
Bar Medi, Palace Street: **Caernarfon, Gwynedd**



Archaeological Recording and Evaluation

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Archaeological Recording and Evaluation: **Bar Medi, Palace Street, Caernarfon**

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Prepared for John Tyrrell

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By

Robert Evans & Andrew Davidson

Illustrations by Tanya Berks

EXTENSION TO BAR MEDI, PALACE STREET, CAERNARFON (G2083)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND EVALUATION

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EXTENSION TO BAR MEDI, PALACE STREET, CAERNARFON

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND EVALUATION

SUMMARY

An archaeological assessment was carried out on land at Bar Medi and the former 'Carters' shop, Palace Street, Caernarfon. The site was formerly the location of Plas Puleston, an important medieval town house, known to have been demolished in 1875. The assessment consisted of an archaeological assessment of the land in the rear yards between the two current properties, the division between them consisting of an arched wall with the arches having been bricked up. A number of other early walls were identified, suggesting a complex history of building arrangements upon the site. The earliest of these was thought to be an outbuilding associated with Plas Puleston when it was a coaching inn known as the Red Lion, a gable of which survives in the rear yard of 2 Palace Street. Cartographic evidence suggests that the arches formed part of a warehouse built on the site of the Bar Medi yard during the latter part of the 18th century. The rear yard contained a small water closet and was demonstrated to be virtually unchanged since the building of 4a Palace Street in 1875.

The evaluation excavation revealed that there was a substantial make up deposit, at least 1.1m thick, of loose modern rubble within the yard of Bar Medi, probably associated with the building of the Gwynedd County Council Offices on Castle Street in the 1980s. Archaeological deposits of post medieval date were noted below that depth however, and earlier ones might survive at a greater depth. In the yard of 4a Palace Street the remains of a stone lined cesspit of probable late medieval or early post-medieval date was discovered only 0.25m below the current yard level, indicating high potential for the survival of archaeological deposits in this area. However the area of undisturbed deposits is probably quite small owing to services and later building.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

It is proposed to construct an extension to the rear of 4a Palace Street, Caernarfon, Gwynedd (centred on NGR SH 47846279). This will encompass a stone wall pierced by three arches which runs on a north-south alignment behind Palace Street. A planning condition stipulated that an archaeological survey of the wall, a desk-based study of the site and an archaeological evaluation be undertaken in advance of the development. 4a Palace Street and the arched wall behind it are grade II listed buildings (Ref No 26559).

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust was invited by Mr John Tyrell to undertake the survey work and archaeological evaluation. A brief was provided for this project by Gwynedd

Archaeological Planning Service (ref. D1303), and GAPS monitored progress of the project to ensure the planning condition was fulfilled.

1.2 Location

The development area consists of a plot of land approximately 30m by 16m, forming an open yard behind the properties on Palace Street, High Street and Castle Street, within the walled historic core of the town of Caernarfon (Fig. 1). It includes on its eastern side a north-south wall pierced by three arches which have since been bricked up. The wall separates the yard of the current Bar Medi from the rear yard of 4a Palace Street, which consists of an area approximately 6m by 4.3m, within which a late 19th century water closet survives.

1.3 Acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge the help and understanding of John Tyrell, the landowner, during this project. Ashley Batten of Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service is thanked for his help and advice during the progress of this project. Nina Steele of the Gwynedd HER is thanked for drawing the author's attention to the history of 6 Palace Street. The staff at Gwynedd Archives, Caernarfon, and the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, are also thanked for their forbearance during many requests for maps and other archive material. Tanya Berks carried out the survey work.

2 SPECIFICATION AND PROJECT DESIGN

A brief has not been prepared for this work by Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Services (GAPS) but recommendation has been made by GAPS for a pre-determination archaeological assessment of the area, including building recording and trial excavation. This has been conducted in accordance with guidelines specified in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment* and *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 2001). The building recording follows the guidelines laid down in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standard Buildings or Structures* (1996. Rev. 2001).

3 METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The archaeological assessment study involved the consultation of maps, computer records, written records and reference works, which make up the Historic Environment Record (HER), located at Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Bangor. Estate maps, tithe maps and OS maps were examined at the Gwynedd Archives, Caernarfon and the National Library of Wales, and aerial photographs at the National Monuments Record (NMR) at Aberystwyth. The CARN database of the NMR was also consulted online.

Following the initial assessment it was agreed that three archaeological evaluation trenches should be excavated in order to test for the depth and survival of archaeological deposits; two within the Bar Medi yard and one to the rear of 4a Palace Street (Fig. 2). These were targeted as far as possible on potential areas of archaeological survival.

A site visit was carried out on 17th May 2009, when both the yard to the rear of Bar Medi and that of 4a Palace Street were examined.

A theodolite and drawn survey was carried out on 17th May 2009. This resulted in the production of a drawing of both elevations of the arched wall and associated stub walls (Fig. 15).

4 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Topographic background

Caernarfon lies securely inside the east end of the Menai Strait, on the shore of the Gwynedd mainland, facing north across the Menai Strait located on a low rocky peninsula. It was identified by the Romans and Edward I as being strategically placed to reach the inner regions of Snowdonia, the Llŷn Peninsula and Anglesey. The town lies at the junction of several mountain passes, and on the line of the main transport route that followed the coastal plateau around the Snowdonia massif. It is well defended by the tidal estuary of the River Seiont to the west, the Strait to the north and the River Cadnant to the west. The Roman fort of Segontium, sited inland of the coast and above the River Seiont, may have given rise to a small Christian community in post-Roman times, though the Welsh commotal centre was established closer to the coast, on the site Edward I was to choose for his castle and walled town. From medieval times onwards it continued as a regional centre of economic importance and became the county town of the 'new' county of Caernarfonshire in 1536.

The proposed development site, located behind the southern end of Palace Street close to its junction with the High Street formerly contained the medieval town house of Plas Puleston, a significant town house originating in the 13th century. It was still standing in the 18th century, but was demolished in about 1875 to make way for the present houses at 4 and 4a. The arched wall appears earlier than the 19th century, and must be associated with the former Plas Puleston, probably from a later phase of use, when it was an inn called The Old Red Lion.

In the 19th century the growth of the town was fuelled by the development of the copper and slate industries in the surrounding countryside, and the construction of the Nantlle Railway to ship slates from the harbour.

4.2 Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations

The Castle and town walls of Caernarfon are a World Heritage Site (Ref 374-002), a Scheduled Ancient Monument and in the care of Cadw. Most of the buildings surrounding the study area are Listed Buildings, and those within 250m of Bar Medi are listed in Appendix 1. Most notable however is 6 Palace Street, the former Vaynol Arms, which retains a significant amount of medieval fabric and is a Grade II* Listed Building (Ref No. 3909). 4a Palace Street and the arched wall behind it are grade II Listed Buildings (Ref No 26559) along with 4 Palace Street (Ref No 26560). Bar Medi lies within the Conservation Area of Caernarfon.

4.3 Archaeological and Historical background

4.3.1 Roman Caernarfon

The Romans chose the summit of the ridge between the Cadnant and the Seiont to build their fort of Segontium at the pivotal point between the northern and western coast roads (Casey and Davies 1993). Established about 77AD, it continued in occupation, certainly until 383 when Magnus Maximus withdrew much of the army, and probably until 393, when troops were removed to control the revolt of Eugenius in Gaul. Two hundred metres west of the auxiliary fort lies a second Roman fortification, usually called Hen Waliau. This was a rectangular enclosure 70m by 50m lying at the top of a steep scarp above the Seiont. The west side is now gone, having been heavily robbed out, though the line of this wall has been found by excavation. The function and date of this fort is still uncertain, though the evidence suggests a late 4th century structure, possibly used as a storage compound. Access down the slope to the Seiont would therefore have been important, and this was probably at the north-west corner of the fort where there is a break in the steep slope.

4.3.2 Medieval and later Caernarfon

Following the withdrawal of Roman troops, the initial focus of settlement at Caernarfon appears to have shifted inland of the fort, around the parish church of Llanbeblig, though the location of the church may have been determined by the existence of a Roman cemetery that lay alongside the road outside the fort gate, and not associated with any settlement. When the Normans attempted to gain a foothold in the area in 1090 they chose a site below the fort and alongside the Strait on which to build their motte and bailey castle. A Welsh settlement may well have formerly existed here, and influenced the siting of the motte. A settlement in this area was destroyed after the Edwardian conquest of 1282-3 to make way for the construction of the new castle. It was built around the existing motte, and the new town occupied a level plateau to the north on land that was virtually an island, formed by the river Seiont, the Menai Strait and the river Cadnant. The town laid out on a grid pattern and was enclosed by walls. The chief street of the town was the High Street that crossed the town from east to west, between the two principal exits from within the walls. Porth y Aur was the seaward exit to the west, and Porth Mawr, or the East Gate, built in stone in 1301-2, led out to the short Eastgate

Street, giving it its name (RCAHMW 1960, 150). Evidence from medieval Caernarfon has been found on Eastgate Street (Davidson and Gwyn 1996) and a leet from the river Cadnant for a medieval town mill has been found at 23-25 Bridge Street (Davidson *et al.* 2008).

Within the town walls, Palace Street ran south of the High Street towards the Castle ditch. A number of excavations have been carried out within the town walls. Excavations at 11-13 High Street in 1994 revealed possible evidence for rubbish and cess pits to the rear of the burgage plots on the street (Ward 1994, 4). At 29 High Street a possible late medieval wattle and daub earth found structure was located along with evidence of activity from the 14th through to the 18th century was uncovered (Carver, 1993, 7).

The street name Palace Street is derived from Plas Mawr, a substantial 16th century town house of the Griffith family of Vaynol, on which site the Market Hall, built in 1832, now stands. The name ‘Red Lion Street’, used during parts of the 18th and 19th centuries for Palace Street (Figs. 4,5), is derived from Plas Puleston, a substantial medieval house, when it was the Red Lion Inn, which it had been since at least the late 17th century. Records of assize of ale referring to the Red Lion survive from 1703 (GAS XD1/322) (XD1/322), by which time it had become the property of the Bulkleys of Baron Hill (Jones 1882, 112). The inn was a well known place for accommodating visitors to the town, in 1733 John Kelsall, the prominent Quaker, stayed at the Red Lion whilst conducting business in the town (Evans 1972, 125). The building was described in the latter part of the 19th century as:

‘A long low house extending from the present butcher’s shop to the building used formerly as a fish market. There were two doors and to the ground floor rooms, five windows. To the upper storey there were six windows, all of which were of the old diamond-pane style. The roof was of slate and three massive stone chimneys rose from the back of the house. The upper compartments projected over the pavement... On the front of the house was fastened the sign of a ‘lion rampant’ painted in glaring red on a blue ground and the doors being coloured green, gave a pleasing appearance to the cleanly whitewashed building’ (ibid., 112-113).

The medieval building of Plas Puleston is depicted on John Buckler’s watercolour of Palace Street of 1810. This drawing is centred on Plas Mawr, the Elizabethan town house of the Vaynol estate, however Plas Puleston can be seen in the right foreground (Fig. 16). Another pencil drawing of the house is shown on page 112 of *Old Karnarvon* (Jones 1882), although this is unattributed and of unknown date.

Plas Puleston had been one of at least six substantial properties in the town owned by the principal figures in the commercial and administrative life of the medieval town (Soulsby 1983, 90). It was believed to have been originally the property of Roger de Puleston, sheriff of Anglesey, who was hanged from a beam in his own house when the town was sacked following the Madog rebellion of 1294. Pennant refers to the building as an ‘ancient house’ (Pennant 1783, 227), but it is referred to by Hyde-Hall as a building ‘of very inferior pretensions...degraded into an alehouse, the Red Lion, which gives its name

to the street.’ (Hyde-Hall 1952, 194). The house was demolished in about 1870 and replaced with a new Red Lion Inn, after having been sold to the sitting tenant by the Baron Hill estate.

The fish market building south of Plas Puleston was the property of the Assheton Smiths of Vaynol Hall, and a corn warehouse lay immediately behind it (X Vaynol/4171, Fig. 8). These buildings were demolished in 1875 and a four storey warehouse, faced with Ruabon brick on the street frontage, was built in their place, to be held at an annual rent of £30 per annum (X Vaynol 4231). A yard associated with the old corn warehouse appears to have incorporated the earlier yard of the Red Lion Inn. To the south of the warehouse is the old Vaynol Arms. This is one of the oldest surviving buildings in the town of Caernarfon, containing medieval timberwork dating from the 15th century and roof timbers that showed signs of being part of a medieval solar cross wing to a lost hall (Jones 2003). The medieval burgrave plots survive in their entirety in this part of the street.

The street was notorious in the 19th century for the number of taverns, with at least fourteen public houses on Palace Street by 1900 (Evans 1972, 125).

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY RESULTS

5.1 Cartographic Evidence

The history of land ownership in the area of the proposed development is a complex issue, since it has been in a number of different hands. Speed’s map of Caernarfon of 1610, the earliest cartographic representation of the town of Caernarfon, shows properties along Palace Street and all the surrounding streets, with a large open area behind the properties (Fig.3). The buildings are not shown distinctively different from each other, but do suggest that there was a significant amount of open area behind the properties. The Glynllifon Estate Surveys of 1790 (NLW Ms. Maps 95, Fig. 5) and 1815 (GAS XD2/8356, Fig. 6) also indicates that there was a considerable amount of open space behind the properties. The property that lay on the site of the current Bar Medi building was the property of the Vaynol estate by 1829 (X Vaynol/4074, Fig.7), but appears to have been previously in unknown but different ownership in 1777 (X Vaynol/4056, Fig. 4). It consisted of a Fish market building covering an area of 2 perches and behind it at right angles to it a corn market and attached yard of 5 perches. Plas Puleston, which ran along the street frontage to the south of the fish market was the property of the Bulkley’s of Baron Hill, until sold to the tenant in about 1870. No surviving Baron Hill estate maps showing the town of Caernarfon, which presumably would have shown Plas Puleston, have been located. However the building can be seen on Wood’s map of Caernarfon, dated 1834 (Fig. 8). A yard can clearly be seen to the rear of the building (marked ‘C’ on the map), and access from Palace Street between it and the fish market. A building ran parallel to, but behind Plas Puleston This area was probably an area of stabling connected to Plas Puleston when it served as the Red Lion Inn. The northern gable end of a building which survives in the yard area of No 2 Palace Street is thought to be part of the former stables/outbuildings of the inn (Fig. 21). Wood’s map of Caernarfon of 1834 also

shows a number of warehouses behind Plas Puleston. One wall of these probably partially survives as the infilled arches to the rear of 4a Palace Street. From the early 19th century this area became predominantly infilled with warehousing (Fig. 10), and by 1877 can be shown to have been the property of Sir William Clerke of Mertyn Hall, Flint (GAS XD2/6582).

5.2 Site description

The site consists of a north-south wall pierced by three arches, to the east of which lies the small rear yard of 4a Palace Street, and to the west lies part of the larger rear yard of Café Medi. These three elements will be described separately below.

5.2.1 The Arched Wall

The wall lies in the rear yard behind 4a Palace Street, and presently forms the west boundary of the yard. West of the wall lies a larger yard now associated with Café Medi. The wall is built of limestone rubble and is pierced by three arches. Some worked slate was noted within the main masonry, and this with other stylistic considerations suggests that the wall does not pre-date the 18th century. Later reconstruction and capping of the wall has taken place, which includes modern brick. The arches have been bricked in on two separate occasions – the initial blocking was undertaken on the east side, when all arches were fully bricked up with 19th century bricks of dark red colour and uneven size. More recently, the arches were again fully blocked on the west side with brickwork typical of the later 20th century (Fig. 17). Both layers of bricks are still present, the older visible from the east side and the later visible from the west side. The later blocking and the capping of the wall was probably undertaken when the council offices were built to the west, and the yard behind Café Medi was raised and re-surfaced.

The wall is aligned north-south, and is 5.8m long and 3.5m high. The width of the arched openings are 1.48m (south), 1.48m (central) and 1.52m (north), with intervening piers approximately 0.5m wide. When viewed from the west side the heights of the arches are 3.2m (south), 3.2m (central) and 2.8m (north). The arches are semi-circular with voussoirs of radiating limestone blocks. The spandrels are built up in thin slabs, whilst the two central piers are of larger squared blocks. The top of the wall has been rebuilt and capped in modern cement mortar. Mortared rubble walls run west from the north and south ends, and these are interpreted as the remains of side walls of an original building, of which only these and the arched wall remain.

The west faces of the two central piers are smooth and finished. The east faces, however, are uneven and obviously formerly continued east, as did the two side walls to north and south. Lime plaster survives on the west side of the piers and on the north and south walls. The map evidence suggests the arched wall formed the east end of a building, and that the two walls that run west from either side the arched wall form the remains of the side walls of this building. The western part of the building has been completely destroyed. This fits the evidence on the ground well, apart from the evidence which suggests the building formerly continued east. There is no map evidence for this, and all

the cartographic evidence suggests that this area was an open courtyard, whilst the presence of other buildings would have left little room for continuation.

A stone wall aligned north-south abuts the north-east corner of the arched wall, and continues north. It is not keyed in to either the arched wall or the east-west wall (Fig. 20). It appears to have formed the north side of a building, shown on Wood's 1834 map of Caernarfon (Fig. 8), of which the north gable end also survives in the yard to the rear of 2 Palace Street (Fig. 21). This may have been a stable block associated with Plas Puleston in its Red Lion Inn phase.

5.3.2 Rear Yard to 4a Palace Street

A water closet had been built against the arched wall on the eastern side within the yard to 4a Palace Street, partially covering the southernmost arch. The closet measured 1.96m high and 1.4m wide, and extending 1.15m forward of the wall (Fig. 18). The 1875 cellar to 4a Palace Street extended 1.1m out beneath the current yard with window opening providing a limited amount of light to it. The surface of the courtyard was covered in about 10cm of concrete. Further discussion of this yard is given in 6.3.3 and 8.1 below.

5.3.3 Rear Yard to Bar Medi

The yard to the rear of Bar Medi consists of a 'T' shaped area of open ground, approximately 30m north-south and 16m east west. The eastern portion of it has a Tarmacadam surface, with an area of concrete paving and cobblestones to the west. The area forms an emergency escape route for a number of properties that back onto it, but would formerly have been the back parts of a number of medieval burgage plots. 6.4m west of the arched wall a recently dug open test pit had been excavated (Fig. 2, Trench 1), which revealed a make up layer of loose limestone rubble below the macadamised surface to a depth of 1.3m, suggesting that there had been significant deposits of make up and levelling material placed in the area. Further discussion of this yard is given below.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

6.1 Introduction

It was agreed with Ashley Batten of GAPS that three small evaluation trenches should be excavated to test for the possible survival of medieval and post-medieval deposits in both the yard to the rear of Bar Medi and in the small yard to the rear of 4a Palace Street (Fig. 2). One of these, Trench 1, had been previously opened for a non-archaeological purpose to a depth of 0.65m and this was utilised for the archaeological evaluation. Another trench was hand dug within this yard, Trench 2, to test for evidence for the depth and survival of deposits, and the possibility of the survival of one of the walls of a warehouse believed to be on this site in the early 19th century. Trench 3, located in the rear yard in a small area where neither services nor excavations related to the cellar of 4a

Palace Street was expected to be located, and therefore might reveal deposits of a very different nature to the others two trenches, as there was no reason to believe that deep make up layers would be present. Each trench was to be 2m long by 1m wide.

6.2 Methodology

The evaluation excavation work was carried out over three and a half days between 11th and 16th June 2009. Three trenches were excavated by hand (Figs. 22-24), although a heavy duty concrete breaker was required to break the concrete in the trench to the rear of 4a Palace Street.

The previously opened trench 1 demonstrated that a substantial modern make up layer, at least 0.65m deep, survived in this area, suggesting that a wide area of the Bar Medi yard might be covered in this substantial make up layer. It was therefore felt that this area should be tested for the presence, depth and character of archaeological deposits below this. Trench 3 was placed within the rear yard of 4a Palace Street, where there remained the possibility that the archaeological deposits might be relatively undisturbed by recent activity.

The trenches were planned in relation to the whole site and a scale plan at a scale of 1:20 and one long section was drawn of each of the two trenches in the yard of Bar Medi at a scale of 1:10. Three sections and a plan at a scale of 1:20 were drawn of the third trench in the small yard to the rear of 4a Palace Street, owing to the relative complexity of the deposits observed.

Each distinct layer or evidence of archaeological activity was given its own unique context number and a descriptive record made, and these are referred to throughout the discussion of the results below in brackets. Their relationships to each other were shown on the scale drawings and a photographic record was maintained. The locations of the deposits were surveyed and related to the nearest Ordnance Survey bench mark. A small quantity of finds and one bulk environmental sample recovered from Trench 3.

6.3 Results of the Evaluation Excavation

6.3.1 Trench 1(Figs. 11, 22-23)

Trench 1 consisted of a rectangular area 1.3m by 0.9m that had been previously opened for an unknown purpose. A tarmacadam surface up to 0.1m thick (01) overlay a light grey gravel and mortar deposit about 0.1m thick (02). This overlay a loose grey-brown rubble and mortar deposit (03) containing limestone, quartz and slate material of a depth of 1.1m. This was clearly a make up layer and contained remains of construction materials such as a cement powder bag and a section of an iron pipe or bar running approximately east-west was uncovered. The instability of the loose rubble meant that only a small sondage could be dug from a depth of 0.5m through this deposit. A charcoal rich dark brown silty clay (04) with a depth of about 0.08m, containing burnt ceramic material lay below this make up layer. It was quite compact and could have been a garden

or yard surface prior to the industrialisation of the area in the 18th century, although given that such a small area was exposed it is difficult to be clear on the interpretation of this deposit. This overlay a very charcoal rich very dark grey silty clay (05) the bottom of which was not reached during the excavation.

6.3.2 Trench 2 (Figs. 13, 24-25)

The upper three layers (01-03) were also observed in Trench 2, indicating that the make up layer was present over quite a wide area, probably the whole of the yard behind Bar Medi. Layer (03), partly excavated in a small sondage 0.5m square and seen to be 0.75m deep in this area, overlay a loose brown sandy clay (06) which appeared to be a patchy dump of material overlying 0.05m of a dark brown sandy clay (07) containing slate fragments and roofing felt, indicating that it is a modern deposit. This overlay a mortared brick floor (08), made up of bricks 0.24m by 0.12m laid flat. The floor appears to continue to the north, west and east in the unexcavated areas. Along the southern edge of the brick floor surface abraded lumps of mortar were found, possibly indicating remains of a wall which would be running approximately east-west. The instability of the trench prevented further exploration of this area.

6.3.3 Trench 3 (Figs. 14, 25-26)

Trench 3 was located 1m west of the brick boundary wall and 1m south of the blocked arch wall in the yard behind 4a Palace Street. The surface of the yard consisted of concrete up to 0.1m thick which was broken up by machine drill (09). This overlay a slate flagstone floor surface, consisting of large flagstones, probably dating from the 1875 rebuilding of 4a Palace Street (10). The surface appeared to have undergone a certain amount of patching up over time, a cobblestone and half a brick were observed being used as repair. One slate flagstone, 1.2m by 0.4m, was lifted, revealing an earlier yard surface, which included some slabs of sandstone type stone (11), overlying a sandy clay with charcoal and ash levelling layer up to 0.1m thick, containing the occasional cobblestone (12). This in turn overlaid a thin (0.04m) levelling layer of very dark brown sandy clay with small pebbles which is interpreted as a levelling deposit (13). A patch of disturbance infilled with clay, brick and slate (14) was noted to cut into a brown silty clay (15) containing pottery, slate, cobblestones, clay pipe fragments and butchered animal bone. This deposit was 0.25m thick and overlay friable brown silty clay with red clay lenses and grey ashy material (16). It was at least 1.0m deep and the bottom of this deposit was not reached, but it contained pottery possibly of 17th century date and a significant quantity of butchered animal bone, clearly food waste. Deposits (15) and (16) were contained within the stone lining (17) of a dug pit [18]. The stone lining was of dry stone construction built up against the cut of the pit, and was observed to a depth of 1.35m (Fig. 28). It was not possible to ascertain the dimensions of the pit from the small evaluation trench excavated, as it clearly extended to the north east under the present property boundary with 4 Palace Street. It is however interpreted from comparable examples found elsewhere (Chester City Council 2001) as a cess pit, and to have been in use at least in the 17th and early 18th centuries, and would probably have been at least 2

metres square and 2 metres deep. The origins of the pit could date back to the late medieval period.

7 ARTEFACTS

7.1 Trenches 1 and 2

No artefacts, other than material associated with late 20th century construction work, was uncovered in Trenches 1 and 2. This material was not retained.

7.2 Trench 3

Description	Material	Context	Quantity	Date
CONTEXT 15				
Clay pipe stems	Clay	15	6	18 th cent.
Butchered Animal Bone		15	3 bags	
Bird/poultry bone		15	3 bags	
Shell		15	1 bag	
CONTEXT 16				
Glass		16	1 sherd	
Bird/Poultry Bone		16	8 bags	
Butchered Animal Bone		16	12 bags	
Oyster shell		16	5 shells	
Glazed pottery sherds	Clay	16	4 sherds (one with slip decoration)	18 th cent.
Clay pipe stems		16	1	

7.3 Discussion

7.3.1 Trenches 1 and 2

The material recovered from trenches 1 and 2 is indicative of modern activity only, contained within a make-up layer of up to 1.2m, above probable warehouse foundations of 19th century date.

7.3.2 Trench 3

A number of clay pipe stems were recovered from context (15). These, and finds of thin, regular roofing slates indicate that the upper fill of the cesspit is not earlier than 18th century in date. One sherd of brown glaze slip ware and another glazed sherd found in the lower fill of the cesspit (16) are indicative of a 17th or early 18th century date for this

context. Waste food material, in the form of butchered animal bone, oyster shells, and poultry bones, were found throughout both deposits.

It has not been possible to date the cesspit from the evidence recovered, but comparable examples from places such as Chester (Chester City Council 2001) indicate that deposits of 17th century or earlier are likely to be encountered at greater depth and at the base. The cesspit must have been in use in the 18th century, and was therefore a place of waste disposal during the time that Plas Puleston served as the Red Lion Inn.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The excavation

Trenches 1 and 2 revealed made-up ground approximately 1m deep. These layers were seen to be modern, with the presence of modern building waste, and this is likely to be associated with the construction of the council offices on Castle Street in the 1980s. The earlier deposits were only examined in small trial holes to a maximum depth of 1.3m, and it was not possible to identify the full depth of archaeological deposits.

The charcoal deposit may be associated with a post-medieval yard surface. The brick floor (08) is probably associated with the warehouse known to have been on the site in the 19th century, and may have been the cellar floor of the building associated with the arched wall.

The evidence from Trench 3 revealed a number of yard surfaces overlying a pit partly lined in stone. It contained two fills rich in food waste and discarded domestic material probably dateable to the late 17th and 18th centuries (15,16) within a soft organic soil. This is similar in character to cesspits found in a number of medieval towns, particularly Chester (Chester City Council 2001). The fills also suggested that attempts had been made to control offensive smells by sealing it with layers of ash and red clay. These pits were often cleaned out and the material spread on fields so the dateable material recovered may only represent its final usage. An example of a stone lined cesspit of very similar construction from Chester with a 17th century fill is thought to date from the 15th century (Chester City Council 2001, 3). Only a portion of the pit has been excavated, but it can be suggested from comparable examples that it may have been at least 2m square and 2m deep.

It is clear that the cesspit was in use during the time that the medieval Plas Puleston building was in use, not least because it certainly crosses the boundary between 4 and 4a Palace Street, created only after the demolition of Plas Puleston in 1875. The evidence from the finds suggests that it was used by those staying at the Red Lion Inn during the 17th and 18th century when it was a notable coaching inn within the town of Caernarfon. The pit may however go back to the time when the house was a substantial medieval town house. With further excavation, its contents could reveal a significant amount of evidence about life in early modern Caernarfon.

8.2 The Building Recording

The blocked arches at the rear of 4a Palace Street appear to be of late 18th or early 19th century date, and probably formed the access into a warehouse or similar structure, as shown on Wood's map of 1834, and the OS map of 1889. The phasing of the various walls noted is complex, however, the two walls running west either side the arch, though partly rebuilt, are best interpreted as part of the same building as the arched wall. The end of the wall visible in the north side of the yard of 4a Palace Street, and continuing north to No. 2 Palace Street, is best interpreted as the west side of the building shown on Wood's map in this location. The north gable of that building is preserved behind No. 2.

It has not yet proved possible to identify the function of the building shown on Wood's map which the arched wall is thought to have fronted. It appears as a long narrow building accessible only from the rear of the Red Lion. The widths of the arches are only 1.4m at their widest, yet up to almost 3m high. They would not have been wide enough for carts, and would allow pedestrian access only. However access from Palace Street around the side of Plas Puleston/Red Lion would also have been limited to pedestrians only, although the yard would have been larger before Plas Puleston was demolished (Fig. 8).

8.3 General conclusions

The study area lay largely within the rear yard of Plas Puleston, a medieval town house, which by the late 17th century had become an inn called the Red Lion. This was demolished c. 1870 and replaced by the two houses at 4 and 4a. The arched wall is interpreted as the end of an 18th century warehouse or workshop shown on Wood's map of 1834, of which a small section of the north and south walls survive. This wall became the rear boundary of 4a Palace Street, and the arches were blocked in. This may have occurred c. 1870 when 4a was built. The area west of the arched wall would appear to have remained built up until the construction of the new council offices in the 1980's, when the buildings were demolished, and the floor surfaces raised with rubble by approximately 1m. Nonetheless substantial archaeological deposits survive below this, whilst east of the arched wall there are significant archaeological deposits immediately below the present surface. Future investigation of the surviving deposits could resolve many of the outstanding issues identified within this report.

9 ARCHIVE

The archive consists of 3 day record sheets, 19 individual context sheets, a drawing and photographic register and one A2 sheet of section and plan drawings. Digital survey data is also maintained within the archive.

The photographic archive consists of 66 digital images for the assessment phase of the project and 38 of the evaluation excavation.

Two large bags of animal bone and 11 ceramic sherds were recovered from contexts (15) and (16). A charcoal and bulk sample was obtained from context (16).

The archive is currently held at the trust under project **G2090**.

Three copies of the bound report will be sent to the client, and a copy and principal digital material will be sent to the regional HER. A copy of the report will be provided to the National Monument Record, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales, Aberystwyth.

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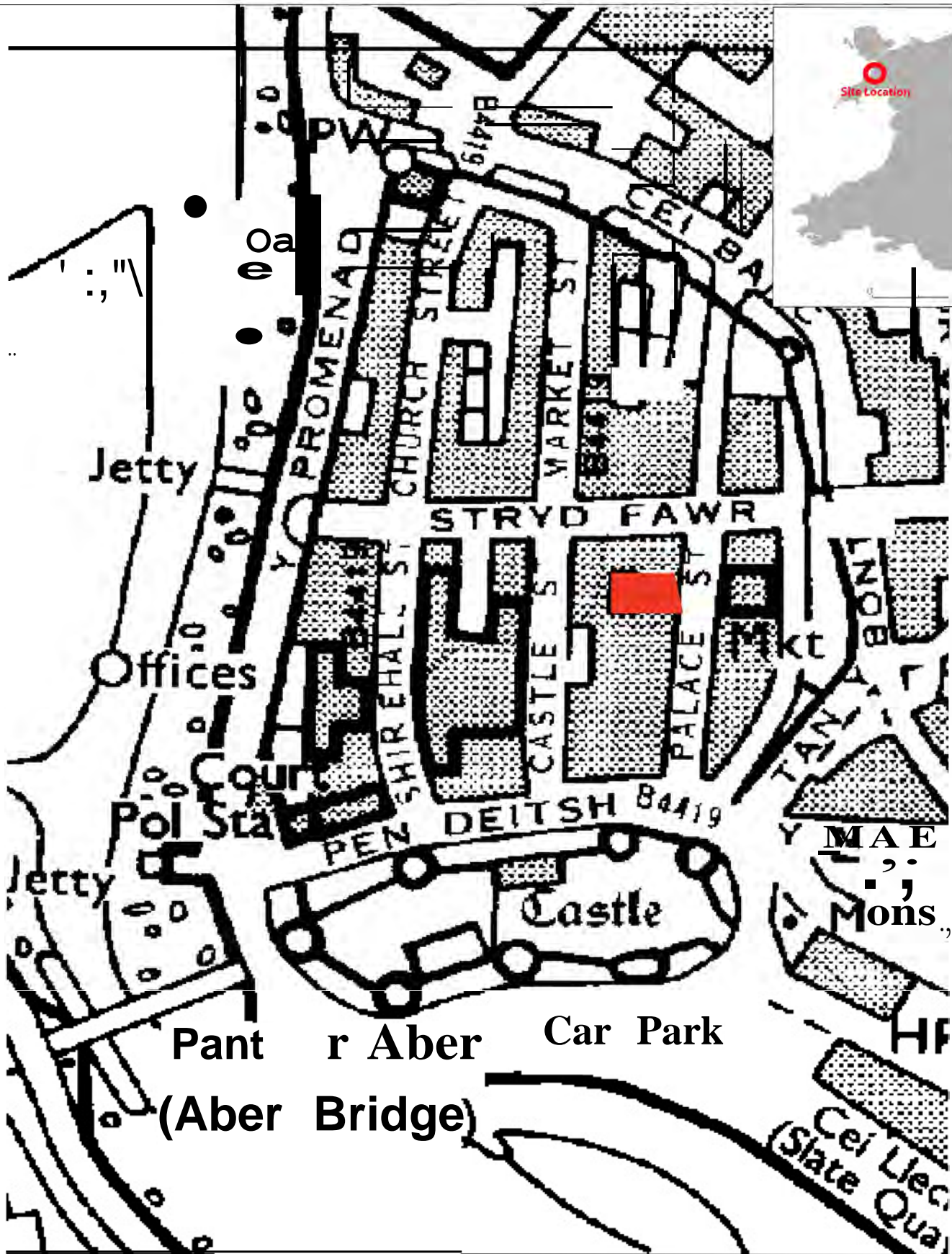
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Development area outlined in Red

N
6

0

200m

VMDDIRIDOLARTH
AACHAOLUCOR



rwymmn
RCHU/THBHC/CI

Craig &uno, Ffird y (jarth, Uango, Gw)lidd. LL57 2RT
Ffôn 01 248 352535, Ffôn 01248 370925, email: gat@hanch.co.uk

G2083, Palace Street,
Caernarfon

Figure 1.Site Location

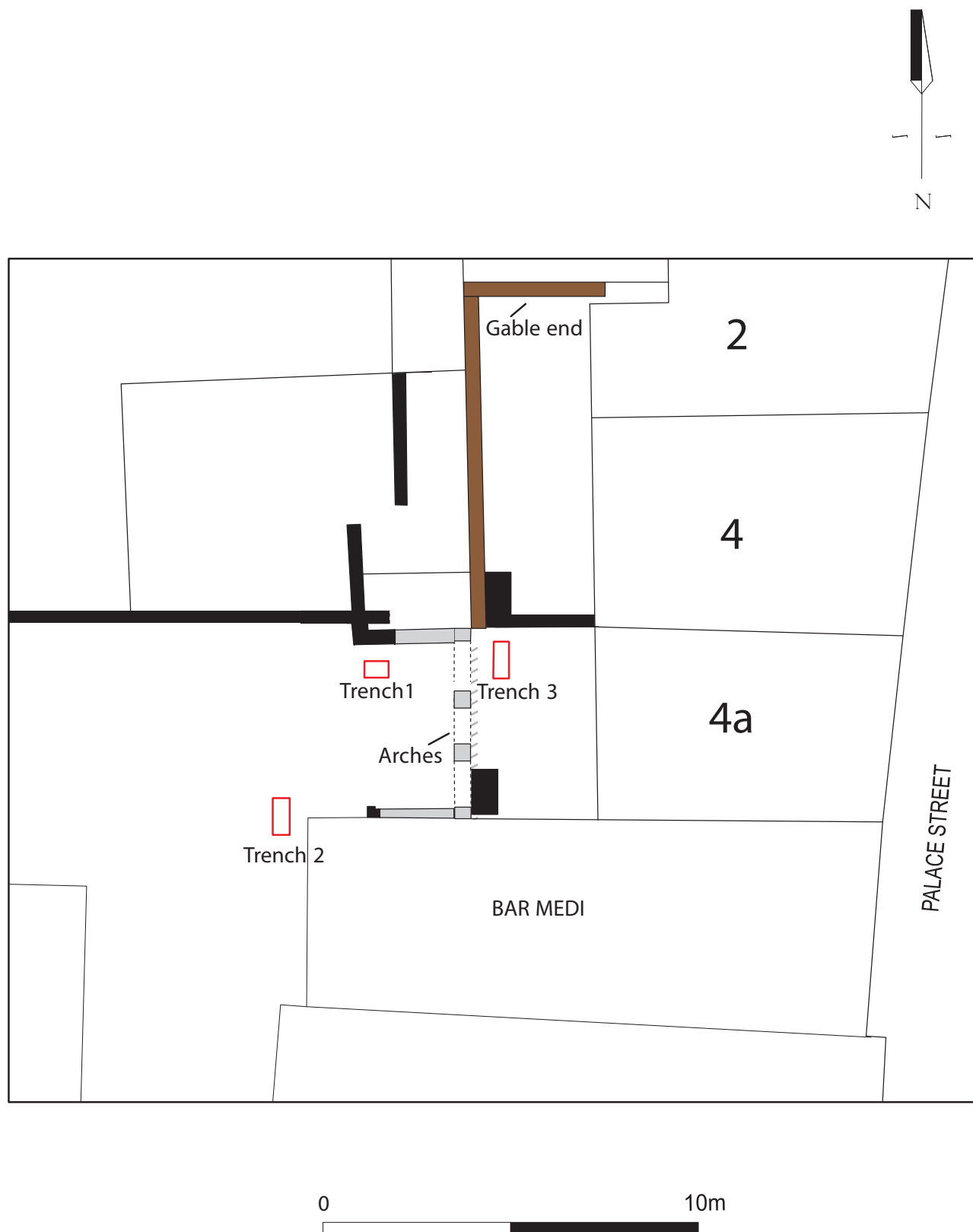
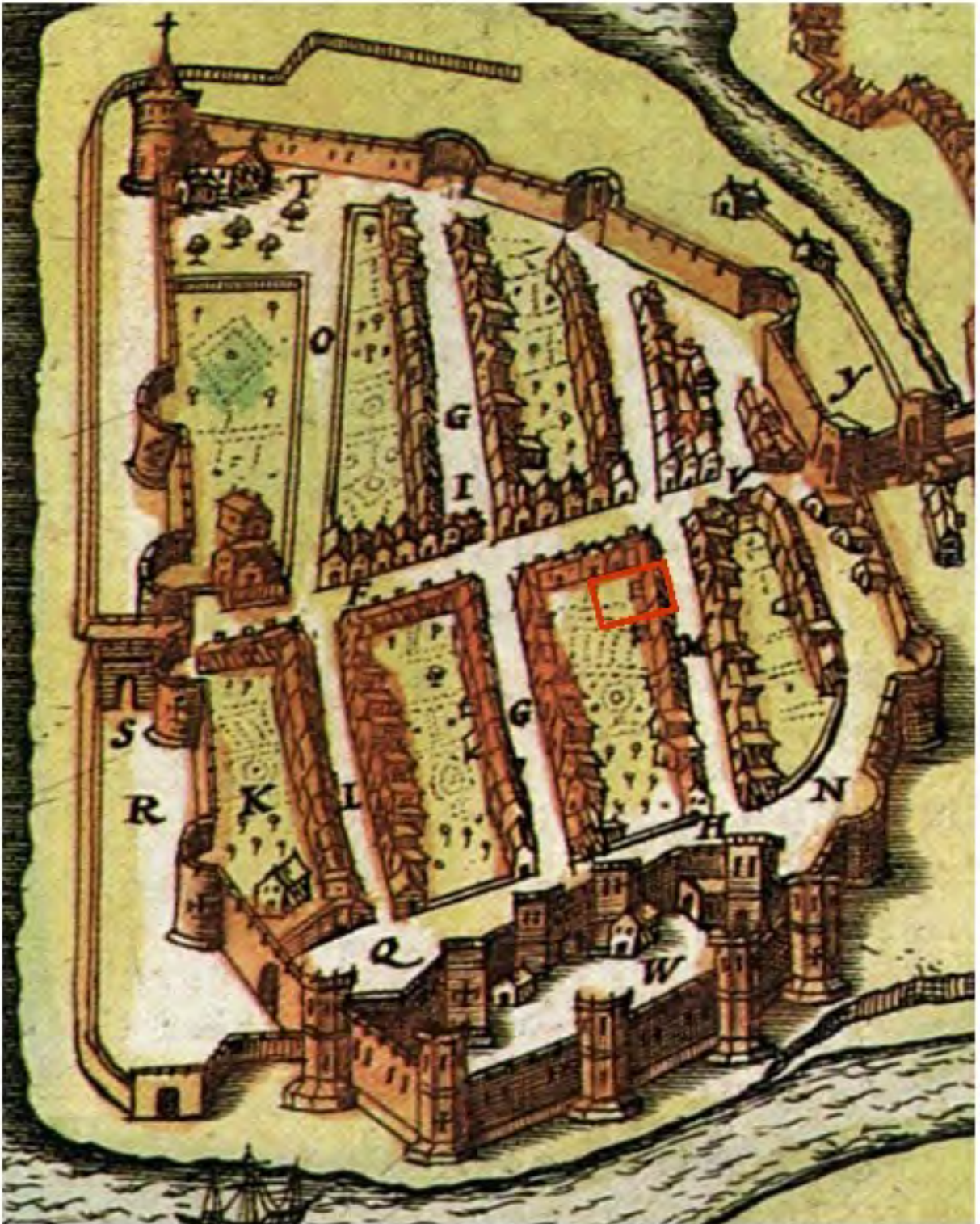


Fig. 2 Trench Location plan showing the arched wall and possible warehouse building shown on Wood's map of 1834 outlined in grey. Possible Red Lion Inn stable outlined in brown. Brick partition wall between 4 and 4a Palace Street, WCs and other later boundary walls shown in black. Not all partition walls beyond the study area are shown.



Fjg.3 Detail from Speed's Map of Caernarfon 1610 (Palace Street is marked 'M').
 Aproximate development area outlined in red

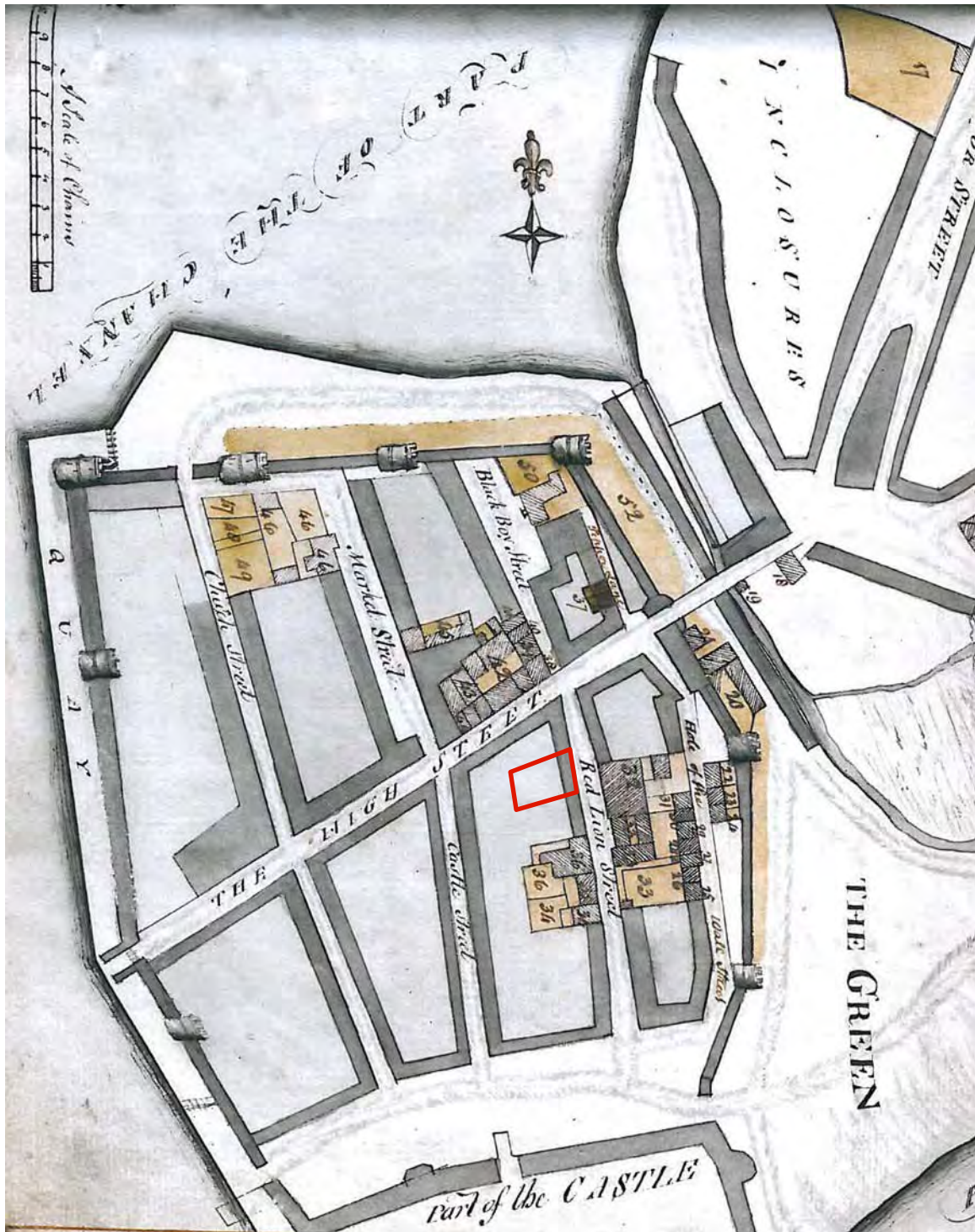


Fig. 4 Detail from the Vaynol Estate Survey of 1777 showing Palace Street when known as Red Lion Street (X Vaynol/4056). The old fish warehouse (north of no. 36) does not appear to have been Vaynol property at this time. The development area is outlined in red.



Fig. 5 Extract from Glynllifon Estate Survey of 1790 (NLW Ms. Maps 95). The approximate area of development is outlined in green, and north arrow is added.



Fig. 6 Detail from Glynllifon estate survey of 1815 (GAS XD2/8356) showing Nos. 24-26 High Street as Glynllifon property. Approximate development area outlined in green.



Fig. 7 Detail from Vaynol Estate Map of the Town of Caernarfon 1829 (X/Vaynol/4223) showing site of Current *Bar Medi* (No. 13). Development Area outlined in red, and north arrow added.

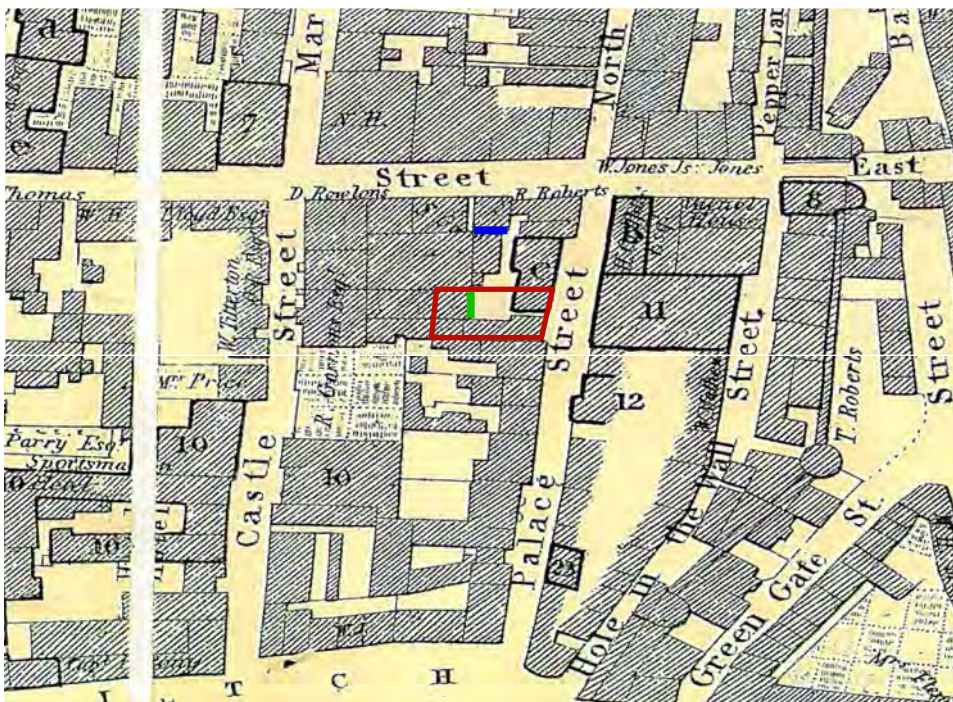


Fig. 8 Detail from Wood's 1834 *Map of Caernarfon From an Actual Survey*. Plas Puleston is outlined in Bold and labelled 'C'. Development area is overlaid in Red, arched wall in green, and gable to rear of 2 Palace Street in Blue.



Fig. 9 Detail from Vaynol Estate Map of 1866 (X/Vaynol/4171) showing old fish warehouse (300) and Corn warehouse (301). Development area outlined in red, and north arrow added.

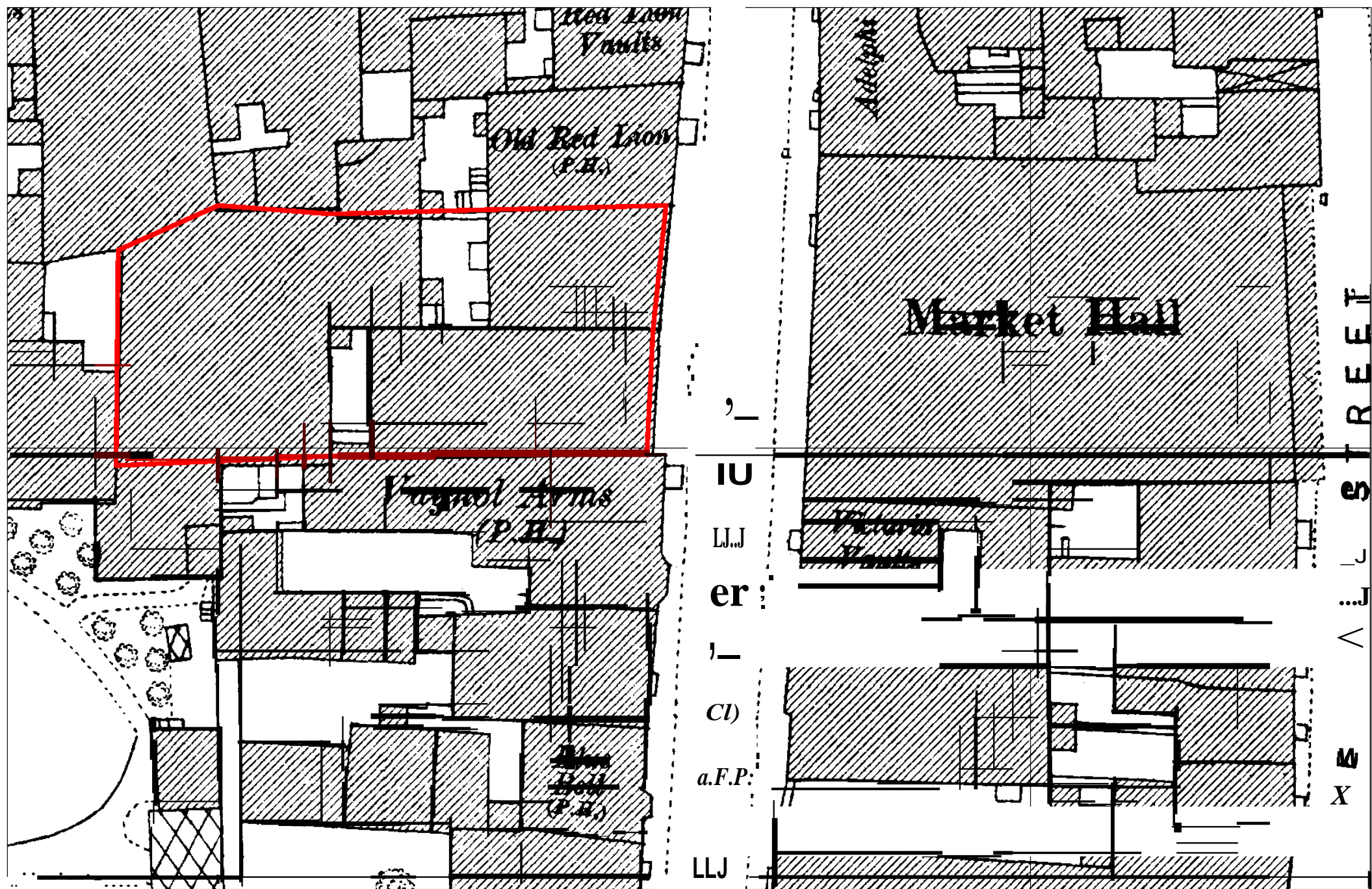


Fig. 10 Proposed development area overlain on 1:500 Ordnance Survey Town plan of 1889. Sheet VIII. Scale 1:250

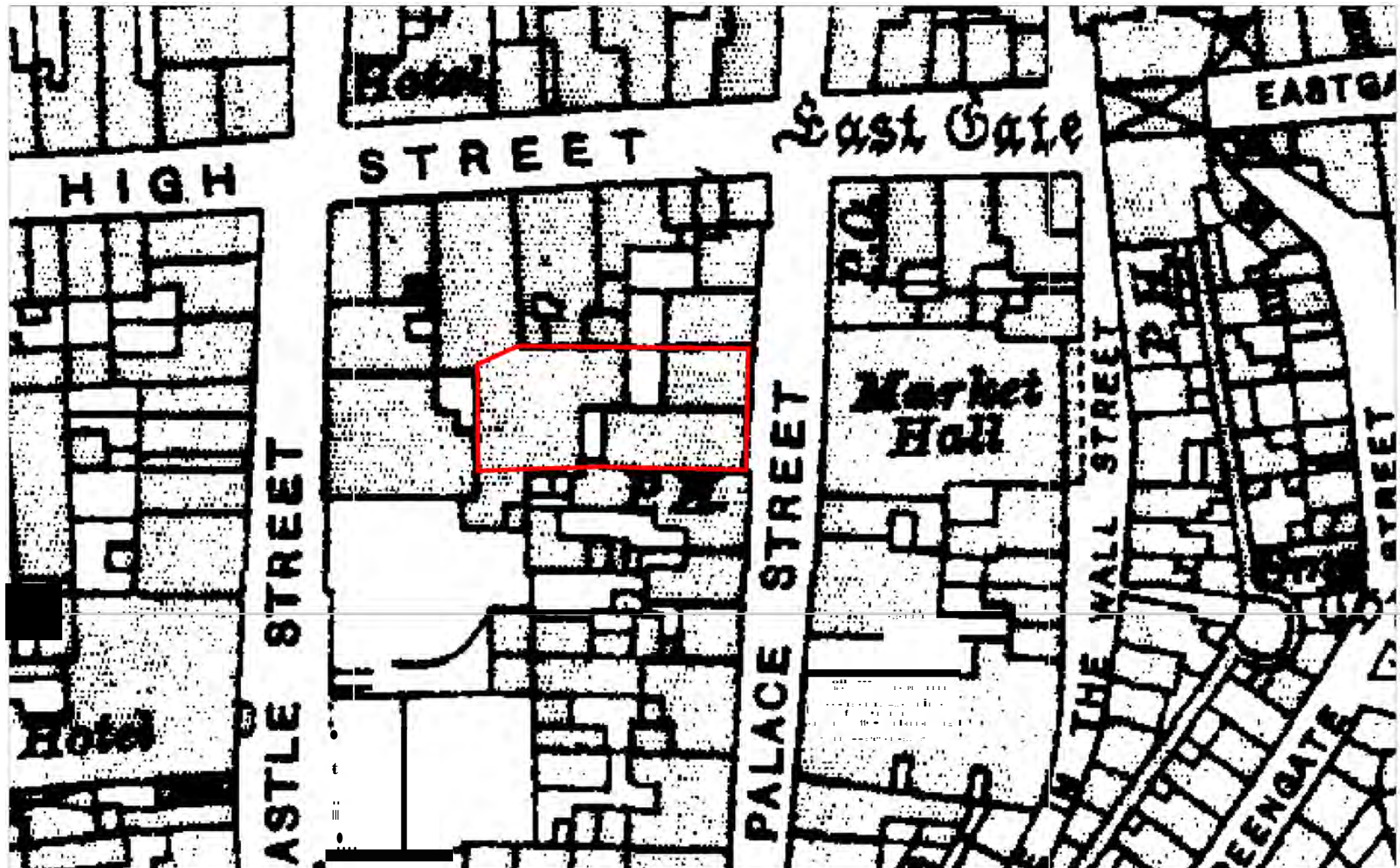


FIG. 11 The Development Area overlaid on Ordnance Survey 1913 3rd Edition Map Anglesey XXV.4. Scale 1:1500

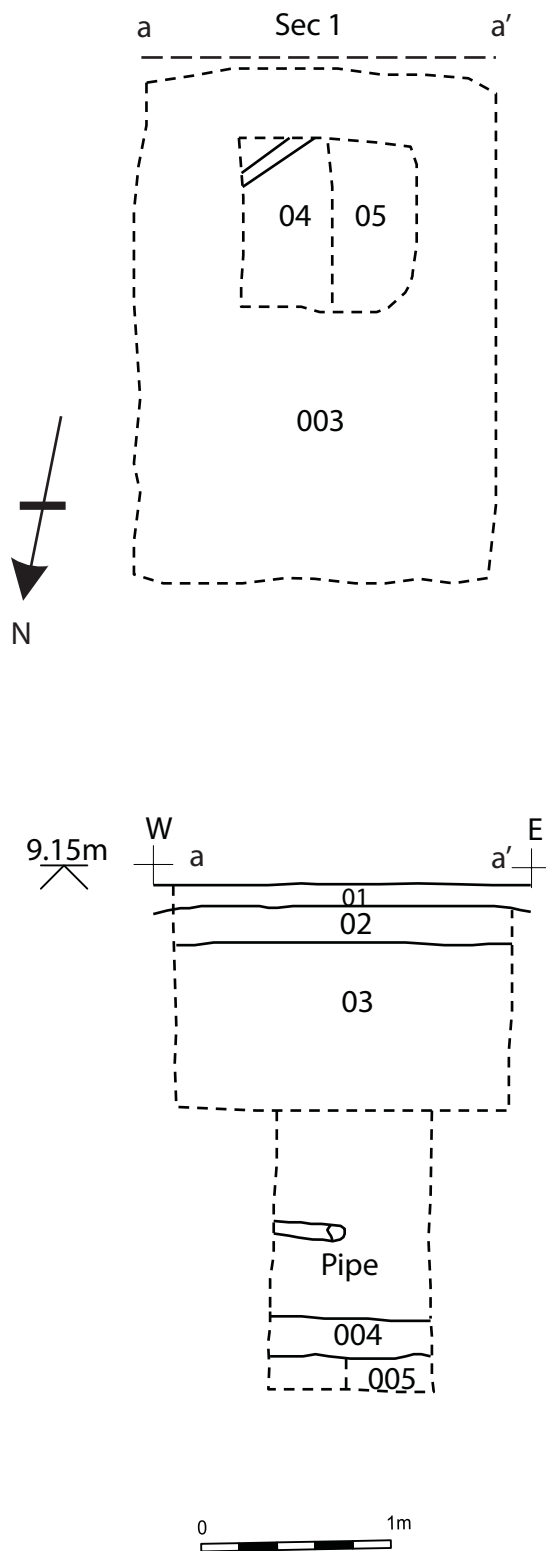


Fig. 12 Plan and Section of Trench 1

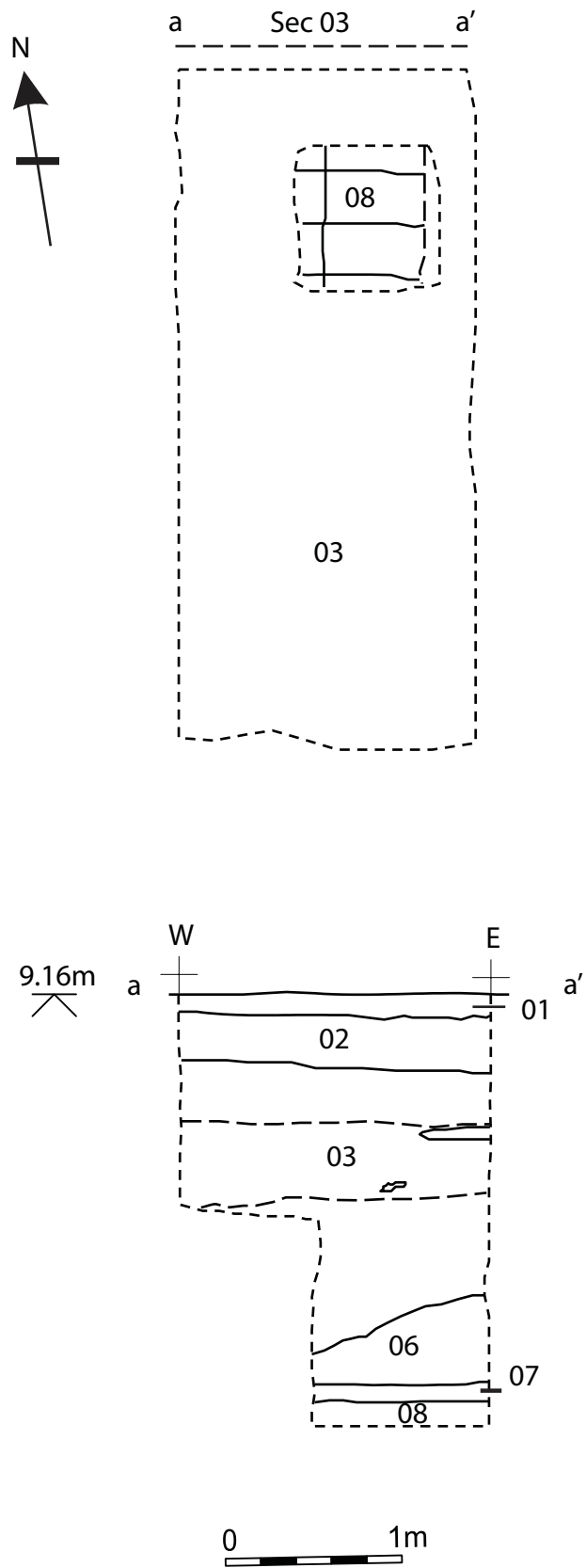


Fig 13 Post Ecavation Plan and Section of Trench 2

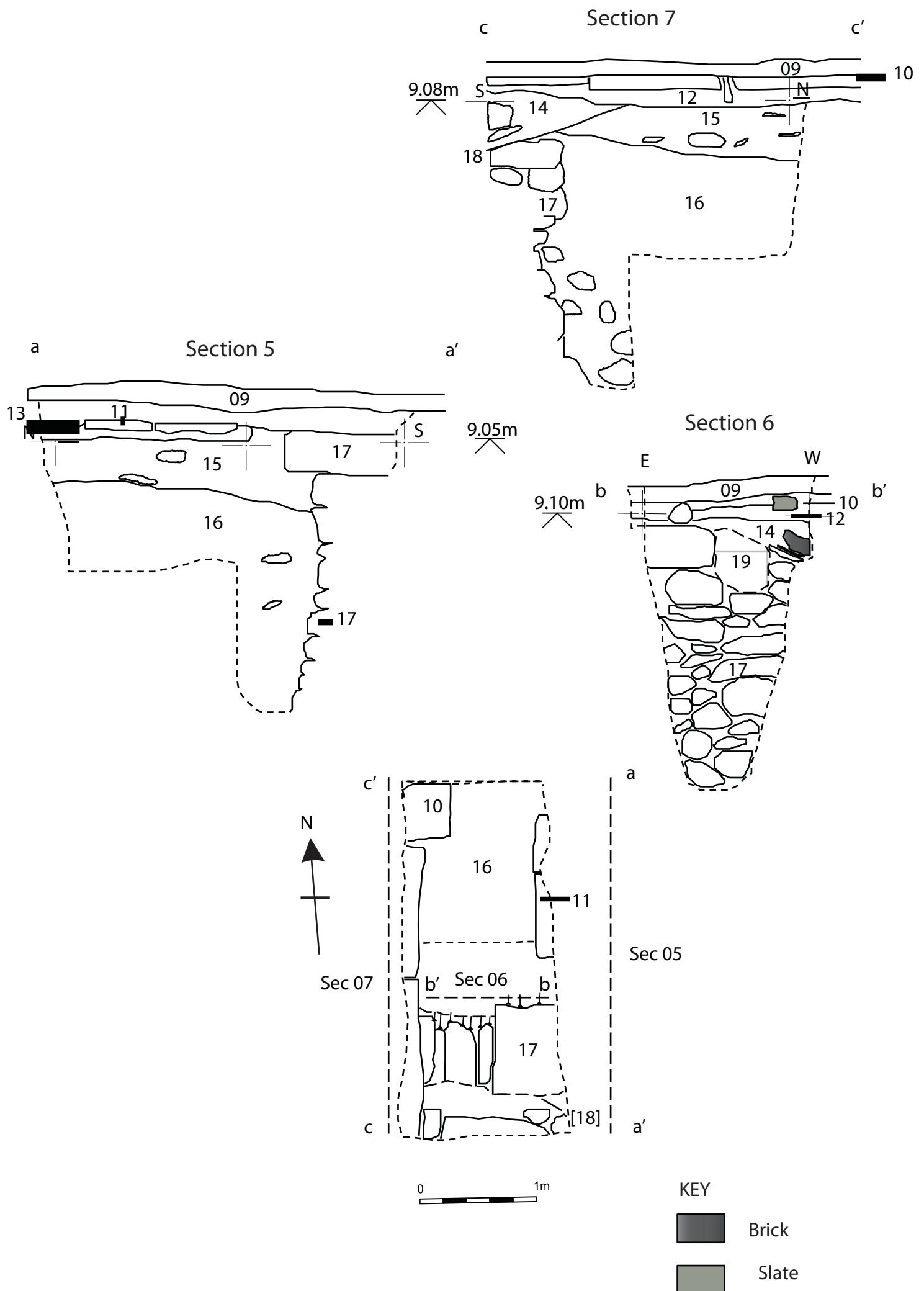


Fig. 14 Trench 3 Post- Excavation Plan and Sections

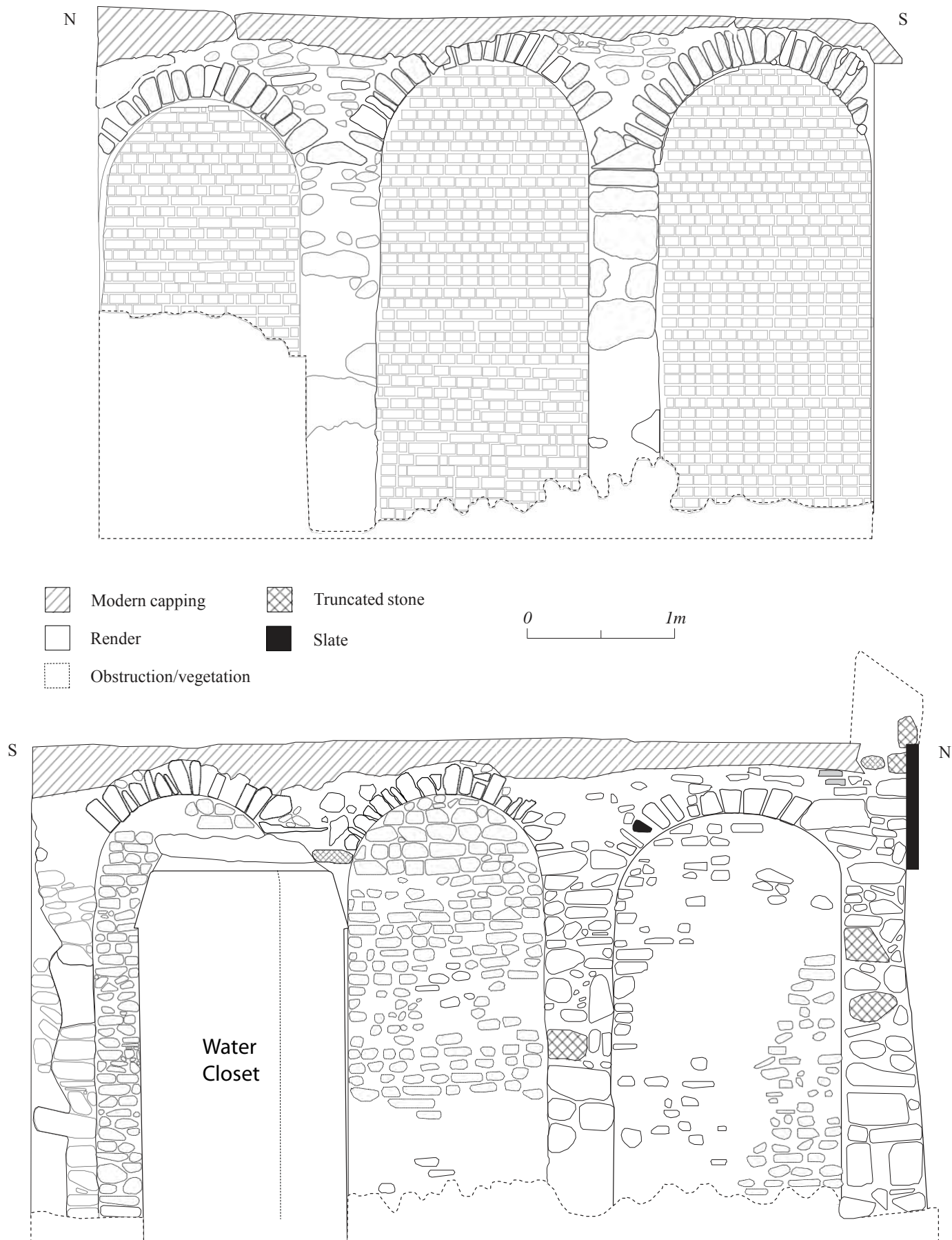


Fig. 15 North east and south west facing elevations of the arched wall



Fig. 16 Plas Mawr, Palace Street, Caernarvon, 1810 showing Plas Puleston on the right Foreground by *John Buckler* (NLW Drawing Volume 85)



Fig. 17 View of the Arched Wall from the Bar Medi Yard. Scale 2m in 50cm segments



Fig 18 View of Arched Wall from the east in 4a Palace Street Yard showing relationship with Bar Medi wall to the left



Fig.19 The Rear Yard of Bar Medi showing rendered surface of arches and fragments of surviving walls to the north and south.



Fig. 20 The wall of the Possible Plas Puleston outbuilding, offset from the arched wall and almost certainly earlier. It is probably associated with the gable end seen in the right background.



Fig.21 The surviving gable end of the building in the yard of 2 Palace Street. The long side wall is on the same alignment as the wall forward of the arched wall.



Fig.22 Trench 1 facing west. Scales 2m with 50cm divisions

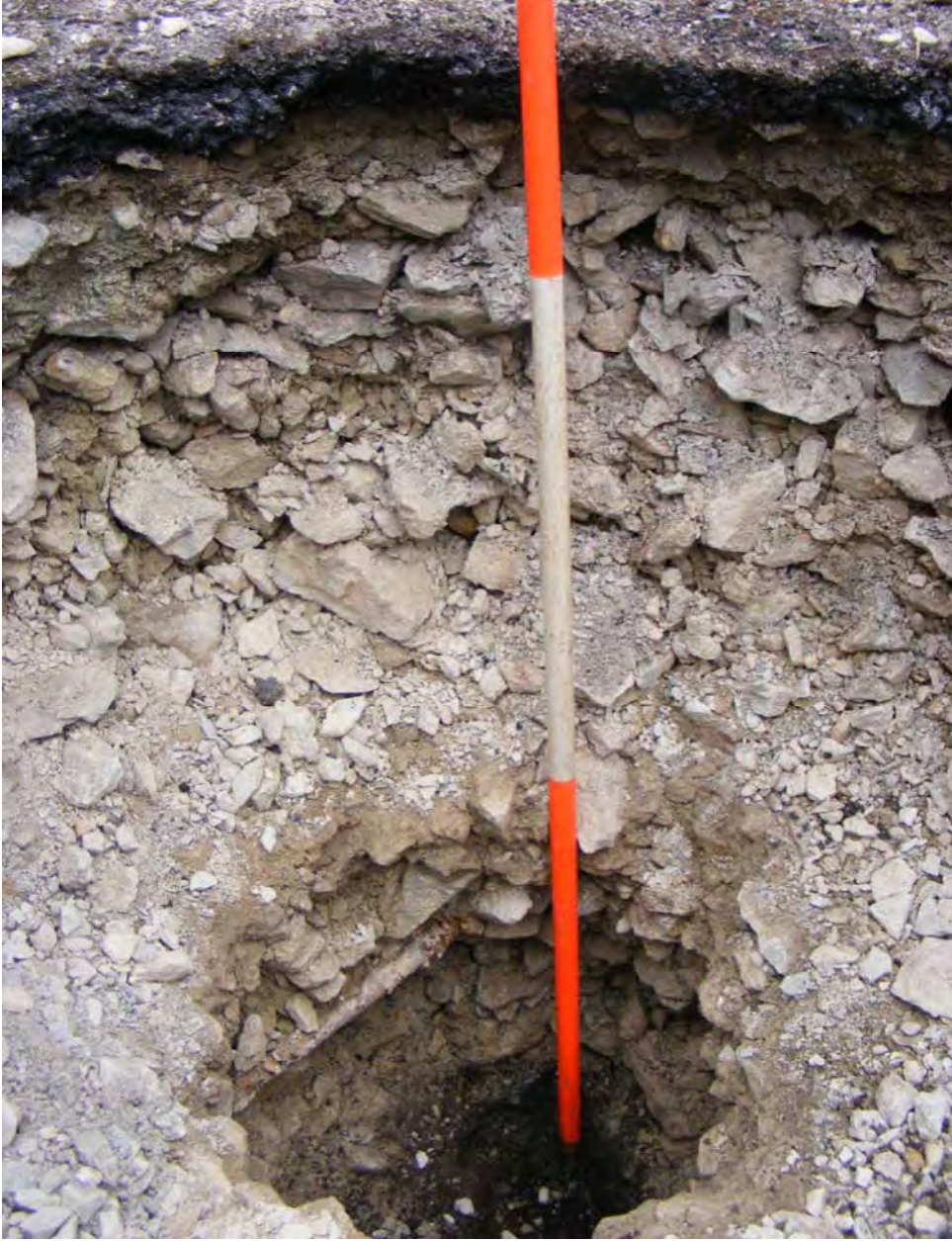


Fig.23 Trench 1 facing north



Fig. 24 Trench 2 facing west. Scales 2m and 1m



Fig. 25 Detail of Brick Floor in Trench 2



Fig.26 Trench 3, showing former slate yard surface



Fig.27 Trench 3 showing cesspit lining (17), and fill (16) and pit cut [18]



Fig. 28 Detail showing cesspit lining in Trench 3

APPENDIX 1. LISTED BUILDINGS WITHIN 250m OF BAR MEDI, PALACE STREET, CAERNARFON

PRN	NPRN	SITENAME	NGR	LB STATUS
11346	16603	NORTHGATE STREET, 2	SH47876283	GII
11373	16637	PALACE STREET, 6;VAYNOL ARMS	SH47856278	GII*
11374	16638	PALACE STREET, 8	SH47856277	GII
11375	16639	PALACE STREET, 10	SH47856276	GII
11419	16751	PLAS LLANWYDA, CASTLE STREET;COUNTY EDUCATION OFFI	SH47816280	GII
11644	23227	MARKET HALL, PALACE STREET (E)	SH47876279	GII
12018	26217	CASTEL STREET NO 3;FOXWIST HOUSE	SH47816280	GII
12223	26637	HIGH STREET 21 & 23	SH47836283	GII
12224	26638	HIGH STREET 20 & 22;CASTLE STREET NO.1	SH47816281	GII
12225	26639	HIGH STREET 25 & 27	SH47856283	GII
12226	26640	HIGH STREET 28	SH47856281	GII
12227	26641	HIGH STREET 29	SH47866283	GII
12228	26642	HIGH STREET 36	SH47876281	GII
12229	26643	HIGH STREET 38 & 40	SH47886282	GII*
12231	26645	HIGH STREET 42	SH47896282	GII
12249	26669	HOLE IN THE WALL ST NO 15	SH47886278	GII

APPENDIX 2. LIST OF CONTEXTS FROM EXCAVATION

Context Number	Trench	Description
01	2	Tar Macadam surface
02	2	Light yellow brown gravel sub surface
03	1 and 2	Mixed rubble within light yellow brown sandy silt
04	1	Dark brown silty clay with CBM inclusions
05	1	Dark brown silty clay with charcoal
06	2	Brown sandy clay, possible isolated dump
07	2	Dark brown silty clay mixed demolition layer
08	2	Brick laid floor surface
09	3	Concrete yard surface
10	3	Slate flagstone surface
11	3	Flagstone surface
12	3	Dark brown sandy clay leveling layer for (10)
13	3	Brown sandy clay levelling layer for (11)
14	3	Layer of disturbance with slate inclusions
15	3	Later fill of cess pit [18]
16	3	Earlier fill of cess pit [18]
17	3	Stone lining of cess pit
18	3	Construction cut of cess pit
19	3	Backfill layer, light brown sandy clay, between stone lining (17) and construction cut [18]



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Craig Beuno, Ffordd y Garth, Bangor, Gwynedd. LL57 2RT
Ffon: 01248 352535. Ffacs: 01248 370925. email: gat@heneb.co.uk