

## 4 Excavation by C R Wickham-Jones and K Hardy

### 4.1 Methods

Excavation took place in May 2000 over a period of six days. Work had originally been scheduled for a longer period, but was terminated before some of the deposits could be fully recorded.

A 6 × 2 m trench (trench 1, also known as Tr1) was laid out at CD1 across the track at the point where a patch of darker material had been noted during the initial work (Illus 10 & 11). Trench 1 ran to either side of the ground that had been disturbed by the bulldozing of the track and it was divided into metre squares (B1, B2, C1, C2, etc, Illus 12). These squares were sub-divided into quadrants (NE, SE, NW, SW). Excavation proceeded by context with the exception that contexts were divided into spits where it was not possible to be sure of the division between one context and another. Finds were recorded by quadrant. All residues were sieved through a 3 mm mesh and both artefactual material and carbonized material were removed on site. Individual samples were taken for specialist examination for plant remains (Section 10.3; Section 10.4). All sections were drawn and plans made of significant contexts as well as at the termination of excavation.

In addition, a series of four 1 m × 0.5 m **test pits** were dug on the grassy slope to the east of the track (Illus 10, 21, 22 & 23). These were numbered in reverse alphabetical order (TPZ, TPY, etc). They

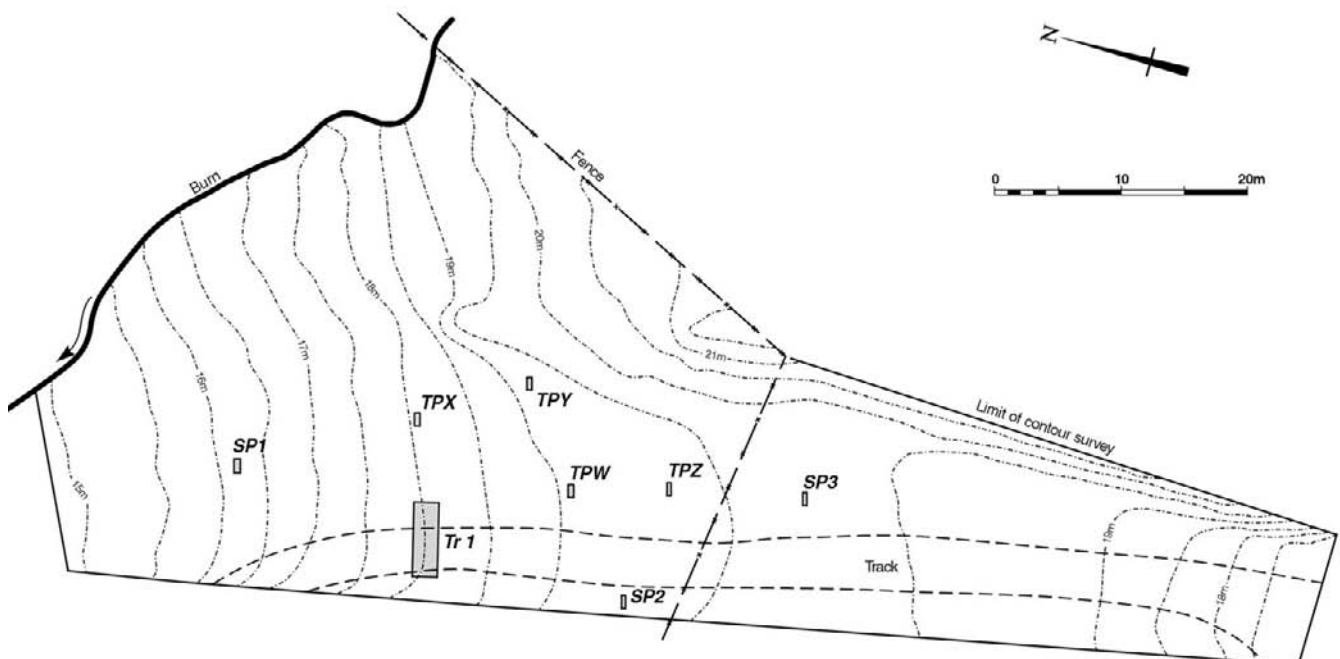
were excavated by context and contexts numbered by test pit (Z01, Z02, etc). Finds were recorded within their contexts in each test pit. All residues were sieved and significant material removed as for trench 1. Some sections were drawn but others were obscured when the site was unexpectedly backfilled by a local resident. No significant features requiring planning were uncovered.

Excavation also included the digging of three **soil pits** to characterize the nature of the local soils and underlying beach material (Illus 10, 41, 42 & 43). The size of the soil pits varied according to individual conditions. Soil contexts were recorded, residues sieved and artefacts removed. Sections and plans were drawn.

### 4.2 Results

#### 4.2.1 Trench 1

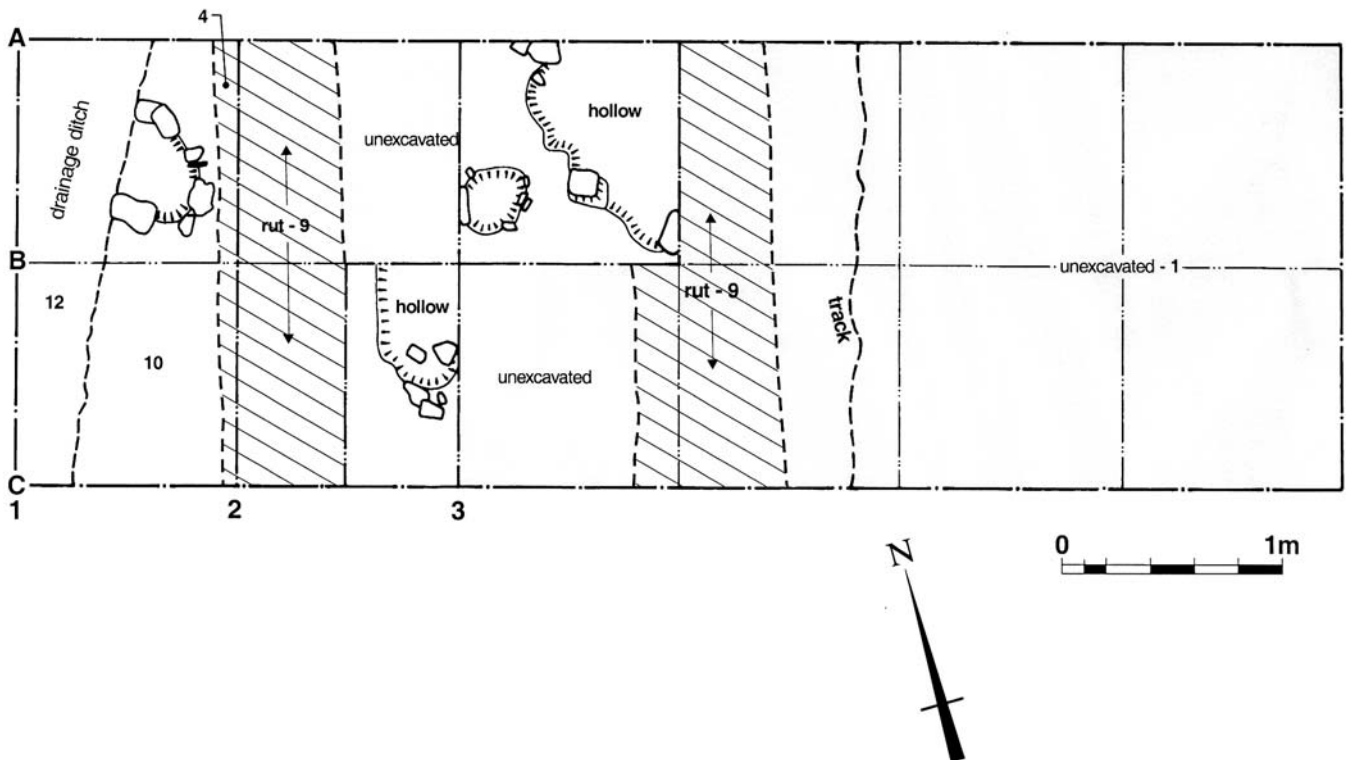
Not surprisingly, trench 1 was very disturbed by the new track (contexts 04, 06, 07, 09; Section 17 – List of Contexts) which cut through the archaeological layers. Four squares were selected for excavation (B1, B3, C1, C2; Illus 12) and this revealed a series of ploughsoil contexts (contexts 01, 02, 03) some 400 mm deep. Below this a spit



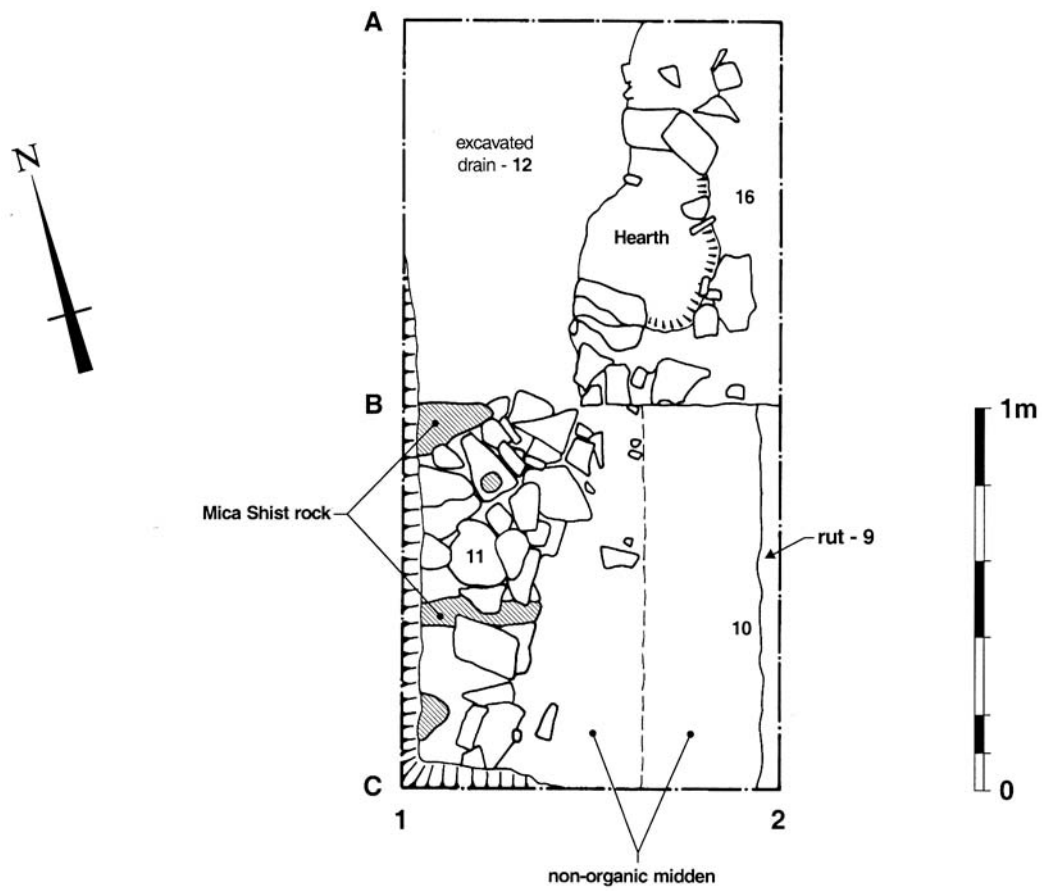
Illus 10 Camas Daraich: contour survey with position of main trench, test pits and soil pits



*Illus 11 Camas Daraich: view of the track from the N showing the location of trench 1*



*Illus 12 Camas Daraich: overall plan of trench 1*



Illus 13 Camas Daraich: trench 1, squares B1 & C1



Illus 14 Camas Daraich: trench1, squares B1 & C1 during excavation from the E



*Illus 15 Camas Daraich: trench 1, square B1 hearth area, at abandonment of excavation, from the E*

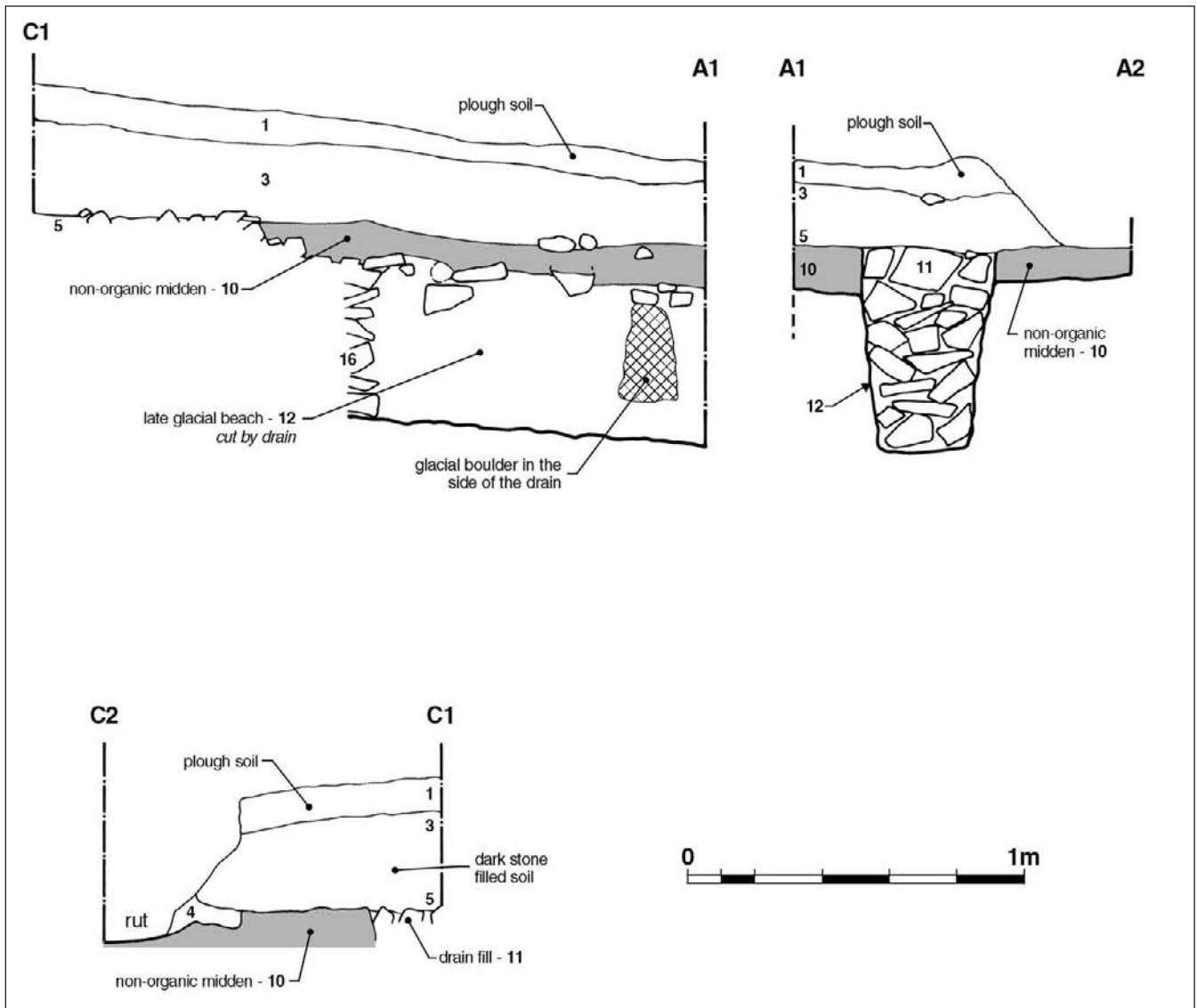
(context 05, 140 mm deep) was excavated to define clearly a black greasy layer (context 08 in B3 & C2; context 10 in B1 & C1). The black greasy material appeared to be a non-organic midden, which has been interpreted as a cultural deposit. It is likely that contexts 08 and 10 are the same and originally covered this area, but they were effectively separated by the rut of the track as it ran across B2 and C2. Both contexts contained flaked lithic material and charcoal as well as several stones. In square B1, the stones appeared to outline part of a hearth (*Illus 13, 14 & 15*). This was not given a context number as it was discovered just before excavation was terminated; however, it was planned (*Illus 13*). In square B1, context 10 was 187 mm deep (*Illus 16*) and, in square B3, context 08 was 170 mm deep; in B3 it appeared to fill a shallow scoop into the surface of the raised beach (*Illus 17, 18 & 19*). Where they were removed to the bottom, contexts 08 and 10 both lay directly on the surface of the raised beach (context 16). A second, smaller scoop lay in square C2 (*Illus 17*). In squares B1 and C1, a deep drainage ditch (context 12, filled with context 11) had been dug through context 10 and destroyed it in the western half of each trench (*Illus 16 & 20*). This ditch had cut through the western half of the hearth.

The halt to excavation work meant that the scoops and hearth could not be properly recorded or given

context numbers, though they were hastily planned as part of the clearing-up exercise. The cultural material remains unexcavated in squares C1, B2 and C3, and there was not time to carry out excavation in squares B4–6 or C4–6.

#### **4.2.2 Test pits (*Illus 10*)**

**TPZ** was dug at the top of the raised beach (*Illus 21*). The plough soil (contexts Z01, Z02) gave way at a depth of 100 mm to a thin black greasy layer (Z03), 10 mm thick, which lay directly on top of the raised beach (Z04). Both the ploughsoil and Z03 contained a considerable amount of flaked lithic material (*Table 2; Table 15*). **TPY** was dug to the east side of the raised beach up against a natural bedrock rise (*Illus 22*). The plough soil here (context Y01) lay straight on top of the raised beach (Y02). A small assemblage of lithics was recovered (*Table 2; Table 15*). **TPX** was dug lower down the raised beach to the east of trench 1 (*Illus 23*). Once again the ploughsoil (contexts X01, X02) gave way straight onto the raised beach with no sign of a black cultural layer. There were, however, many pieces of flaked stone (*Table 2; Table 15*). **TPW** was sited further up the raised beach and, though it contained several flaked lithics, work here was terminated before it could be determined whether or not the cultural deposit was present.



Illus 16 Camas Daraich: trench 1, squares B1 & C1: N, W and S section drawings at end of excavation

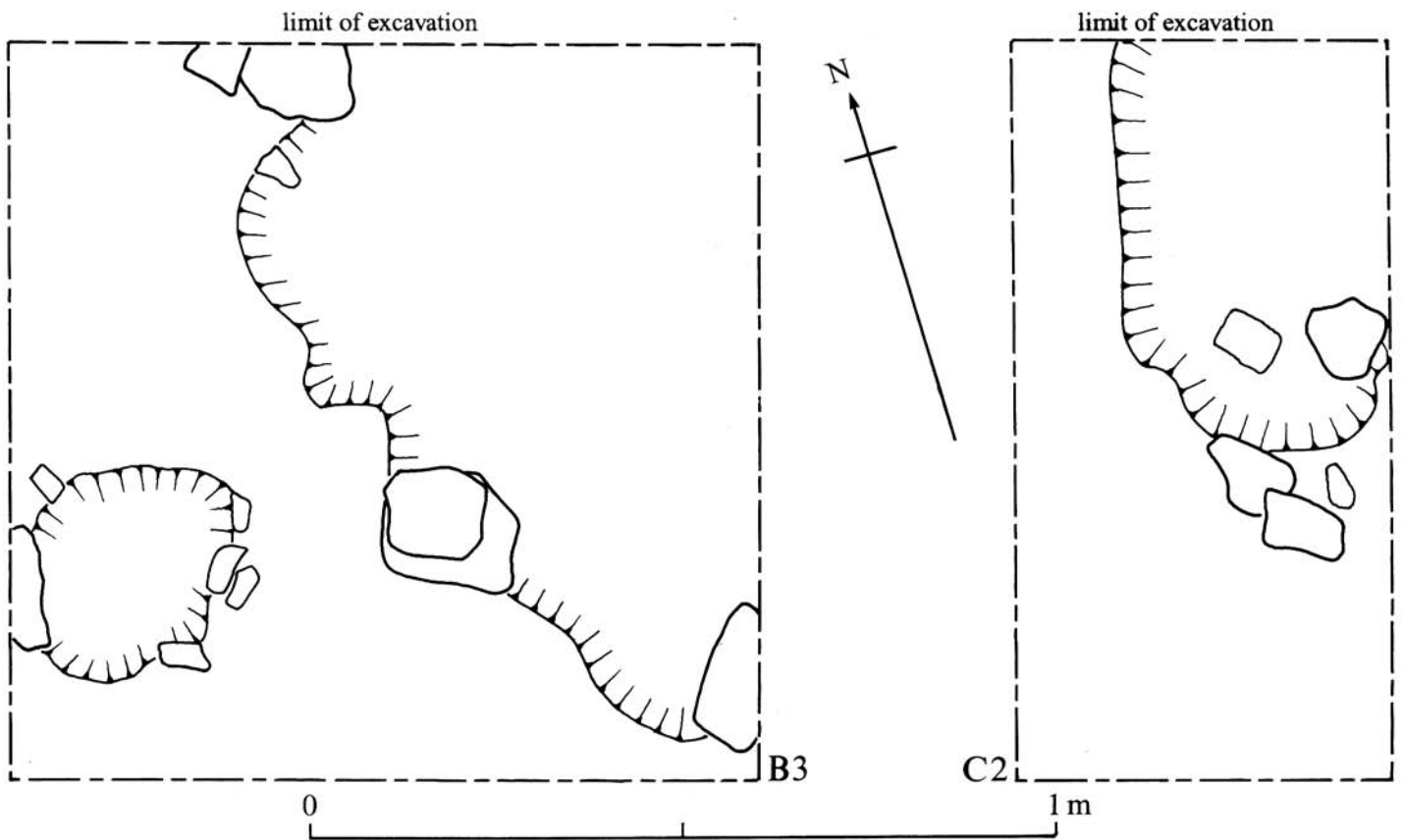
#### 4.2.3 Soil pits (Illus 10)

The specialist results of the three soil pits (SP1–3) are presented below in the section on geology and soils (Section 10.1). **SP1** (Illus 41) was placed near a small bog about 20 m north of trench 1 and contained a ploughsoil (context SP1002) which lay below the turf (SP1001). The ploughsoil contained a few lithics and lay on top of a glacial till (SP1003). **SP2** (Illus 42) lay up-slope to the south of trench 1 towards the western cliff-line that overlooks the site. Below the sandy topsoil (context SP2001) lay the stones of a field drain (SP2002/2003) that had cut into the raised beach. There were a few lithics (Table 2; Table 15). **SP3** (Illus 43) was dug further to the south, outside the area of common grazing. Well-humified peat (context SP3001) lay directly on top of the beach deposits (SP3002). There were two pieces of flaked stone.

#### 4.2.4 Other sites (Illus 2 & 24)

Site **CD2** lay along the access track into the croft, some 220 m to the north of CD1. It comprises an exposure of lithics along the path of the newly constructed track (Table 15). It also lies on the 20 m beach-line. No excavation was undertaken here, or at sites CD3 and CD4.

Site **CD3** likewise lies on the 20 m raised beach, and it is c 60 m north of CD1. Lithics were exposed at this spot by the bulldozing of an area in conjunction with work on the croft (Table 15). **CD4** comprises a stone-lined ditch, from three sections of which lithics were collected (Table 15). It lies c 100 m north of CD1, slightly below the 20 m raised beach. Nearby, to the southeast, one piece of flaked stone was found when a Christmas tree was planted out in the spring of 2000.



*Illus 17 Camas Daraich: trench 1, square B3*



*Illus 18 Camas Daraich: trench 1, square B3 during excavation, from the S*



*Illus 19 Camas Daraich: trench 1, square B3 at end of excavation, after removal of context 08, from the S*



*Illus 20 Camas Daraich: trench 1, squares B1 & C1 during excavation of the drain (012), from the S*



*Illus 21 Camas Daraich: Test Pit Z*



*Illus 22 Camas Daraich: Test Pit Y*



*Illus 23 Camas Daraich: Test Pit X*



*Illus 24 Camas Daraich: general view of the croft from the S across the other areas of lithic collection (see [Illus 2](#))*