

Land off Crick Road Portskewett Monmouthshire

Archaeological Evaluation



for
Monmouthshire County Council Estates

CA Project: 5628
CA Report: 16056

January 2016



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Portskewett
Monmouthshire

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A	16 Dec 2015	Paolo Guarino	Ian Barnes	Internal review	Client Comment	Cliff Bateman

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Land off Crick Road
Location: Portskewett, Monmouthshire
NGR: ST 4937 8842
Type: Evaluation
Date: 7-11 December 2015
Location of Archive: To be deposited with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales
Site Code: CRIC15

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in December 2015 on land off Crick Road, Portskewett, Monmouthshire. A total of twenty trenches were excavated.

The remains of a possible lime kiln were identified in Trench 1. Undated features of possible archaeological interest were identified in Trenches 4, 6, 12 and 15. These did not correspond with early modern fieldboundaries, nor could they be directly associated with earlier archaeological assets in the surrounding area. All other trenches were blank.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In December 2015 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Monmouthshire County Council Estates (MCCE) on land off Crick Road, Portskewett, Monmouthshire (centred on NGR: ST 4937 8842; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to accompany any future planning application to Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) for the development of the site, following consultation with Claudine Gerrard (Archaeological Planning Manager, Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT)), the archaeological advisor to MCC.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a *brief* for archaeological evaluation prepared by GGAT (2015) and with a subsequent *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2015a) and approved by Claudine Gerrard. The fieldwork followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014). It was monitored by GGAT, including a site visit by Rob Dunning on 10th Dec 2015.

The site

1.3 The proposed development area is 10.95ha in extent and comprises five open fields. The site is bounded to the west by a disused railway (and then the Castlegate Business Park), to the east and south by residential development and to the north by an area of former quarries and open fields. The site slopes from c.19m AOD in the north to c.17m AOD in the south.

1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Mercia Mudstone Group Sandstone of the Triassic Period. In the south of the site, superficial deposits are mapped as River Terrace Deposits sand and gravel of the Quaternary Period (BGS 2015). The natural substrate was observed in Trenches 2-20.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The site lies within an area of known archaeological interest. The following is a summary of archaeological evidence noted in the vicinity of site.

2.2 Prehistoric evidence has been recorded at Heston Brake, a Neolithic long barrow type chambered tomb, c.1km to the east of the site (NPRN 300078). During

excavations across a palaeochannel, within the grounds Caldicot Castle (c. 600m to the west of the site), water-logged material dating to c. 2500 BC was recovered. General settlement evidence, a house platform and trackway of similar date has also been in the area recorded (NPRN 402110; Nayling and Caseldine 1997). The Iron Age settlement at Sudbrook Camp, a multivallate triangular shaped enclosure, is located 1.3km to the south-east of the site (NPRN 94873).

- 2.2 In 1992 the Avon Archaeological Unit evaluated an area adjoining the eastern boundary of the site and found extensive evidence of early prehistoric and Roman activity in the form of pits and ditches, suggesting the potential for similar remains to be present on site (AAU 1993). Roman buildings associated with iron working have been identified near Portskewett Hill (c. 500m to the north-east); activity dates from the 1st to 4th centuries AD (Arnold & Davies 2000).
- 2.3 The site lies approximately 500m to the north-west of the historic core of Portskewett. The field boundaries as they are visible in the present broadly correlate to those illustrated on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (1881). On this imprint, activity is evident at the northern extent of the site: 'old limekilns' are labelled.
- 2.4 An archaeological watching brief undertaken during geotechnical site investigations recovered no archaeological features or artefacts (CA 2015b).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality. In accordance with *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014), the evaluation was designed to be minimally intrusive and minimally destructive to archaeological remains. The information gathered will enable MCC to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of 20 trenches in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). All trenches were 25m long and 1.8m wide. The trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS, and scanned for live services by trained CA staff using CAT and Genny equipment in accordance with the CA *Safe System of Work for avoiding underground services*. Trench 20 was moved 5m to the west of its original agreed position in order to avoid a live service with the agreement of Rob Dunning (GGAT). The final 'as dug' trench plan was recorded with GPS.
- 4.2 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 No artefacts were recovered during the fieldwork and no deposits were identified that required sampling.
- 4.4 The archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble and will be deposited with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-7)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts, including the relative heights of the principal deposits and features expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD), are to be found in Appendix A.
- 5.2 The natural geological substrate, consisting of sand and gravel deposits, was exposed in all trenches, except Trench 1. In Trench 1, the natural substrate was not observed. It is possible that all material observed here was connected to historic quarrying activities to the north. Most trenches presented a similar sequence of deposits consisting of natural sand and gravel overlaid by subsoil and topsoil. All

features identified were cut into the natural substrate and overlaid by subsoil. No archaeological features were identified in Trenches 2, 3, 5, 7-11, 13-14 and 16-20.

Trench 1 (Figs 2 & 3)

- 5.3 Approximately 5m from the south edge of the trench a scatter of stones was identified (102). While tenuous and unbonded, they could represent the remnants of a north-south orientated wall. The scatter became thicker at its northern extent (c.0.4m thick), see Fig. 2 and 3.

Trench 4 (Figs 2 & 4)

- 5.4 Undated ditch 405 was orientated north/east-south/west, and measured 1m in width and 0.3m in depth. It contained a single fill, 406.

Trench 6 (Figs 2 & 5)

- 5.5 Six undated features were identified in Trench 6 (Fig. 5, Section BB and CC). These included five, broadly north-south orientated parallel ditches (605, 607, 610, 612, 614). Ditch 605 was 0.7m in width and 0.3m in depth, and was cut along its east edge by ditch 607. Ditches 610 and 612 were truncated by ditch 614. Pit 603, located to the west of the ditches, was 0.7m wide and c.0.30m deep; it may be associated with sand and gravel quarrying activities.

Trench 12 (Figs 2 & 6)

- 5.6 Linear feature 1204 was identified in the central area of the trench. It measured 2.1m in length, 1.1m in width and 0.15m in depth. It was filled by a single fill, 1205 (Fig. 6, Section DD). This was overlain by a small area of limestone fragments 1206, which measured 0.73m in length, 0.63m in width and 0.15m in depth. While tenuous and unbonded, in similar fashion to the feature observed in Trench 1 this may also represent a wall.

Trench 15 (Figs 2 & 7)

- 5.7 An isolated posthole was recorded close to the southern end of Trench 15. It was circular in plan, 0.3m in diameter and 0.11 m deep. It contained a single fill, 1504.

8. DISCUSSION

- 8.1 The evaluation found no directly datable activity on site. It is possible that the linear features identified at the eastern extent of the site (particularly in Trenches 4 and 6) represent land drains or boundaries, though no features were definitively identified in more than one trench. The observation of repeated recuts of linear features within Trench 6 suggests a level of maintenance during their operation. No field boundaries were illustrated in this location on late 19th century OS map imprints, but this interpretation cannot be entirely excluded. Furthermore, given the proximity of both prehistoric and Roman remains to the east, an earlier date remains a possibility.
- 8.2 The remains of wall 102 may form part of a lime kiln, as illustrated on early OS imprints. The scale of the wall and its curvy shape support this, but no direct evidence of the wall's purpose was recovered during the evaluation.
- 8.3 Overall, there is no evidence of dense activity. The lack of dating evidence makes a robust assessment of the remains present difficult. The presence significant prehistoric or Roman activity is considered to be unlikely, though with presence of ephemeral material of Medieval or earlier date cannot be entirely ruled out.

9. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Paolo Guarino, assisted by Monica Fombelida and Jess Stevens. The report was written by Paolo Guarino. The illustrations were prepared by Leo Heatley. The archive has been compiled by Paolo Guarino, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Ian Barnes.

10. REFERENCES

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Arnold, C.J. and Davies, J.L. 2000 *Roman & early Medieval Wales*

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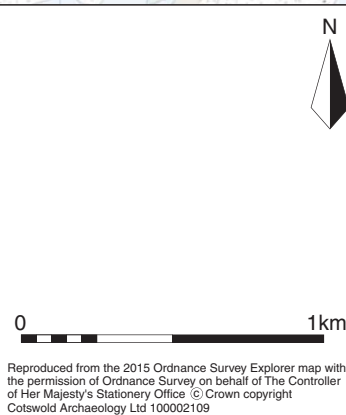
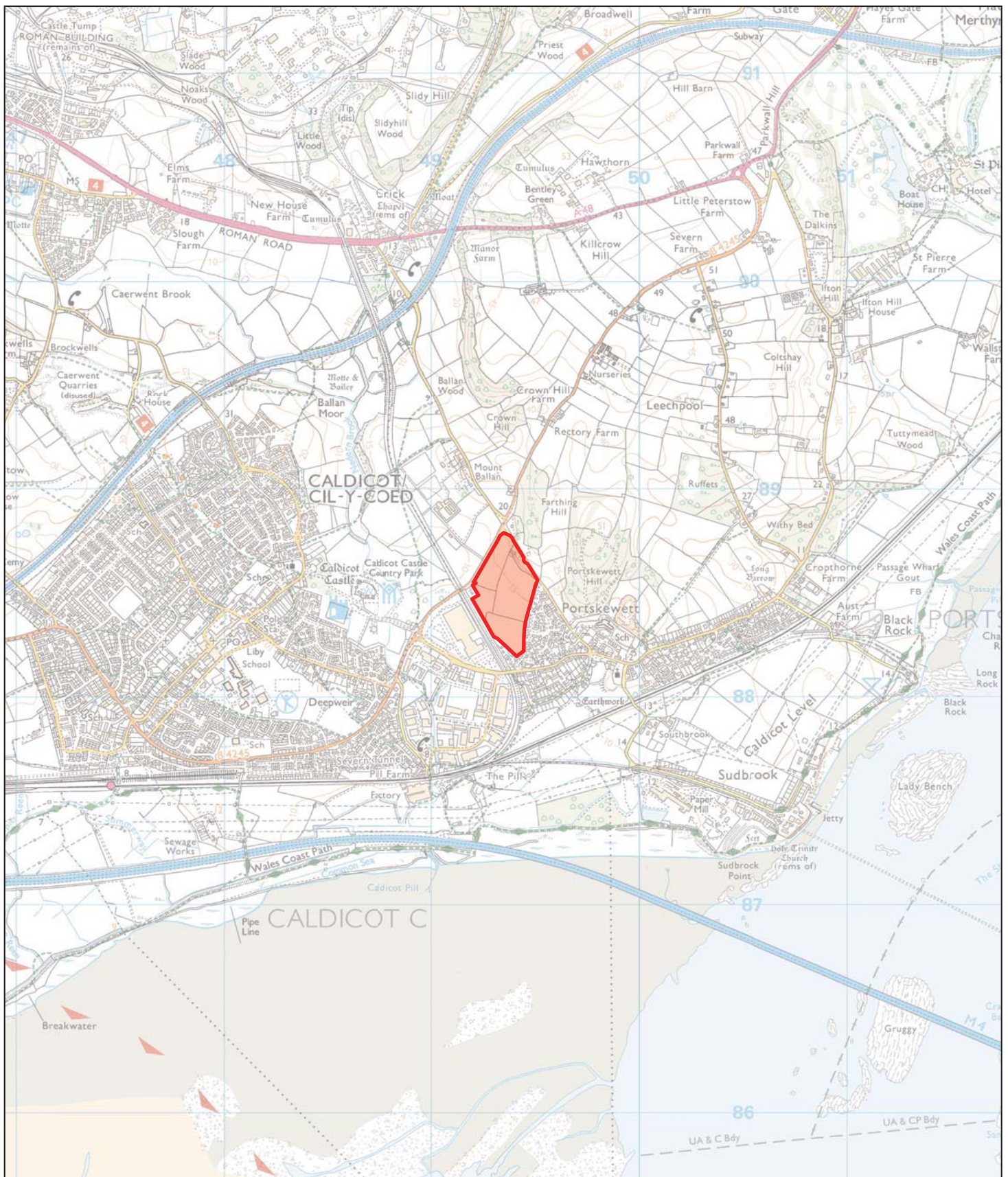
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS


Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
1	100	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.4
1	101	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown silt clay			1
1	102	layer		demolition rubble	modern lime kiln remains			
2	200	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.2
2	201	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown silt clay			0.4
2	202	layer		natural substrate	mid orange silty sand			
3	300	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.3
3	301	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown silt clay			0.7
3	302	layer		natural substrate	mid orange silty sand			
4	400	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.3
4	401	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown silt clay			0.7
4	402	layer		natural substrate	mid orange red-brown silt sand			
4	403	cut		hedgerow	aligned NE/SW, irregular profile		1.75	0.1
4	404	fill	403	bioturbation	mid orange red-brown with light yellow brown sandy silt		1.75	0.1
4	405	cut		ditch	aligned NE/SW, moderate sides, irregular base		1.01	0.2
4	406	fill	405	ditch fill	mid orange red-brown clay silt		1.01	0.2
5	500	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.3
5	501	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown silt clay			0.7
5	502	layer		natural substrate	mid orange red-brown sandy silt			
6	600	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.2
6	601	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown silt clay			0.4
6	602	layer		natural substrate	mid orange red-brown sandy silt			
6	603	cut		pit	sub circular, steep sides, flat base	>0.9	0.7	0.3
6	604	fill	603	pit fill	dark grey brown sandy silt	>0.9	0.7	0.3
6	605	cut		gully	aligned N/S, steep sides, concave base		0.32	0.4
6	606	fill		gully fill	mid grey yellow clay silt		0.32	0.4
6	607	cut		ditch terminus	aligned N/S, steep sides, concave base		0.9	0.6
6	608	fill	607	ditch fill	mid grey yellow sandy silt		0.9	0.3
6	609	fill	607	ditch fill	light red and yellow silty sand		0.7	0.3
6	610	cut		ditch	aligned N/S, steep sides, concave base		0.5	0.4
6	611	fill	610	ditch fill	light yellow grey clay silt		0.5	0.4
6	612	cut		ditch	aligned N/S, moderate sides and concave base		0.4	0.2
6	613	fill	612	ditch fill	dark grey brown sandy silt		0.4	0.2
6	614	cut		ditch	aligned N/S, steep sides, concave base		0.52	0.3
6	615	fill	614	ditch fill	mid orange brown sandy silt		0.52	0.3
7	700	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.4
7	701	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown clay silt			0.7

7	702	layer		natural substrate	mid orange red-brown sandy silt			
8	800	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.3
8	801	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown clay silt			0.6
8	802	layer		natural substrate	mid orange red-brown sandy silt			
9	900	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.3
9	901	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown clay silt			0.6
9	902	layer		natural substrate	mid orange red-brown sandy silt			
10	1000	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.3
10	1001	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown clay silt			0.4
10	1002	layer		natural substrate	mid orange red-brown sandy silt			
11	1100	layer		topsoil	dark brown clay silt			0.3
11	1101	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown silty clay			0.3
11	1102	layer		natural substrate	compact mid brown orange sandy silt clay with dark orange sand patches			
12	1200	layer		topsoil	dark brown clay silt			0.3
12	1201	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown silty clay			0.4
12	1202	layer		natural substrate	compact mid brown orange sandy silt clay with dark orange sand patches			
12	1204	cut		ditch	aligned N/S, gentle sides, flat base		1.1	0.1
12	1205	fill	1204	ditch fill	mid orange brown sandy silt		1.1	0.1
12	1206	structu		wall footing	irregular limestone, sandstone and chalkstone blocks	>0.7	0.63	0.1
13	1300	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.3
13	1301	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown silty sandy gravel			0.5
13	1302	layer		natural substrate	compact orange brown sandy gravel			
14	1400	layer		topsoil	dark brown clay silt			0.2
14	1401	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown silty sandy gravel			0.2
14	1402	layer		natural substrate	compact mid orange brown sandy gravel			
15	1500	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.2
15	1501	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown silty sandy gravel			0.4
15	1502	layer		natural substrate	mid-light orange brown silty sandy gravel			
15	1503	cut		posthole	circular, moderate sides, concave base		0.3	0.1
15	1504	fill	1503	posthole fill	mid purple grey clay silt		0.3	0.1
16	1600	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt		0.38	
16	1601	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown sandy silt		0.52	
16	1602	layer		natural substrate	orange yellow clay sand			
17	1700	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.2
17	1701	layer		subsoil	mid brown clay silt			0.4
17	1702	layer		natural substrate	light red brown sandy silt			
18	1800	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.2
18	1801	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown sandy silt			0.5
18	1802	layer		natural substrate	orange sand with grey clay patches			
19	1900	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.2

19	1901	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown sandy silt			0.3
19	1902	layer		natural substrate	orange sand with grey clay patches			
20	2000	layer		topsoil	dark brown silt			0.3
20	2001	layer		subsoil	mid orange brown sandy silt			0.3
20	2002	layer		natural substrate	orange sand with grey clay patches			

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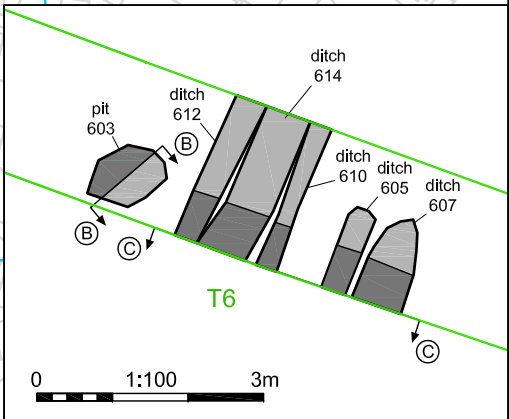
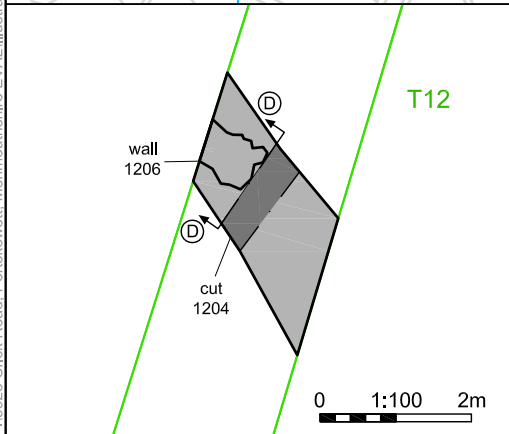
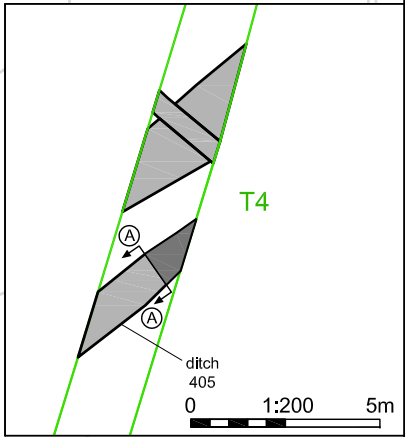
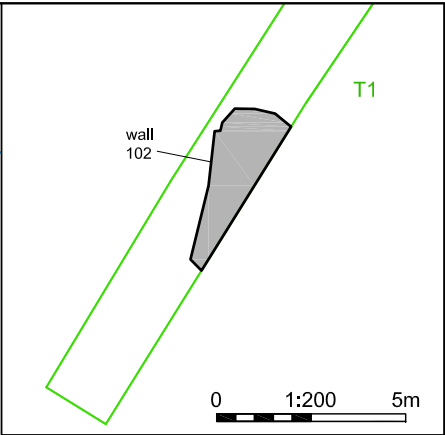
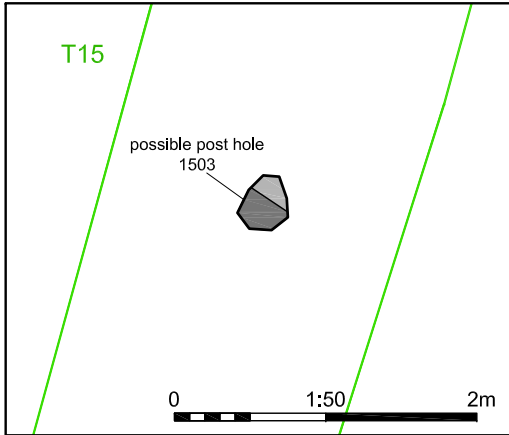
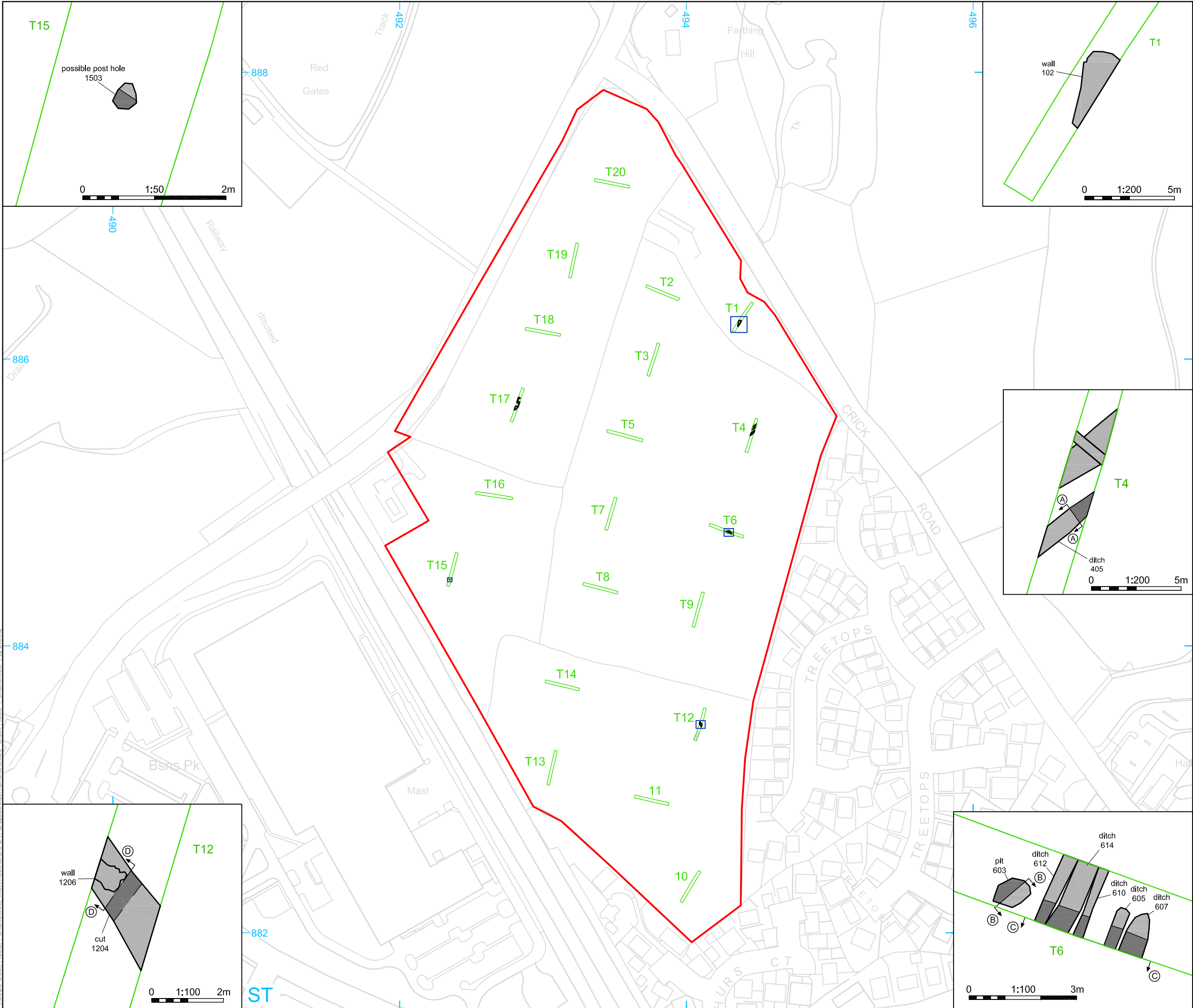
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PROJECT TITLE
 Crick Road, Portskewett, Monmouthshire

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

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- site boundary
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- archaeological intervention
- section location



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**Crick Road, Portskewett
Monmouthshire**

**Trench location plan showing
archaeological features**

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CHECKED BY D J B DATE 23/12/2015
APPROVED BY I B SCALE@A3 1:2500, 1:200, 1:100 & 1:50

FIGURE NO.

2



Wall 102, possible lime kiln wall, looking north-east (1m scales)



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FIGURE TITLE

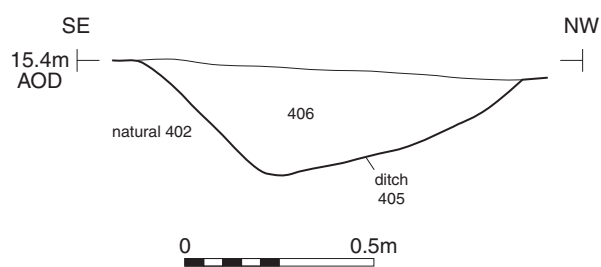
Trench 1: photograph

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FIGURE NO.

3

Section AA



Ditch 405, looking south-west (1m scale)



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FIGURE TITLE

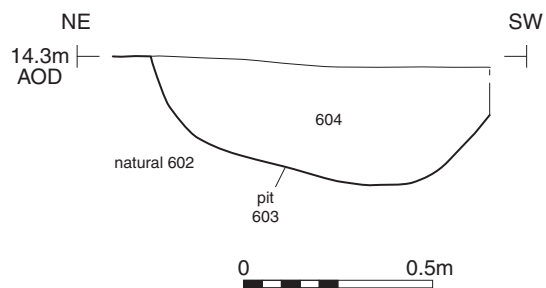
Trench 4: section and photograph

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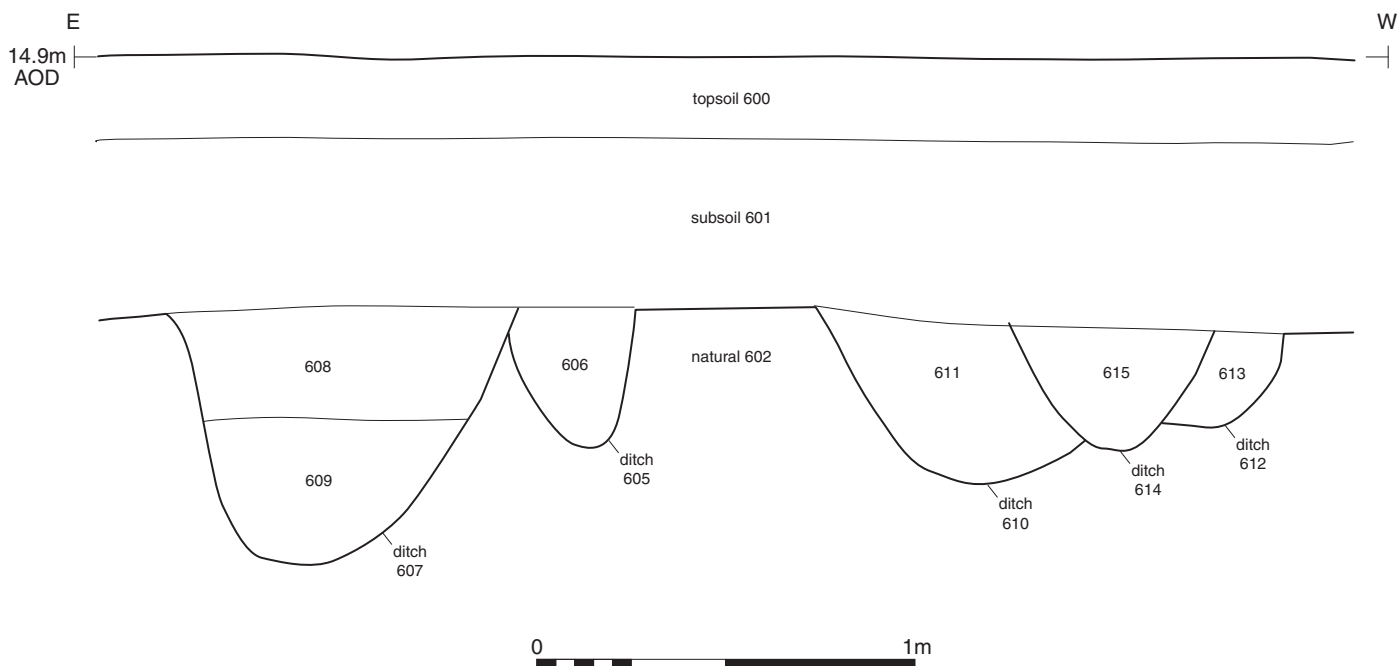
FIGURE NO.

4

Section BB



Section CC



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FIGURE TITLE

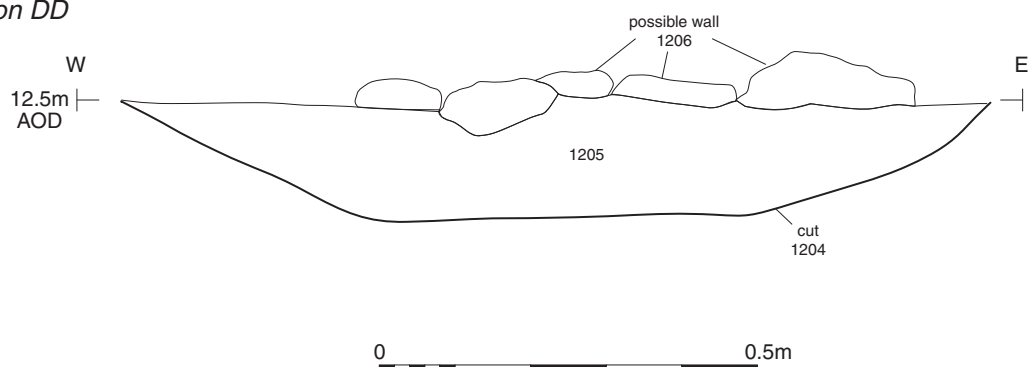
Trench 6: sections

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FIGURE NO.

5

Section DD



Possible wall 1206, looking south-east



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FIGURE TITLE

Trench 12: section and photograph

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FIGURE NO.

6



Possible posthole 1503, looking north-east



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FIGURE TITLE

Trench 15: photograph

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FIGURE NO.

7

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