# **CPAT Report No 1005**

# The Haim, near Llandrinio, Powys

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF





THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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# The Haim, near Llandrinio, Powys ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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Report for The Environment Agency

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# **CPAT Report Record**

### **Report and status**

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# Revisions


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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In May 2009 the Contracts and Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by The Environment Agency to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of test pits relating to proposed works on a flood defence bank at the confluence of the Rivers Severn and Vyrnwy at Haim, near Llandrinio (SJ 32681607).
- 1.2 The existing flood defence bank (PRN 17915)<sup>1</sup> had become ineffective owing to the leakage of groundwater beneath it and it was proposed that its route be modified by the construction of a new section of bank to avoid the area of porous soils. Two other archaeological sites, Cymerau Bridge (PRN 5204) and the site of Cymerau Inn (PRN 17914) are recorded in the Historic Environment Record (HER) for the locality.

## 2 LOCATION

2.1 The site was situated at the confluence of the Severn and Vyrnwy rivers, the nearest settlement being the village of Crew Green on the opposite side of the River Severn, less than 0.5km distant (Fig. 1; SJ 32671606). It lies on the flood plain of the rivers at an elevation of 60m OD.



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey's 1:25,000 map of 1999 with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust licence no. AL 50529A

Fig. 1 Watching brief location.

## **3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The flood defence banks in this locality are thought to have been completed in the period between about 1790-1800, as part of a wider scheme of land enclosure and improvement subject to an Act of Parliament.
- 3.2 The Cymerau Inn formerly stood at the confluence of the Severn and Vyrnwy, and is depicted there on the first edition Ordnance Survey map (Montgomeryshire 16.4) of 1887. There are no standing remains of the building, but it is not known whether any sub-surface evidence may be present. It is also thought that there may have been a cockpit adjacent to the inn and the three pine trees are traditionally said to have been planted as a sign to drovers. In addition to this it may be suggested that one of the functions of the inn could have been to serve the passing river traffic heading to Pool Quay, the highest point of navigation on the Severn. Cymerau bridge is recorded as a single span comprising a low stone arch but was not recognised in the immediate vicinity of the proposed works. It may not have been of any great age, despite unconfirmed local tradition ascribing it to the Norman or Roman periods.

### 4 WATCHING BRIEF

4.1 The watching brief was conducted on 11 and 12 June 2009 and comprised the observation of excavations for seven test pits (TP 201-207), whose positions were recorded using hand-held GPS equipment (see Appendix 1). Each pit was excavated by machine using a 0.6m- wide toothless bucket, the topsoil being stripped first to expose the subsoil which was then excavated to the prescribed depth for the relevant hole, in these cases either 2.0m or 4.5m. The holes varied in length, generally in proportion to their depth, from 3m up to a maximum of 5m and were excavated at the locations depicted on Fig. 2. The plan also shows four borehole locations, one of which (BH 101) was observed in the course of examining the test pits. It was evident however that the borehole method of working would not reveal any decipherable archaeological features and this element of the watching brief was therefore terminated.



Fig. 2 Plan showing the locations of test pits and boreholes, courtesy of Atkins Limited

4.2 While the pits were being excavated a careful watch was kept on the deposits to determine whether any archaeological material was revealed. The only evidence of activity related to previous drainage works and comprised two lines of land drain. That in the test pit at SJ 32524 16148 was not examined as the excavation was moved to avoid disrupting its function, and only a line of gravel fill was observed at 0.5m below the ground surface. At SJ 32711 16070, however, the drain itself was observed at a depth of 0.9m, having a north-north-east/south-south-west alignment and comprising sectional ceramic pipes measuring 0.3m long and 0.08m in diameter. It is likely to be of 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup>-century origin.



Plate 1 Sectional ceramic drainage pipes in the test pit at SJ 3271116070

- 4.3 The soils exposed below the topsoil were grey-brown silty clays, the only anomalies being observed in the test pit at SJ 3252616150, where blue clay was present below about 3m in depth, and in the pit at SJ 3263716075, where a dark brown silty sand was revealed at about 4.0m deep.
- 4.4 No other significant information was gained during the watching brief and it can be confirmed that neither of the archaeological monuments recorded in the locality was affected.

# 5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The watching brief revealed little significant information on the archaeology of the area, the only evidence relating to two land drain alignments of 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup>-century date.
- 5.2 The flood defence bank was not subject to any excavations during this programme of work. No evidence of the other two recorded archaeological sites in the area, Cymerau Inn and Cymerau Bridge, was forthcoming from the test pit excavations, although it is possible that sub-surface remains of both may survive in close proximity to the flood defence bank.
- 5.3 It is not known at present what form the proposed remedial works on the flood defence bank may take, and the possibility that either of the two recorded archaeological sites in this area could be affected by earthmoving work during the construction of any new bank or structures and the possible removal of old sections of bank should be considered at an appropriate time in the planning of any further stages of the work. It should also be borne in mind that the existing flood defence bank is an archaeological site in its own right and further work on it might be contemplated in advance of its removal or alteration.

## End Note

PRN stands for Primary Record Number, a unique identifier within the Regional Historic Environment Record held by CPAT in Welshpool

# APPENDIX 1 Test pit locations

TP201 SJ 32708 16119 TP202 SJ 32637 16075 TP203 SJ 32711 16070 TP204 SJ 32664 16040 TP205 SJ 32711 15982 TP206 SJ 32524 16148 TP207 SJ 32744 16190