

**THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

**A470/A489 Moat Lane Road Junction, Caersws**  
**STAGE 1 CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT**



**CPAT Report No 857**

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By N W Jones  
March 2007

Report for Capita Symonds Ltd

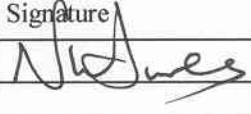
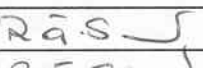
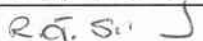
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## CPAT Report Record

### Report and status

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### **NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

A combination of detailed desk-based study and field survey has been used to provide a thorough Stage 1 assessment of the cultural heritage resource within 500m of the Moat Lane road junction.

A small number of sites have been identified within the assessment area, including the possible line of a Roman road, a Grade II Listed road bridge, six houses and a railway level crossing. There are four sites whose significance cannot be determined at present and may require further investigation if they are likely to be affected by the proposals.

In addition to the known cultural heritage sites, there is always the potential for previously unrecorded, buried archaeological features. This is particularly true in valley floor locations such as this where arable cultivation may have removed all surface traces of a monument.

The potential impact of the proposed road improvement cannot be determined at present as the detailed proposals have yet to be developed. However, the report includes recommendations for further stages of cultural heritage assessment which may be considered once details are available.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In February 2007 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (henceforth CPAT) was invited by Capita Symonds Ltd to prepare a specification of works for undertaking an cultural heritage assessment in connection with proposals to improve the road junction at Moat Lane, Caersws, Powys. The CPAT proposals and quotation were accepted towards the end of February and the assessment was conducted during March 2007.
- 1.2 This report presents the results from the Stage 1 Cultural Heritage Assessment, which was conducted in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 11, Section 3, Part 2 – Cultural Heritage. Although there are no details of the proposed road improvement at present, the report includes recommendations for the further stages of cultural heritage assessment which may be required.

## **2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

- 2.1 The site in question is the junction between the A470 and A489 to the south-east of Caersws (SO 03579138). It was agreed with the client that the Stage 1 Assessment should focus on an area with a radius of 0.5km, centred on the junction.
- 2.2 The study area lies on the floodplain, near the confluence of the Rivers Severn and Carno. Soils are generally deep, stoneless, permeable silts of the Teme Soil Association, overlying river alluvium and gravels (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

## **3 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 at the following repositories: the regional Historic Environment Record (HER), held by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in Welshpool; the National Library of Wales (NLW) in Aberystwyth; and the National Monuments Record (NMR) in Aberystwyth.
- 3.2 A search of the HER identified only two recorded sites within the assessment area and a further nine sites were added during the desk-based study. Each site has been identified by its Primary Record Number (PRN).
- 3.3 The study area falls within the Caersws Basin which has been identified as a Landscape of Special Historic Interest (Cadw 2001, 84-86). The broad flood plain at the confluence of the Rivers Severn, Carno and Trannon is surrounded by low hills, and the topographical setting has made the basin an area of exceptional strategic and historical importance. This was most clearly demonstrated during the Roman period when a network of roads emanated from the Roman fort at Caersws.
- 3.4 Although there are no known prehistoric sites within the assessment area cropmark evidence and excavations elsewhere in the Upper Severn Valley, notably to the south of Welshpool, have revealed significant evidence for prehistoric funerary and ritual activity dating to the late Neolithic and Bronze Age, and the potential for similar activity in this area cannot be discounted. Indeed, cropmarks have revealed a number of prehistoric burial features just to the south-east of the study area.

- 3.5 The Roman influence began with the early campaigns against the native tribe, the Ordovici, and a campaign fort was constructed to the east of the present village. By around AD 75 this was replaced by a new fort sited near the confluence of the Rivers Severn and Carno. A civilian settlement, or *vicus*, developed around the fort and along the four roads which led from it. The exact Roman crossing points of the Severn are not known and have been lost as a result of later river movement, although beyond the river sections of the road to the east still survive as an earthwork, notably around Maesmawr Hall. A possible Roman road has also been identified within the study area, to the south of the River Severn. Excavations in the 1960s in the area of the present football field revealed a possible road (PRN 79193) leading to the south-south-east, and, although its precise course beyond this is not known, there are apparent traces of an earthwork, or agger, in an arable field nearby (PRN 83581) (Toller 2000, 75).
- 3.6 The earliest available cartographic source for the area is the Tithe Survey for Llandinam parish of 1847 and its earlier Apportionment (1845), which show the area before the construction of the railway, divided into fairly regular fields and under mixture of arable and pasture. Recorded field names, however, offer no further insight into land use or potential archeological sites. The general field pattern appears to be much as it is today, although more land divisions are evident between the A470 and the River Severn, to the east of the road junction.
- 3.7 The first edition Ordnance Survey 25" map, published in 1885-6, shows a similar situation to the Tithe Survey, with the addition of the Newtown to Machynlleth Railway, which opened in 1863 (Baughan 1980, 152-3).
- 3.8 Examination of vertical aerial photographic coverage taken between 1948 and 1981 revealed no evidence for any archaeological sites, although it was possible to identify a number of former river courses, indicating the extent to which the River Severn has varied its course over several millennia.

#### **4 FIELD ASSESSMENT**

- 4.1 The area of the junction was the subject of a rapid field survey, undertaken on 5 March 2007. It was not possible to gain access to all of the fields within the area, although it was possible to view most of them from adjacent roads and footpaths. Each of the known archaeological sites was visited to determine its condition and significance. The only previously unidentified site noted during the visit was a trackway (PRN 83583).
- 4.2 The field assessment was undertaken after a period of heavy rain which highlighted the presence of former river courses across much of the study area. This, combined with evidence from vertical aerial photography, indicates that the courses of the rivers Severn and Carno have undergone significant variation since the last glaciation (around 10,000 year ago). Evidence from just outside the study area to the south-east indicates that some of these channels are likely to date from the immediate post-glacial or early prehistoric periods as they are overlain by the remains of burial features likely to belong to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age.
- 4.3 Existing cartographic sources indicate that there has been significant change to the course of the River Severn since around 1840 and the field assessment has identified a series of more recent channels to the east of Caersws Bridge. It therefore appears likely that the archaeological potential within these areas is very low.
- 4.4 At the time of the field assessment the majority of the fields were down to pasture.

## 5 CULTURAL HERITAGE SUMMARY

- 5.1 The assessment has included all sites within 500m of the Moat Lane road junction, which are presented in the gazetteer that forms an appendix to this report. The location of sites is also depicted as point data on Fig. 1.
- 5.2 In accordance with the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* Volume 11 Section 3 Part 2, Section 13.5 (i) (1993), which considers assessments of the built heritage (as opposed to the cultural heritage) the following designations have been considered and/or identified:
- i) Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales. The assessment area falls within the Caersws Basin Landscape of Special Historic Interest, as defined in the *Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest in Wales* (Cadw 2001).
  - ii) Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales. No such parks or gardens have been recognized in the area of interest (as defined in Cadw 1995).
  - iii) Conservation Areas. There are no conservation areas within the assessment area.
  - iv) Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs). None has been identified within the study, although the village of Caersws contains a number of scheduled ancient monuments relating to two Roman forts and the associated civilian settlement.
  - v) Listed buildings. The only listed building within the study area is the road bridge over the River Severn.
  - vi) National Trust inalienable land. No inalienable land is present in or adjacent to the study area.
- 5.3 Each site of cultural heritage interest identified during the desktop study, field survey, and geophysical survey which lies within the study area has been classified according to its perceived significance as it appears to us at present. Those sites which lie outside the corridor are assumed to be unaffected by the scheme and have not been classified. The categories are those given in the Cadw draft *Archaeology and the Trunk Road Programme in Wales: a Manual of Best Practice* and have been adopted for the Environmental Assessment Significance Criteria of the present scheme. These categories are based in turn - with the exception of Category E - on those given in the Department of Environment, Transport and Regions' *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* Volume 11 Section 3 Part 2 (1993). Category E (also termed category U in some classifications) has been introduced to cover archaeological sites and monuments whose existence went unacknowledged in the Design Manual.
- 5.4 *Category A: National Importance* Monuments that are scheduled and protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979); those suitable for scheduling; and those considered by us using professional judgment to be of national importance but not covered by the Secretary of State's criteria for scheduling; many listed buildings; and parks and gardens identified in the Historic Parks and Gardens Register.
- 5.5 *Category B: Regional Importance* Sites listed in the Historic Environment Record (HER) or other sources which are of a reasonably well-defined extent, nature and date and are significant examples in the regional context; those listed buildings not in Category A; Conservation Areas; and National Trust gardens.
- 5.6 *Category C: Local Importance* Sites listed in the HER or other sources which are of lower potential importance; some landscapes and features designated as of historic or archaeological value in the Local Plan (Note: subject to their value, these may be of greater, regional or national importance).



5.7 *Category D: Minor Importance* Sites listed in the HER or other sources which are of minor interest or are so badly damaged that too little now remains to justify their inclusion in a higher grade.

5.8 *Category E* Sites whose importance cannot be assessed from fieldwork and desk-top study alone, and where further work will be required to establish their true nature and category.

#### Category A Sites

5.9 There are no category A sites within the assessment area.

#### Category B Sites

5.10 The assessment has identified two sites which can be regarded as being of regional significance.

<i>PRN</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Site type</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Condition</i>	<i>NGR</i>
13124	Caersws bridge	Bridge	Post Medieval	Damaged	SO0323791721
83578	Maes Mawr	House	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Intact	SO03429129

#### *PRN 13124 Caersws bridge*

The present bridge (PRN 13124) over the River Severn was designed or erected by Thomas Penson around 1821 to carry the First District turnpike to Machynlleth (now the A470). The bridge, which is listed Grade II, is constructed in stone with three elliptical arches, and replaced an earlier stone bridge which was then in a very poor state.

#### *PRN 83578 Maes Mawr*

Maes Mawr is a large and impressive brick-built house dating from around 1840, to the rear of which is a range of farm buildings. Although of regional significance, the house is not a listed building.

#### Category C Sites

5.11 The assessment has identified six sites which can be regarded as being of local significance.

<i>PRN</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Site type</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Condition</i>	<i>NGR</i>
20884	Caersws, 'Bridge House'	House	Post Medieval	Intact	SO0321591605
83575	Maes Mawr Cottages	House	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Intact	SO0402591565
83576	New House	House	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Intact	SO0369091365
83580	Moat Lane Level Crossing House	House	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Intact	SO03562938
83582	Moat Lane Level Crossing	Level Crossing	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Intact	SO03569137
83583	Moat Lane track	Track	Post Medieval	Damaged	SO03509153

*PRN 20884 Caersws, 'Bridge House'*

Bridge House is a Type C, lobby-entry house of two bays with a central-chimney. The front appears to be half-timbered in squares, but it has been largely rebuilt in brick.

*PRN 83575 Maes Mawr Cottages*

Originally adjoining brick-built cottages dating from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, they now form a single property known as Greenfields House.

*PRN 83576 New House*

New House is of brick construction, now rendered, and probably dates to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The associated small holding originally had more extensive outbuildings than at present.

*PRN 83580 Moat Lane Level Crossing House*

A brick-built railway cottage alongside the level crossing, presumably dating from 1863 when the line was opened. The house now has a modern brick-built extension and a conservatory.

*PRN 83582 Moat Lane Level Crossing*

The level crossing where the Newtown to Machynlleth Railway is crossed by the A470 has large single gates on either side of the track.

*PRN 83583 Moat Lane track*

A broad, low linear earthwork, c.3m wide, runs from a gate at SO 0349391515 to SO 0354991577.

**Category D Sites**

- 5.12 There is only one Category D site within the assessment area.

<i>PRN</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Site type</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Condition</i>	<i>NGR</i>
83577	Maes Mawr pound	Pound	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Near destroyed	SO03579134

*PRN 83577 Maes Mawr pound*

An animal pound is depicted on the Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 25" map of 1885. A depression marking the site is visible in the corner of the field, measuring c.33 by 15m, and surrounded by a low, slightly curving bank along the west side. The site is now planted with ornamental trees.

**Category E Sites**

- 5.13 The assessment has identified four sites whose importance cannot be assessed from existing information, and where further work may be required.

<i>PRN</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Site type</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Condition</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1578	Cae Clawdd Bach placename	Road ?	Roman	Unknown	SO038910
79193	Castell Collen - Caersws Roman road, Caersws	Road	Roman	Unknown	SO03119154
83579	Bridge House buildings	Building	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Intact	SO03189164
83581	Castell Collen - Caersws Roman road, Caersws	Road	Roman	Unknown	SO032910

*PRN 1578      Cae Clawdd Bach placename*

While the placename is suggestive of a dyke, the current view is that it refers to a Roman road which is believed to divide the fields thus named.

*PRN 79193      Castell Collen - Caersws Roman road, Caersws*

Excavations in the 1960s in the area of the present football field revealed a possible Roman road leading from Caersws to the south-south-east.

*PRN 83579      Bridge House buildings*

The Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 25" map depicts two buildings in the field to the east of the railway. There are no upstanding remains, although the area is uneven and has some amorphous earthworks.

*PRN 83581      Castell Collen - Caersws Roman road, Caersws*

Traces of an earthwork, or agger, have been identified in an arable field which it has been suggested might be associated with the Roman road (Toller 2000, 75).

## **6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 A combination of detailed desk-based study and field survey has been used to provide a thorough Stage 1 assessment of the cultural heritage resource within 500m of the Moat Lane road junction.
- 6.2 A small number of sites have been identified within the assessment area, including the possible line of a Roman road to the west of the railway. Of the thirteen sites which are currently known, there is one listed structure, the road bridge across the River Severn, six are houses, and one is the Moat Lane level crossing. Only the bridge and one of the houses, Maes Mawr, are considered to be of regional significance. There are four sites whose significance cannot be determined at present and may require further investigation if they are likely to be affected by the proposals, including two records relating to the Roman road.
- 6.3 In addition to the known cultural heritage sites, there is always the potential for previously unrecorded buried archaeological features. This is particularly true in valley-floor locations such as this which are favourable sites for arable cultivation which may, over the centuries, have removed all above ground traces of a monument. Cropmark evidence and excavations elsewhere in the Upper Severn Valley, notably to the south of Welshpool, have revealed significant evidence for prehistoric funerary and ritual activity dating to the late Neolithic and Bronze Age, and the potential for similar activity in this area cannot be discounted. Indeed, cropmarks have revealed a number of prehistoric burial features just to the south-east of the study area.
- 6.4 The field assessment, together with cartography evidence, has indicated that there are areas close to the present river course which contain a number of former river channels which appear to be relatively recent and it may be presumed that in such cases the archaeological potential is low.
- 6.5 The potential impact of the proposed road improvement on the cultural heritage cannot be determined at present as the detailed proposals have not been developed. However, once details are available consideration should be given to a further stage of archaeological assessment, comprising a programme of geophysical survey with the potential for subsequent trial excavation should the results reveal any features which may be of archaeological interest.

## 7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 7.1 The writer would like to thank the following people for their assistance during the project: the staff of the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth; and the staff of the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.

## 8 REFERENCES

### Published sources

Cadw, 2001. *The Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales. Part 2.2. Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest in Wales*. Cadw: Cardiff.

Toller, H, 2000. The Roman Road from Castell Collen to Caersws, Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 146, 60-78.

### Cartographic sources

1847 Tithe Survey and Apportionment (1845) for Llandinam parish

1885 Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 25", Montgomery 35.16

1886 Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 25", Montgomery 42.04

1902 Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 25", Montgomery 35.16 and 42.04

1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales map (Sheet 2 - Wales) and Legend (1:250,000 scale)

1994 British Geological Survey map of Wales (Solid edition at 1:250,000 scale)

### Aerial photographic sources

Vertical aerial photographs

CPE/UK/2531/4064, 24/03/1948

541/59/3046 to 3049, 09/06/1948

72-331-848, 1972

76-120-144, 1976

81-007-005, 1981

**APPENDIX 1  
GAZETTEER OF SITES**

PRN	Name	Type	Period	Condition	Category	NGR
1578	Cae Clawdd Bach placename	Road ?	Roman	Unknown	E	SO038910
13124	Caersws bridge	Bridge	Post Medieval	Intact	B	SO0323791721
20884	Caersws, 'Bridge House'	House	Post Medieval	Intact	C	SO0321591605
79193	Castell Collen - Caersws Roman road, Caersws	Road	Roman	Damaged	E	SO03119154
83575	Maes Mawr Cottages	House	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Intact	C	SO0402591565
83576	New House	House	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Intact	C	SO0369091365
83577	Maes Mawr pound	Pound	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Near destroyed	D	SO03579134
83578	Maes Mawr	House	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Intact	B	SO03429129
83579	Bridge House buildings	Building	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Unknown	E	SO03189164
83580	Moat Lane Crossing Cottage	House	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Intact	C	SO03569138
83581	Castell Collen - Caersws Roman road, Caersws	Road	Roman	Earthwork	E	SO03159101
83582	Moat Lane Level Crossing	Level Crossing	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Intact	C	SO03569137
83583	Moat Lane track	Track	Post Medieval	Damaged	C	SO03509153

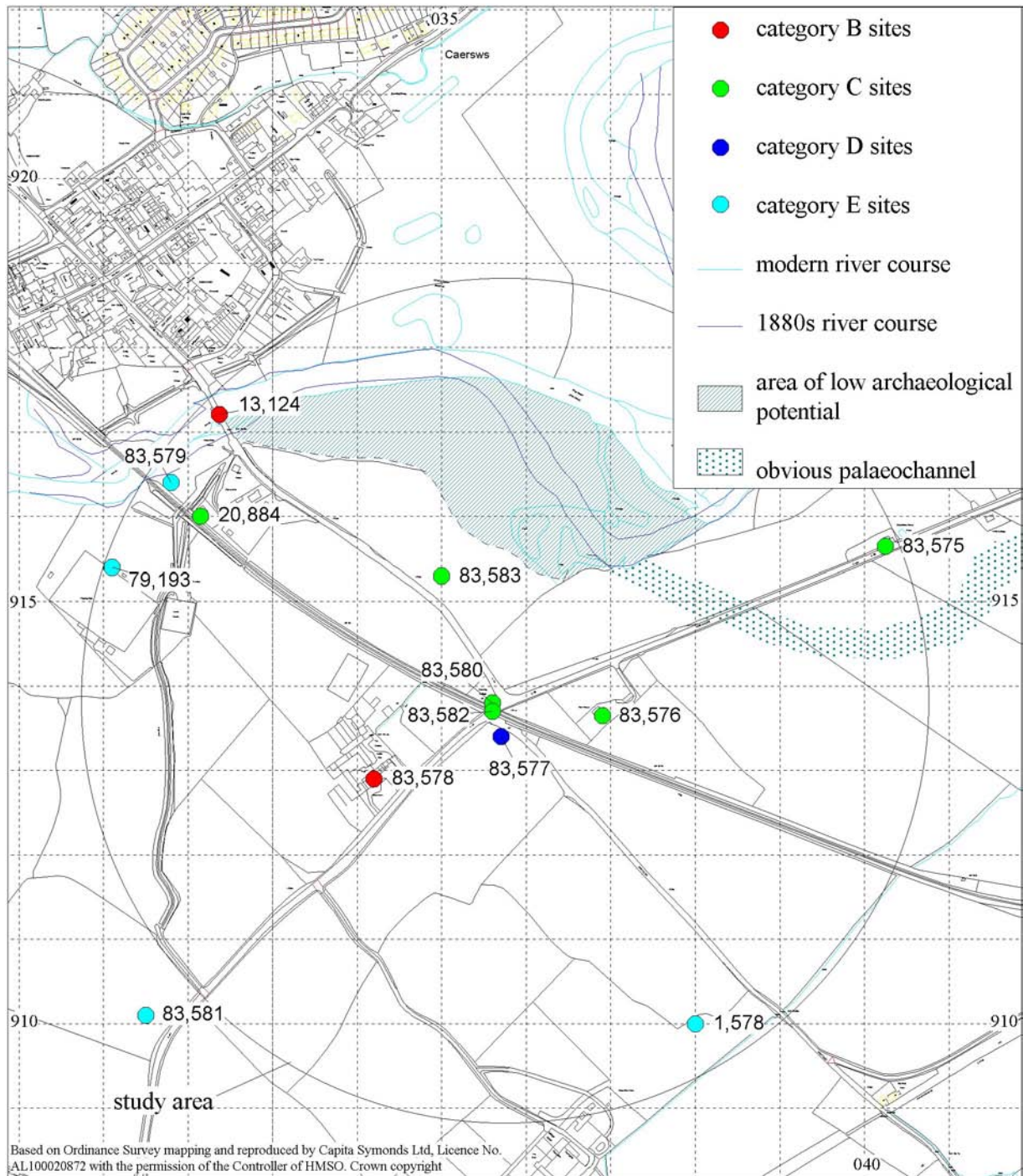


Fig. 1 Study area and known cultural heritage sites