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Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.



**27 Castle Street, Criccieth,
Archaeological Watching Brief
Commissioned by Erik Kruzel, eka architects**

**Fieldwork by:
I.P. Brooks
Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd**

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Archaeological Watching Brief**

I.P. Brooks

EAS Client report 2017/12

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INTRODUCTION

Grid Reference SH 49970 37837
Listed Building Reference 15354
Listed Building Status II
Planning Application Reference C17/0626/35/CR and C17/0627/35/LL

Summary

The archaeological watching brief on the groundworks at 27 Castle Street, Criccieth revealed the presence of a rammed clay footing and a slate path (probably not contemporary). It was also possible to record a number of features revealed by the removal of the plaster on the ground floor of the building which suggest that the house was originally two, separate, dwellings.

Location (Figures 1 and 2)

27 Castle Street, Criccieth is opposite the entrance to Criccieth Castle (Schedule Monuments CN015 and CN173), directly fronting onto Castle Street, forming part of a terrace row with 25 Castle Street. The western gable of 27 Castle Street has been partly built over by Hen Fecws y Castel (Old Castle Bakery) (Plate 1). As part of a restoration of this house a new patio area has been excavated the rear of the house together with a minor modification to the lean-to extension of the house (Plates 2 and 3).

Archaeological Background

27 Castle Street is a Grade II listed building (Listed Building Ref. 15354) listed because it is part of “a pair of modest vernacular town houses which forms part of a group of older buildings close to Criccieth Castle” (<http://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=en&id=15354>). The listing description does not suggest a date for the house, but assumes that it was remodelled as a pair with 25 Castle Street in the early nineteenth century, possibly incorporating earlier buildings. The location, directly opposite Criccieth Castle (Scheduled Monuments CN015 and CN173) places the house with the extents of the medieval town which was founded in 1284. The current development appears to occupy one of the burgrave plots originally laid out along Castle Street.

Very little archaeological work has been carried out within the Medieval town of Criccieth and the probability of the potential to expose or lose archaeological deposits lead to the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service recommending the imposition of archaeological conditions on the planning application.

Methodology

The property was visited on 27th October 2017 to monitor the ground works associated with the levelling of the proposed patio area and the digging of the footings for extension and the retaining wall of the patio area. The ground work was carried out using a mechanical excavator with a smooth faced, ditching, bucket. The opportunity was also taken to record a number of features revealed by the removal of the plaster from the ground floor rooms together with some key elements for the interpretation of the building.

Photographs were taken with a Nikon D5300 Digital SLR Camera at a resolution of 24.2 MP with the photographs being taken in RAW (NEF) format. These photographs were converted into JPEG format for use as illustration in this report and TIFF for archiving. The plans S8705 by Haycock and Todd and 2017/02E by “eka architects” were used as a basis for locating any features recorded. Some detailed planning was undertaken using a Leica TS06 Total Station with the surveys processed using NRG for Widows 2016.

Results

The area of the new patio was part of the rear garden of 27 Castle Street, it was separated from the concrete surface immediately behind the house (Figure 2) by a low, boulder built wall which also partly revetted the side of the garden path running towards the “Ty Bach” and beyond (Plate 1). Attached the rear elevation of the house is a stone built, lean-to, extension, the south-western gable of which had already been demolished ready to be extended (Plate 2).

The garden behind the revetting wall had clearly been built up. The excavation proved this assumption to have been true with the soil of the garden (Context 1) consisting of a mixed, mid grey brown sandy loam up to 600 mm thick with tips of coal ash and sea shells (largely cockles). This layer sealed a “T” shaped feature of rammed yellow clay (Plate 3, Figure 3) which was recorded as Context 2. This would appear to be the rammed clay footings to a building previously occupying the site. The clay used for these footings was locally derived, indeed the natural subsoil within the garden is identical to that used for the footings. The leg of the feature running along the line of the garden is much thinner (up to 0.7 m wide) and probably marks the line of an internal division, whilst the thicker, transverse leg is up to 1.1 m wide and probably represent the rear wall of the building. Neither of the legs of this feature was recorded as being more than 50 mm thick, possibly suggesting an early phase of levelling in the garden. Unfortunately, it was not possible to date this feature as no associated artefacts were found, however the layout would suggest that it pre-dates the current house which is assumed to be 18th century.

Context 2 was cut into a mixed, orange brown, sandy clay with patches of mid brown sandy silt (Context 3) which, in turn, lay over the natural yellow clay which underlies this part of Criccieth. No archaeological features were recorded cutting into this natural layer.

Along the eastern side of the development area, a slate slab path was recorded (Context 4, Plate 5). This consisted of slate slabs up to 500 x 600 mm in size leading towards the “Ty Bach” in the garden. The level of this feature, however would suggest it was leading to an earlier structure as it was approximately 300 mm below the floor of the current structure. There was some evidence that the path had been replaced with a brick path at some point as there were a few hand-made bricks, each 220 x 120 x 60 mm in size, sitting on the slate slabs. It is highly unlikely that Contexts 2 and 4 are contemporary, although the stratigraphic relationship between these two features is uncertain.

During the course of the watching brief it was possible to make a few observations on the development of the house itself. The internal plaster had been removed from part of the ground floor making the observation of earlier features possible. Clues from features seen inside the house also helped with the recognition of features on the front elevation of the house which were not initially immediately clear.

It is apparent that the house was originally a series of smaller units within the terrace, 27 itself starting life as two dwellings. What is now the western window in the front elevation (Figure 4, Plate 6) was originally a door and there is also a blocked window on the western edge of the front elevation. This has also been partly covered by the building of Hen Fecws y Castel (Old Castle Bakery) over the western gable of 27 Castle Street. A similar pattern can be seen in the rear elevation of the house. The current front door is matched by a blocked opening at the northern end of the passage (Plates 7 and 8). This has a slightly curved wooden lintel on the inside and has been used as an alcove with shelves in the extension (Plate 8). Above this blocked door, there is also a blocked window at first floor level (Plate 9).

The position of the original division between the two, original houses is not entirely clear. The current dividing stone, wall, defining the western side of the passage, now containing the stairs, appears to have a straight joint with the front wall (Plate 10) of the building. There also appears to be a possible socket in the rear wall between the dividing wall and the blocked doorway which might suggest that the original division was slightly to the east and was moved when the two houses were combined. This possible movement would have allowed for the stairs to be inserted into the passage.

Conclusions

The archaeological watching brief at 27 Castle Street, suggests that there was at least one earlier phase of building on the site. The rear wall of this, earlier, building was approximately 6 m north of the current rear wall of the house and the building appear to have been divided by a narrow wall running at right angles to Castle Street. Unfortunately, this building is essentially undated, however it would seem likely that it pre-dates the current building which is thought to have been built in the eighteenth century.

The slate path (Context 4) is unlikely to have been contemporary with the rammed clay footings (Context 2). It probably represents a garden path to the assumed predecessor to the current “Ty Bach” or a longer path running along the eastern side of the plot.

The house itself, has clearly developed over time. It was originally build as two, of a series of, terrace houses together with what is now 25 Castle Street. It is likely that that 25 was similarly sub-divided, although this is beyond the scope of this project to check. At some time, probably in the early twentieth century, the two houses were combined and it is likely that the dividing wall between the two houses was repositioned slightly to the west to allow the staircase to be inserted into the passage. This joining of the two properties is reflected in changes to the property boundaries shown between the Second and Third editions of the Ordnance survey maps of the area (Emmett, *pers. comm.*). It is likely that at least some of the blocking of other openings took place at this point, however the ground floor window at the western end of the front elevation, was probably blocked when Hen Fecws y Castel (Old Castle Bakery) was constructed partly over the western gable end of 27 Castle Street.

The date of the construction of the stone-built extension on the rear of the building is uncertain, however it may be contemporary the major re-organisation of the building in that it used the blocked doorway as a shelving unit.

Acknowledgements

This report was commissioned by Erik Kruzel , eka architects, on behalf of the owners, Mr and Mrs Stephenson. The groundworks were carried out by Eryri Builders Ltd. The project was monitored by Jenny Emmett for the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service.

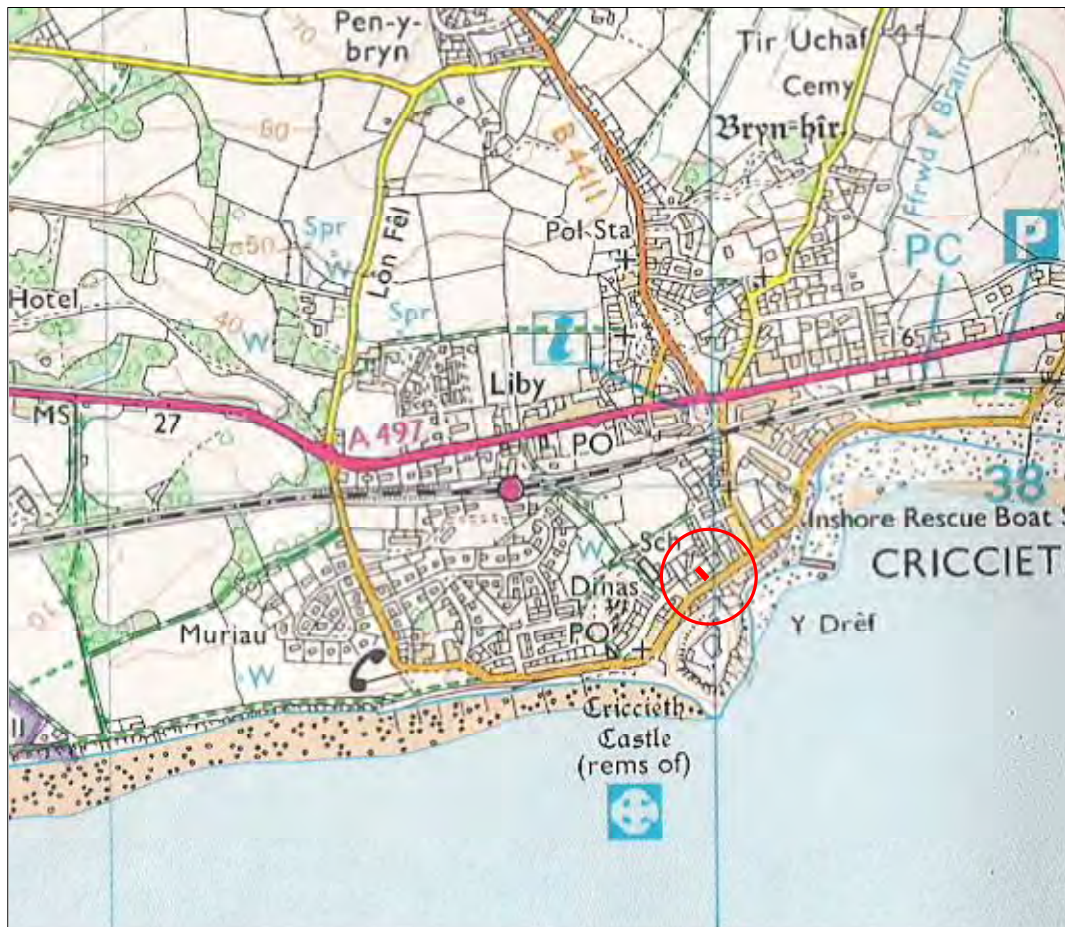


Figure 1: Location
Re-scaled to 1:12,500

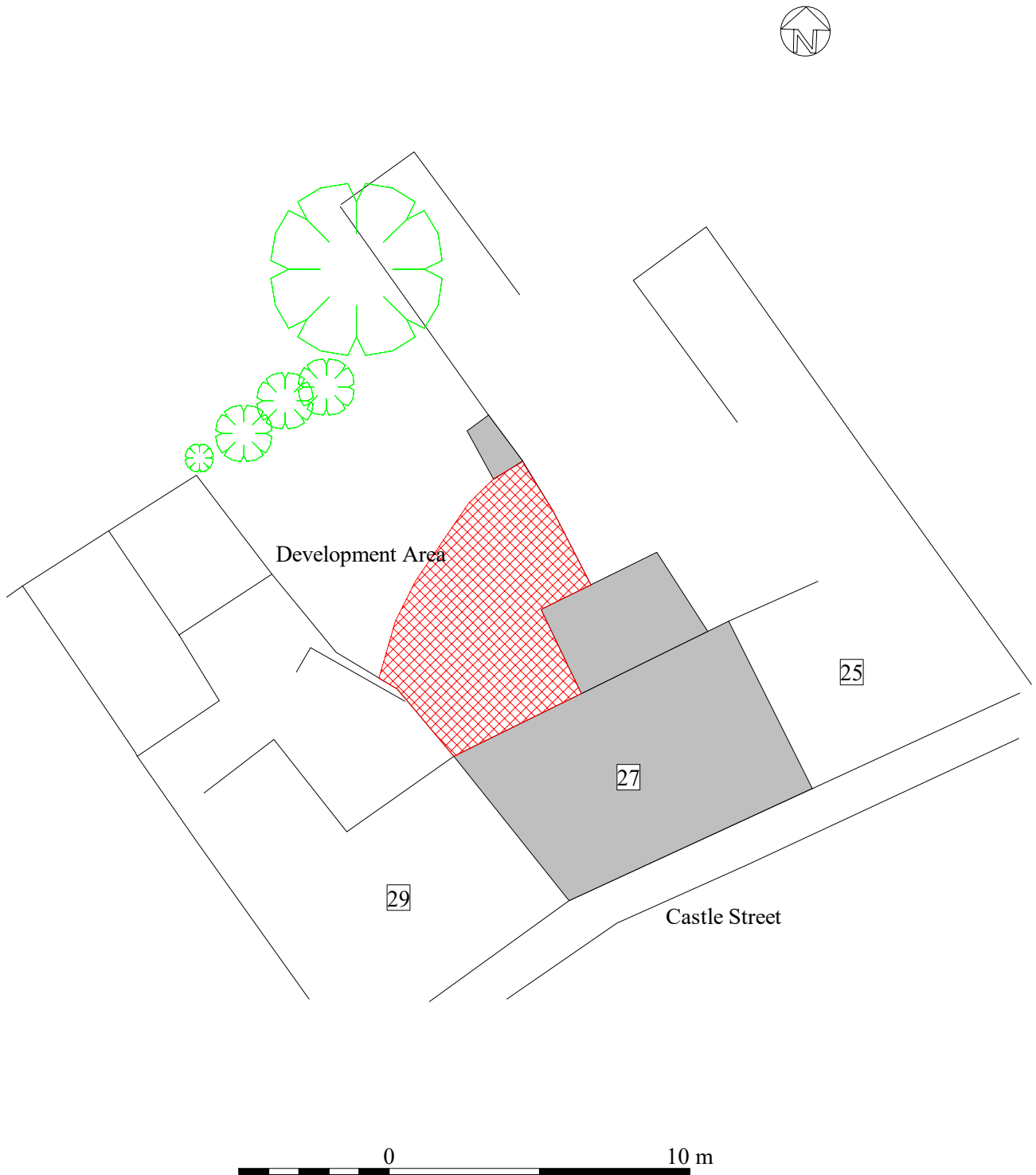


Figure 2: Location of the Development Area
Scale 1:200

Based on Drawing S8705
By Haycock & Todd

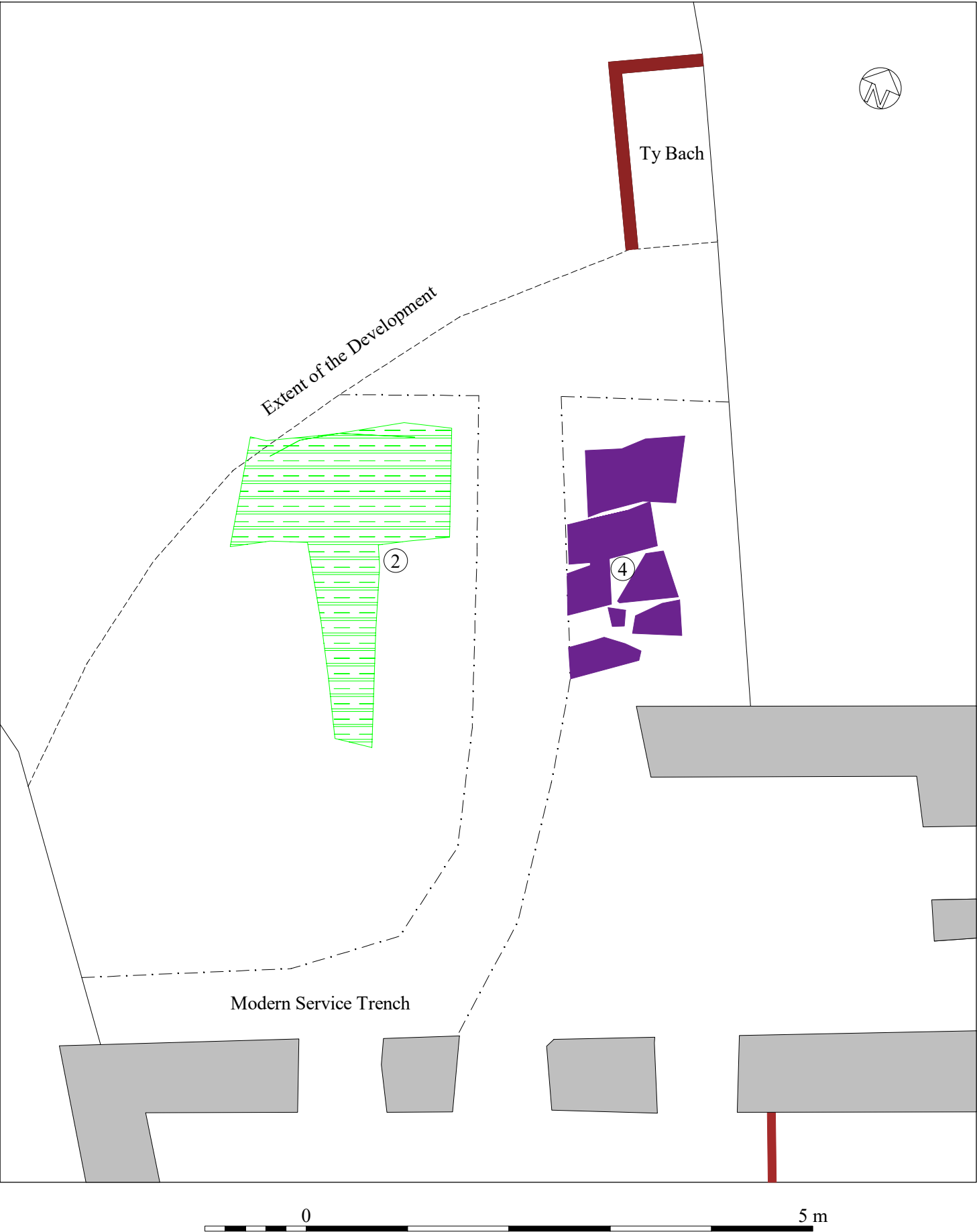


Figure 3: Location of the Archaeological Features
Scale 1:50

Based on Drawing 2017/02E
by eka Architects

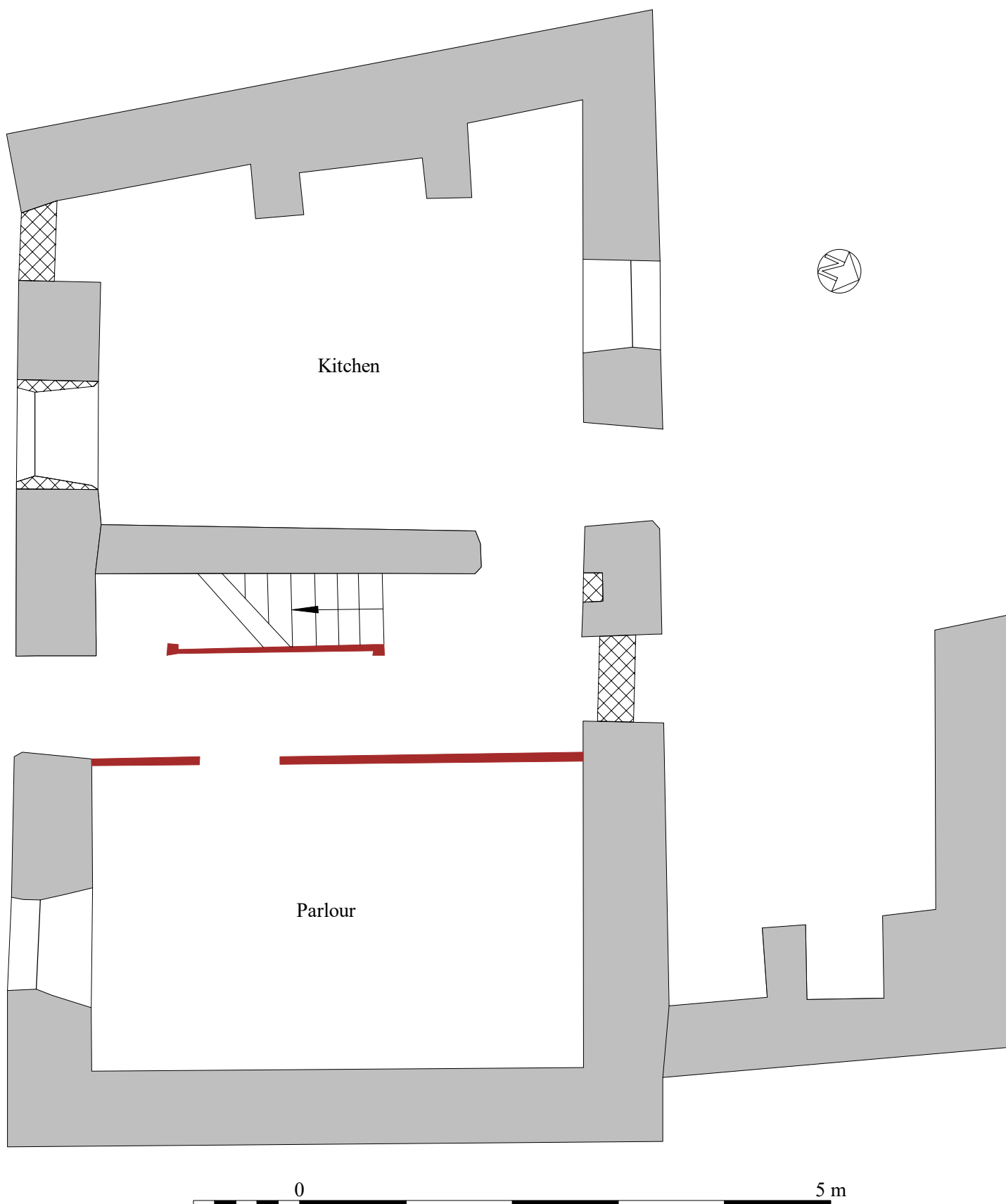


Figure 4: Ground Floor Plan
Scale 1:50

Based on Drawing 2017/02E
by eka Architects



Figure 5: Location of the Photographs
Scale 1:50

Based on Drawing 2017/02E
by eka Architects



Plate 1: 27 Castle Street, Criccieth



Plate 2: Area of the patio before excavation



Plate 3: Existing extension



Plate 4: Context 2, clay footings



Plate 5: Slate path (Context 4)



Plate 6: Partly blocked doorway and blocked widow in the front elevation



Plate 7: Blocked doorway in the rear elevation (internal)



Plate 8: Blocked doorway in the rear elevation (external)



Plate 9: Blocked window in the rear elevation

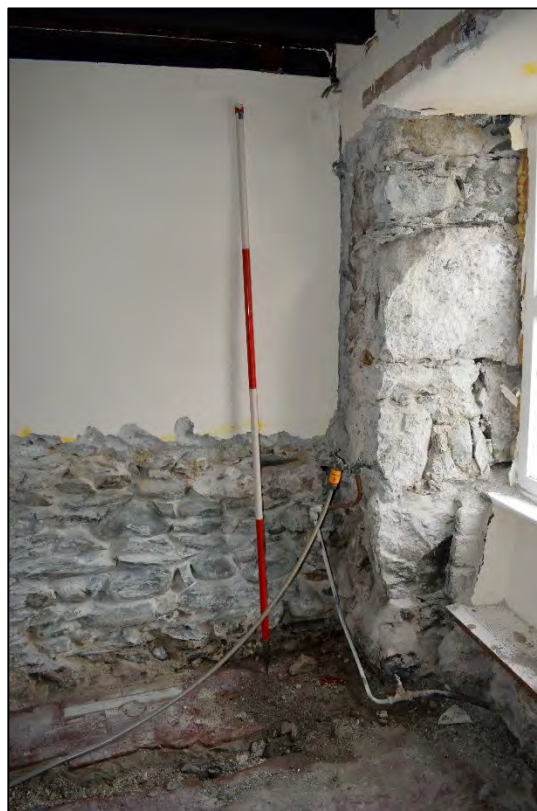


Plate 10: Junction between the front and dividing walls

Appendix 1: Specification

Specification for the Archaeological Watching Brief at 27 Lon Y Castell, Cricceth

Planning Application C17/0626/35/CR
Specification compiled by I.P. Brooks. Revised 14/9/17

13 September 2017

1. Background

- 1.1.1. It is intended to replace the existing extension to the rear of 27 Lon Y Castell (Figure 1) with an enlarged structure and to landscape part of the rear garden to the property
- 1.1.2. This specification has been prepared after:
- 1.1.3. An email from Erik Kruzel of EKA Arch Ltd
- 1.1.4. A telephone conversation with Jenny Emmett, Planning Archaeologist with the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service

2. Aims

- 2.1. To record any archaeological deposits or features revealed the groundworks.

3. Field work program

- 3.1. The fieldwork program will be dependent on the construction program however, it is expected to include:
 - 3.1.1. An archaeological watching brief on the excavations needed for the extension and remodeling of the garden
 - 3.1.2. Report and archive preparation

4. Methodology

4.1. Watching Brief

- 4.1.1. The Watching Brief will follow the standards laid out in the Institute for Archaeologists. 2014. *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*
- 4.1.2. A suitably qualified archaeologist will be present during excavations associated with the digging of the new foundations and the landscaping of the garden.
- 4.1.3. All features or archaeologically significant deposits revealed by the ground works will be fully recorded including:
- 4.1.4. A written description of deposit: type, components etc.
- 4.1.5. Drawn plans and sections at suitable scales. Typically plans will be drawn at a scale of 1:20 or greater and sections at a scale of 1:10.
- 4.1.6. Photographs will be taken with Nikon D5300 Digital SLR Camera at a resolution of 24.2 MP
- 4.1.7. Plan drawing showing extent of deposit.
- 4.1.8. Section drawing of any feature recorded to record vertical stratigraphy
- 4.1.9. The Gwynedd Archaeological Planning service will be notified immediately if significant archaeological deposits, features or artefacts are located.

- 4.1.10. The photographs will include metric scales
- 4.1.11. All artefacts and ecofacts will be recorded by context.
- 4.1.12. Each deposit, feature or layer will be identified by a unique context number to which all other records will be related
- 4.1.13. Where possible, features will be sampled to obtain dating and functional evidence. At least 50% of each of the features exposed by the work will be excavated.
- 4.1.14. Where possible, elevation drawings of feature half sections to record vertical stratigraphy.
- 4.1.15. Where appropriate, deposits will be sampled for environmental, dating or technological evidence. Samples will be fully recorded and packed appropriately for future analysis.
- 4.1.16. Sampling will be carried out in accordance with the procedures outlined in English Heritage. 2011. *Environmental Archaeology. A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation.*
- 4.1.17. If human remains are encountered all works will stop until the appropriate permissions have been obtained. A further specification will be submitted to detail the excavation of any human remains and the subsequent specialist reports.

4.2. Finds

- 4.2.1. Any flint artefacts will be studied by I.P. Brooks for Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.
- 4.2.2. Any pottery will be studied by an appropriate specialist to be agreed in consultation with the Curatorial Archaeologist
- 4.2.3. Any metal or other special finds will be studied by an appropriate specialist to be agreed in consultation with the Curatorial Archaeologist
- 4.2.4. All ceramic, bone and stone artefacts will be cleaned and processed immediately following the watching brief.
- 4.2.5. Metal artefacts will be stored and managed on site according to the UK Institute of Conservation Guidelines.
- 4.2.6. Any samples taken for environmental analysis will be assessed and studied by an appropriate specialist to be agreed in consultation with the Curatorial Archaeologist
- 4.2.7. All finds will be bagged by context with the exception of closely datable or “special” finds which will be recorded with a 3 D position and will be bagged separately
- 4.2.8. The requirement for specialist archaeological reports will be discussed with the Curatorial Archaeologist. The extent and cost of any such report will be discussed with the client and a suitable level of response formulated in discussion between the Archaeologist, Curatorial Archaeologist and the Client.
 - 4.2.8.1. The initial report will include an assessment of the finds from the work and a recommendation for further study if require.

4.3. Archive Preparation and Report Preparation

- 4.3.1. On completion of fieldwork an archive of the results will be prepared.
- 4.3.2. The digital records will be archived with the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales

- 4.3.3. The digital archive will be prepared in line with Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales. 2015. Guidelines for digital archives
- 4.3.4. The deposition of any find with a local museum will be discussed with the owner and the development control archaeologist with a strong recommendation that any finds are deposited in a suitable local museum.
- 4.3.5. A summary report on the findings of the investigations will be prepared and completed within four weeks from completion of the project. This will summarise the results of the project including;
- 4.3.6. A site location plan
- 4.3.7. A plan of the site locating any features or archaeological deposits located.
- 4.3.8. An outline methodology
- 4.3.9. The results of the Watching Brief.
- 4.3.10. A full bibliography
- 4.3.11. A copy the agreed specification
- 4.3.12. An assessment of the potential for further archaeological investigation
- 4.3.13. Up to five copies of the report will be provided.
- 4.3.14. A digital copy of the report will also be provided.
- 4.3.15. A digital copy of the report will be supplied to the Gwynedd Historic Environment Record
- 4.3.16. A digital copy of the report will be supplied to Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service

5. General

5.1. CIfA Code of Conduct

- 5.1.1. All staff will abide by, and all procedures be carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct

5.2. Health and Safety

- 5.2.1. EAS Ltd adopt and adhere to safe working practices at all times. A copy of the company's general statement of policy is available on request.

6. Staff

- 6.1. The project will be directed by Dr I.P. Brooks MCIfA FSA
- 6.2. Project Staff will include Dr I.P. Brooks MCIfA FSA.

7. Curatorial Monitoring

- 7.1. The Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service will be informed as to the start date and progress of the survey.

8. Insurance

- 8.1. EAS Ltd carries all necessary Public and Employee Liability Insurances.
- 8.2. EAS Ltd carries Professional Indemnity Insurance

10. Copyright

- 10.1. EAS Ltd shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documentation, under the *Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved: excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive license to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.

10.1.1. EAS Ltd is prepared to assign copyright at the request of the client.

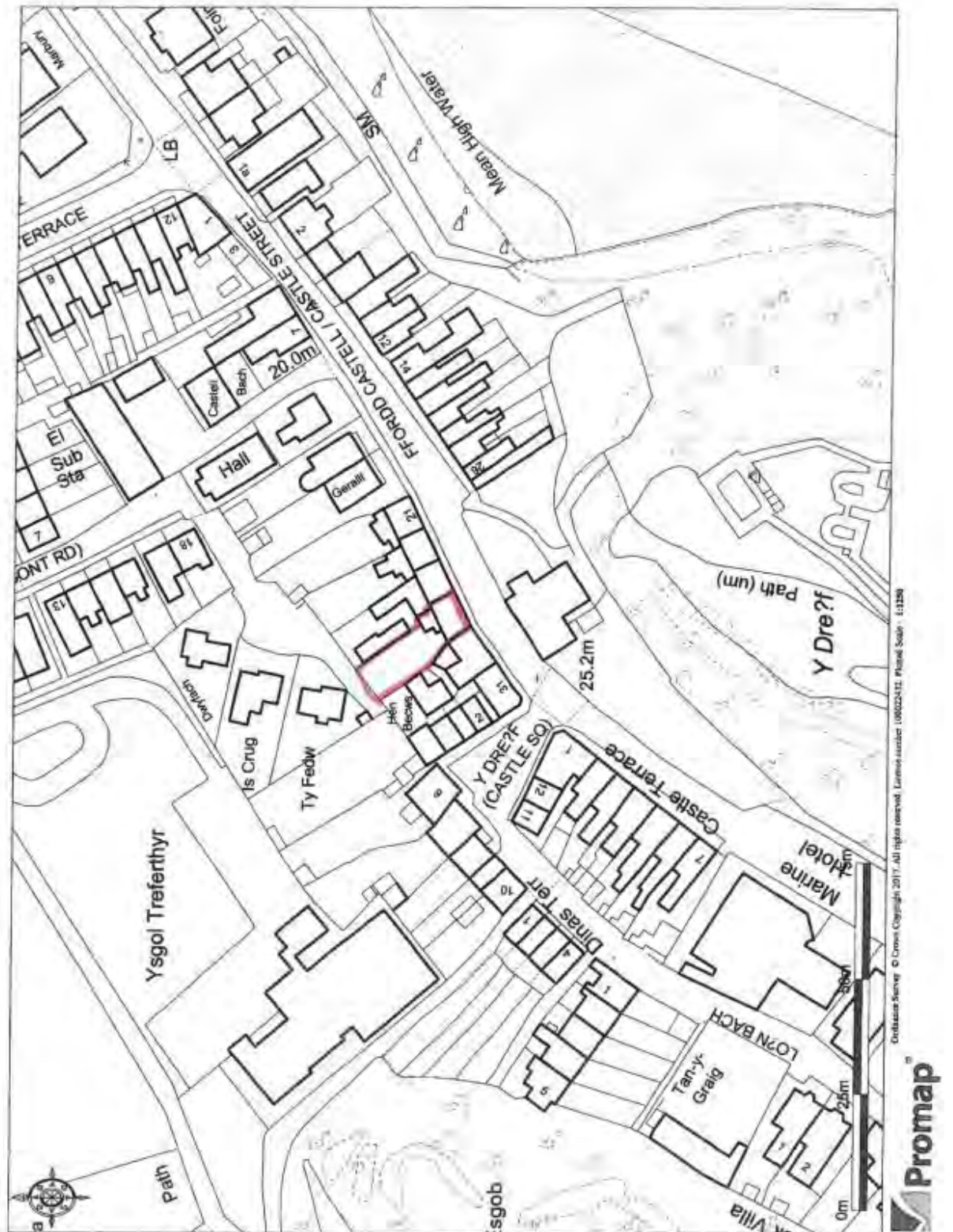


Figure 1: Location

Appendix 2: Context Summary

Context	Relationships	Description
1	Above 2 and 4	Mixed soil layer up to 600 mm thick. Mid grey brown sandy loam with tips of coal ash and sea shells (largely cockles). Clearly dumped/accumulated in garden.
2	Below 1 Cuts 3	Band of yellow clay 400 mm wide running at right angles to the existing house. Traced for a length of 1.9 m before it joins a cross wall 0.9 m wide running across the garden. Only the remnant survives. Appears to be cut into Context 3
3	Cut by 2 Below 4	Mixed orange brown sandy clay with patches of mid brown sandy silt.
4	Below 1 Above 3	Slate path consisting of slabs up to 500 x 600 mm in size leading towards the Ty Bach. Some evidence the path was replaced with a brick path using hand-made bricks 220 x 120 x 60 mm in size