



A.P.A.C. Ltd.

Archaeological Perspectives Analysis Consultancy

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

REPORT : EV/LLF/15

Plot Adjacent to St Faith's Church, Llanfoist



Pre-Planning Application No: MC/2014/ENQ/00865

Prepared for:

Messrs R & A Boucher

By:

Dr N Phillips.



Summary

Dr N Phillips of A.P.A.C. Ltd, was contacted in February 2015 by Mr T Boucher on (client) in relation to proposed work to be undertaken on a plot of land adjacent to St Faith's Church Llanfoist

The proposed work involves construction of 1 pair of semi detached residential properties.

A pre-planning application was submitted to Monmouth Chounity Council (MCC) planning and as part of the planning process; (Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust) Archaeological planning Service (APS) advised that as the proposed work at the site could likely impact on archaeological resources the client would need to engage an archaeologist to undertake preliminary evaluation work at the site.

Dr N Phillips from A.P.A.C. Ltd visited the site on 11th February 2015 and after discussions with the clients agreed to accept the work.

A project design was drawn up and sent to GGAT for approval; which was granted and the evaluation trenching took place on the 17th February 2015.

This report contains the findings of the archaeological evaluation.

No structural archaeological resources were impacted upon within the area of the two evaluation trenches.

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Introduction

This Evaluation Report has been prepared by Dr Neil Phillips, A.P.A.C. Ltd, as part of the response to a proposed programme of works, to construct a pair of semi-detached houses on a plot of land adjacent to St Faith's Church, Llanfoist, NP7 9NF, NGR 328675 213170, fig 01.

The proposed construction work will involve excavation of trenches for footings and services which may impact on any archaeological resources present.

The clients; Messrs R & A., Boucher, are considering submitting a planning application to Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) and have submitted a pre-planning enquiry (MC/2014/ENQ/00865), which was responded to by Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT), Archaeological Planning Services (APS) who advise the council on such matters.

GGAT noted that:

the proposed development could have significant negative impact on the archaeological resource in this area but that insufficient information is currently available for a determination to be made...

and therefore advised:

that an archaeological evaluation be undertaken to consider the archaeological impact of proposed development prior to the determination of the planning application, in order that Members of the Monmouthshire County Council are full informed about the effect of the development on the archaeological resource.

MON2128/2014/009/JBHD

GGAT's advice specified that the clients would need to engage a professional archaeological contractor in order to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation, *citing* Planning Policy Wales, 7th Edition 2014: Conserving the Historic Environment; section 6.5.2 and Welsh Office Circular 60/96.

A project design; PD:EV/LLF/15, for the excavation of two evaluation trenches was submitted to GGAT for approval which was given and the evaluation trenching took place on 17th February 2015.

This document is the evaluation report on the work.

Site Location and Description

Llanfoist is a small village to the south west of Abergavenny in Monmouthshire and can be easily reached from the south west junctions of the A465 Heads of the Valleys.

If travelling eastwards, take the slip road to the 'Waitose' roundabout and then the 2nd left onto the A4143 and at the next roundabout the 1st left onto the B4246, alternatively, if travelling westward take the slip road marked with the brown Heritage sign to Big Pit and 1st exit at the roundabout onto the B4246.

Carry straight on to the centre of the village and turn left at the Spice Lounge, Indian Restaurant, onto Kiln Rd and then 1st right onto Llanellen Rd and the current site.

At present, the site is overgrown grassland with an old garage built against the churchyard wall (*see cover*), and a telegraph pole for which the ground would have been disturbed.

Geology and Topography

The village of Llanfoist lies at the foot of the north easterly slope of the Bloreng, in the Usk valley, to the south west of Abergavenny.

The site itself is parcel of fenced waste land with grass and bramble cover; with buildings east and west, a road and access to the north and fields to the south.



The underlying geology of Llanfoist is predominantly made up of St Maughans Formation - argillaceous rocks and [subequal/subordinate] sandstone, interbedded with glaciofluvial deposits, Devensian - sand and gravel, (BGS 2015).

Brief archaeological and historical background

The general area of South East Wales has witnessed a human presence from prehistoric times to present.

In the vicinity of Llanfoist, evidence ranges from small lithic scatters, Bronze Age cairns, Iron Age Forts, Roman Roads, Norman castles, Medieval and Post Medieval structures both secular and ecclesiastical to infrastructures of the Industrial age.

The known range of records narrows closer to the proposed site with a 500m search of the HER centred on the proposed plot revealing 2 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, 13 Grade II listed Buildings and 20 other primary records; mostly post medieval/industrial.

Of the above listings, the medieval church of St Faith's SAM: MM306 which is also Grade II listed no:17228, is adjacent to the proposed site as are the medieval churchyard cross no:1979 and the 19th century memorial to Ironmaster Crawshay Bailey no:17229, (HER 4947).

At present, a straight wall separates the churchyard from the proposed plot but if the church had an earlier origin than the 13th c; which was suggested (Bradney, p359.), then it is likely that the original church boundary wall would have been curvilinear.

It is known that development of such early ecclesiastical sites can involve fluctuations in the enclosed ground for a church property (*Llan*) which may have included structures as well as burials internally, with habitation in close proximity outside the wall.

The area has been greatly influenced by the industrial period and is included within the Blaenafon Registered Historic landscape (HCLA013-Cwm Llanwenarth & Cwm Craf, and HLCA015-Llanfoist), (GGAT 4947).

To the south of the proposed site is the 1812 Monmouth and Brecon Canal, to the west the 1817 Hill's Tramroad and to the north the 1862 Merthyr, Tredegar and Abergavenny railway system all with surviving structures and defined routes, (ibid.).

The closest to the site would be the current Kiln Road, of obvious origin, its path leading to the former Llanvihangle Tramway of 1812, (ibid).

The earliest map of Llanfoist was that of the 1832 1st Series Ordnance Survey map fig 02a, which shows the area of interest but it is very difficult to be precise.

It is possible that the church is represented as the black cross which makes the triangle of roads to the left roughly comparable to those present today and the grey curved line running left to right, possibly the tramroad to Kiln Rd.

If this is the case then the south west wall of the graveyard did not exist.

However, a much more clear representation on the 1844 Tithe map fig 02b, does record the present courtyard wall.

The 1899 Ordnance Survey fig 02c, shows no change to the wall but does record the new path from the road and the presence of the Llanfoist Brewery to the north.

It is not until 1944 that any change was recorded and that map was not published until 1953, fig 03d.

Of specific importance to this report is the presence of the two field divisions to the east of the churchyard, each with a building.

The present map fig 03 e shows that the left house and plot of the 1953 map has been subdivided and the garage building has been added, currently derelict.



Aims and Objectives

In accordance with the Project Design, DB:EV/LLF/15 the of the evaluation was to:

Elucidate the character, distribution, extent and importance of any potential archaeological remains, extant in the development area; allowing for the production of a sufficiently detailed report to be used to inform and mitigate any associated development.

This was to be realized through the following objectives:

The evaluation report would provide sufficiently detailed information to allow informed decisions to safeguard the archaeological resource, to be taken on the basis of its contents.

The evaluation would attempt to; specifically, establish the presence and extent of potential significant archaeological deposits, features and structures, which may be identified in the fieldwork.

The evaluation would attempt to recover enough information to enable assessment of the archaeological implications of the study area.

Resulting from the evaluation, a report on the results would be produced, which would include a detailed summary of the methodology, site history, deposits/features/ structures/artefacts uncovered and interpretation of the results.

Scope of the Work

The archaeology of the application site as a whole, in its wider local or regional context, was considered, although the evaluation trenching was confined to those areas which will be directly affected by the development or some aspect of it.

All remains of potential interest were considered, whatever their date.

Methodology

The trenching strategy was drawn up with reference to discussion with the clients, Messrs T & R Boucher and from the brief supplied by the (GGAT) (APS).

The evaluation trenches were strategically placed in order to maximise the archaeological potential; to determine the nature, depth, survival and extent of any archaeological features remaining in situ.

Evaluation

Two evaluation trenches were excavated by a tracked mechanical digger fitted with a grading bucket.

The trench locations are shown in fig 03, their measurements were:

1. 4m x 2m; evaluated the site access; as required, an area of undisturbed ground close the churchyard wall.
2. 8m x 2m; evaluated the proposed buildings; as required, cutting across four areas of the proposed foundations and an area of ground noted during the site visit as undulated.

The mechanical digger was used to remove the overburden of soil in order to reach either an archaeological horizon or natural deposit.

Initial recording

A record of the stratigraphy of each trench was made during excavation and modified on completion.

The work was recorded digitally throughout using a Sony DSC F828 Camera set to RAW format.

All finds recovered were recorded to context and bagged but later discarded.



Research

Initial research was undertaken using information and documentation supplied by the client and GGAT (APS)

A request was made to the Historic Environment Record (HER) for a search of a 500m diameter around NGR 328675 213170, centred on the building plot.

A visit was made to the church St Faith's; adjacent to the plot, and concluded with discussions on site with the vergger.

Further research was undertaken at Gwent Records Office.

Data Presentation

Presentation Notes:

All contexts are denoted [#] in the text, listed in Appendix I.

Photographs used in the text are listed Pl #, listed in appendix II and can be found following the figure section.

All finds denoted #{#} in the text and are listed in Appendix III with images IIIa.

A contact sheet is also provided and a full set of photographs is included in an archive disc.

Ground conditions

The ground condition was very good on the day of the evaluation.

Unfortunately, although the bright sunlight and blue sky was appreciated after a cold and frosty start the lighting from the low angle of the sun was quite detrimental for photographically recording the trenches.

Evaluation Trenches Results

Trench 1. (refer to fig 03)

Trench 1, Pl 01 provided an unbroken deposition sequence section aa, fig 04, PL 02:

[100] Grass cover on dark brown/black humic soil some 250mm I depth which provided the only finds assemblage {1}.

[101], a red/brown sandy clay, with occasional roots and small angular stone, some 400mm in thickness.

[102], red/brown sandy clay with 'pea sized' angular gravels at about 30/40%, some 600mm in thickness.

[103], at 1.2m for at least 350mm, sandy fill around rounded large red sandstone, stones, some with laminar fracturing.

The base of the trench became increasingly difficult to dig, composed mostly of rounded stone (natural glaciofluvial).

Trench 2. (refer to fig 03)

Trench 2, Pl 03, section bb fig 04, had less stratigraphic separation than in TR1 consisting of

[100], reduced from 250mm to 200mm.

[101], similar to TR1 at 200mm.

[103], reaching to a depth of 1.2m with larger rounded sandstone boulders to the bottom

Trench 2 produced no finds.

Finds

The finds were restricted to one sherd of blue & white china, 1 sherd of Pyrex plate, and a modern glass beer bottle base. A few fragments of corrugated iron were also observed during excavation of [100].

The finds were not retained



Discussion and Interpretation

Apart from a few bits of modern deposition, {1} the two evaluation trenches revealed no evidence of any archaeological resources with the exception of some possible lynchet deposition along the hedge, above the road, where Trench 1 was situated.

Research information dated the church to the medieval period with a suggestion of early Christian origins (Bradney, p359.), and as such does raise the possibility of an earlier potentially larger and rounded cemetery.

The present derelict garage along this wall prevents any detailed inspection but its construction would have inevitably disturbed the ground; however, there is the potential along the wall for archaeological evidence to have survived, if any ever existed.

Impact

Considering the results of the evaluation trenching, it is unlikely that any significant archaeology will be impacted upon by the proposal to build a new dwelling on this site.

Archive

Original archive will be retained by APAC Ltd.

A secondary Archive will be deposited with Gwent archives.

A copy of the final report & project design will be deposited with the HER.

Staff

Dr. Neil Phillips, AIFA.

Post ex
Mr A. O. Phillips.

The copyright for this report shall remain with the A.P.A.C. Ltd.

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Tom and Roger Boucher, for allowing APAC Ltd to undertake the evaluation, and for providing insight, conversation and refreshments.

Thanks are also due to the driver for his expertise with the mechanical digger.

**Bibliography and References:**

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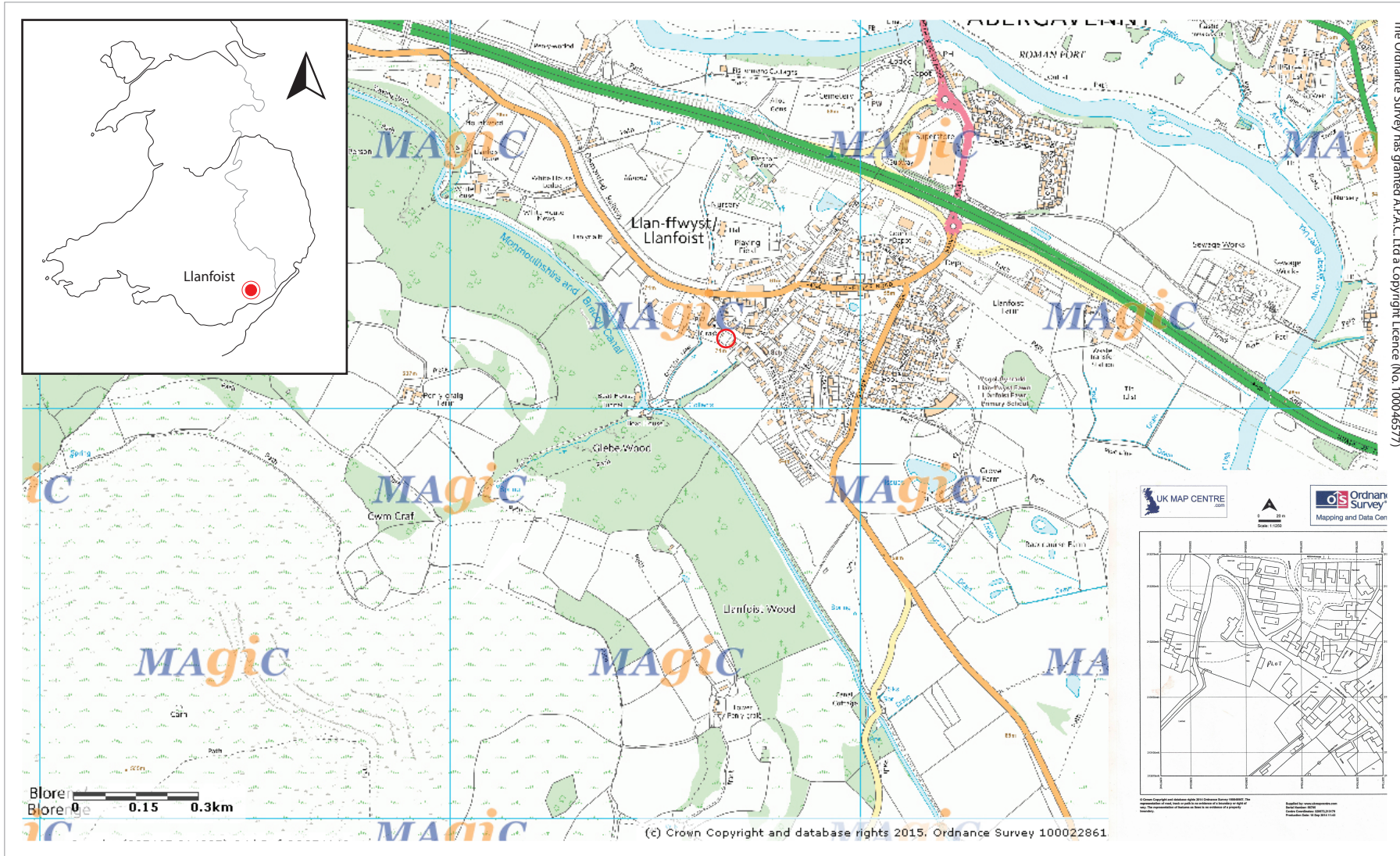
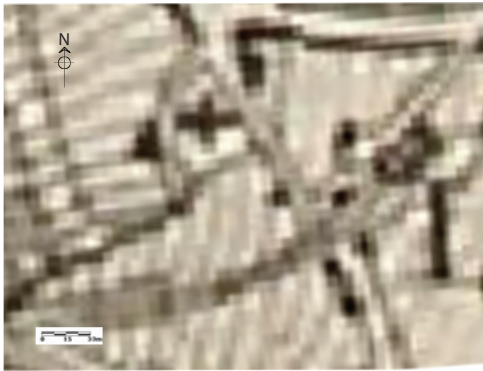


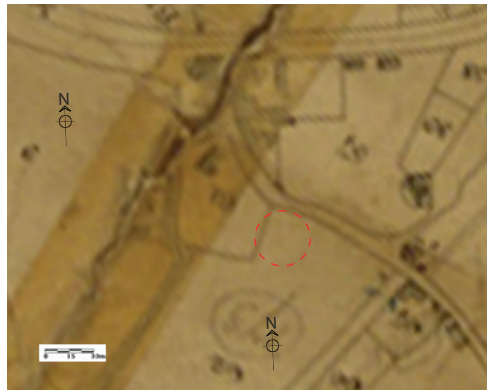
Fig 01: Location

02a



1832 1st Ed Ordnance Survey Sheet 42

02b



1844 Tithe Llanfoist D/PA 147.16

02c



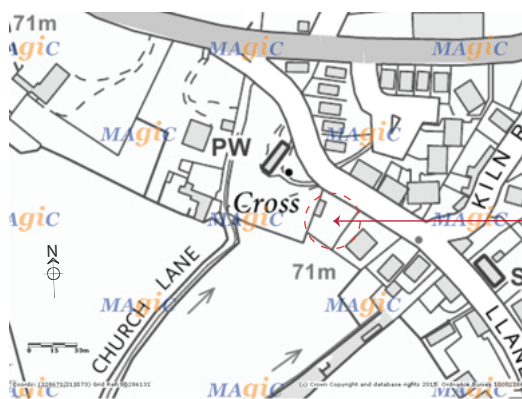
1899 Ordnance Survey XII.NE 6" pub 1902

02d



1944 Ordnance Survey XII.NE 6" pub 1953

02e



Field subdivided after 1953 & garage added

2015 <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

Fig 02: Caption



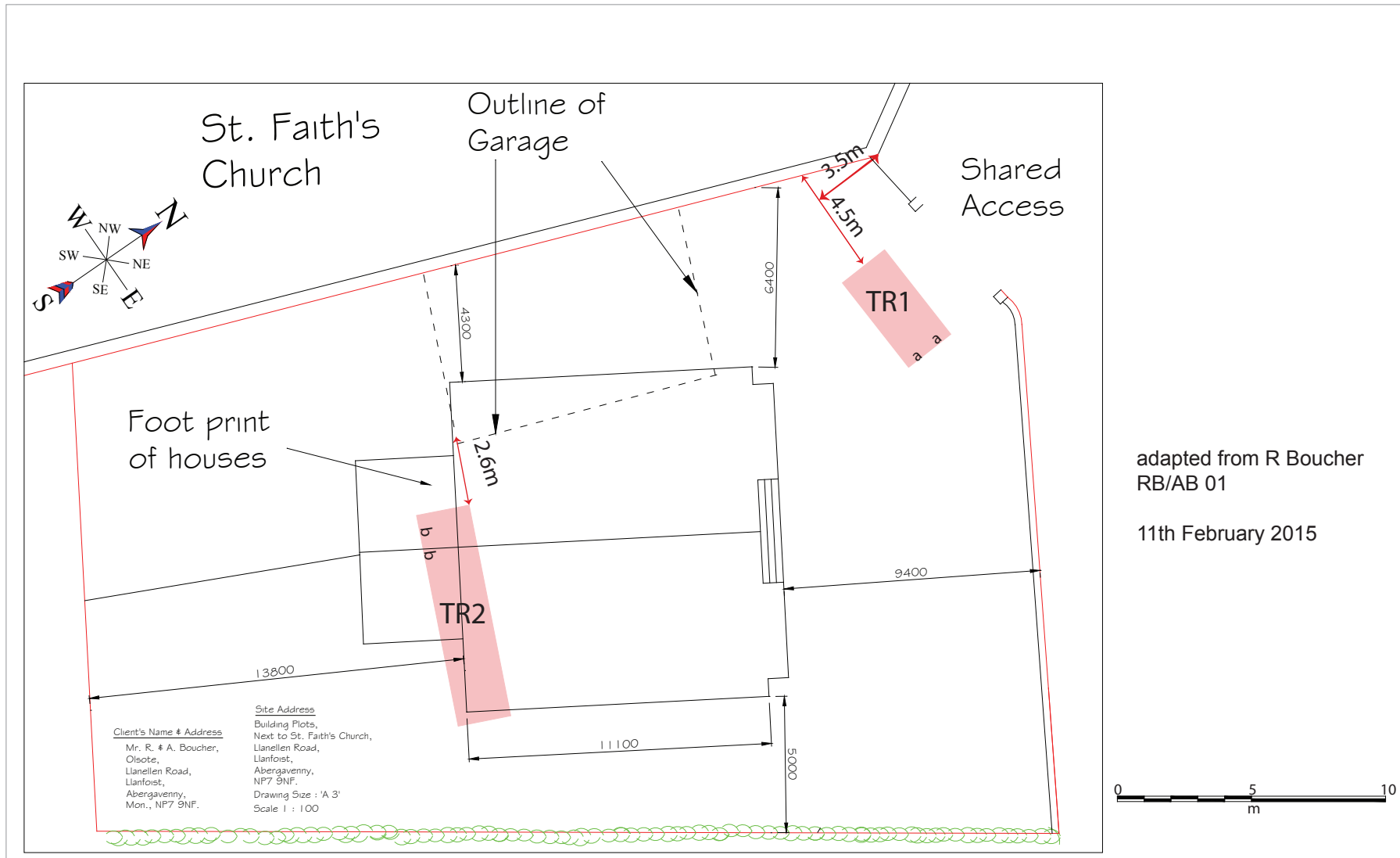


FIG 03 Trench Plans

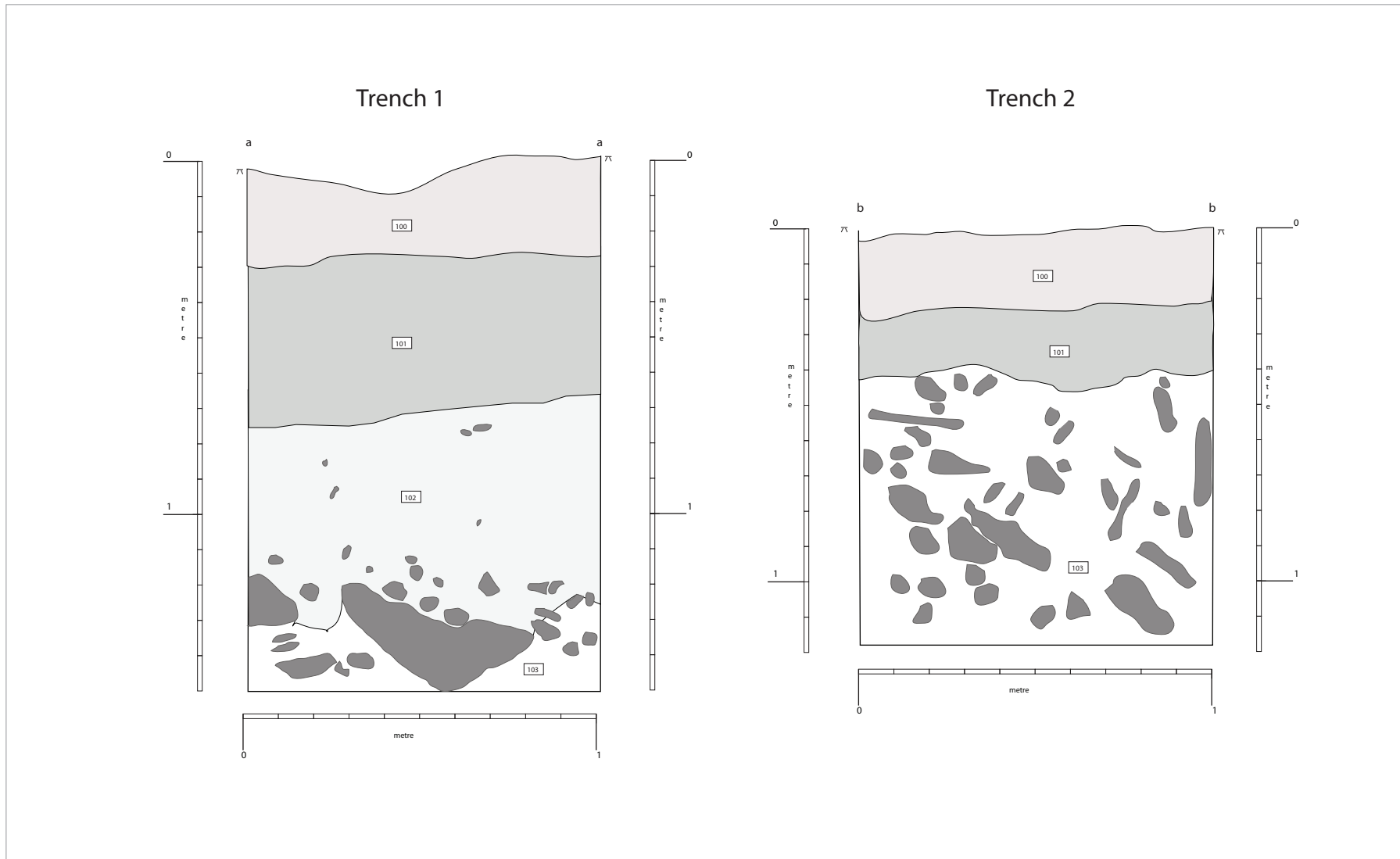


Fig 04: Sections aa & bb





DSC07677

Plate 01: Clearing trench 1. Contexts [100] [101] [102] [103]



DSC07685

Plate 01: Section in trench 1, East face. Contexts [100] [101] [102] [103]



DSC07684

Plate 03: View along trench 2. Contexts [100] [101] [103]

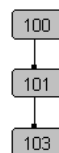


DSC07682

Plate 04: Section of trench 2, western end south side (with flash). Contexts [100] [101] [103]

Site: Plot adjacent to St Faith's, Llanfoist		Grid Ref: 328675 213170	Site No: EV/LLF/15	Alternate No: Trenches 1&2	1
CONTEXT	AREA	FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	FINDS	PHOTOGRAPHS
100	T1 & T2	Topsoil	Grass on dark brown/black humic soil TR1 \geq 250mm. TR2 \geq 200mm.	{1}	DSC07677, DSC07678, DSC07679, DSC07680, DSC07683, DSC07684, DSC07685, DSC07686.
101	T1 & T2	Deposit	Red/brown sandy clay, occasional root and small stone. TR1 \geq 400mm. TR2 \geq 300mm.		DSC07677, DSC07678, DSC07679, DSC07680, DSC07683, DSC07684, DSC07685, DSC07686.,
102	T1	Deposit	Red/brown sandy clay with 'pea sized' angular gravels. TR1 \geq 600mm.		DSC07677, DSC07685,
103	T1 & T2	Deposit	Sand and rounded and laminar fractured sandstone bedding. TR1 from 1.250m to 1.6m. TR2 from 0.75m to 1.2m.		DSC07677, DSC07678, DSC07679, DSC07680, DSC07681, DSC07682, DSC07683, DSC07684, DSC07685, DSC07686.

TR1

TR2


Appendix II

Photo no	Date	Camera	Size	Area	View	Description	Plate
15.56.36	11/02/2015	Samsung	4128x2322	SV	S	Site overview for design brief	
15.57.05	11/02/2015	Samsung	4128x2322	SV	SW	Site overview for design brief	
15.57.40	11/02/2015	Samsung	4128x2322	SV	SE	Site overview for design brief	
DSC07672	16/02/2015	DSC F828	3264x2448	GRO	V	1844 Llanfoist Tithe D/PA 147.16	
DSC07673	16/02/2015	DSC F828	3264x2448	GRO	S	1844 Llanfoist Tithe D/PA 147.16	
DSC07674	16/02/2015	DSC F828	3264x2448	GRO	SE	1844 Llanfoist Tithe D/PA 147.16	
DSC07675	16/02/2015	DSC F828	3264x2448	GRO	SE	1844 Llanfoist Tithe D/PA 147.16	
DSC07676	16/02/2015	DSC F828	3264x2448	GRO	NE	1844 Llanfoist Tithe D/PA 147.16	
DSC07677	17/02/2015	DSC F828	2448x3264	TR1	V	Clearing trench 1. Contexts [100] [101] [102] [103]	PL 01
DSC07678	17/02/2015	DSC F828	3264x2448	TR2	S	Trench 2 western end from top of spoil head. Contexts [100] [101] [103]	
DSC07679	17/02/2015	DSC F828	3264x2448	TR2	S	Trench 2 eastern end from top of spoil head. Contexts [100] [101] [103]	
DSC07680	17/02/2015	DSC F828	2448x3264	TR2	W	View along trench 2. Contexts [100] [101] [103]	
DSC07681	17/02/2015	DSC F828	3264x2448	TR2	N	Section of trench 2, western end north side. Contexts [100] [101] [103]	
DSC07682	17/02/2015	DSC F828	3264x2448	TR2	N	Section of trench 2, western end south side (with flash). Contexts [100] [101] [103]	PL 04
DSC07683	17/02/2015	DSC F828	3264x2448	TR2	W	View along trench 2 from inside trench. Contexts [100] [101] [103]	
DSC07684	17/02/2015	DSC F828	2448x3264	TR2	E	View along trench 2. Contexts [100] [103]	PL 03
DSC07685	17/02/2015	DSC F828	3264x2448	TR1	E	Section in trench 1, East face. Contexts [100] [101] [102] [103]	PL 02
DSC07686	17/02/2015	DSC F828	3264x2448	TR2	E	Section in trench 1, East face Detail. Contexts [100] [101] [103]	
DSC07687	17/02/2015	DSC F828	2448x3264	church			
DSC07688	17/02/2015	DSC F828	3264x2448	church			



2015-02-11 15.56.36.jpg



2015-02-11 15.57.05.jpg



2015-02-11 15.57.40.jpg



DSC07672.jpg



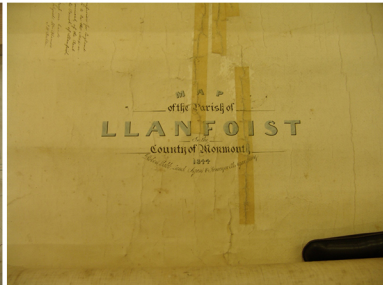
DSC07673.jpg



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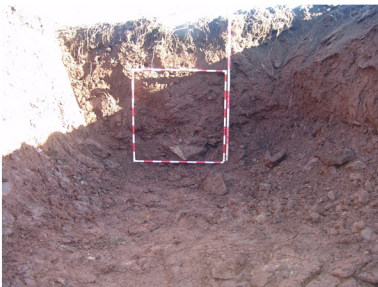
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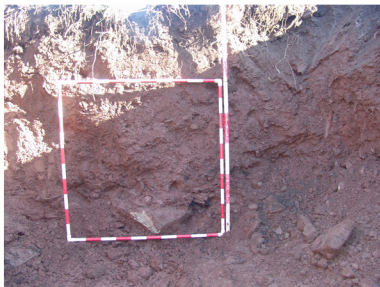
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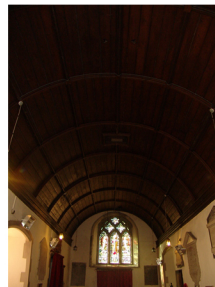
DSC07684.jpg



DSC07685.jpg



DSC07686.jpg



DSC07687.jpg



DSC07688.jpg



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Appendix III
Finds Index

EV/LLF/15
Adjacent to St Faith's Llanfoist

Find no	Area	Context	Description	Period	Date
1		100	1 sherd blue & white china. 1 shard 'pyrex', 1 partial modern glass beer bottle	Modern	17/02/15

Finds not retained