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DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD

REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON THE NEW MOAT TO
RHYD-Y-BROWN WATERMAIN RENEWAL SCHEME, 1994 (CON 93/17 B)

Client: Dwr Cymru

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Details of the New Moat to Rhyd-y-brown watermain renewal scheme were forwarded to the Curatorial Section of Dyfed Archaeological Trust by Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water for comment on 20 September 1993.

Following the initial comments made by the Curatorial Section of the Trust, Dwr Cymru were advised of the need for a detailed archaeological desk top assessment of the project to be prepared in order for detailed mitigatory measures to be drafted. This desk top assessment was produced by Dyfed Archaeological Trust in December 1993. Dwr Cymru accepted the recommendations in the report and 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.

1.1 Content and scope of the watching brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists 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.

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 Archaeological Trust's 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 desk top assessment 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 normally 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 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

2.1 General

The watching brief was required because the watermain was being installed through the area of the medieval borough of New Moat. For much of its route through the modern village the watermain was positioned close to the outer edge of the defensive ditch surrounding the bailey of New Moat castle. The course of the present road occupies the line of this ditch (see Map 1). To the S of the castle the watermain passed close to the E wall of the churchyard of St. Nicholas' Church.

2.2 Construction Techniques

The 6" watermain was laid in a machine-dug trench. This trench was no more than 12" wide and was excavated along the edge of the metalled road. Only limited areas of topsoil were removed prior to excavation. This limited disturbance prohibited the examination of extensive areas; there was ample time to examine exposed sections of trench. The existence of numerous existing services meant that much of the trench cut through recently disturbed ground; one face of the trench always cut undisturbed material.

2.3 Observations

Throughout its length in the village, the watermain trench cut through shale bedrock. Mostly, this was fairly loose, easily broken and mixed with a light brown clay - probably the result of periglacial activity. South of the village much harder bedrock was encountered.

No evidence was recorded for the location of the bailey ditch. It is likely that it is entirely contained beneath the modern road to the E of the watermain. Any evidence for a counterscarp bank, if one existed, has been removed by activities on the roadside verge.

2.4 Other Archaeological Observations in New Moat

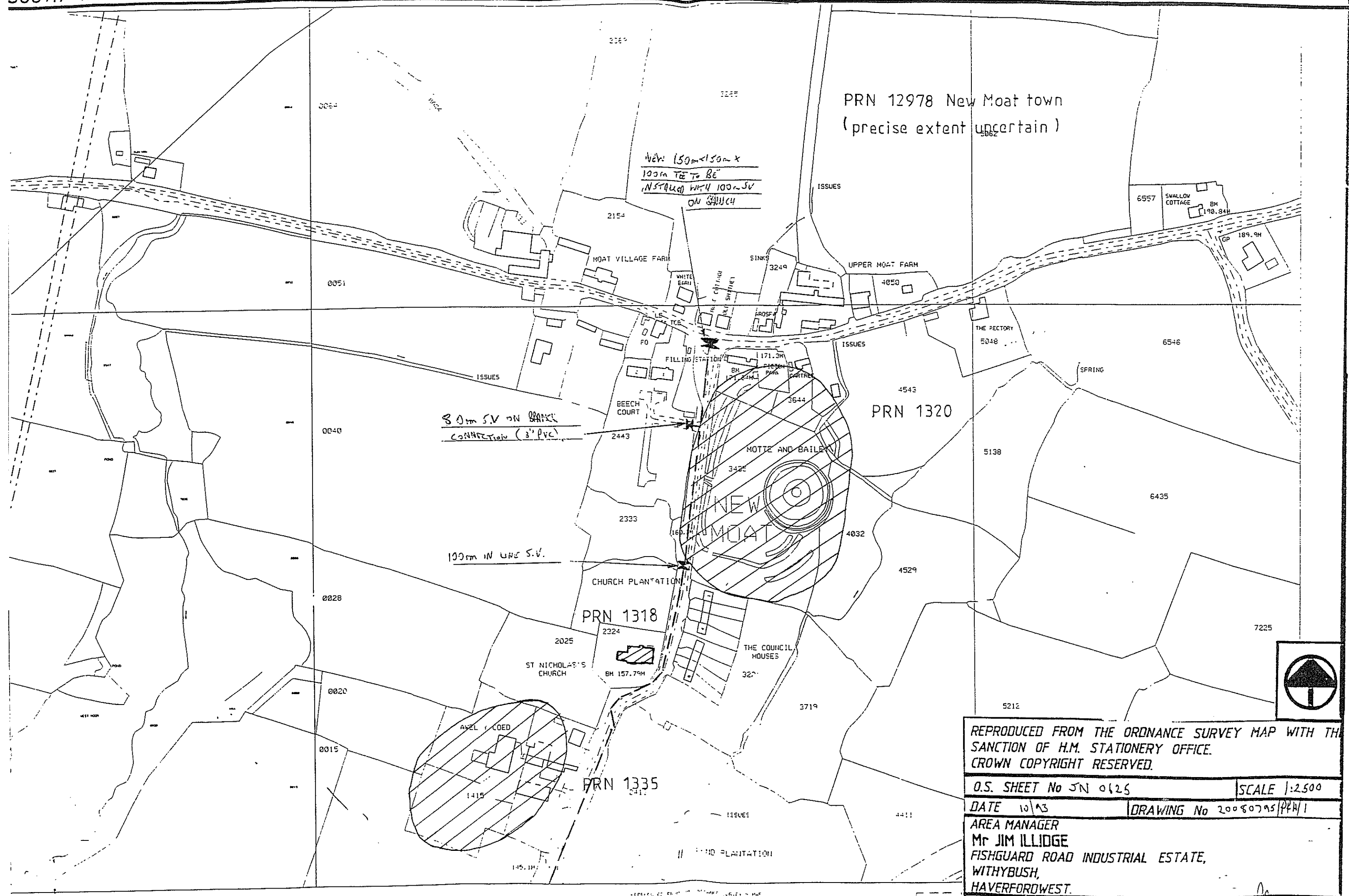
Church Plantation. In the area N of the churchyard are a series of enclosures and possible house platforms. The area at present contains a number of mature trees with a ground cover of grass and dense patches of brambles. The brambles obscure the pattern of enclosures and platforms. It appears that there are several large rectangular enclosures sub-divided by smaller boundaries. The platforms lie to the E and are largely obscured by brambles and modern encroachment from the roadside.

PRN 1335. A motte is recorded here on Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Sites and Monuments Record. The site now appears to be completely flattened and the area covered by a modern farm and farm buildings. The farmer has no recollection of any features in the area.

PRN 1320. New Moat motte and bailey castle. The motte is overgrown with scrub and mature trees and much of the mound is riddled with badger sets. There is evidence of active badger digging with subsoil exposed in many places throughout the mound.

4.0 THE FINDS

No finds were recorded during the watching brief.



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