

JARVIS WENTLOOG CASTLE HOTEL

NGR: ST 2520 8340

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION Phase II

JWC04

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Authors – D Mayer & R King
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES

1st Floor, Shaftesbury Centre, Percy Street, Swindon, Wilts. SN2 2AZ Tel: 01793 525993 Email: admin@foundations.co.uk

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SUMMARY

Between 30th June and 2nd July 2004 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological field evaluation on land at the site of the former Jarvis Wentloog Hotel, Castleton, Newport at NGR: ST 2520 8340.

The evaluation comprised the excavation and recording of four trenches across the proposed development area (Figure 2). No archaeologically significant finds or features were identified during the course of the project.

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 *circa* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

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.

Romano-British

Term used to define the fusion of indigenous Iron Age traditions with invasive Roman culture. Traditionally dated AD 43 to *circa* AD 410.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between 30th June and 2nd July 2004 Foundations Archaeology undertook a second phase of archaeological field evaluation on land at the site of the former Jarvis Wentloog Castle Hotel, Castleton, Newport at NGR: ST 2520 8345, on behalf of Babtie Group. These works followed on from an archaeological desk-based assessment and field evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in December 2003.
- 1.2 The works were undertaken in order to comply with the principals of Welsh Office Circular 60/96, the archaeological policies of Monmouthshire County Council and the Borough of Newport.
- 1.3 This report constitutes the results of the archaeological works. The project was undertaken in accordance with the Specification prepared by Babtie Group (2004) and was agreed by the Development Control Officer of Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust.
- 1.4 The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with IFA *Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Evaluation* (1994, revised 2001) and relevant guidance issued by the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is irregular and covers an area of approximately 2ha. It is bounded to the north by Mill Lane, Newport Road to the southeast, a field to the southwest and the Motte of Wentloog Castle to the northwest (see Figure 1 & 2). At the time of the archaeological works the buildings of the Wentloog Castle Hotel had been mostly demolished, although demolition works continued during the fieldwork.
- 2.2 The geology of the site consists of the St Maughans Group of the Old Red Sandstone comprising red brown mudstone with occasional sandstone and limestone bands. Near the surface, these are weathered into a firm and stiff red brown silty clay with mudstone lithorelicts. Superficial deposits in the form of Morainic Drift overlie the solid geology (SSEW sheet 249).
- 2.3 The southern half of the motte fell within the grounds of the hotel. The motte is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Cadw no. MN 131) and is recorded on the SMR as ref.0007g. It lies within an ornamental garden and stands approximately 5m high with a flat top measuring 16m in diameter. A possible moat or bailey ditch is visible on aerial photography.
- 2.4 There is limited historical documentation with regard to the origin and development of the castle, although it has been considered one of the principal castles in the lordship of Gwynllwg during the Norman incursions of the 12th century. It was later superseded as a principal castle by the construction of Newport Castle built between 1327 and 1386.

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- 2.5 A number of other archaeological features and finds are recorded from the vicinity of the study area. A single prehistoric feature, comprising a Bronze Age scraper is known from within 500m of the site. No Roman or Dark Age features are known from the vicinity, although there are several references to finds and features of medieval date.
- 2.6 The medieval Chapel of St. James was to the south of study area. This building probably now lies beneath the A48. St. Mary's Church is medieval in origin. A medieval cross is present within the churchyard.
- 2.7 The earliest cartographic material to illustrate the castle motte is included in the Tredegar Estate papers held at the National Library of Wales. A plan of 1760 drawn to illustrate the holdings of Mill Farm shows the study area and a rough outline of the location of the motte. A simple rectangular hall-type building is present roughly in the location of the modern hotel. A dotted line shown on the map is likely to represent the line of a trackway leading to the motte from the main road.
- 2.8 A plan of 1777 shows a curvilinear line drawn from the motte, curving to the southeast. This feature would fit very well into a traditional bailey plan for an 11th-12th century motte-and-bailey type castle. The rectangular building shown on the 1760 plan had now made way for an 'L' shaped building, which appears to be located slightly to the southeast of the former structure.
- 2.9 The next available plan dates to 1824 illustrating the property of Sir Mark Wood. This shows the study area containing the motte and a substantial house with several wings. The next plan is the 1841 tithe map, which shows a similar basic house plan, although there are a number of marked differences. The motte is not shown on this plan and the grounds have been subdivided on the western side. The 1881 1st Edition Ordnance Survey plan shows the motte and a much-changed house, although the essential outline of the frontage is similar. Of more interest are two banks shown to the south of the motte and which may represent a square or sub-square outer ringwork. A possible 'tumulus' is also marked within the grounds of the house. It may be considered unlikely, however, that this does represent a prehistoric mound. If this area were originally included within the bailey to Wentloog Castle such a feature would undoubtedly have been levelled during construction. It is more likely, however, that this feature was formed through another process, such as piled demolition rubble, possibly from the 1777 house.
- 2.10 The 1920 Ordnance Survey plan illustrates the continuing evolution of the house, particularly to the rear. The present layout of the building, including the extension to the frontage and western annexe are of comparatively modern origin.
- 2.11 The pasture field to the west of the study area had been previously evaluated by Cotswold Archaeological Trust (Barber 1997). Extracts from the report on these works were provided. No archaeological features relating to the Castle bailey were identified during the works.

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- 2.12 The evaluation works undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in December 2003 comprised the excavation and recording of five 10m by 1.8m trenches across the proposed development area (Figure 2). Evaluation Trenches 1-3 demonstrated that the area had been previously stripped prior to the construction of the hotel car park, although a probable buried garden soil was present in Trenches 4-5. Trenches 1 and 2 revealed the presence of a probable terrace wall and pathway, which were likely to represent elements of the 17th-18th century gardens to Castleton House. Trenches 4 and 5 proved to contain the foundations for a 19th-20th century wall, but no other archaeological features. Two sherds of medieval pottery, comparable with Chepstow Ha ware of 12th-13th century date, were recovered during the project.
- 2.13 Consequently, the first evaluation identified features comprising a 17th-18th century terrace wall, a 19th century path and a 19th-20th century wall. Medieval activity was restricted to the recovery of two sherds of pottery, neither of which was associated with any feature. This field evaluation did not identify the bailey, although the probable, 17th/18th century terrace wall revealed in Trenches 1 and 2 may conceivably lie on line of the postulated bailey; it is not impossible that a new terrace was built along the line of an existing topographic feature.
- 2.14 The main archaeological potential for the site was therefore for Medieval activity associated with Wentloog Castle. This did not prejudice the evaluation to the recovery of features from other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluations 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:
- 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 excavation of three trenches measuring 15m by 2m and one trench (Trench 1) measuring 20m by 2m. The location of Trench 4 was revised on site to fall outside the footing of the former hotel building. This was undertaken following discussion with Jon Mullis of Babtie Group and agreed with Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust.
- 5.2 Tarmac 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 trenches were cleaned and all additional excavation was conducted by hand.
- 5.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the Babtie Specification and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

6 RESULTS

- 6.1 **Trench 1** (20m long by 2m wide) was aligned north northeast to south southwest and was excavated onto the natural pink brown clay sand with moderately large limestone fragments. Depths ranged from 0.44m (30.68m OD) in the SSW corner, 0.59m in the centre of the trench, to 0.36m (30.57m OD) in the NNE corner from the modern ground surface. The area within and around this trench appears to have had been stripped and subsequently levelled with a hardcore rubble layer prior to the construction of the hotel. A modern drain and a pipe running southwest to northeast of the southwest end of the trench also resulted in further disturbance of this trench. Modern rubble hardcore within a sandy loose matrix (102) overlaid the natural throughout the trench. Large oblong concrete footings were situated at intervals throughout the trench, cut into the natural and (102). Modern demolition rubble (101) overlay both (102) and (103). No archaeological features were present within this trench.
- 6.2 **Trench 2** (15m long by 1.8m wide) was aligned north to south and was excavated onto the natural orange brown clay sand with large limestone fragments. Depths ranged from 0.48m (33.01m OD) to 0.44 (32.86m OD) at the north and south ends respectively and 1.4m towards the centre. Two modern pipes, one iron and one ceramic were present at the north end of the trench. A grey black to brown black hard clay sand subsoil (204) overlaid the natural. This layer contained pieces of wood, unidentified metal, brick, modern clay pipe, china, slate, and charcoal.
- 6.3 Pit/ditch [205] was present in the central part of the trench and comprised a large negative feature, measuring 6.2m wide by at least 0.97m deep, with slightly irregular, sloping sides. It was not bottomed due to Health and Safety constraints. The feature cut layer (204) and cut, or was associated with, a pipe

trench. It contained an orange brown clay sand (206) with fragments of ceramic pipe and Post-medieval ceramics.

- 6.4 Cut [205] was sealed at its northern end by a yellow sandy gravel (209) forming the hardcore for a thin concrete layer (208). A compact grey brown sand with limestone fragments (207) overlaid both (206) and (208). Layer (204) and cut [205] were sealed beneath a brown beige sandy medium limestone rubble hardcore (203). This was overlain in turn by a layer of hardcore (202) for the tarmac surface (201) to the car park
- 6.5 **Trench 3** (16m long by 2m wide) was aligned north to south and was excavated onto natural at 0.29m (34.48m OD) in the north end and 1.10m (34.04m OD) in the south end from the modern ground surface. Modern disturbance in the form of drains, pipe trenches, and investigation hatches cut into the natural substrate along the length of the trench. The natural was overlain in patches by a mid-brown clay sand with occasional large limestone and brick fragments (302), probably a remnant subsoil. Overlying the natural and (302) was a modern make-up layer (301) containing tarmac, concrete, pipes, plastic, and other sorts of demolition rubble all within a dark brown loose sandy matrix. No archaeological features were present within this trench.
- 6.6 **Trench 4** (15m long by 2m wide) was cut in an east-west alignment and excavated onto the natural pink grey to orange grey clay sand with medium to large limestone fragments. The depth of the trench ranged from 0.33m (35.77m OD) at the west end, to 0.18m at the east end (34.94m OD) from the modern ground surface. This trench was relocated northwards to avoid a deep cellar associated with the hotel. A mid red brown clay sand subsoil (403) containing Late Post Medieval ceramic overlay the natural in the west end of the trench. This was overlain by a pale yellow loose silty gravel make-up layer (402), itself beneath a black loose silty sand topsoil (401). These layers were cut by an area of sunken flooring [406], measuring 9.4m long by at least 2m wide by 0.89m deep cut layers (402) and (403).
- 6.7 Feature [406] consisted of two north-south walls at the west and east ends and a 0.10m thick concrete floor finished with plastic tiles (405). The feature contained demolition backfill (404), which included modern cans, glass, and ceramics. The west end of the trench had been disturbed by a drain pipe running east-west before turning 90° southwards to follow the western wall of [406]. The east end of the trench had been further disturbed by a modern water pipe associated with the eastern wall of [406].

7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1 Previous archaeological works indicated a possible line for the bailey associated with the motte of Wentloog Castle. Earlier field evaluation (2003) did not identify the bailey, although a probable terrace wall, dated by 17th-18th century pottery within the construction cut, was located, which may conceivably lie on line of the postulated bailey. A possible outer ringwork is also illustrated on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey plan.

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- 7.2 The 2003 evaluation demonstrated that the site had previously been stripped, probably during 19th century landscaping works. A number of garden features were also identified. Two sherds of 12th-13th century medieval pottery were recovered during the 2003 evaluations.
- 7.3 The historic core of the hotel building was extensively cellared and archaeological remains in these areas would have been badly truncated or completely destroyed. Examination of historic maps also demonstrated that there has been considerable fluctuation in the plan of the house, which appears to have been completely rebuilt a number of times. Wall foundations and possible earlier cellaring may also have removed archaeological deposits. It was likely, therefore, that the area of the existing hotel, excluding the 'modern' extensions, would retain limited potential for the presence of archaeological features.
- 7.4 The current evaluation trenches were all sited to test for the location of the bailey, while attempting to avoid the most obvious areas of modern cellaring. With the exception of Trench 2, all the trenches contained significant modern disturbance associated with the hotel and its ancillary buildings. Natural deposits, albeit often truncated or surviving only as 'islands' surrounded by modern disturbance, were identified within each trench.
- 7.5 A large negative feature was identified in Trench 2. The profile of this cut would suggest that it has no potential to represent a defensive ditch associated with the castle. A more likely interpretation would be that it might represent the cut for the bowl to a large fountain, which previously stood in the grounds of Castleton House and was removed after a daughter of the house drowned within it. The cut contained 19th-20th century pottery at the lowest levels and either cut, or was associated with, a service trench carrying a substantial cast iron water pipe. It is of some interest, however, to note that the cut corresponds with a line of unknown origin illustrated on the trench location plan supplied by Babtie Group.
- 7.6 No archaeologically significant finds or features were located during the evaluation works.

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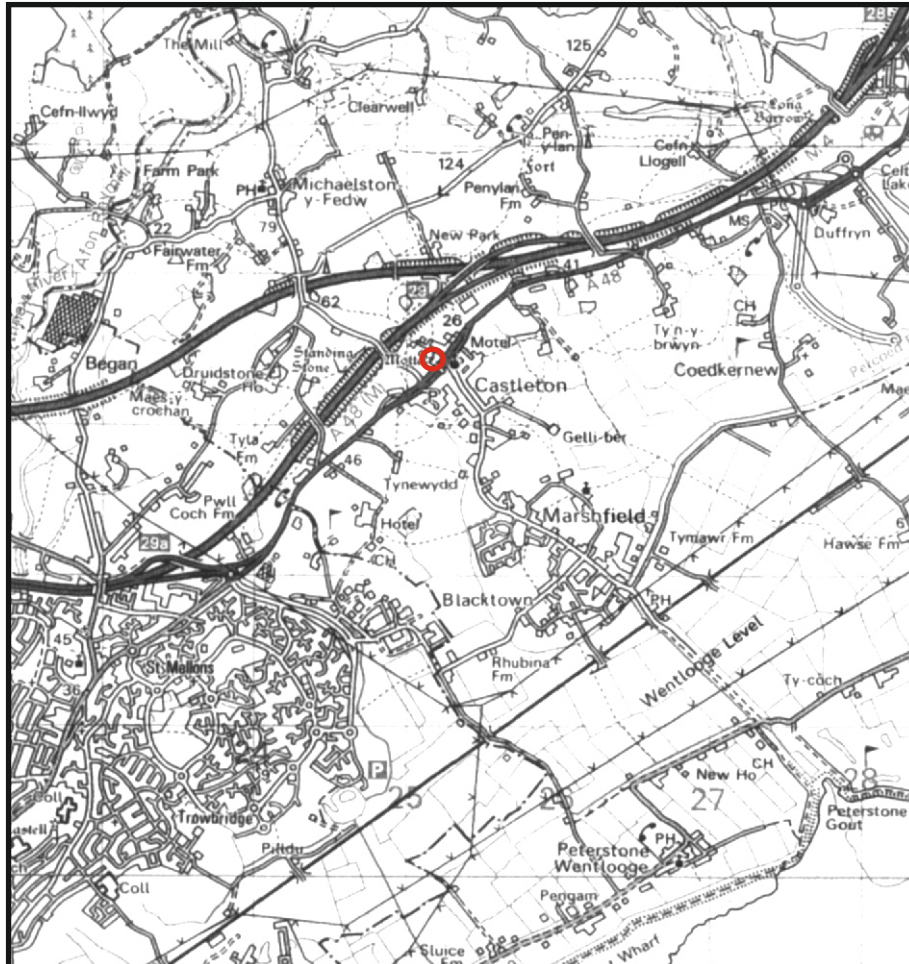
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FIGURE 1: Site Location

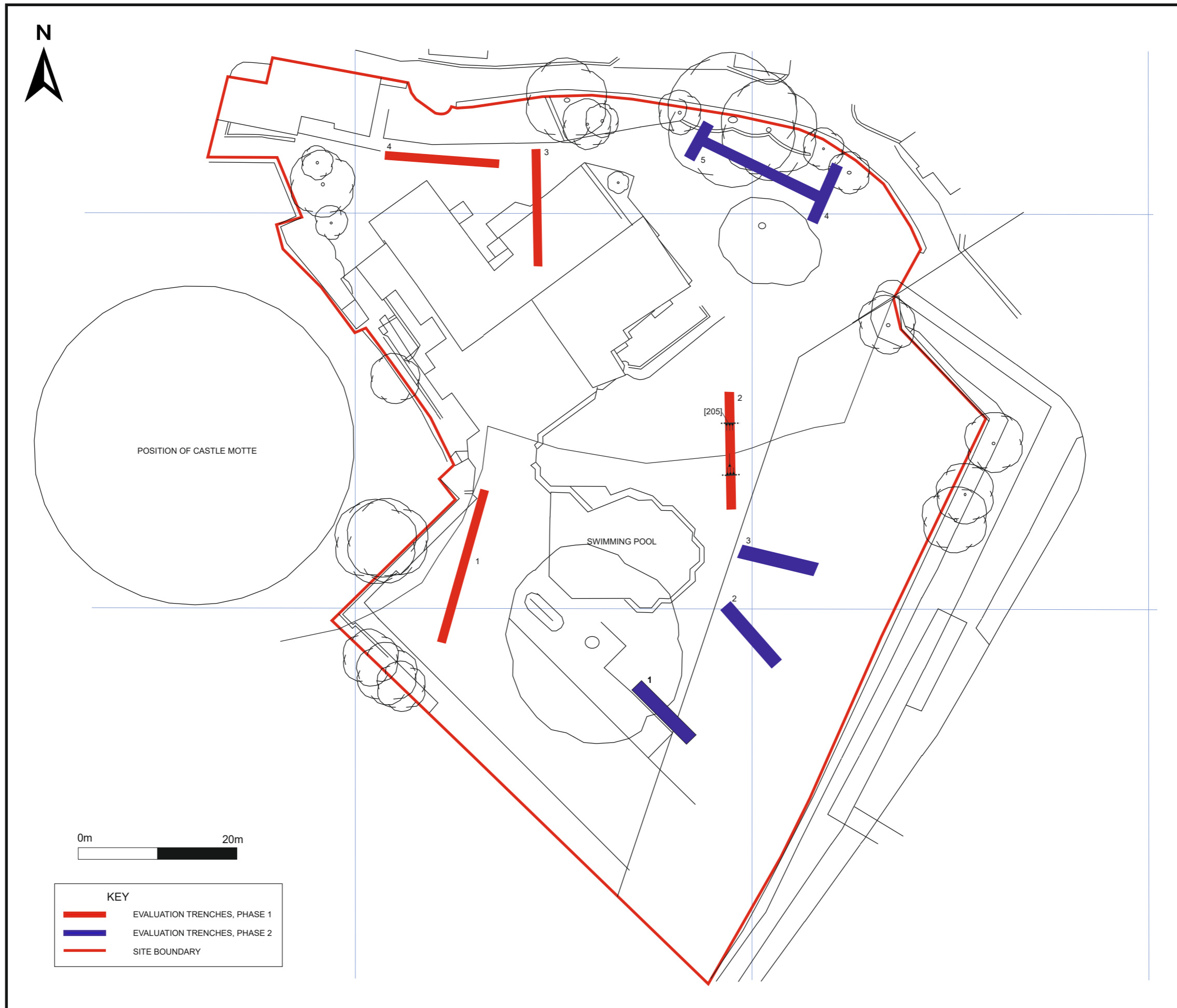


FIGURE 2: Trench Locations

EAST FACING SECTION OF TRENCH 2

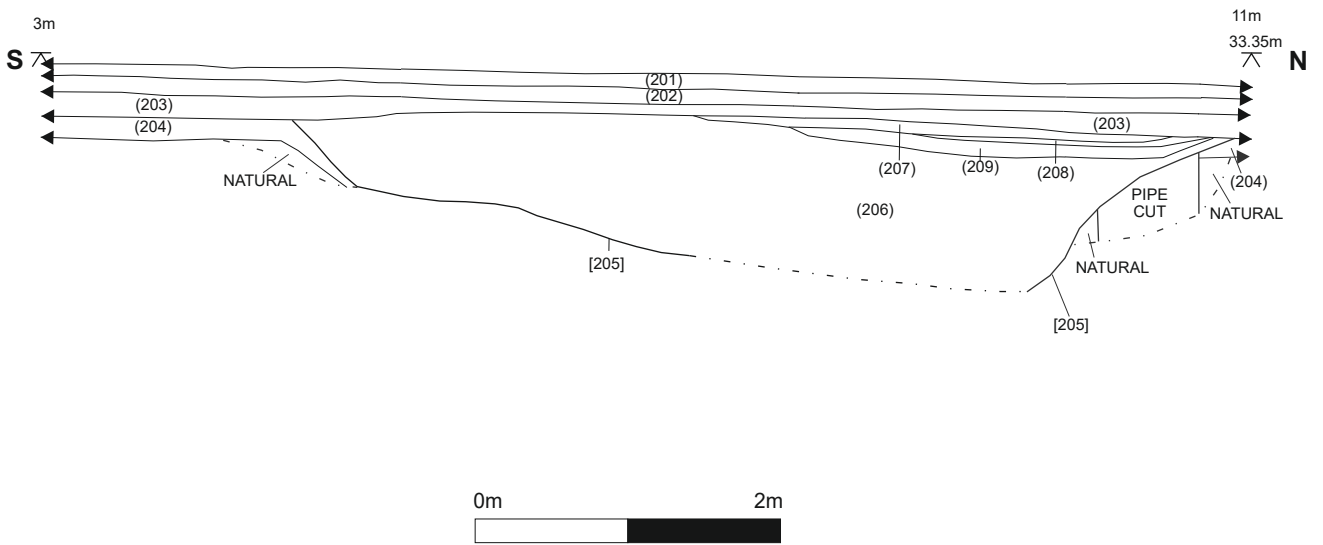


FIGURE 3: Trench 2, Section