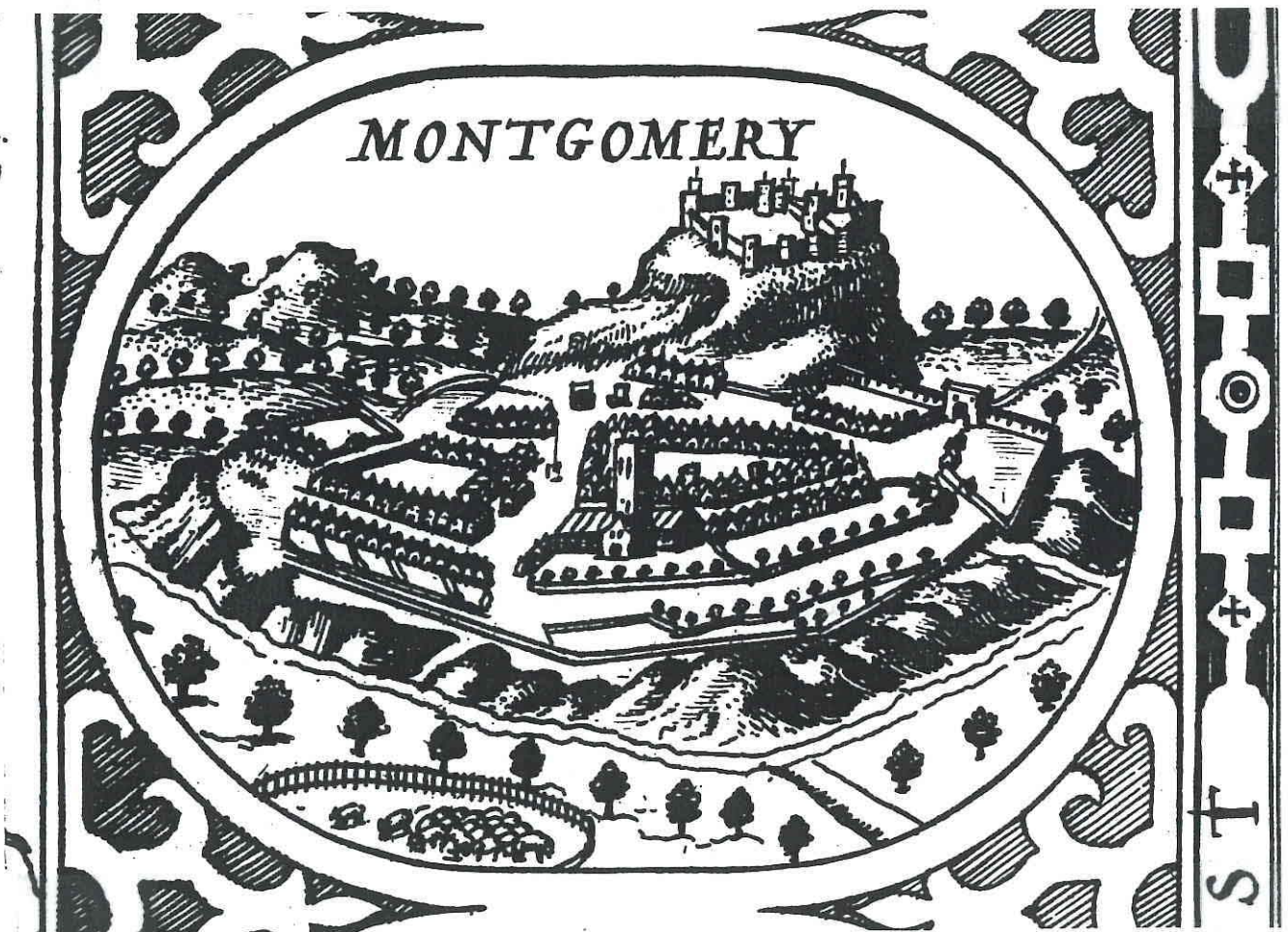


THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

*WESTMEAD, SCHOOL LANE,  
MONTGOMERY*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



CPAT Report No 393

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***Westmead, School Lane, Montgomery***  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**W.G.Owen**  
October 2000

Report for Mr S. Hamer

**The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust**

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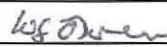
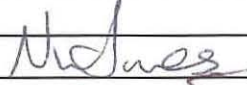
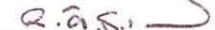
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## CPAT Report Record

### Report and status

CPAT Report Title	Westmead, School Lane, Montgomery: Archaeological Watching Brief		
CPAT Project Name	Westmead, School Lane, Montgomery		
CPAT Project No	908	CPAT Report No	393
Confidential (yes/no)	No	draft/final	Final

### Internal control

	name	signature	date
prepared by	W.G. Owen		20/10/2000
checked by	N.W. Jones		27/10/2000
approved by	R.J. Silvester		30/10/2000

### Revisions

no	date	made by	checked by	approved by

### Internal memo


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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In August, 2000, the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Manweb plc, acting on behalf of Mr S Hamer of Garden Cottage, Montgomery, to submit a specification and quotation for carrying out a watching brief during the excavation of trial pits and a cable trench at Westmead, School Lane, Montgomery. The work was required by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments as a condition for granting Scheduled Monument Consent for the installation of a sub-surface electricity cable to a new development on land adjacent to Garden Cottage, located to the north-east of the scheduled area of the town defences.
- 1.2 The specification and quotation were duly accepted and CPAT was asked to carry out the work.

## 2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The trial pits were located close to the north-eastern boundary of the open, north-west facing field known as Westmead, Montgomery (Fig. 1; centred at SO 2240 9560).
- 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. A section of the defences, 50m long, is located to the south-east of Garden Cottage where it is visible as a broad bank (Fig. 2).
- 3.2 Speed's map shows the general layout and street frontages of the town, indicating houses fronting onto Chirbury Road in this area. Although there is no surface evidence for occupation along the Chirbury Road frontage, there are a number of earthwork terraces and platforms in the field to the rear of the frontage. A pre-planning archaeological evaluation undertaken in 1992 found evidence for occupation during the 13th or 14th century. One evaluation trench was located on a platform immediately to the south-east of, and overlooking, the proposed trial pits, where two gullies probably associated with a house site were identified (Gibson 1992). On the basis of the results of the evaluation which demonstrated the presence of medieval houses, the field was subsequently designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments.
- 3.3 Elsewhere in Montgomery, other archaeological excavations and watching briefs have yielded evidence for domestic occupation during the late medieval period. Excavations carried out adjacent to Pool Road at SO 22299691 from 1984 to 1987 revealed evidence of timber buildings adjacent to a holloway (Britnell & Jones 1989) and confirmed during the course of a watching brief in 1998 (Hankinson 1998). There was evidence for the presence of a late medieval burgage plot to the east of Arthur Street at SO 22259653 (Gibson 1991). This was broadly contemporary with structural remains excavated in the grounds of Plas Du at SO 22235969 (Ashton & Garwood 1985) and an assemblage of pottery recovered from a pit adjacent to Back Lane (SO 22249636).



#### 4 THE WATCHING BRIEF

- 4.1 The watching brief of the excavations of the trial pits was carried out on September 27th, 2000 and during the course of trench excavation along the line of the trial pits on October 10th, 2000.
- 4.2 Four pits each approximately 0.45m square were hand-excavated to a depth of at least 0.45m and examined for archaeologically significant features. The turf/topsoil layer in each case was approximately 0.3m deep and consisted of a dark brown humic loam. Below this, the soil in Trial Pits 1, 2, and 3 consisted of a friable clayey loam which was moderately stony and varied only slightly in colour from a light brown to yellowish brown. The equivalent layer in Trial Pit 4 was slightly darker in colour than the other three.
- 4.3 Finds consisting of brick fragments, clay-pipe stem fragments, an iron gate hinge and pottery of a 19th or 20th-century date were recovered from the topsoil but were not retained. No features of archaeological interest were recorded and no medieval material found.
- 4.4 The trench excavated along the line of the trial pits was carried out mechanically to a maximum depth of 0.60m. Soil layers exposed between Trial Pits 1 and 2 and were generally similar to those recorded in those trial pits and finds recovered from the topsoil layer were of a late 18th to early 20th-century date. The trench between Trial Pits 2 and 4 was excavated to a depth in excess of 0.45m and cut into the underlying undisturbed subsoil at the base of the trench which was a stiff yellow clay typical of that found elsewhere in the area. Pottery finds recovered from the spoil included a sherd of late medieval or early post-medieval date from a position in the lower topsoil between Trial pits 3 and 4. The trench extended for a further distance of 2.0m beyond Trial Pit 4 and the soil exposed below the topsoil consisted of a brown fairly stony hillwash up to 0.28m deep overlying the stiff yellow clay seen elsewhere.

#### 5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The trial pits yielded no features of archaeological interest and nothing of obvious significance was disturbed. The finds from the pits were of a comparatively late origin.
- 5.2 The finds recovered from the trench were more numerous and included the late post-medieval sherds described above which were all from the topsoil. The single sherd of either 14th or 15th-century date which was recovered from the base of the topsoil is possibly of greater significance as its location in the trench was close to the base of the medieval house platform overlooking the trench from the south-east, and may suggest occupation of the platform into the 15th century.

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## APPENDIX 1

### WESTMEAD, SCHOOL LANE, MONTGOMERY: WATCHING BRIEF SPECIFICATION FOR A CONTRACTED ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF BY THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed development involves the excavation of trial pits at Westmead, School Lane, Montgomery. The area impinges upon a Scheduled Ancient Monument and as a condition of Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent (SMC), Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments have decided that an archaeological watching brief is required during groundworks.

#### 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, should this be required.

#### 3 Methods

- 3.1 The watching brief will be undertaken to include the excavation of trial pits.
- 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 colour slide and black and white print. 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 if required as a condition of SMC. 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. A short summary will be prepared for *Archaeology in Wales* and further publication of the results may be considered in an appropriate regional or national journal at a later date, as 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. Cadw 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  
15th August 2000

**APPENDIX 2**  
**SITE ARCHIVE**

**Site data**

**Pottery**

- 1 sherd (15g) Midland Purple, ?16th century
- 1 sherd (17g) Local Red Earthenware, 17-18th century
- 1 sherd (27g) Whiteware, 19th century
- 1 sherd (3g) Developed Whiteware, 19-20th century
- 2 sherds (50g) Industrial Slipware, 1770s-20th century
- 1 sherd (43g) land drain

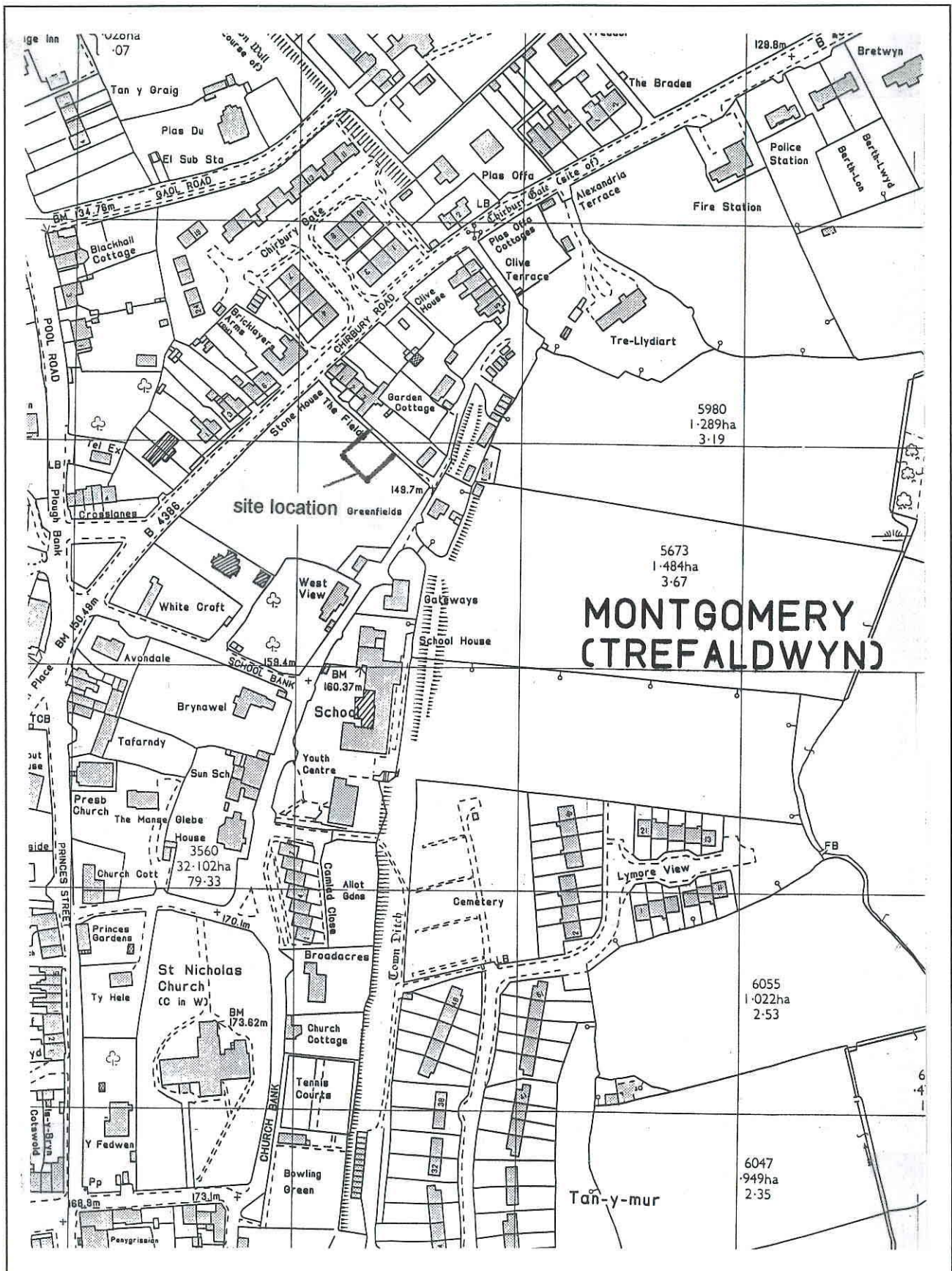


Fig. 1 Site location. Scale 1:2,500



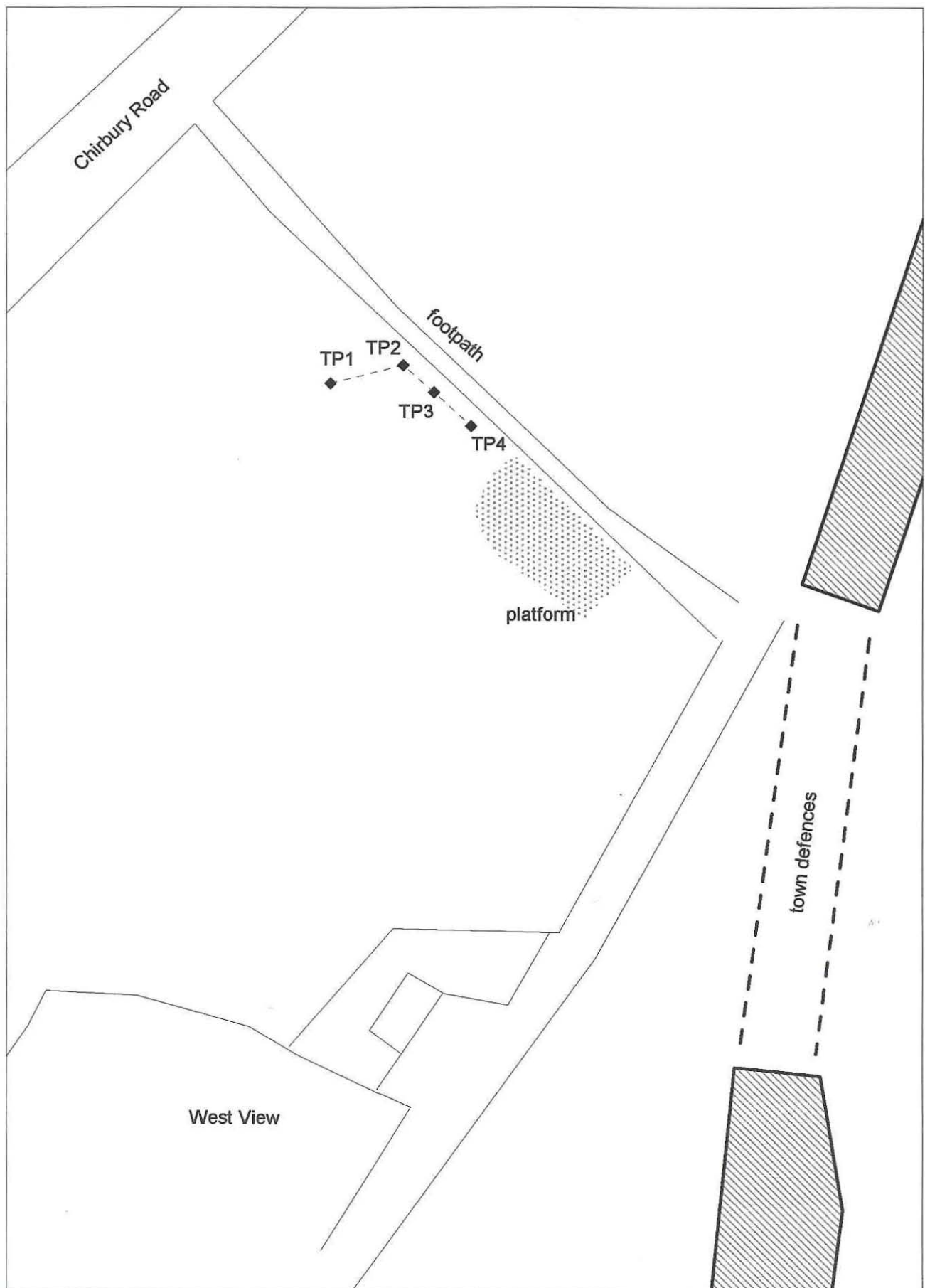


Fig. 2 Location of test pits, scale 1:500