



Victoria Iron Foundry, Possilpark, Glasgow

Archaeological Trial Trenching

Authors: Ian Hill BSc MSc
Illustrations: Ian Hill BSc MSc

Heritage and Archaeological Research Practice
Conference House
152 Morrison Street
The Exchange
Edinburgh
EH3 8EB

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*Adopt-a-Monument

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The Friends of Possilpark Green space is a local residents group who have been a registered charity since 2010 (SC041661). The group are concerned with raising the standard of their local environment by carrying out landscaping and conservation works within their community. The group regularly hold meetings and run local community events.

British Waterways are responsible for over 2,200 miles of the country's canals and rivers. They are responsible for the maintenance and promotion of issues relating to the heritage and environment of all lands under their care and work with a number of partners to support these works.

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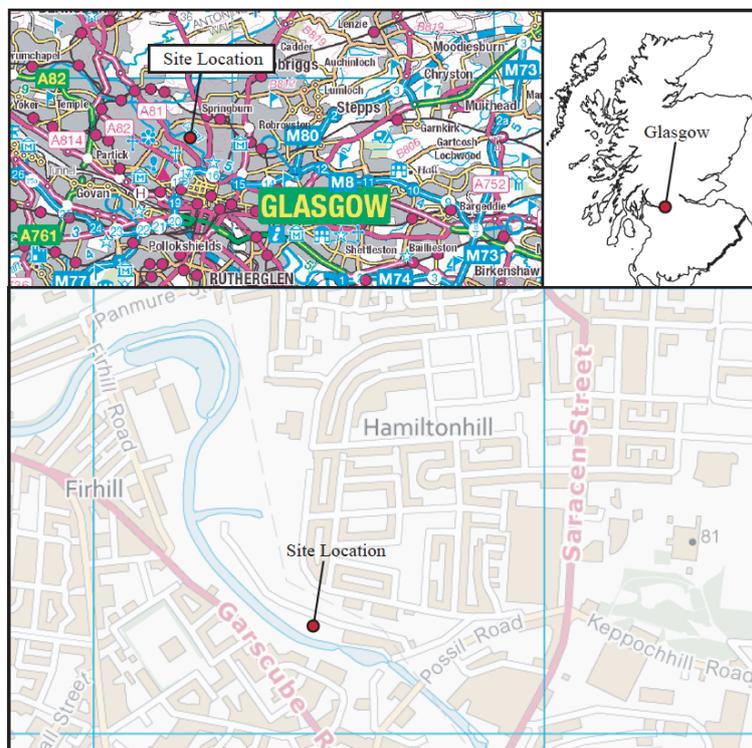
Heritage and Archaeological Research Practice Limited are a Social Enterprise that deals with a number of issues relating to archaeology and cultural heritage. They are actively involved in a number of community led projects and provide assistance and training in the research, excavation and dissemination of archaeology and heritage sites throughout the UK.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

1.1.1 Friends of Possilpark Greenspace (FPG) organised and ran a community activity weekend ‘Bats Beasts and Buried Treasure’ on the 11th and 12th June 2011. As part of the activities Heritage and Archaeological Research Practice Limited (HARP) assisted Archaeology Scotland (AS) with trial trenching at the site of the old Victoria Iron Foundry, Possilpark Glasgow (centred NS 58495 67240). The site was located on land owned by British Waterways (BW), who generously supported the project and provided a mini digger to carry out the excavations.

1.1.2 The site is in an area of land known as the ‘Clay Pits’, an area of waste ground to the east of the Glasgow branch of the Forth and Clyde canal roughly defined between the Hamiltonhill and Firhill Canal Basins (see Fig. 1). The location of the old Victoria Iron Foundry lies just to the west of the current BW offices on Applecross Street.



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Figure 1 – Site Location Map

1.1.3 The works were supported by BW and AS and were intended to increase the understanding of the cultural heritage of the area, and provide an opportunity for the local community to get involved in archaeology.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 A full Desk Based Assessment (DBA) for the area has been carried out by AS (see McKeggie 2011). As the trial trenching was targeted on the site of the old Victoria Iron Foundry, background information here will be provided on the foundry.

1.2.2 The presence of the foundry is first noted on the Ordnance Survey (OS) 1st Edition map of 1865 where it is labeled as Victoria Foundry (Iron). The foundry consists of two blocks with the main foundry building being roughly square shaped. The second block to the east is rectangular and orientated approximately north to south. Both blocks sit within a larger yard that appears to have a walled boundary. A road from the east leads into the foundry complex at the middle of the eastern block. Survey work for the OS 1st Edition was carried out in 1858, showing that the foundry had been built prior to this date.

1.2.3 By the time of the OS Town Plan of Glasgow published in 1894 the foundry is annotated as a Glass Store, indicating a change in function. The building also has the addition of a chimney and a new access road has been built along the northern boundary of the complex, removing the original access road into the eastern block.

1.2.4 A building in the same location as the foundry is depicted on the OS 3rd Edition map of 1905, and the 1913 1:2,500 edition shows the building as Victoria Glass Works, suggesting that it was producing glass by this time. By the time of publication of the OS 1 Inch Popular Edition in 1925 there is no longer a building depicted in the location of the foundry, but the 1932 1:2,500 edition depicts a building at the east of the complex and likely

corresponds to the rectangular block orientated approximately north to south on the 1st Edition. A smaller building aligned east to west is also shown occupying part of the former foundry site.

1.2.5 The site of the foundry is recorded as site NS56NE 2716 in the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS), and as site 47973 in the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). Neither record holds detailed information on the foundry however the NMRS does hold a series of photographs of the foundry from the John R Hume collection; the collection dates to 1969, however the dates when the photographs were taken are unknown.

1.2.6 One of the photographs shows a view of the foundry taken from the south east and shows the front of the eastern block of the foundry complex, with the foundry itself shown behind (see Plate 1).



Plate 1 – Canmore Image SC712938 © RCAHMS

1.2.7 A second photograph taken from the west-north-west from inside the foundry yard shows the west-north-west facing elevation of the eastern block of the foundry complex (see Plate 2).



Plate 2 – Canmore Image SC712932 © RCAHMS

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

2.1.1 All work undertaken by HARP was conducted with regard to the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation and Code of Conduct*.

2.2 Trial Trenching Strategy

2.2.1 Two small trial trenches were excavated on the site of the old Victoria Iron Foundry and were located within the bounds of the main foundry building of the foundry complex (see Fig. 2).

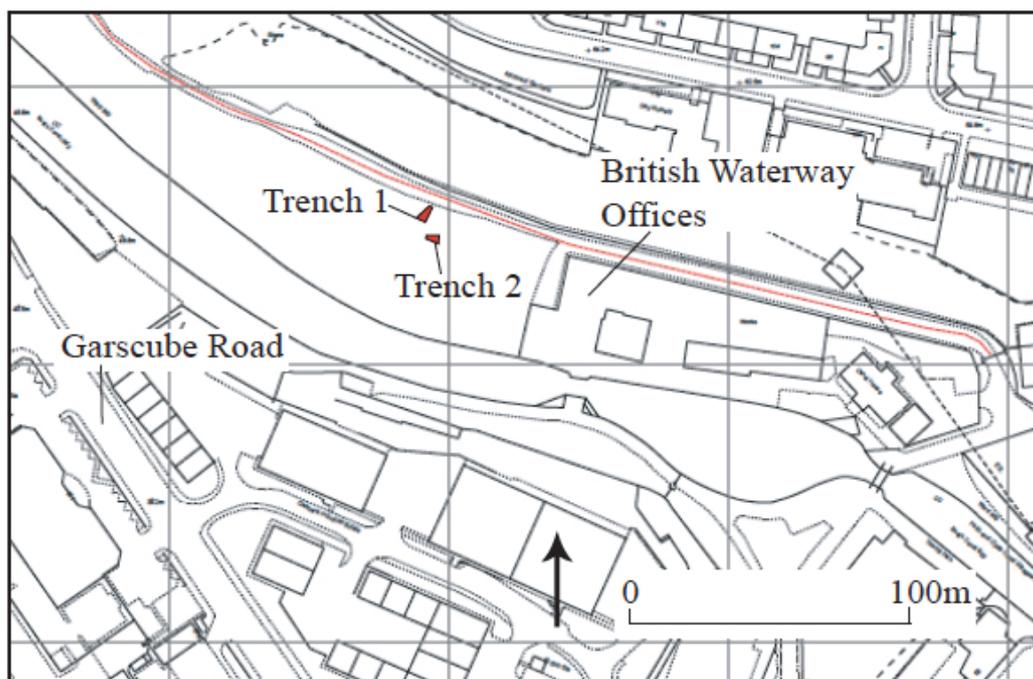


Figure 2 – Trench Location Plan

2.2.2 BW provided a mini digger to carry out the excavations. Trenches were excavated using a smooth-bladed ditching bucket to remove modern overburden under constant archaeological supervision.

2.2.3 Once modern overburden had been removed all deposits were excavated by hand. Excavations were carried out by both trained archaeologists and members of the community under supervision.

2.2.4 During the 'Bats Beasties and Buried Treasure' activity weekend time slots were allocated to allow members of the local community and general public to assist with the excavation and to learn more about archaeological excavation and the remains of the Victoria Iron Foundry

2.2.5 All excavation and on-site recording was carried out according to standard HARP procedures, principally by drawing, by photography and by completing standard HARP record forms. Trench locations were surveyed using industry standard electronic surveying equipment.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 General

3.1.1 A full list of archaeological contexts including descriptions can be found in Appendix 1. All Appendices are to be found in section 6.

3.1.2 All numbers in bold and parentheses in the following sections correspond to context numbers listed in the Appendices. Context numbers in rounded parentheses refer to deposits, whilst those in square parentheses refer to cuts for features.

3.1.3 Excavation revealed a variety of mixed clays and made ground overburden covering the site, much of the clay material had been deposited on site during previous episodes of dredging from the adjacent canal.

3.1.4 The remains revealed in the two trenches are described in turn below.

3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1 Trench 1 was roughly triangular in shape; 5m long and 3.2m wide at the southern end, 1m wide at the northern end (see Fig. 3). It was orientated north to south and it was located on what was believed to be the north western corner of the foundry building. Excavation revealed up to 0.4m of mixed modern overburden, mainly consisting of sand and clay with a mixed rubble and debris demolition deposit (**024**).

3.2.2 The removal of the overburden revealed the remains of part of a brick wall and concrete floor. The brick wall (**020**) was located towards the northern end of the trench was orientated north-south. At its southern extent the wall returned to the west and continued beyond the western limit of the trench. The wall was visible for 1.7m in length and was 0.28m wide and two courses high.

3.2.3 Adjacent to the east of wall (020) was a concrete foundation layer set into a foundation cut (019). The visible remains of this cut lay 0.22m to the east of wall (020) and was aligned the same as the wall.

3.2.4 The foundations (019) and wall (020) were overlain by a series of concrete surfaces. The earliest concrete surface (014) to overly (019) was located at the northern end of the trench. (014) consisted of a thin layer of concrete that was subsequently overlain by a later re-skim of concrete (018). This later re-skim abuts wall (020) and contains a vertical iron pipe (021) that also abuts wall (020).

3.2.5 Beneath the concrete surfaces (014) and (018) was a thin layer of mid-orange sand, likely representing a ground levelling event prior to the construction of the first concrete floor (014). The layer of sand was found to seal an earlier episode of concrete (017) and brick (016) construction.

3.2.6 It is unclear at this stage what both (016) and (017) represent, but they may form part of an earlier brick wall and concrete foundation, or a brick laid floor.



Plate 3 – Brick surface (016) with later concrete surfaces (014), (018) and wall (020)

3.2.7 Towards the southern end of the trench further concrete remains **(023)** were revealed, however no direct relationship with the features at the northern end of the trench could be identified. There was also evidence of a modern pit **(025)** that was partially revealed in the south western corner of the trench, and has likely caused disturbance to the remains of the building in this area.

3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 Trench 2 was roughly rectangular in shape. It was 4.5m long, 1.8m wide at its eastern end and 1.1m wide at its western end (see Fig. 4). It was aligned east to west and was positioned to south east of trench 1 in order to investigate the likely interior of the foundry building.

3.3.2 Excavations revealed a series of deposits of modern overburden and ground levelling events. A light brown clay **(001)** was present throughout the trench and continued to a depth of up to 0.5m and likely represents clay deposited on site from episodes of dredging the nearby canal. Below **(001)** was a mixed rubble and debris deposit **(002)** up to 0.6m deep at its eastern end and likely represents a ground-levelling event.

3.3.3 Below **(002)** were three deposits of black sand and ash **(003)**, **(005)** and **(027)**. These deposits were thin, levelling deposits up to 0.06m deep and were found to seal an earlier destruction deposit **(004)**. **(003)**, **(005)** and **(027)** likely represent an episode of levelling and sealing of the ground after the potential destruction of the building (see Fig. 5).

3.3.4 Deposit **(004)** was a mixed ash, blast and slag debris deposit that continued throughout the trench. In the eastern half of the trench this deposit was excavated reveal the deposits beneath, and it continued up to a depth of 0.3m.

3.3.5 Beneath **(004)** a series of wooden and metal remains were revealed. **(009)** and **(010)** were the remains of a likely rotten wooden floor and preserved

wooden planks. The planks **(010)** were aligned E-W and were surrounded by a rich dark black matrix **(009)**, the possible rotten remains of the floor. Both were left unexcavated and abutted further wooden plan remains **(007)**.

3.3.6 Context **(007)** consisted of some remnant wooden planks aligned both NE-SW and NW-SE. They appeared to form a square shape approximately 0.8m by 0.8m and surrounded very rusted and corroded iron remains **(008)**. The iron and wood remains are possibly the remnants of a machinery stantion.

3.3.7 Abutting **(008)** to the east were the remains of a small brick setting **(006)**. The deposit was not fully revealed and continued beyond the limits of the trench to both the east and south. Deposit **(006)** may represent the remains of a machinery setting.

3.3.8 Other remains within trench 2 consisted of a large wooden beam **(012)** and some concrete debris **(011)** with steel wire reinforcement **(013)**. These deposits were all found to lie on top of the likely floor remains and are likely representative of debris or collapse following the buildings destruction.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 The two trenches revealed significant archaeological remains on the site of the old Victoria Iron Foundry. Whilst the trenches were limited in size, they were targeted in order to determine the likely presence of remains of the main foundry building.
- 4.1.2 Trench 1 revealed at least three phases of construction of flooring, and a small brick wall with associated water pipes. The brick wall and pipe work may have been part of a possible toilet block that was a later addition to the original structure, represented by the earlier phases of concrete flooring and brickwork. Further excavation to reveal the extent of the brick walls would however be needed to determine whether this was the case.
- 4.1.3 Trench 2 revealed a probable wooden floor and possible brick and metal machinery settings in the interior of the foundry building. The destruction deposits above suggest that the building was deliberately demolished and burnt prior to a series of ground levelling events. As with Trench 1, Trench 2 will require further excavation to determine the extent of the possible floor and machinery settings in order to determine their exact function.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 Trial trenching on the site of the old Victoria Iron Foundry have revealed the likely remains of part of the interior of the main foundry building. Excavations were limited to two small trenches over a period of two days so it is unclear as to the exact extent and function of the structures and features revealed.
- 5.1.2 It was not possible to determine whether the remains related to the original foundry building or the glass works depicted on the later OS Town Plan of Glasgow, however, significant floor and machine settings were found in Trench 2, and substantial floor and wall remains were found in Trench 1 that would warrant further investigation.

5.2 Recommendations

- 5.2.1 The remains revealed likely form part of the old Victoria Iron Foundry and further investigation by archaeological excavation could reveal information about a building and period of history in the Possilpark area that little is known about at present.
- 5.2.2 Further archaeological excavations could be used to provide a professionally led community excavation that would allow the local community to actively participate into the investigation into their local areas history, whilst learning new skills at the same time.
- 5.2.3 If further archaeological investigations were to be carried out there would need to be consent from the landowners (currently BW), and if excavations were to extend further to the south permission would need to be granted by Historic Scotland for Scheduled Monument Consent for the nearby Scheduled Monument the Forth and Clyde Canal: Glasgow Branch (SM 6771).

6 REFERENCES

6.1 Cartographic

1865, *Ordnance Survey First Edition 6 inch to the mile*, Lanarkshire, Sheet VI

1894, *Ordnance Survey Town Plan of Glasgow 1:500*, Sheet VI.6.9

1905, *Ordnance Survey Third Edition one inch to the mile*, Sheet 30, Glasgow

1913, *Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 Plan, Lanarkshire*

1925, *Ordnance Survey 1 inch Popular Edition*, Sheet 72, Glasgow

1932, *Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 Plan, Lanarkshire*

6.2 Bibliographic

Mckeggie.L, 2011, '*Clay Pits, Glasgow: Desk Based Assessment*',
unpublished DBA, Archaeology Scotland

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Context Register

Context No.	Trench	Description	Interpretation	Stratigraphic Relationship
001	2	Light brown clay	Re-deposited clay dredged from canal	Above (027)
002	2	Modern rubble	Made ground/ground levelling	Below (027)
003	2	Sand lens	Made ground/ground levelling	Below (002)
004	2	Mixed sand & ash	Destruction layer	Below (005)
005	2	Black sand	Levelling following destruction	Below (003)
006	2	Small setting of bricks in NE corner of trench	Possible machinery setting	Below (004)
007	2	Remains of wooden planks aligned NE-SW	Possible machinery setting	Below (004)
008	2	Rusted iron remains	Possible remains of machine	Below (004)
009	2	Dark black matrix surrounding (007)(008)	Rotten remains of floor	Below (004)
010	2	Remains of wooden planks aligned E-W	Old wooden floor	Below (004)
011	2	Concrete blocks	Post depositional rubble	Below (004)
012	2	Wooden beams	Probable rubble	Below (004)
013	2	Rusted wire	Probable reinforcing for (017)	Below (004)
014	1	Concrete in N of trench	Floor	Below (018)
015	1	Sand layer over brick wall (016)	Ground levelling prior to construction of (014)	Below (014)
016	1	Brick layer	Older wall or surface	Below (015)
017	1	Original concrete	Possible drain capping	Below (015)
018	1	Concrete surface	Later phase of concrete, skim over (014) (second phase/repair/re-floor?)	Below (028)

019	1	Foundation cut with sandy concrete fill	Cut for wall (020)	Below (020)
020	1	Brick wall	Later, intrusive wall at W of trench	Below (028)
021	1	Vertical iron pipe	Possible drain pipe relating to (017)	
022	1	Metal pipe to S of wall (020)	Function unknown, waste water?	Below (028)
023	1	Remnant concrete floor	Floor surface, possibly abutted (018)	Below (028)
024	1	Very mixed rubble	Demolition deposit	Below (028)
025	1	Mixed clay soil and rubble	Possible modern pit	Below (028)
026	1	Dark brown silt	Over concrete fill around wall (016)	Below (028)
027	2	Mixed sandy clay	Likely ground levelling deposit	Below (016)
028	1	Mixed rubble, clay and stone	Mixed modern overburden	Below (001)

Appendix 2

Photographic Register

Photo Number	Description	Taken From	Conditions
1	Working shot	-	O/C
2	Working shot	-	O/C
3	Working shot	-	O/C
4	N facing section Trench 2	N	O/C
5	N facing section Trench 2	N	O/C
6	General shot Trench 2	W	O/C
7	General shot Trench 2	N	O/C
8	Working shot Trench 1	-	O/C
9	Working shot Trench 1	-	O/C
10	General shot post-ex Trench 2	W	Bright
11	General shot post-ex Trench 2	W	Bright
12	N facing section Trench 2	N	Bright
13	N facing section Trench 2	N	Bright
14	Close up of wooden floor Trench 2	N	Bright
15	Close up of wooden floor Trench 2	N	Bright
16	General shot Trench 1	S	O/C
17	General shot Trench 1	S	O/C
18	Close up of brick 'surface' (016)	S	O/C
19	Close up of brick 'surface' (016)	S	O/C
20	Close up of brick wall (020)	E	O/C
21	Close up of brick wall (020)	E	O/C
22	General shot of pipes (021) and (022)	E	O/C
23	General shot of pipes (021) and (022)	E	O/C
24	Close up of makers mark on bricks	S	O/C
25	Close up of makers mark on bricks	S	O/C

Appendix 3

Drawing Register

Drawing No.	Sheet No.	Description	Section / Plan	Scale
1	1	Post ex plan of Trench 2	P	1:20
2	2	Post ex plan of Trench 1	P	1:20
3	3	N facing section of Trench	S	1:20

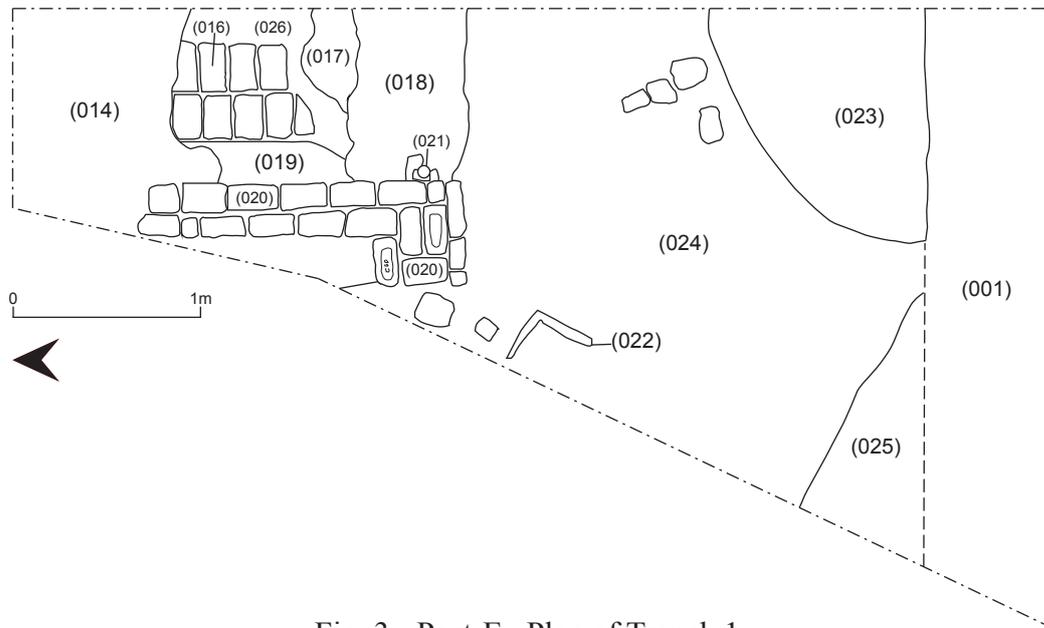


Fig. 3 - Post-Ex Plan of Trench 1

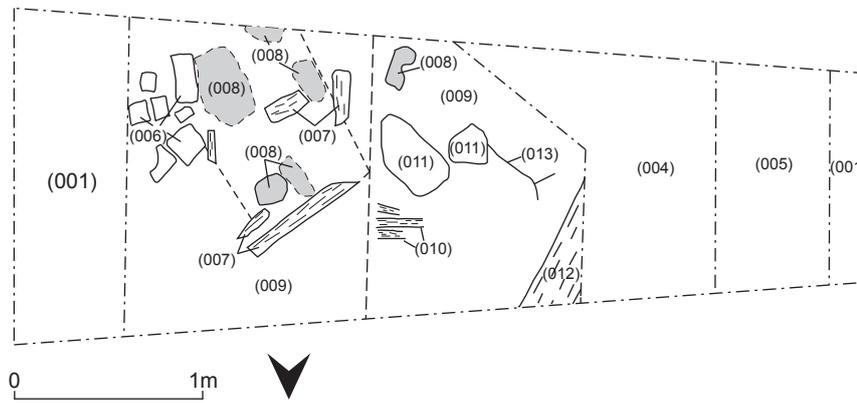


Fig. 4 - Post-Ex Plan of Trench 2

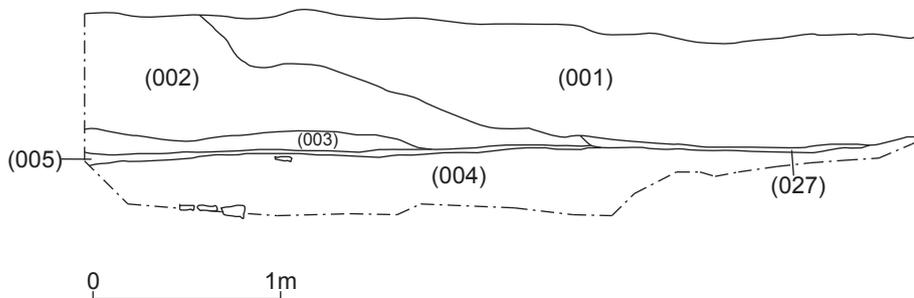


Fig. 5 - North Facing Section of Trench 2