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DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD



DAREN LEAD MINE

**BANC-Y-DAREN,
NEAR ABERYSTWYTH**

DAT PRN 29900

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSESSMENT
DECEMBER 1994

Commissioned by: Cadw

**Report by: K. Murphy
of
Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd
The Shire Hall
8 Carmarthen Street
Llandeilo
Dyfed SA19 6AF**

Tel (0558) 823121

Fax (0558) 823133



DAREN LEAD MINE, BANC-Y-DAREN, NEAR ABERYSTWYTH: ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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DAREN LEAD MINE, BANC-Y-DAREN, NEAR ABERYSTWYTH: ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

A letter dated 3 October 1994 to Dyfed Archaeological Trust from Mr R C Turner of Cadw provided a brief for an archaeological assessment in a paddock in part of the scheduled area of Daren Lead Mine (CD144). An anticipated SMC application for an agricultural building by Messrs Jenkins of Darren Farm in a corner of the scheduled area was the reason for the assessment.

The brief requested: i) a detailed plan of the earthworks in the paddock showing the site of the intended building and a series of fixed points.

ii) trial excavations on the line of the foundations of the proposed building to establish what stratigraphy or archaeological structures would be affected.

iii) a short report and recommendations for further archaeological work prior to the erection of the building.

The assessment was carried out in the week starting 28 November and this report was completed in the following week.

2 SITE LOCATION AND SURVEY (Figs. 1, 2 and 3)

The site of the proposed agricultural building lies in a small paddock surrounded by wire fences immediately to the W of the farmyard of Darren Farm. Mr Protheroe-Jones in his recent survey described the paddock as a 'Tip area represented by rough scrubby disturbed ground'. Mr Turner considered that low footings of two rectangular buildings seemed to be present, one of which would be affected by the proposed building. These are marked A and B on Fig. 2. The character of the paddock does not seem to have changed since the publication of the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1st Edition in *circa* 1888.

The paddock measures 70m E-W and 40m N-S. It is defined by a stream on its S edge. Access tracks to the farm and farmyard lie to the N of the paddock. The most distinct spoil heap in the area of the paddock is defined by a low scarp slope about 1 to 1.5m high which runs immediately to the S of these tracks before turning to the S into the paddock about 10m from a stone-built farm building. Other spoil heaps and earthworks are slighter than this and rarely achieve heights over 0.7m. The area marked A on Fig. 2 consists of two low parallel banks about 6m apart. These have the appearance of building foundations. A second possible building is B. This is a roughly rectangular platform 12m by 7m with a spur to the W. Other earthworks in the paddock appear to be low linear and circular spoil tips. All the heights shown on the plans and sections are based on an arbitrary datum of 100m.

3 THE TRIAL TRENCHES

Three trenches were excavated by machine, though Trench 2 was started by hand. The resulting sections were then cleaned and one section of each trench drawn and photographed. Trenches 1 and 3 were dug along the N and S walls of the proposed building. Trench 2 was positioned to examine the nature of the earthworks labelled A. See Figs. 2 and 3 for trench locations.

3.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 4)

Deposits present in S facing section:

1. Topsoil and turf. A dark brown silty loam with few inclusions. Generally less than 10cm thick.
2. Layer of small stones (30-50mm) and gravel in a grey clay loam matrix. 50% stones, 50% soil. Mine waste
3. Medium sized stones (60mm) in a loose dark brown loamy matrix. 40% stones, 60% soil. Mine waste.
4. Medium sized stones (60mm) in a greyish brown clay matrix. 60% stones, 40% soil. Mine waste.
5. Small stones (20-30mm) in a grey silty clay loam matrix. 60% stones, 40% soil. A black glazed rim sherd with a fabric mainly red in colour but with streaks of pale yellow. Possibly Buckley Ware dating to the 18th or 19th century. Mine waste.
6. Layer of shattered small stones (30-40mm). Mine waste.
7. Medium sized stones (60mm) in a dark brown clay loam permeated throughout with iron panning. 60% stones, 40% soil. Mine waste.
8. Small and medium sized stones in a grey clay loam matrix. 70% stones, 30% soil. Mine waste.
9. Buried soil. 9a, a turf line comprising a gleyed clay loam with a thin 'iron pan' over. 9b, the B horizon, a greyish brown silty loam. Below and penetrating the subsoil, 10, is a slightly leached deposit. A podzolic soil.
10. Subsoil consisting of an orange-brown silty clay.

3.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 5)

Deposits present in E facing section:

1. Topsoil and turf. Thin layer, generally less than 10cm, comprising a very dark brown silty loam with few inclusions.
2. A loose deposit of 50% small stones (30-50mm) and 50% dark silty loam. Mine waste.
3. 70% small stones (20-30mm) and 30% dark brown silty loam. Mine waste.
4. Buried soil. 4a is the A and B horizons of this soil and consists of a very dark brown silty loam. 4b is the C horizon and is a gleyed layer of gravel and small stones in a silty matrix. A podzolic soil. This soil slopes down from N to S. it has been truncated at the N end of the trench.
5. Subsoil. Mixed subsoil comprising bands of loose small rounded stones, clay and silty clay. Layers of iron panning are also present. The S end of the section is heavily gleyed. Fluvio-glacial deposits.

3.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 6)

Deposits present in S facing section:

1. Topsoil and turf. Thin layer, less than 10cm, comprising a dark brown silty clay loam with few inclusions.
2. Layer of small angular stones (on average less than 20mm) mixed with a mid to dark brown silty clay loam matrix. 75% stones to 25% soil. Mine waste.
3. Layer of small stones (20-30mm) mixed with silty clay loam matrix. 95% stones, 5% soil. Chocolate brown in colour. Mine waste.
4. A thin 'iron pan' formed over the buried soil, 5, and upcast buried soil, 7.
5. Buried soil. 5a the A horizon comprising a dark grey, soft silty loam with charcoal specks. 5b the B horizon, a very dark greyish brown silty loam. 5c the C horizon and modified subsoil - a leached mid grey silty sand mixed with stones and a 'iron pan' at its base. A podzolic soil.
6. Subsoil. Banded gravels, some up to 20cm in length, pea gravel also present. Colour varies from dark reddish brown to mid olive brown and mid grey. A fluvio-glacial deposit.
7. A layer of upcast and disturbed subsoil, 5.

3.4 Summary

Basically the three trenches revealed a similar sequence; modern topsoil over mining waste which was deposited over a podzolic soil. Subsoil consists of fluvio-glacial gravels and clays. There was no evidence of any buildings or other structures; the earthwork A was shown to consist of low spoil heaps similar the deposits in the other two trenches. It is probable that the earthwork B is also a spoil heap.

The general small size of the stones present in the spoil heaps is of some interest as the average stone size in spoil heaps in the vicinity is much larger. It seems likely, therefore, that the spoil in the paddock is the residue from processing. Its source is unknown, but processing plant on the site of the present farmyard is a possible location.






4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The floor of the proposed building is to be raised on a bed of redeposited mine waste. There will be some disturbance caused to the earthworks from the digging of foundations for concrete bases for steel stanchions through this bed and for the digging of a soakaway. In light of the limited nature of the archaeological deposits encountered in this assessment it is recommended that no further archaeological work is required on the site prior to the construction of the building.

PROPOSED BUILDING AT DARREN FARM

LOCATION MAP SCALE 1/1250

KEY

-  DARREN LEAD MINE - SCHEDULED AREA OF MONUMENT
 SITE OF PROPOSED BUILDING
 STREAM
 HAY BARN
 DARREN FARM HOUSE

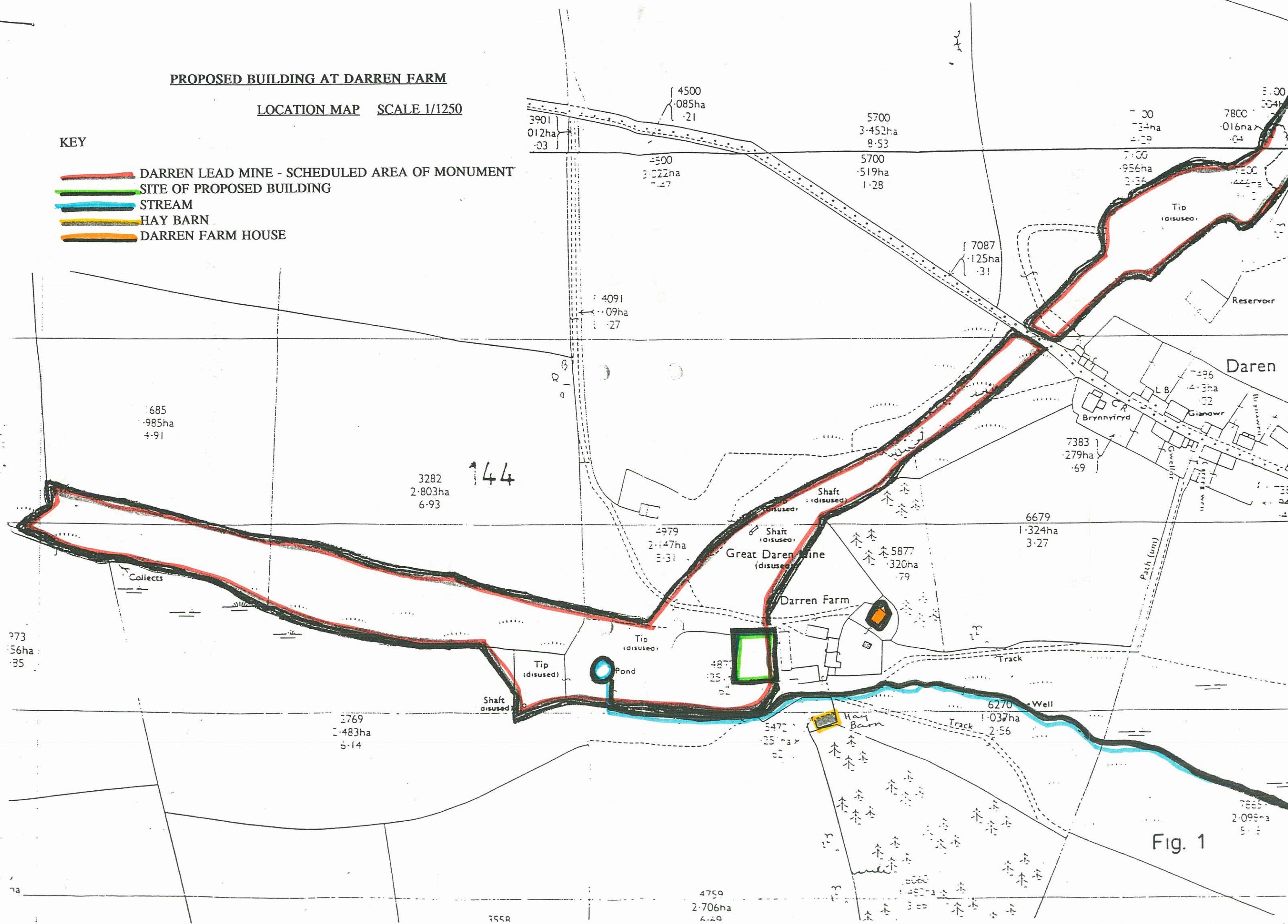
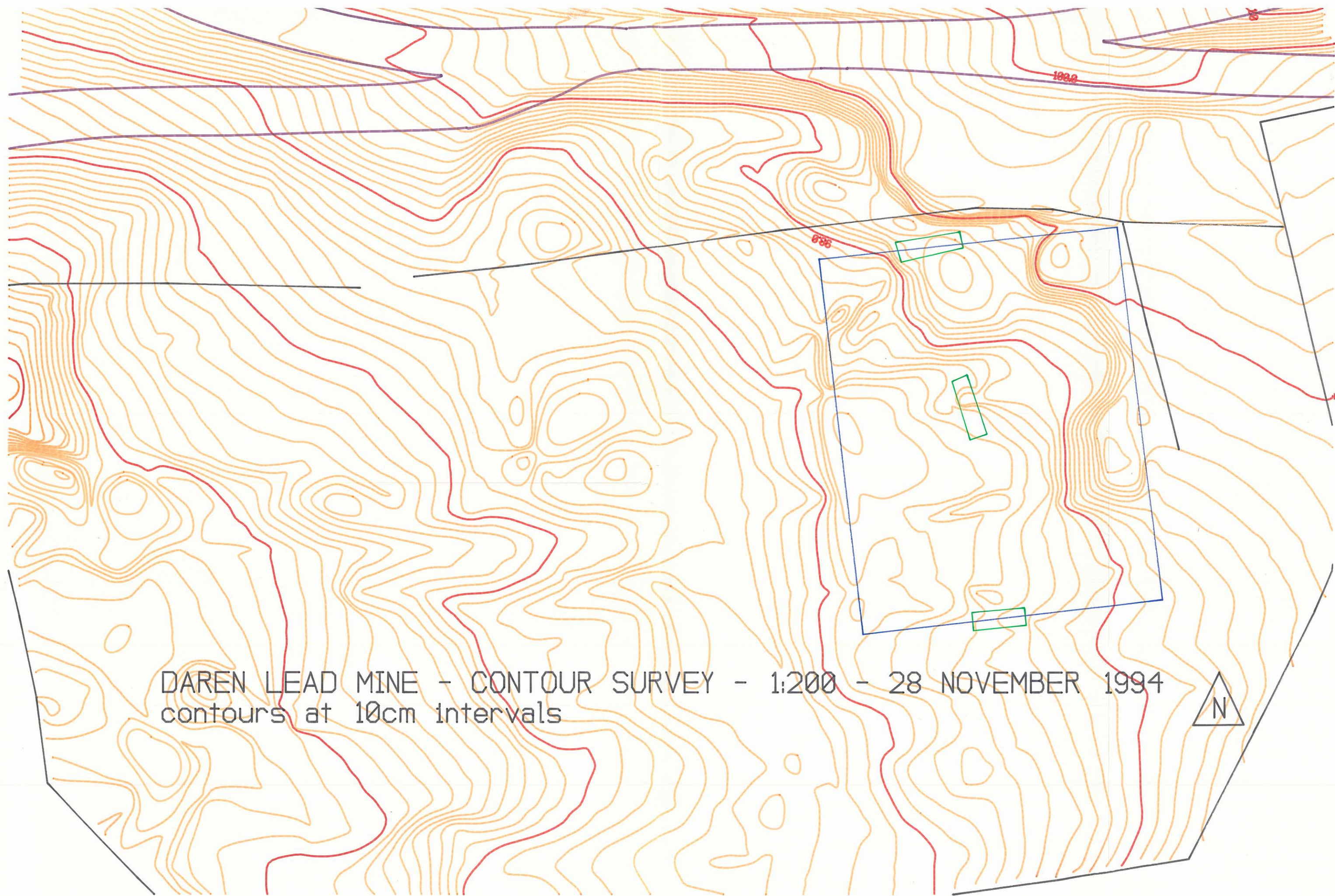


Fig. 1



DAREN LEAD MINE - CONTOUR SURVEY - 1:200 - 28 NOVEMBER 1994
contours at 10cm intervals



Fig. 3

TRENCH 1· SOUTH FACING SECTION · 1:20

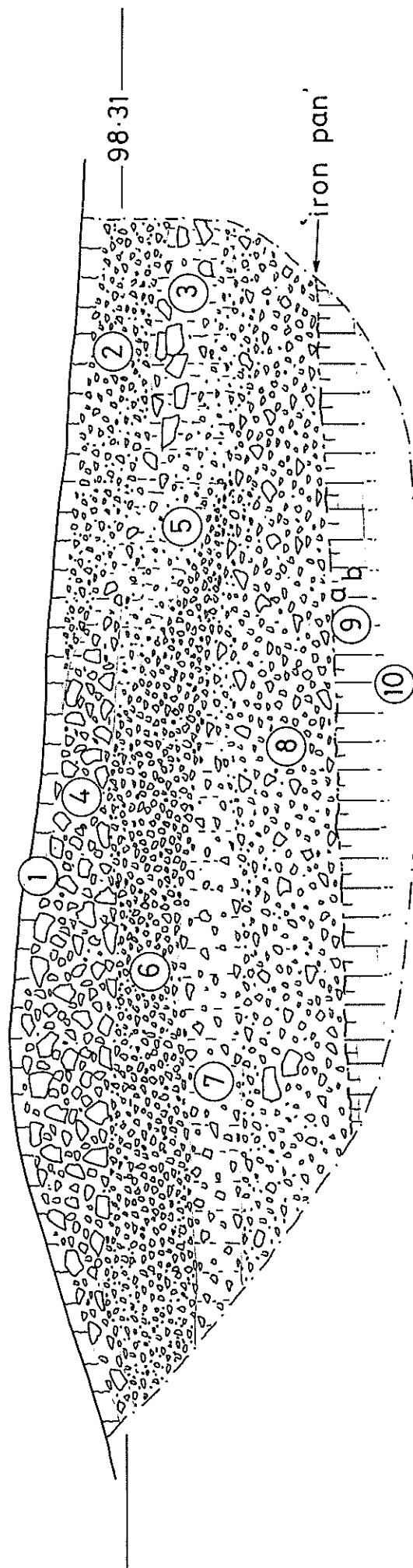


Fig. 4

TRENCH 2·EAST FACING SECTION ·1:20

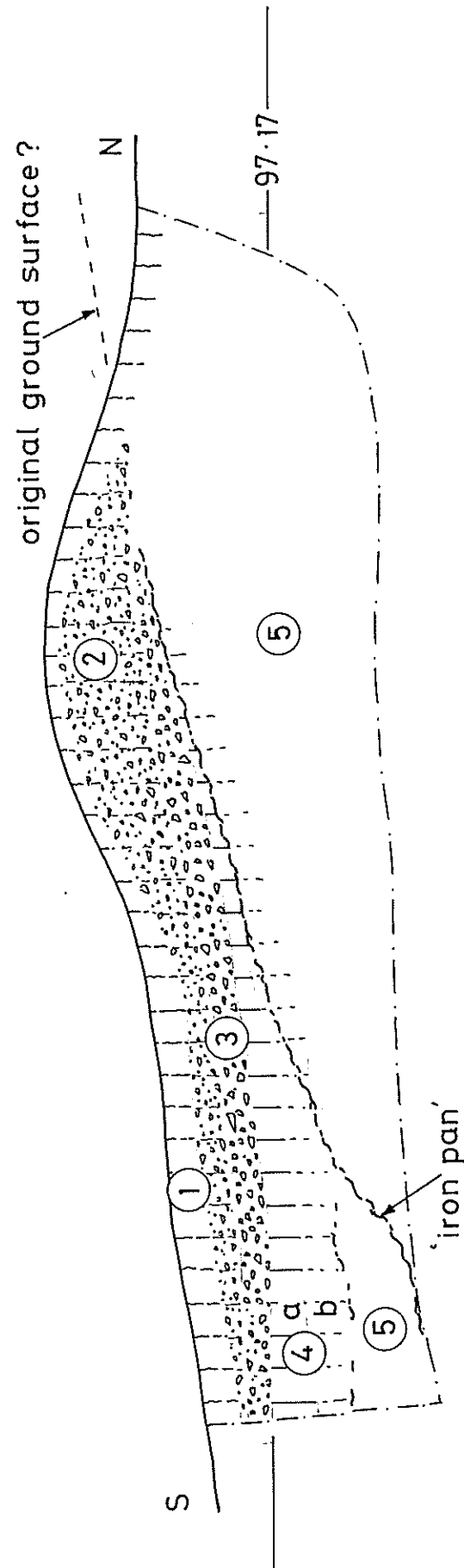


Fig.5

TRENCH 3 · SOUTH FACING SECTION · 1:20

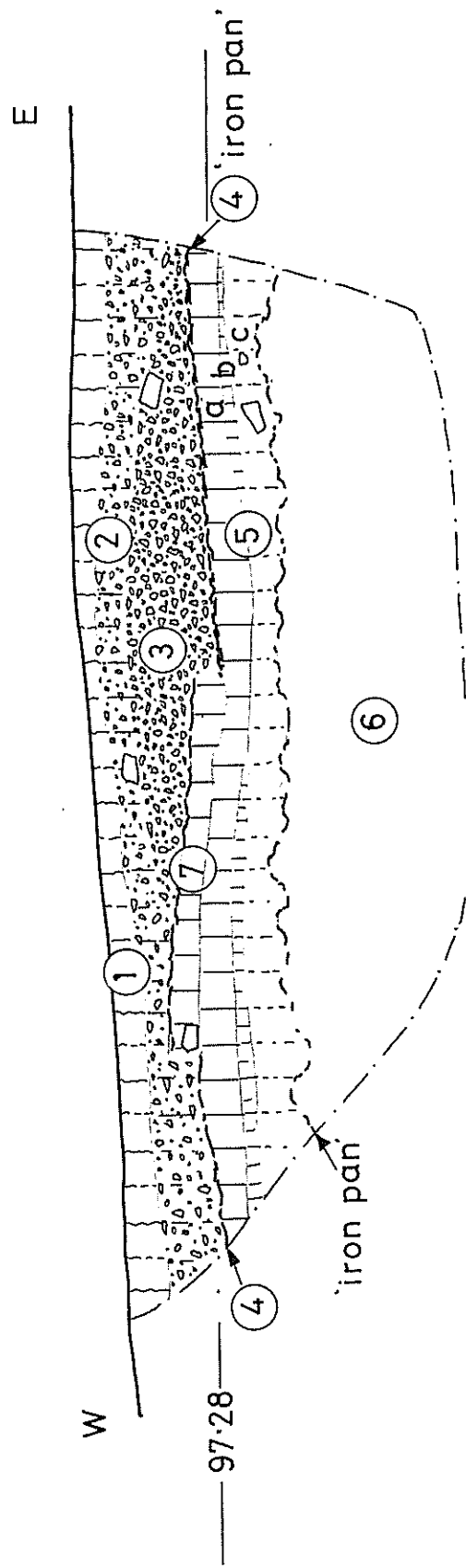


Fig.6