

Written Scheme of Investigation
For Archaeological Desk Based Assessment and Site Visit:
Proposed Eisteddfod Site at Castle Meadows and
Llanfoist, Abergavenny

Prepared for:
Monmouthshire County Council

Project No: 2203

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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This Written Scheme of Investigations details the proposal for an archaeological Desk Based Assessment and site visit associated with the proposed temporary location of the National Eisteddfod site in 2016. It has been prepared by Archaeology Wales Ltd for Monmouthshire County Council.

1. Introduction

The proposed development comprises plans to site the National Eisteddfod 2016 on two sites either side of the river Usk, Abergavenny (centred on NGRs: SO 29620 13901 and SO 29787 13455; fig. 1).

This WSI has been prepared by Dr Iestyn Jones, Project Officer, on behalf of Archaeology Wales Ltd (Henceforth - AW) at the request of Monmouthshire County Council. It provides information on the methodology that will be employed by AW during an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment and Site Visit.

The purpose of the proposed Desk Based Assessment and Site Visit is to provide Monmouthshire County Council with the information they have requested in respect of the proposed development, the requirements for which are set out in Planning Policy WALES, November 2012, Section 6.5, and Welsh Office Circular 60/96.

All work will conform to the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (IfA 2011) and be undertaken by suitably qualified staff to the highest professional standards.

2 Site description

The proposed sites lie on open land either side of the river Usk at Castle Meadows (north of the Usk) and at Llanfoist (south of the Usk). Both sites lie to the immediate south of the market town of Abergavenny. The historic town is associated with Roman (Gobbanium) and medieval settlement and possesses an eleventh-century castle and parish church.

The first site (Castle Meadows; NGR: SO 29620 13901; fig. 2- A) comprises an approximate area of 930m by 230m and an additional 186m by 70m triangular plot east of the Afon (river) Cibi (47m OD). The closest point of the site's northern boundary is approximately 100m to the south-west of Abergavenny Castle. The present site can be described as an irregular oval and level open meadow with isolated stands of trees and a drain. The meadow is crossed north to south and east to west by footpaths that link Abergavenny with the river Usk.

The second site lies immediately south of Castle Meadows and the river Usk (NGR: So 29787 13455; fig. 2-B). The area comprises the access route to and fields surrounding Llanfoist Sewage Works, between the A465 to the south and the river Usk to the north (approximately 415m by 586m).

3 Site specific objectives

The primary objective of the archaeological work will be to assess the impact of the development proposals on the historic environment by means of a detailed desk top study and site visit. This will help inform future decision making, design solutions and potential mitigation strategies. The aim will be to make full and effective use of existing information in establishing the archaeological significance of the site, to elucidate the presence or absence of archaeological material, its character, distribution, extent, condition and relative significance.

The work will include a comprehensive assessment of regional context within which the archaeological evidence rests and will aim to highlight any relevant research issues within national and regional research frameworks.

The work will result in a report that will provide information of sufficient detail to allow informed planning decisions to be made which can safeguard the archaeological resource. Preservation *in situ* will be advocated where at all possible, but where engineering or other factors result in loss of archaeological deposits, preservation by record will be recommended.

4 The proposed archaeological work

The proposed archaeological work relates to the whole of the site, i.e. all of the application area.

The aim of the work will be to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site. The work will include the following elements:

- A detailed desk top study (Stage 1)
- A site visit (Stage 2)
- The production of an illustrated report and the deposition of the site archive (Stage 3)

The assessment will consider the following:

- a) the nature, extent and degree of survival of archaeological sites, structures, deposits and landscapes within the study area.
- b) the significance of any remains in their context both regionally and nationally
- c) the history of the site
- d) the potential impact of any proposed development on the setting of known sites of archaeological importance
- e) the potential for further work, with recommendations where appropriate for a suitable investigative and/or mitigation methodology.

5 Method statement for a detailed desk top study (Stage 1)

The desk based assessment will consider the following:

1. Collation and assessment of all relevant information held in the regional HER
2. Assessment of all available excavation reports and archives (including unpublished and unprocessed material) affecting the site and its setting
3. Assessment of all extant aerial photographic (AP) evidence and, where relevant, a re-plotting of archaeological and topographic information by a suitably qualified specialist at an appropriate scale. The main source of archaeological aerial photographic records is held at the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales (RCAHMW), Aberystwyth
4. Assessment of online records held by the Portable Antiquities Scheme relating to finds from the assessment area
5. Assessment of archive records held at the County Archives, and as appropriate, site files held by RCAHMW
6. Assessment of the environmental potential of the archaeological deposits through existing data or by inference
7. Assessment of the faunal potential of the archaeological deposits through existing data or by inference
8. assessment of the artefactual potential of the archaeological deposits through existing data or by inference
9. Assessment of available geotechnical information for the area including the results of test pits and boreholes
10. Assessment of the present topography and land use of the area through maps and site inspection

The history of the site will also be studied. This will involve the following:

1. A review of the published resources (in particular the documents outlined in Section 2 above).
2. An analysis of relevant maps and plans. Cartographic evidence is held at the County Record Offices, including tithe maps, enclosure act plans, estate maps and all editions of the Ordnance Survey. Place and fieldname evidence from these sources must be considered.
3. An analysis of the historical documents (e.g. county histories, local and national journals and antiquarian sources) held in museums, libraries or other archives, in particular local history and archives library.
4. A review of the aerial photographic evidence.

6 Method statement for a Site Visit (Stage 2)

A walkover survey will be undertaken of the proposed development area. This will consider the nature, extent and degree of survival of archaeological sites, structures, deposits and landscapes within the study area.

Photographs will be taken in high-resolution digital photography with the camera set to take TIFF format images with a resolution greater than eight megapixels.

The locations any previously unrecorded features will be logged using GPS. A distribution plan showing the locations of known and previously unknown features in relation to the proposed track will be produced.

Written records will be made as appropriate.

7 Method statement for the production of an illustrated report and the deposition of the site archive (Stage 3)

The results will be presented in a report and will be detailed and laid out in such a way that data and supporting text are readily cross-referenced. The HER Officer will be contacted to ensure that any sites or monuments not previously recorded in the HER are given a Primary Record Number (PRN) and that data structure is compatible with the HER. The historical development of the site will be presented in phased maps and plans comprising clearly, the outline of the site.

Within the report an attempt will be made to indicate areas of greater or lesser archaeological significance and the sites will be ranked in level of overall archaeological importance (locally, regionally and nationally).

All relevant aerial photographs, re-plots and historic maps will be included and be fully referenced. Any site photographs included in the report will be appropriately captioned and clearly located on a suitably scaled site plan.

The report will specifically include the following:

1. a copy of the approved specification
2. a location plan
3. all identified sites plotted on an appropriately scaled plan of the proposal site
4. a gazetteer of all located sites with full dimensional and descriptive detail including grid reference and period

Copies of the report will be sent to the LPA, Monmouthshire County Council and for inclusion in the regional HER. Digital copies will be provided in pdf format if required.

A summary report of the work will be submitted for publication to a relevant local or national journal (eg Archaeology in Wales) no later than one year after the completion of the work.

The site archive

A project archive will be prepared in accordance with the National Monuments Record (Wales) / the guidelines of the Institute for Archaeologists agreed structure and be deposited within an appropriate local museum on completion of site analysis and report production. It will also conform to the guidelines set out in 'Management of Archaeological Projects Two, Appendix 3' (English Heritage 1991).

Arrangements will be made with the local museum before work starts. Wherever the archive is deposited, this information will be relayed to the HER.

Although there may be a period during which client confidentiality will need to be maintained, the report and the archive will be deposited not later than six months after completion of the work.

Other significant digital data generated by the survey (ie AP plots, EDM surveys, CAD drawings, GIS maps, etc) will be presented as part of the report on a CD/DVD. The format of this presented data will be agreed with the curator in advance of its preparation.

9 Resources and timetable

Standards

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

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

Staff

The project will be undertaken by suitably qualified AW staff. Overall management of the project will be undertaken by Mark Houlston (MIFA), (a CV is available upon request).

Equipment

The project will use existing AW equipment.

Timetable of archaeological works

No start date or timetable of works has yet been agreed.

This WSI will be resubmitted if the start of the assessment is deferred by more than 6 months.

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.

If AW has sole possession of the site, then AW will produce a detailed Risk Assessment for approval by the client before any work is undertaken. If another organisation has responsibility for site safety, then AW employees will be briefed on the contents of all existing Risk Assessments, and all other health and safety requirements that may be in place.

Iestyn Jones, BA, PhD

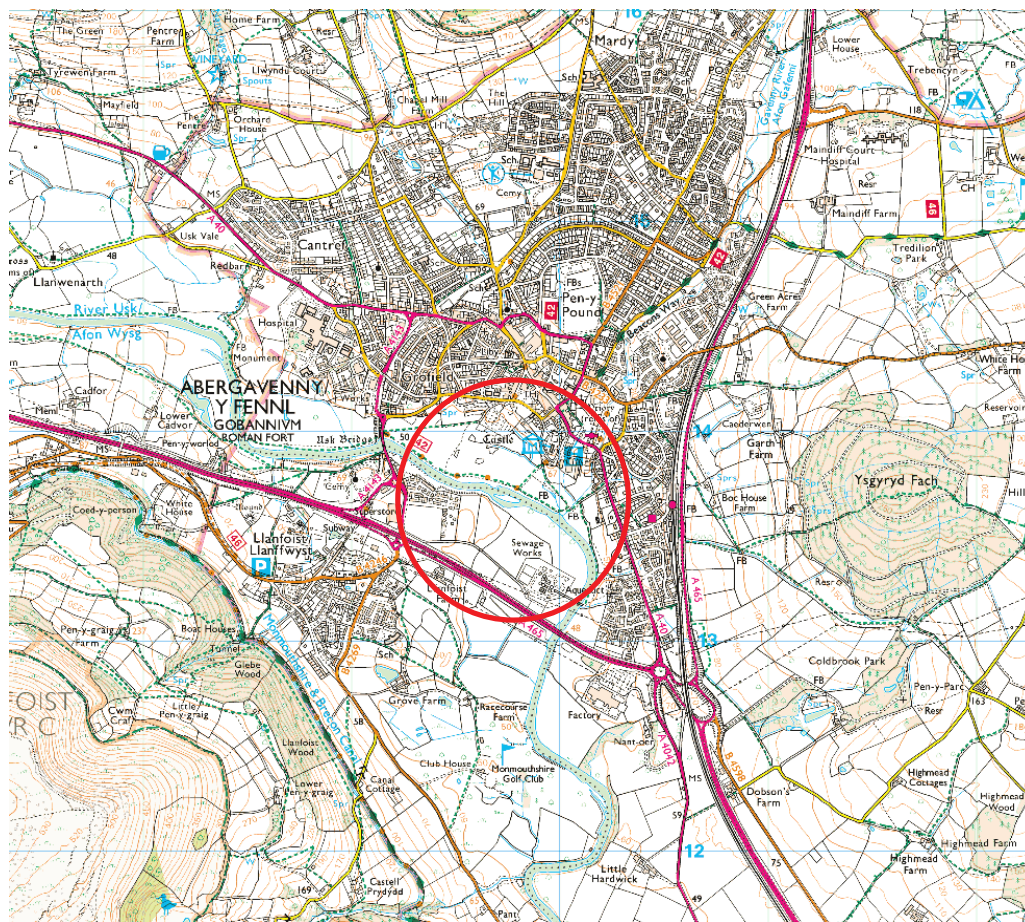


Fig. 1
Location of
sites

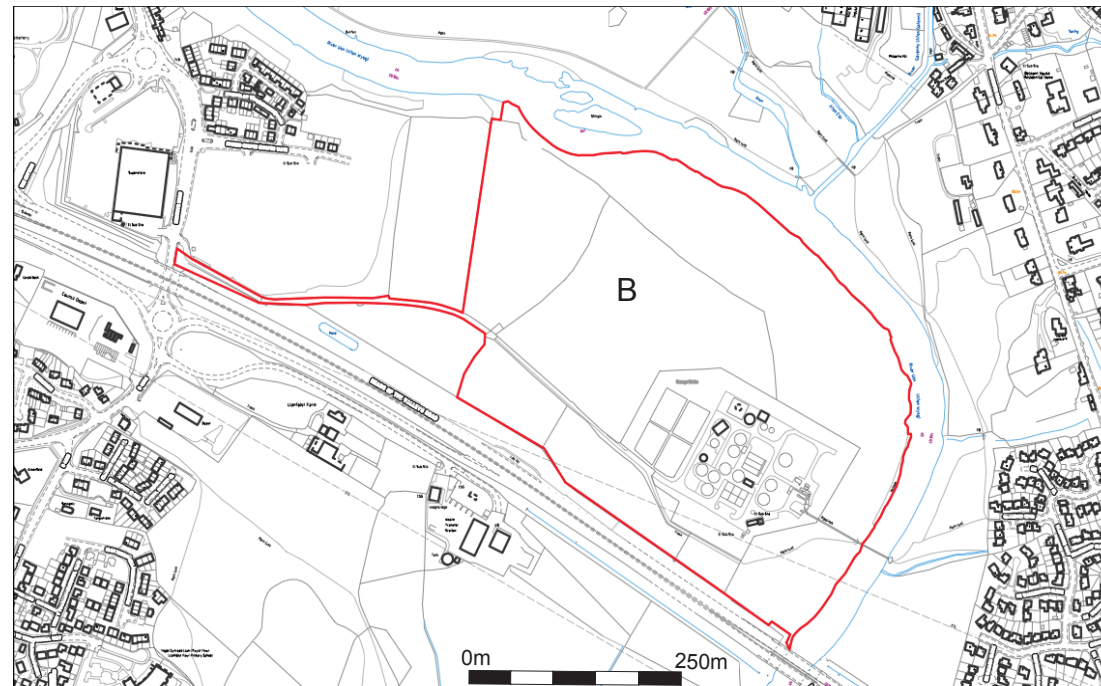
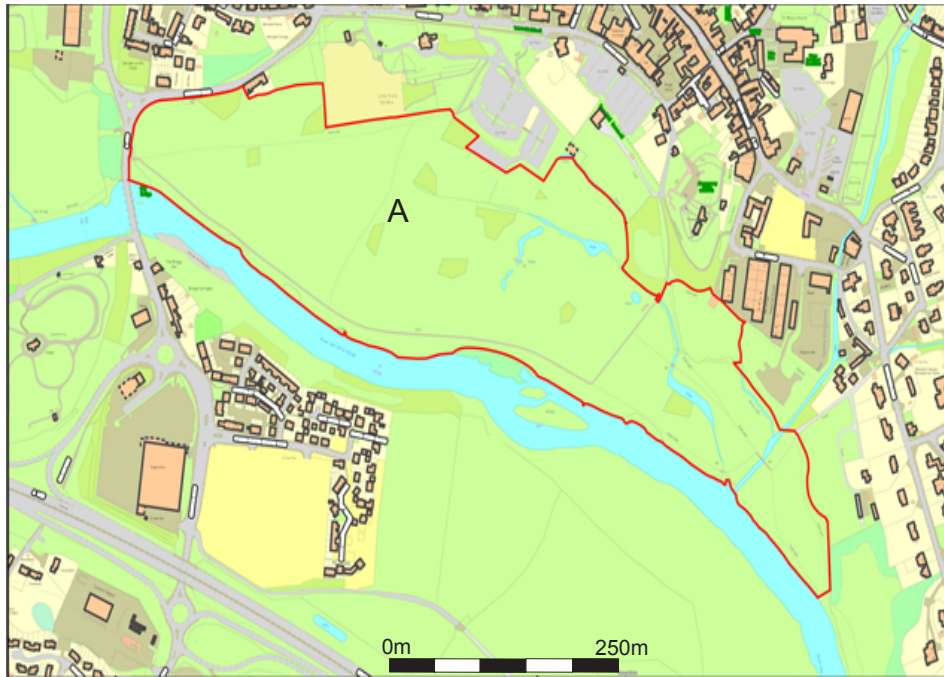


Fig. 2
The
proposed
site areas

Archaeology Wales



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