

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Llanidloes Link Road, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS



CPAT Report No 738

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November 2005

Report for Jones Bros, Ruthin

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

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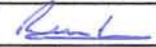
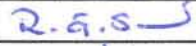
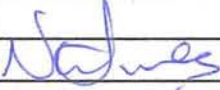

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CPAT Report Record

Report and status

CPAT Report Title	Llanidloes Link Road, Powys: Archaeological Works		
CPAT Project Name	Llanidloes Link Road		
CPAT Project No	1280	CPAT Report No	738
Confidential (yes/no)	No	draft/final	Final

Internal control

	name	signature	date
prepared by	R Hankinson		
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approved by	R.J. Silvester		11/11/05

Revisions

no	date	made by	checked by	approved by

Internal memo

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The planned development of a road serving a new industrial estate complex which was designed to link with the A470 close to the outskirts of Llanidloes in central Powys led to the requirement for an archaeological assessment of the land that would be affected by the proposed works. The assessment was instigated by Mr M Walters of the Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, acting in his capacity as archaeological advisor to the local authority.
- 1.2 A report on that initial phase of work was prepared by the Field Services section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) in October 2003 (Hankinson 2003). The assessment report included a study of the archaeological significance of the proposed development and its immediate landscape setting. The potential impact of the proposal on the archaeological resource of the area was considered and mitigation measures were proposed, where these were considered appropriate.
- 1.3 Subsequently, the various mitigation measures were accepted by those organisations involved in the projected development, including Powys County Council and the Welsh Development Agency. The site developers, Jones Bros of Ruthin, contracted the Field Services section of CPAT to undertake the various pieces of work that were identified in the first report, as soon as the development commenced.

2 The Proposed Works

- 2.1 Table 1, derived from the original report and is reproduced in its entirety on the following page, summarises the works that were recommended in the original report. Of the nineteen features or sites of archaeological or historic interest that were likely to be affected by the development, ten were considered to warrant some further work as the development progressed. In addition, a more general issue – that of topsoil stripping – was addressed, and most of the new road line was observed as the surface cover was removed by machine (“the watching brief”).
- 2.2 The results of the watching brief are recorded in Section 3, while those relating to the recommended mitigation measures are detailed in Section 4. National Grid References are given for the locations of the watching brief, but those sites subject to mitigation measures and already identified in the earlier report (no 583) are not are given such references here, and the reader is referred back to that report.
- 2.3 Fig 1 depicts all the sites involved and is taken from the original report. In addition it has been annotated to indicate the location of the four fields which were subject to the watching brief as topsoil stripping took place.

2.3 Table 1

Site No	Name	Type	Period	Condition	Impact	Mitigation
PRN 31759	Llanidloes railway station	Railway station	19th Century	Intact	Site setting	Setting already altered
PRN 31812	Long Bridge	Bridge	19th Century	Intact	Site setting	None possible
Site 1	Llanidloes railway goods sidings	Railway Sidings	19th Century	Near destroyed	Loss	Watching brief
Site 2	Lower Green trackway	Trackway	19th Century	Destroyed	Loss	No further mitigation
Site 3	Lower Green barn I	Barn ?	19th Century	Near destroyed	Loss	Watching brief
Site 4	Wtra Bron-y-bedd holloway	Holloway	Post Medieval ?	Near intact	Partial loss	Preservation by record (survey)
Site 5	Lletty Cochnant reservoir	Reservoir	19th Century	Near intact	Partial loss	Preservation in-situ of structures
Site 6	Llanidloes Foundry	Foundry	20th Century	Intact	Potential loss	Preservation by record (photo)
Site 7	Llanidloes Foundry stone	Stone	Post Medieval ?	Near intact	Potential loss	Evaluation
Site 8	Lower Green barn II	Barn	20th Century	Intact	Potential loss	No further mitigation
Site 9	Old Tollgate Cottage	House	Post Medieval ?	Near intact	Potential loss	Preservation in-situ
Site 10	Victoria Avenue weighing machine	Weighing machine ?	19th Century	Intact	Loss	Preservation by record (survey)
Site 11	Dolafon house	House	19th Century	Intact	Potential loss	Preservation in-situ if possible
Site 12	Llanidloes Council depot	Council depot	20th Century	Intact	Partial loss	Preservation by record (photo)
Site 13	Idloes Terrace well	Well	Post Medieval ?	Destroyed	Loss	No further mitigation
Site 14	Lower Green building I	Building	19th Century ?	Destroyed	Loss	No further mitigation
Site 15	Lower Green building II	Building	19th Century	Destroyed	Loss	No further mitigation
Site 16	Lower Green building III	Building	19th Century ?	Destroyed	Loss	No further mitigation
Site 17	Cambrian Railway	Railway	19th Century	Destroyed	Loss	No further mitigation

3 *Watching Brief*

- 3.1 Para 10.3 of the original report dealt with general mitigation, the main thrust of which was that a “watching brief should be carried out during any significant ground disturbance”.
- 3.2 Topsoil stripping along the length of the road line on the south side of the A470 took place during May 2005. From an archaeological standpoint, the conditions were not ideal, for much of the topsoil removal was done with a bulldozer which inevitably tended to smear newly exposed surfaces as it moves across them, potentially disguising any subtle alterations in the subsoil that might denote features of archaeological interest cut through it.
- 3.3 Topsoil stripping in the first field, here termed Field 1, (south-east of the old factory and centred at SN 9594 8439; Fig 1); on 16 May produced a relatively small collection of late post-medieval pottery, mainly 19th and 20th-century in date. A low mound of earth in the extreme west corner (at SN 9591 8437) which appeared to abut the field boundary (and thus be later than it) was examined during the machining. It appeared to be a dump of fairly homogeneous clayey silt with iron pan streaks showing. Clay pipe fragments and animal bone suggested that it was not of any great age, but its precise origin remains unclear.
- 3.4 Topsoil stripping in Field 2 (north-east of the factory site and centred at SN 9599 8450) on 19 May also produced only small amounts of 19th and 20th-century material during the watching brief.
- 3.5 The topsoil stripping in Field 3 (north-east of the factory site and centred at SN 9600 8460) took place on 18 May and again produced very small amounts of 19th and 20th-century material.
- 3.6 Topsoil stripping in Field 4 (north-east of the factory site and centred at SN 9590 8451) on 19 May) produced rather more material of 18th and 19th-century date, particularly pottery. It also yielded a single coarseware potsherd in a reduced fabric which is certainly of earlier date, though expert opinion is divided on whether it is of the medieval or Romano-British period (at SN 9586 8452).

The earthworks in Field 4

- 3.7 Prior to the topsoiling of Field 4 it was possible to record relict earthworks surviving in the pasture. Along the south-west side of the field ran a holloway, which is effectively the continuation of the track leading down from Chapel Farm towards the town. This was cited in the original report as Site 4. At some point after the Tithe map was prepared in 1840 the layout of this landscape was altered and a new track was created which traversed the hillside, separating Fields 2 and 4. The old holloway was abandoned (although it is known to have been used for channeling a gas pipeline down to a sub-station which lies against the northern boundary of the field).
- 3.8 Some 60m to the north-east and running on the same broad alignment as the holloway was a low bank which is clearly an abandoned field boundary. This was up to 11m wide and not more than 0.4m high, and had undoubtedly been spread during the removal of the hedge on the top of it, and perhaps, too, by subsequent ploughing. Towards its

northern end, the standing stone, site 7 (see below) was erected on this bank, reinforcing the view that it functioned as a boundary or mere stone.



Plate 1: Site 7, stone, prior to excavation

- 3.9 Curving gently across the southern corner of Field 4 was a further relict boundary, this a wide, slightly stepped, scarped bank whose form suggests a more complicated history, perhaps representing more than one phase of construction. In relict form it continued into Field 2, merging with the north-west/south-east boundary with the mere stone abutting it, and then continued in a shallow curve to meet the shallow valley that formed the north-eastern boundary of Field 2.
- 3.10 All these features – the holloway and the two abandoned field boundaries – are survivals of the earlier field system that once covered the southern side of the valley. It is depicted, as a fairly coarse representation, on the Tithe Map of 1840, but at some point after that date, the landscape was redesigned, a more regular pattern of fields laid out and the holloway from Chapel Farm was diverted northwards to create a new trackway leading down the hill.
- 3.11 In addition to the relict boundaries themselves, there were also faint traces of ridge and furrow in the field between the holloway and the mere-stone boundary bank. The ridges ran down the slope, parallel to both of the aforementioned earthworks, and the width of the ridges varied between 3.4 and 4.7m, but the height was never more than about 0.3m. The date of this ridge and furrow cannot be determined with any certainty. It could be of medieval date (i.e. from before 1500 AD) but equally it could be later. The fact that it was from within this area that at least one sherd of medieval pottery was recovered is probably no more than coincidence.

- 3.12 The ridge and furrow did not extend into the smaller area defined by the relict, curving field boundary, but it is significant that the bulldozer operator encountered a greater building of soil in this area.
- 3.13 All of these features were inevitably destroyed in the soil moving operations, with the exception of the old holloway, which was temporarily preserved because of the gas pipe running down it.
- 3.14 There was a further relict field bank in Field 3 that ran to the barn site recorded as Site 3.

4 Sites with Recommended Mitigation Measures

4.1 *Llanidloes railway goods sidings (Site 1)*

- 4.1.1 No additional evidence of these former sidings was revealed during the watching brief.

4.2 *Lower Green barn I (Site 3)*

- 4.2.1 The terrace on which this site is thought to have been located fell immediately outside the area of topsoil stripping and no further information on the nature and origins of the site were revealed.

4.3 *Chapel Farm (Wtra Bron-y-bedd) holloway (Site 4)*

- 4.3.1 The more south-easterly portion of this feature close to Chapel Farm is currently intact and in use, a slightly lowered trackway hedged by hawthorn, flat-bottomed and up to 3.5m wide. The newer (i.e. 19th-century) portion of it, where it swung to the north was largely filled in during topsoil removal and the hedges removed. Its dimensions were similar to the other stretch, but it was less hollowed, an obvious indicator of its more recent origin.

- 4.3.2 The relict holloway in Field 4 was a distinctive feature, its base about 2.2m wide and its width at ground-surface level between 6.5m and 7.5m. The depth varied between 0.5m and 0.7m.

4.4 *Lletty Cochmant reservoir (Site 5)*

- 4.4.1 The reservoir was held back by a dam, which was 28m long, almost straight on an east-south-east/west-north-west alignment, though with a slightly bowed appearance (see plate 2). At 18.4m from the east-north-east end the dam wall was interrupted by the mouth of the spillway. It is effectively a revetment wall with soil piled up behind it to create a barrier.



Plate 2: Site 5, reservoir, showing the dam wall

- 4.4.2 The dam wall is constructed of shaped and tight-fitting freestone blocks, only one block deep and of varying sizes. Those measured varied from 460mm to 760mm long with depths in excess of 300mm. Heights, where measured, were 640mm.
- 4.4.3 The overall height of the wall is unknown, as is the depth of the reservoir, because of the quantity of silt that has accumulated against it. Unfortunately, it was not however possible to maintain a watching brief at the time that some of the silt deposits were removed by machine during construction works, which might have helped to clarify the issue.
- 4.4.4 The spillway is 2.65m wide, with quoins or corner stones on either side. Immediately to the north-east of the spillway a concrete block 2040mm long and 440mm deep is built into the top of the dam wall. It contains two mortise slots, now voids.
- 4.4.5 Lying back from the spillway in the reservoir was a sluice gate (plate 3), the visible height of which (excluding the screw) was 1220mm, its width 1970mm and its depth 620mm. Behind it (towards the spillway) are two pairs of iron stanchions which presumably supported a superstructure (now gone) that gave access to the sluice mechanism. It was not possible to preserve these features in situ because of the construction requirements.



Plate 3: Site 5, reservoir, showing the sluice gate and stanchions

4.5 *Llanidloes Foundry (Site 6)*

- 4.5.1 Unfortunately, most of the internal structures and equipment of the former foundry had been removed prior to the commencement of the development, presumably under the direction of the former owners. A rapid photographic survey was undertaken of the interior of the shell that remained.

4.6 *Llanidloes Foundry Stone (Site 7) excavation*

- 4.6.1 The stone was originally identified in the archaeological assessment of the proposal (CPAT Report No 583), where it was considered likely to be a 19th-century addition to the landscape, if only because there appeared to be no record of it in the antiquarian literature of the 18th and 19th centuries. A small amount of relatively modern graffiti was incised on the upper surfaces of the stone. Nevertheless, in view of its imposing appearance, a much earlier date could not be ruled out entirely. The excavation was carried out to ascertain whether this assumption was correct.
- 4.6.2 An area, 2.8m east to west by 1.45m north to south, was excavated by hand on the north side of the stone to uncover the pit or socket which it was assumed had been dug in order to take the stone, and to recover any datable material that might be contained in the fill of the pit. A portion of the stone itself was included within the excavation to allow its inclusion in the drawn section of the deposits which were encountered (plate 4) .
- 4.6.3 An initial topsoil layer of mid grey-brown loamy silt (1), up to 0.07m thick, was removed, revealing an underlying layer of gravelly stone in a matrix of mid-grey silt (2). Layer 2 proved to be up to 0.10m thick and contained finds dating to the 19th and 20th centuries. At this point the socket cut (5) for the erection of the stone (4) and its fill (3)

became visible. The socket was 1.4m in diameter, but only 0.4m deep, its shallowness explaining the reason for the lean of approximately 30 degrees to the vertical exhibited by the stone. The stone measured 1.43m in total length, and its cross-section was 0.81m by 0.75m.



Plate 4: Site 7, stone, during excavation and recording

4.6.4 Finds recovered while excavating the sticky orange clay silt fill (3) of the socket were entirely 19th-century in date. On completion of the section drawing, the stone was carefully removed by machine and the base of the socket examined. A number of pottery sherds were recovered from directly beneath the stone, all of which were again from the 19th century.

4.6.5 The finds confirmed the original hypothesis that the stone had been erected in the 19th century and was not of prehistoric origin. An appropriate hypothesis is that the stone was erected as a marker or mere stone to aid in the definition of a boundary during the time when the nearby Gorn Hill was enclosed.

4.7 *Victoria Avenue weighing machine building (Site 10)*

4.7.1 The exterior of this brick building had been recorded briefly during the initial assessment of the development. Unfortunately, it was not possible to access the interior of the building at that time, and this had to be deferred until the commencement of work on site. The interior was eventually examined on 16 August, but was largely devoid of diagnostic features. Its function, as the housing for a weighing machine related to the railway depot, had apparently been confirmed to the site contractors by local residents. The interior contained a fireplace, with a late Victorian wooden surround and a chimney breast on its south wall, cracks in which demonstrated the poor condition of the building. The window fronting Victoria Avenue was covered by an external wooden shutter, but the glazing survived on the interior and it seems likely that the area behind the window

(the north-west corner of the building) was the location of the weighing machine base. The walls of the building were only 0.3m thick.



Plate 5: Site 10, weighing machine building, interior

4.8 *Llanidloes Council depot (Site 12)*

- 4.8.1 The main building on the site was examined and photographed during demolition and found to consist of a brick frontage concealing a hooped cast-iron framed structure. The frame was of tubular, sectional, construction, with angle-iron cross links hooked to the main frame, and covered in weatherproof cladding. Some later brick additions were evident on the west side of the building. Information provided by local residents suggested it had been brought to the site from the Shrewsbury area in the 1960s. The previous function of the building is unknown.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The programme of work described in this report has provided some useful further information on Llanidloes and its locality, particularly in the 19th century. The stone, Site 7, about which there was some doubt as to its origin has been confirmed as a 19th-century erection, probably used as a mere stone at the time of the enclosure of Gorn Hill.
- 5.2 Only a single sherd of pottery predating the post-medieval period was recovered during the watching brief, most of the material encountered being of 19th-century origin. Some additional earthworks were recognised in Field 4 (for location see Fig 1), constituting traces of an agricultural field system which may be of medieval date.
- 5.3 Further recording, both by descriptive and photographic means, was carried out on a number of sites which had been recorded in the original assessment, prior to their removal during the scheme. None of these were seen as being of particular importance to the archaeological resource of the locality.

6 Acknowledgements

- 6.1 The writers would like to thank the site staff of Jones Bros, Ruthin, for their help and assistance during the watching brief, particularly Mr G Brookes; also their colleague Ms W Owen, for her assistance during the excavation of Site 7.

7 References

Hankinson, R, 2003, *Llanidloes Link Road, Powys*, Welshpool: CPAT Report No 583

Appendix 1

Works undertaken on the Llanidloes Link Road during construction operations

Visit date	Work undertaken	Location
10/05/2005	Site meeting re evaluation and procedures	
16/05/2005	Watching brief during topsoil stripping; earthwork survey	Field 1 Field 4
17/05/2005	Watching brief during topsoil stripping	Field 1
18/05/2005	Watching brief during topsoil stripping	Field 3
20/05/2005	Watching brief during topsoil stripping	Fields 2 and 4
26/05/2005	Excavation of Site 7; watching brief during topsoil stripping	Field 4
16/08/2005	Examination of remainder of topsoil stripped area; recording of Site 10 (building); examination of former Council depot	Development area as a whole

Appendix 2

Site Archive for Site 7 excavation

6 context record forms
2 A4 site drawings at 1:20

Finds

Context 2 (not retained)

4 fragments of brick
1 fragment of window glass
6 fragments of bottle glass
1 glass stopper (Lea & Perrins)
1 clay pipe bowl
1 iron nail
2 fragments of clay pipe stem
11 sherds of developed whiteware
3 sherds of coal measures red ware
4 sherds of coal measures buff ware
4 sherds of late yellow ware
1 sherd of slip decorated ware
2 sherds of refined red ware
1 sherd of brown glazed stoneware
8 sherds of white stoneware
1 sherd of pearlware
3 sherds of ironstone ware

Context 3 (not retained)

3 fragments of brick
2 sherds of 19th-century whiteware
1 sherd of a large coal measures red vessel with internal glaze

Context 3 (finds from beneath the stone – retained for reference)

1 sherd of late yellow ware
2 sherds of developed whiteware
3 sherds of ironstone ware

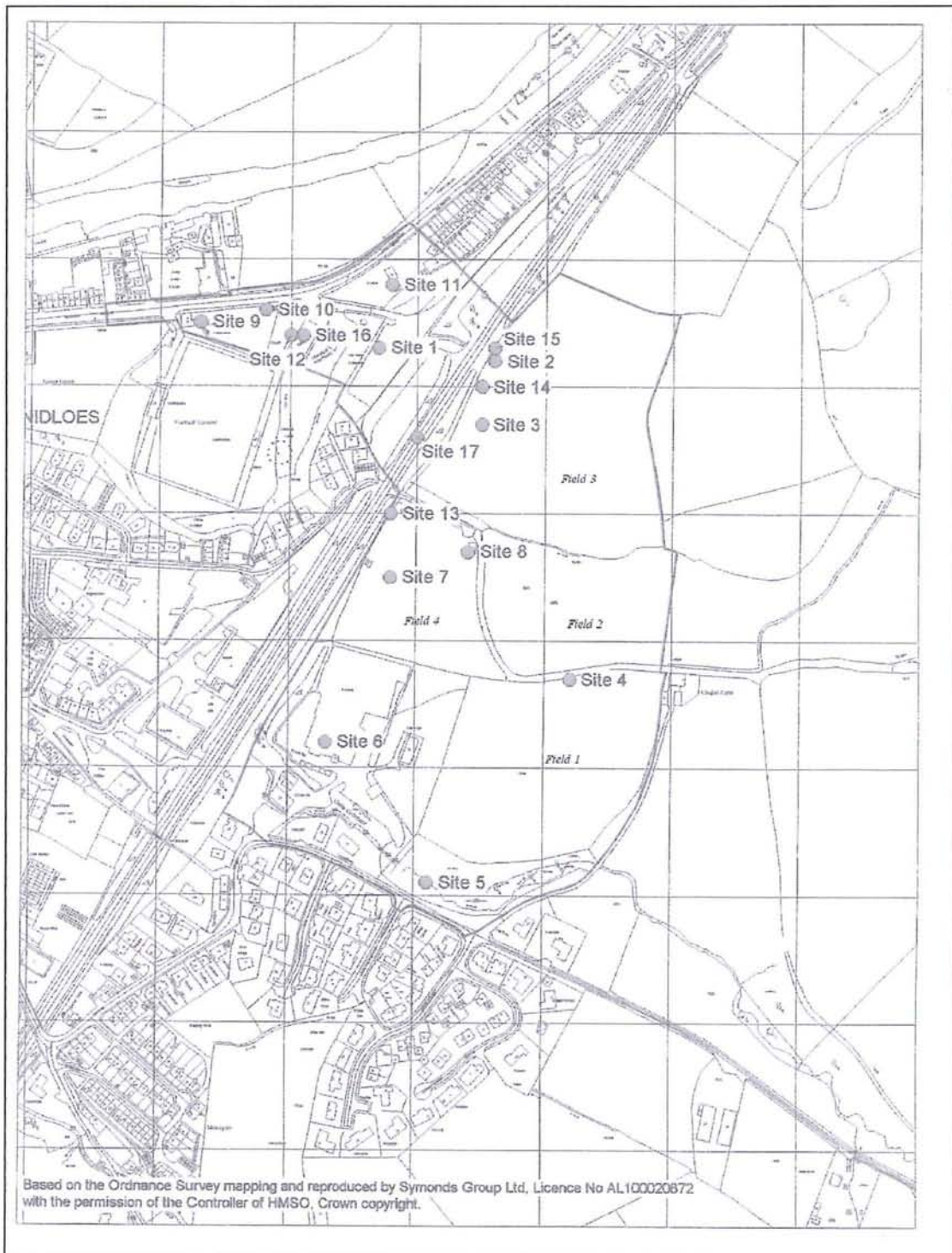


Fig. 1 Location of archaeological sites and fields examined during the watching brief