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# DEAN STREET MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK DEVELOPMENT, BANGOR

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION OF 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY WORKERS' HOUSING : PRELIMINARY REPORT AND POST- EXCAVATION ASSESSMENT

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Project No. G1880

Report No. 672



Prepared for Shepherd Gilmour Environment Ltd

By R.T.J. Evans and G.H. Smith  
June 2007



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Cover: Dean Street in flood, February 1929 (Cowell 1997, 8)

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# **DEAN STREET MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK DEVELOPMENT, BANGOR**

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION OF 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY WORKERS' HOUSING: PRELIMINARY REPORT AND POST-EXCAVATION ASSESSMENT**

**GAT Project no. G1880**

### **SUMMARY**

*An archaeological excavation was carried out in advance of a proposed development on the site of the car park at the west side of Dean Street, Bangor. This report provides a preliminary description of the excavation and assessment for post-excavation analysis and publication. The work was requested by Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS) because the results of an archaeological evaluation of the area demonstrated that very good preservation of early 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing was present. These were examples of very small urban housing, a type that is no longer extant because of 20<sup>th</sup> century 'slum' clearance. An open area 12m by 6m was excavated, being the entire ground floor plot of one house with its rear yard. The excavation revealed good evidence for the internal layout of the early house and a remarkably well preserved earth closet in the rear yard. A short period of abandonment was followed by the raising of the ground level across the whole site and the insertion of drainage. There was evidence for the addition of sewerage in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Excavation beneath the houses showed the buried topsoil of the field that preceded the house construction but no evidence of earlier activity.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust was asked by Shepherd Gilmour Environmental to carry out an archaeological excavation in advance of construction of a multi-storey car park on the site of a former ground level car park at the west side of Dean Street, Bangor (NGR SH58257237), as a result of significant evidence being uncovered during an archaeological evaluation of the site (Smith 2007b). The excavation was requested by and monitored by Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS) as part of the planning development control process. The work was part of the development of the former Wellfield shopping centre, for which an earlier desktop archaeological assessment had been carried out (Page 2003), and an archaeological assessment and watching brief carried out on the former gas works site to the south (Smith 2007a).

This report provides a preliminary description of the excavation and assessment for possible post-excavation analysis and publication according to the project management guidelines set out in the documents MAP2 (English Heritage 1991) and MORPHE (English Heritage 2006).

The excavation incorporated the whole ground plot of a single house and its rear yard situated on the former Dean's Court, the second house along from its junction with

Dean Street. The work comprised the open area excavation of an area 12m by 6m. The location had undergone an archaeological evaluation (Smith 2007b) and the excavation area incorporated part of that evaluation. This area was selected because the evaluation had demonstrated that particularly good preservation of the remains was present along the Dean Street side of the development. It was felt that the complete exposure of one of the single room dwellings would provide a valuable insight into the constructional details, internal layout and use of internal space within this type of workers housing that has rarely been studied archaeologically.

## **2. SPECIFICATION AND PROJECT DESIGN**

The work was carried out in accordance with a design agreed by verbal agreement with Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service. This comprised the complete excavation of the remains of a single example of a house and yard within the development area. The previous evaluation allowed the identification of a house that was particularly well preserved.

The excavation was carried out in conformance with the specifications of the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1995, rev. 1999).

## **3. METHODS AND TECHNIQUES**

The excavation was carried out from Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> to Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2007 (Nine working days).

The trench was cut using a wheeled excavator with a 1.6m ditching bucket down to the level of the former house, followed by hand cleaning and recording. Further machining to help with deposit removal was later carried out because two distinct phases of occupation were evidenced with a significant make-up layer between them. This earlier phase of occupation was then cleaned and recorded. In parts of the site surfaces were excavated through to the natural subsoil to look for evidence of any earlier activity.

Each separate feature, fill, layer and structure was given an individual context number which is referred to in the text, and a written record was made. Deposits were drawn in plan and section at a scale of 1:20 and where appropriate a photographic record was kept.

All the finds from the various contexts were collected, comprising mainly pottery and bottle glass, but including clay pipes and some metal objects, with one coin.

Some finds were from mixed contexts, deriving from machine removal of rubble layers from demolition in the 1930's and these were not studied. The remaining finds, from identifiable stratified contexts were cleaned and a preliminary level of analysis was carried out. This comprised rapid identification and dating, allowing an assessment of the potential for analysis.

The archive is held by GAT under the project number **G1880**. After completion of the post-excavation process and with the agreement of the landowners, the archive will be placed in the Gwynedd Museum, Bangor.

#### **4. HISTORICAL AND DOCUMENTARY ASSESSMENT**

##### **Medieval Origins**

Bangor as a settlement has its origins in the ecclesiastical community founded around the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD by Deiniol, reputed to be a descendant of the royal family of Rheged, the ancient British kingdom around the Solway Firth (Roberts 1994, 20). The site had no previous historic significance because it was not a strategic location for communication or defence. The community established in the 6<sup>th</sup> century occupied a small enclosed valley with a stream, the Afon Adda, and this land was probably a gift of Maelgwn, the ruler of Gwynedd. The earliest settlement would have been monastic and there is a note in the Irish Annals of the sack of the monastery in AD 634. This original settlement would have been focussed on a chapel within an enclosure, from which the town takes its name – Bangor, meaning ‘Wattle fence’, and other settlements have derived their name similarly at Bangor-on-Dee, Cheshire and Bangor, Co. Down, Northern Ireland. White (1984) and Longley (1994) have argued that this early enclosure (Fig. 1) may have been the same as the oval area that was still the focus of the town as recorded by Speed in his map of the town in 1610. However, it is recorded that Edward 1 had some town defences constructed in 1283-4 (*Annales Cambriae*, 108). These have not yet been identified archaeologically but may have had some effect on the subsequent development of the town plan. None the less, excavations in this same area, north of the High Street and east of the cathedral between 1981-9 (Longley 1995) identified several early boundaries, the earliest a curvilinear ‘slot’ dated to between the 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD (*ibid* 56) just east of the cathedral. Numerous early graves were also recorded further east, some of which predated a rectilinear boundary ditch dated to around the mid 10<sup>th</sup> century (*ibid* 65).

There is good evidence then that this area was a centre of ecclesiastical activity prior to the establishment of the present cathedral in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century by Bishop David, who was consecrated in 1120 (Carr 1994, 28). However, some pre-12<sup>th</sup> century buildings are recorded as having survived until at least the late 13<sup>th</sup> century before falling into decay (Soulsby 1983, 76). It had previously been thought that the early monastic community was located on the north side of the Afon Adda, on the terrace at the foot of the slopes below the main university building (RCAHMW 1960), where buildings and burials had been found in 1924 (Hughes 1924). Excavations were carried out prior to the construction of the university students’ union building and on the hillside close to the 1924 discoveries (Alcock 1964) and prior to the construction of the theatre (White 1971) but no medieval remains, or other burials were found. It has been suggested therefore that the principal monastic community must have been on the south other side of the Adda Valley, in the vicinity of the present cathedral and that the remains found in 1924 were those of a subsidiary parish church, Llanfair Garth Brannan, mentioned in 1291.

There were other ecclesiastical buildings in the valley, including another chapel, Capel Gorfyw, a friary and several houses for the clergy such as the dean, canons,

vicars choral, which were clustered around the cathedral, where the High Street is now. The friary was of the Dominican order and was established about 1250. Its original site was by the mouth of the Afon Adda, close to Seiriol Road. It later moved to a new site in Hirael and after its dissolution in 1538 its buildings became a school by private bequest.

The secular settlement of Bangor was subsidiary to the ecclesiastical, both in terms of function and importance, and probably had its origins in the employment deriving from the services required by the ecclesiastical community. The houses of the city in fact developed on the fringes of the ecclesiastical community because the majority of the land around the cathedral belonged to one or other of the diocesan incumbents. Never the less, there were 53 burgesses or tenants named in a survey of the Bishop's lands in Bangor of 1306, although eleven of these were clerics (Carr 1994, 29).

Bangor was not a centre of secular authority, although a motte was built in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, possibly on the Aethwy ridge north of the present town and above Garth (Soulsby 1983, 76). Even so the town suffered during many hostilities, probably because of the varying loyalties of the bishop. It flourished under the Welsh princes but was burned by King John in 1211. It was later damaged during Edward's campaign, possibly by the Welsh because the bishop had supported the English. It was attacked by Glyndwr in 1402 and 'the cathedral had been partly destroyed and probably the houses of the cathedral clergy had been laid waste' (Pryce 1923). The cathedral was supposed to have remained in ruins for nearly 90 years until the end of the fifteenth century when restoration was begun.

### **Post medieval development**

The area later to be occupied by the Dean Street car park and earlier by the first Bangor gas works and workers' housing lay between the medieval historic core of Bangor and the Friary to the east (Fig. 1). It lay on the south bank of the *Afon Adda* and prone to seasonal flooding, which may account for the lack of early development. In 1808 Dean John Warren bought 8.79 acres of *Cae Sgybor* from John Jones, who had inherited the Brynhir estate, which incorporated the Bangor holdings of Richard Fletcher of Treborth Isa, Registrar to the Bishop in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Dean subsequently divided the area into lots, and sold them for development. The development of this distinct area of previously undeveloped Bangor preserved the historical integrity of the area around the cathedral (Page 2003, 15). Dean Street forms the principal axis through the area, and subsidiary streets were laid out on either side (Jones 1989, 149-51).

A new demand for housing had been created by a labouring population that had flocked to the area to seek work at Port Penrhyn or for its ancillary trades (Dodd 1968, 288). The first houses in Dean Street and Well Street were built about 1814 and building lots continued to be sold until 1827, although many were subsequently resold by the original purchaser. By the time of the first proper survey of the town carried out by John Wood in 1834, much of the Dean Street area was already built up with terraced housing. The area of the present development was still largely an open field at that time although two streets had been built- Garden Street and Brook Row, the former with two terraces, the latter with one row facing the *Afon Adda*. The land for these had been sold in October 1825 to Richard Griffiths, shoemaker, for the

construction of 10 dwellings along Garden Street and 6 dwellings along Brook Row. In December 1827 John Jones, gardener, bought land that was resold to Robert Roberts, a builder, in 1832 for 34 dwellings fronting Garden Square. These are not shown on the Tithe map of 1841, which had probably been surveyed before the houses had been constructed. The name Garden Square became unfortunate when in 1843 the remaining paddock was sold to James Smyth Scott as a site to build the first Bangor gas works (Jones 1989, Table 1).

The houses were stone built and the L-plan wall that formed the boundary between the east and west parts of the present car park until March 2007 incorporated the remains of the front wall and one of the party walls of the eastern Garden Square terrace. The houses built in this area, such as Brook Row, Garden Street (later to be re-named Dean's Court) and Garden Square, were the smallest possible houses that could be built to house a family and were built at the highest possible density. They consisted of one living room with one bedroom over it.

The gaps between the fronts of the terraces were no more than 12-17ft and 80% of each plot was built over, leaving outside only a small yard with an ash-pit and midden. There was no sanitation, no wash-house and no water supply. The *Afon Adda* was used at this time for the dumping of rubbish, excrement and waste from slaughterhouses further upstream, around Sackville Street. Garden Street is described in 1849 as having 'very close back premises, and suffers from the smell of the gas works which are close by, as well as that from the brook, which is much complained of. This like most other streets, is ill-paved' (Clark 1849).

Evidence from the 1841 census (NA HO 107/1398/2) and rate books show that the occupiers of the Dean Street area were labourers and artisans. Brook Row in 1843 contained three quarrymen, four shoemakers, a painter, a joiner, a skinner, an excise officer and six labourers. They were clearly not paupers however, as they were able to pay 1s. 9d. as part of a rate for watching and lighting in the city (Gwynedd Archives XB9/5/14). Clark (1849) however specifically states that the Dean Street area of the city was unlit, despite the close proximity of the gas works. In 1843 the occupiers of the housing were mainly tenants, but the owners were often smallholders who owned just one or two properties (XB9/5/14). In 1841 Garden Street was occupied by 113 people, with on average six people per house. By the time of the 1901 census (NA RG13/5280), 51 people lived in the houses of the street (by then re-named Dean's Court), so the occupation density had decreased considerably. In 1841 there were 14 quarrymen, a mariner, ship's carpenter, shoemaker, skinner and miller living in Garden Street, but by 1901 a printer, tailor, bookbinder, dressmaker, milliner and laundress occupied the houses in the street now called Dean's Court, along with a pork butcher, carter, wine and spirit merchant and house painter. In addition to the new practice of naming female occupations in 1901, the comparison suggests that the nature of the workforce living in the Dean Street area had changed somewhat from labouring and seafaring to artisan trades. A study carried out in Birmingham has noted that houses of this size during the 19<sup>th</sup> century housed on average sixty people in ten houses, the average size of one of these streets (The National Trust 2004, 3). This density is matched closely in the Dean Street area of Bangor. In 1841 the house plot under excavation was occupied by Robert Owen, a cooper, his mother and various lodgers, and in 1901 it was occupied by Henry Jones, a tailor and his family.

The 1889 1:500 Ordnance Survey map of the area shows the layout of the streets and houses clearly (Fig. 4), and the houses can also be seen on an aerial photograph of Bangor taken in 1910 (Fig. 5). Most of the inhabitants seem to have been born within the local districts and presumably moved into the city because of increasing work prospects. The area was badly affected by the typhoid epidemic of 1882, which heightened the need for the provision of better public water and sewerage services. This need had already been addressed in other urban parts of Britain, for example at 12-18 Albert Embankment, Lambeth where as a result of the arrival of piped sewerage the earlier cess pits were backfilled in one event during the period 1851-60 (Surrey Archaeological Collections 2004). This has enabled an insight into the lifestyle of mid-Victorian Lambeth's residents to be obtained in a way that might be possible for Bangor from the cess pit assemblage from this excavation. In Paisley, Scotland a piped water supply was installed into every tenement in the town in 1860-65 and soon after a sewerage system with water closets after outbreaks of cholera and typhoid had escalated due to poor sanitation and a defective water supply (Barrhead-Scotland.com).

The housing in the Dean Street area was identified in a survey undertaken in June 1932 as being unfit for habitation. A report submitted to the Housing Committee of Bangor City Council on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1932 states that '51 [houses] are occupied by two or more families. The majority of these cases are to be found in the one and two bed-roomed houses, and the problem is aggravated where males and females above 14 years of age are obliged to share the same bedroom, and in some cases the same bed' (Gwynedd Archives ref: M/752). The bedroom of one these single roomed houses on each floor is described as 'divided into two by a thin wooden partition, and is occupied by Husband, wife, and seven children, aged 23, 11, 9 (Sons); 18, 16, 13, 3 (Daughters) Son aged 23 obliged to sleep on the sofa in the kitchen. Boy aged 11 years is a cripple since 8 years and is obliged to use crutches.' The report states that there were 11 houses in Deans Court, 8 of which were of the single bedroom type, occupied by 48 people, half of whom were children. It is one of these houses that was examined in this archaeological excavation.

In the Dean Street area overall there were 45 single bedroom houses, and the inspector found that there was only 10ft between the rear walls of some of the houses and those on the opposite side of the street and that 'the inspection was carried out on a sunny day but not a ray of sunshine entered the houses. The yards are very small (10' x 4.5')' (*ibid.*). With considerable civic pride and optimism for the future, a brochure was produced by the City Council in 1935 entitled *The Development of Bangor* detailing the extent of the problem and the proposed solutions, concentrating on the Dean Street area (Bangor City Council 1935).

A new housing estate of 162 houses was built at Maes Tryfan, west of the railway station, and the first tenants from Brook Row were moved there on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1935 (Jones 1986, 158-9). The Dean Street houses were subsequently demolished, and much of the rubble was used as hard core for the new roads and houses at another new council development at Maesgeirchen. £60 5s 4d was paid on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1936 and £166 15s 4d on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1936 for the demolition of the 'slum clearance houses' (Gwynedd Archives XB9/2/1). The area east of Dean Street was re-developed with new houses by 1939, though the plans for the area west of Dean Street (the location of the present development) were delayed. This may be in part due to fact that the land

on which the properties were built was only acquired piecemeal from the numerous small landowners by the council between February 1936 and May 1937, with some owners having to be compelled to sell through the instrument of compulsory purchase (Gwynedd Archives B2/115/108-9), thereby delaying redevelopment, and partly due to the outbreak of war. The current area of development was soon made into a car park, though part was still occupied by the gas works. The gas works site has been the subject of an archaeological assessment and watching brief (Smith 2007a).

## **5. RESULTS OF THE EXCAVATION**

### **Introduction**

The excavation of a single house located on Dean's Court, Bangor followed an archaeological evaluation of the former workers housing that occupied the modern Dean Street car park area (GAT Report No. 661). Six trial trenches were excavated showing that the ground floors and lower parts of the walls, along with all minor features of the houses were well preserved. One of these evaluation trenches, trench 6, was partially included in the excavation area of 12m by 6m. Preservation of early house features was very good owing to the fact that ground levels had been raised across the whole site during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the floor levels raised thereby preserving earlier deposits.

The work identified four main phases of activity, summarised here.

Phase 1. Soils predating the construction of the workers housing, consisting of topsoil and suggestions of agricultural activity.

Phase 2a. The construction of the housing, and early floor levels associated with its occupation.

Phase 2b. A phase of abandonment of the early house

Phase 3a. Later the ground level over the whole site is raised and drainage inserted as part of this process, followed by occupation in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Phase 3b. Occupation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century associated with the insertion of a modern sewerage system

Phase 4. Recent features associated with the demolition of the housing in 1936 and subsequent levelling in order to create a car-park.

### **Phase 1**

The natural subsoil observed consisted of light brown alluvial silty clay, associated with the *Afon Adda* whose course ran west-east about 30m to the north of the excavated area. This was overlain by about 0.12m of topsoil (655), consisting of a dark grey silty clay loam with charcoal inclusions (Figs 9, 22). These deposits relate to the open fields belonging to the Dean of Bangor which occupied the site before the land was sold for development in lots from 1814 (Jones 1989, 149-51).

## Phase 2a (Fig. 8)

Construction of dwellings appears to have been begun by placing the footings of the main house walls on the silty clay subsoil. Wall (604) was observed in section and the foundation trenches for the initial building appears to have consisted of removing the topsoil (655) from the field and constructing the foundations on wider stones placed directly on the natural subsoil (Fig. 10). Walls (604), (608), (609) and (658) were built in this way, forming the walls of the house, constructed of mortared limestone blocks with plastered internal surfaces and surviving in places to a height of 0.8m. The doorway from the street on the southern side, 0.85m wide, was located at the westernmost end of the property where it joins the adjacent house. At the rear of the house the opening into the yard was offset to the east by 0.65m (Fig. 9). Within the house two stub walls (610) and (611), 0.4m by 0.3m, and bonded with the east wall of the property (608) formed the northern and southern buttresses of the hearth opening, 1m wide by 0.41m deep (Fig. 8, 13).

A make up layer about 0.4m thick was deposited on the field topsoil surface in both the house and the rear yard (654), which was covered by floor surfaces. In the house a light yellowish brown sandy clay surface about 0.2m thick formed an earthen floor (626), on which were placed a number of slate pieces (Figs. 7, 12), above which a rough laid slate surface (619) must have served as the floor for a while, possibly laid when flooding was causing problems. In the rear yard the floor surface was made up of a dark purple brown silty clay layer with pebble inclusions and 0.14m thick (642) (Fig. 18).

Within the house the hearth (Fig. 14) had a slate slab floor (615) and remains of the grate structure were *in situ* including brickwork forming the front of the fire surround (616). A purple ash deposit (614) may be a remnant of the last fire in the grate prior to the raising of the floor levels. A metalwork object was found that probably formed part of an ornamental front to the grate itself. In the alcoves on either side of the fireplace (Figs. 15a and b) slate floors were present (638, 639) above (626). On the internal north and south walls of the house (604, 609) a groove was noted in the plasterwork suggesting that some timber structure occupied the alcoves, probably cupboards. Along the south wall of the house (609) a discrete deposit extending 0.7m north from this wall and 2.2m towards the front doorway of the property was observed. It was only about 0.1m deep, overlying floor surface (626). It is difficult to interpret, but is possibly an undisturbed surface below a long term piece of furniture or internal fitting that resulted in this area not becoming worn. The threshold into the front door of the property was disturbed by the insertion of a later drain. However that belonging to the adjacent house along Dean's Court to the east was observed during the evaluation work, and consisted of a slate slab surface (620).

In the rear yard a privy structure (649) was located in the north east corner of the yard. It consisted of a structure 1.2m by 1m with a doorway to the east 0.6m wide (Figs. 7, 20). Adjacent to it to the west was another chamber (647) which butted against (649) (Figs. 7, 21). This consisted of a chamber 1.4m by 1m with a narrow opening 0.45m wide to the north-west. This proved to be a pit for the night soil coming through a hole in the privy wall that connected it to the earth closet (Fig. 21). Both structures butted against the rear property boundary wall (653) which separated this property



from the one on Brook Row to the north (Fig. 7, 20). The privy consisted of a floor surface to the east consisting of an irregular layer of slate and mortar (651). There were slots at this level on either side of the entrance to the closet of uncertain function. The western slot was partially covered by a large slate slab which formed the front panel of the earth closet itself (645). The closet had an organic fill (650), which drained into (647) through an opening in the west wall of (649) at an upper level. There was however a substantial sump at least 1m deep which was waterlogged at its lower levels, containing pottery and wood fragments (Fig. 11). This overlay a grey sandy clay layer that was probably the natural alluvial silt subsoil. The east and west yard boundary walls (634, 652) overlay yard make-up layer (654) and suggest that in the early phase of the property's occupation the yard was open and shared with the adjacent properties to the east and west. Within the chamber (647) a gully was noted, below a pottery and domestic refuse rich fill (648), along which the night soil would have been raked out.

### **Phase 2b (Fig. 8)**

A thin layer of trampled debris over the original floor of the house (625) was associated with the robbed out fire place (Fig. 12b). This suggests the house was abandoned for a while prior to the major renovations entailed in raising the floors and constructing drains in Phase 3a.

### **Phase 3a (Fig. 7)**

At some point, possibly as a result of flooding problems in the area, the ground surface across the whole site was raised by about 0.4m (Fig. 12a). The make up layer (624) in the house, and (635) over the rear yard consisted of shale fragments mixed with a small amount of relatively clean mid orange- brown silty clay. An 1831 William IV farthing was found within the house in layer (624), suggesting that this development may have taken place earlier rather than later in the house's development. Contemporary with this deposit a system of drainage was inserted, demonstrating that the new drainage system was conceived at the same time as the decision to raise the floor levels, suggesting an overall plan of remedial action (Fig. 7, 9 and 16). A culvert (656) ran from the property entrance on Dean's Court curving somewhat through the house to enable it to exit through the rear door into the yard, where there was a junction with a north south running drain (631) (Fig. 16). The culverts were stone lined with the side walls made up from shale blocks, with the drain opening about 0.3m by 0.2m wide (figs. 15, 16). Within the house a layer (623) made up the later house floor, and in the rear yard a layer of topsoil 0.18m thick (606) overlay make-up layer (635). No internal house features of the period were noted as the house was truncated at this level at the time of demolition and levelling, although stone sills to both doorways were still *in situ* (Fig. 7, 16). The north-south dividing walls (634, 652) of the yard were inserted at this time as they were laid on the old yard surface (642), and butted the house walls (604) and boundary wall (653) to the west and closet wall (649) to the east. The old Tarmacadam road surface (607) of Dean's Court was noted about 1m south of the front wall of the house, with an area of crushed rubble and tile (621) between it and the house front wall that probably formed a make-up layer for paving slabs that were removed at the time of demolition. Beneath this rubble was another stone lined drain (622) oriented east to west under the probable pavement. Although it cannot be demonstrated conclusively, this drain

probably formed part of the drainage system that includes (631) and (656). The earth closet and associated night soil pit were also backfilled with a large quantity of domestic waste that contained pottery, metal and other material (643).

### **Phase 3b (Fig. 7)**

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century sewerage was inserted (Fig. 17) into the house and a water closet installed. An upper fill of the earth closet (646) consisting of loamy soil and ash was probably deliberate infilling of the earth closet above (643), within which were inserted ceramic pipes for a water closet system (644) (Fig. 20, 21). These were inserted through the dividing wall between the closet and chamber, above (648), and a slate slab was placed covering the pipe and backfill in the chamber (657). The pipe also formed a 'y' junction and cut through wall (653) to serve closets in Brook Row, but it was not excavated further. The pipe then cut south-westwards through shale make up layer (635) towards drain (631) into which it flowed. This involved the partial demolition of the south wall of (647) (Fig. 19). The water closet was truncated at the later floor level when demolition of the house took place. The slate slab surface of the water closet floor in the adjoining property to the north on Brook Row (632) was noted showing a higher quality floor surface than was present in the Dean's Court house. Overlying this surface was a patch of cobbling (633) that seems to have lead towards the Dean's Court closet from the Brook Row rear yard (Fig. 22), demonstrating that the rear property wall (653) must have been demolished to ground level before the final demolition of the properties and that the Brook Row toilet was likely to be no longer functioning and that both houses were using the Dean's Court one.

### **Phase 4**

During 1936 the whole of the Dean Street area workers housing was demolished and the land cleared for a car park (Jones 1986, 158-9). A debris layer over the rear yard (629) and later toilet floor was noted (640), dating from the demolition phase, beneath a levelling deposit of demolition rubble and building debris (603), about 0.5m thick, which was spread over the remains of the whole plot after it had been demolished to ground level. This was overlain by a number of lenses of car park surfacing 0.15m thick (602) below the modern Tarmacadam car park surface (601) (Fig. 22).

## **6. ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE**

The great majority of the finds consisted of pottery sherds including tableware and kitchenware. There were surprisingly small amounts bottle and other glass. There were a few metal objects, including one coin, and a few clay tobacco pipe fragments and one complete pipe.

A preliminary examination has been undertaken of the finds to allow assessment of their potential for further analysis. The pottery and glassware were recorded by Sara Richards who provided a provisional identification and dating, where possible. GAT is very grateful for her assistance. One sherd is present of each vessel unless otherwise stated. Tobacco pipes have not been closely dated, but the large bowl diameters,

where present, suggest that they date from the middle and later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The finds catalogue (Table 1) has been shown in Phase order to allow easier understanding in relation to the context descriptions, above.

### **Table 1 Provisional artefact description catalogue**

#### **Phase 1**

Nil

#### **Phase 2a**

##### **POTTERY**

##### *Context 627*

Pearlware cup *c.*1840

2 sherds blue rimmed pottery *c.*1840

Possible vegetable tureen sherd of blue transfer printed ware *c.*1865

Green printed sherd from oblong vessel *c.*1870

2 sherds of cream pot base

Stoneware bottle neck

Large number of sherds of black internally glazed coarse kitchen ware

2 sherds brown and white banded ware

##### *Context 628*

11 sherds blue rimmed 'pearl' ware *c.*1840

Pale blue willow pattern plate *c.*1865

##### *Context 637*

6 sherds blue and white cup *c.*1840

3 sherds from large blue and white cup *c.*1840

Brown black banded kitchen ware *c.*1880

##### *Context 642*

Pictorial transfer printed sherd showing a man and a woman with a slave *c.*1810

Dark blue decorated meat platter *c.*1830

Blue dash pottery *c.*1830

Willow pattern cup or bowl *c.*1840

Jar or bowl internally decorated and externally printed with '...NET' *c.*1840

Dinner plate *c.*1840

Shallow based willow pattern dish *c.*1850

Painted copper lustre teapot *c.*1870

Brown stoneware kitchen jar *c.*1870

Meat platter *c.*1870

Light blue decorated sherd  
Plain white cup sherd  
2 sherds terracotta ware storage bowl  
Brown glazed mixing bowl  
Buff and black drinking vessel with handle  
Stoneware bottle marked 'BLACKING J.B.D.'  
4 sherds ribbed, glazed kitchen ware storage jar

*Context 648*

Undecorated pearl or queens ware platter c.1830  
Blue dash rim of platter c.1830  
Saucer dish c.1830  
Brown glazed teapot lid c.1860  
4 sherds of kitchen ware  
2 sherds porcelain decorated with lilac flowers  
Embossed teapot lid

GLASS

*Context 648*

Glass ink bottle c.1870  
9 sherds green bottle glass

TOBACCO PIPES

*Context 627*

Pipe stem

*Context 642*

2 Pipe bowls

*Context 648*

Complete buff coloured clay pipe 85mm long with a pipe bowl diameter of 16mm.  
Short stem length of 70mm suggest that this is possibly a ladies pipe.

2 pipe stems

IRON OBJECTS

*Context 616, Small Find No. 2*

Metal object 320mm by 50mm. Probably a fire bar that formed part of the hearth, in front of which it was found, in Phase 2a and 2b of the occupation of the house.

*Context 648*

Cupboard or chest key

## COPPER ALLOY OBJECTS

*Context 627, Small Find Nos. 3*

Copper alloy button 17mm in diameter with four attachment holes.

*Context 627, Small Find Nos. 4*

Copper alloy button 21mm in diameter consisting of a solid metal disk with attachment loop.

## **Phase 2b**

### POTTERY

*Context 625*

Blue dash sherd *c.*1830

Blue transfer sauce tureen *c.*1845

Dark blue decorated platter *c.*1860

Brown interior glazed storage jar

Black/grey kitchen ware

Stoneware

### TOBACCO PIPES

*Context 625*

Pipe stem

## **Phase 3a**

### POTTERY

*Context 624*

3 sherds black glazed large kitchen storage container

2 sherds brown glazed large kitchen storage container

Stoneware jar

*Context 635*

Blue and white internally and externally decorated platter *c.*1840

White slop bowl base

12 sherds terracotta kitchen ware

Brown and white kitchen bowl

*Context 636*

Storage jar lid

Many sherds black glazed domestic ware

Green painted sherd, possibly late 19<sup>th</sup> century

*Context 641*

Fineware chinoiserie cup sherd c.1830

Kitchen ware c.1870

GLASS

*Context 635*

Embossed glass bottle ‘...PIER’

TOBACCO PIPES

*Context 635*

Pipe stem

*Context 636*

Pipe stem

COIN

*Context 624, Small Find No.1*

1831 farthing of William IV, with Britannia on the reverse. The coin is relatively unworn but the edge has been filed in a series of notches, making it valueless and therefore probably the reason it was discarded.

**Phase 3b**

POTTERY

*Context 643*

Cream and brown glazed terracotta shallow dairy bowl c.1860

Blue and white plate c.1865

Chinoiserie cup c.1885

Blue glazed drinking tankard

Black glazed terracotta kitchen ware

5 sherds stoneware

*Context 646*

Willow pattern style tea dish *c.*1830  
Pink rimmed lilac painted shallow bowl or saucer dish *c.*1835  
Black printed saucer dish *c.*1840  
Blue rimmed vessel *c.*1840  
Brown glazed, hand painted decorated teapot spout *c.*1860  
Large round platter blue printed leaf design *c.*1860  
7 sherds of lilac decorated jug and handle *c.*1870  
2 sherds chinoiserie sugar basin  
Possible cheese dish base *c.*1870  
Lilac seaweed design plate sherd *c.*1870  
Brown glazed pottery *c.*1870  
'Asiatic pheasant' platter sherd *c.*1875  
2 sherds lilac decorated jug pieces *c.*1875  
4 sherds meat dish *c.*1875  
2 willow pattern meat dishes *c.*1875  
Asiatic design meat platter rim *c.*1875  
Diaper work dark blue sherd *c.*1875  
Blue and white flower decorated sherd *c.*1880  
'Treacle' base of tea pot or bowl *c.*1880  
Terracotta kitchen ware *c.*1880  
Tea pot spout *c.*1880  
Marmalade or conserve pot *c.*1880?  
Sunderland (pink lustre) decorated cup base *c.*1880  
Sunderland decorated tea plate *c.*1880  
Chinoiserie style large breakfast cup *c.*1885  
Ink pot *c.*1890  
Blue decorated kitchen bowl *c.*1890  
Blue and white kitchen bowl *c.*1900  
Blue/brown dairy bowl *c.*1890  
Brown glazed with white slip small kitchen bowl *c.*1900  
Dark brown and pale blue kitchen storage jar *c.*1900  
Sugar or slop basin *c.*1900  
Stoneware marmalade pot *c.*1900  
Key pattern cup rim  
Fragment of ornament of a dog

GLASS

*Context 643*

Green glass bottle sherd  
Window glass

*Context 646*

Fine glassware hand blown bottle fragment *c.*1790  
Long narrow bottle, of medical or cosmetic type *c.*1800

Dark green bottle with fragment of embossed lettering '...SON' (i.e. POISON)  
Many sherds green bottle glass  
Brown moulded glass goblet base  
Ink well  
Moulded glass salt cellar?

#### TOBACCO PIPES

*Context 646*

Fine pipe bowl with shield and star pattern and thumb piece c.1875  
2 plain pipe bowls

#### IRON OBJECTS

*Context 646*

Possible fragment of coal tongs  
Possible poker

#### **Phase 4**

#### POTTERY

*Context 629*

2 sherds blue pictorial ware c.1865  
'Asiatic pheasant' pottery sherd c.1880  
White decorated plate rim c.1900  
Glazed shallow dish c.1900  
Brown glazed teapot handle c.1910  
10 sherds terracotta kitchen ware

#### GLASS

*Context 629*

Screw topped perfume bottle c.1915  
Bottle neck

### **7. DISCUSSION**

The natural horizons were encountered consisting of clayey alluvial silts within the valley floor through which the *Afon Adda* flows. No harder deposits or natural bedrock were observed.



The soils of the field that pre-dated the housing were observed containing peaty soils and some wood. This suggests that the fields may have been partially waterlogged. They would at any rate have been subject to the periodic flooding of the river.

No archaeological features were observed that predated the 19<sup>th</sup> century houses although the previous evaluation excavation identified two probable field drainage ditches further to the west (Smith 2007b).

The excavation demonstrated that there was very good preservation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century house beneath the existing car park surface. This enabled the complete house floor plan, construction techniques and the internal fittings of the house to be identified.

The walls survived to a height of up to 0.6m above the earliest house floor and retained their internal plasterwork and traces of ochre wash colouring. Preservation was particularly good because at some point the whole of the ground floor level was raised by about 0.4m by inserting a deep make-up layer of shale and clay. This preserved *in situ* the fireplace and floors of the early house (Phase 2a). A few pieces of pottery were discovered *in situ* upon the earlier floor within the alcoves either side of the fireplace, suggesting that cleaning was not carried out just before the floor level was raised. This may indicate that the work was done as something of an emergency measure. Generally the interior of the house was clean with no obvious rubbish deposits, although a certain amount had been included with the demolition material.

A thin intermediate layer of trampled debris lay on the first floor, apparently representing a brief abandonment phase (Phase 2b) probably after the house was flooded and before insertion of the raised floor.

The date of this raising of the floor level (Phase 3a), probably required to counter problems caused by the *Afon Adda* periodically flooding cannot be dated precisely. Flooding continued to be a common occurrence in the Dean Street area until a flood prevention scheme in 1931 resolved the problem (Cowell 1997, 8-9). The raising of floor levels must post date 1831, as a relatively unworn, although filed, farthing of that date was found within the shale backfill of phase 3a. The preliminary dating of the pottery from the floor backfill suggests that a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century date for the floor raising might be appropriate. Within the backfill make-up deposit an elaborate system of stone lined culverted drainage was constructed which ran through the house south-north into a drain running east-west. A date later than about 1860 is therefore unlikely because ceramic pipe drains were coming into common use after about 1870.

Ceramic pipe drains were inserted into the yard along with a piped toilet closet, connected to sewers (Phase 3b). The provisional pottery identification suggests this happened between about 1890-1900. The later floor level was also excavated, enabling a succession of occupation surfaces to be observed. There was less evidence of internal fittings from the latest phase of the house's occupation because demolition of the house had truncated them, whereas the earlier house occupation surface had been buried intact.

The excavation also revealed the surfaces of back yard of the house both before and after the raising of the ground level, which included fragments of pottery and other household waste that was probably thrown out from the house during both its main

phases of occupation. The structure of the earth closet and associated chamber within the rear yard during both ground level phases survived, including the cess pit and early privy with its slate fronted seat.

During the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a number of services were inserted into the property before their demolition in 1936. The excavation revealed details of the conversion of the earth closet in the rear yard into a water closet and its connection with a public sewerage system.

Some evidence for the maintenance of the road surface of Dean's Court at the south side of the house was also recorded. The earlier evaluation (trench 6) showed there had been a stone-lined drain under the footpath and this must have been associated with the stone-lined culvert of phase 3a within the house.

Post demolition levelling deposits of rubble and successive car park surfacing were also seen, along with some electric cabling that provided power to light the car park.

## **8. POST EXCAVATION ASSESSMENT FOR ANALYSIS**

### **8.1 Factual Data**

Context records:	57
Artefact records:	4 Small Finds: 1 Coin, 2 buttons, 1 iron object
Common records:	41 Bags from 13 contexts, containing pottery fragments, glass vessel fragments, glass bottle fragments, clay pipe fragments, iron fragments, slate objects.
Photographs:	84 Digital Images 3 Colour Negative Films
Drawings:	8 A2 Sheets

### **8.2 Stratigraphic deposit assessment**

No of context records:57

No. of stratigraphic phases: 5 (1, 2A, 2B, 3, 4)

This was a small excavation of a single one-roomed early 19<sup>th</sup> century dwelling. The deposits were discrete areas in the interior (room) and exterior (yard) of the dwelling. A maximum of five phases of deposition were recorded, of which four produced artefacts. The stratigraphy is simple and no further analysis is needed.

### **8.3 Structural Assessment**

The single dwelling was the only structure apart from exterior yard walls, sub-floor drains and a small outhouse privy. These had been modified as part of two phases of activity only and no further analysis is needed.

## 8.4 Artefactual Assessment

The great majority of the artefacts comprise pottery. This all derives from rubbish deposits and consists of about 110 vessels, most of which are represented by a single sherd only, i.e. there are no pit deposits of complete or near complete vessels. There are also a few pieces of glassware vessels and ornaments, glass bottles, clay pipes and metal objects, including one coin.

Of these, the pottery and glass vessel fragments require specialist study before further interpretation is possible. The provisional identification needs to be supplemented by more accurate dating, sourcing and analysis. This would aim to provide a profile of the social status of the inhabitants of the house in its different phases through identification of the type and source of the vessels used and comparison of them with assemblages from excavations elsewhere.

## 8.5 Statement of Potential

Only a small part of this area of early housing was excavated and this was confined to a single dwelling that was identified during the evaluation phase. This was chosen carefully as a well-preserved complete example of a number of quite similar houses. It proved to be a good and well-preserved example and it also proved to have greater potential than was expected. This was because it had more than one phase of construction and, as part of this, had some sealed floor levels from the earliest part of its occupation. This appears to have derived from modification of the housing in the area generally and adds to the history of Bangor. It also provided some stratigraphic separation of the artefacts and analysis of these gives the potential to allow better understanding of the occupants of the house. Further desktop research could identify other excavated examples of similar 19<sup>th</sup> century houses to allow close comparison and better understanding of the social conditions in Bangor during the period in which the house was occupied.

After receipt of the specialist pottery report a more meaningful interpretation of the Dean's Court house can be made for a revised report and which could be incorporated into an academic publication. This would synthesise the results and make them available for wider academic use. The Journal of Post-Medieval Archaeology would be suitable a suitable place for publication.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **CONTEXT CATALOGUE IN PHASE ORDER**

#### **Phase 1**

655 Old Field Topsoil below 654

#### **Phase 2a**

604 Wall at North Side of House  
608 Party Wall Between Houses  
609 Wall at South Side of House  
610 North Stub Wall of Fireplace  
611 South Stub Wall of Fireplace  
613 Remains of Hearth Side Walls  
615 Slate Slab Floor of Hearth  
616 Remains of Brick Hearth Surrounds  
617 Rough Laid Slate Surface to Ash pit  
620 Doorway to Adjacent Property to East along Dean's Court  
627 Interface between 625 and 626  
628 As 627, but within Alcove South of Fireplace  
637 Gravelly/Ashy Deposit in Alcove North of Fireplace  
638 Slate Floor to South Alcove  
639 Slate Floor to North Alcove  
642 Surface of Backyard Below Shale Deposit  
645 Slate Slab Forming Front of Earth Closet  
647 Structure West of Earth Closet  
648 Lower Fill of 647  
649 Closet Structure  
650 Lower fill of Earth Closet  
651 Slate Floor of Earth Closet Chamber  
653 Northern Property Boundary Wall  
654 Make-up Layer below Yard Surface 642  
658 West Wall of House

#### **Phase 2b**

614 Purple Ashy Deposit within Hearth  
619 Rough Laid Slate Floor Surface beneath 605/612  
625 Debris Floor below 624

#### **Phase 3a**

605 Stony clay Make-up Layer for Later House Floor  
606 Old Topsoil of House Backyard  
607 Buried Old Tarmac Road  
612 Same as 605  
618 Probable Ash/Midden Pit in Back Yard

- 621 Broken Tile Layer Subsiding into Culvert 622
- 622 Stone Lined Drain or Collapsed Culvert
- 623 Surface of Later House floor
- 624 Shale Make up Layer of Later house Floor
- 626 Sandy Clay Floor below 625
- 630 Rear House Yard
- 631 Ceramic Drain Trap at Rear of House
- 634 Wall at West Side of House Yard
- 635 Shale Make up Layer below Rear Yard, equivalent to 624
- 636 Shale Make up Layer below Rear Yard, equivalent to 624
- 641 Lens of Sandy Material overlying 626 Floor
- 652 Wall at East Side of House Yard
- 656 Stone Lined Culvert within 624

### **Phase 3b**

- 631 Ceramic Drain Trap at Rear of House
- 632 Slate Slabs at Rear of Brook Row House
- 633 Rough Cobbled Surface at Rear of House Yard
- 643 Rubble Infill of Water Closet
- 644 Ceramic Drains in Water Closet
- 646 Fill of Earth Closet
- 657 Upper fill of 647 (Water Closet Phase)

### **Phase 4**

- 601 Modern Car Park tarmacadam surface
- 602 Lenses of Previous Car Park Surfaces
- 603 Demolition Rubble
- 629 Demolition Debris over Rear Yard 630
- 640 Cleaning Debris over 20<sup>th</sup> century Floor of Toilet

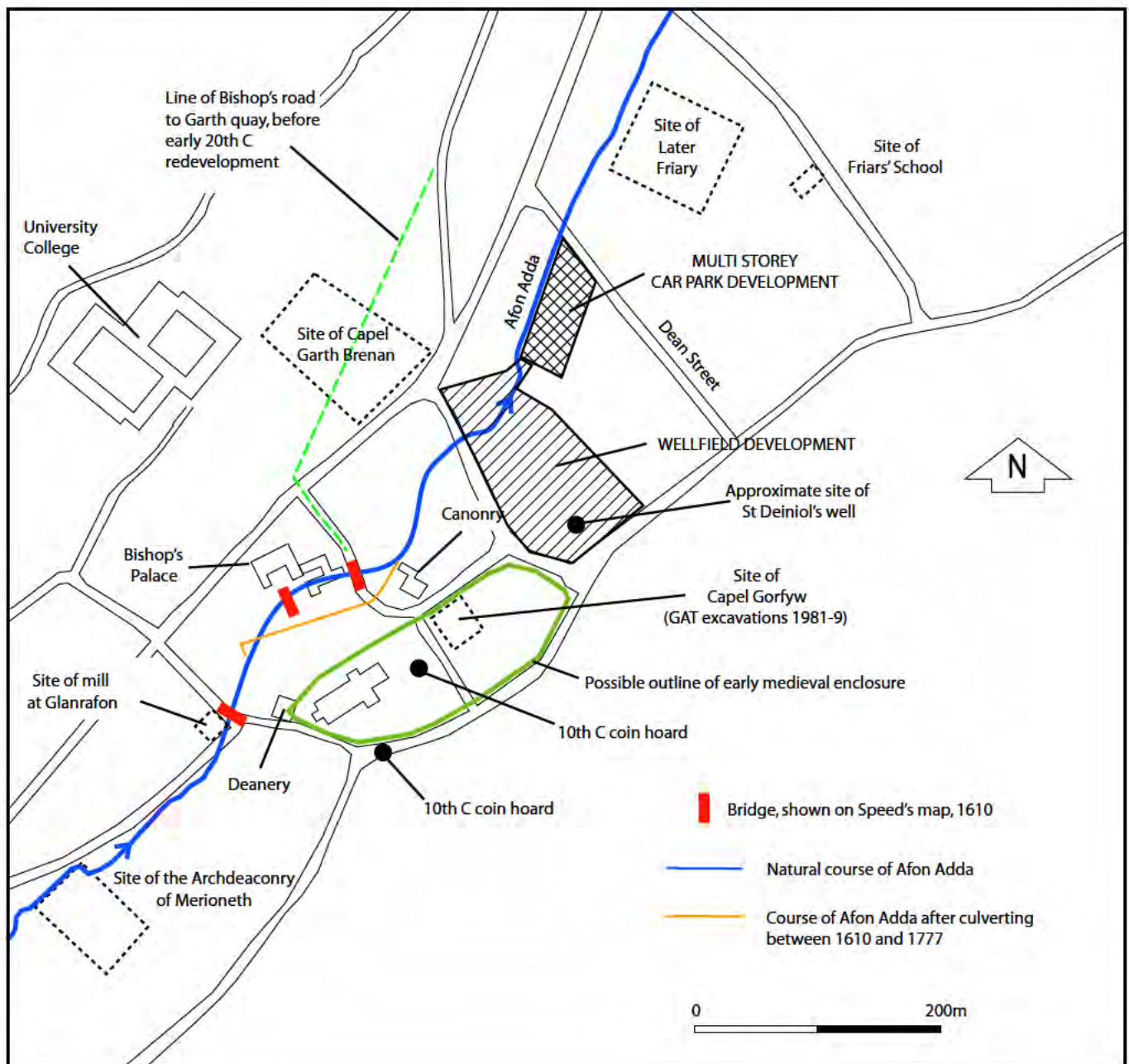


Fig. 1 Dean Street Car Park Excavation.  
Location of the development area in relation to historical features and finds in Bangor



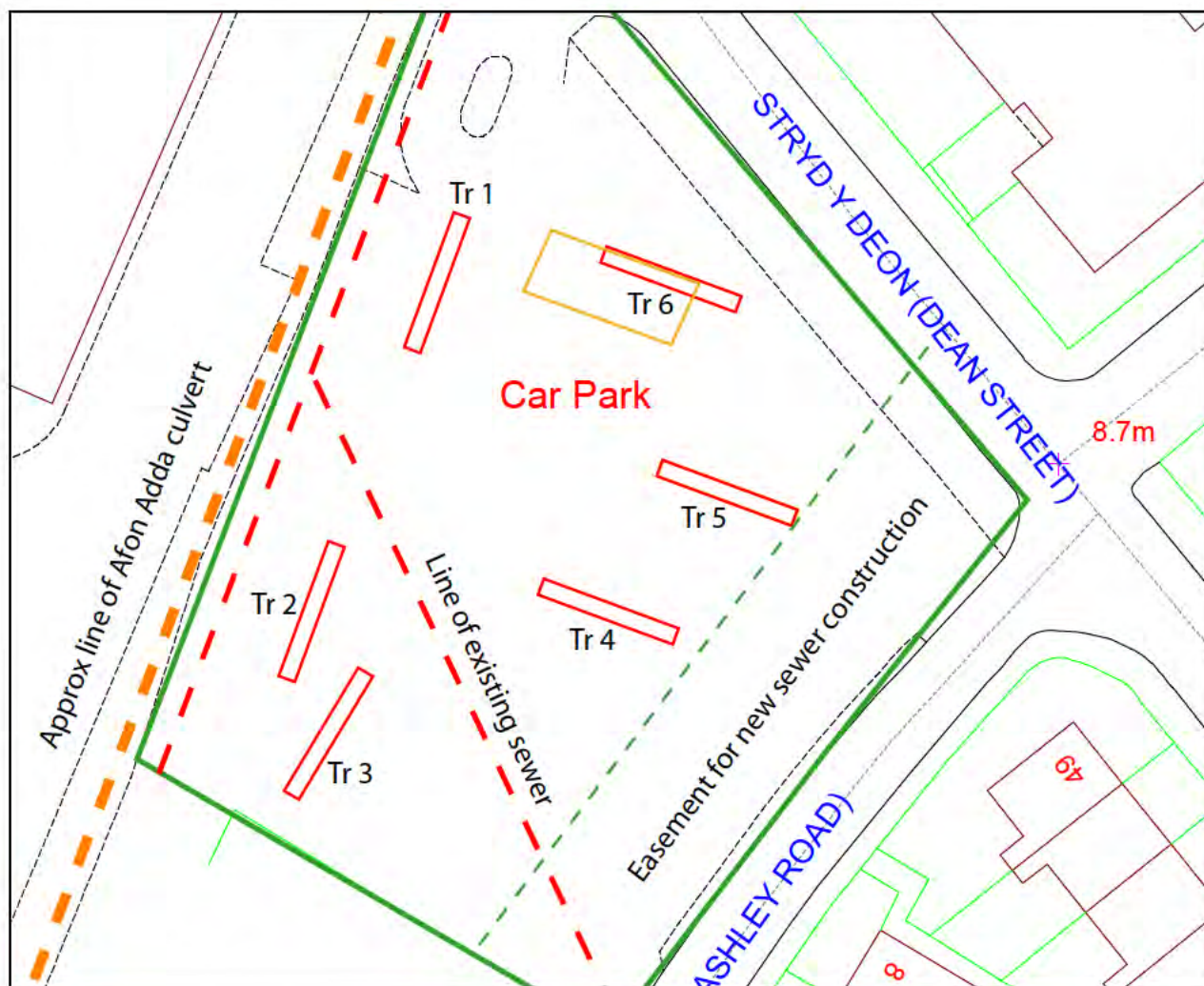


Fig. 2 Dean Street Car Park Excavation, Bangor. Scale 1:500. Green: outline of proposed development area. Yellow: Excavation Area. Red: Excavated archaeological evaluation trenches.

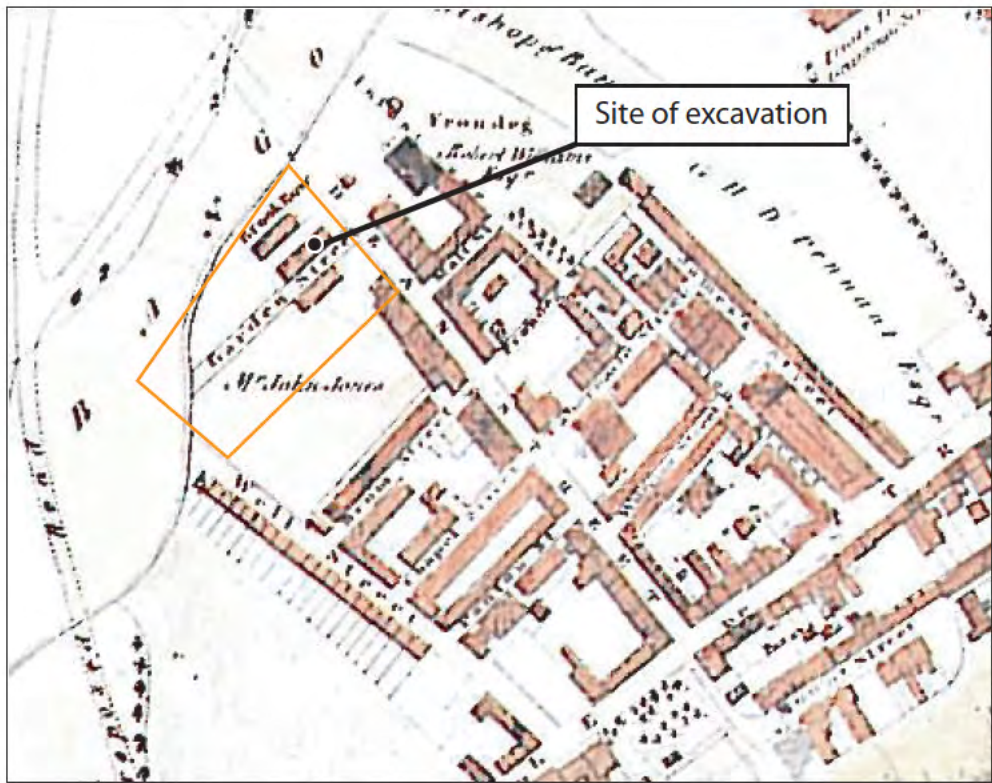


Fig. 3a The excavation site in relation to the Dean Street area of Bangor on Wood's map of 1834. Development area outlined orange.

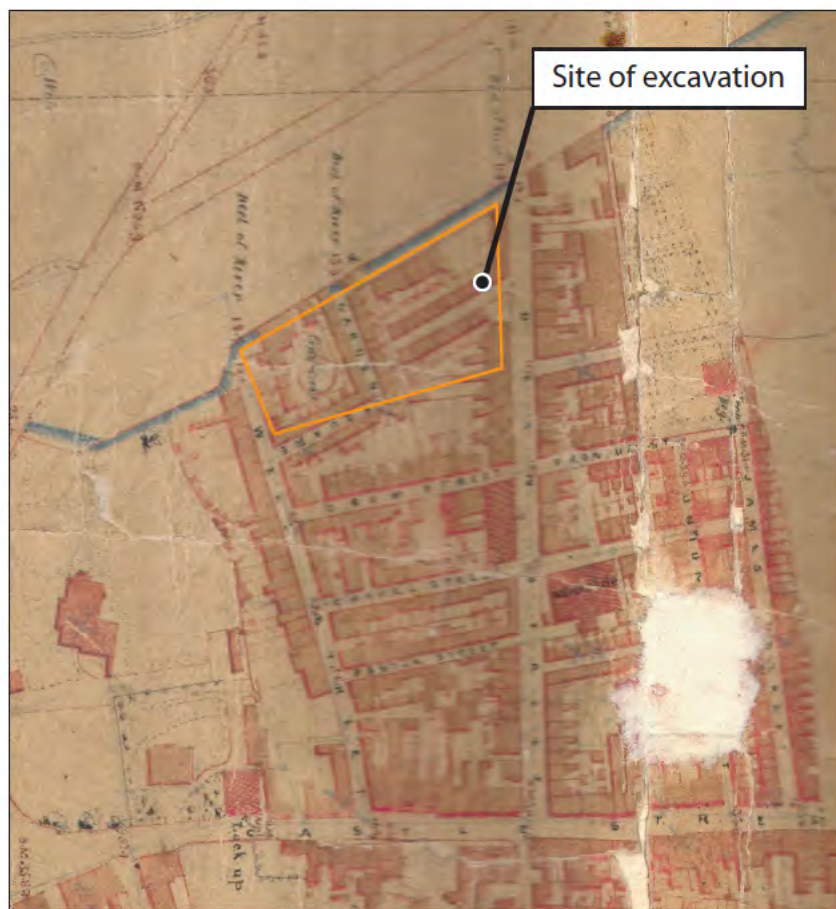


Fig. 3b The excavation site in relation to the Dean Street area of Bangor on a map of 1854 after construction of Garden Square and the first gas works. Development area outlined orange.



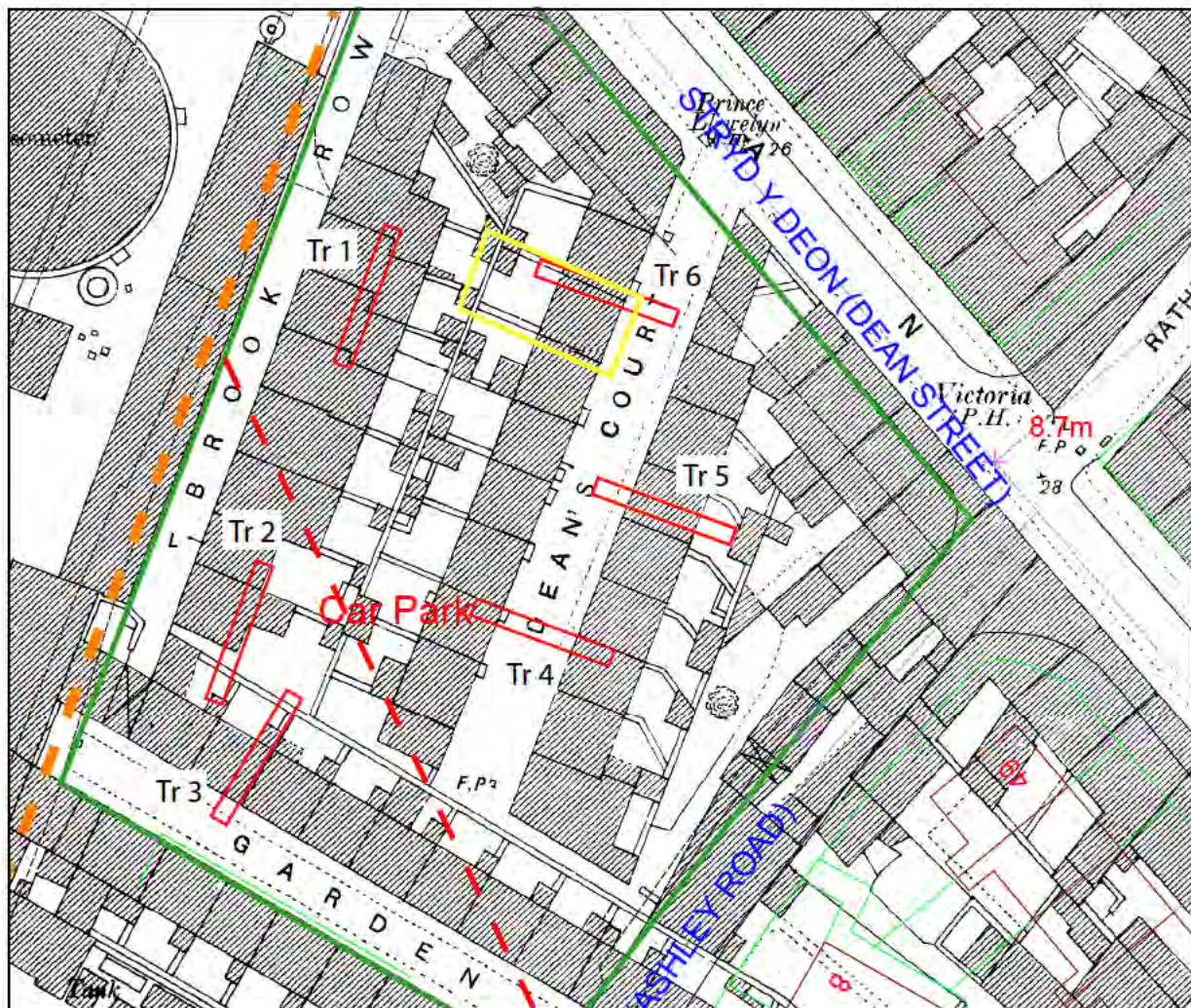


Fig. 4 Dean Street Car Park Excavation Area in relation to the Ordnance Survey map of 1889. Scale 1:500.  
 Green: Proposed development area. Orange broken line: Approximate course of the Afon Adda prior to 1900.  
 Red broken line: Existing sewer. Red: Excavated archaeological evaluation trenches. Yellow: Excavation Trench



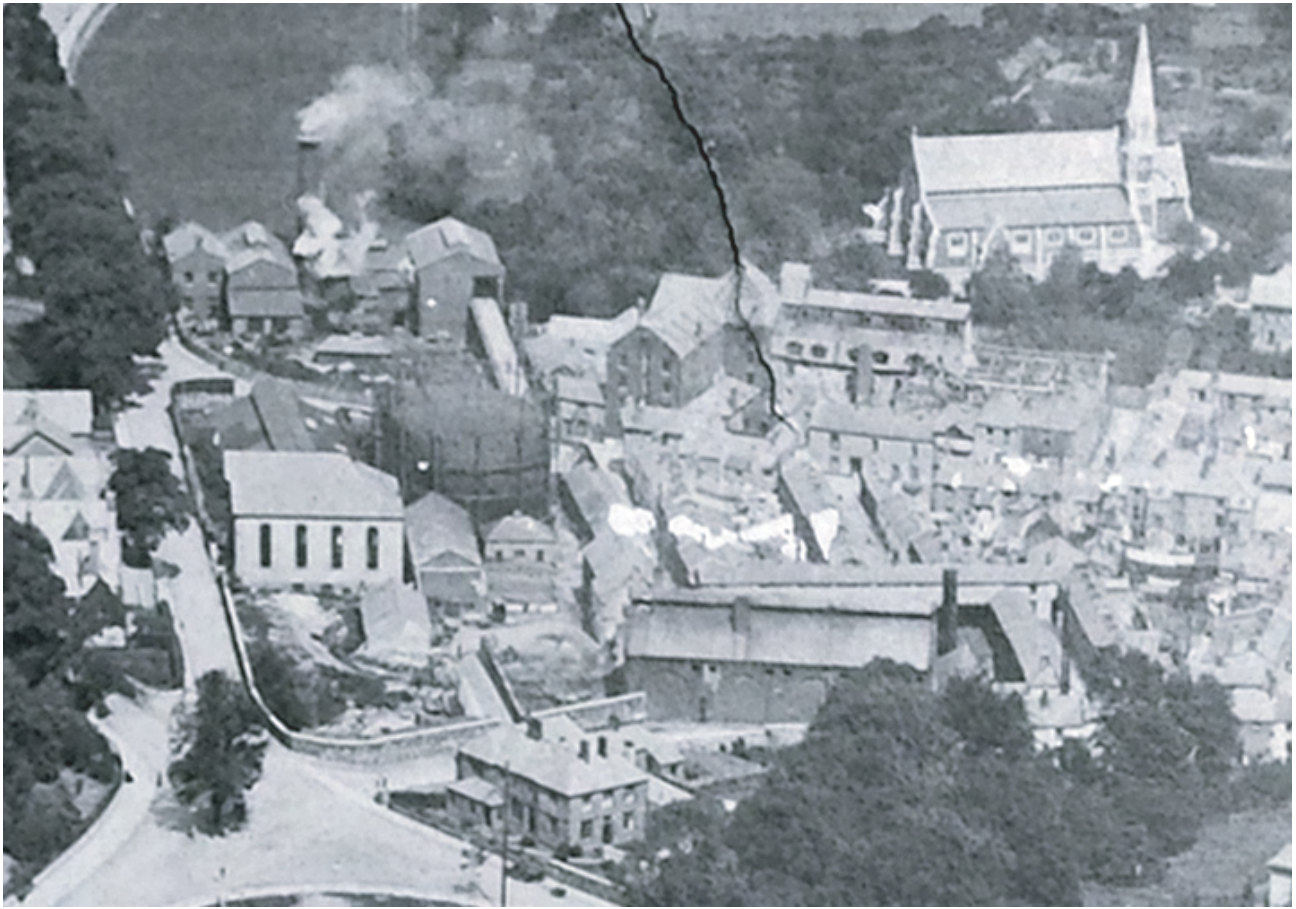


Fig. 5 Aerial view of Bangor from a balloon, c. 1910. View from the west showing the Dean St. area housing, gas works, electricity works and Snowdon Mill.



Fig. 6 View of Dean's Court facing east towards Dean Street, taken in the early 1930s. The excavated house is at the far end of the row on the left. Note the higher roof line of these houses and of the presence of raised entrance steps, compared to those on the other side of the street

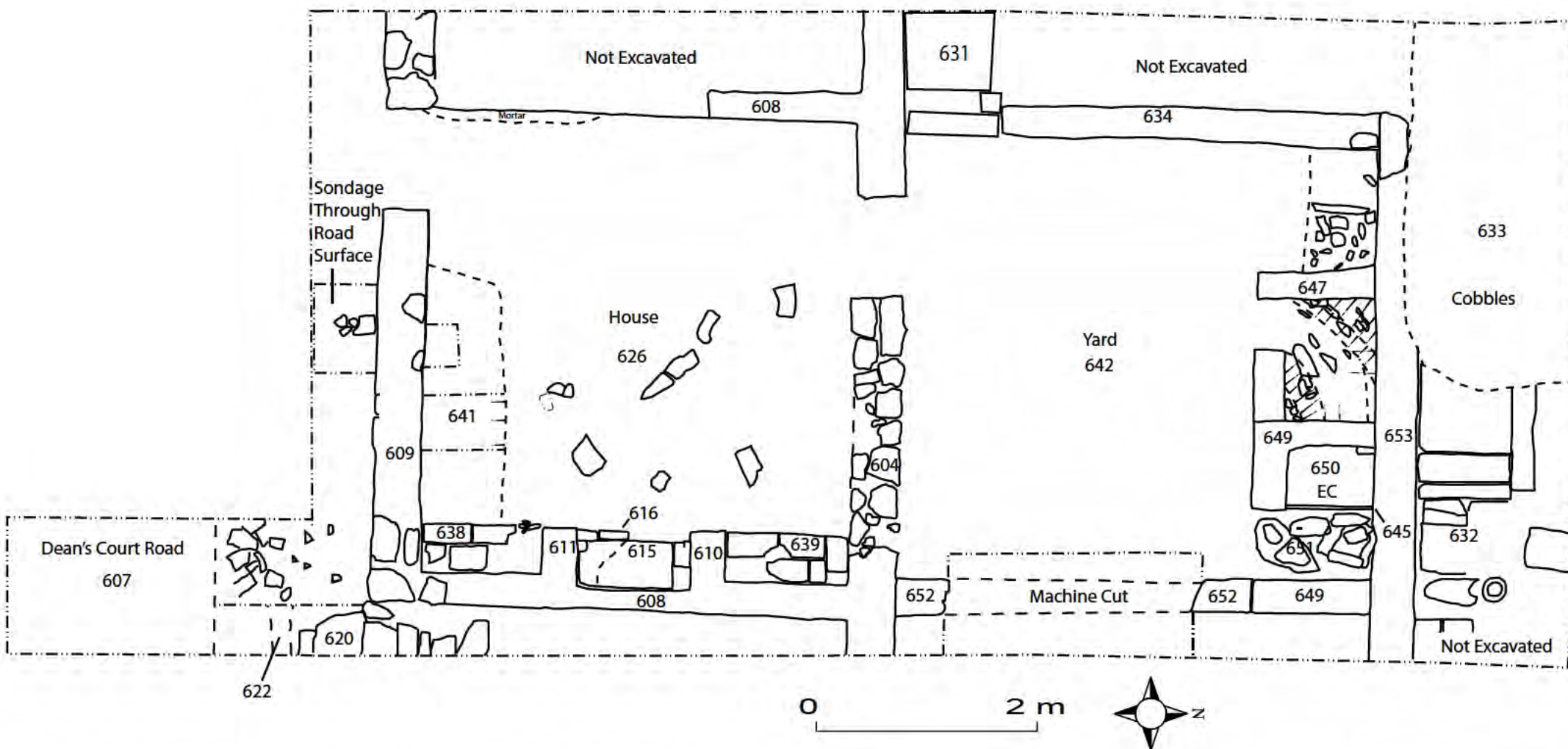


Fig. 7 Plan of earlier house and yard



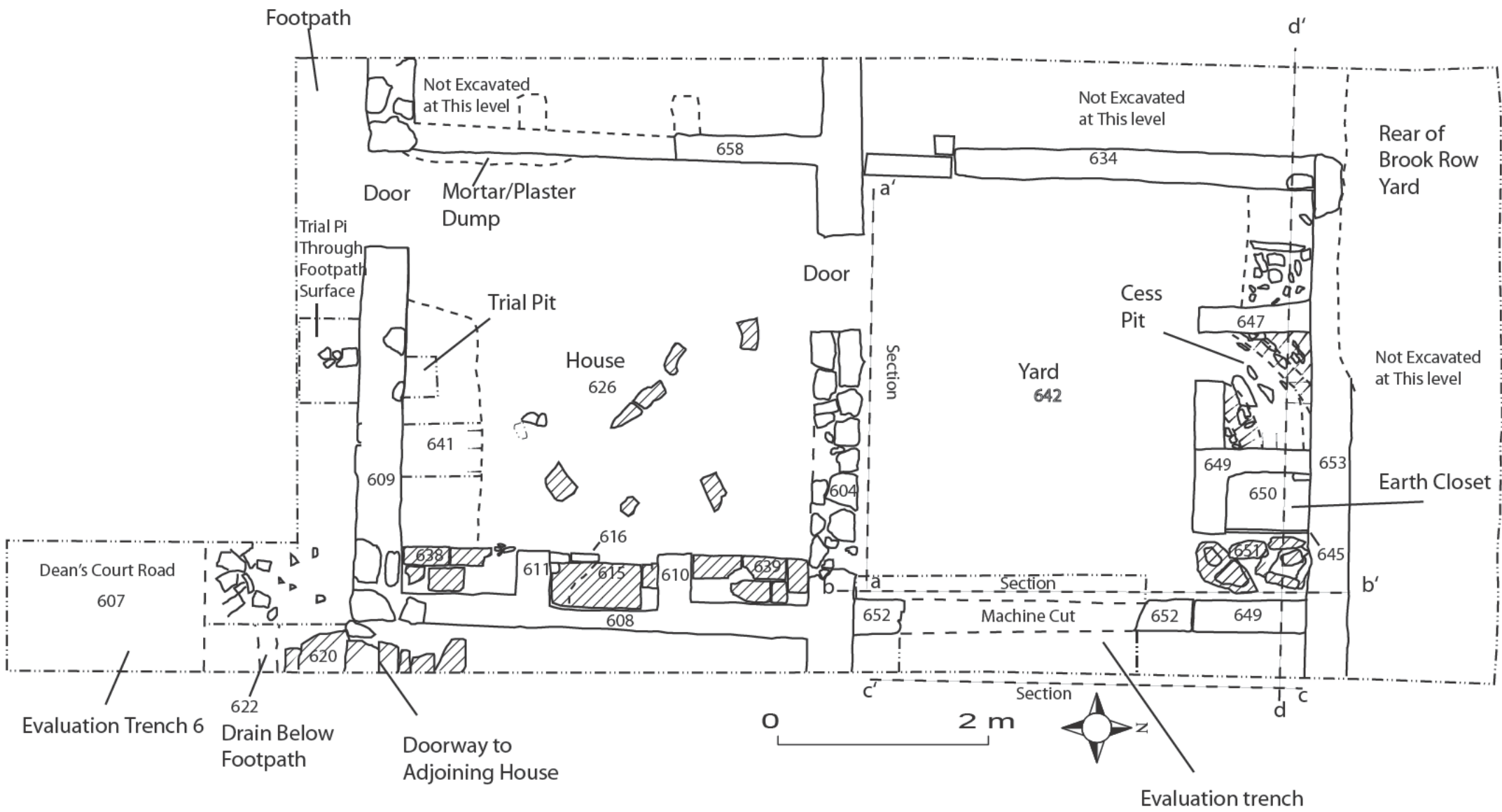


Fig. 8 Phase 2a and 2b

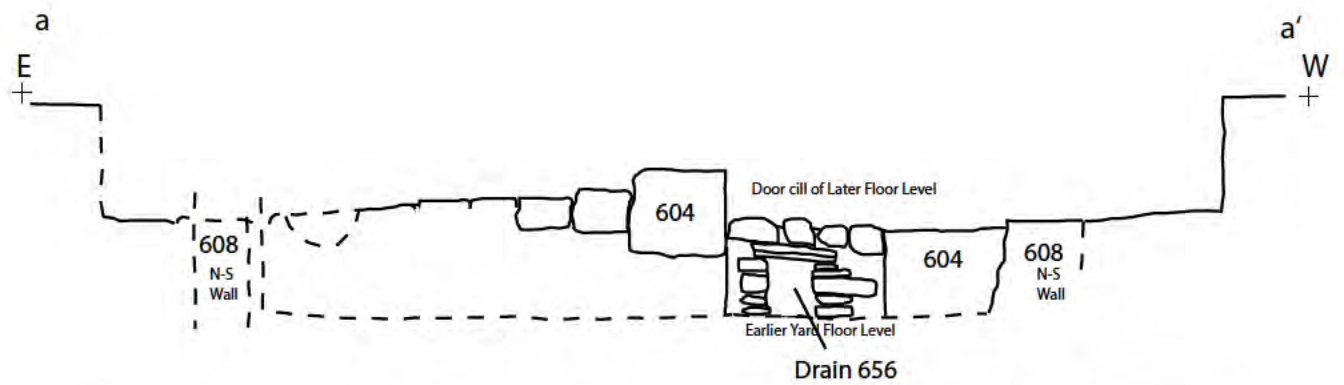


Fig. 9 Section of North facing rear wall of house and later Drain 656, showing doorway into yard

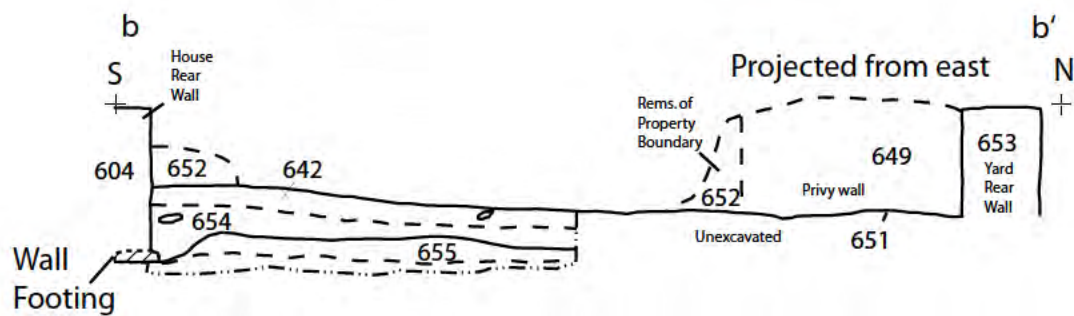


Fig. 10 Section through rear yard showing Phase 1, Pre-house field surface and relationship to house walls  
Sections. Scale 1:40



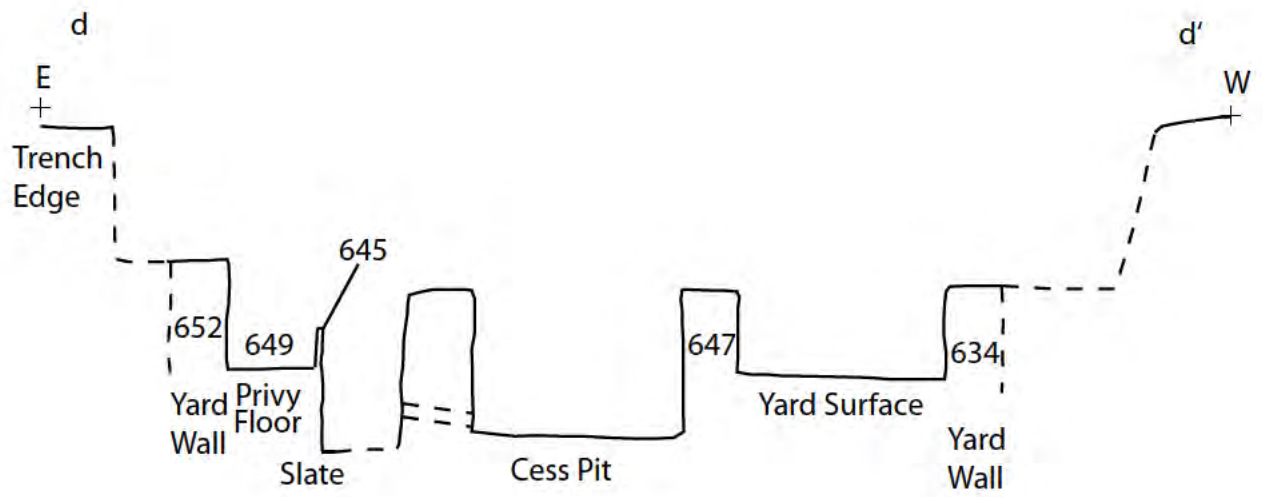


Fig 11. Profile through Phase 2a privy and associated cess pit in rear yard. Scale 1:40



Fig. 12a The later house floor and yard, from the west. Scales with 50cm divisions.



Fig. 12b The intermediate, reconstruction phase floor of the house, from the west. Scales with 50cm divisions.





Fig. 13 The early house floor with the later yard surface still in place, from the west. Scales with 50cm divisions.



Fig. 14 Detailed view of the early house fireplace with its contemporary floor, from the west. 1m and 30cm scales.





Fig. 15a The southern wall alcove of the early house showing its slate floor, heap of coal fragments on the left, and abandoned broken tableware on the right. 30cm scale.



Fig. 15b The northern wall alcove of the early house showing its slate floor. 1m and 30cm scales.





Fig. 16 The rear door of the house and part of the early yard surface, from the north, showing the culvert constructed through the doorway and overlaid by the door cill of the later floor. Scales with 50cm divisions.



Fig. 17 The later yard surface by the rear door of the house showing the slate covered external culvert with a ceramic drain trap for the later piped drain inserted, from the south. Scale with 50cm divisions.





Fig. 18. The early yard surface from the north showing the rear wall of the house with the later culvert and raised floor still in place in the doorway. Excavated privy and cess-pit chamber in the foreground. Scales with 50cm divisions.



Fig. 19. The early yard surface from the south showing the front wall of the privy with the infilling associated with the later raised floor and piped toilet still in place. Scales with 50cm divisions.





Fig. 20. The privy from the east, excavated to its original floor level, with the rear drain hole and slate front to the seat still in place, showing the inserted pipes of the later toilet at a higher level. Scale with 50cm divisions.



Fig. 21. The privy cess pit chamber from the west with the pit emptied, showing the original rear drain hole and the inserted pipes of the later toilet at a higher level. Scale with 50cm divisions.





Fig. 22. The latest surface of the house yard from the west, showing the rough cobbling lying over the boundary between the Brook Row and Dean's Court house yards and the slate slab floor of the Brook Row outhouse. Scales with 50cm divisions.

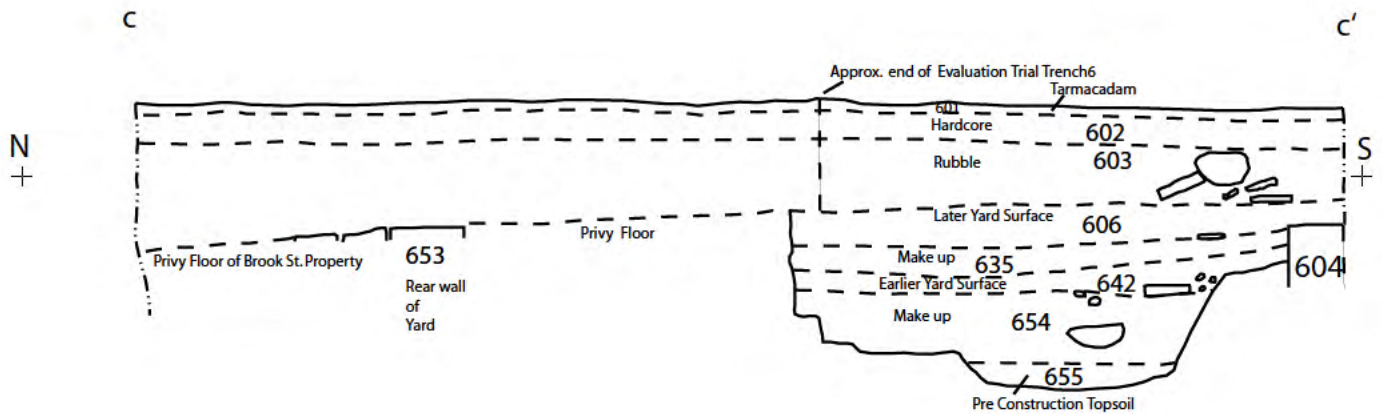


Fig. 23 Section through yard surface showing previous old land surface 655 machine cut through yard deposits







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