

Interim Report
Archaeological Evaluation & Watching Brief
Phase II
Kindrochit Castle
Braemar
ABERDEENSHIRE

BM02



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**INTERIM REPORT
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION &
WATCHING BRIEF PHASE II
KINDROCHIT CASTLE
BRAEMAR**

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ABSTRACT

North-East Scotland Preservation Trust commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological evaluation on the site of consolidation works at Kindrochit Castle, Braemar. The castle, in ruinous condition, is a scheduled ancient monument (HS No 2583), centred on NGR NO 1512 9134. The work (site code BM02) was undertaken during the period 2nd–3rd June 2014 in varying weather conditions. Two test pits were dug to determine the presence or absence of a suspected subterranean wall line; this feature was exposed in one of the pits, while a similar feature in the second may have been a floor. In addition, three possible buttresses or tower bases were recorded on 24th April 2014 as part of an ongoing watching brief on Phase II of the works.

The present report is an interim discussion of findings to date.

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

North-East Scotland Preservation Trust commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological evaluation on the site of consolidation works at Kindrochit Castle, Braemar. The castle, in ruinous condition, is a scheduled ancient monument (HS No 2583), centred on NGR NO 1512 9134. The work (site code BM02) was undertaken during the period 2nd–3rd June 2014 in varying weather conditions. The requirement was to evaluate either end of a suspected buried wall line in the south-east of the site, through digging two test pits of 1m x 2m each. Special attention was to be paid to any structural remains encountered. As part of an ongoing watching brief on the works, several architectural features of archaeological interest, recently exposed by the masonry contractors, were also recorded during a visit on 24th April 2014. These features are included in the present report as part of Phase II of works on the site.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this investigation was to establish the presence/absence, date, character and quality of any archaeological remains surviving within the specified area. The results of this investigation will be used to inform future mitigation strategies for the site.

1.3 Reporting

The present document has been prepared as an interim report on this evaluation and watching brief. Copies will be sent to the client, Historic Scotland and Aberdeenshire Council Sites and Monuments Record. A final report will be prepared on all phases of work on this site.

1.4 Planning and Curatorial Issues

This evaluation and watching brief is part of a programme of archaeological work designed to satisfy the outstanding archaeological condition on the scheduled monument consent for the consolidation works.

1.5 Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Bruce Mann and Claire Herbert of Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology, Paul Rutherford and Oliver Lewis of Historic Scotland and Stewart Urquhart of Urquhart Stonemasons for their assistance and guidance throughout this project. Thanks are also due to Catherine Smith and Sophie Cathcart for the finds report. North-East Scotland Preservation Trust funded this evaluation and watching brief.

2 Details of Work

2.1 The Site (Illus 1)

Kindrochit Castle is a Scheduled Monument (HS Ref No 2583), located at NGR NO 1512 9134, adjacent to the public car park and toilets in the centre of Braemar, Aberdeenshire.

The site comprises the fragmentary remains of the Castle, a late 14th century tower house incorporating earlier work. The castle occupies a strong defensive location and is protected by the Water of Clunie to the W and by an ancient mill lade to the E. Its location had considerable strategic value, overlooking a major crossing of the Clunie.

2.2 Archaeological Potential

Consolidation work had suggested that a wall stub in the extreme southern corner of the site may connect to the remainder of the outer defences via a buried wall line. Part of this line was overlain by a considerable amount of tumbled stone. Moreover, the removal of turf as part of the consolidation had exposed several architectural features at various points around the Phase II area of work.

2.3 Archaeological Method

Two test pits were hand-excavated at either end of the suspected wall line (illus 2). Turf and topsoil was removed by spade and any archaeological features thereby exposed were cleaned and recorded. Features or deposits identified as recent were removed until a horizon was reached which corresponded with the historic construction and use of the castle. Both pits were recorded in plan and section drawing and photographed, as were the features exposed during the consolidation work.

2.4 Results of Investigations

Test Pit 1

This pit initially measured 2m east-west x 0.5m north-south. An extension measuring 1m east-west x 0.5m north-south was then excavated leading off from the southern edge of the western terminus, so that in final outline, the pit formed a right-angle. Within both the extension and the western half of the original pit, an alignment of three roughly-dressed stone blocks was exposed, at minimal depth below the turf (no more than 0.1m and generally less than this). The alignment ran northeast (northern edge) to southwest (southern edge) and, if continued, would terminate at the northwest corner of the supposed tower base (wall 26) in the southwest corner of the site. Extended in the opposite direction, the alignment would appear to continue the southern terminal of wall 25 (see Illus2). The alignment therefore appeared to represent the base of a wall.

To either side of this wall base lay two deposits of redeposited, fragmented stones within matrices of loose, sandy soil- (177) to the west of the wall and (180) to the east. Immediately over the stones lay a deposit of crushed mortar, (178). Although mortar was not apparent between the stones, traces of crushed mortar were apparent on some of the stone faces; moreover, beneath (177) and abutting the wall to the west lay a more compacted deposit of stones, stone fragments and crushed mortar, within a yellow sandy matrix. This appeared to continue as far as the west-facing section of the spoil build-up adjacent to the tower base.

Abutting the eastern face of the stone alignment, deposit (180) was found to contain numerous fragments of cut bone, sherds of early modern glass, including broken bottles of nineteenth-century design, porcelain fragments and a copper alloy band possibly originating from a small tin or caddy. Beneath this deposit, which also included lenses of sand and river gravel, the wall base continued at a lower level as stones [185] (0.7m below the present ground surface) across the whole of the western half of the test pit;

this suggested the removal of several wall stones and the backfilling of the resulting pit with refuse.

Test Pit 2

This was excavated immediately to the south of wall 25, initially 0.2m out from the wall end, rather than abutting the stonework itself, in order to avoid undermining any loose masonry. Aligned northwest to southeast, the pit measured 1m northeast-southwest and 3.2m northwest-southeast, including a 0.6m extension to the west of the wall face. It thus took in the entirety of the wall end. Immediately below the 0.05m thick topsoil, a deposit of fragmented sub-angular stones in a loose sandy silt matrix (183) was exposed, extending across the whole of the test pit. Beneath this, at a depth of 0.1m beneath the present ground surface, a large (0.4m diameter) flat, sub-rounded boulder was found to be part of a layer of similar stones (186) extending across the width of the pit from a point 0.8m from the northwest terminus to 1.15m further to the southeast. This appeared to align it with the wall base detected in Test Pit 1 (see Illus2) The stones, which were closely set but frequently not abutting and did not appear to have been worked, were contained within a yellow sand and crushed mortar matrix (187). The stones formed a roughly level surface which may have represented the base of a wall or alternatively a floor.

In order to further investigate these possibilities, the pit was extended to abut the wall face immediately southeast of the deposit: it was found that the wall face was deep-set into the ground with at least one additional course below both the present ground surface and the deposit; and that it finished flush with its visible line. This was clearly the intended terminus of the wall, which respected the edge of the deposit. The stones within the deposit did not appear to be keyed into the wall face. On balance, then, the deposit seems likely to represent a floor level. Isolated stones within yellow sand (188) and (189) in either end of the test pit may have represented the truncated remnants of the same floor or tumble from surrounding structures. The sand matrices may have been contiguous with (187), but this could not be established without further excavation.

It should be noted that the wall end here had been recently uncovered by consolidation work and appeared to represent one side of a deep-set window splay, entrance or fighting bay, angled back obliquely from perpendicular with the wall line. The floor may have been associated with this feature, which was given the new number Wall Face 49.

Watching Brief Features

Three features, (a), (b) and (c), were uncovered during Phase II works. All were located at corners of the Phase II building remains and took the form of a sub-rectangular protrusion from the wall face at or close to present ground level. All were composed of roughly dressed or undressed stone blocks with rubble infill and traces of lime mortar.

Feature (a) was exposed at the apex of wall faces 13 and 14, protruding to the southwest from the former. Measuring 1.60m northwest to southeast x 1.15m northeast to southwest, it included an outlying flat, sub-angular stone (168) which was probably part of the original structure and deposits of mortar either overlying the stones- (167), (170)- or adhering to them- (169), (171).

Feature (b) was located at the northwest corner of the site, at the junction of wall faces 16 and 01 and extending to the northeast. Measuring 1.60m northwest to southeast x 1.10m northeast to southwest, this feature was considerably less compact than (a), with numerous loose stones around a rubble and mortar core. It overlay at least two large, flat stones- (173), (174)- embedded in the present ground surface and appearing to form a paved floor at the northwest corner of feature (b). The exact extent of these stones was undetermined, as they were partially overlain by unstripped topsoil.

Along the northeast edge of feature (b) lay a long (1.61m x 0.48m x 0.25m) grey granite slab, bearing toolmarks and a pronounced notch in the northeast corner. The slab rested on spoil and loose stone chips and therefore appeared to be out of its original position. This may have represented part of a threshold or lintel, displaced from elsewhere in the castle.

Feature (c) was exposed at the opposite end of wall face 01, at its junction with wall face 02 in the northeast corner of the site. Lying almost level with the present ground surface, this measured 2.4m northwest to southeast x 1.5m northeast to southwest. This included a large spread of mixed mortar and silt (175) within a rubble core. The edges of the feature were defined by several large (0.40m diameter) boulders or flat slabs.

All three features may have represented the bases of buttresses designed to strengthen the corners of the Phase II building, perhaps indicating corner towers or turrets at these points.

A previously unrecorded wall face, 49, was also uncovered by consolidation. This measured 2.53m in length and adjoined wall face 25 at an oblique angle. At the time of the visit, this had been partly consolidated with mortar, but traces of the original mortar were still apparent. As with much of the castle fabric, the wall face consisted of rough-dressed blocks around a rubble core. One to two courses were apparent above the present ground surface, with at least one additional course visible in section within Test Pit 2.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

The evaluation demonstrated the existence of the suspected wall line in Test Pit 1. However, the feature exposed within Test Pit 2 may have represented a floor level, indicating that the building structures in this part of the site may have been of greater complexity than previously thought. Alder Archaeology recommends that the area between the two test pits be excavated to determine the relationship between the features exposed by the evaluation works.

This phase of the ongoing watching brief has exposed and recorded three previously concealed architectural features. Consolidation work has also uncovered what may be a window or bay at the southern end of wall face 25 (wall face 49). However, it must be remembered that the present report is an interim on the ongoing works, which may produce further data. It is recommended that the watching brief continue and that the remains be re-surveyed electronically upon conclusion of the works.

Appendix 1 Context Register

<i>No:</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Phase</i>
165	Loose, dark brown bioturbated soil deposit, probably remnant topsoil overlying stone 168	II
166	Loose, mid-brown soil deposit with frequent (c.15%) mortar fragments and small river-rounded pebbles. The internal fill interpenetrating the damaged end of wall 14	
167	Light grey lime mortar deposit overlying the base of wall face 13 at the junction with WF14	
168	Flat, sub-angular stone slab, dark grey granite, extending from the west face of WF13, unworked, with mortar adhesion. Not fully exposed.	
169	Agglomerated mortar adhering to WF13.	
170	Deposit of crushed mortar at the base of WF13, abutting stone 168	
171	Mortar adhering to stone 168	
172	Large- 1.61m x 0.48m x 0.25m – weathered grey granite slab with pronounced notch in the “narrow end” possibly created to hold or caused by a doorpost, lying on loose soil on the edge of feature (b)	
173	Flat floor or foundation support granite slab at base of feature (b)	
174	Flat floor or foundation support granite slab at base of feature (b)	
175	Deposit of admixed crushed mortar and brown silt within rubble core of feature (c)	
176	Topsoil over Test Pits 1 & 2	
177	Redeposited stone fragments and topsoil in TP01, inclusions of modern glass, pottery, iron, c.10% flat stones c.15cm diameter (average), loose compaction	
178	Deposit of crushed mortar in TP01, containing fragmented glass bottle	
179	Base of wall alignment in TP01, comprising 3 roughly dressed masonry blocks, with traces of lime mortar adhesion.	
180	Redeposited stones and silt in East of TP01, c.5% stones, 10cm diameter (average), inclusions of glass, porcelain, animal bone (sawn), moderate compaction	
181	Gravel lens within 180, 5cm diameter river-rounded pebbles	
182	Loose stone fragments, crushed mortar & silt beneath 177, possible fill of founds trench	
183	Loose stones, redeposited topsoil, crushed mortar beneath topsoil in TP02	
184	Sand lens beneath 181 in TP01, coarse yellow sand/gravel	

185	Stones in base of TP01 beneath 180, close-fitting rounded or sub-angular, no traces of mortar but continuation of wall base 179	
186	Stones beneath 183 in TP02, roughly level surface of dispersed rounded or sub-angular stones of varying diameters. Set into bedding 187. Possible base of floor level	
187	Admixed crushed mortar and yellow sand forming bedding layer for stones 186.	
188	Loose stones within yellow sand matrix in E end of TP02, possible continuation of 186/7	
189	Loose stones within yellow sand matrix in W end of TP02, possible continuation of 186/7	

Appendix 2 Photographic Register

<i>Set 10</i>	<i>24 April (Watching Brief)</i>	
<i>Image No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>View</i>
0001-4	Pre-ex, feature (a)/Wall Face 13	NE
0005-6	Stone 168, feature (a)	NE
0007-13	Stone 168, feature (a)	NW
0014-15	Stone 172, feature (b)	SE
0016-17	Feature (b), location	SE
0018-19	Stone 172, location	NE
0020-21	Feature (c), deposit 175	SW
0022-23	Feature (c), deposit 175	NE
<i>Set 11</i>	<i>Test Pits 01-02 June</i>	
0001-2	Test Pit 01, location	NE
0003-6	Test Pit 01, location	E
0007-8	TP01, post-topsoil removal	E
0009-10	Masonry block, part of 179 wall base	E
0011-14	Wall base 179, in TP01	N
0015-18	Wall base 179, in TP01	W
0019-20	Wall base 179, in TP01	S
0021-22	TP02, location	N

0023-24	TP02, location	NW
0025-26	Deposit 183, TP02	W
0027-28	Stones 185, base of TP01	W
0029-34	Gravel lens 181, north-facing profile TP01	S
0035-38	Wall base 179, TP01	SSE
0039-44	Stones 186, TP02	W
0045-46	Southwest-facing section, deposit 183, TP02	NE
0047-49	Deposit 189, TP02	W
0050-51	TP02, post-ex	W
0052-55	TP02, post-ex	E
0056-57	Base of Wall Face 49, in TP02	NE

Appendix 3 Drawing Register

<i>Sheet No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Scale</i>
1	Drawings 1, 3 & 4, WB 24 th April, features (a), (b) and (c), plans	1:20
2	Drawing 2, WB 24 th April, feature (a) post-removal deposit 165, plan	1:20
3	TPs 01 & 02, evaluation, plans	1:20
4	TPs 01 & 02, section drawings	1:10

Appendix 4 Finds Register

<i>Context</i>	<i>Material Type</i>	<i>Details</i>
176	Fe	1 nail; shaft circular cross-sectioned. ?modern
176	Glass	1 clear bottle base, embossed [RINSE & RETURN]; (20th century milk bottle) 1 green bottle sherd
176	Pottery	1 sherd stoneware, transfer printed blue on cream glaze, legend [RICH PRE] 1 redware base sherd, glazed yellow 1 standard whiteware base sherd, glazed white

		2 standard whiteware body sherds, glazed white
176	Animal bone	Bird cranium cf chicken (<i>Gallus gallus</i>)
176	Cu alloy	U-shaped mount with 4 rivet holes. Two flattened fixing loops at end of each arm. Possibly covering for furniture handle. Length 88mm, width 10.5mm, thickness 1.5mm
180	pottery	2 body sherds standard whiteware, glazed white; 1 with transfer-print blue floral pattern 1 rim sherd standard whiteware, glazed white with thin gilded band 1 rim sherd standard whiteware, glazed white 1 rim sherd porcelain, white glaze and thin gilded band
180	Glass	1 body sherd green bottle in thick metal 1 green bottle neck 1 moulded brown bottle neck 1 green moulded base, legend [VE PG31] 1 green ovate bottle base, in thick pale green metal with air bubbles (late 19th/early 20th century date)
180	CBM	1 sherd red brick/tile
180	CBM	1 fragment rough mortar with stones
180	Heated residue	1 fragment vitrified waste
180	Animal bone	1 cattle scapula; sawn 1 cattle right radius, proximal 1 cattle metatarsal, shaft 1 sheep/goat left radius shaft; sawn 1 sheep/goat ilium, sawn 1 sheep/goat right astragalus 1 large ungulate vertebra 2 large ungulate rib fragments 6 small ungulate rib fragments 3 small ungulate vertebrae and 4 vertebral fragments, chopped 1 sheep/goat right calcaneum

		1 rabbit pelvic fragment 1 chicken ulna (in 2 fragments) 1 chicken scapula 1 chicken pelvic fragment 1 sawn large mammal shaft fragment 1 burnt large mammal fragment 2 indeterminate mammal fragments
183	Animal bone	1 cattle lower third molar, in wear 1 cattle left tibia shaft fragment 1 cattle humerus shaft fragment 1 sheep/goat metacarpal, proximal 1 large ungulate vertebra, entire 1 small ungulate rib 6 indeterminate mammal fragments
183	Glass	1 sherd window glass
183	Pottery	1 rim sherd, standard whiteware
WF25	Fe	1 ?iron knife, with whittle tang. Very poor condition, heavily corroded.

Appendix 5 Standard Terms of Reference for all Fieldwork

5.1 Recording Methodology

Alder Archaeology employs a Single Context Recording System that allows full cross-referencing of stratigraphy, finds and environmental samples, as well as site-wide phasing. All features will be planned at scale 1:20, and sections drawn at scale 1:10. Sections and profiles will be drawn and all features will be photographed with metric scale included. Environmental samples will be taken from archaeologically significant contexts, if the analysis of these samples would aid significantly in the interpretation of any features identified.

5.2 Human Remains

If human remains are encountered they will be left in situ and the local police will be informed. If removal is required this will take place in compliance with Historic Scotland's Policy Paper *The Treatment of Human Remains in Archaeology*.

5.3 Products and Reporting

A Data Structure Report will normally be prepared within a period agreed within the Written Scheme of Investigation/ Project Design, after the completion of the fieldwork. This forms the basic level of reporting. Further reporting may be required on the basis of discoveries made during excavations.

A copy of the report and the project archive will be deposited in the NMRS. Further copies will be sent to the client, LAAO and others, as appropriate.

5.4 Artefacts

Finds of objects will be subject to the Scots Laws of Treasure Trove and *Bona Vacantia*. We will report such finds, if recovered, with supporting documentation to the Secretariat of the Treasure Trove Panel for disposal to the appropriate museum.

5.5 Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

A brief summary of the results will be submitted to *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*.

5.6 General Conditions and Health and Safety

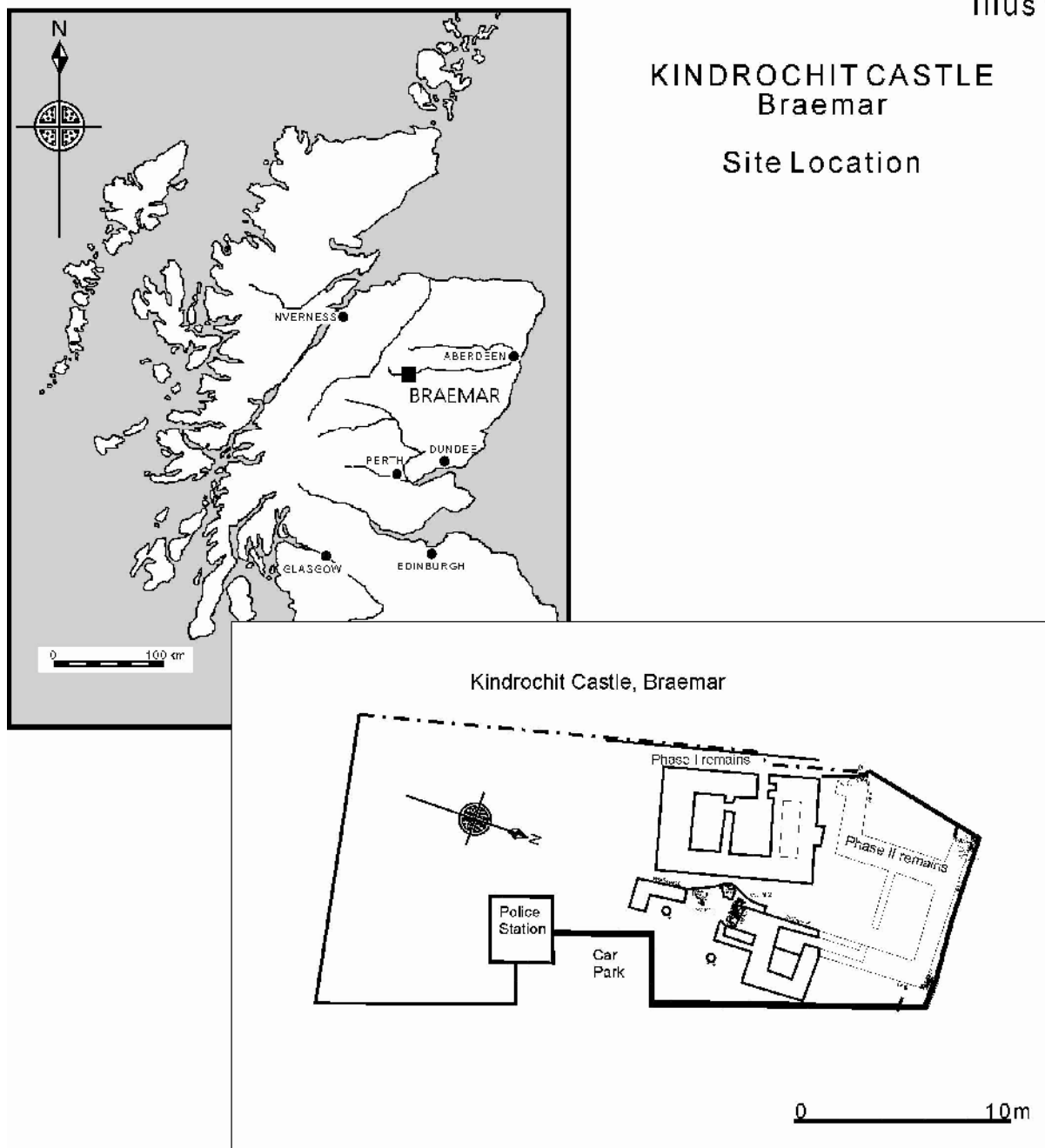
We adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists.

Alder Archaeology Ltd has public liability insurance of £2,000,000. Details of this can be provided on request.

We operate a strict health and safety policy and conforms to the Health and Safety at Work Act. We undertakes Risk Assessments on all fieldwork carried out.

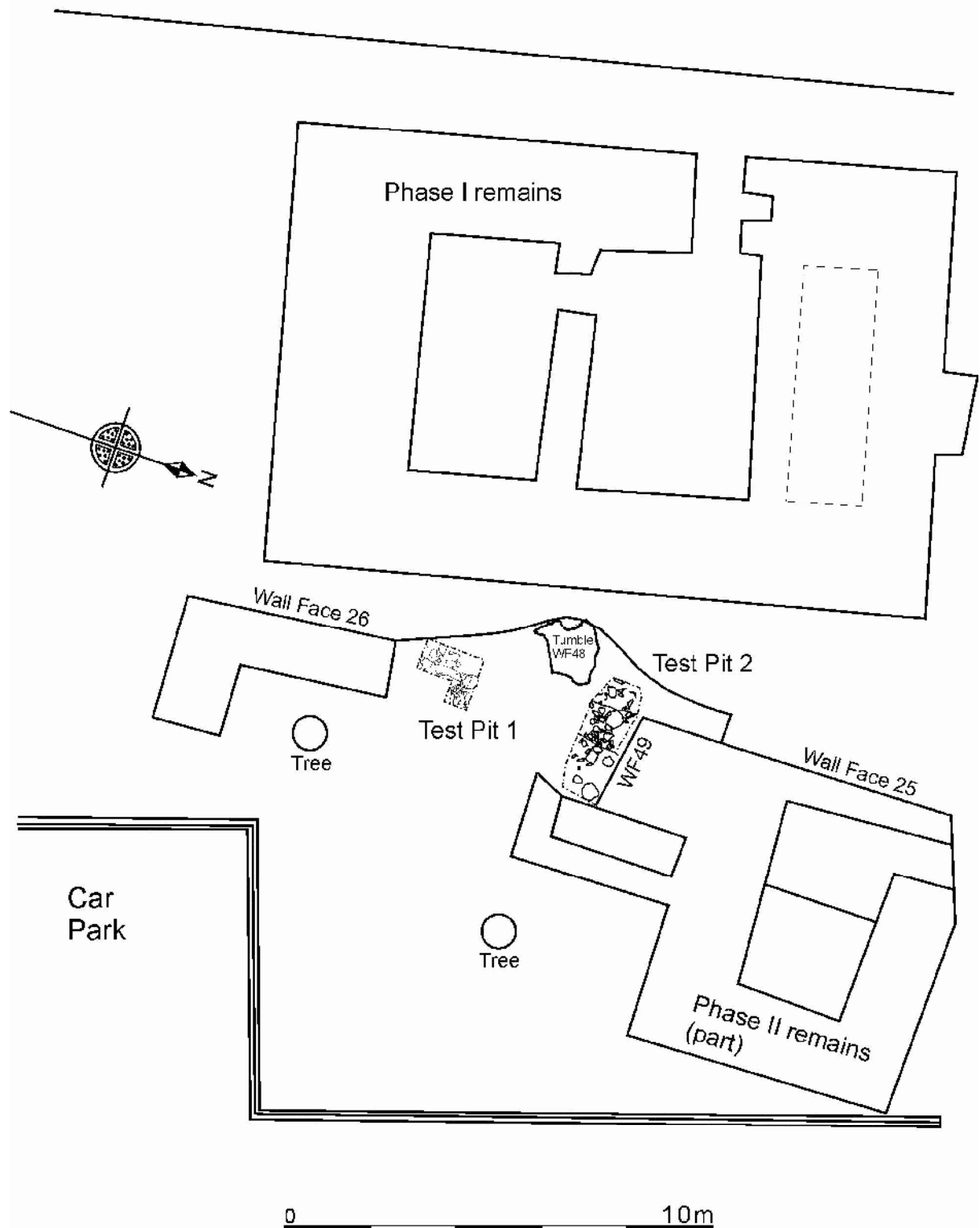
Alder Archaeology representatives will at all times wear protective footwear, high visibility clothing and other appropriate clothing. Hard hats will be worn if there is active plant on site or at all times if the site is deemed a hard hat area.

If lightly contaminated deposits are uncovered disposable boiler suits and gloves will be worn. A source of clean water will be made available for staff to clean hands with. If the health risk posed by site contamination is felt to be too high all further archaeological work will stop in that area.



Illus2

Location of Test Pits

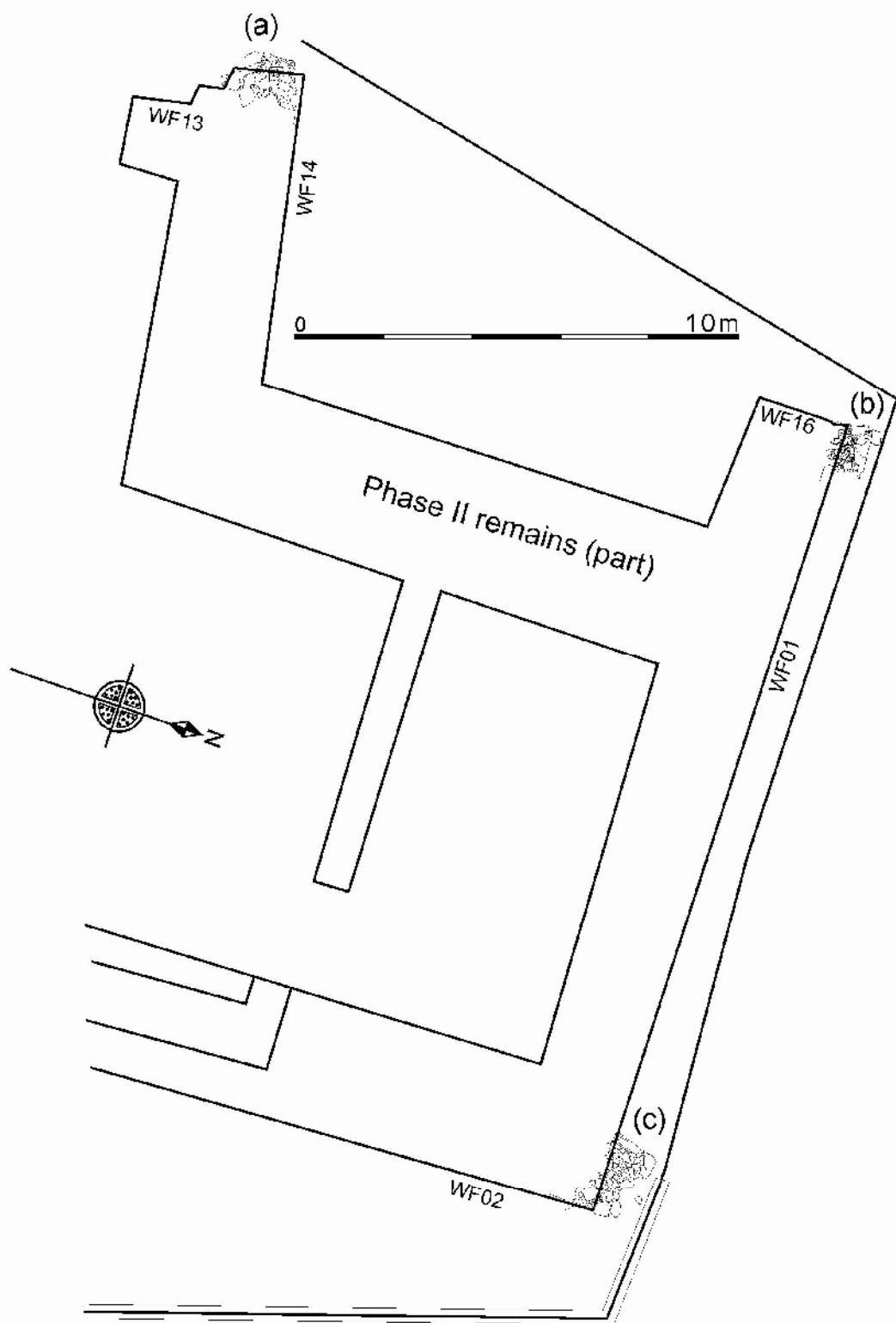


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Illus3

Location of Phase II Watching Brief Features

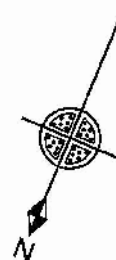
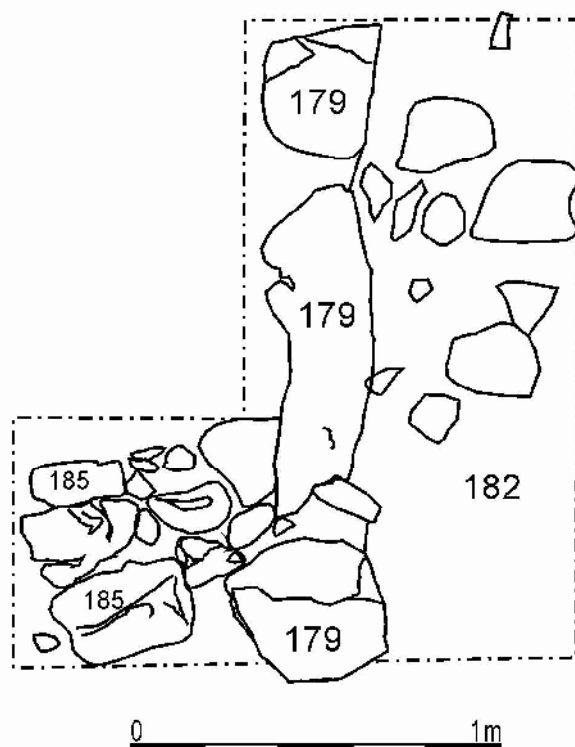


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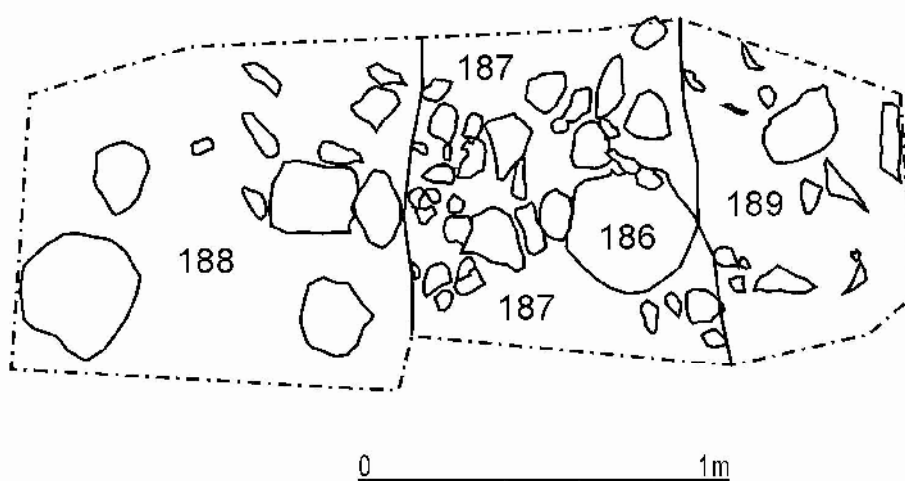
Illus4

Test Pit 1



Illus5

Test Pit 2

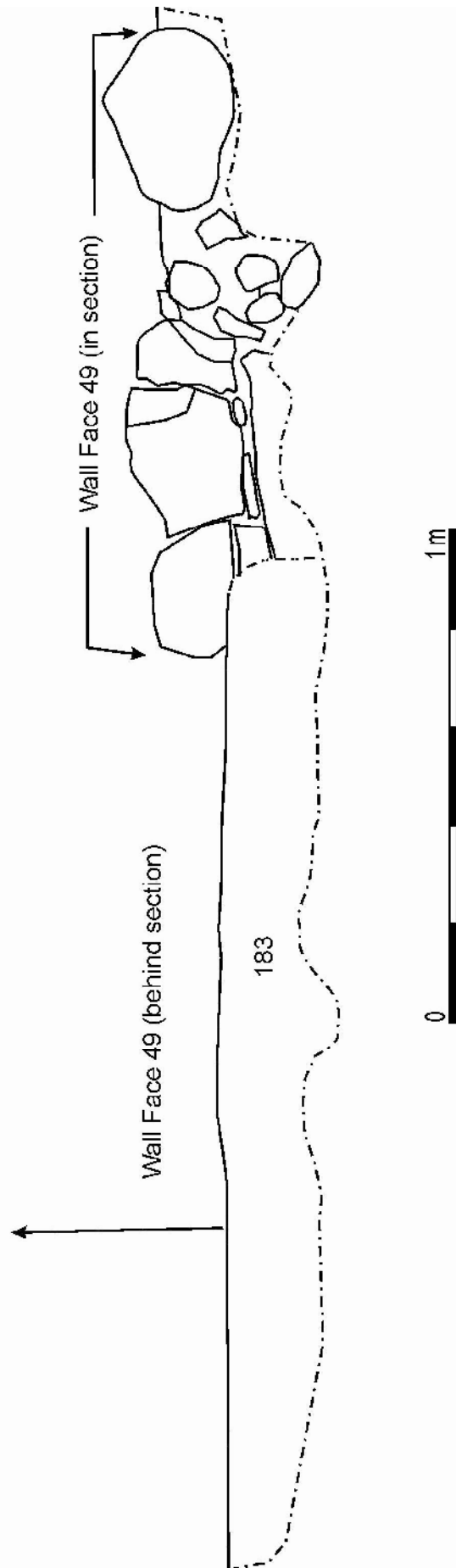


BM02

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Illus6

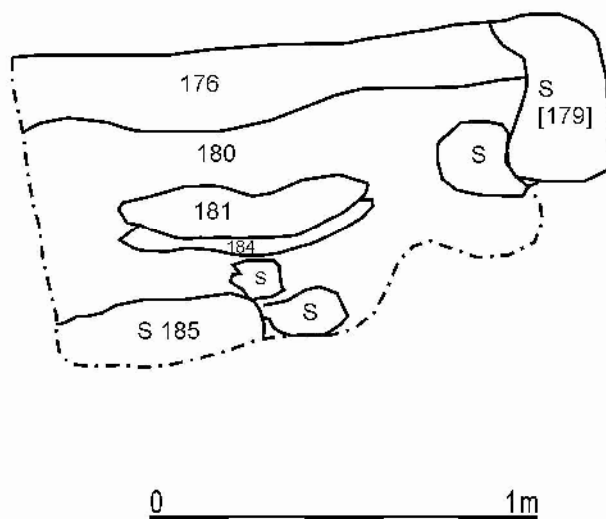
South-facing profile of Test Pit 02



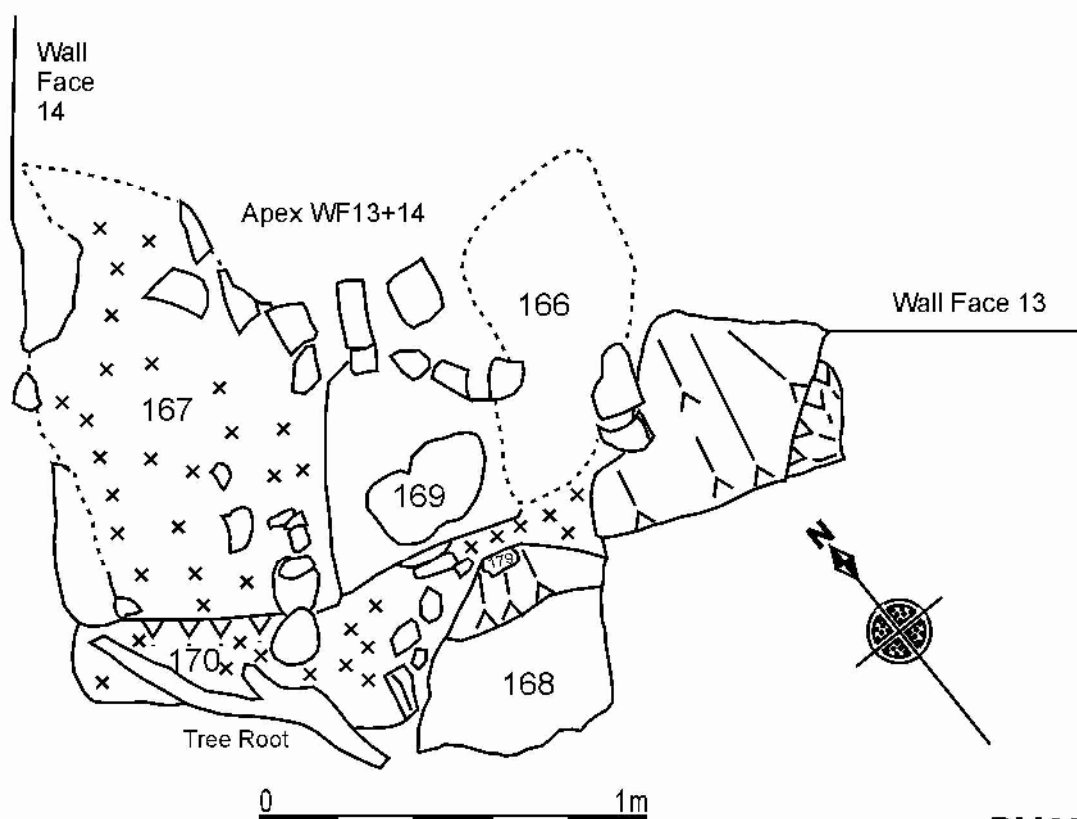
BM02

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Illus7 North-facing Profile, Test Pit 1



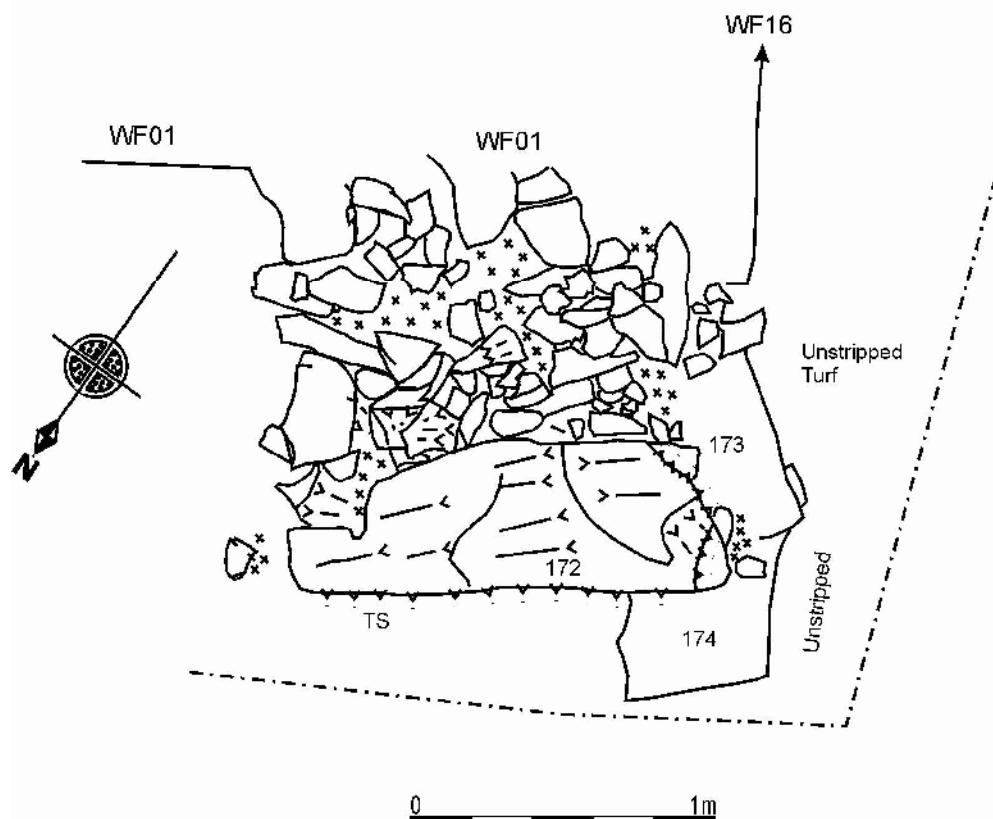
Illus8 'Buttress' feature (a), Walls 13 & 14



BM02

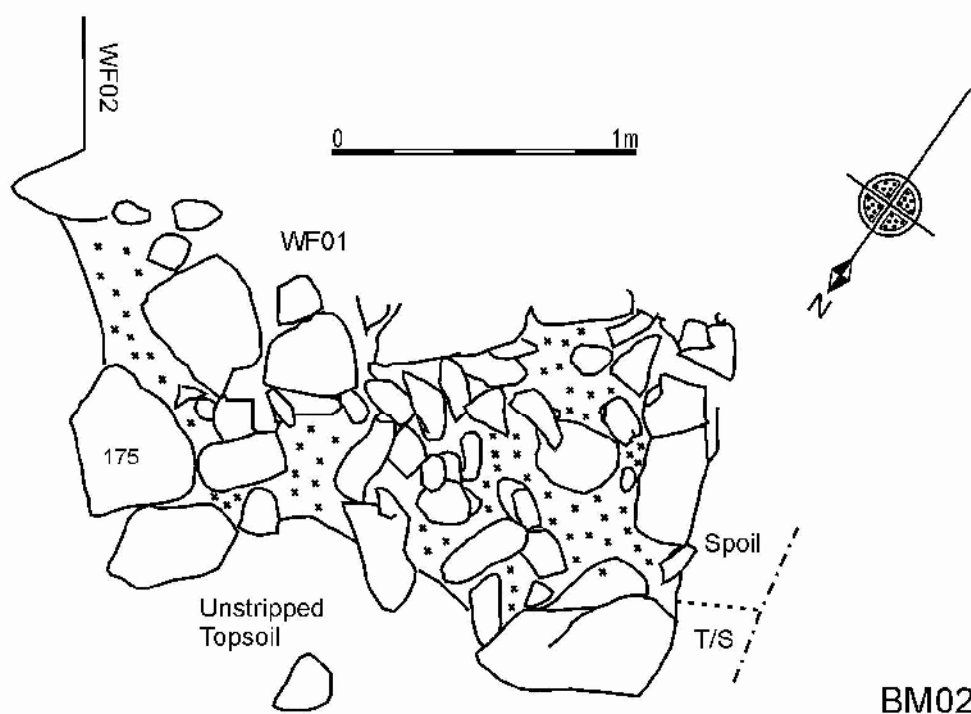
Illus9

Buttress?, feature (b), Walls 01 & 16



Illus10

Buttress? feature (c), Walls 01 & 02



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