

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

**Land at Borrass Airfield and the Holt Estate
Borrass Quarry, Wrexham
BUILDING RECORDING**

CPAT Report No 812

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**Land at Borrass Airfield and the Holt Estate
Borrass Quarry, Wrexham
BUILDING RECORDING**

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July 2006

Report for Tarmac Central Ltd

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

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CPAT Report Record

Report and status

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was commissioned by Sloane Meade, on behalf of Tarmac Central Ltd, to carry out a programme of building recording on land at Borrás Airfield and the Holt Estate, Borrás Quarry, Wrexham in connection with the extension of the quarry. The recording programme was carried out in June 2006.
- 1.2 Archaeological Assessments had already been undertaken by CPAT with regard to the planning applications for both sites and permission had been granted with a condition (Condition No. 23) that a detailed drawn and photographic survey should be undertaken of those Category C sites which were identified during the Archaeological Assessment. However, two of the sites in question, the runway and perimeter road (sites 8 and 9), were considered to have been recorded in sufficient detail during the Assessment, while a third site, the Battlefield HQ (site 13) cannot be accessed internally at present.

2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The Application Site lies 13km south of Chester, 3.5km north-east of the centre of Wrexham and 2.5km south of Gresford. The Site lies south-east of Borrás Road, west of Borrás Hall Road, north of Holt Road (A534) and north-east of the Llan-y-pwll Link Road (A5156).
- 2.2 The Site is situated on a plateau, at a height of approximately 75m OD. Land to the north-west of the Site, lying between the Site and Gresford, is primarily undulating, agricultural land (75-81m OD), containing a number of depressions, known as 'kettle holes'. Mineral extraction is currently taking place at Caia Farm, which also forms part of Borrás Quarry and is centrally located between the Site and Gresford.
- 2.3 The Application Site and its immediate surrounds are located in an area of exposed sand and gravel. The exposed sand and gravel is of glacial origin and is composed predominantly of pebbles and cobbles of quartzite, with limestone and igneous rocks, with some quartz, sandstone, siltstone, chert, ironstone and coal. In general, the sand and gravel deposit can be sub-divided into two distinct horizons (the upper sands and gravels and the lower sands).

3 BUILDING SURVEY

- 3.1 In addition to a photographic and written record, a measured sketch plan for each building was prepared. These may be found within the site archive, which is lodged with the curatorial section of Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust.
- 3.2 *Site 2 (Plate 1)*
The original building is irregularly cruciform in plan, with later additions to the north, east and west. The building is single storied, constructed from brick, rendered on the outside and painted internally, with a pitched asbestos roof. The original window frames are metal. The main east to west wing measures 28.36m x 5.77m, the south wing 9.26m x 6.52m, and the north wing 14.23m x 6.1m. Each wing is sub-divided internally to create rooms of varying dimensions, linked by a single corridor in each. Brick-built projections along the external walls generally align with the internal wall divisions, except where larger or smaller rooms have been created by the omission/addition of further internal walls. There appear to have been several exit/access points from each block, although to the north and the east these have been utilised to access the later extensions. An external doorway on the south side of the building exits onto two shaped concrete steps. The northern wing appears to have functioned as a maintenance and service area, with the boiler room and chimney

stack at the far northern end, and toilets in the central area. Other rooms have the appearance of office quarters with larger rooms presumably functioning as meeting areas etc.

3.3 *Site 5 (Plate 2)*

This building, currently in use as the quarry laboratory, comprises a single storey block, 18.02m north-south x 6.5m east-west. The walls are brick-built, rendered externally and painted internally, with a modern pitched metal roof and extension to the west. The original window frames are metal. There are two doorways in the southern gable wall, although the western one is now blocked. A further external door currently gives access to the later extension. Internally, a corridor runs along the western wall leading to a larger room at both the north and south ends of the block, with doors leading off to four smaller rooms in the central area. The internal brick dividing walls align with brick-built projections on the exterior of the building, which continue around the building at fairly regular intervals. Further sub-dividing internal walls at the southern end of the block create smaller rooms, probably washrooms/toilets, in this area.

Two Anderson-type metal shelters are currently situated to the south-west corner of the main building. These measure 3.72m x 1.83m x 1.85m high, and are constructed from corrugated iron sheeting.

3.4 *Site 7 (Plate 3)*

The former gunnery butts are currently in use as a workshop. The original building comprises a brick-built, open-fronted enclosure, 7m high at the rear, stepped to 6.50m towards the front, with concrete coping slabs topping the side and rear walls. The rear wall is 0.50m thick with two brick-built buttresses 0.60m thick. The side walls are also buttressed with three slightly narrower (0.50m) brick-built supports. Two flanking walls extend for 2.62m to either side of the front, with a single storey trapezoidal extension built behind the eastern wall, which extends it to 2.92m. This extension is shown on a map of 1953 and is presumed contemporary with the original building. The exterior of the structure is rendered except to the rear which remains bare brick.

3.5 *Site 12 (Plate 4)*

Two asbestos roofed, brick-built huts are presently in agricultural use but were originally constructed as a distance finding radio station for Borrass Airfield. The eastern building, formerly the staffing building, measures 6.11m x 4.28m internally, and is 3.75m to the apex of the pitched roof. The walls are rendered inside and out, except for a 0.94m-wide area just inside the entrance, and sit upon a concrete plinth. Brick-built support projections are present externally at each corner and midway along the long walls. The building has four windows with wooden frames and with the metal curtain rods still in place. The doorway was originally centrally placed in the northern gable wall, along with two additional flanking windows. These have since been removed in order to create a single large opening, but the original lintels remain in place. A chimney with iron stove pipe is situated in the southern gable wall.

The western building consists of a single-storey structure measuring 5.02m x 3.65m internally. The brick-built walls are unrendered and sit upon a concrete plinth. 1.50m high brick-built external buttress supports exist at the south and east corners and midway along the eastern long wall. The entrance is in the southern gable wall. There are no internal features.

4 CONCLUSIONS

In accordance with the planning requirements for the extension of the quarry, a building recording programme was carried out at Borrass Airfield and adjoining land at the Holt Estate. The resulting written, drawn and photographic archive has been lodged with the curatorial section of Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust, Welshpool, Powys.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 5.1 The writer would like to thank the following for their assistance and co-operation: Gill Meade, Sloane Meade; Mr Nick Ball, Quarry Manager.

APPENDIX 1 SITE ARCHIVE

2 x A2 drawings

45 digital images catalogue number 2150



Plate 1 Site 2 Building at Borrass Airfield, from SW. Photo CPAT 2150-004



Plate 2 Site 7 Gunnery Butts, from NW. Photo CPAT 2150-018



Plate 3 Site 5 Building at Borrass Airfield, from E. Photo CPAT 2150-26



Plate 4 Site 12 Borrass Airfield radio station buildings on the Holt Estate, from SW.
Photo CPAT 2150-044

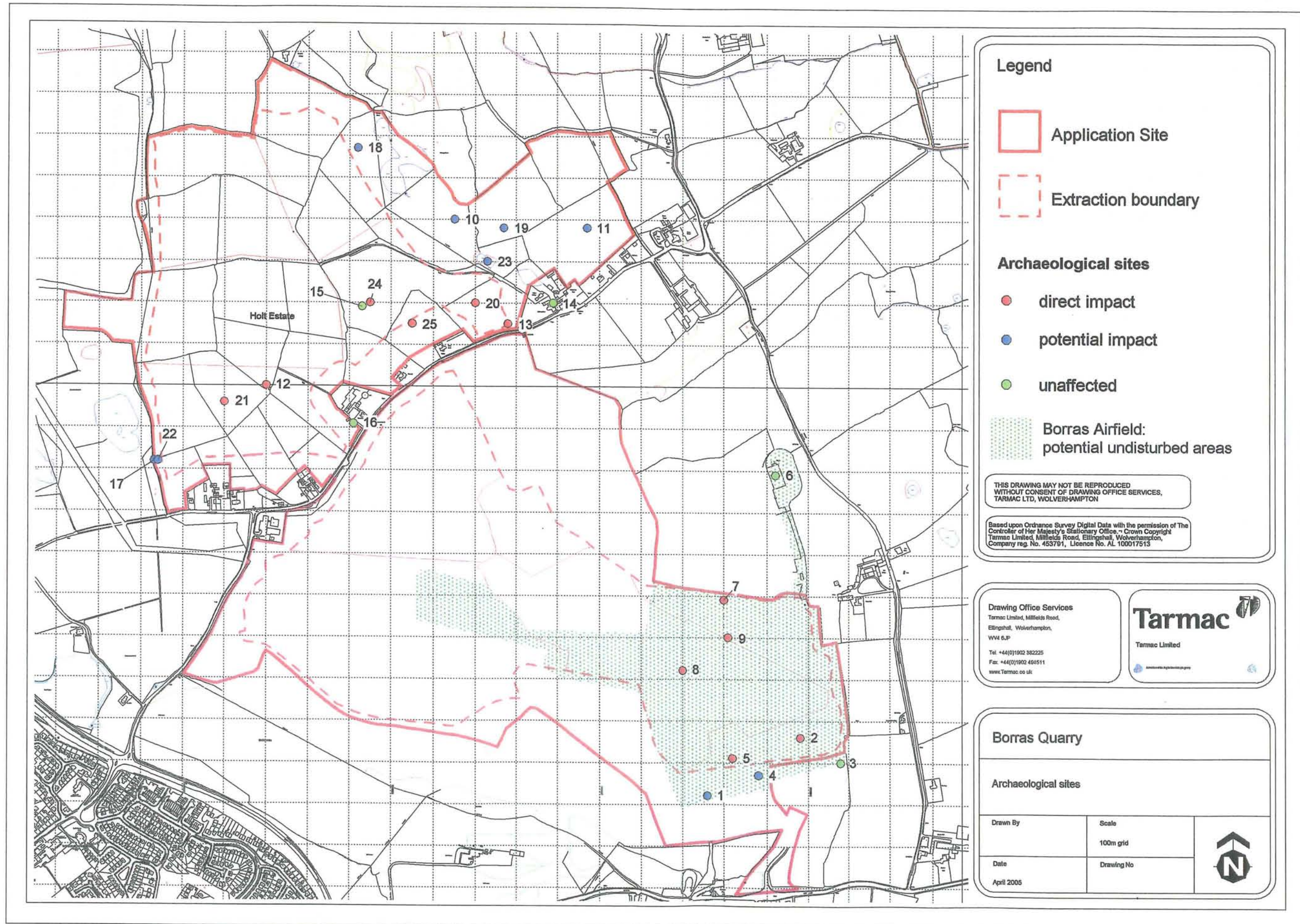


Fig. 1 Archaeological sites in relation to the Application Site and Extraction boundary