GLAMORGAN-GWENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST
(CONTRACTS DIVISION)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION
CALDICOT CASTLE, MONMOUTHSHIRE

OCTOBER 1996

Report prepared by D N Williams
for Monmouth Museums Service

GGAT REPORT NO.96/068
PROJECT NO. A353
EXCAVATION NO. 347

CALDICOT CASTLE

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Summary

Monmouthshire County Council's Museums Service has submitted an application for Scheduled Monument Consent to demolish existing buildings and construct extended public lavatories in an area within Caldicot Castle (PRN 513g, SAM Mm50, NGR ST 4867 8851) abutting the south-east curtain wall. Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments required an evaluation of the site in order to allow them to determine the application.

The Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (hereafter **GGAT Contracts**) was commissioned to undertake the work, and this report details the results of the archaeological field evaluation.

The majority of the evaluated area had been disturbed by recent construction and services, including the footings of the standing buildings and the associated pipelines (foul sewer and gas). The only horizon not recently disturbed lay within a cut for the castle wall foundations, but no dating evidence was retrieved from this feature.

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by David N Williams BA (Hons) PIFA, Project Officer, **GGAT Contracts**, with the assistance of other Trust staff. Fieldwork for the evaluation was carried out by D N Williams and D J Maynard. The author would like to thank the following people for their assistance with the project:

Mr A Helme, Monmouthshire County Council Museum Service.
Mr S Brewer, Custodian of Caldicot Castle.

1. Introduction

1.1 Development proposal and commission

Monmouthshire County Council's Museums Service has submitted an application for Scheduled Monument Consent to demolish existing buildings and construct extended public lavatories in an area within Caldicot Castle (Figure 2), abutting the south-east curtain wall. Cadw, Welsh Historic Monuments require an evaluation of the site in order to determine the application.

1.2 Specification for the evaluation

The specification for the project was drawn up by the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust, **Contracts Division**, to fulfil the brief supplied by Monmouthshire County Council's Museum Service. A copy of the specification is to be found in Appendix 1.

1.3 Scope of the report

The report describes the physical environment of the site (section 2), gives a brief history of the site (section 3), and fieldwork results (section 4). Further information is to be found in the Appendices.

1.4 Abbreviations used in the report

Sites previously recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) are referred to by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and National Grid Reference (NGR). SAM denotes a Scheduled Ancient Monument. OD refers to Ordnance Datum (height above sea level), which in this case from was taken from the gatehouse (10.57m OD). References to documents and published works are given in brackets: the full titles will be found in the bibliography.

2. Physical environment

2.1 Topography (Figure 1)

The castle is situated to the east of Caldicot town centre, and the entrance to the castle is *via* Church Road. The castle was built on a slight rise to the north of the Caldicot Level, and to the east runs the Nedern Brook which enters the River Severn via Caldicot Pill.

2.2 Surface geology

The soil type of the site is Escrick 2. This generally consists of deep well drained often reddish coarse loamy soils and some fine loamy soils with slowly permeable subsoils. These soils overlie glaciofluvial drift deposits (Ordnance Survey 1983).

3. **Site History** (Anon 1979, extract)

After William I had invaded England in 1066, he permitted some of his trusted barons to erect fortresses along the Marches to control the Welsh. William Fitzosborn was created Earl of Hereford, which included lands in Gloucestershire and most of Gwent (by alliance with Caradoc ap Griffydd).

In 1074 however, FitzOsborn's son, Roger rebelled against the king and as a consequence his lands were forfeit and its administration given to Durand, Sherriff of Gloucester.

The Domesday Book of 1086 mentions the presence of a knight at Caldicot, and it is possible that a small wooden donjon (or Keep) had been constructed on the site of the present Keep.

In 1158 the castle and its manor came into the hands of Humphrey de Bohun, through his marriage to Margaret, a descendant of Durand. The de Bohun family were probably responsible for re-building the Keep, adding the curtain wall and constructing the three main towers. The ruined gatehouse (now called de Bohun Gate) was also constructed during this period.

In the 1360s a later Humphrey de Bohun carried out extensive repairs to the castle. The next main building phase was carried out under the directions of Thomas Woodstock, the youngest son of Edward III, who acquired the castle through his marriage to Alianore de Bohun in 1376. In the 1380s it is known that Thomas built a new gatehouse (the present entrance), and the square tower opposite containing a Postern Gate (the Woodstock Tower). He also constructed a great hall of which only the windows in the curtain wall remain.

After being held directly by the Crown, including Henry V, for some decades, the castle passed to the Duchy of Lancaster, and was leased from them by the Herbert family, who became the Somersets, Earls of Worcester in the 16th century.

In 1759 Capel Hanbury, a Pontypool industrialist, leased the castle and it remained in the Hanbury family until 1830, when the lease was passed to the Lewis's of St Pierre. In 1857 Charles Lewis bought the castle outright, adding to his extensive estates in the area.

In 1885 J R Cobb bought the castle and lands, and carried out a programme of restoration.

In 1963 the Chepstow Rural District Council bought the castle from the Cobb family, and from 1974 it has been

administered by, firstly, Monmouth District Council, and now by Monmouth Borough Council, via the Boroughs Museums Service.

4. Excavation results

Method

One area was excavated (Figure 2), and this measured 2.4m x 2.4m. The trench was excavated by hand to a depth of 0.50m (or bedrock) and features of archaeological interest were drawn, photographed and recorded on context sheets. The levels referred to (Figure 3) were taken from the gatehouse (10.57m OD).

Following completion of the work the site was backfilled.

Features identified (Figures 3 and 4)

Modern disturbance

The uppermost surface consisted of layer of gravel, 0.10m deep, and this overlay contexts 002, 004, 005 and 006. Context 002 consisted of a modern concrete foundation measuring 2m (north-south) x 1.4m (east-west) that had a thickness of 0.02m.

Underlying 001 and 002, was a make-up layer (006). This consisted of a dark brown sandy silty loam with fragments of mortar, coal and disturbed bedrock.

Along the north edge of the excavated area, and butted by 006, the sandstone foundation (005) of the present toilet block was uncovered. The exposed area of this was 1.8m x 0.23m x 0.15m.

Underlying 006 was a thin layer of light grey, disintegrated mortar. The exposed portion of this deposit measured 2.05m x 1.70m x 0.02m. This horizon overlay 010, a 0.10m thick mixed deposit of silty loam, containing both angular and rounded stones, along with charcoal and lime mortar flecks.

The base layer 015 consisted of sandstone bedrock.

Three modern pipe trenches were identified within the evaluated area.

Underlying 006, and cutting the bedrock (015), was the first pipeline cut, 007. The exposed section of the pipe trench measured 1.8m x 0.36m x 0.22m and the ceramic pipe had a diameter of 0.10m. This trench had been backfilled with a silty clay (008) that contained fragments of clinker and mortar, along with a few small rounded stones and ceramic pipe fragments.

Cutting 002 and 006 was a cut (003) for a gas pipeline. This trench contained a mixed deposit (004) of sandy, silty

loam with fragments of wood, mortar, charcoal, plastic, and redeposited bedrock (015).

The third pipe was located in the northeast corner of the excavated area. This underlay 001 and consisted of a plastic gutter downfall pipe.

Castle wall

Cut into the bedrock, parallel to the castle wall was the construction trench 011. This measured 0.60m in width, and sloped down at an angle of 45 degrees to a depth of 0.30m. Within this trench the castle wall foundation (014) was uncovered. This consisted of 3 courses of random coursed rubble stone with a matrix of yellow-grey lime mortar, and the exposed section measured 0.85m x 0.15m x 0.30m. The fill of the trench 011, was a red-brown silty loam (012) containing medium sized stone fragments (possibly the result of the wall construction), and a small quantity of sheep bones.

5. Discussion

The majority of deposits encountered during the evaluation were of 19th century or later origin, and included 3 modern pipelines and debris from the construction of the present toilet block. The exact date of construction is unclear but it can be suggested that it was post 1963 when the Chepstow Rural District Council bought the castle from the Cobb family.

The only possible medieval deposits encountered were the castle wall foundations: the construction trench, and its associated fill. The small section investigated produced no dating evidence.

It is concluded that the area has been heavily disturbed previously and that the proposal will have a limited archaeological impact.

Appendix One: Specification

Purpose

This specification was drawn up to fulfil the brief for the work supplied by Monmouthshire County Council Museums Service.
The purpose of these specifications is to set out a quantifiable schedule of works against which performance, fitness for purpose and achievement of quality can be measured.
This specification was prepared to ensure that the work is undertaken to the standard required by The Institute of Field Archaeologist's Standard and Guidance For Archaeological Field Evaluations (1994).

Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

An investigation of the potential archaeological resource through intrusive observation and recording in order to determine the character, distribution and importance of the resource in the development area.
The presentation of these observations in a written report, taking account of related documentary and historical evidence.

The preparation of an archive of data recovered and records made as a result of the project, and the deposition of this archive in a suitable receiving museum or similar institution.

Timing

Lead-in Period

GGAT Contracts will require a lead-in period of one week from notification of award of contract.

Completion

GGAT Contracts will complete the works within three weeks thereafter.

Fieldwork Methodology

Trial Excavations

Location

One area will be excavated, in the position shown on the plan attached to the brief; this area will measure 2.4m x 2.4m. The total area investigated will be 5.76 square metres.

Method of excavation

The areas will be excavated manually. The minimum number of archaeological deposits sufficient to establish the character and chronology of past human activity will be excavated.
Part of each area will be excavated to the base of the deposits which contain archaeological and related palaeoenvironmental evidence, or 0.5m, or intact medieval horizons (whichever is the lesser), to determine the potential range and depth of such deposits.
Cut features will be partially, rather than fully, excavated, in order to minimise destruction of the resource, provided that sufficient information is thereby obtained.

Method of recording

The techniques employed will conform to best current professional practice. Archaeological deposits will be recorded with a single continuous context numbering system, in accordance with GGAT's Manual of Excavation Recording Techniques, a copy of which is deposited in the county SMR. Contexts will be drawn at a suitable scale (usually 1:20) in plan, and where appropriate in section. All significant contexts will be photographed in 35mm colour transparency and monochrome film.

Finds recovery and recording

All classes of finds will be retained, cleaned, and catalogued, in accordance with the GGAT Manual of Excavation Recording Techniques, and then temporarily stored in stable conditions following the guidance given in the UK Institute of Conservation's Guidelines for the Treatment of Finds from Archaeological Sites, until arrangements for final deposition have been agreed. No human remains will be removed from site until the relevant permissions have been obtained. If substantial quantities of undiagnostic, residual or modern material are recovered, an on-site recording and discard policy for these classes of find will be devised, in consultation with the Museums Service.

Environmental sampling

The management of environmental recording and sampling will follow the principles and tenets laid down in the Association for Environmental Archaeology's draft Guidelines for Environmental Archaeology. All deposits with a high potential for the preservation of palaeoenvironmental material will be sampled, by column, bulk and other method, for possible subsequent analysis.

Specialist advisers

GGAT have a number of established specialist advisers and consultants whose advice will be sought where the type of site or

artefact falls outside the areas of expertise of **GGAT Contracts** staff.

Reporting

Assessment & Archive Preparation

Site archive

An archive of archaeological records relating to the trial excavations and/or survey will be prepared to the specifications in Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991) Appendix 3.

Documentary research

Readily available primary and secondary archaeological and historical sources (eg SMR, inventories, county histories, previous excavation reports) will be consulted, in order to place the results of the fieldwork in an appropriate archaeological and historical framework. It is understood that the Museums Service has access to this information.

Post-excavation analysis

Following a review of the potential of the recovered evidence, a programme of analysis and research will be undertaken, resulting in the preparation of a site narrative and supporting data, including finished drawings and photographs as necessary.

Specialist reports

Reports on cultural or palaeoenvironmental material, dating, and remote sensing will be prepared either using GGAT's Central Services or sub-contracted from established specialists as and when required.

Assessment

The proposed land-use will be assessed in terms of its potential effect on the archaeological resource identified through the fieldwork, and will also consider, where appropriate, the impact of the development on the setting of the resource.

Research archive

An archive of records relating to the preparation of the reports will be prepared to the specifications in Management of Archaeological Projects, (English Heritage, 1991) Appendix 6.

Reports and Archive Deposition

Report to client

The report will comprise a synthesis of data gathered through the execution of sections 3.1-3.2.1.5, together with inclusion of supporting evidence in appendices as appropriate, and illustrations. Six copies of the report will be supplied; additional copies may be provided at a small cost.

Report Deposition

After an appropriate period has elapsed, copies of the report will be deposited with the relevant county Sites and Monuments Record and National Monuments Record

Summary reports for publication

Short archaeological digest reports will be submitted for publication in relevant regional, national and thematic learned journals; as a minimum, a report will be submitted to the annual publication of the regional CBA group or equivalent journal.

Archive deposition

The archives will be deposited with the Monmouthshire County Council Museums Service.

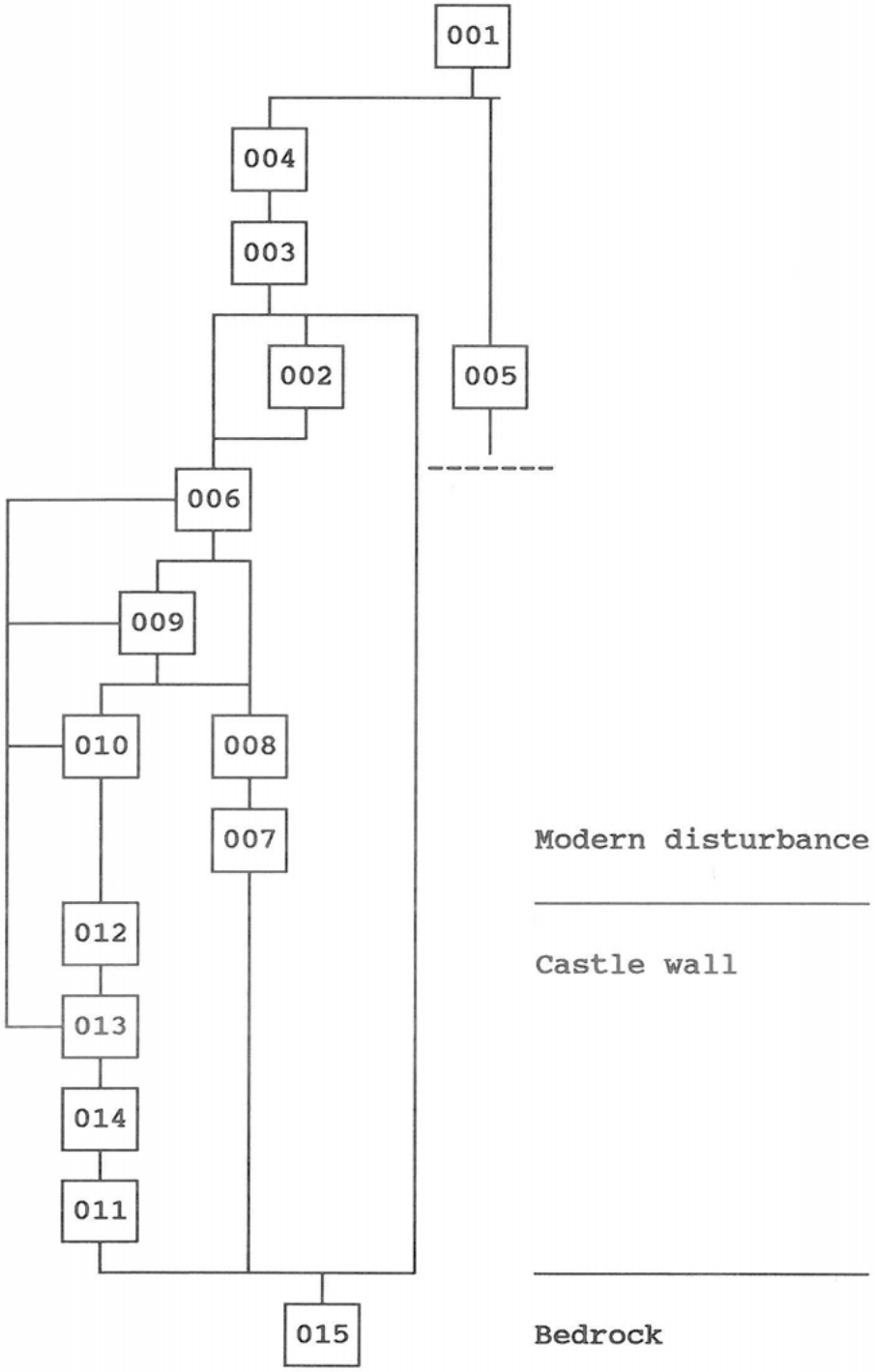
Finds Deposition

The finds, including artefacts and ecofacts, excepting those which may be subject to the laws of Treasure Trove, will be deposited with the Monmouthshire County Council Museums Service. A copy of the archive index will be deposited with the National Monuments Record, RCAHM(W), Aberystwyth.

Appendix Two: Site Data

Context	Description	Date
001	Gravel.	Modern
002	Concrete foundation of standing building.	Modern
003	Modern cut for gas pipeline.	Modern
004	Fill of pipe trench 003.	Modern
005	Stone foundation of female toilet.	Modern
006	Soil make-up, underlying 001 and 002.	Modern
007	Modern cut for foul water pipe.	Modern
008	Fill of trench cut 007.	Modern
009	Modern construction layer.	Modern
010	Modern make-up underlying 009.	Modern
011	Construction trench for castle wall.	Medieval
012	Fill of construction trench 011.	Medieval
013	Castle wall.	Medieval
014	Castle wall foundations.	Medieval
015	Bedrock.	

Matrix


001
004
003
002
005
006
009
010
008
007
012
013
014
011
015
Modern disturbance
Castle wall
Bedrock

Bibliography

ND 1979 A brief history of Caldicot Castle. Monmouth District Museums Service.

Ordnance Survey 1983 Soils of England and Wales, Sheet 2, Wales, 1:250:000.

Ordnance Survey 1978 Mid Severn Estuary, Sheet 48/58, Pathfinder 1150, 1:25:000.

Sources consulted but not cited

Wheatly Cobb G 1919 Caldicot Castle. Proceedings of the Monmouthshire and Caerleon Antiquarian Association, 7-12.

Bradney J 1929 Caldicot. A history on Monmouthshire: The hundred of Caldicot 4, part 1.

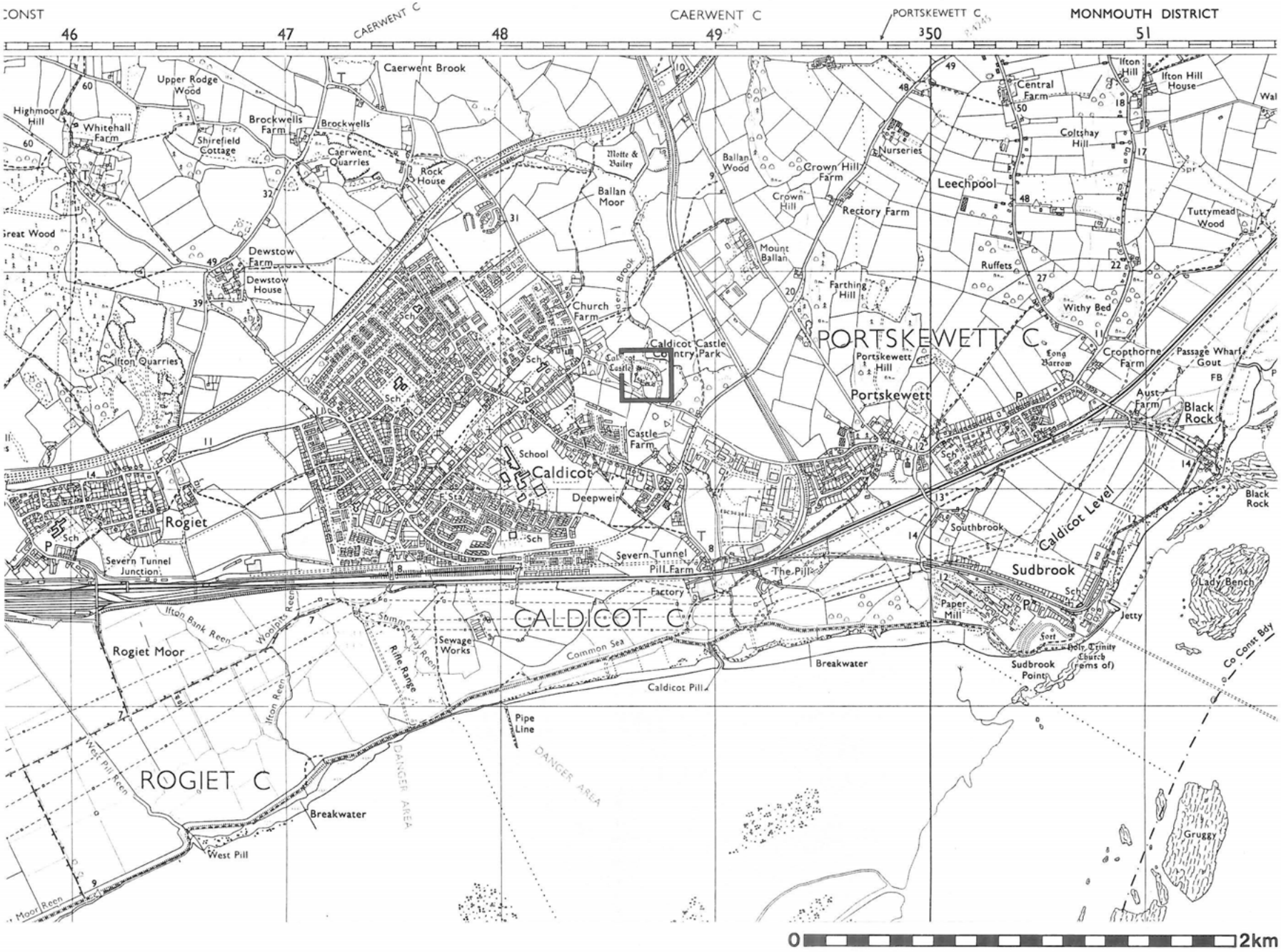


Figure 1: Site location

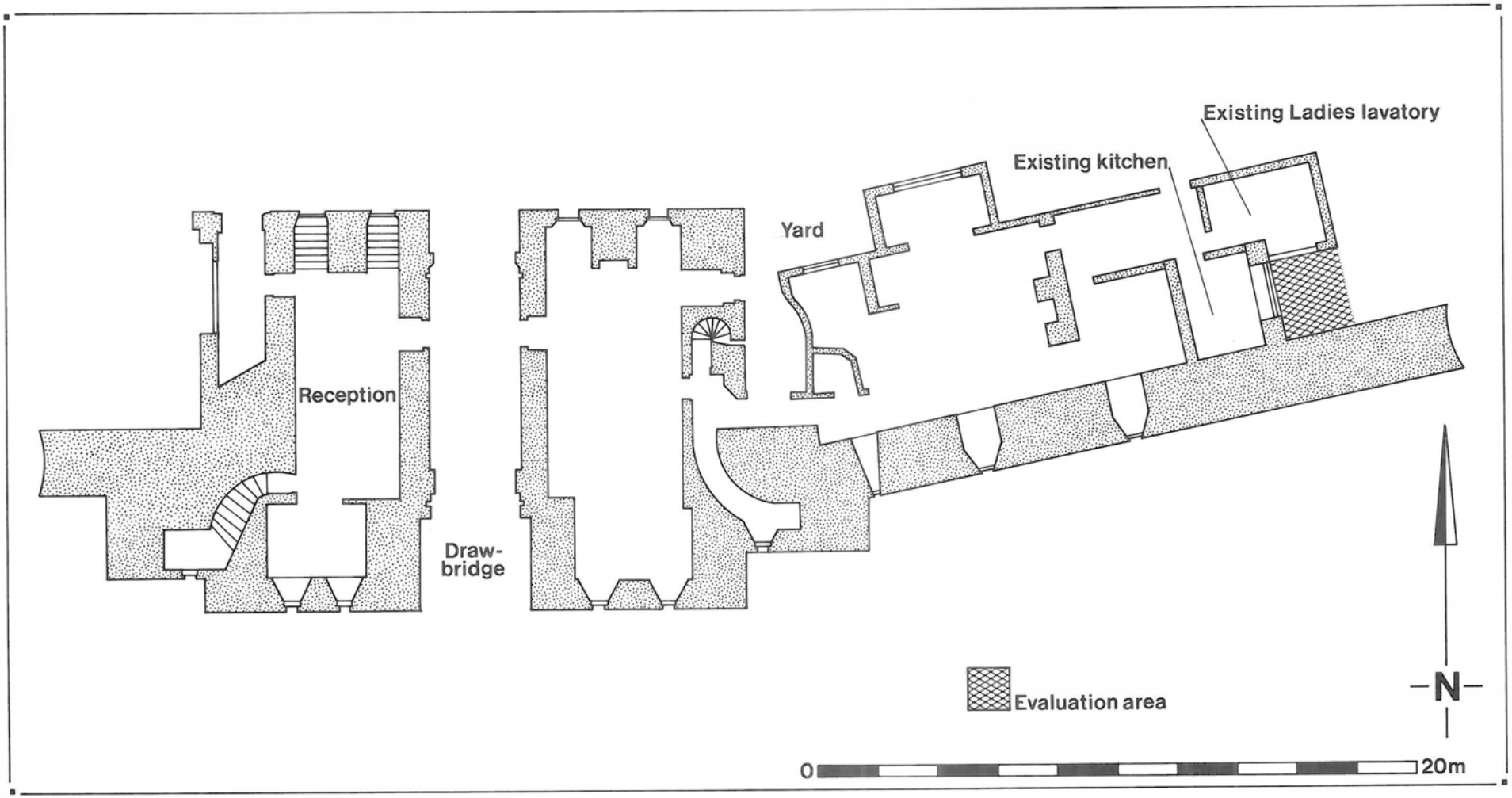


Figure 2: Trench location

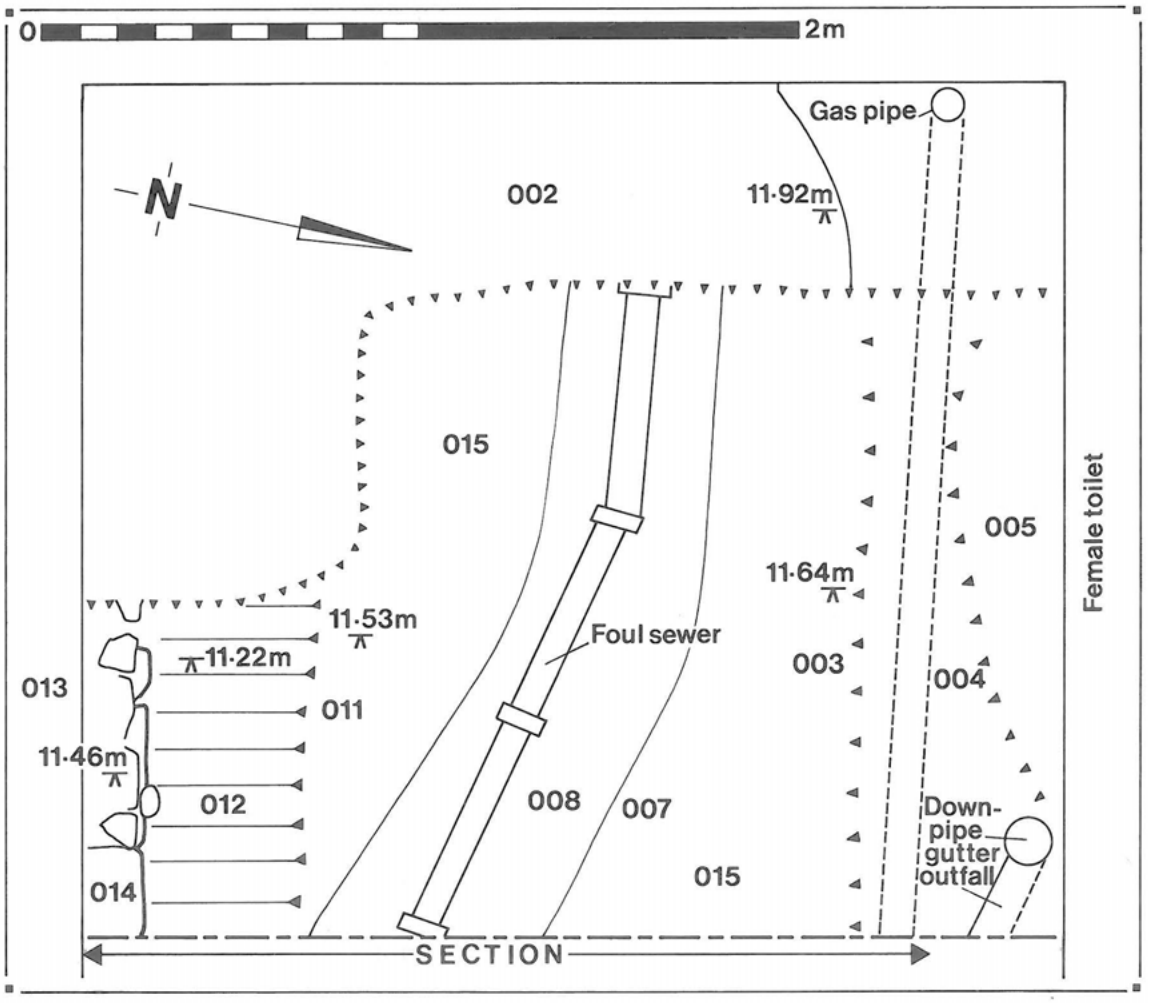


Figure 3: Plan of evaluated area (all levels are in metres above Ordnance Datum)

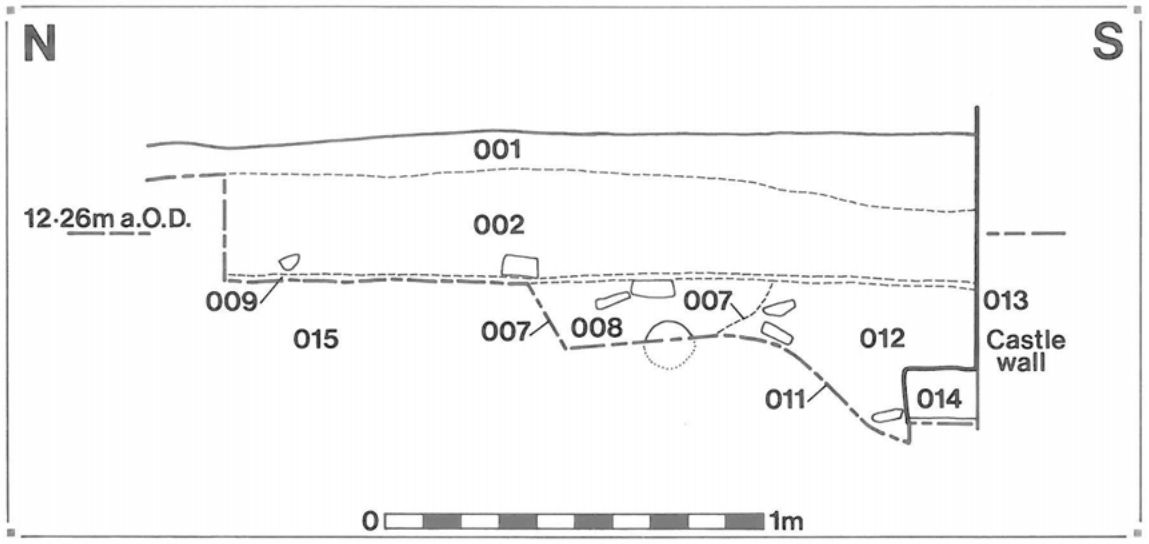


Figure 4: West facing section (see Figure 3)