

THE CLWYD POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Caergwrle Castle Fields, Flintshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
& MANAGEMENT REPORT



CPAT Report No 475

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Report for Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire

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Contents

- 1 *Introduction***
- 2 *Historical and Archaeological Background***
- 3 *Castle Fields***
- 4 *Descriptive Catalogue of Historical and Archaeological Features***
- 5 *Conclusion***
- 6 *Bibliography***

Appendix 1: Welsh Office Planning Inspectorate Appeal Decision 1989

Appendix 2: Regional Sites and Monuments Record Extract (separately bound)

Introduction

In February 2002 Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire commissioned the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust to carry out an assessment of an area to the south of Caergwrle Castle known as Castle Fields. Groundwork's interest in these four fields stems from their involvement in local initiatives to preserve this important element of the castle's setting, which has been 'threatened' by building development on a number of occasions, by turning it into a community resource. The aim of this assessment has been to examine the surviving archaeological resource on the ground and in archaeological and historical records, to describe the features noted and to produce specific management guidance for them. Apart from the general discussion of the historical and archaeological background given below, the assessment has not looked in any detail at the many archaeological and historical sites surrounding Caergwrle as these are covered in great detail elsewhere. However, an extract from the Regional Sites and Monuments Record, for an area of about 2km around the site, has been attached as an appendix for information.

The site was visited by CPAT on the 22nd March 2002.

Historical and Archaeological Background

The village of Caergwrle lies on the west bank of the River Alyn, some 7km to the north-west of Wrexham. It covers flattish ground where the lowest slopes of Hope Mountain tip down to the river in a series of gentle terraces. The village's dominant historical feature is its castle, which sits on the small but steep-sided knoll on the south of the village detached from Hope Mountain by a dry valley which is now followed by the A541.

Historical records reveal a good deal of information about the medieval history of the area. The earliest form of the name may be '*Kaierguill*' in 1278, developing into '*Caergorle*' in 1327. It has been suggested that this complex name integrates '*caer*' meaning '*walled town*' with '*corle*' derived from '*wood of the cranes*', although this derivation is by no means certain.

Caergwrle Castle was founded by Dafydd ap Gruffudd perhaps in 1278, though conceivably earlier, within the lordship of *Hopedale* which had been granted to him by Edward I in the previous year. When Dafydd revolted against English overlordship in 1282, the castle immediately fell into the hands of the king. By the following year a town was being laid out below the castle and a charter allowed for an annual market and weekly fair. Damaged by fire later in the year, it was subsequently conferred on the Prince of Wales, but its strategic importance appears to have declined and by 1335 it was a ruin.

Caergwrle village was designated as a market town and was termed '*Hope ad Castrum*', meaning '*Hope at or below the Castle*', thus often leading it to be confused with the village of Hope nearby. Thirty-five taxpayers were recorded in 1292, and it seems to have been regarded as a borough in the first half of the 14th century if not earlier, being described as such in 1347 and again in 1349/50. Initially, both native Welsh and English incomers held land in the town (*burgages*), but a charter of 1351 altered this and the Welsh *burgages* were confiscated. It appears that the Constable of the castle also functioned as the mayor of the borough, at least in the early years.

The town was attacked in 1403 by Glyndwr when it was 'burnt and completely destroyed'. The results were long-lived. Although in the 1530s it was designated as a contributory borough with other Flintshire towns in the election of a member of parliament. The antiquarian Leland who visited the area in the 1530s, described it as a '*toune. now decayid*', and in the early 17th century, John Speed, the map maker, did not list it among the principal towns of Flintshire.

A map of c1790 points to a relatively small population and even at the time of the Tithe survey in the mid 19th century, the pattern of houses was dispersed, and the street pattern fragmented.

Archaeological evidence is, in many respects, less detailed but covers a much wider period. Prehistoric finds from the general area include the Caergwrle bowl of shale and gold leaf found in boggy ground in 1820, 300m south-east of the castle, and though to be of Bronze Age date - and thus some 3000 year old. It has been suggested that the 'bowl' is in fact a representation of a boat, although this is by no means certain. It is certainly one of the most important prehistoric finds from Wales and is now in the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff. A small number of other Bronze Age sites (burial mounds standing stones and finds) exist in the surrounding area.

Hartson refers to the removal of 'a number of large stones . . . which formed a large circle' from an unspecified field to the south of Castlefields. On an annotated map given to CPAT by Mr Hartson in 2000 he places this feature in the lower field of the Castlefields site and

states that this was a 'stone circle' removed before the second world war. This later location seems an unlikely siting for a prehistoric stone circle - as these are rarely built on such a slope - although this should not be totally discounted.

Caer Estyn hillfort, 2km to the east of Caergwrle, is the area's dominant Iron Age feature. However, the size and shape of the outer enclosure of Caergwrle Castle has led to suggestions that it also might originally have been a hillfort that has been adapted during the medieval period to form the castle. Excavation on this outer enclosure has yielded evidence of Early Medieval (or possibly late Roman) construction and occupation, but it is possible that this is also a reuse of an earlier Iron Age site.

It has been postulated that Caergwrle was a focus of Roman settlement, however the evidence for this is equivocal. A number of Roman finds, including a 2nd century coin and sherds of pottery have been reported from the castle's outer enclosure, but none of these come from secure excavated contexts and may have been re-deposited here after the Roman period. Nor is there any substantive evidence for the Roman *vicus* (a type of settlement usually only found outside Roman forts) claimed to lie against north side of the castle's outer enclosure by some authorities. Hartson suggests that the line of a Roman (or possibly medieval) road runs around the north edge of the Castlefields site. It is unclear what evidence is being cited to support this theory, and from topographical perspective the proposed route seems highly unlikely - and there is no obvious sign of such a road on the ground here.

The Caergwrle Castle excavations have yielded evidence of late Roman / Early Medieval occupation, and it seems clear that the outer enclosure of the castle is earlier than the surviving medieval masonry - radiocarbon dates suggest a construction date for at least part of the outer enclosure of between AD 500 and 700.

To the east of Castlefields, on the east bank of the River Alyn, runs the enigmatic linear earthwork Wat's Dyke. The dyke, a virtually continuous bank and ditch, possibly built to define a border between Saxon and Welsh kingdoms, runs for some 40km from south of Oswestry in Shropshire through Wrexham and on towards the Dee Estuary in Flintshire, is similar to the better known Offa's Dyke, which runs on a roughly parallel course some 3km west of Caergwrle. Like Offa's Dyke the date of construction of Wat's Dyke is not certain but both are thought to belong to the Dark Ages. Interestingly a recent radiocarbon date from an excavation at the southern end of Wat's Dyke has suggested a 5th century construction date which may make it roughly contemporary with the occupation of the outer enclosure at Caergwrle Castle.

The surviving masonry at Caergwrle Castle belongs to the late 13th-century. Built by the Welsh prince Dafydd ap Gruffudd, an ally of the English king Edward I, the castle seems to have been a mixture of the 'new' Edwardian architecture and the more traditional Welsh approach and is therefore something of a hybrid. Originally the site comprised a single curtain wall with a number of mural towers, set behind a substantial rock cut ditch. A larger south tower served as a keep and the walls were entered through a simple gatehouse from the outer ward which is now defined by a single bank and ditch running around the hill top - which appears to pre-date the stone castle (see above). The castle has been extensively excavated (see Manley, 1994) and medieval records relating to its construction much studied (see Taylor, 1992) and the results of neither exercise are reiterated here.

Following the building of the castle in the 13th century, the town of Caergwrle was laid out in its present position. Settlements, of this period, built under English influence, are often called *planted towns*, and at Caergwrle the regular *grid iron* street plan is still clearly visible in the modern street pattern with three parallel lanes on a north-west/south-east axis

(roughly parallel to the line of the river valley) and three others, two of them dog-legged at right angles. It has been assumed that all of these streets had their origin in the medieval period, although it is possible that the most westerly of the three north-west/south-east streets may be later. An estate map of c.1790 shows only two High Street and to a lesser extent Derby Road are both broad thoroughfares, the houses lying back from the modern road. In contrast the side lanes such as Hope Street and Gwalia are noticeably narrow. The estate map seems to show that in the late 18th century, many more dwellings lay on Derby Road than on High Street.

A small triangle of land bounded by Castle Street on the south and unnamed lanes lies on the eastern edge of the village, beneath the castle's shadow. Its role in the development of the settlement is not documented, although it is depicted on the c.1790 map as an open space with one small encroachment. That it represents the early market place must be considered.

There is no suggestion that the town was ever protected by defences and no indication of the density of medieval occupation on the street frontages. In Hope Street is a stone-lined outlet for spring water, known as The Pystill, which presumably provided a water supply for the plantation.

A *chapel of ease* (a small private medieval church) called *Plas y Bold* is documented at Caergwrle in the Middle Ages. This was supposedly in the vicinity of Plas-yn-bwl, but no remains have been identified. Today Plas-yn-bwl house contains remodelled 16th-century or earlier work. The Derby Arms is attributed to the 17th century but has been much altered. No other buildings in Caergwrle appear to pre-date the 19th century.

A fine packhorse bridge, probably of the 17th century but of more than one build, takes Fellows Lane across the River Alyn to Hope.

Castle Fields

The group of five, similarly sized (approximately 150m by 50m), rectangular fields (labelled A - E on Figure 1), known as Castle Fields, lie to the south of and below Caergwrle Castle. B and C occupy a plateau on a ridge, which slopes progressively from north to south, with their long axis following the line of the ridge. These are flanked by fields A and D on west and east respectively, with field A occupying the steeply sloping west facing side of the ridge side while D occupies the slightly lower ground to the east, which gently slopes towards the River Alyn. Field E, which lies 'at right angles' to the others, occupies the ground beyond the break in slope at the southern end of the plateau and itself slopes quiet sharply to the south.

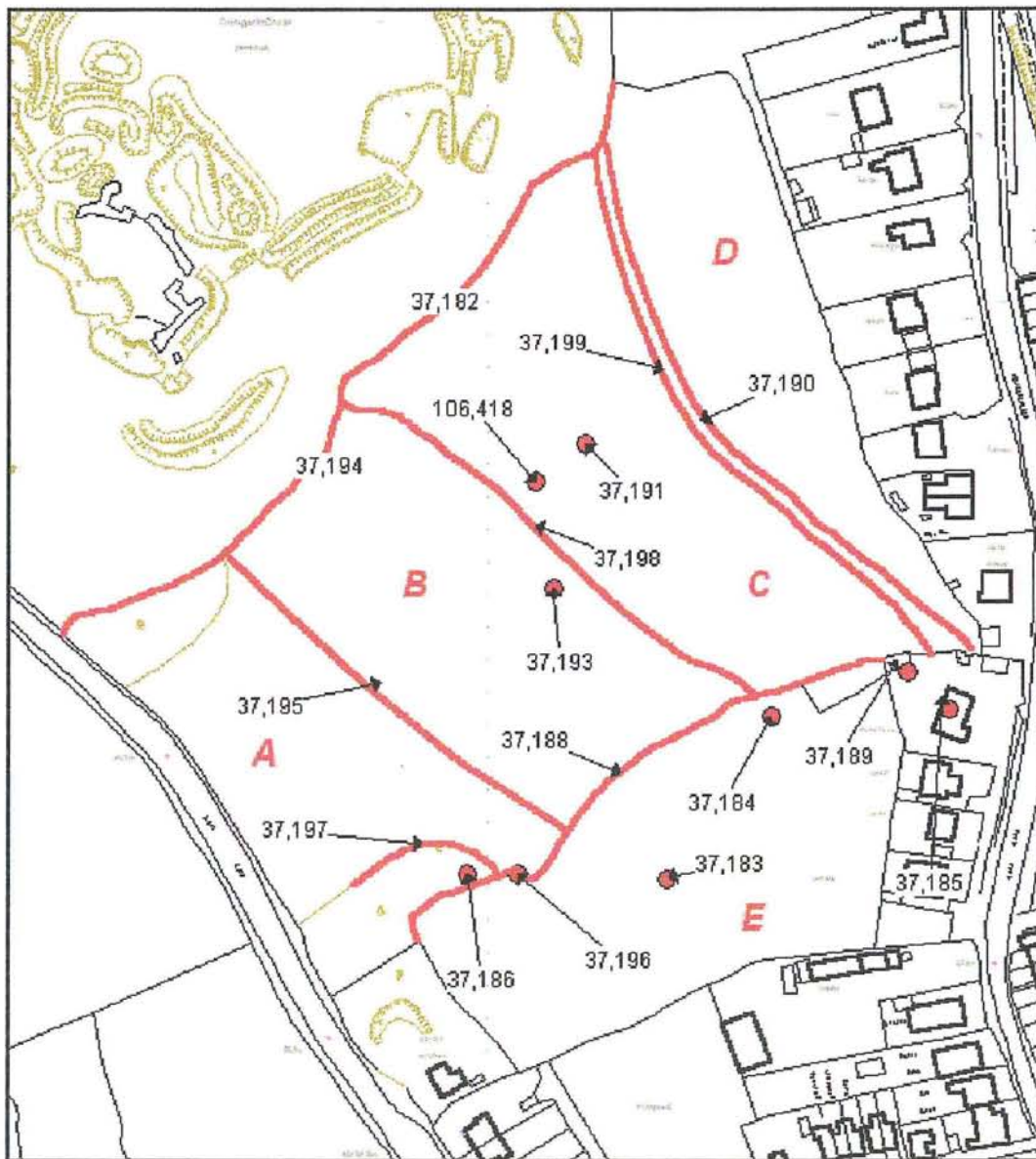


Figure 1: Location of sites mentioned in text

Based on Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Crown copyright, 2002 National Assembly for Wales licence GD272221

The boundaries between the fields are broadly similar, in that they are low earth and stone banks topped by hedges. Together the fields appear to form a discrete field system. Their pattern is the same as that shown on the 19th century Tithe Map and size and shape suggests that this is a small medieval 'strip field' system, probably belonging to the medieval town, sheltering below the castle. Analysis of the hedgerow species in the boundaries has suggested that these hedge lines could have been established for over 600 years and while most of the earthwork hedge banks are slight and the individual trees relatively young they may well be the original medieval boundaries.

The boundary between fields C and D is of particular interest. It marks a change in level of approximately 2 metres between the two fields and takes the form of a large stone-revetted lynchet below which lies a terraced trackway. The bank appears to carry the remains of a substantial hedge now containing a number of large tree stools. Superficially these look as if they have been 'coppiced' - they have certainly been managed - and may even represent the remains of a laid hedge. Although the age and original purpose of this trackway is not known it appears to run from the area of Castle Farm around the eastern side of the base of Castle Hill and may even have been an approach to the castle.

Having perhaps started life as part of Caergwrle's Medieval common field system, a hint of later landholding might be given by the small stone walled enclosure at the southern end of field A. Although the remains are now slight the enclosure appears to have been bounded by a single dry-stone wall and has the appearance of a small paddock perhaps containing a house or farmstead. The paddock appears to be built on to the northern boundary of field E and appears to be deliberately sited next to a now blocked gateway in this boundary. The whole may represent a late Medieval or early post Medieval encroachment by a smallholder, or maybe even a 'squatter', onto the town's communal fields.

Although the later history of the field system is not clear, once they had passed out of common ownership they were probably 'belonged to' Castle Farm which formerly stood just to the south west of the study area.

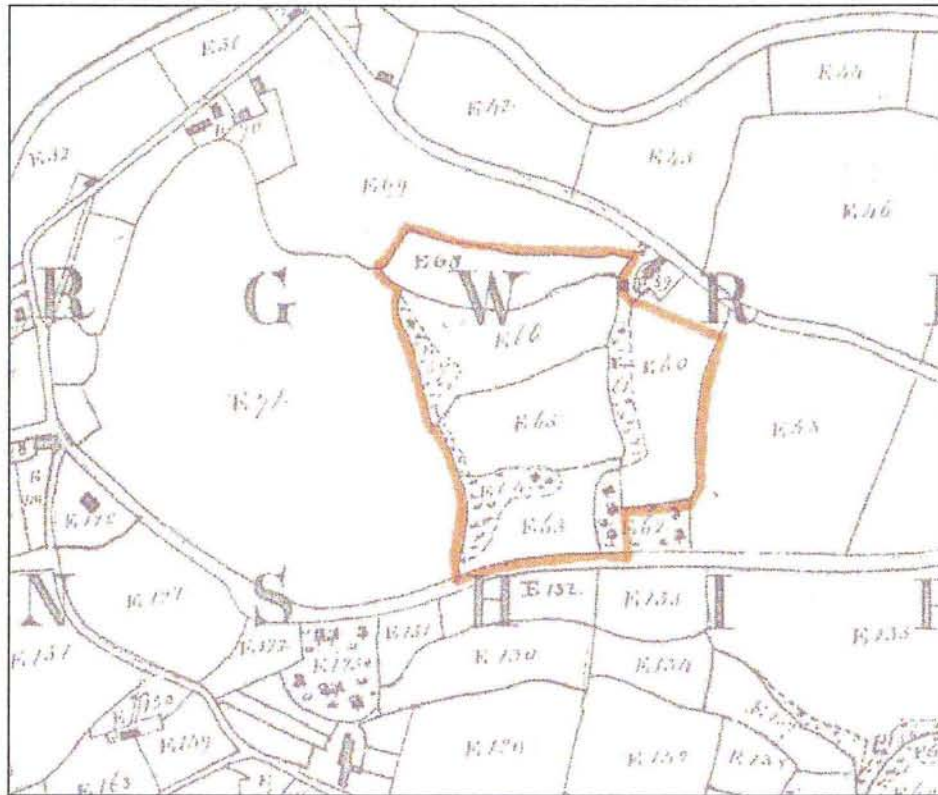


Figure 2: Extract of Caergwrlle Tithe Map, showing Castle Fields in the mid 19th century. Note that north is to the left of the map.

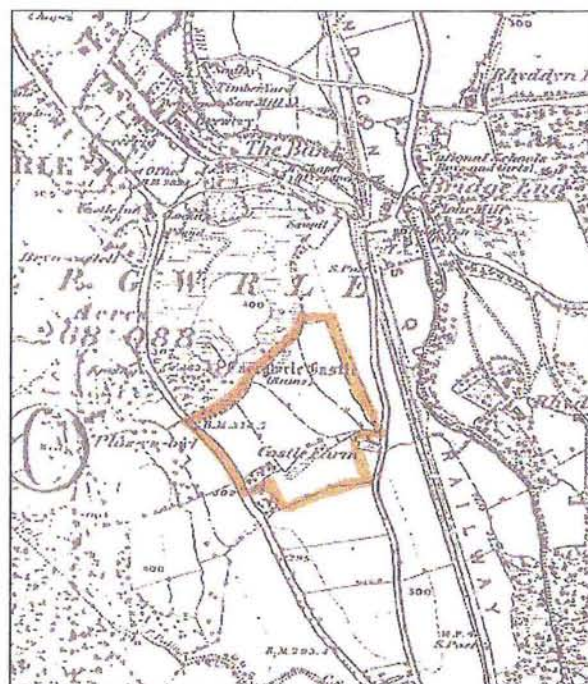


Figure 3: Extract of Ordnance Survey 6 inch map 1879.

Like any Medieval castle, the building of Caergwrle required the assembly of many men and materials, as can be seen from the detailed written accounts published by Taylor in 1992. It has been suggested that a 'construction compound' might have occupied the Castle Fields site during the building work of the 1270s. This is a tempting theory, as the site would have been suitable for such a purpose - but then so would the already defended outer enclosure to the castle which is after all rather 'closer to the action'. Whatever the truth of this the Castle Fields have certainly always been utilised by castle and town and today form an integral part of the setting of both.

Descriptive Catalogue of Historical and Archaeological Features

In the following site catalogue, ordered alphabetically by site name, each feature is discussed and where necessary specific recommendations made about its future management. The number at the head of each record is the Primary Record Number (PRN) of that site in the Regional Sites and Monuments Record operated by the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust on behalf of Flintshire County Council.

37182 Caergwrle Castle 'road'

SJ3075357157

Non antiquity ?

Alleged line of "Roman" or "Medieval" 'road' crossing Castle Hill Caergwrle to the south of the castle (drawn on an undated annotated map by Mr. CL Hartson of Caergwrle). It is not clear what evidence is being cited, by this source, for this road line. On the ground, part of the given line is occupied by a vague 'terrace' (now used as a footpath), which appears to be the product of leveling up behind a field bank than any form of made road. Elsewhere the line depicted (snaking its way around modern property boundaries) seems a highly unlikely course for any sort of ancient road. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)

Management recommendations

No specific management is recommended for this site.

37185 Caergwrle Castle Fields, farmstead

SJ3077056995

Post Medieval Farmstead ?

A small densely overgrown enclosure, shown on the Tithe Map, and now marked on the ground by a much tumbled stone wall (PRN37197) and surrounded by a number holly trees, at the south western corner of Castlefields. It has the appearance of a paddock around a building and may mark a former house site or small farmstead. Presumably out of use by the mid C19th. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)



Management recommendations

The site is relatively stable and ideally should be maintained in its present general condition. However the site is untidy (containing some rubbish and dead undergrowth) and limited clearance could be considered after consultation with CPAT. On no account should any structural remains or other stone be removed from the site nor any part of the site dug into.

37197 Caergwrle Castle Fields, farmstead, wall

SJ3075757004

Post Medieval Wall

Tumbled dry stone wall, now also picked out by a number of large holly trees, surrounding a small irregular enclosure or paddock. The wall is shown on the Tithe Map and probably encloses a small farmstead or house site (PRN37185). (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)

Management recommendations

The wall forms an integral part of farmstead PRN37185 and should not be unnecessarily disturbed without prior consultation with CPAT.

37184 Caergwrle Castle Fields, field system

SJ3079657079

Medieval ? Field system

System of what is now four, although until fairly recently has been five, rectangular fields. Sited on a small plateau below Castle Hill Caergwrle, the fields are demarked by low earth and stone hedge banks of some age. Hedgerow analysis of the surviving species of these hedges has suggested that the boundaries might have been in place for up to 600 years, although this is not corroborated by any field evidence. The boundary between the eastern most field and the rest is potentially the most interesting as it is a terraced trackway formed against a massive revetted lynchet (PRN37188 & PRN37199 respectively) and contains a number of now mature trees which show signs of extensive management and may even at one time have been part of a laid hedge. The four enclosures closest to the castle are reminiscent of small medieval strip fields running north west - south east (with one at a lower level running at right angles) and has the appearance of a small possibly medieval field system associated with the castle. The supposed presence of ridge and furrow (PRN37189) might add weight to this notion. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)



Management recommendations

The field system as a whole is under a relatively stable pasture regime and should be maintained in this state, with stock being limited to prevent erosion. At the time of the visit, the fields were occupied by a single horse and while that stocking level is as low as it can be, horses are a significant cause of erosion and any increase in their number might well be detrimental to the site. Cattle in any numbers may be equally as damaging and the most acceptable alternative may a limited number of sheep. Ploughing should be avoided on any of the fields - if pasture renewal is necessary this should be achieved by other means.

Some of the scrub areas, away from the established hedge lines, could be cleared if required, but only after consultation with CPAT.

The management of the system's individual components is given separately.

37198 Caergwrle Castle Fields, field system, boundary

SJ3079057097

Medieval ? Field boundary

Low bank forming one side of 'medieval strip field'. Topped by hedge and mature trees. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)



Management recommendations

This hedge bank is in a generally stable condition, and should be maintained in this state. From an historic environment perspective, the most important element here is the bank rather than the hedge - as the earthwork is a non-renewable resource (unlike the hedgerow). Therefore extra care must be taken to avoid damaging the bank in any future maintenance work. The hedgerow and its trees will require attention in due course (and certainly before the bank suffers any damage from wind throw or the like) but, as long as none of the distinctive species are unnecessarily removed, this may be undertaken with relative safety. In any maintenance operation the earthwork bank on which the hedge sits should be left undisturbed - stumps should be left to rot in situ rather than being dug out be, no new access ways should be cut through the bank, no part of the bank should be leveled.

37195 Caergwrle Castle Fields, field system, boundary

SJ3074557051

Medieval ? Field boundary

The line of a former field boundary shown on the Caergwrle Tithe Map and early OS editions. Apart from a vague line of isolated hedgerow trees there is now no indication on the ground of its original form - there is no obvious bank surviving and this boundary may never have been more than a hedge. The boundary has now been replaced by a post and wire fence slightly to the east of its original line. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)



Management recommendations

The line of this field boundary has little or no physical presence and no specific management recommendations are made here. However prior consultation of CPAT should be made before any significant disturbance across its line.

37194 Caergwrle Castle Fields, field system, boundary

SJ3071957109

Medieval ?

Field boundary

A substantial earth bank, revetted in places with stone towards its western end, marking the junction of the potential medieval field system PRN37184 and the base of Caergwrle Castle Hill. The bank is now topped by a low dry stone rubble wall which has no appearance of great age, and which has now been replaced by a post and wire fence. It is different in character from the other boundaries of the field system (which are mostly low hedge banks). (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)



Management recommendations

This boundary is in a generally stable condition, and where possible should be maintained in this state. As with the hedged boundaries any repairs to the wall and fence line must be achieved with a minimum of damage to the underlying bank - stumps should be left to rot in situ rather than being dug out, no new access ways should be cut through the boundary, no part of the bank should be leveled, any repairs to the wall should be done only with stone from an agreed source.



At the boundary's west end, the post and wire fence has been damaged and replaced by a temporary arrangement of scaffold poles. Considerable erosion has occurred at this point where the footpath crosses the fence line. Consideration should be given to consolidating the path here and inserting a gate or stile to avoid this scar spreading further.

37186 Caergwrle Castle Fields, field system, boundary

SJ3081557025

Medieval ? Field boundary

Field boundary formed of a stone and earth bank, and sporting a number of mature trees, running along the crest of the scarp above the lower of the Castlefields fields and marking the edge of the small plateau to the south east of the castle. The boundary is shown on C18th and C19th maps and be part of small medieval field system centered on the plateau. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)



Management recommendations

This hedge bank is in a generally stable condition, and should be maintained in this state. From an historic environment perspective, the important element here is the bank rather than the hedge itself - as the earthwork is a non renewable resource (unlike the hedgerow). Therefore extra care must be taken to avoid damaging the bank in any future maintenance work - stumps should be left to rot in situ rather than being dug out be, no new access ways should be cut through the bank, no part of the bank should be leveled.

The hedge row and its trees will require attention in due course (and certainly before the bank suffers any damage from wind throw or the like) but, as long as none of the distinctive species are necessarily removed, this may be undertaken with relative safety.

37196 Caergwrle Castle Fields, field system, gateway

SJ3078556995

Medieval ? Field gate ?

A small but sharply defined earth bank joining two sections of apparently older revetted field banks. The bank occupies a distinct elbow in the line of this older revetted bank and appears to have resulted from the 'modern' blocking of a gateway (the bank is still in use as a crossing point of his boundary by the field path - and consequently suffering considerable erosion). This 'gate' may be related to the adjacent house site PRN37185 and enclosure PRN37197.

No gap is shown in the field boundary on the Caergwrle Tithe Map so the blocking is presumably earlier than the mid C19th and may relate to an adjustment of the field pattern following the demise of the adjacent house site and paddock. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)



Management recommendations

This former gateway still acts as a crossing point of the field boundary PRN37186 and north-south the footpath across the site. Traffic on this path is causing erosion. Without considerable effort to consolidate the bank here and then work to maintain the crossing point it is difficult to see how this erosion can be controlled. Given that the bank blocking the gateway is relatively modern consideration might be given to re-excavating the gateway and creating a new pathway through the boundary at this point. Excavation would need to be done under archaeological conditions.

37199 Caergwrle Castle Fields, field system, lynchet

SJ3082857143

Medieval ?

Field boundary

A significant earth bank formed against north-eastern side of a field. The bank could in part be a lynchet, formed by the movement of ploughsoil downhill from the field to the south west. In places it has been revetted in stone and at several places along its length it is topped by several mature trees which show marked signs of past management and may in fact be the remains of a laid hedge. The bank marks the south western edge of a possible trackway PRN37188. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)



Management recommendations

This hedge bank is in a generally stable condition, and should be maintained in this state. This boundary is most remarkable for the number of, now mature, 'trees along the crest of the bank. Each of these trees, which now survive as massive 'coppiced' stools with considerable re-growth, have clearly been managed. The most recent re-growth is now quite large and takes the form of short lengths of near-horizontal boughs with branches sprouting vertically from their ends. These trees are historic features in themselves and should be further studied and recorded.

The bank forming the boundary is also of considerable interest and must be preserved. As with the other hedged boundaries in the field system, maintenance work on the hedge and trees should aim to avoid damaging the bank - stumps should be left to rot in situ rather than being dug out be, no new access ways should be cut through the bank, no part of the bank should be removed, any repairs to the revetment should be done only with stone from an approved source and after appropriate survey and recording.

37188 Caergwrle Castle Fields, field system, trackway

SJ3083957128

Medieval ?

Trackway

What appears to be a narrow level trackway set against the major revetted field boundary PRN37199. It runs from Castle Farm (shown on the Tithe Map) along the eastern side of Castlefields and then appears to continue around the north eastern side of Castle Hill - it could even be a former approach to the castle from the east. The feature does not appear as a track on the Tithe map. It appears to be integral with the revetted field boundary against its western side and could be of some age. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)

Management recommendations

This terraced trackway, although overgrown, is relatively stable and should be maintained in this condition. Consideration might be given to removing some of the scrub vegetation on this feature although this should not be undertaken without similar work in the rest of the field. At approximately

SJ3082457183 there is an 'active' badger set which is damaging the trackway, although the set is quiet small and may only be in occasional use. Clearly this cannot be removed if it is inhabited but the situation should be monitored to assess the likelihood of future damage.

106418 Caergwrle Castle Fields, iron key

SJ3079057110

Medieval ? Find

An iron key located in close proximity to Caergwrle Castle, in a field noted for its ridge and furrow. Its location may suggest a link with the castle. (CCC site visit, 1984)

Neither the key, the circumstances of its finding, nor its present whereabouts, are described by this source, although it seems to have been assumed to be medieval by those recording the 1984 site visit. It is possible that this is the same key noted by Hartson (Hartson, 2000), although this find is mentioned but not discussed by this reference. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)

Management recommendations

The site of this find requires no specific management.

37189 Caergwrle Castle Fields, ridge and furrow

SJ3080557121

Medieval ? Ridge and furrow

An area of ridge and furrow field system noted in a Clwyd County Council site record relating to the find of an iron key (PRN106418 - "found . . . in a field noted for its ridge and furrow"). The original source of this reference is not known and no convincing trace of ridge and furrow earthworks can now be seen on the ground. Vague striations are visible on CPAT air photos but these run across the major axis of the field - an alignment along this axis might be expected if this were ridge and furrow. However this field falls within what was almost certainly a small medieval field system associated with the castle so the presence of ridge and furrow here might not be unexpected. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)



Management recommendations

As this site could not be identified in the field, no specific management advice can be offered here. Future aerial survey may identify the remains of this feature.

37191 Caergwrle Castle, construction camp site

SJ3076357073

Medieval Construction camp

It has been suggested (see Manley, 1994) that the small plateau on the ridge to the south east of Castle Hill Caergwrle was utilised as the site of a temporary 'construction camp' for the adjacent Edwardian castle of 1282. While detailed accounts exist for the construction of the castle (King, 1974) and this area would undoubtedly make an ideal location for such a camp (which would no doubt have been necessary during the castle's construction), there is no corroborating archaeological or historical evidence that such a camp existed here. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)

Management recommendations

As this site could not be identified in the field, no specific management advice can be offered here. Future survey or documentary research may identify the remains of this feature.

37193 Caergwrle, Castle Farm

SJ3090957047

Post Medieval Farmstead

Farm shown and named on the Caergwrle Tithe Map. Building shown appears to be basic rectangular structure with additions abutting, and at right angles to, the road at its east end and sitting amongst a number of small outbuildings. An apparently modern house now occupies the approximate site of the main farm house although one or two of the original outbuildings do survive. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)

Management recommendations

This site lies outside the study area, but as been included here to show its relationship to sites within it.

37190 Caergwrle, Castle Farm, abandoned field

SJ3085957041

Post Medieval Field

Small field shown on Tithe Map but not now apparent on ground - although a slight kink in the boundary PRN37186 indicates where it joined this feature. Probably related to Castle Farm immediately to south. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)



Management recommendations

This site has little or no archaeological presence and no specific management advice is offered here.

37187 Caergwrle, Castle Farm, outbuilding

SJ3089657057

Post Medieval Farm building

The site of a small building shown on the Caergwrle Tithe Map and OS 6 inch map of 1879, but now to be seen as a small rectangular enclosure. Sited immediately north west of the site of Castle Farm and probably related to it. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)

Management recommendations

This site lies outside the study area, but as been included here to show its relationship to sites within it.

37183 Caregwre 'stone circle'

SJ3082956994

Bronze Age

Stone circle ?

A number of large stones, which "formed a large circle" removed, using "horses and chains", from an unspecified field south of Caergwre Castle (Hartson, 2000 - quoting a local resident). An annotated map, given to CPAT by Mr Hartson, sites this 'stone circle' in the field centered on the NGR given here. It is not clear exactly what the 'monument' was or where it was sited, and although it is possible that this was a Bronze Age stone circle or cairn much of the field indicated would seem to have too steep a gradient for such a site. (CPAT site visit, 22/03/02)

It is possible that this reference is a mis-location of the now destroyed cairn at Abermorddu (PRN101292) 500m to the south.

Management recommendations

No specific management is recommended for this feature as its site cannot be located.

Conclusion


"It is my opinion that the development of this site would have a harmful impact on the on the area. To my mind the effect of this would be to spoil the prominent present day imposing setting of Caergwrle Castle by allowing modern housing to encroach on the ancient monument."

This was the conclusion of the Welsh Office Planning Inspectorate in 1989, in refusing to allow an appeal against Alyn & Deeside Disrtirct Council's refusal of planning permission to develop the Castle Fields site for housing (see Appendix 1). It is a conclusion that undoubtedly holds good today. It is clear from this study, and from consideration of the other strands of evidence noted here, that Castle Fields is an integral part of the Caergwrle's historic landscape and an is still an invaluable component of the setting of the castle and town. It is the conclusion of this report that although at first glance the Castle Fields may not be as 'impressive' as the adjacent castle, their medieval field system its hedges and their history are a valuable historic and archaeological resource in their own right and help to define the essential character Caergwrle.

Bibliography

Appendix 1: Welsh Office Planning Inspectorate Appeal Decision 1989

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PL1/359
Dyddiad Date
16 February 1989

RECEIVED
16 FEB 1989

Gentlemen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971: SECTION 36 APPEAL
MR N EDWARDS - LAND AT CASTLE FARM, CAERGWLE

I am directed by the Secretary of State to say that consideration has been given to the report of the Inspector, Mr A N Vaughan BSc, CEng, MICE, who held a local inquiry into your client's appeal, under Section 36 of the 1971 Act against the decision of the Alyn and Deeside District Council to refuse outline planning permission for residential development on land at Castle Farm, Caergwle, Clwyd.

In his report, a copy of which is enclosed, the Inspector concluded:-

"34. I accept that it is possible to meet the requirements of the County Surveyor and Nature Conservancy interests as regards the proposed development and therefore I do not consider these matters to be an impediment to the proposed housing scheme.

35. I have seen this site and the surrounding area on two occasions; once during the height of summer when the trees were in full leaf, and also in the late autumn when views of Castle Hill are readily available through the bare branches of the trees on both the appeal site and Castle Hill.

36. The castle buildings, although dilapidated, are a prominent feature on the landscape and they can be seen from many miles around. Similarly from the castle there are commanding views of the surrounding countryside and it is not difficult to see why this site was chosen as an important fortification. When looking south from the castle the appeal site is clearly visible in the foreground on gently sloping ground giving way to fairly dense existing development on lower land beyond.

37. When the castle is viewed from Mavarden Road only glimpses of the appeal site can be seen as it is concealed behind existing houses. From the Wrexham Road there is no such cover provided and any house on the eastern edge of the proposed housing site would be seen in the foreground of views of the castle. The proposed access cutting off this length of highway would also be a noticeable modern engineering feature in the foreground of views of the castle from this angle.

38. More important in my opinion are the views of the castle from more distant points in the surrounding district. At present the development near the castle is mainly set at a low level and does not appear to encroach on the high ground that surrounds the monument. Castle Hill as a former fortification stands out as a magnificent emplacement towering above the surrounding countryside. The prominence of this fortress on the southern side is augmented by the natural topography of the gently sloping land which comprises the appeal site. In my opinion any new building works which would harm this setting should not be allowed to proceed.

39. Undoubtedly the appeal site is placed on higher ground than the present built up parts of the settlement in this area. It is the intention that a large part of the proposed housing would be on land which slopes up to the monument. This housing, even if restricted to single storey buildings, would be clearly seen from the points to the south in the foreground of views of this castle. It is my opinion that the development of the appeal site would have a harmful impact on the area. To my mind the effect of this would be to spoil the prominent present day imposing setting of Caergwrle Castle by allowing modern housing to encroach on the ancient monument."

The Inspector recommended that the appeal be dismissed. The Secretary of State notes that no evidence was given at the inquiry about the adequacy of the supply of land for housing development. He has considered whether it is necessary to seek information from the parties but he has decided not to do so on this occasion because it seems to him that whatever the outcome of a reference back on this point the clear objection already noted to the proposal would remain unaffected.

For the reasons given by the Inspector in paragraphs 24-39 inclusive the Secretary of State accordingly dismisses your client's appeal.

A separate letter will be sent to you with regard to your client's application for an award of costs.

Copies of this letter have been sent to the Director of Legal Services, Clwyd County Council and the Chief Legal Officer, Alyn and Sea-side District Council.

I AM Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant


Authorized by the Secretary
of State to sign in that behalf

Encs: Letters 'A' and 'H'

Appendix 2: Extract from Regional Sites and Monuments Record

Note

This data has not been reproduced in CPAT's library copy of this report, but is available as a Word (DOC) or Acrobat (PDF) file in the CPAT archive.

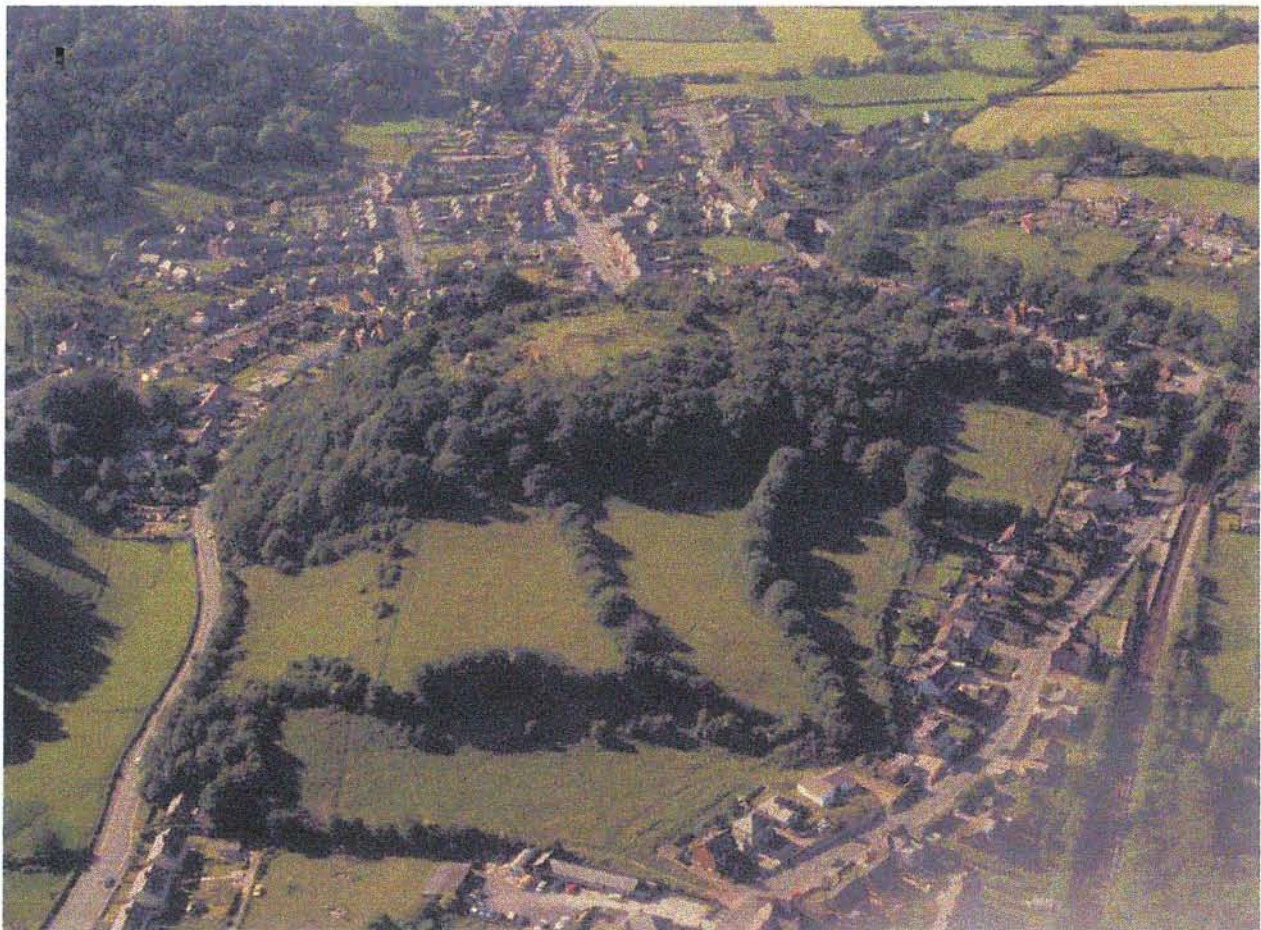
CHRM 17/05/02

THE CLWYD POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Caergwrle Castle Fields, Flintshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
& MANAGEMENT REPORT

APPENDIX 2: REGIONAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD EXTRACT



CPAT Report No 475

Caergwrle Castle Fields, Flintshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT REPORT

APPENDIX 2: REGIONAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD EXTRACT

C H R Martin and A E Kennedy
April 2002

Report for Groundwork Wrexham & Flintshire

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The following extract of the Regional Sites and Monuments Record of the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust is provided as background information to the Caergwrle Castle Fields Assessment. The records are arranged in alphabetical order by name.