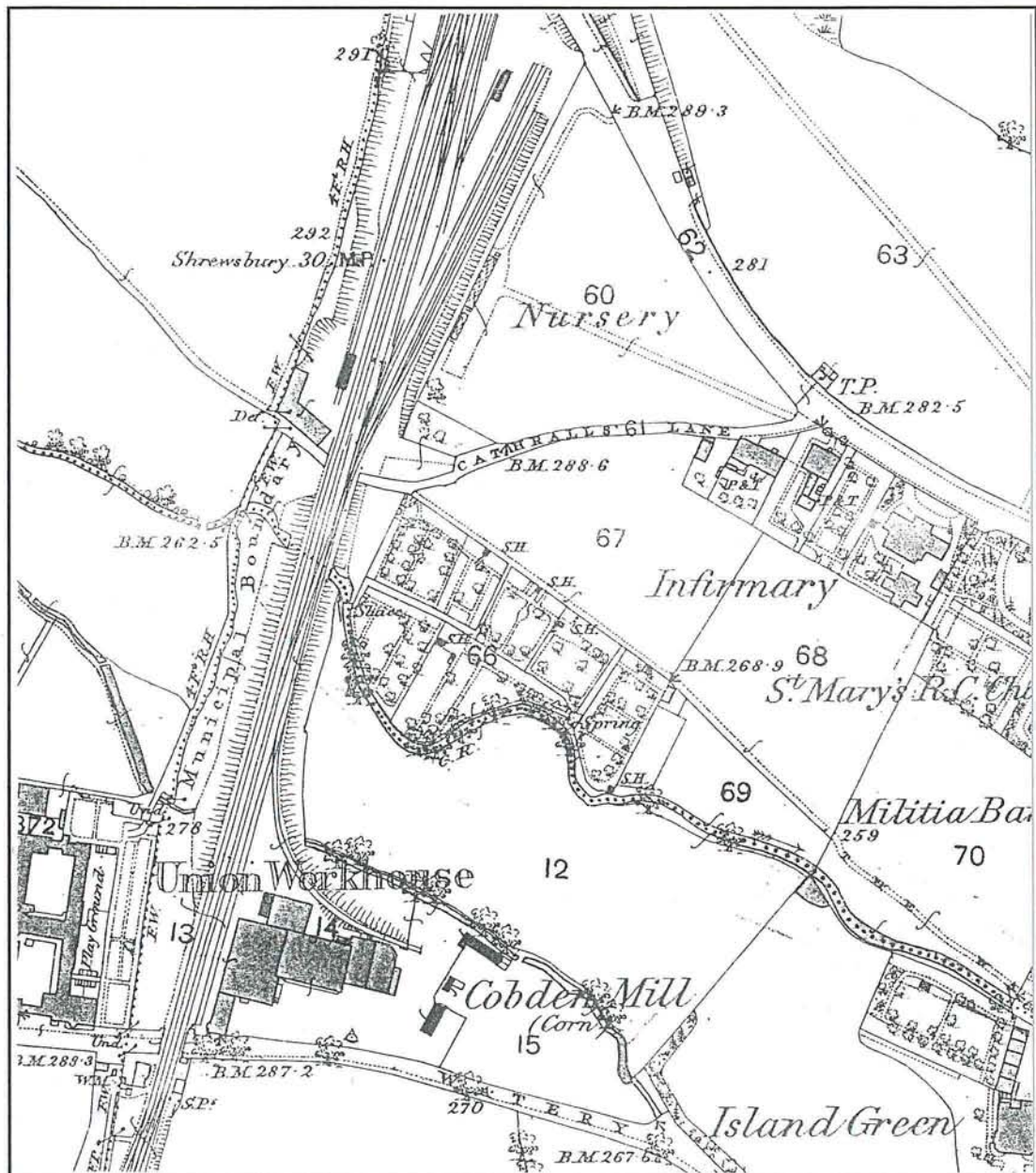


# Wat's Dyke, Jaques Garage, Mold Road, Wrexham

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



**CPAT Report No 492**

**Wat's Dyke, Jaques Garage, Mold  
Road, Wrexham**  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**I Grant**  
September 2002

Report for Jaques Garage


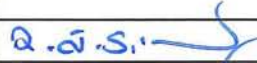

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## CPAT Report Record

### Report and status

CPAT Report Title	Wat's Dyke, Jaques Garage, Mold Road, Wrexham: Archaeological Watching Brief		
CPAT Project Name	Jaques Garage		
CPAT Project No	1010	CPAT Report No	492
Confidential (yes/no)	No	draft/final	Final

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	name	signature	date
prepared by	I. Grant		09/09/02
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### Revisions

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### Internal memo


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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The watching brief, which forms the subject of this report, was undertaken during groundworks at Jaques Garage, Mold Road, Wrexham. The site in question included a section of Wat's Dyke which is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (De 191) under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979 (Fig. 1).
- 1.2 Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) to undertake the works was granted by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales, and included the following conditions: the applicant shall appoint a professional archaeologist, to be approved in writing by Cadw, to undertake a watching brief during all work within the scheduled area; the approved archaeologist shall make a photographic record of the site before the works are undertaken; the approved archaeologist shall be present during all works involving ground disturbance; within one month of completion a copy of the report shall be submitted to Cadw, the Regional Sites and Monuments Record and the National Monuments Record.
- 1.3 The Contracting Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was approached by Jaques Garage to undertake the required watching brief, and this was carried out in August 2002.

## 2 LOCATION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is located on the north-west side of Wrexham, to the south of Regent Street, between two railway lines (Fig. 1; SJ 328507). The area is currently occupied by Jaques Garage and has been used as a scrapyard for a number of years, resulting in a considerable build-up of material on top of the area of Wat's Dyke.
- 2.2 The Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:2,500 map, surveyed in 1872 (Fig. 2), shows the area before any development had occurred, with the exception of the railway forming the eastern boundary. Within the designated area the map shows a scarp with a trackway on top which follows the line of Wat's Dyke and suggests that an upstanding section of the Dyke may have survived in this area at that time. During the 20th century the site was used as a quarry, the working of which may well have impacted upon Wat's Dyke.

## 3 WATCHING BRIEF

- 3.1 The watching brief was undertaken between 5th and 9th August 2002, with additional on site recording carried out on the 21st August 2002. The works were monitored on the 5th, 6th and 8th August by Ian Bapty, Offa's Dyke Officer, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, acting on behalf of Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments at the request of Dr Sian Rees. Additional monitoring was provided by Ms Karina Kucharski, Archaeological Officer, Wrexham Borough Council Museum Services.
- 3.2 The total area machine excavated within the scheduled corridor was 120m x 10m, with the exception of an area 13m x 10m in the centre of the corridor that incorporated a disused site access road with associated gates. The construction of the access road had potentially removed all evidence of an embankment within that section of the corridor (see Fig. 3 and Plate 1). The entire eastern side of the excavation area was bounded by a high breeze-block wall of modern construction, and all modern deposits were removed up to the footings of this boundary.
- 3.3 Work commenced at the northern end of the corridor, moving south of a disused 19th-century building associated with the adjacent railway. The existing embankment at this point stood to a height of 2m with an approximate width of 5m at the base. Initially, the entire embankment was found to be constructed of a series of 20th-century deposits, which had been deposited by machine from west to east (see Plate 2). On removal of these deposits a flat surface (Context 07) was revealed, consisting of white sand, gravel, large rounded stones, pebbles and coal/mudstone shale throughout. The deposit was interpreted as the natural subsoil and probably formed the basis of materials subject to extensive quarrying in the late 19th and early 20th century.
- 3.4 At a point 7m south of the disused building the nature of the embankment changed. The 20th-century deposits were removed to a depth of 1.5m to reveal a firm gravel embankment with a fairly flat crown,



1m in width and with sloping sides, the eastern side having a more gradual gradient to the base. A section through the bank was recorded at this point (Section A; Fig. 4 and Plate 3).

- 3.5 The embankment, which was orientated north-east to south-west, survived to a height of 1.44m with a basal width of 5.2m. The uppermost deposit (Context 02, up to 0.66m thick and 2.6m in width) consisted of a firm pinky red clay/sand mix containing a quantity of large rounded stones, gravel and pebbles throughout. Below this was a very loose deposit (Context 03, up to 0.3m thick and 4m wide) of fine sand and shale, mid-brown to greyish in colour, appearing as a series of lenses. Underlying Context 03 was a deposit of large rounded stones, gravel and pebbles mixed with clay and sand (Context 04, up to 0.5m thick and 4.7m in width). The remaining underlying deposits consisted of consecutive lenses similar to contexts (03) and (04), overlying a base of natural sand and gravel (Context 07). All of the layers appear to have been deposited from west to east and their nature would suggest that they were deposited by hand rather than mechanically. The steep gradient to the western face of the embankment, together with the nature of the deposits illustrated in Section A, implies that the western side of the bank had been severely truncated by subsequent quarrying or other machining activity. Reports from previous excavations at this location (Hill and Wilson 1974) indicate that remains of Wat's Dyke had survived at this point to a width of between 9 to 10m.
- 3.4 At a point 8.2m south of the disused building a large 4m-wide cut through the embankment was recorded. It was evident by the nature of the deposits that this was a fairly recent event and probably represents the backfill to the archaeological excavations undertaken by Hill and Wilson in 1974. In order to prevent further erosion and to preserve the integrity of the embankment, the bank was reconsolidated using previously removed 20th-century deposits. The process of removing the modern deposits and grading down onto the surviving embankment continued for a further 8.4m, at which point the embankment had been partially truncated by a foundation cut for an early 20th-century structure, measuring 3m x 3m, the wall foundation and interior floor remains of which were still upstanding. The structure, which had been truncated on its western side, has been identified as an outbuilding relating to the former railway platform.
- 3.5 The removal of the modern deposits continued from the southern side of the structure, extending for a further 26m as far as the modern disused road access. Underlying the modern deposits was a level ground surface of very loose natural white/grey sand. As excavation proceeded southwards the natural subsoil changed to a deposit of gravel, pebble and rounded stone, similar in character to that recorded further to the north. Throughout this section there was no evidence for the remains of an embankment which might relate to Wat's Dyke. However, evidence for extensive quarrying activity along the western edge of the scheduled corridor was quite apparent. The extent of the quarry edge was established by removing the 20th-century quarry backfill until a reasonable extent of similar natural subsoils or embankment deposits were evident on the western slope. The results were recorded in plan (see Fig 3) and the nature of the subsequent backfill and tipping observed in section (Plate 4, section (B)).
- 3.6 Beyond the disused access road the excavation and removal of the 19th and 20th-century deposits onto a level plain of natural gravel and pebbles continued to demonstrate the absence of any remains of Wat's Dyke, with the truncation of the western edge through quarrying activity continuing as before. The eastern extent of the excavations revealed a 20th-century trench, within which had been installed an electricity cable for servicing railway outbuildings. The cable had been installed on a north-east to south-west alignment and ran for the full extent of the remaining excavation. It is quite possible that the electricity installation could have been set into the eastern side of an older embankment that was no longer upstanding.
- 3.7 At a point 30m south of the disused gate access there was a rise in the level of the natural ground surface by approximately 0.25m. All subsequent excavation continued at this level. The rise in the natural subsoils was recorded (see Fig 3 - Section C, Plate 5), thus illustrating the lenses of compact lignite (coal/shale) and sand and gravels. From this point excavation continued south for a further 26m onto a mixed sand and gravel surface, until excavation was finally terminated at a point where the building foundations and floor remains of a 20th-century structure were encountered. These were subsequently removed until natural deposits were revealed (see Plate 7)
- 3.8 A further section through the quarry deposits was recorded at a point where the defined quarry edge receded and shifted westwards (see Fig 3 and 4, Section (D) Plate 6). This section through the deposits possibly demonstrates the remains of a lower section of the original Dyke ditch on its westward face, as this is the only point along the extent of the scheduled corridor where the natural ground base survives beyond a width of 5 metres. The section was excavated to a total depth of



0.85m following a fairly firm and compacted real edge on the eastern side. This revealed a gradient profile that sloped downwards from east to west quite sharply. The lowest deposit overlying this edge appeared to be similar to the material forming the body of the surviving section of Wat's Dyke (see Fig 4 Section A) and may well represent slump deposits from the Dyke. At the base of the section firm light brown sandy/silt deposits were observed. These deposits were unlike any of the quarry backfill deposits that had been recorded throughout the excavation and could possibly represent silting deposits within the remnants of a ditch. All other deposits, characterised by a dark brown oil stained silt with inclusions of coal fragments, large boulders and an abundance of 20th-century artefacts, represented the sequence of consecutive deposits of quarry backfill.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The results of the watching brief indicate that the extensive quarrying within the area has removed a large proportion of what was believed to be Wat's Dyke. With the exception of a section of embankment, 15m in length at the northern extent of the scheduled area, the upstanding embankment was found to be constructed from 20th-century deposits and was subsequently removed. The remaining embankment was constructed from natural deposits and appeared to be constructed by hand. With additional reference to the excavations undertaken by David Hill (1972-76) and in the absence of positive dating evidence to prove otherwise, the embankment should be regarded as a surviving section of Wat's Dyke, albeit reduced to a fraction of its original dimensions. This would indicate that the existing scheduled corridor, and all of the remaining natural ground surface, falls within the projected line of Wat's Dyke. However, with the exception of the southern extent of the site excavations, all possible evidence for the remains of a ditch have been removed by quarrying activity.
- 4.2 The present condition of the dyke is fairly poor and some form of reconsolidation will be required if further deterioration, due to natural element exposure, is to be avoided. We are led to believe that this consolidation and future management of the scheduled area will be the subject of a management plan produced by Ian Babty, Offa's Dyke Officer, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.

## 5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 5.1 The writer would like to thank the following people for their assistance during the project: Bob Silvester and Nigel Jones, CPAT; Ian Babty, Offa's Dyke Officer, CPAT; Mr Martin Jaques and Mr Paul Jaques, Jaques Garage, Wrexham; Dr Sian Rees, CADW, Welsh Historic Monuments; Ms Karina Kucharski, Archaeological Officer, Wrexham Borough Council Museum Services.

## 6 REFERENCES

### Published sources

Hill D, 1972-76. Offa's and Wat's Dykes 1972-1976, *Site 23 Wrexham Exchange Station. Medieval Archaeology* 1977 21,221.

### Unpublished sources

Hill D, Wilson D and Worthington M 1972 - ongoing. *Offa's and Wat's Dyke Project Archive*.

### Cartographic sources

1871-1872 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" Denbighshire 28.12

1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales map (Sheet 2 - Wales) and Legend (1:250,000 scale)

**APPENDIX 1**  
**PROJECT ARCHIVE**

**Site archive**

1 A1 site drawing  
1 A2 site drawing  
06 Watching brief daily visit forms  
1 black and white negative film, no 1216  
1 colour print film, no 1217  
1 colour slide film, no cs02/30  
Photographic catalogue

Specification, brief and correspondence



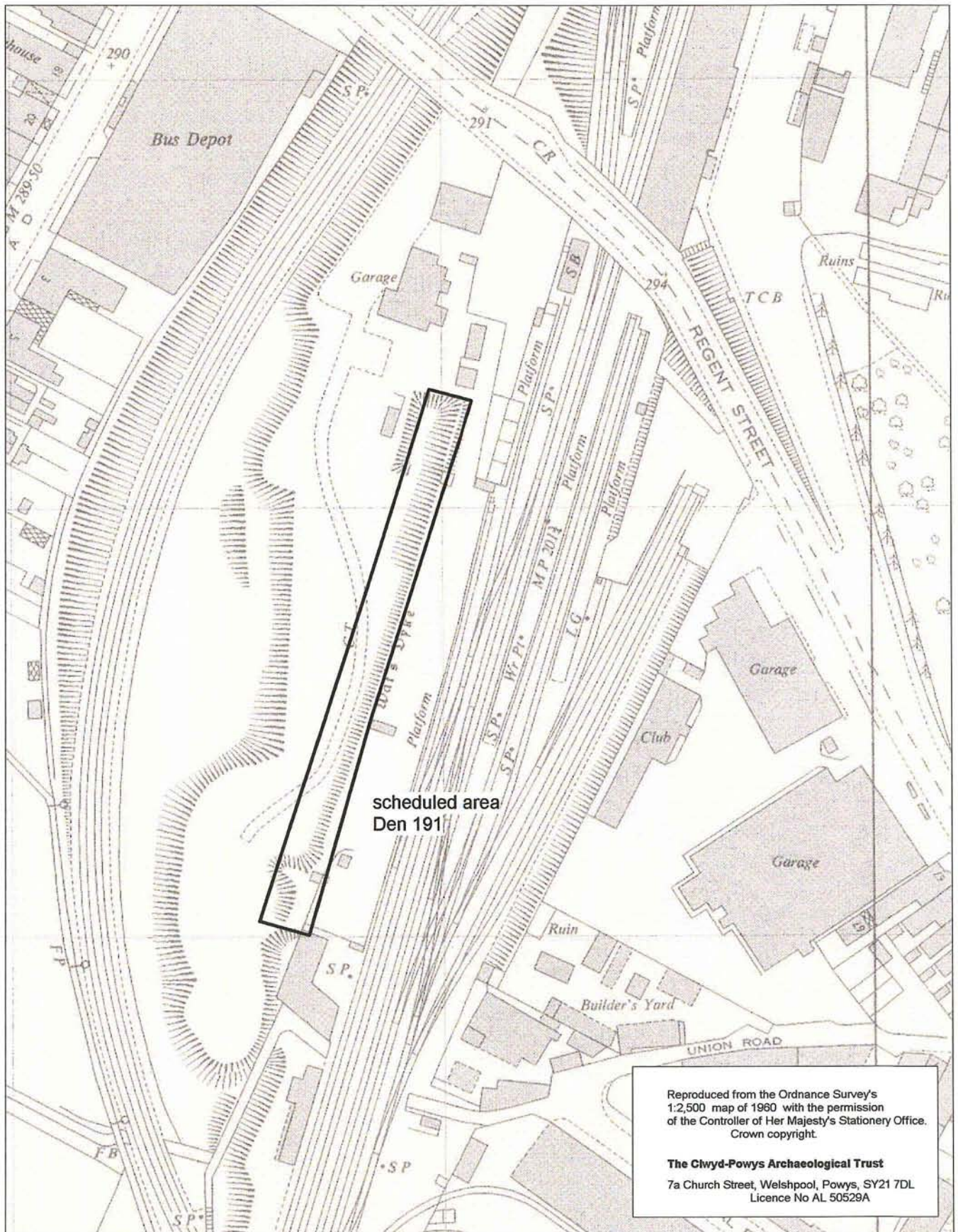


Fig. 1 Location, scale 1:1,250



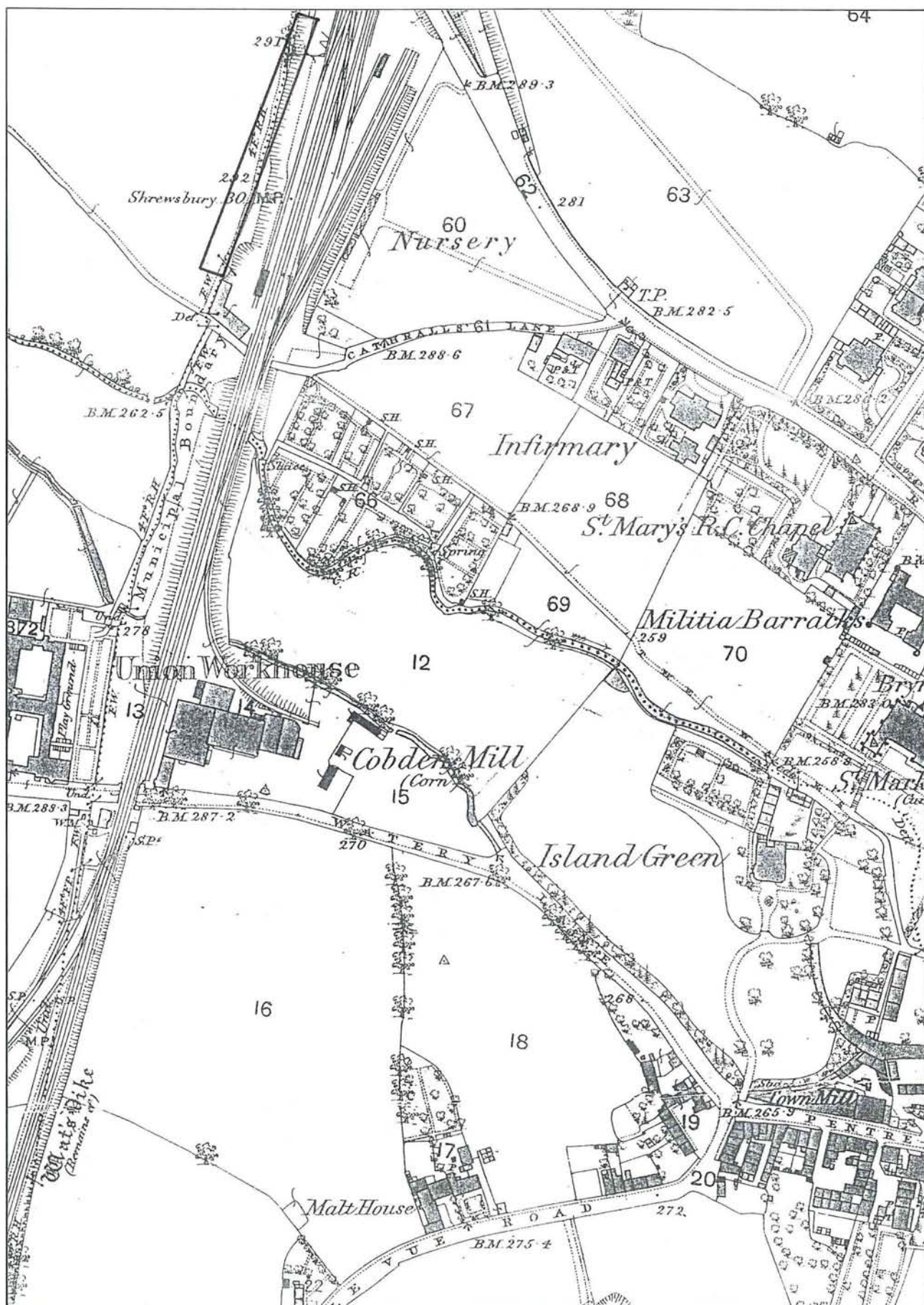


Fig. 2 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" Denbighshire 28.12, surveyed 1872

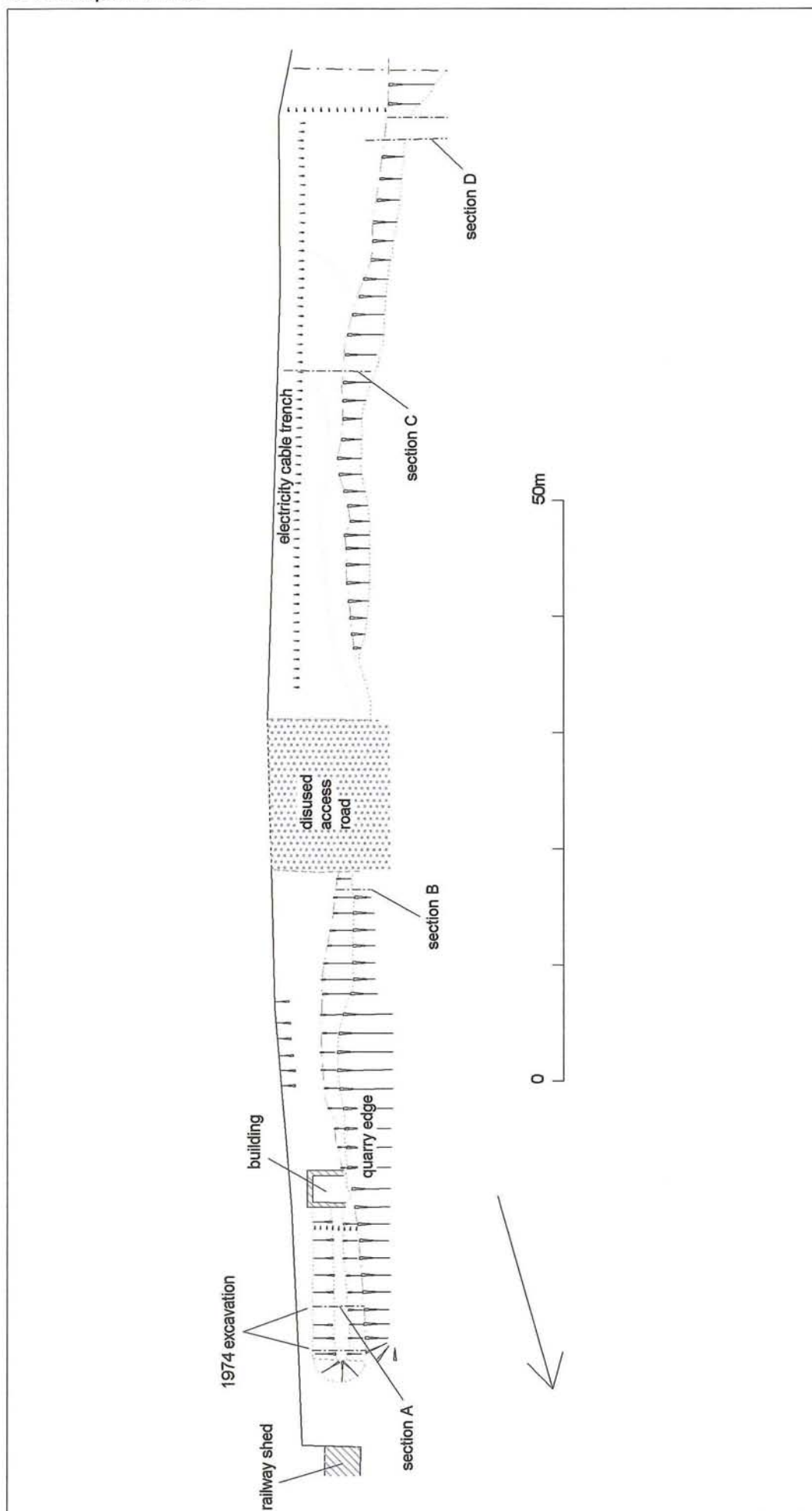


Fig. 3 Plan of watching brief area, scale 1:500



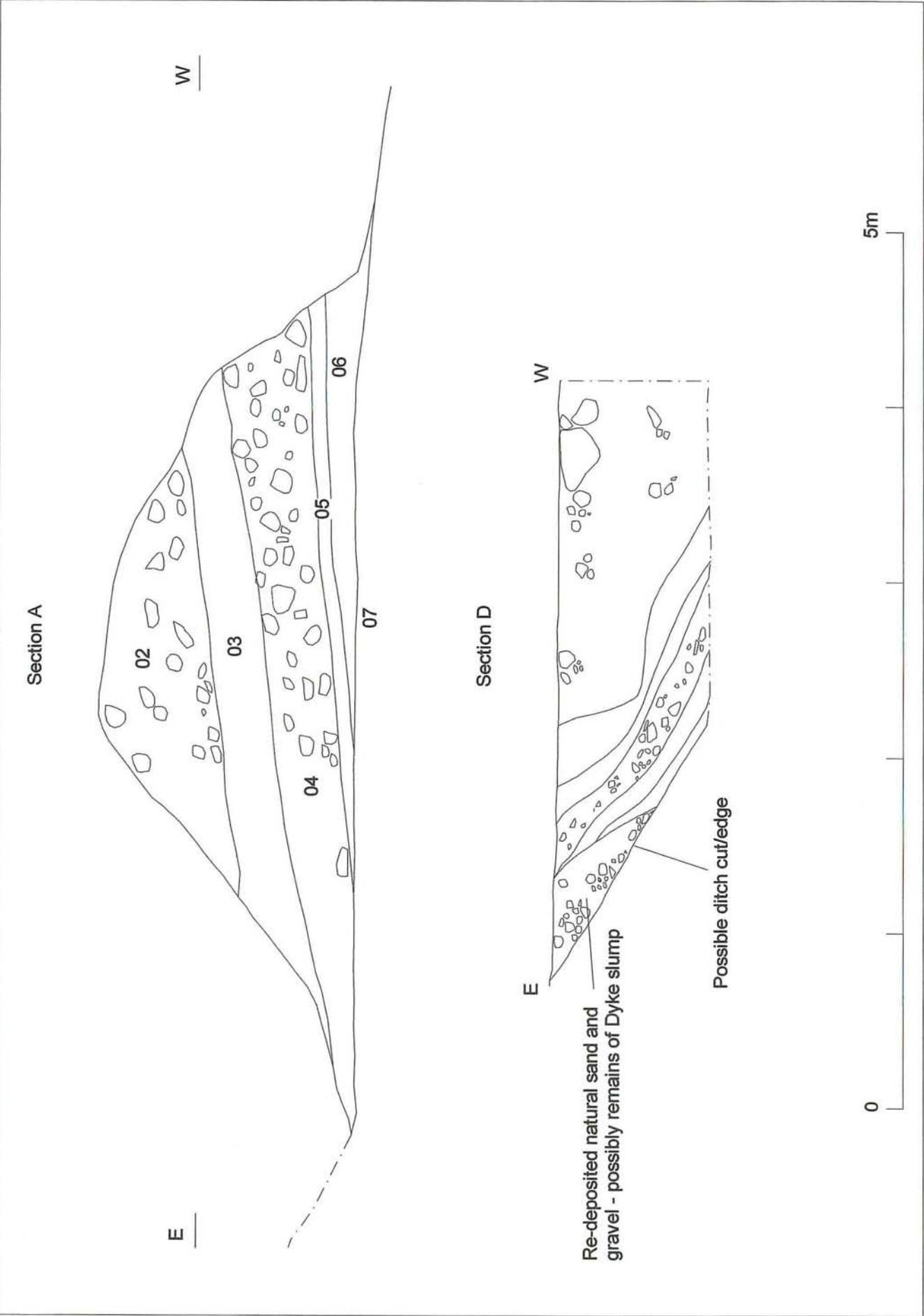


Fig. 4 Sections A and D, scale 1:30

## APPENDIX 2

### **WAT'S DYKE, JAKUES GARAGE, WREXHAM SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF BY THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

#### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Proposals to undertake groundworks at Jaques Garage, Mold Road, Wrexham, may affect archaeological remains associated with Wat's Dyke. The site in question has been designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.
- 1.2 Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) to undertake the proposed works granted by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales, included the following conditions: the applicant shall appoint a professional archaeologist, to be approved in writing by Cadw, to undertake a watching brief during all work within the scheduled area; the approved archaeologist shall make a photographic record of the site before the works are undertaken; the approved archaeologist shall be present during all works involving ground disturbance; within one month of completion a copy of the report shall be submitted to Cadw, the Regional Sites and Monuments Record and the National Monuments Record.
- 1.3 The Contracting Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been approached by Jaques Garage to undertake the required watching brief and the following specification provides a method statement for undertaking this work.

#### **2 Objectives**

- 2.1 The objectives of the archaeological watching brief are:
  - 2.1.1 to monitor all works involving ground disturbance;
  - 2.1.2 to ensure that only 20th century deposits are removed by machine within the scheduled area;
  - 2.1.3 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 works in so far as these aims are possible;
  - 2.1.4 to make a photographic record of the site before the works are undertaken;
  - 2.1.5 to offer advice on reprofiling the earthwork with topsoil, if appropriate, in order to leave the monument in a stable and tidy condition;
  - 2.1.6 to prepare a report outlining the results of the watching brief, even they are negative.

#### **3 Methods**

- 3.1 The watching brief will be carried out according to the conditions contained within the SMC and will involve the examination of all works involving ground disturbance within the scheduled area.
- 3.2 A photographic record will be maintained in 35mm black and white and colour slide with a photographic scale visible in each view.
- 3.3 Should any significant archaeological deposits be revealed sufficient opportunity must be allowed for adequate recording and excavation as appropriate. All contexts will be recorded on standard individual context forms and drawn in section and/or plan as appropriate.

- 3.4 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared. 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 watching brief will be undertaken by a skilled and experienced archaeologist. Overall supervision will be by Mr R J Silvester, 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 or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist who conducted the watching brief. Copies of the report will be provided to the following: the client; Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments; the Regional Sites and Monuments Record, CPAT, Welshpool; the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.
- 4.3 The duration of the watching brief will be entirely dependant on the client's/contractor's programme of work and that the subsequent report will be prepared immediately thereafter. The date of commencement, at the time of writing, has yet to be agreed with the client, who will be responsible for informing Cadw of the timetable for the works.
- 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.

N.W. Jones  
11th March 2002





Plate 1. General site location looking north, before commencement of site excavations, illustrating existing embankment on the eastern boundary. Photo CPAT 1217.11



Plate 2. North east facing section through the embankment, illustrating the 20th century deposits throughout the earthwork. Photo CPAT 1217.13





Plate 3. North east facing section (A) of possible remains of Wat's Dyke. Note the severe truncation of the western edge of the embankment. Photo CPAT 1217.24

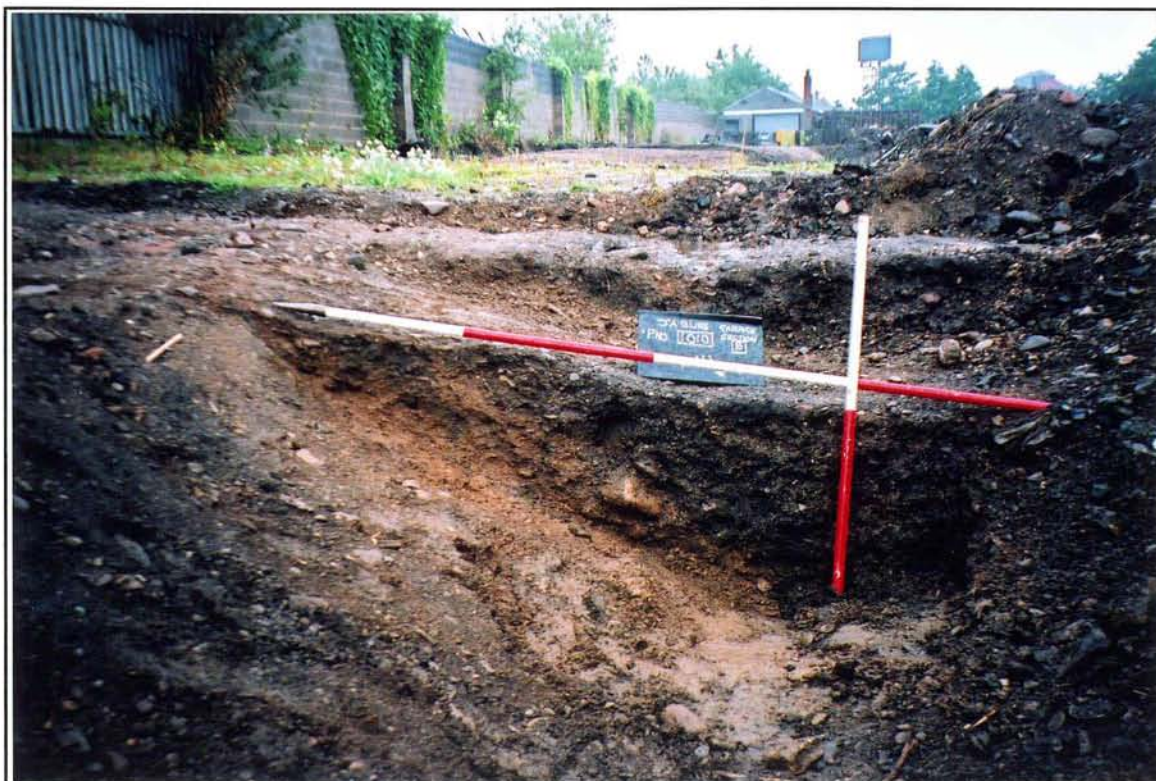


Plate 4. North east facing section (B), illustrating the quarry edge and subsequent 20th century backfill and tipping. Photo CPAT 1217.26





Plate 5. North east facing section (C) across the base of the scheduled corridor, illustrating the rise in the natural subsoils and the electricity cable installation trench along the eastern extent of the excavations. Photo CPAT 1217.29



Plate 6. North east facing section (D) illustrating possible westward facing ditch edge, dyke slump and subsequent quarry backfill. Photo CPAT 1217.30





Plate 7. Extent of the site excavations, looking north along the scheduled corridor. Photo CPAT 1217.36