

CPAT Report No. 1840

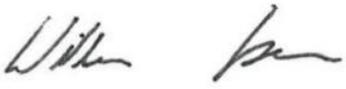
Ffinnant Farm, Trefeglwys, Powys

Archaeological Mitigation



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL CLWYD-POWYS
CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Four Seasons Country & Leisure Park
 CPAT Project No: 2579
 Project Name: Ffinnant Farm, Trefeglwys, Powys
 Grid Reference: SN 97749123
 County/LPA: Powys
 Planning Application: 20/0093/FUL
 CPAT Report No: 1840
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 Report status: Final

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 with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

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Summary

In October 2021 the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust carried out an archaeological mitigation during the installation of a service trench across the line of a Roman road at land at Ffynnant Farm, near Trefeglwys in Powys. Groundworks revealed the agger of a road measuring approximately 6.5m in width bounded by two side ditches. The agger was in good condition, but had lost some of its upper structure, probably as a result of ploughing. The agger had been built or had slumped over the side ditches, although this had occurred at or close to the time that the road was constructed. No further features were identified in the area to either side of the road. No artefactual remains were found.

Paleoenvironmental analysis of the ditch fill material identified domestic fuel residues and spelt wheat indicative of habitation close to the line of the road in this location. A sample of burnt branchwood from the northernmost ditch was C14 dated to the middle Iron Age. Spelt wheat grain recovered from the southern ditch was C14 dated to the Iron Age-Roman transition period.

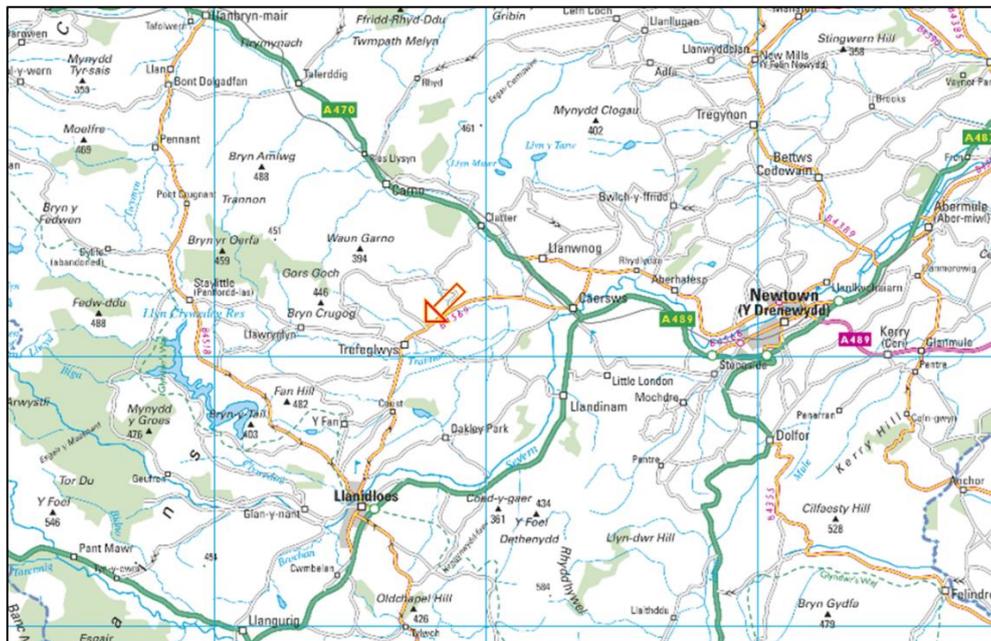
Crynodeb

Fis Hydref 2021, bu Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys yn cwblhau gwaith lliniaru archaeolegol yn ystod gwaith gosod rych gwasanaeth ar draws llinell ffordd Rufeinig ar dir yn Fferm Ffynnant, ger Trefeglwys ym Mhowys. Yn ystod gwaith paratoi tir, datgelwyd sarn ffordd yn mesur rhyw 6.5m o led, gyda dwy ffos o bobtu. Roedd y sarn mewn cyflwr da ond roedd wedi colli rhywfaint o'i strwythur uchaf, mae'n debyg o ganlyniad i aredig. Roedd y sarn wedi'i hadeiladu dros y ffosydd neu roedd wedi syrthio drostynt, er bod hyn wedi digwydd ar adeg adeiladu'r ffordd neu'n agos at yr amser hwnnw. Ni nodwyd unrhyw nodweddion pellach yn yr ardal ar y naill ochr na'r llall o'r ffordd. Ni ddatgelwyd unrhyw weddillion arteffactau.

Pan wnaed dadansoddiad paleoamgylcheddol o'r deunydd a oedd yn llenwi'r ffosydd, nodwyd gwaddodion tanwydd domestig a gwenith yr Almaen, sy'n awgrymu y bu pobl yn byw yn agos at linell y ffordd yn y lleoliad hwn. Pan wnaed prawf dyddio carbon-14 ar sampl o bren canghennau oedd wedi'u llosgi yn y ffos fwyaf gogleddol, cafwyd dyddiad o ganol yr Oes Haearn. Pan wnaed prawf dyddio carbon-14 ar wenithen yr Almaen o'r ffos ddeheuol, cafwyd dyddiad o'r cyfnod pontio rhwng yr Oes Haearn a'r cyfnod Rhufeinig.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. In October 2021 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust carried out an archaeological investigation on behalf of the Four Seasons Country & Leisure Park to discharge a planning condition for the installation of a rising main at Ffinnant, Caersws SY17 5QY (20/0093/FUL).



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Fig. 1 Location of the site (arrowed)

- 1.2. The site is located on arable land to the west of the country park, located to the east of the village of Trefglwys in the Trannon Valley in Powys (NGR SN97749123). The Roman road

(PRN 86625) is visible as an earthwork or cropmark running broadly east-west along the northern side of the valley floor. The groundworks comprised an open cut trench running north-west south-east across the line of the agger (Fig. 2).

1.3. The aim of the investigation was to excavate and record a section of the Roman road so that details of its construction are kept for posterity.

1.4. The brief set out the approach to be adopted. This comprised;

“a 1 metre wide trench to be cut along the red area marked on the attached plan (Figure 2) to allow access for recording the Roman road in plan and section. The max depth of excavation will be 1100mm. Topsoils and non-archaeological subsoils will be removed carefully by a machine fitted with a toothless bucket down to the surface of the Roman road. The road itself and any lateral features will then be manually excavated to the max formation level of the new pipeline (1100mm) over a trench 1 metre wide. The trench should extend up to 5 metres either side of the Roman road to pick up potential quarry pits and lateral drains.”

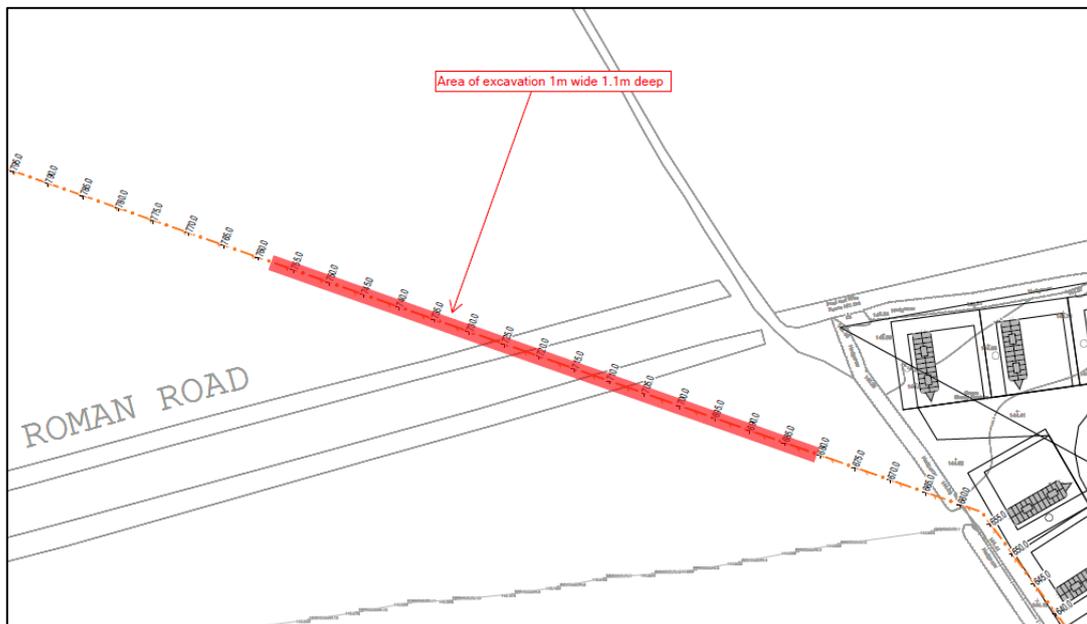


Fig. 2 Detailed plan of the proposed excavation area

2 Historical Background

2.1. There is considerable known evidence for pre Roman occupation of the Upper Severn Valley. Caersws, 7km to the east of the study area was occupied during the late prehistoric period, with several enclosed settlements including a causewayed enclosure recorded in the vicinity. This pattern of occupation continues within the Trannon Valley, with Iron Age enclosure sites at Gaer Bella and Pwllglas, both 1.5km to the south of the site and Penrhos 1.1km to the east. A small poorly defined Iron Age hillfort is located at Berth-las 2.2km to the north-west.

2.2. The earliest Roman occupation of the area seems to date from the mid-late 1st century AD when the first permanent fort was constructed at Caersws. A second somewhat smaller fort was also constructed during this period, which was improved during the late 1st and early to mid-2nd centuries and occupied militarily until the early 3rd century. A vicus grew up in association with the second fort, but it is unclear whether this continued to be occupied once

the fort had fallen out of use. Caersws was strategically important as it was located at the junction of several routes within mid-Wales. Some of these routes are not well defined or are notional but included a road north to Caer Gai at the southern end of Lake Bala, a possible route to Castell Collen to the south, a route that runs towards Carno and a route between Wroxeter in the east and Pennal in the east. This latter route ran along the northern edge of the Trannon valley where the route is visible as an earthwork, cropmark or is fossilised in the form of extant field boundaries. The road is less well defined west of Trefeglwys and is assumed to have continued due west toward Penycroben and Pennal.

- 2.3. Evidence for Roman occupation in the lower Trannon valley is sparser than the dense concentration discovered in Caersws. Evidence for an iron bloomery at Cwmbernant 3.8km south of the study area, and smelting at Pen y Graig 1.5km to the west may be Roman in date and indicative of occupation. There is also evidence that lead was mined at Dylife 12km to the west during this period. It is notable that the road runs directly towards Dylife and may have been constructed specifically to serve the mining operation in this location. A large quantity of 1st and 2nd century Roman coins buried in a pottery vessel was discovered at Cil Haul Farm 2.1km west of the study area, in the early 19th century and must surely have related to a dwelling close to the road west of Trefeglwys.
- 2.4. The study area appears to have been open farmland since the Roman period. The 1836 Ordnance Survey Map records the Roman road itself but does not record the field boundaries (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3 Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1" map of 1836

- 2.5. The 1885 Ordnance Survey 6" Map depicts the study area in a recognisable modern form including the extant field boundaries (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4 Extract from the Ordnance Survey 6" map of 1885

3 Archaeological Mitigation

- 3.1. The archaeological mitigation was conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2020). A trench 21m in length and 1.5m wide was laid across the line of the west – east aligned Roman road (Drawings 1 and 2). The trenching was oriented north-west south-east across the agger rather than at right angles to it which distorted it when viewed in section (Drawing 3).



Fig. 5 Post excavation view of the agger viewed from the north-east Photo CPAT 4963-045

- 3.2. The topsoil (001) comprised a mid-yellowish grey plastic clay silt varying between 0.20-0.25m deep (see section in Drawing 3). While comparatively rich in small stones throughout the length of the trench, the density increased markedly directly over the road (Fig. 5), which was probably due to long-term arable farming dragging stones up from the underlying road structure. Beneath the topsoil were two broadly similar deposits (002) and (007) consisting of a matrix of a mid-yellowish-grey sandy-clay-silt 0.22-0.29m thick containing small stones, and separated by the road structure. The southern-most deposit (007) was somewhat stonier than that to the north suggesting that this material had been pulled down off the top of the road structure by later weathering or arable activity. Underlying deposit (002) was a stony sandy clay (012), 0.13m thick overlying the edge of the agger construction deposit (003).



Fig. 6 South-west facing section of the agger viewed from the south Photo CPAT 4963-031



Fig. 7 South-west facing section showing the road construction Photo CPAT 4963-033

- 3.3. The agger comprised two layers of construction. It measured 6.5m in width and 0.43m in height. The upper surviving layer (003) was composed of densely packed poorly sorted river cobbles and pebbles within a finer stony matrix 0.2m thick. Underlying layer (003) a layer of oxidised bright orangey-brown clay silt, varying in depth between 0.03-0.05m, was revealed (005). This was possibly a trample layer formed during the construction of the road. Underlying (005) was the substructure of the agger (004) formed from a dense, sterile rich reddish-brown plastic clay-silt 0.2-0.3m thick (Fig. 7).



Figs. 8 and 9 Ditches [010] (left) and [008] (right) viewed from the north-east Photos CPAT 4963-043 and 4963-040

- 3.4. To either side of the road was a shallow ditch, with stones from the agger extending over the northern ditch. The northern ditch [008] consisted of a flat based, U-shaped channel 0.40m wide and 0.1-0.2m deep. The northern edge sloped gently to the south, whereas the southern edge was steeper. The single fill (009) comprised a friable, pale mid-reddish-grey clay sealed by the upper agger construction layer (003) which had been pushed over on to it due to weathering or plough activity.
- 3.5. On the southern side of the road, a stony deposit (006) was revealed underlying deposit (007). This layer was similar in composition to the upper agger deposit (003), sealing the roadside ditch [011]. This deposit was probably material removed from the upper structure of the road by weathering or ploughing.
- 3.6. The southern roadside ditch [010] was similar in form to [008] but shallower at 0.11m deep, and with a rather flatter base. The single fill (011) comprised a friable, pale mid-reddish-grey clay sealed by (006).
- 3.7. Underlying the road and cut by the roadside ditches was a naturally derived stony clay subsoil (013). This was excavated to 5m either side of the agger and cleaned but no additional features were identified. It was interpreted as a natural geological formation.

4 Palaeoenvironmental Assessment

- 4.1. Two bulk samples were taken from ditch fills (009) and (011) and assessed by Archaeological Services, Durham University (Appendix 2). The bulk samples were manually floated and sieved through a 500 μ m mesh. The residues were examined for shells, fruitstones, nutshells, charcoal, small bones, pottery, flint, glass and industrial residues, and were scanned using a magnet for ferrous fragments. The flots were examined at up to x60 magnification for charred and waterlogged botanical remains using a Leica MZ7.5 stereomicroscope. Identification of these was undertaken by comparison with modern reference material held in the Palaeoenvironmental Laboratory at Archaeological Services Durham University. Assessment and report preparation was conducted by Lorne Elliott. Sample processing was by Lorne Elliott and Dr Charlotte O'Brien.
- 4.2. Both samples contained a surprising amount of palaeoenvironmental information considering they produced small flots. Ditch fill (011) was the more productive of the two. There were signs of domestic waste and the palaeoenvironmental evidence was consistent with a Roman date, in particular the use of spelt wheat, which was a principal crop during the Roman period. Ditch fill (009) had less material than (011), but contained comparable fuel debris, including the good condition of the charcoal and the range of tree species present in the assemblage.
- 4.3. Both contexts have evidence that reflects a heathy grassland environment, and some of this evidence could also be an indication of burnt turves. The good condition of the charcoal suggests that there has been little exposure to post-depositional processes, which may be due to it being rapidly buried amongst the stony fills.
- 4.4. Material suitable for C14 dating was obtained during the palaeoenvironmental assessment and sent to Beta Analytic for processing. A sample of birch branchwood charcoal from ditch fill (009) was dated to *541 - 389 cal BC* to two sigma (2490-2338 BP Beta 613900) and was therefore middle Iron Age in date. Spelt wheat grains from ditch fill (011) were dated to *127 cal BC - 62 cal AD* to two sigma (2070-1888 BP, Beta 613901), suggesting a late Iron Age or early Romano British date (Appendix 3).

5 Conclusions

- 5.1. The road surface would probably have been 4.5m-5m in width. This would be a medium width roadway by Roman standards, roads of this period being typically 3m-8m in width (Bagshawe, 2000, 15). The side ditches were approximately 6-7m apart. Drawing 3 shows the section through the agger as 6.5m in width, but this section was at an angle and much of this width was due to slumping and weathering or plough damage after it had been constructed
- 5.2. The upper structure of the road appeared to have been truncated, either by historic weathering or recent arable activity. The stone upper road structure (003) was only 0.2m below current ground level and completely abraded away from the lower structure (004) which rises to a high point on the southern side, and possibly also did on the north side. The camber of the road surface was still discernible on the northern side but was quite flat in the centre. There was no evidence to suggest any form of metalling besides the stony surfacing material.
- 5.3. The lower structure was constructed from redeposited subsoil and the upper structure from river cobbles, but these appeared to have been imported from somewhere outside of the immediate locality. The side ditches were too shallow to have provided enough material to build the lower agger and are interpreted as drains rather than quarry ditches.

- 5.4. A paleoenvironmental assessment of the fills of the side ditches identified spelt wheat which is generally considered a key signifier of Roman occupation and fuel debris, possibly residues from burning turves. Environmental remains suggested that the landscape was grassland. Other small plant species identified included ribwort plantain and pignut. Tree species represented included alder, birch, blackthorn, hawthorn, hazel and oak. It is possible that the burnt residues originated as a result of burning and clearance of vegetation along the route for the road.
- 5.5. Carbon dating (C14) of birch branchwood charcoal recovered from the northern roadside ditch [008] indicated that the material had been burnt in the middle Iron Age and was therefore residual. Spelt wheat grain recovered from the southern ditch (011) was dated to the Iron Age-Roman transition period, but presumably dates from the mid-late 1st century onwards which is the median of the date range given, and would be potentially contemporary with the road construction.

6 Sources

Published sources

Bagshawe, R., W., 2000. *Roman Roads*. Shire Publications Ltd, Princes Risborough

Unpublished sources

Beta Analytic, 2022. *Report of Radiocarbon Dating Analyses FFC9S1*, Beta Analytic

Elliot, L., 2021. *Ffinnant Farm, Trefeglwys, Powys, Paleoenvironmental Assessment*, Archaeological Services Durham University, Report 5692

Online sources

<http://archwilio.org.uk/arch/> accessed December 2021

Cartographic sources

1836 Ordnance Survey 1" Map Sheet 60

1885 Ordnance Survey 6" Map Montgomeryshire Sheet 42 N.W.

7 Archive deposition Statement

- 7.1. 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

48 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4963

1 permatrace drawing sheet

1 trench recording sheet

1 photogrammetric plan

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 2579

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been appointed by Four Seasons Country & Leisure Park to undertake an archaeological investigation of a Roman road prior to installation of a rising main across it (planning reference 20/0093/FUL) (Figure 1). The location is NGR SN97749123, and the address is Four Seasons Country & Leisure Park, Ffinnant, Caersws SY17 5QY.
- 1.2. The development is to install a rising main for the Country Park and a Brief has been produced by the Archaeological Advisor to the planning authority for a pre-construction investigation.
- 1.3. The Caersws to Trefeglwys Roman road has been recorded as a clearly visible cropmark by the Royal Commission (see NPRN 400131) with potential quarry pits for road construction on the north side. It is anticipated that there will also be evidence of lateral drainage ditches.
- 1.4. A proposed rising main trench (300mm x 1100mm) to the Four Seasons Holiday Park, Gleiniant, Trefeglyws will be constructed through a section of the Roman Road (PRN 11737). The trench will cut diagonally from NW to SE across the Roman road, and so an archaeological investigation is required as mitigation for the development impact.

2 Methodology

Aims and Approach

- 2.1. The aims of the investigation are to excavate and record a section of the Roman road before it is disturbed, so that details of its construction are kept for posterity.
- 2.2. The Brief sets out the approach that must be adopted "a 1 metre wide trench to be cut along the red area marked on the attached plan (Figure 2) to allow access for recording the Roman road in plan and section. The max depth of excavation will be 1100mm. Topsoils and non-archaeological subsoils will be removed carefully by a machine fitted with a toothless bucket down to the surface of the Roman road. The road itself and any lateral features will then be manually excavated to the max formation level of the new pipeline (1100mm) over a trench 1 metre wide. The trench should extend up to 5 metres either side of the Roman road to pick up potential quarry pits and lateral drains."

Fieldwork

- 2.2. The investigation will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Field Evaluation (2020). The mitigation investigation will be undertaken to record the Roman road under archaeological conditions, rather than as part of a watching brief on construction activities. 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.

Artefacts

2.3. 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 will be made to assess and study any artefacts, assemblages and environment samples.
- Any artefacts recovered during the recording process will be deposited with the nearest regional or county Museum, subject to the permission of the owner. The artefacts will be deposited along with a copy of the site report including a detailed list of all artefacts recovered.

Selection Strategy

2.4. 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.

2.6. 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

Site archive

- 2.7. 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) and Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs) V1 (July 2018).
- 2.8. 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. 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.

Data management plan

- 2.9. 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.

Report

- 2.10. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:
- Non-technical summary
 - Introduction
 - Aims & Objectives
 - Methodology
 - Site location
 - Archaeological Background
 - Watching brief
 - Conclusions
 - References
 - Appropriate appendices on archives and finds
- 2.11. 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).

3 Resources and programming

- 3.1. The investigation 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

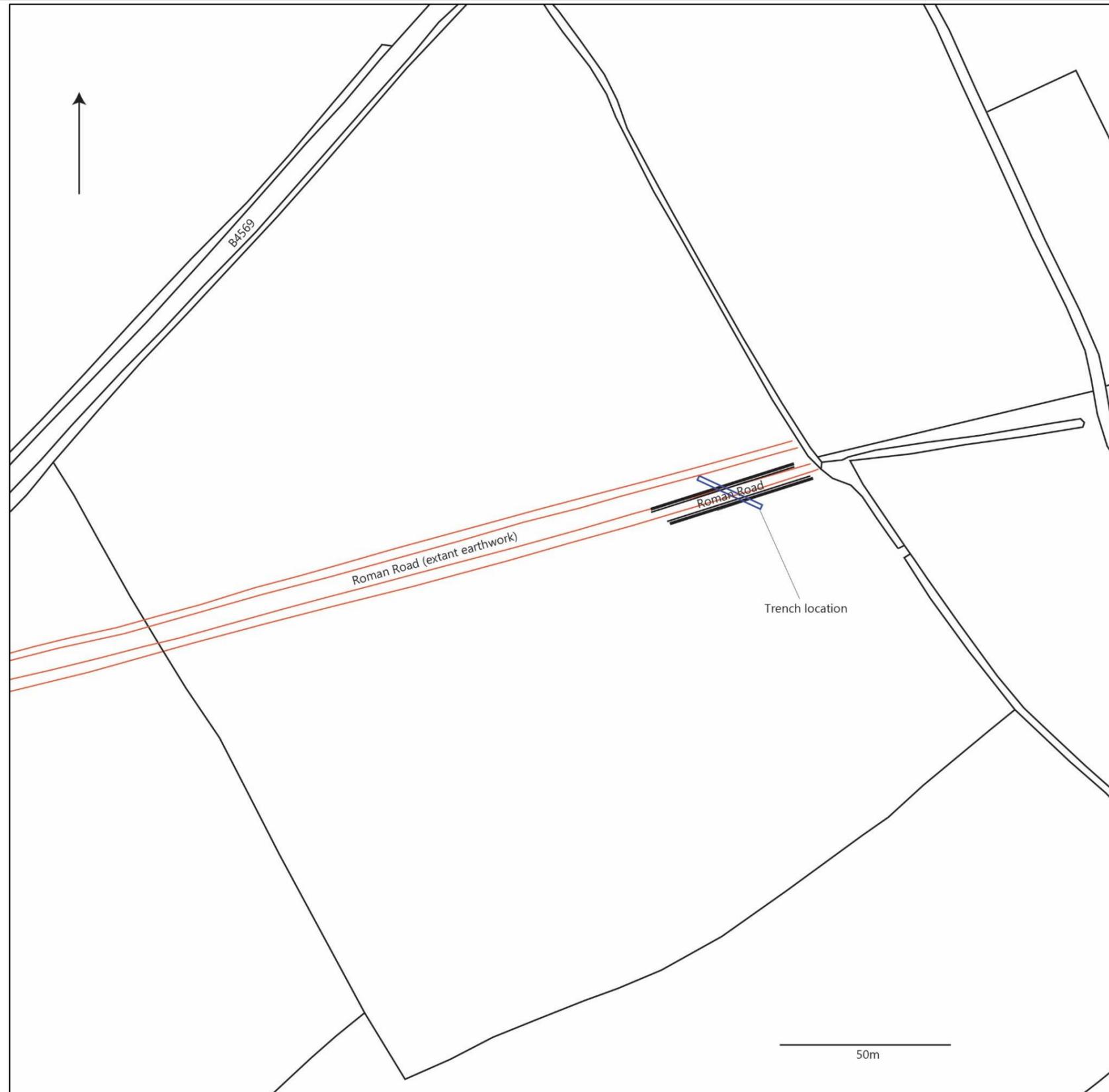
abide by their Code of Conduct (2019) and the Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology (2014).

- 3.2. The field work is scheduled for week commencing 4th October 2021 and may take up to three days in duration.
- 3.3. 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.
- 3.4. 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 |
- 3.4. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 3.6. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

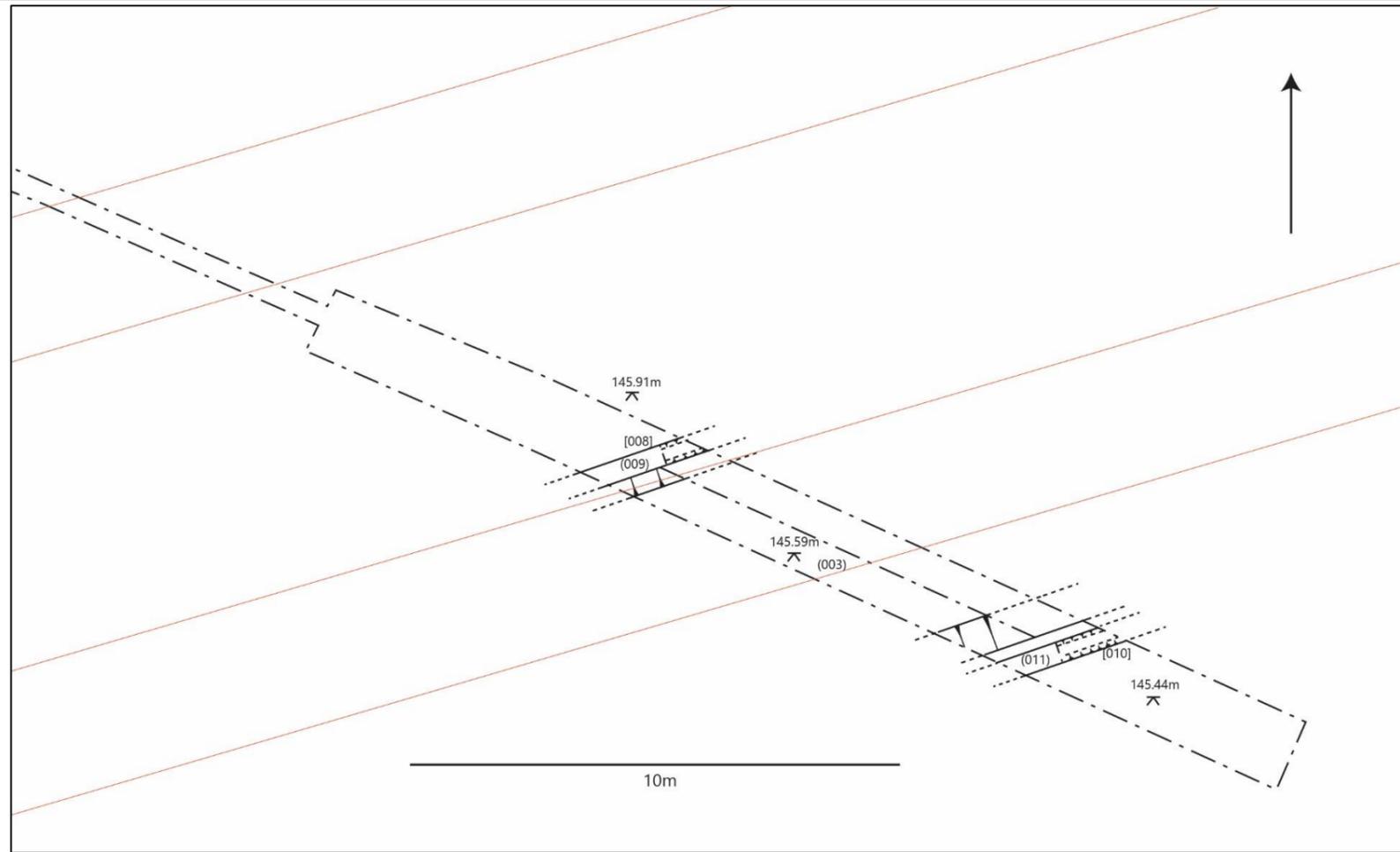
Tim Malim
30th September 2021

Appendix 2: Palaeoenvironmental Assessment

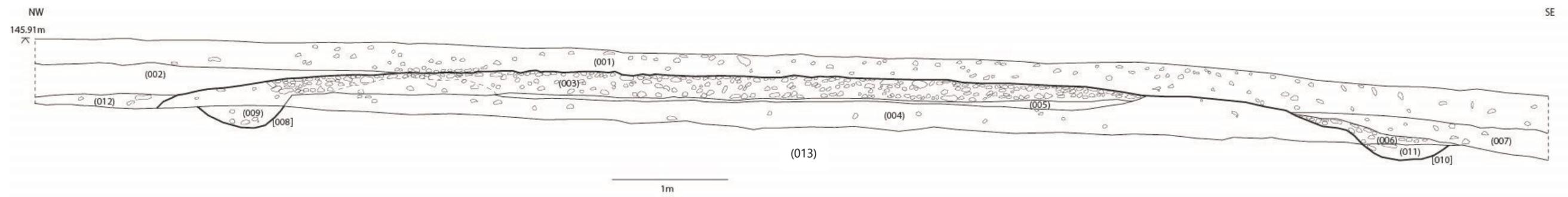
Appendix 3: Beta Analytic radiocarbon determination



Drawing 1 Groundworks location plan showing the archaeological trenching (marked in blue)



Drawing 2 Plan of the trenching showing the position of the features



Drawing 3 South-west facing section of the Roman road