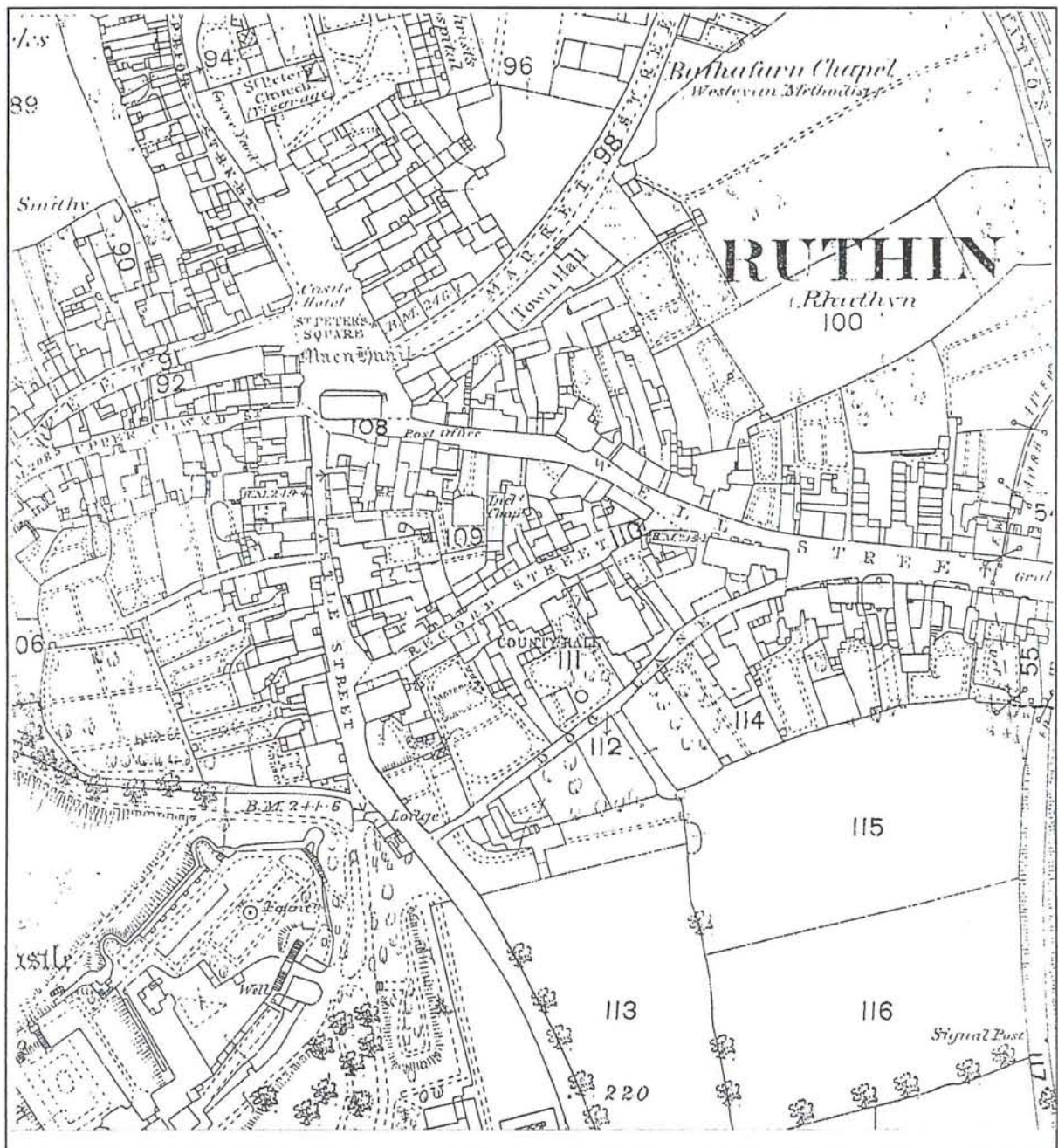


Land off Record Street, Ruthin, Denbighshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



CPAT Report No 798

Land off Record Street, Ruthin, Denbighshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

I Grant
May 2005

Report for Dr JDG Williams

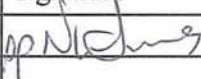
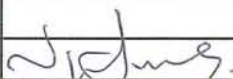
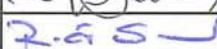
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CPAT Report Record

Report and status

CPAT Report Title Land off Record Street, Ruthin, Denbighshire: Archaeological Evaluation			
CPAT Project Name Record St Ruthin			
CPAT Project No 1375		CPAT Report No 798	
Confidential (yes/no) Yes		draft/final	Final

Internal control

	name	signature	date
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			05/05/06
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Revisions

no	date	made by	checked by	approved by

Internal memo

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was invited to undertake an archaeological evaluation in connection with proposals to erect a new dwelling on land off Record Street in Ruthin, Denbighshire. The Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, acting as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority, had determined that an archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to assess the potential impact of the proposals on the archaeological resource.
- 1.2 The site lies within the historic core of the medieval town, and it was therefore anticipated that significant buried archaeological deposits might survive within the area.

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The town of Ruthin developed on the westernmost of two north to south glaciated ridges set within the Vale of Clwyd. The solid geology consists of weathered Permo-Triassic sandstone, overlain by boulder clay and fluvio-glacial deposits.
- 2.2 The site in question lies along the eastern side of Record Street (SJ12425818), on land belonging to 9 Castle Street.

3 THE DESK-TOP ASSESSMENT¹

- 3.1 Ruthin has been the subject of various studies over the years and much of the following section is taken from a study by R .J. Silvester (1995). Numbers in brackets are the P(rietary) R(ecord) N(umbers) given to features and finds in the regional Historic Environment Record maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.

Historical background

- 3.2 Prehistoric finds include a stone axe (PRN 106389) found in an allotment to the north of the town, and a polished example (PRN 106417) found in Mwrog Street, south-west of the town centre, in the 1980s. As yet, however, little has come from the more western of the two glacial ridges which is occupied by the castle and the historic town. The excavations in Brynhyfryd Park (see para 3.3 below) on the more easterly ridge on to which Ruthin has now expanded, also produced six sherds of pottery and over 100 worked flints of prehistoric date.
- 3.3 Roman activity is well attested in the more recently developed part of Ruthin to the east in the in Brynhyfryd Park area. Roman pottery vessels containing cremations (PRN 102885) were found during an extension to the hospital in 1981; and there is an unprovenanced figurine (PRN 102890) from the town, now in the National Museum of Wales. East of the hospital in Brynhyfryd Park, Roman activity has been detected over an extensive area (PRN 106027), particularly during a series of excavations that took place in 1989. Views differ as to whether the features that were identified represent a Roman fort and its associated *vicus* or a civilian settlement (for details the reader is referred to Waddelove *et al.* 1990; Jones 1992).
- 3.4 Prior to the Edwardian Conquest in the second half of the 13th century, Ruthin is believed to have developed as a *maerdref*, the administrative centre of the commote of Dyffryn Clwyd. As a result a Welsh settlement of some size probably developed in the area of modern Well Street, formerly 'Welsh Street'. Claims of a Welsh stronghold, 'the Red Fort', beneath or close to the later castle, are not backed by substantive evidence, but in the absence of excavation cannot be conclusively refuted.

- 3.5 Dyffryn Clwyd was disputed by the English and Welsh throughout the mid-13th century. However, the area came under Edward I's control in 1277 and the construction of Ruthin Castle commenced immediately. The town was returned to David, brother of Llywelyn, soon after, but following an abortive Welsh uprising in 1282, Dyffryn Clwyd was bestowed on Reginald de Grey who continued the castle building programme and also started to lay out a town focused on the existing Welsh *tref*. Ruthin became the *caput* or central place of a lordship that extended over three commotes.
- 3.6 A charter granted privileges to the newly established borough in 1282 or soon after, and this 'reflected the prosperity of the town under the Welsh princes and the relatively peaceful transition into a marcher borough, where despite the initial number of English immigrants, a genuinely Anglo-Welsh community was created' (Jack 1978).
- 3.7 St Peter's church was founded as a chapel in 1282 or thereabouts, and was subsequently rebuilt in 1310 as a collegiate church with seven priests, although the *Taxatio* of 1291 apparently refers to a 'flourishing collegiate establishment', implying an earlier foundation. With the castle and the market place it represented one of the three focal points of the medieval town, the centre of which was St Peter's Square, the permanent market place from 1295. A timber-framed court house (PRN 102550) was erected in the centre of the square in 1401. Restored in 1926, it now houses a bank and the remains of a gallows project from one wall, while a few original prison cells survive below ground. Nearby, a town hall was built of stone from the old collegiate church in 1663, with a meat market occupying the ground floor.
- 3.8 The street pattern extending from the square is relatively rectilinear and traces of burgage plots are still discernible off Clwyd Street (formerly Mill Street) and Castle Street. Dog Lane appears to be a medieval name, although as late as 1826 its significance in terms of the houses giving on to it was very slight. Record Street and Well Street were previously Castle Lane (though an alternative name, New Hall Street, appears in 1823) and Welsh Street respectively. Market Street was created during the mid-19th century. The road from Corwen originally adopted a straight course, running close to the castle and merging with Castle Street. In the early 19th century, it was diverted further to the east to its present line. Housing almost certainly extended westwards across the River Clwyd: New Street (previously Borthyn) and Mwrog Street were both mentioned in a register of tenants of the local lordship in 1324.
- 3.9 By 1324 there were 70 burgesses controlling 100 burgages, one third of them Welsh and concentrated mainly in the Well Street area. A weekly market and thrice-yearly fairs centred on the market place which was established properly in 1295-6.
- 3.10 Ruthin was sacked by Glyndwr in 1400 and again perhaps in 1402, and it was only as a result of these attacks that town defences were added, a murage grant being recorded in 1407. This reputedly led to the construction of a ditch around the town, though no traces of any defences now remain or indeed have even been traced. The town recovered quickly and by 1496 90 burgesses holding 209 burgages were recorded.
- 3.11 Henry VII purchased the lordship of Ruthin in 1508 and in the same year he granted a charter to the borough confirming market rights and other privileges. During the Civil War it was besieged in 1644 and again in 1646 by Parliamentary forces, and when it finally fell the castle was razed. From 1536 it functioned as one of the county towns of Denbighshire. Quarter Sessions and Great Sessions courts were held in the town, and in 1775 the county gaol was built there.
- 3.12 Nantclwyd House (PRN 102552; Grade I listing), on the north side of Castle Street, is a two storey, timber-framed building of late 16th-century origin. No. 9 Castle Street (PRN 25964) is a grade II listed building dating from around 1800 and is part of a group of listed buildings along the south side of Castle Street (with Nos 5, 7, 11, 13 and 15), which also includes No. 11 Record Street. Pendref Chapel (PRN 16648), which lies immediately to the east of the site, fronting onto Wells Street, was built in 1827.

Record Street in Cartographic Sources

- 3.13 The assessment of the proposed development site from extant records proved not to be particularly useful. In the Middle Ages Record Street was known as Castle Lane and conceivably may have formed part of what was then known as Town End, while the half a burgage in Castle Lane acquired by William de Bunbury in 1323 confirms that this area was certainly a developed part of the medieval town in the 14th century². The name Castle Lane was retained to around the turn of the 18th century on the basis on an undated estate map that can be attributed to the period around 1800³.
- 3.14 Unfortunately, Ruthin was not a town that was frequently mapped in the post-medieval era. The estate map mentioned above apart, only one map of any interest has been identified. A *Plan of the Town of Ruthin* dated to 1826 is at a scale sufficient to show the streets and, seemingly, many of the buildings in the town. It appears to reveal that there was a building on the spot at the beginning of the 19th century, but that the plot immediately to the south-west was at that time open.⁴
- 3.15 The Tithe map, two decades later is uninformative, and by the time of the first edition of the large scale Ordnance Survey map, published in 1875 (Fig. 2), the appearance of the area was very much as it was today .

4 EVALUATION (Figs 3 & 4, Plates 1 – 4)

- 4.1 The evaluation consisted of one L-shaped trench with a total length of 10m and a width of 1.8m. The main axis of the trench was aligned east-north-east to west-south-west across the width of the development plot while the other arm ran north-north-west to south-south-east towards the street frontage (Fig. 3, Plates 1 & 2). The aim of the evaluation was to identify the nature and possibly the dating of any archaeological features within the development area, with particular emphasis placed on any evidence that might relate to former medieval and post-medieval buildings and their associated deposits.
- 4.2 The modern and post-medieval overburden was removed by machine under close archaeological supervision, with all subsequent cleaning and excavation being carried out by hand. The numbers in brackets in the following text refer to contexts given to the features and layers that were identified during the excavation. A drawn, written and photographic record was maintained throughout the evaluation (see Appendix 1).
- 4.3 Along the entire length of the trench the overburden consisted of a dark brown sandy silt (01) with underlying deposits of dark grey silty clay (05) and a reddish-brown mortar-flecked sandy soil (07) (see Fig. 4, section B – C). The combined thickness of these deposits was up to 0.85m. The upper deposit (01) represented the residue of a late post-medieval garden soil, and had probably been imported onto the site as a landscaping/levelling deposit thus explaining the large quantity of 18th and 19th-century ceramics, glass and clay pipe recovered. The underlying deposits (05, 07) resembled building demolition layers and these also contained similar quantities of 18th and 19th-century artefacts. A single pottery sherd of Roman Samian ware was recovered from deposit 07.
- 4.4 The removal of the overburden revealed what appeared to be a trampled surface (12), lying directly on top of the natural subsoil (16) across the eastern part of the site, which comprised a firm, gritty, mottled, yellow and red clay. The natural subsoil (16) was variable, appearing either as a red boulder clay or as a gritty cleaner variation of the trampled surface (12). It was evident that the subsoil had been cut into to create a levelled terrace, at the northern extent of which was a lime-mortared stone wall (10), running roughly north-east to south-west. This survived to a height of 0.42m and was up to 0.62m thick, and was only faced on the southern side. Only a short length survived, with either side having been removed leaving robber trenches (11) and

(04), which had been backfilled with rubble (02) (see Fig. 4 plan and section B – C, Plate 4). Towards the street frontage a narrow stone-lined gully (17), 0.2m wide and 0.1m deep, was identified cutting into the subsoil, running parallel to the wall 2.8m to the south-east. The gully contained clay pipe, bottle glass and ceramics of 18th-century date, and a single sherd of 17th-century pottery was recovered from within the mortar fabric of the wall. Both features are probably associated with a building depicted in approximately this location on a map of 1826.

- 4.5 To the north of the wall a series of deposits and features had been truncated by the terracing to the south and extended beyond the limits of excavation to the north. The earliest deposit consisted of light brown, silty sand (15). This was overlain by a firm, brown, silty clay (14) which contained a high percentage of metallurgical residues, probably smithing slag waste, fragments of burnt clay furnace lining and abundant charcoal flecks. Two sherds of Roman pottery, Samian and greyware, were also recovered. The deposit had been cut through on the western side by a pit (22), 1m wide and 0.42m deep, from which a sherd of 14th-century pottery, an iron nail, fragments of medieval roofing tile, smithing residue, burnt limestone and animal bone were recovered (See Plate 3). The north-eastern side of the deposit had also been truncated by a pit (26), 1.1m wide and 0.15m deep (See Plate 4). This contained numerous quantities of smithing residue and fragments of furnace lining together with three sherds of unglazed roofing tile and three sherds of medieval pottery, probably of local manufacture (possibly from the Ewloe area), of 14th to 15th-century date. A gully (24) was identified to the south of the wall, cutting into the subsoil, which appeared to predate layers 14 and 15, and was also cut by pit 22. The gully, orientated north to south, was 0.45m wide and contained a single fill (25), a pale reddish gritty sandy silt 0.2m thick. It is quite possible that a charcoal rich deposit (15) of light brown sandy silt which was underlying the Roman deposit 14 is a secondary upper fill of the gully 24, although this could not be confirmed during the evaluation.
- 4.6 Another gully (19), located at the north-west end of the trench, also cut into the natural subsoil. The gully, 0.55m wide and 0.2m deep, contained two fills 20 and 21 from which a single sherd of Roman Samian ware and two pieces of smithy waste and furnace lining were recovered.
- 4.7 With the exception of gully 19, all of the Roman and medieval features north of wall 10 were sealed by a mid-brown, sandy silt (13) which was rich in charcoal. Two sherds of medieval pottery, of typical local wares, were recovered from this deposit, which was in turn sealed by the topsoil (01).

5 THE FINDS

- 5.1 The excavations produced four sherds of Roman pottery, two from the deposit of metallurgical residues (14) comprised a sherd of Samian and a sherd from a greyware jar. A small sherd of Samian was recovered from context 21, the fill of gully 19, and another from the overburden deposit 07.
- 5.2 Six sherds of medieval pottery were recovered, all from stratified deposits. One sherd came from the fill of pit 22, which also contained three fragments of medieval roofing tile, one sherd from deposit 13 and three sherds from deposit 27, together with three fragments of medieval roofing tile. The red sandy fabric of the unglazed roofing tile was typical of local coal measures. All of the medieval pottery, both glazed and unglazed, is likely to be from either Ewloe or Rhuddlan.
- 5.3 The excavations produced over 1.3kg of metallurgical residues, the generally glassy nature of which suggest high temperature metalworking, together with a few fragments of possible hearth or furnace lining. The residues came partly from an in situ deposit (14), and also from the fills of features 22 and 26, which had cut through this deposit, as well as from a gully (9).

- 5.4 A quantity of post-medieval pottery was recovered from the overburden deposits, none of which was retained. Other post-medieval pottery came from the matrix of the wall (10), the fill of the robber trench (02) and the fill of gully 17.
- 5.5 Other finds included a piece of lead waste and an iron object from deposit 14, and an iron nail and burnt limestone from the fill of pit 22.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The evaluation has demonstrated that significant buried archaeological remains survive within the plot, comprising a sequence of features and deposits dating from the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods.
- 6.2 The earliest evidence consisted of a gully and two deposits, the upper of which contained a high percentage of metal working debris, from which two sherds of Roman pottery were recovered. The deposit had been truncated by later medieval and post-medieval features but extended, along with the medieval deposits, beyond the excavated area to the north-north-west.
- 6.3 The partially robbed-out remains of a lime-mortared wall were revealed, to the south-south-east of which the natural slope had been cut into in order to create a levelled terrace. A building is depicted in approximately this location on a map of 1826, although its origins and function are unknown.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 7.1 The writer would like to thank the following for their assistance during the project: Richard Hankinson and Wendy Owen, CPAT; Mrs Fiona Gale, County Archaeologist, Denbighshire County Council; the staff of the County Records Office, Ruthin; the staff of the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth; and the staff of the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.

8 NOTES

1. The desk-top assessment was based on sources archived in the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth and the Denbighshire Record Office in Ruthin. The Historic Environment Record held by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and the National Monuments Record housed by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales in Aberystwyth were also examined. The latter yielded two records of only marginal interest, a single photo of No.1 Record Street (SJ 1240 5816) and from 1994, sale particulars for no. 2 Record Street.
2. Castle Lane is referred to as such in Professor R. I. Jack's consideration of Ruthin in *Boroughs of Medieval Wales* (1978). Nine burgages in Town End are referred to in a document of 1324 (Jack 1978, 249, 250).
3. This map is in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth and comes from the Chirk Castle collection (MSS 11786), where it is attributed to the late 18th or early 19th century. A photocopy is housed in the Denbighshire Record Office as DRO/NTD/1620. It cannot be reproduced in this report because of copyright restrictions, but a legitimate copy can be consulted in the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust's archive for this project.

The map is at too small a scale to provide any information about the specific development plot on Record Street.

4. Denbighshire Record Office DD/DM/274/166. It cannot be reproduced in this report because of copyright restrictions, but a digital image can be consulted in the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust's archive for this project. It was also reproduced but at a small size in *Historic Ruthin* 1986, 18.

9 REFERENCES

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Griffiths, R A (ed.) 1978. *Boroughs of Medieval Wales* (Cardiff)

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Waddelove, E, Waddelove, A C, & Jones, G D B, 1990. The Roman Fort at Ruthin, Clwyd. *Britannia* 21, 299-305.

Sources

Printed Maps

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1st edition, Denbighshire 19.07, surveyed 1874, published 1875

Manuscript Maps

Late 18th/early 19th century. Estate map of Ruthin area. Denbighshire Record Office DRO/NTD/1620

1826 *Plan of the Town of Ruthin*. . Denbighshire Record Office DD/DM/274/166

1839 Tithe Map of Ruthin. Copies in Denbighshire Record Office and National Library of Wales

APPENDIX 1**PROJECT ARCHIVE****Site archive**

27 context record forms

2 A1 site plans

01 colour slide film

01 black and white negative film

11 Digital images

Photographic catalogue

Context Register

Drawings Register

FINDS CATALOGUES**Roman pottery catalogue**

Context	Sherds	Weight (g)	Comment
07	1	2	Samian
14	1	14	Samian
14	1	14	Greyware jar
21	1	1	Samian

Medieval pottery catalogue

Context	Sherds	Weight (g)	Comment
13	2	4	
23	1	12	Rim
23	3	224	Roofing tile
27	3	45	
27	3	116	Roofing tile

Post-medieval pottery catalogue

A quantity of post-medieval pottery was recovered from the overburden but not retained

Context	Sherds	Weight (g)	Comment
02	3	61	
10	1	10	
18	1	5	

Metallurgical residues

Context	Number	Weight (g)	Comment
14	21	446	
14	1	13	Fired clay
21	2	7	
23	3	440	
27	19	382	
27	2	25	Fired clay

Miscellaneous finds catalogue

Context	Material	Number	Weight (g)	Comment
13	Iron	1	50	Object
14	Lead waste	1	50	
14	Iron	1	74	Object
18	Clay pipe	1	6	
18	Bottle glass	2	38	
18	Brick/tile	1	30	
23	Burnt limestone	1	43	
23	Limestone	1	70	
23	Iron	1	10	Nail

APPENDIX 2

SPECIFICATION

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been invited to prepare a specification of works for undertaking an archaeological evaluation in connection with proposals to erect a new dwelling on land off Record Street, Ruthin, Denbighshire (SJ12425818). The Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, acting as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority, have determined that an archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to assess the potential impact of the proposals on the archaeological resource.
- 1.2 The site lies within the historic core of the medieval town, and it is therefore anticipated that significant buried archaeological deposits may survive within in the area and the following specification has been designed to evaluate the depth and significance of these deposits.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the evaluation are:
 - 2.1.1 to reveal by means of a desktop study and field evaluation, 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 archaeological deposits identified during the field evaluation;
 - 2.1.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the assessment, incorporating sufficient information on the archaeological resource for a reasonable planning decision to be taken regarding the future management of the archaeology.

3 Methods

- 3.1 Stage one of the evaluation will involve the examination of all the readily available primary and secondary documentary, cartographic, pictorial, and photographic sources at the County Records Office, Ruthin; the County Sites and Monuments Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, Welshpool; the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth; and the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.
- 3.2 All cartographic sources consulted will be included within the desktop section of the report, together with transcriptions of relevant documents and copies of plans, maps and photographs containing relevant information.
- 3.3 The field evaluation will consist of two trenches, each measuring 1.5m wide and up to a total of 30m in length. The location and size of the trenches will be determined following discussions with the client and curator. The excavation will be undertaken using a machine excavator with a toothless bucket to remove modern overburden down to the level of the first recognisable archaeological horizon. Thereafter, all excavation will be conducted by hand unless otherwise agreed with the Curator in advance. The evaluation will be entirely non-destructive and designed to determine the depth at which archaeologically sensitive deposits survive, together with their nature condition and significance. The depth of natural deposits will be determined to assess the extent of any stratified deposits which may be encountered.

- 3.4 It has been assumed that the area in question has sufficient access for a JCB or other mechanical excavator. Excavated material will be temporarily stored adjacent to the trench, which will be reinstated with this material upon completion. No provision has been made for stripping or relaying any surfaced areas, or for fencing the trench during the excavation. It has also been assumed that each trench will be mechanically excavated and any changes to this methodology could impact on the timing and therefore cost.
- 3.5 Contexts will be recorded on individual record forms and be drawn and photographed as appropriate. All photography will be in 35mm format black and white print and colour slide. All features will be located as accurately as possible with respect to buildings and boundaries identified on modern Ordnance Survey maps and levels will be related to Ordnance Datum where possible.
- 3.6 All artefacts will be related to their contexts from which they were derived and treated in a manner appropriate to their composition and will be processed by trained CPAT staff.
- 3.7 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared in A4 format, containing conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Archaeological Background; Evaluation; Conclusions and References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds.
- 3.8 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991), to be deposited with the Regional Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). All artefacts will, subject to the permission of the owner, be deposited with Llandrindod Wells Museum.

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The evaluation will be undertaken by a small team of skilled archaeologists under the overall supervision of Mr RJ Silvester, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA). CPAT is an IFA Registered Organisation.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist who conducted the evaluation.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the evaluation will be completed within 5 days. The report will be completed within 2 weeks of the completion of on-site works. A draft copy of the report will be forwarded to the Curator for approval prior to the production of the final report. Copies of the final report will be provided to the client and the Regional SMR. The Curator will be informed of the timetable in order to arrange for monitoring if required. At present, CPAT would be in a position to undertake the work during April or May 2006, subject to sufficient advance notice.
- 4.4 The following contingency sums have been allowed in accordance with section 10 of the curatorial brief. The need for such contingencies, and their potential cost, would be subject to discussions between CPAT, the client and the curator once the fieldwork has been completed. The following figures are therefore only for guidance and the final cost, should any of the services be required, may be more or less than the estimates provided.

Curatorial monitoring	£50 per visit
Finds conservation etc	£100
Dating	£300
Environmental sampling	£200
Museum deposition and storage	£50
Publication	<i>Archaeology in Wales</i> at no additional charge

- 4.5 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.6 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

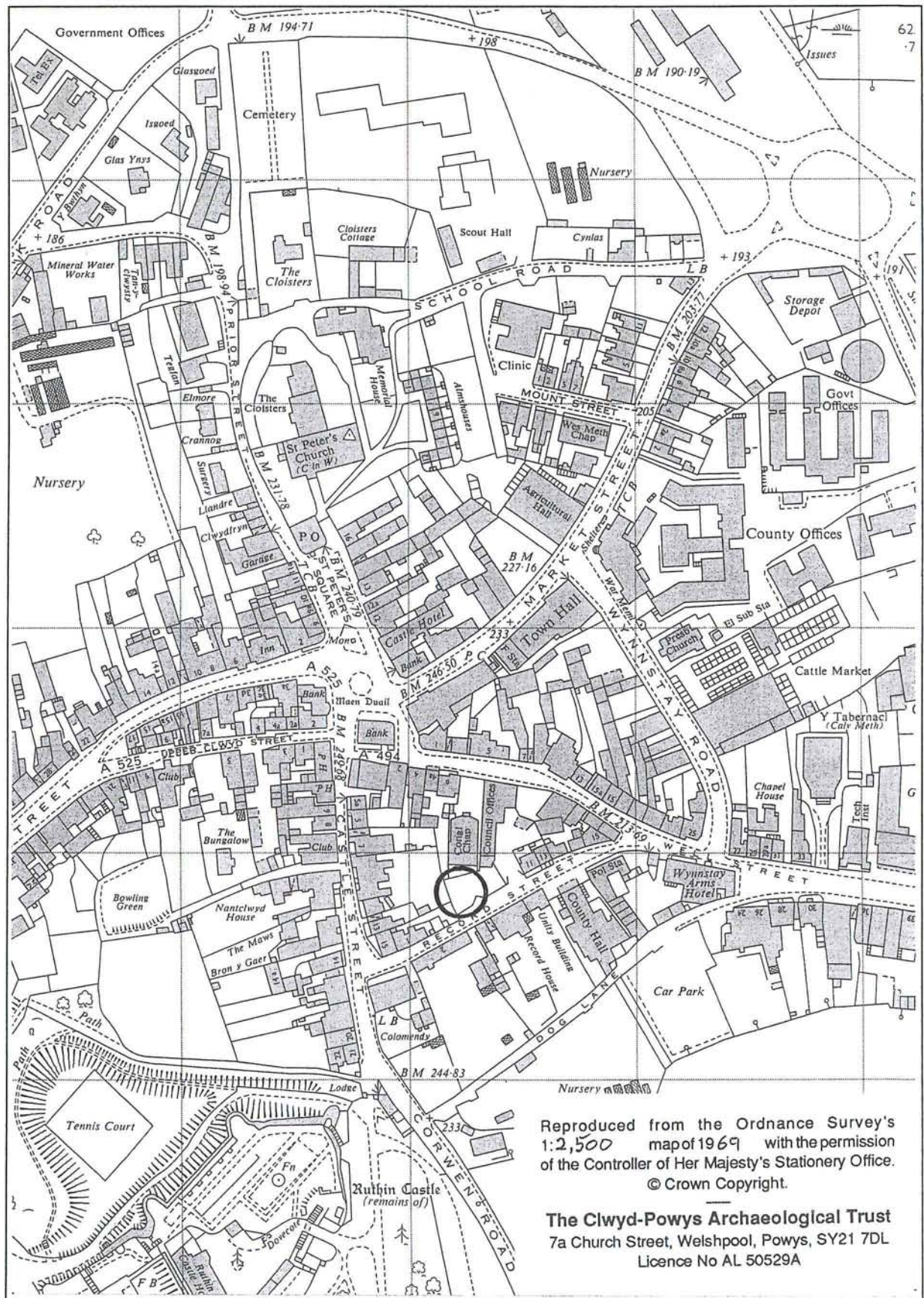
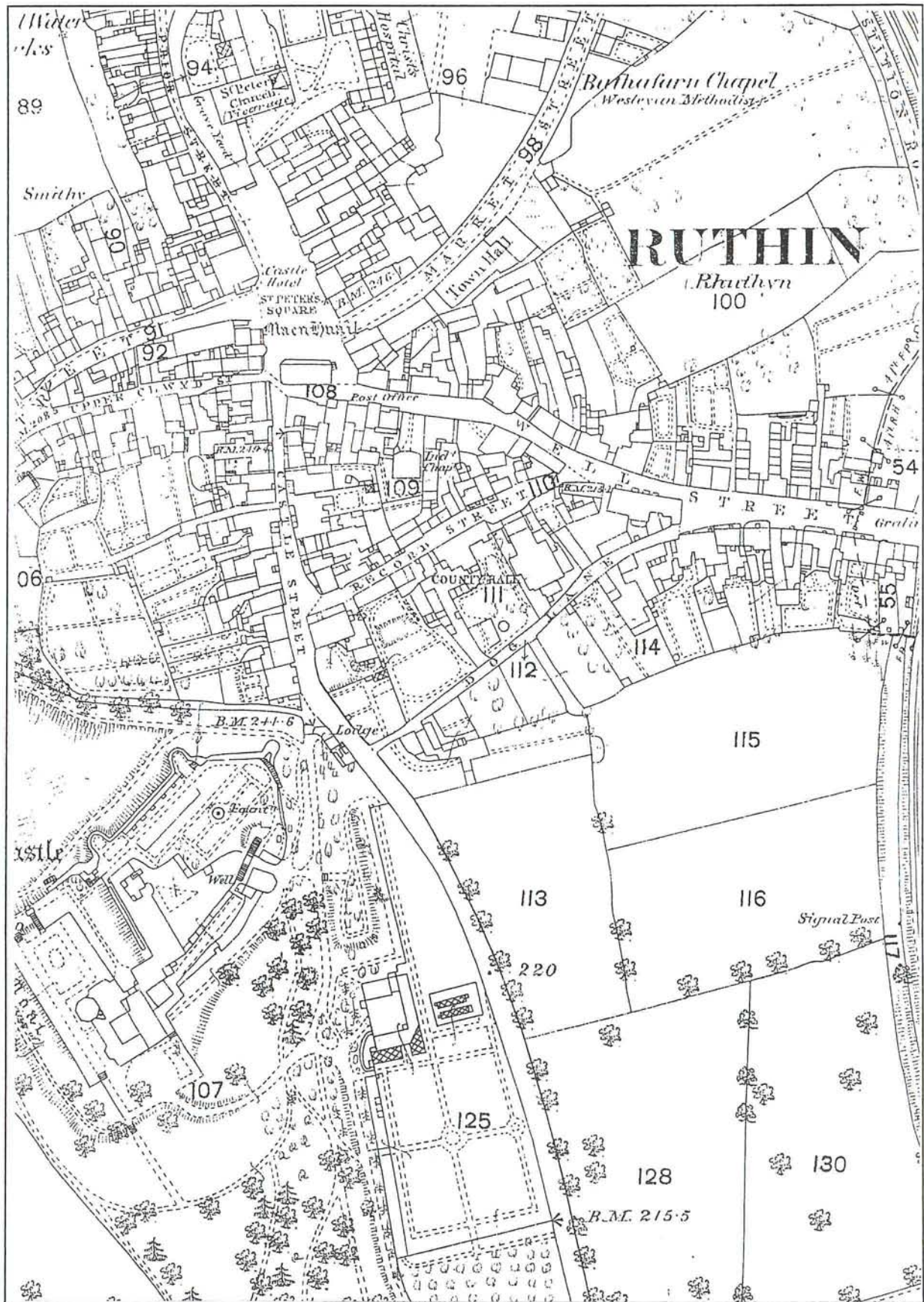


Fig. 1 Site location, 1:2,500



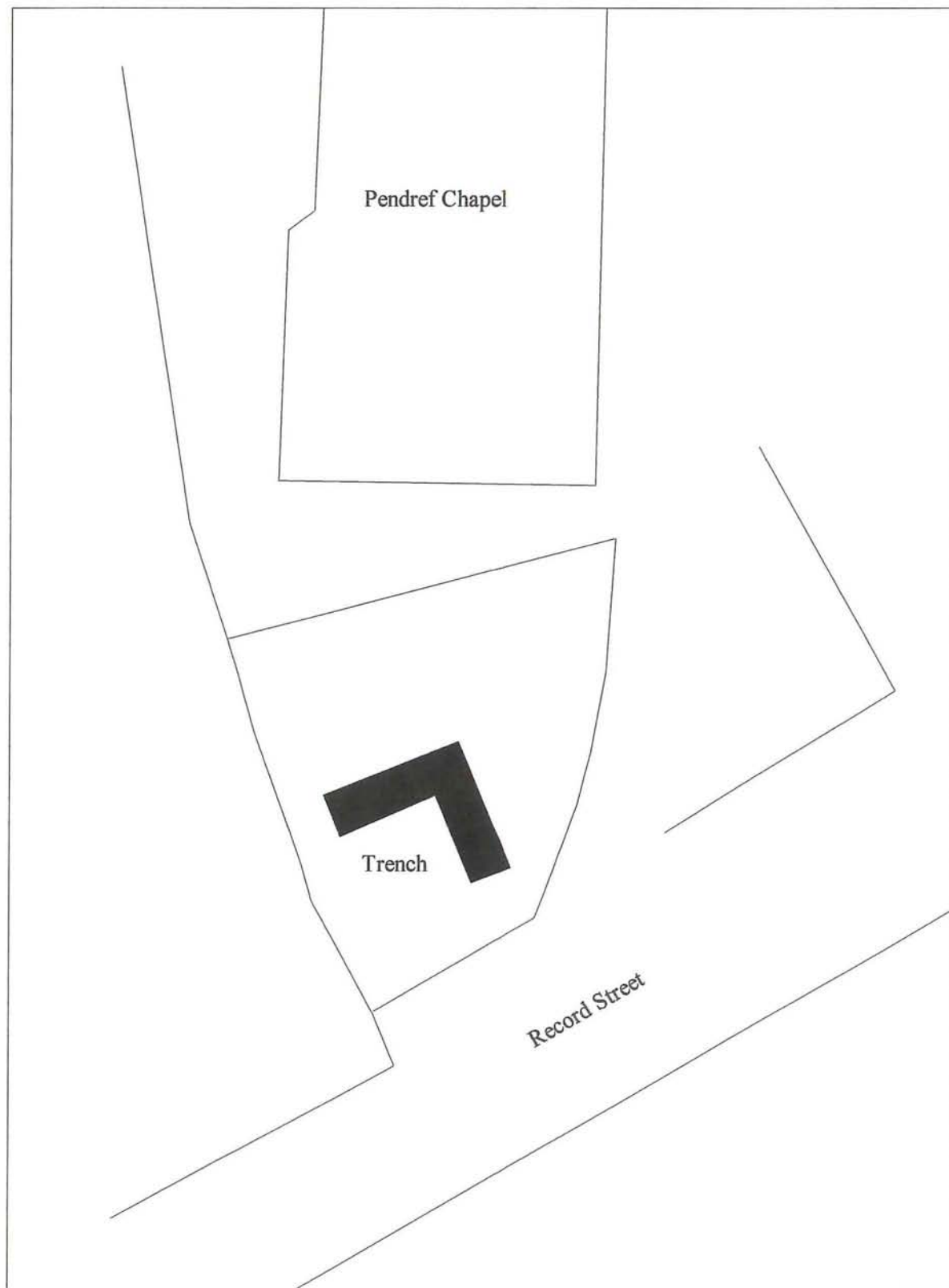


Fig. 3 Trench location, scale 1:250

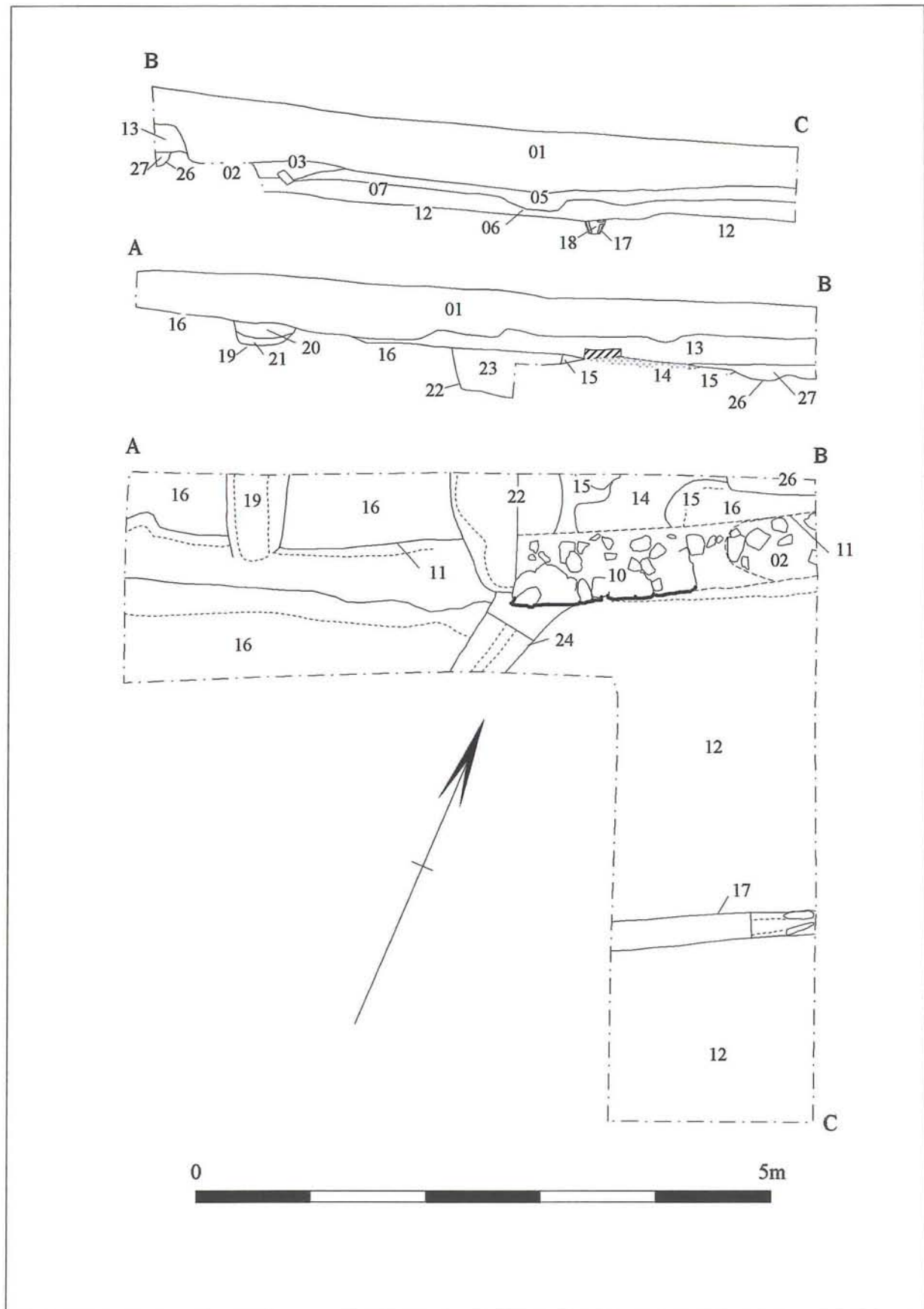


Fig. 4 Evaluation plan and sections, scale 1:50



Plate 1. South-east facing arm of trench, post machining. Gully 17 in foreground with wall 10 towards rear of trench. Photo CPAT 2230.22



Plate 2. North-east facing arm of trench, post machining. Wall 10 and robbed foundation cut 11 with in situ Roman and Medieval deposits north-west of the wall. Photo CPAT 2230.17



Plate 3. Wall 10 showing excavated section of pit 22 and gully 24, unexcavated in centre foreground. Roman deposits 14 and 15 lie beyond the wall at the right-hand side of the view. Photo CPAT 2230.26



Plate 4. Robber trench 02 in foreground with Roman deposits 14 and 15 beyond, left of centre. Photo CPAT 2230.28