

Archaeological Watching Brief  
67 Blackness Road, Linlithgow  
West Lothian



General view of site looking East



29<sup>th</sup> July 2019

## **Introduction (Illus 1)**

This programme of archaeological works was carried out for Mr and Mrs Mark Green to satisfy the planning condition attached to application number 102/H/19 as recommended by Martin O'Hare of WOSAS in a letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019. It was undertaken by the author on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019 (site code LIN01); weather conditions were slightly cloudy with bright sunshine.

## **Archaeological Background (Illustration 2)**

WOSAS had identified the site at 67 Blackness Road as being located in an area of increased archaeological sensitivity associated with the historic core of the medieval burgh of Linlithgow. The plot that is being developed is located beyond the eastern end of the High Street, which would have been the principal thoroughfare of the early town. As a result, it would be located just outside the probable core of the medieval burgh, the eastern boundary of which is likely to have been located in the vicinity of roundabout at the junction of Blackness Road and High Port. The East Port and Low Port gates formerly stood in this area and would have controlled access to the town and its market along the lines of what are now Blackness Road and Edinburgh Road. In comparison with other Scottish medieval burghs of a similar size WOSAS suggested that there may be evidence for extra-burghal activity in this area, represented by suburban settlement and/or industrial activity. It was recommended that all below ground excavations associated with this development should be monitored by an archaeologist.

## **Foundation trenches for new extensions to existing building (Illustration 3)**

The excavated foundation trenches have been labelled on illustration 3 and are described separately. Representative sections of each trench were drawn at 1:10 and labelled with assigned contexts (Illustrations 4 and 5).

### **Trench A (Illustrations 4, 6 and 7)**

This ran North West from the existing building at 67 Blackness Road and was 0.80m wide and 0.60m deep. A mixed grey brown sandy clay, small stone and occasional purple red gravel 100 (0.26m deep) overlay a light brown sandy clay with occasional charcoal 101 (0.34m deep) which lay above a moderate to loose gravel and stone 102. 102 was a natural deposit. At 5.2m from the back of house a light brown sandy clay with occasional stone 103 was visible below 101 to formation level. This looked undisturbed and suggests that the ground falls away North Westwards towards Linlithgow Loch. There were no finds from this foundation trench.

### **Trench B (Illustrations 4 and 8)**

This foundation line ran North East off trench A and was 0.80m deep and 0.60m deep. A dark grey brown sandy clay and stones 100 (0.35m deep) overlay a light brown sandy clay with occasional charcoal and bone 103 (0.25m deep) to formation level. A former garden path 104 (0.80m wide) was visible (loose yellow brown gravel) at a depth of 0.35m. Towards the North Eastern end of this trench a sheet of plastic and loose gravel had been laid on top of 103 below 100. There were no finds from this foundation trench.

### **Trench C (not illustrated)**

This foundation line ran South East off trench B and was 0.80m wide and 0.60m deep. Dark grey sandy clay and stones 100 (0.32m deep) overlay light brown sandy clay with stones 101 to the base of the trench. There were no finds from this foundation trench.

#### **Trench D (Illustrations 4 and 9)**

This trench ran North West to South East and was 0.80m wide and 0.60m deep. Dark grey brown silty clay and stones 100 (0.33m deep) overlay light brown sandy clay and occasional charcoal 101 (0.27m deep) which overlay loose to moderate gravel 102 (natural) at the base of the trench. At 2.5m from its junction with Trench C Trench D was deepened to a depth of 1.20m. At this point Context 103 continued to formation level at its base.

#### **Trench E (Illustrations 5 and 10)**

This foundation line ran North West to South East and was 0.80m wide and 0.70m deep. Dark grey brown silty clay and stones 100 (0.10m deep) overlay light brown sandy clay and stones 103 to the base of the trench. A single sherd of Scottish Post Medieval Reduced Ware pottery was recovered from Context 103 2m North West of its junction with Trench F.

#### **Trench F (Illustrations 5 and 11)**

This foundation line ran South West to North East right up to the North Eastern wall of 67 Blackness Road. It was 0.80m wide and 0.80m deep and exposed dark brown sandy clay and stones 100 (0.10m deep) over light brown sandy clay and stones 103 to formation level.

#### **Finds (Illustration 12)**

A single sherd of Scottish Post Medieval Reduced Ware pottery was recovered from context 103 in Trench E. This fabric can be viewed as a late medieval transition from the Scottish Redwares (dating to the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> centuries) and was first identified in the excavations at Stirling Castle in the late 1970's (Haggarty 1980). The only production centre so far identified is at Throsk in the Forth Valley (Caldwell and Dean 1992, 1-46), although good documentary evidence exists for others (Harrison 2002). Similar pottery fabrics are present from previous excavations in Linlithgow (Hall 2015, 23-32).

#### **Conclusions**

The footprint of the new extension to the rear of the current house at 67 Blackness Road sits in an area where the ground has been previously raised by at least 0.35m. The extension on the Northern side of the site lay in an area where the ground had not been noticeably raised. Generally, across the whole of the monitored area a similar sequence of apparently undisturbed soils was recorded and aside from a single bodysherd of Scottish Post Medieval Reduced Ware pottery of 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century date from Trench E nothing of archaeological interest was located. There was no evidence that there had ever been another building on the North Eastern side of 67 Blackness Road.

#### **References**

Caldwell, D H and Dean, VE 1992 'The Pottery Industry at Throsk, Stirlingshire in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century', *Post Med Archaeol* 26, 1-46

Haggarty, G R 1980 'The Pottery' in Ewart, G 'Excavations at Stirling Castle 1977-1978'. *Post Med Archaeol* 14, 36-46

Hall, D W 2015 'Pottery' in Hunter, D, Brooks, C, Caldwell, D, Stell, G, Middleton, M and Smith, C **ARO16 Digging Linlithgow's Past archaeology on the High Street, 1966-1977**

### **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank Ian, Mark, Ricky and Stewart the machine driver for their interest and good humour during the monitoring of the excavations.

### **Context List**

100 Mixed grey brown sandy clay with small stones and occasional purple gravel

101 Light brown sandy clay with occasional charcoal

102 Moderate to loose gravel and stone (natural)

103 Light brown sandy clay with occasional stones

104 Loose yellow gravel

### **Finds List**

Trench E Context 103 – 1 bodysherd of green glazed Scottish Post Medieval Reduced Ware pottery

### **Illustration List**

Illustration 1 Site Location (red dot) (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2016. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628)

Illustration 2 Location of plot on Blackness Road (based on supplied architects plan)

Illustration 3 Excavated foundation trenches A to F showing locations of section drawings 1 to 7. Current house at 67 Blackness Road in black (1:200 at A4)

Illustration 4 Sections of foundation trenches A, B and D

Illustration 5 Sections of Foundation trenches D to F

Illustration 6 Trench A looking West at its South Western end showing soils 100 and 101 above natural gravel 102.

Illustration 7 Trench A looking West showing appearance of soil 103, junction of natural gravel 102 and beginning of soil 103 visible just above scale

Illustration 8 Trench B looking North West showing made up ground (100) above plastic and gravel sitting on surface of context 103

Illustration 9 Trench D looking North showing stepped new foundation cut into soil 103

Illustration 10 view along trench E looking South East showing made up ground 100 overlying Context 103 to formation level.

Illustration 11 Trench F looking South West showing deep soil build-up 103 adjacent to standing building at 67 Blackness Road

Illustration 12 Bodysherd of Scottish Post Medieval Reduced Ware pottery from context 103 in Trench E (dating to the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> centuries)

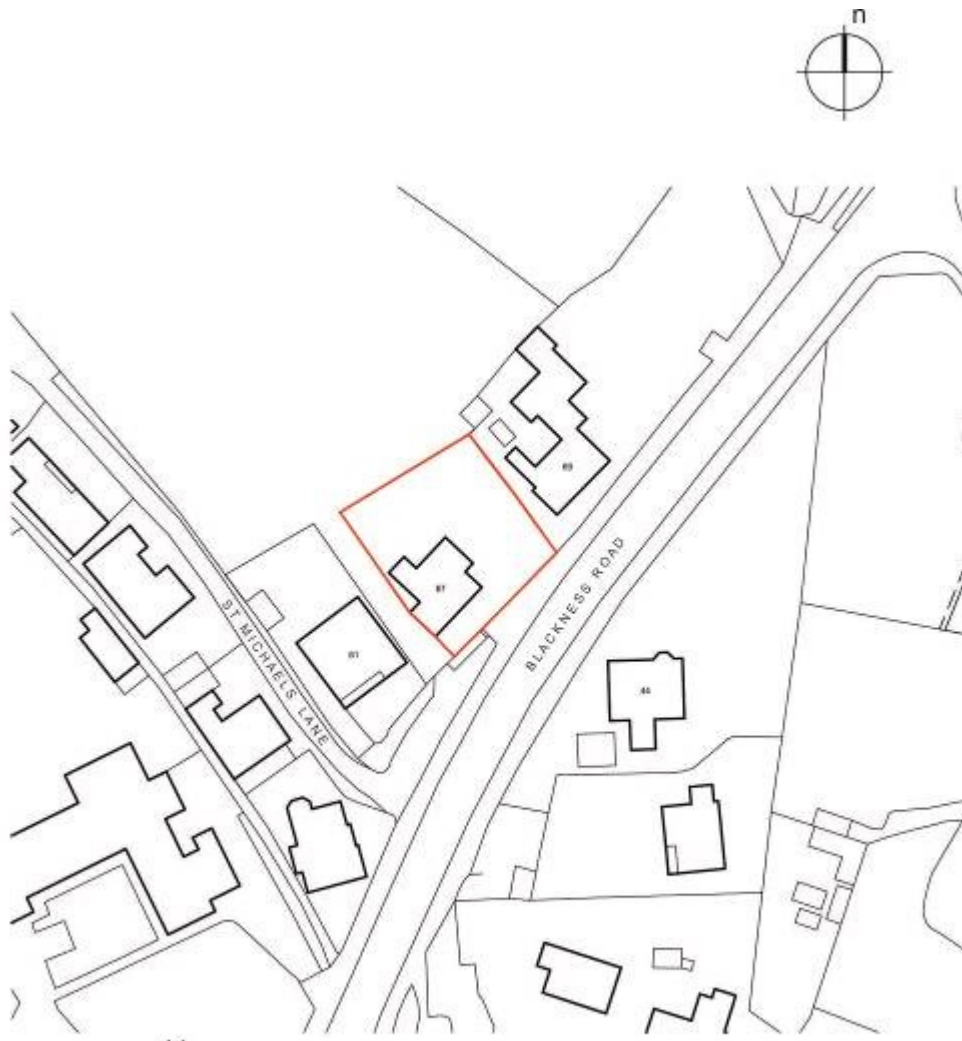
## Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	West Lothian
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	67 Blackness Road, Linlithgow
PROJECT CODE:	LIN01
PARISH:	Linlithgow
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Derek Hall
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Derek Hall, archaeologist and ceramic specialist
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 00636 77385
START DATE	23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2019
END DATE	23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2019
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological watching brief was carried out on the digging of new foundation trenches for extensions to the house at 67 Blackness Road. Deposits of topsoil and garden soil were encountered across the site. Apart from a single sherd of Scottish Post Medieval Reduced Ware of 17 <sup>th</sup> /18 <sup>th</sup> century date nothing of archaeological interest was located.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Mr and Mrs Green
CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRS	N/A
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	34 Glenfarg Terrace, Perth, PH2 0AP
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	NMRS
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Derek.hall1@blueyonder.co.uk



Illus 1

Illustration 1 Site Location (red dot) (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2016. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628)



## LOCATION PLAN

1:1250

Illustration 2 Location of plot on Blackness Road (based on supplied architects plan)



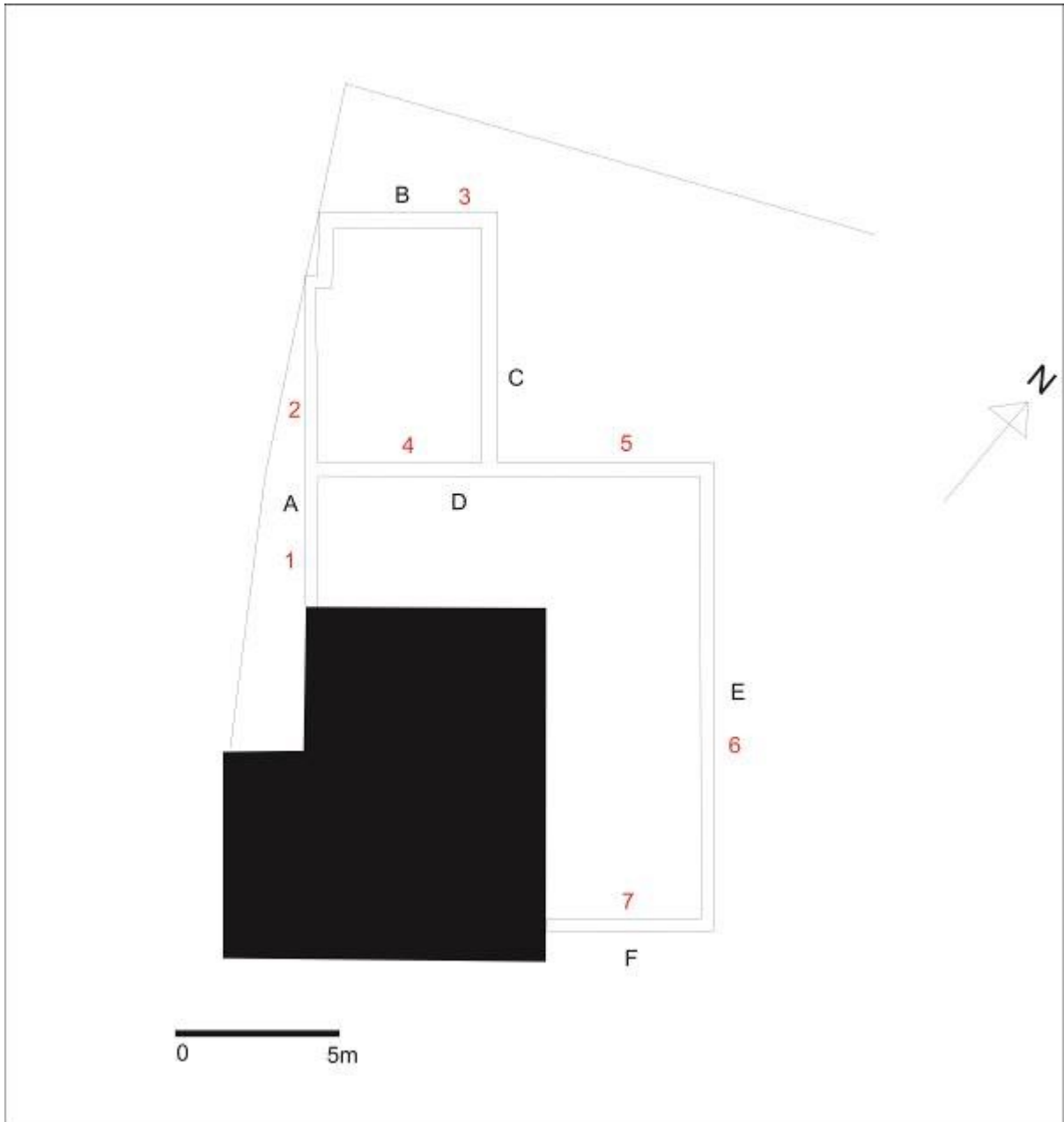


Illustration 3 Excavated foundation trenches A to F showing locations of section drawings 1 to 7. Current house at 67 Blackness Road in black (1:200 at A4)

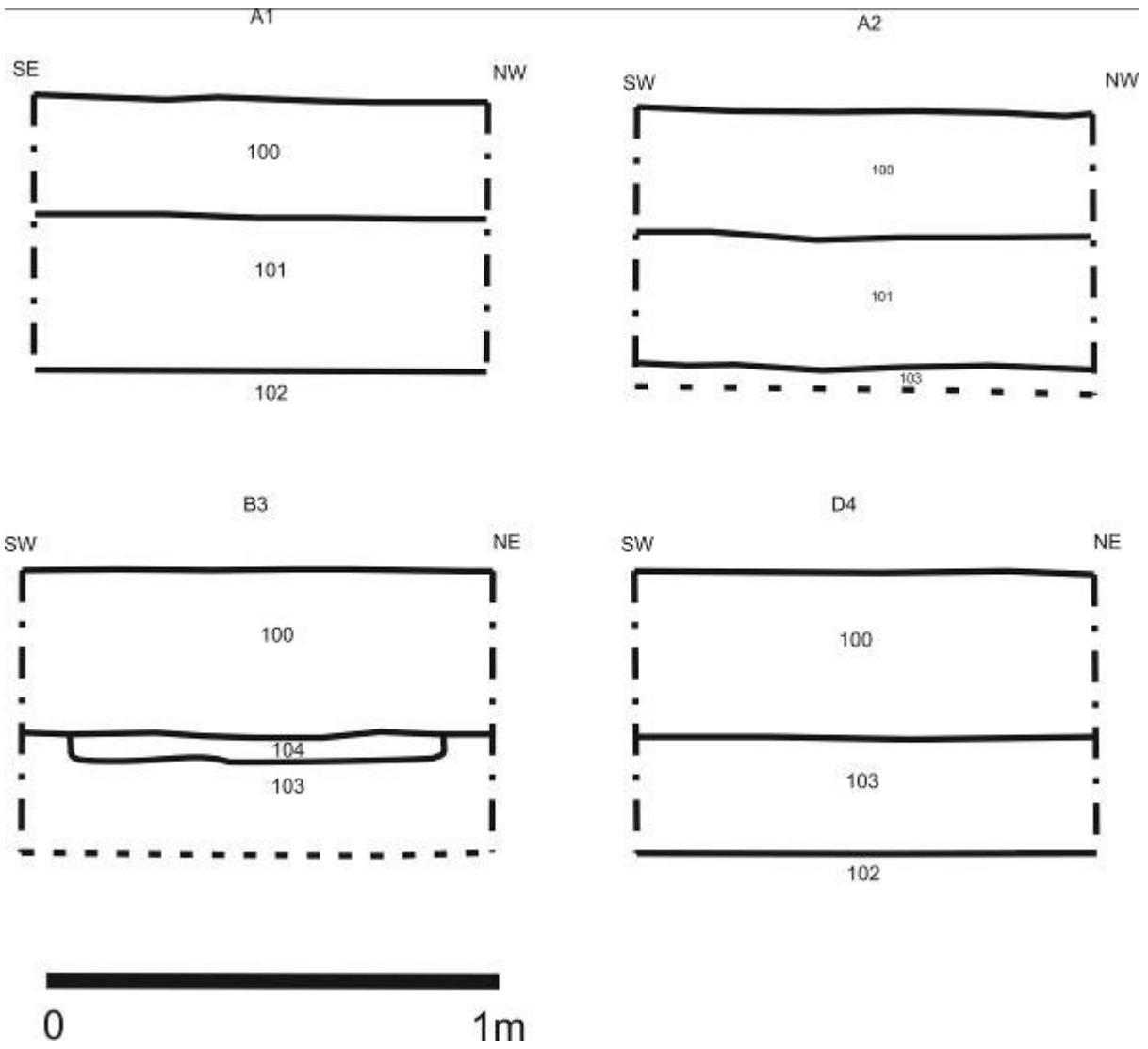


Illustration 4 Sections of foundation trenches A, B and D (dotted lines indicate formation level)

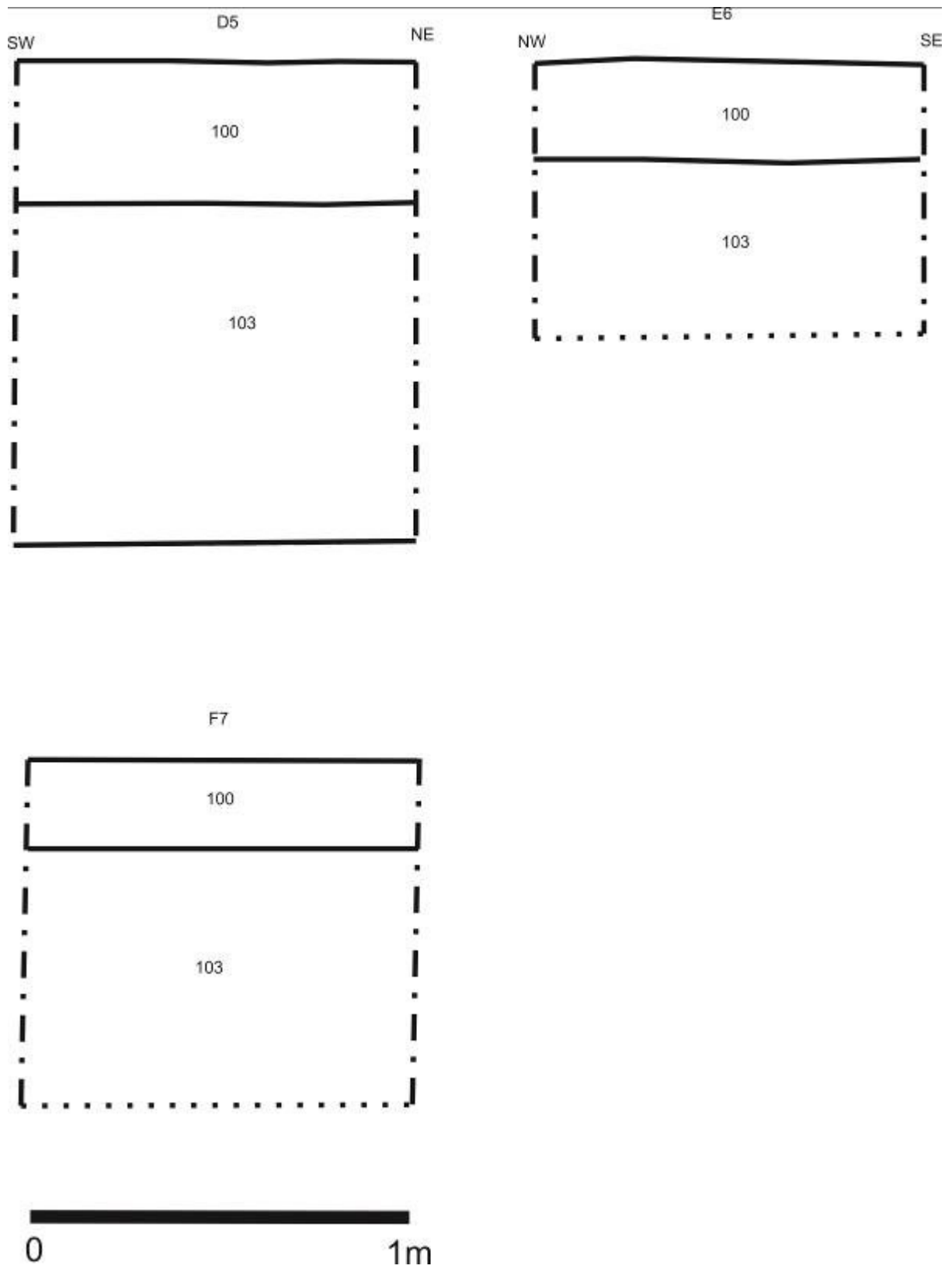


Illustration 5 Sections of Foundation trenches D to F (dotted lines indicate formation level)



Illustration 6 Trench A looking West at its South Western end showing soils 100 and 101 above natural gravel 102.



Illustration 7 Trench A looking West showing appearance of soil 103, junction of natural gravel 102 and beginning of soil 103 visible just above scale



Illustration 8 Trench B looking North West showing made up ground (100) above plastic and gravel sitting on surface of context 103



Illustration 9 Trench D looking North showing stepped new foundation cut into soil 103



Illustration 10 view along trench E looking South East showing made up ground 100 overlying Context 103 to formation level.





Illustration 11 Trench F looking South West showing deep soil build up 103 adjacent to standing building at 67 Blackness Road



Illustration 12 Bodysherd of Scottish Post Medieval Reduced Ware pottery from context 103 in Trench E (dating to the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> centuries)