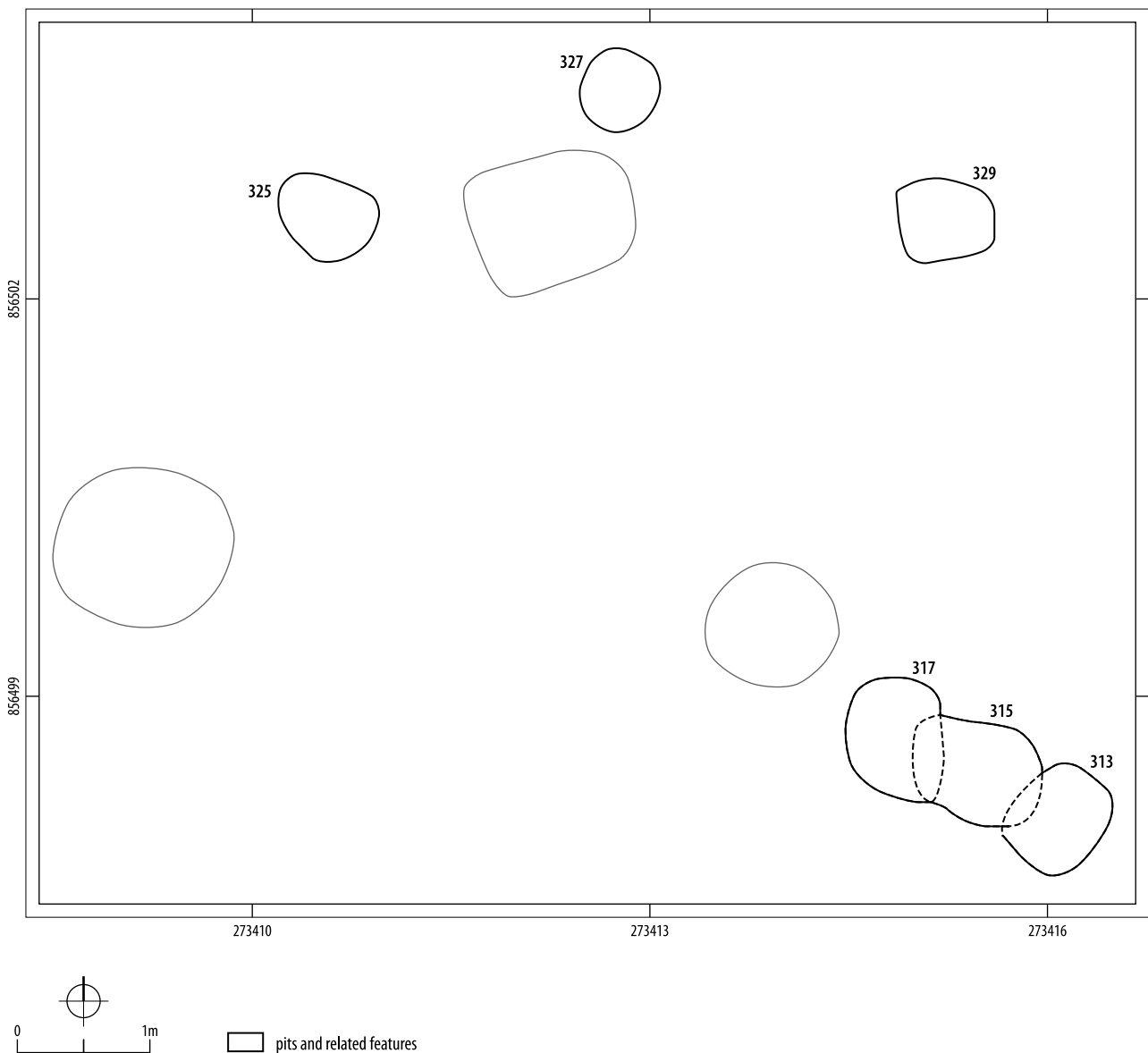


4. THE NEOLITHIC PIT CLUSTER

A small cluster of three pits (325, 327 and 329) was discovered some 50m north-east of the main cluster of cremations (Illus 3). These were located amongst a concentration of probable modern pits but were distinct in both form and content (Illus 4). All three were sub-circular and measured 0.6–0.8m in diameter and 0.2–0.3m deep. The pits represent the remains of nearby early to middle Neolithic domestic activity containing: pottery, flint debitage, charcoal and charred hazelnut shells. The charcoal was dominated by oak (*Quercus* sp.) but also contained fragments of hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and heather

(*Calluna vulgaris*) charcoal. Nine sherds of early to middle Neolithic Carinated Bowl were found in the pits, representing three vessels (V10, V11 and V12). The body sherds, most likely from the lower portion of the vessels, have an average thickness of c 10–12mm with smoothed exterior surfaces. The fabric, which is tempered with large angular quartz inclusions, is specific to the Neolithic pottery found on site. The largest sherd was recovered from Pit 325 and comes from near the bottom of a hemispherical base. There is a layer of residue on the interior surface indicating that it had been used with foodstuffs, potentially as cookware. None of the other sherds showed evidence of residues. A sherd from Pit



Illus 4 Plan of Pits 325, 327 and 329 (© Headland Archaeology)

329 has grain impressions on the exterior surface, providing further evidence for domestic activity. Pit 327 was radiocarbon dated to 3700–3530 cal BC (95.4% probability; SUERC-64616) from a hazelnut shell recovered from the fill.

The abrasion on all three vessels suggests they had moved around or been open to the elements, before slumping or being placed in the pits. The

material within the pits potentially accumulated over some time before being deposited. Pits 325 and 329 each contained a single fill, indicating that the deposition of the material occurred as one phase of activity. The high quantities of flint debitage within the fills, principally from Pit 329, may also imply that flint knapping was taking place nearby.