

Church Walk, Meifod, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



CPAT Report No 434

Church Walk, Meifod, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

N W Jones
September 2001

Report for Mr G D Johnson

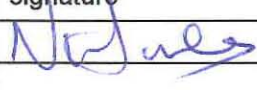
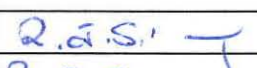

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In June 2000 the Contracting Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Mr G D Johnson to submit a specification and quotation for undertaking a watching brief during construction work on a vacant plot adjacent to Church Walk, Meifod, Powys. The quotation was accepted in August 2001 and the watching brief conducted at the end of that month.
- 1.2 The development involves the construction of a single dwelling with new access and garden landscaping (Powys County Council Planning Application M96284). The Curatorial section of CPAT, acting in their role as archaeological advisors to the local authority, determined that a watching brief should be carried out during the initial stages of topsoiling, construction and service trench excavation. Accordingly, a Brief (CWAT 362) was prepared detailing the scheme of works required.
- 1.3 The site lies on the south side of Church Walk (SJ15431316), between the Congregational Chapel to the west and the churchyard to the east. Information held on the County Sites and Monuments Record indicates that the site lies within the historic core of the village, as defined in the Montgomeryshire Historic Settlements Survey (Silvester 1992).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A pre-planning evaluation was undertaken by CPAT in 1993 (Jones 1993) in response to the supposed proximity of the former medieval chapel dedicated to St Gwyddfarch (PRN 50458). The evaluation revealed wall foundations and other features which suggested that the site had been occupied by one or more buildings during the 17th and 18th centuries, together with a number of features relating to relatively recent activity. There was no evidence, however, for any features relating to St Gwyddfarch's chapel or any other medieval occupation.

3 WATCHING BRIEF (Fig 2)

- 3.1 The watching brief was undertaken on 31 August 2001 during the excavation of foundations for the new dwelling. The trenches were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision, after which the sections and base were inspected for the presence of any features of archaeological significance. A full written record was maintained throughout, together with a photographic record in 35mm black and white and colour print and colour slide formats.
- 3.2 The foundation trenches were between 0.7 and 1.2m wide and were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.0m, cutting into the undisturbed clay subsoil. An inspection of the exposed sections revealed that in general the upper layer consisted of a grey-brown clay-loam (1) up to 0.55m thick, overlying a similar, although darker coloured layer (3) up to 0.4m thick, which lay directly above the undisturbed clay subsoil (4). The only exception to this was in the north-east corner of the foundations where a layer of stiff yellow clay (2) was identified beneath layer 1 (see plate 2).
- 3.3 A small assemblage of pottery was recovered from layer 1, all of which dated to the 18th and 19th centuries, consisting of sherds of Coal Measures red wares, white wares, and a single sherd of mottled ware, as well as fragments of clay pipe. A list of finds is given in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 Following discussions with the curator it was jointly decided on the basis of the negative results from the foundation trenches, that the remaining service trenches and soakaways were unlikely to produce significant new information and the watching brief would not therefore be required during their excavation.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The watching brief revealed a considerable build-up of soils (1 and 2) above the undisturbed subsoil (4), which would appear to have been derived from the use of the plot for many years as a garden. A small assemblage of finds was recovered from the topsoil or garden soil, all of which dated to the 18th or 19th centuries.
- 4.2 Within the foundation trenches there was no evidence for any features or deposits which could be associated with the possible building identified during the 1993 evaluation, or any earlier phase of activity.

5 REFERENCES

Jones, N W, 1993. *Church Walk, Meifod, Powys: Archaeological Evaluation*. CPAT Report No 57.

Silvester, R J, 1992. *Montgomeryshire Historic Settlements Survey*. CPAT Report No 40.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 The writer would like to thank Glyn Owen for undertaking the watching brief and Mr G D Johnson for his co-operation.

APPENDIX 1

CHURCH WALK, MEIFOD, POWYS SPECIFICATION FOR A CONTRACTED ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF BY THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed development involves the construction of a single dwelling with new access and garden landscaping on a plot of land adjacent to Church Walk, Meifod, Powys (Powys County Council Planning Application M96284). The Curatorial section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, acting in their role as archaeological advisors to the local authority, have determined that a watching brief should be carried out during the initial stages of topsoiling, construction and service trench excavation. Accordingly, a Brief (CWAT 362) has been prepared detailing the scheme of works required.
- 1.2 Information held on the County Sites and Monuments Record indicates that the site lies within the historic core of the village as defined by the Montgomeryshire Historic Settlements Survey. A pre-planning evaluation was undertaken in 1993 due to the supposed proximity of the former medieval chapel dedicated to St Gwyddfarch (PRN 50458). The evaluation revealed wall foundations and other features, all of likely post medieval date, and some possibly relating to relatively recent activity.

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 watching brief.

3 Methods

- 3.1 The watching brief will be undertaken to include the initial topsoil stripping, foundation trench excavation, service trench excavation and construction of a new access.
- 3.2 Limited excavation of all significant contexts will be undertaken where possible following negotiations with the developer. All significant archaeological deposits and/or features noted during the watching brief will be recorded by drawn plan/section and photography in 35mm format black and white and colour print and colour slide. All features will be tied in locationally to the Ordnance Survey as accurately as possible.
- 3.3 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared according to the principles detailed in Section 8 of the Brief. 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. Further publication of the results in an appropriate regional or national journal will be undertaken at a later date and as considered appropriate depending on the nature of the findings.
- 3.5 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991). Following agreement with the landowner, arrangements will be made for the long term conservation and storage of all artefacts in an appropriate repository.

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.
- 4.3 The duration of the watching brief will depend entirely on the developers programme of work. The subsequent report will be prepared immediately following completion of on-site recording, 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.

N.W.Jones
Projects Officer
22nd June 2000

APPENDIX 2
SITE ARCHIVE

Site records

6 Context record forms
2 A4 site plans

Black and white negative films, contacts
colour print films
colour slide films
photographic catalogue

Finds

6 clay pipe stem frags
1 clay pipe bowl frag

4 sherds coal measures red wares, 18th-19th century

9 sherds white wares, 19th century

1 sherd mottled ware, 1690-1760

Fig. 1 Site location 1:2,500

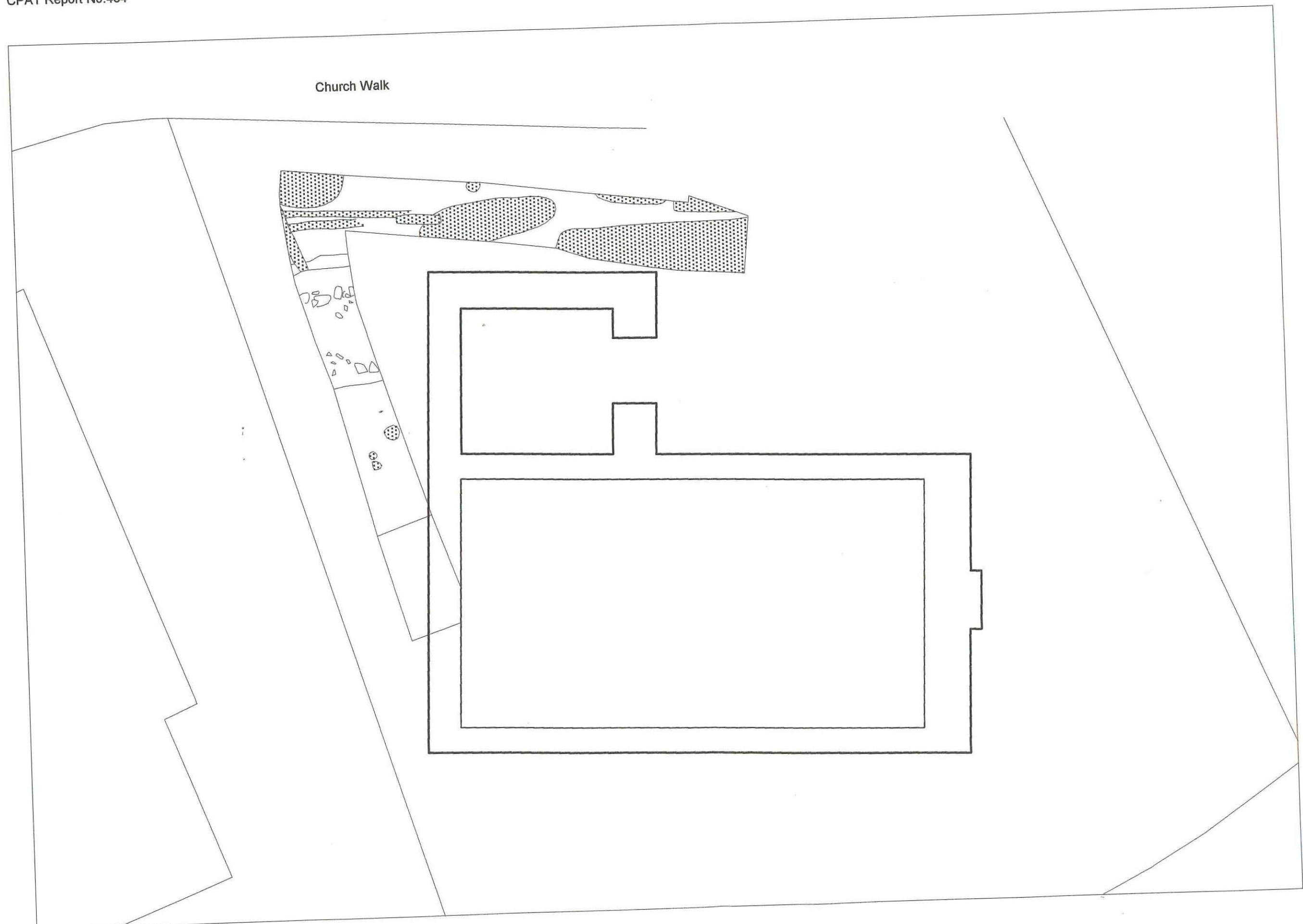


Fig. 2 Plan of foundation trenches and 1993 evaluation, scale 1:100



Plate 1 Foundation trenches from north-west. Photo CPAT 1096.17



Plate 2 North-west corner of foundation showing context 2. Photo CPAT 1096.13