

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Discoed Motte, Discoed, Radnorshire
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

CPAT Report No 409

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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December 2000

Report for South Wales Electricity

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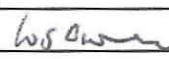
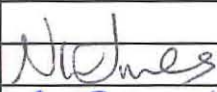
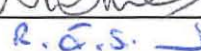
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CPAT Report Record

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was invited by Mr Mark Turrell, South Wales Electricity, to undertake a watching brief during the erection of a new electricity pole in the field to the north of Church House, Discoed, Presteigne, Powys.
- 1.2 The proposed works lay within the Scheduled Area of Discoed Castle Mound (Rd 059) and the watching brief was requested by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments as a condition of granting Scheduled Monument Consent.
- 1.3 The Watching Brief was carried out on April 20th, 2000.

2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The site of the proposed work was located c. 14m to the south-west of Discoed Castle Mound (SO 27665 64790; 198m OD), in a north-facing pasture field overlooking the Lugg valley.
- 2.2 The underlying geology in this area consists of shales of the Ludlow Series of the Lower Old Red Sandstone supporting well-drained fine silty soils (Rudeforth *et al.* 1984).

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Documentary evidence regarding the original function of the mound is contradictory. The interpretation given by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments was that the mound might be a motte with a moat to the north, the line of which was later adopted by a road (RCAHMW 1913, 40, No. 145). A later suggestion was that it was a barrow rather than a motte (Hogg and King 1963), whilst following a visit by the Ordnance Survey in 1974, both previous interpretations were refuted, and on the grounds that the old vicarage garden appears to have continued into this area, it was suggested that its original form was modified to form the base for a gazebo for the vicarage. Silvester (1994, 44) again regards the barrow/motte hypothesis as unconvincing, suggesting that it is no more than a landscaped spur whilst Remfry suggests that it might have represented an aborted attempt at a castle base (Remfry 1996, 121).
- 3.2 At present, this oval-shaped spur has a level summit, 20m long from south-south-west to north-north-east and 10m wide, with a narrowed approach from the south-south-west. On its north-western side it is 2.0m high.

4 THE WATCHING BRIEF

- 4.1 A single pit was machine-excavated for the erection of the pole, and aligned west-north-west to east-south-east, measuring 1.80m long 0.50m wide and up to 1.50m deep. Removal of the brown humic topsoil (1) exposed a reddish-brown stony clay (2), up to 0.84m thick, overlying a shaly bedrock (3). No features of archaeological interest were exposed and no artefacts were recovered.
- 4.2 The sections exposed were drawn at an appropriate scale (fig. 2) and photographed in 35mm black and white negative and colour slide.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The pit, which was located some 14m to the south-west of the mound, revealed no archaeological features or finds.

6 REFERENCES

- Hogg, A H A, & King, D J C, 1963. Early Castles in Wales and the Marches, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 112, 77-124.
- RCAHMW, 1913, *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire. III County of Radnor*. London: HMSO.
- Remfry, P M, 1996. *A guide to Castles in Radnorshire: Monuments in the Landscape Vol 3*. Woonton Almeley.
- Silvester, R J, 1994. *Radnorshire Historic Settlements: Part One*, CPAT Report No. 92.

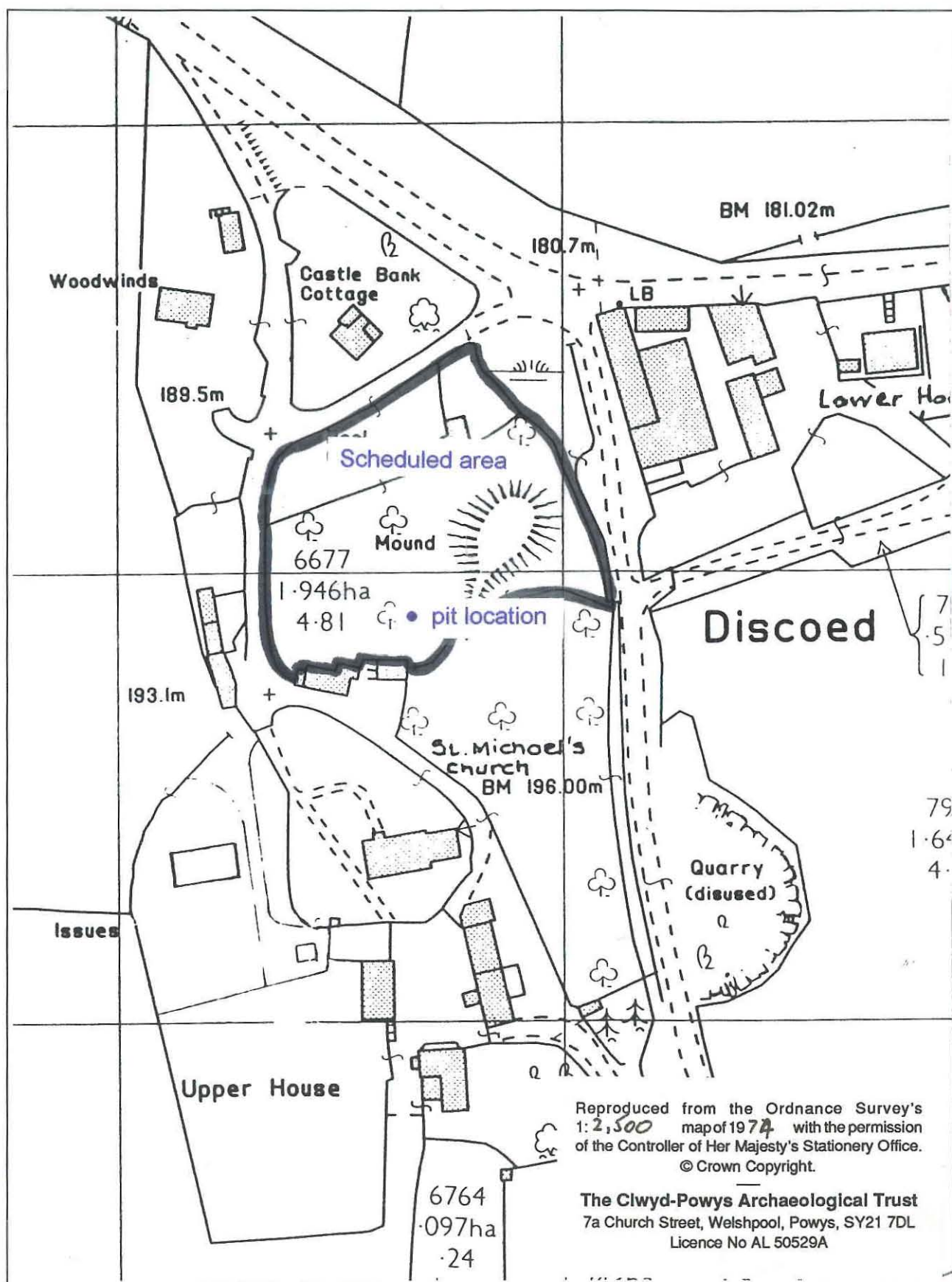


Fig. 1 Site location. Scale 1:1,250

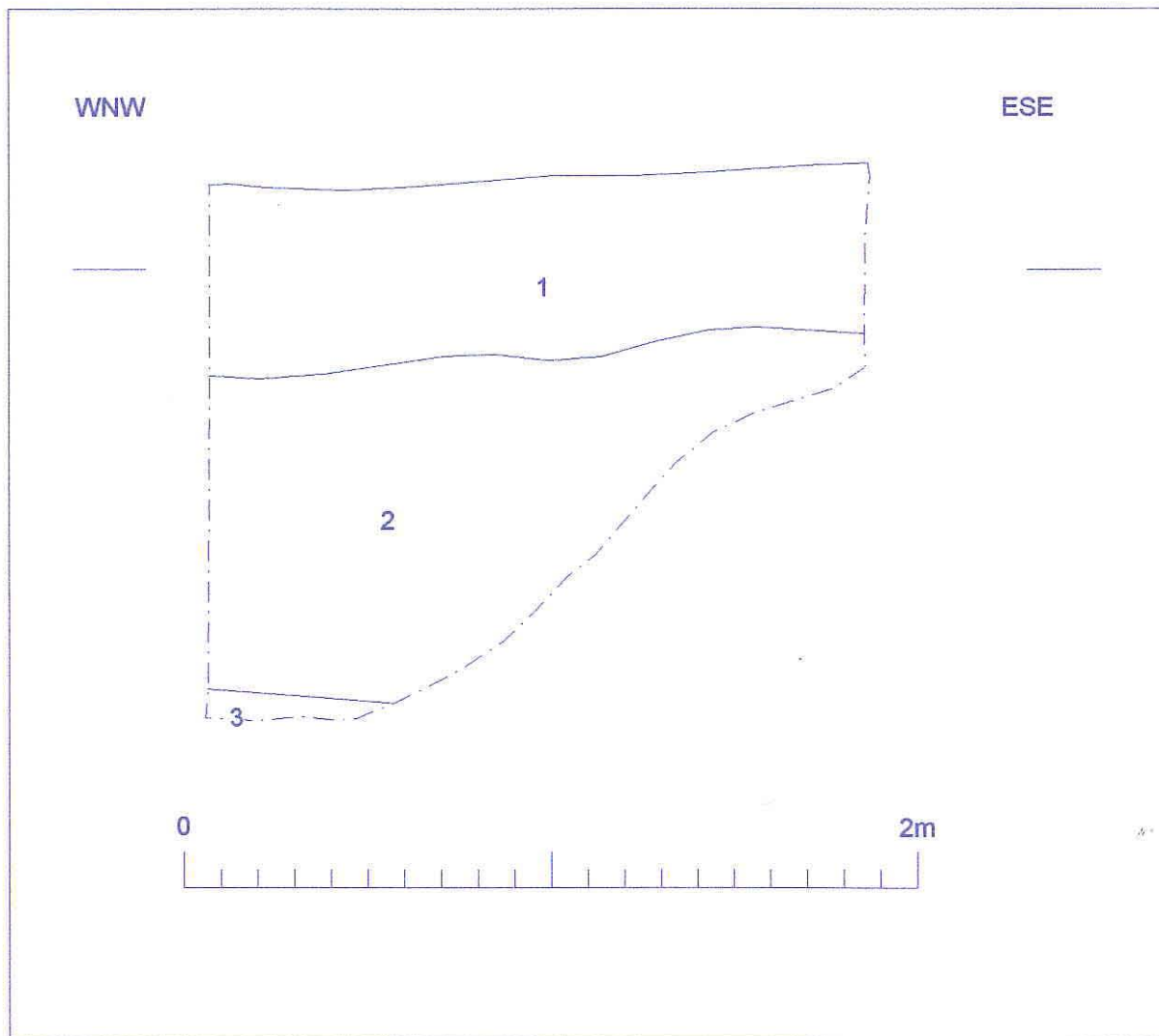


Fig. 2 Pit section, scale 1:20