

Archaeology Wales

Castle Cinema Merthyr Tydfil

Archaeological Watching Brief



By
Adrian Hadley
&
Chris E Smith
Report No. 1134

Archaeology Wales

Castle Cinema, Merthyr Tydfil

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Non-Technical Summary

This report results from work undertaken by Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. It draws upon the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out during groundworks on the site of the former Castle Cinema, Merthyr Tydfil. The cinema was built in 1929 on the site of the Castle Inn (also known as the Castle Hotel). The inn, which was built in the 18th century, is closely associated with the Merthyr Uprising of 1831, an event of considerable significance in the development of the international labour movement.

During the archaeological investigation the remains of some of the walls and flagstone flooring from at least four stone-built cellars associated with the Castle Inn were identified in areas adjacent to the High Street. These were cleaned and recorded archaeologically before being preserved in situ during the subsequent site remediation works.

Two basements that probably formed part of the twentieth century Castle Cinema were encountered at the southern end of the site, along with brick and stone walls, concrete foundations, and an area where the mechanism of the cinema's famous Christie Organ would have been located. The basements probably replaced earlier cellars that once extended along the High Street and Castle Street.

1 Introduction

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In February and March 2013 Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) carried out an archaeological watching brief during remediation works at the site of the former Castle Cinema, Merthyr Tydfil. The assessment area is located between the High Street and Castle Yard. The development area comprises some 840 square metres, centred at 304950 206350 (Fig 1). The site is at an approximate height of 177.75m Ordnance Datum (OD).
- 1.1.2 The local planning authority for the project is Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC). The planning application reference is P/12/00266.
- 1.1.3 A Specification (Appendix 3) for the work to be undertaken was drawn up by Chris E Smith (AW). This was subsequently approved by Judith Doyle of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust on behalf of MTCBC.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The underlying solid geology of the site is composed of Carboniferous Limestone from the Tournaisian and Visean series (Geological Survey Map, 2001).

- 1.2.2 The site is located within the historic centre of Merthyr Tydfil. The site is located between High Street and Castle Yard (Fig 2).

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 1.3.1 The Castle Inn, also known as the Castle Hotel (Fig 7 & Fig 8), was built in the eighteenth century, probably during an early period in the industrial development of Merthyr Tydfil, a process that eventually saw the transformation of the town from a small, rural, settlement, to a major industrial centre occupied by upwards of 40,000 people.
- 1.3.2 In 1829 a depression hit the town's iron industry that was to last for three years. As a result, many workers were made redundant and the wages of others were cut. With prices rising at the same time, severe hardship was experienced by many, and in order to survive, large numbers were forced to take out loans that they had little chance of paying back. This resulted in their creditors turning to the much despised Court of Requests, an institution that had been set up in 1809 to allow bailiffs to seize the property of debtors.
- 1.3.3 The Merthyr Rising was the violent climax to many years of simmering unrest among the working population of the town and surrounding areas. A large number of protestors gathered in Merthyr at the beginning of June 1831. Soldiers were ordered to protect the Castle Inn in the High Street where local employers and magistrates were holding a meeting. The workers marched there to demand a reduction in the price of bread and an increase in their wages, but these requests were rejected. When the crowds refused to disperse, soldiers were ordered to fire on them, killing several of the crowd. The protesters then took over the town, but within a few days the authorities had regained control through force. Twenty-six people were arrested and put on trial for taking part in the revolt; Dic Penderyn, a local miner, was wrongfully hanged for allegedly stabbing a soldier (Malaws, 2008)
- 1.3.4 The Castle Cinema was built in 1929 (Ball & Co., 2010 - see Appendix 4) on the site of the Castle Inn (NPRN 408151), following the latter's demolition in the mid-1920s. It incorporated a Christie Organ at the centre piece of the stage, and at the time of its construction was considered to be one of the finest cinemas in Wales.
- 1.3.5 The Castle Cinema closed in 2010 after falling into a poor state of repair. The building was purchased by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and demolished in 2011
- 1.3.6 This site is located within the historic core of Merthyr and the remains of the Castle Inn are of regional architectural interest. The historical importance of the structure, however, specifically its close association with the Merthyr Uprising, means that it has an archaeological significance that goes beyond a consideration of its function and design.
- 1.3.7 The redevelopment of the site has impacted upon the remains of the Castle Inn, in particular its foundations and cellars. Despite this, however, walls relating to the

building were identified, cleaned and recorded during the initial clearance of the site, a process that allowed to them to be preserved *in situ* below the extant ground surface.

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 Watching Brief

2.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken to:

- Allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
- Provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching brief archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself were not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- The main objective of a watching brief was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

3 Methodology

3.1 Watching Brief

- 3.1.1 The removal of overburden and demolition rubble across the site was undertaken by mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision. Subsequently, selected areas were hand-cleaned to facilitate archaeological identification and recording.
- 3.1.2 All archaeologically significant walls, surfaces and sections were examined and recorded. All archaeological features were hand excavated.
- 3.1.3 Walls deemed to be of archaeological significance were protected and left *in situ*. To achieve this, the crushed rubble formed from the overburden deposits was compacted evenly around the extant walls.
- 3.1.4 On-site archaeological works were undertaken by Adrian Hadley. The project was managed by Chris E Smith (MifA).
- 3.1.5 All areas were photographed using high resolution digital photography and all on-site illustrations were undertaken on drafting film using recognised conventions and scales (1:10, 1:20, 1:50) as appropriate.

- 3.1.6 All works were undertaken in accordance with the IfA's *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (2008, revised 2011) and current Health and Safety legislation.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the excavation.

4 Watching Brief Results

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 Rubble overburden deposits, resulting from the 2011 demolition of the Castle Cinema, were found to be up to 3.0m deep across the site.
- 4.1.2 The ground conditions were mixed, wet and dry, throughout the course of the work.

4.2 Description

- 4.2.1 The results of the archaeological investigation are discussed below and shown in figs 3-6 and plates 1-14. It should be noted that the walls relating to the cellars and basements have been labelled numerically for the purposes of this report. These divisions have been used to broadly distinguish individual cellars or basements; further partitions may once have existed that are no longer evident.
- 4.2.2 Basement 1 (Fig 5, Plates 3-4) At the southern end of the site, over two metres depth of demolition rubble was excavated to expose a large basement associated with the Castle Cinema. This area was triangular in shape, defined by boundary walls fronting Castle Street and Castle Yard, and to the north by a substantial concrete wall (that ran across the site). The latter structure was 0.7m wide and 14.9m long, aligned east-south-east to west-north-west. The basement, demarcated by these three retaining walls, extended approximately 14.4m north-south by 16.7m east-west. The floor comprised a concrete slab, at least 150mm (6 inches) thick. Overall the cellar was about 2.5m deep; the floor level was recorded as 175.20m OD.
- 4.2.3 A number of internal walls were noted along the south-east and western elevations. These were of modern brick construction. Some of the dividing walls were tied into the perimeter walls. The boundary wall was approximately 0.5m wide, built of coursed stone. Lime mortar and cement render was noted on both main elevations of the stone wall. Limewash was also present on the western wall. The wall coatings noted within this basement suggest that cellars associated with the Castle Inn formerly extended across this part of the development site.

- 4.2.4 The most significant feature within this basement was a partially blocked-up pavement light, or basement access, located on the western elevation. The internal opening was 1.83m (6 foot) wide and 2.11m (6 foot 11 inches) high. This feature was defined within the pavement along Castle Yard as a rectangle of tarmac within brick paving, to give an estimated depth of 1.78m for the recess. Within the cellar, the corners of the opening were of Ebbw Vale brick. The wall above had formerly been supported by the extant 0.25m thick concrete lintel (which had been cast *in situ* over steel bars). This opening was seemingly constructed as a basement access for the cinema, but the original opening could be contemporary with the Castle Inn.
- 4.2.5 The other noteworthy feature identified during monitoring is the opening at the eastern end of the concrete retaining wall. This doorway measured 1.39m between the concrete wall and a substantial brick pier along the south-east boundary of the site. The pier had been built of Ebbw Vale brick and re-used stone blocks in cement mortar and was tied into the stonework along the south-east elevation. The position of this opening indicates that the area to the north was also used as a basement for the Castle Cinema.
- 4.2.6 Basement 2 (Fig 5, Plate 5) The extent of this basement is uncertain, although the remains of a stone wall (0.46m thick) were encountered some 9.8m to the north of the entranceway. The projected line of this stone wall was not parallel to the concrete retaining wall; this would suggest that the latter does not respect the alignment of any previous foundations or cellar walls (relating to the Castle Inn). The basement was defined to the east and south-east by the stone boundary wall along the High Street and Castle Street, respectively. The alignment and position of the western wall was not ascertained due to ground disturbance. However, a large concrete foundation base had been cast *in situ* some 10m west of the eastern boundary, and this defined the maximum westward extent of this basement.
- 4.2.7 The excavation depth within this area was about 1.8m. A concrete floor slab had partly survived in the eastern part of this basement; the height of this was recorded as 176.02m OD. This level is 0.8m higher than the floor of Basement 1.
- 4.2.8 A blocked pavement light or coal chute was identified on the eastern elevation. This would have extended onto the pavement along the High Street, but no evidence for the opening was found beyond the site boundary. This feature was 0.61m (2 foot) wide. Lime mortar render was recorded on the same wall, which provides a further indication that this modern basement may have originated as a cellar.
- 4.2.9 As mentioned above, only a short section of the northern stone wall had survived within this basement. This wall was attached to a large concrete base. The remains of this wall indicated this had once extended around the concrete block.
- 4.2.10 Cellar 1 (Fig 6, Plates 6-9) This cellar was identified to the north of the concrete base recorded along the eastern boundary wall. The back wall of the cellar was largely intact. The south-west corner of the cellar comprised a stone wall with lime mortar, about 0.47m or 0.7m wide. This extended internally 3.7m along the side wall (east-west) and 2.5m (north-south) along the back of the cellar, to an opening (1.02m) that

lead to another cellar further west (Cellar 4). Brickwork flanked the entranceway to this cellar, and a single brick skin was evident along a 2.44m long section of the back wall, between the opening and the north-west corner. Overall the back wall was 0.74m-0.8m thick. The north wall had only partly survived, but was recorded as approximately 0.6m thick. It was noted that the northern wall was not perpendicular to the back wall.

- 4.2.11 Extensive ground disturbance was encountered along the presumed line of the northern wall. This meant that the precise dimensions of this cellar were not determined. However, the dimensions of the back wall indicate this cellar was probably rectangular, measuring 6.00m (north-south) by 11.04m (east-west). The cellar floor consisted of pennant flagstones. The general level of the floor was 175.85m OD.
- 4.2.12 The boundary wall at the front of the cellar (eastern elevation) was noted to have been partly rebuilt in stone and brick. Sections of this wall had also been underpinned or rebuilt on a new concrete foundation. This wall was probably stabilised and strengthened when the Castle Cinema was built.
- 4.2.13 Cellar 2 (Fig 6, Plates 9-10) Another corner wall was identified towards the northern end of the site. The back wall of this cellar was set back some 4.5m from the eastern boundary with the High Street. The walls here were predominantly built in stone, but with some brickwork evident. The cellar floor consisted of pennant flagstones. The average height of the floor was 175.87m OD, which is similar to the level recorded within Cellar 1.
- 4.2.14 The walls at the north-west corner of this structure were only 0.46m high. From this corner the side wall extended 1.1m (east-west) to an opening, 1.2m across, within the northern elevation. This section of the northern cellar wall was recorded as 0.7m thick. The missing section of walling adjoining the stone boundary wall was determined by the line of the flagstones.
- 4.2.15 The line of the southern wall was not ascertained due to ground disturbance, but the cellar perhaps extended 5m along the front of the building. Where the southern wall potentially joined the front cellar wall there is a slight realignment of the boundary (along the High Street); consequently, it is not known if the southern and northern cellar walls were parallel.
- 4.2.16 As with Cellar 1, the boundary wall had been extensively underpinned with concrete, or rebuilt on new foundations. These modifications may be contemporary with the construction of the Castle Cinema.
- 4.2.17 Cellar 3 (Fig 6) This cellar was largely demarcated by the pennant flagstones that extended from an opening in the wall to the south. The cellar floor abutted the boundary wall to the east, but appears to have been truncated to the north by a wall associated with the Castle Cinema. It is therefore probable that the floor extended further than the recorded measurement of 3.2m (north-south). The position and alignment of the western wall was not determined. If the latter had been a continuation

of the back wall of Cellar 2, then this cellar would also have extended 4.5m (east-west) from the front boundary wall (adjoining the High Street).

- 4.2.18 The floor height in this cellar was 176.02m OD. This is 15cm higher than level recorded in the adjacent cellar. The difference in floor height may suggest that the opening between Cellars 2 & 3 is not contemporary with the original construction.
- 4.2.19 Extensive modification to the boundary wall was noted within this cellar. This wall had been underpinned with concrete (or rebuilt on concrete foundations). Part of the wall had also been rebuilt in Ebbw Vale brick. This work was probably completed to strengthen the foundations for the Castle Cinema.
- 4.2.20 Cellar 4 (Fig 6, Plates 11-12) This was the best preserved cellar found during the watching brief. The walls of this structure were largely intact, recorded as up to 1.2 tall. The southern wall had been damaged by previous groundworks, but the line of this structure was evident on the ground. Many of the pennant flagstones were also missing and replaced by a large steel plate (some 40mm thick) over the central part of the cellar floor.
- 4.2.21 The cellar was located more or less in the centre of the development site. The position of this structure indicates that the cellars beneath the Castle Inn extended over 14 metres back from the High Street (eastern site boundary).
- 4.2.22 This cellar was rectangular in plan. Overall, the cellar measured 1.6m-1.7m east-west and 6.3m north-south (to the line of the southern wall). The floor comprised pennant flagstones, although many of these were missing. The average height of the floor was 175.78m OD, which is similar to the level recorded within Cellar 1.
- 4.2.23 The three extant walls were predominantly built of stone in lime mortar with some brick noted flanking the entrance on the eastern wall. The walls had also been plastered in lime mortar. The wall dividing cellars 1 and 4 was 0.74m to 0.8m thick. The remaining walls to the north, south and west were some 0.6m wide. The back (west) wall bowed outwards at the top (by about 10cm); this may not be an original feature of this wall, but more likely the result of previous groundworks (for the Castle Cinema).
- 4.2.24 As noted above, the cellar floor had partly been replaced by a steel plate which measured 1m by 1.83m. The plate was removed, to expose bedding material of coal dust/ash deposited over a brick base. The brickwork formed a shallow arch, creating a 10-15cm void in the centre of the floor along a north-south axis. This was presumably intended to act as a sump for the cellar. The full extent of the brickwork was not determined, but this may have extended under the entire cellar floor.
- 4.2.25 Modern Wall adjacent to the Northern Site Boundary. The wall at the back of the old cinema was set back approximately 3m from, and parallel with, the northern site boundary. The mechanisms designed to raise and lower the cinema Christie Organ were set into this wall. The central section of this wall was built in stone and brick, extending approximately 11.5m across, and flanked by *circa* 0.8m square brick pillars. It is probable that this internal wall extended to the eastern (High Street) and western

(Castle Yard) site boundary in order to support the cinema flooring. These side walls were constructed of poorly coursed stone. There is no evidence to suggest this wall was adapted from foundations associated with the Castle Inn.

- 4.2.26 The full extent of the organ pit was not determined during the watching brief; the walls to the south, east and west had seemingly been severely damaged during the demolition phase. The excavation depth in this part of the site was approximately 2 metres.
- 4.2.27 Northern Boundary Wall. The 3m wide strip at the northern end of the site was not excavated in order to avoid disturbance to the adjoining property (No.97 High Street). However, two small trial pits were excavated along this wall at the start of the remediation work. The foundation depth at both locations was more than a metre deep. At surface, this wall was over 0.5m wide, extending below the neighbouring building. It is evident that this is a substantial foundation, possibly contemporary with the Castle Inn.
- 4.2.28 Undisturbed Ground adjacent to Western Site Boundary. The foundation depth of the stone wall along the western side of the site was recorded at approximately 0.8m - 1.5m below ground level. This is considerably less deep than the perimeter wall within Basement 1 (further along the western elevation) and the site boundary opposite (along the High Street).
- 4.2.29 Between 1.2m and 2m of rubble was excavated along the western boundary. The natural subsoil was also encountered at shallower depth within this area, noted to be approximately 0.8m below surface at 176.80m OD. There is consequently no evidence for cellars in this part of the site. Moreover, the comparative absence of disturbed ground suggests that formerly this area was used as yards to the back of the Castle Inn.
- 4.2.30 Figs 7-9 show the Castle Hotel as it appeared in the 19th and early 20th centuries prior to its 1929 demolition.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Overall conclusion

- 5.1.1 The remains of a number of cellars associated with the Castle Inn (also known as the Castle Hotel) were identified during the archaeological investigation (Cellars 1-4, Fig 6). These appear to have been severely damaged during the construction of the Castle Cinema. The cellar walls and flagstone floors were most disturbed near the boundary with the High Street and not all of the dividing walls survived. Nonetheless, the extant remains suggest at least three cellars (Cellar 1-3) were located at the front of the Castle Inn. The walls and floors were better preserved further back from the eastern boundary, towards the centre, where a small cellar survived largely intact (Cellar 4).

- 5.1.2 The cellars were considered the primary areas of archaeological interest and as such their surviving walls and floors were preserved *in situ* by the groundworks contractor, being carefully encased within deposits of crushed rubble.
- 5.1.3 Apart from the cellars, two basements that probably formed part of the twentieth century castle cinema were encountered at the southern end of the site, along with brick and stone walls, concrete foundations, and an area where the mechanism of the cinema's famous Christie Organ would have been located. The basements probably replaced earlier cellars that once extended along the High Street and Castle Street.

6 Acknowledgements

- 6.1.1 Thanks are due to Helen Kell (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council), Gareth Williams (Capita Symonds, Cardiff) and the staff of Alun Griffiths (Contractors) Ltd.

7 Bibliography and References

Ball & Co., 2010, *Historic Report for Castle Cinema Castle Street, Merthyr Tydfil* (see Appendix 4)

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Institute for Archaeologists, 2008, revised 2011. *Standards and Guidance for a Watching Brief*

Malaws, 2008 *cited in*

<http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/site/408151/details/MERTHYR+RISING,+CASTLE+IN N,+HIGH+STREET,+MERTHYR+TYDFIL/> - Accessed 5/6/2013

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APPENDIX I: Figures

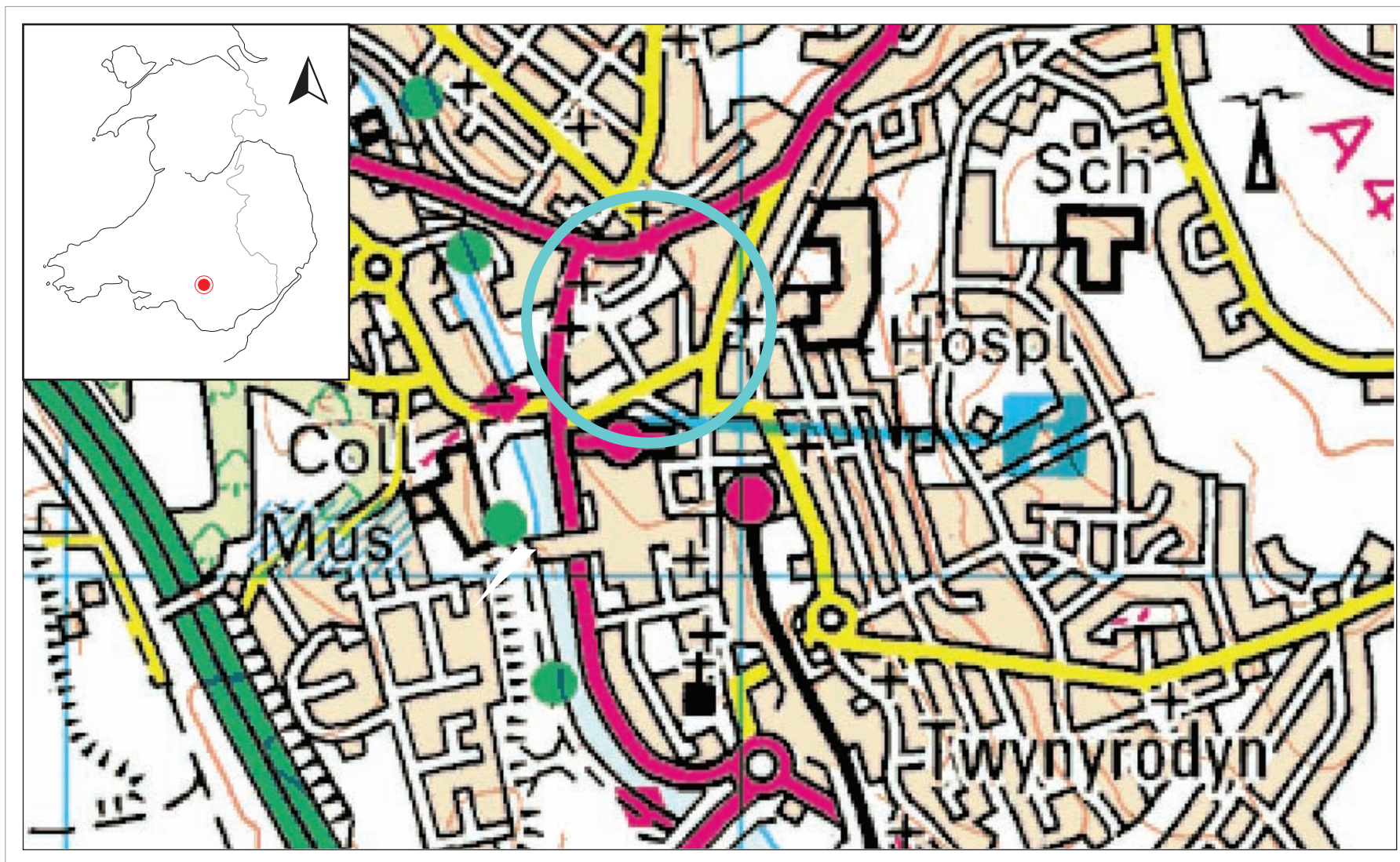


Fig 1: Map showing location of assessment area



Fig 2: Detailed location map showing assessment area

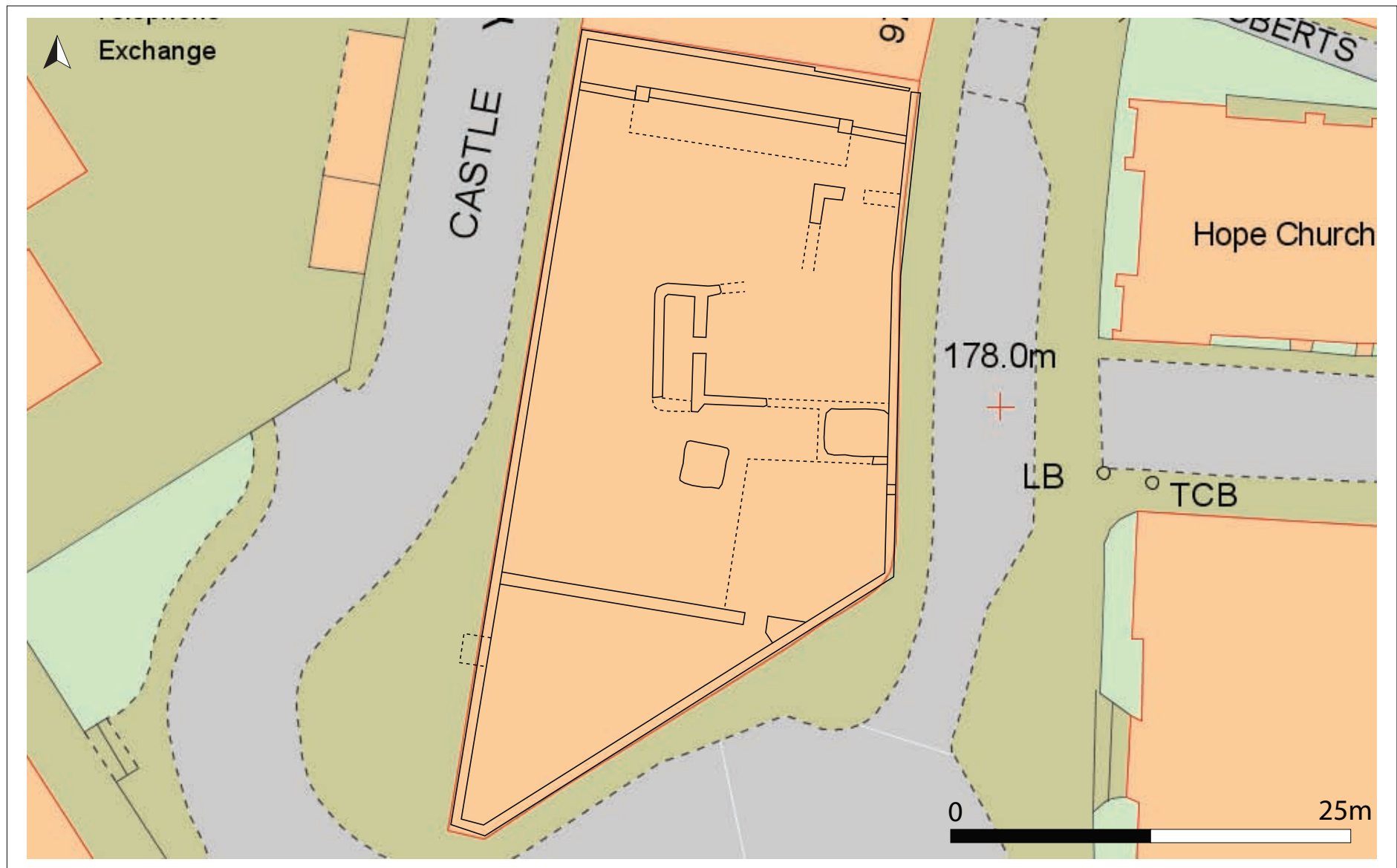


Fig 3: Map showing locations of exposed features

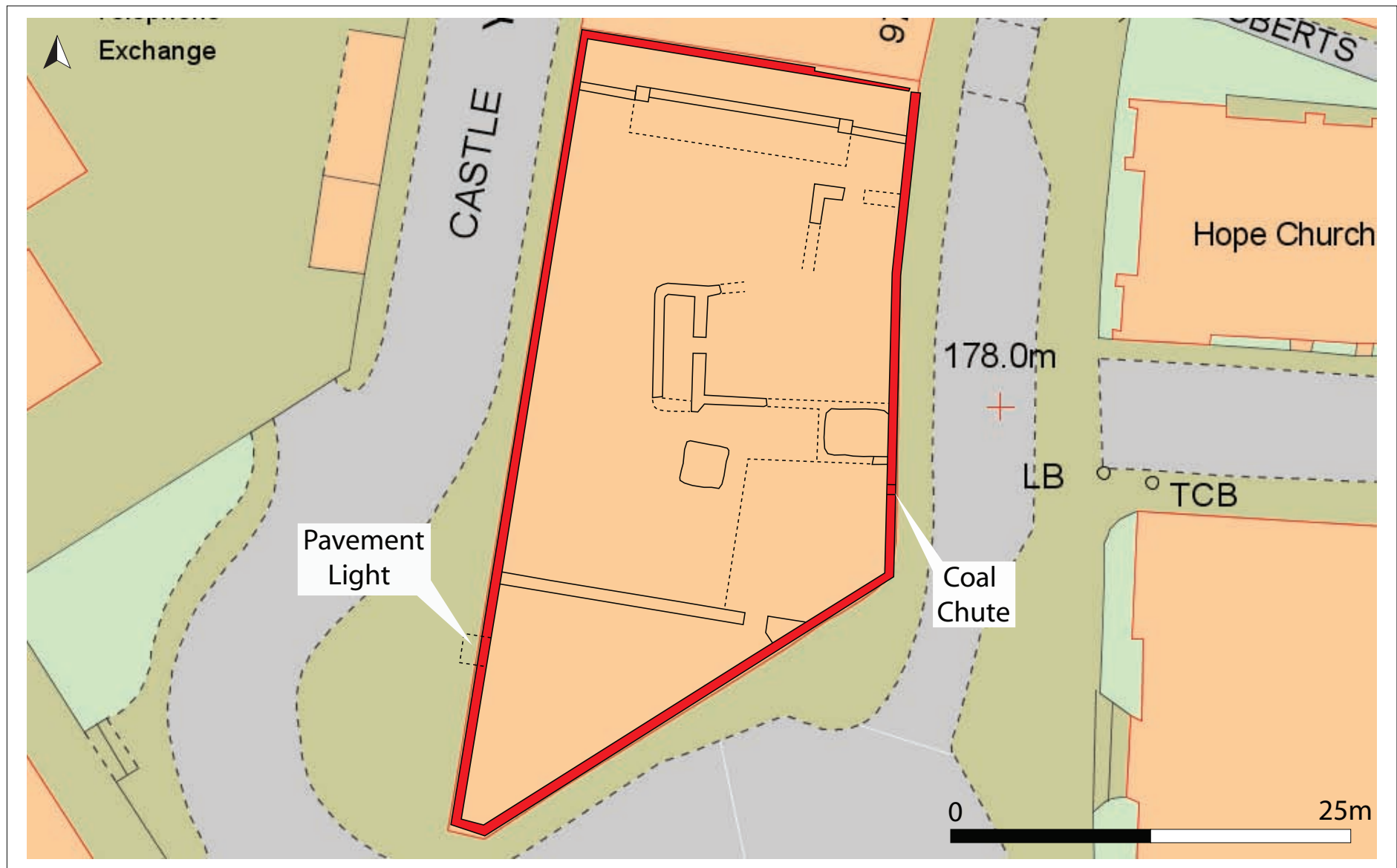


Fig 4: Map showing locations of foundations shared by both Castle Inn & Castle Cinema

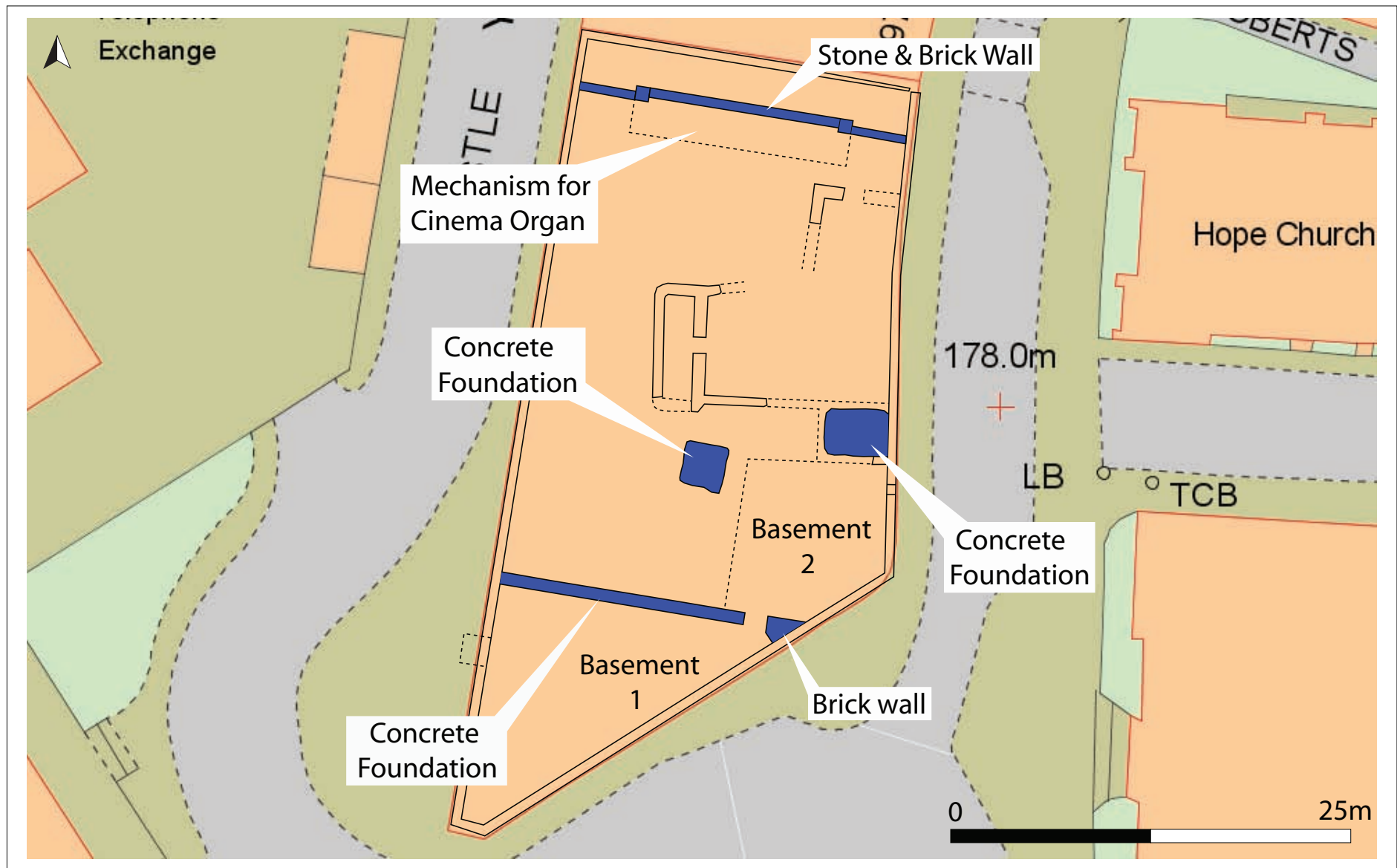


Fig 5: Map showing locations of construction associated with Castle Cinema

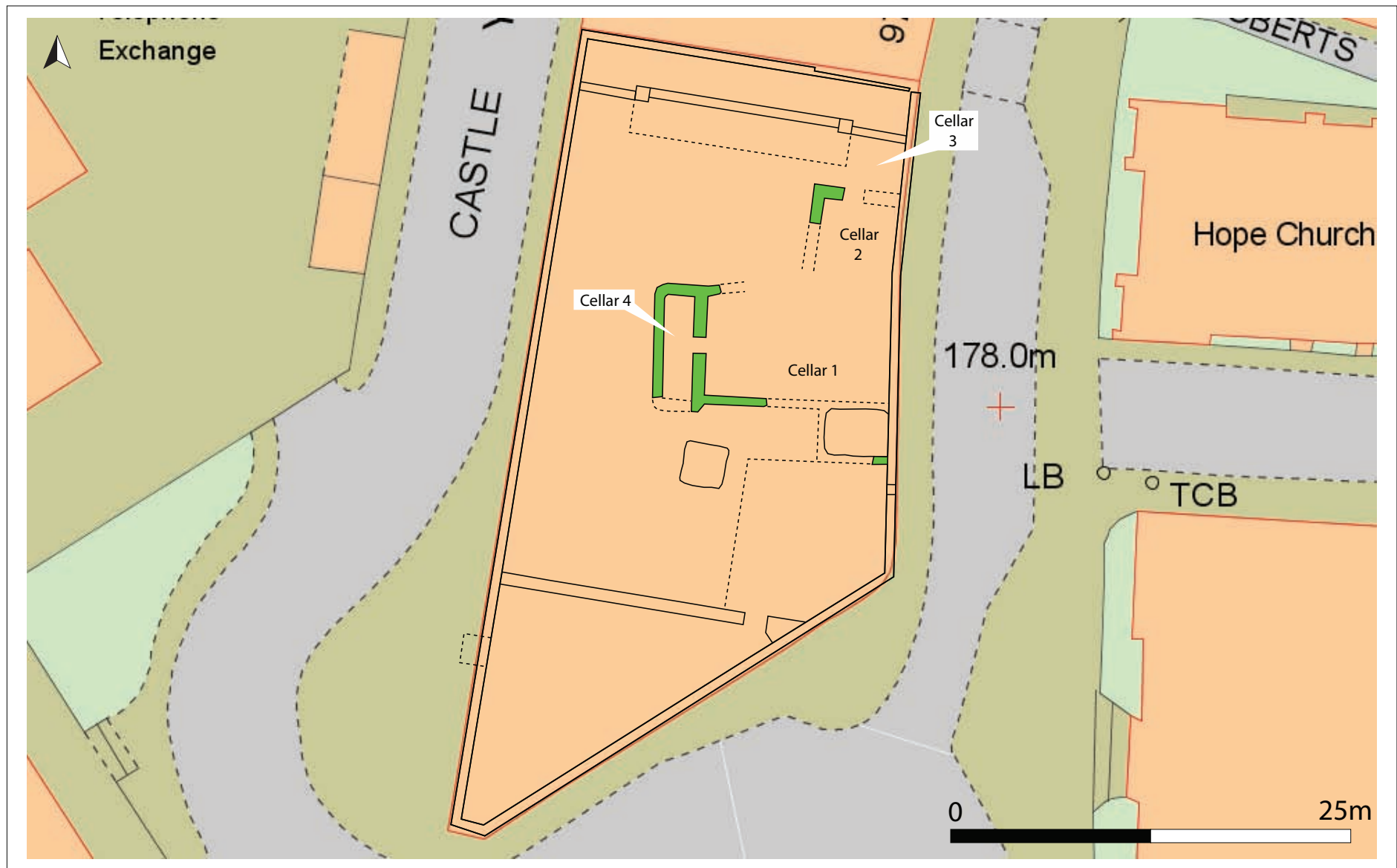


Fig 6: Map showing locations of construction associated with the Castle Inn



Fig 7: The Castle Hotel prior to its demolition in the mid 1920's



Fig 8: High Street, Merthyr Tydfil, with the Castle Hotel on the right



Fig 9: 1875 1:2500 OS Map showing the Castle Hotel

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APPENDIX II: Plates



Plate 1: General view of the assessment area from Castle Street (Looking north east)



Plate 2: Working shot of the remediation works (Looking south south west)



Plate 3: General view of basement 1 at the southern end of the site, with part of the floor slab in the foreground and the concrete retaining wall in the background (Looking north east)



Plate 4: View of the pavement light within basement 1, along the boundary with Castle Yard (Looking north west). Scale 1x1m



Plate 5: View of blocked coal chute within basement 2 (Looking east). Scale 1x1m



Plate 6: View of the south west corner of cellar 1 (Looking south)
Scale 1x1m



Plate 7: View of back wall of cellar 1 (western elevation) in foreground, with the entrance to cellar 4 on the right (looking west). Cellar 4 is shown in the background
Scale 1x0.5m



Plate 8: Oblique shot of the north west corner of cellar 1 (looking north west).
Cellar 4 is shown in the background



Plate 9: Working shot of the excavation (over Cellars 1&2), showing demolition material along the boundary with the High Street (looking north).



Plate 10: View of the north-west corner of Cellar 2 (looking west-north-west). In the background infill material is shown over the rear cellar wall (western elevation). The northern elevation is shown to the right, with the entrance to Cellar 3 at the bottom right. Scale 1x0.5m



Plate 11: Overview of Cellar 4 (looking north-north-west).



Plate 12: Oblique shot of the south-east corner of Cellar 4 (looking east-south-east). The entrance from Cellar 1 is shown on the left. Scales 1x1m & 2x0.5m



Plate 13: Working shot of the excavation along the wall near the northern site boundary (looking north-north-east). This wall was built as part of the Castle Cinema.



Plate 14: Working shot of the excavation, along the western side of the site, across the probable location of yards to the rear of the Castle Inn (looking south-south-west).

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APPENDIX III: WSI

Written Scheme of Investigation
For a Watching Brief:
Land at Former Cinema Site, Castle Street
Merthyr Tydfil

Prepared for:
Helen Kell
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Project No: 2111

12th Feb 2013

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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This specification details the proposal for an archaeological watching brief at the former Castle Cinema site, Castle Street, Merthyr Tydfil. It has been prepared by Archaeology Wales Ltd for Helen Kell of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

1. Introduction

The proposed development is at the site of the former Castle Cinema, Castle Street, Merthyr Tydfil (Henceforth – the site). The development proposal has been submitted by Capita Symonds acting as agents for Merthyr County Borough Council. The local planning authority is Merthyr County Borough Council and the planning application number is P/12/00266.

This specification has been prepared by Chris E Smith (MIfA), Project Manager, Archaeology Wales Ltd (Henceforth - AW) at the request of Helen Kell. It provides information on the methodology that will be employed by AW during an archaeological watching brief at the site.

GGAT (Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust), in its capacity as archaeological adviser to the local authority, has recommended that an archaeological watching brief is undertaken during removal of below ground rubble deposits.

All work will conform to Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (IfA 2008), and be undertaken by suitably qualified staff to the highest professional standards.

2 Site description

The Castel Cinema building closed in the 2010 after falling into a poor state of repair and Merthyr Tydfil County Council purchased the building later that year (2010) and it was subsequently demolished in 2011.

The Castle Cinema was constructed in 1929 on the site of the Castle Hotel, a significant historic building and important in the history of Merthyr and the foundation of the international Labour Movement.

3 Site specific objectives

The primary objectives of the work will be to locate and describe, by means of a watching brief during removal of below ground surface rubble, all archaeological features (though more specifically walls) that may be present within the development area. The work will elucidate the presence or absence of archaeological material, its character, distribution, extent, condition and relative significance.

The work will include a comprehensive assessment of regional context within which the archaeological evidence rests and will aim to highlight any relevant research issues within national and regional research frameworks.

The work will result in a report that will provide information of sufficient detail to allow informed planning decisions to be made which can safeguard the archaeological

resource. **Preservation *in situ* will be advocated where at all possible**, but where engineering or other factors result in loss of archaeological deposits, preservation by record will be recommended.

4 The proposed archaeological work

The proposed archaeological work relates to the whole of the site, i.e. all of the application area.

The aim of the work will be to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site. The work will include the following elements:

- A watching brief (Stage 1).
- The production of an illustrated report and the deposition of the site archive (Stage 2)

5 Method Statement for a Watching Brief (Stage 1)

A watching brief complying with the IfA Standards and Guidance on Watching Briefs (October 2008) will be completed during removal of below ground surface rubble deposits and during any other significant ground disturbances.

The watching brief is intended to ensure that any buried remains associated with The Castle Hotel will be fully investigated, recorded and preserved *in situ* if they are revealed.

As defined by the IfA (2008) 'the Watching Brief will provide an opportunity for the archaeologists present to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard'.

If such a find is made representatives of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and GGAT will be informed and a site meeting organised as appropriate. If, as a result of the meeting, GGAT recommend that further work is undertaken, for example the excavation of specific areas or features, AW will prepare a Specification for the work and an estimate of all associated costs.

Monitoring

GGAT will be contacted prior to the commencement of the watching brief, and subsequently once the work is underway.

Any changes to the specification that AW may wish to make after approval will be communicated to the GGAT for approval on behalf of Planning Authority.

Representatives of GGAT will be given access to the site so that they may monitor the progress of the watching brief. GGAT will be kept regularly informed about developments, both during the site works and subsequently during the post-fieldwork programme.

6 Method statement for the production of an illustrated report and the deposition of the site archive (Stage 2)

Report preparation

The report will contain the following:

- A fully representative description of the information gained from Stage 1 above, even if there should be negative evidence.
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results. This will be presented in Welsh, as required, to meet any Welsh language policy requirements.
- At least one plan showing the site's location in respect to the local topography, as well as the position of all excavated areas.
- Suitably selected plans and sections of significant archaeological features. All plans and sections should be related to Ordnance Datum.
- Written descriptions of all features and deposits excavated and their considered interpretation.
- A summary report on the artefactual and ecofactual assemblage and an assessment of its potential for further study, prepared by suitably qualified individuals or specialists.
- A statement of the local and regional context of the archaeological remains identified.
- An impact assessment, with mitigation proposals, of the proposed development on the archaeological resource can be considered and presented for consideration. This could include the mapped archaeological potential of the site in relation to the proposed development.

Copies of the report will be sent to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and GGAT and for inclusion in the HER. Digital copies will be provided in pdf format if required.

A summary report of the work will be submitted for publication to a national journal (eg Archaeology in Wales) no later than one year after the completion of the work.

The site archive

A project archive will be prepared in accordance with the National Monuments Record (Wales) agreed structure and be deposited within an appropriate local museum on completion of site analysis and report production. It will also conform to the guidelines set out in 'Management of Archaeological Projects Two, Appendix 3' (English Heritage 1991).

Arrangements will be made with the local museum before work starts. Wherever the archive is deposited, this information will be relayed to the HER.

Although there may be a period during which client confidentiality will need to be maintained, the report and the archive will be deposited not later than six months after completion of the work.

Other significant digital data generated by the survey (ie AP plots, EDM surveys, CAD drawings, GIS maps, etc) will be presented as part of the report on a CD/DVD. The format of this presented data will be agreed with the curator in advance of its preparation.

7 Resources and timetable

Standards

The watching brief will be undertaken by AW staff using current best practice.

AW is an IFA Registered Archaeological Organisation and all work will be undertaken to the standards and guidelines of the IFA.

Staff

The project will be undertaken by suitably qualified AW staff. Overall management of the project will be undertaken by Mark Houlston (a CV is available upon request).

Equipment

The project will use existing AW equipment.

Timetable of archaeological works

The work will be undertaken at the convenience of the client. A provisional start date of 18th Feb 2013 has been set.

Insurance

AW is an affiliated member of the CBA, and holds Insurance through the CBA insurance service.

Health and safety

All members of staff will adhere to the requirements of the *Health & Safety at Work Act, 1974*, and the Health and Safety Policy Statement of AW.

If AW has sole possession of the site, then AW will produce a detailed Risk Assessment for approval by the client before any work is undertaken. If another organisation has responsibility for site safety, then AW employees will be briefed on the contents of all existing Risk Assessments, and all other health and safety requirements that may be in place.

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APPENDIX IV: Historic Report

HISTORIC REPORT FOR

CASTLE CINEMA

CASTLE STREET, MERTHYR TYDFIL



1.00 **Introduction**

1.01 The purpose of this report is to provide a historic record of the property formerly known as Castle Cinema, Castle Buildings, Castle Street, Merthyr Tydfil.

1.02 The Castel Cinema building closed in the 2010 after falling into a poor state of repair and Merthyr Tydfil County Council purchased the building later that year (2010) and it was subsequently demolished in 2011.

A photographic condition survey of the property was undertaken by Ball & Co; Chartered Building Surveyors in November 2010. The survey was restricted to a visual inspection and no materials or finishes were removed during the inspection.

Ball & Co; Chartered Building Surveyors undertook various inspections of the property at through the demolition works and there were no findings of archaeological interest.

1.03 Various historic documents have been obtained form the following sources:

- Photographs of the building during the demolition were provided by Mr Richard Jones of MLA Photography.
- Historic information was provided Ms C Jacobs of Merthyr Tydfil Library & CADW.

- 1.04 Ownership and the use of the property have changed several times since it was constructed in the late nineteen twenties. The following chronology has been produced to assist in identifying the extent of the alterations works and use the building has had over the eighty year life span.

Chronology

1929	Construction and opening of Castle Cinema on behalf of Merthyr Cinemas Ltd.
1932	Association of British Cinemas (ABC) took ownership and operation of Castle Cinema.
1972	The Castel Cinema building was refurbished by Star Group of Companies to incorporate two Cinemas to the upper floors with a Bingo Hall and Social Club to the ground floor areas.
1977	Cinemas and Bingo Hall were operated by various independent operators.
1998	The Bingo Hall closed.
1999	The Cinema was refurbished with a 45 foot screen which was located in front of the original stage.
2003	<p>The Castle Cinema closed and the building fell into a state of disrepair.</p> <p>The Castle Cinema building was converted into a Ice Rink and Bowling Alley.</p> <p>The Castle Cinema building was converted into a public house / night club.</p>
2010	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council purchased the property which was subsequently demolished in 2011.

2.00 **Castle Cinema in 1929**

- 2.01 1929 was an exciting year for the town of Merthyr Tydfil with the construction of the Castle Cinema which incorporated a Christie Organ as the centre piece of the stage. The new Cinema building with the Christie Organ was considered to be one of the principalities finest cinemas.
- 2.02 The Castle Cinema building was located on the corner of Castle Street / High Street on the former site of the famous Castle Hotel. The Castle Hotel was demolished in the mid 1920's to make way for Castle Cinema development. The Castle Hotel dated back to the 1830's where it is said to have been constructed to mark the location of the Merthyr rising.



The Castle Hotel prior to demolition in the mid 1920's

- 2.03 The Castle Cinema development was conceived by Mr Fred Price, a well established trader with the community whom for many years had a general interest in "Pictures". It is understood that Mr Fred Price had financial interest in a number of Cinemas throughout South Wales region.
- 2.04 Castle Cinema opened on the 11th February 1929. The building was designed by architect O.P. Bevan and the construction works were undertaken by a local contractor Mr G. Warlow of Merthyr Tydfil, for the company known as Merthyr Cinemas Ltd.

The design, method of construction and materials used are discussed in detail in the latter part of the report.

- 2.05 Mr Frank Taylor was the manager when Castle Cinema first opened and endured several successful years. The investment in the Castle Cinema development and the cutting edge technology provided by the Christie Unit Organ and the Petter Oil Engines within the basement meant the Cinema was one of the finest of its time.

- 2.06 The Christie Organ represented the latest development in Cinema Organ construction, and combines the musical features of the finest Cathedral Pipe Organ with the manifold voices of the Symphony Orchestra. This particular type of Cinema Organ was completely adequate to musically illustrate every type of picture or render any solo performance which may be required. It was constructed from ten different species of timber (Teak, Pine, Birch, Rosewood, Mahogany, Maple, Idaho, Sequoia, Oak and Beech).

The Christie Unit Organ was constructed by Messrs Wm. Hill & Son and Norman & Beard, Ltd, the oldest firm of organ builders in this country with a reputation of nearly 200 years.

The Organ was placed in the front of the screen, but so that it may in nowise detract from the pleasure of the audience it can be raised or lowered as required by means of an electric lift, also the work of Messrs Evans of Leicester.



Castle Cinema Organist Gene Lynn

- 2.07 The Cinema was powered by electricity generated by two Petter Oil Engines located within the basement area. The engines generated 32 Kilowatts that provided light for projecting films and all general lighting throughout the building.

The Petter engines were considered to be suitable at the time because they provided a smooth regular motion with little maintenance and high reliability with a steady supply of power to prevent flickering.

3.00 **Castle Cinema in 1932**

- 3.01 In November 1932 Associated British Cinemas (ABC) purchased the Cinema building and controlled the daily operations. The Cinema was renamed ABC Castle Super Cinema circa 1963, still seating a vast 1,696 seats.

Pop concerts were occasionally staged, one being Pink Floyd in 1967 and another group Small Faces.



ABC Cinema

- 3.02 The beginning of the Second World War in 1939 which resulted in the British Government closing all public places of entertainment for at least one week. By the end of the war Castle Cinema was the only Cinema in Merthyr operated by the Associated British Cinema group (ABC).
- 3.03 The Christie Organ that was installed when the building first opened in 1929 could often be heard on many radio broadcasts throughout the 1930's and 1940's. However the Organ fell into a state of disrepair in the late 1940's and it is understood it was fully removed in 1954.

4.00 **Castle Cinema in 1972**

4.01 Various managers operated the Cinema complex during Associated British Cinemas (ABC) ownership of the property between 1932 and 1972. In 1972 the property was purchased by Star Group based in Leeds.

4.02 The new owners Star Group refurbished the building which consisted of extending the first floor balcony to incorporate two smaller cinemas while the ground floor consisting of a bingo hall / social club.

The conversion of the two studio cinemas in the balcony seated 195 and 98 both were by means of periscope mirror projection with Westar Projectors and long play towers. The projection room being constructed from the second balcony level high in the original building, making it a nightmare journey for any projectionist to carry films up and down.

4.03 On the 12th October 1972 the former world boxing champion Howard Winstone opened the newly refurbished entertainments centre.

4.04 It is understood that the decline of the cinema building began shortly after the refurbishment works were completed. Various conversions allowed parts of the building to fall into disrepair, whilst other areas were well maintained, notably the decorative plaster work. The building was reported to have suffered from roofing defects whilst it was a bingo hall, prompting complaints from occupiers.

5.00 Castel from 1977 to present day

5.01 From 1977 onwards ownership of the Castle Cinema building was transferred to various independent operators.

5.02 In 1995 Mr Geraint Davies (a local business man) who operated the adjacent Bingo Hall and Social Club arranged a facelift investment and reopened the cinema complex. This investment incorporated two new state of the art screens that replaced the old painted plaster board that formed the original screen.

Poor investment in building maintenance by previous owners and tenants resulted in roof leaks that began to upset cinema and bingo goes for some time which complied problems for the cinema eventually resulting in the closure of the Bingo Hall and Social Club in 1998.

5.03 In 1998 the former stalls area was once again refurbished / re-seated and a giant 45 foot screen placed in front of the original stage area, with luxury seating for 300, this new Screen 1 opened in June 1999 with "The Mummy". The two smaller screens to the first floor area also remained in operation. To the rear of the report is a copy of a planning application drawing produced by Bill Chew Associates that identifies the ground floor layout in 1999.

5.04 Competition from the arrival of a new state of the art multiplex cinema to Merthyr Tydfil leisure village together with the high costs of maintaining the building finally resulted in the closure of the cinema complex in September 2003.

It is understood that the building by this time had degenerated into a dilapidated state and was no longer used for presentation of films again.

5.05 After the closure of the cinema complex in 2003, despite its dilapidated appearance the building attracted new investment. The ground floor area was converted into a skating rink, bowling alley and finally a public house / night club until its closure in 2010.

Lack of general maintenance to the roof structure resulted in excessive moisture penetration to the upper parts of the building however the original structure remained in relatively good condition. The general condition of the building as a whole together with the costs associated with undertaking the essential repairs and removing the Asbestos prevented any further investment.

5.06 In 2010 Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council purchased the Castle Cinema building and demolition commenced in January 2011.

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APPENDIX V: Archive Cover Sheet

ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Castle Cinemam Merthyr Tydfil

Site Name:	Castle Cinema
Site Code:	CCM/13/WB
PRN:	-
NPRN:	408151
SAM:	-
Other Ref No:	-
NGR:	NGR SO 304950 206350
Site Type:	Brown Field Urban
Project Type:	Watching Brief
Project Manager:	Chris E Smith
Project Dates:	Feb-March 2013
Categories Present:	Post-medieval to Modern
Location of Original Archive:	AW
Location of duplicate Archives:	-
Number of Finds Boxes:	-
Location of Finds:	-
Museum Reference:	-
Copyright:	AW
Restrictions to access:	None

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