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REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
AT THE CROSVILLE BUS DEPOT, BEACH ROAD,
BANGOR.

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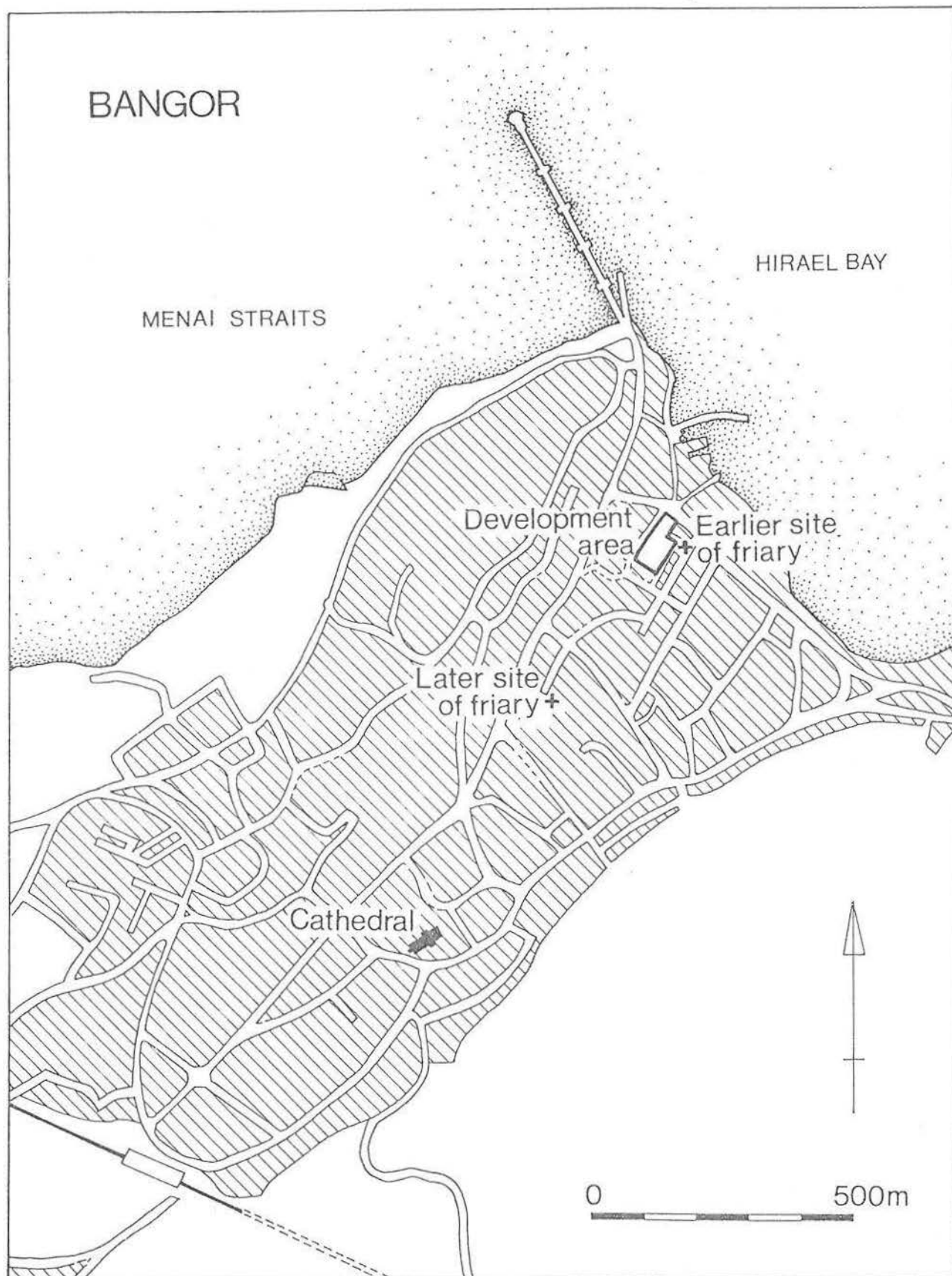


Fig. 1. Location map.

INTRODUCTION.

The Gwynedd Archaeological Trust was contracted by The Eaton Partnership, clients of Hobbs Architects Ltd, 105A Euston Street, London, NW1 2ED, to undertake an archaeological assessment at the Crosville Bus Depot, Beach Road, Bangor (Fig. 1), in January 1992, as part of the company's process of preparing a planning application to build a supermarket with associated car parking at the site. (Planning application No. 3/11/1072A Arfon Borough Council, 10 October 1991).

BRIEF.

The brief as drawn up by Gwynedd Sites and Monuments Record was as follows:

A. EXISTING DATA.

An examination of existing archive material such as SMR information, tithe and estate maps and papers, accessible documents and known previous developments on the site.

B. GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY.

An investigation using non-destructive prospecting methods was proposed. However the nature of the present site made this all but impossible. The only possible method of survey would be ground penetrating radar, but the cost and unreliability of results rendered this approach unfeasible.

C. TRIAL TRENCHING.

A programme of trial trenching, by machine, to determine the depth, survival and extent of archaeological deposits. It was proposed to cover a minimum 2% (100 sq m) of the threatened area, with seven trenches, located to obtain information concerning the location and extent of the known friary structures and that of any further structures.

PROCEDURES AND METHODS.

A. EXISTING DATA AND RECORDS.

Consultation was made of the G.A.T. Sites and Monuments Record, Ordnance survey and estate maps, University College North Wales Archives, Gwynedd Archive Service, (Caernarfon office) and published archaeological and historical articles.

B. TRIAL TRENCHING.

Three trial trenches were excavated by machine to assess the depth, survival and extent of any archaeological deposits within the threatened area. Unfortunately, due to health and safety considerations and the scale of the bus depot operations, it was impossible to investigate the seven trenches proposed in the brief, particularly those nearest to the known friary structures. As a result only three trenches were investigated (Fig. 2), representing 1.36% (68 sq m) of the area of proposed development. Two trenches were located to the rear of the depot in the bus park, whilst a third was located within the depot itself. The two trenches to the rear of the depot were excavated by machine through the tarmac surface and cleaned by hand. The trench within the depot had the concrete surface removed by cutter and the spoil removed by skip. The trench was machine dug, (J.C.B. 3CX with concrete breaker attachment) and the sections were hand cleaned.

RESULTS.

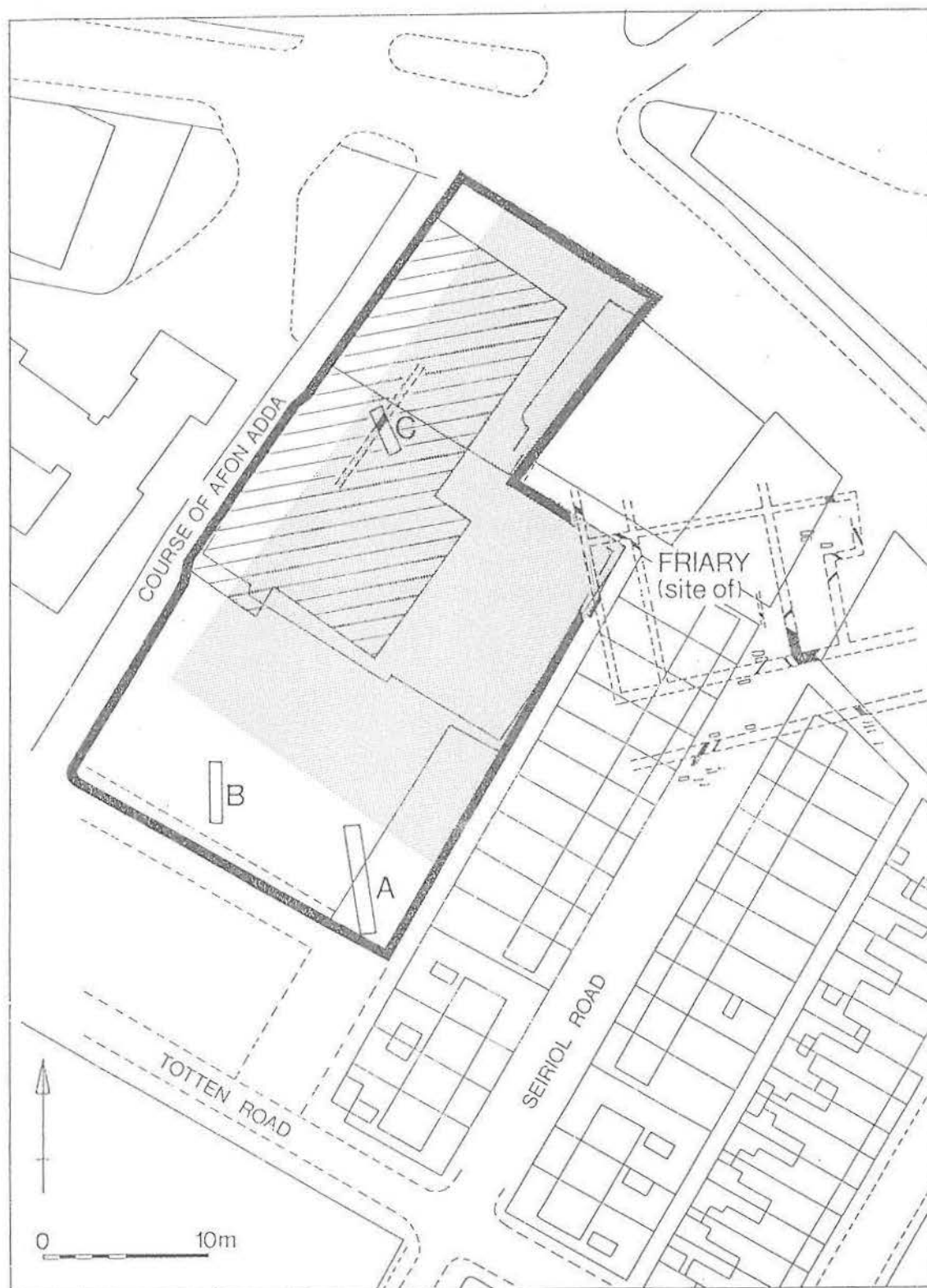
A. EXISTING DATA: DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH.

The friary at Bangor belonged to the Black Friars of the Order of St. Dominic (Dominicans, Friars Preachers, *Fratres Predicatorum*). The date of the foundation of Bangor Friary is not known, but the first reference to its existence at Bangor occurs in 1251, thirty years after the first Dominicans had landed in England. The Justice of Chester was ordered by Henry III to allow the Friars Preachers of Bangor to sail to Deganwy. From an early date the friars played a role in political affairs, the Prior Adam and Brother Ieuf of Bangor taking part in the mediation between Llywelyn ap Gruffydd and Richard, Bishop of Bangor in 1261 and between Llywelyn and Gruffydd ap Gwenwynwyn, Prince of Powys, in 1263. During Edward I's campaign against Llywelyn in 1276-77 the friars were almost certainly in support of the king. They gained safe-conduct from him in 1277 for 'Llywelyn the Welshman and his fellow Friars Preachers'. It is likely that this was the Llywelyn who was described as the prior of Bangor in 1278.

When Llywelyn ap Gruffydd rose in rebellion in 1282 the friary suffered great damage, although it is unclear whether this was at the hands of the Welsh or English. Adam the prior of Bangor received £100 compensation in 1284 for the damage done to the friary buildings, a considerable sum, far larger than that for any other house in North Wales. The discovery of grave slabs in 1898/9 which date from c.1250-1280, adjacent to the site of the proposed development (Fig. 2) suggest that this was the location of the earlier friary. It is of particular interest archaeologically that the site was in use for such a short time (c.1251-1282). It appears that the rebuilding of the friary took place some 450m to the south of the earlier friary site (Fig. 2) where the later school buildings stood. The reason for this move is not clear but it may have been to avoid flooding. In 1293 there is evidence that the task of rebuilding the friary had commenced. The King ordered the Justice of North Wales to allow the friars to take thirty oaks from the forest of Snowdonia to rebuild their church 'lately burnt'. In 1300 Bishop Anian of Bangor granted the friars an acre of land, probably to aid their re-foundation. The existence of only pre-1300 grave slabs at the earlier location and post-1300 grave slabs at the later site would appear to confirm a relocation around this time. The tradition that Tudur Hen ap Goronwy of Penmynydd was the founder of the friary would appear to relate to his patronage of the re-establishment rather than the original foundation. His descendants, the Tudor family, continued to have a close association with the friary and many are named as having been buried there. However, having sided with Owain Glyn Dwr in the revolt of 1400 the Tudors lost much of their possessions in Gwynedd, being replaced by the Griffiths of Penrhyn.

During the dissolution of the monasteries, Bangor Friary surrendered its house to Richard Ingworth on 19th August 1538. The surrender certificate has not survived but an inventory of the friary possessions from this date is presently housed in Westminster Abbey. It mentions a steeple with two bells, the prior's chamber, the buttery and the kitchen. The contents of the friary were few and poor in quality; the friars may have had warning of Ingworth's arrival and spirited away much of the removable property. Ingworth also noted the relics of the friary. One 'the holiest relke in all Northe Walys' appears to have been portable and possibly jewelled, the second was possibly a tomb or shrine, which he had closed up.

After the dissolution the local gentry made attempts to acquire the friary possessions. Edward Griffith of Penrhyn was already farming the friary possessions, paying a rent of 35/- a year. He made a plea to Cromwell to be granted the friary and its possessions after its surrender, but he was to die in Dublin in 1540. In 1541 the land was leased by the court of augmentation to Rowland Griffith of Plasnewydd, at a rent of 35/- a year for 21 years. In 1553 the friary and its lands were sold outright to Thomas Browne and William Breton of London, only to be bought in the same year by Geoffrey Glynne. In his will of 1557 Glynne bequeathed the friary for the purpose of founding a free grammar school, later to become known as Friars School.










-  Area of proposed development
-  Proposed site of supermarket
-  Archaeologically sensitive area
-  Conjectural plan of friary (after Hughes)
-  Walls
-  Burials
-  Grave slabs

Fig. 2. Location of development, trenches and 1898/9 discoveries

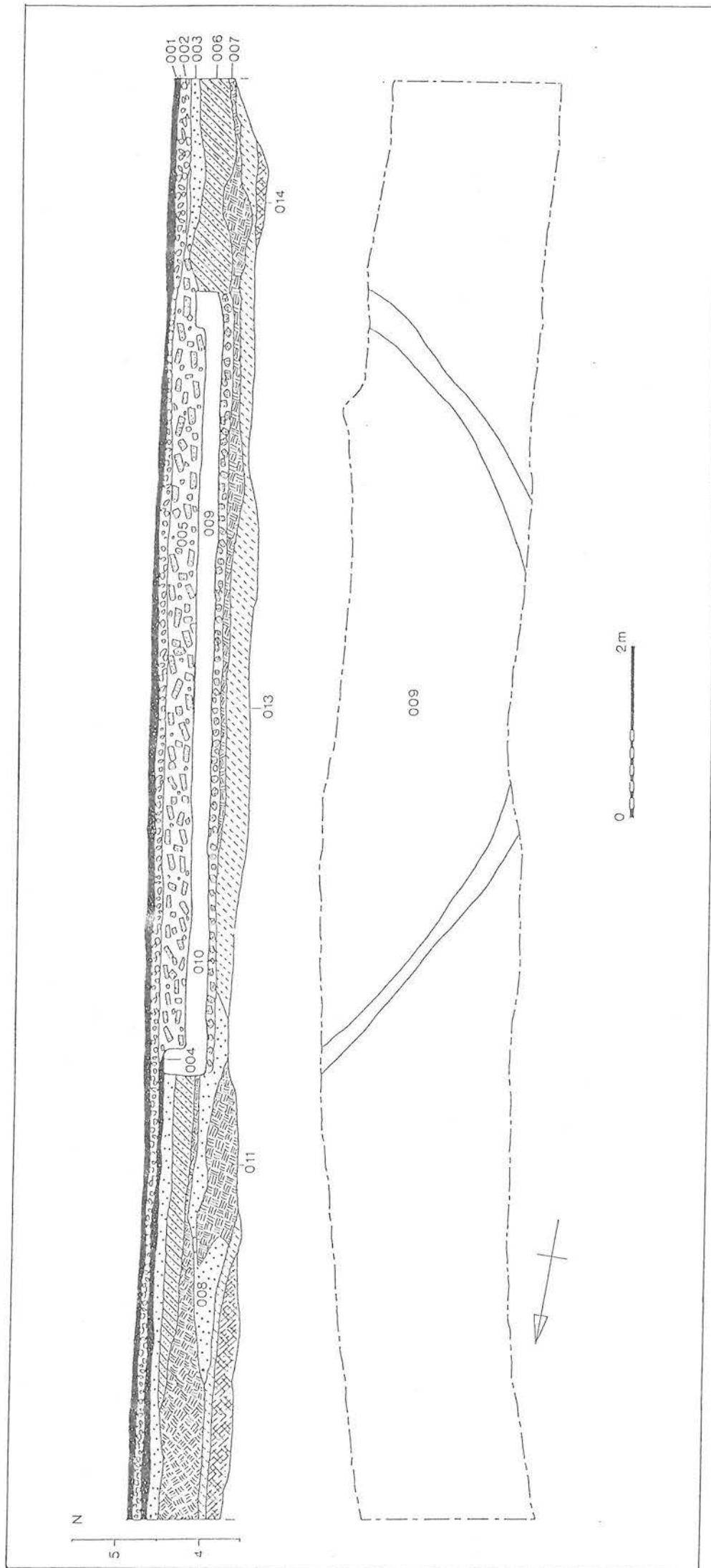


Fig. 3. Section and plan of trench A.

The Friars estate was purchased by a syndicate in the 1890s with a view to its conversion into building property. It appears that its previous use was that of grazing land. In 1898-9 Harold Hughes observed sections of walling within sewer trenches excavated in Seiriol Road and the back roads leading from it. In some cases these walls were 2ft below the surface and up to 4ft in height. In his articles, published in 1898 and 1900, he presents a suggested plan of the friary layout, noting the position of the burials and grave slabs that he discovered (Fig. 2). This plan must be regarded as speculative given the limitations of the sewer trenches and the short stretches of walling recorded. Many of the walls may have extended further than was shown on Hughes's plan. Dominican friaries did not follow any regulated layout, therefore the existence of ancillary buildings in the vicinity of the church and cloister must be suspected. Hughes also notes the discovery of seven grave slabs and a stone coffin. Five of these slabs are decorated and date from c.1250-80. Three of these slabs are now to be found in Bangor Museum; the remainder have been lost. Many slate fragments were also found. One holed example, illustrated by Hughes, was 5/8 inch thick.

B. TRIAL TRENCHES.

The operations of the bus depot only allowed 1.36% (68 sq m) of the threatened area to be investigated.

TRENCH A. (Fig. 3, Plate 1).

A trench 17m in length and 2m wide was excavated by machine to a depth of 1-1.5m in the southern corner of the bus park to the rear of the depot. The removal of the tarmacadam revealed a circular concrete structure (009) of unknown purpose, with a further area of tarmacadam to the north associated with it. Beneath these features were successive levellings of clay and clinker. The clinker (003, 008), which contained nineteenth century pottery, possibly originated from the iron foundry situated on Beach Road at the end of the last century. The trenches were excavated down to the clay subsoil, which contained no features of archaeological interest.

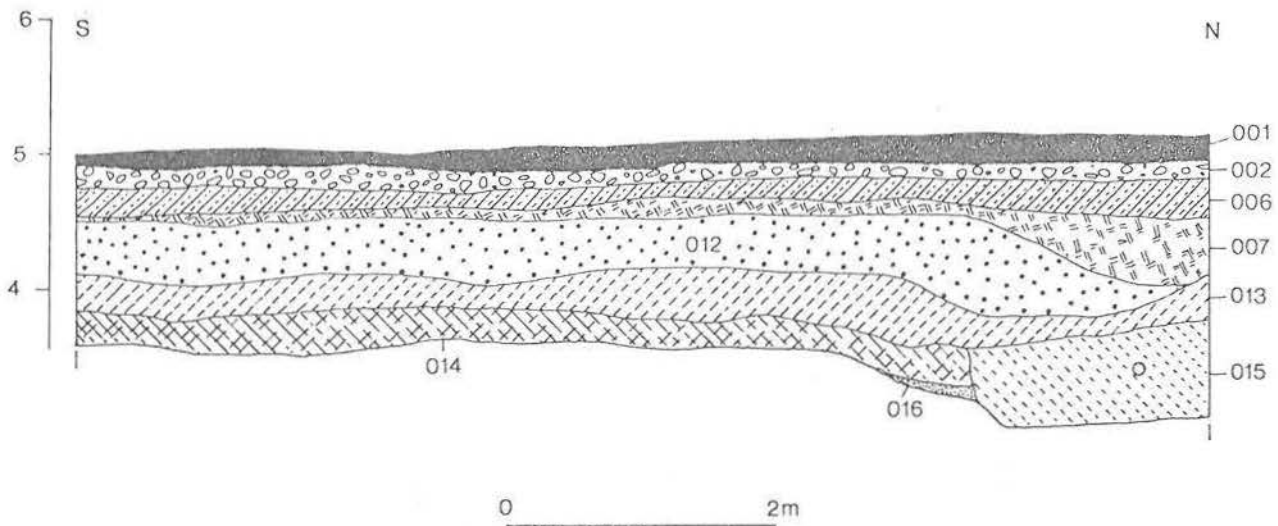


Fig. 4. Section of trench B.

TRENCH B. (Fig.4, Plate 2).

A trench 9m in length and 2m wide was excavated by machine to a depth of 1.5-2m at the rear of the bus park, 20m north-west of trench A. The removal of the tarmacadam surface revealed a

layer of clay above a layer of clinker. The clinker (012) disappeared at the northern end of the trench and contained sherds of nineteenth century pottery, being similar to the clinker layers in trench A. A deposit of silty clay lay beneath the clinker, sealing a drainage trench (015). The drain within this trench was constructed from half-round sections of pottery pipe lying on flat roof slates and probably dates to the nineteenth century. This drainage trench also cut through sandy gravel (016) which lay beneath the natural clay.

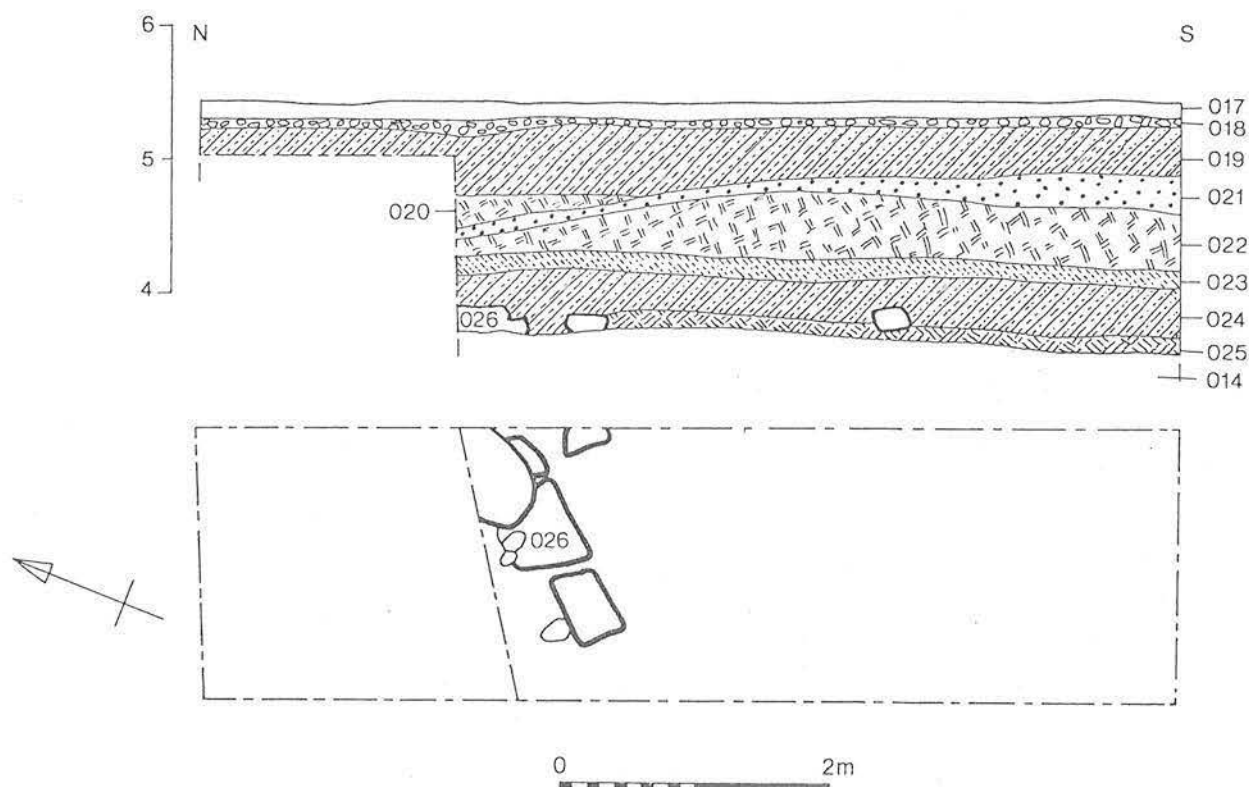


Fig. 5. Section and plan of trench C.

TRENCH C. (Fig. 5, Plates 3, 4, 5 and 6).

A trench 8m in length and 2m wide was excavated by machine to a depth of 2m within the north-east side of the bus depot. The concrete was cut through using a diamond disc cutter and then broken up by machine. A 2m length at the northern end of the trench was only excavated to a depth of 0.4m due to a leakage of diesel from a pump situated 1m from the trench (Plate 3). This was to prevent diesel from flooding the remainder of the trench. This trench was the most significant archaeologically. It contained similar levelling layers of clay and clinker to those recorded in trenches A and B (Plate 4). Beneath these, at the northern end of the trench, an alignment of large flat stones was discovered (026) (Plates 5 and 6). The stones were approximately 100mm thick and the largest was 0.6m in length and 0.6m wide. These stones were set on the natural clay surface (014) and did not appear to have had a construction trench dug for them. Only one stone of the second course was present and this was set back 0.1m from the face of the lower stone course. Behind these stones were a number of large rounded beach stones which may have made up the core of a wall faced with the flat slabs, the lower course of which made a plinth to support the upper courses. Unfortunately, due to the diesel spillage, any indication as to the wall's width could not be determined. The top of the wall as revealed lay 1.5m below the surface of the concrete. The horizon of clayey silt (024) which lay above the wall contained a large quantity of roofing slate. A whole example matches in thickness the fragment found by Hughes in 1898/9 and probably dates to the mid-thirteenth century.

SUMMARY.

Trenches A and B contained no features of archaeological significance. The area appeared to have had waste material from the iron foundry in Beach Road spread upon it and covered over with either clay or soil in the nineteenth century. There are no records as to the function of the concrete circle in trench A although it could have been the base for a fixed crane, possibly dating from World War II when munitions were stored on the site.

The only significant archaeological feature recorded was the wall footing in trench C. Although it is impossible to date this wall with any precision, its proximity to the friary buildings and the existence of roofing slates similar to those found in 1898/9 would support a date within the latter half of the thirteenth century. The wall appears to have been too insubstantial to have supported any significant load but given its distance from the friary itself and its sympathetic alignment with Afon Adda it may have been the precinct wall of the friary. In which case a major portion of the area of proposed development must lie within the friary precinct, although it is impossible to state how far to the north, west and south the precinct extended as no return wall was observed in trenches A and B.

CONCLUSIONS.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERESTS.

The evaluation revealed that much of the area of proposed development lies within the precinct of the Dominican Friary, which was in use for only a short time from c.1251-82. Unfortunately, due to the limitations imposed by the current use of the site, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust was unable fully to undertake the evaluation as initially outlined in the brief. Consequently no further information regarding the extent of the friary structures and possible further burials as recorded in 1898/9, was obtained. It is necessary to reiterate that the layout of this friary is not clear from the earlier investigations. Also, no information concerning the existence of further structures within the area of proposed development could be obtained from this evaluation.

It is impossible to determine the extent of the friary precinct on the basis of the results of this limited evaluation. It is not known how far to the north, west and south the precinct wall extended although no return wall was observed in trenches A and B. A portion of this wall was recorded in trench C, the top of which was 1.5m below the concrete surface. It is possible that more substantial stretches of this wall survive and may be closer to the ground surface. It must be noted that portions of the walls discovered in 1898/9 survived to a recorded height of 4ft yet only 2ft below the ground surface. Any ground disturbance proposed may destroy unrecorded sections of the precinct wall, other structures and burials within the precinct.

PROPOSALS FOR PROTECTIVE AND MITIGATORY MEASURES.

The physical preservation, in situ, of any archaeological remains is to be preferred, as outlined in the Welsh Office's Planning Policy Guidance 16, 1991 (P.P.G.16). This is the underlying principle of professional archaeology and the primary concern of Gwynedd Archaeological Trust.

The reduced scale of the evaluation, compared to that outlined in the brief, due to circumstances beyond the control of Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, necessitates that a number of fairly broad mitigatory proposals be made, if planning permission is granted. P.P.G. 16 (para. 23-26) recommends that agreements are reached between developer, archaeologist and planning authority to provide for excavation and recording of archaeological remains and the subsequent publication. Voluntary agreements (rather than imposed conditions) are recommended as they set out the developer's commitment from the outset and reduce any uncertainty.

Proposal 1.

During the demolition of the existing structures an archaeological presence should be maintained to record any archaeological features, particularly within the area of the service bays.

Proposal 2.

The car-park and associated area of landscaping should be built up from the present ground surface to protect archaeological deposits.

Proposal 3.

The area of archaeological interest affected by the proposed supermarket development should be preserved in situ. This would be extremely difficult to achieve in view of the proposed development. Having regard to the advice given in P.P.G. 16 (Wales) that there is a need to weigh "the intrinsic importance of the remains...against the need for the proposed development", it may be necessary to go for the less satisfactory option of "preservation by record". This would involve the full excavation of the area threatened by the proposed supermarket development, including post excavation analysis and publication.

Proposal 4.

Any remaining areas of the application site, not covered by other proposals should be subject to a watching brief during the early stages of development.

Proposal 5.

Although the best possible effort was made during the course of the evaluation to identify the full extent of archaeological interest, due to the limitations imposed by the current use of the depot, it is impossible to guarantee that further archaeological features will not be found during the course of development. Provision should be made in the contract documentation to allow for a duly authorised temporary delay to development to facilitate salvage excavation and recording. A financial contingency should also be agreed in advance and set aside by the developer.

APPENDIX A.

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APPENDIX B.

CONTEXT SUMMARIES.

001	Tarmacadam surface of bus park.	Trench A, B.
002	Hardcore for tarmacadam 001	Trench A, B.
003	Industrial waste, clinker and slag containing nineteenth century pottery.	Trench A.
004	Tarmacadam surface, possibly associated with concrete base 009.	Trench A.
005	Brick rubble infill over concrete base 009.	Trench A.
006	Greyish brown silt.	Trench A, B.
007	Mottled yellow/grey clay.	Trench A, B.
008	Industrial waste, clinker and slag, containing nineteenth century pottery.	Trench A.
009	Circular concrete base with a raised rim. the base of a World War II crane.	Trench A.
010	Brick and rubble hardcore for concrete 009.	Trench A.
011	Mottled yellow/grey clay dump within layer of industrial waste 008.	Trench A.
012	Industrial waste, clinker and slag, containing nineteenth century pottery.	Trench B.
013	Grey silty clay.	Trench A, B.
014	Mottled yellow/grey natural clay.	Trench A, B, C.
015	Drainage ditch of grey silt containing a pottery/slate drainage pipe.	Trench B.
016	Natural sandy gravel.	Trench B.
017	Concrete surface of bus depot.	Trench C.
018	Hardcore for concrete 017.	Trench C.
019	Greyish brown clayey silt containing modern pottery and brick.	Trench C.
020	Mottled yellow/orange clay.	Trench C.
021	Industrial waste, clinker and slag, containing nineteenth century pottery.	Trench C.
022	Mottled yellow/orange clay.	Trench C.
023	Dark grey clayey silt.	Trench C.

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 024 | Greyish brown clayey silt overlying the wall footings 026. | Trench C. |
| 025 | Greyish blue clay abutting wall footings 026 and lying on the natural clay 014. This is possibly an introduced surface. | Trench C. |
| 026 | Wall footings. The inner face of a lower plinth course of four flat squared stones 0.1m high laid on the natural clay surface 014. A further stone was all that remained of the second course which was set back 0.10m from the edge of the plinth. There was a core of founded beach stones behind these. The wall ran for a length of 1.5m across the trench but the width could not be determined. | Trench C. |
| 027 | Lens of cement below hardcore 002. | Trench A. |

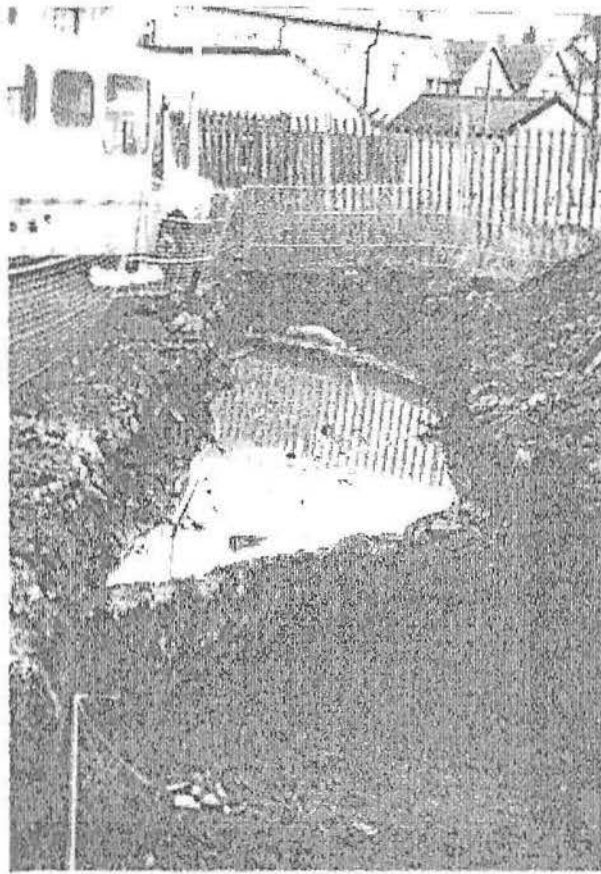


Plate 1. Trench A.



Plate 2. Trench B.



Plate 3. Trench C.



Plate 4. Trench C.



Plate 5. Wall 026.

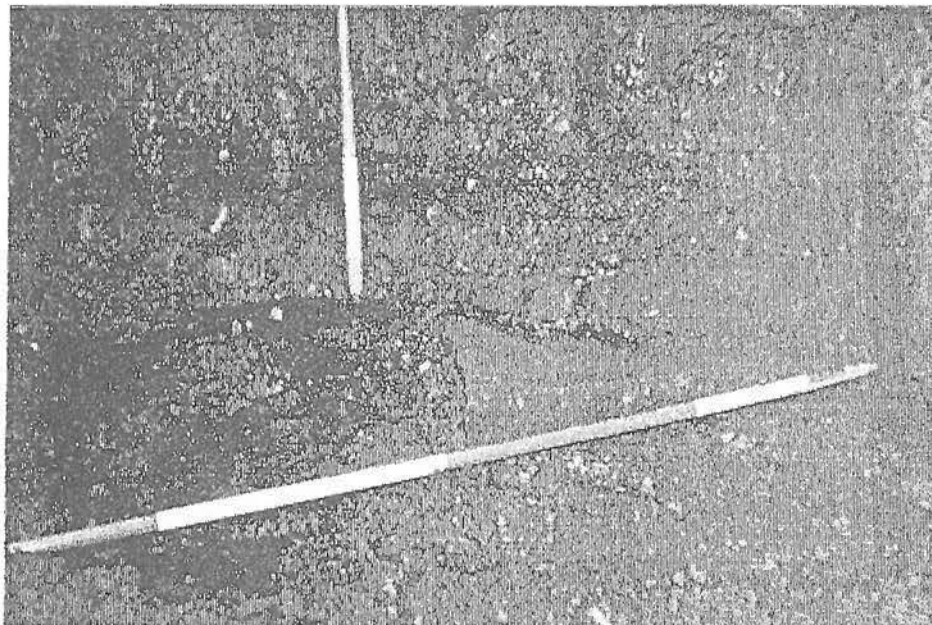


Plate 6. Wall 026.

