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NEWPORT RUGBY CLUB CHANGING ROOM, LONG STREET, NEWPORT, PEMBROKESHIRE:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AUGUST 2011



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For: Mr Andrew Griffiths of Property
Refurb Ltd. / PLANED



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February 2012

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LONG STREET, NEWPORT, PEMBROKESHIRE:
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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 Andrew Griffiths of Property Refurb Ltd. to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the alterations and additions to the Newport Rugby Club Changing Room, Long Street, Pembrokeshire (NGR SN 0579 3942). The alterations to the Rugby Club Changing Room were made possible through a grant from PLANED.

The development lies within the confines of the medieval settlement of Newport, whose origins began in the early 12th century with the building of the Old Castle – a Scheduled Ancient Monument (PE404 PRN1468) – the remains of which are visible as earthworks approximately 85m north of the development site.

Despite the fact that the site has been compromised in the past by the laying of service pipes, the building of a revetment wall between it and a playground to the north and a modern bank and dry stone wall to the west, the watching brief has demonstrated that archaeological remains are present on site.

At the northeast corner of the site a linear feature, aligned approximately north to south, cut into the undisturbed natural subsoil was recorded. This was truncated by the foundation trench and was visible in section on both sides. No dating evidence was recovered from the fill of this feature, nevertheless, its orientation and the fact it is cut from the top of the subsoil make it similar to medieval features excavated in 1991 prior to the building of Newport Primary School some 15 metres to the south. This indicates that the feature could possibly be of medieval date associated with a similar period of occupation of Newport.

INTRODUCTION

Project Commission

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services were commissioned by Mr Andrew Griffiths of Property Refurb Ltd. on behalf of PLANED to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks on approx. 60²m of land belonging to Newport Rugby Club, between Long Street and the west side of Newport Rugby Club Changing Rooms, (centred on NGR SN 0579 3942; Photo 1). A planning application (Planning Reference NP/11/094) proposing to alter and extend the Changing Room building was referred to the archaeological advisors¹ to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park planning authority who noted that the site lay within the historic medieval layout of the town; the potential, therefore, for encountering medieval archaeological features or deposits within the proposed development area is considered to be high. Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management recommended that, during the groundworks, an archaeological watching brief should be undertaken to adequately record any significant archaeological features.

The site lies to the south of the Old Castle at Newport (PRN 1468), a precursor to the later medieval Castle on the southern side of the town. The earthwork is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (PE404 PRN1468). Long Street's medieval origins probably began during the time when the castle site moved to the south. Many medieval ceramic finds have been located on the street including a group of finds recovered to the west of the site area in the rear yard of the adjacent property (possibly associated with rubbish pits; PRN 11321). The Grade II Listed White Cottage lies to the south of the area on Long Street (PRN 58742).

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services carried out the archaeological watching brief on the 10th and 11th August 2011. The work undertaken complied with a Written Scheme of Investigation that had been prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services and approved by the local planning authority prior to the works commencing (following approval from their archaeological advisors).

Scope of the Project

The project objectives as laid out in the WSI were:

- To monitor groundworks in order to identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed groundworks.
- To appropriately investigate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the groundworks.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

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.

¹ Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management (DAT-HM).

Abbreviations

Regional Historic Environment Record – HER; Primary Record Number – PRN; National Grid Reference – NGR; Scheduled Ancient Monument – SAM.

Illustrations

Record photographs are included at back of the report. Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale and are illustrative only.

Timeline

The following timeline in Table 1 below is used within this report to give date ranges for the various archaeological periods that may be mentioned within the text.

Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic –	c.450,000 – 10,000 BC	Prehistoric
Mesolithic –	c. 10,000 – 4400 BC	
Neolithic –	c.4400 – 2300 BC	
Bronze Age –	c.2300 – 700 BC	
Iron Age –	c.700 BC – AD 43	
Roman (Romano-British) Period –	AD 43 – c. AD 410	Historic
Post-Roman / Early Medieval Period –	c. AD 410 – AD 1066	
Medieval Period –	1066 – 1536	
Post-Medieval Period ² –	1536 – 1750	
Industrial Period –	1750 – 1899	
Modern –	20th century onwards	

Table 1: Archaeological and historical timeline for Wales

² The post-medieval and industrial periods are combined as the post-medieval period on the Regional Historic Environment Record as held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust

THE SITE

Location and Topography

The proposed development area lies at NGR SN 0579 3942 on the northern end of Long St., Newport. The development site measures approximately 6.5m by 9m, with its long axis on a north-south orientation (Figure 1). The site is relatively level, although Long Street and the general topography of the land slopes northward, down to the river Nyfer, 200m away. It is bounded by a breeze block revetment wall to the north, which separates it from a playground; to the west it is enclosed by a modern bank on top of which is a small, drystone wall, beyond which is Long Street; directly south lies the access road to the Changing Rooms and the Primary School, Ysgol Bro Ingli; and to the east is the west wall of the Newport Rugby Club Changing Room.

Ordovician sedimentary rocks, which outcrop in many locations represent the solid geology of the area. The drift geology comprises of a complex mix of fluvio-glacial deposits of sand, gravel and clay. (British Geological Survey).

Archaeological and Historic Background

A good outline history of Newport is contained in the Newport and Carningli parish section of a Dyfed Archaeological Trust Historic Landscape Characterisation report prepared for Cadw (Murphy and Ludlow 2003). The appropriate section, 361 Newport, is paraphrased below, with the addition of relevant Primary Record Numbers (PRNs) for further reference (it is reprinted in full in Appendix 1).

Historic Background

Newport lies within the medieval Cantref of Cemaes. Cemaes was brought under Anglo-Norman control in c.1100 by the Fitzmartins who established their castle at Nevern on the site of an Iron Age fort. Cemaes remained in Anglo-Norman hands until 1191 when Rhys ap Gruffudd retook it. He strengthened Nevern Castle, but Welsh supremacy was short-lived, for Rhys died in 1197 and in the same year William Fitzmartin regained control of Cemaes. Instead of re-fortifying Nevern, William established a new castle at Newport (possibly the Old Castle earthworks by the Nevern estuary (PE404 PRN 1468) which lies directly to the north of this development site) and founded a new town. In c.1241, Nicholas Fitzmartin confirmed in a charter privileges bestowed on the town by his father, William. The early years of the town were not easy for the new settlers. In 1215, Newport Castle was destroyed by Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, and the Fitzmartins did not regain control until about 1230, but in 1257 the castle was once again razed to the ground, this time by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. By 1276-77 the castle was back in the hands of the Fitzmartins who retained it, as well as the Barony of Cemaes, until 1326, when the Audleys succeeded them.

Excavation and survey have shown that the town was originally laid out with burgage plots - long building plots - along two main streets, Long Street and St Mary's Street, with the castle now known as the Old Castle (PRN 1468) between them, close to the shore of the Nevern estuary. Properties on these streets towards the estuary did not survive long, perhaps as a result of attacks by the Welsh, and by the end of the 13th century, if not earlier, these burgage plots had been abandoned and were not used again.

Possibly following the attacks of 1215 or 1257 the castle was re-founded at its present site (PRN 1499) dominating the southern end of the town. A grid of new streets and the parish church of St Mary (PRN 1504) were also established in

the same area. The town, however, did not flourish for in 1434 a survey lists 233 burgage plots, but only 76 burgage holders. By 1594, 211 plots are recorded, but only 44 are occupied, and most of these are at the southern end of the town. Many house plots lay unused until the eve of the modern period, as Richard Fenton noted in the early 19th century that, 'the chasms in its depopulated streets are filling up fast with buildings'. Clearly Fenton witnessed rebuilding that is evident in the town today, represented by numerous good-quality 19th century houses. The castle, which had been in decay since the late medieval period, was re-occupied in 1859 and the gatehouse was converted into a house; other additions followed. (Murphy and Ludlow 2003).

A 1434 rental of the town published by B. G. Charles provides the most important source for the study of the medieval topography of Newport. Of the 233 burgages in the town during that period, 43 were located on the east side of Long Street and 46 on the west side. However, the layout of the burgage plots can only be shown schematically (Figure 2) as it is difficult to relate the positions of the 1434 plots to the modern property boundaries; therefore the location of the development site on the plan is approximate. It is clear from the plan that Long Street and St Mary's Street were laid out on either side of the Old Castle. These two parallel streets ran to the south for c.500m before crossing an ancient route (the present West St. – East St. – Bridge St.) and continued for another c. 100m. The burgage plots of these two streets were bounded on the west by the stream Afon Felin and on the east by the stream Afon Ysgolhegion. These two streams seem to have been canalized to form straight rear boundaries to the burgage plots. The first phase of development of the town thus seems to be centred on Old Castle and the estuary, with burgage plots on Long Street and St. Mary's Street. (V. M. Evans and K. Murphy).

The archaeological excavations (PRN 32130) undertaken on Long Street ahead of the building of the new primary school (Murphy 1991), its northern edge a mere 15m south of the development site, revealed archaeological features representing former burgage plot boundaries, buildings on the street frontage delineated by their drainage gullies, gravel-filled drainage ditches, pits, plough furrows and spade-dug trenches interpreted as the remains of lazy beds (Figure 3). Nearly all the features were shown to be cut into the natural clay subsoil and some were only 0.2m below the surface of the topsoil (ground level). The fact that the burgage plots and buildings in that area of Long Street were abandoned very early, for whatever reason, and were never again built upon, meant that valuable evidence had been preserved; this afforded the rare opportunity for archaeologists to examine in detail the earliest stratigraphy of medieval Newport. The excavations revealed such insights as to how the burgage plots were first laid out, as it was possible to closely examine the undisturbed remains of the boundary ditches. This type of evidence, coupled with the concentrated academic analysis such as that undertaken by Nicky Bignall (Bignall 1991) has made Newport a focal area in the field of medieval Welsh town studies and archaeological research.

METHODOLOGY

The detailed methodology for the watching brief was laid out within the WSI. The relevant methodology can be summarised as follows.

During August the 10th and 11th 2011, two visits were made to the site to monitor groundworks which had the potential to expose, damage or destroy underlying archaeological remains. The site was cleared and excavated using a tracked 360 degree excavator fitted with a 800mm toothless bucket.

Initial clearance consisted of the removal of a small, modern drystone wall which sat on top of a bank overlooking Long Street, a tree stump and building rubble. In order to facilitate creating a concrete floor base, the site was afterwards reduced by approximately 0.35m to a more compact level. No archaeological cuts or deposits were uncovered during this phase.

The second phase of the groundworks consisted of cutting a foundation trench approximately 0.80m wide, with an average depth of 1m, to accommodate a new blockwork base wall. This ran round the perimeter of the site and was approximately 22m long.

Recording of all archaeological features or deposits conformed to best current professional practice and was carried out in accordance with the Recording Manual³ used by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services. Significant archaeological features or deposits were hand drawn at a scale of 1:10 and 1:20 and photographed in digital RAW format (later converted to high definition TIF format and smaller jpeg format).

A report has been prepared upon the results (this document) and an archive prepared which will be deposited with an appropriate repository.

³ Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services have adopted the 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

The initial phase of clearance of the site and reduction of ground levels revealed no archaeological cuts or deposits (Photo 2).

A great deal of modern activity has occurred over the majority of the site which may have already exposed, damaged or destroyed any archaeological remains that may have been present. Conduits for services (gas, water, electricity and sewage) were present, and on the west side of the site, discarded stone from the modern dry-stone wall could be seen in the lower parts of the sides of the foundation trench, implying much disturbance. This notwithstanding, a simple stratigraphical sequence was apparent throughout much of the site. This consisted of a truncated layer of disturbed/redeposited topsoil (01), a mid-brown, fairly compact, clayey-sand subsoil, containing c.5% small stone (03) which overlay the natural, orangey-yellow clay (06).

In the northeast corner of the site, approximately 1m south of the west wall of the Changing Rooms, the bisected remains of a round bottomed feature (cut 05), was revealed in the north (Photos 3 & 4) and south facing (Photos 5 & 6) sections of the foundation trench. In the northernmost section A (Figure 4), the cut is 0.13m deep and 0.50m wide, while in the southernmost section B (Figure 4), it is 0.17m deep and 0.42m wide. Both cuts contained an identical fill (04) of mid grey, firm, clayey-sand and both are cut into the clay natural (06). The northernmost fill contained a single charcoal fleck. Apart from this no other inclusions were observed. It is assumed that both cuts represent the same feature truncated by the foundation trench (Photo 7). The projected axis of the feature is north – south, with a fall of 0.12m towards the north.

CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief has demonstrated that although the site had been significantly disturbed in the recent past, remnants of archaeological features of possible medieval origins are still present. The site area had numerous conduits for services (gas, water, electricity and sewage) present within the majority of its footprint. On the western side of the site area the presence of discarded stone from the modern dry-stone wall in the lower parts of the foundation trench, indicate that the ground has been dug up and levelled in the recent past.

In the northwestern part of the trench a single feature was identified which had been truncated by the foundation trench. This would suggest that the feature is linear, such as a gully. Comparison of the feature with gullies revealed during the 1990 excavations on the Primary School site 15m to the south, indicates that similar gullies were recorded there. A number of these gullies were aligned north-south, as is the likely alignment of the feature revealed in the foundation trench.

No dating evidence was recovered from the fill of the feature within the foundation trench of the new changing rooms (such as pottery). Due to its similarity of scale and alignment of those seen on the primary School site to the south, they are very likely to be contemporary, and thus of medieval date.

The development site lies on the northern side of Newport, close to the scheduled site of the Old Castle (PE404 PRN1468), which has 12th century origins. Previous excavations in the area indicate that this area of Newport was occupied during the 12th and 13th century, after which time settlement moved to the south around the new Castle. It is thus considered likely that the feature revealed within the Newport changing room site is of 12th to mid-13th century date, associated with occupation during this period in the area around the Old Castle.

The watching brief has confirmed that even with modern disturbance, archaeological remains do still survive within this area of Newport.

SOURCES

Database

The Regional Historic Environment Record, housed with Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Shire Hall, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF.

Murphy, K & Ludlow, N 2003 *Historic Landscape Characterisation of Pen Caer, Newport and Carningli, Manorbier, and Stackpole Warren*. Dyfed Archaeological Trust Report No. 2003/6 for CADW.

Murphy, K 1994 *Excavations in Three Burgage Plots in the Medieval Town of Newport, Dyfed 1991*, in *Medieval Archaeology* Vol.XXXVIII.

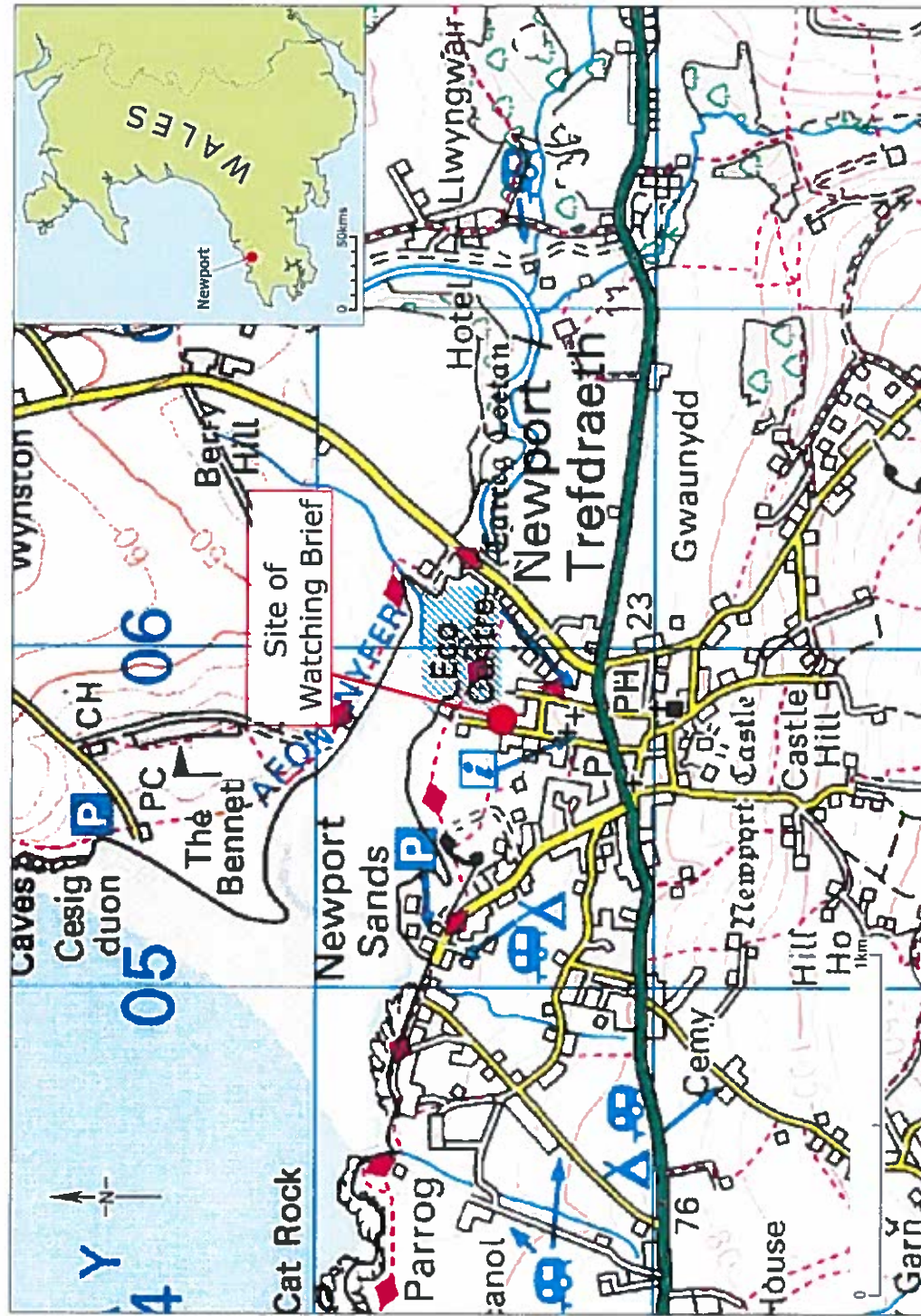


Figure 1: Location of watching brief site based on Ordnance Survey.

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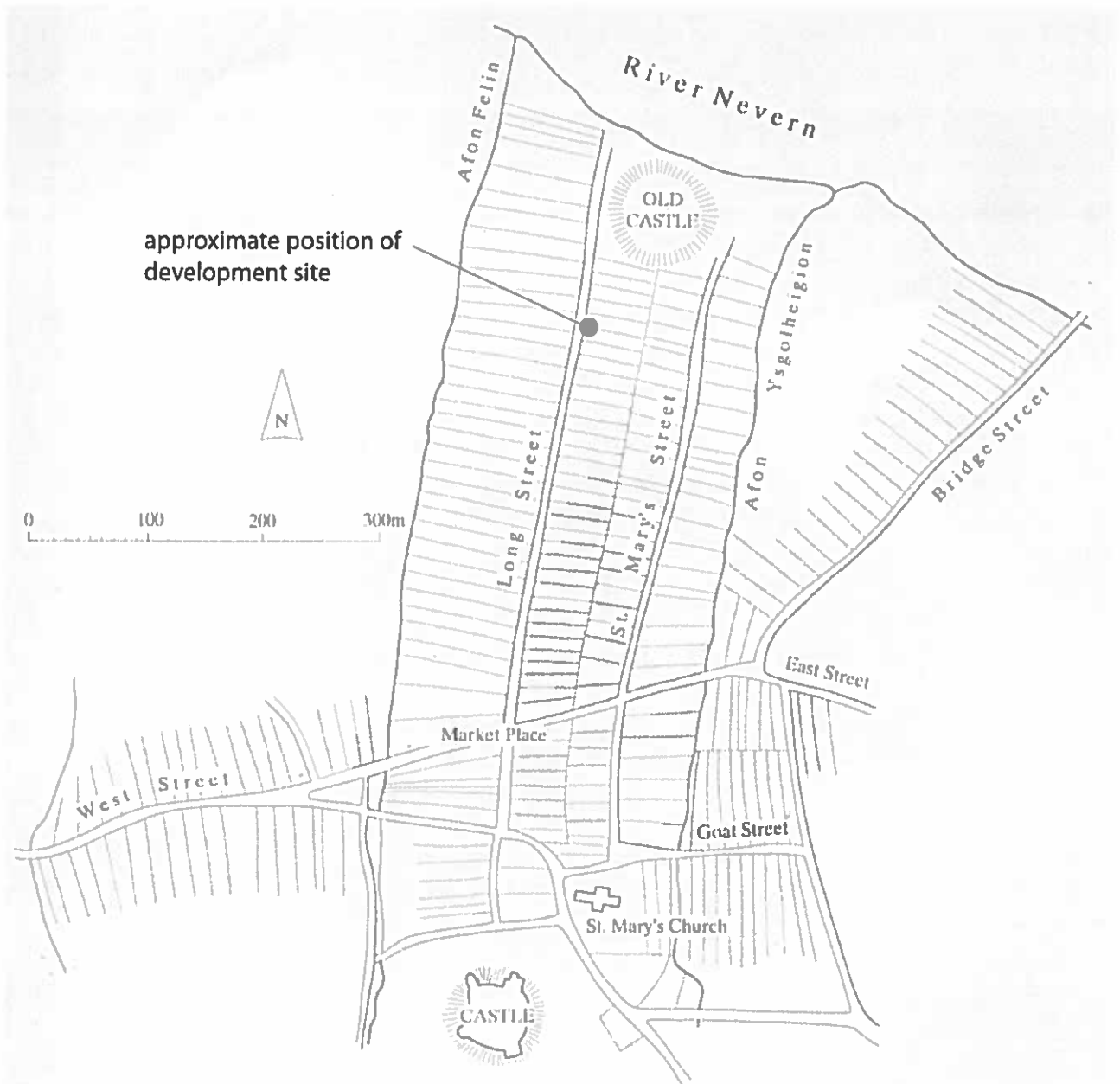


Figure 2: Map of burgage plots based on 1434 rental of Newport published by B G Charles

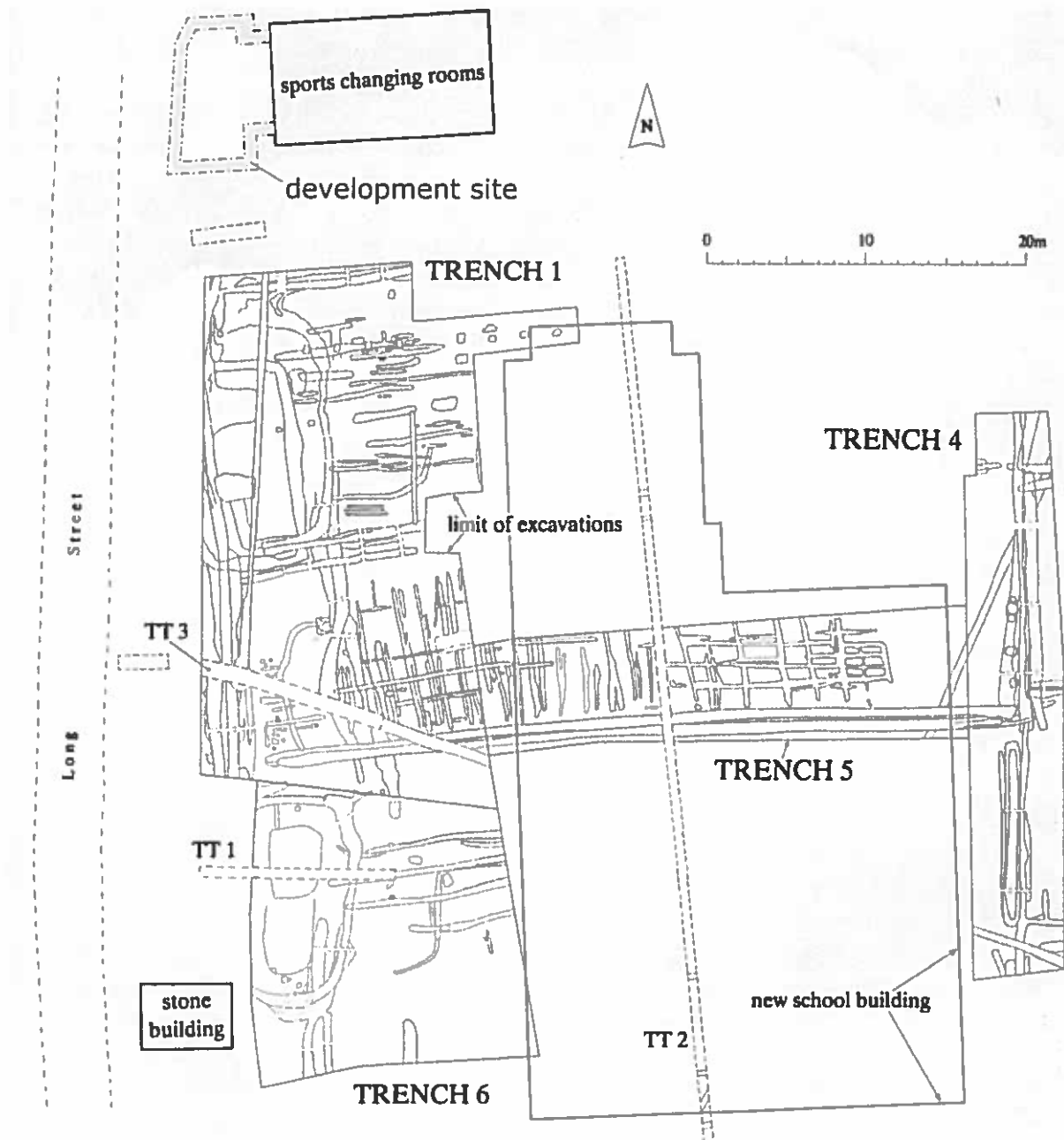


Figure 3: Location of development site in relation to 1991 archaeological excavation

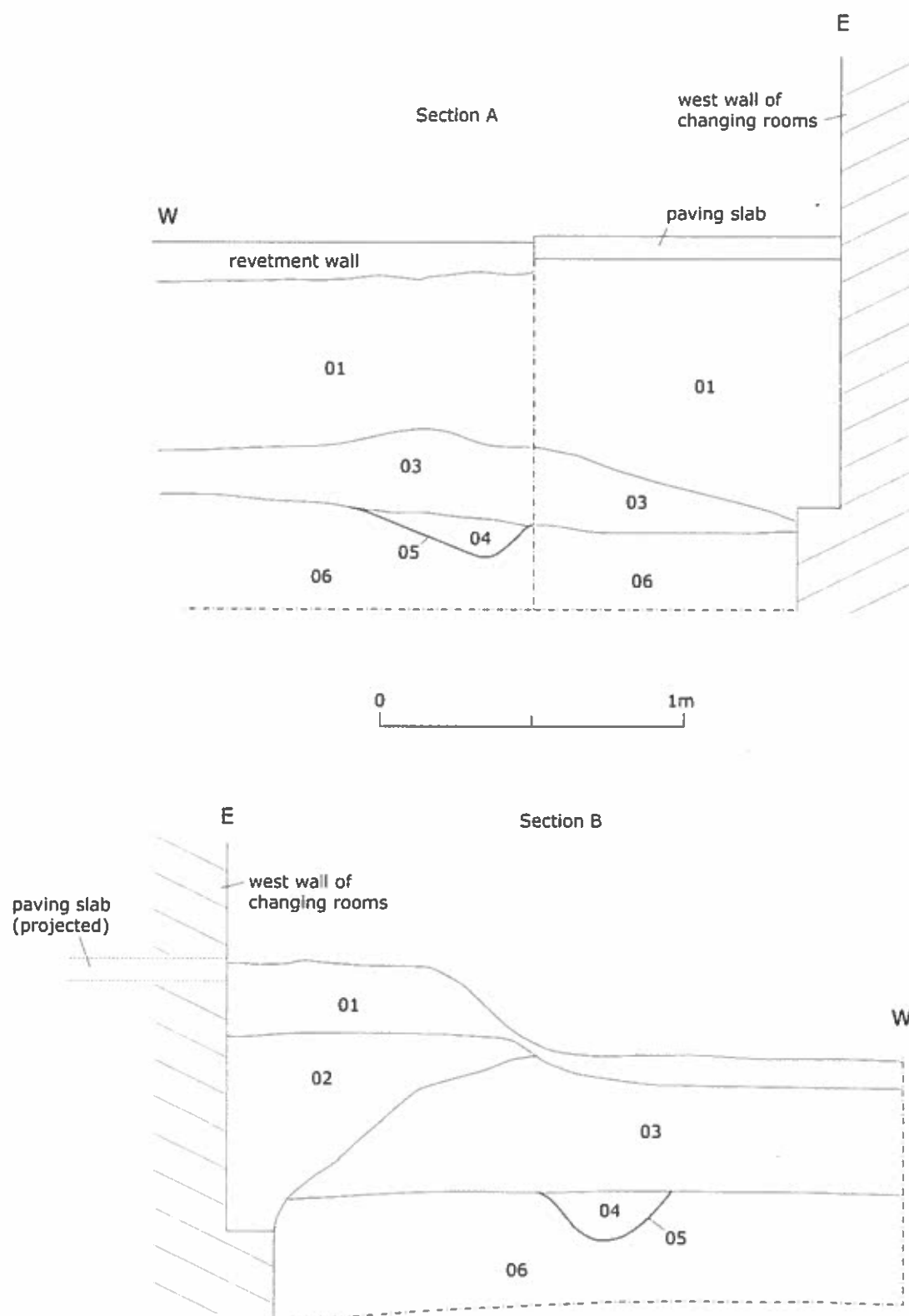


Figure 4: Drawing of north (Section A) and south (section B) facing sections of foundation trench

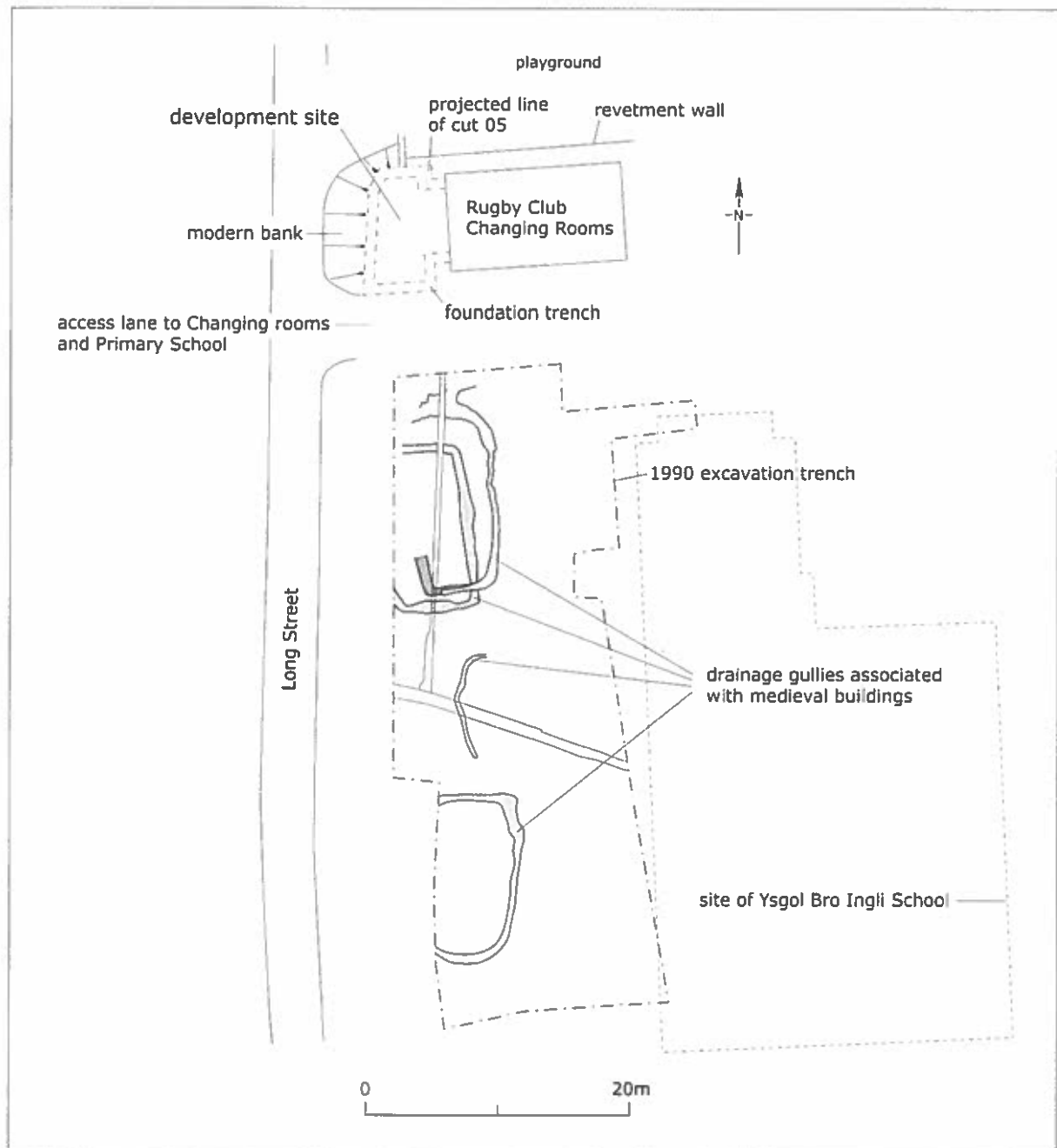


Figure 5: Plan of gullies recorded during 1991 archaeological excavation in relation to feature (05)

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1: Site before commencement of watching brief (view northeast)



Photo 2: Site after clearance of overburden, showing modern dry stone wall (view southwest)



Photo 3: Cut (05) in north facing section of foundation trench



Photo 4: Oblique shot of cut (05) in north facing section of foundation trench



Photo 5: Cut (05) in south facing section of foundation trench



Photo 6: Oblique shot of cut (05) in south facing section of foundation trench



Photo 7: Looking east, showing both sides of foundation trench, cut (05) can be seen to the right of ranging pole

APPENDIX 1: FULL TEXT FROM THE NEWPORT AND CARNINGLI PARISH SECTION OF THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION REPORT

The appropriate section, 361 Newport, is reprinted in full below with the addition of relevant Primary Record Numbers (PRNs) for further reference (Murphy and Ludlow 2003).

Historic Background

A small area of modern Pembrokeshire, comprising the built-up area of Newport town. It lies within the medieval Cantref of Cemaes. Cemaes was brought under Anglo-Norman control in c.1100 by the Fitzmartins who established their castle at Nevern on the site of an Iron Age fort. Cemaes remained in Anglo-Norman hands until 1191 when Rhys ap Gruffudd retook it. He strengthened Nevern Castle, but Welsh supremacy was short-lived for Rhys died in 1197 and in the same year William Fitzmartin regained control of Cemaes. Instead of refortifying Nevern, William established a new castle at Newport (possibly the Old Castle earthworks by the Nevern estuary (PRN 1468)) and founded a new town. In c.1241, Nicholas Fitzmartin confirmed in a charter privileges bestowed on the town by his father, William. The early years of the town were not easy for the new settlers. In 1215, Newport Castle was destroyed by Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, and the Fitzmartins did not regain control until about 1230, but in 1257 the castle was once again razed to the ground, this time by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. By 1276-77 the castle was back in the hands of the Fitzmartins who retained it, as well as the Barony of Cemaes, until 1326, when the Audleys succeeded them.

Excavation and survey have shown that the town was originally laid out with burgage plots – long building plots – along two main streets, Long Street and St Mary's Street, with the castle now known as the Old Castle (PRN 1468) between them close to the shore of the Nevern estuary. Properties on these streets towards the estuary did not survive long, perhaps as a result of attacks by the Welsh, and by the end of the 13th century, if not earlier, these burgage plots had been abandoned and were not used again.

Possibly following the attacks of 1215 or 1257 the castle was re-founded at its present site (PRN 1499) dominating the southern end of the town. A grid of new streets and the parish church of St Mary (PRN 1504) were also established in the same area. The town, however, did not flourish for in 1434 a survey lists 233 burgage plots but only 76 burgage holders. By 1594, 211 plots are recorded, but only 44 are occupied, and most of these are at the southern end of the town. Many house plots lay unused until the eve of the modern period as Richard Fenton noted in the early 19th century that 'the chasms in its depopulated streets are filling up fast with buildings'. Clearly Fenton witnessed rebuilding that is evident in the town today, represented by numerous good-quality 19th century houses. The castle, which had been in decay since the late medieval period, was re-occupied in 1859 and the gatehouse was converted into a house; other additions followed.

Despite the decay evidenced in the town, Newport had several small but important industries. The town's economy was based on agriculture, fishing and coastal trade. Newport had been the centre of a medieval and early post-medieval pottery industry, but the emergence of the town as a trading port really began in the 16th century when cloth and wool were exported. As a result, a considerable textile industry developed in the town's hinterland. Exports also included the products of the numerous local quarries. The town was also noted for its herring fishery.

Changes in the silting-up of the estuary caused a new quay to be established at The Parrog, with shipbuilding facilities, storehouses and limekilns. It flourished well into the

19th century - 97 vessels visited the port in 1884 - but decline set in soon afterwards. Newport has largely not developed beyond its medieval limits, but 20th century housing occupies a pocket around Cnwc-y-grogwydd, to the west of the town, the site of a medieval gallows (and possible early medieval religious site). The economy during the late 20th and early 21st centuries has been dominated by leisure, including a yacht club on The Parrog, and tourism, with a number of caravan parks. Newport is now an attractive option for middle-class home-buyers, which has imparted a genteel aspect to the town.

Description and essential historic landscape components

Newport historic landscape character area is mainly composed of the houses, gardens, shops, school, roads and other infrastructure of the town, but includes pockets of fields and other open ground between the built-up areas. The town lies on gentle north-facing slopes that run down to the south bank of the Nevern estuary. The medieval castle and church are located on the higher ground on the south side of the town. The core of the town is centred on the east-west A487(T) road and several narrow side-streets which form a loose grid pattern to the north and south.

Parrog, situated on the estuary, is a secondary centre, which is now connected to the town proper by linear development, and there is also linear development along the A487(T) and Bridge Street to the northeast. The late 12th century - 13th century layout of the town still exerts a strong influence over the modern topography, with many houses located hard against the street frontage within medieval burgage plots.

The large, cruciform parish church (PRN 1504) was extensively rebuilt in the early 19th century and much of the medieval detail has been lost, except the fine 15th-16th century west tower. The castle (PRN1499) is a single enclosure, with drum-towers and a twin-tower gatehouse, with masonry of 13th-14th century date, with 19th century additions. Apart from the parish church and the castle, almost the entire older building stock was constructed in the 19th century. This and the almost universal use of local dolerite and shale building stone provide Newport with a very strong and distinctive architectural signature. There is a fairly even mixture of cement rendered and bare stone. The render on many houses has recently been removed to reveal bare stone, usually un-coursed rubble. Close examination of this reveals that the masonry had been lime-washed prior to being covered with cement. The grey-blue and warm brown dolerite stone is normally roughly coursed, with consideration given to contrasting stone colour, and in some instances courses of slate slab give a more formal appearance to the buildings. Modern machine-cut non-local slate is the main roofing material. Within the core of the town most dwellings are in terraces. These are not single-build terraces, but rather each house has developed individually within its own burgage plot, resulting in a great range of building type from single storey vernacular cottages to three storey houses in the Georgian tradition. Two storey houses, however, dominate, with most examples in the polite 'Georgian' tradition, and many retaining period detailing such as porches, door cases and box-sash windows. Commercial properties including the Castle Hotel and the three-storey Llwyngwair Arms, and chapels such as the Ebenezer and Bethlehem, are of the same period and in the same building tradition as the dwellings. A similar building style and use of local stone can be found on the Parrog Road and on The Parrog itself, but here detached houses are as common as the terraces. The use of local stone in roadside and garden walls is also a notable feature of the town. Nearly all modern development is from the second half of the 20th century or later. This includes new, detached houses on the fringes of the town, and small estates of houses and bungalows at the town's edge as well as within the town's historic core. Facilities to serve the local community and visiting tourists such as a library, new school, doctors' surgery, car parks and tourist information office are located in the town. A modern

yacht club is located on the stone breakwater at The Parrog and a campsite and caravan park lie on the periphery of the town. Small fields now encircled by houses provide a rural feel to parts of this area, in particular close to the estuary. These fields are of pasture and are enclosed by banks topped with often over-grown hedges. Most of the recorded archaeology is related to components of the town described above – the castle and church – or to other standing buildings such as a late 18th century mill. Other sites such as several 19th century limekilns testify to the former importance of maritime trade. Unusually for a town a Neolithic chambered tomb, Carreg Coetan Authur (PRN 1462), is a prominent historic component, although it is now somewhat overwhelmed by neighbouring modern housing. (Murphy and Ludlow 2003).

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Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by
HUBERT WILSON

Swydd / Position: **Archaeologist**

Llofnod / Signature Date

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith
This report has been checked and approved by
JAMES MEEK

ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.
on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: **Head of Field Services**

Llofnod / Signature Date

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

*As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any comments you
may have on the content or presentation of this report*