

Archaeology Wales

Church Lane, St Mellons, Cardiff

Archaeological Watching Brief



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Report No. 1552

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
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Prepared for CFW Architects


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CONTENTS

Non-Technical Summary	1
1. Introduction	1
2. Site Description	1
2.1 Location, Topography and Geology	1
2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background	2
3. Aims and Objectives	2
4. Methodology	2
5. Health and Safety	3
6. Results	3
6.1 Trench Descriptions	3
7. Finds	4
8. Environmental	4
9. Conclusion	4
10. References	5

List of Figures

1. Location map
2. Site plan and Location of Sections
3. Representative section drawing 1
4. Representative section drawing 9

List of Plates

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Plate 1 | Pre-excavation shot of layout of the southern house development. |
| Plate 2 | Shot of drainage and soak away trench. |
| Plate 3 | Shot of foundation trenches of southern house. |
| Plate 4 | Overall view of foundation trenches of southern house. |
| Plate 5 | Overall view of foundation trenches of southern house. |
| Plate 6 | Shot of service trench. |
| Plate 7 | Pre-excavation shot of northern house development. |
| Plate 8 | Shot of foundation trenches of northern house. |

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Archaeology Wales Ltd was commissioned by CFW Architects to carry out an archaeological watching brief on ground works associated with a private housing development at the corner of Church Lane and Tyr Winch Road, St Mellons, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) ST 22921 81432. The work took place between October 2015 and January 2016.

A total of five areas were machine excavated across the site. All areas revealed similar, naturally derived deposits.

No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered.

The work was carried out in compliance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (2014).

1. Introduction

In October 2015, Archaeology Wales Ltd (hereafter 'AW') was commissioned by CFW Architects to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land at the corner of Church Lane and Tyr Winch Road, St Mellons, Cardiff, during the ground works associated with a private housing development. The site is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR): ST 22921 81432.

An approved Written Scheme of Investigation (henceforth - WSI) was produced by AW in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (CIfA 2014) and was designed to provide an approved methodology of archaeological work to be implemented during the construction works. Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Curatorial Division (Henceforth - GGAT-CD), acting as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority, subsequently approved the WSI. The AW Project Number is 2388.

The groundworks were supervised by Simon Reames throughout the duration of the work. The report was written by Simon Reames. The project was managed by Rowena Hart (MCIfA).

2. Site Description

2.1 Location, Topography and Geology

The site is situated in the western part of St. Mellons and is approximately six and a half kilometres northeast of Cardiff city centre. The site comprised of previously developed land bounded to the east by Tyr Winch Road, to the north by Church Lane and west and south by residential properties (Figure 1 and 2).

The site encompasses approximately 955m² on gently sloping land from approximately 47m above ordnance datum (AOD) in the west to approximately 46 metres in the east.

The underlying natural geology of the site comprises of Argillaceous Rocks and Sandstone from the St Maughans Formation with superficial geological deposits of Devensian Till (British Geological Survey, 2016).

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site lies within the medieval settlement core of St Mellons and therefore there is potential to encounter buried archaeology. Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) – Curatorial Division stated that:

“GGAT advises that the application site lies within the medieval settlement of St Mellons. The focus of the settlement was around the church which is first mentioned in documents of the mid-13th century, but which is an earlier foundation, and the extent of the churchyard was originally much larger. Archaeological work in the area has shown that features associated with the medieval and early post-medieval periods survive in the area and clearly there is the potential that such features may exist within the area of potential development. A condition is recommended requiring a watching brief to be undertaken.”

The development area lies 50m to the east of St Mellons Church (Grade I Listed Building 13865/01272s) and its associated churchyard cross (Scheduled Ancient Monument MM121) and churchyard (03773s). A previous Desk-Based Assessment, centred on The Ton, some 20m to the south of the proposed development area concluded that there was potential of encountering medieval archaeological remains in the immediate area, including remains associated with a 13th century cemetery (Blockley, 1997). An excavation also undertaken at The Ton, revealed disturbed human remains (Taylor, 1997). A watching brief was undertaken during the repositioning of fencing and a gate beside St Mellons Church and revealed fragments of disarticulated human bone (Dunning, 2010).

A number of other medieval and post-medieval sites lie within the historic core of St Mellons situated at least 200m away from the development area.

3. Aims and Objectives

The general aims and objectives of the archaeological watching brief are:

1. To confirm the presence or absence of preserved archaeological material within the site, its nature and depth below the current ground surface;
2. To identify the character, condition, date, distribution and significance of any surviving archaeological remains,

4. Methodology

The foundation trenches for two buildings, a service trench, two soak-aways and a retaining wall trench were excavated by mechanical excavator fitted with a 600mm ditching bucket and located across the site based upon locations specified by the client.

All trenches were excavated under constant archaeological supervision.

All excavated spoil was separated into topsoil and subsoil/superficial geology and visually inspected for finds.

Each area was recorded using AW's pro forma recording system. Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. General digital photographs were taken of each trench followed by specific shots of archaeological features/areas of interest.

All recording was undertaken to the standards laid down by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

5. Health and Safety

All work was carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992. A Health and Safety Risk Assessment was produced by AW prior to the commencement of the evaluation.

Health and Safety considerations were of paramount importance in conducting all fieldwork. Safe working practices overrode archaeological considerations at all times.

6. Results

This section presents descriptions of the archive produced on site. Cut numbers are surrounded by square brackets [], deposit numbers are in rounded brackets () and structures are in brackets { }.

6.1 Trench Descriptions

All foundations trenches revealed a similar stratigraphic sequences.

The basal deposit encountered was (104) was a firm, yellowy-red silty, sandy clay and was the superficial geology of the area. All features were cut into layer (104).

At representative section location 1-3 and 7 (Figure 2) (104) was overlain by deposit (103) which was a loose, greyish black silty loamy clay that measured approximately 0.54m deep. This deposit was a layer of made ground, associated with the construction and occupation of the previous structure on the site (Church Lodge) and indicates the area was probably landscaped. Modern material was present throughout the deposit (Figure 3).

At the representative section locations 4-6 (104) was overlain by deposit (102) which was a loose, yellowish-red silty sandy clay that measured approximately 0.09m in depth. This layer was redeposited natural that occurred as a result of modern landscaping and ground works.

In representative section 11 deposit (103) was overlain by (102). This was in turn sealed by deposit (101) which was a loose, dark grey/black silty clay layer of modern demolition rubble and topsoil originating from the recent demolition of Church Lodge that was situated on the site. This deposit extended across the site and measured approximately 0.06m in depth.

Cut [106] was situated midway within the service trench and is the foundation cut for the previous structure (Church Lodge). Within cut [106] was a 0.2m deep layer of concrete (107) which acted as a bedding layer for wall {108}, a brick built wall which was part of the western wall of Church Lodge with concrete bonding. Wall {108} measured 0.3m in depth.

Cut [109] was located in north-western extreme of site situated immediately southeast of the tree T2. Cut [109] is a foundation cut for the previous structure and contained a single deposit (110) of loose, mid-grey concrete which was the bedding layer for the foundations of Church Lodge and measured 0.4m in depth. Cut [109] and deposit (110) are the same as cut [106] and deposit (107) respectively (Figure 4).

Deposit (111) was a loose, light brown, silty clay remnant soil that was only present in section 9 located on the north-western extreme of site. Layer (111) was heavily bioturbated and probably contained a mixture of remnant top and subsoil and indicates the original ground level before landscaping occurred within the site; which is evident by deposit (103) situated immediately above it.

Cut [112] is an arbitrary cut number given for stratigraphic purposes and is the present limit of the root extent from tree T2. [112] contained a mid to dark brownish-black silty clay deposit (113) that was heavily root bioturbated and measured 1.22m in depth. Within the root matrix, an impression of brickwork is visible where deposit (113) abutted the northwest wall of Church Lodge.

Deposit (105) was a firm, dark grey, silty loam that measured 0.05m in depth and was the present day topsoil/turf associated with the previous structure. This deposit was only present in sections 3 and 9 on the outer edges of the development.

Cut [114] is the cut of a modern service trench that led up to the previous structure and contained a single deliberate backfill (115) or redeposited excavation material. Deposit (115) was mid to dark brown in colour and had loose compaction and measured 0.45m in depth.

Cut [116] is located in the centre of site within section 10. Cut [116] is a cut created as part of the recent demolition of Church Lodge and contained a single mixed fill (117) of crushed concrete, CBM and glass (not retained).

7. Finds

No archaeological finds were discovered/retrieved

8. Environmental

No material suitable for environmental analysis was demonstrated to be present within the excavated areas.

9. Conclusions

The watching brief at the corner of Church Lane and Tyr Winch Road was successful in determining the absence of any surviving archaeological remains within the site.

The majority of the foundation trenches, particularly those within the centre of the site, revealed modern made ground (103) associated with the construction and occupation of the former structure, Church Lodge, immediately overlying superficial geology (104). This made ground deposit (103) revealed the area had been landscaped thereby altering the topography of the site by increasing it during the construction of Church Lodge or within the period of active occupation.

This differed towards the outer edges of the site where multiple levels of modern rubble ((101), (102)) associated with the demolition of the previous structure could be seen to the southeast. In the north-western area of site, the foundations of the previous structure were clearly visible revealing a trench cut ([106] and [109]) with a concrete bedding layer ((107) and (110)) and then a cement mortared brick wall {108}.

No evidence of any prior land use was encountered.

10. Bibliography

Blockly, K., 1997, *'The Ton', St Mellons, Cardiff: Desk Top Assessment and Archaeological Excavation*, Cambrian Archaeological Report

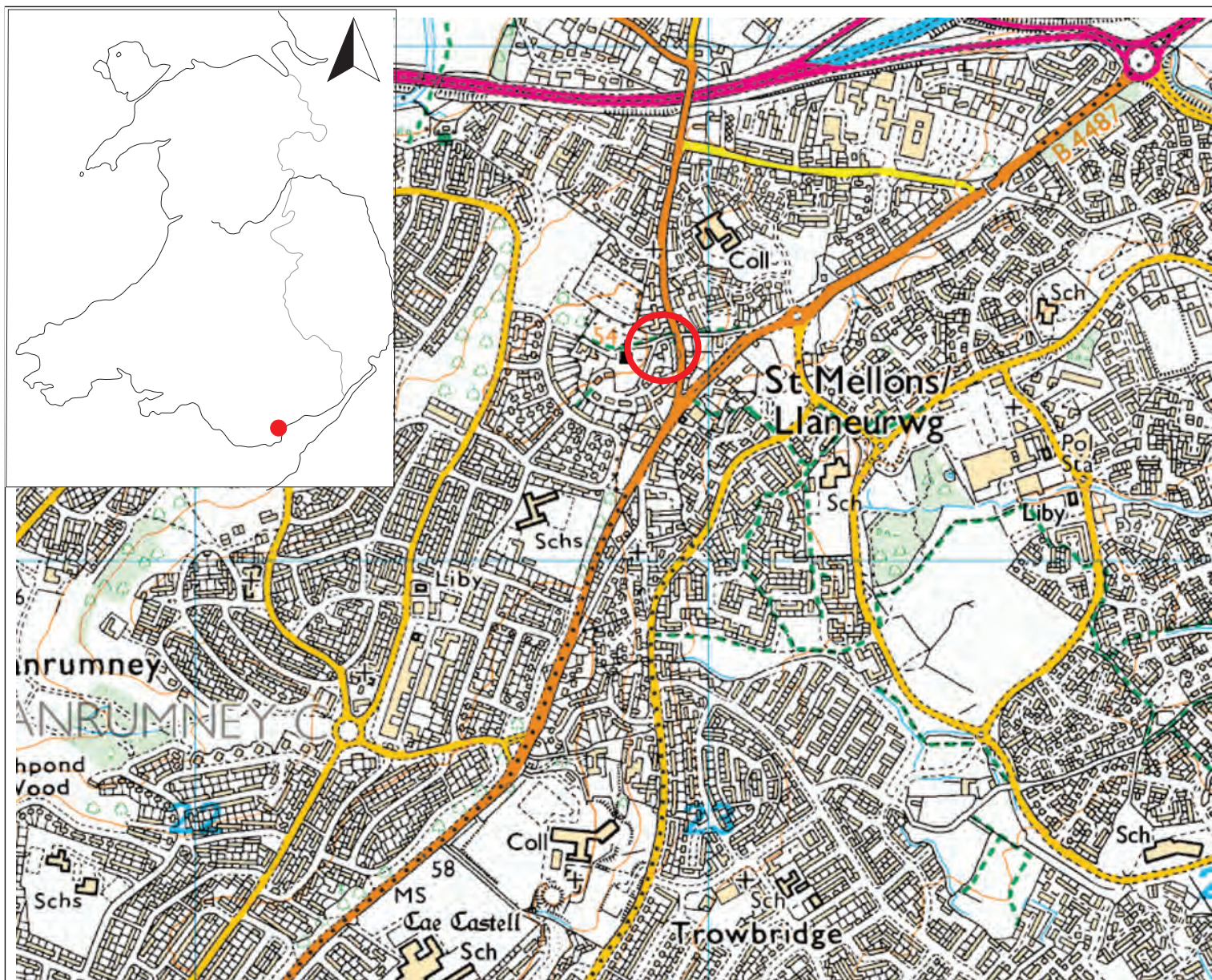
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Figures



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Figure 1
Location of Site



KEY


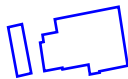

-  Site Boundary
-  Church Lodge Location
-  Section Location

Figure 2 - Site Plan and Location of Sections

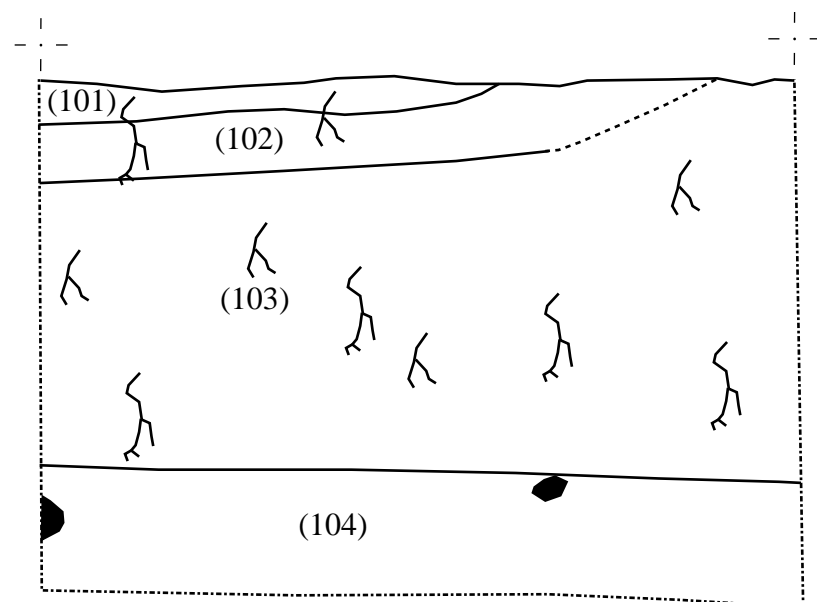


Figure 3 - South-Southeast Facing Section of Drawing 1



South-Southeast Facing Section of Gabion Trench

0 1m

Figure 3 - Section Drawing and
Corresponding Section
Photograph

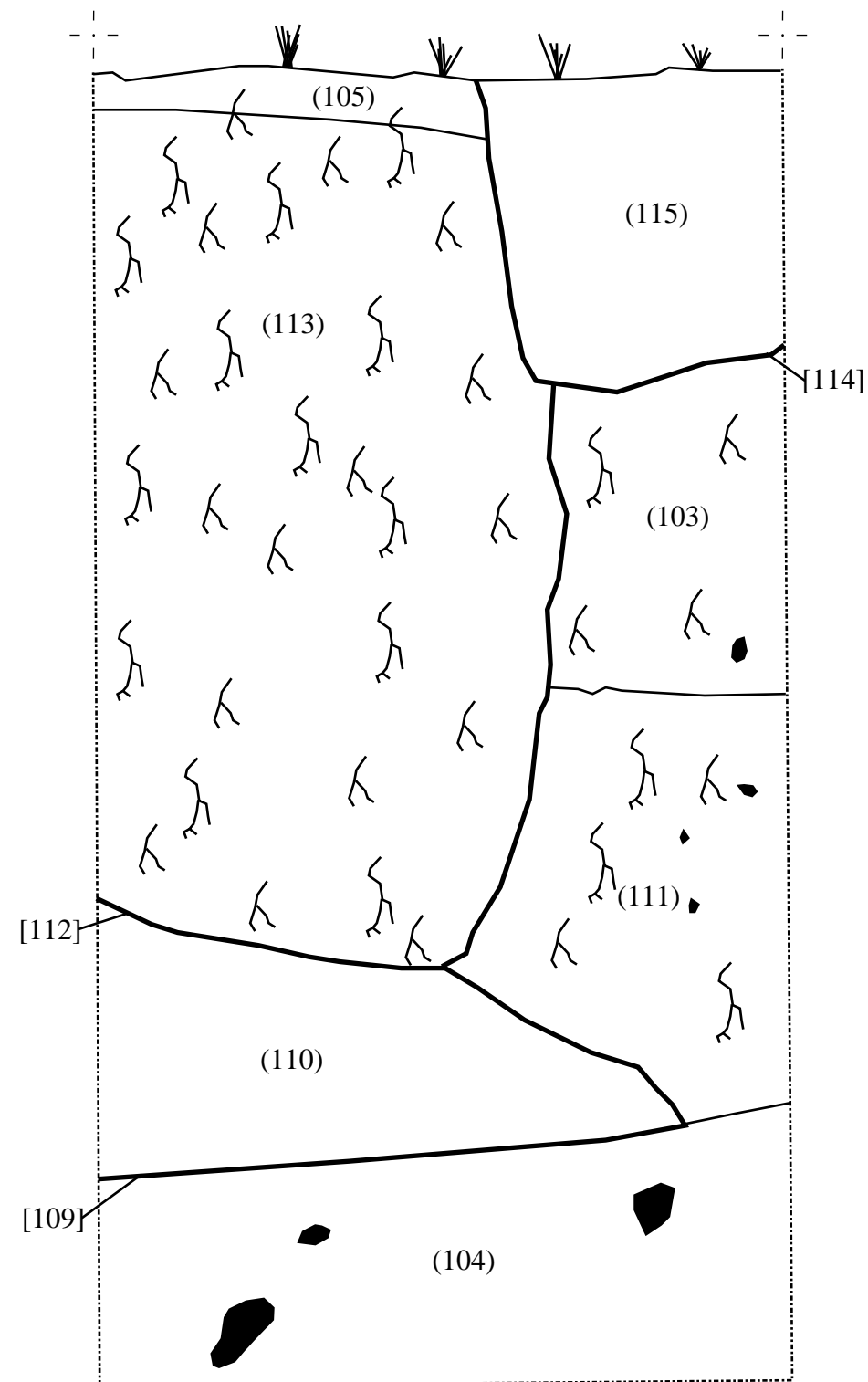


Figure 4 - Southeast Facing Section of Drawing 9



Southeast Facing Section of House 2 (northern) Foundation

Figure 4 - Section Drawing and Corresponding Section Photograph

0 1m

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Plates



Plate 1. Pre-excitation shot of layout of the southern house development. Looking southwest



Plate 2. Shot of drainage and soak away trench. Looking southeast



Plate 3.
Shot of foundation trenches of
southern house. Looking southwest



Plate 4. Overall view of foundation trenches of southern house. Looking southwest



Plate 5. Overall view of foundation trenches of southern house. Looking east



Plate 6. Shot of service trench.
Looking northwest



Plate 7. Pre-excavation shot of northern house development. Looking northeast



Plate 8. Shot of foundation trenches of northern house. Looking southwest

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