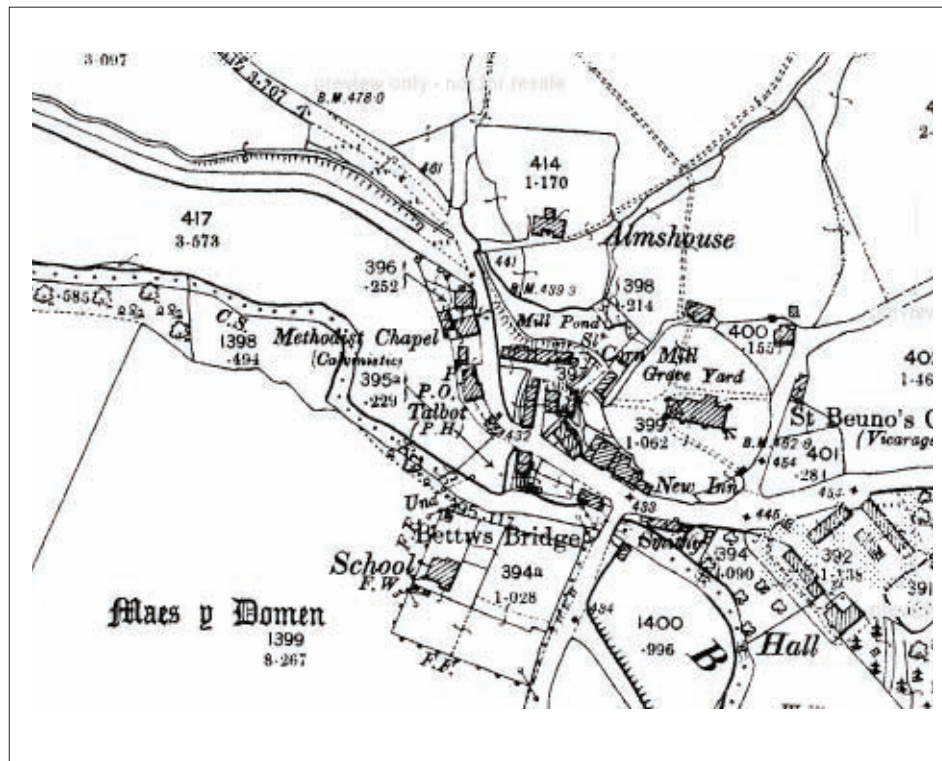


# Archaeology Wales

## Bull & Heifer Pub Bettws Cedewain, Powys

Archaeological Watching Brief



By  
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Report No. 1076

# *Archaeology Wales*

## **Bull & Heifer Pub Bettws Cedewain, Powys**

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Report No: 1076

Date: **September 2012**

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

*This report results from work undertaken by Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) for Philip Humphreys Architects, Broad Street, Montgomery. It draws upon the results gained by a watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of an extension to the rear of the Bull & Heifer Pub, Bettws Cedewain, Powys.*

*The watching brief was carried out during the mechanical excavation of foundation trenches to depths of up to 1.2m.*

*No features or finds of archaeological significance were identified within the foundation trenches.*

### **1 Introduction**

#### **1.1 Location and scope of work**

1.1.1 On 5<sup>th</sup> September 2012 Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the site of The Bull & Heifer Pub, Bettws Cedewain, nr Newtown, Powys, NGR SO 12158 96843 (Fig 1).

1.1.2 The work was undertaken for Philip Humphreys Architects, Broad Street, Montgomery, acting on behalf of the Bull & Heifer Pub.

1.1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigations (WSI) was prepared by Chris E smith (MifA), Project Manager, Archaeology Wales Ltd. This was subsequently approved by Mark Walters, Development Control Archaeologist with the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological trust, prior to work being undertaken on the site.

#### **1.2 Geology and topography**

1.2.1 The underlying solid geology of the assessment area is comprised of undifferentiated Wenlock rocks comprising mudstone, siltstone and sandstone (Geological Survey Map, 2001).

1.2.2 The assessment area is located some 5km to the north of the nearby urban settlement of Newtown. The town of Bettws Cedewain itself is located primarily on the northern bank of the river Bechan at approximately 137m above ordnance datum. It is surrounded on all four sides by higher ground rising up to 300m. It is located in a hilly, pastoral, landscape of sparse woodland.

#### **1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

1.3.1 The following is an extract from Samuel Lewis' (1833) *Topographic Dictionary of Wales* concerning Bettws Cedewain:

1.3.2 BETTWS, a parish in the upper division of the hundred of NEWTOWN, County of MONTGOMERY, NORTH WALES, 4 miles (N. by E.) from Newtown, containing 890 inhabitants. This place is pleasantly situated on the small river Bechan, which falls into the Severn at Aber-Bechan. The western branch of the

Montgomeryshire canal to Newtown passes through the eastern part of the parish, which is also intersected by the turnpike road from that town to Welshpool; another road from Berriew to Llanwnnog passes through the village. The parish contains about six thousand acres of land, all enclosed, the commons having been divided pursuant to an act for enclosing the waste lands within the manors of Cedewain, Hopeton, and Gorddwr Uchav, obtained in 1796. The road leading from Brynderwen Bridge to Garthmael is beautifully picturesque; the high grounds on the north side are richly planted, from the base to the summit, with trees and shrubs of various kinds, and the scenery, which is enlivened by the meandering of the river Severn and the canal, presents, especially in the Autumn, when every variety of tint is seen to advantage on the wood-crowned heights, one of the most pleasing and interesting spectacles in this part of the principality.

The living is a discharged vicarage, in the archdeaconry and diocese of St. Asaph, rated in the king's books at £ 10, and in the patronage of the Bishop of St. Asaph. The church, dedicated to St. Beuno, a saint of the sixth century, originally belonged to the ancient nunnery of Llanllugan, founded prior to 1290, for sisters of the Cistercian order, and endowed with a revenue amounting at the dissolution to £22. 14. It is a plain neat structure, with a handsome tower, which was built in the year 1531, by John ab Meredith, whose effigy, engraved on a brass plate bearing a Latin inscription, ornaments a tablet of porphyry erected to his memory on the north side of the chancel. There is a place of worship for Welsh Calvinistic Methodists.

An almshouse was founded and endowed in 1709, for four poor persons of this parish, and for four of the adjoining parish of Tregynon, by Arthur Weaver, Esq., who also left £4 per annum to keep it in repair, and to purchase fuel for the use of the inmates.

About half a mile to the north-west of the village is Pen y Gaer, a British camp defended by a triple intrenchment (sic); there are also several smaller encampments in various parts of the parish. On the summit of a lofty conical hill of steep ascent, commanding an extensive prospect of the Vale of Severn and the surrounding country is Castle Dol y Vorwyn, or the Castle of the Virgin's meadow. The name is supposed to allude to the traditionary story of Havren, daughter of Locrinus, the son of Brutus, first king of Britain, by Essylt, daughter of the king of Germany, whom Locrinus had taken captive in his wars against Humyr, king of the Huns. Locrinus, having espoused Essylt, in violation of a former pledge given to Gwenddolau, daughter of Corineus, who had accompanied Brutus into Britain, was compelled by a threat of hostilities to fulfil his engagement to the latter; and, concealing Essylt, whom he pretended to have banished from the kingdom, married Gwenddolau, according to his engagement. On the death of Corineus, which followed soon after, Locrinus divorced Gwenddolau, and declared Essylt queen; but, on the death of Locrinus, Gwenddolau assumed the government, and in retaliation caused Essylt and her daughter Havren to be drowned in the river Severn. From this circumstance the

river is supposed to have derived its name, originally "Ys Havren," and by contraction Savern, from which are deduced the Latin name Sabrina and the English Severn. The castle is said by Camden to have been originally built by Prince Bleddyn ab Cynvyn, between the years 1063 and 1073; but Dugdale refers its erection to Davydd ab Llewelyn, about the year 1245. In the Welsh Chronicle (*Brut y Tywysogion*) it is said to have been taken by Llewelyn ab Gruffydd, in 1269. It was besieged in the year following by the Earl of Lincoln and Roger Mortimer, to whom the garrison, being in want of water, surrendered it: the latter, in 1278, obtained from Edward I. a grant of it, together with the castles of Cedewain and Kerry. The castle was of a quadrangular form, about fifty yards in length, and twenty-five in width, and built of the small ragstone found in the neighbourhood: a small portion of the north wall, with some parts of the interior, are the only remains. On the more accessible sides of the hill on which the castle is built it is defended by deep intrenchments cut in the solid rock, and the base is surrounded by a deep dingle, thickly planted with wood, in which rises a small stream, which, after pursuing a course of nearly a mile, falls into the river Severn. A brass pot, an earthen jug, and some other ancient relics, were dug out of the ruins, some years since, and are at present preserved at Gregynog.

- 1.3.3 The above account by Samuel Lewis refers to a castle of Cedewain. This would appear to be in reference to the field name *Maes y Domen*, initially referred to on the 1901 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig 3). It would appear more likely that, rather than a medieval motte and bailey fortification, the mound referred to in the place name (*Domen*) was a Bronze Age round barrow. It is referred to as such in the regional HER with recorded visits in 1972, 1978 and 1984.
- 1.3.4 The church of St Beuno within the centre of Bettws Cedewain would appear to be of medieval, if not considerably earlier, date. Though largely rebuilt in 1868 (Salter, 1991), the 16<sup>th</sup> century west tower is still present. The location of the church within the centre of a roughly circular churchyard, combined with the dedication to a Welsh saint, appears to hint at a much earlier, post-Roman, foundation date.
- 1.3.5 Whilst Bettws Cedewain was a settlement in the medieval period, very few features of this date remain within the village. Evidence of ridge and furrow ploughing in the fields surrounding the village does survive however.
- 1.3.6 Post-medieval features are more evident within Bettws Cedewain such as a mill, mill pond, platforms, trackways and most of the still extant buildings within the centre of the village.
- 1.3.7 The Bull & Heifer Pub is marked on the 1901 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS Map, though it is called the Talbot Inn at that point.

## 2 Aims and Objectives

### 2.1 Watching Brief

2.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken:

- To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
- To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- The main objective of a watching brief is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on a site.

### **3 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Watching Brief**

3.1.1 All foundation trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator and by hand under close archaeological supervision. All trenches were 0.6m wide whilst the depth varied between 0.6 and 1.2m below the current ground surface.

3.1.2 The on-site work and overall management of the project was carried out by Chris E Smith (MifA). All areas were photographed using high resolution digital photography

3.1.3 All works were undertaken in accordance with the IfA's *Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* and current Health and Safety legislation.

#### **3.2 Finds**

3.2.1 No finds were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

### **4 Watching Brief Results**

#### **4.1 Soils and ground conditions**

4.1.1 The topsoil deposit was of a uniform appearance within all areas of the foundation trenches. It was a mixed mid clay with frequent small stone inclusions.

4.1.2 Ground conditions were dry throughout the course of the work though at depths greater than 1.0m, seepage of groundwater into the base of the trench was apparent.

#### **4.2 Description**

4.2.1 The area of the proposed extension lay to the rear of the Bull & Heifer pub, between the pub and the course of the river Bechan. The total combined length of the foundation trenches excavated for the extension was approximately 22m.



- 4.2.2 Removal of overburden deposits using the mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision revealed a mixed clay silt deposit with frequent small rounded stone inclusions. This was present in all excavated areas and measured 0.2m thick.
- 4.2.3 Excavation beneath this layer revealed compact layers of banded clay with colours varying between greys and yellow/browns. Few stones, if any, were present within these horizons. No charcoal flecks were present.
- 4.2.4 Beneath the banded clay horizons, at depths varying between 1m and 1.2m, deposits of natural gravel were encountered. Excavation ceased at this point.

## **5 Discussion and Interpretation**

### **5.1 Overall interpretation**

- 5.1.1 The watching brief undertaken to the rear of the Bull & Heifer Pub, Bettws Cedewain, revealed no finds or features of archaeological significance. The lack of finds from any period, combined with the lack of soil deposits, was unexpected.
- 5.1.2 It is worth noting that the river Bechan, to the rear of the pub, is bounded along its northern edge by an artificially raised flood bank. This separates the pub from the watercourse.
- 5.1.3 The lack of material containing any archaeological finds/features to the rear of the pub may be attributed to this flood defence if it was created by moving deposits from the area of the car park, to the rear of the pub, and heaping them into a bank.
- 5.1.4 The deposits of banded clay exposed within the foundation trenches may indicate that the area was, at some point, beneath water. This may be due to the course of the river Bechan meandering over time.

### **5.2 Acknowledgements**

- 5.2.1 Thanks are due to Mark Walters (CPAT) and Phillip Humphreys for their help in setting up and running the project.

## 6 Bibliography and references

British Geological Survey. 2001, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Solid Geology Map, UK South Sheet

Lewis, S. 1833. *A Topographic Dictionary of Wales* – Cited on <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/wal/MGY/BetwsCedewain/Gaz1868.html#Lewis> – accessed on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2012

Institute for Archaeologists. 2008. Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief.

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## **APPENDIX I:** Figures

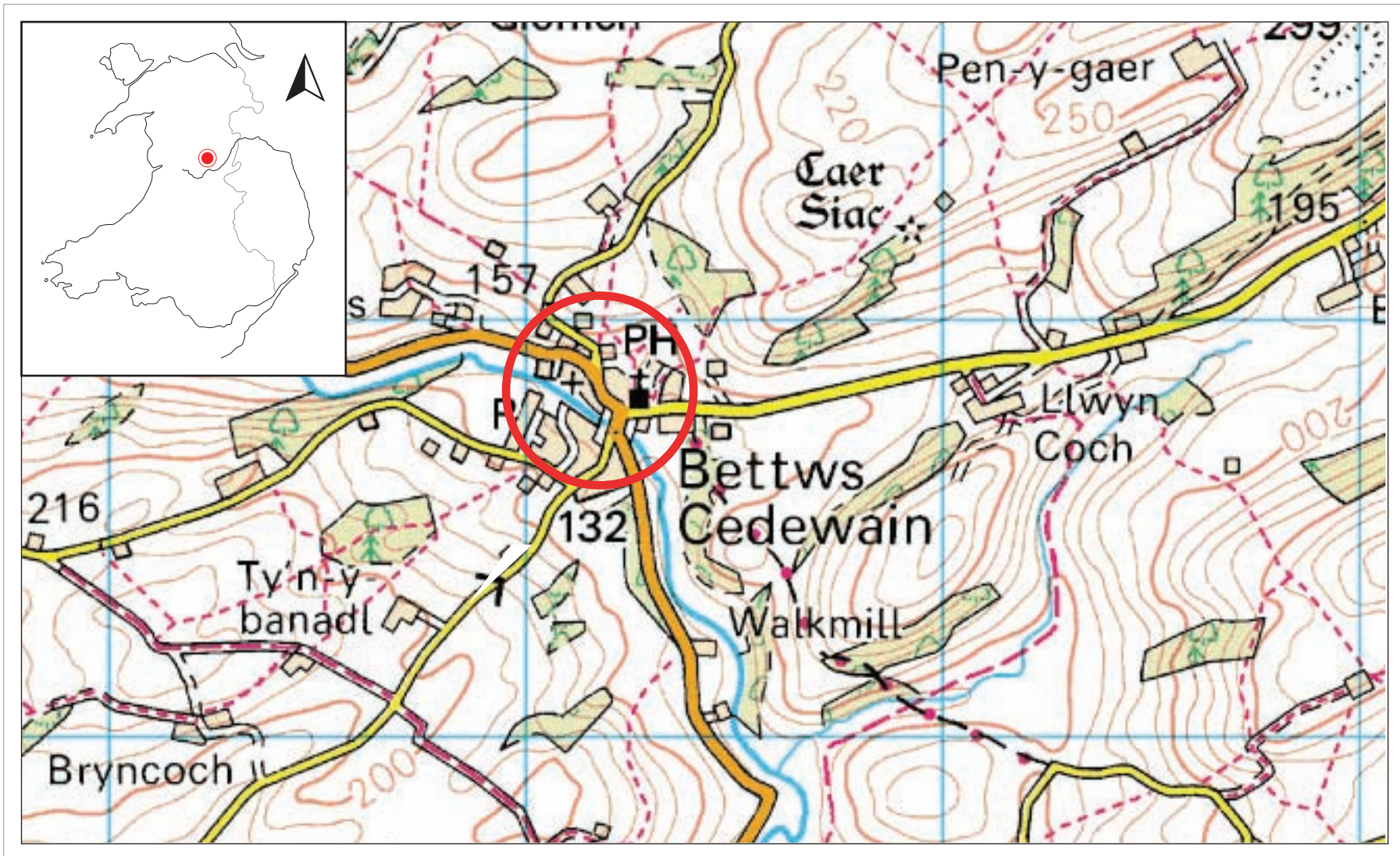


Fig 01: Map showing location of assessment area

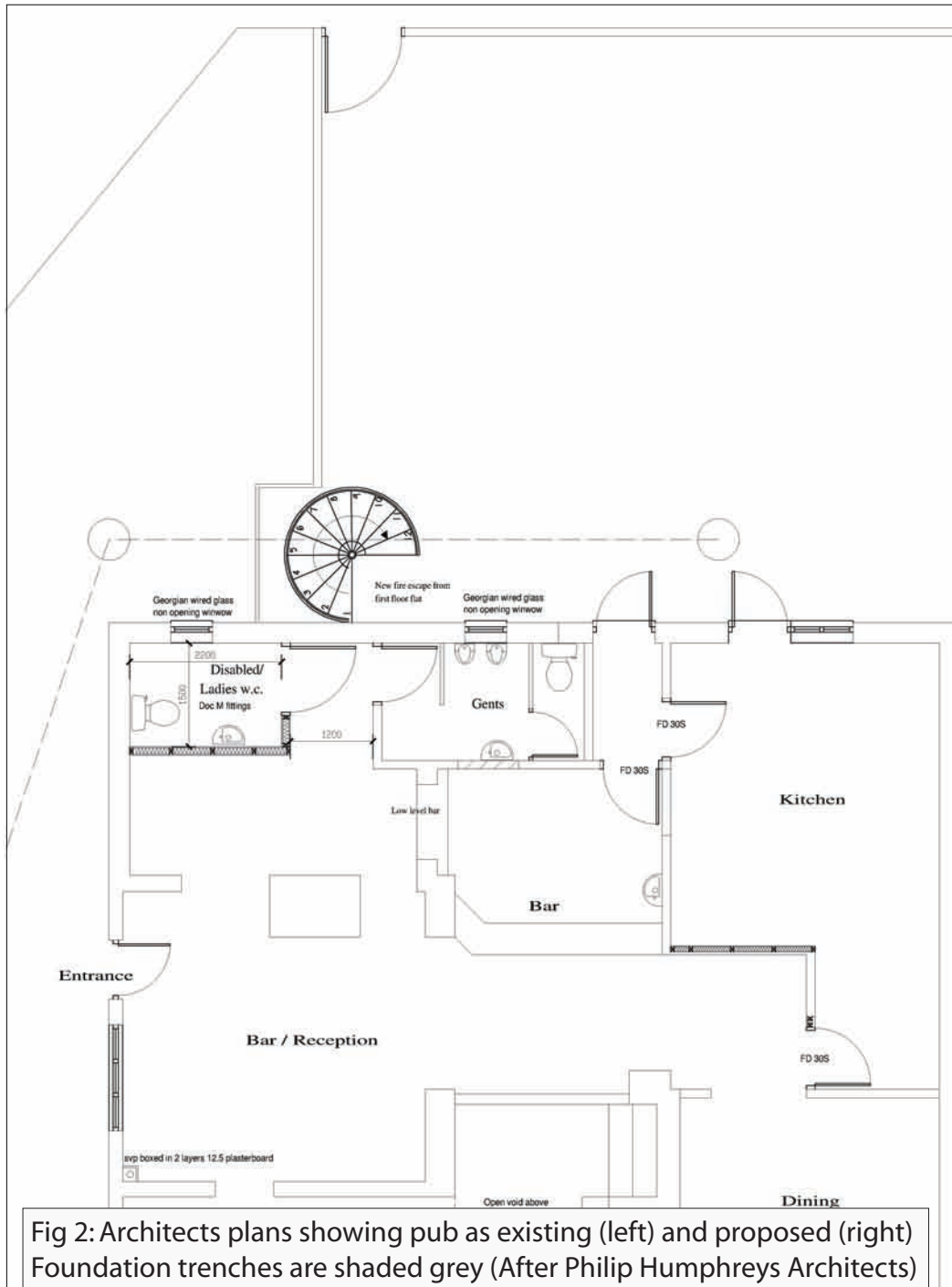
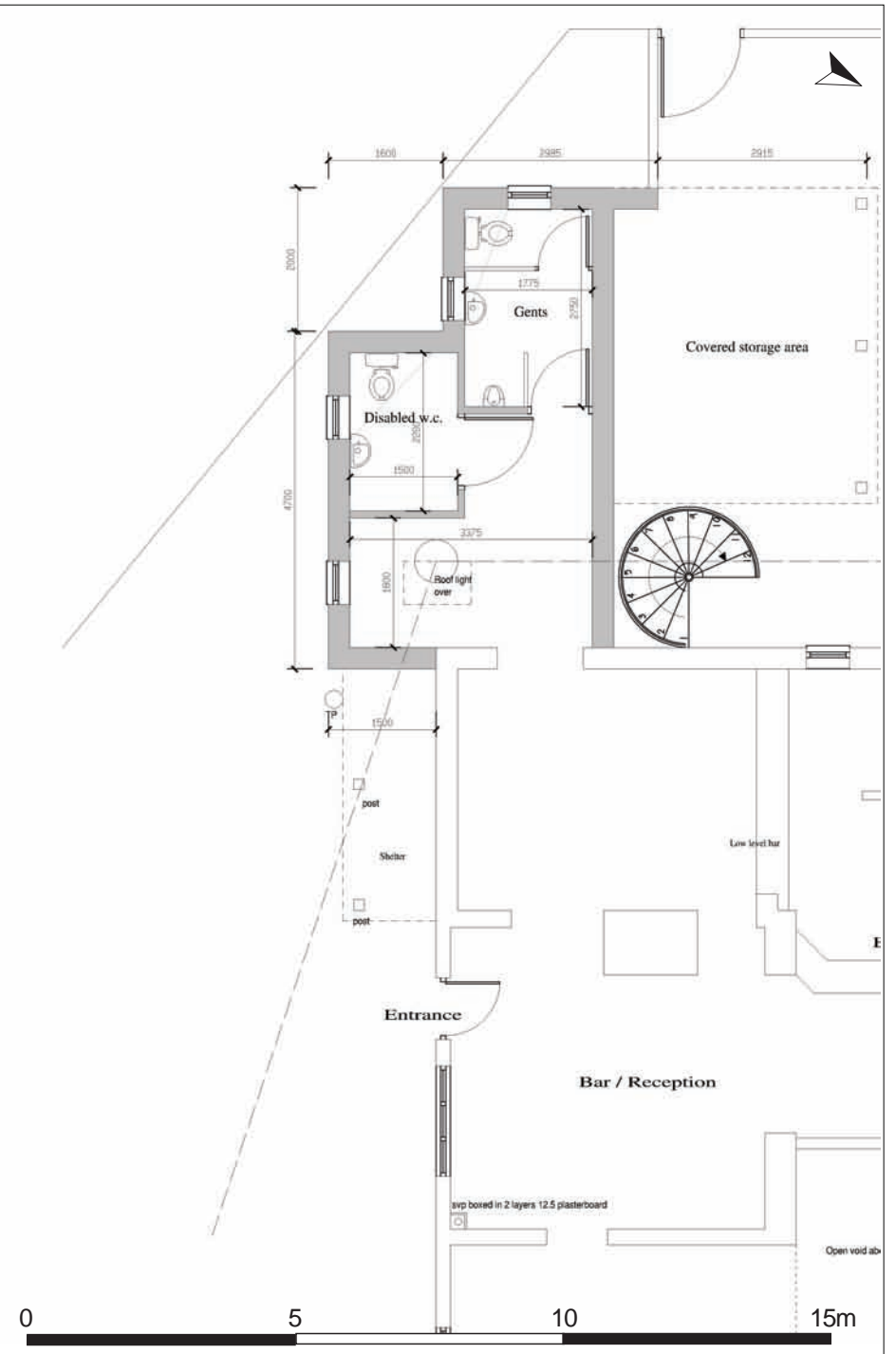


Fig 2: Architects plans showing pub as existing (left) and proposed (right) Foundation trenches are shaded grey (After Philip Humphreys Architects)



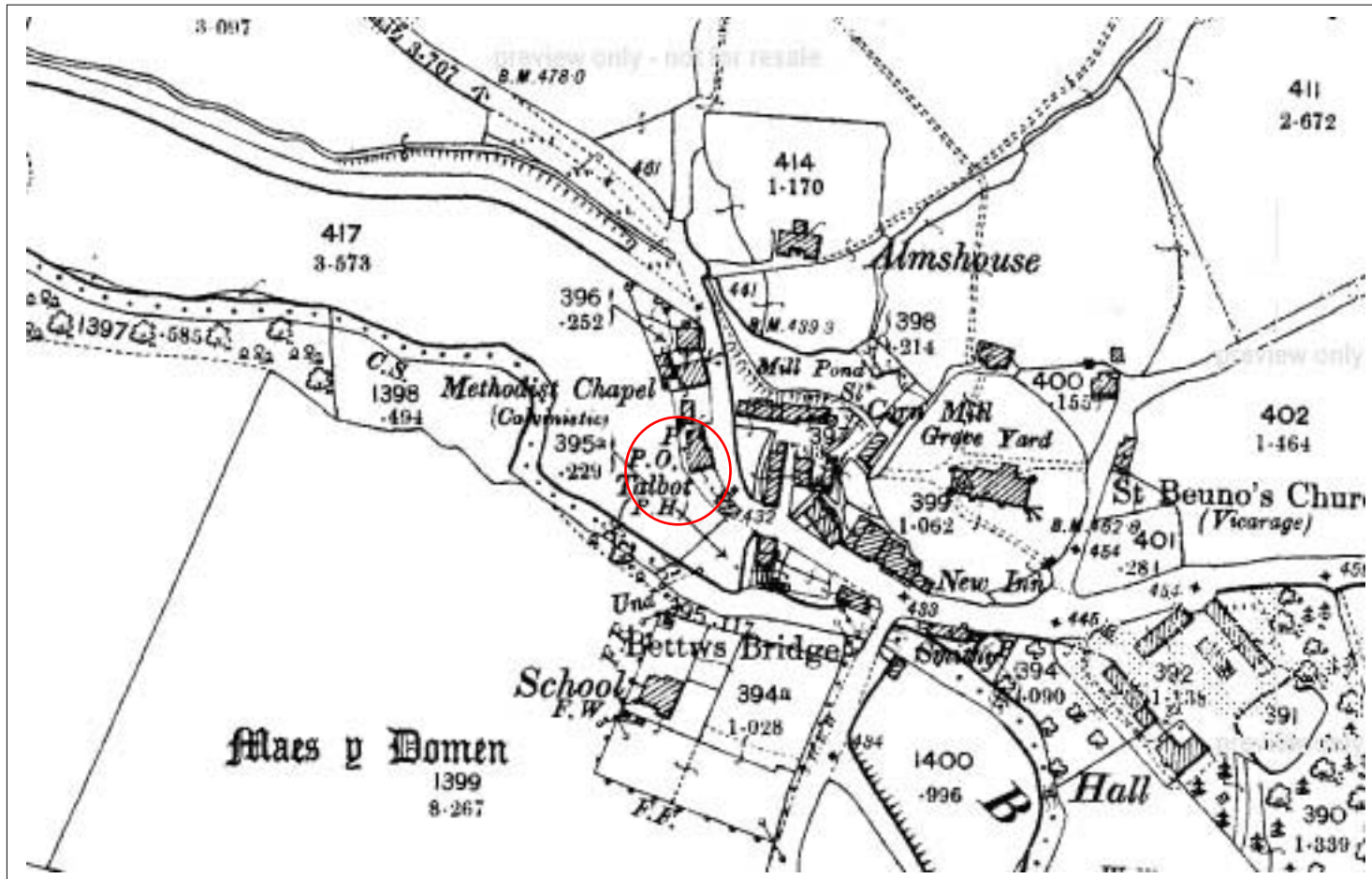


Figure 3: 1901 2nd Edition OS Map showing Bull & Heifer pub, then called Talbot Inn  
Note Maes y Domen field name to south

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## **APPENDIX II: Plates**



Plate 1: View along northern foundation trench  
Looking north east, Scale 1x1m



Plate 2: View along northern foundation trench  
Looking south west, Scale 1x1m





Plate 3: View of dogleg within northern foundation trench, looking north  
Scale 1x1m



Plate 4: View along southern foundation trench looking west, Scale 1x1m



Plate 5: View of dogleg within southern trench  
Looking south, Scale 1x1m



Plate 6: View of trench section showing clay banding above gravel  
natural. Looking west, Scale 1x1m

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## **APPENDIX III: Archive Cover Sheet**

# ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

## Bull & Heifer, Bettws Cedewain, Newtown, Powys

Site Name:	Bull&Heifer
Site Code:	BHP/12/WB
PRN:	-
NPRN:	-
SAM:	-
Other Ref No:	-
NGR:	NGR SO12158 96843
Site Type:	Public House
Project Type:	Watching Brief
Project Manager:	Chris E Smith
Project Dates:	September 2012
Categories Present:	None
Location of Original Archive:	AW
Location of duplicate Archives:	-
Number of Finds Boxes:	-
Location of Finds:	-
Museum Reference:	-
Copyright:	AW
Restrictions to access:	None

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