

CPAT Report No. 1703

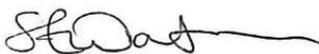
Powis Castle Fibre Installation

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



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Client name: National Trust
 CPAT Project No: 2425
 Project Name: Powis Castle Ducting
 Grid Reference: SJ 2148 0641
 County/LPA: Powys
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Summary

In October 2019 the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust undertook an archaeological watching brief at Powis Castle, on behalf of the National Trust, during the installation of a ducted fibre optic cable.

The watching brief identified a former flagstone road surface immediately adjacent to the north-west side of the castle, which is likely to be 18th- or 19th-century date.

No further significant archaeological features or artefacts were identified.

Crynodeb

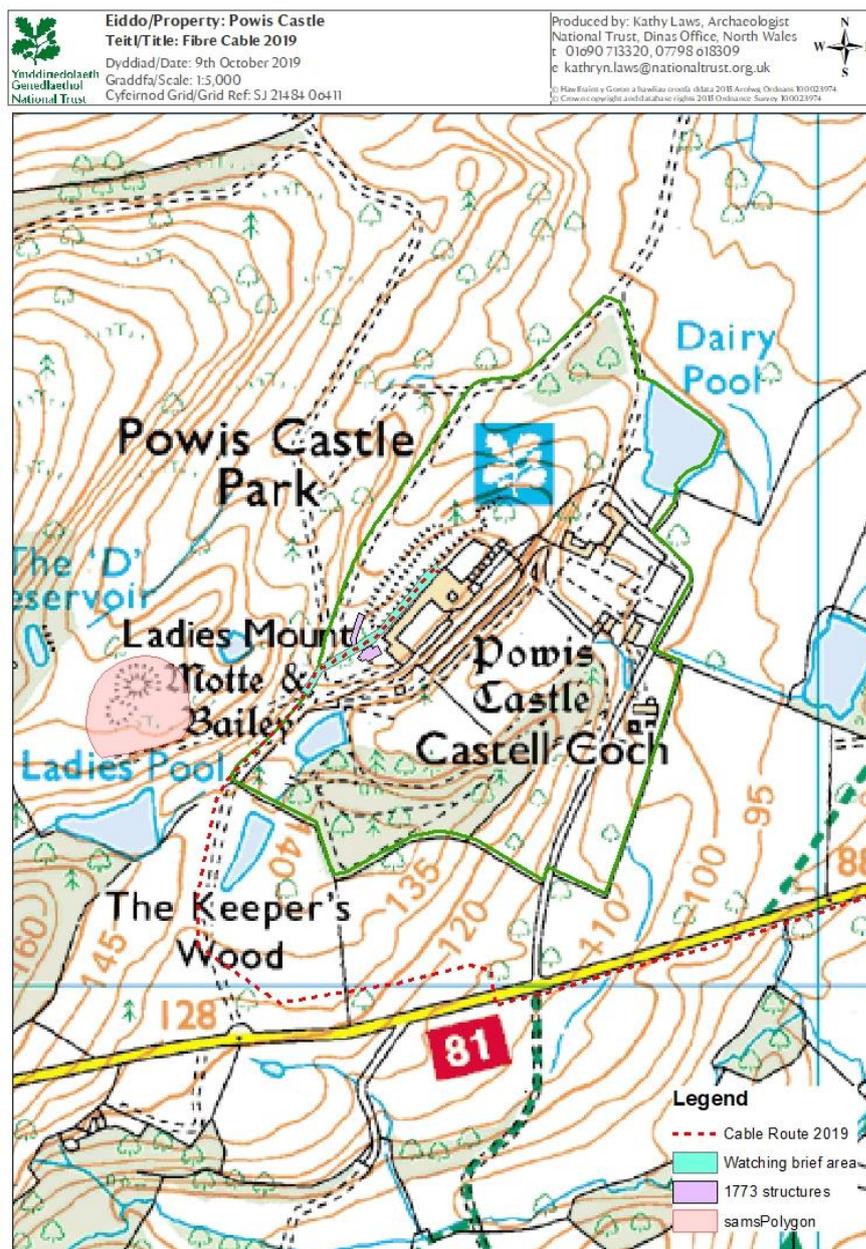
Ym mis Hydref 2019, bu Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys yn cynnal briff gwyllo archaeolegol yng Nghastell Powys, ar ran yr Ymddiriedolaeth Genedlaethol, yn ystod gwaith gosod cebl ffeibr optig trwy bibellau.

Nododd y briff gwyllo arwyneb hen ffordd o lorlechi yn gyfagos at ochr ogledd-orllewinol y castell, sy'n debygol o ddyddio o'r 18^{fed} neu'r 19^{eg} ganrif.

Ni nodwyd unrhyw arteffactau neu nodweddion archaeolegol sylweddol eraill.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) were invited by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief in connection with the installation of a ducted fibre optic cable at Powis Castle, Welshpool, Powys (SJ 2148 0641).
- 1.2. The duct ran from the west side of the castle to a point on Red Land close to the junction with the A458, although the watching brief was restricted to the area closest to the Castle where there was the highest potential to disturb archaeological deposits.
- 1.3. The remainder of the cable route largely followed the exit route from Powis Castle (see Fig. 1).



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Fig. 1 Location of Powis Castle cable trench

2 Background

- 2.1. The original date of construction of Powis Castle is unknown. While early accounts refer to events taking place at a castle in this area in the twelfth century, the presence of two other castle sites nearby, Domen Castle in Welshpool and Lady's Mount within Powis Castle Park, confuse the issue. It does seem that there was a castle on the site by the 13th century, with earliest references to a park and garden dating to the 16th century.
- 2.2. To the south-west of the castle the cable trench crossed the projected line of the large medieval defensive ditch, as well as the site of a barn shown on a 1771 map by Thomas Pritchard.
- 2.3. In 2013 an intact English pancake (onion) wine bottle, dating to between 1680 and 1720, was recovered from this area whilst a tree was being planted.
- 2.4. In 2017 a watching brief was carried out by CPAT of a cable duct trench which also ran through this area. The line of the defensive ditch was observed, although the excavation was too shallow to define its edges.
- 2.5. Further along the route passed within more than 100m of Lady's Mount Motte and Bailey Castle. Lady's Mount is a Scheduled Monument (MG093), and possibly the predecessor to Powis Castle.

3 Watching Brief

- 3.1. The watching brief was conducted between 28-31 October 2019 in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) (2014) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*.
- 3.2. The trench was for the most part relatively narrow (0.25m) and shallow (0.30m) and employed a cut and back-fill method, whereby a relatively short length of trench was excavated, the ducting installed, and the trench backfilled before moving on.
- 3.3. Where a junction box was inserted, a pit measuring around 0.60m square and 0.65m deep was excavated.
- 3.4. Excavation of the ducting trench started to the immediate west of the castle along the line of a track following the base of the castle walls. The trench identified as series of levelling deposits beneath the track, although part of an earlier road surface was exposed, composed of rectangular flagstones of probable 18th- or 19th-century date. This lay immediately beneath the current gravel road surface (see figure 2).
- 3.5. No other archaeological deposits or features were identified in this section of the trench.



Fig. 2 Flagstone surface exposed alongside the castle CPAT Image 4711-0009



Fig. 3 Powis Castle fibre trench extending across the grassed area. CPAT Image 4711-0015

- 3.6. Where the trench turned down slope, across the grassed area to the south-west of the castle, the topsoil overlay a red gravelly clay, although in places the trench was primarily filled with a brown soil which had seen a great deal of root action owing to the proximity of the surrounding trees. Here, the trench also partially followed the line of an earlier water main and also crossed the line of a large black drainage duct heading from the castle towards red lane, the deposits in this area having already been recently disturbed.
- 3.7. Towards the base of the slope, where the ground levels slightly before sloping again down to the road, the topsoil overlay a very mixed yellow/grey clay containing occasional fragments of brick (see figure 3 above).
- 3.8. A further junction box was excavated in between the gravel footpath and the road leading up to the castle which revealed 0.10m of topsoil overlying a 0.15m-thick layer of mid-reddish grey sub-soil, which in turn overlay 0.15m of dark reddish/grey sandy, clayey silt containing varying sized fragments of brick and charcoal. At the base of the trench, a greyish green angular stone was exposed (see figure 4 below).



Fig. 4 Junction box between the footpath and Red Lane. CPAT Image 4711-0018

4 Conclusions

- 4.1. The watching brief identified the remnants of a former flagstone surface along the north-west side the castle, immediately beneath the present gravel track. Other remnants of this surface survived outside of the doorways into the north-west side of the castle. Although no dating evidence was recovered it is likely that the road surface dates from the 18th or 19th century.
- 4.2. The grassy area to the south-west of the castle had been disturbed previously on a number of occasions by other cable trenches, and also for water mains and drainage. The proximity of some large trees also meant that the area was subject to considerable root action.

-
- 4.3. Generally, the trench did not exceed a depth of 0.30m and it appears that the grassy area to the south-west of the castle had been landscaped at some time, with the importation of a redeposited yellow/grey clay deposit.
 - 4.4. No visible remains of the building shown on the 1771 map were identified, although some of the deposits exposed within the area of the building contained occasional red brick fragments.
 - 4.5. Despite the close proximity to the castle, no further significant archaeological deposits or artefacts were identified during the watching brief.

5 Archive deposition Statement

- 5.1. 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 a copy of the report will be deposited jointly with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and the National Monuments Record (RCAHMW). Archive summary

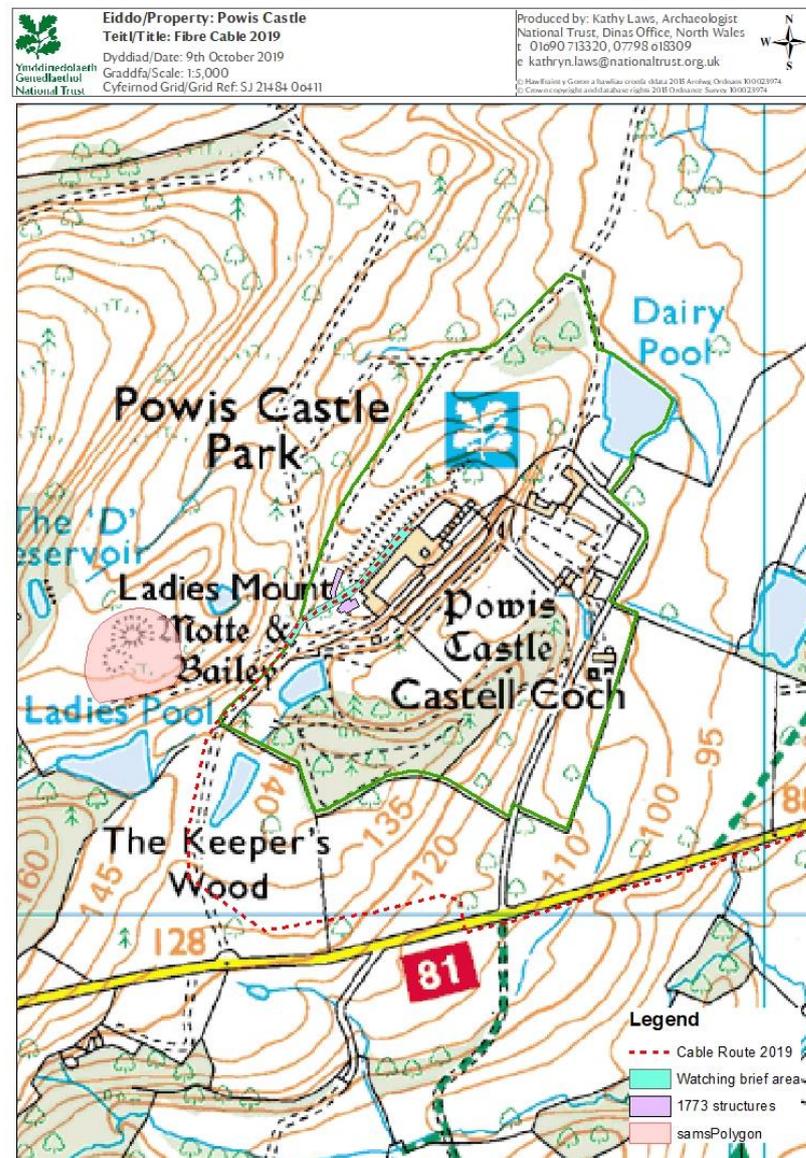
CPAT Event PRN: 140319

19 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4711

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 2130

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been invited by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief in connection with the installation of a ducted fibre optic cable at Powis Castle, Welshpool, Powys (SJ 2148 0641). This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) is based on a brief prepared by the National Trust Archaeologist.
- 1.2. The duct will run between the west side of the castle to a point on Red Land close to the junction with the A458. The cable route largely follows the exit route from Powis Castle, see map below.



- 1.3. The trench is for the most part likely to be relatively narrow and shallow. A cut and back-fill method will be employed ie a relatively short length of trench will be excavated, the duct laid, and then back filled before moving on.

- 1.4. The watching brief is restricted to the end of the route closest to the Castle where there is the highest potential to disturb archaeological deposits.

2 Archaeological and Historic Background

- 2.1. The original date of construction of Powis Castle is unknown. While early accounts refer to events taking place at a castle in this area in the twelfth century, the presence of two other castle sites nearby, Domen Castle in Welshpool and Lady's Mount within Powis Castle Park, confuse the issue. It does seem that there was a castle on the site by the 13th century, with earliest references to a park and garden dating to the 16th century.
- 2.2. The cable trench will run along the path directly adjacent to the west side of the castle before running through an area where several structures are shown on a 1771 map by Thomas Pritchard, see accompanying map. This area is also at the end of a feature cut into the hill slope which may represent the remains of a moat associated with the medieval castle.
- 2.3. In 2013 an intact English pancake (onion) wine bottle, dating to between 1680 and 1720, was recovered from this area whilst a tree was being planted.
- 2.4. In 2017 a watching brief was carried out by Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust of a cable duct trench which also ran through this area. The line of the defensive ditch was observed although the excavation was too shallow to define its edges.
- 2.5. Further along the route passes within more than 100m of Lady's Mount Motte and Bailey Castle. Lady's Mount is a Scheduled Monument (MG093), and possibly the predecessor to Powis Castle.
- 2.6. The route then runs along the edge of the road which leads away from Powis Castle before cutting across the Powis Estate fields to Red Lane.

3 Objectives

- 3.1. The objectives of the watching brief are:
 - To provide an intensive archaeological watching brief and suitable archaeological recording of deposits disturbed during the trenching for the new cable for the section of the route closest to the Castle, where there is the highest potential for disruption to archaeological deposits (see map attached).
 - To respond to call out for unanticipated discoveries along the remainder of the route.
 - To prepare a report outlining the results of the watching brief.
 - To establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing along the route of the new cable.

4 Methodology

Fieldwork

- 4.1. 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 extension. 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

- 4.2. 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.

Site archive

- 4.3. 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).
- 4.4. 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-Powis Archaeological Trust.

Report

- 4.5. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:
- Non-technical summary
 - Introduction
 - Site location
 - Archaeological Background
 - Evaluation
 - Conclusions
 - References
 - Appropriate appendices on archives and finds
- 4.6. 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).

5 Resources and programming

- 5.1. The watching brief will be undertaken by a skilled archaeologist under the overall supervision of Nigel Jones, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). CPAT is also a CIfA Registered Organisation and as such agrees to abide by their *Code of Conduct* (2014) and the *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (2014).
- 5.2. 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*.
- 5.3. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 5.4. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

N W Jones

23 October 2019