

CPAT Report No. 1776


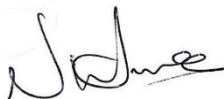
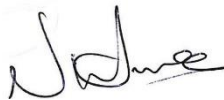
# Ffrith Recreation Ground, Flintshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL CLWYD-POWYS  
CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Llanfynydd Community Council  
 CPAT Project No: 2482  
 Project Name: Ffrith Recreation Ground  
 Grid Reference: SJ 2748 5656  
 County/LPA: Flintshire  
 Planning Application: N/A  
 CPAT Report No: 1776  
 HER Enquiry No: N/A  
 Event PRN: 140360  
 Report status: Final

Prepared by:	Checked by:	Approved by:
		
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11 February 2021	11 February 2021	11 February 2021

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Cover photo: General view of the Multiplay area located in the recreation ground. Photo CPAT 4819-0009



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## Summary

In September 2020 the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust undertook a watching brief on behalf of the Llanfynydd Community Council during the installation of new play equipment at Ffrith Recreation Ground, in Flintshire. The site lies within the scheduled monument of Ffrith Roman Site (FL164) and the work was required by Cadw as a condition of consent.

The watching brief monitored the removal by machine of topsoil and the excavation by hand of a series of post pits. No artefacts of Roman date were recovered, although undated deposits in two pits suggested possible occupation.

## Crynodeb

Fis Medi 2020, bu Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys yn cynnal briff gwyllo ar ran Cyngor Cymuned Llanfynydd yn ystod gwaith gosod cyfarpar chwarae newydd ym Maes Chwarae y Ffrith, yn Sir y Fflint. Mae'r maes o fewn safle heneb gofrestredig Rufeinig y Ffrith (FL164) ac roedd Cadw wedi gwneud y gwaith yn ofynnol fel amod o roi caniatâd.

Bu'r briff gwyllo'n monitro gwaith peiriant yn tynnu uwchbridd a gwaith cloddio cyfres o dyllau pyst â llaw. Ni ddatgelwyd unrhyw arteffactau yn dyddio o'r cyfnod Rhufeinig, er bod dyddodion heb eu dyddio mewn dau bwl yn awgrymu anheddu posibl.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1. In July 2020 the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was invited by Aura Leisure and Libraries Ltd, on behalf of Llanfynydd Community Council, to undertake a watching brief during groundworks to install new play equipment at a recreation ground in Ffrith, Flintshire (Fig. 1; SJ 2748 5656). The two items of playground equipment comprised an aerial runway with a Grasslok safety surfacing and a toddlers' 'multiplay' structure, including a slide with a surrounding wet pour safety surface (Fig. 2).



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Fig. 1 Location of the scheduled monument and development area

- 1.2. The recreation ground lies within a scheduled monument known as FL164 Ffrith Roman Site and the works were a condition of scheduled monument consent, granted in July 2020:
- a. The applicant shall provide Cadw with reasonable advance notice of commencement of works on site and will afford access at all reasonable times to any Cadw official or archaeologist nominated by Cadw to monitor progress of the works.

- 
- b. The approved works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the application form, plans and documents as listed below. No variations are permitted unless they have been authorised in advance in writing by Cadw.
  - c. No works, including site clearance, shall commence until Cadw has been informed in writing of the name of an appropriately qualified archaeologist operating to ClfA published standards and guidance who will carry out an appropriate programme of archaeological mitigation works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which has been submitted to, and approved in writing by Cadw.

As a guide this should allow for the archaeological contractor to excavate the two principal post holes for the aerial walkway in advance in order to assess archaeological levels at the maximum depth of disturbance. Subject to the findings within these larger holes the remainder of interventions, including the excavation of all outstanding post-holes and any surface stripping are to be covered by a watching brief.

No work shall commence until Cadw has confirmed in writing that the proposed archaeologist and archaeological works are acceptable.

- d. A digital copy of the archaeological report shall be submitted to Cadw for approval within 4 working weeks of the archaeological fieldwork being completed. This should include a brief annotated photographic record of the site before and during works take place.
- e. A digital copy of the approved archaeological report shall be submitted to the regional Historic Environment Record and National Monuments Record of Wales to be incorporated into these public records.
- f. Cadw shall be invited to attend a start of works site meeting to review the programme, submitted method statement and arrangements that have been established for archaeological mitigation.
- g. Any historic or archaeological features not previously identified which are revealed when carrying out the works shall be retained in-situ and reported to Cadw 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 by Cadw.
- h. That all contractors and sub-contractors are to be made aware of the scheduled status of the site and the sensitivities and restrictions that this carries with it.

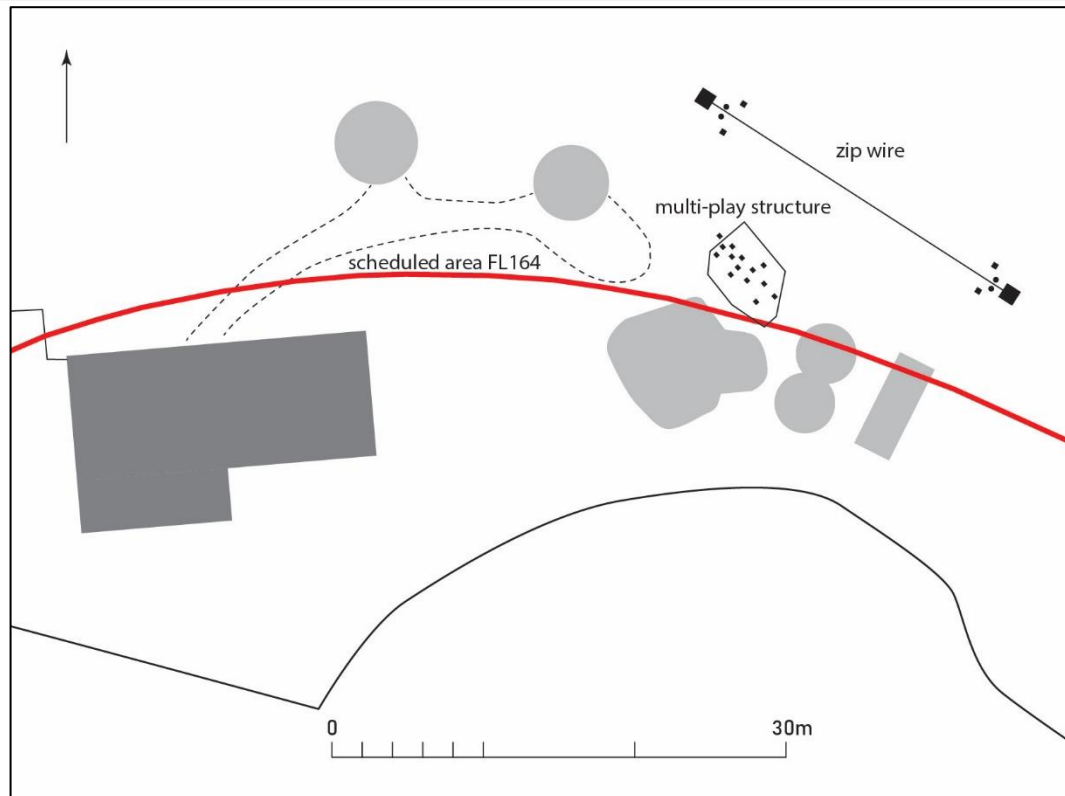


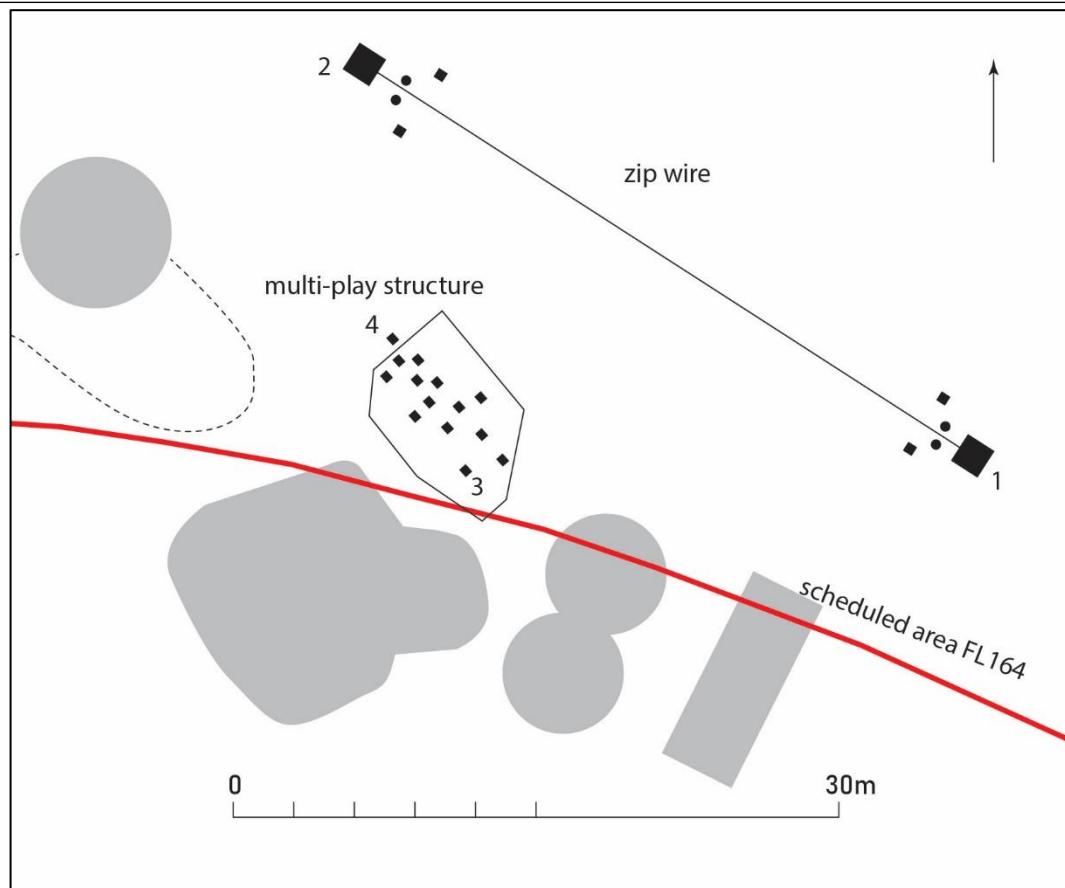
Fig. 2 Location of the new structures

## 2 Historical Background

- 2.1. Intensively used in the Roman period, and traversed by Offa's Dyke several centuries later, Ffrith otherwise seems to have emerged as a settlement only in the 19th century. The church is no earlier than 1842/3 and the Tithe Map of 1850 shows perhaps half a dozen houses, all on the south side of the River Cegidog and north of Valley Road. Later, an industrial element emerged on the north side of the Cegidog including a smithy and lime kilns.
- 2.2. A Roman building complex, at least 60m east to west by 55m, was partially excavated between 1967 and 1969 (Blockley 1989). This suggested an initial phase between AD 80 and 125 that included a timber structure with painted plaster walls, superseded by a substantial masonry structure that continued in use until AD 180. The latter produced two stamped tiles of Legio XX and small copper alloy objects of military nature. The military nature is supported by cremation burials found in 1828 that point to a presence in the later 1st century through to the second century and some reoccupation in the late third or early fourth, but the location is not a likely one for a fort. It is more likely to be a settlement with official status associated with local lead mining and processing.

## 3 Watching Brief

- 3.1. The watching brief was conducted between 15 and 17 September 2020 in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) (2020) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. The removal of turf was undertaken by machine, while the excavation of the post pits for the two structures was carried out by hand.

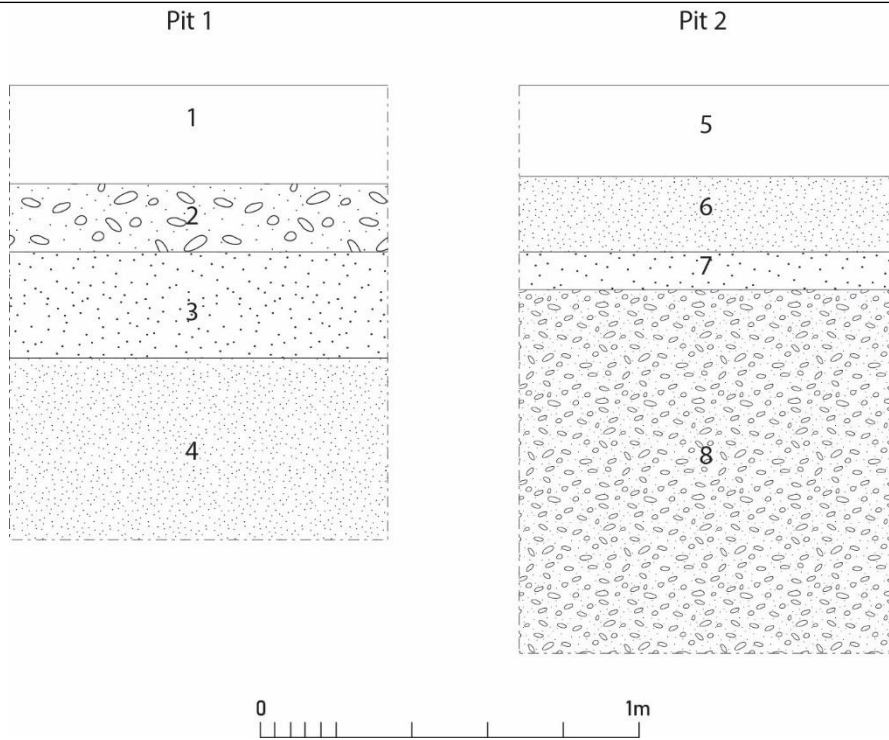


*Fig. 3 Plan of excavations for the new structures*

### Aerial walkway

- 3.2. The aerial walkway is a zip-wire carried on upright poles some 24m apart, each supported by a pair of stanchions. Two post pits (pits 1 and 2) were excavated for the uprights (Fig. 4), each 1m by 1m across, with smaller pits for the stanchions, measuring 0.3m by 0.3m by 0.8m deep. The latter produced no useful information.
- 3.3. Post pit 1 measured 1m by 1m and 1.2m deep (Fig. 5). Riverine deposits (3 and 4) were encountered at a depth of 0.44m, sealed beneath a deposit of yellow/brown sandy silt and stone (2), 0.18m thick, which lay directly below the topsoil (1).
- 3.4. Post pit 2 measured 1.2m by 1.2m by 1.5m deep (Fig. 6). A layer of river gravel (8) was encountered at a depth of 0.54m, sealed beneath a thin, undated deposit of pale grey silty clay (7), 0.1m thick, possibly representing a former ground surface. This was sealed by a deposit of yellow/brown silty clay (6), 0.2m thick, which lay directly below the topsoil (5).





*Fig. 4 Sections of the two main post pits for the aerial walkway*



*Fig. 5 Post pit 1, viewed from the south-south-west. Photo CPAT 4819-0002*



*Fig. 6 Post pit 2, viewed from the south-south-west. Photo CPAT 4819-0004*

### Multiplay structure

- 3.5. The multiplay structure required the excavation of a number of post pits, each measuring 0.3m by 0.3m by 0.6m deep, and two post pits measuring 0.6m by 0.3m by 0.6m deep. The overburden was removed to a depth of 0.4m.
- 3.6. The removal of the topsoil revealed a mid yellow/brown silty clay which had not been disturbed by modern activity. Finds from this layer were all of 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century date.
- 3.7. Post pit 3 revealed riverine deposits at a depth of 0.35m, while pit 4 revealed a deposit of yellow/brown sandy silt and stone at a depth of 0.25m, similar to context 2 in post pit 1.



*Fig. 7 General view of the multiplay area.*

## 4 Conclusions

- 4.1. The watching brief revealed no features or artefacts of Roman date, although the post pits for the aerial walkway did contain potential occupation horizons. Given the small size of each of

the excavated pits it is perhaps not surprising that the watching brief failed to positively identify any Roman activity. Nevertheless, the results did indicate the potential for Roman activity to be present within this part of the scheduled area.

## 5 Sources

Blockley, K., 1989. Excavations on the Romano-British settlement at Ffrith, Clwyd, 1967-9. *Flintshire Historical Society Journal* 32, 135-65.

## 6 Archive deposition Statement

- 6.1. 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 archive is entirely digital and will be deposited jointly with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and the National Monuments Record (RCAHMW).

### Archive summary

CPAT Event PRN: 140360

11 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4819

### Photographic catalogue

No	Date	View from	Description
01	15/09/2020	SSW	Zipwire Post Pit 1
02	15/09/2020	SSW	Zipwire Post Pit 1 - detail
03	15/09/2020	S	General location view – Post Pit 1
04	15/09/2020	SSW	Zipwire Post Pit 2
05	15/09/2020	SSW	General location view of Post Pit 2
06	15/09/2020	SSW	Stantion pit for Post Pit 2
07	15/09/2020	SSW	Stantion pit for Post Pit 2
08	15/09/2020	SSW	Zipwire Post Pit 1 – detail (better lighting)
09	17/09/2020	SE	General view of stripped Multiplay area
10	17/09/2020	NW	General view of stripped Multiplay area
11	17/09/2020	SW	Sample Pit B – Multiplay area

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## Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 2192

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been invited by AURA Leisure & Libraries Ltd, acting as agent on behalf of Llanfynydd Community Council, to submit a proposal for undertaking an archaeological watching brief in connection with the installation of two items of playground equipment at Frith Play Area. This application affects the larger of two scheduled areas which occupies the entirety of a public park and playing fields on the low gravel terrace at the confluence of the River Cegidog and Nant-y-ffrith. The area is largely unexplored archaeologically, although 2005 Time Team excavations a little to the north of the affected area identified no archaeological levels or features.
- 1.2. All of the proposed works are within the designated scheduled area and Scheduled Monument Consent will be required. A Brief has been prepared by Cadw's Inspector of Ancient Monuments outlining the mitigation works which will be required. The mitigation will be implemented in accordance with the requirements of subsequent consents and any conditions attached to the Scheduled Monument Consent.

### 2 Research Objectives

- 2.1. The monument comprises the buried archaeological remains of a Roman settlement of uncertain date and function thought to be associated with nearby mining activity. The northern end of the modern village has been known to overlie a Roman settlement since the 16th century and casual findings and small scale excavations indicate that the remains are extensive and in places substantial, including masonry buildings and a hypocaust, although much of these previously observed remains have been built over.
- 2.2. The proposed play equipment will require the excavation of a number of post holes, as set out in section 3.1. These have some potential to disturb unexplored archaeological horizons, albeit on a small and local scale although no archaeological remains have been accurately recorded in this location and the Time Team excavations (2005) just to the north produced negative results. The evidential value of this part of the site is therefore unknown and proposed holes will offer an opportunity on a test pit scale to enhance it by better understanding the extent of archaeology within this part of the scheduled area.
- 2.3. The objectives of the watching brief are:
  - to monitor groundworks associated with the installation of two items of playground equipment.
  - to investigate and record any archaeological features/deposits/artefacts identified during the watching brief;
  - to prepare a report outlining the results of the watching brief and the research potential of the site archive;
  - 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

### Fieldwork

- 3.1. The watching brief will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (revised 2020). The two items of playground equipment are: (i) An aerial runway with a Grasslok safety surfacing and (ii) A toddler's 'multiplay' structure including a slide with a surrounding wet pour safety surface.
- 3.2. The aerial walkway is a zip-wire carried on upright poles some 24m apart, each supported by a pair of stanchions. The excavations for the uprights will measure 1m x 1m by 1.2m in depth, those for the stanchions 0.3, x 0.3m x 0.8m deep. The Grasslok safety surface will be 4m wide and will not extend below the turf layer.
- 3.3. The multiplay structure will require the excavation of 11 post holes measuring 0.3m x 0.3m by 0.6m deep and 2 post holes measuring 0.6m x 0.3m by 0.6m deep. The wet pour safety base will be polygonal in plan and measure some c4.3 x 6.4m and will require the stripping of the turf layer to a maximum depth of 0.25m.
- 3.4. The two principal post holes for the aerial walkway will be hand excavated by the archaeologist in advance in to order to assess archaeological levels at the maximum depth of disturbance. Subject to the findings within these larger holes the remainder of interventions, including the excavation of all outstanding post-holes and any surface stripping are to be covered by the watching brief.
- 3.5. The excavation of any 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.
  - 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 (MoJ) 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.

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## Selection Strategy

3.6. Unstratified finds will only be collected where they contribute significantly to the project objectives or are of particular intrinsic interest. All artefacts will be retained from stratigraphically secure contexts of 18th-century date or earlier. In the case of later or disturbed contexts, all 18th-century or earlier material will be retained, together with a sample of later finds to assist with dating and phasing, unless later deposits/artefacts are deemed to be of high archaeological value.

3.7. CPAT has a retention policy for artefacts which prioritises as follows:

### High priority for retention

- Rare finds from stratified and unstratified contexts
- Prehistoric and early medieval assemblages
- Key stratigraphic dating assemblages crucial to the structural development of the site
- Assemblages which are not well represented in museum collections

### High priority for disposal

- Unstratified material unless intrinsically dateable and unusual/rare
- Artefacts from residual/intrusive contexts unless of key stratigraphic importance to the site
- Assemblages already well represented in museum collections
- Unprocessed environmental/soil samples

## Post-excavation and reporting

3.8. 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.

3.9. 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

- 3.10. 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).

### Site archive

- 3.11. The overall archive will conform to guidelines described in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE), Historic England 2015, the CIfA (2020) *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).
- 3.12. 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.

### Data management plan

- 3.13. The project will be conducted in accordance with CPAT's data management policy. All paper records will be collated, catalogued and labelled with the unique project code. All digital data will follow strict file naming, to include the unique project code, and be sorted into a standard series of sub-folders. The digital data will be catalogued, including a list of file types and relevant software.

## 4 Resources and programming

- 4.1. 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 and as such agrees to abide by their *Code of Conduct* (2019).
- 4.2. 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 and the regional Historic Environment Record within one month of the completion of on-site works. If appropriate, a short report will be published in *Archaeology in Wales*.
- 4.3. 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 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



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

I Grant

September 2020