

DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD



CROFTUFTY SOLVA

PEMBROKESHIRE

STANDING BUILDING RECORDING

Project Record No. 8885

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Commissioned by: Cadw

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Summary

Standing building recording and one small trial trench were undertaken for Cadw on this ruined farmhouse with Flemish-style chimney. Only the chimney and probably some of the opposite wall can be guaranteed to be of any antiquity (probably early post medieval), with the rest of the structure having been rebuilt or extended at later dates. Much of the 1993 archaeological assessment/evaluation report is reproduced again here.

Purpose

To record and interpret the remains of the main farmhouse building, before the building is renovated.

Location

Croftufty Farmhouse (SM 788252) is situated between the village of Solva and the city of St. David's in Pembrokeshire and lies within the parish of Whitchurch. The ruins are to be found near some modern agricultural buildings, approximately 250m to the south of St. David's Airfield (figure 1).

Description

The remains of the farmhouse are within a sub-square/rectangular enclosure, now with modern buildings on its eastern side (figure 6). The original hedge bank on the eastern side has been removed.

In the western part of the south side of the compound there is an orchard (figure 6), now very overgrown, enclosed by Pembrokeshire style hedge banks; within this there was probably a pigsty. The original entrance to this orchard is in the middle of its northern side, and no other entrances are visible. Directly to the east of the orchard is a substantially intact outbuilding, which has now been almost completely renovated into a dwelling. The remains of stone steps up to the first floor are intact and are on the western (orchard) side of the building (figure 6).

The western side of the compound is bounded by sizable Pembrokeshire style hedge banks, now much overgrown, with a gateway to the west.

On the northern side of the enclosure, the main entrance lane is to the west, and in the centre of the northern Pembrokeshire hedge bank there is an old gateway.

The farmhouse is located towards the western side of the compound, with the main alignment of the farmhouse just off a north-south orientation (figure 6). The earlier farmhouse has been extended to the north, continuing on the alignment of the front (eastern) wall of the house, but is slightly narrower overall than the main structure. The rear (western) side is connected to the earlier structure by an angled doorway (figures 5 and 7).

A lean-to was built against the southern part of the western side of the main farmhouse structure (figure 7); it has a slate roof with wooden pegging (photo 526).

In the centre of the western side of the farmhouse a two story extension has been built. This had the remains of a fireplace on the ground floor and a large southern window. The first floor appears to have had one or two small windows in the pine (gable) end (figure 2).

At the northern end of the west side of the main farmhouse, there are the remains of a room with many windows; this structure butts all other walls. Butting the north end of the farmhouse there is a lean-to building, narrower than the farmhouse (figures 6 and 7); little of this now remains. To the east of the farmhouse at the northern end there are the ruined remains of an outbuilding or outbuildings (figure 6).

Much of the enclosure is covered with rubble and building materials. Although the area directly in front of the farmhouse is clear there are no signs of the well, thought to be located in this area.

Site History

The earliest date of Croftufty farmhouse is unknown. Within the remaining ruins a probable structural sequence can be seen; however, the dating of this can only be surmised on stylistic grounds, with the later phases being eighteenth or nineteenth century.

The lateral fireplace with a round upper chimney stack (figure 2), often referred to as 'Flemish style' (Barnwell 1862), may date from the early post-medieval period, if not before (Allen 1902, Smith 1988). It has been suggested that this style of chimney stack may be derived from high status medieval buildings, such as those that survive at the Bishop's Palace in St. David's and Flimston, near Castlemartin. This stack, however, is shorter and conical, and may well be post-medieval, and therefore have no direct link to high-status medieval buildings (pers comm., A J Parkinson of RCAHMW 1994).

The farmhouse was probably last occupied in the middle to late 1950's; its abandonment possibly came about due to a large amount of farmland, originally some 56 hectares (140 acres), being taken for the construction of St David's airfield during the Second World War.

The farmhouse building, being described as in a ruinous state, became a Scheduled Ancient Monument in 1978. In a report of a visit in 1986 by the local Field Monument Warden, specific mention is made of the hold that vegetation had taken on the site; however, no action was taken and the upper part of the chimney stack subsequently collapsed.

A planning application was made to the National Park in May 1989, to convert the outbuildings into two holiday homes and the farmhouse into a residential dwelling; permission was granted in August 1989. The application by the landowners for Scheduled Monument Consent was given in November 1991, subject to conditions. In January 1992 Cadw asked Dyfed Archaeological Trust for comments on the application.

In March and April 1992 a report on the standing structure was made by Mr A Parkinson, of RCAHMW, and the drawing of the standing chimney and provisional phase plans are reproduced again within this report (figures 2, 3, and 4).

Field evaluation was undertaken by Dyfed Archaeological Trust in 1993 (Crane 1993). This consisted mainly of clearing the undergrowth from the interior of the farmhouse and excavation of a long trench down the centre of the main part of the building. It was discovered that there were no earlier features of any consequence below the latest surviving floor and that the wall footings of the building, where seen, were constructed onto the geological subsoil.

This 1993 evaluation concluded that the sequence of this building would be unlikely to be resolved below ground, due to the lack of stratified deposits either within or against the outside of the farmhouse. However, there were considered to be two areas where excavation might prove to be beneficial: within the central west extension to see if there was any evidence of the line of the postulated wall running from the back of the fireplace (figure 3); the other would be just inside the building to the south of the northern doorway to see if there were any traces of an original shorter north end to the farmhouse (figure 3).

It was also considered that, in preference to a watching brief, the dismantling of the walls around the fireplace area should be undertaken by suitably qualified personnel, making records as necessary. Of particular interest here was the relationship between the fireplace and the walls, and whether there was a rear entrance to the passage, possibly with a porch, as in a number of houses of this type in the area (Allen 1902). After dismantling of this fireplace area to ground level a small excavation might give evidence for the sequence and earlier layout, if this could not be seen during the dismantling.

During the interval between the 1993 fieldwork and the 1995 building recording, the structure had become more ruinous. This was especially noticeable on the central western extension of the farmhouse, in the later structure to the north and in parts of the front of the farmhouse. The southern pine end and the area around the Flemish chimney had suffered to a lesser extent; however, the upper part of the remains of the chimney had fallen and collapse of the rest of the fireplace now appeared imminent.

Aims and Objective

The aim of the 1995 project was to undertake standing building recording of the farmhouse, both photographic and drawn; to make a large scale plan of the building; and ascertain any visible sequence to the structure. The objective was to obtain the structural record of this building before it was lost.

Methodologies and Results

At the commencement of the fieldwork the site was cleared by hand and a petrol strimmer. The large sycamore tree growing in the chimney was cut down, permission having been obtained from the owner. This tree was estimated as approximately 50 years old. Much of the ivy was removed from the walls. The remains of the standing building were then photographed with mono print and colour slide films (see appendices).

The remains of the chimney base were far more ruinous than when previously recorded in 1993. This area, along with the interior of the fireplace was cleared of loose rubble. This clearance was not possible in 1993, due to the then imminent collapse of the remaining upper part of the chimney. The exterior area directly to the south of the chimney base was excavated down to subsoil, and the west elevation of that part of the main farmhouse wall was drawn at 1:20 (drawing 604). The west elevation of the chimney was also drawn (drawing 605).

The interior elevation of the west wall was drawn stone by stone at 1:20 scale (figures 9, 10 and 11).

The exterior front elevation was drawn at 1:20, most of this was covered in hard cement render and pebble dash and, even where visible, individual stones were not drawn (figure 12).

Part of the interior front elevation was drawn, from north of the main doorway to the lower window (drawing 605). The plaster on part of this was then removed to reveal the blocking of an alcove and this section was redrawn (drawing 606).

A small trench was excavated through the collapsed rubble in the area between the south side of the chimney and the lean-to structure (figure 7). After removal of the debris the surface below was found to be geological subsoil with a patch of thin mortar on it. This would appear to have been the ground level at the time that the building went out of use.

From the lower external walls of the chimney it was apparent that the rear of the structure had been added at a later date, and was built directly onto the subsoil, whereas the rear of the earlier chimney base was slightly offset and constructed into the subsoil. This rear extension may have been added when the very late post-medieval range and oven were constructed into the fireplace. This late range had a relatively small hole at its

rear which appeared to have taken the hot gases around both sides and to the rear of the large oven above (figure 7). From there the fumes were led round and into the northern side of the fireplace. This oven, approximately 300mm high and 750mm square, extended into the later structure butted on to the rear of the fireplace.

There was no indication in the top of the remaining chimney and adjacent walls of the position of the northern, outside, edge of the original fireplace walls, if they survived, as they were obscured by later building.

Directly to the south of the chimney in the main west wall of the farmhouse a window had been inserted (figures 9 and 10). This window lit the stairs and was between floor levels. South of the chimney, on the exterior face below the window, there were signs that this part of the wall may have been rebuilt. This was more evident in the interior, as the surviving inner wall face was nearly 100mm wider than the original face behind (figure 7). This inner face could be traced for approximately 1 metre to the south of the fireplace, but from there on and above, appeared to be dry or clay bond wall core of the later rebuild. No signs of an earlier doorway opposite the main front entrance could be seen, and appeared to be unlikely. This later widening of the wall stopped on a line above the southern part of the fireplace, possibly on an upstairs interior wall.

The alcove below and to the south of the window (figures 9 and 10), directly to the south of the fireplace, appeared to be contemporary with the later main wall build.

The interior walls opposite the main door, and on either side of the stairs were later than the rebuild of the main wall (figure 7), but had been partly keyed in. On the southern interior wall, main wall plaster could be seen in the butt joint.

The interior wall just to the south of the main door appeared to be contemporary with that part of the main wall; however the western end forming one side of the doorway into the southern wall was later. The interior wall to the north butted the main wall on its southern edge, but was bonded or keyed in at its northern edge. The impression was that the main front wall of the farmhouse, from south of this northern interior wall, including both sides of the main doorway, the southern room and to the south side of the chimney, was all of one later build. The windows and possibly the western doorway could be even later still.

This southern later phase, could however, be on the line of earlier walls, as was the case just to the south of the main chimney. The southern pine end had external offset footings, and these were only seen elsewhere at the base of the chimney, possibly indicating that these footings may have been earlier. Later, this pine end was externally slate hung from 1 metre above ground level (figure 9). This southern extension from just to the north of the main door always had an upper floor and did not appear to have been altered.

Most of the front wall of the house was covered in ivy. In 1993 some of this wall was in perilous condition, but much of this section had subsequently collapsed. Most of the ivy and loose stone was cleared from the remains. However most of the surviving front face was covered with hard cement render, pebble dashed and dark pink in colour and details of construction could not be seen in this area. A roof line to the south of the northern front door was revealed (figure 12). The later extension to the north was not rendered but showed no detail, other than possibly the north side of the door, which was of lime mortar construction, although this was probably contemporary.

The interior of the front elevation, opposite the main chimney, appeared to indicate that the upper floor had been altered and the first floor dormer window was later in date. This window had the remains of a wooden sash window with horns (figure 12), indicating the window frame was post-Georgian in date (Curl 1986).

The interior face just to the north of the chimney had a butt joint (figure 10). The part to the north of this joint was later than the fireplace and likely to be contemporary with, and part of, the building of the extension to the middle of the western side of the farmhouse (figure 7). The upper part of this later extension was built over part of the fireplace/chimney structure (figure 10), probably indicating that the first floor or the height of the building had been altered. This later building extended to the south side of the door, into the western extension.

On the north side of the door into the western section there was an earlier face, approximately half the width of the wall (figure 7); this inner face is just visible in the main elevation drawing (figure 10). The face was plastered and continued 500mm to the north before turning to the east, but not running so far as the later interior face (figure 7). This earlier build indicated that there was a doorway in this position previously. This part of the structure could be contemporary with the fireplace and chimney, if the doorway was set back on its southern side, as was the case on the northern side.

The plaster was stripped from the south side of this central western doorway, to see if there was an earlier face on the same alignment, but it proved to be all of a later single build (see above). The surviving large timber lintel of this doorway (figure 10) was possibly contemporary with the earlier wall on the northern side (the southern side having been inserted below the timber), as was the window aperture above. This window appeared to be later altered into a doorway for the first floor of the western extension, this remodelling having blocked the lower part of the window.

Pottery sherds from a single vessel were found in clay mortar above the doorway into the western extension (figure 10), approximately 350mm above the lintel and 200mm into the wall from the western side, and possibly

from the earlier build. Provisional identification (from Louise Lane) as a shallow bowl with almost no foot ring, sgraffito, probably Bristol or North Devon Gravel-free ware, date 17th-18thC. It must be noted that this part of the wall was very loose and had considerable root damage, therefore this pottery may have come from the later build.

To the north of the doorway into the mid western extension, by just under 2 metres, there were the remains of a blocked doorway (figure 10). The blocking was formed by the northern wall of the western extension, the face of which was at an angle to join with the extension to the north (figure 7). This would indicate that the extension to the north was earlier than that to the west (as shown on figure 4), but could be near contemporary. The southern door jamb appeared to be an earlier build than the rest of the face to the south (figure 10). This jamb was probably contemporary with the earlier wall on the west side (figure 7). Above this blocked door there were the remains of a wooden lintel, with some of the wall on the same line as that of the main part of the farmhouse.

The later northern extension of the farmhouse had a high ceiling and no upper floor, unless in the loft (figure 11). Within the north west corner of this room was a large oven and a large fireplace to the east (figure 5); both of these internal features were later.

Discussion

Unfortunately the possibility of dismantling any of the structure was ruled out by PCNP as no demolition is allowed without consent. There was insufficient time for a grant application to be submitted before this work was to commence and the opinion was that permission would either be refused or deferred.

The structural evidence indicated that little of the remaining structure was original or early (figure 7). Whether there was originally a through passage with a back door opposite the front door, as on some houses of this type, could not be ascertained, due to this section of the back wall being a rebuild.

When the western central extension was built its northern wall blocked what was probably the only external western doorway. It is therefore possible that the extension to the north and its western, slightly angled, doorway could be near contemporary to that of the western extension. However, any structural evidence is now lost.

The main beam of the fireplace was in a state of imminent collapse. If this collapse were to occur a large portion of the inner wall above and part of the chimney walls on either side would probably be brought down at the same time. It is considered that any collapse, in this area, should be inspected for any additional structural information.

A watching brief is considered advisable when: render and pebble dash is removed from the front wall and any demolition or dismantling of the chimney area is undertaken. In our opinion, almost total dismantling of the structure will be necessary before these walls can be made good.

Conclusion

From the structural evidence it can be seen that only the fireplace, chimney and probably most of the lower front wall opposite are of any antiquity (figure 7); most likely early post-medieval. Very little of the farmhouse is original. There may be some original structure within the wall to the north of the chimney, but this cannot be proved and could be second phase. Probably all of the walls south of the chimney and main front door have been rebuilt, possibly on the position of earlier walls. The rest of the structure is likely to be eighteenth century or later, along with some later windows and doorways.

Further observation and a very limited watching brief during renovation are considered advisable.

Acknowledgements

Mr and Mrs B Morris, the owners, for their permission and cooperation to undertake this work. I Darke of DAT for assistance on site and producing the post excavation drawings and report. J

Purdue for assistance with EDM survey. A J Parkinson, formerly of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments, for his work and comments on the site, and permission to use their drawings.

Archive deposition

National Monuments Record at RCAHMW, Crown Buildings, Plas Grug, Aberystwyth, Dyfed, SY23 1NJ.

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Parkinson A J 1992 National Monument Record for Wales: Croftufty. File NA/PE/92/19

Smith P 1988 Houses in the Welsh Countryside.

Appendices

1995 Record Numbers Used

Photo Numbers 501-529

Drawing Numbers 601-609

Photographic record.

All photographs taken in black and white prints and colour slides.

Photo: 501

Description: North end of farmhouse, pre-clearing

Direction: S

Scales: 2m

Photo: 502

Description: East side of farmhouse, pre-clearing

Direction: W

Scales: 2m

Photo: 503

Description: South end of farmhouse, pre-clearing

Direction: N

Scales: 2m

Photo: 504

Description: West side of farmhouse, pre-clearing

Direction: NE

Scales: 2m

Photo: 505

Description: Detail, chimney, pre-clearing

Direction: NE

Scales: 2m

Photo: 506

Description: Detail, farmhouse west extension north side, pre-clearing

Direction: S

Scales: 2m

Photo: 507

Description: Detail, internal of chimney/fireplace, pre-clearing

Direction: NW

Scales: 2m

Photo: 508

Description: Interior of farmhouse, pre-clearing

Direction: S

Scales: 2m

Photo: 509

Description: Exterior of farmhouse west extension - collapse immanent, pre-clearing

Direction: NNE

Scales: 2m

Photo: 510

Description: Interior of west extension fireplace - col-

lapse immanent, pre-clearing

Direction: W

Scales: 2m

Photo: 511

Description: Exterior front of farmhouse, pre-collapse

Direction: WNW

Scales:

Photo: 512

Description: Interior main fireplace, encase of collapse

Direction: WSW

Scales: 2m

Photo: 513

Description: Exterior of chimney, encase of collapse

Direction: ENE

Scales: 2m

Photo: 514-521

Description: Main internal elevation, south to north

Direction: W

Scales: 2x2m

Photo: 522

Description: External chimney and adjacent passage as cleared

Direction: E

Scales: 2x2m

Photo: 523

Description: External chimney and adjacent passage with trial trench excavated to geological natural.

Direction: E

Scales: 2x2m

Photo: 524

Description: External view of front of farmhouse, as cleaned and recorded

Direction: W

Scales: 2m

Photo: 525

Description: Interior of south wall of main room opposite chimney, as cleared but before removal of any plaster

Direction: E

Scales: 2m

Photo: 526

Description: Interior of lean-to roof at south west of farmhouse

Direction: NW

Scales:

Photo: 527

Description: Interior north side of main doorway and internal wall before removal of plaster

Direction: NE

Scales: 2m

Colour slide only

Photo: 528

Description: Interior of west extension, east side of room and doorway before removal of plaster

Direction: SE

Scales: 1m

Photo: 529

Description: Interior as 527 but with plaster removed

Direction: NE

Scales: 2m

Colour slide only

Drawing record

Drawing: 601

Description: Interior west elevation, southern part

Scale: 1:20

Drawing: 602

Description: Interior west elevation, northern part

Scale: 1:20

Drawing: 603

Description: Exterior elevation, west side of chimney

Scale: 1:20

Drawing: 604

Description: Exterior west, south side of chimney and part of main wall with window above

Scale: 1:20

Drawing: 605

Description: Interior elevation. Part of elevation north of main door to window

Scale: 1:20

Drawing: 606

Description: Interior elevation. Detail of 605 after removal of plaster showing blocking

Scale: 1:20

Drawing: 607

Description: Exterior front elevation, southern part

Scale: 1:20

Drawing: 608

Description: Exterior front elevation, northern part

Scale: 1:20

Drawing: 609

Description: Farmhouse plan, done with EDM and off-sets

Scale: 1:50

Croftuffy, Solva. Site Location

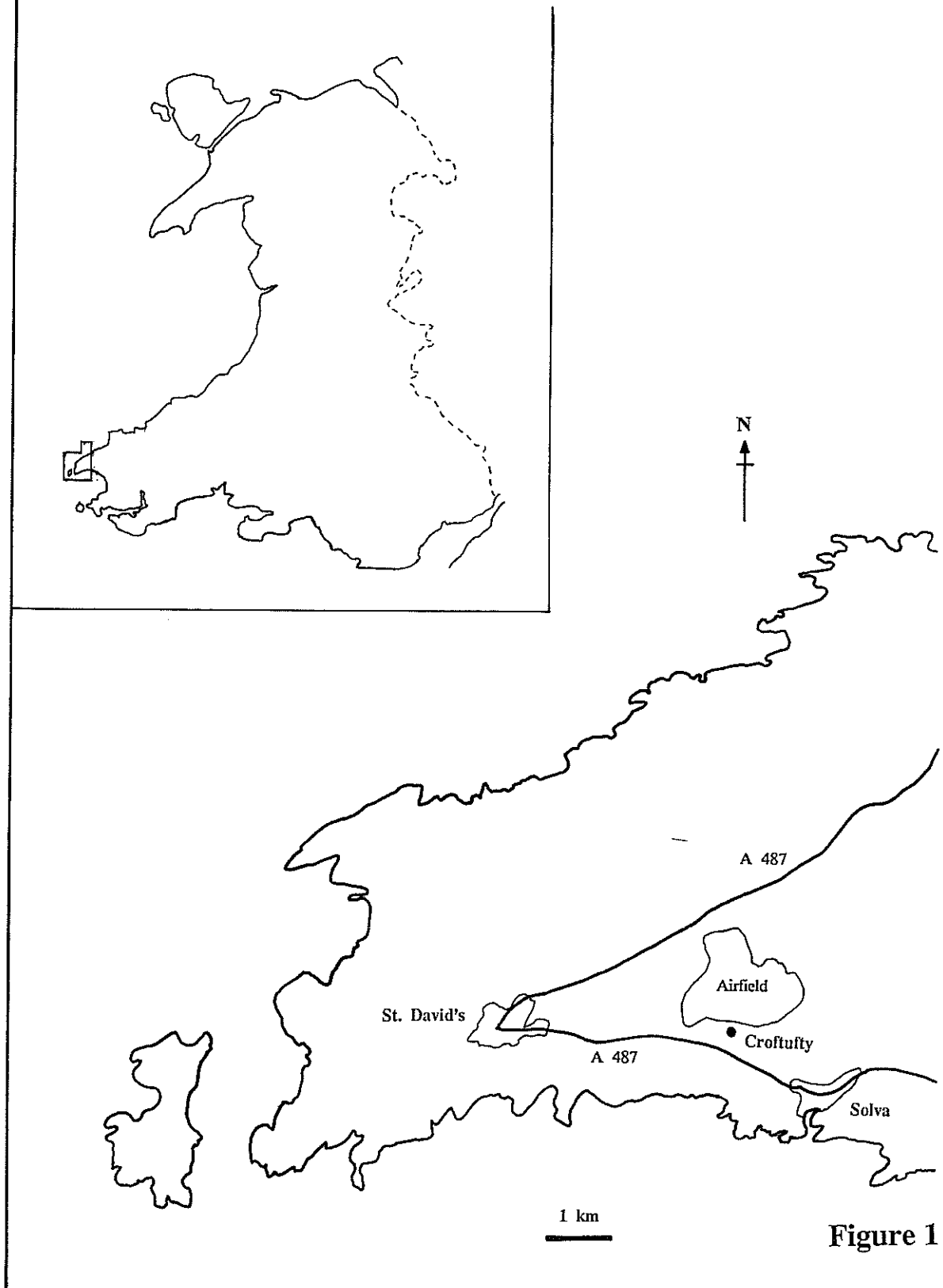


Figure 1

Croftufty Chimney from RCAHMMW

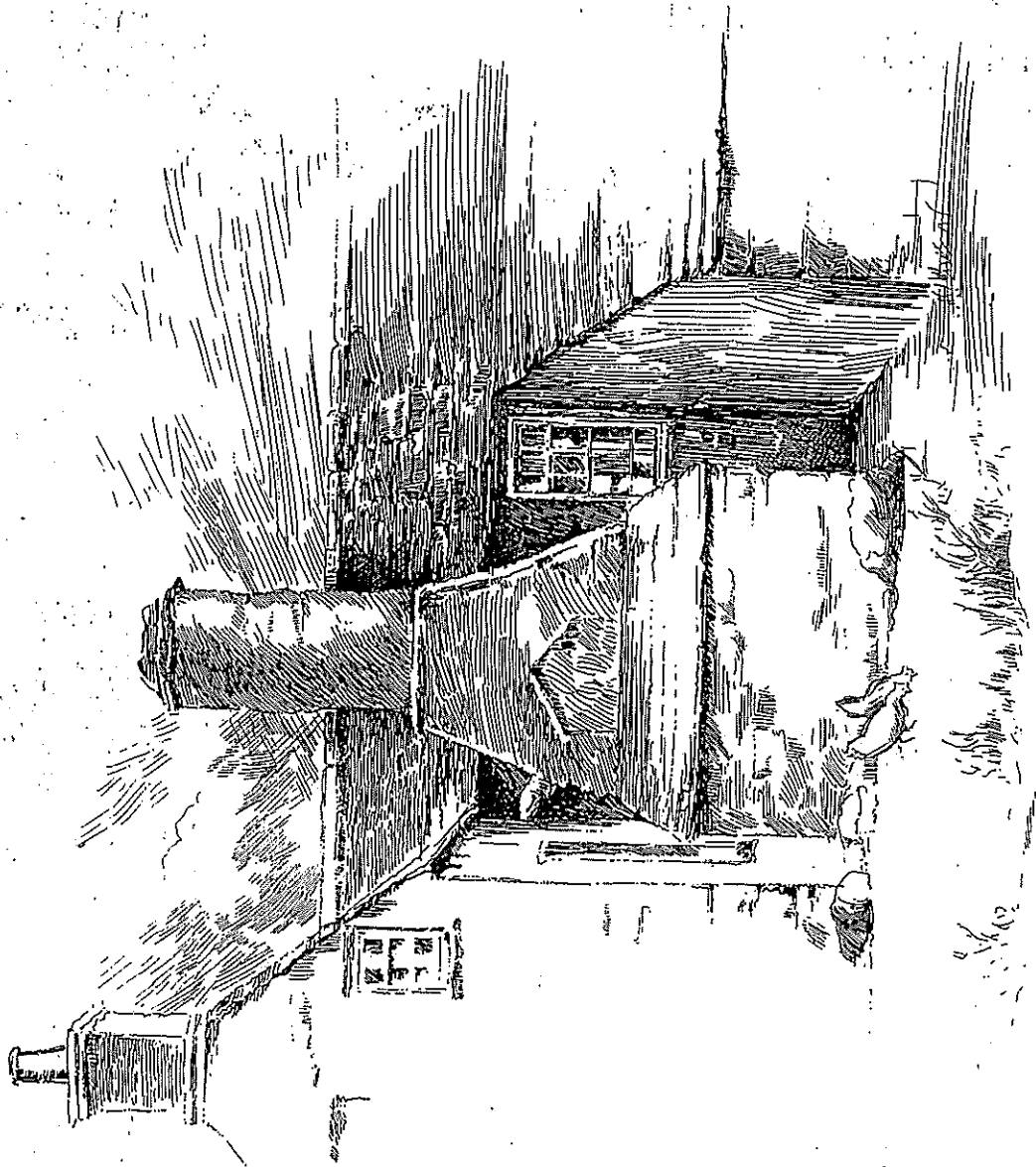


Figure 2

Arch. Camb. ser. 6, pl. 2, p. 1

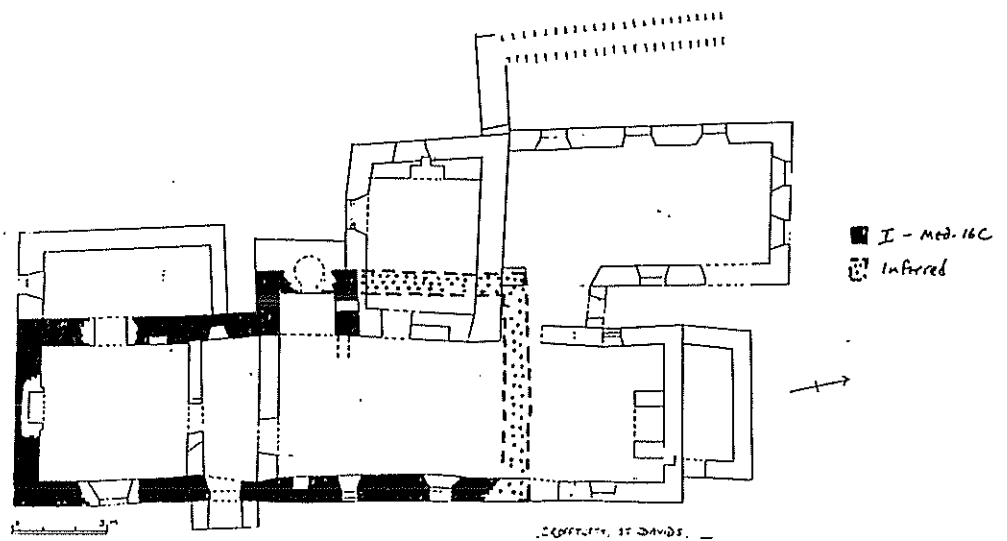
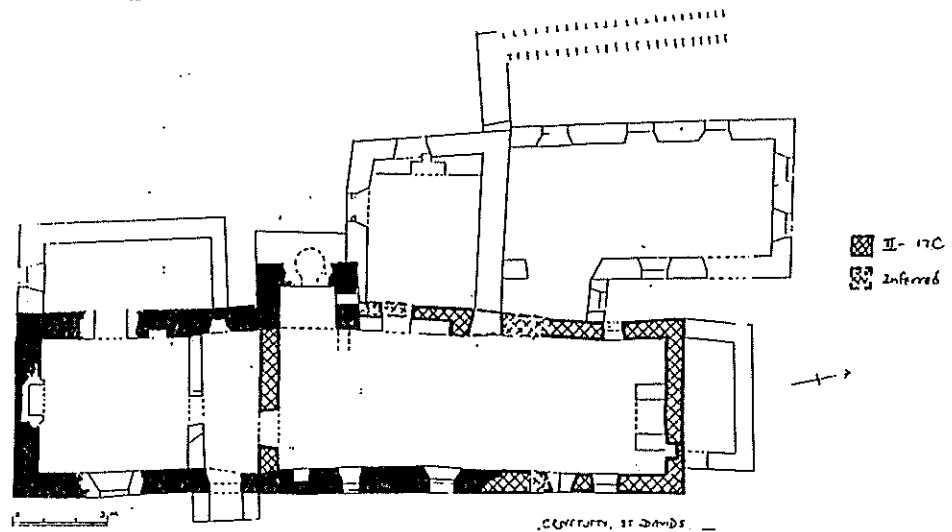


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Croftufty Provisional Phase Plan



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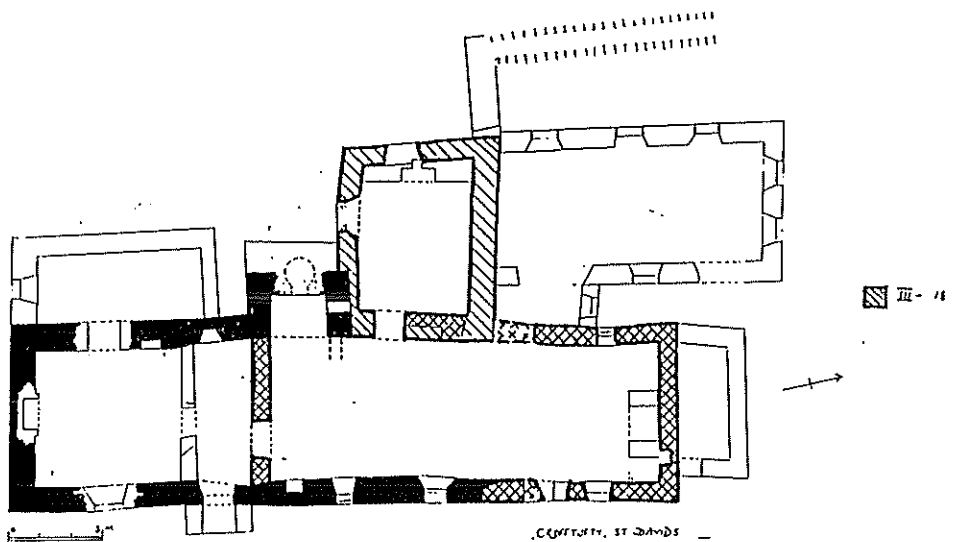
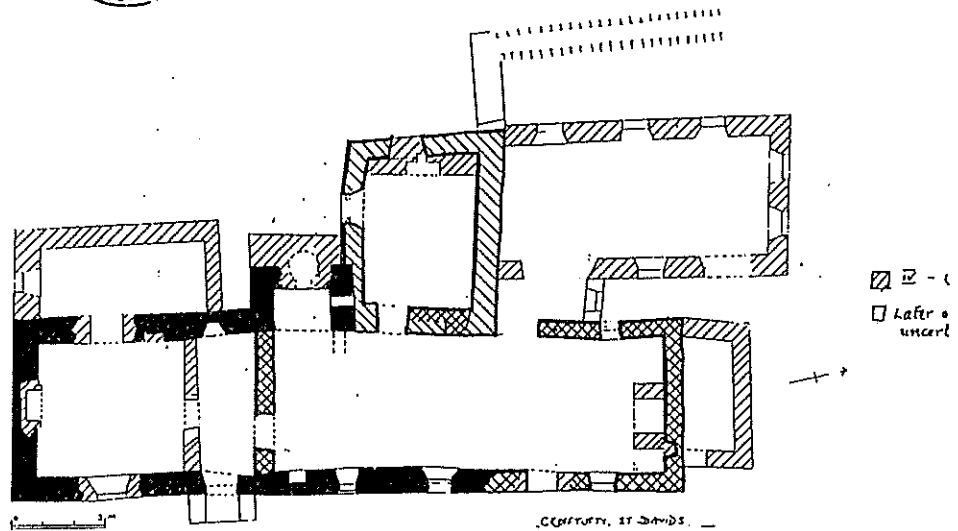
NR/PE/92/19

Figure 3

Croftufty Provisional Phase Plan



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NA/PE/92/19
Figure 4

Croftufty. RCAHMW Plan with Excavation Trench

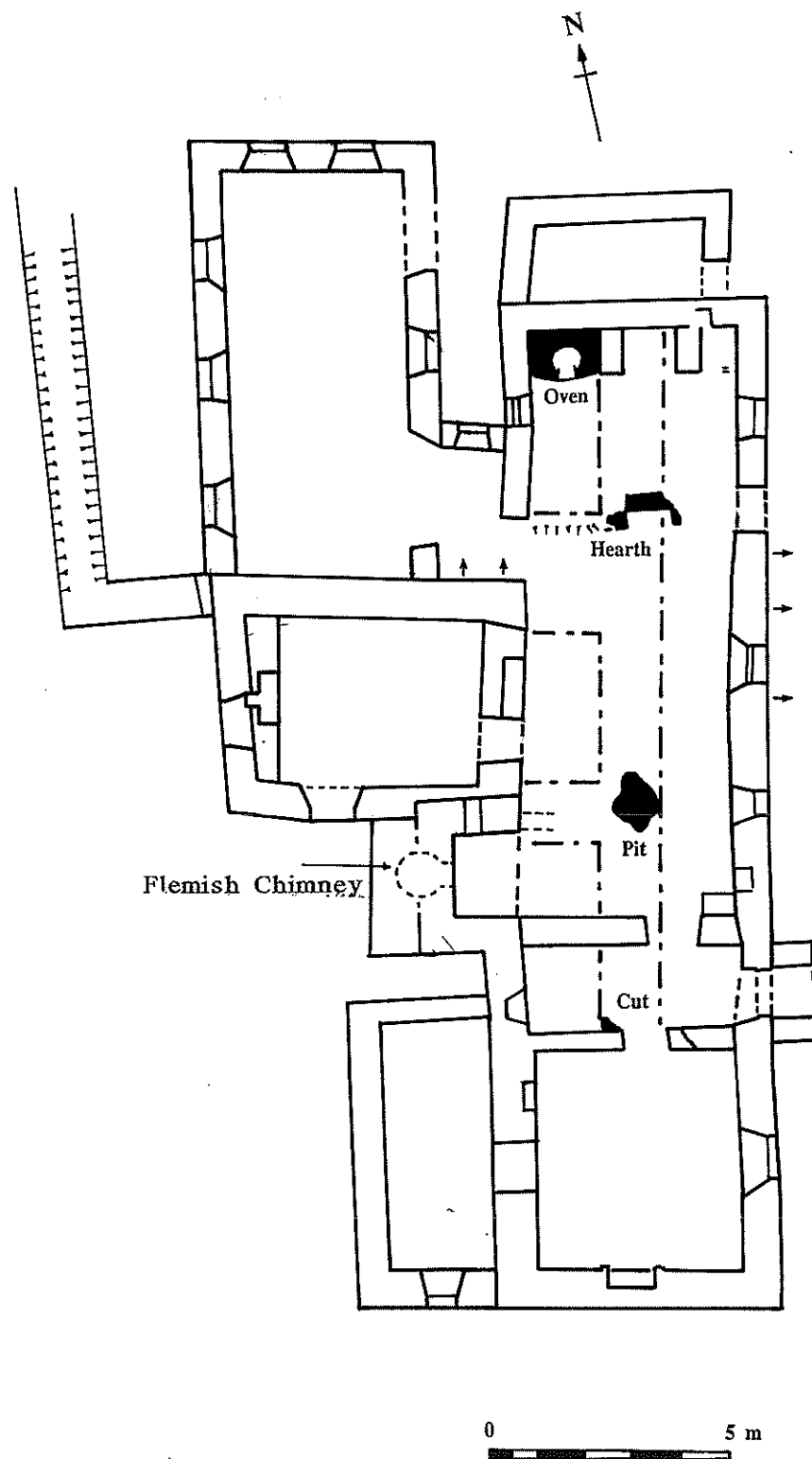


Figure 5

Croftufty 1995 Farmyard Plan

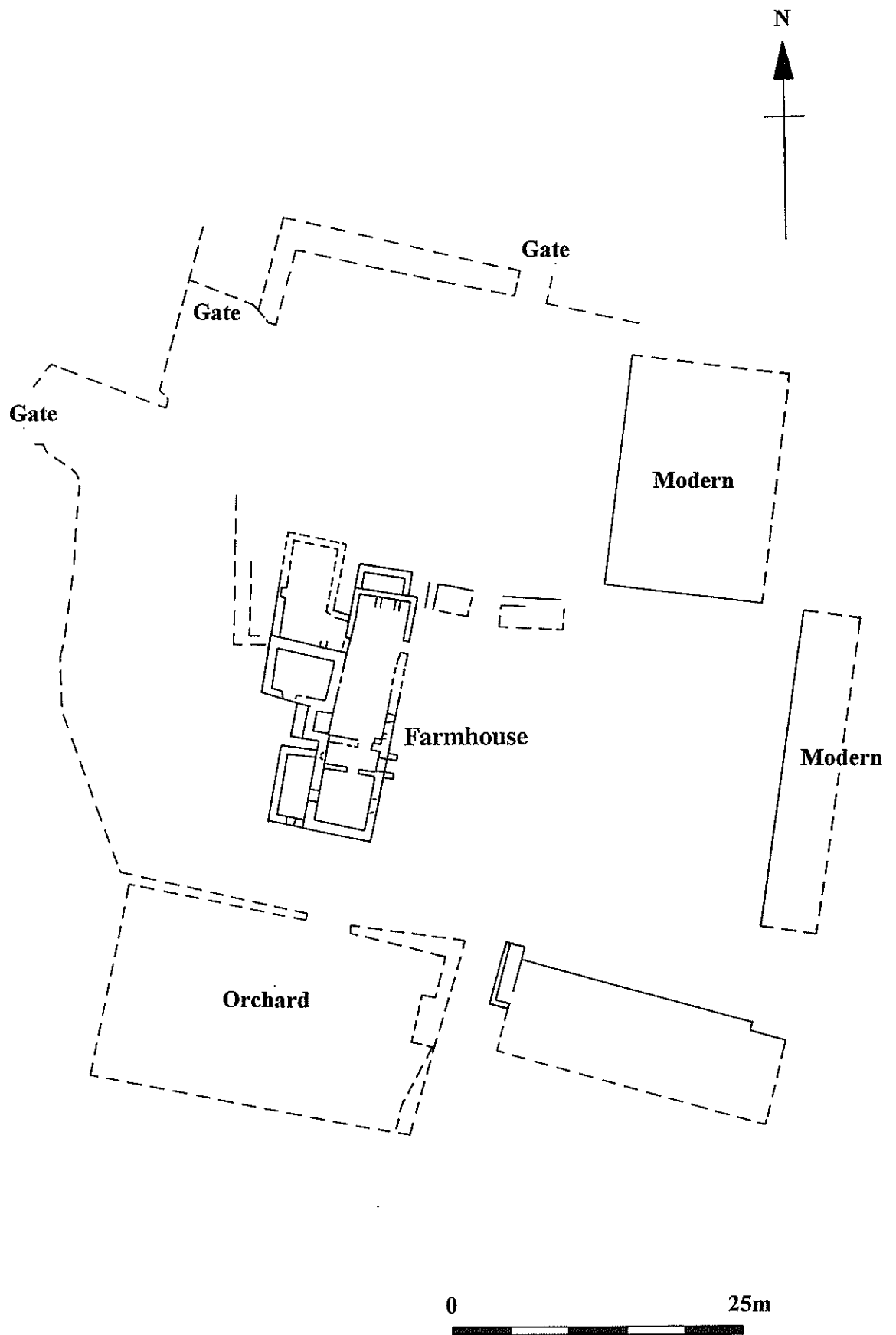


Figure 6

Croftufty 1995 Farmhouse Plan



Figure 7

Key for Interior Elevations

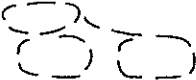

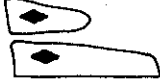

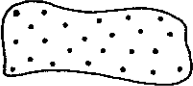


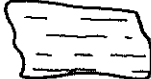


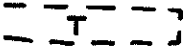

	Stones set back		Slate
	Stones set forward		Void
	Plaster		Render
	Mortar		Render with Horizontal Lines
	Timber		Lime Wash
	Timber set back		Floor?

Figure 8

Croftufty 1995
Inner Elevation of
Main Back Wall (1)

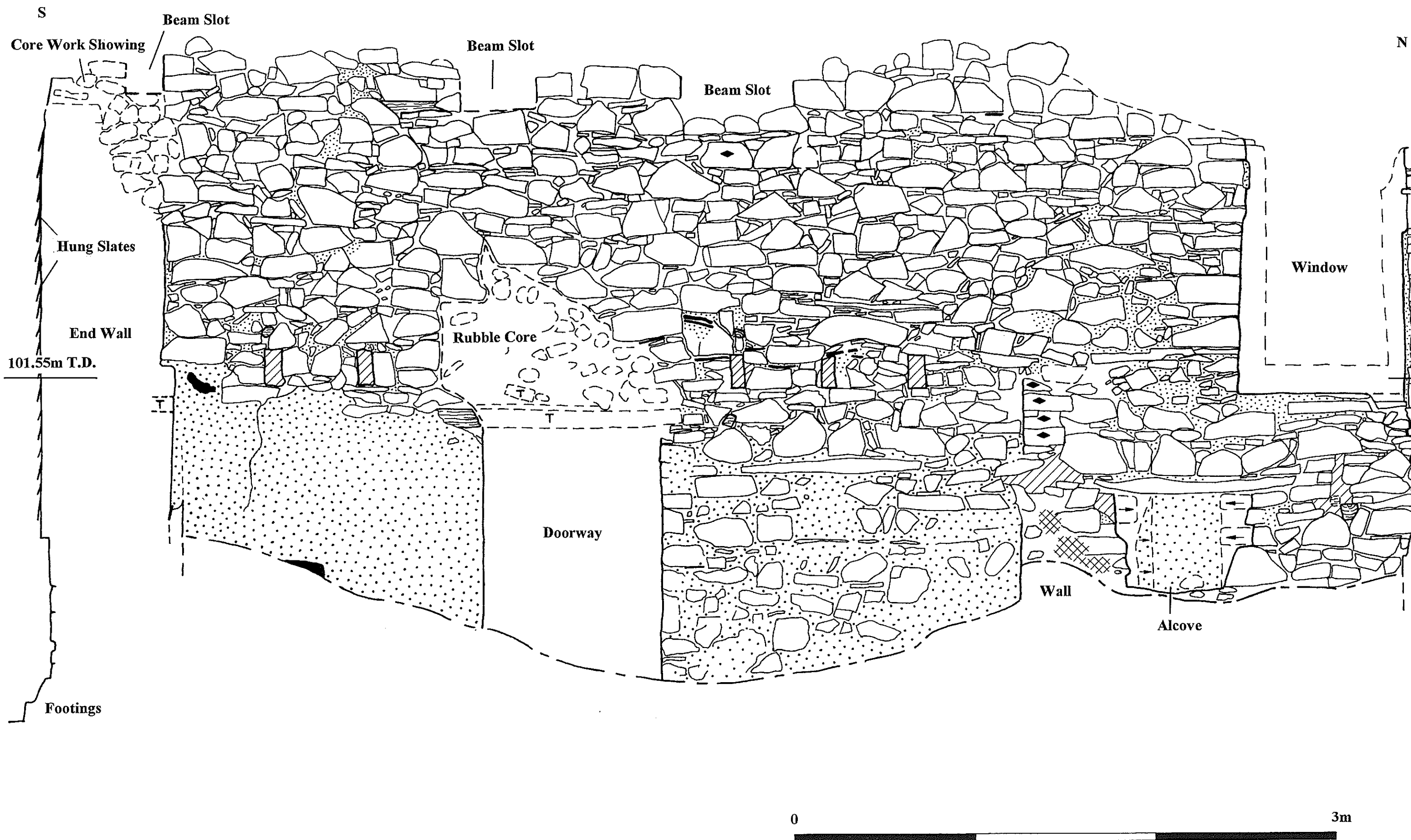


Figure 9

Croftufty 1995
Inner Elevation of
Main Back Wall (2)

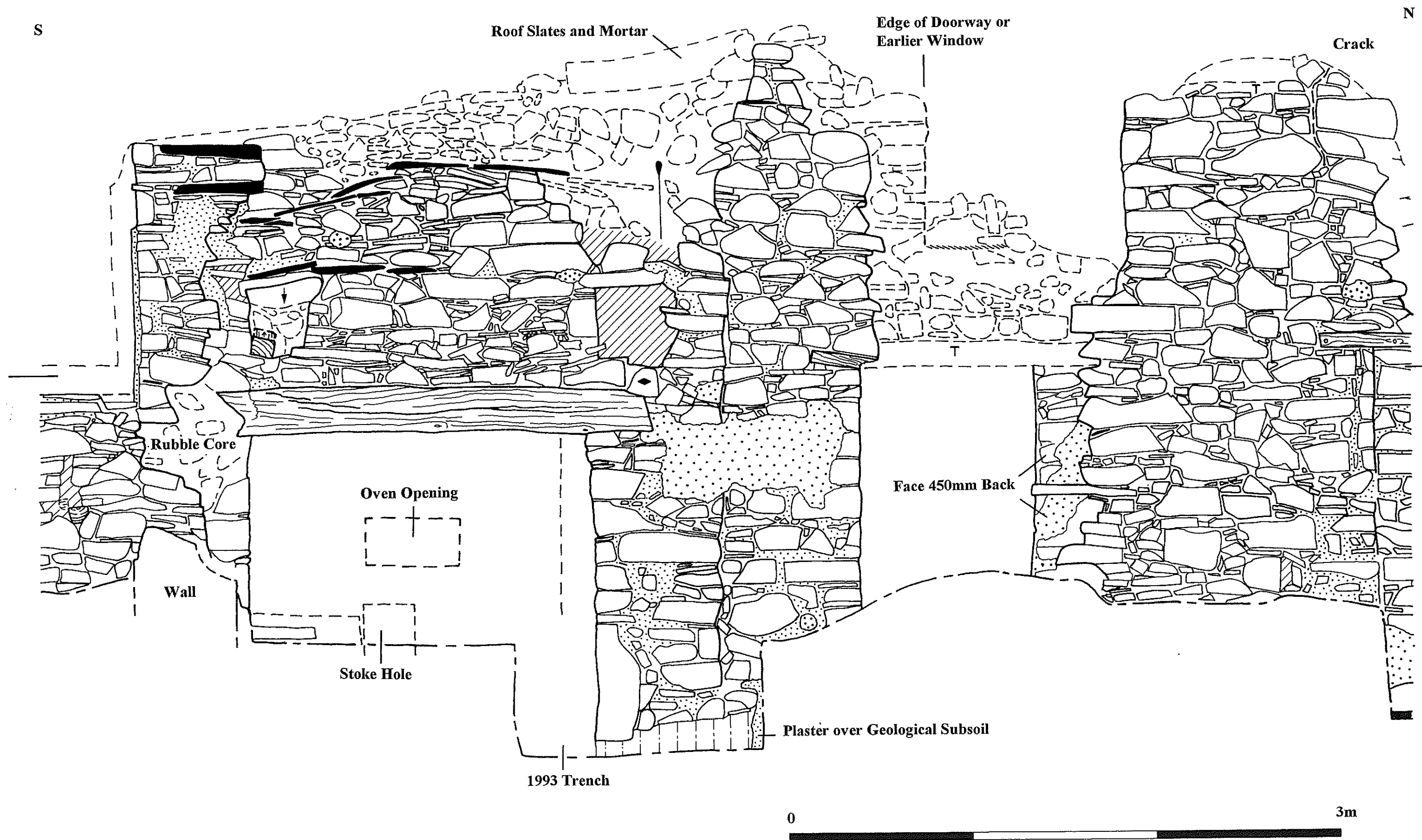


Figure 10

Croftufty 1995
Inner Elevation of
Main Back Wall (3)

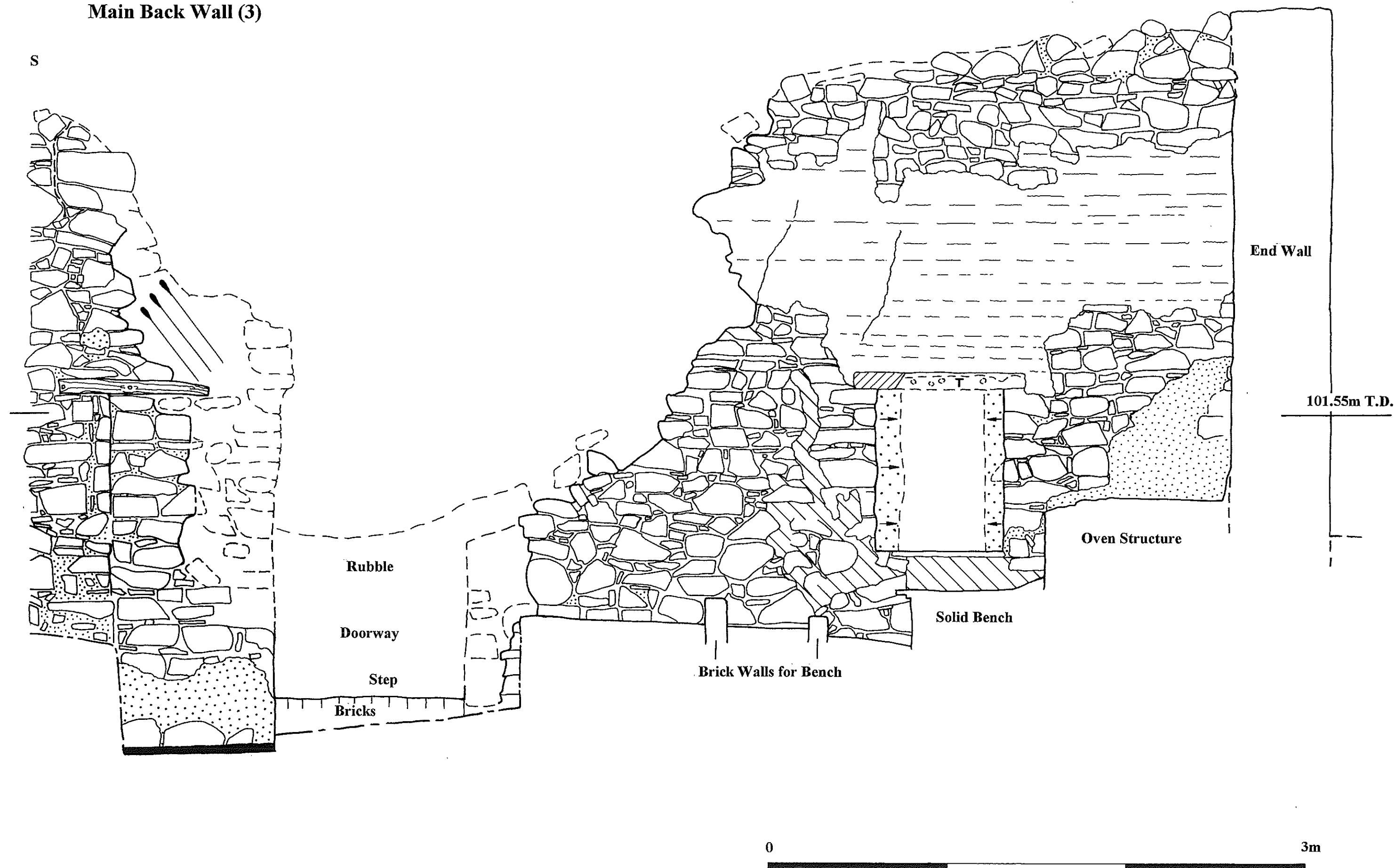


Figure 11

Croftufty 1995
Front Elevation

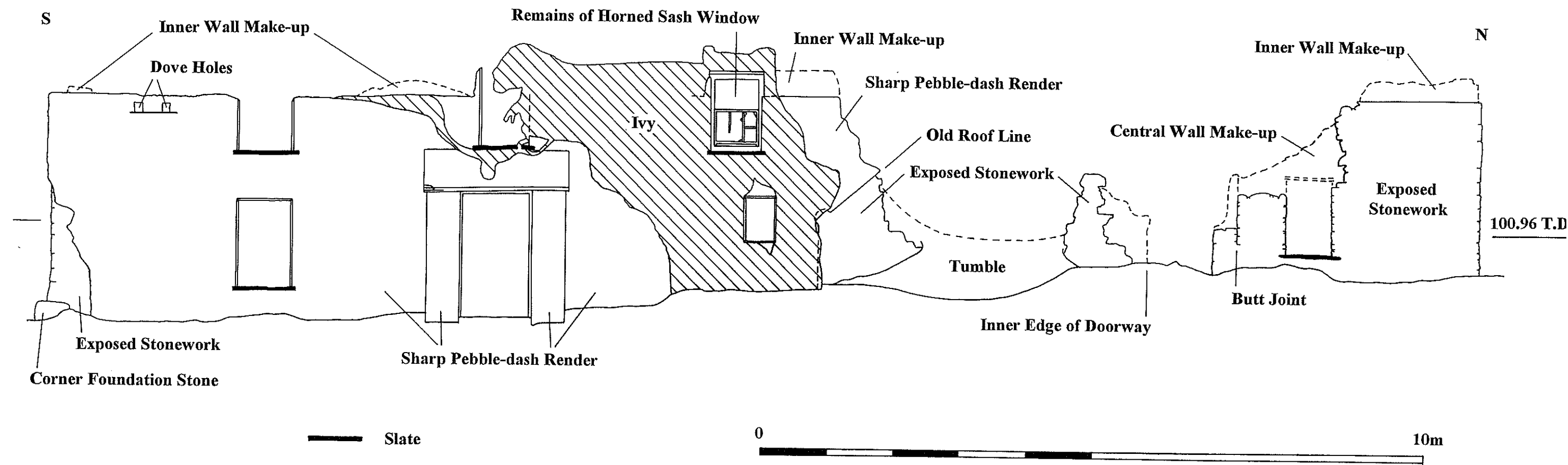


Figure 12