

CSCW20



FORMER SITE OF COWBRIDGE SCHOOL, COWBRIDGE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

2018/01417/FUL

commissioned by EDP
on behalf of Hafod Housing Association

November 2020

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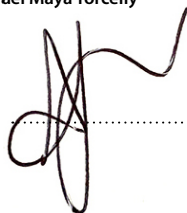
PROJECT INFO:

HA Project Code **CSCW20** / NGR **ST 00036 74595** / Parish **Cowbridge with Llanblethian** / Local Authority **Vale of Glamorgan Council** / Archive Repository **RCAHMMW**

PROJECT TEAM:

Project Manager **Ailsa Westgarth** / Author **Peter James** / Fieldwork **Blazej Lechowicz, Peter James** / Graphics **Julia Bastek-Michalska, Rafael Maya Torcelly**

Approved by **Ailsa Westgarth**



Headland Archaeology Midlands & West
Unit 1 | Clearview Court | Twyford Rd | Hereford HR2 6JR
t 01432 364 901
e midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com
w www.headlandarchaeology.com



part of the **RSK** Group



PROJECT SUMMARY

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd undertook an archaeological evaluation at the former site of Cowbridge Comprehensive School, Aberthin Road, Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan between 12th and 14th October 2020. The work was commissioned by The Environmental Development Partnership, on behalf of Hafod Housing Association, in advance of proposed residential development (subject to approval).

The evaluation identified significant disturbance as a result of the late Victorian and modern development of the site, associated with the former Comprehensive School.

No features or materials pre-dating the Victorian and modern development was encountered.

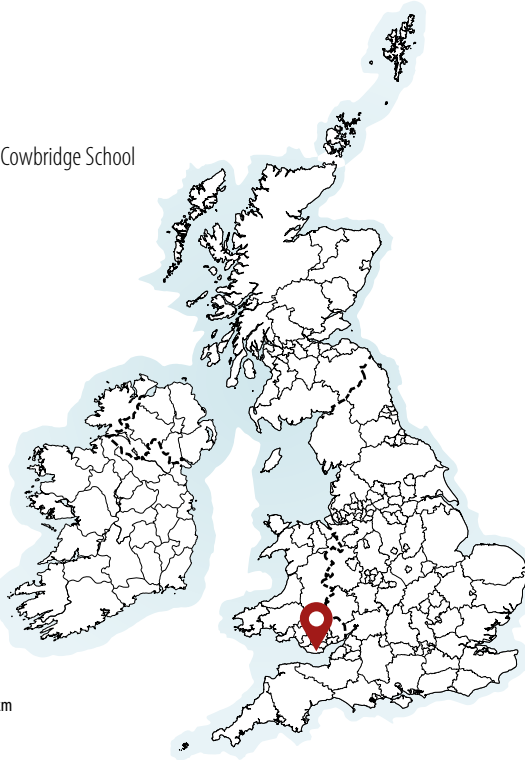
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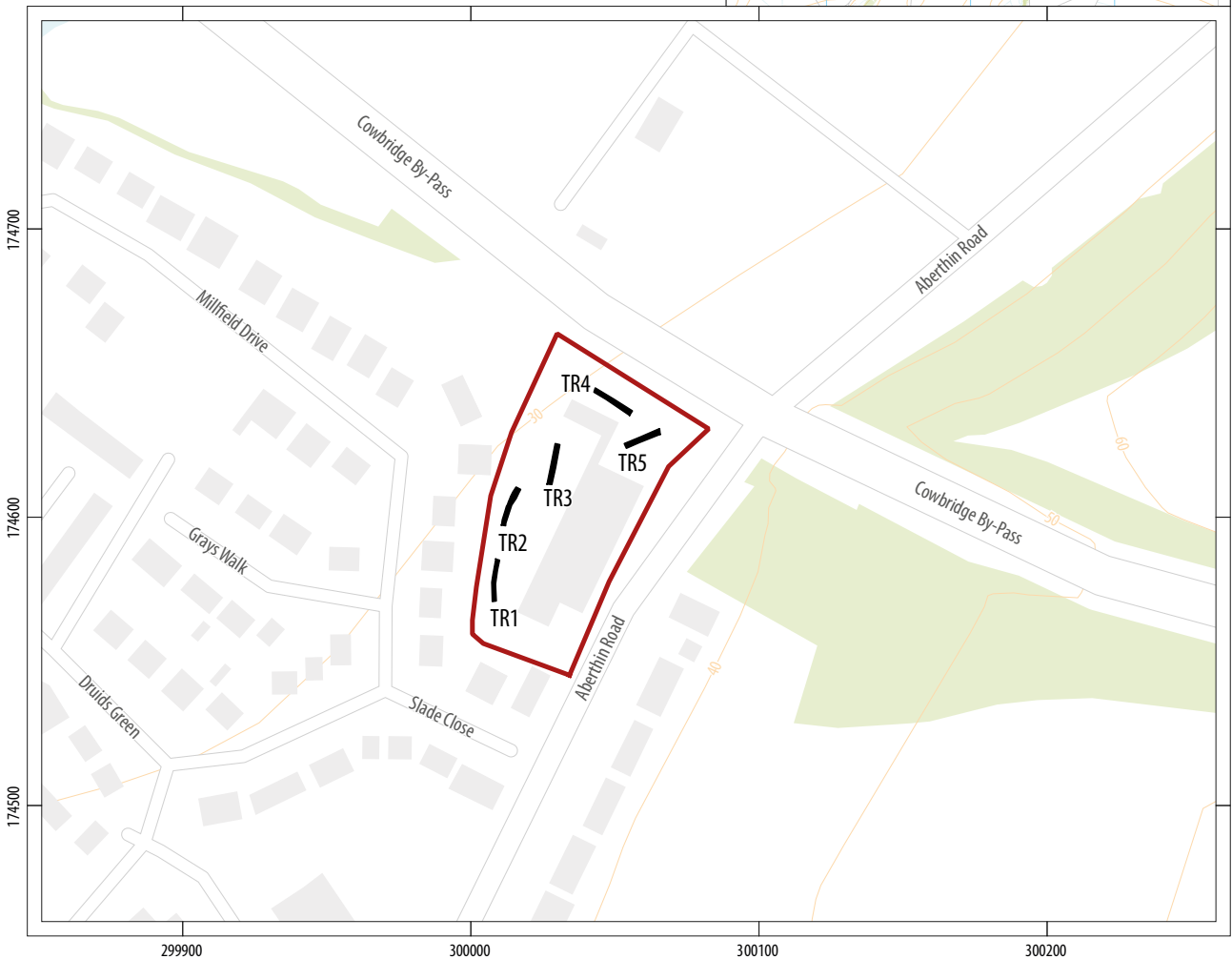
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Land at former site of Cowbridge School
 Aberthin Road
 Cowbridge



0 200km
 1:12,500,000 @ A4



0 50m
 1:2,500 @ A4

development boundary
 trench location



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 t 01432 364 901
 e midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com
 w www.headlandarchaeology.com

FORMER SITE OF COWBRIDGE SCHOOL, COWBRIDGE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

1 INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd (part of the RSK Group), was commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP), on behalf of Hafod Housing Association, to undertake a programme of Archaeological Evaluation at the site of the former Cowbridge Comprehensive School, Aberthin Road, Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan, CF71 7ET (centred at NGR ST 00036 74595).

A planning application was submitted to the Vale of Glamorgan for the residential development of the site, comprising the demolition of the extant buildings and development of 34 dwellings with associated landscaping works (PLANNING REF: 2018/01417/FUL).

The archaeological advisor for the local planning authority, Glamorgan and Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) indicated a programme of Archaeological Evaluation was required in order to support determination of the planning application. Headland Archaeology were commissioned to produce a Project Design (PD) (Westgarth 2020) setting out the proposed strategy for an archaeological evaluation, which was submitted to and agreed by GGAT.

1.1 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The proposed development area is to the north of the town of Cowbridge, located within the grounds of the former Cowbridge Comprehensive School, covering 0.53ha of land (Illus 1).

The site is occupied by derelict buildings associated with the former Comprehensive School and grounds comprising of the former playground and garden spaces. The site is bounded by Aberthin Road (A4222) to the east, grounds associated with the

new Cowbridge Comprehensive School to the north, and residential properties to the west and south.

The site is generally flat set at approximately 36m above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The base geology is of the Mercia Mudstone Group (marginal Facies) - Conglomerate. Superficial deposits of Glaciofluvial sands and gravels are recorded in this area (NERC 2020).

1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological background is covered in detail by an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (EDP 2019). A summary of the results is detailed below:

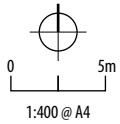
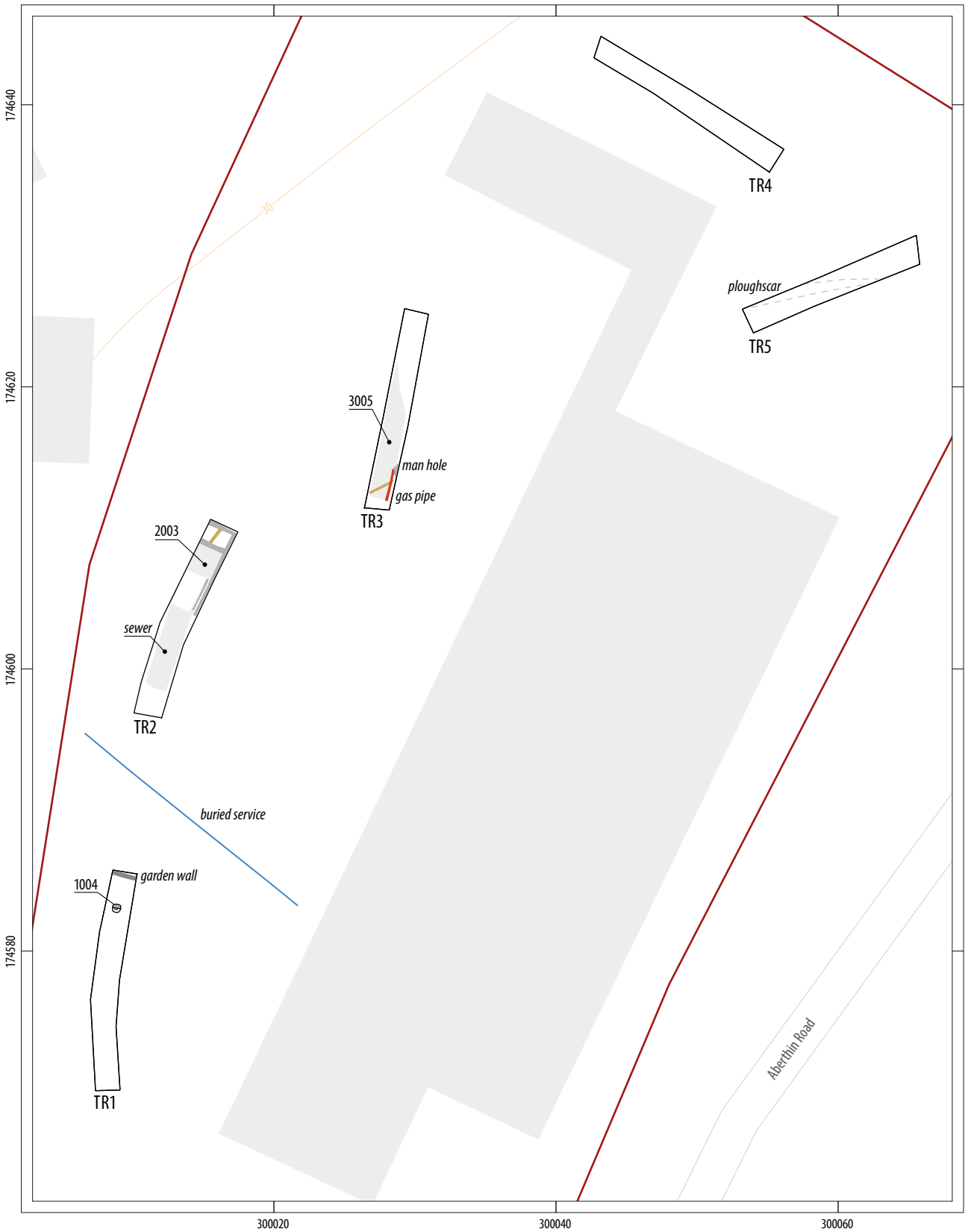
Prehistoric

The closest known Prehistoric evidence was discovered c 5m north of the proposed development, comprising of a Bronze Age burial (01481s, 00333s) and associated knife blade excavated during the construction of the modern Comprehensive School c 1960s. Further prehistoric evidence has been discovered, comprising of a Neolithic axe (02442s, 00247s) in 1891 on the site of the Cowbridge Railway Station and another Neolithic axe (00319s) discovered c 340m north of the site in 1977.

The only surviving archaeology within close proximity to the development site is a Monolith (00269s) c 215m south-west, now outside a residential property in the centre of Cowbridge. This feature is thought to date to the Bronze Age.

Roman

The Roman settlement at Cowbridge is thought to be located beneath the Medieval town. All recorded evidence of the Roman settlement was encountered c 500m west of the proposed



- development boundary
- trench location
- archaeological feature
- made ground/sewer backfill
- concrete housing
- ceramic drain

ILLUS 2 Trench location plan



ILLUS 3 View of Trench 1, looking south **ILLUS 4** General view of shrub bowl [1004], looking north

development site, comprising the structural remains of a 13-room bathhouse (01586s) with associated ditch and pit systems (01528s, 05224s, 00893s, 01866s). The material culture recovered from the site dates between the 1st and 2nd century.

There is no evidence to indicate settlement activities continued beyond the medieval core, where the modern day town resides. It is likely the site sits within the agricultural hinterland of the Roman settlement and therefore it is considered to be a low potential for buried archaeological remains from this period.

Medieval

The medieval town of Cowbridge was located beneath the modern town footprint. It is likely the development site remained under agriculture during this period.

Modern

The development site continued as an agricultural field until the construction of the Cowbridge School in c 1896 with additional building in 1909 prior to the addition of the modern building. There was no further significant development on the site after that period. During the fieldwork, the proposed development area contained extant buildings associated with the former Cowbridge Comprehensive School. The main school building dates from 1896. An extension was added in 1909, with outbuildings erected between 1955–1957. As part of the initial development, the surrounding

grounds had been subject to landscaping, resulting in mixed areas of hardstanding and vegetation, still surviving today.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The general aims of the project was to provide supporting information in relation to the potential impact of the proposed development in order to assist the present planning application.

The objectives of the evaluation were:

- › to establish the location, extent, nature and date of archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the areas proposed to be disturbed during the development;
- › to establish the integrity and state of preservation of archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the areas proposed to be disturbed during the development;
- › to inform the planning authority;
- › to assist in developing a mitigation strategy should remain of significance be present on the site; and
- › to produce and deposit a satisfactory archive and disseminate the results of the work via grey-literature reporting and publication as appropriate.



ILLUS 5 Representative section of Trench 2, looking west

2 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation comprised the excavation of 5 trenches, measuring 15m in length and 1.6m wide (Illus 2).

All trenches were excavated with 6t tracked excavator, equipped with 1.6m wide ditching bucket.

All mechanical excavation was under constant archaeological supervision and ceased when the geological substrate or archaeological horizon was exposed.

Prior to breaking ground, all trenches were located using a Trimble dGPS. Utility plans were consulted, and all trenches were scanned using a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) to identify any potential unknown buried services.

Where archaeological features were identified, a representative sample was excavated by hand, sufficient to characterise the significance and potential.

2.1 RECORDING

All recording followed the Cifa Standard and Guidance for conducting archaeological evaluations (Cifa 2020)

All recording was carried out on Headland Archaeology pro-forma recording sheets that conform to accepted archaeological standards.

All archaeological features and deposits were assigned a unique number (context), a full summary of which is presented in Appendix 1.

Context numbers follow on from subsequent trench no ie Trench 23, context 2300.

A pro-forma trench record and context record was completed for each stratigraphic event.

A digital plan of the excavation was produced using a Trimble dGPS.

Sections of stratigraphic events/ features were drawn by hand at scale of 1:10 or 1:20.

A photographic record of all excavated features and general views of the site.

A diary record of the progress of the archaeological works was maintained, including liaison and monitoring meetings, site visits and record of staff working on site.

2.2 REPORTING AND ARCHIVES

All aspects of reporting and archive were undertaken in accordance with guidelines published by the Cifa on behalf of the Archaeological Archives Forum (July 2007).

On completion of the evaluation Headland Archaeology produced a site archive, in line with the MAP2 specification and MoRPHE Guide.

The final report contents and format are in line with Cifa and GGAT-HER requirements. Copies of this report will be sent to the client for onward transmission to the local planning authority; copies (paper & electronic) will also be submitted to the HER Manager, to be deposited in the GGAT Historic Environment Record. Submission will



ILLUS 6 Representative section of Trench 5, looking north-west

be in accordance with Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (2018).

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd actively seeks to encourage land-owners to deposit artefacts with an appropriate museum, and agreement will be sought to this effect. Where permission is forthcoming the finds and archive will be deposited with the appropriate museum in line with its deposition guidelines. Deposition will be undertaken within one year of the completion of fieldwork. Deposition will be in accordance with the National Standard and Guidance to Best Practice for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives in Wales (2017).

A digital copy of the archive including photographs will be send to RCAHMW as per its guidelines.

Summary publication of the results will be in *CBA Wales and Morgannwg* in the year following the completion of fieldwork.

If further publication of the results of the evaluation is required, then a specification will be agreed with GGAT and costs will be provided for agreement by the client.

3 RESULTS

Introduction

Full context and trench descriptions, including dimensions, depths and orientations, are presented in Appendix 1.

The evaluation encountered no evidence of negative cut features pre-dating the late Victorian construction.

In the western extent of the development site, were the remains of sewer system, comprising of ceramic drains and concrete housing for inspection chambers (manhole). These features were constructed through artificially deposited materials (made ground), likely associated with the initial construction of the school building.

General stratigraphy

Levels of made ground were encountered of varying depths from between 0.18m to 0.34m. This comprised of mixed deposits containing re-deposited clay and garden soil with fragments of construction debris (brick, tile, ceramic drainpipe, plastic drainpipe, and degraded chalk). This material was exposed within Trenches 2, 3 and 5.

The geological substrate was consistent across the site, comprising of medium orange brown sandy clay. This was exposed at depths between 0.18 and 0.79m bgl.

Trenches 1 and 3 were in the gardens area, where the depositional sequence consisted of re-deposited garden soil overlain the geological level.

3.1 EXCAVATION

Trench 1 was located in the south-west corner of the development site, within the previous garden area.



ILLUS 7 View of Trench 5, looking north

A single sub-rectangular feature [1004] was located in the northern part of the trench. This feature measured 0.47m long, 0.54m wide and at a depth of 0.10m. It contained a humic dark grey brown sandy loam deposit (1005) with fragments of slate. It is likely that this was the basal remains of a removed shrub or tree bowl (Illus. 4).

The base remains of a wall was also located within the northern part of the trench. This was constructed of red brick bonded by mortar, surviving at a height of 0.30m and approximately 0.24m wide. It is likely this is the remains of a garden wall, associated with the School.

The geological substrate was exposed 0.44m bgl, sealed by buried soil horizon (1002) and overlain by asphalt footpath and modern overgrowth (Illus 3).

Trench 2 and 3 were located to the east of the development site, excavated through hardstanding and former garden area.

These trenches contained the remains of a sewer system, comprising concrete housing and bricked inspection chamber (manhole) with ceramic drains.

The geological substrate was exposed between 0.33m and 0.79m bgl, sealed by made ground deposits and garden soil/asphalt (Illus 5).

Trench 4 and 5 was located in the north-east of the development site within the former playground.

Trench 5 exposed probable plough scarring indicative of previous agricultural land use predating the initial development of the site c 1896 (Illus 7).

The geological substrate was exposed between 0.18m and 0.40 bgl, sealed by made ground deposits (5002) and asphalt/bedding 'type 1' deposit associated with the construction of the former playground (Illus 6).

4 DISCUSSION

Trench 1 and 3 contained soil deposits associated with previous garden spaces and no indication of structural elements buried beneath the current ground level suggesting these areas are less disturbed than other areas of the site. However, all trenches were archaeologically sterile.

5 CONCLUSION

The evaluation encountered evidence of landscaping and the insertion of a sewer system, associated with the development of the site between c 1896 and the 1960's. No evidence was found for any earlier activity within the site.

Trench 5 contained linear striations, tentatively interpreted as possible plough scarring. The absence of any buried agricultural soils or subsoil suggests the likelihood of any potential buried archaeological features is highly unlikely.

6 REFERENCES

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- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2020 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (Reading) https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CifA%26GFieldevaluation_4.pdf accessed 15 October 2020
- Environmental Dimension Partnership 2019 *Aberthin Road, Cowbridge, Archaeological and Heritage Assessment* Ref: edp5120_r001d
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- Westgarth A (2020) *Former site of Cowbridge School, Cowbridge: Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation* [unpublished client document] Headland Archaeology

7 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SITE AND CONTEXT REGISTERS

Appendix 1.1 Trench register

*D BGL = Depth below ground level

TR01	L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
	15	1.5	0.44	0.45

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	*D BGL (M)
1001	Asphalt; remains of path	0.10
1002	Buried soil horizon – Dark grey brown sandy clay.	0.34
1003	Geological Substrate-Medium orange brown sandy clay.	N/A
1004	Cut of shrub bowl- Sub-rectangular in plan. Shallow, gradual sides with concave base.	0.10
1005	Fill of shrub bowl- Dark grey brown silty clay with fragments of slate.	N/A

Summary: 1x Shrub bowl and lower coursing of modern wall. No archaeological features or materials pre-dating the Victorian period encountered.

TR022	L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
	15	2.1	0.45	0.79

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	*D BGL (M)
2001	Asphalt; hardstanding	0.05
2002	Type 1; bedding deposit beneath hard standing	0.34
2003	Made ground- Mixed medium yellow brown sandy clay and medium grey brown sandy loam garden soil with construction debris.	0.35
2004	Geological substrate- Medium orange brown sandy clay	N/A

Summary: No archaeological features encountered. 1x ceramic drain, respecting N/S alignment contained within concrete housing.

TR03	L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
	15	1.8	0.40	0.50

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	*D BGL (M)
3001	Garden Soil -Dark grey brown sandy loam.	0.30
3002	Void	N/A
3003	Geological Substrate- Medium orange brown sandy clay.	N/A
3004	Cut of sewer- Linear cut, aligned NW/SE, truncating geological level.	N/A
3005	Fill of Sewer- Dark grey brown sandy loam.	N/A

Summary: No archaeological features encountered. 1x Ceramic land drain to note, respecting E/W alignment. Drain feed into sewer. Edge of inspection chamber (Man hole) exposed in trench profile. Gas pipe (yellow plastic), N/S aligned also encountered in trench.

TR04	L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
	15	1.5	0.18	0.20

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	*D BGL (M)
4001	Asphalt; hard standing	0.04
4002	Type 1; bedding deposit beneath hard standing	0.14
4003	Geological Substrate- Medium orange brown sandy clay	N/A

Summary: No archaeological features or materials encountered

TR05	L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
	24	1.8	0.40	0.50

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	*D BGL (M)
5001	Asphalt; hardstanding	0.30
5002	Made ground- mixed sub-rounded 'type 1' bedding material and yellow brown clay with fragments of brick, tile and pottery.	0.20
5003	Geological Substrate – Medium orange brown sandy clay	N/A

Summary: No archaeological features encountered. Potential scaring, indicative of plough drag. Possible evidence of previous agricultural land use.

Appendix 1.2 Photographic register

PHOTO	DIRECTION	TRENCH/CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	FILE NAME
001	West	Trench 4	View of excavated trench	100-0001
002	North	Trench 4	South facing representative section	100-0002
003	North	Trench 5	View of excavated trench	100-0003
004	N-W	Trench 5	South-east facing representative section	100-0004
005	North	Trench 3	View of excavated trench	100-0005
006	East	Trench 3	West facing representative section	100-0006
007	North	Trench 3	View of backfilled trench	100-0007
008	East	Trench 4	View of backfilled trench	100-0008
009	North	Trench 5	View of backfilled trench	100-0009
010	West	Trench 4 & 5	General view of backfilled trenches	100-0010
011	N-W	Trench 4 & 5	General view of backfilled trenches	100-0011
012	South	Trench 2	View of excavated trench	100-0012
013	East	Trench 2	West facing representative section	100-0013
014	West	Trench 2	East facing representative section	100-0014
015	South	Trench 1	View of excavated trench	100-0015
016	West	Trench 1	East facing representative section	100-0016
017	North	[1004]	South facing section of shrub bowl	100-0017
018	North	[1004]	General view of excavated shrub bowl	100-0018
019	North	[1004]	South facing section of shrub bowl	100-0019
020	South	Trench 1 & 2	View of backfilled trench	100-0020
021	South	Trench 1 & 2	View of backfilled trench	100-0021



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part of the **RSK** Group

Headland Archaeology Scotland
13 Jane Street
Edinburgh EH6 5HE
t 0131 467 7705
e scotland@headlandarchaeology.com

Headland Archaeology Yorkshire & North
Units 23–25 & 15 | Acom Business Centre | Balme Road
Cleckheaton BD19 4EZ
t 0113 387 6430
e yorkshireandnorth@headlandarchaeology.com

Headland Archaeology South & East
Building 68C | Wrest Park | Silsoe
Bedfordshire MK45 4HS
t 01525 861 578
e southandeast@headlandarchaeology.com

Headland Archaeology Midlands & West
Unit 1 | Clearview Court | Twyford Rd
Hereford HR2 6JR
t 01432 364 901
e midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com

Headland Archaeology North West
Fourways House | 57 Hilton Street
Manchester M1 2EJ
t 0161 236 2757
e northwest@headlandarchaeology.com

www.headlandarchaeology.com