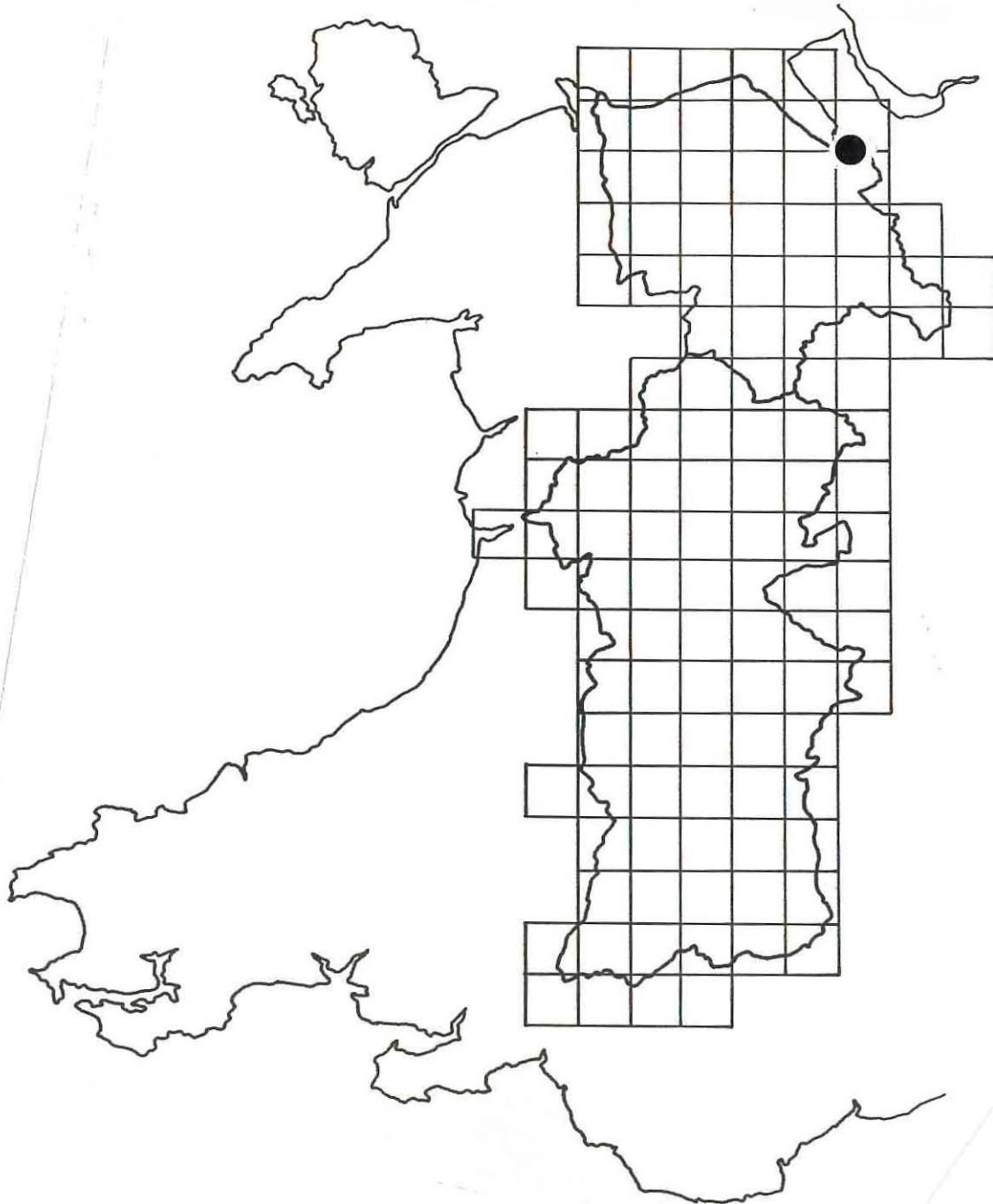


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A459/A550 Improvement Scheme,  
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**by Mark Walters**

May 1992

## **AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE A494/A550 IMPROVEMENT SCHEME DEESIDE PARK TO DROME CORNER, CLWYD**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This assessment has been instigated at the request of the development and engineering consultants Rendel Palmer & Tritton who have designed the newly proposed road course on behalf of the Welsh Office.

1.2 The assessment has attempted to establish the archaeological resource within the road scheme corridor shown on the enclosed plan. This corridor consists of a narrow strip of land adjacent to the present course of the A494(T) and its junction with the A550(T) immediately north of the River Dee crossing at Queensferry. A new feeder road linking the A458 to the A494(T)/A550(T) junction has also been proposed.

1.3 The topography consists of a low-lying narrow alluvial plain with a present ground level averaging 5m OD. The land rises gently to the north onto the first river terrace of the former course of the Dee. The underlying drift geology is wholly derived from alluvial deposition episodes related to the course of the Dee prior to its silting up and consequent canalisation. The road scheme cuts across this flood plain between Sealand and Garden City within the recently formed parish of Sealand.

### **2 METHODOLOGY**

Stage 1 - Desk-top study.

#### **2.1 (A) County SMR**

Consultation of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) housed at the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. This includes the checking of the Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map coverage in the relevant area for known sites of archaeological interest. Also use of the computerised SMR database and photographic collection.

#### **2.2 (B) Aerial Photographs**

Consultation of the aerial photographic archive held at Clwyd County Council, Mold. This includes vertical aerial coverage of Clwyd by Geonex in 1984.

#### **2.3 (C) Cartographic Sources**

Checking of maps held at the Clwyd County Council Record Office and the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth including: Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6" maps, Maps for Hawarden Tithe Survey of 1839 (Sealand Township), Hawarden



Estate Map of Shotton c.1651, Enclosure Map of Aston 1730-40, 1815 Survey of the Parish of Hawarden, Original Ordnance Surveyors' drawings of 1835.

#### 2.4 (D) Documentary Sources

Checking of records held in the Clwyd County Council Library - Local History Section including: Parish histories, archaeological journals, photographic collection, deeds.

#### 2.5 Stage 2 - Field Study

Involves walking the corridor to be developed where access is possible. Archaeological features recognised on route are photographed, mapped and recorded.

#### 2.6 Stage 3 - Post-survey

Collation of data derived from stages 1 and 2 to provide a summary of the character, dating and significance of the archaeological features located during the survey. Based on this information recommendations are made for those parts of the archaeological resource which would be affected by the development scheme.

### 3 RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

3.1 The County Sites and Monuments Record showed that no known sites exist within the road corridor.

3.2 The aerial photographic record housed at Clwyd County Council revealed no features of archaeological interest. The area around Old Marsh Farm (SJ 3340 6975) was checked for traces of a surrounding moat with negative results. The only obvious features were former watercourses (palaeochannels) oriented north-west to south-east, located to the south of Old Marsh Farm and centred on SJ 3350 6940. These channels ultimately drained into the former course of the River Dee to the east.

3.3 Cartographic sources revealed a similarly negative picture for potential archaeological features. The Speed map of 1610 showed the original course of the Dee which was by then rapidly silting up. The 1835 Ordnance Surveyors' drawing of the area north of the modern course of the Dee revealed a field pattern similar to that of the present day with large regular square or rectangular field boundaries divided by long linear trackways and roads. The larger fields cluster along the shoreline of the Dee. The farms shown on this map were all named after previous or present owners in 1835 and they still exist today though the farms now have topographic names; for example, Sealand Manor at SJ 3320 6850 was Garyt's Farm in 1835. The Hawarden Tithe Survey of 1839 was used to retrieve field names for those plots directly affected by the

road corridor. The fields south-east of the A494(T) had no recorded names and all were in the ownership of the River Dee Company which was set up in 1737 to construct a new canalised course for the Dee. Fields south of Old Marsh Farm were called Marsh Ley which indicate areas of open marshland reclaimed for pasture.

3.4 Overall the cartographic sources show no archaeological potential in this area. Settlement to the north of the present course of the Dee and south of the first river terrace near Saughall was clearly stimulated by the reclamation of the Saltney Marshes after 1737 by the River Dee Company and no evidence exists for settlement here prior to that date.

3.5 Documentary sources support this conclusion. By the 1740s the River Dee Company had enclosed some 3,068 acres of the 4,818 acres available within Sealand parish. In 1778 an Act of Parliament was passed to enclose the rest of Saltney Marsh. Land reclamation followed rapidly with a new river bank flood defence and sluices. The Saltney township economy expanded agriculturally after enclosure due to an influx of small farming concerns.

3.6 The field survey revealed no new sites of archaeological interest within the corridor of development.

#### **4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 In view of the evidence presented above we cannot see any archaeological objection to the proposed improvement scheme for the A494(T)/A550(T) and A548 feeder road.

4.2 Should there be any subsequent route changes to the current scheme proposals further consultation should be sought from a recognised archaeological body so that the archaeological resource can be defined.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Lloyd, G. 1967 'The canalisation of the River Dee in 1737', Flintshire Historical Society Publications, Volume 23

Willett, R. 1822 A memoir of Hawarden parish (Chester)



Airfield  
(disused)

New Marsh  
Farm

New Marsh  
Farm Cottages

Chester  
Junction

Camp

Sports Field

No 9 & No 10  
Holding

No 8 Holding

Camp

Old Marsh Farm  
Cottages

Old Marsh  
Farm

Woodland

Belvedere

Sealand Bank  
Farm

Garden City

Playing Field

Ferrybank  
Farm

Sealand Manor  
Farm

3008

RIVER DEE (Afon Dyfrdwy)  
Mean High Water

SEA

