

# *Archaeology Wales*

## **The Rhiw, Bridgend**

Watching Brief Report



By  
Simon Reames BA

Report No. 1466


Archaeology Wales Limited,  
The Reading Room, Town Hall,  
Great Oak Street, Llanidloes,  
Powys SY18 6QF  
Tel: +44 (0) 1686 440371  
E-mail: [admin@arch-wales.co.uk](mailto:admin@arch-wales.co.uk)

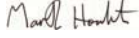
# Archaeology Wales

## The Rhiw, Bridgend

### Archaeological Watching Brief

Prepared For: Coastal Housing Group

Edited by: Mark Houliston  
Signed:   
Position: Managing Director  
Date: 20/05/2016

Authorised by: Mark Houliston  
Signed:   
Position: Managing Director  
Date: 20/05/2016

By  
Simon Reames BA

Report No.  
1466

**May 2016**

Archaeology Wales Limited,  
The Reading Room, Town Hall,  
Great Oak Street, Llanidloes,  
Powys SY18 6QF  
Tel: +44 (0) 1686 440371  
E-mail: [admin@arch-wales.co.uk](mailto:admin@arch-wales.co.uk)

## Contents

Summary.....	2
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Site	
Description.....	3
2.1 Location, Topography and Geology.....	3
2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background.....	3
3. Aims And Objectives.....	4
4. Methodology.....	5
5. Health and Safety.....	5
6. Results.....	5
6.1 Trench	
Descriptions.....	6
7. Finds.....	9
7.1 Pottery.....	9
7.2 Animal	
Bone.....	9
8. Environmental.....	9
9. Conclusions.....	9
10. Bibliography.....	10

### Figures

Figure 1:	Site Location.....	11
Figure 2:	Section Location Plan.....	12
Figure 3:	Section Drawings 1 and 2.....	13
Figure 4:	Section Drawings 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8.....	14
Figure 5:	Section Drawing 6.....	15
Figure 6:	Section Drawings 9, 10 and 11.....	16
Figure 7:	Section Drawings 12, 13 and 14 and Plan 15.....	17
Figure 8:	Site Stratigraphic Matrix.....	18

### Plates

Plate 1:	East Facing Section of Foundation Trench.....	15
Plate 2:	Northeast Facing Section of Cut [120].....	19
Plate 3:	East Facing Section of Deposit (121).....	19
Plate 4:	Post-ex Plan of Culvert {107} Eastern Wall.....	20
Plate 5:	East Facing Section of Culvert {107} Roof with Cut [111].....	20

Copyright Notice: Archaeology Wales Ltd. retain copyright of this report under the copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, and have granted a licence to Coastal Housing Group, to use and reproduce the material contained within. The Ordnance Survey has granted Archaeology Wales Ltd a Copyright Licence (No. 100055111) to reproduce map information; Copyright remains otherwise with the Ordnance Survey.

## Summary

*Archaeology Wales Ltd was commissioned by Coastal Housing Group to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land at the site of The Rhiw multi-story car park, Bridgend in advance of construction of a commercial/residential block and associated car park. The Site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR): SS 90551 79621. The work was undertaken between January and March 2016.*

*The watching brief determined that the majority of the land within the development site was made up from multiple layers of successive construction and demolition debris and deposits of deliberately backfilled material used to consolidate the area, alter the landscape and increase the ground surface. Within these areas, no surviving archaeological material was encountered.*

*Where the depth of demolition rubble and backfill was less, a dressed stone and lime mortar culvert was encountered that ran on an approximate north- south alignment. This alignment was parallel to the curve of the Ogmere River, which suggests its primary purpose to have been a form of flood defence or drain.*

*In a limited area, two archaeological deposits were noted below approximately 2m of rubble overburden. Clay pipe and animal bone was retrieved from the upper of these two deposits.*

*All work was carried out to the standards and guidance set by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.*

## **1. Introduction**

In August 2015, Archaeology Wales Ltd (hereafter 'AW') was commissioned by Coastal Housing Group (hereafter 'the Client') to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land at the site of the Rhiw multi-story car park, The Rhiw, Bridgend (hereafter 'the Site'), in advance of construction of a commercial/residential block and associated car park. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR): SS 90551 79621 (Figure 1). The local planning authority is Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC), the planning application number is P/15/60/FUL.

The groundworks were conducted by Simon Reames between January and March 2016. The report was written by Simon Reames. The project was managed by Rowena Hart (MCIFA).

## **2. Site Description**

### **2.1 Location, Topography and Geology**

The site is situated to the east of the Ogmore River within the centre of Bridgend town. The site comprised previously developed land bounded to the north by Water Street/The Rhiw, to the east and south by steep cliff faces leading to commercial and residential developments and to the west by Ogmore River.

The site occupies an area of approximately 1.4 acres of relative flat land at a height of approximately 22m above ordinance datum (AOD).

The site was located at a junction of two distinct underlying geological formations; Porthkerry Member under and surrounding Ogmore River and the Blue Lias Formation extending to the east. Both geologies are sealed with superficial geological deposits of alluvium (British Geological Survey, 2016).

### **2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background**

Prehistoric and early historic activity in this area is attested by the location of a late Neolithic or Bronze Age standing stone and a flint scraper find on the western bank of the river. Roman activity is indicated only by the find of a Roman coin hoard from Newcastle, also on the western bank of the Ogwr. The proposed site on the eastern side of the river, however, lies close the location of the earliest of the two twelfth century castles located in this area known as Oldcastle or Nolton. The second, known as Newcastle, was located on the opposite (western) bank of the Ogwr and formed the focus for the medieval settlement established by Robert Fitz Hamon c. 1106. The Old Castle (Nolton) site, which predates 1106, may be an early Norman structure or Welsh foundation and was located on higher ground on the southern edge of the proposed site (Soulsby 1983, 85).

The Old (Hen) and New (Newydd) castle focused settlements are mentioned by John Leland in his 1530s itinerary:

*'At Penbont almost 2. Mile upper ther is a village, wherof that part that stonndith on the weste side of the bridg is caullid Castelle Newith, and is in West Thawan; and that part of it that is on the est side of the bridge is caullid Henecastelle, and is yn Ter brennine' (Leland 1535-43, 29).*

Leland's reference to Penbont (Bridgend) suggests that a bridge was built across the River Ogwr in the fourteenth-century, linking both settlements. A Coity Estate Map dated 1778 (see below) shows Penybont as a scatter of houses located on the east side of the Ogwr bridge on the bend of the river, north of Oldcastle. The road from Ewenny towards Coity and passing through Oldcastle in the eighteenth-century seems to have become the focus for further settlement during the early nineteenth century. It is during this period that Bridgend began to slowly grow. Quarries located close to the town mined Rhaetic sandstone (Quarella) present on the northern edge of the town and this industry played a part in its early development. The Rhiw was probably originally a trackway that connected the eastern side of Old Castle Village with a ford across the river Ogwr where Water Street Bridge is located today.

The area of the Rhiw (Rue) is mentioned in a report on sanitary conditions written in 1849:

*'The Rue contains 14 houses letting at from 1s to 1s 8d a week. They are without water. In the street is an open gutter, and behind are very close and filthy yards, unpaved and wet and draining upon the houses. At the lower part of this street is a tan yard, and next it a fellmongery. The smell of the latter is complained of. Mr. Popkin also complains, and with great reason, of the smell of the adjacent public slaughterhouses. This quarter of the town is within the reach of the river floods.'* (Clark 1850)

The population of the town, however, did not significantly expand until the late twentieth-century with the arrival of the Ford Motor Company (Newman 1995, 158).

### **3. Aims and Objectives**

There were three general aims and objectives of the archaeological evaluation:

1. To confirm the presence or absence of preserved archaeological material within The Site, its nature and depth below the current ground surface;
2. To identify the character, condition, date, distribution and significance of any surviving archaeological remains and;
3. To determine the degree of complexity of horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy.

#### **4. Methodology**

The foundation trenches for the proposed commercial/residential block and associated car park were excavated by 22 tonne tracked mechanical excavators fitted with 1.8m and 600mm toothless ditching buckets in locations specified by the client.

All foundation trenches were excavated under constant archaeological supervision.

All excavated spoil was visually inspected for finds.

Each trench was recorded using AW's *pro forma* recording system. Sections and plans were drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 depending on the nature of the section and access to it. Context numbers were prefixed with the trench numbers to avoid duplication. General digital photographs were taken of each trench followed by specific shots of archaeological features/areas of interest.

All recording was undertaken to the standards laid down by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (hereafter 'CIfA') Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (2014).

#### **5. Health and Safety**

All work was carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992. A Health and Safety Risk Assessment was produced by AW prior to the commencement of the watching brief.

Health and Safety considerations were of paramount importance in conducting all fieldwork. Safe working practices overrode archaeological considerations at all times.

#### **6. Results**

This section presents trench descriptions of the archive produced on site. Cut numbers are surrounded by square brackets [ ], deposit numbers are in rounded brackets ( ) and structures are in brackets { }.

Figure 2 includes a plan of the foundation trenches with locations of relevant sections and Figure 8 contains the stratigraphic matrix for the site. The nature of the watching brief meant the excavations for the foundation trenches were located in specific areas which resulted in non-continuous sections that did not encounter the superficial geology. This resulted in some relationships within the stratigraphic matrix being unclear.

## 6.1 Context Descriptions

Deposit (105) appeared to be the earliest stratigraphic context encountered and was composed of a mid-grey silty sand derived from natural alluvial deposition from the Ogmores River immediately to the west of The Site (Figure 4: Drawing 4). The dimensions of this context are unknown as the excavation only revealed the surface of the deposit. This layer was only present in the south-western area of site.

Immediately above (105) was a 0.68m thick deposit (104) of mid-brown sandy silt. This layer was comprised of waterlogged organic material most probably deposited naturally when the Ogmores River extended to this area. Clay pipes, animal bone and remains of a cow skull were recovered from this deposit indicating a post-medieval date. This deposit was also only present in the south-westernmost area of site (Figure 5: Drawing 6: Plate 1).

Situated above layer (104) was deposit (103), a black silt deposit that measure 0.2m in depth and was composed of naturally derived decomposing organic matter made up of twigs and degraded plant matter. Deposit (103) originated from overflowing/flooding events associated with the adjacent Ogmores River and was isolated to the south-western area of site and was overlain with deposit (117).

Deposit (119) was a light yellowish-white silty sandy layer of crushed/broken mortar that measured 0.2m in depth. Although this layer was not fully exposed during the watching brief, (119) appeared to be the earliest layer of demolition within the site and did not appear to be associated with any structure, however, its presence on site strongly indicates to the demolition of a previous structure within the vicinity (Figure 4: Drawing 8).

Overlying deposit (119) was deposit (118), a 0.3m deep, reddish-black layer of mixed construction and demolition debris associated with a previous structure that inhabited the site. Deposit (118) was sealed by (114).

Deposit (115) was also situated directly beneath (114) and was only just visible during excavation which revealed a 0.18m deep, light grey silty sand deposit similar to (105).



Some demolition debris was present within the top of (115), however, this could be residual being pushed down from (114) above (Figure 4: Drawing 3: Plate 6).

Deposit (114) was a greyish-yellow silty sand that measured 0.36m in depth. This deposit was a band of crushed lime mortar similar to deposit (109) thereby indicating multiple spreads of demolition debris across the site. This also indicates that the site had been in use/active for a prolonged period in the recent history. Layer (114) was situated above deposit (115) and (118) and below (110).

Layer (110) was another layer of deliberate backfill consisting of demolition rubble, natural silts and some slag. (110) was black in colour and measured 0.18m in depth (Plate 7) and was situated stratigraphically above (114) and below (109).

Deposit (109) was a light yellowish-white layer of crushed lime mortar that measured 0.3m in depth. There was no evidence of any remaining structure associated with layer (109) thereby indicating this is demolition rubble. Deposit (109) was covered by layer (117) and situated above (110).

Deposit (117) overlaid deposits (103) and (109) and was a mid-grey silty-sandy clay layer of mixed coarse components and small pieces of lime mortar that measured 0.39m in depth. Deposit (117) was covered by layer (102) and truncated by cut [120].

Cut [120] was located in the middle of the western end of the site and measured 0.4m deep (not fully excavated) and 2.5m wide (not fully excavated) and contained a single deliberate backfill deposit (121) of crushed concrete and stone very similar to deposit (100). This feature is probably associated with another construction/demolition event with deposit (121) being used to increase the level of the ground surface (Figure 6: Drawing 9 and 10 and Plates 2 and 3). Cut [120] truncated deposit (117) and layer (121) was situated below modern demolition layer (101).

Deposit (102) lay above layer (117) and below layer (101) and was a mid-grey silty clay that measured approximately 0.75m and was only present in the western area of site close to Ogmore River. This deposit was heavily mixed with multiple tips of deliberate backfill and naturally derived alluvial silts from the adjacent river (Figure 4: Drawing 5). Modern CBM and metal were present within the deposit.

Cut [106] was situated in the central southern half of the site and was the foundation cut for a stone built culvert {107} that ran adjacent to, and appeared to to be parallel to the course of the River Ogmore. Cut [106] was not seen in section but was issued for stratigraphic purposes. It is unknown where the cut [106] appears in the stratigraphic matrix.

Structure {107} was a stone built culvert contained by cut [106] in the central southern area of the site (Figure 7: Drawings 12-15: Plates 4 and 5). Structure {107} was constructed with dressed stone blocks that measured 0.17m by 0.3m by 0.25m and were bonded with lime mortar. The culvert measured approximately 3m in width (including walls) with an interior space of approximately 1m. The internal height was approximately 1.5m. Culvert {107} ran on an approximately north-south alignment and appeared to follow the route of the adjacent river and was most probably a form of flood prevention. Health and safety concerns resulted in the internal area of the culvert not being recorded. Culvert {107} was followed by deposit (108) and was physically truncated by cut [111].

Layer (108) was a light yellow clayey silt deposit that measured 0.35m in depth and was not fully excavated. Deposit (108) was a deliberate backfill of excavated material originating from excavation of [106] and used to infill and cover culvert {107}. Deposit (108) was stratigraphically above {107} and below (101).

Deposit (126) was a 0.16m deep layer of mixed yellowish-brown silty clay brought in to act as a bedding layer or landscaping deposit on The Site (Figure 6: Drawing 11). This deposit was not fully excavated therefore it was unable to determine its place within the stratigraphic matrix. Deposit (126) was overlain by layer (125).

Layer (125) was a 0.1m deep dump of black material similar to deposit (110) and situated above layer (126) and below (124). Deposit (125) was a bedding or consolidation layer used to level or increase the ground surface ready for further construction.

Deposit (124) was a layer of 0.1m deep crushed concrete directly beneath (123). This layer represents the demolition of a previous structure which was used as consolidation or build up to landscape the immediate area.

Layer (123) was situated directly beneath (122) and consisted of a reddish-brown silty sand bedding layer used to consolidate and level the ground prior to the road surface (122) being constructed. (123) measured 0.16m in depth and overlaid deposit (124).

Deposit (122) was a 0.14m deep layer of black asphalt located in the north-western area of The Site (Figure 3: Drawing 2). This layer is associated with a previous structure and modern in date. Deposit (122) was situated below (101) and above (123).

Deposit (101) was a layer composed of dark grey, yellow and pink lenses which represent multiple dumps of modern construction refuse, demolition rubble and general refuse. This layer varied in depth across the site from 0.2m in depth to 0.3m in depth and produced modern artefacts that were not retained. Deposit (101) overlaid (121), (102), (108) and (122) and was truncated by [111].

Cut [111] truncated (101) was cut into the roof of culvert {107}. [111] measured 0.5m in depth and 0.75m in width and contained structure {112} and backfill (113) (Figure 7: Drawings 13-14). The primary purpose of the intrusion is unknown.

Structure {112} was a brick repair set into the stone culvert ceiling {107} and consisted of mortared bricks within cut [111] to an approximate level consistent with the rest of culvert {107}, 0.32m in thickness. This was followed by deliberate backfill (113).

Layer (113) was a dump of deliberate backfill, 0.43m in depth, derived from spoil generated as a result of cut [111]. This deposit was brownish grey in colour and situated below modern demolition rubble (100).

Deposit (100) overlaid the entire site and was composed of light grey/white demolition rubble from the destruction of the previous car park and contained modern refuse that was not retained (Figure 3: Drawing 1). Deposit (100) varied in depth from 0.97m to 0.22m across the site.

Deposit (116) was an asphalt surface created as temporary haul road for access within the western area of The Site and overlaid modern demolition rubble deposit (100) (Figure 4, Drawing 7).

## **7. Finds**

### **7.1 Clay Pipes**

A total of four fragments of post-medieval clay pipe stems were recovered from context 103.

### **7.2 Animal Bone**

A total of 32 fragments of animal bone were recovered from context 104. These comprised medium to large mammal

## **8. Environmental**

No material suitable for environmental analysis was present within the excavated areas.

## 9. Conclusions

The watching brief revealed that the majority of the site close to Water Street/The Rhiw was made up from multiple layers of construction and demolition debris and deposits of deliberately backfilled material that extended to depths surpassing 2.5m from the current ground surface. This material was used to consolidate the area, alter the landscape and increase the ground surface. Within these areas, no surviving archaeological material was encountered

In the central southern area of the site at a depth of approximately 0.55m from the current ground surface, a dressed stone and lime mortar culvert {107} was encountered. The culvert ran on an approximate north-south alignment and appeared to mirror the curve of the Ogmore River. The primary purpose of the culvert is unknown. However, its close proximity to and the apparent mirroring of the river suggest that the culvert {107} may have been used as a form of flood defence or drain. The presence of a later intrusion into the culvert in the form of cut [111] and repair {112} may indicate the culvert was reused in more recent times.

Within the south-western corner of the site, at a depth of 1.5m (average) from the current ground surface, two layers of archaeological deposits were encountered. Layers (103) and (104) contained heavily organic deposits comprised of small twigs and fibrous material which revealed intact deposition of material during flooding events associated with the River Ogmore.

## 10. Bibliography

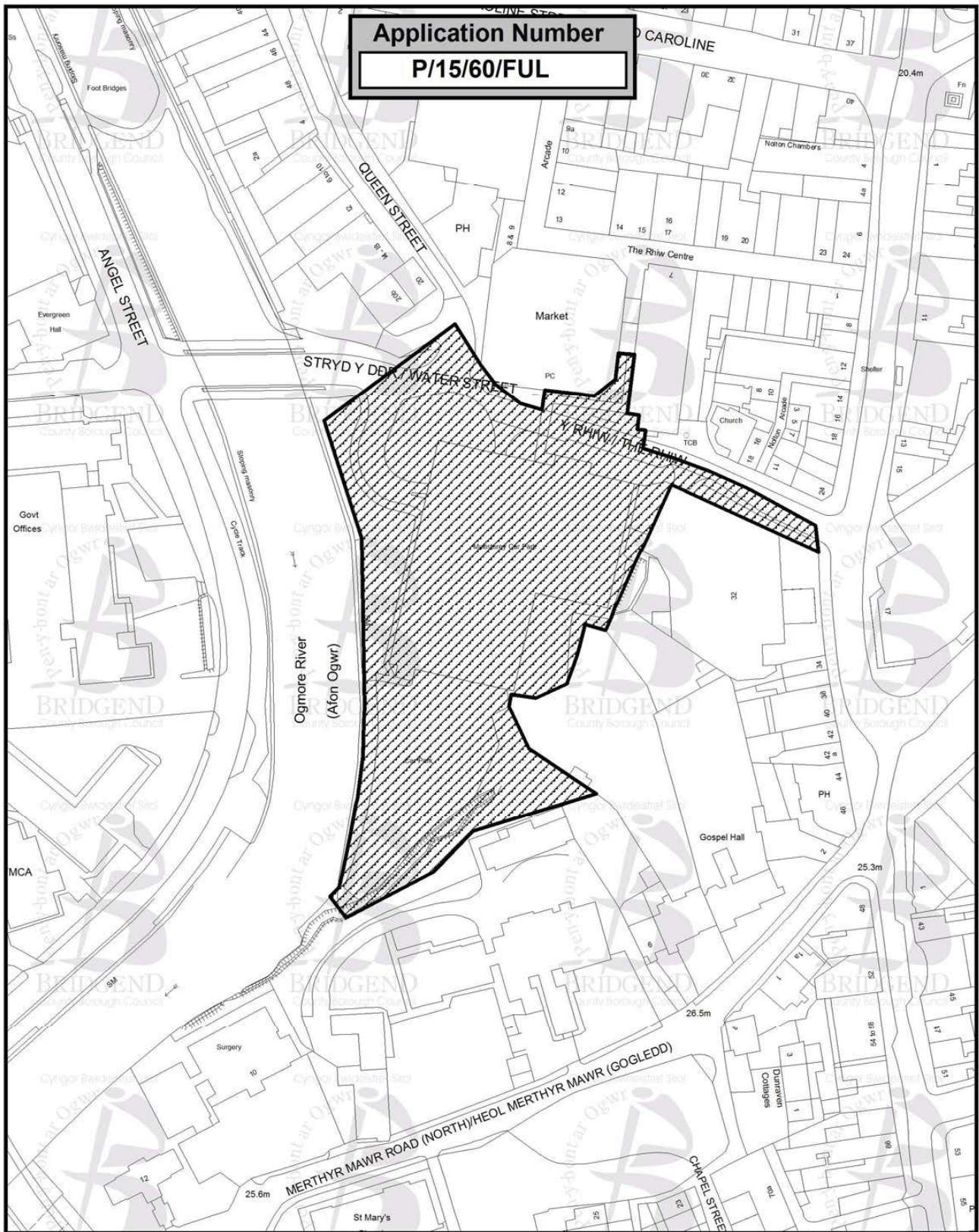
British Geological Survey, 2016, available at:  
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>, (accessed 08/03/2016)

Clark, G. T., 1850, *Report of the General Board of Health on a preliminary inquiry into the sewerage, drainage and supply of water and the sanitary conditions of the inhabitants of the town of Bridgend*, (1849) London, W. Clowes and Sons for HMSO.

Jones, I., 2014, *The Rhiw, Bridgend: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment*, Archaeology Wales Report **1265**

Leland, J., 1536-1539, *The Itinerary in Wales of John Leland in or about the years 1536-1539*, Extracted for his MSS. Arranged and edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith London, George Bell (1906)

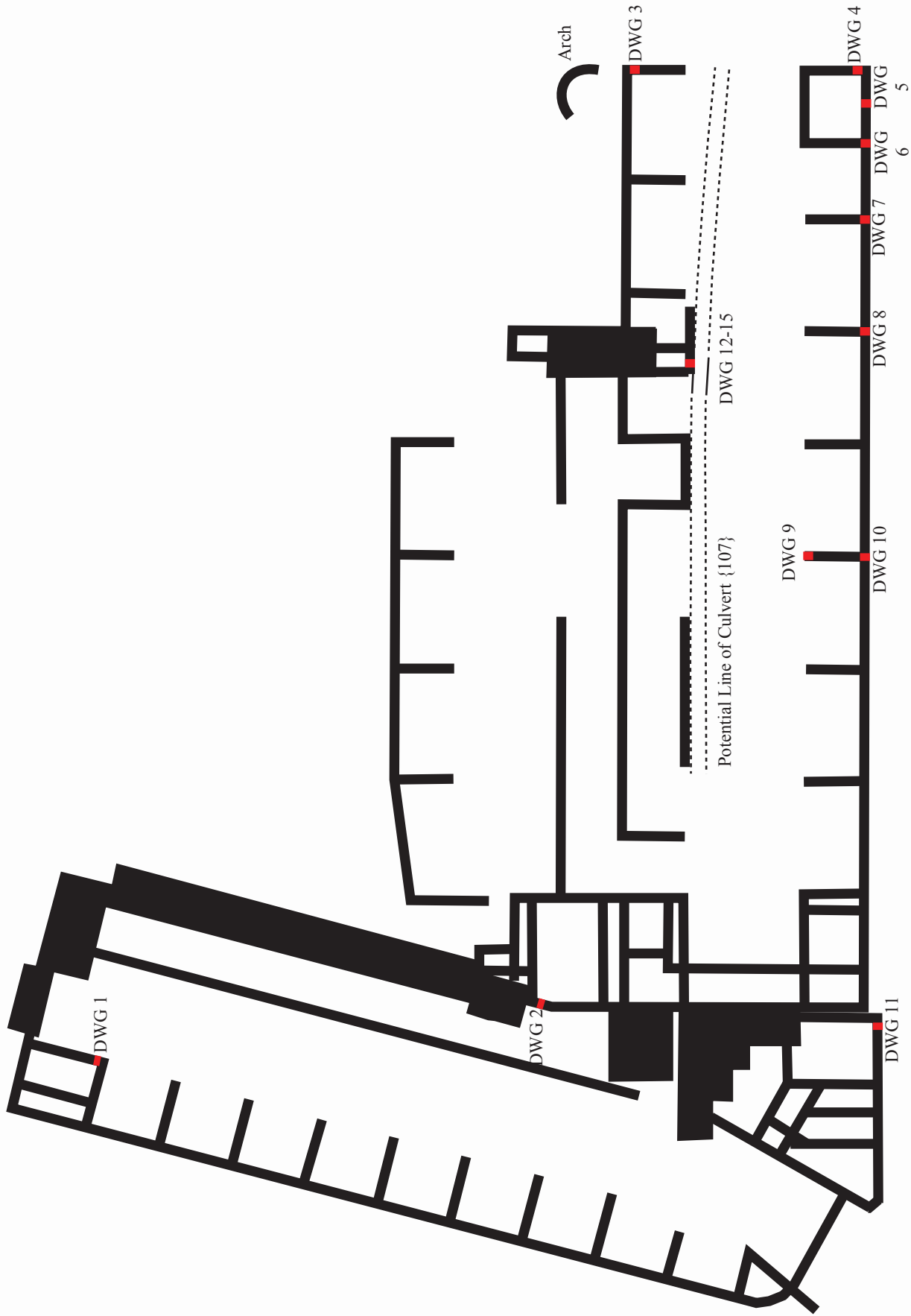
Soulsby, I., 1983, *The towns of medieval Wales: a study of their history, archaeology and early topography*, Chichester, Phillimore



**Application Number**  
**P/15/60/FUL**

	<b>Scale 1:1,250</b>	<p><b>Mark Shephard</b> Corporate Director-Communities</p> <p>Communities Directorate, Bridgend County Borough Council, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend CF31 4WB.</p> <p>O/Drive/Plandraw/new MI layouts/ Committee DC Plan</p>	<p>(c) Crown Copyright and database rights (2015) Ordnance Survey (100023405)</p> <p>(c) Hawlfraint a hawliau cronfa ddata'r Goron (2015) Rhif Trwydded yr Arolwg Ordnans (100023405)</p> <p>(c) Cities Revealed Aerial Photography copyright, The GeoInformation Group (2009)</p>	
	<b>Date Issued:</b> <b>22/04/2015</b>			
	<b>Development-Mapping</b> <b>Tel: 01656 643176</b>			

Figure 1: Location and Extent of Site



Excavated  
Foundation  
Trench

Section and  
Plan Drawing  
Location

Scale  
0m 4m

Job Title: TRB-15/WB

Drawing Title: Section  
Location Plan

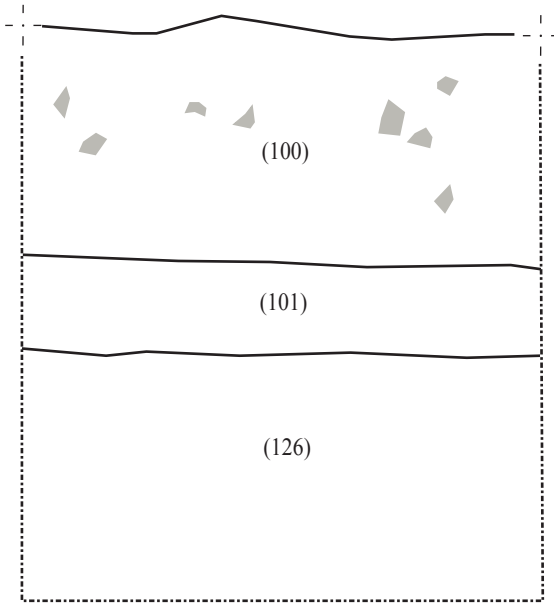
Date: 09/03/2016

Drawn By: Simon Reames

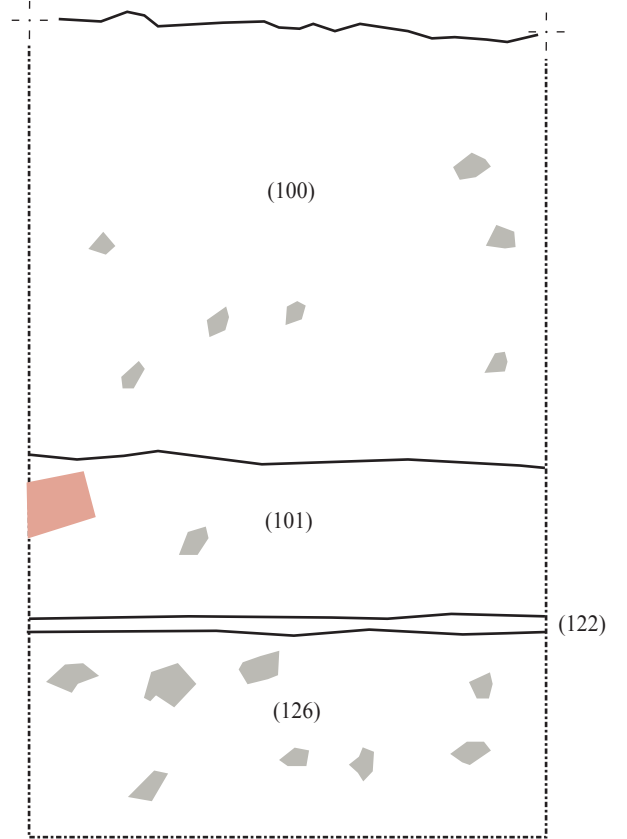
Scale: See Above

Figure 2

Northeast Facing Section of Foundation Trench  
DWG 1 Scale 1:10




East-Southeast Facing Section of Foundation Trench  
DWG 2 Scale 1:10



Scale 1:10

0m  1m

Key

 = Stone


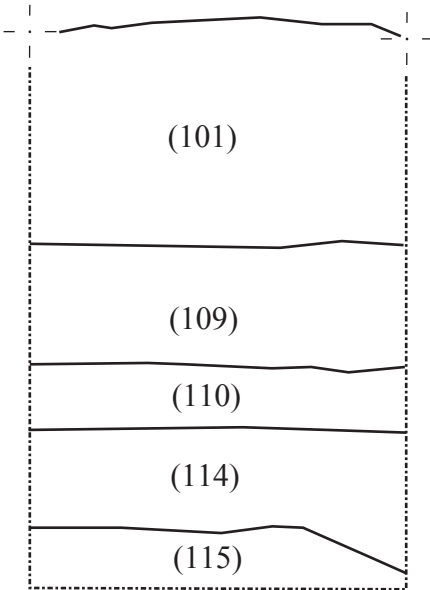
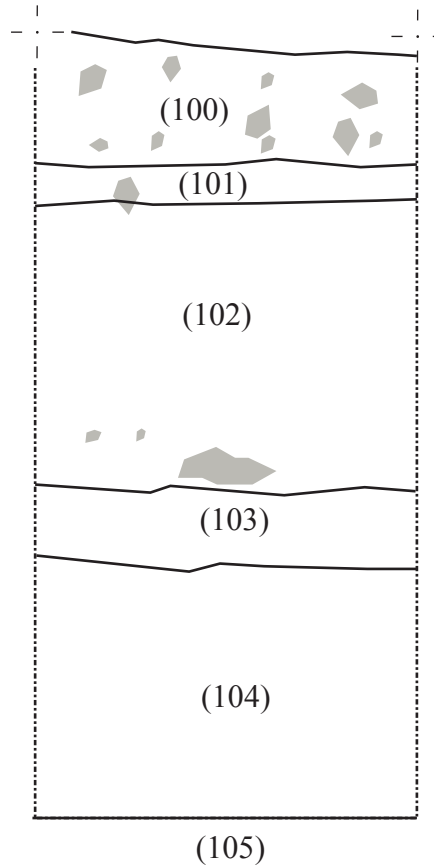
 = Brick

Figure 3: Section Drawings 1 and 2

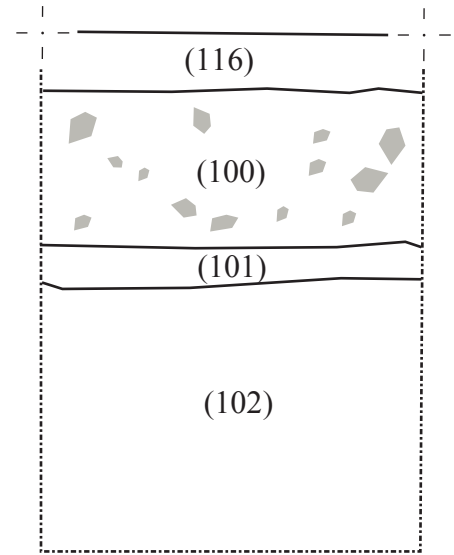
North Facing Section of  
Foundation Trench  
DWG 3 Scale 1:20



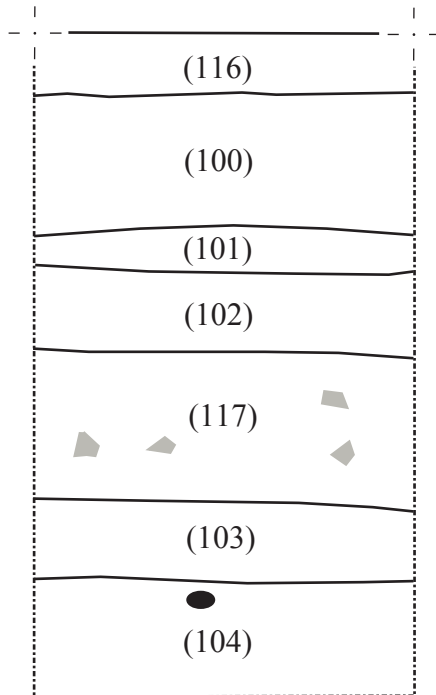
North Facing Section of  
Foundation Trench  
DWG 4 Scale 1:20





East Facing Section of  
Foundation Trench  
DWG 5 Scale 1:20



East Facing Section of  
Foundation Trench  
DWG 7 Scale 1:20



Key

-  = Concrete
-  = Stone

Scale 1:20

0m

1m

East Facing Section of  
Foundation Trench  
DWG 8 Scale 1:20

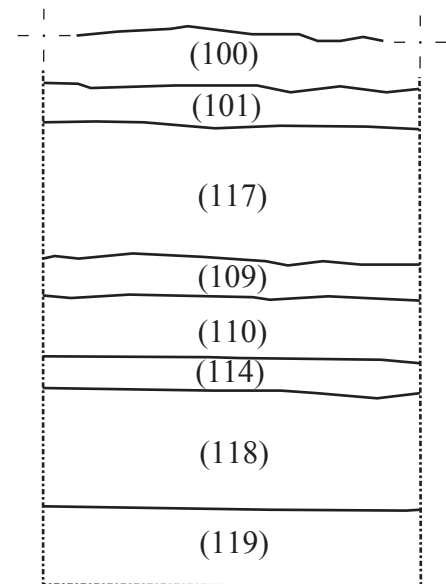
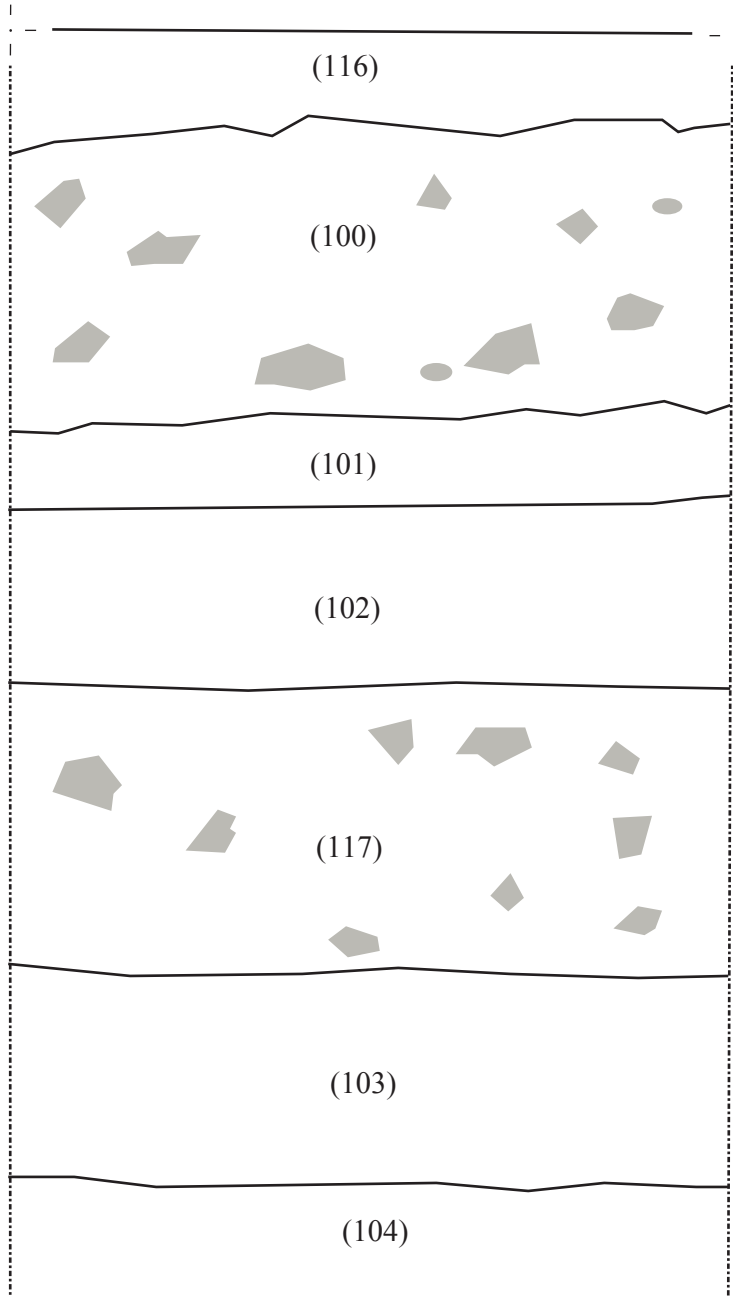


Figure 4: Section Drawings 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8



East Facing Section of Foundation Trench  
Section Drawing and Corresponding Photograph

East Facing Section of Foundation Trench  
DWG 6 Scale 1:10



Scale 1:10

0m

1m

Key


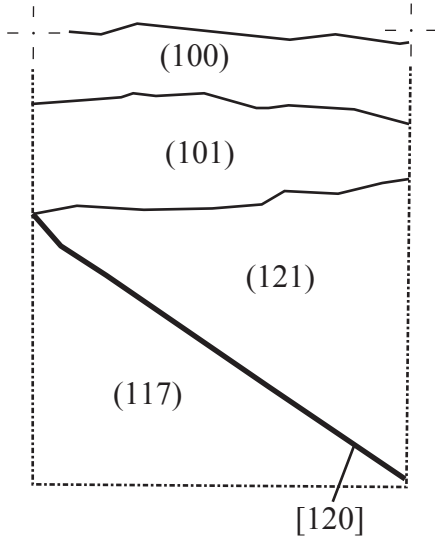
 = Concrete

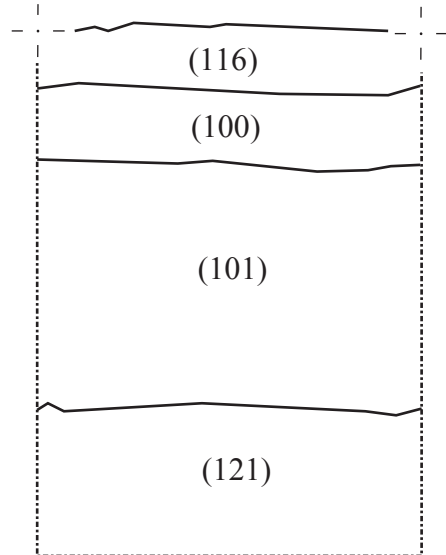
Figure 5: Section Drawing 6

Plate 1: East Facing Section of Foundation Trench

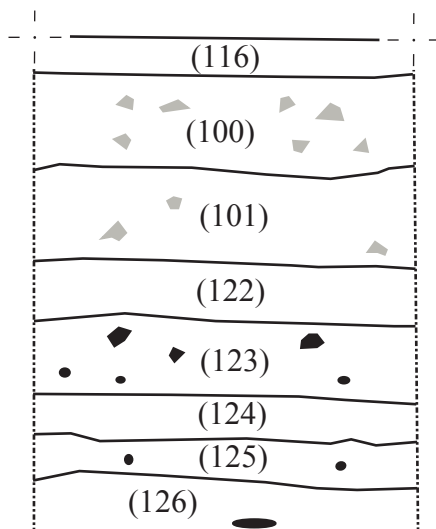
Northeast Facing Section of  
Foundation Trench  
DWG 9 Scale 1:20



East Facing Section of  
Foundation Trench  
DWG 10 Scale 1:20



East Facing Section of  
Foundation Trench  
DWG 11 Scale 1:20



Scale 1:20

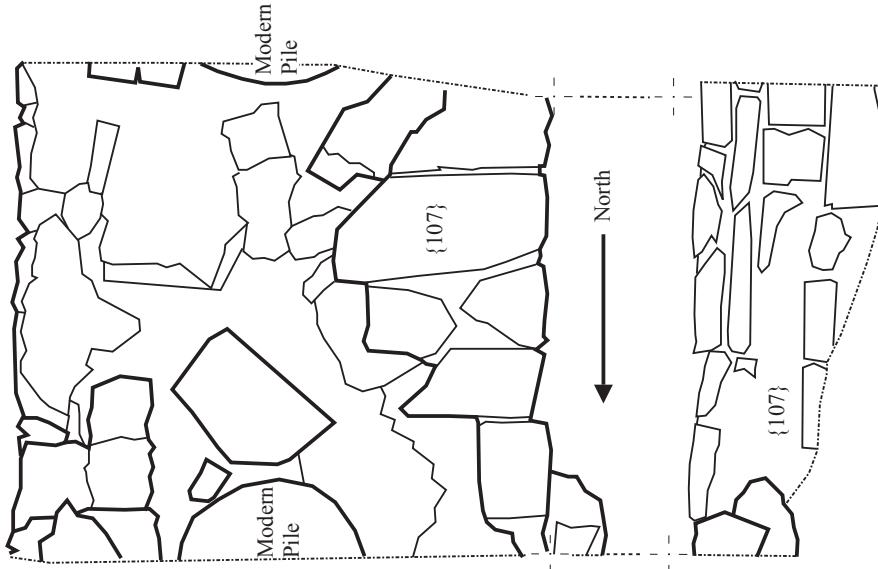
0m 1m

Key

- ▲ = Concrete
- = Stone

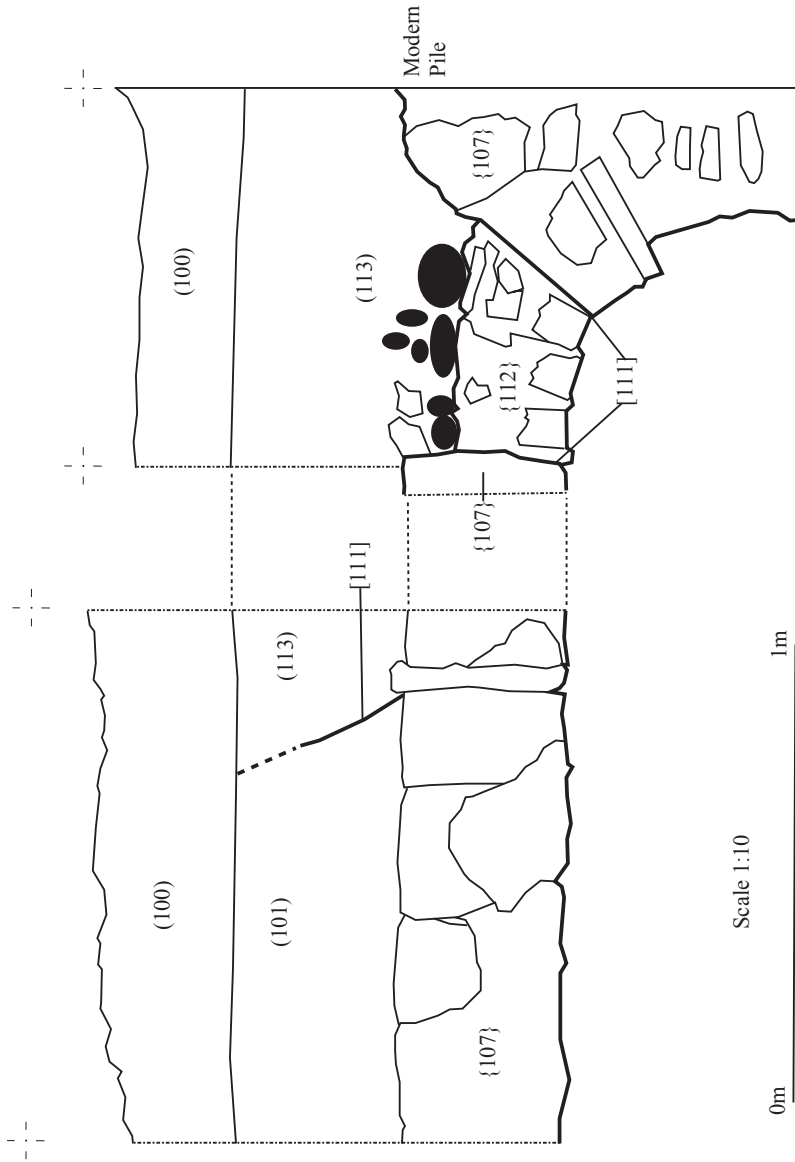
Figure 6: Section Drawings 9, 10 and 11

Plan of Culvert Wall {107}  
DWG 15 Scale 1:10

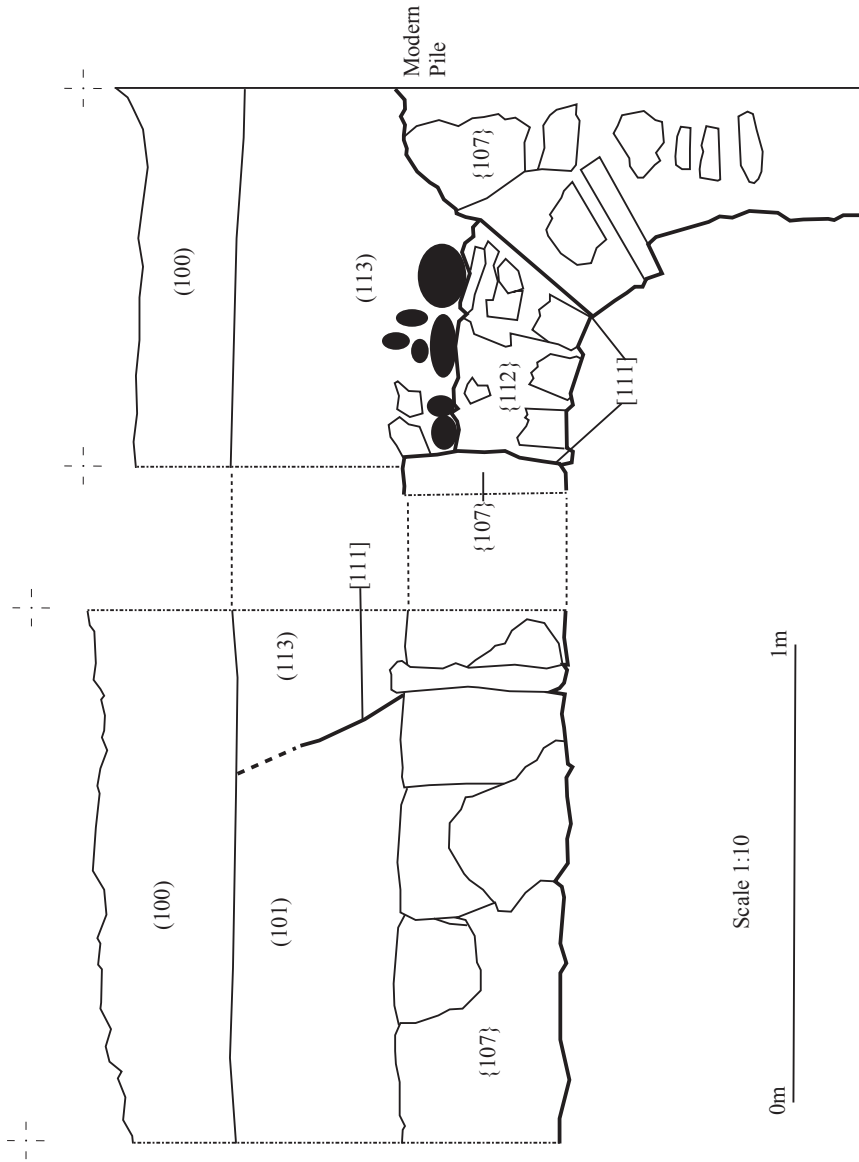


East Facing Section of Culvert Wall {107}  
DWG 12 Scale 1:10

East Facing Section of Culvert Roof {107} and Modern Cut [111]  
DWG 13 Scale 1:10



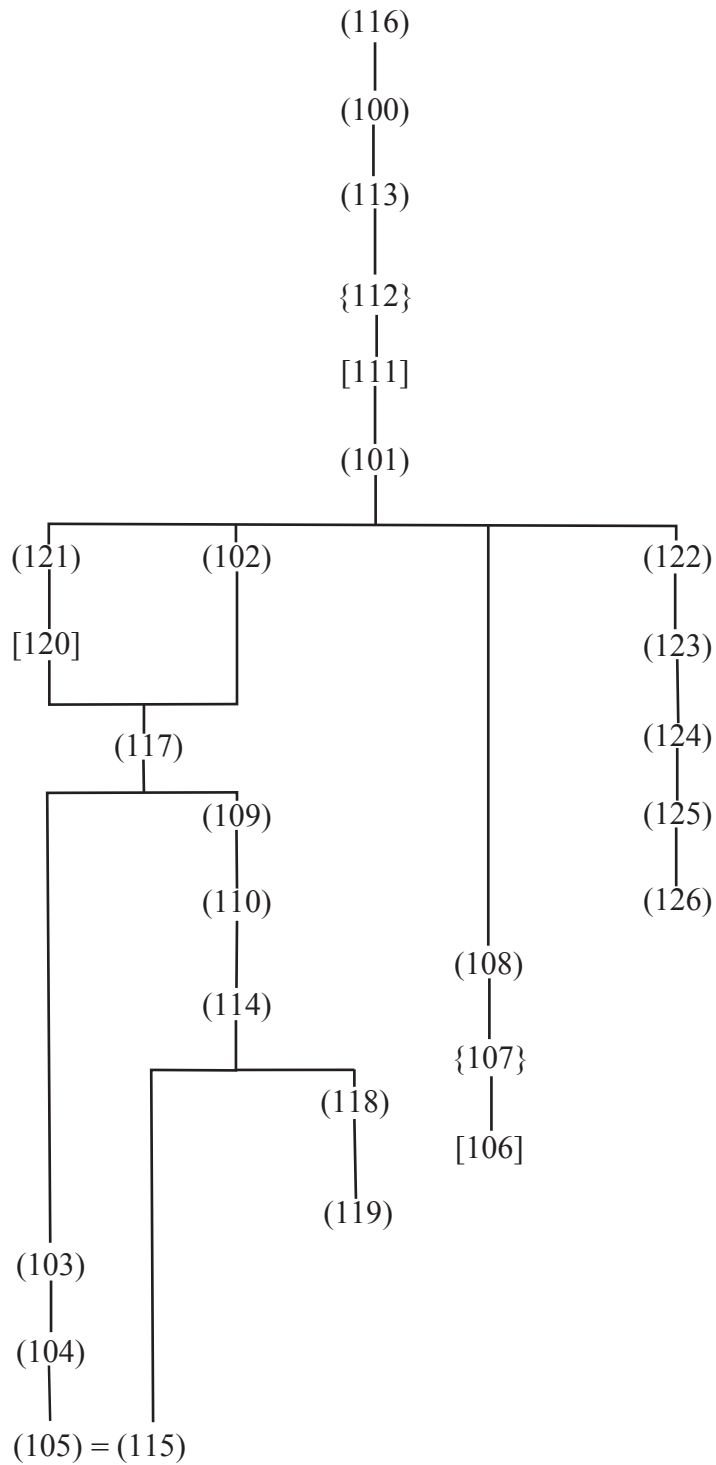
South Facing Section of Culvert Roof {107} and Intrusion [111]  
DWG 14 Scale 1:10



Key

- = River Gravels
- ◻ = Dressed Stone

# Site Stratigraphic Matrix



( ) = Deposits  
 [ ] = Cuts  
 { } = Structure

Figure 8: Site Stratigraphic Matrix

Plate 2: Northeast Facing Section of Cut [120]



Plate 3: East Facing Section of Deposit (121)





Plate 4: Post-ex Plan of Culvert {107} eastern wall



Plate 5: East Facing Section of Culvert {107} Roof with Cut [111]



Plate 6: East Facing section of Foundation Trench Relating to DWG 8



Plate 7: North Facing Section of Foundation Trench Relating to DWG 3

# *Archaeology Wales*

**Archaeology Wales Limited**

The Reading Room, Town Hall, Llanidloes, SY18 6BN

**Tel: +44 (0) 1686 440371**

Email: [admin@arch-wales.co.uk](mailto:admin@arch-wales.co.uk)

Company Directors: Mark Houlston MIFA & Jill Houlston  
Company Registered No. 7440770 (England & Wales).  
Registered office: Morgan Griffiths LLP, Cross Chambers,  
9 High Street, Newtown, Powys, SY16 2NY