

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Supermarket Development at Pool Road, Newtown

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT



CPAT Report No 817

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R J Silvester and F Grant
October 2006

Report for Development Planning Partnership

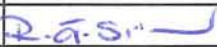
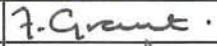
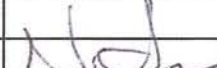
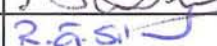
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In August 2006 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (henceforward CPAT) was invited by The Development Planning Partnership (DPP) in Cardiff to provide a quotation for a pre-determination archaeological assessment for land at Pool Road, Newtown, Powys. The assessment had been requested by Mr M Walters of the Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in his capacity as archaeological advisor to the planning authority for the region.
- 1.2 The CPAT quotation was accepted by DPP in September 2006. The desk-top and field survey elements of the assessment were carried out in September 2006 and this report was written immediately thereafter.

2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The proposed development is located on the south side of Pool Road on the eastern edge of Newtown centred at SO 11459147 (Fig. 1). The site is bounded by Pool Road to the north-west and by the railway to the south-east.
- 2.2 Current and recent land use in the archaeological study area is varied, with domestic and light-industrial buildings, and the former Smithfield animal market with its associated buildings and open areas.
- 2.3 The underlying geology of the development area consists of Silurian sedimentary rocks of the Wenlock and Ludlow series (British Geological Survey map 1994). The soils consist generally of typical brown alluvial soils, derived from the River Severn which flows just to the north of the study area (Soil Survey of England and Wales map and legend 1983).

3 METHODS

- 3.1 The initial phase of the assessment consisted of a desk-based study of the readily available primary and secondary sources relating to the development area. The repositories consulted include: the regional Historic Environment Record (HER), held by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in Welshpool; the Powys County Archives in Llandrindod Wells; the National Monuments Record (NMR), at the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW), in Aberystwyth; and the National Library of Wales (NLW), also in Aberystwyth.
- 3.2 Following the desk-based study, the area was examined by a walk-over survey. Any sites that were encountered during the field survey were recorded on standard CPAT site visit forms, the data including: an accurate location using a hand-held global positioning system (GPS) receiver; a written description of character, function, condition, vulnerability, dating etc; and a sketch survey, where appropriate. Digital photography, to an appropriate resolution, was taken of selected archaeological sites and locations.
- 3.3 In the following sections the term *PRN* precedes the primary record number of a site in the regional Historic Environment Record and where appropriate, the term *SAM* precedes the scheduled ancient monument number given to a site statutorily designated by Cadw.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Town of Newtown

- 4.1 Newtown, the largest urban centre in northern Powys, lies on level ground in a bend of the River Severn. This provided some natural protection to the medieval settlement that developed here. Like so many of the historic towns and villages of eastern Wales it is not possible to determine when the earliest settlement came into existence. The surrounding area was known as Llanfair Cedewain and the valley as Dyffryn Llanfair, both of which might suggest that the church of St Mary was a foundation that pre-dated the new town.
- 4.2 The first reference to the chapel of St Mary, which still survives as a ruin beside the river in the northern corner of the town, was in 1253 when the chapel of *Llanweyr* was dependent on the mother church of Llanllwrchaiarn just down river. When the commote of Cedewain was granted to Roger Mortimer in 1279, it took him little more than a year to acquire from Edward I the right to hold a weekly market and an annual fair in the manor, and it can be assumed that the establishment of the town went hand in hand with the adoption of these rights. By 1291 Llanfair had become independent of Llanllwrchaiarn, the implication being that Newtown was growing in importance, and by 1321 it was well established. However, specific references to Newtown do not appear until the second quarter of the 14th century, with a document of 1331 referring to the *Nova Villa de Kedenwywg*, while *Drenewyth*, the Welsh equivalent of Newtown, was first recorded in 1394. It seems likely that during the century Newtown acquired borough status though no confirmatory charter is known to exist.
- 4.3 Its later history is equally poorly documented. Leland in the 1530s thought it 'meately welle buildyd after the Walche fascion' (Smith 1964, iii, 12) and this suggests that unlike some other border towns it was not going through a phase of stagnation or decline at that time. In 1545, fifty-five taxpayers appear in the records.
- 4.4 The layout of the town reveals the classic pattern of a planned settlement, with a main axial street – Broad Street – and other lanes or roads running off it at right angles. There is an assumption that the bridge across the Severn linking Broad Street to the lands to the north was an early communication link, but there is little evidence to confirm such a theory. The stone bridge built here in 1826-7 and was widened in 1857; it replaced a wooden predecessor but its age is unknown. Immediately to the south-west of the planned settlement was what is usually classed a motte and bailey earthwork castle, though if it was contemporary with the emergence of the town it is an extremely late example of this type of earthwork. Newtown Hall which once lay beside it and whose gardens destroyed much of the bailey, has now gone but its history certainly goes back to the 16th century. A second motte, Gro Tump, lay further to the east, about 1.25km away from the medieval town.
- 4.5 How far south the original town extended is not immediately obvious, but becomes a little clearer when the former existence of Newtown Green is taken into account. This was an elongated tract of common land which was enclosed as late as 1806, its northern boundary lying immediately south of the Newtown Hall motte and Market Street, its southern boundary a small stream around 100m away. By 1843 the former green was dense with housing on both sides of the new Ladywell Street, but it can reasonably be assumed that the common dated back to medieval times and that there was no housing there, other than a handful of small and late in date encroachments.
- 4.6 It was only in the 19th century that Newtown really expanded as it developed into the centre of the flannel manufacturing industry in mid-Wales, with at least fifty factories established, having a considerable impact on the spread of settlement in Penygloddfa to the north of the river. Fulling mills, bleaching grounds, a foundry, tanneries and potteries all followed as Lewis

pointed out in 1833, and in 1819 the Montgomeryshire canal was extended to Newtown (Dodd 1990, 107).

- 4.7 New Road was cut through the existing layout of streets in the early 19th century, but prior to its creation there was a road running along the southern side of the river, through what was called St Giles, and then swinging through the old town via Market Street, before looping up to meet an existing road running besides the river to Llanidloes. This road is almost certainly on the line of the original Roman road from Caersws to Forden Gaer near Montgomery. Its line was extended by a continuous field boundary running for hundreds of metres eastwards and clearly discernible on 18th and 19th-century maps.
- 4.8 It is against this background of a relatively small and tightly constrained medieval settlement in the loop of the Severn, surrounded by agricultural land and with a gentry house (Newtown Hall) on its western periphery, that the Pool Road development should be seen.

The Pool Road Area

- 4.9 For an assessment of the development that has occurred along Pool Road over the last two hundred and more years we are dependent on a sequence of maps that commence in 1788 and continue, admittedly irregular intervals, to the present day. For copyright reasons, it is not possible to reproduce the maps in this report.
- 4.10 The earliest, John Sayce's 1788 map shows the best depiction that we have from the 18th century. It is evident that even though David Pugh, a local gentleman, did not own all the land – some was owned by James Basier and Pryce Buckley Esq - and the boundaries have much changed, most if not all of the land to the south of the river was agricultural at that time. The modern telephone exchange block, however, is defined by boundaries that were there in 1788. To the south and south-east were two fields known as Maes Gwnasted, spread over ten acres, that were then under meadow. A small additional area was Cae Pontprin under arable.
- 4.11 The plan of 1798 refines the context confirming that all this land was agricultural at the end of the 18th-century. It also holds out the interesting possibility that there was a chapel or church dedicated to St Giles on the south side of the Severn and to the north side of the main road, seemingly where Hughes' garage is today. There is the hint of a curvilinear enclosure around which the road bent and glebe land on the opposite side of the road which by the 18th-century belonged to St Mary's in Newtown. Two buildings are also shown, one presumably the St Giles House referred to in 17th-century documents. There is no suggestion that this putative ecclesiastical focus extended south of the road into the area of the proposed development, but it might provide a general context for the figurine of St Catherine found in 1935 (see below).
- 4.12 The 1821 map does not show the development area as it was restricted to Pugh's land holdings only, but simply notes "lands belonging to different persons and the vicarage". However by edging the block to the west in red it suggests that the area south-east of the historic town was already beginning to be developed. The map volume from the previous year adds nothing to this.
- 4.13 The 19th century saw the general development of this area as an industrial focus on the south side of the river. The Cambrian Ironworks lay a little to the west. The Tithe map of 1843 shows that land to either side of Sheaf Street had been built on, presumably for housing, and also along the Pool Road frontage. These Pool Road buildings comprised dwelling houses (nos 22-27) (Sites 1 and 2), and a tannery building (Site 7). The area immediately behind these buildings was a close held by a Samuel Morgan, with gardens belonging to George Green and pastures, meadows and gardens belonging to Thomas Morris extending to the south.

- 4.14 The railway which now forms the southern limits of the development area is shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 town plan of 1885. The tannery and other buildings fronting onto Pool Road are detailed, and an area of garden (Site 8) is shown laid out behind the houses on Pool Road. Adjacent to the tannery Green's Court, a short cul-de-sac, allows access to a row of properties to the west (and reflects the ownership identified on the Tithe map). A lane is shown crossing from south-west to north-east (Site 5), following the former field boundaries. A Rope Walk (Site 6), runs alongside the railway, with several buildings, presumably associated with the rope making process, in the same area.
- 4.15 Little change is shown by 1902 (OS 2nd edition) except for additional buildings, both along the railway, and as an extension to the terrace block in the north-eastern sector of the study area (Site 9). Later in the 20th century the entire open area underwent further development. Large corrugated iron sheds (Site 4) were constructed in the south-east, later housing the bus depot, with the Smithfield Market (Site 3), built in the 1930s, occupying much of the remaining open area. Access to the market was allowed by the creation of a perimeter road, overlying the former Rope Walk in the south. Demolition of the tannery and the properties to the west allowed the creation of a new road, Smithfield Road, and the building of a terrace of houses followed in the 1970s. In the north-east an electricity sub-station and a new access road was sited on the former 19th-century building plots (Site 9).
- 4.16 During the construction of the Smithfield in 1935 a figurine of St Catherine was found (Site 10). The figurine was made of plaster and was missing the head, the surviving portion standing to just over 3 inches in height. At the time a late 14th or early 15th century date was suggested (Hughes 1936).

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- 5.1 Each site of archaeological interest, identified during the assessment, has been classified according to its perceived significance. The categories, with the exception of Category E, are based on those given in the Department of Environment, Transport and Regions' *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (DMRB) Volume 11 Section 3 Part 2 (1993). Category E is taken from the draft *Archaeology and the Trunk Road Programme in Wales: a Manual of Best Practice* prepared by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments (n.d.) which in other respects follows the DMRB volume.

Category A sites are those believed by CPAT to be of primary significance, either potentially of national importance or already designated by CADW as scheduled ancient monuments or listed buildings. It is presumed that sites in this category will be preserved and protected *in situ*.

Category B sites are sites of regional importance. These sites are not of sufficient importance to justify scheduling, but are nevertheless important in aiding the understanding and interpretation of the archaeology of the region. Preservation *in situ* is the preferred option for these sites, but if loss or damage is unavoidable, appropriate detailed recording should be undertaken.

Category C sites are sites of local importance. These sites are of lesser importance, but are nevertheless useful in aiding the understanding and interpretation of the archaeology of the local area. They are not normally of sufficient importance to justify preservation if threatened, but merit adequate recording in advance of loss or damage, or if portable they should be moved.

Category D sites are either sites of minor importance or those which are so badly damaged that too little now remains to justify their inclusion in a higher grade. Rapid recording should be sufficient, but as with Category C sites they should be moved if this is an appropriate strategy.

Category E sites are sites which have been identified, but whose importance cannot be assessed from fieldwork and desk-based study alone. An archaeological evaluation would be required to categorise such a site more accurately if the proposal was likely to affect it in any way.

- 5.2 The locations of the individual archaeological sites are shown on Figure 1. Tables summarising the archaeology of the study area according to its perceived importance are provided below.

Category A sites

- 5.3 There are no sites belonging this category in the development area.

Category B sites

- 5.4 There are no sites belonging this category in the development area.

Category C sites

- 5.5 There are four sites belonging to this category in the development area

Site No	Name	Type	Condition	Category	NGR
Site 1	22-23 Pool Road	Building	Intact	C	SO31152916
Site 2	24-27 Pool Road	Building	Intact	C	SO31142915
Site 3	Smithfield Market	Buildings	Intact	C	SO31152914
Site 4	Bus depot	Buildings	Intact	C	SO31162915

Site 1

19th-century buildings fronting Pool Road

Site 1 comprises two dwellings (numbers 22 and 23) constructed of red brick under a slate roof. Number 23 has been rendered over the brick. The properties are three stories high, with a shared entrance-way placed centrally in the front elevation beneath an arched lintel. There are later, single-storey, timber extensions to the rear of each of the properties. A stretch of brick wall fronts Pool Road and links Site 1 with Site 2 in the west, behind which is an overgrown garden area. These properties, along with 24-27 Pool Road, are noted in Walters (2003, 37) as industrial workers housing.

Site 2

19th-century buildings fronting Pool Road

This block of buildings is shown on the OS 1st edition map, and currently consists of four dwellings (numbers 24-27). The properties are constructed of red brick under a slated roof, and are three stories high with rear extensions which appear to be contemporary with the original build. Several outbuildings are associated with the properties, including an original boiler or wash-house with chimney at the rear of number 24. Although access was not gained to any of the properties it was possible to view much of the exterior from the surrounding areas.

Site 3

Smithfield Market

Three sets of buildings are associated with the Smithfield Market. The first block lies adjacent to the main gates to the market at the end of Smithfield Road. This consists of a single storied, red-brick building with a slate roof. Despite the ornamental nature of the finials on the roof it would seem that this block served primarily as a toilet area.

The second range of buildings acted, amongst other things, as the market office, and is sited centrally in the market area. It consists of an hexagonal rendered brick building, with entrances to the north and south.

The third range of buildings consists of the former cattle sheds in the western part of the market. Two large, rectangular brick-built sheds, aligned north-east to south-west, front onto the market at their north-eastern gable ends. A rough area of brick surfacing is visible outside the southernmost shed.

The remainder of the Smithfield Market consists of animal pens formed from iron railings, set amongst concrete and tarmac yards. The perimeter of the market is defined by iron railings, with the main entrance onto Smithfield Road, and additional gateways to the south and east.

Site 4

Bus Depot and area to east

The bus depot currently occupies the western extent of an originally larger, single-use site, and consists of two long (c.90m) sheds constructed from corrugated iron sheeting with arched roofs. The main sheds form the long sides of a rectangular yard area, with smaller, similarly constructed, sheds along the shorter west and east sides. Information obtained during the site visit suggests the sheds were built early in the 20th century during the First World War to house ponies brought from the Welsh hills before they were transported, via the railway, to the front-line. Fixing rings for the ponies are still present inside the sheds.

Category D sites

- 5.6 There are no sites belonging this category in the development area

Category E sites

- 5.7 There are six sites belonging to this category in the development area

Site No	Name	Type	Condition	Category	NGR
Site 5	Roman Road	Earthwork	Damaged	E	SO31152915
Site 6	Rope Walk	Building	Destroyed	E	SO31142914
Site 7	Tannery	Buildings	Destroyed	E	SO31142915
Site 8	Gardens	Garden	Destroyed	E	SO31152916
Site 9	Sub-Station buildings	Buildings	Destroyed	E	SO31152915
Site 10	Figurine	Find	Unknown	E	SO311291

Site 5

Roman Road/footpath

Portions of the Roman road from Caersws to Forden Gaer are very well-evidenced in the Severn Valley, most recently on the western outskirts of Newtown. Past suggestions of its course in the Newtown area have tended to focus on the modern Pool Road. However, it is clear from the later 18th-century maps that there is a continuous line of field boundaries running eastwards on the south side of Newtown. The current footpath accesses the Smithfield in the west via a metal kissing gate, then crosses the open field and continues eastwards through the bus depot. This latter part of the route appears to have been diverted slightly to the north to follow an overgrown route alongside the gardens of the houses on Maesderwen. The path across the field follows a slightly hollowed route marked by a prominent terrace along its southern edge. There is a strong possibility that the field boundaries and footpath follow the line of the Roman road, though whether on top of or to one side cannot be established at present.

Site 6

Rope Walk

No evidence of any structures relating to the former Rope Walk were identified.

Site 7*Tannery*

No evidence of any structures relating to the former tannery or the adjoining Sheaf Street were identified. The Smithfield Road and associated houses (constructed c.1970s) are believed to be located on the former site. Whether any sub-surface features remain cannot be established.

Site 8*Gardens*

A garden area to the rear of 24 and 25 Pool Road, with associated small structures (probably outhouses) was identified from cartographic evidence. No evidence of this site was identified during the field visit, although the turfed open area contains many amorphous depressions and low mounds which may relate either to the garden or to the former tannery.

Site 9*Sub-Station Buildings*

A range of buildings identified on OS 1st edition, and extended on the 2nd edition, extending south-eastwards from Pool Road, in the north-eastern extent of the development area. These appear to have been destroyed during the creation of the present access road and construction of the electricity sub-station.

Site 10*Find only*

During the construction of the Smithfield in 1935 a figurine of St Catherine was found. The figurine was made of plaster and was missing the head, the surviving portion standing to just over 3 inches. At the time a late 14th or early 15th-century date was suggested.

6 IMPACT

- 6.1 The potential impacts of the proposal on the archaeological resource of the development area are considered in the table below.

Site No	Name	Type	Condition	Potential Impact	Category
Site 1	22-23 Pool Road	Building	Intact	Loss of 19 th -century housing	C
Site 2	24-27 Pool Road	Building	Intact	Loss of 19 th -century housing	C
Site 3	Smithfield Market	Buildings	Intact	Loss of 20 th -century buildings	C
Site 4	Bus depot	Buildings	Intact	Loss of 20 th -century buildings	C
Site 5	Roman Road	Earthwork	Damaged	Potential discovery of length within development area	E
Site 6	Rope Walk	Buildings	Destroyed	Potential disturbance to any surviving sub-surface remains	E
Site 7	Tannery	Buildings	Destroyed	Potential disturbance to any sub-surface remains	E
Site 8	Gardens	Garden	Destroyed	Potential disturbance to any sub-surface remains	E
Site 9	Sub-Station Buildings	Buildings	Destroyed	Potential disturbance to any sub-surface remains	E
Site 10	Figurine	Find	Unknown	None	E

- 6.2 In addition to the sites recorded above, there is the potential for further unrecorded sites or features that may be disturbed by the proposed development. These sites consist of those which have not been previously recorded and only remain as sub-surface features, leaving no extant visible traces.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The assessment has identified ten sites within the area of the proposed development, the earliest of which is the potential course of a Roman road, the line of which may cross the site from west to east. Apart from a late medieval figurine which was found during the construction of the Smithfield in 1935, the remaining sites are all of post-medieval and early modern date.
- 7.2 Prior to the construction of the Smithfield part of the area was occupied by a tannery and a rope walk, both of which have left no visible trace although buried structural remains could survive. A further terrace of buildings occupied the north-eastern extent of the development site. There are two groups of late 19th-century houses along Pool Road, while the Smithfield itself has surviving buildings and animal pens. The bus depot which occupies the eastern part of the site may have its origins during the First World War when the sheds were used for the transit of ponies.
- 7.3 It appears likely that a programme of mitigation will need to be developed by the regional Curator on the basis of the assessment report.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 The writers would like to thank the following for their assistance during the project: the staff of the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth; and the staff of the National Monuments Record at RCAHMW in Aberystwyth; and the staff at the Powys County Archives in Llandrindod.

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Maps

1788 Survey and Valuation of sundry Farms, tenements and lands in the parishes of Newtown, Llanllwrchaiarn etc belonging to David Pugh Esq. Surveyed and mapped in A.D.

1788 by Jno Sayce (NLW/Harrison Vol 7).

1798 Plan of Newtown and surrounding area (NLW/Glansevern 147/now Folio 89)

1800 (circa) Kedewen Cottages and Lands allotted to the Lord on the enclosure of Commons in that manor. (NLW/Powis Castle M22).

1820 Map of Farms, Tenements and Lands in the Parishes of Newtown, Llanllwrchaiarn, etc, belonging to David Pugh Esq By J Lloyd, Land Surveyor, Broseley, Salop There is a partial schedule only. (NLW/Harrison Volume 6).

1821 Map of Lands in Several Parishes of Llanllwrchaiarn, Newtown etc, the property of D Pugh Esq (NLW/Harrison Deposit 85). Almost certainly be J Lloyd.

1843 Tithe survey of Newtown Parish

1885 Ordnance Survey 1:500 town plan

1886 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" Montgomeryshire 36.15

1890 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6" 36 SE

1902 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25" Montgomeryshire 36.15

1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales map and legend (Sheet 2 – Wales, at 1:250,000 scale)

1994 British Geological Survey map of Wales (Solid edition, at 1:250,000 scale)

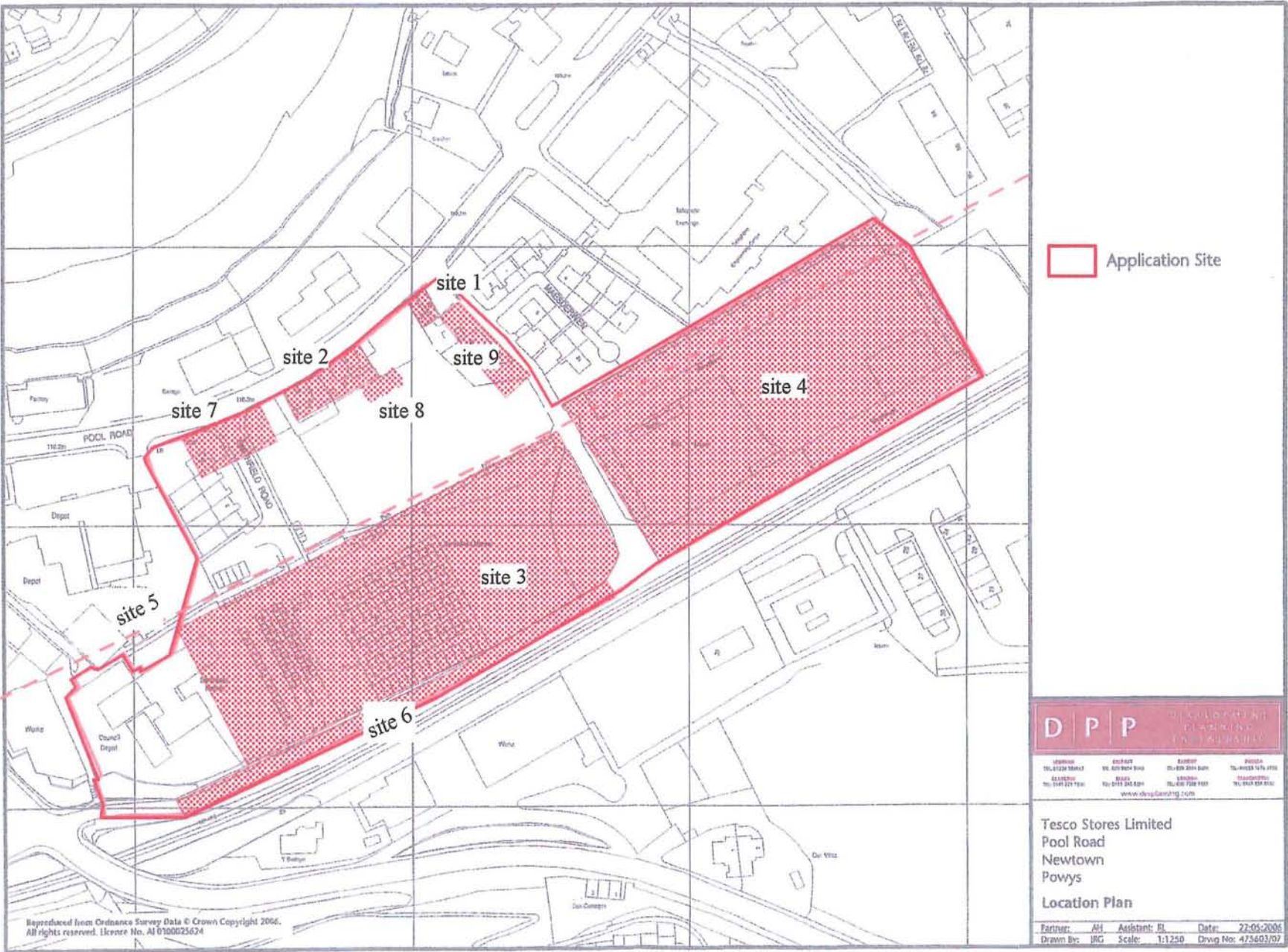


Fig. 1 Development area and known archaeological sites

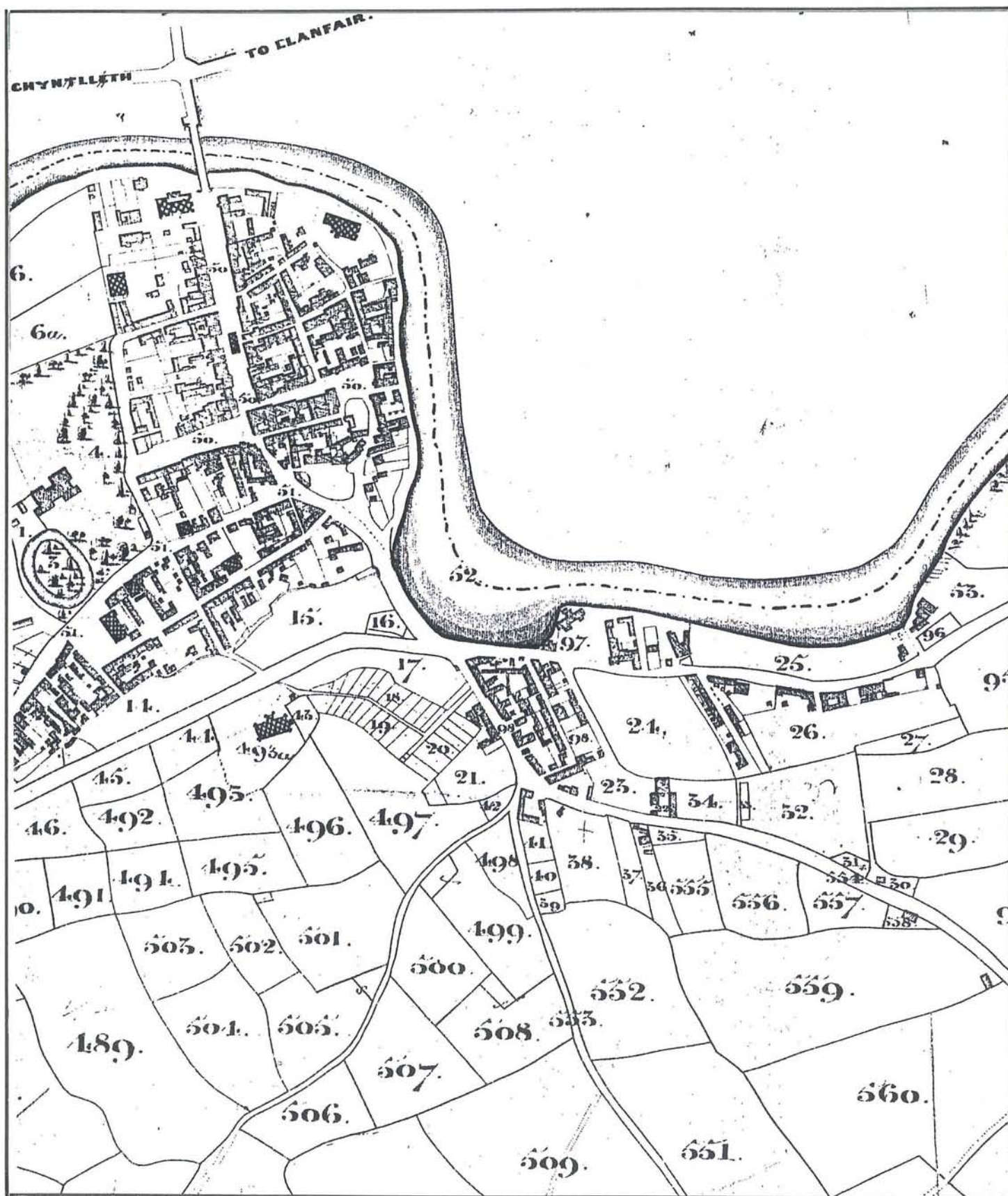




Plate 1 Site 1 Nos 22-23 Pool Road, Newtown, from north



Plate 2 Site 2 Nos 24-27 Pool Road, Newtown, from west



Plate 3 Site 3 Smithfield Market, entrance and toilet block, from north-east



Plate 4 Site 3 Smithfield Market, office block, from north



Plate 5 Site 3 Smithfield Market, cattle sheds, from south-east



Plate 6 Site 3 Bus Depot sheds, from south-west



Plate 7 Site 5 Roman Road/footpath, from south-west