

TIN SHED MUSEUM AND PLOT 1, ELDON, CLIFTON STREET, LAUGHARNE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEFS

(NGRs SN 30145 11209 and 30150 11180)



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SUMMARY

DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned by Simon Pugh-Jones and Andrew Isaacs to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground works associated with the construction of a new toilet block at the Tin Shed Museum (planning ref.W/29267) on Clifton Street, Laugharne. Shortly after this a second watching brief was commissioned from DAT Archaeological Services by Andrew Isaacs, on behalf of his sister, for a second development site on Clifton Street, on land adjacent to Eldon (planning ref.W/19767).

Due to the archaeological potential of the sites a condition was placed upon the planning permissions for both requiring the attendance of an archaeologist during the ground works to undertake an archaeological watching brief. As both sites were located so close to one another and the works were being done for members of the same family, the results of both watching briefs have been incorporated into the same report.

The archaeological watching brief at the Tin Shed Museum observed the excavation of four foundation pad pits and the sewer pipe trench leading from the toilet to an existing sewer main. The four pits were all roughly 0.5m square and excavated to depths of around 0.45m. The two eastern pits were excavated at a higher ground level than those to the west, separated by a small revetment wall. The western pits were both dug through the backfill of a modern oil pipe exposing no archaeological material. The two eastern pits were excavated through garden soils containing numerous fragments of modern pottery and waste material.

At Plot 1, Eldon, the watching brief observed the topsoil strip across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling, over which a concrete raft foundation was to be laid. The topsoil strip exposed layers of modern waste material strewn across the area. This included patches of ashes, which presumably have been thrown out from the hearths of the properties on the opposite side of Clifton Street. Further modern detritus was also present within the topsoil and exposed layers beneath..

No features, finds or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during either of the watching briefs. It is understood that this area on the western side of Clifton Street had been used for middens of rubbish and waste during the 20th century by the owners of properties on the eastern side of the road. This may have been carried out for many years. The land on the western side of the road is low lying and within the floodplain of the River Coran. The land has presumably been used as meadow or pasture since the medieval period as it was unsuitable for development due to flooding. It is shown as undeveloped on the 19th century mapping. In more recent times development has encroached into this low lying zone as new building techniques have made it easier to raise the footprints of buildings above the level of flood risk. The Tin Shed itself was formerly a garage, which was built on higher ground adjacent to the road in the early 20th century. In more recent years the property of Eldon was constructed and most recently, the Millennium Hall building. These appear to be the first development that has occurred on this plot of land.

The lack of archaeological remains observed during groundworks in and around the vicinity of the development sites does not preclude the possibility that significant archaeological features exist in the wider area.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Commission

- 1.1.1 DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned to carry out two watching briefs on sites on Clifton Street, Laugharne owned by the Isaacs family. The first site was at the Tin Shed Museum and the second at Plot 1 Eldon. As the two sites were located in close proximity and were for members of the same family, a combined report has been produced,
- 1.1.2 Seimon Pugh-Jones and Andrew Isaacs of The Tin Shed Museum contacted DAT Archaeological Services to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground works associated with the construction of a new toilet block at the Tin Shed Museum (SN 30145 11209, Figures 1 and 2). The required archaeological works for this development were placed as a condition on planning permission by Carmarthenshire County Council (Planning reference W/29267), following advice from their archaeological advisors¹.
- 1.1.3 Andrew Isaacs, on behalf of his sister Jill Isaacs, contacted DAT Archaeological Services to undertake an archaeological watching brief during initial groundworks associated with the construction of a single dwelling at the site of Plot 1, Eldon on behalf of his sister (SN 3015 1118; Figures 1 & 3). The required archaeological works for this development were placed as a condition on planning permission by Carmarthenshire County Council (Planning reference W/19767), following advice from their archaeological advisors.
- 1.1.4 The archaeological condition has been placed on the development as the proposed works could potentially expose, damage or destroy archaeological remains. These could be associated with the medieval activity (settlement or agriculture) in the vicinity of the church.

1.2 Scope of Project

- 1.2.1 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a watching brief was prepared for both sites by DAT Archaeological Services prior to the commencement of works. Both WSIs outlined methodologies for:
- Provision of a written scheme of investigation to outline the methodology by which Dyfed Archaeological Trust will undertake the watching brief.
 - 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 ground works.
 - To appropriately investigate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
 - To produce an archive and report of any results.
- 1.2.2 For the Tin Shed Museum the overall project was outlined in the WSI as:
- Archaeological attendance and recording during groundworks associated with the construction of a toilet block and associated sewerage at the Tin Shed Museum, Clifton Hill, Laugharne, Carmarthenshire. These works may expose, damage or destroy any underlying archaeological remains, if present. The works will also involve the preparation of a report and archive on the results of the watching brief. (WSI Ref FS13-096 – WSI – Tinshed Museum, Laugharne)*

¹ Dyfed Archaeological Trust Planning Services – Heritage Management.

1.2.3 For Plot 1, Eldon the project was similarly outlined in the WSI as:

Archaeological attendance and recording during groundworks associated with the construction of a dwelling on land adjacent to Eldon, Clifton Street, Laugharne, Carmarthenshire. These works may expose, damage or destroy any underlying archaeological remains, if present. The works will also involve the preparation of a report and archive on the results of the watching brief. (WSI Ref FS13-117 – WSI – Plot 1 Eldon, Laugharne)

1.3 Report Outline

1.3.1 This report provides a summary and discussion of the archaeological watching briefs and their results.

1.4 Abbreviations

1.4.1 Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record² (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management – DAT-HM; Scheduled Ancient Monument – SAM; Written Scheme of Investigation – WSI.

1.5 Illustrations

1.5.1 Printed map extracts are not necessarily produced to their original scale.

1.6 Timeline

1.6.1 The following timeline (Table 1) 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 – 4000 BC	
Neolithic –	c.4000 – 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 1086	
Medieval Period –	1086 – 1536	
Post-Medieval Period –	1536 – 1750	
Modern –	20 th century onwards	

Table 1: Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales.

² Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo SA19 6AF.

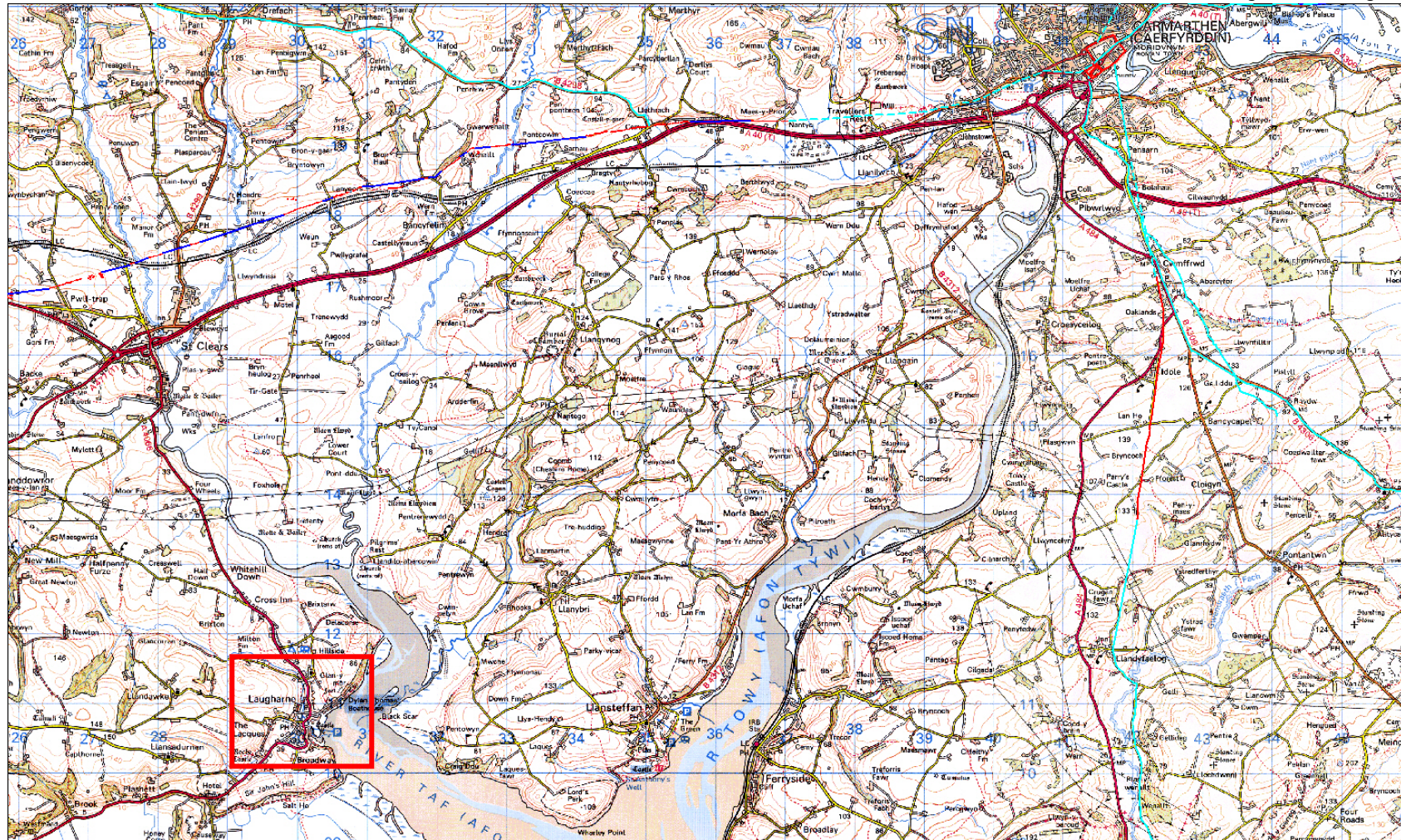


Figure 1: Location plan of Laugharne based on 1:50000 Ordnance Survey map.

Reproduced from the 2003 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office,
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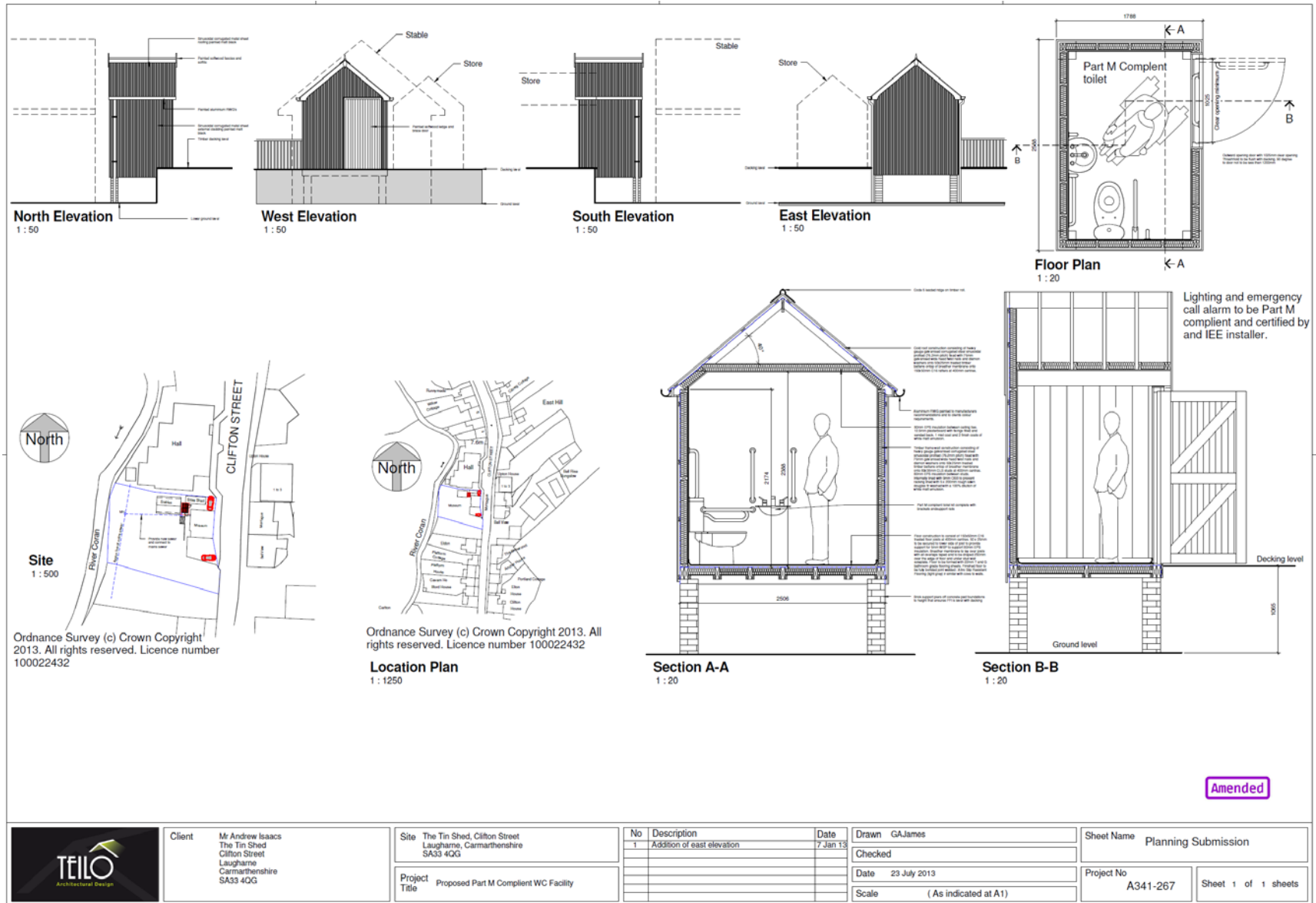


Figure 2: Plans and elevations relating to the proposed toilet at the Tin Shed Museum
(Teilo Architects, copied from CCC Planning website)

DAT Archaeological Services

2 THE SITE

2.1 Location

- 2.1.1 Both sites lie on the western side of Clifton Street, on the northern side of Laugharne.
- 2.1.2 The Tin Shed Museum lies directly to the south of the Millennium Hall. The proposed toilet block is located directly to the northwest of the Tin Shed itself, and adjacent to a former wooden structure (Figures 2 and 3).
- 2.1.3 Plot 1 lies directly to the north of the existing property known as Eldon (Figure 3). It is located in a defined plot two down from that of the Tin Shed Museum.

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 2.2.1 Both site areas lies adjacent to the main road out of Laugharne (Clifton Street) towards St Clears. Early maps show that the western side of Clifton Hill in the area of the sites was not occupied and the land laid to meadow, leading down to the river (Figure 4).
- 2.2.2 A search of the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust indicates that there are 10 known sites within 150m radius of the proposed developments. These are summarised in Table 2.
- 2.2.3 The majority of the recorded sites are post-medieval structures along Clifton Street, all of which are Listed buildings.
- 2.2.4 The record for Laugharne Castle tennis court (PRN 2167) is possibly a mis-located entry on the record. It will have no bearing on the proposed development site.
- 2.2.5 Of most interest is the record of the possible Early Medieval or Bronze Age cist cemetery recorded at the Croft (PRN 11610). This site is located around 100m to the northeast of the Tin Shed Museum. The cist graves are undated, and as the practice of using stone lined graves was prevalent during both the Bronze Age and Early Medieval periods it is not possible to be certain to which period the site belongs. Being located quite close to the church at Laugharne it is perhaps most likely they are of early medieval date (400AD – 1086AD), indicating an early ecclesiastical site onto which the present church was founded. The cemetery could indicate an early medieval settlement was present in the surrounding area and the potential for remains of this date encroaching into both development sites was identified.
- 2.2.6 Anecdotal evidence received from Andrew Isaacs and Seimon Pugh-Jones stated that in recent times the broad area of both development sites was treated as waste ground by the local residents and was used as a place to dispose of household rubbish. Both plots are quite low lying and run down to the River Coran to the west. Material may have been deposited on these plots to raise them above flood risk or alternatively because they remained unused areas due to risk from flooding.

PRN	Site Name	Period	Description	NGR
2167	Laugharne Castle Tennis court	Post-medieval	Site of tennis court associated with the castle. No further information given	SN30221114
6611	Great House	Post-medieval	Historic dwelling of early-18th century (or possibly earlier) origin. Now renovated. Grade II* Listed Building	SN3015011061
6612	Clifton Villa; Clifton House	Post-medieval	Grade II Listed Building. Dwelling of 18th century origin. RPS August 2001	SN3016611125
6614	Dragon Park	Post-medieval	Grade II Listed Building. Dwelling of 18th century origin. RPS August 2001	SN3018411055
6687	The Limes	Post-medieval	Grade II Listed Building. Dwelling of 18th century origin. RPS August 2001	SN3016911090
6688	Moir House	Post-medieval	Grade II Listed Building. Dwelling of 18th century origin. RPS August 2001	SN3016911080
6689	Rosetta	Post-medieval	Grade II Listed Building. Dwelling of 18th century origin. RPS August 2001	SN3017011067
6690	Upton House	Post-medieval	Grade II Listed Building. Dwelling of 18th century origin. RPS August 2001	SN301611125
11610	The Croft, Laugharne Cist grave cemetery	Early Medieval, Bronze Age	Early medieval B site, i.e. medium-probability early medieval origins. Undated cist burials have been observed behind 'The Croft', 100m to the south of Laugharne parish churchyard (PRN 14296), where 8 graves were reported, two with burials, in 1931.	SN301911128
20655	Vicarage	Post-medieval	Grade II Listed Building.	SN3015811044

Table 2: Historic Environment Record Entries within 150m radius of the development sites

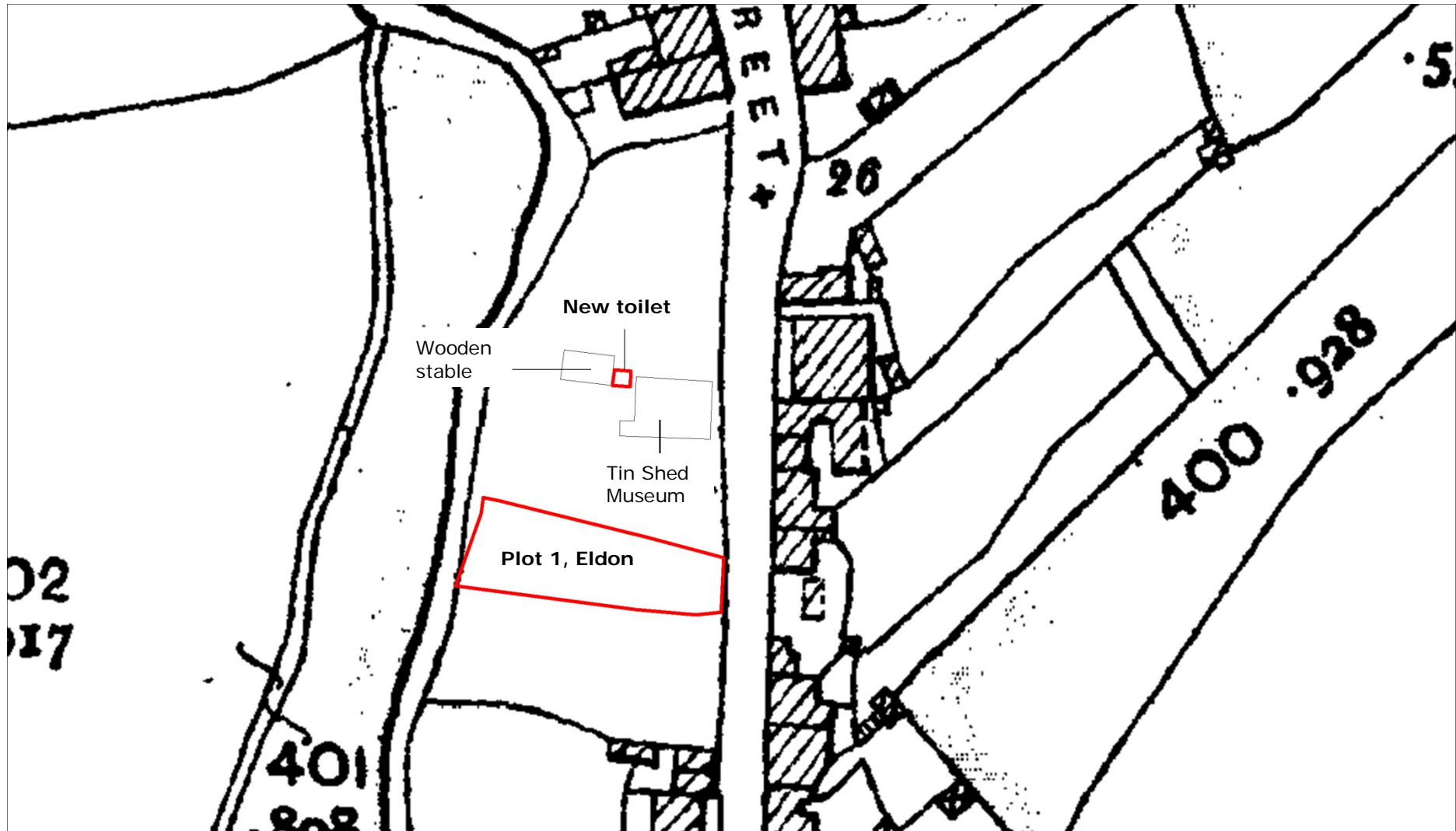


Figure 4: Development areas and outlines of Tin Shed and adjacent wooden stable, shown on the 1907 Ordnance Survey Map, indicating whole area as vacant plot of land

3 WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology and Timetabling

- 3.1.1 An archaeological 'watching brief' was undertaken at the tin Shed Museum on 6th February 2014 and a brief return visit was made on 17th August 2014. The watching brief at Plot 1 Eldon was undertaken in a single day on 25th March 2014. The watching briefs were undertaken at the commencement of ground works that had the potential to expose, damage or destroy underlying archaeological remains. The return visit to the Tins Shed Museum was undertaken to observe the excavated sewer trench.
- 3.1.2 All archaeological deposits revealed during the ground works were examined and recorded to an appropriate level.
- 3.1.3 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 DAT Archaeological Services.

3.2 Post-Fieldwork Reporting and Archiving

- 3.2.1 All data recovered during the fieldwork will be collated into a site archive structured in accordance with 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.
- 3.2.2 The results of the fieldwork have been assessed in local, regional and wider contexts. The report includes a desk-based research element to ensure that the site is placed within its wider archaeological context.

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.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Tin Shed Toilet

- 4.1.1 The location of the toilet and waste pipe trench were established by the site contractors according to the plan laid out by the architect (see Figure 2).
- 4.1.2 The area of the proposed toilet was partially covered by raised decking which had been removed prior to the works commencing. The decking was raised some 0.58m above the underlying ground surface, which comprised a very dark garden soil. To the west of the decked area was a concrete revetment wall of 0.46m height which dropped down to a crushed stone area some 0.76m in width between the wall and the adjacent wooden stable (Photo 1, Figure 5).



Photo 1: Location of the new toilet to the rear of the Tin Shed Museum and east of the wooden stable (with oil tank behind). Facing northwest.

- 4.1.3 Four roughly square pits for the foundation pads for the toilet were hand excavated through the exposed ground surface, two on the raised area of the garden soil and two in the lower part adjacent to the wooden stable through the crushed stone (Photo 2).
- 4.1.4 The northwestern pit was roughly 0.55m square located directly adjacent to the foundations for the adjacent stable (Photos 2 and 3). It was excavated to a depth of 0.44m through layers of crushed stone. Within these layers of crushed stone was a thin metal pipe which carried heating oil from the oil tank to the north to the nearby boiler for the museum.
- 4.1.5 Located 1.75m to the south of the northwestern pit was a second excavated at the lower level through the crushed stone layers. This pit measured roughly 0.50m square and again of 0.44m depth. The oil pipe was again exposed within the pit, as were the foundations for the wooden shed (Photos 2 and 4).

- 4.1.6 The northeastern pit was 0.50m square and excavated to a depth of 0.47m depth through layers of very dark garden soils (Photo 2 and 5). The pit was excavated adjacent to supports for the former decking and a smaller galvanized steel building to the north. A single soil layer was excavated from which a number of pieces of modern detritus were recovered, mostly comprising broken ceramics and glass. This pit was located 1.10m east of the northwestern foundation pit.
- 4.1.7 The southeastern pit was located 1.70m south of the northeastern pit and 0.96m east of that to the southwest. The pit measured 0.60m x 0.55m and was excavated to a depth of 0.45m. This pit was again excavated through a homogenous garden soil layer containing fragments of modern detritus.



Photo 2: View north showing pits for the foundation pads. 1m scale.

4.1.8 Following infilling of the foundation pits with concrete, the toilet was constructed on timber supports, to be accessed at the raised level of the decking. The toilet was built of wooden frame and covered in galvanized steel sheets to match the Tin Shed Museum.

4.1.9 At a later date the waste pipe from the toilet was excavated, leading down to the existing large manhole and sewer run which passes through the western part of the Tin Shed plot, immediately west of the wooden stable (Photo 7). This was viewed following excavation (no photographs illustrated), as it was known that the area had been previously disturbed. The sewer trench was cut through layers of stone which formed the ground surface outside of the wooden stable. This overlay layers of waste material and garden soil and no significant archaeological remains revealed. The join with the existing sewer cut through previously disturbed ground.



Photo 3: Northwestern pit against end of wooden stable wall, with oil pipe exposed, viewing east with 1m scale



Photo 4: Southwestern pit against wooden stable wall, with oil pipe exposed, viewing west with 1m scale



Photo 5: Northeastern pit excavated through garden soils with decking supports visible, viewing north with 1m scale.



Photo 6: Southeastern pit excavated through garden soils with decking supports visible, viewing north with 1m scale.



Photo 7: Route of the waste pipe from the toilet east of the stable, turning along the front of the stable towards existing sewer, with manhole for sewer on left of photo

4.2 Plot 1, Eldon

- 4.2.1 The location of the building plot was established by the site contractor according to the development scheme presented to the local planning authority.
- 4.2.2 The site area was laid to grass, with areas of stone chippings, presumably having been laid down to make the area suitable for use for parking. The plot was undeveloped and it was noted that a considerable amount of rubbish and other waste material had been strewn across the area, including large areas of ashes.
- 4.2.3 The topsoil was stripped to an approximate average depth of 0.15m using a mini-digger with a toothless ditching/grading bucket (Photo 8). The footprint of the building was reduced to the formation level on top of which a concrete raft foundation was to be constructed, and so the depth of groundworks was minimal.
- 4.2.4 The topsoil removed from the site was levelled across the area directly to the west of the plot (Photo 9). All material removed from the footprint of the building was observed by the attending archaeologist (Photos 10 & 11).
- 4.2.5 No archaeological features were apparent in the exposed surface, which still contained compacted layers of modern waste material. In only a few areas what appeared to be natural undisturbed ground was exposed.
- 4.2.6 A small selection of artefacts included 6 ceramic fragments and a spoon, all probably of 20th Century date were recovered from the site.



Photo 8: Topsoil stripping across site area, viewing west across Plot 1, Eldon from Clifton Street entrance



Photo 9: View of Plot 1 facing southeast towards Eldon



Photo 10: Completed topsoil strip of Plot 1, Eldon, viewing east

- 4.2.6 During the watching brief it was noted that a north to south aligned bank ran across the centre of the development plot, directly to the west of the proposed house footprint. This was not removed. It spanned the width of the plot, although had been partially removed in the past in certain areas. To the west of this boundary the plot was slightly lower and closer to the River Coran. A small area of former cultivated ground was noted nearer the river comprising a series of raised ridges.



Photo 11: Completed topsoil strip of Plot 1, Eldon viewing west.



Photo 12: Western part of development plot showing narrow ridges in the ground surface (centre front of photo)

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 No archaeological features or finds of archaeological significance were recorded in either of the development locations.
- 5.2 The four foundation pads for the new toilet at the Tin Shed Museum were excavated on two different levels: the two pits to the east were higher, and dug through layers of garden soils and modern waste material; those to the west were located at a lower level adjacent to a wooden stable to the west and a 0.46m high revetment wall to the east. These two pits were excavated through layers of crushed stone, which were associated with a modern oil pipe which had been recently dug through this lower area and backfilled with imported stone.
- 5.3 At Plot 1, Eldon, the footprint for the proposed building was stripped of topsoil, in readiness for the construction of a concrete raft foundation. The depth of material removed exposed underlying layers of waste material, including ashes and general detritus. Most of the material identified was of 20th century date and seemingly related to waste material being thrown across the site area.
- 5.4 While there are other sites of established archaeological interest in the vicinity (Table 2) the specific locations and nature of these developments probably explains why nothing was found. They are both on low-lying land immediately adjacent to the River Coran and would therefore be subject to periodic flooding. It is probably the case that the land was only used for meadow or pasture, as indicated by the area from the existing Millennium Hall through to Eldon itself being shown as an undeveloped plot on earlier Ordnance Survey maps (Figure 4). Modern building techniques have now enabled this area to be developed, as buildings can be raised above the flood risk level.
- 5.5 Through discussions with Andrew Isaacs, it transpires that these plots on the western side of Clifton Street were used as waste midden areas by the owners of properties on the eastern side of the street. This would seem to be corroborated with the evidence revealed on both sites. At the Tin Shed, the garden soil area on the higher level beneath the decking contained frequent pieces of modern detritus. At Plot 1, Eldon, the exposed ground surface contained large areas of ash as well as other layers of modern waste material. The ash presumably discarded from cleaning out hearths within the properties opposite.
- 5.6 The Tin Shed was a former garage erected on the plot in the earlier part of the 20th century, presumably on top of layers of earlier waste material. The building is raised at its western end indicating the drop in ground level from Clifton Street down to the River Coran. Mr Isaacs still remembers waste being thrown to the west behind the Tin Shed once it had been built.
- 5.7 Whether any earlier archaeological remains could survive at a lower depth beneath these waste layers is uncertain, although no indication of earlier material was identified during the watching briefs.
- 5.8 It appears that there is little archaeological potential along this specific section of the Coran valley (between the Millennium Hall and Eldon), the land presumably unsuitable for building so used as agricultural land from at least the medieval period into the early part of the 20th century. This does not negate the need for appropriate archaeological supervision if any further development projects come to light in this area, particularly those which are likely to result in works of a more intrusive nature (ie. below the layers of waste material).

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Swydd / Position: Archaeologist / Head of DAT Archaeological Services

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date 27/01/2015

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

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

Swydd / Position:

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date 27/01/2015

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