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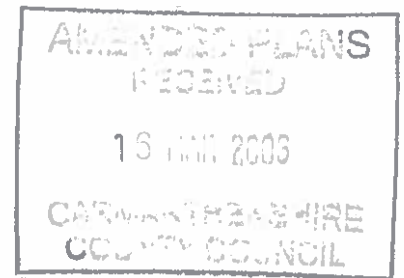
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**St Catherine's Street,  
Carmarthen**

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Prepared for:  
**Under Construction Archaeology**

On Behalf of:  
**Simons Developments Ltd**



**CAP Report No: 415**

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## Non Technical Summary

*This report results from work undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd (CAP) for Under Construction Archaeology on behalf of their client Simons Development Ltd. The work undertaken was a pre determinate evaluation prior to a proposed redevelopment of the St. Catherine's Street area of Carmarthen. Features located within the area by a previous desk-top assessment carried out by Under Construction Archaeology include a possible medieval mill and Carmarthen's Civil War defensive circuit.*

### 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In February 2006 Cambrian Archaeological Projects (CAP) carried out a pre-determinate archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to St. Catherine's Street in Carmarthen on behalf of Under Construction Archaeology and their client Simons Development Ltd.
- 1.1.2 The archaeological evaluation was carried out prior to any possible development on the site in order to ascertain the extent, nature and quality of any archaeological remains in the area. A project design was prepared by Under Construction Archaeology prior to any work being carried out.
- 1.1.3 The proposed building work concerns the redevelopment of the St. Catherine's Street area of Carmarthen with a retail-led multi use scheme (Planning Application W/11064) and is centred on NGR SN 40976 20307 (Fig 1).

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The area of proposed development covers an area of approximately 4 hectares. The northern part of the site slopes gently southwards and eastwards but there are clear level changes that appear to have human origins. The southern part of the site is broadly level (Rosenberg, 2005).
- 1.2.2 The underlying solid geology of the area is comprised mainly of Old Red Sandstone overlain by alluvial clay deposits (BGS, 1979, Soil survey of England and Wales, 1980).

### **1.3 Archaeological and historical background**

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a desk-based assessment compiled by Under Construction Archaeology in August 2005. The desk-based assessment highlighted the possible presence of a mill dating to at least the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and a section of Carmarthen's civil war defence circuit.
- 1.3.2 The proposed development area contains no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Historic Parks & Gardens, Registered Battlefields or Conservation Areas (Rosenberg, 2005).

## **2 Aims and Objectives**

### **2.1 Field Evaluation**

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area paying particular attention to the aforementioned mill and civil war defensive circuit.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features
- 2.1.4 To appraise the likely impact of the proposal on any surviving archaeological deposits and if appropriate to make suggestions for a mitigation strategy or, where areas contain archaeology of national importance, for preservation *in situ*.

## **3 Evaluation Methodology**

### **3.1 Scope of Fieldwork**

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of two machine-excavated trenches measuring 10 x 2 metres and 50 x 2 metres. Trench 1 was located immediately adjacent to the disused Esso garage forecourt on St. Catherine Street whilst Trench 2 was located within St. Catherine Street car park adjacent to the disused garage's boundary wall (Fig 2). Both trenches were aligned roughly NW – SE. A mechanical excavator fitted with a pecking

tooth and a grading bucket removed the overburden under close archaeological supervision.

3.1.2 Site director Chris E Smith (AIFA) and project assistants Hywell Keen and Iestyn Jones undertook the evaluation under the overall direction of Kevin Blockley (MIFA). The trenches were cleaned by hand with sections and plans being recorded on drafting film at a scale of 1:20. All trenches were photographed using 35mm black and white print film and digital photography.

3.1.3 All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IFA's *Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological evaluation* and current Health and Safety legislation.

### **3.2 Finds**

3.2.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

### **3.3 Palaeo-environmental evidence**

3.3.1 No deposits suited to environmental sampling were located during the evaluation.

### **3.4 Presentation of results**

3.4.1 This presentation outlines the results from each trench. An inventory of all contexts and finds is presented in Appendices 1&2.

## **4 Evaluation Results**

### **4.1 Soils and ground conditions**

4.1.1 Generally the site and weather conditions were mixed with dry, bright but cold conditions persistent during the machining of the trenches and rain thereafter. Some flooding did occur in both trenches 1 and 2 though not to any serious detrimental effect. The topsoil in this instance was comprised of concrete, stone chippings and rubble overburden and as such was not overly affected by the wet weather.

### **4.2 Distribution of deposits**

4.2.1 The distribution of deposits seemed largely consistent in both trenches. Concrete and rubble overburden as well as stone chippings made up the upper layers whilst a natural

mid orange alluvial clay seems to have overlain the bedrock at the base of both trenches.

### 4.3 Descriptions

#### *Trench 1 (Fig 2, Plate 1)*

- 4.3.1 The concrete surface of the disused petrol station forecourt (101) was broken up and removed by a JCB 3CX using a pecking tool and a grading bucket. This concrete surface was found to be supported by a layer of rubble and brick hardcore (102) which was subsequently removed by the mechanical excavator as overburden. The overburden layer (102) was found to be approximately .15m in thickness and lay on top of (103), a layer of apparently reworked natural alluvial clay with occasional rubble inclusions. A cut for a large service pipe [105] running the length of the trench was encountered at this point. The service pipe (104) proved to be defunct. Removal of the apparently reworked natural yielded no archaeological finds and natural alluvial clay (110) was eventually reached along the base of the trench at an average depth of one metre. A sondage, sunk at the north western end of the trench encountered the natural bedrock (111) at a depth of 1.3 metres. An electric cable (107) with no apparent cut appeared to have been mole drilled in to the south east end of the trench. A distinct yet shallow cut [108] and fill (109) was apparent in the south western section of the trench although this emitted a strong scent of petrol, possibly suggestive of it being the edge of a cut for a petrol reservoir.

#### *Trench 2 (Figs 2, 3 & 4, Plate 2)*

- 4.3.2 The surface of trench 2 was made up of loose stone chippings (201) which were easily removed by the mechanical excavator. As in trench 1 a similar layer of rubble and brick overburden (202) was encountered as the second stratigraphic episode. This overburden appeared to be sat directly above a series of shallow rafted footings set at 90° angles, thus running across the trench. These footings (203) appeared along three quarters of the length of the trench and appeared to be of a uniform size and regularity (Plate 3). They do not relate to any structure marked on the 1977-78 Ordnance survey map but do show on the 1983 edition (Fig 5) thus suggesting a date of *circa*. 1980. The shallow, rafted nature of the footings seems only to apply to those sections at 90° angles to the alignment of the trench. The south westerly facing section of trench 2 is largely made up of a low brick wall sat on a deep concrete footing from which the 1980's footings

run at a 90° angle. It was possible to excavate the space between the shallow footings down to natural using the mechanical excavator. As with trench 1 a layer of reworked and disturbed natural alluvial clay (204) was encountered where it was possible to excavate to any depth. This layer was again located immediately above a natural alluvial clay deposit with no apparent inclusions (205). At the north western end of trench 2 a dark grey clay deposit (215), approximately 15 metres long was uncovered. (215) appeared largely undamaged by the 1980's concrete footings as it was encountered at a relatively shallow level directly beneath the rubble overburden (Plate 4). This layer, on average .2 metres thick, contained material seeming to date from the 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries with possible residual material dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. An exploratory section cut through (215) revealed a light orange layer of subsoil approximately 0.3m -0.4m thick containing medieval pottery (Plate 5). Beneath this apparent medieval horizon natural alluvial clay (205) was again located. 3 pits, [216] [218] & [221] were cut into (215) although no dating evidence was retrieved from their respective fills. 19<sup>th</sup> century masonry remains (209), possibly relating to cattle market activity were also located within trench 2 (Plate 6). A culverted section of the Tawelan stream, as mentioned in the 2005 desk-top assessment, was also located within trench 2.

## **5 Finds**

5.1.1 A relatively small finds assemblage was recovered from Trench 2. This consisted mainly of pottery sherds, clay tobacco pipe fragments and pieces of glass. No finds were recovered from Trench 1. A detailed description of the complete finds assemblage is available in Appendix 2.

### **5.2 Pottery**

5.2.1 The assemblage was in fair condition representing a small group of material (Appendix 2). The main focus of activity appeared to be late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century although 13 sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from context (220) as well as 16 post-medieval sherds from various contexts. None of the medieval sherds seem to be cooking pot or domestic jar as one would expect with a domestic urban assemblage, in contrast some of the sherds appear to be relatively good quality pottery.



### **5.3 Clay Tobacco Pipes**

- 5.3.1 Again the assemblage was in a fair condition with 13 pipe stems and one bowl. The stems cover a wide date range from late 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century whilst the bowl appears to date from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **6 Discussion and Interpretation**

### **6.1 Reliability of field investigation**

- 6.1.1 The evaluation was, to a degree, hampered by modern buildings and services. Trench 1 was placed so as to locate a possible mill and its wheel pit although owing to modern buildings, i.e. the disused petrol station, the trench could not be placed in an ideal location. This was, however, unavoidable as the mill seems to be located directly beneath where the disused petrol pumps now stand according to cartographic evidence (Rosenberg, 2005). Excavation of Trench 2 was hampered by the presence of the 1980's footings at such a shallow level.
- 6.1.2 The overall findings of the evaluation were inconsistent with what was expected to survive beneath ground level. Ordnance Datum level readings taken on both Trenches 1 & 2 show a difference in ground level of around 1 metre, Trench 1 being the lower of the two. This height difference is also reflected in the masonry of the petrol station boundary wall which appears to show an original ground level higher than it is currently (Plate 7). If the ground were levelled or terraced prior to the construction of the petrol station this may explain the lack of archaeological activity. A wheel pit, however, is potentially a deep feature which may have survived any levelling episode. Trench 2 was placed specifically so as to identify the Civil War defences. The dark deposit (215) at the north western end of Trench 2 was in the correct area to fit with the projected line of the Civil War defences and was initially thought to represent both the bank and ditch of said defences. Further investigation, however, revealed that the dark deposit was likely to date to the late 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century and was sealing a possible medieval horizon (220). 3 small pits [216], [218] & [221] were cut into the dark deposit (215) and were found to be filled with mainly cobble stones, rubble and ceramic building material fragments although no securely datable material was recovered from

these features. A further pit [206], cut into the natural (205) and partially obscured by the trench edge, was also excavated and was found to contain 19<sup>th</sup> century material.

## **6.2 Overall interpretation**

- 6.2.1 The evaluation can be shown to have yielded unexpected results. The lack of archaeological activity in the area of Trench 1 was unexpected and may possibly be explained by a change in ground levels as evidenced by the masonry remains visible on the petrol station boundary wall. Within the disused garage itself changes in the ground level are in evidence. As mentioned in the desk-top study (Rosenberg, 2005) the ramp leading into the garage continues to a much higher ground level than the forecourt. It is possible that the original ground level survives towards the rear of the garage structure, the garage itself having being terraced into the natural slope.
- 6.2.2 Trench 2 was positioned so as to identify the presence of the Civil War defences. It is possible that the dark clay deposit (215) represents the base of the mill pond. The fact that this layer (215) lies immediately and directly beneath the layer of rubble overburden (202) acting as hardcore for the car park surface would suggest that layer (215) was truncated during levelling for the car park. Plate 8 shows the difference in ground levels. The ground level to the north east (foreground) of the boundary wall is considerably lower than that on the south west side (background). This is demonstrated by the truck in the picture (Rosenberg, 2005). Cartographic evidence also suggests that the mill pond was indeed in this location (Fig 6).

## **7 Acknowledgements**

- 7.1.1 Thanks are due to Nansi Rosenberg (UCA), Charles Hill and Louise Austin (Cambria Archaeology) for their monitoring visits, to Hywell Keen and Iestyn Jones (CAP) for all their assistance with the fieldwork and to Ian Farmer associates for all their on site help.

## **8 Bibliography and references**

ROSENBERG, N. 2005. Carmarthen Town Centre Development. A Desk Based Assessment.  
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British Geological Survey, 1979,

## ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Site Name:	St. Catherine Street, Carmarthen
Site Code:	CCM/06/EVA
PRN:	
NPRN:	
SAM:	
Other Ref No:	Project No.
NGR:	NGR SN 40976 20307
Site Type:	Multi - period
Project Type:	Archaeological Evaluation
Project Officer:	Chris E Smith
Project Dates:	February 2006
Categories Present:	
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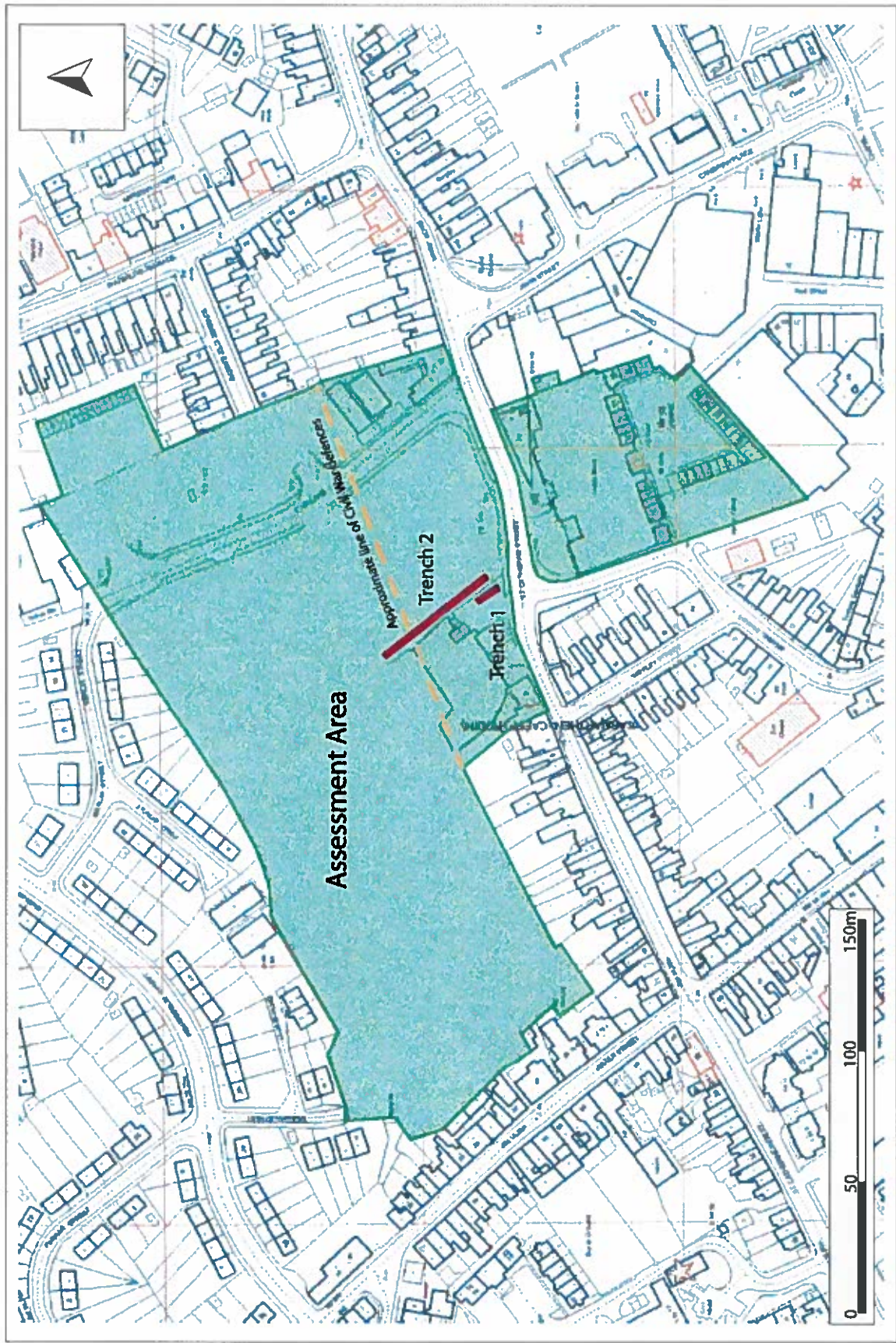
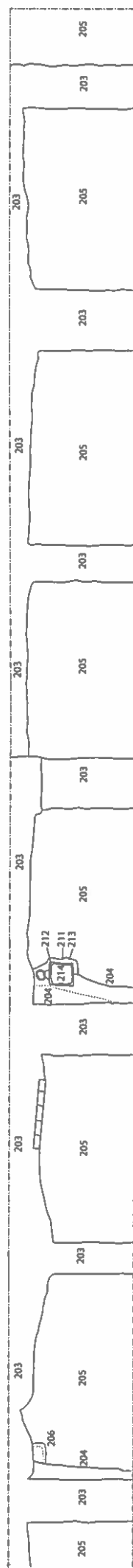


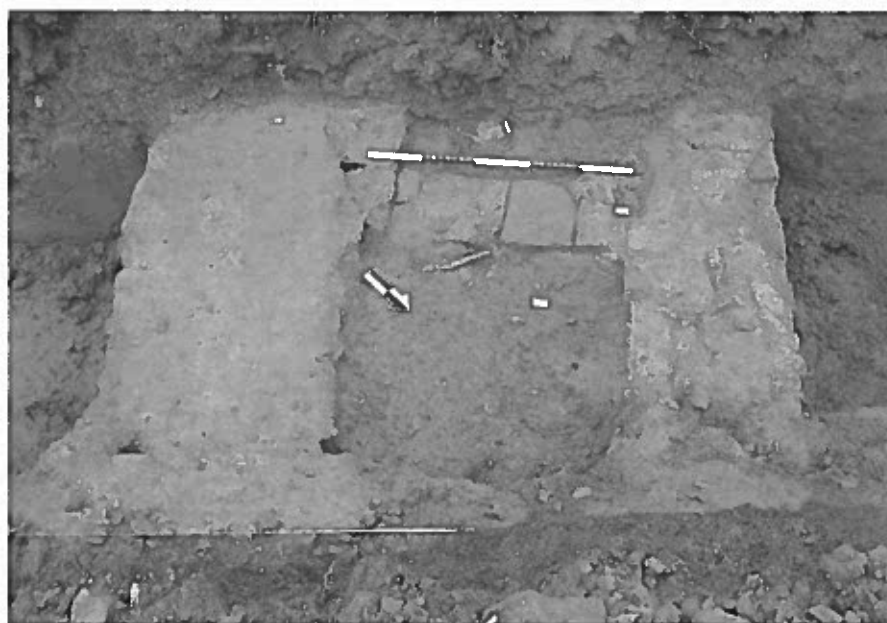
Fig 2: Location of Trenches Within Assessment Area



**Fig 4: Section showing deposits excavated in sondage**



**Plate 5: View of sondage through 215 and 220, looking south-east**



**Plate 6: View of 19th century masonry, between 1980s concrete footings**



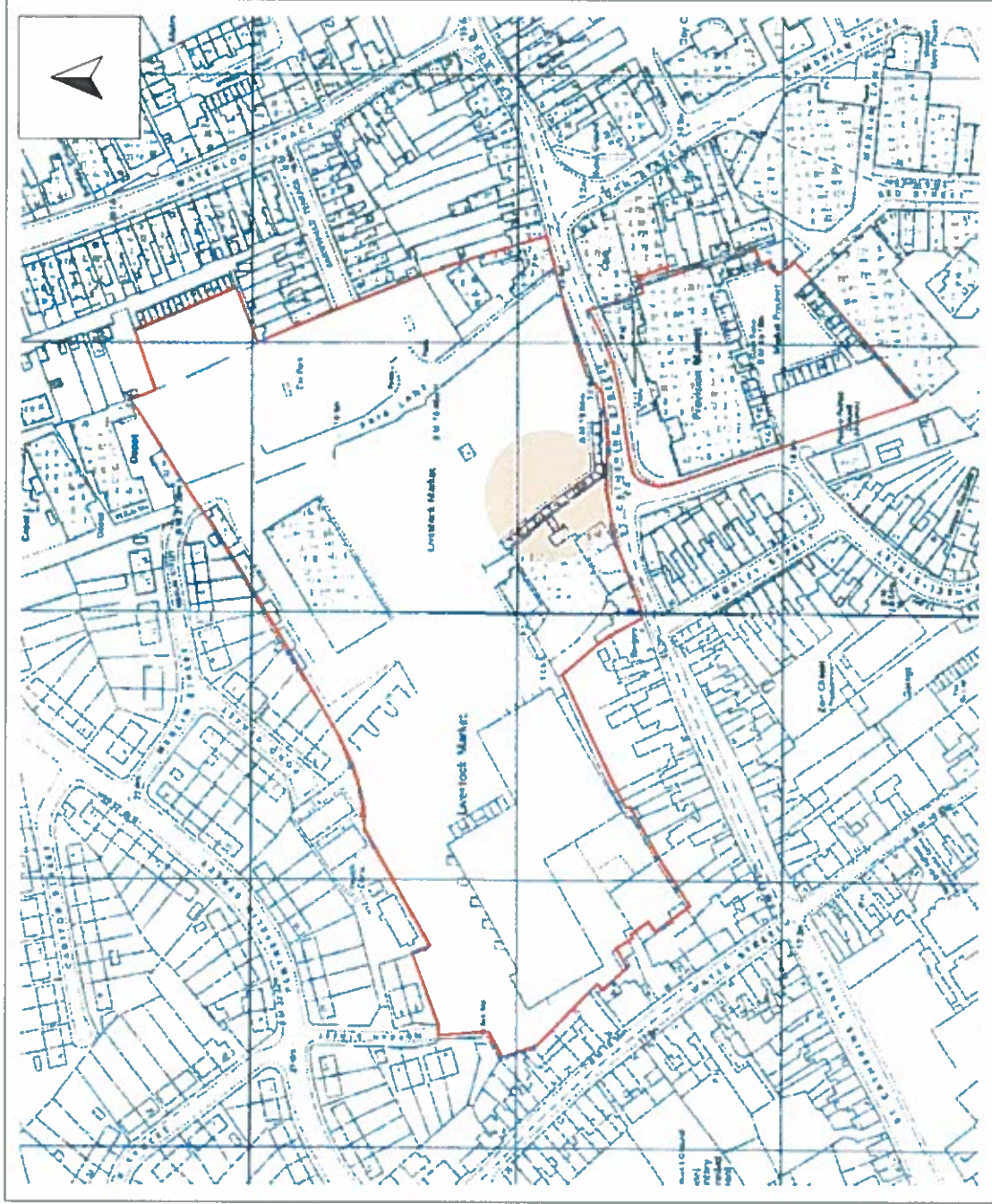


Fig 5: 1983 OS Map of Assessment Area, Note Building Structures in  
Area of Trench 2



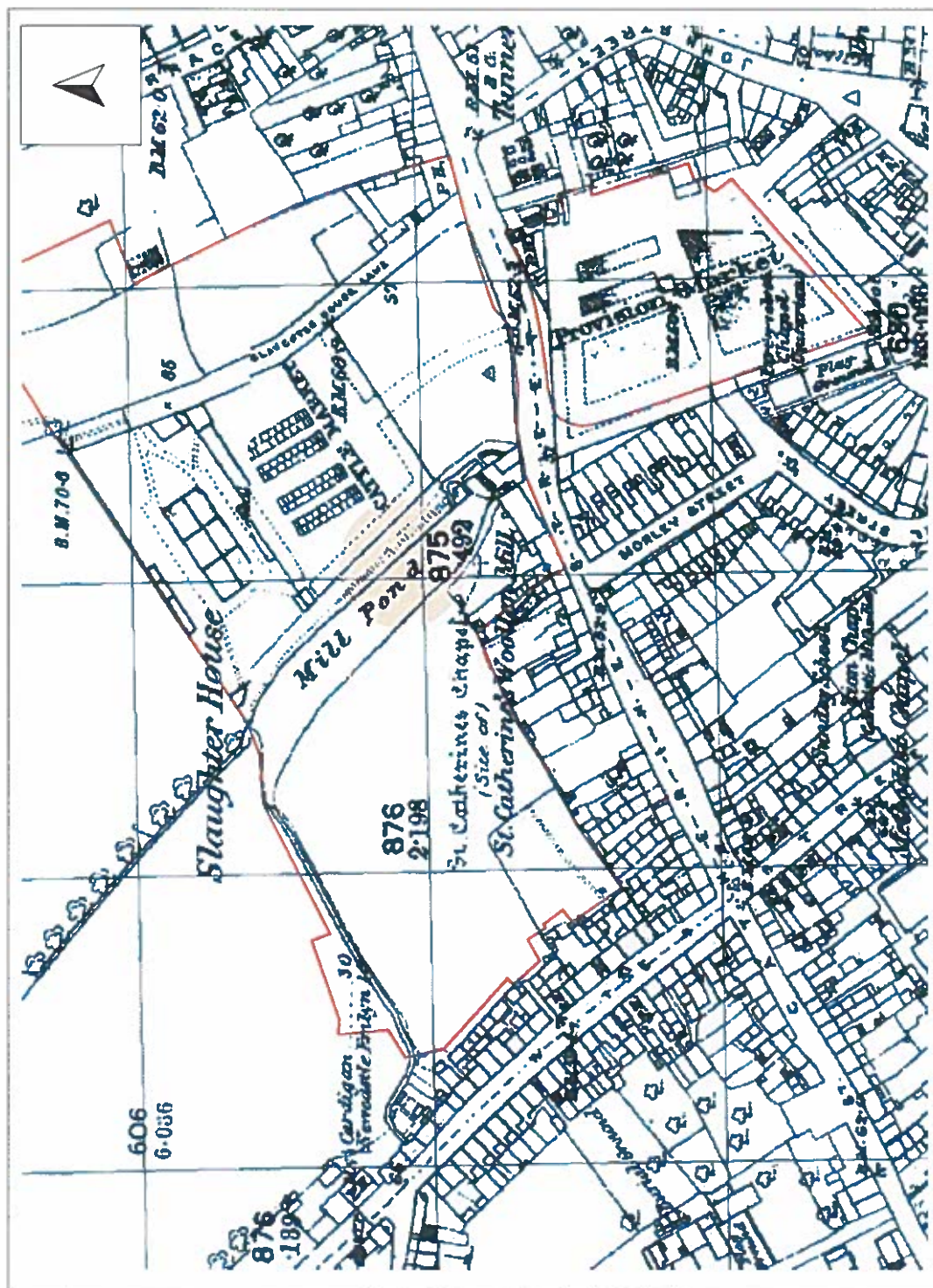


Fig 6: 1890 OS Map of Assessment Area, Note Presence of Millpond in Area of Trench 2



**Plate 1:** Trench 1, looking south-east.



**Plate 2:** Trench 2, looking south-east