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Report on archaeological watching brief for groundworks being undertaken at The Old Croft, Green Street, Holt, Wrexham LL13 9JF

Date: 16th February 2024

Application number: HOL P/2023/0076

Client: Mr Peter Catherall (T/A Project Architecture), on behalf of Mrs Sue Robson-Catling

Location: SJ 41017 54184

CA/HOC/24/report/FINAL

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**1. Summary**

**CRYNODEB**

Yn unol ag amod 11 yr hysbysiad cynllunio uchod, comisiynwd Archaeoleg y Capel gan Mr Peter Catherall i gynnal gwyliadwriaeth yn Old Croft, Holt.

Y prif amcanion oedd:

- Cynnal briff gwylio dros yr holl rannau hynny o’r datblygiad sy’n ymgorffori gwaith daer.

- Cofnodi unrhyw nodweddion archeolegol, ac I adfer unrhyw ddarganfyddiadau, os ydnt yn bresennol.

Cwblhau’r archif a pharatoi adroddiad yn manylu ar unrhyw ganfyddiadau perthnasol.

Cloddiwyd 6 ffos I ddyfnder uchaf o 450mm-1m. Roedd pob un yn cynnwys tir colur yn bennaf neu ‘aflonyddu’ gan wasanaethau cyfleustodau neu ddraeniau maes.

Roedd Darganfod/Arteffactau yn brin iawn, yn anarferol felly ar gyfer adeilad mor hirsefydlog a oedd wedi cael cymaint o newidiadau ers yr 19eg ganrif.

**SUMMARY**

In compliance with condition 11 of the above Planning Notice, Chapel Archaeology was commissioned by Mr Peter Catherall to undertake an archaeological watching brief at The Old Croft, Green Street, Holt.

The primary objectives were:

- To carry out a watching brief over all those parts of the development incorporating groundworks.

- The recording of any archaeological features, and to recover any finds, if present.

- The completion of the archive and preparation of a report detailing any findings.

Six trenches were dug between 450mm-1m. Each was primarily composed of made ground or ‘disturbed’ by a utility service below lay undisturbed soils overlying the natural boulder clay.

No features of any note were located.

Finds/artefacts were extremely scarce, unusually so for such a long-established building that had undergone so many changes since the 19th century.

**2. DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The following Data Management Plan, included in the Written Scheme of Investigation, was adhered to and managed by Simon Oliver, Chapel Archaeology’s Data Manager.

Section 1: Project Administration

Project name: Watching brief at The Old Croft, Holt

Project description: to carry out an archaeological watching brief over all those parts of the development incorporation groundworks at The Old Croft, Holt.

Section 2: Data Collection

The relevant people responsible for the creation and management of the data plan are the following co-directors of Chapel Archaeology:

Mike Emery (Consultant Archaeologist) m.emery@chapelarchaeology.co.uk

Alan Wilmshurst (Field Manager)

Simon Oliver (Data Manager)

The data created and collected will include the recording of:

- all archaeological features and deposits and the recovery of any finds, if present

- completion of the archive

- delivery of the final report on any relevant findings.

Section 3: Documentation and Metadata

Archaeological deposits and any structural remains will be recorded employing a continuous context recording system.

Any archaeological features present, and their distribution, will be drawn up to a scale of 1:100.

Any other relevant plans will be drawn at 1:20.

Any significant profiles will be drawn at 1:10.

Deposits and structural remains will be levelled and related to a known datum point.

Section 4: Ethics and Legal Compliance

Ethical, copyright and Intellectual Property Rights will be addressed in accordance with the guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. Any sensitive information will not be publicised.

Section 5: Storage and Backup

Report data and images will be retained. Information will be backed up and stored on at least two USB sticks, held in separate locations, plus on iCloud.

Section 6: Selection and Preservation

After cleaning, the finds will be sorted, catalogued and stored by period and material type, following the approved guidelines laid down by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists for archaeological watching briefs.

Pottery and any building materials will be recorded by fabric type and form, where possible.

A sherd count will be made to enable comparisons between groups of materials.

Individual sherds and objects will be discussed, where they are important, to determine the date or functional context of a deposit.

Faunal remains, if of sufficient quantity, will be analysed by a local specialist.

The digital data will be stored on USB sticks and iCloud. Any artefacts will be stored in a suitably locked cabinet.

The final report will be submitted to Heneb: Clwyd-Powys HER and the RCHAMW (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales), along with the full digital archive if required. If required, the digital data will also be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (www.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk).

Chapel Archaeology will absorb any archiving costs.

Section 7: Data sharing and Accessibility

Should the deposit of a full digital archive be required, this will be submitted to the RCHAMW (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales). For a sterile site, a digital copy of the report will be submitted to RCHAMW and the Heneb: Clwyd-Powys HER.istorical MonHistorica

Information and images of any notable finds will be uploaded to the Chapel Archaeology website for public dissemination.

They may be offered on loan to local museums if appropriate and in accordance with the client’s wishes.

There are no perceived restrictions on data sharing required.

Section 8: Data Management

The responsibility for data management, including implementing the data management plan lies with Simon Oliver (Chapel Archaeology Co-director and Data Manager).

The final report, including any significant findings will be lodged with the Local Planning Authority. Once this has been approved, a further copy of the report will be sent for inclusion in the HER (Historic Environment Records).

**3.** **SELECTION STRATEGY**

Archaeological Archive Managers: Mike Emery (Consultant Archaeologist) and Simon Oliver (Data Manager)

Organisation: Chapel Archaeology Community Interest Company

Developer: Mr Peter Catherall, T /A Project Architecture

Landowner: Mrs Sue Robson-Catling

Project objective: To carry out a watching brief for groundworks being undertaken at The Old Croft, Green Street, Holt, Wrexham LL13 9JF.

Selection of the working project archive will be guided by the aims and objectives of the project outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation and watching brief, the regional research framework and the local deposition policy.

Any final decision about selection for inclusion in the preserved archive will be made following the production of the final project report. Involved in the selection strategy will be Mike Emery (Consultant Archaeologist), Alan Wilmshurst (Field Manager) and Simon Oliver (Data Manager). De-selected digital material will be retained following the completion of the project. Finds later than AD 1800 are unlikely to be retained or selected for inclusion in the preserved archive. Ceramic material recovered is likely to be selected for inclusion. Selection will take place during archive completion.

Uncollected building material will be assessed and recorded by Mike Emery. It will be left on-site to be incorporated into backfill. Deselected artefacts will be returned to the landowner.

Relevant specialists who may be consulted: Dr Carla Burrell, consultant osteologist (Co-director of Chapel Archaeology CIC), Julie Edwards, Senior Archaeologist Cheshire West and Chester Council, ceramics specialist.

**4. Final report:**

Crynodeb: Ymgymerwyd a’r Gwaith tir ddydd lau/dydd Gwener 18fed – 19eg Ionawr 2024 mewn amodau oedd bron a bod yn rhewi. Cloddiwyd chew rych rhwng 450mm-1metr o ddyfnder. Roedd y darganfyddiadau yn hynod o prin. Ni ddaethpwyd o hyd I unrhyw modweddion o bwys.

Summary: The groundworks were undertaken on Thursday/Friday 18th-19th January 2024 in near freezing conditions. Six trenches were dug between 450mm-1m. Finds/artefacts were extremely scarce. No features of any note were located.

Findings:

Each of the six trenches was primarily composed of made ground or ‘disturbed’ by a utility service below undisturbed soils overlying the natural boulder clay. The trenches averaged 450-650mm, none exceeding 800mm below current made ground level. Undisturbed soils overlay a fine waterlogged sandy layer, possible relating to a spring-line/water-table. This was superimposed on firm, dense and compact boulder clay.

Each trench profile was photographed, but it was deemed unnecessary to draw them to scale, given the absence of artefacts. The soil profiles closely resembled those recorded at nearby Holt Hill (Chapel Archaeology CIC 2020).

The photographic record was complemented with the use of an aerial drone survey. Attached in TIFF format are separate files for the map and three photographs chosen to accompany this final report. These include:

CA/HOC/24/photo1[[1]](#footnote-1)

The site before preparatory work had taken place. Photograph taken by Alan Wilmshurst. © Chapel Archaeology CIC.

CA/HOC/24/photo2

The site prepared for trenching work. Photograph taken by Alan Wilmshurst. © Chapel Archaeology CIC.

CA/HOC/24/photo3

Drone shot of the trenches. Photograph taken by Alan Wilmshurst. © Chapel Archaeology CIC.

CA/HOC/24/map

Map of the location of The Old Croft, Green Street, Holt. Copyright Ordnance Survey. Map sourced and included by Simon Oliver.

Finds/artefacts were extremely scarce, unusually so for such a long-established building that had undergone so many changes since the 19th century. The scarcity of finds/artefacts was significant, further confirmed by the extensive use of a metal detector. The Selection Strategy was not implemented due to the lack of finds.

No features of any note were located.

The digital archive was completed according to the submitted Data Management Plan by Chapel Archaeology Co-director Simon Oliver. A copy of the report will be sent for inclusion in the HER.

Mike Emery, Co-director of Chapel Archaeology Community Interest Company

16th February 2024

1. CA Chapel Archaeology, HOC Holt Old Croft, 2024) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)