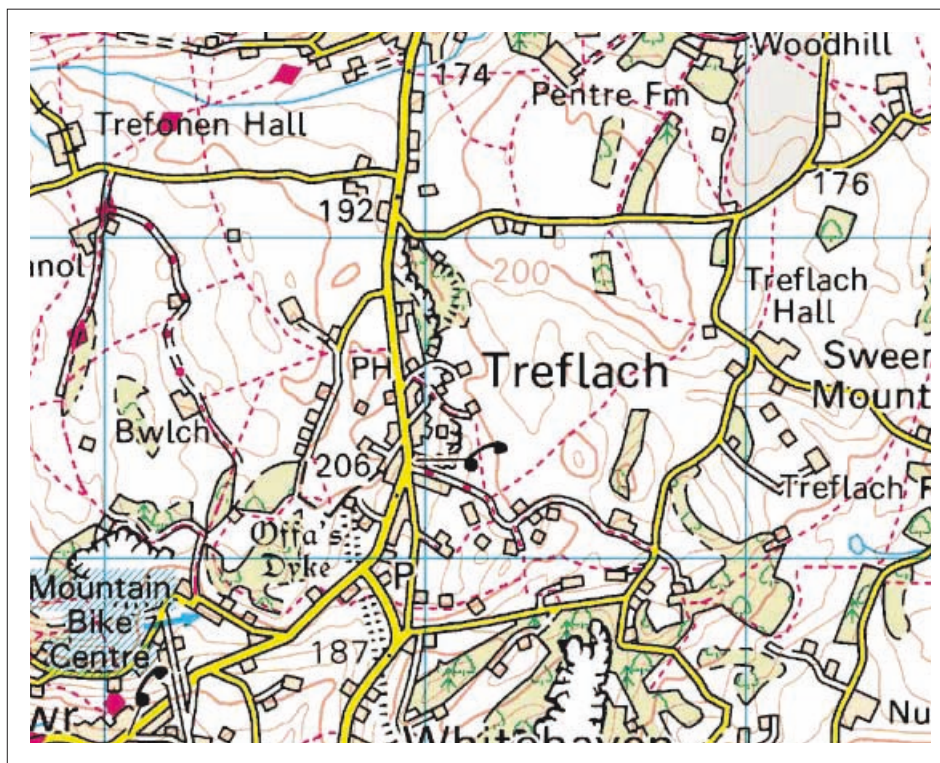


# *Archaeology Wales*

## **Lazy Acre, Treflach Shropshire**

Archaeological Evaluation



By  
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Report No. 1040

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Archaeological Evaluation

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Report No: **1040**

Date: **December2011**

# CONTENTS

1	Introduction .....	1
1.1	Location and scope of work .....	1
1.2	Geology and topography .....	1
1.3	Archaeological and Historical Background .....	1
2	Aims and Objectives .....	4
3	Methodology .....	4
3.1	Evaluation .....	4
3.2	Finds .....	4
3.3	Palaeo-environmental evidence .....	4
4	Evaluation Results .....	5
4.1	Soils and ground conditions .....	5
4.2	Distribution of deposits .....	5
4.3	Description .....	5
5	Finds .....	6
6	Discussion and Interpretation .....	6
6.1	Reliability of field investigation .....	6
6.2	Overall interpretation .....	6
7	Acknowledgements .....	6
8	Bibliography and references .....	7

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1	Location map
Figure 2	Trench Location Map

## **List of Plates**

Plate 1	Trench 1
Plate 2	Trench 1 Section
Plate 3	Trench 2
Plate 4	Trench 2 Section
Plate 5	Foundation trench observed during watching brief
Plate 6	Foundation trench observed during watching brief
Plate 7	Foundation trench observed during watching brief

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# **Non Technical Summary**

*This report results from work undertaken by Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) for Mr Paul Whale on behalf of Mr & Mrs Powell. This report draws upon the results gained by the excavation of two evaluation trenches located adjacent to Lazy Acre, Treflach, Shropshire. Excavation was undertaken prior to the construction of a house on the plot. A watching brief was also carried out on the cutting of foundation trenches. No features of archaeological significance were located within either the evaluation trenches or the foundation trenches.*

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Location and scope of work**

In December 2011 Archaeology Wales (AW) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at Lazy Acre, Treflach, Shropshire NGR SJ25913 25559 (Fig 1).

An evaluation on the site was requested by Dr Andy Wigley of Shropshire Council as part of the planning condition for the construction of a new dwelling. This was based on the sites proximity to the line of Offa's Dyke which passes immediately to the rear (west) of the plot.

A WSI was prepared by Mark Houliston (AW) which was subsequently approved by Dr Andy Wigley prior to the commencement of any work on site.

### **1.2 Geology and topography**

The underlying solid geology of the Cilgerran area is primarily made up of the Caradoc series of deposits laid down in the Palaeozoic era (British Geological Survey, 2001).

Treflach is located within a sparsely wooded, undulating, landscape primarily given over to grazing. The village is located 4km to the south west of the larger urban area of Oswestry.

### **1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

- 1.3.1 Treflach is a township located within the parish of Oswestry. Colin Hinson, in his 2003 transcript of the 1868 National Gazetteer of England and Wales, describes the area thus: "OSWESTRY, a parish, market town, and municipal borough in the Upper division of Oswestry hundred, county Salop, 18 miles N.W. of Shrewsbury, and 179 miles from London. It is a station on the Shrewsbury and Chester section of the Great Western railway, and on the Cambrian, Newtown, and Welsh Coast railway. It is one of the chief

towns on the borders of Wales, and is situated on high ground on the main road from London to Holyhead. The surrounding scenery comprises the vale of Shropshire, with the Wrekin, and the Staffordshire hills on one side; and the views towards the counties of Montgomery and Denbigh on the other. The parish, which consists of nearly 16,000 acres, is divided into 16 townships, including the liberties of the town. The town is of great antiquity, and was originally named by the Britons Croes Oswallt, after St. Oswald, King of Northumberland, who lost his life here in a battle, fighting against the heathen king, Penda of Mercia, in 642. The Saxons called it Masefield, or Maes Oswallt, signifying "Oswald's field," and subsequently Oswaldstre, or "Oswald's town." Being situated between Offa's and Watt's dykes, and a border town, it was the scene of many severe conflicts, as well between the Saxons and Britons as the Welsh and Normans. Walter Fitzalan, the founder of the Stewart dynasty, who built a castle here in the reign of King Stephen, also walled in the town and fortified it. Henry II. having been defeated by the Welsh at Berwyn Hill in 1164 made Oswestry his headquarters. In the reigns of King John and Henry III. Oswestry was twice burnt, in the latter reign by the Welsh under Llewellyn. During the civil wars of Charles I. it was taken by the parliamentary army and dismantled. William Earl of Arundel granted the first charter to the town in the reign of Henry II., but Richard II. gave the first royal charter to Oswestry, which King Charles II. subsequently confirmed. The town has very much improved during the last fifty years. The streets are for the most part spacious, well paved, and lighted with gas, and the houses are generally well built. The sum of £16,000 has lately been expended in supplying it with water, and a complete system of drainage has also been carried out at a considerable cost, while some years ago a large commodious cattle and sheep market was added to the town. Many of the ancient houses built of wood still exist in parts of the town. It is divided into two wards, and governed by a mayor, six aldermen, and eighteen councillors, with the style of "mayor, aldermen, common councilmen, and burgesses of Oswestry."-The population in 1851 was 4,817 with 995 inhabited houses, which in 1861 had increased to 5,414 with 1,125 inhabited houses. The Oswestry Poor-law Union contains 14 parishes and townships, and the workhouse is situated about a mile from the town. The public buildings are the townhall, situated near the site of the castle, and forming one side of the principal square called Bailey-head: it contains a statue of King Oswald in stone. The corn market is roofed in with glass, and has a clock tower. There are besides, the borough gaol, a theatre, and the savings-bank. Two large buildings have lately been erected-one at the S. end of the town, called the Victoria Rooms, for public meetings, assemblies, &c.; and the other at the N. end, containing a reading-room and a hall for lectures. The ruins of the ancient castle are but scanty; they, however, are sufficient to indicate its primitive strength. Flower walks have been planted on the site, a lofty artificial mount, from which good views of the surrounding scenery may be obtained. The town gates were taken down about 1780. There is a spring of water which bears the name of Oswald's well. Quarter sessions, petty sessions, and a county court are held monthly at Oswestry, which is a polling-place for the northern division of the county. The inhabitants are chiefly engaged in the malting trade, which is very flourishing. Brickmaking is also carried on to some extent. The linen and woollen manufacture has very much declined of late. The living is a vicarage\* in the diocese of St. Asaph, value £477. The church,

which is dedicated to St. Mary, was originally part of an old monastery. It is a commodious structure with a square tower and eight bells. In it are some curious tablets and monumental inscriptions. In addition to the parish church there are the district churches of Trinity and Trefonen-the former a perpetual curacy, value £150, in the patronage of the vicar; the latter a perpetual curacy, value £175. There is also Morton Chapel, on the immediate boundary of the parish, to which the townships of Morton and Crickheath, and a part of the township of Sweene, have been assigned as a district, value £600, in the patronage of the bishop. Aston chapel is a private one belonging to Mrs Lloyd, of Aston Hall, and has no district assigned to it; the townships of Pentregaer and Cynynion are assigned to the church at Rhydycroesau. There are also places of worship for Baptists, Calvinistic and Primitive Methodists, Independents, Welsh Independents, and Wesleyans. The free grammar school was founded and endowed by David Holbeck in the reign of Henry IV. There are also National and infant schools, built in the Elizabethan style, and a dispensary. Eure's almshouses are among the charities. The Earl of Powis is lord of the manor. Market days are Wednesday and Saturday, the former for corn, when much business is done, and the latter for cheese, poultry, and provisions. Fairs for the sale of cattle are held on the first Wednesday in every month. TREFLACH, is a township in the parish of Oswestry, county Salop, 3 miles S.W. of Oswestry."

1.3.2 Treflach was described in John Marius Wilson's 1870 *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales* as a township in Oswestry parish, Salop; 3¼ miles SW of Oswestry. Pop., 396.

1.3.3 An online HER search using Shropshire Council's Heritage Gateway revealed a total of 8 archaeological sites within a 250m radius of the site. Six results were returned from the Shropshire HER and 2 from the National Heritage list for England.

1.3.4 The six HER results are described below:

- Site of mound (possible barrow) c.110m N of Royal Oak Inn
- Gibraltar Inn, Treflach Wood
- Possible standing stone 350 E of Bwlch
- Gibraltar Inn
- Treflach Wood chapel
- The Fields (Farmstead)

1.3.5 The two National Heritage List for England results are described below:

- Gibraltar Inn (Grade II listed Building)
- Offas Dyke section

- 1.3.6 Of the 8 results returned from the Heritage Gateway search, the section of Offa's Dyke, which runs immediately to the west of the site, is the most relevant based on its proximity to the proposed groundworks.

## 2 **Aims and Objectives**

2.1.1 The evaluation was undertaken to:

- establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within, and immediately surrounding, the building plot;
- determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present;
- establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features;
- To produce a record of the features

## 3 **Methodology**

### 3.1 **Evaluation**

The excavation consisted of two machine excavated trenches each measuring 1.8m in width. Trench 1 measured 10m in length whilst Trench 2, owing to physical constraints on site, measured 5m in length.

Project Manager Chris E Smith (MIFA) undertook the evaluation. The trenches were cleaned by hand with plans and sections being recorded and drawn at scales of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. All trenches were photographed using high resolution (14MP) digital photography.

The trenches were located so that each followed the proposed line of the proposed dwellings foundations.

All works were undertaken in accordance with the IFA's *Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological evaluation* and current Health and Safety legislation.

### 3.2 **Finds**

Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

### 3.3 **Palaeo-environmental evidence**



No deposits suitable to environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the excavation.

## **4 Evaluation Results**

### **4.1 Soils and ground conditions**

Generally the site and weather conditions were damp, overcast and cold throughout the course of the evaluation. Ground conditions thus remained damp.

### **4.2 Distribution of deposits**

The topsoil was of a reasonably uniform distribution over the surface of the each trench, seemingly varying little across the plot. The topsoil was mainly composed of a friable dark brown/black silt.

### **4.3 Description**

- 4.3.1 Trench 1 (Fig 2, Plates 1-2) measured 10m in length by 1.8m in width and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.8m. Removal of turf and topsoil (101) revealed a mixed horizon composed of dark brown silt with occasional scrap metal and rubble inclusions (102). Subsequent removal of this layer proved it to be reasonably thin, only 0.2m deep, and overlaying a buried topsoil horizon (103). Excavation of (103) revealed occasional 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century ceramic and clay pipe finds. Further removal of (103) showed it to be located above a natural smooth mid brown clay deposit with occasional manganese flecks (104) and no charcoal. Excavation into this horizon ceased at a maximum depth of 1.8m below the current ground surface. No features of archaeological significance were located within Trench 1.
- 4.3.2 Trench 2 (Fig 2, Plates 3-4) measured 5m in length by 1.8m in width. Stratigraphically the trench followed exactly the same sequence as observed in Trench 1 and was excavated to a similar (0.15m shallower) depth. Again, no finds or features of archaeological significance were located.
- 4.3.3 Following a monitoring visit by Shropshire Councils archaeological representative, Dr Andy Wigley, the trenches were observed and the work approved. An archaeological watching brief on the excavation of the proposed dwellings foundation trenches was requested.
- 4.3.4 The excavation of the foundation trenches was carried out by a mechanical excavator using a narrow toothless bucket. Each foundation trench was a maximum of 0.9m deep and 0.75m wide.
- 4.3.5 The foundation trenches (Plates 5-7) were excavated to a shallower depth than the evaluation trenches and produced no finds or features of archaeological significance.

## 5 **Finds**

- 5.1.1 A very small amount of finds was recovered from the two trenches, none of which was retained. The finds assemblage consisted of two sherds of internally glazed red earthenware, a single sherd of 18<sup>th</sup> century glazed Staffordshire ware and two clay tobacco pipe fragments including a diagnostic bowl of c.1700-20 (Partially obscured makers mark on the heel was 'William...'). No finds were located within archaeological features.

## 6 **Discussion and Interpretation**

### 6.1 **Reliability of field investigation**

The overall findings of the evaluation and watching brief were perhaps somewhat inconsistent with what would be expected when excavating adjacent to the line of Offa's Dyke. The area of the evaluation appears to have been terraced down at some point which may have removed any deposits associated with the bank of Offa's Dyke. The ground level then appears to have been raised again at some point, most likely when the house at Lazy Acre was constructed c.25 years ago, as evidenced by the buried topsoil and the scrap metal and rubble deposits.

### 6.2 **Overall interpretation**

The overall interpretation gained from the evaluation and the watching brief is that the stratigraphy shown in the trenches appears to indicate the area having been lowered then subsequently built back up again. No part of the Offa's Dyke bank appears to survive east of the Lazy Acre and adjoining plot property boundary.

## 7 **Acknowledgements**

Thanks are due to Dr Andy Wigley for all his help with monitoring and to everyone on site at Lazy Acre.

## 8 **Bibliography and references**

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Shropshire Council Heritage Gateway – Accessed 10/12/2011

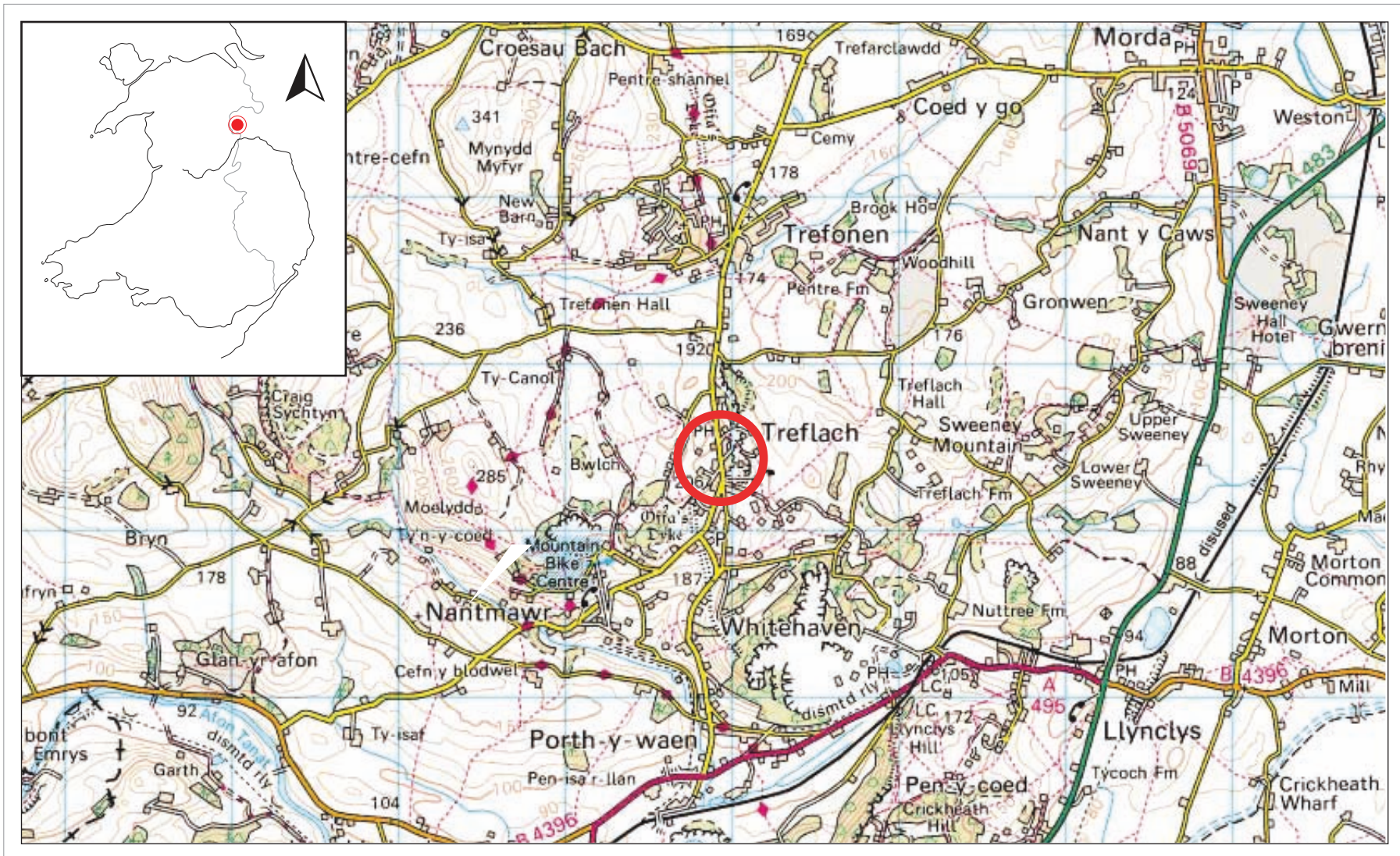


Fig 01: Map showing location of assessment area

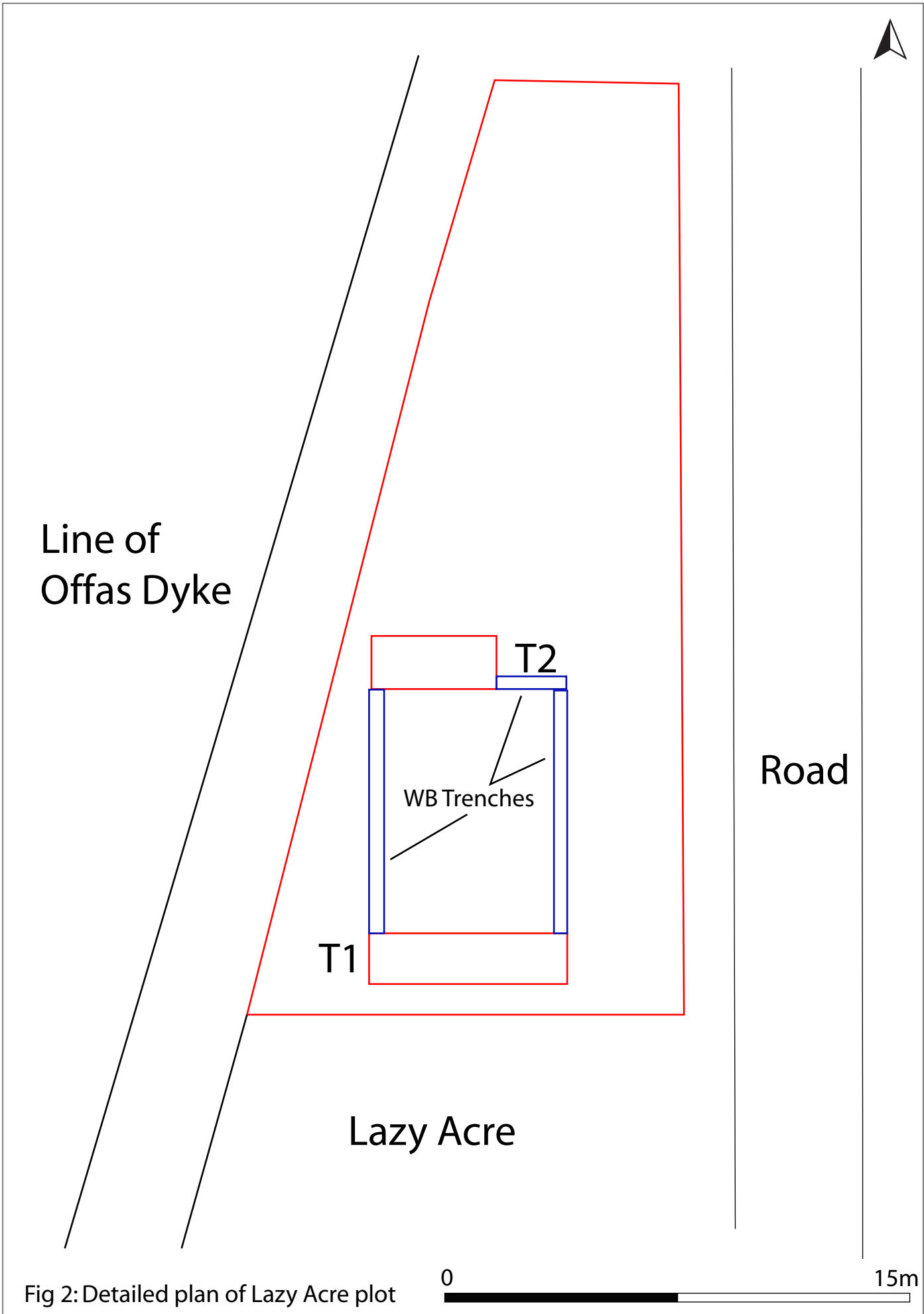


Fig 2: Detailed plan of Lazy Acre plot

0 15m



Plate 1: View along Trench 1, looking west  
Scale 1x1m



Plate 2: View of north facing section within Trench 1  
Scale 1x1m



Plate 3:View along Trench 2 looking south, Scale 1x1m



Plate 4:View of north facing section in Trench 2  
Scale 1x1m



Plate 5: View along western foundation trench from end of trench 2



Plate 6: View along western foundation trench from end of trench 2



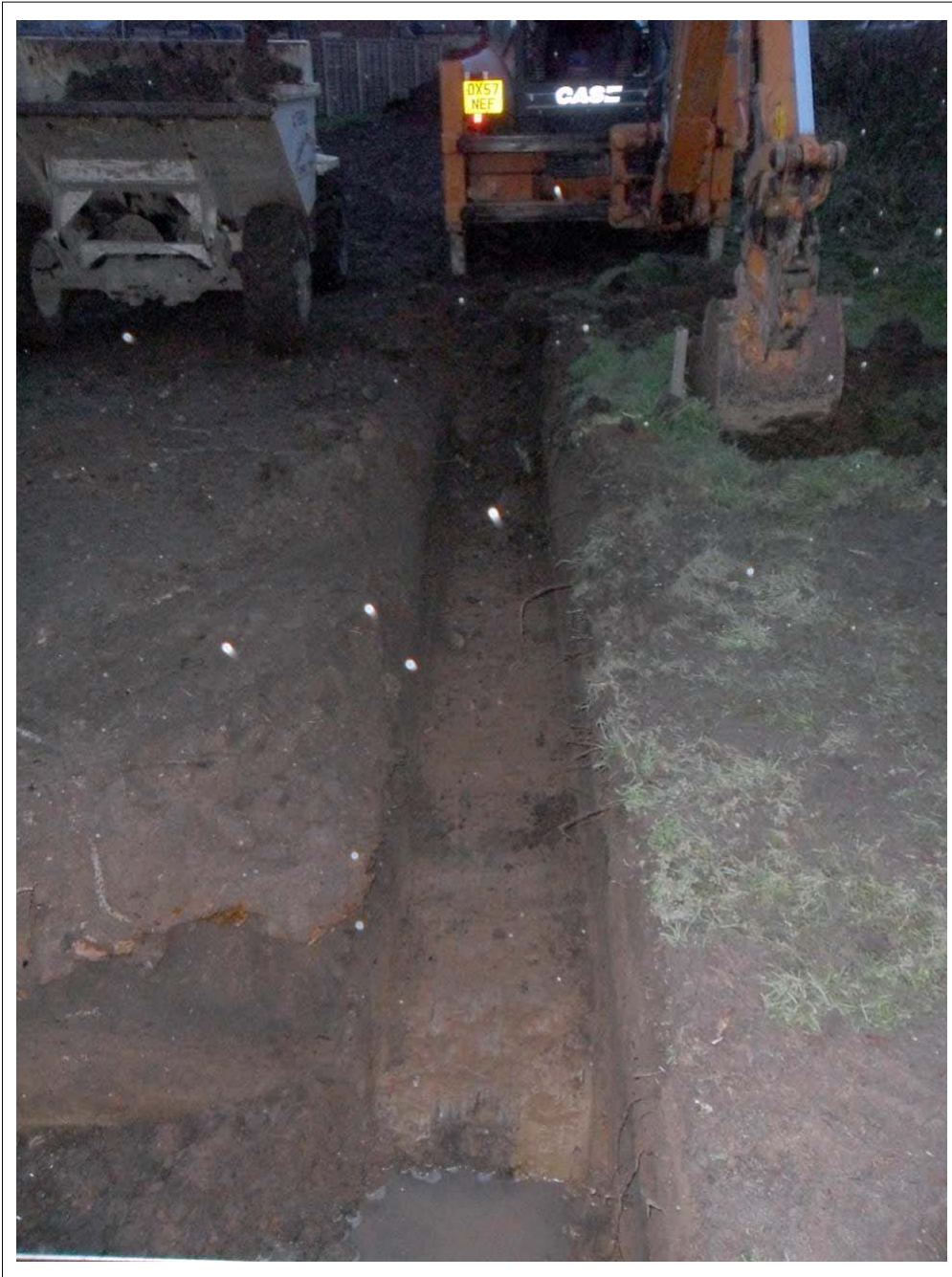


Plate 7: View along eastern foundation trench from end of trench 1

# ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

## Lazy Acre, Treflach

Site Name:	Lazy Acre
Site Code:	LAT/11/EVA
PRN:	-
NPRN:	-
SAM:	-
Other Ref No:	-
NGR:	SJ25913 25559
Site Type:	Proposed Dwelling
Project Type:	Evaluation
Project Manager:	Chris E Smith
Project Dates:	Dec 2011
Categories Present:	Post-medieval/Modern
Location of Original Archive:	AW
Location of duplicate Archives:	-
Number of Finds Boxes:	-
Location of Finds:	-
Museum Reference:	-
Copyright:	AW
Restrictions to access:	None

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