

# 1 AGINCOURT STREET MONMOUTH

*An Archaeological Watching Brief*

*For*

*Dr. Nicola Bradbear of Bees for Development*

Carried out by

MONMOUTH ARCHAEOLOGY

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**Summary**

Monmouth Archaeology carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief for Dr. Nicola Bradbear of *Bees for Development* during groundworks connected with redevelopment of an area to the rear of 1 Agincourt Street, Monmouth (NGR SO 50772 12791).

The archaeological features revealed were of 19/20<sup>th</sup> century date and consisted of paved floor levels, where some areas of cobbles survived; there were two abandoned walls which may be earlier) and remains associated with a hearth and ash pit.

Findings were dated to the Victorian and later periods and included ceramics, clay pipe stems, glass and locally made brick and pantile. The only find of an earlier date was a sherd of 18<sup>th</sup> century slipware.

Masons' marks were noted on the back of several sandstone paving stones.

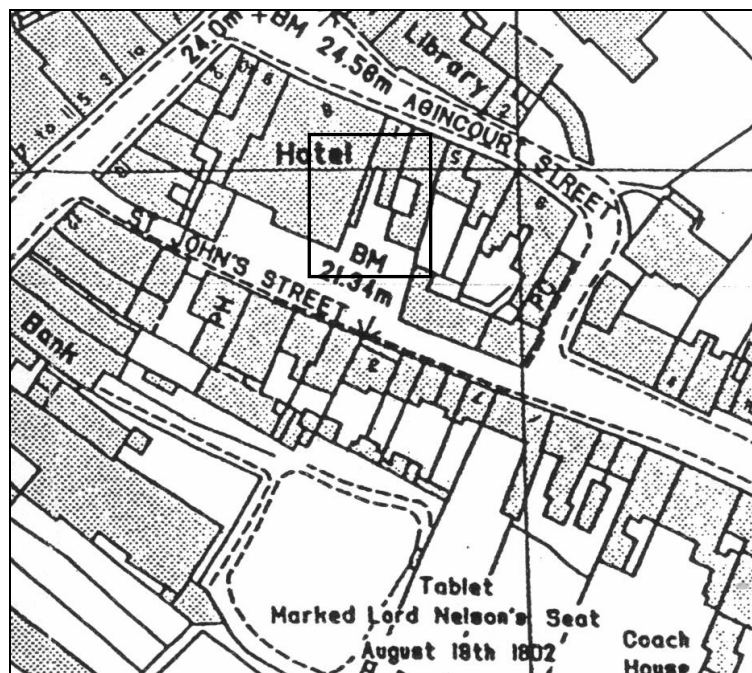


Fig. 1  
1 Agincourt Street, Monmouth : Site Location

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## ***Introduction***

Monmouth Archaeology carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief for Dr. Nicola Bradbear of *Bees for Development* during groundworks connected with redevelopment of an area to the rear of 1 Agincourt Street, Monmouth (NGR SO 50772 12791).

The Archaeological Watching Brief was required in order to comply with a condition imposed by Monmouthshire County Council's archaeological advisors, the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust which considered that a significant archaeological resource may have survived on the site (Planning application no. DC/2009/00346).

Monmouth Archaeology wishes to acknowledge the help given by Alan Morgan, Ross and Steve on site. The unit is also grateful for the help received from Mr. Neil Maylan and the staff of Monmouthshire County Council's archaeological advisors, the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust.

Monmouth Archaeology carried out a watching brief on the site in 2007 (*report MA11.07*). The current watching brief was carried out during April 2013.

## ***Objectives***

The objectives of the Archaeological Watching Brief were to safeguard any archaeological remains and to understand the nature, date and extent of any archaeological features and deposits which existed on the proposed development site. All remains of potential interest were recorded and finds retained.

## ***Methodology***

The groundworks consisted of the hand excavation and reduction of the floor level (average 0.45m) in two rooms to the rear of 1 Agincourt Street.

Stephen Clarke of Monmouth Archaeology was present on the site during the groundworks and the watching brief was carried out to the Institute for Archaeologists' *'Standards for Archaeological Watching Briefs'*.

A photographic record was maintained during the excavations, while plans and sections were drawn and context records were kept in accordance with normal archaeological practice. The finds were related to the contexts in which they originated and were examined by recognised specialists.

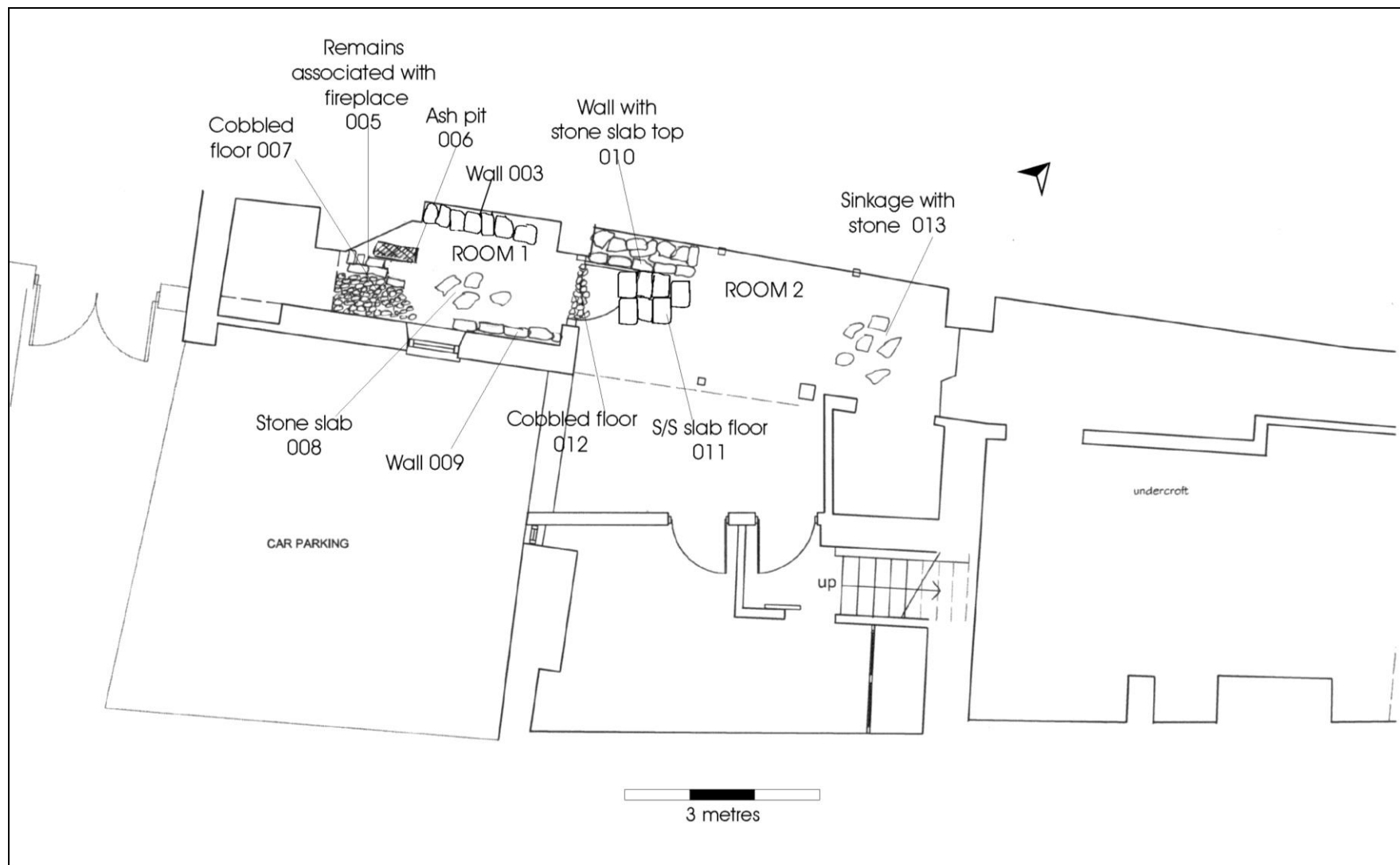


Fig. 2  
1 Agincourt Street, Monmouth : Site plan showing the position of features

## ***Historical Background***

No 1 Agincourt Street is located to the south-east of Monmouth Castle which was established by William Fitz Osbern in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century. The site lies below the Norman bailey defences and is thought to be above the bailey ditch. During a watching brief carried out by Monmouth Archaeology on this site in 2007 (*report MA11.07*) the organic-rich fill of a ditch was revealed. The fill was sealed by a deposit of red-brown charcoal flecked clay. Although the fill contained small amounts of Roman pottery, it was dated by sherds of 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century cooking pottery.

If the presumed ditch which was encountered during the 2007 watching brief is that of the Castle bailey it is where it was always thought to be – below the scarp running through the King’s Head Hotel down Agincourt Street and turning towards the top of the Glendower Street Car Park. However, the alignment of a ditch which is thought to be that of the bailey and which was found running through the garden of Agincourt House was shown to be heading too far south to have curved around to the present site without a very abrupt turn. Such a route, requiring an almost right-angled turn, would be uncharacteristic of Monmouth’s medieval town defences.

Preserved wood in organic-rich soil in the backfill of a service trench under the pavement outside the house on the corner of Glendower Street and St. John Street (Number 13 Glendower Street) has also been recorded during previous service excavation work. A thick and very solid road surface mostly of iron slag has been found running along St. John Street and is believed to be Roman

## ***The Archaeology***

### *Room 1 (See Fig. 2, pg. 4)*

In the north-west corner of Room 1 the remains associated with a brick fireplace (005) were uncovered with an ash pit (006) constructed of brick and stone, measuring approximately 0.25m in depth and 1.30m in length with a sloping slab placed inside the eastern end. To the south and west of the fireplace the remains of a stone slab floor had survived (008) at a depth of approximately 0.25m.



Ash pit 006

A lime-mortared sandstone wall (003) was recorded on the northern side of Room 1, measuring 0.23m x 2.00m, and another wall (009) on the south which measured 0.30m x 2.50m in length. Just under the stone slabs a stone post base (not in situ) was found measuring approximately 0.25 x 0.20m x 0.30m. A layer of rubble and made-up ground with some lime mortar extended to an average depth of 0.25m; this was topped by sandstone slabs. Some of the slabs had masons' marks on the underside.



Context 004, stone post base

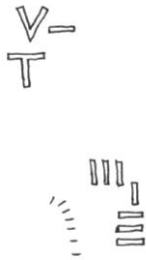
### *Room 2*

In the north-west corner of Room 2, a lime-mortared sandstone wall (010) was uncovered measuring approximately 0.70m x 2.10m in width, with stone slabs covering part of its surface.



Wall 010

To the south of Context 010 a levelled floor of mixed stone and stone slabs (011) was encountered at a depth of 0.45m. In the doorway between Rooms 1 and 2 further remains of cobbled floor were found (012). To the west was an area of sinkage with some rubble (013); this might possibly be related to the pit or ditch discovered in 2007 (*report MA11.07*). A layer of rubble and made-up ground with some lime mortar extended to an average depth of 0.45m; this was topped with sandstone slabs. Some of the slabs had masons' marks on the underside (*see below*).



### ***The Contexts***

- 001 Stone slabs, previously lifted, some with masons' marks on the underside.
- 002 Rubble and made up ground with lime mortar to an average depth of 0.25m in Room 1 and 0.45m in Room 2.

#### *Room 1 (See Site Plan, Fig 2, pg. 4)*

- 003 Lime-mortared, sandstone wall on the north 0.23m x 2.00m.
- 004 Large stone (post base), not in situ, approx 20m x 25m x 0.30m.
- 005 Remains associated with brick fireplace.
- 006 Ash pit of fireplace constructed of brick and stone, approx. 0.25m deep and 1.30m in length with sloping stone slab inside the eastern end.
- 007 Cobbled floor on the south of Context 005.
- 008 Remains of stone slab floor on the east.
- 009 Lime mortared, sandstone wall on the south 0.30m x 2.50m.

#### *Room 2 (See Site Plan, Fig 2, pg. 4)*

- 010 Lime mortared, sandstone wall on the north with stone slab top 0.70m x 2.10m.

- 011 Levelled floor of mixed stone and stone slabs at a depth of 0.45m.
- 012 Remains of cobbled floor in the doorway, between Rooms 1 and 2
- 013 Area of sinkage on the east with rubble.

### ***The Finds Summary***

All finds were retrieved from Context 002, the majority dating to the 19/20<sup>th</sup> centuries and consisted of various ceramics, clay pipes, glass and nails. The earliest find was a sherd of 18<sup>th</sup> century slipware.

### **Catalogue of Finds**

The finds are catalogued in the contexts from which they were recovered.

### **The Pottery**

#### *Context 002*

<i>Context</i>	<i>Fabric and Form</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Date.</i>	<i>Sherds</i>
002	Various pottery/china	G	19/20 <sup>th</sup> C	10
002	English stoneware	G	19/20 <sup>th</sup> C	3
002	Bristol mocha ware	C	19 <sup>th</sup> C	1
002	English (probably Bristol) slipware	C	18 <sup>th</sup> C	1

### **Other Finds**

#### *Context 002*

<i>Context</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>No.</i>
002	Iron nails	19/20 <sup>th</sup> C	3
002	Bottle glass fragments	19/20 <sup>th</sup> C	2
002	Clay pipe stems	19/20 <sup>th</sup> C	2
002	Pantile	19/20 <sup>th</sup> C	3
002	Brick	19/20 <sup>th</sup> C	10+



## ***Conclusion***

The watching brief revealed Victorian and later structural features although two abandoned walls may be earlier. Most of the finds – ceramics – were of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century date. The earliest find was a sherd of 18<sup>th</sup> century slipware – probably made in Bristol.

## ***The Archive***

The archive will be held in the depository of Monmouth Archaeology at The Town Wall, Monmouth, until it can be accessioned by the Monmouth Museum Service. The Archive consists of CD with digital photographs, report and drawings, photographic contact sheet, finds, finds records, contexts records, other paperwork.

The finds were retained on the site.

*This report was compiled by  
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of Monmouth Archaeology.*

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