

Watching Brief Commissioned By

DEWIS Ltd.

Fieldwork by

I.P. Brooks

Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.

Registered in England

Nº 2869678

***Former Council Depot, Wexham
Street, Beaumaris
Watching Brief***

July 2010

EAS Client Report 2010/21

CONTENTS

Introduction

NGR

Location and Topography

Archaeological Background

Aims of the Watching Brief

SUMMARY

Methodology

Results

Conclusions

Acknowledgements

References

Appendix 1: Context Summary

List of Figure

Figure 1: Location

**Figure 2: Location of the
development areas**

**Figure 3: Location of the
Features**

Figure 4: Plan of Features

**Figure 5: Section through wall
(Context 3)**

List of Plates

Plate 1: Entrance passageway

Plate 2: Plot 1

Plate 3: Plot 2

**Plate 4: Plot 2, level of previous
disturbance**

**Plate 5: Depth of imported
material in Plot 2**

**Plate 6: Drain disturbed by
previous works**

**Plate 7: Remains of wall
(Context 3) at north end of
passageway**

Plate 8: Wall (Context 5)

NRG

Centred on: SH 6022 7625

Location and Topography (Figure 1)

The development area is behind 41-45 Wexham Street, Beaumaris (Figure 2). The site consists of an entrance passage from Wexham Street to two blocks of land, the former Council Depot itself centred on SH 60200 76235 and a plot consisting part of the back gardens of 43 and 45 Wexham Street centred on SH 60172 76212.

Archaeological Background

Wexham Street is not within the medieval core of Beaumaris, but appears to have been in existence by at least 1600, although the current layout of this area of the town would appear to have been established by the eighteenth century. An archaeological desk-top study by Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd (Laws 2006) suggested that the standing remains on the site, prior to the development, dated to the last decades of the nineteenth century with the possible exception of the boundary wall on the southern side of the development area.

The desk-top study recommended that a watching brief was carried out during the development of the site and this recommendation was incorporated into the planning permission for this development. In 2007, Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned to carry out this watching brief. Although the site was visited by K. Laws, no work was being carried out and she was advised that only limited works were being undertaken, at that time, to prepare the rear plot and that these works would not include the removal of any soil. She was also

informed that Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd would be contacted when ground works were to start. No further contact was made by the developer until July 2010 when Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd was re-commissioned to carry out the watching brief.

Aims of the Watching Brief

To record any features or deposits of archaeological value disturbed by ground works associated with the construction of houses on the Old Council Depot, Wexham Street, Beaumaris.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Only a limited number of archaeological features were disturbed by the current development phase. Of most importance were two walls recorded in the entrance passageway, suggesting at least a previous land division and possibly a building fronting onto Wexham Street prior to the current street frontage.

Any possible archaeological remains in the plot behind 43 and 45 Wexham Street, however, had been totally destroyed before the current phase of development with the removal of between 0.5 and 1.0 m of deposits from the whole of the plot.

Methods

The watching brief took place on works carried out by EuroGold Groundworks and Civil Engineering Contractors Ltd. between 20th July 2010 and 19th August 2010. The watching brief was largely in response to when ground works were being carried out consisting of seven visits to the development over the period of the month.

Three main areas were recorded consisting of the passageway leading to the site (Plate 1), Plot 1 covering the site of the Old Council Depot (Plate 2) and Plot 3 behind 43 and 45 Wexham Street (Plate 3) (Figure 2). The works in the passageway consisted of the construction of a new drain along the length of the passage. In both Plots 1 and 2 the footing for the new houses were observed together with the drainage works associated with these buildings.

Results

The surviving archaeological remains concentrated in the passageway to the development site, indeed no significant deposits were recorded in either Plot 1 or Plot 2.

Within Plot 1, the footings for the houses and the associated drainage works proved this area to be highly disturbed by modern services which cut through a layer of disturbed soil up to 1 m thick (Context 7) and no other visible features.

Plot 2 proved to have been previously disturbed, between 0.5 and 1.0 m of deposits had been removed over the whole of the plot (Plate 4), indeed the level of destruction proved to be greater than initially expected as a layer of crushed

tarmac and other modern building debris up to 0.5 m thick (Plate 5) had been imported onto the plot. A hint of existence possible features in disturbed area was recorded in the standing section at the northern end of the plot. Here the remains of a "French Drain" were observed. It consisted of a trench lined with slate and filled with cobbles (Context 6, Plate 6). When this section was cut back, this feature disappeared suggesting that only the north western end of this feature had survived. Neither the direction of this drain, nor its extent, are known. The use of slate to line the drain would suggest a modern date for this feature.

At the northern end of the passageway the remains of two walls were recorded. Context 3 ran across the line of the passageway and continued the line of the street frontage on either side of the development area (Figures 3 and 4). This wall was disturbed by a drain running down the length of the passageway, but it appeared to be a well-constructed wall of limestone block in a pale yellow mortar (Figure 5, Plate 7).

A second wall (Context 5) ran along the length of the passageway (Figure 4). In all a 12.8 m length of this wall was observed, although the relationship with Context 3 was uncertain. The character of this wall was different to that of Context 3. It consisted of a series of rounded boulders with the occasional squared block. Only the occasional patch of pale yellow mortar was recorded, however there were many voids within the structure of this wall. This relatively poor construction may only mark the footing of this wall. The line of the wall was at a slight angle to the line of the passageway, possibly suggesting that it

related to a previous land division system. No dating evidence was recorded from either of the wall observed.

Conclusions

The lack of archaeological remains recorded during the watching brief partly reflects the level of previous disturbance prior to the current development. However, the two walls recorded in the passageway hint at activity in the area prior to the current street pattern. Assuming that the two walls are contemporary it is not certain whether they represent a building or the division between two properties. Given the poor quality of the Context 5 it would seem likely that it may have been a boundary wall, although the use of squared block in Context 3 on the street frontage hints at a more formal structure. The lack of finds from the area of the walls may also suggest the land boundary theory.

The date of these walls is uncertain. They clearly do not relate to the current street layout and presumably reflect an earlier land division. The 1829 Baron Hill Estate Map by Richard Yates (Laws 2006) shows the gap now occupied by the passageway was in already place, so presumably the walls recorded predate this map.

Acknowledgments

The watching brief was commissioned by Dewis Williams for Dewis Ltd. Particular thanks are due to Darren and his team from EuroGold whose support whilst carrying out the fieldwork is gratefully acknowledged.

References

Laws, K. 2006. *Fomer Council Depot, Wexham Street, Beaumaris. Archaeological Assessment*. EAS Client Report 2006/15



Plate 1: Entrance Passageway



Plate 2: Plot 1



Plate 3: Plot 2



Plate 4: Plot 2, level of previous disturbance.



Plate 5: Depth of imported material in Plot 2



Plate 6: Drain disturbed by previous works



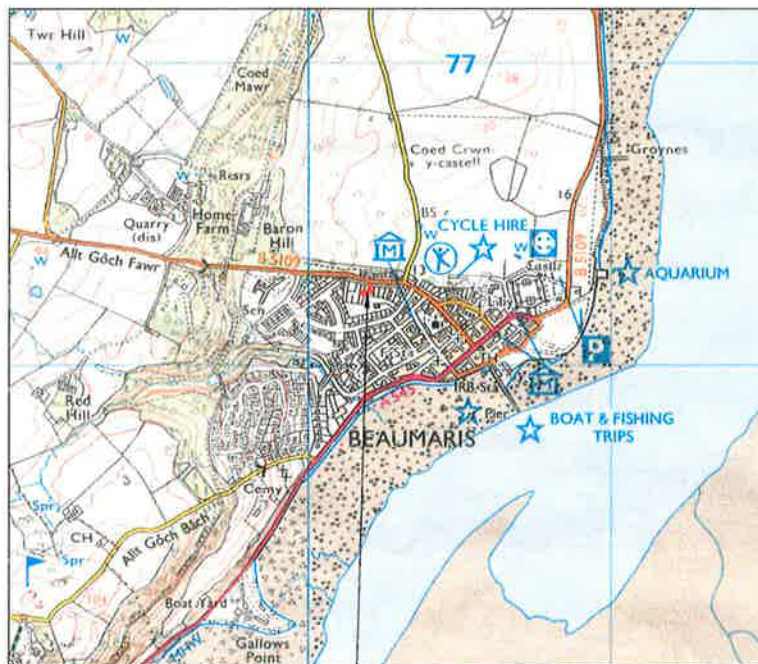
Plate 7: Remain of Wall (Context 3) at north end of passageway



Plate 8: Wall (Context 5)

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Relationships	Description
1	Above 2	Tarmac surface of the passageway up to 100 mm thick
2	Below 1, Above 3, 4 and 5	Pale yellow/brown gravel sub-base to the tarmac in the passageway
3	Below 2, Abuts 4	The remains of a wall running across the passageway consisting of a series of limestone block in a pale yellow mortar. The blocks were approximately 250 mm x 15 mm in size. The full extent of this wall was not determined as it extended into the baulk. The wall was also disturbed by a previous drain running along the line of the passageway.
4	Below 2, Abuts 3	Dark orange/brown clayey soil with fragments of modern ceramics, plastic and glass. [modern disturbance associated with a previous disturbance in the passageway]
5	Below 2	A rough wall running along the line of the passageway. Probably originally 0.6 m wide it was constructed of a mixture of rounded boulders (up to 300 mm in size) and the occasional squared block 400 x 400 x 100 mm in size. There is the occasional patch of pale yellow mortar within the wall; however there are also many voids. The wall was traced for a length of 12.8 m along the passageway, although its relationship with Context 3 could not be determined.
6	Within topsoil	A “French Drain” seen in the section of the previously disturbed area of Plot 2. Approximately 0.5 m wide and 0.5 m deep this drain had vertical, sawn slates lining its sides and was filled with a series of cobbles. This drain ran into the disturbed area. When the section was cut back by less than 0.5 m this feature disappeared suggesting that only one end of the feature disturbed. The presence of sawn slates suggests a relatively modern date for this feature.
7	Within Plot 1	Very dark brown highly disturbed soil up to 1 m thick



Former Council Depot

Reproduced from the ExplorerTM 263, 1:25,000 scale
by permission of the Ordnance Survey ® on behalf of
The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office
© Crown Copyright 1999
All Rights Reserved Licence Number AL 100014722

Figure 1: Former Council Depot, Wexham Street,
Location
Scale 1:25,000

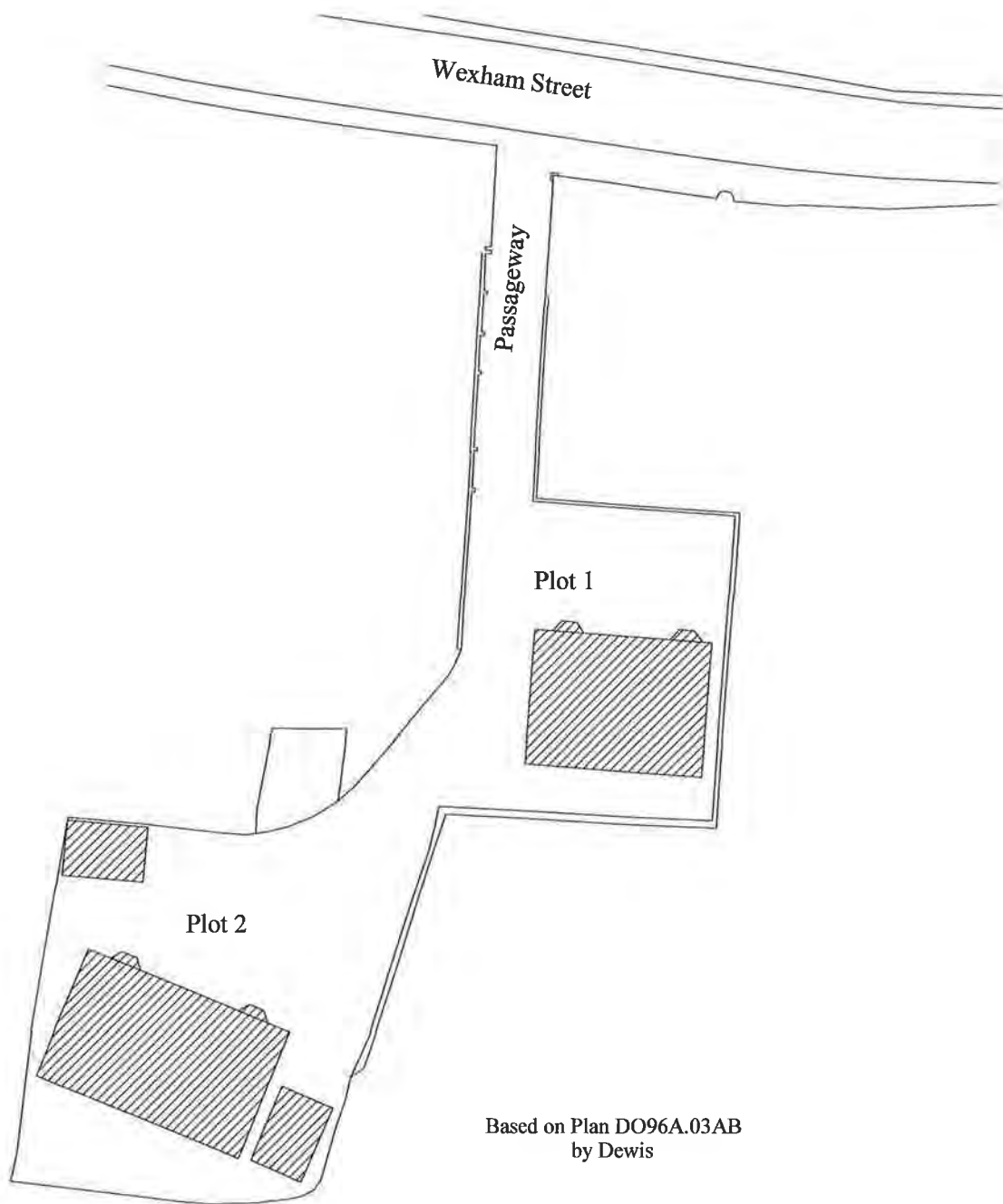


Figure 2: Location of the Development Areas
Scale 1:500

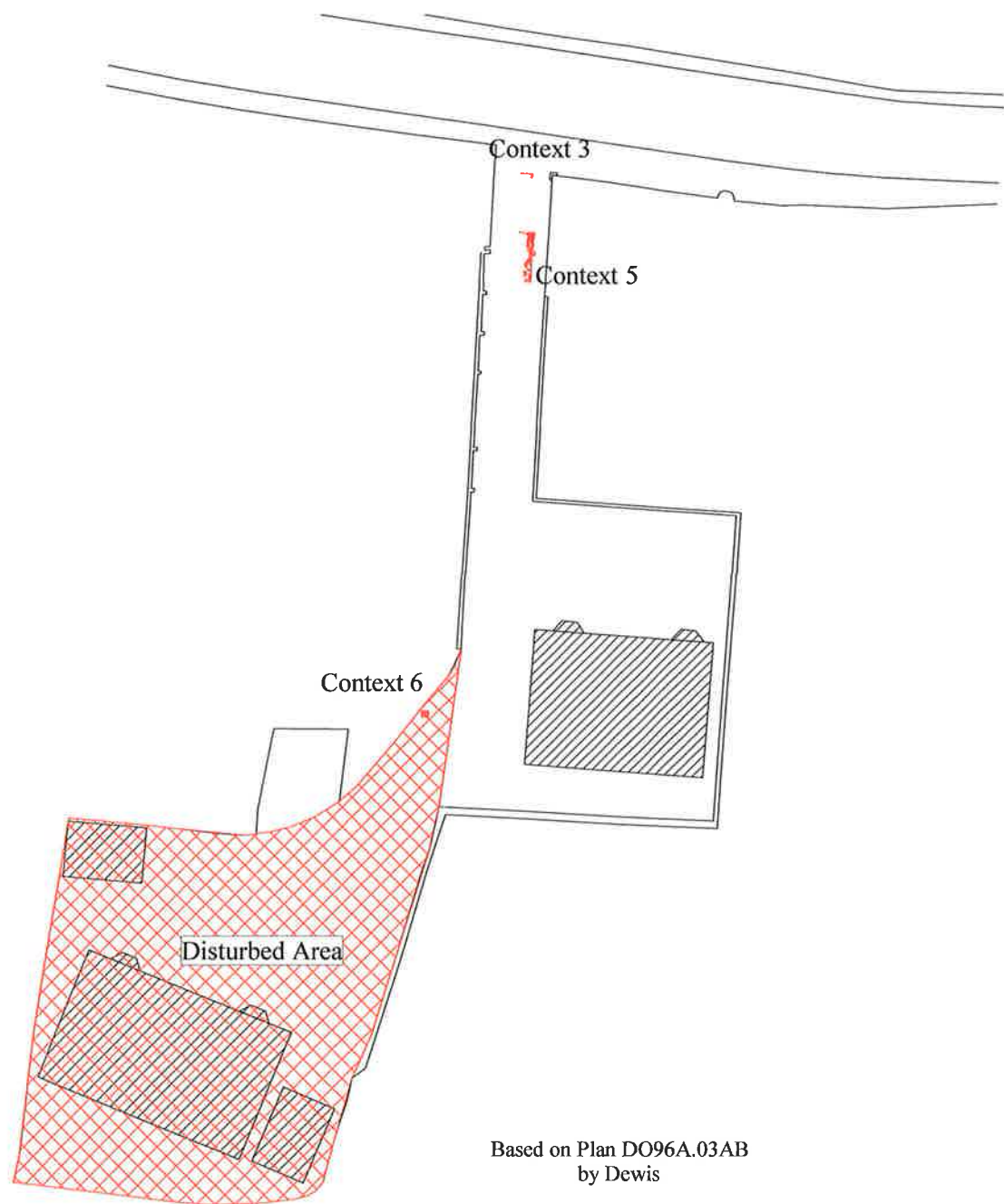


Figure 3: Location of the Features
Scale 1:500

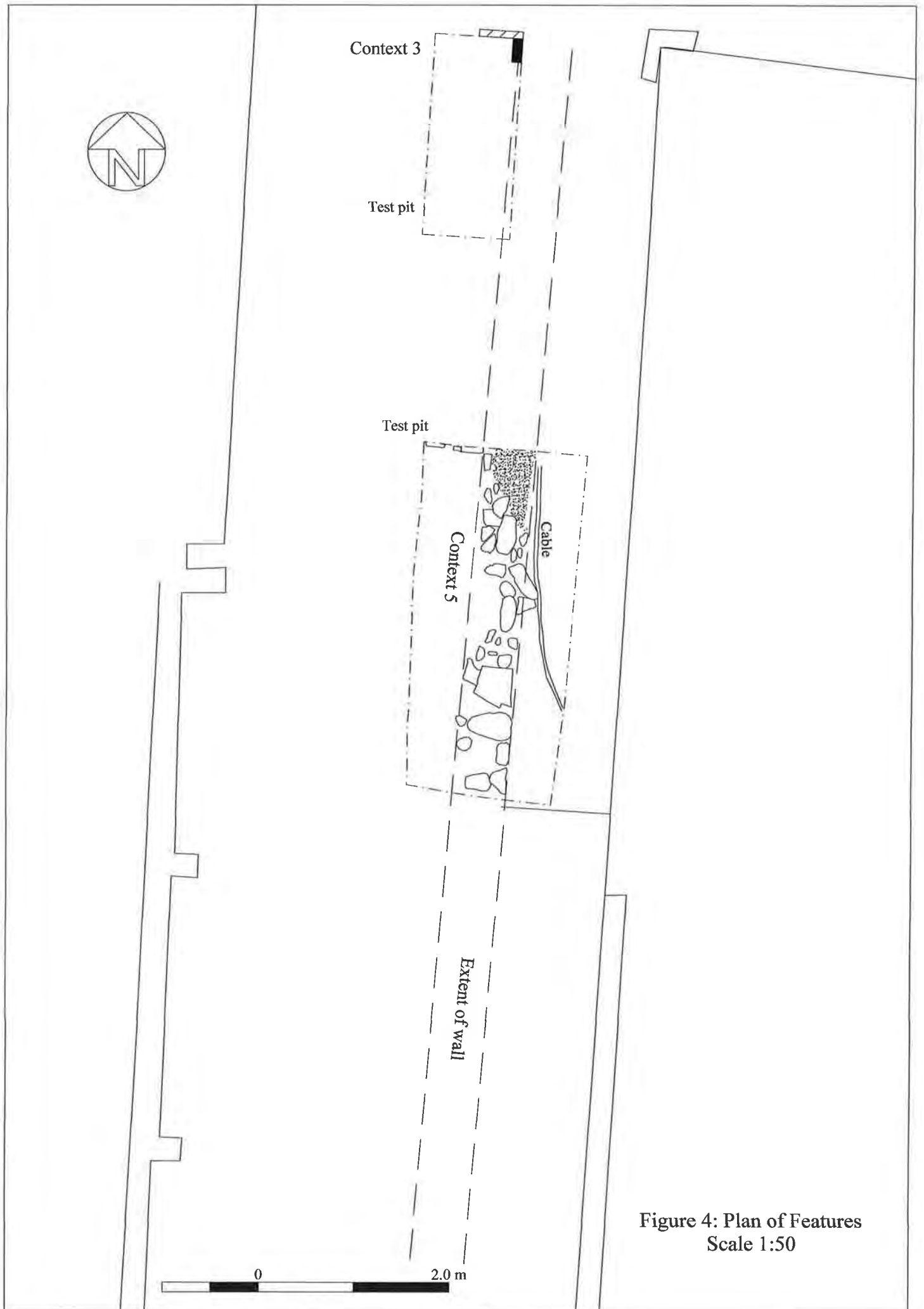


Figure 4: Plan of Features
Scale 1:50

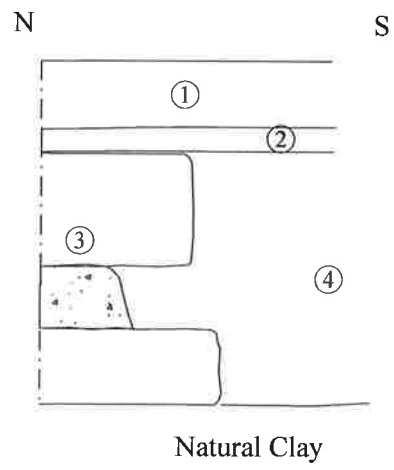


Figure 5: Section through Wall (Context 3)
Scale 1:10