

# *Archaeology Wales*

## **2a Ashwell Villas, Ashwell, Caerleon**

### Archaeological Watching Brief



By  
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Report No. 1070

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### Archaeological Watching Brief

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## 2a Ashwell Villas, Caerleon

### **Summary**

*In July 2012 Archaeology Wales was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Heard to carry out a watching brief during the excavation of footings for an extension to the rear of their house in Ashwell, Caerleon. The work involved the excavation of an L-shaped trench to a depth of 0.7m. The trenches cut through topsoil within which post-medieval glass, pottery and animal bone was found. No features of archaeological significance were revealed.*

### **1. Introduction**

In July 2012 Archaeology Wales was commissioned to carry out a watching brief during the excavation of footings trenches for an extension to the rear of 2a Ashwell Villas, Ashwell, Caerleon NP18 1JU (fig. 1). Planning permission for the construction was granted by Newport City Council on the 12<sup>th</sup> July 2012 (planning application 12/0408).

The site lies around 500m south-east of the Roman fortress of Isca (Caerleon), on the opposite site of the river. Roman remains are known to extend into this area and consequently, Neil Maylan of Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust recommended that an archaeological watching brief be carried out on the site during the works.

The watching brief was undertaken on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2012 by Dr Amelia Pannett. The site condition were good and the weather dry and sunny.

### **2. Site Description**

The site is located to the rear of 2a Ashwell Villas, a 1930s semi-detached house in the small village of Ashwell, south-east of Caerleon. A large post-medieval house stood on the site until its destruction in the 1930s. The site lies on the eastern edge of the floodplain of the river Usk at 12m AOD. The site is located on the edge of the riverine gravels which overlie the Devonian sandstone geology.

### **3. Results**

Around one third of the site had previously been occupied by a small extension that was recently demolished (figs. 2 and 5). An L-shaped trench was excavated to accommodate the footings of the new extension. This measured 6m north-east/south-west and 5m north-west/south-east, was 0.8m wide and up to 0.7m deep. The trench was excavated by hand (fig. 3).

The trench cut through a thick deposit of topsoil containing post-medieval glass, pottery (blue and white glazed), animal bone, coal and ash (fig. 4). This deposit was at least 0.7m deep, with no underlying deposits revealed in the trench. No features of artefacts of archaeological significance were revealed.

On the north-eastern side of the trench the shallow brick foundations of the former extension were revealed. These overlay the topsoil deposit. A brick-built drain containing pipes leading to the cess-pit for the house was identified on the northern edge of the trench. The cess pit pipes were found to be leaking, the water from which flooded the northern side of the trench (fig. 4).



#### **4. Discussion and Conclusions**

No features of archaeological significance were revealed during the excavation of the footings trench for the new extension at 2a Ashwell Villas. The site appears to have been landscaped in the post-medieval period, with a significant depth of topsoil deposited. This could have been associated with the large post-medieval house that occupied the site until the 1930s, perhaps the remains of a terraced garden. The trenches did not extend below the topsoil deposit, and consequently no archaeological horizons were disturbed.

#### **5. Acknowledgements**

Thanks to Anthony Wood and the construction staff for their assistance on site.

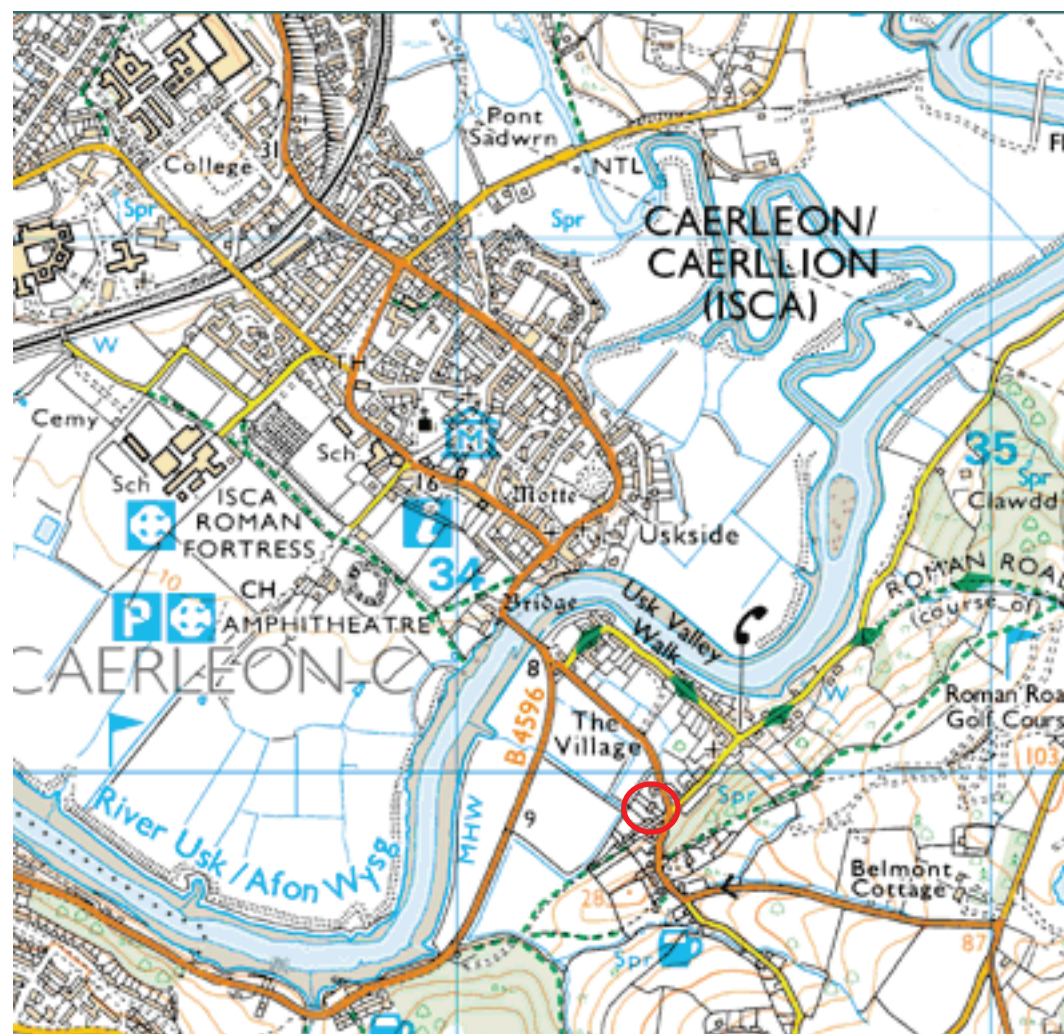
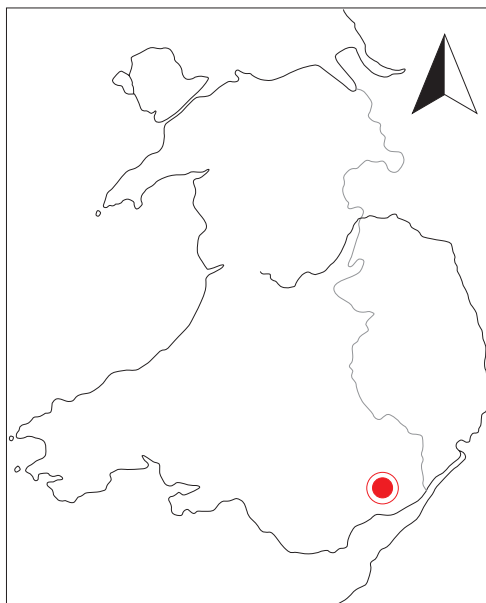


Fig. 1  
Location of  
development  
site



Fig. 2  
The site prior to  
excavation

Looking West





North-western trench



North-eastern trench - brick in  
centre of trench acting as a dam

Fig. 3  
The trench post  
excavation

Scale = 1m





Fig. 4  
Section through  
the topsoil

Scale = 1m



Fig. 5  
The site post  
excavation

Scale = 1m

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