

CPAT Report No 1040

Brynderwen, Abermule, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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Brynderwen, Abermule, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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May 2010

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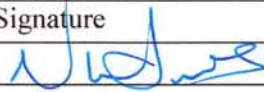


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CPAT Report Record

Report and status

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|----------------|-------|
| CPAT Report Title | Brynderwen, Abermule: Archaeological Watching Brief | | |
| CPAT Project Name | Brynderwen, Abermule | | |
| CPAT Project No | 1666 | CPAT Report No | 1040 |
| Confidential (yes/no) | No | draft/final | Final |

Internal control

| | name | Signature | date |
|-------------|----------------|--|------------|
| prepared by | N Jones |  | 04/05/2010 |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| checked by | R.J. Silvester |  | 04/05/2010 |
| approved by | R.J. Silvester |  | 04/05/2010 |

Revisions

| no | date | made by | checked by | approved by |
|----|------|---------|------------|-------------|
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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

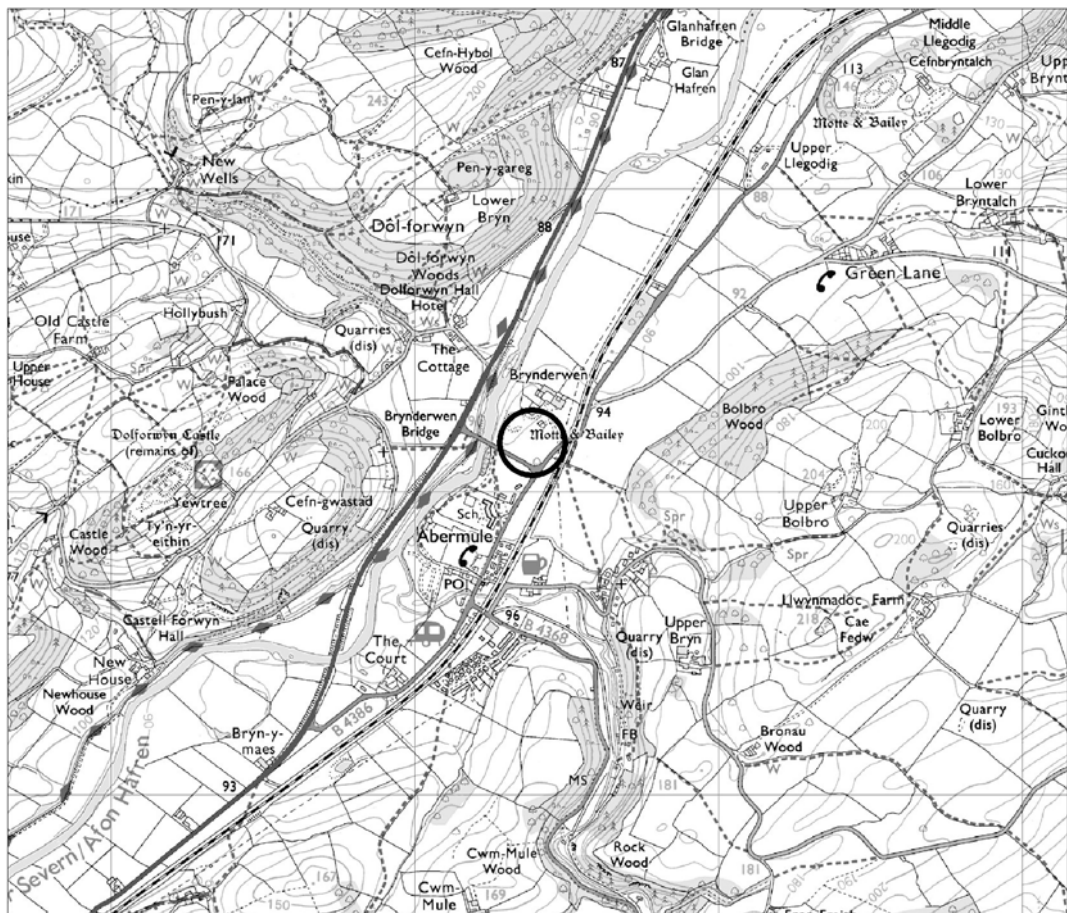
A watching brief and subsequent excavation were undertaken in association groundworks for a new dwelling, identifying two apparently parallel, butt-ended ditches, aligned roughly south-west to north-east and lying around 3m apart. The ditch terminals were offset, with the south-eastern ditch terminal lying about 7m further to the south-west than that of the north-western ditch. The north-western ditch measured around 2.5m in width and 1.3m deep, while the south-eastern ditch was 2.0m wide and 0.8m deep. Both ditches appear to have had banks on their north-western sides.

The only dating evidence came from the fill of the north-western ditch and consisted of a single body sherd of prehistoric pottery which has been provisionally identified as Bronze Age. This does not, however, provide secure dating for the ditch since it is possible that the pottery was residual.

The significance of the ditches remains unclear and while they may be part of a previously unrecorded, double-ditched enclosure there is currently a lack of evidence to confirm this. Further discoveries may yet come to light as adjacent plots are developed which could elucidate the nature of the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In April 2010 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Mr A Davies of Lifier Designs to undertake a watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a new dwelling with garage and access on land adjacent to Derwen Mead and Brynderwen, Abermule, near Newtown in Powys (SO 16399520). The site lies immediately to the east of the scheduled area surrounding Brynderwen motte and bailey castle. 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 763).



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Fig. 1 Site location

- 1.2 Planning permission for the development had been granted with a condition requiring that a watching brief be undertaken. This process was commenced on 9 March 2010 and it was immediately apparent that significant archaeological deposits were present within the plot. A rapid excavation was mounted over the following two days, at which point only the footprint for the garage and part of the new dwelling had been stripped of overburden. It was understood at that time that further archaeological works would be undertaken once stripping resumed for the remaining areas. However, following discussions between the client and the local planning authority the archaeological condition was removed from the planning consent and no further work was undertaken.

- 1.3 This report has been produced to summarise of the results from the rapid excavation in order to provide a record of the archaeology to be submitted to the regional Historic Environment Record, the client having refused to fund the production of either an interim report, or further analysis and publication. A note on the findings will appear in *Archaeology in Wales* in due course.

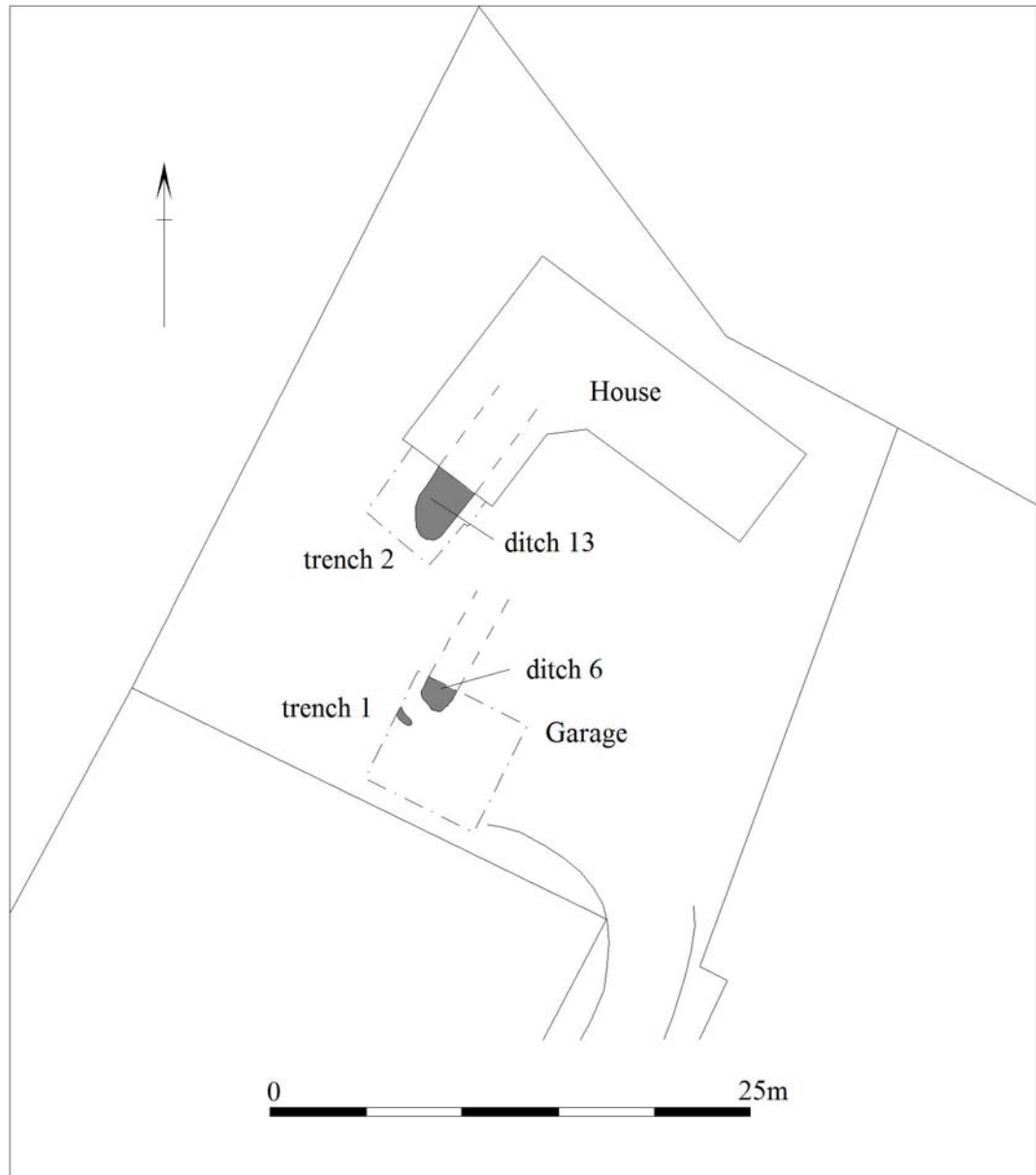


Fig. 2 Trench locations

2 EXCAVATION

- 2.1 The removal by machine of overburden within the footprint of the house and detached garage was undertaken under the direction of an archaeologist over a two-day period from 9-10 March 2010. The stripped areas were hand-cleaned and a written, drawn and photographic record was maintained during the rapid excavations which followed.

Trench 1 – Garage Plot

- 2.2 An area measuring 6.4 x 6.2m was stripped of up to 0.6m of overburden revealing a butt-ended ditch (6) cut into the natural gravels. The ditch was up to 2.0m wide, 0.8m deep and aligned south-west to north-east, with the butt-end to the south-west. The ditch was filled by a series of deposits which appeared to have been predominantly derived from the north-western side, suggesting that this was the position of the accompanying bank. Although the excavator initially suggested that layers 28 and 30 might be remnant bank material a re-assessment of the available evidence, and in particular the pattern of deposition within the ditch, suggests that these are perhaps more likely to be natural deposits. No dating evidence was forthcoming from the ditch, and although samples of charcoal were recovered from contexts 5, 26 and 29, which have been retained for the time being with the site archive, no funding is currently available to provide charcoal identification and radiocarbon dating.
- 2.3 The only other feature to be identified was a possible gully (32) around 0.35m wide and aligned roughly north to south with a butt-end to the south. This also produced no dating evidence.



Plate 1 Ditch 6 viewed from the south. Photo CPAT 3049-0025

Trench 2 – House Plot

- 2.4 An area measuring 4.8 x 4.4m was stripped of up to 0.6m of overburden revealing a second butt-ended ditch (13) cut into the natural gravels. The ditch was up to 2.5m wide, 1.3m deep and was also aligned south-west to north-east, again with the butt-end to the south-west. Although the sequence of deposition provided no firm indication for the position of the bank, the excavator considered a gravel deposit along the north-western side to be remnant bank material.
- 2.5 The only dating evidence came from a single body sherd of prehistoric pottery recovered from context 22, which has been provisionally identified as Bronze Age.
- 2.6 Two postholes were identified in the base of the ditch, cut into the natural gravels, one of which (17) was located in the ditch terminal and measured around 0.5m across and 0.2m in depth. The other (19) was smaller, measuring 0.35 x 0.2m, and lay around 1m to the north-east.



Plate 2 Ditch 13 viewed from the south-west. Photo CPAT 3049.0012

3 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The watching brief and subsequent excavation identified two apparently parallel, butt-ended ditches, aligned roughly south-west to north-east and lying around 3m apart. The ditch terminals were offset, with the south-eastern ditch terminal lying about 7m further to the south-west than that of the north-western ditch. The north-western ditch measured around 2.5m in width and 1.3m deep, while the south-eastern ditch was 2.0m wide and 0.8m deep. Both ditches appear to have had banks along their north-western sides.
- 3.2 The only dating evidence came from the fill of the north-western ditch and consisted of a single body sherd of prehistoric pottery which has been provisionally identified as Bronze Age. This does not, however, provide secure dating for the ditch since it is possible that the pottery was residual. Samples of charcoal were recovered from the south-eastern ditch which have the potential for providing radiocarbon dates.
- 3.3 The site lies around 400m south-south-west of a sub-square, single-ditched enclosure (PRN 148) which has produced Fengate Ware dated to *c.* 3350-3000 BC from a pit within the interior (Gibson and Musson 1990), and while it is tempting to suggest that the two ditches may be part of a previously unrecorded, double-ditched enclosure there is currently a lack of evidence to confirm this. Further discoveries may yet come to light as adjacent plots are developed which could elucidate the nature of the site.

4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 4.1 The writer is grateful to Ian Grant of CPAT who conducted the watching brief and excavation, the latter with the assistance of George Luke.

5 REFERENCES

- Gibson, A., & Musson, C., 1990. A cropmark enclosure and a sherd of later Neolithic pottery from Brynderwen, Llandyssil, Powys, *Montgomeryshire Collections* 78, 11-15.

APPENDIX 1

SITE ARCHIVE

Context register

32 context record forms

30 digital photographs, CPAT film 3049

2 A1 site drawings

1 body sherd of prehistoric pottery

Charcoal sample from context 5, fill of ditch 6

Charcoal sample from context 26, fill of ditch 6

Charcoal sample from context 29, fill of ditch 6