

**FORMER VICTORIA DAIRY SITE,
MONMOUTH**

NGR: SO 5019 1245

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF
VDM02Wb**

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SUMMARY

In June to August 2002 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on land at the former Victoria Dairy site, Wonastow Road, Monmouth at NGR: SO 5019 1245. The project was undertaken on behalf of Piercefield Developments Ltd.

The watching brief was undertaken on all appropriate groundworks associated with the residential redevelopment of the site.

A previous phase of evaluation (Monmouth Archaeology 1999) and excavation (Foundations Archaeology 2002) had revealed the depth and orientation of the outer edge of the Medieval ditch known as the Clawdd Du, within the study area.

No archaeological features were identified during the course of the watching brief.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *c.* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site. In this case red clay and terrace gravels.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum)

OS

Ordnance Survey

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in June to August 2002 on land at the Former Victoria Dairy, Wonastow Road, Monmouth (NGR: SO 5019 1245). The project was undertaken on behalf of Piercefield Developments Ltd.
- 1.2 A programme of archaeological works was undertaken in accordance with the principals of Circular 60/96 and the archaeological policies of Monmouth County Council.
- 1.3 This report constitutes the results of the archaeological works. The project was undertaken in accordance with the written scheme of investigation prepared by the Contracts Division of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust and was agreed by Neil Maylan of Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Curatorial Division, on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with IFA *Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Watching Briefs* (1999).

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The archaeological watching brief took place prior to the proposed residential development at the above site. The development consists of six houses with associated car parking and landscaping.
- 2.2 The project and archaeological background to the site is summarised in the Archaeological Scheme of Investigation issued by the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (2001). The archaeological report should be read in conjunction with this document.
- 2.3 The site is situated in the suburb of Overmonnow, which probably dates to the Norman period, after AD 1067. Evidence for Roman activity, predominantly connected with metal-working debris, has been found in the area and maybe associated with a Roman fort postulated to have existed in the vicinity of what is now Agincourt Square. A timber bridge across the River Monnow was constructed by at least AD 1140 and was probably on the same line as the stone bridge. The church of St Thomas Becket had been founded by AD 1186 and taken conjunction with the presence of the bridge may indicate the presence of a substantial settlement by this time.
- 2.4 The Medieval settlement was defended to the east by the River Monnow and on the other three sides by a substantial earthen bank and ditch, which is thought to have been constructed during the late 13th century. It measures a minimum of 13 metres wide by about 2.5metres deep and is commonly known as the Clawdd Du (black ditch or dyke), the name probably derives from the iron-working activities within the area. The open part of the earthwork is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Mm 036) and runs up to the south-east boundary of the development plot. This part of the Clawdd Du was cleaned out in the 1950's and then backfilled with modern rubble and rubbish.

- 2.5 The site was subject to an archaeological evaluation by Monmouth Archaeology in 1999. The evaluation was undertaken in order to identify the course of the Clawdd Du through the development plot. The evaluation uncovered evidence for the course of the outer bank of the ditch as it turned sharply north-east from the open section. The turn was so sharp that the inner bank of the ditch was not revealed during the archaeological works. The part of the ditch sampled by the evaluation was filled with 19th and 20th century rubble and rubbish to a depth of three metres below site datum. A second linear cut was also identified which is likely to represent a re-cut of the outer bank. The sharp turn in the ditch at this point reflects a similar change of course in the southern arm of the Monument near Overmonnow Garage and is supported by an early 20th century Ordnance Survey map.
- 2.6 Archaeological excavation was undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in May 2002 across the areas of the Clawdd Du which would be affected by the new development. The outer edge of the ditch Clawdd Du was present in both of the areas under investigation and followed the line revealed in the evaluation of 1999. The line of the inner ditch was not present within the confines of the study areas.
- 2.7 The ditch had a very steep, regular cut with a shelf or flat base and in parts contained flat bottomed ledges. This shape was consistent with the ditch being emptied out with a mechanical excavator, most likely during the cleaning and backfilling of the ditch in the 1950's. The dating evidence within the fills (105) and (205) was also consistent with this date. No dating evidence was recovered for the original construction of the ditch. In addition the flat base to the ditch cut in the excavation areas was at a noticeably shallower depth than the visible section of the Clawdd Du to the south, contrary to the results of the archaeological evaluation (1999). This difference, in conjunction with the dating evidence indicates that the cleaning of the ditch almost certainly altered the profile. The feature sampled by the excavation works was likely, therefore, to have been created entirely as part of the modern cleaning process rather than representing the medieval profile of the Clawdd Du.
- 2.8 The main potential of the site therefore consisted of Roman activity associated with the postulated fort and metal-working activity and Medieval activity associated with the Clawdd Du. This did not prejudice the works against the recovery of evidence dating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits, in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn this would allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.
- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

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- i) To define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
- ii) To attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;
- iii) To recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The project required the observation of all appropriate groundworks associated with the development, including the house plots, services and car parking area. Area locations are shown on Figure 3.
- 4.2 Topsoil and non-significant overburden was removed to the top of archaeological deposits or natural, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved with the use of a mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket. Thereafter the areas were cleaned and all additional excavation was conducted by hand.
- 4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the Foundations Archaeology Project Design and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 No archaeological features were identified during the course of the watching brief. Across the majority of the site the natural deposits were sealed beneath a 0.13m thick subsoil consisting of a grey brown sandy clay beneath a dark grey sandy clay buried topsoil up to 0.12m thick. Modern make-up layers between 0.42 and 1.50m thick were present throughout.

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 No archaeological deposits or features were identified during the course of the watching brief.
- 6.2 The project archive will be deposited with Monmouth Museum.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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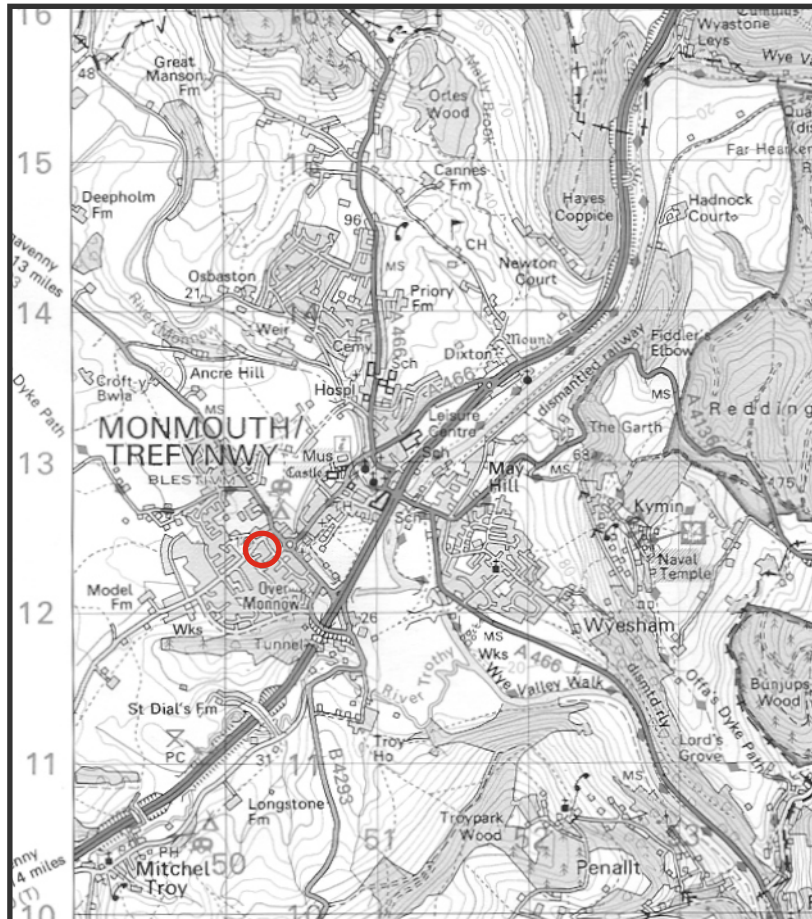
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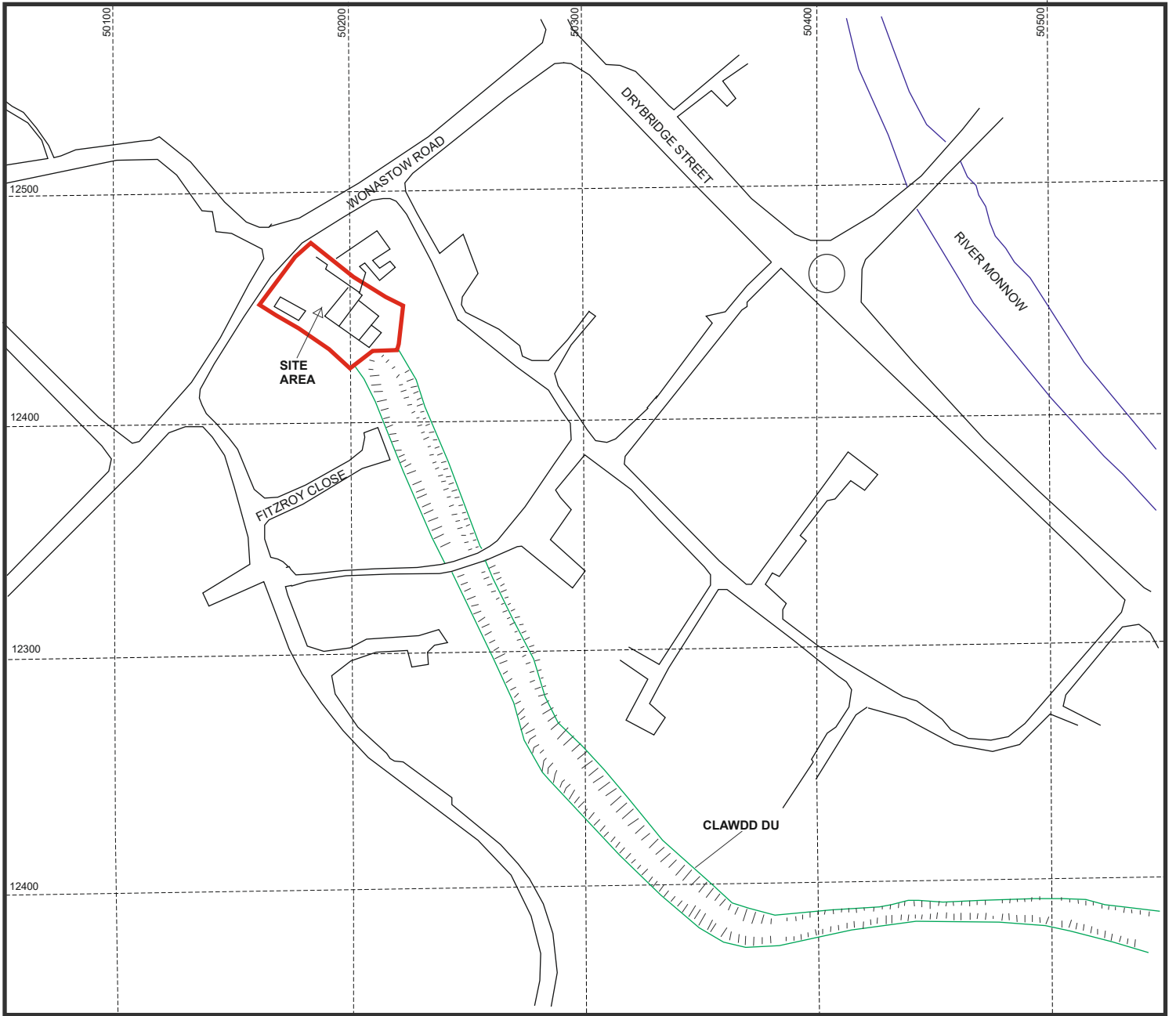
8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FIGURE 1: Site Location.



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FIGURE 2 :Site Area Plan.

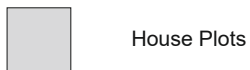


FIGURE 3: Location of House Plots