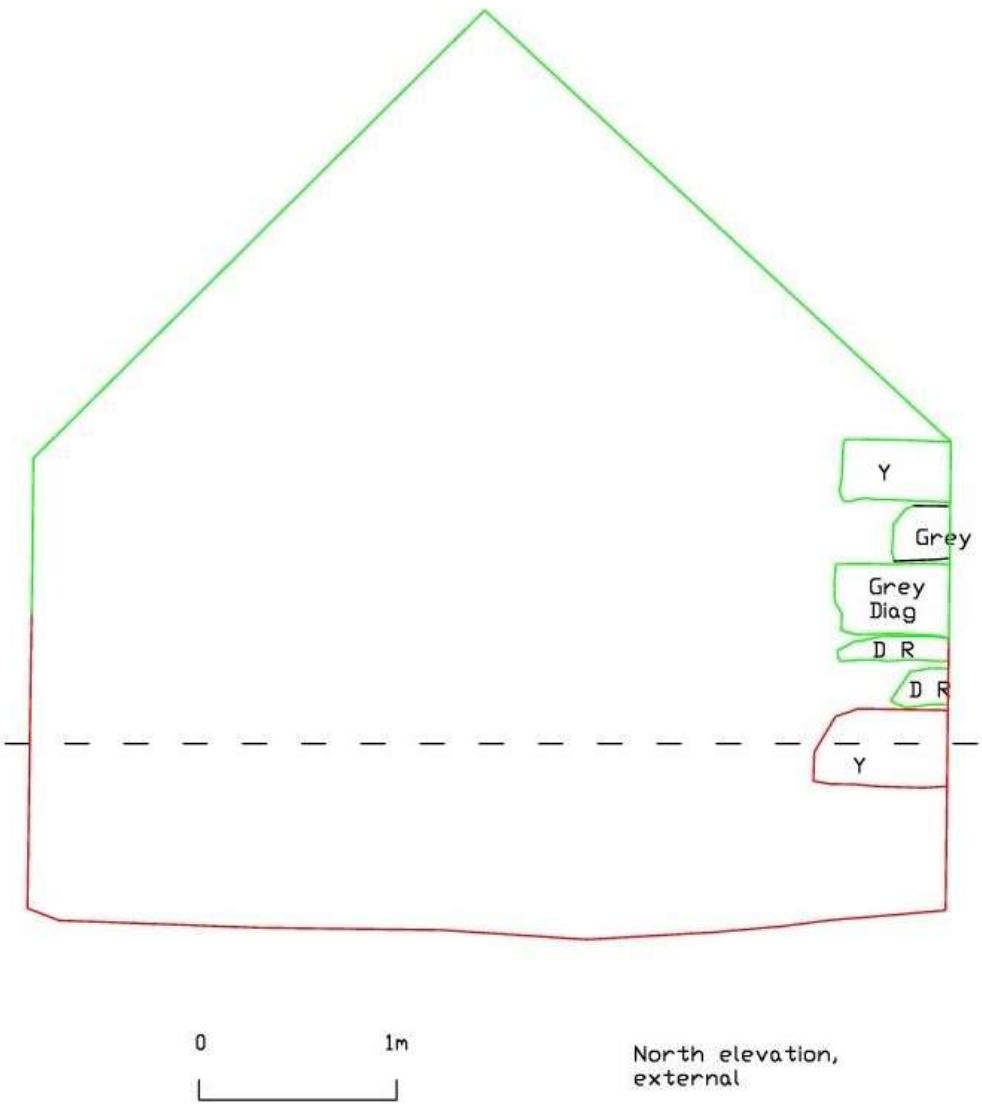
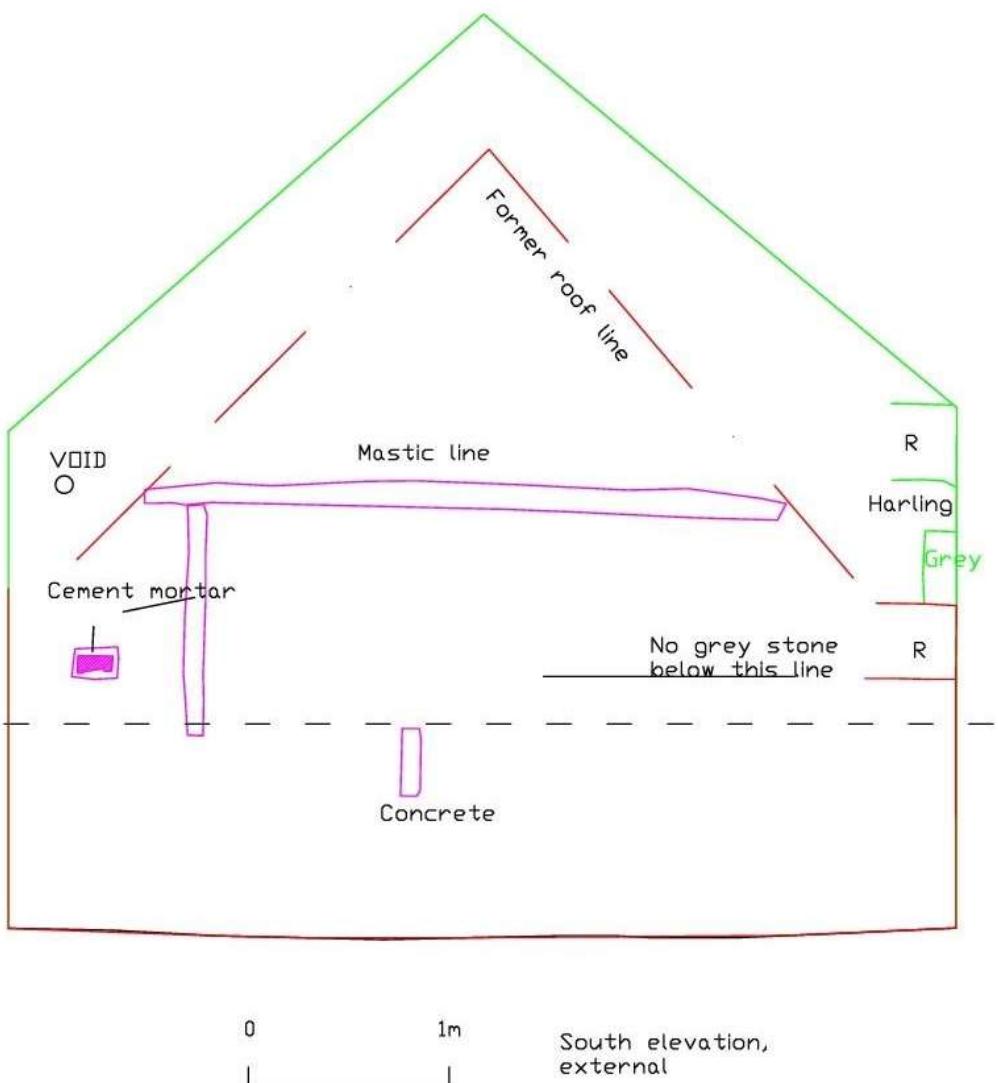


Figure 19 South and north external elevations

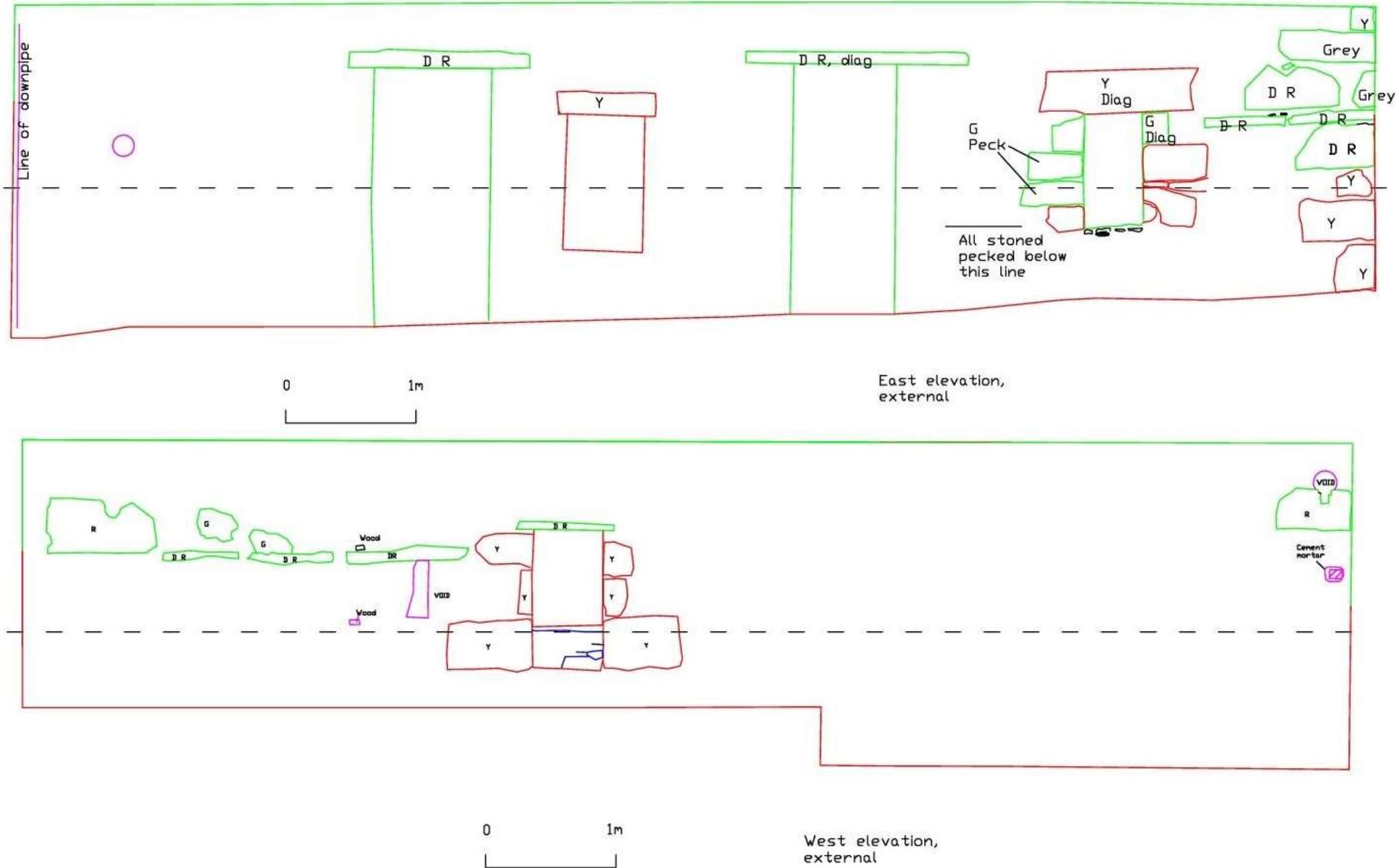


Figure 20 East and west external elevations

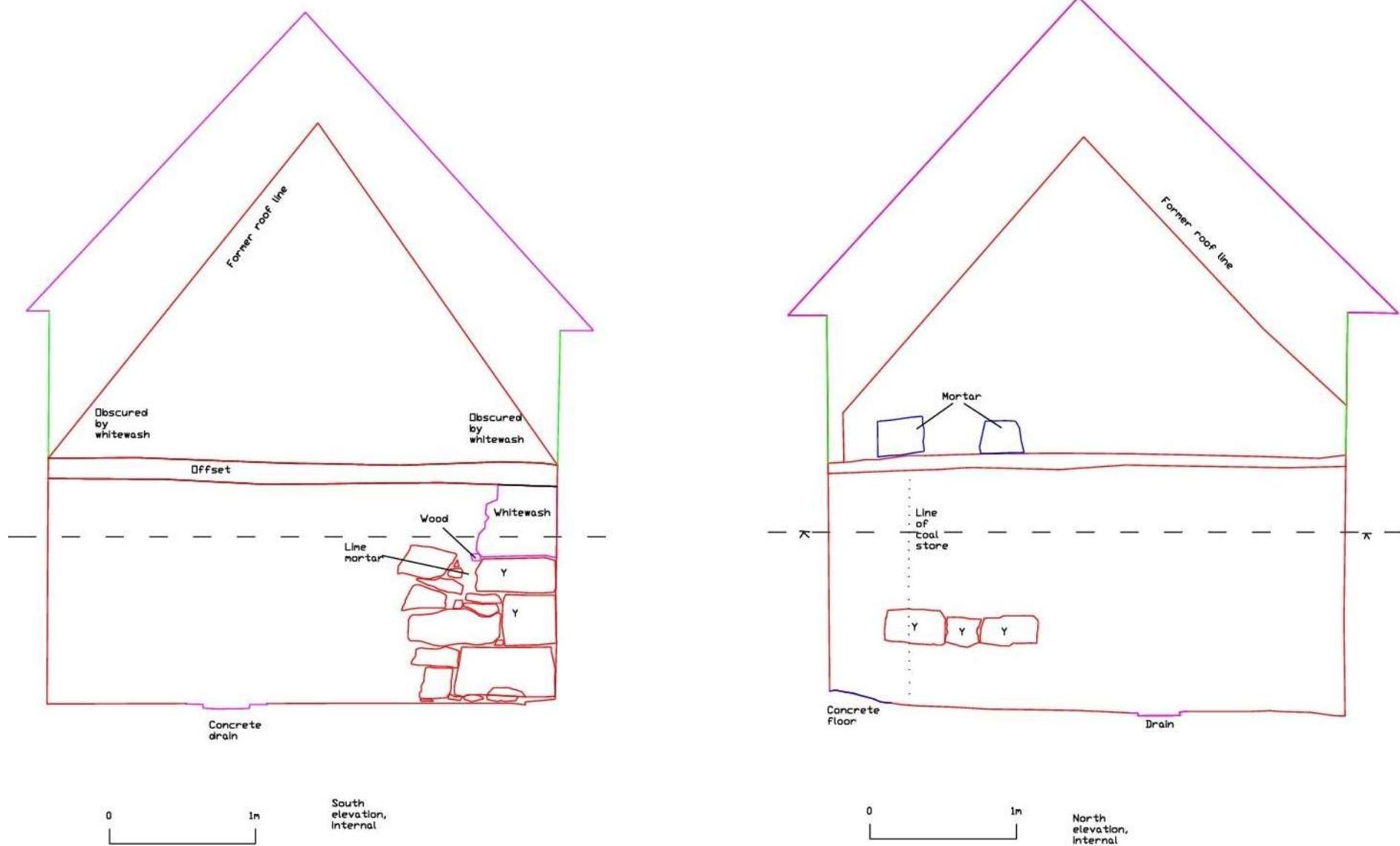


Figure 41 South and north internal elevations

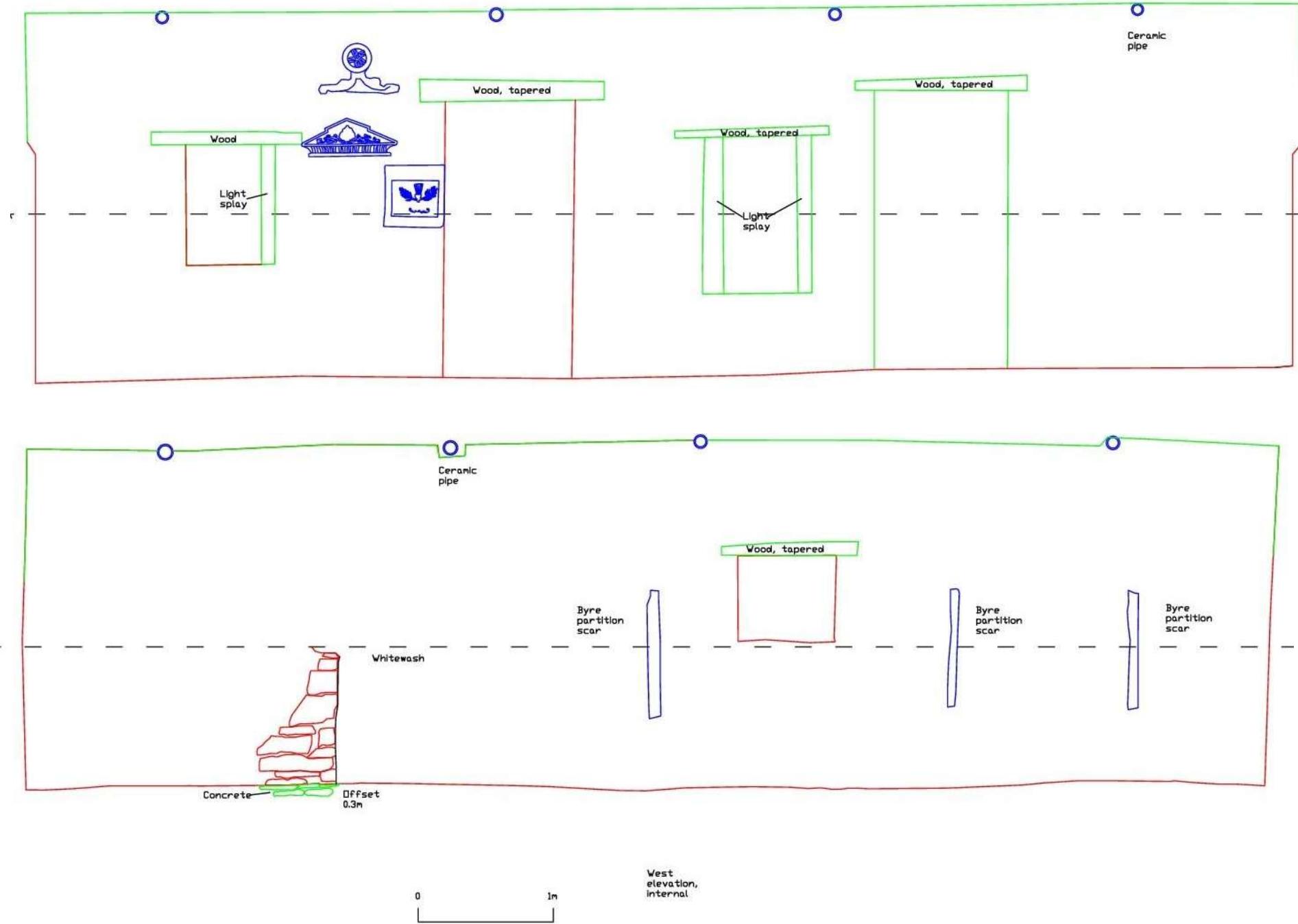


Figure 22 East and west internal elevations

Plans of positions from which photographs were taken

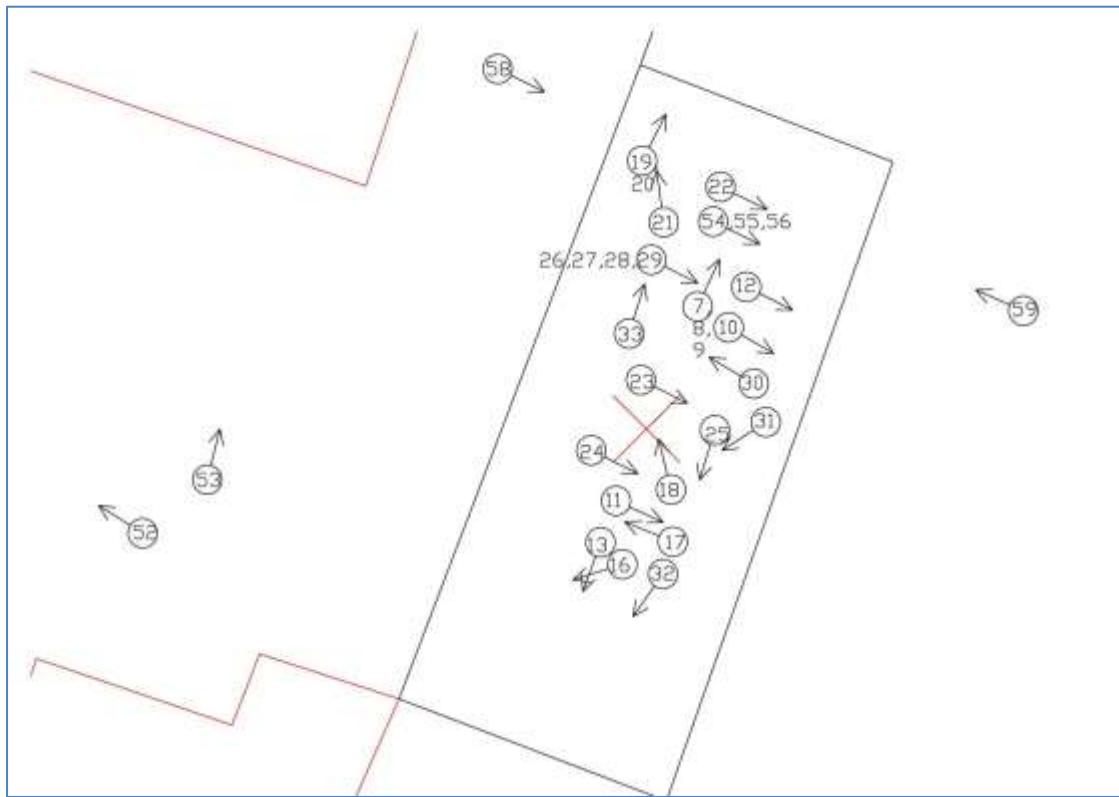


Figure 23 Photograph positions in and around building

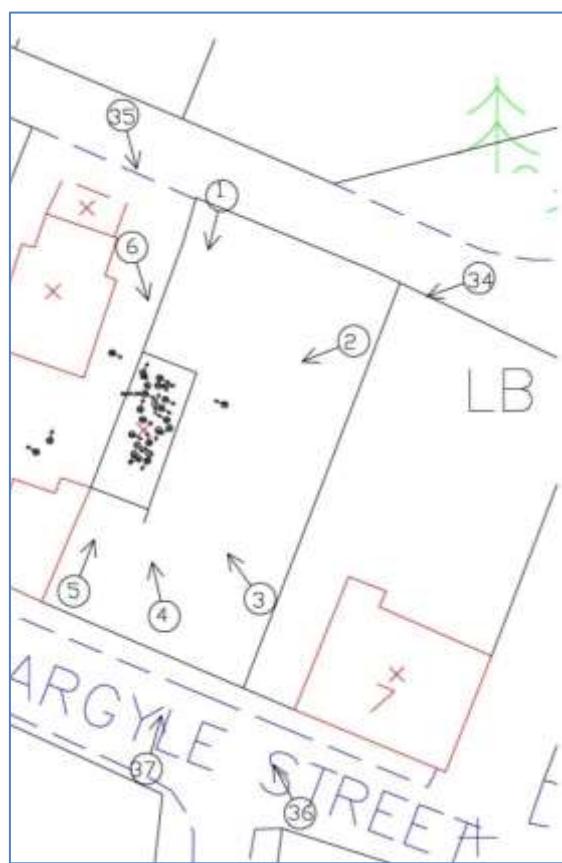


Figure 24 Photograph positions for location shots



Figure 25 Site plan