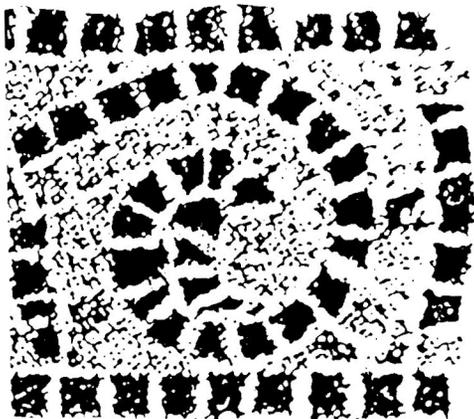

TIGH VECTICAN, ARROCHAR

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*An archaeological evaluation on behalf of Argyll and Bute
Council.*

carried out by

Glasgow University Archaeological Research Division

The archaeological evaluation of a double cottage
at Arrochar Outdoor Centre, Argyll & Bute.

By Gavin MacGregor, Olivia Lelong & DJ Johnston-Smith

GUARD 686

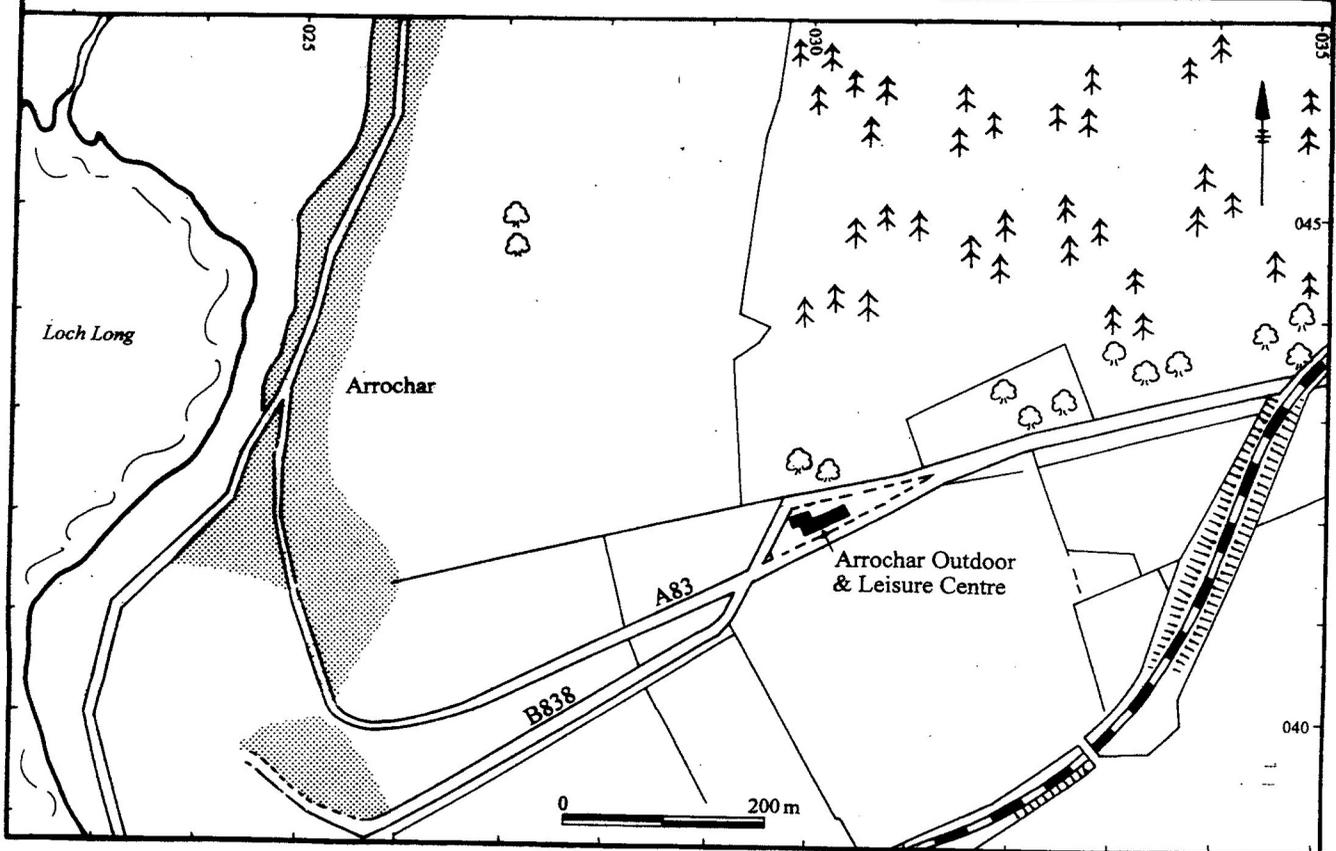
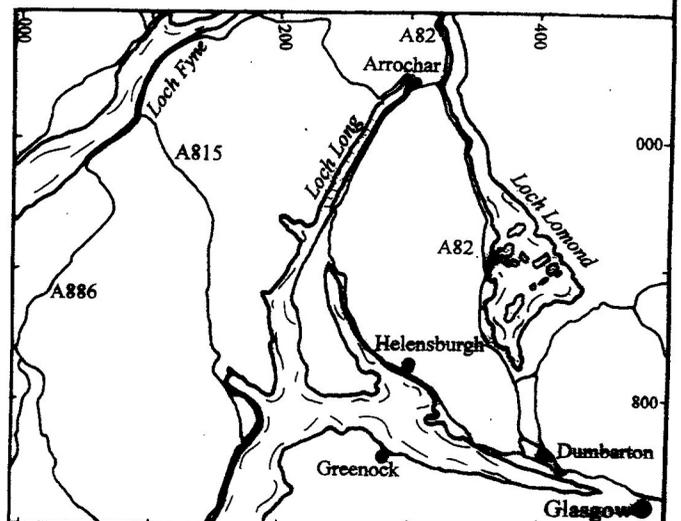
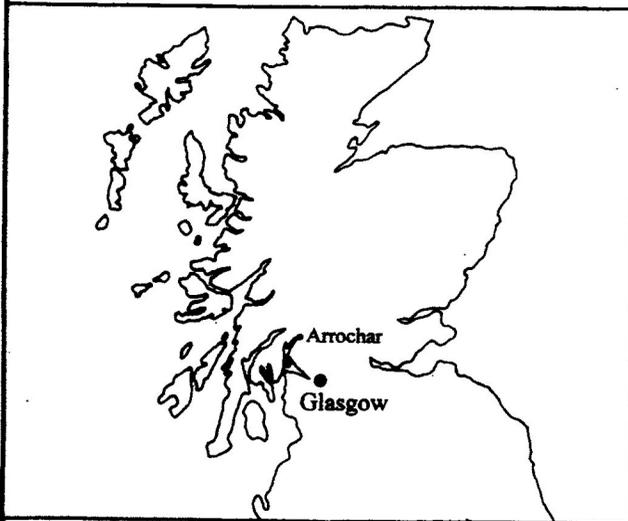
An archaeological evaluation on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council.

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Archaeological Evaluation at Arrochar

G.U.A.R.D 686



1.0 Executive Summary

Archaeological evaluation of a building, in the area of the proposed redevelopment of the Arrochar Residential Outdoor Centre, was undertaken by GUARD on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council. The evaluation has revealed that the building is a double cottage with its origins in the first half of the nineteenth century. The structure has, however, undergone several phases of substantial modification relating to its well documented history. Recommendations for mitigation are made herein should it not be possible to preserve the building in-situ.

2.0 Introduction

The former Arrochar Residential Outdoor Centre (at NGR NN 3032 0419) is proposed for redevelopment by Argyll and Bute Council (Fig 1). Within the area of proposed development is a building which is of late eighteenth to early nineteenth century character, while a length of military road runs through the north of the assessment area.

The building is a single storey stone construction, with a modern timber and corrugated iron extension at the western end, where the original gable has been demolished. Its form distinguishes as double cottage rather than a longhouse. Prior to the evaluation the building was being used as a canoe store. Preliminary historical research by DJ Johnston-Smith had highlighted the potential for an earlier phase of occupation at Tigh Vecfican that may be represented archaeologically.

Terms of reference produced by West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) called for an archaeological survey, assessment and evaluation of the proposed area of development, which were carried out by Glasgow University Archaeological Research Division (GUARD) in January 1999.

3.0 Site Location

The double cottage is located to the north of the A83 between Tarbet and Arrochar (Fig 1). It is set on the valley slope, situated to the rear of the former Arrochar Residential Outdoor Centre, Argyll and Bute.

4.0 *Aims & Objectives*

The aims were to establish the site history, to record the building and landscape and to investigate and record any archaeological traces of this occupation and any other phases of use to inform the mitigation strategy. The objective was to produce a desk based survey, measured plans and elevations of the building and development are, to trial trench areas of archaeological potential and record any remains identified. The ultimate goal was to produce recommendations for mitigation.

5.0 *Methodology*

5.1 *Desk-based Survey* by D J Johnston-Smith

Information about the history of the site was obtained by an inspection of materials and resources available in the following repositories.

- National Monuments Record of Scotland [CANMORE]
- The National Map Library
- Glasgow University Library Special Collections
- The Mitchell Library
- The Faculty of Procurators Library, Glasgow
- Dumbarton and Helensburgh Libraries

5.2 *Field Survey* by Olivia Lelong

The field survey, undertaken over two days, comprised electronic survey of the building plan and elevations and of the land within the assessment area, as well as visual analysis of the building.

5.2.1 *Topographic Survey*

The topographic survey was carried out from five survey stations using a Sokkisha SET-5 total station, with data logged in a Psion organiser equipped with Sokkisha SDR 5 software. The absolute height above Ordnance Datum of station 3 was determined with reference to a

benchmark beside the A83, which runs along the south side of the site, and the relative heights of the other stations and surveyed features were adjusted to this to produce absolute heights for the entire survey. The data were downloaded into Liscad Plus software for reduction into planimetric form; the field files were edited where necessary and then merged and exported into AutoCAD.

The existing 1:200 plan of the site, provided by Argyll & Bute Council, was partly digitised in AutoCAD. This provided a control for the orientation of the survey plan and allowed some of the digitised features, such as the line of the road and the outline of the outdoor centre building, to be reproduced in the survey plan to show the position of the long house, military road and other features in relation to the modern features.

5.2.2 Standing Building Survey

The electronic survey of the building was carried out using a Pentax total station, set to record co-ordinates. To create a plan of the interior, readings were taken at window height along the walls, including inner and outer edges of apertures and any points where changes in wall alignment or other possible features were visible. The interior plan was linked to the survey of the exterior by means of readings between mutual stations. The elevations were surveyed by holding the prism at points along the wall head and base, at aperture corners and along other features and recording the x , y and z co-ordinates of each point.

Data were logged by hand in the field, and the co-ordinates were manually entered into AutoCAD (x and y co-ordinates for the interior plan and x , y and z for the elevations). The resulting elevations were printed at a scale of 1:50 and then re-drawn by hand, with additional features and surface treatments recorded in the field by measured sketch added at this stage. For the interior plan, the depth of the prism head was measured and the co-ordinates were corrected accordingly. The plan, drawn in AutoCAD, was pasted into the topographic survey plan and manipulated into position using the stations as controls. The plan was re-drawn by hand using Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) conventions for drawing standing buildings.

5.3 Trial Trenching

5.3.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 ran along the exterior of the northern wall of the building. It was placed here in order to establish if deposits relating to the extant building (e.g. cobbled surfaces or middens) or earlier phases of occupation were present on the exterior. It measured 2.00 m north to south by 10 m east to west and was machine excavated under archaeological supervision to a maximum depth of 0.90 m.

5.3.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was positioned adjacent to the interior of the eastern gable of the building. It was located here in order to establish whether a hearth was present and characterise the archaeological deposits at this point. A concrete floor (200) was removed by hand, after which the surface of the trench was cleaned by hand prior to further excavation.

5.3.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was placed against the northern wall at a point where the wall thickness changed. This was to establish the reason for such variation in wall thickness and to see if the remains of a cross wall were present. A concrete floor (301) was removed by hand, after which the surface of the trench was cleaned by hand prior to further excavation.

5.3.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 was located across the demolished western gable in order to clarify the degree of preservation of the remains of the gable wall and, if present, the nature of its construction. This trench was also intended to establish whether a hearth was present and characterise the archaeological deposits at this point. A concrete floor (400) was removed by hand, after which the surface of the trench was cleaned by hand prior to further excavation.

6.0 Results

6.1 Desk-based Survey by DJ Johnston-Smith

While the available time and resources have restricted the scale of this survey, with the result that certain avenues of research have been left unexplored. The limited time available did however allow for a relatively thorough review of the documentary and cartographic sources that were readily available.

6.1.1 Cartographic research

Early sources

Of the earliest cartographic sources available (Blaeu 1654; Edgar 1745; Roy c.1750) only one records a settlement of any sort in the area in question. William Edgar's survey of 1743-5, prepared in advance of the proposed construction of a Dumbarton-Inverary military road, indicates the presence of at least one structure just before a bend in the planned road near where it meets the shores of Loch Long. This building is labelled *Ty-vech-keatan*, a variation on the name which would appear regularly on subsequent maps and documents, being a corruption of the Gaelic *Tigh an Fhreiceadain* meaning House of the Watch or Sentinel.

It is interesting to note that although Edgar records the existence of this settlement in 1743, (? Fig) the surveyors sent by General Roy less than a decade later omit any such detail from their military survey. This could suggest an oversight on their part or alternatively it may point to a short period of abandonment of the settlement during the intervening period.

Plan of the Road from the Schoolhouse of Luss to the Bridge at Loch Long Head (1827)

The surveyor Henry Read sketched the area with the dual purpose of aiding the impending conversion of military road to turnpike and providing an estate survey for the area's new proprietor, Sir James Colquhoun of Luss. Drawn at a scale of four inches to the mile, it clearly indicates the existence of three structures at the crossroads to the east of the Arroquhar Inn (? Fig). Two of the buildings are to be found to the south of the military road, and one immediately to its north. The settlement is strangely enough unnamed on the map, perhaps

connected to its division between two tenants at the time, one John Smith and one John MacFarlane. The alignment of the southern pair of buildings as indicated on the map makes it tempting to suggest, if we accept the cartographer's accuracy, that they may be the same two buildings which feature on future maps. Alternatively, the map may simply depict an illustrative rather than topographically accurate representation of the buildings' existence. In either case this plan offers the earliest physical evidence of any buildings immediately to the south of the military road at this junction.

1st Edition Ordnance Survey (Surveyed 1860; Published 1863)

This six inch to the mile map gives a much more detailed representation of the building situation as it was at the Arrochar Inn Junction on the old Military Road in 1860. Points to note include the addition of the name *Tigh an Fhreachadain* to the settlement; the apparent supersession of the military road by the newer turnpike road to the south of the settlement; and the alignment of the three buildings (the southern two immediately adjoining one fork in the military road junction, whilst the northern one sits directly beside the other fork.

2nd Edition Ordnance Survey (Revised 1897; Published 1899)

Little has altered in the layout of the settlement as shown on the first edition OS, but for the addition of a parish hall (built by workers on the West Highland Line c 1894) to the south-west of the longest of the southern two structures at Tigh an Fhreachadain.

3rd Edition Ordnance Survey (Published 1918)

The scale of this map is so small as to allow the clear identification of the standing building as the most south-westerly of the cluster of three shown on the previous two OS surveys. Its detail is such that it even illustrates the existence of a partition wall dividing the building in two. This edition also illustrates the clearly demarcated individual boundary plots belonging to each of the three buildings at *Tigh an Fhreachadain*.

Revised Edition Ordnance Survey (Surveyed 1975; Published 1976)

By 1975 there was evidently no trace of the settlement of *Tigh an Fhreachadain* worthy of recording on the survey, as it is utterly absent from this addition. Even the name was

replaced by ‘Arrochar Outdoor and Leisure Centre’. One must assume that the surveyors mistook the standing building to the rear of the newly constructed Outdoor Centre as one of its contemporary outbuildings, camouflaged as it was (and still is) in a thick coat of whitewash with a red tin roof. This would seem to account for its apparent incorporation into the modern building as depicted on the map.

6.1.2 Documentary Evidence

The documentary source material was approached with two objectives in mind. The first was to establish a reliable and detailed record of the settlement at *Tigh an Fhreacadain*, concentrating primarily on the building which was the subject of the field survey, taking it as far back in time as possible and utilising mostly original primary source material but also bringing to bear the limited secondary material available. The second objective was to place the settlement in its appropriate historical and topographical context, in order that its contemporary significance might be better assessed.

6.1.2.1 Documentary Descriptions of the Settlement

Parish and local government documents (c.1759-c.1930) comprised most of the material that provided any reliable information describing the settlement at *Tigh an Fhreacadain*. These records consisted of:

- Old Parochial Registers (Births, Deaths & Marriages).
- Poor Law Commission/Parish Council Minute Books
- Census Returns

Through a careful examination of each of these primary sources, it became possible to construct an almost uninterrupted chronology of the tenants of *Tigh an Fhreacadain* as far back as 1777, at which time there appears to have been only one tenant, ‘Andrew Macfarlane...in *Tighmheachidan*.’ He is joined by a second tenant, Finley Gillies, by September 1795, whilst the first census return of 1841 records fifteen people occupying the houses at *Tyvechtin* (11 adults and 4 children), with the settlement possibly divided between four leaseholders, although this is unclear.

The best documented period in the settlement's history was from 1845 onwards, as its residents fell into increasingly straitened circumstances and had to seek the aid of succeeding local Poor Law Committees. The minute books of these committees make doleful reading; the different tenants of *Tyvectan* received quarterly payments from the Poor Law funds almost yearly from *c* 1850 to 1880. By 1887 the situation at Tigh an Fhreachadain was such that the local parish council, presumably after considering the longevity of its inhabitants' reduced circumstances, instructed its inspectors to assess the cottages' suitability for adaptation as a place of accommodation for the itinerant poor and the "casual sick."

...The report from the Committee appointed to inspect the Cottages at Tyvectan was read and the Chairman on behalf of the Colquhouns Trustees [the owners] made an offer to the Board to do the repairs necessary to put the double cottage in habitable condition...and thereafter lease the house to the Parochial Board for five years at an annual rent of Six Pounds.

(Committee Minute Book 03/09/1887)

The fact that the double cottages had to be refurbished to an extent that would bring them up to a 'habitable condition' may suggest that they had fallen out of use prior to 1887; alternatively, it may simply mean that they did not meet the required standard for casual poor hospitals set by law. From the entries in the next three minute books it becomes clear that the building currently undergoing survey was soon deemed adequate for this purpose and remained so at least until 1930 when the entries come to an end as the role of poor administration was shifted from local into county council hands.

Other information that concentrated solely upon the settlement at Tigh an Fhreachadain was also gathered from other sources, most notably travellers' accounts, of which there are a great many. Unfortunately, most of this material gives only the most general accounts of their authors' observations which can only be used to construct a generic portrayal of any of the many settlements which were situated along the small neck of land between Lochs Long and Lomond. One of the most detailed accounts of such dwellings came from the pen of Dorothy Wordsworth, sister of the poet William,

This hut was unplastered, and without windows, crowded with beds, uncomfortable and not in the simplicity of the ferryman's house. A number of good clothes were hanging against the walls, and a green silk umbrella was set up in a corner...

(Wordsworth 1803, 117)

From her description of its locality it is tempting to suggest that Wordsworth may even be describing the contents of one of the cottages at Tigh an Fhreacadain, this must however remain a matter of speculation. We can however be sure of her account from her second visit in 1822 when she wrote:

[I] rested at the point where the Road from the Inn joins the direct road to Tarbet, marked by a Guide-post, which every one must recollect who has been to Arroquohar [sic]. It is a beautiful spot - two Cottages, the one with a green-grown, the other with a brown roof stand close to the road, embowered in trees - Birches, Elders, Firs, Hollies - the Lake gleaming below...

(Wordsworth 1822, 107)

Finally, an examination of the sparse secondary source material available on the area revealed the earliest possible date of occupation so far. The Rev W. Winchester's collection of local oral traditions (?1919) asserts that the settlement's name is derived from its primary use as the house of the watchman whose task it was to warn the local clan (the MacFarlanes) of the approach of likely spoil in the form of cattle being driven north or south. Alan MacInnes asserts that the MacFarlane Clan was one of the greatest exponents of such blackmailing activities during the medieval to early modern period, second only in notoriety to the MacGregors (MacInnes 1996, 34). The use of this building during this period is further attested to by the clan historian James MacFarlane who claims that the spoils of a raid against the neighbouring Clan Colquhoun, namely their castle gates, were deposited at *Tigh Vectican* in 1592, where they remained until relatively recently (c.1825) when they were returned to Luss and their rightful home. (MacFarlane 1922, 80).

The implications of these two accounts are therefore quite clear, unfortunately there is nothing in the way of documentary corroboration. A brief examination of the original Clan MacFarlane muniments (c1395-1777) revealed nothing that would back up this early foundation date. This 'silence' by itself does not negate the oral tradition, one reason being that the deplorable state of the clan documents, which are in many cases utterly unreadable, may have caused the obliteration of the appropriate references. Nonetheless without further supporting evidence the case for such an early establishment relies on the placename itself and two early 20th Century accounts which rely heavily upon oral history.

6.1.2.2 Oral Descriptions of the Settlement

It was possible to interview a few local residents who could recall the settlement when it was still inhabited and at the time of its most recent remodelling. It was not possible, unfortunately, in the given the time restraints to contact the last living resident of *Tigh an Fhreacadain* who still resides locally. Two interviewees provided information of particular relevance to the recent history of the double cottages currently undergoing study.

Mr James MacTavish, who has lived in Arrochar since childhood, remembers buying the property sometime around 1950, at which time he converted it from a habitable structure to a car showroom/garage. In the process he remembers demolishing the internal dividing wall, in which he clearly remembers a connecting doorway, he was also responsible for the demolition of the western gable and the subsequent erection of a corrugated iron extension. Mr MacTavish was also able to recall that he saw only one hearth at the eastern end of the building before he covered the floor in a layer of thick concrete and consolidated parts of the walls.

Another elderly local resident Mrs Jessie Munro provided information of another nature on the previous use of the double cottages. She recalled with great clarity that the casual poor hospital was only remembered locally for its utility in the treatment of one particular ailment - venereal disease. Whether this reputation was warranted or not remains open to speculation, it may be of profit to note however that there were at least three major influxes of men into the area between c1890 and 1955. The first was during the construction of the West Highland Line railway, the second was during the Second World War when foreign soldiers were billeted in the village and P.O.W's were incarcerated near the head of Loch Lomond, and the third major influx occurred during the construction of the massive Hydro Electric scheme at nearby Loch Sloy.

It seems most likely that it would be the arrival of the thousand or so navvies used to construct the West Highland Line (completed in 1894) which may have contributed the most to any such reputation. This indeed may be supported by their gift to the community of a corrugated iron building constructed only a few metres to the south of the hospital (and shown on the 1899 OS map), which would soon become the village hall. We may speculate that its initial use may have been to accommodate the increased numbers of 'casual sick' who needed to make use of the attendant carer's medical facilities. Unfortunately the minute books remain silent as to the existence of socially unacceptable infections, only noting cases of twisted ankles and bouts of influenza.

6.1.3 *The Settlement in Historical Context*

As explained above Tigh an Fhreachadain is situated in the heart of the territory that was once home of the Clan Macfarlane. For six hundred years this warlike and often lawless clan held sway over this neck of land at the northern end of Loch Lomond. By the middle of the eighteenth century the clan's reputation as brigands and cattle thieves had all but passed away as its successive chiefs found the attractions of London and Edinburgh a stronger draw than the wilds of Arrochar and Tarbet. As a direct consequence of living above their means, their estates were sequestrated and sold from under them in 1784. The 'Abstract and Memorial' of this Sale records the title to "the House and Wynd at *Ty Vichattan*" as part of the sale (MacFarlane 1922, 144). The area then underwent a rapid and severe period of 'improvement,' firstly under the control of its new owner William Fergusson of Raith, an East Coast Improver laird, and then under Sir James Colquhoun of Luss who was influenced greatly by his father-in-law Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, of Statistical Account fame, perhaps the greatest Improver of them all.

The most dramatic changes invoked by these two landlords would be upon the landscape. Not content with the numerous small tenants who were strung out across the estate, they attempted to centralise their tenantry in and around the Arrochar-Tarbet isthmus. This is testified to by the gradual demise of many of the small townships between the publication of Roy's map and the first edition Ordnance Survey map. This may in part have accounted for the growth in size of the community at Tigh an Fhreachadain around the turn of the nineteenth century.

However, it was not only the landscape which underwent radical changes, as new landlords encouraged new social and occupational practices. The area around Arrochar and Tarbet came to rely most heavily on the tourist industries, particularly in the wake of Scott's novels and Thomas Cook's 'Tartan Tour' Excursions. Even the community under current scrutiny was not averse to providing succour to the many travellers which passed its doors, Rev Winchester records with a note of wry humour the existence of the excise flouting 'shebeen' at *Tighvectan* which produced immoderate quantities of the *uisge bheatha* for the benefit of thirsty travellers for many years. (Winchester ?1919, 25).

The local inhabitants' long period of straitened circumstances from the mid nineteenth century onwards was not unusual. Caused by their consistent inability to find successful and gainful long-term employment within an estate whose whole economic and social direction was in a continual state of flux, this was a state of affairs seen in many similar small communities across the Highlands of Scotland. Tigh an Fhreachadain's eventual demise was symptomatic of its inability to keep abreast of the growing changes in community tastes, particularly with regards to house building. Its last inhabited house was abandoned in favour of the recently constructed prefabricated dwellings at the Torpedo Range in the 1940's by the family of Mrs Chrissie Fisher of Stuckindroin, they occupied the solitary cottage to the north of the old military road. (Fig 00). It was shortly afterwards that the double cottage was converted for use as an automobile garage and showroom.

6.1.4 Conclusions

The earliest reliable date for occupation at Tigh an Fhreachadain must be given as 1745. Its absence from earlier documentary sources such as the only extant rental prior to this date (1708) does not imply there was no settlement here before 1745, there are many reasons why a settlement may not have been present on a rental, it simply means there is nothing to conclusively corroborate oral traditions of a foundation as early as 1592.

The double cottage itself has seen a variety of uses ranging from family home, poor-house refuge, casual sick hospital and infectious disease quarantine to car showroom, garage and eventually a canoe store. It accordingly has earned for itself over the last century and a half or so, a well deserved place among locally asserted oral traditions.

6.2 Field Survey by Olivia Lelong

6.2.1 Topographic Survey

From the modern road (the A83) which runs along the south side of the development site, the ground rises c 14 m to the north extent of the site. In the southern part of this area the ground has largely been levelled for the Arrochar Outdoor Centre, its outbuildings and car park. The building known as Tigh Vectican lies on a stretch of level ground above the car park; a modern driveway runs along its north side. To the north again a small, probably canalised

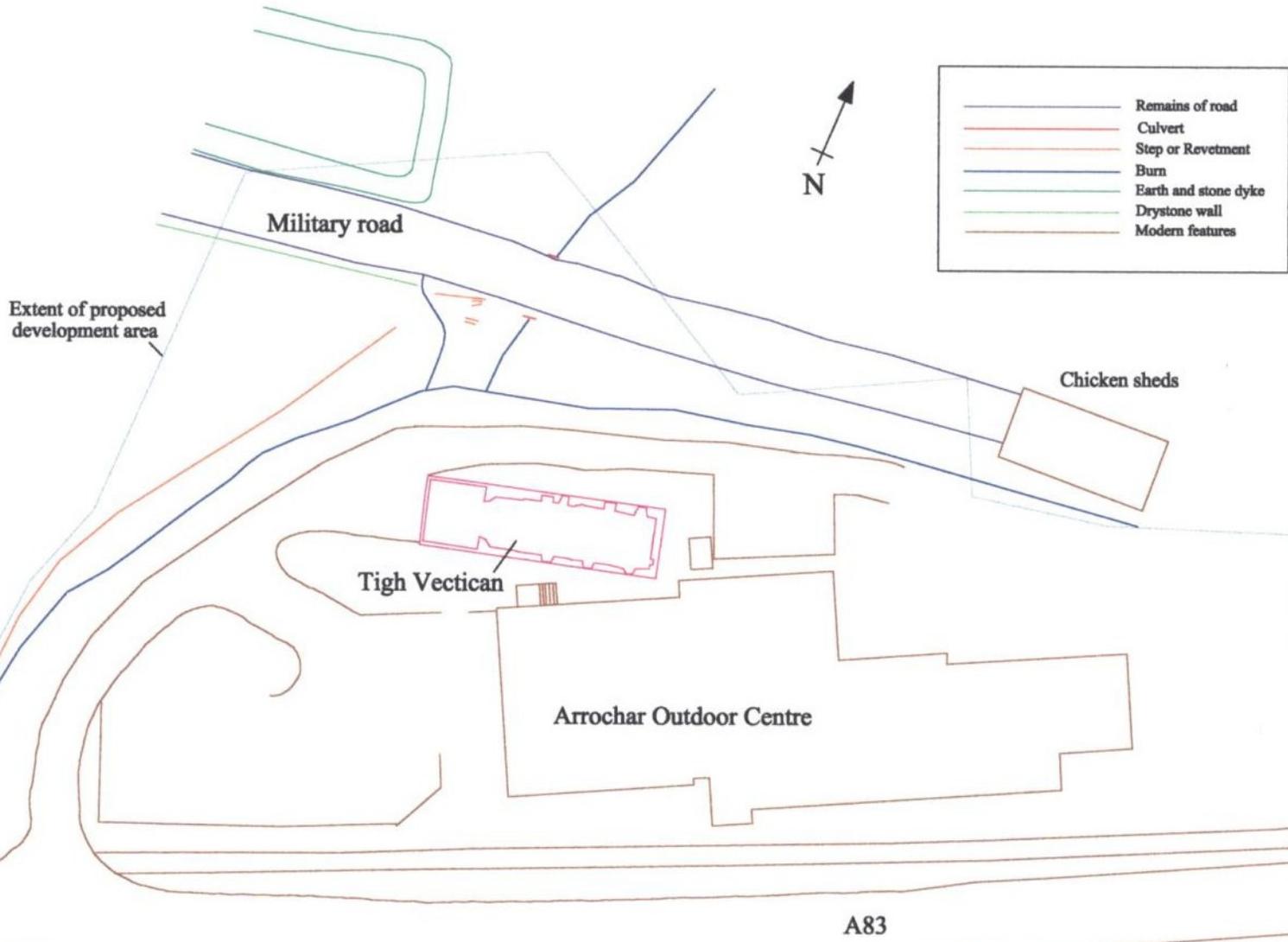


Fig 2 Survey plan of the development site.
 GUARD 686

burn and its ditch follow the driveway, and beyond the ground rises sharply to the level of the military road. Fig 2.1 shows the full extent of the survey, while Fig 2.2 shows the archaeological features surveyed in slightly more detail.

The most prominent archaeological feature in the development area is the military road, which runs roughly east/west, measures c 5 m wide and has been terraced into the natural slope. At the eastern extent of the survey area a small, modern building, presently associated with some chicken sheds, lies directly on the course of the road. There is some evidence that stone was quarried or blasted to create the terrace, particularly to the east of the culverted burn which flows southward down the hill, joining the canalised burn south of the military road. The stone-built, arch-headed culverts, visible both to the north and south of the road, probably date to the construction of the road in the 1740s.

Another fork of the burn, most likely draining the boggy ground directly opposite to the north of the road, flows from beneath it at the edge of a short (4.3 m) stretch of stone revetment to the west of the culvert. This revetment supports part of the steep break of slope which defines the road on the south; to the east of the culverted burn the break of slope is much more ragged, and it may have subsided and partly collapsed since the road was built. Westward from the revetment a length of drystone dyke standing c 1.6 m high runs along the south edge of the road.

This dyke may have been built after the construction of the main Tarbet to Arrochar road (now the A83) which had superseded the military road by 1863. The 1827 map of the area shows a fork leading west-south-west from the military road, past two buildings, one of which might be the surviving structure at Tigh Vectican. This fork is traceable now as a slightly terraced or hollowed linear feature, c 4.5 m wide, leading in the same direction from the military road at the east end of the drystone dyke. The remains of this road are defined on the south-east by a drystone revetment that retains the steep ground above the canalised burn.

At the western extent of the survey area, the military road runs directly past a large enclosure to the north. This is defined by a substantial bank, standing c 1 m high and up to 0.9 m thick; some stones are apparent in its fabric, but it is largely covered with turf and moss and extensively disturbed by the roots of trees that have grown on or against it. It may originally have been built of earth and stone. It defines an area c 30 m north/south by more than 60 m, extending beyond the west edge of the development area. Given its position, it must have

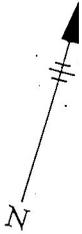
been linked to the use of the road. Its size and nature suggest it was used to corral cattle being driven along the road, perhaps by drovers pausing overnight.

6.2.2 *Standing Building Survey*

The survey of the building at Tigh Vectican produced some evidence of its origins and development, although to a large extent the clues are masked by surface treatments and later alterations. In its present state it measures 19.6 m long internally by up to 5.3 m wide, with high double doors in the west gable wall (Fig 3). The interior walls are partly covered with plasterboard cladding to the west; the upper parts of the masonry walls of the earlier, eastern part of the building are covered in cement render and the walls are whitewashed for the most part. The east gable wall is whitewashed only to the level of the wall-heads to the north and south. Externally the walls are partly rendered with cement and generally whitewashed; the doors and windows have been bricked up and in two cases boarded over (Fig 4). The present roof is of red corrugated iron, and the interior floor is covered in concrete.

In its original, or perhaps secondary state, the building was a double cottage, a four-bay, single-storey structure measuring 14 m long internally by 4.7 m wide, built of coursed rubblework masonry. It was later extended to the west with the addition of a corrugated iron structure, 4.8 m long by 5.3 m wide (Fig 3). Elsewhere in the interior, the only features that may be original to the building are several timber lintels above the windows and doors.

Evidence for its original state was found both in the survey and the excavation. In the latter, the lowest course of a masonry cross-wall was found in Trench 3, and the lowest course of another masonry wall, the original or secondary west gable, was found in Trench 4. This evidence is corroborated by the results of the building survey. Visible on both the north and south interior elevations are vertical patches of brickwork and cement render, 0.6 m wide (see Fig 5), in positions which correspond to the cross wall found in Trench 3 (see Fig 8). The position of the original or western stone gable is visible externally on both the north and south, where the rubblework masonry of the earlier structure abuts the corrugated iron extension. The junction is masked internally by sections of plasterboard cladding along the north and south walls (see Fig 3).



corrugated iron extension

Trench 1

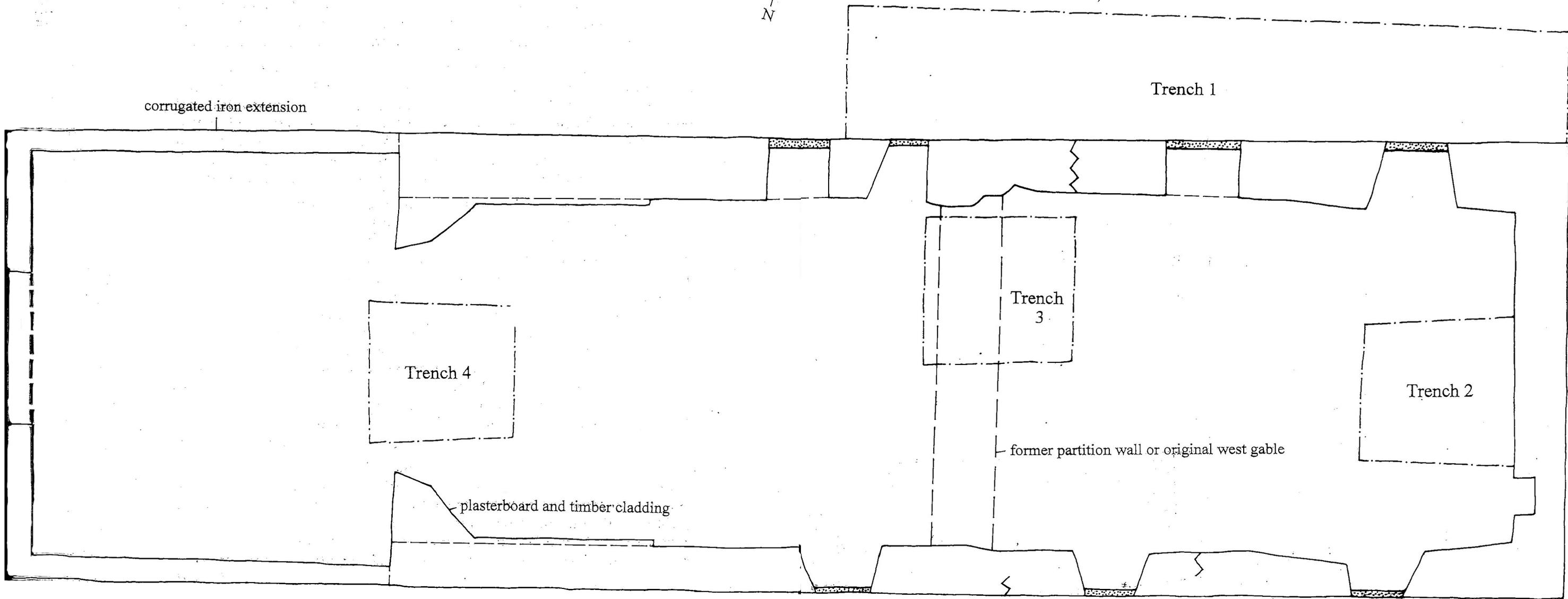
Trench 4

Trench 3

Trench 2

former partition wall or original west gable

plasterboard and timber cladding

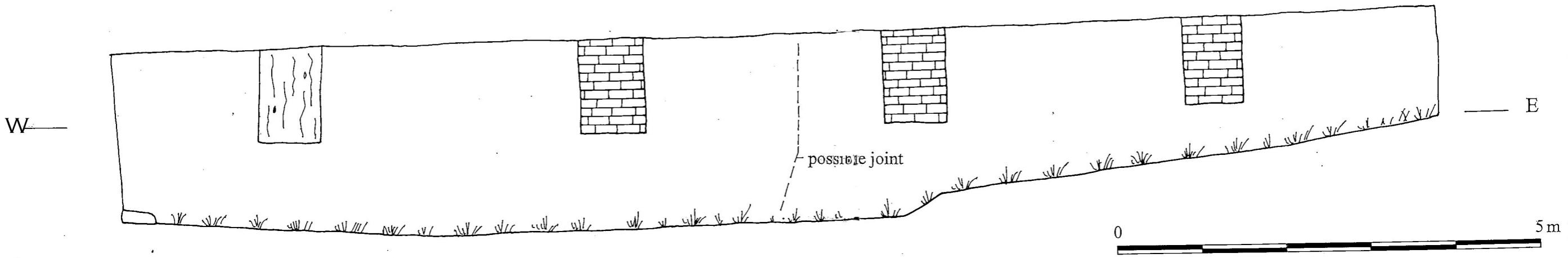
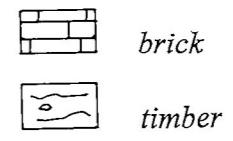
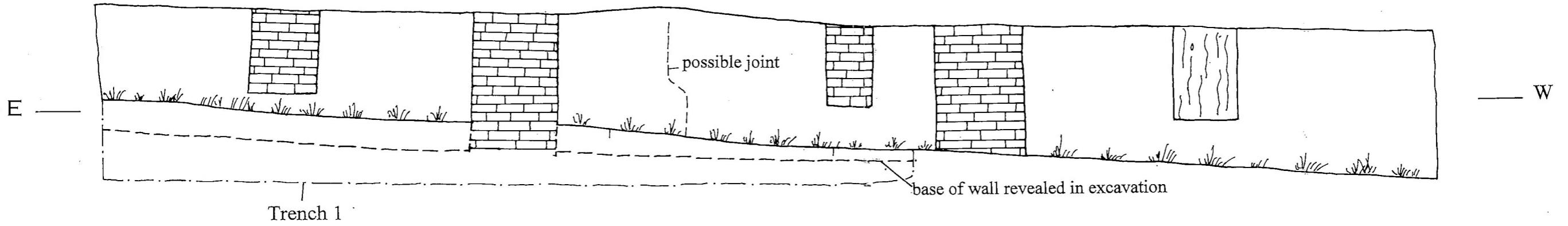


It is not possible, on the basis of presently available evidence, to state with certainty whether the eastern part of the masonry building existed first and was later extended to the west or whether it was built as a double cottage; further investigation of the building during its demolition may clarify this. However, it is possible to suggest that the eastern part was built first (see below).

In either case, on the evidence of the excavations and survey, the two parts of the building would have each functioned as an independent dwelling. The eastern part would have been entered through a doorway in the north wall (now blocked), warmed by a hearth against the east gable wall and lit by one window in the north wall and two in the south (all with splayed recesses). The western part would also have had its own door in the north wall, with a window on either side of it and two windows in the south wall. Its hearth lay against the west gable wall.

The only real clue that the western part was built later lies in the arrangement and nature of its windows. Those in the south wall are arranged more or less symmetrically, to allow consistent light to both ends of the room inside. Those in the north wall, however, are not. The western window in the north wall sits midway between the doorway and the west end of the masonry building; the eastern one sits just east of the doorway, between it and the wall dividing the cottages in two. The western side of its recess is splayed, but the eastern side is not, suggesting it was squeezed into the available space and that the proximity of the cross-wall did not allow enough room for a splay on that side. The western windows in the north and south walls are entirely masked behind plasterboard cladding inside and boards outside, so their form cannot be examined for splays. However, the fact that the eastern window in the south wall and all the windows in the eastern part of the structure are splayed suggests this was the favoured form for window recesses and used whenever possible to maximise light and ventilation.

On this basis, it can be suggested, but not proven, that the western part of the structure was added to an existing cottage, and the need to work around the constraints of the pre-existing building led to the odd arrangements of windows and space in the western part. It is also possible, however, that the small window east of the western doorway was inserted later, and this would equally account for its irregularly and unusual position. The stylistic form of the window and the survival of wooden lintels may indicate a date for their construction in the



first half of the twentieth century, which would support the possibility of modifications to an earlier structure.

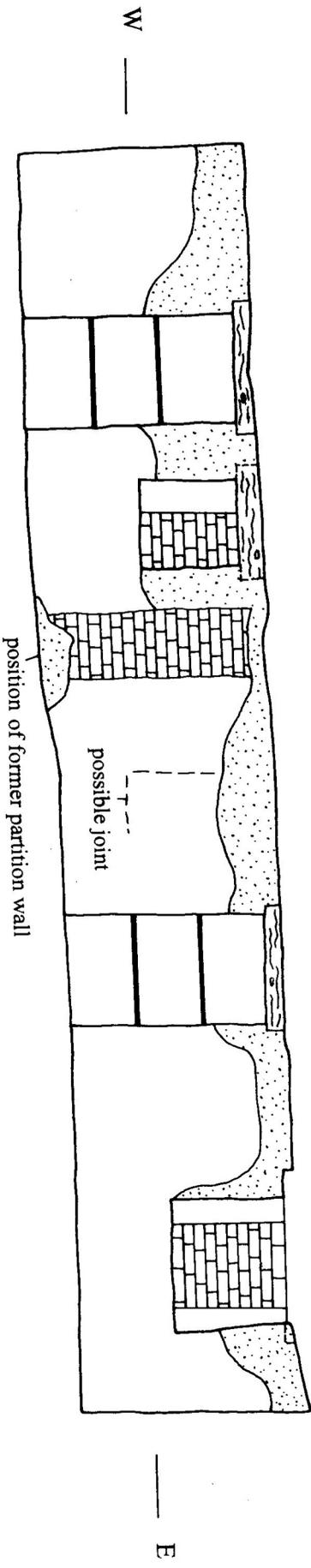
While cement render and whitewash obscure most internal features, the most prominent one still visible is a small aumbry, set into the east gable wall to the south of the hearth discovered in Trench 2. Framed by a large stone lintel and sill, it measures 0.5 m high and wide and 0.22 m deep. It is not whitewashed inside, and what appears to be lime mortar is visible bonding the stonework. The wall to the north of this feature bears a large, sub-rectangular blackened area, c 1 m long by 0.8 m high, about 0.3 to 1.1 m above the present floor level. This was interpreted as sooting from the hearth discovered in Trench 2. The absence of a chimney built into the wall fabric means that some sort of appended chimney, such as a hanging lum, would have been necessary. Several diagonal linear black marks on the masonry above the whitewash on the this wall may be the sooty shadows of a lum (Fig 6). In addition, two roughly diagonal or angular joins are visible in the masonry to either side of these, perhaps suggesting that a lum was an original feature of the wall and was added as the wall was being built.

This wall also contains evidence that the original roofline was raised: while existing rafters obscure much of the roofline, at its lower edges a joint is visible on either side, marking the original line and the addition of rubblework masonry to widen the roof's base and decrease the steepness of its pitch (Fig 6).

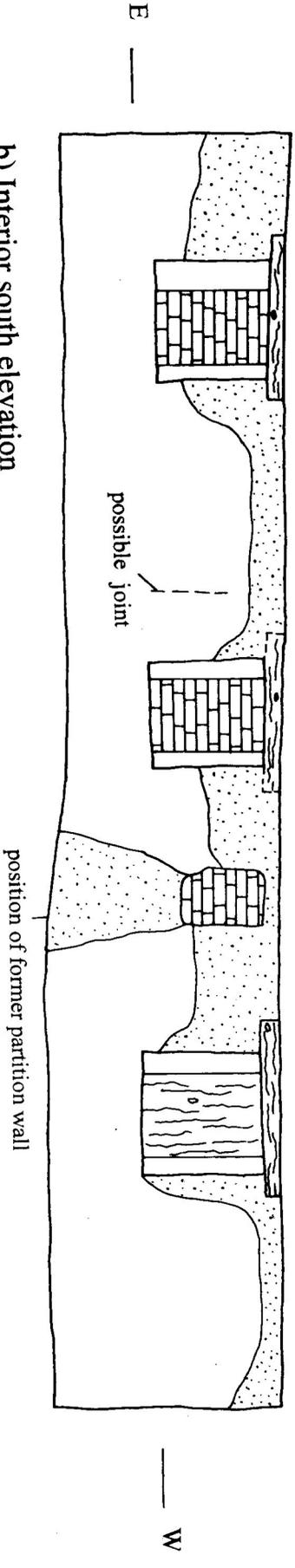
The only remaining anomalies presently visible are what may be ragged joints in both the interior and exterior north and south walls. They are most easily visible externally, but in neither case do they extend quite to the wall-head or -base. Internally they are represented by much shorter lengths of abutting stonework. In the north wall, these possible joints are in corresponding positions internally and externally, but in the south wall they do not correspond; in no case do they quite correspond to the position of the removed cross-wall. Given their ambiguity, it seems likely that these do not represent different building phases, but pauses or phases within the same building project.

The building seems to owe its present form mainly to modern alterations in the twentieth century, probably undertaken when it was converted to a car showroom in the 1940s. These include the concrete floor, the removal of the cross-wall and west gable wall, the addition of the corrugated iron extension and the raised roof.

a) Interior north elevation



b) Interior south elevation



-  ? cement plaster
-  brick
-  timber



6.3 *Trial Trenching*

6.3.1 *Trench 1*

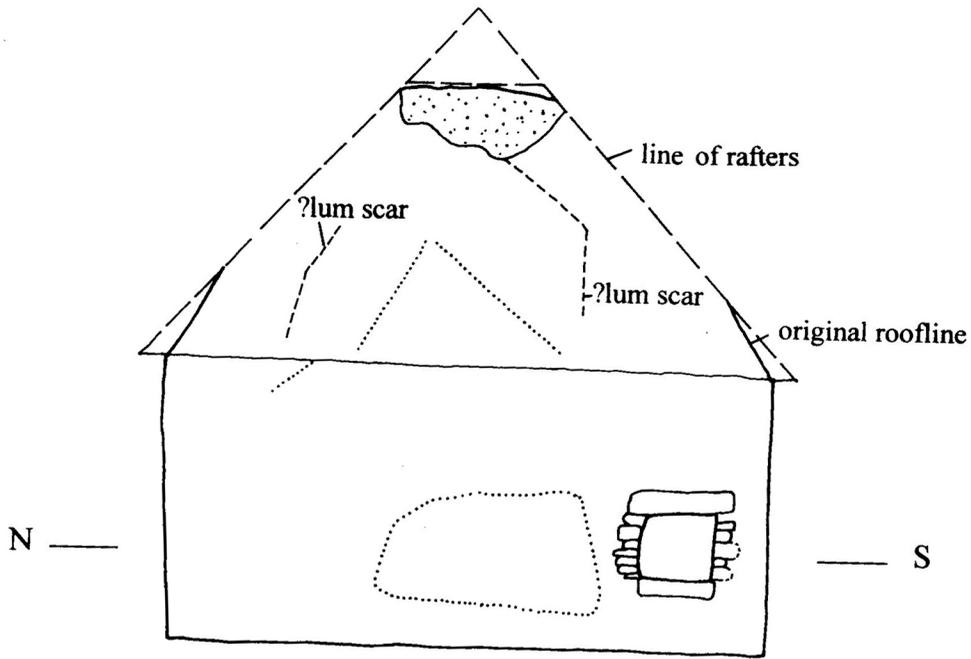
Machine excavation and subsequent hand cleaning of this trench revealed no trace of exterior ground surfaces or other structural remains. A sequence of deposits was present within the trench. The majority of these were relatively modern (110, 111, 112), as testified by the presence of bricks, ceramics, polythene and crisp packets. These appeared to relate to the dumping of rubbish or the construction of the tarmac road to the north of the building. The lowest deposit was a black sandy silt, which varied in depth between 0.10-0.25 m (113). Fragments of brick were present in this layer indicating it was relatively modern in origin. The layer 113 extended irregularly across the trench, with bedrock visible in places, and had been cut through by the insertion of a modern drainage pipe(103).

Two potentially significant pieces of information were recovered from the excavation of this trench. The first was that within the eastern part of the trench the foundation stones of the building were observed to lie in a rock cut trench. The trench extended 0.20 m beyond the wall face to a depth of 0.85m, extending into the bedrock by 0.20 m. The second significant observation was variation in the nature of the lower courses of the building between the eastern and western portions of the building. The eastern part comprised of well faced large blocks, while in contrast the western part was more irregular in construction and had utilised smaller irregular boulders.

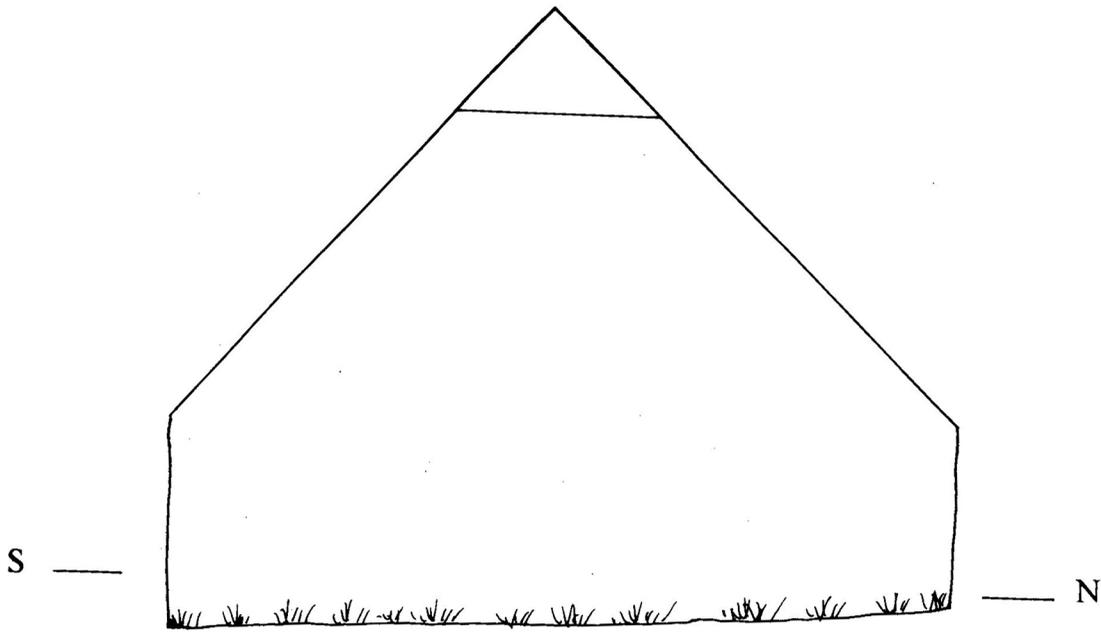
6.3.2 *Trench 2*

The removal of concrete (200) revealed a layer of gravel (201) that extended across the majority of the trench. The excavation of 201 revealed a variety of features within the trench. To the east, abutting the gable wall, was a low mortared stone hearth (203) which showed evidence of use through a deposit of ash just beyond it (207) (Fig 7).

A large flagstone (205), 1.0 m by 0.60 m, was situated to the front of the hearth (203). This was partially sealed to the north east by a deposit of yellow mortar (206). Another paving stone was present in the south-west of the trench (209), while the southern portion of the



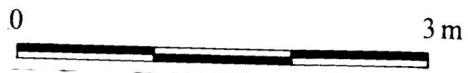
a) Interior east elevation



b) Exterior east elevation

 *cement plaster or patching*

 *areas of sooting*



trench consisted of a yellow mortar floor (204). The north-east part of the trench comprised of a brown sand silt with frequent inclusions of yellow mortar (208). Artefacts including modern china, bone, and corroded iron were recovered from across these surfaces. Also of note was the presence of two possible negative features; a pit (210) and an apparent post-hole with slots radiating at right angles (211).

Excavation was subsequently limited to a slot, 0.70 m by 1.30 m, in the north-west corner of the trench in order to establish the depth, character and age of the deposits. The excavation of layer (208). This revealed further paving of two different types. Another large paving stone (213) was present which probably represents the same event as (209). Slightly different, however, was the use of small roughly dressed slabs (214) around the large paving stone (205) in front of the hearth (203). These in part retained the larger stone but rather than being functional were more decorative in character.

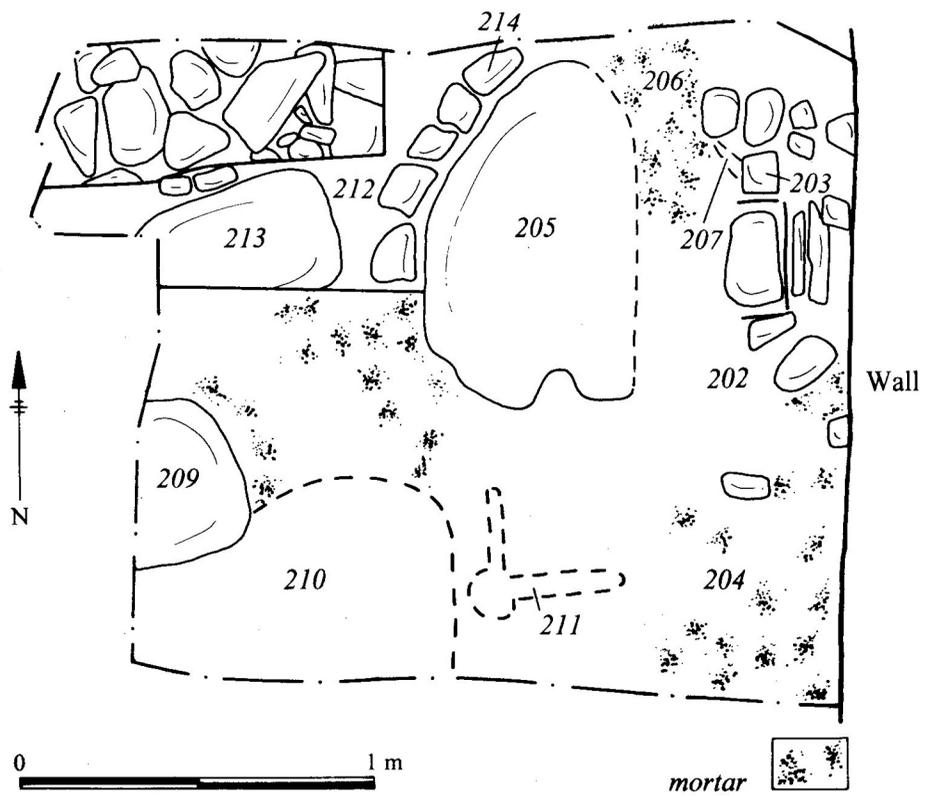
The two sets of paving lay on a indurated brown sand silt with frequent inclusions of fine gravel and occasional yellow mortar (212). This was absent in the north-western corner of the trench where a rough paving appeared to be present (215). Excavation was again further restricted to a slot, 0.40 m by 1.0 m, in the north-west corner of the trench to investigate this deposit (215). This revealed that 215 extended to a depth of upto 0.20m and comprised of layer of boulders within a black clay silt matrix with some voids. This could be seen in section to extend under 212 which in turn lay under 213 and 214. Importantly a piece of glass (SF 021) was recovered from c 0.15 m depth in (215). The glass is probably part of cylindrical bottle from a wooden mould bottle dating to the mid to late 19th century (Robin Murdoch pers comm).

Prior to the backfilling of the trench, the large slab (205) in front of the hearth was examined to establish the nature of the deposits beneath it. This revealed a friable brown sand silt with moderate inclusions of charcoal. From the surface of this deposit was recovered two fragments of bone and a piece of mussel shell.

6.3.3 Trench 3

Removal of concrete (301), followed by hand cleaning of the trench revealed a wall base (302), about 0.90 m wide, running north to south through the trench (Fig 8). The western face of the wall had an irregular step to it where it extended further to the west. A portion of the

Trench 2



eastern part of the wall had been robbed, the void form which was filled with a brown sand clay (307). In the eastern part of the trench was a series of mixed sand clay deposits (303), (304), (305). While to the west of the wall (302) was a black sandy clay with frequent rounded stones (309), within which was an area with a concentration of small pieces of coal (308).

Excavation was restricted to a 0.40 m wide slot running along the southern baulk. This revealed that the deposits to the east of the wall were only 0.01 m thick and lay directly on bedrock. A cut (312) had been made to depth of 0.15 m through the bedrock to retain the wall base, which survived to a maximum depth of two courses.

The deposit (308) to the west of the wall only had a thickness of 0.04 m. Below this was a red-brown gravel sand upto 0.05 m in depth (310). This in turn sealed an orange yellow gravel sand (311) with a depth of 0.11 m. This layer (311) lay above the bedrock and could be seen to run under the wall base (302). A fragment of slightly patinated fine blue glass (SF 020) was recovered from (311) during excavation. The glass is probably from a small bottle dating to the mid to late 19th century (Robin Murdoch pers comm).

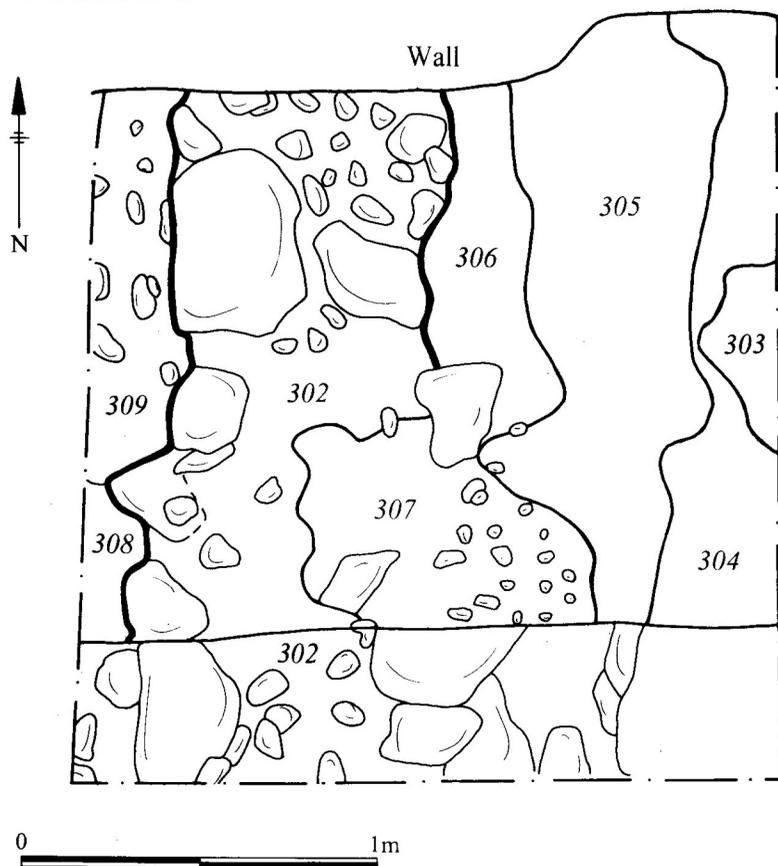
The relationship between the cross wall and the northern wall(s) was unclear due to the white wash which obscured the stones, which was therefore chipped off at this point to elucidate the nature of the relationship. This was, however, unsuccessful in establishing the relationship with any degree of certainty.

6.3.4 Trench 4

The concrete (400) was removed from the trench and then the surface was cleaned by hand. Excavation of 401 revealed a number of different features within the trench. Located at the eastern side of the trench were two groups of four mortared bricks (403) and (404) (Fig 9). The makers mark on the bricks was difficult to read but appeared to be 'PATERSON LTD PAISLEY'. The bricks were situated within a deposit of brown gravel sand (402). Running north to south through the trench was a brown clay silt, measuring between 0.90 to 1.00 m in width (407). To the west of this was a compact brown silt sand (408).

The gravel sand deposit (402) lying between the bricks was excavated in order to establish the nature of the settings. This revealed a layer of mortar (410) within which had been pressed

Trench 3



frequent quantities of charcoal. Most striking, however, was the discovery of a concentration of hair between 402 and 410. The hair appeared to have been cut and showed no trace of burning.

Excavation was then limited to a 0.60 m wide slot running east to west across the trench. Within the eastern end of the slot the mortar (410) between the brick setting was excavated. This revealed that the bricks lay to a depth of two courses and had been mortared to a strip of metal at the base resting on several large stone blocks (413). The layer of mortar (410) lay on top of a layer of rubble up to 0.15 m in depth, which was observed to run into the section of the slot. This rubble (413) sat on a layer of orange brown clay with a depth of 0.16 m (416). The layer of clay (416) another layer of orange brown clay (418) which were distinguished by the near absence of stones from (418). Notably several fragments of mortar were recovered from (416) and layer (418) was observed to run under the foundations of the wall (411).

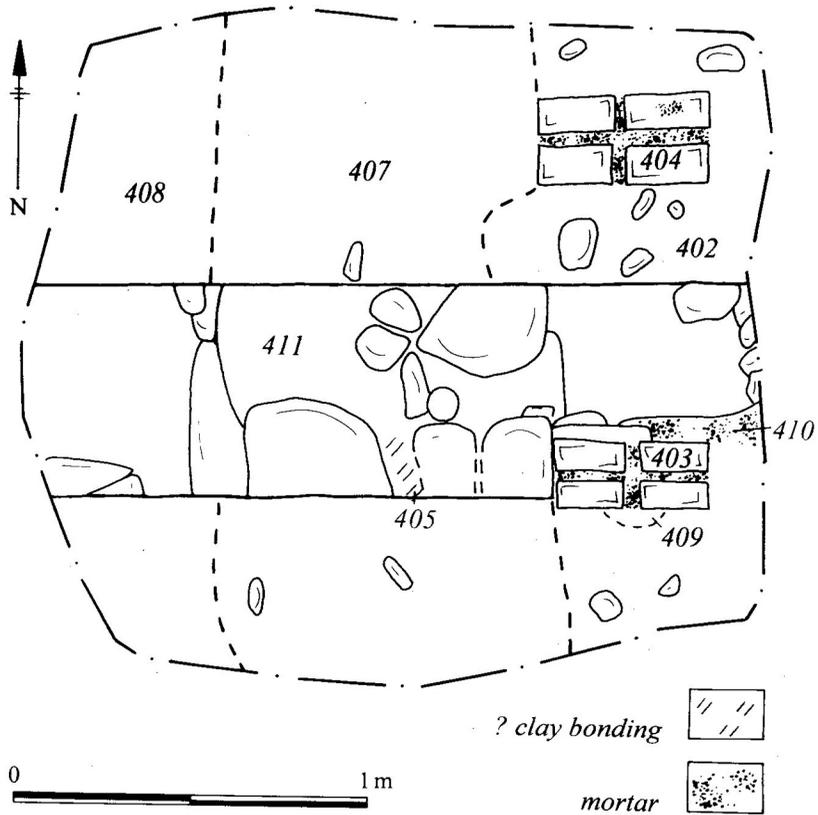
Excavation within the slot revealed that the lower portion of the gable wall survived (411). This had a width of 0.85 m and survived to a depth of two course above the foundations. Two further points about the construction of the wall are of note. First, no trace of mortar was visible between the stones. Rather the wall appeared to be bonded in places with a light green silt clay. Second, the foundations were 1.05 m wide and comprised of massive slabs of stone which extended beyond the position of the external wall face.

Excavation of the deposits to the west of the wall that the compact brown silt sand (408) extended to a depth of c 0.15 m. Below 408 was a dark brown clay loam (412) with a thickness of c 0.08 m. This in turn sealed a layer of mid brown gravel (414) of 0.03 m depth. The gravel (414) lay over a dark brown clay silt (415) up to 0.20 m in depth, which in turn sealed a 0.23 m deep deposit of orange brown silt clay (417). The silt clay (417) was observed to lie on the bedrock and appeared to run under the foundations of the wall (411).

7.0 *Discussion*

Several aspects of the architecture of the building suggest that there were potentially several phases of remodelling or partial rebuilds. In particular the variation in the thickness, and form of the construction of the lower courses, of the northern wall at the point where the internal cross wall once stood and the need to bed the cross wall in a rock cut trench may

Trench 4



indicate the building was originally a single cottage which was subsequently enlarged. This may be supported by the observed variation in the construction of the western gable, with a clay bonding and lack of mortar, and the other walls that are mortared. The nature and chronology of this relationship may be clarified by further investigation

The contrast in the nature of construction of the hearths is particularly notable. The stone hearth at the eastern gable is likely to be original to the construction of the building. In contrast the brick built hearth at the western gable is probably a later rebuild which may relate to the conversion of the building into a house for the poor and sick.

It has been of interest to establish the sequence of development of different flooring materials in trench 2. With the earthen floor, being enhanced by the laying of slabs, which were subsequently at least partially sealed by a mortar floor. Indeed it was the application of a thick layer of concrete across the whole interior of the building, and the continued maintenance of a roof, which has resulted in relatively good preservation of archaeological deposits within the interior.

The desk-based assessment highlighted the variety of uses that the building has undergone. Perhaps most interesting was the conversion of a domestic dwelling into a shelter for the poor and sick. The discovery of the concentration of hair within the hearth against the interior wall of the western gable may well relate to the tending of patients prior to the building's conversion into a garage in the 1950's. The potential exists for other archaeologically visible traces of this period of use of the building.

None of the desk based evidence indicates that the extant building can be anticipated as earlier in date than the 18th Century. The artefacts recovered during excavation would, however, tend to indicate a late eighteenth or early nineteenth century date for the main fabric of the building.

8.0 *Recommendations*

The results of the evaluation would indicate that the standing building is unlikely to be later in origin than the first half of the nineteenth century. Although the interior deposits are relatively well preserved a double cottage from this period is not particularly rare and

therefore can not be considered of national significance. In the excavators opinion the degree of preservation of the deposits and the unusual history of the site does, however, give it some cultural significance. Where possible all archaeological remains should be preserved *in-situ*.

Should planning consent be granted, and preservation in-situ prove unfeasible, the following mitigation measures may be acceptable. In light of the potential complexity of the structure, the good preservation of the archaeological deposits and the documentary evidence of an unusual history of use during the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century two main recommendations for further work are made.

1 Controlled demolition of the building.

It is considered that the archaeological supervision of the demolition of the structure may clarify the relationship between several components of the building. In particular the nature of construction at the intersection of the north wall and the western gable and the interior cross wall may establish the sequence of development of the structure.

2 Modified watching brief.

By its very nature the evaluation revealed a limited proportion of the interior of the building. The relatively good preservation of floor deposits results in the opportunity to assess if the conversion of the building into a 'cottage hospital' resulted in any archaeologically visible impact on the deposits elsewhere within the structure. It is considered that the archaeological supervision of the removal of the concrete floor would allow the nature of this phase of use of the building to be clarified.

3. Oral history.

A third avenue of further work is highlighted due to its good potential for additional significant information. Consideration should be given to making further enquiries into the living memory of the use of this building during the early part of this century.

The recommendations herein are intended as guidelines, final decisions about mitigation rests with the Council as planning authority as advised by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Stuart Halliday and Chris Dalglish who undertook the evaluation; Olivia Lelong and Martin Carruthers who conducted the survey; to Fraser Harper (Argyll and Bute Council) for his assistance and Robin Murdoch for glass identification. John Atkinson managed the project for GUARD and Mel Richmond provided technical support. Argyll and Bute Council funded the archaeological works, which were specified and monitored by West of Scotland Archaeology Service on behalf of the Council.

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11.0 Concordances

11.1 Photo record

Colour Slide

No	Description	Dir. Tak.
1	Exterior shot	NE
2	Exterior shot	NE
3	Exterior shot	NW
4	Exterior shot	NW

5	Exterior shot	SE
6	Exterior shot	SE
7	Exterior shot	N
8	Exterior shot	N
9	Exterior shot	N
10	Exterior shot	N
11	Exterior shot	S
12	Exterior shot	S
13	Exterior shot	S
14	Exterior shot	S
15	Interior shot E.gable	W
16	Interior shot	W
17	Interior shot	W
18	T3 After initial clean	W
19	T3 After initial clean	S
20	T3 After initial clean	E
21	T4 After initial clean	W
22	T4 After exc. 401	E
23	T4 After exc. 401	SE
24	T4 After exc. 402	A
25	T4 After exc. 402	S
26	T3 post exc slot	W
27	T3 post exc slot	N
28	Working shot	W
29	Working shot	E
30	Working shot	NW
31	Working shot	SW
32	308	N
33	308	W
34	T4 After exc. 413	W
35	T4 After exc. 413	W
36	T4 After exc. 413	E
37	T4 After exc. 413	E
38	T4 After exc. 413	S
39	T4 After exc. 413	S
40	T2 After exc. 201	SW
41	T2 After exc. 201	W
42	T2 Detail 203/205	W
43	T2 After exc. 201	N
44	T3 Junction of walls	S
45	T3 N-facing section	N
46	T4 Gable wall	E
47	T4 post-exc	N
48	T4 post-exc	W
49	T4 post-exc	N
50	T4 post-exc	N
51	T4 post-exc	N
52	T1 N. end	N
53	T1 middle	N
54	T1 W. end	N
55	T1	E
56	T1	E

57	T2 205, 212, 215	W
58	T2 205, 212, 215	SE
59	T3 Wall junction after removal w.w.	S
60	T2 After excavation 212/215	N
61	T2 After excavation 212/215	E
62	Detail of interior	S
63	Detail of interior	S
64	Detail of interior	S
65	Detail of interior	W
66	Detail of interior	N
67	Detail of interior	N
68	Detail of interior	N
69	Detail of interior	E
70	Detail of interior	E
71	Detail of interior	E
72	Detail of interior	E

Black and White Film

No	Description	Dir. Tak.
1	Exterior shot	NE
2	Exterior shot	NE
3	Exterior shot	W
4	Exterior shot	NW
5	Exterior shot	SE
6	Exterior shot	SE
7	Exterior shot	N
8	Exterior shot	N
9	Exterior shot	N
10	Exterior shot	N
11	Exterior shot	S
12	Exterior shot	S
13	Exterior shot	S
14	Exterior shot	S
15	Interior shot E.gable	W
16	Interior shot	W
17	Interior shot	W
18	T3 After initial clean	W
19	T3 After initial clean	S
20	T3 After initial clean	E
21	T4 Post exc. 401	W
22	T4 Post exc. 401	E
23	T4 Post exc. 401	SE
24	T4 Post exc 402	A
25	T4 Post exc 402	S
26	308	W
27	308	N
28	T4 Post exc. 413	E
29	T4 Post exc. 413	S
30	T2 Post exc 201	NW
31	T2 Post exc 201	W
32	T2 Post exc 201	W

33	T4 Post exc.	E
34	T4 Post exc.	S
35	T4 Post exc.	W
36	T1 N. end	N
37	T1 middle	N
38	T1 S. end	N
39	T1	E
40	T3 post exc.	S
41	T2 After excavation 212/215	N
42	T2 After excavation 212/215	E
43	Detail of interior	S
44	Detail of interior	S
45	Detail of interior	S
46	Detail of interior	W
47	Detail of interior	N
48	Detail of interior	N
49	Detail of interior	N
50	Detail of interior	E
51	Detail of interior	E
52	Detail of interior	E

11.2 *Small finds list*

No	Material	No.	Description	Context
1	ceramic	1	sherd	301
2	ceramic	1	sherd	301
3	ceramic	7	sherds	401
4	iron	1	nail	407
5	iron	1	? file	407
6	hair	many	? human	402
7	bone	2	fragments	407
8	ceramic	1	sherd	407
9	shell	1	?razor	407
10	glass	1	brown	408
11	metal	1	preserve lid	408
12	metal	1	-	208
13	metal	1	-	208
14	bone	1	rib	205
15	pot	1	-	204
16	ceramic	1	base sherd	202
17	mixed	many	-	415
18	glass	1	-	412
19	mortar	3	lumps	418
20	glass	1	fine blue	311
21	glass	1	clear	215
22	coal	1	-	215
23	bone	2	fragments	216
24	shell	1	frag. mussel	216
25	mortar	1	lump	216

11.3 Context list

No	Description
100	Building.
101	Foundations
102	Cut for foundation trench
103	Drainage pipe
104	Yellow - brown clay
105	Brick tumble
106	Light brown sand
107	Dark brown sand silt clay
108	Bedrock
109	Topsoil
110	red/orange clay
111	dark brown silt loam
112	small-medium angular stones in grey sandy silt matrix
113	black sandy silt
200	Concrete
201	grey - brown medium gravel
202	brown sand gravel
203	Stone hearth
204	Mortar floor
205	Paving stone
206	Mortar
207	Ash deposit
208	mid brown sand silt
209	Paving stone
210	Putative pit
211	Putative post-hole
212	mid-dark brown sand silt
213	Paving stone
214	'Decorative' paving
215	Rubble deposit
216	light - mid brown sand silt
301	Concrete
302	Wall
303	blue/yellow sand clay
304	black sand clay
305	mixed orange sand & blue yellow clay sand
306	mid brown clay sand
307	mid brown sand clay
308	black sand clay
309	black sand clay
310	red brown gravel sand
311	orange yellow gravel sand
312	Cut for construction trench
400	Concrete
401	light brown gravel sand
402	light brown gravel sand
403	Brick setting: hearth
404	Brick setting: hearth
405	light green silt clay

- 406 Charcoal
- 407 light brown clay silt
- 408 mid brown silty sand
- 409 Mortar
- 410 Mortar
- 411 Wall
- 412 dark brown clay loam
- 413 Rubble deposit
- 414 mid brown gravel
- 415 mid - dark brown clay silt
- 416 mid - dark brown clay silt
- 417 mid orange brown silt clay
- 418 orange brown silt clay

11.4 Drawing record

No	Description	Scale
1	Trench 3 Pre-exc. plan	1:20
2	Trench 4 Pre-exc. plan	1:20
3	Trench 4 overlay plan post removal 402	1:20
4	Trench 3 slot 1 post-exc. plan	1:20
5	Trench 4 post-exc. plan of slot	1:20
6	Trench 1 post-exc. plan	1:20
7	Trench 1 w-facing section	1:10
8	Trench 4 N facing section	1:10
9	Trench 2 pre-exc. plan	1:20
10	Trench 2 after exc. 208	1:20
11	Trench 2 plan of 215	1:20