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DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD



REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION *of the* SITE ADJACENT TO OGMORE HOUSE, TEMPLETON, DYFED, 1994

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning background

In commenting on a planning application (D3/52/92) for a single dwelling adjacent to Ogmore House, Templeton, Dyfed Archaeological Trust referred to plan policies and to Planning Policy Guidance 16 'Archaeology and Planning'. The Trust recommended that an archaeological evaluation of the site be carried out prior to determination of the consent. This was undertaken in April 1993. Arising from the evaluation was a recommendation for further archaeological excavation and recording. Monies for this work were requested and secured from Cadw. An agreement, pursuant to Section 106 Town & Country Planning Act 1990, was reached between the Trust and South Pembrokeshire District Council permitting the work. This report documents the results of this work.

1.2 Summary

The application area lies within the village of Templeton which is among the best preserved of the "planned" Norman villages of South Pembrokeshire. In April 1993, Dyfed Archaeological Trust carried out an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. Sufficient evidence of the existence of archaeological layers and features led to the recommendation that further evaluation of the site take place before development. In the event, no firmly datable medieval features were encountered but post medieval occupation was very much in evidence.

1.3 Site History

Templeton is likely to have been founded in the early 12th Century. Its name is linked with the Knights Templar of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem although not documented in this early period. The village lies on a south facing slope, above a river valley. The village was probably founded to create a buffer zone between the Norman seized lands to the west and the Welsh retained lands to the east. In 1531, the crown seized much land in and around Narberth and Templeton. The land remained in the crown's hand for over seventy years and during this period two surveys were carried out. The first in 1532 and the second in 1609. The survey of 1609 indicates that the village consisted of 20 burgage plots as a whole.

Owing to the topographical nature of the siting of the village, platforms have been cut into the slope to create level sites for houses either side of the N-S running road. The medieval houses were built adjacent to the road frontage with long plots at right angles to the streets behind them (Fig. 1).

Evidence suggests that the population of the village declined in the later Middle Ages resulting in vacant plots.

Modern development and rebuilding on other similar areas has resulted in the fact that the site adjacent to Ogmores House is the last remaining open frontage in Templeton.

1.4 Aims & Objectives

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the possible presence of archaeological features denoting the existence of early medieval timber, clom and stone buildings together with marking out boundary ditches and fences. Also to establish the extent of any such features and whether they would be under threat from the proposed development.

2 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was undertaken by means of archaeological excavation.

A single 38m long trench (Fig. 2) was excavated by machine using a 1.6m wide toothless bucket. The location of the trench corresponding to the planned dwelling and its accompanying garage. The exact location of the trench was dictated by, at its western end the presence of a telegraph pole, and its direction by extensive undergrowth along the northern edge of the plot restricting the area needed for the subsequent spoil.

Archaeological features were evident in the western end immediately below the topsoil along the first 9m of the trench. The remaining 29m, excavated down to subsoil level, appearing sterile.

The concentration of features in the western end of the trench were then cleaned, planned, recorded, photographed and fully excavated. All finds were recorded and retained.

The work was undertaken over 5 days at the start of July in unseasonably inclement weather.

All of the archaeological features detected were found within the first 9m of the western end of the trench.

Prior to excavation, recently dumped material covered the present surface of the plot and substantial debris consisting of various iron objects, modern glass, pottery, slate, bone and fragments of drainage pipe were recovered from the topsoil.

Figure 3, Section 1 shows that the topsoil (1) directly overlays three separate layers. The central layer (6) consists of a mixture of soil, stone and mortar and contained modern glass, pottery and iron objects and is representative of demolition debris. This layer, thickest in the illustrated section thinned out across the trench towards the south and terminated after 1m.

Below this is a 10cm spread of degraded mortar and plaster (7), its limits confined to the extent of the lime plaster floor surface (9) exposed beneath. This context was found to be best preserved at its eastern end where it was found to be made of compacted grit ash and coal fragments subsequently lime wash plastered. The western section was only evident where it was seen rising up against the N - S Wall (15).

The plastered floor surface (9) has been cut into by feature (12), the fill of which (11) was found to be made up of clayish loam with high percentages of degraded plaster and mortar. A sherd of 18/19th Century white enamelware was contained within this fill. In section this feature can be seen to have been capped by a rectangular slate slab (8) measuring 0.60 X 0.42 X 0.07m.

Feature 12 (Fig. 4) terminates as a 0.23m deep pit which contained a large stone and showed traces of iron staining. It is likely that this is a post pit denoting the corner of a building possibly of timber and clom construction although no evidence of walling could be traced.

Running East to West 30cms south of feature (12) is a narrow, shallow drainage gully (14). The floor surface (9), pit (12) and gully (14) have all been cut into a layer of redeposited subsoil (17) which covered the site, as is the case with Wall (15). This wall, (Fig. 3, Section 1) has been built on a foundation of large stones with a poor grade of friable white mortar badly degraded giving the appearance of a boundary or retention wall - the ground slopes steeply away to the west towards the modern road.

To the west of wall (15), below the topsoil, is a deep humic layer of loam and stones (18) - modern bank make up. Below this is a thin layer (19) of downwashed mortar from wall (15). Layer (20) is again redeposited subsoil which lies above a consolidated layer of degraded plaster and mortar (21). Slag consisting of fused iron and coal fragments was recovered from this layer.

At the Eastern end of Fig. 3, Section 1 layer (6) has been cut into by a broad feature (5), the fill of which (4) was similar to the overall topsoil and distinguished from it only by its inclusions which were numerable, coal fragments, slate, grit, mortar, stone and 19th/20th Century pottery sherds.

Fill 2 (Fig. 3, Section 2) cut (3) was found to be of similar make up as (4) suggesting that this is a broad, deep, modern ditch across the site, the upcast from it being responsible for the thin lens of redeposited subsoil (16) sealed within the topsoil (1) to the east.

The western end of Fig. 3, Section 2 shows Wall (22) running west to east and being built directly onto the Old Red Sandstone subsoil (23) and butting onto wall (15). Wall (22) is constructed with a compact yellowish mortar and stone possibly robbed from wall (15). Wall (22) is itself rendered above the level of layer (20).

4 CONCLUSIONS

It can be clearly seen that the site has seen several phases of occupation.

It is suggested that the entire site was originally cleared and levelled down to the bedrock for use as a working or occupational surface, due to the absence of any buried soils. The entire site was then raised using redeposited subsoil probably from adjacent landscaping within the village.

The N - S wall was constructed on a step cut into this surface and may have represented the western extremity of a building having a plastered floor. The location and construction of this wall suggests that as it became unstable, a second phase of building occurred some 2m to the east on more level, consolidated soil.

The E - W wall being the latest phase is constructed directly on the bedrock and serves solely as a retention or boundary wall.

Although no evidence for medieval occupation was found, the presence of several phases of building suggests that the site was occupied for several centuries before becoming vacant in the mid- to late-19th century.

5 INDEX TO THE ARCHIVE

5 site drawings on gridded drafting film

23 context record forms

11 photographic records

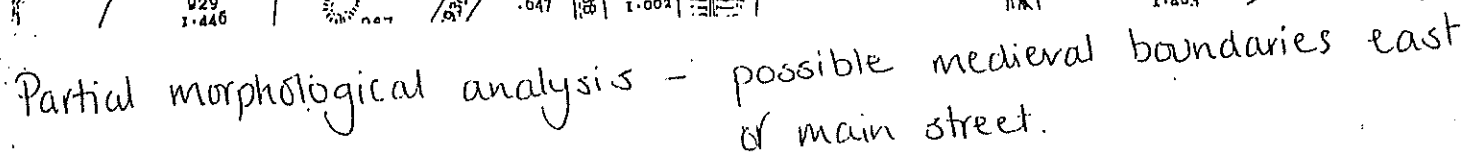
6 drawing records

11 colour slides

11 black and white negatives (DAT 94-33.1 to 11)

File of correspondence etc

1 box of post-medieval finds



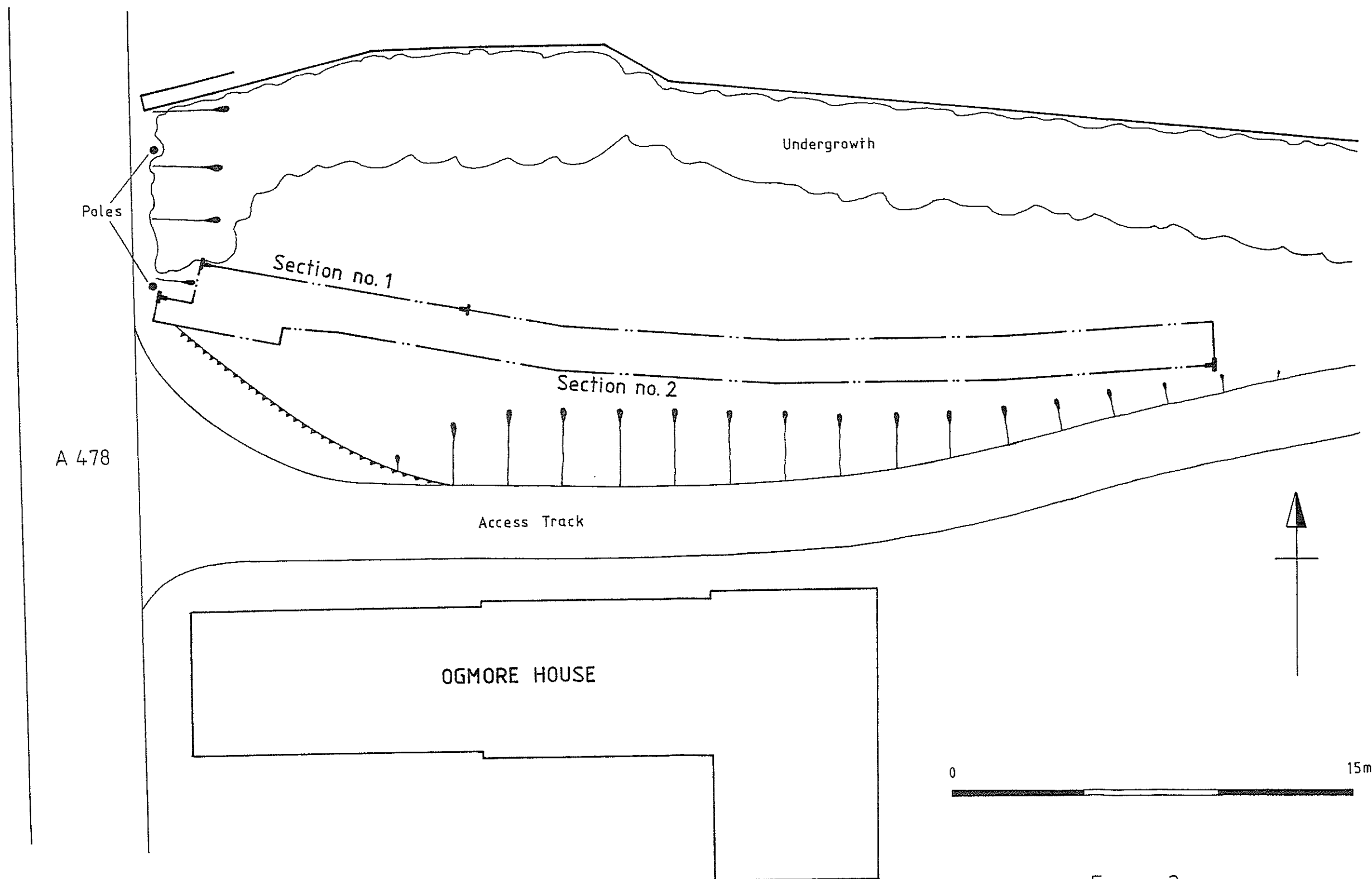
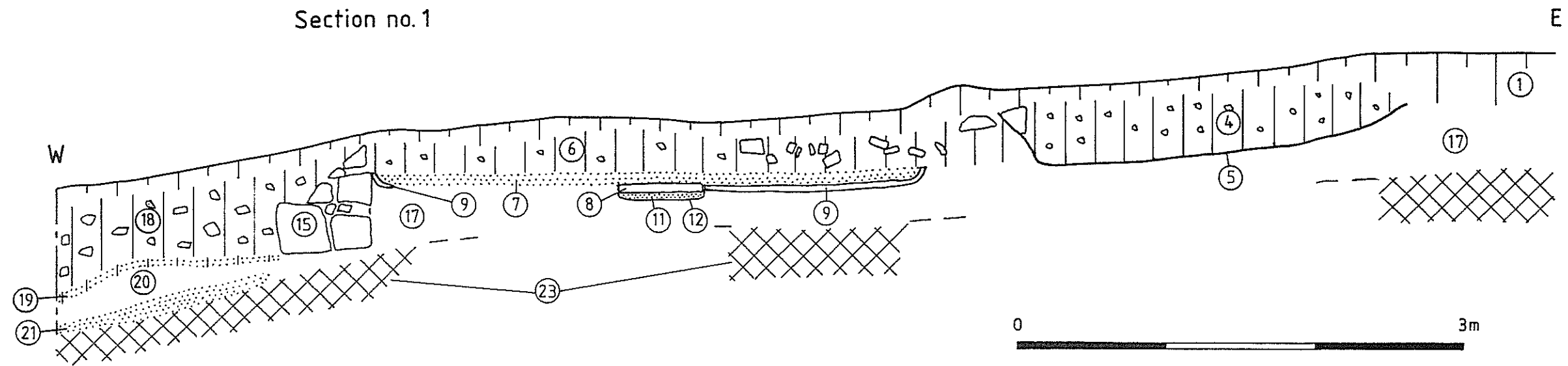


Figure 2

Section no. 1



Section no. 2

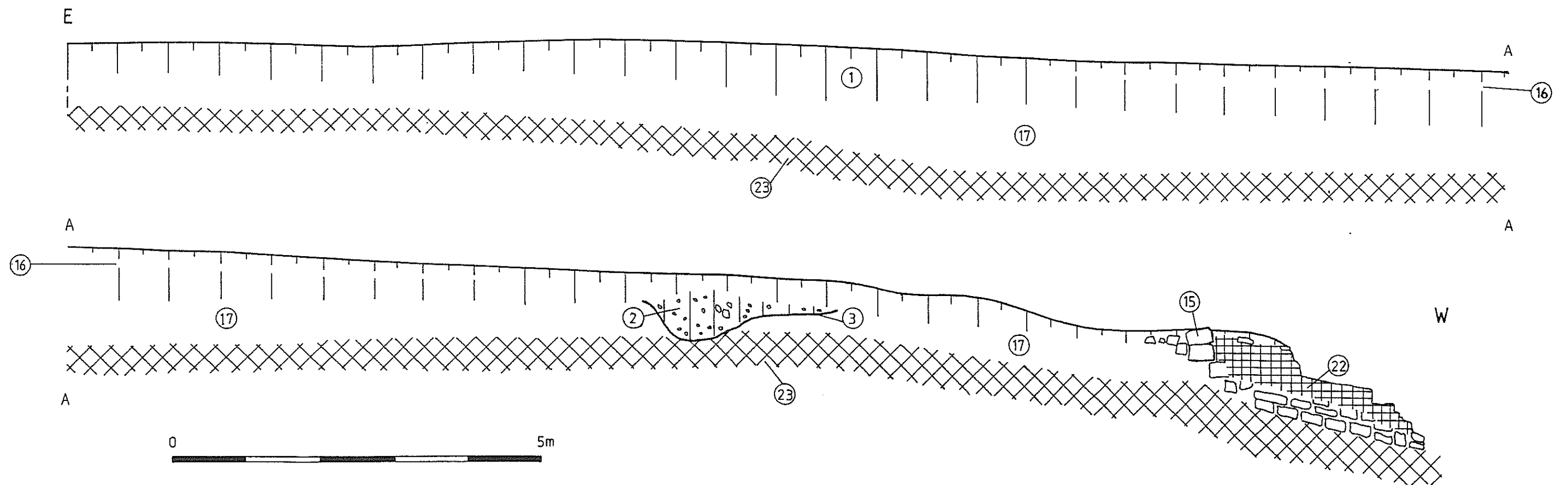


Figure 3

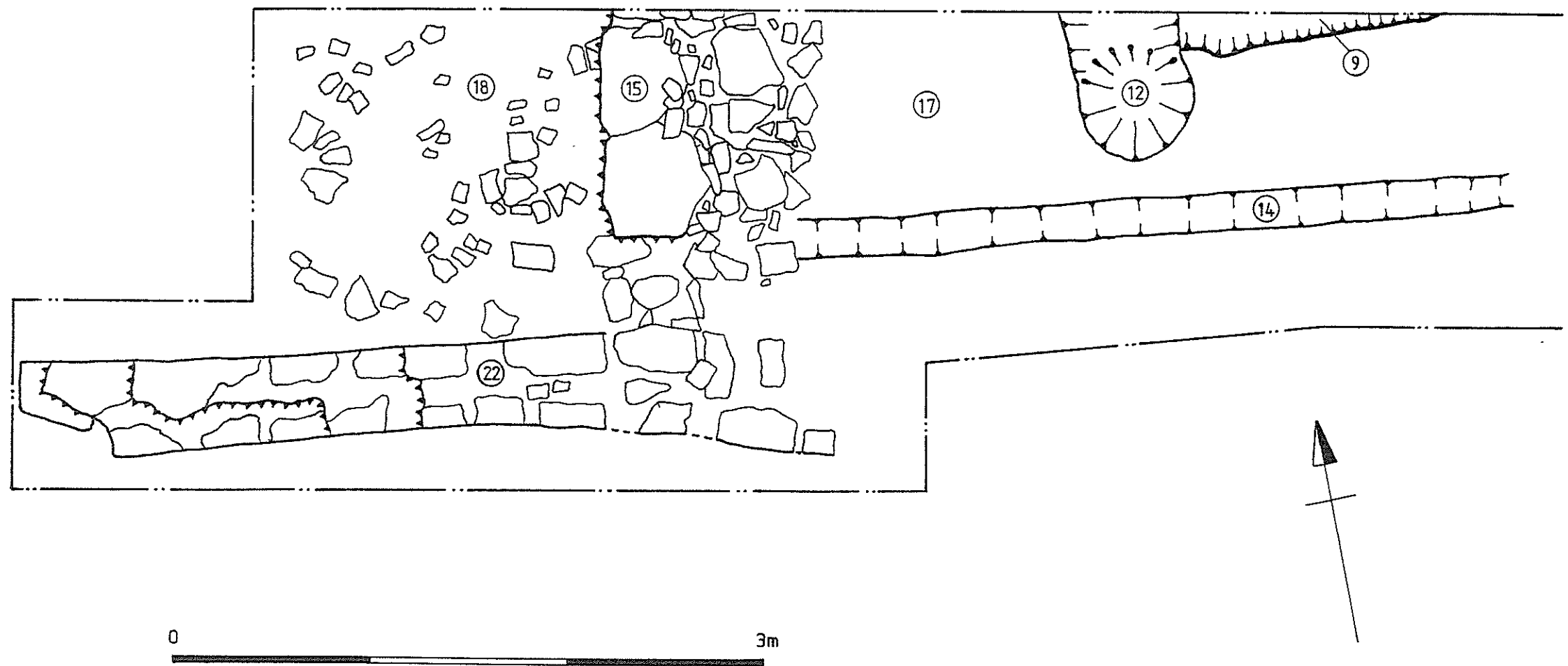


Figure 4