

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT THE GUARDHOUSE, FORT No. 3 BERRY HEAD, BRIXHAM**

### **Exeter Archaeology**

#### **1. RESULTS**

A total of seven test pits were excavated. Pits 1-4 were located on the corner positions of the proposed building, while pit 5 was located to coincide with a pile position along its southern wall. Pits 6 and 7 were excavated on the line of the western and southern proposed walls respectively and were positioned to expose the northern and eastern walls of a historic building, the corner of which will be encroached upon by the proposed building.

##### **1.1 Pit 1 (Fig 1 and Fig 2)**

This pit measured 750mm on each side and was excavated to a maximum depth of 600mm. Undisturbed natural subsoil was not encountered in this pit. Substantial limestone rubble levelling layer 107 was encountered at a depth of 480mm and was sealed by thin mortar layer 106. Possible robbed flagstone surface 108 overlay mortar bedding layer 106. The mortar layer also featured a small sub-circular cut, opening up into an apparent void between large stones within layer 107. It was as likely to have been the result of damage to this layer during a phase of robbing, as to be a genuine feature. Rubble layer 105, resulting from the robbing of the flag stone surface, sealed the in situ flagstones and mortar layer. The robbing debris was overlain by soil layer 104 dated to the early 20th century, which was in turn covered by relatively recent concrete surface 103. This surface was buried below two layers of modern made ground (102, 101), which were sealed by turf layer 100.

##### **1.2 Pit 2 (Fig 1 and Fig 3)**

This pit measured 1.9m long, a maximum of 750mm wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 940mm. Undisturbed natural subsoil was not encountered in this pit. Substantial limestone rubble levelling layer 209 was encountered at a depth of 570mm and was sealed by thin mortar layer 208. Constructed directly onto mortar bedding layer 208 was east-west aligned internal wall 207. This in situ masonry was encountered at a depth of 240mm and continued to a maximum depth of 580mm. These in situ features and deposits were overlain by stone and slate demolition debris layers 203, 204, 205 and 206. Layer 203 was truncated by modern cut 202 and sealed by topsoil and turf layer 200.

##### **1.3 Pit 3 (Fig 1 and Fig 4)**

This pit measured 750mm on each side and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.3m. Undisturbed natural subsoil was not encountered in this pit. Substantial limestone rubble levelling layer 107 was encountered at a depth of 1.08m. It was overlain by a thick layer of black, ashy kitchen waste. Pottery sherds and clay pipe bowls dated to the early 19th century were recovered from this layer. This waste dump was covered by thick reddish brown limestone and mortar rubble layer 305, which was in turn overlain by thick 20th century levelling deposit 304. Modern

service cut 303, containing ceramic waste pipe 308, truncated layer 304. This was sealed by modern surface 301 and topsoil layer 300.

#### **1.4 Pit 4 (Fig 1 and Fig 5)**

This pit measured 750mm on each side and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.22m. Undisturbed natural subsoil was not encountered in this pit. Substantial limestone rubble levelling layer 402 was encountered at a depth of 260mm. Levelling layer 401 overlay 402 and was in turn sealed by modern topsoil layer 400.

#### **1.5 Pit 5 (Fig 1 and Fig 6)**

This pit measured 750mm on each side and was excavated to a maximum depth of 560mm. Undisturbed natural subsoil was not encountered in this pit. Substantial limestone rubble levelling layer 501 was encountered at a depth of 430mm sealed by thin mortar layer 506. This mortar layer was overlain by three layers of rubble slate and earth levelling (505, 504 and 503 respectively). This levelling material is likely to have come from the demolition of the adjacent building to the west. Set into layer 503 was limestone cobble surface 502, which appeared to feature an edge along its southern side and to have possibly been removed to the north. This was in turn sealed by topsoil and turf layer 500.

#### **1.6 Pit 6 (Fig 1 and Fig 7)**

This pit measured 1.4m long, 750mm wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 340mm. Undisturbed natural subsoil was not encountered in this pit. An east-west aligned limestone wall consisting of three separate structural elements (footing 606, slate damp course 605 and upper coursing 604) was encountered at a depth of 150mm and continued below the level of excavation. This masonry appeared to represent the northern outer wall of the historic building. A rebate running length ways along the inner face of this wall, in addition to a narrow socket, both created by masonry course 604, are likely to have received timbers that formed the majority of the upstanding building. The outer face of this wall had been covered by grey mortar render 603. It is possible that this wall was built onto a wider foundation of the type observed in pit 7 (706). Demolition rubble layer 601 covered the masonry and continued to the south, while rubble and mortar layer 602 abutted the outer face of the wall and continued to the north. Both were overlain by topsoil and turf layer 600.

#### **1.7 Pit 7 (Fig 1 and Fig 8)**

This pit measured 1.9m long, a maximum of 1.08m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 540mm. Undisturbed natural subsoil was not encountered in this pit. Wide limestone and lime mortar foundation 706 was encountered at a depth of 450mm. It appeared to have been 'mass poured' into an irregular cut, creating a ragged foundation with poorly defined edges. The orientation of this feature was approximately north-south although its exact alignment was difficult to determine within the area exposed. Single limestone block 705 set into the top of this foundation may have represented the primary course of the upstanding wall associated with the foundation. The structure at this point had been demolished and robbed to the level of the foundations. Demolition debris layer 704 overlay foundation 706, as well as abutting it to the west, within the internal area of the original building. This continuation of demolition rubble below the level of the top of the foundation was suggestive of the removal of associated floors.

Foundation 706 was directly overlain by loosely mortared northeast-southwest aligned limestone culvert 707, encountered at a depth of 260mm. The relationship of this culvert to the underlying foundation is unclear due to the level of robbing that had occurred. It is possible, however, that it was built into the wall and functioned as a feature of the original building.

Building demolition rubble layers 703 and 702 overlay foundation 706 and wall 705. These debris layers and culvert 707 were sealed below made ground layer 701, which was in turn overlain by topsoil and turf layer 700.

## 2. SUMMARY

Natural subsoil/bedrock was not encountered at any stage during the excavation. The general sequence of deposits observed consisted of a widespread and substantial layer of primary levelling represented by contexts 107, 209, 307, 402 and 501, consolidated by a thin mortar layer on the western side of the site (seen in pits 1, 2 and 5). Masonry, in the case of internal walls, and surfaces associated with the earlier building, appear to have been constructed onto this mortar layer, while external load bearing walls were constructed on substantial foundations, possibly cut into the primary levelling. Layers of stone and slate debris in filled the internal area of the early building, while elsewhere, more recent made ground had levelled up the existing garden area.

The primary levelling layer, consisting of loosely packed limestone quarry waste with frequent voids, was encountered at a consistent level of approximately 49.60m above site datum across the site (around 400mm below ground level). The exception to this was pit 3 on the northeast corner of the proposed building, in which primary levelling was encountered at 48.98m. The volume of food waste and ash overlying the levelling layer in this test pit, suggests that it was positioned within an earlier rubbish pit, used to discard kitchen waste during the original occupation of the Napoleonic fort.

Surviving structural elements of the historic building were encountered in pits 2, 6 and 7 at a maximum height of 49.83m, 50.05m and 49.66m respectively.

**[All stated heights are in relation to a site datum consistent with the Centre Line survey dated November 2008]**

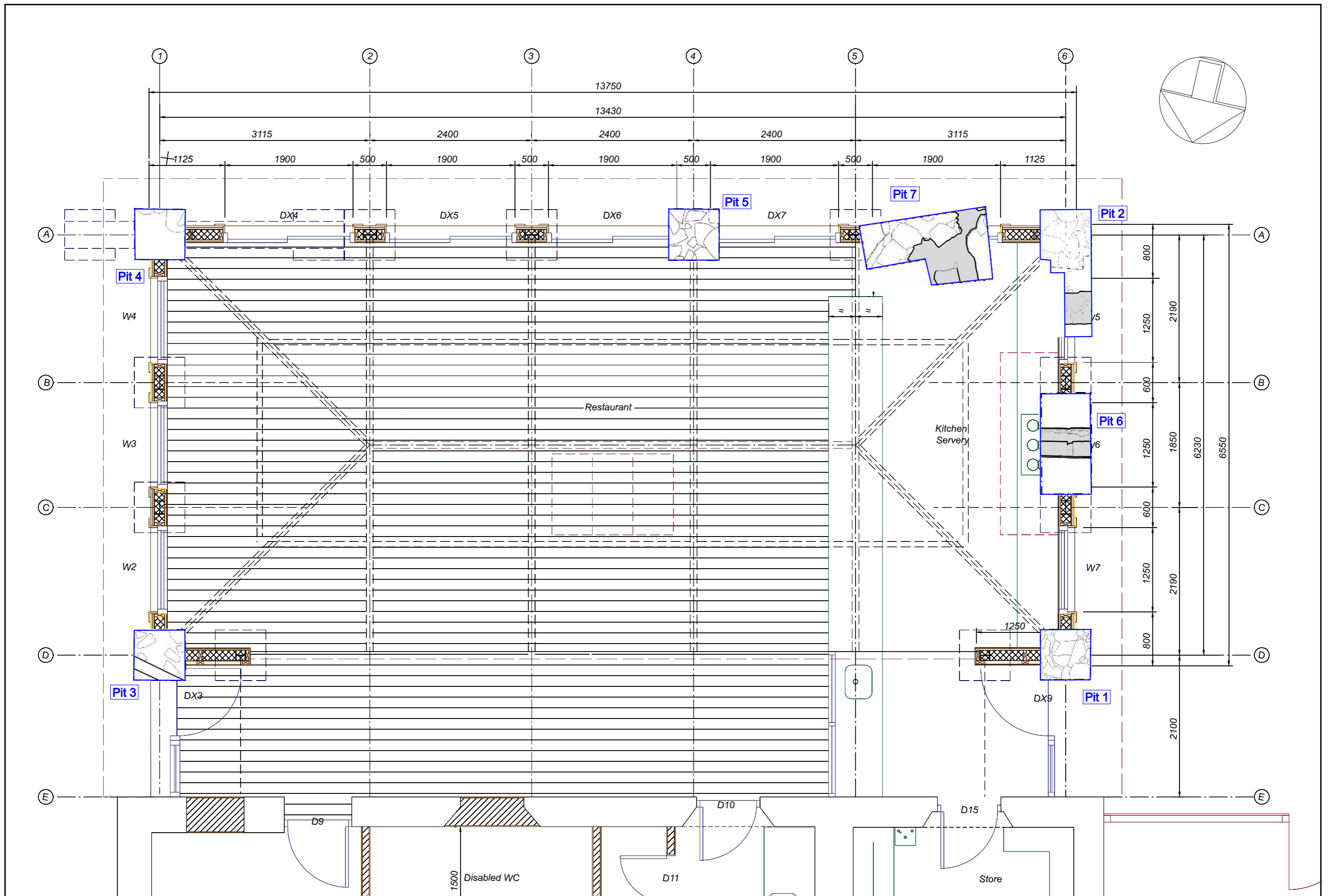
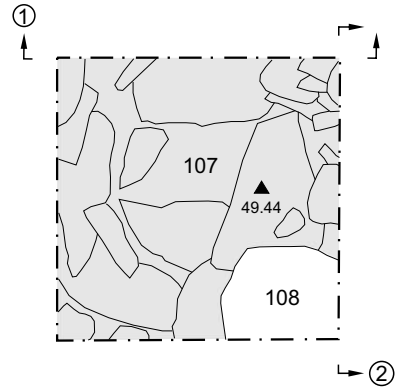
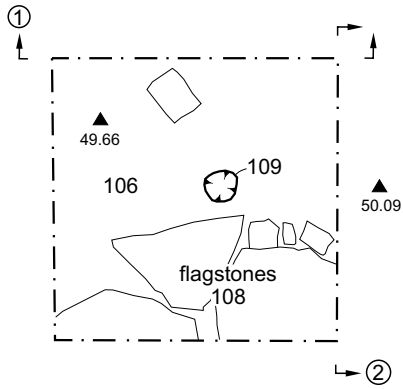


Fig. 1 Location of Test Pits 1-7 showing exposed walls and foundations (shaded). Scale 1:50 @ A3.

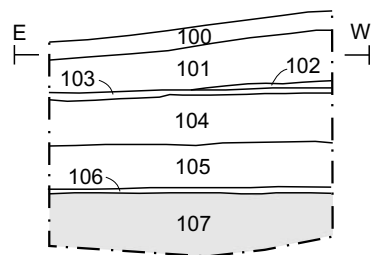
# Pit 1

## Plans

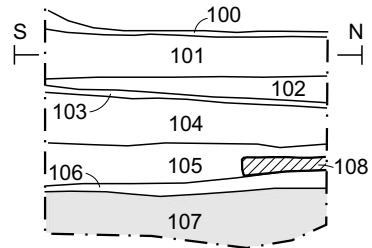


## Sections


1



2



50m

 limestone rubble levelling

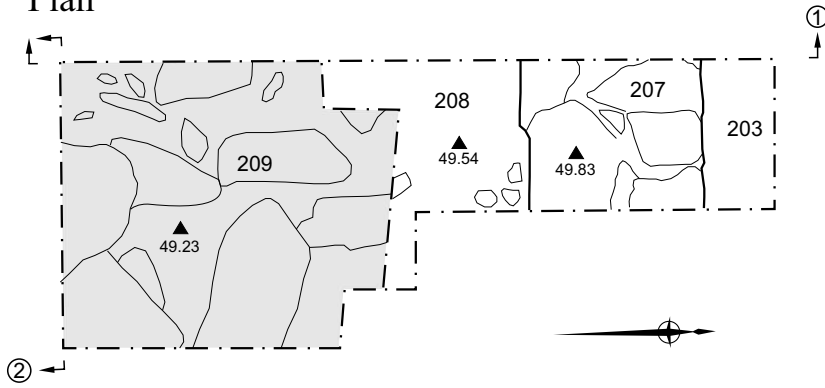
0 1 metre

all levels above site datum

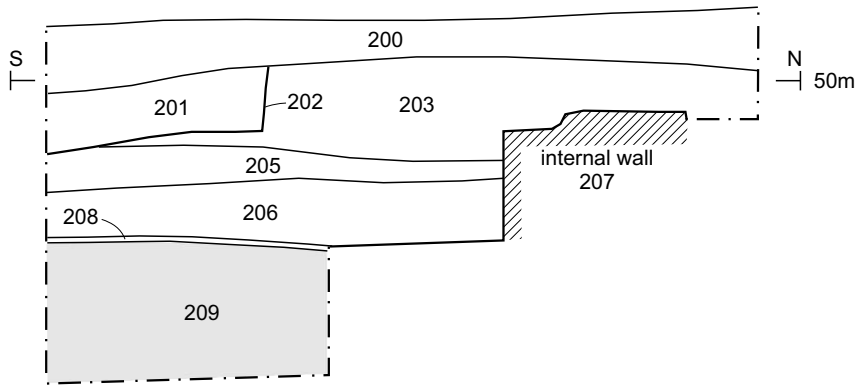
Fig. 2 Pit 1: plans and sections. Scale 1:20 @ A4.

# Pit 2

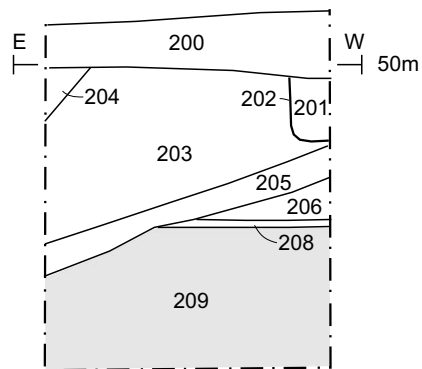
## Plan




## Section 1



## Section 2



 limestone rubble levelling

0  1 metre

all levels above site datum

Fig. 3 Pit 2: plan and sections. Scale 1:20 @ A4.

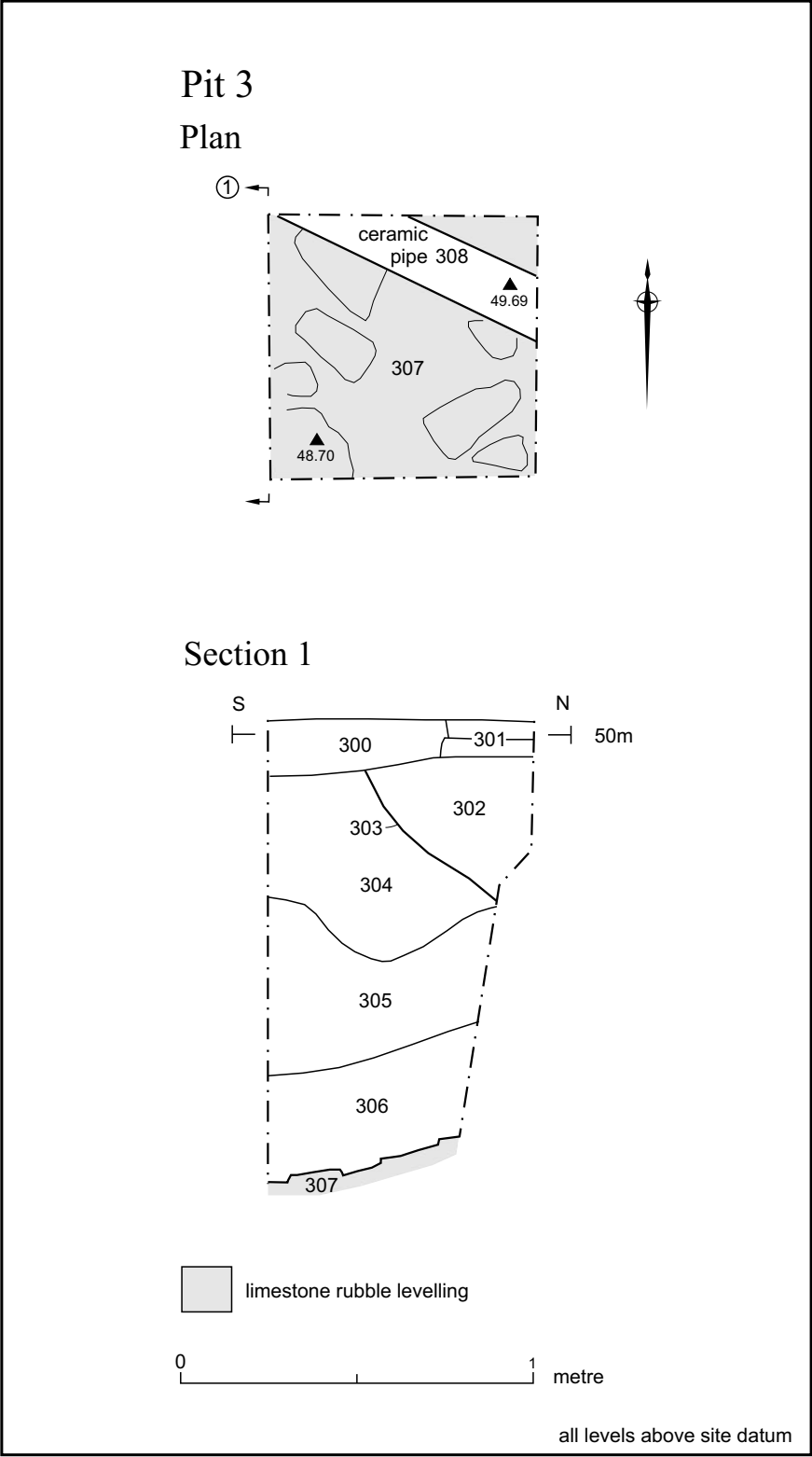


Fig. 4 Pit 3: plan and section. Scale 1:20 @ A4.

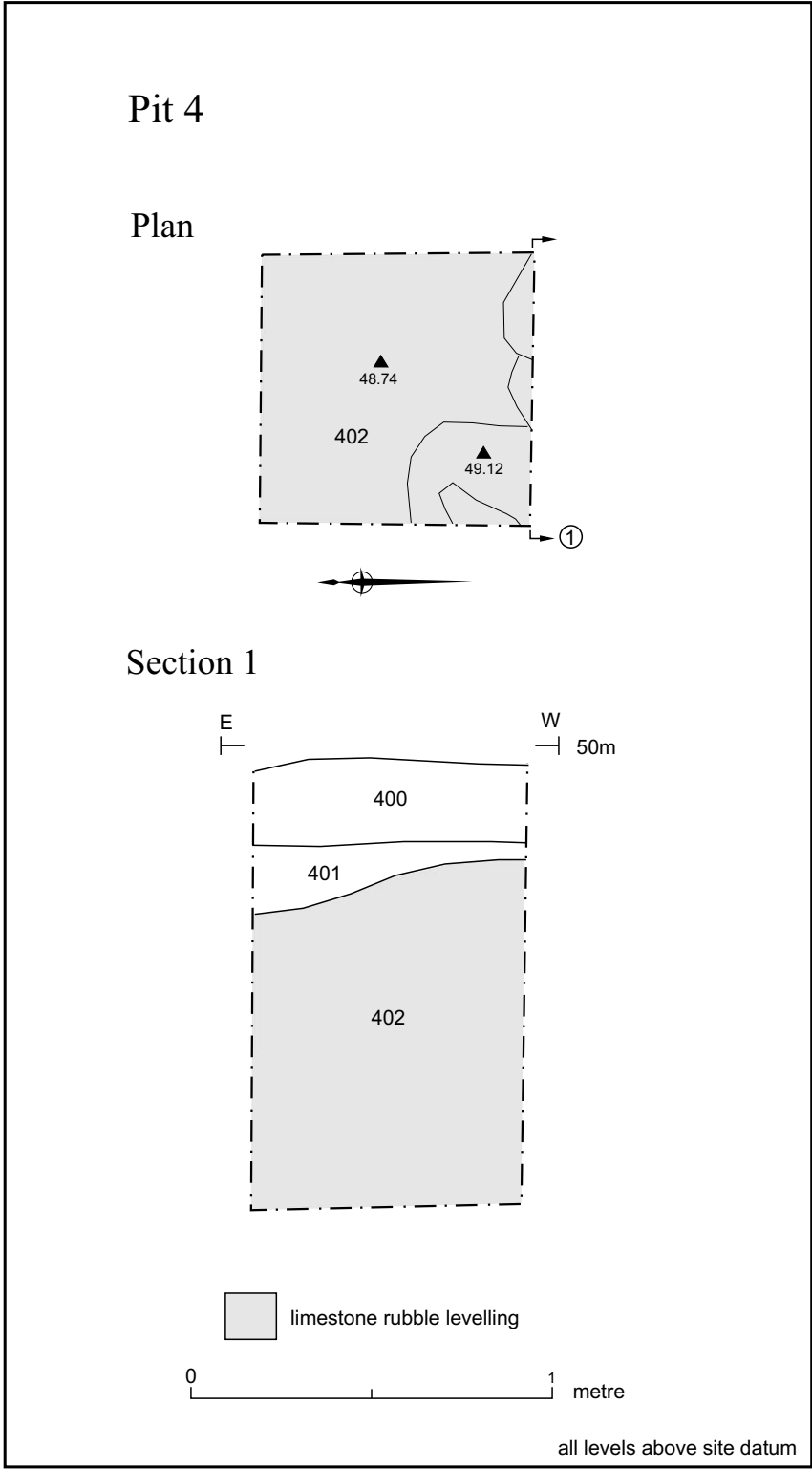


Fig. 5 Pit 4: plan and section. Scale 1:20 @ A4.



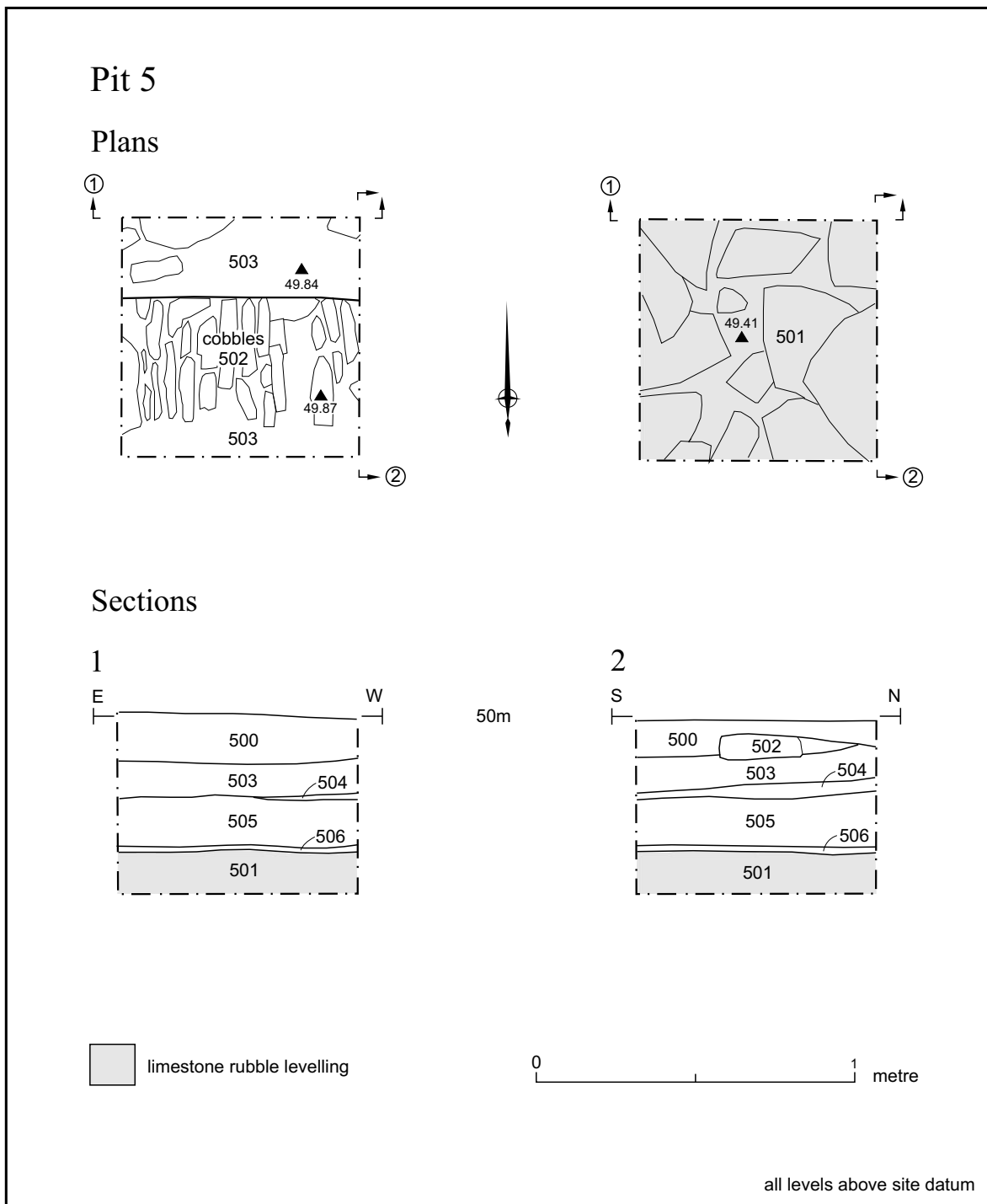


Fig. 6 Pit 5: plans and sections. Scale 1:20 @ A4.

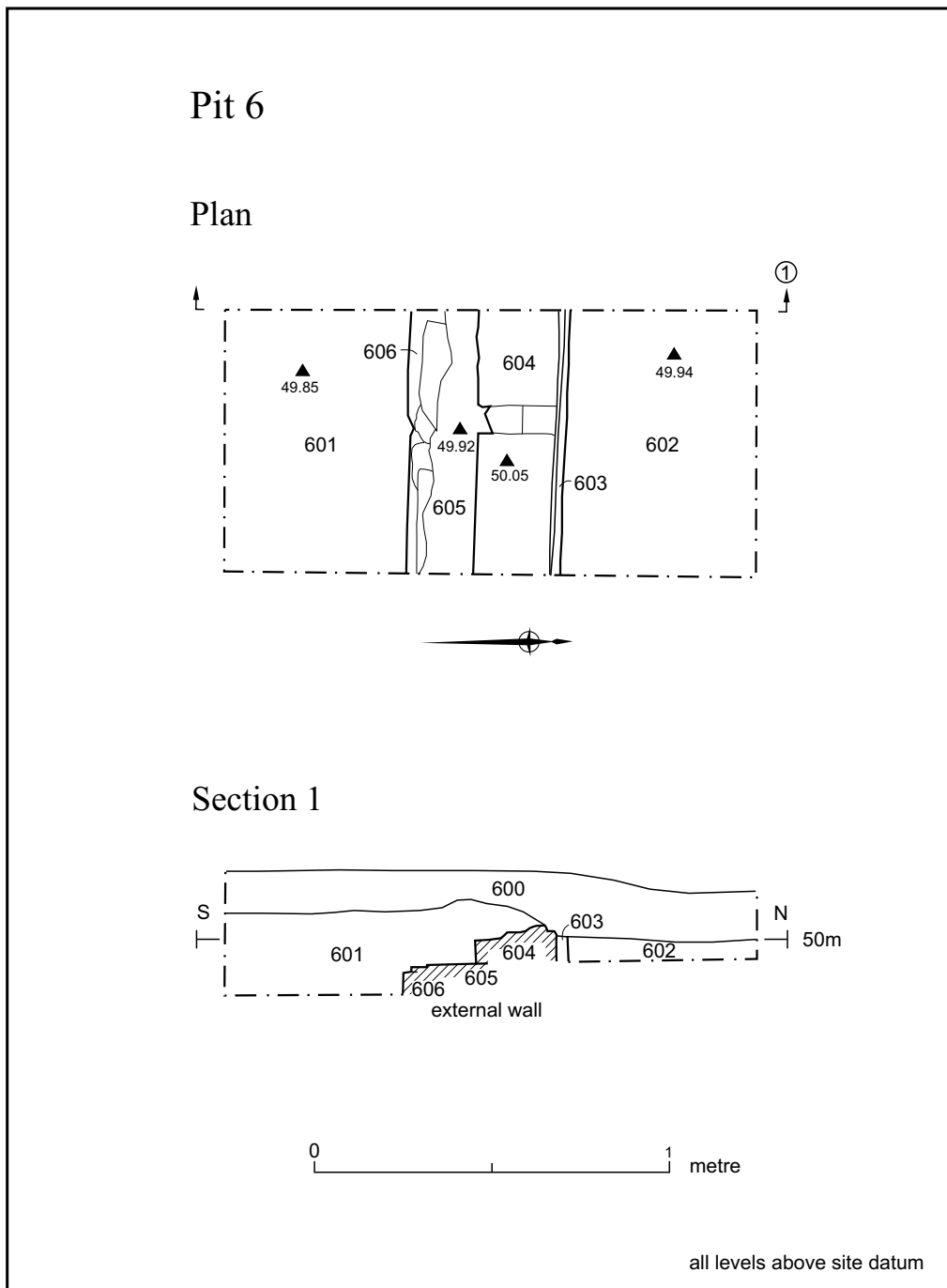


Fig. 7 Pit 6: plan and section. Scale 1:20 @ A4.

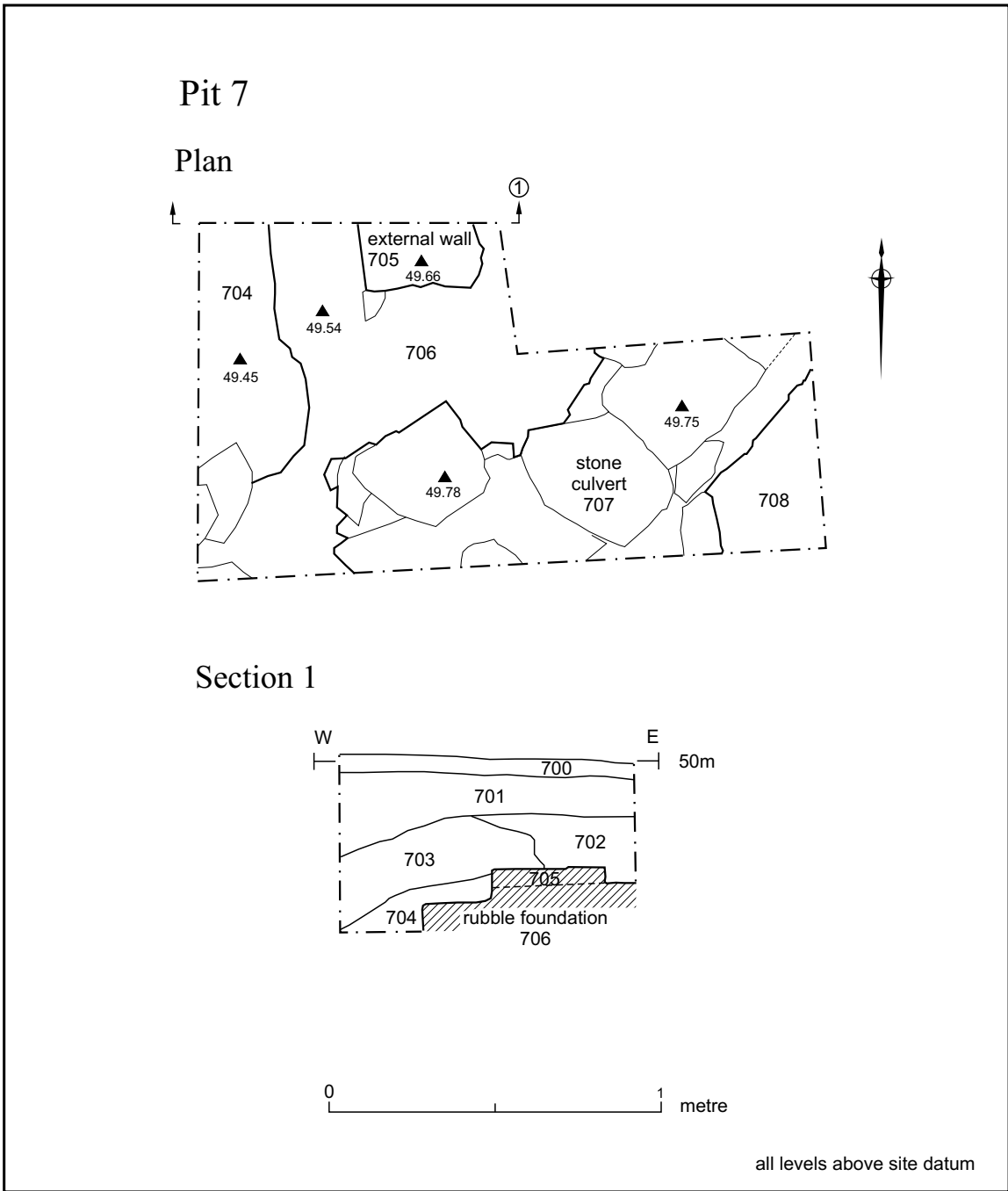


Fig. 8 Pit 7: plan and section. Scale 1:20 @ A4.