



A.P.A.C. Ltd.

Archaeological Perspectives Analysis Consultancy

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
RECORDING & WATCHING BRIEF**

WB/GOV/10

Old Corn Mill, Govilon



Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Planning Application No: 08/2734/FUL

Dr. N. Phillips 2010
A.P.A.C. Ltd



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Cover Photo DSC01642. Area for the foundation trenches.

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1 Non Technical Summary

On 20th April 2010, Dr N Phillips of A.P.A.C. Ltd was contacted by Mr T. Booth, in relation to proposed work to be undertaken at The Old Corn Mill, Govilon. The proposed works were to construct an annex to the present property for the provision of accommodation for the owner's grandparents. In order to construct the annex, a pre-existing single storey garage was demolished; thereby providing a suitable site on which to build.

As the work involved excavation and there was a possibility that such work would impact upon archaeological resource expected to have been present on the site, the client was advised of the need to appoint an archaeologist to undertake a watching brief during excavation work.

Dr N Phillips from A.P.A.C. Ltd, accepted the contract and undertook the watching brief over a two day period in May 2010.

No archaeological resources were found.

2 Introduction

2.1 Location and scope of work

The village of Govilon can be found along the B4246; just south of the A465 and 4 miles west of Abergavenny, fig 01.

The site, Old Corn Mill, Mill Lane, Govilon, Monmouthshire NP7 9SA, NGR: SO 2660 1401, is located on the west of the village, where Mill Lane runs north, opposite the old Smithy.

Old Corn Mill; consists of a long, two storey building, formally a corn mill, which has been converted to a single dwelling house, Plate 01 with a detached garage, Plate 02. The house has retained its waterwheel, Plate 03 as well as some of the internal mechanisms which now form part of a lounge feature. The garage, a recent build and sympathetic to its surroundings, unfortunately, had to be demolished to provide the building plot for the annex, fig 02.

The garage site is bounded to the south by a high retaining wall for the property next door Plate 04. To the east is a raised patio Plate 05 which stands at the base of the old wheel race Plate 06. To the west is a walled stream Plate 01 and to the north the mill house and a paved area Plate 07.

Construction work involved demolition and clearance of the garage building and floor, the removal and levelling of some of the raised patio Plate 05 and replacement of an earlier service pipe Plate 08. As the patio area, garage and earlier services were built by the present owner this part of the work was not covered by the watching brief.

The watching brief was undertaken on work involving the excavation of foundation trenches within the levelled ground previously covered by the garage and raised patio Plate 09.

The archaeological work was implemented to comply with planning application: Brecon Beacons National Parks Authority (BBNPA).08/2734/FUL.

The rationale for the condition was that the site had been identified by Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT), 'as having a potential for archaeological interest in that it occupies land possibly associated with a lost Medieval Mill' (MON1693/CG). The possibility is highlighted by the existence at site of converted Mill buildings and the name of the location. Given that a Mill is known in this position, it is reasonable to assume that any earlier mills may have also been similarly sited; using the same resources and infrastructure of leats and races, etc.

A.P.A.C. Ltd was contacted to undertake the watching brief and submitted a Watching Brief Specification (WB/GOV/10. 23/04/10), which was approved.



2.2 Geology and topography

The village of Govilon lies beneath the northern edge of the Bloreng mountain, a western edge of the South Wales Coal Fields. Govilon itself stands on river terrace deposits and glacial sands and gravels well beneath the limestone and millstone grit layers that instigated this areas involvement in the industrial era of the 17th to 19th centuries.

2.3 Archaeological and historical background

In the village, Mill Lane gives a clear indication of a Mill site. Here the old corn mill operated from at least 1790. At this time the owner was David Ellys and it was called Velyn Johaan Clydach Vach (corrupted Welsh for Melyn Iowan Clydach Fach = John's Mill in little Clydach). It operated until 1956, and was then lovingly restored into a private household in 1976. Some of the old stone mill wheels can be found decorating the building.

Govilon Local History

The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments Wales, (RCAHMW) simply lists the site, NPRN 40081, with a Post Medieval, Agriculture and Subsistence, broad class listing.

3 Aims and Objectives

3.1 Watching Brief & Recording Work

The aim of the watching brief and recording work was to preserve by record, within the resources available, any archaeological deposits uncovered during groundwork.

The watching brief would also ensure that: in the event of archaeological resources of significance, being discovered and requiring treatment beyond the remit of the watching brief; then steps would be implemented to ensure that their treatment would be undertaken within the standards recommended by the IFA.

3.2 Recording Methodology

Fieldwork

A simple survey of the site was made during the latter stages of the clearance work, in order to correctly place trenches against the existing features.

Further survey was undertaken during excavation to record levels and position of trenches. The Total Station was also used in layout mode to assist the JCB driver with levels.

Processing

The survey record was undertaken using a Topcon GPT3007, Reflectoless, Total Station. Data collected was downloaded into CivilCad 6.7 for initial processing and exported into Autocad for further work before being processed for publication copy in Adobe Illustrator CS.

3.3 Watching Brief Methodology

Fieldwork

Groundwork at the site entailed excavation, by JCB, with finishing by hand and removal of spoil from site; initially by wheelbarrow and then with a small dumper.

The watching brief consisted of an archaeological fieldworker being present during groundwork at the site.



All excavation was undertaken by the employees of the site owner

During excavation, the stratigraphic record and initial contexts were noted, with a brief description given where appropriate. The most complete stratigraphic record was found at the south of the site and an annotated photograph (DSCO6938) of the section is shown in fig 03.

Photographs were taken throughout the watching brief and recorded with a unique number in the appendix. A full set of photographs are included in the archive and selected illustrative images appear in the plates accompanying this report.

There were no finds of any archaeological significance. Glass, plastic and household debris relating to the build of the garage was not retained.

3.4 **Watching Brief Results**

Soils and ground conditions

Weather conditions for the watching brief were excellent and so did not adversely affect the work.

The general stratigraphy over the site was one of redistributed soils arising from the building work undertaken by the present owner in the mid 1970s.

Beneath the layer of building debitage, was a layer of river terrace deposit which itself overlay glacial deposits fig 03.

There was a very abundant mix of rounded stone and boulder within the lower deposit which made not only digging very difficult but also seriously affected the ground stability Plate 10.

Great care was taken along the southern edge where the retaining bank and partial retaining wall to the next property was constantly monitored for collapse, Plate 04 and fig 03.

Description

The foundation trenches

The foundation trenching was started in the south east corner, fig 03 and continued in the first instance along the east side Plate 11. A slight difference to the stratigraphy was evident in this area in that the ground had been made up to accommodate the raised patio.

The raised ground consisted of black soil with bricks, large stones, building fittings including small lengths of mains cable, electrical switch boxes and plastic sheeting. Plate 12 shows a sample of the section; the large void having been left by a large stone.

Once the east trench had been excavated, the northern edge was dug out to half its length. The foreshortening of the excavation was necessary to for allow access for the JCB; as the site was very limited with working space. The centre line was then excavated, parallel to the north trench.

Excavation then began beneath the south retaining wall, where, as well as the danger of collapse, further obstacles were met when an area of concrete was found, butted to the retaining wall Plate 13. The concrete was carefully removed so as to cause as little disturbance to the retaining wall as possible. Plates 13 & 14, show views of the south and west trench giving some idea of the problems involved in the excavation. The Tesco bag, full of building debris and shown in the pictures, was found under the concrete floor and therefore provided confirmation as to the construction of the garage in the 1970s.

Finds

Other than building debris the site was completely devoid of finds.



4 Discussion and Interpretation

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

Removal of the garage and its concrete floor and partial removal of the raised patio from above the site was undertaken prior to the start of the watching brief however, judging by the later work it is not likely that any significant archaeological resources were disturbed by this action.

The confined nature of the site caused problems but the digger driver was quite adept at his task and the spoil was never a problem.

However; with the above noted, it can be stated that the watching brief has provided a clear understanding of the archaeological resource potential at the site and has recorded its lack adequately within the confines of the remit.

4.2 Overall interpretation

The entire site seems to be confined within an area disturbed in recent times; late 1970s *pers com* (T. Booth). No sign of any of the suspected archaeological resources were uncovered during the watching brief although, features and structures in the near vicinity do still point to their potential existence nearby.

It is therefore advisable to impose conditions on any work associated with the main house and east boundary.

5 Acknowledgements

Thanks to both Mr and Mrs Booths the ground worker who assisted with efficiency in this undertaking and Colin Williams for his adept skill with a JCB.



6 Bibliography and references

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Application no: 07/01434/FUL.

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Location Plan 12/12/2008
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ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Site Name: Old Corn Mill, Mill Lane, Govilon.
Site Code: WB/GOV/10
PRN: -
NPRN : 40081
SAM: -
Other Ref No: A.P.A.C. Ltd Report No. 109
NGR: SO 2660 1401
Site Type: Modern
Project Type: Watching Brief
Project Officer: Neil Phillips
Project Dates: May 2010
Categories Present: N/A
Location of Original Archive: A.P.A.C. Ltd
Location of duplicate Archives: NA
Number of Finds Boxes: 0
Location of Finds: 0.
Museum Reference: -----
Copyright: A.P.A.C. Ltd
Restrictions to access: None

Photo No	Date	Time	Camera	jpg	Size	MB	Area	View	Description	Drawing
DSCO6795	25/04/2010	9.25	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2	Culvert ?	SE	Possible culvert in stream, below south boundary	
DSCO6796	25/04/2010	9.26	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.2	Garage	SE	View of garage, prior to demolition	
DSCO6797	25/04/2010	9.26	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	Garage	SE	View of garage, prior to demolition	
DSCO6891	02/05/2010	8.02	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.2	section	E	Section against SE corner	
DSCO6892	02/05/2010	8.02	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	Garage	SE	Garage floor	
DSCO6893	02/05/2010	8.03	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	Patio	NE	General view across site	
DSCO6894	02/05/2010	8.03	DSC-F828	√	1944x2592	2	Wheel race	N	Raised bank on which stood a stone wheel race	
DSCO6895	02/05/2010	8.39	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.2	Patio	SE	General view across site showing reduced patio area	
DSCO6896	02/05/2010	8.39	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.2	Patio	S	General view across site showing reduced patio area	
DSCO6897	02/05/2010	8.39	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	Patio	SW	General view across site showing reduced patio area	
DSCO6898	02/05/2010	13.15	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.2	Concrete	SW	Removing the garage floor	
DSCO6899	02/05/2010	13.26	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	Patio	SE	Reducing the patio level	
DSCO6900	02/05/2010	13.33	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.2	Patio	W	Reducing the patio level	
DSCO6901	02/05/2010	13.44	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.4	Section	E	Section of raised patio	
DSCO6919	05/05/2010	7.04	DSC-F828	√	1944x2592	2.2	Pipe trench	N	Service pipe replacement along western drive area	
DSCO6920	05/05/2010	7.06	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	Layout	NW	Trench layout	
DSCO6921	05/05/2010	7.17	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	Waterwheel	E	Waterwheel	
DSCO6922	05/05/2010	7.17	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.2	Pipe trench	S	Service pipe replacement along western drive area	
DSCO6923	05/05/2010	7.18	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	Stream	NW	General view	
DSCO6924	05/05/2010	7.18	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	Stream	S	General view	
DSCO6926	05/05/2010	8.18	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.2	SE Trench	V	Lower deposits	
DSCO6927	05/05/2010	10.04	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	SE Trench	S	Section sequence	
DSCO6928	05/05/2010	10.04	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	SE Trench	S	Section sequence	
DSCO6929	05/05/2010	10.04	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.4	SE Trench	S	Section sequence	
DSCO6930	05/05/2010	10.04	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	SE Trench	S	Section sequence	
DSCO6931	05/05/2010	10.04	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.4	SE Trench	S	Section sequence	
DSCO6932	05/05/2010	10.13	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.2	E Trench	W	Boulders	
DSCO6933	05/05/2010	12.24	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	S Trench	W	Boulders	
DSCO6934	05/05/2010	14.19	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	E Trench	S	Completed	
DSCO6935	05/05/2010	14.2	DSC-F828	√	1944x2592	2.1	S Trench	E	Overview	
DSCO6936	05/05/2010	10.54	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	W Trench	S	West trench and south boundary retaining wall	
DSCO6937	05/05/2010	10.54	DSC-F828	√	2592x1944	2.3	S Trench	W	Concrete floor, connected to retaining wall, south trench.	
DSCO6938	05/05/2010	10.56	DSC-F828	√	1944x2592	2.4	S Trench	S	SE corner section	

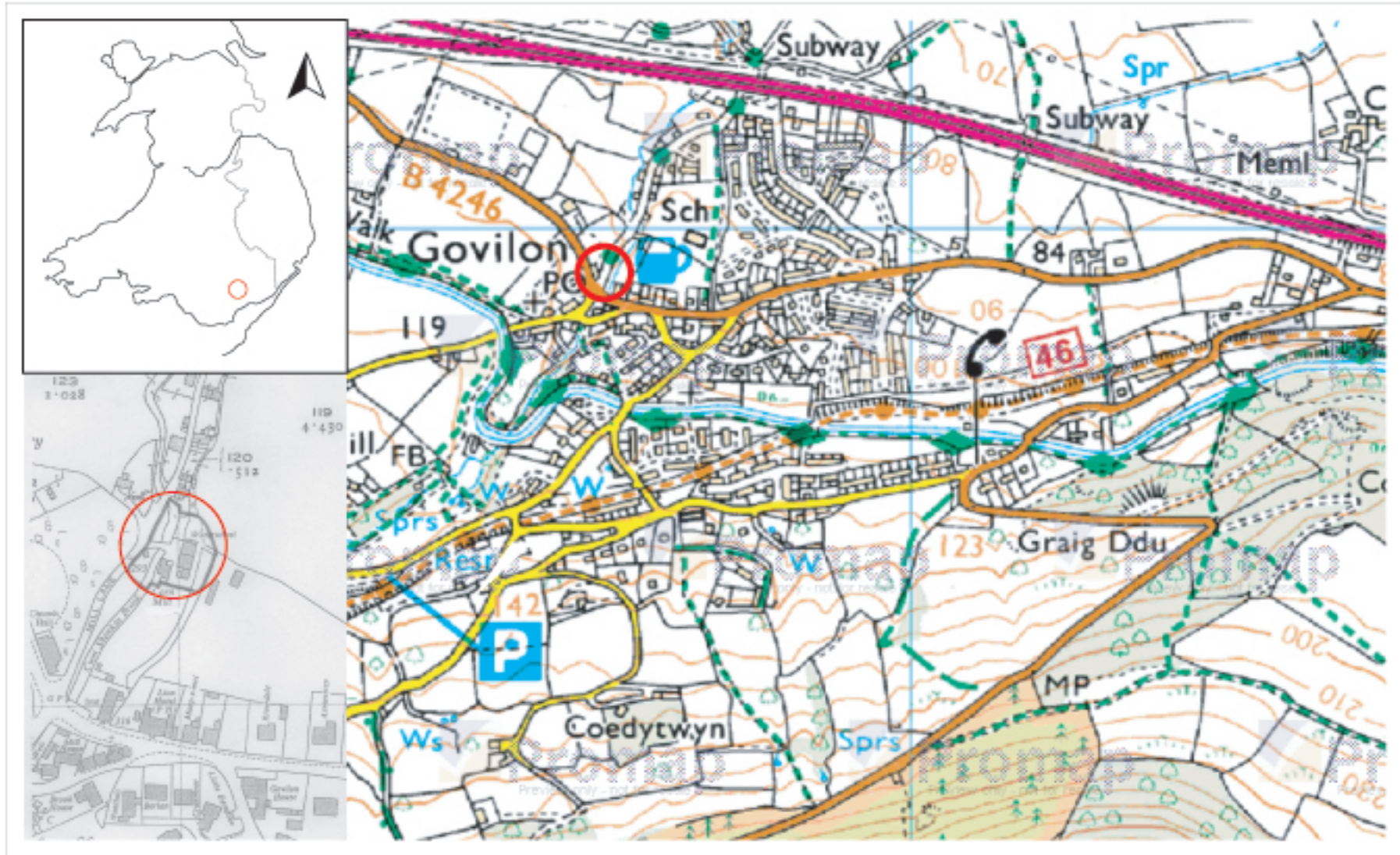


Fig 01: Location

DSC06938



- 100 Top soil, black sandy loam, 0.2-0.3m
- 101 Grey black, loam with small angular stone and plaster 0.2m
- 102 Black loam with coal 0.09m
- 103 Orange sandy soil, with small angular stone. 0.17m

- 104 Orange sandy soil, no stone 0.2m
- 105 Grey brown coarse grits with small stone/pebbles 0.07m
- 106 Orange sandy silt, with large rounded stones and boulders, 1.32m
- 107 Red sandy clay with green and red sandstone rock

Fig 03: SE section





Plate 01: General view of the house.



Plate 02: Detached garage, prior to demolition.



Plate 03: Waterwheel.



Plate 04: South boundary, retaining wall.



Plate 05: Remaining raised patio after ground reduction.



Plate 07: The northern end of the site.



Plate 06: Position of old wheel race.



Plate 08: Service pipe replacement along western drive area



Plate 09: Trench layout



Plate 10: Lower deposits



Plate 11: Eastern trench.



Plate 12: Made up ground under patio.



Plate 13: Concrete floor, connected to retaining wall, south trench.



Plate 14: West trench and south boundary, retaining wall.