



A.P.A.C. Ltd.

Archaeological Perspectives Analysis Consultancy

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

WATCHING BRIEF

WB/StC/09

St Cenau's Church

Llangenny



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



Contents

Contents.....	1
List of Figures	2
List of Plates.....	2
1 Non Technical Summary.....	3
2 Introduction.....	3
2.1 Location and scope of work.....	3
2.2 Geology and topography.....	3
2.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	3
3 Aims and Objectives	4
3.1 Watching Brief & Recording Work.....	4
3.2 Recording Methodology	4
3.3 Watching Brief Methodology	4
3.4 Watching Brief Results	5
4 Discussion and Interpretation.....	6
4.1 Reliability of field investigation	6
4.2 Overall interpretation.....	6
5 Acknowledgements	6
6 Bibliography and references.....	7

Appendix



List of Figures

Figure 1	Location Map
Figure 2	Site Plan

List of Plates

Plate 01	N wall, eastern trench, bone fragments
Plate 02	N wall, western trench, bone fragments
Plate 03	Boiler flue
Plate 04	Boiler house cover
Plate 05	Boiler house stairwell
Plate 06	Boiler house, showing bulging west wall of church
Plate 07	N wall of boiler house
Plate 08	N wall, boiler house fuel duct
Plate 09	W wall of boiler house showing pipes through wall
Plate 10	N wall underpinning
Plate 11	W wall flue
Plate 12	W wall underpinning
Plate 13	w wall underpinning and N wall underpinning rebar.

Cover Photo DSC04588. NW corner of the church wall to be underpinned.

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1 Non Technical Summary

On 31st March 2009, Dr N Phillips of A.P.A.C. Ltd was contacted by Ms E. R. Thomas; Llangenny, in relation to work being undertaken at St Cenau's Church, Llangenny. The approach was made due to the untimely death of Dr G A Makepeace, the contracted archaeologist during previous work at the church. The proposed work involved repair and renovation to the church.

The client's Architects advised A.P.A.C. Ltd. that the work would involve installation of surface drainage and some underpinning work.

A Written Scheme of Investigation was forwarded to the client's architects and a contract for the work was signed. The watching brief for the underpinning work was completed in September. No watching brief for drainage work was undertaken.

No significant archaeological resources were disturbed during the work although a brick lined flue was removed from the area of underpinning.

2 Introduction

2.1 Location and scope of work

The village of Llangenny can be found 2km east of Crickhowell, along a lane north of the A40 on the eastern outskirts of Glangrwyney. fig 01.

St Cenau's Church, NP15 2LE, lies at the heart of the village, on the W bank of the Grwyne Fawr stream, NGR SO 24012 18147, and is Grade II* listed. Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust, (CPAT) list the Church in the Historic Environment Record (HER) as no: 16868.

The proposed work involved:

- 'Isolated underpinning beneath the NW corner of the knave'... to a length of 1m, each side of the corner (Provisional item C. 2/5 Ref:0724).
- 'carefully lift up existing brick paviors and set aside for re-use. Excavate to reduce levels in areas shown on attached plan. Size of trench 600mm wide to depth of 350mm...(2/4 E. {erroneously marked F} Ref:0724).

To this was added a watching brief for the removal of the cover stones, of the boiler room; abutted to the church below the west wall and quite close to the underpinning work. A photographic record was made of this structure and associated features.

A.P.A.C. Ltd was contacted to undertake the watching brief and submitted a Watching Brief Specification (WB/StC/09. 25/07/09), which was approved.

2.2 Geology and topography

The underlying geology of the area is predominantly made up of the Senni and Brownstones formation with drift deposits of boulder clay, alluvium, glacial and fluvoglacial sand and gravel (BGS, 1990).

In the area of Llangenny, the geology has been cut by the Grwyne Fawr stream, to form a deeply sided and wooded valley. The valley originates in the Black Mountains to the north but opens further to the south, into that of the Usk.

2.3 Archaeological and historical background

CPAT records the church as 'Most of the structure is late 15th/early 16th century, although part is almost certainly



earlier', (16868). It also mentions the suggestion that an early medieval record; Ecclesia de Stratden'ad, 1271 refers to this church, but it is possible that the reference refers to an earlier, now disappeared church, on the east bank, (Makepeace & Phillips 2007).

It is believed that the original church yard was more of the curvilinear 'Llan' type. (16868).

The church has had various restorations and renovations over the centuries, and as always, the Victorians have played their conspicuous part, and erased most of the architectural clues to its origins.

The underpinning work of this project is concentrated on the NW, corner possibly one of the earlier parts of the church. The necessity for the underpinning probably relates to the heating system which has made inroads into the structure of the wall at this corner.

This present phase of work continues the archaeological undertakings of the late Dr G. A. Makepeace

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 photographic record was made of the work area during two site visits: 26th July 2009 and 5th August 2009; both prior to the start of the watching brief.

The watching brief for the opening of the boiler room and the underpinning work took place over two days 14th & 15th of September 2009.

Recording took the form of a digital photographic record and field notes. Provision was made for continuous context recording but this proved to be unnecessary beyond a simple description; included below.

3.3 Watching Brief Methodology

Fieldwork

All excavation and clearance at the site was undertaken by hand, by employees of the building contractor, Rourke Davies Ltd of Brecon.

Opening of the boiler room entailed the careful removal of the two flagstones cemented over the stairwell. This allowed access to the chamber for recording purposes.

The underpinning work started on the north edge of the NW corner, with the removal of the brick lined surface drain before excavating two trenches 0.8 x 1 x 0.6m deep. These two separate trenches were then shuttered and filled with concrete and rebar. The following day the 0.6m gap between the two end trenches was excavated and later filled with concrete.

The underpinning trench to the west consisted of one 1 x 1 x 0.6m trench at the corner and rebarred to the N trench.



Photographs were taken of the excavation, all of which have been given a unique number and listed in the appendix of this report.

A complete set of annotated and original photographs is included in the archive.

Finds excavated, were collected and retained at the church.

3.4 **Watching Brief Results**

Soils and ground conditions

The site and weather conditions for the watching brief dry, which greatly helped the work.

The general stratigraphy over the site was one of red sandy soil, typical of the geology. There was some evidence of re-deposition under the N wall, Plates 01 & 02, and the ground along the west wall had been disturbed by the boiler flue Plate 03.

Description

The boiler house.

The long axis of the boiler house was aligned along the west wall of the church. A cover of two stone flags measuring 0.87m wide and 1.85m long had been cemented in place over the stairwell, Plate 4. The cover lay some 4.2m south of the NW corner. With the cover removed, a set of 8 stone steps became visible, Plate 5, leading to a small chamber, Plates 06 & 07.

The 8 stairs had smaller stone risers, topped with flag steps and were only 0.64m wide over their 1.9m flight, Plate 05. The boiler room itself was some 2.1m in length by 1.35 m in width and just over 2m in depth. The N end had two side supports for a boiler shelf (*now gone*), Plate 07 and there were the remains of pipes and ducts in the N, Plate 08 and W walls, Plate 09.

Plates 06 & 09 also show how badly the west wall of the church as bulged outwards into the boiler house.

The underpinning trenches

The N underpinning trench was dug in two sections; as already mentioned above, in order not to undermine too great a span of the wall. Plate 10 shows the trench on day two with the two concrete supports in place. The sequence of the trench was topsoil [100] and a cut [101] for a brick culvert [102]. The culvert consisted of a width of four bricks laid flat, in a continuous E/W run along the N wall. Beneath the culvert was a layer of red sandy soil interspersed with rounded stone of various sizes [103]. Under the N wall, within context [103] were found two areas of fragmented human bone, Plates 01 & 02.

The N church wall itself had a foundation of about 0.3m

The W trench had a completely different make up. There was no culvert across the surface and the topsoil lay over dark brown loam interspersed with quantities of powdered plaster [104]. Within this layer was a squared culvert on small regular flag tiles, Plate 03. The culvert had brick sides; two courses high over which was brick top, Plate 11. The line of the culvert extended N/S; raising at a slight angle N and aligned to the flue from the boiler house, shown in Plate 08.

Context [104] reached a depth of approximately 0.35m; the same depth as the foundation wall, before meeting [103] Plate 12. Plate 13 shows the underpinning of the wall and two rebar ends b from the N side. Just below the end of the bottom rebar, are some more bone fragments.

The drainage

It is not possible to report on the drainage; listed in the condition above for inclusion in the watching brief, as there was no contact with either the builder or the architect concerning this. A chance visit to the site on the 3rd of February did however; reveal that the work may have been done, or that the work had been decided against. I am not sure and the architect seems unwilling to discuss it. I was also surprised to see a new drain channel along the south wall, but this had not been mentioned in the original design brief.



Finds

The only finds from the site were three small amounts of fibrous fragmented bone. These originated in the underpinned areas as discussed above.

The bone fragments were bagged and placed in the vestry for proper disposal.

4 Discussion and Interpretation

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

It can be stated that the watching brief has provided a clear understanding of the potential of archaeological resources at the site and has recorded them adequately within the confines of the remit. This statement cannot however, be included in connection with the drainage work mentioned above.

4.2 Overall interpretation

With the exception of the boiler hose and its associated flue, and the drainage culvert along the N wall there has not been any unusual or unexpected disturbance within the areas investigated.

The fragmented bones under the wall may be suggestive of work predating the present church fabric but they could also be indicative of animal disturbance. There is no real evidence either way to answer this question but hopefully the fact that they are recorded may help some future work.

5 Acknowledgements

Thanks to ground workers who assisted with efficiency in this undertaking.



6 Bibliography and references

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- Promap
www.promap.co.uk



ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Site Name: St Cenau's Church. Llangenny

Site Code: WB/StC/09

PRN: -

NPRN : -

HER: 16868

Other Ref No: A.P.A.C. Ltd Report No. 89

NGR: SO 24012 18147

Site Type: Ecclesiastical

Project Type: Watching Brief

Project Officer: Neil Phillips

Project Dates: March 2010

Categories Present: N/A

Location of Original Archive: A.P.A.C. Ltd

Location of duplicate Archives: Brecon Museum

Number of Finds Boxes: 1

Location of Finds: St Cenau's Church, Llangenny.

Museum Reference: -----

Copyright: A.P.A.C. Ltd

Restrictions to access: None

Photo No	Date	Time	Camera	jpg	Size	MB	Area	View	Description	Drawing
DSC04587	26/07/2009	10.34	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.4	S side	N	General view; St Cenau's	Plan, fig 02
DSC04588	26/07/2009	10.35	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.5	NW corner	SE	General view NW corner; to be underpinned	Plan, fig 02
DSC04589	26/07/2009	10.35	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.6	NW corner	E	General view NW corner; to be underpinned	Plan, fig 02
DSC04601	05/08/2009	1.37	DSC-F828	√	2176x3264	3.6	NW corner	E	NW corner showing extent of damage	Plan, fig 02
DSC04602	05/08/2009	1.37	DSC-F828	√	2176x3264	3.7	NW corner	S	NW corner showing extent of damage	Plan, fig 02
DSC04788	14/09/2009	8.19	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3	NW corner	W	Internal view NW corner showing area to be underpinned	Plan, fig 02
DSC04789	14/09/2009	8.24	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.7	NW corner	E	NW corner, start of work	Plan, fig 02
DSC04790	14/09/2009	8.27	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.3	W side	N	Blocked stairwell to old boiler room	Plan, fig 02
DSC04791	14/09/2009	8.28	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.5	W side	E	Blocked stairwell to old boiler room	Plan, fig 02
DSC04792	14/09/2009	9.01	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.7	W side	N	Boiler room	Plan, fig 02
DSC04793	14/09/2009	9.01	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.7	W side	N	Old boiler room. Boiler base and bulge in W wall, subsurface.	Plan, fig 02
DSC04794	14/09/2009	9.02	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.1	W side	N	Old boiler room. Brick lined flue in N wall	Plan, fig 02
DSC04795	14/09/2009	9.02	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.6	W side	NE	Old boiler room. Pipes through W wall	Plan, fig 02
DSC04796	14/09/2009	9.02	DSC-F828	√	2176x3264	3.3	W side	S	Old boiler room. Access stairs	Plan, fig 02
DSC04800	14/09/2009	11.15	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	2.1	N side	S	Underpinning N wall. Bone fragments	Plan, fig 02
DSC04803	14/09/2009	11.15	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.5	N side	S	Underpinning N wall. Bone fragments	Plan, fig 02
DSC04804	14/09/2009	12.41	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.1	N side	S	Underpinning N wall. More bone fragments	Plan, fig 02
DSC04805	14/09/2009	12.42	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.2	N side	S	2 Underpinning N wall. More bone fragments	Plan, fig 02
DSC04806	14/09/2009	1.01	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.5	N side	S	Extent of underpinning N wall.	Plan, fig 02
DSC04807	14/09/2009	1.02	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.6	N Side	E	Extent of underpinning N wall.	Plan, fig 02
DSC04808	15/09/2009	9.59	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.3	N Side	V	Final underpinning of N wall	Plan, fig 02
DSC04824	15/09/2009	10.35	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.4	W Side	E	Underpinning W wall	Plan, fig 02
DSC04825	15/09/2009	11.29	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	2	W Side	V	Stone lined, brick flue	Plan, fig 02
DSC04828	15/09/2009	11.29	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.3	W Side	V	Stone lined, brick flue	Plan, fig 02
DSC04829	15/09/2009	11.29	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.3	W Side	V	Stone lined, brick flue	Plan, fig 02
DSC04830	15/09/2009	11.3	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.3	W Side	S	Stone lined, brick flue	Plan, fig 02
DSC04831	15/09/2009	12.49	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.4	W Side	V	Flue removed, W Wall	Plan, fig 02
DSC04833	15/09/2009	12.49	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.2	W Side	E	W wall underpinning	Plan, fig 02
DSC04834	15/09/2009	12.49	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.5	W Side	E	W wall underpinning, rebar from N wall	Plan, fig 02
DSC04835	15/09/2009	12.49	DSC-F828	√	3264x2176	3.1	W Side	E	W wall underpinning, rebar from N wall	Plan, fig 02

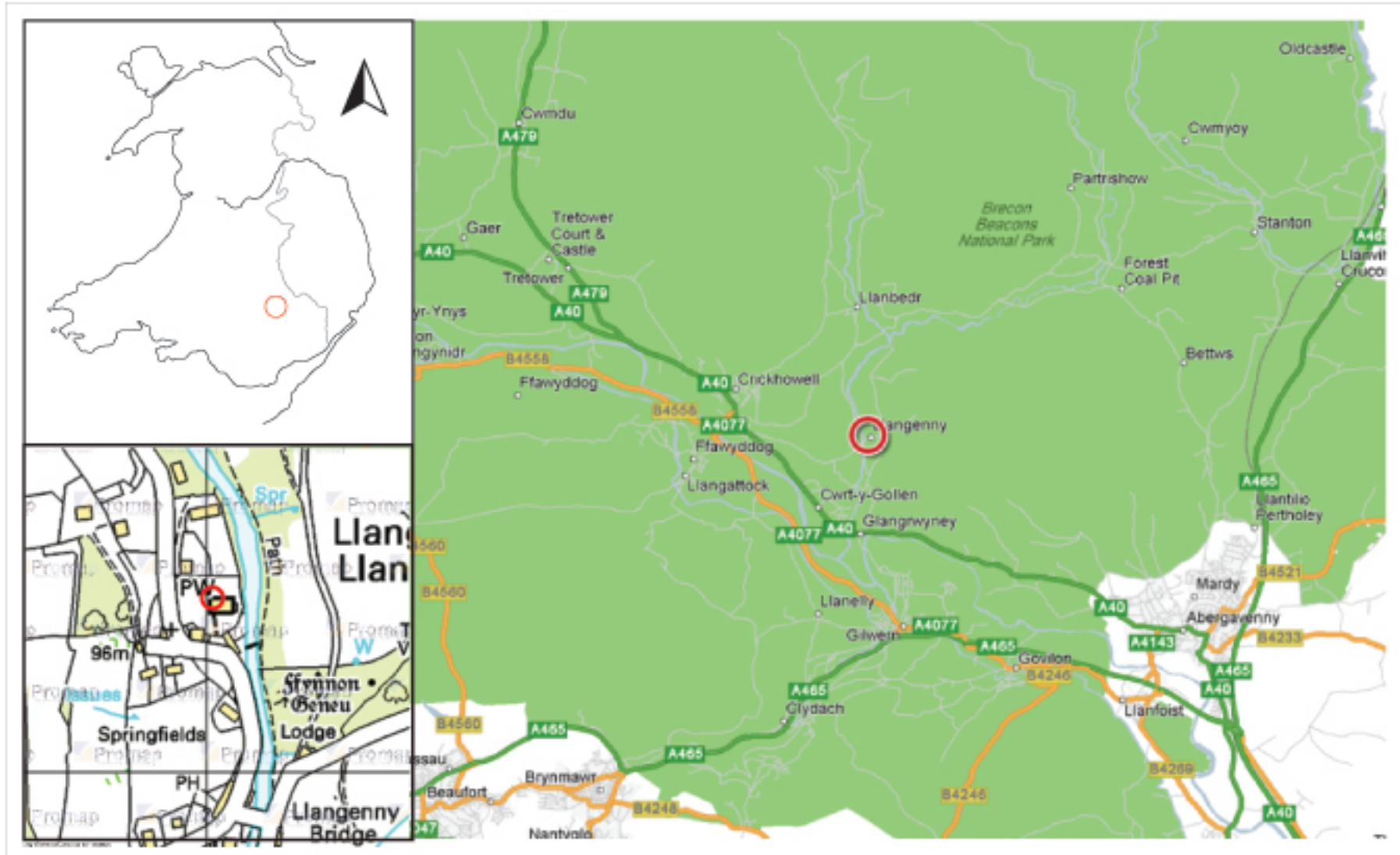


Fig 01: Location Map



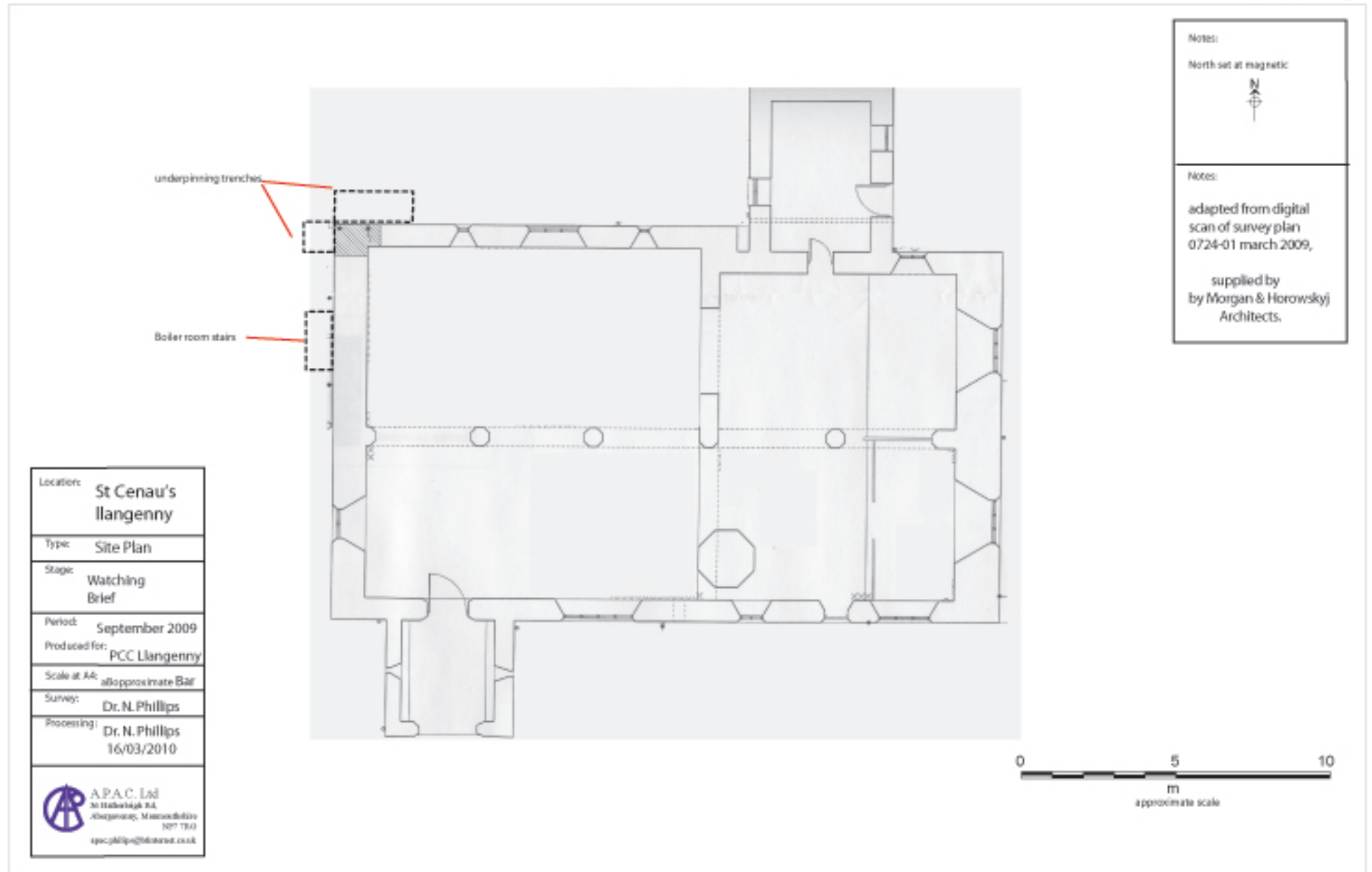


Figure 02: Site plan



Plate 01: N wall east trench, bone fragments



Plate 02: N wall, west trench, bone fragments



Plate 03: Boiler flue



Plate 04: Boiler cover



Plate 05: Boiler house stairwell



Plate 06: Boiler house, Bulging west wall of church



Plate 07: N wall boiler house



Plate 08: N wall boiler house. Flue duct



Plate 09: W wall, boiler house. Pies through W wall



Plate 10: N wall underpinning



Plate 11: W wall flue



Plate 12: W wall underpinning



Plate 13: W wall, underpinning and N wall underpinning rebar