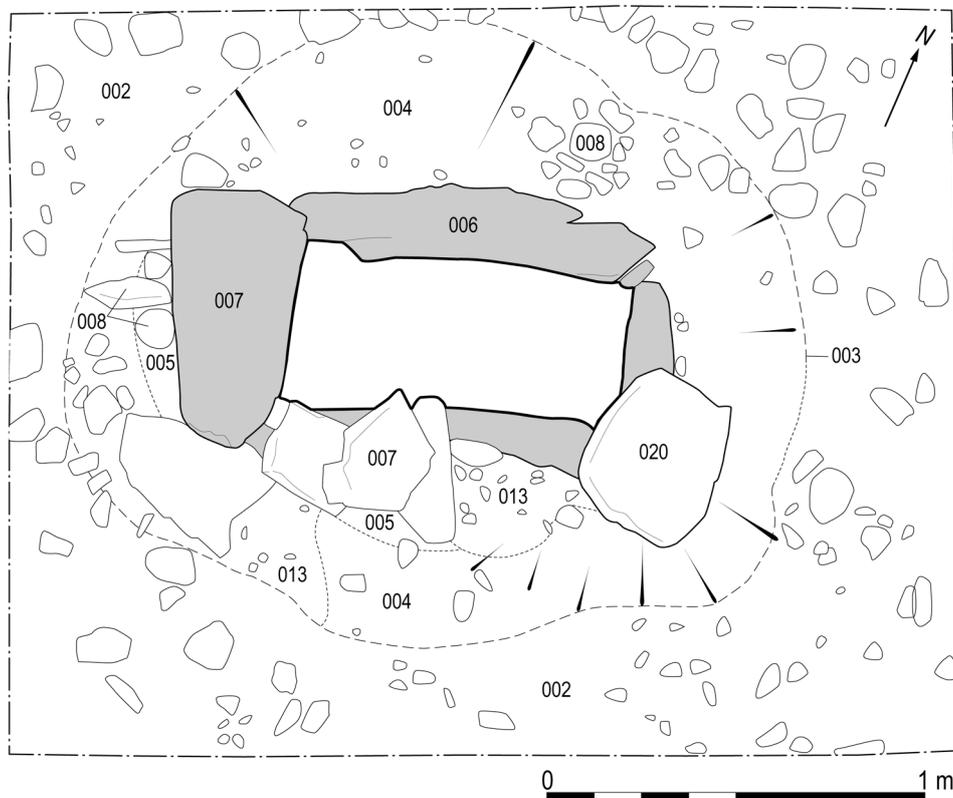


3. FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

A trench measuring 2.5m NNE/SSW by 2m was excavated over the cist (Illus 2 & 3). After the loose, intrusive ploughsoil that covered the floor was removed, eight samples were taken on an east/west grid of the basal deposit to recover small fragments of bone or botanical material and allow testing for phosphate levels. Background samples were also taken from the ploughsoil, the upper subsoil and the lower subsoil. However, the decision was taken not to subject these samples to geochemical analysis, on the basis that the

results were not likely to significantly inform interpretation.

As the landowner wished to leave the cist intact, no geological samples were taken of the slabs that formed it. The cist's construction was investigated by excavating opposing quadrants of the cut outside the structure. This allowed the recording of two cross-sections across the cist and the examination of half of each exterior face for artificial markings. Following excavation, the capping slab was replaced and the pit that held the cist was backfilled; the estate manager then sealed it with a thick layer of ploughsoil.



Illus 2 Pre-excitation plan of the cist. © Northlight Heritage



Illus 3 The cist before excavation, from the east. © Northlight Heritage