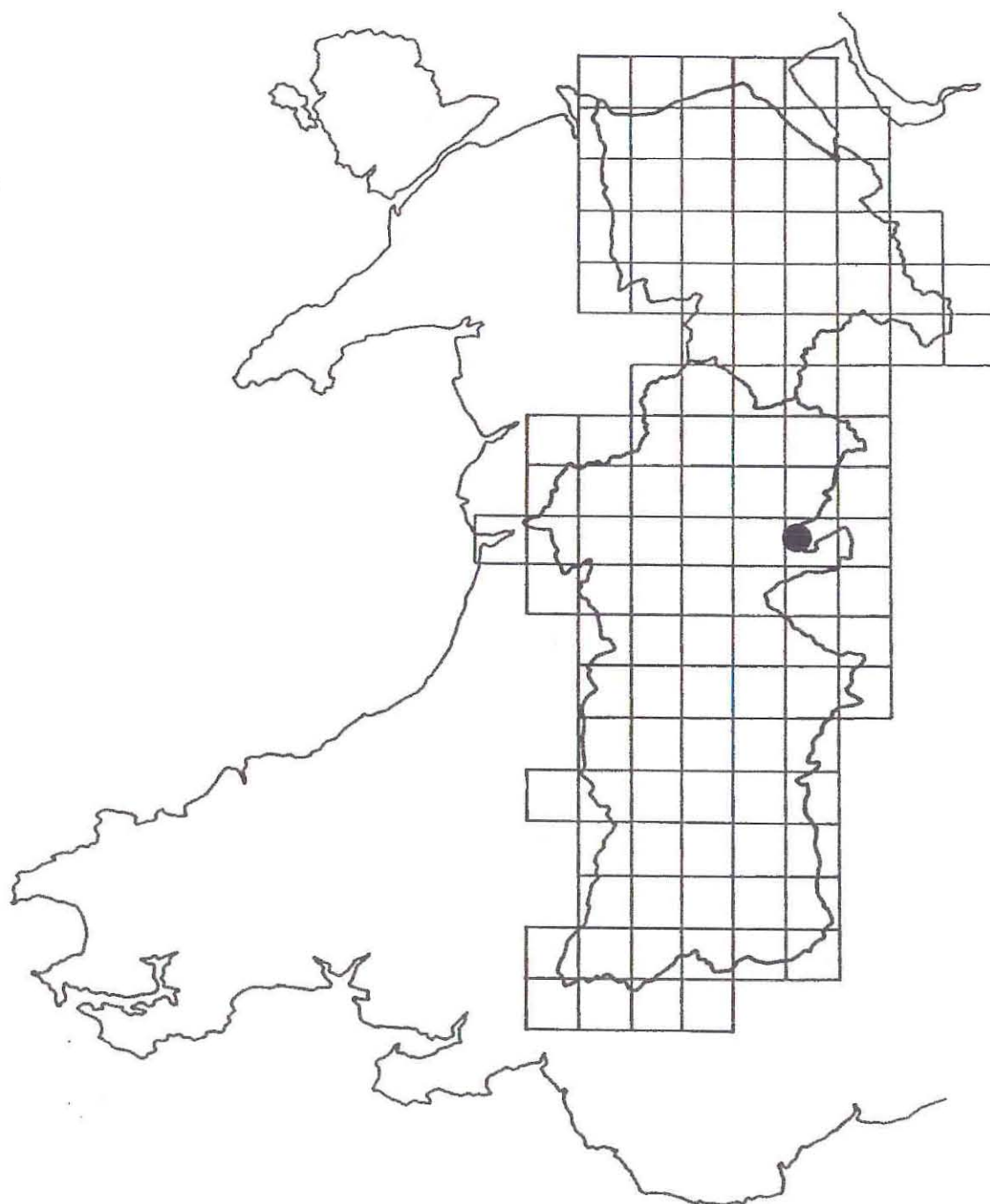


THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

*Princes Square, Montgomery, Powys*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



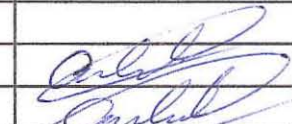
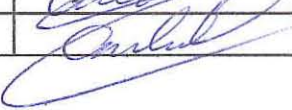
CPAT Report No 188

## CPAT Report Record

### Report and status

CPAT Report Title	Princes Square, Montgomery, Powys. Archaeological Watching Brief		
CPAT Project Name	Princes Square, Montgomery		
CPAT Project No	685	CPAT Report No	188
Confidential (Y/N)	Y	draft/final	FINAL

### Internal control

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*Princes Square, Montgomery, Powys*  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

by **D.Murphy**  
July 1996

Report prepared for Ian Pryce Property Services

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## **CONTENTS**

1 INTRODUCTION

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

4 THE FINDS

5 CONCLUSIONS

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 On 10th June 1996, the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (hereafter CPAT Contracts) was invited by Ian Pryce Property Services to tender for an Archaeological Watching Brief in response to the archaeological condition appended to the planning consent by Powys County Council (PCC) and the Design Brief prepared for PCC by the Curatorial section of CPAT (No WAT 144).
- 1.2 The development at Princes Square (20299652, Figs 1 & 2) involved the excavation of foundation trenches prior to the construction of a new office building on a site formerly used as a car park.
- 1.3 The specification and quotation prepared by CPAT Contracts was accepted on the 13th June 1996 with the groundworks proposed for 18th June 1996.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The town of Montgomery was established in 1223 and granted a borough charter in 1227. Substantial traces of the town walls still survive and the medieval street plan appears to have been relatively unaltered over the centuries.
- 2.2 The development plot off Princes Street lies within the historic core of the town and it was believed that medieval street-frontage buildings may have survived in a relatively undisturbed state. No prior archaeological investigation has taken place at this site.

## **3 THE WATCHING BRIEF**

- 3.1 Excavation works took place on the 25th and 26th June under the supervision of the writer. In the following text, numbers in brackets refer to individual contexts recorded in the site archive.
- 3.2 Four trenches (Fig. 3) were machine-cut to a maximum depth of 1 metre below the existing ground surface to enable building foundations to be established.
- 3.3 The first trench was excavated parallel to the present street frontage and to a stone wall with hard mortar bonding (0101). The wall was removed to ground level before excavation commenced and subsequently was found to be sitting on a layer of sterile yellow clay (0102) at a depth of 0.45 metres below ground level.
- 3.4 A carefully laid brick floor (0104, 0108, 0115, 0120) was revealed below the rubble layer (0103, 0109, 0116, 0121) in all four trenches. At the western end of Trench B (Fig. 3) several courses of contemporary brick wall were bonded to the brick floor. Both the floor and wall could possibly be part of an ancillary building connected with slaughterhouse activities known at the site in living memory.



3.5 In all four trenches the stratigraphy revealed in section was as follows:

0 - 200mm thick hardcore layer covering the present car park (0107, 0114, 0119).

100 - 650mm thick rubble layer consisting of bricks, stones and mortar (0103, 0108, 0115, 0120).

150mm thick brick floor surface with bricks layed on edge (0104, 0109, 0116, 0121).

50 - 100mm thick Layer of black gritty sand (0106, 0111, 0117, 0122).

3.5 Underlying the black gritty sand on the eastern part of the plot was a layer of sterile yellow clay (0102, 0112, 0123). On the western side, 2.4m from where Trenches B and D meet Trench C, the ground consisted of a brown-grey clayey-silt (0113, 0118, 0124).

#### 4 THE FINDS

4.1 Finds consisted of a selection of bottles, pieces of pottery and iron artefacts. All were post-medieval in date. The bowl of a clay tobacco pipe of likely 16/17th century date and a small fragment of pottery (probably medieval) were found in association with modern finds and therefore must be regarded as residual. A post-hole was seen in both section and plan in Trench 4 and was sampled by hand. It was found to contain decaying wood and a piece of modern pottery and is considered to be relatively recent in date.

4.2 No finds were recovered from the sterile yellow clay layer. Apart from two pieces of pottery found to the west of the post-hole, no other finds were associated with the brown-grey clayey-silt layer (0113, 0118, 0124).

4.3 The layer of black gritty sand (0106, 0111, 0117, 0122) produced 413 grammes of undated plano-convex base from a slag smithing hearth.

#### 5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The Watching Brief revealed a carefully laid brick floor and several courses of contemporary wall, possibly of an ancillary building connected with slaughterhouse activities known at this site in living memory. Although this connection cannot be stated with absolute certainty without further investigation.

5.2 The sterile yellow clay layer (0102, 0112, 0123) did not appear to be the natural soil of the region. It would seem that it was deliberately dumped to possibly provide a level building platform on the street frontage. Previous excavation within Montgomery at Pool Road has shown similar levelling layers of medieval date (Britnell & Jones 1989, 52); although no datable evidence was recovered from Princes Square. The construction of the brick floor had truncated any surviving archaeological remains within the trenches excavated.

5.3 Overlying both the brown-grey clayey-silt and yellow clay layers was a layer of black gritty sand in which 413 grammes of plano-convex base from a slag smithing hearth were found. This layer may represent the re-use of sand from a nearby smithing floor as a bedding layer for the brick floor.

- 5.4 Overall, the results of the watching brief have not been particularly conclusive in defining medieval or post-medieval activity, save the noting of structures presumed to be part of the slaughterhouse, and possible evidence for smithing in the vicinity. Any medieval activity is likely to have been damaged by more recent developments or still preserved underneath the clay platform.

## **6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The co-operation and assistance of Ian Pryce, Jim Bradbury, Tom and Wynne Ralph is greatly appreciated.

## **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Britnell, J. & Jones., 1989. Pool Road, Montgomery: excavations within the medieval town. *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 77, 41-72.





Fig. 1 Location 1:2500



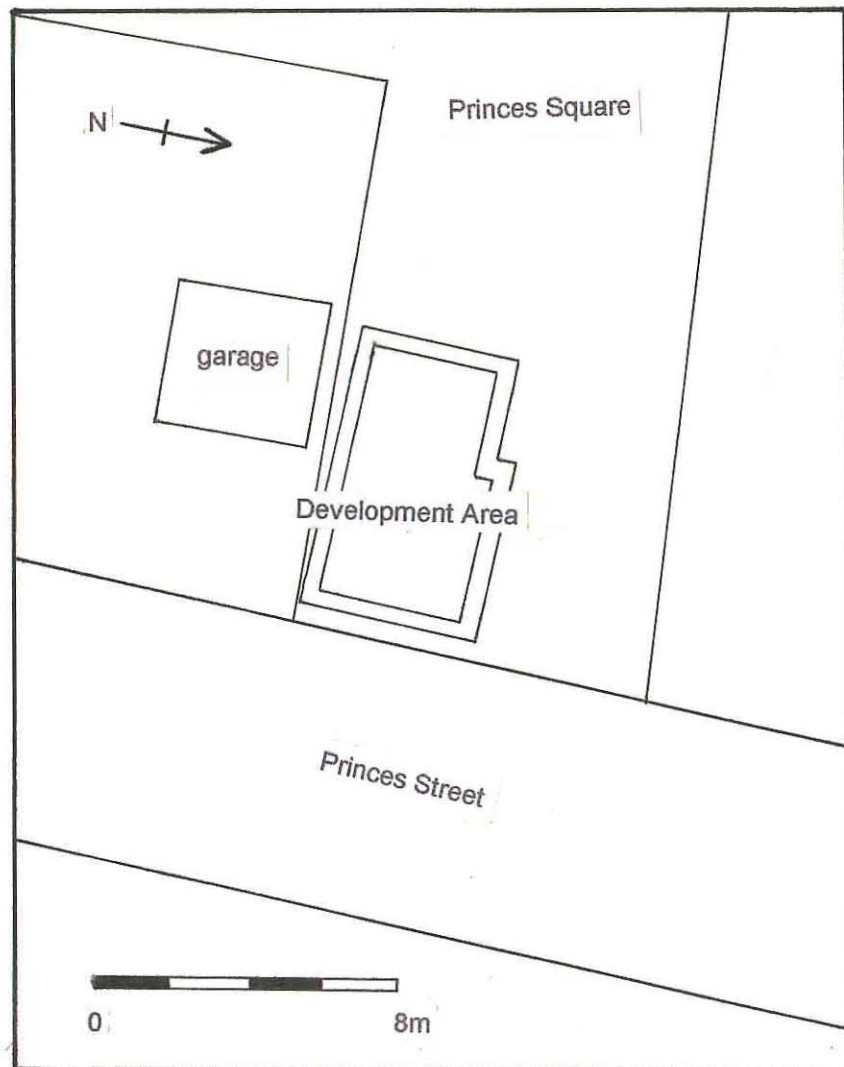


Fig.2 Development Area 1:200

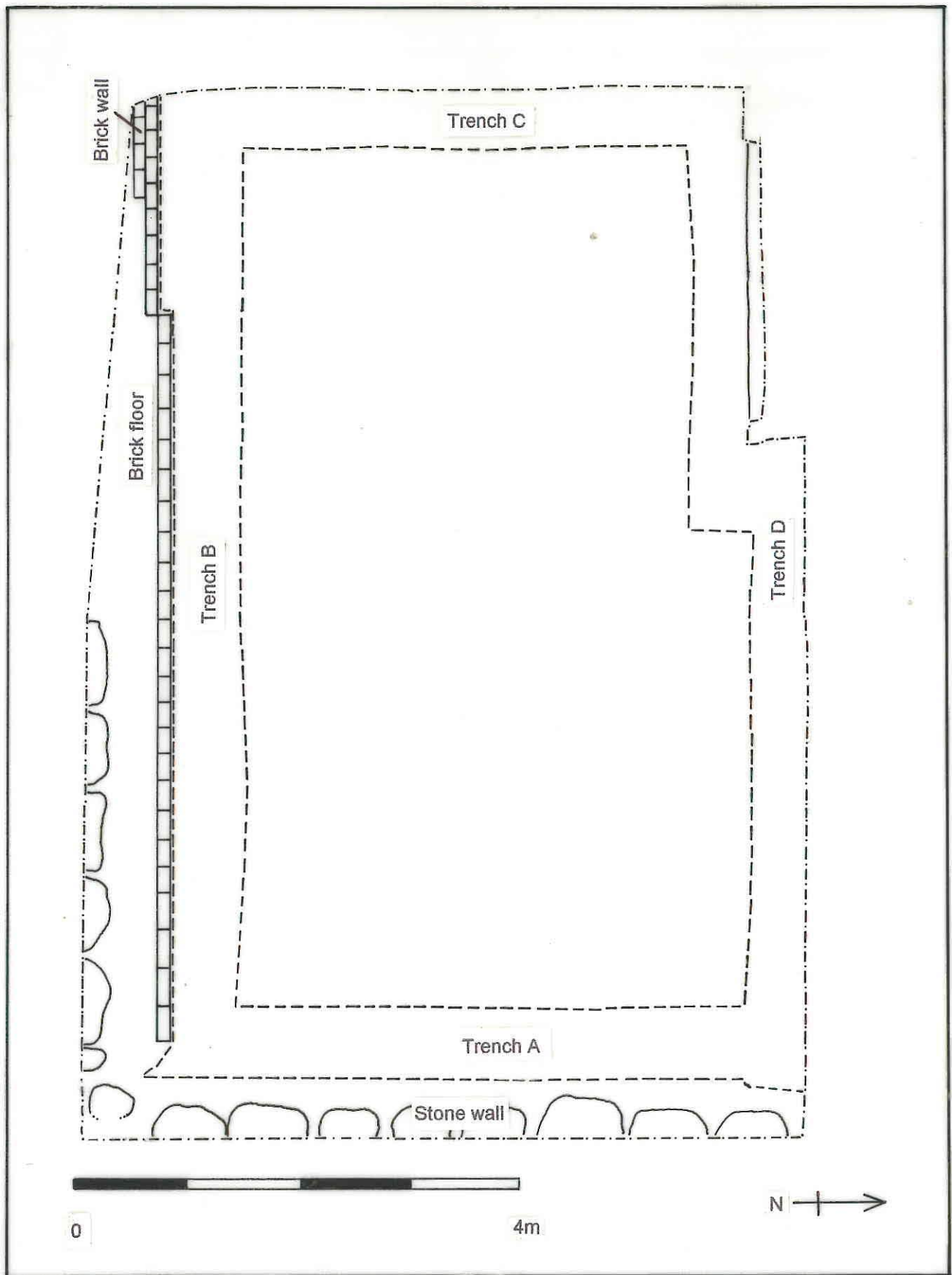


Fig.3 Plan of Foundation Trenches 1:50