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Manor Farm, Llanllwch Carmarthenshire.

Archaeological Field Evaluation



By
Richard Scott Jones (MA, BA Hons)



HRSWales Report No: 108

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Manor Farm, Llanllwch, Carmarthenshire.

By
Richard Scott Jones (*BA Hons, MA*)

Prepared for:

Ken Morgan Design and Building Management
The Studio
Little Greenway,
Crinow Road
Narberth
Pembrokeshire SA67 8TA

On behalf of:

Mr & Mrs M Jones,
Manor Farm,
Llanllwch,
Carmarthen SA31 38N

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RECORDING SERVICES WALES

Pen-y-Fan, 11 Forest Lane, Llangybi, Ceredigion, SA48 8LZ

Tel: 01570 493312 Fax: 08712 428171 E-mail: hrrswales@tiscali.co.uk

Contents

i) LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ii) IFA STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE

NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY	Page 01
1. INTRODUCTION	Page 01
2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	Page 03
3. METHODOLOGY	Page 03
4. RESULTS OF FIELD EVALUATION	Page 04
5. CONCLUSIONS	Page 05
6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	Page 06
7. REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	Page 06
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: Site map.

Fig 03: Existing development with trench locations.

Fig 04: Proposed development with trench locations.

Fig 05: Ground plan and section Trench 1.

Fig 06: Ground plan and section Trench 2.

Fig 07: Ground plan and section Trench 3.

Fig 08: Ground plan and section Trench 4.

Fig 09: OS First edition map of 1887.

Plates

Plate 01-02: Trench 1.

Plates 03-04: Trench 1 and 2.

Plates 05-06: Trench 2.

Plates 07-08: Trench 2.

Plates 09-10: Trench 3.

Plates 13-14: Trench 4.

Plates 15: Trench 4.

ii) IFA Standards and Guidance

THE INSTITUTE OF FIELD ARCHAEOLOGISTS (IFA)

Standard and Guidance for an archaeological field evaluation

The Standard

An archaeological field evaluation will determine, as far as it is reasonably possible, the nature of the archaeological resource within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices. These will satisfy the stated aims of the projects, 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 field evaluation

The definition of an archaeological field evaluation is a limited programme of non-intrusive and / or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.

Purpose of field evaluation

The purpose of field evaluation is to gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality), in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate 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 to initiate a threat to the archaeological resource.
- ◆ the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research.

The Standard and Guidance for an archaeological field evaluation 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 archaeological work undertaken by Heritage Recording Services Wales for Ken Morgan Architects, on behalf of Mr and Mrs M. Jones, the owners of Manor Farm, Llanllwch, Carmarthen. The work was part of a condition for an archaeological evaluation prior to the construction of four new residential dwellings.

The evaluation was designed to gain information about the archaeological resource within specific areas of Manor Llanllwch, in order to make an assessment of its archaeological worth and formulate a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource.

In total four evaluation trenches were excavated, each within the bounds of the footprint of each proposed dwelling. Of all of the trenches excavated, only one exposed significant archaeology, what is likely a former mill feeder leat, that may have had an association with the former Llanllwch Mill located in the lower valley to the south east. The earliest dateable material recovered from this trench was a fragment of North Devon ware, dating between 1650 –1750. This fragment was located within a deposit overlying the leat, which would imply that the leat pre-dates this period. All of the other evaluation trenches excavated had a thin overlying top soil with fragments of victorian ceramic material and modern construction debris within it. Below this was natural orange clays and river gravels, implying the major part of this area west of Manor Llanllwch was likely always used as either pasture or meadow land.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following text details the results of an archaeological field evaluation undertaken by Heritage Recording Services Wales (HRSW) on an area of meadow land immediately west of the former Manor Farm, Llanllwch, Carmarthenshire, prior to the proposed development of four new residential dwellings.
- 1.2 After being approached by Ken Morgan Design and Building Management to undertake the archaeological evaluation, HRSW submitted a project specification to Cambria Archaeology, the regional Archaeological Trust in Llandeilo, detailing the schedule of works in November 2006. This specification was approved and the evaluation work was undertaken on 20th November 2006.
- 1.3 All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IFA's *Standards and guidance: for an archaeological field evaluation*, and current Health and Safety legislation.

Planning Background

- 1.4 Planning permission was granted by Carmarthenshire County Council (*Application numbers: W/12552; W/12553; W/12551*) to Mr and Mrs Jones, owners of Manor Farm, Llanllwch, Carmarthenshire, to build four new residential dwellings (NGR: SN 3859 1886) in an area of meadow immediately west of the Manor Llanllwch farmyard. A condition for an archaeological scheme of works was attached to this permission. This archaeological scheme entailed an archaeological evaluation within the footprint of each new building.

Site Description (see Figs 1, 2, & 3)

- 1.5 The location of the proposed development lies in an area of clear pasture or meadow land immediately west of Manor Farm farmyard (NGR: SN 3859 1886). The site lies at approx. 30m O.D on gently sloping land that runs down southwards toward the river valley in which runs a tributary of the River Tywi. Immediately to the south of the site is the parish church of St. Mary's, which has a medieval foundation. The church is enclosed with what appears to be a 19th century stone enclosure wall. At the time of the field evaluation, the top soil of the area under investigation had already been churned up by mechanical excavator following the construction of an earlier residential dwelling in the same area.

Geology

- 1.6 The geology of the area is a sedimentary rock of Ordovician period consisting of both Llanfyrn and Arenig types. Local geology indicates an area of clays, sands and river gravels. A gravel pit extraction plant is still in existence immediately east of Llanllwch village.

Brief Historical & Archaeological Background

- 1.7 Records held in the regional Archaeological Trust at Llandeilo show that the development lies in a significant area of medieval settlement. To the south lies the parish church of St. Mary's (PRN: 5241), which has a medieval foundation. Further south is a former medieval fulling mill (PRN: 12759). Manor farm itself (PRN: 25083) is recorded as a medieval/post medieval dwelling.
- 1.8 In the 12th century, Llanllwch was the demesne manor of Carmarthen, with a nucleus around its mill and its medieval church, forming, with the castle and borough, its 'Englishry'. An ancient demesne was land in possession of the arglwydd and cultivated directly by him, it was his 'home farm', that contributed to the needs of his residence. In this way the hamlet of Llanllwch was attached to the castle of Carmarthen. Its distance from the castle and, perhaps, the expansion of the castle into becoming the military and administrative centre of the 'principality of South Wales' led to a change; the demesne had ceased, by the end of the thirteenth century, to be worked directly from the castle. The land under cultivation in Llanllwch was let to the unfree who had previously done direct service to the demesne. These 'customary' tenants who paid a rent for their 'messuage' and 'virgates' on the demesne, were called gafol-men (latinised in the accounts as gabularii). They held at the will of the lord, and could sublet only after giving him due notice; they still belonged to the castle, and they paid sixpence an acre for their holdings.
- 1.9 Although the manor was administrative rather than a territorial unit, and lay mainly beyond this character area where it is commemorated in the name Manor Farm, significant areas of former ridge and furrow have been noted around the church itself. From the 14th century onwards the demesne was farmed out to customary tenants for rent.
- 1.10 Other holdings in Llanllwch were rented at a shilling an acre or more; their tenants included the Master of Slebech, who also rented the mill there; the lepers of Tawelan had a small plot; the prior of Carmarthen held twelve acres (?Maes y Prior), which he relinquished at the time of the Black Death. The herbage (the uncut hay) of Rhydygors, 'Dokchoke' and other meadows 'above and below the bridge', and the grazing of the horses and cattle of the burgesses on 'Horsemoor' were sources of considerable profit; for the collection of these issues the reeve of Llanllwch was responsible. Llanllwch had its own court, held by the nominee of the Justice as constable of Carmarthen castle; the profits were collected by the reeve, who accounted directly to the chamberlain.
- 1.11 During the time of the Glyn Dwr rebellion places like Llanllwch, which were defenceless demesne hamlets of the borough received particular attention from the Welsh, and could pay no dues, and were totally destroyed and devastated. This is evident from documentary accounts of 1407-09.
- 1.12 Documentary accounts of Llanllwch, dated 1348, tell of 11 of the 12 gafol men having died from the bubonic plague outbreak of that same year and other tenants of the village having abandoned their holding.

2 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 In accordance with IFA's *Standards and guidance*, the aims of an archaeological field evaluation are to gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality), in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate 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 to initiate a threat to the archaeological resource.
 - the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research.
- 2.2 An archaeological field evaluation will determine, as far as it is reasonably possible, the nature of the archaeological resource within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices. These will satisfy the stated aims of the projects, 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.

3 Methodology

- 3.1 With regards the evaluation, ground work was undertaken by the contractor using a mechanical digger with a 2 meter wide grading bucket and hand shovel, when deemed necessary, under the guidance of the qualified supervising archaeologist. Initially the overlying top soil was removed in 4 meter long increments and if any archaeology became exposed it was excavated to ascertain its character, recorded and left in situ, whilst digging of the trench continued along its length.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 Where features were present limited excavation was undertaken to establish the date, depth, preservation, extent, function and relationship to other features.
- 3.4 Recording of the trenches was undertaken in three formats:
- Photographic record* - Photographs were taken in digital format using a 5 mega-pixel camera recording in high resolution JPEG files. Where deemed necessary standard 35 mm film format in Black and White was also appropriated
 - Drawn record* - Site drawings, plans and sections, were produced at scales of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 on drafting film, where deemed necessary. Finished drawings have been related to Ordnance Survey datum and published boundaries where appropriate.
 - Written record* - Written records were produced using a continuous numbering sequence for all contexts.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IFA's *Standards and guidance: for an archaeological field evaluation* and current Health and Safety legislation.

4 Results of the Field Evaluation *(see Figs 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8)*

- 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.

Trench 1

- 4.2 Trench 1 was repositioned from its former position due to existing services. It measured approx. 11 meters long x 2 meters wide. The average depth of this trench was approx. 1m. The upper most deposit was tarmac (100). This was removed across the entire length of the trench to a depth of approx. 0.10m. Directly below this was a mid-brown silty sand and gravel deposit (101). This averaged a depth of approx. 0.60m. Below this was a natural mid/light brown sand, of which only 0.30m was exposed (103). No archaeological features nor any dateable material was recovered from this trench.

Trench 2

- 4.3 Trench 2 measured approx. 10m long x 2m wide. It was orientated N-S within the area of the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. This trench averaged depths of 2m at the southern end and approx. 1m at the northern end. The position of this trench was sunk in the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. Much of the northern consisted of made up ground. Initially the overlying deposit was removed (200). This consisted of a mid-brown soil with small amounts of building stone, which appeared to have been imported from earlier construction work to build up the ground in this area. Directly below this was a mid-brown loam type soil with stone fragments, turf and roots from an earlier top soil now buried from imported soil (201). This reached an average depth of approx. 0.20-30m. Directly below this deposit was a grey-light brown silty clay (202). This reached a depth of approx. 0.60m. A fragment of North Devon Green Ware was recovered from this deposit.
- 4.4 On removal of this deposit excavation exposed the remains of a former cut feature (203) cutting into a natural grey clay deposit (205), which appeared to be an early drainage ditch or else the remains of an early mill leat. The feature ran diagonally across the trench orientated E-W. It was approx. 1.30m wide. It was filled by the overlying grey silty clay deposit (202) and its edges were defined by a thin dark orange band of leached iron/calcite deposit. A slot was put through this feature at its east end so as to ascertain the features depth so as to get a clearer understanding of its character and form as well as in the hope of recovering any dateable material. The base of the feature was reached at a depth of only 0.30m. The same hardened iron stained leached deposit was also found at the base of the feature. This deposit appeared to have been formed by iron deposits having percolated through the soil and settled onto the clay cut ditch or leat. The base of the ditch appeared to be fairly flat in character and the sides fairly steep in character. No small finds or any dateable material was recovered from the removed fill. Unfortunately it was not possible to fully remove the fill of the cut as rainwater from the heavy storm the night before was flooding through the soils into the trench and filling the leat at a rate quicker than it could be removed making excavation and interpretation impossible. However, these conditions did help with the interpretation of the feature nevertheless.
- 4.5 At the far north end of the trench excavation had to avoid an existing ceramic drainage pipe that was running diagonally across the trench (204).

Trench 3

- 4.6 Trench 3 measured approx. 19m long x 2m wide. It was orientated E-W. Its depth varied from 1m at the west end to 2m at the east end. Initially the overburden was removed which consisted of soil containing construction material such as pieces of stone, brick. All of this appeared to have been imported onto the site fairly recently during earlier construction work (300). This deposit reached an average depth of approx. 0.40m. Directly below this was a mid-brown loam type soil with stone inclusions indicative of an agricultural soil. This deposit reached a depth of approx. 0.30m (301). Below this layer was a natural

deposit of orange sandy clay. This was exposed only to a depth of approx. 0.30m at the west end and shallowing off at the east end (302). No archaeological features nor dateable material was recovered from this trench.

Trench 4

- 4.7 This trench measured approx. 20m long x 2m wide. It was orientated E-W within the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. It averaged a depth of only 0.80m. The overburden was removed to a depth of approx. 0.10-0.15m. It consisted of a dark to mid-brown loam soil with stone inclusions indicative of a meadow type soil (400). Below this deposit was a natural mid-brown clay with round/oval river gravel (401). This layer was removed to expose the next underlying deposit, which was a natural sandy clay river gravel deposit with occasional pieces of round/oval quartz (402). Across the entire length of this trench no archaeological features were exposed nor any dateable material recovered.

Summary of results

- 4.8 Only one of the evaluation trenches at Manor Llanllwch managed to expose any significant archaeology. The feature exposed in trench 2 appears to be an early man-made water course, either a drainage ditch or else, and what seems more likely, the remains of a former feeder leat.

Discussion

- 4.8 If the context (202) from which the fragment of North Devon Ware is not an imported deposit, then it would seem that the leat feature at least pre-dates the years between 1660-1760, the period in which North Devon Ware originates. This implies that the *leat* has a medieval or early post medieval date and as such may be associated with the medieval fulling mill at Llanllwch located south east. The topography in this area is naturally gently sloping down towards the area of the former mill house and as the rain from the night before clearly demonstrated this feature holds water very well and certainly acted in draining run-off from the field.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 Of the four evaluation trenches within the footprints of the proposed new dwellings at Manor Llanllwch, only one, Trench 2, exposed an archaeological feature of significance. All of the other trenches (1, 3, & 4) only exposed natural deposits of silty sand and river gravels. Each of these trenches were dug to a minimum depth of 1m. The required depth for the foundations of the new dwellings is to be 0.80m only.
- 5.2 Within Trench 2 was discovered the remains of what appeared to be a former drainage channel or possible a feeder leat associated with the medieval fulling mill at Llanllwch. Dateable material recovered from this trench, in the form of a fragment of North Devon Ware, implies that the feature pre dates the years 1660-1760. Part excavation of this feature revealed that it was fairly shallow and its base was fairly flat with fairly steep sides.
- 5.3 The top of this feature at the present upper ground level lies at an approx. 2m depth, below the required depth of 0.80m for the new buildings foundations. This said however, the soil overlying this feature is far from solid, consisting of silty sand and clays. To attain a hard standing surface then excavation will have to dig down to a more solid surface. This being the case then the potential mill leat may be in danger of destruction. In this case, as a recommendation, it is advised that an archaeological watching brief be in place during any ground works for the foundations of the new dwelling in this area, so as to further record this feature should it become exposed.

6 Acknowledgements

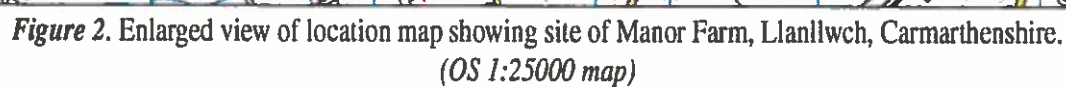
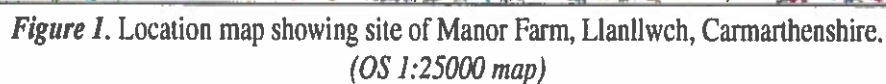
Thanks to; Mr and Mrs M. Jones , the owners of Manor Llanllwch for their patience during the ground work and archaeological recording work.

7 Bibliography

JACK, R, I. 1981 'Fulling-Mills in Wales and the March before 1547'



APPENDIX I: Figs & Illustrations



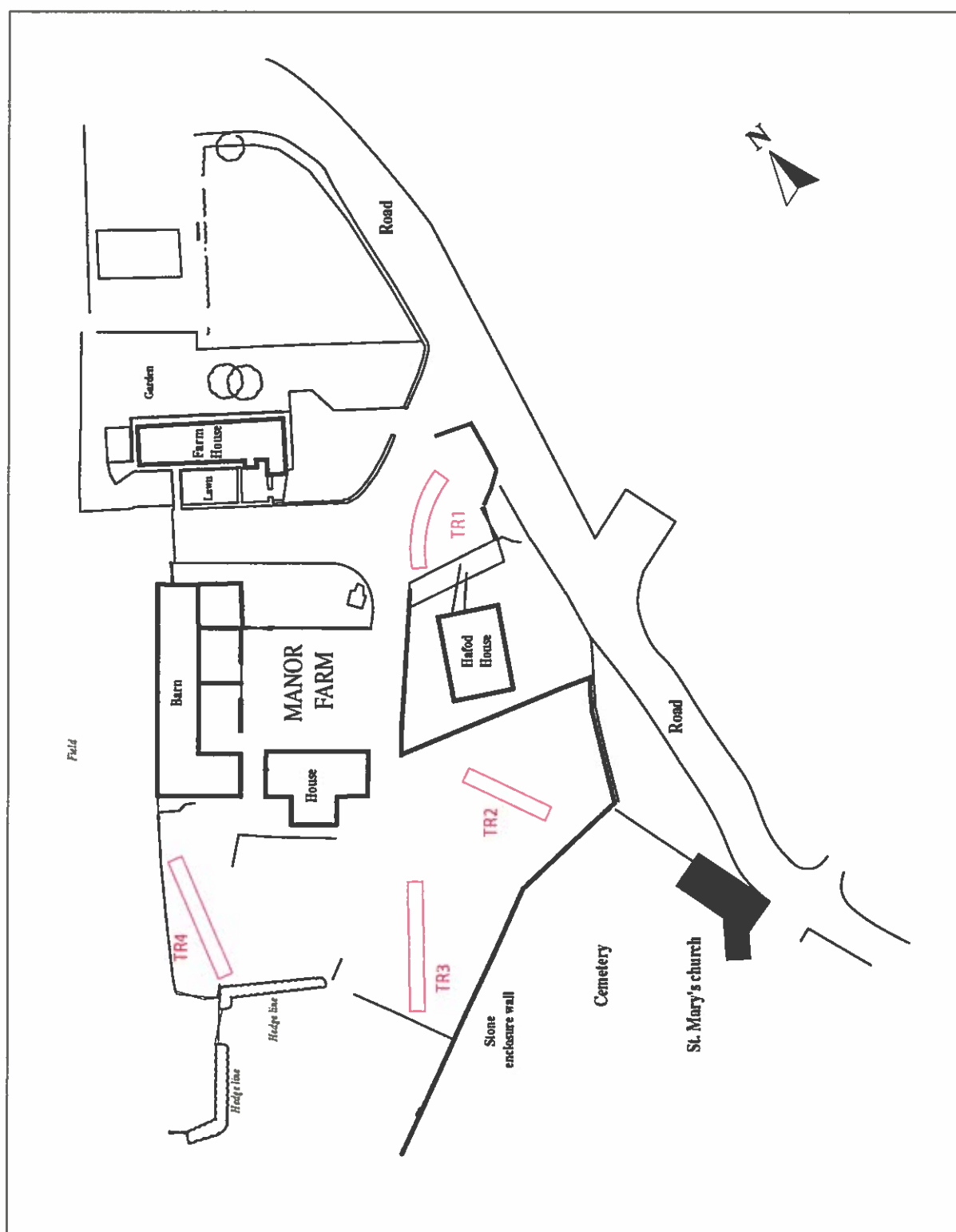


Figure 3. Existing site layout prior to proposed development. Evaluation trenches high-lighted in red.



Figure 4. Proposed development with evaluation trenches high-lighted in red.

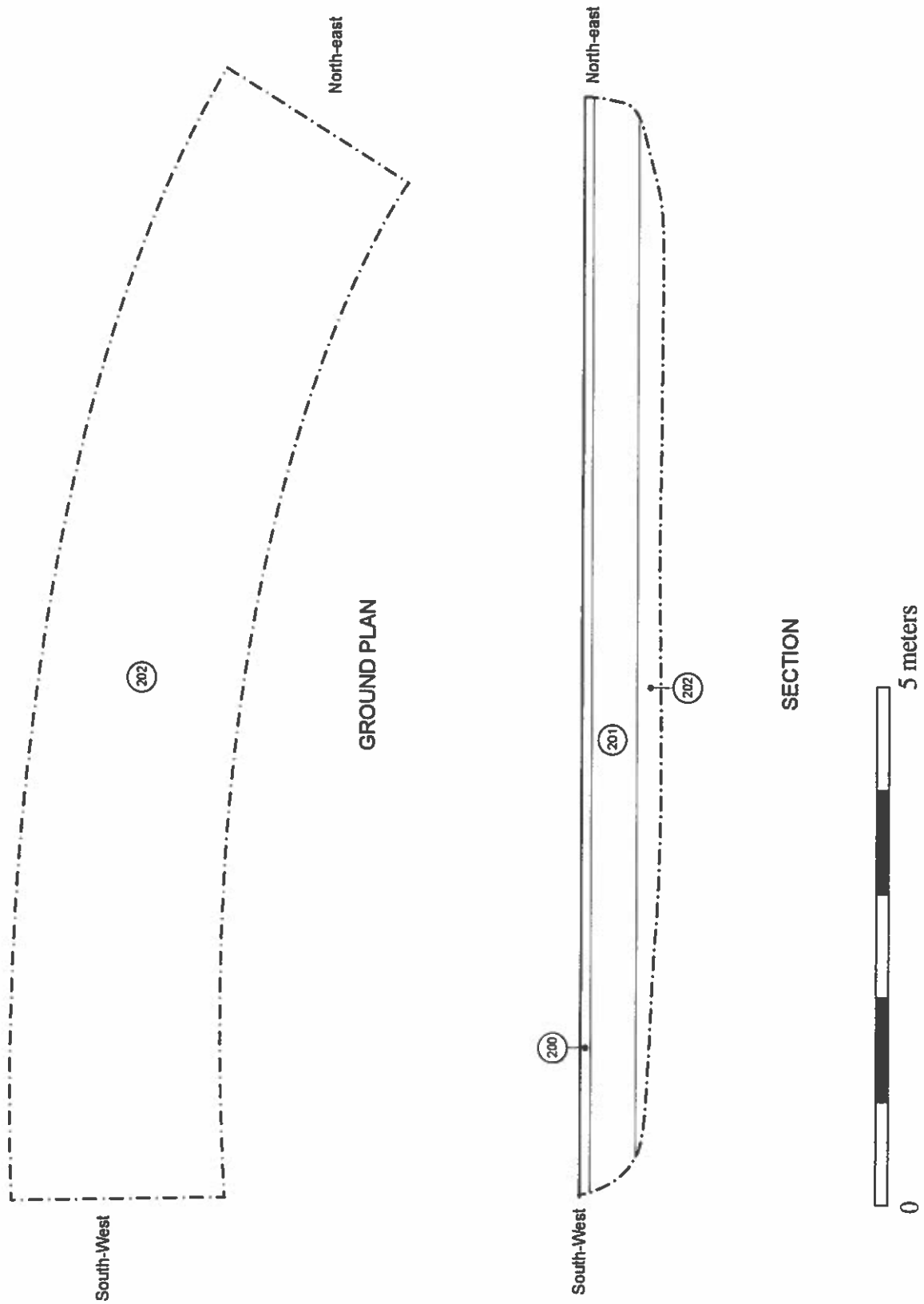


Figure 5. Ground plan and south facing section of Trench 1

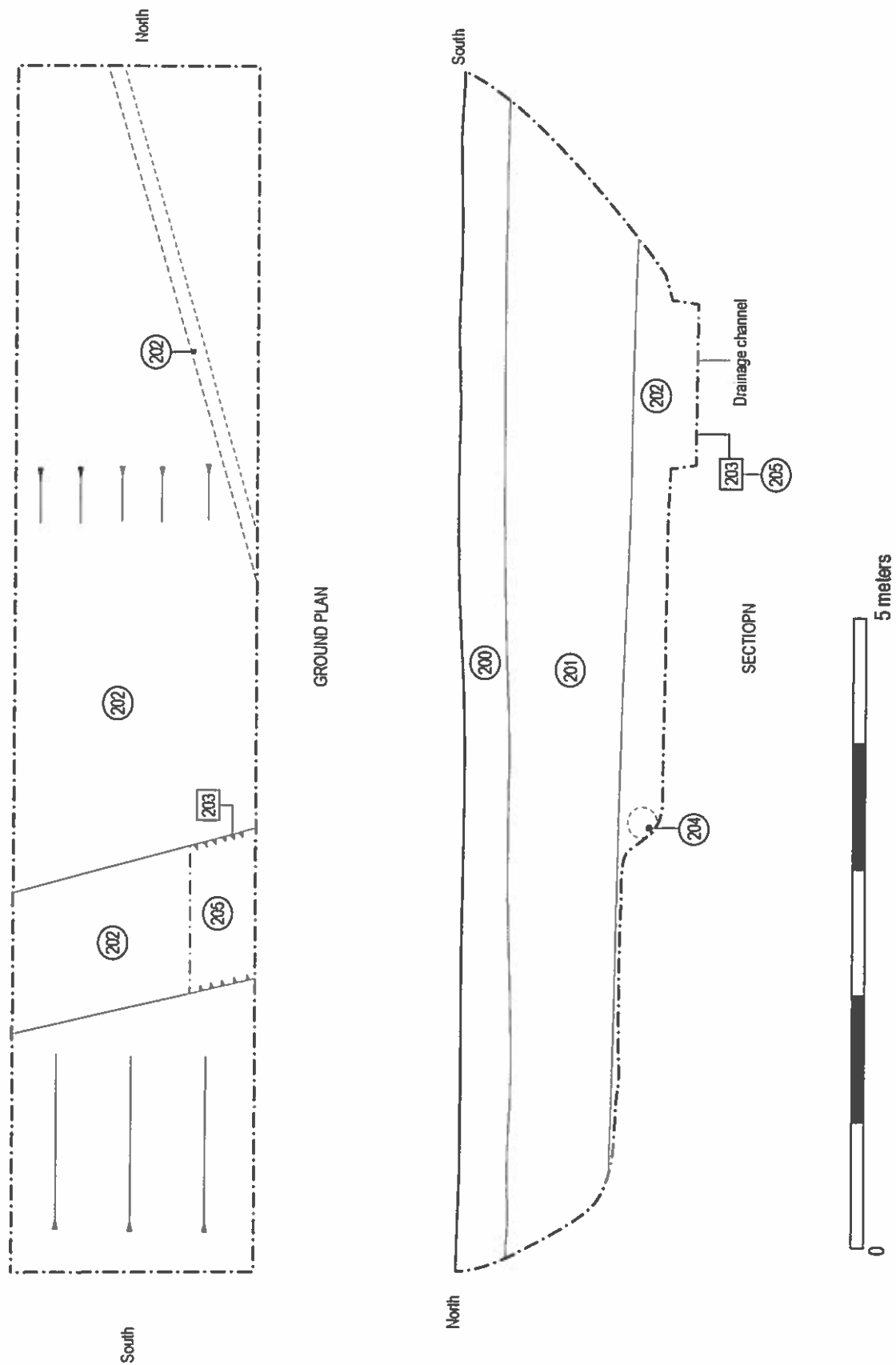


Figure 5. Ground plan and west facing section of Trench 2

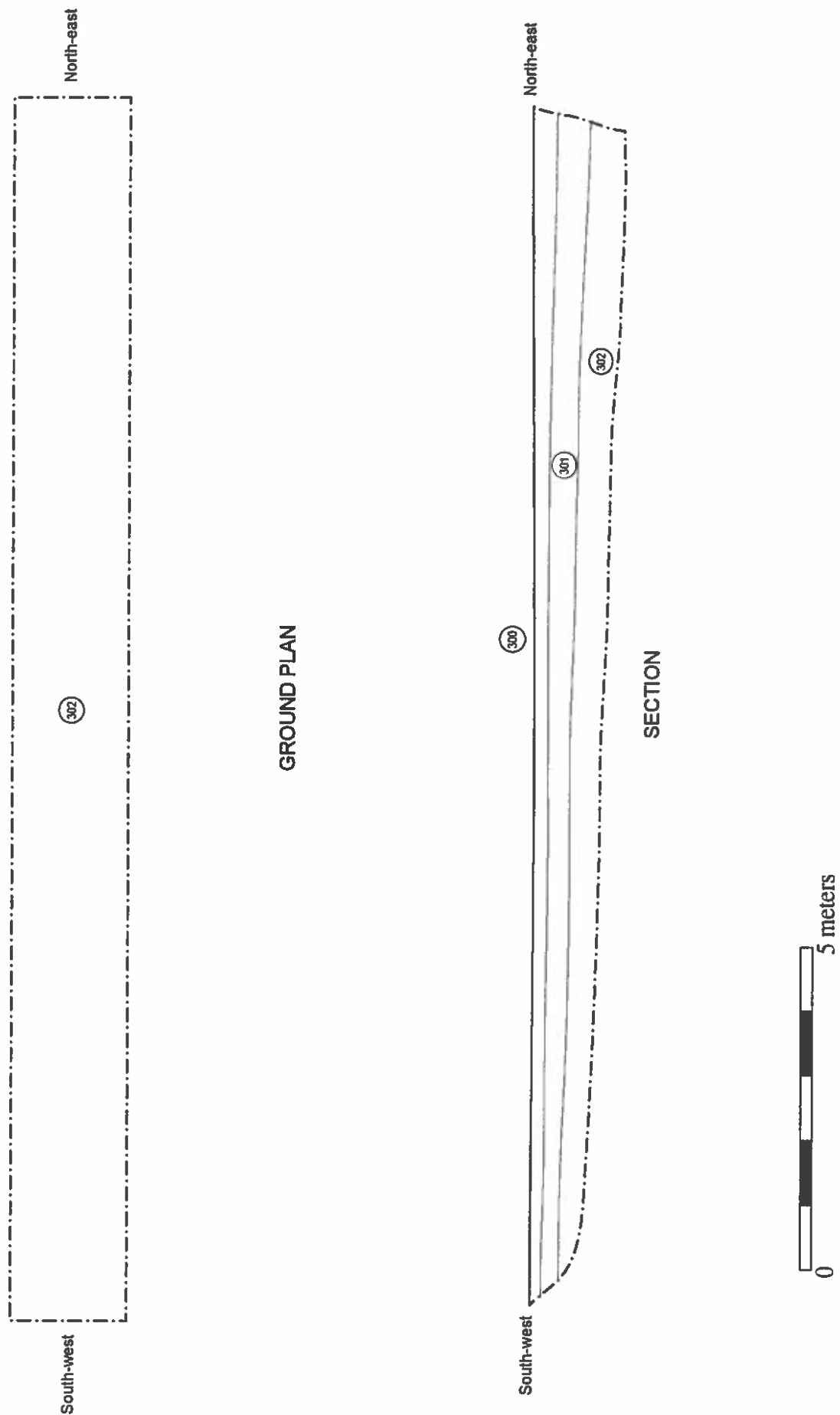


Figure 7. Ground plan and south facing section of Trench 3

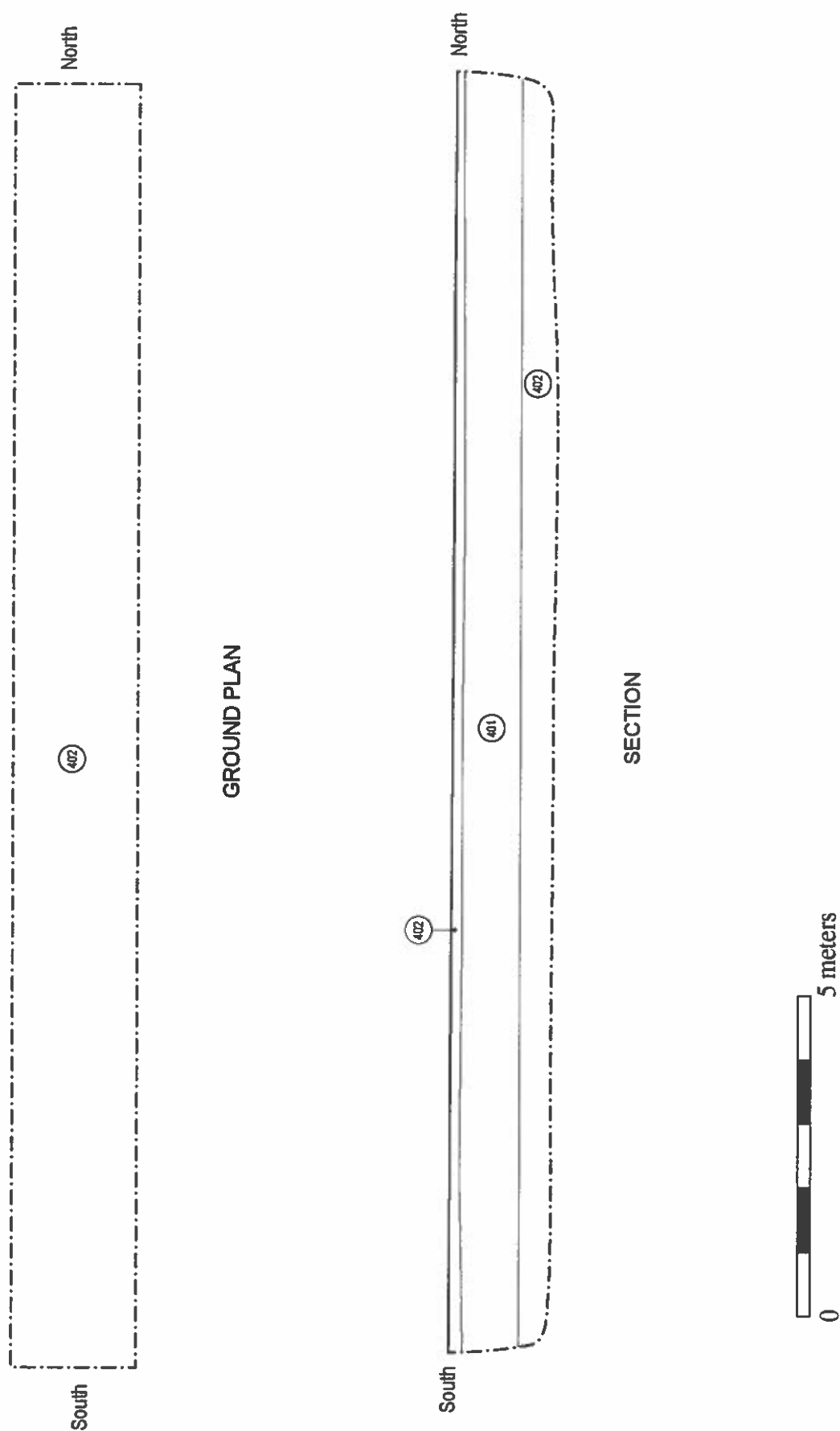


Figure 8. Ground plan and south facing section of Trench 4.

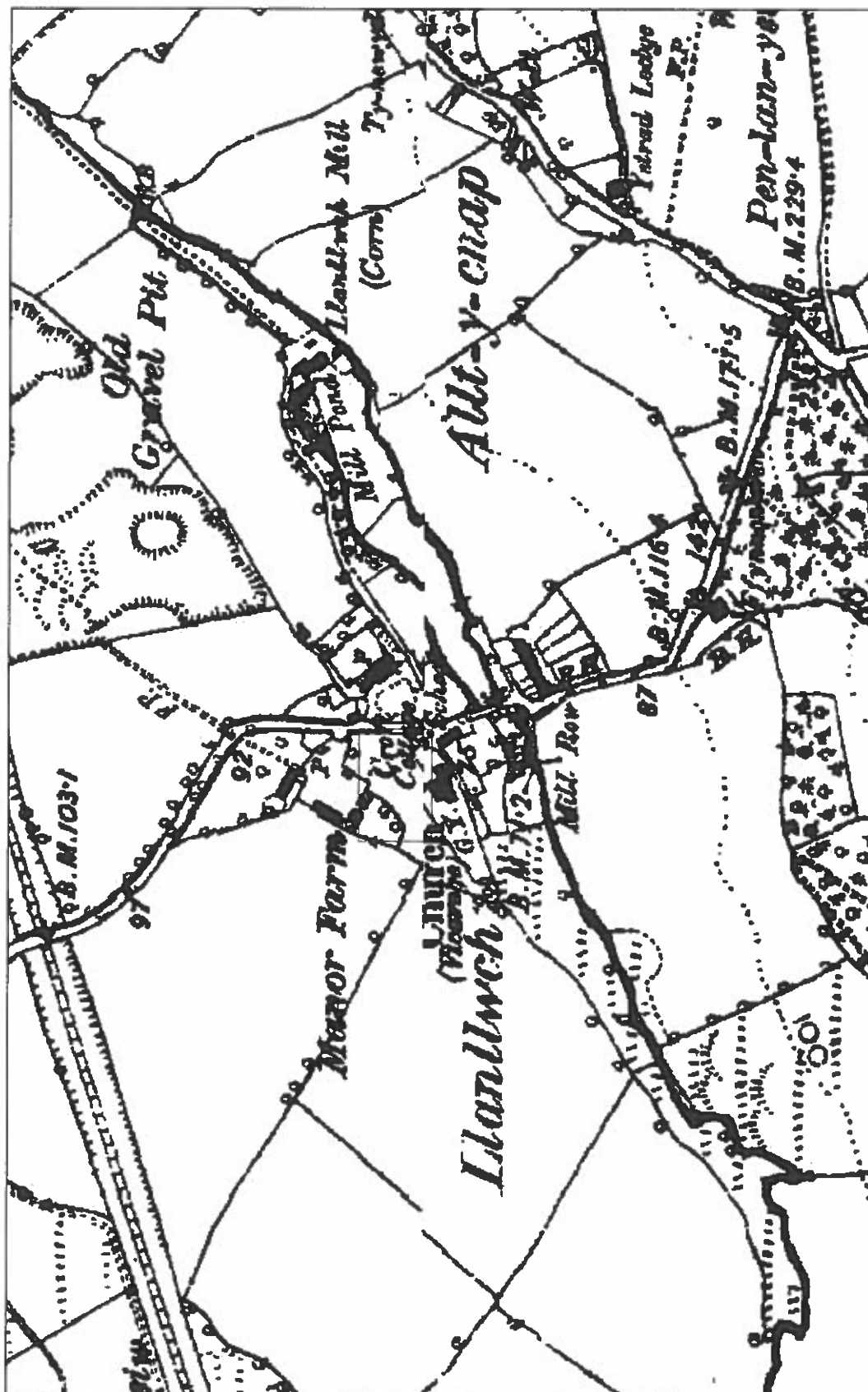


Figure 9. Part of Ordnance Survey First Edition six inch series map of 1887 showing Llanllwch in conjunction with early mill. Area of development highlighted in red.



APPENDIX II:

Photo plates



Plate 1. Trench 1. Looking south-east.



Plate 2. Trench 1. Looking north-west.



Plate 3. Trench 1. Typical section of trench 1. South facing.



Plate 4. Trench 2. Looking northwards



Plate 6. Trench 2. Detail showing remains of drainage ditch at base of trench. Looking southwards



Plate 5. Trench 2. Looking south towards church.



Plate 7. Trench 2. Detail showing remains of drainage ditch at base of trench. Looking eastwards.



Plate 8. Trench 2. Typical section through trench 2. Looking westward.



Plate 10. Trench 3. Looking westward.



Plate 9. Trench 3. Looking eastwards



Plate 11. Trench 3. Oblique shot looking eastward.



Plate 12. Trench 3. Typical section facing south.



Plate 14. Trench 4. Looking east.



Plate 13. Trench 4. Looking west.

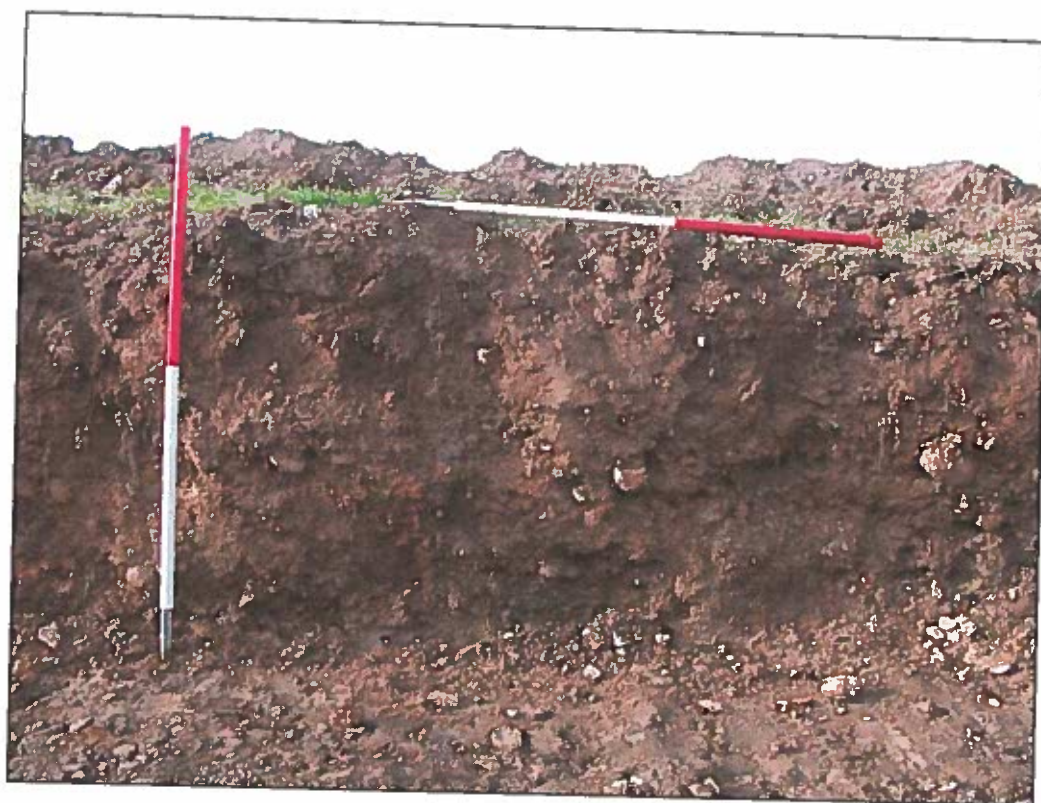


Plate 15. Trench 4. Typical section facing south.



APPENDIX III: **Finds Summary**

SUMMARY OF FINDS

Manor Llanllwch, Llanllwch, Carmarthen

CONTEXT 202

TYPE	NUMBER OF (e.g SHERDS)	WEIGHT (g)	DATE (CENTURY)
North Devon Ware	1	10	17 th -18 th century



APPENDIX IV: Context Register

SUMMARY OF CONTEXTS

Manor Farm, Llanllwch, Carmarthen

CONTEXTS

Trench 1

- 100. Modern Tarmac.
- 101. Mid brown silty sand/gravel (natural)
- 102. Mid –light brown sand (natural)

Trench 2

- 200. Overburden (brown soil with building stone)
- 201. Earlier top soil
- 202. Grey silty sandy clay
- 203. Cut for leat
- 204. Modern ceramic drain pipe.
- 205. Compact grey clay (natural)

Trench 3

- 300. Overburden (construction material)
- 301. Mid brown loam
- 302. Orange silty sandy clay (natural).

Trench 4

- 400. Overburden.
- 401. Mid brown clay/river gravels (natural)
- 402. Orange silty sandy clay and river gravels (natural)



APPENDIX V: Archive Cover Sheet

ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Manor Farm, Llanllwch, Carmarthen.

ARCHIVE DESTINATION – DAT, Llandeilo

Site Name: **Manor Farm, Llanllwch**

Site Code: **ML/06/FE**

PRN:

NPRN : **N/A**

SAM: **N/A**

Other Ref No: **HRSW Report No. 108**

NGR: **SN 3859 1886**

Site Type: **Medieval Manor site**

Project Type: **Field Evaluation**

Project Officer: **Richard Scott Jones**

Project Dates: **November 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**