

CPAT Report No. 1834




Castle Road, Crickhowell

Archaeological Watching Brief



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL CLWYD-POWYS
CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Mr R. J. Hoare
 CPAT Project No: 2571
 Project Name: Castle Road, Crickhowell
 Grid Reference: SO 2185 1815
 County/LPA: Powys County Council
 Planning Application: 17/15612/FUL
 CPAT Report No: 1834
 Event PRN: 140386
 Report status: Final

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Summary

In September 2021, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust were instructed by private clients to undertake a watching brief at a property in Crickhowell. The watching brief was to oversee the initial groundworks in association with the widening of the parking space at 9 Castle Road. Due to the proximity to the mediaeval castle at Crickhowell and the rich heritage within the Brecon Beacon National Park, a watching brief was deemed necessary by the planning authority. The watching brief identified a deposit of post-medieval waste, but did not identify anything of earlier significance that may warrant further investigation.

Crynodeb

Fis Medi 2021, derbyniodd Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys gyfarwyddiadau oddi wrth gleientiaid preifat i wneud briff gwyllo ar eiddo yng Nghrughywel. Bwriad y briff gwyllo oedd goruchwyllo gwaith cychwynnol paratoi tir mewn cysylltiad â lledu lle parcio yn 9 Ffordd y Castell. Oherwydd bod y gwaith yn agos at y castell canoloesol yng Nghrughywel, ac oherwydd y dreftadaeth gyfoethog o fewn Parc Cenedlaethol Bannau Brycheiniog, roedd yr awdurdod cynllunio o'r farn bod angen cael briff gwyllo. Nododd y briff gwyllo ddyddodion gwastraff ôl-ganoloesol, ond ni nododd unrhyw beth o arwyddocâd cynharach a fyddai'n cyfiawnhau ymchwilio pellach.

1 Introduction

1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust were appointed by Mr R. J. Hoare, to undertake an archaeological watching brief in connection with a private house development. Although the application was for a "2 storey extension to the existing dwelling. Parking facilities increased. (Full Application) at 9 Castle Road, Crickhowell, Powys, NP8 1AP" at this stage only the enlargement to the parking area was undertaken. This entailed widening the parking space from its existing c.7m length on its north side, to c.15m length by cutting into the garden area at the east end of the plot.

1.2. Due to the site being within the Brecon Beacons National Park, the Archaeological Advisor from the national park authority was involved in the planning process in order to protect the character of the national park, and determined that an archaeological watching brief was required to identify any potential impact on the archaeological resource. This is Condition 5 to planning permission reference 17/15612/FUL, which was granted on the 8th February 2018:

5. The developer will ensure that a suitably qualified archaeological contractor is present during the undertaking of any ground works in the development area, so that an archaeological watching brief can be maintained.

Prior to commencement of any groundworks an archaeological written scheme of investigation shall be submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority Archaeologist and which must meet the standards laid down by the Institute for Archaeologists in their Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief.

The archaeological fieldwork shall be carried out in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation. Following completion of the fieldwork a copy of the Watching Brief report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority Archaeologist for approval.

Following approval, the report will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and the local Welsh Archaeological Trust for inclusion in the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER).

1.3. The site is located at SO 2185 1815 on the southern side of the town with the river Usk to the south, the bridge to the west and the A40 main road to Abergavenny to the east. The site of the groundworks is located within the Crickhowell Conservation Area, and within the historic settlement core. The car parking lay-by and associated property face on to Castle Road to the south, with housing to the west, a recreational area to the north, and with a clubhouse and pavilion to the east (fig. 1).

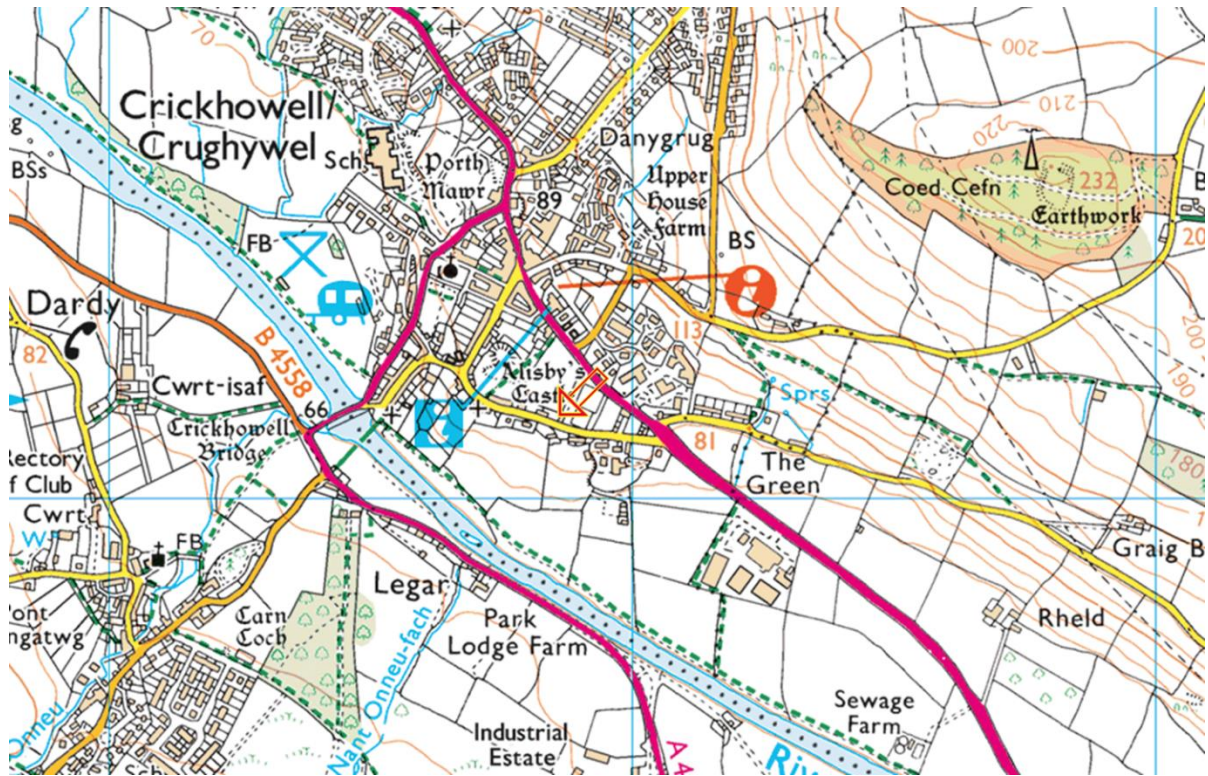


Fig. 1a Location plan of property on Castle Road.

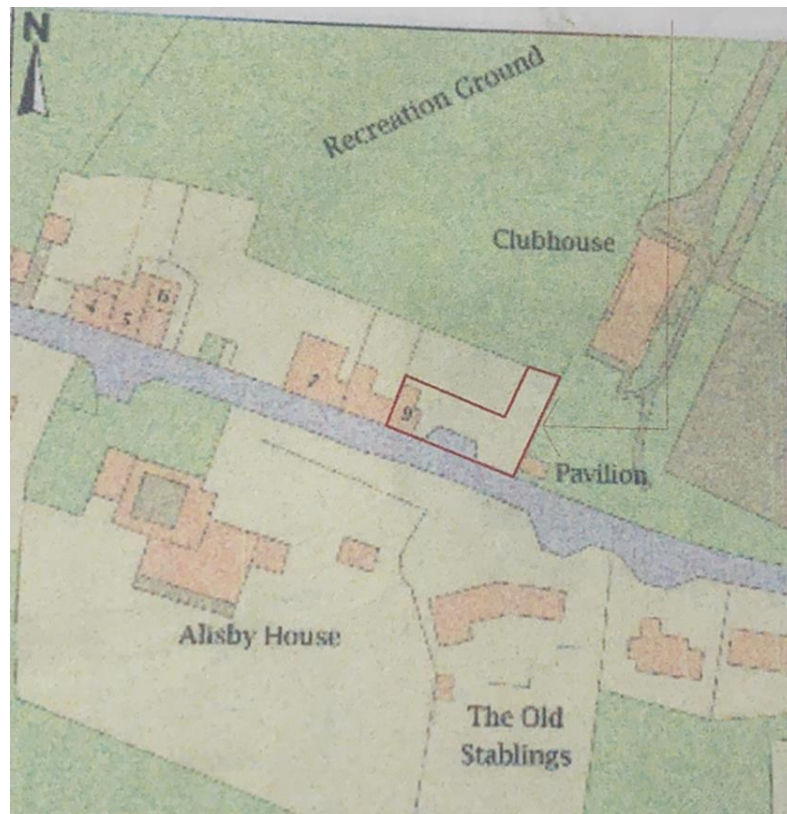


Fig. 1b Location plan of property marked with red outline on Castle Road.

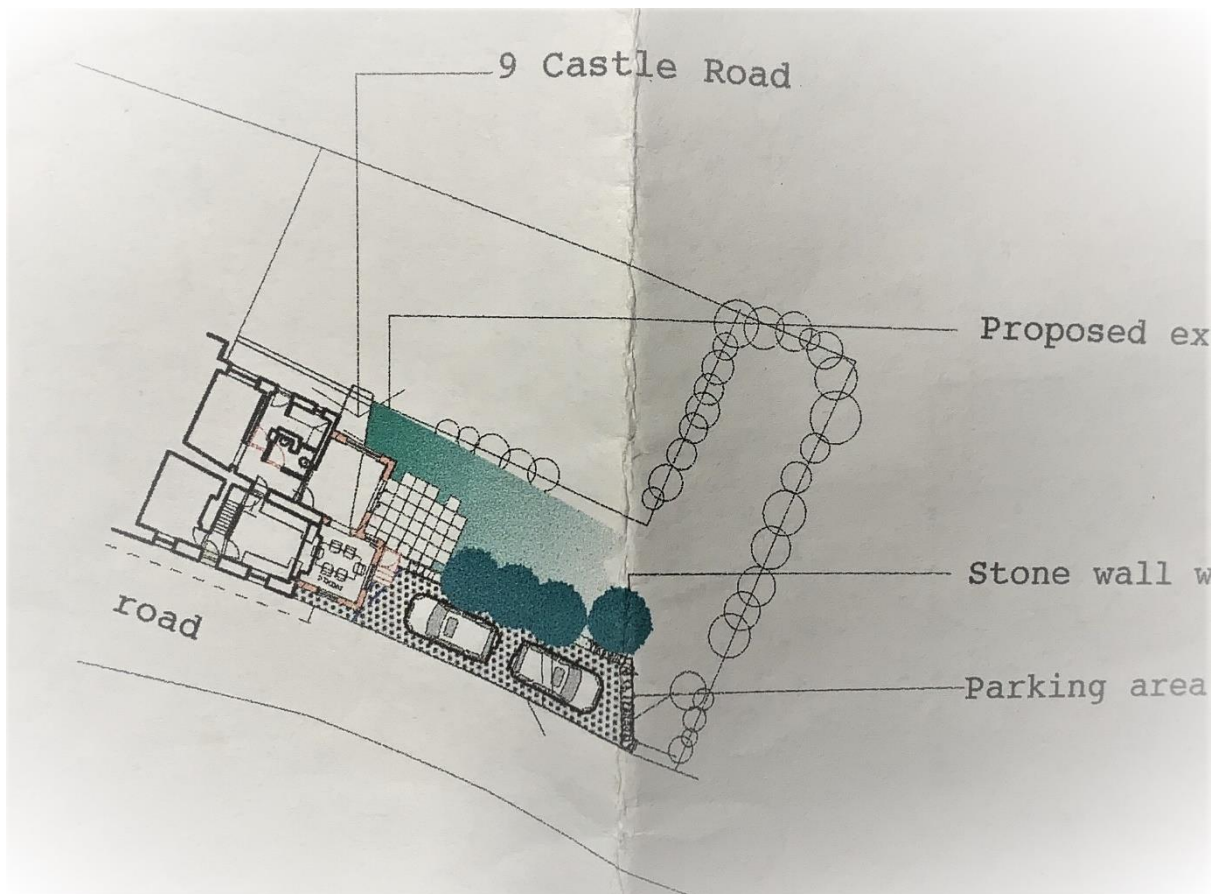


Fig. 2 Plans for the extension of parking space as well as future building extensions.

- 1.4. The plans to extend the car parking space required the garden to be reduced in height by approximately 1.5 m. The parking space was levelled and extended to allow two cars to fit into the space (see fig. 2). There are plans to extend the property itself eastwards, but these plans have not yet been undertaken.

2 Historical Background

- 2.1. Crickhowell has signs of human activity since prehistoric times. There are prehistoric standing stones still present near to the town, such as the Great Oak Stone. The town takes its name from the Iron Age hillfort known as Crug Hywel, or Hywel's Hillock (possibly referring to a cairn or the hillock the fort is constructed on). The modern settlement of Crickhowell is focused around the Norman fort by the river Usk.
- 2.2. It was not until the Norman era that Crickhowell became a significant settlement. It appeared to have developed on the north bank of the Usk, adjacent to the site of a large Norman motte, known as Alisby's Castle (Scheduled Monument BR111), located c.70m north-west of the application site. The motte is believed to have been constructed during the 12th-13th centuries, and a shell keep survives. A large bailey to the south incorporated the recreation ground, and oral reports indicated that further earthworks were levelled out on the adjacent cricket ground early in the 20th century. Therefore, this area, bordering the application site, is

considered to be an area of high archaeological sensitivity, with potential to contain remains associated with the development and use of the castle and the urban development of Crickhowell.

- 2.3. No 9 also forms part of a range of historic buildings fronting Castle Road, which are depicted on the 1844 Crickhowell Tithe and are therefore of at least early 19th century date. These can be seen in fig. 3.



Fig. 3 1844 Tithe map showing the terraces on Castle Road. The property (No. 9) is located at "443" on the map

3 Watching Brief

- 3.1. The watching brief was conducted on the 30th September 2021 in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) (2014) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*.
- 3.2. The watching brief was undertaken to meet the aims as described in the planning permission conditions; outlined above in section 1.2. The archaeologist was present for the duration of the ground reduction of the garden area near to the current parking space until a satisfying depth was reached. A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was submitted and approved by the National Parks Authority prior to groundworks occurring (Appendix 1).



*Fig. 4 The original height of the garden soil, visible upon removal of wall. Viewed from the southwest.
Edited, CPAT photo 4945-0002*

- 3.3. The garden topsoil reached a height of 1.3 m before reduction began (see fig. 4). There were concrete blocks present in the garden topsoil which caused a slow start to excavation. The soil was mechanically excavated by a 1.7 tonne mechanical excavator, and was dragged outwards for the spoil to be stored in the space to the west of the garden area (fig. 5).



Fig. 5 Mechanical excavation of the soil. CPAT photo 4945-0004

- 3.4. The excavation quickly removed the topsoil, which was a layer of garden debris and humus associated with the turf and the plantation of trees. The garden topsoil was rich in modern waste, and revealed that the revetment wall facing the road was firmly concreted. It also allowed the later imported soil to become clearly defined (fig. 6).



Fig. 6 Stripped topsoil showing concreted material behind revetment and imported soil. CPAT photo 4945-0007

- 3.5. Removing the uncompacted dark silty topsoil revealed a lighter clayey silt subsoil with minor stone inclusions ranging up to 0.25m in depth. This soil contained fragments of pottery from the 20th century and earlier. There were fragments of dark glass present which resembled the fabric of 20th century beer bottles. The natural basal deposit was a dark orangey brown compact silty clay with stones ranging up to 0.25 cm across, typical of a colluvial deposit. The subsoil ranged from 0.2 to 0.4m in depth from the surface level of the garden, and the base soil continued below this (fig. 7).



Fig. 7 Bulk of garden material standing over stripped area, top of garden soil has been stripped by approximately 0.2m. CPAT photo 4945-0021

- 3.6. There was one possible feature that was identified during the watching brief. At the western part of the excavated area near the wall to the current parking space, there was a small deposit of broken glass, ceramic ware, and fragmentary concrete. Careful excavation began but it became apparent the material was in a backfill event and not inside a cut and represented a possible former surface level that existed before the revetment was installed. This surface received a backfilled deposit, and its position in relation to the revetment wall indicates that it was done in order to delete voids that were present behind the revetment wall at the point of its installation. The finds were not retained as they had no stratigraphic value beyond confirmation of the existing possible former surface or backfill event before the installation of the revetment wall (fig. 8)



Fig. 8 Deposit of glass and ceramics within western part of excavated area. CPAT photo 4945-0021

- 3.7. The watching brief was concluded upon excavating to a depth of 1.3 m below the original surface level. The natural subsoil and base deposit remained sterile with no features cut into it. The soil behind the revetment remained a pale grey into a depth of 0.9m and approximately 0.8 m inwards behind the revetment (fig. 9). This appears to have been a remnant of a former infill deposit placed behind the revetment wall after its construction to ensure a level garden behind it. With the exception of the waste deposit mentioned in sect. 3.6 no other artefacts were observed.



Fig. 9 Closing shot of excavated area. CPAT photo 4945-0024 looking north

4 Conclusions

- 4.1. The watching brief identified a deposit sequence comprising of a typical garden topsoil, a thick subsoil, and a colluvial basal deposit. The topsoil was typical of a deposit associated with a private domestic garden, with waste material throughout that confirmed its usage as an active garden soil. As the excavation continued deeper, the soil became a consistent clayey silt subsoil with organic material marring it, seemingly from the result of deep rooting caused by planted vegetation from the garden soil above. However, a layer of waste material was discovered at the western part of the excavated area where subsoil would have been expected. This deposit was sat in a somewhat steep incline within a light grey silt deposit that was typical of a buried topsoil, with colour affectation due to the fragmentary concrete and mortar presence. This material probably represents an infill event that was undertaken during the construction of the garden revetment wall, possibly to secure the wall by eliminating voids created by the incline.
- 4.2. The waste material within this deposit may confirm an earlier phase of usage for the garden as it was typical domestic ware, but the presence of fragmentary concrete suggested that it was a crude infill that may have been sourced from construction waste and garden material. Whilst the non-stratified material could not be used to extrapolate archaeological understanding of the site beyond its continued use as a domicile, it was photographically recorded for the sake of recognising the deposit's role in the securing of the revetment wall. The colluvial base soil beneath both this deposit and the subsoil was bereft of any archaeological features nor did it contain any organic material.

5 Sources

Cartographic sources

1844 Tithe apportionment for Crickhowell Parish

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 digital archive only will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. No paper archive was produced during the watching brief and therefore no deposition of paper archive is required.

Archive summary

CPAT Event PRN: 140386

24 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4945

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 2571

1 Introduction

1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been appointed by Mr R. J. Hoare, to undertake an archaeological watching brief in connection with a private house development. Although the application was for a "2 storey extension to the existing dwelling. Parking facilities increased. (Full Application) at 9 Castle Road, Crickhowell, Powys, NP8 1AP" at this stage only the enlargement to the parking area will be implemented from its existing c.7m length on its north side, to c.15m length by cutting into the garden area at the east end of the plot.

1.2. The Archaeological Advisor at Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, has determined that an archaeological watching brief is required to identify any potential impact on the archaeological resource. This is Condition 5 to planning permission reference 17/15612/FUL granted 8th February 2018:

5 The developer will ensure that a suitably qualified archaeological contractor is present during the undertaking of any ground works in the development area, so that an archaeological watching brief can be maintained.

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Following approval, the report will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and the local Welsh Archaeological Trust for inclusion in the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER).

1.3. The site is located at SO 2185 1815 on the southern side of the town with the river Usk to the south, the bridge to the west and the A40 main road to Abergavenny to the east. The car parking lay-by and associated property face on to Castle Road to the south, with housing to the west, a recreational area to the north, with a clubhouse and pavilion to the east. (Fig. 1).

1.4. The application site is located within the Crickhowell Conservation Area, and within the historic settlement core.

1.5. Crickhowell developed on the north bank of the Usk, adjacent to the site of a large Norman motte, known as Alisby's Castle (Scheduled Monument BR111), located c.70m north-west of the application site. The motte is believed to have been constructed during the 12th-13th centuries, and a shell keep survives. A large bailey to the south incorporated the recreation ground, and oral reports indicated that further earthworks were levelled out on the adjacent cricket ground early in the 20th century (CPAT, 2013, 15). Therefore this area, bordering the application site, is considered to be an area of high archaeological sensitivity, with potential to contain remains associated with the development and use of the castle and the urban development of Crickhowell.

- 1.6. No 9 also forms part of a range of historic buildings fronting Castle Road, which are depicted on the Crickhowell Tithe and are therefore of at least early 19th century date.

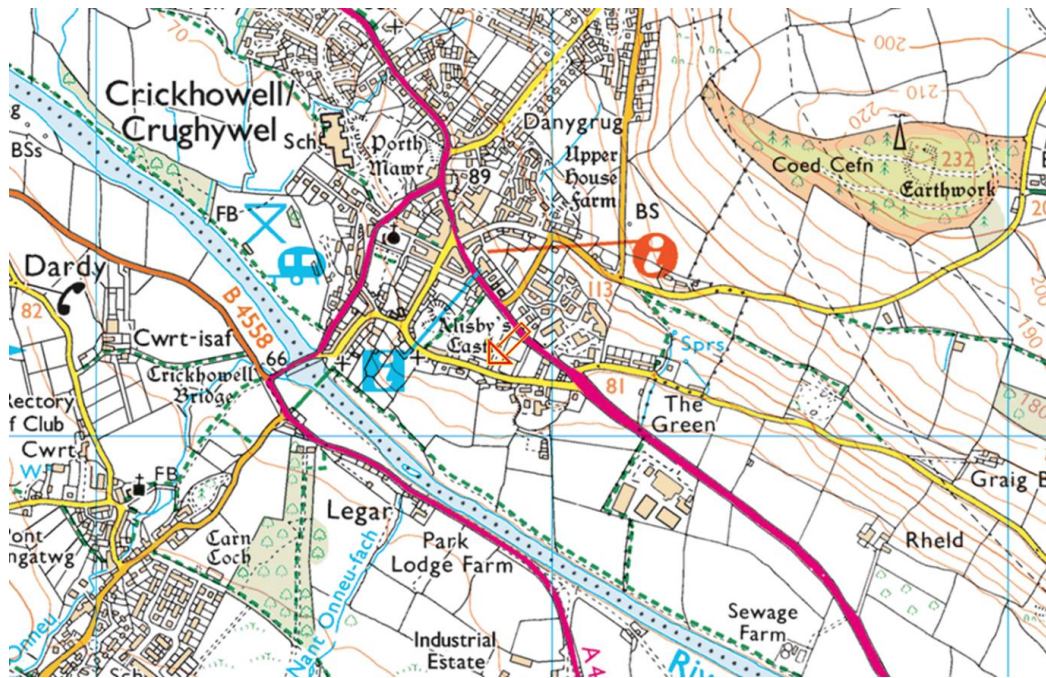


Figure 1 Site location plan arrowed in top map, and red line boundary in lower map

2 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1. The aim of the watching brief is to investigate and record any archaeological remains that are revealed during groundworks.
- 2.2. The objectives of the watching brief are:
 - to monitor groundworks associated with the proposed enlargement of the parking area (Figure 2)
 - to excavate, sample and record any archaeological features/deposits/artefacts identified;
 - to prepare a report outlining the results of the watching brief and assessing the research potential of the site archive;
 - if appropriate to prepare a final publication of the results in an appropriate regional or national journal, depending on the nature and significance of any archaeology.

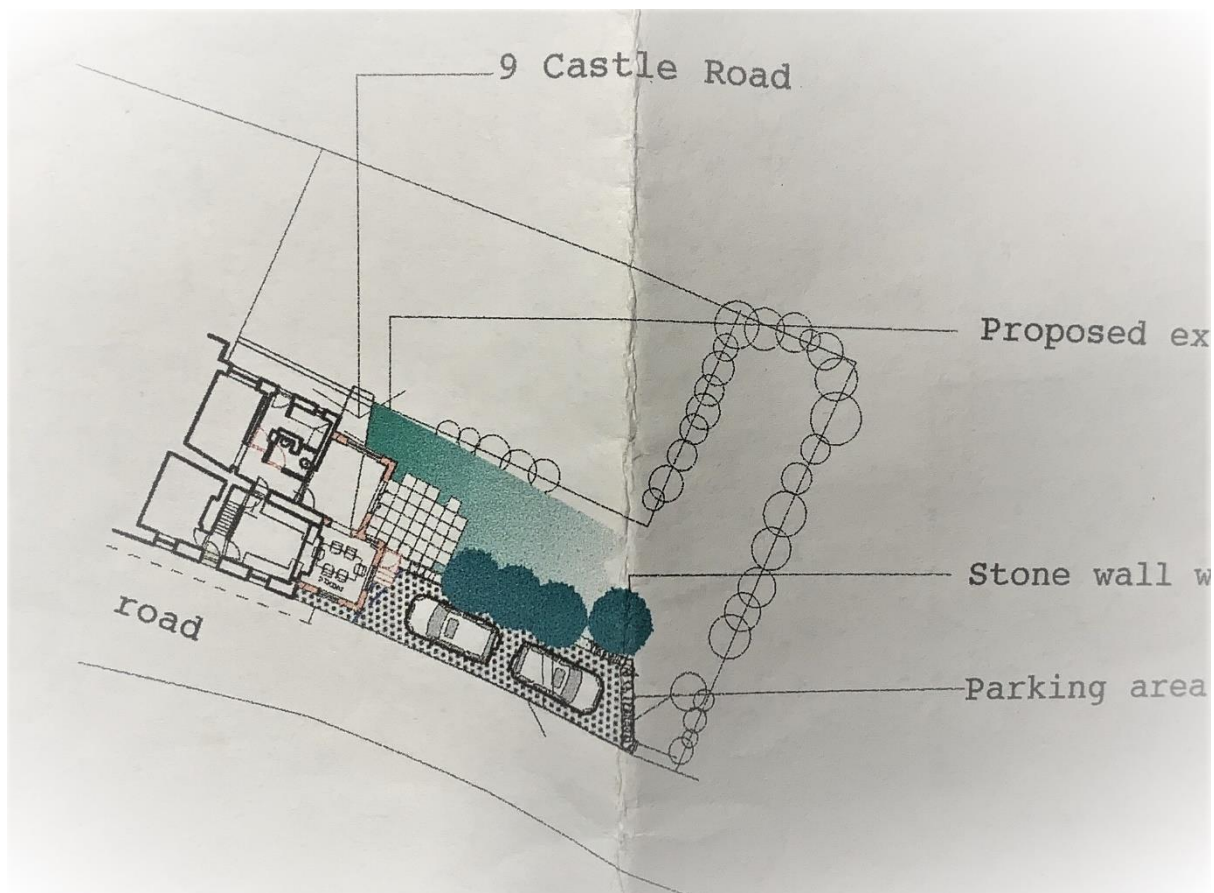


Figure 2 Plan showing proposed enlarged car parking lay by

3 Methodology

1. 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 watching brief will be undertaken to monitor groundworks associated with the construction of the new build, access road, foundations and service trenches. 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 licence 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.

2. Selection Strategy

3.2. 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.

3.3. 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

3. Post-excavation and reporting

- 3.4. 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.
- 3.5. 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
- 3.6. 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).

4. Site archive

- 3.7. 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, The National Standard and Guidance to Best Practice for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives in Wales* (NPAAW, 2017) and *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs) V1* (July 2018).
- 3.8. The paper and material archive would be deposited with Y Gaer Museum 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. NMR Digital archives will follow the standard required by the RCAHMW (RCAHMW 2015). A copy of the digital archive only will also be lodged with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Negative results would not result in an archive significant enough for deposition.

5. Data management plan

- 3.9. 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, and managed on an Excel spreadsheet.

4 Resources and programming

- 4.1. The watching brief will be undertaken by a skilled archaeologist under the overall supervision of Tim Malim, Principal Archaeologist and 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, with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's Archaeological Advisor, and with the regional Historic Environment Record within one month of the completion of on-site works. If appropriate, a short report will be published in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* or as part of the "Gazetteer of Sites Explored in 2021" for *Archaeology in Wales*.
- 4.3. Monitoring will be undertaken by the BBNPA Archaeological Advisor who will be notified of the start of works, and if significant remains are revealed so that a site visit can be arranged. 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 | £300 per day |
| Radiocarbon dating | £375 each |
| Finds specialist | £300 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.

Tim Malim

24th August 2021