

Archaeological Observation Programme

**Land adjacent to Haverfordwest Priory,
Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire**

Report No: 2003-07-09

Border Archaeology
PO Box 36
Leominster
Herefordshire
HR6 OYQ

July 2003

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY | 3 |
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| 2. BRIEF HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND | 4 |
| 3. GEOLOGY | 5 |
| 4. METHODOLOGY | 5 |
| 5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION | 6 |
| 6. SUMMARY | 8 |
| 7. BIBLIOGRAPHY | 8 |
| 8. COPYRIGHT | 8 |
| FIGURE 1 PLAN OF PRIORY GROUNDS & ADJACENT FIELD SHOWING LOCATION OF TRENCHES | 9 |
| FIGURE 2 TRENCH 1 (PLAN) | 10 |
| FIGURE 3 TRENCH 1 (NORTH-FACING SECTION) | 11 |
| FIGURE 4 TRENCH 1 (SOUTH-FACING SECTION) | 12 |
| FIGURE 5 TRENCH 2 (PLAN) | 13 |
| FIGURE 6 TRENCH 2 (SECTION) | 14 |

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Two trenches were excavated for engineering purposes on the field boundary to the south of Haverfordwest Priory. No archaeological features, structures or deposits were identified within either trench. This may be attributable to disturbance resulting from the original laying of the cast water main and to subsequent utility and service activity.

Archaeological Observation of works carried out on land adjacent to Haverfordwest Priory, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, by Laing Utilities for Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Border Archaeology was instructed by Laing Utilities on behalf of Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water to conduct archaeological observation of ground works within a field adjacent to Haverfordwest Priory, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire.
- 1.2 The works were carried out as part of DCWW's refurbishment programme and archaeological observation was required in order to observe the excavation of two small trenches for access to the water main, after efforts to connect outside the scheduled area proved unsuccessful.
- 1.3 The purpose of the archaeological observation was to assess the nature of any archaeological remains and to record as appropriate. CADW considered there to be significant archaeological implications within the immediate vicinity of the priory due to its early medieval origins and Scheduled Monument Consent was applied for and granted
- 1.4 The archaeological observation followed usual on-site procedures that complied with standards as set by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
- 1.5 Copies of this report will be supplied to CADW, DCWW, Laing Utilities and the SMR at Cambria Archaeology.
- 1.6 The programme of archaeological observation took place on the 3rd of July 2003 and was undertaken by Nicola Hancox (Staff Project Archaeologist).

2.0 BRIEF HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In the mid 19th century, Haverfordwest was somewhat picturesquely described as 'a seaport, borough, and market town... finely situated at one of the inland extremities of Milford Haven, upon the declivities, and at the base, of very steep hills, round which the Western Cleddau flows: it consists of numerous streets, some of which are regularly built, and contain the town residences of many of the neighbouring gentry, others are steep and narrow' (Lewis 1833).
- 2.2 The town probably originated as a settlement supplying the Norman castle in the 12th century AD. The castle was probably built by the Marcher lord Gilbert, Earl of Clare and Pembroke, and is situated on a commanding hilltop overlooking the River Cleddau (Lockley 1957:75). The medieval town expanded greatly in the 13th century, attracting Norman and Flemish traders and an Augustinian priory, probably built by the Tancred family for the Augustinian order and dedicated to St Mary and St Thomas the Martyr. The priory

eventually became the richest monastic house in Pembrokeshire. Although defended by a wall and a castle, the wealth from the churches and merchants, together with its strategic importance, led to the town being attacked by Llewelyn the Great in 1219 and Owain Glyndwr in 1405 (Rees 1999).

- 2.3 The status and wealth of Haverfordwest declined from the 16th century with, first, the destruction of the priory by order of Henry VIII in 1536 and then an economic downturn. The town suffered further during the Civil War, when the castle was slighted by Parliamentary forces. During the middle years of the 19th century, Haverfordwest had a population of 4,328 and was regarded as the 'modern' capital of Pembrokeshire. Lewis (1833) states that 'from its central situation it attracts considerable trade, chiefly coastwise: the exports are principally oats and butter, with a small quantity of leather and bark; the imports are chiefly groceries, manufactured goods, and other miscellaneous articles, for the supply of the shops. Coal is brought by water from Newport in Monmouthshire, and from Liverpool'. The construction of the railway in 1853 brought an end to ship-building, the town's major industry. Decline was halted after the Second World War with the construction of suburban housing and rural factories supplying the Pembrokeshire countryside (Lockley 1957:75).
- 2.4 The ruins of the priory were plundered for stone following its destruction during the 16th century, the only significant remains being those of the priory church to the north of the monastic buildings. Since 1983, excavations have revealed further building foundations and a large number of finds, including painted window glass, coins and tokens, copper alloy brooches, keys, tools and dress accessories. Several oyster shells that had been used as paint palettes were also discovered. These still contained the remains of a red pigment identified as cinnabar.

3.0 GEOLOGY

- 3.1 The drift geology of Haverfordwest is a DENBIGH 1 [541j] comprising well drained, fine loamy and fine silty soils over rock. Some similar soils have slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Shallow soils and bare rock occur locally. The solid geology of the area is Palaeozoic slaty mudstone and siltstone. Also present in Haverfordwest is a TEME [561b], consisting of deep, stoneless, permeable silty soils. There are some similar soils variably affected by groundwater. Some gravelly subsoil is present in places. The geology of this area comprises river alluvium.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The aim of the programme of archaeological observation was to locate and record any archaeological remains revealed during the course of the ground works phase.
- 4.2 Two small trenches were opened, both of which revealed disturbance resulting from the original water main excavations. Further disturbance was evident in Trench 1, which contained an electrical cable running across the central section, and in Trench 2, which had a

fencing post set in a concrete base located in the central area of the trench and concrete blocking where the main entered under the road on the west-facing section. This disturbance had heavily impacted the stratigraphy within each of the trenches and any deposits, features or structures of archaeological importance.

- 4.3 All spoil was scanned for artefacts. Any artefacts recovered from the spoil were recorded as unstratified. Artefacts of a late date, or considered not important, were recorded but not retained.
- 4.4 The evaluation of each trench included a detailed stratigraphic record using a context numbering system, as follows: (001)-(004) [Trench 1] and (101)-(103) [Trench 2].
- 4.5 Full written and drawn records of all excavated contexts were made in accordance with archaeological practices set out by the IFA and using the MoLas single-context planning system (where applicable). A photographic record was made and sections were recorded at a scale of 1:20, as was a trench plan.
- 4.6 Each trench was tied into existing Ordnance Survey data using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit.

5.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION

- 5.1 The priory is located to the south-east of the town centre and is enclosed within a roughly triangular area formed by Freemans Way (A4076) on the east, Union Hill to the west and by Haroldston Lane forming the south-western boundary. The field boundary lies to the south of the priory, aligned with Haroldston Lane and running partially along the A4076, again forming a roughly triangular area.
- 5.2 TRENCH 1 (NGR: SM 95609 15138 [east-facing section] to SM 95630 15123 [west-facing section]).
- 5.3 The trench, measuring approximately 5.0m x 1.60-1.67m x 1.86m, was located 0.50m immediately inside the hedge boundary of the field running along Haroldston Lane and 18.0m from the north-western corner of the field.
- 5.4 The majority of the trench was excavated mechanically (using a mini-excavator). The area around the electrical cable and at the base of the trench around the water main required manual excavation.
- 5.5 Four contexts were identified. The first of these extended to a depth of 0.06-0.18m below existing ground level and comprised a loosely compacted, medium-to-dark brown, sandy turf layer (001) with tree and shrub root disturbance (from the hedgerow). Underlying this to a depth of 0.40-1.54m was a loosely-to-moderately compacted, grey-brown, silty sand soil (002) with frequent small, angular stones and three mid 20th century clear glass soda bottles. Again, heavy root disturbance was evident. Underlying (002) to a depth of

approximately 0.88m was a moderately compacted, orange-brown, sandy clay soil (003) with further evidence of root disturbance. Underlying (003) to the trench base was the natural geology (004).

- 5.6 No archaeological features, structures or deposits were identified within the trench. The stratigraphy was identical in all sections to the depths recorded. The trench was backfilled following completion of the work.
- 5.7 TRENCH 2 (NGR: SM 95792 15030 [east-facing section] to SM 95801 15026 [west-facing section]).
- 5.8 The trench was located partially on the grass verge outside the field boundary, extending into the field at its south-eastern end, close to where Haroldston Lane approaches the bridge over the A4076 and the field begins to rise steeply. The trench measured 3.90m x 1.60-1.40m x 1.50-2.0m (the greatest depth being where the trench partially lay on the slope of the field).
- 5.9 Three contexts were identified. The first of these extended to a depth of 0.22m and comprised a loosely compacted, medium brown to dark brown, sandy turf layer (101) with occasional, small, angular stone inclusions. Underlying (101) to a depth of 0.84m was a moderately compacted, grey-brown, silty clay soil (102) with frequent small and occasional medium angular and sub-angular stone inclusions. Several 20th century ceramic utility pipe fragments were also identified. Underlying (102) to the trench base was a moderately compacted, orange-brown, sandy clay soil (103).
- 5.10 The stratigraphy was identical in all sections to the depths recorded, except for the west-facing section which comprised concrete blocks where the water main entered beneath the A4076.

6.0 SUMMARY

- 6.1 Two trenches were excavated for engineering purposes on the field boundary to the south of Haverfordwest Priory. No archaeological features, structures or deposits were identified within either trench. This may be attributable to disturbance resulting from the original laying of the cast water main and to subsequent utility and service activity.

7.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lewis, S. (1833) *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*

Lockley, M. (1957) *The Regional Books: Pembrokeshire*. Robert Hale Ltd.

Rees, S. (1999) *Haverfordwest Priory* CADW Welsh Historic Monument.

Soil Survey of England and Wales. 1983. Silsoe (1:25,000).

8.0 COPYRIGHT

- 8.1 Border Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all the rights reserved: excepting hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of the report by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the project specification.

FIGURE 1. PLAN OF PRIORY GROUNDS & ADJACENT FIELD SHOWING LOCATION OF TRENCHES

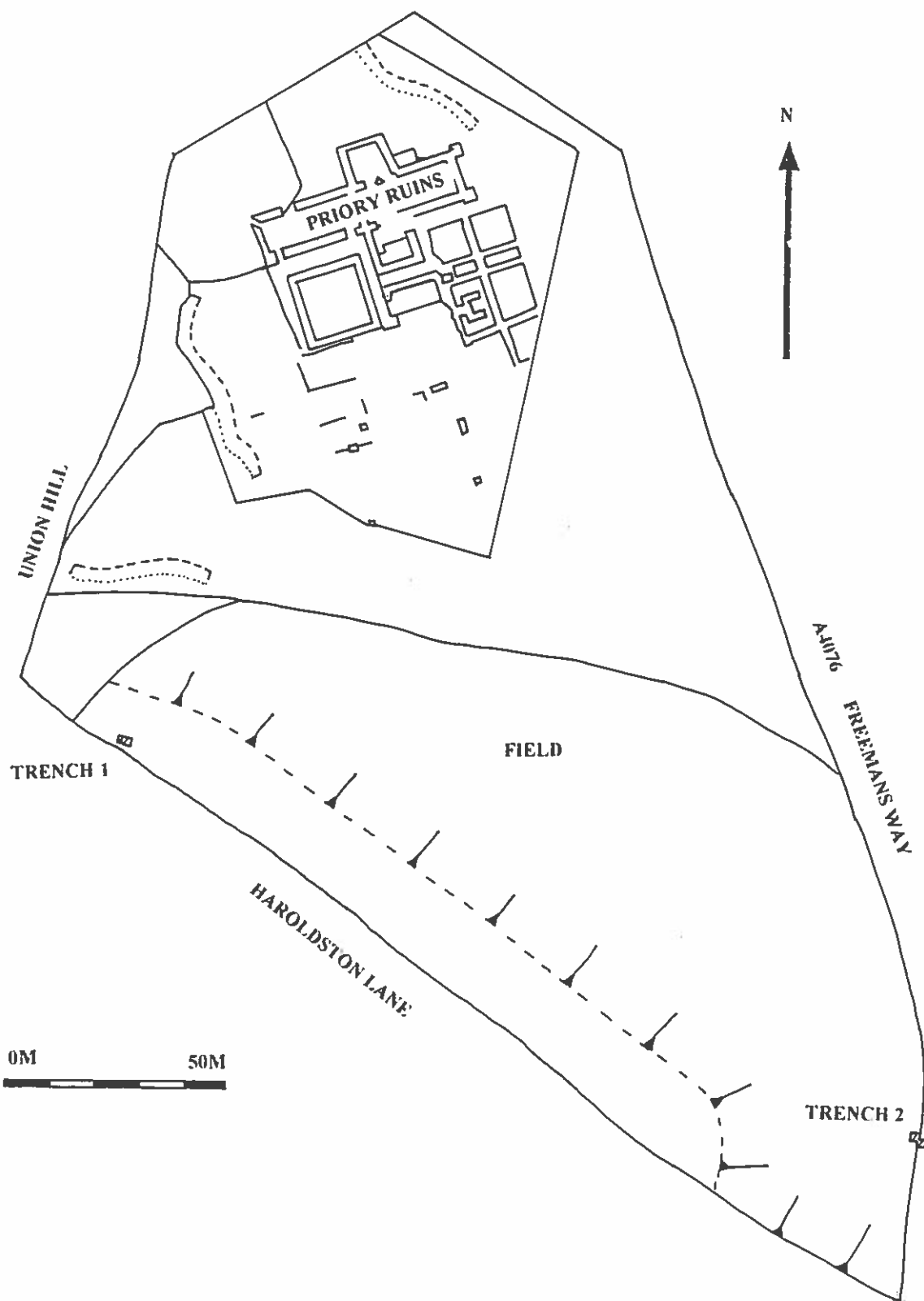


FIGURE 2. TRENCH 1 (PLAN)

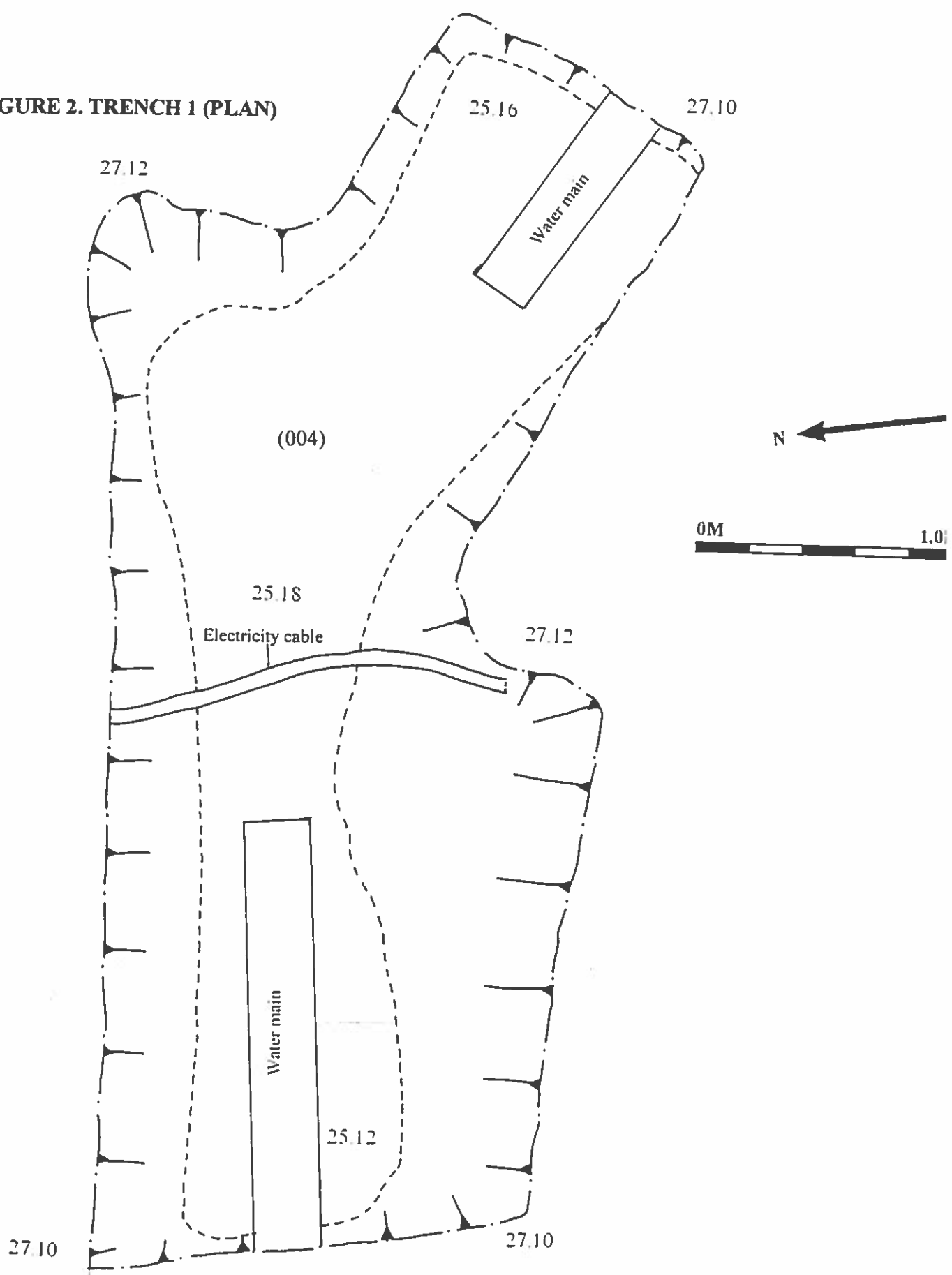


FIGURE 3 TRENCH 1 (NORTH-FACING SECTION)

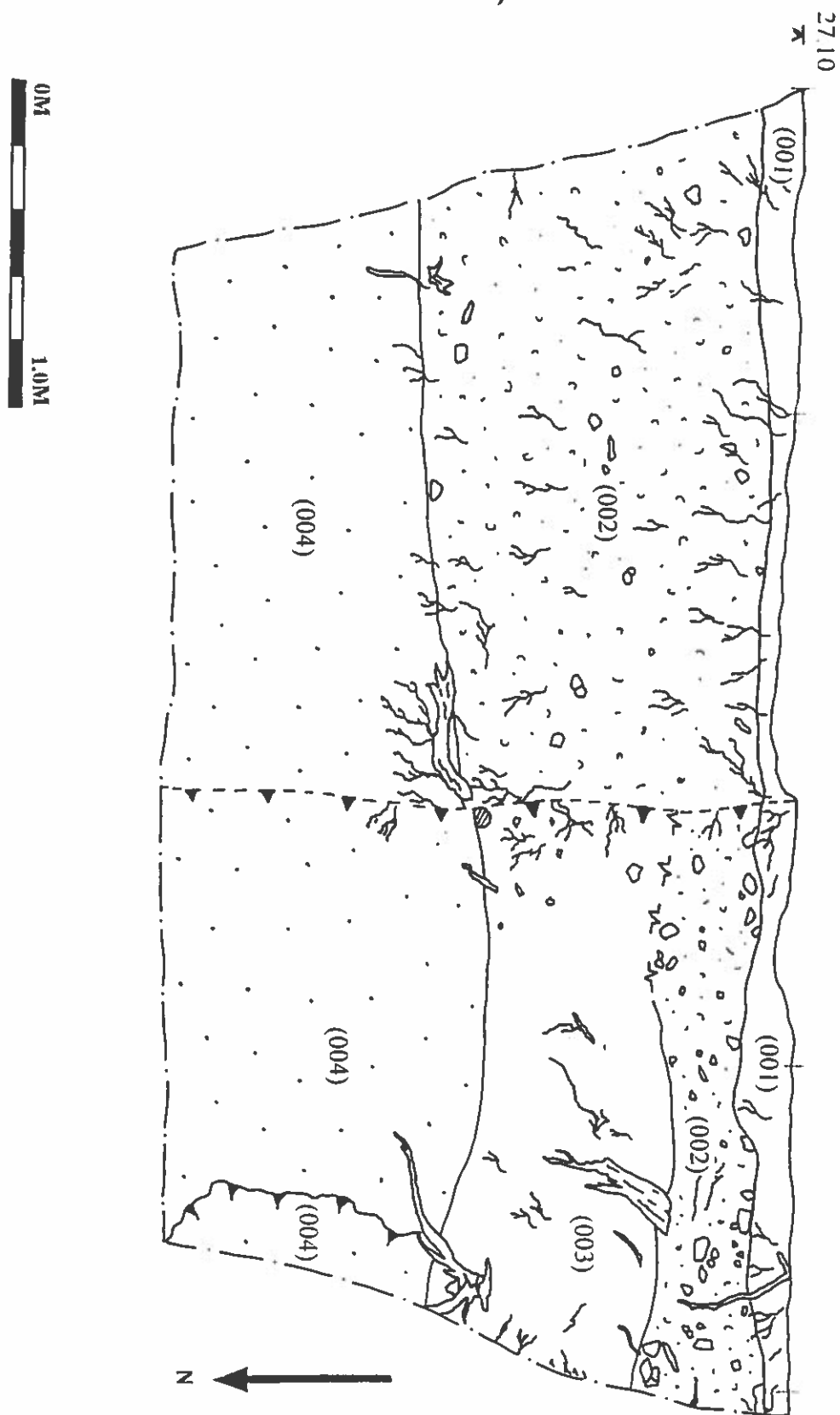


FIGURE 4 TRENCH 1 (SOUTH-FACING SECTION)

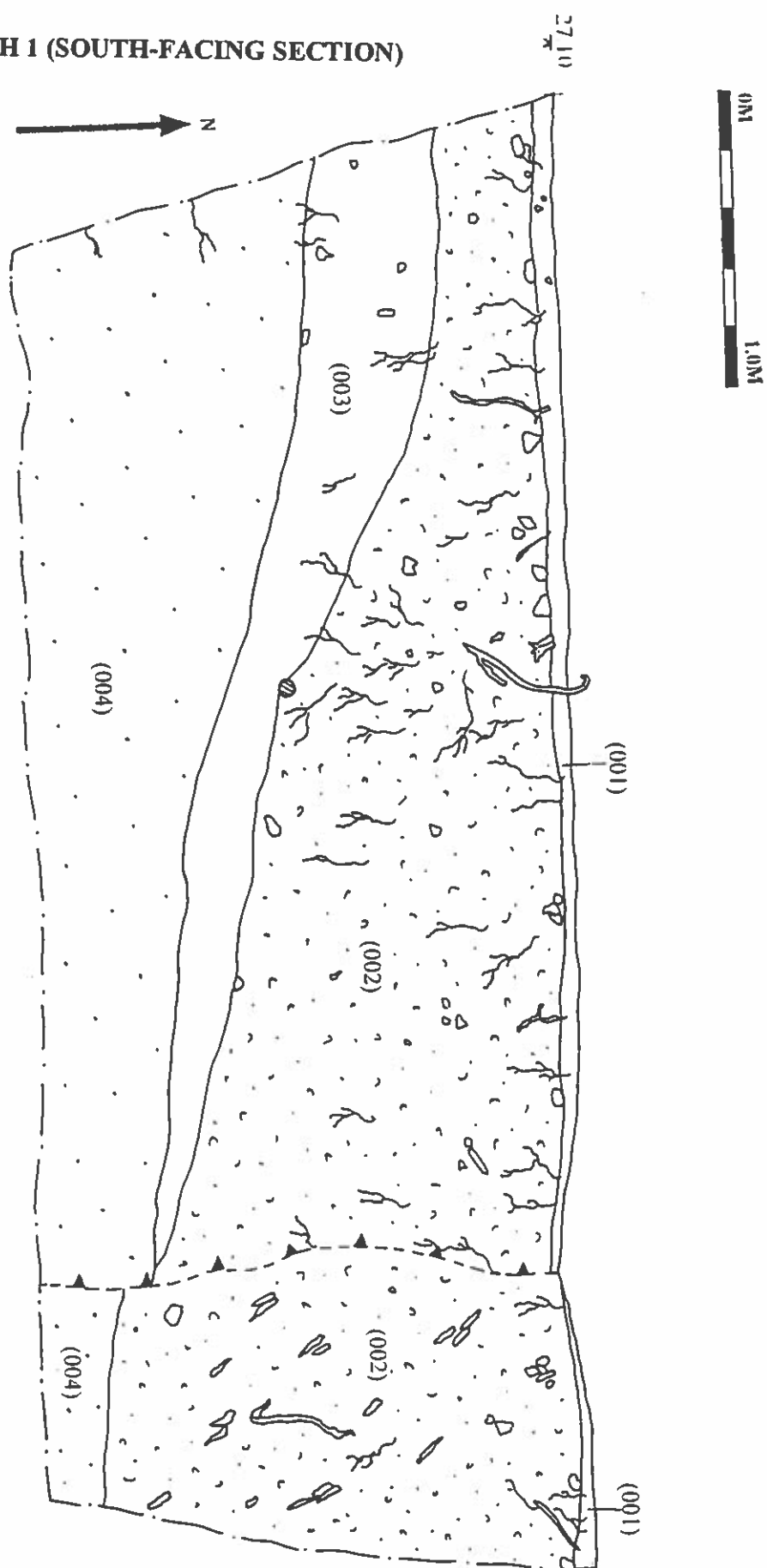


FIGURE 5. TRENCH 2 (PLAN)

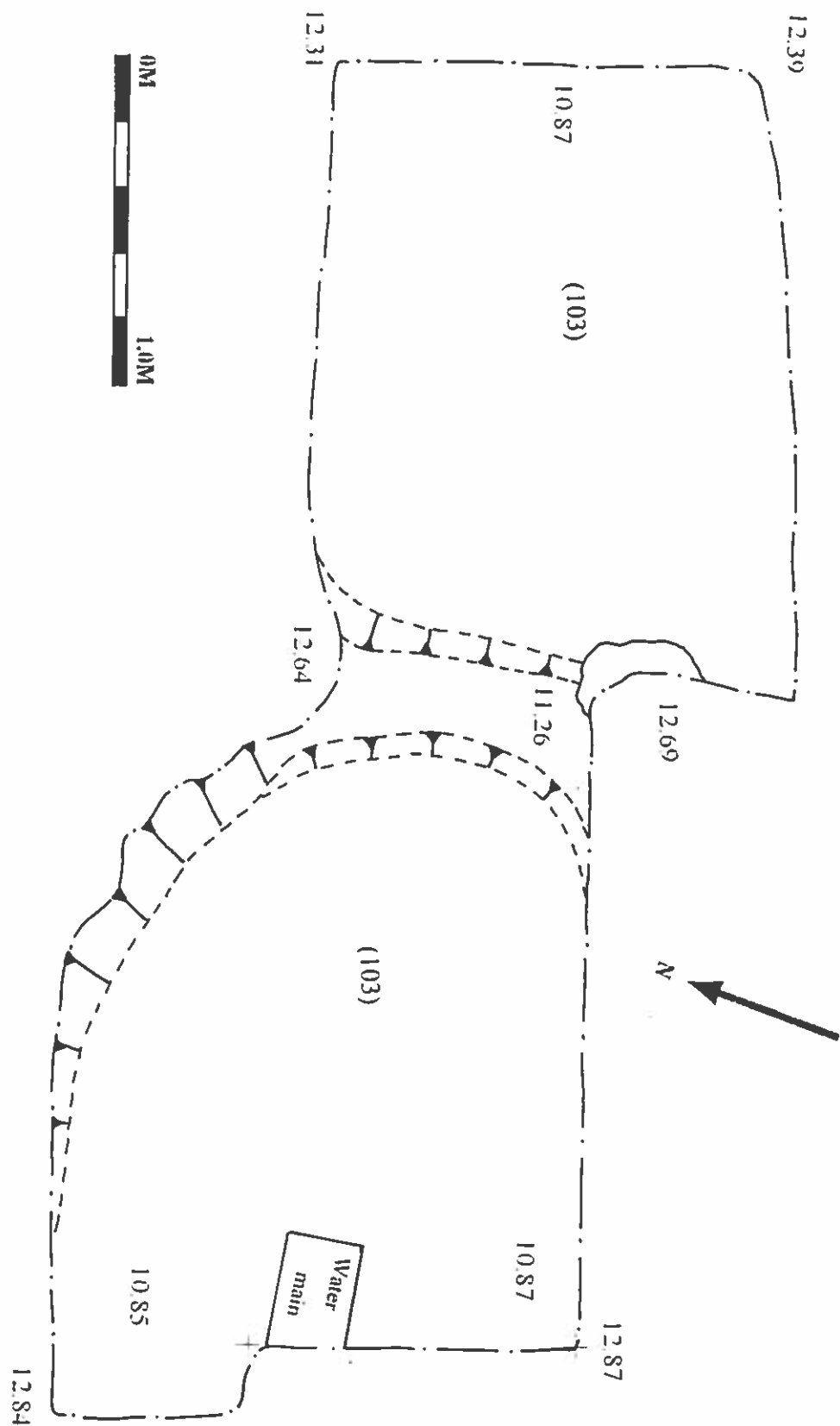


FIGURE 6. TRENCH 2 (SECTION)

