

**EVALUATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES AT
BREKKA AND DAÐASTAÐIR, NÚPASVEIT IN
ÖXAFJARÐARHREPPUR**

Evaluation report



Oscar Aldred

Fornleifastofnun Íslands

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101 Reykjavík

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SUMMARY

A road was evaluated close to Daðastaðir. This involved trenching and recording of the archaeological deposits and features that were observed. It revealed a stone revetment, which was visible on the surface, but in excavation revealed a two stone line construction.

In the construction of the present road, an historical account mentions that a sheep house was seen near to Brekka. Trenching on the nearside of the road did not reveal any evidence of the sheep house at its suggested location.

INTRODUCTION

Fornleifastofnun Íslands were commissioned by Vegagerðin to conduct an evaluation of the road and sheep house in Núpasveit at Daðastaðir and Brekka respectively. The work took place across 2 days, between the 25th and 26th August, 2005. The team comprised Oscar Aldred, Oddgeir Hansson, and Stefan Ólafsson.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the project were identified in a letter written by Fornleifavernd ríkisins, Minjavörður Norðurlands eystra to Vegagerðin and which were followed in the work.

They were:

- Trench (a bucket width c. 2m) and evaluate the road (NP-075:015) in plan and in section, and outline its visible length.
- Trench (a bucket width c. 2m) and evaluate to investigate whether any remains of a sheep house (NP-068:022) can be seen or are left in the path of the new road.

METHODS

The excavation was carried out using the single context planning and recording system developed and used by MOLAS in England, but adapted for Icelandic archaeology (Spencer 1994; Lucas 2003; <http://www.instarch.is/instarch/utgafa/handbok/>) Trenching was hand-dug and machine excavated using a 360 JCB with a toothless ditching bucket under careful supervision. Contexts formed the main unit of recording and were excavated stratigraphically, in sequence, within trenches. The information from the archaeological investigations such as the physical and digital archives reside, at present, at Fornleifastofnun Íslands.

RESULTS

The two evaluation sites were several kilometres apart, on different farms, but excavated under the same conditions with the same methods, consequentially.

SITE 1 NP-075:015

An initial clean and removal of top surfaces by hand and with machine revealed a the stone revetment. This was planned and recorded and drawn to scale. The trench was extended by machine both beyond the northern face of the stone revetment and south of it, to ensure no other archaeological deposits or features remained. The trench dimensions were 6m by c.2m wide (a flat toothless bucket width).The south east facing section was recorded.

The results of the excavation identified a stone constructed revetment [5], to support the northern edge of the slope. This was constructed 2-4 stones high, along two rows of stones, at an approximate depth of 0.5m. The stone construction sat over a colluvial windblown matrix. Other windblown and gravel deposits sat over the stones [1, 3]. Against the southern edge of the stone revetment a natural looking gravel deposit [4] comprising large stones sat within a fine gravel natural accumulation; this was incidently the surface deposits seen all around the site beyond the proximity of the road.



Figure 1 Looking north, the two stone revetment for the track.

The stone revetment was visible either side of the trench, and probably has a similar construction. Towards the south, as it approached the present road downslope, severe erosion and destruction has occurred. Otherwise near to the trench further upslope it was relatively well preserved on the surface.

SITE 2 NP-068:022

Once the site was identified on the ground, machining took place at two places. The first trench was located on the inside edge of the homefield parallel to the fence line. The second trench was located on the outside edge of the homefield fence line. Neither trenches revealed any cultural deposits, only substantial windblown accumulation from the nearby sandy beach as well as interleaving silt deposits.

The trenches were machine dug down to an initial depth of 3m, and then c.1.2m. The dimensions were c.30m x c.2m (trench 1) and 14m x c.2m (trench 2). The deposits were removed in spits and the stripping was carefully observed to identify any cultural deposits both in plan and in section.

CONCLUSIONS

The stone revetment which is part of an old track was well preserved as a visible feature on the surface though excavation revealed that it was actually 2 rows of stones.

Though the trenching did not reveal the sheep house, it is not unlikely that its remains may have been totally destroyed in the construction of the present road, or that it lies, partially preserved under it. It is also possible that it lies in an entirely different location along the present road.

FIGURES

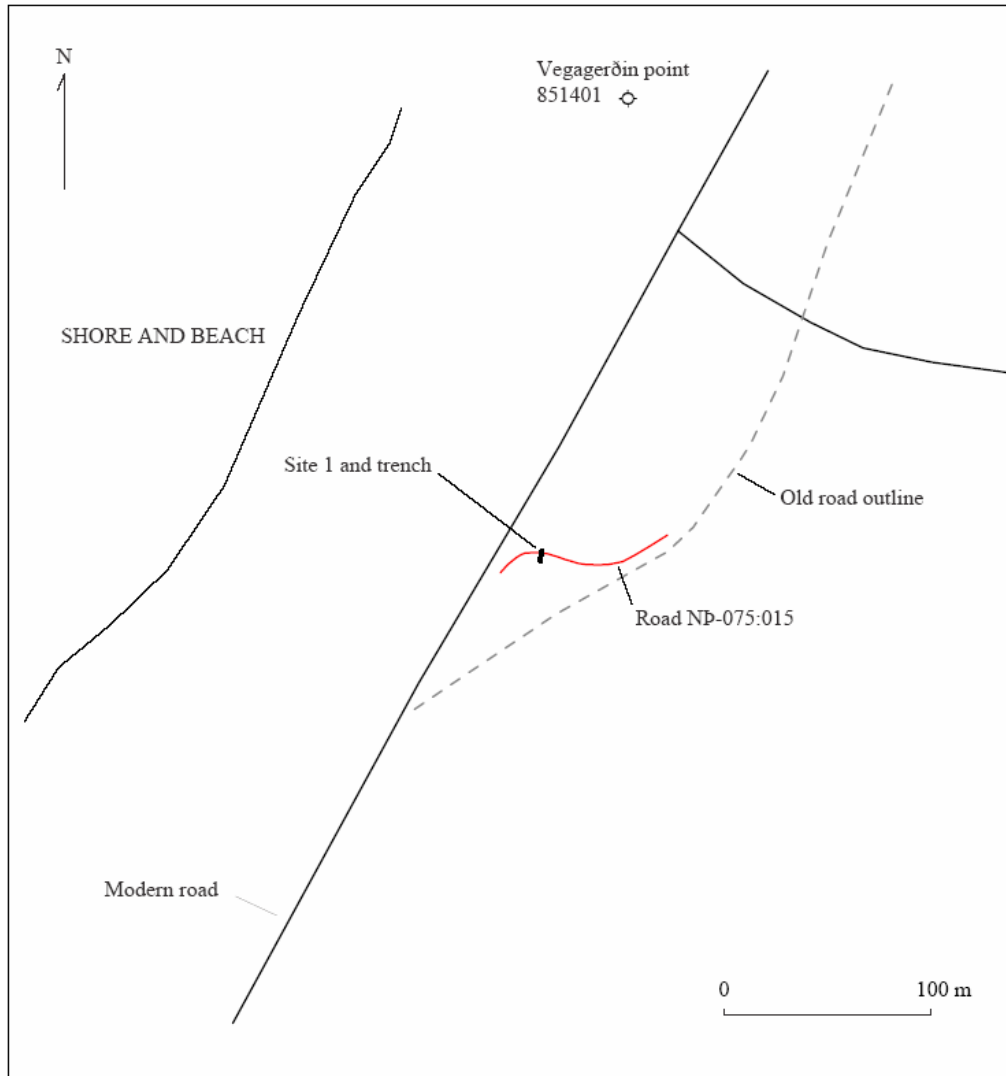
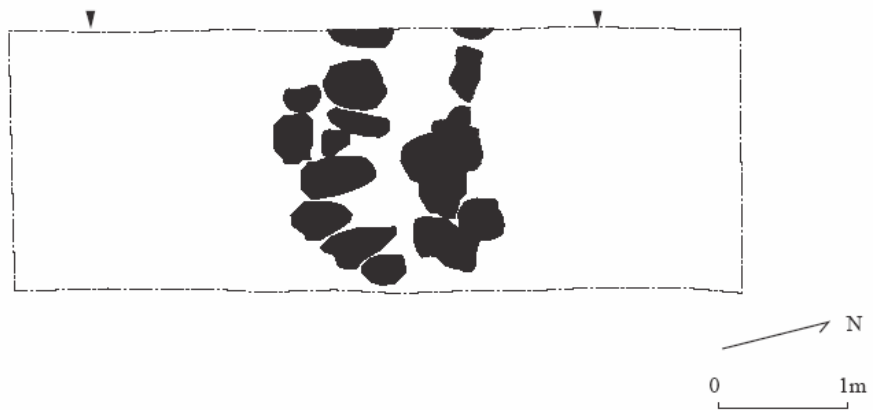
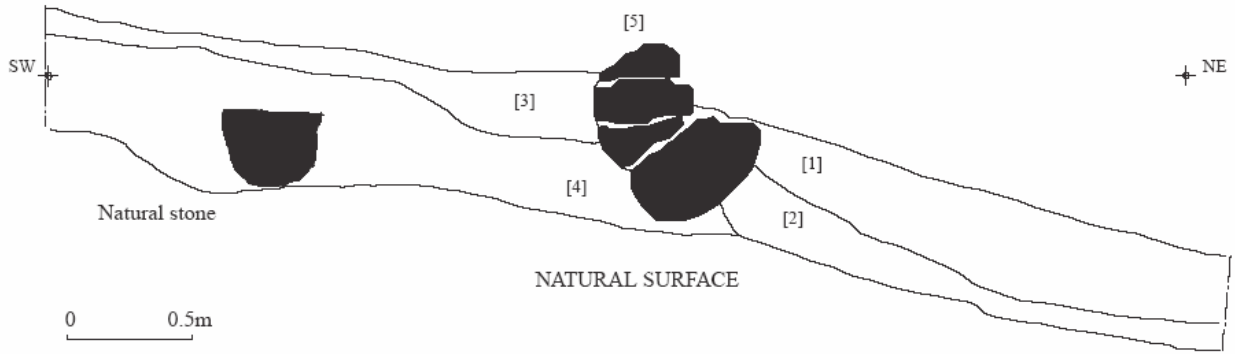


Figure 2 Location plan of trenches and detailed plan of site 1



<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Black coarse gravel
2	Clayey silt colluvium, yellow brown, occ. small stones
3	Silty gravel, vegetated colluvium and wind blown, dark yellowish brown
4	Coarse and fine gravel with large stones
5	Stone structure (2 rows,, 2-3 stones tall)

Figure 3 Section of site 1 and context description

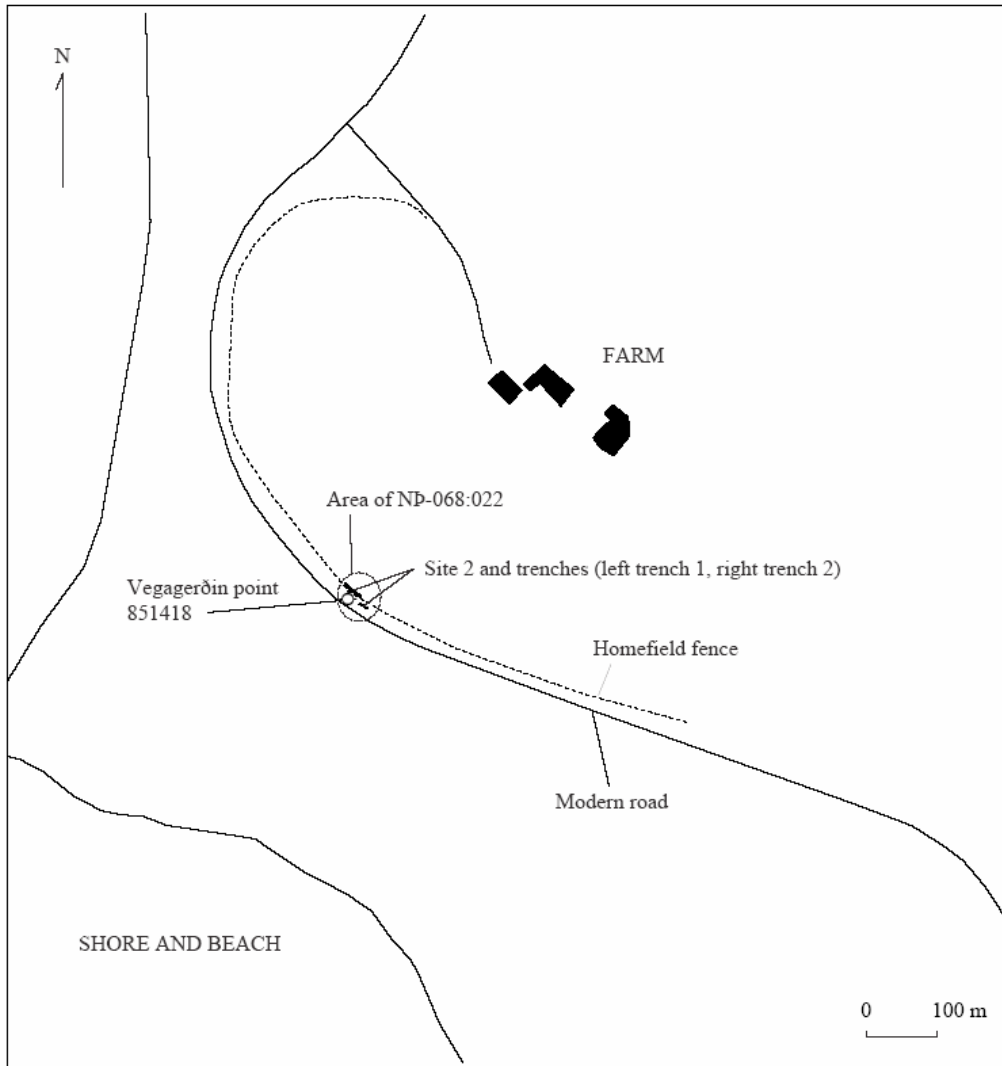


Figure 4 Location and plan of trench outlines at site 2

INTERIM STATEMENT

FORNLEIFAKÖNNUN Í LANDI BREKKU OG DAÐASTAÐA Í NÚPASVEIT, ÖXARFJARÐARHREPPI, N-ÞINGEYJARSÝSLU. - FRAMVINDUSKÝRSLA

Að ósk Vegagerðarinnar voru gerðar athuganir á minjum á tveimur stöðum í Núpasveit. Verkið unnu Oscar Aldred, Oddgeir Hansson og Stefán Ólafsson. Undirbúningur rannsóknanna hófst 17. ágúst 2005. Fornleifavernd ríkisins veitti leyfi 19. ágúst og vettvangsannsókn fór fram dagana 25.-26. ágúst. Lokaskýrsla er í vinnslu, en helstu niðurstöður liggja fyrir og eru eftirfarandi:

Gamall þjóðvegur um Svelting (NP-075:015) í landi Daðastaða.

Í samræmi við úrskurð Minjavarðar Norðurlands var vegarslóðinn mældur upp, könnunarskurður grafinn í hann og upphleðsla og önnur ummerki teiknuð og skráð. Teikningar verða birtar í lokaskýrslu.

Fjárskýli (NP:068-022) í landi Brekku.

Við undirbúning vegaframkvæmda óskaði Minjavörður eftir að gengið yrði úr skugga um hvort téð fjárskýli frá Brekku sé að finna í vegarstæðinu, grafið undir uppfyllingarefni í vegarkantinum. Grafnir voru tveir könnunarskurðir. Við uppgröftinn fundust engar mannvistarleifar og var staðfest að leifar fjárskýlis er ekki að finna á þessum stað.

Kröfu Fornleifaverndar um björgunarrannsóknir vegna fyrirhugaðra framkvæmda við Norðausturveg í Öxarfjarðarhreppi hefur því verið fullnægt.