

Excavation Summary for Extra-Housepit Excavation 26

Sara Mossop Cousins and Terry Clouthier

Extra-Housepit Excavation 26 (EHPE 26) is a fairly shallow depression located 11 m to the southeast of HP 109 (Vol. III, Preface, **Fig. 1**). It is approximately 4.5 m in diameter (including a 1 m wide rim, see **Fig. 1**). It was partially excavated in 1998 in order to determine its function, which was anticipated to be either a roasting pit or a small structure.

Extra-Housepit Excavation 26 did not demonstrate any characteristics of a roasting pit. It appears to have been a small structure, perhaps a menstrual "hut", although this is not clear. Subsquares 8 and 12 of Square B in the center of the depression included part of what appears to have been a small pit with some associated fire reddening (**Figs. 2 and 3**). The soil in the pit was blackened. A few pieces of burned bone were all that was recovered from this feature.

The non-sterile deposits are very shallow, even the pit feature does not extend below surface more than 17 cm. Due to its shallowness it may not be very old. Most bone fragments are too small to determine what they were.

Analysis of the Excavation

There is a lack of diagnostic artifacts throughout the entire depression. An average of only 3 cultural elements (bone or lithic) were recovered from each subsquare. The bone appears to be deer, as some diagnostic elements were recovered and interpreted. There is very little evidence of a floor, roof, or structure of any kind. There is a possibility that a bench of some kind was

situated around the hearth along the eastern side of the depression. This bench does not appear on the south or western side. Fire-cracked rock occurs throughout the first few centimeters of the depression. This FCR does not appear to be completely related to the hearth and it is possible that it may have been thrown out onto the roof or is associated with a possible post-structure camp occupation in the surface stratum (Stratum I). Such a post-structural occupation is indicated by fire-reddening in parts of Stratum I as well as by the occurrence of bone fragments and FCR in this stratum. In addition, practically all of the lithics that have been recovered from this excavation occur within the first five centimeters and are likely to have been deposited after the original depression was abandoned.

Interpretations Based on the Analysis

A number of possible interpretations are available from the excavations. The first interpretation would be a transitory encampment or an animal-processing place of some kind possibly for smoking meat or tanning. The occurrence of some bone fragments might support this. The next interpretation would be a ceremonial or limited use structure such as a menstrual hut. The apparent lack of lithics would support this; however, the occurrence of bone fragments recovered might contradict this according to ethnographic evidence. On the other hand, most bone fragments occurred in the surface levels (Stratum I) so that there may be an insignificant presence of mammal bones in the floor contexts. The depression may also have been used as a short term living area. It is possible that the depression was a mat lodge. Mat lodges generally have very little structure associated with them. Additionally, as this depression is quite shallow (approximately

30 cm), the only way a person could have lived in this depression would be for most of the structure to be built above ground. This could have been accomplished through the use of mats that would then be taken away when the structure was abandoned leaving little or no evidence for a structure, no roof deposits, and very little evidence for a floor.

Figures

Figure 1: Location and excavation units for EHPE 26.

Figure 2: Floor plan of the excavated areas of EHPE 26.

Figure 3: Cross-section of stratigraphic units excavated in EHPE 26.

Figure 1. Location and excavation units for EHPE 26.

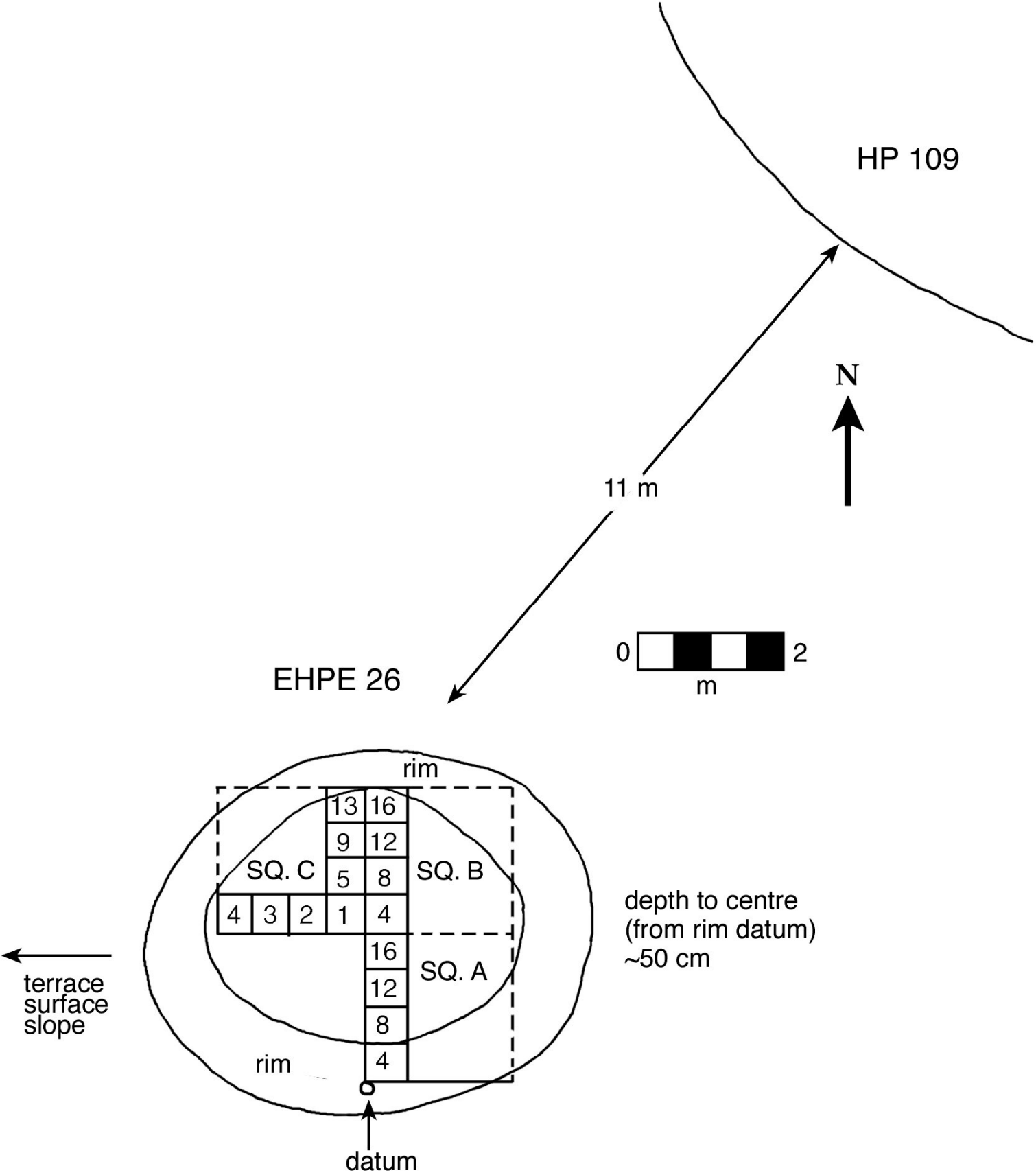


Figure 2: Floor plan of the excavated areas of EHPE 26.

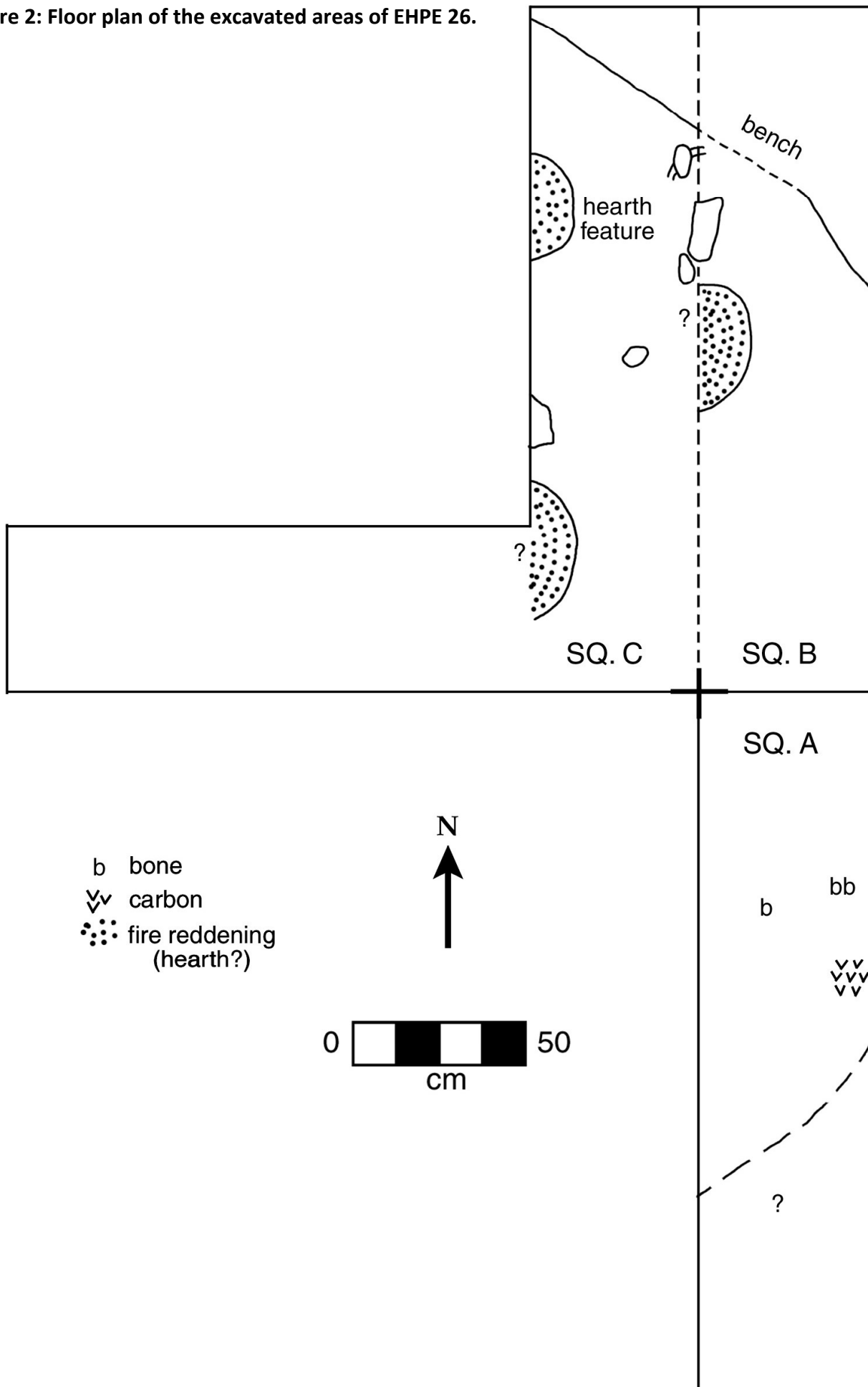



Figure 3: Cross-section of stratigraphic units excavated in EHPE 26.

EHPE 26 PROFILES

⊗ Fire-cracked rocks

○ Rocks

 Heavy fire-reddening associated with hearth extends through sterile in C13

