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Report 1987

Basingwerk Abbey 2023

Archaeological Evaluation

CYNGOR Sir y Fflint Flintshire COUNTY COUNCIL
Greenfield Valley Dyffryn Maes Glas
Cadw
POWERED BY LEVELLING UP
WEDI'I YRRU GAN FFYNIANT BRO
Archaeoleg Clwyd-Powys Heneb Clwyd-Powys Archaeology

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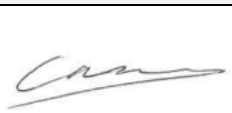	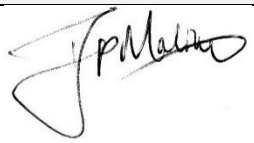	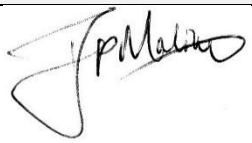
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Summary

In the Autumn of 2023, Heneb (then the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust) conducted an evaluation within fields to the south and west of Basingwerk Abbey. The project was commissioned by the Greenfield Valley Heritage Park and Flintshire County Council as part of their land management plans funded by the UK Government regional levelling up scheme. The objectives of the evaluation were to determine the potential presence, depth, date, nature and preservation of archaeological remains. The investigation also included public engagement and volunteer participation coordinated by the heritage park and Flintshire County Council.

The excavation consisted of six trenches in three separate areas of land surrounding the Abbey, targeting a combination of features and blank spaces identified during a geophysical survey undertaken by CPAT in the summer of 2023.

The investigation aimed to determine potential archaeological activity related to the Basingwerk Abbey monastic complex. Despite the assumption of a high potential for encountering medieval remains, very little in situ medieval archaeology was found. Most artifacts and materials were recovered from disturbed deposits, indicating post-medieval activity. However, significant Roman activity was identified, including one defensive ditch with Roman infills, and a second with a mixed Roman, early medieval and medieval infill. To the south of the abbey, the excavation also identified the remains of a temporary Roman structure. Additionally, a large cut feature that may have been associated with an oven was found. These findings have resulted in a unexpected combination of medieval, early post-medieval and Roman activity on the site and highlight the need for further investigations.

Crynodeb

Yn nhymor yr hydref, 2023, bu Heneb (sef Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys ar y pryd), yn gwneud gwerthusiad o gaeau i'r de a'r gorlle$_{win}$ o Abaty Dinas Basing. Roedd y prosiect wedi'i gomisiynu gan Barc Treftadaeth Dyffryn Maes Glas a Chyngor Sir y Fflint fel rhan o'u cynlluniau rheoli tir, wedi'i ariannu gan gynllun ffyniant bro rhanbarthol Llywodraeth y DU. Amcanion y gwerthusiad oedd darganfod a oedd yna weddillion archaeolegol yno ac, os oedd, beth oedd eu dyfnder, eu dyddiad, eu natur a'u cyflwr cadwraethol. Roedd yr ymchwiliad hefyd yn cynnwys ymgysylltu â'r cyhoedd a chael gwirfoddolwyr i gymryd rhan, wedi'i gydlynu gan y parc treftadaeth a Chyngor Sir y Fflint.

Roedd y gwaith cloddio'n cynnwys chwe rhych mewn tair ardal o dir ar wahân o amgylch yr Abaty, gan dargedu cyfuniad o nodweddion a gwagleoedd a nodwyd yn ystod arolwg geoffisegol y bu CPAT yn ei wneud yn ystod haf 2023.

Nod yr ymchwiliad oedd darganfod unrhyw weithgarwch archaeolegol posibl yn gysylltiedig â chymhlyg mynachaidd Abaty Dinas Basing. Er y tybiwyd y byddai'r potensial yn uchel i ddod ar draws gweddillion canoloesol, prin iawn oedd yr archaeoleg ganoloesol y daethpwyd o hyd iddi yn y fan a'r lle. Datgelwyd mwyafrif yr arteffactau a deunyddiau o ddyddodion yr aflonyddwyd arnynt, gan awgrymu gweithgarwch ôl-ganoloesol. Fodd bynnag, nodwyd gweithgarwch Rhufeinig sylweddol, gan gynnwys un ffos amddiffynnol gyda mewnlenwadau Rhufeinig, ac ail ffos gyda mewnlenwad cymysg o'r cyfnod Rhufeinig, y canol oesoedd cynnar a'r canol oesoedd. I'r de o'r abaty, nododd y gwaith cloddio hefyd weddillion strwythur Rhufeinig dros dro. Hefyd, darganfuwyd nodwedd doredig fawr a allai o bosibl fod yn gysylltiedig â phopty. Mae'r darganfyddiadau hyn wedi arwain at gyfuniad annisgwyl o weithgarwch canoloesol, ôl-ganoloesol cynnar a Rhufeinig ar y safle ac maent yn dwyn sylw at yr angen am ymchwilio pellach.

1 Introduction

1.1. In the Autumn of 2023, Heneb, then the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT), were commissioned by the Greenfield Valley Heritage Park and Flintshire County Council to undertake an evaluation within fields to the south and west of Basingwerk Abbey (FL001). The investigation formed part of the Greenfield Valley and Flintshire County Council's land management plans which have been funded by the UK Government regional levelling up scheme. The aim was to determine the potential presence, depth, and preservation of archaeological remains which might help inform the potential extent of known archaeological activity.

1.2. In addition to the archaeological objectives, the investigation also incorporated public engagement and volunteer participation which was coordinated by the heritage park and Flintshire County Council.

1.3. The scope of the proposed excavation was agreed upon in consultation with Cadw and the Clwyd-Powys archaeological planning advisor and consisted of six trenches divided between three separate areas of land surrounding the Abbey. The trenches target a combination of features and blank spaces identified during a geophysical survey undertaken by CPAT during the summer of 2023 (Matthews, 2023).

Figure 1: Location of Basingwerk Abbey
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2 Topography and Geology

2.1. This site is situated at the northern end of a promontory, with the opening of Greenfield Valley to the west and the low-lying coastal lands to the north and northeast. To the south, the land gradually rises to form one side of Greenfield Valley. The excavation was divided between the gardens of Basingwerk House, which formerly consisted of managed lawns, some of which are now overgrown. The second area was the paddocks and orchard to the south of the abbey. Both areas are pastoral, with the paddock being relatively flat with some notable undulation. The orchard has a gentle slope towards the northeast.

2.2. The British geological survey records the bedrock geology as being divided between Gwespyr Sandstone formed between 320 and 318 million years ago during the Carboniferous period and Pennine Lower Coal Measures Formation divided between sandstone and mudstone formed between 319 and 318 million years ago during the Carboniferous period. The drift geology is comprised of sandy gravely clay formed between 116 and 11.8 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period (BGS, 2024).

3 Historical Background

3.1. This section summarises the known historical and archaeological background of the site, which will enable the results of the excavation to be placed in context.

Roman

3.2. There has been a long-standing attribution of probable Roman activity at Basingwerk. In 1796, Thomas Pennant purportedly recorded the discovery of a Roman hypocaust while digging the foundations for the brass melting-houses of the Greenfield Copper and Brass Company (PRN 102388). However, subsequent opinions are divided on whether the remains were actually part of the hypocaust, with the possibility of a medieval tile kiln associated with Basingwerk Abbey seeming more likely (Davies 1949, 188-9).

3.3. Roman pottery was collected by workmen in 1924-26 while clearing the site of the abbey for H.M. Office of Works. The pottery included sherds of Samian ware dating back to the late 1st and early 2nd centuries, as well as orange-wares, greywares, and black-burnished ware. A Roman coin (PRN 102399) was also found at the abbey in 1876. It was reported to be a third brass of Constantine II (Caesar 317, Augustus 337-46), minted in Lyon (Davies, 1949, pp. 189-191). More recently during an evaluation in 2015 for the expansion of the Greenfield Valley Visitor Centre, the first evidence for *in situ* Roman activity was discovered, which included a post hole and ditch containing finds that dated to the 1st and 2nd century AD (Dodd, 2015).

Early Medieval

3.4. The site is situated at the northern terminus of Wat's Dyke (FL079). The dyke was constructed in the 9th century to formalise and mark the boundary between the early historic kingdoms of Gwynedd and Mercia, running south from Basingwerk to the Morda Valley near Maesbury. The dyke consists of an earthen bank, which often follows the local geography and is also often accompanied by a ditch on the west side. Basingwerk's position at the northern terminus of the dyke is of potential significance, with historical links to notable events in regional history including the death of King Cenwulf of Mercia in 821, who was died whilst attacking the Welsh Kingdoms (Malim & Hayes 2008).

3.5. The name Basingwerk also has potential Anglo-Saxon origins loosely translating to the work or settlement of the Basa family, Basing (*Basengum*) meaning family of Basa (Mills, 1991), 'werk' meaning a construction or earthwork. The Welsh name follows a similar theme '*Dinas Basing'* meaning the city of Basing (family of).

Basingwerk Abbey (Medieval)

3.6. The original Basingwerk Abbey was established in 1131 by Earl Ranulf of Chester as a settlement for Savigniac monks within the disputed borderlands of England and Wales, a region known as Tegeingl. It later transitioned to the Cistercian order and relocated to its current location in the Greenfield Valley in 1157 (Robinson, 2006, p. 27).

3.7. Most of the historical accounts of Basingwerk Abbey are from its early years and the border conflicts between the Kingdoms of Gwynedd and England. During the conflict with King Henry II at the battle of Coleshill (AD1157), which nearly resulted in the death of the Norman king, Basingwerk is mentioned as the main staging post for Owain Gwynedd. The Chronicle of the Welsh Princes claims that he raised a ditch at Basingwerk to give battle to the king (Jones, 1952), but aside from reference to Wat's Dyke, it is not clear which exact site this may refer to. This is because, in addition to the Abbey, there is also Basingwerk Castle, which may be either the site of what is now Holywell Castle, but this is more likely associated with a fortification established by the Earl of Chester to protect pilgrims to the shrine of St. Winefride's, or the site of the present abbey. Alternatively, the castle at Hen Blâs, 2.3 miles to the southeast has also been suggested as the site of both the castle and the original Saviniac foundation of the abbey, however, one of the former is the most likely given the proximity to the present location of the abbey and associations with Wat's dyke (Hankinson, 2016, p. 3).

3.8. After peace was reached between Owain Gwynedd and Henry II, the terms saw Owain lose his recent acquisitions, including the lands of Tegeingl. The border was once again redefined, and it was at this time in AD1157 that the Abbey was re-established at its present location. Texts referring to the period note that Basingwerk Abbey was fortified (Lloyd, 1939 and Knowles & Hadcock 1971). This may be a consequence of the new border with Gwynedd, with Rhuddlan also being refortified as a border fortress under Hugh of Beauchamp. It is possible that this refers to a refortification of Basingwerk Castle rather than the Abbey itself, however, any fortification would have been merited, as the Abbey was once again taken by Owain Gwynedd by 1166 (Lloyd, 1939).

3.9. In the 13th century Dafydd ap Llywelyn issued a charter to Basingwerk Abbey in July 1240 from his seat of power, most likely at Hen Blâs, which forms the only recorded act of monastic endowment during his principate (Hankinson, 2016, p. 2). As part of this charter, Daffydd granted the church of Holywell and the pilgrimage shrine chapel of St Winefride's to Basingwerk, which increased the abbey's wealth (Silvester, et al., 2011). St Winifred's shrine, which remains today an active pilgrimage site, is located only 1.5 km to the southwest of the Abbey and was likely connected to the abbey by a roadway.

3.10. There are very few records of the abbey after the invasion of King Edward I, with it likely suffering diminished prosperity under new taxation and following the black death (Cooper, 1992, p. 39). Towards the latter end of its operation, there were as few as three monks in residence, with references to parts of the building being in a near ruinous state (*ibid).*

3.11. The dissolution of the abbey in 1536 left it in ruins, with references to materials from the abbey having been reused within local churches. It is highly likely that large elements of the abbey were systematically demolished and recycled by local lords including the Pennant and Mostyn

families. The abbey gradually became enveloped by industrial complexes, railway lines and housing, part of which now form the Greenfield Valley Heritage Park. The east range appears to have continued in use and is shown in 19th century mapping as a roofed structure forming part of a tanning yard, the enclosure of which is today defined by the field to the south (Area B). A photograph from 1904 shows this range upstanding and roofed but recently abandoned, likely after the structure ceased being used as part of the tannery (Figure 2). The exposed roof trusses visible in the photograph were investigated by the Royal Commission for Historic and Ancient Monuments Wales (RCHAMW) using dendrochronology to a felling date of c1385.

Layout of the Abbey

3.12. The Abbey follows the traditional Cistercian monastic layout, albeit on a much more condensed scale. It features a church with a nave and choir, flanked by the north and south transepts. The south transept leads to the cloister, which comprises the Chapter house, dormitories, refectory, and kitchen. It is believed that the western wing served as the lay brother's quarters. Towards the southeast of the cloister, there is an east-west aligned structure from a later period. Its purpose is still debated, with some suggesting it was a guest accommodation, abbots' lodging, or an infirmary.

3.13. We have limited knowledge of the abbey beyond the church, cloister, and abbey pond with no evidence of the exact precinct boundary. It is considered highly likely that other ancillary buildings were present to the south of the abbey, especially given the suitability for building in this area, but also given the routeway linking the abbey to the shrine at St Winefride's to the south. It is also presumed that there will be some form of burial grounds associated with the Abbey, with Basingwerk having been an important burial place for the *uchelwyr* (nobleman) of the surrounding medieval cantref of Tegeingl (Gresham, 1968).

Figure 2 1904 photograph of the south-east range of Basingwerk Abbey (Robinson, 1996)

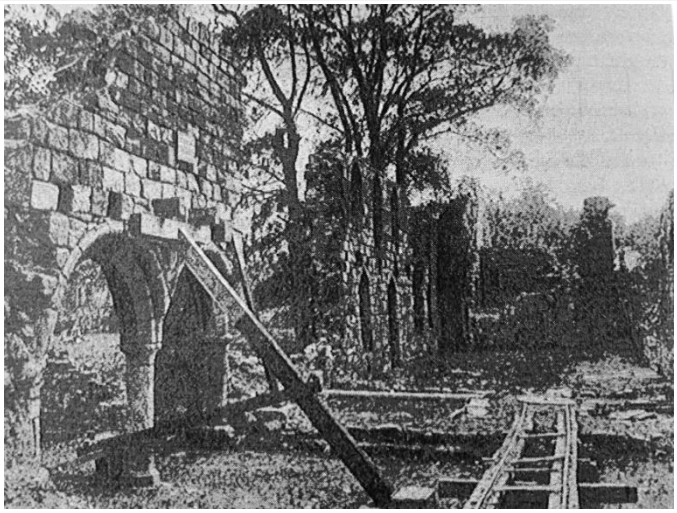

Figure 3: Ministry of Works 'excavations' at Basingwerk Abbey (from Greene 2005)

Previous investigations

3.14. Between 1924-26 the site of the abbey was cleared by H.M. Office of Works. It was during these investigations that the discovery of Roman artefacts were noted. The clearing of the site appears to have been undertaken as a mechanised process typical of the time and therefore it is highly likely that the site has been heavily truncated by this event (Figure 3).

3.15. Very few archaeological interventions have been made into the Abbey and its surroundings since, the most recent being an evaluation in 2015. As with the 1920s works, this excavation also produced Roman material as well as features (Dodd, 2015).

3.16. In 1992 a geophysical survey was undertaken which comprised both resistivity and magnetometry. The latter was relatively unsuccessful, with the condition of the site being cited as the cause. The former was however more successful and identified some detail on the south range, features associated with the east range, and an unknown structure to the west of the lay-brothers quarters (Figure 4), which appeared as a high resistance anomaly on a northeast southwest alignment. The interpretation of this feature noted potential association with landscaping (Shiel, 1992).

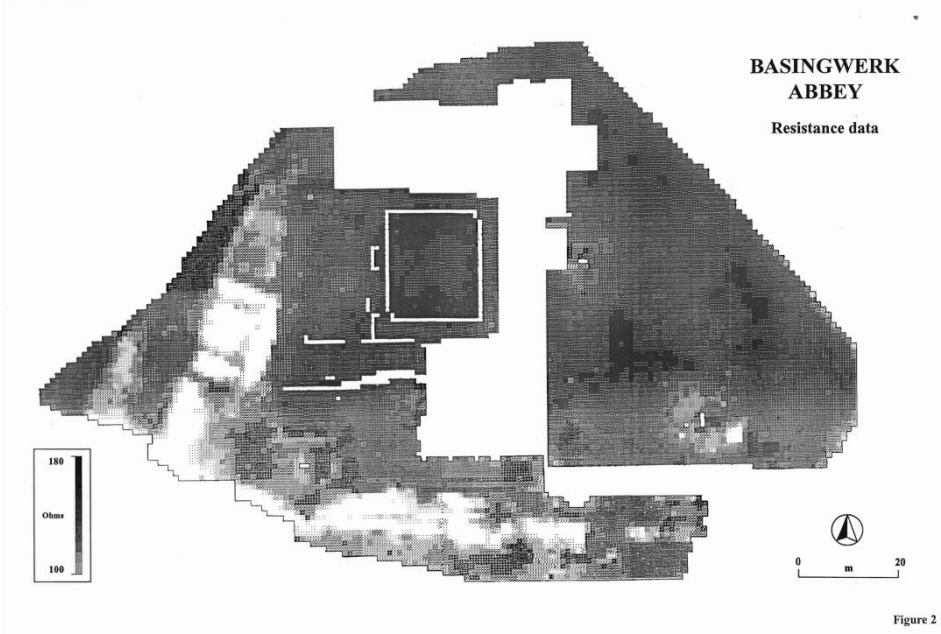

Figure 4: 1992 resistivity survey results by Bradford Geophysical Surveys

3.17. In June 2023, CPAT undertook a geophysical (magnetometry) survey to determine the archaeological potential of the land immediately surrounding the scheduled Basingwerk Abbey (Map 1) at the end of this report). The survey revealed various structural features including a possible large northeast to southwest aligned structure within the paddock adjacent to the visitor centre. The survey of the orchard did not produce any significant archaeological features, however, given the proximity to the Abbey there remains a potential for archaeological activity, such as burial.

4 Archaeological Evaluation Trenching

4.1. The evaluation was conducted between the 12th and 27th of October 2023 in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) St*andard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2020).

4.2. The evaluation comprised 6 trenches as depicted in Figure 5. Trenches 1 and 2 were situated within the gardens of Basingwerk house. Trench 1 was only partially opened due to obstacles which divided the trench into two separate areas. Trench 2 was widened due to the depth of the overburden. Trenches 3 and 4 were located in the paddock and overlapped to form a cross but were not fully excavated, owing to the instability and depth of the sections. Trenches 5 and 6 were excavated to test empty areas of the former orchard situated to the south of the Abbey.

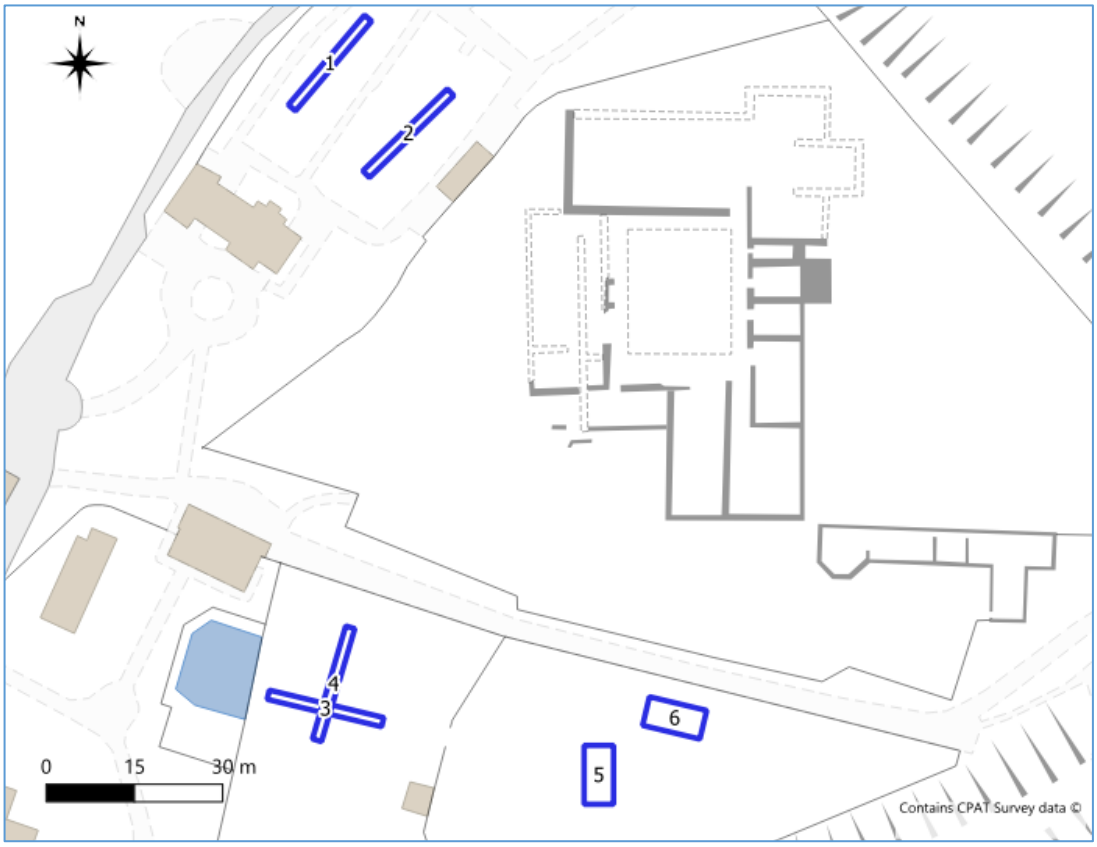

Figure 5: 2023 trench location plan.

Trench 1

4.3. This trench was divided into two separate areas, to the north was a trench measuring 1.8m wide and 12m long (Figure 8). To the south was a smaller curving trench measuring 1.8m wide and 7.5m long. This curve was a result of obstacles blocking the exit of the machine (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Trench 1 (North section left and south section right) pre-excavation photo

4.4. The general trench makeup comprised a dark brown loam topsoil (101) 0.4m thick (avg.) overlying a thin yellowish brown pebbly subsoil (102) up to 0.1m thick. At the base of the trench was a loose silty gravel natural (103).

4.5. Six features were identified within the trench, these included an east-west aligned linear ditch [104] a small possible post hole [106], a shallow burning feature (114) and three pits extending into the west-facing section [108, 110, 112] (Figure 7).

- Cut feature [104] comprised a wide ditch, of which the full width and depth was not uncovered within this excavation. A partial excavation of the upper fill was undertaken which consisted of a mixed gritty and organic fill containing fragments of Roman and medieval pottery as well as bone and industrial residues. The most notable find was uncovered by metal detecting the spoil from the upper fills of this feature and consisted of an early medieval buckle which is further detailed in the finds section of this report (SF006).

- Cut feature [106] consisted of a possible shallow post hole that was regular, oval cut in plan and steep-sided with a flat base. The pit measured 0.64m long by 0.38m wide and 0.15m deep. The feature contained a single fill which comprised a dark greyish brown pebbly sand (107).

- Cut feature [108] consisted of a possible oval pit extending 0.45m from the west-facing section which was 0.95m wide and 0.3m deep. The feature contained a single fill of dark greyish-brown silty sand (109) within which was a single fragment of encaustic floor tile and animal bone.

- Cut feature [110] consisted of a possible oval pit extending 0.45m from the west-facing section, which was 0.8m wide and 0.3m deep. The feature contained a single fill of dark greyish-brown silty sand (111). The feature produced a single find in the form of a possible iron key (SF011).

- Cut feature [112] consisted of a possible elongated oval pit or ditch terminus extending 0.75m from the west-facing section and was 0.9m wide and 0.2m deep. The feature contained a single fill of dark greyish-brown silty sand (113) and produced one fragment of medieval pottery as well as animal bone.

Figure 7: Trench 1 (north) pit group post excavation photo

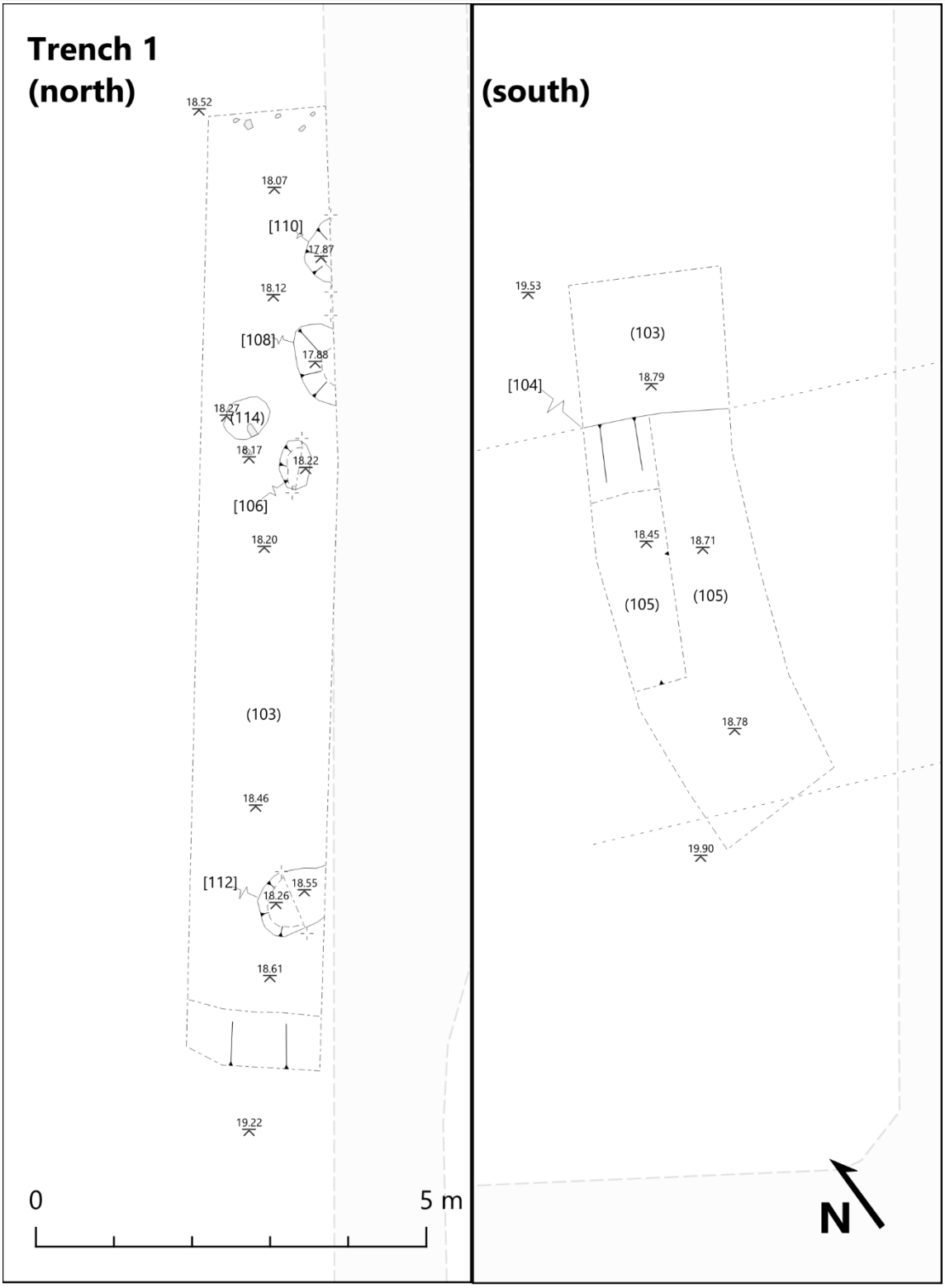

Figure 8: Trench 1 post excavation plan

Trench 2

4.6. This trench was located on the eastern lawn of Basingwerk House Gardens and measured 22.5m and was widened to 2.2m for most of the trench apart from the northern 5m which measured 1.8m wide (Figure 10).

4.7. The general trench stratigraphy comprised a topsoil and modern levelling layer 0.5m thick that increased to 0.8m at the northeastern end incorporating a deposit of construction rubble (201). This overlay a loose cobbly deposit 0.3m thick (average) containing mostly medieval material including roof tile and floor tile (202). At the bottom of the trench was a thin silty subsoil (203) overlying the natural sandy gravely clay (204) that sloped off towards the north.

4.8. Four features were identified within this trench, they included two linear ditches, one running roughly east to west [207] and the other north-south [208] (Figure 11 and Figure 12). Monolith samples were taken through both so that they can be processed for palaeoenvironmental or OSL analysis. There were also two oval post-hole features within the centre of the trench [213, 215].

- Cut feature [207] which crossed the southwestern end of the trench on a roughly east to west alignment consisted of a large ditch, the full extent of which could not be exposed due to the limit of safe working conditions having been reached (Figure 9 & 10). The cut, of which only one side was exposed, was steep-sided with a slight step at 0.8m depth which continued downwards at around 45˚. The base was not encountered. This feature contained two fills, the lowest reached in this investigation was a deep homogenous waterlogged silty pebbly infill, the full extent of which was not reached (210). This contained a fragment of Roman amphora and animal bone. The upper deposit appeared to be a later capping or levelling comprised of a silty pebbly loose deposit (206) which contained medieval pottery and animal bone. Sealing this feature was a loose medieval demolition-rich deposit (202) that is likely to date to after the dissolution of the monastery.

Figure 9: Trench 2 ditch feature [207] post excavation photo

- Cut feature [208] which crossed the northeastern end of the trench on a roughly north-south alignment consisted of a broad ditch, the full extent of which could not be exposed due to the limit of safe working conditions having been reached. The cut, of which only one side was exposed, was a strait sided with a slight step at 0.8m depth which continued downwards at a slightly steeper angle. The base was not encountered. This feature contained two fills, at the base of what was reached in this investigation was a yellowy silty sand (211) which contained a fragment of animal bone and a lens of charcoal. Above this was a fill which comprised an orangey brown silty sand (209) which contained a concentration of decorated Roman pottery and animal bone dating to the late 1st and early second century AD. The feature was partly capped by a redeposited clay (205) which masked its northern extent (Figure 10 and Figure 12).

Figure 10: Trench 2 post excavation section of ditch [208]

- Cut feature [213] consisted of an oval cut extending 0.8m from the southeast facing section and 0.7m wide. The feature was not fully investigated but contained a visible fill of compacted cobble stones and a dark greyish brown silt (214). The fill contained small degraded fragments of orange ceramic that were not retained and a fragment of animal bone.

- Cut feature [215] consisted of an oval cut 0.45m in diameter. The feature was not investigated but contained a visible fill of dark greyish brown silt with angular stone inclusions (212).

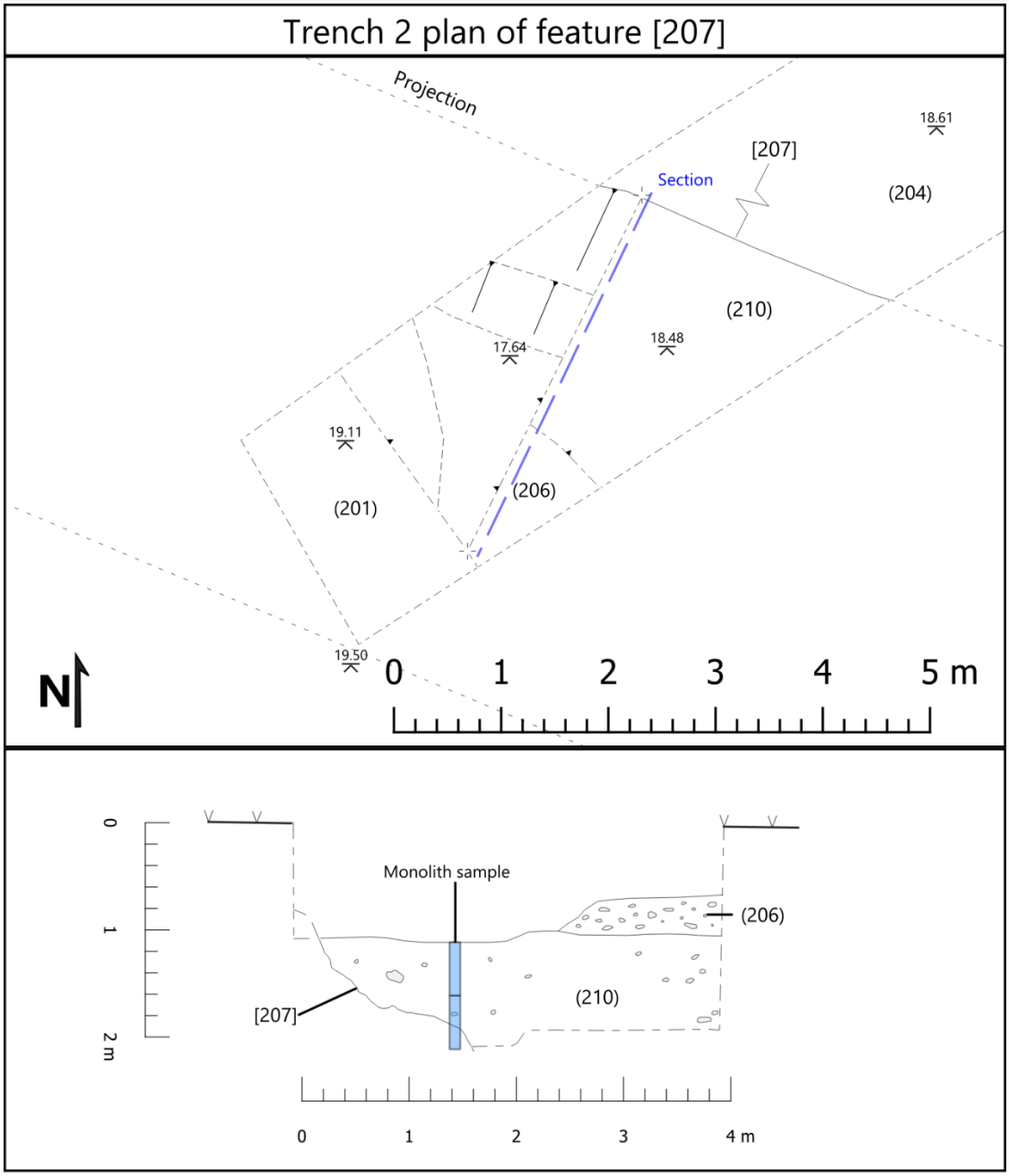

Figure 11: [207] plan section and monolith sample location (Sample 04)

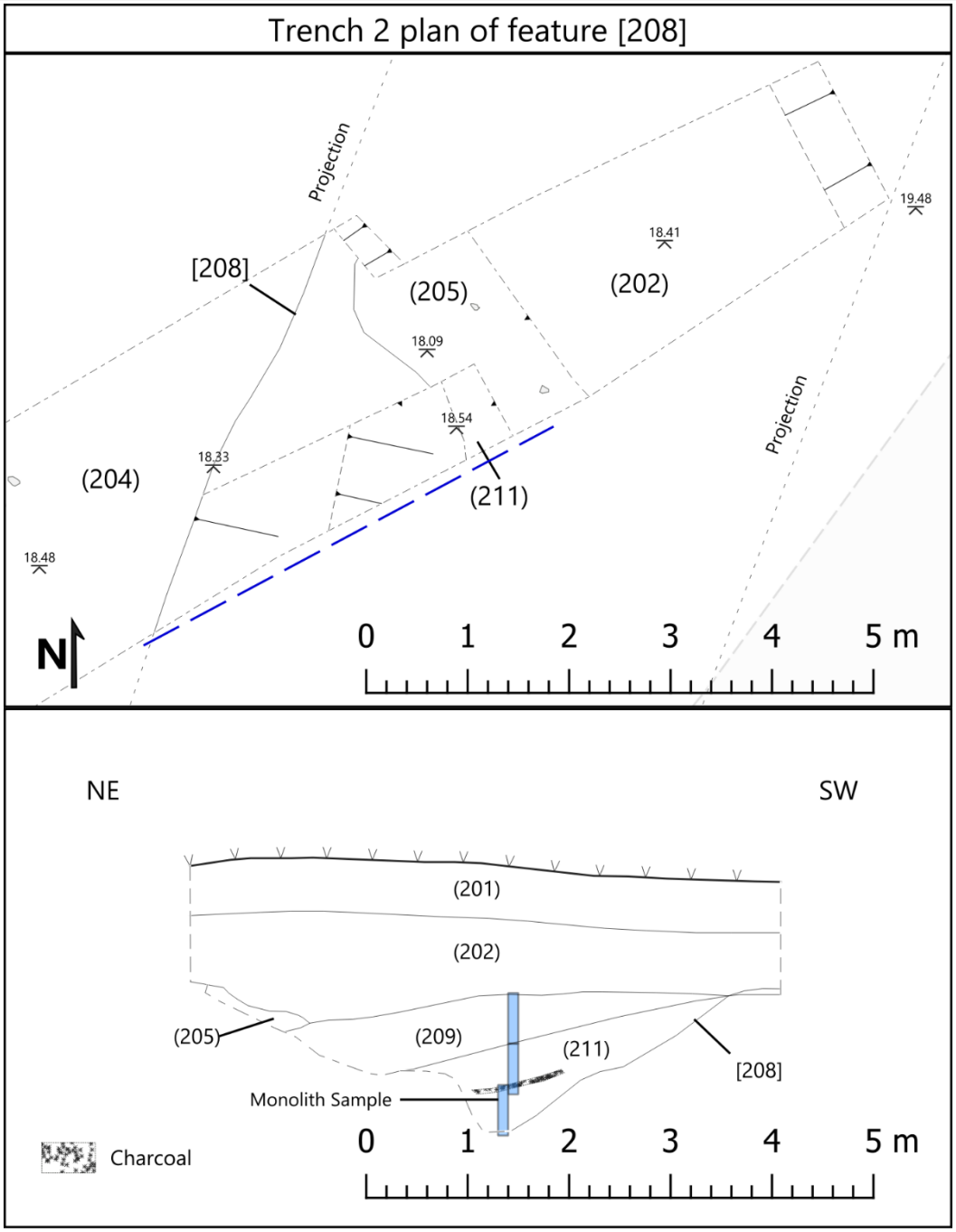

Figure 12: [208] plan section and monolith sample location (Sample 03)

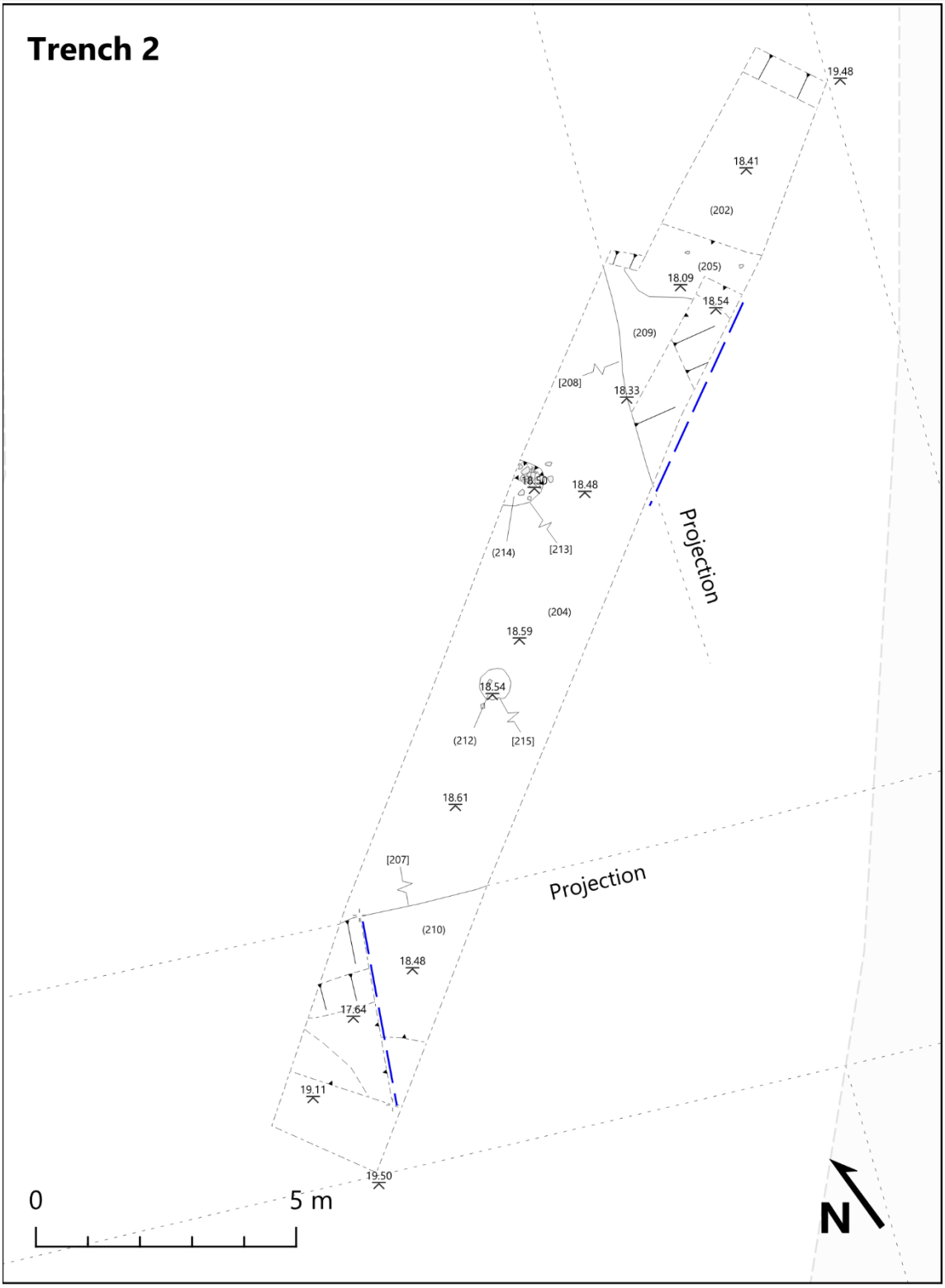

Figure 13: Trench 2 post excavation plan

Trench 3

4.9. This trench, located in the paddock, targeted a feature in the geophysical survey that was interpreted as a possible structure. The trench, which ran north to south, measured 13m long, 1.8m wide and exceeded safe working depth at 1.3m. The trench was abandoned after a severe section collapse which occurred soon after opening (Figure 14).

4.10. The general trench makeup consisted of a topsoil (301) overlying a redeposited natural clay overburden (302). This overburden sealed a mound of loose crushed ceramic with high concentrations of 19th-century pottery and building material (303). Below this was a dark organic soil, possibly a remnant topsoil, however, this was not investigated due to the instability of the trench.

Figure 14: Trench 3 collapse

Trench 4

4.11. This trench, located in the paddock, was also targeted over a feature in the geophysical survey interpreted as a possible structure. The trench, which ran east to west, measured 20m long, 1.8m wide and natural geology would have exceeded safe working depth at 1.2m. As with Trench 3, this trench was abandoned after a severe section collapse which occurred soon after opening, however, a scaffold was erected in the western portion of the trench which enabled the partial investigation of lower deposits.

Figure 15: Trench 4 collapse

4.12. The general trench makeup consists of a topsoil (401) overlying a redeposited natural clay overburden (402) which seals a tip of red construction sand in the centre of the trench (403), and the continuation of the ceramic tip from Trench 3 (405). At the western end of the trench was a redeposited natural clay embankment 4.3m wide (406) (Figure 15) from which deposits (403, 405) had possibly been dumped from. This bank sealed a thin layer of grey silt (407) which overlays a compacted angular stone feature interpreted as part of a railway track bed (408). A single large iron spike was found within this feature and is likely to be a railway spike.

4.13. This feature may be associated with the post-medieval linear identified in the 2017 excavation by Earthworks Archaeology, which together are probably associated with the 19th century tramway which passed the western side of the abbey.

Trench 5

4.14. This trench, which measured 10m by 5m (Figure 16), was located in the former orchard and positioned over what was a mostly blank area shown in the geophysical survey, with the exception of a ferrous spike in the northeast corner.

Figure 16: Trench 5 pre-excavation photo

4.15. The general trench stratigraphy comprised a dark brown loamy topsoil 0.5m thick (avg.) (501), within which were the articulated remains of a sheep, but the apparent lack of cut suggests the remains were sealed within the accumulating organic topsoil. Below this was a pebbly pinkish-brown sandy subsoil which contained Roman ceramics (502). At the base of the trench was a sand and pebbly gravel natural.

4.16. There were six features identified within this trench which included two post holes [506 and 509] which were linked by a compacted cobblestone spread (511). In the northeast corner of the trench were two conjoined pit features, one a large oval containing concentrations of charcoal [504] and the second a partially exposed cut feature in the section containing a shell infill [512] . There were also two pit features attributed to tree bowls from the former orchard.

- Cut feature [506] comprised a shallow north-south orientated oval posthole extending from the west-facing section (Figure 17 left). The feature measured 0.3m wide and 0.15m deep and contained a single charcoal-rich fill. At its base was a forged iron nail likely to be of Roman origin.

- Cut feature [509] comprised a shallow possible posthole set within surface feature (511) (Figure 17 right). The cut measured 0.45 m long by 0.35m wide and 0.25m deep with a possible packing stone within the western cut edge. The feature contained a single fill which produced a fragment of Roman pottery.

- Surface feature (511) comprised a heavily truncated thin spread of compacted clay and cobble that formed either a surface or foundation that was set between cut features [506] and [509] (Figure 19). Pressed into this surface were small abraded fragments of Roman pottery.

- Cut feature [504] consisted of a clearly defined elongated pit that extended 1.1m from the south-facing trench section (Figure 18 and Figure 20). The pit was relatively shallow, with a depth of 0.25m, but contained a charcoal-rich fill (508), the upper extents of which

produced fragments of Roman Ceramic Building Material and industrial waste, however, these may be intrusive.

- Cut feature [512] comprised a steep-sided cut that was only partially exposed in the northeast corner of the trench and had been truncated by feature [504] (Figure 18 and Figure 20). The cut contained a burnt shell and charcoal-rich deposits, of which a small environmental sample was obtained but not selected for processing during this investigation as it was deemed that too little was known of this feature to be able to contextualise the results.

Figure 17: Trench 5 cut feature [506] (Left) and cut feature [509] (Right)

Figure 18: Trench 5 cut feature [504]

Figure 19: Trench 5 stone spread and post holes in west facing section

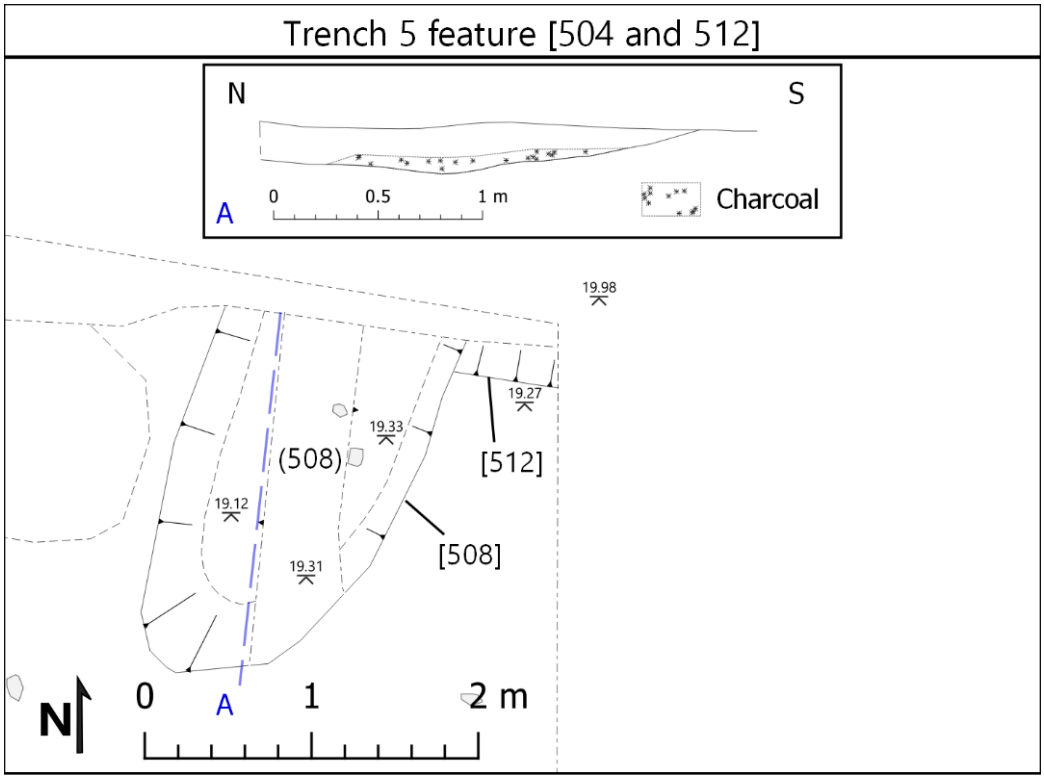

Figure 20: Trench 5 feature [504 and 512]

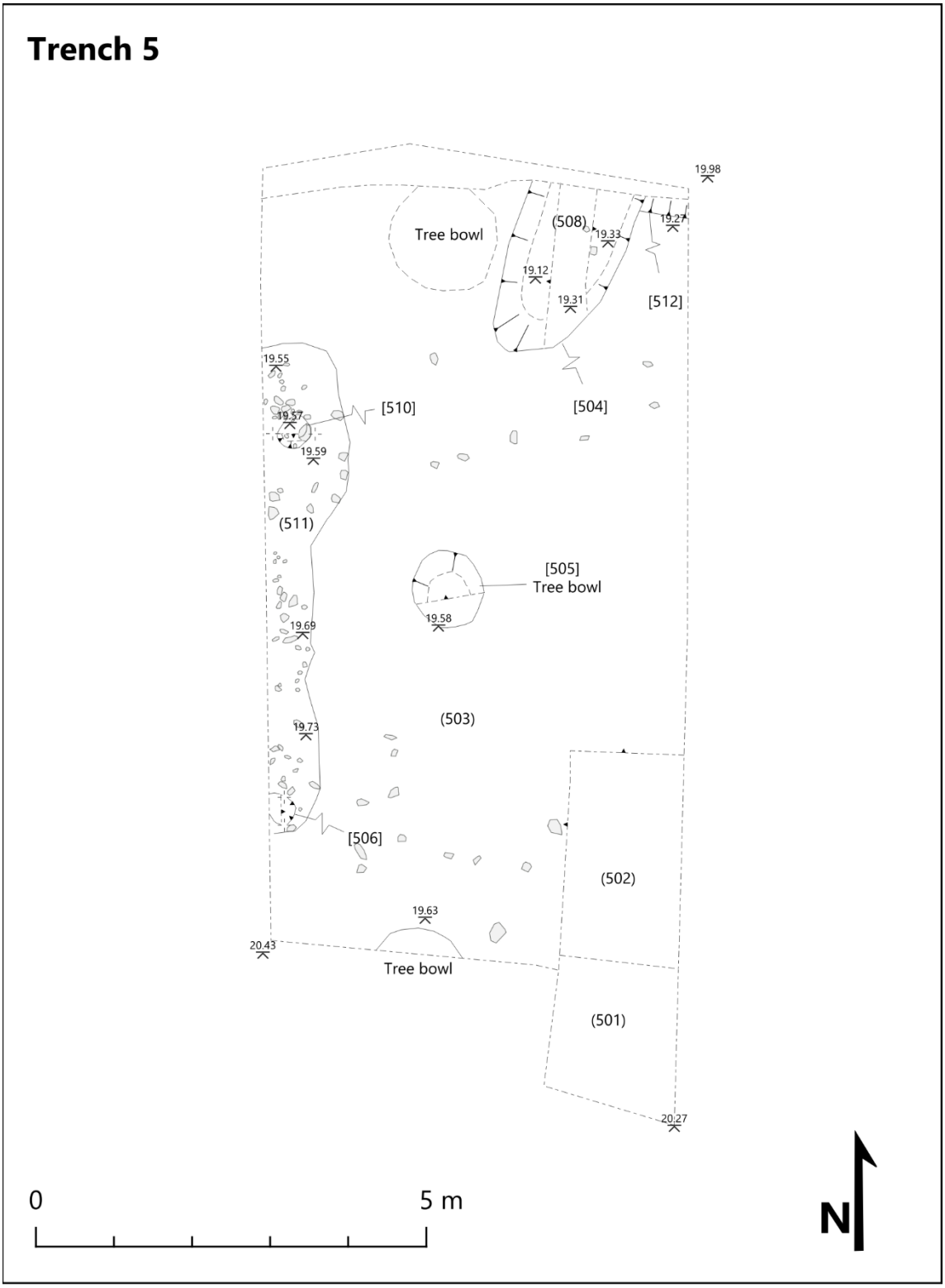

Figure 21: Trench 5 post excavation plan

Trench 6

4.17. This trench (Figure 22), which measured 10m by 5m, was also in the former orchard and positioned over a ferrous spike in the northeast corner of the field.

Figure 22: Trench 6 pre-excavation photo

4.18. The stratigraphy of the trench comprised a topsoil (601) 0.5m deep overlying a mixed loose deposit (602) 0.4m thick on average. In the northeast corner was a spread of mixed lime mortar-rich demolition material (603) which contained medieval monastic floor tiles as well as a mix of medieval and early post-medieval roof tile, pottery and animal bone. The latter is likely to be the cause of the high ferrous response in the geophysical survey.

4.19. Running through the centre of the trench was a clay deposit (604) sealing a possible natural, however, this was not fully explored. There was a single possible cut feature [604] which when investigated proved to be very shallow and probably was caused by an undulation in the clay.

5 Artefacts and Ecofacts

5.1. The following paragraphs outline the assessment and quantification of artefacts recovered from the excavation, with a more detailed specialist analysis of the ceramics contained within sections 5 and 6 of this report.

Trench 1

Small finds

5.2. Five small finds were recovered from Trench 1, of which only one was recovered from within a feature, the majority having been found through the metal detecting of spoil heaps. The most notable finds included an early medieval buckle recovered from the spoil heap at the southern extent of the excavation (SF006) (Figure 23). This object is made from silvered copper alloy and was reported to the local portable antiquities officer with further analysis being undertaken by the National Museum of Wales (ongoing). A small iron key was recovered from within the upper extent of the fill of a pit feature [110] which also contained medieval pottery.

Table 1: Trench 1 small finds

SF Number	Context	Fill of	Trench	Description
6	101		1	SN strap buckle (Early Med)
9	101		1	Cu object
11	111	110	1	Small iron key
20	U/S		1	Cu object
21	U/S		1	Pb obj, Stylus?

Figure 23: Early-Medieval Buckle

bulk finds

5.3. The bulk finds in Trench 1 consisted of animal bones, Ceramic Building Materials (CBM) clay pipes, nails, industrial slag, lead, and pottery (Figure 26).

5.4. The animal bones consisted of butchered and calcined bone with the initial assessment indicating the presence of cow, sheep/goat and pig. In addition, the bone assemblage also contained wild boar tusks which could indicate a medieval or Early post-medieval origin. The

assemblage comprised 143 fragments in total, of which 75% were recovered from disturbed deposits that form the general trench makeup, the remaining 25% having been recovered from within features.

5.5. A large quantity of iron objects dominated by nails were recovered from the spoil, some of which may be Roman and/or medieval. Industrial slag was found within the upper fill of the ditch feature [104] but is of an unknown date. The lead items found consisted of lead ore, sheet lead, and lead waste, the majority of which had been recovered from the spoil heap.

Trench 2

Samples

5.6. Two monolith samples were obtained from cut features [207 and 208] with the aim of recovering datable material. The positions of these monoliths have been depicted in Figure 12 and Figure 11. The full extent of both ditch features was not uncovered. By using this method, it was deemed that these samples could be sent for OSL analysis to determine the date of the cut.

Small finds

5.7. Eight small finds were recovered from Trench 2, all of which had been found through the metal detecting of the spoil heap. The most notable finds included a small buckle recovered from the spoil heap that is likely to be early post-medieval (SF007). Other objects include a possible window latch that may be associated with lead-panelled windows (SF018), likely post-medieval. A lead masonry socket was also recovered which may originate from the abbey (SF019). Two decorative copper alloy objects were also recovered and require further investigation to determine their origin (SF 016-017). A large forged iron key was also found in the spoil heap and is likely to be either medieval or early post-medieval (SF002) (Figure 24).

Table 2: Trench 2 small finds

SF Number	Context	Description
2	201	Iron key
7	201	Buckle
8	201	Gilded copper alloy
10	201	Cu object
16	U/S	Decorative CuA object
17	U/S	Decorative CuA object
18	U/S	Fe object, possible window latch
19	U/S	lead socket

5.8.

Figure 24: Trench 2 small find SF002

Bulk finds

5.9. The excavation of Trench 2 revealed various items, including stone and ceramic building materials (Figure 25), animal bones, iron objects, lead, and pottery.

5.10. The animal bones consisted of butchered bone with the initial assessment indicating the presence of cow, sheep/goat and pig. In addition, the bone assemblage also contained wild boar tusks and horn cores which often indicate a medieval or early post-medieval origin. The assemblage comprised 49 fragments in total, of which 28% were recovered from disturbed deposits, 30% from within features, and 41% were unstratified.

5.11. The iron objects found included nails, a penny, and buttons which were recovered from the spoil heap. Two forged iron nails were found within feature [208] and are likely to be Roman. The detecting of the spoil heaps also revealed sheet lead that may be from demolition debris associated with the Abbey.

Figure 25: Encaustic floor tiles from Trench 2

Figure 26: Roman pottery from ditch [208]

Trench 3

Bulk finds

5.12. Trench 3 has produced a large assemblage of 18th and 19th-century pottery comprising large fragments that are detailed in section 5.

5.13. A notable example amongst the assemblage was three fragments of a commemorative plate depicting a scene of what is likely to be political figures, below which are two quotes from Benjamin Franklin. This vessel is likely an example of locally produced ceramics for export.

Trench 4

Bulk finds

5.14. Only a single find was stratigraphically recovered from trench 4, however, the ceramic tip feature in trench 3 partly continued into this trench but with all finds being attributed to context (303). The single find from this trench was an iron rail spike likely to be mid 19th century.

Trench 5

Samples

5.15. Two environmental samples were taken, one of a shallow charcoal-rich fill (508) from the oval pit feature [504] and the second was the shell-rich deposit (513) from within a partially exposed cut in the northeast corner of the trench [512] (Figure 20). At present the feature has been interpreted as possibly industrial and likely associated with the Romano-British period, however, it is likely that the focal point of the feature exists outside the limits of the excavation.

Table 3: Trench 5 environmental samples

Number	Context	Fill of	Reason	Bags/Tubs	Volume (L)	Percentage (%)
1	507	506	Obtain Datable material	1	5	50
2	513	512	Environmental sample of shell midden	1	10	50

Small finds

5.16. Three small finds were recovered from Trench 5, the most notable of which was a Roman lead quantity weight with the remains of an iron loop fitting (SF003). In addition, a worked flint was found within the topsoil which may represent a prehistoric flint scraper, however, based on the shape and context the object was found in, it could also originate from a flintlock rifle. One of the finds was found within a feature, this was a small hand-forged iron nail (SF005) within a probable post hole that is likely to be Roman.

Table 4: Trench 5 small finds

SF Number	Context	Fill of	Trench	Description
3	502		5	Roman Lead weight
4	501		5	Flint scraper
5	507	506	5	Possible Roman nail

Bulk finds

5.17. In Trench 5, various artefacts were discovered, including stone and ceramic building materials, bones, clay tobacco pipes, iron objects, flint, glass, industrial slag, lead, other lithics and pottery.

5.18. The animal bone assemblage was relatively small, consisting of fragments of mandible and teeth. In addition, there was a single articulated skeleton of a small sheep/goat which appeared to have been deposited within the accumulating loamy topsoil rather than within a cut feature, which based on other topsoil finds dates to between the 18th and 19th century.

5.19. Some clay pipe stems were also discovered in the trench topsoil as well as iron objects found within the spoil heap including nails and a golf club. A quantity of industrial slag dominated by lead slag, was recovered from both the spoil heap and within feature [508].

Trench 6

Small finds

5.20. The small finds found in this trench include a small fragment of possible stained window glass (SF 01) and window lead (SF 13) both likely associated with the demolition of the abbey. There was also a lead sack seal and pewter button likely dating to the 18th or 19th century.

Table 5: Trench 6 small finds

SF Number	Context	Description
1	602	Window glass
12	601	Lead sack seal
13	603	Window lead
14	601	Pewter button
15	603	Worked bone

Bulk finds

5.21. The bulk finds for this trench comprised stone and ceramic building materials (Figure 27), bone, ferrous objects, lead, clay pipe and pottery.

5.22. This assemblage is dominated by materials likely to be associated with the demolition of the abbey, with context 603 containing a concentration of building materials and lime mortar likely dating to the medieval and early post-medieval periods. In total, there were 227 fragments of Ceramic Building Material, most of which are roof tile, with an additional three fragments of Medieval encaustic floor tile.

5.23. The trench also produced 73 fragments of animal bone including butchered long bones of cow/horse sheep/goat and pig as well as possible canine mandibles. The assemblage is likely to be predominantly domestic in origin, however, the trench is situated within close proximity to the focal point of the post-medieval tannery that occupied the site after the reformation. The presence of boar tusks could indicate that the assemblage is predominantly medieval or early post-medieval.

Figure 27: Encaustic floor tiles from Trench 6

6 Pottery Assessment Report

Dan Garner BA, FSA, MCIfA and Rachael Matthews BSc, PCIfA

Data collected March 2024

Summary

6.1. A small/medium sized assemblage of pottery (501 sherds; 27.398 kilograms) was recovered from six evaluation trenches on land at Basingwerk Abbey, Greenfield Valley Heritage Park, Flintshire, CH8 7GH (NGR 319510, 377430). The pottery assemblage was divided between Roman pottery (64 sherds, weighing 729 grams); Medieval pottery (21 sherds, weighing 168 grams); and Post-medieval pottery (416 sherds, weighing 26.501 kilograms).

6.2. A large element of the assemblage (387 sherds; weighing 26.127 kilograms) comprises Post-medieval pottery of 19th to early 20th century date recovered from a single context (303). This material probably represents part of a house clearance event from one of the houses on or near the site that was demolished in the early 20th century. The Roman and Medieval material is characterised by small assemblages recovered from a range of layers and feature fills sampled in several of the evaluation trenches.

Introduction

6.3. This report details an assessment of the pottery archive from six evaluation trenches on land at Basingwerk Abbey, Greenfield Valley Heritage Park, Flintshire, which was undertaken in 2023 by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT). Pottery artefacts of Roman, Medieval and Post-Medieval date have been identified in the assemblage.

6.4. The pottery has been fully catalogued to a level and standard that is in keeping with recommendations made by both the Study Group for Roman Pottery and The Medieval Pottery Research Group; and assessed in accordance with recommendations in A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology (2016).

6.5. All the pottery was examined macroscopically and where necessary using a hand lens (x20) and was also separated by fabric type within each context. Sherds from each different vessel were then recorded individually by sherd count and weight on an Excel spreadsheet. The finds were briefly considered in relation to the stratigraphy, as understood from the site matrices, and with reference to other sites in the general area.

6.6. The Roman pottery has been identified to fabric using the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber & Dore 1998) unless a fabric has been identified that does not occur in that publication.

6.7. Where possible the Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery has been identified to ware.

Roman Pottery

6.8. A full catalogue of the Roman pottery has been created on an Excel spreadsheet and will form part of the digital site archive. A key to the Roman pottery fabric codes is in Table 1.

6.9. A total of 64 sherds of Roman pottery with a combined weight of 729 grams were identified in the pottery assemblage and details of this are summarised in Tables 2 and 3 (Appendix 1); this represents 12.77% by count and 2.66% by weight of the total pottery assemblage from

the evaluation. The Roman pottery was recovered from a total of 10 contexts. These contexts were dispersed over three evaluation trenches (Trenches 1, 2 and 5). No specific context produced a significantly large assemblage. The largest group consisting of 38 sherds (weighing 400 grams) was recovered from a fill of ditch [208] context (209). For this reason, the stratified assemblage's primary function is in being able to suggest a chronology for the structural narrative of the site; as it is too small to lend itself to other statistical analysis.

6.10. The Roman pottery is summarised by trench and context below:

Trench 1

Topsoil Context (101)

6.11. A small body sherd (1 gram) of south Gaulish samian ware (LGF SA) with a small section of an ovolo border; probably part of a Drag. 37 decorated bowl. Produced c.AD 70-110.

Context (105)

6.12. A base sherd (12 grams) of south Gaulish samian ware (LGF SA); probably part of a Drag. 18 plate. Produced c.AD 50-100. A small body sherd (2 grams) of local Holt oxidised coarseware (HOL OX) usually ascribed a date range of c.AD 90/100-130.

Pit fill (109)

6.13. A small body sherd (2 grams) of local Holt oxidised coarseware (HOL OX) usually ascribed a date range of c.AD 90/100-130.

Unstratified

6.14. A body sherd of Dressel 20 amphora (BAT AM 2) weighing 88 grams broadly dating to the 1st to 3rd century AD. A small body sherd (2 grams) of local Holt oxidised coarseware (HOL OX) usually ascribed a date range of c.AD 90/100-130.

Trench 2

Fill (209) of ditch [208]

6.15. A total of 38 sherds of Roman pottery weighing 400 grams were recovered from this context. These included 27 sherds (weighing 156 grams) from a single vessel in a local Holt oxidised coarseware (HOL OX) usually ascribed a date range of c.AD 90/100-130. The vessel was a bowl with evidence for a zone of rouletted decoration on the exterior surface and traces of red slip on the interior; the form is paralleled at Holt where it is described as probably derivative of Samian form Drag. 29 (Grimes, 1930, pp 172 & 226, Fig.74 No.227).

6.16. Ditch fill (209) also produced 7 body sherds of Dressel 20 amphora (BAT AM 2) weighing 206 grams broadly dating to the 1st to 3rd century AD. There was also a base sherd (22 grams) of south Gaulish samian ware (LGF SA); probably part of a Drag. 18 plate. Produced c.AD 50-100.

Fill (210) of ditch [207]

6.17. This context produced a single rim sherd from a Dressel 20 amphora (BAT AM 2) weighing 54 grams. The rim form is comparable to Martin-Kilcher Type 13 which is dated mid 1st to early 2nd century AD (Peacock & Williams 1991 pp137).

Trench 5

Topsoil Context (501)

6.18. This context produced 3 small and very abraded body sherds of local Holt oxidised coarseware (HOL OX) weighing 8 grams and usually ascribed a date range of c.AD 90/100-130.

'Roman Level' context (502)

6.19. The deposit produced 11 sherds of Roman pottery weighing 124 grams. This small assemblage included the only sherd of Black Burnished ware (DOR BB 1) recovered from the site. The sherd represented the complete profile of a plain-rimmed dish dating to the 2nd to early 3rd century AD. There were also 2 small rim sherds (6 grams) of south Gaulish samian ware (LGF SA). The first was a very worn/abraded sherd lacking nearly all of its glossy red slip which was from a Drag. 29 bowl produced c.AD 70-85. Whilst the second was probably from a Drag. 37 bowl produced c.AD 70-110.

6.20. The context also produced 2 sherds of local greyware weighing 24 grams which included the rim from a jar of late 1st/early 2nd century date.

Oven pit/stoke hole (508)

6.21. This context produced 1 small body sherd of local Holt oxidised coarseware (HOL OX) weighing 2 grams and usually ascribed a date range of c.AD 90/100-130.

Fill (510) of posthole

6.22. This context produced 1 body sherd of local Holt oxidised coarseware (HOL OX) weighing 14 grams and usually ascribed a date range of c.AD 90/100-130.

Context (511)

6.23. This context produced 2 sherds of local Holt oxidised coarseware (HOL OX) weighing 10 grams and usually ascribed a date range of c.AD 90/100-130. This included a body sherd and a rim sherd from a wide-mouthed jar or bowl.

Unstratified

6.24. An abraded rim sherd from a bowl in local Holt oxidised coarseware (HOL OX) weighing 10 grams and usually ascribed a date range of c.AD 90/100-130.

Medieval Pottery

6.25. A full catalogue of the Medieval pottery has been created on an Excel spreadsheet and will form part of the digital site archive. A key to the Medieval pottery fabric codes is in Table 1.

6.26. A total of 21 sherds of Medieval pottery with a combined weight of 168 grams were identified in the pottery assemblage and details of this are summarised in Tables 4 and 5 (Appendix 1); this represents 4.19% by count and 0.61% by weight of the total pottery assemblage from the evaluation. The Medieval pottery was recovered from a total of 8 contexts. These contexts were dispersed over 4 evaluation trenches (Trenches 1, 2, 5 and 6). No specific context produced a significantly large assemblage. The largest group consisting of 5 sherds (weighing 26 grams) was recovered from subsoil context (602). For this reason, the stratified assemblage's primary function is in being able to suggest a chronology for the structural narrative of the site; as it is too small to lend itself to other statistical analysis.

6.27. The Medieval pottery is summarised by trench and context below:

Trench 1

Topsoil Context (101)

6.28. The context produced a base sherd (weighing 20 grams) in an unglazed iron-rich sandy fabric (IRSWU) with traces of residue on the interior and dated to the 13th/14th century. There were also 2 body sherds (weighing 16 grams) in local Ewloe fabrics: the first was in a red/grey fabric (EWLRG) with an iron-rich red/brown slip and a patchy olive green glaze; the second was in a pink/white fabric (EWLPW) with an external iron-rich red/brown slip. Ewloe products are generally dated to the late 14th/15th century.

Subsoil (102)

6.29. The context produced a small body sherd (weighing 2 grams) in an unglazed iron-rich sandy fabric (IRSWU) dated to the 13th/14th century.

Context (105)

6.30. The context produced a small body sherd (weighing 2 grams) in an unglazed iron-rich sandy fabric (IRSWU) dated to the 13th/14th century.

Pit fill (113) of pit [112]

6.31. The context produced a body sherd (weighing 8 grams) in an unglazed iron-rich sandy fabric (IRSWU) with traces of residue on the interior and dated to the 13th/14th century.

Unstratified

6.32. A body sherd (weighing 6 grams) in a Ewloe pink/white fabric (EWLPW) with an external iron-rich red/brown slip and a patchy olive green glaze. Ewloe products are generally dated to the late 14th/15th century.

Trench 2

Modern levelling layer (202)

6.33. The context produced a large body sherd (weighing 26 grams) in a glazed iron-rich sandy fabric (IRSWT) with splashes of olive green and yellow glaze on the exterior and dated to the 13th/14th century. There was also a small body sherd (weighing 4 grams) in a fine white fabric (SAINTONGE) with splashes of speckled pale green glaze on the exterior; possibly an import from the Saintonge region of France. Broadly dated AD1250 1350.

Fill (206) of ditch [207]

6.34. This context produced a body sherd (weighing 12 grams) in an unglazed iron-rich sandy fabric (IRSWU) with two scored lines on the exterior which were applied prior to firing. There was also a body sherd in a glazed iron-rich sandy fabric (IRSWT) with splashes of olive green and yellow glaze on the exterior and possible traces of rouletted decoration (but very worn). Both of these sherds are dated to the 13th/14th century.

Unstratified

6.35. A small body sherd (weighing 2 grams) in a glazed iron-rich sandy fabric (IRSWT) with an olive green glaze on the exterior dated to the 13th/14th century.

Trench 5

Unstratified

6.36. A body sherd (weighing 6 grams) in a late Medieval orange ware (LMOW) with an olive green/yellow glaze on the exterior dated to the late 14th/15th century.

Trench 6

Subsoil (602)

6.37. This context produced 5 body sherds (weighing 26 grams) in a Ewloe pink/white fabric (EWLPW) with an external iron-rich red/brown slip and a patchy olive green/yellow glaze. Ewloe products are generally dated to the late 14th/15th century.

Demolition layer (603)

6.38. This context produced 3 body sherds (weighing 28 grams) in a Ewloe pink/white fabric (EWLPW) with an external iron-rich red/brown slip and a patchy olive green/yellow glaze. Ewloe products are generally dated to the late 14th/15th century.

Post-Medieval Pottery

6.39. A full catalogue of the Post-medieval pottery has been created on an Excel spreadsheet and will form part of the digital site archive. A key to the Medieval pottery fabric codes is in Table 1.

6.40. The Post-Medieval pottery is summarised by trench and context below:

Trench 3

Ceramic dump (303)

6.41. The majority of the Post-medieval pottery (387 sherds, weighing 26.127 kilograms) was recovered from a ceramic dump (303) located within Trench 3, a 2% sample of material was recovered ad hoc, this was due to the unstable nature of the trench. These were predominately Black Glazed Red Earthenwares and White Glazed Earthenwares dating to between the 18th and 20th century.

6.42. Some of the earliest pottery recovered from (303) was two sherd of Midlands Purple Ware, a partial rim and handle (21g), of a possible cup/mug dating to the 16th -17th century; three sherds of Press Moulded Slipware dish, with a slip trailed design (1700+) and a further 5 pieces of Slipware bowl with slip design around the rim (1700+). A single sherd of Mottled Ware was present, possibly part of a jar weighing 112g (1680+).

6.43. A mix of 18th to 20th century Stoneware was identified from 29 sherds, this included 3 sherds (194g) of the same small white salt glazed bowl (1720+) and a small ink bottle (273g) with the markings:"Denby And Codnor Park Pottery, Near Derby, Vitreous Stone Bottles, J Bourne, Patentee, Warranted Not To Absorb" the company dates between 1833-1850 (Perry, 2010. potteryhistories.com). A base fragment of James Keiller & Sons, Dundee marmalade jar was also recovered, it likely dates between 1886 and 1923, after which the company switched to glass vessels (adirondackgirlatheart.com).

6.44. There was a total of 57 sherds of Black Glazed Red Earthenware (BBG) weighing 13.869kg, likely dating between the 18th and early 20th century. They are predominately larger kitchen vessels: storage pots/jars and bowls, with internal dark black and brown lead glazes and with evidence of some external glazing. Most of the sherds were rims and bases, with lugg handles on the storage jars.

6.45. A total of 230 sherds of Pearl Glazed Earthenware were collected weighing 6.544kg, these were tablewares in the form of plates, platters, bowls, cups and jugs dating from 1780+. Many

of the sherds were decorated with transfer prints in blue, black, brown, green and polychrome colours. Willow Pattern and Asiatic Pheasant were identified among the designs, considered to be some of the most popular blue printed designs of the 19th century (thepotteries.org). The latter had 5 fragments with three identifiable makers stamps: 'Wedgwood & Co' dating (1860-1925), 'F, C & Co' Ford, Challinor and Co., Tunstall (1865-1880) and 'S&B' 'Sefton and Brown of Ferrybridge (1897-1919) (Godden. 1987).

6.46. Two adjoining plate sherds contain two Benjamin Franklin quotes: "not to oversee workmen is to leave them your purse open, the eye of a master will do more work than both his hands". These are extracts from the 1758 almanac, The Way to Wealth. Franklin takes on the role of Father Abraham, giving the secrets to success to Poor Richard, with the underlying message as one of hard work and thrift (McKay, 2009).

6.47. Further Chinoise type designs were present, as well as, floral and geometric designs. A further stamp was identified 'Severn, T&T', the Severn refers to the design which must have been around the rim which was not present and the maker is Turner and Tomkinson (1860-1872) (thepotteries.org).

6.48. 32 sherds of Industrial Slipware (795g) were recovered from (303), dating from 1780+, these were mostly body and rim fragments of bowls, jars, jugs and mugs, with a probable teapot rim. Striped designed were prevalent, with one sherd showing an applied thistle sprig, and a single sherd having a red earthenware body.

6.49. Other white wares include seven sherds of creamware (31g) of various tablewares (1760+), nine sherds of Porcelaneous bodied ware (19th century) mostly bowls (99g), six pieces of gold line (139g) tablewares and a single sherd of Porcelain plate (40g) possible late 18th-19th century.

Trench 1

Upper fill (105) of ditch [104]

6.50. Context (105) was the upper fill of ditch [104] in trench 1, it produced a single body sherd of Midlands Purple Ware (6g) dating to the 16th -17th century.

6.51. The remaining assemblage of 26 sherds were from topsoil and subsoils deposits across trenches, 1, 2, 5 and 6. Two sherds of 16th-17th Midlands Purple were identified in (202) and two sherds of Cistercian Ware in (602) dating from the late 15th -16th century. Other sherds include Creamware (1760+), Pearl Glazed (1780+) with a sherd of shell edged ware (1780-1890), Porcelaneous Bodied Ware (19th-20th century), unglazed red earthenware (19th century) and 19th century Stoneware.

Unstratified

6.52. A single sherd of Cream Ware (1760+) plate and Stoneware marmalade jar (19th century) were from within unstratified contexts.

Significance, potential and recommendations for further work

Roman Pottery

6.53. The Roman pottery recovered from the evaluation trenches has significance at a local level and adds to a growing collection of Roman material recovered from the Greenfield site.

Previously, traces of a timber building (PRN 128789) associated with pottery dating from the late 1st to mid 2nd centuries AD (Dodd, 2015) have been recorded on the site.

6.54. Whilst the present assemblage is too small to draw any meaningful conclusions about the nature of the occupation on the site during the Roman period it does highlight the potential of the site to provide a larger sample in the future. Evans (2001) has shown that there are trends in the composition of assemblages and a consistent variation between forts/towns and rural sites, with villas falling between the two. Evans suggests that rural assemblages are usually dominated by jars compared to urban and military sites (2001, 28). Other features of a rural assemblage are low percentages of beakers and tablewares and a fairly high level of mortaria; the absence of mortaria from the Basingwerk assemblage is notable. The samian assemblage, although thought to be low at 7.8 per cent (by sherd count) is considerably higher than many rural sites in the region.

6.55. Amphorae are also considered to be good indicators of site type, with military sites having a higher percentage than urban or rural. Less than 1 per cent, based on sherd count is the usual proportion of amphorae on rural sites. The high value of 14 per cent from the Basingwerk needs to be explained, and maybe this high percentage reflects a military supply pattern. The possibility that Greenfield may have functioned as a harbour during the Roman period (Jones, 2017) could also explain this high amphora percentage.

6.56. Data has been collected to an appropriate archive level and it is not recommended that any further study is required. However, if further stages of excavation were undertaken then this would need to be reconsidered.

Medieval Pottery

6.57. The Medieval pottery recovered from the evaluation trenches has significance at a local level and adds to a growing collection of Medieval material recovered from the Greenfield site. The original Basingwerk Abbey was established in 1131 by Earl Ranulf of Chester as a Savignac monastery. It was later adopted by the Cistercian order and moved to its current location in 1157. The Abbey was dissolved in 1536, and subsequently left to ruin.

6.58. The Medieval pottery has significance at a local level and demonstrates Medieval activity covering the site's use as an Abbey. Whilst the present assemblage is too small to draw any meaningful conclusions about pottery use on the site, it does demonstrate links with local pottery production centres as well as imports from the continent.

6.59. The iron-rich sandy wares identified in the assemblage have been attributed a broad date range of the 13th to 14th century and similar wares are common along the North Welsh borders with a number of kiln sites noted in neighbouring Cheshire at Ashton, Brereton Park and Eaton by Tarporley (McCarthy & Brooks, 1988, 361). Kilns producing comparable pottery have been identified at Rhuddlan (Owen, 1994) where the products have a suggested 13th century date (pre c.1280).

6.60. The later Ewloe wares identified in the assemblage have a suggested date range of late 14th to 15th century (Harrison & Davey, 1977, 98) and represent local distribution from what must have been a major pottery industry serving the North Welsh Marches.

6.61. The presence of a single sherd of Saintonge ware from south-western France is in keeping with other North Welsh coastal sites such as Rhuddlan (Owen, 1994), Conwy (Butler & Evans, 1977) and Deganwy Castle (Talbot, 1977). At Chester there is a marked increase in imports

from the Saintonge area (near Bordeaux) after c.1250 which is thought to be linked to the territorial possessions of the English kings and the earls of Chester and the extensive wine trade between Chester and Aquitaine. The quantity of imports from Saintonge drops off between c.1350-1450 before rising again in the second half of the 15th century (Axworthy Rutter, 1988, 56).

6.62. Data has been collected to an appropriate archive level and it is not recommended that any further study is required. However, if further stages of excavation were undertaken then this would need to be reconsidered.

Post-Medieval Pottery

6.63. Context (303) produced small/medium sized Post Medieval pottery assemblage, the context is interpreted as a deliberate dumping of material. The assemblage is dominated by pottery dating to the 19th century/early 20th century. Due to the volume and density, it is likely the ceramic was 'dumped' in a single event or over a short period of time. Many of the forms are table and kitchen wares of different styles and may have been part of a house clearance event from one of the houses on or near the site that was demolished in the early 20th century.

6.64. This is a small/medium sized assemblage, which has limited potential to contribute further to an understanding of the site beyond what has already been recorded in terms of the range of types and their chronology.

6.65. Data has been collected to an appropriate archive level and it is not recommended that any further study is required.

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Table 6: Key to pottery fabric codes (all periods)

FABRIC CODE	FABRIC DESCRIPTION
ROMAN	
BAT AM 2	Baetican (Late) amphorae 2
DOR BB 1	Dorset Black-burnished ware 1
GREYWARE	
HOL OX	Holt Oxidised ware
LGF SA	La Graufesenque samian
MEDIEVAL	
EWLPW	Ewloe pink/white ware
EWLRG	Ewloe red/grey ware
IRSWT	Iron-rich sandy ware (table)
IRSWU	Iron-rich sandy ware (utilitarian)
LMOW	Late Medieval Orange ware
SAINTONGE	Saintonge ware (south-west France)
POST-MEDIEVAL	
BBG	Black/brown glazed red earthenware
CREAM	Creamware
EW	Unglazed red earthenware
ISW	Industrial Slipware
MIDP	Midlands Purple
MOTT	Mottled Ware
PGE	Pearl Glazed Earthenware
POR	Porcelain
PORCW	Porcellaneous Bodied ware
SLPW	Slipware
STW	Stoneware
WW	White earthenware

Table 7: Roman Pottery by context, fabric and sherd count

FABRIC	BAT AM 2	DOR BB 1	GREYWARE	HOL OX	LGF SA	TOTAL
CONTEXT						
101					1	**1**
105				1	1	**2**
109				1		**1**
209	7			30	1	**38**
210	1					**1**
501				3		**3**
502		1	2	6	2	**11**
508				1		**1**
510				1		**1**
511				2		**2**
U/S T1	1			1		**2**
U/S T5				1		**1**
TOTAL	**9**	**1**	**2**	**47**	**5**	**64**

Table 8: Roman Pottery by context, fabric and weight (g)

FABRIC	BAT AM 2	DOR BB 1	GREYWARE	HOL OX	LGF SA	TOTAL
CONTEXT						
101					1	**1**
105				2	12	**14**
109				2		**2**
209	206			172	22	**400**
210	54					**54**
501				8		**8**
502		16	24	78	6	**124**
508				2		**2**
510				14		**14**
511				10		**10**
U/S T1	88			2		**90**
U/S T5				10		**10**
TOTAL	**348**	**16**	**24**	**300**	**41**	**729**

Table 9: Medieval Pottery by context, fabric and sherd count

FABRIC	EWLPW	EWLRG	IRSWT	IRSWU	LMOW	SAINTONGE	TOTAL
CONTEXT							
101	1	1		1			**3**
102				1			**1**
105				1			**1**
113				1			**1**
202			1			1	**2**
206			1	1			**2**
602	5						**5**
603	3						**3**
U/S T1	1						**1**
U/S T2			1				**1**
U/S T5					1		**1**
TOTAL	**10**	**1**	**3**	**5**	**1**	**1**	**21**

Table 10: Medieval Pottery by context, fabric and weight (g)

FABRIC	EWLPW	EWLRG	IRSWT	IRSWU	LMOW	SAINTONGE	TOTAL
CONTEXT							
101	12	4		20			**36**
102				4			**4**
105				2			**2**
113				8			**8**
202			26			4	**30**
206			8	12			**20**
602	26						**26**
603	28						**28**
U/S T1	6						**6**
U/S T2			2				**2**
U/S T5					6		**6**
TOTAL	**72**	**4**	**36**	**46**	**6**	**4**	**168**

Table 11: Post-medieval Pottery by context, fabric and sherd count

CONTEXT	303	501	502	U/S	TOTAL
FABRIC					
BBG	57				**57**
CREAM	7	1		1	**9**
EW	5				**5**
ISW	32				**32**
MIDP	2				**2**
MOTT	1				**1**
PGE	230	6	1		**237**
POR	1				**1**
PORCW	9				**9**
SLPW	8				**8**
STW	29	1		1	**31**
WW	6				**6**
TOTAL	**387**	**8**	**2**	**2**	**398**

Table 12: Post-medieval Pottery by context, fabric and weight (g)

CONTEXT	303	501	502	U/S	TOTAL
FABRIC					
BBG	13869				**13869**
CREAM	31	1		5	**37**
EW	466				**466**
ISW	795				**795**
MIDP	21				**21**
MOTT	112				**112**
PGE	6544	28	1		**6573**
POR	40				**40**
PORCW	99				**99**
SLPW	1380				**1380**
STW	2631	14		20	**2665**
WW	139				**139**
TOTAL	**26127**	**43**	**2**	**25**	**26196**

7 Ceramic Building Material Assessment Report

Dan Garner BA, FSA, MCIfA

Data collected March 2024

Summary

7.1. A small/medium sized assemblage of ceramic building material (CBM) (302 fragments; 27.451 kilograms) was recovered from six evaluation trenches on land at Basingwerk Abbey, Greenfield Valley Heritage Park, Flintshire, CH8 7GH (NGR 319510, 377430). The CBM assemblage divided between Roman (2 fragments, weighing 32 grams); Medieval (33 fragments, weighing 4.220 kilograms); and Post-medieval (267 fragments, weighing 23.199 kilograms).

Introduction

7.2. This report details an assessment of the ceramic building material archive from six evaluation trenches on land at Basingwerk Abbey, Greenfield Valley Heritage Park, Flintshire, which was undertaken in 2023 by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT). CBM artefacts of Roman, Medieval and Post-Medieval date have been identified in the assemblage.

7.3. All the CBM was examined macroscopically and where necessary using a hand lens (x20) and was also separated by fabric type within each context. Sherds from each different vessel were then recorded individually by sherd count and weight on an Excel spreadsheet. The finds were briefly considered in relation to the stratigraphy, as understood from the site matrices, and with reference to other sites in the general area.

Contextual Analysis

Roman CBM

7.4. A total of 2 fragments of Roman CBM, weighing 32 grams were recovered from the evaluation. These were from Oven pit/stoke hole (508) and as an unstratified find from Trench 1. Both fragments were in a poor condition and of indeterminate form.

Medieval CBM

7.5. A total of 33 fragments of Medieval CBM, weighing 4.220 kilograms were recovered from the evaluation (Tables 1 and 2). The material can be divided between roof tile (9 fragments, weighing 284 grams) and floor tile (24 fragments, weighing 3.936 kilograms).

Trench 1

Topsoil Context (101)

7.6. This produced 4 fragments of Medieval floor tile in moderate/good condition including 1 complete tile (measuring 107mm (L) x 108mm (W) x 26mm (T)) with no remaining upper surface decoration or glaze; some olive green glaze was present on the edges. The other 3 fragments all had olive green glaze on the upper surface but no visible decoration. One fragment had measurable dimensions of 108mm (W) x 30mm (T); whilst another was 26mm thick.

7.7. The context also produced 2 fragments of Medieval glazed roof tile weighing 42 grams. The fragments were both in an iron-rich sandy fabric and are probably from a ridge tile.

Pit fill (109)

7.8. A single fragment of Medieval floor tile weighing 16 grams with no measurable dimensions or surviving decoration/glaze.

Trench 2

Modern levelling layer (202)

7.9. The context produced 15 fragments of Medieval floor tile in moderate/good condition including 2 fragments of mosaic tile. No complete tiles were present, however, 2 tiles provided measurable width dimensions of 112mm and 115mm respectively and 13 fragments had complete thicknesses between 22mm and 30mm. Only 5 of the tile fragments had surviving evidence for surface decoration; the remaining 10 fragments having traces of either yellow or olive green glaze or no surviving glaze at all.

7.10. One of the decorated tile fragments had a line-impressed design with a circle containing a quatrefoil (similar to tile cat. 724 in Lewis, 1999, pp 89 & 194). A further 2 tiles, each corner fragments, had white slipped designs which were not immediately identifiable. The remaining 2 tiles were curvilinear mosaic tiles with white-slipped designs in the form of letters; mosaic tiles have been recovered from Basingwerk Abbey previously and are suggested to be mid 13th century in date (see Lewis, 1999, Group 36, pp77).

7.11. The context also produced 1 fragment of Medieval glazed roof tile weighing 16 grams. The fragment was in a Ewloe fabric (EWLRG) with an external Iron-rich slip and a patchy olive green glaze. Probably from a ridge tile. Late 14th to 16th century in date.

Trench 6

Topsoil (601)

7.12. This context produced 1 fragment of Medieval floor tile in good condition (weighing 64 grams) with a complete thickness of 23mm. The fragment was from a corner and had olive green glaze on the upper surface but no traces of decoration.

7.13. The context also produced 1 fragment of Medieval glazed roof tile weighing 26 grams. The fragment was in a Ewloe fabric (EWLRG) with splashes of purple glaze. Probably from a ridge tile. Late 14th to 16th century in date.

Demolition layer (603)

7.14. This context produced 2 fragments of Medieval floor tile in good condition (weighing 528 grams) both fragments were from mosaic floor tiles. The first had complete dimensions of 74mm (L) x 68mm (W) x 25mm (T) and line-impressed decoration in the form of a letter 'Q' beneath a white slip under a yellow glaze. The second had complete dimensions of 78mm (W) x 28mm (T) with an olive green glaze on upper surface but no decoration.

7.15. The context also produced 2 fragments of Medieval glazed roof tile weighing 54 grams. One fragment was in a Ewloe fabric (EWLRG) with splashes of purple glaze the second was in Ewloe fabric (EWLPW) with an olive green glaze. Probably from ridge tiles. Late 14th to 16th century in date.

Clay Deposit (604)

7.16. This context produced 1 fragment of Medieval floor tile in good condition (weighing 402 grams) with a complete thickness of 34mm. The fragment was from a corner and no remaining upper surface decoration or glaze; some olive green glaze was present on the edges.

Post-Medieval CBM

7.17. A total of 267 fragments of Post-medieval CBM, weighing 23.199 kilograms were recovered from the evaluation (Tables 3 and 4). The material can be divided between field/land drain (1 fragment, weighing 18 grams) and flat roof tile (254 fragments, weighing 22.911 kilograms) and indeterminate forms (10 fragments weighing 138 grams). All of the flat roof tile fragments were in a hard iron-rich sandy fabric which was unglazed and handmade; with a smoothed upper surface; and a sanded underside.

Trench 1

Topsoil Context (101)

7.18. This produced 19 fragments of Post-Medieval CBM including 16 fragments of flat roof tile and 3 indeterminate fragments. Amongst the fragments of flat roof tile was one example of a pinched nib with a square nail hole adjacent to it and one example of a diamond shaped nail hole. Both nail holes had been created prior to firing.

Pit fill (109)

7.19. A single indeterminate fragment of Post-Medieval CBM weighing 6 grams was recorded from this context it is likely to be an intrusive find.

Trench 2

Modern levelling layer (202)

7.20. The context produced 13 fragments of Post-Medieval CBM all of which were derived from flat roof tiles.

Ditch fill (206)

7.21. A single fragment of Post-Medieval CBM weighing 30 grams was recorded from this context it is likely to be an intrusive find. It was derived from a flat roof tile.

Trench 3

Ceramic tip (303)

7.22. A single fragment of Post-Medieval CBM weighing 80 grams was recorded from this context it is likely to be an intrusive find. It was derived from a flat roof tile. There are traces of an animal paw print present (possibly a cat).

Trench 5

Topsoil (501)

7.23. A single fragment of Post-Medieval CBM weighing 2 grams was recorded from this context it is of indeterminate form.

Roman Level (502)

7.24. A single fragment of Post-Medieval CBM weighing 32 grams was recorded from this context it is likely to be an intrusive find. It was derived from a flat roof tile.

Oven pit/stoke (508)

7.25. A single fragment of Post-Medieval CBM weighing 18 grams was recorded from this context it is likely to be an intrusive find. It was derived from an unglazed field drain.

Trench 6

Topsoil (601)

7.26. This context produced 27 fragments of Post-Medieval CBM all of which were derived from flat roof tiles. Amongst the fragments of flat roof tile were two examples of a pinched nib.

Subsoil (602)

7.27. This context produced 47 fragments of Post-Medieval CBM all of which were derived from flat roof tiles.

Demolition layer (603)

7.28. This context produced 125 fragments of Post-Medieval CBM all of which were derived from flat roof tiles. Amongst the fragments of flat roof tile were six examples of a pinched nib and one example of a diamond shaped nail hole. The nail hole had been created prior to firing. One fragment had a partial paw print on the edge. Five fragments had the appearance of having been overfired/distorted during firing possibly suggesting that they were wasters.

Clay deposit (604)

7.29. This context produced 12 fragments of Post-Medieval CBM all of which were derived from flat roof tiles. Amongst the fragments of flat roof tile was one example of a pinched nib.

Significance, potential and recommendations for further work

Roman CBM

7.30. The Roman CBM recovered from the evaluation trenches has significance at a local level and adds to a growing collection of Roman material recovered from the Greenfield site. Previously, traces of a timber building (PRN 128789) associated with pottery dating from the late 1st to mid 2nd centuries AD (Dodd, 2015) have been recorded on the site.

7.31. Whilst the present assemblage is too small to draw any meaningful conclusions about the nature of the occupation on the site during the Roman period it does highlight the potential of the site to provide a larger sample in the future.

7.32. Data has been collected to an appropriate archive level and it is not recommended that any further study is required.

Medieval CBM

7.33. The original Basingwerk Abbey was established in 1131 by Earl Ranulf of Chester as a Savignac monastery. It was later adopted by the Cistercian order and moved to its current location in 1157. The Abbey was dissolved in 1536, and subsequently left to ruin.

7.34. The Medieval floor tile has significance at a regional level and adds to the existing corpus of medieval floor tile designs recovered from the Abbey. Mosaic pavements of the curvilinear tradition are comparatively well represented in North and Mid Wales; however, Basingwerk has previously been noted as being an exception, in that the tiles are embellished with white-slip designs. The mosaic tile from (603) bearing the letter 'Q' clearly belongs to Lewis' Group 49 tiles described as alphabet series line-impressed border tiles dated to the 14th century (Lewis, 1999, 86). The mosaic tiles with the white-slipped lettering from (202) are in a style similar to Lewis' Group 60 tiles (attributed to the first half of the 14th century) and in particular to no.789 which is suggested to have parallels at Chester cathedral and the roundel series at Chertsey Abbey (Lewis, 1999, 97).

7.35. Whilst the present assemblage is too small to draw any meaningful conclusions about variation in floor designs within the Abbey over time, it does highlight the potential to recover larger and more meaningful assemblages in the future.

7.36. The later Ewloe ware ridge tiles identified in the assemblage have a suggested date range of late 14th to 16th century (Harrison & Davey, 1977, 98) and represent local distribution from what must have been a major industry serving the North Welsh Marches.

7.37. Data has been collected to an appropriate archive level and it is not recommended that any further study is required. However, if further stages of excavation were undertaken then this would need to be reconsidered.

Post-Medieval CBM

7.38. The bulk of the ceramic building material placed within the Post-Medieval assemblage represents flat roof tile with no complete width or length dimensions present. A number of these tile fragments included evidence for pinched nibs and square/diamond shaped nail holes to aid attachment of the tile to a roof. These tiles are difficult to date more precisely but it should be noted that unglazed flat nibbed tiles have been recovered from the Dominican friary site in Chester where they occurred in a post-friary deposit (Axworthy Rutter, 1990, 108). Stratigraphic analysis of the roof tile recovered from 25 Bridge Street, Chester has also noted the occurrence of flat roof tile in a late Medieval context (Edwards, 2008, 158). Flat roof tiles with both nibs and square nail holes have been recorded at Norton Priory (Cheshire) and here it is suggested that priory buildings may have had ceramic tiled roofs from as early as the late Medieval period (Dawson & McPhillips, 2008, 330-332).

7.39. Associated dating evidence from the Basingwerk evaluation trenches suggests some correlation between the unglazed flat roof tiles and the glazed ridge tile fragments attributed to the Ewloe kilns. Further evidence is needed to clarify the date of this material, but it could potentially belong to a late Medieval/early Post-medieval period of the site. The presence of a small number of possible tile wasters in (603) also raises the possibility that the tile was manufactured on the site.

7.40. The Post-Medieval CBM recovered from the evaluation trenches has significance at a local level. Data has been collected to an appropriate archive level and it is not recommended that any further study is required.

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Table 13: Medieval Floor Tile by context, type and fragment count

TYPE	FLOOR TILE	MOSAIC TILE	TOTAL
CONTEXT			
101	4		**4**
109	1		**1**
202	13	2	**15**
601	1		**1**
603		2	**2**
604	1		**1**
TOTAL	**20**	**4**	**24**

Table 14: Medieval Floor Tile by context, type and weight (g)

TYPE	FLOOR TILE	MOSAIC TILE	TOTAL
CONTEXT			
101	950		**950**
109	16		**16**
202	1858	118	**1976**
601	64		**64**
603		528	**528**
604	402		**402**
TOTAL	**3290**	**646**	**3936**

Table 15: Medieval/Post-medieval Roof Tile by context, type and fragment count

CONTEXT	FIELD DRAIN	FLAT TILE	INDET	RIDGE-TILE	TOTAL
101		16	3		**19**
102		2			**2**
105			1		**1**
109			2		**2**
202		13		1	**14**
206		1			**1**
303		1			**1**
501			1		**1**
502		1			**1**
508	1		1		**2**
601		27		1	**28**
602		47	1	2	**50**
603		125		9	**134**
604		12			**12**
U/S T1		6	1		**7**
U/S T2		3			**3**
TOTAL	**1**	**254**	**10**	**13**	**278**

Table 16: Medieval/Post-medieval Roof Tile by context, type and weight (g)

CONTEXT	FIELD DRAIN	FLAT TILE	INDET	RIDGE-TILE	TOTAL
101		1780	46		**1826**
102		176			**176**
105			6		**6**
109			6		**6**
202		604		16	**620**
206		30			**30**
303		80			**80**
501			2		**2**
502		32			**32**
508	18		22		**40**
601		1730		26	**1756**
602		4668	46	100	**4814**
603		11825		274	**12099**
604		1412			**1412**
U/S T1		436	10		**446**
U/S T2		138			**138**
TOTAL	**18**	**22911**	**138**	**416**	**23483**

8 Discussion and conclusions

8.1. This investigation sought to determine the potential extent of archaeological activity relating to the Basingwerk Abbey monastic complex within the grounds of Basingwerk House to the west, and within two fields to the south. It was assumed based on the proximity to the Abbey and the suitability of the land, that there would be a high potential for encountering medieval remains, such as ancillary buildings or even burial (Silvester, et al., 2011). This narrative had been further bolstered by a geophysical survey earlier in 2023 which had identified what was believed to be structural activity in the field to the south of the Abbey (Matthews, 2023). This evaluation has however identified very little in terms of *in situ* medieval archaeology, with all artefacts and materials of that period having been recovered from disturbed demolition-rich deposits that were present in both the orchard to the south (Trench 6) and in the gardens of Basingwerk House to the west (Trenches 1 and 2). The possible structural activity identified in the geophysical survey proved to be a concentrated dump of 18th-19th century ceramics, the origin of which is likely to be the clearance of a nearby substantial house or hall. Some shallow pit features of undetermined function were identified in Trench 1, which contained abraded medieval material including a small iron key of unknown date. Given the condition of the finds and the abundance of demolition debris from the Abbey, these may be intrusive, with the features potentially related to post-medieval activity. In trench 6, concentrations of mortar-rich demolition materials, medieval and early post-medieval roof tile, as well as monastic floor tile, appear to represent an area used for the processing of demolition material from the Abbey during the post-dissolution period from AD1536.

8.2. Despite the lack of medieval features, this investigation has identified potentially significant Roman activity. Trenches 1 and 2 identified two large defensive ditches, the full extent of which could not be safely exposed within the confines of the evaluation trenches. One of the ditches, which crossed the northern end of Trench 2 on a north-south alignment, contained clear Roman infills with an upper deposit producing fragments of Holt oxidised coarseware (HOL OX), with a date range of c.AD 90/100-130, and fragments of Dressel 20 amphora (BAT AM 2) broadly dated to the 1st-3rd century AD. Both suggest an association with Legionary activity. The second ditch crossed the southern ends of both trenches 1 and 2 but contained a loose waterlogged homogenous backfill which produced a mixture of Roman, medieval and early-medieval artefacts. The latter was a silvered copper alloy Hiberno-Norse possible buckle, dated to the 10th century. This could point to some early medieval activity on the site and therefore is a question that should be addressed during future investigations. Within Trench 2 were the remains of two possible post holes with stone packing that extended into the east facings section. These were not fully investigated during this excavation but suggest a possible related structure adjoining the ditch on the western side.

8.3. Within the Orchard to the south of the Abbey, Trench 5 identified the ephemeral remains of a temporary Roman structure. This was defined by two post holes, one producing Roman pottery and the other a Roman nail, both linked by a compacted cobble surface containing a scatter of Roman pottery. Again, the pottery recovered from Trench 5 fits a pattern of legionary activity, being dominated by Black Burnished ware (DOR BB 1), Gaulish Samian ware (LGF SA) and Holt oxidised coarseware (HOL OX) which dates activity to 1st - 2nd century AD.

8.4. Also in Trench 5 was a large burnt feature that extended beyond the trench limits to the northeast. This feature, which was a shallow elongated bowl filled with a charcoal-rich deposit had the appearance of a stoke or flue associated with an oven, the focal point of which may be situated outside of the trench limit. Within the far northeast corner, this feature also appeared to truncate a second cut feature containing burnt shells and charcoal. When first

identified, the upper extents of this feature produced fragments of Roman ceramic building material as well as industrial residues, however, these may be intrusive, with the feature being earlier. It is therefore necessary for this feature to be exposed in its entirety before any clear conclusions can be drawn regarding its origin and function.

Interpreting the origins of the site

8.5. It is becoming increasingly clear that there is a far more complex multi-period activity associated with the Abbey than has been previously afforded to it. Based on the features and finds recovered from this investigation as well as previous interventions, the timeline for the Abbey as we currently understand begins in the early Romano-British period. Understanding the potential significance of the Roman phase will require further investigation, however, some theories can be drawn based on what we know to date. The reference to a work in the name Basing'werk' could suggest that there had already been some form of fortification on the site prior to the Abbey being established. This has already been speculated but combined with the site being located at the northern terminus of Wat's Dyke, a monument traditionally ascribed to the early-medieval period, this has led to previous speculation of an Anglo-Saxon settlement, with Roman origins having been largely overlooked. An excavation by Thomas Pennant in 1796, purportedly recorded the discovery of a Roman hypocaust while digging the foundations for the brass melting-houses of the Greenfield Copper and Brass Company (PRN 102388). This has since received little credit, with scholars attributing his discovery to medieval activity, such as a tile kiln (Davies 1949, 188-9). Whilst this may be the case, the now increasingly occurrent examples of Roman activity on the site do raise the question as to whether Pennant's original interpretation may hold merit. Roman pottery had also been found by workmen in 1924-26 while clearing the site of the Abbey for H.M. Office of Works. This included an assemblage that mirrors that produced by this investigation, including Samian ware, orange-wares (possibly Holt), grey wares, and black-burnished ware dating to the 1st to 2nd century AD. The investigations by Earthworks Archaeology in 2017, which identified the first evidence of *in situ* Roman activity, again mirror both the finds assemblage and the features found in this investigation. The features that Earthworks Archaeology recorded under the heritage park's visitor centre, bear similarities to those found in Trench 5, suggesting the presence of timber structures and surfaces to the south and southwest of the Abbey complex.

8.6. The pattern of Roman pottery found from this and other investigations belongs to the 1st to 2nd century AD, which aligns with the early establishment of Roman administrative presence in Northeast Wales. The type of Roman pottery found at the site, particularly the presence of Amphorae, is also considered a strong indicator of military activity. It is therefore possible that the remains found at Basingwerk belong to some form of military settlement or fortification. To place it in context, located 7 km southeast of Basingwerk is the Roman lead processing site at Pentre Oakenholt, established by the Twentieth Legion to supply lead for the construction of the fortress at Chester during the mid to late first century (Mason, 2012, p. 51). The lead working site is linked to Basingwerk by the north coast Roman Road, which Basingwerk both overlooks and is situated at a point where the road diverts and heads inland towards St. Asaph (Figure 28). This places the site within a significant part of the early logistical infrastructure developed by the Roman legion in the late first century.

8.7. The absence of pottery dating after the second century suggests that the Roman presence was relatively short-lived, focusing primarily on the main period of military activity in the area. It is possible that the site was initially established as a fortification along the main North Wales Roman Road (Figure 28), which could indicate that the Pennant discovery in the 18th century may have represented a Roman industrial feature such as a kiln or even a bathhouse, both commonly found on semi-permanent and permanent legionary sites.

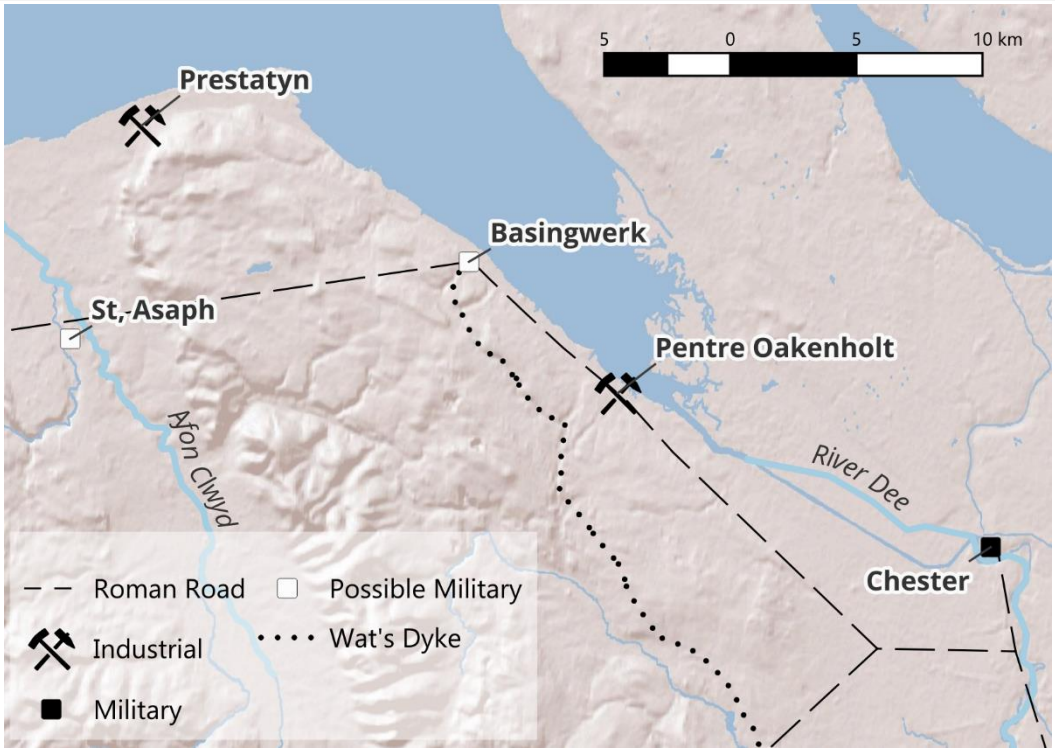

Figure 28: 1st-2nd century Roman activity in Northeast Wales

8.8. The north-south ditch behind Basingwerk House could therefore represent part of a defensive enclosure, the full extent of which is currently unknown, but may enclose what is now the inner precinct of Basingwerk Abbey. The origins of the east-west ditch, however, are unclear. It may represent a Roman feature that has been recut in the medieval period, but given the date range of the infilling material and the ditch being sealed by the post-dissolution demolition materials, it is clear that the ditch must have been open to some extent during the medieval period. Whilst Cistercians are known for water engineering, the feature does not link to any sources of water, nor is it situated in a place that would offer a flow of water to and from the Abbey. Historical sources note that ditches had been raised at Basingwerk when it was relocated to the present site in 1157. This was a defensive response that followed the occupation of the site and Northeast Wales by Owain Gwynedd in the same year. Owain had also purportedly raised a ditch at Basingwerk during his campaign against Henry II, culminating in the battle of Coleshill. Whilst there is some ambiguity as to whether the ditch was raised at the site of 'Basingwerk Castle' or the abbey, it is quite possible that the two may be the same, with the Abbey having been relocated to the remains of Basingwerk Castle after the conflict, which in turn had been raised by Owain Gwynedd.

8.9. In terms of our understanding of the monastic activity, this investigation has demonstrated that the lack of *in situ* features as well as the presence of a suspected defensive enclosure predating the abbey, could represent a highly informative discovery that likely reflect the site's turbulent beginnings. It seems that the Anglo-Welsh wars significantly influenced the layout of the main monastic complex, possibly leading to a compact defensive design during its early development. The limited activity to the south of the abbey may also indicate a lack of investment and prosperity, despite its connection to the shrine of St. Winefride's. While post-medieval activity has likely affected this area of the site, there appears to be a lower level of activity compared to what would typically be found within the immediate environs of an abbey.

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10 Archive Selection Strategy

2715-Project Name (NGR SJ 19598 77462) Archaeological Evaluation 12-22 of October 2023 **Selection Strategy v2.0**	
Heneb CPA Project Management	
Project Manager	Tim Malim
Project Supervisor	
Archives Manager	Sophie Watson
Project Stakeholders	
Project Lead / Project Assurance	i.e Mark Walters, Development Control Archaeologist for Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust
Client / Landowner	
Other	
Collecting Institutions	
Regional HER	Clwyd-Powys
HER Enquiry Number	N/A
HER Event PRN	215586
Digital Archive Repository	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales
Documentary Archive Repository	N/A
Finds Archive Repository	Flintshire Museum Services
Museum Accession Number	N/A

Digital Project Data			
Project sub-folders	**Data**	**Retained**	**Selected for Archive**
Admin			
H&S - RAMS	Risk Assessment	Y	N
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation	Y	Y
Client Data	Documents/other files provided by the client.	Y	N
Correspondence	Correspondence records relevant to the project	Y	N
Drafting	Working site drawings/illustrations	Y	N
Finds data	Finds catalogues/specialist reports etc	Y	Y
GIS data	Survey data including GPS data and illustration files	Y	N
Metadata	Metadata report for all files submitted as part of the archive.	Y	Y
Photography	121 digital photographs (.tif)	Y	Y
Report	CPAT Report 1987 (.docx/.pdf)	Y	Y
Report Illustrations	Illustrations generated for inclusion within the project report	Y	N
Research Data	Research data – always secondary sources and available elsewhere	Y	N
Site data	Digital site records exported from Diggit Digital Recording System. • 2715_Contexts PDF • 2715_Samples PDF • 2715_Small Finds PDF	Y	Y
Temporary	Temporary storage for temporary files – always deleted at project completion	N	N

Physical Project Data (Documentary)			
Not applicable (N/A) Digital format (Digi)			
	Quantity	**Retained by CPAT**	**Selected for Archive**
Context register	Digi	Digi	Digi
Drawings register	Digi	Digi	Digi
Finds register	Digi	Digi	Digi
Levels register	Digi	Digi	Digi
Photo register	Digi	Digi	Digi
Context sheets	Digi	Digi	Digi
Finds/samples record	Digi	Digi	Digi
Skeleton record forms	N/A	N/A	N/A
Staffing record form	N/A	N/A	N/A
Trench record forms	Digi	N/A	Digi
Watching brief forms	N/A	N/A	N/A
A1 plans	N/A	N/A	N/A
A2 plans	N/A	N/A	N/A
A3 plans	2	2	2
A4 plans	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A	N/A

Physical Project Data (Materials)

Not applicable (N/A)

Finds Deposition Agreement obtained	*Flintshire Museum Services*
Archive Repository	*Flintshire Museum Services*
Accession Number	*TBC*

Pottery/Ceramics	*collected*	*processed*	*catalogued*	*specialist*	*conserved*	*discarded*
Prehistoric	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
Roman	*64*	*64*	*64*	*64*	*TBC*	*0*
Medieval	*21*	*21*	*21*	*21*	*TBC*	*0*
Post-medieval	*416*	*416*	*416*	*416*	0	*TBC*
Modern	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
Undated	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
CBM	*297*	*297*	*297*	*297*	*0*	*TBC*
Clay Pipe	*57*	*158*	*158*	*0*	*0*	*TBC*
Glass	*34*	*34*	*34*	*0*	*0*	*TBC*

Stone	*collected*	*processed*	*catalogued*	*specialist*	*conserved*	*discarded*
Stone Artefacts	*1*	*1*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*1*
Roofing Tile/Slate	*18*	*18*	*18*	*0*	*0*	*TBC*
Building Materials	*2*	*2*	*2*	*0*	*0*	TBC
Flint/Chert	*2*	*2*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*TBC*
Other (specify)	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*

Metalwork	*collected*	*processed*	*catalogued*	*specialist*	*conserved*	*discarded*
Ironwork	*202*	*202*	*202*	*0*	*0*	*TBC*
Copper Alloy	*3*	*3*	*3*	*0*	*0*	*TBC*
Lead	*166*	*166*	*166*	*0*	*0*	*TBC*
Silver	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
Metalworking Residues	*26*	*26*	*26*	*0*	*0*	*TBC*
Other (specify)	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*

Bone/Animal Remains	*collected*	*processed*	*catalogued*	*specialist*	*conserved*	*discarded*
Animal Bone	*313*	*313*	*313*	*0*	*0*	*TBC*
Human Skeletal Material	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
Shell	*23*	*23*	*23*	*0*	*0*	*TBC*
Other (specify)	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
	N/A	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
	N/A	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*

Samples	*collected*	*processed*	*catalogued*	*specialist*	*conserved*	*discarded*
Bulk soil	*3*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*3*
Charcoal	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
Other (specify)	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
Finds Catalogues	*N/A*	*N/A*				
Box Catalogue	*N/A*	*N/A*		***Number of boxes***		*N/A*

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319700

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Legend

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Basingwerk Abbey

Greenfield Valley

Grey-scale survey plot (clip 1)

Map 1

Scale
1:750 @ A3

Date
June 2023