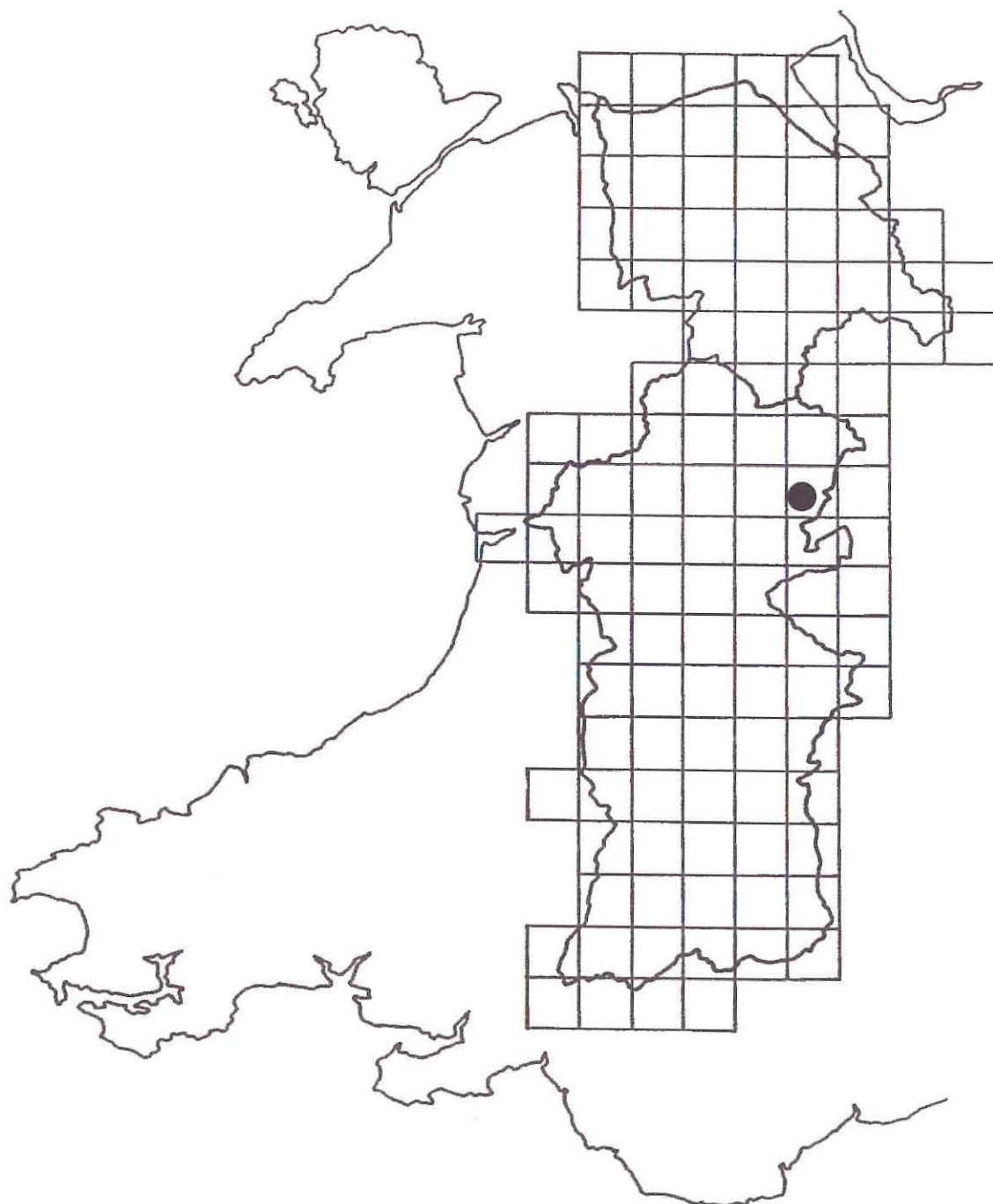


*Domen Castell Motte & Bailey Castle,  
Welshpool:*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF




## CPAT Report Record

### Report and status

CPAT Report Title	Domen Castell Motte & Bailey Castle, Welshpool: Archaeological Watching Brief.		
CPAT Project Name	Welshpool Motte & Bailey		
CPAT Project No	671	CPAT Report No	177
Confidential (yes/no)	N	draft/final	FINAL

### Internal control

	name	signature	date
prepared by	A.M.Gibson		16/5/96
checked by	W.J. Britnell	WJ Britnell	28/5/96
approved by	W.J. Britnell	WJ Britnell	28/5/96.

### Revisions

no	date	made by	checked by	approved by

### Internal memo


## The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

7a Church Street Welshpool Powys SY21 7DL  
tel (01938) 553670, fax 552179

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*Domen Castell Motte & Bailey Castle,  
Welspool:*

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**by A.M. Gibson**  
May 1996

Report prepared for Powys County Council Highways & Property Directorate

**The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust**

7a Church Street Welshpool Powys SY21 7DL

tel (01938) 553670, fax 552179

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## **APPENDIX 1: SPECIFICATIONS**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In April 1996, the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (henceforth CPAT Contracts) was requested by Powys County Council Highways & Property Directorate to submit a quotation and specification for undertaking archaeological work connected with the construction of a fence and drainage works at the motte & bailey castle at Dornen Castell, Welshpool. (NGR SJ23010740; SMR Primary Record No. 120; Scheduled Ancient Monument No. Mg19).
- 1.2 The development lies within Dornen Castell motte & bailey castle, Welshpool (fig. 1), which is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Mg 19). Scheduled Monument Consent for the works was granted by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, which was conditional on a specified archaeological response:
- a that Cadw shall be provided with at least 2 weeks' notice, in writing, of the date of the commencement of works;
  - b that the posts for the fence shall be driven into the ground and not dug in;
  - c that the trial excavations to locate the land drains shall be carried out under the supervision of a professionally qualified archaeological organisation;
  - d that the excavations shall initially be carried out within the 2m corridor behind the retaining wall. In the event that further excavations beyond this area are necessary, the approved archaeological organisation shall be permitted to stop this work for up to one day to record any archaeological strata or features revealed;
  - e that no excavation work shall be carried out beyond the area which is 5m from the retaining wall, without prior consultation from Cadw; and
  - f that arrangements shall be made with the approved archaeological organisation to prepare a report on the archaeological work, even if no archaeological features are revealed. A copy of the report should be deposited with Cadw within 3 months, at the latest, of the completion of the excavation work.
- 1.3 CPAT Contracts were subsequently commissioned by Powys County Council Highways and Property Directorate on 2nd May 1996 to carry out the work. The watching brief was commenced and completed on 13th May 1996.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Motte and bailey castle at Welshpool is not closely dated but is likely by analogy to be early medieval.
- 2.2 Presently, the motte is overgrown with managed woodland and scrub. The bailey, to the north, is oval and measures 57m x 44m internally and is now occupied by a crown bowling green. The bailey banks have been formalised to provide for spectators, and the outer perimeter of the bailey is occupied by woodland and light scrub.



- 2.3 The eastern arc of the site is now bounded by the Welshpool relief road. A watching brief was mounted during the construction of this road and the re-consolidation of the modern retaining wall. This concluded that the clay bank of the bailey sloped down to meet the natural gravel roughly at the point where the retaining wall now stands (Gibson 1991). Any surrounding ditch at this point is presumed to lie under the present road.
- 2.4 The location of this clay bank during the watching brief has been taken to suggest that the medieval bailey was more ogival than the present earthworks suggest (Gibson 1991; Nenck *et al.* 1992), though it must be remembered that the date of the clay bank visible in the excavations was not determined.

### **3 WATCHING BRIEF**

- 3.1 Works commenced at the site on the morning of 13th May under the supervision of the writer.
- 3.2 A trench (fig. 2) was dug behind the present retaining wall by mechanical excavator to locate the porous pipe behind the wall as well as the drainage pipes from the bowling green inside the bailey. This trench extended c. 2m from the retaining wall.
- 3.3 While the former was located, no trace of the latter could be found.
- 3.4 **Stratigraphy**
- 3.4.1 The excavated trench was full of a backfill of loose sand and gravel. This extended to the foundations of the retaining wall on the east and to a depth of approximately 1.2m on the west. This was a single episode backfill relating to the construction of the retaining wall.
- 3.4.2 In the west section of the trench, a clay band was noted at a depth of approximately 1.2m extending to a depth of approximately 2.5m at which point it directly overlay the natural gravel. This is interpreted as the clay bank forming the present bailey and its position is shown schematically in fig. 2.
- 3.4.3 The age of this bank could not be determined and there were no finds. No buried soil was noted between the clay bank and the natural gravel. The instability of the modern backfill prevented detailed recording of the stratigraphy.
- 3.4.4 No trace of drainage pipes, pipe trenches or drainage gullies cutting this clay bank were noted.

### **4 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 The present groundworks lay within the confines of the excavations previously carried out by McAlpines in connection with the construction of the Welshpool relief road and therefore little, if any, damage is likely to have been done to the archaeological deposits.

- 4.2 Traces of a bank of clean yellow clay were noted in the western section and are interpreted as the make-up of the bailey bank.
- 4.3 Whether this clay bank represents the original medieval construction or whether it is part of the modern landscaping of the bowling green has not been determined.

## **5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

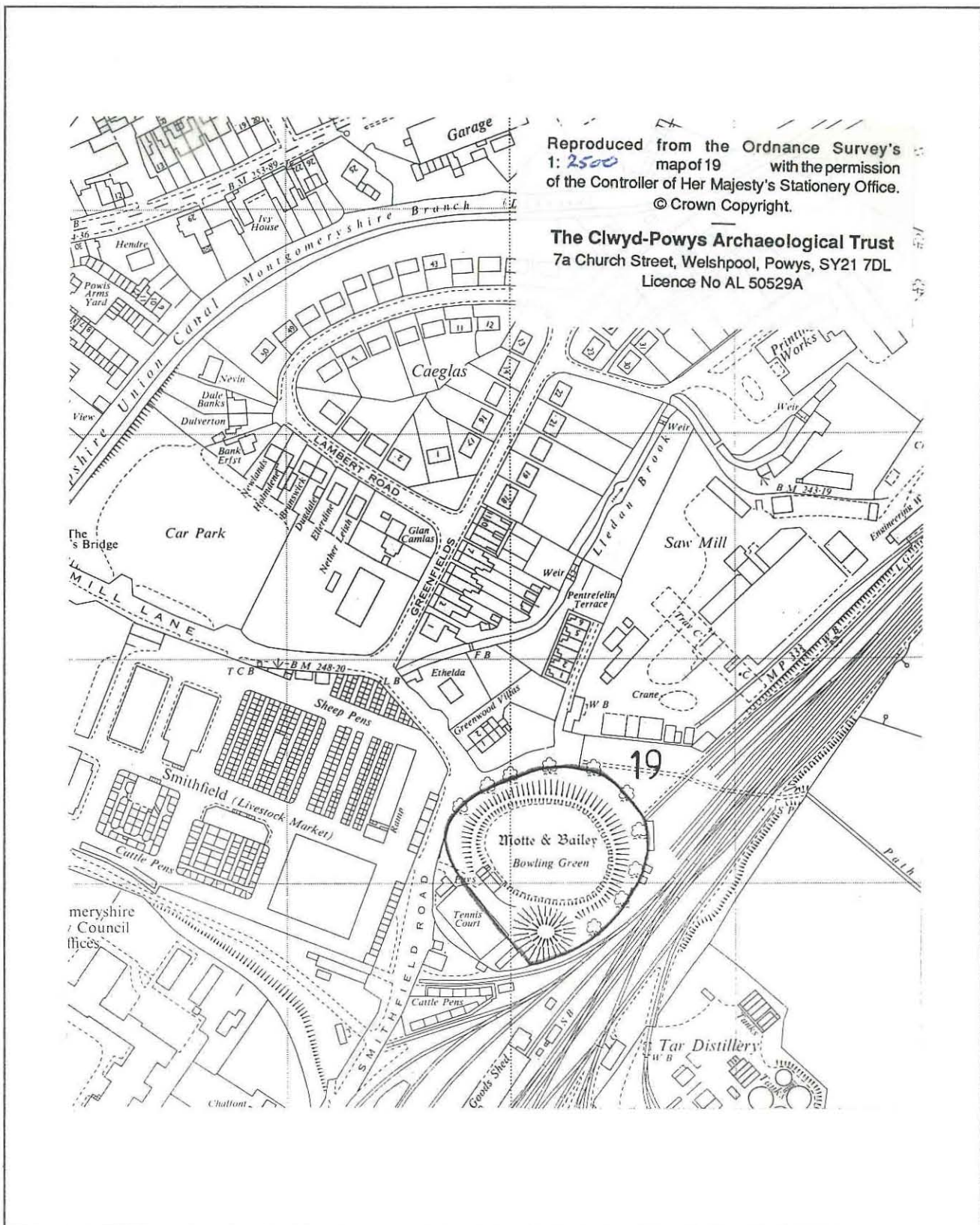
CPAT Contracts wishes to thank the staff of Powys County Council Highways and Property Directorate for their co-operation during this project.

## **6 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Gibson, A.M., 1991. Welshpool Motte, Welshpool. *Archaeology in Wales*, 31, 49.

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**Fig. 1:** Location of Domesday Castle Motte & Bailey Castle, Welshpool.



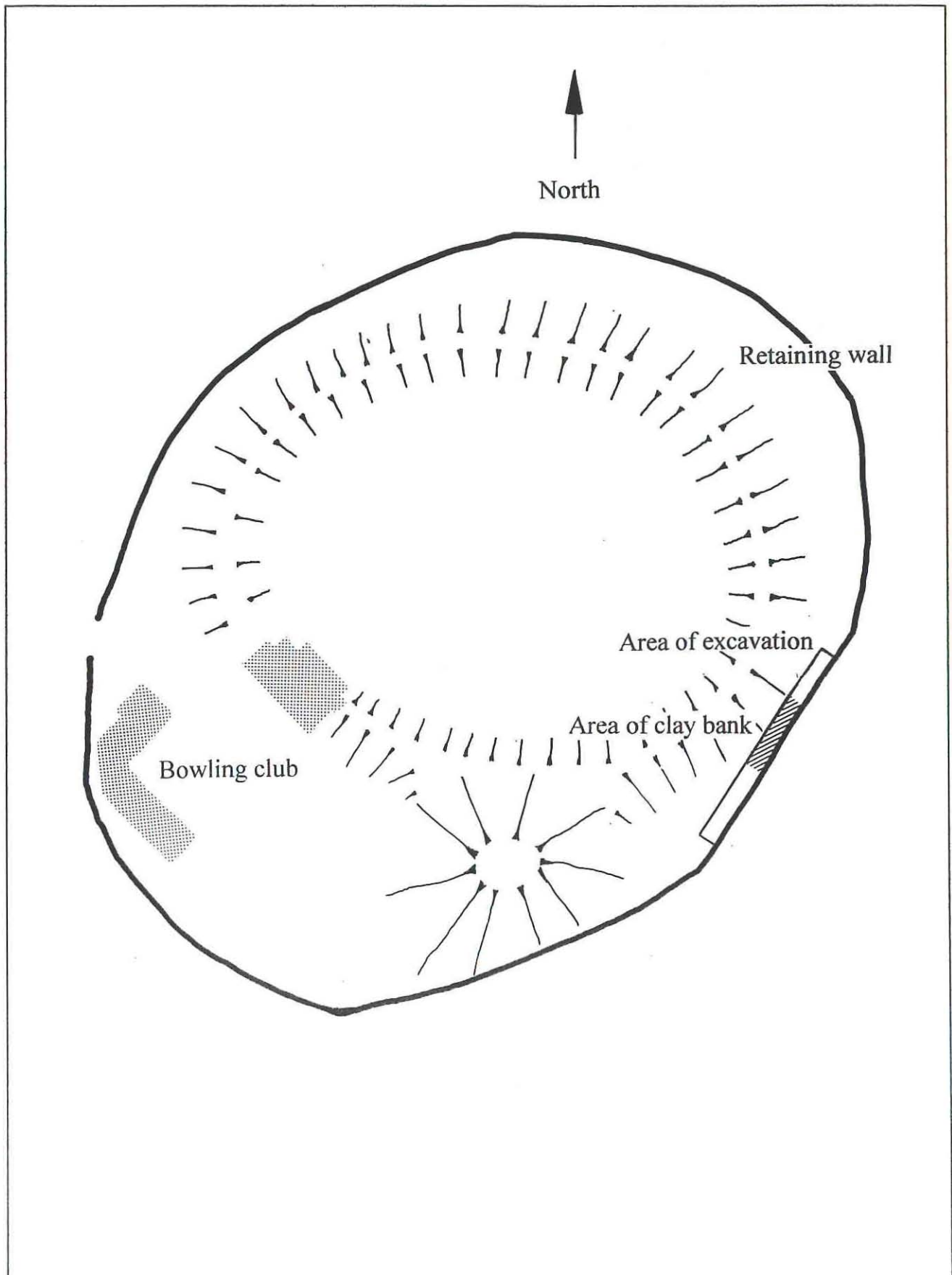


Fig 2: Domen Castell Motte & Bailey Castle, Welshpool. Location of excavation. Scale 1:750.

## **Appendix 1**

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUPERVISION AND RECORDING OF GROUNDWORKS AT DOMEN CASTELL, WELSHPOOL: SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The proposed development at Domen Castell, Welshpool involves the erection of a fence and the excavation of trial holes to locate land drains.
- 1.2 The monument is an early medieval Motte and Bailey castle considered an archaeological site of national importance by the Secretary of State for Wales and is scheduled as site Mg19. Accordingly all works within the scheduled area will be subject to Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC).
- 1.3 The Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments at Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments have granted SMC to this project conditional on all groundworks being supervised by an approved archaeological contractor and that time be allowed to fully record archaeological features noted during the excavation works (SMC ref:CAM1/2/1028/3, conditions c, d, e, and f).

#### **2 OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 The objectives of the archaeological works are:
  - 2.1.1 to record the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of any archaeological deposits and/or features revealed within the area of the proposed development during the development works in so far as these aims are possible;
  - 2.1.2 to prepare a report outlining the results of the archaeological work.

#### **3 METHODS**

- 3.1 The archaeological supervision will involve the examination of all the groundworks in the archaeological sensitive areas.
- 3.2 All archaeological deposits and/or features noted will be recorded by drawn section and/or photography.
- 3.3 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared as required by SMC condition f. This will be in A4 format and contain conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Historic Background; Catalogue of sites identified with notes on their condition and significance, Conclusions and Recommendations and References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds.
- 3.5 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991).

#### **4 RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING**

- 4.1 The archaeological supervision and recording will be undertaken by a skilled and experienced archaeologist. Overall supervision will be by Dr A Gibson, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by the same field archaeologist who conducted the watching brief.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the subsequent report would be prepared immediately after the completion of the groundworks, dependent on the client's instructions and the arrangement of a suitable timetable. The date of commencement, at the time of writing, has yet to be agreed with the client, and will be dependent on the state of the site and negotiated access. The archaeological curator will be informed of the detailed timetable and staffing levels when agreement has been reached with the client.
- 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.

A.M. Gibson  
25th April 1996