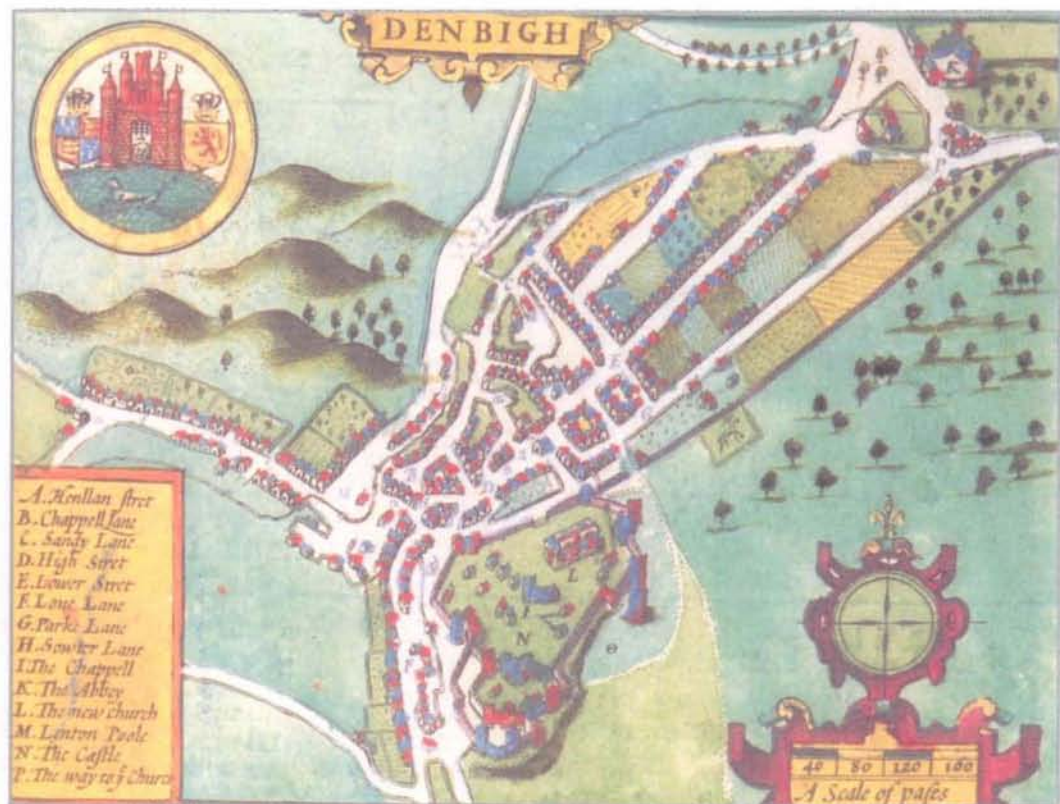


THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Land Adjacent to Rofft, Denbigh

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



CPAT Report No 887

Land Adjacent to Rofft, Denbigh

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

I Grant
September 2007

Report for Mr P Jones

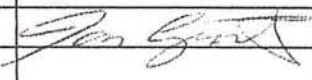
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CPAT Report Record

Report and status

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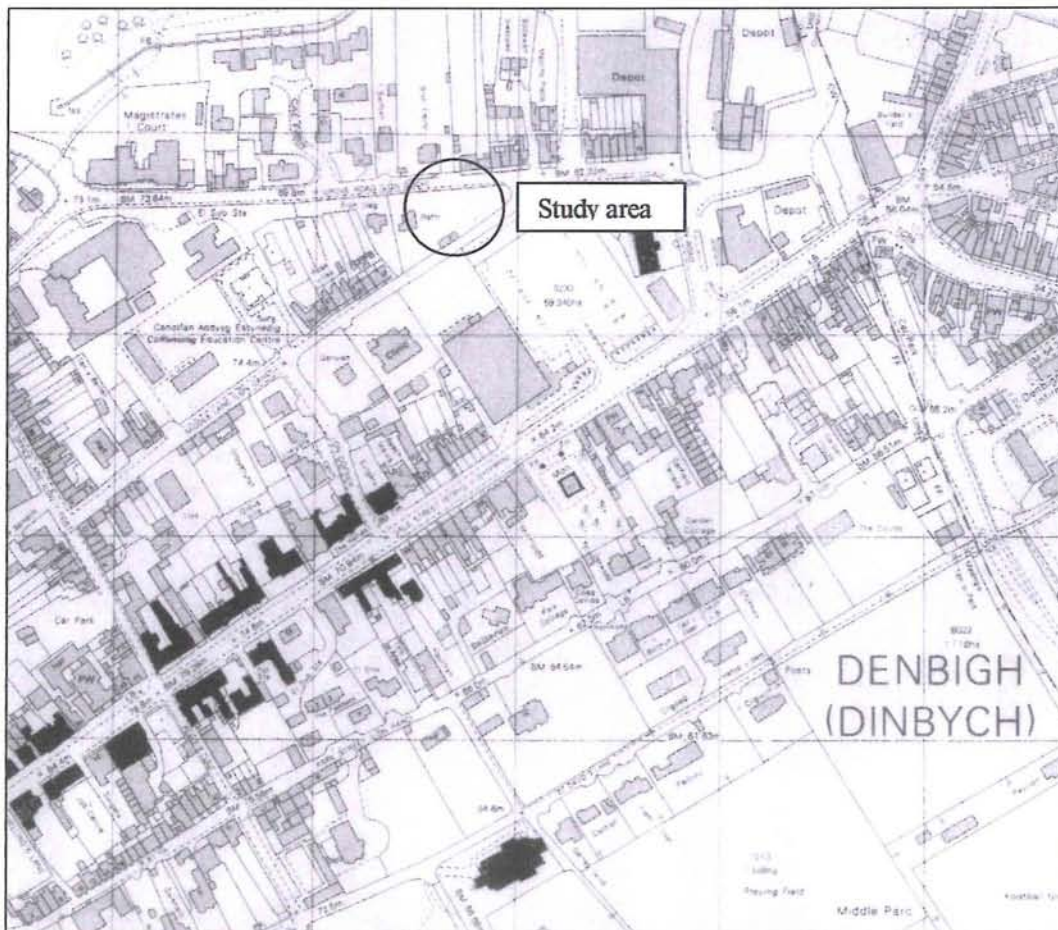
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was invited in August 2007 to undertake an archaeological evaluation in connection with proposals for a new development on land adjacent to Rofft, Grove Road, Denbigh. The Denbighshire Archaeology Service, in their capacity as archaeological advisors within the local authority, had determined that the archaeological evaluation was required to identify the potential impact of the proposed development on the archaeological resource. Accordingly, a brief was prepared by the Denbighshire Archaeology Service which detailed the works required.
- 1.2 The proposed development is located within the historic core of the medieval town of Denbigh, between the town centre and Denbigh Friary which dates from the late 13th century. Denbigh as a town, however, originated prior to the construction of the Edwardian castle and the friary. Just south of the development area the remains of medieval tile kilns were identified in 1938. Given its position, it was considered likely that buried archaeological deposits may survive relating to medieval and later occupation.

2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The proposed development area occupies the apex of a triangle of land formed by the convergence of Middle Lane and Grove Road (Fig. 1; SJ 05576646). Middle Lane itself runs parallel to Vale Street, the main thoroughfare leading eastwards from the walled medieval town, and is potentially of some significance in the medieval era.



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey's 1:2,500 map of 1990 with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright. CPAT Licence no. AL 50529A

Fig. 1 Site location.

- 2.2 The underlying geology of the development area consists of Undivided Permian and Triassic red sandstone (British Geological Survey map 1994). The soils consist of slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged reddish fine loam over clay of the Salop Soil Association (Soil Survey of England and Wales map and legend 1983).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The first stage of the assessment comprised a desk-based study of all the readily available primary and secondary documentary, cartographic, pictorial, and photographic sources held in the following repositories: the regional Historic Environment Record (HER), maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in Welshpool; the Flintshire Record Office (FRO) in Hawarden; the National Library of Wales (NLW) in Aberystwyth; and the National Monuments Record (NMR) in Aberystwyth.
- 3.2 The hill-top castle and walled town at Denbigh were constructed by Henry de Lacy in the second half of the 13th century, after the creation of the lordship of Denbigh by Edward I in 1282. However, it has been argued that the hilltop had previously been a stronghold of Dafydd ap Gruffydd, functioning as a *llys* which was the centre of the cantref of Rhufoniog; and there are references during the 13th century to the *maerdref* of Dinbych, the nucleated settlement that would have been associated with such a *llys*. The name itself is considered to derive from *dinas fechan* or 'small fortress'.
- 3.3 It was briefly recaptured by the Welsh in 1294, but by 1311 the fortifications at Denbigh, which with Ruthin controlled the Vale of Clwyd, are assumed to have been largely complete. The creation of a borough followed quickly, leading to an influx of English families. Forty-seven burgages held by thirty-nine burgesses were listed in 1285 when the first charter was granted, but subsequent to the Welsh attack on the town in 1294, a second charter of 1295x1305 recorded only 45 burgages, together with the first mention of the town walls. A manor was established in due course near to the castle.
- 3.4 As early as the beginning of the 14th century, the town had expanded beyond the confines of its walls and down the northern slopes of the hill. As Soulsby has pointed out the site of the walled town was ideal for defence but not for commercial operations. In 1305 there were 183 burgages outside the defences, 52 within, and by 1337 the town spread over 57 acres. By 1311 an annual fair was being held and in 1334, the 'Survey of Denbigh' refers to 'a borough within the walls' and 'a market town without'. It also mentions the hamlet of 'Neuburgh', part of Lleweni where originally the townspeople had held agricultural land. Neuburgh cannot now be traced and Beresford has stated that 'it is not certain whether the survey has recorded an abortive attempt to lay out a small borough beyond the suburbs of Denbigh, or whether it is the remains of a Welsh commercial settlement, older than Denbigh'.
- 3.5 In 1373 there were 438 burgages, and Denbigh at this time was clearly commercially successful. A detailed rental of 1476 also charts the growth of the town beyond the walls with more than four times as many burgages outside as inside, and this some eight years after the extra-mural areas had been ravaged by fire, during the Wars of the Roses when the Earl of Pembroke besieged the castle.
- 3.6 For the late 15th and 16th centuries there are details of craftsmen practicing within the town: a draper, glovers, shoe-makers, mercers and weavers. And from the 15th century come references to High Street, Beacon's Hill, Pepper Lane and Sowter Lane.
- 3.7 By the early 16th century a survey records suburbs for three quarters of a mile to the north of the castle, a pattern of development also represented on Speed's map published in 1611. His map reflects the general abandonment of the walled town with relatively little housing within its

confines, though there was St Hilary's chapel and the incomplete church begun by the Earl of Leicester in the 1580s.

- 3.8 The decline within the walls continued in later centuries: a drawing of 1750 shows few houses, even though the population of the town at the time was nearly 2000. Instead the focus of the town was High Street with three roads - Love Lane, Henllan Street and Lower Street - leading off it. Lower Street (now Vale Street) had three minor streets running parallel to it. Notwithstanding this, John Ogilby in his *Britannia* in the 1670s stated the town to be "esteemed the best in North Wales".
- 3.9 During the Civil War in the mid-17th century, Denbigh again became important militarily. There was a battle here in 1645 and the castle was besieged, surrendering to the Parliamentarians in the following year.
- 3.10 Some expansion occurred between the early 17th and the mid-19th century. Lhuyd noted a total of 330 buildings in the town at the end of the 17th century. Redevelopment occurred later in the 19th century. The railway along the Vale of Clwyd was built in 1860, and communications were further improved by the major road from Ruthin to Rhyl.
- 3.11 Turning specifically to the area of Rofft, the earliest detailed map available to us, John Speed's plan of Denbigh published in his *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* in 1611, but surveyed perhaps three or four years earlier, shows several houses along the street frontage of Middel Lane (see cover illustration).
- 3.12 In 1780 the same quadrilateral area of land was still evident on an estate map, and the Plas Heaton plan shows one house on the south-west side though others undoubtedly existed. No further details are given of this patch, but at least all the lanes were then in place.



Fig. 2 Extract from Denbigh Tithe Survey, 1840

- 3.13 In about 1809 John Roberts of Ruthin produced a manuscript plan of Denbigh and its environs at a scale of around 3.6" to the mile, which is a little small to be useful in an urban context. Roberts was hardly at the forefront of early 19th-century mapping: his plan has a decidedly antiquated appearance with houses drawn in bird's eye view, a technique generally abandoned by most cartographers at least half a century earlier. The map does distinguish the area of the development and shows houses close to, though not necessarily at, the apex defined by the roads
- 3.14 The Tithe map offers a detailed picture of Denbigh in 1840 (Fig. 2). The quadrilateral block of land defined by Pembroke's Hill/Redlane on the north and Middle Lane on the south had a chapel in its west corner, properties along the south-western and some of the south-eastern sides and, at the eastern apex where the Rofft development is planned to take place, a sand pit. Precise definition of this feature from the Tithe map is not possible. Most of the rest of the block had hay taken from it at that time. It was in the ownership of the Rev. Thomas Wynne Edwards and the tenant was Abraham Dale.
- 3.15 The Ordnance Survey 1:500 town plan of 1872 shows no sign of the sand pit and depicts the area as being laid out with trees and a number of paths, presumably as a garden.
- 3.16 During the earlier part of the 20th century the area was occupied by a market garden.

4 EVALUATION

- 4.1 The evaluation in September 2007 consisted of a single trench (Fig. 3), the dimensions of which had to be modified from the layout required by the curatorial brief owing to logistical constraints, i.e. a mature tree canopy. The trench was reduced in length from 18m to 10m x 1.6m wide, and was aligned north-north-west to south-south-east. Numbers in brackets in the following text refer to individual context records that are defined and detailed in full in the site archive.

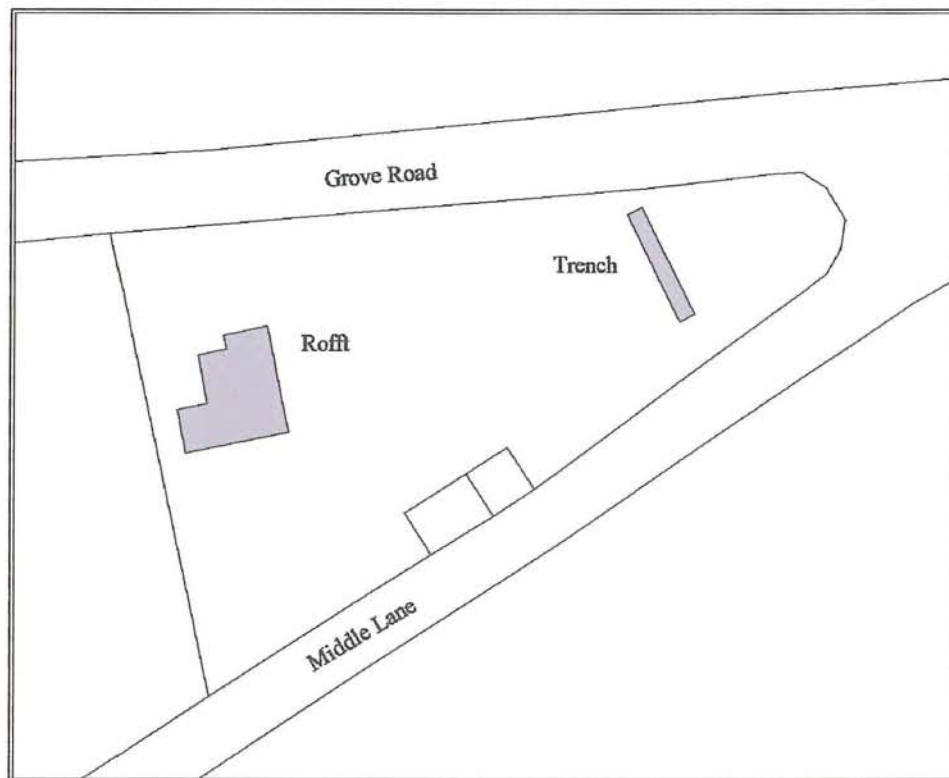


Fig. 3 Trench location plan

- 4.2 The modern overburden was removed by machine under close archaeological supervision down to the surface of the first recognisable archaeological horizon. Thereafter all excavation was undertaken by hand. The evaluation was essentially non-destructive and was designed to determine the depth at which archaeologically sensitive deposits survived, together with as much information as possible about their nature, condition and significance. A summary of the site archive is provided in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 A modern feature of the site was a cinder and limestone blocked garden path (07) running east to west, traversing the bounds of the southern end of the trench. This was removed, together with the topsoil (01), a dark grey soft sandy loam up to 0.3m thick, to reveal an underlying deposit of garden cultivation soil (02). This deposit, a mid grey brown sandy silt that varied from 0.4m thick at the southern end of the trench up to 0.7m at the north, contained large quantities of ceramics dating from the late 18th century through to the mid 19th century. Underlying this deposit was a series of layers (03) consisting of bright red sand, orange sand, mid grey brown sandy silt, mottled buff sand and brash (broken/fragmented) red sandstone. Combined, these layers were up to 0.9m thick and in section (see Fig. 4) revealed a series of contemporary tipping and dumping events into a large pit (08), the extent of which lay beyond the limits of the excavation. The few pottery fragments recovered from the infill deposits covered a broad range from the 14th century to the mid 19th century. Removal of the deposit (03) revealed the underlying natural red sandstone bedrock (05) across the base of the trench. A single feature, a narrow gully (04), 0.2m wide, 0.2m deep and aligned east to west, was recorded at the base of the southern end of the trench. The gully, which was cut into the bedrock, is possibly a drainage gully contemporary with the sand pit (08) (see Plate 1).



Plate 1. East-facing section through sandpit (08). Photo CPAT

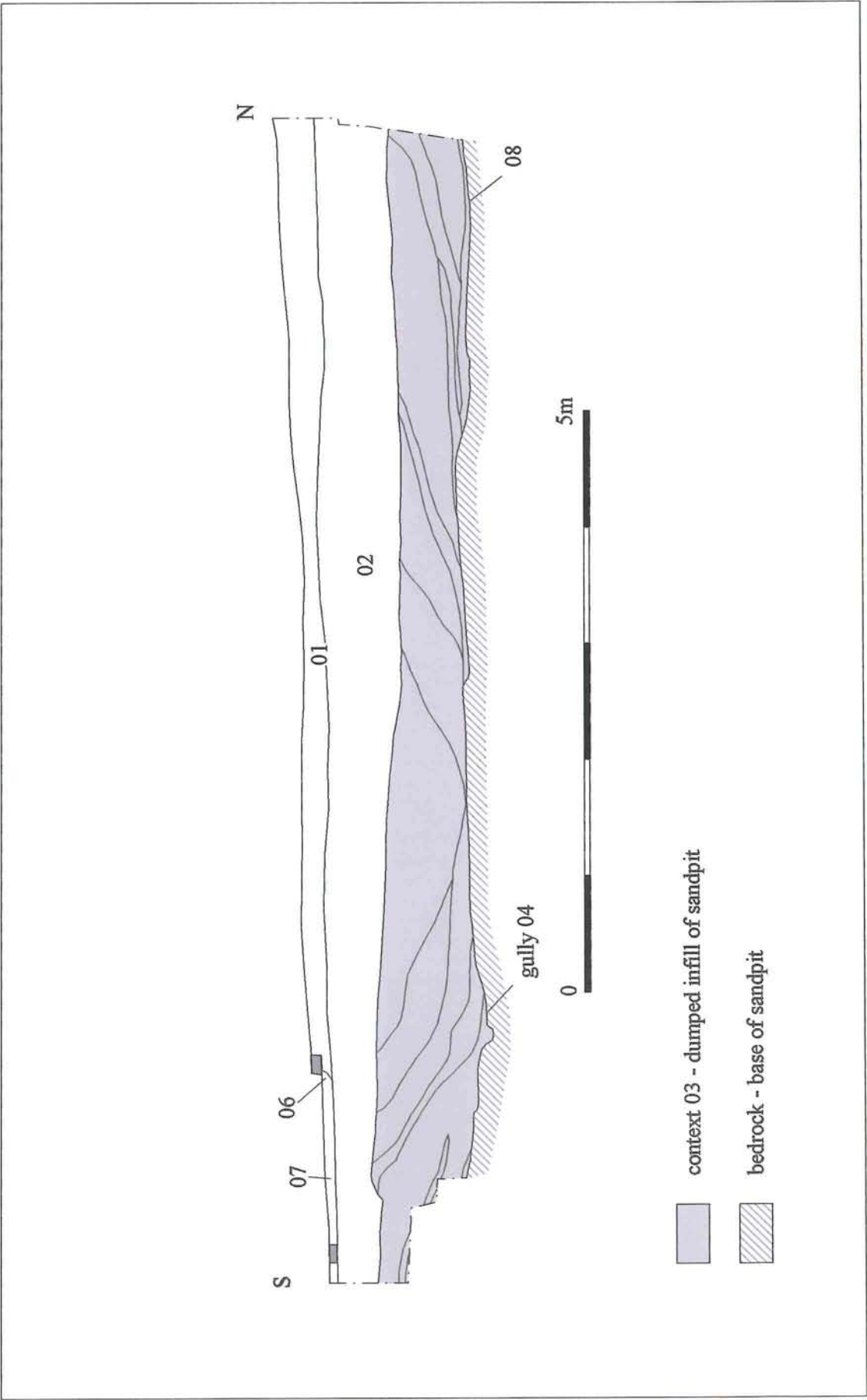


Fig. 4 East-facing trench section, scale 1:50

5 FINDS

- 5.1 A small cross section of pottery was retained from the excavation for deposition with the site archive. However, it is evident that they are not from in situ archaeological deposits but come from material which had been imported from, probably, the local environs, hence the broad spectrum of fabrics represented within the assemblage. The earliest ceramics recovered, a sherd of local Rhuddlan or Ewloe sandy-ware and a rim sherd of a highly fired orange sandy-ware, were of late 14th/15th-century date. The other fabric types are typical of the vessels used in daily life within a post-medieval rural town, with both fine-wares and earthen-wares evident, together with quantities of clay pipes of both 18th and 19th-century date. The assemblage is dominated by regional coal measures red-wares, recorded here in different forms of decorated slipware, fine-ware and black and brown glazed earthen-wares. Other regionally imported fabrics, mainly from Staffordshire, included forms of mottled-ware, yellow-ware, white stoneware, pearl-ware and a variety of mid 19th-century tea-wares and developed wares.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The evaluation has demonstrated that during the early 19th century the site was occupied by a sand pit as depicted on the Tithe survey for Denbigh in 1840. The trial excavations revealed the remains of the sand pit, which was at least 10m across and 1m deep, and had been deliberately infilled with dumped material containing later 19th-century pottery. Within the numerous deposits that, collectively, represented the period of abandonment and backfilling of the sand pit, there was no date-sequential deposition of the artefacts, suggesting that the initial infilling of the site was a sequence of contemporary events using imported material. The overlying cultivation soil also appears to have been imported onto the site as all the recovered pottery from this deposit (02) predated the operational life of the sand pit (*i.e.* pre c.1840).
- 6.2 Cartographic evidence suggests that the sand pit had been infilled by the late 19th century, at which time the area appears to have been part of a garden. It was clear from the trench section (see Fig. 3) that at some point after the sand pit had been backfilled the site was graded down and a new boundary retaining wall was constructed. Subsequently garden cultivation soil was imported onto the site (deposit 02) and from the early 20th century the site was occupied by a market garden.
- 6.3 In summary, the evaluation has produced no evidence for any in-situ archaeological deposits that pre-date the excavation of the sand pit. However, the extent of the pit is not known and the possibility remains that earlier features could survive where the ground has not been disturbed by the extraction of sand.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 7.1 The writer would like to thank the following for their assistance during the programme: Richard Hankinson, Nigel Jones, Bob Silvester of CPAT; the staff of the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth; and the staff of the National Monuments Record at the RCAHMW in Aberystwyth; and the staff of the Flintshire Record Office in Hawarden.

8 REFERENCES

Maps

- 1611 John Speed's plan of Denbigh published in *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain*
- 1780 Maps of lands lying in the several parishes of Denbigh, Henllan, Llanrhaiadr-in-Kinmeirch.... belonging to Richard Heaton. By Sam. Minshull *NLW/Pleas Heaton Deposit Vol 1*
- c.1809 John Roberts plan of Denbigh, *Denbighshire Record Office/BD/A308*
- 1840 Tithe survey (apportionment and map) for Denbigh
- 1872 Ordnance Survey 1:500 town plan of Denbigh
- 1875 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1st edition: Denbs 13.04

APPENDIX 1

SITE ARCHIVE

08 Context record forms
01 A1 site plans and sections
12 digital images
Photographic catalogue
Context register
Drawings register
Levels register

APPENDIX 2 SPECIFICATION

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been invited to submit a tender for an archaeological evaluation in connection with proposals for a new development on land adjacent to Rofft, Grove Road, Denbigh. The Denbighshire Archaeology Service, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local authority, have determined that an archaeological evaluation is required to identify the potential impact on the archaeological resource. Accordingly, a brief has been prepared which details the works required.
- 1.2 The proposed development is located in the historic core of the medieval town of Denbigh, between the town centre and Denbigh Friary (SJ 05576646). Denbigh as a town originated before the construction of the Edwardian castle and the Friary dates from the late 13th century. Just south of the development area the remains of medieval tile kilns were identified in 1938. Given its position, it is considered likely that buried archaeological deposits may survive relating to medieval and later occupation.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the evaluation are:
 - 2.1.1 to reveal by means of a field evaluation, the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the cultural heritage within the area of the proposed development in so far as these aims are possible;
 - 2.1.2 to record any archaeological sites identified during the evaluation;
 - 2.1.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the evaluation.

3 Methods

- 3.1 The evaluation will consist of a single trench measuring 18 x 1.5m, the location of which will be agreed with the curator in advance.
- 3.2 All excavations will be undertaken using a machine excavator with a toothless bucket to remove modern overburden down to the level of the first recognisable archaeological horizon. Thereafter, all excavation will be conducted by hand unless otherwise agreed with the Curator in advance. The evaluation will be entirely non-destructive and designed to determine the depth at which archaeologically sensitive deposits survive, together with their nature condition and significance. The depth of natural deposits will be determined to assess the extent of any stratified deposits which may be encountered.
- 3.3 It has been assumed that the area in question has sufficient access for a JCB or other mechanical excavator. Excavated material will be temporarily stored adjacent to the trench, which will be reinstated with this material upon completion. No provision has been made for fencing, stripping or relaying any surfaced areas or reseeding.
- 3.4 Contexts will be recorded on individual record forms and be drawn and photographed as appropriate. All photography will be in 35mm format black and white print and colour slide. All features will be located as accurately as possible with respect to buildings and boundaries

identified on modern Ordnance Survey maps and levels will be related to Ordnance Datum where possible, with the use of total station surveying.

- 3.5 All artefacts will be related to their contexts from which they were derived and treated in a manner appropriate to their composition and will be processed by trained CPAT staff. Provision has been included for sampling deposits for dating, environmental and technological evidence as appropriate.
- 3.6 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared in A4 format, containing conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Archaeological Background; Evaluation; Conclusions and References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds.
- 3.7 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991), to be deposited with the Regional Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). All artefacts will, subject to the permission of the owner, be deposited with Llandrindod Wells Museum.

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The assessment will be undertaken by a team of two to three skilled archaeologists under the direct supervision of Mr R J Silvester, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. CPAT is also an Institute of Field Archaeologist Registered Organisation.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the assessment.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the evaluation will be completed within 4 days with a team of two archaeologists, and the report will be completed within 5 days following the on-site work. At present CPAT would be in a position to commence the evaluation in September 2007, subject to receiving sufficient written notice from the client.
- 4.4 The following contingency sums have been allowed at the request of the Curator.

Curatorial monitoring	£60 per visit
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- 4.5 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.6 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

N W Jones
19 July 2007