

52-54 Vale Street, Denbigh
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



Written Scheme of Investigation
submitted by
Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

On behalf of

Tai Clwyd



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS



The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was one of the four archaeological trusts established in Wales in the mid-1970s to provide an archaeological service across the whole of the Principality. It is both a registered charity and a limited company, and its activities are managed by a board of Trustees. It is also an IfA-registered organisation (Institute for Archaeologists). Its mission statement was and remains geared towards working closely with other national, regional and local bodies, to help identify, protect and interpret all aspects of the historic environment.

Over the last thirty years it has developed an unrivalled expertise in the archaeology of east and north-east Wales, created a full record of the archaeological sites and monuments in the region, and built up experience in all the major methodologies that can be used to elucidate the past. At the same time its remit and resource base have been modified to take account of the broader changes in the organisation and delivery of archaeological services in the United Kingdom as a whole. Based in Welshpool, CPAT has developed close links with a number of local institutions and has extensive knowledge of local history and archaeology.

In the last fifteen years CPAT has built up a small Field Services section which focuses on funded projects and on contract archaeology. Much of this sort of work is still undertaken in its core area of east and north-east Wales, but increasingly it has been contracted to do work in north-west and south Wales and in the west Midlands. During this period its collective expertise has grown, and its core staff have been in place for a number of years. Where necessary the core staff are supplemented by additional temporary staff for specific projects. CPAT prides itself on the economic and efficient delivery of archaeological services for a range of developments from road construction and pipeline works to housing developments and windfarm schemes. It is led by Bob Silvester, who moved to Wales from eastern England eighteen years ago and who is an acknowledged expert in landscape archaeology and the archaeology of the medieval and post-medieval eras in the region.

CPAT has developed considerable experience in undertaking all aspects of archaeological investigation, including detailed building recording, excavation, topographical survey, and documentary research, and the staff have developed a considerable wealth and range of expertise.

Further information regarding the Trust, including summary reports of some of the more significant recent projects can be found on its website at www.cpat.org.uk



1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been invited by Tai Clwyd to provide a written scheme of investigation and costing for undertaking a programme of archaeological works in connection with the redevelopment of 52/54 Vale Street, Denbigh.
- 1.2 Full planning permission (01/2013/0080) was granted for the demolition of the existing streetfrontage buildings and the redevelopment of the plot with a single new building. Condition 13 of the permission relates to archaeology and states that:
- ‘No development shall take place within the application area until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The archaeological work will be undertaken to the standards laid down by the Institute for Archaeologists. On completion of site work and any postexcavation analysis a report on the investigation will be submitted for approval to the Local Planning Authority and the Development Control Archaeologist, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, 41 Broad Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7RR. tel: 01938 553670.’
- 1.3 The site is located in Vale Street, within the medieval town of Denbigh (SJ 0550 6625). Denbigh is an important medieval town, with the early Edwardian, English town developing at the top of the limestone hill, where Denbigh castle now stands at the end of the 13th century. Settlement soon moved down to the lower ground and Vale Street is shown clearly on the John Speed map of 1610 which depicts buildings lining the street frontage. These buildings could date from the medieval period and certainly date from the early 17th century.
- 1.4 A pre-planning evaluation was conducted by CPAT in 2012, revealing evidence for potential medieval activity to the rear of the plot at a depth of around 0.7m, while along Vale Street it was apparent that the original street level was considerably below the present ground surface.
- 1.5 The nature of the archaeological works required to fulfil the planning condition were agreed at a meeting on 6 June 2013 attended by Fiona Gale (Denbighshire Archaeology Service), Alwyn Rowlands (Creu Architects), Peter Baker (Tai Clwyd), Rhys Dafis (Tai Clwyd) and Nigel Jones (CPAT). A curatorial brief has been prepared by Denbighshire Archaeology Service detailing the works required.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the programme of archaeological works are:
- 2.1.1 to ensure the preservation by record of all significant archaeological remains which may be disturbed by the redevelopment in so far as these aims are possible;
- 2.1.2 to produce an interim report and archive assessment;
- 2.1.3 to prepare a final report for publication in an appropriate journal.



3 Methods

3.1 Following discussions with Tai Clwyd the programme of work has been split into two phases as outlined below.

PHASE 1 - Demolition and site reduction

3.2 Prior to the commencement of the development the remaining building (54 Vale Street) will be demolished and the site cleared to the present ground level. Levels will subsequently be reduced by around 1m within the footprint of the new building.

3.3 This will be conducted as a watching brief under close archaeological supervision using a machine with a large, toothless bucket. Material will be removed onto the surface of the first significant archaeological horizon, or the formation level of the new building, whichever is encountered first.

3.4 In order to comply with the planning condition machine excavations must not continue below the level of any surviving archaeology until this has been subject to appropriate excavation and recording in Phase 2.

3.5 Should the watching brief reveal any potential archaeological deposits there may be a requirement for rapid hand-cleaning of the area in order to:

- identify the extent of surviving deposits
- provide an indication of their date and significance
- allow an agreement to be reached with the curator regarding any further excavation which may be required under Phase 2
- provide a basis for estimating the cost of Phase 2

3.6 It is understood that a new service trench will be required to provide a supply from Vale Street to the rear of the plot. This will be conducted under an archaeological watching brief during which the archaeologist should be allowed the opportunity to provide an adequate record of any significant features, deposits or artefacts which may be revealed.

3.7 Following the completion of Phase 1 a site meeting will be required to agree the extent and timing of any further archaeological works which may be required under Phase 2.

PHASE 2 - Excavation

3.8 Following the completion of Phase 1 it will be apparent as to whether any archaeological deposits survive within the footprint of the new building. Should no significant deposits be present further elements of the construction may still be subject to a watching brief but no detailed excavation would be required. A report would subsequently be prepared on the results of the watching brief under Phase 3.

3.9 However, should any archaeological deposits be present, and subject to an agreement regarding the extent of any further archaeological excavations, a programme will be implemented to ensure the preservation by record of all significant archaeological remains within the footprint of the new building which are likely to be removed during the construction process.

3.10 Within the agreed area the surface of the archaeology will be hand-cleaned prior to the excavation of deposits under the normal principles of stratigraphic excavation. Features and deposits may be subject to a sampling strategy, to be agreed with the curator, which may include up to 50% of pits or discrete features and up to 25% of linear features. Any burials or features containing significant artefactual or ecofactual remains may be subject to 100% excavation.



- 3.11 It has been assumed that security fencing will be provided by the client for the during the excavations, although welfare facilities and site accommodation will be provided by CPAT.
- 3.12 Contexts will be recorded on individual record forms and be drawn and photographed as appropriate. All photography will be in digital format to a minimum resolution of 6 mega pixels. All features will be located as accurately as possible with respect to buildings and boundaries identified on modern Ordnance Survey maps and levels will be related to Ordnance Datum where possible, with the use of total station surveying.
- 3.13 All artefacts will be related to their contexts from which they were derived and treated in a manner appropriate to their composition and will be processed by trained CPAT staff. Provision has been included for sampling deposits for dating, environmental and technological evidence as appropriate.

PHASE 3 - Reporting and archive

- 3.14 Following the on-site work an illustrated interim report will be prepared in PDF format, outlining the results from the watching brief and any subsequent detailed excavation. This will include an assessment of the site archive to allow a costed programme to be developed as a separate Quotation and WSI for an appropriate level of post-excavation analysis, including specialist reporting and services, leading to publication in an appropriate regional or national journal.
- 3.15 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991), to be deposited with the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER). All artefacts will, subject to the permission of the owner, be deposited with an appropriate museum.

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The programme of archaeological works will be undertaken by a team of skilled archaeologists under the overall supervision of Dr R J Silvester, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). CPAT is also an Institute for Archaeologist Registered Organisation.
- 4.2 The client has indicated that the demolition and reduction of levels will be conducted during January 2014.
- 4.3 All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who supervised the excavation.
- 4.4 The client should be aware that in the event that significant archaeological remains are revealed there may be a requirement for a further programme of archaeological works comprising post-excavation analysis and specialist services, such as radiocarbon dating, artefacts analysis and conservation, leading to the production of a full excavation report for publication in an appropriate regional or national journal. Such a programme would only be conducted following an agreement between CPAT, the client and the curator and would be the subject of a separate WSI and costing.
- 4.5 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.



4.6 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance, copies of which will be made available on request.

Nigel W Jones
25 November 2013

