CHAPTER 3

THE SOUTH HOUSE

by

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3.1 Introduction

South of the Central Platform a new area was opened up during the 1990 season (Figures 3.1 and 3.2). The excavation extended across twelve 5-metre squares, in both north and south directions joining up with the excavation squares of the Central Platform and South Pylon respectively.

The site was chosen partly on account of its location, between the line of the enclosure wall (where, as it emerged during the season, lay a pylon) and the Central Platform, and partly because the ground rose slightly to form a very low mound. This showed traces of mud brick but minimal amounts of pottery on the surface (except for a concentrated patch of weathered sherds around square Z16), which had itself been compacted and rutted over recent years by tractors taking a short cut across to the fields. The resulting damage accentuated that caused earlier by robbing for bricks.

The aims of the season's work were to discover the nature and extent of whatever structure lay beneath, and its relationships (physical and stratigraphic) to both the Central Platform and the enclosure wall. If the surface topography is a reliable guide to the original extent of the building, it would seem that by the end of the season around one third of it had been exposed so that the assessment offered in this chapter is of a preliminary nature only.

The removal of the topsoil [6026] in the squares on the higher area of the mound revealed that the remains of the paved mud-brick floor lay only just below the surface, and, consequently, that no walls should be expected to have survived above floor level. On the slopes of the mound not even the paved floor survived. Though this necessarily caused problems in ascertaining which walls originally stood above floor level, it did give greater freedom to explore the structure of the sub-floor level which raised the floor of the building above the surrounding court by around 35–40 cm.

3.2 The pattern of foundations

Although nothing of the superstructure of this building has survived above the level of the paved floors, a very well preserved substructure remained underneath. The reason for this is that the foundations seem to have been built as part of the original design for Kom el-Nana, directly on to the natural desert surface, and were subsequently buried by the dumping of soil to build up the overall internal ground level inside the southern Kom el-Nana enclosure, and by the additional fill needed to raise the floor of the South House higher still. Owing to erosion and the robbing out of bricks, however, the relationship between substructures and the paved floors was very nearly lost altogether. The importance of this relationship is demonstrated by the one place (in AC15) where the survival of part of the floor actually overlying the substructure showed that the square piers were not intended to be seen above the floor. The base of the foundations has not been properly exposed at any point yet within this building, although a rough working surface was reached beneath the substructure fill of fine yellow sand [6040] in the exploratory trench dug in square AB15. This lay 1.25 m below the brick paving in the areas to east and west and probably indicates the general depth of the foundations inside the South House. The brick paving itself lay at around 35–40 cm above the level of the surrounding mud-plastered ground.

The wall foundations must enclose an elongated building running east–west. So far only lengths of the northern [6246] and southern walls [6027] have been exposed. Their outer faces are 13.80 m apart, which must provide the full depth of the building. If it was symmetrical about the axis represented by the stairway, the parts exposed so far imply an east–west width of at least 41

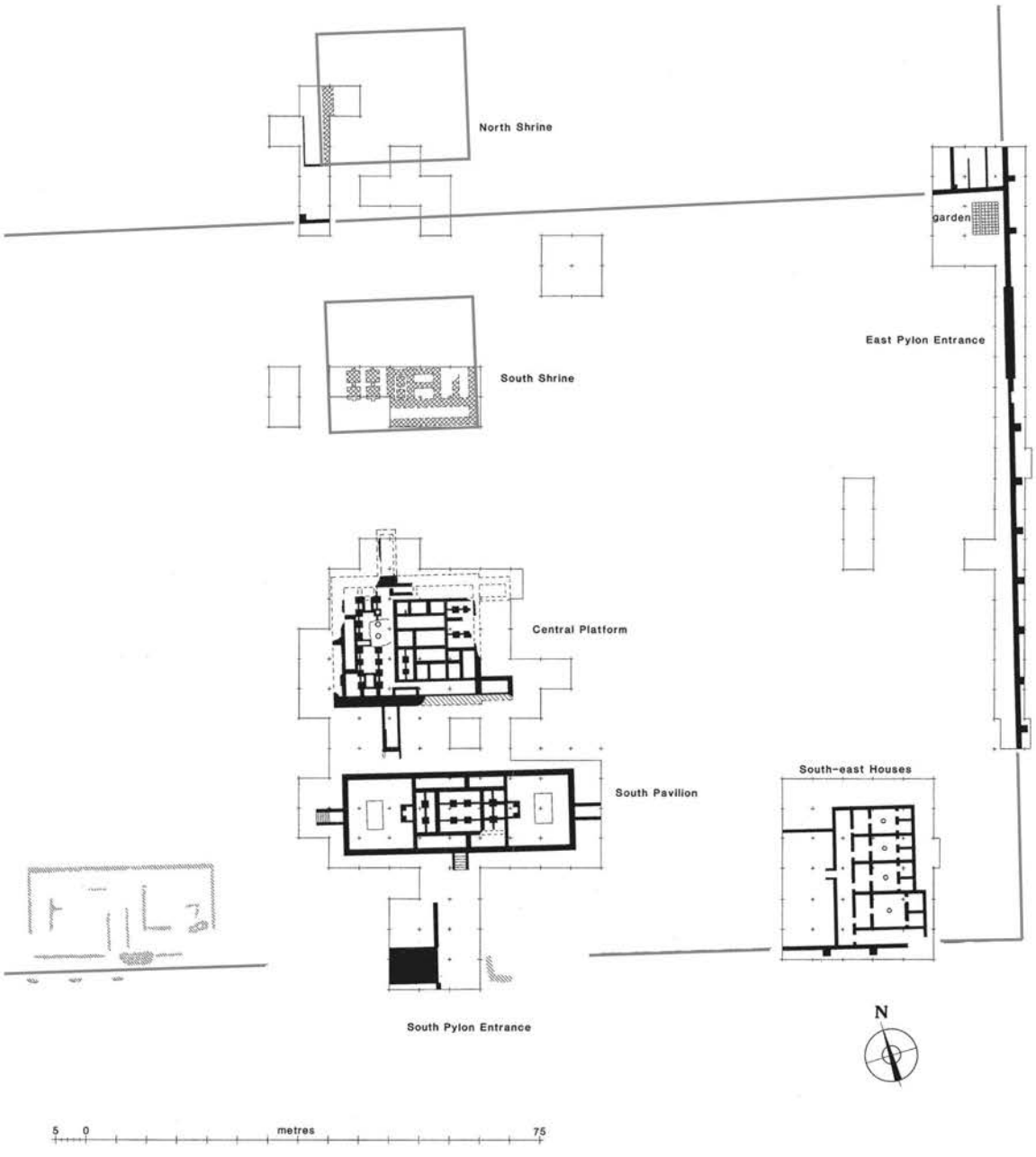

Figure 3.1. General plan of the South House and South Pylon.

Figure 3.2. Aerial photograph of the western part of the South House, with the Central Platform beyond.

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m, which is, in fact, consistent with the way that the contours run in this area. The excavated part of the building is subdivided into two by a north–south wall [6248]. On the west is what was probably an open court containing a sunken garden, whilst to the east lay a pattern of foundations which probably supported a roofed and columned pavilion. Again, if one assumes a strict symmetry of layout, the pavilion will have comprised a central room, bounded on north and south by a corridor-like space and on the east and west by a rectangular room. In terms of what has so far been exposed, the southern corridor is the space between walls [6027] and [6043], with a presumed northern equivalent running inside wall [6246]; the western flanking room will have been that lying between walls [6041] and [6248].

Interspersed between the main walls are regularly spaced square piers ([6045], [6047], [6213], [6559], [6555], [6557]) with sides of about 1.10 m and a depth of at least 0.90 m (or eight courses; Figures 3.3 and 3.4). These are connected with each other, and with one or other of the main walls, by way of narrow walls of the same height, but only one header thick, laid in alternate courses of headers and stretchers ([6044], [6046], [6212], [6554], [6556], [6558]). The question of what the square piers were used for is not adequately answered by regarding them as supports for the brick paving. The regularity of their alignment, not just with each other, but with the major features visible above the floor, such as the stairway, the larger walls and the sunken

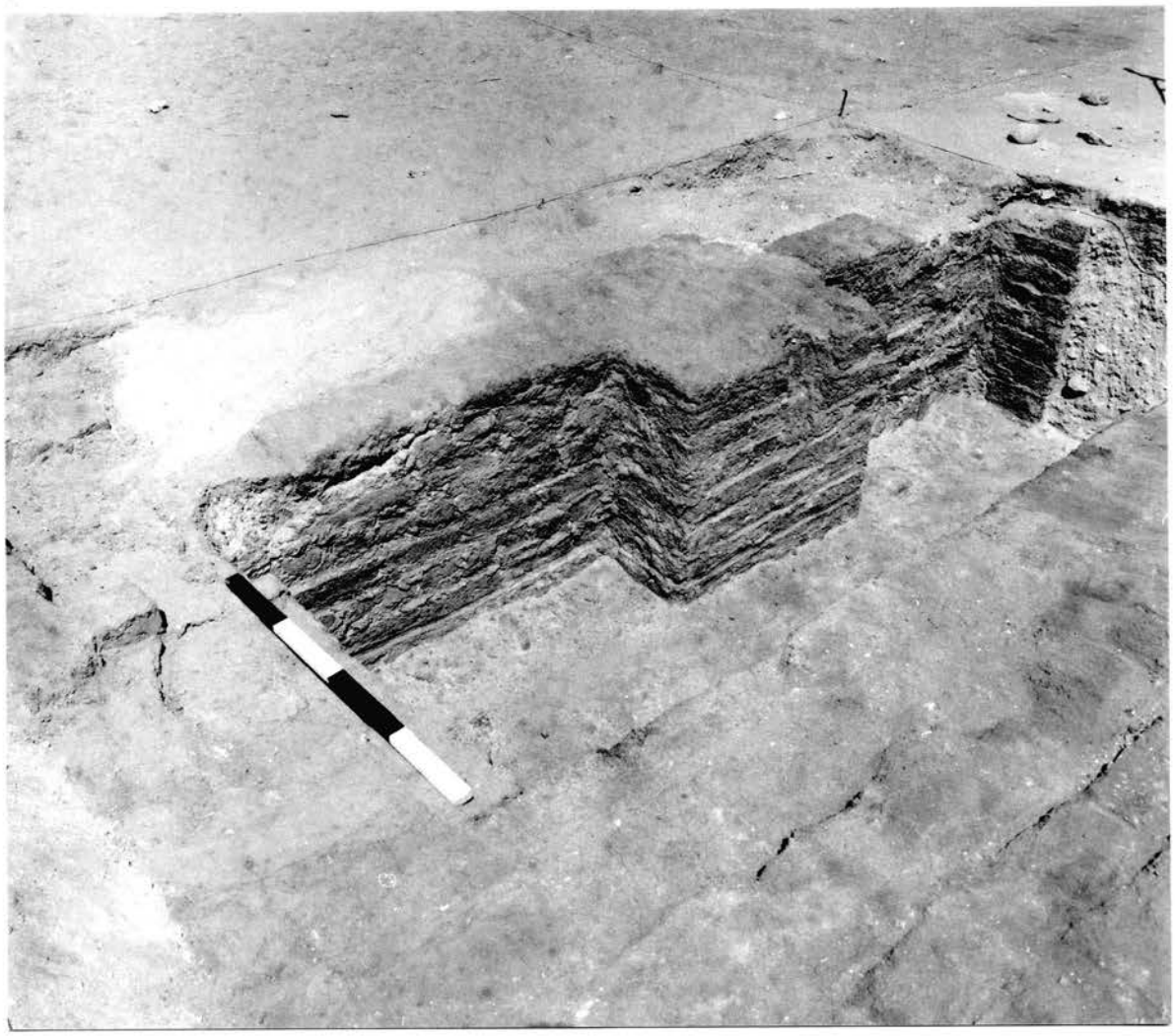

Figure 3.3. Foundations for columns in square AB15, consisting of two square piers [6045] and [6047] linked by stabilizing walls [6044] and [6046]. View to the north–west.

garden, points to their connection with something equally visible above the floor. Their solidity and high quality of construction can best be explained if they had to support a considerable weight. If this were so, then the narrow walls could be better understood as a means of spreading the load down through the tops of the piers and over a wider area. The solution that fits these circumstances best is that the piers were supports for columns or pillars above the floor, supporting some form of roofing. As mentioned above, in only one place has a portion of the paved floor survived over one of these piers, and this is the western pier in AC15 which was found still to be partially covered with brickwork from the floor (Figure 3.4). The implication is that the flooring was continued over the pier foundations, and that stone column bases were then placed on top.

Four of the six pier bases occur within what were probably rooms with roofs: [6559] and [6213] in what was probably the central hall of the whole building, and [6045] and [6047] in a western room that lay between the central hall and the garden court. The two remaining pier bases ([6555] and [6557]) were linked to each other and to wall [6248] by three short walls ([6554], [6556], and [6558]) which connected to the pier bases at their outer edges rather than by their mid-points, to form a square construction. There can be little doubt that this is the foundation for a small portico of two columns shading a doorway between the adjacent room to the east and the garden court to the west.

Figure 3.4. The tops of two square foundation piers for columns [6559] and [6213] emerging from beneath the brick pavement in square AC15. View to the east.

The spaces between all the walls and piers were filled with sterile material of various kinds which built up the height of the structure to the level of the brick-paved floors. Over most of the excavated area only the top has been exposed, but in two places (between walls [6041] and [6046], and between walls [6027] and [6043]) the excavation was taken to a deeper level. The first of these soundings revealed that a single homogeneous deposit [6040] of an extremely fine and clean pale yellow sand had been used as the fill, reaching 0.90 m in thickness. In other squares, such as AA 15, the sand was very coarse and stony and orange in colour, whilst in AC 15 it was a medium-coarse yellow sand. The deeper sounding in square AB14 (between walls [6027] and [6043]) showed that the lower part of the fill here was a mixture of limestone chippings and occasional fragments of mud brick and sandstone, but topped with the same fine yellow sand as [6040] (here [6216]). The chippings deposit resembles the deposits found beneath

the mud surface outside the building, e.g. that exposed beside the staircase on the south side of the South House (Figure 3.6, and see below; also Chapter 4).

These fills were covered, in every case, by a very thin layer of mud ([6215] in AB14). Possible explanations are that it was a surface created by being left open to the elements before the next stage of work, or that it arose from men working on it while laying the next sand layer above followed by the brick paving. This final layer of sand was 0.25–0.35 m in depth. In some cases it lay directly under the topsoil (which was probably all that remained of a mud-brick floor) or the paved floor itself.

3.3 The stairway and entrance

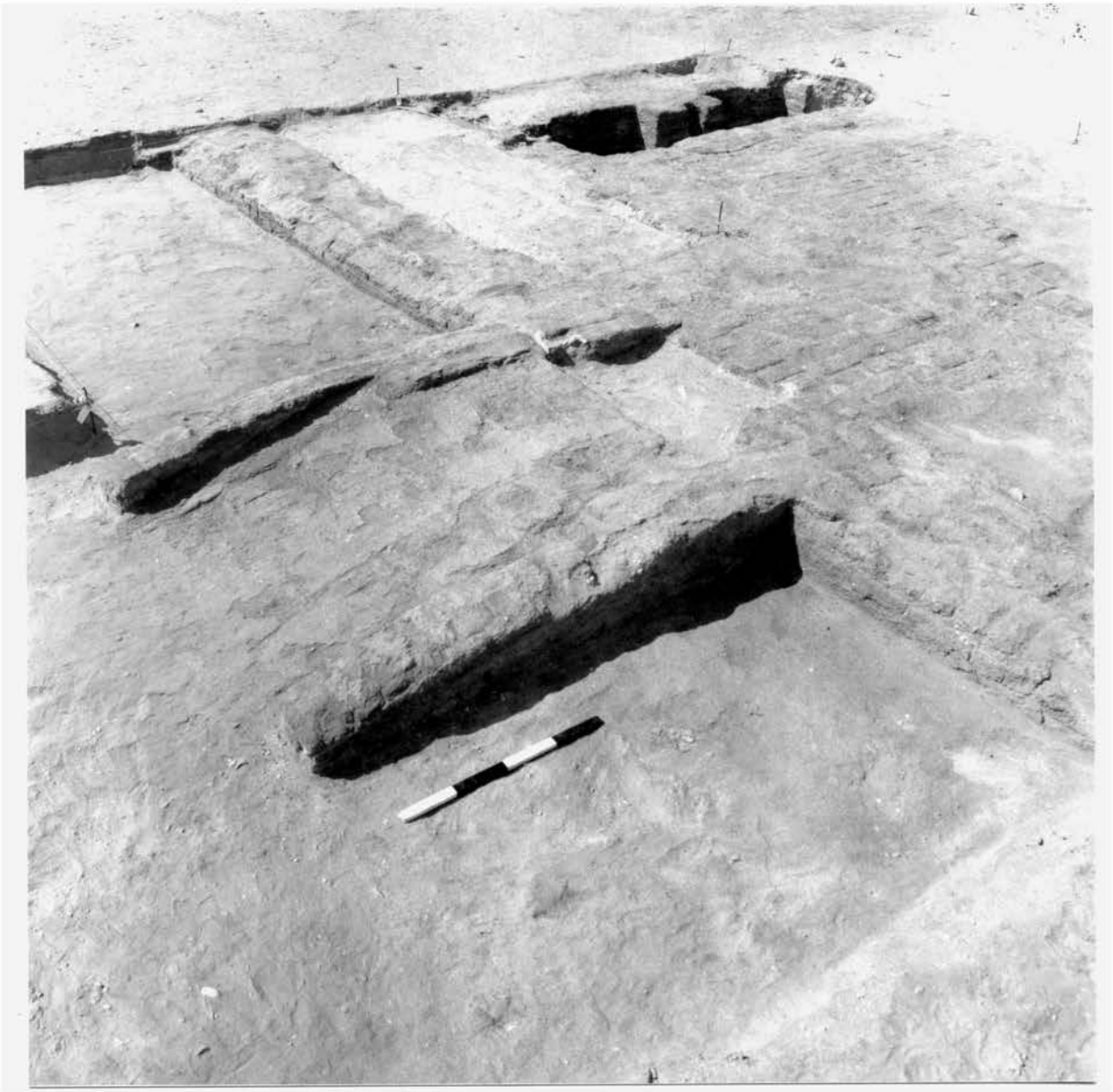

Figure 3.5. The stairway on the south side of the South House, viewed to the north–west.

The entrance to the building lay on its southern side, opposite the pylon in the south stretch of the enclosure wall. The entrance was reached by way of a mud-brick stairway [6219] of four steps (Figure 3.5). Each step was constructed by laying two rows of headers face upwards, with a

Figure 3.6. The east side of the stairway after removal of a patch of mud floor, showing the underlying layer of chippings and the way that the mud plaster on the side of the stairway runs down to it. Viewed to the west.

couple of centimetres of mortar between each row. The next step was laid in the same way, but starting half way up the thickness of the bricks in the second row, so that the treads were deep but not very high. A considerable amount of wear had further worn down the height of the steps until the centre of the stairway was virtually flat, forming a ramp, and it had had to be replastered several times. The last time that this had been done seems to have been shortly before the final use of the building, as it appeared, when first excavated, to be in an almost pristine condition.

The stairway was bounded on each side by a low wing wall: [6035] on the west, and [6036] on the east (Figure 3.6). These also show signs of considerable wear and repair. As earlier layers of brick had worn down at an angle towards the base of the stairway new bricks were laid on top, but following the eroded line of bricks rather than the original line. The repairs were not, however, of a particularly high quality, and neither were the bricks used. In between the wing walls and the treads of the steps on each side there was a line of bricks lying unbroken along the edge, parallel to and on a level with the gradient of the stairs.

The stairway will need to be partially dismantled to ascertain how it was constructed and what its precise relationship was to the outer wall [6027], which it meets at its northern end. However, from what could be seen from the clearance of fill [6232] from the threshold [6220] at the top of the stairs, sand appears to have filled the space between the wing walls, and it was on this that the steps were then laid. The wing walls extend downwards for some way below the level of the lowest step and the mud surface [6031] around the southern side of the building. At the very end of the season this mud surface was removed over a small area against the east wing wall of the stairs and the adjacent south wall of the South House, revealing, at a depth of about 10 cm, the top of the thick deposit of limestone chippings encountered elsewhere in this stratigraphic position (Figure 3.6). The walls descended through this, presumably to a depth similar to the walls and pillar bases that make up the interior of the South House (see below). The removal showed, as well, that the plastering of the walls also ran down to the top of the layer of chippings, and so must have been done before the mud surface [6031] was laid.

The stairs rose up to meet a threshold [6220] originally laid over the south-facing outer wall [6027] of the building which the wing walls join. The presence of the threshold obviously implies the existence of a doorway and thus a fair height to wall [6027], something which was confirmed by the broad spread of decayed mud-brick collapse ([6029], [6032], [6218]) to the south of the surviving base of the wall (Figure 3.7). The surface of [6027] was very eroded so that, unlike the inner wall running parallel with it to the north [6043], it was not possible to see evidence in the mortar patterns left by decayed or robbed bricks of how much higher than the surviving floor level the wall would at one time have been.

There is little doubt that the original wing walls of the stairway were built simultaneously with the outer wall and the doorway that opened on to it. The freshness of the mortar and brick surfaces beneath the fill of the threshold show that they were covered with the sand [6232] soon after they had been laid. The sand would have been overlain originally by roughly shaped limestone blocks typical of threshold stones on this site, though these had been uprooted, broken, and tossed down the stairs. On either side of this threshold it is most likely that, as already noted, the walls rose to some height above the level of the interior paved floor [6033], which survives on the north side of the threshold [6220] as far as the second, innermost threshold over wall [6043].

The second threshold is not so evident as the first. The clues lie in the pattern of the mortar, which showed that the configuration of the course of bricks above floor level was in the form of door jambs parallel to those of the first threshold, rather than the standard pattern of brick-laying normally employed in the construction of a wall. The average thickness of a mud brick would also have brought the next layer of bricks up to a level above that of the surviving paved floor. Thus one can be fairly certain that wall [6043], too, rose above floor level, thus creating a double entrance to the building.

3.4 The paved floor [6033]

The paved floor that lies between the two doorways and continued into the hall beyond, to the north, was formed from rows of stretchers, face up, orientated north–south. Though much of the adjacent ground has yet to be uncovered, it is already clear from the dilapidated state of the remaining floor as it peters out to the north and east that the adjacent squares in those directions are unlikely to contain mud-brick paving in any better condition.

At its western edge in the central hall of the South House this surviving section of paving met another wall [6041]. As there was no trace of the floor on the western side of this wall, and as the wall is comparable in dimensions to the wall [6043] which it joins, it is unlikely that the floor continued over it, but rather that the wall rose above it, presumably to roof height. There was meagre evidence for a doorway threshold on this wall, where a dip in the level of the top surface of the wall occurred close to where the wall passed northwards into unexcavated ground, in square AB16. The dip was found to be filled with sand and to contain traces of gypsum or lime plaster attached to the mortar.

It is worth noticing that the three thresholds so far identified are centred on the spaces between square brick column supports. This implies that another threshold could have existed in the wall [6248], leading from the side hall into the area with the garden, although that wall has

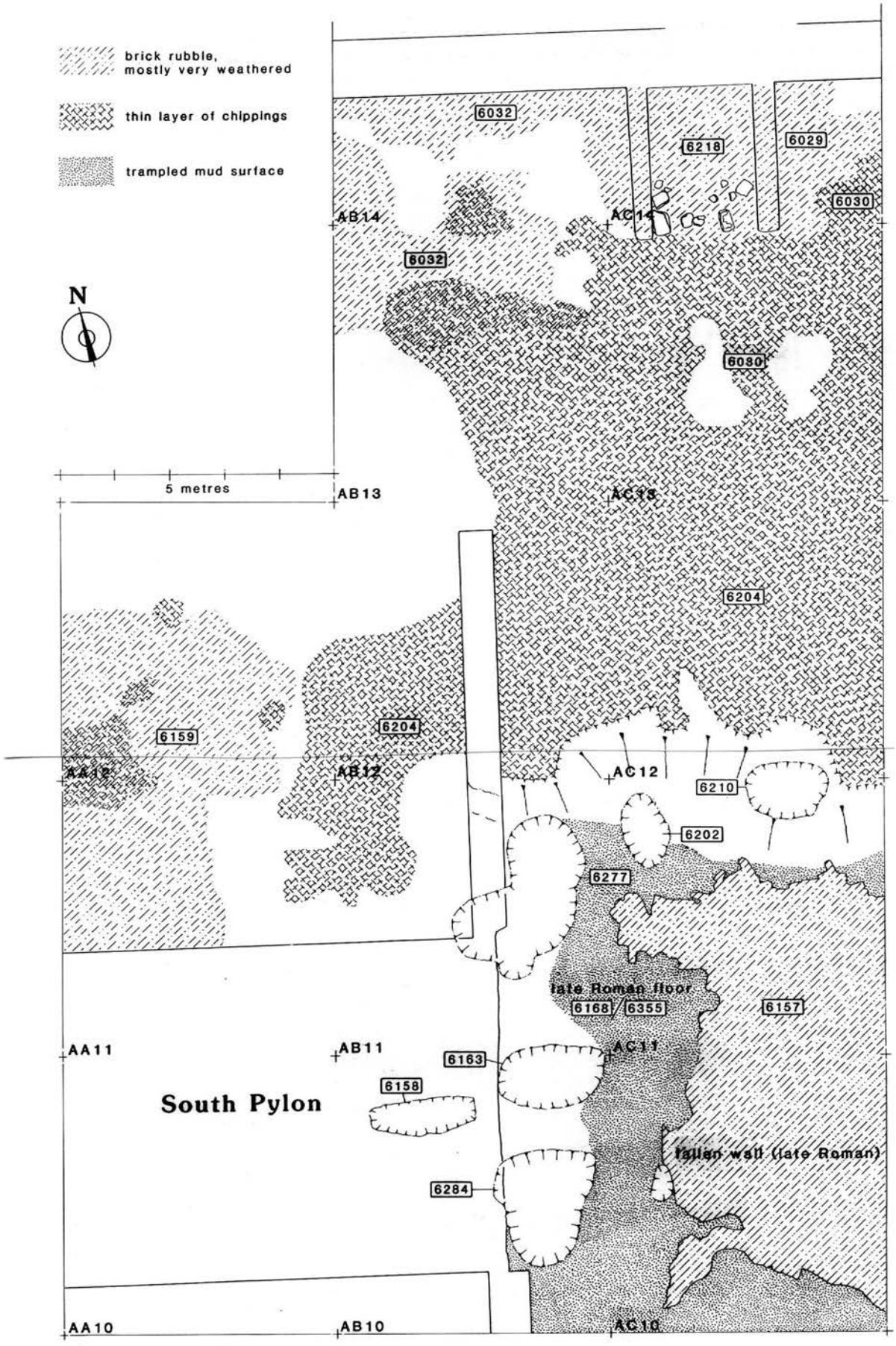

Figure 3.7. Plan showing post-Eighteenth Dynasty deposits between the South House and South Pylon. Originals by I. Grundon and S. Cole.

lost more of its brickwork through robbery so that the direct evidence is missing.

3.5 The paved floor [6230]

Further to the west of wall [6248] another and more substantial area of brick flooring emerged, following the same layout and orientation as the first. This floor was in better condition compared to [6033], and was, in part, covered with a thin mud surface [6241], which could have been an original feature of the floor or a result of wear and weathering. In one part, north–east of the north–east corner of the sunken garden (and marked with a separate convention on the plan, Figure 3.1), this surface bore a pattern of drying cracks, presumably the result of exposure to rain. The condition of the bricks in the paving was not uniform. The two rows closest to the north wall [6246] were in better condition, showing less wear, than those to the south, which were very fragile and began to decay fast and easily once exposed. This presumably reflects the protection provided by the north wall to the edge of an area otherwise open to the sky.

The paving bore several very localised features. One is a small round cut ([6240], fill: [6239]) in the paving, about 2.5 m north of the mid-point of the north side of the sunken garden. Just over 1 m away on either side there was a patch of a brown organic matter, which is often a clue that termites have been eating wood or other vegetable matter. An investigation of these two patches revealed no trace of post-holes beneath, however, nor did cut [6240] have sufficient depth to serve this purpose. Closer to the edge of the sunken garden lay another shallow cut in the surface of the pavement ([6231], fill: [6229]; Figure 3.8), its surface interrupted by three irregular depressions and bearing patches with drying cracks. One explanation for both [6240] and [6231] is that pottery jars had been stood in them, in the latter case when the pavement had been wet, perhaps from water contained within the vessels. A further mark on the pavement was a roughly circular band of brownish scorching approximately in the middle of square AA16.

3.6 The sunken garden

The floor led up to and ran across the side walls of a sunken garden, which occupied a position roughly in the middle of what must have been a brick-paved courtyard (Figures 3.9 and 3.10). The pit measured 4.80 m in length at its inside base, and 2.75 m on average in width. The base of its side walls was about 1.20 m below the level of the brick pavement. The full thickness of the side walls has not been fully exposed except where, at the end of the season, a small portion of the brick paving [6230] was lifted along the east side (visible in the aerial photograph Figure 3.2, and in 3.9). This showed that the east wall was 0.60 m in width, with a pattern of bricks where each course consisted of a line of stretchers and a line of headers. It also confirmed the observation that could be made from the deep erosion cut at the south end that the garden must have been made by first building a rectangular brick enclosure on what was presumably the original desert surface. When the various parts of the South House were filled with earth to create the raised floor level the wall around the garden became a retaining wall leaving the interior as an open sunken area. The side walls had been eroded all the way round, and more especially on the south, though it is difficult to determine whether this happened while the garden plots at the bottom of it were in use, or later as the pit filled up with sand and rubbish when the garden was disused. This question is related to the stratigraphy of the pit fill, which will be treated in the next section.

The garden plots themselves ([6453], [6454], [6455], [6456], [6457], [6458], [6459], [6460], [6461], [6462], [6463], [6464], [6465], [6466], [6467], [6469], [6470], [6480], [6483], [6484], [6489]) had been in rows of four and columns of eight, though not all had survived intact, not least because of the later digging of two pits ([6468], [6476]). Each plot was divided from its neighbours by moulded mud partitioning [6242], so that the enclosed space was a standard size of approximately 0.5 m sq. The composition of the partitions varied, though some cases showed that ash had been used in the mix. The partitions had been laid down on top of the same fine yellow sand as was found in the sub-structure fill [6040], which had in turn overlain what appears, from the cut of the tree pit [6476], to be natural *gebel*. In the corners of three of the plots there were dips that could indicate where a plant plus root system had been removed. A narrow channel lay on each of the long sides between the walls and the plots. For a further discussion, with illustrations, see the chapter on garden plots by Pamela Rose.

Figure 3.8. Part of the brick paving [6230] on the north side of the sunken garden. In the middle of the picture is the group of depressions [6231], perhaps shallow pot emplacements. Viewed to the south.

The pits represent a change of practice in the garden for they clearly replaced the garden plots. We have assumed that they were to contain trees, although they were found to be filled not with dark soil but with the same sandy rubbish that filled the entire sunken garden, implying that when the site was abandoned they were empty and open. The central pit [6476] was roughly oval in plan, its maximum and minimum widths being 1.10 and 0.80 m. It had straight vertical sides and a depth of about 1 m. Pit [6468] was much shallower and seemed partially to undercut the east wall of the garden, perhaps because it also cut into an earlier pit dug before the east wall was built. Both pits were found filled with deposits of sand and sherds which were uniform not just with the fill [6222] of the entire garden pit, but also with the deposit [6228] that sat outside the north end of the garden above the paved floor [6230]. The deposits were clearly rubbish which

Figure 3.9. General view, to the north, of the sunken garden.

had accumulated at a later date, though the condition of the pottery was good.

The southern side of the garden (Figure 3.10) differed from the other three in that it had a break in the middle of the wall, which was here badly eroded, and was also overlain by a deposit of decayed mud brick and sand [6243] containing much pottery. This deposit went right down the back of the southern wall of the garden and, at a level well beneath that of the surrounding paving, continued into the unexcavated square Z14. Its stratigraphic relationship to the garden itself and to the pavement has yet to be properly established. The break was in the form of a rounded cut which extended downwards to approximately 0.5 m from the base of the wall. Beneath it lay a dip [6485] which was not the remains of an old garden plot but apparently the result of wear, presumably from water which, to judge from the general state of the wall itself and of the adjacent ground and brickwork behind, poured down into the garden from the south at a time when the garden had not yet filled up with sand and rubbish. The water was presumably

Figure 3.10. View, to the south, of the sunken garden.

from rain, evidence for which has already been noted in the drying cracks on the brick paving to the north. It is tempting to conjecture that the break marks the point where an interruption in the line of the wall originally occurred, the obvious explanation being that here lay the exit for a limestone conduit which brought water to the garden. The sunken garden in the North Palace was provided with such a conduit, which ran in a trench beneath the brick paving which surrounded the garden. Nothing so far has been noted at the Kom el-Nana garden which looks like a conduit trench, so that it is possible that the break in the wall is wholly the result of erosion and hence fortuitous. It is hoped that excavation in square Z14 immediately to the south will clarify matters.

3.7 The deposit which filled the garden

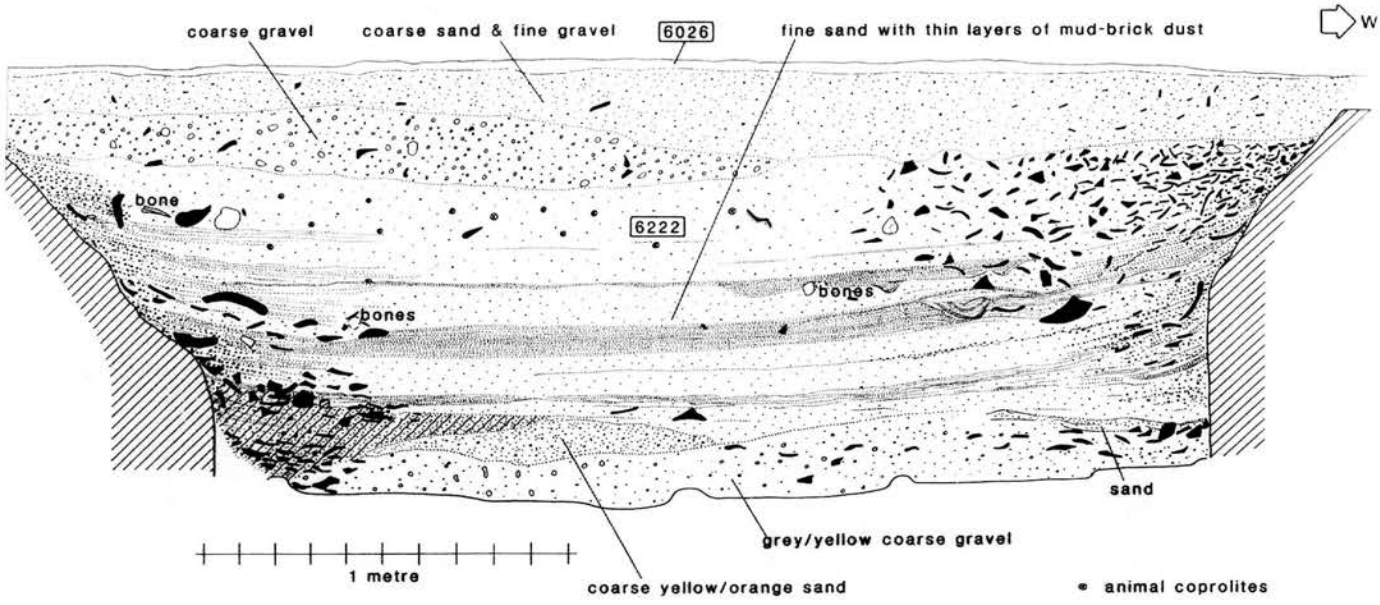

Figure 3.11. East–west section across the fill of the sunken garden. Original by Imogen Grundon.

Before excavation began many small and badly eroded sherds were visible on the surface over the northern part of square Z16. Removal of the topsoil [6026] uncovered the top of a spread of sherds mixed with sand and mud-brick dust [6228] (Figure 3.12) which proved to be a relatively thin deposit over the brick paving [6230] (maximum thickness was 14 cm). As the excavation proceeded over the southern part of the square it emerged that the same deposit dipped downwards to become the fill of what eventually was seen to be the sunken garden. Figure 3.11 is a section-drawing across the garden showing the structure of this fill.

The stratigraphy revealed by the section strongly implies that it accumulated naturally and was not dumped deliberately. Much of the deposit was composed of sand and gravel, with a degree of lateral sorting, in that the small stones tended to be to towards the edges. The pebbles presumably were products of the decay of the surrounding brickwork, for bricks in both the garden retaining walls and the pavement contained much gravel. Through much of the lower half of the deposit ran thin layers of fine mud-brick dust which mark stages in the filling of the pit. Sherds occurred throughout, but, as the section shows, they became densest towards the sides, with a major accumulation towards the upper part of the west side. As well as sherds, occasional bones were present and, in the upper part, small brown organic spherical pellets which are probably animal coprolites.

The sherds were in substantial quantities, and represented a wide range of types in which closed forms outnumbered open forms. The collection included elaborate blue-painted vessels, pots with a red-burnished surface including many Group 4 open bowls, fairly abundant beer jars and some bread moulds, many Egyptian amphora fragments (Group 21) from which came eleven sherds carrying hieratic inscriptions (at least one them bore a year-17 date), and at least 5 imported (Canaanite) amphorae which contained traces of incense/resin. The bulk of the sherds came from the fill of the sunken garden and were in reasonably good condition, including those with blue-painted and red-burnished surfaces, both of which are prone to rapid decay from weathering.

The pottery deposit is an interesting one from the variety of forms and the quality of many of its vessels, and also because it is, so far, the only significant pottery collection of the Amarna Period from the southern enclosure at Kom el-Nana. Its origin can be deduced from a number of

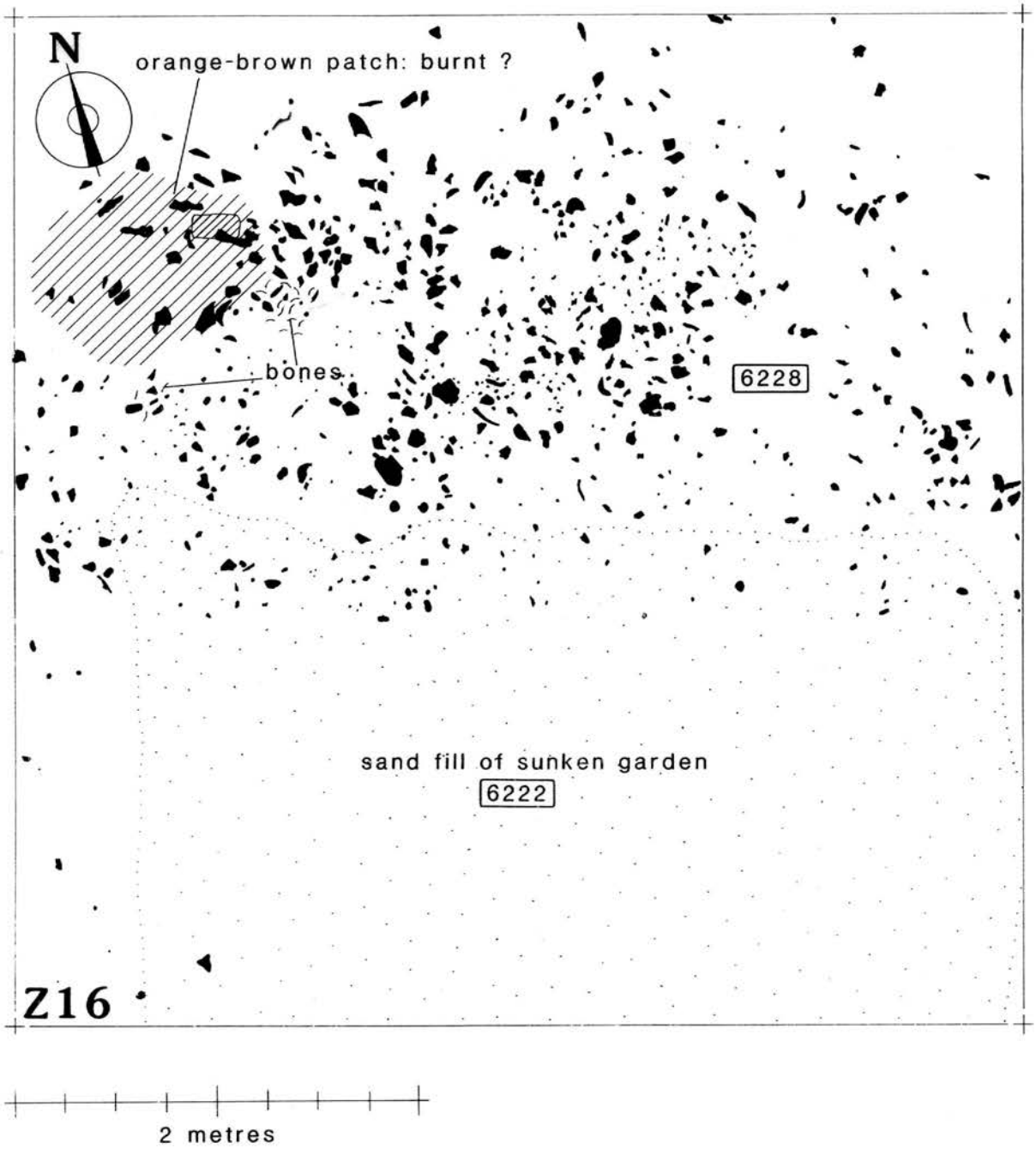

Figure 3.12. Plan of square Z16 following removal of topsoil, showing concentration of sherds over the pavement beside the sunken garden. The deposit did not extend into square Z17 to the north. Original by Imogen Grundon.

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circumstances: the fill of the sunken garden was probably the result of natural processes, yet the sherds within it had not been exposed to prolonged weathering; the fill of the sunken garden was also part of the same deposit which spread thinly over the surrounding floor, especially on the north side where the sherds were densest; the garden and surrounding pavement were probably wholly enclosed by a high wall. From these observations one can envisage that, before Kom el-Nana was abandoned, the paved area in the garden court had been used as a temporary store for

pottery vessels, either in preparation for or in the aftermath of a particular occasion. After abandonment of the site part of the collection began to fall into the sunken garden as it filled with sand whilst the remainder stayed in place and was gradually reduced to the small powdery sherds which formed the surface deposit over the pavement. During this time the surrounding walls fell down. It is possible that the thin grey layers in the fill of the sunken garden derive from the collapse and decay of these walls. If so, then it shows that a good part of the pottery in the fill came to rest there after the area had become more exposed to erosion, at which time it would also have been more open to animals. The relatively good condition of some of the sherds is perhaps a sign that the timespan involved was not a long one.

The excavations conducted so far over the south enclosure at Kom el-Nana have produced relatively little pottery of the Amarna Period. This applies not only to the various ceremonial buildings but also to the group of houses and the adjacent courtyard in the south–east corner of the enclosure where the small quantity of artefacts of all kinds is particularly noteworthy and consistent with a policy of keeping the area clean. Within this context the pottery deposit from the garden court gains greatly in signficance, for it could represent what was needed for a single major celebration, perhaps involving a feast. By this interpretation the fact that at least one of the sherds bore a hieratic label of regnal-year 17 carries with it the implication that this — presumably Akhenaten's final year — was the last time that a celebration took place in the South House. Even if this were to be accepted, however, one should not read into it an almost instantaneous abandonment of Kom el-Nana generally, for another hieratic label of regnal-year 2, presumably of a successor of Akhenaten, was found in the south–east houses, in the room used as a workshop.

3.8 Exterior connections

Between the south entrance to the building and the South Pylon was an open area that was covered with a fine mud surface [6031], part of a surface which evidently stretched over much of the south side of Kom el-Nana and surrounded the various individual buildings. It was underlain by a deposit of chippings which was also picked up in the sloping ground which formed the approach to the gateway in the South Pylon (see Chapter 4). The mud surface [6031] had been covered by another layer of limestone chippings, plaster, and mortar [6030] south of wall [6027], which was in turn overlain by rubble ([6029], [6032], [6218]) from the collapse of that same wall. This, so one imagines, is debris left from the destruction of the stonework at Kom el-Nana in the period following the abandonment of the site, something graphically illustrated at the South Pylon itself (Chapter 4).

To the north of the building the rubble [6227] from the collapse of the main north wall [6246] immediately underlay the topsoil, and consequently bore the scars of the tractor traffic that had passed over it. Although it had been much compressed it was still easy to pick out brick patterns. The base of the wall itself had been so badly robbed out that in places it was one or two courses below the outside surface. However, by the time it was robbed it can have stood to little height for towards the west end of square Z17 the wall still preserved the base of the deep erosion groove that must have precipitated the outward collapse of the wall, and this was virtually at the level of the mud surface [6245]. A layer of wind-blown sand [6224] over the mud surface on the outside of the building must belong to this time.

The removal of the thin sand layer revealed the end of the ramp protruding from the southern side of the Central Platform (Figure 2.1). The ramp finished just inside the north edge of AA17 and Z17, with a line of stretchers on their edges. Two wings on either side come 1.5 m further south beyond this row, with the bricks laid the same but orientated at right angles to the first row. The gap between the two wings was filled with a thin layer of limestone chippings.

Between the end of the ramp and the north wall of the South House the mud surface showed no features to suggest a connection between the two buildings. It should be recalled that the north wall of the South House is here serving as the enclosure wall around the garden court, and that the two rows of bricks of the pavement which were closest to the wall were the best preserved, and showed no areas of wear. There was thus probably no doorway in the wall in the area opposite the ramp, something which emphasises the separation of the two buildings.

As far as our present knowledge of the ceremonial area at Kom el-Nana goes, it would seem that three significant buildings — the North and South Shrines and the Central Platform — stood in a row and faced west, towards the natural "front" of the enclosure. The South House, although very close to the Central Platform, seems to have nothing to do with these other buildings but, together with the South Pylon, to have formed a quite independent focus of interest and activity which faced southwards. Although the pylon, in its present reduced state, does not sieze the attention, from its width one can judge that it was originally a construction of monumental scale, conferring on the South House an unsual degree of importance.