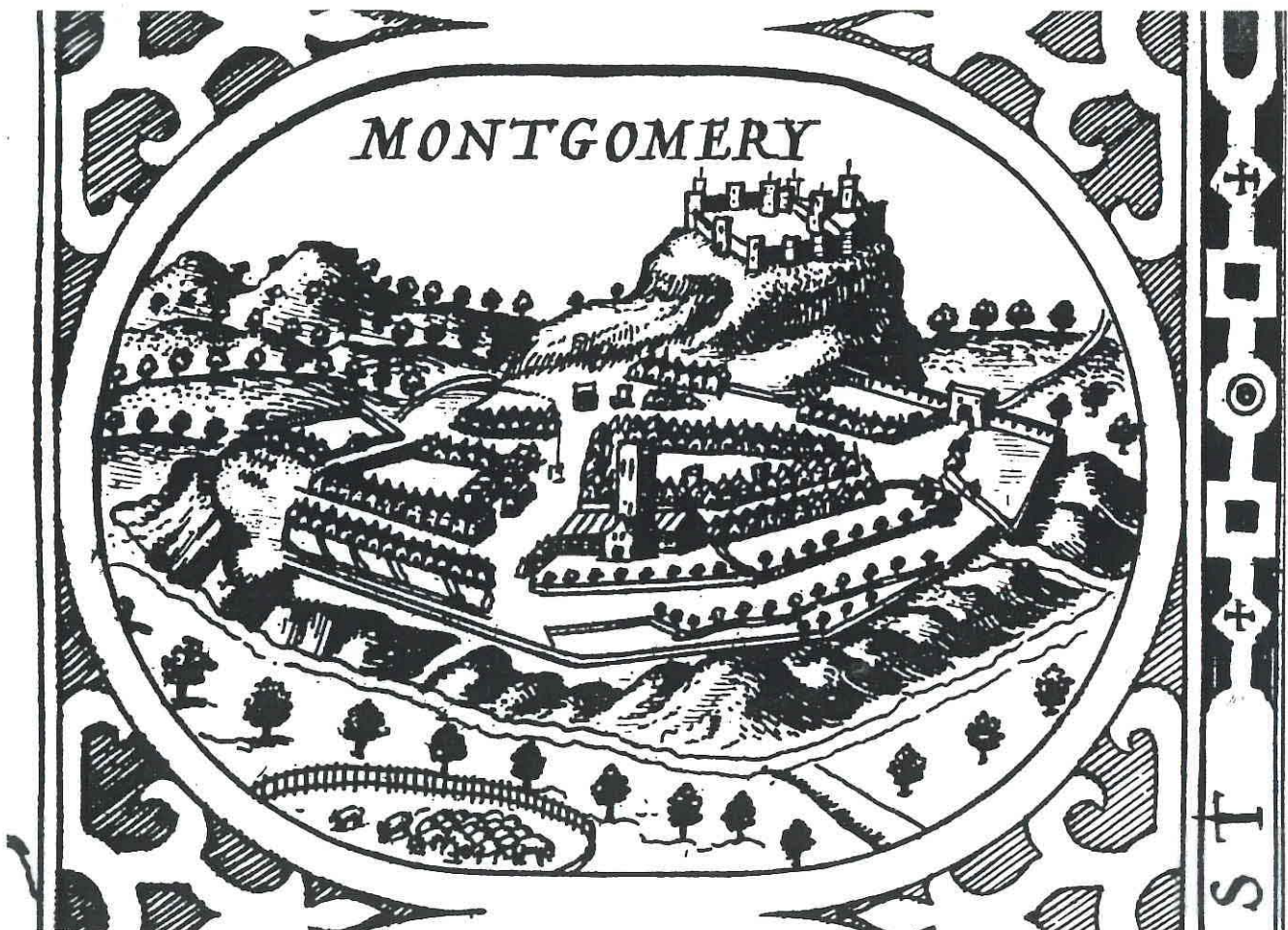


THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Kerry Gate, Montgomery
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



CPAT Report No 413

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March 2001

Report for Manweb plc

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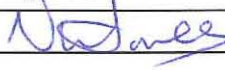
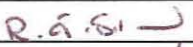

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CPAT Report Record

Report and status

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In May, 2000, the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Mr K V Phillips, Manweb plc, to submit a quotation for carrying out a watching brief during the excavation of four test pits and a trench for an underground cable at Kerry Gate, Montgomery. The work was required by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments as a condition for granting Scheduled Monument Consent for the installation of a new underground cable within the scheduled area of Kerry Gate Settlement (SAM Mont 225).
- 1.2 The quotation was duly accepted and CPAT was asked to carry out the work.

2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The new cable route was located to the south of Kerry Gate, Montgomery (Fig. 1; SO 22189625), partly within a pasture field comprising the scheduled area, and extending beyond the scheduled area to the east into a garden at the rear of Plas Trefaldwyn.
- 2.2 The underlying geology in this area consists of Wenlock calcareous shales with stagnogley silty clay loam of the Cegin series above the bedrock (Rudeforth *et al.* 1984).

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The dominant feature of Montgomery is the castle built under the instructions of Henry III. Building commenced in 1223 and may have been completed by the end of that decade. At the same time it seems clear that the nucleus of a settled town came into being. Its first charter was awarded in 1227 by Henry III and this stated that the town could be enclosed by a ditch and a wall; it has been suggested that an approximate date for the commencement of the work was the year 1230 (O'Neill & Foster Smith 1940). It seems likely that the first defences consisted of a timber palisade surmounting an earth rampart with an external ditch. The timber palisade appears to have been replaced in stone between 1278 and 1280 (Taylor 1947), but it is improbable that this was done along the entire circuit of approximately 2km. John Speed's map of 1610 seems to show a wall only on the sections adjacent to Arthur's Gate to the north of the town.
- 3.2 Within the town walls archaeological excavations and watching briefs have yielded evidence for domestic occupation during the medieval period. Excavations carried out adjacent to Pool Road in 1984 and 1987 revealed evidence of timber buildings, yards and the original street, consisting of an unsurfaced track (Britnell & Jones 1989). Elsewhere, evidence has been revealed for the presence of a medieval burgrave plot to the east of Arthur Street, together with a number of earthwork platforms and terraces in a field adjacent to Chirbury Road (Gibson 1991).
- 3.3 The Kerry Gate Settlement consists of a series of building platforms and trackways, the surviving remains of which extend over two fields to the south of the town, outside the medieval town defences. This extra-mural settlement is assumed to be medieval in date, with the platforms having supported a number of timber buildings. A survey of the settlement was undertaken in 1990 (Gibson 1991).

4 THE WATCHING BRIEF

- 4.1 The watching brief was carried out between 21-23rd February 2001. A full written and photographic record was maintained throughout.
- 4.2 Following the requirements of the scheduled monument consent, four test pits (Fig. 2, A-D) were hand excavated along the line of the cable trench. The pits measured between 0.6 and 0.9m long, 0.5m wide, and 0.5m to 0.64m deep. Cleaning of the sections and base of each pit revealed no deposits or features of archaeological significance. The stratigraphic sequence in all four pits consisted of 0.38-0.45m of topsoil overlying a yellow brown silty clay with charcoal flecks, which extended to the base

of the pit, and appeared to represent an old ploughsoil. No artefacts were recovered from any of the test pits.

- 4.3 The trench for the new cable (Fig. 2) was mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision. The trench, which was 0.3m wide and up to 0.6m deep, extended north from an existing pole within the scheduled area, following alongside an existing underground cable trench laid in 1981 parallel to the western boundary. Investigation of the trench sections revealed 0.35-0.4m of topsoil overlying the yellow clay subsoil. The only feature identified was a ceramic land drain which crossed the base of the trench, running north-west to south-east. At a distance of 17m from the pole the trench turned to the west to follow the northern boundary for a distance of 36m. The stratigraphy along this section reflected that which had been revealed in the test pits, consisting of 0.38-0.45m of topsoil overlying a yellow brown silty clay. No features were identified along this section of the trench.
- 4.4 A single sherd of abraded pottery was recovered from the silty clay beneath the topsoil. The small body sherd was in a red sandy micaceous fabric likely to be of local manufacture. The form could not be identified due to the size of the sherd and from an examination of the fabric it is possible that the pottery may be either medieval or Roman in date. Other finds consisted of a number of sherds of 18th and 19th-century pottery, clay pipe and bottle glass from the topsoil, which were not retained.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The watching brief revealed no features of archaeological significance and the groundworks do not appear to have had any impact on archaeological deposits within the scheduled area.
- 5.2 The old ploughsoil identified beneath the topsoil along the northern boundary would appear to represent a build up of material against the boundary to form a lynchet, the ground level on the northern side being up to 1.0m lower than that to the south.

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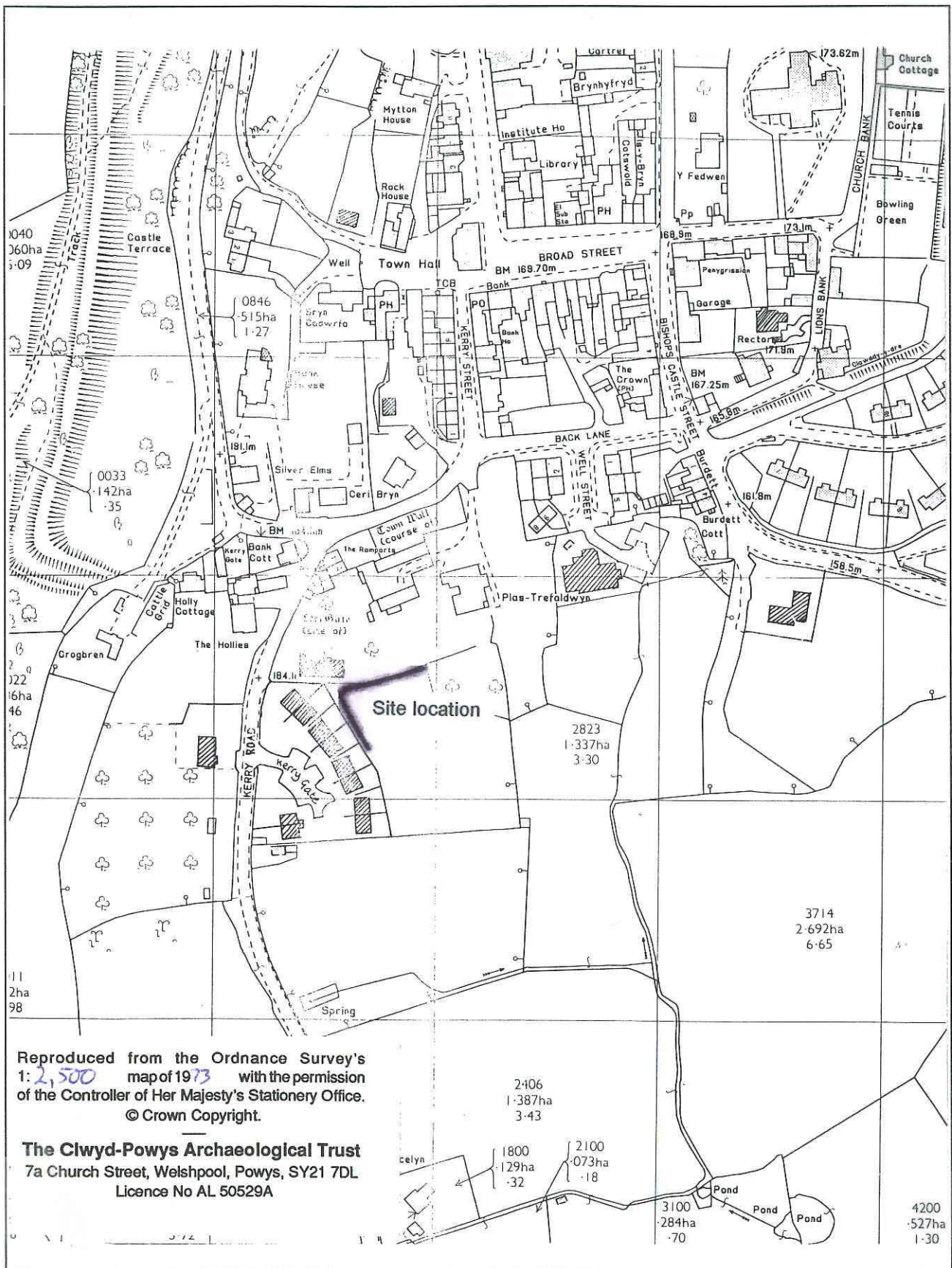


Fig. 1 Site location. Scale 1:2,500

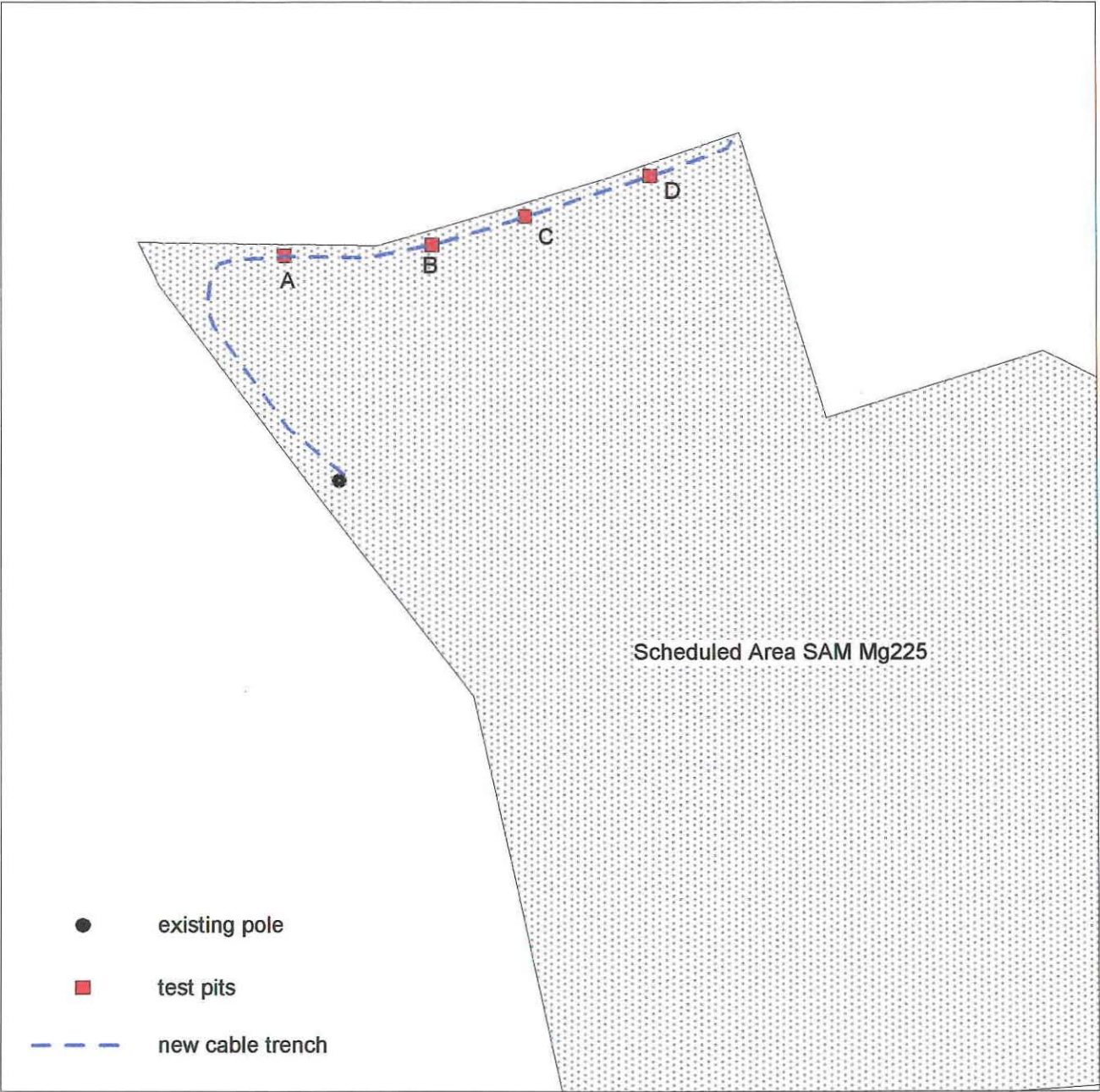


Fig. 2 Location of test pits and cable trench, scale 1:500