



Tintagel Castle, Cornwall  
Archaeological test pitting along the Island visitor  
route

Cornwall Archaeological Unit

Report No: 2017R020



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The Project Manager was Adam Sharpe.

Thanks are due to Carl Thorpe at CAU for his preliminary assessment of the artefacts collected during the test pitting programme, included here as Appendix 2: summary finds report

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of Cornwall Archaeological Unit and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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Cover illustration

*View from Tintagel Island, March 2017*

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## **Abbreviations**

CAU	Cornwall Archaeological Unit
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
CRO	Cornwall Record Office
EH	English Heritage
GPS	Geographical Positioning System
HE	Historic England
HER	Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record
IA/RB	Iron Age/Romano-British period
MCO	Monument number in Cornwall HER
NGR	National Grid Reference
OD	Ordnance Datum – height above mean sea level at Newlyn
OS	Ordnance Survey
RCHM(E)	The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England)
TCARP	Tintagel Castle Archaeological Research Project

## **1 Summary**

In response to ascertain the potential impacts of proposals for footpath improvements at Tintagel Castle to counter visitor erosion and rationalise the visitor route round the site, Cornwall Archaeological Unit was commissioned by English Heritage to undertake an evaluative test pitting programme along the path route on the island section of the site. Ten representative locations were selected on the basis of their potential sensitivity to the proposals.

The fieldwork was undertaken in March 2017 following on site discussions with English Heritage and Historic England.

As a result of the excavation of the of test pits, the presences of a number of sub-surface archaeological features were confirmed. These included several walls, occupation surfaces, an area containing Medieval demolition rubble, a possible hearth feature and an area which appears to have been cultivated during the Iron Age, the Romano-British period and during the post-Roman period. Iron Age, Romano-British, post-Roman and Medieval pottery were recovered from secure contexts within a number of the test pits, as well as some animal bone from an apparently late Medieval context.

Within some the of the locations examined, the underlying archaeology was either robust and capable of withstanding visitor impacts or was of low significance; in other locations it was found to be only shallowly-buried, and therefore potentially vulnerable to physical impact. The sections of the three structures examined on the island were found to be vulnerable to further erosion or to compaction during the construction of the new path surface.

The results of the 2017 test pitting programme will be used to help inform the design of the path which will form the improved visitor route at Tintagel Castle.



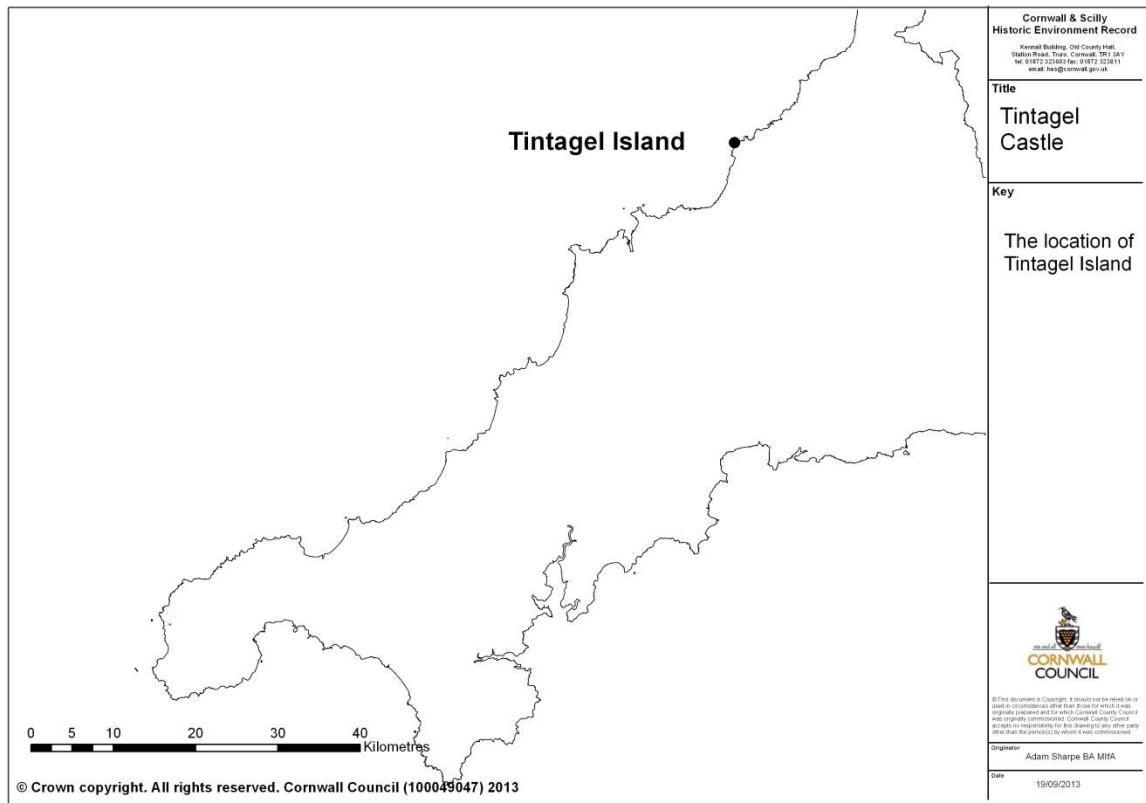


Figure 4: The location of Tintagel Castle, Cornwall.

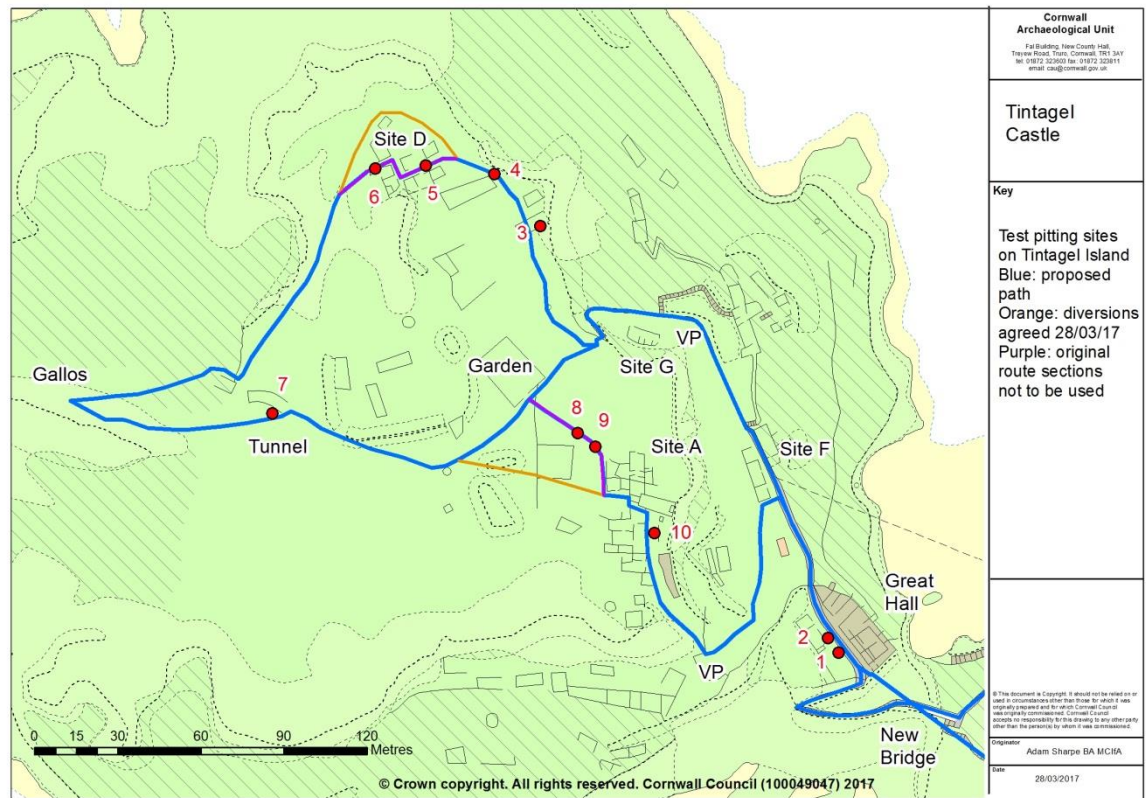


Figure 3: The locations and reference numbers of the test pits excavated along the Island visitor route in March 2017; routes as amended 28 March 2017.

## **2 Introduction**

### **2.1 Project background**

Tintagel Castle, Cornwall is an internationally significant scheduled ancient monument owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and under the guardianship and management of English Heritage. It is one of the county (and nation's) premier visitor attractions with over 200,000 visitors a year.

In response to the progressive degradation of the bedrock forming the narrow isthmus which links the Mainland and Island sections of Tintagel Castle, the difficulties experienced by some visitors in navigating the steep, rock-cut steps which form the only access between these two sections of the site, and the absolute barrier which the current access arrangements present to visitors who experience difficulties with mobility and who may wish to visit Tintagel Island, English Heritage has proposed the construction of a high-level pedestrian bridge to link the mainland and island.

In tandem with the construction of the new footbridge, proposals have been developed by Nicholas Pearson Associates for an upgrading of the existing path network on the mainland approaches to the Castle and within the site as a whole, most particularly on the summit of the island. The upgrading of the path network is designed to significantly reduce visitor foot erosion of the often fragile ground surface and vegetation found on the site, produce a formalised path route capable of being used by expected larger numbers of visitors to the site (irrespective of whether or not the footbridge is constructed), reduce damage to the SSSI within which Tintagel is sited, and allow natural regeneration of damaged areas in the southern part of the island.

Following preliminary on-site discussions, a walk-over survey of the path route on the island was undertaken in January 2017 by Win Scutt (English Heritage), Dan Ratcliffe (Historic England), Adam Sharpe (Cornwall Archaeological Unit) and a representative from Nicholas Pearson Associates (on behalf of Natural England). Some modifications to the proposed route were made, and areas of particular sensitivity identified. It was agreed that archaeological recording along the majority of the route could be achieved through a watching brief during the groundworks or through the pre-excavation of selected areas, but that in some clearly sensitive areas it would be advantageous to determine the potential impacts of path widening or formalisation through investigation by evaluative (test pit) trenching in advance of path construction.

Cornwall Archaeological Unit were asked by Reuben Briggs, National Project Manager, Estates Department, English Heritage to draw up a written scheme of investigation (WSI) and accompanying cost schedule for undertaking this work. The WSI was finalised on 14 February 2017 in the light of comments received from Historic England. The fieldwork was undertaken in mid-March 2017 immediately following a site visit to check the test pit locations with the Historic England assistant Inspector of Monuments, Nick Russell. At a further site meeting on 28 March 2017 some amendments were made to the agreed path route (Fig 2).

### **2.2 Aims**

The principal aim of the study has been to gain a better understanding of the nature and significance of representative archaeological deposits likely to be traversed by the proposed new path in representative potentially highly sensitive locations, the likely impacts of path construction activities and the identification of methods by which any negative impacts resulting from the path upgrading might be mitigated. A further aim of this work will be to use the information it produces to inform the drawing up of appropriate technical options for the protection of archaeological deposits from further erosion or damage along the route traversed by the path. It should also be used alongside new survey data from LIDAR and photogrammetry surveys to provide an up to date baseline record against which data acquired in the future can be compared, as well as providing a tool which will assist in monitoring visitor impacts on the site.

The areas selected for examination were (see Fig. 2 and Figs 23 to 28):

- Test pits 1 and 2. Within the Inner Ward (Great Hall area) adjacent to the path running from the site entrance to the gateway in the northern curtain wall where an extended area of pitched slate paving is proposed.
- Test pit 3. At the location of a building eroding out from the path surface to the south-east of Site D.
- Test pit 4. At the eastern end of a large elongated rectangular earthwork to the south of Site D where walling has become visible in the path surface.
- Test pit 5. At the location of a small slate-edged rectangular feature between structures within Site D.
- Test pit 6. At the north-western end of the Site D complex.
- Test pit 7. Immediately to the south of the eastern end of the Tunnel where foot erosion has resulted in wall foundations becoming visible in the path surface.
- Test pits 8 and 9. At the locations of earthworks along the line of a new path proposed between the Garden and the north-western corner of Site A.
- Test pit 10. In the south-eastern part of the Site A complex surrounding the Chapel.

The key objectives of this work were:

- To establish the nature and sensitivity of archaeological deposits at targeted locations along the path network which were identified as being potentially at risk of significant negative impacts by the proposed path improvements and agreed during a scoping meeting in January 2017 (see above).
- To locate and characterise evidence for past activity at these key locations.
- To recover and identify any artefacts relating to the occupation and/or use of these locations.
- To provide further information on the known upstanding archaeology of Tintagel from any archaeological remains encountered.
- To produce a summary of the aims and results of the test pitting programme for inclusion within the final report on the current Tintagel Castle Archaeological Research Project (TCARP).

## **2.3 Methods**

All recording work was undertaken according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording*. Staff will follow the CIfA *Code of Conduct* and *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Archaeology*. The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists is the professional body for archaeologists working in the UK.

### **2.3.1 Assessment of available information**

A number of archaeological assessments and recording projects have been carried out at Tintagel, though in relation to the sites proposed for this investigation, the only previous excavation on the upper part of Tintagel island is that carried out at Sites D, A, F, the well and the Garden by Raleigh Radford during the 1930s and the CAU report on repair works undertaken during the late 1990s (Reynolds 2006).

The 1985 RCHM(E) archaeological (measured) survey of Tintagel Island which followed a widespread heath fire recorded a large number of low and ephemeral earthworks, many interpreted as likely buildings and while all at present are undated, many are assumed to be post-Roman in date, though some may relate to the pre-castle-building period in the 11<sup>th</sup> century (associated with the chapel) or the period during which the castle was occupied in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and later. A notable scatter of fragments of Iron age and Romano-British native wares identified in the unpublished Tintagel archive collated by Radford and then later re-catalogued by the late Charles Thomas (now held in the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro) have been mapped as surface finds, particularly across the south-western area of the headland (unpublished catalogue copy held at CAU). There is also a possibility that some of the low earthworks particularly in this

area may relate to earlier phases of late Roman settlement on the headland, although further site investigation would need to confirm this. While late Roman activity has been identified at Site C during the work undertaken by GUARD in the 1990s, its exact character and spatial extent across the headland is still unknown. The earthworks mapped by the RCHM(E) survey have now been re-examined and reported on by Historic England (Bowden and Jamieson 2016), and this is a key source of information helping to interpret the results of this exercise. Further useful supplementary information is likely to derive from a new high resolution drone-flown Lidar survey of the whole of the site which is due to take place in March 2017. The recent walkover of Tintagel Island during the scoping inspection in January 2017 (see above) made it apparent that the 1985 survey does not record all earthworks and other features making up this part of the site).

### **2.3.2 Fieldwork**

Evaluation test pitting was carried out at number of key sites identified in January 2017 in order to adequately assess their archaeological character, significance and sensitivity in the light of the proposed upgrade of the path network. This information will be used to inform the final path construction methodology and route. For the locations of the test pits see Section 2.2 above, Figs 2 and 23-28. For the excavation results see Section 6 (below).

The majority of the test pits measured 1.0m square (though in a couple of places their sizes were adjusted according to site conditions; the two pits opened up over buildings eroding out from the path surface near the Tunnel (pit 7) and to the south-east of Site D were to measure 2.0m x 1.0m (test pit 3) though these dimensions were adjusted on site).

#### *Recording – general*

- Excavation of archaeological features was restricted to the minimum necessary to assess their character, significance and sensitivity to the proposed works and their likely potential.
- Where present, the turf was hand dug and carefully removed and placed on a plastic sheet. Following excavation and recording, the pits were backfilled by hand and the turf reinstated. A methodological statement for this work was agreed in advance with Natural England. Where the existing path surface consisted of stone, soil and gravel, this was kept separate from the underlying materials during excavation and was compacted back into place during reinstatement.
- The positions of the trenches were marked onto a scaled base map linked to the National Grid. A high-resolution GPS unit was used to locate the test pits on site.
- Each test pit was hand excavated, any archaeological features sampled and recorded. Where considered necessary, small-scale sondages were excavated to determine floor levels and made up surfaces within structures or depths to bedrock. Each test pit was given a unique code preceded by site code TTP17.
- Site drawings (plans at 1:20 and sections at 1:10) were made by pencil (4H) on drafting film; all drawings include standard information: site details, personnel, date, scale and north point.
- All features and finds were accurately located at an appropriate scale.
- All archaeological contexts were numbered and described to a standard format linked to a continuous numbering sequence (Appendix 1).
- Finds were collected in sealable plastic bags, which were labelled immediately with the test pit and context number (Appendix 2).
- Digital photography was used as the primary record medium, as well as for illustrative purposes.

- The photography included before and after images of the trench locations.
- All detailed photographs included a metric scale. A north arrow was included where the subject was shown in plan.
- The archive standard photographs have been recorded in a register detailing the feature number, location, and direction of shot.
- Photographs of details were taken with lenses of appropriate focal length.

### **Treatment of finds**

The fieldwork produced some finds: pottery, flint, probable slag, worked stone and worked slate, animal bones and teeth and a probable fired clay loom weight.

All finds in significant stratified contexts predating 1800 AD (e.g., settlement features) were plotted on a scaled base plan and described.

### **Post-fieldwork**

The post excavation programme (assessment, analysis and reporting) will need to be reviewed in the light of the fieldwork results and agreed with English Heritage and Historic England. This may include the analysis of the animal bone, pottery and other artefacts recovered during the fieldwork. This is likely to be reported on within the TCARP publication.

### **Creation of site archive**

An ordered and cross-referenced site archive has been produced. Site plans, photographs and other records have been completed and indexed, and all artefacts retrieved have been washed and marked (where appropriate) and catalogued.

A Historic England /ADS OASIS online archive index entry has been created.

## **3 Location**

See Figures 1, 2 and 23-28.

Tintagel Castle occupies a coastal site on the rugged and exposed north Cornish cliffs, its structures being located both on the mainland (the Upper and Lower Wards) and on the southern end of a headland (the Inner Ward) attached to it by a slender and eroding isthmus. Much of the remainder of the Island is occupied by earthwork and reconstructed buildings assumed to be of early Medieval date as well as a number which have been dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century (principally the Chapel) and the 13<sup>th</sup> century (the Garden, the Tunnel and possibly elements of Site D). The main coded sites were those identified by Radford's archaeological work for the Ministry of Works in the 1930s and 1950s (see Barrowman et al 2007). Tintagel Island is centred at SX 04927 89115, its highest point being at 83m OD. Fig 2 shows the route of the proposed visitor path on the Island (as a blue line, with late March modifications in orange and purple) together with the main coded sites. At a site meeting on March 28 2017 the path from the Garden to the north-western corner of Site A was removed from the visitor route; the existing desire-line path to the south will now be upgraded. At site D the original suggestion was that the path would pass through the complex of reconstructed structures, but it was agreed that impacts could be reduced by routing a new path around its eastern side. A path proposed from the Garden to Site A will now not be constructed.

## **4 Designations**

### **4.1 National**

Tintagel Castle passed into the Guardianship of the State in 1929, being cared for by the Office of Works (and its successors, now the English Heritage Trust); the site was Scheduled in 1981 (Monument N<sup>o</sup> 1014793).

Tintagel Island and the adjoining coast are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Tintagel Island and the adjoining coast fall within the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

## 4.2 Regional/county

Tintagel Castle was identified in the now-superseded Cornwall Structure Plan as falling within areas identified as an Area of Great Historic Value (AGHV) and an Area of Great Scientific Value (AGSV).

## 5 Site history

There is currently little evidence for pre-Roman occupation on the headland of Tintagel though discoveries of worked flints, Neolithic/Bronze Age cup-marked stones on coastal outcrops on the island and recent finds of SW Iron Age pottery during the 2016 TCARP excavations, during this test pitting programme, and as surface finds in the past provide evidence for some activity during later prehistory (Nowakowski and Gossip 2017).

There is evidence that Tintagel had become a relatively important place by the Roman period. Within the neighbourhood there are two (inscribed) Roman milestones which suggest a route passing near to Tintagel, while late Roman coins and pottery (Oxford Colour-Coated Wares and native flanged bowls) have been found on the island, suggesting a date *c* AD 300 – 400. Radiocarbon dates obtained from the re-excavation of structures on the Lower Terrace, Site C, gave a range *c* AD 395-460 (Harry and Morris 1997; Barrowman *et al* 2007). It has been suggested that Tintagel might have been the *Durocornovio* (fort of the Cornovii) mentioned in the *Ravenna Cosmography* (Thomas 1993, 84). One example of pottery from this period was recovered from test pit 9.

During the post-Roman period (from the 5<sup>th</sup> to early 7<sup>th</sup> centuries) the headland at Tintagel developed into a major fortified citadel. The 'Great Ditch' excavated during this period may be the origin of the Cornish place-name '*dyn tagell*' - the fortress of the constriction (Padel 1988).

Excavations since the 1950s (including those undertaken during the summer of 2016 and due to be continued in 2017) have revealed numerous buildings and structures which are apparently related to this period, the settlement apparently covering almost every available level part of the headland, including on artificial terraces cut into the slopes above the precipitous sea cliffs that surround almost all of the site.

Very large quantities of imported pottery (both fine table wares and coarsewares) originating from North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean have been found during excavations on the island, together with glass from the Atlantic seaboard dating to the mid-6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. These suggest that at Tintagel there was a degree of control, organisation and power sufficient for its occupants to trade directly with the Byzantine Empire. The nature of the return trade is not known, though there is some evidence from other sites that tin may well have been an important element (Thomas 1993; Harry and Morris 1997; Barrowman *et al* 2007).

Subsequently the island was abandoned apart from the conversion of a pre-existing building into a small chapel on the peak of the island *c* 1100 AD, and, as is suggested by the results of the CAU 2016 excavations, possibly also some other contemporary structures. A castle which was probably more of a showpiece than a defensive work was constructed by Richard, Earl of Cornwall in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century.

Though the more substantial buildings on the island along with the garden and the tunnel date from this period, the ceramic evidence suggests that their occupation was sporadic. A substantial rebuild of the original Great Hall was required following an episode of cliff collapse, the site was occasionally used as a state prison during the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the buildings ceased being used altogether by the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Roof slates

found in test pit 1 in the Inner Ward appear to be evidence for a phase of deliberate demolition, probably to recover timberwork and other materials for re-use elsewhere. The Listing entry for Tintagel Castle notes that a major phase of demolition is documented as occurring in the period 1328-36. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, two small gun houses were proposed on the island in response to a possible threat from the Spanish; it is uncertain whether these were completed and armed. The rest of the castle however was by then described as a picturesque ruin (Thomas 1993).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries Tintagel quickly became an increasingly popular and highly romanticised tourist destination, particularly following the coming of the main line railway to Cornwall and the construction of the Railway Hotel at Tintagel. The Reverend Kinsman, taking on the title of the Constable of the Castle, oversaw the reconstruction of some elements of the monument, and employed a guide to take visitors around the Castle, which was increasingly identified as the birthplace of King Arthur (Thomas *ibid*).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was also an attempt to mine lodes of lead and silver beneath the island, whilst the haven was developed as a harbour for servicing the important local slate quarrying industry.

Tintagel Castle was taken into Guardianship in 1929, and this was followed by archaeological investigations overseen by C.A. Raleigh Radford. He concluded that the buildings on the island were part of an early Christian 'Celtic' monastery, and the landscaping, reconstruction and repair works undertaken by the Ministry of Works at the time reflected this interpretation. Between 1990 and 1999, English Heritage commissioned Glasgow University (GUARD) to undertake research excavations at Site C (an area previously excavated during Radford's pre-war campaigns) and elsewhere in order to test this theory.

Radford's interpretation of the character of the post-Roman remains at Tintagel as being a 'Celtic' monastery was challenged by Ian Burrow in the 1970s. Subsequently in the 1980s the late Professor Charles Thomas undertook a re-evaluation of the extraordinary unpublished finds assemblages from the site and drew attention to the large quantities of imported fine and storage wares which made it clear that Tintagel had been involved in trade networks extending to Europe's southern Atlantic seaboard as well as to North Africa and to the central and eastern Mediterranean throughout the immediate post-Roman period, that is the 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. Most early medieval specialists now favour the site's current interpretation as a high status trading settlement (c.f. Thomas 1988 and b, Thomas 1993, 74; Hodges 2006; Barrowman et al 2007).

Cornwall Archaeological Unit has undertaken a number of watching briefs during safety, visitor management and other works within the Castle site from the mid-1980s to the present day, and has just completed the first season of new excavations as part of a research programme (TCARP) based on selected earthworks on the eastern and southern cliff-slopes to find out more about the character and preservation of the post-Roman settlement.

## **6 Archaeological results**

### **6.1 General**

The test pitting was undertaken between 14 March and 16 March 2017 by a single CAU archaeologist. Weather conditions were variable, being primarily overcast with occasional light mizzle and fog.

Each test pit was photographed in advance of excavation, de-turfed (or in the cases of those within eroded areas, cleared of superficial materials), excavated to a depth at which the underlying archaeology could be characterised, cleaned and recorded in plan (and section where relevant), photographed, backfilled and the turf reinstated, and re-photographed. Artefacts exposed during the test pitting were recovered and bagged by context.

The feature numbers referred to below (and elsewhere in this report in square brackets) are those assigned to them in Bowden and Jamieson 2016.

Test pits 1 and 2 were intended to test for occupation surfaces adjacent to the Great Hall and lodgings building. Test pits 3 and 4 were positioned over probable post-Roman structures [102], [097] eroding out of the path surface; test pit 7 was located over a further previously unrecorded structure eroding out of the path surface near the Tunnel. Test pits 5, 6 and 10 were positioned within complexes of buildings (Site D and Site A) reconstructed in the 1930s by the Ministry of Works following excavation by Raleigh Radford. Test pits 8 and 9 were located close to earthworks [141] and [142] which were originally to be traversed by the new path.

## **6.2 Test pit 1**

See Figures 2, 3, 4 and 23.

Test pit 1 was centred at SX 05078 89011 immediately to the west of the slate path running past the Great Hall and just to the north of the new interpretation plinth. It measured 1m<sup>2</sup> in plan.

Upon removal of the turf and topsoil, which was a dark brown soft silt (101), 0.2m deep, a deposit of dark greyish-brown soft silt with (common) stone inclusions (102), <0.15m deep was revealed. The surface of the layer contained some small (abraded) sherds of pottery identified as being medieval and post-Roman in date. This in turn covered (103), a dark brown loose silt <0.12m deep, which contained stone inclusions made up of roofing slates, some of which retained their nail holes (Fig 38). Animal bone, teeth, post-Roman (Fig 39) and medieval (12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century) pottery was found intermixed with these slates. Below this layer was a mid to dark grey fairly solid material (104), interpreted as possible slate bedrock.

The findings from this test pit were interpreted as a relatively recently imported topsoil overlying a spread of medieval or post-medieval demolition material, presumably related to the abandonment of the Great Hall and other related castle buildings. Results here indicated that the material underlying the topsoil at this location would be impacted by the proposed extension of the adjacent slate pitched paving.

## **6.3 Test pit 2**

See Figures 2, 5, 6 and 23.

Test pit 2 was centred at SX 05075 89016 between the existing slate path running past the Great Hall and the lodgings building to its west and measured 1.0m x 0.5m in plan.

The removal of a dark brown soft silty topsoil with a grass topping (201) (<0.09m deep) revealed a mid to dark greyish brown loose loam (202) (<0.03m deep) with (common) stone inclusions and smaller pieces of broken slate similar in appearance to (102) in test pit 1. This covered a mid-greyish brown compacted stone and earth layer (203), interpreted as a metalled surface associated with the adjacent building. The plastic tube from a ballpoint pen was found on the surface of this layer, suggesting that it had been exposed in recent decades. The trench was less than 0.2m from the edge of the present footpath and reached a maximum depth of 0.16m from the grass level.

The findings from this test pit were interpreted as a relatively recently imported topsoil which overlaid a thin spread of material which sealed a former activity/occupation or land surface associated with the nearby building. This occupation surface would be impacted by the extension of the adjacent slate pitched paving should this require excavation deep enough to intersect it.

## **6.4 Test pit 3**

See Figures 2, 7, 8, 24 and 29.

Test pit 3 was centred at SX 04971 89164 on the path route to the south-east of the Site D complex where one [102] of a closely-set group of five small buildings [100–104] of likely post-Roman date is currently being significantly eroded by foot traffic. The structure appears to have been built on an exposed slate outcrop. The trench



measured 2.0m x 1.0m in plan. This eroding feature was surveyed and described by CAU in 1998/9 (Reynolds 2006) and was considered to be likely to be a small building of possible post-Roman date.

A spread of a mid-red-brown loose silt (301) partially overlaid the walling and the interior of this structure and was mixed with common inclusions of broken slate <0.1m deep; this layer was variable in depth and spread across the area excavated. The central area of the test pit was made up of (302), a layer of broken slates randomly scattered between two walls located at either end of the trench. The slate was not the roofing material found in test pits 1 and 2, but appeared to be of a poorer quality and thicker, possibly material associated with the infill of a wall.

On the surface at the south end of the trench was (303) a dark layer of organic almost peaty soil, which lay on top of the stones making up the south side of the feature. This layer was notably eroded and was mixed in with smaller fragments of slate crushed by prolonged foot traffic. Below (303) were the masonry remnants of a wall facing (304), made up of at least two courses of thin slates; these two courses reached a depth of 0.17m and seemed to make up the south face of a coursed stone-faced wall around 1.4m wide.

The test pit examined the structure recorded in plan by Reynolds in 1998/9. It appears that in parts, two of the wall courses recorded at that time may have been lost to erosion. Given the fragility of the stone remains revealed, no excavation within the interior of the building was undertaken, though it seems likely that the material here may only survive to relatively shallow depths and the overall survival of the building is poor. The inclusion of a slag droplet within the fills may hint at an industrial function for this structure. No artefacts were recovered. This structure and those adjacent to it are clearly vulnerable to erosion resulting from foot traffic and measures to halt further damage are required.

#### **6.5 Test pit 4**

See Figures 2, 9, 10, 24 and 30.

Test pit 4 was centred at SX 04952 89183 where the northern wall at the eastern end of structure [097], an elongated earthwork of unknown date and function, has been exposed by foot traffic induced erosion. To both east and west feature [097] survives as an earthwork; along the pathline this has been lost and the wall core is now exposed at path surface level. The test pit measured 2.3m long and 0.5m wide.

The topsoil (401) to the north-west of the excavation was made up of a mid-reddish brown loose loam, (<0.16m deep), very rooty and topped with grass. Alongside this to the south and the east within the area eroded by the wear and tear of foot traffic the ground was made up of (406), a mid-greyish brown stone and soil surface which incorporated broken slate compacted by continuous foot traffic. Below (401) on the north-west side was (402), a dark reddish-brown loose loam with common stone inclusions (this was not bottomed). The stone inclusions included larger pieces of slate and some quartz material, possibly representing wall collapse or demolition debris as well as two sherds of imported post-Roman coarseware. To the east of (402) was (403), the possible remains of a structural wall made up of two large pieces of slate aligned north to south and sat on (404). Between the two stones delineating the western edge of 403 was a mid-yellowish-brown clay (404); this appeared to continue to the east and is likely to be the internal fill of a wall which measured 1.05m wide. At the eastern edge of the trench on the outside of the walling was (405), a dark reddish-brown loose silt <0.1m deep, this abutted wall (403). A second possible wall aligned north-south was revealed at the top of the trench, approximately 0.7m long, 0.22m wide and at least 0.05m deep; this wall appeared to be made up of relatively smooth pieces of slate.

Parts of the walling making up the eroding eastern end of structure [097] were examined. The test pit also exposed sections of an additional wall which had a different alignment. Owing to the relative fragility of the walls, the full depths of these features was not revealed. A limited number of artefacts were found. This feature has already

been eroded by foot traffic to some degree and is likely to be further degraded by erosion in the future unless protected from this.

## 6.6 Test pit 5

See Figures 2, 11, 12, 25 and 31.

Test pit 5 was 1.0m<sup>2</sup> in plan and was centred at SX 04930 89187 over a small feature [035] within the eastern end of the Site D complex consisting of two vertically-set slates protruding from the turf in an area between two reconstructed buildings.

The ground surface at this location was topped with grass which covered (501), a dark brown loose silt (<0.12m deep). The removal of the turf and topsoil revealed a large piece of slate in the south corner of the test pit; on its removal a plastic drinking straw was found. The turf removal showed that vertical slates (504), (505) and (506) formed three sides (of an originally four-sided) slate box approximately 0.5m<sup>2</sup> whose interior had been subjected to burning. The immediately perimeter of the slate box was made up of (502), a mid to dark brown loose silt containing stone inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal. Where it abutted one upright slate (504) this material appeared to have been subjected to heat, having a reddish tinge normally associated with soil which has been subjected to intense heat. The interior of the box adjacent to slate (503) was a dark brown organic silt with frequent flecks of charcoal, containing (common) stone inclusions. To the north-east and north-west of (503) was (504), a large upright and embedded slate which measured 0.5m long and 0.1m thick, 0.08m of this originally protruding from the ground surface. To the north-west was (505), a large upright piece of slate which measured 0.5m long and 0.04m thick, 0.16m of this originally protruding from the ground surface; this stone appeared to be heavily fractured along its exposed upper edge. Adjoining (505) was stone (506); this was still partially covered by the surrounding turf and measured 0.3m long and 0.06m thick.

Test pitting in this area of Site D revealed parts of an artificial stone box made up of large stones set on edge. Parts of the interior of the feature were evaluated – this material incorporated flecks of charcoal, whilst reddening of the adjacent soils suggested that this may have been an open hearth. It is unclear whether this was originally within a building or in an open space between buildings. No artefacts were recovered which might help to date this feature, though its charcoal content may have the potential to provide a radiocarbon date. This feature should not be covered over by any upgraded path.

## 6.7 Test pit 6

See Figures 2, 13, 14, 25 and 32.

Test pit 6 was 1.0m<sup>2</sup> in plan and centred at SX 04914 89183 where it is proposed that the new path will pass between structures [029] and [030] in Site D at its north-western corner near a reconstructed doorway. These buildings are currently interpreted as being part of a medieval farmstead.

The location chosen for the test pit was topped with grass covering a dark brown fine silt (601) (<0.15m deep). Below this was (602) a dark brown loose silt, <0.12m deep containing sparse stone inclusions; this appeared to be a pocket of topsoil containing a few stones and very similar to (601). Below these was (603), a dark brown loose loam with sparse stone inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal; a rim sherd from a post-Roman Bv amphora (Fig 40) was recovered from this context. This in turn overlaid (604), a mid-yellowish brown plastic clay which appeared to have a level top and may be an original occupation surface or former old land surface. The maximum depth of the test pit was 0.3m. No later Medieval finds were recovered from this location.

The results of the test pitting were relatively inconclusive and no features were revealed. It is probable that the test pit was located within an area which had been previously excavated and subsequently reinstated as this location is at the north-western corner of Site D, which was consolidated during Radford's campaign of work in the 1930s (Barrowman *et al* 2007, table 1). The depth of the material revealed in the test pit suggests that this particular location is relatively insensitive to foot traffic.

## **6.8 Test pit 7**

See Figures 2, 15, 16, 26 and 33.

Test pit 7 was centred at SX 04875 89097 over a pair of stone walls which have been revealed by foot erosion immediately to the south of the Tunnel near its eastern end. The pit measured 2.0m x 1.0m.

The ground surface was made up of (701), a <0.03m deep layer of crushed slate which was grey in colour and which had become compacted by foot traffic and weathering. Two parallel wall faces were revealed crossing this area at surface. These are not recorded on the RCHM(E) plan and were not numbered by Bowden and Jamieson (2016).

Excavation of the test pit revealed that the western wall continued below surface for six further courses of relatively thin slate (702). Two metres to the east was a single line of stones, these being exposed at surface (704). It seems very unlikely, given the distance between these two lines of stone, that they are the eastern and western facings of a single wide wall, and it is possible that these features represent the remains of a revetted spoil dump created during the excavation of the adjacent Tunnel in the 1930s. The fill between the two wall faces comprised (703), made up of broken pieces of slate and the remnants of roofing slates. Unlike those recovered from test pits 1 and 2, the roofing slates within this test pit were of much poorer quality and considerably thicker. The slate fill was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.35m; at this depth the slates became more voided and there was less soil content; the deposit was not bottomed. The excavation of the area between the two walls was halted at this depth owing to the potential for them to become undermined. The base of each wall appeared at this depth to have been built off loose slaty material visually very similar to the backfill between the walls. External to (704) was (705), a yellowish-brown stony material possibly representing bedrock.

Test pit 7 investigated a previously unrecorded double walled structure adjacent to the Tunnel. The results were somewhat inconclusive and the loose character of the infill suggested that this might not necessarily have been a structural wall fill. The nature of the roofing slates included in this fill suggests derivation from either an early or a low-status building (but not this structure). The character of the structure defined by these two wall faces is uncertain on present evidence, though may represent the base of a revetted spoil dump, possibly dating to the 1930s. No artefacts which might date this structure were recovered. The structure is clearly vulnerable to foot erosion or destabilisation through compaction, and it is suggested that the new path is re-routed away from the exposed walls.

## **6.9 Test pit 8**

See Figures 2, 17, 18, 27 and 34.

Test pit 8 was 1.0m<sup>2</sup> in plan and centred at SX 04985 89089 where a new path proposed between the Garden and the north-western corner of Site A would have passed over a low earthwork [141] of uncertain character.

The area was topped with long grass covering a mid to dark brown loosely-textured rich loam (801), (<0.15m deep). This in turn overlaid (802), a dark brown loose loam (<0.5m deep) containing sparse stone inclusions, worked slates and pottery. The pieces of slate present within the deposit were random and infrequent and suggest natural incorporations within a well-cultivated soil. Context (802) incorporated one sherd each from post-Roman Bi and Bii amphorae and 3 sherds of undiagnostic imported post-Roman wares, as well as 3 slag fragments, a notched slate and a possible broken slate amphora stopper. Context (802) overlaid (803), a grey slate bedrock sloping down to the north.

The findings from this test pit suggest that this area had been cultivated, either as a garden or as part of a larger field and the low and rather amorphous earthwork visible at surface might originally have been a bank associated with a cultivation plot. The area examined by the test pit did not appear to be vulnerable to impacts associated with the

construction of any new path between the Garden and Site A, though contains pottery (including a sherds of post-Roman amphorae) and other artefacts at no great depth from surface. The soils encountered here have the potential for geoarchaeological analysis.

### **6.10 Test pit 9**

See Figures 2, 19, 20, 27 and 35.

Test pit 9 was 1.0m<sup>2</sup> in plan and centred at SX 04990 89085 and adjoined the location where the proposed new path would have passed over earthwork [143], a low scarp or lynchet.

The grass surface covered a dark brown loose silty loam (901) <0.25m deep containing sparse stone inclusions. This covered (902), a dark brown loose loam <0.35m deep, with some stone inclusions and fragments of well-preserved pottery; the stone comprised pieces of broken and crushed slate and well-preserved pottery including 7 sherds of a late Roman Bi amphora with grooved decoration (Fig 41), 10 further sherds of Bi amphora and 3 sherds (including one neck sherd) from a post-Roman Biv amphora; the stone comprised pieces of broken and crushed slate and included one notched slate. Below (902) was (903), a dark brown loose silt <0.2m deep with sparse stone inclusions. This also incorporated pottery – one decorated body sherd of 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century South Devon ware (Fig 42), one sherd from a late Roman Bi grooved amphora and a rim sherd from a Middle Iron Age South West Decorated vessel (Figs 43 and 44). (903) was sat on top of a <0.1m deep layer of dark brown silt containing common stone inclusions (904). This overlaid grey slate bedrock (905) similar to (803) found in test pit 8.

Like the area examined not far to the north-west, test pit 9 seems to have been excavated into an area of former cultivation, the pottery possibly indicating episodes of manuring. The artefactual evidence suggests some degree of continuity of this activity from the Iron Age through the Romano-British period into the post-Roman period at this location. The findings from this area highlight the potential for further such discoveries during the cutting of any new paths or other below-ground interventions. The excavation of this test pit suggest that the area originally proposed to be traversed by the new path from the Garden to Site A was likely to be relatively insensitive to negative impacts from this proposal, though has a demonstrable potential for the recovery of well-preserved artefactual material and for geoarchaeological and palaeoenvironmental analysis.

### **6.11 Test pit 10**

See Figures 2, 21, 22, 28 and 36-37.

Test pit 10 was 1.0m<sup>2</sup> in plan and centred at SX 05013 89053 within the centre of the incomplete reconstructed building sited immediately to the south of the Chapel on the eastern side of the Site A complex.

The area examined by the test pit was topped with short cropped grass which sealed a dark brown plastic silty clay (1001) (<0.06m deep) which had few stone inclusions. The topsoil was consistently thin throughout the area of the test pit and covered a stonier layer of soil (1002), a dark brown loose loam containing common stone inclusions averaging 0.15m deep. Two sherds of pottery were recovered from this material, both of these being from late Roman Bi amphorae. (1002) was partly mixed with (1005), which may be the possible fill of a wall located on the south side of the trench; this deposit was not bottomed. The western side of (1005) contained a large slate/quartz stone <0.4m in diameter. On the northern edge of the trench were a series of flat stones (1003) interpreted as either elements of a possible floor or the edge of a wall; the western edge of this feature appeared to be made up of two courses of stone. On the northern edge of the trench was a pocket of a dark brown loose silt (1004) which did not appear to be associated with the potential wall/floor (1005).

The results from this test pit were somewhat inconclusive and it is possible that it was sited in an area which had previously been excavated as this is close to the centre of

Site A which was excavated and consolidated during the 1930s Radford campaign (Barrowman et al 2007). The test pit revealed part of a possible stone-built feature but given the keyhole investigation provided by the test pit it is not possible to interpret this feature or to determine its relationship with the building within which it is sited. As a consequence it can be concluded that there is a well-preserved surface at this location which may be associated with the use of the buildings; any new pathway here would have the potential to impact on the buried archaeology.

## **7 Chronology/dating evidence**

Overall this exercise has produced some interesting and varied insights and the results (and finds) highlight the significant potential of the sub-surface archaeology of Tintagel headland. This opportunity to test some of the Royal Commission's survey results has not been presented before. The test pitting programme has also allowed some degree of assessment of the impact of continuing pressure from the wear and tear of surfaces, buried deposits and structures induced by visitors. The degree of preservation of the sub-surface archaeology clearly varies across the site but some examples of well-preserved buried archaeology were found during the test pitting, particularly in pits 1–5, 7 and 10). The artefactual material includes Middle Iron Age, Romano-British and 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century pottery, animal teeth and bones and roofing slates of various sizes and qualities (Fig 38), that from test pit 1 probably resulting from the un-roofing of the Great Hall. The infill of the hearth revealed in Trench 5 included some charcoal. The Site D complex is currently interpreted as a farmstead of later Medieval date (Radford 1965); charcoal recovered from a sealed context in the unexcavated section of the hearth in the future might be capable of providing a radiocarbon date which might assist in determining whether this is the case.

The pottery from test pit 9 included Middle Iron Age material, post-Roman amphorae sherds and Romano-British (2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) material (Figs 41 to 44) in a deep topsoil which looks very much like that which would be found in a garden plot or a small, well-manured field with considerable continuity of use. Despite the interpretation of Site D as a later Medieval farmstead, no pottery dating to this period was recovered from this area, or from the adjacent area likely to have formed its fields. Radford found wheel-thrown late prehistoric pottery both within and around Site A during his excavations, as surface finds in the area to its west close to the location of test pit 9, and in the south-western corner of the island where the 1984 fire revealed some relatively slight earthworks. Collectively the discovery of these artefacts make it clear that a much greater area of Tintagel island was occupied in later prehistory than has previously been realised, even though no definitive sites which might date to this period have been identified with certainty on this exposed part of the island.

## **8 Potential for impacts and suggested mitigation**

### **8.1 The proposals**

Discussions between English Heritage, historic England, Nicholas Pearson Associates and Natural England between 2014 and 2016 resulted in the finalisation of proposals for a primary visitor path route on the mainland and island sections of Tintagel Castle and its approaches. The island section of this route is shown in blue in Fig 2 of this report (modifications to the route agreed at a site meeting on 28 March 2017 are shown in orange and purple on this plan).

The intention is to construct a path with a width between 1.6m and 2.0m, though this will be varied in response to the local topography in some sections. On the majority of the island this will be a 'floating' or 'part-dig' path largely built up above the existing ground surface and set on a geotextile membrane. The path will be constructed of a graded range of compacted crushed slate aggregate or another appropriate hard-wearing material, and will, where required, incorporate steps. Within the Inner Ward adjacent to the Great Hall and extending northwards along the eastern side of the island to the viewing point overlooking Site C it is proposed that the path surface will

consist of vertically-set pitched slate paving. Steps required in the northern section of this part of the route will be similarly surfaced.

It was originally intended by the path designers to avoid all archaeological features visible at surface, but on walking the proposed path route it became clear that this was impracticable in some areas of the site and that the public were likely to follow desire lines in locations where the new path did not closely follow these. In some areas the proposed path line traversed earthworks which had not been mapped by RCHM(E). It was decided to largely align the new path along existing routes and as a result, some archaeological features will be traversed by the new path. Given the nature of the path design, parts of these features will become hidden following the works. Wherever possible these effects have been minimised.

Within two complexes of buildings (Site A and Site D) the current ground cover is mown turf. Where the paths run through the complexes it was proposed that its surface would be of consolidated aggregate. Modifications to the path route agreed on site on 28 March included the re-routing of the path around three elements of the building earthwork group to the south east of site D and the re-routing of the path around the north-western and northern sides of Site D (rather than through it as had previously been suggested). The path originally proposed from the Garden to Site A was taken out of the scheme and a desire line path from the Well to Site A will be reinstated as part of the finalised route.

In areas where rising ground along the path route consists of bare rock, existing eroded steps may need to be re-cut where this is considered necessary to minimise the likelihood of slips, trips and falls. Some other sections of existing steps will be replaced to types capable of accommodating the expected visitor numbers and with less slippery surfaces than are found on some of the existing features.

## **8.2 Physical impacts**

Where archaeological features and deposits are shallowly-buried they are potentially at risk through any intrusive activities such as excavation for slate pitching or step edgings. If features or deposits are only shallowly-set below ground level and are sensitive to compaction or contain fragile artefacts they may also be vulnerable to compressive impacts during path construction, particularly if the path materials are to be mechanically consolidated. They may potentially be impacted on by the effects of increased foot traffic along the visitor circulation route, though the path material covering them will help to cushion these effects.

Within the Inner Ward where the area of pitched slate surface is to be widened to provide a more extensive area for visitor circulation, the demolition debris found in test pit 1 and the occupation surface found in test pit 2 next to the western building are between 150mm and 300mm from the current ground level. Care will need to be taken not to damage these buried features when setting in place the new slate surfacing. It is unclear how extensive the occupation/activity surface adjacent to the lodgings is, though it does not extend as far south as the location of test pit 1. It is possible, though not certain, that it extends the whole length of the nearby building, and may also wrap around its southern side where there are the remains of a buttressed feature which represents the basal section of an external staircase.

Where buildings have become exposed at surface through foot erosion near site D (test pits 3 and 4) and adjacent to the Tunnel (test pit 7) it has been proposed that these should be protected from foot erosion by burial, if necessary under enhanced depths of the path surfacing material or using soil and turf. In the case of [102], the southernmost of the group of buildings to the south-east of Site D, a ramped approach path on its southern side would have been needed to achieve this, as this building is sited at the top of a fairly steep natural rise in ground levels. The modified path route now loops around the western side of this group of structures. Some elements of the foundation courses of a structure attached to the southern side of the Tunnel near its eastern end appear to be sited located not far above bedrock, and it would be difficult to protect these without laying a thick layer of compacted aggregate over them. The

basal sections of these walls are built off and define an area of voided slate debris which is likely to be vulnerable to subsidence as a result of compaction; it would be preferable if the path at this location were to be routed somewhat further to the south than is currently being proposed, avoiding the exposed sections of the walls of this building altogether.

Where the new section of path was to be created between the Garden and Site A it would have passed through an area containing several rather amorphous linear earthworks. A sinuous path route would have been required to avoid cutting through any of these features, whilst a substantial build-up of consolidated aggregate adjacent to them would have been required to carry the route over such features to avoid unacceptable changes in path surface level. Some infilling of the hollowed area abutting the north-western base of scarp [143] adjacent to test pit 9 would also have been required to avoid producing a steeply-sloping section of the path at this point. Both test pits within this area revealed that the underlying, apparently cultivated soils incorporate pottery from the Iron Age to the post-Roman period. This section of path is now not to be constructed.

It has been suggested that the requirement to widen the section of path from Site F up to the viewing platform overlooking Site C to install steps of a sufficient width to accommodate predicted levels of visitor traffic could be addressed by the use of gabion baskets at the top of the slope on its eastern side. On re-inspection this approach seems unfeasible, and it will probably therefore be necessary to excavate a little way into the grassy cliffside on its western side. Whilst this area does not appear to incorporate any artificial terracing to the north of Site F, it is likely that the hillwash material which cloaks it will contain post-Roman artefactual material deriving from occupation sites upslope, as has been found elsewhere on this side of the island, for instance during excavations in advance of the construction of the steps leading upslope above the Custodian's Hut (Batey, Sharpe and Thorpe 1993) and as surface finds in several locations.

### **8.3 Visual impacts**

The construction of gravel paths of even widths, with level surfaces and with a consistent appearance across along the whole of their lengths across the island plateau will inevitably produce some visual impact, given the current natural and 'unmanaged' appearance of this area. Where the path is to run through the building complex at Sites A its creation will tend to result in a lessening of the visual coherency of this group of buildings, which is currently supplied by the closely-mown turf which occupies the interiors of the structures, the spaces between the buildings and their immediate surroundings. The current lack of a single path route at this site (as at site D) also encourages visitors to spread out to explore their various elements, reducing foot erosion. It was hoped that the areas within Sites A and D should be left as mown grass as this surface seemed to be effective in limiting footfall impacts, but that this approach, if adopted, should be monitored. It has been agreed that at Site D the new path will now run around the eastern and northern periphery of this building group. It did not prove possible to find an alternative route at Site A, however.

Where the improved path will traverse earthworks or slate-built structures it will partly bury them and visually break them up into separated sections whose original extents and forms will no longer be appreciable to the visitor. This would seem to be unavoidable in a small number of areas across the site given the density of such features at some locations along the visitor path. Where possible, the precise routes of the paths at these locations has been modified to minimise such effects.

## **9 Mitigation**

Although the majority of the work involved in the construction of the new path network at Tintagel Castle will involve the building up of current ground levels, there will be a requirement for turf and topsoil removal in areas where the slate paving is to be extended or newly-laid as well as along those sections of the route where the 'floating

path' design is to be employed. The provision of an archaeological watching brief or (in some areas) for pre-excitation by archaeologists to mitigate impacts resulting from these works has also been discussed, and a similar approach may be required during any necessary path widening in the area between Site F and the viewing point above Site B. The creation of a new gently-graded path from the Garden to Site A would have intersected deposits which have been shown to incorporate Iron Age, Romano-British and post-Roman artefacts; this section of the path route will now not be constructed.

A suggested alternative approach to laying a gravel path through the currently grassed building complexes at Sites A and D was proposed (above, Section 8.3). A diversion around Site D was agreed at the site meeting on 28 March, but no alternative to the floating path could be found for Site A.

Elsewhere on the island section of the path route it is felt that some degree of minor re-alignment would benefit sensitive archaeological sites by either avoiding traversing them completely or not bisecting them.

Some site types (particularly buildings exposed at surface) have been shown to be potentially at risk of impacts arising from the path construction methods to be employed – in particular the processes used to compact the path surfacing materials. Careful consideration will need to be given to minimising harm, if possible by adopting potentially less impactful designs. Once the path is in place, the additional depth of surfacing materials will provide additional protection to the underlying archaeology.

## **10 Post-excavation analysis**

Only a cursory examination of the artefactual material recovered during the test pitting programme has been undertaken to date, and the interpreted dates presented in this report should be considered as interim only. It is recommended that this small collection of pottery should be examined by a specialist to characterise and date it and details of the collection should be added to the current Tintagel archive catalogue (copies of which are held at CAU and the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro).

The teeth and other animal bone found mixed with the demolition debris in test pit 1 should also be examined by a suitable specialist.

It is recommended that a costed and agreed methodology should be drawn up for this phase of post-excavation analysis.

## **11 Conclusions and discussion**

The test pitting programme undertaken on Tintagel Island in 2017 has enabled some degree of assessment of the potential impacts on its sub-surface archaeology which would result from the construction of the new path network, and has also provided some new insights into its character.

The selection of the sites for the test pits was based on surface indications – the locations were intended to be representative of the island as a whole and included areas which were considered to have a high potential for subsurface archaeology (pits 1 and 2), eroding structures (pits 3, 4 and 7), locations within groups of buildings reconstructed during the 1930s (pits 5, 6 and 10) and in a relatively blank area between a pair of linear earthworks across which a new path was originally proposed (pits 8 and 9).

Pits 1 to 5, 7 and 10 revealed the presence of shallowly-set underlying archaeological features which may be vulnerable to impacts during path construction should these not be adequately mitigated. Four test pits (1, 8, 9 and 10) produced artefactual material, that from pit 9 potentially being of considerable interest given its likely date.

Several of the pits raised more questions than they answered, as the features revealed in them could not be adequately characterised or described without the test pits being extended beyond their agreed dimensions or by significantly deepening the excavations. In the cases of the walling found in test pits 3 and 4 or the possible hearth



box examined in test pit 5 this would have risked the destabilisation of features. This was most marked in test pit 7 where the full character of the structure could not be established without a significant risk of potentially undermining the built feature. It remains unclear whether the features exposed here represent two separate wall faces, possibly those revetting an excavation spoil heap; the relationship between these features and the adjacent Tunnel is also unclear.

However, the test pitting programme has thrown some new light on the archaeology and archaeological potential of areas of the island. The presence of apparently undisturbed medieval demolition debris close to surface within the Inner Ward indicates that Raleigh Radford's excavations were probably confined to the areas within and immediately adjacent to the above-ground castle structures. The archaeological potential of the material underlying the Great Hall has already been established (Thomas 1999a and Appleton et al 1988) but the findings from test pit 1 suggests that areas between the buildings here retain some unexcavated archaeological material, and possibly also features.

Limited investigation of small parts of two of the structures plotted by RCHM(E) on the Tintagel Island in 1985 (test pits 3 and 4) and trial excavation of an un-mapped feature (test pit 7) has provided some information about the construction and degree of survival of the often rather ephemeral structures which have been mapped on Tintagel island. Structures which appear at surface as earthworks (for example structure [097]) have been shown to have stone-walled cores and their potential below-ground preservation is higher than would appear from surface evidence alone.

The roughly-shaped roofing slates found in test pit 7 are notably different from the carefully-shaped, thinly-split medieval examples recovered from test pit 1. These seem likely to have either been used to roof a low status later Medieval structure or may suggest the nature of the roofing materials used on at least some of Tintagel's early Medieval structures. The latter is felt to be more likely to be the case given some equivalent finds from the 2016 TCARP excavations and the appearance of some of the slates recovered from Radford's spoil heaps on the slope between the Custodian's Hut and the path to the Iron Gate in 2017 (Adam Sharpe pers. comm.), these possibly deriving from the excavation of the nearby Site F.

Test pits 8 and 9 show that some form of cultivation was occurring within this area of the island, probably for an extended period of time. The quality of the soil within test pit 8 was exceptional for an exposed coastal location over relatively shallow bedrock. It was notably free-draining and easy to trowel, with very little stone content, but incorporating pot sherds from the Iron age through to the post-Roman period. These soils may be good candidates for the examination of their chemistry and structure, as well as palaeoenvironmental sampling and analysis to determine whether organic remains survive within them.

Test pit 9 intersected similar soils, but also demonstrated the presence of what appears to be Iron Age and Romano-British period pottery within this area, adding to the growing number of sherds of these periods recovered in this part of the island. The presence of post-Roman sherds in the same context strongly suggest a continuity of use of these cultivation plots over an extended period. The fresh condition of this pottery suggests that it was used within the general vicinity and disposed of close by.

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#### 11.4 **Websites**

<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/> The online database of Sites and Monuments Records, and Listed Buildings

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tintagel\\_Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tintagel_Castle)

[http://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob\\_id=431862&sort=4&search=exact&criteria=tintagel%20castle&rational=q&recordsperpage=10](http://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob_id=431862&sort=4&search=exact&criteria=tintagel%20castle&rational=q&recordsperpage=10)

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## **12 Project archive**

The CAU project number is **146668**

The project's documentary, digital, photographic and drawn archive is maintained by Cornwall Archaeological Unit

Electronic data is stored in the following locations:

Project admin: \\Sites\Sites T\Tintagel Castle footpath test pitting

Digital photographs: \\Historic Environment (Images)\Sites Q-T\Tintagel Castle footpath test pits

Electronic drawings: \\Historic Environment (CAD)\CAD Archive\Sites T\Tintagel Castle Footpath test pits

Historic England/ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2-279728

## Appendix 1: Table of contexts

Context Number	Description
(101)	Topsoil, a dark brown soft silt topped with short mown grass, sparse stone inclusion comprising of broken slate and pieces of quartz, <0.2m depth.
(102)	A dark greyish brown soft silt, loose layer<0.15m deep, containing one sherd of post-Roman pottery.
(103)	A dark brown loose silt <0.12m deep, containing larger pieces of roofing slate and some animal bone and teeth.
(104)	Possible bedrock, A grey slate which appeared to be fractured and easily broken when trowelled.
(201)	Topsoil, a dark brown soft silt topped with short mown grass, sparse stone inclusions, comprising broken slate and pieces of quartz, <0.09m deep.
(202)	A mid to dark greyish brown loose stony loam, with common stone inclusions, <0.03m deep, containing a piece of worked flint.
(203)	A mid greyish brown compacted stone surface, possible a metallated surface (not bottomed). The maximum depth to this surface was 0.16m from the grass surface.
(301)	A mid reddish brown loose silt <0.1m deep containing common stone inclusions, sat on top of possible building remains which have been eroded by foot traffic.
(302)	An infill of slaty material between the features considered to be wall faces. The slate pieces were large and randomly scattered poor in quality and not typical of the roofing slate seen nearer to the castle. Not bottomed.
(303)	A deposit of dark organic soil sat on top of the stones at the south end of the trench, eroded and mixed with smaller fragments of crushed slate; this is the ground surface the visitors walk on.
(304)	The south side of the wall comprising at least two courses of stone, <0.17m deep, but possibly deeper; the inner stone is possible collapsed material, the north side of the wall was implied by the presence of two larger pieces of slate forming a linear feature running across the present path; the wall was about 1.4m wide.
(401)	A mid reddish brown loose – firm loam <0.16m deep, easy to trowel but compacted in places.
(402)	A dark reddish brown loose loam, (not bottomed), top soil mixed with loose stones some quartz and slate, possible remnants of demolition material or collapse from a wall.
(403)	Possible north face of a larger (wider feature), 1.05m wide, indicated by large slate stones set into the ground; this did not appear to be a stand-alone wall of a single width; not bottomed due to possible interference with structural integrity.
(404)	A yellowish clay deposit between the wall making up (403), lying underneath (402), this could be part of the core of wall (403). Appears to extend about 1.05m wide and apparently confined between the wall faces.
(405)	A dark reddish brown loose silt, <0.1m deep. Loose soil at the south end of

	the trench free draining easy to trowel, abuts the south side of the wall.
(406)	A mid greyish grey brown compact stone surface, common stone inclusions <0.05m deep, this is the pathway caused by erosion from foot traffic, around the area of the trench.
(407)	A possible wall on an alignment counter to (403), comprising a single line of slate 0.7m long, 0.22m wide, 0.05m deep; these stones are orientated northwest to south east.
(501)	A dark brown loose silt, <0.12m deep, appears to be imported and has been disturbed, a plastic drinking straw was found between (501) and (503).
(502)	A mid to dark brown loose silt, mixed with common stone inclusions, soft to excavate, included occasional flecks of charcoal, indication of extreme heat to the north east side adjacent to one of the upright stones (504). The layer was not bottomed to maintain the integrity of the feature. Located on the exterior of the possible hearth type feature.
(503)	A dark brown plastic silt, appeared to be more organic in content, common stone inclusions, frequent charcoal flecks but not enough to make a new layer; located within the boundary of stones (504), (505) and (506). Not bottomed.
(504)	Slate stone on the north-east side of the feature, 0.5m long, 0.1m wide, 0.08m deep touching the highest point of (502) and (503), set vertically; the strata of the stone was visible and it appeared friable.
(505)	Slate stone on the north-west side of the feature, 0.5m long, <0.04m wide, 0.16m deep touching on (502) and (503); slate badly fractured; set vertically upright.
(506)	Smaller slate stone set upright and adjoining (505), partially embedded in the topsoil; 0.3m long, 0.06m wide, partially protruding above the level of the grass.
(601)	Topsoil, a dark brown fine silt, containing sparse stone inclusions, <0.15m deep.
(602)	A dark brown loose silt, <0.12m deep, similar to (601) but contained more stone inclusions.
(603)	A dark brown loose loam <0.25m deep, sparse stone inclusions of broken slate, infrequent flecks of charcoal; some pottery recovered from this material
(604)	A mid yellowish brown plastic clay, appears to be a levelled ground surface, (not bottomed).
(701)	A mid grey compact stone and clay surface <0.03m deep = surface material eroded and compacted by foot traffic. The stone is broken mudstone. Two lines of walling orientated north-south visible at surface 2m apart.
(702)	Section of wall comprising seven courses of walling made up of thin slate pieces, reaching a depth of 0.3m before stopping and appearing to be set on loose slate, possible demolition material; the wall appears to be comprised of a single line of stone. North-south orientation.
(703)	Possible demolition layer of poor quality slate, not the thinner material associated with the castle but chunkier pieces; the upper part of the deposit was mixed with soil but at 0.3m depth, it became more obvious that there were voids and the deposit was cleaner; this was not observable in the section. Several pieces of slate recovered with larger holes possibly representing drill marks.

(704)	Opposite wall to (702), excavation revealed it only comprised the single line of stones which was visible on the surface. Excavating alongside the upper stone did not reveal a second course due to the risk of damaging the integrity of the surface line of stones excavation was not continued.
(705)	A mid yellowish brown stone layer, possible geology, <0.15m below the surface, without further excavation of the area not possible to determine if it was associated with the wall (704), or is outside the structure.
(801)	Topsoil, a mid to dark brown loose plastic loam, <0.15m deep, no stone inclusions.
(802)	A dark brown loose loam, 0.5m deep, containing sparse stone inclusions; this material included a random scattering of slate, together with pot sherds and worked slate. There were no distinct tip lines and the soil appeared to have been cultivated to its base.
(803)	Bedrock, a grey slate/mudstone with strata running north to south.
(901)	Topsoil, a dark brown loose silty loam containing sparse stone inclusions, <0.25m deep.
(902)	A dark brown loose loam containing common stone inclusions, <0.35m deep, containing pottery. Possible tip line of material.
(903)	A dark brown loose silt, a very fine soil which appeared to have been cultivated; <0.2m deep, containing pottery.
(904)	A dark brown loose silt containing small stone inclusions, unsorted and irregular. Possible an old ground surface.
(905)	Bedrock, a grey slate mudstone fractured rock.
(1001)	Topsoil: A dark brown plastic silty clay, sparse stone inclusions 0.06m deep.
(1002)	A dark brown loose loam with common stone inclusions, some pottery <0.15m deep, some surface debris.
(1003)	Possible wall or floor surface to the north of the trench, made up of larger flat stones (slate) orientated north -east and south-west across the trench; the feature was 0.3m wide, depth below the grass <0.3m. The west side of the wall/floor has what appears to be a second course.
(1004)	A dark brown loose silt <0.15m deep, possible subsoil on the north side of trench, sparse stone inclusions.
(1005)	A dark brown loose/compact silt and stone mix, possible infill for a double skinned wall, common stone inclusions, not bottomed but to the south of (1003). There was also a large stone comprised of quartz and slate within this mix implying this was wall fill.

## Appendix 2: Summary finds report

Context Number	Description
(102) TP1	1 sherd South-western chert tempered ware. 12 <sup>th</sup> to 13 <sup>th</sup> centuries AD 3 flakes of burnt chert or a volcanic rock, one at least appears worked.
(103) TP1	Piece of rounded stone with lime mortar attached to the flat side. Piece of stone (Haematite – iron ore).
(103) TP1	4 sherds Late Roman 2 amphora (Bi). Post-Roman. 1 rim sherd Late Roman 3 amphora (Biv). Post-Roman. 2 body sherds Late Roman 3 amphora (Biv). Post-Roman.  2 sherds South-western chert tempered ware. 12 <sup>th</sup> to 13 <sup>th</sup> centuries AD  1 sherd South-western micaceous ware with spots of glazing. 13 <sup>th</sup> century.
(103) TP1	3 notched slates 6 slate roof tiles – very well shaped.
(103) TP1	11 animal bone fragments including sheep's teeth?
(202) TP2	Piece of worked flint.
(302) TP3	Small half-rounded object black in colour – probably a slag droplet
(402) TP4	1 water rounded flint pebble 1 water rounded quartzite pebble  2 sherds Post-Roman imported coarseware
(502) TP5	Stone x 1 , small quartz crystal x 1.
(602)/(603) TP6	1 rim sherd Bv amphora. Post-Roman. 1 charcoal fragment.
(702) TP7	Slate with notches x 10.
(802) TP8	1 sherd Late Roman 2 amphora (Bi). Post-Roman. 1 sherd Late Roman 1 amphora (Bii)? Post-Roman. 3 sherds undiagnostic imported wares. Post-Roman.  3 slag fragments.  1 broken slate disc. Possible amphora stopper? 1 notched slate.
(902) TP9	7 sherds Late Roman 2 amphora (Bi) with grooved decoration. Post-Roman. 10 sherds Late Roman 2 amphora (Bi). Post-Roman. 3 sherds (1 neck) Late Roman 3 amphora (Biv). Post-Roman.  1 notched slate
(903) TP9	1 body sherd burnished with fine incised decoration of converging lines. Granitic fabric. South Devon ware. 2nd to 4th centuries AD.  1 sherd Late Roman 2 amphora (Bi) with grooved decoration. Post-Roman.  1 burnt (calcined) bone fragment. Animal? Human?
(903) TP9	1 rim sherd in a 'Local?' fabric (does not appear to be gabbroic) the form of which resembles South West Decorated ware. Middle Iron Age 3rd to 1st centuries BC.
(1002) TP10	2 sherds Late Roman 2 amphora (Bi). Post-Roman.
(1005) TP10	Large fragment of burnt clay, it does not appear to be daub, but more likely to be something like a clay loom weight.



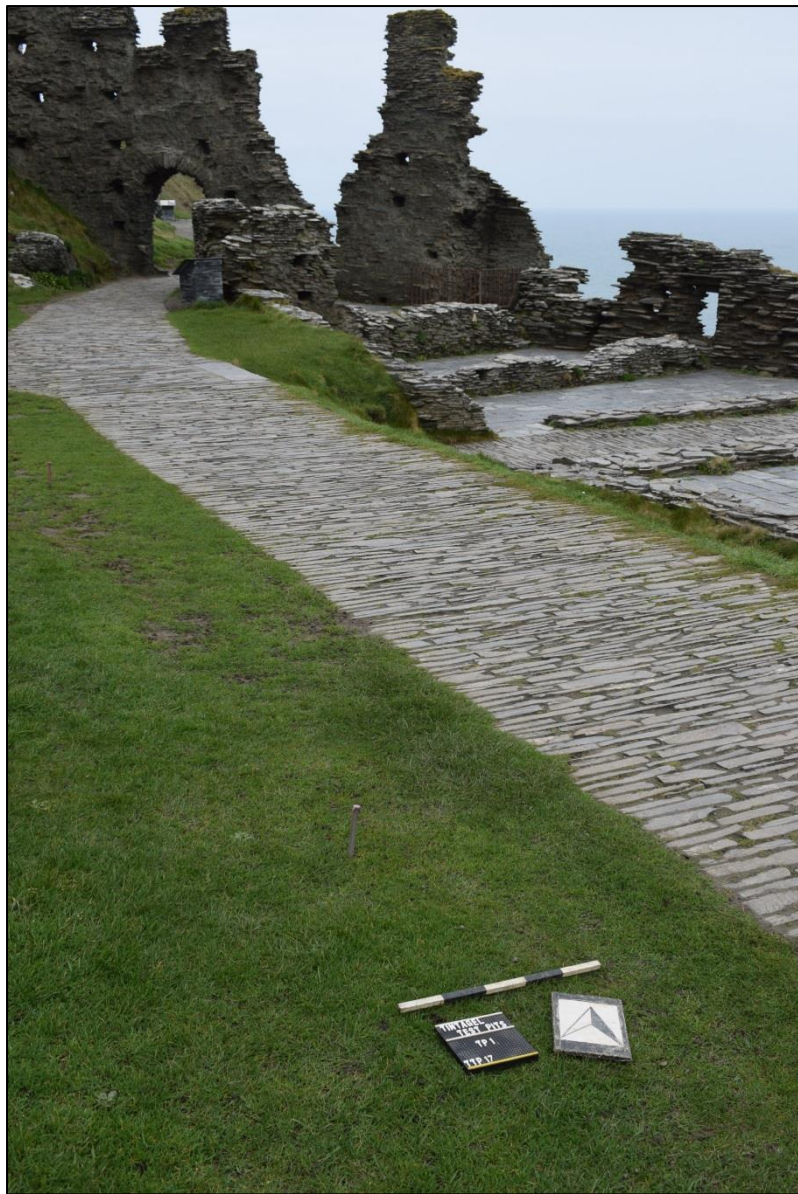


Figure 5: Test pit 1 location prior to excavation.



Figure 6: Test pit 1 section showing demolition layer.



Figure 7: Test pit 2 location prior to excavation.



Figure 8: Test pit 2 post excavation showing metallised surface.



Figure 9: Test pit 3 prior to excavation.

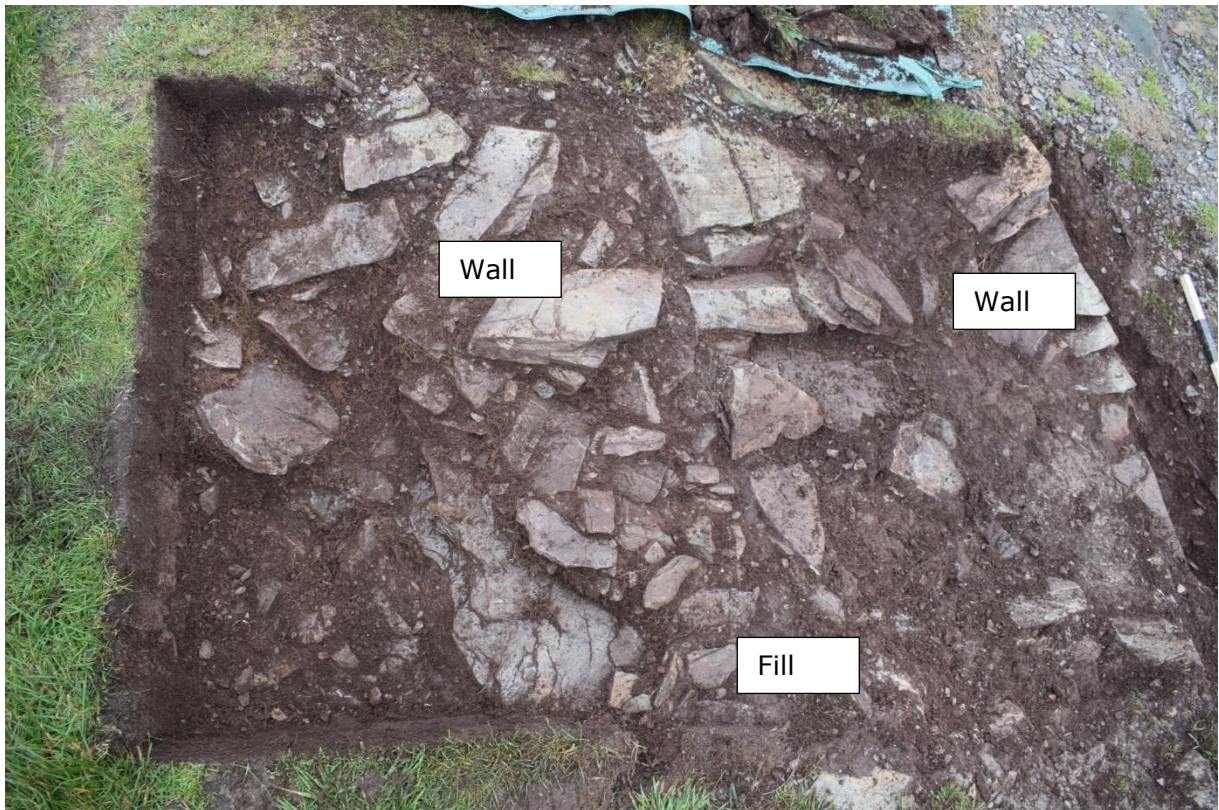


Figure 10: Test pit 3 post excavation showing location of wall.



Figure 11: Location of Test pit 4.



Figure 12: Post excavation Test pit 4.



Figure 13: Pre excavation image of Test pit 5. showing stones protruding through the grass.

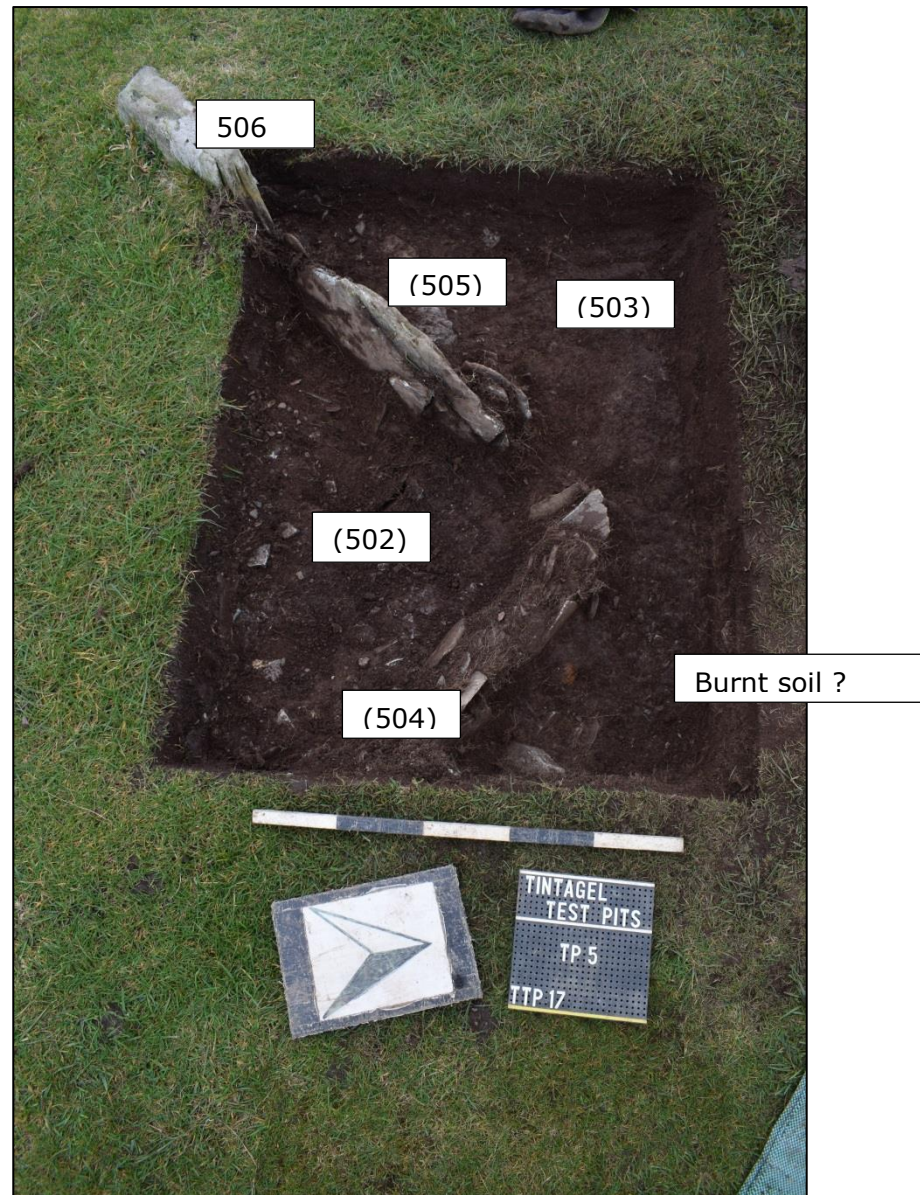


Figure 14: Post excavation Test pit 5 showing possible hearth.



Figure 15: Location of Test pit 6.



Figure 16: Post excavation Test pit 6.



Figure 17: Location of Test pit 7.

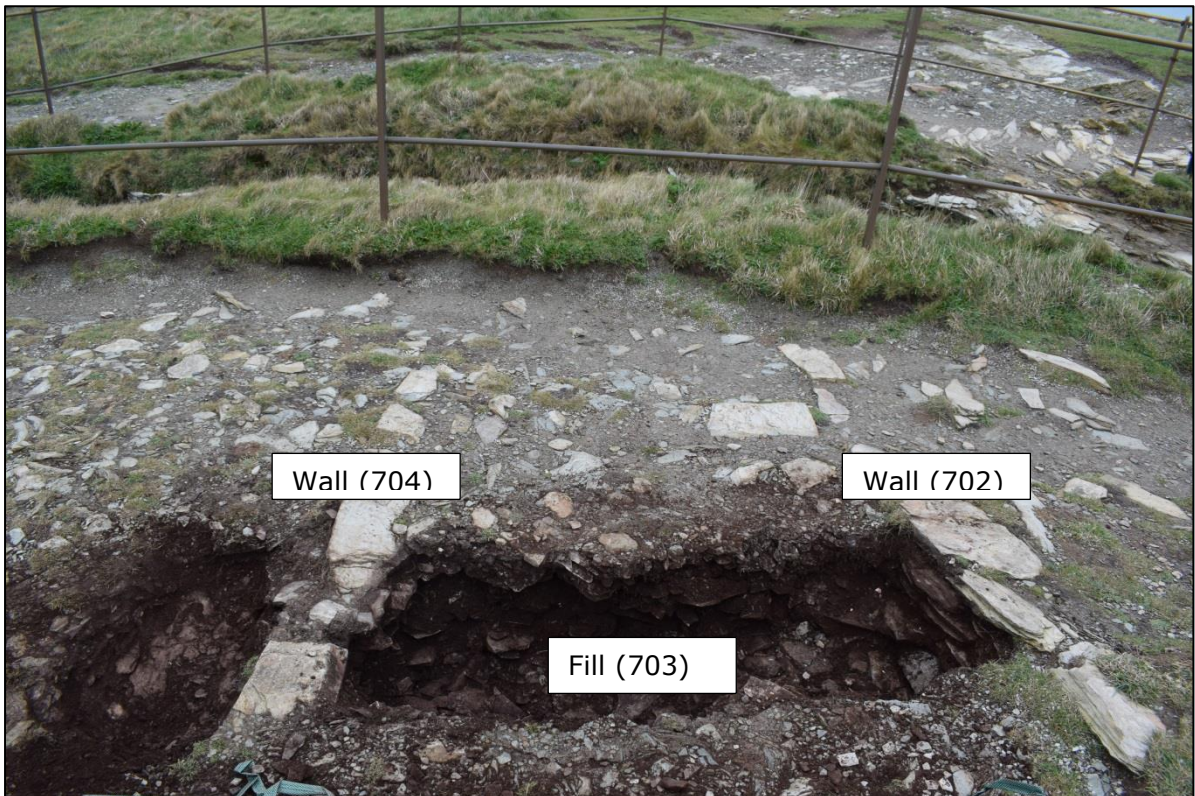


Figure 18: Post excavation of Test pit 7, showing the lines of the walls visible at surface.



Figure 19: Location of Test pit 8.



Figure 20: Test pit 8 section.





Figure 21: Location of Test pit 9.



Figure 22: Post excavation image of Test pit 9 showing bedrock base.



Figure 23: Location of Test pit 10.

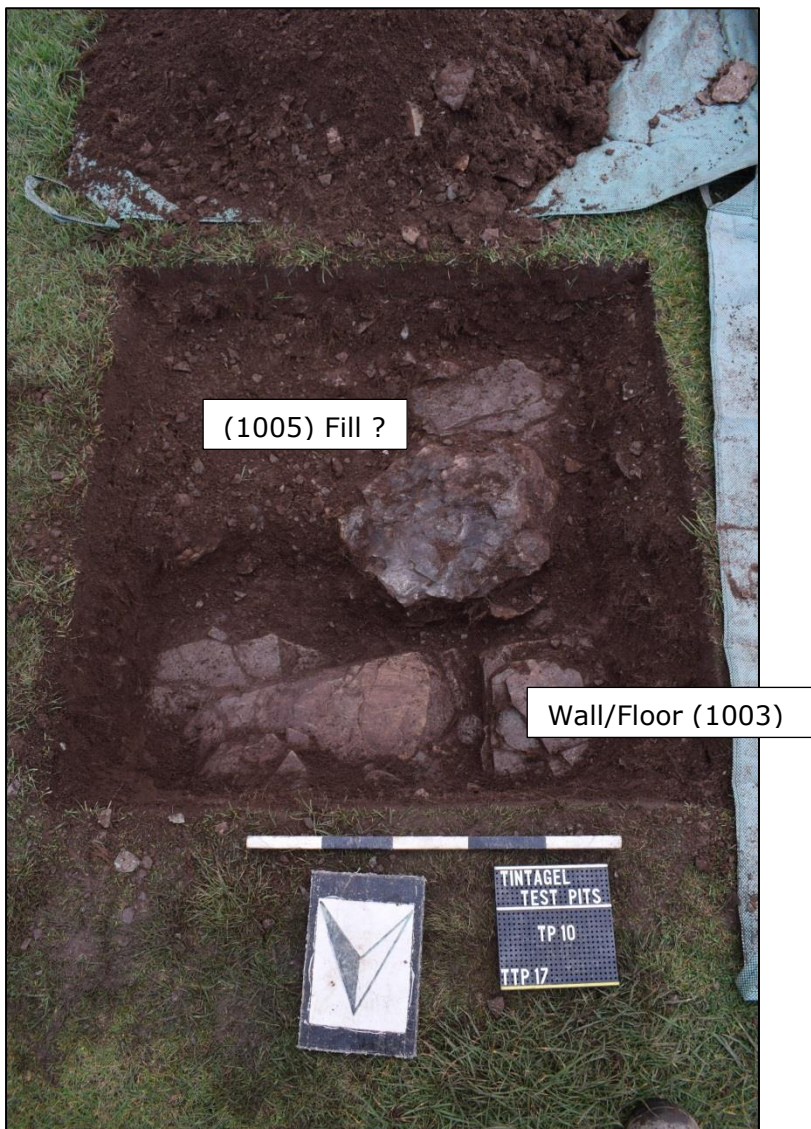


Figure 22: Post excavation image of Test pit 10.

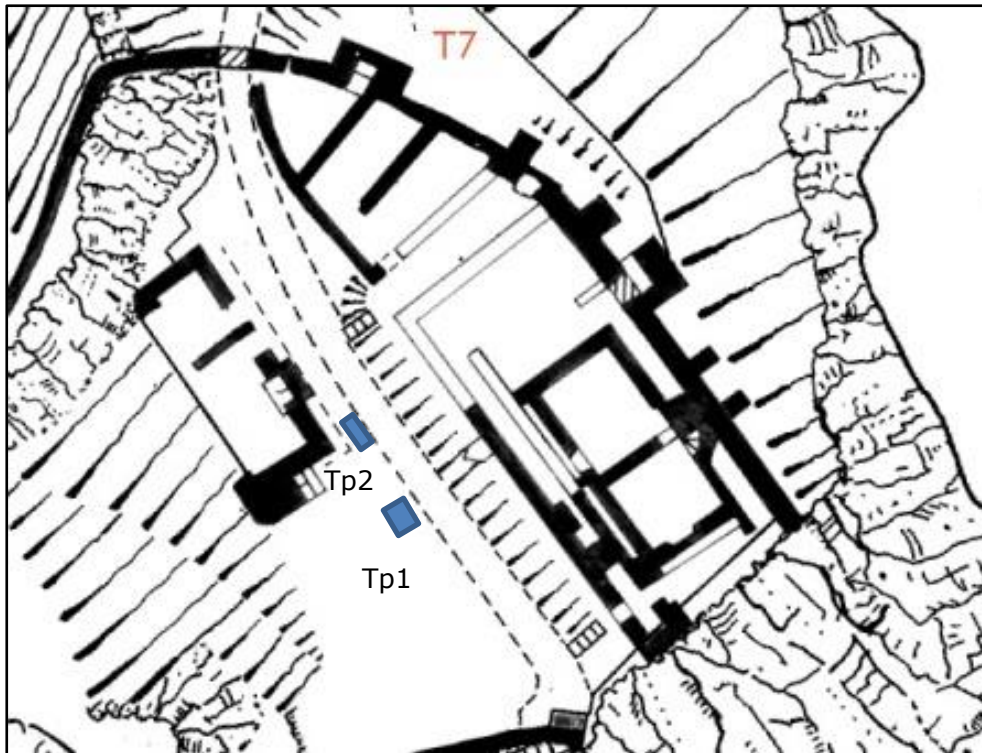


Fig 23. The locations of test pits 1 and 2 (pits not shown to scale).

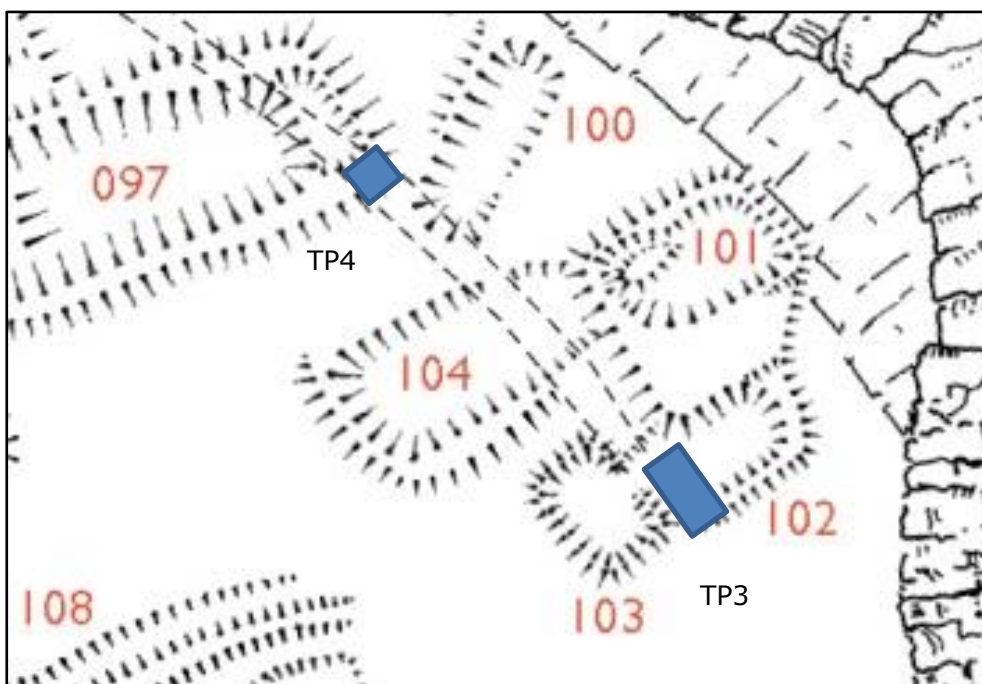


Fig 24. The locations of test pits 3 and 4 (pits not shown to scale).

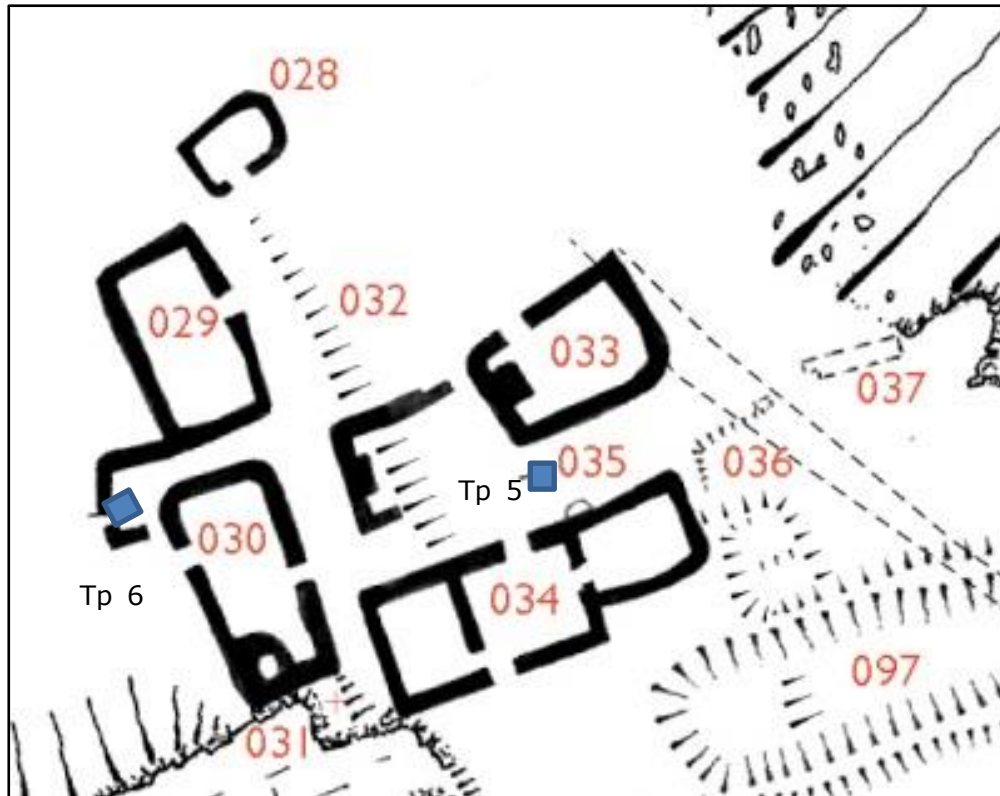


Fig 25. The location of test pits 5 and 6 (pits not shown to scale).

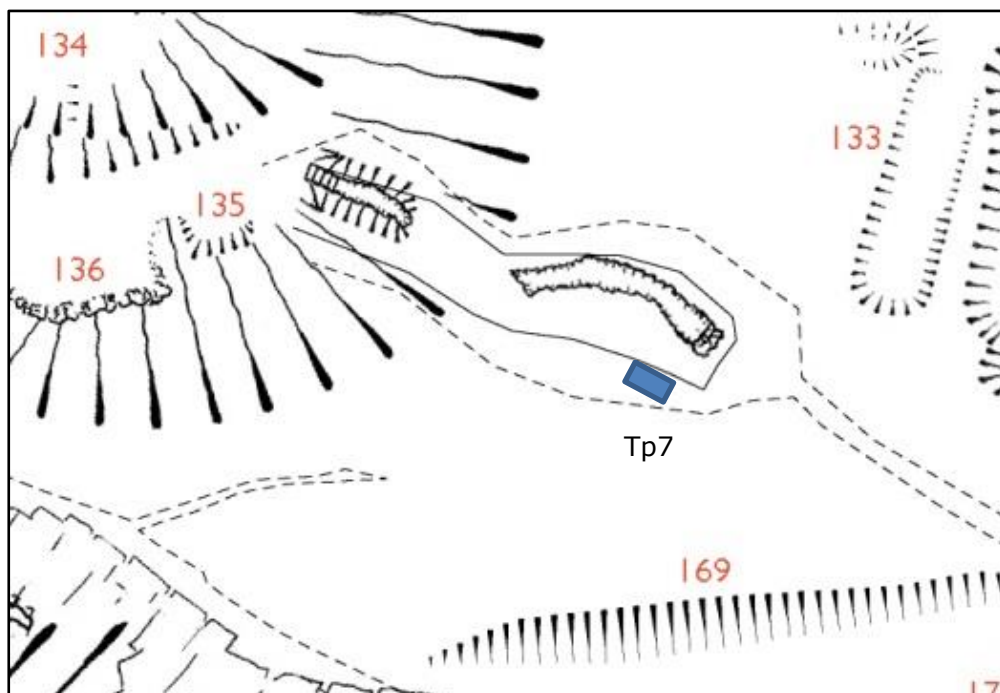


Fig 26. The location of test pit 7 (pit not shown to scale).

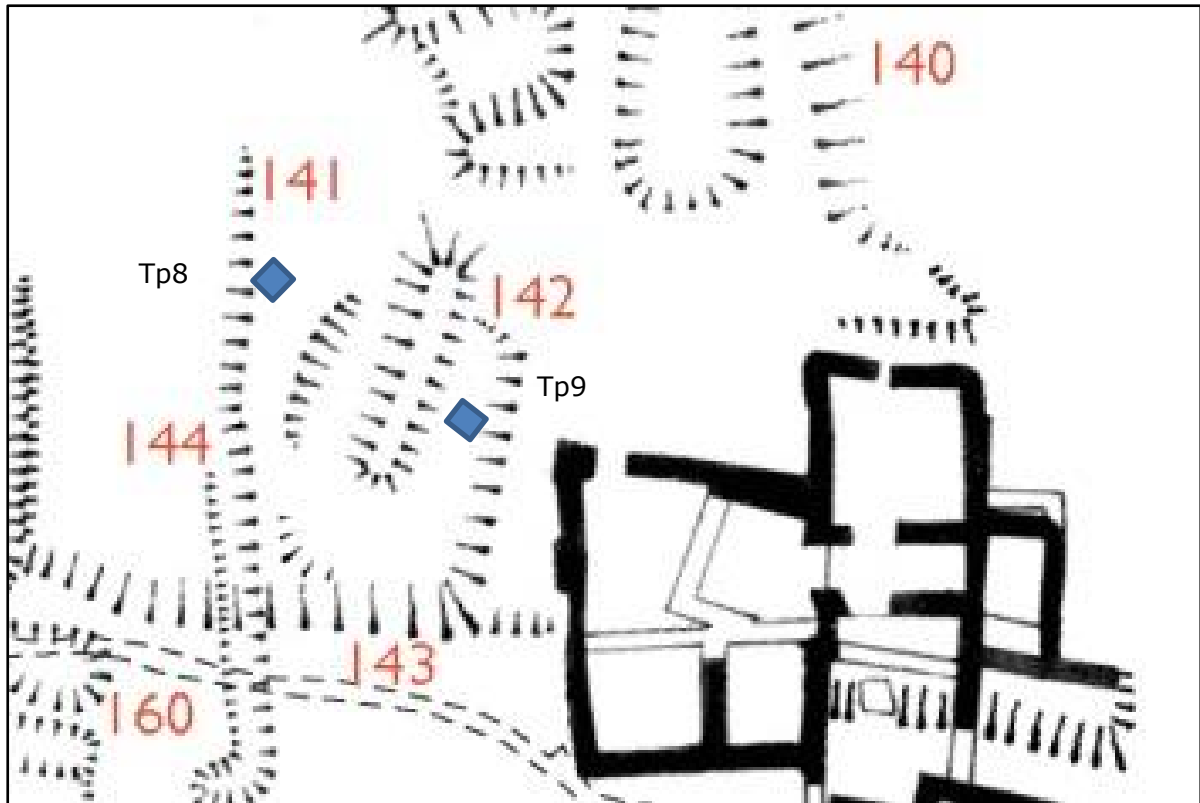


Fig 27. The locations of test pits 8 and 9 (pits not shown to scale).

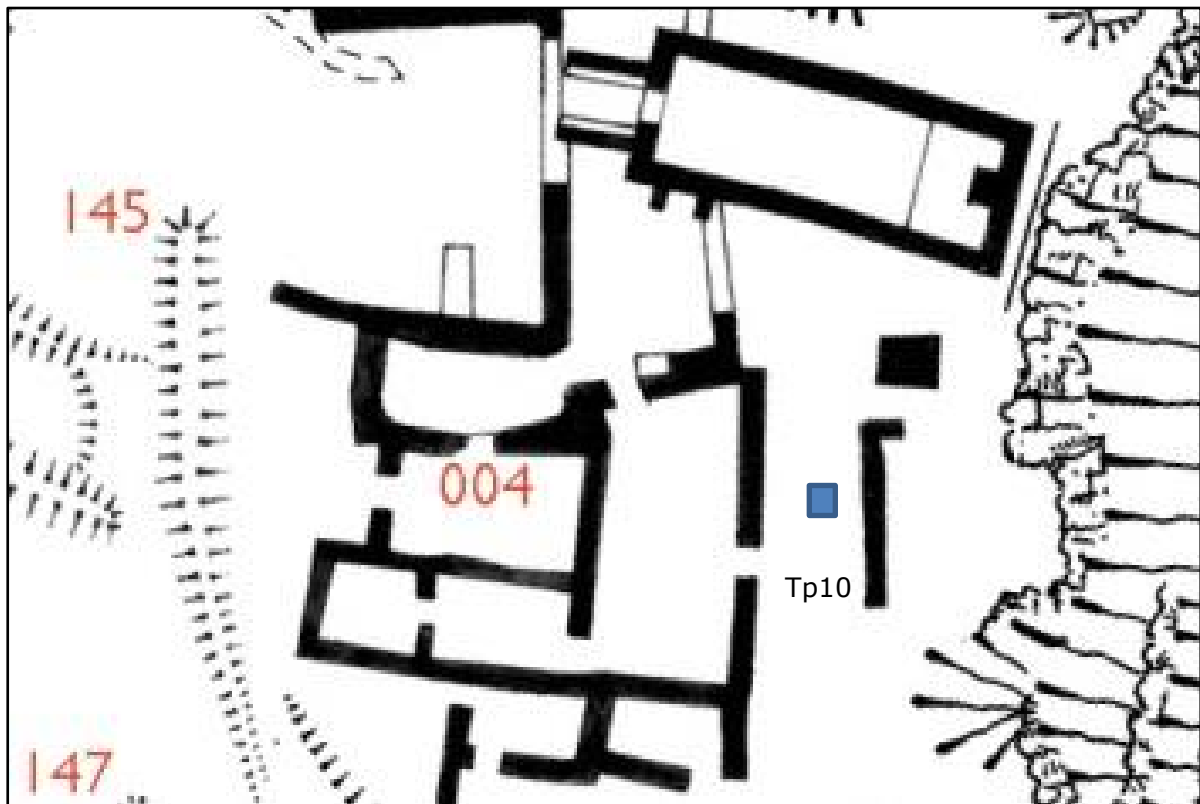


Fig 28. The location of test pit 10 (pit not shown to scale).

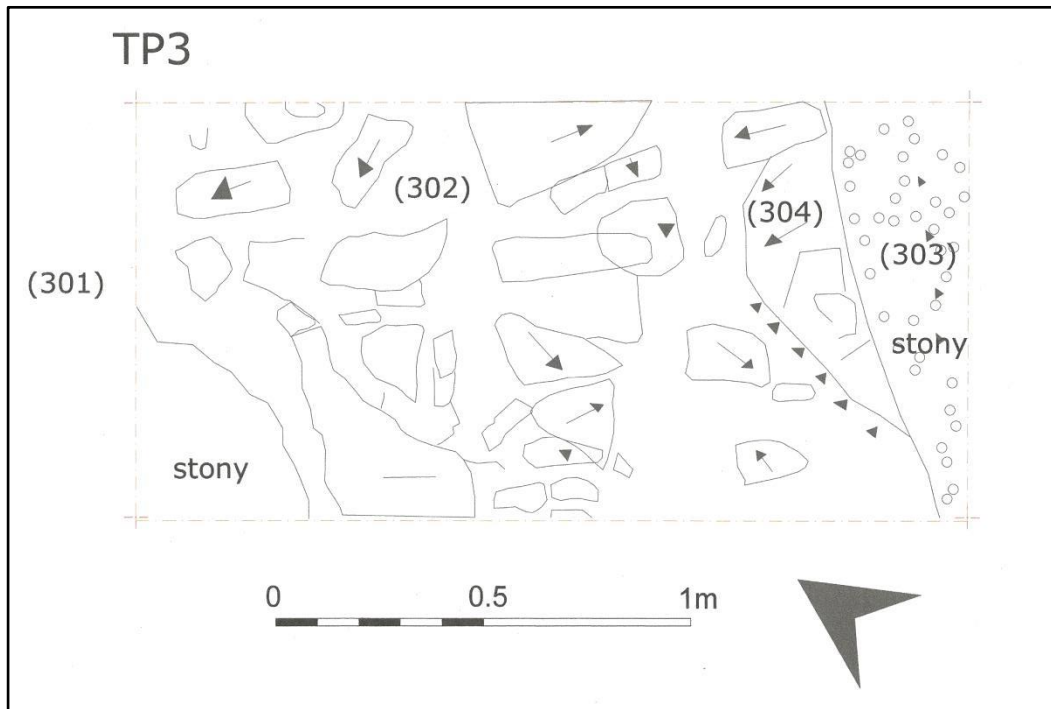


Fig 29. As excavated plan of test pit 3 across the southern wall of feature [102].

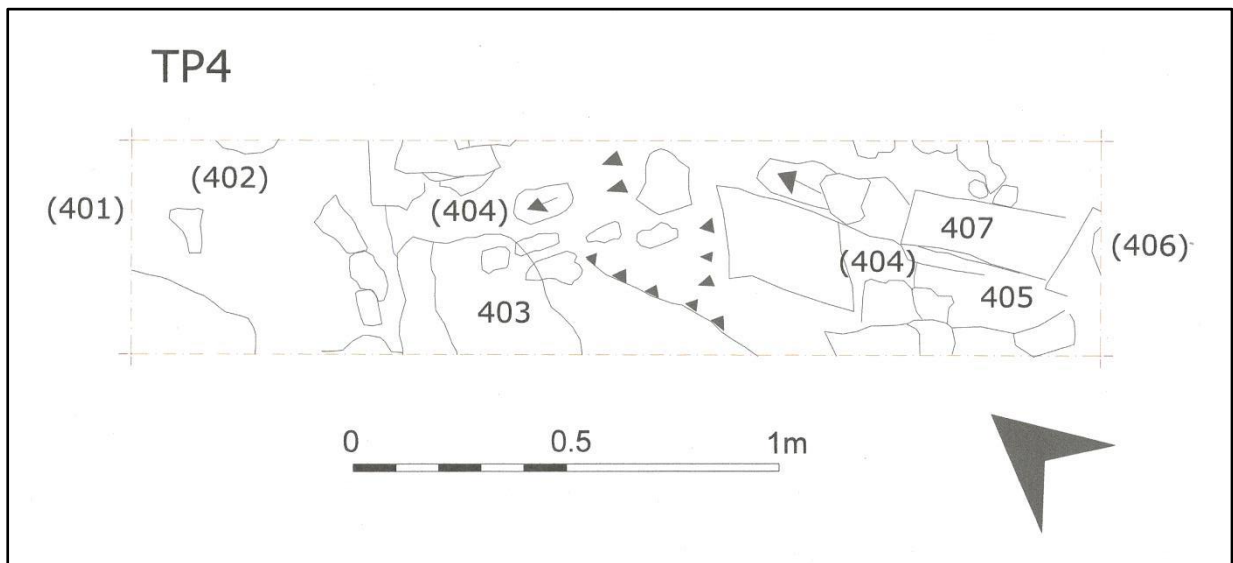


Fig 30. As excavated plan of test pit 4 across the eastern end of the southern wall of feature [097].

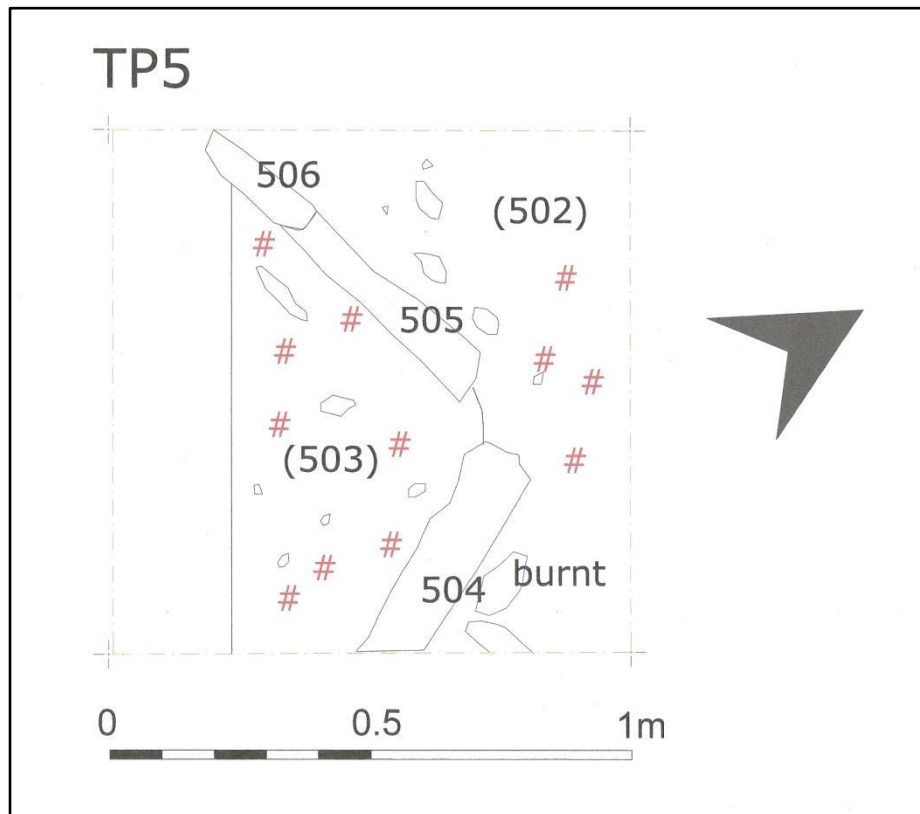


Fig 31. As excavated plan of test pit 5 over the north-eastern corner of feature [035]. Hatches indicate charcoal.

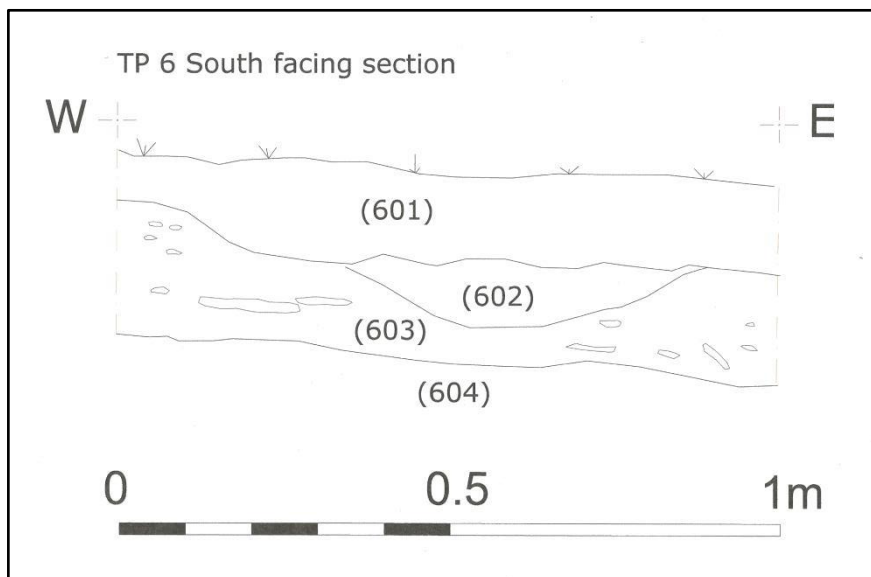


Fig 32. South-facing section through test pit 6 between features [029] and [030].

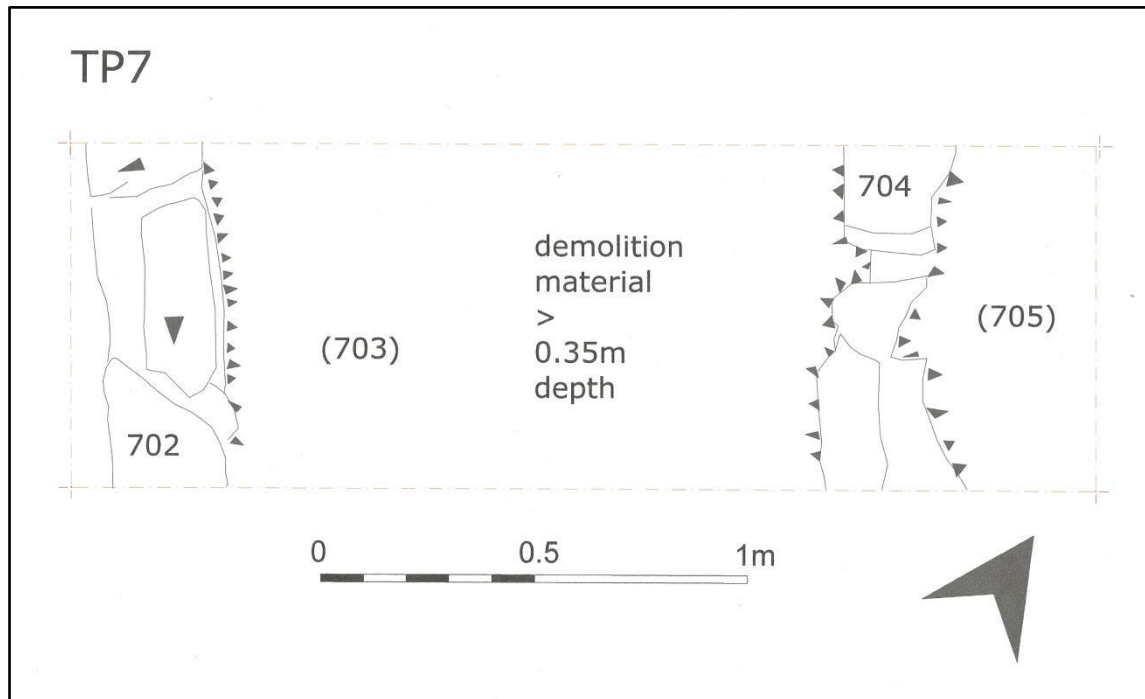


Fig 33. As excavated plan of test pit 7 over the twin-walled feature to the south of the eastern end of the Tunnel.

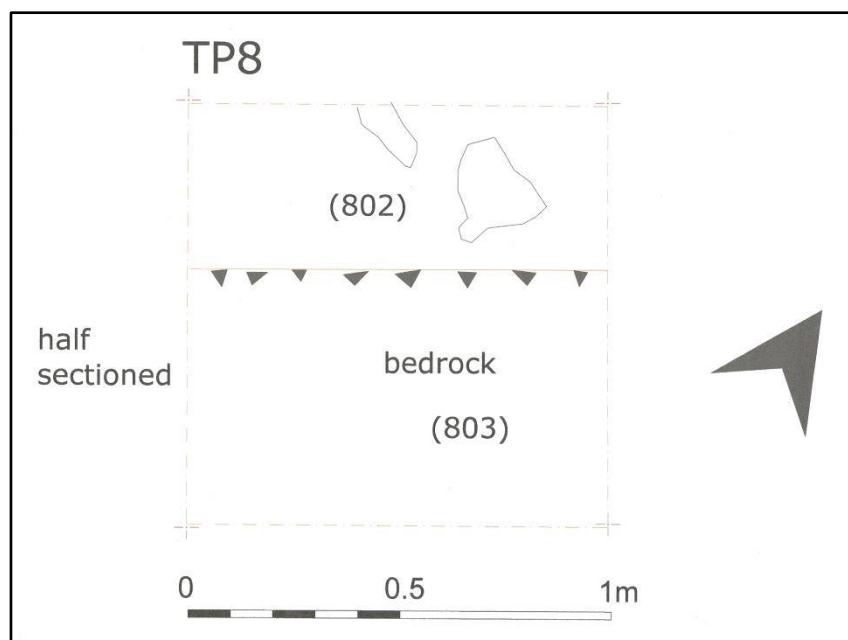


Fig 34. As excavated plan of test pit 8 close to earthwork [141].



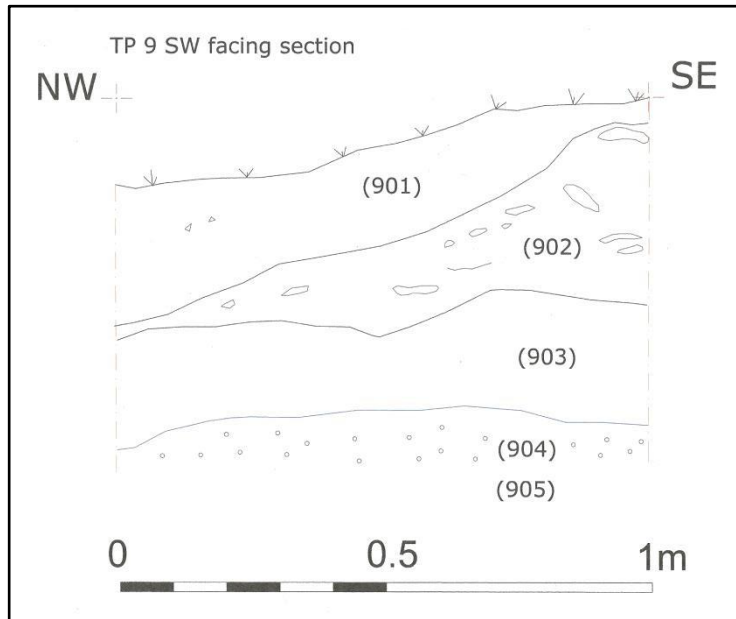


Fig 35. South-west facing section of test pit 9 close to earthwork [143].

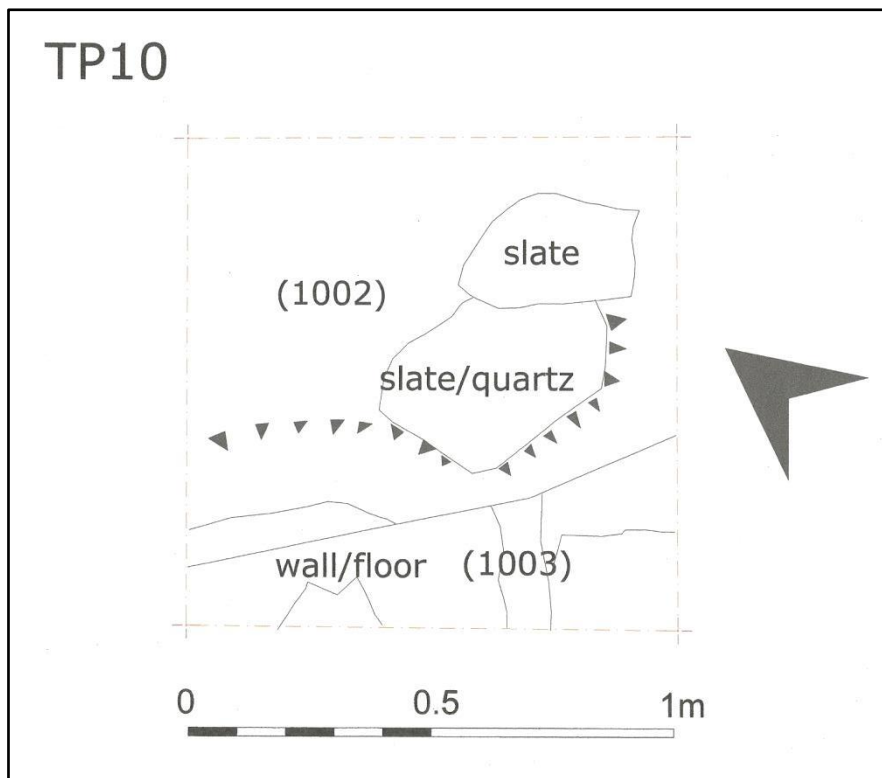


Fig 36. As excavated plan of test pit 10 in the south-eastern area of Site A to the south of the Chapel, showing possible wall edge.

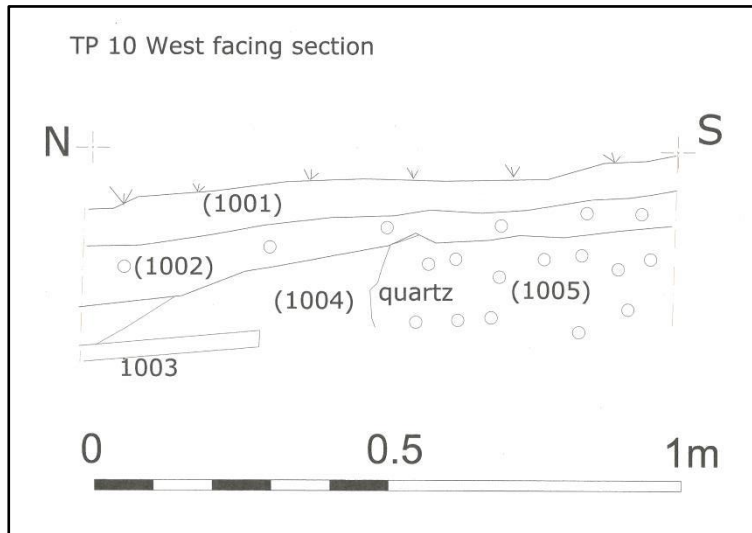


Fig 37. West-facing section in test pit 10.



Fig 38. One of the Medieval roofing slates from the demolition layer intersected in test pit 1.



*Fig 39. Rim and body sherds from a Biv amphorae found in test pit 1.*



*Fig 40. A rim sherd from a Bv amphora found in test pit 6.*



*Fig 41. Part of a Bi amphora found in test pit 9.*



*Fig 42. A sherd of decorated South Devon ware found in test pit 9.*



*Fig 43. The rim sherd from an Iron Age vessel retrieved from test pit 9.*



*Fig 44. The interior of the rim sherd of the Iron Age vessel found in test pit 9.*

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