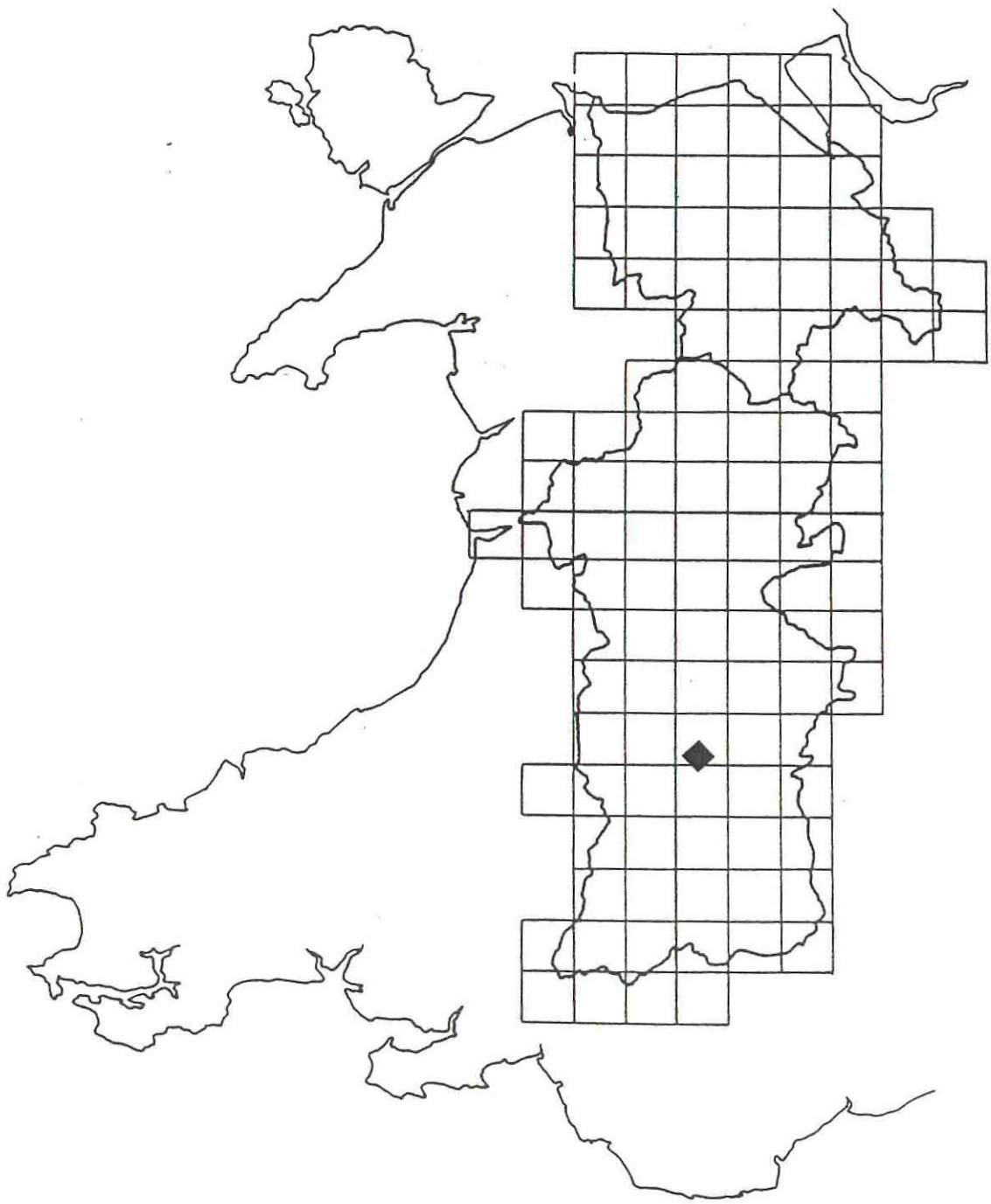
THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

The Strand Yard, Builth Wells, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



CPAT Report No 55

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The Strand Yard, Builth Wells, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

by David Thomas

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Report prepared for J Osborne & Son (Builders) Ltd

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust
7a Church Street Welshpool Powys SY21 7DL
tel (0938) 553670, fax 552179
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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT STRAND YARD, BUILTH WELLS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The following archaeological assessment was carried out in response to a planning application for residential development at Strand Yard, Builth Wells (NGR SO 041 510), by Tutorcourt Ltd. The assessment was required as part of the client's planning application (B.6630) to Brecknock Borough Council, as specified in the brief prepared by the Council's archaeological advisor, the Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.

1.2 The town of Builth Wells is thought to have been founded around 1100, although the first historical reference dates from 1217, and it did not receive its charter until 1277. The proposed development is located within the historic medieval core of the town, which lies between the castle and St Mary's church, and affects an area which could contain evidence of medieval domestic activity.

2 THE EXCAVATION

2.1 The evaluation was carried out between 10th and 11th of March 1993 by CPAT, and was commissioned by J. Osborne & Son (Builders) Ltd acting on behalf of Tutorcourt Ltd. In accordance with the evaluation brief (CPAT EVB 36) a trench 14m x 1.5m was excavated, initially by machine, and then by hand.

2.2 The machine stripping of the overlying gravel surface and the removal of modern hardcore revealed a dark brown garden soil across the whole site, which contained 19th and 20th-century material, including a complete clay-pipe bowl. This was then removed by machine to reveal natural yellow and grey mottled clay. No archaeological horizons were present between the garden soil and the natural clay, presumably because the modern cultivation has disturbed the medieval ground surface. The clay surface was cleaned by hand which showed that it had been cut by a number of features.

2.3 The features were all excavated to discover their nature and date. Two stone-filled land drains crossed the trench from South-east to North-west on slightly different alignments. Both contained 19th-century pottery and clay-pipe fragments in their fill. An irregular feature in the north of the trench contained some burning and 19th-century pottery, and is thought to have been caused by the removal of a tree stump. A linear slot, 25cm wide and 5-10cm deep, was also cut into the natural towards the northern end of the site, but its purpose was unclear, although two other slots, just showing against the eastern baulk may suggest that it formed part of a structure associated with the modern garden.

2.4 All the excavated features contained 19th-century material, but three sherds of medieval pottery, dating from the 13th-14th century, were recovered from the garden soil deposit.

3 CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Although located within the core of the medieval town, the site is approximately 30m away from the likely street frontage, which lies beneath the modern street frontage on High Street. Modern property boundaries, and

those from the 19th-century tithe map, could suggest that the site lies within a medieval tenement plot, although only features of post-medieval or modern date were present. The area was possibly used for small scale domestic cultivation during the medieval period.

SITE ARCHIVE

The excavation archive at CPAT consists of the following;

A Reports
1. Assessment Report

B Site Data
1. A1 plan of excavations at 1:20 scale.
2. List and description of all contexts.

C Photographic Archive.
1. Catalogue of 35mm colour transparencies.
2. Catalogue of 35mm black and white negatives.
3. Colour slides.
4. Black and White negatives and contact of prints.

D Finds
All recovered finds cleaned, marked, and stored at CPAT

FIG 1 BUILTH WELLS
Location of Development.

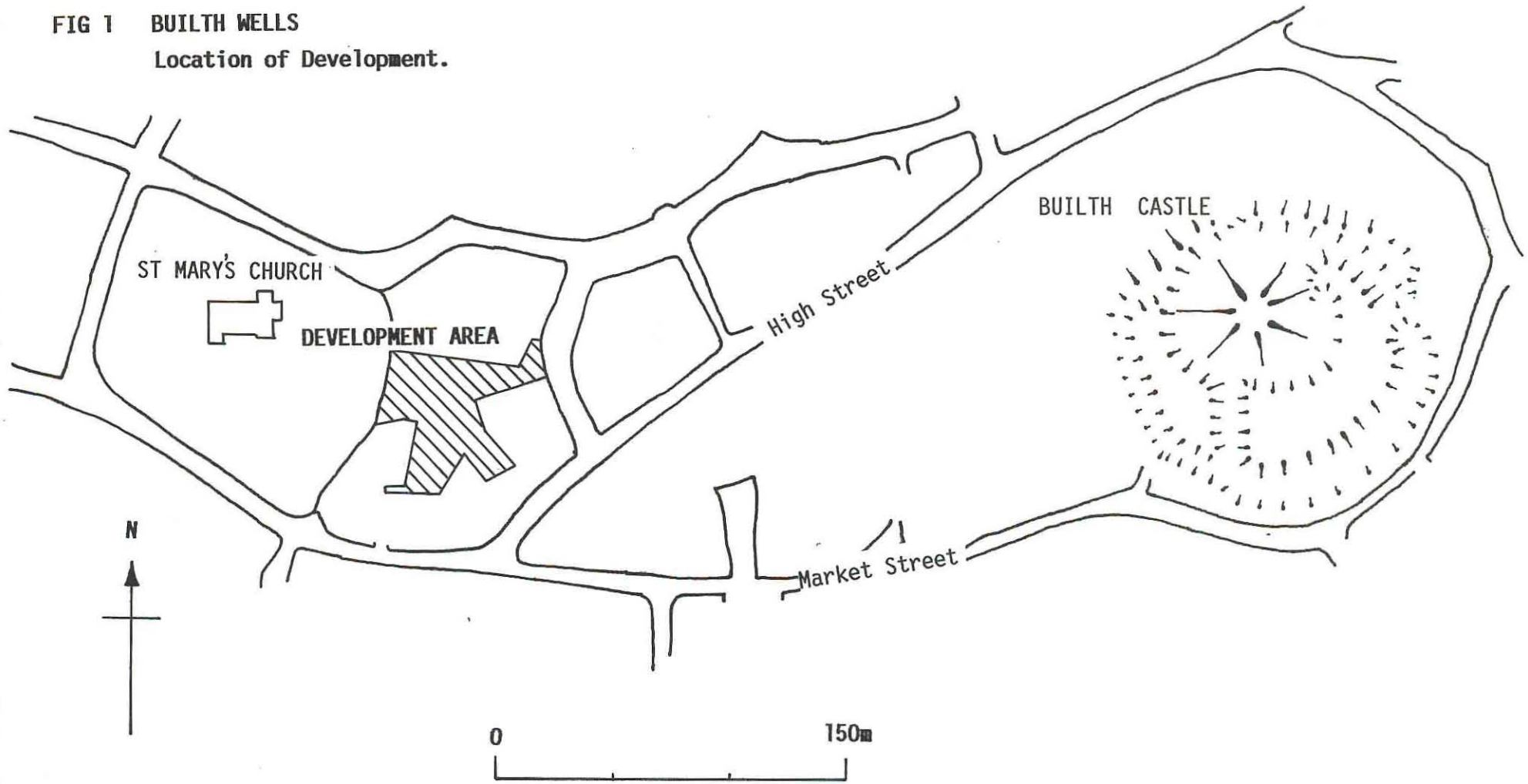
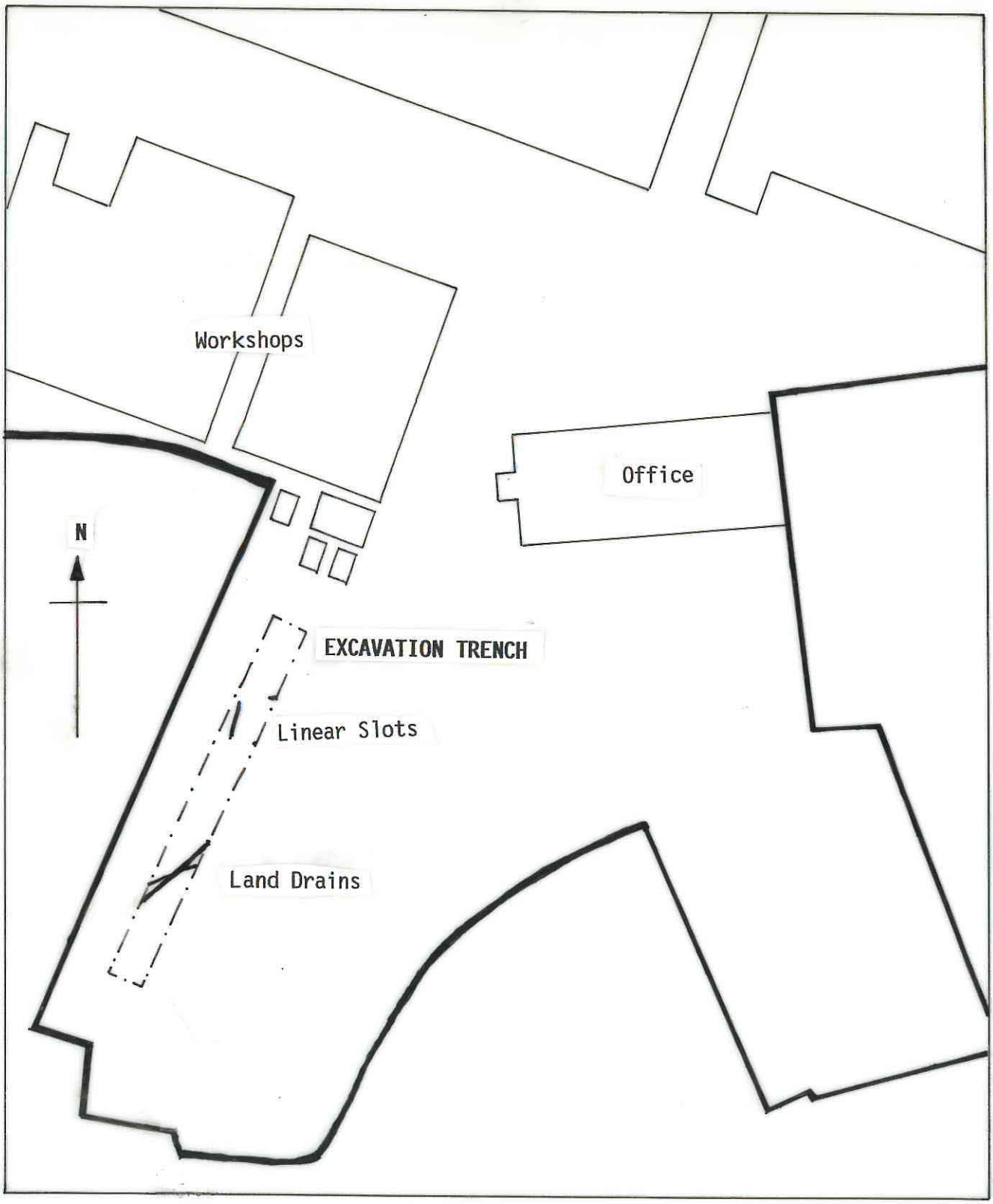
FIG 2 TRENCH LOCATION WITHIN DEVELOPMENT AREA.