

CPAT Report No 1038

Abermule Business Park, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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Report for Welsh Assembly Government

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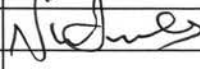


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CPAT Report Record

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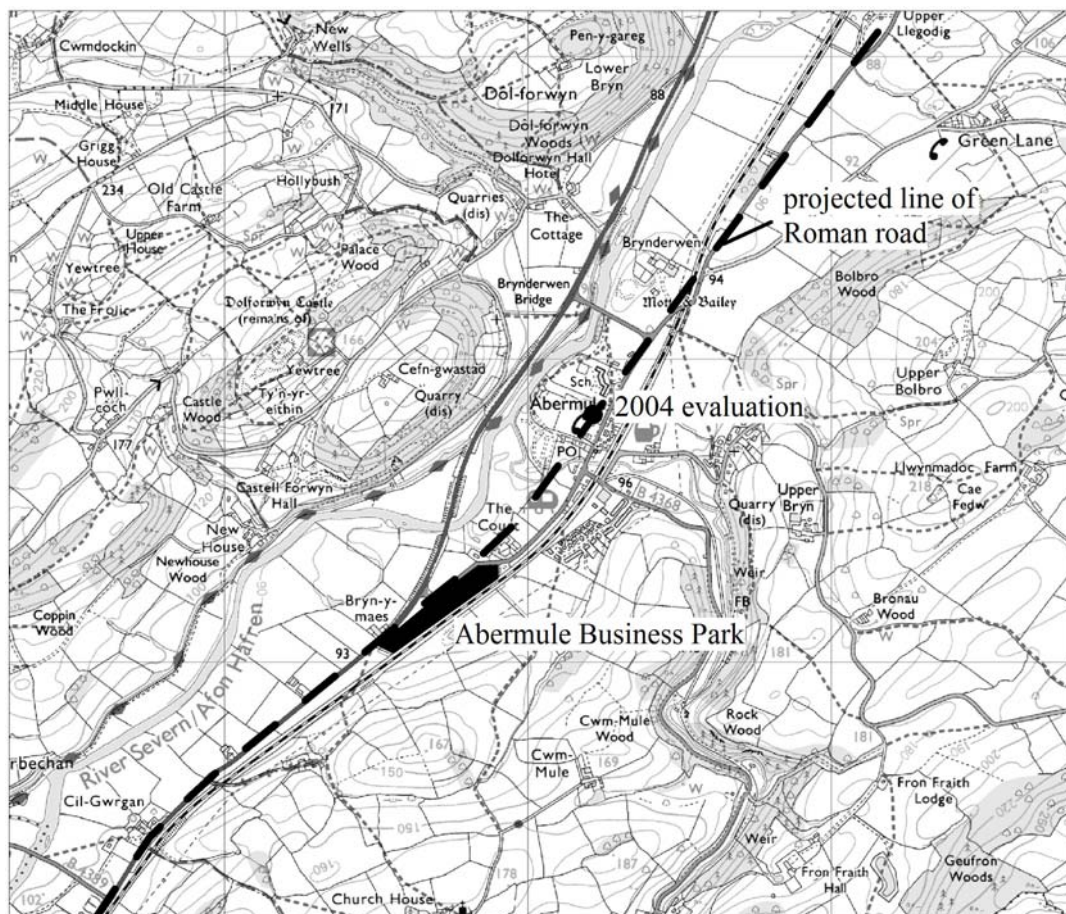
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In November 2009 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Alun Griffiths Ltd, on behalf of Welsh Assembly Government, to undertake a watching brief during the initial infrastructure works associated with the construction of a new business park at Abermule, 5km north-east of Newtown in Powys. The Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, acting as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority, had determined that a watching brief should be undertaken to ensure the preservation by record of any archaeological remains revealed during the construction works and a brief was prepared detailing the nature of the required works (CWAT 756).
- 1.2 The development plot is located at the south-western end of the village (SO 15869429), lying between the B4386 and the A483 to the north-west, and the railway to the south-east. The plot lies immediately to the south of the projected alignment of the Roman road between the forts at Caersws and Forden Gaer, and it was thought possible that associated archaeological features might be present within the development area.
- 1.3 In 1996 a watching brief during pipeline works along the A483, 800m to the south-west, had recorded the probable construction layers of the Roman road founded on a bed of natural clay. Further evidence for the road was uncovered during an archaeological evaluation in 2004 on the north-west side of Abermule, revealing a metalled surface around 6.5m wide, although with no indication of any side ditches (Cooper 2004).



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Fig. 1 Site location showing projected line of Roman road

2 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.1 The watching brief was undertaken between 25 January and 4 March 2010, with site visits being dependent on the contractor's programme of work. The projected alignment of the Roman road was generally assumed to be north-east to south-west, based on evidence from the previous archaeological investigations within the general area, although it was not clear whether the road itself might impinge on the development area. On this basis the watching brief focused on the access road running north-west to south-east, in the hope that the Roman road might be revealed crossing the stripped area.

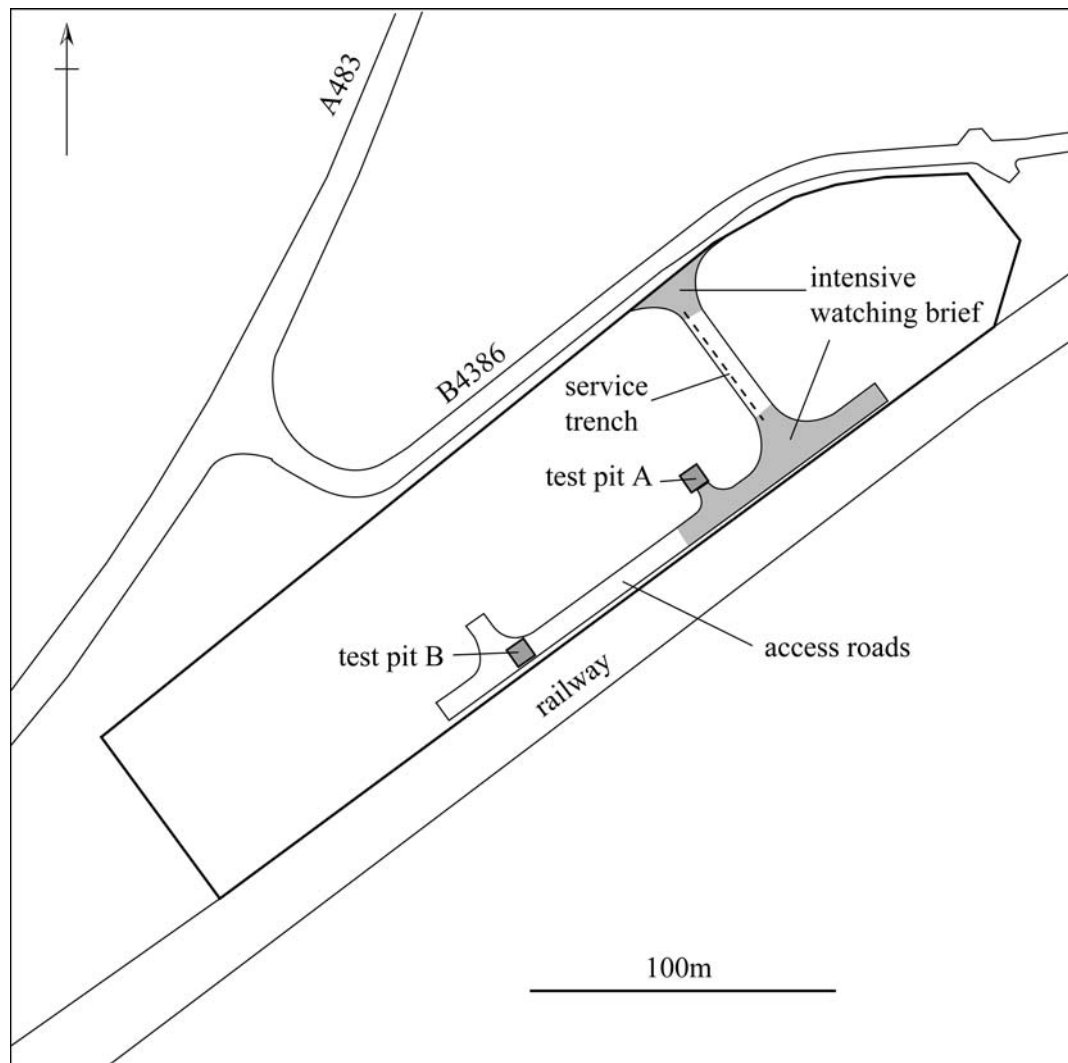


Fig. 2 Site layout and watching brief

- 2.2 Intensive monitoring was undertaken during the removal of overburden along two sections of the access road (Fig. 2), in areas where the depth of stripping was sufficient to reveal the natural river gravels, at a depth of between 0.6m and 0.8m below the existing ground level. Elsewhere, stripping was restricted to depths of between 0.3m and 0.6m, levels at which no significant archaeological deposits were likely to be revealed. Neither area revealed any evidence to confirm the presence of the Roman road. Monitoring during the excavation of a service trench between the two stripped areas also failed to identify any archaeological deposits.
- 2.3 In addition to the access road, the watching brief monitored the excavation of two test pits (Fig. 2 A and B) neither of which exposed any archaeological deposits, although both confirmed the

general sequence of deposition. The surface of the natural gravels was generally at a depth of around 0.8m, overlain by a 0.1m-thick deposit of clay and an alluvial deposit around 0.3m thick, above which lay 0.4m of ploughsoil and topsoil.



Plate 1 Test pit A viewed from the north-west

3 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The site of a new business park at Abermule in Powys was thought to lie in close proximity to the projected line of the Roman road linking the military forts at Forden Gaer and Caersws (RR64), based on evidence from previous archaeological investigations in the general area. Consequently, a watching brief was maintained during the construction of an access road in order to identify and record any archaeological features which might be present.
- 3.2 Although the depth of soil stripping was not always sufficient to identify any potential archaeology, the intensive monitoring of specific areas, together with the excavation of a service trench, revealed no evidence to suggest that the Roman road lies within the development plot. It is perhaps more likely that the road is sited further to the north-west, running north-east to south-west, approximately following the modern B4386 and A483.

4 REFERENCES

Cooper, R., 2004. *A report on the archaeological watching brief for land adjacent to the B4386 at Abermule, Powys*. SAP Report WB 002/04