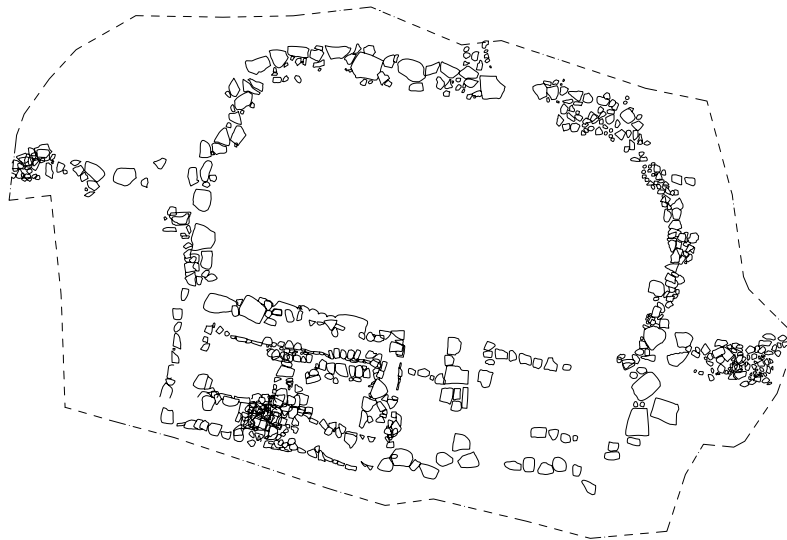


# EXCAVATIONS AT NAUTHÓLL 2007

*Framvinduskýrsla/Interim Report*



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*With a contributions by James Taylor*

Fornleifastofnun Íslands  
FS371-07281  
Reykjavík 2007



Front picture: the excavations at Nauthóll – enclosure and structural remains (stones only)

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## **SUMMARY**

The excavations at Nauthóll were conducted over 10 days during October 2007 following on from an evaluation based on trial trenching (as well as an additional few days for the evaluation) in advance of a building development. The excavations revealed a stone built enclosure attached to a farm structure c. 7.5m by 4.5m. In addition elements of the homefield boundary were excavated and recorded. There were also some indications of an earlier phase of activity prior to the construction of the enclosure and the structure, though these were fragmentary and not well preserved. The structure and enclosure probably date from the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Acknowledgements**

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The author in particular wishes to convey his personal thanks to those who worked on site, both in the evaluation and excavation. These were James Taylor, Freya Sadarangani, Howell Roberts, Uggi Ævarsson, Guðrún Alda Gísladóttir, Ármann Guðmundsson, Ashly Pooley, Mike House, Lisa Yeomans. In addition to Angelos Parigoris who processed the finds.



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## **Nauthóll excavation report**

The excavations at Nauthóll were a continuation of an evaluation that identified a zone of archaeology that needed to be excavated in advance of development (see Appendix 2). Three of the trial trenches revealed archaeology in the southern half of the development area. The remains were interpreted as two boundary walls, including a possible enclosure and a structure. All were visible from the surface, though the enclosure was partially buried, and its full extent was not revealed until the area had been stripped. What follows is a summary of the excavations, with the evaluation report and a finds summary report attached.



**Figure 1 Recording and excavation of the structure [101]**

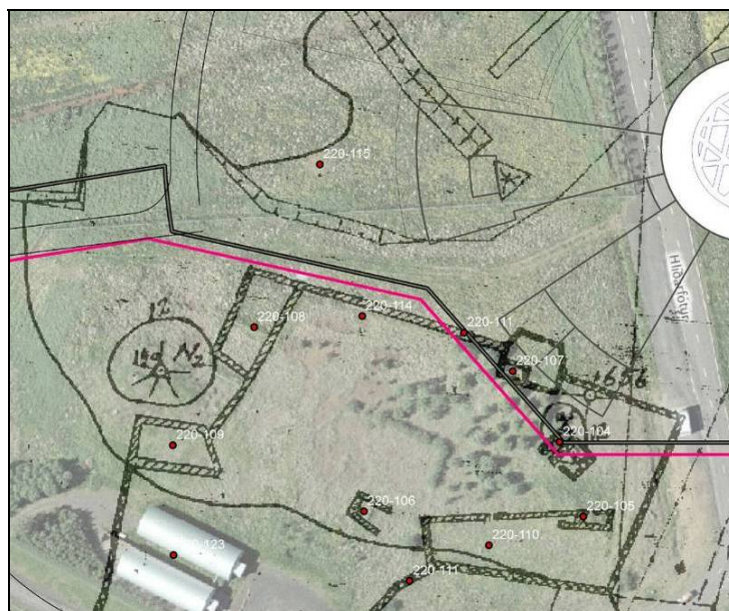
### **Introduction**

The excavations at Nauthóll took place over 10 days between October 15th to 26th, with variable staff numbers due to inclement weather conditions which made working hazardous on occasions (these included Uggi Ævarsson, Guðrún Alda Gísladóttir, Ármann Guðmundsson, Ashly Pooley, Mike House, Lisa Yeomans). An area of 300 sq m was opened up to include the enclosure, part of the boundary and the structure. The aims were to record and excavate the archaeological remains that were to be impacted by the construction of a new building. The project was commissioned and supervised by Minjasafn Reykjavíkur.

The excavation was carried out using the single context planning and recording system primarily used by MOLAS and in England, but adapted for Icelandic archaeology (Spencer 1994; Lucas 2003; <http://www.instarch.is/utgafa/handbok/>). The area was opened by machine and hand-cleaned. Contexts formed the main unit of recording and were excavated stratigraphically, in sequence. Each find, environmental sample and record is related to the unit that it was found within/taken from/being described. The information from the archaeological investigations such as the physical and digital archives reside, at present, at Fornleifastofnun Íslands.

## Background

A desktop assessment was carried out prior to the initial trenching by Minjasafn Reykjavíkur<sup>1</sup>. In this it is indicated that Nauthóll – a farm, depicted on a map from 1903 and 1933, which included the area under excavation, dates to the mid-19th century. It was occupied until shortly before World War II and was abandoned due to where there are some indications of later activity around the site. The 1933 representation of the farm site has been overlaid over an aerial photograph on which it is possible to see earthworks relating to the farm.



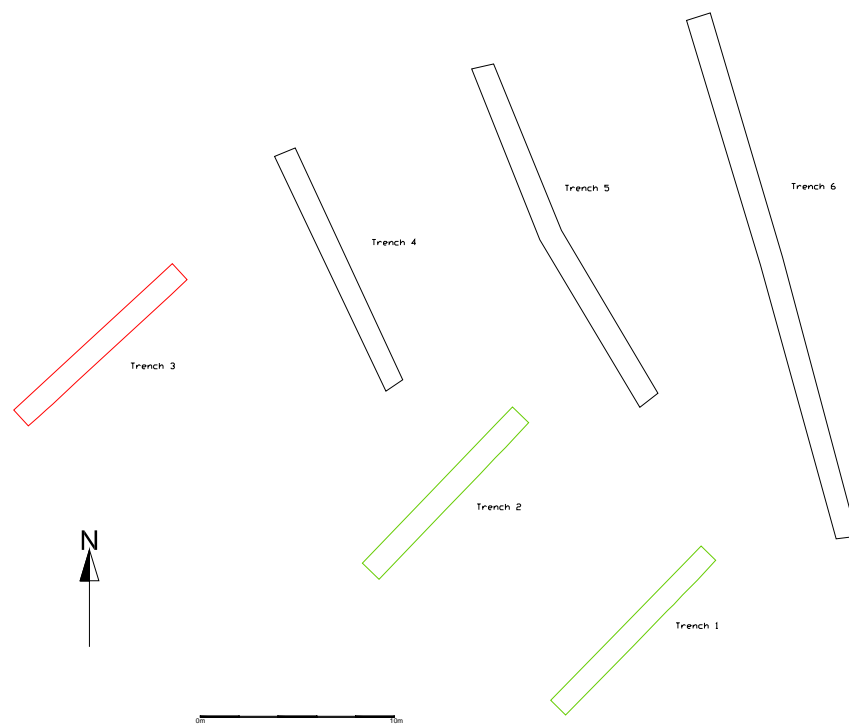
**Figure 2 Nauthóll in 1933, with aerial photograph and development front print. The focus for excavation is centred on 220-107**

<sup>1</sup> Anna Lísía Guðmundsdóttir *Fornleifaskráning lóðar Háskóla Reykjavíkur Öskjuhlíð – Nauthóll*. Minjasafn Reykjavíkur Skýsla nr. 130. Reykjavík 2006.



## Previous work

As has already been outlined, an evaluation took place prior to the excavation which established an area of archaeology which merited further excavation. The 6 trenches that were placed across the development area were placed in order to assess the degrees of preservation and complexity of known archaeology (as earthworks) and to assess the extent of other possible archaeological remains in connection with the farm, or any other earlier activity. The results identified an area across 3 trenches (1-3) in which further work would be needed.



**Figure 3 Evaluation trenches**

The evaluation trenches therefore identified a zone of activity but also demonstrated good levels of preservation and perhaps several phases of construction. It also identified possible remnants of the enclosure in its trenches, both the infield boundary as well as the enclosure identified on the 1933 interpretation. It was therefore decided that further work would focus on the southern area from the evaluation and that the entire structure and enclosure would be opened for further excavation.



**Figure 4 Evaluation trench 2 looking south**

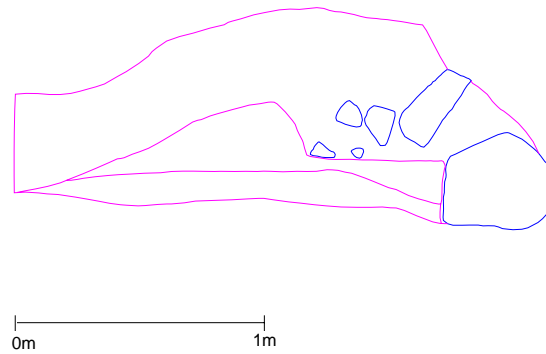
## **Results**

The following narrative is divided into the discrete zones of archaeological interest: the infield boundary; the enclosure; and the structural remains, including the area on its east side.

### *The infield boundary* [103, 104]

The boundary ran approximately east to west, and was divided in 2 by the enclosure: its western part was [104] and its eastern part [103]. The eastern part consisted of entirely stones and no turf or deposits. The western part on the other was a combination of both turf and stone. It was badly damaged on its upper surfaces by vegetation group, particularly from nearby trees. Soil had accumulated on its southern edge, and its northern edge had a stone foundation, one row thick. It stood to a height of approximately 0.3m high from the ground

surface but to a height of c. 0.8m from the actual natural surface. At its maximum extent it was c.1.5m wide. It ran outside and beyond the excavation towards both the east and the west limits of excavation.



**Figure 5 Boundary [104]**



**Figure 6 East facing section across infield boundary [104]**

## Enclosure [102]

The enclosure wall [102] consisted of medium sized stones approximately 1m thick, enclosing an area of c.120 sq m. It had a gate or entrance centrally placed in its northern side, and possibly some gate feature that extended slightly north from it. The stones on the eastern side seem to be smaller than those on the western side, and this may have been a result of robbing from the infield wall. It joined the structure [101] and area east of it [120, 128], and it came later than the infield boundary [104, 103]. The presence of a peat-ash surface (like [18] found in trench 2 during the evaluation) that went underneath the enclosure [102] in places but up against the western and southern edge of the infield boundary [104]. This demonstrated the relationship between these 2 features. However, it is possible that some rebuilding had occurred given the differences between the eastern and western edges of the enclosure.



**Figure 7 Enclosure [102] (blue) and other stone features (grey)**

The build of the western side south of the infield boundary was slightly better constructed than other parts of the enclosure. This may have been a result of preservation. The enclosure's



relationship to the structure [101] was uncertain though the construction of the walls were different – stone and turf with the structure and primarily stone for the enclosure. It is possible that there had been some modification of the infield boundary wall at this point given the alignment of the eastern portion of the wall [103].



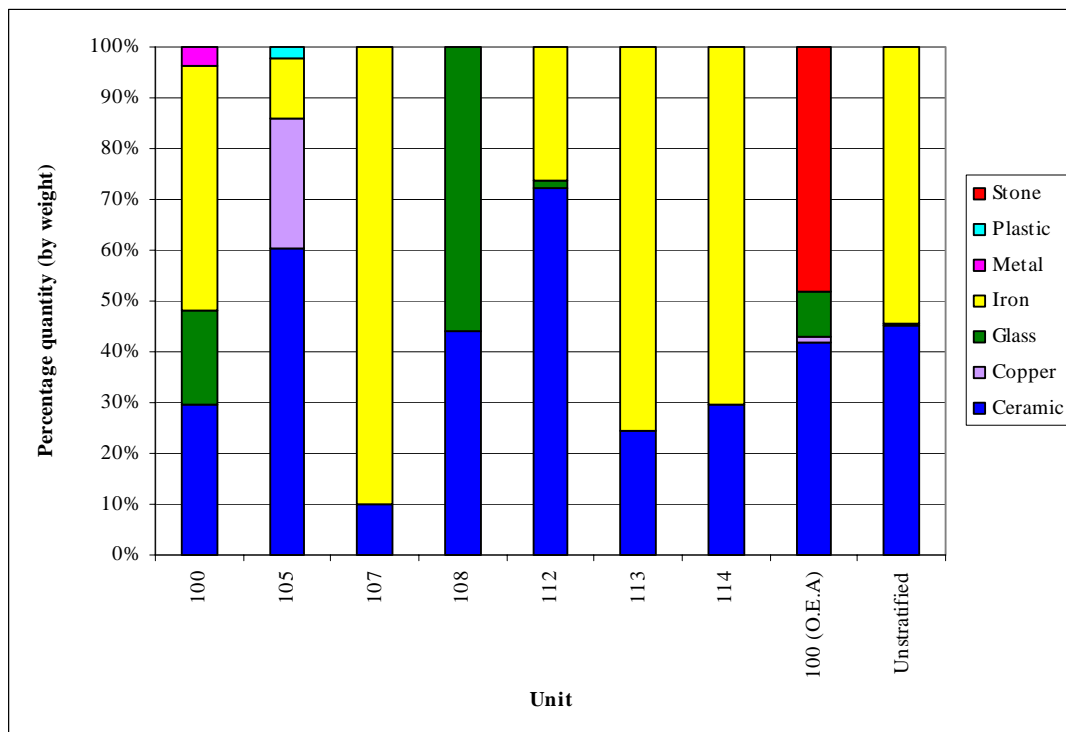
**Figure 8 Enclosure [102] looking south-west; entrance on the far right (centre)**

### *Structure [111, 130, 101, 129]*

The structure that was excavated contained several phases, though much of the earlier evidence was fragmentary: a collapse, modification, usage and construction, as well as an earlier phase with a different form and construction. The discussion below follows this format.

The collapse of the structure consisted of stones, turf [105, 113] as well as modern finds ([105]: a nail, pottery, copper and a plastic button; [113]: iron fittings and pottery. There was also a blocking from collapse of an entrance in the south wall [111]; two successive layers of

stones intermixed with Aeolian deposits [108, 109]; [108] contained pottery and glass. Underneath the collapse inside the structure a layer of Aeolian soil [114] was excavated which abutted a division in the structure; the deposit contained more pottery as well as a large fragment of an iron pot. The finds assemblage from the collapse and disuse phase are indicative of sporadic disturbance and generalised usage of the structure for rubbish dumping. The finds from [100] – the cleaning layer – also relate to this phase and contained a large amount of pottery, iron fittings, glass (window and vessel) as well as other miscellaneous types.



**Figure 9 Finds by percentage weight distribution in each context relating to the collapse phase of [101]**

The structure had a phase of activity which may have been part of its construction but which was identified during the field work as being a modification of a single roomed structure [130]. The modification involved creating a partition and dividing the eastern and western ends of the structure into 2 rooms. There was no obvious walk way between the western room (which had the southern wall entrance [111] and the eastern room, though this may have been disturbed while the structure collapsed. The dividing wall [106] was quite solid and well built consisting of three layers of stone 0.5m thick and 1.5m long and standing up to c.0.6m high, and lying between the northern and southern walls. The lower portion of the wall was

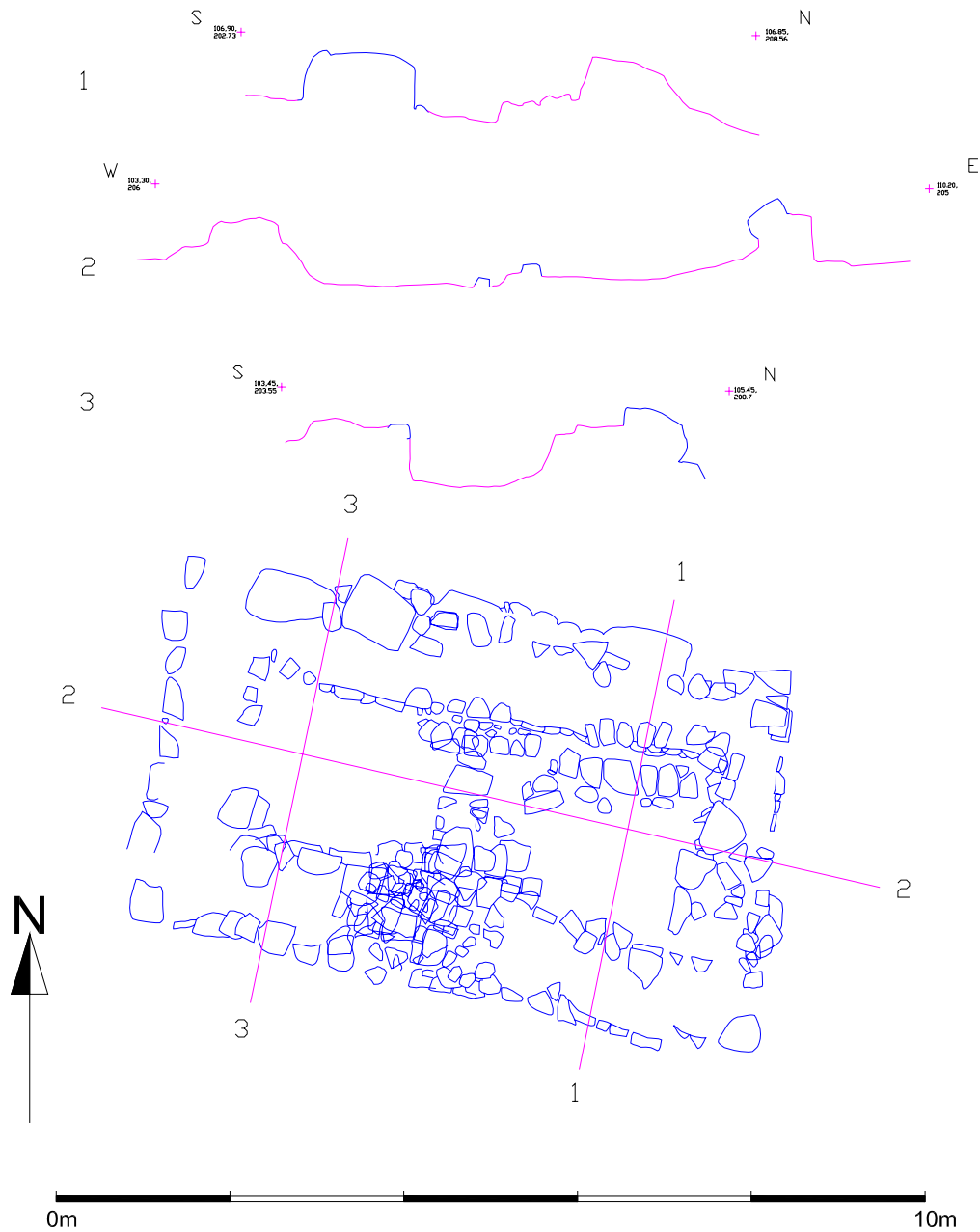
constructed in a diagonal one direction herring bone construction [106] overlay a construction trample [107]. The trample abutted the stone construction [110] on the southern and eastern side of the dividing wall which conceivably paired with the remnant of an earlier stone feature [125]; see later discussion on earlier structure. The combination of this feature and [110] suggest a narrowing of the eastern room of the structure.



**Figure 10** Dividing wall [106] across structure [101]; looking east

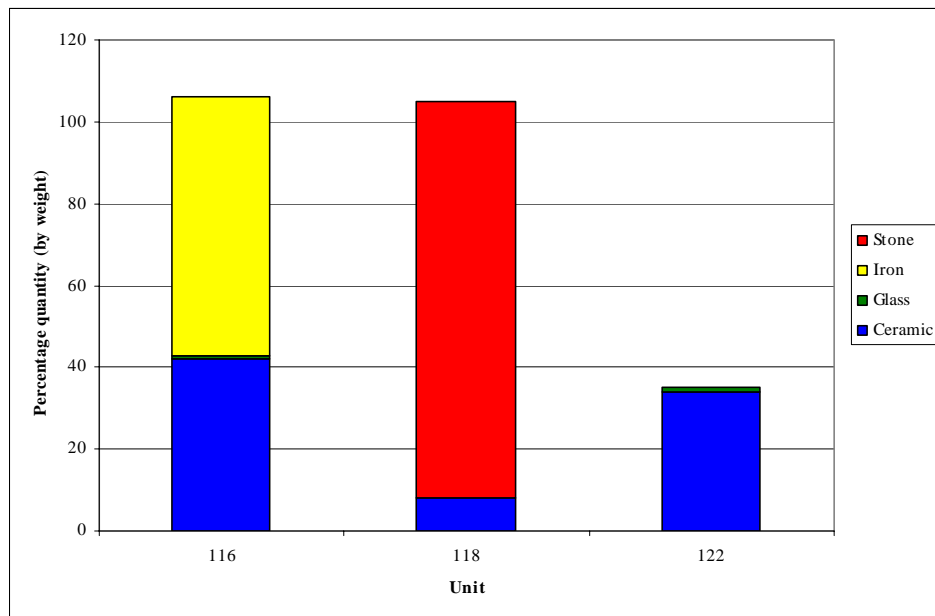
There were no occupation or usage surfaces to speak of inside the structure [101] besides [116] which was a turfy peat ash surface, possibly a levelling layer c. 0.05m thick to support a floor; it was not compacted. Iron and pottery were found within it. The construction, however revealed more information than its occupation. Structure [101] consisted of a southern entrance [112, 111] with a flat stone flooring, stone and turf walls [115, 118, 122, 127]. Of particular note was the northern wall [122] which consisted of an earlier wall phase seen both on the external northern side [124] as well as inside the structure on its southern side [125]. Only the base and remnants of this earlier wall were seen. It is likely though that the northern side of the north wall had a stone foundation to counter subsidence in the bog and meadow

land on which the structure and enclosure were built. The walls stood high c. 0.65m and were c. 1.20m wide, and consisted of stone, turf and peat ash. The finds from the occupation and construction phase were similar to the distributions seen in the abandonment phase of the structure, with iron, pottery as well as glass present.



**Figure 11 Structure [101] and profiles**





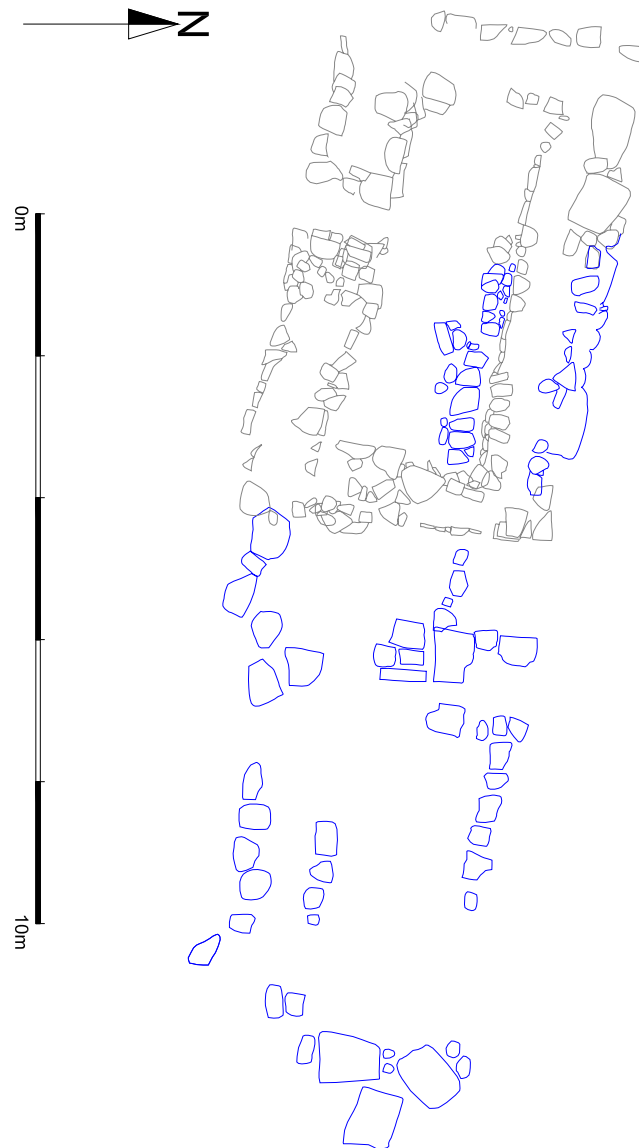
**Figure 12 Proportions of finds by weight in each unit relating to the occupation and construction phase of the structure [101]**

They were several features of the structure which indicated an earlier phase [129]. There are very few finds to verify the potential phasing (only from [123]) and reliance in this interpretation is based entirely on the stratigraphic sequence and the alignments of features both inside and outside the structure. The first indication is the double wall element in the north wall. This is clearly seen in figure 13. As has already been suggested it might be that this was part of a stabilising feature, though it is entirely possible that this was part of an earlier build that was incorporated into the later one.



**Figure 13 Structure [101] with [124] stone row sitting under the wall [122] (left), and [123] on its inside edge (right)**

There was also an inner wall [124], on the inside of [122] which was a probable remnant of an earlier structure or feature. When this is compared to the feature [120=128] east of structure [101] then there is a good argument for an earlier structure or feature which has been robbed and re-used in the construction of [101]. Furthermore, there was a cobbled surface [117] which went under the walls of [101] but which sat within the stones that defined the limits of [120=128]. Figure 14 shows these features together.



**Figure 14 Phase [129] indicated in blue – grey later phase [101]**

There were also some indications of floor-like deposits in the western end of [101] which suggest activity in the vicinity prior to its construction; sealed by the walls. These deposits has been truncated by [119] – a structural cut in the west end – and were observed in section. The first was [121] a mix of peat ash and turf debris, but the second deposit [123] had clear indications of 3-4 lensed black and peat-ash surfaces (see lower part of section in figure 15).



**Figure 15 Looking north through the west wall [126]**

It is unclear whether these elements were part of a structure, or perhaps connected to the enclosure [102, 103, 104]. This has been hampered by later disturbance probably during the construction of [101], though there are clearly indications of earlier activity, probably not long before the construction of [101] (the pottery is the same decorated white ware that was found in later contexts).

## **Conclusions**

Whilst the excavations took place under difficult weather conditions much information about the site has been gathered. The enclosure and structure complex on this outlying farm have

important consequences in terms of understanding the distribution of material goods from Reykjavík. Especially considering that the harbour excavations that have taken place between 2006 – 2007 have large material assemblages with which to compare and contrast societies living in the centre of commerce and those on the outside.

The excavation at Nauthóll also represents a significant step towards understanding the development of farms that were established in the 19th century. The enclosure and farm structure, whilst probably not a domestic occupation, suggest that there was a good deal of alteration and change in farm land organisation perhaps towards the end of the 19th century. This process of change perhaps reflects a greater assertion in society and community within the boundaries of a more affluent society based on the import and export of material goods.

# Appendix 1

## Units

Unit	Area	Type	Group	Description	Date	ID
1	Trench 1	Deposit		Collapse / wall	17/09/2007	FS
2	Trench 1	Deposit		Peat ash dump	17/09/2007	FS
3	Trench 1	Deposit		Stone collapse	17/09/2007	FS
4	Trench 1	Deposit		Stone boundary wall	17/09/2007	FS
5	Trench 1	Deposit		Possible turf collapse	17/09/2007	FS
6	Trench 1	Deposit		Clayey silt	17/09/2007	FS
7	Trench 1	Deposit		Natural	17/09/2007	FS
8	Trench 1	Deposit		Natural	17/09/2007	FS
9	Trench 2	Deposit		Stone wall	17/09/2007	FS
10	Trench 2	Deposit		Stone wall	17/09/2007	FS
11	Trench 2	Deposit		Peah ash	17/09/2007	FS
12	Trench 2	Deposit		Silt rich deposit	17/09/2007	FS
13	Trench 2	Deposit		Possible turf collapse	17/09/2007	FS
14	Trench 2	Deposit		Stone wall	17/09/2007	FS
15	Trench 2	Deposit		Turf collapse	17/09/2007	FS
16	Trench 2	Deposit		Bog deposit - natural	17/09/2007	FS
17	Trench 2	Deposit		Possible disturbed in situ tephra	17/09/2007	FS
18	Trench 2	Deposit		Silt with peat ash	17/09/2007	FS
19	Trench 2	Deposit		Stone boundary wall	17/09/2007	FS
20	Trench 3	Deposit		Stone boundary wall	17/09/2007	FS
21	Trench 3	Deposit		Subsoil	17/09/2007	FS
22	Trench 3	Deposit		Humic clay silt - natural	17/09/2007	FS
23	Trench 4	Deposit		Possible stone boundary wall	17/09/2007	FS
24	Trench 4	Deposit		Subsoil	17/09/2007	FS
25	Trench 4	Deposit		Natural bog deposit	17/09/2007	FS
26	Trench 5	Deposit		Natural bog deposit	17/09/2007	FS
27	Trench 5	Deposit		Subsoil	17/09/2007	FS
28	Trench 6	Deposit		Subsoil	17/09/2007	FS
29	Trench 6	Deposit		Bog deposit - natural	17/09/2007	FS
30	Trench 3	Deposit		Subsoil	17/09/2007	FS
100		Deposit		Cleaning layer	19/10/2007	UÆ
101		Group		Structure	19/10/2007	UÆ
102		Deposit		Enclosure - stone	19/10/2007	UÆ
103		Deposit		Boundary wall - stone	19/10/2007	UÆ
104		Deposit		Boundary wall - stone and turf	22/10/2007	UÆ
105		Deposit		Collapse inside structure	23/10/2007	OA
106		Deposit	130	Wall between rooms in structure	23/10/2007	OA
107		Deposit	130	Turf remnant - block	23/10/2007	GAG
108		Deposit	111	Blocking in SE corner of west half south wall	23/10/2007	UÆ
109		Deposit	111	Blocking in SE corner of west half south wall	23/10/2007	UÆ
110		Deposit	130	Stone lining south side of structure	23/10/2007	GAG
111		Group		Entrance / blocking in west half	23/10/2007	UÆ
112		Deposit	111	3rd spit in entrance / blocking	23/10/2007	UÆ
113		Deposit		Collapse in NW corner	23/10/2007	OA
114		Deposit		Aeolian deposit in E room	23/10/2007	OA
115		Deposit	101	Gable wall at east end	24/10/2007	GAG
116		Deposit	101	Peaty floor surfaces in E room	24/10/2007	UÆ

117	Deposit	129	Gravel silt - cobbles	24/10/2007	GAG
118	Deposit	101	SE wall of structure	25/10/2007	OA
119	Cut	101	Cut into earlier surfaces?	25/10/2007	UÆ
120	Deposit	129	Stones east of [101] - ?earlier structure	25/10/2007	OA
121	Deposit	129	Surfaces under W wall	25/10/2007	OA
122	Deposit	101	N wall of structure	25/10/2007	GAG
123	Deposit	129	Surfaces in section W end	25/10/2007	UÆ
124	Deposit		Earlier wall under [122] N	25/10/2007	OA
125	Deposit		Earlier wall under [122] inside edge	25/10/2007	OA
126	Deposit		W wall of structure - over [121]	25/10/2007	OA
127	Deposit		S (W part) wall of structure	25/10/2007	OA
128	Deposit	129	Stone construction east of structure	25/10/2007	OA
129	Group		Earlier activity / structure	19/12/2007	OA
130	Group		Modification - internal re-arrangement	19/12/2007	OA

**NB** Numbers 1-30 were used for the evaluation and 100-130 used for the excavation.

### **Finds register**

<b>Finds no.</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Grid</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Weight (g)</b>	<b>Count</b>
1		100		Horseshoe	Iron	216	2
2		100		Pot	Iron	263	4
3		100		Spoon	Iron	32	1
4		100		Unidentified	Iron	205	2
5		100		Nail	Iron	38	4
6		100		Fittings	Iron	284	11
7		100		Fittings	Iron	222	2
8		100		Fitting	Iron	147	1
9		100		Unidentified	Iron	410	1
10		100		Unidentified	Iron	21	1
11		105		Nail	Iron	5	1
12		107		Pot	Iron	8	1
13		107		Nails	Iron	1	2
14		112		Nail	Iron	18	1
15		113		Fittings	Iron	77	4
16		114		Pot	Iron	165	1
17		116		Pot	Iron	63	1
18		123		Pot	Iron	43	1
19		Unstratified		Fitting	Iron	76	1
20		100		Pottery	Ceramic	15	1
21		100		Pottery	Ceramic	3	1
22		100		Pottery	Ceramic	10	1
23		100		Pottery	Ceramic	1	2
24		100		Pottery	Ceramic	11	3
25		100		Pottery	Ceramic	14	4
26		100		Pottery	Ceramic	13	1
27		100		Pottery	Ceramic	9	1
28		100		Pottery	Ceramic	10	1
29		100		Pottery	Ceramic	9	2
30		100		Pottery	Ceramic	6	1
31		100		Pottery	Ceramic	29	5

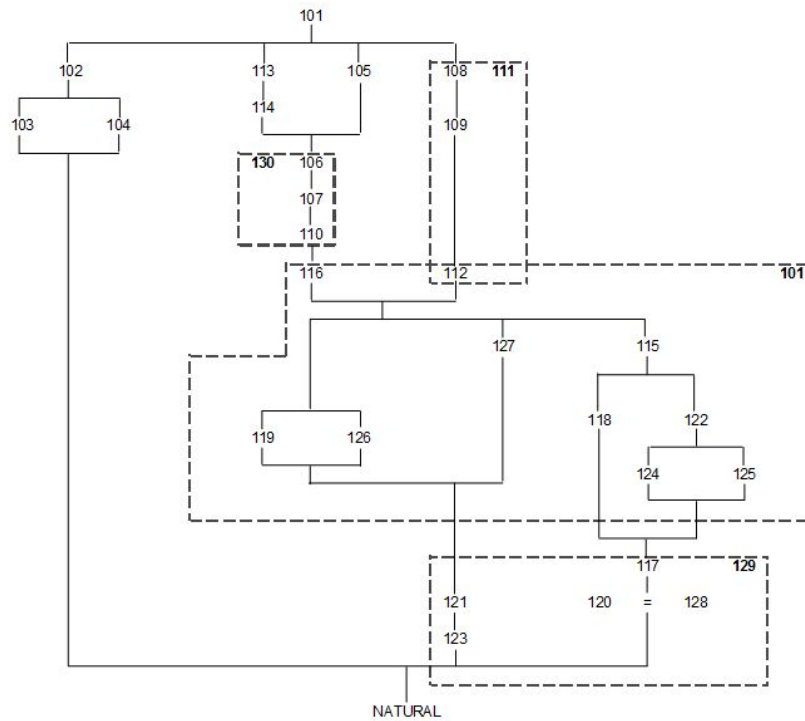
32	100	Pottery	Ceramic	11	1
33	100	Pottery	Ceramic	32	3
34	100	Pottery	Ceramic	27	4
35	100	Pottery	Ceramic	8	1
36	100	Pottery	Ceramic	6	2
37	100	Pottery	Ceramic	8	2
38	100	Pottery	Ceramic	16	3
39	100	Pottery	Ceramic	5	4
40	100	Pottery	Ceramic	29	6
41	100	Pottery	Ceramic	42	12
42	100	Pottery	Ceramic	7	2
43	100	Pottery	Ceramic	1	2
44	100	Pottery	Ceramic	8	1
45	100	Pottery	Ceramic	163	12
46	100	Pottery	Ceramic	552	118
47	100	Pottery	Ceramic	4	1
48	100	Pottery	Ceramic	15	1
49	100	Pottery	Ceramic	6	1
50	100	Pottery	Ceramic	12	1
51	100	Pottery	Ceramic	9	1
52	100	Pottery	Ceramic	7	1
53	100	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
54	100	Pottery	Ceramic	3	1
55	100	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
56	100	Pottery	Ceramic	5	1
57	100	Pottery	Ceramic	3	1
58	100	Pottery	Ceramic	3	1
59	100	Pottery	Ceramic	4	1
60	100	Pottery	Ceramic	5	1
61	100	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
62	100	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
63	100 (O.E.A)	Pottery	Ceramic	5	1
64	100 (O.E.A)	Pottery	Ceramic	7	1
65	100 (O.E.A)	Pottery	Ceramic	6	1
66	100 (O.E.A)	Pottery	Ceramic	16	6
67	100 (O.E.A)	Pottery	Ceramic	17	6
68	100 (O.E.A)	Pottery	Ceramic	47	3
69	100 (O.E.A)	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
70	105	Pottery	Ceramic	25	6
71	105	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
72	107	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
73	108	Pottery	Ceramic	6	4
74	108	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
75	108	Pottery	Ceramic	5	2
76	108	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1

77	108	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
78	108	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
79	112	Pottery	Ceramic	16	3
80	112	Pottery	Ceramic	18	1
81	112	Pottery	Ceramic	5	5
82	112	Pottery	Ceramic	1	3
83	112	Pottery	Ceramic	4	1
84	112	Pottery	Ceramic	4	1
85	112	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
86	113	Pottery	Ceramic	21	9
87	113	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
88	113	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
89	113	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
90	113	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
91	114	Pottery	Ceramic	11	2
92	114	Pottery	Ceramic	15	1
93	114	Pottery	Ceramic	3	1
94	114	Pottery	Ceramic	16	2
95	114	Pottery	Ceramic	25	11
96	116	Pottery	Ceramic	16	6
97	116	Pottery	Ceramic	11	2
98	116	Pottery	Ceramic	10	1
99	116	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
100	116	Pottery	Ceramic	3	1
101	116	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
102	118	Pottery	Ceramic	8	6
103	122	Pottery	Ceramic	17	1
104	122	Pottery	Ceramic	9	1
105	122	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
106	122	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
107	122	Pottery	Ceramic	6	1
108	123	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
109	123	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
110	123	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
111	123	Pottery	Ceramic	11	7
112	Unstratified	Pottery	Ceramic	32	1
113	Unstratified	Pottery	Ceramic	16	1
114	Unstratified	Pottery	Ceramic	8	2
115	Unstratified	Pottery	Ceramic	6	1
116	Unstratified	Pottery	Ceramic	1	1
117	100	Light Bulb	Glass	1	1
118	100	Glass Vessel	Glass	43	3
119	100	Bottle	Glass	71	1
120	100	Bottle	Glass	54	1
121	100	Bottle	Glass	12	1
122	100	Bottle	Glass	193	3
123	100	Bottle	Glass	44	1
124	100	Glass Vessel	Glass	133	4
125	100		Glass	7	3
126	100	Glass Vessel	Glass	64	1
127	100	Glass Vessel	Glass	42	4



128	100	Glass Vessel	Glass	9	3
129	100	Glass Vessel	Glass	3	1
130	100	Glass Vessel	Glass	13	1
131	100	Glass Vessel	Glass	1	1
132	100	Glass Vessel	Glass	1	1
133	100	Glass Vessel	Glass	1	1
134	100	Glass Vessel	Glass	7	1
135	100	Glass Vessel	Glass	1	1
136	100 (O.E.A)	---	Glass	8	2
137	100 (O.E.A)	---	Glass	1	1
138	100 (O.E.A)	Glass Vessel	Glass	11	1
139	112	Window Glass	Glass	1	1
140	108	Glass Vessel	Glass	19	1
141	116	Glass Vessel	Glass	1	1
142	122	Glass Vessel	Glass	1	1
143	Unstratified	Glass Vessel	Glass	1	1
144	100	---	Metal	134	1
145	100 (O.E.A)	Whetstone	Stone	114	1
146	100 (O.E.A)	Bead	Glass	1	1
147	100 (O.E.A)	Coin	Copper	3	1
148	105	Alloy	Copper	11	1
149	105	Button	Plastic	1	1
150	118	Whetstone	Stone	97	1

## Matrix





## **Appendix 2**

### **Archaeological Evaluation at Nauthóll, Reykjavik. Trench Summary.**

*By James Taylor*

#### **Introduction**

Fornleifastofnun Íslands carried out an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) on land to the south-western side of the City Airport in Reykjavik between the 13<sup>st</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> September 2007. This work was carried out on behalf of the City Museum, in an effort to assess the impact of a proposed development by Reykjavik University upon any archaeology in an area where the farm complex of Nauthóll was known to have been located. Furthermore the work was designed to evaluate the limits and degree of preservation of any archaeological remains, which may have been present.

Targeted trial trenching of some of the visible earthworks at the site revealed archaeological remains to the west of the development area. All of the remains encountered upon this site appeared to represent a phases activity dating to the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century - this corresponds well to the documented abandonment of the farm at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Most of the significant archaeology however, was situated just outside of the proposed development area, with, only a few minor boundaries and dump deposits extending within the area. This archaeological impact of the proposed development is considered to be minimal.

Further speculative trenching to the east of the visible earthworks revealed nothing of obvious archaeological significance. Natural waterlogged organic peat deposits were mostly identified, which were almost certainly related to Vatnsmýri, the large bog, upon which the city airport was built to the immediate west of the site. Little more can be said of these deposits as high groundwater levels significantly obscured their observation.

The following text, is simply a trench summary.

#### **Aims and methodology**

No previous archaeological investigation has been undertaken at the site, and little is known about its archaeological development. As such, the aims of this project were primarily to assess the nature, extent and preservation of archaeological deposits within the farm-complex at Nauthóll.

In order to address this concern a trial trenching methodology was adopted. This was supplemented by measured survey, and a measured graphic record.

A grid system was established using known points provided by the developer (based on the local grid system). Areas targeted for study were staked out using a total station theodolite. Turf, topsoil, and modern overburden were all removed by machine under archaeological supervision. All archaeological deposits thus revealed were also excavated by hand. Written, and drawn records of all archaeological deposits were completed using pro-forma recording

systems developed by Fornleifastofnun Íslands, and supplemented by photography as appropriate. All finds were recovered and located by single context.

In total, 6 trial trenches were excavated;

Trenches 1 to 3 were orientated broadly northeast-southwest targeting the visible earthworks, and extending slightly outside the development area in order to place any archaeology found into the context of the nearby farm complex.

Trenches 4 to 6 were all orientated on a broadly northwest-southeast alignment and were placed to the north and east of the development area, where no visible archaeology was present. This was a largely speculative measure establish whether the archaeology on the site extended beyond the visible limits of the earthworks.

## **Results**

Three of the trenches yielded archaeological deposits with a good degree of preservation, immediately below the turf surface. Intrusive excavation was therefore kept to a minimum in order to preserve the deposits *in situ* pending the formation of a broader mitigation programme, should this prove necessary. Archaeological descriptions of the trenches are outlined below:

### *Trench 1*

Trench 1 was oriented northeast-southwest and located on the northwestern edge of the visible remains. It measured 11.10m long by 1.10m wide.

The underlying natural in this trench was a sterile mid yellow brown slightly clay silt, [008], at a level 11.30m Above Sea Level (ASL). This deposit was also seen in the northwestern end of the trench as [006], [007], although here the natural deposits were seen to get slightly paler and greyer with depth (at a height of 10.95m ASL).

In the northeasternmost end of the trench the natural was sealed by 1.70m of light orange brown, slightly clay silt with grey, brown and dark bluish tephra stripes, [005], c.0.18m deep. This deposit remains ambiguous in its interpretation, since it could have been a highly deflated collapsed turf wall, however it could equally be a feature of localised cryoturbation. The absence of any obvious structure and lack of finds make the latter more likely, but the former cannot be ruled out because it's proximity to the adjacent boundary structures mentioned below.

Bisecting the trench on a northwest-southeast alignment was a 2.20m wide linear stone structure, c.0.42 high, [004]. The structure was almost certainly a land boundary consisting of two fair faces along its eastern and western limits, which were in-filled with loose mortarless rocks. The boundary appeared to be visible in the ground as an earthwork extending mainly to the north side of the trench. Some collapse was noted to the west of the boundary, [003], probably from the western fair face.

Abutting the wall on its western side was a 4.30m wide and 0.20m band of mid pinkish-brown peat ash-rich silt, containing frequent charcoal flecks (the surface of which was at 11.52m

ASL). This probably represented ephemeral dumping of midden material against the outer boundaries of the farm complex.

The very southwestern end of the trench was marked by a, probably linear (northwest-southeast aligned), deflated stone structure, [001]. However this was barely visible as an earthwork and was essentially a cluster of stones at the end of the trench. It seems likely that this was simply a very deflated stone boundary.

### *Trench 2*

Trench 2 was oriented northeast-southwest and located on the east side of the visible remains, also straddling the boundary of the development impact area. It measured 11.20m long by 1.20m wide.

The lowest deposit in this trench was a natural light-mid grey brown slightly humic clay silt, [016], similar to the bog deposits identified elsewhere on the site, at a height of 11.08m ASL.

Sealing the natural at the western end of the trench was a dark brown, slightly humic, slightly clay silt, [018]. This was probably subsoil, however it did contain frequent pinkish peat-ash and charcoal flecking and moderate amount of quite late pottery and glass. This midden dumping within the subsoil (and topsoil) formed the foundation at the very northeastern end of the trench for northwest-southeast orientated stone boundary wall, [019]. This boundary was c.0.70m wide and orientated northwest-southeast, consisting of an irregular line of large stones, with no obvious turf element.

Approximately 6.5m to the west of this boundary was another narrow boundary, [014], (1.00m wide) which consisted of a fair southwestern face set into a turf wall. The turf was all mid reddish brown with ephemeral darker grey stripes, and survived very poorly to a height of no more than 0.15m.

This latter boundary was sealing a thin deposit of mixed slightly clay silt, which appeared to be turf collapse, including some lensed peatash with charcoal flecking, [013] and [015]. The deposit which extended to the west of the boundary wall, which was the more sterile of the two, also appeared to run under the main feature of the trench, a large turf and stone walled outbuilding, clearly visible as an earthwork prior to excavation. Similarly a thin band of peatash, [011], ran under the base of the wall at a height of 11.45m ASL.

Only the eastern face of this structure was actually excavated, and two possible builds were noted, the lower of these, [010], was a single course of small rocks at the base of the structure, c.0.20m long. These were separated from the upper course, [009], by c.0.30m of bland reddish brown silt. The upper course itself was morphologically very different, consisting of two courses of much larger rocks (upto 0.30m diameter), standing to a height of c.0.80m (at 12.22m ASL).

### *Trench 3*

Trench 3 was oriented northeast-southwest and located on the northernmost series of visible earthworks in the area. It measured 11.10m long by 1.10m wide.

The underlying natural in the trench was a mid grey brown, slightly humic, clay silt, [022], identified at a height of c.10.79m ASL. This almost certainly represented a bog deposit, probably related to nearby Vatnsmýri. This was sealed by 0.20-0.30m of sterile mid reddish brown silt subsoil, [021] and [030], which contained some lighter banding, probably a result of cryoturbation.

At the southwestern end of the trench was a very obvious field boundary, [020]. This mostly consisted of an eastern fair-face, comprising of very large angular boulders, upto 0.80m wide and at least 0.65m high. These stones may have retained or been supported by a turf element, however the actual presence of turf was not detected, as there was no obvious organic and tephra striping. This boundary was clearly visible extending both to the northwest and to the southeast (at least as far as the turf and stone outbuilding identified in Trench 2) and can be seen on maps and aerial photos of the site. Like some of the archaeology in Trenches 1 and 2, this structure was actually outside of the developmental impact zone. No obvious archaeological material was identified inside this trench to the east of the boundary, which might be affected by the development.

#### *Trench 4*

This trench was 12m long by 1.1m wide and orientated broadly northwest-southeast.

It contained no obvious archaeology, simply natural black humic 'bog deposits', [025], at a height of 10.64m ASL. These were sealed by subsoil, [024] and finally topsoil.

A cluster of stones was identified just outside of the southeastern end of the trench which may well be associated with one the boundaries in Trench 2.

#### *Trench 5*

This trench was 19m long by 1.1m wide and orientated broadly northwest-southeast.

It contained no obvious archaeology, simply natural black humic 'bog deposits', [025], at a height of 10.61m ASL. These were sealed by subsoil, [024] and finally topsoil.

#### *Trench 6*

This trench was 33m long by 1.1m wide and orientated broadly northwest-southeast.

It contained no obvious archaeology, simply natural grey-black humic 'bog deposits', [029], at a height of 10.79m ASL. These were sealed by subsoil, [024] and finally topsoil.