



DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD

24/03/95



CAPEL IWAN CRUGYGORLLWYN FIVE ROADS

WATERMAIN RENEWAL SCHEME

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Project Record No. ~~29798~~ 42685

MARCH 1995

Commissioned by: DWR CYMRU

Report by:

N A Page

of

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd

The Shire Hall

8 Carmarthen Street

Llandeilo

Dyfed SA19 6AF

Tel (01558) 823121

Fax (01558) 823133



CONTENTS

Summary	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Physical environment	4
3. Results of watching brief	5
4. Conclusions	7
Catalogue of watching brief archive	8
Bibliography	9
Figure One: Sites location plan	
Figure Two: The burnt mounds	
Figure Three: The pump house	

SUMMARY

Following recommendations outlined in an archaeological impact assessment (Murphy and Sambrook, 1994) of the route of the Capel Iwan - Crugygorllwyn - Five Roads watermain renewal scheme Dwr Cymru agreed to a watching brief on identified sections of the route. The watching brief, carried out by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field operations, was necessary to record a number of archaeological sites which would be affected by the works.

The sites included two prehistoric burnt mounds (mounds of heat shattered stones) which are probable cooking places indicating some form of settlement, a pump house which formerly supplied a nearby farm, and a disused mill leat. Only the burnt mounds were directly affected, one almost totally destroyed.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project commission

The watching brief was the second phase of archaeological works on the Capel Iwan - Crugygorllwyn - Five Roads watermain renewal scheme, and it follows recommendations made in the initial assessment (Murphy and Sambrook, 1994).

1.2 Scope of project

The watching brief comprised a number of site visits to record those features previously identified as liable to significant damage, and to locate any unknown sites affected by the works.

1.3 Report outline

This report outlines the physical environment of the watching brief site (Section 2), before summarising the results of the fieldwork (Section 3). Conclusions based on the data in Sections 2 and 3 are detailed in Section 4.

1.4 Acknowledgements

The report was prepared by N A Page, who is grateful to Mr R Hamer, Resident Engineer, Acer Wallace Evans, for his help during the fieldwork.

2. THE SITE

2.1 Location and topography

The features to be recorded were at the western extreme of the route in the valley containing the Afon Mamog, and lay on the eastern edge of Capel Iwan village. All the features lay on the valley bottom on the northern bank of the Afon Mamog, at an altitude of c.135m aOD. At this point the valley is very narrow, with steeply rising ground to both the north and south. The ground is very wet and marshy, a situation made worse by the very wet winter.

3. RESULTS OF WATCHING BRIEF

3.1 Methodology

A number of archaeological features previously identified (Murphy and Sambrook 1994) lay on the line of the watermain but only the two mound sites 14954 and 14970 were directly affected. Both sites were recorded, along with a stone-built pump house and the remains of a mill leat.

Following the recording of the known sites, the route of the watermain was examined to determine the presence or otherwise of any unknown archaeological sites or features. No new sites were recorded.

3.2 Burnt Mound 14954 (Fig 2)

A circular mound of small fragments of heat shattered shale and charcoal, originally 9m dia.: only the southern 3.5m of the mound survived the rest had been truncated during topsoil stripping and deep cutting the pipe trench.

The mound was positioned on the northern bank of the Afon Mamog, and when first recorded stood to c.1m in height (Murphy and Sambrook 1994, 7). The surviving section of the mound was only c.0.3m high.

There were no other features, or artefacts associated with the mound.

3.3 Burnt Mound 14970 (Fig 2)

An ovoid mound of heat shattered shale and charcoal, formerly c.9m dia.. This mound had been truncated on both its southern edge and its west side leaving a surviving mound c.9m x 4.5m. The southern end had been eroded by the action of the Afon Mamog, whilst the west side had been damaged during topsoil stripping.

There were no other features or artefacts recorded near the mound.

3.4 Pump house (Fig 3)

A stone-built pump house, 6.84m x 2.91m, built to house a water pump that supplied Gelynen Farm which stands on the slope above. The pump is still *in situ*, although now in a fairly rusted state. The water was fed through a 0.2m dia. metal pipe to the farm.

It appears that the pump was driven by a generator which stood on a concrete engine block at the west end of the building. The generator had been removed, but the four mounting bolts were still present, giving an indication of its size. A timber frame which contained the valve gear (operating wheels etc.) stood in the entrance. It appears to have

been necessary to have removed the right hand door to install this frame. The original left hand door was intact.

3.5 Mill leat

The mill leat, which joined the Afon Mamog inside the easement, was not affected by the works, so was not investigated beyond a superficial examination of an eroded section of the bank.

The leat was constructed into the northern slope of the valley and possibly ran from the site of a medieval mill (PRN 12627) to the Afon Mamog. The downhill side of the leat was constructed from large stone blocks and slabs, now turf covered, that did not appear, at least in the exposed section, to have been laid as a wall, but rather randomly placed.

At the eastern end where it joined the stream the leat had been widened and possibly stone-lined. One large stone slab appeared to be *in situ* against the southern edge.

Despite being heavily silted the leat is still a prominent topographical feature in the landscape.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 General

The only archaeological sites affected during the works were at the west end of the route, and both were prehistoric burnt mounds. The sites of the pump house and mill leat were inside the easement but not affected by the works.

4.2 Burnt Mounds 14954 and 14970

Burnt mounds are characteristically made up of heat shattered stones, and located near to a watercourse; in both respects these two mounds were typical. Many mounds have associated pits, and structures, but it was not possible to determine whether there were any associated with these mounds as the works had destroyed the stratigraphy around and below them, thereby removing any evidence.

There are a number of possible uses for the heated stones that made up the mounds, such as their use in "sweat lodges", which would have operated like a sauna, with the heated stones dropped into water to produce steam (Barfield and Hodder, 1987; Barfield 1990). However, the most likely use of the stones was for cooking: the heated stones would be dropped into a water-filled pit to heat the water, thereby boiling any food placed in the water.

Experiments showed that it was possible to cook a leg of lamb in this fashion. They also revealed that it may take from between 20 - 60 boilings to achieve a mound of fractured stones similar in size to these mounds (James 1986; Williams 1990; 131-132). This suggests that they were not associated with particularly long term occupation, and may have been eating places associated with hunting.

4.3 The pump house

The excellent construction of the pump house shows the importance of a reliable and convenient water supply to those farms in locations which are difficult to service. Although a relatively small building it reflects a large investment of finance and labour in its construction. Internally it is still remarkably intact, with the pump and valve gear surviving, only the generator has been removed, presumably to work somewhere else on the farm.

4.4 The mill leat

The mill leat first appears on late 19th century plans of the area (Murphy and Sambrook 1994, 7), and is probably associated with the present mill building (PRN 15405) rather than the suspected medieval mill which stood somewhere near Banc-y-Felin (PRN 12627).

CATALOGUE OF WATCHING BRIEF ARCHIVE

The fieldwork archive indexed according to the National Monuments Record (NMR) material categories is held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Section, and contains the following:

- A. Copy of the report.
- B. Notes made during fieldwork.
- C. Site photographs (Monochrome and colour slide, 35mm)
- I. Annotated copies of the report.
- L. Project brief.
- M. Correspondence, excluding matters relating to confidential or financial matters.

There is no material for categories **D, E, F, G, H, K** and **N**.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barfield L & 1987 Burnt Mounds as Saunas, and the Prehistory
Hodder M of Bathing. *Antiquity*, 61, 370-379.
- Barfield L 1990 Hot Stones; Hot Food or Hot baths? In Burnt
 Mounds and Hot Stone Technology: papers
 from the second International Burnt Mound
 Conference, Sandwell, 12th-14th October 1990,
 Eds. M A Hodder and L H Barfield.
- Murphy K & 1994 *Report on the Archaeological Impact of the*
Sambrook P *Proposed watermain renewal scheme, Capel*
 Iwan-Crugygorllwyn-Five Roads. Unpublished
 DAT report.
- James H J 1986 Excavations of Burnt Mounds at carne, nr
 Fishguard, 1979 and 1981. *Bull. Board Celtic Stud.*
 33, 245-65.
- Williams G 1990 Burnt Mounds in South-West Wales. in
 Burnt Offerings: International Contributions to
 Burnt Mound Archaeology, compiled by V
 Buckley. Academic Publications, Dublin.

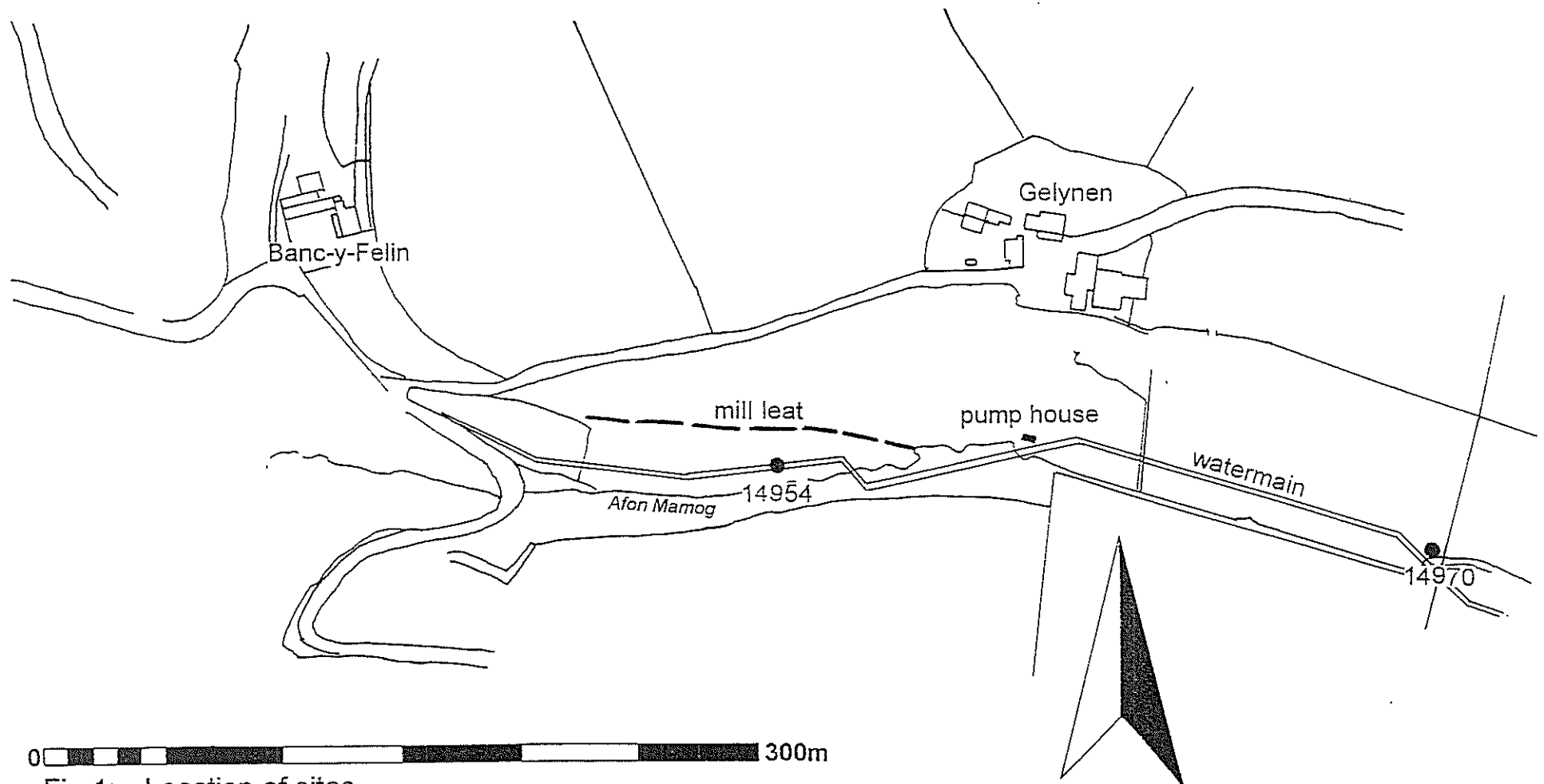
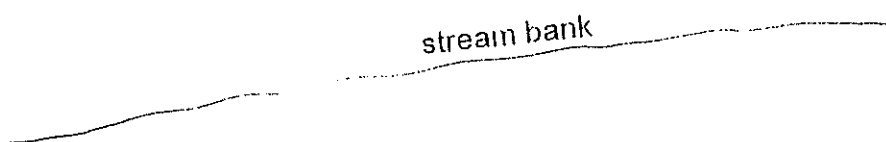
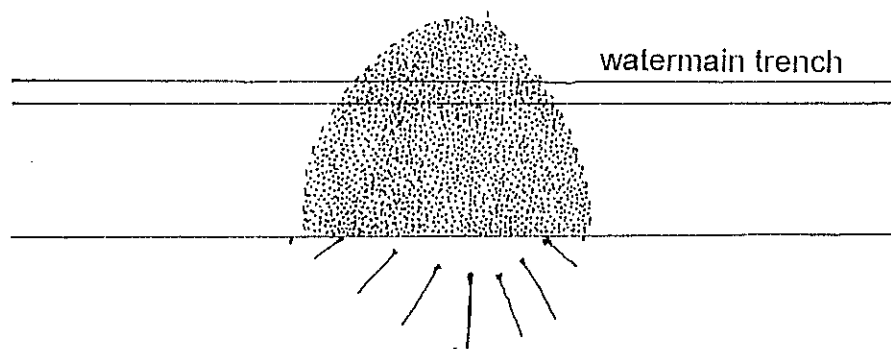

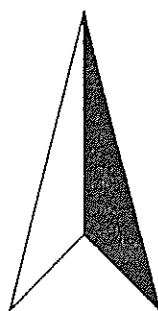
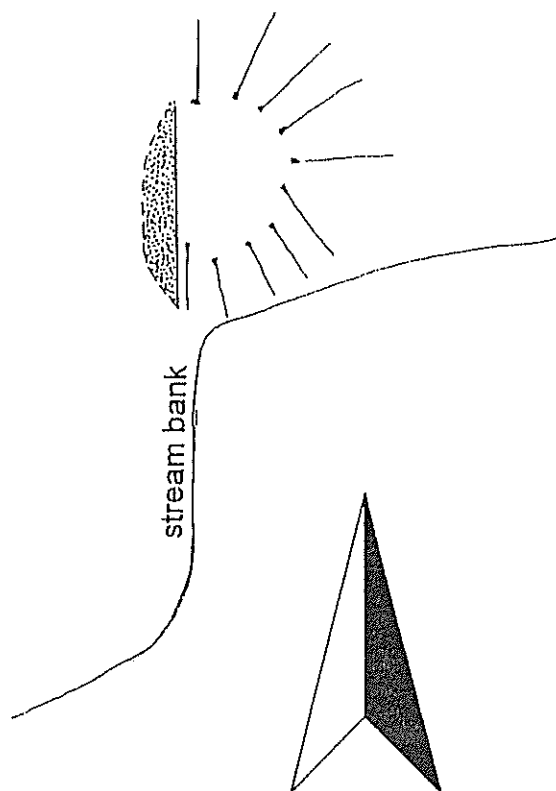


Fig 1:- Location of sites

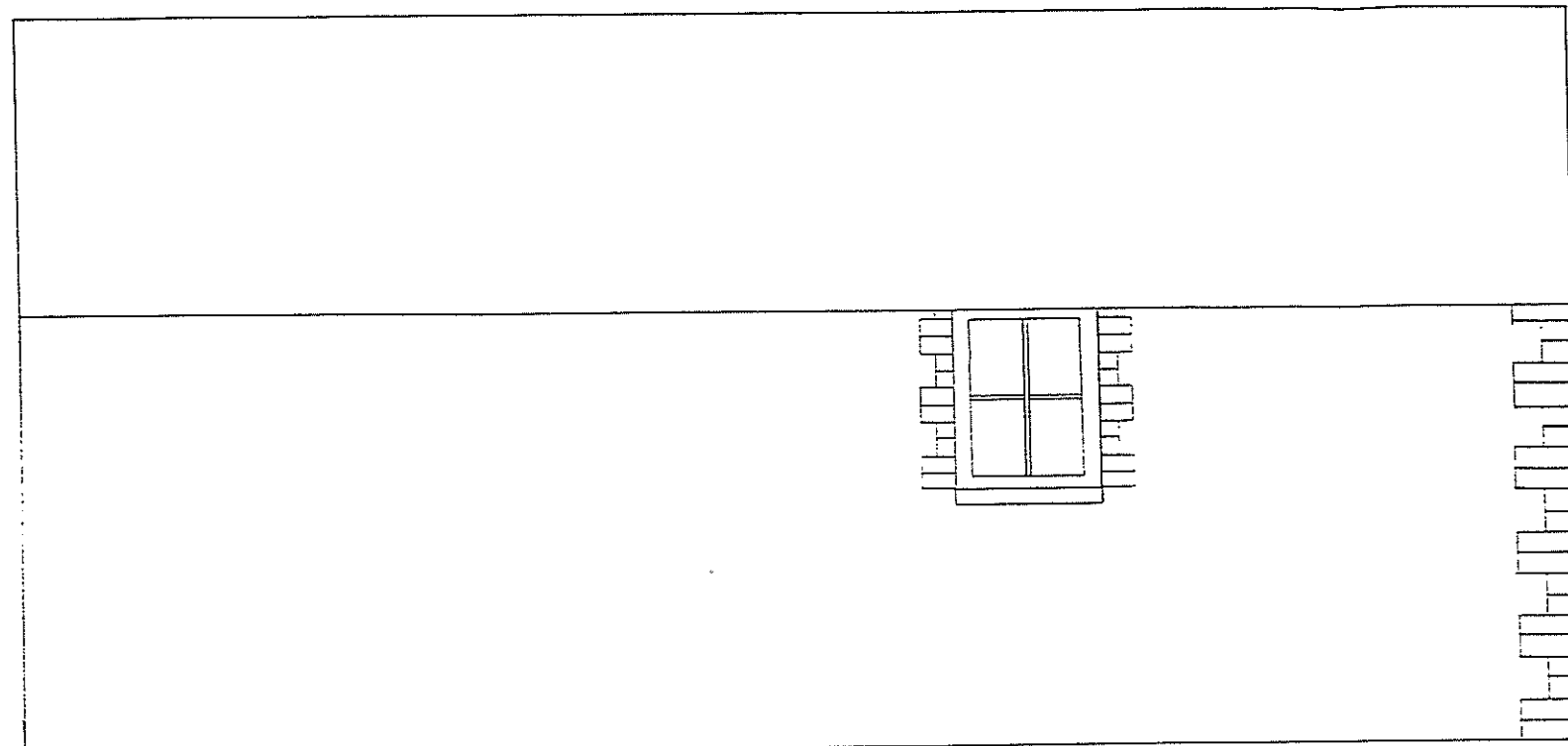


 = former extent of mound

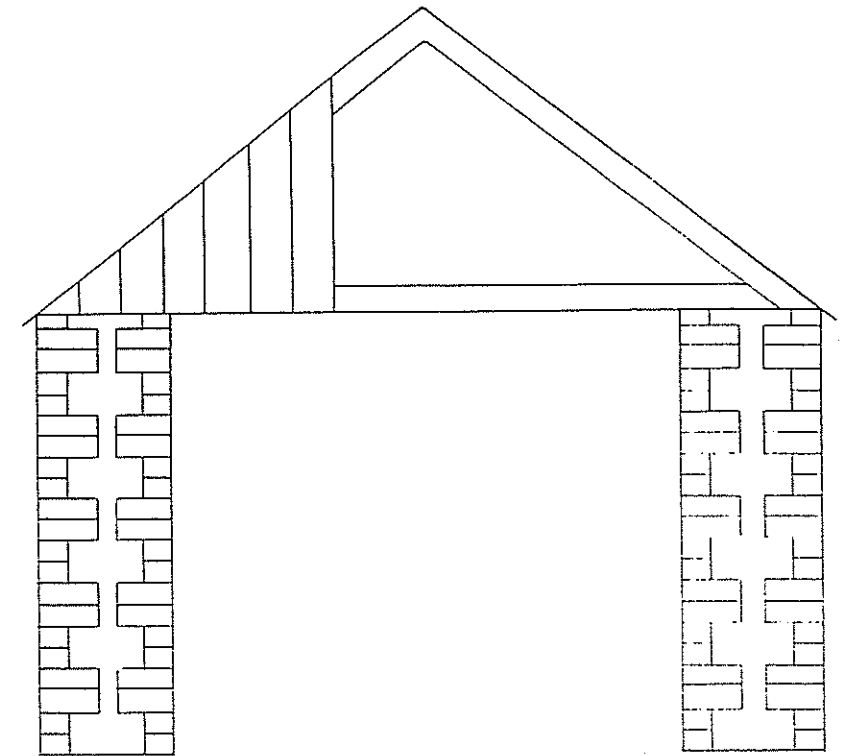


0  10m

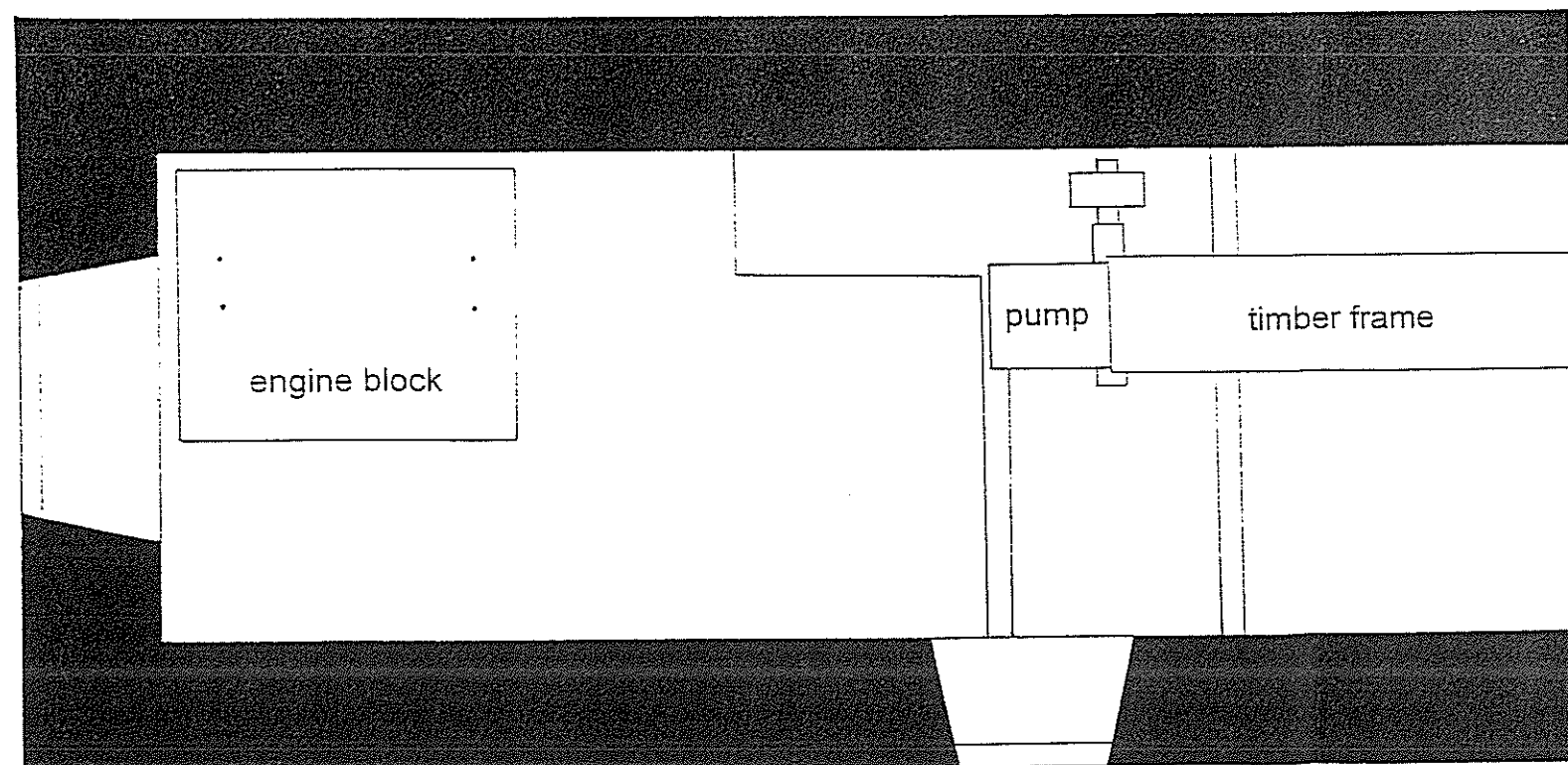
Fig 2:- Burnt Mounds 14954 (top) and 14970 (bottom)



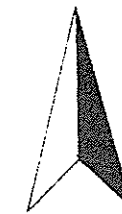
south elevation



east elevation



ground plan



0 3m

Fig 3:- Pump house