

Housepit 110 Excavation Results

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Housepit Location and Description

Housepit 110 is located on the south side of Keatley Creek on the lowest terrace on the edge of a small promontory overlooking the creek bed (Vol. III, Preface, **Fig. 1**). Housepit 110 measures approximately 6 m north-south by 5.5 m east-west, and its surficial rim to basin depth is about 0.75 m. Surficially, the house depression is circular in plan, and has a saucer-shaped cross-section with gently sloping walls. It is situated on slightly sloping terrain, and has slight lipping along the western sections of its rim. Evidence for pot hunting was not observed.

Test Trench Excavation Results

Two test excavation units measuring 2.0 m north-south by 0.5 m east-west were dug into the southern half of the housepit. The northern unit was designated Square A and the southern one Square B. Together they formed a test trench 4.0 m north-south by 0.5 m east-west that extended from the center of the house to its southern rim (**Fig. 1**). Although the stratigraphy represented in this housepit is fairly complex, at least four occupation episodes (three relate to the house structure, the fourth is a probable post-abandonment open encampment over the depression area) have been provisionally identified. The average depth of cultural deposits within the house extended to about 40 cm below surface (BS), and six distinct strata were identified (**Fig. 1**).

Stratigraphy

Stratum I

Stratum I is a moderately compact, medium gray brown (10 YR 3/2) sandy silt with 10% granules and 15% pebbles. It occupies the upper 8 cm of both excavation squares and represents a mixture of post-occupational aeolian and slopewash deposits with what appears to be materials related to a non-house use (i.e., an open encampment) within the house depression and possibly some materials related to underlying Strata II and III. Recovered cultural materials were surprisingly dense for an uppermost stratum, and include about 60 lithic waste flakes; a white chalcedony drill bit from Square B; and several pieces of partially burnt and calcined mammal bone.

A possible, small, short-term hearth (no feature number) was identified in the northwest corner of Square A at a depth of about 5–6 cm BS. The horizontal extent of this possible feature is not known, as only the southeastern section of it was exposed. It was indicated by a thin lens (1 cm thick) of fire-reddened matrix associated with four pieces of calcined bone, five flakes, and five rocks which roughly surrounded it. It may have been a small cooking fire associated with the non-house open occupation represented in this stratum.

Stratum II

Stratum II is a fairly compact, light gray brown (10 YR 3/3) sandy silt with 20% granules, 30% pebbles, and 10% cobbles. This stratum was represented throughout Square B and only the very southern end of Square A between about 8 cm and 15 cm BS. It is interpreted to represent a very thin roof deposit associated with the most recent (third?) major occupation

horizon associated with the house. Recovered cultural materials include: a large basally-notched Plateau projectile point at 85 cm north, 8 cm east, 12 cm BS; a scraper at 143 cm north, 6 cm east, 10 cm BS; approximately 150 lithic waste flakes of various materials; and about 100 mammal bone fragments (10% burnt).

Stratum III

Stratum III is a fairly compact, dark gray brown (10 YR 3/1) sandy silt with about 10% granules, 10% cobbles, and 10% pebbles. It occupies both excavation squares and lay between about 15 cm and 30 cm BS in Square B, and from 8 to 25 cm BS in Square A. It represents floor deposits associated with the most recent (third?) major occupation episode within the housepit deposits. A large quantity of cultural materials was recovered from this stratum, most of which were recovered from between about 20–30 cm BS. They include: two medium sized Plateau horizon projectile points; the medial section of a medium-sized triangular biface which is also probably a portion of a Plateau horizon point; a drill made from a resharpened Plateau horizon point; a unifacial graving tool; a large convex-edged endscraper; three bone tools; about 500 lithic waste flakes; hundreds of pieces of fragmented mammal bone; several pieces of fire cracked rock (FCR), and; some scattered charcoal. No features were identified.

Of interest is a resharpened “early Nesikep” period projectile point that was recovered from Square B at 45 cm north, 43 cm east, and 30 cm BS. This point style is currently believed to date to between about 7,000 and 6,000 BP (Stryd and Rousseau 1996). This point is clearly out of temporal context, and at least two explanations for its presence within this Plateau horizon context

can be offered: (1) it was picked up from another site and brought into the house during the Plateau horizon, or; (2) there is an early Nesikep period component located in the area of the pithouse which was intersected during the construction of the house and became incorporated within Stratum III. Of the two scenerios, the first seems more probable.

Stratum IV

Stratum IV is a moderately compact, light gray brown (10 YR 3/3) sandy silt with about 5% granules, 10% pebbles, and 5% cobbles. It was encountered in both excavation squares, and lay between about 25–33 cm BS in Square A, and from about 30–38 cm BS in most of Square B with exception of Feature 2, a large pit which contained Stratum IV deposits to a depth of about 70 cm BS (see below). Stratum IV represents floor deposits relating to the second(?) major occupation of the house. Stratum IV yielded a relatively high density of cultural materials, but it was not as rich as Stratum III above. Materials include: a nearly complete, medium-sized corner-notched Plateau horizon projectile point; a partial corner-notched Plateau horizon point; two large bifaces; a cylindrical olivine hammerstone; a polished siltstone item; the tang from a corner-notched point; a possible bone artifact fragment; a piece of obsidian; about 200 flakes; several pieces of FCR; scattered charcoal, and; about 150 mammal and fish bone fragments.

Two features were identified in association with Stratum IV; a large hearth (Feature 1) and a medium-sized pit (Feature 2) (**Figs. 2 and 3**). Feature 1 is a major hearth feature (possibly main hearth) identified in the northern end of Square A, which intersected the southwestern quarter(?) of the hearth. It is estimated to be about 75 cm in diameter and is about 10 cm

thick along the western wall and 20 cm thick along the eastern wall. The lower one-third or so of the feature consists of fire-reddened soil, the upper two-thirds (designated Stratum IVa) is a mottled orange brown/medium brown/black (10 YR 4/6), sandy ashy silt containing scattered charcoal, several pieces of FCR, pieces of calcined mammal bone, a small leaf-shaped biface, and a few lithic waste flakes.

Feature 2 is a medium-sized, fairly deep pit that has a circular plan outline and a basin-shaped cross-section. It measures about 60 cm in diameter, and extends into sterile deposits about 40 cm. Although its function is not clear, its size, shape, and location suggest that it may have been a storage pit—perhaps for small quantities of food. After its use had expired, the pit was intentionally infilled with Stratum IV deposits and two fairly large boulders. The materials recovered from the bottom half of the pit are suggestive of typical floor-type refuse. These included: most of a large Plateau horizon corner-notched point found at the bottom of the pit, several flakes, a few pieces of bone, and some scattered bits of charcoal.

Stratum V

Stratum V is a fairly compact, somewhat mottled, gray black (10 YR 3/1) sandy silt with 10% granules and 10% pebbles. It was encountered within the northern four-fifths of Square A between about 33 cm and 50 cm BS, and represents a portion of the floor deposits associated with the initial occupation of the house (see also summary section below). As with the other floor deposits above, this stratum contained a fairly high incidence of cultural materials. These included: the tip of an antler tine pressure flaker, a

large bifacial flake tool, a small white chalcedony biface fragment, about 50 flakes, and several complete and fragmented mammal bones (deer).

Of great interest in Stratum V is the presence of a partially burnt, medium-sized canid (probably dog) in the north-central part of Square A between about 40 cm and 50 cm BS. It was designated as Feature 3, and is thought to represent an intentional dog cremation/burial (**Fig. 4**). Almost all of the individual was exposed and removed with exception of some of the lower vertebra. Most of the remains were in fair to poor condition, and most of the elements were articulated or semi-articulated, indicating that it had been burnt *in situ*. The cremation/burial extended over an area measuring about 50 cm diameter.

Stratum VI

Stratum VI is a compact, light gray (10 YR 5/3) sandy clayey silt with 5% granules, 5% pebbles, and 5% pebbles. It occurs only within Square B, and represents a mixture of sterile glacial till and Stratum V deposits which probably relate to the excavation of the large pit (Feature 2) encountered in Square B.

Excavation Summary and Conclusions

Test trench excavations within HP 110 revealed stratigraphy that suggests at least four separate occupation episodes: three are associated with the occupation of the house depression; the fourth and final occupation may be a non-house open encampment within and possibly surrounding the house depression.

The initial house occupation, represented by Stratum V, contained a partially cremated canid burial. This stratum was not encountered in Square

B, and it may be that deposits associated with this occupation in this part of the floor were removed and displaced outside the house onto the rim during the second occupation (represented by Stratum IV). The temporal affiliation of the initial Stratum V occupation is not known, although it probably relates to the initial part of the Plateau horizon as is indicated for the two following occupations.

The second occupation of the house is represented by Stratum IV. A hearth (Feature 1) and a medium-sized pit (Feature 2) were associated with it in the tested area. The density of cultural materials and thickness of deposits suggest that the dwelling was occupied for a reasonable amount of time during the initial part of the Plateau horizon (ca. 2,400–1,600 BP).

The second and third occupations are not separated by any distinguishable roof deposits. However, the roof may be very thin in the tested area, or perhaps a non-earth roof (i.e., such as a matlodge roof) may have been erected over the floor during the second (Stratum IV) occupation.

The third occupation of the house depression, represented by Stratum III, was very rich in cultural materials and the recovery of several projectile points indicate that it also dates to the initial half of the Plateau horizon. A thin roof deposit (Stratum II) was identified above this occupation in Square B.

The provisional fourth and final occupation was encountered in the upper 8 cm of the house (Stratum I), and it is associated with a possible short-term hearth and a moderate amount of cultural materials. It may be a post-abandonment encampment extending within and possibly beyond the housepit confines. The relative age of this final occupation episode is not known.

Because the house did not contain any Kamloops horizon occupations, and because it is fairly complex, it was not subjected to further detailed investigations during this study. Nevertheless, the results again support the observation that Plateau horizon housepits/dwellings are often quite small, and some indicate having been intensively occupied for fairly long durations.

References

Stryd Arnoud and Michael Rousseau

- 1996 The Early Prehistory of the Mid Fraser-Thompson River Area of British Columbia. In Roy Carlson and L. Dalla Bona (Eds.), *Early Human Occupation in British Columbia*, pp. 177-204. University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver.

Figures

- Figure 1: Housepit 110 west wall profile.
Figure 2: Plan and profile views of Feature 1, a hearth.
Figure 3: Plan and profile views of Feature 2, a pit.
Figure 4: Plan view of Feature 3, the cremation burial of a canid.

Figure 1. Housepit 110 west wall profile.

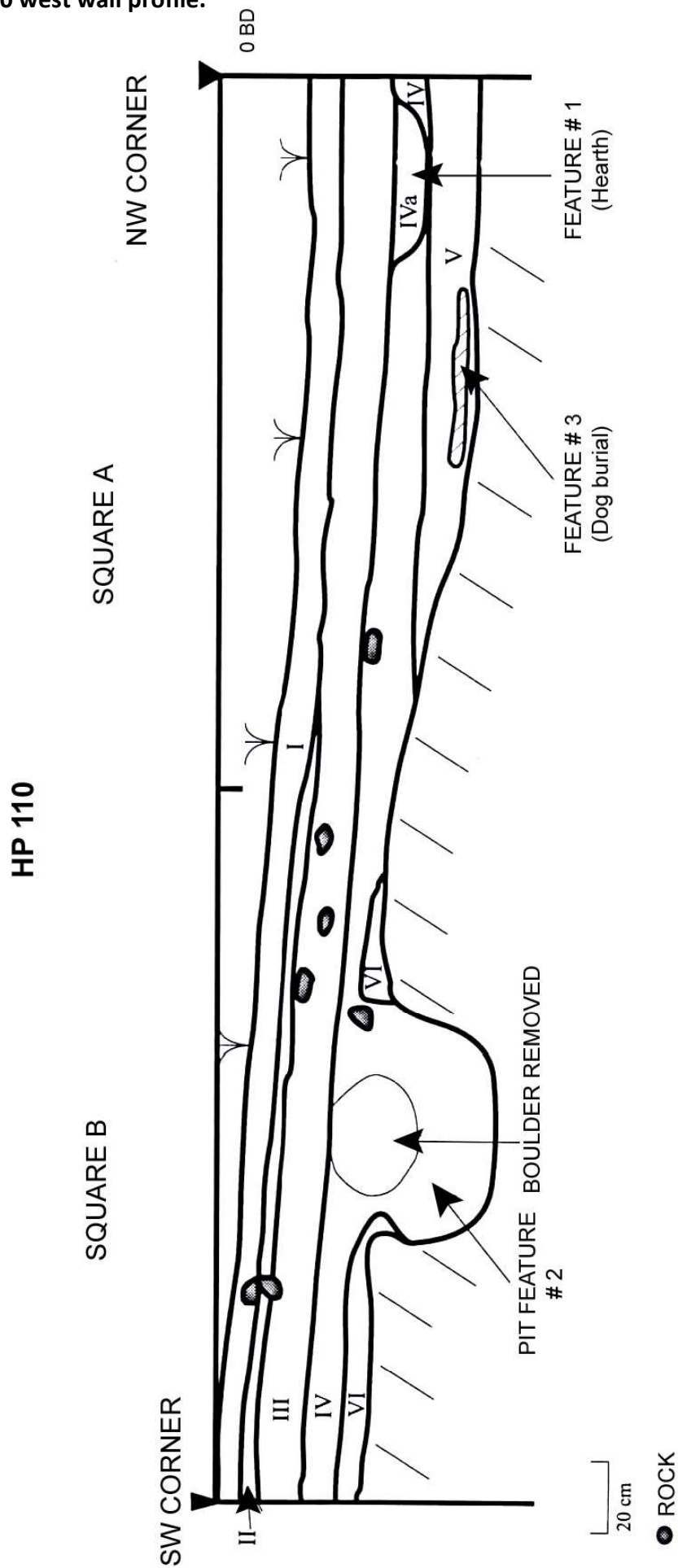


Figure 2. Plan and profile views of Feature 1, a hearth.

HP 110

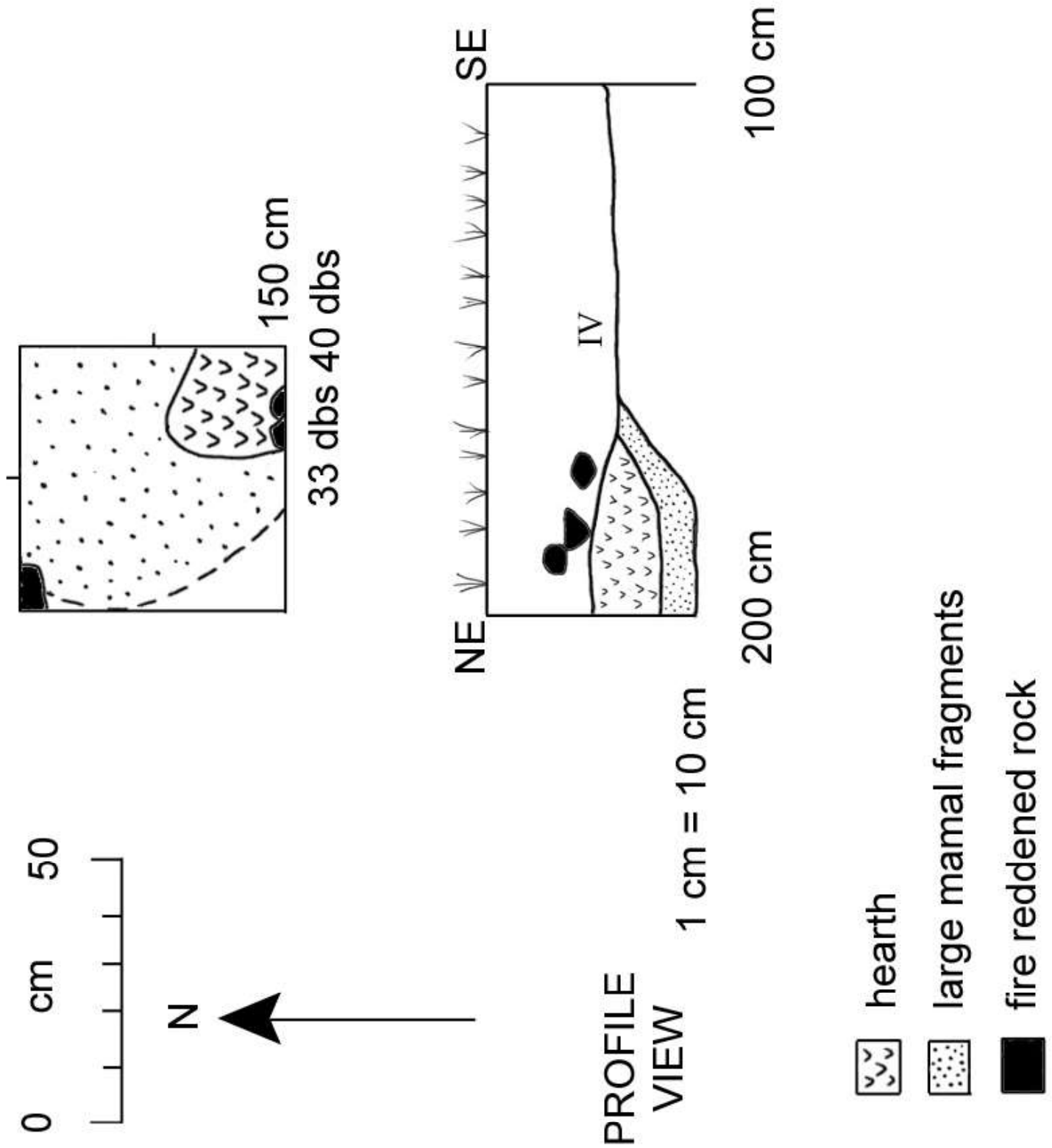


Figure 3. Plan and profile views of Feature 2, a pit.

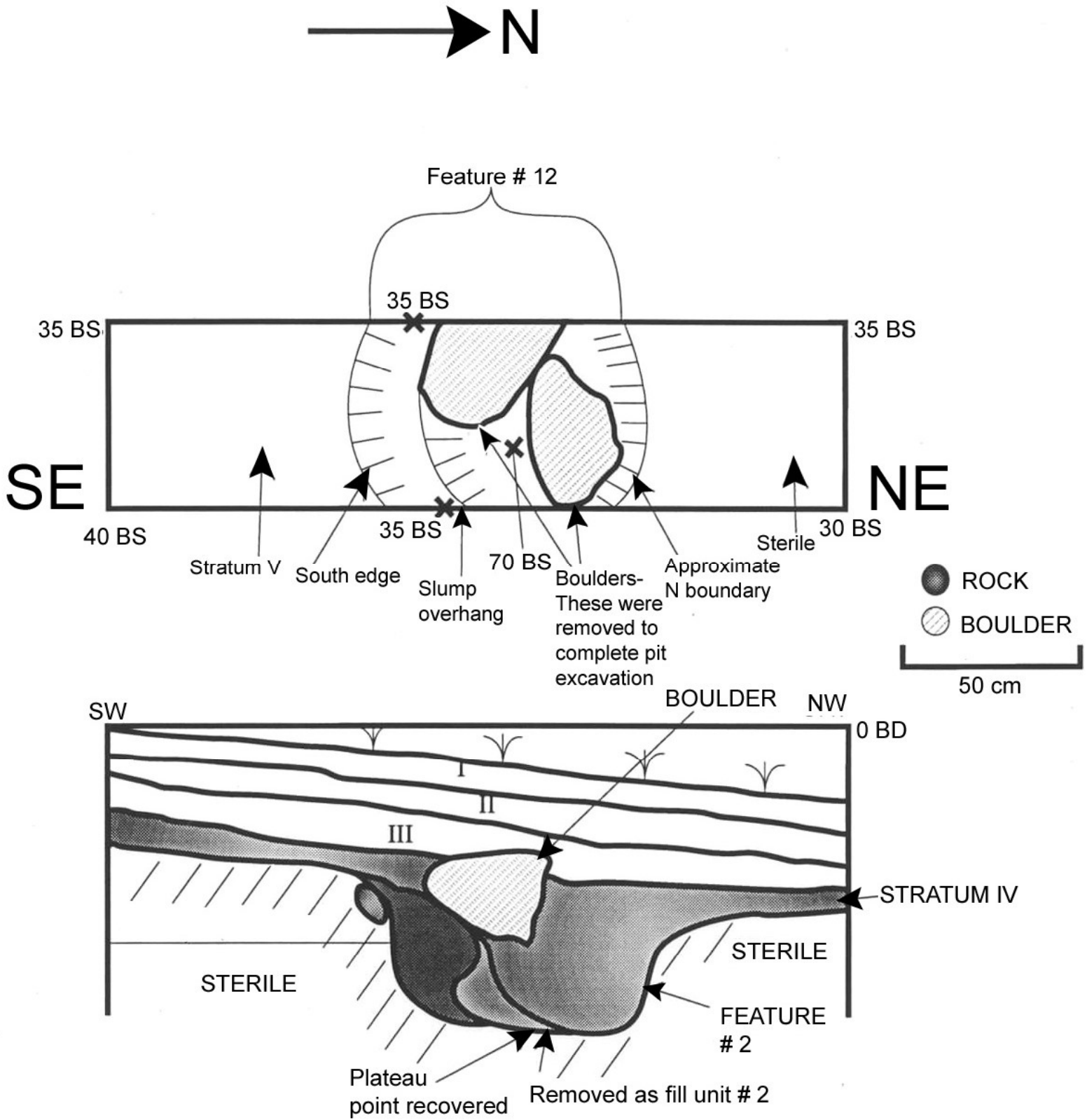
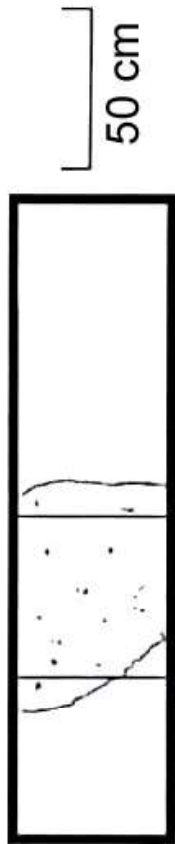


Figure 4. Plan view of Feature 3, the cremation burial of a canid.

HP 110 FEATURE 3

SQUARE A



50 cm

N

NE

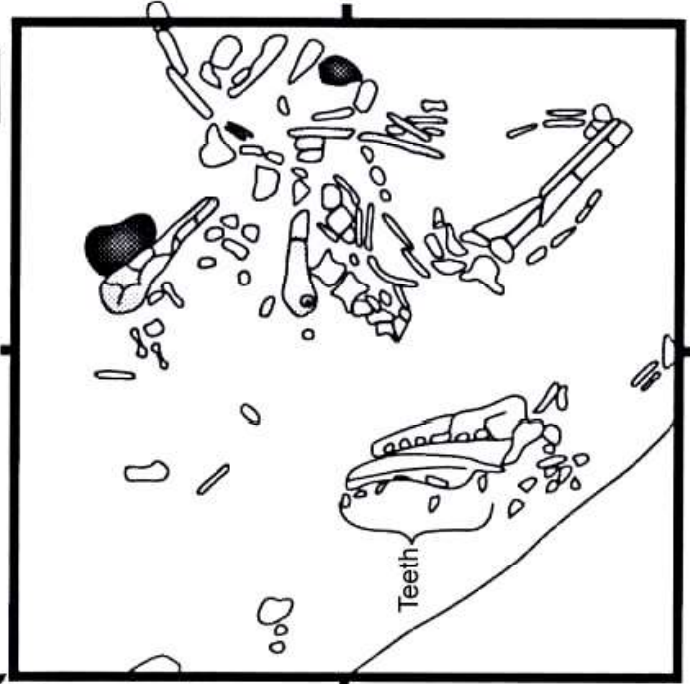
LEGEND

○ CALCINE BONE

• SALMON VERTEBRAE

● ROCK

⋯ FIRE REDDENING



25 cm