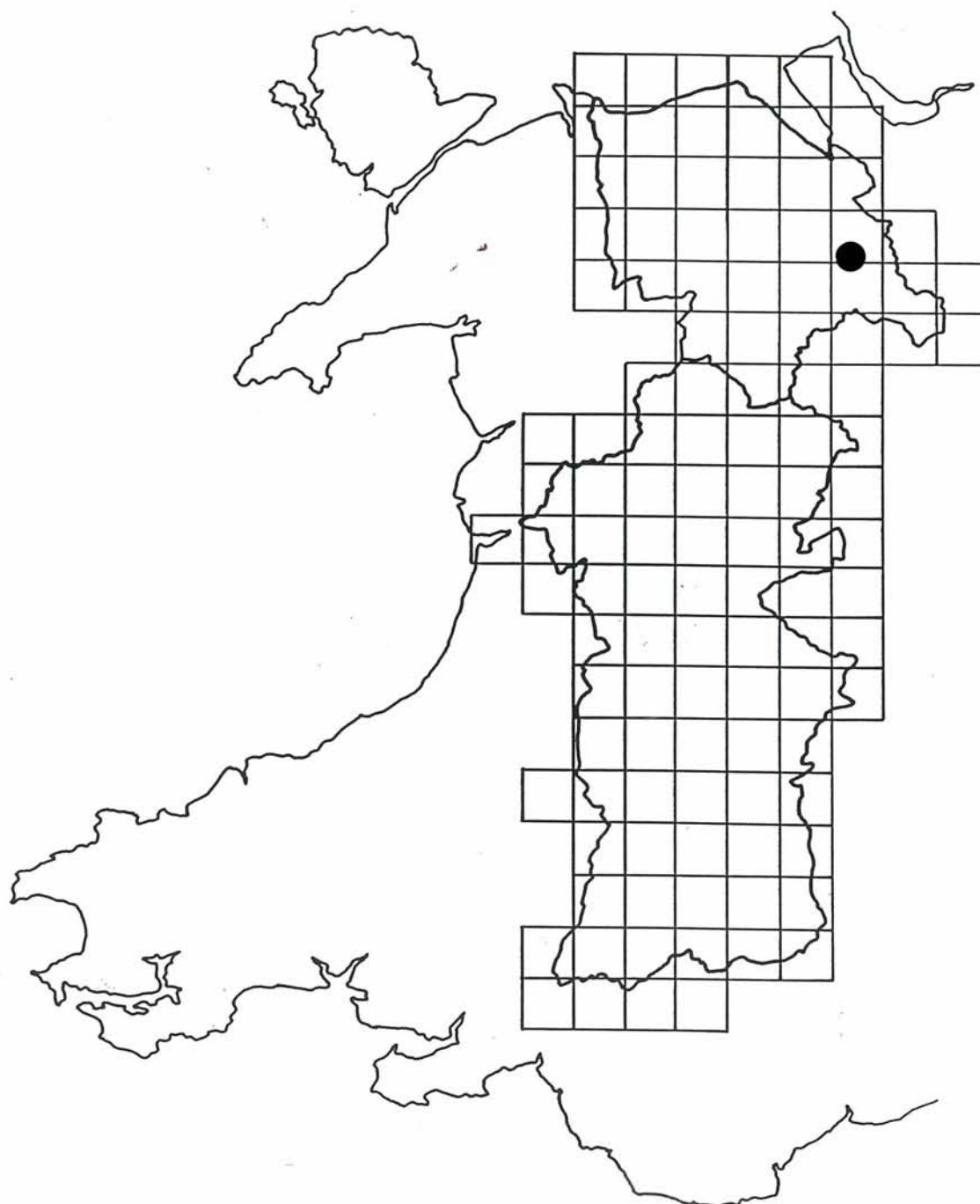


Lambpit Street, Wrexham, Clwyd

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



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by N W Jones

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Report prepared for Wrexham Maelor Borough Council

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following archaeological evaluation was carried out prior to the development of an area of open space and derelict land along Lambpit Street and Chester Street, Wrexham (Fig 1).
- 1.2 The development area was previously occupied by a market hall, the former Guildhall, the Grammar School, and more recently a car park. At present the site has been levelled and partly landscaped along the street frontages.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The development is located in an area of considerable archaeological potential within the core of the medieval town as identified in the Wrexham Maelor Historic Settlements Survey (Silvester et al 1992). The plot is likely to contain sub-surface archaeological remains relating to buildings fronting onto both streets, possibly dating back to the medieval period. There is cartographic evidence for buildings along the street frontages during the 19th century, many of which may have been cellared. Historical documents also refer to Pwll Mawr, a large pool which was still in existence during the 18th century, to the rear of street front buildings.
- 2.2 An earlier archaeological evaluation during 1990 consisted of a single trench along the southern boundary of the development plot (Fig 1). The excavation revealed that the street frontage at that point had been fairly deeply cellared during the post-medieval period, removing any evidence for earlier occupation. There was no evidence for medieval activity in the area to the rear of the street frontage, although the edge of a large feature, possibly Pwll Mawr, was identified.

3 THE EVALUATION

- 3.1 The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was commissioned to undertake the evaluation, which was carried out between October 4th and 8th 1993. In accordance with the evaluation brief (CPAT EVB 55), two trenches were excavated, one along each street frontage, to determine the extent of the surviving archaeology and to evaluate the significance and likely dating of any features revealed (Fig 1). The trenches were excavated initially by machine with subsequent cleaning, excavation and recording by hand. The length of the trenches was restricted by the need to avoid recently planted trees and the proximity of subsurface electricity cables. It was also necessary to extend the width of both trenches due to soil conditions in order to make the excavations safe. These modifications to the specified brief were agreed with the Curator prior to work commencing. A full drawn, written and photographic record was maintained throughout. The results from the excavations were as follows:

- 3.2 **Trench A** (12.3 x 1.5m. Fig 2). Numbers in brackets refer to Figure 2.
- 3.2.1 The trench was excavated by machine to a maximum depth of c. 1.12m, cutting slightly into the natural subsoil (21). The upper c. 0.25m consisted of recently deposited topsoil (1), beneath which was the tarmac surface of the old car park (2). Below this, a layer of loose demolition rubble (3 and 11) lay on top of the remains of a concrete floor (4) c. 0.12m thick. This floor was part of a brick building fronting onto Lambpit Street, the end walls of which were readily identified (5 and 6), together with part of the front wall (8). The eastern wall (6) had been built on a stone foundation (7). Beneath the floor a series of layers containing rubble (19, 20 and 32) marked the infill of a cellar, with a possible pit (16) cut through them.
- 3.2.2 Immediately to the east of this building a large stone (10) set within a pit (9) may be part of the foundation for an earlier building.
- 3.2.3 A trench c. 1.10m wide (12) visible in the base of the excavation may be a foundation trench for a second building, together with an adjacent feature (14).
- 3.2.4 No clear dating evidence was produced for any of the features identified, but, given the nature the construction, it would seem likely that the buildings are of nineteenth century date.
- 3.3 **Trench B** (11 x 1.5m. Fig 3). Numbers in brackets refer to Figure 3.
- 3.3.1 The trench was excavated by machine to a maximum depth of c.1.20m, again cutting slightly into the natural subsoil (31). As with Trench A the upper layer (22) consisted of recently deposited topsoil, here lying above a layer of sand (23). Beneath this a layer of concrete (24) c. 0.20m thick marks the position of the kerb belonging to the former Guildhall carpark. A thin layer of gravel and tarmac (25) formed the base for the concrete and sealed an undated layer of sandy loam (27) c. 0.24m thick. At the southern end of the trench this overlay a layer composed of fragments of yellow sandstone (28) which may represent building rubble.
- 3.3.2 The only feature identified in Trench B was a trench (29) running roughly N-S cutting into the natural subsoil (31). The fill consisted of soft stoney silt (30) which was sealed beneath layers 27 and 28. No dating evidence was recovered.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The results from the two evaluation trenches would suggest that any evidence of medieval street frontages along both Lambpit Street and Chester Street has been largely, if not totally destroyed by subsequent building, particularly during the nineteenth century. It is therefore unlikely that any significant archaeology survives along these street frontages. However, due to the limited area available for evaluation it is not possible to comment on the likelihood of archaeological deposits surviving in the interior of the plot, to the rear of the street frontages, which may have been less affected by post-medieval and modern development.
- 4.2 Along Lambpit Street the evaluation revealed the brick foundations and cellar belonging to No 26, with the foundation trench to the east probably belonging to No 25. Both buildings were probably of nineteenth century date and remained standing until at least the 1960's.
- 4.3 The only feature identified which may belong to an earlier period of occupation was the possible foundation trench (9) which remains undated.
- 4.4 Trench B produced no clear evidence for buildings, although the layer of sandstone fragments (28) may have derived from the demolition of a building. The only feature identified was a possible trench (29) which was undated and not necessarily structural.

5 REFERENCES

- Silvester , R.J, Walters, M., and Wayne, D., 1992 Wrexham Maelor Historic Settlements, CPAT Report No 42.

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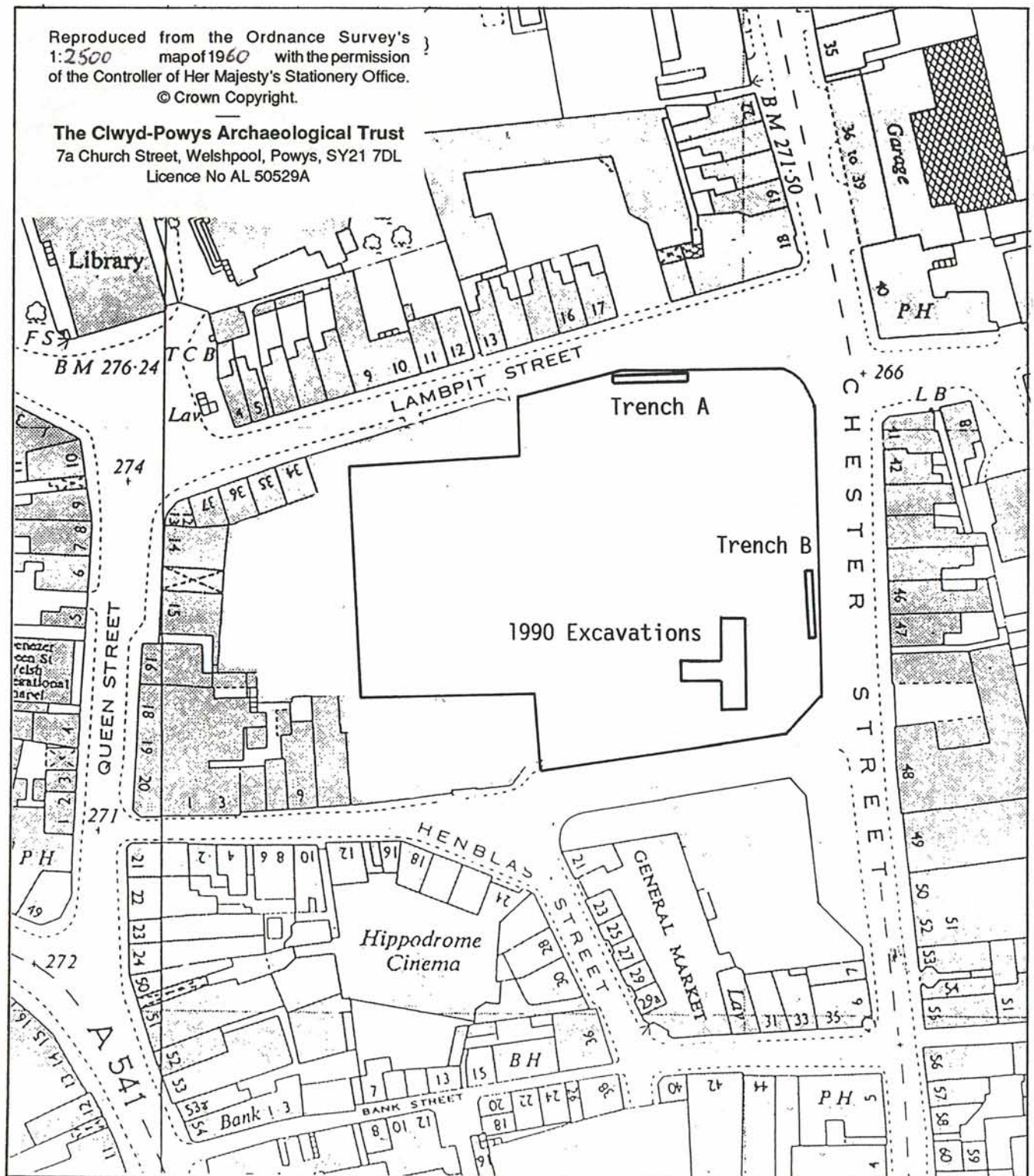


Fig 1: Location. Scale 1:1000

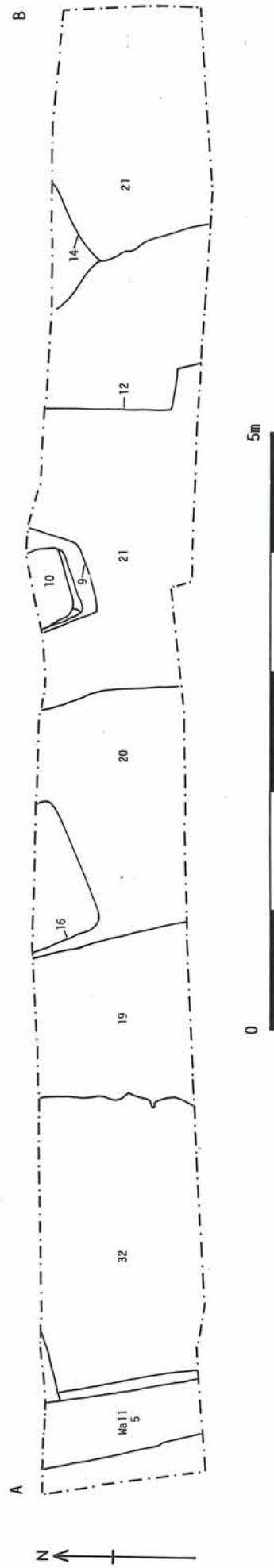
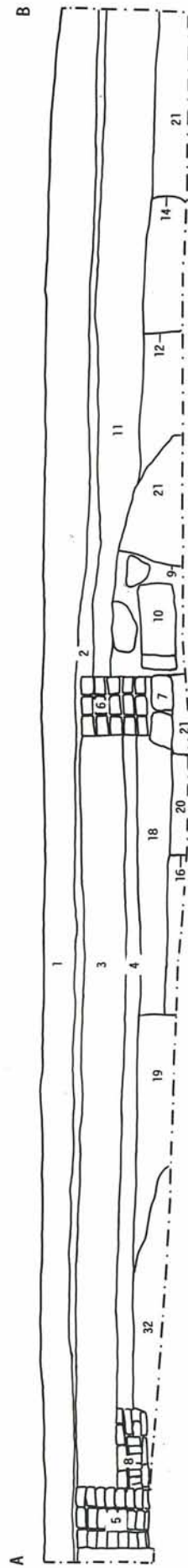
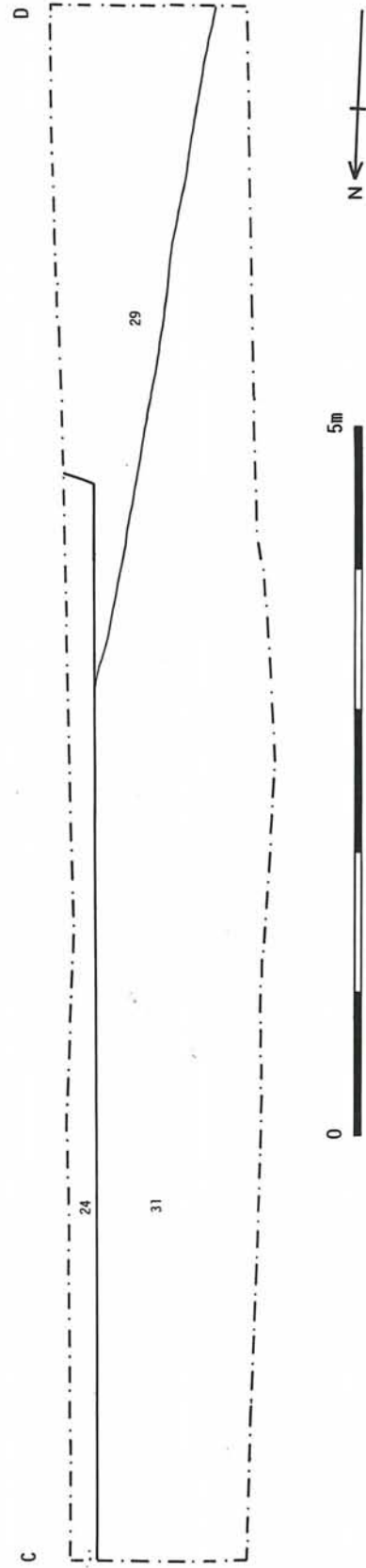
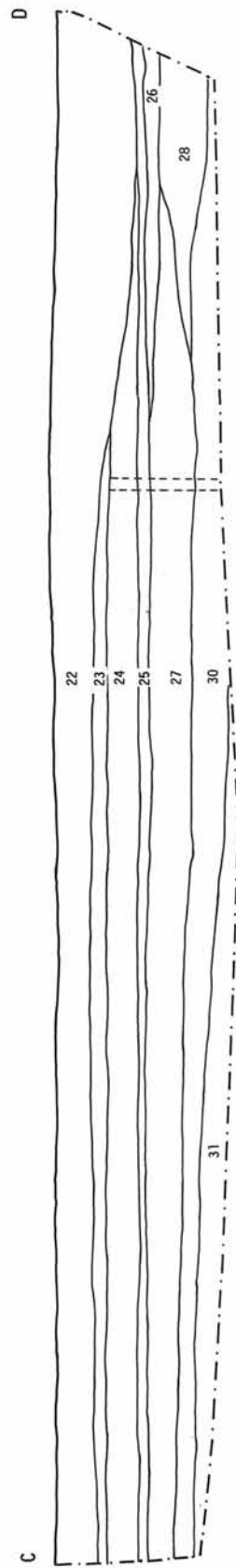


Fig 2: Trench A



0 5m



Fig 3: Trench B