

DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD



RUSTIC ALCOVE **HAFOD** CEREDIGION

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
Project Record No. 32476
MAY 1996



Commissioned by: Hafod Trust

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Contents

SUMMARY	1
BRIEF	1
LOCATION	2
SITE HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION	2
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	3
METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS	3
<i>Survey</i>	3
<i>The Excavations</i>	3
<i>Site 1</i>	3
<i>Site 2</i>	5
<i>Site 3</i>	6
<i>Site 4</i>	7
<i>Site 5</i>	8
<i>Other Features</i>	8
DISCUSSION	9
<i>Site 1</i>	9
<i>Site 2</i>	10
<i>Site 3 and Site 4</i>	10
<i>Site 5</i>	11
<i>Status</i>	12
RECOMMENDATIONS	12
<i>General</i>	12
<i>Path Reinstatement</i>	13
<i>Site 1</i>	13
<i>Site 2</i>	13
<i>Site 3 and Site 4</i>	14
<i>Site 5 (the opposite bank)</i>	14
CONCLUSION	14
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	14
ARCHIVE DEPOSITION	14
BIBLIOGRAPHY	15
<i>Source references to Rustic Alcove</i>	15
APPENDICES	15
<i>Bengal Lights</i>	15
<i>Survey</i>	15
<i>Record Numbers used</i>	16
<i>Brief</i>	17
<i>Comments on Brief</i>	19
FIGURES 1-15	22

Summary

Limited evaluation on a small building or gazebo indicated deliberate dismantling of its side walls. A platform nearby would seem to be a bridge pier as the remains of a corresponding structure were noted on the opposite bank. There was no evidence of a large wall parallel to the path, south west of the Rustic Alcove. No archaeological evidence was found for another bridge below the Alcove. The cascades of the stream between the Perian Falls and the Alcove were possibly enhanced.

Brief

The specification of work was prepared by Ken Murphy of DAT; the outline below incorporates comments supplied by Andrew Sclater of Landskip and Prospect, Landscape Consultants, Talley, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 7YH, following an on-site discussion. (See Appendices for original correspondence.)

The primary objective of this investigation was to identify, quantify and characterise a sample of the surviving archaeological evidence by the use of strategically placed trenches. Five trenches were proposed; the numbered references 1-4 correspond to the site numbers shown on figure 1, except for Site 5, which relates to the three numbered features on the east side of the stream. The exact size and placing of investigation trenches were to be finalised on site.

1. A trench in the area of the 'apron' fronting the drystone wall built against the bank, to locate and characterise remains associated with it. The presumption is that this may have been the rear wall of a small building or gazebo. It would be useful to
 - a. locate any evidence for the former existence of this building and, if successful, to
 - b. attempt to provide information of the building's structure and function, to inform future plans to construct a replacement on the site;
 - c. provide advice on the conservation of the surviving wall, and any other artefacts at this location.
2. Clean the surface of the masonry platform over-hanging the stream SE of Site 1, recording any archaeological features revealed. This has been interpreted as the approach to a bridge. Additionally to examine, by means of a 1m wide trench, the relict stone wall that appears to run down the side of the path to the south of the platform. Also to examine and record the stone 'abutment' or wall which supports this platform.
3. Clean and record a drainage culvert and also to examine the area where oak timbers were discovered earlier (Phillips 1994). This area was at the bottom of the bedrock slope (beneath and below the end of the portable path). Also examine the low-lying hollow below for evidence of post-holes or other signs of a former rustic wooden bridge in this area. (Long straight oak timbers lying on the bank may have formed part of a bridge.)
4. An area to the north of the termination of the metalled path when approached from the south, to locate and characterise any remains. Here there is a section of stone

revetment beneath the stream-side edge of the path. It was believed that this curves outwards towards the stream, and could have been associated with a stream crossing at this point.

5. An area across the stream from Site 2, where a 2m by 1m trench was proposed.

With consultation and consideration, it was decided that intrusive investigation of Site 5 would cause further damage to any surviving structure, and therefore the examination would be limited to surface observation.

Location

Hafod Rustic Alcove (SN 76997356) lies 150m south east of Hafod Church, 4.5km south east of Devil's Bridge, which is 16km east of Aberystwyth. The site is near the upper end of a blind valley, now mostly under conifer plantations (front cover), and situated some 60m below Pwllpeiran Falls (figures 1 and 2). The individual features to be examined were adjacent to the Ladies' Walk footpath, which is being reinstated.

Site History and Description

While the features of the Rustic Alcove were probably constructed as part of the Ladies' Walk, there is as yet no firm dating for these structures, and some of these features may therefore predate this Walk.

The Hafod house, landscape and garden paths were extensively the undertaking of Colonel Thomas Johnes (1748-1816), commencing c1783, which included the laying out of the Ladies' Walk. There is, however, increasing evidence that Johnes' predecessor, John Paynter, may have previously undertaken landscape work on the estate (Kerkham and Briggs 1991). The earliest description and map, c1795, was published in 1796 by George Cumberland. This account gives some detail of the approach to the Rustic Alcove and, as a footnote to the description, there is a record of this area being artificially lit at night by 'Bengal-fire' (see appendices: Bengal lights). Soon after Cumberland's description there were records of other visitors with brief mentions of the Rustic Alcove (see sources).

Kerkham and Briggs (1991) give the following description of the feature: "This gazebo was found on the gravel path north from Peiran bridge to Pwllpeiran Falls. A favourite resting point for visitors contemplating the cascades, it was much appreciated during the early 1800s. The structure was entered from the south through a small arch leading into a square building, there having been a seating arrangement inside, to the right, giving the visitor a view of the falls. A wooden bridge adjoined the gazebo. Probably constructed of two large tree trunks, with a rough wooden handrail similar to other rustic bridges described and illustrated on the walks, it was thrown across the Peiran at this point and led a gravel path through oak woods down to Tyloge Bridge."

The land is now owned, and the woodlands managed, by Forest Enterprise. In 1994 the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust commissioned an archaeological investigation of the route and nature of the Ladies' Walk (Phillips 1994). This work consisted of a number

of trenches across the assumed route of the Walk and an investigation in the area of the Rustic Alcove. The excavation within this last area was limited to the removal of the surface humic material. A number of features were uncovered but, within the constraints of the brief and the time available, no further investigation was possible.

The commissioning of the current project was partly to try to resolve, and record in more detail, aspects of the earlier investigation as part of the continuing archaeological assessment of the Ladies' Walk.

Aims and Objectives

This was to undertake the brief with a view to making recommendations on any consolidation or other works which may be deemed necessary or desirable for the immediate area of the Rustic Alcove.

Methodologies and Results

Fieldwork was undertaken between 22 April and 3 May 1996. The weather was initially dry but frequently overcast; during the second week there were prolonged showers, making fine cleaning of archaeological surfaces difficult.

All archaeological photographs were executed both in colour slide and black and white prints. Photographs were taken of all individual areas to be affected by this project, prior to excavations, at final excavation limits and after backfilling.

Survey

An Ordnance Survey datum height for the site was established from that on Hafod Church, and survey stations set up (see survey in appendices). An EDM survey was made, with the results processed through MAP400 software and placed into ECAD to produce the general site plans (figures 1 and 2).

The excavations

These were divided into 5 sub-divisions and used the same numbers as those laid out in the brief, except sub-division 5 which included all three features individually recorded on the south east side of the stream (figures 1 and 2). Bracketed numbers are those used in the original recording and archiving.

Site 1

The area of the excavation extended to either side of the rear wall of the gazebo and in front of the wall to the other side of the footpath. On the far side of the path there were the remains of tree stumps and considerable root action; it was considered that further archaeological investigation here probably would not be appropriate, as this area was indicated as natural (Phillips 1994, 23), and had a large amount of root disturbance.

The earliest feature appeared to be the cutting of the bedrock (17) (figure 4) to form a level platform (8) into the base of the hill slope, on a level with the path. This platform was cut so that three sides formed the bottom edge and base for two short

side walls (6 and 11) and the rear 'revetment' wall (7) which was visible prior to the excavation (figure 3).

There was an 'L'-shaped rock cut drain (9) at the rear and north eastern side of the gazebo (figure 7). One of the capstones (10) at the rear of the gazebo was lifted and here the drain cut was quite shallow, 100mm. The drain fill below the capping was not excavated but appeared very humic, root disturbed and very like the topsoil (1) above. This drain must have flowed from the south west corner of the gazebo and probably out under the path (16); although the drain could be seen running towards the path (figure 8), their relationship could not be established as the remains of the path were not excavated. It could not be confirmed whether the drain cut was contemporaneous with the platform cut or was later; however, as this drain cut was right at the rear and, as elsewhere in some parts of the path, construction of a rear drain seems to be part of the original plan, it may also be the case here.

There were the remains of a grey clay layer (2), mainly in the area of the footpath. This layer was probably the same as that found during the earlier excavation (Phillips 1994, 23) but was not as extensive as previously described, presumably having been disturbed at the end of or after that excavation. This clay layer lay directly over bedrock (17) and, where it contained small angular stones and fragments, formed the footpath (16). This clay layer may be the remains of the soil matrix for metalling which extended further into the gazebo. It must be noted that there was little of this grey clay layer remaining and it was disturbed.

The footpath metalling (16) only remained to any extent at the north eastern end of the excavation area (figures 4 and 8). This consisted of small shale slabs and fragments set on a greyish brown silty clay, lying directly on bedrock (17) and probably over part of the drain capping (10).

Both ends of the remaining back wall (7), which revets the hillside, were clearly incomplete. Excavation revealed the remains of two side walls (6 and 11) and it was evident that these were keyed in, apparently to the full height of the back wall, at least on the south western corner (figure 4). These side walls appeared to have projected about 1.3m up to the line of the path. It was evident that these side walls had been deliberately robbed (figure 9) and there were the minor remains of one possible robber trench fill (19) on the north eastern side. The robbing appeared to have been done with some care, in order to leave the rear wall intact.

The back wall (7) had the remnants of a poor lime mortar or pointing. There were insufficient remains of the higher parts of the side walls (6 and 11) to prove lime mortar bonding but it is considered likely. The top of the rear wall appeared to be curved; whether this represented the roof line could not be ascertained without compromising the structure, which was in a poor state of repair and in need of consolidation and repointing.

After the removal of the side walls, slump or hill wash (3 and 5) covered over the footings and also spread slightly on to very dark humic soil which covered the drain capping (10) and the base of the rock-cut platform (8). This very dark humic soil was

indistinguishable from the topsoil (1 and 3) above the slump/hill wash. Within this topsoil in the area of the rock-cut platform, and partly on the line of the footpath (16), there were a number of individual stones and patches of stones (14) (figure 3). These stones were found to be within or have topsoil below them.

One thin slate fragment with a nail hole was found in the topsoil (1). There were also a few other small fragments possibly from the same slate. It would seem probable that this slate was connected with the gazebo roof although, as only one slate was found, it is uncertain whether this slate represents a repair or the type of roof material on this building at some point. This slate does not rule out the possibility of either a thatched or rough slate roof.

A final site plan (306) for this area was prepared and the elevation (307) of the rear wall, with projected side features, was drawn. The area of excavation was then backfilled.

Site 2

This area had only limited excavation, with the removal of very dark humic topsoil (27) with much root disturbance, and the cleaning of the surfaces beneath. This was done on the surface of the platform, a small area to the south of the wall on the platform and a small trench 2.5m to the south west (figures 1 and 2).

The earliest structure was that of a drystone pier 2.2m wide, 1.8m above the bedrock and projecting at least 1.6m out from the top of the stream bank (figure 10). It was constructed on bedrock which, in the area above the stream, appeared to have been cut to form part of the footings, and also into or on the natural clay bank/hillside material. There was no evidence for timber features in or on the surviving structure (figures 5 and 11). Stone by stone drawings (301-303, figure 6) were made of the elevations; moss cover was left intact where present.

A wall (28) projected above the southern side of this platform and also further to the south on the top of the bank, making a thickened 'L'-shape (figure 5). This again appeared to be all of drystone construction (figure 11). The wall top was thickly covered in moss and almost certainly had been damaged (Phillips 1994). The eastern side of the thickened part had collapsed and this face had been lost. The long arm projecting to the east was evidently much lower than its original height and three stones had been displaced, giving it a false curved appearance. On the higher and thickened part of this wall the southern and western faces had been stepped back by approximately 150mm at 500mm height and the remaining upper part of these faces were slightly battered. The battering of this higher part of the wall could have formed a pillar, possibly to support an arch; however, there was no discernible physical evidence for any structure on the opposite side of the path, and the apparent drystone construction of this pillar is unlikely to have taken any great amount of thrust. It is possible that it was simply decorative or supported a timber structure.

The surface of the platform revealed no structural evidence. The surface layer (27) may have formed the upper part of the core of the pier. It seemed that this layer might

have been later than the 'L'-shaped wall on its southern side, but was probably near contemporary.

There was no evidence for an adjoining wall parallel to the gully path, south of the 'L'-shaped wall. A 1m wide trench was excavated further along and this also failed to reveal any indication of a wall. The bank, both south of the 'L'-shaped wall and further along, was very flat topped, so it could have supported a wall, for which, however, there was no evidence. The remains of the bank were investigated in this trench and excavation demonstrated that the gully for the path had been cut through bedrock 500mm below the surviving upper height of the bank. The top and outer part of the bank was made up of natural clay, above the bedrock.

The remains of a previously unrecorded drystone wall face, 7m to the south of the 'L'-shaped wall, were not excavated or cleared of cut down scrub (figure 2). Approximately 1.5m of wall face were visible. It may have continued further south down to the stream and there was some suggestion of flat stones laid on one another lower down, nearer to the water on or close to this alignment. The stones could have been naturally deposited, but further investigation without a consolidation programme could have compromised their survival.

Along with the elevations of the platform (301-303), a plan was made of its cleared surface with an outline of the 'L'-shaped wall (304). The north eastern elevation of the 'L'-shaped wall was recorded stone by stone, except where covered by moss. The profile of the bank in the 1m wide trench was also drawn (313).

Site 3

This area was chosen to record the drainage culvert located at the point where the path turned in a more northerly direction, and began to ascend quite steeply to the Rustic Alcove (figure 2). From this point the path was cut through the valley side to form a gully, rather than simply being terraced into the slope. The sloping part of the path had a shallow drain, crudely stone-capped, cut into the bedrock on its hillside edge and the culvert had allowed drainage across the path from the drain.

The earliest feature was probably the cutting (57) for the path through the natural clay (54) and the bedrock (55) below, followed by the cutting (56) of the same material to form the sides for the culvert. A drain wall (53) was then constructed on the north east side, composed of flat stones, laid roughly and with no apparent bonding material (figure 12). The south west side of the drain simply utilised the cut side of the natural clay and bedrock.

The stone capping (52) for the drain rested on the drain wall and the natural clay and bedrock. The remaining capstones did not appear to be exactly *in situ*, possibly disturbed during the earlier excavation, or in the reinstatement of the path. However they were probably not far out of place. It is likely that the wedge-shaped cut on the south western side (Phillips 1994, 24-25) was not to support bridging timbers, but to accommodate the sides of one or more capstones.

The fill (58) within the drain was very root disturbed, and similar to the humic topsoil around. It is possible that this build-up of fill only occurred after the path and/or drain went out of use.

The topsoil was very disturbed and some of this probably post-dated the earlier investigation. The path had been temporarily reconstructed at this point; some of the timbers used probably included those previously recorded as possibly part of a bridge, together with the half round timber (Phillips 1994, 24) which was placed in the upper void within the drain.

Investigation of the hollow to look for remains of a possible bridge site was not undertaken, as this area had already been excavated to bedrock (Phillips 1994, 23-24) and was considered unlikely to be informative (see Discussion below).

A plan (not shown here) was made of the limited area (308) cleared and a cross section of the culvert was drawn (309).

Site 4

A one metre wide trench was cleared across the path at the north east end of a small portion of remaining revetment wall.

On the north east side of the trench, beyond the end of the revetment wall and above the bedrock (81), there was a layer forming a bank of mid-light brown clay loam (80). This layer, or bank, was probably a natural deposit on the side of the stream, but could possibly have been redeposited to form the base for the path make-up (78). The bedrock of the hillside, and probably the clay bank beyond the area of this trench, were cut (82) to construct the footpath.

The revetment wall (79) of rough drystone construction appeared to be, at least partially, built on bedrock. It probably did not continue beyond the start of the clay loam bank, possibly being considered unnecessary. However, evidence for the continuation of this wall in front of the clay bank could have been removed or collapsed and obscured. Behind this wall and extending up to and over the clay loam (80) was a layer of path make-up material (78). This make-up layer was probably originally semi-voided rubble, but was later partly filled with humic material. It appeared to be later than the revetment wall, but most probably had been deposited during or immediately after the wall's construction.

Above the path make-up there was a final path layer forming the surface. This was approximately 1.1m wide and 60-100mm thick. It consisted of very dark grey loam with a very large amount of small angular stones or gravel and a few medium-sized flat stones. The soil constituent for this path surface may well have been mainly of natural clay but later became more humic.

Covering the path there was only a very thin deposit of topsoil and leaf mould (76), probably having been recently cleared.

There was no indication that the path changes direction at this point.

Following excavation, the trench, including the surface of the path, and the two cross profiles were drawn (310-311) (not shown here).

Site 5

Wall 101: The remains of what was probably a corresponding bridge pier could be seen opposite that of Site 2 (101, figures 1 and 2). However access was poor and it was in a very ruinous condition (figure 13).

This structure was built on bedrock which slopes towards the stream. In the area where the south western corner and southern face of the pier were probably located the slope was approximately 45°, which may have been a factor in its collapse. However, part of the face remained, adjacent to the stream. Here, partly below the fallen remains of a dead tree, there was a face three courses wide by 5 courses high (approximately 0.5m). There was also a considerable amount of core work and some of the southern face may have survived further up the slope. The core work was at least 1.7m wide. It appeared that these remains possibly ran up the hillside to join the remnants of a footpath, and seemed to have been of similar height to those of the pier on Site 2.

No intrusive archaeological examination was undertaken.

Wall 102: A length of revetment wall, probably for a terraced footpath on its south eastern side, was recorded (figure 1). This wall was of drystone construction with a rough face, approximately 6.6m in length, slightly angled or curved and up to 1m high. Both ends appeared to be destroyed or partly covered by hillslip.

There may have been the remains of another footpath 4 or 5m up the hillside, and further to the south east. This was not recorded in the survey.

No intrusive archaeological examination was undertaken.

Wall 103: A small section of wall lay at right angles to the stream on the south east bank (figures 1 and 2). Each course of the face on the upstream side was set further back in a series of steps (figures 14 and 15). The maximum dimensions seen were length 1.5m, width 1m and height 950mm. Nine or possibly ten courses remained and were constructed of massive or very large flat stones and built up from the stream bed; there were also some smaller stones against the bank. The stream end of this wall appeared to have been destroyed. The stepped-back nature of this wall gave the impression of a dam wall, or possibly a cascade feature. The remains appeared to be quite stable and were considered unlikely to suffer further in the near future. No intrusive archaeological examination was undertaken.

Other Features

It appeared that the massive large flat stone, 25m below the base of the waterfall (figure 1), had been artificially placed on upright stones. The stream now flows partially under this and probably did so more extensively, but has become silted up.

There were other suggestions, along with wall 103, which appeared to indicate that the cascades of the stream between the waterfall and the Rustic Alcove had been artificially enhanced.

Discussion

Site 1

It would appear that the gazebo was already covered with a thin layer of topsoil before the hill wash and slump extended over it, after the robbing of the side walls. It is considered probable that this slumping occurred soon after the removal of the side walls. The topsoil within the gazebo indicated that this structure was in disrepair or neglected prior to the wall robbing.

The side walls were probably robbed for their corner stones; however, the back wall was left intact and may indicate that this revetment wall was judged still to be a useful feature. It is considered that the stones from the side walls were unlikely to have been taken far, possibly for repair of the nearby footpath revetments.

It appeared that the gazebo structure consisted of the remaining back wall and two side walls, coming forward approximately 1.25m to the footpath. The structure has been described as square (Kerkham and Briggs 1991); if this was the case then the path would probably have run through the building. There was neither any remaining physical evidence to suggest that the path alignment was later, nor that the side walls continued onto the other side of this path; furthermore, there was no evidence for a front wall or any evidence for timber uprights. The earlier excavation (Phillips 1994) recorded this area, on the other side of this path from the back wall, as natural, and there was nothing to indicate that this assessment had been incorrect. However, this area is lower and heavily root disturbed and was only investigated near the footpath edge during this project. Limited evidence for timber uprights or former walling may exist adjacent to the remaining tree stumps (but this is considered unlikely). This area opposite the gazebo back wall should, however, still be regarded as particularly archaeologically sensitive; at the least, it is likely that the continuation of the drain from the rear of the gazebo survives.

On field evidence it would appear that this structure was rectangular and did not cross the path, and therefore the path did not run through the building, but in front of it. However, due to the topography and the disturbed nature of the ground on the other side of the path, this is not conclusive.

The roofing material for the gazebo is uncertain. A sketch which may or may not be of this gazebo appears to indicate a thatched roof (pers. comm. A Sclater). The single roof slate found and the slates (11) seen in the hillside (figure 4) may not be indicators of either the original or the final roof covering. The apparent curve of the upper part of the rear gazebo wall (7) could be a false impression; there are no indications of any roof timbers in the top of this wall and these should be sought and their existence, or lack, be recorded in any future consolidation programme.

Within the gazebo the drain and capping stones are likely to have been part of the original design or a very early addition. There were no signs of the seat being constructed into the base or surviving back wall, therefore it was probably free-standing.

Site 2

With the evidence for remains of a similar structure on the opposite bank (101), it would appear most likely that this feature is the remnant of a bridge pier. However, the lack of any specific mention of such a presumably substantial feature in the early accounts of this area, possibly indicate that it was already out of use, or not then constructed.

A bridge here is likely to have become redundant after the possibly later construction of the gullied part of the Ladies' Walk between Site 2 and Site 3 (figure 2). The reason for the construction of this gully walk could have been the unstable south eastern hillside, where there was evidence of several landslips, blocking the footpaths on that side.

The 'L'-shaped wall on the southern side of the pier extends beyond the line of the pier, therefore it is possible that this feature was not envisaged at the time of construction of the bridge. However, there is no discernible difference in the simple construction between the lower part of this wall and the pier below, so they could have been part of the same construction phase or nearly contemporary.

It is possible that the battered and set-back pillar on the 'L'-shaped wall could have been a later phase than the wall. However, as this had suffered considerable damage, lay hidden under a large amount of moss, and appeared to be only partially intact (figure 11), the results were inconclusive. Its function, as already stated, could have been decorative, maybe as part of a screen with the wall below, or it may have supported some form of arch.

Any conclusive evidence for a substantial wall parallel to the gully is lacking, despite the presence of the newly recorded wall face and its possible continuation on the same alignment. The flat-topped bank may have continued to the south as a wall, and this whole length may, mistakenly, have been considered to be a wall in the earlier accounts.

This area, from Site 2 down to and including Site 3, from the path to the stream, should all be regarded as archaeologically sensitive.

Site 3 and Site 4

A stream crossing adjacent to Site 3 or Site 4 would seem logical, as this would have saved in cutting a considerable length of path along the hillside. As already stated this gully footpath section may be later, although this is unproven on present evidence. Once this cutting had taken place a crossing and recrossing of the stream would no longer be necessary.

The culvert at Site 3 is a simple structure and relates to the drain in the gully part of the footpath. There is no evidence for any timber bridge structure here. Features all appear to relate to the drain, and all could be explained more simply as cutting of the bedrock to accommodate capping stones. There was nothing to suggest that these 'timber features' predate the culvert.

The hollow into which the culvert emptied would appear to be a feature associated with it, and constructed at that time or soon after. This culvert must date from, or after, the period when the gully path was cut between Sites 2 and 3. Whether this is part of the original plan or layout for the Ladies' Walk is uncertain. If the gully path is original then there is no need for a bridge at this point. However, if it is later, the construction of the culvert and hollow are likely to have removed any evidence of a path to, and any possible evidence of, a bridge at this point.

The drain in the gully path and the hollow, probably for a pool of water, would appear to indicate that conditions were much wetter. Although the density of tree cover is unknown, oak trees grew in the vicinity in the 18th century, probably providing more open woodland than the modern conifer plantations established during the 1950s. The oak woodland would have absorbed less water than the conifers and the hillsides were probably appreciably wetter than they are today, hence the drains and culverts on the side of the path.

To look for evidence of a bridge at either Site 3 or Site 4 would require large scale excavation, probably with little chance of finding any trace of the crossing and/or recrossing of the stream, evidence for which is more likely to be on the opposite bank to the present Ladies' Walk. Any investigation of this is likely to leave unsightly, but probably only temporary scars, in the ground cover.

The presence of a bridge is not indicated on William Blake's plan within the Cumberland description (Cumberland 1796). Is it possible that this plan post-dates the description, either when the route of the Walk had slightly altered, or changes were planned, and the map therefore drawn accordingly? From the description of the 'simple foot-bridge' it is unclear if the bridge actually crosses the stream and, if so, there is no reference to any re-crossing. Another interpretation could be that this account was slightly inaccurate and the Ladies' Walk originally came up the other side of the valley, possibly going out of use later due to landslips. However, the description of these features in this area is brief, and what was self-evident then, is no longer so. In the light of the archaeological evidence, more detailed study of the written accounts may prove beneficial and resolve some of the apparently conflicting evidence concerning the bridge and other aspects of this area.

Site 5

Wall 101: This probable bridge pier is likely to have collapsed partly because of the slope of bedrock on which it was constructed (figure 13) and by the action of the stream in flood on the vulnerable south west corner. However, this structure could have suffered from lack of maintenance or have been deliberately demolished.

There was considerable evidence for more than one route on the south east side of the valley, with at least one major footpath, and suggestions of other lengths of footpath on this hillside (possibly including wall 102). However it is heavily wooded and steep, with evidence of a number of landslips. The possible footpaths on this side may not have been in contemporary use with each other, or with the route of the Ladies' Walk.

Evidence for features relating to the enhancement of the stream cascades between the waterfall and the Alcove was apparent, and further, more detailed work within the stream area could be productive.

Status

Although all of the individual sites on the Ladies' Walk show damage or decay, they have survived and form a unique collection of garden features from this picturesque period. In particular the Rustic Alcove and its associated features as a group are, in our opinion, of Scheduled Ancient Monument quality; this designation is, however, at Cadw's discretion.

Recommendations

General

When archaeological or reconstruction work is being undertaken it would be advisable for a member or members of the Hafod Trust to visit and undertake a briefing and a debriefing at the completion.

Where areas have been identified as archaeologically sensitive and any work is being undertaken on or near these, the contractors must be made aware of this and their work monitored. This is particularly important where the removal of tree stumps is planned, although the archaeological preference would be to leave stumps in place.

The main areas of archaeological sensitivity which were identified in this project are:

- a. from the gazebo (Site 1) to the culvert of Site 3 and all of that segment from there out to the stream, including the bridge pier base of Site 2;
- b. on the opposite side of the stream, walls 101 and 103 and surrounding areas (figure 2);
- c. the area of the stream bed and adjacent banks from the waterfall down to the probable bridge at Site 2 (figure 1).

If further consolidation and clearance is to be undertaken on the sites above then additional archaeological recording is desirable (suggested details below), along with further survey of the path on the opposite bank as this area is cleared. The exact nature of and when this archaeological work needs to be done, whether just prior to, during or immediately after clearance, depends on the details of the programme to be decided upon.

Path Reinstatement

There does not appear to be any reason why the present footpath resurfacing should not be continued taking particular care of both the area adjacent to the gazebo, where the path and the internal floor need to be made up slightly, and the inclined footpath within the gully. In the latter instance the creation of steps may be deemed desirable, because of its slope, slippery bedrock and the likely accumulation of leaves. Here care will be needed in the design and implementation to protect the bedrock and the drain capping. It may be necessary to record this area in detail, including the drain capstones, if disturbance is considered inevitable.

Where the footpath crosses the culvert (Site 3) some reconstruction will be inevitable. This should be done sympathetically using local material of either stone or timber. The immediate area is fully recorded and there is no reason why the displaced capstones or similar should not be replaced. The placing of modern material, either coins or plastic, below any new or rebedded material will indicate, for any future investigators, that this is later work.

Softening of the appearance of new path material should be encouraged to give a more aged look and if possible use a range of local materials. Originally the paths of these major walks were made from whatever was available within the immediate vicinity, literally "at hand", and varied around the walk. However, for practical and safety reasons, the original type of material may not be suitable.

Site 1

The gazebo rear wall is in a poor state of repair (figure 7) and is in dire need of consolidation. This wall appears to have been lime mortar bonded or pointed; similar material should be used in the consolidation (Cadw: *Notes on repair and preservation of masonry* revised 1994). It will be necessary to have the upper part of this wall archaeologically recorded immediately prior to this work.

Archaeologically it would be preferable to leave the gazebo much as it is seen today, possibly with the addition of a rustic seat. However, should it be judged desirable to undertake any reconstruction of the side walls, or even the whole building, then little archaeological damage is likely to be caused, and in the areas of the side walls the archaeology has been fully recorded. Before any reconstruction, further research would need to be done on the original appearance; however, it is considered that an accurate reconstruction, on the basis of surviving records, would be impossible.

If further work is to be done in the area in front of the gazebo rear wall then the tree stumps should be carefully removed under archaeological conditions and the adjacent area re-examined for any additional features, and the continuation of the drain from the gazebo traced.

Site 2

This pier structure, other than a few stones on the northern side, appears to be in reasonable repair. The surface edge stones, however, would be vulnerable to foot damage and some thought should be given to either capping and re-surfacing of the platform of the pier or excluding visitors from this area. Consideration should be given

before exclusion, as originally a view would have been available from the bridge at this site and later from the platform.

The 'L'-shaped wall and pillar above are in worse condition. The consolidation of drystone walls in poor repair is a problem. There is insufficient evidence of the original structure for a satisfactory reconstruction and furthermore the bank has fallen away below part of the wall. This walling should either be left as it is and its condition monitored, or substantial consolidation (probably with internal bonding) should be undertaken with prior recording, but still leaving an impression of a drystone moss-covered ruin.

The bank and wall face to the south, adjacent to the gully part of the footpath, should be cleared of the cut down scrub, but otherwise left as it is.

Site 3 and Site 4

Other than the reconstruction of the path and the culvert as detailed above, these areas should be left as they are.

Site 5 (the opposite bank)

On wall 101 the three dead trees and the one conifer at the top area should be cut down with care and the stumps left to rot in place.

The archaeological preference, other than the instance above, would be to leave this hillside and the stream area as it is. If clearance is undertaken then resurvey should be done, and recording of additional features as they come to light.

Conclusion

This project has recorded the features deemed necessary and made recommendations on future undertakings. The plan of the gazebo walls has been established and it appears to be a rectangular building. All of the sites investigated are damaged; however the collective uniqueness of all the sites on the Walk adds considerably to their archaeological value. The sensitive approach to this area should continue.

Acknowledgements

K Murphy, contracts manager DAT. R Ramsey, site assistant. D H Wilson, site draughtsperson. L and R Hallett of Hafod for archive information. L Lane for proof reading and editing.

Archive Deposition

National Monument Record at RCAHMW, Crown Buildings, Plas Grug, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 1NJ

Bibliography

Cumberland G 1796 An attempt to describe Hafod, Cardiganshire

Kerkham C R and Briggs C S 1991 A review of the archaeological potential of the Hafod landscape, Cardiganshire in Brown, A E ed. *Garden Archaeology* CBA

Phillips D G 1994 Hafod 1994 An Archaeological Examination of the Ladies' Walk for The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust.

Source references to Rustic Alcove

Cumberland G 1796 An attempt to describe Hafod, Cardiganshire (description 'rustic building')

Malkin B H 1904 The scenery, antiquities, and biography of South Wales (description 'simple Alcove')

Lipscomb G 1802 Journey into South Wales in the year 1799 (description 'A small rustic building furnished with a seat')

Smith J E 1810 A tour to Hafod in Cardiganshire (description 'covered seat')

Yates Richard Vaughan 1785-1856 travellers in Wales (description 'small summer house') in Kerkham C R 1978 *Nat Lib Wales J*, 20, 265-72 (reference not checked)

Appendices

Bengal Lights

Bengal Lights (ref Everyman Encyclopaedia 1913) or Blue light, as it is called, is a vivid signal light used at sea. It is a composition of nitre, sulphur and black sulphide of antimony, ground to a powder, dried, and mixed by weight in the proportions 6 nitre: 2 sulphur: 1 black sulphide of antimony. When this is lit, a most brilliant blue light which illuminates the sea for many miles around is the result. The Bengal light is used in cases of shipwreck. Owing to the poisonous fumes from it the light cannot be used in enclosed spaces.

Survey

All datum heights used are based on an OS Datum of 244.93m for the bench mark on Hafod church. Three runs were taken with the average of 181.035m being established for station A. Grid references only relate to this project. Three survey stations were used. Station A was marked by a 50mm nail in the centre of a tree stump adjacent to the present path (Figure 1). Station B was marked in a similar fashion in a large stump on the opposite side of the path from the gazebo. Station C was a wooden grid peg and is unlikely to survive for long. Two other grid pegs were seen on site by the gazebo, which may belong to the earlier excavation and these are marked on the main plans.

Co-ordinates used:

A 250.000E 500.000N 181.035ELE
B 250.000E 462.176N 182.025ELE
C 260.862E 441.443N 176.529ELE

No trees or tree stumps were plotted as all of the valley sides are very heavily wooded. The contours produced on the plans are reliant on the number of readings taken. Within the lower part of the valley a large number of points were used; however, further up the valley sides less were used, due to tree cover and no records were made of the outcrops of rock, particularly on the north west side. The contours, therefore, are an approximation in these upper areas.

Record Numbers used

Context Site 1: 1-19
Context Site 2: 26-32
Context Site 3: 51-58
Context Site 4: 76-82
Context Site 5: 101-103

Drawing: 301-313

Photo: 201-246 (colour slides and black and white negatives)

Brief

HAFOD: RUSTIC ALCOVE

BRIEF FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

Background

The Hafod Trust is proposing to restore the Ladies' Walk, including the section in the vicinity of the Rustic Alcove. Phillips (1994) has previously investigated the Alcove and its environs. As the brief for his work requested that only superficial deposits should be removed to reveal the underlying archaeology, much of his work was inconclusive. The original form and function of the Rustic Alcove and its associated masonry structures is still unknown. It is proposed here to conduct an intrusive archaeological investigations in conjunction with survey and building recording.

The Investigation

The primary objective of the investigation will be to identify, quantify and characterise a sample of the surviving archaeological evidence by the use of strategically placed archaeological trenches. Five trenches are proposed:

1. The 'apron' fronting the dry-stone wall built into the bank in order to locate and characterise archaeological remains associated with the dry-stone wall.
2. The surface of the masonry platform over-hanging the river in order to locate and characterise archaeological remains associated with the platform. Also to examine, by means of a trench 1m wide, the relict stone wall that runs down the side of the path to the south of the platform.
3. At the bottom of the bedrock slope (beneath and below the end of the portable path) to record a drainage culvert and to examine the area where Phillips discovered oak timbers.
4. Area to the north of the termination of the metalled path when approached from the south in order to locate and characterise the archaeological remains in this area.
5. On the opposite river bank from 2. A 2m x 1m trench to examine record and characterise the archaeological remains.

The dimensions of some trenches are not provided, as these will be determined by the space available. All trenches are to be hand-dug. All superficial deposits should be removed. Sufficient underlying archaeological layers and features should be archaeologically investigated to enable their character and function to be assessed. These layers and features should be fully recorded. Plan and section drawings will be normally at 1:20 scale, though 1:10 scale may be required for some details; all should be on drafting film. Heights should be related to OS data. A single-context recording system shall be used for written descriptions. Black and white and colour slide photography shall be employed.

It is not envisaged that many finds will be encountered during the evaluation, though provision should be made for their analysis.

Any deposits encountered during the excavations that might contain palaeoenvironmental evidence should be sampled.

Because of the complex topographical setting of the alcove a survey carried out with an EDM theodolite and showing the position of the excavation trenches, the masonry structures, the path and natural features should be undertaken. The results of this survey should be presented at 1:100 or 1:200 scale.

Outline elevations (not stone-by-stone drawings) at 1:20 scale should be made of all upstanding masonry. These drawings should be accompanied by black and white and colour slide photography.

Six copies of the report detailing all the findings of the evaluation, including artefacts, shall be submitted within four weeks of finishing the fieldwork. The report should contain recommendations relevant to the restoration and conservation of the walk and Rustic Alcove. Interim information will be made available to the client soon after completing fieldwork. Copies of the report shall be lodged with the National Monuments Record and with the Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record. An archive of the evaluation shall be prepared. On completion of the project the archive shall be deposited with a appropriate institution.

K. Murphy Dyfed Archaeological Trust 22 January 1996

LANDSKIP AND PROSPECT

Landscape Consultants

TALLEY, LLANDEILO, DYFED. SA19 7YH.

Tel. 01558 685567. Facsimile 01558 685745.

PLEASE CONFIRM RECEIPT OF THIS FACSIMILE MESSAGE

TO: Ken Murphy

FAX NO: 01558 823133

FROM: Andrew Sclater

OUR REF: HAF.DATfx.196

PAGE 1 OF 3.

DATE: January 20 1996

HAFOD ALPINE MEADOW ARCHAEOLOGY

I am delighted that you believe that you have found remnants of the Ladies' Walk and that these conform with my expectations as to location.

I have arranged to meet the machinery contractor on site at 11 a.m. on Friday 26/1/96, in order to consider the question of protecting the archaeology. Would you be able to attend to advise? If the time is inconvenient, I imagine that the leader of your site team could convey the necessary information?

I have instructed the machinery contractors to start their contract on 29/1/96 or soon thereafter. This was agreed by you.

I regret that, owing to pressure of work, I am unable to join your team as a volunteer on the Alpine Meadow work.

RUSTIC ALCOVE

I enclose a copy of the 1:500 scale plan, as promised. While this is not reliable as to precise orientation of the walk over large areas, I believe it will be perfectly adequate in terms of distances of vegetation and features from the centre line of the path (marked with solid straight lines). The Mx positions on the plan refer to numbered metal tent pegs which are inserted under the surface of the path and will be identifiable by you with a little difficulty.

Following our discussions on site, the work would seem to fall into 5 components:

1. the 'apron' fronting the dry-stone wall built against the bank. The presumption is that this may have been the rear wall of a small building or gazebo. It would be useful to
 - a. locate any evidence of the former existence of this building. If successful, to
 - b. attempt to provide information of the building's structure and function to inform future plans to construct a replacement on the site.
 - c. provide advice on the conservation of the surviving wall, and any other artefacts at this location

A.A. SCLATER, B.Sc., Ph.D., M.I.Hort., Grad.Dipl.Cons.(A.A.)

ALSO AT: 47 NORFOLK TERRACE, CAMBRIDGE, CB1 2NG. Tel/Fax. 01223 461432.

ASSOCIATED OFFICE: RERUMNOVARUM LAAN 122, 2170-MERKSEM, BELGIUM. Tel. 00323 645 6721 Fax 00323 645 5828

2. the platform over-hanging the river SE of 1. This has been interpreted as the approach to a bridge. I do not favour this. DAT could usefully
 - a. examine and record the stone 'abutment' or wall which supports this platform
 - b. investigate re structure and function the relict stone wall which encloses the southern side of the platform, and runs down the E side of the bedrock slope currently clad with portable path.
3. the area at the bottom of the bedrock slope (beneath and below the end of the portable path). Record drainage culvert, and examine the low lying hollow below for evidence of post-holes or other signs of a former rustic wooden bridge in this area. (We saw the long straight oak timbers lying on the bank, which may have formed part of a bridge).
4. area to N of termination of metalled path when approached from S. Here there is a bit of stone revetment beneath the riverside edge of the path. I believe that this curves outwards towards the river, and could have been associated with a river crossing at this point. Appropriate archaeological work could be done here.
5. area across river from 2. I do not think that you will find much here, but good luck in looking for evidence of a former 2-5 bridge! I would imagine that you would want to approach this one by inspecting that part of the bank which does not today support a path, but which might formerly have done using blind end(s) of surviving paths as indicators.

Please regard the above as notes on aspects in which I am have a special interest in association with the walk. With regard to the specification, I will contact Christopher Houlder, who is a Trustee, as he will no doubt be familiar with the writing of such a document for archaeology.

The Trust anticipates that the Alcove excavations will be carried out in February/March. I understand that arrangements for approval of the specifications will be as for the Alpine Meadow, i.e. FE will seek comments from B. Dix and the RCAHMS.

Clearly, you should make reference to D. Phillips previous work in this area. I believe that you have a copy of his report, if not please ask M. Norman.

I hope to be able to join this exercise as a volunteer, if acceptable to you.

Yours sincerely

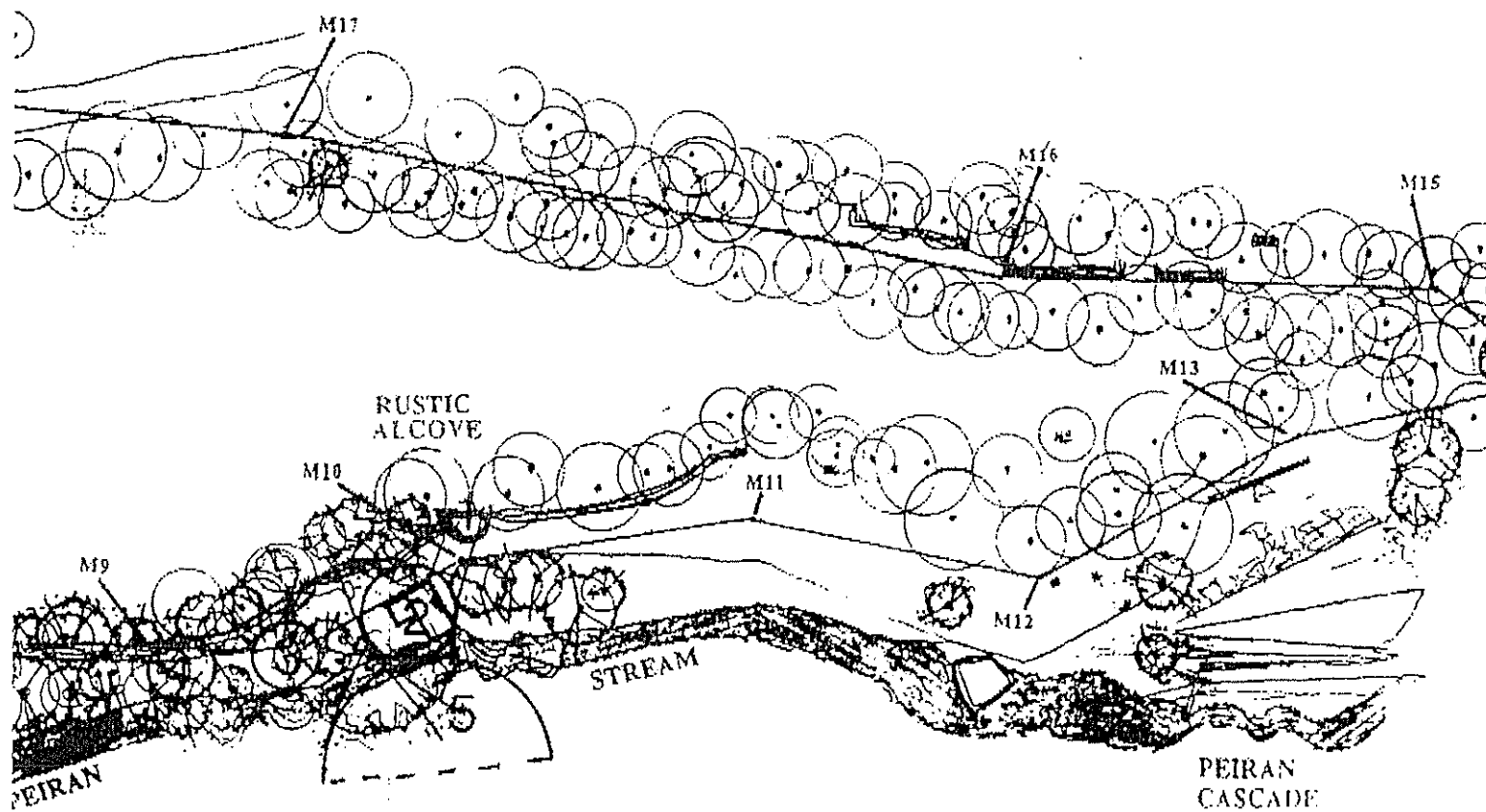


cc C. Houlder:

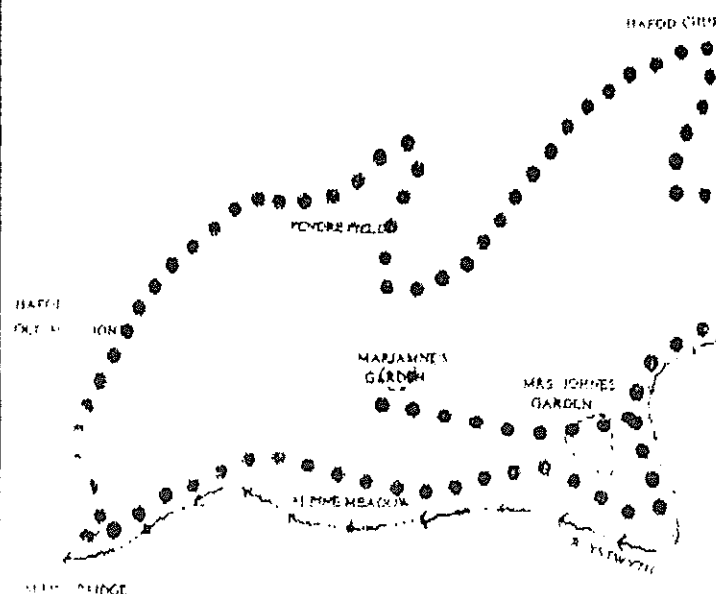
Chris - I should be most grateful if you (as the archaeological Trustee) could produce a spec for DAT's work at the Rustic Alcove. This is really needed as soon as you could manage

M. Norman

Ken:
I can provide more copies of this 1:500 plan if required. Andrew.



HAFOD LADIES' WALK: CONTEXT M
SCALE 1:10,000



HAFOD RUSTIC ALCOVE

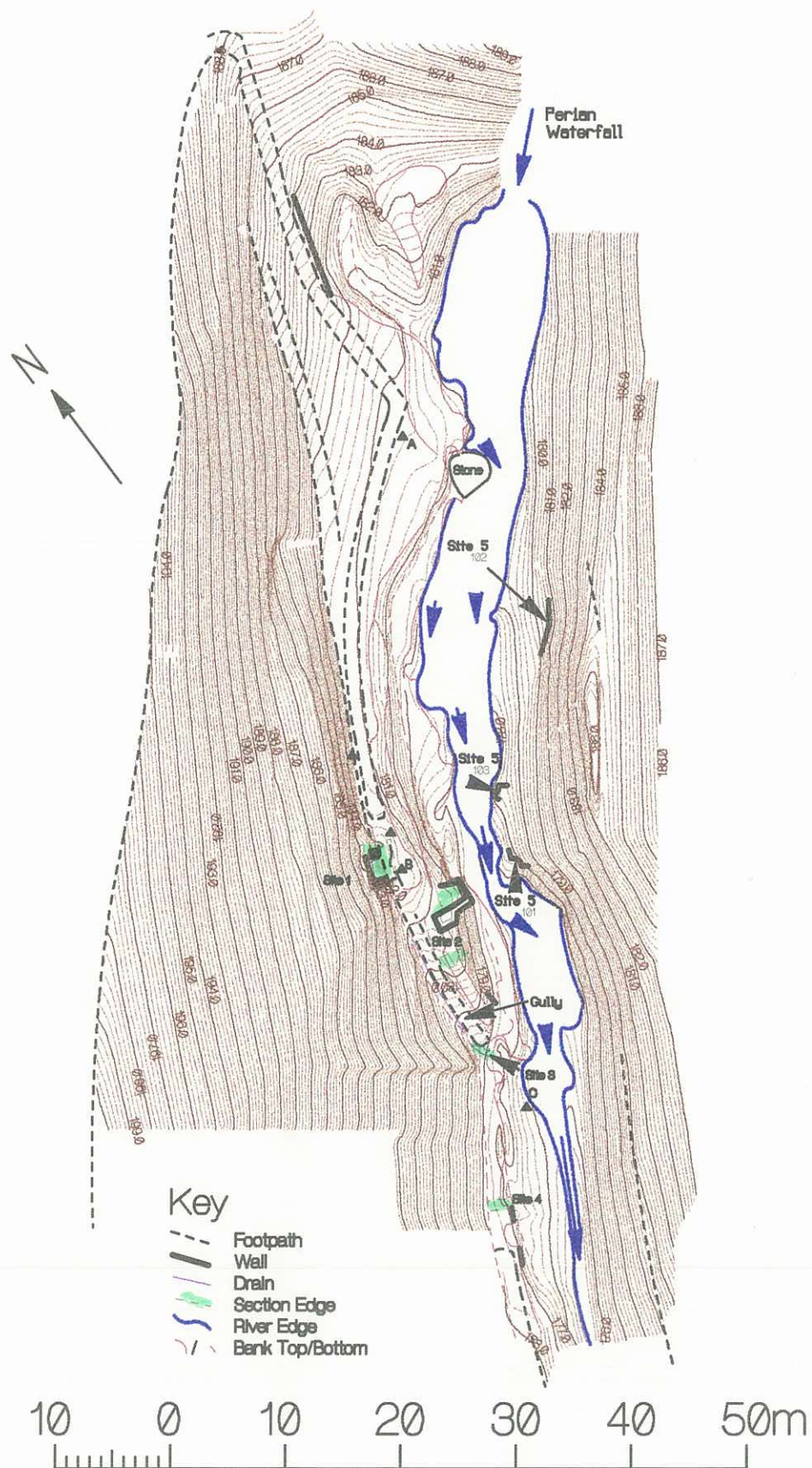


Figure 2

HAFOD RUSTIC ALCOVE

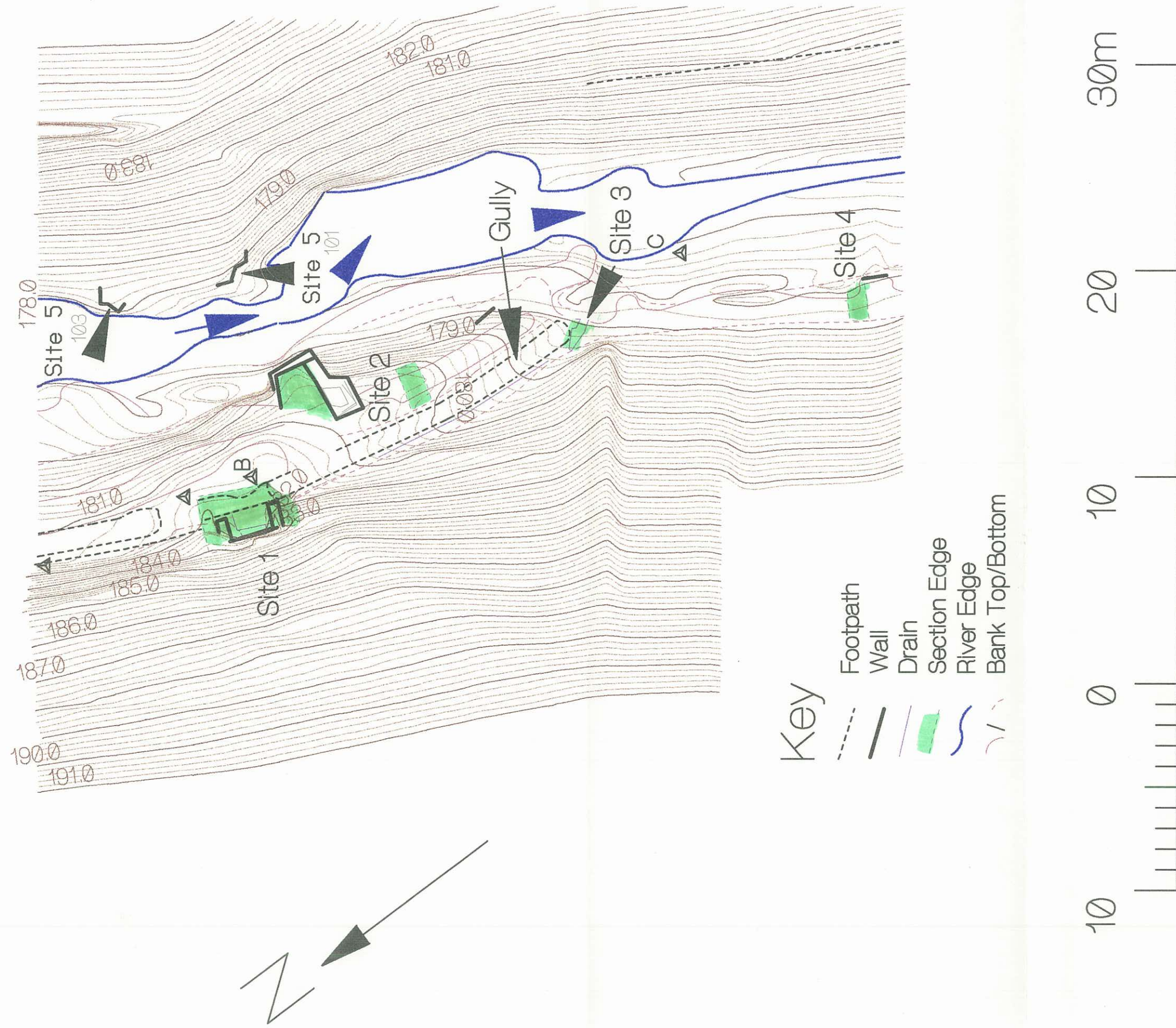


Figure 3

Site 1: Gazebo Elevation and Plan

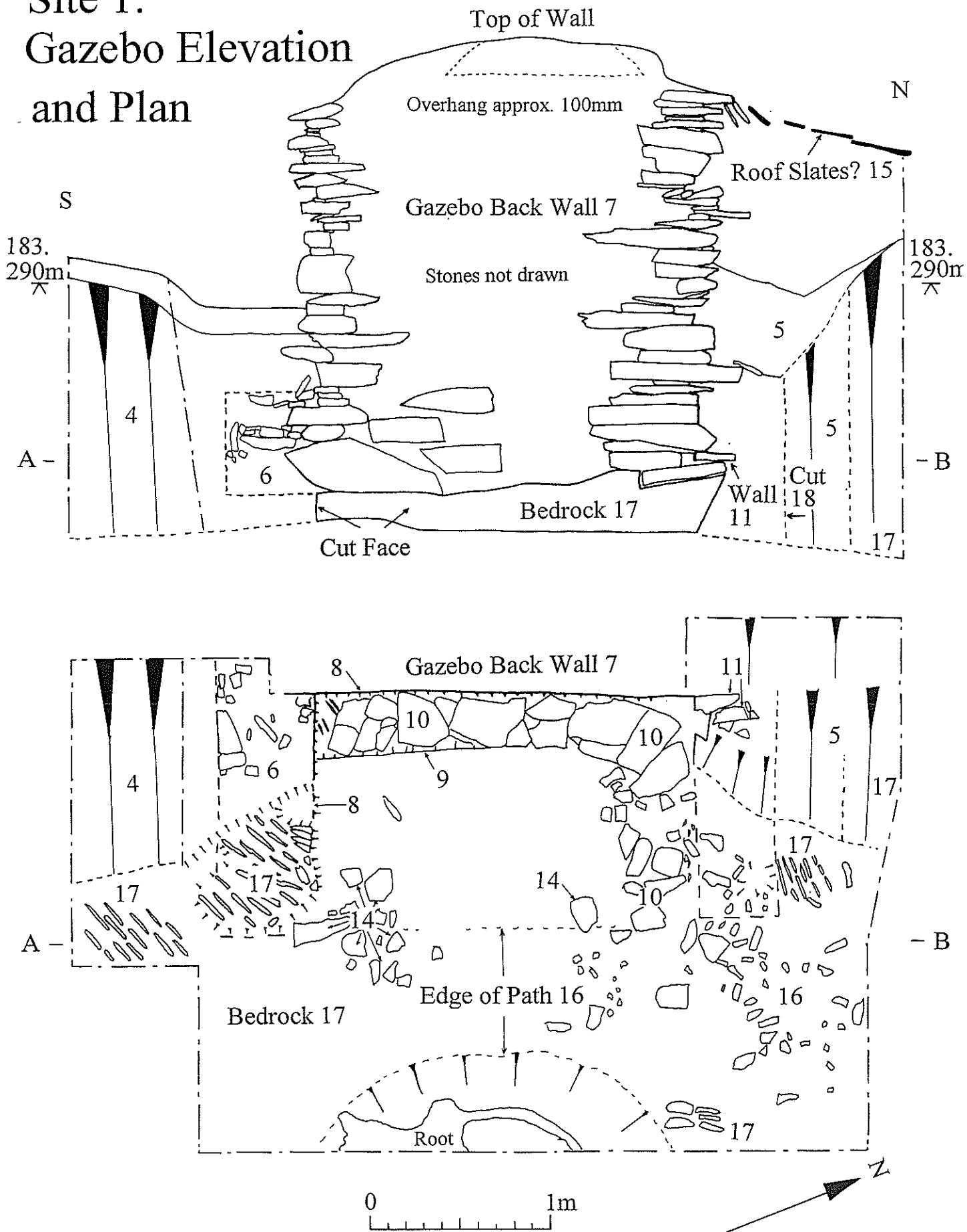


Figure 4

Site 2: Bridge Pier? 'L'-Shaped Wall Elevation and Plan

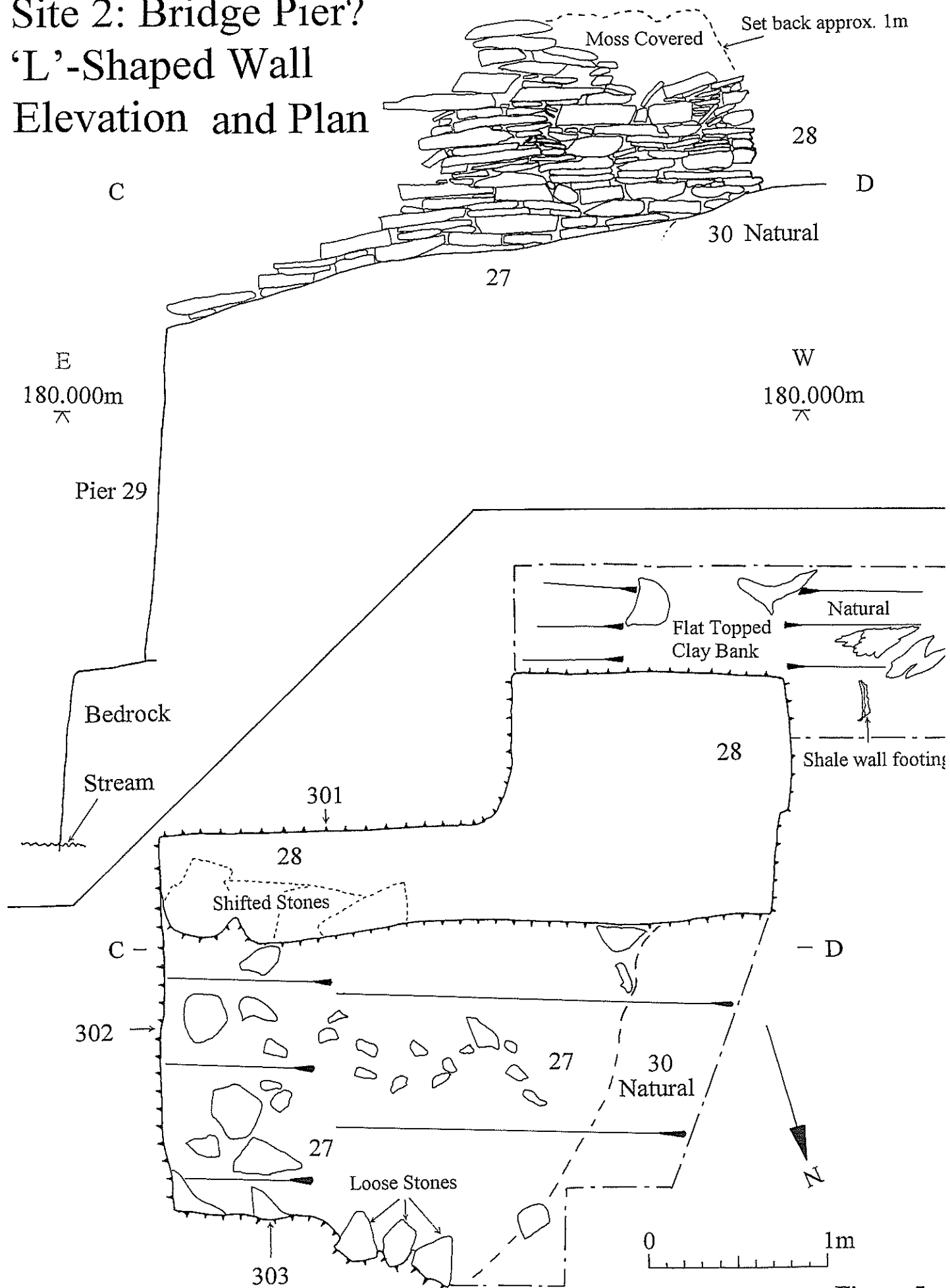


Figure 5

Site 2: Pier Elevations

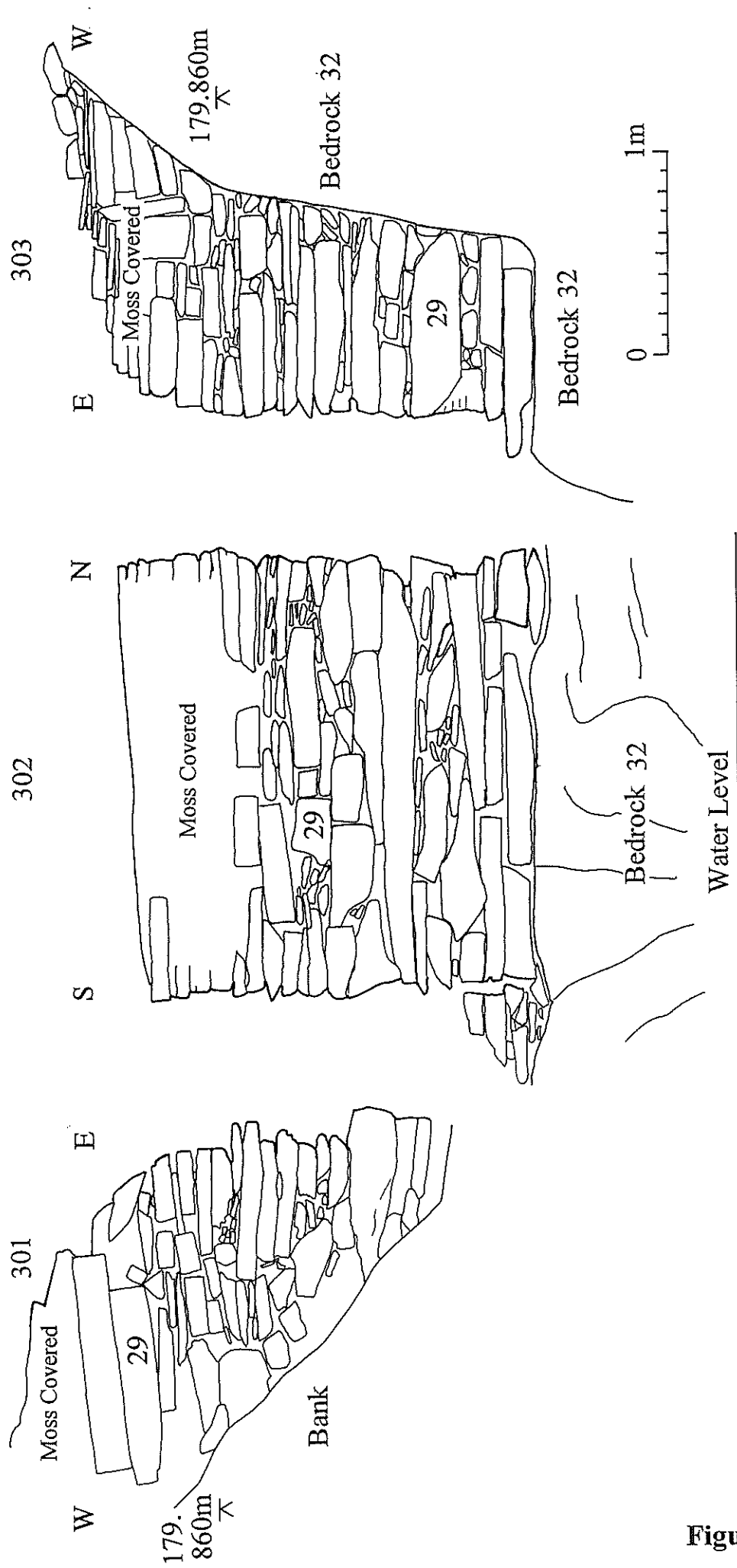


Figure 6



Figure 7

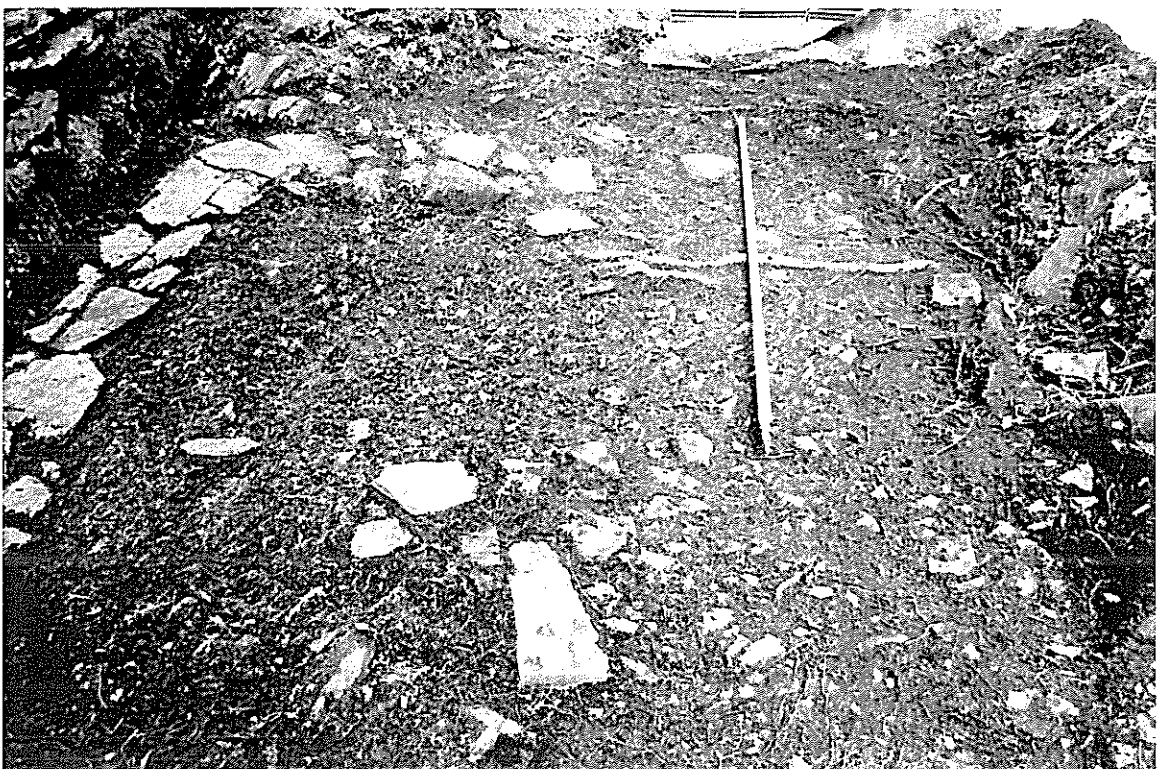


Figure 8

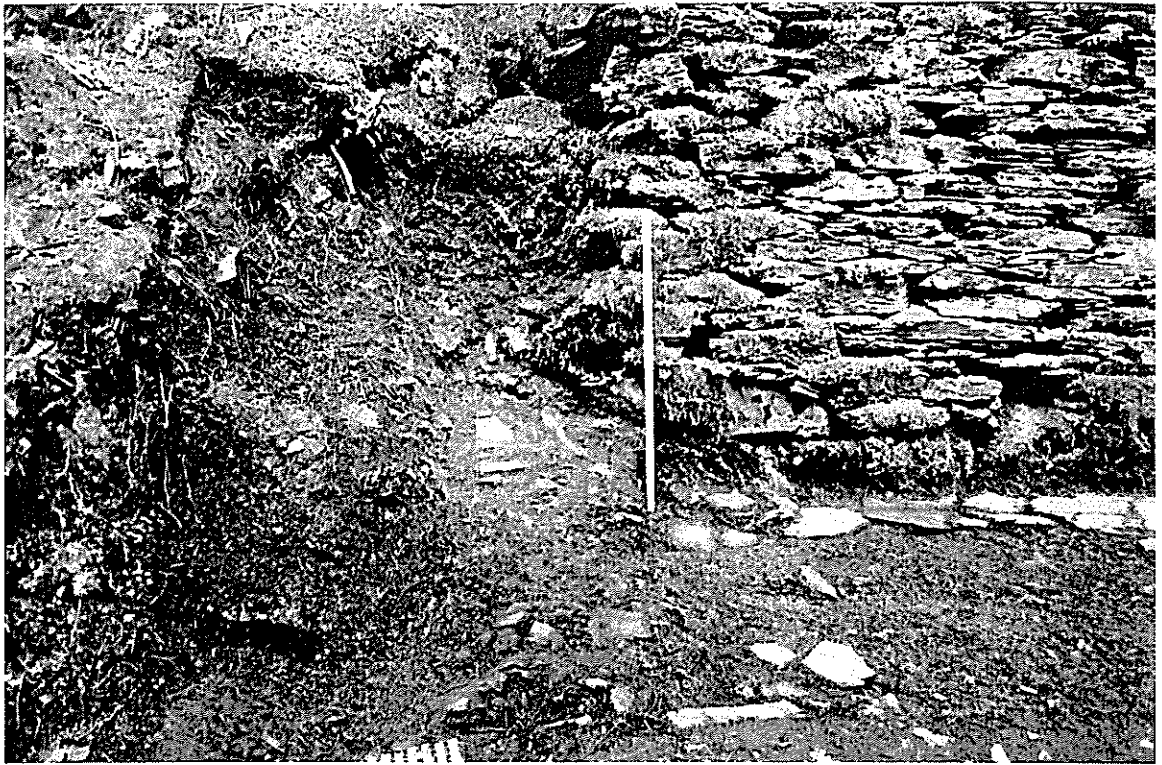


Figure 9



Figure 10

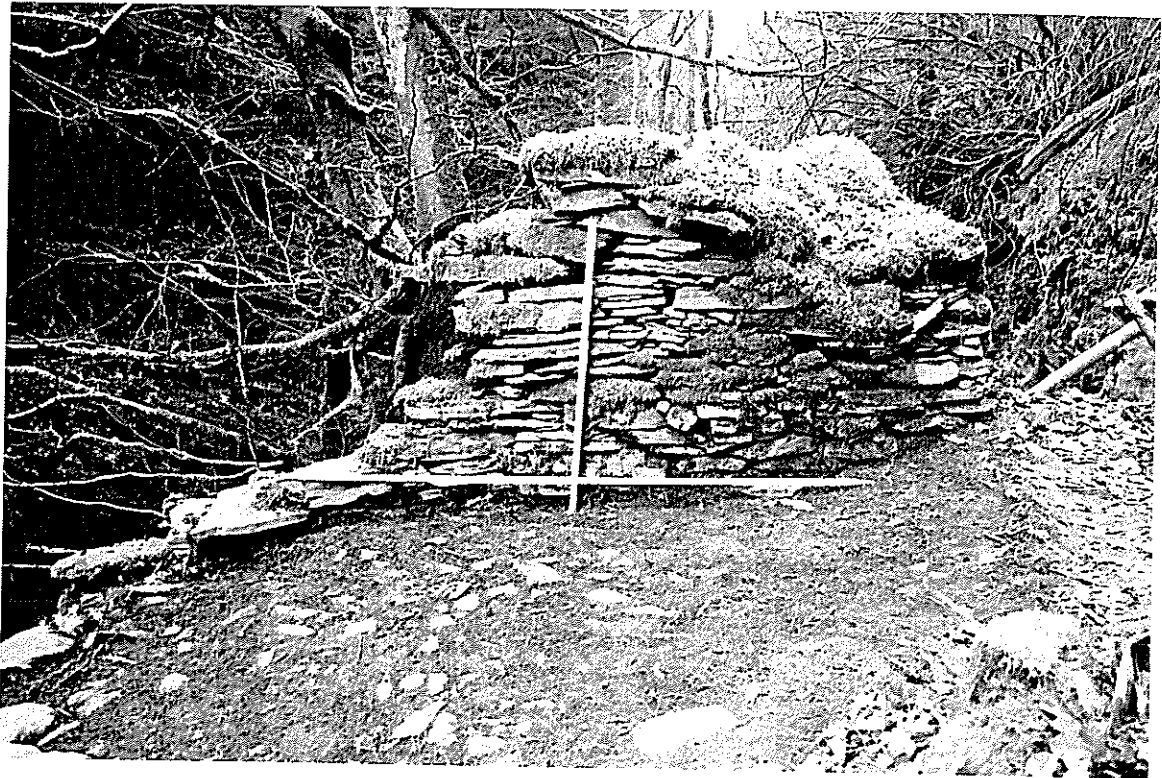


Figure 11



Figure 12

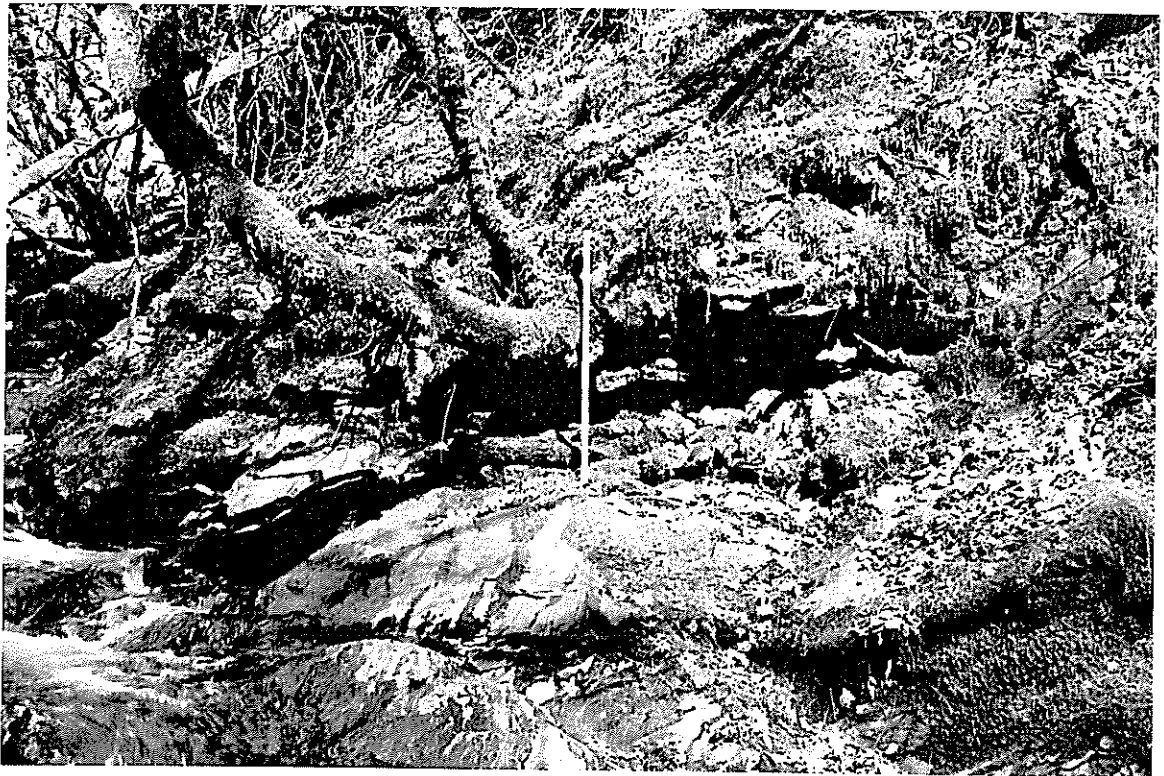


Figure 13

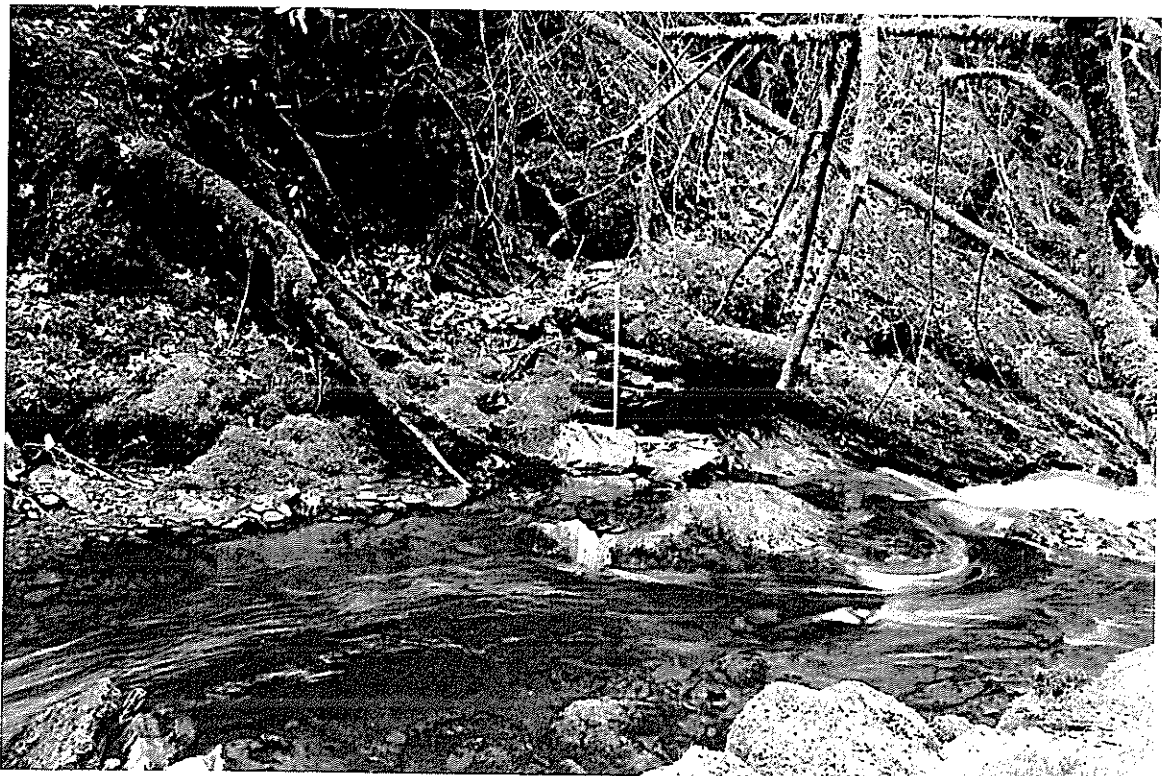


Figure 14



Figure 15

Site 2: Pier Elevations

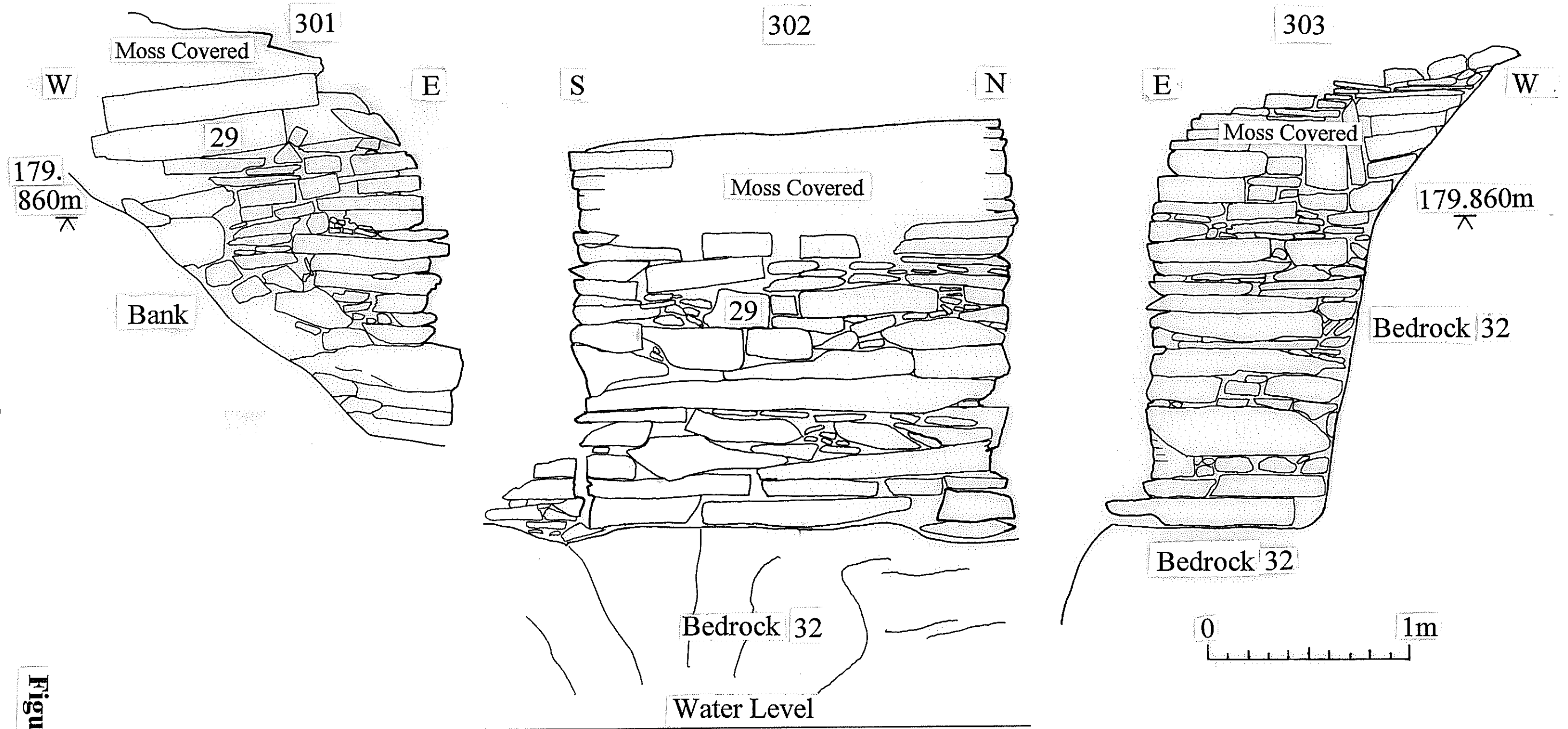


Figure 6

Site 1: Gazebo Elevation and Plan

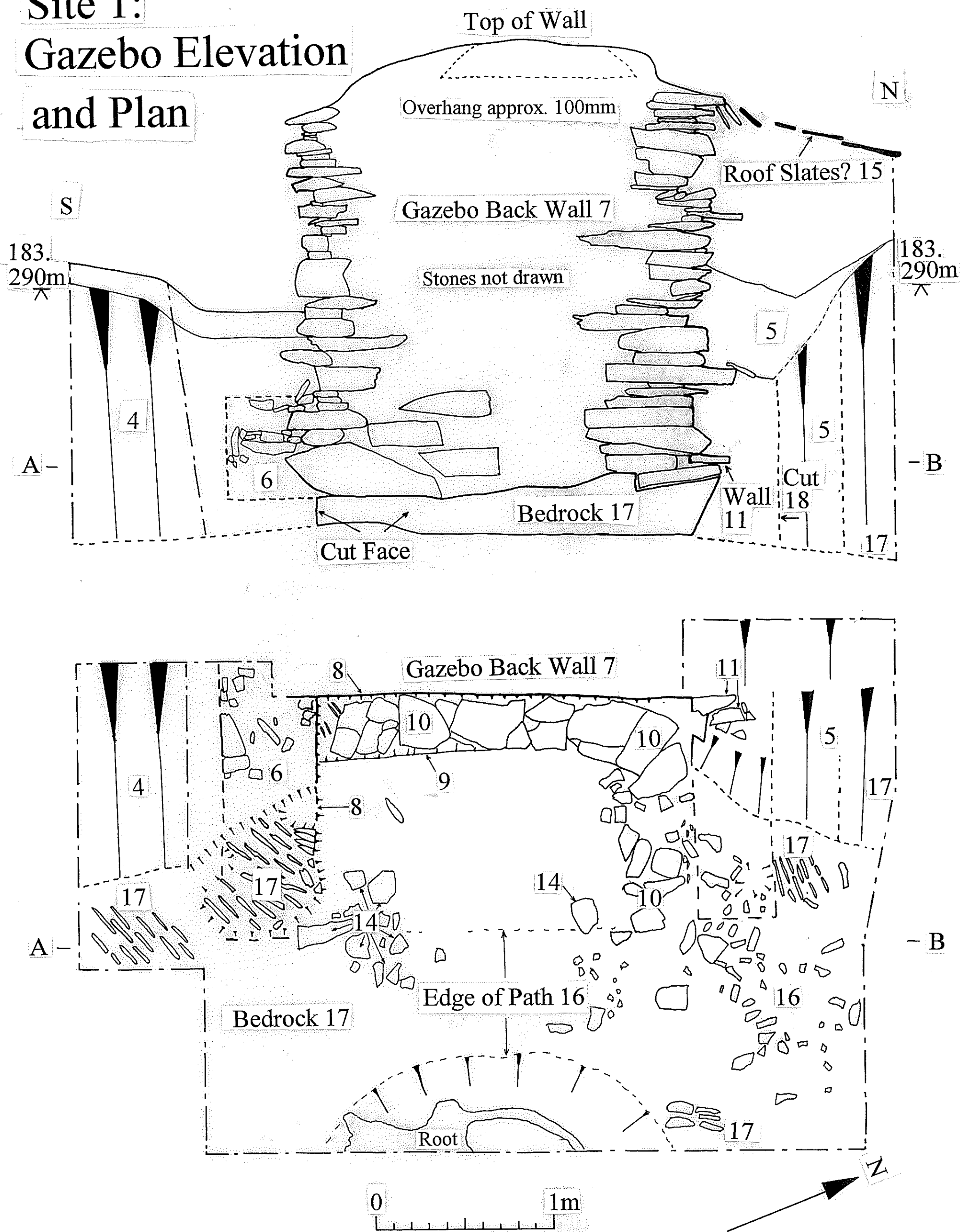


Figure 4

Site 2: Bridge Pier? 'L'-Shaped Wall Elevation and Plan

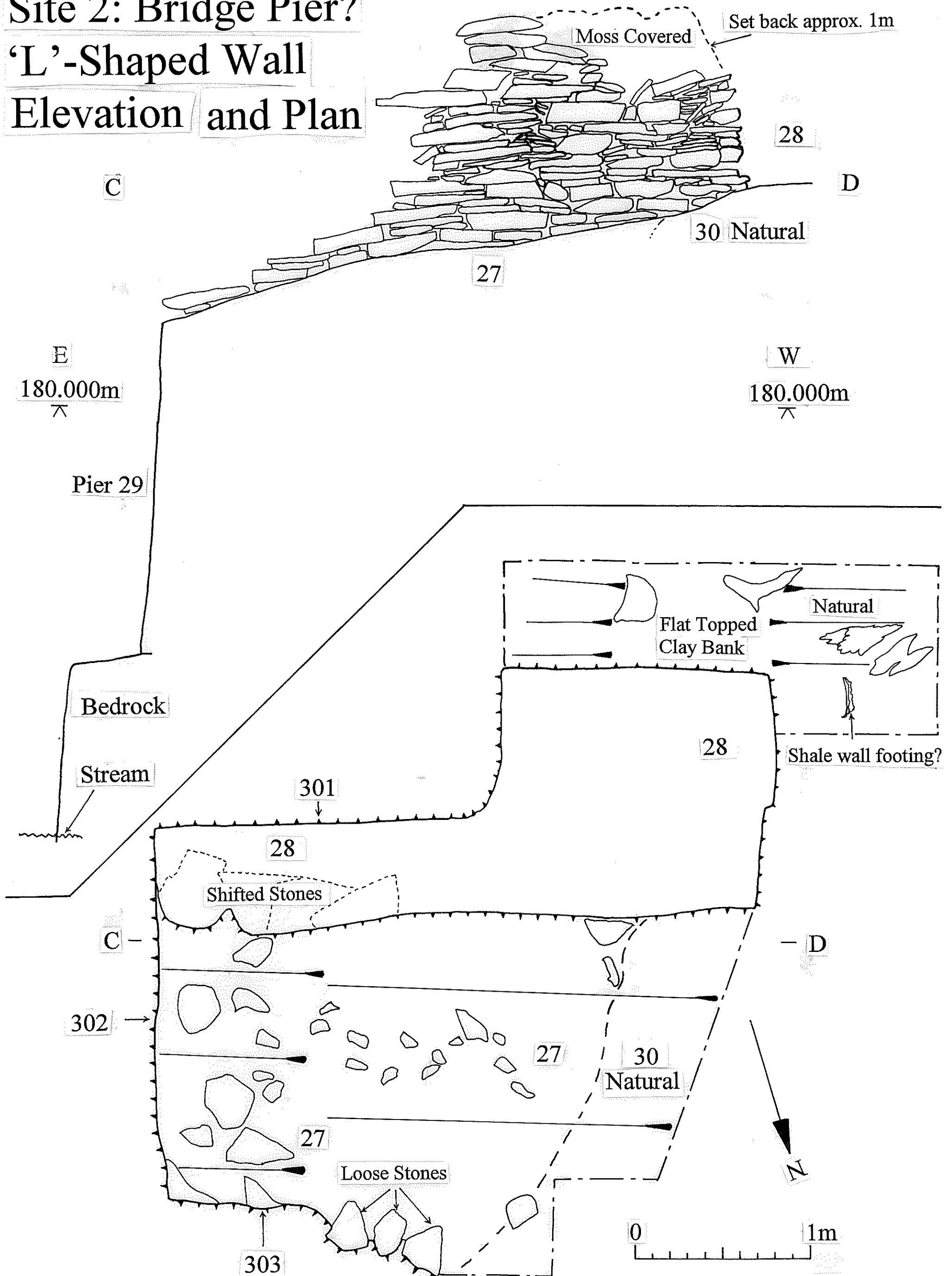


Figure 5