

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

*Pen Graig Barn, Builth Wells*  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

CPAT Report No 231

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*Pen Graig Barn, Builth Wells*  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

**R. Hankinson**  
July 1997

Report for Powys County Council

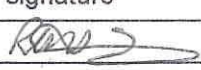

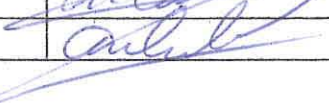
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## CPAT Report Record

### Report and status

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| CPAT Report Title     | Pen Graig Barn, Builth Wells: Archaeological Excavation |                |             |
| CPAT Project Name     | Pen Graig Barn, Builth Wells                            |                |             |
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### Internal memo

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## The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In April 1997, the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was asked by Powys County Council to provide a specification (Appendix 1) and quotation for excavations and a photographic survey at Pen Graig Barn, Hospital Road, Builth Wells (SO 03695085).
- 1.2 The work became necessary due to the proposal to build a new school in the area containing the listed barn (PRN 30476). It was proposed by the County Archaeologist for Powys that the barn and its site be recorded prior to its dismantling and subsequent re-erection outside the area of the development. The recommended recording entailed an initial photographic survey of the barn, followed by excavation of three 2m x 2m trenches in the floor of the barn. However, permission was granted by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments for dismantling to take place prior to the archaeological excavations; the photographic survey had already been carried out by the Architect as part of the design and planning application.
- 1.3 The CPAT (Contracts) quote was accepted by Powys County Council at the beginning of June 1997. The excavations were carried out from the end of June to the beginning of July 1997; this report was written immediately afterwards.

## 2 GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The location of the barn falls within the south-western part of the town of Builth Wells in Powys, adjacent to the cottage Hospital. It occupies a generally north-east facing slope overlooking the Wye valley and the town.
- 2.2 The soils of the area belong to the Denbigh 1 Soil Association and are well drained fine loamy and silty soils over rock, shallow soils and exposed rock are present locally (Rudeforth *et al* 1984). The soils are derived from the underlying slaty mudstones and siltstones of Silurian age (George 1970).

## 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The barn is considered to date to the 18th century, and prior to its dismantling comprised a rectangular five bay timber structure built on a stone plinth, aligned north-west/south-east. The walls had weatherboard cladding, while the roof was clad by a mixture of stone tiles, slates and asbestos corrugated sheets. At the centre of each long elevation there were a pair of double doors, with a smaller pair of doors to the south-east of the main doors in the north-east elevation.
- 3.2 The internal structure of the barn consisted of open trusses on timber cill beams, with upright centre posts rising to tie beams and flanking arch braces rising to wall posts. The centre bay had a stone slab floor and the south-eastern bay had a cobbled floor; the remaining bays were earth floored.

## 4 EXCAVATIONS (Fig 3)

- 4.1 The excavations were carried out after the barn had been dismantled and removed from the site, they took the form of three 2m x 2m trenches excavated in the earth floored bays of the barn.
- 4.2 **Trench A (2.1m x 2m)**  
Trench A was excavated in the most north-westerly bay of the barn, adjacent to Hospital Road. The existing floor of compacted brown clay (1), up to 0.1m thick, was removed by machine revealing a layer of mixed shaley stone and disturbed orange-grey clay subsoil (2), up to 0.35m thick. This underlying layer was partially removed by machine, with the remainder being removed by hand revealing natural orange-grey and yellow subsoil and shaley bedrock (3). The layer of mixed stone and subsoil would appear to represent the initial levelling of the site. No other archaeological features were seen in the trench.



**4.3 Trench B (2.1m x 2m)**

Trench B was excavated in the bay adjacent to Trench A. The existing floor of compacted brown clay (4), up to 0.15m thick, was removed by machine revealing shaley bedrock and natural orange-grey clay (5). No archaeological features were seen below the floor.

**4.4 Trench C (2m x 2m)**

Trench C was excavated in the bay immediately to the south-east of the central bay. The existing floor of compacted brown clay (6), up to 0.15m thick, was removed by machine revealing shaley bedrock and natural orange-grey clay (7). Two sherds of pottery likely to be of Post medieval date were recovered from the clay floor (6). No archaeological features were seen below the floor.

**5 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 The existing floors which were excavated in trenches A, B, and C proved to be of compacted brown clay, the two sherds of pottery recovered from the floor in trench C were not sufficiently typologically distinct to assist in the dating of the floor, although they are assumed to be of post medieval date.
- 5.2 The layer underlying the floor in trench A would appear to represent levelling of the site using excavated local materials prior to the construction of the barn. This may be a result of the proximity of the north-western bay to Hospital Road, which is sunken to a depth of perhaps 1.5m below the adjacent ground level.
- 5.3 No evidence of earlier structures on this site was seen during the excavations. The barn would appear to have been the only structure located on this site.

**6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 6.1 The writer would like to thank the staff of the site contractors, Frank Galliers, for their help and assistance during the excavations.

**7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

George, T.N., 1970, *British Regional Geology: South Wales*, London: HMSO.

Rudolf, C.C., Hartnup, R., Lea, J.W., Thompson, T.R.E., and Wright, P.C., 1984, *Soils and their Use in Wales*, Bulletin No 11. Harpenden: Soil Survey of England and Wales.

**APPENDIX 1**

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25th April 1997

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**BUILTH UCP SCHOOL: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK AT THE LISTED BARN, PEN  
CRAIG.**

**SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION AND  
PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY  
BY THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The proposed development of a block of land at Builth Wells UCP school involves the demolition of a listed barn at Pen Craig.
- 1.2 Powys Co Council have invited the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust to prepare a quotation and specification for an excavation in the interior floor of the barn and, if necessary, a photographic survey of the building prior to its demilition (Telephone call with Mr R Shelton, PCC, 25th April 1997).

**2 Objectives**

- 2.1 The objectives of the excavation are:
  - 2.1.1 to reveal by means of excavation trenches, the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the archaeology within the area of the proposed development in so far as these aims are possible;
  - 2.1.2 to record any archaeology revealed in the excavation trenches;
  - 2.1.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the excavation;
  - 2.1.4 to undertake a photographic survey of the building in colour print, black and white print and colour slide and to incorporate a precis of the results of this survey in the final report.

**3 Methods**

- 3.1 The excavation will take the form of 3 trenches, each 2m long by 2m wide. Where required these will be taken to a maximum depth of 1.2m below the existing ground surface. Consultation with the client and the curator will be necessary before this depth is exceeded.
- 3.2 The excavation will be undertaken using standard evaluation procedures:
  - 3.2.1 removal of modern overburden by machine if practical or by hand if not;



- 3.2.2 excavation of the archaeological deposits by hand trowelling to establish their importance and integrity, but avoiding any unnecessary disturbance of the deposits. All features encountered will be examined as fully as appropriate and within the constraints imposed by time and safety considerations.
- 3.2.3 all archaeological contexts recorded using the standard numbered context system employed by CPAT. All significant contexts to be planned and/or drawn in section at appropriate scales (as defined in the Curatorial Brief), and photographed in monochrome and colour. All drawn records will be related to control points depicted on modern maps.
- 3.3.4 all archaeological artefacts and environmental samples recorded and processed in a manner appropriate to the material involved. Those requiring conservation or other specialist treatment will be stored in a stable environment until such times as they can be examined by a specialist. All finds, except those deemed to be Treasure Trove, are the property of the landowner. It is anticipated that they will be donated to the appropriate local or regional museum, subject to agreement being reached with the landowner and the museum curator.
- 3.4 A comprehensive photographic record of the site will be made in colour print, colour slide and BW photographs to augment the drawn survey already prepared.
- 3.5 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared. This will be in A4 format and contain conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Historic Background; Excavation; Photographic survey, Conclusions and References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds.
- 3.5 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991).

#### **4 Resources and Programming**

- 4.1 The excavation will be undertaken by a skilled archaeologist. Overall supervision will be by Dr A Gibson, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by the same field archaeologist who conducted the excavation.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the project will take no more than 5 days in all and that the subsequent report would be prepared immediately thereafter, dependent on the client's instructions and the arrangement of a suitable timetable. The date of commencement, at the time of writing, has yet to be agreed with the client, and will be dependent on the state of the site. The archaeological curator will be informed of the detailed timetable and staffing levels when agreement has been reached with the client.
- 4.4 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.5 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

A.M. Gibson  
Projects Manager



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Development Site

BUILTH  
WELLS

BUILTH

**Fig 1 Location (1:25,000)**



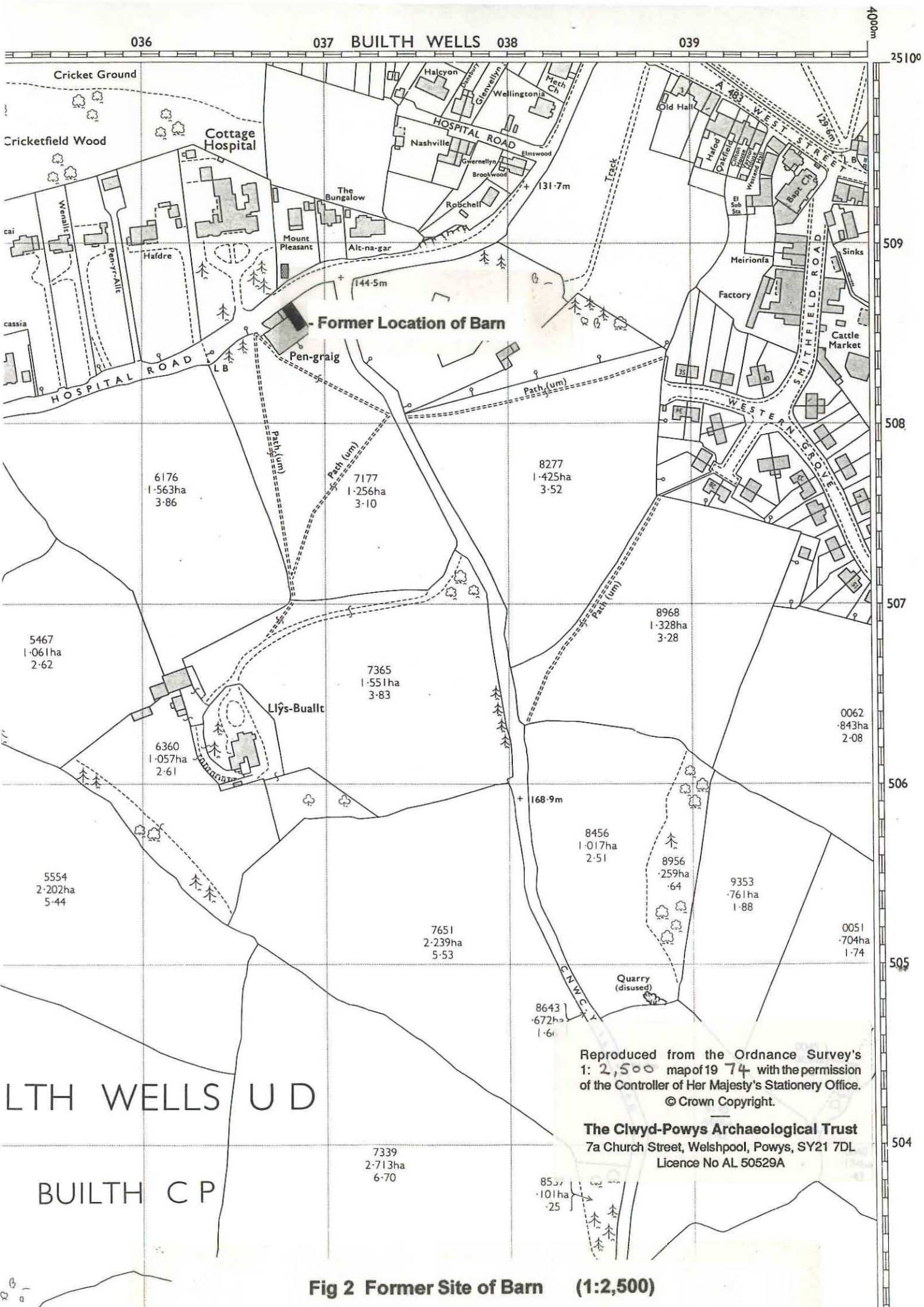


Fig 2 Former Site of Barn (1:2,500)

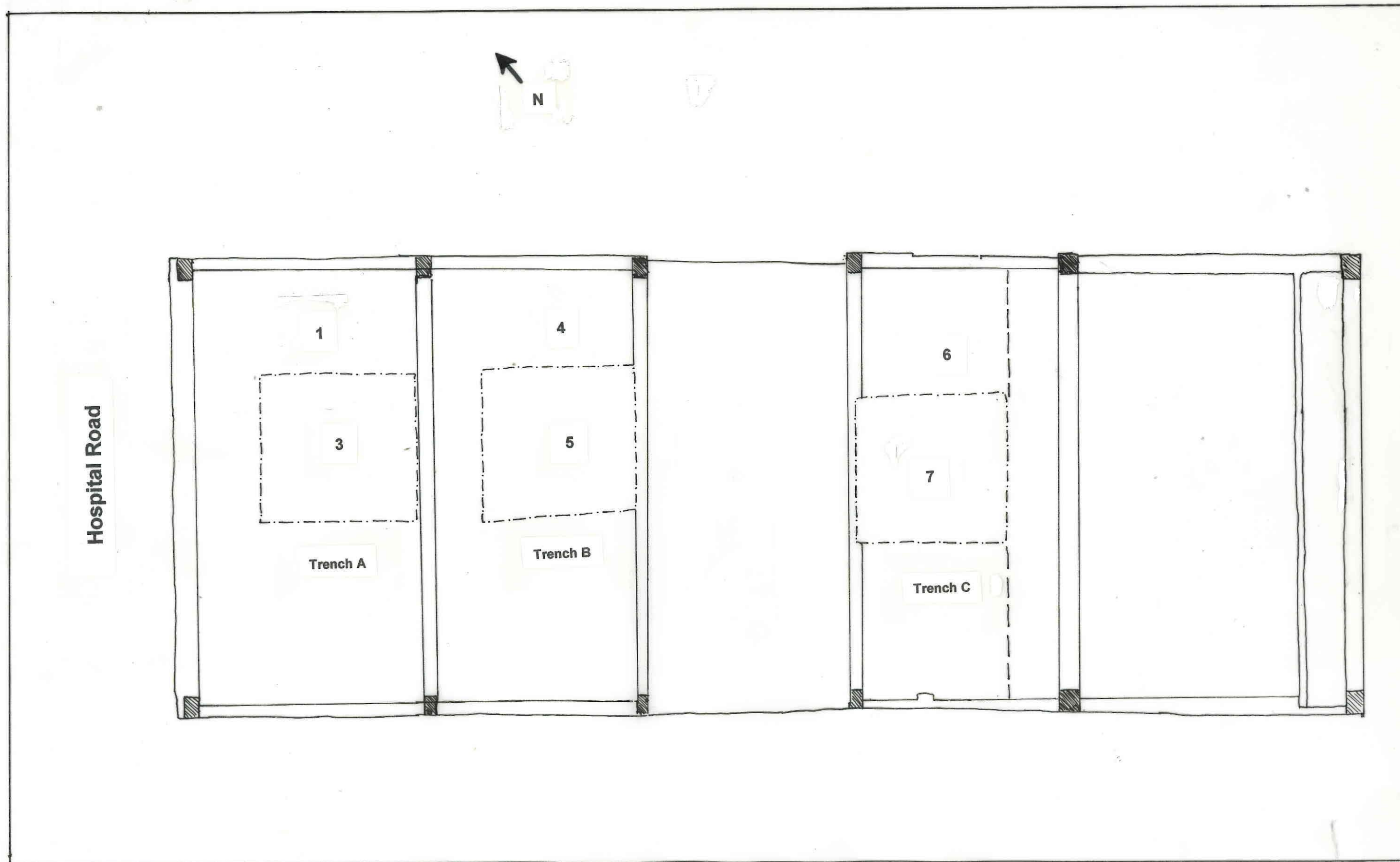


Fig 3 Location of Excavation Trenches (1:50)