

# *Archaeology Wales*

## **Land to rear of Greenfields Bronllys, Powys**

Archaeological Watching Brief - Interim Report



By

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Report No. 1547

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# Archaeology Wales

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Archaeological Watching Brief - Interim Report

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Archaeology Wales Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief during geotechnical investigations on the 10<sup>th</sup> January on land to the rear of Greenfields, Bronllys, Powys. The aim of this watching brief was to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the areas subject to geotechnical investigation. Watching brief work at the site is ongoing and this document is intended as an interim report.*

*The assessment area is composed of a single pasture field just outside the historic core of the medieval village of Bronllys. Previously undertaken work in the surrounding area has located evidence of medieval and post-medieval activity close to the southern end of the assessment area at Rose Cottage (Watson, 2015).*

*The Watching Brief was undertaken over the course of a single day. None of the eight geotechnical trial pits excavated showed any finds or features of archaeological significance. The Archaeology Wales project number is 2487 and the Powys County Council planning reference is B/0007/0368.*

## **1. Introduction**

In January 2017 Archaeology Wales Ltd was commissioned by Sotero Ltd to conduct an archaeological watching brief during all groundworks with a potential to impact upon the archaeological resource at land to the rear of Greenfields, Bronllys, Powys. The initial watching brief phase was undertaken on geotechnical investigations within the assessment area prior to the construction of six new residential dwellings with associated landscaping, access and infrastructure (NGR 314355 235120 - Fig. 1).

Prior to any on-site works taking place a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by Chris Smith MCIFA of AW Ltd (Appendix 3) and submitted to the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) for approval in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority (Powys County Council). The archaeological watching brief was carried out by Chris Smith (AW) in January 2017 under the overall management of Mark Houlston (AW).

## **2. Site Description**

### **2.1 Location, Topography, Geology**

The site is located on the northern edge of the historic core of the medieval village of Bronllys, Powys, at approximately 140m OD. The site consists of a single, largely rectangular (aligned north-west to south-east), field currently in use as pasture. A now largely defunct field boundary shows where the assessment area was previously divided.

The natural soils in the area are in the Oglethorpe association and are classed as deep well drained coarse and fine loamy and silty soils (Soil Survey of England & Wales, 2016). The underlying solid geology in the area is composed of Lower Old Red Sandstone (including Downtonian) formations of Devonian age (British Geological Survey, 2016).

### **3. Archaeological & Historical Background**

The road running north-east to south-west through the centre of Bronllys, to the south-east of the site, is purportedly the line of the Kenchester to Brecon Roman road (PRN11606).

An archaeological evaluation at Rose Cottage (PRN128726), bounding the south-eastern edge of the site, undertaken by Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust in 2015, located evidence of 14th/15th century activity as well as 17th/18th century activity in the form of linear features, boundary ditch and pit (Watson, 2015).

According to the regional HER (Welshpool) the site itself contains evidence of ridge and furrow earthworks (PRN2994) though these were not visible at the time of the watching brief.

It is anticipated that the majority of medieval settlement activity is likely to have occurred towards the southern end of the plot given its location closer to the historic core of the village and the results of the 2015 Rose Cottage evaluation.

The presence of cultivation furrows within the long field forming the assessment area would appear to suggest that its use as agricultural land dates back at least as far as the medieval period. The concentration of occupation activity along its southern edge (the historic core of the village), as evidenced by the 2015 CPAT evaluation, suggests occupation fronting onto the road with the assessment area located to the rear of this as a medieval strip field.

## **4. Aims and Objectives**

### **4.1 General**

The aims of an archaeological watching brief, as defined by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014) are:

- To ensure that any buried remains located within the development area are fully investigated and recorded if revealed as a consequence of the site works
- To provide an opportunity for the archaeologists present to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an ar-

archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard

- If such a find is made, representatives of the client and the County Archaeologist will be informed and a site meeting organised as appropriate

## **5. Methodology**

### **5.1 Watching Brief**

Excavation of the geotechnical test pits was undertaken using a JCB 3CX mechanical excavator and by hand under close archaeological supervision. Prior to excavation all areas were CAT scanned for live services.

Eight test pits, of which three were soak-away tests, were proposed by the contractor for the purposes of the geotechnical investigation. These pits measured 1.5m wide by between 2.5m and 3m in length. Depth of topsoil and subsoil deposits located above the natural varied from 0.4m to 1m deep.

All areas were photographed using high resolution (14mp+) digital photography. All test pit locations were recorded using GPS.

All on-site illustrations were undertaken on drafting film using recognised conventions and scales (1:10, 1:20, 1:50) as appropriate.

All works were undertaken in accordance with the CIfA's Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological watching brief (2014) and current Health and Safety legislation.

## **6. Archaeological Watching Brief**

### **6.1 Results**

All of the excavated test pits were covered with topsoil comprised of friable mid brown silt clay. The topsoil varied in depth from 0.2m to 0.4m. The subsoil deposits were uniformly composed of mixed red clay silts with occasional to frequent sub-rounded stone inclusions, which varied in depth from 0.2m and 0.4m. The natural exposed in all of the pits was composed of compacted, angular and sub-angular, red sandstone and clay. This stratigraphic sequence was observed in all of the excavated trial pits. The pits are described in detail below and their locations shown on figure 1:

#### Test Pit 1 (Plates 1&2)

Soak away test pit 1 (SO 14407 35094) was located towards the southerly end of the assessment area and measured 1.5m wide and 3m in length, on a north-east to south-west alignment. The topsoil (1001), a friable mid brown silt clay, was 0.2m in depth. The subsoil (1002), a red silt clay, was 0.4m deep. The natural, (1003), composed of

broken red sandstone and clay, was encountered at a depth of 0.6m below the current ground surface. No finds or features of archaeological significance were located during the excavation of test pit 1.

#### Test Pit 2 (Plates 3&4)

Soak away test pit 2 (SO 14418 35108) was located towards the southerly end of the assessment area and measured 1.5m wide and 3m in length, on a north to south alignment. The topsoil (2001), a friable mid brown silt clay, was 0.2m in depth. The subsoil (2002), a red silt clay, was 0.4m deep and contained small abraded sherds of 18<sup>th</sup> century ceramic (not retained). The natural, (2003), composed of broken red sandstone and clay, was encountered at a depth of 0.6m below the current ground surface. No finds or features of archaeological significance were located during the excavation of test pit 2.

#### Test Pit 3 (Plates 5&6)

Soak away test pit 3 (SO 14386 35121) was located towards the southerly end of the assessment area and measured 1.5m wide and 3m in length, on a north-west to south-east alignment. The topsoil (3001), a friable mid brown silt clay, was 0.3m in depth. The subsoil (3002), a red silt clay, was 0.4m deep. The natural, (3003), composed of broken red sandstone and clay, was encountered at a depth of 0.7m below the current ground surface. No finds or features of archaeological significance were located during the excavation of test pit 3.

#### Test Pit 4 (Plates 7&8)

Test Pit 4 (SO 14433 35085) was located towards the southerly end of the assessment area and measured 1.5m wide and 3m in length, on a north-east to south-west alignment. The topsoil (4001), a friable mid brown silt clay, was 0.2m in depth. The subsoil (4002), a red silt clay, was 0.35m deep. The natural, (4003), composed of broken red sandstone and clay, was encountered at a depth of 0.55m below the current ground surface. No finds or features of archaeological significance were located during the excavation of test pit 4.

#### Test Pit 5 (Plates 9&10)

Test Pit 5 (SO 14363 35150) was located towards the southerly end of the assessment area and measured 1.5m wide and 3m in length, on an east to west alignment. The topsoil (5001), a friable mid brown silt clay, was 0.2m in depth. The subsoil (5002), a red silt clay with frequent charcoal flecks, was 0.8m deep. The natural, (5003), composed of broken red sandstone and clay, was encountered at a depth of 1m below the current ground surface. No finds or features of archaeological significance were located during the excavation of test pit 5.

#### Test Pit 6 (Plates 11&12)

Test Pit 6 (SO 14320 35142) was located towards the southerly end of the assessment area and measured 1.5m wide and 3m in length, on a north-east to south-west alignment. The topsoil (6001), a friable mid brown silt clay, was 0.2m in depth. The subsoil (2002), a red silt clay, was 0.3m deep. The natural, (6003), composed of broken red sandstone and clay, was encountered at a depth of 0.5m below the current ground surface. No finds or features of archaeological significance were located during the excavation of test pit 6.

#### Test Pit 7 (Plates 13&14)

Test Pit 7 (SO 14310 35178) was located towards the southerly end of the assessment area and measured 1.5m wide and 2.5m in length, on a north-west to south-east alignment. The topsoil (7001), a friable mid brown silt clay, was 0.2m in depth. The subsoil (7002), a red silt clay, was 0.6m deep. The natural, (7003), composed of broken red sandstone and clay, was encountered at a depth of 0.8m below the current ground surface. No finds or features of archaeological significance were located during the excavation of test pit 7.

#### Test Pit 8 (Plates 15&16)

Test Pit 8 (SO 14273 35165) was located towards the southerly end of the assessment area and measured 1.5m wide and 2.5m in length, on a north-east to south-west alignment. The topsoil (8001), a friable mid brown silt clay, was 0.2m in depth. The subsoil (8002), a red silt clay, was 0.8m deep. The natural, (8003), composed of broken red sandstone and clay, was encountered at a depth of 1m below the current ground surface. No finds or features of archaeological significance were located during the excavation of test pit 8.

## **7. Discussion and Conclusions**

The excavated test pits revealed no finds or features of archaeological significance. Only one test pit, test pit 2, showed any anthropogenic material (abraded post-medieval ceramic sherds within the subsoil horizon). Subsoil within test pit 5 showed greater concentrations of charcoal which may be indicative of a feature in the vicinity.

## **8. Acknowledgements**

Thanks are due to John Knight (Sotero Ltd) for managing the geotechnical investigations and Mark Houliston MCIfA (AW) for managing the project.

## **9. Bibliography**

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html> (accessed 03/01/17).

[www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes](http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes) (accessed 03/01/17)

Watson, S. 2015. Rose Cottage, Bronllys. Archaeological Evaluation. CPAT Report

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## **APPENDIX I:** Figures

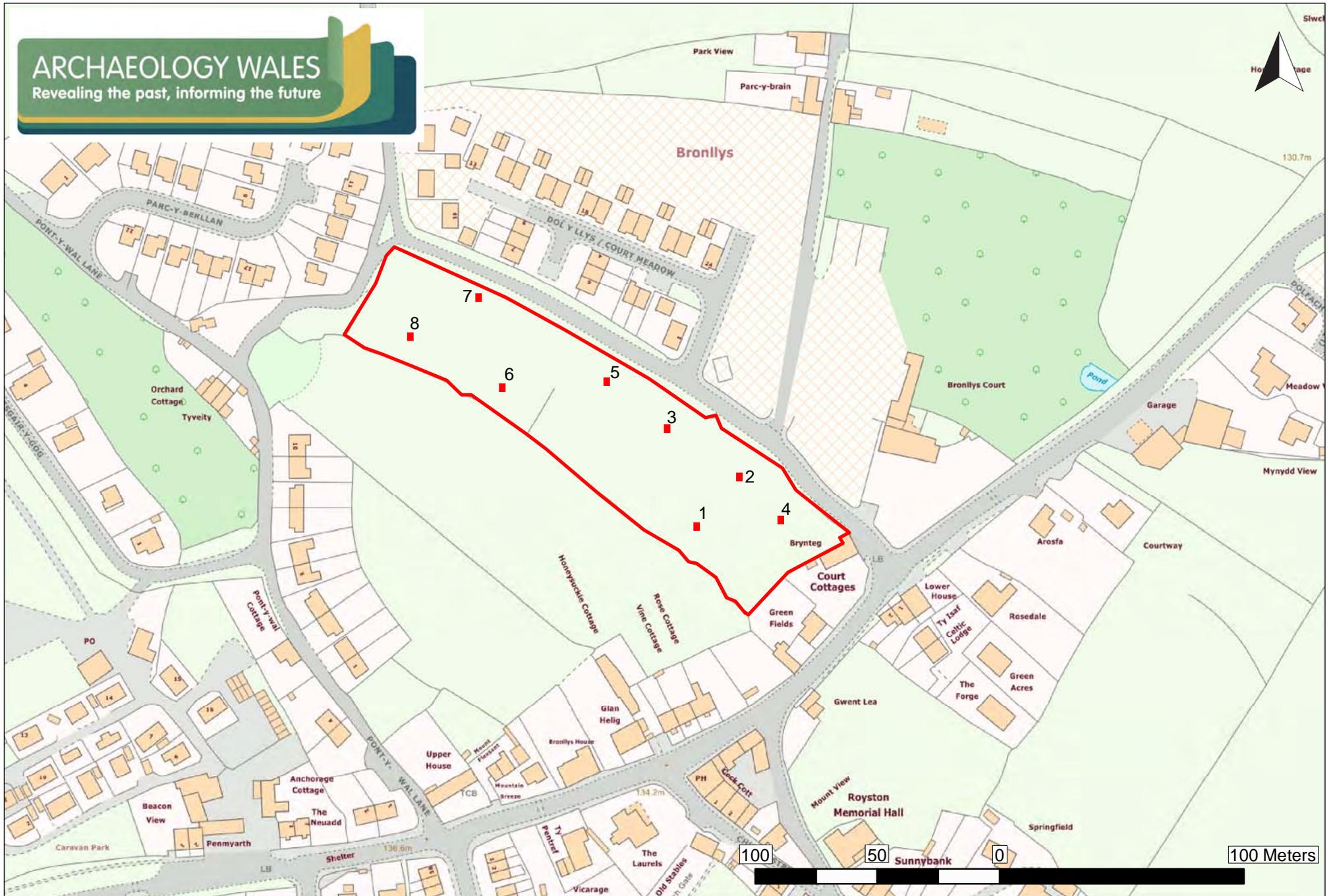


Fig 1: Map showing location of test pits 1-8 within assessment area (red boundary)

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## **APPENDIX II: Plates**



Plate 1:View of test pit 1. Looking north west. Scale 1x1 m



Plate 2:View of test pit 2. Looking west. Scale 1x1 m



Plate 3: View of test pit 3. Looking north east. Scale 1x1m



Plate 4: View of test pit 4. Looking north west. Scale 1x1m



Plate 5:View of test pit 5. Looking north. Scale 1x1m



Plate 6:View of test pit 6. Looking north west. Scale 1x1m



Plate 7: View of test pit 7. Looking north east. Scale 1x1m



Plate 8: View of test pit 8. Looking north west. Scale 1x1m

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### **APPENDIX III:**

#### **Written Scheme of Investigation**

# *Archaeology Wales*

**Written Scheme of Investigation  
For an Archaeological Watching Brief  
at  
Land to the rear of Greenfields  
Bronllys, Powys**

**Prepared for:**

Sotero Ltd

**3<sup>rd</sup> January 2017**

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## **NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

#

This Written Scheme of Investigation details the methodology for an archaeological watching brief associated with a proposed residential development on land to the rear of Greenfields, Bronllys, Powys, NGR 314355 235120 (Planning Application Number B/0007/0368). It has been prepared by Archaeology Wales Ltd at the request of Sotero Ltd. The watching brief will be undertaken during all groundworks associated with the development.

### **1. Introduction**

#

The proposed development is for six new residential dwellings with associated landscaping, access and infrastructure (Planning Reference: B/0007/0368) at land to the rear of Greenfields, Bronllys, Powys. The development plot consists of an area of agricultural land (grazing) to the rear (north and north-west) of Greenfields, Bronllys, totaling approximately 0.93 hectares, centred on NGR 314355 235120 (Fig 1).

The development proposal comprises the construction of six new residential dwellings with associated landscaping, access and infrastructure. The development proposal has been granted outline planning permission.

This Written Scheme of Investigation has been prepared by Chris E Smith (MCIfA) of Archaeology Wales Ltd (henceforth - AW) at the request of Sotero Ltd. It provides information on the methodology which will be employed by AW during archaeological works at the site. The on-site archaeological works are to comprise a watching brief on all groundworks.

All work will be undertaken in accordance with Chartered Institute for Archaeologists standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief (2014). The work will be undertaken by suitably qualified staff to the highest professional standards.

### **2. Site Description**

The site is located on the northern edge of the historic core of the medieval village of Bronllys, Powys. The site consists of a single, largely rectangular, field currently in use as pasture.

The natural soils in the area are in the Oglethorpe association and are classed as deep well drained coarse and fine loamy and silty soils (Soil Survey of England & Wales, 2016). The underlying solid geology in the area is composed of Lower Old Red Sandstone (including Downtonian) formations of Devonian age (British Geological Survey, 2016).

The road running north-east to south-west through the centre of Bronllys, to the south-east of the site, is purportedly the line of the Kenchester to Brecon Roman road.

An archaeological evaluation at Rose Cottage, bounding the south-eastern edge of the site, undertaken by Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust in 2015, located evidence of 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century activity as well as 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century activity in the form of linear features, boundary ditch and pit.

It is anticipated that the majority of medieval settlement activity is likely to have occurred towards the southern end of the plot given its location closer to the historic core of the village and the results of the 2015 Rose Cottage evaluation.

### **3. General Objectives**

The aims of the watching brief, as defined by the CIfA (2014) are:

- To allow a rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features that are uncovered during the proposed groundworks within the application area.
- To provide the opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief are not sufficient to support the treatment to a satisfactory or proper standard. #

### **4. Watching Brief Methodology**

#### Scope

The archaeological watching brief will be undertaken by AW staff using current best practice. It will be carried out on all groundworks deemed likely to have an impact on the archaeological resource. This will include, but not be limited to; geotechnical investigations, soil stripping, service runs, landscaping, foundation excavations etc

All work will be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist with relevant level membership of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and will follow the CIfA Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (2014) and current Health and Safety legislation.

All archaeological features and/or deposits that are identified during the watching brief work will be mapped, cleaned, recorded and fully excavated. The developer will provide a safe working area and sufficient time to record and excavate all features to the satisfaction of AW and CPAT. Full excavation of identified features will not be compromised by the construction programme.

#### Contingency Arrangements

In the event of a significant quantity of archaeological features being discovered all activities in this area of the site can be temporarily suspended. This will allow a period of consultation with CPAT and if required the opinion of specialists.

Following such consultation, recommendations will be presented to the Developer and the Local Planning Authority.

The methodology and timescale of any additional archaeological work to investigate such features (which cannot be adequately excavated and recorded as part of the watching brief) will be presented and included in the Developers Programme; the feature will be fenced off and secured thus allowing the site programme to continue.

### Recording

Recording will be carried out using AW recording systems (pro-forma context sheets etc), using a continuous number sequence for all contexts.

Plans and sections will be drawn to a scale of 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 as required and related to Ordnance Survey datum and published boundaries where appropriate.

All features identified will be tied in to the OS survey grid and fixed to local topographical boundaries and related to the developer's site plan. The location of all features will also be recorded using GPS metric survey equipment.

Photographs will be taken in digital format, using a 14MP camera with photographs stored in Tiff format.

The archaeologists undertaking the watching brief will have access to the AW metal detector and be trained in its use.

### Artefacts

Archaeological artefacts recovered during the course of the excavation will be cleaned and labelled using an accession number, which will be obtained from the local museum. A single number sequence will be allocated to all finds. The artefacts will be stored appropriately until they are deposited with a suitable local museum.

All finds of gold and silver will be removed to a safe place and the Environment Agency, CPAT and the local coroner informed, within the guidelines of the Treasure Act 1996.

Any finds which are considered to be in need of immediate conservation will be referred to a UKIC qualified conservator (Phil Parkes at Cardiff University).

### Human remains

In the event of burials or cremations being found all work will be halted in the area of the burials and their extent and nature established. The client, CPAT and the Ministry of Justice will be informed and a methodology of excavation agreed which will adhere to Ministry of Justice Guidelines.

### Other specialists

In the event of certain finds/features etc. being discovered, the site archaeologist may have to seek specialist opinion for assistance. Such specialists will be accessed either internally within AW itself or from an external source. A list of external specialists is given in the table below.

<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>
Flint	Kate Pitt
Animal bone	Jen Kitch
CBM, heat affected clay, Daub etc.	Rachael Hall
Clay pipe	Chris Smith
Glass	Andy Richmond
Cremated and non-cremated human bone	Malin Holst
Metalwork	Kevin Leahy
Neo/BA pottery	Dr Alex Gibson
IA/Roman pottery	Jane Timby
Post Roman pottery	Paul Blinkhorn
Charcoal (wood ID)	John Carrot
Waterlogged wood	Nigel Nayling
Molluscs and pollen	Dr James Rackham
Charred and waterlogged plant remains	Wendy Carruthers

## **5. Post-Fieldwork Programme**

### Conservation

After agreement with the landowner arrangements will be made for the long term conservation and storage of all artefacts in an appropriate local or county museum.

### Archive

The site archive will be prepared in accordance with MORPHE (English Heritage 2006). It will comprise all the data recovered during the fieldwork and shall be quantified, ordered and indexed and will be internally consistent. The archive will be deposited with the finds in a suitable local museum.

### Reporting

The results of the watching brief will be submitted in an illustrated and bound report, which will include the following material:

- Non-technical summary
- Location plan showing the area/s covered by the watching brief, all artefacts, structures and features found
- Plan and section drawings with ground level, ordnance datum and vertical and horizontal

scales.

- Written description and interpretation of all deposits identified, including their character, function, potential dating and relationship to adjacent features. Specialist descriptions and illustrations of all artefacts and soil samples will be included as appropriate.
- An indication of the potential of archaeological deposits which have not been disturbed by the development
- Statement of local, regional and national context of the remains
- A detailed archive list at the rear listing all contexts recorded, all samples finds and find types, drawings and photographs taken. This will include a statement of the intent to deposit, and location of deposition, of the archive.

### Monitoring

Any changes to the specification that the contractor may wish to make after approval will be communicated to CPAT for approval on behalf of the Planning Authority.

Representatives of CPAT will be given access to the site so that they may monitor the progress of the watching brief. CPAT will be kept regularly informed about developments, both during the site works and subsequently during any potential post-excavation.

### Archive Format & Deposition

The full site archive will be deposited within one month of the completion of the client report.

The paper/drawing/digital archive will be deposited at the offices of CPAT with the finds will be deposited with the appropriate local museum. AW will agree the location and timing of the deposition of the archive before the contract commences.

The archive will include all site notes, finds, documents, drawings, photographs, digital data and a copy of the final report and any prior draft versions. All of these items will be clearly quantified in tabular form in an 'archive deposition statement' located at the rear of the clients report, and their ultimate location and proposed date of deposition stated.

## **6. Resources and timetable**

### Standards

The watching brief will be undertaken by AW staff using current best practice.

All work will be undertaken to the standards and guidelines of the CIfA.

### Staff

The project will be undertaken by suitably qualified AW staff.

### Equipment

The project will use existing AW equipment.

### Timetable of archaeological works

A start date for the geotechnical phase of the works of 10<sup>th</sup> January 2017 has been agreed between AW and the client.

### Insurance

AW is an affiliated member of the CBA, and holds Insurance through the CBA insurance service.

### Health and safety

All members of staff will adhere to the requirements of the *Health & Safety at Work Act, 1974*, and the Health and Safety Policy Statement of AW.



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**APPENDIX IV:**  
**Archive Cover Sheet**

# ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

## Greenfields, Bronllys, Powys

Site Name:	Bronllys
Site Code:	GBP/17/WB
Other Ref No:	-
NGR:	NGR 314355 235120
Site Type:	Green Field
Project Type:	Watching Brief
Project Manager:	Mark Houliston
Project Dates:	Jan 2017
Categories Present:	None
Location of Original Archive:	AW
Location of duplicate Archives:	-
Number of Finds Boxes:	NA
Location of Finds:	NA
Museum Reference:	NA
Copyright:	AW
Restrictions to access:	None

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