

CPAT Report No. 1540

Little Acre, Forden




Archaeological Evaluation



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CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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 Project Name: Little Acre, Forden
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Summary

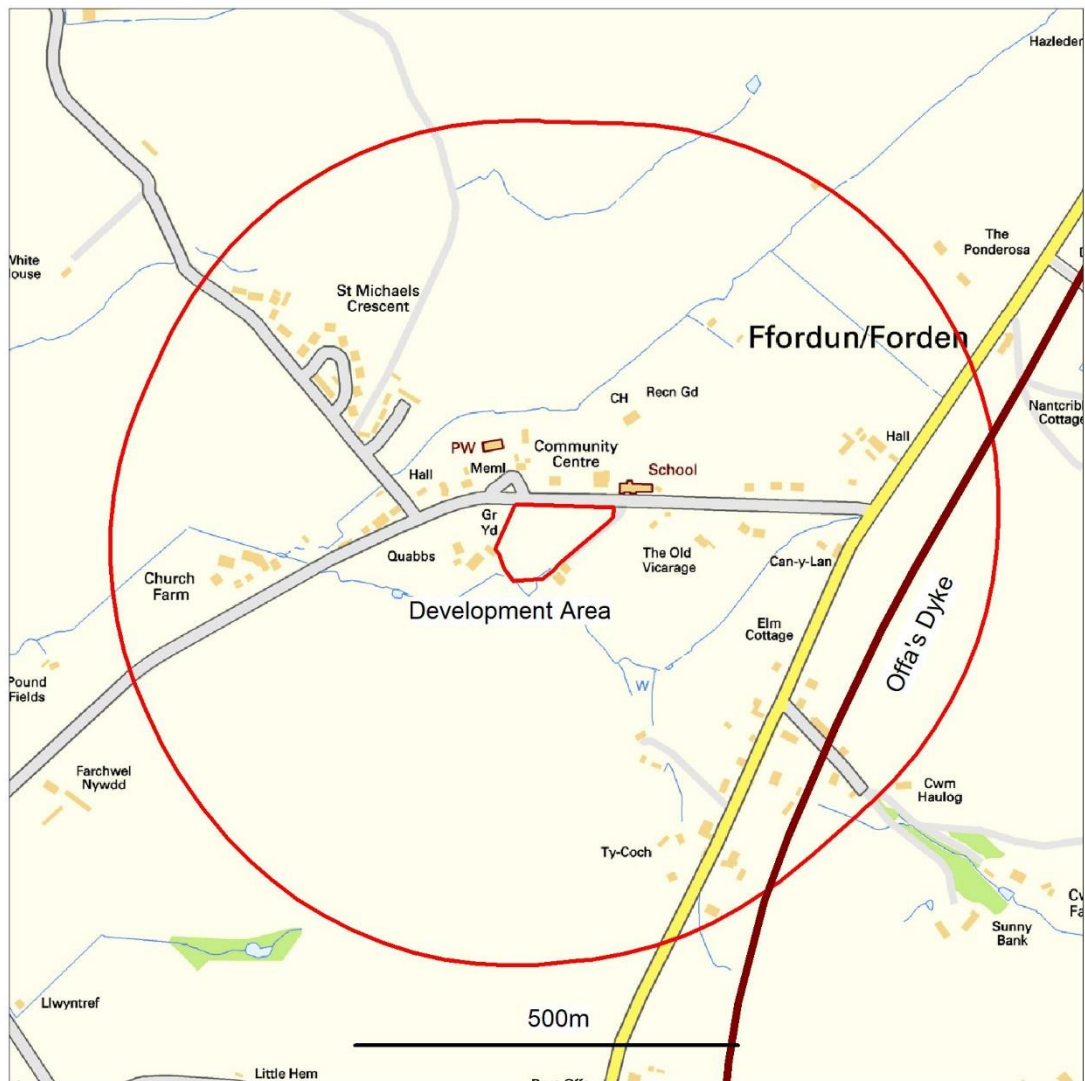
An archaeological evaluation was carried out by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in November 2017 in connection with a planning application for a residential development on land at Little Acre, Forden (NGR: SJ 22801 00996), situated about 100m south-east of the church.

The work investigated a bank and ditch at the western end of the development area which had been identified previously and appeared to be part of a large enclosed field lying to the south of the church and possibly associated with the nearby Quabbs farm. It seems likely that this became redundant at the time of the Forden enclosure awards in the early years of the 19th century and the evidence from the evaluation suggested that it had been subject to erosion from subsequent ploughing.

Three shallow ditches and a small ring-shaped gully were also found, most of which were thought to be connected to field drainage, but all were undated. The function of the ring gully could not be determined in the limited view afforded by the trench.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was commissioned by Gwynfor Humphries, on behalf of Mr and Mrs V Jones, to carry out an archaeological evaluation in relation to a planning application (P2017/1103) for a proposed development of nine dwellings on land at Little Acre, Forden in Powys. The Curatorial Section of CPAT, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local authority, had specified that a pre-determination archaeological evaluation was required to identify the potential impact of the development on the archaeological resource and had detailed the scope of the work in a brief (EVB887).



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Fig. 1: Location of the proposed development, the wider area depicted is a 500m buffer zone that provided the basis for a search of relevant records

- 1.2. The development site is located on the south side of the public road passing the school at Forden, only some 100m to the south-east of the church at NGR: SJ 22801 00996. The church and the surrounding dwellings lie on a flattish spur between the twin branches of a small stream which runs westwards down to the Camlad, itself

a tributary of the Severn, which it joins less than 2 km away. The plot is currently pasture with gated access on the south east side from a farm track; immediately to the west is the modern graveyard extension associated with St Michael's Church.

- 1.3. The evaluation was carried out on 7-9 November 2017 and this report was written later in the same month.

2 Desk-base Study

- 2.1. Much of the following general description of the immediate district in which the development is proposed has been taken from the historic settlements study of the old county of Montgomeryshire compiled by CPAT (Silvester et al. 2012), as it relates to Forden. The historic core of the village as defined by that source encompasses the development area.
- 2.2. Forden features in the Domesday Book (1086), where it was distinguished as Furtune, incorporating the Old English elements ford and tun, though because of its position away from any river, experts consider that the first element means 'route' or 'road', perhaps referring to the Welsh 'ffordd'. Thus Forden is interpreted as the 'settlement by a road', the road being of Roman date. Local suggestions about crossing points of the River Severn may be wide of the mark. In 1292 it was Forton and in 1570 it appeared in its present form for the first time.
- 2.3. Its appearance in Domesday points to the presence of a late Saxon estate here and this has been tentatively linked to Nantcribba, a farm complex about one kilometre to the east on the far side of the B4388 and more importantly also Offa's Dyke. Nantcribba has been seen as a manorial centre with a demesne, but this was referred to as Wropton alias Nantcribba in 1596, which in turn has been associated with the Wropton of 1292 and the Vrbetvne of Domesday Book, (and the name of a township). This points to an estate or settlement, separate from Forden.
- 2.4. The church, though outwardly with little to suggest that it has a long history, could conceivably be an early medieval foundation. It is the shape of the churchyard as shown on an estate map of 1783 which hints at this, though the accuracy of the map has not been assessed, and the picture it presents is clearly different from the outline of the churchyard today.
- 2.5. The post-Conquest nature and appearance of Forden remains uncertain through subsequent centuries, but there must be some doubt as to whether a settlement ever grew up around the church. For much of its time it was a chapel attached to the mother church at Chirbury. The 1783 estate map shows the church in a circular churchyard on a common, with two or three houses set in their fields as separate but detached enclosures. While it is conceivable that a nucleated settlement of the Middle Ages might be gradually abandoned and ultimately revert to open common, it is not at all likely. The Forden commons were subject to enclosure in 1803 (Kain *et al* 2004, 329).
- 2.6. The pattern represented on the late 18th-century map, and the later Tithe survey map of 1843, where the church was accompanied only by Church House, a farm called Quabb and one or two post-enclosure cottages, suggests that Forden was generally a dispersed settlement, its individual elements spread intermittently around extensive

tracts of common land, and that only in the later 19th century did it take on a nucleated appearance. At present there is nothing to suggest that Forden was anything other than a church settlement.

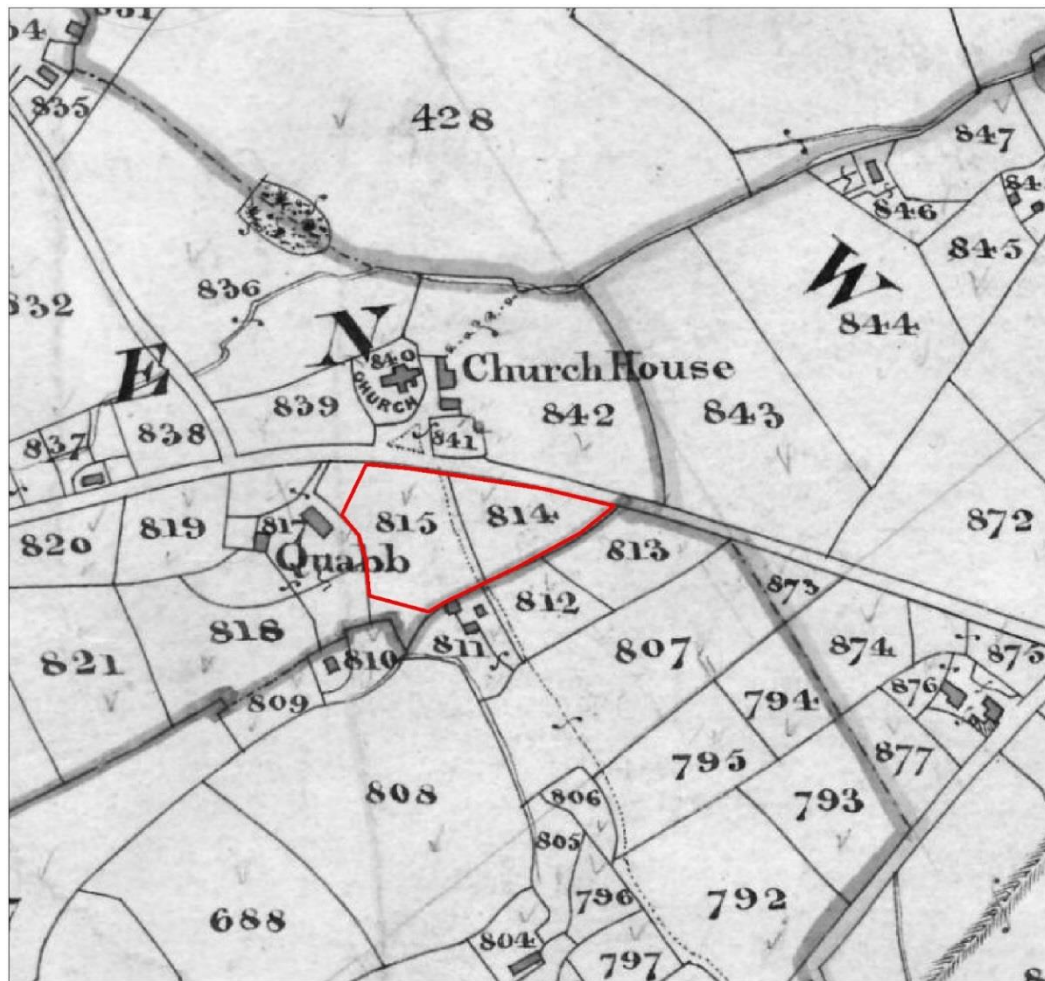


Fig. 2: The 1843 Tithe map, with the development area outlined in red

- 2.7. The church of St Michael was rebuilt in its entirety in 1867, to the north of the old building. Of its medieval predecessor, nothing remains, nor do any furnishings or fittings. Its churchyard now has a decidedly rectilinear appearance, at odds with its more curvilinear depiction in the eighteenth century. There are no known buildings of any age in the vicinity of the church.
- 2.8. There is a wide range of historic assets in the neighbourhood, including the Roman fort at Forden Gaer; numerous Iron Age and Romano-British farmsteads showing as cropmarks; several features of different periods at Nantcribba and Offa's Dyke; and a motte on the bank of the Severn at Lower Munlyn. Geographically, however, none of these is directly relevant to the settlement at Forden.
- 2.9. In relation to the development plot itself, the first accurate depictions are provided by the Ordnance Survey mapping of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Figs 3 and 4). Neither of these maps show any evidence of heritage assets within the area, though it is crossed by a trackway heading south-east from the church.

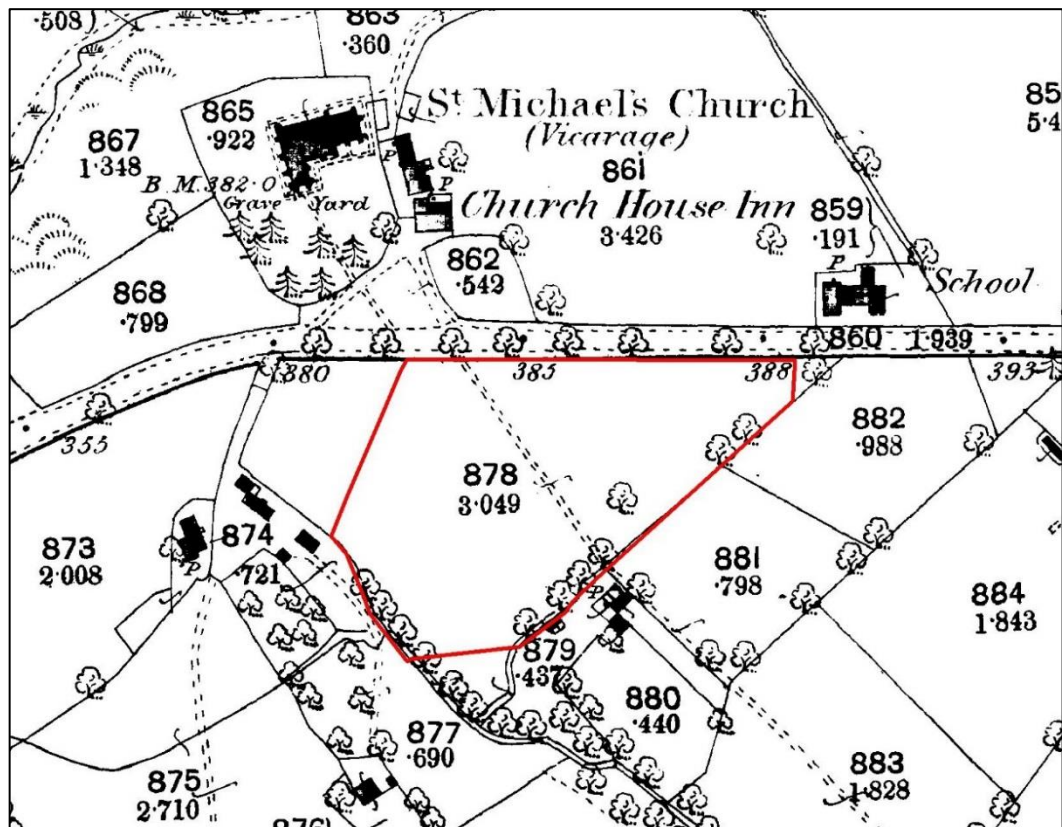


Fig. 3: The first edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1886

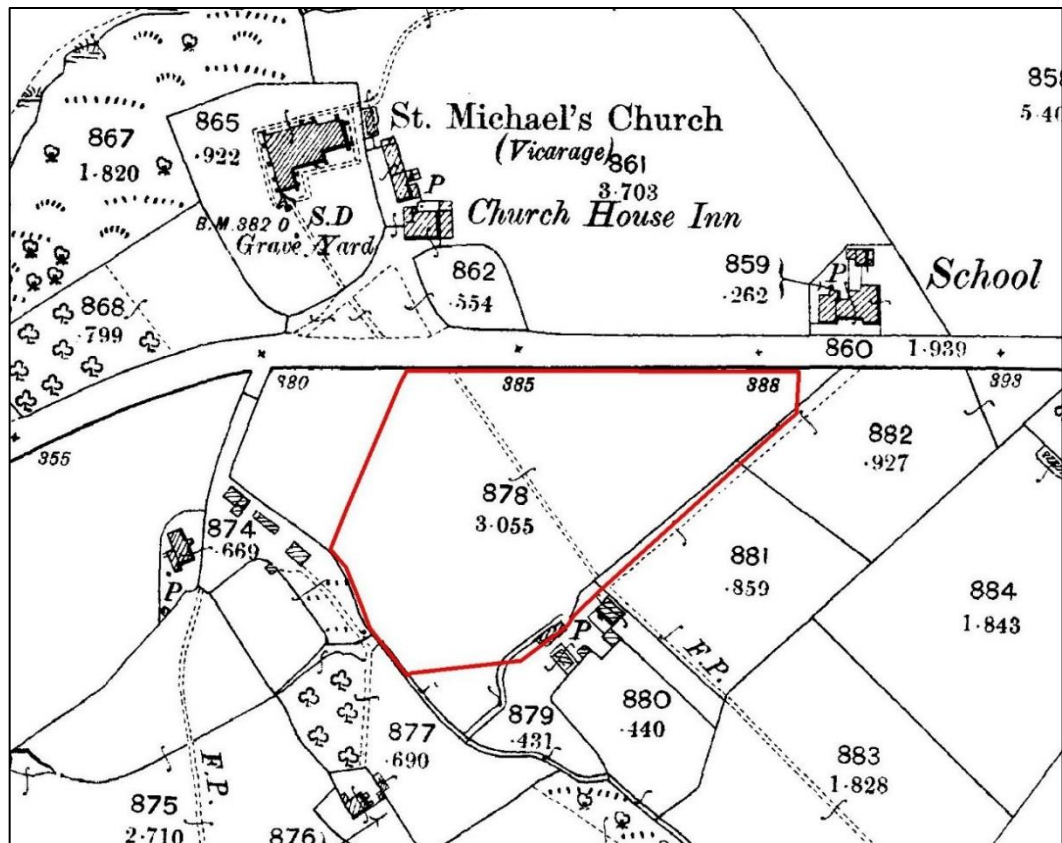


Fig. 4: The second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1902

- 2.10. Two heritage assets have been recorded within the proposed development area in the regional Historic Environment Record (HER); a series of earthworks south of the church (PRN 7599) and an earthwork bank (PRN 7589). Both have been considered to be of post-medieval origin. Although the location is slightly different, PRN 7589 may be a broad earthwork visible on the LiDAR coverage for the area, which extends for approximately 60m to the north-east from the small settlement known as Quabbs; the bank (104) and ditch (105) are depicted on Fig. 5, below. This could represent the partial survival of a former enclosure, or, more likely, a portion of a former field system centred to the south-west of the church and it is perhaps informative that the bank stops at the point where it meets the line of a former trackway depicted on the 1886 and 1902 Ordnance Survey maps. In the case of PRN 7599, the record only denotes that there is a group of earthworks at this location and it may be that PRN 7589 is one of those, others could represent traces of possible remnant ridge and furrow cultivation. The historic core of the village has been thought to encompass the proposed development area, partly owing to its proximity to the church and partly to the presence of the earthworks. The locality was therefore considered to have some potential to retain evidence of a former medieval village layout, if such a thing existed.

3 Evaluation

- 3.1. The trenches were excavated using a small machine excavator, fitted with a 1.6m-wide toothless ditching bucket. At the start of each trench a sondage was dug in order to test the nature of the natural deposits.
- 3.2. The topsoil and subsoil deposits were excavated in controlled spits, under direct archaeological supervision, down to the natural clay or until archaeological deposits were encountered, with all excavation thereafter being carried out by hand. In total, five trenches were excavated; Trench 1, to the south-west, was 45m long, with the remainder (Trenches 2-5) each measuring 32m in length.
- 3.3. The general site stratigraphy comprised a turf line, above a brown, friable, sandy clay subsoil (102), which ranged in thickness from 0.35m in Trench 4, to almost 1.00m in Trench 1. The underlying natural soils comprised an orange, firm sandy clay, containing stone fragments; this was visible over the whole site.

Trench 1

- 3.4. The trench, which measured 45m by 1.6m, was aligned north-west/south-east and was placed across the line of the earth bank identified as PRN 7859 (see para 2.10). During machine stripping a raised deposit (104), comprising an orange-brown sandy clay with common small stones, was identified which was no doubt the core of the visible earthwork. This was approximately 2.6m wide at its base and up to 0.4m high, on its crest there was a layer of compacted clay (106), 0.70m wide and 0.10m thick, which appeared to represent material excavated from the base of the ditch.

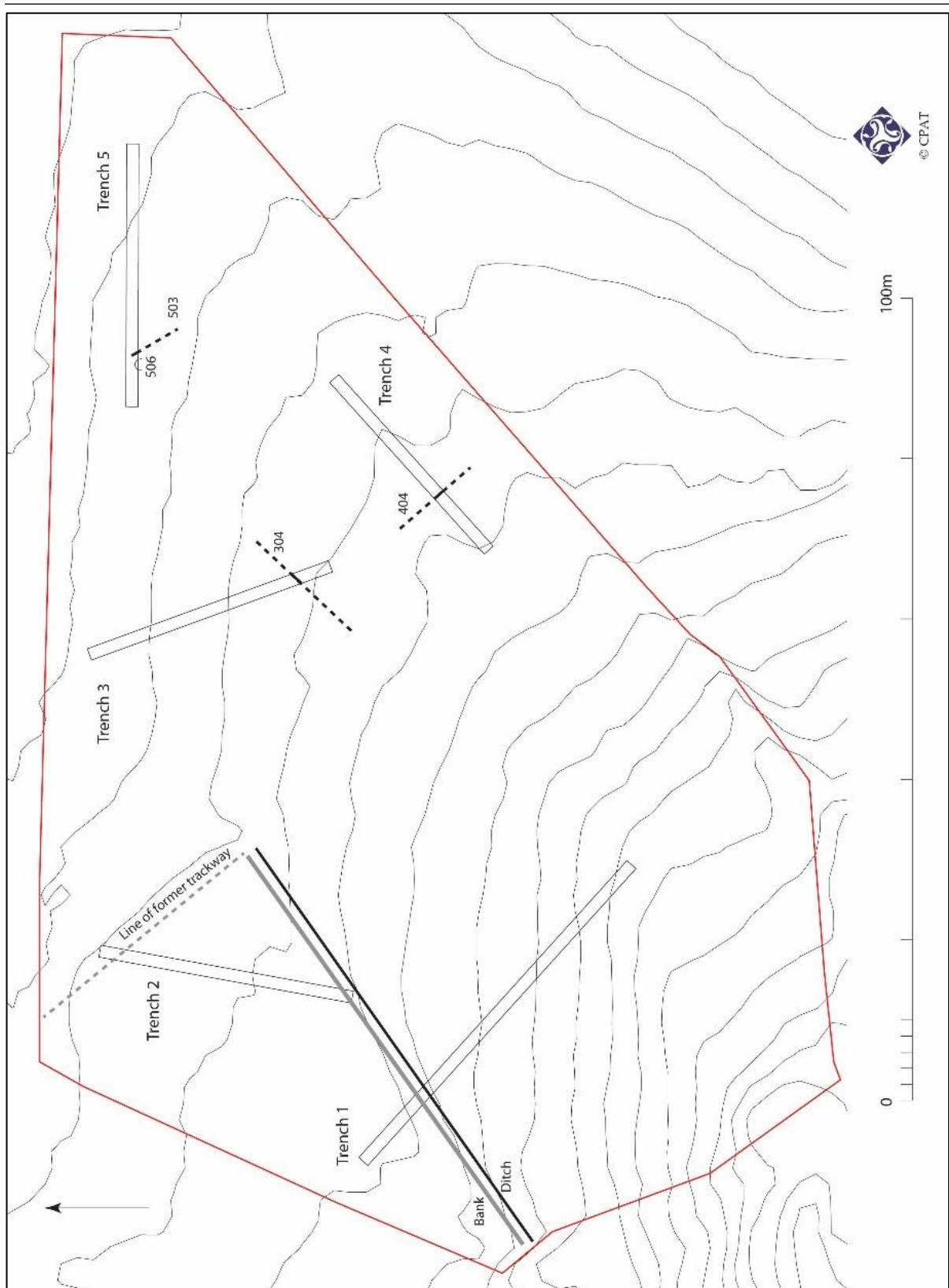


Fig 5: Contour map of the development area, showing trench layout and excavated features



Fig. 6: Trench 1, view of bank deposit (104), with the associated ditch (105) to top left, taken from the north. Photo CPAT 4423-0010

- 3.5. A ditch (105) was identified on the south-eastern side of the bank, cut into the natural subsoil and measuring 1.5m wide by 0.25m deep; its fill (109) was very similar in composition to the core of the bank and it appeared that this was material that had been eroded from the bank, probably as a result of ploughing.

Trench 2

- 3.6. The trench measured 32m by 1.6m and was aligned approximately north/south and positioned such that it could investigate the possibility of there being surviving features within the possible enclosure or field system upslope of the bank and ditch recorded in Trench 1.
- 3.7. At the southern end of the trench cleaning of the sections and base revealed further traces of the bank and ditch. The bank (206) comprised a mottled light brown, silty clay, with occasional medium sized angular stone inclusions, placed directly on the natural clay, and was 1.7m wide by 0.35m high. Immediately to the south was the ditch (204), only part of which was exposed and which was at least 0.4m wide by 0.25m deep; it was filled by a silty clay (208) of a similar composition to the bank. Again, this similarity between the bank and the material filling the ditch appears to reflect erosion of the bank by ploughing, as seen in Trench 1.
- 3.8. Cleaning of the base and sides of the trench revealed no further features, which implies that the bank represents part of a former field system, rather than an enclosure. Fragments of 17th century pottery were recovered from the lower subsoil (201), probably reflecting manuring of the soil in this locality.

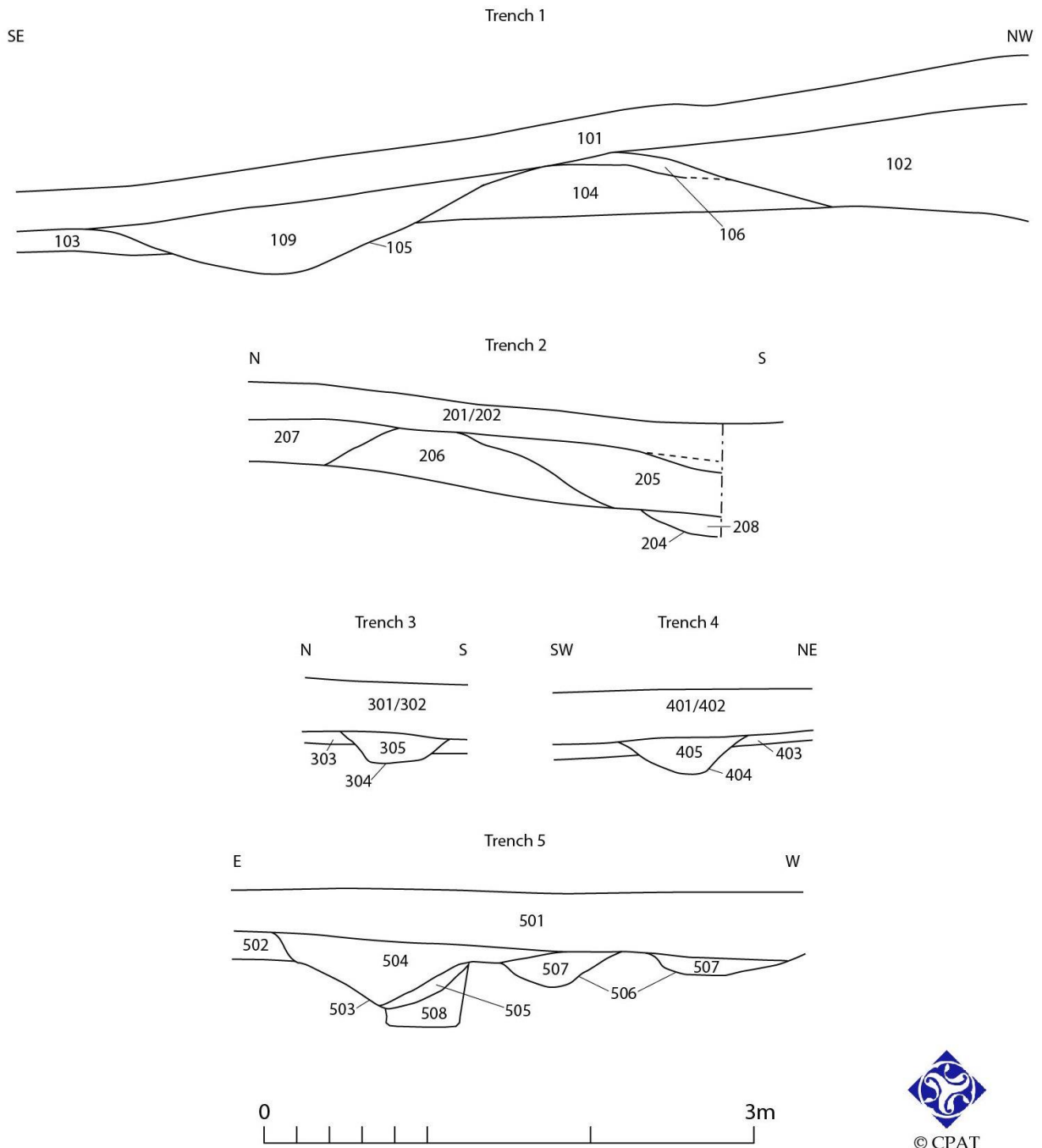


Fig. 7: Sections across the significant features in each trench



Fig. 8: The remains of the bank and ditch at the southern end of the trench, from the west. Photo CPAT 4423-0020

Trench 3

- 3.9. The trench measured 32m by 1.6m and was located in the centre of the field on a north-north-west/south-south-east alignment. Towards its south-south-eastern end, a narrow ditch (304) was revealed, running on a north-east/south-west alignment. It measured 0.5m wide by 0.18m deep and was filled by a light brown, silty clay (305). No dating material was recovered.
- 3.10. No other features or significant material were revealed in the trench.

Trench 4

- 3.11. The trench, which measured 32m by 1.6m, was positioned alongside the south-eastern boundary of the development area and was aligned north-east/south-west. Following machine stripping a narrow ditch (404) was revealed running in a north-west/south-east direction. It measured 0.6m wide by 0.25m deep and had a rounded profile. No dating material was recovered from the fill of greyish brown, friable silty clay (405).
- 3.12. There were no other significant features found in this trench, though two stone filled land drains were identified crossing it in a north-south direction.



Fig. 9: Section through ditch 304. Photo CPAT 4423-0015



Fig. 10: Section through ditch 404. Photo CPAT 4423-0014

Trench 5

- 3.13. The trench measured 32m by 1.6m and was located towards the eastern end of the development area and was aligned east/west. Two features were revealed towards the western end of the trench; a ditch terminus, and part of what appeared to be a small, perhaps circular, ring gully (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11: Trench 5, showing the ditch terminus (503) and possible ring gully (507), from the north. Photo CPAT 4423-0016

- 3.14. The ditch (503) appeared to be running broadly south-east from the terminus, and measured 1.2m wide by 0.4m deep with a widely rounded upper profile and a slot in its base. The lower fill (508) was an orangey-grey clay and this was overlain by a mid-yellowish brown, friable, clayey silt (505). The uppermost fill (504), was of similar composition to fill 505, but with more evidence of iron panning; it extended to the west to partially cover the fill of the possible ring gully.
- 3.15. Only a small segment of the possible ring gully (506) was visible as it extended to the south beyond the confines of the trench. The feature appeared to cover an area about 1.8m in diameter and the gully was up to 0.8m wide and 0.2m deep. The fill comprised a mid-yellowish brown clayey silt (507), with occasional small stone inclusions.
- 3.16. Four possible stakeholes (509) were identified just beyond the terminus of the ditch. They were evenly spaced, following the curve of the terminus, and measured approximately 50mm in diameter and 60-70mm deep. They were filled by a soft brown clayey silt (510).

4 Conclusions

- 4.1. The evaluation investigated a north-east/south-west aligned bank and ditch in the western part of the development area, and revealed a small number of additional features of unknown date.
- 4.2. The excavated bank and ditch sections seen in Trenches 1 and 2 appear to form the south-east boundary of a large, irregularly-shaped field, which is visible on the 2m-resolution LiDAR data of the surrounding area (Fig 12). This bank is not shown as a boundary on the 1843 Tithe map, which suggests it had already gone out of use by that time and this may be related to the enclosure of commons in Forden in the early years of the 19th century. At its north-east end, the earthwork meets the line of a trackway running south-east from the church that is depicted on the 1886 and 1902 Ordnance Survey mapping; this is also visible on the LiDAR coverage.

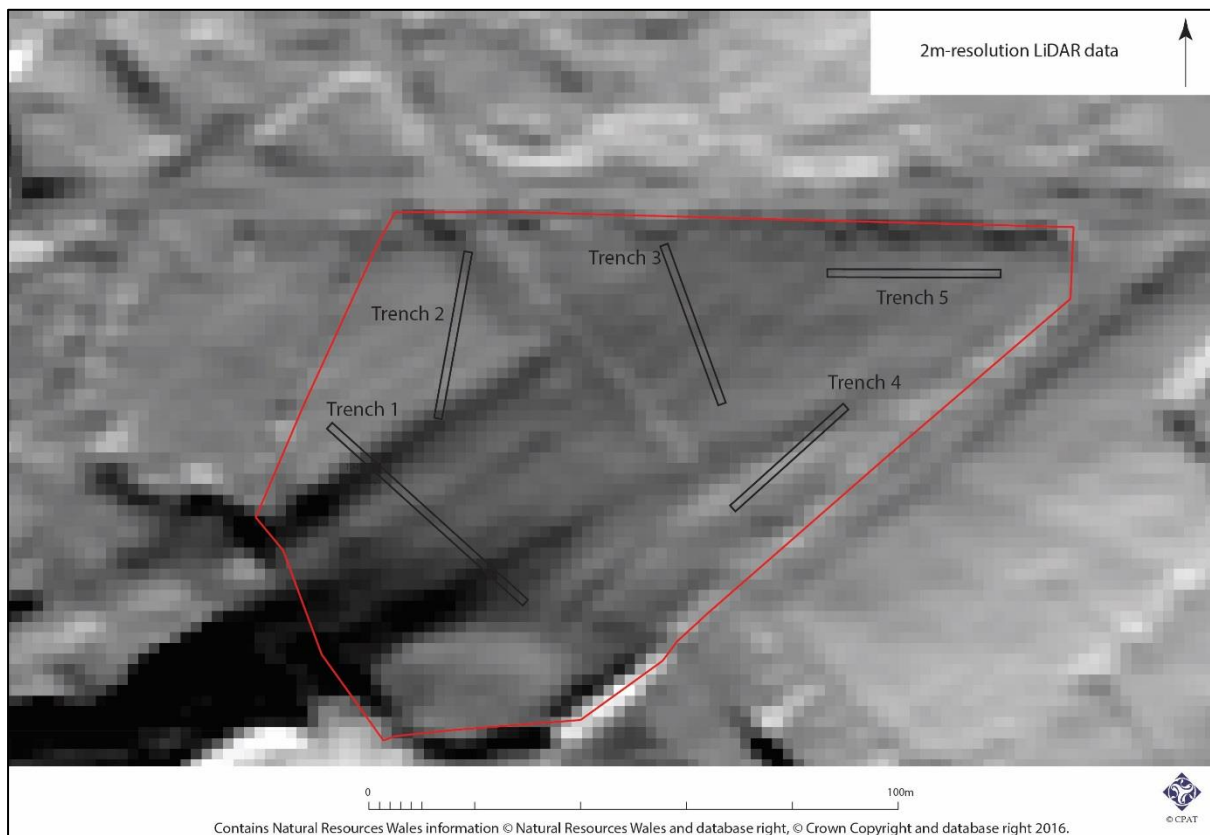


Fig. 12: LIDAR 2m Resolution data of site showing underlying earthworks

- 4.3. The indications are that the field was either part of the church lands, or was associated with one of the isolated settlements surrounding the church, most probably Quabb farm, to the south-west. There is some evidence of ploughing activity within the field, visible as a series of north-east/south-west aligned ridges on the LIDAR plot.
- 4.4. The two small ditches seen in Trenches 3 and 4 have a similar shape and profile and are likely related to some form of drainage activity, though of what period is not known.

- 4.5. The ditch and small ring gully in Trench 5, while undated, also suggest small scale agricultural activity, though the function of the ring gully could not be determined in the limited view afforded by the trench.

5 Sources

Written

Kain, R. J. P., Chapman, J., and Oliver, R. R., 2004. *The Enclosure Maps of England and Wales 1595-1918: A Cartographic Analysis*, Cambridge University Press.

Silvester, R J, Martin, C H R and Watson, S E, 2012. *Historic Settlements in Montgomeryshire*, CPAT Report 1134.

Cartographic

1817 Ordnance Surveyors' drawing No 198

1840 Forden Tithe Map

1886 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map (Montgomeryshire 30.08)

1902 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map (Montgomeryshire 30.08)

6 Archive deposition Statement

- 6.1. The project archive has been prepared according to the CPAT Archive Policy and in line with the CIfA *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives guidance* (2014). The digital archive only will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and the paper/drawn/digital archive with the National Monuments Record (RCAHMW). The few artefacts collected have not been retained. A summary of the archive is provided in Appendix 1.

7 Site Archive

CPAT Event PRN: 140208

5 section drawings (single sheet)

4 trench recording forms

Context register

28 context record forms

Photographic register

Drawings register

Finds register

2 finds and samples record forms

1 bag of 17th/18th pottery (4 sherds, not retained)

2 bulk environmental samples (not retained)

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 1858

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) has been invited by Gwynfor Humphries to submit a proposal for an archaeological evaluation in connection with a proposed new housing development on land at little Acre, Forden in Powys. The curatorial section of CPAT, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local authority, have determined that an archaeological evaluation is required to identify the potential impact on the archaeological resource. Accordingly a brief was prepared which details the work required.
- 1.2. The development site is located immediately south of the Church House and Devryl properties in Forden at NGR: 322801, 300996. The graveyard extension attached to St Michael's Church lies immediately west of the plot. The plot is currently pasture with gated access on the south east side from a farm access track.
- 1.3. Information retained within the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that the development plot lies within an area of high archaeological sensitivity relating to the historic core of the village, as defined in the Montgomeryshire Historic Settlements Survey 2011. The plot also contains two recorded historic assets, a series of earthworks south of the church (PRN 7599) and an earthwork bank (PRN 7589). The 2 metre-resolution LiDAR coverage for the plot indicates a wide NE-SW oriented bank at the west end of the field which perhaps curves to the north at its eastern extremity and is indicative of an undated enclosure. There may also be some remnant ridge and furrow earthworks in this field.
- 1.4. It is therefore possible that the plot may contain evidence of the former medieval village layout including timber framed houses, associated plot boundaries, gardens and outbuildings together with artefacts of all periods related to that occupation evidence. There is additional potential for prehistoric and later archaeology in the same field.

2 Objectives

- 2.1. The objectives of the evaluation are:
 - to reveal by means of a field evaluation, the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the cultural heritage within the area of the proposed development in so far as these aims are possible;
 - to record any archaeological features identified during the evaluation;
 - to prepare a report outlining the results of the evaluation;
 - to prepare a final publication of the results in an appropriate regional or national journal, depending on the nature and significance of any archaeology.

3 Methodology

- 3.1. The evaluation will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2014) and Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment (2014).

Desk-based Assessment

- 3.2. Stage 1 of the assessment will involve the examination of all the readily available primary and secondary documentary, cartographic, pictorial, and photographic sources at the following repositories:

- the regional Historic Environment Record
- the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
- the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth
- Powys County Archives

- 3.3. All cartographic sources consulted will be included within the desktop section of the report, together with transcriptions of relevant documents and copies of plans, maps and photographs containing relevant information, subject to any copyright restrictions.

Evaluation

- 3.4. The evaluation will comprise five trenches, each measuring 1.5 wide and 45m in length. The precise locations and dimensions of the trenches will be agreed with the developer and the curator prior to the commencement of on-site work.
- 3.5. The trenches will be excavated initially using a machine fitted with a wide toothless ditching blade. All modern overburden will be removed down to the level of the first recognisable archaeological horizon. Thereafter, all excavation will be conducted by hand unless otherwise agreed with the Curator in advance. The base and at least one section of each trench will be manually cleaned and recorded. The evaluation will be essentially non-destructive and designed to determine the depth at which archaeologically sensitive deposits survive, together with their nature condition and significance. The depth of natural deposits will be determined to assess the extent of any stratified deposits which may be encountered.
- 3.6. It has been assumed that the area in question has sufficient access for a small mechanical excavator via existing gateways. Any variation from this may impact on the overall charges. Excavated material will be temporarily stored adjacent to the trench, which will be reinstated with this material upon completion. On completion of the evaluation all trenches will be reinstated with excavated material. No provision has been made for fencing during the excavations, other than using plastic barrier mesh.

- 3.7. The excavation of archaeological features or deposits will be undertaken by hand using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation:
- Where features of archaeological interest are identified they will be systematically investigated by hand with sufficient work being undertaken to determine their date, character and function, using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation and in accordance with CIfA Standard and Guidance.
 - All features will be located as accurately as possible on an overall plan of the development at an appropriate scale, showing boundaries depicted on Ordnance Survey mapping.
 - Contexts will be recorded on individual record forms, using a continuous numbering system, and be drawn and photographed as appropriate.
 - Stratigraphic units will be assigned a record number and entered along with a description on an individual record form or trench recording sheet as appropriate.
 - Plans will be drawn on permatrace to a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50, as appropriate.
 - All photography will be taken using a digital SLR camera with a minimum resolution of 8 mega pixels, including a metric scale in each view, with views logged in a photographic register.
 - In the event of human burials being discovered the Ministry of Justice will be informed. The remains will initially be left in situ, and if removal is required, a MoJ licences will be applied for under the Burial Act 1857.
 - In the event of finding any artefacts covered by the provisions of the Treasures Act 1996, the appropriate procedures under this legislation will be followed.

Artefacts

- 3.8. All artefacts and environmental samples will be treated in a manner appropriate to their composition and a sampling strategy will be developed as appropriate:
- All stratified finds will be collected by context, or where appropriate, individually recorded in three dimensions. Unstratified finds will only be collected where they contribute significantly to the project objectives or are of particular intrinsic interest.
 - All finds and samples will be collected, processed, sorted, quantified, recorded, labelled, packed, stored, marked, assessed, analysed and conserved in a manner appropriate to their composition and in line with appropriate guidance.
 - arrangements to assess and study any artefacts, assemblages and environment samples.
 - Any artefacts recovered during the evaluation will be deposited with an appropriate museum, subject to the permission of the owner.

Report

- 3.9. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:
- Non-technical summary
 - Introduction
 - Site location
 - Topography and Geology
 - Archaeological Background
 - Evaluation
 - Conclusions
 - References
 - appropriate appendices on archives and finds
- 3.10. The site archive will be prepared to specifications in English Heritage's Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) system and the ClfA Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives (2014). The digital archive only will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and the paper/drawn/digital archive with the National Monuments Record (RCAHMW).

4 Resources and programming

- 4.1. The assessment will be undertaken by a team of skilled archaeologists under the overall supervision of Nigel Jones, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). CPAT is also a CIfA Registered Organisation (RAO No 6) and as such agrees to abide by their Code of Conduct (2014) and the Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology (2014).
- 4.2. All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the evaluation.
- 4.3. It is anticipated that the trial excavation will be completed within two to five working days with a team of two archaeologists, and the report prepared immediately thereafter. At present CPAT would be in a position to undertake the evaluation during November 2017, subject to the receipt of sufficient advanced notice from the client.
- 4.4. The client is advised that should significant archaeological remains or artefacts be revealed additional services may be required for which a contingency should be

allowed. The need for such contingencies, and their scope and potential cost, would be subject to discussions between CPAT, the client and the curator once the fieldwork has been completed. The following figures are therefore only for guidance and the final cost, should any of further services be required, may be more or less than the following figures which are included to provide an indication of the types of additional services and indicative costs which might be required:

- Curatorial monitoring £150 per visit
- Finds conservation etc £285 per day
- Finds specialist £265 per day
- Dating £320 per date
- Environmental specialist £285 per day
- Charcoal identification £50 per sample
- Interim Publication Archaeology in Wales at no additional charge

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.

N W Jones

16 October 2017