

Archaeological Watching Brief  
Woodside, Snabs Farm, Longforgan,  
Perth and Kinross



Aerial photograph of Southern ditch line of temporary camp (red arrow indicates site of new house).



15<sup>th</sup> December 2021

## **Introduction**

This programme of archaeological works associated with the construction of a new house and its associated services was carried out on behalf of Val and Brian Stevenson to satisfy the outstanding archaeological condition on the planning consent for this development 19/01436/FLL, dated 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The watching brief (Site Code LON01 OASIS ID [derekhal1-434266](#)) was undertaken by the author on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 and on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Weather conditions were bright and sunny in December 2020 and on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 but overcast and grey otherwise.

## **Archaeological Background (Illustration 1-3)**

The site lies within the footprint of Longforgan / Greenbourne Roman temporary camp (CANMORE ID 30624) a site that is visible as cropmarks on oblique aerial photographs and is thought to date to the early third century AD (Severan campaign). Previous archaeological evaluation, watching brief and excavation work on parts of the site (St Joseph 1971; Neighbour 1994; Cachart 2013; Lewis 2013 and Fyles and Cachart 2015) had established that the camp was surrounded by a ditch with a similar profile to those recorded on other such Roman camp sites (Jones 2011, 266-267). A site evaluation directly to the East of the house site under discussion was carried out at Woodlands prior to development works and revealed two ditches on the projected alignment of the Longforgan / Greenbourne Roman Temporary Camp boundary (Lewis 2013). The cropmarks of that ditch line can be seen on aerial photographs to continue across part of the proposed development site.

## **Watching Brief (Illustrations 4 to 13).**

As a first step the author monitored the opening of four engineering test pits in December 2020. Further site visits took place during the general site soil stripping and digging of the new foundations for the house in November 2021.

### *Engineering Test Pits (Illustrations 4 and 5)*

All four pits were 1m x 1m squares dug by a small mechanical excavator. In three of the trenches 0.40m of dark brown sandy clay ploughsoil was removed to expose the natural broken red sandstone in the fourth the edge of a cut feature was recorded dug into natural apparently on the line of the recorded cropmarks. There were no finds recovered from any of the trenches.

### *Topsoil Stripping and digging of new foundation trenches*

#### *Topsoil Strip (not illustrated)*

The footprint of the new house and its grounds were stripped of a dark brown sandy clay (ploughsoil) (100) down to the top of the natural broken red sandstone (101). Ploughsoil (100) varied in depth between 0.30m and 0.40m below the modern ground surface. Observation of the exposed surface of the natural ground surface identified the line of a poorly defined cut feature running from the North East to the South West across the site.

### *New foundation trenches (Illustrations 6 to 13)*

The foundation trenches for the new house were opened by a mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket and were 1m wide and 0.50m deep. The line of a linear feature (102) cut into the natural broken red sandstone (105) was observed, excavated and recorded at the North Western end of the house plot. That feature was filled with an homogenous grey brown sandy clay (103) and in one section of the exposed feature 103 overlay a deposit of small stones and sandy clay (104) (Illus 13). There were no finds recovered. Preservation of the North Eastern section of 102 was poor and it only survived to a depth of 0.30m below the stripped surface of natural 105. The South Western section of 102 was better preserved and survived to a depth of 0.73m below the stripped surface of natural 105.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The monitoring of the topsoil stripping and digging of new foundation trenches located the line of the linear cut feature (102) that shows up on aerial photographs of the site. That feature survives poorly on the upslope in the field (Illus 10) but does get deeper the further to the South West that it runs (Illus 8 and 9). The two sections observed, excavated and recorded were filled with similar homogenous grey brown sandy clays (103), aside from a small section where a stony fill was observed on its base (104). Despite careful examination, sampling and sieving of the exposed sections of feature 102 no datable finds or charcoal were retrieved from its fill. The feature would appear to have been filled in very quickly, there was no trace of any silting deposits to suggest that it had remained open for any length of time. Cut feature (102) exhibited a U-shaped profile of a similar nature to what was previously recorded in the adjacent Woodlands evaluation, there was no sign of an 'ankle breaker' in the ditch base (Lewis 2013).

This monitoring exercise has confirmed the line and location of the cropmarks that have been recorded on aerial photographs of the site. Unfortunately the ditch feature excavated and recorded failed to provide any dating evidence to confirm its identification as a Severan temporary camp.

Following the completion of the on-site monitoring exercise the author feels that no further archaeological work is required. The final decision on that however rests with Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank Scott Mackie and his site team for their help and interest during this watching brief.

## References

Cachart, R 2013 *Archaeological Monitoring West Meadows, Woodlands Longforgan LF04* Alder Archaeology Ltd unpublished archive report.

Fyles, C and Cachart, R 2015 *Archaeological Watching Brief, The Snabs, Longforgan, Perth and Kinross (LF05)* Alder Archaeology Ltd unpublished archive report.

Jones, R H 2011 **Roman Camps in Scotland**. Edinburgh, 266-7

Lewis, J 2013 'Woodlands, Longforgan, Dundee Archaeological Evaluation' CFA Archaeology Ltd Report No 2187  
<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse/issue.xhtml?recordId=1121962&recordType=GreyLitSeries>

Neighbour, T. 'Excavations on the Roman Temporary Camp at Longforgan, near Dundee, 1994' *Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal* 4, 99-105. <https://www.tafac.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TAFAJ-Vol-4-5-Roman-camp-Longforgan-Neighbour.pdf>

St Joseph, J K S 1971 'Longforgan' *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 1970 38.

**Context List**

100 – Dark brown sandy clay (ploughsoil).

101 - Broken red sandstone (natural).

102 – Linear cut feature (ditch).

103 – Homogenous grey brown sandy clay (fill of 102).

104 – Small stones and sandy clay (basal fill of 102).

**Sample List**

S1 Context 103 (dried, sieved and not retained).

## Illustration List

Illustration 1- Site Location (red dot) (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2019. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628).

Illustration 2 – Site Location (based on supplied architect's drawing © Richard Watkinson).

Illustration 3- Oblique aerial photograph of site (1996) looking North West showing cropmarks of ditch line where it crosses the new house site (red arrow) (© CANMORE (ID 30624)).

Illustration 4- Site plan showing Engineering Test Pits 1 to 4, Test Pit 3 located a cut feature on the plotted line of the cropmarks (in yellow), ditch line previously excavated to the East by CFA Archaeology Ltd is also shown. The proposed footprint of the new house is shown in black.

Illustration 5 - Test Pit 3 looking North with edge of cut feature visible in trench section (red arrow).

Illustration 6 - sections of cut feature 102 located, excavated and recorded in North Eastern and South Western foundation trenches for new house.

Illustration 7 - Plan of foundation trenches for new house showing location of excavated and drawn sections across linear cut feature 102.

Illustration 8 - Section across linear cut feature (ditch) 102 looking South West where it was crossed by the new Southern foundation trench for the house, red arrow shows stony fill (104) on base. Location is 1 on Illustration 7.

Illustration 9 - Section across linear cut feature (ditch) 102 looking North East where it was crossed by the new Southern foundation trench for the house. Location is 2 on Illustration 7.

Illustration 10 - Section across poorly preserved linear cut feature 102 (ditch) where it was crossed by the Northern foundation trench for the house. Red arrow indicates base of feature. Location is 3 on illustration 7.

Illustration 11- General view of excavated foundation trenches for new house looking South (River Tay just visible at top of photograph), line of cut feature 102 is marked with ranging rods (red arrows).

Illustration 12 - General view across excavated foundation trenches for new house looking South West. Ditch line is marked by ranging rods (red arrows).

Illustration 13 - Ditch sections as recorded at points 1, 2 and 3 on illustration 7.

## Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Perth and Kinross
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Woodside, Snabs Farm, Longforgan
PROJECT CODE:	LONG02
PARISH:	Longforgan
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Derek Hall
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Derek Hall, archaeologist and ceramic specialist
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
CANMORE ID:	30624
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Potential Severan marching camp
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NO 30037 30213
START DATE	22 <sup>nd</sup> December 2020
END DATE	16 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	St Joseph, 1971; Cachart, 2013; Lewis 2013; Fyles and Cachart 2015
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was carried out on the ground preparation works and the excavation of foundation trenches for a new house and its associated services in the vicinity of the possible Severan Roman temporary camp at Woodside, Snabs Farm, Longforgan. The edge of a ditch line was located in one of the engineering test pits and was crossed by the North Western and South Western foundation lines of the new house. Two ditch sections were recorded and investigated and no finds or datable material was recovered.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Val and Brian Stevenson
CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONTRS	N/A
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	34 Glenfarg Terrace, Perth, PH2 0AP
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	NMRS
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Derek.hall1@blueyonder.co.uk



Illustration 1- Site Location (red dot) (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2019. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628).



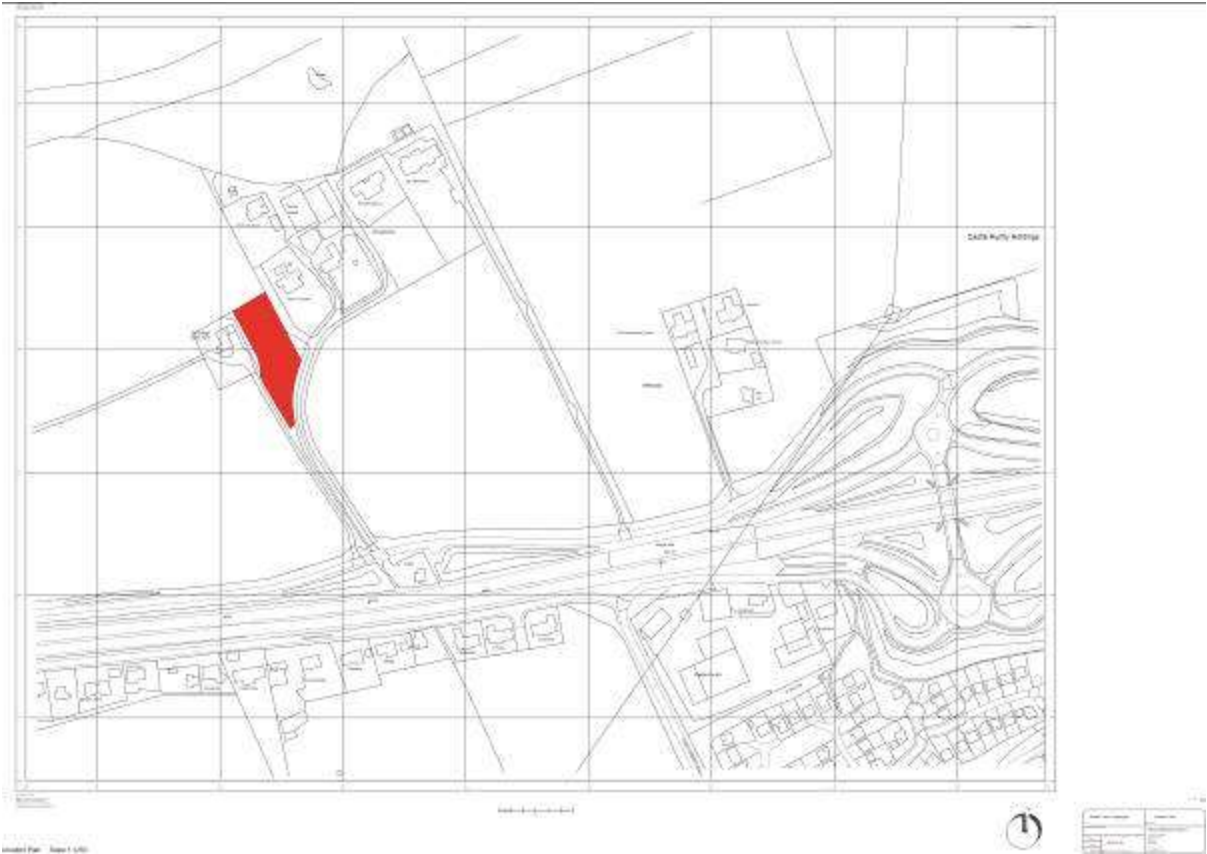


Illustration 2 – Site Location (based on supplied architect’s drawing © Richard Watkinson).

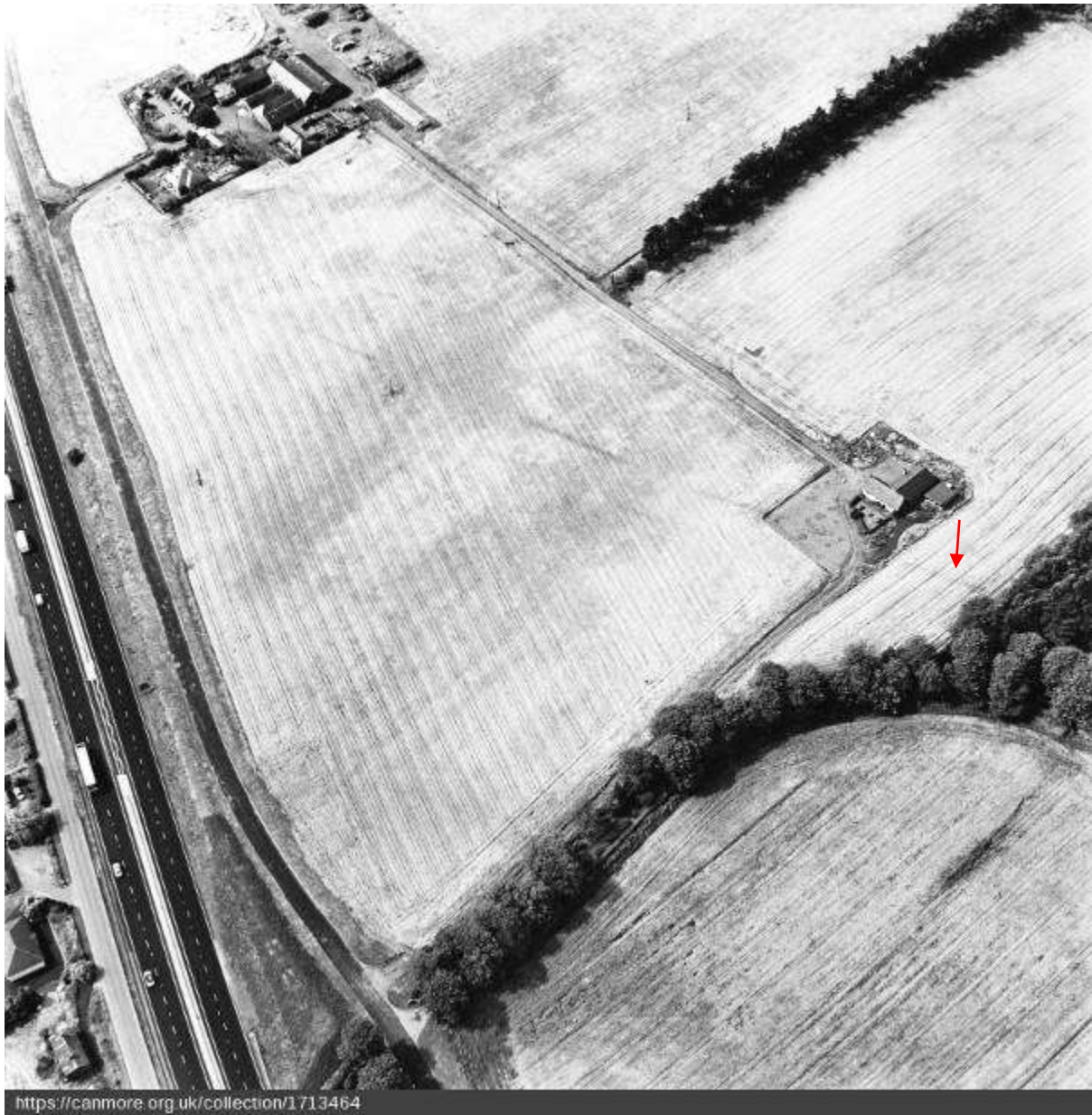


Illustration 3- Oblique aerial photograph of site (1996) looking North West showing cropmarks of ditch line where it crosses the new house site (red arrow) (© CANMORE).

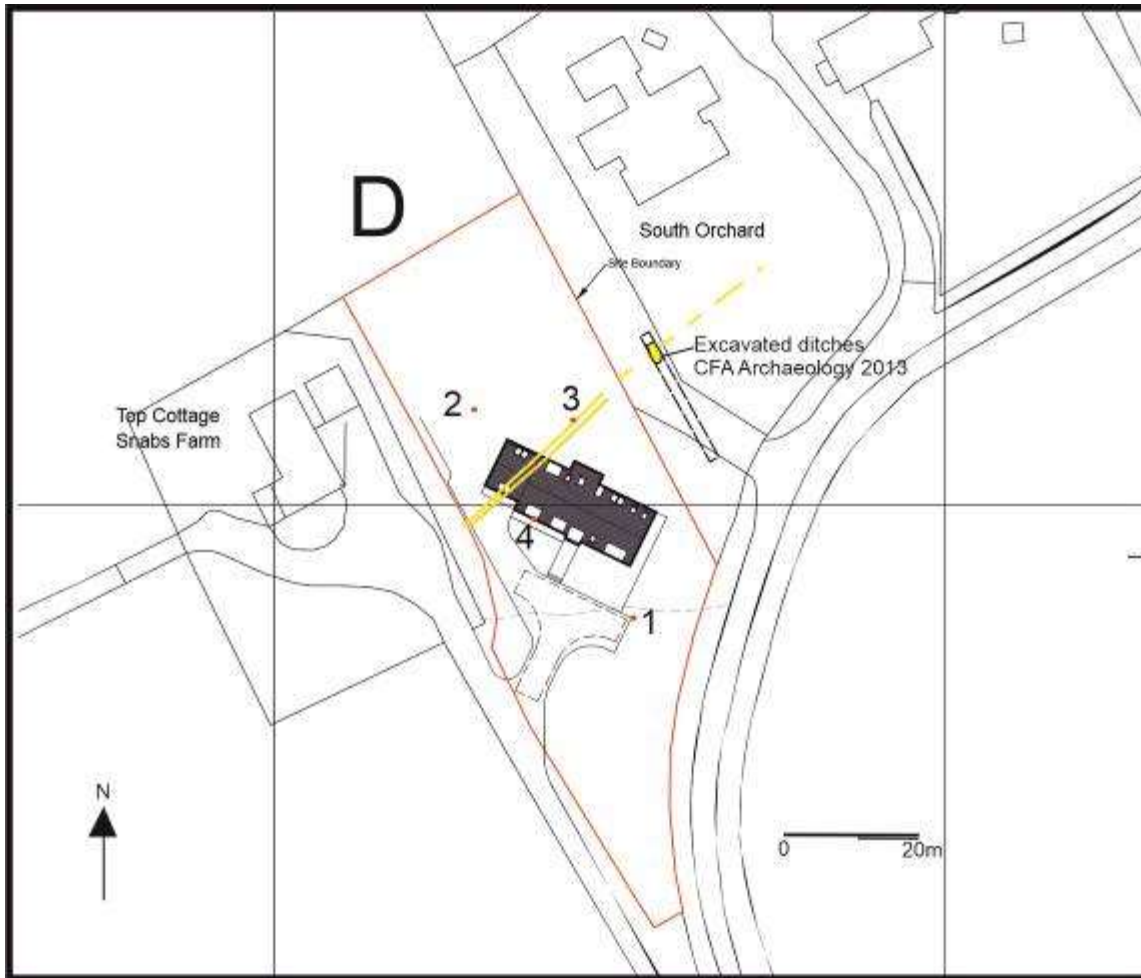


Illustration 4- Site plan showing Engineering Test Pits 1 to 4, Test Pit 3 located a cut feature on the plotted line of the cropmarks (in yellow), ditch line previously excavated to the East by CFA Archaeology Ltd is also shown. The proposed footprint of the new house is shown in black.





Illustration 5 - Test Pit 3 looking North with edge of cut feature visible in trench section (red arrow).

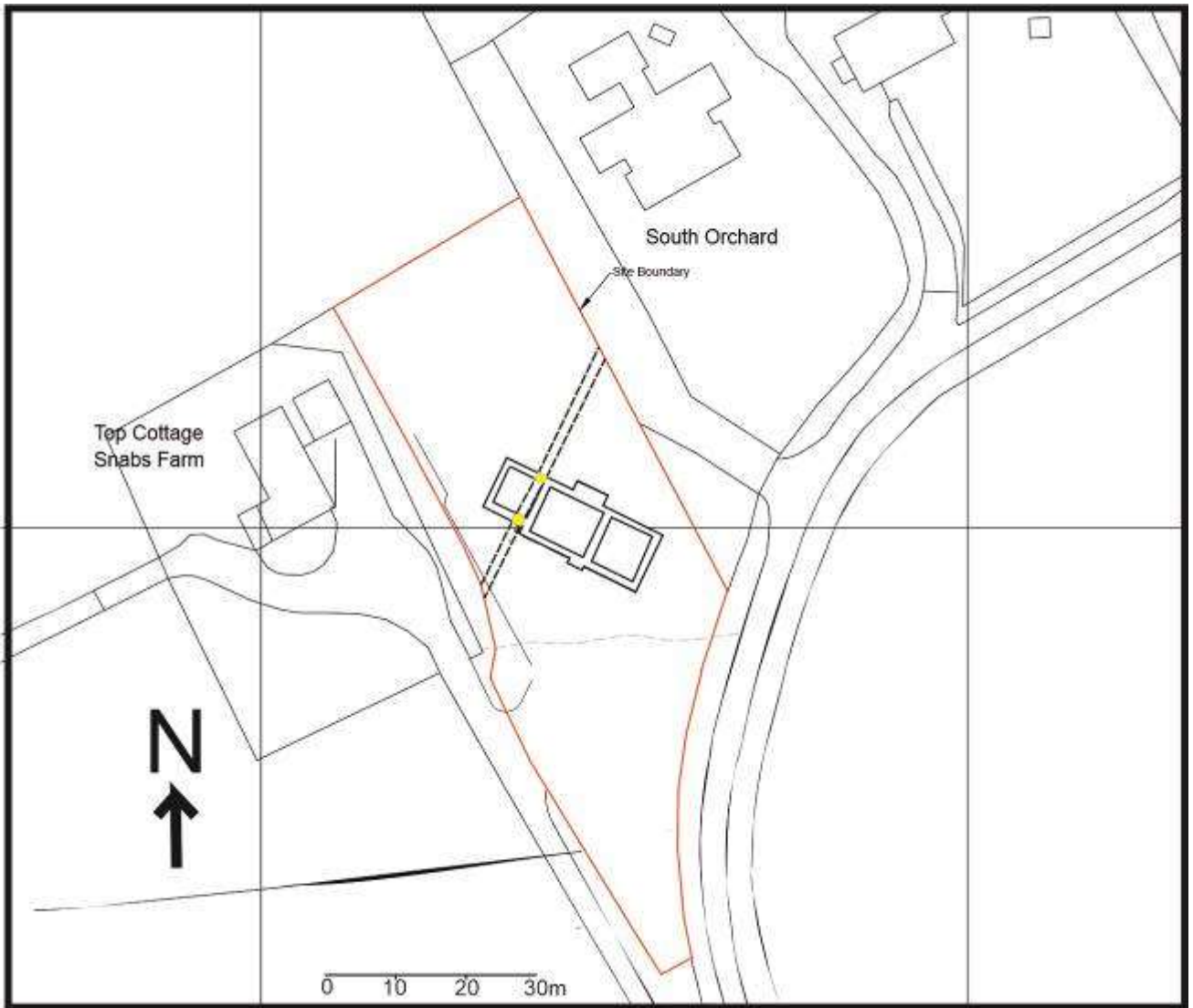


Illustration 6 - sections of cut feature 102 located, excavated and recorded in North Eastern and South Western foundation trenches for new house.

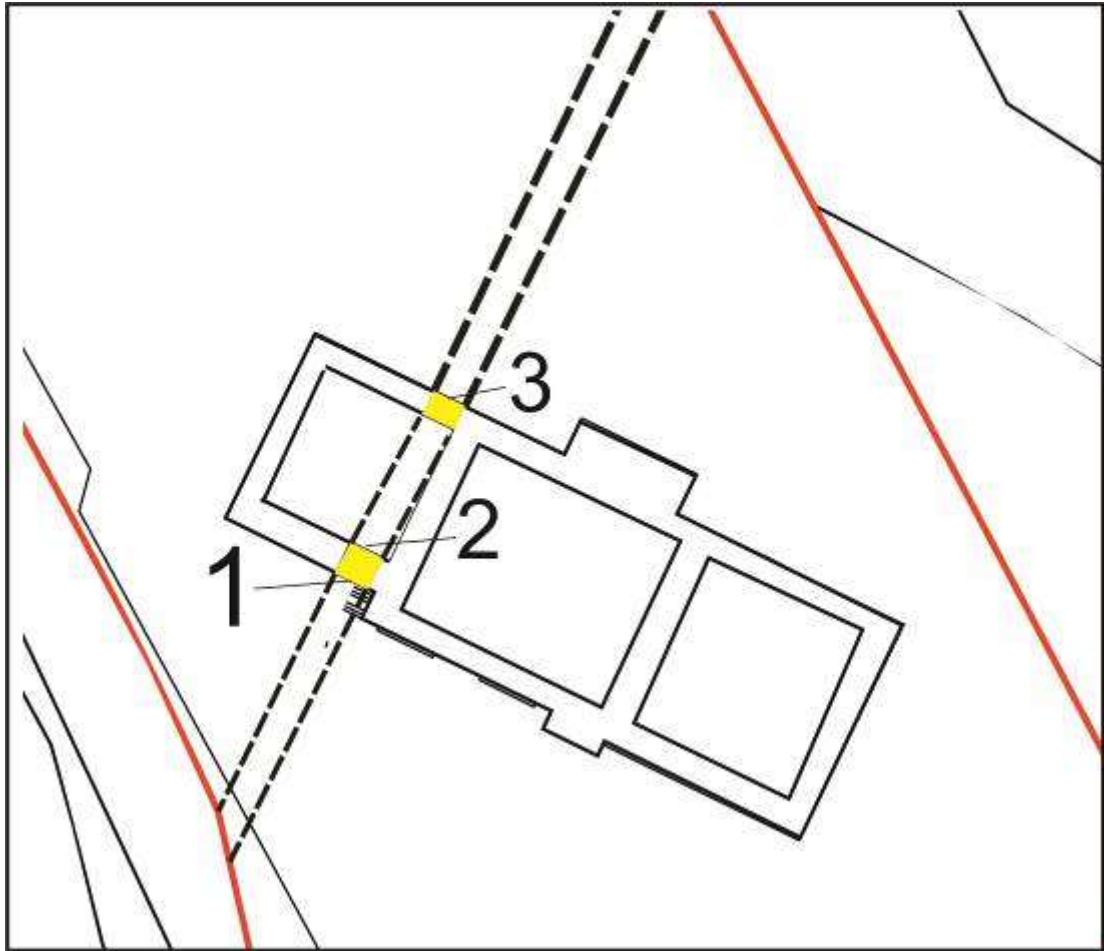


Illustration 7 - Plan of foundation trenches for new house showing location of excavated and drawn sections across linear cut feature 102.



Illustration 8 - Section across linear cut feature (ditch) 102 looking South West where it was crossed by the new Southern foundation trench for the house, red arrow shows stony fill (104) on base. Location is 1 on Illustration 7.





Illustration 9 - Section across linear cut feature (ditch) 102 looking North East where it was crossed by the new Southern foundation trench for the house. Location is 2 on Illustration 7.





Illustration 10 - Section across poorly preserved linear cut feature 102 (ditch) where it was crossed by the Northern foundation trench for the house. Red arrow indicates base of feature. Location is 3 on illustration 7.



Illustration 11- General view of excavated foundation trenches for new house looking South (River Tay just visible at top of photograph), line of cut feature 102 is marked with ranging rods (red arrows).



Illustration 12 - Detail view across excavated foundation trenches for new house looking South West. Line of cut feature 102 is marked by ranging rods (red arrows).



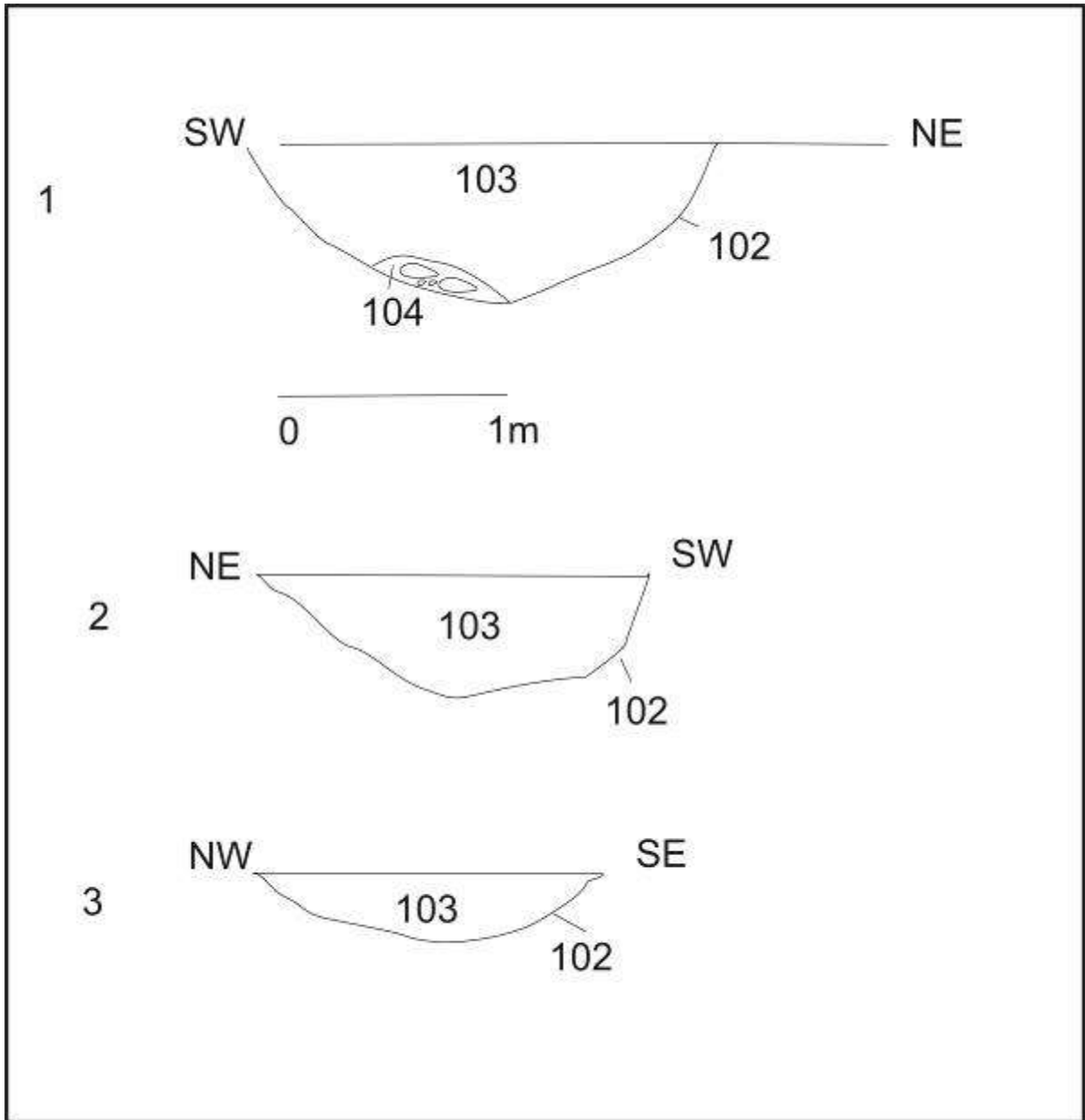


Illustration 13 - Ditch sections as recorded at points 1, 2 and 3 on illustration 7.