

**DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD**



**EXTENSION TO SCHOOL PLAYGROUND**

**ST.AIDAN'S  
V.A. SCHOOL WISTON**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**Project Record No. 30154**

**FEBRUARY 1994<sup>5</sup>**

**Commissioned by: Dyfed County Council**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

On 5 October 1994, a planning application was submitted by the County Architect, Dyfed County Council to DCC Planning Department seeking permission to extend the playground area at St. Aiden's School, Wiston. The Heritage Management Section of Dyfed Archaeological Trust commented on the planning application and requested that a condition permitting an archaeological watching brief should be included with the planning permission. This request was accepted by DCC Planning Department. A condition of planning permission, dated 6 December 1994, was that no development shall take place without the implementation of a programme of archaeological work.

A programme of work was agreed at a site meeting on 8 February between David James, County Architects and Kenneth Murphy, Dyfed Archaeological Trust. The watching brief was undertaken by Ian Darke on Monday 13 February and Wednesday 15 February.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

A watching brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as:

a formal programme of observation or investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons within a specified area or site, where there is the possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report

At St. Aidan's School observations were made during topsoil stripping. It was not necessary to observe further operations of the development.

### 3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the 12th century, in the wake of the Anglo-Norman conquest of South Wales, Flemings settled in south Pembrokeshire. Foremost amongst these was Wizo, who gave his name to the castle and settlement of Wiston. It has been established that Wizo arrived in Pembrokeshire before AD 1112. A recent study has suggested that Wizo was a *locator* founding not only the Wiston in Pembrokeshire but a second one in Lanarkshire. Wizo died prior to 1130. In 1147 Wiston Castle was taken by Hywel ab Owain and in 1195 by Hywel Sais. For the year 1220 the *Brut y Tywysogyon* records that Llywelyn ap Iorwerth destroyed Wiston Castle and burned the town. This is the first direct reference to a settlement at Wiston. An entry in the Calendars of the Patent Rolls for 1220 following Llywelyn's attack commands the knights and free tenants of the county of Pembroke to repair the castles of Narberth and Wiston. However, some authorities consider that Wiston Castle was not refortified after its destruction in 1220 but was superseded by Pictou Castle 5Km to the south.

One family, the Wogans, dominates the later history of Wiston. The capital messuage of the Wogans, at least in recent centuries, was the Manor House, immediately to the east of the castle. The date when this house was established is not known, though a sketch dated 1740 seems to show a Tudor building. The main house was demolished in the late-19th century though a vaulted undercroft survives in an out-building. The first known association of the Wogans with Wiston is in 1324 when Walter Wogan held part of two knights fees. Later, included amongst the extensive holdings recorded in an inquisition on the death of Sir John Wogan in 1577 are 'twelve and a half burgages in the town of Wiston, lately bought from different persons'. Writing at about the same time, George Owen noted that the weekly market at Wiston was no longer held. Some authorities have expressed doubts over the borough status of Wiston. However, many of the documents related to the Wogan family clearly show that Wiston was considered a borough. This is later confirmed in the first report of the Commissioners on Municipal Corporations to Parliament, published in 1835. Under the 'Borough of Wiston' the commissioners recorded a mayor, an alderman, burgesses and an annual fair. They did note, however, that no one had ever heard of a charter.

Present-day topography (Fig. 1) is of little help in defining the former nature and extent of the borough. The modern village comprises the earthworks of the castle with the Manor House immediately to its east, St. Mary's Church, Cawdor House with a terrace of 19th century cottages next to it and a couple of dwellings to the east of these at a 'T' junction (Fig 1). Modern development includes St. Aidan's School and houses to the south and west of it. Low, indeterminate earthworks, but probably former house sites and building plots, lie along the street frontage on either side Cawdor House. To the north of the churchyard are clear earthworks of building foundations. Earthworks in the field to the north of Cawdor House are less determinate. Here a hollow-way runs to the east out from the entrance of the castle north of the Manor House. There are no visible house platforms associated with this hollow-way. The current open landscape

around the Manor House was in existence by 1779 as the will of John Wogan mentions 'the grounds around the house called "the Green" and the fish pond'. The area to the east of the Manor House is still known as 'The Green'.

Depopulation is implicit within much of the earlier historical documentation. The 1835 description of the village by the Commissioners on Municipal Boroughs is, however, quite explicit: 'There are here two or three Houses, one of which was formerly of some importance, and is still called the Manor House'. The period of this depopulation is not known, but it still seems to be occurring in the late- 16th century when the purchase of twelve and a half burgages by Sir John Wogan was recorded (see above). This may be interpreted in two ways as evidence of depopulation. First, Wogan was engaged in land speculation and was buying up vacant plots. Second, he purchased plots possibly with the view to evicting the tenants; it may have been in this manner that 'The Green' around the Manor House was created.

In addition to the evidence of medieval settlement in Wiston, recent research by Dyfed Archaeological Trust on a Roman Road west of Carmarthen is of relevance. The road has been definitely traced from Carmarthen to Llawhaden. Work in progress suggests that the road runs along the line of the hedgebank immediately to the north of the castle and school.

The field in which the school is located was formerly known as Upper Hoarstone (record no. 4434). This may be an indication that a standing stone, perhaps of prehistoric date, used to be situated in the vicinity.

#### 4. RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

Observations were made during topsoil stripping for the playground extension (Fig. 2). Nothing of archaeological interest was noted. No sub-surface archaeological features were noted and no finds were recorded.

It must be assumed that the playground extension was too far away to the north from the street frontage and the possible sites of medieval buildings to have contained artifacts and archaeological features associated with them. The presumed line of the Roman road lay further to the north and was not affected by the development.

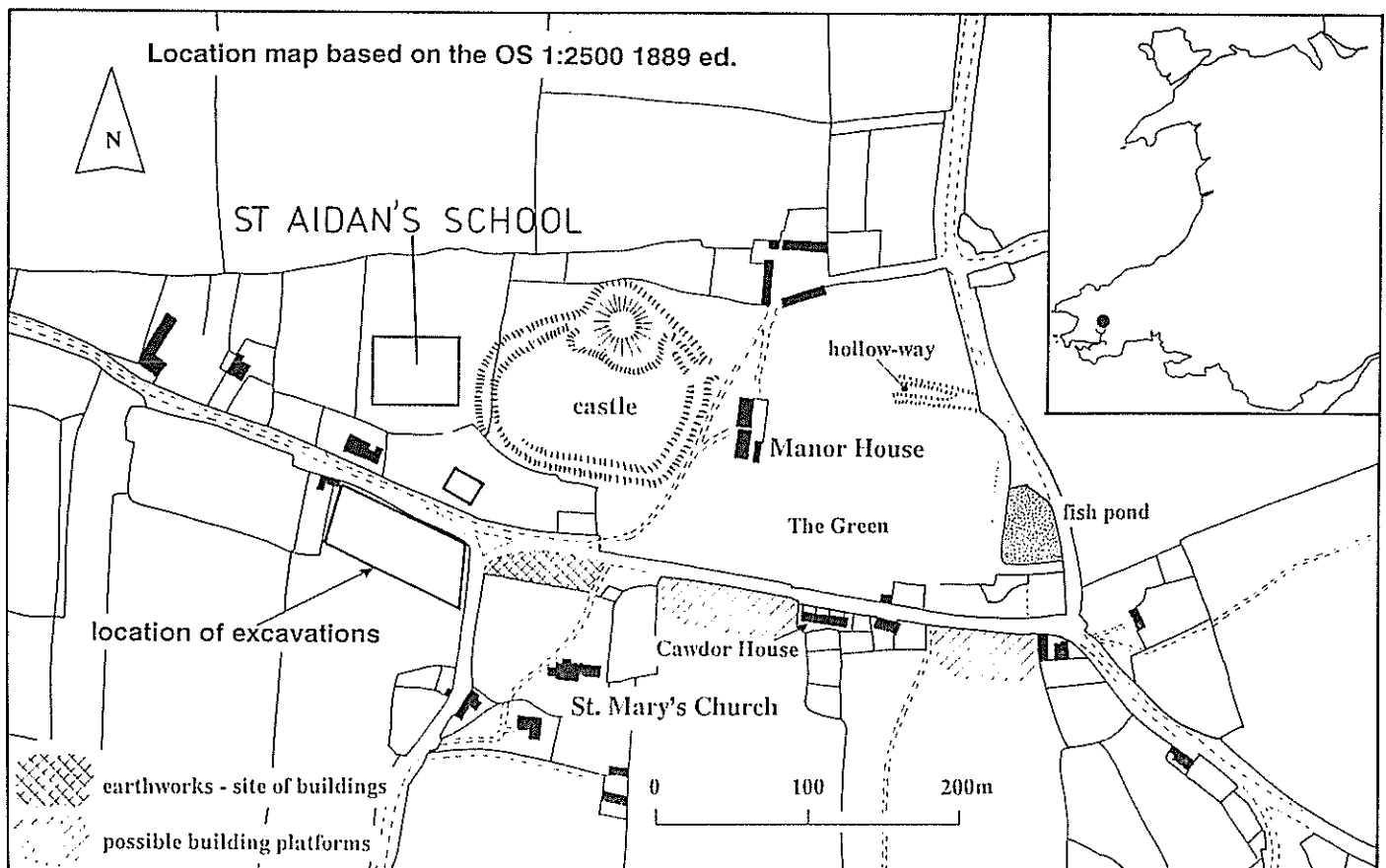


Fig 1



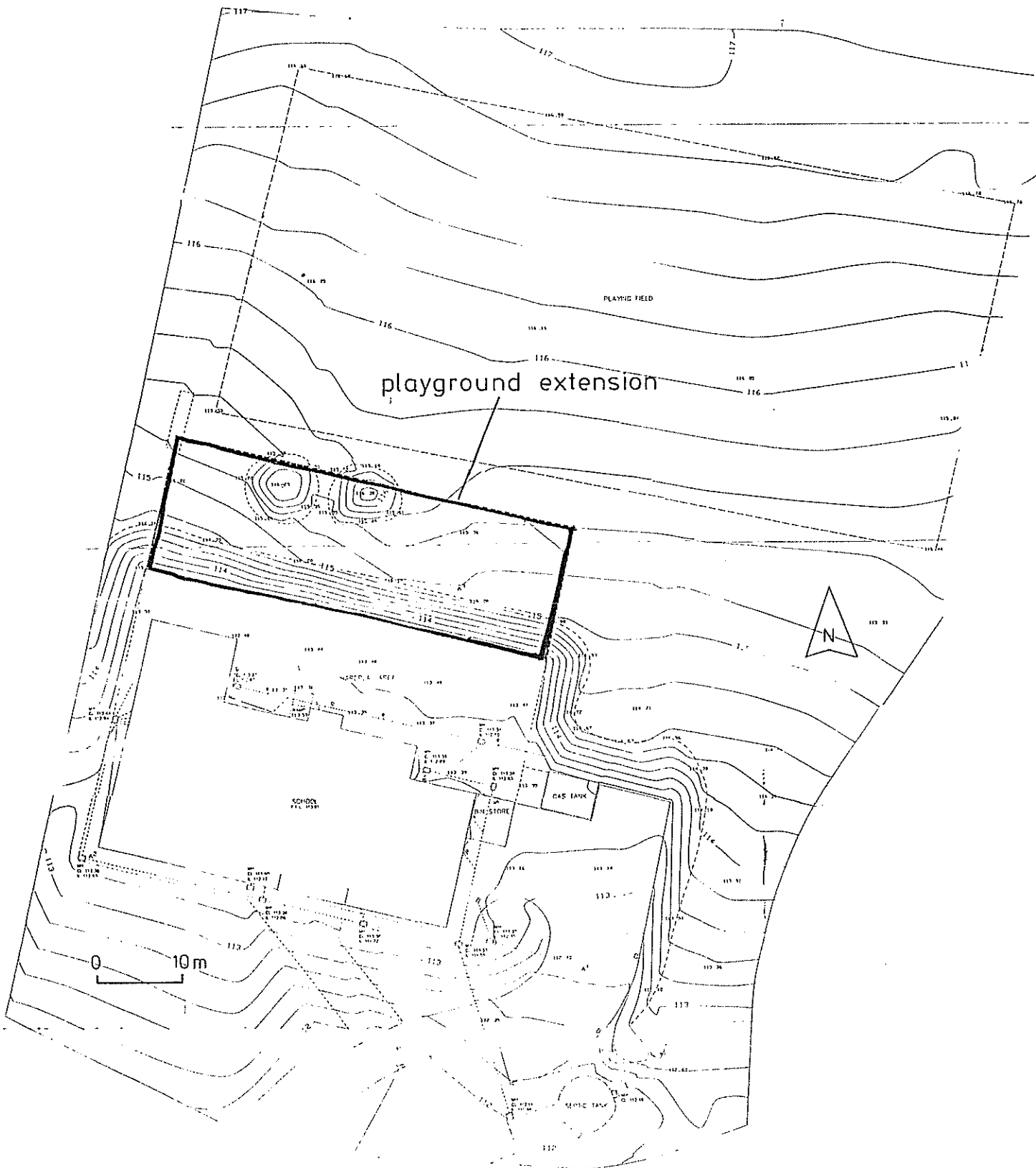


Fig. 2