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## THE LATER IRON AGE FARMSTEAD

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A large collapse of the broch walls, resulting in the abandonment of the tower, marks the division between Phases 7 and 8, sometime during the 4th century cal AD. The tower was used as a dump and subsequently an iron-working shed was built into the rubble of the broch collapse. The focus of the settlement shifted to the **NE** building which formed the nucleus of a domestic settlement with a cluster of yards, interpreted as the farmstead. The focus then switched to a new **Stalled** building in the W of the site and in Later Phase 8 back to the modified **E** building. These continuous additions, modifications and periods of rebuilding are covered by 12 stages, 1–4 in Early Phase 8 and 5–12 in Later Phase 8.

The main environmental changes which distinguished Phase 8 was the decline in the use of wood as a fuel and the substitution of heathy turves. There is a diversification in arable agriculture with the presence of hulled six-row barley, the appearance of flax and possibly cultivated oats in the farmstead. There is also a marked decline in red deer with greater reliance on sheep in particular in this mixed farming economy.

Working in iron continued in this phase, with a late surge before its general decline. Antler working was still practised and composite hair combs, previously found on other sites in Late Iron Age/Early Norse levels, were produced. Copper-alloy jewellery continued to be important, distinctive objects from the earlier stages representing a period of the mid-4th to 6th centuries AD and from the later stages material ranging from 2nd century BC to 7th–9th AD. A gaming board, usually associated with Norse levels, was also found. The occupation of the settlement could have ended during the 7th century AD, but may have continued on to as late as the 9th.

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### 5.1 • THE STRUCTURAL EVIDENCE

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#### 5.1.1 • EARLY PHASE 8 (illus 59)

Following the collapse of its S walls, at some point in the 4th century cal AD, the broch was abandoned and subsequently used as a dump. The Phase 7 **NE** building continued in use, mainly as a domestic structure, with 4 stages of activity. It gained the addition of an **Oval** building, after some clearing away of the broch tumble, and a path led from it to sheds in the Phase 7 **E** yard. The Phase 7 **E** building was modified and continued in use.

Into the rubble of the broch collapse and the general rubble build-up on the S and SW area, an iron-working shed was constructed with a paved courtyard. It was later replaced by a **Stalled** building with apsidal ends, for domestic use.

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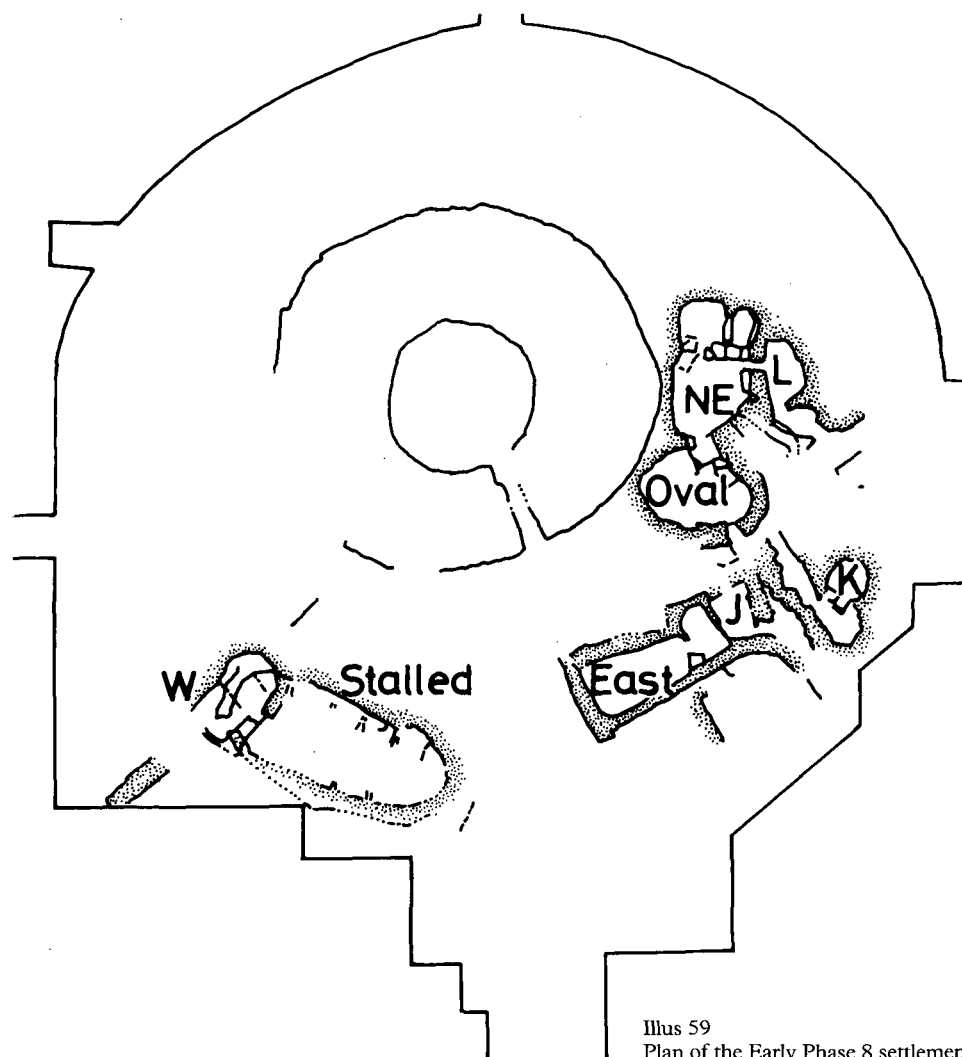
### THE BROCH TOWER

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Following a period of stability when the broch was used for dumping rubbish, a series of massive collapses began sometime in Phase 8 which almost filled the tower. The first fall that triggered these final collapses was in the entrance area, and was probably from the same unstable E side of the entrance passage that had caused the earlier Phase 7 collapse. This left a large heap of rubble across the SE quadrant of the interior. A series of small collapses followed, mostly on the S and E, until the S face was completely buried and little more than 0.5m of the broch wall showed above the rubble elsewhere. Throughout these collapses, rubbish rich in bone, shell and pottery was still being dumped here. The only specific event that could be identified was the collapse of the S end

of the corbelling which left a compact heap of massive flagstones, mixed with yellow clay, which had presumably been used to bond the corbelling together.

Following the final collapse, the remaining hollow between the broch and the rampart on the N side gradually filled with rubble and earth as material weathered and washed in. The remaining exposed sections of the broch wall also weathered, gradually masking the broch's outline. During this decay, extensive stone robbing began on the S side of the tower. The earliest robbing was in the entrance area where the wall was cleared down to the passage lintels which were then removed. As the lintels had



Illus 59  
Plan of the Early Phase 8 settlement.

remained intact, the passage below would have been free of rubble and appears to have been used as a store. Following the removal of the lintels, the passage gradually filled with a fine stony wash.

A number of undatable holes in the wallhead may also date from

this late Iron Age period. The only other ancient feature was a small fragment of wall, dug into the E side of the broch interior against the broch wall. This single-faced wall survived 0.5m high and enclosed a disjointed flag floor. Most of the building was destroyed by recent digging but the remaining fragment was built in a typically late Iron Age style.

## STAGE I (illus 60)

### THE NE BUILDING

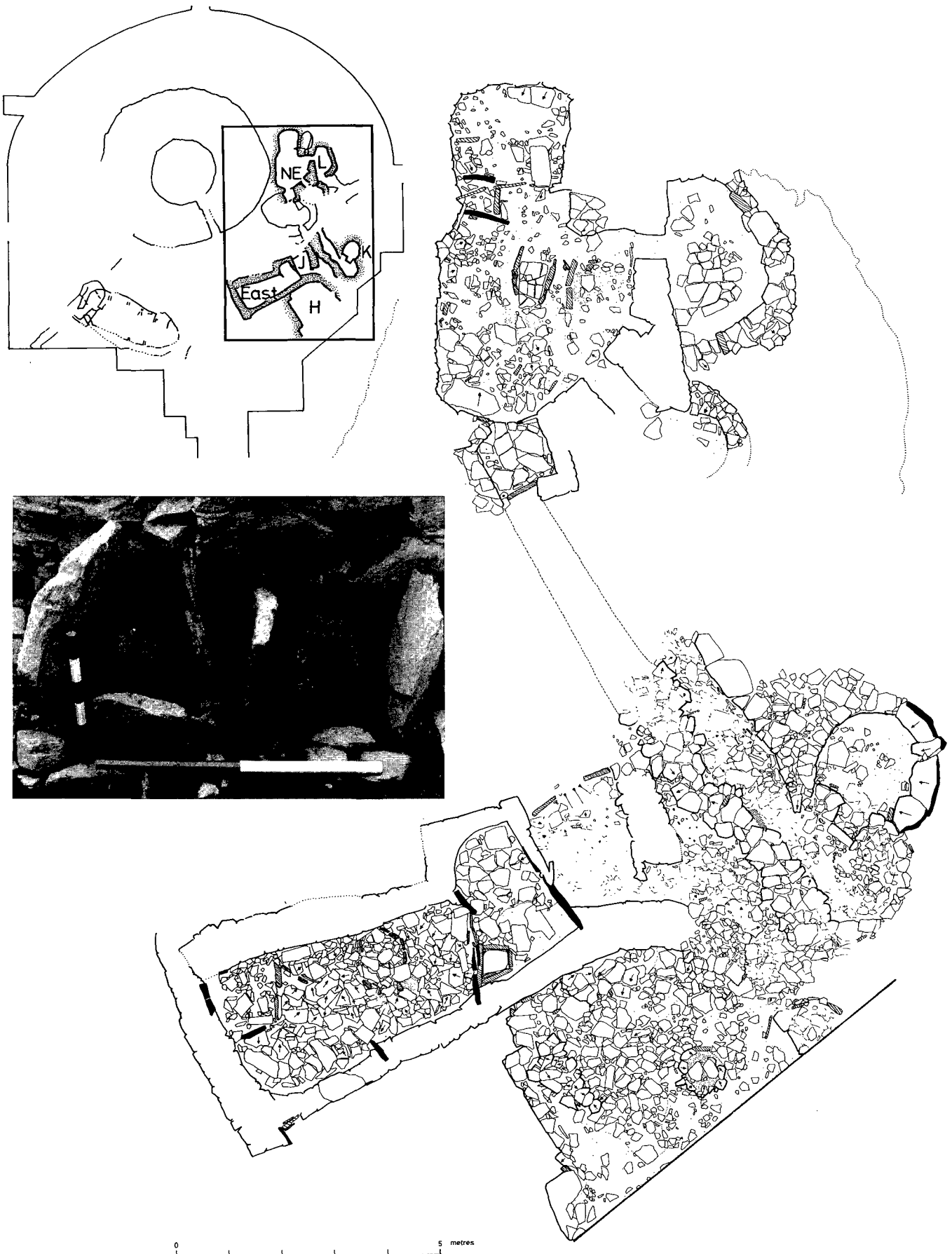
After the S side of the broch collapsed, partly covering this Phase 7 building, major alterations were carried out. Some of the rubble was cleared away to the S of the house and a square porch was built in front of the original doorway. It had a flagged floor and the door was marked by a sill-stone, and pivot-stone. The W wall was built against the rubble collapse but the E wall was partly freestanding. The junction of the W wall was later strengthened by the addition of a buttress. A path led S from the porch towards other buildings in the old E yard (see below).

Within the building the changes included the construction of two opposing buttresses in front of the N and NE cells (illus 60 Inset). Each was constructed from three upright flagstones surmounted by coursed masonry. The construction of these supports and the

rebuilding of the E entrance suggests that the building was reroofed now.

The NE cell was now abandoned as the floor levels within it had built up to the top of the corbelling and the E buttress was constructed directly in front of it. The N cell was refloored with a partly paved earth floor and had an upright stone projecting from its W wall. A collapsed orthostat on the floor marked the site of an entrance screen.

The rest of the NE building was given a partly paved earth and rubble floor contained some ash and patches of charcoal. It had a central hearth, 1.2 × 0.72m, which was kerbed by upright stones on the E and W; deposits of ash and charcoal from here were dumped against the E wall defined by a second kerb, 0.3m to the E of the hearth, and by the remains of a linear setting to the N.



Illus 60  
Early Phase 8 settlement: stage 1 buildings on the E side of the site. Inset shows buttress in **NE** building; scales – 50cm & 1m; from E.

A new shed, **L**, was built into the collapsed rampart bordering the yard, just outside the rebuilt E entrance. It was entered from the S, through a paved entrance with a stone upright on the E side, and it had a partial flagstone and earth floor.

Immediately beyond shed **L** was the curved wall of another freestanding structure which abutted the remains of the Phase 7 E wall of the building. The rest of this structure was destroyed by later disturbances and its extent and shape are unknown. It had an earth floor and was reached by an entrance and passage which cut through the E wall of the building. Beyond and surrounding these structures, a mixed earth and rubble surface formed over the previous yard surface.

### THE **EAST** BUILDING

The **East** building was also affected by the S collapse of the broch, and was now partly cleared of rubble. The S half of the building was cleared down to levelled rubble and an E–W double-faced cross wall blocked off the rubble filled N half. The E cell was still intact and was repaved with stone, and a tank,  $0.65 \times 0.7\text{m}$ , was built in the SE corner. The original entrance was retained.

An irregular, partly kerbed hearth,  $1.15 \times 0.8\text{m}$ , was built against the new N wall, paved with an uneven layer of flagstone. There was little accumulation of hearth or floor deposits, which may indicate that use of this building was short lived, perhaps due to difficulties of access. No evidence survived for a doorway to the building and access was probably gained over the W or S walls.

### THE **E** YARD

The late Phase 7 sheds in the **E** yard were reoccupied now; shed **K** was modified whilst shed **J** remained unaltered. The new

flagstone path was constructed over the late Phase 7 levelling rubble and ran between the two sheds to the **NE** building. About 6m of this path survived, with the S end being traced as far as the disused rampart whilst the N end was destroyed by later building activity. The S end overlay collapse from the yard dividing wall which had a rubble and earth surface levelling layer over it. This levelling partly blocked the entrance to shed **K** which was rebuilt and raised, with a new sill-stone placed between two masonry door jambs which were built into this levelling layer and were only faced on the inside of the cell. The floor of the shed was also raised by the addition of another layer of paving in the entrance and earth in the rest of the room. Both sheds **J** and **K** may have continued in use during Stages 2 and 3 as the path remained in use.

### THE **SE** YARD

A new flagstone floor was laid over the rubble collapses and general build-up within the late Phase 7 yard, **H**. To the NE, earlier rubble was still visible and, at the SE end, an irregular shaped hearth  $0.75 \times 1.0\text{m}$  was built of sloping stones set around two flat hearth slabs. It contained deposits of earth and charcoal, which were also found surrounding the hearth. A sloping heap of rubble on the E side of the flagstone floor was derived from the Phase 7 yard wall in the E. The exact relationship of the rubble to the flags was not ascertained. If the rubble was deposited before the flagstones, it suggests that the flags were merely flattened rubble and the occupation, only temporary. If the rubble was later, a more permanent arrangement was suggested, which may not have been fulfilled because of the threat of collapsing masonry.

Apart from a 0.7m length of single-faced wall, built on the flags in the N part of the room, the use of building **H** was short-lived. It was abandoned before the sheds in the N and rubble and debris from these accumulated over the floor. This area then remained out of use until Phase 8 Stage 5.

## STAGE 2 (illus 61)

### THE **NE** BUILDING

Alterations to the **NE** building continued during this stage. Further rubble from the large broch collapse was cleared away and some was used in the construction of a large **Oval** building immediately to the S. The W end was built into the rubble but the E end was freestanding, and it incorporated the Stage 1 porch of the **NE** building and reused part of the Phase 7 entrance passage wall which had survived the broch collapse.

An irregularly shaped entrance, with passage and internal sill-stone in the S wall, linked it to the Stage 1 path and the sheds to the S. An alcove was built into the SW wall, and the building had an earth floor which contained much peat that had probably derived from a partly kerbed rectangular feature to the W. This feature,  $0.9 \times 0.45\text{m}$ , has been interpreted as a hearth, even though it had no base slab. The E half of the building had a paved floor and also had a buttress at its N end which may have supported the porch.

The porch of the **NE** building was repaved with flagstone and earth as was the rest of the floor. A smaller rectangular kerbed hearth was constructed over the top of the Stage 1 hearth, and ash from it became intermixed with the surrounding earth and flagstone floor. Further alterations at the N end of the building included the dismantling of the division between the NE and N cells which was now replaced by a small buttress, and the construction of a new curved wall over the top of the redundant NE cell, along the E wall to the E door (illus 61 Inset). The top of the E internal buttress was also rebuilt and extended to the W. The W internal buttress was partly dismantled, surviving only as a pair

of upright stones. The N end was now extended from a single cell into an irregular shaped room which must have been completely reroofed. It had a square hearth,  $0.55 \times 0.55\text{m}$ , in the centre which had a cracked flagstone base which was kerbed by low stones on three sides and open to the S.

Both E and SE doorways to the external shed and cell were maintained, although the shed **L** was refloored with earth and stone. The cell to the S remained unaltered. Beyond the buildings to S and E, a surface developed full of midden material of shell and bone, domestic rubbish, slag, and burnt clay.

### THE **EAST** BUILDING

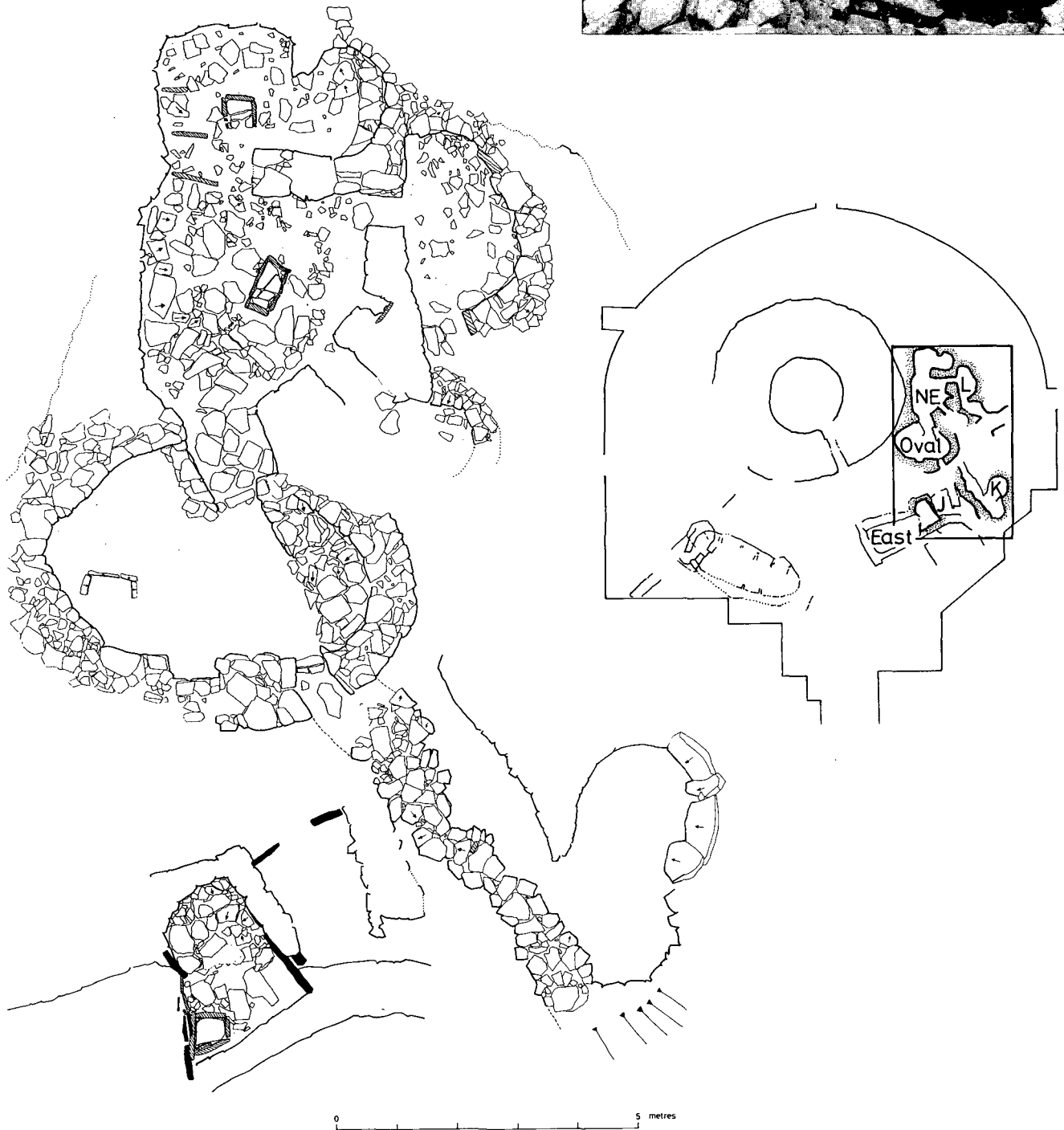
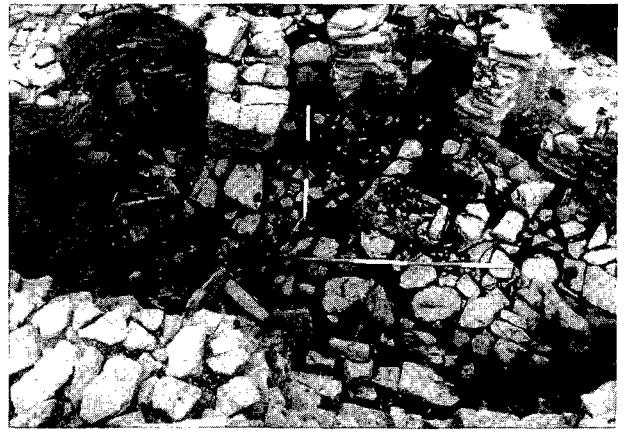
The rectangular room created in this building continued in use during this stage, although the cell was modified slightly by the addition of a buttress against its W wall to reinforce the junction with the Stage 1 N wall. After this the N part of the cell was repaved with close-set slabs set into silt and clay. Masonry collapsed into the cell and building, causing rubble to accumulate and the building to be abandoned until Stage 5. The sheds **J** and **K** and the path remained in use, unaltered.

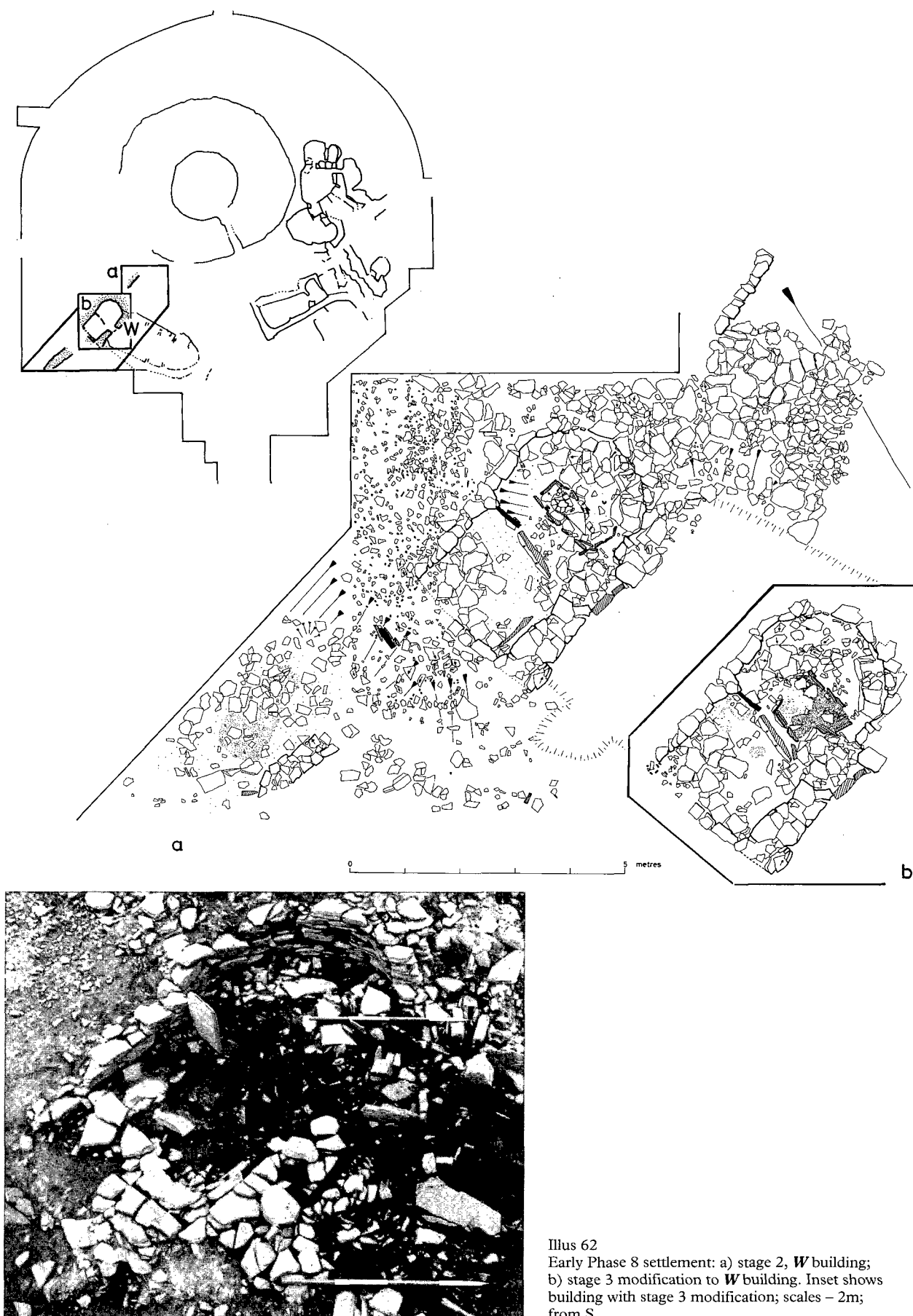
### THE W SIDE OF THE SITE (illus 62)

For the first time since the levelling that preceded the S collapse of the broch, occupation took place to the W of the tower, with the construction of a square structure with an apsidal end within the rubble over the Phase 7 SW buildings and partly over the surviving

Illus 61

Early Phase 8 settlement: stage 2 buildings on the E side of the site. Inset shows close up of **NE** building; scales – 2m; from W.





Illus 62  
Early Phase 8 settlement: a) stage 2, *W* building;  
b) stage 3 modification to *W* building. Inset shows  
building with stage 3 modification; scales – 2m;  
from S.

Phase 5/6 rampart. This building, the **W** building, had a door with a sill-stone in its SE freestanding wall. Opposite the doorway, abutting the NW single-faced wall was a partition of two stones which divided the building into two. The southernmost stone formed a step between the two rooms as the floors were at different levels. The NW wall of the building was single faced and backed into rubble. It curved to the NE and joined the SE wall. Ploughing had disturbed the SW wall which was originally freestanding, but only a fragment of it remained.

The SW room was  $2.0 \times 2.0$ m square, and had a partly paved earth floor. The doorway was paved and led into the lower NE room which was  $2.3 \times 2.5$ m. Lying centrally in this room was a kerbed hearth,  $1.5 \times 0.65$ m, with a cracked slab base set within an earth and flagstone floor. NE of this building was a layer of flagstones that formed a level yard surface which extended as far as the late Phase 7 retaining wall to the W.

### STAGE 3 (illus 63a)

#### THE **NE** BUILDING

Only minor alterations were made to the **NE** building during this stage. A new hearth,  $0.58 \times 0.54$ m, replaced the one in the N end of the building and a raised flagstone feature was built against the W wall opposite the E entrance, incorporating the remaining upright stone from the former W buttress. Its measurements were  $0.82 \times 0.34$ m and its function unknown.

The shed **K** remained unaltered, but the small fragmentary cell to the S was demolished, and the SE entrance from the building blocked. A series of new structures were built over the Phase 5/6 rampart, abutting the **NE** building and shed **L**. Their full extent and actual shape remains unknown as only fragments survived. A passage with a paved and earth floor led from shed **L** down a step to a room with a rectangular kerbed hearth set in an earth floor. This hearth,  $1.0 \times 0.65$ m, was repaved at least once during its lifetime. A curved single-faced wall abutted the shed and formed the N wall of this structure. Its S wall was parallel and was also faced with stone to the W. A curved length of wall abutted the E wall of the **NE** building and formed the S wall of the passage. Presumably this wall turned to the S, but like the rest of this structure was cut away by later buildings.

Both the **Oval** building and the porch were damaged and partly filled by falling masonry and rubble from the broch tower and the Phase 7 walls. The porch may have been completely filled, but the SE part of the **Oval** building was cleared of stone to form a small cell using the original entrance. A single-faced curved wall formed the boundary of this cell which had a

roughly paved floor. Only a few courses of the wall survived, and these had partly collapsed, suggesting that the cell may not have been long-lived. There was still access from this building to the E and W sheds to the S.

#### **W** BUILDING (illus 62)

Alterations to building **W** on the W side of the site included a new enlarged hearth,  $1.25 \times 1.1$ m, which was built over the top of the Stage 2 hearth in the NE room (illus 62b). Slag deposits with clay and ash were found on the hearth, indicating an industrial use, and the floor around the hearth was largely repaved. The entrance and the SW room remained unaltered, and two slag deposits found on its floor probably derived from the hearth.

A layer of carbonised material in this room was either charcoal from the hearth or burnt roof material, and its deposition was followed by two rubble collapses. One collapse came from the curved NE wall while the other collapse originated from the SE corner where the wall fell outwards to the SE. This building was abandoned following these collapses and stone and rubbish accumulated in the ruins.

A layer of rubble was laid on top of the adjacent paved surface towards the end of the building's use, and an earthy surface developed over it. Beyond the paving to the E, rubble and earth continued to form a surface on top of the major S collapse of the broch tower, and an earthy surface developed within and just beyond the Phase 7 broch entrance.

### STAGE 4 (illus 63b)

#### THE **NE** AND **OVAL** BUILDINGS

Between Stages 3 and 4, rubble built up on the floors of the **NE** building to a depth of 0.3m, indicating that it had been abandoned for some time. Rubble and earth in the **Oval** building was levelled to create a roughly paved floor and a single-faced wall was built on the alignment of the W porch wall. Access might have been cleared between the **Oval** and **NE** buildings, but a further masonry collapse blocked this completely. The walls of the **Oval** building were maintained, and the entrance was buttressed externally. A new stone sill in the entrance formed a step down to a paved yard surface to the S. This yard was  $2.5 \times 3.0$ m, and its surrounding rubble effectively covered the site of the demolished shed J and its path. Shed **K** was infilled with rubble and an open area created in front of the **Oval** building which may have only been intermittently used as a store or shed as there was little accumulation of organic deposits on its floor. Only a small dump of ash and burnt stone was found in the Stage 2 alcove.

The **NE** building was now for the first time without a hearth. It was given a new earth floor with a central paved area, and a large stone setting, built between the E buttress and the W wall, was presumably a roof support. Collapsed masonry close to the W wall, appeared during the short period of abandonment between Stages 3 and 4. The building was entered now from the SE, through the original Stage 1 entrance which was unblocked, and

its NE wall strengthened by the addition of a buttress for the new lintel over the door.

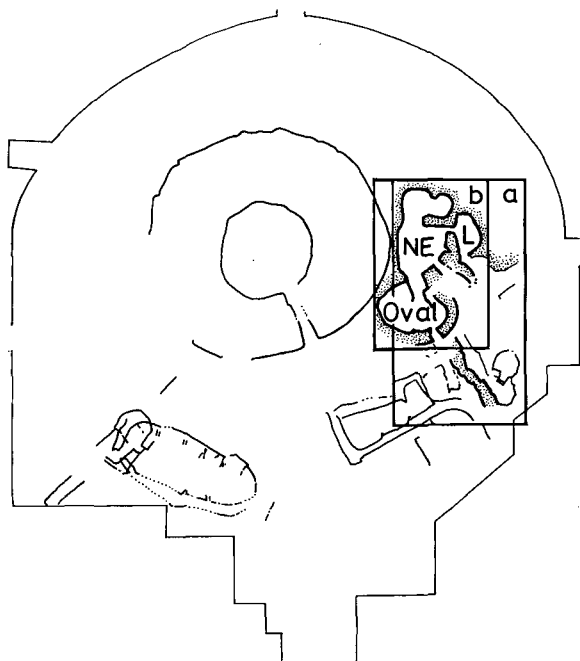
The E entrance was maintained but largely rebuilt and widened along its S side. The shed was kept, but with the addition of an earth and peaty floor. The structures added during Stage 3 had largely been demolished and masked under rubble.

It seems that the **NE** building was abandoned intact while the **Oval** building suffered further collapses. An extensive abandonment horizon of rubble developed across the E and NE part of the site, before further redevelopment took place later in Phase 8. The walls of the **NE** building survived to be reused again in the last stage of Phase 8.

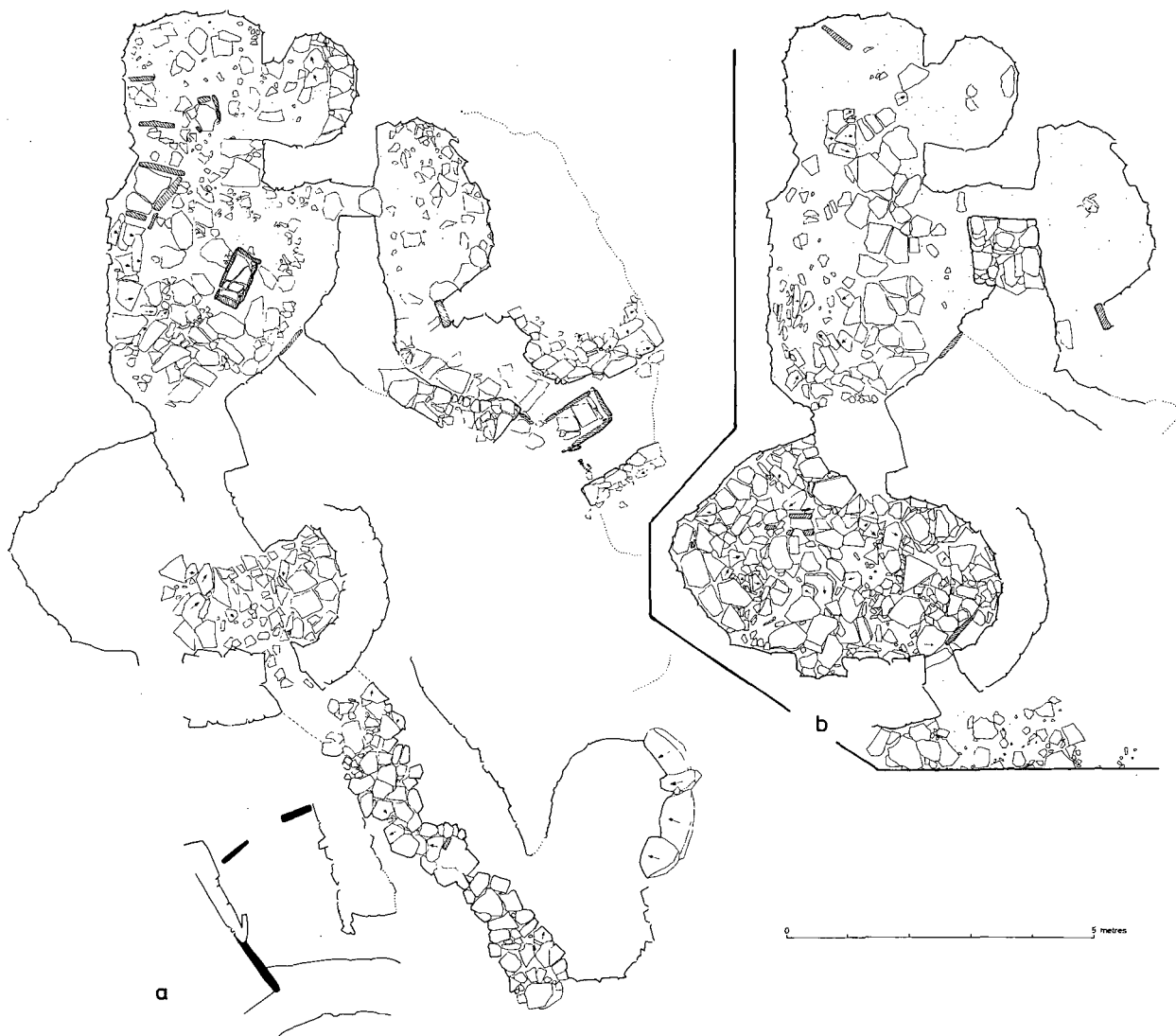
#### THE W SIDE OF THE SITE

#### THE **STALLED** BUILDING (illus 64)

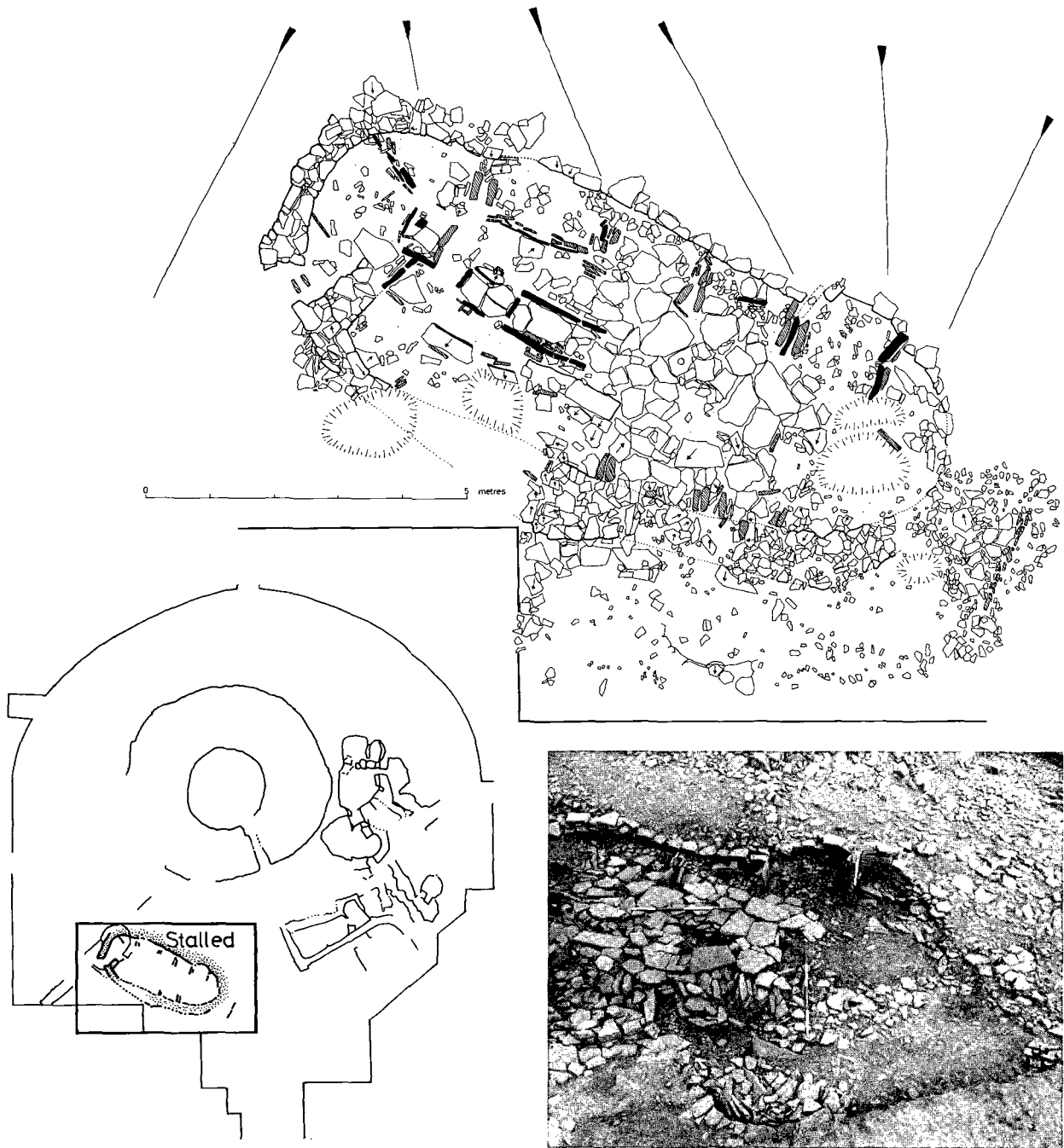
A new building was inserted into the rubble of the **W** building and the adjacent sloping ground surface. First a horizontal platform was dug out and an earthy levelling layer laid down, and any surviving walls of the **W** building were levelled. The new, **Stalled**, building,  $10.5 \times 4.0$ m, was constructed onto this prepared



Illus 63  
Early Phase 8 settlement: a) stage 3 alterations to buildings on the E side of the site; b) stage 4 modifications to buildings on the E of the site.







Illus 64

Early Phase 8 settlement: stage 4 **Stalled** building in SW Inset shows stalls and paving in E half of partially revealed building; scales – 1m & 2m; from S.

ground, and appears to have been all of one build. The curved NW wall survived, but the S wall and E end of the building were almost completely ploughed away. All that remained of the S freestanding wall were foundation stones and three stone settings which would have held upright stones. The curved freestanding W wall of the building contained a silled doorway. N of the entrance, where the wall curved to the N, it became single-faced, and backed by rubble. Along the inside of the N wall were two upright stones and their packing, projecting into the building, and the remains of a further three stalls. Each stall lay 1.6m from the next. Butting the N wall in the second stall recess was a 0.45m square, paved feature forming a small platform or buttress.

The W entrance was screened from the rest of the building by the SE wall of the earlier **W** building, reused as paving or a dividing wall. The **W** building's entrance sill-stone was maintained as an internal door into the new building paved on either side with flagstones. Immediately to the N was a 0.7m square feature of upright stones surrounding a central flat slab. This was probably a roof support as it lay centrally within the building. A line of small upright stones and packing formed a screen, which led between the roof support to the N wall, thus partitioning off the entrance area, or vestibule, from the rest of the building.

Set in the middle of the building, but towards its W end was a kerbed hearth,  $1.3 \times 0.8\text{m}$ , with opposing external sockets in the centre of the long sides. The hearth was open to the E and was constructed on two layers of coloured stone levelling material. To the immediate W and sharing a common kerb stone was a smaller hearth,  $1.0 \times 0.7\text{m}$ , which again had opposing sockets. Both hearths had base slabs and their uses were contemporary, even though the W hearth was probably a later addition.

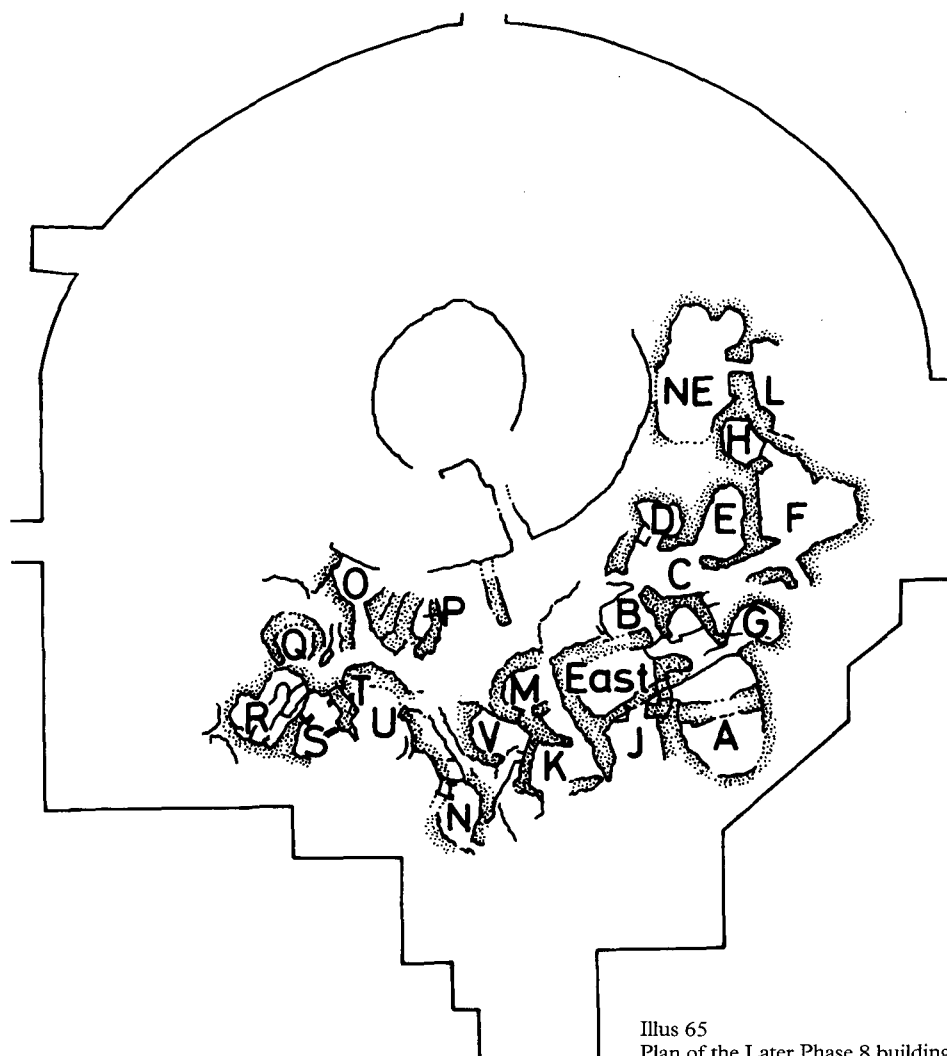
N and S of the hearths were the remains of two lines of upright stones, 0.3m high and lying 0.8m from the hearths. These formed a screened work area around the hearths complex. The N screen survived about 1.6m in length and the S one, although collapsed, was about 3.2m long.

The W end of the building was largely unpaved, while the area immediately E of the hearths was well paved with large stone (illus 64 Inset). This paving incorporated a soakaway using a quernstone with a central hole (SF 2049). The floor at the E end of the building was disturbed but showed evidence of some paving. Both hearths contained ash deposits which became intermixed with an earth floor that developed on top of the paved floor.

Beyond the E wall of the building was a small external paved area,  $1.1 \times 1.5\text{m}$ , kerbed by small upright stones to the E. This area was later repaved with larger stones. The N wall of the building slumped off its rubble foundations during its use, causing some rebuilding at this point. The building was later abandoned leading to the development of a deep rubble layer within it which was left undisturbed till Stage 10 of Phase 8.

### 5.1.2 • LATER PHASE 8 (illus 65)

This phase, divided into eight stages 5–12, is characterized by a series of additional structures, initially around the Phase 7 **E** building, in the form of small sheds, to the N and S. This domestic structure and its complex of buildings grew and then contracted, and gradually moved to the rubble areas of the W side of the site where new buildings were constructed with the use of old wall alignments. A figure-of-eight domestic building, **U**, with ancillary cells was constructed in the W and modified repeatedly. A contraction of available usable space led to a final reuse of the Phase 7 **NE** building before the site was finally abandoned.



Illus 65  
Plan of the Later Phase 8 buildings.

## STAGE 5 (illus 66)

### THE *EAST* BUILDING AND ROOMS *A* AND *B*

Habitation continued on the E side of the site in the *East* building, which was partly cleared of rubble. Two new entrances were built, one, in the SE, served a new sub-rounded room, *A*, to the S, and the other cut through the N wall of the building to allow access to a new room, *B*, beyond. The N entrance was faced with walls and provided with two steps. The floor of the building was levelled and covered with earth and new flagstones were laid in the Phase 7 E cell. The wall between the cell and the new N doorway was strengthened and extended northwards. As part of this remodelling, a screen of upright stones was formed from the Stage 1 tank to partition off the S part of the cell. Adjacent to this, a roof support for the whole building, 0.15m diameter and 0.46m high, was placed in a stone setting. Thus from the N entrance, a paved passage was created which bifurcated around the roof support.

A large rectangular hearth, 1.2 × 0.7m, set against the N wall, dominated the W room. Its well-paved base rested on a levelling layer of grey silt and it had a kerb of low upright stones which contained a grinding stone (SF 1136) in its SW corner (illus 66 Inset). Surrounding the hearth, 0.4m to the W and S, was a further low screen of small stones set on edge, to delineate the work area around the hearth. A stone setting was apparent in the screen's SW corner and beyond it, to the NW corner of the room, a low heap of silt and ash accumulated in a hollow in the underlying rubble. Ash had also become intermixed with the earth floor around the hearth and deposits of ash and charcoal were found within the hearth. Another stone socket was built in the NE angle created between the hearth and wall.

A new sub-rounded room, *A*, 5.0 × 4.0m, was added to the S, built into rubble beyond the *East* room. Its rubble single-faced walls were over 1.0m wide but were disturbed by ploughing. An earth floor was laid down in the room and an open ended hearth was placed N of centre. Only the side kerbings of this feature survived with a c 1.5 × 0.8m spread of ash and charcoal to the SE. Within the room, to the N, W and S, were patches of rubble,

probably the result of both wall collapse and later plough disturbance.

An anteroom, *B*, 2.3 × 1.8m, was constructed to the immediate N of the *East* building and was entered from the latter. Its W wall was built of orthostats and its N cut the early Phase 8 rubble collapse from the broch tower and incorporated a doorway at its E end. Large flagstones set into earth formed the floor of this room. Beyond, to the immediate N, a newly constructed freestanding wall (which abutted the masonry of the redundant *Oval* building) incorporated a stepped passage. The passage provided E–W access from the Stage 4 paving and levelled rubble in the E to a new structure in the W. The latter survived as a single freestanding wall, 2.5m long, to the immediate W of the Phase 7 broch entrance. The only other evidence supporting this building was a 1m diameter ash patch with a small stone setting set on levelled rubble and stone chippings. To both SW and E, this structure was disturbed by 19th century excavations.

The only other surviving addition during this Stage was a fragment of an enclosed stone-floored cell, constructed to the E of the anteroom.

### STAGE 5 : SECONDARY FEATURES

Alterations to the internal fittings of both the *East* building and the adjoining room, *A*, to the S took place during this Stage. The rectangular hearth in the *East* building was covered with earth floor material and replaced by two smaller, fragmentary hearths to the S. Three stones of a collapsed partition, 1.2m long, were inserted from the S wall between the hearths. During this Stage, a pile of butchered bone and rubble accumulated besides the N entrance. In room *A*, the hearth was replaced by one to the N. This had considerable use as it was repaved and contained ash deposits. The end of the earlier hearth was made into a post setting for the new one. After this, room *A* was abandoned and not reoccupied.

## STAGE 6 (illus 67)

### THE *EAST* BUILDING AND CELLS *G* AND *J*

This Stage began with a remodelling of the Phase 7 *East* room and a N expansion of the settlement. The S wall of the room was levelled and the E cell partition broken off at floor level to create a larger area. The S wall was rebuilt with irregular stones and in parts did not survive above one course. The wall of the E cell was broken through to create a doorway to a new cell, *G*, to the E, which was constructed into rubble. This rebuilding used the N parts of the abandoned *S* room as foundation for the new S and E walls. The alcove of the E cell was blocked up and faced with stone and the central roof support was replaced by one of coursed masonry which survived 0.7m high. A silled entrance was created in the S wall which gave access to a rectangular yard, *J*, with a W extension and an earth and flag floor. The full extent of this yard was lost to the plough.

The *East* room was completed by the addition of further features. It was divided into three by a partition in the W (the reuse of the late Stage 5 hearth division), and by one to the E of the roof support. The W part of this room now measured 2.4 × 2.6m and contained a square hearth set into ash and silt. The hearth was kerbed on three sides, but open to the W, and ash was found around it. On the W side of the hearth, subsidence of the underlying rubble caused the depression to be filled with a dump of ash and silt. Some paving was laid onto the new earth floor in the N part of the room and a gap between the partition and the N wall gave access into the new central area. This measured 1.2 ×

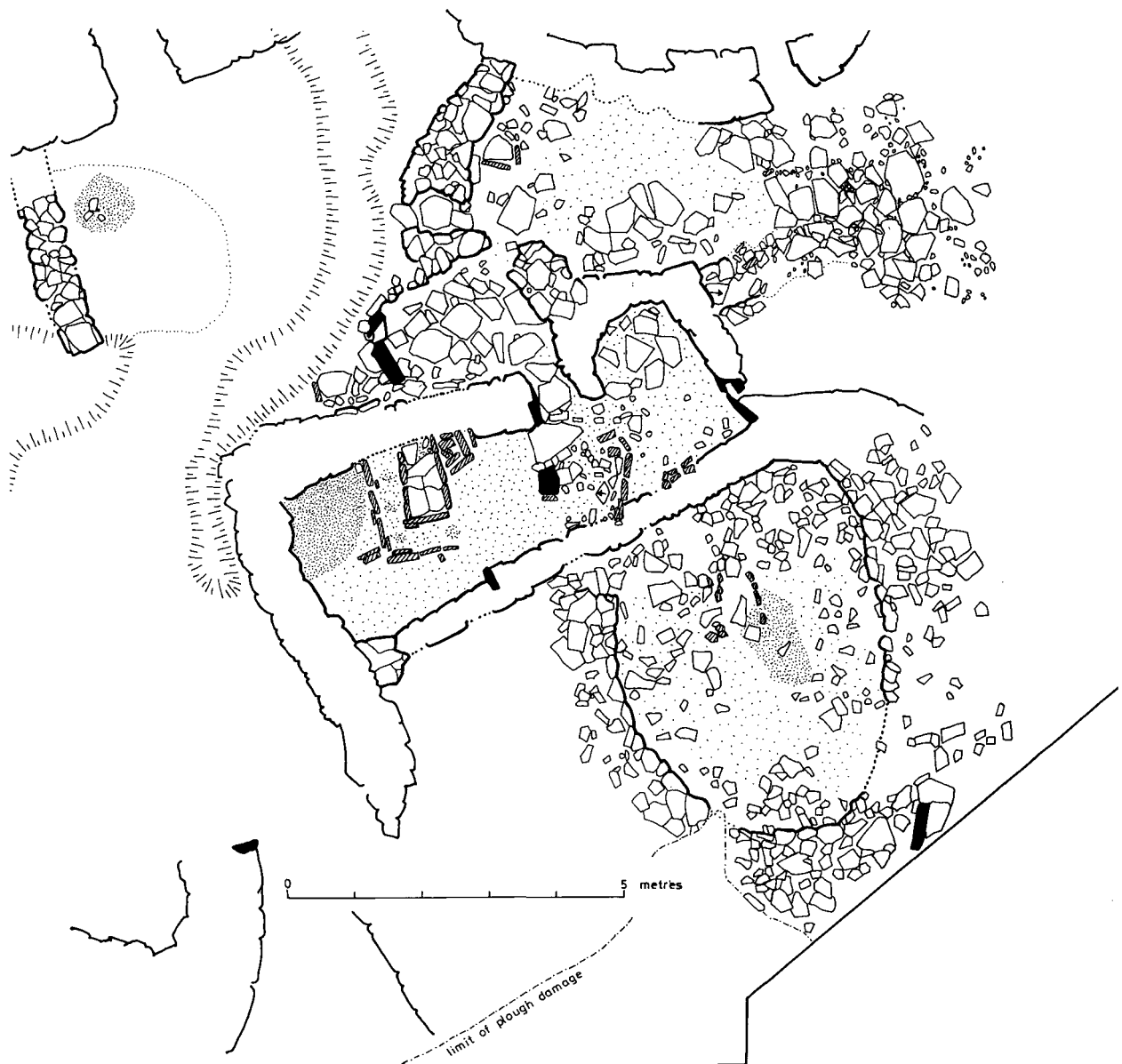
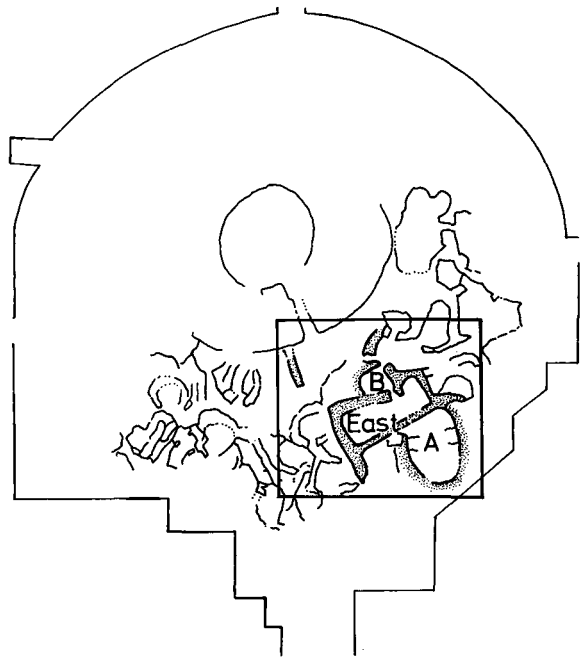
2.4m and was given a clean earth floor. Beyond the roof support and E partition an irregular shaped room with an E cell, *G*, was created. In the S part of the room a square hearth was built, open to the S and filled with and surrounded by ashes. The N half of the room was levelled with earth and surfaced with flags. The E extension was reached through a paved entrance broken through the old E wall. Cell *G* was paved with stones set into a levelling layer of earth and may have had a second doorway in the SE where a sill-stone was built into the wall. Anteroom *B*, N of this redesigned complex, continued in use as did its doorways. The passage to its immediate N was probably still used, as was the structure in front of the broch entrance.

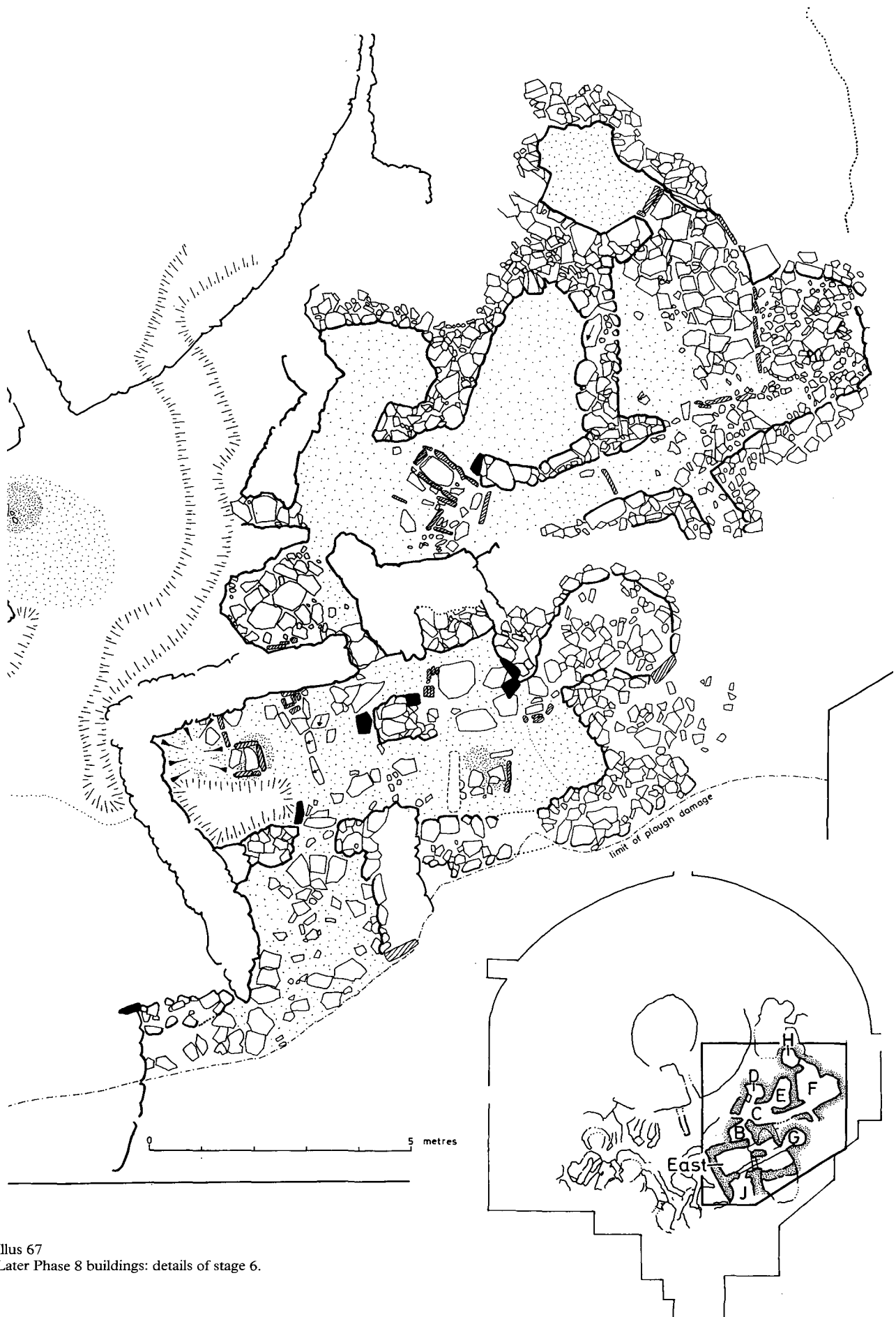
### NE OF THE SITE: ROOMS *C*, *D* *E* AND *H* AND YARD *F*

New building on a large scale took place to the NE. Here, beyond the N entrance to the anteroom, three irregular but interconnecting rooms (*C*, *D* and *E*) were partly built into the levelled remains of the Stage 4 *Oval* building. The E wall of this complex reused the Stage 5 wall which retained the collapsed rubble from the broch tower. At the N end of this wall an irregular oval cell, *D*, was created by the addition of two walls to the N and E. The latter curved to the W and enclosed the earth floor of the cell, 2.2 × 1.2m, forming a 1m wide entrance for it. In doing so, it also created a wall for the room *C*, to the S, and a partition with

Illus 66

Later Phase 8 buildings: stage 5. Inset shows close-up of hearth of reused *E* building; scale – 50cm; from S.





Illus 67  
Later Phase 8 buildings: details of stage 6.

the room **E** to the E. Room **E** was similarly constructed and was enclosed by an arm of walls in the E. Room **C**,  $3.3 \times 2.2\text{m}$ , with a levelled earth floor was formed; it was entered through a  $0.7\text{m}$  wide entrance from the SW. Lying in front of, and almost blocking the entrance to, room **E** was a rectangular hearth, oriented NW-SE, set at one end of the interconnecting room **C**. The hearth measured  $c 1.6 \times 0.6\text{m}$ , had a slab base, and was kerbed on three sides and open to the SE. Abutting it to the S, as part of the hearth complex, was a square kerbed feature. The rest of room **C**, into which the hearth had been constructed, had a thin earth floor over the top of levelled rubble. The hearth was badly located and effectively blocked the access to the **E** room and entry to a narrow passage which led to the E. In view of this, the hearth may not have been part of the original design. Alternatively, the W end of the enclosing wall to the **E** room may have been extended and widened during the early use of this complex.

A passage,  $0.9\text{m}$  wide, traversed the S end of the E room to a roughly levelled and paved yard, **F**, built against the surviving earlier rampart. In total, the passage was  $c 7\text{m}$  long and was faced to the S by a wall which was centrally breached by a  $0.5\text{m}$  wide doorway leading to the SE. The passage was predominantly floored with earth at its W end and stone and earth at its E. A sill-stone was erected in the passage opposite the end of the E wall of the **E** room. A buttress of coursed masonry was also constructed at the exterior corner of the **E** room. It had a dual function of extending the N wall of the passage and of being the W half of a doorway to a courtyard to the N. At this point a cross passage was created to give access into courtyard **F**. The courtyard was oriented N-S and was  $c 2.5 \times 3.5\text{m}$  long. It was enclosed to the E and partly to the S by a line of orthostats which formed a screen between the courtyard, the passage and the yard beyond. The SW half of the courtyard had an earth

floor and the rest of the area was well paved with large flagstones set into levelled rubble. At the N end of the courtyard a silled doorway led directly down into an irregular shaped room, **H**, interpreted as an earthhouse. Its walls were built into the angle formed between the old levelled **Oval** building and the end of the E wall of the Phase 7 **E** building. It measured  $c 2.2 \times 1.6\text{m}$  and had an earth floor.

## STAGE 6 : SECONDARY FEATURES

Although changes may have occurred throughout the occupation of this complex series of rooms, it is only known with certainty that alterations took place within the remodelled old **East** building. At the W end, as a result of slumping, more earth floor and a second layer of paving were added N of the hearth. Subsidence still affected the NW corner where large stones and earth were used to level the surface. The hearth was buried in a mixture of ash, earth floor and rubble on to which was placed a new hearth. It consisted of an angle of kerbing in the NE which enclosed an area of ash with two stake holes. Two  $0.1\text{m}$  diameter post settings were also constructed, one to the SW of the new hearth, and another against the W wall in the area of subsidence.

The central room remained unaltered, but in the E room the N half was refloored with flags which were eventually partly covered in ash from the hearth. The central roof support for the structure had its E end rebuilt as it had partly collapsed. A new partition of low upright stones was erected E of the hearth and cell **G** was also altered. It was given a new earth floor into which were placed some flagstones and a hearth at its E end. The hearth was poorly made but kerbed and open to the S.

## STAGE 7 (illus 68)

### EAST BUILDING AREA

Stage 6 may have seen a long occupation and new alterations interpreted as Stage 7 were the result of building collapse. An orthostatic-faced blocking was inserted over the top of paving in the E room of the **East** building and the cell **G** was reduced in size by the addition of a curved N wall. The alterations were not successful as the room and cell were soon abandoned following, or during, the collapse of the W partition and the recent blocking. After this abandonment, alterations were made in the W half of the structure. The N entrance was blocked and faced with stone and a new entrance was made through the N wall  $1.5\text{m}$  to the W. A new E wall to the W room was probably built at this time, which was later blocked by large stones at its W end because of slumping of the N wall of the building. A new earth floor was then laid in the W room. The earlier hearth and floor were covered with a thin layer of earth with some paving in the N and a new hearth built on top. The hearth, aligned E-W, was open to the W and measured  $1.1 \times 0.6\text{m}$ . Ash spread across the N part of the floor from the hearth which had been cleared, and later subsided to the W. As in the previous stages, the SW part of the room had been destroyed by 19th-century excavation.

The area to the S of this room continued in use and the deposits on top of its floor were capped with a flag surface creating a yard, **J**. Approximately  $3\text{m}$  to the SW, a new structure, **K**, was built into the abandonment rubble of the mound. Its W wall enclosed an area,  $2.2 \times 2.0\text{m}$ , of earth and ash and stone flooring. The E wall of this structure was curved but very fragmentary. The only other feature associated with this structure was a  $2\text{m}$  length of single-faced wall at its S extremity which was aligned N-S which seemed to be a later addition.

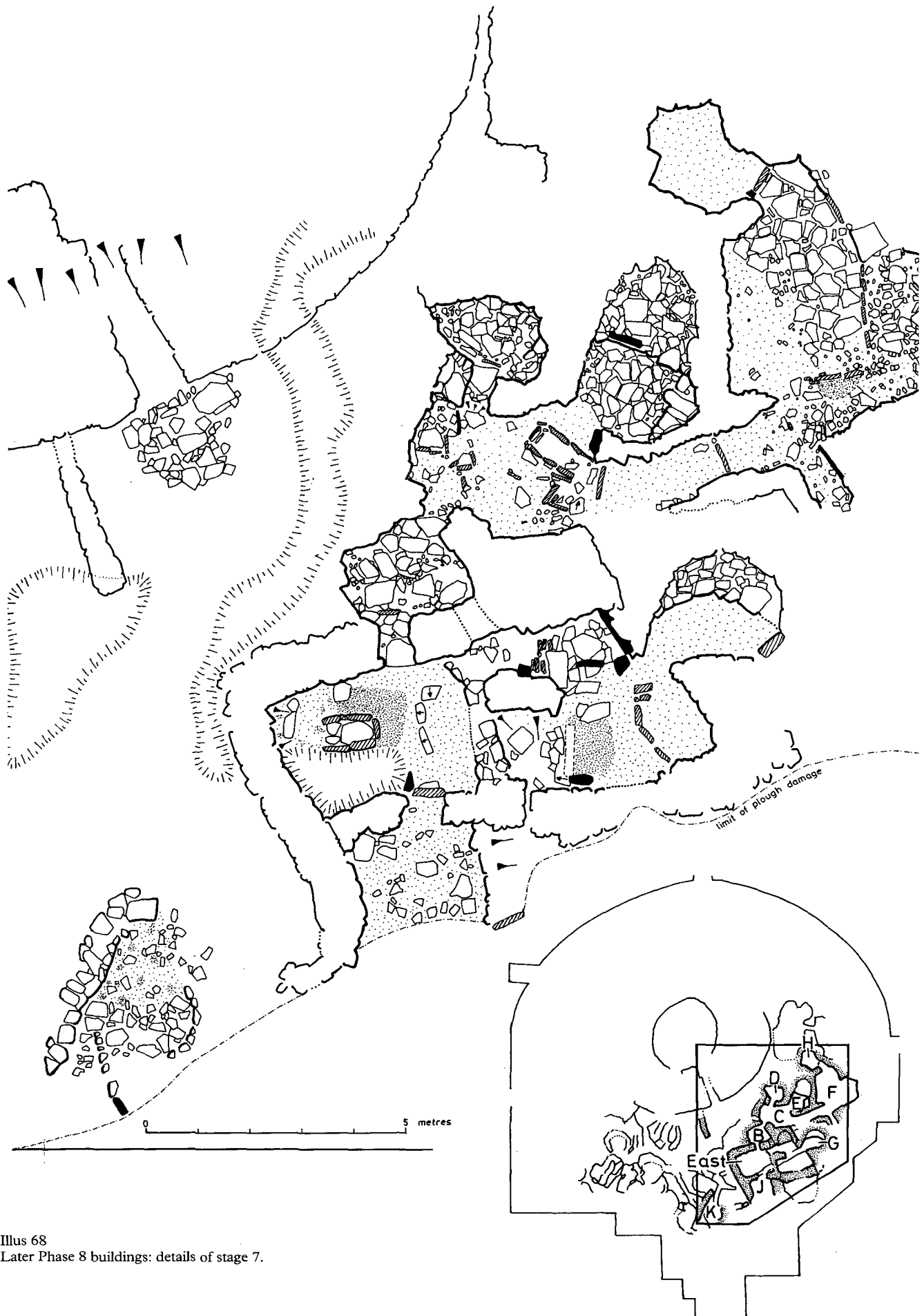
An area of heavy rubble was stacked in front of the broch

entrance, and also over the remains of the structure in use here in the previous two stages. This rubble may have been the result of removing the broch entrance lintels. N of the altered **East** building, anteroom **B** was repaved after the new entrance was pushed through from the S and the old entrance blocked. A buttress was also added against its W wall.

### NE BUILDINGS COMPLEX

The complex of structures to the NE were similarly altered during this Stage. The doorway to cell **D** was narrowed by the addition of a  $1\text{m}$  wide buttress from the W. The cell and its entrance were given a new flag floor, set into earth, with the addition of a sill-stone. A fragmentary additional wall or bench was built at the same time as the floor was laid down, but against the E wall of cell **D**. SW of the entrance, against the W wall of room **C**, a kerbed stone setting was constructed with a stone base. A small angular partition partly screened the setting to the SE.

Other alterations took place within the **E** room which was reduced in size by the addition of a central E-W blocking wall and filled in behind with rubble. This may have been a final solution to a badly constructed room whose walls were collapsing. Evidence of a small buttress, predating the blocking, was found in the N of the room, and the SE arm of the room was also strengthened by the addition of extra masonry. After these alterations the room was paved with large flagstones. The only other discernible additions during this Stage were a buttress in the angle of courtyard **F** with the doorway of earthhouse **H** and a dump of furnace lining, clay and slag against the S partition of the courtyard. This  $0.8 \times 0.5\text{m}$  dump of industrial waste is significant as it indicates the continuation of iron smelting on the site (see Slag report 8.7 below).



Illus 68  
Later Phase 8 buildings: details of stage 7.

## STAGE 8 (illus 69)

This stage covers the initial re-expansion of the settlement W into the area abandoned since Stage 4. Use of the **East** building and the rooms in the NE continued, but the most important changes were those relating to access.

THE **EAST** BUILDING COMPLEX

The entrance into the **East** building from the yard **J** in the S was blocked, while passage through the N complex of rooms and yards to the E entrance remained possible, if somewhat obstructed. A new entrance 0.7m wide was cut at the NW end of the **East** building wall. This was partly faced to the N and S by coursed masonry and had a flagged floor. Porch **M**, into which this led, and the contemporary sheds to the S and W are discussed below.

Within the **East** building the N-S partition, E of centre, was retained, but a new earth floor was laid, sealing the large hearth from the previous stage. Material from this floor produced a radiocarbon date (10 Radiocarbon dates below) of  $1450 \pm 50$  bp, which calibrated suggests a date somewhere around the mid 6th century cal AD. S of the entrance, an E-W partition was built of five uprights; four stood up to 0.1m above the floor level while the fifth, to the W, survived to a height of 0.3m, approximately that of the surviving wall. A small hearth, 0.5m square, was constructed against the N wall and, like its predecessor, was open ended to the W. It continued in use until the end of Stage 9 and some ash deposits remained between its earlier and later base slabs. This is the only hearth attributable to Stages 8 or 9 found on the site. Excavations last century had completely destroyed the rest of the floor in this room.

By Stage 8, wall slumps had led to the complete abandonment of the central room **E** in the NE rooms. Rubble covered the large hearth and its earth floor, which became a partly roofed or unroofed yard, **C**. Porch **B** which linked this complex with the old domestic area further S remained largely unchanged – except for a small buttress added to the W wall.

Room **D** continued in use unaltered: both its flagged floor and silled entrance were retained as were the setting and kerb around it. The only other building in use in the vicinity was the earthhouse **H** in the extreme N. Here a new earth floor, up to 0.4m deep, was laid and the threshold rebuilt with small orthostats and flags but the earlier sill continued in use. The earlier, partly paved, yard **F**, had become disused and covered with up to 0.5m of small stone fragments. For this reason, a staircase, consisting of seven steps, was constructed c 2m N of the E entrance to the settlement and ending c 1m S of the entrance to the earthhouse **H**. A single-faced retaining wall formed the W side of the staircase and abutted the S side of the entrance to the earthhouse, but an E wall was never found. This was perhaps a result of the construction of a building in Stage 12, although, equally, this could be seen as confirmation that it was still an open yard.

A new porch, **M**, was added to the entrance to the reused **East** building, it was oval and measured 2.0m  $\times$  1.8m. Its curvilinear wall cut deeply into the surrounding ground surface in the N and W. Its lower courses, buried in the ground surface, were single-faced, but higher up it was freestanding. The S end of this wall was entirely freestanding; it had a rubble core and rested on foundation stones set wider than the wall. The E part of the porch was missing as a result of rebuilding in Stage 10 and disturbance caused by the S end of a long, sinuous N-S robber trench.

Within the porch, a flagged surface was laid upon a deep layer of sandy loam levelling. The flags in the new entrance through to the **East** room were at the same level as this floor, although the relationship between them was also destroyed by the robber trench. E of the sill and slightly below the level of the flagged floor was a pivot-stone (SF 110), assumed to be *in situ*. S of the porch was a flagged surface, a yard, which replaced the inaccessible one,

**J**, further E. This new yard surface extended for 4.5m, as far as the limit of deep ploughing, but was cut to the E and W over most of its length by later structures so its original width cannot be determined.

## THE W SIDE OF THE SETTLEMENT

The only surviving occupation deposit in the W part of the settlement from this Stage was a fragmentary shell and bone midden, abutting the W wall of the porch and overlying the ground surface and some of the rubble bank. This may have been more extensive, but was cut on the N by another 19th-century excavation trench.

Phasing of the structures further W is tentative. In the NW were two arcs of walling each c 2m in length. The furthest E of these was single-faced to the W and survived to a height of three courses. It was truncated to the N and S by later structures. Further W, was an even more fragmentary stretch of single-faced wall. These two walls need not have been contemporary but may have formed parts of a single arc, as tipped flags under later structures in the intervening area could have been part of this structure. Their function cannot be determined as no occupation deposits survived in association with them.

## STAGE 8: SECONDARY STRUCTURES (illus 70a)

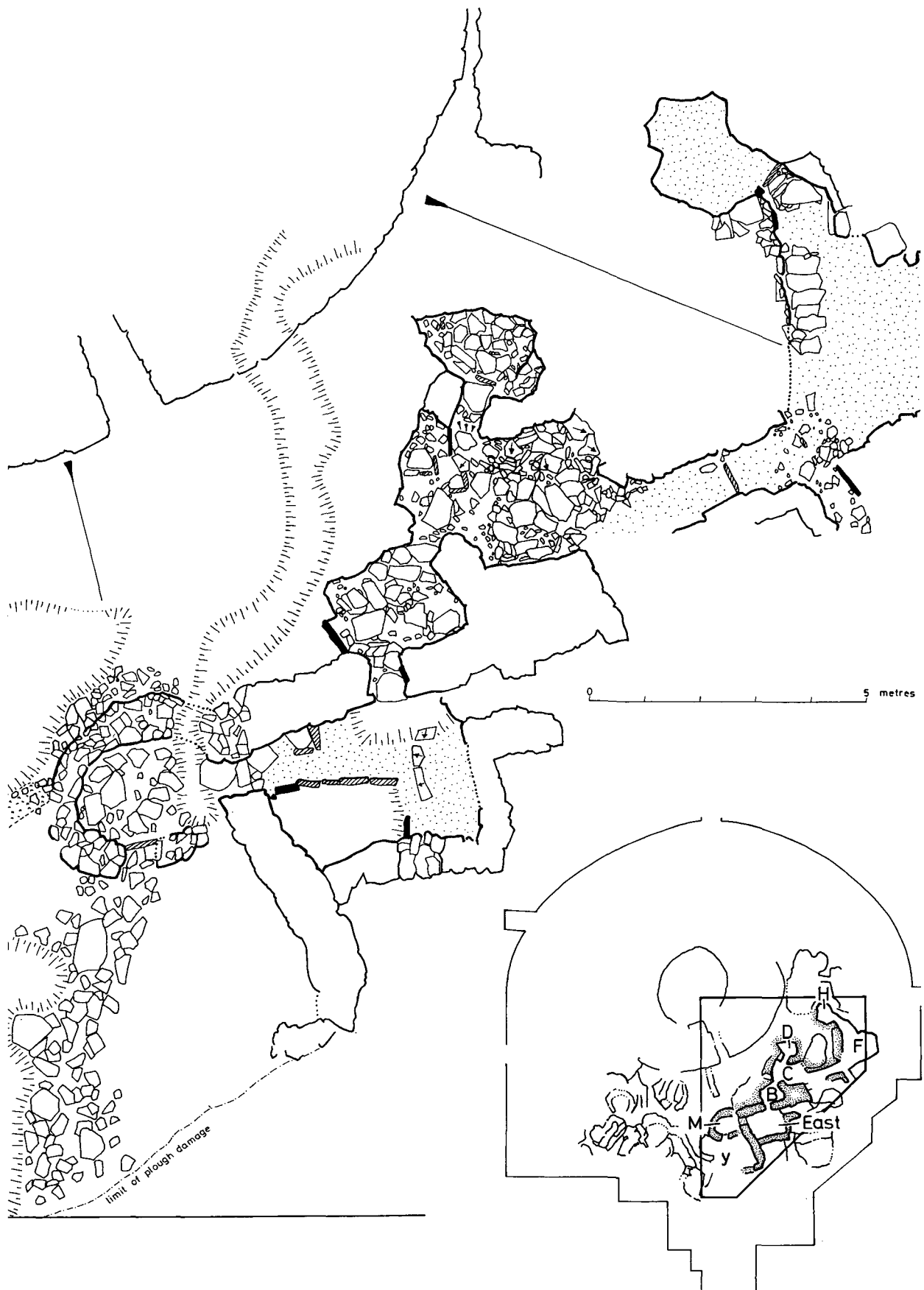
The revived interest in the W rubble slopes from the broch tower led to the rapid development of the settlement into that area. Three new buildings can be assigned to the later part of Stage 8, together with a number of linking features. A building, **N**, with entrances towards the E and W was built to the SW of the new yard and porch **M**. It was approximately oval in shape and measured c 1.5m  $\times$  2.2m internally. The N and E walls appeared to have been single-faced, though the rubble backing for the latter, which would have overlain the yard surface, was later robbed almost entirely. The S and W walls were freestanding and built predominantly of sub-rounded boulders, in contrast to the coursed flags from which the remainder of the structure was constructed. The entrance in the S end of the E wall was a simple gap. In contrast, the W entrance consisted of large upright door jambs between which were carefully laid flags.

Most of the flag flooring within the room had been disturbed. Levelling under these flags and under the entrance could have existed for a time as an earth floor. Early in its use, the N wall and N door jamb were rebuilt to accommodate an earth-floored cupboard or tiny store room, 0.7m wide, with single-faced walling, and an opening to the W. It was truncated to the W by a recent field wall and so its original length is not known.

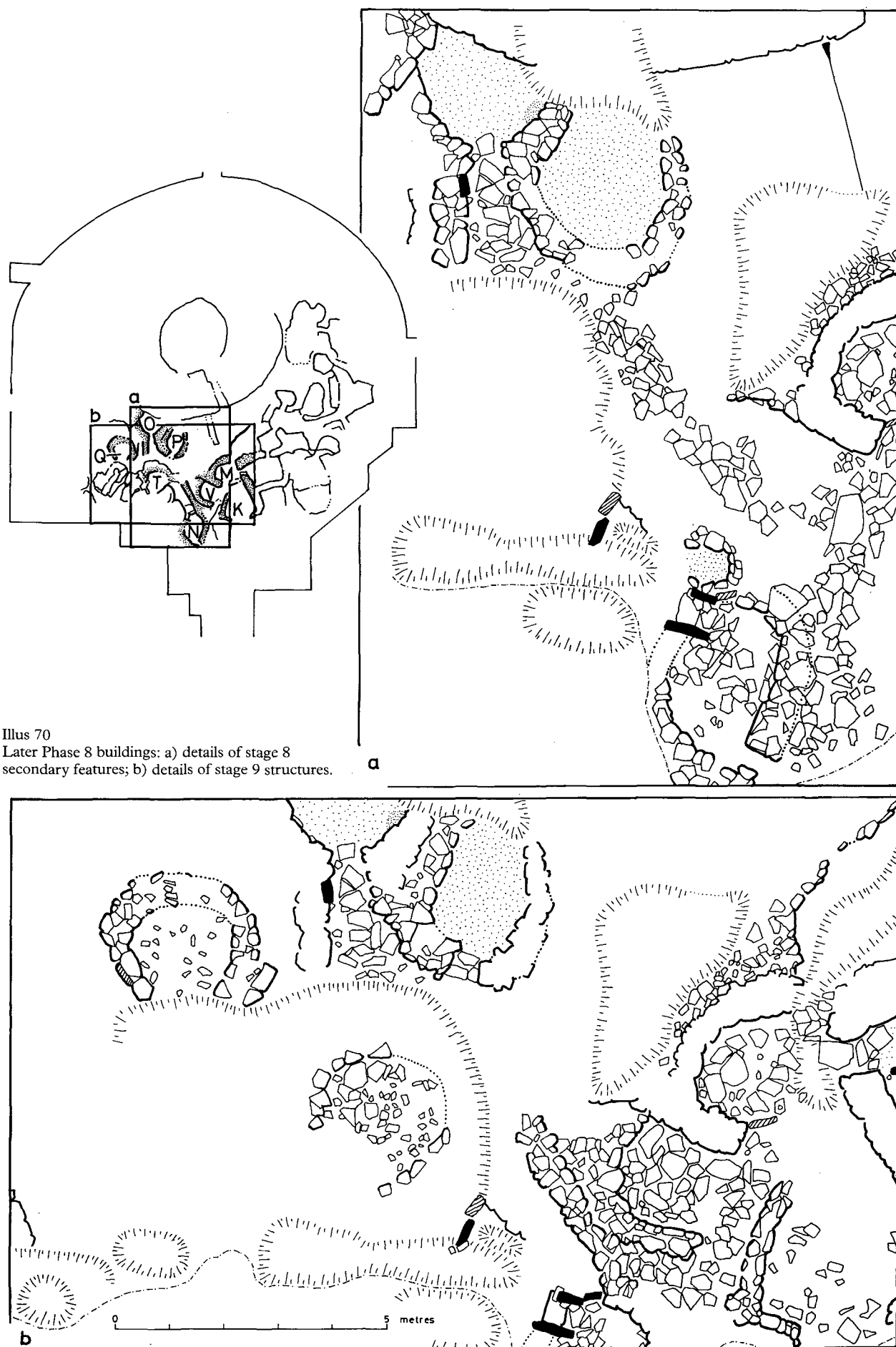
Half way along the yard, a flagged path led off to the NW towards two sheds, **O** and **P**, abutting the remains of the broch tower wall. This path passed a short stretch of single-faced wall inserted to retain the shell and bone midden W of the porch and was carefully bonded to the S wall of porch **M**. The path stretched in a straight line for c 10m, though it was partly cut away at its N end during Stage 10 construction and ended at the entrance to shed **O**. Shed **O** was semi-circular in shape with maximum dimensions of 2.5m  $\times$  1.7m internally. It utilized the broch tower as its N wall, whilst the NW corner was composed of a single-faced retaining wall built against continued masonry collapse from the broch. This directly overlay a Phase 7 wall which had served the same function. Abutting the new retaining wall was the curved single-faced W wall of the shed, which had a very substantial rubble bank behind it including tipped flags which may have come from the earlier Stage 8 fragmentary walls in this area.

A freestanding wall at least 1.7m long, lying N-S, protected the W side of the entrance to shed **O**. Ash levelling under this wall was





Illus 69  
Later Phase 8 buildings: details of stage 8.



Illus 70  
Later Phase 8 buildings: a) details of stage 8  
secondary features; b) details of stage 9 structures.

noted and a substantial midden of shell and bone accumulated W of it between Stages 8 and 10. The floor of shed **O** was composed of earth and stone chippings and was largely clean except for an ash patch which abutted the wall between the two sheds. This dividing wall was 0.75m wide, had a rubble core, and was built on a mound of levelling. The S side of this E shed, **P**, survived in a very fragmentary condition and no primary entrance could be determined. Both the dividing wall and the E wall (also freestanding, but only 0.5m wide with a stone chip core) were cut to the S of the broch tower by a 19th-century stone robbing

trench. It is possible that the two sheds were linked by a passage in front of the broch wall, but it is assumed that the entrance to shed **P** was always from the path. Like its neighbour, it had a fragmentary stone floor.

From illustration 70a, it will be seen that the porch and three sheds, together with the linking path, had, by the end of Stage 8, formed a unified group. Although parts of the large Stage 4 **Stalled** building were still clearly visible there is no evidence that it continued to be used during this stage.

## STAGE 9 (illus 70b)

### **EAST BUILDING COMPLEX**

In this Stage, use of the area W of the **East** domestic room increased considerably but, as in Stage 8, no new hearth was evident. The **East** room continued in use together with the N rooms and earthhouse **H**, and without any apparent change in character (illus 71). Access to the W sheds beside the broch tower, which included a new structure **Q**, became more circuitous following the abandonment of the path. A new yard, **K**, in the S and a room in the angle between the Stage 8 porch and the N side of the wall of the **East** building were constructed at this time.

The latter consisted of a curvilinear wall built on a foundation of laid flags, and single-faced to the SE. It abutted the N side of the porch, through which an entrance was cut. The S end of the wall stood to a height of c 0.6m, but further N only one course of small flags survived. Almost the entire floor area was removed by a 19th-century stone robbing trench, as were any relationships to the structures to the SE.

To the SE of the entrance to porch **M**, a N-S freestanding wall was built forming one side of an enclosed yard **K**, c 2.0–3.2m wide, between it and the old Phase 7 wall. Yard **K** was entered from the S, through a 1.5m wide gap between the remains of the old wall and an insubstantial piece of freestanding masonry. The

surface of this yard was composed of flags and stone fragments and, whilst it may have been roofed, the wide entrance and type of floor suggest that it was not. The N end of the structure was redesigned in Stage 10 and therefore it is not known whether access to porch **M** from yard **K** was possible. No modifications were made to the porch in this Stage but a second pivot-stone (SF 109) was found at the E end of the sill.

A substantial curved wall abutted the S face of the midden retaining wall. It was constructed of squared sandstone blocks and survived to a height of at least 0.45m on a foundation of wider set stones. At its S end, where it turned towards the W wall of yard **K**, it was freestanding, but was single-faced elsewhere. Originally this part of the wall had been 1m wide. Above this it was 0.5m wide with the wider foundation course laying outside the room, **V**. After it had been completed, a flag floor was put down which continued through the entrance as flags. The fact that these flags stopped c 0.7m from the NE wall of the Stage 8 shed, **N**, probably indicates that its rubble backing was still in place.

Structure **V**, just described, overlay the flagged path which led towards the sheds in the NW and a stone chip ground surface sealed the path further N. A freestanding wall ran SE–NW in the direction of the sheds at the broch tower but was damaged at its N end in Stage 10. Its construction required the levelling of the tiny



Illus 71  
Later Phase 8 buildings during excavation in the E half of the site; scales – 2m; from S.

earth-floored store of the previous Stage. Oval shed **N**, to which it had been joined, remained unmodified in this Stage. The SE-NW wall can be seen as a retaining wall for continued ground surface build up and perhaps as the E side of an unsurfaced path to the NW sheds.

### THE W BUILDING COMPLEX

The westernmost of the two NW sheds, **O**, remained unaltered, but the E side of the dividing wall was buttressed by an extensive addition, reducing the internal width of shed **P** by up to 0.7m. A paved entrance from the S was associated with this rebuilding and was sited at a level indicative of considerable ground surface accumulation around the structure. Both sheds retained earth floors, and the shed **O** seems to have kept its flagged entrance.

The disused structure to the W of the sheds was replaced by a small freestanding building, **Q**, c 1.8m in diameter which survived to a height of a single course. It had a simple paved entrance on the W side, and its floor was of small compacted rubble. Damage caused by Stage 10 precludes reconstruction of the S end of this building, but it appears to have been sub-circular in shape.

Stratigraphically isolated from the other structures, but predating Stage 10, was a sub-circular single-faced structure, **T**, which was built into the stony ground surface. The floor of this c 2m diameter building was composed of flags in the W and rubble, silt and some charcoal elsewhere. No entrance to the building survived but may be assumed to have been in the SW. The building was heavily robbed in Stage 10. Access between the S and NW sheds must have been difficult because of differences in height between the various rubble surfaces.

## STAGE 10 (illus 72; 73)

### THE W BUILDING COMPLEX

This Stage saw the establishment of a large and important domestic complex in the area formerly occupied by the Phase 8 Stage 4 *Stalled* building. The old domestic *East* room may have continued in use in its Stage 8 form, but the porch between it and the new structure underwent modifications which suggest a change of use. Sheds **O** and **P** remained functional for at least a short time in a reduced form while shed **T** was levelled to facilitate access from E to W and was superseded by part of the new multi-roomed house. This new building exploited the advantages of deep rubble abandonment and also small fragments of the *Stalled* building. Its position on the shallowest slope of the site resulted in severe plough damage to the structure, but it is clear that this building marks a shift of focus for the settlement. All the older buildings were relegated to storage or other limited use.

### ROOMS/CELLS **R**, **S** AND **U**

The new building consisted of a heart-shaped cell, **R**, to the W and a figure-of-eight room, **U**, to the E with a further, much destroyed, cell SE of this. The two structures were linked by another room, **S**, which can perhaps be seen in the role of a porch. We do not know how much of these buildings to the S were destroyed by ploughing. Cell **R** survived complete, if with only one course of walling in places. Initially, porch **S** and cell **R** were flag-floored as was the N half of room **U**. The S part of the latter had an earth floor and contained an unenclosed hearth. The fragmentary SE cell also appears to have had an earth floor. A deep hollow had been made in the upper levels of a stony ground surface to accommodate the N wall of structure **U** and for parts of the N walls of the porch and room **R**.

Room **U** survived to a length of 4.40m, its floor areas each being up to 2.8m wide. Behind it, the area between wall face and ground surface was filled by rubble overlain by a layer of thick flags. It is probable that these flags represented an external ground level which only covered the rubble behind the E half of the wall. At the W end of the flags, at a slightly lower level, was a semi-circular alcove formed by small flags surrounded by uprights. In the W, the remainder of these walls were backed by rubble.

In the finely coursed E wall of Room **U** was a simple entrance which was approximately 0.6m wide. The S continuation of the E wall consisted of orthostats surmounted by flags; it abutted at right angles a small fragment of coursed wall which lay to the S of the entrance. The wall was rubble backed and its S end was formed from orthostats and masonry rebuilds of the Stage 4 *Stalled* building.

The wall of the fragmentary SE cell consisted of high orthostats, on a layer of rubble levelling, surmounted by coursed flags. Its N end, which abutted a reused orthostat, consisted of a rubble rebuild overlying a fragment of the Stage 4 *Stalled* building wall

which survived to a height of four courses.

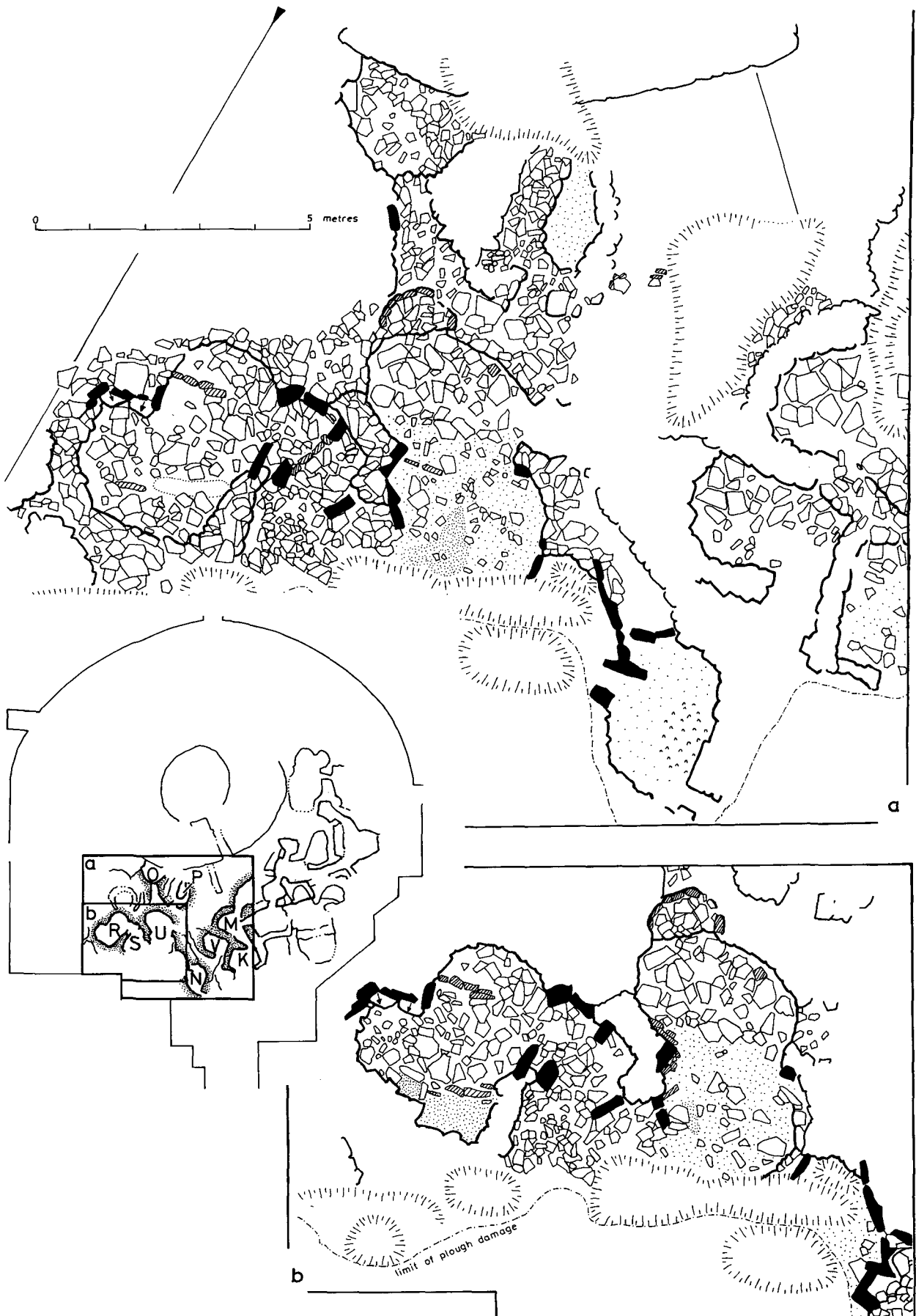
The N half of Stage 8-9 shed **N** was, by this time, filled with rubble, and an earth layer covered the tiny store. The new wall cut this earth abandonment layer and its S orthostat blocked the W entrance to the old shed, where small rubble was piled. A new orthostat was positioned to the S of the blocked opening to form a new entrance. As a result of robbing and plough damage, it is not clear whether the remainder of the W side of shed **N** remained an integral part of the new structure or whether a missing wall continued the curved path of the new orthostatic masonry.

The W side of room **U** was formed by a freestanding dividing wall, with the porch in the N and an orthostatic wall abutting it in the S. The latter contained three large uprights, the S and the large orthostat on the porch side of the wall were freestanding. The area between these two uprights was filled with flattened rubble. It is probable that that this area was never blocked and formed part of an entrance through to the porch. The W side of the dividing wall contained another large orthostat near to its N end. To the W of this were one small and two large orthostats topped by flags forming the N wall of porch **S** which led to room **R**. Another finely coursed wall, consisting of larger flags than the E wall of the figure-of-eight cell, **U**, abutted the orthostatic masonry just described. Beyond this, the W end of the room was constructed within the shell of the Stage 4 *Stalled* building.

The original style of the new wall in cell **R** was unclear due to the settling of its rubble backing. The wall formed a right-angled corner to the N, consisting of two large orthostats surmounted by horizontal flags. The W wing of the corner was of a hybrid construction, some large flags were arranged on points rather than edges, the intervening spaces being filled by rubble and smaller uprights. The W and S coursed walls of room **R** survived complete, and formed a room 3.5m by 3.5m. The backing rubble to the SE corner of the structure was destroyed by a recent animal burial pit. Only one course of the E wall of room **R** survived as a result of later rebuilding; unlike the W wall, this consisted of a rubble core faced with comparatively large blocks. The N end of this wall was terminated by two substantial orthostats, which formed an entrance c 0.85m wide with the orthostats of the single-faced wall opposite and with the massive upright abutting the other dividing wall.

The figure-of-eight building, **U**, had a sequence of four earth floors in the S area of the E cell, suggesting that it was in use for a relatively long period. Few links were present within the house to indicate the relationships of the numerous minor structural modifications to the sequence of hearth/earth floors. For this reason, the primary floor has been included on illustration 72a and the final hearth and floor on the composite plan of secondary features (illus 72b). The intermediate floors are not illustrated but described below.

The earliest floor in the S consisted of silt mixed with small rubble, immediately overlying abandonment rubble and an earth ground



Illus 72

Later Phase 8 buildings: a) details of stage 10; b) details of stage 10 secondary features.



Illus 73

Excavation of Later Phase 8 buildings on the W part of the site. Part of the stage 10 figure-of-eight building, U, can be seen in the lower centre; from NW.

surface. In the N of the floor, a spread of small rubble was distinct and could have been functional, perhaps as a post support. A pair of low upright flags were dug into the abandonment surface N of this. They seem too low to have served as a kerb to the hearth but may be seen as supports for a flimsy partition. A sequence of ash and charcoal layers developed to the S of the hearth area. A tiny choked stake-hole within this sequence may have been one of a group, but no others were recognized. The second floor consisted of a number of silts, overlain by ash patches in the W. A large flag dominated the hearth area although smaller stones were scattered elsewhere on the floor and other features included two small stake holes, possibly spit sockets. The third floor is described below (Secondary features).

The N area of the figure-of-eight building, **U**, had a floor of large flags, carefully levelled with earth with a deposit of willow/sallow charcoal (SF 1564) in the W. To the E of the flagged area, almost abutting the coursed N wall, an orthostatic block stood c 0.15m above floor level. Initially both room **R** and porch **S** had a flagged floor with no signs of a hearth. The floor to porch **S** was carefully laid, but the floor in room **R** was rather poor. In the S portion of the porch, extending as far as the limit of deep ploughing, levelled rubble formed the only surface.

Access to room **R** was across a sill constructed of four low orthostats, well packed with small stones. No pivot-stone was present. Compacted rubble (which included the gaming board SF 700) in the area immediately W of the sill, gave way to larger flags. Stones from a collapsed refacing to the N wall of the Stage 4 **Stalled** building were reused as a kerb or partition packing. The floor throughout the W room was of fairly sparse flags of very mixed size, laid directly onto the earth ground surface. Finally, within the fragmentary SE cell, small areas of earth flooring survived, mainly beside the orthostatic wall and the entrance.

### THE **EAST** BUILDING COMPLEX

SE of this complex of rooms, within the former shed **N**, a shell midden accumulated against the E wall. Since the rubble backing for this wall was removed at some point, this event is likely have taken place in this Stage, before the final disuse of the four buildings grouped around the W side of the **East** building and shed **N**

complex. It seems a valid assumption that the SE room of the new building was of similar size to shed **N** and may therefore have superseded it in functional terms. To the E, modifications were made to the enclosed yard **K** and the two S rooms of the Stage 8 and 9 development. In room **M**, no further information is available than for its Stage 9 state as a result of 19th-century robbing. In the room nearest to the new structure, **V**, a new floor was laid consisting of flags over the N half and small stones and earth within and to the W of the entrance. As in its Stage 9 use, no pivot-stone was present.

The former silled entrance to room **M**, immediately to the N, was blocked and faced with rubble and the N end of the freestanding wall between room **V** and the yard **K** to the E was bonded to it and to a new wall. This had the effect of enlarging room **M** and reducing the length of yard **K**. A narrow entrance without sill- or pivot-stone, led S from the enlarged room into the yard. The entrance area of the enlarged room was floored with carefully laid flags while the remainder was covered by very large, thick flags on a layer of levelling rubble c 0.3m deep. The status of the reused **East** building and the N complex, both last modified in Stage 8, remain debatable as a result of 19th-century excavation and will not be dwelt upon. These rooms are shown on the Stage 10 plan as though they were still in use, as there is no evidence to the contrary.

### THE NW SHEDS

Lastly, a final period of use is discernible in the NW sheds, **O** and **P**. The entrance in the NE of room **U** led to an area of stony ground surface and thereby permitted the use of the sheds via a route next to the broch tower wall. Although this area was robbed during the 19th century it was possible to see a blocking faced on the interior in the entrance to shed **O**, and a new floor of uneven small flags laid within it. In shed **P**, the already widened dividing wall was further buttressed, blocking the S entrance. The resulting floor area was c 1m wide. Beyond the E wall of this shed, two stone settings cutting the abandonment have been tentatively phased to this Stage, though their function is uncertain. A possible explanation is that they belong to a lean-to structure or shelter related to the two sheds.

### PHASE 10 : SECONDARY FEATURES (illus 72b)

It is assumed that the Stage 10 buildings had a comparatively long life. This is borne out by the presence of the hearth and earth floor deposits in the S cell of the figure-of-eight structure, **U**. Room **R** was partly redesigned and the SE and NW walls of room **U** refaced. Blocking of the two entrances in the E of the complex prevented access to the sheds **O** and **P**, and to the rooms grouped around the old **East** building. In room **R**, the S wall was rebuilt to include a rectangular niche, utilizing the dividing wall with the porch and a setting of three low uprights. The 1.1m × 0.7m area had an earth floor. Immediately to the W of this, two much larger orthostats enclosed a very small (0.4 × 0.3m) area of earth floor entered from the W. Most of the rest of the room received a new, but very uneven, flag floor. Porch **S** appears to have remained unaltered for the whole of the Stage.

In the N half of the figure-of-eight building, **U**, the E side of the dividing wall with porch **S**, was refaced with four orthostats. New, larger, flags were laid in the semi-circular intramural alcove in the N wall of the room. As has already been mentioned, the entrance in the E side of this wall was blocked, rather crudely with partly faced rubble and redeposited stone fragments. In front of this blocking, two superimposed blocky flags appeared to be a support or simple furnishing similar to the orthostat c 0.5m to the NW. In the S half of the room, the E wall was refaced with small, blocky, coursed flags on a foundation of small rubble. This curved W but was cut by the massive Phase 9 field wall and by plough disturbance. A large, thick flag lay beside the refacing and, like the smaller set stones further N, may have been more than simply a piece of flooring.

Ploughing also damaged the S extremities of the third and fourth earth floors in the room. The orthostat, which stood beyond the S end of the dividing wall, was abutted by a coursed refacing which overlay the second earth floor described above. The central section

of the orthostat wall to the N of this was also refaced or buttressed with coursed masonry. A small post setting was inserted beside the N orthostat of the wall but there was no indication as to whether this was structural or simply part of the adjacent hearth. The later earth floors of this building became progressively less extensive.

The E side of room *U* continued to be covered by the second floor throughout its later history, while the third floor, a grey-brown silt loam, overlay it in the W half. The third hearth produced a larger quantity of ash and charcoal and a charcoal spread, which overlay two low uprights to the N of the hearth area. This was later sealed by another silty loam earth floor with ash/earth dumps. These last

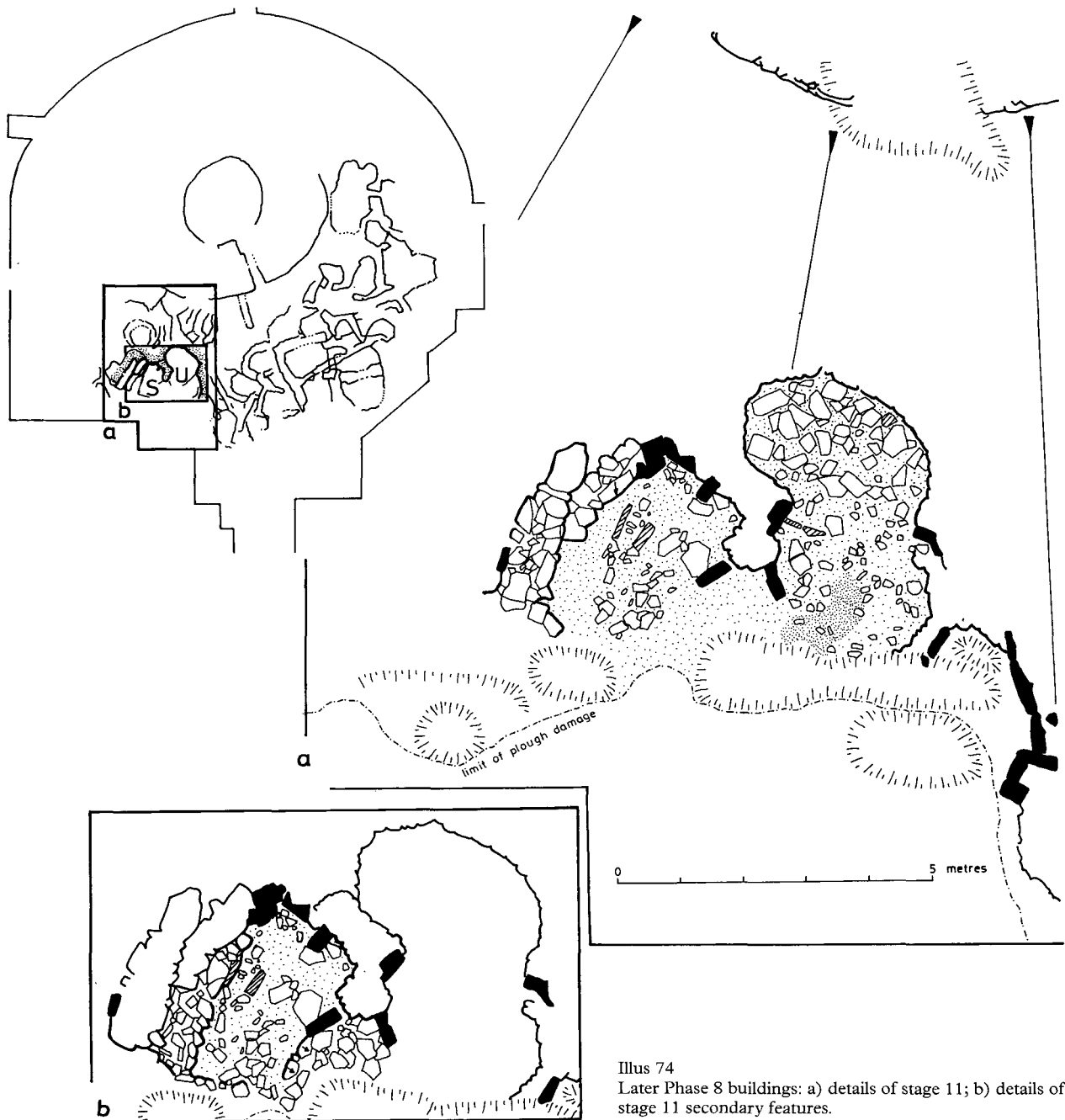
had the distinction of producing the only hazelnut shell (SF 1547) found in any period of the site. A burnt and much fragmented flag overlay this floor and seemed to represent the final form of the hearth, but no ash or charcoal can be attributed to its use. This hearth appeared to be unenclosed although a single orthostat, to the N, cut all the earth floors and was probably associated with it.

The E entrance from the fragmentary SE cell had an elaborate blocking consisting of a curved single-faced wall built between the entrance orthostats and backed by rubble, that partly filled the levelled structure. An orthostat was then positioned across the former entrance and the gap between this upright and the curvilinear wall filled with rubble.

### STAGE 11 (illus 74a)

The late stages of the settlement's history are difficult to interpret because of their fragmentary nature; however, Stage 11 represents continued use of at least part of the Stage 10 structures. This is

the last stage where continuous development can be proved as the Stage 12 structures and the late, unphased features cannot be tied to the end of the sequence.



Illus 74

Later Phase 8 buildings: a) details of stage 11; b) details of stage 11 secondary features.

THE W COMPLEX : **R**, **S** AND **U**

The freestanding wall separating room **R** and porch **S** of the Stage 10 structure, was levelled to one course at the beginning of this Stage. It was replaced by a similar N–S wall built on a layer of small rubble, leaving an entrance in the S. An earth floor which had developed in porch **S** and within an area extending at least 0.5m W of the entrance, continued to build up throughout this Stage. The W room continued in use for a short time, still with the rough flagged floor, from the end of Stage 10. The earth floor overlay these flags in the new entrance. To the E, the same earth floor overlay the flags S of the dividing wall between porch **S** and room **U**, and it is therefore likely that this room remained in use. No hearth was found in the former porch, indicating that the unenclosed hearth in the E room probably remained in use. The only features present in the earth floor of the porch were some scattered flags and a post-setting, approximately in the centre of the room, which may have replaced a more fragmentary example further S which was sealed by some of the earth floor.

## STAGE 11 : SECONDARY FEATURES (illus 74b)

The old porch, **S**, was subsequently reduced in size and access first to the W and then (less certainly) to the E made impossible. The blocking of the W entrance was accomplished by the construction of a wall, single-faced to the E and overlapping behind the earlier Stage 11 W wall. Its S end was very uncertain due to plough damage but a few stones suggest that it curved to the SE within the surviving length. The W side of the room was then buttressed by a further rebuild which abutted both the earlier W walls and overlay the W orthostat of the post setting, though this would not necessarily have rendered the setting unusable. Immediately to the S of the setting and abutting the new wall was a patch of charcoal. As in the earlier form of the building, a fragmentary E–W wall survived to the S. Furthermore, this curved round to abut the large orthostat beside the S end of the dividing wall with room **U**. Although there must have been an entrance through this wall, too little remained to allow it to be identified.

## STAGE 12 (illus 75)

The main focus of activity on the site at this time was the old **NE** building which was reused for the first time since Stage 4. The walls of this c 6 × 3m building had remained largely intact since its abandonment and a new earth floor c 0.25m in depth was laid throughout. This floor was lost at its S end because of recent disturbance, but contained an area of flags in the vicinity of the E entrance, and some charcoal N of this. A stone setting NW of the entrance was a later feature and over lay a shell midden deposit within the earth floor. To the E of the entrance and the old rampart, a semi-circular yard, **L**, c 3.5m wide, was formed which had a thin flag and stony surface. The old adjacent earthhouse, **H**, was buttressed to the NW and the top of its SW wall was rebuilt.

It was entered from over the top of its former lintel as c 0.4m of earth and stone had developed within it.

Immediately S of the yard was a 4m square area, **F**, of flattened rubble, enclosed to the W by a single-faced wall. This wall retained the rubble collapse from the tower to the W, but it is uncertain whether it represents an open yard or part of a building. A line of small upright stones to the S may indicate the alignment of a wooden screen. Through the centre of the feature was a sunken channel partly delineated by low upright stones. Fragments of a wall to the N may have linked this feature to earthhouse **H**.

## 5.2 • THE LATER IRON AGE FARMSTEAD • DISCUSSION

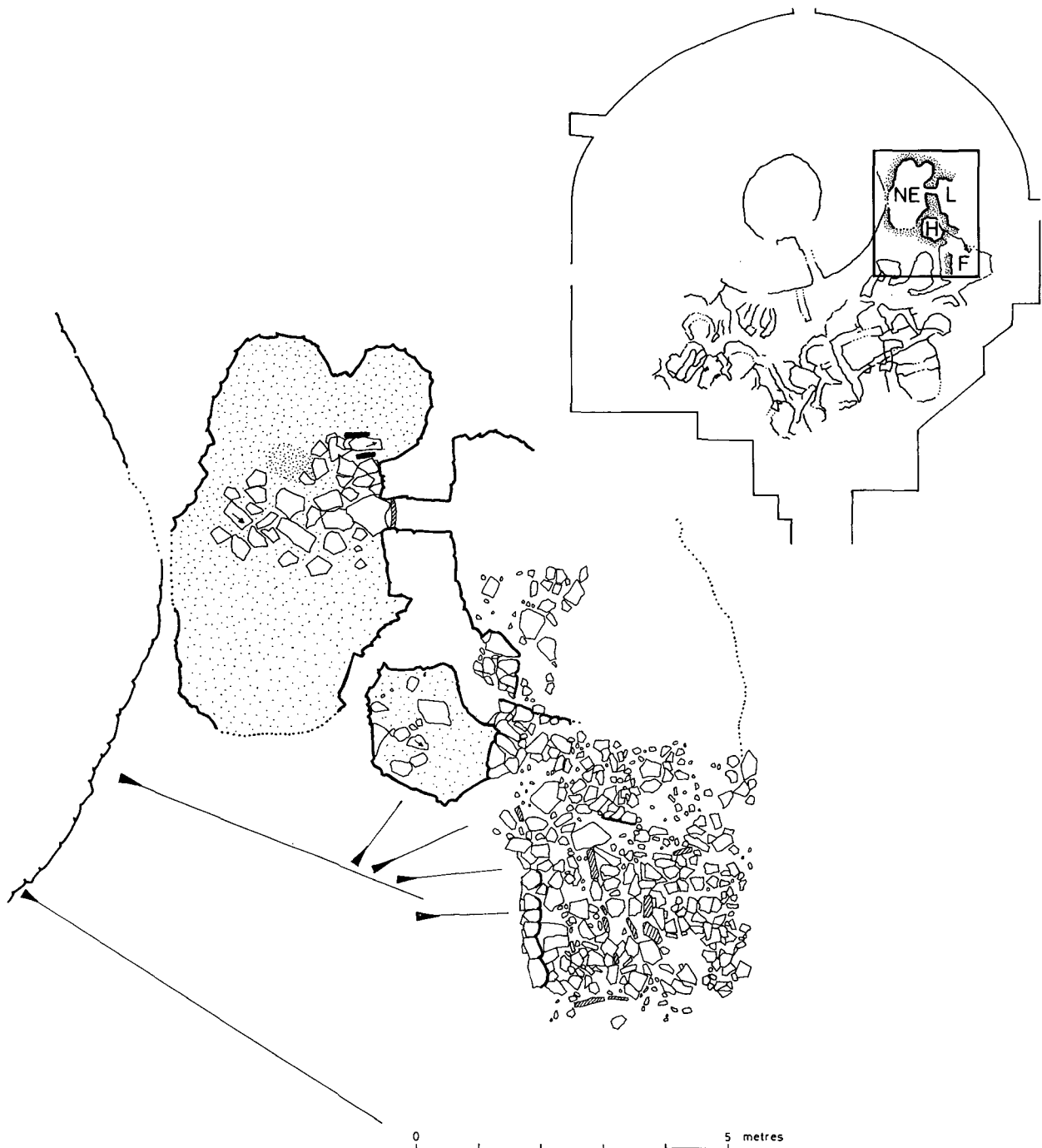
The collapse of the broch tower to the S, marked the division between Phases 7 and 8. At that time only the **NE** building was still in use, with its yard formed from the old **E** and **NE** yards, which contained two small sheds in the old E yard. This collapse had an immediate effect on the settlement, by blocking the route to the **NE** building from the old rampart gateway. This was replaced by a new entrance, paved with flagstones, cut through the rampart between the sheds in the old **E** yard. In the early stages of Phase 8, this area became the focus of the settlement, which was bordered on the E by the rampart and on the W by the broch and its collapsed wall, but was open to the S, through the rampart.

The **NE** building was now clearly domestic in function, with no sign of the earlier iron-working. It was enlarged by the addition of a large oval room at its S end, and by small rooms between it and the rampart to form a single inter-connected complex. This combination of a domestic complex and a yard with its separate sheds, was typical of Later Phase 8, and this was the earliest example of what will, for convenience, be called a farmstead. This complex of buildings was not quite the only occupied area on what was becoming a stony mound, as two other short-lived structures were also built at about this time. One reused the S part of the rubble-filled **E** building, by clearing rubble to create a small rectangular room. This was probably entered from the E end of the S wall, and may have been associated with a new surface laid over the **SE** yard. This room with its hearth and tank, had little in the way of floor deposits, and was apparently not in use for long.

The second new structure was a small building with a paved floor and a hearth, built into the collapsed building rubble on the abandoned W side of the settlement mound. Its later use included iron-working, and it seemed best interpreted as a short-lived workshop. Although it was only 30m from the **NE** building, it was possible that this workshop formed part of a larger group of buildings that lay to the S of the rampart, but were not excavated.

The main domestic complex centred on the **NE** building had suffered some damage from the falling broch masonry, and this appears to have had two results. Firstly, the E side of the broch tower above the still





Illus 75  
Later Phase 8 buildings: details of stage 12.

occupied buildings was demolished, and the stone dumped into the broch interior. The broch had been used as a dump for some time, but now the domestic refuse was mixed with large rubble as the E side was reduced to a safe height. The second result was that the **NE** building was finally abandoned as a domestic structure, although it had been temporarily repaired and occupied for a short time after the collapse. The main **Oval** room and original rooms were subsequently refloored, although no hearth or other evidence for human habitation was found, suggesting that it may have functioned as a byre or store for the farmstead. The new location of the farmstead is unclear; however, on stratigraphic grounds, two excavated domestic structures were possible candidates. These were the modified **E** building, described above, and a new **Stalled** building that was constructed on the W side of the settlement. This new building had been built into the remains of the small iron-working shed and the rubble of the building collapse from the S side of the broch tower. The

presence of a well-developed soil over this rubble argued for a construction date of well into Phase 8. Its position on the W side fits nicely into Phase 8 of the site, when the complex of structures on the E side was finally abandoned. The other alternative is that a new house was built away from the mound, outside the excavated area.

The problem of interpretation caused by the presence of unexcavated or destroyed structures recurred throughout Phases 7 and 8, but was particularly acute at this point as it was difficult to demonstrate continuity of occupation for the few stratigraphically isolated structures that were found. Until later in Phase 8, when the stratigraphy became more secure, it can only be assumed that occupation continued and that it probably consisted of a similar farmstead to those seen both before and after this period. On balance, it is easier to accept continuity rather than repeated abandonment and reoccupation when interpreting these structures.

The *Stalled* building which appeared to fit into the sequence at this point was notable as the first new domestic structure to have been built since the start of Phase 7 that did not rely largely on the reuse of existing walls. Even so it incorporated part of an older workshop, although its size and shape were not constrained by these earlier features. It was sausage-shaped, being approximately rectangular, 10.5 × 4.0m, with apsidal ends. One long wall ran along the line of the inner face of the much reduced rampart, whilst the other was dug into rubble from the collapsed broch tower. It was entered from the W end, over the old rampart, through a paved entrance lobby that divided off the rest of the house, which was arranged symmetrically with central hearths at the W end, and five stall-like partitions extending down either side of the room. This well-planned building had no surviving associated structures other than some external paving, although other buildings were presumed to lie beyond the defences to the S, outside the excavated area. This *Stalled* building had no obvious architectural parallels on the site; it does present similarities to the *wags* of Caithness (Smith 1990, 37). Its design indicates what was considered suitable accommodation in the 5th–6th centuries cal AD in Orkney. It was abandoned following the collapse of its long N wall which had been dug into rubble.

Stratigraphic continuity was re-established with the reoccupation of the modified *E* building, which had last been used earlier in Phase 8. This building became the focus of an increasingly complex group of interconnected rooms, which had at times at least two linked domestic areas. This complex reused parts of the late Phase 7–early Phase 8 structures on the E side of the mound. They were linked by added walls to form an agglomeration of small rooms, with passages that led to paved yards, containing separate, approximately circular outbuildings. The presence of external yards and what may have been store sheds, surrounding the domestic structure suggests that most of the settlement at this period had been excavated. This complex was therefore interpreted as a single farmstead of the 6th–7th centuries, occupied by an extended family, much the same as at the start of Phase 8 c 300 cal AD.

Subsequently the focus of this farmstead shifted W following the construction of a new house over the levelled remains of the *Stalled* building, in an area which already housed a number of sheds. The core of this new house has already been described as a figure-of-eight building (Neil 1985, 206), although the presence of associated contemporary rooms created a more complex agglomeration and ‘clover-leaf’ may be a more appropriate description. The old house complex was partly retained, although with modifications, for non-domestic use. The new house underwent a series of alterations and repairs and its subsequent abandonment brought to an end the main Phase 8 structural sequence. Later, isolated Iron Age style buildings, and a final reuse of the late Phase 7 *NE* building add little to our understanding of the Phase 8 settlement. The presence of a fragment of a St Ninian’s Isle type brooch indicated occupation at least as late as the end of the 9th century, and parts of two rectangular structures on top of the mound, hint at continuity of occupation beyond the Scandinavian colonization of Orkney.

### THE FARMSTEAD ECONOMY

The Phase 8 economy was similar in many ways to that of Phase 7, with mixed arable and pastoral agriculture, combined with hunting and gathering. The range of stone artefacts was similar, and no new types were found now. Only simple hammerstones, whetstones, whorls and pot lids occurred in any quantity and querns became very rare later in Phase 8 (8.3 Stone Artefacts below). There is no evidence of iron-working after the beginning of Phase 8 (4th century cal AD), and pottery became much less abundant. These trends may reflect the declining population in the settlement, with an increasing chance of infrequent activities not surviving in the archaeological record. The standard of wall building was certainly inferior

compared to early in Phase 7, but otherwise there was no evidence for a decline in the quality of life. There was a similar scatter of imported decorative metalwork and glass beads, to that noted in Phase 7, and some of the Phase 8 burnished pottery was the finest recovered from the site.

Analysis of the animal bones revealed a significant decline in red deer from Phase 7 to Phase 8. This is discussed in terms of possible environmental changes in the Animal Bone Report (7.2 below), where it is concluded that it was probably caused by economic factors. In the animal assemblage, red deer was replaced by relative increases in domestic sheep and pig, but not cattle. Sheep and deer would have competed for grazing, so that any increase in domestic flocks could have displaced the wild deer. Smith (*ibid*) draws attention to the changes in sheep mortality, with a greater proportion living longer in Phase 8 than in Phase 7, indicating either that there was improved husbandry or that there was a change in farming practice. Did an increased emphasis of sheep lead to the decline in deer hunting, or did a declining deer population force increases in domestic livestock numbers? Alternatively, the Phase 8 farmstead may have lost access to the deer herd available during Phase 7, or hunting was no longer a viable proposition for a small family group on their own. Data from other contemporary West Mainland sites would help to resolve this issue.

Flax is first recorded from the Phase 8 *Stalled* building, presumably as a crop, either for its fibres, or the edible seeds. Whilst the increasing numbers of oat grains in the late Phase 8 (7th–8th century cal AD), although not specifically identified, may indicate intentional cultivation of that cereal. The diversification of arable crops and apparent reduction in hunting leads to an economy that resembles other 7th–8th century settlements in Orkney, for example Pool, Sanday (Hunter, pers comm), and Buckquoy, Birsay (Ritchie 1977; Morris 1983; 1989). However, it was still a way of life that would have been familiar to the inhabitants of the Phase 7 village, 800 years earlier.

## CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that from at least the start of Phase 8, the 4th century cal AD, the settlement at Howe was occupied as a single farmstead. Contemporary settlements have been excavated at Skaill, Deerness (Gelling 1985) and at Pool, Sanday (Hunter forthcoming). Both sites have a long chronology spanning the period of Phase 8 at Howe and should, when published, provide a useful comparison. The excavations at Birsay also identified very late Iron Age structures beneath the Norse occupation: Ritchie's (1977) 7th–8th century farmstead at Buckquoy and Morris' (1983; 1989) similar structures nearby. Pre-Norse remains on the Brough of Birsay, dated by radiocarbon to the 7th and 8th centuries, are harder to interpret, but may represent a larger settlement than those seen at Buckquoy or Howe (Hunter 1986). The suggested political and social status of the settlement on the Brough may, if confirmed, make it an exceptional site.

If it is accepted that the settlement at Howe declined from a defended village to a single farmstead in the 1st–4th centuries cal AD, then unless the total population declined, people must have moved elsewhere. If this event was repeated in other defended nucleated broch settlements, then this period must have seen the dispersal of much of the population of Orkney in to new, unenclosed settlements.

