
The Pines Residential Home: **Criccieth, Gwynedd**



Archaeological Assessment and Watching Brief

GAT Project No. 2107

Report No. 879

July, 2010

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Prepared for

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July 2010

By

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G2107 THE PINES, CRICCIETH

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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Fig.1 Site Location. Development Area Outlined in Red. Crown copyright. All rights reserved.
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Fig. 3 Division of the Study Area into Building Plots as part of Lord Harlech's Sale of the Land in 1912 (Gwynedd Archives XSC/329).

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THE PINES, CRICCIETH (G2107)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY

An archaeological assessment and watching brief was carried out on land at The Pines, Criccieth, Gwynedd. The works consisted of an archaeological assessment of the land and a watching brief during the ground works associated with new construction work. The assessment identified the land as belonging to Lord Harlech, and to have remained undeveloped in post-medieval times, although sub divided into a number of fields. A wet area, with a pond and watercourse appear to have been close to the land which later became the Pines Residential Home. This has now been culverted and flows towards the sea to the north east of its location in 1839. The current south eastern property boundary also appears to have been present by 1839.

During the watching brief, a substantial section through the ground deposits on the western side of the development was observed as part of the extension construction works. This revealed a make up layer of dark greyish brown silty clay, 0.45m deep overlain with 0.2m of Tar macadam. This is possibly a garden soil, which overlies a narrow band, 0.2m deep of mixed stone, gravel and charcoal, forming a discrete band that may be a former rough surface. This overlies a substantial layer of mid orangey brown clay silt with medium to large rounded and sub angular stones, which was probably a glacial clay. No archaeological deposits of pre modern date were observed, although the substantial amount of current and historic ground works already noted in the area mean that any deposits are likely to have been destroyed.

In the new car park area, no deposits of pre 19th century date were encountered, although there appeared to be evidence of land drainage. Some evidence for the division of plots relating to Lord Harlech's sale of the land in 1912 was encountered, although much of the rebuilding proposed at that time did not take place.

1 INTRODUCTION

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) was commissioned by Mr Sam McKinley to complete an assessment and archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with construction work at *The Pines Residential Home*, Criccieth, Gwynedd (centred on NGR SH50053802, Fig. 1). Prior to the development the area comprised two irregular shaped plots, within an existing property boundary, belonging to the *Pines Residential Home*.

2 DESIGN BRIEF AND SPECIFICATION

2.1 Project Background

A mitigation brief was not prepared for this work by GAPS (Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service) (project ref.: D1251), but recommendations were given for a desk-based assessment and a partial watching brief during ground works as a planning condition.

2.2 Archaeological Desk Based Assessment and Watching Brief

No brief was prepared for this work by GAPS, but recommendation has been given for an **archaeological desk-based assessment** and an **intermittent watching brief** of the site during works (see appendix 1 for definitions). An intermittent watching brief comprises archaeological observation during non-archaeological groundworks. The regularity of attendance was to be determined during the course of the works and increased within areas of particular archaeological sensitivity. The guidelines and definitions are specified in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching brief* (Institute for Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 2001).

3 METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

3.1 Desk top study

The desktop study comprised the consultation of maps, documents, computer records, written records and reference works, which form part of the Historic Environment Record (HER), located at Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT), Bangor. The archives held by Gwynedd Archives, Caernarfon

and Bangor University were also consulted. Information about listed buildings was consulted by means of the CARN (Core Archaeological Index), which is the online index of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments, Wales. Relevant aerial photographs from the collection at RCAHM, Wales were examined. See Paragraph 4 for the results of the assessment.

3.2 Field visits and watching brief

Two distinct plots of land were identified, Area A, an irregular plot to the north on which the Pines itself is situated, and Area B, a triangular shaped plot of land bounded to the south west by an area of bramble and scrubland that was formerly an area of tennis courts, to the south east by a lane leading to Marbury and Hendre Waelod (Fig. 1, Plate 4). A site visit was carried out on 7th December 2009, for the archaeological assessment, and the watching brief within Area A was carried out at the same time. Further return visit were carried out on the 10th to the 12th March 2010 to examine the stripping of the car park area (Area B) as part of the watching brief. The topsoil stripping was carried out with a medium size 360 crawler excavator. See paragraph 5.0 for the results of the watching brief.

3.3 Report

The available information was synthesised to give a summary of the archaeological and historic background and of the assessment and recommendations, as set out below. The separate features, their evaluation and recommendations are listed separately, and a summary of the overall assessment of the area is given at the end.

The criteria used for assessing the value of features was based upon those used by the Secretary of State for Wales when considering sites for protection as scheduled ancient monuments, as set out in the Welsh Office circular 60/96. The definitions of categories used for impact, field evaluation and mitigation are set out below.

PRN in the report refers to the Primary Reference Number given to each site on the Gwynedd HER.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

4.1 Topographic description

The soils of the Criccieth area consist of brown earths of the East Keswick 1 Association (BGS 1983), overlying Ordovician Grits of Lingula flags and Tremadog beds (Smith *et al.* 1961, 28). The town is situated on a gentle slope facing south towards Harlech and Cardigan Bay. A promontory, dividing the beach has the castle located upon it. To the north of the town arable land provided food for the town, and the *maes* originated as common land.

4.2 Archaeological and historical background

4.2.1. Prehistoric and Roman Criccieth

A short distance north-east of Criccieth lies the Neolithic burial chamber of Cae'r Dynni (PRN1291, NGR SH 25113382), but other evidence for prehistoric occupation is slight, and reliant on an account of the finding of a probable Bronze Age urn within the outer castle ditch, and also upon the interpretation of the outer castle ditch as the defences of a former late prehistoric promontory fort. Little evidence for late prehistoric or Romano-British activity has been found within the town itself, although there may have been activity within the area.

4.2.2 Medieval

A settlement may have existed at Criccieth prior to the construction of the castle, perhaps based around the church to the north, and perhaps also around the small estuary at Abermarchnad, but there is no surviving evidence. The township of Treferthyr is thought to have been created by Llewellyn ab Iorwerth to accompany the construction of the first castle around 1230-1240, when the church was dedicated to St. Catherine. Treferthyr was much larger than the subsequent Edwardian Borough of Criccieth (Gresham 1966, 5-12). The earliest part of the present church is dated to about 1300, but remains of an earlier structure were noted during renovations in 1993 (Ward 1993, 85).

4.2.3 Post-Medieval

The castle at Criccieth probably burned down during the Glyndwr revolt in 1404, and following the destruction of the castle the borough declined. Leyland writing in the mid 16th century describes the town as consisting of ‘2 or 3 poore houses, and there is a small rylle. There hath been a franchised toune, now clene decayed’ (Smith 1906,88). Pennant describes it as a poor town (1781, 191-2) and Hyde Hall, writing in 1812 describes it as ‘formed of a single street of mean houses lying along a kind of bay of no very good anchorage even for small vessels. Some export trade is carried on however by the sale of herrings taken in the adjoining bays by half-decked vessels of scanty tonnage and limited number’

4.2.4 Early-Modern/Modern

Criccieth never developed into a major trading port, although the tithe map of 1839 shows that there had been some development by that time (Fig. 2). Settlement had begun to develop along the turnpike road which passed Criccieth to the north, which later became the current High Street. The area of the current development appears to have been still undeveloped at this time. A wet area, with a pond (no. 547) and watercourse appear to have been close to the later Pines Residential Home. The current south eastern property boundary also appears to have been present by 1839. Information from the tithe schedule for the development plot and the surrounding area is given below.

Landowner	Occupier	Plan No.	Name and Description of Land and Premises	State of Cultivation	Quantities in statute measures A R P
			<i>Tynygrisia Farm</i>		
William Ormsby Gore Esq.	William Jones	548	Cae'r felin		1 - -
		547	Llyn y felin		- - 27
		549	Cae Cefn Stabl		- 3 22
The corporation of the Borough of Criccieth	Unoccupied	580	Maes Glas [includes cottages]		18 2 35
		571	Abedeistedd		3 2 25
		576	Dinas		2 2 6
		551	Merilyn		3 3 0
		579	Castell and Gallt y Castell		3 3 5
	Hugh Evans	578	Garden within the castle		- - 18
		489	Cae'r Ceiliaid		1 - 10
		550	Llain Ceiliaid		- 1 30
			<i>Brynhir Arms</i>		
Owen Jones Ellis Nanney Esq	Robert Davies	546	Cae'r hovel		- 1 -
		545	Cae'r ty		1 2 20
		543	Yr Oft		1 2 26
		544	Llain glanarfon		- - 36

The development area can be seen to have formed Tynygrisia farm, and the field names *Cae'r Felin* and *Llyn y Felin* are indicative. They demonstrate that the field was associated with the mill and the pond was almost certainly the mill pond. The mill is a single-storey building now converted to a house (NGR SH 50143797; PRN 24513). It was a corn water mill, driven by the Afon Cwrt. This building is possibly on the site of the medieval mill that belonged to the borough.

Following the construction of the railway in 1867, and the development of Criccieth as a seaside resort the old borough town was largely neglected in favour of a new development along the High Street to the north, and Marine Terrace to the west. By the time of the Ordnance Survey 25 inch 1st edition map of 1889 (Fig. 4) a limekiln appears to have been built to the south east of the site of the current development (NGR 50133800; PRN 24511, and also the RNLI had constructed a lifeboat house to the south (field 549 on tithe map). The

current structure of the Pines appears on the 25 inch 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1913, although evidence for the watercourse remains, it appears to have been culverted.

On 12th September 1912 Lord Harlech proposed to sell the property for building lots (Fig. 3, GAS XSC 329). These consisted of 11 lots varying between 502 and 1912 square yards in area, and the ground was divided up for the purpose (Fig. 3). Whilst development only took place in the southernmost six plots and at The Pines itself at the northern end, the proposals have continued to affect the site layout. The Pines was built between 1900 and 1913, as it can be seen on the 25 inch 3rd edition OS map, but not the second, suggesting building after Lord Harlech's sale (Fig. 1, Area A). The Beach Café lies to the east of Area B (Fig. 1), and the south eastern boundary with the lane can be seen on the tithe map of Criccieth of 1839 (National Library of Wales), and is currently a privet hedgerow of relatively recent date. The south western boundary consists of a drystone wall, more than 2m high of squared and rounded blocks of quarried granite, probably from the Trefor quarry (Plate 4). This boundary would appear to be post 1913 in date, as it is not on the OS 3rd edition 25 inch map.

4.3 Statutory and non-statutory designations

Criccieth Castle (Ref C015, PRN 1328), first recorded in 1239, is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, along with an additional area (C173, PRN 1317), thought to include a possible ditch of an Iron Age hillfort. The town contains a number of listed buildings, including Wellington Terrace, a pair of late 17th century cottages (PRN 4334), Porth yr Aur (PRN 4335), built about 1700 and Ty Mawr (PRN 5675), a late 16th century house. The Morannedd Café (PRN 7250), designed by Clough Williams Ellis and built c. 1948 is listed.

5 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Area A

Area A comprised of an irregular shaped plot adjacent to the northern end of Tanygrisiau, on which the current *Pines Residential Home* is situated (Fig. 1; Plate 1). A watching brief was carried out on the building work at the Pines, Criccieth on 7th December 2009. Work was well advanced on the additional building work in the grounds of the Pines, which had included the demolition of a porch and cellars on the south western side of the building.

A section, 2.65m deep was observed along the western side of the development to the south of the main Pines building (Plate 1). A sample section was observed, facing the new work along the Tan y Grsiau street frontage. A sample section was drawn, revealing a make up layer of dark greyish brown silty clay, 0.45m deep overlain with 0.2m of Tarmacadam. This is possibly a garden soil, which overlies a narrow band, 0.2m deep of mixed stone, gravel and charcoal, forming a discrete band that may be a former rough surface. This overlies a substantial layer of mid orangy brown clay with medium to large rounded and subangular stones. The full extent of this deposit was not observed, but it is almost certainly a glacial boulder clay deposit. At the northern end of the section a length of about 1.3m was heavily disturbed ground associated with the foundation trenches of the Pines.

Area B

Area B consists of a triangular shaped area of land bounded to the south west by an area of bramble and scrubland that was formerly an area of tennis courts, to the south east by a lane leading to Marbury and Hendre Waelod (Fig. 1, Plates 2-4).

A hedgerow divides the area of land into two parts, which also appears to be quite recent in date, which was due to be removed as part of the development. A modern garage and attached WC lies in the south west corner of the plot, and a sewer pipe leads from this to a septic tank to the south-east of the hedgerow crossing the plot. The plot had been part stripped to the south of the hedgerow prior to the commencement of the watching brief and piles of spoil remained.

Five features of modern date were identified in the strip of this area. A stone drain and the remains of a modern wall, with the drain running west to east and 3.4m long and 0.7m wide was noted. This drain had rounded and sub-angular stones in its make up. A brick wall was noted on the edge of the stripped area, adjacent to the hedge, running north-south, for a distance of 4.1m. Three stone lined drains, running south-west north east across the site are probably best interpreted as land drainage (Plate 3). They may be early 19th century in date,

as they possess no material of a later date than that within them, and may have fed the uncovered stream running beyond the north-eastern edge of the plot.

6. SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

No sites that were demonstrably earlier than 19th century in date were uncovered as part of the watching brief. Evidence for 19th cent site drainage was noted (Plate 3), along with modern services, including a septic tank, and a modern garage (Plate 2).

The assessment identified that the area was mainly undeveloped from post-medieval times, and formed part of the land of Tynygrisiau farm. The stream noted on the tithe map was probably the old mill leet, and the mill pond was located under where the Pines Residential Home is located now.

7. ARCHIVE

The archive consists of historic maps, plans and aerial photographs, along with notes and 112 digital images taken on the field visit.

Three copies of the bound report will be sent to the client, a copy to Ashley Batten at GAPS, and a further copy sent to the HER Archaeologist at the curatorial division of Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Bangor, for deposition in 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.

8. REFERENCES AND OTHER SOURCES CONSULTED

BGS 1983 *Soils of Wales*

Davidson, A. 2006 *Ports and Harbours of Gwynedd* (unpublished GAT report no 641)

Smith, B. and George, T.N. 1961 *British Regional Geology- North Wales* (London)

Haslam, R., Orbach, J. and Voelker, A. 2009 *The Buildings of Wales; Gwynedd* (Pevsner Architectural Series)

GAT Historic Environment Record

Gwynedd Archives

XM/Maps/8586/1 Plan of Ormsby-Gore land in Criccieth

XSC 329 *Sale of Valuable Farms, Small Holdings, Accommodation and Building Lands, Freehold Ground Rents with Reversions and Two Fully Licensed Premises in the Parishes of Criccieth, Llanystwmdwy, Clynog, Dolbenmaen and Ynyscynhaiarn in the Counties of Caernarfon and Merioneth, North Wales, by the Direction of Lord Harlech.*

National Library of Wales

Tithe map of Criccieth 1839

RCAHM Wales Aberystwyth

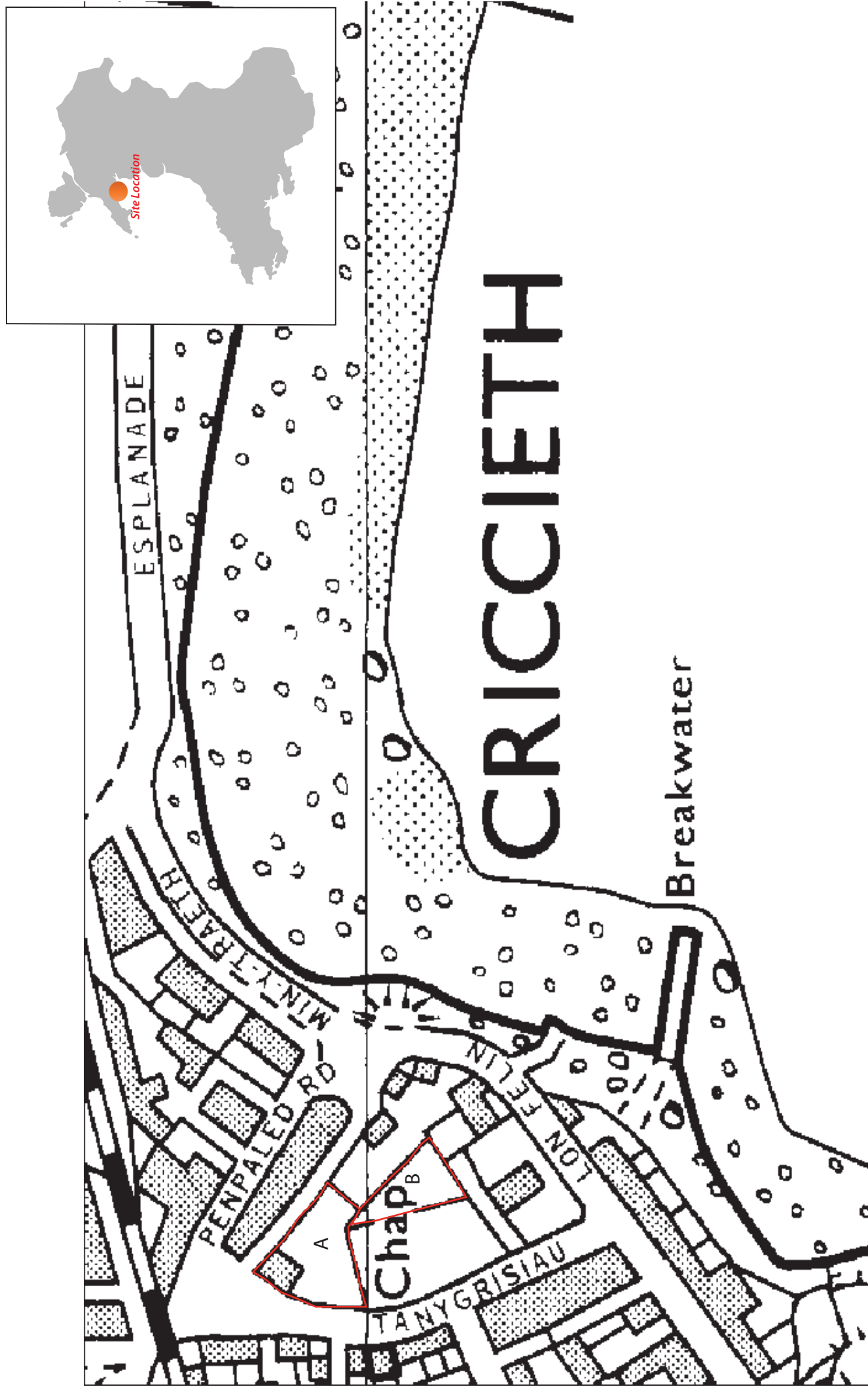
Aerial Photographs

Verticals

RAF

106G/UK/1469 Frames 4043-4044 taken 4th May 1946

106G/UK/664 Frames 4208-4209 and 4301-4302 taken 14th August 1945



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Fig.1 Site Location. Development Area Outlined in Red. Map taken from Ordnance Survey 1:10 000 sheet SH43NE



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A

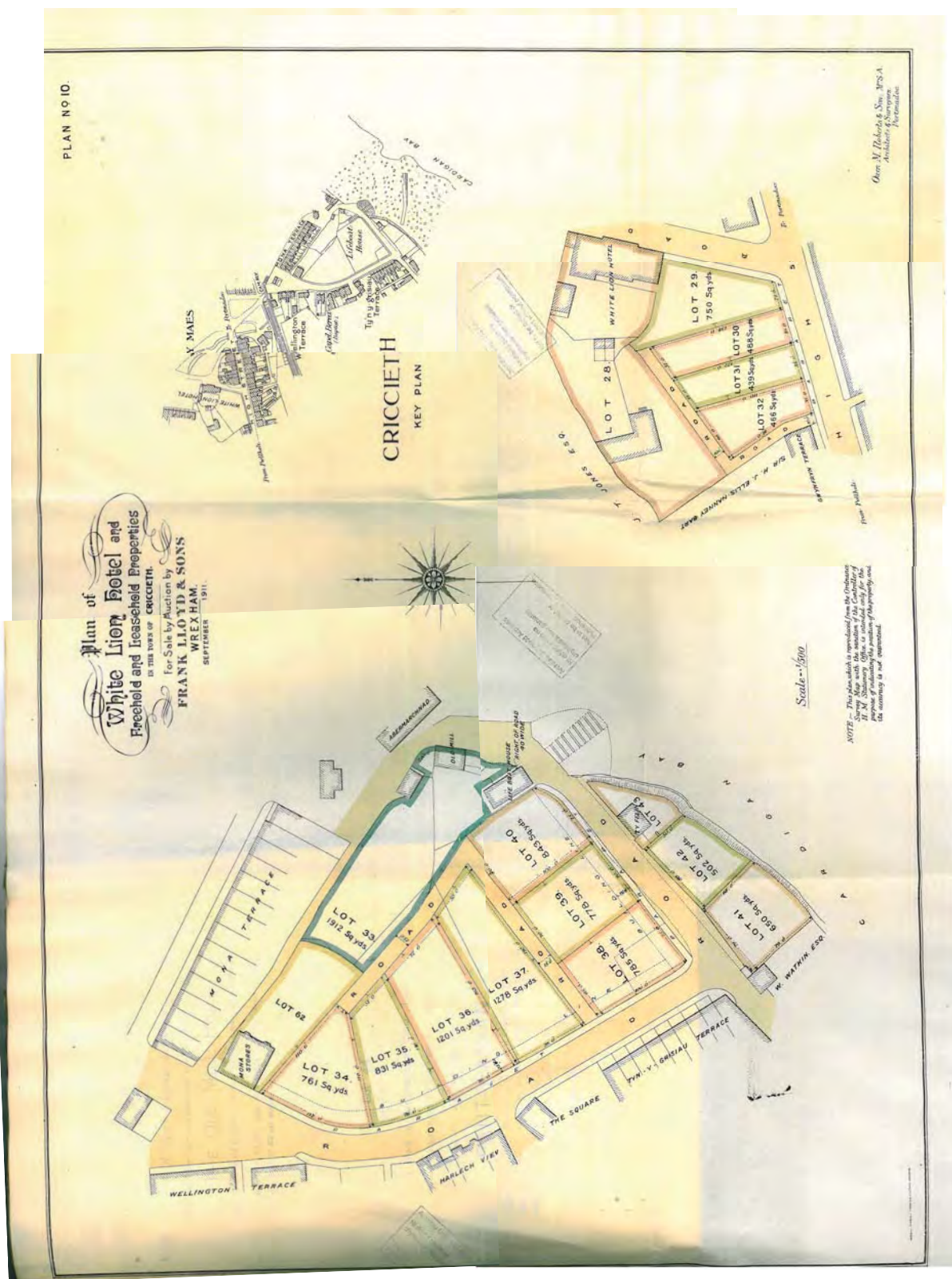


Fig. 3 Division of the Study Area into Building Plots as part of Lord Harlech's Sale of the Land in 1912 (Gwynedd Archives XSC/329)

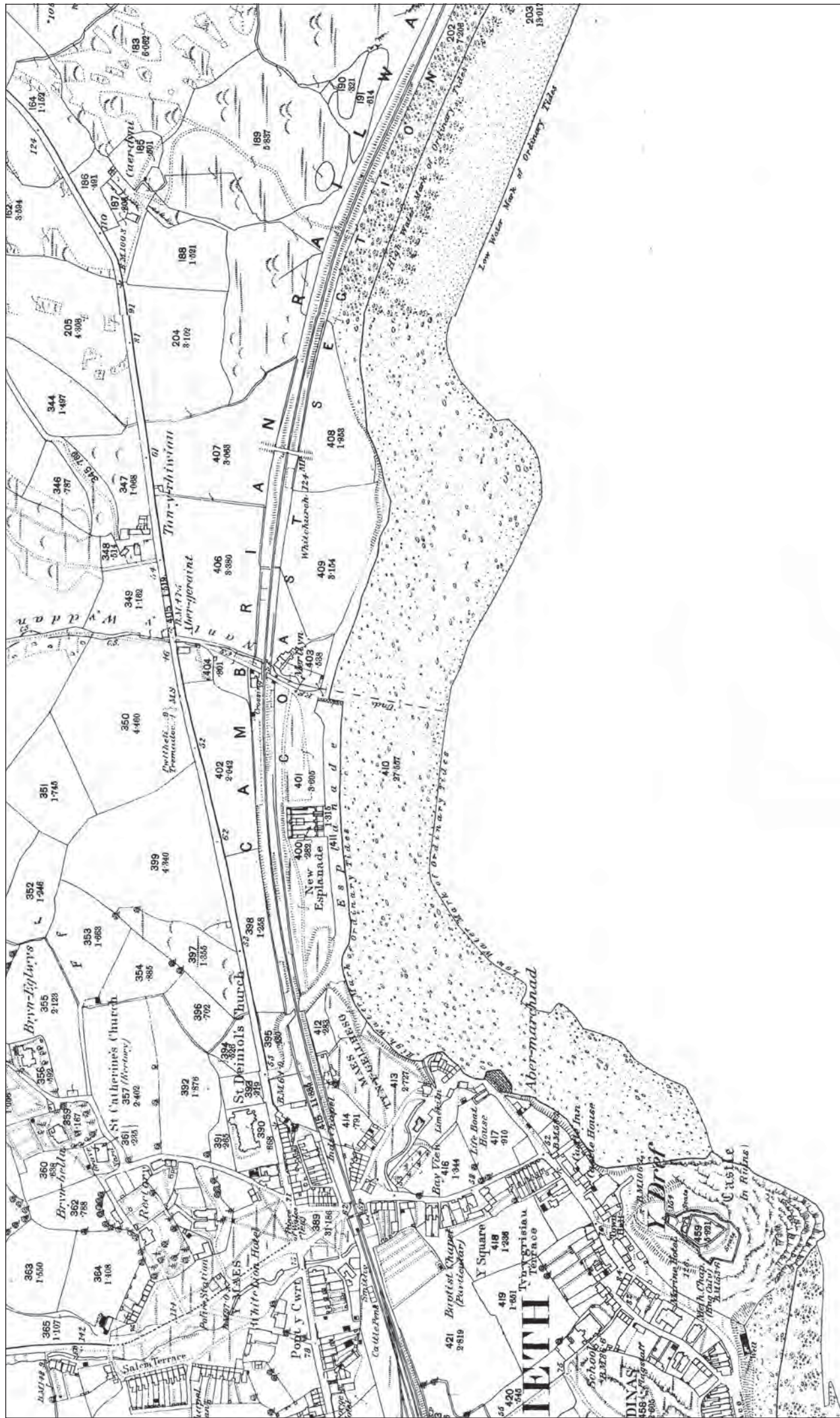


Fig. 5 Ordnance Survey 25". County Series. Caernarfon. XLI.3, XX.1, XLI.4, XX.2. 1889. Scale 1,5000



Plate 1 South western section through make up and glacial deposits in Area A



Plate 2 Proposed car park area, partially stripped, view from the north-east. Scale 2m with 50cm divisions



Plate 3 Probable 19th century stone lined field drain in Area B. Scale 1m with 50cm divisions



Plate 4 Stripping Area B, view from the East South East

Appendix 1

Desk Based Assessment

A desk-based assessment is defined as ‘a programme of assessment of the known or potential archaeological resource within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. It consists of a collation of existing written, graphic, photographic and electronic information in order to identify the likely character, extent, quality and worth of the known or potential archaeological resource in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate’. (*Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*, IFA 2001, 2).

The aims of the assessment as given in the specification are:

- to identify and record the cultural heritage within the defined study area;
- to evaluate the importance of what has been identified;
- to recommend ways in which impact upon the cultural heritage can be avoided or minimised.

This report conforms to the guidelines specified in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment* (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 2001).

Watching Brief

The definition of an archaeological watching brief is a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive.

An archaeological watching brief is divided into four categories according to the IFA. 2001. *Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001 Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*:

- comprehensive (present during all ground disturbance)
- intensive (present during sensitive ground disturbance)
- intermittent (viewing the trenches after machining)
- partial (as and when seems appropriate).

An **intermittent** watching brief has been agreed with GAPS in this case.

The purpose of a watching brief is:

- to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works
- to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard
- A watching brief is not intended to reduce the requirement for excavation or preservation of known or inferred deposits, and it is intended to guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

The objective of a watching brief is:

- to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on a site.

Reproduced from IFA. 2001. *Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001 Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*. The watching brief conformed to the specified guidelines.



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