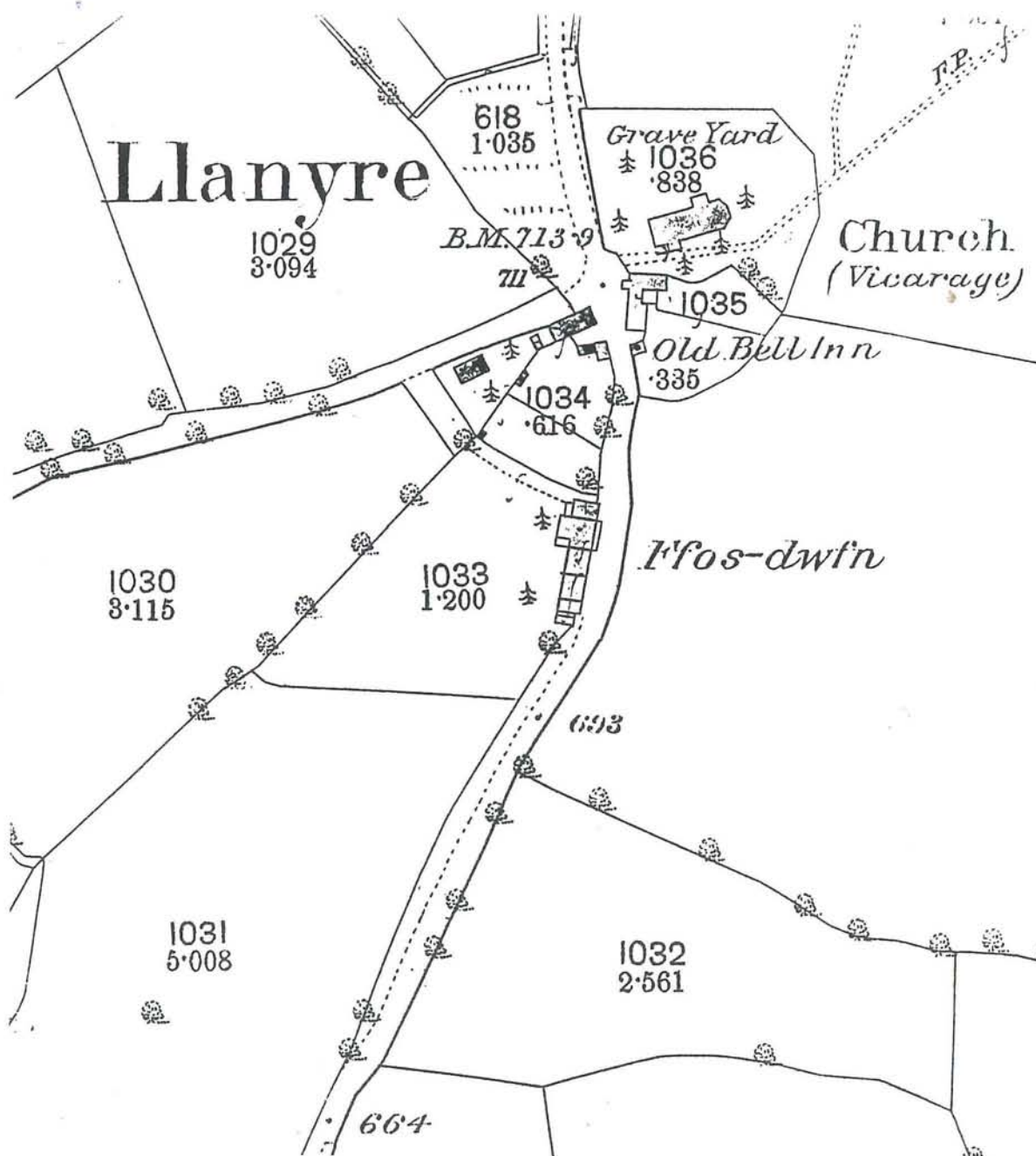


St Llyr's Church, Llanyre, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



CPAT Report No 382

St Llyr's Church, Llanyre, Powys
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

W.G.Owen
July 2000

Report for Mr D M Hobbs, Church Secretary

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

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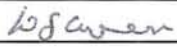
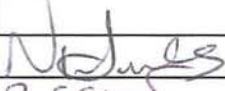
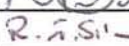
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CPAT Report Record

Report and status

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checked by	N.W. Jones		31/07/2000
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In April, 2000, the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was asked to provide a specification and quotation for carrying out a watching brief during the course of renovation work at St Llyr's Church, Llanyre, Powys (SO044623).
- 1.2 Information held on the County Sites and Monuments Record suggested that the present Victorian church was built on, or immediately adjacent to the site of a medieval structure. The present works involve the removal of all internal floor areas and the construction of new foundations and services, which it was felt might impact upon buried archaeological deposits. Accordingly, a design brief (CWAT 377) was prepared by the Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust detailing the archaeological works required.
- 1.3 The specification and quotation submitted by CPAT Contracts were accepted and the watching brief was carried out on July 13th 2000

2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 St Llyr's Church is located in the centre of the village of Llanyre, adjacent to the A4081 Llandrindod Wells to Newbridge on Wye road and about 1.5 km. north-west of Llandrindod Wells (Fig. 1).
- 2.2 Topographically, the village is on a moderate east-facing slope overlooking the River Ithon some 800m away. Soils in the area are slowly permeable silts and clays of the Cegin Association which are derived from drift from Palaeozoic slaty mudstone and siltstone (Rudeforth *et al.*, 1984).

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The present church is reputed to be the third on the site. Nothing is known of the earliest church although, as elsewhere in Wales, it seems not unlikely that a 'Llan' or centre of worship was established here in early medieval period to cater for the spiritual needs of the community. This is supported by the sub-circular form of the original churchyard boundary which was later extended in 1886 and again in 1969.
- 3.2 The earliest reference to the parish is to be found in the Charter of Edward II in 1292, which provided for a weekly market and two annual fairs, suggesting that there was a significant community which presumably had by then grown around the focal point of the church. The present oblong octagonal font is thought to date from this period.
- 3.3 A survey and report carried out by Rev. Basil Jones in 1854 gives a detailed account of the church describing it as consisting of a nave and chancel 'without architectural division' and noting that it had no tower or bell-cote (Rees 1986).
- 3.4 In 1885, the Bishop of St David's was petitioned by the parish to remove the old church and build a new one. This was granted, but the new Church had to be completed by 1886. It was consecrated by the Bishop on June 2nd 1886, although the tower had not been completed. The new church, built by S.W. Williams in the Early English style, consisted of a nave, a chancel with a three sided apse and a porch on the south side. On the north side of the chancel is a vestry which includes the beginnings of a spiral staircase which was meant to provide access to the tower of which the vestry was to be the ground floor chamber (Rees 1986; Silvester 1999).

4 THE WATCHING BRIEF (Fig. 2)

- 4.1 The watching brief was carried out on 14th July 2000, immediately after areas of the concrete floor of the nave had been removed. A full drawn, written and photographic record was maintained throughout. Numbers in brackets in the following text refer to individual context numbers in the site archive.

- 4.2 The removal of the concrete floor revealed a rubble sub-base (2) consisting of rounded pebble and angular stone fragments, mortar fragments, and brick and tile fragments contained in a loose grey coloured, granular matrix. To the north and south of this area stone sections of the wall foundations were exposed (8). An area of approximately 21m² of this layer adjacent to the north wall (Area A) was lowered by c. 0.10m in order that an overall level area was formed. This revealed a continuation of the rubble layer from which no finds were recovered. A small trial pit demonstrated that this layer was 0.35m deep and rested on a buff-yellow clay (3) which may have been the natural subsoil.
- 4.2 Adjacent to this area on its southern side, removal of the concrete had exposed a cast iron, coke-fired boiler and ducting (5) which constituted part of the under-floor heating system serving the nave and also the vestry. The boiler was housed in a brick-lined chamber (4; plate 1) 0.9m long, 0.7m wide and 0.9m deep, with a stone slabbed base. Also within this chamber was a wooden chest (6; plate 2) which when lifted out was found to be a chest hollowed out of a single oak trunk. Externally its dimensions were 1.35m long, 0.55m wide, 0.37m high. Only half of the hinged lid, which was in a decayed state, was left. Also recovered was a mortice lock which appeared to be of relatively recent origin, although it may have replaced an older one. The chest was evidently the old parish chest referred to by the Rev. Basil Jones in 1884 which he noted was lodged in the belfry.
- 4.3 Two other smaller areas, areas B and C, adjacent to the chancel and the door respectively, were also lowered but, again, both proved negative.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The watching brief revealed no features or deposits of archaeological significance beneath the concrete floor of the nave. The writer was informed that no new service trenches would be excavated.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 We would like to thank Mr David Hobbs, Secretary of St Llyr's Church, for his kind help during the course of the project.

7 REFERENCES

Rees, W, 1986. *The Centenary of Llanyre Parish Church, Llanllyr-yn-Rhos 1886-1986*.

Rudeforth, C C., Hartnup, R., Lea, JW., Thompson, TRE., & Wright, PC. 1984. *Soils and their use in Wales*, Soil Survey Bulletin No. 11. Harpendon: Soils Survey of England and Wales.

Silvester, R J , 1999. *The Historic Churches of Radnorshire*. CPAT Report No 309.

APPENDIX 1

REMOVAL OF FLOOR AT ST LLYR'S CHURCH, LLANYRE, POWYS SPECIFICATION FOR A CONTRACTED ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF BY THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following specification has been prepared in response to proposed sub-surface disturbance within St Llyr's Church, Llanyre. The proposals involve the removal of internal floors, lowering of the sub-floor ground levels and the insertion of new foundations and services. The Curatorial section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust have determined that a watching brief should be carried out during the works. Accordingly, a Brief (CWAT 277, dated 17/4/00) has been prepared detailing the scheme of works required.
- 1.2 The present church was rebuilt around 1885-7 on, or immediately adjacent to, the site of a medieval church. It is therefore considered possible that the proposed works may affect deposits associated with the earlier church.

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 removal of existing floors and all ground disturbance below that level, together with excavations for foundations and services.
- 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 in 35mm format black and white and colour print and colour slide. 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 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. 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
18th April 2000

APPENDIX 2

SITE ARCHIVE

7 Context record forms

1 A1 site drawing

colour slide, colour print and black and white negative films

photographic catalogue

correspondence and documents

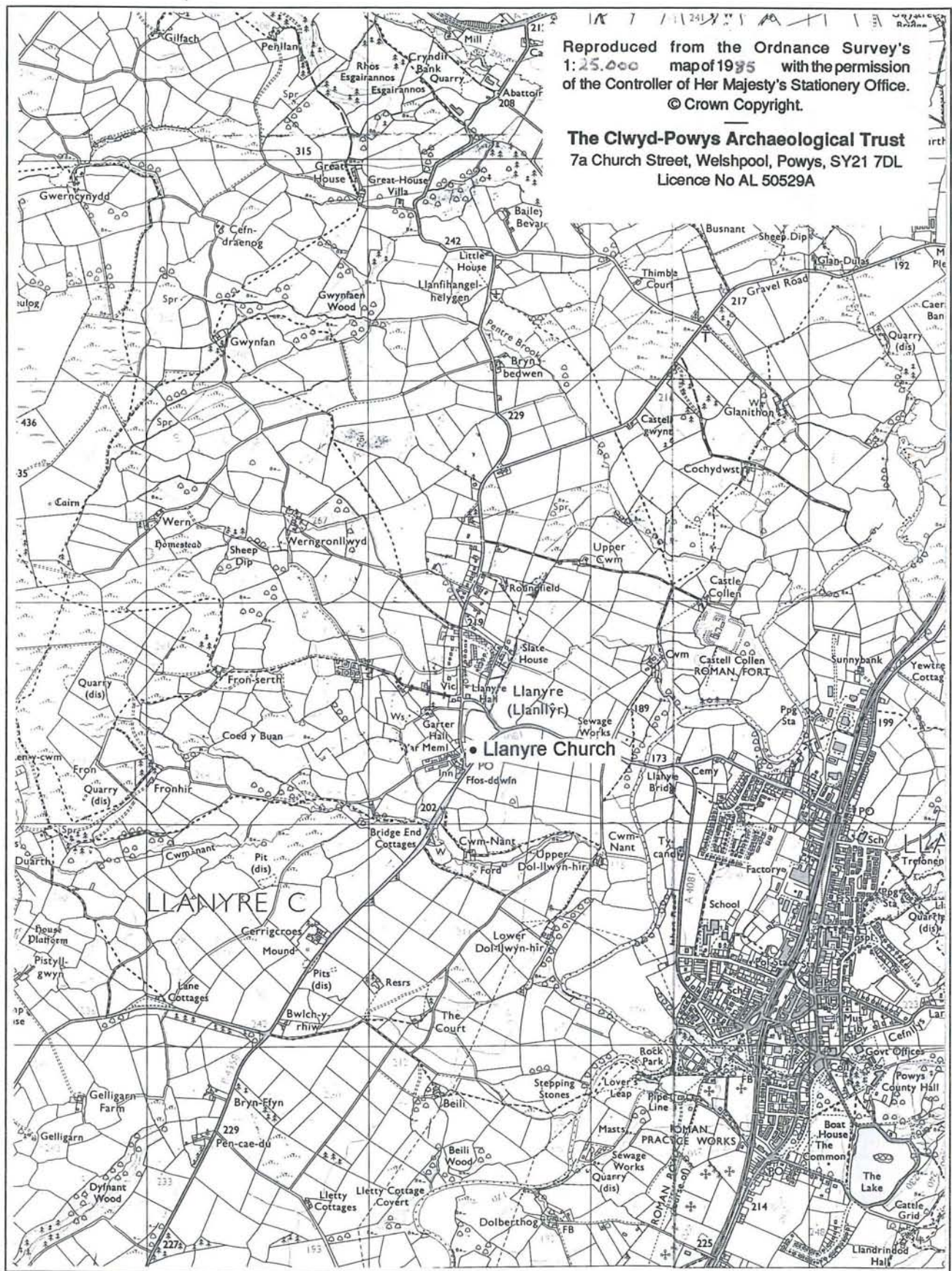


Fig. 1 Site location. Scale 1:2,500

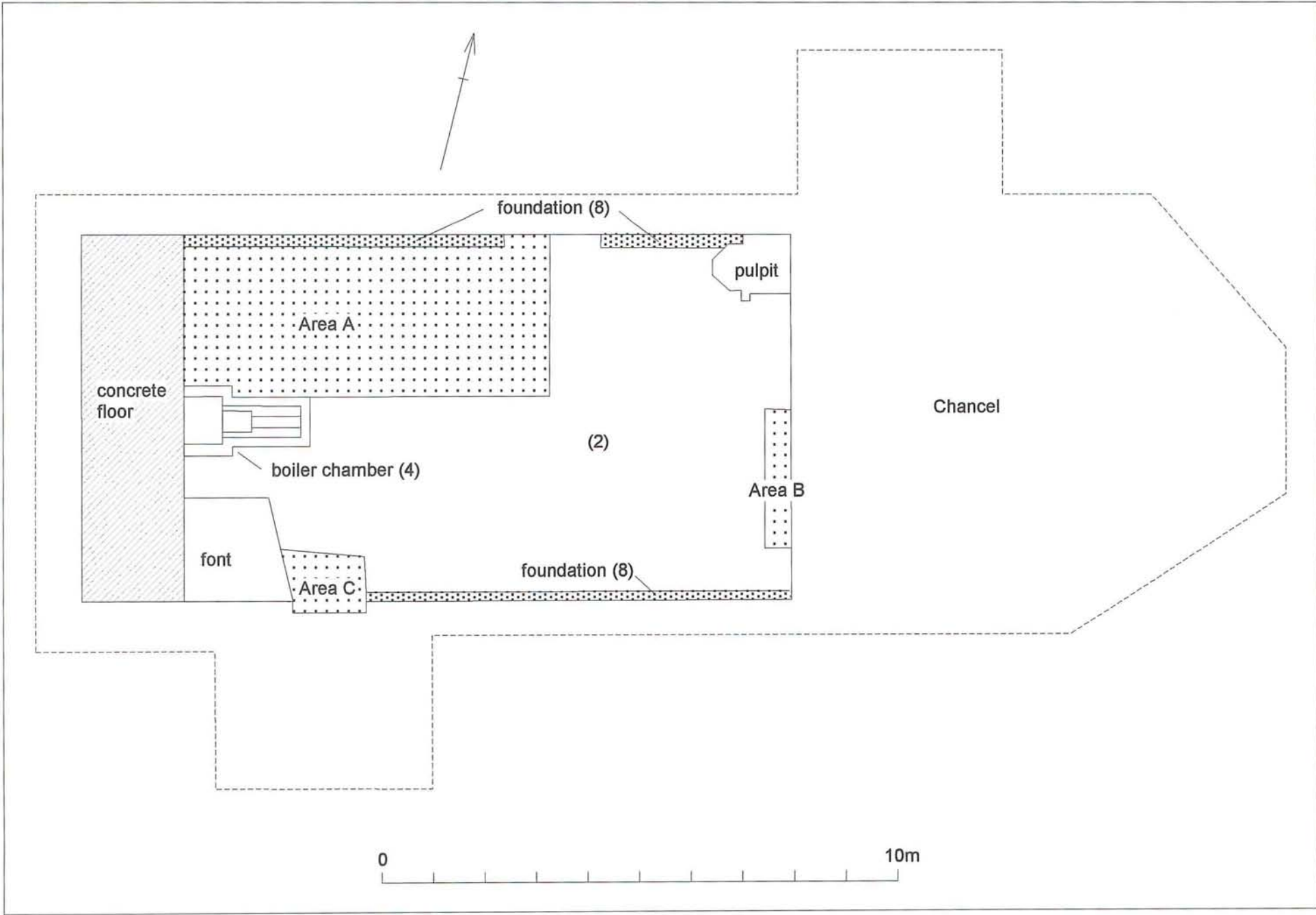


Fig. 2 Interior plan of nave, scale 1:100



Plate 1 Boiler chamber (4). Photo CPAT 983.09



Plate 2 Wooden chest (6). Photo CPAT 983.03