

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

The Smithfield Livestock Market, Welshpool, Powys

DESK-BASED STUDY



CPAT Report No 740

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The Smithfield Livestock Market, Welshpool, Powys

DESK-BASED STUDY

N Jones
December 2005

Report for J Ross Developments Ltd

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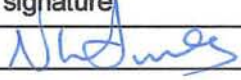
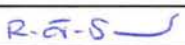
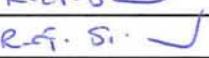
cover: Aerial view of Welshpool Smithfield. Photo CPAT 05-c-002

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In September 2005 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Mr A R Jones of J Ross Developments Ltd to prepare a specification and quotation for undertaking an archaeological evaluation on the site of the Smithfield Livestock Market, Mill Lane, Welshpool, Powys, in connection with proposals to redevelop the site for retail and residential use. The evaluation was the subject of a brief drawn up by Mr M Walters of the CPAT Curatorial Section (CPAT EVB 591), acting in his capacity as archaeological curator for the region and archaeological advisor to the local authority.
- 1.2 The curatorial brief had specified a full programme of evaluation, including a desk-based study, building recording and field evaluation. However, following discussions between the client and the local planning authority CPAT Field Services was informed that an agreement had been reached whereby only the desk-based study would be undertaken as part of the application for outline planning permission. Subject to the success of this application, it was agreed that the building survey and field evaluation would then be undertaken at a later stage, as a condition of consent, and CPAT Field Services were instructed accordingly.
- 1.3 Accordingly, this report presents only the results from the desk-based study, as well as outlining further stages of work which would be required before full planning permission could be sought. A specification prepared by CPAT Field Services for undertaking these further stages is provided in Appendix 1.

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The area of the assessment lies to the east of the present town centre of Welshpool, occupying land on either side of Mill Lane (Fig. 1; SJ 2296 0746). The proposed development occupies the site of the existing livestock market (4.5ha), to the south-east of the town centre.

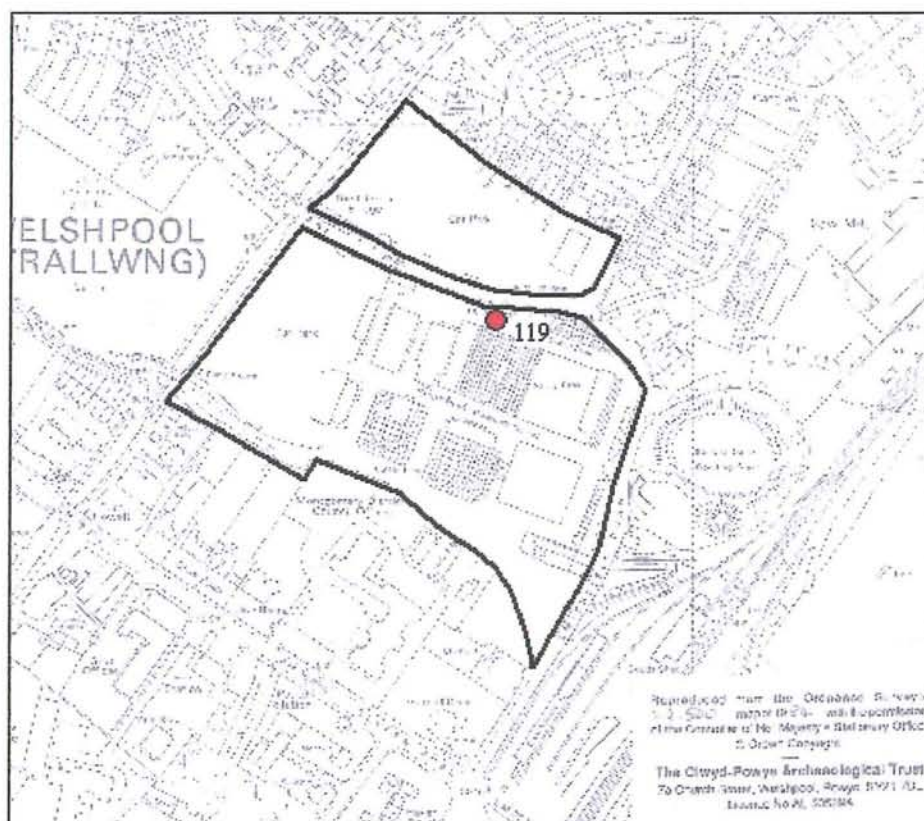


Fig. 1 Area of the proposed development and known archaeological sites

- 2.2 The solid geology of the area mainly consists of undivided Ludlow and Wenlock Series siltstones and mudstones belonging to the Silurian period, though there is some local faulting which has exposed Caradoc Series siltstones and mudstones of the Ordovician period (1994 British Geological Survey map). The soils of the area generally consist of fine silty and loamy soils belonging to the Denbigh 1 Association (1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales map).

3 DESK-BASED STUDY

- 3.1 The desk-based study involved the examination of all the readily available primary and secondary documentary, cartographic, pictorial, and photographic sources for the immediate area. Repositories consulted included the following: the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER), held by CPAT at Welshpool; the National Monuments Record, maintained by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales (RCAHMW) in Aberystwyth; the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth; and Powys County Archives in Llandrindod Wells.

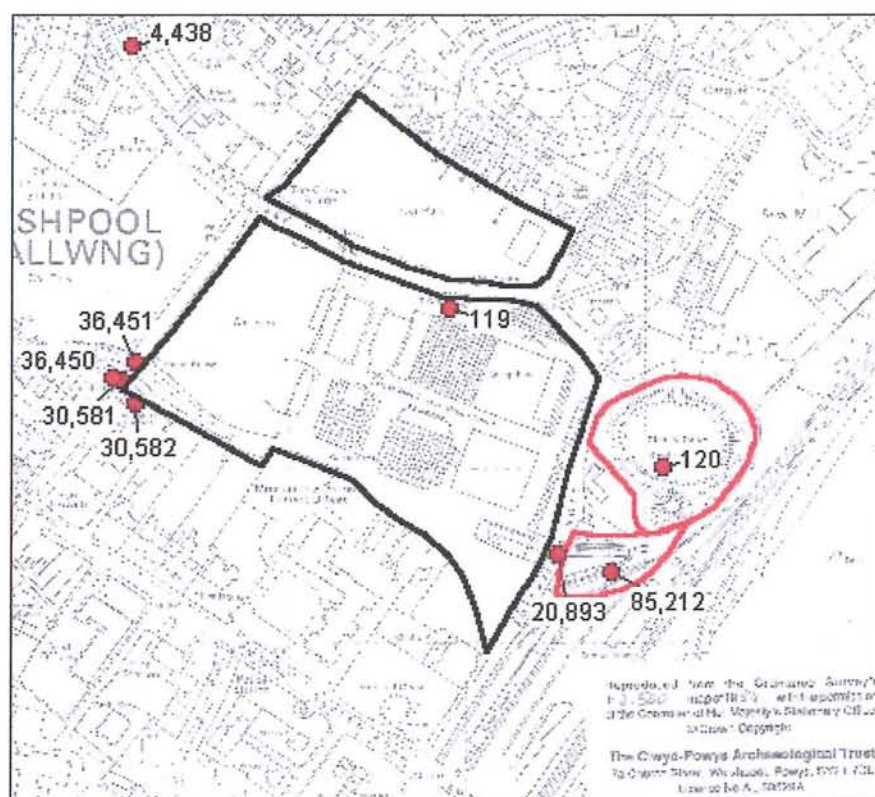


Fig. 2 Area of the proposed development and surrounding archaeological sites and scheduled areas (outlined in red)

Prehistoric period

- 3.2 Although there are no recorded prehistoric archaeological sites in the vicinity of the proposed development there is nevertheless the potential for buried deposits of this period within the area. Evidence from the wider area around Welshpool suggests that this part of the Severn Valley was extensively occupied during prehistory, particularly from the Neolithic onwards. To the south of Welshpool there is a nationally important complex of Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary and ritual monuments, while to the north of the town there is evidence for later prehistoric farming in the form of defended enclosures and field systems. In general, sites of this period are located on the river terrace above the floodplain, in a similar position to that of the proposed development.

Romano-British period

- 3.3 Although the origins of the present town lie in the medieval period, there is evidence of occupation dating back to the Roman period. During construction works at the Smithfield in 1959 a probable burial deposit of Roman date was found (PRN 119; Fig. 1), and this was partially excavated by the National Museum of Wales some months later, in July 1960. All of the objects recovered were consistent with grave goods, although no trace of a pit, cist or other burial feature was identified.
- 3.4 The artefacts were of extremely high quality and included three bronze paterae (dishes) and a bronze ewer (jug), which were placed in a bronze cauldron and wrapped in a fine linen cloth and may have been packed in leaves. A sixth vessel was a wooden bucket with a bronze bull's head handle, similar to an example from Kent. There was also an iron fire-dog which dates from AD 150-200, two iron stands, the remains of a glass bottle and some sherds of pottery. From the nature of the artefacts George Boon of the National Museum concluded that they were likely to be associated with the grave of a native Cornovian chieftain.
- 3.5 The limited excavations revealed no evidence of any Roman stratigraphy, with no more than an old ploughsoil lying directly above the subsoil. The finds appear to have been recovered from the surface of the natural subsoil which lay around 0.3m below the earliest layers associated with the Smithfield, and about 0.9m below the tarmac surface. It appeared that the artefacts had all been deposited within an area about 1.2m across, and a patch of wood ash, a few sherds of pottery and an iron nail were identified *in situ*. An unknown quantity of pottery was also uncovered during the initial construction works, but none of this was retained (Boon 1961, 13-31). There are no other reports of any other Roman artefacts or deposits having been discovered at the Smithfield, either during its construction or during any subsequent works.

Early medieval period

- 3.6 Welshpool is said to have been the site of churches founded by St Cynfelyn and his brother Llywelyn in the 6th century AD; the foundation of the latter has since been associated, at least traditionally, with the 'Old Church' which is known formerly to have stood on the east side of Mill Lane, immediately to the south of Salop Road (see Fig 2; PRN 4438). The most recent church on the site was erected in 1587 but was destroyed by fire in 1659, though some of its masonry remains were still visible until the 19th century (Soulsby 1983, 265). Part of its associated graveyard was identified during rescue excavations by CPAT in 1986-7, when seventeen burials were located. Radiocarbon dates suggested that they belonged to the 13-14th century (Blockley 1987, 24-6). Further work in 1997 revealed the possible site of Capel Llewelyn (PRN 4438) in a garden to the rear of 37 Salop Road. It may be then that the line of Mill Lane broadly followed the western boundary of the graveyard (PRN 16386).

Medieval period

- 3.7 Domen Gastell, a motte and bailey castle (PRN 120; Fig. 2) lies immediately to the east of the proposed development area. It may have been constructed as early as 1111, although the earliest possible reference to it dates from 1196 (Silvester 1992, 167). There has been some suggestion that a settlement developed around the castle, but no firm evidence has yet been found to substantiate this hypothesis. The site has been statutorily designated as a scheduled ancient monument (SAM No. Mg019).

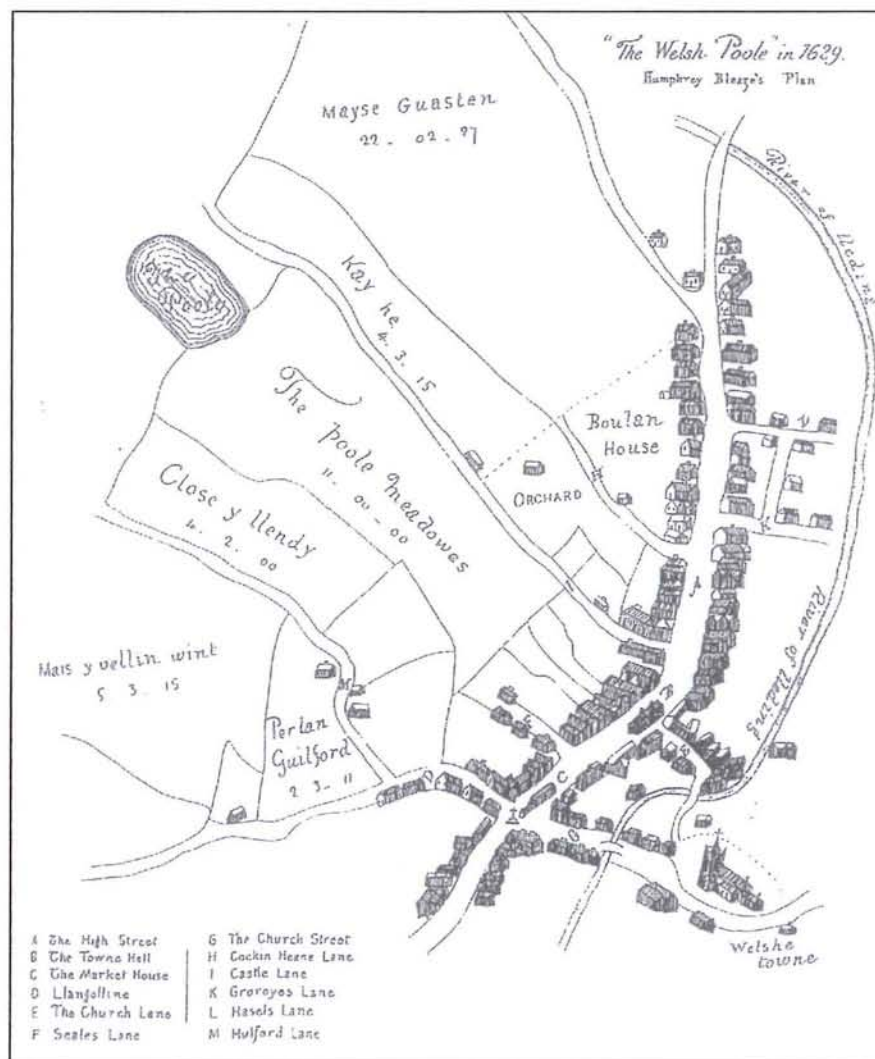


Fig. 3 Map of Welshpool by Humphrey Bleaze, 1629

- 3.8 The present town of Welshpool resulted from a deliberate attempt by Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn, Prince of Powys, to establish a new borough. As such, this was a planned town which owed little to any existing settlement (Soulsby 1983, 266). The burgesses received a foundation charter in the 1240s and a market was recorded there in 1252 (Silvester 1992, 167). The new town adopted a basically linear plan, centred on High Street and Broad Street, with some development also along Church Street, Berriew Street and Severn Street. Interestingly, the parish church of St Mary's, which was refounded around 1250, lies further to the east, away from the centre of the town and in an area recorded by Humphrey Bleaze on his map of 1629 as 'Welshe town' (Fig. 3). While this, the earliest map of Welshpool, does not show the area of the proposed Smithfield development, it is clear that the location is within the general area of 'Welshe town', and it is conceivable that Mill Lane was part of an early Welsh settlement which emerged between the motte and bailey castle and Capel Llewelyn.
- 3.9 An archaeological evaluation, undertaken in the grounds of The Moorings in the summer of 2002, provided tentative evidence for occupation in this area during the 13th and 14th century, although no structures were identified. The depth of deposits sealing the medieval contexts suggested that the plot remained largely unoccupied for a considerable period and may have been in agricultural or garden use from perhaps the 14th-century onwards.

Post-medieval and modern

- 3.10 A mapped survey of the Manor of Leighton, including parts of Welshpool, in 1663, shows Mill Lane and depicts the area later occupied by the Smithfield on the south side of the road as fields, named as 'maes', suggesting an area of open fields which would have originated in the medieval era. Interestingly, it does not indicate any buildings along Mill Lane. Copyright restrictions prevent the reproduction of the map in this report
- 3.11 A survey of the Estate of Mrs Victoria Lloyd, surveyed by John Rocque in 1747 shows Mill Lane and Salop Road; there are no indications of any buildings on the street frontage, but this could be because the area then was under different ownership and was thus not mapped in any detail. The condition of the map and copyright restrictions prevent its reproduction in this report. Although other pre-19th-century depictions of Welshpool are available, none shows the area of the evaluation.
- 3.12 The first accurate cartographic depiction of Welshpool is provided by a post-1780 map of Powis Estate (NLW/Powis Castle/M17-18), and a later version of the same map dated 1800 (NLW/Powis Castle/M20). Copyright restrictions prevent the reproduction of either map in this report. The maps do not show the area of the Smithfield, but do include the area east of Severn Street although no buildings were depicted in this area.
- 3.13 The north-western boundary of the development area is formed by the waterway now known as the Montgomery Canal, which was built in stages between 1794 and 1821, and ran from the Shropshire Union Canal at Frankton Locks to Newtown. The canal was an agricultural rather than an industrial waterway and was primarily constructed to carry and distribute lime for agricultural purposes from the Llanymynech Quarries (Hughes 1988, 9).
- 3.14 Beyond the western corner of the assessment area is a group of structures related to the canal, all of which are statutorily protected as Grade II listed buildings (Fig. 2). The Lledan Brook Aqueduct (PRN 30581) is a fine example of the engineering associated with the canal, and is of considerable interest for its engineering as well as for its architectural character. On the western side of the aqueduct, brick retaining walls to either bank of the brook flank the pool below a circular weir (PRN 36450). This was probably rebuilt with the aqueduct in 1836, and existed to divert water to Domen corn mill, now demolished, which lay at the end of Smithfield Road, under the line of the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway, near the present entrance to the Smithfield. Welshpool Aqueduct Cottage (PRN 30582) is an excellent example of a canal-side house which retains much of its original character and detail. The house was built as part of a second phase of development of the canal wharf, and was in use as the canal agent's house by the mid 19th century (Hughes 1988).
- 3.15 The 1840 Tithe Survey for Pool parish, Lower Division, Trefnant Fechan, Town etc. (Fig. 4) depicts the area later occupied by the Smithfield, showing it as a series of fields, the recorded names for which are listed below. The Lledan Brook is shown crossing the area, and alongside it there is a small building. To the east is Domen Mill, with its feeder leat (or artificial feeder channel) running from the canal-side weir.

469 Field below the canal	Meadow
478 Rail Meadow	Meadow
479 Little Mill Meadow	Meadow
510 Part of Mill Meadow	Meadow
511 Domens mill house,	buildings and fold
512 Bowling Green	intrenchment
533 Field adjoining Greenwood Cottage	Meadow
534 Greenwood	Cottage and garden
535 Greenwood	Cottage and garden
536 Clerks Field	Meadow

537 Slang adjoining Clerks Field
538 Barn Field

Meadow
Meadow

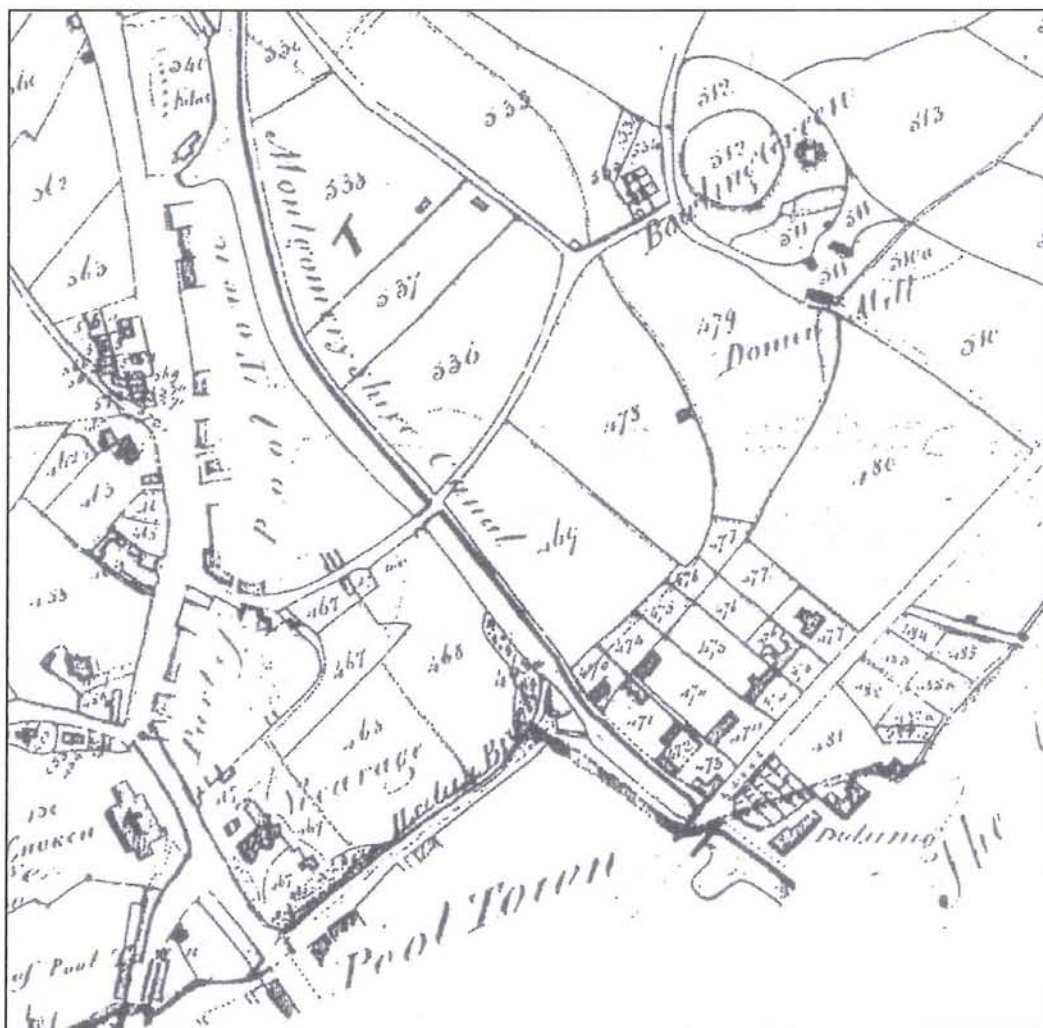


Fig. 4 1840 Tithe Survey for Pool parish, Lower Division, Trefnant Fechan, Town etc

- 3.16 Immediately to the north of the aqueduct is a bridge (PRN 36451) built to carry the Welshpool and Llanfair Railway over the canal. The bridge, which is a Grade II listed building, has stone abutments with rusticated terminal piers on the east side and rough rubble to the west, while cast-iron girders form the span. The bridge is a unique surviving relic of the light railway in its length through the town; the bridge also forms part of a group of structures associated with the canal.
- 3.17 It is not known precisely when the Smithfield was constructed although it was in existence by 1875 (Boon 1961, 14), and it is depicted on the large-scale Ordnance Survey (1:500) town map of Welshpool in 1885 (Fig. 4). Although the Smithfield has undergone some changes, particularly in more recent years, the overall layout of the main area is similar to that depicted in 1885 and a number of the Victoria buildings survive.

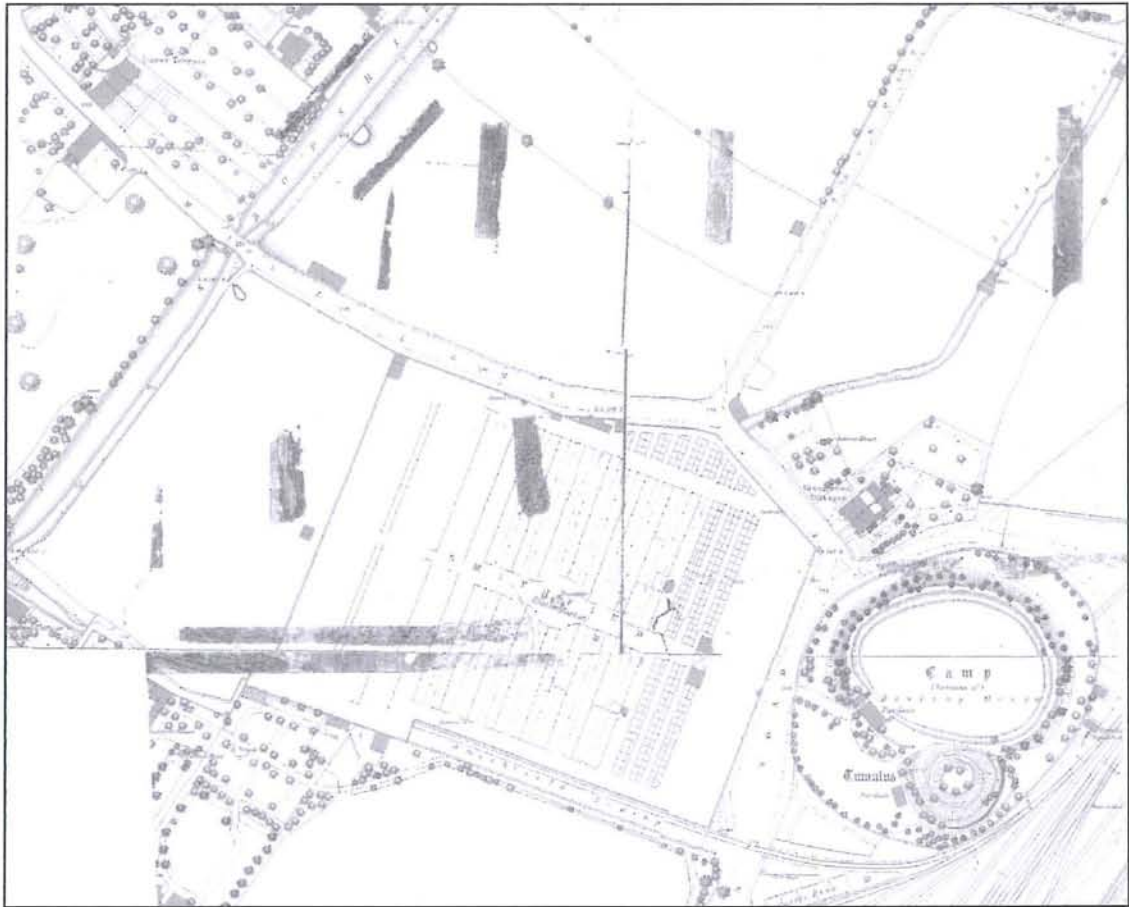


Fig. 5 Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of Welshpool, 1885

- 3.18 The 1885 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 5) shows railway sidings extending from the main line to the south side of the Smithfield. This course was later adopted by the Welshpool and Llanfair Caereinion Railway Company which was formed in 1898, and the railway opened (PRN 85862) in 1903. It was taken over by the Great Western Railway in 1921 and closed by British Rail in 1956.
- 3.19 On the eastern side of Smithfield Road there is a rare surviving interchange facility between the narrow and broad gauge railways. Built 1903 to provide a connection between the Welshpool and Llanfair Railway (narrow gauge) and the Cambrian Railways (later Great Western) (standard gauge), it remained in use until 1956. Three parallel rails in the transfer dock (PRN 85212) allowed access for both standard and narrow gauge rolling stock to the same platforms. The site is a scheduled site of national importance and is a rare surviving railway transfer dock, believed to be the last surviving example in Wales, and possibly Britain.
- 3.20 During the First World War the horse repository in Smithfield was used as a prisoner of war camp (PRN 70235).

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The results from the desk-based study have revealed a significant, but as yet unquantified potential for buried archaeological deposits within the area of the proposed Smithfield development. The discovery of Romano-British grave goods in 1959-60 indicates important activity in the area during this period. The nature of the finds suggest that this activity may have been of relatively high status although the exact context of the artefacts was not illuminated by the small-scale excavations undertaken at that time. It is therefore uncertain how extensive the Romano-British activity was and, indeed, even its precise nature is unclear.
- 4.2 It has been suggested that this area of Welshpool, centred on Mill Lane, could have been the location of the original Welsh settlement, pre-dating the establishment of the planned town in the 13th century. Part of a 13/14th-century cemetery has previously been identified on the north-east side of Mill Lane, some distance from the area of the proposed development, and this has been thought to be associated with Capel Llewelyn which is believed to have been originally founded as early as the 6th century. Although it is possible that the development area contains buried archaeological deposits relating to the early medieval occupation of the town there is presently no physical evidence to support this.
- 4.3 The course of the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway runs along the south-west side of the area, before crossing Smithfield Road to sidings alongside the former course of the main line railway. It is considered likely that buried deposits and structural remains will survive and may therefore be affected by the proposed development, although any remains are considered to be of limited archaeological significance.
- 4.4 The proposed development lies in close proximity to Domen Gastell motte and bailey, a scheduled ancient monument, and it is possible that related buried archaeological deposits may lie close to the eastern boundary of the site.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

- 5.1 As already indicated, the results contained within this report represent only the first stage of archaeological investigation. The curatorial brief (EVB 591) originally identified further phases of work to be conducted at the pre-planning stage. Subject to an agreement between the client and the local authority these will now be undertaken as a condition of outline planning permission, and are detailed below.
- 5.2 A programme of rapid building survey should be undertaken to record the various buildings and structures associated with the livestock market before any demolition work commences. This should follow the guidelines for an RCHME Level 1 Survey (RCHME 1996, Recording Historic Buildings: a descriptive specification, third edition).
- 5.3 Following an agreement between the client and the local planning authority a programme of field evaluation would undertaken following the receipt, and as a condition of, outline planning consent. The evaluation would be undertaken after the demolition of the buildings and structures associated with the livestock market, but before any significant ground disturbance and reduction of levels. The evaluation would consist of the trial excavation of a number of trenches, and would be designed to provide information on the nature, condition and significance of any archaeological deposits. The evaluation trenches would be sufficient in number and at appropriate locations to provide a representative sample of the area defined for development, with specific attention to the areas along either side of Mill Lane, including the position of the known Roman deposits, and the area closest to Domen Gastell motte and bailey. The precise number, size and location of all evaluation trenches would be determined in

discussions between the client and the local planning authority before outline planning permission is sought, and the agreed scheme of works would form a condition of consent.

- 5.4 The evaluation would be an essentially non-destructive process designed to promote the appropriate management of the archaeological resource within the framework of any relevant planning permissions. However, sufficient information would have to be retrieved to assess the archaeological implications of the development and all features identified would be sufficiently sampled to provide information on dating, form, relationships and significance. The level of the natural subsoil would be tested in each of the evaluation areas.
- 5.5 Following the completion of the field evaluation a report would be prepared detailing the results from the excavations. The report would include as a minimum: a summary, a description of the aims and methodology, the results of the field evaluation including any specialist reports, conclusions, recommendations for any further work, bibliography and appropriate appendices.
- 5.6 Depending on the results from the field evaluation a further stage of archaeological work might be required either before or during the construction phase of the development. An absence of significant archaeological deposits during the field evaluation would not be taken to indicate that the development area as a whole was devoid of such features.
- 5.7 There would need to be a commitment on the part of the developer to the full publication of the results in an appropriate journal once all archaeological works in connection with the development have been completed. The site archive would be deposited with the regional Historic Environment Record and all artefacts would be deposited with an appropriate museum, which in this instance is likely to be the Powysland Museum, Welshpool.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 The writers would like to thank the following people for their assistance during the project: Bob Silvester, CPAT; the staff of the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth; and the staff of the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.

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1747 Survey of The Estate of Mrs Victoria Lloyd in the parishes of Pool, Guilsfield and Buttington, surveyed and drawn by John Rocque, NLW M256.

Post-1780 Powis Castle estate map, NLW Powis Castle M17-18.

1800 Powis Castle estate map, NLW Powis Castle M20.

1840 Tithe Survey and Apportionment for Welshpool parish.

1885 Ordnance Survey 1:500 first edition map of Welshpool.

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).

APPENDIX 1

SPECIFICATION FOR FIELD EVALUATION

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Contracting Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been invited to prepare a specification of works for undertaking an archaeological evaluation in connection with proposals to redevelop the existing livestock market site, Mill Lane, Welshpool, Powys.
- 1.2 The site lies on either side of Mill Lane (SJ 22860746), close to the Medieval motte and bailey castle, and is assumed to lie within the historic core of the medieval town. In addition, there is known Roman activity in the area including burial deposits. It is therefore anticipated that significant buried archaeological deposits may survive within in the area and the following specification has been designed to evaluate the depth and significance of these deposits. The cattle market itself is of industrial archaeological interest, including a number of Victorian buildings.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the evaluation are:
 - 2.1.1 to record the existing buildings and structures associated with the livestock market;
 - 2.1.2 to reveal by means of a field evaluation, the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the archaeology within the area of the proposed development in so far as these aims are possible;
 - 2.1.3 to record any archaeological deposits identified during the field evaluation;
 - 2.1.4 to prepare a report outlining the results of the assessment, incorporating sufficient information on the archaeological resource for a reasonable planning decision to be taken regarding the future management of the archaeology.

3 Methodology

- 3.1 A programme of rapid building recording will be undertaken following the guidelines for an RCHME Level 1 Survey (RCHME 1996, Recording Historic Buildings: a descriptive specification, third edition). This will comprise a rapid visual inspection of the exterior and interior of each building, a photographic survey in digital format (minimum 4 megapixels) and a written description of the character, fabric, function and dating of each building.
- 3.2 All excavations will initially be undertaken using a machine excavator 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 Each trench or area will be mechanically excavated using a machine with a toothed bucket to remove hardcore and modern overburden and then a flat, toothless ditching blade to remove further overburden onto the surface of the first significant archaeological horizon. Excavated material will be temporarily stored adjacent to the trench, which will be reinstated with this material upon completion.

- 3.4 The evaluation areas will be sufficient in number and at appropriate locations to provide a representative sample of the development area, but with specific attention to the areas along either side of Mill Lane, including the position of the known Roman deposits, and the area closest to Domen Gastell motte and bailey. The precise number, size and location of the evaluation areas will be determined following discussions between the client and the local planning authority before outline planning permission is sought, and the agreed scheme of works will form a condition of consent.
- 3.5 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, and digital. 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.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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 evaluation will be undertaken by a small team of skilled archaeologists under the overall supervision of Mr RJ Silvester, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA). CPAT is an IFA Registered Organisation.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist who conducted the evaluation.
- 4.3 It is not possible to determine the duration of the evaluation at this stage, the timing being dependent on the number and size of the excavated areas. The report will be completed within 3 weeks of the completion of on-site works. A draft copy of the report will be forwarded to the client and Curator for approval prior to the production of the final report. Copies of the final report will be provided to the client and the Regional HER. The Curator will be informed of the timetable in order to arrange for monitoring if required.
- 4.4 The following contingency sums have been allowed although the need for such contingencies, and their potential cost, would be subject to discussions between CPAT, the client and the curator once the fieldwork has been completed. The following figures are therefore only for guidance and the final cost, should any of the services be required, may be more or less than the estimates provided.

Curatorial monitoring	£50 per visit
Finds conservation etc	£200
Dating	£600
Environmental sampling	£200
Museum deposition and storage	£50
Publication	Summary in <i>Archaeology in Wales</i> at no additional charge

- 4.5 There is a commitment to the full publication of the results in an appropriate journal once all archaeological works in connection with the development have been completed. The site archive will be deposited with the Regional Historic Environment Record and it is recommended that all artefacts should be deposited with an appropriate museum, which in this instance is likely to be the Powysland Museum, Welshpool.
- 4.6 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.7 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

N.W. Jones
21 October 2005