
5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

5.1 Methodology

The requirement for the excavation was based on the findings of a walkover survey and desk-based assessment carried out by Kirkdale Archaeology, and an evaluation carried out by CFA on behalf of The City of Edinburgh Council in advance of construction of the M9 Spur extension. The evaluation demonstrated that while much of Jack's Houses had been disturbed by the insertion of a modern water pipe, significant remains survive, including extramural deposits and the large pottery dump.

A trench was positioned so as to expose completely the footings of the cottages and enclosure at Jack's Houses, as demonstrated by the evaluation and cartographic research. The southern limit of the trench was constrained by the presence of a tarmac road (*illus 4*). Two further trenches were excavated to the south of the road to test the possibility that features associated with Jack's Houses were present on the other side of the road. The easternmost of these two trenches was also excavated with the specific goal of recovering pottery from a large dump of potsherds revealed during the evaluation. Numbers in brackets in the following text refer to contexts numbered on the illustrations and described in detail in the archive report (*Mitchell 2004*).

5.2 Results

The footings of the southern wall and foundation trenches for the other walls were all that survived of the terrace of cottages (*illus 5*). The footings of the southern wall (006) were *c* 18m long and up to 1m wide and were constructed of large sandstone blocks set directly onto the subsoil surface. A rectangular stone threshold, positioned 3m from the east end of the wall, was worn and concave towards its centre. The stub of a rusted iron drainpipe was situated close to the threshold. The foundation trenches for the northern and eastern walls (003) were between 1m and 1.3m wide and 0.3m deep. The foundation trench for the western wall was only faintly visible, having been severely truncated. A drainage ditch, containing mid 19th-century clay drainage pipes, ran parallel to the northern foundation trench. The drainage pipes terminated in a junction abutting the foundation trench, where the pipes were angled upwards and towards the house, suggesting they were rainwater and waste drainage pipes from the cottages.

An outbuilding abutted the eastern end of Jack's Houses (*illus 4*). It measured 3m by 2.2m and had brick wall foundations set within a 0.3m-deep foun-

ation trench, which had been backfilled with dark brown silt. The footings of an internal dividing wall within the outbuilding were very truncated. A possible floor layer comprising a thin layer of very compact dark soil with occasional mortar flecks was present. A metal grille and fragments of 20th-century pottery were recovered from heavily disturbed demolition deposits within the interior of the outbuilding.

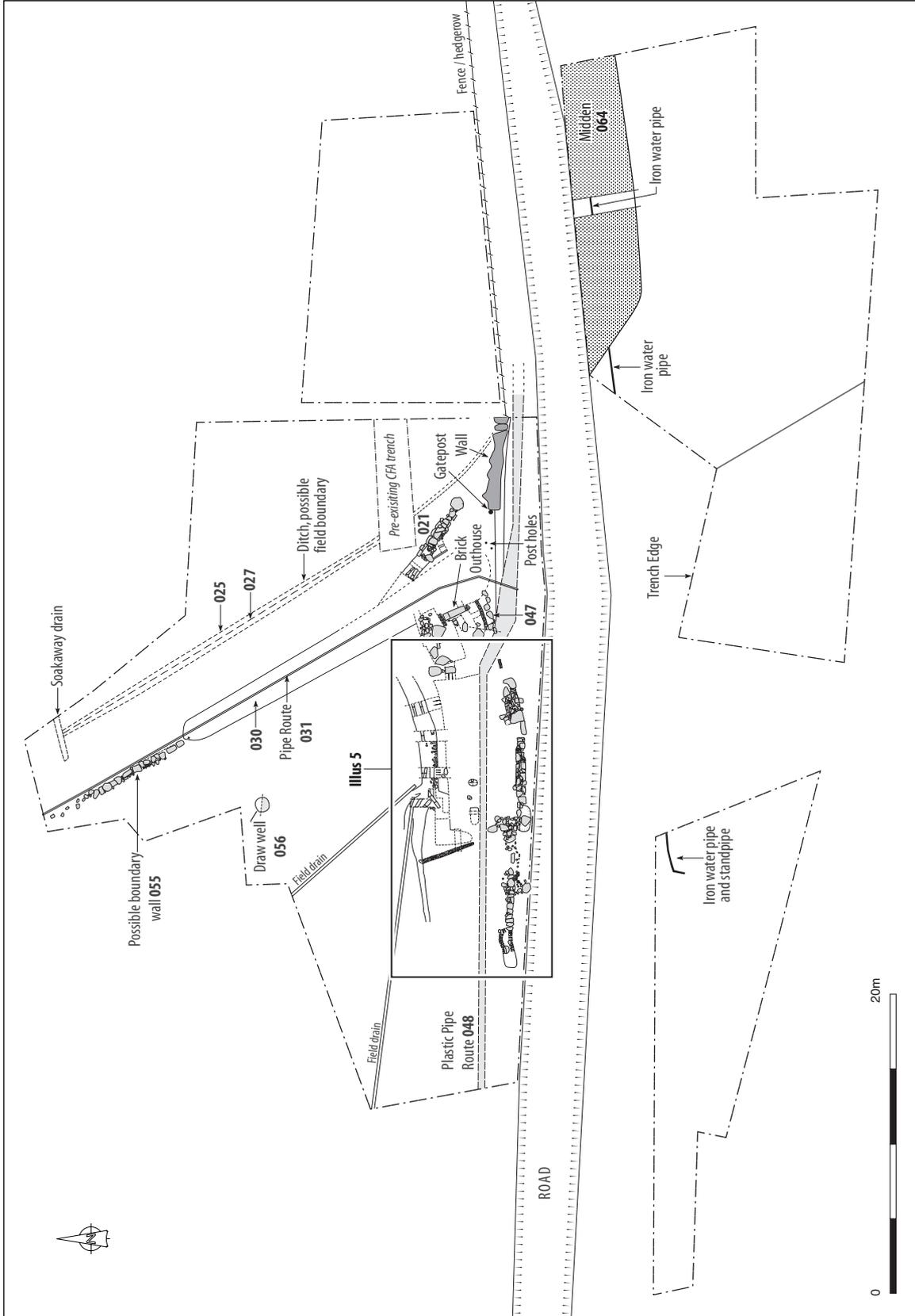
Two pits (010, 012) were discovered within the cottages. One pit (012), of 0.6m diameter, occupied a central location. It was shallow and concave and was filled with black burnt material. The second pit (010) lay west of 012, was 0.5m in diameter and 0.2m deep, and was partially filled with angular stones. A shallow linear trench (014), 1.5m long and 0.6m wide and filled with ash-rich soil, was aligned east to west across the centre of the house. A modern water pipe trench (048) containing a blue plastic pipe had been cut through the centre of Jack's Houses, most likely within the past 30 years, possibly destroying other features within the structure, and erasing relationships.

5.2.1 Field boundaries

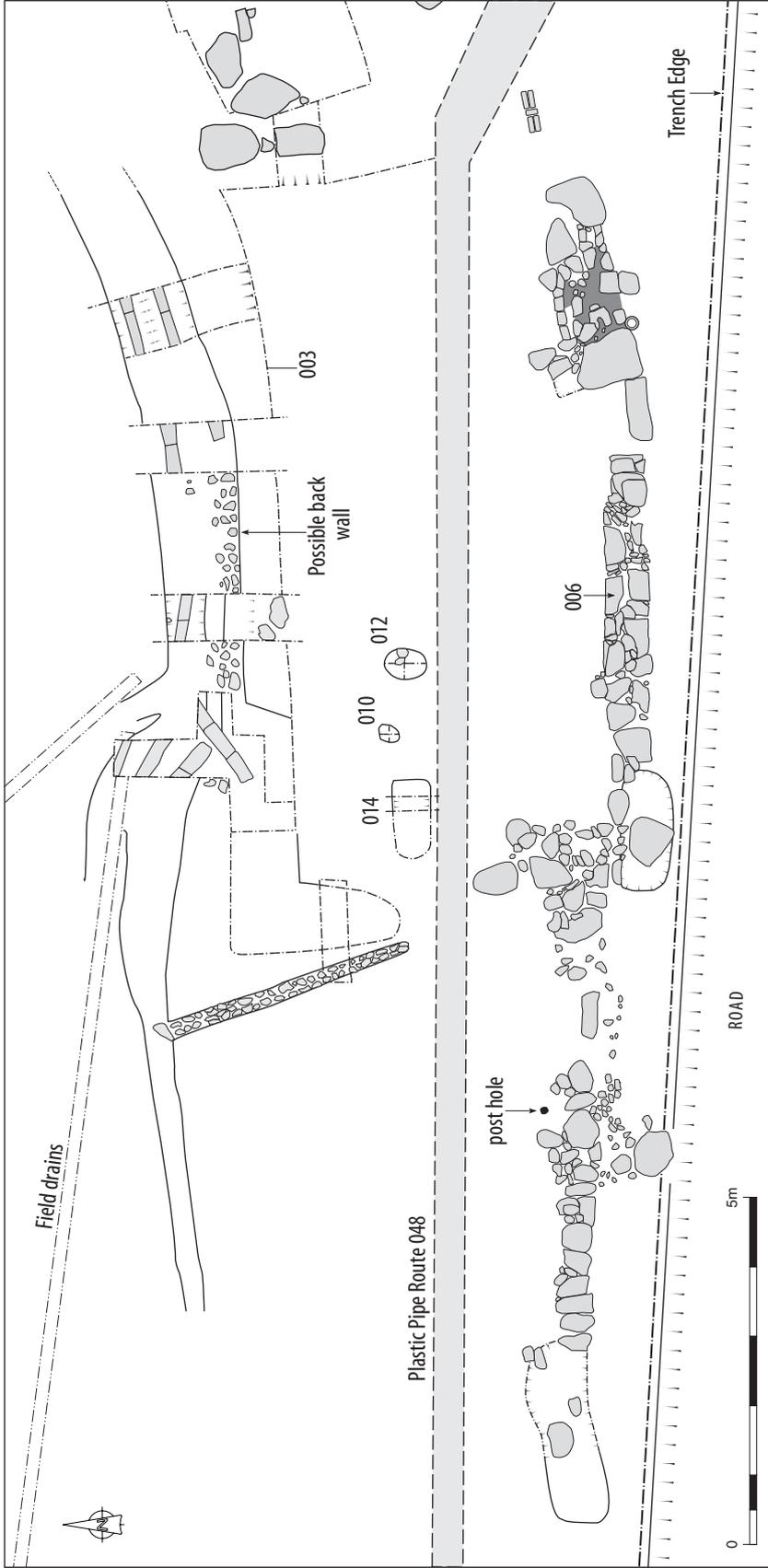
Field boundaries were represented by ditches and three upstanding walls. Two of the walls (016 and 047), both aligned roughly east to west along the roadside, were situated to the east of Jack's Houses. The third (055) was located further to the north.

One of the east-west-aligned walls was situated *c* 12m from the eastern edge of Jack's Houses. It was still upstanding to a height of 1.2m and had been built or remodelled in several phases. It was built from large volcanic boulders and smaller stones, and had a soil core which contained late 19th- and early 20th-century ceramics. This survived as a 6.2m-length standing to a height of 0.9m, although as it was better preserved on the south side it may represent the percolated remains of a former soil bank abutting the south side of the wall. The wall had been extended by the later addition of large stones to the east and west, and had been capped with mortar-bonded stone blocks and slabs. The remains of a large upright wooden post (*illus 4*) at the west end of the wall marked the position of a former entrance. Two postholes were located *c* 2.5m to the west of the post stump. Both were lined with stones and were *c* 0.2m wide and *c* 0.3m deep, and filled with dark silt.

The second wall (047), which survived as a single course of large volcanic stones, extended 2m from the south-eastern corner of Jack's Houses. It had



Illus 4 General plan of site



Illus 5 Detailed plan of Jack's Houses

probably extended directly from Jack's Houses, but the relationship had been destroyed by the modern plastic water pipe trench.

Both walls partially overlay a field ditch, which ran from the east edge of Jack's Houses to a hawthorn hedge that defined the modern field boundary. The ditch was 1m wide and 0.5m deep, and was filled with dark silt containing fragments of late 19th-century pottery, glass and china. No stratigraphic relationship was revealed between Jack's Houses and the ditch, although the ditch appears to terminate close to the houses, perhaps indicating that they were contemporary, in which case the two walls post-date the building of Jack's Houses. It remains possible, however, that the ditch could have been filled in earlier in the century, before the houses were built, in which case the walls could have been constructed at the same time as the houses.

A length of wall (055) built from large sandstone blocks was revealed *c*13m to the north of Jack's Houses. It was aligned north to south and was 0.8m wide and 0.4m high, and extended for *c* 7.5m. It may represent the eastern boundary of the triangular enclosure depicted on the 1855 (1st edition) Ordnance Survey maps.

A linear ditch (025) aligned north to south and extending for *c* 25m, was revealed to the east of 055. It was *c* 1.5m wide and 0.5m deep and was filled with re-deposited stony clay. The ditch had been re-cut by a secondary ditch (027) measuring 0.75m wide and 0.5m deep. It was filled with angular stones and clay and possibly represents a north-south aligned boundary.

5.2.2 Field drainage

Three distinct types of pre-modern drain were revealed by the excavation. The earliest type was represented by a stone culvert (021) which was aligned north-west to south-east and extended for *c* 3.5m. It was 0.3m wide and 0.5m deep, and was built from large rectangular red sandstone blocks with unshaped sandstone lintel slabs. The culvert was cut by a clay pipe drain (031) at its north-west end. Its south-east end appeared to have been robbed out. Clay pipe drains were widely spread across much of the site, and are suspected to be of mid 19th-century date. Several soakaway drains were also present, although their dates are unknown.

5.2.3 Draw well

A well (056) was located *c* 20m north of Jack's Houses, roughly where it is depicted on the 1855 (1st edition) Ordnance Survey map. It was 1.4m in diameter and was lined with dressed stone blocks. The well was half-sectioned to a depth of 1m, at which point it became waterlogged. It was filled with damp, dark soil containing glass, metal, 19th-century pottery fragments, two leather shoes, a sock and a water-logged wooden barrel.

5.2.4 Other features

A square pit measuring 0.6m by 0.6m and 0.5m deep was discovered close to the road, midway between Jack's Houses and the upstanding field wall. It was lined with sandstone slabs and had a large flat slab in its base. It was filled with dark silt containing frequent metal and 19th-century pottery fragments. Its purpose is unclear but it may have served as a socket for an upright post.

A spread of stony compacted soil (030), aligned roughly north to south, extended 23m from close to the putative gateway to the wall at the north end of the site. It measured 2.7m wide and was set into a shallow cut measuring 0.3m deep. It was filled with stony dark soil and was cut by a clay pipe trench for its entire length. The position and alignment of the stony soil spread relative to the gateway suggests that it may have been a track, which was later cut by the pipe trench.

An iron water pipe ran parallel to the road on its south side. It terminated on the south side of the road adjacent to Jack's Houses at a former standing hand-pump which was still present, although displaced and damaged.

5.2.5 The midden

A large dump of pottery and glass was situated on the south side of the road, *c* 20m south-east from Jack's Houses. It was *c* 8m by 4m in extent and was up to 0.3m deep. It contained large quantities of late 19th-century refuse. The midden was sampled in its entirety.