

DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD



23/10/95

**Watching Brief
at
OLD CARDIGAN BRIDGE**

DYFED

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Project Record No. 31032

OCTOBER 1995

Commissioned by: Veryards Ltd on behalf of
Dyfed County Council
Report by: K. Murphy BA MIFA
of
Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd
The Shire Hall
8 Carmarthen Street
Llandeilo
Dyfed SA19 6AF

Tel (01558) 823121

Fax (01558) 823133



REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING-BRIEF CARRIED OUT AT CARDIGAN OLD BRIDGE, DYFED

Dyfed Archaeological Report no. 31032

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Content and scope of the watching-brief

1.2 Purpose and methodologies of the watching-brief

2.0 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING-BRIEF

2.1 Archaeological interest

2.2 Results of the watching-brief

3.0 INDEX TO THE ARCHIVE

4.0 FIGURES

Figure 1. Plan and upstream elevation

Figure 2. Plan of excavated area

Figure 3. Section 2

Figure 4. Sections 3, 4 and 5

Figure 5. sections 1 and 6

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Following a telephone conversation of 5 September 1995, Veryards Ltd, consulting engineers, wrote to the Field Operations section of Dyfed Archaeological Trust requesting confirmation that the Trust would be able to carry out a watching-brief on Cardigan Old Bridge during engineering works. The bridge is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Cd 3), and the Secretary of State for Wales had consented to the proposed engineering works subject to the following archaeological conditions:

that the applicants shall arrange for a record of the bridge, consisting of black and white photographs and drawings, to be carried out by a qualified archaeologist, who shall be approved in writing by Cadw, on behalf of the Secretary of State. The record should be undertaken following the removal of the existing fill and prior to the introduction of the concrete replacement and;

the applicants shall arrange for the preparation by the approved archaeologist of an archive, to consist of all the photographs and drawings made, and a brief report on the findings of the recording work. The archive and report shall be deposited with the National Monuments Record for Wales, with a further copy sent to Cadw, and to the Regional Sites and Monuments Record.

Dyfed Archaeological Trust wrote to Veryards Ltd on 11 September confirming that they would be able to undertake the work in accordance with the above conditions. Dyfed Archaeological Trust's estimated costings were accepted by the Highways and Transportation Department of Dyfed County Council on 22 September. Work commenced on 2 October 1995 and lasted for three weeks.

1.1 Content and scope of the watching-brief

An archaeological watching-brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during an operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons - normally a development or other construction project - within a specified area where archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report.

The watching-brief will be intended to allow, subject to resources, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits in advance of their disturbance or destruction and to provide an opportunity, if necessary, for the watching archaeologist to alert all interested parties to the presence of an archaeological find for which the resources allocated to the watching-brief are insufficient to support satisfactory treatment.

The watching-brief is not intended as a substitute for contingent excavation.

1.2 Purpose and methodologies of the watching-brief

The purpose of the watching-brief is to undertake as complete a record as possible of any archaeological features affected

by the client's scheme of works. In the case of larger archaeological sites it will seldom be possible or necessary to undertake a record of the entire site; the record will be undertaken only on those areas of the site that may be affected. The work will be closely observed by an archaeologist from the Field Operations section who will also undertake a full drawn, written and photographic record

of any archaeological features which may be disturbed by the scheme, and any artefact or find exposed during the works. Recording will be carried out where necessary and when convenient: it is the Field Operations section's aim to minimise any disruption to the client's schedule. However, if archaeological features may be lost during the scheme, it may be necessary for the Field Operations section to request a postponement of the works in order that the archaeology may be recorded. Larger areas affected may require fuller excavation and/or survey.

2 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING-BRIEF

2.1 Archaeological interest

An entry for the year 1231 in the *Brut y Tywysogyon* first records a bridge at Cardigan when Maelgwn Ieuan ap Maelgwn, son of Lord Rhys, captured and burnt the town of Cardigan and broke the bridge over the Teifi, which was close by the town. It is presumed that this was a wooden bridge. The remains of some large timbers (Dyfed Archaeological Trust record 8506) found during the construction of a footbridge in 1977 immediately downstream of the present bridge may be the remains of this or a later medieval bridge.

According to the Cadw record form the bridge was rebuilt in about 1639 and widened in the 18th century. A view of Cardigan of 1741 by Nathaniel and Samuel Buck shows a five arched bridge. The present structure is of five main arches, with a smaller, now dry arch on the south side. Two phases of widening can be seen on the downstream elevation of the bridge, the second phase confined to the just the three northern arches. All stonework is of undressed shale, apart from the voussoirs, which are of dressed shale. The voussoirs of original bridge of the second arch from the north are noticeably more weathered than the rest, perhaps indicating an older date. There is a date stone, 'THIS ARCH WAS BVILT IN YE YEAR 1726 W IONES', in the external elevation of the east, rebuilt parapet wall between arches two and three from the south. This rebuilding has cut off the refuge between these arches. All the other refuges on the east side of the bridge survive.

2.2 Results of the watching-brief (Figs. 1-5)

The engineering work consisted of removing the infill over the centre arch of the bridge and replacing it with concrete (Fig 1). The watching-brief was undertaken during the removal work.

Three clear phases of building were revealed by the engineering work:

Phase I. The east wall of the bridge belongs to this phase, though not the parapet wall as this has been rebuilt and patched. The remains of the west wall lay beneath the road (Figs. 2, 4, 5) giving an original carriage-way width of about 2.8m. The original construction technique of the bridge consisted of the building of a masonry arch and side walls, the space between then filled with compacted clay and shale (Fig. 4, layer 12) over which a layer of flat stones bonded with clay and mortar were laid (Figs. 2-5, layers 5, 6). These stones seemed to be bonded into the side walls of the bridge. More clay and shale (layers 13, 14) was then deposited over these stones. A road surface was then presumably laid, though no evidence for this survived. After the construction of this phase of the bridge, but prior to Phase II, two deep pits (Figs. 2, 4, contexts 3, 4) were dug through the clay infill and flat stones down to the tops of the piers. These pits destroyed the parapet wall on the west side of the bridge adjacent to the piers. It is presumed that these pits were dug to permit maintenance work to be carried out on the tops of the piers. Pit 3 was filled with: 7, orange sand; 8,

crushed shale; 9 clay and shale fragments; 10, loose soil, shale and mortar. Pit 4 was filled with: 11, bands of loose soil, shale and mortar; 14, clay with shale fragments. It must be assumed that a new west parapet wall was built on the outside of the Phase I wall in order to retain the fill of the two pits. No trace of this wall survives: all evidence for it was destroyed during the Phase II constructions.

Phase II. This consists of a new west wall to the bridge built to increase the width of the carriage-way to *c.* 4.8m (Figs. 2,4,5). The foundation trenches for the Phase II parapet (Figs. 2, 4, 5; contexts 1, 2) cut through the two pits (3, 4) described above.

Phase III. The carriage-way was widened to *c.* 6m over the three northern arches by the building of a new west wall to the bridge (Figs. 2, 5).

The only artefacts discovered during the engineering works were four sherds of pottery from unstratified contexts. The sherds have a date range from the 17th to the 19th century.

It is clear from the above brief description and the figures that Cardigan Bridge has had a long and complex history. It is assumed that the Phase I bridge was the one under construction in about 1639, though the greater weathering on one arch may be an indication that more than one phase of construction is present. It is not certain to what phase of building the date stone of 1726 refers. Two clear phases of rebuild are visible in the masonry, though as described above another phase was probably present though not now represented by any stonework.

4.0 INDEX TO THE ARCHIVE

The following categories are represented in the site archive:

A.1 Final report

B.4 Field notebooks (photocopy)

D.1 Catalogue of photographs

D.2 Colour slides

D.3 Black and white negatives, contact prints

J.1 Publication drawings

M.1 Correspondence

The finds have been deposited with Ceredigion Museum, Aberystwyth.

CARDIGAN BRIDGE: PLAN AND UPSTREAM ELEVATION (based on a drawing supplied by Veryards Ltd)

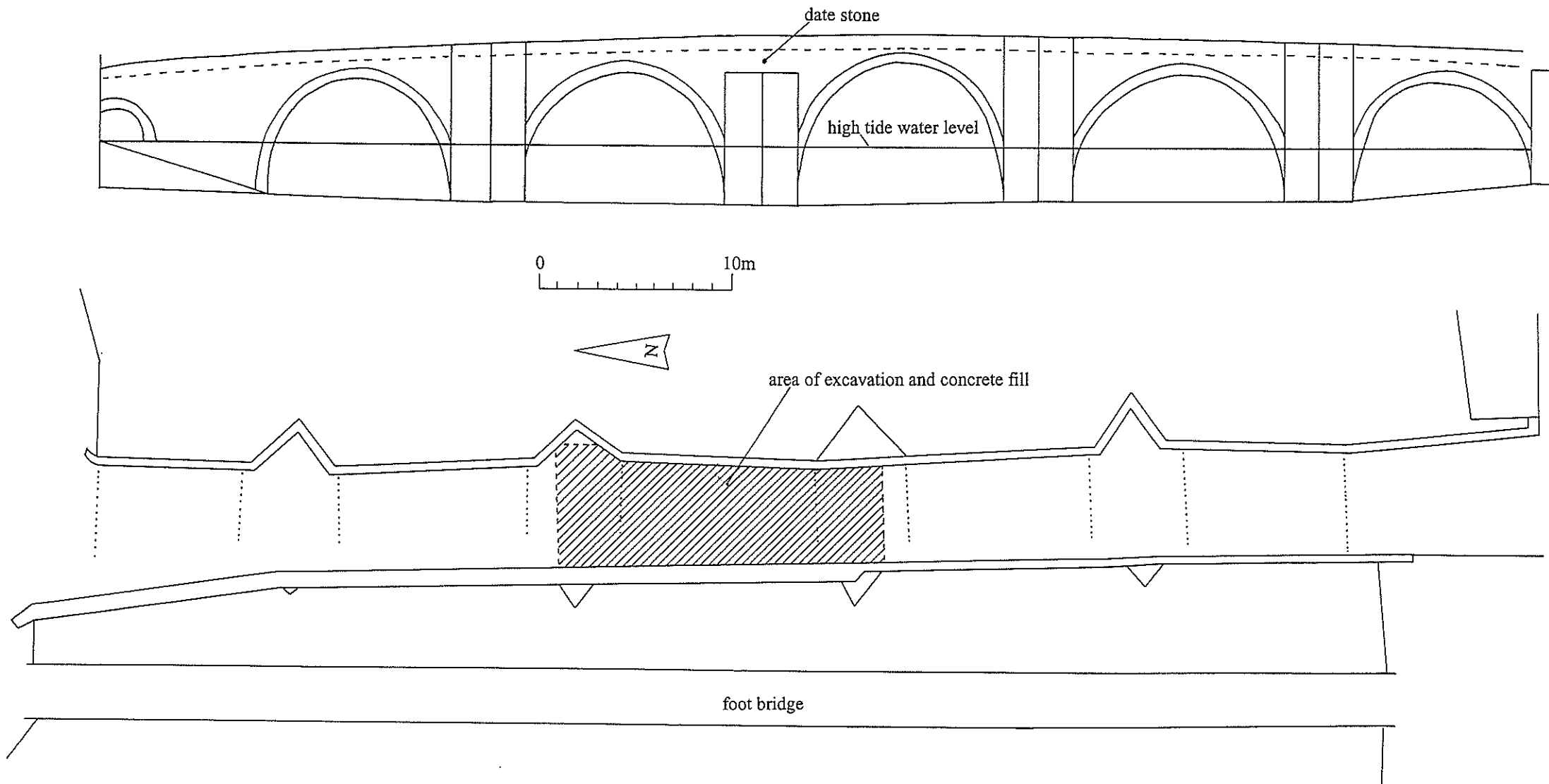


Figure 1

CARDIGAN BRIDGE: PLAN OF EXCAVATED AREA

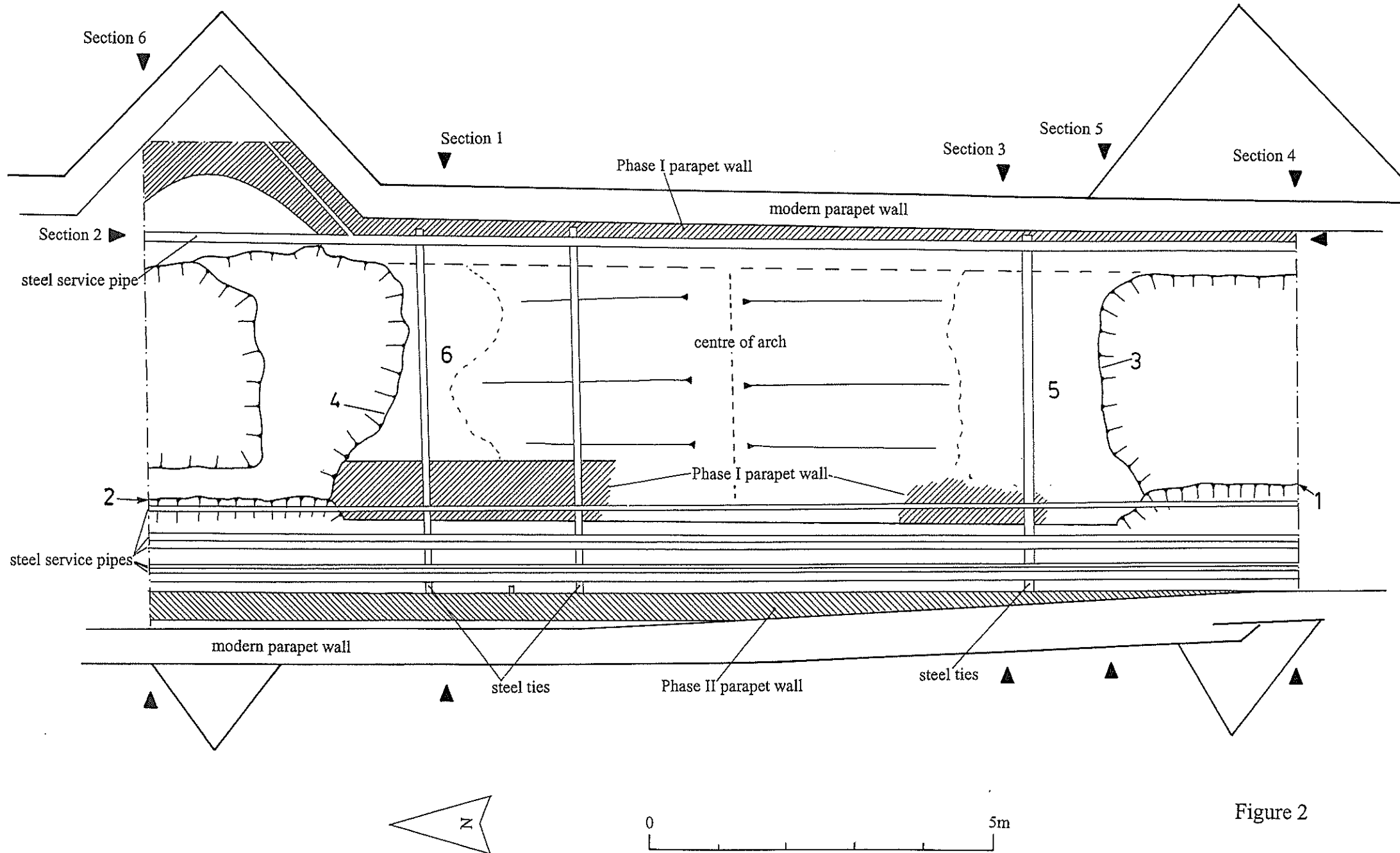


Figure 2

CARDIGAN BRIDGE: SECTION 2

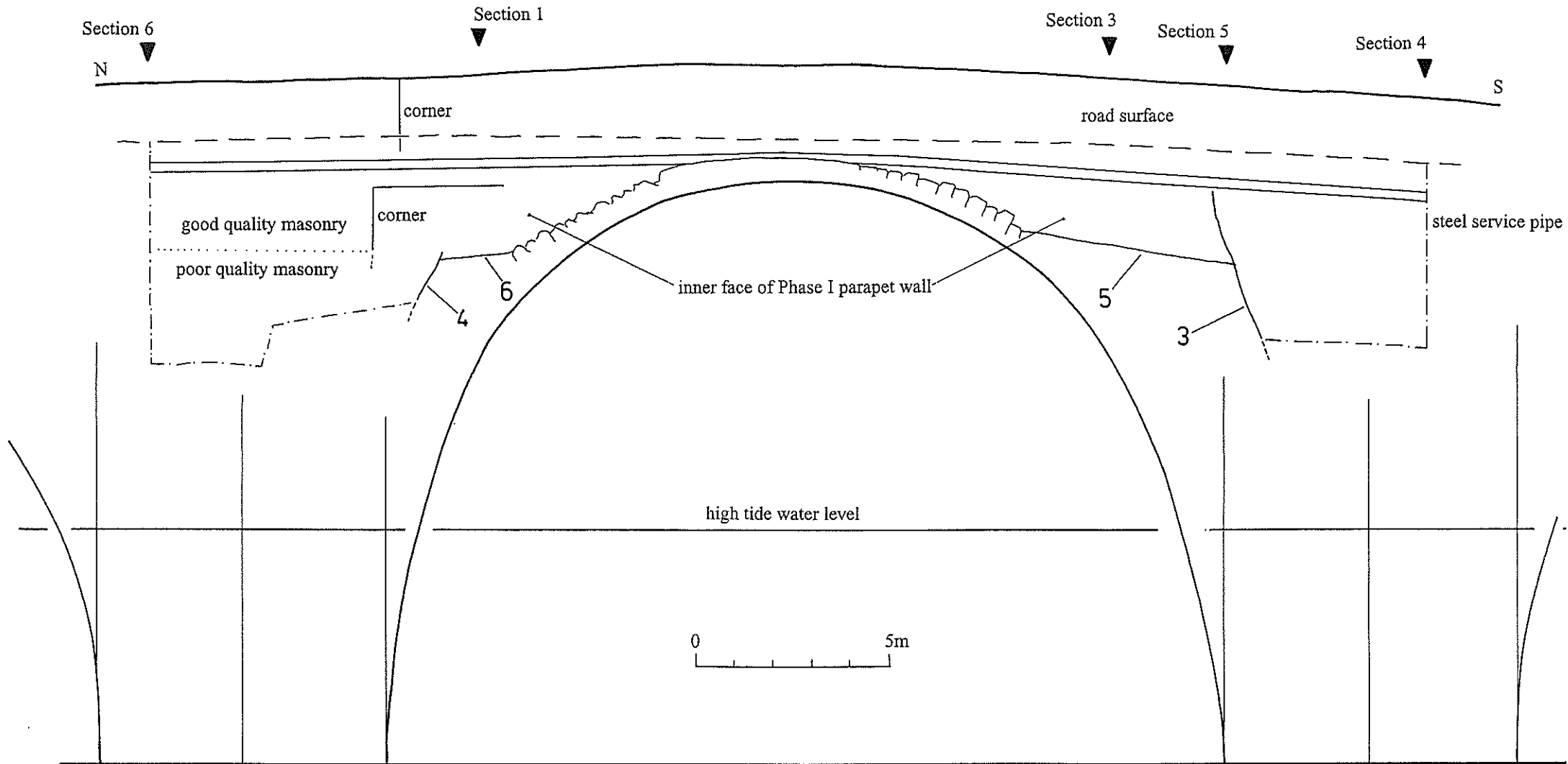
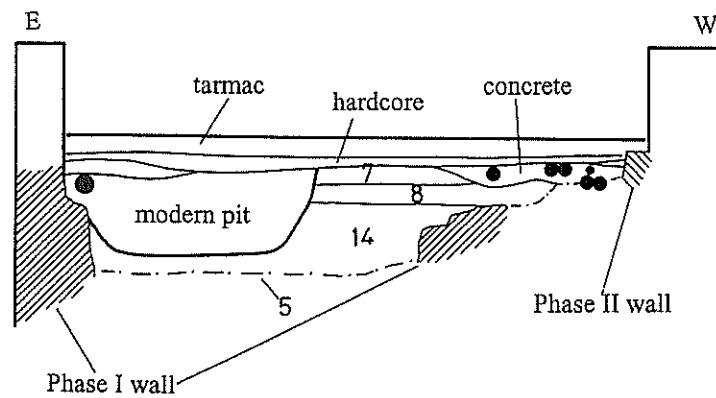


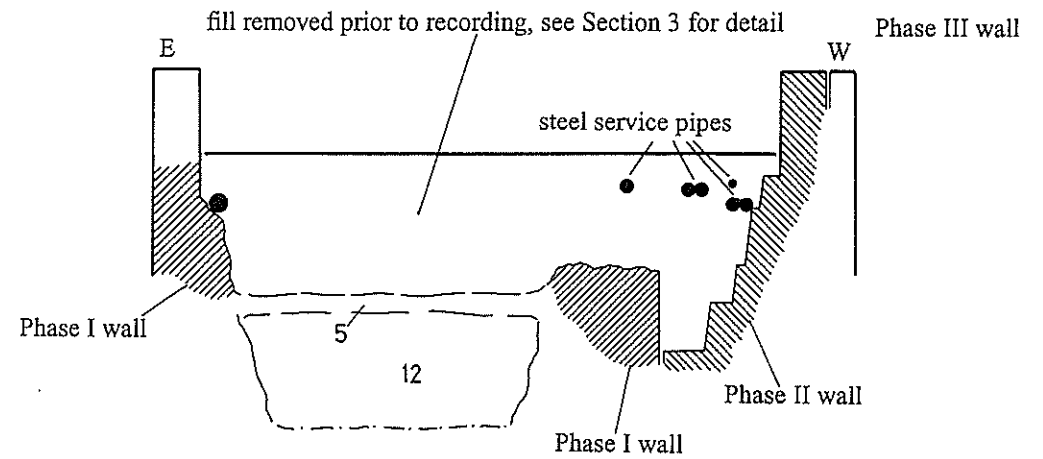
Figure 3

CARDIGAN BRIDGE: SECTIONS 3, 4 AND 5

Section 3



Section 5



Section 4

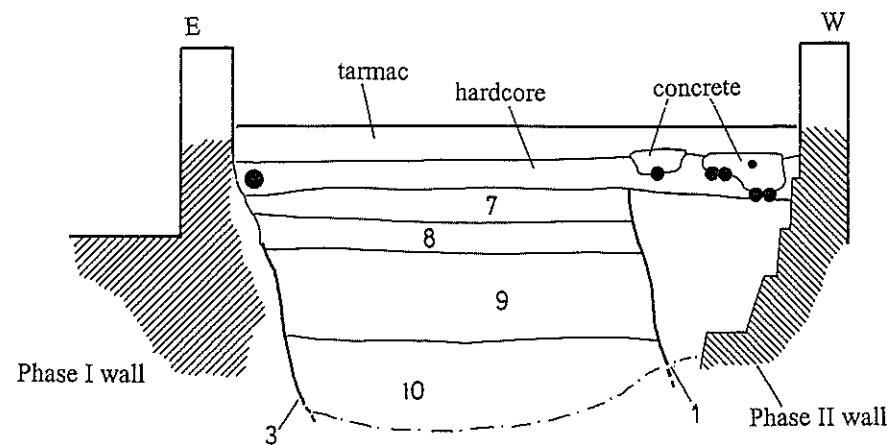


Figure 4

CARDIGAN BRIDGE: SECTIONS 1 AND 6

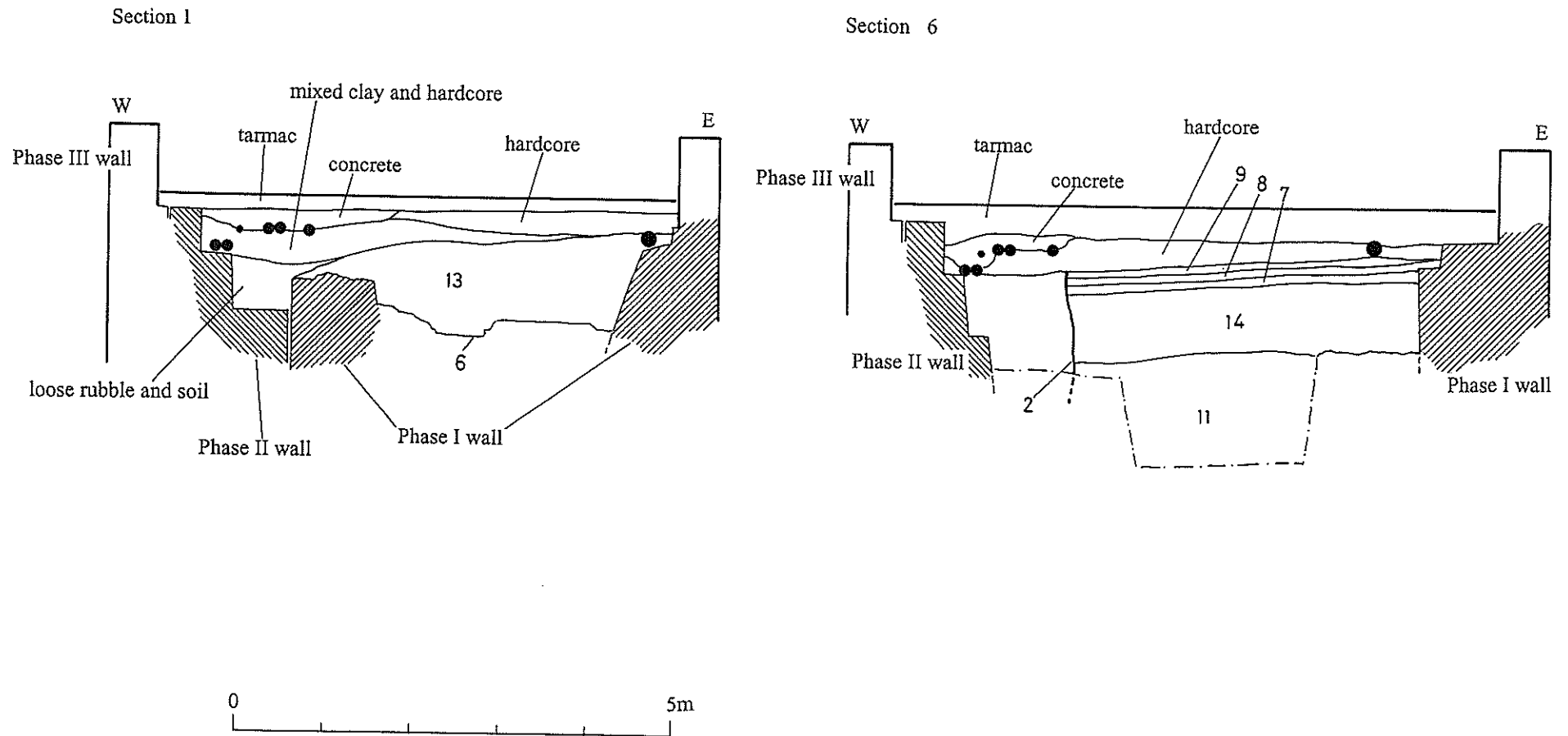


Figure 5