



**DOWNS QUARRY, WORTH MATRAVERS, DORSET**  
**Archaeological Evaluation**



**Report No. 53239/2/1**

**February 2007**

**DOWNS QUARRY, WORTH MATRAVERS, DORSET**  
**Archaeological Evaluation, January 2007**

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### **SUMMARY**

*In January 2007, Terrain Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of the proposed site of a new quarry at Downs Quarry to the west of Langton Matravers, Dorset (NGR SY97827905). Six trenches were excavated in two fields to the north of the Swanage to Kingston B0369 road. This is the site of the Late Iron Age and Roman settlement and industrial site known as Gallows Gore West, which was investigated during quarrying activity in the 1930s and 1940s.*

*The results of the evaluation showed that the whole of the area, except for the north end of the northern field was disturbed by former quarrying activity and no archaeology survives, other than a scatter of finds in the topsoil. At the northern end of the site, the remains of two drystone walls were found. These walls were associated with scatters of stone rubble and burnt stone, which included a small amount of abraded Late Iron age pottery. These walls are probably the remains of field walls or part of an enclosure around the Iron Age/ Roman site of Gallows Gore West.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by D & P Lovell to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the proposed site of a new quarry to the west of Langton Matravers, Dorset.

The proposed development comprises the quarrying of a dormant IDO area at Downs Quarry, Worth Matravers, Dorset, covering approximately one hectare to the north of the Swanage to Kingston Road (Figure 1).

The site lies on the top of the ridge above Harman's Cross to the north and Worth Matravers to the south at a height of approximately 135m above Ordnance Datum, centred on NGR SY97827905. The underlying geology is Upper Purbeck Beds.

The site occupies two fields at present under pasture. The southernmost field has been heavily quarried in the past and has a level but very undulating and irregular surface. There is a partially backfilled quarry along the northern edge of the field and the former presence of a quarry along the eastern side of the field is indicated on earlier Ordnance Survey maps (Figure 2). The northern field has a very slight slope to the north with a substantial terrace at its northern end.

An archaeological evaluation, comprising trial trenching was requested by Steven Wallis, Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council. This is in line with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Archaeology and Planning).

An archaeological evaluation, as defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* is a "limited programme of non-intrusive and / or intrusive fieldwork, which determines the presence, or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site [...]. If such archaeological remains are present, field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context, as appropriate. "

The fieldwork was carried out between the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2007 by Steven Tatler and Rebecca Montague. The project was managed by Peter Bellamy BSc (Hons) MIFA.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and cooperation of Alan Lovell (D & P Lovell Ltd), Nick Dunn (Land and Mineral Management Ltd), Steve Wallis and Claire Pinder (Senior Archaeologists, Dorset County Council).

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Site lies in an area rich in archaeological remains dating from the Bronze Age to the medieval period. A Late Iron Age site, called Gallows Gore West, was found in the southern field at SY97867904 during quarrying activity in the 1930s and 1940s (Calkin and Piggott 1938; Calkin 1947; Calkin 1948; Calkin 1953; RCHME 1970, 620-1). It covered an area of about 200 m by 90 m across and contained a large number of pits, some stone-lined, several cobbled surfaces and a produced a very large quantity of finds. A number of burials were also found. Occupation continued into the Roman period and this comprised a number of storage pits, a possible stone-lined well, stone-lined tanks, shale-working 'floors', a number of short lengths of drystone walls and finds dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD (RCHME 1970). Further discoveries were made in 1962, when Late Iron Age and Roman pottery, shale debitage and some salt-making briquetage was found at SY97827897 (Farrar 1962).

Approximately 400 m to the east similar remains were found at Gallows Gore East, also during quarrying in the 1930s and 1940s (Calkin 1953). These included an infant inhumation in a cist, evidence of leather working and shale working debris, short lengths of drystone walling and associated floor slabs (RCHME 1970, 621).

To the northwest of the site, possible Roman 'marble' quarries have been identified at Dunshay Lane (Farrar 1966) and Primrose Hill (Farrar 1952).

To the north of the site lies Downshay Farm, which occupies the site of Dunshay Manor (RCHME 1970, 413), which provided marble for the construction of Salisbury Cathedral. To the west of the manor are earthwork remains of an associated medieval settlement (*ibid.* 415-6).

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the archaeological works was to evaluate the archaeological potential of the site, that is, to appraise the nature, extent, level of preservation and importance of any archaeological deposits.

The evaluation aimed to record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the works in order to provide sufficient data to assess the archaeological significance of the site.

The results of this evaluation may be used to formulate a strategy for the preservation or management of any archaeological remains; and/or formulate an appropriate response or mitigation strategy to planning applications or other proposals which may affect adversely any such archaeological remains, or enhance them; and/or formulate a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research.

## **METHODS**

The archaeological works were undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Terrain Archaeology (Ref. 3239/0/1, January 2007) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, although no written brief was issued for the works.

The evaluation comprised intrusive investigation in the form of six machine-excavated trial trenches, positioned to evaluate the area of the quarry and the spoil storage (Figure 2). All trenches

were excavated using a machine fitted with a 1m wide toothless grading bucket. At each end of Trenches 2,4,5 and 6 a sondage was excavated by the machine to investigate the nature of the deposits exposed.

During the evaluation, several areas previously excavated by Lovell's to investigate the natural deposits across the site were walked over and any finds recovered. These areas were labelled 701 to 711.

All archaeological deposits and features exposed during the works were planned and recorded. Excavation of archaeological deposits and features was limited to resolving questions relating to their date, nature, extent and condition. All such excavation was carried out by hand.

All deposits revealed, irrespective of their apparent archaeological significance, were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records.

The records have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines and the requirements of the receiving museum, Dorset County Museum.

## RESULTS

### *Trench 1 (Figures 3 and 4)*

Trench 1 was situated at the northern end of the north field and aligned N-S. It was 19.5 m long by up to 1.65 m wide and between 0.25 m and 0.80 m deep. It was excavated across a prominent scarp which runs roughly E-W across the north end of the trench and can be traced curving round into the field to the west. To the east it has been truncated by quarrying activity (Figure 2).

#### *Natural Deposits*

The underlying natural varied throughout the trench. At the southern end of the trench a clean clay deposit (107) was exposed which appeared to be overlain by limestone slab bedrock (108). In the rest of the trench a mixed deposit of degraded shelly limestone and clay (109) was found to be sealing a grey shelly limestone bedrock (110), which was only apparent at the northern end of the trench.

#### *Archaeological Features*

In the northern part of the trench, was a linear feature (106), running E-W across the trench and cut into the underlying natural clay (109) (Figure 3; Plate 3). This feature was approximately 2.20 m wide and up to 0.35 m deep, with a steep southern edge and an indistinct, shallow northern edge. At the base of the cut was a thin layer of clay (112), probably representing the initial silting. It was overlain by a layer of silty clay (111) mixed with limestone rubble, which filled the feature. The remnants of drystone wall (113) were found running roughly NE-SW across this feature (Plates 3 and 4). The wall comprised a single course of vertically-set flat limestone pieces, which appeared to have been pressed into the fill of feature 106 (Plate 4). On the southern side of feature 106 was what initially appeared to be a discrete feature, but on investigation was found to be no more than a shallow depression in the underlying natural. Feature 106 lay about 4.5 m to the north of the prominent scarp running across the field.

In the southern half of the trench, natural clay was not exposed over the whole area, as machine excavation was halted on top of a layer of mixed limestone rubble (105), which was archaeological in origin. At the southern end of the trench, this rubble layer was very thin and directly overlay the natural clay. It became thicker towards the north, where it was found to seal another layer of limestone rubble in clay (114), which, in turn, sealed a thin localised layer of silty



clay (115) containing small, mixed limestone pieces and a number of sherds of Iron Age pottery. These lower layers were only exposed in a small sondage excavated across the line of the earthwork scarp (Plate 6).

The remains of a drystone wall (104), aligned E-W, was built on top of the stony rubble layer 114. This wall survived as a single course of large vertically-set limestone slabs, (Plates 5-7). To the south, the rubble layer 105 is at its thickest where it butted against wall 104. To the north of the wall is another spread of rubble (103) against the base of wall 104. It was noticeable that there was a concentration of larger stone rubble immediately adjacent to wall 104, which may represent some of the collapsed wall structure (Plate 5). It is clear from its location and orientation that wall 104 runs along the prominent earthwork scarp or terrace running across the northern end of the field.

Not enough of the two drystone walls was exposed to be certain of their function, but wall 104 seems most likely to be a boundary wall, rather than part of a structure. Wall 113 may also have had a similar function. The relationship between the two walls was not exposed and neither is well dated.

### *Colluvium*

The remains of walls 104 and 113 and the stone rubble spreads were sealed by a layer of \*\* (102). This lay immediately beneath the reddish-brown clay loam topsoil (101).

### **Trench 2** (*Figure 5; Plates 7-8*)

Trench 2 was situated in the middle of the northern field and aligned E-W. It was 19.5 m long by 1.5 m wide and between 0.25 m and 0.85 m deep. The whole trench appeared to contain various dumps of quarry waste (201) including yellow, red and grey clays mixed with blocks and slabs of limestone. A compact deposit of yellow clay with limestone pieces was observed in the middle of the trench which may have been part of the underlying natural, indicating the possibility of two quarries rather than one. However, it is more likely to have been a dump of natural clay backfilling a quarry. These deposits were sealed by a reddish-brown clay loam topsoil (200), up to 0.25m thick, containing occasional pieces of limestone.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were found in this trench.

### **Trench 3** (*Figure 6; Plates 9-10*)

Trench 3 was situated at the southern end of the northern field and aligned N-S. It was 18.8 m long by 1.5 m wide and up to 0.4 m deep. The underlying natural deposits consisted of a heavily degraded shelly limestone bedrock (302) mixed with yellow and grey clay. Above this was a pale yellowish-brown clay subsoil (301), up to 0.2 m thick, containing very occasional limestone pieces. This was sealed by a reddish-brown clay loam topsoil (300), up to 0.2 m thick, containing very occasional pieces of limestone.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were found in this trench.

### **Trench 4** (*Figure 7; Plates 11-12*)

Trench 4 was situated at the western end of the southern field and aligned E-W. It was 23.5 m long by 1.5 m wide and between 0.5 m and 1.0 m deep. The whole trench appeared to contain various dumps of quarry waste (401) including layers of loose limestone rubble, yellow, red and grey clay mixed with limestone rubble and bands of brown clay and clay loam. Sealing these deposits was a dark brown clay loam topsoil (400), up to 0.2 m thick, containing occasional pieces of limestone.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were found in this trench.

### **Trench 5** (*Figure 8; Plates 13-14*)

Trench 5 was situated in the middle of the southern field and aligned N-S. It was 24.2 m long by 1.5 m wide and between 0.5 m and 0.85 m deep. The whole trench appeared to contain various dumps of quarry waste (501) including yellow, orange and grey clay mixed with limestone rubble and bands of brown clay and clay loam. The clay and loam deposits were found in both thin horizontal bands along the length of the trench and larger deep deposits at the southern end together with a dump of loose limestone rubble. These deposits were sealed by a mid brown clay loam topsoil (500), up to 0.15 m thick, containing occasional pieces of limestone.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were found in this trench.

### **Trench 6** (*Figure 9; Plates 15-16*)

Trench 6 was located at the eastern end of the southern field and aligned E-W. It was 24.5 m long by 1.5 m wide and between 0.3 m and 1.0 m deep. The whole trench appeared to contain various dumps of quarry waste (601) including yellow, orange and grey clay mixed with limestone rubble and bands of brown clay and clay loam. At the eastern end of the trench the loam deposit contained modern rubbish. These deposits were sealed by a mid brown clay loam topsoil (600), up to 0.2m thick, containing occasional pieces of limestone.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were found in this trench.

### **Areas 701-710** (*Figure 2*)

The backfilled remains of ten large testpits excavated by Lovell's were visible across the two fields. A number of finds were exposed on the surface and these were collected in order to see if there was any concentration of finds across the site. Areas 701, 702 and 703 were located at the northern end of the north field adjacent to Trench 1. Areas 704 and 705 were situated in the middle of the north field between trenches 2 and 3 and area 706 was located in the southeast corner of the field. Areas 707 and 708 were located to the north and south of Trench 4 in the southern field. Areas 709, 710 and 711 were situated along the southern edge of the southern field. The finds collected are presented below in Table 1. There was a concentration of worked flint in the northern end of the north field adjacent to Trench 1 (areas 702, 703). The pottery and other material was concentrated in the western half of the southern field in areas 707-709.

## **Finds**

The finds recovered from the evaluation are presented in Table 1 below.

### *Iron*

A single piece of iron, probably a nail, was recovered from Area 709.

### *Pottery*

A total of 86 pieces of Late Iron Age pottery weighing 509g was recovered from Trenches 1, 4 and 5 and Areas 701, 703, 707, 708 and 709. The bulk of the pottery comprised small abraded undecorated body sherds, predominantly in a range of quartz tempered fabrics. A single decorated sherd from a Late Iron Age bowl, decorated with an impressed chevron pattern was recovered from Trench 5 and the rim of a large storage jar and an eroded rim from another jar were found in Trench 4. The pottery recovered from Trenches 4 and 5 and Areas 707, 708 and 709 probably derives from quarry waste. The pottery found in trench 1 was recovered from a probable colluvial deposit (102) and two rubble layers (105 and 115).



Three sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from Trench 4 — one plain footring from a samian vessel, one sherd from a dish and a small body sherd.

### *Ceramic Building Material*

Two small fragments of clay daub, one with wattle marks, were recovered from Area 707.

### *Stone Object*

A single stone pebble had some evidence of use as a hammer stone or grinding stone. It was recovered from Area 707.

### *Shale*

Four small featureless pieces of shale were recovered from areas 707 and 709.

### *Worked Flint and chert*

A total of 165 pieces of worked flint were recovered from Trenches 1 and 5 and areas 701–710. The flint was almost all rough flakes and other debitage removed by a hard hammer. A single utilised flake with two notches was identified. Much of this material may represent waste from the use of flint in shale working. A single flake of Portland Chert was recovered from Area 702.

### *Burnt Stone*

Thirteen pieces of burnt limestone weighing 566g were recovered from rubble 105 in Trench 1.

### *Animal Bone*

Four pieces of animal bone weighing 6g were recovered from colluvial deposit 102 in Trench 1.

Context	Iron	Iron Age Pottery	Roman Pottery	Ceramic Building Material	Stone Objects	Shale	Flint and Chert	Burnt Stone	Animal Bone
102		9/48					21/292		4/6
103							1/49		
105		6/29						13/566	
115		30/52					2/2		
401		10/133	3/29						
501		1/33					1/4		
701		1/1					1/1		
702							26/309		
703		2/10					69/408		
704							4/12		
705							2/16		
706							4/59		
707		10/53		2/1	1/354	3/2	14/273		
708		5/70					4/104		
709	1/3	12/80				1/1	16/144		
710							1/56		
TOTAL	1/3	86/509	2/29	2/1	1/354	4/3	166/1729	13/566	4/6

Table 1: Finds assemblage by context (No./Wt. (g)).

## CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation trenches were located to sample most of the area of the proposed development and represent a nominal 2% sample of the whole site. Overall, the results of this archaeological evaluation are considered to be representative of the potential archaeology existing on the site.

The evidence from the trenches in the southern field (Trenches 4-6), together with the present uneven character of the field surface, indicates that this field is completely disturbed by quarrying activity and little or no archaeology survives *in situ*, though quantities of unstratified Iron Age and Roman material still survives in the topsoil. These finds are probably the remnants of the Iron Age and Roman site of Gallows Gore West, which was recorded by Calkin in the 1930s and 1940s, during quarrying operations (Calkin and Piggott 1938; Calkin 1947, 1948, 1953).

In the northern field, the evidence from Trenches 1 and 2 suggests that the southern part of this field has also been disturbed by quarrying activity. However, some archaeology does survive in the northern end of the field as seen in Trench 1, where the remains of two drystone walls and spreads of stone rubble, including some burnt stone, and abraded sherds of Late Iron Age pottery were exposed. Although not well dated, these walls and the stone rubble deposits are probably associated with the Iron Age and Roman site at the top of the hill to the south. The walls are probably boundary walls, perhaps field walls, or part of an enclosure around the Iron Age settlement. The spreads of rubble appear to be material derived from further upslope to the south that has moved downhill through colluviation. The surface collection of artefacts in this northern field revealed a significant concentration of worked flint, much of it probably associated with shale working, at the northern end, which is also likely to be derived from the Iron Age and Roman site to the south.

In order to check that the walls were not the remains of later field boundaries, a rapid search of the historic maps held by the Dorset History Centre was undertaken. This did not reveal any cartographic evidence for field boundaries in this location, dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. No boundaries were noted on the parish map of 1772 by Samuel Donne (DCRO D/RWR/E16), the 1840 Worth Matravers Tithe Map, the Ordnance Survey 1/2500 maps of 1887, 1901, 1928 and 1954 or the Land Sale Plan of Corfe Castle, Worth Matravers and Langton Matravers of 1919 (DCRO D/RWR/P4). This suggests that the walls were not recent field boundaries and confirms the probability that they are of considerable antiquity, most probably associated with the Iron Age and Roman activity in the area.

The results of the evaluation indicate that there is little or no surviving archaeological potential across most of the area of the proposed quarry, other than at the northern end of the field, where some *in situ* deposits and features survive. These appear to be peripheral to the main focus of Iron Age and Roman activity, which was concentrated on the top of the ridge in the southern half of the site, but which has now been removed by quarrying.

## PROJECT ARCHIVE

The archive (Terrain Archaeology Project No. 53239) will be deposited with Dorset County Museum, which has agreed in principle to accept the archive, subject to fulfilment of the Museum's requirements of the preparation of archaeological archives. A copy of the microfilmed archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record.

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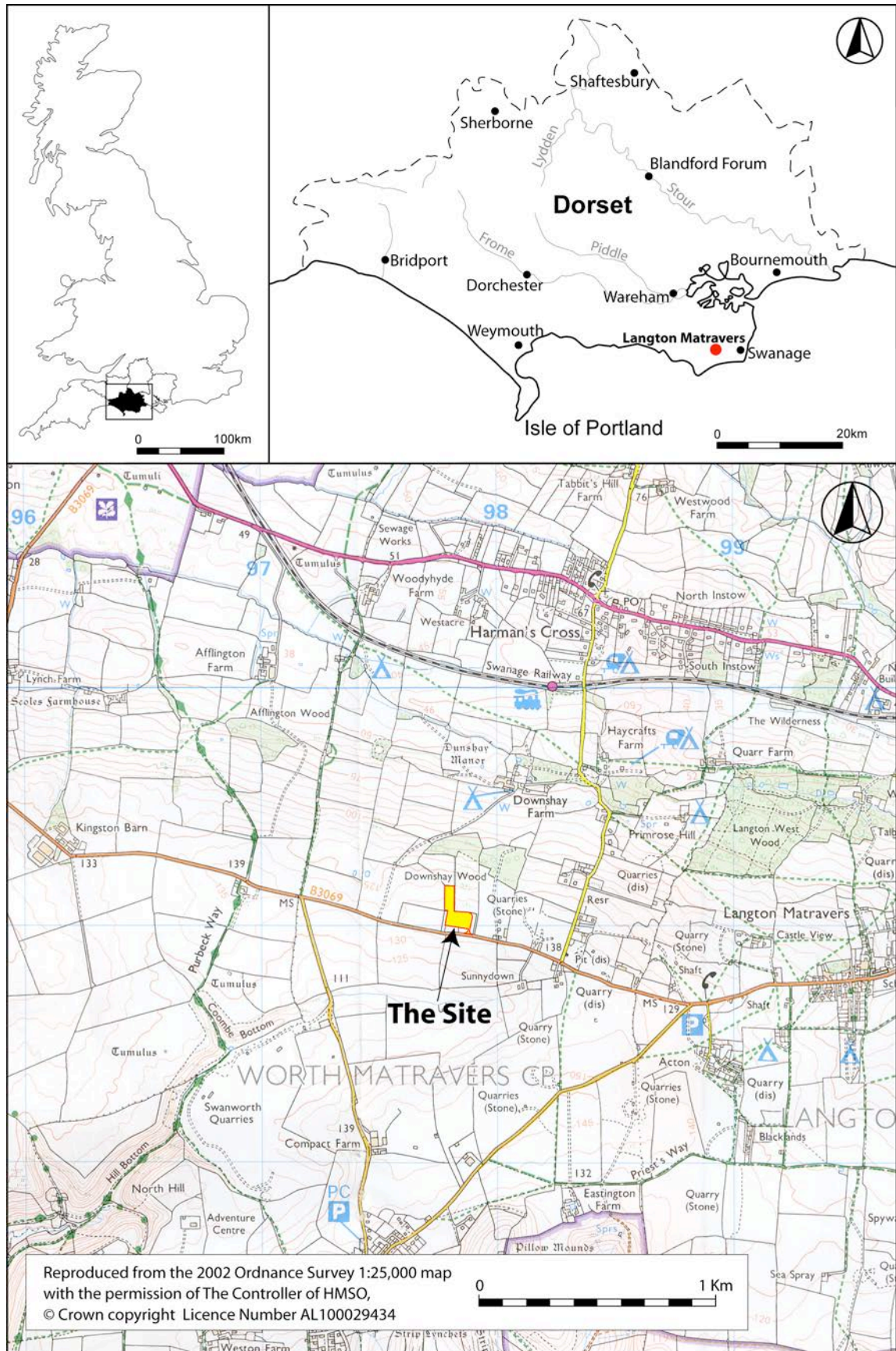


Figure 1: Location map



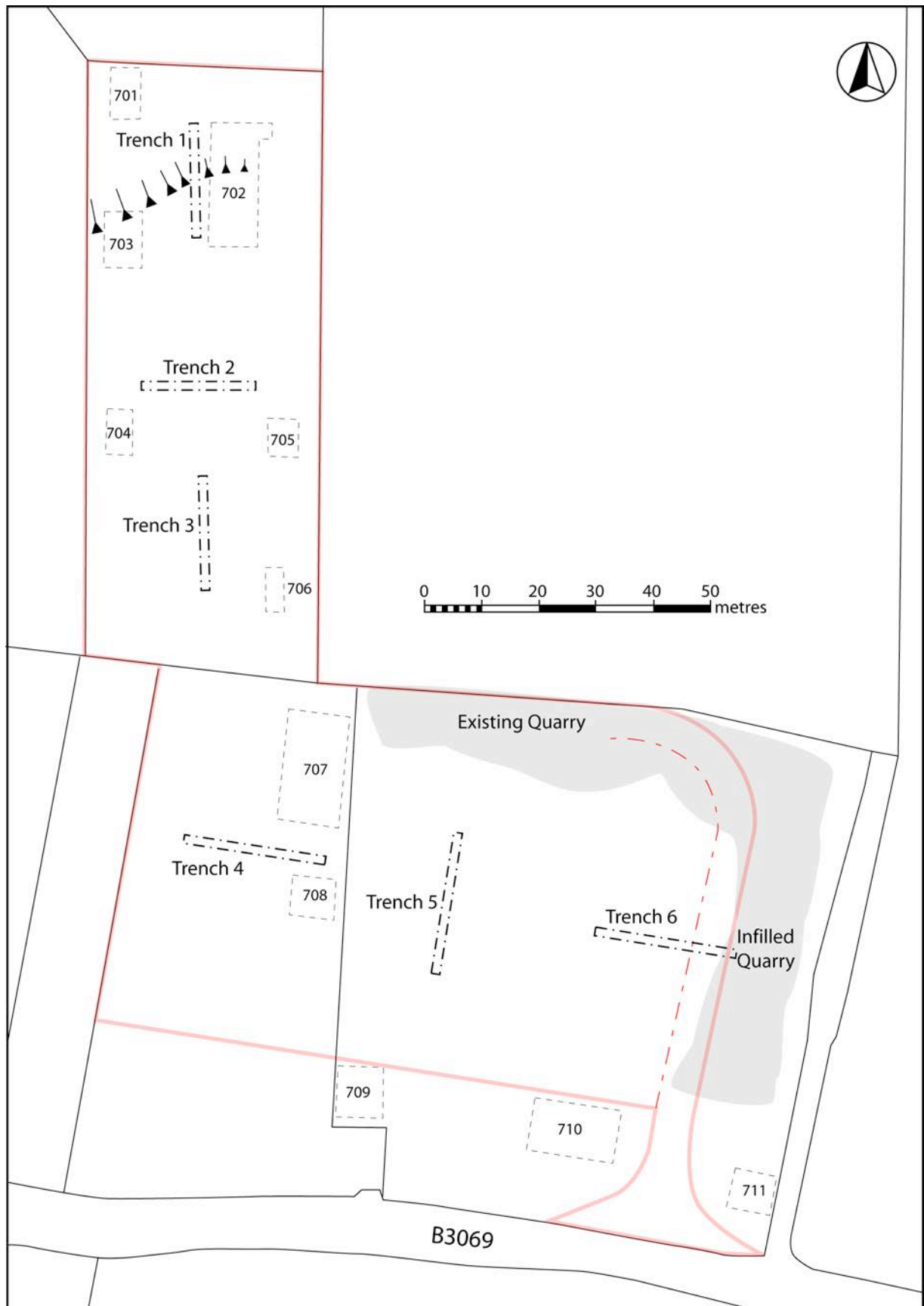


Figure 2: Trench location plan

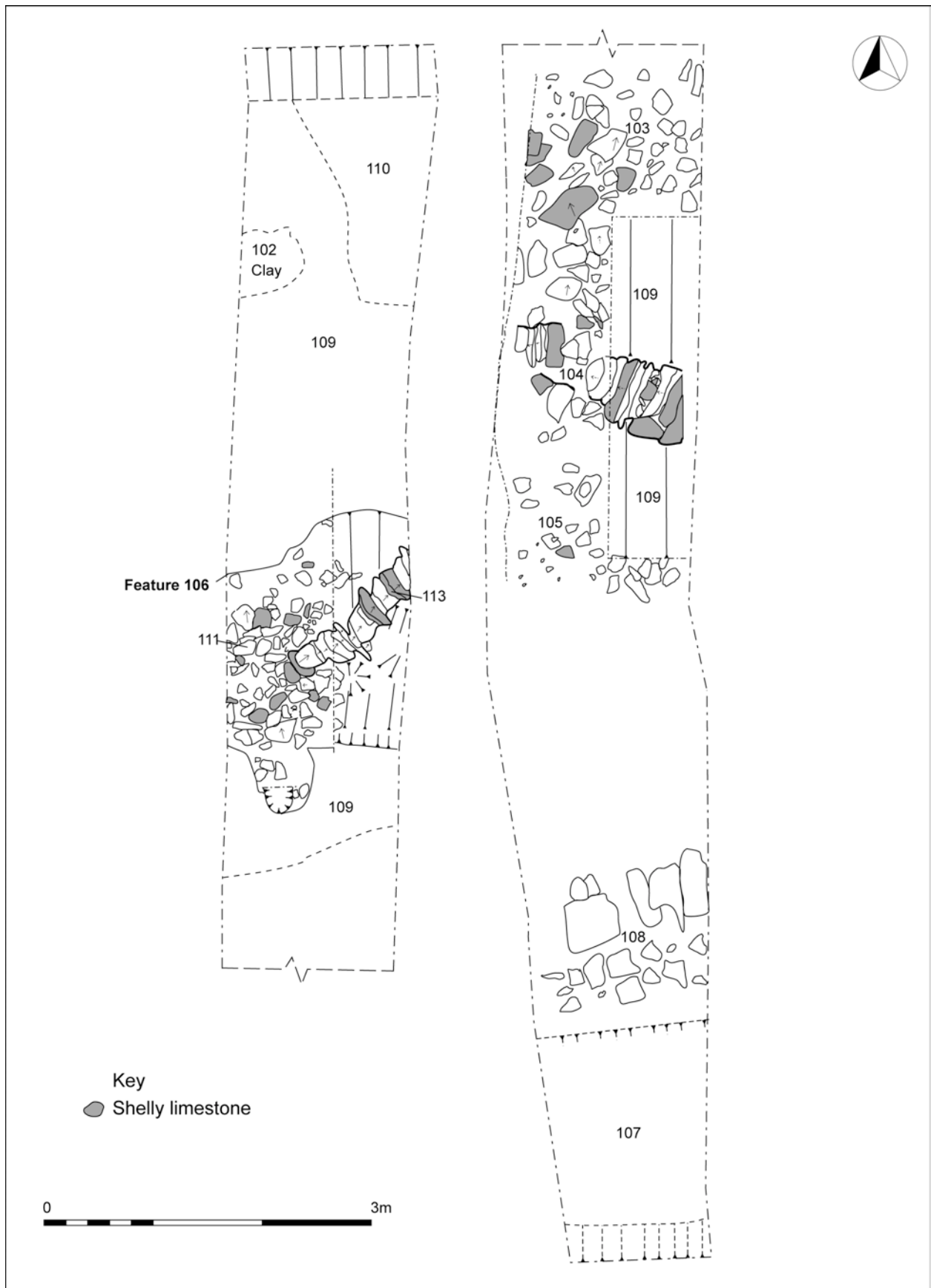


Figure 3: Trench 1 – Plan



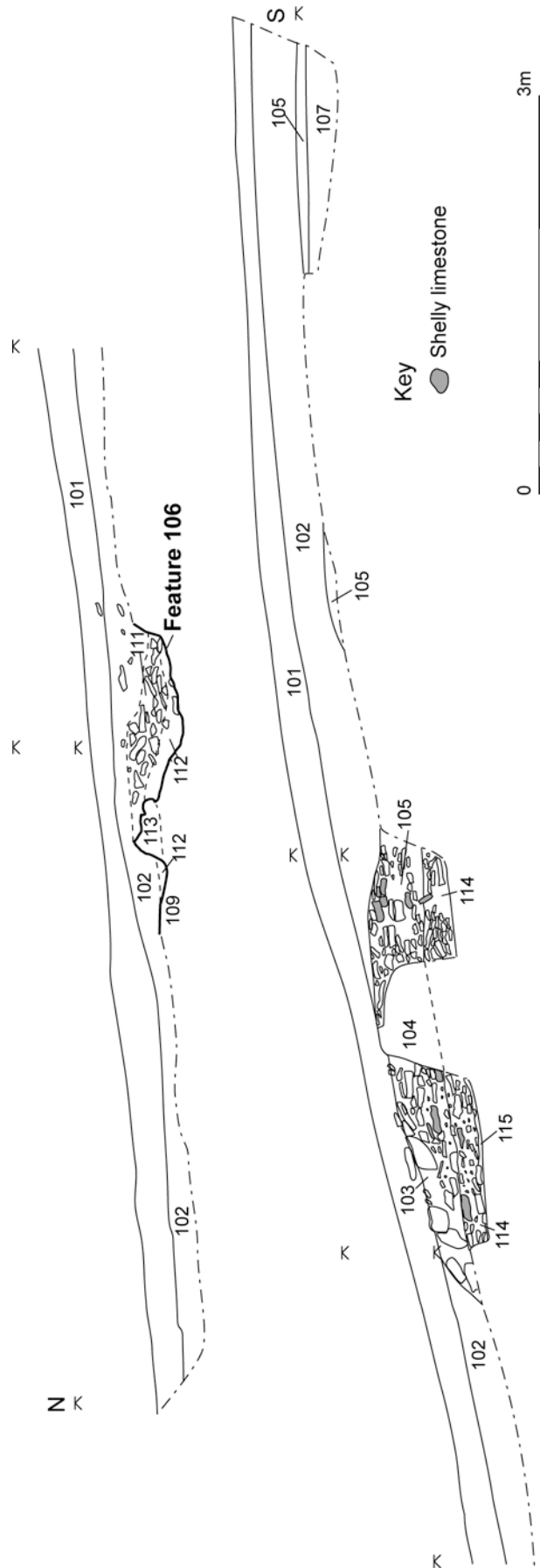


Figure 4: Trench 1 – West-facing section

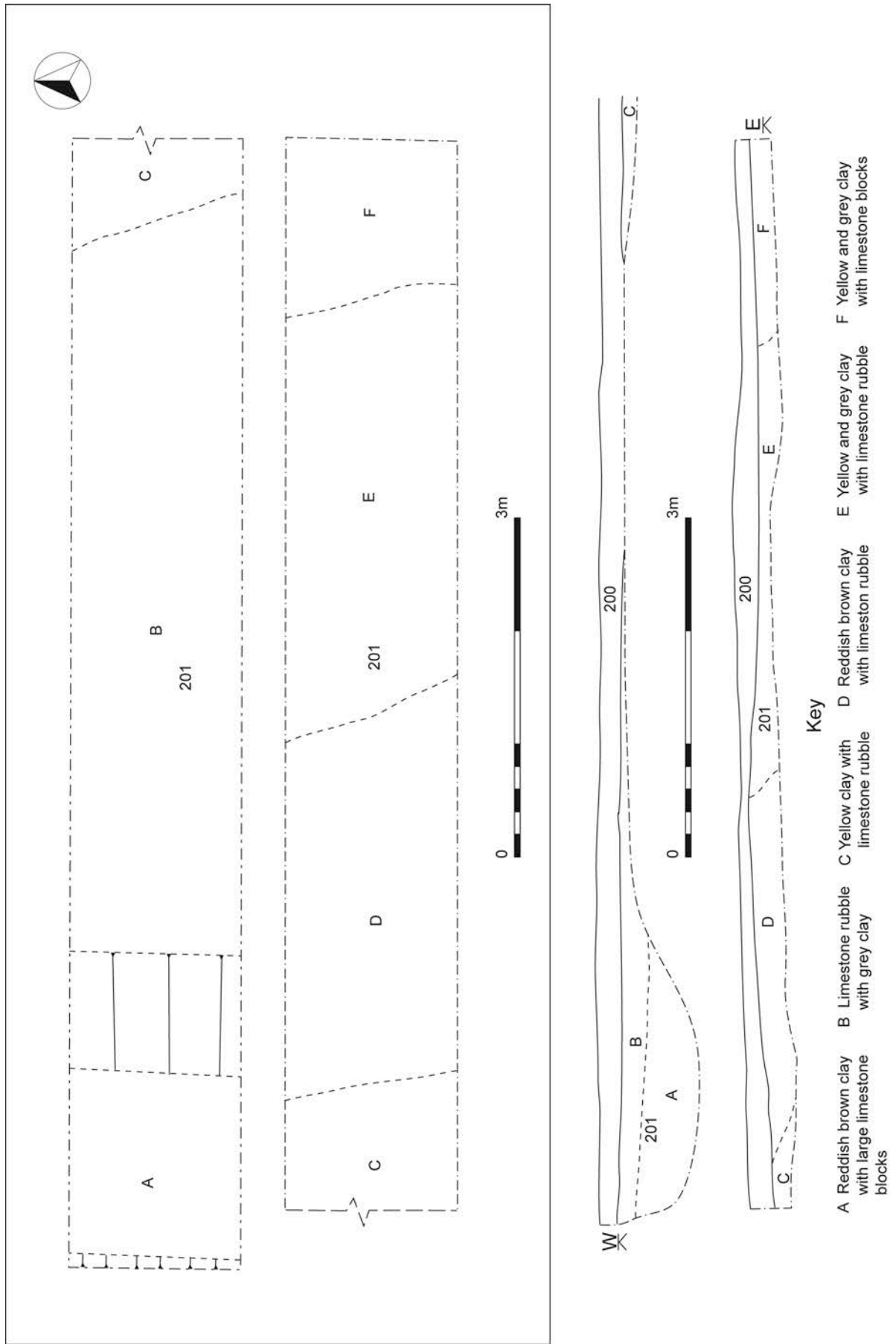


Figure 5: Trench 2 – Plan and section

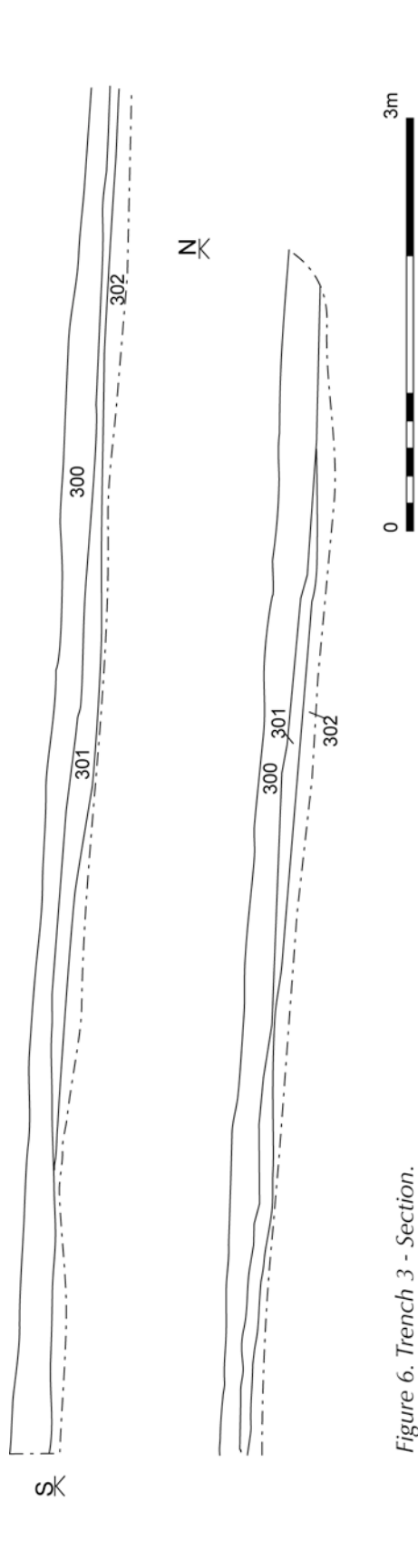


Figure 6. Trench 3 - Section.

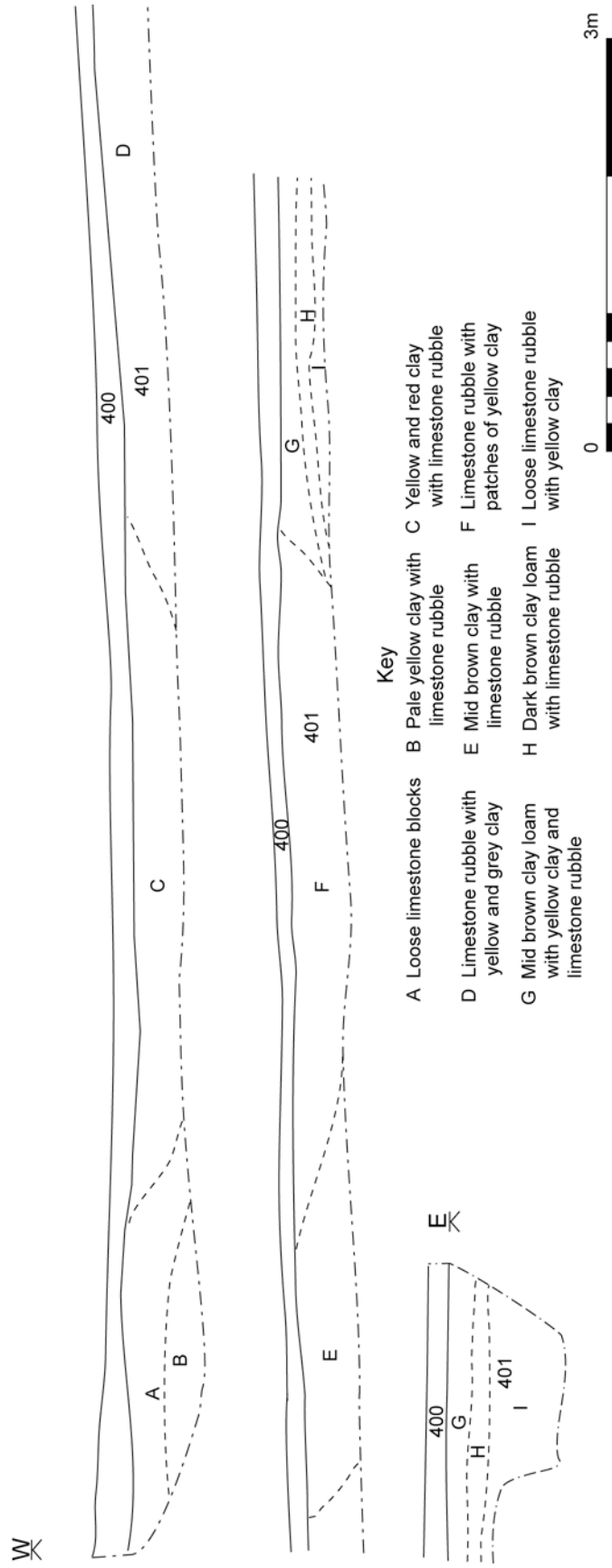


Figure 7. Trench 4 - Section.

- Key
- A Loose limestone blocks
  - B Pale yellow clay with limestone rubble
  - C Yellow and red clay with limestone rubble
  - D Limestone rubble with yellow and grey clay
  - E Mid brown clay with limestone rubble
  - F Limestone rubble with patches of yellow clay
  - G Mid brown clay loam with yellow clay and limestone rubble
  - H Dark brown clay loam with limestone rubble
  - I Loose limestone rubble with yellow clay

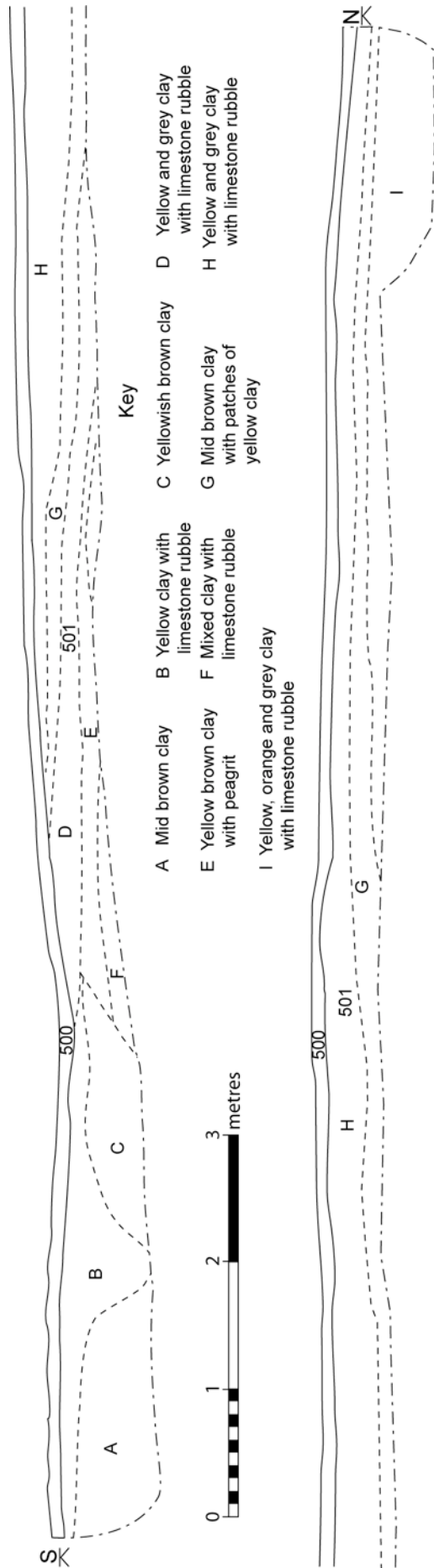


Figure 8: Trench 5 - Section.

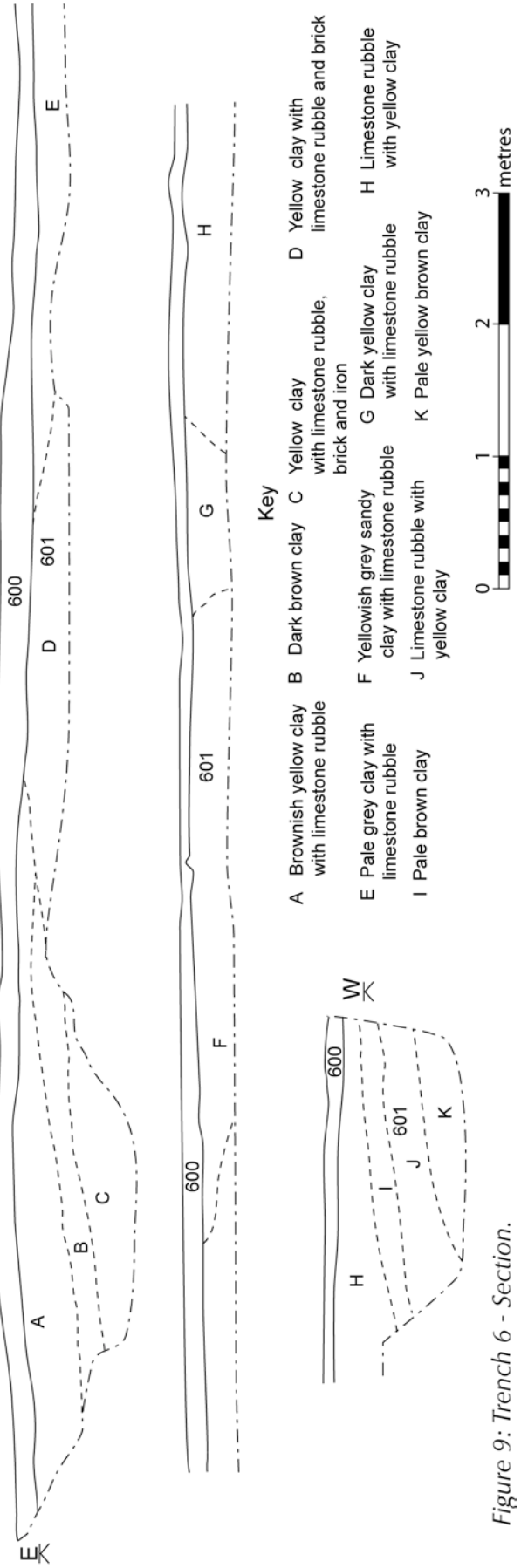


Figure 9: Trench 6 - Section.





*Plate 1: Trench 1 - General view from the south.*



*Plate 2: Trench 1 - General view from the north.*



*Plate 3: Trench 1 - View of feature 106 and wall 113 from the north.*





*Plate 4: Trench 1 - View of partially excavated rubble filled feature 106 and wall 113 from the southwest.*



*Plate 5: Trench 1 – View of wall 104 and rubble collapse 103 from the northwest.*



*Plate 6: Trench 1 – View of sondage across wall 104, showing rubble layers, from the west.*





*Plate 7: Trench 2 –  
General view from  
the east.*



*Plate 8: Trench 2 – View of  
south facing section at west  
end of trench.*





*Plate 9: Trench 3 –  
General view from  
the south.*



*Plate 10: Trench 3 – View of  
east facing section in southern  
half of trench.*





*Plate 11: Trench 4 –  
General view from  
the east.*



*Plate 12: Trench 4 – View of  
south facing section at east  
end of trench.*





*Plate 13: Trench 5 –  
General view from  
the south.*



*Plate 14: Trench 5 – View of  
east facing section at north  
end of trench.*





*Plate 15: Trench 6 –  
General view from  
the east.*



*Plate 16: Trench 6 – View of  
north facing section at east  
end of trench.*