

CPAT Report No. 1646

Upper House, Bronllys, Powys

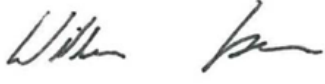


Archaeological Watching Brief



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL CLWYD-POWYS

CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Julie Evans
 CPAT Project No: 2353
 Project Name: Upper House, Bronllys, Powys
 Grid Reference: NGR: SO 1429 3498
 County/LPA: Powys
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 with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

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Summary

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust conducted a watching brief to the rear of Upper House, Bronllys, in order to determine any impact on buried archaeological features which may have resulted from groundworks conducted without archaeological supervision. This revealed a thick garden soil directly overlying the natural subsoil, with no evidence for any features or deposits of archaeological significance. However, the depth of the excavations was such that it was not possible to determine whether any archaeology had been present on the site prior to the groundworks.

Crynodeb

Bu Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys yn cynnal briff gwyllo y tu ôl i Upper House, Bronllys, er mwyn gweld a allai gwaith paratoi tir a gynhaliwyd heb oruchwyliaeth archaeolegol fod wedi cael unrhyw effaith ar nodweddion archaeolegol claddedig. Datgelodd hyn bridd gardd trwchus yn gorwedd yn union dros yr is-bridd naturiol, heb unrhyw dystiolaeth o unrhyw nodweddion neu ddyddodion o arwyddocâd archaeolegol. Fodd bynnag, nid oedd y gwaith cloddio'n ddigon dwfn i'w gwneud yn bosibl penderfynu a oedd unrhyw archaeolegol wedi bod yn bresennol ar y safle cyn y gwaith paratoi tir.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. In March 2019 the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust carried out a watching brief at the rear of Upper House, Bronllys, Powys. The work was conducted in order to determine whether groundworks which had been undertaken without archaeological supervision had resulted in any impact on buried archaeological features. The groundworks related to the conversion of the existing dwelling, formerly a farmhouse and converted barn and byre, into two dwellings. The barn and byre are currently occupied, the farmhouse is derelict but undergoing renovation works, including the construction of an extension to the north elevation.



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Fig. 1: Location of Upper House

- 1.2. The conversion has been granted planning permission (P/2013/1102) by Powys County Council, the local planning authority, subject to a number of conditions, which include the following provision for archaeology:

3. The developer shall ensure that a suitably qualified archaeological contractor is present during the undertaking of any ground works in the development area, so that an archaeological watching brief can be conducted. The archaeological watching brief will be undertaken to the standards laid down by the Institute for Archaeologists. The Local Planning Authority will be informed in writing, at least two weeks prior to the commencement of the development, of the name of the said

archaeological contractor. A copy of the watching brief report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and the Development Control Archaeologist, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, 41 Broad Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7RR, within two months of the fieldwork being completed.

Reason: To ensure that the archaeological interest at the site is properly assessed in accordance with Powys Unitary Development Plan (March 2010) Policy ENV 18.

- 1.3. The development involves the division of the existing house into two dwellings, and also includes the erection of an extension and the creation of new vehicular access and parking to the rear.

2 Historical Background

- 2.1. Upper House is recorded in the regional Historic Environment Record as a detached farmstead complex comprising a conjoined barn, granary, byre and cartshed, with detached ruined buildings. The barn and possibly the first phase of the byre are possibly of 17th-century date, while the cartshed infill is probably 18th-century and the granary is 18th- or 19th-century. It is one of the few buildings in Bronllys that predate the 19th century.
- 2.2. The house lies in the historic core of Bronllys, a settlement which is first recorded as Brendlais around the year 1200, and could mean 'the court of Brwyn, who may perhaps be the bruin o bricheinauc (Brycheiniog) living in the 12th century. Whether the court that is referred to has any link with the moated site adjacent to the church has yet to be established. It is a characteristically 'English' settlement, despite its Welsh name, and looks to be one of the few settlements in the area which has no obvious 'Celtic' component.
- 2.3. The village today, although still centred around the church, is a linear development running east-west for about half a kilometre, along the main Hay to Brecon road. It does not now spread as far as Bronllys Castle, which lies some 500m to the south-east, but this is perhaps misleading and a case can be made for a much closer connection during the Middle Ages.

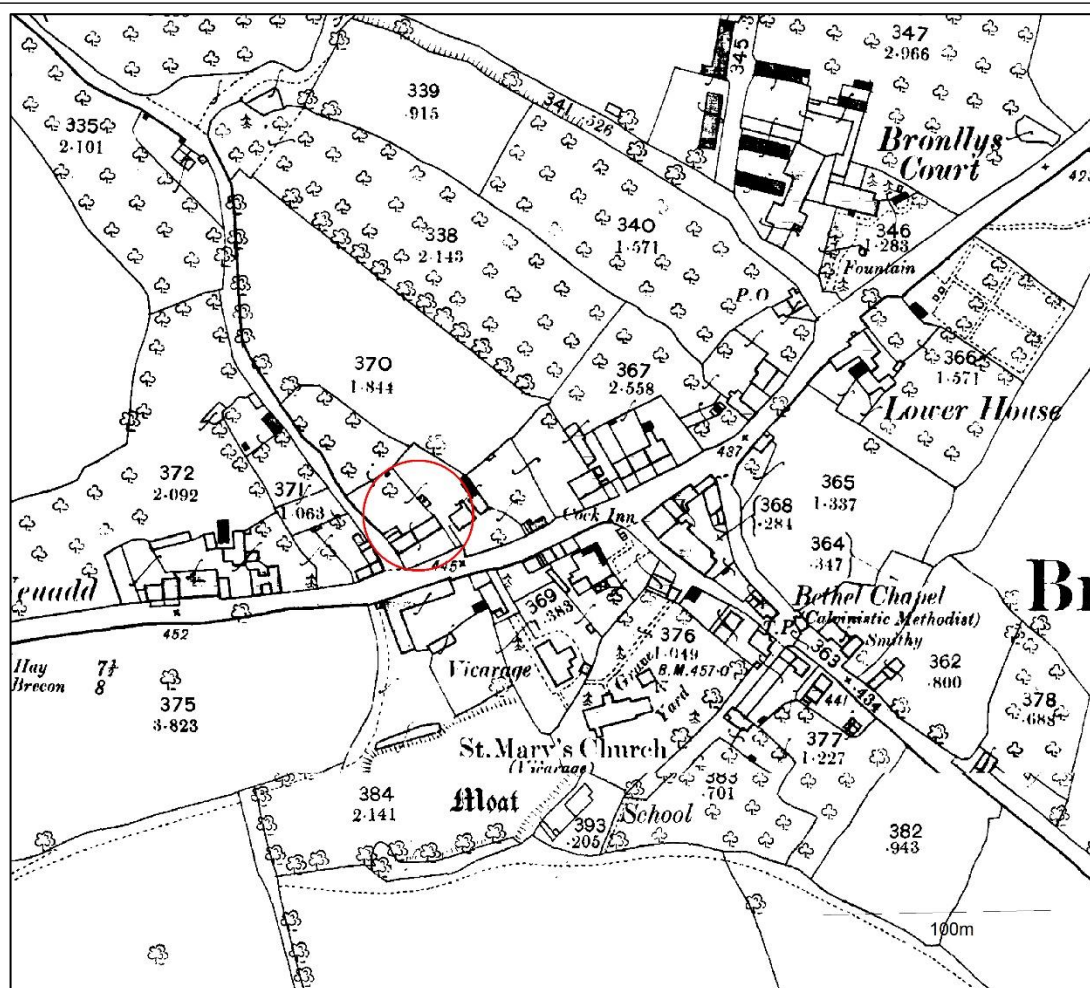


Fig. 2 Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map of 1888 showing the site (circled in red)

3 Watching Brief

- 3.1. The watching brief was undertaken on 1 March 2019 and was conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014).
- 3.2. The site had previously been excavated and levelled to a depth of approximately 1.7m below former ground level. The northern extent of the site had been revetted with a blockwork wall which prevented the soil deposits behind it from being examined. A section to the east of the site was recorded, having been first cleared of vegetation.



Fig. 3 View from the north-west across the site towards the farmhouse Photo. CPAT 4605-0008



Fig. 4 West-facing section through soils on the eastern boundary of the site Photo. CPAT 4605-0004

- 3.3. The upper soil deposit (001) comprised a moderately compacted mid-reddish brown silt, containing occasional lime mortar flecks, and occasional small pebbles. It extended >14m in width and between 0.7m and 0.9m in thickness. A single sherd of 19th- or 20th-century pottery was revealed. Underlying this was a firmly compacted red clay silt layer (002), containing occasional degraded stone which was interpreted

as the natural subsoil. This extended >14m in width to a maximum thickness of >0.6m.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1. It was not possible to determine conclusively the level to which the groundworks may have impacted upon any archaeology, although an examination of a surviving section through the site stratigraphy suggested that most of the area had formerly comprised gardens or orchards as suggested by 19th-century historical mapping. The makeup of the upper soil deposition visible in the recorded section suggested garden or orchard soils.
- 4.2. Natural soils were attained at approximately 0.7m to 0.9m below the former ground level. It was noted that further groundworks upon the site, to extend the former farmhouse, would not involve any excavation into archaeological deposits.

5 Sources

Cartographic sources

1888 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1st edition Brecknockshire 23.09

6 Archive deposition Statement

- 6.1. The project archive has been prepared according to the CPAT Archive Policy and in line with the CfA *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).

Archive summary

CPAT Event PRN: 140286

1 watching brief visit form

8 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4605

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 2025

1 Introduction

1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) have been engaged by Julie Evans, Upper House, Bronllys, to undertake a watching brief at Upper House (NGR: SO 1429 3498), during works related to the conversion of the existing dwelling into two dwellings.

1.2. The conversion has been granted planning permission (P/2013/1102) by Powys County Council, the local planning authority, subject to a number of conditions, which include the following provision for archaeology:

3. The developer shall ensure that a suitably qualified archaeological contractor is present during the undertaking of any ground works in the development area, so that an archaeological watching brief can be conducted. The archaeological watching brief will be undertaken to the standards laid down by the Institute for Archaeologists. The Local Planning Authority will be informed in writing, at least two weeks prior to the commencement of the development, of the name of the said archaeological contractor. A copy of the watching brief report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and the Development Control Archaeologist, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, 41 Broad Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7RR tel: 01938 553670 within two months of the fieldwork being completed.

Reason:

To ensure that the archaeological interest at the site is properly assessed in accordance with Powys Unitary Development Plan (March 2010) Policy ENV 18.

1.3. The development involves the division of the existing house into two dwellings, and also includes the erection of an extension and the creation of new vehicular access and parking to the rear.

2 Background

2.1. Upper House is recorded in the Historic Environment Record as a detached farmstead complex comprising a conjoined barn, granary, byre and cartshed, with detached ruined buildings. The barn and possibly the first phase of the byre are possibly of the 17th century, while the cartshed infill is probably 18th century and the granary is 18th -19th century. It is one of the few buildings in Bronllys that predate the 19th century.

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3 Methodology

- 3.1. The watching brief will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014).
- 3.2. Examination of the plans for the development show that an extension will be constructed to the rear of the eastern part of the existing dwelling and a parking area and access road from the adjoining Pont-y-Wal Lane will be created. It is envisaged that the watching brief will examine the groundworks for the above, and any other ground disturbance within the Development Area that may affect sub-surface archaeological features relating to the medieval settlement.
- 3.3. Sufficient time must be allowed by the developer during the on-site works for the Archaeologist to record any significant remains that are exposed and the developer should be made aware of the need to work closely with the Archaeologist during the on-site works; to this end the Archaeologist should be given reasonable notice as to when site works will be carried out and regular contact should be maintained subsequently.
- 3.4. The excavation of any archaeological features or deposits will be undertaken by hand using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation:
- The presence or absence of archaeological features encountered during the ground works will be noted.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - Plans will be drawn on permatrace to a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50, as appropriate.
 - The recording of stone floors or structures may be conducted using rectified photography if appropriate.
 - 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.

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- 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.
- 4
- 4.1. 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 will be made to assess and study any artefacts, assemblages and environmental samples.
 - Any artefacts recovered during the watching brief will be deposited with an appropriate museum, subject to the permission of the owner.
- 5
- 5.1. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:
- Non-technical summary
 - Introduction
 - Site location
 - Historical Background
 - Watching brief
 - Conclusions
 - References
 - Appropriate appendices on archives and finds
- 5.2. The report summary will be provided in English and Welsh, in accordance with the *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs) V1* (July 2018).
- Site archive**
- 5.3. The overall archive will conform to guidelines described in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE), Historic England 2006, the CIfA (2014) *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* and *The National Standard and Guidance to Best Practice for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives in Wales* (NPAAW, 2017) and *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs) V1* (July 2018).
- 5.4. The paper and digital archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record (NMR), RCAHMW, including a copy of the final report. This archive will

include all written, drawn, survey and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken. NMR Digital archives will follow the standard required by the RCAHMW (RCAHMW 2015). A copy of the digital archive only will also be lodged with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.

6 Resources and programming

- 6.1. 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).
- 6.2. All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the site work. On approval by the Development Control Archaeologist, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and the Planning Authority, 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*.
- 6.3. 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 which might be required, for which the client is strongly advised to make some provision.
 - Curatorial monitoring £150 per visit
 - Finds conservation £295 per day
 - Radiocarbon dating £330 per date
 - Finds specialist £285 per day
- 6.4. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 6.5. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

R Hankinson

19 February 2019

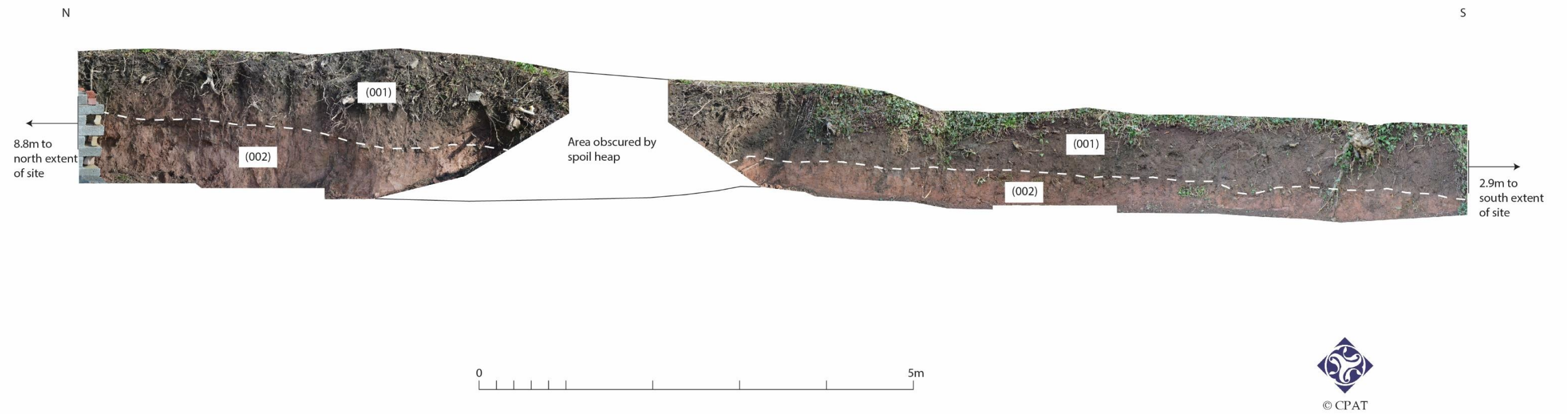


Fig. 5 West-facing section showing surviving stratigraphy along the eastern extent of the site