Bodelwyddan Castle Children's Playground: Bodelwyddan, Denbighshire



Archaeological Watching Brief

GAT Project No. 2177 Report No. 940 March, 2011

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Bodelwyddan Castle Playground Watching Brief

Report No. 940

Prepared for the Bodelwyddan Castle Trust

March 2011

By Richard Cooke

Bodelwyddan Castle playground

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BODELWYDDAN CASTLE PLAY AREA (G2177)

WATCHING BRIEF

Summary

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust conducted an archaeological watching brief during ground-works carried out by PlayQuest Adventure Play Ltd, in advance of the instalment of a new children's playground at Bodelwyddan Castle. Despite the close proximity of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM): **FL186** First World War Practice Trenches, no features of archaeological merit were observed within any of the excavations.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) was asked by the *Bodelwyddan Castle Trust* to carry out an archaeological watching brief on ground-work excavations in advance of the instalment of a new children's playground (centred on NGR SJ 0000 7475; figure 1 and figure 2) within the grounds of Bodelwyddan Castle, Bodelwyddan, Denbighshire.

Nine playground apparatus' were installed within a trapezoidal area measuring 107.26m in length (longest edge) and 53.09m in width (longest width), and centred around a copse of trees. The construction programme included the hand excavation of multiple holes to support uprights that formed the various playground equipment; these included a 30.0m long aerial runway that required 16no. 0.60m x 0.45m postholes. The archaeological mitigation was completed as part of a planning condition (application number 40/2010/0988).

2.0 SPECIFICATION AND PROJECT DESIGN

A detailed brief was received for this work from Denbighshire Archaeology Service (DAS) (*Work to monitor and record possible archaeological features during initial construction phases of the children's playground, Bodelwyddan Castle. February 2011*), and the work was carried out according to the standards set out in the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (2001). Furthermore, the report should be read in conjunction with the scheme specific project design produced by GAT dated February 2011.

3.0 METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust undertook the watching brief between the dates of 28th Feburary 2011 and 21st March 2011. The locations of the ground-works were determined by a representative from *PlayQuest Adventure Play Ltd*, and they were dug by hand using spades. The excavations were watched by the archaeologist, although the depth and size was controlled by the PlayQuest representative

The archaeologist photographed each excavation and recorded the layers revealed by making notes and measurements. This report provides a record of the deposits and archaeological remains observed.

4.0 GEOLOGICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

(Source: DAS Mitigation Brief. February 2011).

Bodelwyddan castle is an estate house with it's origins as a 17th century farmhouse. The estate was greatly enlarged and areas of agricultural land emparked in the early 19th century by Sir John Williams. There has been lead extraction in some parts of the parkland, and the road which forms the western boundary of the estate is known as Engine Hill. The main area of interest within the area where the playground is to be constructed is early 20th century. The grounds of Bodelwyddan were used as a practice area for troops stationed at the adjacent Kinmel Park, prior to going to the battlefield in France during World War I. Much of the grounds were covered with practice trenches, an example of which are still extant to the south east of this application, these are scheduled and protected (SAM **FL186** (NGR **SJ00037446**)). There is the possibility that remains of the trenches may lie within the area of playground development.

The terrain is characterised by meadow parkland, often interspersed by mature deciduous trees. The underlying geology is limestone with overlying drift geology of glacial boulder clays

5.0 RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

Introduction (see figure 2)

Deposits within a sample of the hand-dug post-holes are described below and the results are summarised and conclusions discussed. The post-holes are located on figure 2.

5.1 'Double Runway' Zipline (see plates 1 and 2)

Results

Twelve post-holes were excavated for the installation of a zipline at the southern side of the development area. The postholes were arranged into two groups of six, laid out in two rectangular arrangements at the north-eastern and south-western ends of the apparatus. The excavations all measured 0.80m in length by 0.50m in width, and varied between 0.60m and 0.95m in depth, dependant upon the slope of the ground surface. The group of post-holes at the south-western end were excavated into an existing shallow bank, which may have been the up-cast material from the World War I trenches located some 100.00m to the east.

The topsoil removed from all twelve excavations had a maximum depth of 0.15m, and was a dark grey-brown sand-silt with very occasional small stones. This laid above a 0.20m thick band of mid brown-grey sand-silt subsoil which in turn lay above a mid orange-grey sandy clay-silt of glacial origin.

No archaeological features were observed within any of the twelve post-holes, however a small piece of lead was recovered from the topsoil which has a small circular dial and triangle symbol upon it, possibly being an artefact associated with the World War I practice trenches.

5.2 Hex Swings (see plates 3 and 4)

Results

Six post-holes forming a hexagon shape were excavated (see plate 2) at the northeastern end of the development area. The excavations all measured 0.50m in diameter with an average depth of 0.80m. The topsoil removed from all post-holes measured 0.20m in depth and was a dark grey-brown sand-silt with occasional stone inclusions. This lay above a 0.20m thick mid brown-grey sand-silt subsoil layer, beneath which lay a mid orange-grey sandy clay-silt of glacial origin.

No archaeological features were observed during the excavations but a small fragment of black glazed Buckley-ware ceramic was found within the topsoil removed for the third post-hole.

5.3 Climbing Frame (see plate 5)

Results

The central climbing frame was located within the central copse of trees, and approximately forty post-holes were required to be excavated for the construction of this apparatus. Due to the limited area, it was deemed acceptable for a sample amount of these post-holes to be observed and as such seven excavations were monitored for archaeological material.

The seven post-holes all measured 0.40m in diameter and ranged between 0.53m and 0.86m in depth. All the post-holes had a 0.18m thick mid/dark red-brown sand-silt topsoil layer removed onto a mid/light grey clay of glacial origin. No archaeological features or artefacts were recovered from any of the post-holes.

Summary

Nine pieces of apparatus were installed at the new children's playground, of which three (the cradle-swings, the springies, and the train) did not require excavations of sufficient depth or dimension to warrant archaeological monitoring. The groundworks for the six other pieces of apparatus were either monitored while being dug, or inspected afterwards for the presence of archaeological features and artefacts, including sifting through the up-cast material. No archaeological features were observed within any of the post-holes, although more ephemeral features such as pits and post-holes may have been difficult to observe within such small excavations, and there remains the possibility that unknown archaeological deposits are present within the area. A fragment of Buckley-ware ceramic and a piece of lead were recovered from the topsoil, and are thus considered to be unstratified.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

The watching brief allowed the depth and nature of the deposits on the site to be inspected. Despite the absence of archaeological features within the exposed excavations, there exists the possibility of unknown archaeological deposits being present within the area. Thus, it is recommended that any further works in the area are similarly attributed a watching brief.

7.0 THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of field-notes and 47 digital images taken using a Nikon D40 DSLR. The paper archive will be held by Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (project code G2177), and the digital photographs will be curated by the National Monument Record (NMR), Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales, Aberystwyth. Copies of the bound report will be sent to the regional Development Control archaeologist, to the Historic Environment Record (HER) Archaeologist at the curatorial division of Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, for deposition in the Regional HER, and to the NMR after approval by the client.

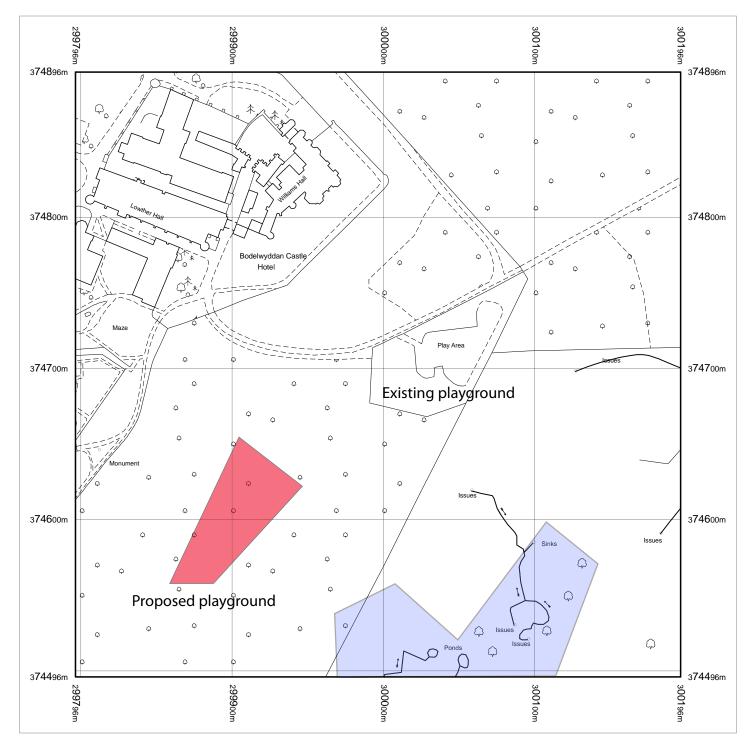
8.0 SOURCES

DAS Mitigation Brief. Work to monitor and record possible archaeological features during initial construction phases of the children's playground, Bodelwyddan Castle February 2011

GAT Project Design. Bodelwyddan Castle Play Area. February 2011.







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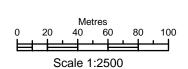
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Proposed playground



Scheduled Ancient Monument



Figure 1: Location of **Bodelwyddan Castle** Playground

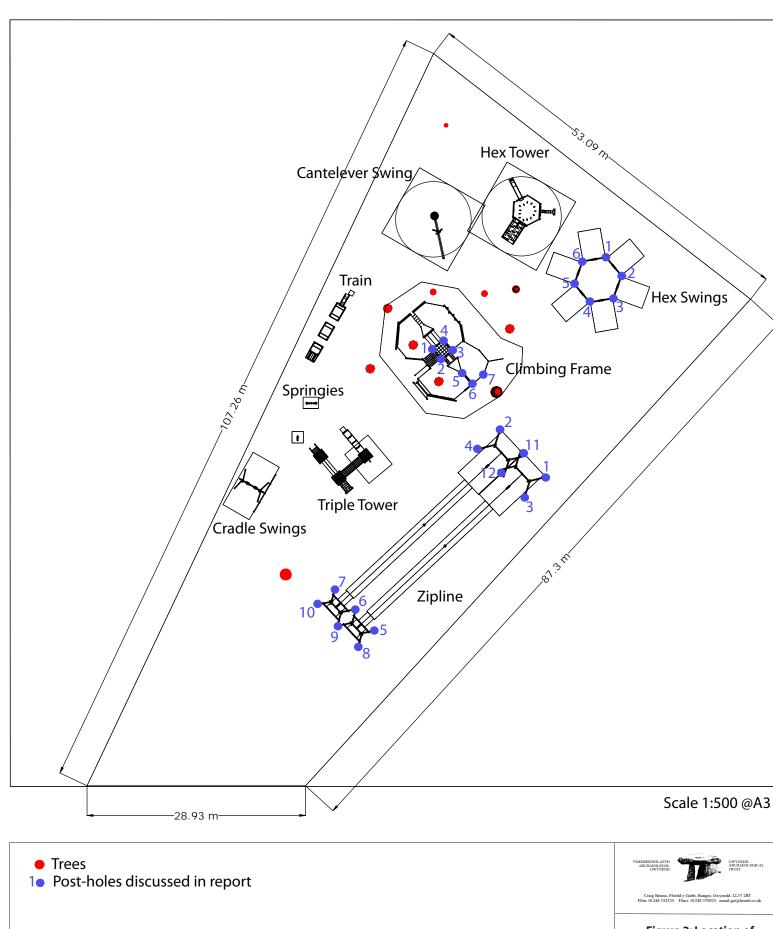


Figure 2: Location of excavated post-holes discussed in report

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Plate 1. Zipline post-hole number one, from the north (Nikon D40 - f3.3 - 6mm)



Plate 2. northern arrangement of zipline post-holes, from the northwest. (Nikon D40 - f8.5 - 6mm)



Plate 3. Hex Swings post-holes, from the north (Nikon D40 - f6.3 - 18mm)



Plate 4. Hex Swings from the west (Nikon D40 - f7.1 - 29mm)



Plate 5. Climbing frame post-hole number one, from the south (Nikon D40 - f7.1 - 29mm)

Appendix I

DENBIGHSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

<u>Work to monitor and record possible archaeological features during ini-</u> <u>tial construction phases of the Children's playground, Bodelwyddan Cas-</u> <u>tle</u>

Brief prepared for Kevin Mason

<u>Summary</u>

This document is the brief for archaeological work to be undertaken on the site of proposed children's playground in the grounds of Bodelwyddan Castle. It sets out the requirements for a watching brief to be carried out during ground works. Such a scheme should facilitate the preservation by record of any archaeological deposits.

The brief should be used by archaeological contractors as the basis for the preparation of a detailed archaeological project design. In response to this specification, contractors will be expected to provide details of the proposed scheme of work, to include the anticipated working methods, time scales and staffing levels.

This brief has been prepared by the Denbighshire Archaeology Service (part of Denbighshire County Council), joint holders of the County Sites and Monuments Record. It must not be altered or amended in any way without the express consent of the County Council.

Site Location & Description

Grid Reference: SJ 00007475

The site is located within the grounds of Bodelwyddan Castle, just to the south of the A55. There may be various service cables/pipes crossing the site, the contractor will be responsible for informing him/herself of their presence and to avoid these. The underlying solid geology is limestone with overlying drift geology of glacial boulder clays.

Planning Background

Planning permission (application number 40/2010/0988) has been granted for the building of a new children's playground, there is a planning condition on the permission which states 'No develop-

ment works of any kind shall begin until the presence of a contracted archaeologist has been secured on site according to the prescriptions set out in a watching brief....'

This brief has been prepared by Denbighshire Archaeology Service, part of Denbighshire Countryside Service, in order to provide an archaeological scope of work to allow an archaeological contractor to provide a costed project design.

Archaeological Interest

Bodelwyddan castle is an estate house with it's origins as a 17th century farmhouse. The estate was greatly enlarged and areas of agricultural land emparked in the early 19th century by Sir John Williams. There has been lead extraction in some parts of the parkland, and the road which forms the western boundary of the estate is known as Engine Hill. The main area of interest within the area where the playground is to be constructed is early 20th century. The grounds of Bodelwyddan were used as a practice area for troops stationed at the adjacent Kinmel Park, prior to going to the battlefield in France during World war 1. Much of the grounds were covered with practice trenches, an example of which are still extant to the south east of this application, these are scheduled and protected. There is the possibility that remains of the trenches may lie within the area of play-ground development.

Objective of the Fieldwork

The objective of the watching brief will be to monitor ground works within the development area, to preserve, through record, any archaeological remains revealed during the work.

Approach

A written project design is required of the archaeological contractor, to be submitted to the Denbighshire Archaeology Service and accepted by them in writing before work commences. The submitted project design should be based upon the format for a project design contained in "*The Management of Archaeological Projects*" (English Heritage, 2nd edition, 1991).

The archaeological contractor should contact the Denbighshire Archaeology Service prior to producing the project design to discuss the approach to be adopted. Work to include:

- 1. Inspection of revealed surfaces for archaeological features.
- 2. Recording of archaeological features.
- 3. Limited excavation of features, where appropriate.

Any archaeological remains excavated should be recorded according to the normal principles of stratigraphic excavation.

Note:

- All photographic records to be at a minimum 35 mm format
- All sections to be drawn at a minimum 1:10 scale

- All plans to be at a minimum 1:20 scale
- Artefacts recovered to be related to their contexts, by three-dimensional recording when closely dateable/typologically distinct items are found.
- Provision must be made for sampling deposits for environmental/technological evidence.

4. The developer has indicated that the groundwork's will take place over a protracted period of time, exact time scales to be checked with the site contractor. The archaeological contractor should seek to ensure that they are in attendance for a sufficient period during that time in order to satisfy the aims of the brief.

5. As the precise timing and level of staffing commitment to the watching brief is unquantified at present it may be of benefit to the Contractor and the Developer if the work is estimated for on a daily rate basis.

6. The archaeological Contractor will not be entitled to enforce specific delays and hold ups to the work of the site Contractor. If delays prove desirable to the archaeological recording process they should be arranged by mutual agreement with the Developer (and their Agents), and the Denbighshire Archaeology Service.

7. A plan drawing of the site at a suitable scale to be produced, locating its position and extent accurately and the position of any trenches in relation to Ordnance Survey datum and published boundaries where appropriate.

8. The Contractor should state the period of notice (at the time of writing) required to commence the project.

9. The Denbighshire Archaeology Service are responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project. To facilitate this, the project design should include a projected timetable on site (indicating staff grades, numbers, estimated visit frequency etc.).

10. An estimate of time and staff resources required for report production is required.

11. The contractor should forward their detailed project design to the Denbighshire Archaeology Service for consideration and validation before any costed proposals are submitted to the applicant.

<u>Results</u>

1. Details of style and format are to be determined by the archaeological contractor.

2. The Report should include:

(a) A full description and interpretation of results produced to an adequate publication standard.

(b) Plans and sections at the appropriate scale showing the archaeological remains (as dug) and features located.

(c) Any descriptive text should include a table summarising the features, classes and numbers of artefacts recovered and an interpretation.

(d) A confidence rating in the methodology used.

(e) A plan at an appropriate scale showing both actual, and where possible, predicted archaeological deposits.

(f) Artefact analysis to involve the production of a descriptive catalogue.

(g) A full bibliography, indicating whether each reference was actually consulted.

3. The collaborative role of the Denbighshire Archaeology Service in carrying out this project shall be acknowledged in all publicity (including media releases, publications etc.) arising from it.

4. A copy of the results will be supplied to the County Sites and Monuments Record held jointly by the Denbighshire Archaeology Service and the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, on the understanding that this will become a public document after an appropriate period of time (generally not exceeding six months).

5. The Report to be produced within one month of completion of the fieldwork. Further information or clarification of any aspects of this brief may be obtained from the Curator:

Denbighshire Archaeology Service Countryside Services Directorate of Lifelong Learning Yr Hen Garchar 46 Clwyd Street Ruthin, Denbighshire LL15 1HP Tel. (01824) 708262 Fax. (01824) 708202 FG February 2011

APPENDIX II

BODELWYDDAN CASTLE PLAY AREA

PROJECT DESIGN FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF (G2177)

Prepared for

Bodelwyddan Castle Trust

February 2011

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

BODELWYDDAN CASTLE PLAY AREA

PROJECT DESIGN FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF (G2177)

PREPARED FOR BODELWYDDAN CASTLE TRUST, FEBRUARY 2011

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BODELWYDDAN CASTLE PLAY AREA

PROJECT DESIGN FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF (G2177)

PREPARED FOR BODELWYDDAN CASTLE TRUST, FEBRUARY 2011

1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) has been asked by the *Bodelwyddan Castle Trust* to provide a cost and project design for carrying out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a children's playground at Bodelwyddan Castle.

The groundworks area is located within the grounds of Bodelwyddan Castle. Bodelwyddan, Denbighshire (centred on NGR **SJ00007475**) and incorporates a trapezoidal shaped area in which the playground equipment will be installed. The archaeological mitigation is being completed as a planning condition (application number **40/2010/0988**).

A Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM): **FL186** (NGR **SJ00037446**) First World War Practice Trenches, is located within close proximity to the proposed playground area.

1.1 Groundworks Programme

The construction programme will include:

- The hand excavation (by client appointed contractor) of multiple holes to support uprights that form the various playground equipment; these will include a 30.0m long aerial runway that will require 16no. 0.60m x 0.45m postholes.
- The excavation should be completed in approximately 3 working days (Kevin Birtles, Playquest *pers comm*.).
- The ground works will commence from 28/02/11.

1.2 Mitigation and Monitoring

Denbighshire Archaeology Service (DAS) has prepared a mitigation brief for this project (February 2011), with recommendation made for an archaeological watching brief during groundworks (see <u>para. 4</u> for appropriate methodology).

DAS will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the course of the project.

The current design and all subsequent mitigation will conform to the DAS brief and the guidelines specified in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (Institute for Archaeologists, 1994, Revised September 2001 and October 2008).

2.0 BACKGROUND

According to the DAS mitigation brief:

Bodelwyddan castle is an estate house with it's origins as a 17th century farmhouse. The estate was greatly enlarged and areas of agricultural land emparked in the early 19th century by Sir John Williams. There has been lead extraction in some parts of the parkland, and the road which forms the

western boundary of the estate is known as Engine Hill. The main area of interest within the area where the playground is to be constructed is early 20th century. The grounds of Bodelwyddan were used as a practice area for troops stationed at the adjacent Kinmel Park, prior to going to the battlefield in France during World War I. Much of the grounds were covered with practice trenches, an example of which are still extant to the south east of this application, these are scheduled and protected (SAM **FL186** (NGR **SJ00037446**)). There is the possibility that remains of the trenches may lie within the area of playground development.

3.0 REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Watching Brief

The watching brief will consist of the following:

- Observation of non-archaeological excavation works.
- A drawn, written and photographic record of any archaeological structures and deposits that may be revealed.
- Preparation of full archive report.

The watching brief will monitor:

• All groundworks associated with the construction children's playground.

4.0 METHOD STATEMENT

4.1 Watching Brief

<u>The watching brief is to be undertaken in a manner that allows for the</u> <u>immediate cessation of the works for the recording of archaeological evidence.</u> <u>This will involve close liaison between the archaeologist and the site agent.</u>

- A photographic record will be maintained throughout, using a digital SLR camera set to maximum resolution (Nikon D40 Digital SLR).
- Any subsurface remains will be recorded photographically, with detailed notations and a measured survey.
- All sections to be drawn at a minimum 1:10 scale
- All plans to be at a minimum 1:20 scale
- Artefacts recovered to be related to their contexts, by three-dimensional recording when closely dateable/typologically distinct items are found.
- Provision must be made for sampling deposits for environmental/technological evidence.
- The archive will then be held by GAT under an appropriate project number (G2177).

NB. Due to the potential for archaeological activity, the identification of any significant archaeological features may necessitate the production of a new project design and the submission of new cost estimates to the contractor. The archaeological contractor will not be entitled to enforce specific delays and hold ups to the work of the site Contractor. If delays prove desirable to the archaeological recording process they should be arranged by mutual agreement with the Developer (and their Agents), and the Denbighshire Archaeology Service

4.2 Environmental Samples

If necessary, relevant archaeological deposits will be sampled by taking bulk samples (a minimum of 10.0 litres and maximum of 30.0 litres) for flotation of charred plant remains. Bulk samples will be taken from waterlogged deposits for macroscopic plant remains. Other bulk samples, for example from middens, may be taken for small animal bones and small artefacts.

4.3 Human Remains

Any finds of human remains will be left *in-situ*, covered and protected, and both the coroner and the DAS Archaeologist informed. If removal is necessary it will take place under appropriate regulations and with due regard for health and safety issues.

4.4 Small Finds

The vast majority of finds recovered from archaeological excavations comprise pottery fragments, bone, environmental and charcoal samples, and non-valuable metal items such as nails. Often many of these finds become unstable (i.e. they begin to disintegrate) when removed from the ground. All finds are the property of the landowner, however, it is Trust policy to recommend that all finds are donated to an appropriate museum where they can receive specialist treatment and study. Access to finds must be granted to the Trust for a reasonable period to allow for analysis and for study and publication as necessary. All finds would be treated according to advice provided within *First Aid for Finds* (Rescue 1999). Trust staff will undertake initial identification, but any additional advice would be sought from a wide range of consultants used by the Trust, including National Museums and Galleries of Wales at Cardiff, ARCUS at Sheffield and BAE at Birmingham.

4.5 Processing data, illustration, report and archiving

Following completion of the record as outlined above, a report will be produced incorporating the following:

(a) A full description and interpretation of results produced to an adequate publication standard.

(b) Plans and sections at the appropriate scale showing the archaeological remains (as dug) and features located.

(c) Any descriptive text should include a table summarising the features, classes and numbers of artefacts recovered and an interpretation.

(d) A confidence rating in the methodology used.

(e) A plan at an appropriate scale showing both actual, and where possible, predicted archaeological deposits.

(f) Artefact analysis to involve the production of a descriptive catalogue.

(g) A full bibliography, indicating whether each reference was actually consulted.

Illustrations, including plans and photographs, will be incorporated within the report.

4.6 Archive

A full archive including plans, photographs, written material and any other material resulting from the project will be prepared. All plans, photographs and descriptions will be labelled and cross-referenced, and lodged in the County Historic Environment Record held jointly by the Denbighshire Archaeology Service and the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in an appropriate place within six months of the completion of the project. A CD-ROM copy will also be produced.

5.0 STAFF

The project will be supervised by Andrew Davidson, Principal Archaeologist at the Trust. The work will be carried out by fully trained Project Archaeologists who are experienced in building survey. (Full CV's are available upon request).

6.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Trust subscribes to the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers) Health and Safety Policy as defined in **Health and Safety in Field Archaeology** (1999).

7.0 INSURANCE

Contract Works Insurance – Aviva Policy 24719850 CTC

• Sum insured £500,000 any one occurrence

The current period expires 04/09/11

Liability Insurance - Aviva Policy 24299068 CCI

- Employers' Liability: Limit of Indemnity £10m in any one occurrence
- Public Liability: Limit of Indemnity £5m in any one occurrence

The current period expires 01/04/11

Professional Indemnity Insurance – Markell A30664/0710

• Limit of Indemnity £2,000,000 in the aggregate

The current period expires 22/07/11

8.0 **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Denbighshire Archaeology Service. Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief, Children's playground, Bodelwyddan Castle. February 2011

Institute for Archaeologists: *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (Institute for Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 2001 and 2008)

BODELWYDDAN CASTLE PLAY AREA

PROJECT DESIGN FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF (G2177)

PREPARED FOR BODELWYDDAN CASTLE TRUST, FEBRUARY 2011

ESTIMATED COSTS:

Based on communication with Bodelwyddan Castle Trust, it is understood that the groundworks will be completed in 3 days, with an expected start date in March 2011 (Kevin Birtles *pers comm.*). Based on this information, it is estimated that on GAT archaeologist (site supervisor level) will be required on site for up to 3 working days (7.5 hour day). The costs will be based on a £30/hour rate extrapolated for the five site days. An additional day will be required for project archiving and the report.

These costs do not cover any mitigation required for extensive archaeological activity; if extensive archaeological activity is identified, please cf. para. 4.1

- 1) Watching Brief (groundworks)
 - (1 member of staff)

Labour 3 days

Note: VAT will be charged at the appropriate rate

2) Project Archiving/Report

• (1 member of staff)

Labour 1 day



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL GWYNEDD



GWYNEDD ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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