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EXCAVATION AT MORAUNT
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South Eastern Archaeological Services

**THE EXCAVATION OF A ROMANO-BRITISH
SITE AT MORAUNT DRIVE, MIDDLETON-ON-SEA,
WEST SUSSEX: AN INTERIM REPORT**

(Project No. 1992/ 31A)

by

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COUNTY PLANNING	
21 DEC 1992	

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CONTENTS:

1. Introduction.
2. The Excavation: Methods.
3. The Excavation: Results.
4. Summary and Conclusions.

< Finds : detailed analysis awaited

Figure 1 - Location map of Trench.

Figure 2 - Plan of Trench.

Figure 3 - Sections.

Figure 4 - Sections.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The original archaeological assessment of the site (see previous report, October 1992; and Trenches A-F, Fig.1), had revealed Romano-British activity in the vicinity of Trench F (Fig.1).
- 1.2 Following these discoveries South Eastern Archaeological Services of University College London was commissioned by Mr. R.J. Robinson of Beazer Homes (Southern) Ltd. to undertake rescue excavations prior to the residential development of the site. The brief for both the original Archaeological Assessment and the subsequent larger scale excavations was produced by Mr. M. Taylor, the County Archaeologist for West Sussex.
- 1.3 An area was excavated around Assessment Trench F using a JCB mechanical excavator, to further investigate the nature of the previous findings (Fig.1). This work was undertaken during early November 1992.

2. THE EXCAVATION: METHOD

- 2.1 After machining the excavated area (see Figs.1 and 2 for trench size) was cleaned by hand in order to locate any archaeological features present.
- 2.2 Once cleaned, the major features were individually numbered and sampled by excavation in order to gain dating evidence, and, where appropriate, environmental samples. All the numbered features (mainly comprising cuts, fills, and cut and fills) were described on pre-printed context record forms.
- 2.3 A few of the minor features were also numbered in the field (i.e. stakeholes nos. 16,17,18,19, see Fig.2). Stakeholes however, proved to be extremely numerous and therefore most were not numbered.
- 2.4 All excavated features had their sections drawn at a scale of 1:10 (a selection of these drawings is shown in Figs.3 and 4). The whole trench, including excavated and unexcavated features, was then planned at a scale of 1:20 (Fig.2).

3. THE EXCAVATION: RESULTS

- 3.1 Well in excess of 164 archaeological features were located within the trench (see Fig.2) suggesting intense activity during the Romano-British period. Features mainly consisted of pits, post-holes, ditches and stakeholes. The latter were extremely common, particularly in the western half of the trench. A few were numbered and sampled by excavation (Fig.2 nos. 17,18 and 19): most were less than 8cm deep.
- 3.2 Numerous other features, mainly post-holes and pits, were also located. These, some of which were sampled by excavation, did not form any obvious pattern (e.g. Fig.2, Context nos. 71/72, 50, 51, 87, 89, 93, 94, 114, 115, 117, 123, 150 etc.). Some

could, however, form parts of fencelines, and/or small ancillary structures which left little trace in the archaeological record.

- 3.3 One possible structure, represented by a roughly rectangular setting of post-holes, was located (Fig 2, Context nos. 74, 75, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 88, 91, 92, 95, 100, 125, 133, 148, 160, 161 and 162). Many of these post-holes were intercutting and presumably represent the insertion of replacement timbers. Some of the post-holes were sectioned, but often the similar nature of their fills made it impossible to ascertain their relative chronology (Figs. 2,3 and 4 Section nos. 5, 6, 15, 16, 28 and 32).
- 3.4 This tentative timber building probably overlay earlier Romano-British features (the exact relationship was unclear and will require detailed study). Running across the trench in a N-S direction was a ditch (Fig.2, Context no. 126). It contained three fills, Context nos. 127, 128 and 130 (see Fig.3, Section 29). The uppermost fill (Context no.127) consisted of redeposited brickearth which prevent the ditch's entire course from being traced without full excavation. It is likely however that a feature sectioned to the south (Fig.2, Context no. 138/139 and Fig.4, Section no. 33) is part of this same ditch.
- 3.5 This main ditch had subsequently been cut by two smaller intercutting ditches/gulleys (Fig.2, Context nos. 31/32 and 37/38 and Figs. 3 and 4, Section nos. 24, 26, 29 and 33). It is possible that the initial ditch marks a field boundary which was subsequently replaced by a fence, set in these small ditches/gulleys.
- 3.6 A large feature was located near the S.E. corner of the trench (Fig.2, Context no.145). Its exact edges were not ascertained. A slot was excavated through it however (Fig.4, Section no. 42). Its fill contained fairly high concentrations of pottery and sandstone blocks. It is possible this feature represents a shallow pond.
- 3.7 The finds recovered, mainly consisting of pottery, all date to the Romano-British period, with the exception of a few sherds of Iron Age pottery and a couple of prehistoric struck flint flakes. Environmental soil samples were taken from Context nos. 188, 128, 131, 145 and 152. These, along with the pottery, are still awaiting processing and detailed analysis.

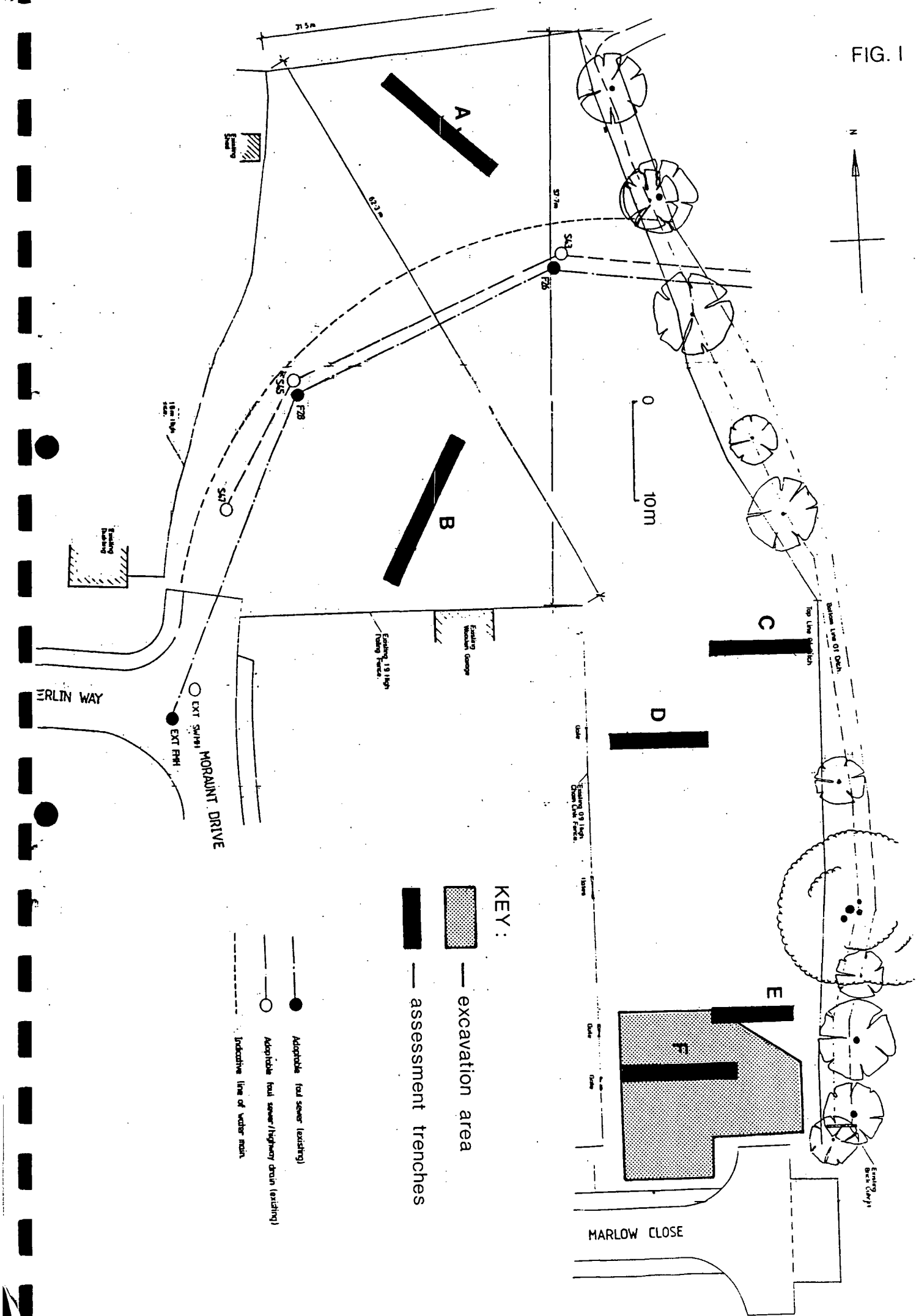
4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The excavation showed the site to have been occupied during the Romano-British period with some activity in the vicinity during the Iron Age.
- 4.2 It seems likely the site's economy was one of mixed agriculture. Unfortunately the acid nature of the brickearth is not favourable to the preservation of bone, and this may explain the small quantities recovered during the excavation. Hopefully the environmental samples may provide evidence of cereals.
- 4.3 The clutter of pits, post-holes and stakeholes makes identifying recognizable structures

difficult. However, one rectangular building measuring *circa* 7.5 x 3 metres may be postulated, although the exact nature of this structure cannot be ascertained. It may represent a small farmstead or an agricultural outbuilding of some form.

- 4.4 It is likely the excavated features form a small part of a much larger site which probably extended under existing housing to the south and west of the trench. The extent of the site to the east is unknown, although from the original assessment trenches it appears not to extend much further to the north.
- 4.5 Without a full plan of the site the individual features are difficult to interpret. The excavation has however provided a selection of material to both date the site and hopefully comment on its economy and environment.
- 4.6 Staff of South Eastern Archaeological Services have begun the task of producing a fuller report on these archaeological discoveries for publication in the *Sussex Archaeological Collections*.

FIG. 1



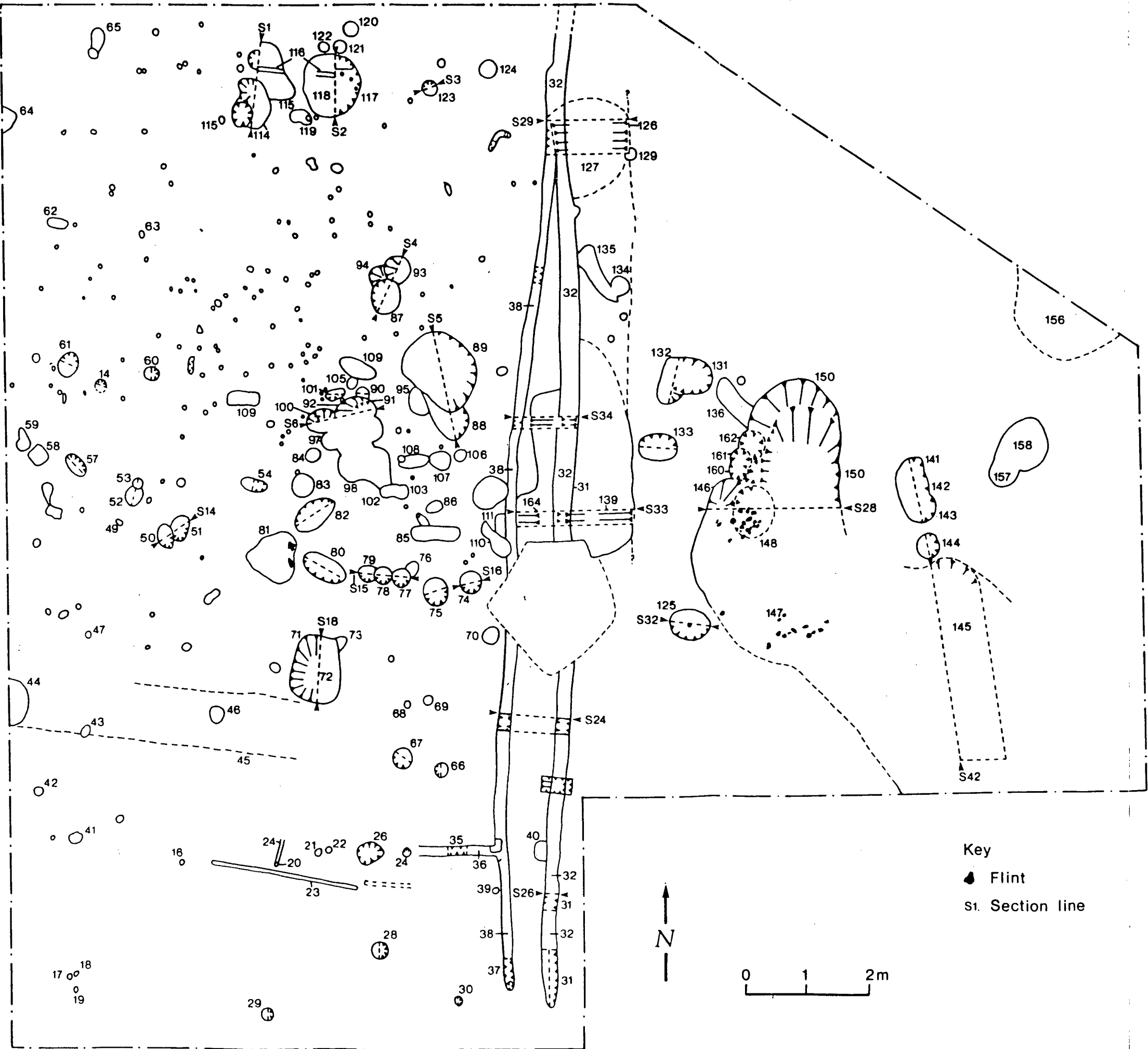


FIG. 3

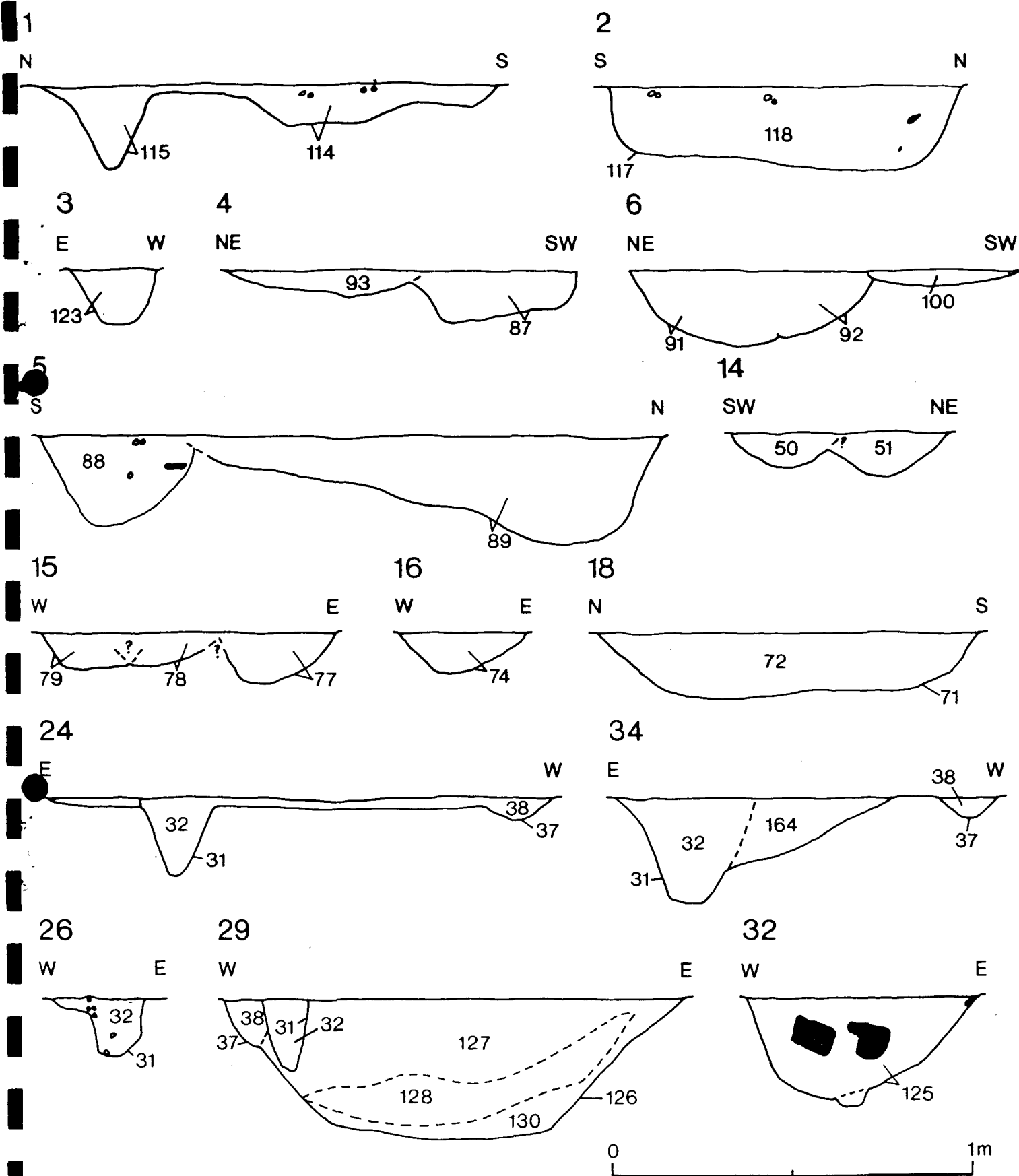
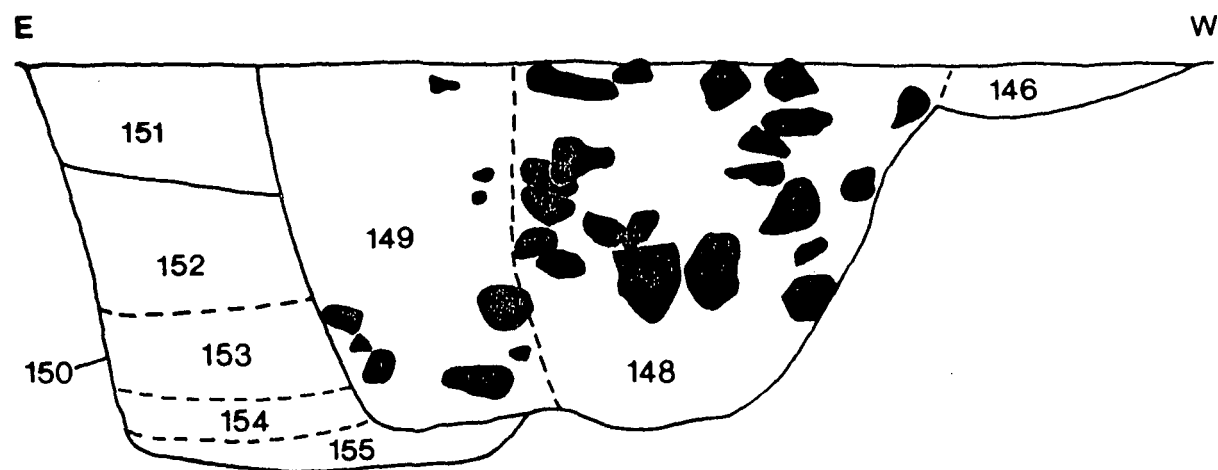


FIG. 4

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Key

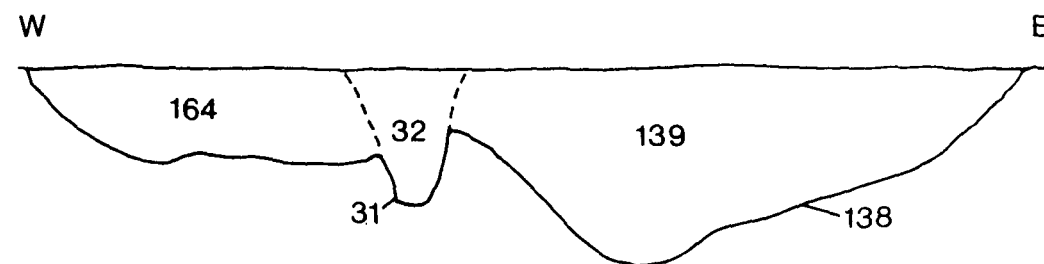


Flint

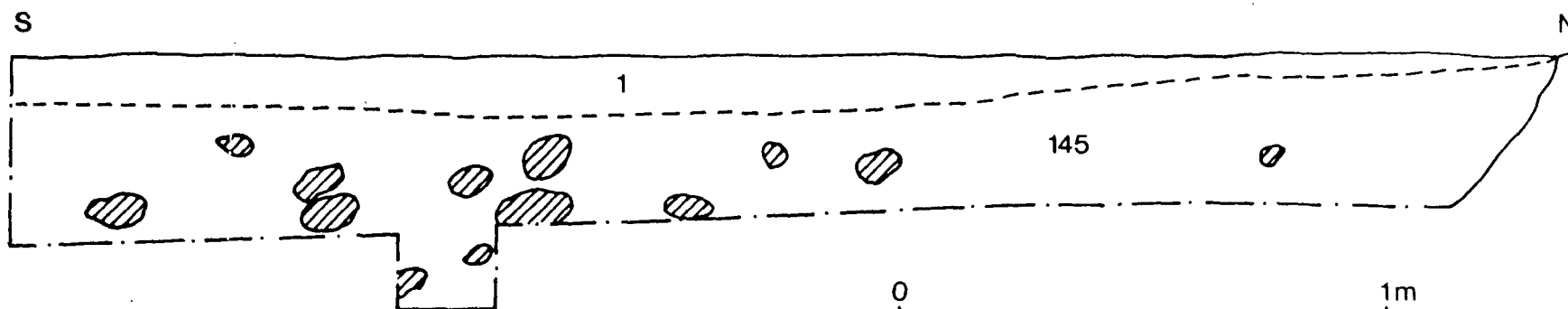


Sandstone

33



42



0 1m

