

**PHASE 2A, BLUESTONE HOLIDAY VILLAGE,  
CANASTON BRIDGE, PEMBROKESHIRE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**SEPTEMBER/ OCTOBER 2010**



Prepared by:  
Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.  
For: Dawnus Construction



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Gan / By

**Hubert Wilson**

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**SUMMARY**

*This report has been produced by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services, in response to a request from Mr Matthew Morgan of Dawnus Construction, to provide an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the development of Phase 2A, at Bluestone Holiday Village, Canaston Bridge, Pembrokeshire (NGR SN0679 1334).*

*The site comprises a 14.5 acre field, originally under pasture, and lies on a north facing slope.*

*An archaeological planning condition was placed on the development as it lies close to two historical sites of national importance. Directly to the west of the development site lies Newton North Church, which has early medieval origins. It is situated c.180m from the centre of the development. Castell Coch, a 14<sup>th</sup> century hall-house lying within a moated enclosure, lies 450m to the north-east. Previous archaeological evaluations undertaken within the Phase 2A development area in 2003/4 revealed a small number of medieval features survive. The potential for further evidence of early medieval or medieval activity within the Phase 2A development was considered possible due to the proximity of the known sites of high archaeological significance, supported by the presence of buried archaeological remains identified through archaeological evaluation.*

*The watching brief was undertaken during the initial topsoil strip across the proposed development area. Archaeological observation during the topsoil strip revealed two discrete areas of possible archaeological activity. The first was noted prior to groundworks comprising a series of linear disturbances in the topsoil approximately 100m long, 10m apart and 2m wide. These were not reported in earlier archaeological evaluations and their location within the topsoil would suggest that they are of recent origin. They may represent back filled drainage ditches (a recently dug channel ran alongside the western edge of the site) or back filled trenches, excavated to ascertain the depth of topsoil within the site area, prior to the commencement of the development or for previous agricultural purposes.*

*The second area of activity was an enigmatic complex of features comprising of a possible hearth, floor, and ditch (006) leading to a smaller gully. The date and function of the features was not ascertained, but may represent fragmentary evidence of woodland management, clearance or charcoal production, possibly of medieval date. If charcoal production, as may be a favoured interpretation due to the evidence for burning, then such activity is likely to leave only a small trace of evidence below the topsoil.*

## INTRODUCTION

### Project Commission

A planning application was submitted to Pembrokeshire County Council for an extension to the Bluestone Holiday Village at Canaston Bridge, Pembrokeshire (Planning Application No. 04/0301/PA) by Dawnus Construction on behalf of Bluestone. Pembrokeshire County Council's archaeological advisors, (Dyfed Archaeological Trust – Heritage Management), advised that a condition be placed on planning permission in order to mitigate against any disturbance to any archaeological remains that may be present within the development area. The condition attached to the planning permission states:

*"No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority." Reason: To protect historic environment interests whilst enabling development of the site.*

The condition has been placed on the development as the site lies close to the medieval Newton North Church, which lies directly to the west of the proposed holiday development. The site of Castell Coch lies to the north-east, a 14<sup>th</sup> century hall-house within an earthwork enclosure. Previous archaeological evaluation of the area revealed a number of medieval features across the entire holiday development area, including a small number within the Phase 2A development. Thus there was considered to be a potential for further medieval archaeological remains to be present within the development area. Such features were considered likely to be present at a shallow depth below the ground surface at the interface between topsoil and natural subsoils.

Dawnus Construction Ltd commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services (DAT-FS) to undertake the archaeological works. A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by DAT-FS for an archaeological watching brief which was approved before the archaeological works were implemented.

### Scope of the Project

Archaeological attendance and recording during groundworks associated with the topsoil stripping in advance of construction of a proposed extension to Bluestone Holiday Village, Pembrokeshire. The groundworks entailed a topsoil strip across the entire development area and also creation of access points to the site area, all of which had the potential to expose, damage or destroy any underlying archaeological remains, if present. The project also included the preparation of a report on the results of the work and preparation of an archive.

### Report Outline

This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background before summarising the watching brief results and the conclusions based on those results.

### Abbreviations

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER<sup>1</sup>) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM).

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<sup>1</sup> Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Shire Hall, Llandeilo.

## THE SITE

### Location (Figures 1 – 4)

The site is situated on the southern side of the Eastern Cleddau, and occupies a moderately steep north facing slope. The site is centred on NGR SN 206675 213196, which lies 180m east of the medieval church of Newton North, and 450m south west of Castell Coch, a 14<sup>th</sup> century hall-house within a moated enclosure. The site is approximately 14.5 acres in size, and is bounded by woodland on either side, with the existing Bluestone Holiday Village to the north. Minwear Woods lie to the west and Canaston Woods to the north-east.

### Archaeological and Historical Background

The regional HER, held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust records two sites within close proximity to the development area. To the east and sharing a common boundary with the site is the medieval church of Newton North (PRNs 3611, 46844 and 60075). The pointed chancel arch on simple imposts dates the nave and chancel to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The west tower and north windows are of 16<sup>th</sup> century date. The church is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM Ref. PE270). A medieval holy well lies adjacent to the church (PRN 3612).

The site of Castell Coch lies 450m to the northwest of the area, which is a high status manorial hall-house (PRN 3616 & PRN 60074). This is also designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM Ref. PE053). The building measures 23m by 10.5m, with walls over 1.5m thick and fronted by a rock-cut ditch approximately 4m in depth. It was the centre of the Manor of Newhouse, a member of the Lordship of Narberth. The manor appears to have been a late creation, as an assart (a parcel of land cleared of forest, for use in agriculture and other purposes) from Narberth Forest, under the Mortimer Lords of Narberth in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. It was acquired by the Barlows of Slebech in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century but may have been abandoned by 1670.

PRN	Site Name	Description	NGR Grid Ref
13311	Newton	Medieval hollow way	SN07201351
13349	Waun Maes	Boundary wall – post-medieval	SN06771363
28047	Newhouse	Settlement	SN0713
3610	Newton Farm	Burnt Mound, prehistoric	SN06451360
3611	Newton North Church; Llys Prawst	Church scheduled ancient monument PE270, Medieval listed building II	SN06571332
3612	Newton North	Medieval Holy Well	SN06611333
3616	Castell Coch; Newhouse	Medieval, Post-medieval Moated Enclosure, Fortified House, Scheduled Ancient Monument PE270	SN07121368
4445	Skerry Back	Iron Age Hillfort	SN070130
46047		Roman Findspot	SN07151320
46844	Newton North Parish Church; Llys Prawst	Early medieval Churchyard scheduled ancient monument PE270	SN06581333
60074	Castell Coch	Post-medieval Moated Manor House, Grade II Listed Building, Scheduled Ancient Monument PE053	SN0712113683
60075	Newton North Church	Post-medieval Church, Grade II Listed Building	SN0658113328
7992	Cross	Medieval Cross	SN069132

Table 1: Sites recorded on the Dyfed HER within 400m of the centre of the area

Other known sites recorded on the HER within a 500m radius of the centre of the Phase 2A development area include a possible prehistoric burnt mound recorded in the woodland to the north-west of the site (PRN 3610). A possible Iron Age defended enclosure lies to the south of the site area, directly east of Newton Farm called Skerry Back (PRN 4445). A Roman findspot is recorded to the south-east of the site (PRN 46047). The documented site of a medieval cross lies 100m to the south of the site area (PRN 7992). A medieval hollow way lies 350m to the east of the site near Newhouse Farm and Bridge (PRN 13311), where a former

medieval settlement is also recorded (PRN 28047). A post-medieval boundary wall is situated in the field to the north of the site known as Waun Maes (PRN 13349).

### **Previous Archaeological Studies**

Numerous archaeological studies of the development area were carried out by the Babbie Group, Foundation Archaeology and Archaeological Investigations between 2002 and 2007 as part of the holiday village development. A surface collection survey for artefacts was carried out in March 2003 which included the area of the Phase 2A development site (Babbie/Foundations Archaeology 2003). The results of the survey concluded that the distribution of medieval material was clearly concentrated in the western part of Field 8, the field within which lies the Phase 2, and the subject of this piece of archaeological work. A geophysical survey was also undertaken within the western part of this field nearest the church, although the results demonstrated only agricultural activity (Babbie 2003). The conclusions from the work were that a scatter of medieval and post-medieval pottery and other artefacts was concentrated close to the church, but no suggestion for settlement activity was actually made from the area within the field. As geophysical survey has shown agricultural marks in the same area, it may suggest that the field was mostly used for arable cultivation during the medieval period, and the finds represent a manuring scatter associated with the spreading of rubbish and household waste across the fields as fertiliser.

In 2007, 21 evaluation trenches were cut within Field 8 (Babbie/Foundations Archaeology 2007). The results reiterated the earlier findings of 2003, in that the trenches closest to the Newton North church (Trenches 57, 58, 59 and 60) contained the most archaeological remains. These included a complex of medieval features, predominantly ditches, although a number of postholes were present in Trench 59. This may suggest some settlement activity within the western extent of the field, although the remains were quite slight and inconclusive. In the middle of the development area Trenches 74 and 77 revealed undated archaeological features. The area of Trenches 57, 58, 59 and 60 lies outside of the Phase 2A development area and was not covered within this watching brief, although the areas of trenches 74 and 77 does lie within it.

## WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

### Methodology

The watching brief methodology consisted of six site visits between September 27th and October 7th 2010, to monitor the removal of topsoil prior to the development of Phase 2A at Bluestone Holiday Village. The excavation was undertaken by two tracked bulldozers and a 360 degree mechanical excavator, using a toothless grading bucket.

An archaeologist was present during all major ground disturbance operations. The archaeologist had the power to stop earth moving machines if potential archaeological remains were revealed.

Where potential archaeological remains were identified the contractors allowed the mechanical excavator to assist the archaeologist in better defining the extent of potential archaeological remains within the topsoil stripped areas, by removing loose material and any remnant subsoil. These areas were then defined and recorded prior to any further earth moving operations or vehicle movement being undertaken over them.

All archaeological features or deposits revealed during the groundworks were examined and recorded to best current professional practice and be carried out in accordance with the Recording Manual<sup>2</sup> used by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services. Significant archaeological features and deposits were surveyed and drawn at appropriate scale and photographed in an appropriate format.

No deposits containing palaeo-environmental material were revealed, nor were any human remains.

All data recovered during the fieldwork has been collated into a site archive structured in accordance with the specifications in *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (Brown 2007), and the procedures recommended by the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.

The results of the fieldwork have been assessed in local, regional and wider contexts were appropriate. This report is fully representative of the results of the fieldwork.

The project archive will be deposited with an appropriate body (as no finds were recovered during the works the paper archive will be stored with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales)..

<sup>2</sup> Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services have adopted the new Recording Manual developed by English Heritage Centre for Archaeology. A copy will be available on-site for inspection if required.



### Results of the Watching Brief (Figure xx)

Observation of the topsoil strip revealed two discrete areas of archaeological activity. The first area was evident prior to topsoil stripping, as four parallel, linear disturbances in the south-central part of the pasture field. Each was approximately 2m wide, 10m apart and around 100m long. The features were clearly evident, comprising a mixture of short grass, tussocks and bare soil, contrasting with the uniformity of the surrounding pasture. A corresponding feature was noted within the topsoil, as evidenced within a small section through one of the features that was left visible during machine in order that the feature could be recorded. The feature slightly cut into the underlying natural subsoil, causing a slight depression, and was filled with topsoil.

The second area of archaeological activity lay just to the south-east of the centre of the Phase 2A topsoil strip area. It comprised a small complex of archaeological features measuring approximately 5.4 m by 4.6m (Figures 4 and 5; Photo 1). The natural subsoil in this area consisted of a sandy clay deposit (005), containing a loose amalgam of small to medium, angular stones with occasional charcoal flecking. Cut into and lying on top of (005) was a concentration of disturbed medium sized, angular stone, measuring approximately 1.1m by 0.90m (008). The southern edge of this area ended in an abrupt straight line, unlike the other edges which were indistinct. It contained two distinct areas of heat affected stone (Photo2).

To the west of (008), was an area of orangey-pink clay (010), overlain with a concentration of small, angular, heat effected stones and charcoal fragments (009). This concentration was roughly rectangular in shape, along an east-west axis and measured 0.53m by 0.45m (Photo 3).

A small channel (006) was also recorded which curved round from the east and headed in a north-westerly direction, its southern edge bounded by (005), its northern edge by (008). The channel (006) had a wide u-shaped profile. The channel narrows as it passes between (008) and (009), continuing as a gully (011) as it cut north-west through (005) (Photo 4). The fill of both the channel (006) and gully (011) was a reddish-brown, silty clay containing small amounts of charcoal fragments (007).

## CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological watching brief undertaken within the Phase 2A area of construction at Bluestone Holiday Village has revealed a number of archaeological features. The watching brief was undertaken during the initial topsoil strip across the entire area of the proposed development. The watching brief identified two areas of archaeological activity, one of which corresponds to an area identified during an archaeological watching brief in 2003 undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in 2003. The other area was not observed during the evaluation.

The archaeological watching brief was required as the development area lies close to two historical sites of national importance, Newton North Church to the west and the medieval Castell Coch to the north-east.

The first area of archaeological activity was noted prior to groundworks comprising a series of linear disturbances in the topsoil. Trial Trench Evaluation of this area was undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in 2007, where four of their trenches crossed these linear disturbances, but no record was made of these anomalies. It is considered most likely that the features are the result of recent backfilling of ditches or trenches (not associated with the archaeological works), possibly associated with geotechnical investigations undertaken in advance of this development or alternatively associated with agricultural activity. They may represent back filled drainage ditches (a recently dug channel ran alongside the western edge of the site). The features are considered to be of very low archaeological significance.

The second area of archaeological activity lay just to the south-east of the centre of the Phase 2A topsoil strip area. It comprised a small complex of archaeological features including a layer of burnt / heat affected stones, a small rectangular burnt feature and a small channel and gully. No dating evidence was found with the features, although it is possible they are of medieval date. Being as the site area would have been wooded during the medieval period, it is possible that the features are associated with woodland clearance and management or charcoal production. The features were very shallow and had either been significantly truncated by later agricultural activity or were of a very slight nature anyway. As burning was identified then it is considered most likely that the features represent the remains of charcoal production. Such activity may leave very little evidence below the topsoil.

A further area of archaeological activity had been identified during previous evaluations lying directly to the east of Newton North church within Field 8. This did not fall into the watching brief area. No features were identified within this part of the Phase 2A development closest to this area.

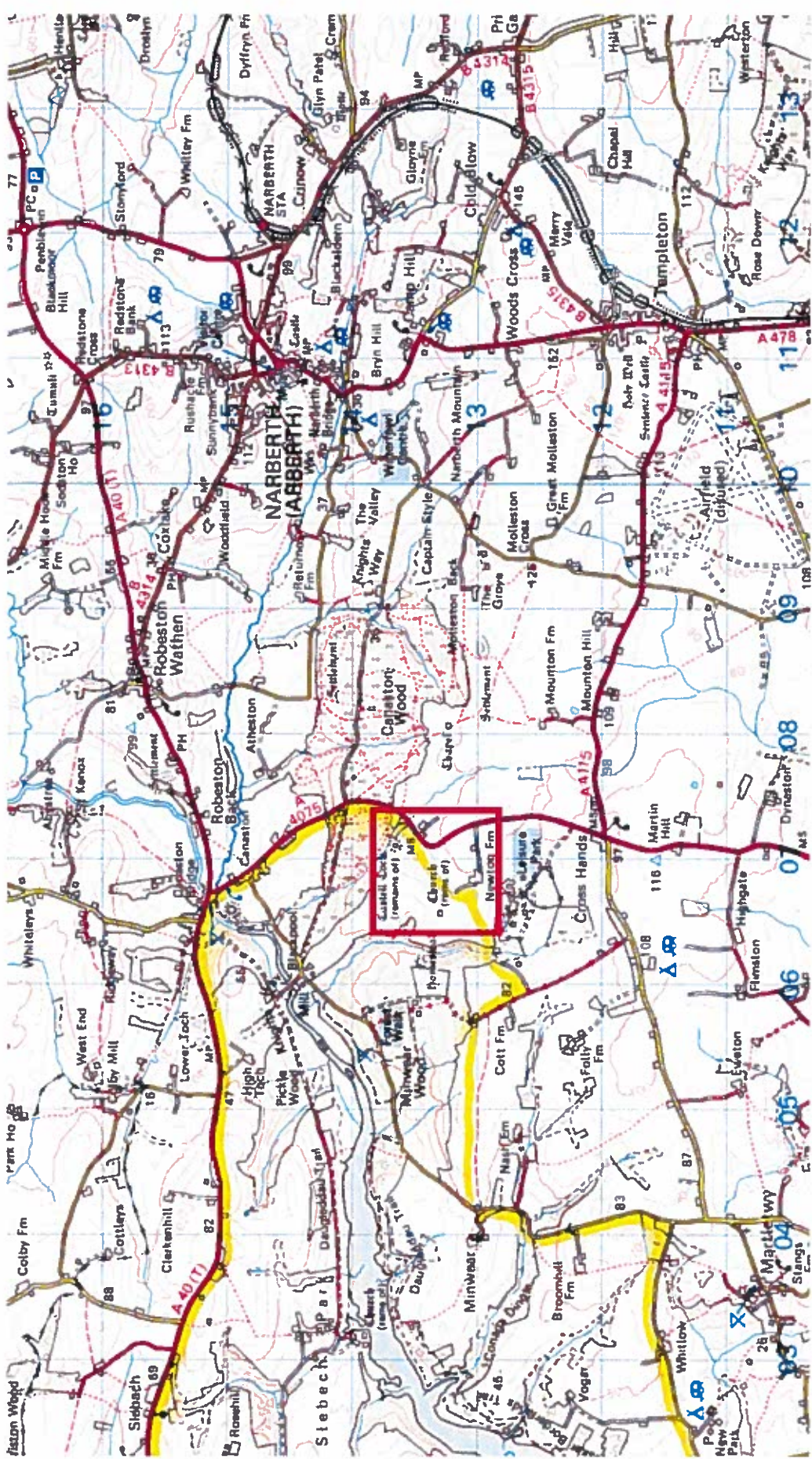
## SOURCES

### Published

Babtie / Foundations Archaeology 2003, *Bluestone: Archaeological Evaluation Works – Surface Collection Survey*, Unpublished Foundations Archaeology Report

Babtie Group 2003, *Bluestone: Archaeological Evaluation Works – Geophysical Survey*, Unpublished Babtie Group Report

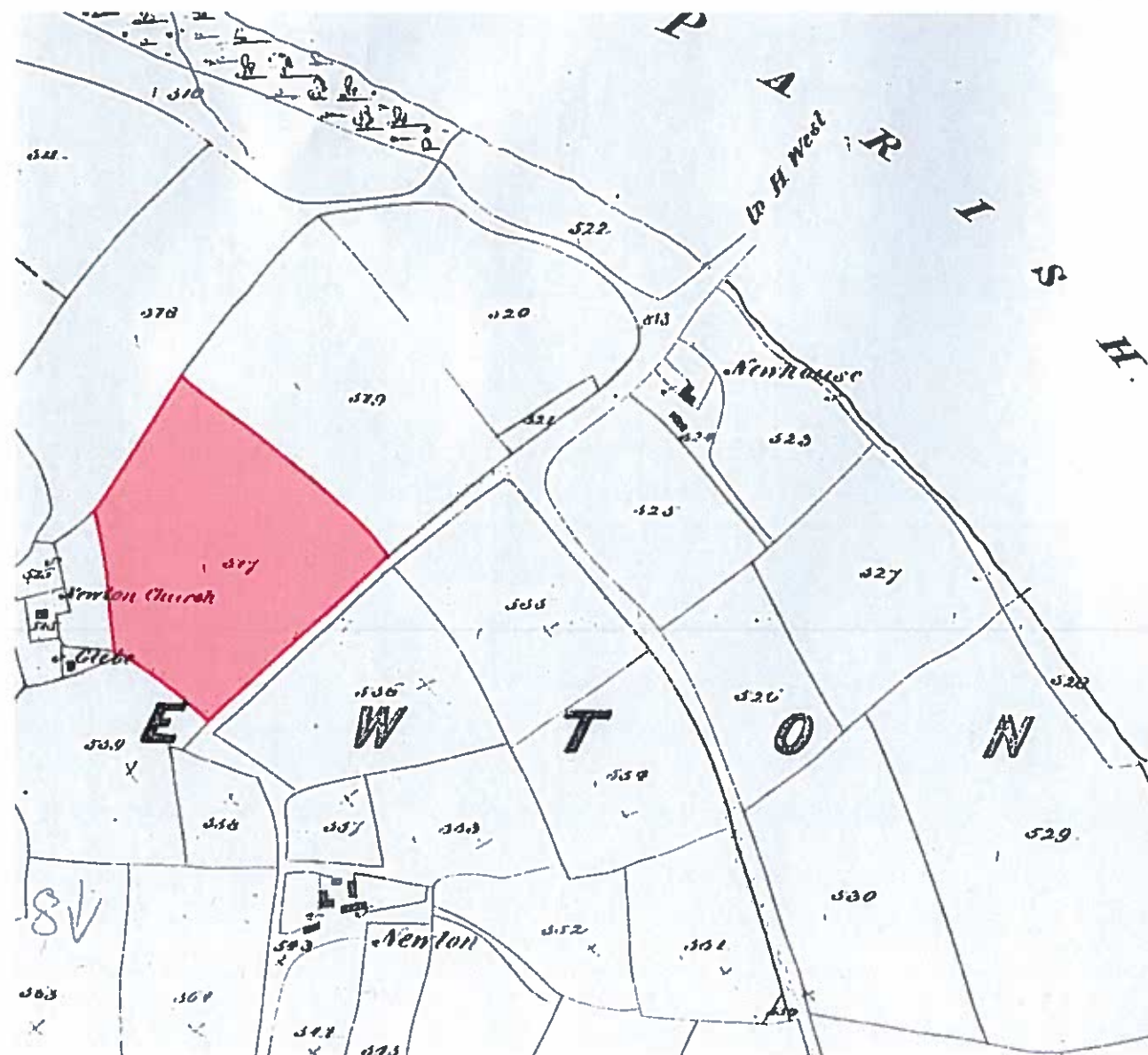
Babtie / Foundations Archaeology 2007, *Bluestone: Archaeological Evaluation Works – Trial Trenching*, Unpublished Foundations Archaeology Report



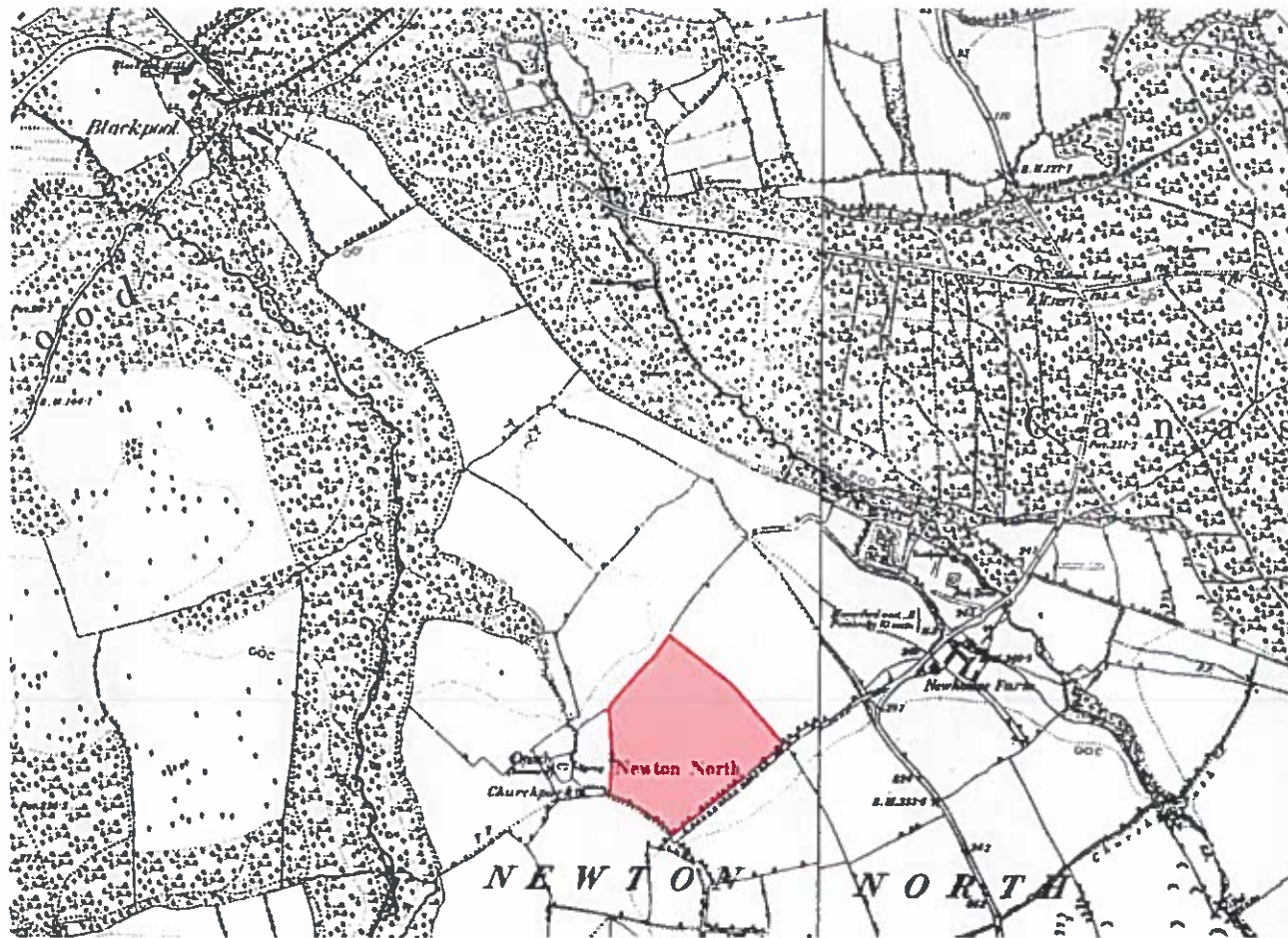
**Figure 1:** Location map of watching brief based on Ordnance Survey

Reproduced from the 1995 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright  
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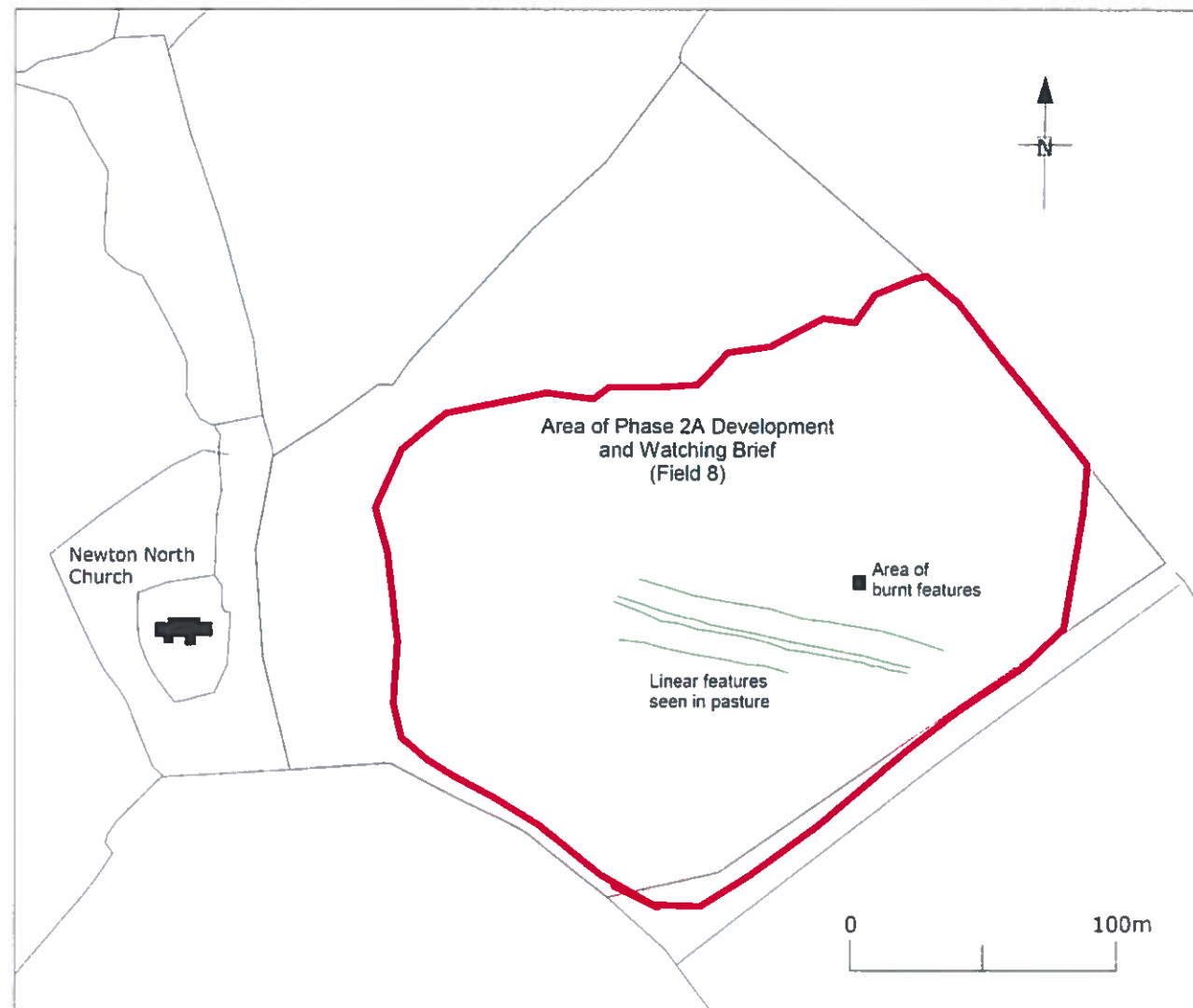




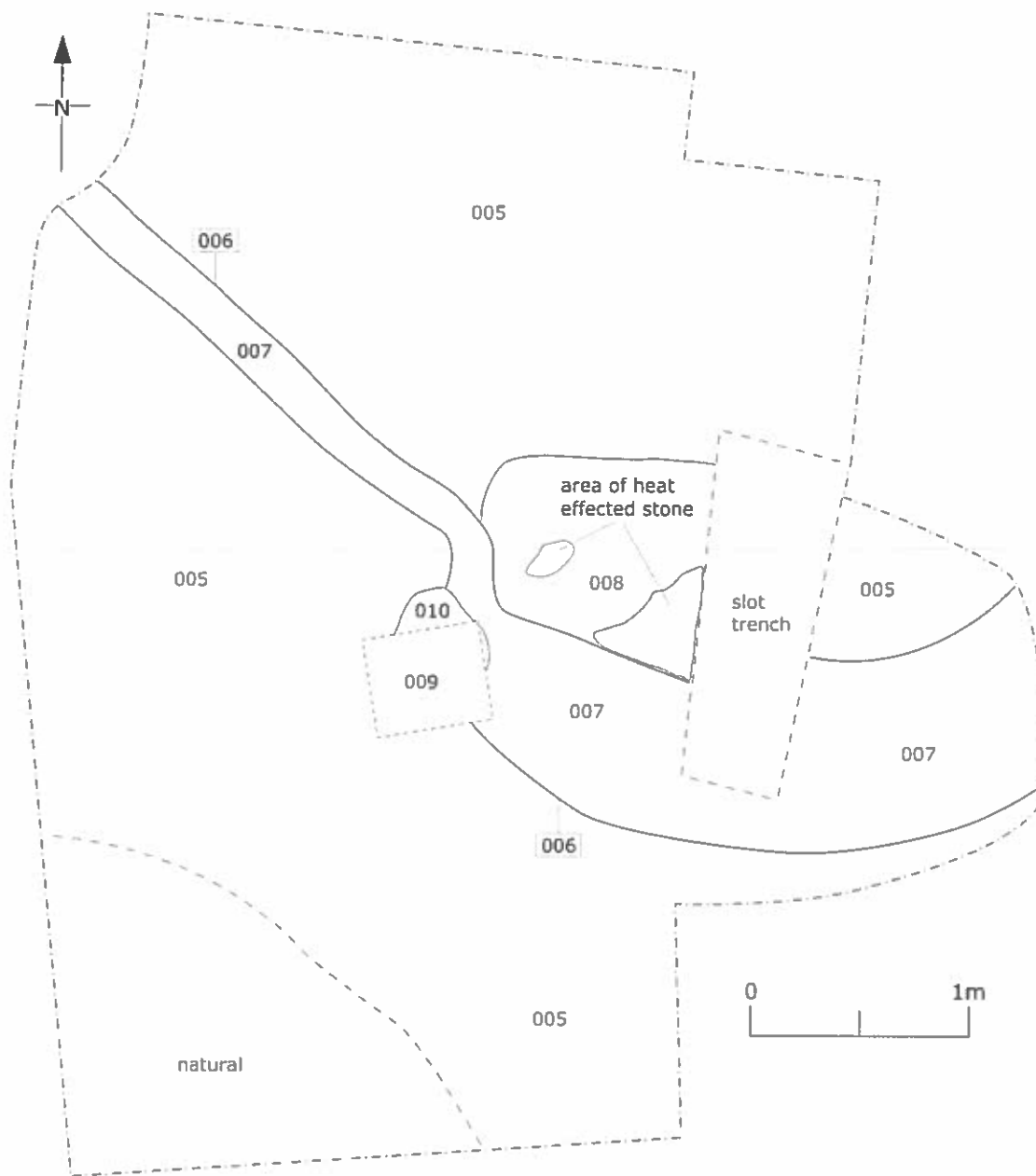
**Figure 2:** Extract of Tithe Map (1840's) showing Newton North Church and Newton Farm. Field 8 shown in red, within which the Phase 2A development area lies



**Figure 3:** Extract of First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1880's), showing Newton North Church and Castell Coch.  
Field 8 shown in red within which the Phase 2A development area lies.



**Figure 4:** Location of the Phase 2A Development boundary and watching brief with areas of archaeological features indicated



**Figure 5:** Plan of complex of archaeological features showing burning





Photo 1: View of group of archaeological features showing burning, viewing west. (008) can be seen in the foreground, (009) is visible above it in the middle-ground. Between the two fills (007) can be seen. 1m scale.



Photo 2: Plan view of (008). 1m scale.





Photo 3: Plan view of (009) and (010). 1m scale.



Photo 4 North facing shot of the complex, showing (007) in the middle-ground passing between (008) and (009) and heading in a NW direction. 1m scale.



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Rhagfyr 2010  
December 2010

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan /  
This report has been prepared by: **Hubert Wilson**

Swydd / Position: **Archaeologist**

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Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith /  
This report has been checked and approved by: **James Meek**

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on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

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*Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau  
sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn*

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comments you may have on the content or presentation of this report*