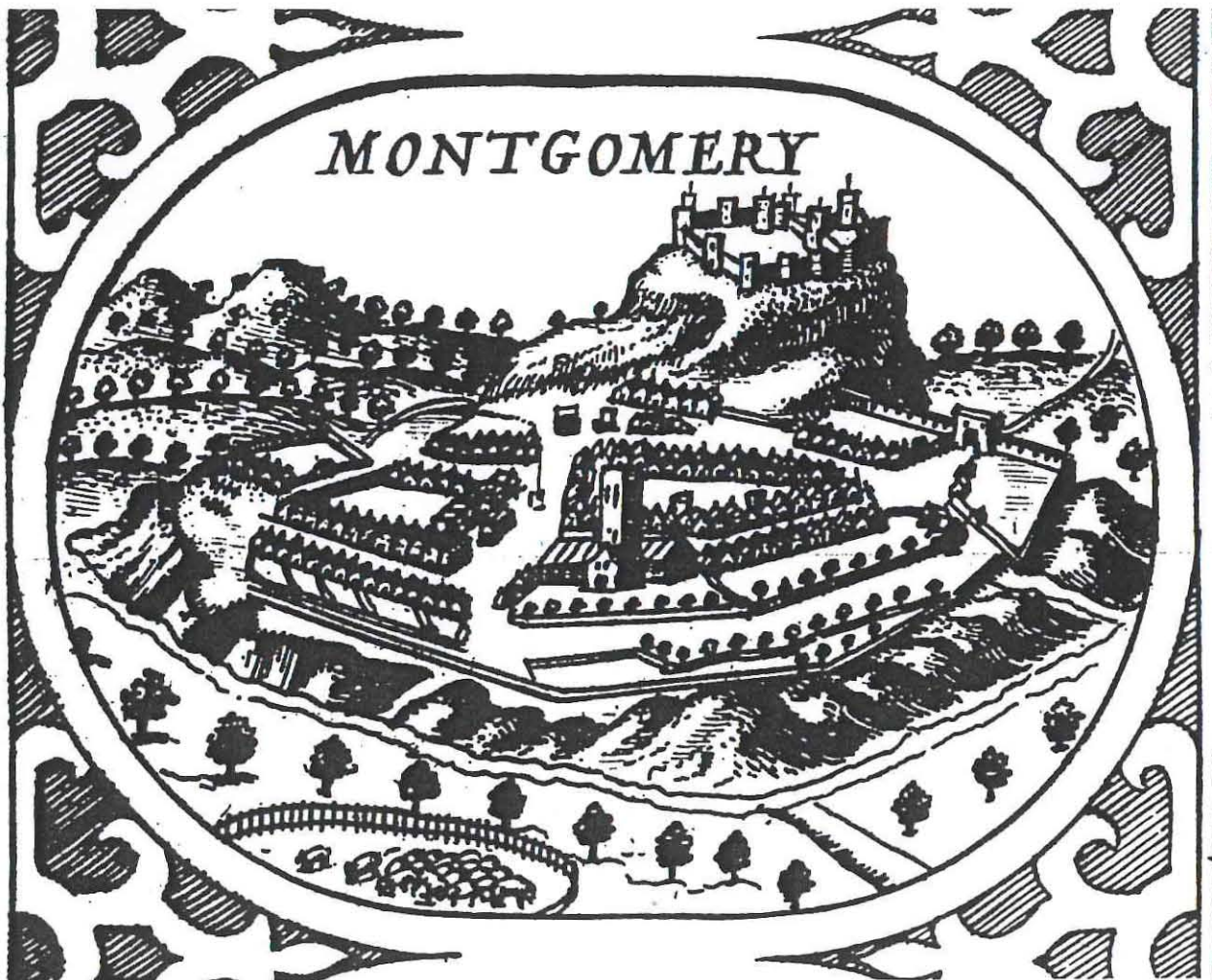


THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

*Land adjacent to The Crofters, Chirbury Road,
Montgomery*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



Report No 326

*Land adjacent to The Crofters, Chirbury Road,
Montgomery*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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July 1999

Report for Mr N Sheen

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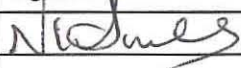
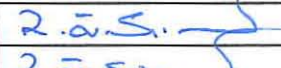

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CPAT Report Record

Report and status

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Fig. 1 Site location, 1:2,500

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The proposed development involves the construction of a new dwelling on a plot of land adjacent to The Crofters, Chirbury Rd, Montgomery, Powys (Powys County Council Planning Application M99361). The Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, acting in their role as archaeological advisors to the local authority, determined that a watching brief should be carried out during the initial stages of topsoiling, construction and service-trench excavation. Accordingly, a Brief (CWAT 326, dated 10/6/99) was prepared detailing the scheme of works required.
- 1.2 This site lies in an area of potential archaeological sensitivity within the medieval town. A pre-determination evaluation undertaken on the site indicated that significant buried deposits relating to a 13th/14th-century timber-framed building were preserved on the street frontage (Halfpenny 1998). Evaluation of the rear of the plot, in the area of the proposed development, revealed sparse deposits. However, although the foundations of the new building were not expected to disturb significant deposits, it was felt that features might be encountered which should be fully recorded prior to destruction.

2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND SOILS

- 2.1 The area of the development occupies a plot 13m wide and extending 20m from the street frontage (fig. 1).
- 2.2 Topographically, the present ground levels slope north-west towards Chirbury Road, dropping by approximately 2.7m. An existing garage had been terraced into the slope.
- 2.3 The underlying solid geology consists of Wenlock calcareous shales which emerge at the surface in places on the steep slopes to the west of the town. Soils overlying the bedrock are stagnogley silty clay loams of the Cegin Series (Rudeforth *et al.* 1984).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The pre-determination evaluation (Halfpenny 1998) consisted of three trenches excavated within the development plot. Two trenches towards the rear of the plot revealed only a shallow gully of possible medieval date. However, the trench excavated close to the street frontage revealed significant evidence for medieval occupation consisting of post holes of a probable timber building with the remains of a small hearth, later sealed beneath a stone surface, possibly forming a floor within the building.

4 WATCHING BRIEF

- 4.1 The watching brief was undertaken over a three-day period between 29 June and 1 July 1999. The watching brief was maintained according to the Brief, and involved monitoring and examining all groundworks and excavation of trenches within the development plot. A full written, drawn and photographic record was maintained throughout. Numbers in brackets refer to individual context numbers in the site archive.
- 4.2 The initial activity involved clearing the site and using a mechanical excavator to reduce the ground level by up to 1.0m in the area of the development. This revealed modern, or post-medieval overburden (1) which extended to the base of the excavations. Artefacts generally included post medieval pottery and brick, although none was retained. A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from the overburden, consisting of a jug rim with strap handle attachment, typical of the 13th to 15th century.
- 4.3 The excavation of service trenches along the eastern boundary of the plot involved cutting a trench 0.65 m wide and up to 0.8m deep from the street frontage into the area of the development. Although the trench passed through an area of archaeological potential along the street frontage, the only

feature revealed consisted of a spread of small stones (3) extending for only 0.35m at the north-west end of the trench. The stones, which were bedded in clay resting directly on the natural, gave the appearance of a worn surface. This surface was sealed beneath a layer of stony clay (2) up to 0.65m thick, lying beneath the topsoil. No dating evidence was recovered.

- 4.4 The excavation of the foundation trenches for the development was undertaken by a mechanical excavator. Trenches were typically 0.60m wide and 0.90m to 1.20m deep, cut through the modern/post-medieval overburden into the natural subsoil, which consisted of stony yellow clay. At the upper, south-eastern end of the plot the natural had already been revealed during the levelling of the site, while elsewhere it dipped to the north-west, visible in the base of the foundation trenches at a maximum of 1.1m below the ground surface.
- 4.5 The only features revealed in the foundation trenches consisted of two modern pits (4 and 5). Although some post-medieval pottery was revealed during the excavations of the trenches, it was all unstratified and not retained.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The only evidence which might relate to medieval or later occupation of the plot consisted of a short section of undated stone surface seen along the street frontage within a service trench. It is possible that this represents a continuation of the stone surface identified during the evaluation and interpreted as a possible floor within a timber building. However, no further features were identified which might be associated. Although the initial evaluation had revealed evidence for medieval occupation along the street frontage, there appeared to be little evidence of activity to the rear of the plot, in the area of the development. The results from the watching brief seem to confirm this picture, having produced no evidence for features or deposits which could be associated with such occupation.
- 5.2 The watching brief recovered only one sherd of residual medieval pottery which came from the general layer of overburden.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 The author would like to thank the following for their assistance during the project: Glyn Owen, CPAT, for undertaking the watching brief; Mr Sheen, the owner; the staff of Mr Ian Snead, contractor, for their co-operation.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Halfpenny, I.W. 1988. *Chirbury Gate, Montgomery, Powys: desk-top assessment and archaeological evaluation*. Cambrian Archaeological Projects Report no. 45.

Rudeforth, 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

SITE ARCHIVE

- 1 A1 site drawing
- 1 A4 site drawing
- 7 context record forms
- 1 black and white negative film
- 1 colour slide film
- 1 colour print film

- 1 sherd of medieval pottery

APPENDIX 2

SPECIFICATION

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed development involves a plot of land adjacent to The Crofters, Chirbury Rd, Montgomery, Powys (Powys County Council Planning Application M99361). The Curatorial section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, acting in their role as archaeological advisors to the local authority, have determined that a watching brief should be carried out during the initial stages of topsoiling, construction and service trench excavation. Accordingly, a Brief (CWAT 326, dated 10/6/99) has been prepared detailing the scheme of works required.
- 1.2 This site lies in an area of potential archaeological sensitivity within the medieval town. A pre-determination evaluation undertaken on the site indicated that significant buried deposits relating to a 13th/14th century timber framed building were preserved on the street frontage. Evaluation of the rear of the plot, in the area of the proposed development, revealed sparse deposits. However, although the foundations are not expected to disturb significant deposits, features may be encountered which should be fully recorded prior to destruction.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the archaeological works are:
 - 2.1.1 to record the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of any archaeological deposits and/or features revealed within the area of the proposed development during the development works in so far as these aims are possible;
 - 2.1.2 to prepare a report outlining the results of the watching brief.

3 Methods

- 3.1 The watching brief will be undertaken to include the initial topsoil stripping, foundation trench excavation, service trench excavation and construction of a new access.
- 3.2 Limited excavation of all significant contexts will be undertaken where possible following negotiations with the developer. All significant archaeological deposits and/or features noted during the watching brief will be recorded by drawn plan/section and photography. All features will be tied in locationally to the Ordnance Survey as accurately as possible.
- 3.3 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared according to the principles detailed in Section 8 of the Brief. This will be in A4 format and contain conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Historic Background; Catalogue of sites identified with notes on

their condition and significance, Conclusions and Recommendations and References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds. Further publication of the results in an appropriate regional or national journal will be undertaken at a later date and as considered appropriate depending on the nature of the findings.

- 3.5 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991). Following agreement with the landowner, arrangements will be made for the long term conservation and storage of all artefacts in an appropriate repository.

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The watching brief will be undertaken by a skilled and experienced archaeologist. Overall supervision will be by Mr R.J.Silvester, 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 either by, or with the assistance of, the same field archaeologist who conducted the watching brief.
- 4.3 The duration of the watching brief will depend entirely on the developers programme of work, but is understood to be two days. The subsequent report will be prepared immediately following completion of on-site recording, 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 and negotiated access. 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.

N.W.Jones
Projects Officer
15th June 1999

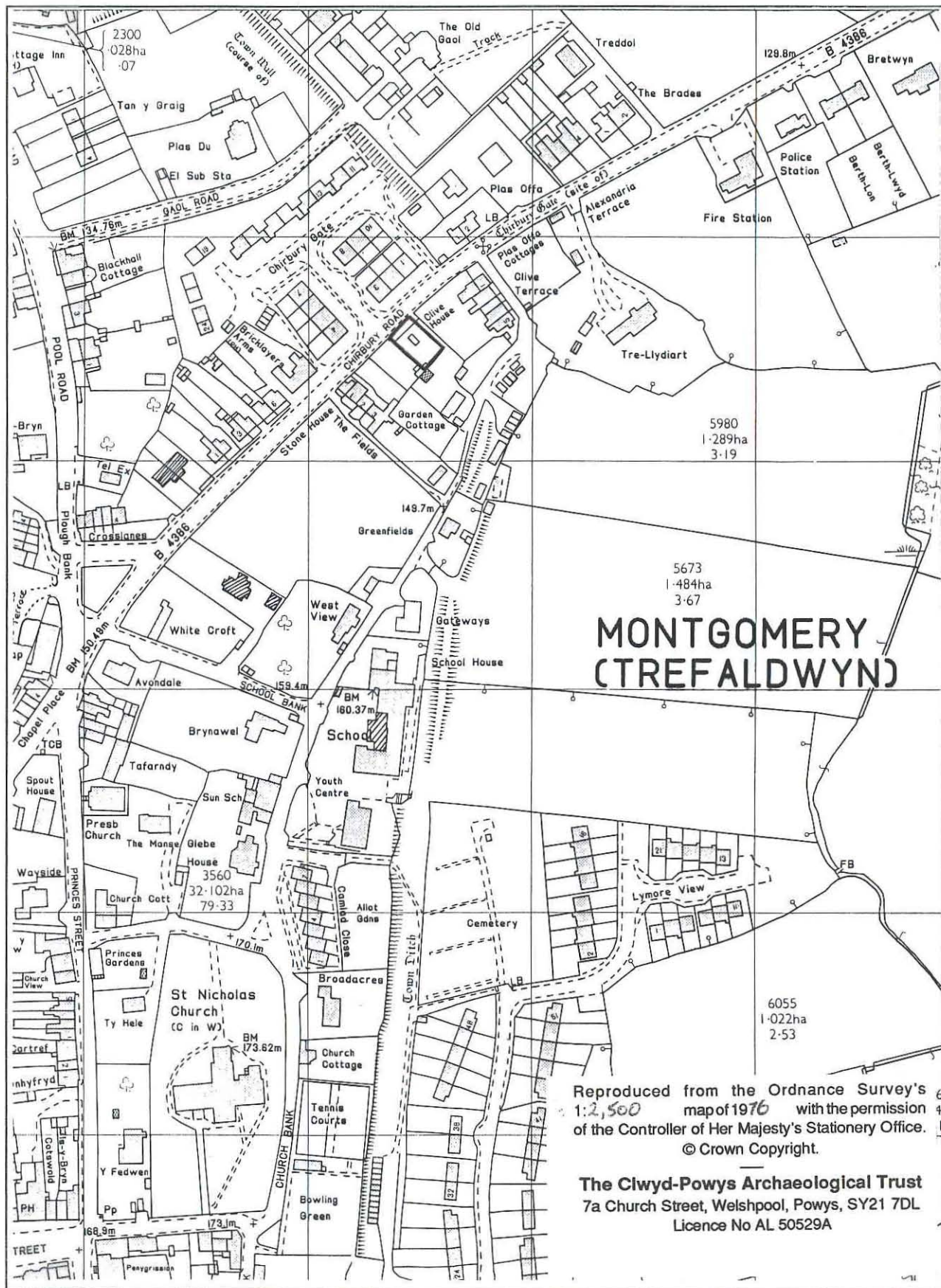


Fig. 1 Site location, scale 1:2,500

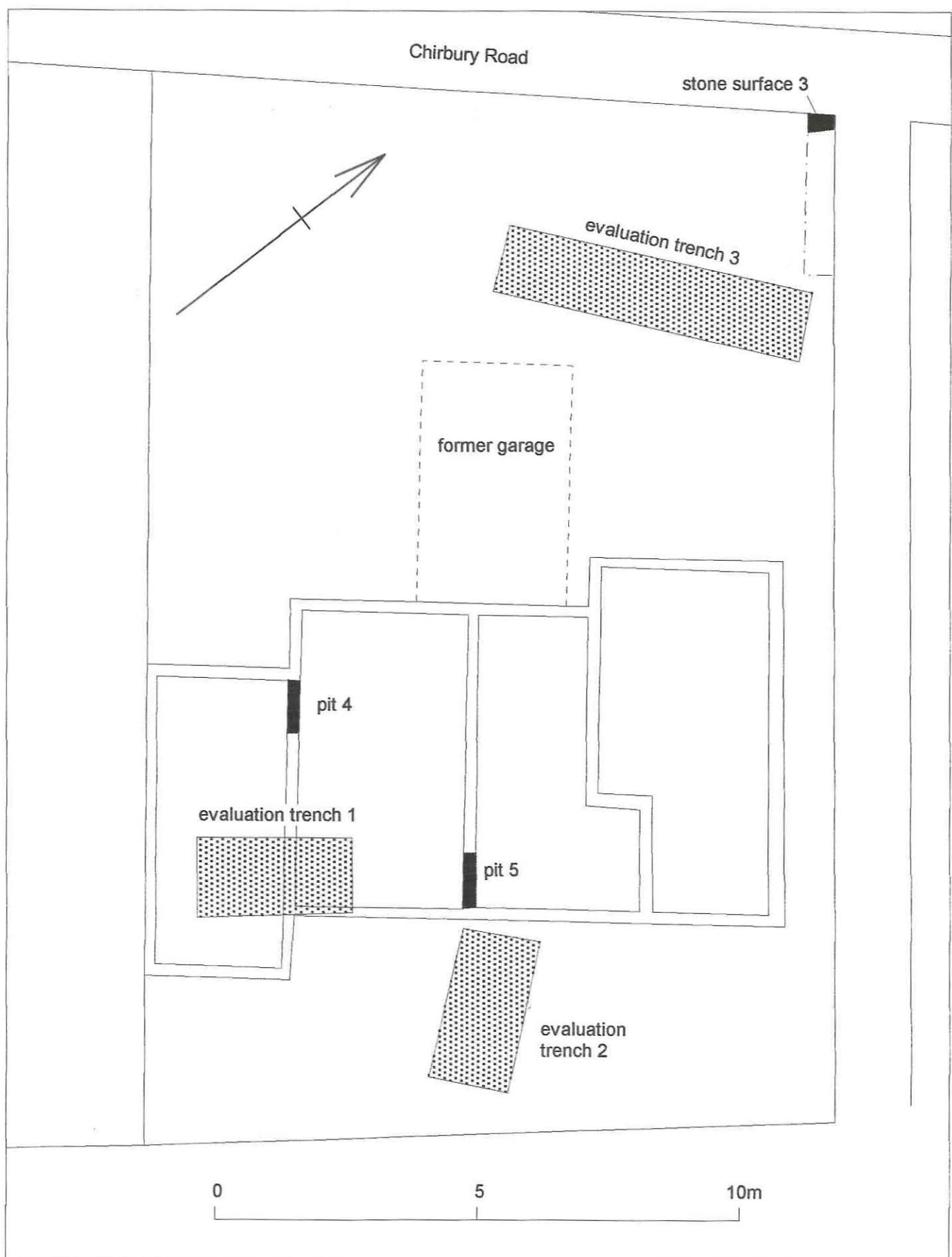


Fig. 2 Trench location, scale 1:100