

CPAT Report No. 1585

Montgomery 11kV Overhead line rebuild

Archaeological Watching Brief



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CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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 CPAT Project No: 2294
 Project Name: Montgomery 11kV Overhead line rebuild
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 with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

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Summary

In May 2018, the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust carried out an archaeological watching brief during the rebuilding of an 11kV overhead line near Montgomery in Powys.

Part of the scheme took place within the scheduled areas for three Scheduled Monuments (SAM Mg023, Mg221 and Mg225), located on the outskirts of the town. The routes through these areas for plant and other site traffic were planned in order to minimise damage to the extant earthworks. Groundworks were monitored for the removal and replacement of the poles and stays and to facilitate access to the supply cables.

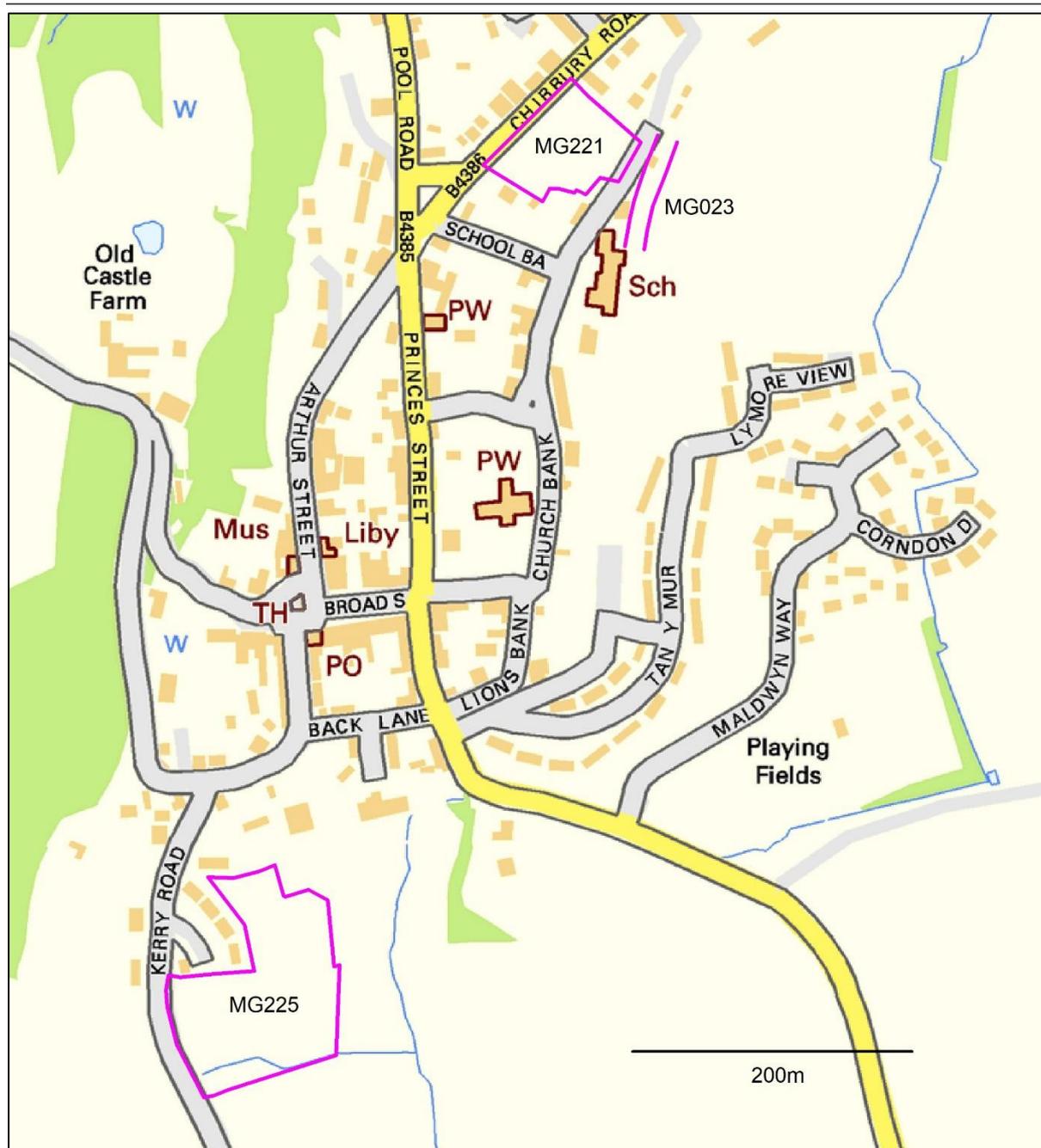
On Kerry Road, to the south of the town, the overhead line scheme passed through farmland containing part of an extra mural settlement (Mg225), surviving as a series of rectangular platforms located either side of a holloway. Nothing of archaeological significance was revealed in the course of this work.

To the south of Chirbury Road the overhead line scheme passed through an open field on a steep bank within the scheduled area for the medieval town (Mg221). A single house platform was located at the top of the bank. Nothing of archaeological significance was disturbed by the groundworks in this area.

To the south-west of this area, the overhead line crossed the part of the eastern section of the medieval town ditch (Mg023). Excavations to replace a pair of poles within the ditch revealed a ditch fill deposit 0.3m thick. No dateable material was recovered from this fill, although two iron fastenings were recovered.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) carried out a watching brief on behalf of Freedom Group during the rebuilding of an 11kV overhead line near Montgomery in Powys. The watching brief related to a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) for works within the scheduled areas of three monuments on the outskirts of Montgomery, consisting of:
 - MG023 Montgomery Town Bank and Ditches
 - MG221 Montgomery Medieval Town, adjacent to Westmead, School Lane
 - MG225 Montgomery Medieval Town, Kerry Gate (See Fig. 1)
- 1.2. SMC was granted in August 2016, with the inclusion of the following condition relating to archaeology:
 1. that the Welsh Ministers shall be given two week's notice, in writing, of the date of commencement of work or of any subsequent adjustment to this date, to allow our representatives to monitor on site activity;
 2. that access to the site shall be afforded to our representatives;
 3. that prior to the start of works a meeting shall be held with the regional Inspector of Archaeology and Ancient Monuments, Will Davies, (will.davies@wales.gsi.gov.uk) to establish outstanding details of the proposed works including exact pole and stay locations and vehicular access routes in relation to upstanding earthworks;
 4. that you shall appoint a suitably qualified CiFA accredited professional archaeologist to undertake a watching brief on all ground disturbance and to ensure no incidental damage is caused by tracked vehicles or other operations. The archaeologist shall be present at the meeting set out in Condition 3;
 5. that the archaeologist shall be afforded sufficient time to record any archaeological deposits exposed during the course of works;
 6. that existing poles shall be either vertically extracted or cut to ground level and left to rot in situ, not grubbed or dug up;
 7. that tracked machinery shall avoid upstanding earthworks and adhere to routes identified by us at the start of works meeting set out in condition 3. Works shall not be undertaken during sustained periods of wet weather in order to avoid damage to the surface by tracking vehicles. Poles shall not be dragged across upstanding earthworks;
 8. that all contractors and sub-contractors shall be advised of the scheduled status of all three sites and the restrictions that this carries with it;
 9. that all three monuments shall be left in a stable and tidy condition; and that the Welsh Ministers shall be informed immediately upon the completion of the works.



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Fig. 1 Location of the scheduled areas (marked in purple) impacted upon by the overhead line rebuilding scheme

Archaeological and Historical Background

- 1.3. The following is taken from the Historic Settlement Survey for Montgomery (Silvester et al. 2012).
- 1.4. Known in Welsh as Trefaldwyn, both this and its English counterpart were attached to Hen Domen (or Old Montgomery), the motte and bailey closer to the Severn, and then transferred to the present town of Montgomery in 1223. In Domesday Book the motte was called Castrum Muntgumeri after its lord, Roger de Montgomery, Earl of

Shrewsbury, whose home on the opposite side of the Channel was Sainte Germain de Montgommeri in Normandy. Gastell baldwin is recorded in c.1170, a reference either to Baldwin de Bollers who was granted possession of Montgomery in the early 12th century, or his grandson, another Baldwin. Trefaldwyn is first recorded in 1440.

- 1.5. Montgomery castle (or perhaps more accurately New Montgomery) was constructed by Henry III as a strategic stronghold on the Welsh border from 1223, its location commended by Mathew Paris, the 13th century monk-cum-chronicler from St Albans, as ideal 'for the erection of an impregnable castle'. The spot was less suitable for the development of a town, however, but the king issued a safe conduct to all who would bring victuals for sale to the castle, promising the liberties enjoyed by the burgesses of Shrewsbury to those who would settle there. Montgomery was thus conceived as a plantation town, created at much the same time as the castle, and it received its charter in 1227, which included provision for the enclosure of the town with defences (though a murage grant of 1267 with others subsequently up until 1336, suggests that the town may not have been provided with its stone wall until later in the 13th century). By 1224, too, a parish had been carved out of the old Saxon parish of Chirbury to support the new church.
- 1.6. The castle's strategic importance may have declined in the 14th century but it was maintained to a high standard by the Mortimer family, perhaps as a border stronghold. The town, however, thrived and the population of the borough expanded through the 13th and into the 14th century. A weekly market was held in Broad Street and there were four annual fairs. However, its strategic location at a distance from the Severn may have hindered its commercial development. The rise of Newtown and Welshpool, both on the river, created rival market towns in superior locations and in 1279 Welshpool's market and fairs were temporarily removed by royal charter because of the damage they were doing to Montgomery's prosperity.
- 1.7. Not surprisingly, Montgomery went into decline in the late medieval period. The king's antiquary, John Leland, noted the 'great ruines of the [town] waulle' around 1540, remarking that the town had suffered during the Glyndŵr rebellion. Yet the castle retained some significance - in the first half of the 16th century, the President of the Council in Wales and the Marches referred to it as 'the second key of Wales', the first being Ludlow. Large areas of the town, particularly in the northern part, were devoid of buildings in 1610-11 when John Speed published his plan of the town, although it was still ranked as one of the more important settlements in the Principality. This was no doubt partly because the town was accorded the status of county town to the newly created Montgomeryshire in the Act of Union between England and Wales instituted by Henry VIII in 1536. Unlike the other towns of Montgomeryshire it did not develop an industrial base during the post-medieval centuries and as a consequence its growth was stunted.
- 1.8. The town defences which were in place by the 1250s survive intermittently as earthworks, either as a ditch or scarp on the north, east and south, and more completely on the west as a considerable bank and ditch linked in with the castle defences. An in-depth study was published in 1940, confirming the former existence of a stone wall, although it has been argued that initially there was a wooden palisade which was replaced by the wall in 1279. Buried and overgrown stone foundations remain in a few places, and over 20m was exposed in 1995-7 near Arthur Gate. Towers were constructed at various points along the perimeter and the positions of

four gates are known with varying degrees of precision, amongst them Arthur[']s Gate on the north side which was still standing in the early 17th century when Speed surveyed the town, the name a corruption of the area name, Gorddwr. It is generally considered that these defences had reached their final form by the end of the 13th century. Limited excavations in the grounds of Crogbren have revealed the line of the town ditch in the south-west corner of the town.

- 1.9. The grid pattern of streets which is one of the defining characteristics of the planted town is recognisable only at the southern end of Montgomery in the vicinity of the church and market. Further north the natural landform necessitates a less regular layout. The location also meant that all traffic was filtered into the town from the north or the south. The focus was a wide open area at the centre of the town that formed the market area. Now Broad Street, it extended uphill behind the town hall and beyond the well which, from the prominence given to it on Speed's map of 1606/7, was probably the main water supply in the town. A market hall appears to have lain lengthways along the centre of Broad Street in the early 17th century with, perhaps, a market cross adjacent, but this was perhaps replaced by the town hall in a more imposing position and on a different alignment in 1748. A second open area, larger than what might be considered normal within a town lies in the northern half of the town where the four main through roads meet. Did this have some special function, perhaps as a green where livestock could be corralled, or is it little more than an indication that there was less pressure on space than in the southern half of the town where all the historic maps that are available imply a higher density of population.
- 1.10. The nature of the medieval buildings and their accompanying grounds is poorly understood. Typical of planned towns, long narrow burgage plots are still distinguishable in some parts of the town, notably off Princes Street and Broad Street. And of the range of trades and industries that might have occurred in the town we currently know very little, but there appears to have been a flourishing local pottery industry.
- 1.11. However, excavations on a plot beside Pool Road in 1984 and 1987 revealed the superimposed plans of two timber houses with a yard behind. Occupation began in the 13th century and seems to have ceased early in the 15th century after which the plot remained empty. Work in Bunner's Yard off Arthur Street in 1991 uncovered a possible building platform, but also a line of stakes which may have formed a division between plots or subdivided a single plot. An archaeological examination of a plot on Back Lane in 1996 uncovered a yard surface, gullies, a wall and at least two pits, one of which may have been medieval in date. There was however, no convincing evidence of a building. Platforms on a large plot west of Greenfields on the Chirbury Road have been shown to support the foundations of medieval buildings and has been statutorily designated. Several other watching briefs and evaluations throughout the town have produced evidence of medieval and Tudor activity, and are all adding to the emerging picture of Montgomery.
- 1.12. Extra-mural settlement immediately to the south of the walled town has recently been identified, though its date is uncertain. It comprises what appears to be a substantial platform enclosure and several house platforms set beside a well-defined holloway. This last-mentioned feature runs above a small valley and there are reasons for believing it may have been the medieval approach to the town from the

south, the main gate known as the Ceri Gate being further east than earlier research implied. It is more difficult to determine whether there was any settlement outside the walls elsewhere in the medieval and Tudor periods: Speed, though never the most reliable commentator in this respect, would appear to imply that extra-mural settlement was absent on the northern side of the town.

2 Archaeological Watching Brief

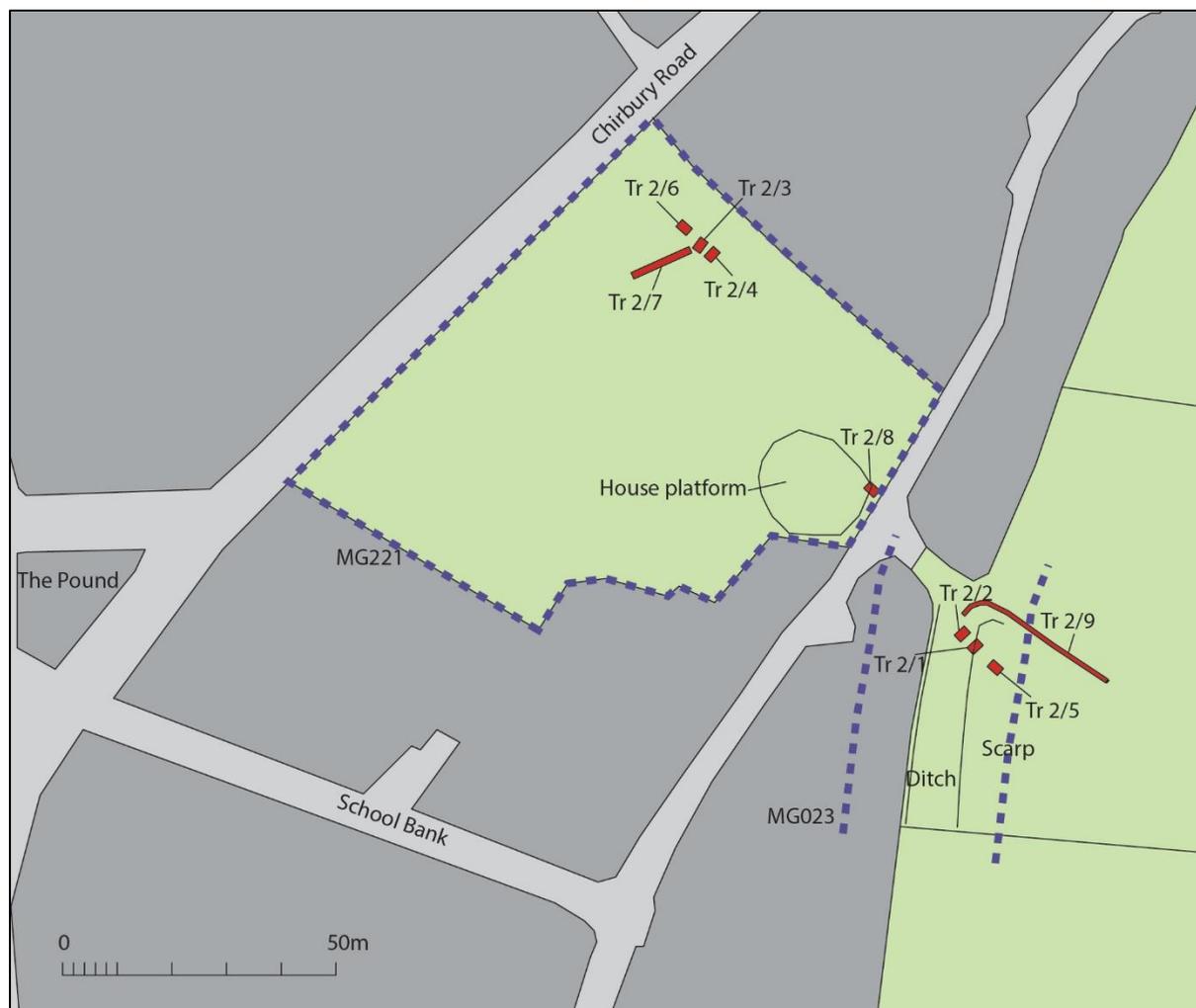


Fig. 2 Plan showing locations of groundworks in Scheduled Areas MG221 and MG023

Montgomery Town Bank and Ditches (MG023)

- 2.1. This section of the medieval town defences was located on the crest of ridge running to the east of the town (Fig. 2). It was separated from the section running through the field (MG221) by the associated defensive bank and a narrow lane running parallel to it. The defences had previously been cut through at the point where the groundworks had been carried out to allow access to the farmland to the south-east via the lane. A watching brief was carried out on the 29th and 30th of May 2018, concurrently with that carried in the adjacent area (MG221).



Fig. 3 South facing section through medieval ditch in Trench 2/2 Photo CPAT 4499-0022

- 2.2. Soil deposits outside of the ditch comprised a topsoil deposit, 0.3m thick, overlying a stony subsoil, >1.5m thick. Underlying the topsoil within the ditch was a reddish brown silt deposit, 0.3m thick, comprising a disuse or silting fill, rather than a deliberate backfill deposit. Two undiagnostic iron fastenings were recovered from this fill, which contained no obviously later artefacts, as were recovered from the overlying topsoil.



Fig. 4 View from the north showing the existing overhead line installation, defensive ditch and scarp Photo CPAT 4499-0014

Montgomery Medieval Town, adjacent to Westmead, School Lane (MG221)

- 2.3. The watching brief on groundworks within an open field to the south of Chirbury Road (MG225) was carried out on the 29th and 30th of May 2018. Three pole trenches and a trench for a stay were excavated within this area, in addition to open-cut trenching to install an earth cable and connect the overhead lines an existing underground powerline (Fig. 2).
- 2.4. Two soil deposits were identified, extending across the entire area. The topsoil was 0.5m in thickness at the top of the bank to the south-east of the area, and 0.3m at the base of the slope. The subsoil was excavated to >1.4m.



Fig. 5 North-east facing section of Trench 2/6 Photo CPAT 4499-0028



Fig. 6 View from the north along cable Trench 2/7 Photo CPAT 4499-0032



Fig. 7 Plan showing locations of groundworks in Scheduled Areas MG225

Montgomery Medieval Town, Kerry Gate (MG225)

- 2.5. The watching brief on groundworks within the area of farmland to the south of Kerry Gate (Fig. 7) was carried out on the 15th of May 2018. The groundworks comprised open area trenching at the north end of the area to reveal the buried cables supplying the overhead lines, and a series of small trenches to install 4 new wooden poles and stays.
- 2.6. Trenching at the northernmost end of the area revealed topsoil deposition, 0.35m thick. Underlying this was a clayey silt subsoil deposition 0.7m overlying weathered bedrock deposition to >0.75m.



Fig. 8 East-facing section of Trench 1/5 Photo CPAT 4499-0011

- 2.7. Around 75m to the south of this a pole and stay were removed on an old hedgeline that had reverted to mature trees. Excavations here revealed very deep topsoil deposition, 0.75m thick, overlying subsoil, 0.55m thick, on top of the bedrock 0.55m thick.
- 2.8. Around 70m to the south a second pole was removed on a field boundary. Topsoil deposits in this part of the site were 0.3m thick, overlying subsoil >1.5m in thickness.



Fig. 9 East facing section of trench 1-8 Photo CPAT 4499-0013

3 Conclusion

- 3.1. A watching brief was conducted as a condition of SMC during the replacement of an overhead electricity line which passed through three scheduled areas in and around Montgomery. All groundworks were carried out in dry conditions, minimising rutting or soil displacement by vehicular traffic. Additionally, vehicular traffic was routed, where possible, to avoid archaeologically sensitive areas within the designated areas.
- 3.2. Archaeological remains recorded within the town ditch forming part of the eastern defensive circuit comprised a distinct fill, underlying the topsoil. Finds recovered from this deposit were undiagnostic and unhelpful in dating the fill, which was believed to have occurred by silting rather than deliberate dumping or backfill.
- 3.3. Groundworks in this area were excavated through the existing field entrance cut through the bank and scarp. The new pole installation was located in this entrance in a similar position as the existing H-shaped pole within the ditch, causing minimal disturbance to the structure and fill of the ditch. No significant damage was caused to the ditch or the scarp during the course of this work.
- 3.4. The watching brief recorded no disturbance of archaeological deposits within the field section, adjacent to Westmead and Chirbury Road. The main focus of groundworks was concentrated on an existing H-shaped pole installation located on a slope towards the north corner of the field. The replacement pole and associated groundworks were located within this area, minimising disruption to previously undisturbed ground.
- 3.5. A single pole was renewed at the field boundary adjacent to the lane at the south-east extent of the area, within a flattened area interpreted as a house platform. No archaeological remains were identified during the course of this work.
- 3.6. No archaeological evidence relating to the occupation of the extra mural settlement south of Kerry Gate was uncovered by the groundworks in this area, which were limited to small pits to accept new posts and stays, with the exception of an open area excavation to locate and join the underground cables to the overhead line.

4 References

Published Sources

Britnell, J., 1991, *Archaeology in Wales: Volume 31, 1991*, Welshpool, Council for British Archaeology Group 2: Wales

Silvester, R. J., Martin C. H. R. and Watson, S., 2012. *Historic settlements in Montgomeryshire*, CPAT Report No 1134.

5 Archive deposition Statement

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 archive will be deposited with the regional Historic Environment Record, maintained by CPAT in Welshpool,

- 5.1. The site archive will be prepared to specifications in English Heritage's Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) system and the CIfA *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).

Archive Summary

CPAT Event PRN: 140240

3 Watching brief visit forms

47 digital photographs Film No. CPAT 4499

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 1782

1 Introduction

1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) have been invited by Matthew Bagby, Freedom Group, to prepare a specification for undertaking a watching brief during the rebuilding of a 11kV overhead line near Montgomery in Powys. The watching brief relates to a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) for works within the scheduled areas of three monuments on the outskirts of Montgomery:

- MG023 Montgomery Town Bank and Ditches
- MG221 Montgomery Medieval Town, adjacent to Westmead, School Lane
- MG225 Montgomery Medieval Town, Kerry Gate

SMC was granted in August 2016, with the inclusion of the following condition relating to archaeology:

1. that the Welsh Ministers shall be given two week's notice, in writing, of the date of commencement of work or of any subsequent adjustment to this date, to allow our representatives to monitor on site activity;
2. that access to the site shall be afforded to our representatives;
3. that prior to the start of works a meeting shall be held with the regional Inspector of Archaeology and Ancient Monuments, Will Davies, (will.davies@wales.gsi.gov.uk) to establish outstanding details of the proposed works including exact pole and stay locations and vehicular access routes in relation to upstanding earthworks;
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6. that existing poles shall be either vertically extracted or cut to ground level and left to rot in situ, *not* grubbed or dug up;
7. that tracked machinery shall avoid upstanding earthworks and adhere to routes identified by us at the start of works meeting set out in condition 3. Works shall not be undertaken during sustained periods of wet weather in order to avoid damage to the surface by tracking vehicles. Poles shall not be dragged across upstanding earthworks;
8. that all contractors and sub-contractors shall be advised of the scheduled status of all three sites and the restrictions that this carries with it;

9. that all three monuments shall be left in a stable and tidy condition; and

10. that the Welsh Ministers shall be informed immediately upon the completion of the works.

2 Methodology

- 2.1. The watching brief will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014). The watching brief will be undertaken to monitor groundworks associated with the construction of the new extension, together with other groundworks likely to impact on potential buried archaeological deposits. The excavation of any archaeological features or deposits will be undertaken by hand using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation:
- 2.2. The presence or absence of archaeological features encountered during the ground works will be noted.
- 2.3. Where features of archaeological interest are identified during the ground works 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.
- 2.4. 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.
- 2.5. Contexts will be recorded on individual record forms, using a continuous numbering system, and be drawn and photographed as appropriate.
- 2.6. Plans will be drawn on permatrace to a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50, as appropriate.
- 2.7. All photography will be taken using a digital SLR camera with a minimum resolution of 12 mega pixels, including a metric scale in each view, with views logged in a photographic register.
- 2.8. 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.
- 2.9. 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.
- 2.10. 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.

- 2.11. Any artefacts recovered during the evaluation will be deposited with an appropriate museum, subject to the permission of the owner.
- 2.12. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:
 - Non-technical summary
 - Introduction
 - Site location
 - Archaeological Background
 - Watching brief
 - Conclusions
 - References
 - Appropriate appendices on archives and finds
- 2.13. The site archive will be prepared to specifications in English Heritage's Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) system and the CIfA *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).

3 Resources and programming

- 3.1. The watching brief will be undertaken by a skilled archaeologist 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).
- 3.2. All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the site work. Copies of the report will be deposited with the client and the regional Historic Environment Record within one month of the completion of on-site works. If appropriate, a short report will be published in *Archaeology in Wales*.
- 3.3. The client should be aware that in the event that significant archaeological remains are revealed there may be a requirement for more detailed excavation and specialist services. Any further work over and above the original watching brief and report would be the subject of a separate WSI and costing. The following figures provide an indication of the types of additional services and indicative costs which might be required, for which the client is advised to make some provision.

	Finds conservation etc	£285 per day
	Radiocarbon dating	£330 each
	Finds specialist	£285 per day
3.4.	Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.	
3.5.	CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.	

N W Jones

21 March 2017

