

**HERITAGE RECORDING
SERVICES WALES**



**"Dolwar Bach, Cilgerran,
Pembrokeshire".**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



By
Richard Scott Jones (BA Hons, MA)



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HRSW Report No: 106

On behalf of:
Mr D. Worth, Dolwar
High Street
Cilgerran
Pembs.

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**HERITAGE
RECORDING SERVICES WALES**

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Contents

i) LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ii) IFA STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE

NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY	Page 01
1. INTRODUCTION	Page 01
2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	Page 02
3. METHODOLOGY	Page 02
4. RESULTS OF WATCHING BRIEF	Page 03
5. CONCLUSIONS	Page 04
6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	Page 05
7. REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	Page 05
APPENDIX I: Figures & Illustrations	
APPENDIX II: Photo plates	
APPENDIX III: Finds Summary	
APPENDIX IV: Contexts Register	
APPENDIX V: Archive Cover Sheet	

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i) List of Illustrations

Figures

Fig 01: Location map.

Fig 02: OS 1st edition map of 1891.

Fig 03: Aerial photo of 2002.

Fig 04: Site plan prior to development.

Fig 05: Proposed development.

Fig 06: north-west facing section.

Plates

Plate 01-02: North-west facing section.

Non Technical Summary

The following report is the result of archaeological work undertaken by Heritage Recording Services Wales on behalf of Mr D Worth, owner of Dolwar Bach, High Street, Cilgerran, Pembrokeshire. This work was part of a planning condition for an archaeological watching brief during the ground-work for the construction of a new dwelling following demolition of the old property.

The watching brief was designed to record any archaeological deposits that may become exposed during the said groundwork.

No significant archaeology was noted in the area of the required groundwork, however an exposed section of ground already uncovered was deemed of interest archaeologically and recorded. This section of ground revealed that the area of the extension to the property had previously been dug down to the natural clays and shale bedrock, having cut through an 18th century garden enclosure wall with culvert.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following text details the archaeological work undertaken by Heritage Recording Services Wales (HRSW) on behalf of Mr D Worth, owner of Dolwar Bach, High Street, Cilgerran, Pembrokeshire. This work was part of a planning condition for an archaeological watching brief during the ground work for the construction of a new dwelling following demolition of the old property.
- 1.2 HRSW submitted a project specification to Cambria Archaeology, the regional Archaeological Trust in Llandeilo detailing the schedule of works in March 2006.
- 1.3 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.

Planning Background

- 1.4 Planning permission has been granted by Pembrokeshire County Council (*Application number 05/0976/PA*) to Mr D. Worth, owner of Dolwar Bach, The High Street, Cilgerran, Pembrokeshire, to erect a new dwelling on the foundations of the old demolished property (*NGR: SN 1955 4290*). The ground work entailed the digging of the foundations for part of the dwelling in the former garden area. A condition for an archaeological scheme of works was attached to this permission. This archaeological scheme entailed a watching brief during the ground work for the new dwelling.

Site Description (*see Figs 2,3 & 4*)

- 1.5 The location of the proposed new dwelling is located along the High Street in Cilgerran village (*NGR: SN 1955 4290*). The old property was north facing whose architectural character, date and style was similar to the other existing properties along the Cilgerran High Street, in that it was late 18th early 19th century with a long narrow garden with dividing enclosure wall.

The area undergoing ground work was located in an area of former garden.

Geology

- 1.6 The local geology is a sedimentary rock of Ordovician Ashgill and Llandeilo rocks. The local geology is a natural Ashgill clay and shale/slate.

Archaeological Background

- 1.7 An Initial documentary assessment of the dwelling of 'Dolwar Bach' shows that it is within close proximity to the 12th century Cilgerran Castle. The castle is forever associated with the abduction in 1109 of Nest, the Welsh 'Helen of Troy', by a besotted Owain, son of the Prince of Powys, an act which set all Wales aflame. The castle as it now stands dates from a century later, when the powerful Norman baron William Marshall the Younger set about rebuilding it following a troubled period of capture and recapture from the Welsh in this hotly disputed area. Yet Marshall's efforts bore little fruit, for the castle was apparently derelict within 50 years. Its fortunes revived in 1377 when Edward III ordered repairs to counter a threatened French invasion, and it was in the wars again during the Owain Glyn Dwr uprising in the early 1400's. Cilgerran's history and setting have long stirred the imagination. It has inspired artists for centuries and was one of Wales's first tourist attractions, much favoured by Victorian visitors who arrived by boat from Cardigan.

2 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 In accordance with IFA's *Standards and guidance*, the aims of an archaeological watching brief are:
- 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.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 The objective of a watching brief is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site. The primary objective of this assessment was to ensure that any previously unrecorded archaeological features and deposits exposed during the ground disturbance works and subsequent development of the site were adequately recorded and interpreted.
- 2.4 In accordance with IFA's *Standards and guidance*, the aim of an archaeological desk based assessment is to gain information about the known or potential archaeological resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character and extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and relative quality of the potential archaeological resource), in order to make an assessment of its merit in context, leading to one or more of the following:
- the formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource.
 - the formulation of a strategy for further investigation, whether or not intrusive, where the character and value of the resource is not sufficiently defined to permit a mitigation strategy or other response to be devised.
 - the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research.:

3 Methodology

3.1 The Watching Brief

With regards the watching brief, ground work was undertaken by the contractors using a mini-digger with a 0.50m wide ditching bucket and hand shovels. Throughout this operation a watching brief vigil was undertaken by an experienced archaeologist.

After the ground work had been completed limited cleaning of the trenches was undertaken in order to ascertain the existence or non existence of any archaeological features.

Where features were present limited excavation was undertaken to establish the date, depth, preservation, extent, function and relationship to other features.

Recording of the trenches was in three formats:

- i) *Photographic record* - Photographs were taken in digital format using a 5 mega-pixel camera recording TIFF file format.
- ii) *Drawn record* - Site drawings, plans and sections, were produced at scales of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 on drafting film. Finished drawings have been related to Ordnance Survey datum and published boundaries where appropriate.
- iii) *Written record* - Written records were produced using a continuous numbering sequence for all contexts.

3.2 An environmental sampling and sampling and processing strategy was in place should the archaeological deposits warrant it. However, in this instance it was not felt that the deposits encountered required sampling.

3.3 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 (*see fig 2-6 and photo plates*)

4.1 In the following, numbers contained within brackets (), refer to context numbers allocated during the watching brief. A detailed list of all contexts is given in Appendix III of this report.

The Ground Clearance and Foundation Trench

4.2 The area in which the groundwork was to take place had already been excavated some years previously. As such the natural bedrock was already exposed, which was considered an adequate surface for the foundations for the new dwelling. Although this seemed to be the case, as a precautionary measure, the surface was scraped back so as to reveal a clean bedrock surface. This showed that the area to the west was natural bedrock but the area to the east had been partly covered in a 4 inch thick concrete base. This was removed to expose a shale rubble core with mid 20th century material inclusions. Approximately 5 inches beneath this was the natural shale bedrock.

4.3 Although the natural bedrock had already been exposed in the area under investigation, an exposed section to the rear of the former house, revealed a complete stratigraphic sequence of the earlier garden area (*see fig 6*). This section was located approx. 1m above the present lowered ground surface.

4.4 The uppermost deposit that covered the present top ground surface of the garden (1) appears to have

been a fairly recent import that completely covered a late 18th early 19th century garden enclosure wall (3) with stone culvert (7). Beneath the top soil was an earlier 19th century garden sub soil (2) with extensive 19th century material in the form of pottery sherds scattered throughout. This deposit reached a depth of approx. 0.40m and covered the area to the south-east of the 18th century wall (3). This deposit appears again to have been imported in order to raise the garden area and cover the early wall. Directly below this deposit was what appeared to be the remains of a stone slab garden path (5). This feature was only partially remaining on the south-east side of the wall and lay directly on top of an original 18th/19th century garden soil (6). On the north-west side of the wall the section showed that part of the early wall had been pushed over to form a slate and wall tumble deposit (4). This deposit was covered by an imported garden top soil (9), possibly the same as context (2). Below both contexts (6) and (4) was the natural orange/buff coloured clay (10). It is within this natural layer that a cut (8) had been made into which the stone wall(3) and a stone culvert (7) had been constructed. This wall and culvert appeared to be set in the section at an angle orientated north-south.

- 4.5 Once this exposed section had been recorded a part of it was removed for the insertion of a series of stone steps up into the garden from the lower area.
- 4.6 All of the deposits uncovered and recorded were no earlier than the exposed late 18th - early 19th century enclosure wall.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The archaeological watching brief for the ground-works at Dolwar Bach, The High Street, Cilgerran managed to record the existence of a late 18th / early 19th century garden enclosure wall in an already exposed section at the rear of the garden. The presence of this wall is marked on the OS 1st edition map of 1886. With regards the watching brief on the foundations for the new dwelling, the area under investigation had already been exposed down to the natural bedrock.
- 5.2 No features or finds were found during the ground-works earlier than the 18th century. All features exposed and recorded during the ground-works are still preserved *in situ*.

6 Acknowledgements

Thanks to; Mr D Worth , the owner of Dolwar Bach and also thanks to Stuart Corbett for his time and patience during the archaeological recording work.

7 Bibliography

Cartographic sources

- Ordnance Survey First Edition 6 inch series map of 1886.



APPENDIX I:

Figs & Illustrations

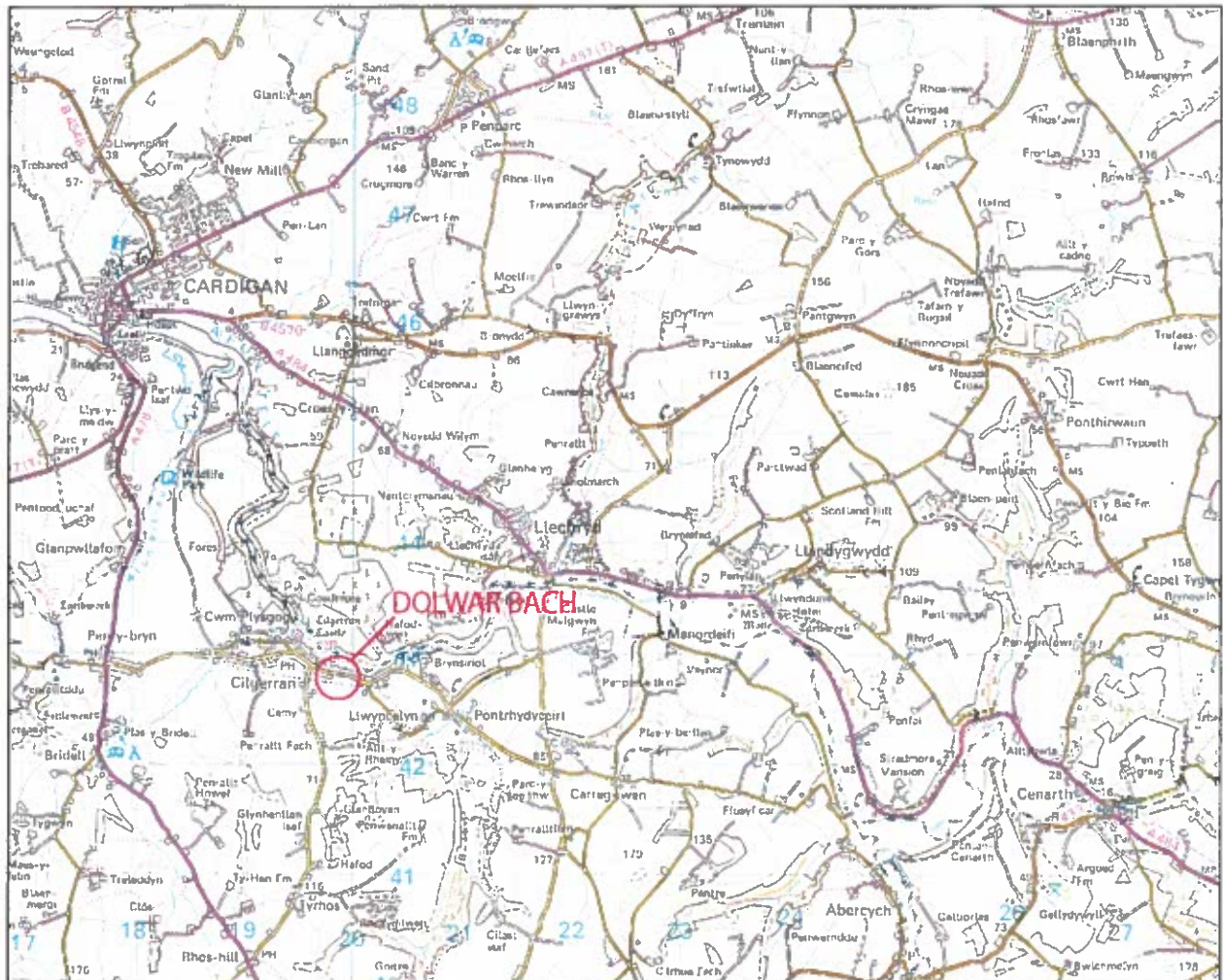


Figure 1. Location map

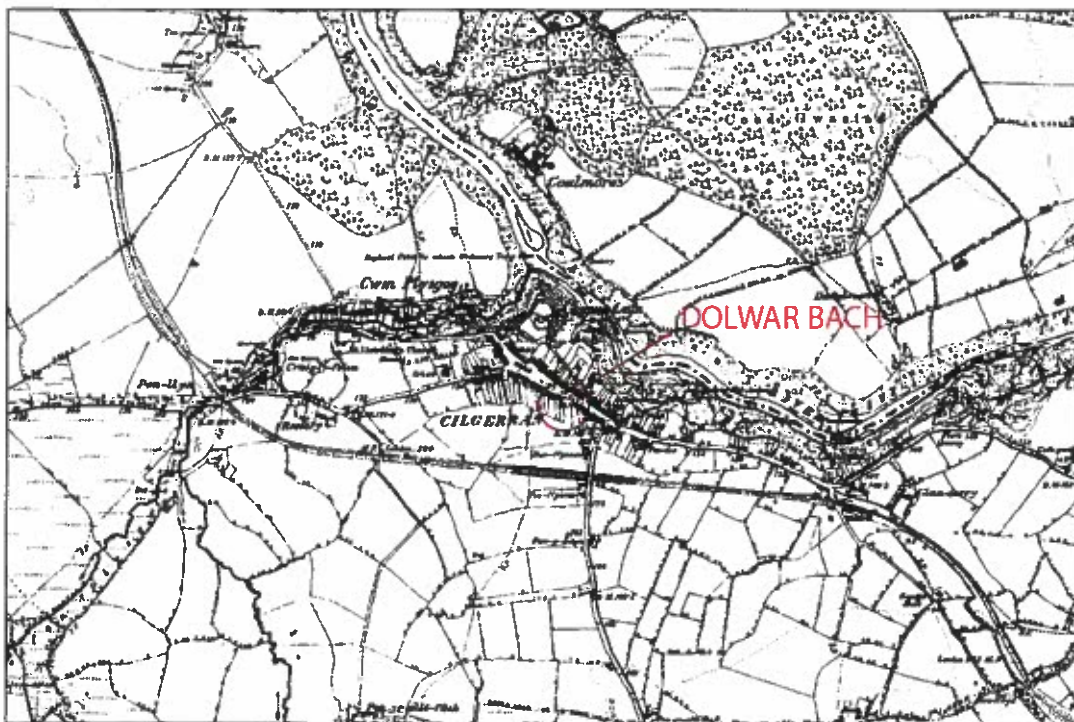


Figure 2. Portion of OS 1st edition map dated 1891 showing location of Dolwar Bach.



Figure 3. Aerial photo of Cilgerran dated 2002.. Dolwar Bach high-lighted.

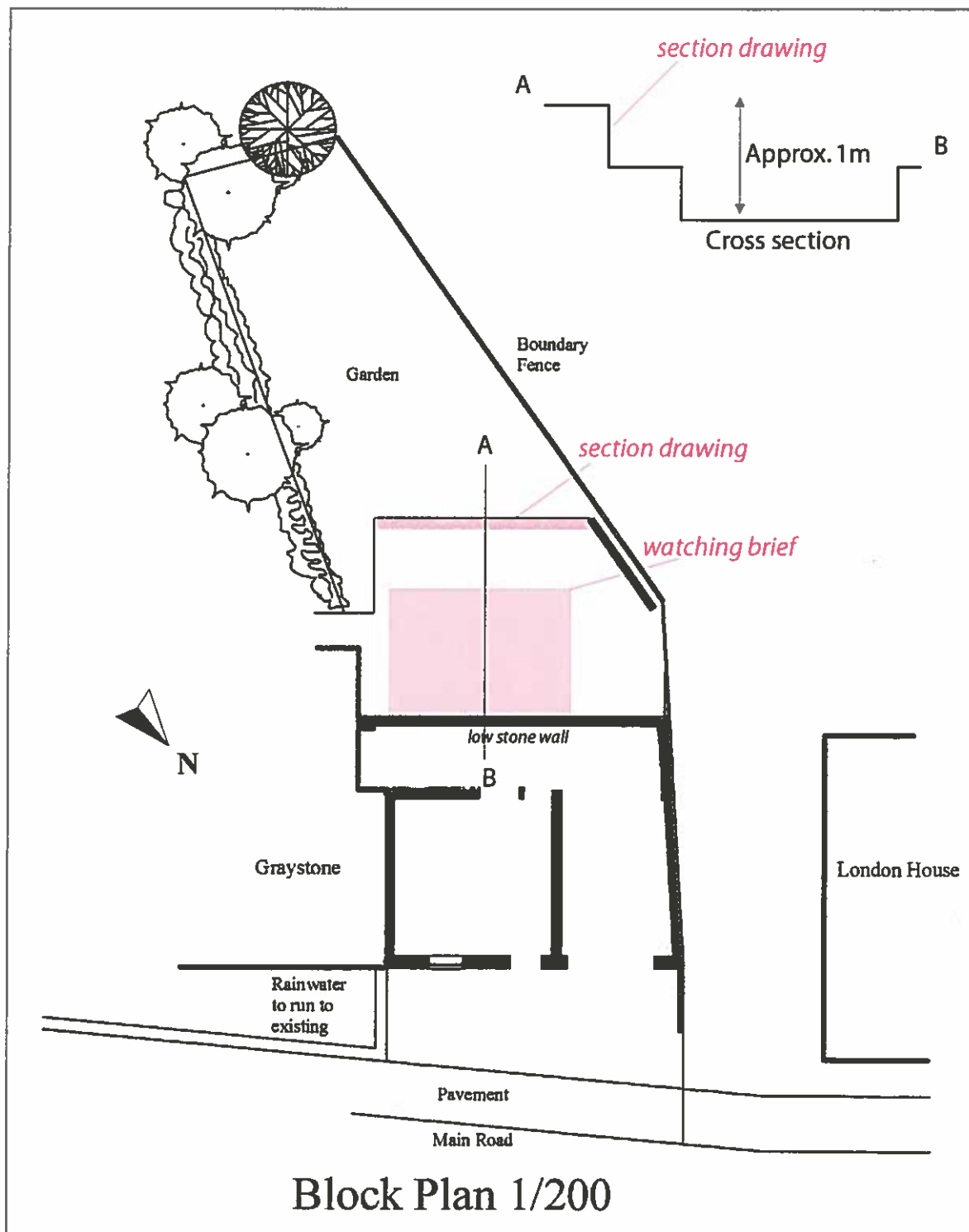


Figure 4. Ground plan of site prior to development proposal (area of watching brief and drawn section high-lighted in red)

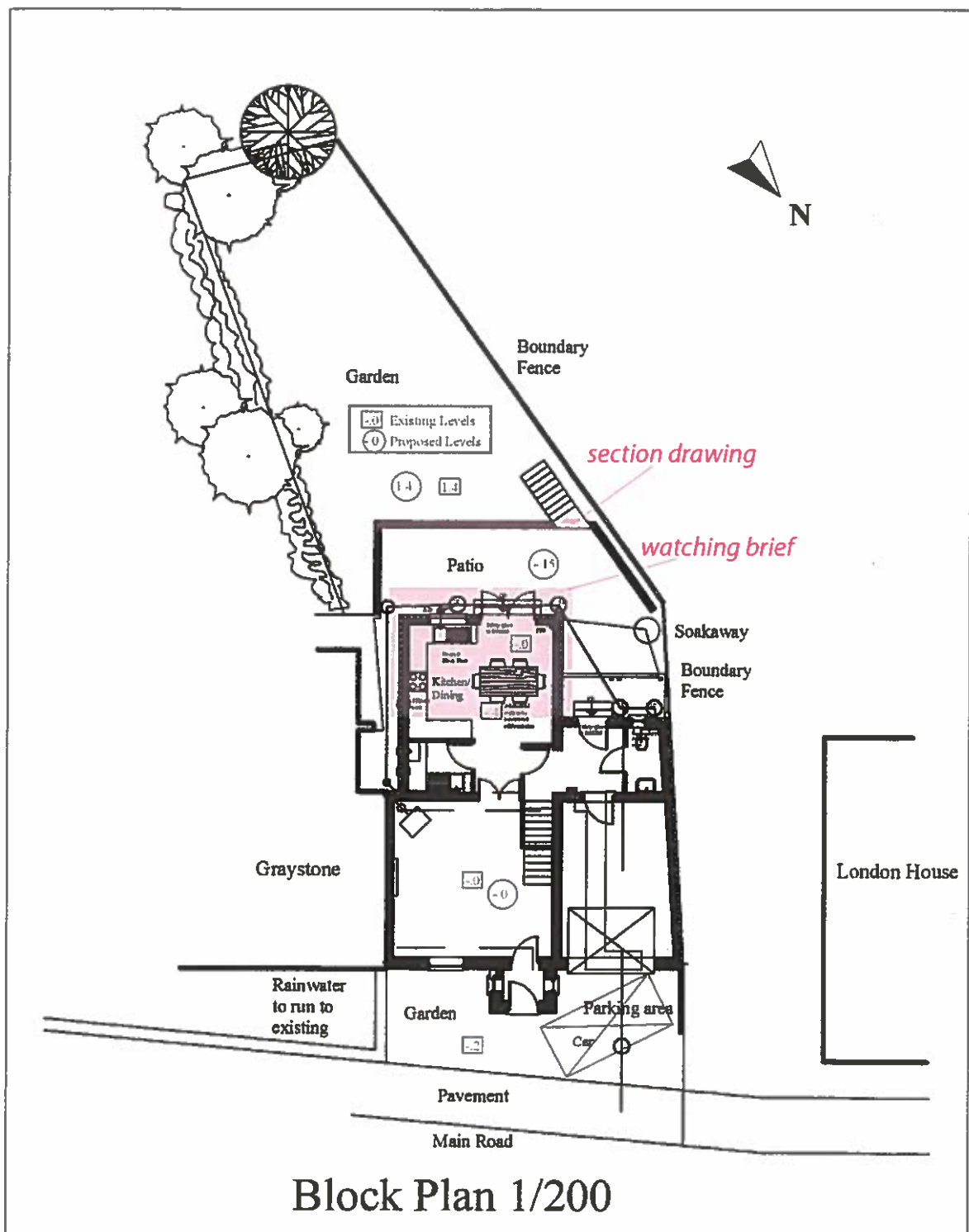


Figure 5. Ground plan of proposed development (area of watching brief and section drawing high-lighted in red).

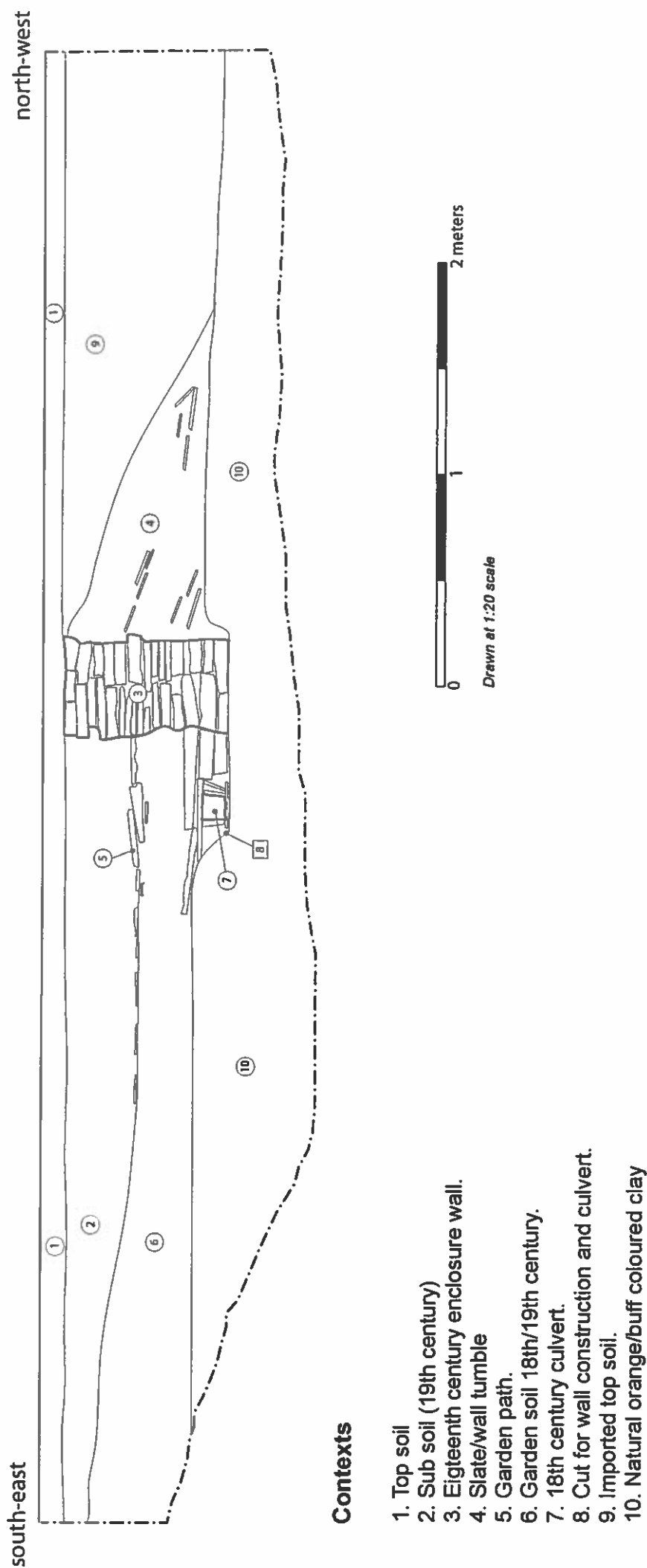


Figure 6. North-east facing section in area of garden at Dolwar Bach.



APPENDIX II:

Photo plates



Plate 1. Exposed section in garden area showing 18th century enclosure wall. Looking south.



Plate 2. Detail of section in garden area showing 18th century enclosure wall. Looking south.



APPENDIX III: Finds Summary

SUMMARY OF FINDS

No:2 Robeston Hall, Robeston West

CONTEXT 6

TYPE	NUMBER OF (c.g SHERDS)	WEIGHT (g)	DATE (CENTURY)
18 th century slipware	2	4	18 th century



APPENDIX IV: Context Register

SUMMARY OF CONTEXTS

Dolwar Bach, The High Street, Cilgerran.

CONTEXTS

1. Top soil.
2. Sub soil (19th century).
3. 18th century garden enclosure wall.
4. Slate/wall tumble.
5. Garden path.
6. Garden soil 18th/19th century.
7. 18th century culvert.
8. Cut for wall construction.
9. Imported top soil.
10. Natural orange/buff coloured clays.



APPENDIX V: Archive Cover Sheet

ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Dolwar Bach, The High Street, Cilgerran

ARCHIVE DESTINATION – DAT, Llandeilo

Site Name:	Dolwar Bach
Site Code:	DB/06/WB
PRN:	
NPRN :	N/A
SAM:	N/A
Other Ref No:	HRSW Report No. 106
NGR:	SN 1955 4290
Site Type:	House and Garden
Project Type:	Watching Brief
Project Officer:	Richard Scott Jones
Project Dates:	April 2006
Categories Present:	N/A
Location of Original Archive:	HRSW
Location of duplicate Archives:	DAT, Llandeilo
Number of Finds Boxes:	N/A
Location of Finds:	N/A
Museum Reference:	N/A
Copyright:	HRSW
Restrictions to access:	None

