

CPAT REPORT No. 1124

Tesco, Cefn Mawr, Wrexham

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AND BUILDING SURVEY**



THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

CPAT Report No 1124

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AND BUILDING SURVEY**

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December 2011

Report for Longcross Construction Ltd and Tesco plc



C P A T

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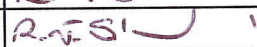
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited in September 2010 by Longcross Construction Ltd, on behalf of Tesco p.l.c, to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation and building survey in connection with a new supermarket development on the site of the former NEWI Cefn Druids AFC football ground, located at Cefn Mawr, in the County Borough of Wrexham, North Wales.
- 1.2 The nature and extent of the archaeological works were outlined in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI 1136) prepared by the Field Services Section of CPAT and subsequently approved (on behalf of the Local Planning Authority) by Mr M Walters, Development Control Officer for the Curatorial Section of CPAT.

2 LOCATION TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 Cefn Mawr is located approximately 13 km south south-east of Wrexham town centre, near Wrexham County Borough's south-western boundary with Denbighshire and midway between the towns of Ruabon and Llangollen in North Wales. The proposed development site is located to the south-east side of the historic core of Cefn Mawr (Fig. 1 SJ 2819 4255). The site extends to a total area of 2.83 ha and is bounded on the east by the Chester-Shrewsbury railway line and to the west by a north-south aligned lane leading off the eastern side of Well Road and serving the NEWI Cefn Druids AFC car park. To the north the site is bounded by the premises and car park of Somerfield's supermarket while to the south, it is bounded by a public recreation ground.

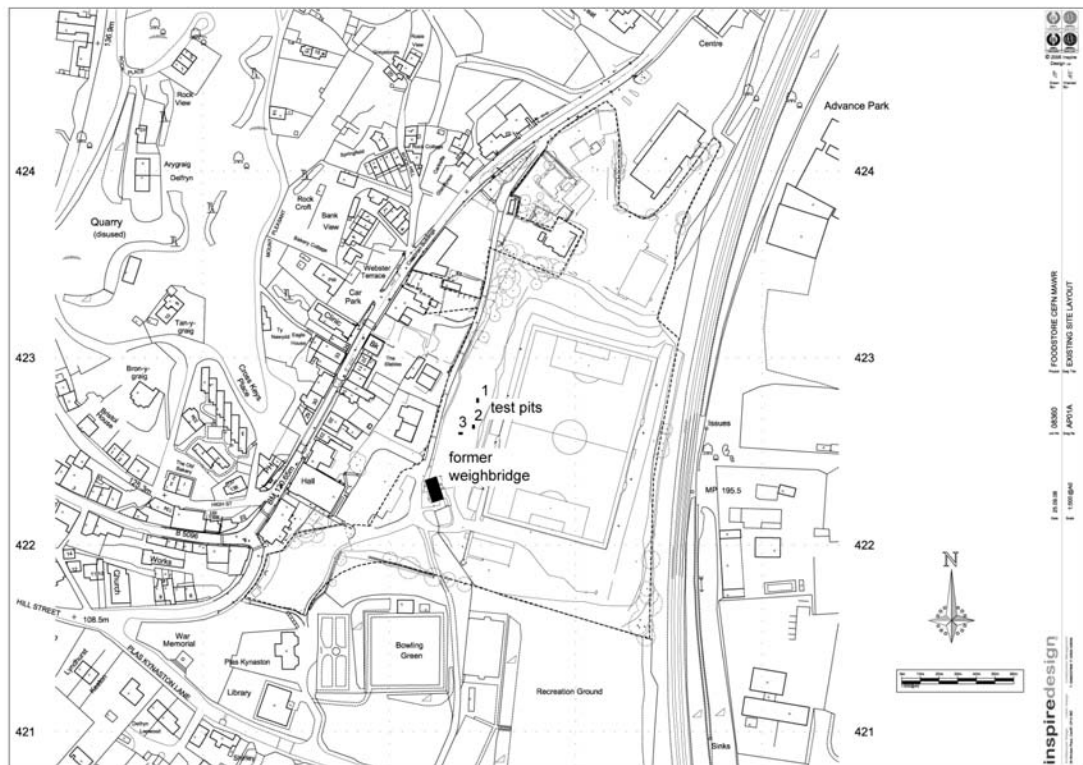


Fig. 1 Site and test pit location plan.

2.2 The solid geology of the area consists of Cefn-y-fedw Sandstone, a fine-grained carboniferous sandstone overlying coal measures formations. Quantities of fireclay and red terracotta marls exist within the upper coal measures, whilst iron-ore is prevalent at deeper levels (1994 British Geological Survey map & WCBC 2005). The soils of the area are of the Cambic stagnogley series and generally comprise slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged, fine loamy and clayey soils belonging to the Brickfield 3 Association (1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales map).

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Until the post-medieval period, Cefn Mawr comprised an area of common land within the ancient parish of Ruabon, and only sparse evidence currently exists for prehistoric and Roman activity in the general area. Limited industrial activity is suggested dating back to medieval times, including the quarrying of local Cefn stone. However, there is very little archaeological or historical evidence for the development of the area prior to the post-medieval period, with evidence pointing to increased exploitation of mineral deposits during the early years of the 18th century while the potential of the area was only fully realised in the later 18th century and into the 19th century.

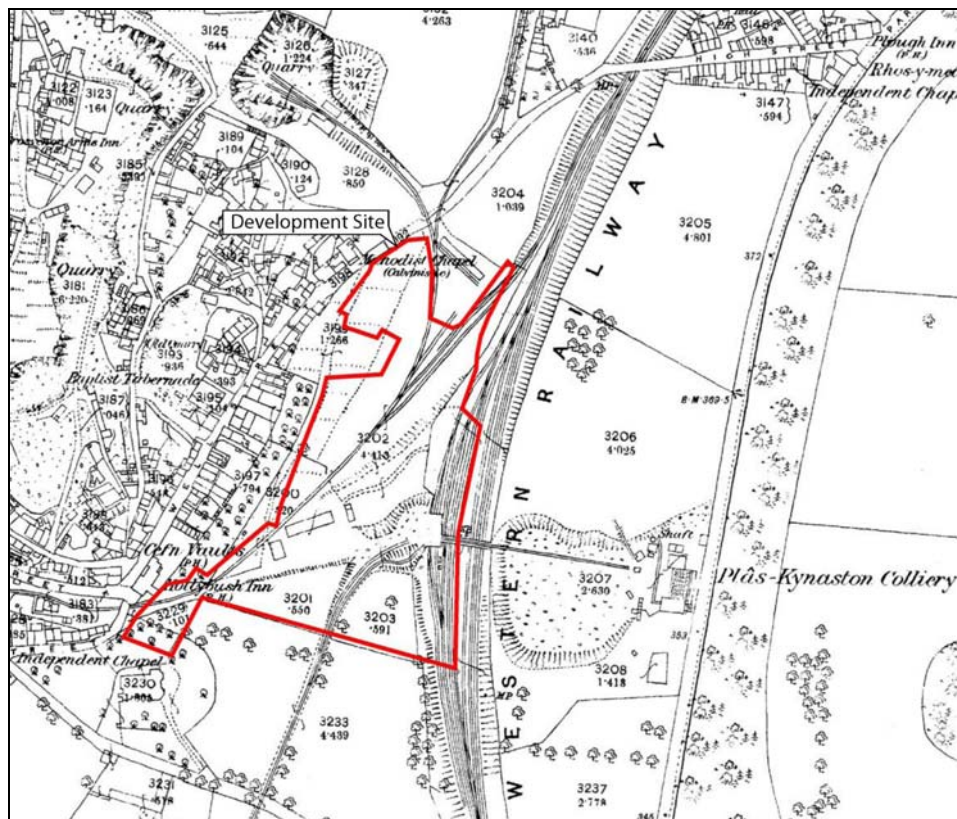


Fig. 2 1873 Ordnance Survey County Series 1:2500 Map, 1st Edition.

3.2 The industrial potential of Cefn Mawr was based upon the exploitation of the rich deposits of coal, iron ore, brick and terracotta clays and the famous ‘Cefn’ sandstone of the area. The area of the proposed development site (Figs 1 and 2) falls within the bounds of the

former Plas Kynaston estate, upon which, during the late 18th/19th century, a number of collieries, quarries, brickworks and potteries were established (including the renowned Plas Kynaston Foundry, established by William Hazeldine in 1799). The development site, while directly linked to this industrial expansion, served as a peripheral transport hub for the distribution of materials, specifically coal from the Plas Kynaston Colliery and stone from the Cefn quarries. The series of rail and tram lines within and extending beyond the development site (illustrated in early Ordnance Survey coverage, Fig. 2), clearly relates to this function, linking firstly to the Plas Kynaston extension canal and later to the major rail connections of the GWR and the Vale of Llangollen railway lines.

- 3.3 The 20th century saw the demise of many of the traditional industries on which Cefn Mawr had thrived since the Industrial Revolution, although clay and terracotta works survived, most notably at Trefynant to the north-east of the town. With the demise of industry and following on from its life as a transport hub, the development area was subject to significant programmes of earth moving during the mid-20th century with the subsequent transformation to a recreational facility (NEWI Cefn Druids AFC). Successive phases of reshaping of the landscape have resulted in the topography of the present-day site, with a series of distinct ‘levels’ separated by marked banks.

4 THE BUILDING SURVEY

- 4.1 At the south-western corner of the development, adjacent to the main entrance and turnstiles to the former Cefn Druids ground, was a single-story, pitched-roof building of Cefn stone construction that had been used as changing facilities by the football club (Fig. 3). The building represented an isolated survivor from the 19th-century industrial complex and is traceable on the earliest Ordnance Survey editions, marked ‘W.M’ on the 1899 edition, indicating that it probably functioned as an office related to a weighbridge.
- 4.2 Prior to the demolition of the amenity building, a survey was undertaken (February 2011) to record the original late 19th-century weighbridge building. This was completed in accordance with the broad specification set out in an English Heritage Level 2 building survey (see *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*, English Heritage 2006) and the IfA Standards and Guidance relating to the Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings (Oct 2008). The survey comprised the following elements: a descriptive survey of all key structural features including the fabric and any original fixtures; a photographic survey utilising high resolution digital photography; a hand-drawn measured survey of the ground floor. The plan and photographs thus generated form part of the site archive.



Fig. 3 'Cefn Druids' 19th century building viewed from the west.
Photo CPAT 3231-0002

- 4.3 The single storey building, still standing to its original height of 5.5m, was constructed from locally quarried 'Cefn' sandstone with a pitched roof of modern concrete tiles. The roof, which presumably would have originally been slate tiled, was a 20th-century timber replacement that, internally, was supported on two central brick plinths and the original sandstone gable ends. The brick plinths could be a later addition, possibly chimney breasts that had been subsequently blocked up. Originally the 19th-century building appears to have been one large open room, measuring internally 11.5m x 5.5m. The main central access, still maintained, was through the western elevation with an additional broader access, the original purpose of which is unknown, through the eastern elevation opposite. The external porch-way, abutting the eastern wall, is also built from 'Cefn' sandstone but is of later date (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4 'Cefn Druids' 19th-century building viewed from the east.
Photo CPAT 3231-0023

- 4.4 Along the western elevation, matching windows flanked the doorway, with a single window in each gable end. The eastern wall was somewhat different with two windows on the south side of the entrance and a single one on the north. The windows, originally of contemporary build and of 19th-century origin, had been greatly reduced in size and partially blocked up 'sympathetically' using similar 'Cefn' sandstone.
- 4.5 Internally the building had been modified into two separate 'changing' rooms partitioned by a central hallway. Through the western entrance there was access to a toilet booth and shower block off the hallway. Additional shower blocks and toilet booths had been constructed within each of the changing rooms. All of the internal floors had been re-levelled with concrete. A combination of plasterboard, stud-walling, modern breezeblock and brick had been used to construct, or alter, all of the internal rooms and partitions (Fig. 5). Any evidence of original 19th-century fixtures and fittings was concealed behind liberal layers of modern lime/wash mortar.

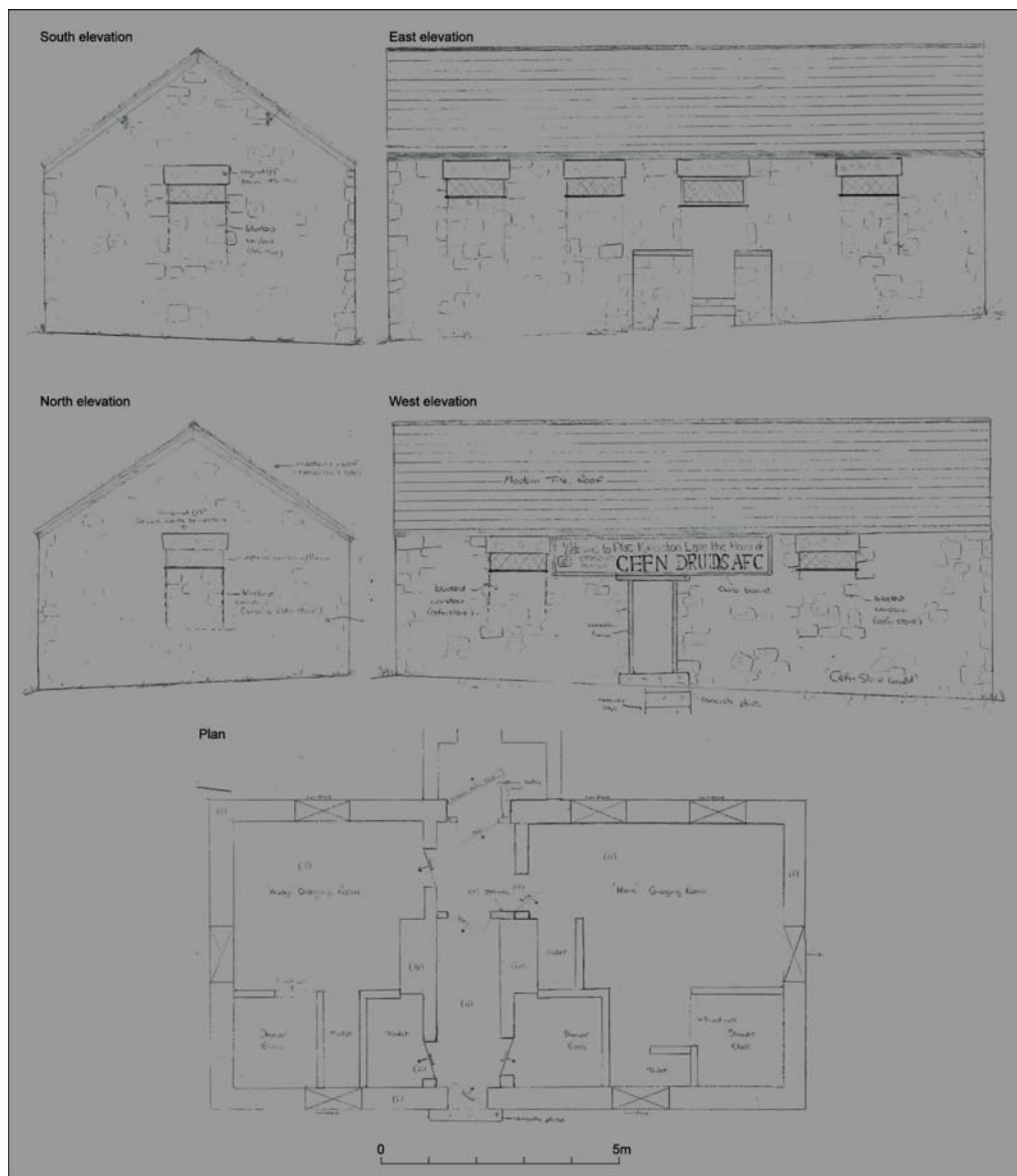


Fig. 5 'Cefn Druids' 19th-century building.
Elevations and ground plan produced as part of the Building Survey.

5 THE WATCHING BRIEF

- 5.1 Initially, the programme of archaeological mitigation on site included the excavation of a number of evaluation test pits, located to the north of the 19th-century weighbridge office. The purpose of the excavation was to determine whether or not any remains of the original 18th/19th-century tram/rail lines remained in situ (as illustrated on the 1873 Ordnance Survey map Fig. 2). However, following on site consultation with Charlotte Sanderson (Ecology Project Manager, Delta-Simons environmental consultants working on behalf of Tesco p.l.c), the evaluation process was abandoned due to wildlife and vegetation concerns. Following further consultation with Mr M Walters (Development Control Officer), the formal programme of 'watching brief' work (the observation and investigation of all ground-works undertaken by Longcross Construction Ltd under the supervision of an attending CPAT archaeologist) was initiated. This work programme began in March 2011 and ended upon completion of all initial ground-works November 2011.
- 5.2 During the process of monitoring ground-works, all forms of scrap metal were collected from the tons of rubbish that had been used for landfill on the site. Occasionally, vestiges of the original 19th-century tram/rail network would appear in the form of fragments of tramline (Fig.6). However, none of the rails was ever recorded in situ and we must assume that all evidence of the network had been removed during the 20th century.



Fig. 6 Two surviving sections of tramline, together with assorted scrap metal.
Photo CPAT 3252-0008



Fig. 7 Test pit 2, viewed from the north-north-east.
Photo CPAT 3252-0013

- 5.3 Three test pits (Figs 1 1-3) were excavated along the postulated alignment of the 19th-century tramline. The pits, varying between 3m and 6m in length and 2m in width and up to 1.8m deep, were excavated by machine down to the natural subsoil, which sloped from north-west to south-east. All the deposits recorded within the trenches consisted of re-deposited 20th-century dumped material.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The former Cefn Druids changing-room building represented an isolated survivor from the 19th-century industrial complex. The single storey building marked 'W.M' on the 1899 Ordnance Survey edition and originally consisting of one large open room, probably functioned as an office related to a weighbridge. The later conversion of the building, with two separate rooms together with window alterations and the addition of the external porch, was probably initiated in the mid-20th century.
- 6.2 All of the inspected ground-works across the site demonstrated that successive past phases of quarrying followed by landfill and re-landscaping had removed all remains of significant archaeological deposits.

7 REFERENCES

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Cartographic Sources

- 1873 Ordnance Survey County Series 1:2500 Map, 1st edition
- 1899 Ordnance Survey County Series 1:2500 Map, 2nd edition
- 1912 Ordnance Survey County Series 1:2500 Map, 3rd edition
- 1938 Ordnance Survey County Series 1:10,560 Map
- 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).

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 The writer would like to thank the following for their assistance during the project: Richard Hankinson and Nigel Jones CPAT, Alan Archer, Neil Barker and John Adams, Longcross Construction Ltd; and Charlotte Sanderson, Ecology Project Manager, Delta-Simons environmental consultants.