

DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD



**THE UNDERGROUNDING
OF OVERHEAD ELECTRICITY CABLES AT
ST. BRIDES
GREEN**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
Project Record No. 27982
MARCH 1995

Commissioned by: Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

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REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON THE UNDERGROUNDING
OF OVERHEAD ELECTRICITY CABLES AT ST BRIDES GREEN, PEMBROKESHIRE,
20-21 SEPTEMBER 1994

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Final details of the scheme for the undergrounding of overhead electricity cables at St Brides were forwarded by Nic Wheeler of PCNP (in conjunction with SWALEC) to Dyfed Archaeological Trust on 11 August 1994.

Following their acceptance of recommendations PCNP, on 12 September 1994, commissioned a watching brief to be carried out on any archaeological sites affected by the scheme prior to and/or during the work, as part of the mitigation strategy. An archaeological report on the results of the watching brief was also commissioned.

Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Field Section were accordingly advised of the proposed schedule of works on 12 September.

1.1 Content and scope of the watching brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1993) as a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during an operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons - normally a development or other construction project - within a specified area where archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive.

The watching brief will be intended to allow, subject to resources, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits in advance of their disturbance or destruction and to provide an opportunity, if necessary, for the watching archaeologist to alert all interested parties to the presence of an archaeological find for which the resources allocated to the watching brief are insufficient to support satisfactory treatment.

The watching brief is not intended as a substitute for contingent excavation.

The client will be supplied with 3 copies of an archaeological report of the results of the watching brief. The report will be fully representative of all the information recovered. Normally it should be read in conjunction with the desk-top assessment for the scheme which provides the historical framework for the watching brief. A copy of the report will also be deposited with Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record.

1.2 Purpose and methodologies of the watching brief

The purpose of the watching brief is to undertake as complete a record as possible of any archaeological features affected by the client's scheme of works. In the case of larger archaeological sites it will seldom be possible or necessary to undertake a record of the entire site; the record will be undertaken only on those areas of the site that may be affected.

The primary stage of the watching brief for any scheme normally involves consultation of the archaeological desk-top assessment normally produced for the scheme and/or consultation of Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record, which is maintained by Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Curatorial Section, for those sites affected by the scheme.

The client will then advise Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Field Section of any changes in the proposed works resulting from their consultation of the desk-top assessment, and of any sites which may still be affected by the scheme. The client will also provide the Field Section with a proposed schedule of works in order that a full field study may be performed on any affected site prior to the commencement of the works.

Work on or around those affected sites will be subject to the watching brief. The work will be closely observed by an archaeologist from the Field Section who will also undertake a full drawn, written and photographic record of any archaeological features which may be disturbed by the scheme, and any artefact or find exposed during the works. Recording will be carried out where necessary and when convenient: it is the Field Section's aim to minimise any disruption to the client's schedule. However, if archaeological features may be lost during the scheme, it may be necessary for the Field Section to request a postponement of the works in order that the archaeology may be recorded. Larger areas affected may require fuller excavation and/or survey.

2.0 ST BRIDES GREEN

The parish of St Brides is rich in both archaeological resource and historical tradition. St Brides Green, at the centre of the parish, constitutes a historic landscape of great archaeological potential.

2.1 Site History

2.1.1 Early Medieval

The name of St Brides, in the form of the dedication of the parish church to St Bride (or Brigid), one of the more revered of the Celtic saints, suggests an early christian origin for at least an ecclesiastical foundation/settlement within the vicinity. In fact the Brigid dedication has long been associated with the survival and translation of a pre-Christian water cult. Indeed St Brides has long been traditionally seen as a major centre of early christian influence.

Direct archaeological evidence for an early christian occupation of the site is represented by the cliff-side cemetery (7606; SM 802 109) on St Brides Haven just N of the parish church. This has been tentatively assigned by various authorities to the pre-Norman period, many of the burials being in the form of cist graves (ie stone-lined). In 1985 samples from two burials were subject to radiocarbon dating. One, part of a femur from a cist grave, gave a date around 1000 AD. The other, from a dug grave, was only 150 years old at most (Dyfed SMR, DRF).

Further possible early christian activity is represented by the crop-mark observed on aerial photographs beneath, and extending to the W, of the churchyard (13294, SM 8020 1085). The feature perhaps represents a 'vallum enclosure' around an early christian religious foundation; it equally may be a prehistoric fortification. Meanwhile a hoard of Anglo-Saxon coins has been unearthed near the village.

2.1.2 Medieval

The earliest reference to the present St Brides parish church is in 1291 in the *Taxatio* of Pope Nicholas when 'Ecclesia de Sanct Brigida' was assessed at 13 6s 8d., Structurally the church contains medieval features including a possible late 12th century chancel arch.

Until the last century a small medieval chapel (3138; SM 8023 1094) stood within cemetery 7606; as has been noted above, burial rights presumably persisted through into the post-medieval period.

The extent of any contemporary civil settlement is not known but it is assumed that church and chapel were associated with a medieval settlement. This was traditionally founded by a Norman, William de St Bride, who was shipwrecked off the coast in the 12th century. There is however no firm evidence to support this tradition. St Brides (as 'le Hille') formed a mesne or sub-lordship of the Barony of Walwyn's Castle through most of the

medieval period (Rees, 1932), and in the 13th century, much of the land in St Brides was held by the de Vales of Dale (Owen, 1918, 7). However, a John de St Bride was a witness to a de Vale charter 1241-5, and a further John de St Bride was a witness to a charter of 1345 (Dyfed SMR, DRF).

2.1.3 Later Medieval

The church was always a rectory in the gift of the lord of the manor, and its list of rectors begins in 1377 (Green, 1913, 273-4). The present rectory building (15253, SM 8028 1089) is a large house primarily of the 18th century and displaying no visible earlier fabric. However, a range of outbuildings exist and some display features from at least the earlier post-medieval period (see below).

The rectory is associated with a (reduced?) area of glebe comprising the western half of St Brides Green.

The later manorial history of St Brides is as unresolved as the earlier. However, at some period prior to the 15th century St Brides was apparently acquired by the Crabhole family, and prior to 1444 by Thomas Laugharne through marriage to Joan Crabhole (Owen, 1902, 97). The estate remained in the Laugharne hands until the early 18th century, producing its most famous member, Rowland Laugharne, a Major-General of the Parliamentary forces during the Civil War.

During the Laugharne tenure a large manor house was constructed on the N side of St Brides Green (3139; SM 8040 1076). Now known as the 'Abbey', the manor house is in ruins. The bulk of the buildings are of post-medieval date; at the core, however, lies a tower-house of typical Pembrokeshire construction and possibly of 15th century date (see Appendix 1). A coin from the 12th-14th century was apparently found in the rubble within. It is possible that an earlier house may lie beneath the building; however, neither the presence, nor the location, of any earlier house has yet been established.

It is likely that the entire St Brides landscape was remodelled when the manor house was established and by the end of the medieval period at least the Green occupied its present extent, with the adjacent fishponds (27983). The site of contemporary settlement is again unknown but it may be assumed that the Green formed a central public space and access way, surrounded by dwellings. By the 17th century the parish numbered 16 hearths, a figure typical of this area of Pembrokeshire, but there is every likelihood that some depopulation had occurred prior to this date.

2.1.4 Post-medieval

The majority of the surviving built heritage, excepting the church, belongs to the post-medieval period.

The rectory (15253) consists of a central double-pile house, (re)built in the 18th century. It lies within a walled enclosure

part of which appears to have been carved out of the churchyard. In this area to the west of the house lie a group of outbuildings, including a stable, the core of which may certainly be from the 17th century and perhaps earlier. The entrance into the rectory enclosure was formerly through a wide gate in the N section of the rather massive wall that surrounds the enclosure to the N of the house. This is now blocked but formerly led onto a wide driveway up to the house. There was a smaller, subsidiary gate onto The Green. Within this northern area formerly lay at least two large stone cottages (F Dunn, owner, *pers. comm.*).

Manor house 3139 was enlarged. The sandstone walled and crenellated courtyard to the N of the tower-house, with its semi-military gatehouse, lack architectural detail but the general form, the looped crenels and corbel table of the gatehouse suggest a date not later than c.1600. The house was abandoned in 1715 and all construction had ceased by this date.

The Green in its present form has the appearance of having been formally laid out as a lawned area, possibly during the later 17th century and accompanying a decline in population. St Brides had a thriving herring industry but this had declined a significant time prior to the 19th century (Fenton, 1903, 98). In addition, some limeburning was being practiced, a kiln being located just at high-water mark in the inlet (23815; SM 8020 1093). The Tithe Map and Apportionment for St Brides parish shows that by 1839 the settlement consisted merely of the rectory and the terrace of cottages of c.1800 (27984, SM 8040 1078) built against the N wall of the manor house enclosure, that still survive in a derelict condition. The ruined smithy (27986, SM 8037 1078), built against the same wall W of the gatehouse, is not shown and was presumably derelict before the 19th century. It is a sandstone lean-to building with three brick segmental-headed openings in the long N wall, two windows and a door, with a large entry to eaves height at the W end.

The main Laugharne lineage became extinct in 1715, St Brides passing to the Philipps family, and manor house 3139 may have been abandoned at this time (D G Benson, *pers. comm.*). The heir, Charles Philipps Esq., may have established the first house at Hill, the site of the present St Brides Castle (8789; SM 7960 1070). The earlier manor house was allowed to decay.

Hill Mansion is shown on the Tithe Map for St Brides parish (1839, but from an earlier survey), and described by Fenton (1811) and Lewis (1833). Sheltered by a plantation to the W, bounding a deer park, the house consisted of a long N-S range with a number of creoo wings, and numerous outbuildings around a rectangular courtyard forming the home farm. In 1811 it was an 'elegantly modern structure' (Fenton, 1903, 98).

However, in 1833 work on the present St Brides Castle (8789) had begun. The Castle is 'a fine example of pre-Pugin Gothic in the Nash style, and an asset to the locality' (D Jenkins, *pers. comm.*). Considerable changes were wrought in the surrounding landscape with its construction. The house apparently remained in Philipps hands until, around the mid-19th century, the estate passed to the second Baron Kensington, *quondam* MP for

Haverfordwest. He enlarged the house and added the range that in 1922 was sold off to become Kensington Hospital. The hospital closed in the early 1980s and the whole was sold by the estate to become a hotel/leisure centre (Western Mail).

The particulars of the 1922 sale (Pembrokeshire Record Office, DX/165/1) constitute an inventory of the buildings in St Brides:-
"The Monastery (sic) Garden...Pumping Power House fitted with Tangye Engine, adjoining are 3 stone built & slated 4 room cottages occupied by the estate workers, with a spring in the wood (and) 2 old stone and flint cottages, now disused... the land surrounding the old fish ponds together with the sand banks is let to William Hughes in lieu of wages'.

St Brides as a settlement today is little changed, comprising the church, rectory, abandoned cottages 27984 and a house at St Brides cross. The water pumping-house (27985; SM 8038 1089), installed by the Kensington estate to pump water up to the Castle, is a fine example from the second decade of the 20th century. It is a single storey square building with pebbledash walls, a pyramidal slate roof with dormer windows and vents in each slope.

2.2 The Landscape

The archaeological resource at St Brides is chiefly represented by a historic landscape which has been shaped by, and bears evidence of the former settlement of the area.

The dominant natural features are the sheltered N facing inlet of St Brides Haven and the low lying flat valley of the two E-W streams which flow into it forming a platform, equally sheltered, 10m above sea level.

At the W end of this platform immediately S of St Brides Haven lies St Brides church 3131, lying in a regular rectangular churchyard. This enclosure may not reflect the early medieval, or even the later medieval arrangement and may be the successor to a larger 'vallum enclosure' around a pre-Norman religious foundation. The area now occupied by rectory 15253 appears to have been carved out from a larger churchyard and encroaches on the SE corner.

The remainder of the platform is occupied by St Brides Green, probably laid out as a central space within a larger settlement of St Brides in the medieval period but remodelled when former manor house 3139 was established.

Part of the W area of the green is glebe land attached to the neighbouring rectory; the area of glebe may be a reduced remnant of a formerly larger area. The remainder of the Green probably constituted the main access through the settlement but the periphery was possibly occupied by dwellings during the medieval period. No evidence for occupation of this nature was present in the cable trench sections (section 3, below) but the entire area of St Brides Green is of high archaeological potential.

3.0 RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

The undergrounding was undertaken by means of the excavation of a cable trench 180m long running along the N side of St Brides rectory wall, across the Green to terminate at the E end of a row of cottages.

The greater portion of the cable trench ran along the periphery of St Brides Green, an archaeologically sensitive area that offered great potential for evidence of former occupation. A shorter length ran along the exterior of the rectory N wall, in an area that may have lain within a formerly larger churchyard enclosure.

3.1 The cable trench

The cable trench averaged 0.3m in width and 0.4m in depth. Excavation was performed partly by mini-digger, partly by JCB, and took place, along with the archaeological recording, 20-21 September 1994.

The trench section was measured, recorded and photographed. In addition, the mansion site, rectory and environs were examined and brief descriptions taken. The 2 records, with a site history following the standard archaeological desk top study procedure, form the basis of this report.

3.2 The Trench Section (Fig. 1)

In general, little of archaeological significance was observed within the trench sections, being in general cut through sterile Old Red Sandstone bedrock or humic topsoil. The latter was particularly apparent at the E end where it lay opposite the row of cottages, presumably garden soil.

Aerial photographs (J A Storey & Partners, 1983, 49/83/179-181; Geonex, 1992, 55/92/005-010 - copies held by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park) reveal at least two strong linear features crossing the middle of St Brides Green and the line of the trench roughly N-S. There was evidence for one of these features in the section; in addition, a N-S bank and ditch, not visible on aerial photographs, occurred in the E area of the trench (3.2.4, below).

In total 5 areas displayed deposits derived from archaeological activity (see fig. 1).

3.2.1. A spread of Old Red Sandstone rubble lay adjacent to the N wall of the rectory 2-4m from the W end of the trench. This occurred in the middle of the section, in a build up of humic soil that characterises this length of the cable trench. It may be demolition debris derived from the cottage that formerly lay against the interior of this wall.

3.2.2. An area of Old Red Sandstone cobbles, 2m wide from E-W and one stone deep, lying on the surface of the bedrock just below the turf, 60-62m from the W end of the trench. This appeared to

be part of a deliberately laid pathway.

3.2.3. An area of large roughly squared Old Red Sandstone rubble lay loose upon the bedrock, just below the turf, 84-90m from the W end of the trench. Whilst having the appearance of demolition debris, the material lies opposite the axis of the baulk between the two fishponds 27983. This axis, and the rubble, are continued in the line of a linear feature seen in the aerial photographs noted above. The material does not appear to represent former bank material but may be derived from a wall.

3.2.4. Corresponding with a sharp downhill break of slope to the W, 120-128m from the W end of the trench, a large feature was recorded in the section. It comprised a bank, which was weathered but still rose to a slight crest 4m wide. It was constructed from spoil quarried from a steep sided ditch, 4m wide but not bottomed, to the W. The visible upper level of the ditch was filled by loose, roughly shaped and partly mortared Old Red Sandstone rubble in a matrix of humic soil containing post-medieval slate and 18th century finds, apparently demolition debris. Bank material was sterile and no dating evidence was recovered. The feature was not visible in aerial photographs.

The feature appears to represent part of a linear bank and ditch, extending for an unknown distance N and S of the cable trench. If corresponding to the break of slope, then the axis of the feature bears no relationship to present landscape features on The Green, being interrupted by both the ponds 27983 and the manor house enclosure wall 3139. However, the ditch appears to have been at least partly open until the 18th century.

3.2.5. 10m from the E end of the trench a recent E-W ash and cinder path to the cottages was cut by the section.

3.3 Conclusions

The two features of real archaeological significance are the two N-S linear features.

The W of the two is possibly represents a wall, continuing the line of the baulk between the two fishponds and proceeding towards the SW along the line observed in aerial photographs. Whilst this line is on a rather different alignment from the remainder of the St Brides Green walls and boundaries, the nature of the feature - dry masonry - suggests that a wall may be represented, probably from the post-medieval period.

The E feature, the rather massive bank and ditch still surviving as a break of slope, likewise does not respect present boundaries. However, its alignment is also interrupted by the fishponds suggesting that it pre-dates these at least. The lack of firm dating evidence must be recognised and the ditch fill is post-medieval; however, the feature possibly represents an axial field boundary underlying, and therefore predating, St Brides Green and manor house.

4.0 THE FINDS

All finds were post-medieval in date and none were kept. They were confined to the topsoil, garden soil dump and ditch fill. Animal bone, slate fragments, bottle glass, clay pipe stems and blue-and-white ware characterised the assemblage.

One item was of local significance, a body sherd from a stoneware jug or flagon with the lettering 'J. B. SKETCH AND CO., JOHNSTON AND PEMBROKE DOCK.' 19th century.

5.0 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

The full watching brief archive will be deposited at the National Monuments Record, housed with the RCAHM, Aberystwyth.

6.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgements to:- Don Benson of DAT for much unpublished research on the history of St Brides; Tony Parkinson of RCAHM(W); Frank Dunn, current owner of the rectory for additional information; PCNP for commissioning the watching brief.

7.0 LIST OF SOURCES CONSULTED

unpublished

Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record and Detailed Record Files (DRF).

NLW, Ordnance Survey, Original Survey Drawings, Sheet 81, 1809-10, revised 1840, 2" to a mile.

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aerial photographs

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8.0 APPENDIX

8.1 Copy of description of tower house within St Brides house 3139, by A J Parkinson, RCAHM(W). (From National Monuments Record.)

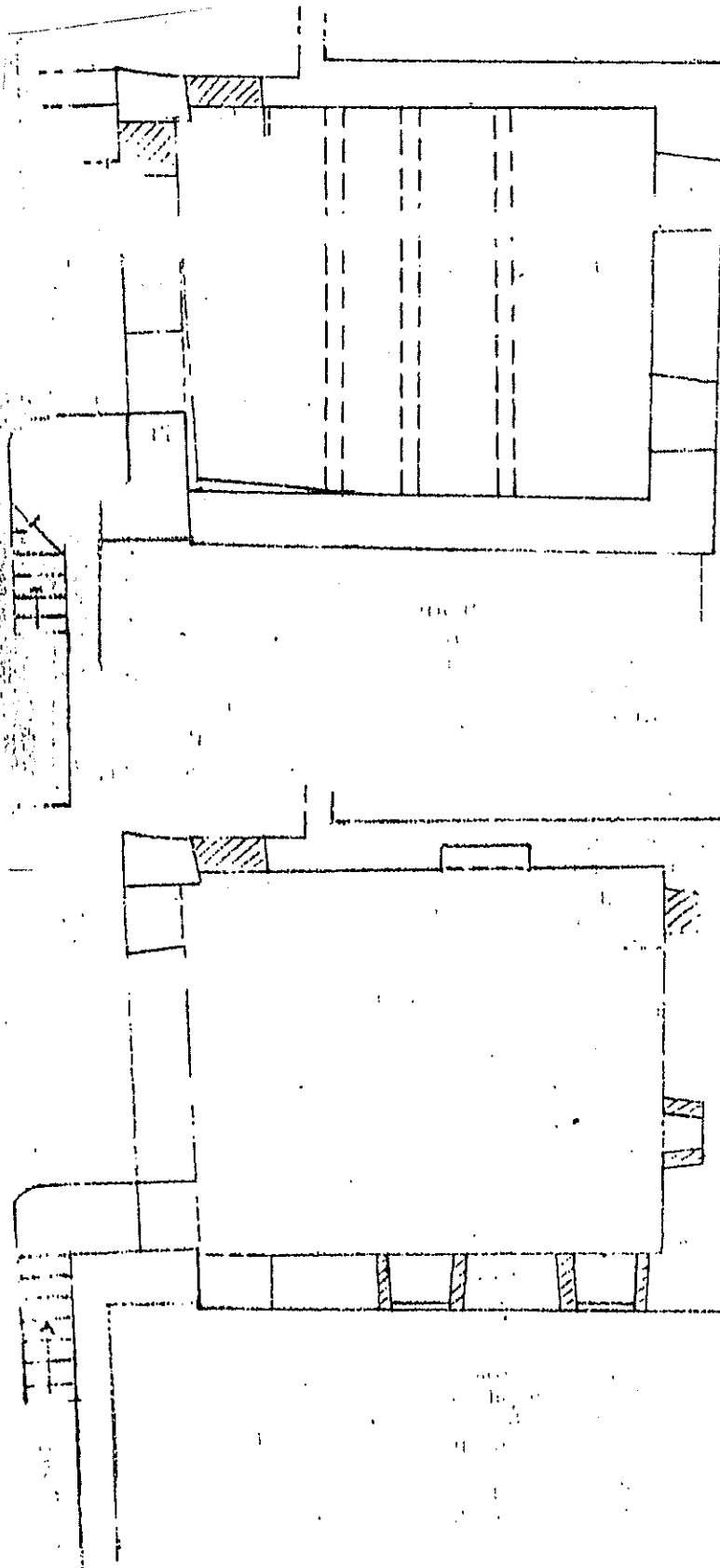
rectangular building, at the S end of a walled courtyard. The building has every appearance of a tower-house except definite signs of age; it has very large window openings and small fireplaces, and could easily be C 15. The walls are of rubble masonry, plastered internally and with pebbledash stucco on the outside of all but the E gable which seems to be rebuilt.

At the NE corner, below the first floor opening through the N wall, the stucco seems to continue next to the added section of wall. At the NW corner there are false quoins in finer stucco recessed back from the pebbledash face. There is a ground floor doorway in the E gable, and 1st floor doorways on the E and N walls. The openings in the N wall ~~were~~ have fine stucco frames and a sill-band; the framing does not continue to the base of the doorway, which may originally have been another window. Steps lead to the 1st floor gable doorway, possibly contemporary with the rebuilding of the gable.

The interior is very plain; a plinth is visible against the N and E walls (possibly the original wall-line subsequently adjusted). The ground floor doorway has a wooden lintel, reused from a wallplate. There were four heavy transverse ceiling-beams, and thin axial joints between them. At the W end are two slightly-splayed window openings. At the SE corner there are blockings in the E and S walls, and the intervening pier of masonry is plastered into the embrasure. This may represent a demolished stair in a projecting turret; stubs of walls remain on the outer face. At first floor level there are doorways through the E walls, one to the present outside stairway and the other to the possible corner stair. A blocking at the E end of the S wall may also have led to the stair. A full-height recess in the S wall may have been a window. At the S end of the W wall are traces of a blocking, possibly of a small earlier window; the fireplace seems to have been reduced in width. The openings in the N wall were originally three full full-height openings or recesses, later reduced in height and width to form small windows; one remains open as a doorway. At attic levels there are windows in the N and S walls (possibly dormers) and a small fireplace with a slate lintel in the W gable. The roof was formerly slated.

The date of the building is very difficult to assess; the large openings would suggest possibly an eighteenth century date, and the pebbledash finish and false quoins would not disagree. However, it is evidently designed as a first-floor building, although the present access to the first floor is through a doorway in the E gable which has almost certainly

been rebuilt. Moreover, the building is attached to a walled enclosure of _____
 *distinctly early appearance; two of the four walls have a corbelled
 *battlemented parapet quite unlike the Victorian Gothic of Kensington
 *Hospital, and there are hints that the present cottages at the N end of the
 enclosure (probably @ 1800) themselves incorporate at least one earlier wall.



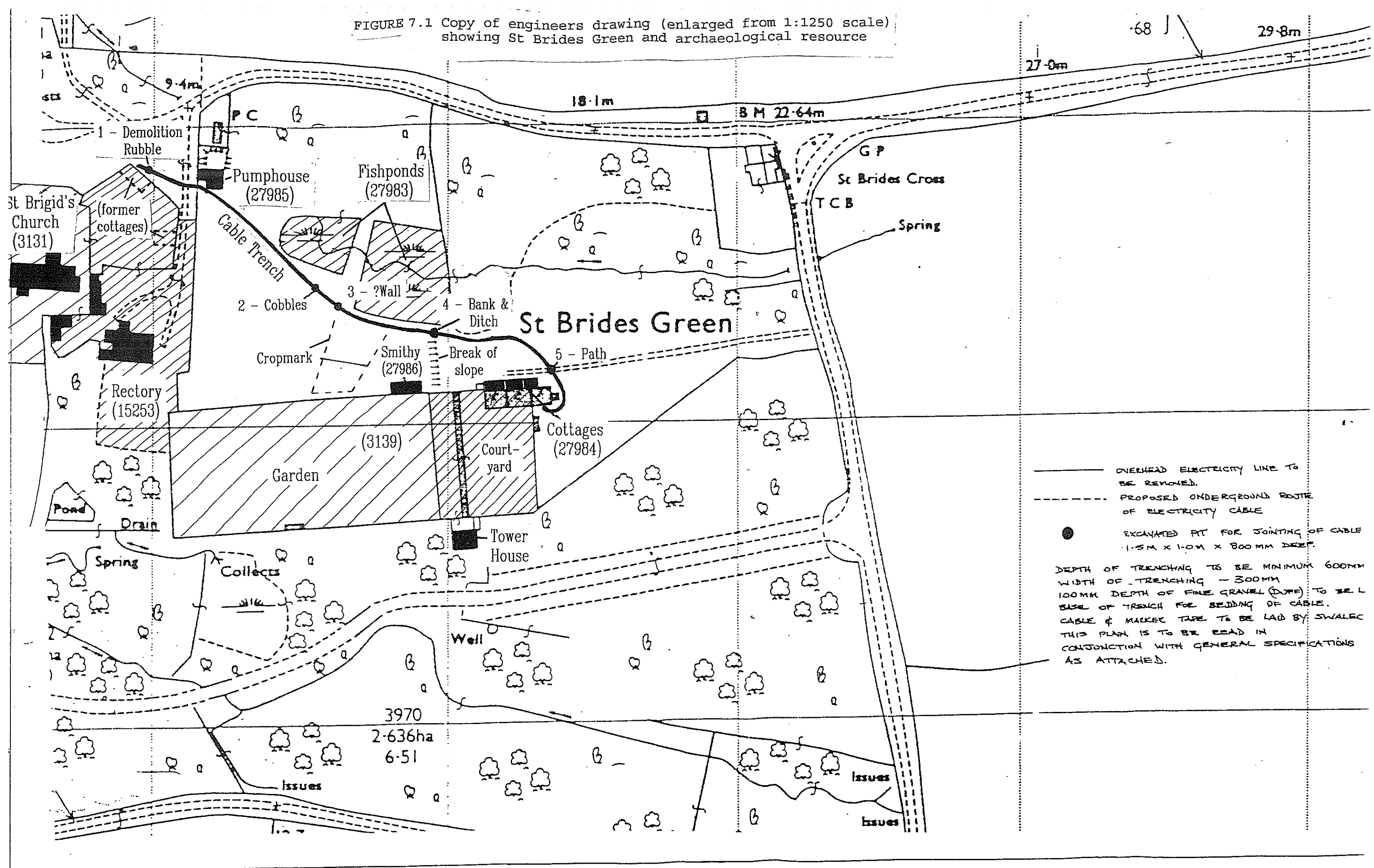
Ground floor plan

Scale 1:100



1st floor plan

FIGURE 7.1 Copy of engineers drawing (enlarged from 1:1250 scale)
showing St Brides Green and archaeological resource



Undergrounding of overhead electricity cable at St Brides Dyfed

Scale: 1:1250

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