

CAMBRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS LTD.

Kitchen Garden, Aberglasney Garden Carmarthenshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



By
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CAP Report No. 195

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
Kitchen Garden Watching Brief
Aberglasney Gardens,
Carmarthenshire

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ii) IFA Standards and Guidance

THE INSTITUTE OF FIELD ARCHAEOLOGISTS (IFA)

Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief

The Standard

An archaeological watching brief will record the archaeological resource during development within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices. These will satisfy the stated aims of the project, and comply with the *Code of conduct*, *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology*, and other relevant by-laws of the IFA.

Definition of an archaeological watching brief

The definition of an archaeological watching brief is a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive.

This definition and *Standard* do not cover chance observations, which should lead to an appropriate archaeological project being designed and implemented, nor do they apply to monitoring for preservation of remains *in situ*.

Purpose of a watching brief

The purpose of a watching brief is:

- ◆ to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
- ◆ to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.

A watching brief is not intended to reduce the requirement for excavation or preservation of known or inferred deposits, and it is intended to guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

The objective of a watching brief is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

The Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief was formally adopted as IFA approved practice at the Annual General Meeting of the Institute held on 14th October 1994.

Non Technical Summary

The following report is the result of work undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd. on behalf of the Aberglasney Restoration Trust. A watching brief was carried out prior to the construction of a northern wall for the kitchen garden. Archaeological monitoring was deemed necessary in order to locate any evidence of a wall, marked on numerous cartographic sources, which appears to have existed close to the location of the new wall, on the southern edge of the Pond Garden. During the course of the watching brief no conclusive evidence was uncovered to confirm the existence of this wall.

1 Introduction

On September the 4th. and 5th. 2001, Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd. undertook a watching brief at the northern end of the Kitchen Garden at Aberglasney. Works being carried out in this area included the excavation of a foundation trench for the construction of a new north wall for the Kitchen Garden. The aim of the archaeological investigation was to identify any remains of a linear feature visible on both the 1887 and 1906 editions of the 25" OS maps, and other more recent maps, presumed to be a pre-existing wall with a south facing aspect for the kitchen garden. On the OS maps the feature runs N-E – S-W, continuing along the line of the northern boundary of the upper walled garden.

1.1 Site Description

The location of the area to be excavated and inspected archaeologically lies at the north end of the Kitchen Garden (see fig.3)

1.2 Soil and Geology

According to the Soil Survey of England and Wales the soil present on site is Denbigh 1. The underlying geology is of the Llanvirn and Arenig series.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Since the instigation of development at Aberglasney House and Gardens by the Aberglasney Restoration Trust, archaeological investigation has been carried out by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd. This has focused on a number of areas within the house and gardens, the closest and therefore most relevant being the excavation work undertaken in July 1999, on the north side of the Kitchen Garden (see fig. 4, CAP Report No. 97).

2 Aims and Objectives

In accordance with the IFA's *Standards and Guidance* the primary objective of the watching brief was to ensure that any previously unrecorded archaeological deposits and features exposed during the ground disturbance works were adequately recorded and interpreted.

3 Methodology

- Excavation was carried out by machine, using a 0.6m toothed bucket.
- The trench was then cleaned and examined by the archaeological contractor in order to identify any features present.

Recording was carried out in three formats:-

1. *Photographic Record* – Photographs were taken in 35mm colour slide and digital formats.
2. *Drawn Record* – Site drawings, plans and sections were produced.
3. *Written Record* – Written text was produced using a continuous numbering sequence for all contexts, and identified features tied into the OS grid where applicable.

An environmental sampling and processing strategy was in place should the archaeological deposits warrant it.

All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IFA's *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, and current Health and Safety legislation.

4 Results of the Watching Brief

The following numbers contained within brackets () refer to context numbers allocated during the watching brief. A list of all the contexts is given in appendix II of this report.

A single trench measuring 0.6m in width by 29m in length was excavated to an average depth of 1m. The stratigraphic sequence of deposits visible in section throughout most of the trench consisted of Topsoil (01), overlying a mid brown silty clay (02), which rested on the natural (05). At a distance of 6m from the west end of the trench, a cut [03] into context (02) was filled by (04) which consisted of angular rubble and large chunks of mortar.

5 Conclusions

The excavation of this trench at the northern end of the Kitchen Garden revealed no real evidence of the supposed pre-existing north wall. This lack of evidence could suggest several interpretations. Firstly, as it was necessary to avoid damaging the root structure of several mature trees, the foundation trench for the new wall was excavated to the south of the position of the boundary marked on the map sources. This may have meant that the trench avoided the pre-existing wall altogether.

Secondly, previous excavation in the area (CAP Report no. 97) was designed with the intention of locating the boundary marked on the maps, but did “not clearly establish the existence of a northern wall in the Kitchen Garden” (Halfpenny 1999). As pointed out in this earlier excavation report (CAP Report no. 97) the feature marked on the cartographic sources need not necessarily be a wall as the OS maps do not differentiate between walls, fences or hedgerows/ field boundaries. The rubbly fill (04) of cut [03] most likely represents backfilling of Trench 2, excavated at right angles to the current foundation trench during 1999 (see fig. 5). As can be seen, no features of any archaeological significance were located during this watching brief.

6 Acknowledgements

Thanks to Phil Evans for carrying out the Watching Brief and providing the raw data for this report. Thanks also to Kevin Blockley.

7 References & Bibliography

7.1 References

IFA Standards and Guidance

Aberglasney Mansion and Gardens: report on excavation work undertaken on the north side of the kitchen garden. CAP Report No. 97, by Ian Halfpenny.

7.2 Bibliography

Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983: *Soils of England and Wales*. Sheet 2 Wales. SSEW

British Geological Service, 1979: *Geological Survey Ten Mile Map*. South Sheet. BGS

7.2 Cartographic Sources

1887 1st. Ed. Ordnance Survey 25" Map.

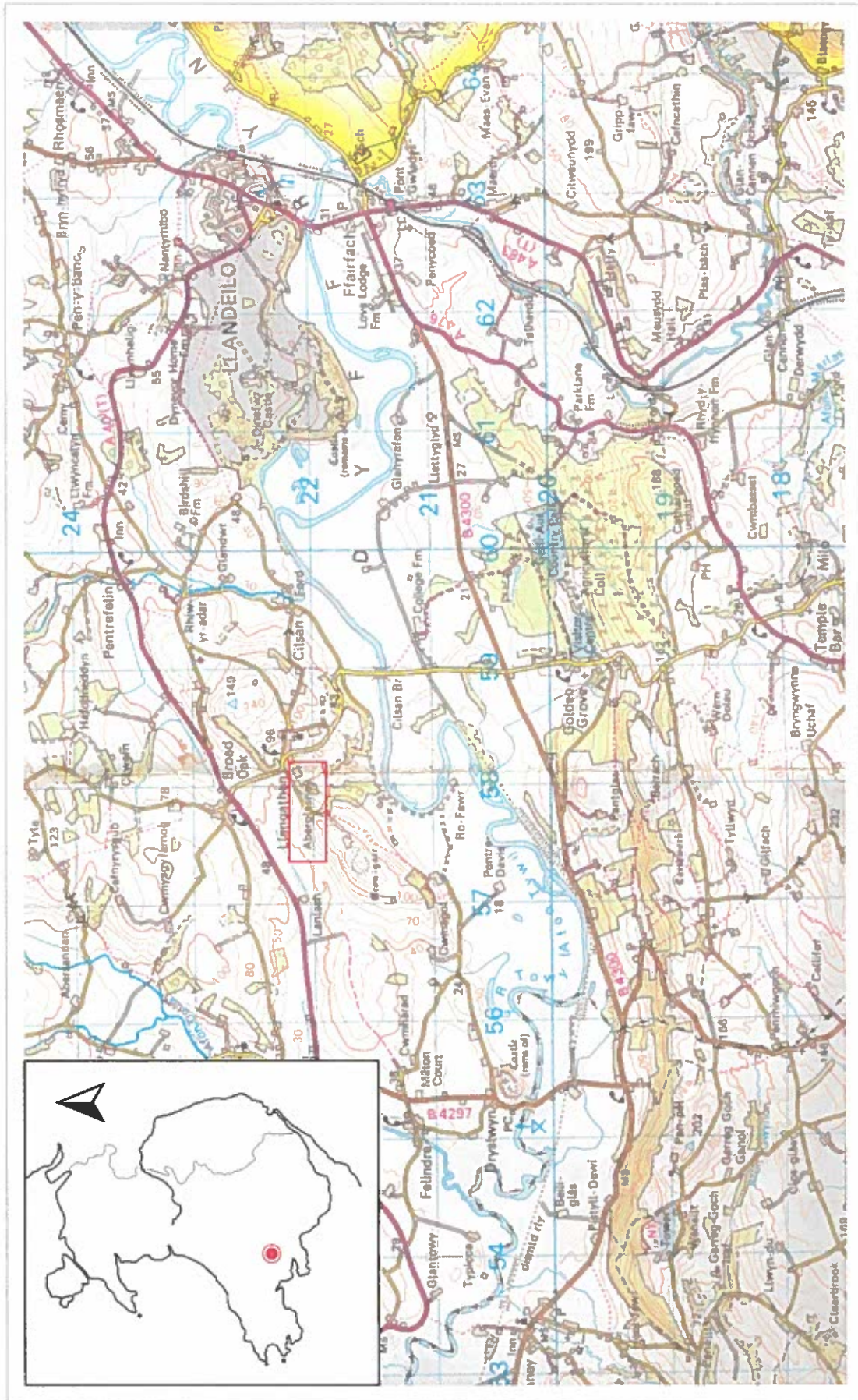


Fig 1: Site Location Map (Scale - 1:50 000)

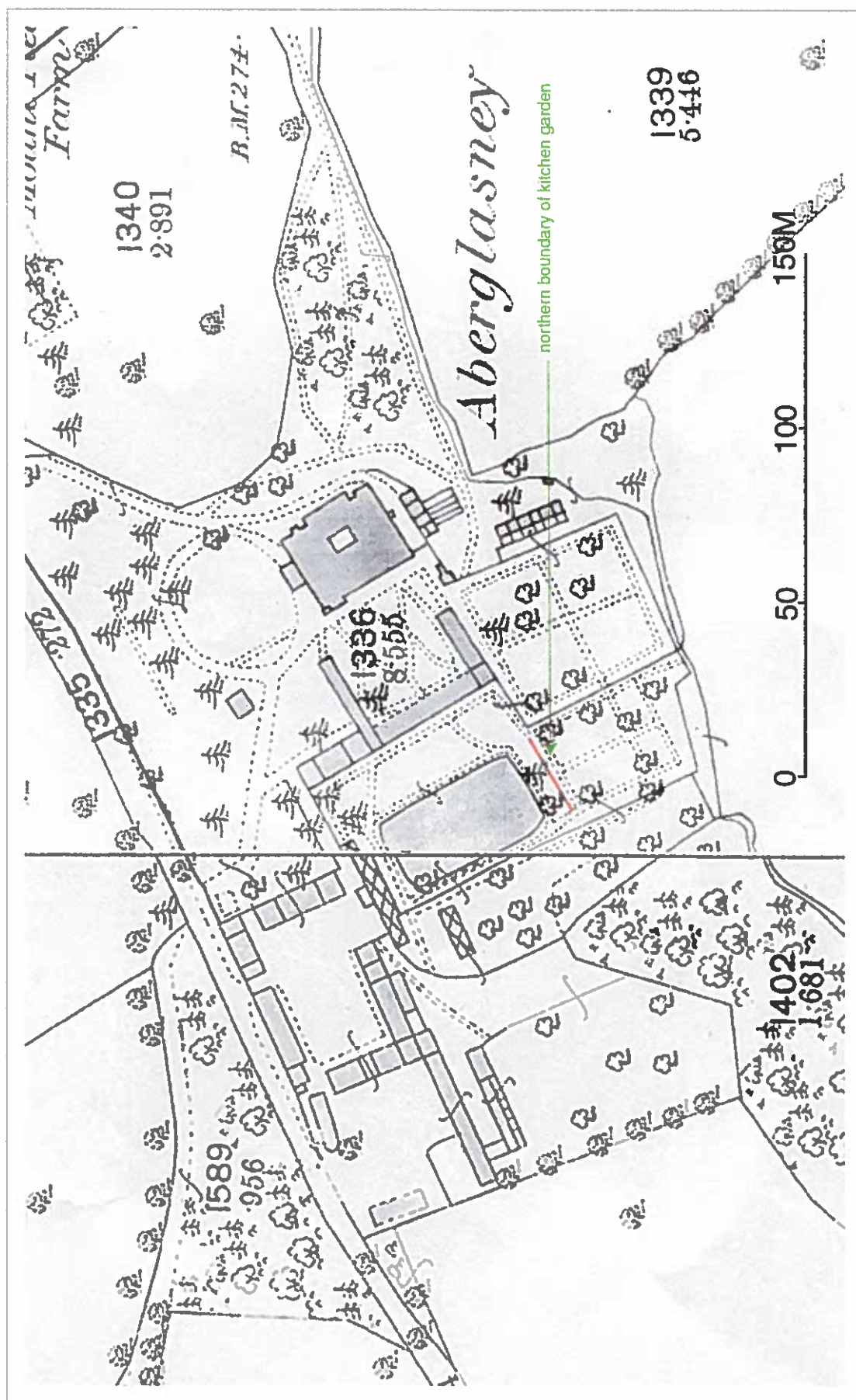


Fig. 2: Location of boundary at northern end of Kitchen Garden, as shown on 1887 2nd. Edition Ordnance Survey map.

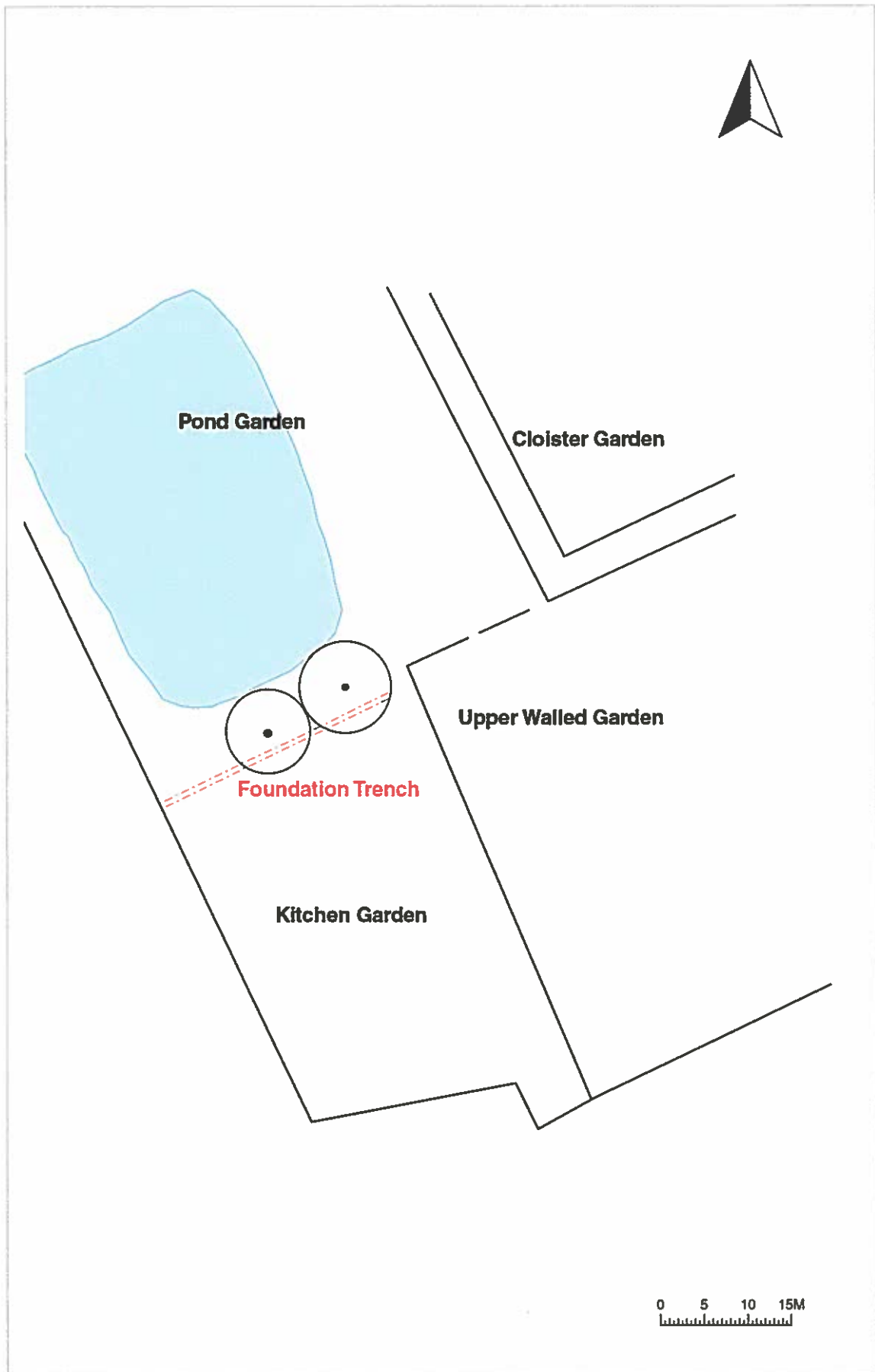


Fig 3:Trench Location Plan

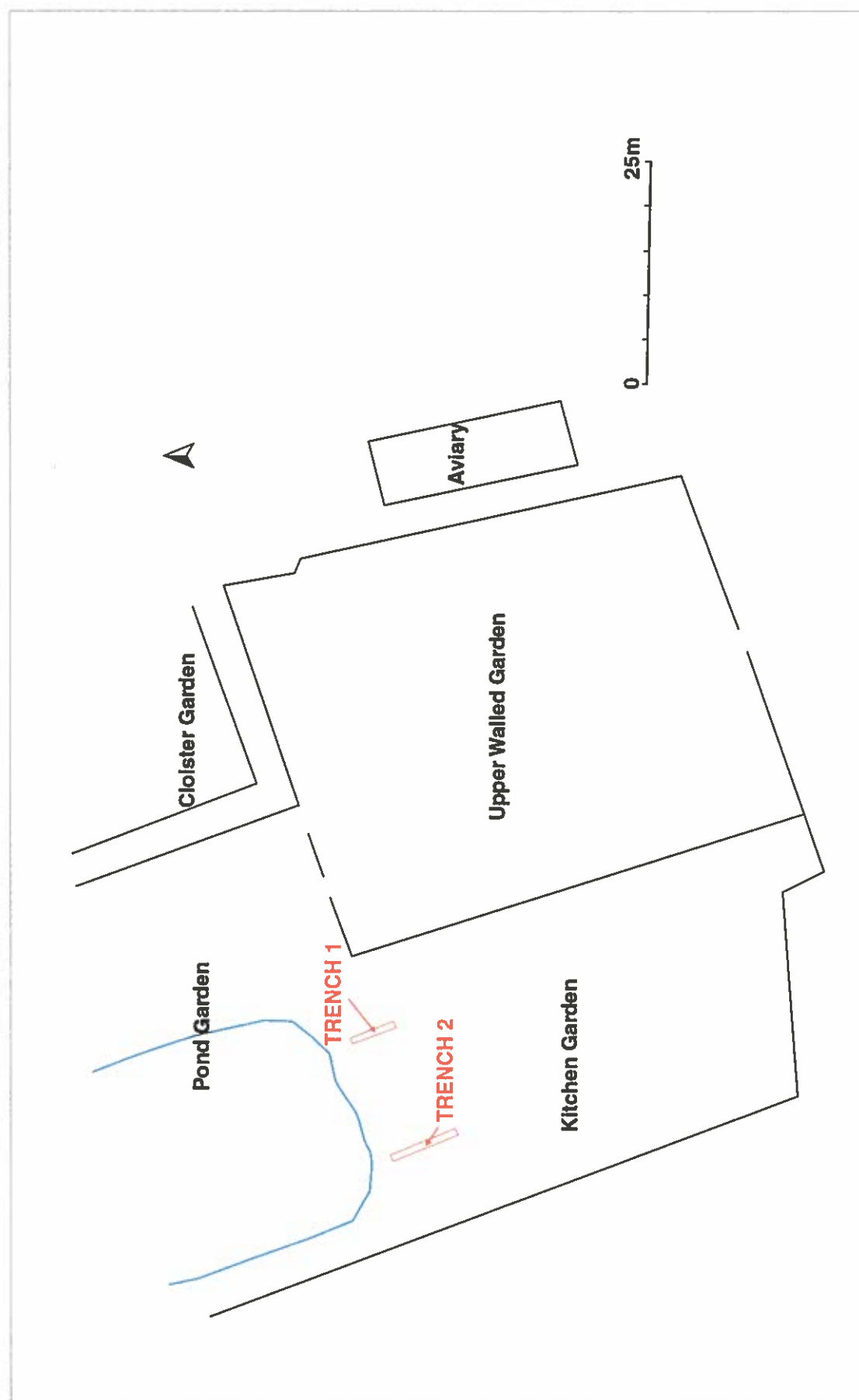


Fig. 4: Plan of area showing trenches excavated in 1999 (CAP Report No. 97)

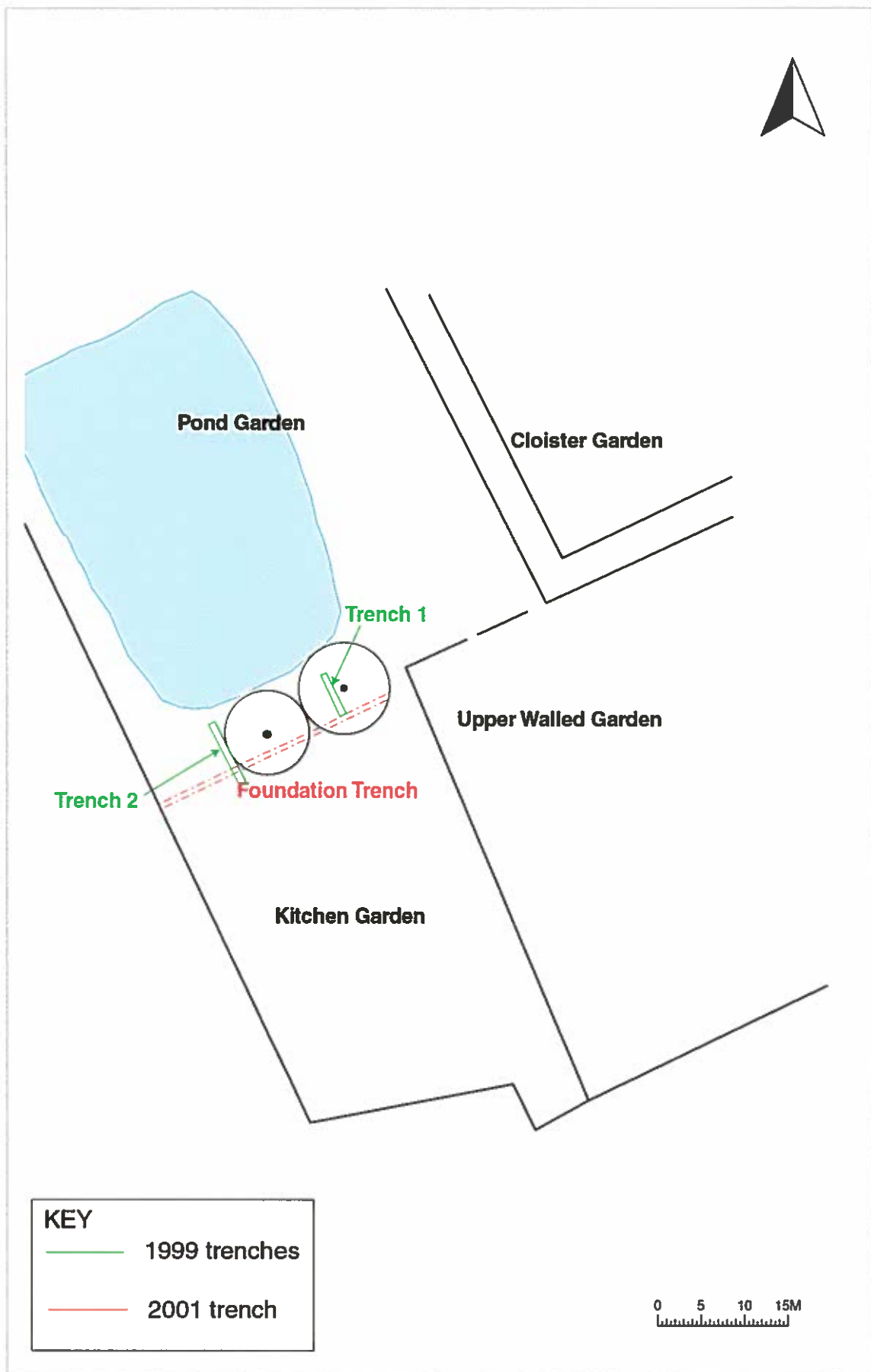


Fig 5: Location plan of trenches excavated during 1999 overlaid on plan of foundation trench (2001 excavations)



Plate 01: New foundation trench
(Scale 1m. looking west)

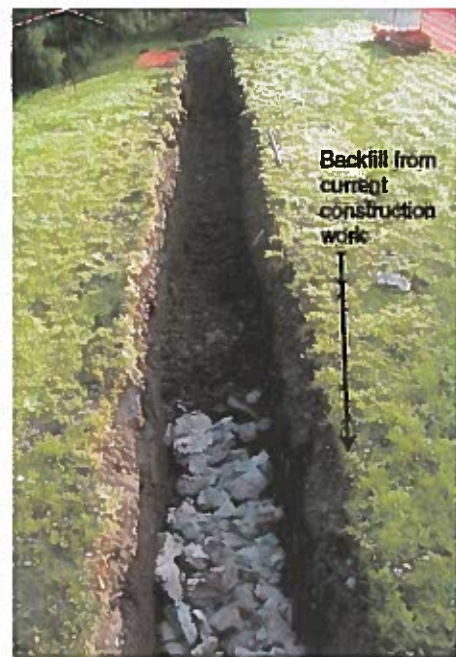


Plate 02: New foundation trench
(Scale 1m. looking east)



Plate 03: Overall view of site, looking south from Pond Garden towards Kitchen Garden.



APPENDIX I: **Archive Cover Sheet**

ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Aberglasney Gardens, Carmarthenshire.

ARCHIVE DESTINATION

Site Name:	Kitchen Garden, Aberglasney Gardens.
Site Code:	AB/01/WB
PRN:	N/A
NPRN :	N/A
SAM:	N/A
Other Ref No:	N/A
Site Type:	Historic Garden
Project Type:	Archaeological Watching Brief
Project Officer:	Phil Evans
Project Dates:	September 2001
Categories Present:	N/A
Location of Original Archive:	N/A
Location of duplicate Archives:	N/A
Number of Finds Boxes:	0
Location of Finds:	N/A
Museum Reference:	Not assigned
Copyright:	CAP Ltd
Restrictions to access:	None



APPENDIX II: **Chronological Divisions**

_____ MODERN (1901 -)
 _____ INDUSTRIAL (1700 - 1901)
 _____ POST-MEDIEVAL (1547 - 1700)
 _____ MEDIEVAL (1066 - 1547)
 _____ EARLY MEDIEVAL (AD 450 - 1066)
 _____ ROMAN BRITAIN (AD 43 - AD 450)
 _____ IRON AGE (700 BC - AD 43)
 _____ BRONZE AGE (2300 - 700 BC)
 _____ NEOLITHIC (4000 - 2300 BC)
 _____ MESOLITHIC (10,000 - 4000 BC)
 _____ PALAEO LITHIC (500,000 - 10,000 BC)

Chronological Divisions as used by the Council for British Archaeology (CBA),
in the *British and Irish Archaeological Bibliography*.



APPENDIX III: **Context Register**

APPENDIX III

CONTEXT REGISTER

- 01** Topsoil
- 02** Mid brown silty clay
- 03** Cut (for 1999 trench)
- 04** Rubbly backfill of 1999 trench
- 05** Natural