



A.P.A.C. Ltd.

Archaeological Perspectives Analysis Consultancy

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

REPORT

Land adjacent to: Pontrilas Sawmills, Herefordshire.

Planning Application No: 131225/F



Prepared for:

Mr K Cooper (*agent*)

By:

Dr N Phillips.



Summary

This report was commissioned in relation to a planning application under consideration by Hereford Council.

The planning application proposed to develop grassland, adjacent to Pontrilas Sawmills, Herefordshire, which is situated in close proximity to known and suspected sites of archaeological interest.

Therefore, the county archaeologist has suggested that the planning decision be deferred until an archaeological evaluation of the site has been undertaken.

The purpose of the evaluation was to inform planning of any likely archaeological issues which may be impacted upon during ground works.

This report provides details of the work required; namely a topographical survey to highlight any earthworks on the site and the excavation of two evaluation trenches.

The topographic survey identified some very slight anomalies across the site.

The two evaluation trenches were placed to investigate the site and specifically the anomalies identified during the topographic survey.

The findings suggest the site is on a natural knoll which has had some human intervention in the past; all of which lies outside of the intended development, with the exception of an access route which yielded some medieval fabric.

A further feature, possibly a shallow ditch, remains unclear as to its formation; natural/manmade.

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Introduction

This report has been prepared by Dr Neil Phillips, A.P.A.C. Ltd, from the results of a programme of archaeological evaluation work undertaken on land adjacent to Pontrilas Sawmills, Kenderchurch, Herefordshire. HR2 0BE, fig 01.

The client's, agent for the proposed development, Mr K. Cooper, Heald Partnership; having submitted a planning application to Hereford City Council (pl.app.no 131225/F), had been advised that the application would be deferred until a programme of archaeological works had be undertaken at the site.

The client's agent contacted A.P.A.C. ltd, to undertake the work.

Based on discussion with Mr J Cotton, Hereford County Archaeologist, a design brief for the work was drawn up, submitted and agreed as fit for purpose, (DB: EVTO/PT/13).

Site Location and Description

The site is located on the eastern side of an isolated knoll, just to the north of Pontrilas but south east of Pontrilas Sawmills.

To the north, the site is bounded by Pontrilas Sawmills, first registered in 1948.

To the east, are the Hereford - Abergavenny road and rail links.

The south is bounded by farmland and to the west; the churchyard stands atop the hill inside a rampart.

Access can be gained from the A465 Hereford to Abergavenny road, south of the sawmills, where to the left of the main entrance there is a short track leading to a gate which opens into the site, fig 01.

The area of ground to be evaluated is the eastern slope of the knoll and at the time of the work, the field was under pasture.

Geology and Topography

The solid geology of the site falls within the St Maughan's sandstone with possible superficial deposits of Alluvium, clay and silt; <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/>

The site is on the eastern side of an elongated oval knoll of land which stands some 20m high above the surrounding valley.

Brief archaeological and historical background

There is very little information available on the general area of Pontrilas although there is a listing in Domesday, 1086, as Elwistone, (Thorn 1, 56. 1983).

Tradition has it that Elwistone became Helyston, Helistone Elstone, Elstones and Elstone Bridge the latter being recorded on Christopher Saxton's Map of 1577, (Smith 2004).

However, by the end of the 17th century Elstone Bridge had become known as the Welsh name Pontrilas, (Rowley 2001).

The First Series Ordnance Survey Map of the more specific site area, shows the knoll surmounted by the church with an enclosed rectangular feature including a building, between the church and the road fig 02.

By the time of the later 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map, both the enclosure and the building were not recorded, fig 03.



The site is dominated by the Church of St Mary, which is a Grade II listed building (155542) and a Scheduled Ancient Monument, (SAM 6882).

Thorn noted that; as both Kenderchurch, where the site is situated and the neighbouring Kentchurch, both have churches dedicated to Welsh saints: *Ecclesia Sancti Kenderi* (Saint Cynidr) and *Ecclesia de Sancta Keyne* (Saint Ceina). The priest at Elwistone may well have presided over both churches which were part of the grant of Harold son of Earl Ralph to Ewyas Harold Priory, (Thorn 1, 56. 1983).

The present building is predominantly Victorian (1871); a restoration which has removed the earlier possibly 13th/14th century structure.

The SMR listing records that the church has a 15th century rood screen, an unspecified wagon roof with bosses, a Norman font, a circular graveyard and a medieval cross base; the latter is also scheduled (SAM 6788).

Aims and Objectives

In accordance with the Design Brief: DB EVTO/PT/13, the aim of the proposed work was to:

Elucidate the character, distribution, extent and importance of any potential archaeological remains, extant in the development area.

Provide an information base from which to formulate mitigation strategies, in the event of significant archaeological resources being impacted upon within the development area.

Provide a detailed record of the work to allow for a report to be produced.

Provide a detail record of the work; in the event of significant archaeological resources being discovered, to allow for publication in a suitable academic journal.

Allow for the development to be monitored.

These aims were realized through a program of archaeological field evaluation including a topographic survey of the site and evaluation trenching.

Methodology

Survey

The topographic survey was undertaken on the 8th August 2013 using a Topcon 3007 REDM to map the site boundary, visible earthworks or anomalies and a background area profile. All data was set from an arbitrary site datum point.

The data collected was imputed into CivilCad for initial processing and exported to Topcon 3000PI for 3D modelling.

A further data set was exported into Autocad in order to include information and geo reference supplied by the client.

The output was then exported to Adobe Illustrator for presentation.

Evaluation

Two 20m x 1.8m trenches were excavated by a tracked mechanical digger fitted with a grading bucket.

The location of the trenches is shown in fig 06; their placement chosen by visible surface anomalies.

The intention was to stop the digger once any archaeological horizon had been reached in order to do any clearing work by hand. As no archaeological resources were found this action was not initiated.



A record of the stratigraphy of each trench was made during excavation and modified on completion.

The work was recorded digitally throughout using a Sony DSC F828 Camera set to 8mp Jpeg & RAW format.

All finds recovered were recorded to context and bagged.

One find was recorded 3 dimensionally in relation to the trench boundary.

Data Presentation

Data referred to within the text is shown in Figures, and Plates.

Appendix I presents in spreadsheet format, details of all the photographs, including those not used in the text which are identified with a P in the right column.

A contact sheet is also provided and a full set of photographs is included in an archive disc.

Survey Results

Ground conditions

Vegetation was low and even and the weather conditions during the survey were dry; however, the sun was high in the sky, mid afternoon, which is generally known to be a poor time for recognising low earthworks.

Description

The site is enclosed within a 294m perimeter which encloses 4395 m² of land sloping west to east at an average gradient of 1:6.6. A 3D terrain model of the site is shown in fig 4 along with a slope profile.

There are three changes of slope that were both identified on the ground and picked up in the survey; they are highlighted in fig 05.

The first begins at the gate in the north east corner of the field and follows the hedgerow, as a gentle depression, for some 30m before veering up and across the slope in a southerly direction.

The second is a very slight depression at the west of the field at the hedgerow, behind which is a steep 1m high rampart.

The third is a depression to just beyond the south west corner of the site.

Evaluation Trenches Results

Stratigraphic contexts are given in [].

Trench 1. (refer to figs 06 & 07)

Initial excavation of the first trench started with the removal of the topsoil [100] to a depth of between 10-15mm, varying along the trench, Plates 01 & 02.

This exposed an orange sandy deposit [101] at a below surface depth of about 40mm.

Beneath [101] was another sandy deposit [102], slightly more red in colour with occasional charcoal flecks.

Natural surface [103] was reached next; characterised as compacted pink sandy clay with occasional bands of degraded sandstone, Plate 03.



The degraded sandstone tended to be located around the high point of slight terracing; probably giving rise to the features as differential erosion.

One anomalous deposit of dark brown/red clay [104] was found at the bottom of the larger terrace, which cannot be explained as yet but no finds were associated with it, Plate 03, at the ranging rod.

Trench 2. (refer to figs 06 & 08)

The second trench was excavated in the same way starting with the topsoil [200].

Beneath [200] was the same sequence as in trench 1 [101]=[201], [102]=[202] and [103]=[203], Plate 04, 05 & 06.

There was no evidence of the clay deposit [104] but then the undulations in the natural found in trench 2 ran at right angles to the slope, Plate 04, rather than across it as in trench 1.

This would reduce any pooling of silts which may have been the cause of [104] in trench 1, Plate 03.

Finds

Trench 1 produced 4 ceramic sherds from [101] and 3 from [102] the majority 19th-20th century.

Trench 2 produce a similar date array from the upper [201] plus some bone fragments and a piece of agricultural metal fitting.

The lower layer [202] however produced a base sherd of a 13th century jug with a green lead glaze and thumbled base.

Plates 06 & 07 show the find spot, sherd image Plates, 08 & 09.

Another potential find was a small piece of stone with a plough cut and possible incised lines; although this cannot be confirmed as an intentional modification.

Discussion and Interpretation

The general stratigraphy of the site would appear to be of natural formation with the possible exception of the depression in trench 1 containing the clay [104] deposit.

The undulations in trench 2 would also appear to be natural running as they do in the direction of natural drainage.

There is however a possibility that the slight depression at the northern end of the trench may have given rise to, or been modified by, an access route to the church. This is the route still used today and was in use in 1888, fig 03.

If this is the case then it is possible that the piece of 13th century jug was deposited by someone visiting the church.

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Staff

Dr. Neil Phillips, AIFA.

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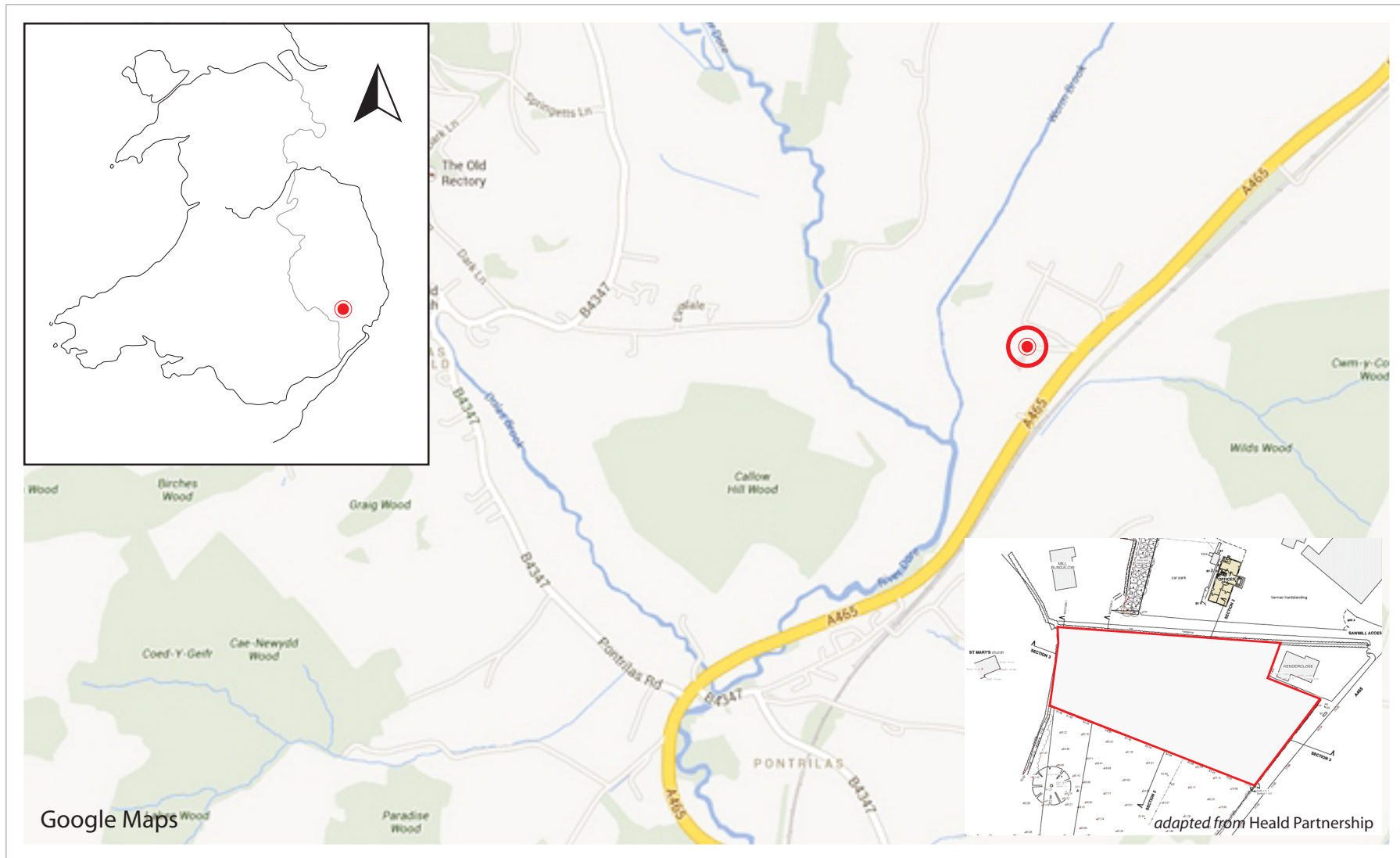


Fig 01: Location



Fig 02: 1888

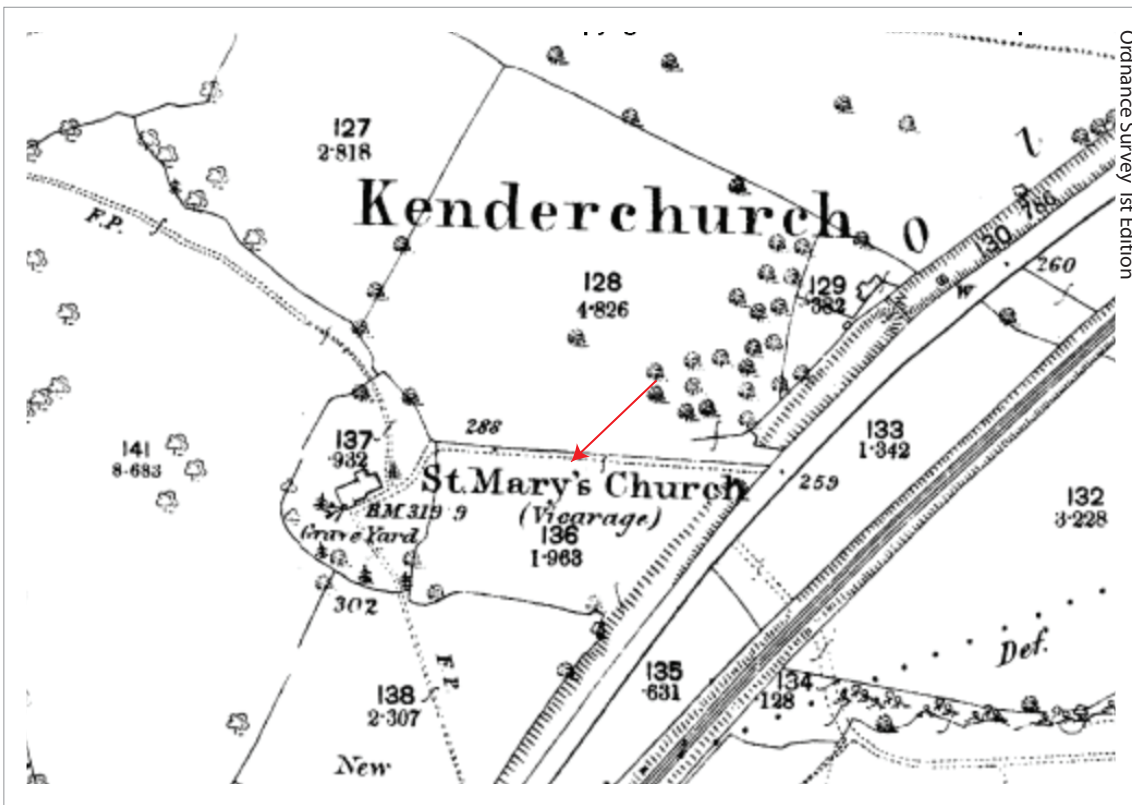


Fig 03: 1888



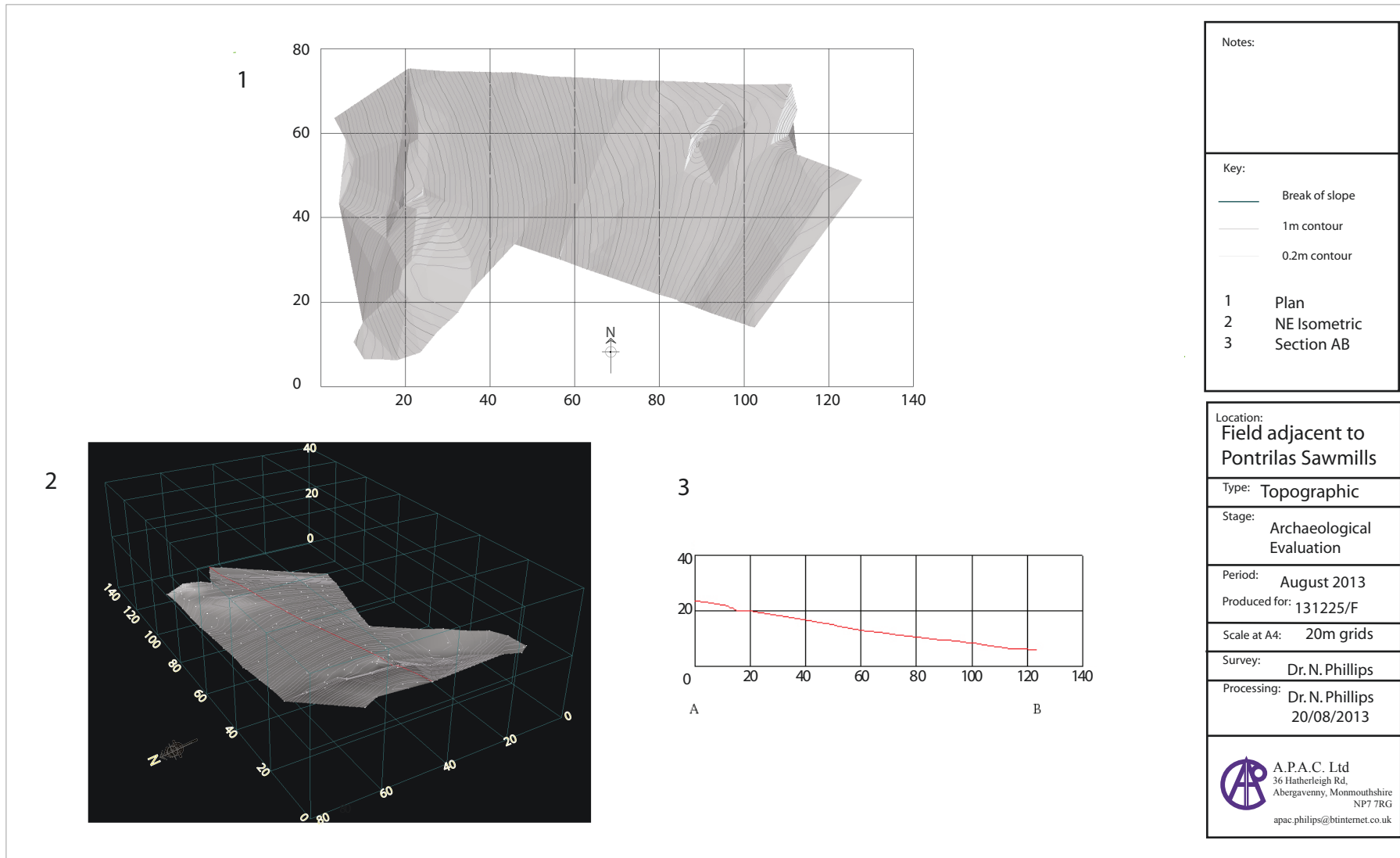


Fig 04: Topographic Survey

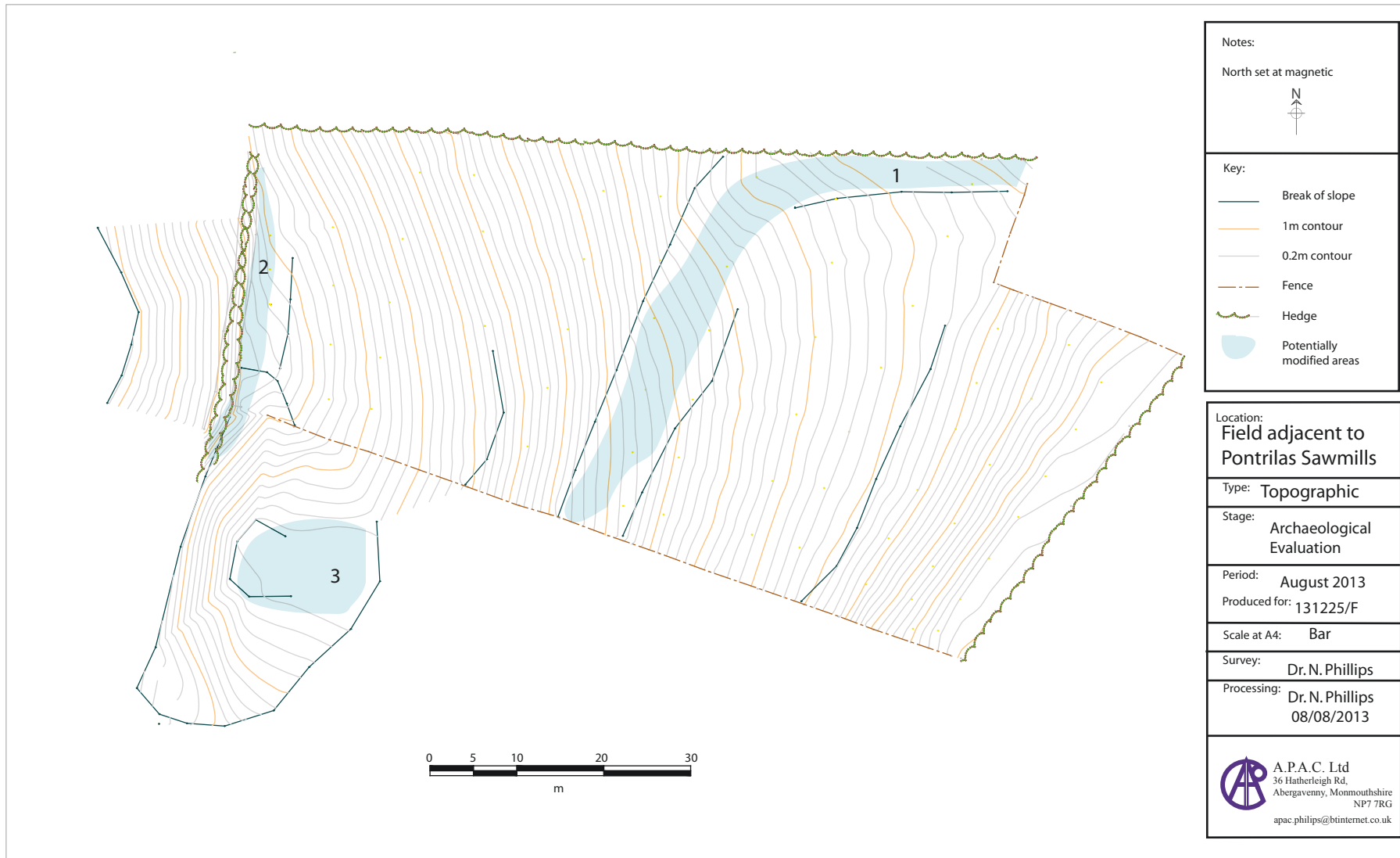


Fig 05: Interpretation

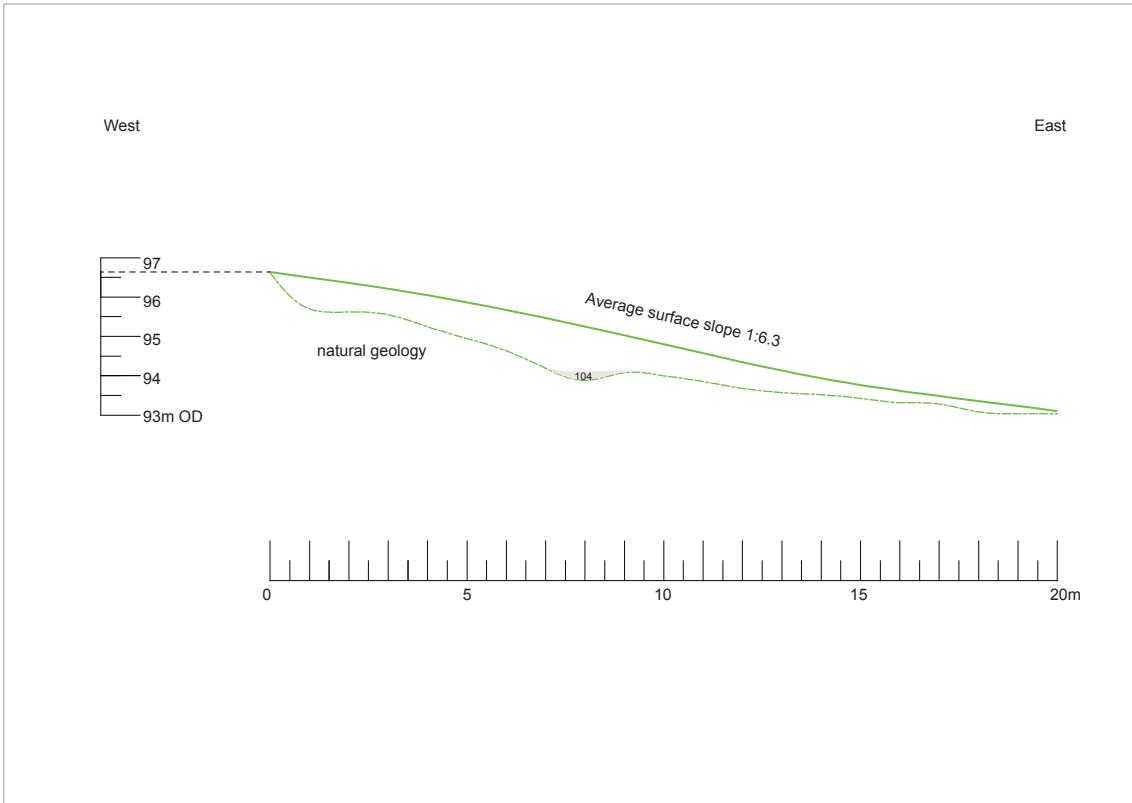


Fig 07: Trench 1 section showing original slope and slope of natural

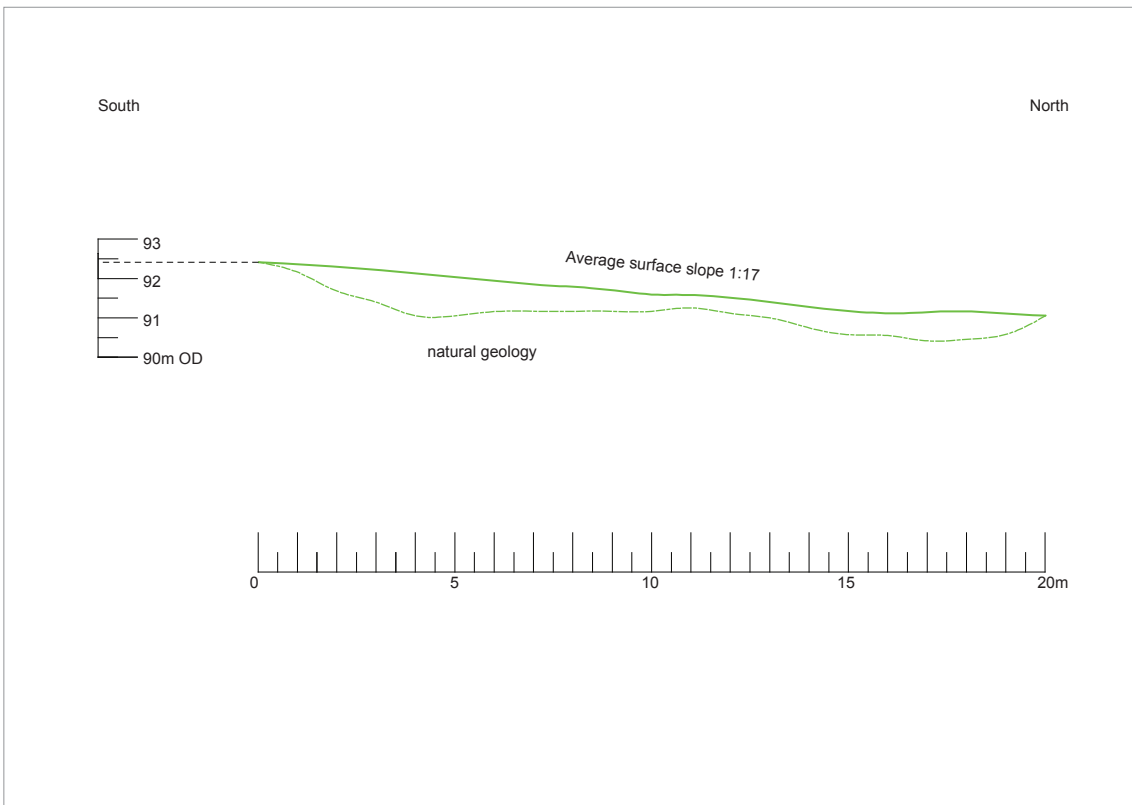


Fig 08: Trench 1 section showing original slope and slope of natural





Plate 01: Initial excavation of Trench 1. South edge at western end. Deposition sequence of [100] to [103]



Plate 02: Detail of section at shallow depression. Colours fairly constant but textures differ.



Plate 03: View 2 uphill of trench 1 showing shallow depression at ranging rod.





Plate 04: View along trench 2 showing deep undulation 4m from the west end



Plate 05: East wall of trench 2 6m from western edge. Deposition sequence [200] to [203]





Plate 06: Deepest part of trench 2 showing natural at 1m, 4m from northern end



Plate 07: West wall trench 2 showing find spot [200] 2.4m from at north end at a depth of 500mm





Plate 08: 13th c, Thumbbed base with green lead glaze. Local similar to Monmouth A5 and Hereford A7b



Plate 09: Few inclusions, black reduced inner surface.

Site: Field adjacent to Pontrilas Sawmills		Grid Ref: 340373 228380	Site No: EVTO/PT/13	Alternate No:	
CONTEXT	AREA	FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	FINDS	PHOTOGRAPHS
100	TR1	surface	Grass with soil, 100-150mm		DSC05028, DSC05029, DSC05030, DSC05031, DSC05032, DSC05033
101	TR1	deposit	Loose light brown/orange sand c 460mm		DSC05028, DSC05029, DSC05030, DSC05031, DSC05032, DSC05033
102	TR1	deposit	Darker orange/brown sandy soil with occasional decayed root. 400-600mm	1 & 2	DSC05028, DSC05029, DSC05030, DSC05031, DSC05032, DSC05033
103	TR1	natural	Compacted pink/orange sandy clay with decayed green sandstone rock fragments and occasional fractured red sandstone bedding. Shallow terracing at depths of 600mm to 1370mm		DSC05028, DSC05029, DSC05030, DSC05031, DSC05032, DSC05033
104	TR1	deposit	Brown clay deposit associated with a shallow depression in the ground surface.		DSC05029, DSC05030
200	TR2	surface	Grass with soil, 100-150mm		DSC05035, DSC05036, DSC05037, DSC05038, DSC05039
201	TR2	deposit	Loose light brown/orange sand c 100mm		DSC05035, DSC05036, DSC05037, DSC05038, DSC05039
202	TR2	deposit	Darker orange/brown sandy soil with occasional decayed root. c 250mm	3 & 4	DSC05035, DSC05036, DSC05037, DSC05038, DSC05039
203	TR2	deposit	Compacted pink/orange sandy clay with decayed green sandstone rock fragments Shallow undulation at depths of 300mm to 1m		DSC05035, DSC05036, DSC05037, DSC05038, DSC05039

Site: Field adjacent to Pontrilas Sawmills		Grid Ref: 340373 228380	Site No: EVTO/PT/13	Alternate No:	
Find No	AREA	Context	DESCRIPTION	Period	Date
1	TR1	101	2 sherds Staffordshire dark brown 1 sherd cream tin glaze 1 sherd blue & white china	18 th – 19 th 19 th – 20 th 19 th – 20 th	27/08/2013
2	TR1	102	1 sherd Staffordshire light brown 1 sherd blue & white china 1 sherd cream tin glaze	18 th – 19 th 19 th – 20 th 19 th – 20 th	27/08/2013
3	TR2	201	7 sherds of blue & white plate 1 sherd glazed earthenware 1 piece of metal. Agricultural fitment 1 tooth and 3 fragments of jawbone, equine	19 th – 20 th 19 th – 20 th	27/08/2013
4			Small fragment of sandstone, irregular 50mmx50mmx16mm. Possible plough cut and two incised marks crossing		27/08/2013
5	TR2	202	Base sherd of a 13th century jug. Green lead glaze with thumbled base. Product of a regionally local kiln. Very few inclusions but occasional small fragments of anular quartz up to 0.5mm and brown clay pellets; oxidised exterior, otherwise black reduced including internal surfaces. Similar to Monmouth Fabric A5 but also with similarities to Hereford A7b. (S. Clarke)	13 th	27/08/2013

Site: Field adjacent to Pontrilas Sawmills		Grid Ref: 340373 228380		Site No: EVTO/PT/13		Alternate No:	
Photo no	Date	Camera	Size	Area	View	Description	Plate
DSC05028	27/08/2013	DSC-F828	3264x2448	TR1	S	Initial excavation of Trench 1. South edge at western end. Deposition sequence of [100] to [103]	P 01
DSC05029	27/08/2013	DSC-F828	2448x3264	TR1	W	Shallow depression, centred 8m from western end. Location of [104] at ranging rods	
DSC05030	27/08/2013	DSC-F828	2448x3264	TR1	N	Detail of section at shallow depression. Colours fairly constant but textures differ.	P 02
DSC05031	27/08/2013	DSC-F828	2448x3264	TR1	E	View downhill of trench 1 showing shallow depression at ranging rod.	
DSC05032	27/08/2013	DSC-F828	2448x3264	TR1	W	View 1 uphill of trench 1 showing shallow depression at ranging rod.	
DSC05033	27/08/2013	DSC-F828	2448x3264	TR1	W	View 2 uphill of trench 1 showing shallow depression at ranging rod.	P 03
DSC05034	27/08/2013	DSC-F828	3264x2448	TR1	SW	Long view showing location setting of completed trench 1	
DSC05035	27/08/2013	DSC-F828	2448x3264	TR2	SW	View along trench 2 showing undulations, Find spot for {3} right wall, below reel tape	
DSC05036	27/08/2013	DSC-F828	2448x3264	TR2	NE	View along trench 2 showing deep undulation 4m from the west end	P 04
DSC05037	27/08/2013	DSC-F828	2448x3264	TR2	E	East wall of trench 2 6m from western edge. Deposition sequence [200] to [203]	P 05
DSC05038	27/08/2013	DSC-F828	3264x2448	TR2	S	Deepest part of trench 2 showing natural at 1m, 4m from northern end	P 06
DSC05039	27/08/2013	DSC-F828	3264x2448	TR2	W	West wall trench 2 showing find spot [200] 2.4m from at north end at a depth of 500mm	P 07
IMG0100	02/09/2013	IXUS-132	4608x3456	TR1		13th c, Thumbbed base with green lead glaze. Local similar to Monmouth A5 and Hereford A7b	
IMG0100	02/09/2013	IXUS-132	4608x3456	TR1		Few inclusions, black reduced inner surface.	