

Rhosmaen, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire

to include:
Archaeological Watching Brief

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Watching Brief for Laing Utilities at Rhosmaen, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Border Archaeology was commissioned by Laing Utilities for Welsh Water to conduct an archaeological watching brief along A40 between the village of Rhosmaen and Llandeilo, and along the Tally Road, B4302. The agents for the programme of works were Laing Utilities and Welsh Water. The watching brief was required in order to observe the hand excavation of test pits. The test pits were excavated so to expose 19th century water mains along both roads¹. A method statement outlining a programme of work was prepared prior to the commencement of the watching brief.
- 1.2 The archaeological work, incorporated into the planning proposal, is set within the non-statutory guidelines of 09/96 issued by the Welsh Office. This national legislation sets out guidance from the Secretary of State regarding development-prompted archaeological issues in relation to Local Planning Authority (LPA) procedure. The guidance given to the LPA provides recommendations of how archaeology can be incorporated into the planning procedure.
- 1.3 The purpose of the watching brief was to assess the nature of any archaeological remains, in particular the Roman Road between Llandovery and Carmarthen, and to indicate any mitigation requirements. It was initially considered by Cambria Archaeology that these groundworks could have significant archaeological implications. The Roman road is believed to have run beneath, or off-line from this section of the A40 and B4302 between Llandeilo and Rhosmaen. A medieval road probably ran through this area between the two settlements and there is a high probability that this road followed the line of the earlier Roman road. There are no available maps to conclusively locate accurately the Roman Road. The rationale of the watching brief was to ascertain the location of the Roman Road.
- 1.4 The watching brief required stringent on-site procedures that complied with present Health and Safety standards set by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
- 1.5 A copy of this report will be submitted to Laing Utilities and Welsh Water. Further copies of this report will be deposited with the Regional Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) at Cambria Archaeology. The watching brief commenced on the 17th of April 2001, and finished on the 20th of April 2001. The monitoring body was Cambria Archaeology. The site was project managed by Neil Shurety. All field work was undertaken by Brigid Gallagher (Project Archaeologist) and Thomas Wellicome (Project Archaeologist).

2.0 BRIEF HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 CADW and Cambria Archaeology SMR have postulated that a Roman Road ran either off-line or beneath the present A40, between Llandovery and Carmarthen. Information specific to this road is limited; sources include the Ordinance Survey Maps for Roman Britain and *The Place-Names of Roman Britain* (Rivet & Smith 1981).
- 2.2 The Ordinance Survey map of Roman Britain indicates that a Roman Road (fig 1), inked Carmarthen (Moridvinvm) and Llandovery (Alabvm). This road was aligned roughly south-west/north-east and following the line of the Afon Tywi [Towy] (Roman - Tuvius). No major settlements are recorded along this stretch of road.
- 2.4 The stretch of A40 between Llandeilo and Rhosmaen appears to be elevated on the flood plain of the Afon Tywi (River Towy) between the river and a sloping south-facing bank of a hill. South of the A40, parallel to the present road alignment, the Black Mountain is located some 4km across a flood plain of the Afon Tywi. On the northern side of the road the slope inclines to a height of 150m towards the settlement of Tally. The A40 at this point stands approximately 30m OD. On the northern side of the road are a number of 19th and 20th century dwellings. The B4302 (Tally Road) branches off north of the A40 in Rhosmaen. It follows the incline north of the A40.

¹ the earliest water mains are believed to date from 1860

3.0 GEOLOGY

- 3.1 The solid geology of the surrounding area is of Palaeozoic Slate and Mudstones. The related drift geology is a 581b SONNING 1 which initially consists of glacial and riverine terrace deposits. The related soils are comprised of well drained flinty coarse loamy and sandy soils, mainly over gravel. Some coarse loamy soils over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging (Soil Survey of England & Wales 1983).

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The aim of the programme of archaeological work is to locate and record any archaeological remains that are revealed during the course of the ground works phase of utility maintenance.
- 4.2 After initial inspection of the site, the area of the proposed maintenance was excavated by hand under strict archaeological supervision. The excavations of the area continued to a required depth, 0.80m to 1.90m, below the existing ground level (in order to fulfil the proposal). A series of test pits were excavated at intervals pre-determined by Laing Utilities. The methodology by Laing Utilities was to excavate a series of test pits which would examine the range of pipe types laid in the area for location and maintenance checks.
- 4.3 All spoil was scanned for artefacts. All artefacts were recorded but not retained.
- 4.4 The depth and complexity of deposits across the whole site was assessed. A written record of all pits was maintained, and the most informative section of all pits drawn to scale 1:20. Photographic records of significant hand excavated areas were made in accordance with best archaeological practice. Records included an overall test pit and site plan. A Global Positioning System (GPS) was used to locate the individual pits.

5.0 THE WATCHING BRIEF

- 5.1 A total of ten test pits were excavated. Of those, nine were archaeologically recorded. PIT 1: not observed and located along the B4320. Laing Utilities numbered this pit as Trial Hole RHOS05.
- 5.2 PIT 2 NGR SN41768 20389; this test pit measuring 1.10m x 0.50m, was located at the T-junction of the A40 and B4302; on the western side of the B4302. Laing Utility numbered this pit as Trial Hole RHOS04. The stratigraphy within this test pit consisted of 5 contexts. The south-facing section was recorded. Context [001] is the upper most deposit in the pit. This measures 0.10m in depth and is the tarmac surface of the road. There is a distinct edge between context [002], the sub-base and [001]. The sub-base is made up of gravel stone chips, average diameter 0.01m. Underlying [002] is a second layer of tarmac [003], 0.09m depth. Underlying [003], is a further sub-base [004] consisting of a well-compacted layer of sub-angular stone chips, average diameter 0.02m. Context [004] has a definite edge with context [005]. This context consists of a brown sandy soil with a 10% silt component. This is moderately hard in compaction, well sorted and moist. Due to limit of excavation, depth is unknown. However context [005] was excavated to a depth of 1.30m. There were no significant artefacts, deposits, features or structures located.
- 5.3 PIT 3 NGR SN 41768 20389; this test pit measured 1.10m x 0.74m and was located along the southern side of the A40, approximately 250m from the A40 and B4302 T-junction (towards Llandovery) - Laing Utility number 'SAMPLE RHOS01'. Seven contexts were observed within this test pit and the east-facing section recorded. Contexts [001] and [002] make up the upper deposits; these were recorded as two different deposits of tarmac for the A40. Underlying [002] are the two sub-base deposits, [003] and [004]. Context [003] comprises of gravel and stone chips up to 0.01m in diameter, and context [004] comprises of angular stones ranging in diameter from 0.01 - 0.15m. These extend to a depth of 0.55m below the existing ground level. Underlying [004] with a distinct edge is context [005]. This deposit consists of a dark brown silty soil of moderate compaction. This deposit overlies context [006], a lower level of tarmac with a thickness of 0.07m. Underlying [006] is a brown sandy soil: context [007], and consists of a well compacted soil with some root disturbance. Due to limit

of excavation, the depth of this deposit is unknown. However [007] was excavated to a depth of 1.55m. There were no significant artefacts, deposits, features or structures identified in this test pit.

- 5.4 PIT 4 NGR SN 63893 23797; this test pit measured 1.10m x 1.0m and was located on the southern side of the A40, approximately 75m west of 'The Plough Inn' toward Llandeilo. Laing Utility number 'SAMPLE RHOS02'. Nine contexts were observed in this test pit and two sections were recorded (south- and west-facing). This pit was subsequently next to pit 8 as the water main required was not located in this pit. Contexts [004] and [005] are numbers allocated to service pipes located within the pit. Context [004] is an electricity cable and [005] is a BT cable, both are within the deposit [003], a stony deposit with a maximum depth of 0.90m below the existing ground level. Some remnant Post-Medieval artefacts were excavated, including various fragmentary ceramics dated to the late 19th - early 20th centuries. Context [006] forms a cut which [003], [004] and [005] are fills. Appearing as a lens in [003], context [002] is the remnant edge to the tarmacaden on the A40 and extends 0.84m into the section. Underlying cut [006] are contexts indicative of earlier deposits, not associated with the laying of services [004] and [005]. Context [007] is a stony deposit bound by an orange sandy silt. It is moderately compacted and 0.70m in thickness. Artefacts within this context are Post-Medieval occupation waste, including glass fragments, a brown glass bottle and a single blue transfer sherd date to the late 19th century. Underlying [007], context [008] is an orange-brown fine grained silty clay with no evidence of anthropogenic activity. In the south-eastern corner of the test pit was a loosely compacted ashy deposit, context [009]. This deposit showed evidence of Post-Medieval activity including glass fragments and white glazed ceramics dating to the late 19th century. The black-brown silty deposit is composed of 5% shell and charcoal flecking. The full extent of [008] and [009] is unknown due to limit of excavation.
- 5.5 PIT 5 NGR SN 64035 23955; this test pit measured 1.18m x 0.62m and was cut through the a tarmacaden surface [001] on the southern side of the A40, approximately 50cm from the kerb-line. On the Laing Utilities CAD map, the test pit is outside 'Rhosmaen Villas' and numbered 'TH RHOS07'. It is located next to pit number 6. Four contexts were observed in this pit and the west-facing section was recorded. The upper stratigraphy included the tarmacaden surface [001] which overlies the road sub-base [002]. The A40 tarmacaden surface [001] measured 0.30m in depth and the sub-base [002], 0.25m deep. The sub-base comprises of angular stone chips with an average diameter of 0.07m. In the base of this pit, a BT cable [004] was located and the test pit was not extended further. The deposit in which [004] was located consisted of an orange silty sand with a 60% component of sub-angular stones, [003]. This was a moderately loose deposit. The full extent of context [003] is unknown due to limit of excavation. However context [003] was excavated to a depth of 0.80m. There were no significant artefacts, deposits, features or structures identified in this test pit.
- 5.6 PIT 6 NGR SN 64046 23932; this test pit measured 1.2m x 0.55m and was cut through the footpath concrete [001] on the south side of the A40. On the Laing Utilities map, the site is outside 'Rhosmaen Villas' and next to pit number 5; numbered 'TH RHOS07'. Ten contexts were observed in this pit and the east-facing section was recorded. Contexts [001] and [002] define the footpath concrete, 0.10m depth, and sub-base, max. 0.20m depth, respectively. Context [003] is the exterior concrete block for a utilities inspection chamber measuring 0.45m deep and 0.30m wide (in section). Cut by [003], context [004] consisted of a black deposit with equal composition of ash, tar, gravel and silt. Underlying [004], and also cut by [003], was a moderately compacted brown silty sand with a 5% stone composition - referred to as [006]. Similar to context [006], context [005] is also a brown silty sand with 5% stone chip fraction. However [005] also has a 1-5% orange sand fraction and <1% charcoal flecking. Context [005] and [006] are separated by two BT cables referred to as [007]. Contexts [004], [005] and [006] are likely to have resulted from the same phase of deposition; when the BT cables were laid. Within deposit [005], a further cable, [008] of unknown origin was located at a slightly lower depth to the BT cables [007]. At a depth of 0.90m, an electricity cable [009] was located across the section, oriented north-south. Cable [009] was also within deposit [005]. At a depth of 0.98m in the north-west corner of the pit, the water main [010] was located (also within context [005]). The full extent of both [005] and [006] is unknown due to limit of excavation. However context [005] was excavated to a depth of

0.80m, and [006] excavated to 0.60m. There were no significant artefacts, deposits, features or structures identified in this test pit.

- 5.7 PIT 7 NGR SN 64135 24034; this test pit measured 1.10m x 0.50m and was cut through the tarmac surface [001] of the A40, on the northern side of the road outside the 'tannery'. Originally this pit was cut into the top of a culvert which runs under the A40 (oriented NW-SE). The pit was subsequently moved approximately 10m west, towards Llandovery. On the Laing Utilities CAD map the test pit is numbered 'TH RHOS03'. Five contexts were observed in this pit and the east facing section was recorded, including the tarmac surface and sub-base material of the A40; referred to as contexts [001] and [002] respectively. Underlying [002] at a depth of 0.40m was a moderately compacted dark grey deposit composed of sinter and ash equally [003]. This deposit measured 0.20m in thickness. Underlying [003] was a light brown sandy clay with 10% stone composition. The deposit was well compacted and fine grained. In the north-west corner of the pit, the water mains pipe [005] was located at a depth of 0.93m, within deposit [004]. The full extent of context [004] is unknown due to limit of excavation. However [004] was excavated to a depth of 1.10m. There were no significant artefacts, deposits, features or structures identified in this test pit.
- 5.8 PIT 8 NGR SN 63810 23890; this test pit measured 1.20m x 0.90m and was cut through the tarmac surface [001] of the A40, on the southern side of the road, approximately 75m from the 'Plough Inn' towards Llandeilo. This pit is located in the road next to pit 4 number. On the Laing Utilities CAD map the site is numbered 'SAMPLE RHOS02'. Five contexts were observed in this test pit and the west-facing section was recorded, including the tarmac surface [001] and sub-base [002]. The pit was excavated to a depth of 1.90m with the water main [005] located at a depth of 1.60m below the existing ground level. The tarmac [001] measured up to 0.65m in thickness and the sub-base [002] 0.35m. Underlying [002], context [003] is a moderately compacted deposit composed of 85% stone and slate fragments within a orange brown silty sand. This deposit is 0.35m deep. Between 0.95m to 1.90m, was context [004] consisting of a yellowish orange silty sand with 5% sub-angular stone fragments; average diameter of 0.05m. The full extent of [004] is unknown due to limit of excavation. There were no significant artefacts, deposits, features or structures identified in this test pit.
- 5.9 PIT 9 NGR SN 63290 23808; this test pit measured 0.58m x 0.80m and was cut through the footpath [001], on the eastern side of the B4302. The site is located at the top of the hill leading northwards away from the A40. On the Laing Utilities map the test pit is numbered 'TRIAL HOLE RHOS06'. Nine contexts were observed in this pit, and two sections were recorded; north- and east-facing. The contexts included the footpath [001] and the sub-base [002], with depths of 0.10m and 0.05m respectively. The stratigraphy of the two sections differ. In the north-facing section, the exterior of a utilities inspection chamber, [003] was observed and comprised of four worked stone blocks of equal size. The exposed depth of [003] is 0.57m. Underlying [003], context [008] is a rubble deposit of stone, shell, and green to brown silty sand. This is a clearly defined deposit in the north-facing section. However in the east-facing section it is ephemeral and may be part of [007]. Within [008] the water main [009] was located at a depth of 1.50m. In the east-facing section, underlying sub-base [002], a dark brown soil [004] was 0.14m deep. This could possibly be an earlier top soil, prior to the present B4302 surface being laid. This is supported by the exposure of [005], a 0.03m deposit of gravel and tar that underlies probable topsoil [004]. Context [005] maybe evidence of an earlier sealed road surface along B4302. Underlying [005], a single deposition phase comprising of a variety of deposits constitutes [006]. There are three fill types; a mid-brown silty soil with 10% angular stone chips, an ashy shelly deposit, and an orange coloured silty sand with 2% stone chips. Due to the non-uniform relationships between the three deposits, neither of the deposits on their own are likely to be significant. Underlying [006], and with an undefinable relationship with [008], context [007] is a moderately compacted, fine grained, mid brown silty sand with 2% clay and 1% stone chip. The depth of both [007] and [008] are unknown due to the limit of excavation. However [007] was excavated to a depth of 0.90m and [008] was excavated to a depth of 0.95m. There were no significant artefacts, deposits, features or structures identified in this test pit.
- 5.10 PIT 10 NGR SN 63525 23893; this test pit measured 0.60m x 1.0m and was cut through footpath concrete [001], on a side road off the northern side of the A40, opposite the 'Plough Inn'. On the Laing Utilities map, the test pit is numbered 'TRIAL HOLE RHOS02'. The only

depth required by Welsh Water was the depth of the water main. As a result the pipe was not exposed in section. Four contexts were observed and the south-facing section was recorded. The footpath concrete [001] measures 0.10m from the surface and the sub-base [002] was 0.05m in depth. Context [002] was a moderately compacted mix of orange-brown silty sand with 90% stone chips. Underlying [002] was a tar deposit and gravel referred to as context [003]. Context [004] which underlies [003] was excavated to 0.90m but the actual depth of this deposit was unknown due to limit of excavation. Context [004] is a moderately compacted, moist, orange brown silty sand with 20% stone chips. There were no significant artefacts, deposits, features or structures identified in this test pit.

6.0 SUMMARY

- 6.1 There was no evidence of the Roman Road recorded along this section of the A40. The only deposits recorded were dated to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These artefacts were not found in association with any features or structures supporting settlement or occupation. Whilst the construction of the A40 or B4302 may have been responsible for destruction of the Roman Road, it is most likely that the Roman Road ran further north. The alignment of the Roman Road on the present Ordinance Survey Map may substantiate this. It can be postulated that the actual route of the Roman Road that links Carmarthen with Llandovery partially runs adjacent to the present line of the A40, passing through the settlement of Penybanc (NGR SN 617 240) and Aber-Marlais Park (NGR SN 695 297).

7.0 COPYRIGHT

- 7.1 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 rights reserved; excepting that it 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.

8.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Rivet, A.L.F. & Smith, C. (1981) The Places Names of Roman Britain. BCA Associates.

Soil Survey of England & Wales (1983). 1:250 000 map

FIGURE 1 APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE ROMAN ROAD

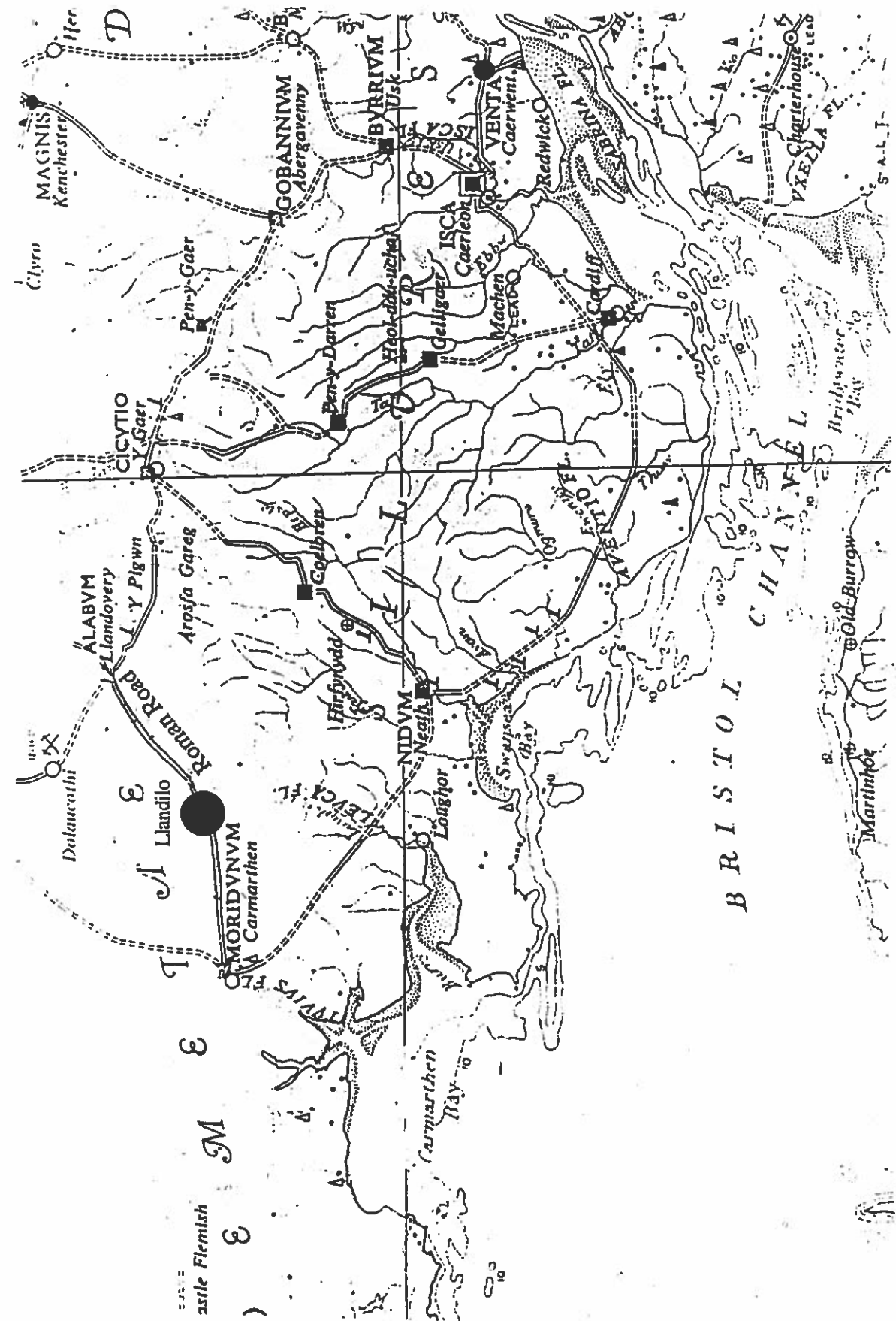
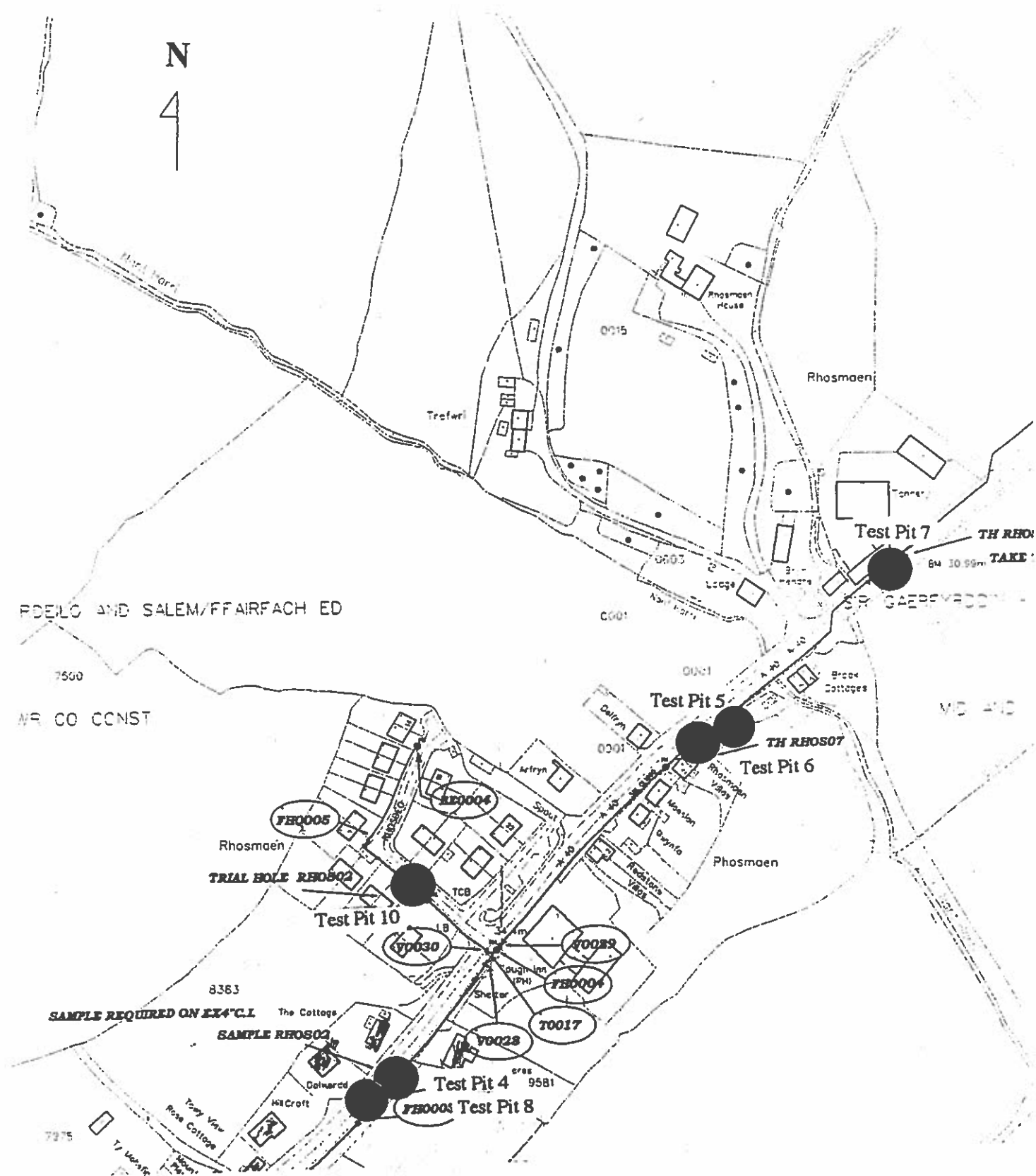
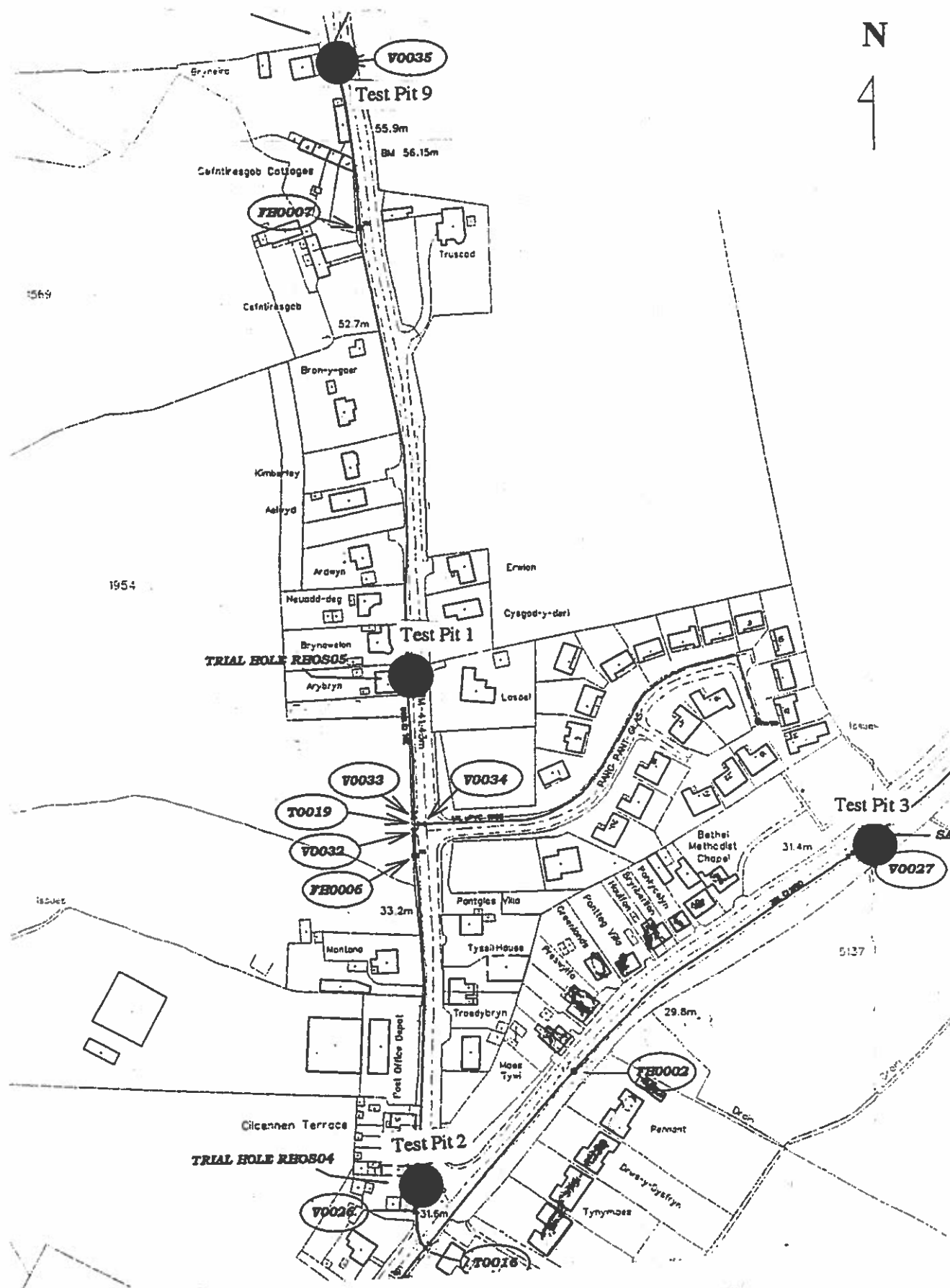


FIGURE 2 TEST PIT LOCATION - A40



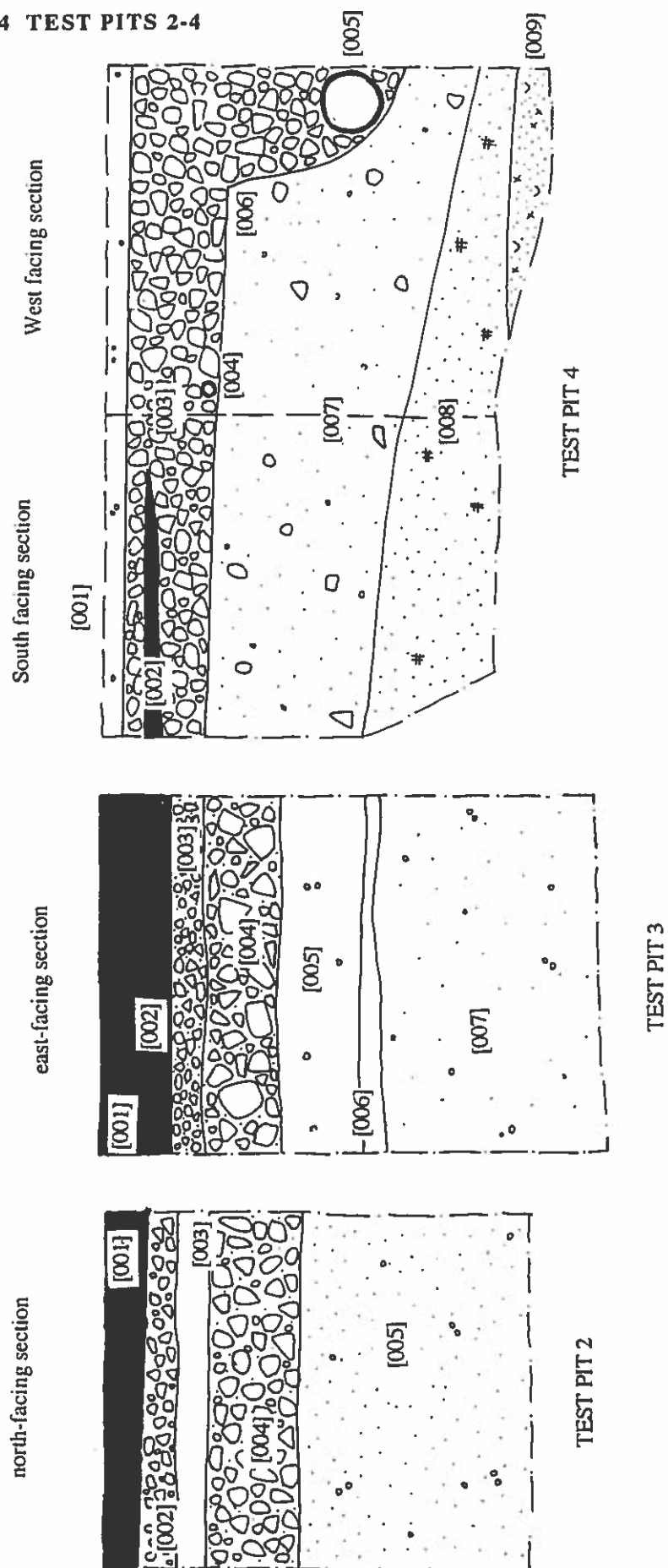
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FIGURE 3 TEST PIT LOCATION - A40 to B4302



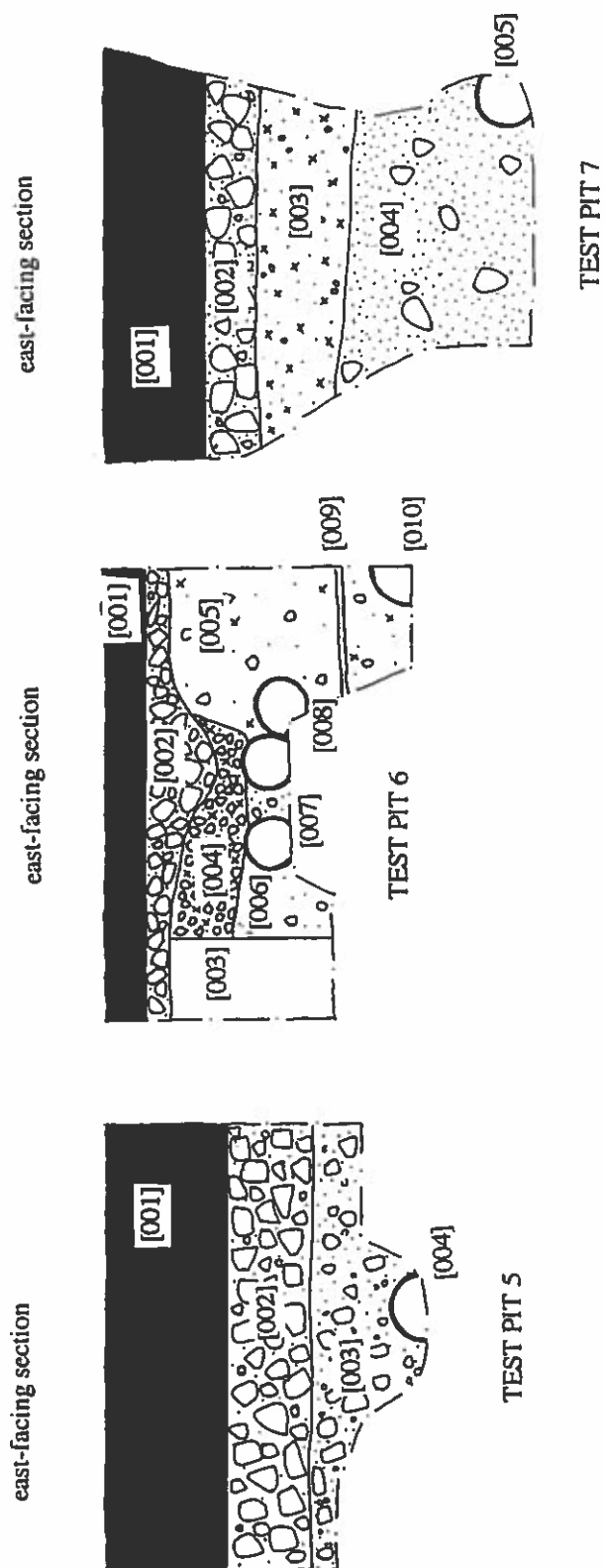
Scale 1:2500

FIGURE 4 TEST PITS 2-4



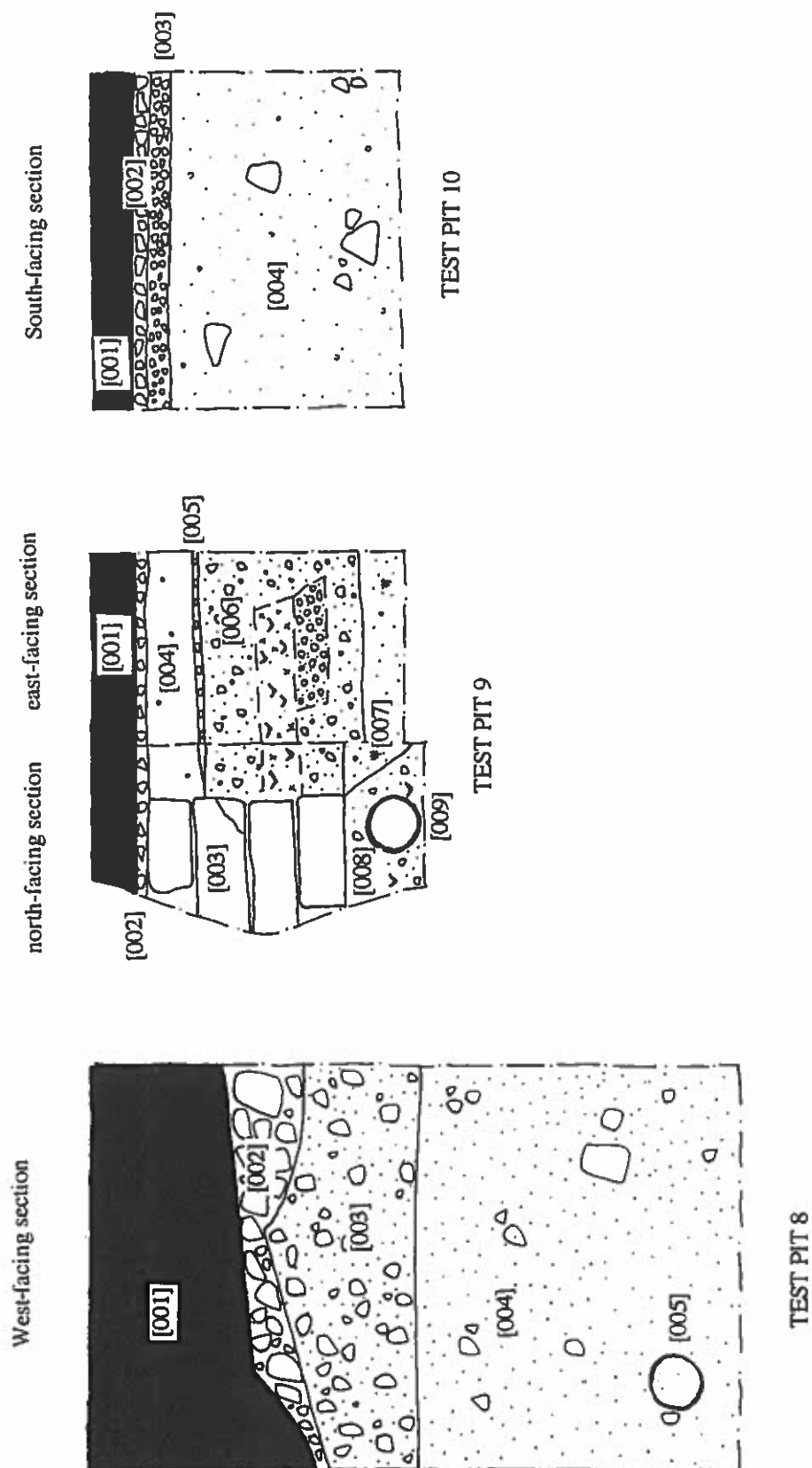
1M.

FIGURE 4 TEST PITS 5-7



1M.

FIGURE 4 TEST PITS 8-10



1M.

