

**LAND ADJOINING THE OLD  
VICARAGE, CHURCH LANE,  
ABERGWILI, CARMARTHENSHIRE:  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
2015**

**(NGR SN 4392 2092)**



Prepared by DAT Archaeological Services  
For: Mr Eifion Thomas & Ian Jones





**DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NO. 2015/49  
RHIF Y PROSIECT / PROJECT RECORD NO. 108558

Medi 2015  
September 2015



**LAND ADJOINING THE OLD  
VICARAGE, CHURCH LANE,  
ABERGWILI, CARMARTHENSHIRE:  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
2015**

Gan / By

Charles Enright

*Paratowyd yr adroddiad yma at ddefnydd y cwsmer yn unig. Ni dderbynnir cyfrifoldeb gan Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf am ei ddefnyddio gan unrhyw berson na phersonau eraill a fydd yn ei ddarllen neu ddibynnu ar y gwybodaeth y mae'n ei gynnwys*

*The report has been prepared for the specific use of the client. Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited can accept no responsibility for its use by any other person or persons who may read it or rely on the information it contains.*



Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf  
Neuadd y Sir, Stryd Caerfyrddin, Llandeilo, Sir  
Gaerfyrddin SA19 6AF  
Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyffredinol 01558 823121  
Adran Rheoli Treftadaeth 01558 823131  
Ffacs: 01558 823133  
Ebost: [info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk](mailto:info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk)  
Gwefan: [www.archaeolegdyfed.org.uk](http://www.archaeolegdyfed.org.uk)

*Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited*  
*The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo,*  
*Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF*  
*Tel: General Enquiries 01558 823121*  
*Heritage Management Section 01558 823131*  
*Fax: 01558 823133*  
*Email: [info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk](mailto:info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk)*  
*Website: [www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk](http://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk)*

*Cwmni cyfyngedig (1198990) ynghyd ag elusen gofrestredig (504616) yw'r Ymddiriedolaeth.*  
*The Trust is both a Limited Company (No. 1198990) and a Registered Charity (No. 504616)*  
**CADEIRYDD CHAIRMAN: Professor B Burnham. CYFARWYDDWR DIRECTOR: K Murphy BA MIFA**





**LAND ADJOINING THE OLD VICARAGE. CHURCH LANE, ABERGWILI,  
CARMARTHENSHIRE:  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 2015**

**CONTENTS**

<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.1 Project Commission</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.2 Scope of Project</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.3 Report Outline</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.4 Abbreviations</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.5 Illustrations</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.6 Timeline</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. THE SITE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.1 Site Location</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.2 Historical Background and Archaeological Potential</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BRIEF METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.1 Fieldwork Methodology</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.2 Post-Fieldwork Reporting and Archiving</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4. EVALUATION RESULTS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5. CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>6. SOURCES</b>	<b>26</b>

**FIGURES**

<b>Figure 1:</b>	Site location of proposed development based upon the Ordnance Survey.	<b>4</b>
<b>Figure 2:</b>	Medieval layout of Abergwili	<b>6</b>
<b>Figure 3:</b>	Extract from the 1890 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map.	<b>7</b>
<b>Figure 4:</b>	Extract from the 1904 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map.	<b>8</b>
<b>Figure 5:</b>	Trench plan showing wider area around Abergwili, including St David's Church	<b>10</b>
<b>Figure 6:</b>	Detailed plan of Evaluation trenches.	<b>21</b>
<b>Figure 7:</b>	<b>Section 1</b> – South facing section through ditch [105]; <b>Section 2</b> – south facing section through ditch [105]; <b>Section 3</b> – East facing section across Trench and ditch [105]	<b>22</b>
<b>Figure 8:</b>	Development proposals overlaid on Trench plan showing location of ditch.	<b>25</b>

## **TABLES**

<b>Table 1:</b>	Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales	3
<b>Table 2:</b>	Descriptions of individually recorded archaeological deposits and features recorded during the evaluation	20

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

<b>Photo 1:</b>	View west along Trench 1 during cleaning	11
<b>Photo 3:</b>	South facing section of Trench 1 showing stratigraphy	13
<b>Photo 4:</b>	North facing section of trench 1 showing an exposed concrete beam <i>in-situ</i> .	13
<b>Photo 5:</b>	Northern area of trench 2 showing the ditch cut (105). Facing west.	14
<b>Photo 6:</b>	Looking north at sections excavated through feature [105]. The apparent terminus of the ditch is located in the foreground of the photo.	15
<b>Photo 7:</b>	South facing section of ditch, at the southwestern terminus.	16
<b>Photo 8:</b>	South facing section of ditch abutting northern edge of trench.	17
<b>Photo 9:</b>	General photograph of development area showing both evaluation trenches.	18

**LAND ADJOINING THE OLD VICARAGE, CHURCH LANE, ABERGWILI,  
CARMARTHENSHIRE:  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 2015**

**SUMMARY**

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land adjoining the Old Vicarage, Church Lane, Abergwili, Carmarthenshire NGR (SN 4392 2092) in order to address an archaeological condition placed upon the planning decision for the proposed development plot (Planning application Number W/23570).*

*The development site is a small undeveloped plot of land bounded by Church Lane (connecting the High Street to St David's Church) to the east and a new residential development to the north. The site lies close to the Church of St David's, a grade II Listed Building. The present church dates from 1840 – 1843 but replaced an earlier medieval church. With the medieval origins of St David's Church and Church Lane there was considered to be a high potential that buried archaeological remains may exist within the area of the proposed development. Thus any below ground archaeological remains associated with the medieval settlement of Abergwili within the development site could have been adversely affected by the proposed development.*

*Two trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision, Trench 1 was aligned north-south (11m x 2m) and Trench 2 was aligned east-west (9.5m x 2m). Trench 2 was void of any archaeological deposits aside from a series of modern concrete beams, which were probably associated with foundations for a construction that was never completed, as it is not marked on any OS maps.*

*In the northern section of Trench 2 at a depth of approximately 0.6 – 0.7m below present ground level, a substantial ditch was exposed. The exposed section within the trench suggests it was curved, but within the constraints of this evaluation it was not possible to determine its full extent or character as its edges continued beyond the edges of the trench.*

*Two sections were excavated through the ditch which demonstrated the backfill comprised a number of different layers but unfortunately no artefactual evidence was recovered. Large deposits of charcoal were noted within the feature, and two samples of this material were recovered. These may contain environmental information and dating evidence for the ditch.*

*At the southern terminus the ditch was approximately 0.6m deep with steep sides. The profile of the ditch at its northern extent within the trench was approximately 1.6m deep with gradual sloping sides towards a convex shaped base. The ditch extended beyond the extents of the excavated trench suggesting the likely survival of further archaeological deposits within the wider development area.*

*If groundworks for the development of the site are likely to impact upon the archaeological deposits then further archaeological mitigation may be required, such as full excavation of the feature. If the archaeological deposits are not likely to be affected then no further works may be required.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Commission**

1.1.1 DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned by Mr Eifion Thomas and Ian Jones to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the proposed site of two new dwellings on land adjacent to the Old Vicarage, Church Lane, Abergwili, Carmarthenshire (Planning Application number 2/23570).

1.1.2 Planning permission has been granted for the development by Carmarthenshire County Council Planning Authority but under the guidance of the archaeological advisors to the planning authority (Dyfed Archaeological Trust Planning Services) the following condition has been placed on the planning application decision:

*No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority Reason: To safeguard the archaeological importance of the site.*

1.1.3 The requirement for the archaeological investigation had been placed upon the development as the site lies close to the Grade II Listed St David's Church and adjacent to Church Lane (NGR SN 4392 2092; See Figure 1), both of which have medieval origins. Therefore it was considered likely that the development could disturb buried archaeological remains associated with the medieval settlement of Abergwili.

1.1.4 The purpose of the evaluation was to provide information on the character, and significance of any below ground archaeological remains that may be present within the development area.

### **1.2 Scope of Project**

1.2.1 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the archaeological evaluation was prepared by DAT Archaeological Services prior to the commencement of works. This was approved in writing by Carmarthenshire County Council prior to the commencement of the works.

1.2.2 The evaluation was designed to provide information on the character, extent, date, state of preservation and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the area. The evaluation would record the identified remains and make a judgement in terms of whether a more detailed programme of archaeological works should be implemented in advance of the development.

### **1.3 Report Outline**

1.3.1 This report provides a summary and discussion of the archaeological evaluation and its results, and puts those results within their regional and national context.

## 1.4 Abbreviations

- 1.4.1 Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record<sup>1</sup> (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services – DAT-FS; Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management – DAT-HM; Scheduled Ancient Monument – SAM; Written Scheme of Investigation – WSI; RCAHMW – Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

## 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.

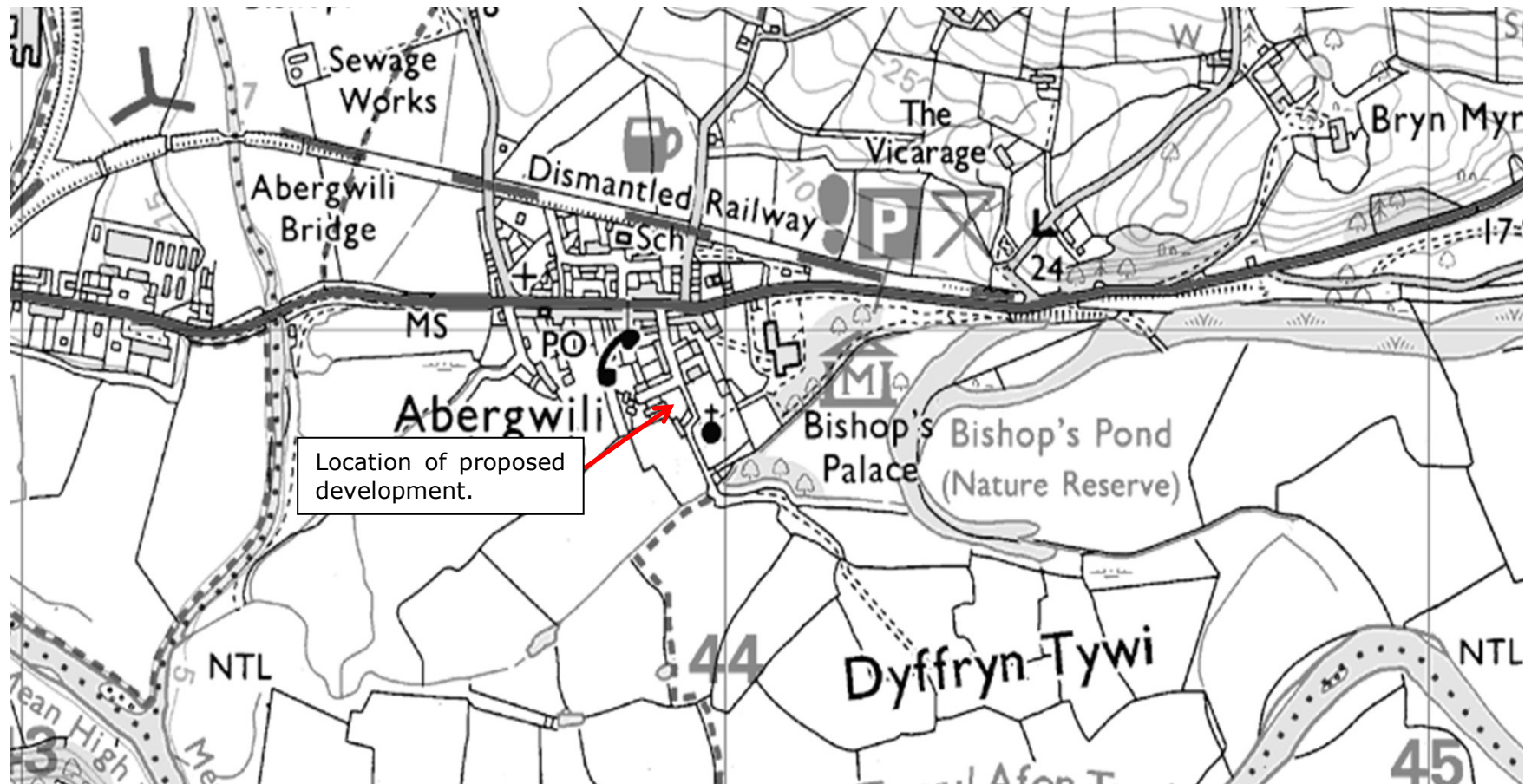
Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic –	c.450,000 – 10,000 BC	Prehistoric
Mesolithic –	c. 10,000 – 4400 BC	
Neolithic –	c.4400 – 2300 BC	
Bronze Age –	c.2300 – 700 BC	
Iron Age –	c.700 BC – AD 43	
Roman (Romano-British) Period –	AD 43 – c. AD 410	Historic
Post-Roman / Early Medieval Period –	c. AD 410 – AD 1086	
Medieval Period –	1086 – 1536	
Post-Medieval Period <sup>2</sup> –	1536 – 1750	
Industrial Period –	1750 – 1899	
Modern –	20 <sup>th</sup> century onwards	

**Table 1:** Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales.

<sup>1</sup> Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo SA19 6AF.

<sup>2</sup> 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





**Figure 1:** Site location of proposed development based upon the Ordnance Survey.

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 scale Explorer Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office,  
© Crown Copyright Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd., The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No 100020930.

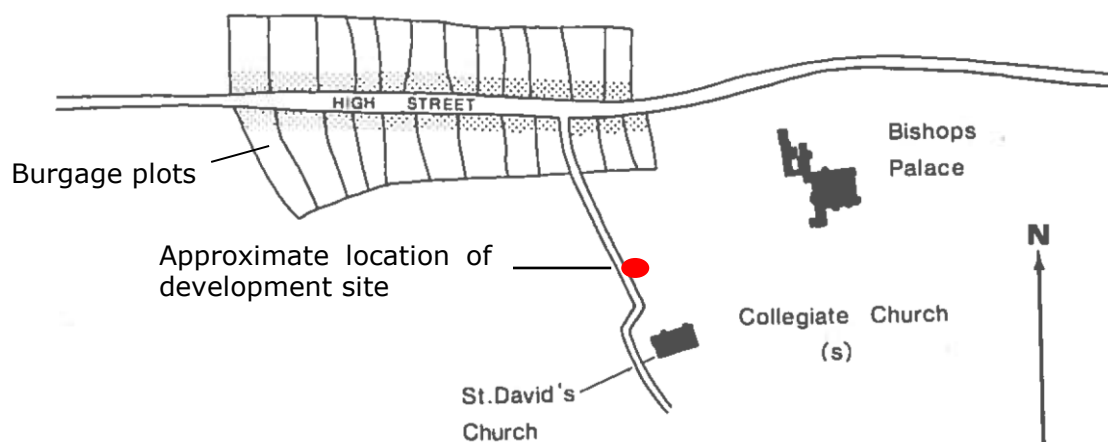
## **2. THE SITE**

### **2.1 Site Location** (Figure 1)

- 2.1.1 The development site is situated approximately 100m south of Abergwili High Street and almost 3km north east of the center of Carmarthen.
- 2.1.2 The site is a small undeveloped plot of land bounded by modern residential development to the north and Church Lane to the east. Church Lane is a narrow lane that connects the High Street to St David's church.
- 2.1.3 Currently the southern part of the development plot is occupied by a small garage and associated hard standing in the south west corner extending into the plot.

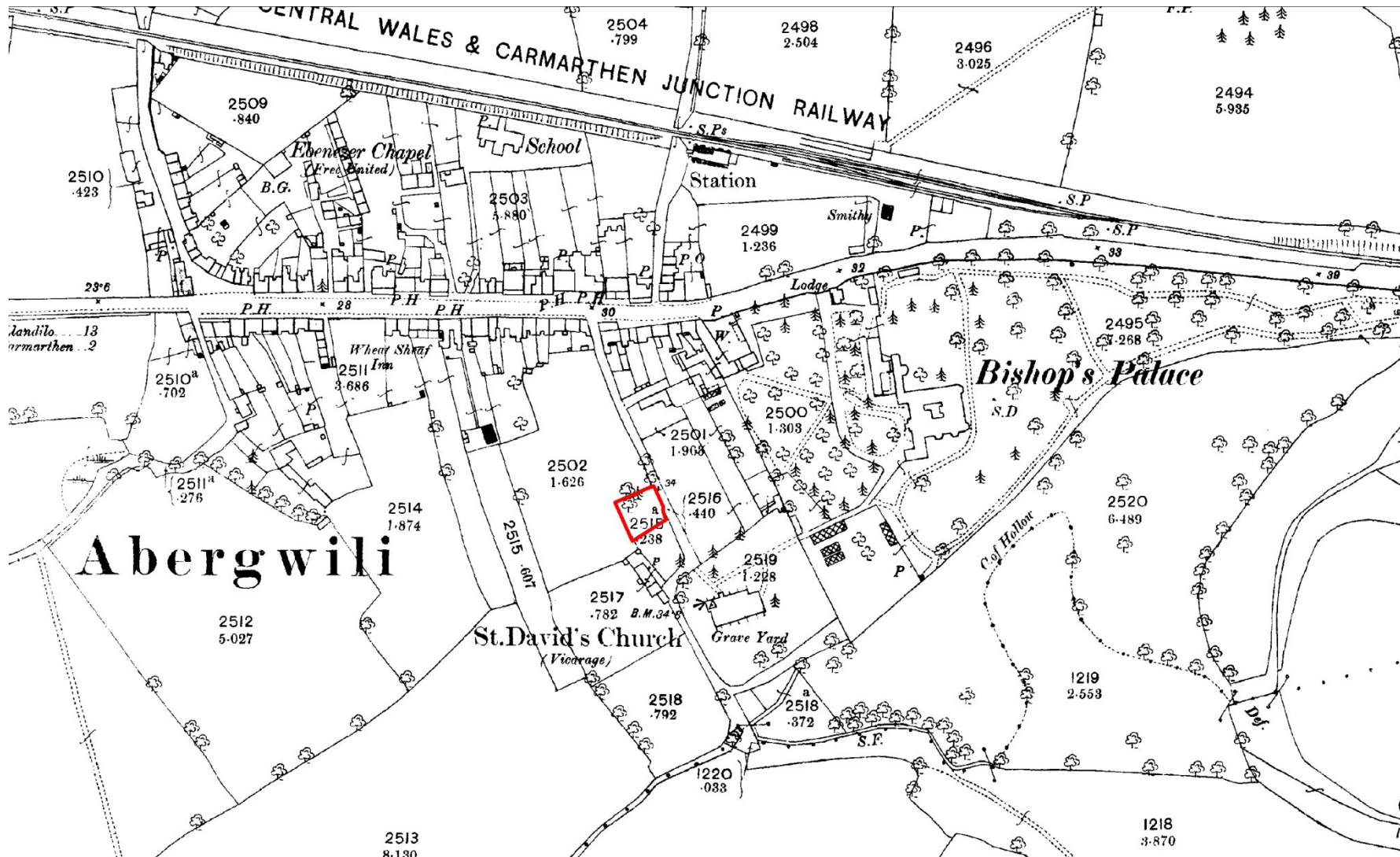
### **2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

- 2.2.1 The following information has been extracted from the Historic environment Record (HER) held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust and the online Coflein data base.
- 2.2.2 The proposed development site lies close to the Church of St David's a grade II Listed Building (81928/PRN 17407). The present church dates from 1840 – 1843, but it replaced an earlier medieval church. The shape of the church yard and St David dedication could indicate an early medieval origin (pre 1086AD) for the church.
- 2.2.3 An inscribed stone (PRN 49232) within the churchyard may indicate prehistoric use of the site but it has not been possible to confirm this (Meek 2012). The suggested route of the Roman road between Carmarthen and Llandeilo lies to the north of the area along the High Street through Abergwili. There was considered a low potential that remains associated with the Roman road, such as roadside settlement, could have been present within the development area.
- 2.2.4 A battle was fought at the site of Abergwili in 1022 between Lywelyn ap Seisyll of Gwynedd and Rhain, an Irish leader (Soulsby, 1983). It is not known how much of the settlement existed at this time but it is likely that there was no organised township until Bishop Beck of St David's built the collegiate college (*ibid*).
- 2.2.5 Adjacent to the development plot is the site of the former vicarage for the church, which is recorded as being extant in 1822 and turned into cottages when a new vicarage was built elsewhere in 1846.
- 2.2.6 The former medieval Bishops Palace lies approximately 150m to the east and was originally founded as a college by Bishop Beck of St Davids. In 1541 the college was relocated to Brecon and the buildings were adapted as the Bishops principal residence. The palace underwent extensive rebuilding in the eighteenth century and was rebuilt after being near destroyed by a fire in 1903. In 1972 the Bishop moved to an adjacent modern residence adjacent and the palace now houses the Carmarthenshire County Museum.
- 2.2.7 The medieval borough of Abergwili has very little recorded history and there is an absence of archaeological investigation and stray finds (Soulsby 1983). The medieval settlement of Abergwili was a small town and records indicate only 25 burgages were here in 1326, each of which was located adjacent to the high street (*ibid*), Figure 2 illustrates the likely layout of the town at this time.



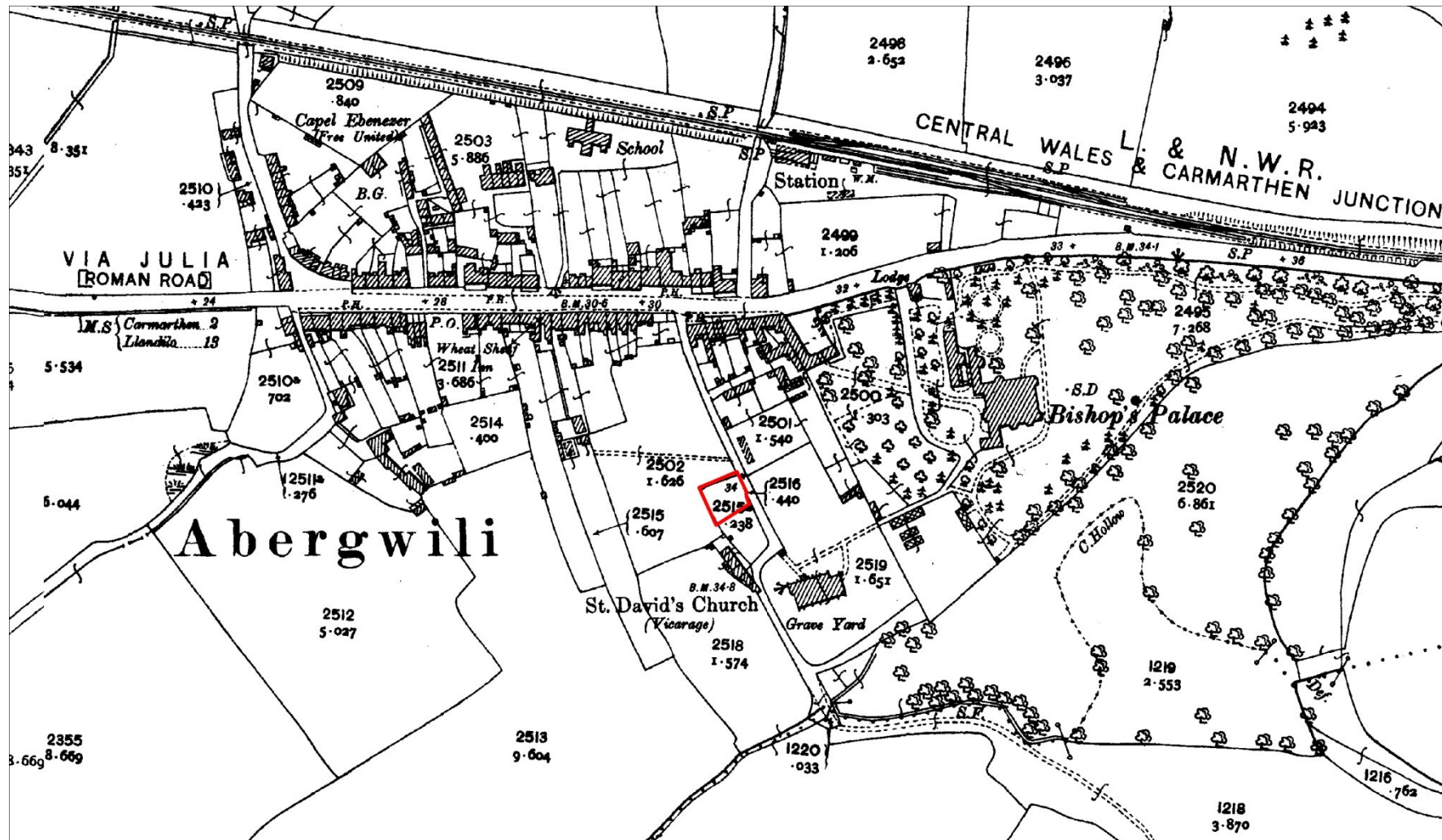
**Figure 2:** Medieval layout of Abergwili (Adapted from Soulsby, 1983).

- 2.2.8 The known archaeological sites listed in the HER predominantly date from the medieval to post-medieval period and there appears to be a lack of archaeological evidence for any earlier activity than this period.
- 2.2.9 Map regression using the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS maps (Figures 3 and 4 respectively) show little has changed since their production and the way that Abergwili looks today demonstrating that the village must have taken on this form before 1890. It is likely that many of the property boundaries along the main street are fossilized from the medieval layout. Church Lane may also date from that period, although it is not known if properties were present along its frontage.
- 2.2.10 The plot of land of the proposed development can be clearly see in in both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS maps as a undeveloped plot, probably used as a small garden plot (Figures 3 & 4).
- 2.2.11 Overall, the proposed development site has the greatest potential to contain medieval (or even earlier remains) associated with the settlement around the church or activity associated with the wider environs of the medieval Bishops Palace.



**Figure 3:** Extract from the 1890 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map.  
The proposed development site is shown within the red boundary.





**Figure 4:** Extract from the 1904 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map.  
The proposed development site is shown within the red boundary.



### **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Fieldwork Methodology**

- 3.1.1 To ascertain the significance and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits within the proposed development area, a phase of trial trench evaluation was implemented. Two conjoined trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision (Figure 5).

**Trench 1:** 11m x 2m – *Orientated east to west across the centre of the development site.*

**Trench 2:** 9.5m x 2m – *Orientated north to south along the eastern frontage of the development site adjacent to Church Lane.*

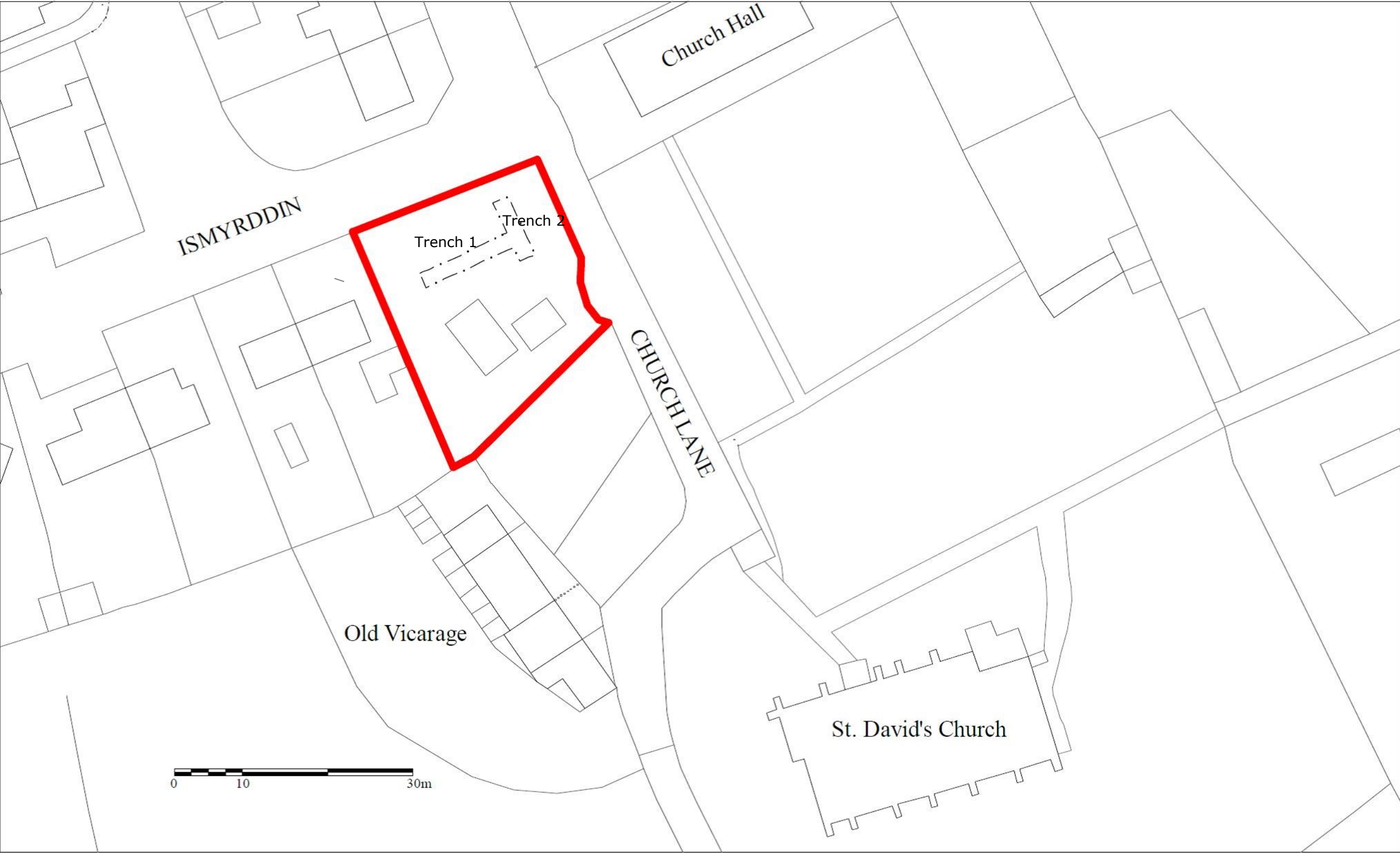
- 3.1.2 The trenches were excavated using a tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a flat bladed bucket. All non-archaeologically significant overburden was removed, and the trenches were excavated down onto archaeological levels.
- 3.1.3 Following machine excavation, the trench was hand cleaned using trowels to elucidate the remains. Certain areas were re-trowelled a number of times to improve the definition of features. Sample excavation was undertaken of a ditch like feature located in the northern half of Trench 1.
- 3.1.4 All deposits were recorded by archaeological context recording sheet, scale drawing, photography and site note books. All individual deposits were numbered using the open-ended numbering system in accordance with DAT Archaeological Services Recording Manual<sup>3</sup>. Trench plans and sections were recorded by means of measured drawings and sketches. A photographic record was maintained using digital cameras.
- 3.1.5 The trench was located in relation to surrounding features and buildings using a Leica Disto D510 laser measurer and a Garmin GPSmap 60CSx hand held GIS device.
- 3.1.6 The archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of August, 2015.

#### **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.

---

<sup>3</sup> DAT Archaeological Services use the Recording Manual developed by English Heritage Centre for Archaeology. A copy will be available for inspection if required.



**Figure 5:** Trench plan showing wider area around Abergwili, including St David’s Church  
Red = Development site boundary

#### **4. EVALUATION RESULTS** (Figures 5, 6 & 7)

- 4.1 All individual archaeological deposits or features were numbered using the open-ended numbering system and each numbered deposit was described. A summary of the descriptions are listed in Table 3.
- 4.2 The trenches excavated within the development plot were located on the northeastern side of the area, the only location possible to place the trench due to constraints from a concrete slab (Figure 5). The trenches were arranged in a T-shape, with Trench 1 aligned roughly east to west across the width of the development area (Photo 1) and Trench 2 along the Church Lane frontage (Photo 2). The length of Trench 2 was constrained by a large concrete block which was too large to be removed by the machine.



**Photo 1:** View west along Trench 1 during cleaning.





**Photo 2:** View northeast over Trench 2, with junction to Trench 1.

**Trench 1** (Figure 5 & 6)

- 4.3 Excavation of Trench 1 demonstrated the stratigraphy of the trench (Photo 3), which comprised a friable layer of topsoil (100) averaging 0.20m in depth containing frequent small stones and pebbles. The topsoil overlay a light brown clay silt layer (119), which again contained frequent small stones and pebbles and fragments of modern and post-medieval pottery. It was between 0.10m and 0.25m in depth. Below this was a dark greyish brown clay silt soil (103), which had the appearance of buried topsoil, of between 0.30m and 0.04m depth. This buried topsoil overlay a disturbed subsoil (104), which is presumed to be the interface with the undisturbed natural geology beneath.
- 4.4 In the north facing section of Trench 1 large concrete beams were exposed in-situ cutting into (103), possibly representing the foundations for a former building (Photo 4), although none is recorded on any earlier maps of the site area.





**Photo 3:** South facing section of Trench 1 showing stratigraphy.

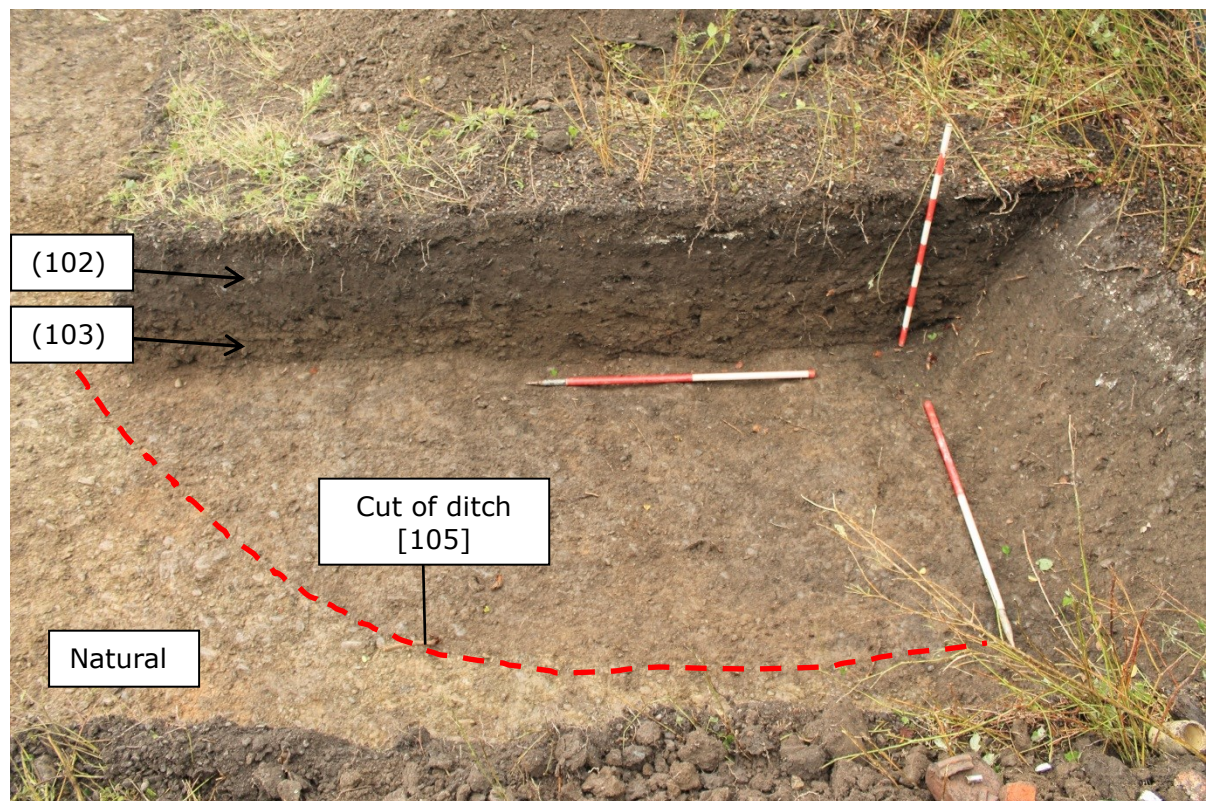


**Photo 4:** North facing section of trench 1 showing an exposed concrete beam *in-situ*.



**Trench 2** (Figures 5, 6 & 7)

- 4.5 Machine excavation of Trench 2 revealed a thin layer of crushed stone (101) overlying much of the trench along the eastern side, with remnants of a thin layer of the topsoil (100) in other areas, both being of between 0.05m and 0.08m in depth.
- 4.6 The crushed stone layer overlay a c.0.50m deep layer of dark greyish brown buried topsoil (102), containing fragments of modern pottery, bottles, boot polish tins and other detritus. This overlay a layer of brownish/grey silty clay of between 0.20m and 0.42m in depth. Both layers contained frequent inclusions of small stones and pebbles.
- 4.7 The trench was excavated to its interface with a compacted yellow/brown clay which represented the undisturbed underlying natural geology.
- 4.8 At the northern end of the trench a clear feature [105] was observed directly underlying (103) and cutting into the natural ground (Photo 5).



**Photo 5:** Northern area of trench 2 showing the ditch cut (105). Facing west.

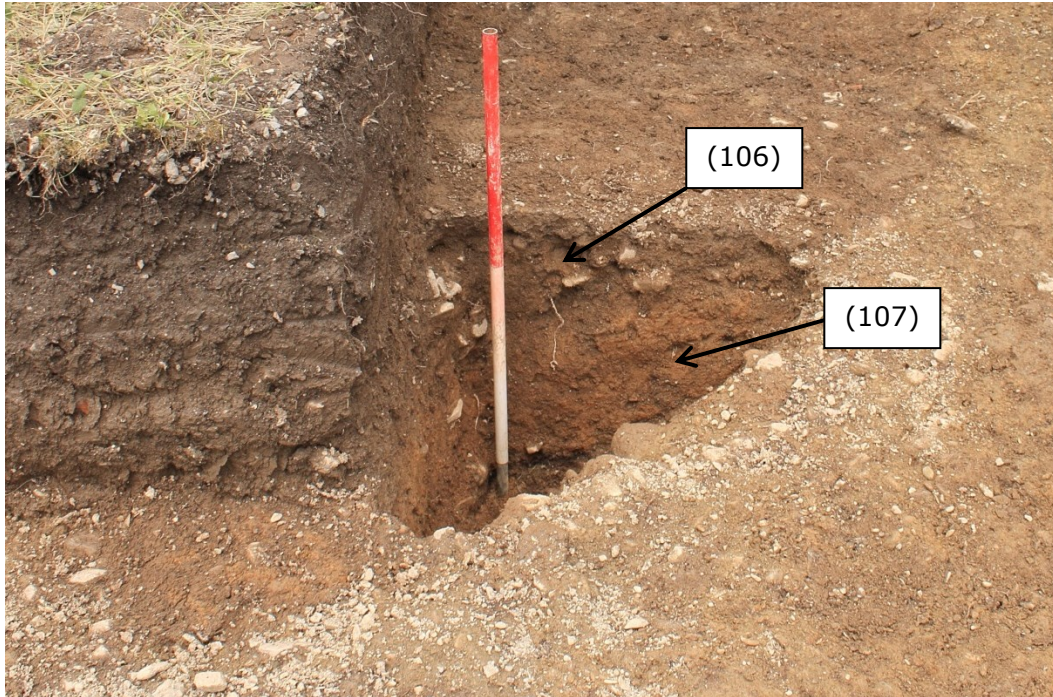
- 4.9 Following cleaning of feature [105], it appeared to be comprise an arc of fill projecting from the northern and western side of the trench in an arc. Its extents continued beyond the north and west end edges of the trench. A possible terminus to the feature was noted just encroaching into the eastern end of Trench 2.
- 4.10 Sample excavation of [105] was undertaken in two sections: one section at the possible southern terminus of the feature; and the second section against the northern edge of the trench (Photo 6).





**Photo 6:** Looking north at sections excavated through feature [105]. The apparent terminus of the ditch is located in the foreground of the photo.

- 4.11 The sections excavated through the feature demonstrated it was a slightly curving ditch, running from the north towards its southwestern terminus.
- 4.12 Excavation at the terminus of [105] uncovered the eastern edge of the ditch. The ditch had been cut through the natural geology with a steep sloping side and appeared to reach a maximum depth of 0.6m. Within the ditch section four distinct layers were observed (Figure 7 - Sections 1 & 3; Photo 7). Layer (109) was the lowest (and chronologically oldest) fill and consisted of a very loose grey gravel, it is probably a result of collapse into the ditch when it was open. This layer contained large fragments of charcoal which were recovered from the very base of the ditch. Above this was (108) a black humic layer, which was very shallow – approximately 0.08m in depth. Overlying (108) was layer (107) which comprised an orange clay with a small amount of silt also present and inclusions of small pebbles. The upper most fill of the ditch, and most recent, was (106), a friable, dark brown silt loam that was spread across the upper layers of the entire ditch feature. It contained frequent inclusions of medium sized angular stones.



**Photo 7:** South facing section of ditch, at the southwestern terminus.

- 4.13 The second section against the northern edge of the trench (Figure 7 - Sections 2 & 3; Photo 8) revealed almost the entire profile across the ditch, although the western edge was still partially hidden beneath the trench edge. The section showed a moderately stepped, gradual sloping edge leading down towards a concave shaped base. The western edge of the ditch was mostly exposed before running into the trench section where it could not be seen. The excavated section revealed the ditch to be approximately 0.85m maximum depth, 1.8m in width and around 0.70m wide at its base.
- 4.14 The uppermost fill (110) stretched across the width of the exposed ditch with a maximum depth of 0.21m. It was distinct as it was very dark grey to black in colour. The layer below this (111), was again visible across the width of the ditch, of 0.18m depth. Layer (112) beneath was not present across the full width of the ditch, and had a maximum 0.07m depth. The underlying layer (113) covered the width of the exposed section and formed the main fill of the ditch, perhaps comprised of redeposited natural. It had a maximum depth of 0.35m. All of the layers below this also covered the full width of the ditch where it narrowed towards its base, excluding layer (117). Layer (114) had a maximum depth of 0.05m and was comprised almost entirely of charcoal. Layer (115) below had a depth of 0.07m, and again appeared to redeposited natural. Layer (116) was full of roots, and had a depth of 0.09m maximum. Layer (117) below was a thin layer of humic material of only 0.04m thickness, not present on the eastern edge of the ditch. The lowest layer (118) was again filled with roots and had a maximum depth of 0.13m.





**Photo 8:** South facing section of ditch abutting northern edge of trench.

- 4.15 A number of archaeological finds were recovered throughout Trench 2 distributed in layers (102) and (103). These included glass bottles, glass jars and post-medieval – modern fragments of pottery and two boot polish tins of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 4.16 Unfortunately no dateable artefacts were collected from the excavated sections of ditch [105].
- 4.17 At the most southern end of the trench a large concrete block was exposed which restricted the length of the trench as it was too large to move and further beyond this a wasps nest was disturbed also preventing further excavation southwards.
- 4.18 No other significant archaeological finds or deposits were located during this archaeological evaluation.
- 4.19 Photo 9 shows a general photograph of the development area with both evaluation trenches.



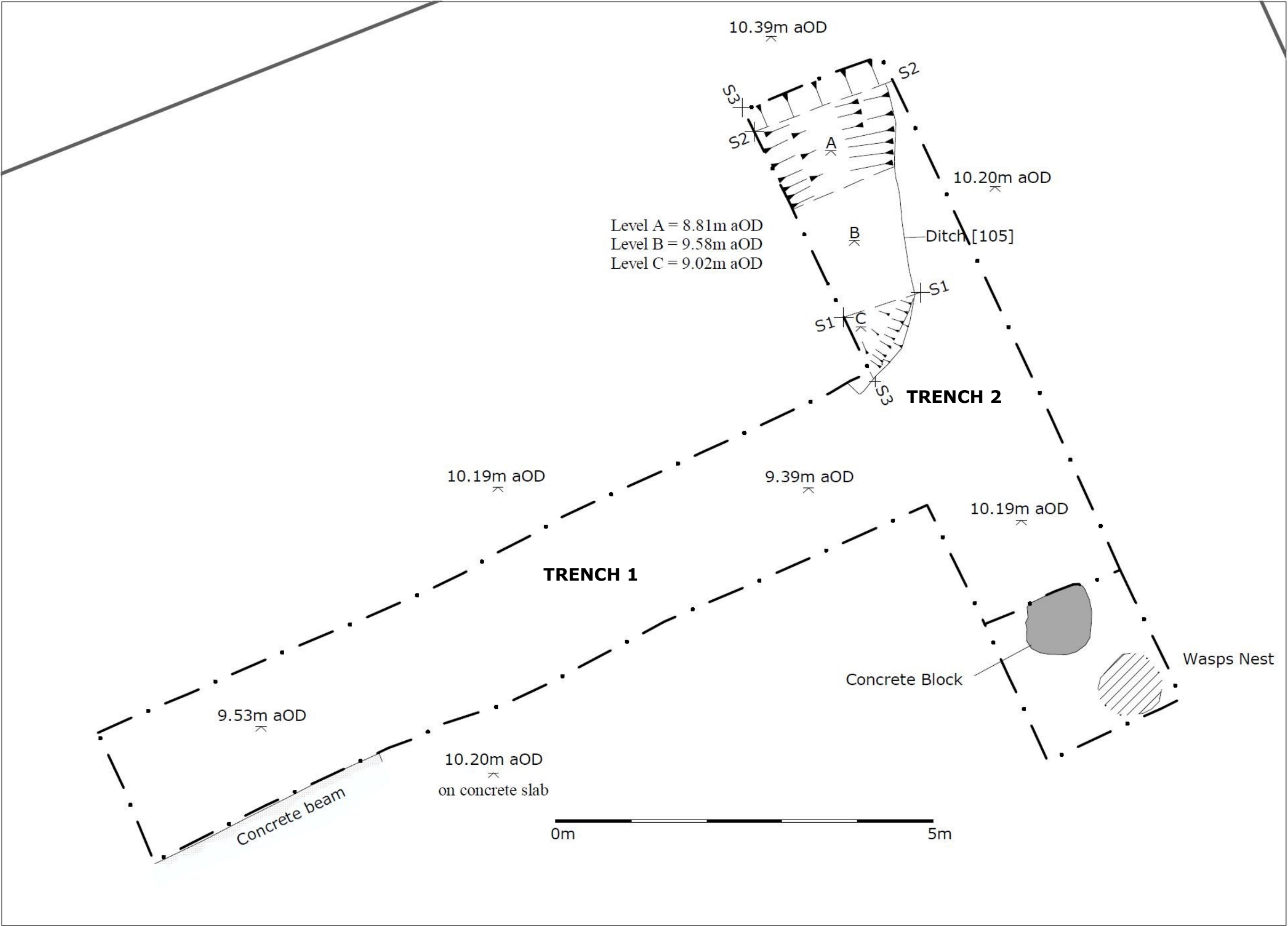
**Photo 9:** General photograph of development area showing both evaluation trenches.



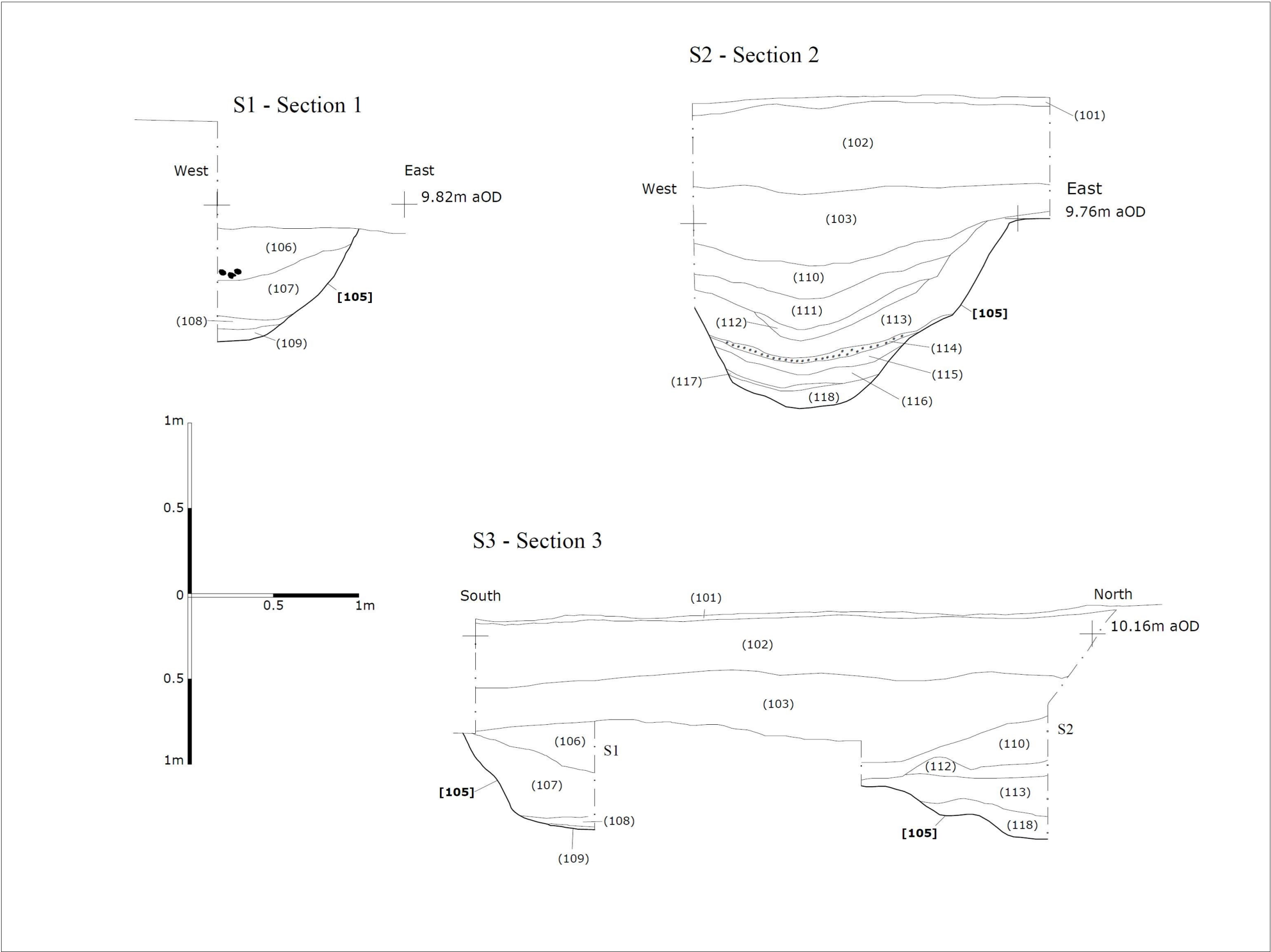
<b>Deposit/ Feature No.</b>	<b>Description</b>
100	Topsoil – loose dark grey. Inclusions – 80% gravel. Contained fragments of post medieval and modern pottery.
101	Crushed stone layer visible across most of Trench 2 along eastern edge of site
102	Underlying possibly redeposited subsoil, dark grey/brown clay silt. Inclusions – Frequent small angular stones. Contained fragments of post medieval and modern pottery and modern debris (boot polish tins, bottles).
103	A possible buried topsoil. Grey/brown clay silt. Inclusions – frequent small pebbles.
104	Dark grey mottled subsoil – directly overlying natural undisturbed ground. Inclusions – Frequent small angular stones and pebbles.
105	Cut of ditch. Full extent and character not identified. Possible arc shaped ditch with steep to gradual sloping sides and a concave shaped base.
106	Fill of [105] – Section 1 A friable dark brown silt loam. Containing frequent small pebbles.
107	Fill of [105] – Section 1 Orange clay containing a small amount of silt containing a moderate amount of pebble inclusions.
108	Fill of [105] – Section 1 A silty dark black humic layer.
109	Fill of [105] – Section 1 A very loose grey gravel – possible collapse material from when the ditch was open.
110	Fill of [105] – Section 2 Very dark grey – brown/black
111	Fill of [105] – Section 2 Light brown in colour but very similar to (112).

112	Fill of [105] – Section 2 A clay silt, mottled grey/light brown containing frequent inclusions of gravel.
113	Fill of [105] – Section 2 Orange clay similar to (107).
114	Fill of [105] – Section 2 Almost entirely charcoal.
115	Fill of [105] – Section 2 A very hard clay, red in colour and contains gravel.
116	Fill of [105] – Section 2 A brown silt containing lots of roots.
117	Fill of [105] – Section 2 Black humic layer similar to (108).
118	Fill of [105] – Section 2 A light brown silt containing lots of roots.
119	Layer of redeposited subsoil recorded across most of Trench 1

**Table 2:** Descriptions of archaeological deposits and features recorded during the evaluation.



**Figure 6:** Detailed plan of Evaluation trenches.



**Figure 7: Section 1** – South facing section through ditch [105]; **Section 2** – south facing section through ditch [105]; **Section 3** – East facing section across Trench and ditch [105]

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 The upper fills of both Trench 1 and 2 contained a number of finds including pottery fragments, glass jars, glass bottles and bricks – all of which date from the post medieval to modern periods. These were typically found distributed through layers (102) and (103).
- 5.2 In the northern half of Trench 2 the evaluation has indicated the presence of a subsurface ditch within the proposed development area.
- 5.3 The exposed section of the ditch within the trench suggests a curved ditch with a southern terminus. Unfortunately within the constraints of this archaeological evaluation it was not possible to determine the full extent and character of the ditch as its edges continued beyond the trench limits.
- 5.4 The ditch was first observed at a depth of approximately 0.6 – 0.7m below the current ground level and was easily discernible due to its dark silty upper fill contrasting well against the natural geology.
- 5.5 Two sections were excavated through the exposed ditch, the first section was located at what appeared to be the southern terminus and the second one was located against the northern edge of the trench. At its terminus the ditch was approximately 0.68m in depth which gradually increased to approximately 1.1m in the northern section. At the terminus the edges were steep sided but more gradually sloping as the ditch continued to the north. The exposed base of the ditch was convex in shape. It was around 1.9m in width at its northern visible extent.
- 5.6 A number of distinct layers were identified in the ditch, most of which were a silty clay containing angular stones, pebbles and gravels. Layer (114) was almost entirely charcoal and substantial charcoal samples were also recovered from the base of the ditch at the southern terminus. It is possible that the layout of the fills in the northern ditch section could suggest episodes of backfilling occurred, possibly from the eastern side. The substantial layer (113) appears to be redeposited backfill, which could indicate a backfilled bank adjacent to the ditch, formed of material originally excavated from it. Layer (115) may be another backfill layer of redeposited natural. No physical evidence of a bank was observed within the site area. Unfortunately no artefactual evidence was recovered from any of the ditch fills. Within the northern section layer (110), (116), (117) and (118) contained humic material or substantial amounts of root activity. It is uncertain if this might indicate a relatively recent date for the ditch, with enough organic material surviving to be a draw for modern root activity. The lack of any finds does not support this theory. Potentially the lack of finds may indicate a ditch that was excavated and quickly backfilled, as might be expected with a defensive ditch as might have been excavated during the 1640s Civil War or an earlier medieval defensive ditch quickly opened for a perceived threat, and backfilled once the threat had passed.
- 5.7 Trench 2 appeared to be void of anything archaeological in nature. Concrete beams were observed in the north facing section. These probably represent foundation footings for a building, although as no maps indicate the presence of a building here it may be that the structure was never built. However, this is probably a relatively recent event in time and not of archaeological interest.
- 5.8 The first evidence of archaeological remains were encountered at a depth of approximately 0.6 – 0.7m below the current ground level. Any ground preparation works on the site, such as site levelling or removal of concrete

slabs are unlikely to disturb underlying archaeological deposits as they lie at depth.

- 5.9 Overlying the proposed development on top of the evaluation trench plan shows that the ditch revealed does lie partially below the eastern proposed house plot (Figure 8). Obviously the majority of the feature has been investigated through the evaluation, although it is uncertain if further associated remains may lie nearby. No archaeological remains were observed within the area of the driveway or within the area of the western house plot that was evaluated.
- 5.10 If the surviving archaeological remains within the development area cannot be preserved *in situ* then it is possible that further archaeological mitigation would be required prior to development. If required, then it is likely that a watching brief may be appropriate during the excavation of the footings within the eastern house plot, taking into consideration the constraints of working within narrow foundation trenches.
- 5.11 It could potentially be beneficial to have the charcoal samples collected analysed by radiocarbon dating.



**Figure 8:** Development proposals overlaid on Trench plan showing location of ditch.

## 6. SOURCES

### Publications

Meek, J., 2012. Retaining Wall Replacement and Improvement Works at St David's Church, Abergwili, Carmarthenshire: Archaeological Watching Brief. *Dyfed Archaeological Trust Report Number 2012/60*.

Brown, D.H., 2007. *Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*. Institute of Field Archaeologists.

Soulsby, I., 1983. *The Towns of Medieval Wales*. Sussex: Phillimore & Co. LTD.

### Database

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record.

RCAHMW Coflein Database <http://www.coflein.gov.uk/>

### Map

Ordnance Survey	1890	1:2500 1 <sup>st</sup> edition Carmarthenshire
Ordnance Survey	1906	1:2500 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition Carmarthenshire
Ordnance Survey	2003	1:25 000 Carmarthenshire



**LAND ADJOINING THE OLD VICARAGE,  
CHURCH LANE, ABERGWILI,  
CARMARTHENSHIRE:**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 2015**

**RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NUMBER  
2015/49**

**Medi 2015**  
**September 2015**

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by  
Charles Enright

Swydd / Position: Archaeologist DAT Archaeological Services

Llofnod / Signature .....  ..... Dyddiad / Date 16/09/15

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: Project Manager DAT Archaeological Services

Llofnod / Signature .....  ..... Dyddiad / Date 16/09/15

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

