

Shilstone, Drewsteignton, Devon

NGR SX 70221 90709

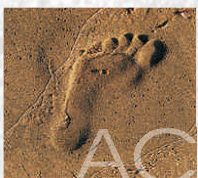
Results of historic building recording and watching brief

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On behalf of
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archaeology

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Summary

Recording of a shippon, forming part of a 16th-century longhouse at Shilstone, Drewsteignton, was undertaken by AC archaeology during alterations to, and extension of, the house. Historic alterations included the addition of a rear outshut, as well as possible conversion to stables. In the mid-20th century the building fell out of use, its roof and upper floor were removed and partially converted into a roof terrace. Excavation of a single trench outside the shippon exposed its foundations as well as the remains of an former internal wall to the outshut and an associated cobbled surface.

1. INTRODUCTION (Figure 1)

This report presents the results of an archaeological building survey and watching brief undertaken by AC archaeology on 12 September 2011 during alterations to the former shippon at Shilstone, Drewsteignton, Devon (SX 70221 90709; Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Steven Brook, and was carried out to discharge condition 2 of Listed Building Consent (Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) 0273/11) for the alterations to an existing application that had been submitted for alterations to, and extension of, the house. Advice on the scope of the archaeological investigations was provided by the DNPA archaeologist.

2. AIMS

- 2.1 The aims of the project were twofold: firstly, to prepare a record of the interior of the shippon prior to works commencing, and secondly, to monitor the groundworks inside the shippon and excavate and record any archaeological deposits and/or historic fabric exposed during construction works.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The works were undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation prepared by AC archaeology (Passmore 2011), and the recording carried out in line with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 1*. The only change to this methodology was that no groundworks were undertaken to the interior of the building, and the existing concrete floor slab was left in place. The excavation of a single trench, located against the back wall of the shippon within a later extension, was monitored and recorded. The recording method was as follows:

- 1:100 plan and elevations of the shippon using architect's as existing drawings, accompanied by a written record and a photographic record using a high-quality digital camera;
- 1:20 plan and sections of the excavated trench, accompanied by a photographic record using a high-quality digital camera.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Shilstone is a Grade II listed building of special architectural or historic interest (National Heritage List number 1106100). The building is described as a Dartmoor longhouse, possibly of 16th-century date that was altered and extended in the late-17th or early-18th century. In the 1950s the shippon fell out of use and the roof was removed and walls reduced to first floor level. The upper part was used as a balcony to the adjacent room.

4.2 In addition to the farmhouse, the farmyard contains three other grade II listed buildings: an ash house (National Heritage List number 1306552), a cow house (National Heritage List number 1106101), and a barn (National Heritage List number 1326076). The farm is situated 140m from Spinsters Rock, a Neolithic chambered tomb that is a Scheduled Monument (National Heritage List number 1003177).

5. THE SHIPPON (Figures 2-4; Plates 1-3)

5.1 The single-storey shippon is located at the south end of the present farmhouse and consists of an open room (Plate 1) with a small secondary extension attached on the western side. The shippon measures 6m by 4.6m, whilst the extension measures 4m by 2.5m. Externally, the shippon is constructed of coursed granite with larger ashlar blocks utilised for the lower courses and quoins. Undressed granite masonry is used for the upper courses and the interior elevations.

5.2 East elevation (Plate 1)

The fenestration of the principal east elevation incorporates a single central entrance flanked by window openings on either side. The southern opening contains a mid-20th-century timber casement window. The present window is within a smaller opening, the lower part having been infilled. The northern window has recently been heightened, and its 20th-century timber casement window removed. On the interior elevation the wall below this window is plastered. None of these openings are likely to be original features. Between the doorway and the north window is a scar of a removed modern wall. This is also visible as a scar on the concrete floor.

5.3 South elevation (Plate 2)

This elevation incorporates two near-central small drains, above which is a larger splayed ventilation opening. The drains are not visible on the interior elevation, and are obscured by the raised 20th-century concrete floor.

5.4 West elevation

At the south end of this elevation there is an inserted round-headed doorway into the rear outshut. To the north, the interior of the wall is partially obscured by paint and later plaster. The edge of these finishes is defined by a scar of stairs that formerly led to a first-floor terrace. The terrace had been constructed on I-beams set into concrete. At the north end of the wall is a blocked window opening.

5.5 North elevation (Plate 3)

Granite masonry is present at first-floor level, although the antiquity of this build is unclear. The lowest five courses may represent the remains of a 17th-century wall, perhaps inserted when first floor was added. The masonry above, also of roughly-coursed granite, is of more recent date, and may date to as late as the 1950s. It incorporates a window and a doorway within a splayed external opening. The ground-floor fabric is of 1950s date and is constructed of concrete and concrete block. This area incorporates a doorway at ground floor level, as well as the scar of the first-floor terrace and a scar of stairs from the terrace to the first-floor door.

5.6 The outshut (Plate 1)

The surviving masonry of the outshut comprises the south and west walls, and is constructed of rubble granite with ashlar blocks utilised for quoins. In the south elevation there is a doorway that has been partially blocked and converted into a window opening. In the west elevation there is a further blocked doorway. The extension was formerly divided into two rooms; the scar of the removed internal wall can be seen in the internal west elevation.

6. THE EXCAVATION (Figures 2 and 5; Plate 4)

A single trench aligned north-south and measuring 2.9m by 0.7m by 0.7m deep was located against the external face of the west elevation of the shippon.

Exposed within the base of the trench were three large granite stones (107) forming the foundation to the primary build of the shippon. These were sealed beneath a 0.35m thick homogenous garden soil type deposit (106). Within the centre of the trench, cutting through (106) and sealing part of (107) was an east-west aligned wall (104), measuring 0.45m wide and constructed of irregularly coursed granite fragments bonded by an indurated lime mortar. This wall represents the remains of the demolished internal wall of the outshut. Associated with wall (104) and sealing the southernmost stone in 107 was an internal cobbled surface (103). During the immediate post-use of this surface an accumulative layer was deposited (102) consisting of a dark grey clay included with frequent mortar flecking. Overlying this is a 0.50m (max) demolition deposit (101) of granite fragments all with adhered lime mortar derived from the demolition of wall (104). Abutting the north face of wall 104 and overlying deposit (106) is the present garden soil (105). Both the garden soil 105 the demolition deposit 101 are overlain by the present concrete surface of the outshut (100).

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The shippon was an integral part of the longhouse where animals were housed, away from the occupants in the other half of the building. The two early architectural features – the drain holes and the splayed vent – are typical features of such agricultural buildings. The use of ashlar on the external elevations is also known from other longhouses, such as Sanders at Lettaford. At this date the shippon was probably open to the roof.

The outshut at the rear of the shippon is likely to be an early addition, initially providing a further two rooms, possibly for the accommodation of bulls or calves. The openings in the east elevation of the shippon have been inserted and probably relate to a change of use. The symmetrical layout, with the central doorway, is typical of purpose-built stables, and may reflect a change in practices with cows being moved away from the house into a dedicated barn.

In the late 17th/ early 18th century the first floor was added to the longhouse, and it may have extended over the shippon although no evidence for this survives. Part of the masonry in the east elevation may be associated with these alterations.

In the 1950s any first-floor structure was removed and a roof terrace created at first-floor level accessed via stairs from the shippon and first-floor accommodation. A raised concrete floor was added to the shippon and outshut, along with rooms under the terrace.

8. OASIS ENTRY AND ARCHIVE

8.1 An entry to the OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological investigationS) database has been completed, and has the identifying code 112480.

8.2 The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, in Unit 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, Nr Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ, and will be deposited under the relevant accession number at the Royal Albert

Memorial Museum, Exeter, at the earliest in 2013 when the current museum non-acceptance policy will be reviewed.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1** The project was commissioned by Stephen Brock, and managed for AC archaeology by Andrew Passmore. The site visit was undertaken by Paul Jones, the report prepared by Paul Jones and edited by Andrew Passmore, with the report illustrations by Cain Hegarty.

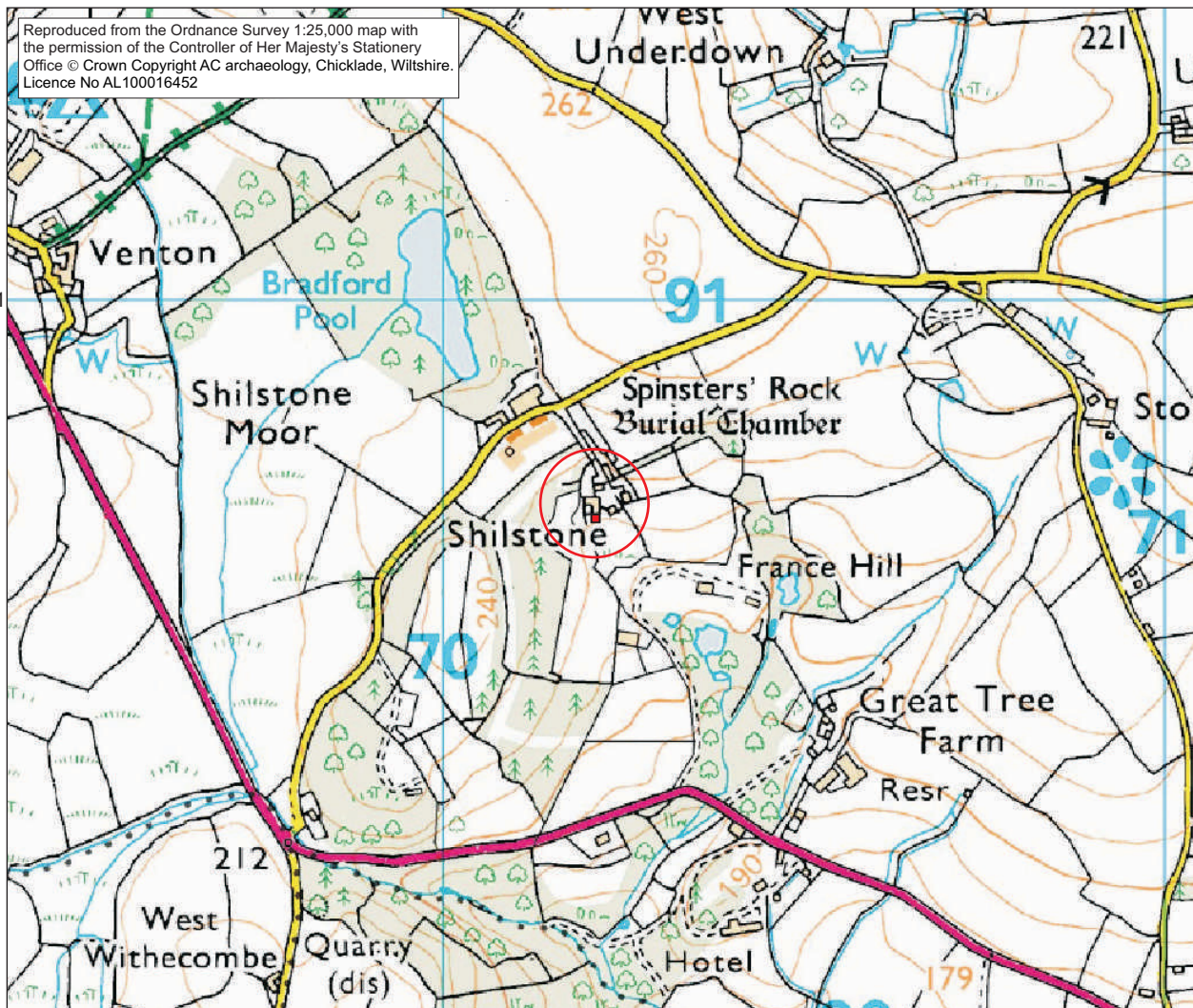
10. SOURCES CONSULTED

Passmore, A.J., 2011, *Shilstone, Drewsteignton NGR SX70221 90709 Written scheme of investigation for historic building recording and watching brief*, AC archaeology document ACD364/1/0.

National Heritage List for England website,
<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/>



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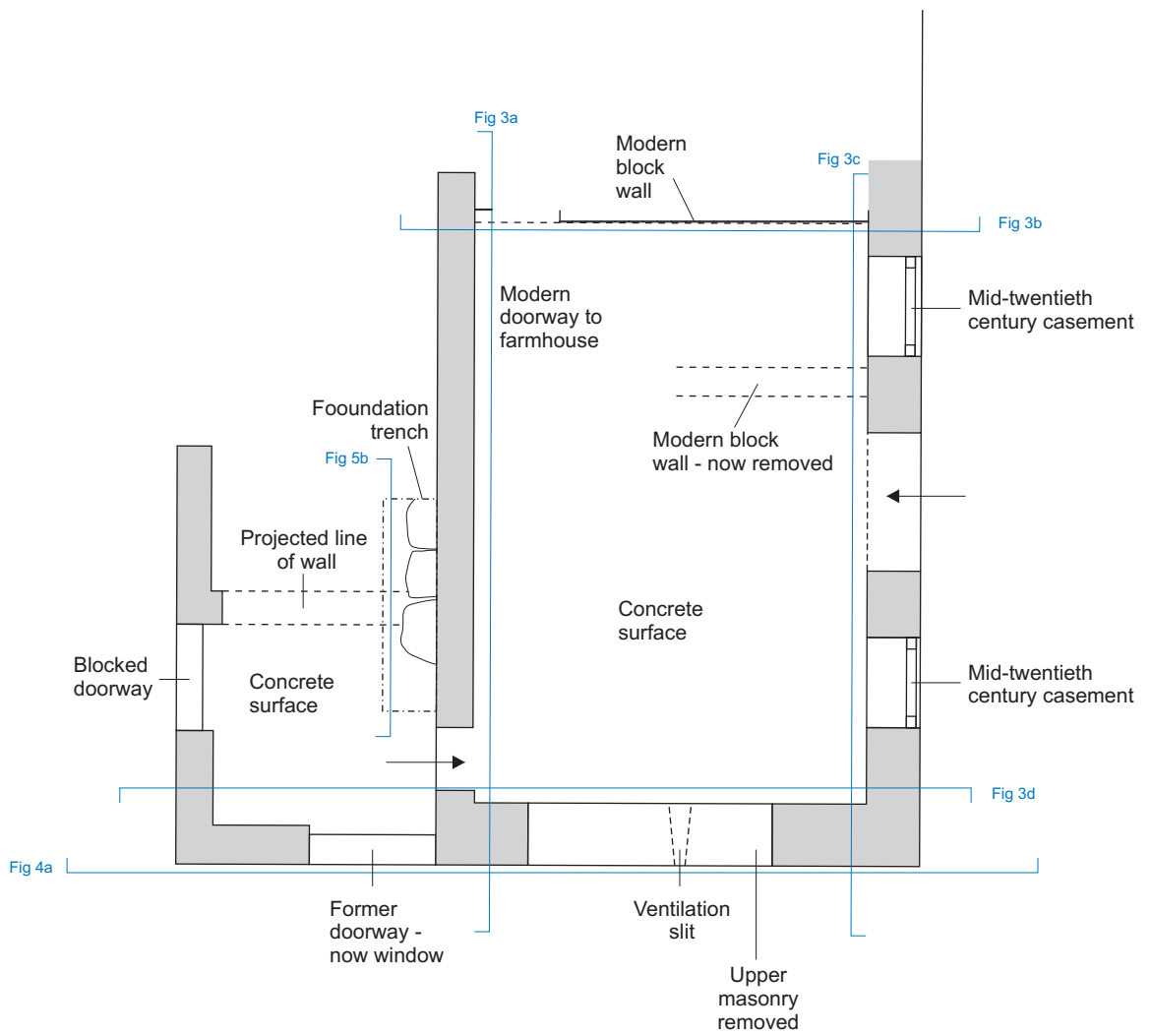
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Fig. 1: Location of site





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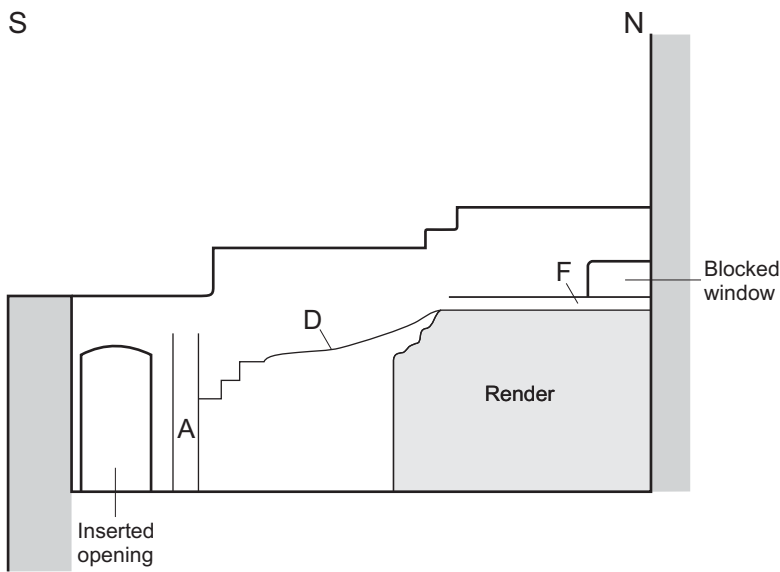
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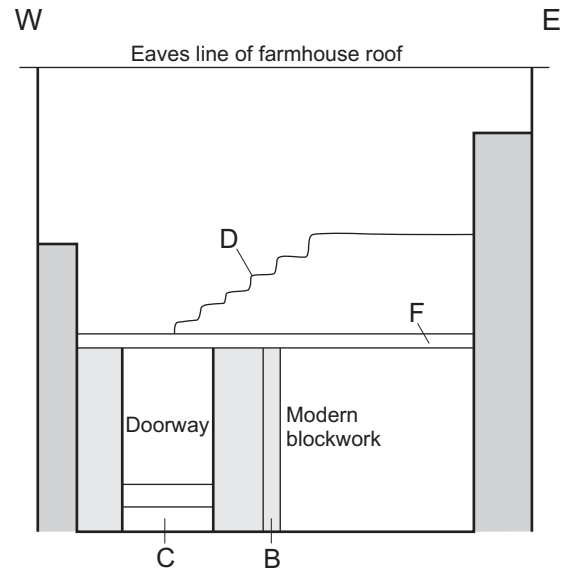
Fig.2: Ground-floor plan



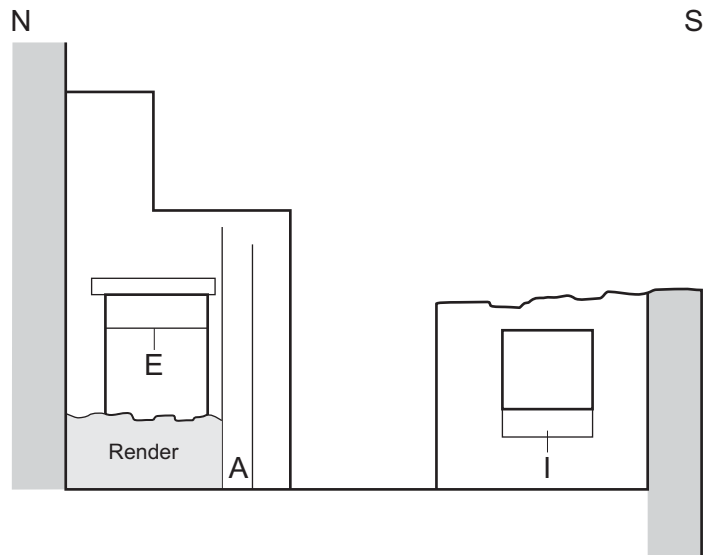
a) Internal west wall



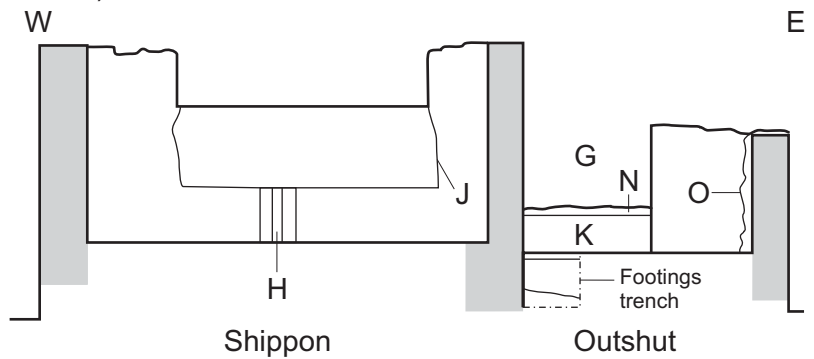
b) Internal northern wall



c) Internal eastern wall



d) Internal southern wall



- A: Position of former twentieth century internal wall
- B: Position of former internal wall; modern blockwork
- C: Concrete steps
- D: Position of twentieth century timber staircase
- E: Height of former window opening
- F: Height of first-floor terrace
- G: Former doorway
- H: Tapered vent
- I: Infilled window opening
- J: Rebuild or infill
- K: Blocking of doorway
- L: Drain outlet
- M: Height of former window lintel (timber)
- N: Timber window sill
- O: Wall scar of former east-west wall (as 104)



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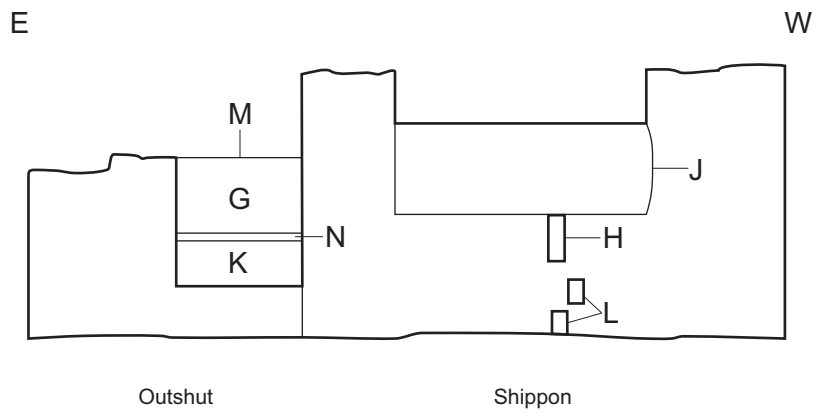
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Fig.3: Internal elevations



a) External elevation



Scale 1:100@A4

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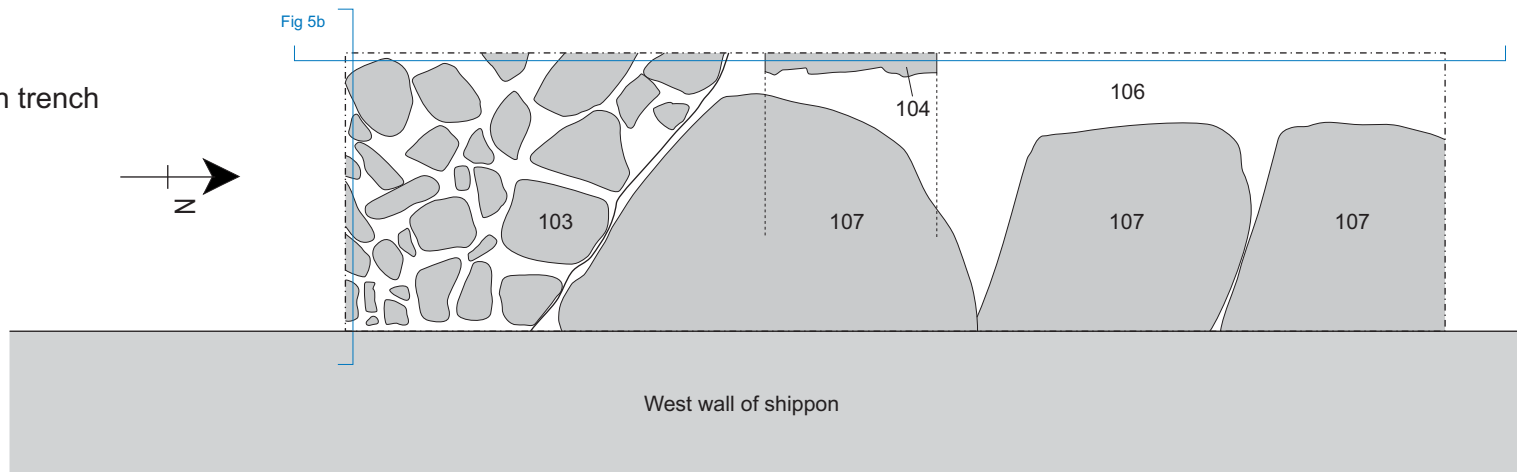
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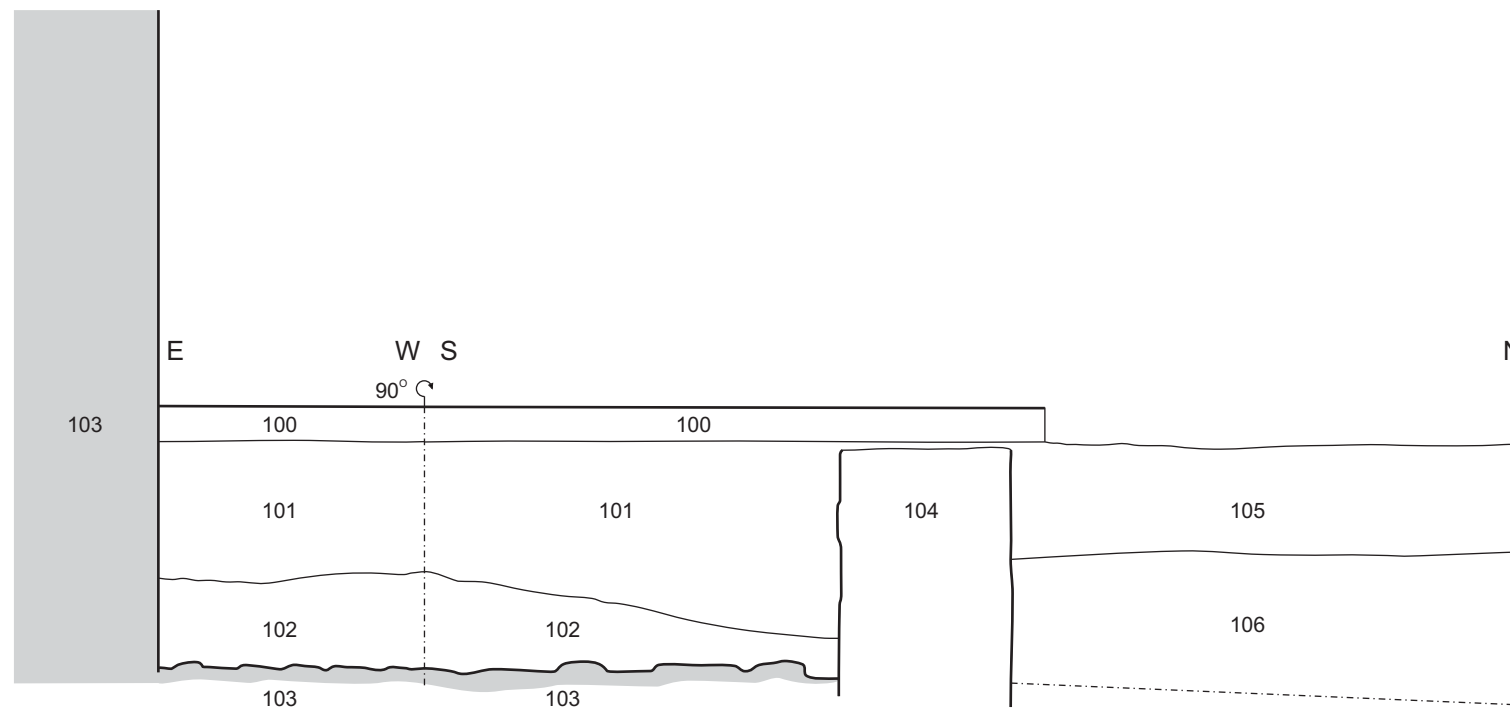
Fig.4: External elevation



a) Plan of foundation trench



b) Section of foundation trench



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Fig.5: Plan and section,
foundation trench





Plate 1: The shippon, viewed from the southeast



Plate 2: The south elevation of the shippon showing drain outlets and vent, with the outshut to the left, viewed from the southeast



Plate 3: The east end of the shippon showing the gable wall of the farmhouse with C20 ground-floor wall, viewed from the south



Plate 4: The foundation trench showing the footings of the shippon (107) and later cobbles (103), viewed from the south. (1m scale)

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