

CPAT Report No. 1568

Hafren, Severn Street, Caersws, Powys



Archaeological Evaluation



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CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Kerry Vale Building Services
 CPAT Project No: 2282
 Project Name: Hafren, Severn Street, Caersws
 Grid Reference: NGR 303291 291825
 County/LPA: Powys
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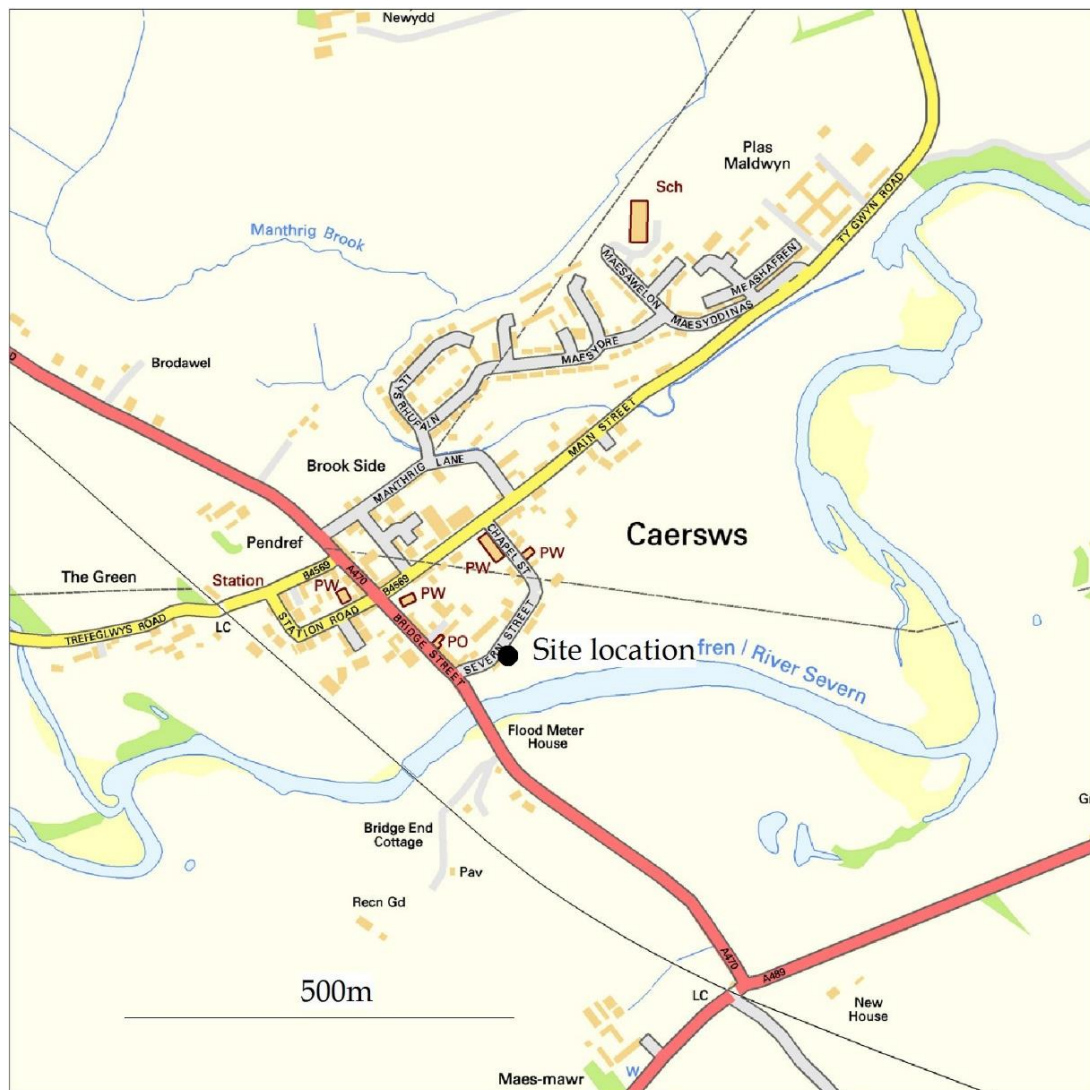
Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by Clwyd and Powys Archaeological Trust on in March 2018, in connection with a planning application for a proposed dwelling at Hafren, Severn Street, Caersws (P/2017/0748; NGR 303291 291825)

The evaluation revealed no features of Roman date, although a single sherd of Roman pottery was recover at 1.6m below ground level, at the base of an alluvial deposit. The remains of a row of cottages which formerly stood on the site were also identified.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Mike Woosnam, Morris Marshall Poole, acting as agent on behalf of Kerry Vale Building Services, to undertake an archaeological evaluation in connection with a proposed new dwelling on land at Hafren, Severn Street, Caersws (P/2017/0748; NGR 303291 291825). The Curatorial Section of CPAT, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local authority, determined that an archaeological evaluation was required to identify the potential impact on the archaeological resource. Accordingly, a brief was prepared which detailed the work required (EVB 886).



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Fig. 1 Site location

- 1.2. The site lies on the south side of Severn Street, which runs from the bridge, east-north-east, parallel with the river. The site itself is a relatively narrow block of land, currently overgrown with long grass and brambles, and various objects of scrap metal and old tyres.
- 1.3. The solid geology of the area comprises Telychian mudstones and siltstones, belonging to the Llandovery series that form the earliest division of the Silurian period. The drift geology comprises fine loamy soils over gravel, belonging to the Reidhol association, and stone less silty river alluvium, belonging to the Teme Association. (British Geological Survey 1994)
- 1.4. The work was carried out on the 12-13 March 2018, and the report was written the immediately thereafter.

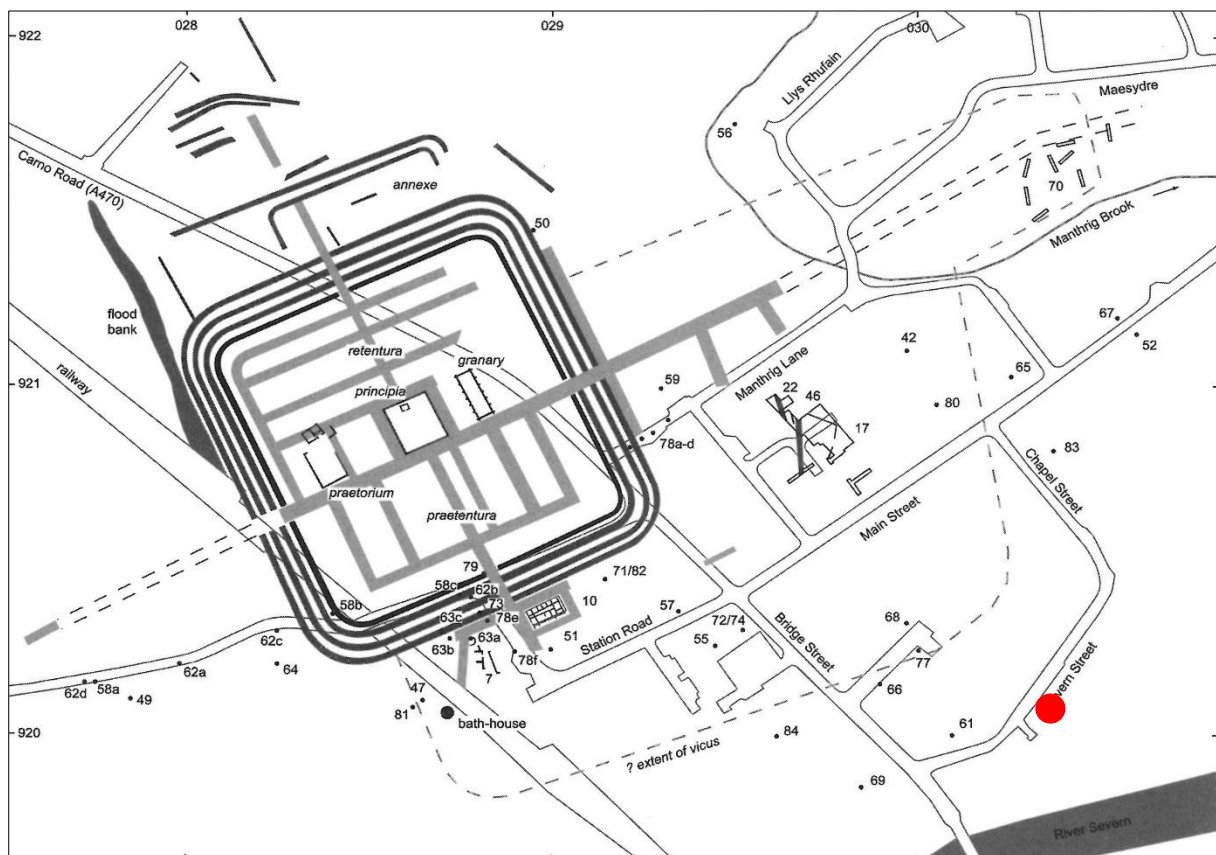


Fig. 2 The known extent of Roman settlement in Caersws (after Jones 1993), with the development site marked in red

2 Archaeological Background

- 2.1. The development is located close to the known southern extent of the civilian settlement, or *vicus*, associated with the Roman fort known as Caersws II (Fig. 2). Caersws occupies a focal point in the system of Roman Forts for the control of mid Wales. As part of the early campaigns, a large auxiliary fort, Caersws I, was built in a strong position overlooking the River Severn, north-east of the present village. This fort was replaced by a more permanent fort, Caersws II, in the 70's AD, near the confluence of the Severn and Carno rivers. Caersws II has been the subject of a series

of excavations, with the results suggesting that the main phase of activity lasted until the late 2nd century AD. By the 3rd century, the military tenure was at an end, although some activity continued into the 4th century.

- 2.2. A civilian settlement developed in association with the Caersws II fort, and evidence from excavation and survey work including aerial reconnaissance, suggests it may have been seven hectares in size, on the south and east side of the fort. Excavations just outside the south gate in 1985, indicated a commercial centre, including shops, a tavern and a metal working building. This commercial activity continued until around AD 130, its decline possibly associated with the movement of troops to the northern frontier and elsewhere in Wales.
- 2.3. Other excavations in Caersws have revealed the extent of the vicus. Work in 1993 (Jones 1993) close to the present site, found no Roman features or deposits, suggesting that generally this part of the village was beyond the extent of the civilian settlement.
- 2.4. Caersws itself was a relatively small village until the mid 19th century when it saw a period of expansion and development, related to the development of the railway network. This expansion can be seen very clearly in the comparison between the 1846 tithe map and the 1902 OS map, which shows a greater density of village buildings and houses between the fort and the river (Figs 3 and 4).

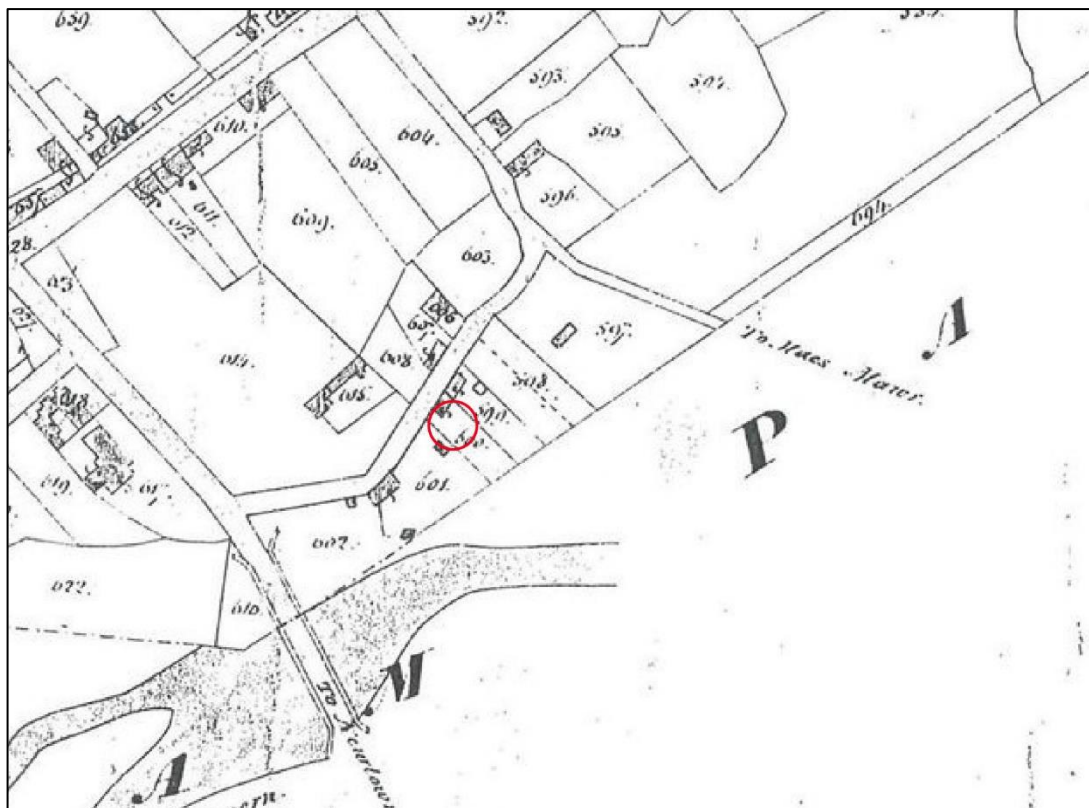


Fig. 3 1846 Tithe survey for Llanwnnog parish. Site circled in red

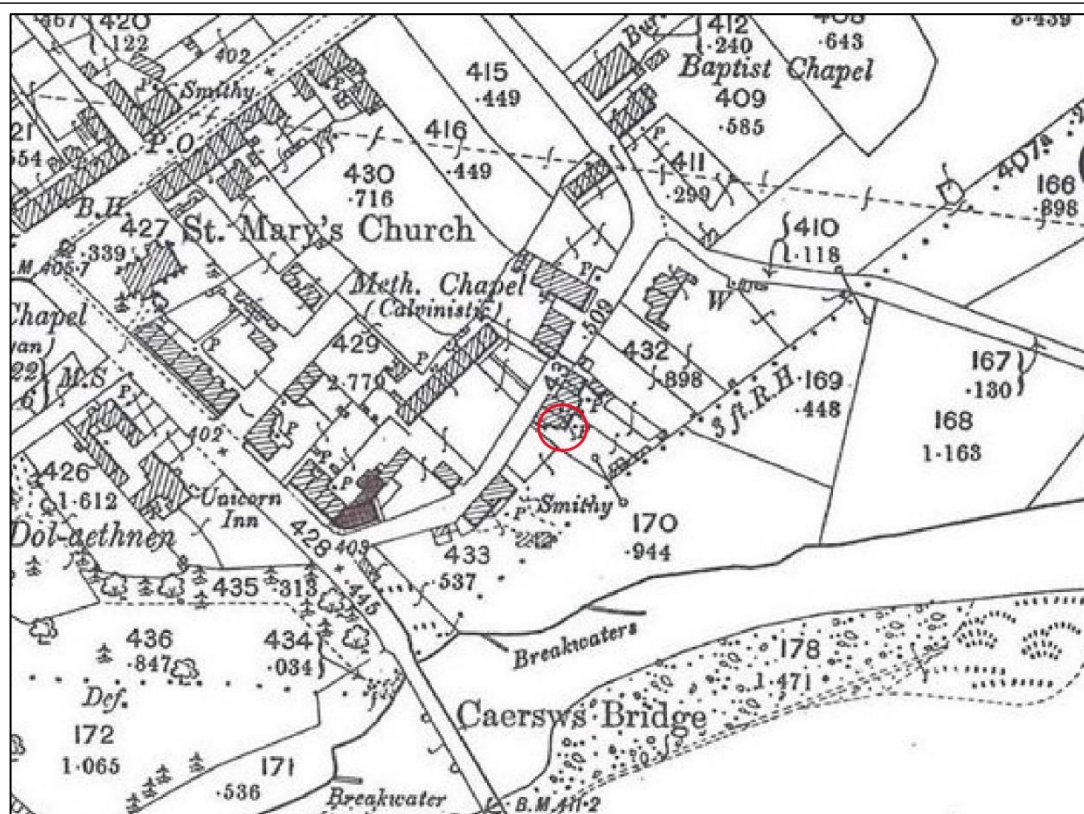


Fig. 4 1902 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25" map. Site circled in red

3 Evaluation

- 3.1. The evaluation was conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014).
- 3.2. Two trenches, forming a T-shape, were excavated by machine in controlled spits, under direct archaeological supervision down to a depth of approximately 1.4m. The base and sides of the trench were then cleaned by hand and all archaeological deposits were recorded in plan and section. A sondage was dug at the south-east end of trench 1a, and three additional auger holes were tested, to determine the depth of the natural geology over the footprint of the site. The presence on site of a telegraph pole and a large fibre glass container along the south-west boundary, meant that the overall lengths of both arms of the trench had to be reduced slightly.

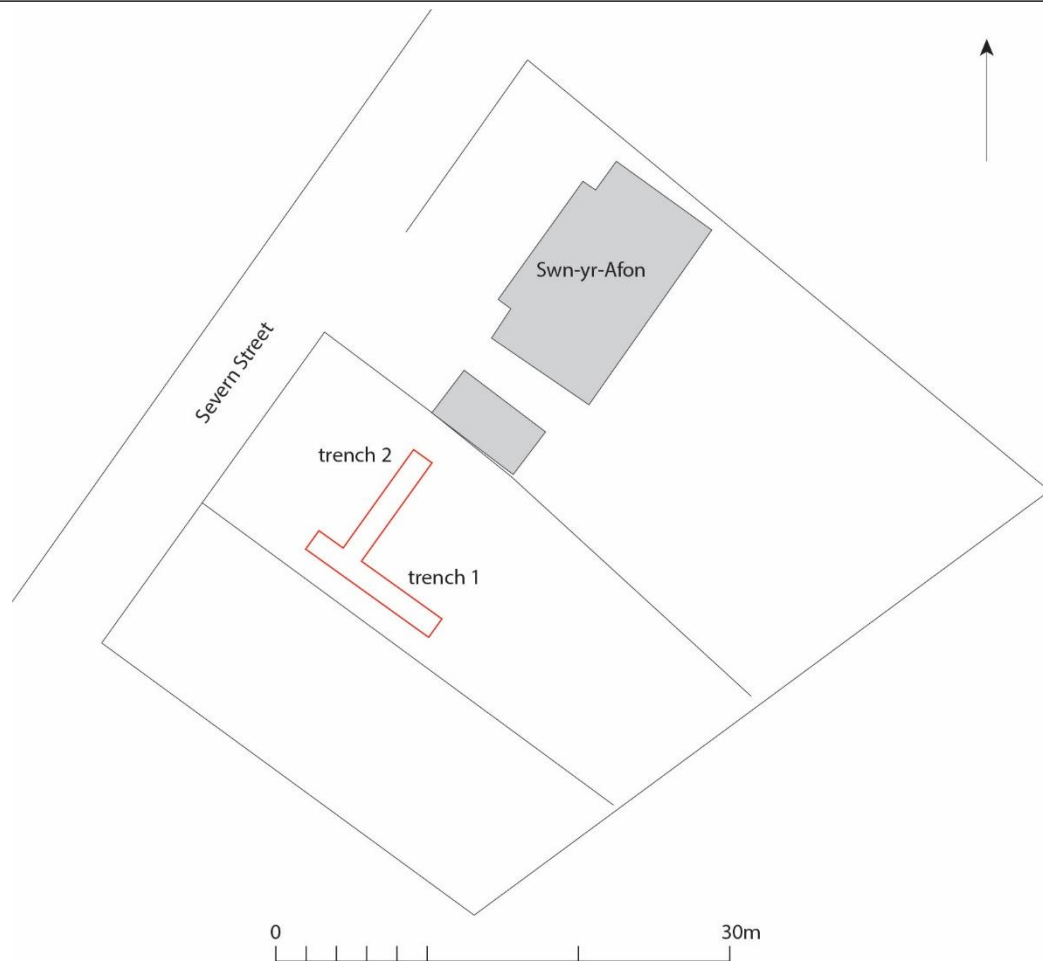


Fig. 5 Location of the evaluation trenches

Trench 1

- 3.3. The trench was aligned north-west/south-east and measured approximately 11m long by 1.3m wide. The stratigraphic sequence comprised a thick, greyish, dark brown, garden soil (101), with fragments of brick and other demolition material forming the upper part of the deposit. Below this was a deposit (102) of friable silty clay, containing traces of charcoal and mortar, and occasional fragments of 19th-century pottery. Below this was a sequence of alternating bands of gravel and alluvium (Fig. 7).
- 3.4. Deposit 103 was a gravel band measuring up to 0.25m thick at the south-east end (closest to the river), composed of medium sized rounded pebbles, and reducing to 0.10m thick at the north-west end. Below this was the main alluvial deposit (104), measuring up to 0.6m thick, comprising a light olive brown, silty clay. Below this was the second gravel deposit (105), measuring 0.15m thick at the south-east end. The undisturbed natural subsoil, comprising greyish, fine sands and coarse gravel (106), was identified as the final deposit in the sequence below band (105), at a depth of 1.6m below ground level.



Fig. 6 Trench 1 viewed from the south-east. Photo CPAT 4479-0012



Fig. 7. Trench 1, south-east end. Stratigraphic sequence. Photo CPAT 4479-0009

- 3.5. A Roman flagon handle was recovered from the interface between alluvial deposit (104), and the lower gravel band (105), at a depth of approximately 1.6m. The handle was in a redware fabric, but the form is not closely dateable..
- 3.6. At the north-west end of trench 1, was a series of features associated with what was formerly a row of terraced cottages on the site. This included a possible wall

foundation cut and associated stone work [114], (108), and a cinder/charcoal deposit (111) (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Trench 1, north-west end. Foundation cut [114], (108). Photo CPAT 4479-0011

Trench 2

- 3.7. Trench 2 was aligned north-east/south-west and measured approximately 9m long by 1.3m wide. The stratigraphic sequence comprised an overburden deposit (113) directly overlying alluvium (104), with the natural subsoil (106) located at approximately 1.6m below ground level (Fig. 9). There was further evidence of the demolished row of cottages seen in trench 1, including a large brick filled pit [109] (Fig. 10), and a possible foundation trench with associated stonework [112]. A low brick wall visible in the south-east section, may have been the remains of a low partition wall surrounding a yard, to the exterior of the cottages.



Fig. 9 Trench 2 viewed from the south-west. Photo CPAT 4479-0005



Fig. 10 Trench 2, feature 00 viewed from the south-east. Photo CPAT 4479-0006

4 Conclusions

- 4.1. No significant Roman deposits or remains were recorded in the trenches, suggesting that this area of the village may lie outside the main focus of the *vicus*. A single sherd of Roman pottery was recovered, indicating activity in the general area.
- 4.2. The evaluation confirmed an alternating sequence of gravel bands and alluvium deposits, lying directly above natural sands and gravels, which is consistent with periodic flooding episodes of the nearby River Severn.
- 4.3. The work also confirmed the presence of below ground remains relating to a row of cottages which stood formerly on the site, but which are considered to be of low archaeological significance. The upper deposits represent an accumulation of garden soils up to 0.6m in depth, and it seems probable that they are related to the expansion of the village in the late 19th century.

5 Sources

Hankinson, R., 2003. *Land adjacent to Bridge End House, Caersws: Archaeological Evaluation*. CPAT Report No 537.

Jones, N. W. 1993. Caersws Roman Fort and Vicus, Montgomeryshire, Powys. 1984-92. *Montgomeryshire Collections* 81, 15-96.

1846 Tithe survey for Llanwnnog

1902. Ordnance Survey Second edition 1:2,500 map. Montgomeryshire 35.16

6 Archive deposition Statement

The project archive has been prepared according to the CPAT Archive Policy and in line with the ClfA *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). The sole artefact will be deposited with Powysland Museum, Welshpool in due course, subject to the owner's permission.

Site Archive

CPAT Event PRN: 140225

1 A2 site drawing

1 A3 site drawing

14 context record forms

1 Trench record sheet/context list

1 Photographic register

1 sherd of Roman pottery - Redware flagon handle

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 1834

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) has been invited by Mike Woosnam, Morris Marshall Poole, acting as agent on behalf of Kerry Vale Building Services, to submit a proposal for undertaking an archaeological evaluation in connection with a proposed new dwelling on land at Hafren, Severn Street, Caersws (P/2017/0748; NGR 303291 291825). The Curatorial Section of CPAT, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local authority, have determined that an archaeological evaluation is required to identify the potential impact on the archaeological resource. Accordingly, a brief has been prepared which details the works required (EVB 886).
- 1.2. The development is located close to the known southern extent of the civilian settlement, or *vicus*, associated with the Roman fort known as Caersws II.

2 Objectives

- 2.1. The objectives of the evaluation are:
 - to reveal by means of a field evaluation, the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the cultural heritage within the area of the proposed development in so far as these aims are possible;
 - to record any archaeological features identified during the evaluation;
 - to prepare a report outlining the results of the evaluation;
 - to prepare a final publication of the results in an appropriate regional or national journal, depending on the nature and significance of any archaeology.

3 Methodology

- 3.1. The evaluation will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014) and *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment* (2014).
- 3.2. The evaluation will comprise two trenches, each measuring 1.5m wide and totalling no more than 25m in length. The precise locations and dimensions of the trenches will be agreed with the developer and the curator prior to the commencement of on-site work.
- 3.3. The trenches will be excavated initially using a machine fitted with a wide toothless ditching blade. All modern overburden will be removed down to the level of the first recognisable archaeological horizon. Thereafter, all excavation will be conducted by hand unless otherwise agreed with the Curator in advance. The base and at least one section of each trench will be manually cleaned and recorded. The evaluation will be essentially non-destructive and designed to determine the depth at which archaeologically sensitive deposits survive, together with their nature condition and significance. The depth of natural deposits will be determined to assess the extent of any stratified deposits which may be encountered.

- 3.4. It has been assumed that the area in question has sufficient access for a small mechanical excavator via existing gateways. Any variation from this may impact on the overall charges. Excavated material will be temporarily stored adjacent to the trench, which will be reinstated with this material upon completion. On completion of the evaluation all trenches will be reinstated with excavated material. No provision has been made for fencing during the excavations, other than using plastic barrier mesh.
- 3.5. The excavation of archaeological features or deposits will be undertaken by hand using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation:
- Where features of archaeological interest are identified 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.
 - 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.
 - Stratigraphic units will be assigned a record number and entered along with a description on an individual record form or trench recording sheet 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 8 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.

Artefacts

- 3.6. 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 evaluation will be deposited with an appropriate museum, subject to the permission of the owner.

3.7. Report

3.8. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:

- Non-technical summary
- Introduction
- Site location
- Topography and Geology
- Archaeological Background
- Evaluation
- Conclusions
- References
- appropriate appendices on archives and finds

3.9. The site archive will be prepared to specifications in English Heritage's Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) system and the CifA *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* (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).

4 Resources and programming

4.1. The assessment will be undertaken by a team of skilled archaeologists 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).

4.2. All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the evaluation.

4.3. It is anticipated that the trial excavation will be completed within two to five working days with a team of two archaeologists, and the report prepared immediately thereafter. At present CPAT would be in a position to undertake the evaluation during August 2017, subject to the receipt of sufficient advanced notice from the client.

4.4. The client is advised that should significant archaeological remains or artefacts be revealed additional services may be required for which a contingency should be allowed. The need for such contingencies, and their scope and potential cost, would be subject to discussions between CPAT, the client and the curator once the fieldwork has been completed. The following figures are therefore only for guidance and the

final cost, should any of further services be required, may be more or less than the following figures which are included to provide an indication of the types of additional services and indicative costs which might be required:

- Curatorial monitoring £150 per visit
- Finds conservation etc £285 per day
- Finds specialist £265 per day
- Dating £320 per date
- Environmental specialist £285 per day
- Charcoal identification £50 per sample
- Interim Publication *Archaeology in Wales* at no additional charge

- 4.5. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.6. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

N W Jones

14 August 2017

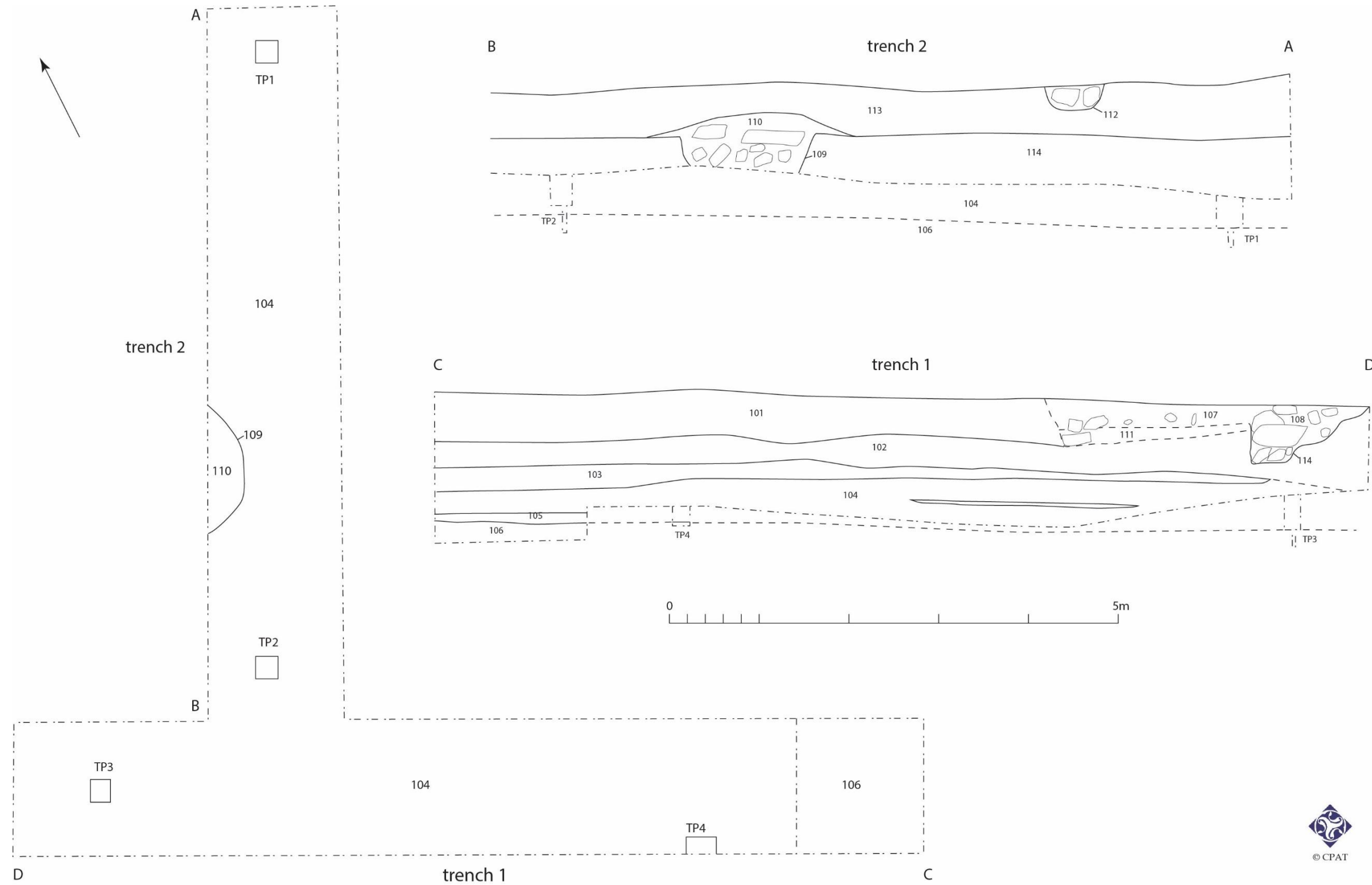


Fig. 11 Evaluation trench plan and sections