

CPAT Report No. 1643

# Offa's Dyke, Kingswood, Powys




Archaeological Watching Brief



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CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Powys County Council  
 CPAT Project No: 2343  
 Project Name: MG138: Offa's Dyke, Section W of Court House Farm  
 Grid Reference: SJ 24320 02648  
 County/LPA: Powys  
 CPAT Report No: 1643  
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## Summary

In February 2019 the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust carried out a watching brief during a flood alleviation scheme involving groundworks to install a new drainage pipe across a scheduled section of Offa's Dyke to the west of Court House Farm, at Kingswood, near Forden, in Powys.

The excavation of a trench across the bank revealed its width to be around 10.5m, with a surviving height of 1.5m. On the north-western side the bank had been partly buried by material used to infill the ditch which had been adopted by a lane, as well as by the roadside hedge bank.

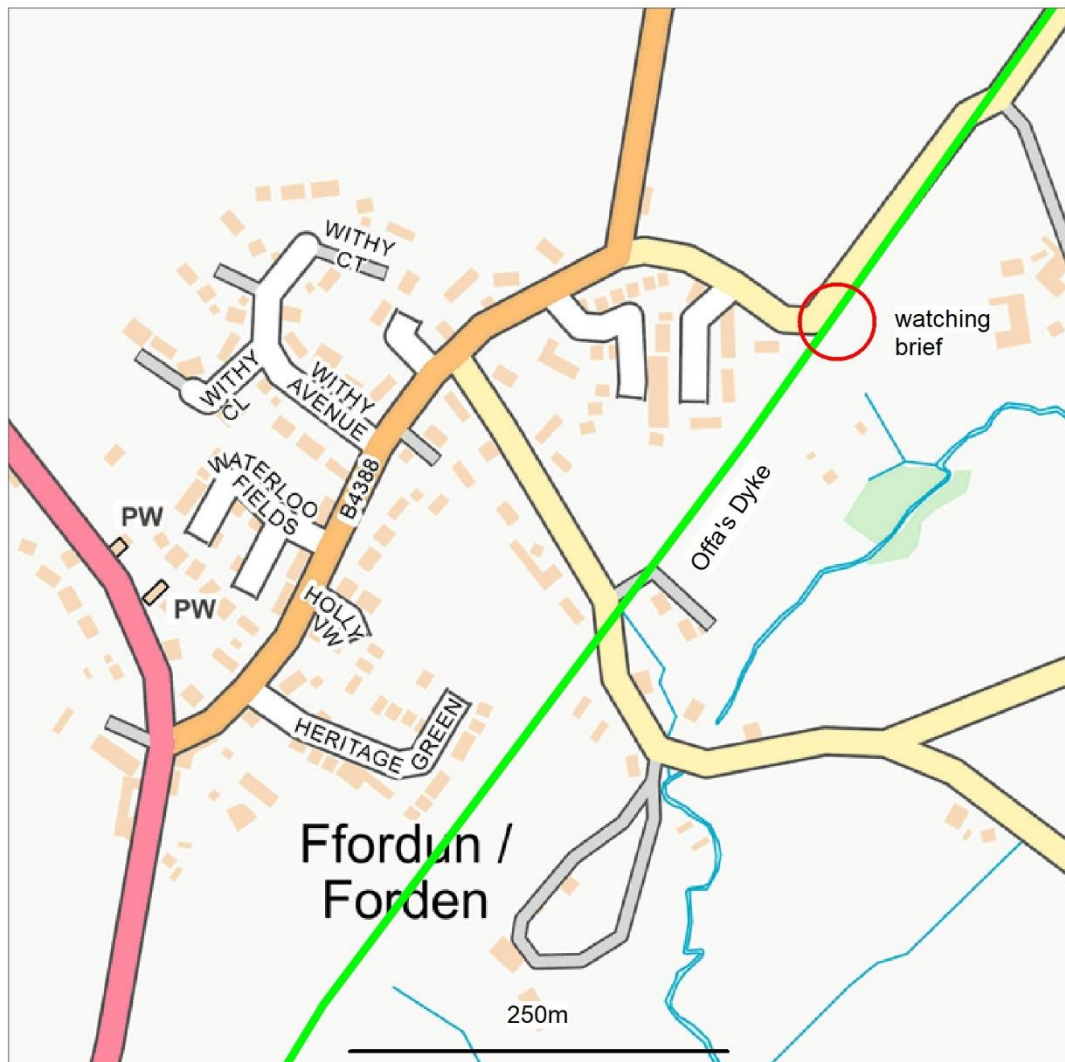
## Crynodeb

Ym mis Chwefror 2019, bu Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys yn cynnal briff gwylio yn ystod cynllun lliniaru llifogydd a oedd yn cynnwys gwaith paratoi tir i osod pibell ddraenio newydd ar draws adran restredig o Glawdd Offa i'r gorllewin o fferm Court House, yn Kingswood, ger Ffordun, ym Mhowys.

Cloddiwyd rhych ar draws y clawdd a datgelwyd bod ei led yn rhyw 10.5m, a'i fod wedi goroesi i uchder o 1.5m. Ar yr ochr ogledd-orllewinol, roedd y clawdd wedi'i gladdu'n rhannol gan ddeunydd a ddefnyddiwyd i fewnlenwi'r ffos yr oedd lôn, yn ogystal â chlawdd y gwrych ar ochr y ffordd, wedi'i mabwysiadu.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Powys County Council to undertake a watching brief during groundworks adjacent to the scheduled monument known as MG138 Offa's Dyke, Section West of Court House Farm, at Kingswood near Forden, in Powys (Fig. 1; SJ 24320 02648). The works were carried out as part of a flood alleviation scheme and involved excavations that broadly follow the line of an existing pipe which crosses the scheduled monument to facilitate the installation of a larger pipe.



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Fig. 1 Location of groundworks to be monitored (circled in red)

- 1.2. Scheduled monument consent for the works was granted in November 2018, with the inclusion of the following conditions:
1. that the applicant shall afford access at all reasonable times to any Cadw official or archaeologist nominated by Cadw to monitor progress of the works;

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2. that the works shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and documents submitted on 22 October 2018. No variations shall be permitted unless they have been authorised in advance in writing by the Welsh Ministers;
  3. no work shall commence until the Welsh Ministers has confirmed in writing that the proposed archaeologist is suitable. This work shall be coordinated with any watching brief required by your archaeological advisor for the area outside of the scheduled area.
  4. that Cadw's representative shall be invited to attend a site meeting within the at the start of the project to review the programme and arrangements that have been established for archaeological mitigation/building recording;
  5. that mechanical excavation of the existing pipe shall be undertaken using a toothless bucket;
  6. following the removal of the existing pipe the archaeological contractor shall be given adequate time to clean and record the exposed sections within the scheduled area; and
  7. that any historic or archaeological features not previously identified which are revealed when carrying out the works shall be retained in-situ and reported to the Welsh Ministers immediately. Works shall be halted in the area/part of the site affected until provision has been made for retention and/or recording of the feature by the appointed archaeologist in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing in advance.
- 1.3. The site is located at Kingswood, a small dispersed settlement located at the junction between the A490 and the B4388, within the parish of Forden. The village of Forden itself is located 2.2km to the south-west, and Welshpool 5.3km to the north. The section of Offa's Dyke in question lies to the east of Kingswood.
  - 1.4. Offa's Dyke is an earthwork delineating the border between Mercia and the Welsh Kingdoms. It is traditionally associated with the Mercian king Offa, who is widely believed to have been responsible for its construction during the mid to late 8<sup>th</sup> century. The dyke served as both an administrative boundary as well as a defensive structure.
  - 1.5. Originally, the monument would have comprised a bank up to 2.4m in height and 10m or more in width, which was largely formed from material upcast from a ditch excavated along the western side of the dyke. It has been noted that the form of both the dyke and the ditch vary somewhat in different places along the line of the earthwork, suggesting that the dyke was built simultaneously by different working parties, but also that there were varying requirements for how effective the dyke was intended to be as a defensive feature.

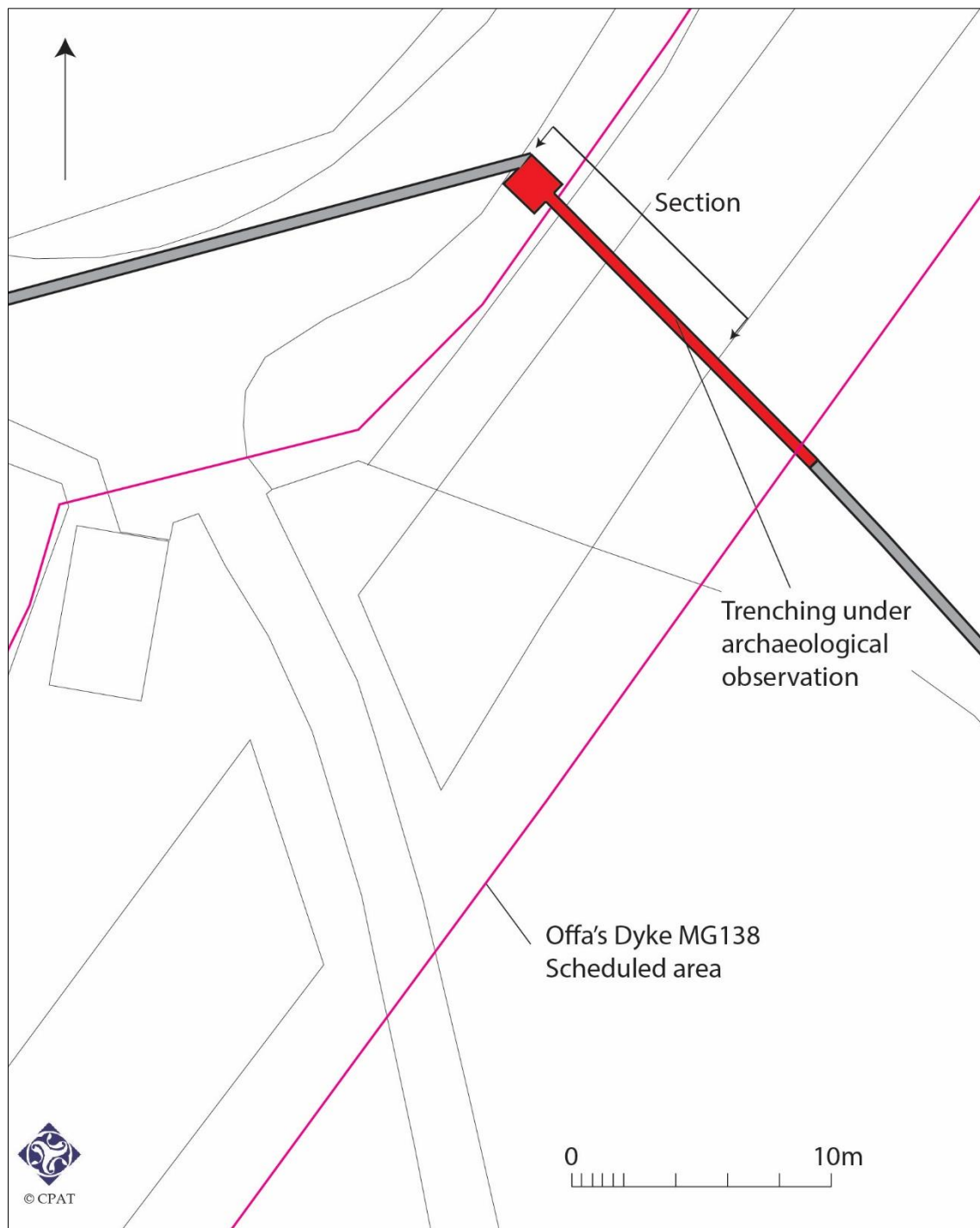


Fig. 2 Trench location plan

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## 2 Watching Brief

- 2.1. The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014) and was conducted intermittently between 1 and 26 February 2019, monitoring a section of trenching approximately 15m in length, located within a small field to the south-west of Court House Farm, Kingswood.
- 2.2. The original intention had been to follow the line of the existing drain, cutting a wider trench in order to accommodate the new, larger drain. However, at the start of the scheme it became evident that this would not be practicable and following discussions with Cadw it was agreed that a new trench would be excavated directly across the upstanding bank under close archaeological supervision.
- 2.3. The trench was 0.6m in width and varied in depth above ground level from 2m at the roadside to approximately 1m within the field. A large drain chamber was constructed within the dyke at the point where it abutted the lane, although this lay outside the scheduled area and was largely within the footprint of an existing chamber.
- 2.4. The excavations afforded an almost complete section of the bank (Fig. 3), revealing that it appeared to have been constructed directly onto the surface of the natural subsoil, a mottled dark greyish orange gritty silt clay layer (3), with no evidence for a buried turf layer. The basal deposit of the bank consisted of a well-compacted yellowish orange clay (5), extending for at least 10.5m in width, with a thickness of up to 0.65m. This was sealed beneath a firm, friable light yellowish brown silt clay (6), up to 0.45m thick, together with a well-compacted greyish orange clay (4), 0.5m thick.
- 2.5. The upper part of the earthwork consisted of a layer of topsoil, comprising a firm, friable light greyish brown silt layer, 0.27m thick. This is likely to represent bank material which had been disturbed through ploughing and natural erosion. On the south-east side of the bank this overlay a deposit of firm, light yellowish silt clay (2), 0.42m thick, which had been partially built up against the side of the bank, and was also presumably derived from material displaced from the bank.
- 2.6. The north-western end of the trench revealed later deposition associated with a former hedgebank and the construction of a lane along the line of the ditch. This consisted of a soft mid-greyish brown silt layer (8), >0.7m in thickness, which had been deposited against the north-western side of the bank, on top of which was a loose, mid brown silty layer, 0.4m thick, representing a former hedgebank.



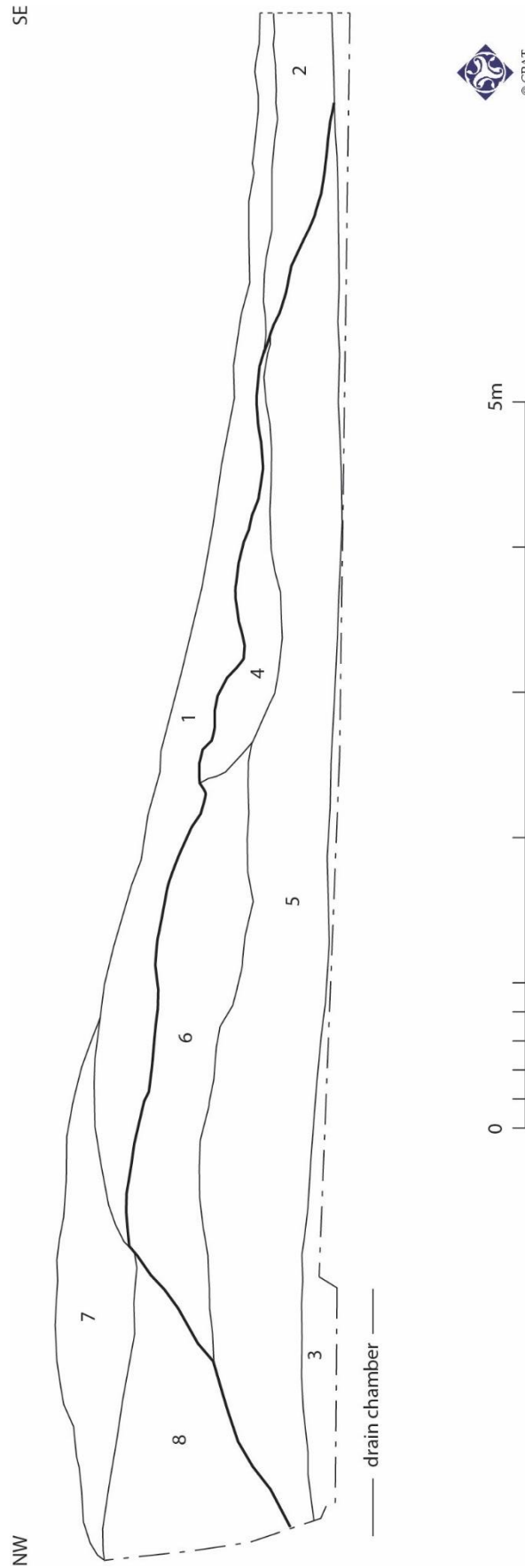


Fig. 3 South-west facing section through the dyke



Fig. 4 View from the south-east of trenching through the dyke Photo. CPAT 4595-0015



Fig. 5 View south showing later deposition against the north-west side of the dyke. Photo CPAT 4595-0028





Fig. 6 The natural subsoil (3) at the south-extent of the trenching. Photo CPAT 4595-0007

### 3 Conclusions

- 3.1. The excavation of a trench across the upstanding bank of Offa's Dyke afforded an opportunity to record a section of the earthwork. The bank was seen to be approximately 11m wide and 1.5m high, having been constructed directly on the natural subsoil, with no evidence for a buried turf. The only artefacts recovered during the groundworks comprised ceramics of mid-late post-medieval date, recovered from the topsoil and a layer of redeposited material on the south-east side of the bank
- 3.2. The extant surface of the dyke at this location was noted to be somewhat flatter when viewed in profile than that observed further to the north-east, this being most likely due to the presence of a footpath running across the dyke at this point.
- 3.3. The works provided no evidence for the accompanying ditch, which had evidently been adopted by an existing lane.

### 4 Archive deposition Statement

- 4.1. 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). No artefacts were retained as part of the archive.

**Archive Summary**

**CPAT Event PRN:** 140283

3 watching brief recording forms

34 digital photographs, CPAT Film No. 4595-0034

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## Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 1902

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) have been invited by Powys County Council to undertake a watching brief during groundworks adjacent to the scheduled monument known as MG138 Offa's Dyke, Section West of Court House Farm, near Forden, in Powys. The works are associated with a flood alleviation scheme and involve excavations along the line of an existing pipe which crosses the scheduled monument to facilitate the installation of a larger pipe.
- 1.2. Scheduled monument consent for the works was granted in November 2018, with the inclusion of the following conditions:
  1. that the applicant shall afford access at all reasonable times to any Cadw official or archaeologist nominated by Cadw to monitor progress of the works;
  2. that the works shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and documents submitted on 22 October 2018. No variations shall be permitted unless they have been authorised in advance in writing by the Welsh Ministers;
  3. no work shall commence until the Welsh Ministers has confirmed in writing that the proposed archaeologist is suitable. This work shall be coordinated with any watching brief required by your archaeological advisor for the area outside of the scheduled area.
  4. that Cadw's representative shall be invited to attend a site meeting within the at the start of the project to review the programme and arrangements that have been established for archaeological mitigation/building recording;
  5. that mechanical excavation of the existing pipe shall be undertaken using a toothless bucket;
  6. following the removal of the existing pipe the archaeological contractor shall be given adequate time to clean and record the exposed sections within the scheduled area; and
  7. that any historic or archaeological features not previously identified which are revealed when carrying out the works shall be retained in-situ and reported to the Welsh Ministers immediately. Works shall be halted in the area/part of the site affected until provision has been made for retention and/or recording of the feature by the appointed archaeologist in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing in advance.

### 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 access and parking. The excavation of any

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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.
- Any significant historic or archaeological features not previously identified which are revealed when carrying out the excavation works / watching brief shall be retained in-situ and reported to the Welsh Ministers within 2 working days. Works shall be halted in the area/part of the site affected until provision has been made for retention and/or recording of the feature by the appointed archaeologist in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing by the Welsh Ministers.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

2.2. 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 watching brief will be deposited with an appropriate museum, subject to the permission of the owner.

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- 2.3. 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
- 2.4. 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).
- 2.5. A digital copy of the watching brief report shall be submitted to the Welsh Ministers for approval within 8 weeks of the archaeological fieldwork being completed.

#### **Site archive**

- 2.6. 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).
- 2.7. 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. A copy of the digital archive only will also be lodged with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.

### **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, the Welsh Ministers, the National Monuments Record and the regional Historic Environment Record within eight weeks 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

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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.

Curatorial monitoring	£150 per visit
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

12 December 2018