

CPAT Report No. 1836




# Stone Cottage, Holt

Archaeological Watching Brief



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL CLWYD-POWYS  
CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Graham Mitchell  
 CPAT Project No: 2588  
 Project Name: Stone Cottage, Holt  
 Grid Reference: SJ4111754051  
 County/LPA: Wrexham County Council  
 Planning Application: P/2020/0577  
 CPAT Report No: 1836  
 Event PRN: 140390  
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## Summary

In November 2021, the Field Services Team of Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust were instructed to undertake archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the partial demolition and extended reconstruction of an existing house in Holt. The monitoring consisted of a watching brief of the initial excavation of the footings around the new structure, and then ground reduction within the centre of the extension. A small deposit of 20<sup>th</sup> century waste material was discovered during the initial trenching, but no significant archaeological resource was identified during the watching brief.

## Crynodeb

Fis Tachwedd 2021, derbyniodd Tîm Gwasanaethau Maes Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys gyfarwyddiadau i gynnal gwaith monitro archaeolegol o waith paratoi tir yn gysylltiedig â dymchwel tŷ yn rhannol yn Holt, a'i ailadeiladu gydag estyniad. Roedd y monitro'n cynnwys briff gwyllo gwaith cloddio cychwynnol i osod y sylfeini o amgylch y strwythur newydd, ac yna lleihau'r tir yng nghanol yr estyniad. Darganfuwyd dyddodion bach o ddeunydd gwastraff o'r 20<sup>fed</sup> ganrif yn ystod y gwaith torri rhychau cychwynnol, ond ni nodwyd unrhyw adnodd archaeolegol arwyddocaol yn ystod y briff gwyllo.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust were instructed by Graham Mitchell, a private client, to undertake an archaeological watching brief in connection with the demolition and reconstruction of a bungalow at Stone Cottage in Holt.
- 1.2. The development was granted planning permission (Number: HOL P/2020/0577) to remove the existing bungalow which had fallen into a state of disrepair, and rebuild the bungalow on the same footprint with some minor extension to square off the corners of the building platform.
- 1.3. On the advice of the local Development Control Archaeologist, it was recommended that the stripping of topsoil, cutting of foundation trenches, and installation of services be overseen by an archaeologist. As outlined by the Development Control Archaeologist, "this advice is in accordance with the guidance set out in Welsh Government TAN 24 and Planning Policy Wales (Ch 6, Dec 2018)". This was to ensure the recording and preservation of the archaeological resource.
- 1.4. This advice was incorporated into condition 5 of the planning permission:

*"5. The developer shall 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 conducted. The archaeological watching brief must meet the standards laid down by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs. The Local Planning Authority will be informed in writing, at least two weeks prior to the commencement of the development, of the name of the said archaeological contractor. A copy of the resulting report should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and the Development Control Archaeologist, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (The Offices, Coed y Dinas, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 8RP Email: mark.walters@cpat.org.uk) "*

- 1.4.1. Reason:

*"5. To secure preservation by record of any archaeological remains which may be revealed during ground excavations for the consented development "*

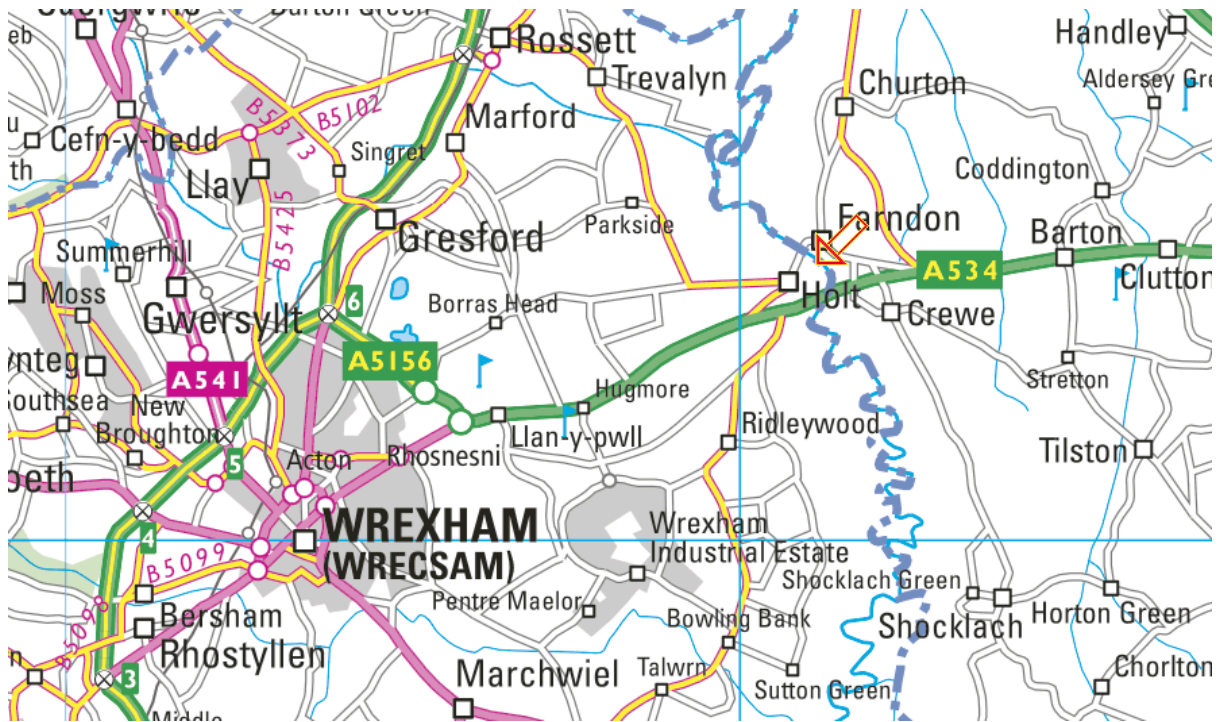


Figure 1a Site location (general)

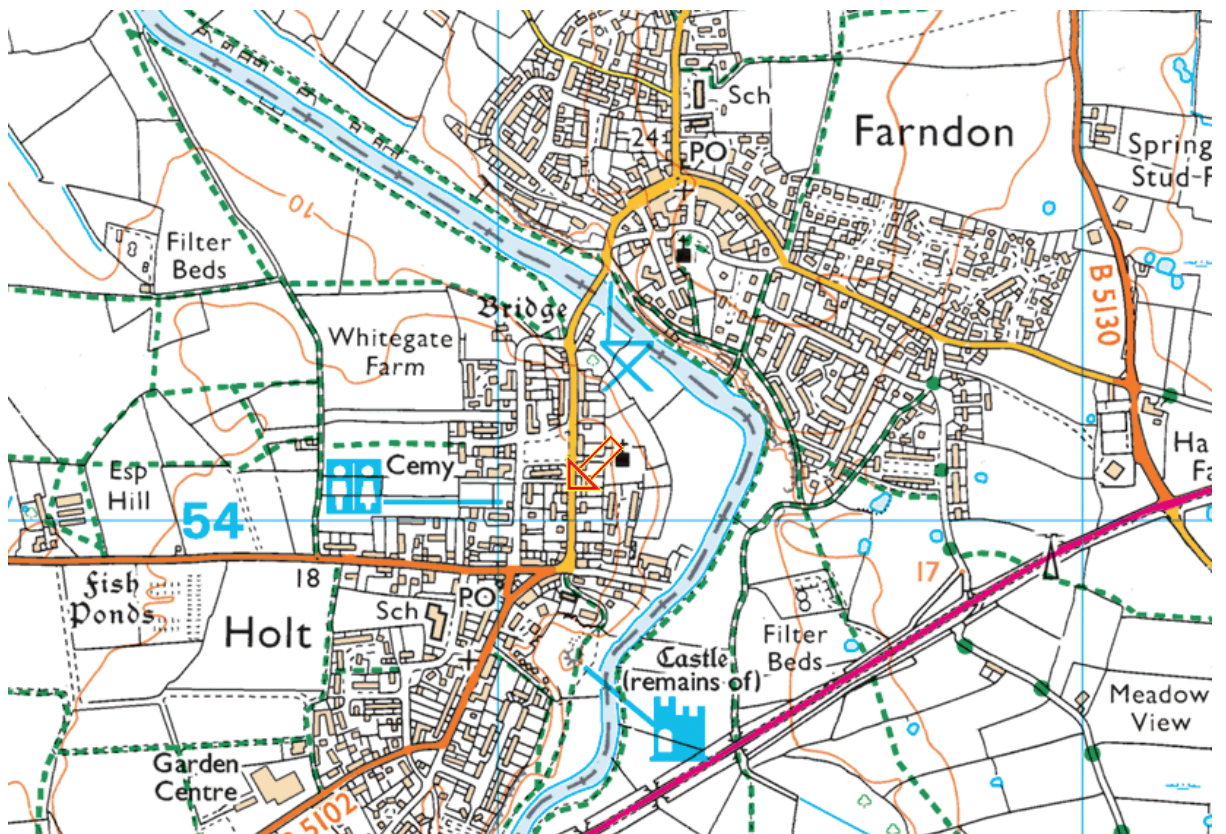


Figure 1b Site location (detail)

## 2 Historical Background

- 2.1. The early history of the area around Holt is not well understood. There are possible prehistoric archaeological features found within the nearby agricultural land, such as cropmarks and possible earthwork features. Without further investigation, it is unclear whether these represent Iron Age (or earlier) occupations of the area around Holt. It is noteworthy that the Portable Antiquities Scheme records very few prehistoric finds around the area, signalling that there may be a lack of significant occupation. However, Bronze Age finds have been identified within Holt, including cremation urns and socketed axes, indicating human presence in the area before the arrival of the Romans.
- 2.2. The Roman Period is well represented within Holt, with evidence of it playing an important role in the local Romano-British economy. Pottery kilns indicate that the area had a significant production of ceramic goods, and coin hoards suggest the presence of commercial wealth in the area during the period.
- 2.3. Through the medieval period, Holt became a frontier between the English and Welsh powers. This is embodied in the presence of Holt Castle, a now ruined fortification along the River Dee. The 14<sup>th</sup> Century bridge crossing the Dee became a major route into Wales for the region, and thus became a key part of the medieval infrastructure to control during conflict. The Parliamentarians had their advance impeded during the English Civil War at Holt Bridge due to the fortifications that were present on the bridge; said to be a tower and drawbridge. The bridge is still presently used for road traffic.
- 2.4. Following the tumult of the English Civil War, Holt Castle became slighted and was no longer permitted to be used as a stronghold. The masonry was reused downstream for the rebuilding of Eaton Hall, and Holt remained as an agricultural settlement. In this period, Holt developed as a village. Following the social shifts provided by religious revivals and innovations, places of worship such as Bethesda Chapel immediately to the north of the property on Church Street were built.
- 2.5. No building is recorded at the site of what is currently Stone Cottage on the tithe map of 1845. The approximate position of the current house site is at the south-east corner of parcel 10 on the tithe map below, nearby to land parcel no. 11 on the tithe map below (as circled on fig. 2). The area that encompasses land parcel 11 has at least partially been redeveloped as a small housing estate. In the decades between the surveys that produced the 1878 and 1900 Ordnance Survey maps of Denbighshire that include Holt (see fig. 3 & 4), the address at Stone Cottage saw the construction of the semi-detached house that is the focus of the current development.





Figure 2 1845 Tithe map, showing approximate location of current house site (red circle). Top of map is north-west.



Figure 3 1878 Ordnance Survey (OS) map showing the Methodist Chapel but no presence of an attached house at the present address of Stone Cottage, Holt (circled).

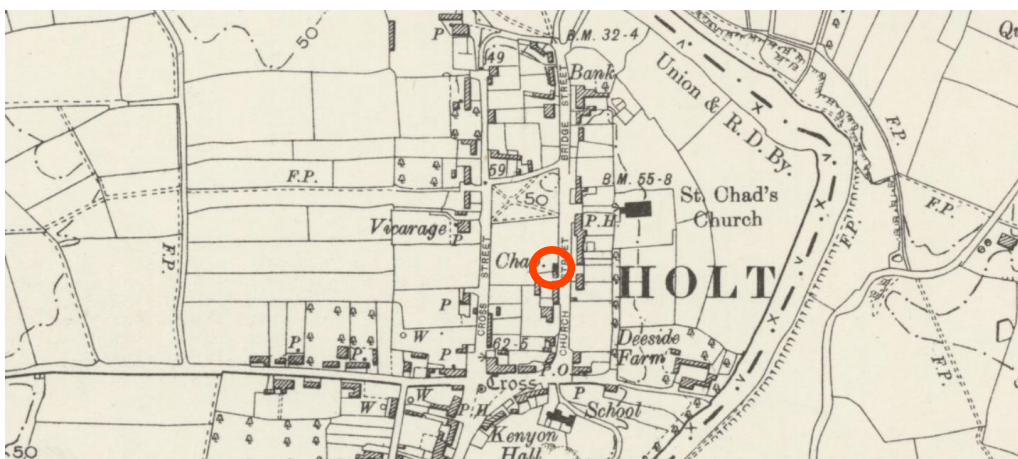


Figure 4 1900 OS map showing the address at Stone Cottage, Holt, as having a building attached to the Methodist Chapel (circled).

2.6. Today, Holt retains some of its agricultural character but has become a relatively upmarket village with desirable housing, notable for its commutable distance to the major employment



places of Wrexham, Chester, Ellesmere Port and Crewe. This has led to increased housing developments in recent years and therefore a rise in archaeological discoveries, adding to archaeologists' understanding of the history of Holt.

### 3 Watching Brief

- 3.1. The watching brief was conducted on the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) (2014) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*.
- 3.2. The excavation was completed mechanically with additional work carried out by hand. The 1 tonne mechanical excavator excavated a trench approximately 0.6 m wide, adhering to a route marked out by yellow paint that represents the wall foundations/footings for the planned extension (see fig. 5).



*Figure 5 Initial excavation beginning at the north part of the site. Viewed from south west. CPAT photo 4961-0002*

- 3.3. The excavation used total station technology to maintain a consistent depth, which was approximately 0.6 m below the existing soil level. The subsoil across the site was a brownish orange silty sand that is typical of the geology of this area. By excavating to an approximate depth of 0.6 m, the excavation reached the natural base soil, which was a highly compacted red clayey sand (see fig. 6).



*Figure 6 The trench at the northern part. Viewed from the west. CPAT photo 4961-0007*

- 3.4. The excavation revealed a small deposit of dark reddish grey sandy loam. It was discovered at the south west part of the trench (fig. 7), and was approximately 0.2 m deep and 0.4 m wide. The deposit contained glass bottles typical of domestic ware from the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The rich organic soil is typical of a waste deposit, as supported by the presence of the domestic waste material. It was located immediately outside the former western wall of the demolished part of the building, at the approximate south-west corner of the structure. Upon hand excavating, it was apparent that the edge of the soil was ephemeral and had no discernible cut. The soil is consistent with it being the former output of a gutter or house drain, although due to the lack of cut it could not be regarded as a designed drainage ditch. The glass was only concentrated in a small area approximately 0.2 m across and 0.2 m deep. It did not contain any other finds.





*Figure 7 Small deposit of organic material containing early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century bottles. Viewed from the east. CPAT photo 4961-0013*

- 3.5. The first stage of excavation was concluded within a day on the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021, and produced a trench that followed the walls of the building that is to be constructed (see fig. 8). This was to allow the installation of footings and drainage.



*Figure 8 The excavated trench as it appeared at the conclusion of the first stage. Viewed from the south-west. CPAT photo 4961-0015*

- 3.6. The second stage of excavation required the removal of the inner baulk of soil, which occurred on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 (see fig. 9). This produced no features or finds.



Figure 9 Completed excavation. Viewed from the south. CPAT photo 4961-0016

## 4 Conclusions

- 4.1. The watching brief did not identify any archaeologically significant finds or features. The excavation exposed a waste deposit from the modern era, but did not produce any significant and stratifiable archaeological remains that might add to the archaeological interpretations of Holt. The reddish orange clayey sand proved to be a sterile subsoil that produced no archaeological material within the interior of the development area.

## 5 Sources

### Cartographic sources

- 1845 Tithe apportionment for Township and Borough of Holt  
1878 Ordnance Survey Map for Denbighshire, 1:10560, Sheet XXII  
1900 Ordnance Survey Map for Denbighshire, 1:10560, Sheet XXII.SE

## 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. This investigation produced no paper archive.

Archive summary

CPAT Event PRN: 140390

16 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4961



## Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 2588

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been instructed by Graham Mitchell to undertake an archaeological watching brief in connection with the demolition and reconstruction of a bungalow at Stone Cottage in Holt.
- 1.2. The development has been granted planning permission (Number: HOL P/2020/0577) to remove the current bungalow which has become dilapidated, and rebuild the bungalow on the same footprint with some minor extension to square off the corners of the building platform.
- 1.3. On the advice of the local Development Control Archaeologist, it was recommended that the stripping of topsoil, cutting of foundation trenches, and installation of services be overseen by an archaeologist. According to the Development Control Archaeologist, "this advice is in accordance with the guidance set out in WG TAN 24 and Planning Policy Wales (Ch 6, Dec 2018)". This is to ensure the recording and preservation of the archaeological resource.
- 1.4. This advice was incorporated into condition 5 of the planning permission;  
*"5. The developer shall 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 conducted. The archaeological watching brief must meet the standards laid down by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs. The Local Planning Authority will be informed in writing, at least two weeks prior to the commencement of the development, of the name of the said archaeological contractor. A copy of the resulting report should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and the Development Control Archaeologist, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (The Offices, Coed y Dinas, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 8RP Email: mark.walters@cpat.org.uk) "*
- 1.5. This is for the purpose of recording and preserving any archaeological resource which may be identified during works conducted at the address, as cited by reason 5 of the planning permission;  
*"5. To secure preservation by record of any archaeological remains which may be revealed during ground excavations for the consented development "*





Figure 1a Site location (general)

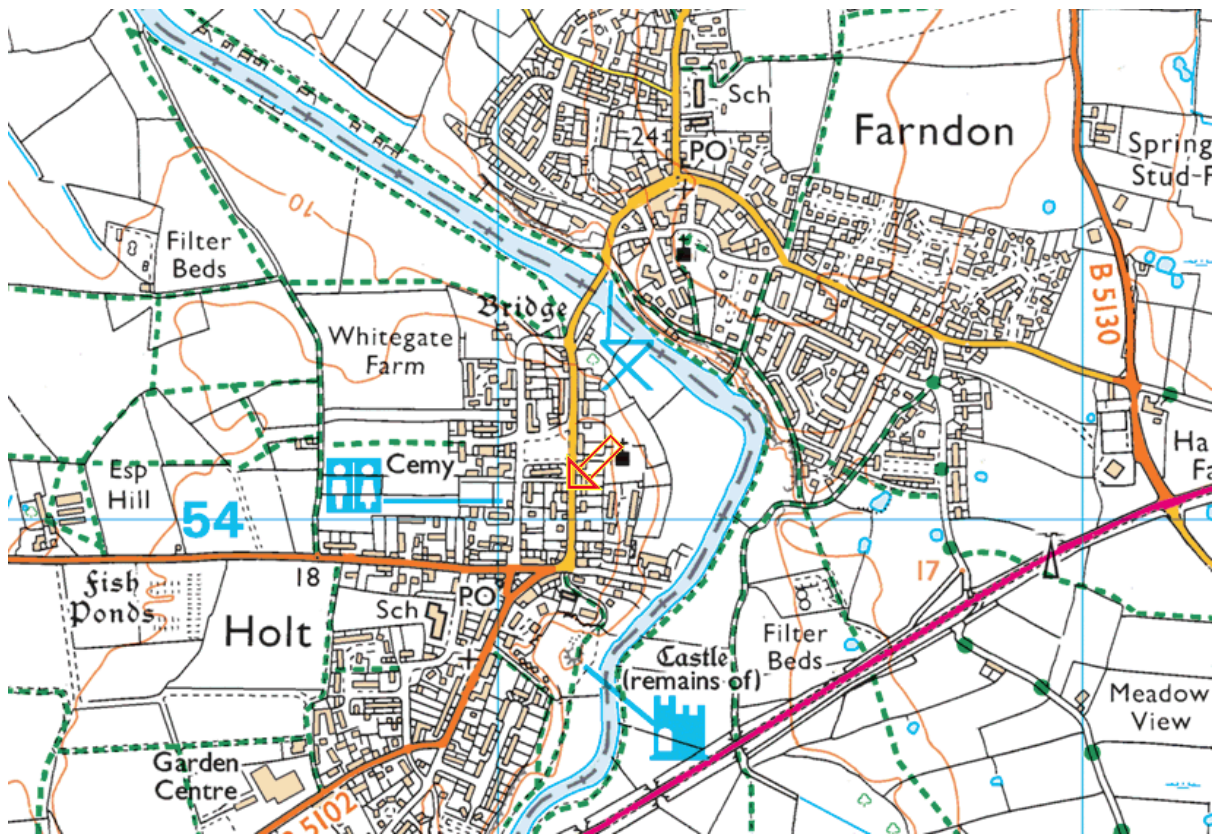


Figure 1b Site location (detail)

## 2 Methodology

### Fieldwork investigation & recording

- 2.1. A plan of the permitted development is shown in Figure 2. The extent of groundworks can be seen to be fairly minimal, and foundations are likely to be c.600mm deep.
- 2.2. The watching brief will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014). The watching brief will be undertaken to monitor groundworks associated with the construction of the new build (Figure 2). 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 OS 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.
  - Photography will apply a digital SLR camera with a minimum resolution of 12 mega pixels, include a metric scale in each view, and 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.

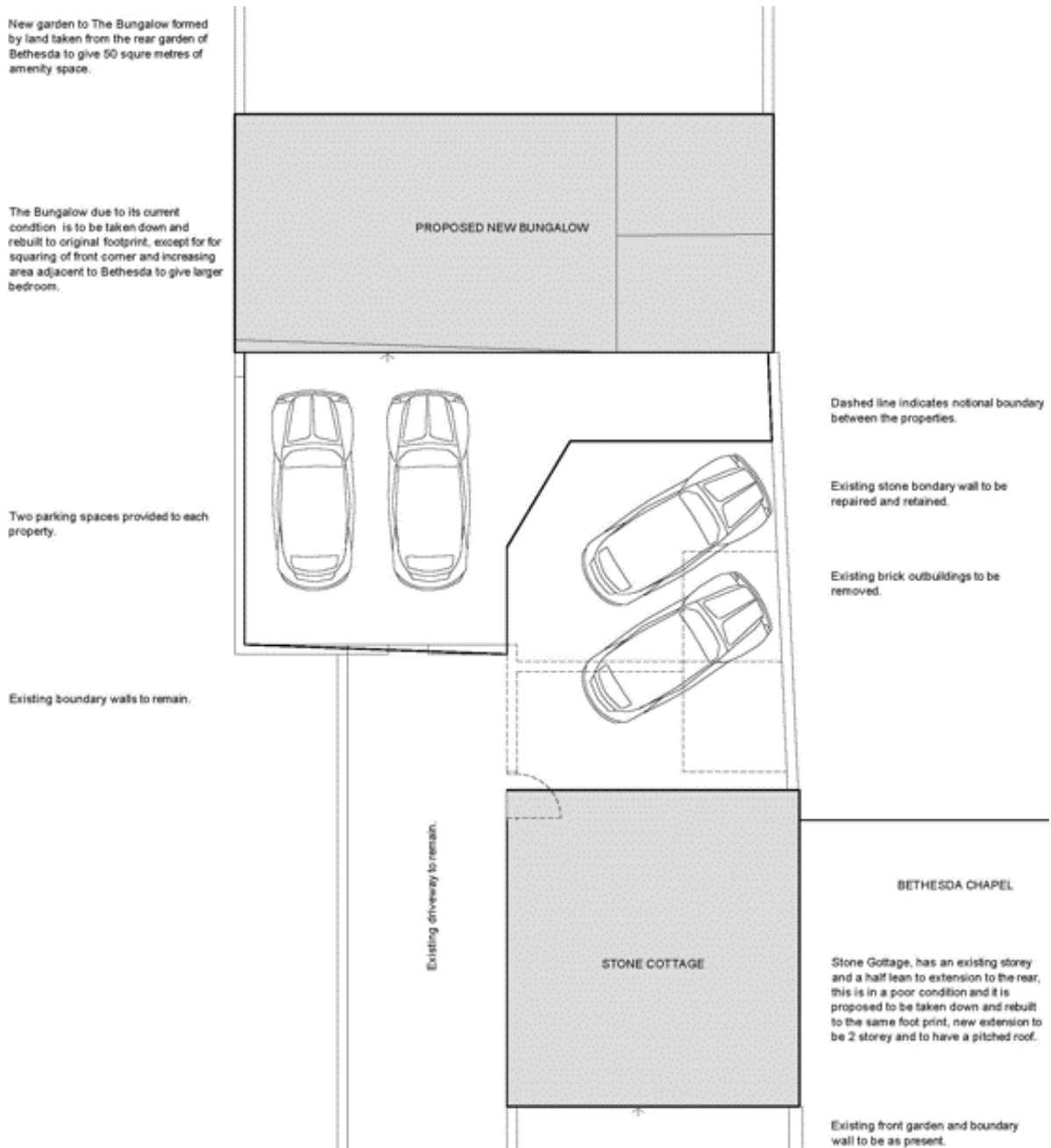


Figure 2 Plan of proposed development

## Artefact selection strategy

- 2.3. 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.
- 2.4. 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**

- 2.5. 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.
- 2.6. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:
- Non-technical summary
  - Introduction
  - Site location
  - Archaeological Background
  - Aims & objectives
  - Methodology
  - Watching brief results
  - Conclusions
  - References
  - Appropriate appendices on archives and finds
- 2.7. 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**

- 2.8. The overall archive will conform to guidelines described in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE), Historic England 2015, the CIfA (2014) *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).

- 2.9. 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

- 2.10. 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.

## 3 Resources and programming

- 3.1. The watching brief will be undertaken by a skilled archaeologist under the overall supervision of Tim Malim, 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* (2014) and the *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (2014).
- 3.2. 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*.
- 3.3. 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	£350 per day
Radiocarbon dating	£400 each
Finds specialist	£330 per day

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

Harri Twigg

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021