CECP19

CASTLE ESTATE, CLYRO, POWYS

WATCHING BRIEF

commissioned by Powys County Council

June 2019

HEADLAND ARCHAEOLOGY

REGISTERED ORGANISATION CIfA

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PROJECT INFO:

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ASCB Accreditation Services Worldwide

ISO 9001

PROJECT SUMMARY

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by Powys County Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of geotechnical test pits at Castle Estate, Clyro, Powys. A total of six test pits were monitored across the site, none of which revealed any archaeological deposits or features.

Comisiynwyd Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd gan Gyngor Sir Powys i gynnal briff gwylio archaeolegol yn ystod gwaith cloddio pyllau prawf geotechnegol yn Stad y Castell, Cleirwy, Powys. Monitrwyd chwe phwll prawf i gyd ar draws y safle, ond ni wnaeth unrhyw un ohonynt ddatgelu unrhyw ddyddodion neu nodweddion archaeolegol.

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ILLUS 1 Site location

CASTLE ESTATE, CLYRO, POWYS

WATCHING BRIEF

1 INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology was commissioned by Powys County Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief. The work comprised the monitoring of six geotechnical test pits, in advance of a proposed development for housing and an open space with a play area near Castle Estate, Clyro, Powys.

1.1 SITE LOCATION (ILLUS 1)

The proposed development area (hereafter referred to as the site) is located on an area of land with a slight to steep incline north-east of Clyro Castle, on the southern edge of Clyro village (NGR SO 214 436). The area of the development site that was monitored measured c 0.42ha. Castle Estate, a residential housing estate, is to the north-west of the site with arable fields to the south and east.

1.2 GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The soils on the site are described as free-draining, slightly acidic and loamy (Landis 2019). The local geology is made up of the Raglan Mudstone Formation, primarily Siltstone and Mudstone, Interbedded. The sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 419 to 424 million years ago in the Silurian Period (NERC 2019).

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership (Sharp 2019) reported the presence of prehistoric and Roman period activity in the vicinity of the site. However, there is no specific evidence for archaeological remains of these periods from within the site itself. A geophysical survey undertaken in August 2018 did not provide any evidence for archaeological anomalies either. Only modern magnetic debris is visible in the data, along with large areas of disturbance from nearby ferrous objects such as fences, etc (Davies 2018). As such, the potential for prehistoric and Roman archaeology to be present within the site, was considered to be low (Sharp 2019). However, there was still a possibility of encountering archaeology relating to Clyro castle located to the south-west to the site (Illus 2).

2 METHOD

A total of six test pits were excavated measuring approximately 0.80m in width x 3.0m in length and 3.0m in depth. These were excavated using a JCB 3CX fitted with a toothless bucket. The test pits were located by an Arcadis geotechnical supervising engineer using a GPS and CAT scanner. All groundworks were monitored by an archaeologist to the level of the first archaeological horizon or the natural geology, whichever was encountered first.

All works were undertaken in accordance with the CIfA Code of Conduct (CIfA 2014a) and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (CIfA 2014b), along with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Craddock-Bennett 2019).

High resolution digital photographs and 35mm black and white negatives form the site photographic record.

3 RESULTS

Full context descriptions are presented in Appendix 1.

Each test pit measured 0.8m in width and a maximum of 3m long. The deposits identified within each test pit remained relatively

ILLUS 2 Looking west across field with castle motte amongst trees in the left of the image

ILLUS 3 East facing section view through through TP104

consistent across the site. Each test pit was machined to a depth of 3 metres below ground level (BGL). TP105 was the only test pit that showed a variation to the stratigraphy across the site.

The geological horizon appeared to be undisturbed and consisted of a mid-reddish brown very stoney clay mudstone with frequent medium to large sub-rounded to angular stones throughout and was encountered at a depth of between 0.90m and 1.60m below ground level (BGL) (eg 10403). The depth at which the geological horizon was encountered varied due to the site being on a north-west to south-east incline with the deeper deposits of topsoil recorded at the slope bases.

Test Pits 109, 106 and 107 were located on sloping ground, with Test Pits 104, 105 and 108 located on flatter ground at the base of the slope. Test Pits 104, 106, 107, 108 and 109 all revealed a relatively consistent undisturbed subsoil of slightly reddish brown, slightly stoney silty clay with occasional small to medium sub rounded to sub angular stones (Illus 3). Subsoil deposits were encountered at depths between 0.40–1.60m BGL. Test Pit 105 evidenced the only variation to the subsoil across the site. The subsoil in Test Pit 105 was recorded as a greyish yellow brown silty clay with occasional rounded stones at a depth of 0.30–1.35m BGL.

Subsoil deposits were sealed by topsoil consisting of reddish brown, slightly stoney silt loam with occasional small angular to rounded stones at a depth of 0–0.55m BGL. This was consistent across the site except for Test Pit 105, where the topsoil consisted of a dark to mid-brown, slightly stoney silty loam with occasional small to medium stones. The shallower depth of topsoil (0–0.3m) in this test pit was likely the result of landscaping evident to the north of Test Pit 105. Modern plastic material was present within the topsoil suggesting that the topsoil had been disturbed recently.

4 DISCUSSION

The relatively consistent stratigraphy across the site suggests that the area has largely been left undisturbed, the exception being the north-east edge of site where modern development to the north may have led to some disturbance to this area of the site. Although no archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified during the monitoring works, it is acknowledged that the test pits amounted to a very limited sample of the total site area.

5 REFERENCES

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA) 2014a ***Code of Conduct*** http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CodesofConduct.pdf accessed 23 May 2019

Chartered Institute for Archaeologist (ClfA) 2014b ***Standards and guidance for and archaeological watching brief*** http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/ClfAS&GWatchingbrief_2.pdf accessed 23 May 2019

Cranfield University 2019 ***Land Information System (Landis)*** http://www.landis.org.uk accessed 23 May 2019

Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) 2019 ***British Geological Survey*** http://www.bgs.ac.uk accessed 23 May 2019

Sharp H 2019 ***Castle Estate, Clyro, Powys: Heritage Impact Assessment. The Environmental Dimension Partnership*** [unpublished client document] edp5112_r001

Davies R 2018 ***Castle Estate, Clyro, Powys: Geophysical Survey Report*** [unpublished client document] Sumo Survey Report No. 13375

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 TEST PIT AND CONTEXT REGISTER

DBGL = Depth below ground level

TP104			
L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
3.0	0.80	3.0	3.0
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION		DBGL (M)
10401	Topsoil: Reddish brown, slightly stoney silt loam with occasional small angular to rounded stones. Soft, mouldable consistency.		0–0.55
10402	Subsoil: Slightly reddish brown, slightly stoney silt clay with occasional small to medium sub rounded to sub angular stones. A relatively mouldable consistency.		0.55–0.90
10403	Natural: Mid-reddish brown very stoney clay mudstone with frequent medium to large sub rounded to angular stones throughout. Compact consistency. The density of large sub rounded to sub angular stones suggests the natural horizon to be from sedimentation over time compacting to form the mudstone geology.		0.90+
SUMMARY TEST PIT – NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS OR FEATURES PRESENT			

TP105			
L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
3.0	0.80	3.0	3.0
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION		DBGL (M)
10501	Topsoil: Dark to mid-brown, slightly stoney silty loam with occasional small to medium stones. Relatively loose consistency. Likely disturbed by landscaping the area to the north of TP105. Modern plastic material present.		0–0.30
10502	Subsoil: Greyish yellow brown silty clay with occasional rounded stones. Relatively compact deposit.		0.30–1.35
10503	Natural: Mid-reddish brown very stoney clay mudstone with frequent medium to large sub rounded to angular stones throughout. Compact consistency. The density of large sub rounded to sub angular stones suggests the natural horizon to be from sedimentation over time compacting to form the mudstone geology.		1.35+
SUMMARY TEST PIT – NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS OR FEATURES PRESENT			

TP106			
L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
3.00	0.80	3.0	3.0
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION		DBGL (M)
10601	Topsoil: Reddish brown, slightly stoney silt loam with occasional small angular to rounded stones. Soft, mouldable consistency.		0–0.45
10602	Subsoil: Slightly reddish brown, slightly stoney silt clay with occasional small to medium sub rounded to sub angular stones. A relatively mouldable consistency.		0.45–1.30
10603	Natural: Mid-reddish brown very stoney clay mudstone with frequent medium to large sub rounded to angular stones throughout. Compact consistency. The density of large sub rounded to sub angular stones suggests the natural horizon to be from sedimentation over time compacting to form the mudstone geology.		1.30+
SUMMARY TEST PIT – NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS OR FEATURES			

TP107			
L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
3.0	0.80	3.00	3.00
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION		DBGL (M)
10701	Topsoil: Reddish brown, slightly stoney silt loam with occasional small angular to rounded stones. Soft, mouldable consistency.		0–0.40
10702	Subsoil: Slightly reddish brown, slightly stoney silt clay with occasional small to medium sub rounded to sub angular stones. A relatively mouldable consistency.		0.40–1.00
10703	Natural: Mid-reddish brown very stoney clay mudstone with frequent medium to large sub rounded to angular stones throughout. Compact consistency. The density of large sub rounded to sub angular stones suggests the natural horizon to be from sedimentation over time compacting to form the mudstone geology.		1.0+
SUMMARY TEST PIT – NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS OR FEATURES			

TP108			
L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
3.0	0.80	3.0	3.0
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION		DBGL (M)
10801	Topsoil: Reddish brown, slightly stoney silt loam with occasional small angular to rounded stones. Soft, mouldable consistency.		0–0.45
10802	Subsoil: Slightly reddish brown, slightly stoney silt clay with occasional small to medium sub rounded to sub angular stones. A relatively mouldable consistency.		0.45–0.90

10803	Natural: Mid-reddish brown very stoney clay mudstone with frequent medium to large sub rounded to angular stones throughout. Compact consistency. The density of large sub rounded to sub angular stones suggests the natural horizon to be from sedimentation over time compacting to form the mudstone geology.	0.90+

SUMMARY TEST PIT – NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS OR FEATURES

TP109			
L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
3.0	0.80	3.0	3.0

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DBGL (M)
0601	Topsoil: Reddish brown, slightly stoney silt loam with occasional small angular to rounded stones. Soft, mouldable consistency.	0–0.55
0602	Subsoil: Slightly reddish brown, slightly stoney silt clay with occasional small to medium sub rounded to sub angular stones. A relatively mouldable consistency.	0.55–1.60
0603	Natural: Mid-reddish brown very stoney clay mudstone with frequent medium to large sub rounded to angular stones throughout. Compact consistency. The density of large sub rounded to sub angular stones suggests the natural horizon to be from sedimentation over time compacting to form the mudstone geology.	1.60+

SUMMARY TEST PIT – NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS OR FEATURES

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