

CPAT Report No 1157

Whittington Road Substation, Oswestry, Shropshire

CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT



THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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Report for Iberdrola



CPAT

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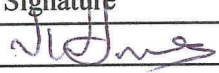

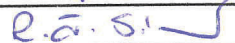
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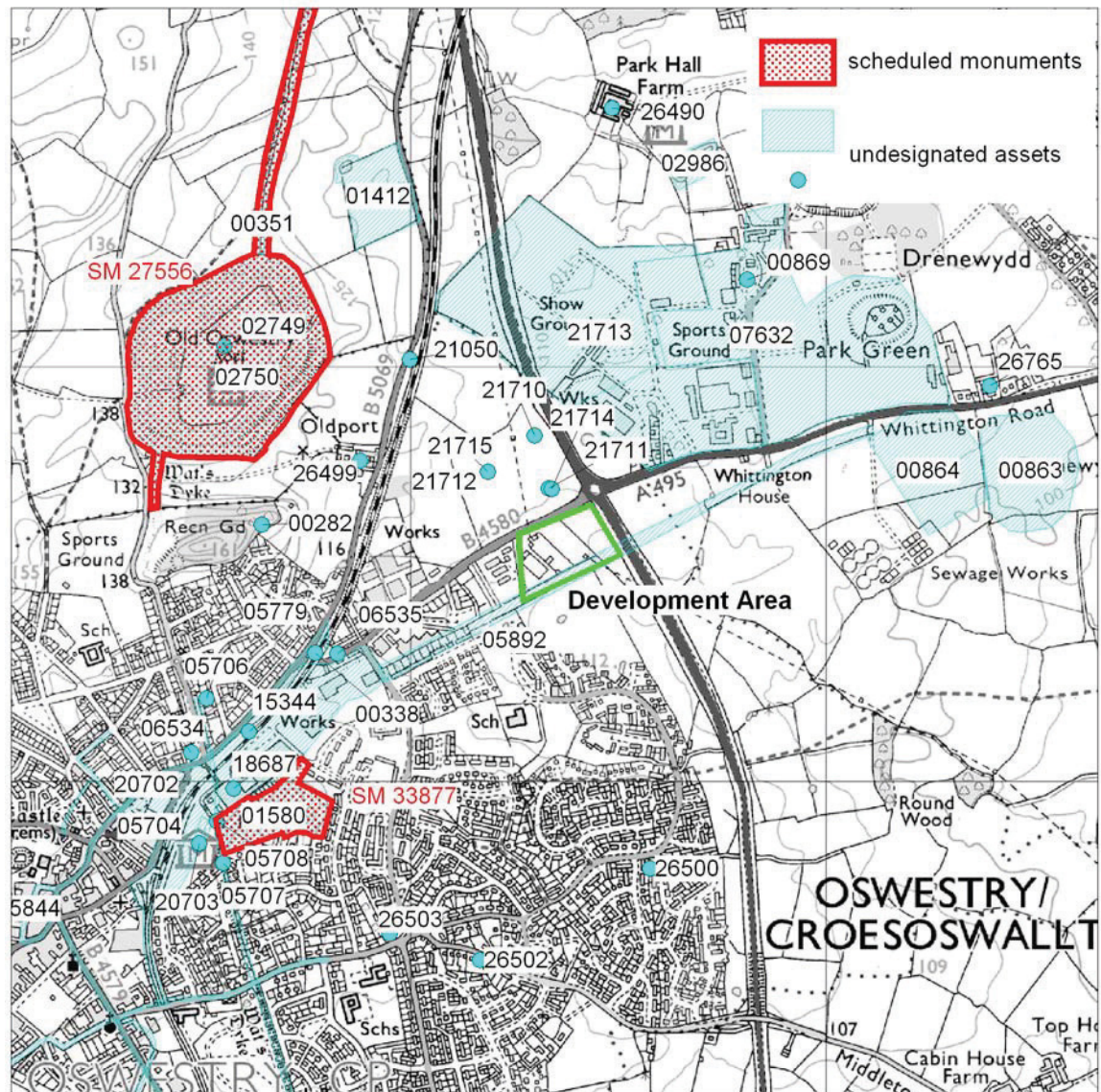
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report describes the results of an assessment of potential impacts on the cultural heritage in connection with planned changes to an existing electricity substation on Whittington Road, Oswestry, Shropshire (SJ 3036 3058). The proposed development does not require planning permission, although Iberdrola have chosen to adopt a best practice approach, part of which involves an assessment of potential impacts on the cultural heritage.
- 1.2 The proposals involve the relocation of the existing substation to a new site immediately adjacent to the east, which is currently arable land. This area, termed here the Development Area, as whole includes the existing substation and the relocation site; it occupies an area of around 3.2ha, bounded to the north by B4580 Whittington Road, to the west by Harlech Road and to the east by the A5 (Fig. 1).
- 1.3 Cultural heritage is deemed to include the complete range of man-made features that have been introduced into the landscape from the Palaeolithic, more than two hundred and fifty thousand years ago, to the 20th century. Some of these features will be visible as upstanding remains on the ground; others will be buried and only become apparent during ground disturbance, whilst others may be objects that have been discarded, lost or deliberately deposited. Some will have an archaeological interest and importance; others will be more historical in their origin. In addition, some natural features will be relevant because of the information they contain; peat bogs, for instance, hold pollen that can throw light on past human activity in the area. Collectively all these features are known as cultural heritage assets.
- 1.4 The assessment was undertaken with reference to the principles and methods for assessing archaeological and cultural heritage assets laid out in a) the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessments and b) the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2001), both produced by the Institute for Archaeologists, the regulatory body for the profession.

2 Assessment Methodology

- 2.1 The Development Area has been determined by the client and is depicted in Fig. 1. A search was made for cultural heritage assets with the boundary of the Development Area and a surrounding buffer zone of 1km.
- 2.2 The desk-based study, which forms the basis for the assessment of the area, involved the examination of readily available written and cartographic sources held in the following repositories:
 - a) The Shropshire Records and Research Centre, Shrewsbury.
 - b) The regional Historic Environment Record, maintained by Shropshire Council in Shrewsbury.
- 2.3 A gazetteer of undesignated assets within 1km of the Development Area is provided in Appendix 1.



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Fig. 1 Cultural heritage assets within 1km of the Development Area

3 The Cultural Heritage History of the Area

- 3.1 The following summary allows the site to be considered within the wider cultural heritage context. The area of the development is dominated by Old Oswestry Hillfort (Mon No 351; Scheduled Monument 27556), which lies 560m to the north-west. The hillfort was excavated in 1939-40 and four main phases of construction were identified, with occupation suggested from the Late Bronze Age to the end of the Iron Age, although Neolithic flints and a stone axe were also uncovered. Iron Age or Romano-British activity in the area is suggested by two possible enclosures or field systems 0.7km to the east of the development (Mon No 863-4).
- 3.2 The hillfort was later incorporated into the line of Wat's Dyke (Mon No 1001; Scheduled Monument 27556), the early medieval earthwork which runs for c 65km from the River Morda at Maesbury to the Dee Estuary at Holywell, Flintshire.

- 3.3 Following the Norman Conquest numerous motte and bailey castles were constructed along the Welsh Marches, including the castle at Oswestry *c* 1.4km to the south-west of the development. A town quickly developed around the castle and the line of the medieval defences is still apparent in the street plan of the town.
- 3.4 The site of the 16th-century mansion of Park Hall (Mon No 869) lies *c* 0.7km to the north-east of the site. The timber-framed house was built *c.* 1571 for a Thomas Powell and was surrounded by a small park (Mon No 7632). During the First World War Park Hall was used as the local military headquarters, and in 1915 a military training camp was constructed. The Hall was destroyed in a fire in 1918. The training camp was used again from the Second World War up until 1968, after which it was used for training Junior Leaders until late 1975. Much of the land was then returned to farming.
- 3.5 The 1838 Tithe Survey for Oswestry records the Development Area as ‘Town Land’ but does not depict any structures within the area. The Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6” map of 1884 shows nothing within the development area except the Oswestry, Ellesmere and Whitchurch Railway (Mon No 5892), the line of which runs along the southern boundary of the site. The railway linked mid Wales to the London and North Western Railway at Whitchurch. It opened in 1864 and was eventually closed in 1965.
- 3.6 Immediately to the north of the development area, on the opposite side of Whittington Road, is the line of the ‘Aqueduct’ (Mon No 21491), a buried cast iron pipeline which carries water from the reservoir at Lake Vyrnwy, constructed in 1888, to Liverpool. It opened in 1892.
- 3.7 Three phases of archaeological assessment were conducted on land immediately north of Whittington Road between 2007 and 2009, comprising a desk-based study (Frost 2007), a geophysical survey (GSB Prospection Ltd 2007) and a programme of trial excavation (Raynor 2009), although the results revealed no significant archaeological deposits or features.

4 The Baseline Assessment

Cultural Heritage Assets within the Development Area

- 4.1 The only asset recorded within the Development Area is the line of the former Oswestry, Ellesmere and Whitchurch Railway (Mon No 5892), which forms the southern boundary of the site, although there is now little surviving trace of the line.

Designated Cultural Heritage Assets within 1km of the scheme

- 4.2 The study has included designated cultural assets within 1km of the scheme in order to assess potential indirect, visual impacts.
- 4.3 The assessment has identified two scheduled monuments within 1km of the Development Area. There are no grade I or II* listed buildings and although there are a number of buildings listed as grade II these have not been included within the study.

Table 1: Scheduled Monuments within 1km of the scheme

Number	Name	Type	Period	NGR	Distance
27556	Old Oswestry and Wat's Dyke	Hillfort and Linear Earthwork	Iron Age/ Early Medieval	SJ29573101	0.56km
33877	Wat's Dyke and cultivation terraces	Linear Earthwork	Early Medieval	SJ29602987	0.7km

5 Assessment of Impacts

Physical Impacts

- 5.1 A single undesignated asset has been identified within the Development Area, the former Oswestry, Ellesmere and Whitchurch Railway. The track itself was removed over 40 years ago and the asset is therefore considered to be of negligible value, with no significant remains surviving.

Visual Impacts

- 5.2 The potential visual impacts have been considered for the two scheduled monuments within 1km of the Development Area. In the case of Wat's Dyke and adjacent cultivation ridges (SM 33877), which lie a minimum of 0.7km to the south-west, the local topography and intervening structures are such that the predicted visual impact is low or negligible. Old Oswestry Hillfort (SM 27556), however, occupies a prominent position around 0.56km to the north-west of the Development Area with clear views across the site from the summit of the hillfort. Although it is evident that the development will be visible from the monument, it should be stated that since the proposals are for a replacement of the existing substation with a new construction adjacent to it there is unlikely to be any significant additional visual impact over and above that which is already apparent.

6 Conclusions and Mitigation

- 6.1 The assessment has identified only one undesignated asset within the Development Area, which is considered to be of low value. A thorough programme of archaeological assessment was conducted immediately to the north of the site in 2007-9, and failed to identify any significant cultural heritage remains. Although cropmarks have revealed possible Iron Age enclosures 0.7km to the east, no cropmarks have so far been identified within the arable field which forms the site of the new substation.
- 6.2 The recommended mitigation is therefore for a programme of archaeological monitoring through the implementation of a watching brief during the stripping of topsoil within the area of the new substation. Sufficient time should be allowed for the adequate investigation and recording of any features which may be revealed.
- 6.3 Consideration should also be given to providing screening, possibly including a bund with tree planting, in order to reduce the visual appearance of the substation in respect to Old Oswestry hillfort and Wat's Dyke.

7 References

Unpublished sources

Frost, P, 2006. *Land at Oldport Farm, Oswestry, Shropshire, Archaeological Assessment*.
Castlering Archaeology.

GSB Prospection Ltd 2007 *Land at Oldport Farm, Oswestry, Shropshire: Geophysical Survey*.
GSB Report 2007/12

Raynor, C, 2009. *Land at Oldport Farm, Oswestry, Shropshire, Archaeological Evaluation*.
Oxford Archaeology North 2009-10/960

Cartographic sources

- 1838 Tithe survey for Oswestry Parish
- 1884 Ordnance Survey 6" 1st edition Shropshire 12 SW
- 1901 Ordnance Survey 25" 2nd edition Shropshire 12.14

APPENDIX 1
GAZETTEER OF UNDESIGNATED CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSETS WITHIN 1KM OF
THE DEVELOPMENT AREA

Mon No	Name	NGR	Type	Period
00338	St Edith's Chapel	SJ29773031	Chapel	Medieval
00351	Old Oswestry Hillfort	SJ29513116	Hillfort	Iron Age
00869	Park Hall	SJ30813121	House	Post-medieval
01001	Wat's Dyke	SJ30783244	Linear earthwork	Early medieval
01580	Cultivation Terraces at Shelf Bank, Oswestry	SJ29672992	Cultivation terrace	Medieval?
02749	Find Spot before 1964 of Neolithic axe at Old Oswestry hillfort.	SJ2955031050	Find	Neolithic
02750	Find Spot in 1974 of Neolithic stone axe at Old Oswestry.	SJ2955031050	Find	Neolithic
02986	Old Park Hall ornamental lake	SJ30703147	Lake	Post-medieval
06534	Malt House	SJ29473007	Malt House	Post-medieval
06535	Saw Mill	SJ2982230308		Post-medieval
07632	Park Hall	SJ3131	Park	Post-medieval
18687	Former Railway Works (Cambrian Works)	SJ2957 2998	Railway works	Post-medieval
05704	Railway yard, Oswestry	SJ29442987	Railway yard	Post-medieval
05706	Find Spot in 1940 of a prehistoric arrowhead at Oswestry.	SJ2950730200	Find	Prehistoric
05707	Wat's Dyke (site 94), Ardmillan, Oswestry	SJ2954729804	Linear earthwork	Early medieval
05708	Wats Dyke (site 119), Shelf Bank, Oswestry	SJ2953229904	Linear earthwork	Early medieval
05779	Shrewsbury, Oswestry & Chester Junction Railway	SJ 3007 3154	Railway	Post-medieval
05785	Medieval street system, Oswestry	SJ 2894 2970	Town	Medieval
05844	Post medieval street system, Oswestry	SJ 2894 2970	Town	Post-medieval
05892	Oswestry, Ellesmere & Whitchurch Railway (Cambrian)	SJ 5438 4073	Railway	Post-medieval
00282	Find of a Spindle whorl in 1932 S of Old Oswestry	SJ 2964 3062	Find	Unknown
00863	Cropmark c 200m W of Drenwydd	SJ 3148 3075	Enclosure?	Prehistoric
00864	Cropmarks c 400m W of Drenwydd	SJ 3125 3076	Enclosure?	Prehistoric
01412	Possible Roman Camp NE of Old Oswestry Hillfort	SJ 2992 3141	Fort?	Roman
15344	The site of tollhouse, Gobowen Road, Oswestry	SJ 2961 3012	Toll house	Post-medieval
20702	Carriage Shed 60m NE of former Station, Oswestry	SJ 29496 29890	Building	Post-medieval
20703	Loading Wharf 60m E of former station, Oswestry	SJ2948929852	Railway Wharf	Post-medieval

21050	Milestone on B5069 North of Oldport	SJ2999731018	Milestone	Post-medieval
21491	Vyrnwy Aqueduct	SJ 3171 3441	Pipeline	Post-medieval
21710	Pit near Oldport Farm, Oswestry	SJ3029830834	Pit	Unknown
21711	Pit near Oldport Farm, Oswestry	SJ3033230708	Pit	Unknown
21712	Ditch near Oldport Farm, Oswestry	SJ 3019 3074	Ditch	Unknown
21713	Military training camp at Park Hall, Oswestry	SJ 3046 3107	Training camp	20 th Century
21714	Mortar crater Near Oldport Farm, Oswestry	SJ3033930706	Mortar crater	20 th Century
21715	Mortar crater Near Oldport Farm, Oswestry	SJ3018530747	Mortar crater	20 th Century
26490	Park Hall Farm	SJ3048531623	Farm	Post-medieval
26499	The Oldport	SJ2987830774	Farm	Post-medieval
26500	Site of unnamed farmstead at Croxon Rise, Oswestry	SJ3057629791	Farmstead	Post-medieval
26502	Llys Cottage	SJ3016629569	House	Post-medieval
26503	Site of Unicorn House	SJ2994929633	House	Post-medieval
26765	1 & 2 Park Green Close	SJ3139530955	House	Post-medieval