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CATARACTONIUM ROMAN STATION:

A 6136

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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MARCH 1992

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CATARACTONIUM ROHAN STATION

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

INTRODUCTION

In early 1992 North Yorkshire County Council undertook work on the A6136 Catterick Bridge to Colburn road consisting of replacing kerbs and laying drains across the road in two places Manholes were dug in the verge and gullies at the road edge at the junctions of these drains with pre-existing drains running along the roadside

A large part of this work lay within the boundaries of the Scheduled Ancient Monument County No 169, Cataractonium Roman Station Some of the work was completed before scheduled monument consent was sought, but as damage was reckoned to be slight, consent was granted for the remainder of the work subject to an archaeological watching brief on all ground disturbance works

This watching brief was carried out between 4 March 1992 and 20 March 1992

CATARACTONIUM

The Roman occupation of Catterick began with a fort of the 1st century A D , which had a civilian settlement nearby to the east Both fort and civilian settlement had varied fortunes over the centuries, but military occupation seems to have continued up to the 4th century and pottery and rebuilding indicates some occupation into the 5th century

The area occupied by the Roman settlement extended both north and south of the River Swale along the route of Dere Street, and excavation in the past has revealed extensive remains both from within the scheduled area of the fort and from Roman and post-Roman settlement in the vicinity

The site is a nationally important one in terms of its potential for revealing elements of Roman military history, its evidence of civilian settlement in a northern context, and its evidence of late Roman and post-Roman occupation This importance is reflected in the scheduled area which covers the fort and town areas north and south of the Swale (see plan 1)

WATCHING BRIEF

Most of the kerb-laying along the north side of the road was completed without a watching brief, as were the northern half of one of the road crossings and at least one manhole

The work which was watched consisted of the remainder of the kerb-laying on the northern half of the road, one complete road crossing, the southern half of one more, three gullies and a manhole (see plan 2)

The kerb-laying both north and south of the road edge revealed no archaeological levels Disturbance went no deeper than had previously been reached by the pre-existing kerbs and their backing, and went to a depth of c 20 cm

The road crossings reached a depth of between 50 and 60 cm and were largely unproductive as they merely recut previously existing drain trenches The easternmost, of which only half was observed, revealed no discernable archaeological levels, the fill consisting of tarmac and modern rubble under the existing road

The manhole cut into the verge on the north side of the western road crossing reached a depth of 60 cm and reached no deeper than previously disturbed levels

The gully cut into the roadside at the eastern end of the site reached a depth of 98 cm but revealed no discernable archaeological features, being cut into grey silt where it reached below modern disturbance

The western road crossing contained a line of cobbles and pink sandstone blocks c 15 cm in diameter at a depth of c 45 cm from the road surface (see figs 5 - 8) They ran in a northerly direction along the pipe trench but did not extend beyond 230 cm into the trench from the southern end In the hole excavated for a gully at the road edge on the south side of the road, these were underlaid by 10 - 20 cm of black loam beneath which were more sandstone and areas of fractured grey-brown shaley slate up to 20 cm deep

The gully cut on the south side of the road by the eastern road crossing reached a depth of 95 cm , the top 50 cm of which was tarmac and modern rubble Below this were a number of stones visible in the sections (see figs 1 - 4) They appeared to be aligned in a north-westerly direction

The only finds made were surface finds of two pieces of Roman black ware, one unidentifiable piece of bone from the manhole and a sheep jaw-bone, two pieces of tile and an iron nail from the western gully and road crossing (figs 5 - 8) A small amount of mortar was observed among the stones in the eastern gully (fig 4)

INTERPRETATION

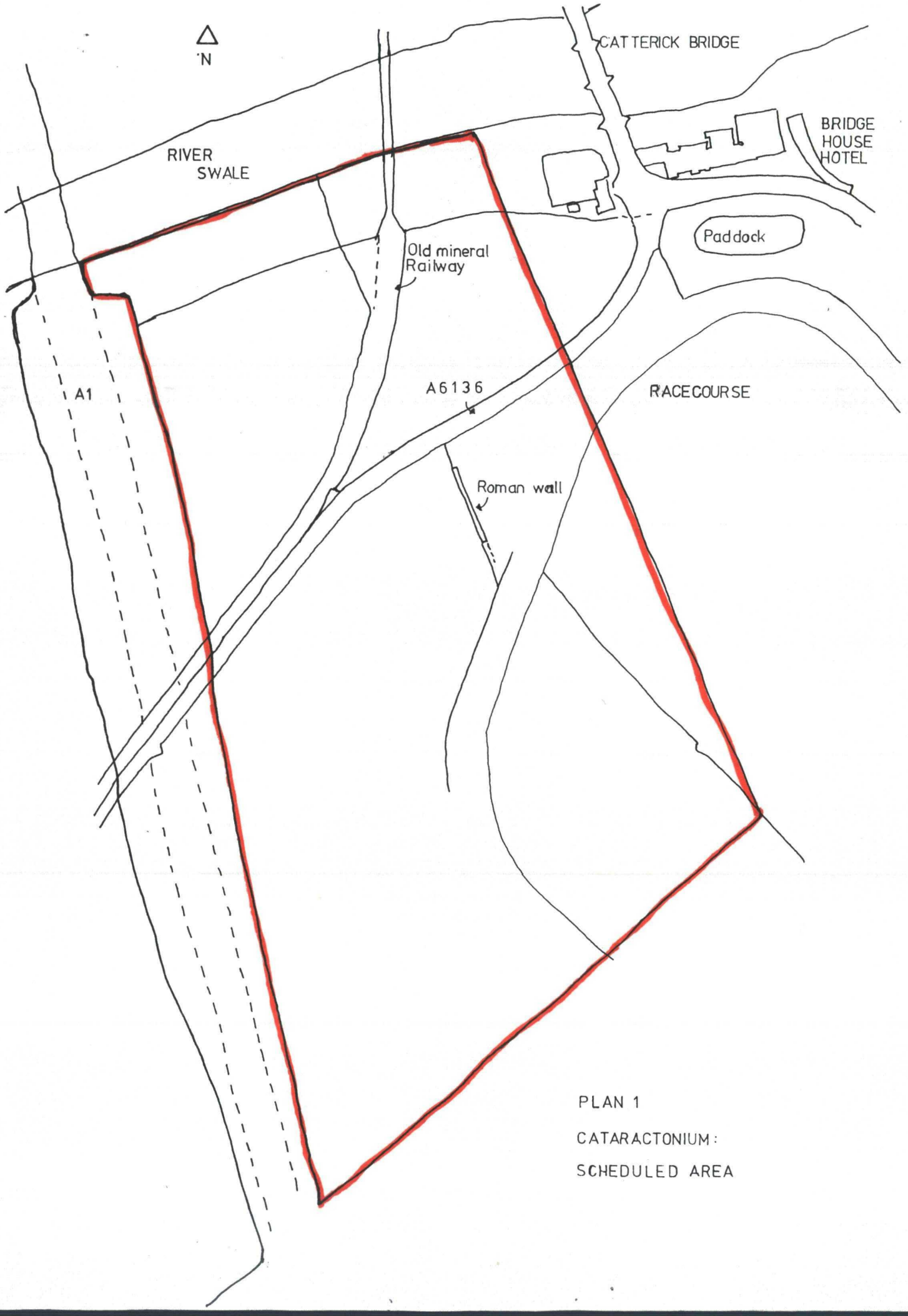
The two lines of stones in the gullies and road crossings can be interpreted as the remains of walls, almost certainly of Roman date, given the proximity of the known section of Roman wall in the racecourse (plan 1) The small size of the excavated area in terms of both depth and extent makes more detailed indentification and interpretation impossible

It is possible however to confirm that (probable) Roman levels lie immediately below the modern road and the disturbance associated with it, although in the area examined these appeared to be fragmentary

SUMMARY

The watching brief undertaken in March 1992 at Cataractonium Roman Station revealed two possible walls beneath the modern road running in a north or northwest direction, which are probably of Roman date

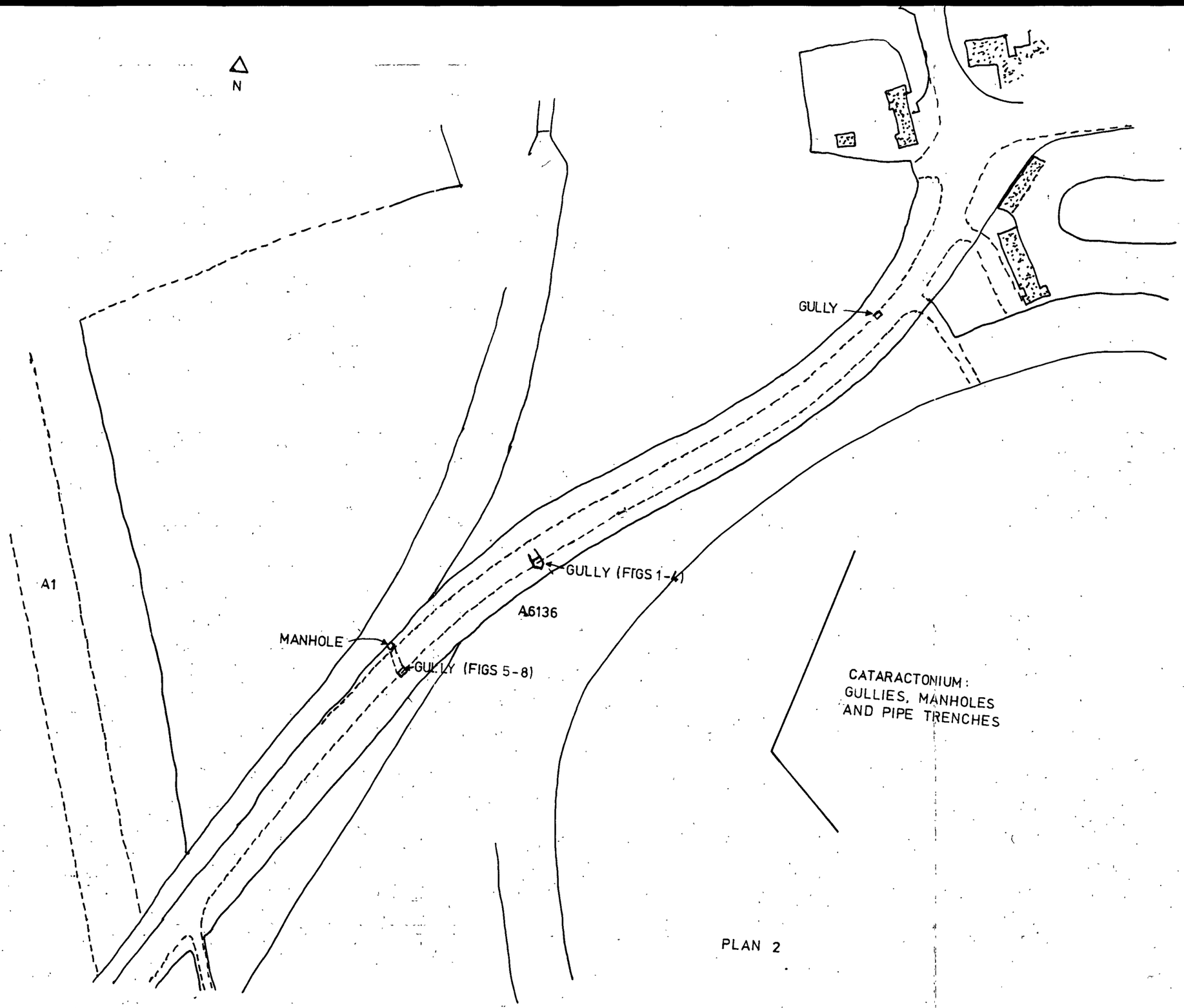
Thanks are due to Mike Woodford of N Y C C Highways Department and the workmen on site for their cooperation, and to Helen Mikolaiczyk, my assistant



PLAN 1

CATARACTONIUM:

SCHEDULED AREA


N
GULLY
GULLY (FIGS 1-4)
A6136
MANHOLE
GULLY (FIGS 5-8)
A1
CATARACTONIUM:
GULLIES, MANHOLES
AND PIPE TRENCHES

PLAN 2

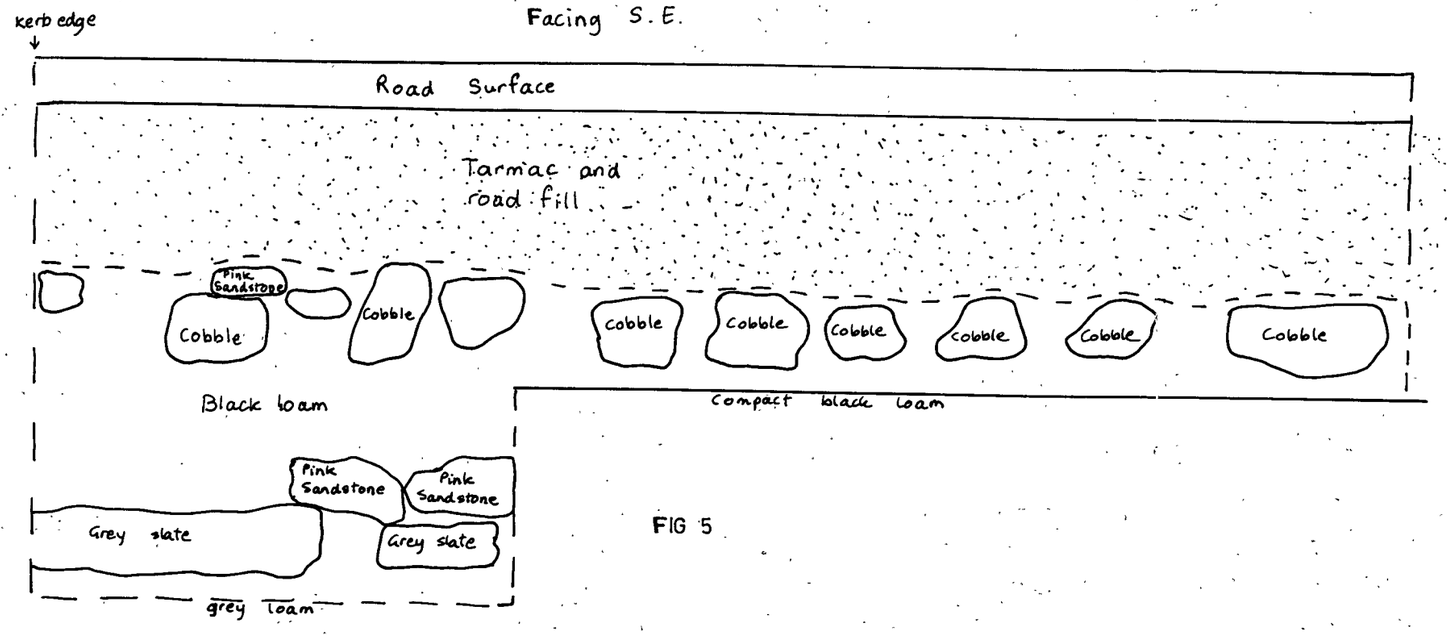


FIG 5

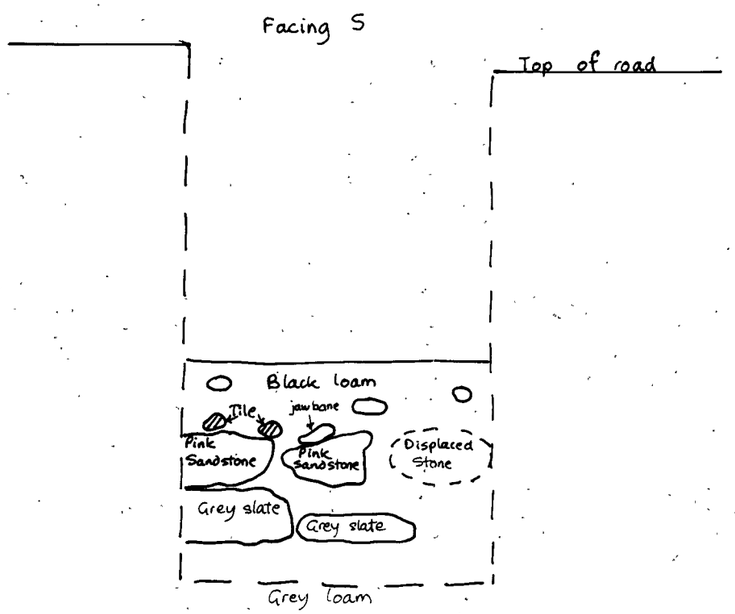


FIG 7

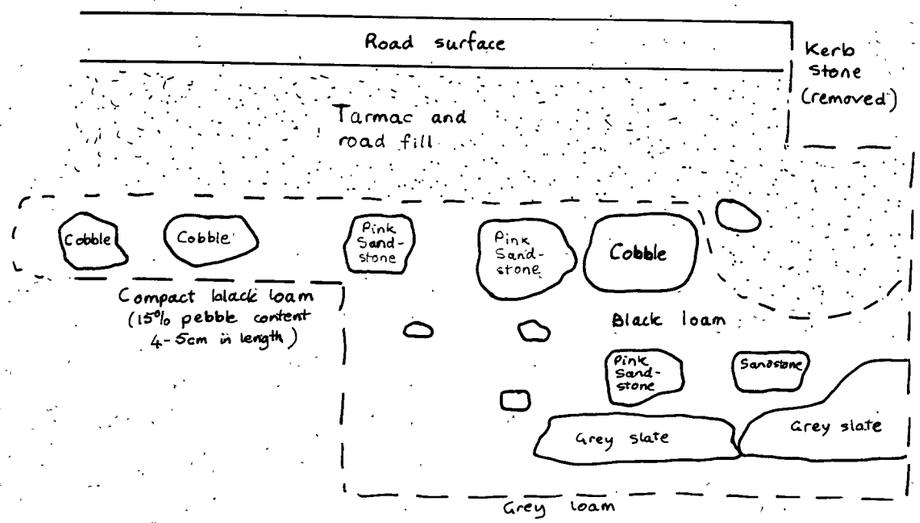


FIG 6

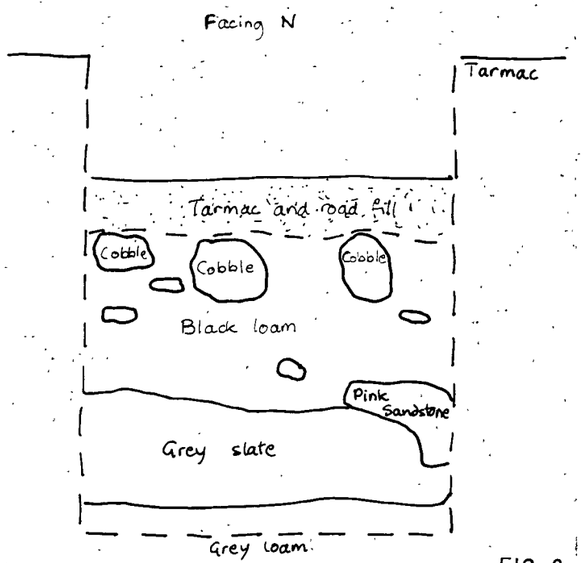


FIG 8

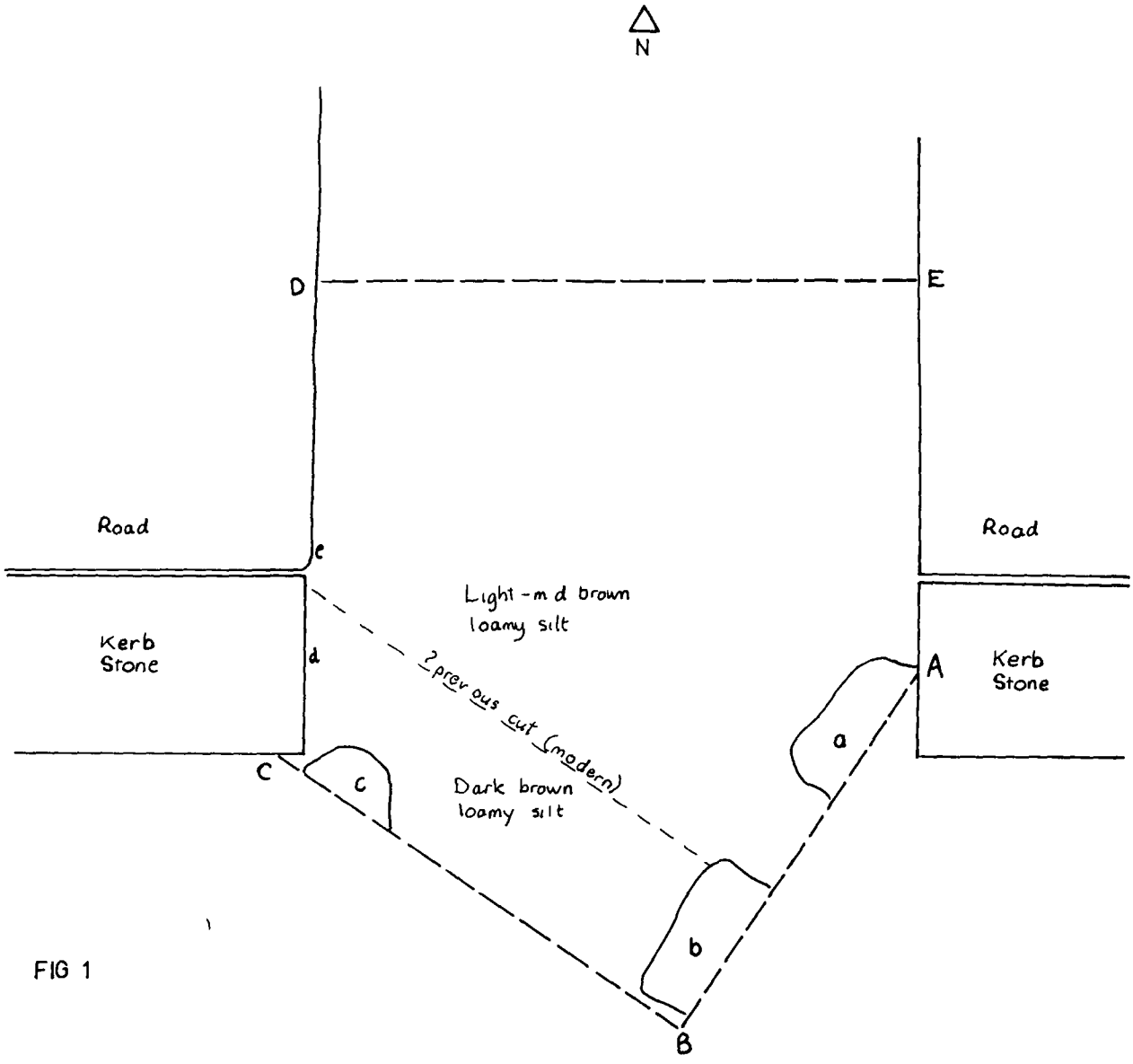

N
D
E
Road
Road
e
Light - m d brown
loamy silt
Kerb
Stone
d
?previous cut (modern)
A
Kerb
Stone
a
C
c
Dark brown
loamy silt
b
B

FIG 1

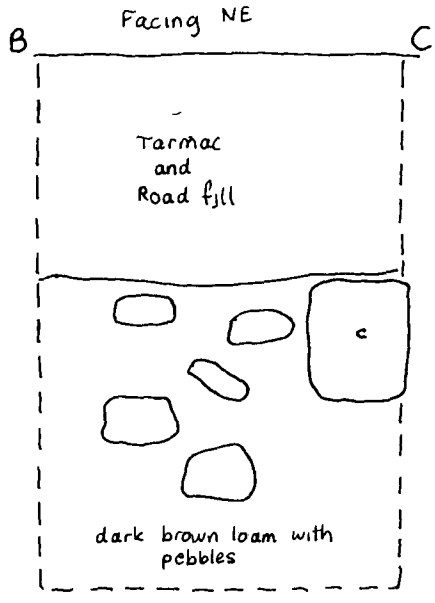

Facing NE
B
C
Tarmac
and
Road fill
c
dark brown loam with
pebbles

FIG 2

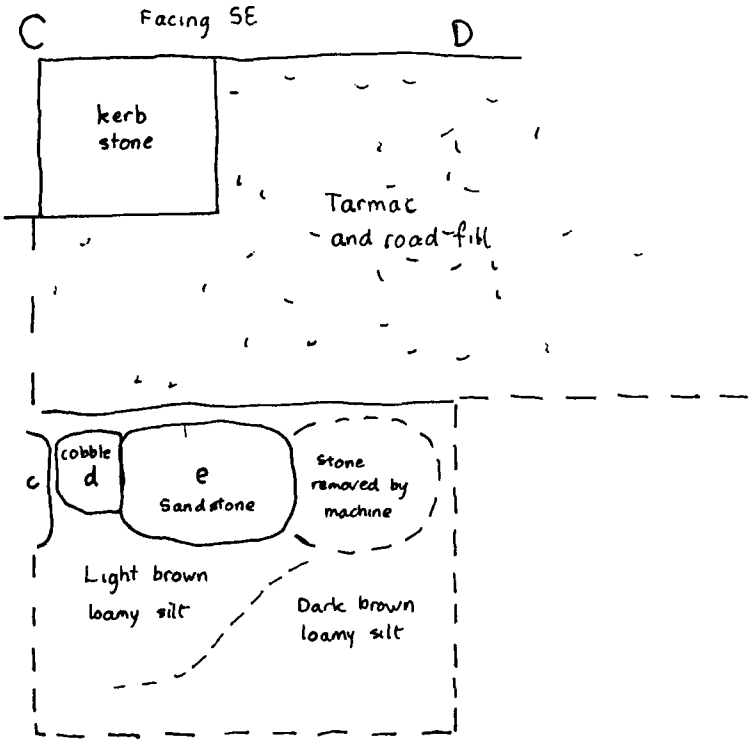

C
Facing SE
D
kerb stone
Tarmac and road fill
c
cobble d
e Sandstone
stone removed by machine
Light brown loamy silt
Dark brown loamy silt

FIG 3

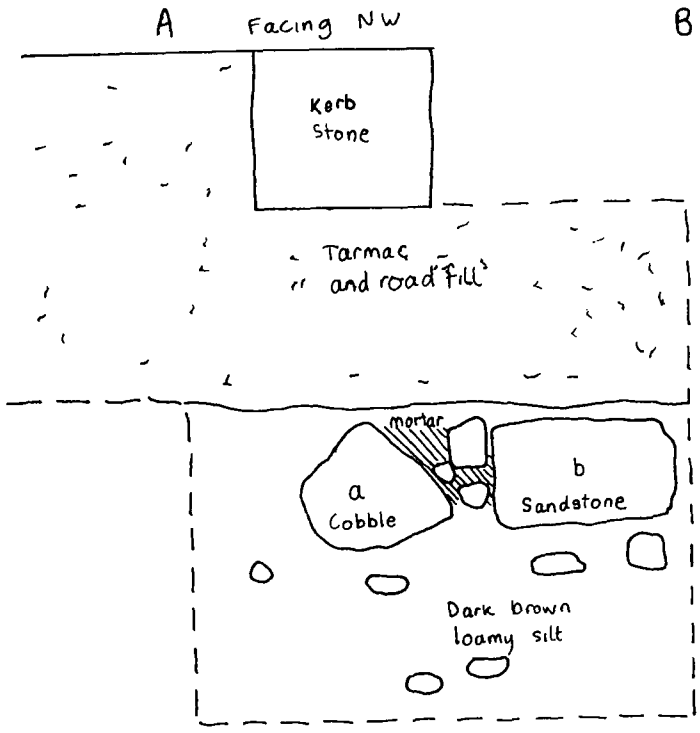

A
Facing NW
B
Kerb Stone
Tarmac and road fill
mortar
a Cobble
b Sandstone
Dark brown loamy silt

FIG 4