

CASTLERING ARCHAEOLOGY

REPORT NO. 678

DRIVE RESURFACING AT

CASTLE VIEW

CASTLE STREET

HOLT

WREXHAM

LL13 9YL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

JANUARY 2019

SYNOPSIS

This report contains the results of an archaeological watching brief maintained during ground disturbing works, undertaken in association with resurfacing the existing driveway at the property known as Castle View, Holt. Castle View lies within the medieval historic core of the planned town of Holt and on a street frontage which is believed to have been part of the medieval village layout. It was therefore believed that there was a potential for unrecorded sub-surface archaeology related to the medieval settlement to be present on the site and an archaeological watching brief was made a condition of planning consent.

The resurfacing comprised removal of the existing cobblestones and excavation to a depth of no more than 300mm below the former drive level. Despite being in an area of archaeological potential, no features or finds were exposed during works on site.

Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn cynnwys canlyniadau briff gwylio archaeolegol a gynhelir yn ystod gwaith ymyrryd yn y ddaear, a gynhaliwyd mewn cydweithrediad â ail-wynebu'r llwybr presennol yn yr eiddo o'r enw Castle View, Holt. Mae Castle View yn gorwedd o fewn craidd hanesyddol canoloesol tref arfaethedig Holt ac ar ffryntiad stryd a gredir iddo fod yn rhan o gynllun y pentref canoloesol. Credir felly bod potensial ar gyfer archeoleg is-wyneb heb ei gofnodi yn ymwneud â'r anheddiad canoloesol i fod yn bresennol ar y safle a gwnaed crynodeb gwylio archeolegol amod caniatâd cynllunio.

Roedd y gwaith ail-wynebu yn cynnwys symud y clogfeini presennol a chloddio i ddyfnlder o ddim mwy na 300mm o dan y lefel gyrru blaenorol. Er gwaethaf bod mewn ardal o botensial archeolegol, ni chafwyd unrhyw nodweddion neu ddarganfyddiadau yn ystod y gwaith ar y safle.

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Abbreviations:

<i>bpgl</i>	<i>below present ground level</i>
<i>c.</i>	<i>circa</i>
CifA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
m	metre
mm	millimetre

Castling Archaeology was established in 1998 to offer independent archaeological and heritage services.

Every effort has been made to provide accurate information within this report.
However Castling Archaeology cannot be held responsible for any third party errors and inaccuracies contained therein

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report contains the results of an archaeological watching brief maintained during ground disturbing works, undertaken in association with resurfacing the existing driveway at the property known as Castle View, Castle Street, Holt, Wrexham, LL13 9YL (Plate 1 *below* & Location & Site Plan Fig. 1 *overleaf*).

1.2 Consultation with the Development Control Archaeologist at Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, acting as advisor to Wrexham County Borough Council in respect of the proposals, had elicited that the development is located within the medieval historic core of Holt and on a street frontage which is believed to have been part of the medieval village layout.

1.3 It was therefore believed that there was a potential for unrecorded sub-surface archaeology related to the medieval settlement to be present on the site and revealed as part of the resurfacing programme. In view of this, it was recommended that an archaeologist be contracted to be present throughout the duration of initial site preparation and ground reduction works in order that an adequate record of any archaeological features revealed by these works could be made. The archaeological requirement was then placed as a Condition of Planning Consent for the application No.P/2018/0958.

1.4 In October 2018, Castlering Archaeology were contracted to undertake the archaeological work by the owners, Mr and Mrs Wybrew. A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared and submitted to the Development Control Archaeologist and, following approval, the groundworks were undertaken in January 2019.



Plate 1: Cobbled driveway to be replaced, September 2018

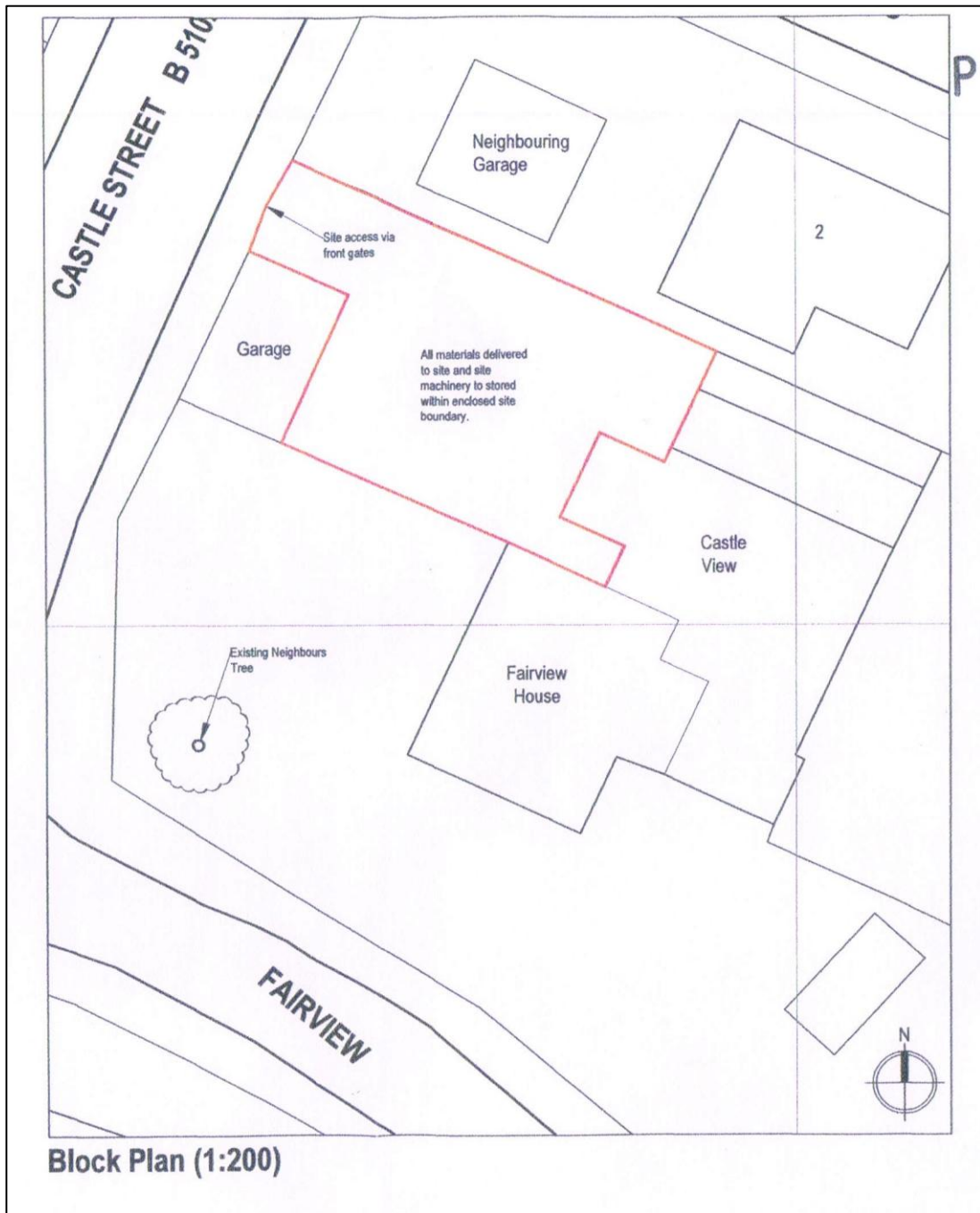


Fig. 1 Site Location & Area of Resurfacing

2. AIMS

The aims of the watching brief were to secure:

- the preservation by record of any archaeological remains or artefacts encountered during ground disturbing works;
- the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site;
- the production of a report documenting the results of the watching brief.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The site work comprised the monitoring of ground disturbing works in the courtyard to the front of Castle View.

3.2 The watching brief was undertaken using proven archaeological techniques which comply with guidelines defined in:

- the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014a, *Code of conduct*;
- the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014b, *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*
- the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014c, *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology*.

3.3 All stages of the project were carried out in accordance with the guidelines of the Welsh Government TAN 24: The Historic Environment, 2017a and Planning Policy Wales, 2016 (Chapter 6, Edition. 9).

4. RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

4.1 Partial removal of the cobblestone driveway, as seen in Plate 1 *previous*, had already been undertaken prior to the commencement of the watching brief on site. The contractors were therefore instructed to scrape over this area in order for a photographic record to be made. Thereafter all ground disturbance was monitored.

4.2 The programme of work comprised the removal of all existing cobblestones and excavation of the driveway to a maximum 300mm below the existing finished height. The ground reduction showed that the cobbles had been laid on a mortar bed, presumably during the last refurbishment of the property. Plates 2 and 3 show the maximum depth of excavation at 300mm, against the south boundary wall. The Plates also show the red sandstone bedrock exposed at this level. Further excavation showed that bedrock outcrops across most of the courtyard and the gaps in the bedrock had been filled with fragmented rock and cinders / ash to create a level working platform for the relaying of the cobbles during the last refurbishment.

4.3 Towards the centre of the courtyard, the yellow cable of the gas mains was exposed at the shallow depth of no more than 250mm below the top of the cobbles (Plates 4 & 5). The cable runs across the courtyard from the gateway towards the right hand corner of the property. The cable will be reset at a safer depth during the current works.

4.4 The current work also includes the replacement of existing drainage runs in the forefront of the garage, as seen in Plate 9.

4.5 Throughout the excavations, no archaeological features were revealed and no finds recovered.



Plate 2:
Southwest corner of the courtyard, excavated to 300mm below former finished level of the cobbles. 1m scale shows the bedrock outcrop



Plate 3:
Southwest corner of the courtyard, with 1m scale against the bedrock; view from the west



Plate 4:
Investigating the gas main, view from the west



Plate 5:
As above, view from the northwest corner of the courtyard; 1m scale bar showing outcropping bedrock



Plate 6:

Removal of cobblestones exposed bedrock at 250mm below former surface level, against the north boundary wall



Plate 7:

Removal of cobblestones and excavation from the pavement into the courtyard, view from the west



Plate 8:

Excavation exposing gaps in the bedrock infilled with fragmented brick and cinders, view from the west

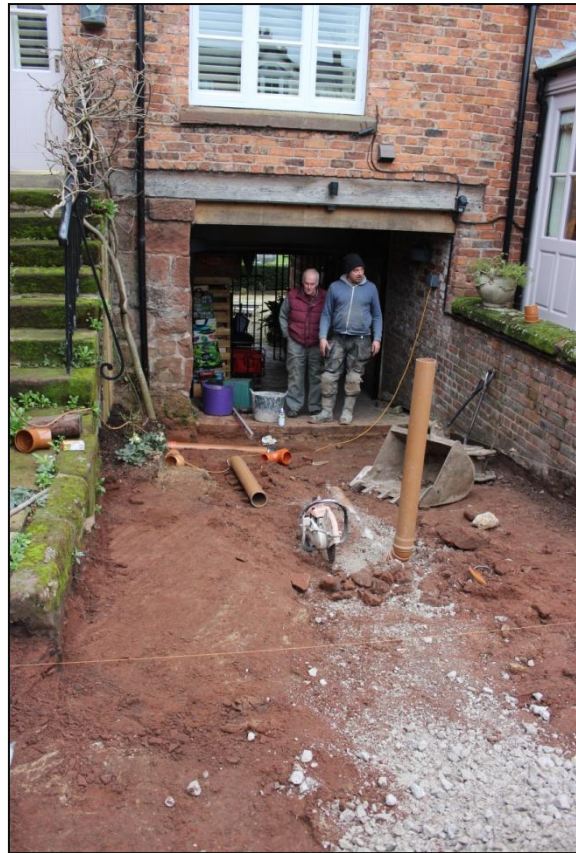


Plate 9:

Sandstone bedrock cut for existing drainage which will be renewed, as part of the current work

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The watching brief has shown that bedrock is located at the shallow depth of approximately 250 to 300mm across the courtyard and entrance at Castle View. The gaps in the bedrock had been filled and the cobblestones laid during the last refurbishment of the property.
- 5.2 Clearly all topsoil and subsoil that may have overlain the shallow bedrock has been removed in the past.
- 5.3 Despite being in an area of archaeological potential, the shallow depth of bedrock and previous removal of any natural soils has rendered the site archaeologically sterile.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Castlering Archaeology would like to thank Mr and Mrs Wybrev for contracting the archaeological work and Mark Lee, the main contractor, and his staff for their full co-operation.

7. REFERENCES

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