

CPAT Report No. 1864

# 11 Harding Avenue, Rhuddlan

Archaeological Watching Brief



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL CLWYD-POWYS  
CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Mr A Hodson  
 CPAT Project No: 2624  
 Project Name: 11 Harding Av, Rhuddlan  
 Grid Reference: SJ 02947 77834  
 County/LPA: Denbighshire  
 Planning Application: 44/2022/0052  
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## Summary

The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust undertook an archaeological watching brief in connection with the development of a rear extension at 11 Harding Avenue, Rhuddlan on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2022. The works were undertaken on the advice of the local planning officer who identified the potential for archaeological remains due to the development's proximity to the medieval borough of Rhuddlan.

The watching brief identified a single small cut feature sealed by alluvial deposits and the foundation of the Harding Avenue houses. The date and nature of the feature is uncertain. The soils excavated from the foundation trenches consisted of alluvial silts overlying oceanic sands. This is indicative of a coastal wetland/river environment.

## Crynodeb

Bu Adran Gwasanaethau Maes Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys yn gwneud briff gwyllo archaeolegol yn gysylltiedig â datblygu estyniad yng nghefn 11 Rhodfa Harding, Rhuddlan ar 13<sup>eg</sup> Ebrill 2022. Gwnaed y gwaith mewn ymateb i gyngor y swyddog cynllunio lleol a oedd wedi nodi'r potensial ar gyfer gweddillion archaeolegol oherwydd bod y datblygiad yn agos at fwrdeistref ganoloesol Rhuddlan.

Nododd y briff gwyllo un nodwedd doredig fach yr oedd dyddodion llifwaddodol wedi'i selio a sylfeini tai Rhodfa Harding. Mae dyddiad a natur y nodwedd yn ansicr. Roedd y priddoedd a gloddiwyd o rychau'r sylfeini'n cynnwys siltiau llifwaddodol ar ben tywodydd cefnforol. Mae hyn yn awgrymu amgylchedd gwlypdir/ afon arfordirol.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was instructed by Mr Adrian Hodson to undertake an archaeological watching brief in connection with the development of a rear extension at 11 Harding Avenue, Rhuddlan.
- 1.2. The development was granted planning permission (Number: 44/2022/0052) for the construction of a two-story extension to the rear of the property.
- 1.3. Condition 5 was placed on planning permission which required that a watching brief be undertaken during all groundwork pertaining to the development.
- 1.4. The advice given by the local Development Control Archaeologist was as follows:

*"...we would recommend that an archaeologist is contracted to be present throughout the duration of new foundation excavations for the extension so that an adequate record of any archaeological features revealed by these works can be made".*

*"...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".*

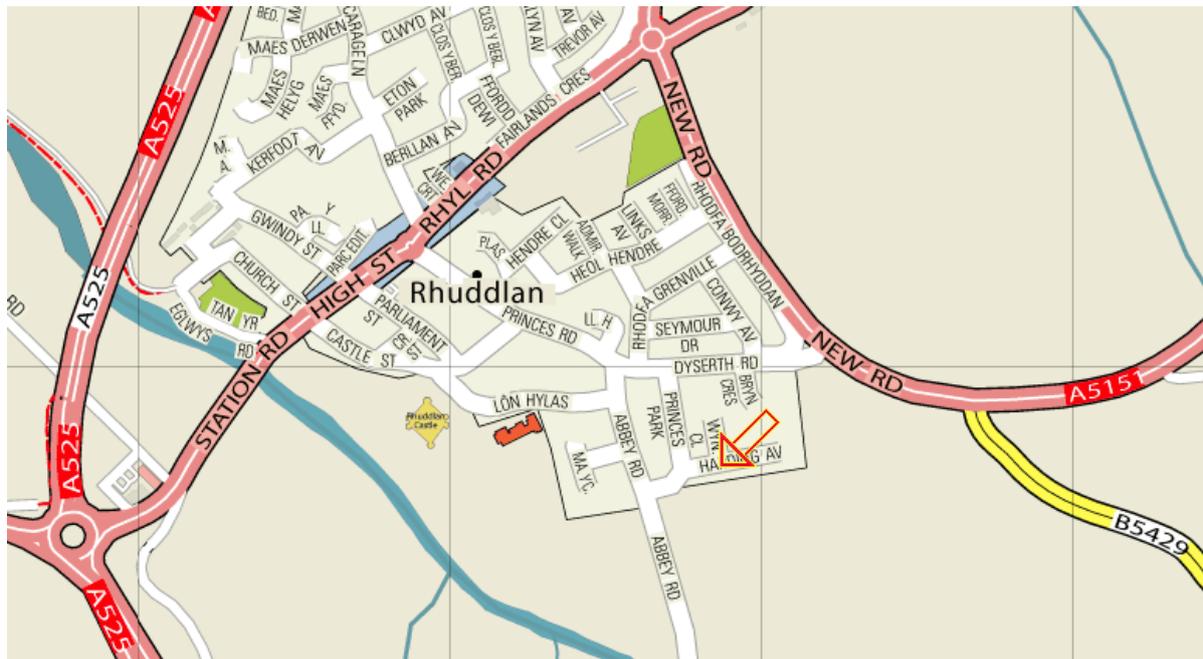
*"Reason: To secure preservation by record of any archaeological remains which may be revealed during ground excavations for the consented development".*

- 1.5. These recommendations were made due to the property's location in relation to the medieval historic core of Rhuddlan and proximity to the scheduled area of the early Norman Borough settlement.



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Fig. 1. General location map



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018

*Fig. 2. Detail Location of 11 Harding Avenue*

## 2 Historical Background

- 2.1. This section provides a brief summary of the archaeology and history of the study area and its immediate surrounds, to enable the findings of the assessment to be placed in a wider context.
- 2.2. The earliest evidence for activity within Rhuddlan consists of several Mesolithic flint and chert tools and a small assemblages of Bronze Age pottery. Evidence for later prehistoric and Romano-British activity was also found during excavations in 1969-73 (Quinnell and Blockley 1994).
- 2.3. Rhuddlan is first referred to in connection with the defeat of the Welsh by King Offa in the battle of Morfa Rhuddlan at the end of the 8th century. In 921 the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records the foundation of a burh at Cledmurtha, which is believed to be present day Rhuddlan.
- 2.4. Rhuddlan is reputed to be the site of the stronghold of Llewelyn ab Seisyll, built in 1015, and possibly located on Twt Hill, which is situated 333m to the southwest of the site. It passed to his son, Gruffydd ap Llywelyn of Gwynedd, who's llys at Rhuddlan was destroyed by Earl Harold in 1063.
- 2.5. After the Norman Conquest, a motte and bailey castle was built at Twt Hill, by Robert of Rhuddlan. The Domesday Book records a small borough founded beside the castle with eight burgesses, a church, and a mint. The probable site of the Church was identified during excavations on the Ysgol-y-Castell playing fields (290m to the west of the development).
- 2.6. In 1140 the town fell under Welsh control and predominantly remained in Welsh hands until Edward I's campaign in 1277, where he established the present Rhuddlan castle.

- 2.7. The 1878 6inch Ordnance Survey map shows the development site within a large open field to the south of Dyserth Road. The site remains part of an open field until the construction of the Harding Avenue houses in the 1950s and 60s.

### 3 Watching Brief

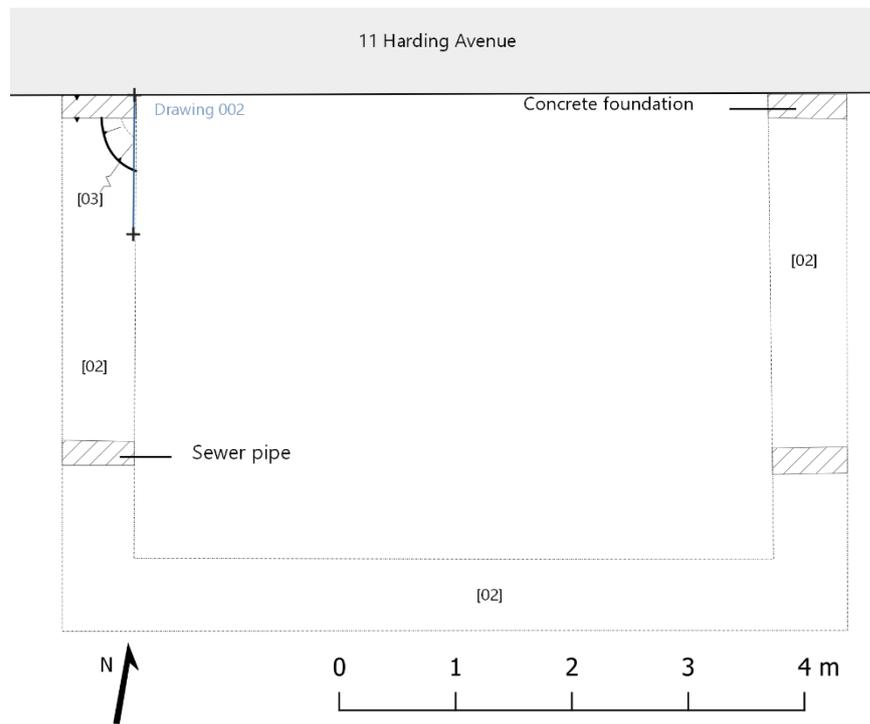
- 3.1. The watching brief was conducted on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2022, in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*. (2014).
- 3.2. The monitored development consisted of 0.6m wide foundation trenching for the eastern, western, and southern walls of the intended extension (Figure 4: Drawing 001).



*Fig. 3. Pre-excavation shot of cut feature [03] CPAT Photo 4986\_3*

- 3.3. The trenches were excavated to a depth of between 0.6 and 0.75m. The stratigraphy consisted of surface concrete covering 90% of the development area, with turf along the southern extent. Below this was a dark grey-brown sandy alluvial deposit formed up to 0.5m thick (01). This overlays a pebbly sand natural (02). Within the south-eastern excavation, the natural geology had been contaminated by water ingress from a leaking service pipe.
- 3.4. Within the western wall trench, sealed below the foundation of 11 Harding Avenue and the alluvial deposits (01) there was a discrete cut feature [03] containing a dark sandy fill (04) with mussel shell and small bone fragments (not retained) (Figure 4). The cut was only partly visible within the excavated area, measuring 0.45m long by 0.3m wide and 0.27m thick.

Archaeological plan of foundation trenching. Scale 1:50  
Drawing 001



West facing sample section of western foundation trench with cut [03]. Scale 1:10  
Drawing 002

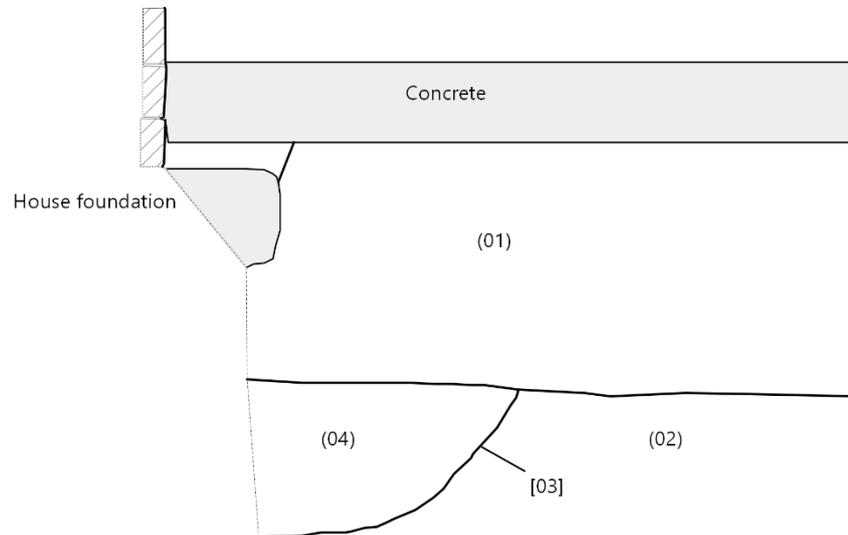
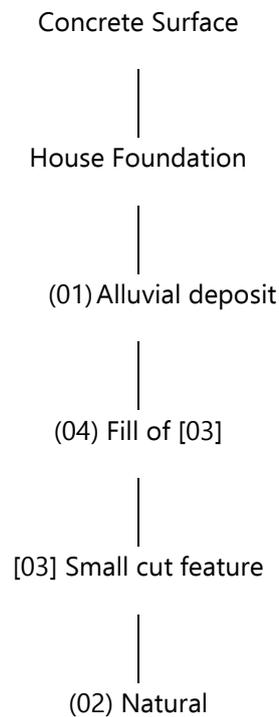


Fig. 4 Drawings 1 and 2: Site Plan 01 and Section 02

### Site Matrix



## 4 Conclusions

- 4.1. The watching brief did not identify any significant archaeological features within the development area. The only feature identified was a single discrete pit, that was cut into the natural below the foundations of the present structure (shown in Figure 4). This feature was only partly visible within the excavated area and contained mussel shells and small fragments of bone. The cut appeared to be sealed by the upper alluvial deposits which could therefore indicate prehistoric origins.
- 4.2. The soils that the houses of Harding Avenue are constructed on are comprised of silty alluvial sands sealing a waterlogged natural of oceanic sand and pebbles. These deposits are indicative of an environment characterised by coastal wetland and/or river deposition.

## 5 Sources

### Published sources

Quinnell, H. and Blockey, M., 1994. Excavations at Rhuddlan, Clwyd 1969-73. Mesolithic to Medieval. CBA Research Report 95. York: Council for British Archaeology.

Silvester, R. J., Martin, C. H. R. and Watson, S. E., 2014. Historic Settlements in Denbighshire. CPAT Report No. 1257

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**Cartographic sources**

1878 Ordnance Survey 6-inch map, Flintshire Sheet 7

1953 Ordnance Survey 6-inch map, Flintshire Sheet IV NE

## 6 Archive deposition Statement

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 and the paper/drawn/digital archive with the National Monuments Record (RCAHMW).

### 6.1. Archive summary

CPAT Event PRN: 214612

12 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4986

1 trench recording sheet

2 permatrace sheet drawings

## Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 2624

### Introduction

The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been instructed by Mr Adrian Hodson to undertake an archaeological watching brief in connection with the development of a rear extension at 11 Harding Avenue, Rhuddlan.

The development has been granted planning permission (Number: 44/2022/0052) for the construction of a two story extension to the rear of the property.

On the advice of the local Development Control Archaeologist, it was recommended that a watching brief be undertaken during all groundwork pertaining to the development.

The advice given by the local Development Control Archaeologist was as follows:

*"...we would recommend that an archaeologist is contracted to be present throughout the duration of new foundation excavations for the extension so that an adequate record of any archaeological features revealed by these works can be made".*

*"...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".*

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

The recommendations by the local Development Control Archaeologist were made due to the property's location in relation to the medieval historic core of Rhuddlan and proximity to the scheduled area of the early Norman Borough settlement.



Figure 1a

Site location (general)

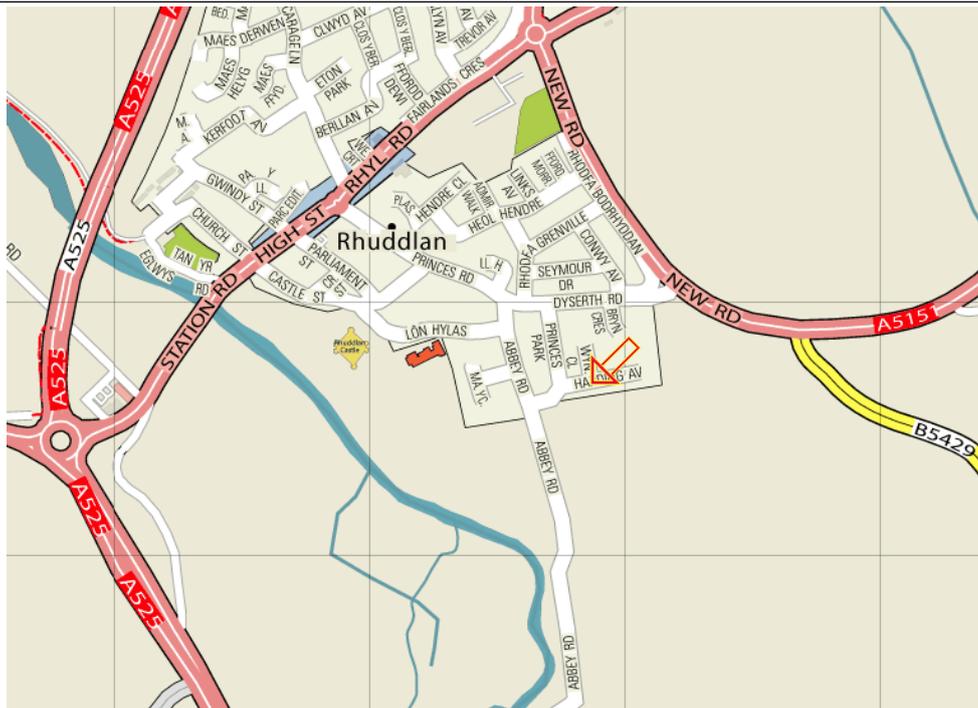


Figure 1b Site location (detail)

## Methodology

### Fieldwork investigation & recording

A plan of the permitted development is shown in Figures 2 and 3. The groundworks will consist of foundations excavated into a partly concreted area, extending 4.8m into the property's rear garden.

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, 3). 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 groundworks will be noted.  
6.2.
- 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.  
6.3.
- 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.  
6.4.
- Contexts will be recorded on individual record forms, using a continuous numbering system, and be drawn and photographed as appropriate.  
6.5.
- Plans will be drawn on permatrace to a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50, as appropriate.  
6.6.

- 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.  
6.7.
- 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.  
6.8.
- 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.

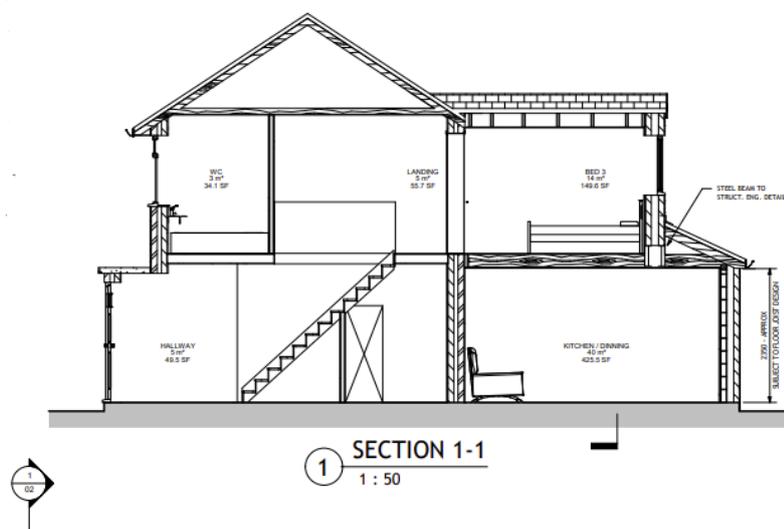


Figure 2 Section elevation of rear extension

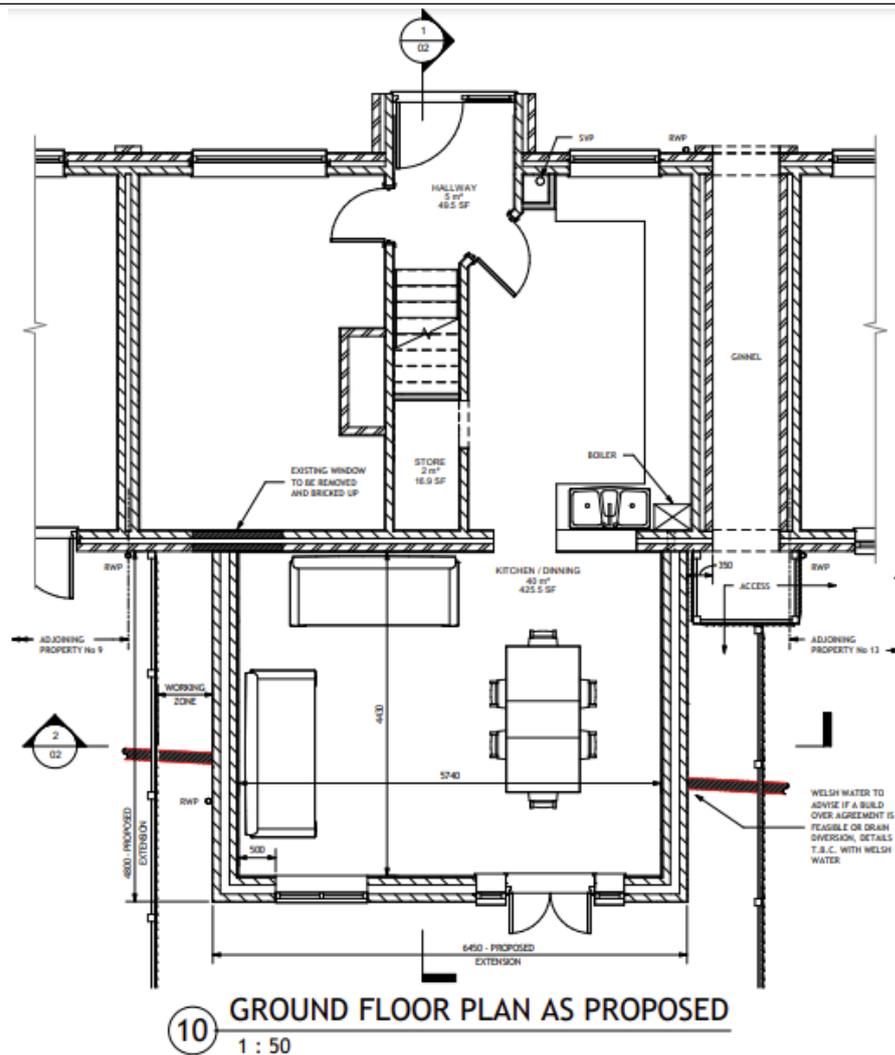


Figure 3 Proposed ground plan of rear extension

## Artefact selection strategy

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.

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

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.

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

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

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).

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.

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## Data management plan

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.

## Resources and programming

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).

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*.

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.

Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.

CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

Chris Matthews MRes

30<sup>th</sup> March 2022