

CPAT Report No. 1856

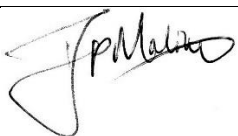

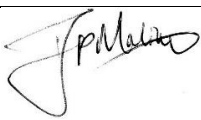
Trenant Chapel, Trefonen, Shropshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL CLWYD-POWYS
CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Miles Ackerman
 CPAT Project No: 2609
 Project Name: Trenant Chapel, Trefonen
 Grid Reference: SJ 2596 2696
 County/LPA: Shropshire
 Planning Application: Pre-application
 CPAT Report No: 1856
 HER Enquiry No: N/A
 Event PRN: tbc
 Report status: Final
 Confidential until: N/A

Prepared by:	Checked by:	Approved by:
		
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29 th March 2022	30 th March 2022	31 st March 2022

Bibliographic reference: Malim, T., 2022 *Trenant Chapel, Trefonen: Archaeological Evaluation* unpublished CPAT Report 1856



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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	ii
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	3
3 EVALUATION	4
4 LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS	7
5 CONCLUSIONS	9
6 SOURCES	10
7 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION STATEMENT	10
APPENDIX 1: CPAT WSI 2609	11
1 INTRODUCTION	11
2 OBJECTIVES	11
3 METHODOLOGY	13
FIELDWORK	13
SELECTION STRATEGY	13
POST-EXCAVATION AND REPORTING	14
SITE ARCHIVE	14
<i>DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN</i>	14
4 RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING	14

Summary

Manual excavation of a 4 x 1m trench in the back garden of Trenant Chapel, Trefonen, was completed by CPAT in March 2022 to ascertain whether a proposed extension on the west side of the chapel would harm the buried remains of Offa's Dyke. The trial trench revealed natural geology as comprising a sandy silt with occasional sandstone at a depth of c.0.4 -0.5m below current ground surface. Most of the trench contained a horticultural deposit above the natural with 19th – 20th century artefactual evidence within in, and a series of possible cultivation slots into the underlying natural. At the western end of the trench, however, a more compact deposit of sandy silt overlying a gravelly layer was found at 0.3m below the ground surface, and this deposit terminated abruptly c.1m from the western end of the trench. It is interpreted as a lynchet, or terrace edge, and historic mapping shows a property boundary in the approximate location of this feature. Historic mapping and field survey also confirmed the line of Offa's Dyke as extending beneath the houses, chapel and burial ground that form the western side to Chapel Lane. It was concluded that there would be no harm to Offa's Dyke from the proposed extension.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been instructed by Mr Miles Ackerman, advised by Design and Planning Associates, to address pre-application consultation concerns from Shropshire Council's Historic Environment Team. The proposal involves changes to an historic chapel which has been converted into a house, and which lies adjacent to the line of Offa's Dyke. Due to this proximity, Shropshire Council has asked for further information to determine whether the development proposals might impact on the monument. The Written Scheme of Investigation approved by Shropshire Council is included as Appendix 1.
- 1.2. The development is located at SJ 2596 2696 on the north-eastern side of Trefonen (SY10 9DX). Trenant Chapel lies on the west side of Chapel Lane with housing to the north and west, whilst to the south a cemetery is located, associated with its former use as a chapel (Figs. 1 and 2).
- 1.3. The development proposal is for extending at the rear of the former chapel, so that new kitchen facilities and reception room with conservatory would replace the existing arrangements (Fig. 2). At present the rear of the property leads into an L-shaped patio area c.2.4 – 5m wide, which has been excavated c.1m below the level of the back garden. At the northern end the existing rear wall line for the house would be extended westwards c.1.2m to match with the wall line further south. The patio parallel with this change would also be extended c.1.2m into the garden, reducing the level by c.1m, and this area would be roofed over to form a conservatory.
- 1.4. Currently the garden measures approximately 7m from the edge of the patio to the western boundary wall, and is covered by synthetic grass with a trampoline on it. The land rises gradually to the western boundary, with the ground on the other side stepping up to a higher level than the garden. To the north new housing has reduced the ground by over 1 metre.



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Fig. 1 Location of the site

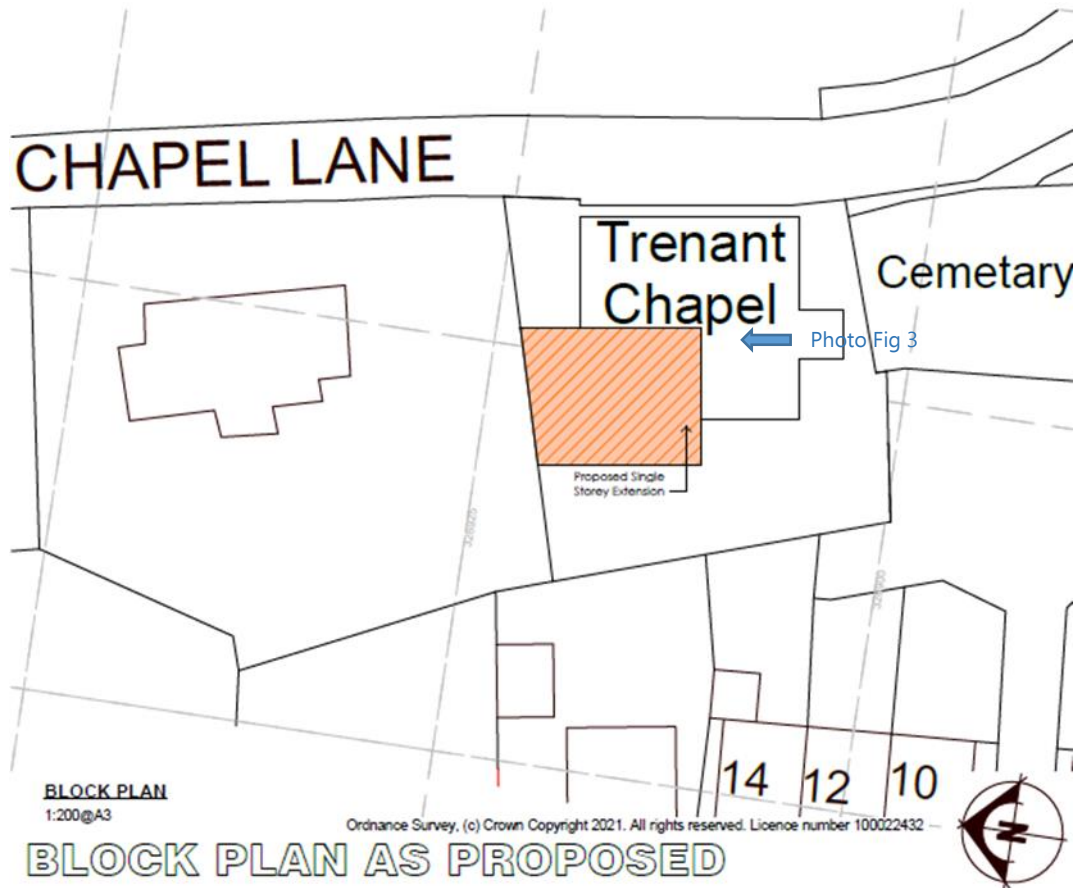


Fig. 2 Proposed development



Fig. 3 View of patio and garden area to be affected by proposed development looking north-west

2 Archaeological and Historical Background

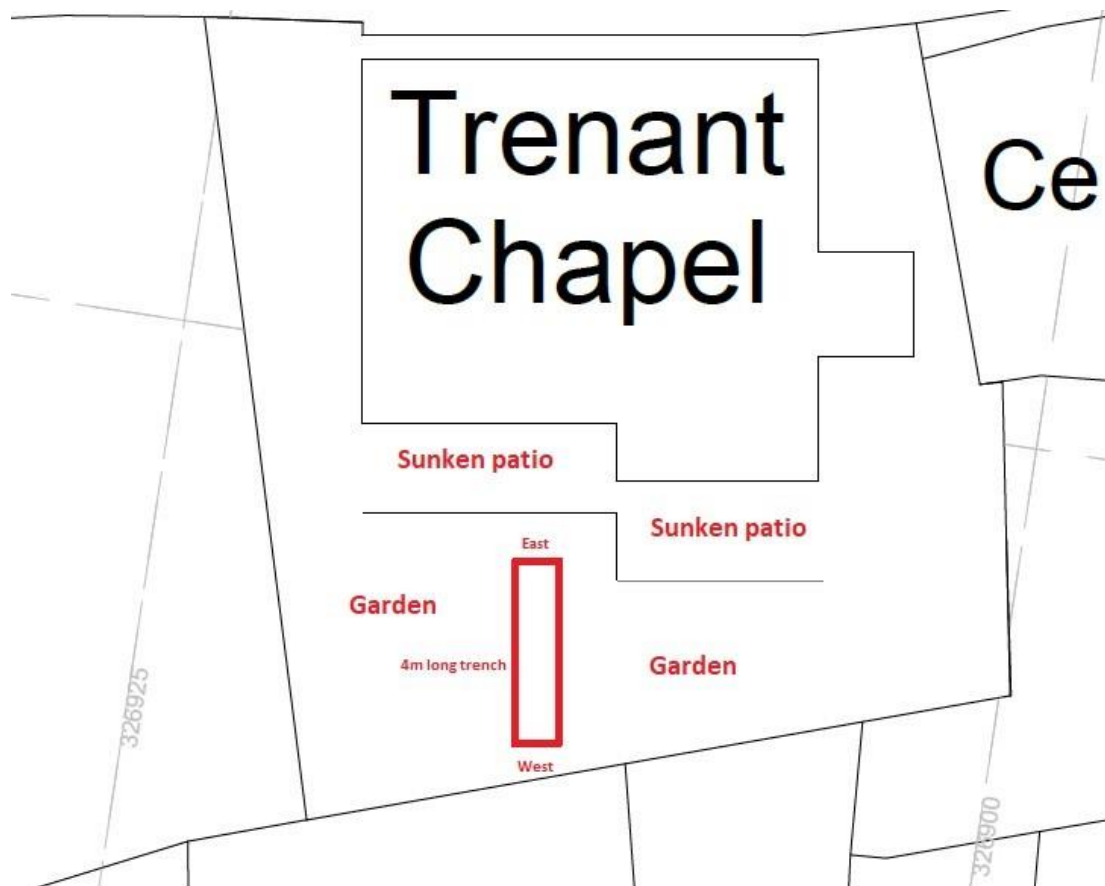
- 2.1. The proposed developed site is located c.80m south of the nationally protected Offa's Dyke scheduled monument: Section 170m SE of Fron (National Heritage List ref. 1006262) and on the former line of the monument as it enters the village of Trefonen. Non-designated earthwork remains of the Dyke survive to both the north and south of the proposed development site (HER PRN 31909), and it seemed likely that below ground remains, as well as potentially upstanding remains, would be present on the proposed development site. For this reason, and on present evidence, Shropshire Council considered that the proposed development site had high archaeological potential.
- 2.2. The village is also well known for its mining history, with associated earthworks visible in the field to the north of the houses ranged along the western side of Chapel Lane, and in the fields to the east of the lane. Although not in the village centre, the chapel is relatively old, being built in 1832 when it was called "Carneddau Independent Chapel" and with a burial ground added to the south in 1868. It became disused after the Second World War but was converted into residential accommodation by 1996.



Fig. 3 Excavation to base of topsoil context (001) looking south-east. Photo CPAT 4975-011

3 Evaluation

- 3.1. The purpose of the evaluation was to clarify whether remnants of Offa's Dyke might survive within the garden, and therefore be impacted upon by the proposed development. Due to the very small area in which to work, the disparity in ground levels, and a shed occupying the access route into the garden, the trench was excavated by hand on the 17th March 2022. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*. (2014).
- 3.2. A four metre long trench, 1m wide, was laid out oriented west-east, with its western end 1m from the property boundary, and its eastern end 2.2m from the edge of the patio. The eastern end was c.8m south of the northern boundary and c.12m north of the southern boundary (Drawing 1).



Drawing 1 Trench location plan

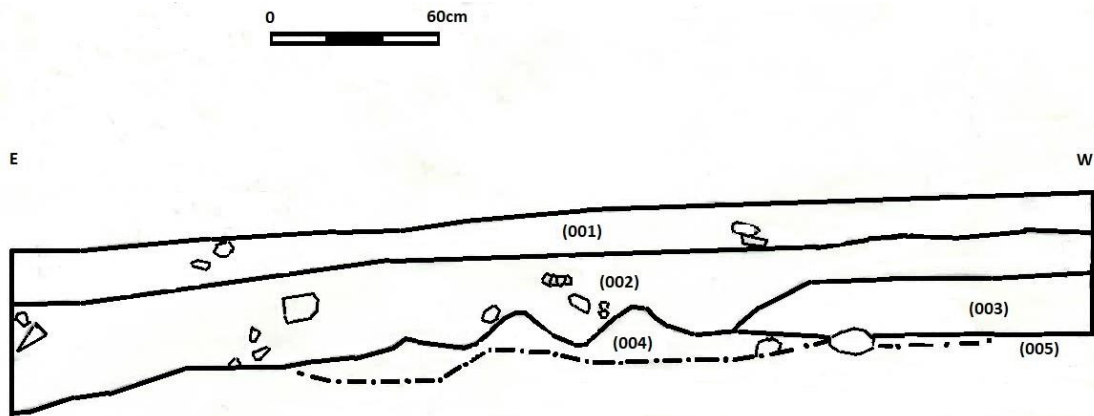
- 3.3. After rolling back the synthetic grass, excavation was undertaken by mattock and shovel, and existing roots from a conifer scrub near the western end were cut where they were found. The excavation continued to a depth of c.0.5m and five deposits were recorded including a basal layer of silty sand which comprised the natural geology. Artefactual remains were only found in the uppermost deposits, contexts (001) and (002). The land had a gradual slope to the east which was largely replicated in the underlying deposits, although (002) became deeper towards the eastern end of the trench.

3.4. The deposit sequence (Drawing 2 and Fig. 5) consisted of

Context	Description	Depth
001	Topsoil dark grey-brown loam, horticultural soil	0 – 10mm
002	Mixed topsoil & clay with tile, slate, large & smaller stones, iron, ceramic drainpipe, charcoal and ceramics (Fig. 4). Many stones at base of deposit, which increases in depth from 10mm at west end to 40mm at east end. A series of undulations at the base of this deposit suggests cultivation slots into the underlying sandy silt (003). These were c.200mm wide and 10 – 15mm deep, set c.400mm apart. (deposit probably horticultural accumulation)	10 – 40mm
003	Firm orange-brown mottled sandy silt with some roots and stones. Pronounced dip down to east c.1m from western end, after which it ceases at 1.2m from western end (see Fig. 6) (interpreted as a possible lynchet)	30 – 50mm
004	Compact yellow-brown silty sand with occasional large sandstones (interpreted as natural geology)	40 – 50mm and deeper
005	Pale yellow silty sand with gravels and small stones, extending c.05m from western end, and terminating to the west against a line of large stones overlain by context (003)	50mm to unknown depth



Fig. 4 Example of artefacts found in context (002). Photo CPAT 4975-011

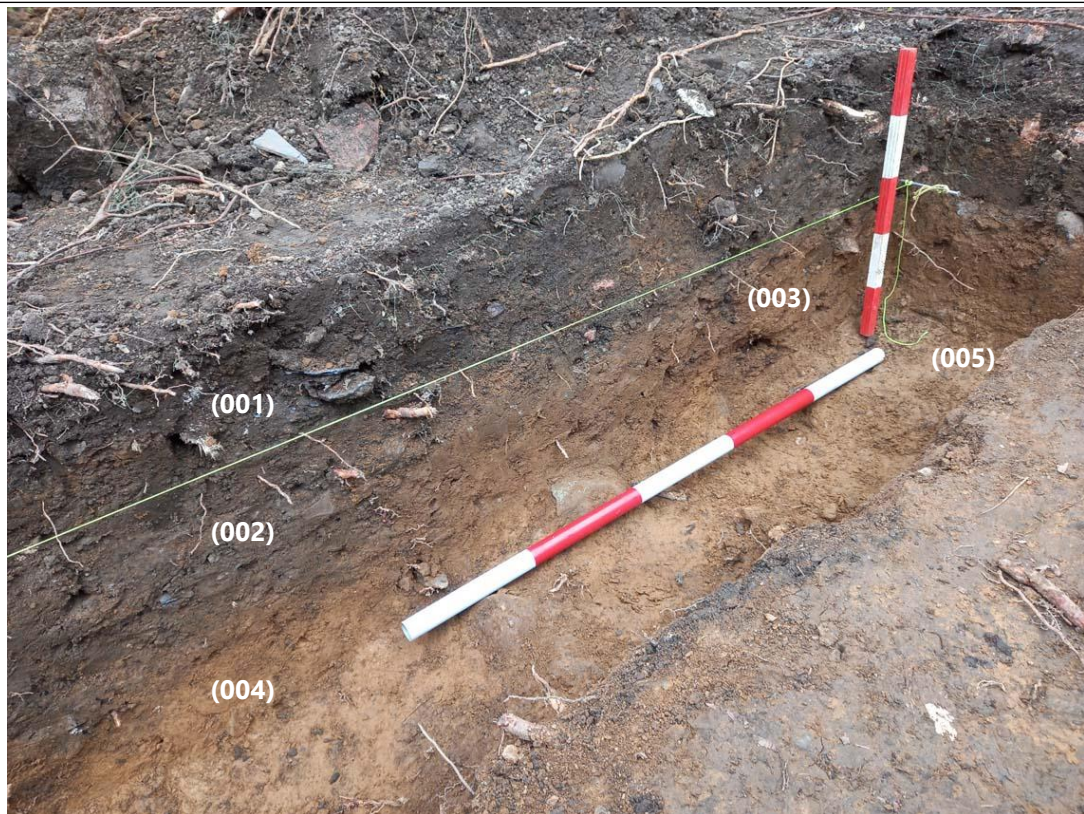


Drawing 2 North-facing section of excavated trench



Fig. 5 North-facing section of excavated trench Photo CPAT 4975-019

- 3.5. The western end appeared to include a consolidated deposit (003) that had been cut into by the horticultural layer (002) (Drawing 2 and Fig. 6). This and the underlying gravelly deposit (005) terminated against the natural with a line of stones, and could indicate a former lynchet, or possibly a terrace which was cut into when the land to the east was cultivated. The loamy soil and artefacts, as well as the undulations cut into the natural (004), suggest that (002) was horticulturally derived. The relatively large quantity of artefactual material and the small size of the plot of land (see conclusions) suggest possible foot ploughing rather than agriculture.



*Fig. 6 West end of trench with lynchet feature and related deposits Photo CPAT 4975-028
(Scale bar 20cm divisions horizontal, and 10cm divisions vertical)*

4 Landscape analysis

- 4.1. A study of the surrounding landscape was also undertaken, which proved very informative. New housing to the north of Trenant Chapel had reduced the ground by c.1m, but walking north along Chapel Lane it was clear that all the entrance drives and houses rise slightly from road level.
- 4.2. In the field to the north of the houses that line the western side of Chapel Lane, the earthworks of Offa's Dyke are plainly visible as they enter the field at its north end, and continue south adjacent to the hedged Chapel Lane boundary (Figs. 7 and 9). The full width of the remnant bank and ditch measured approximately 16m. The line of both the bank and ditch can be extrapolated to continue as a straight line beneath the existing properties on the west side of Chapel Lane including Trenant Chapel.
- 4.3. Adjacent to the south of Trenant Chapel a burial ground exists, in which the bank and ditch of Offa's Dyke can be vaguely seen, with the latter a linear depression along the centre of the cemetery, and the former a slightly raised area to the east on which several graves are located (Fig. 8). Chapel Lane follows the eastern side of the dyke until it cuts through it towards Fron.



Fig. 7 Offa's Dyke visible as bank and ditch in field north of houses, west of Chapel Lane. Photo CPAT 4975-021 looking north



Fig. 8 Offa's Dyke visible as ditch to left and bank to right. Photo CPAT4975-025 view to north

5 Conclusions

- 5.1. The evaluation did not find evidence for Offa's Dyke but a study of the surrounding landscape showed visual traces of the earthwork on an alignment that took the Dyke beneath Trenant Chapel, rather than the rear garden to the west of it. Historic mapping (Fig. 9) shows the earthwork represented as hachures at the north end, and then a series of narrow plots aligned along the west side of Chapel Lane which are the result of encroachment of the dyke for piecemeal development and garden plots. The possible lynchet found in the evaluation trench is probably shown as a diagonal line to the west of the chapel. In conclusion, the evaluation has shown that the proposed extension would not harm the dyke or associated remains.

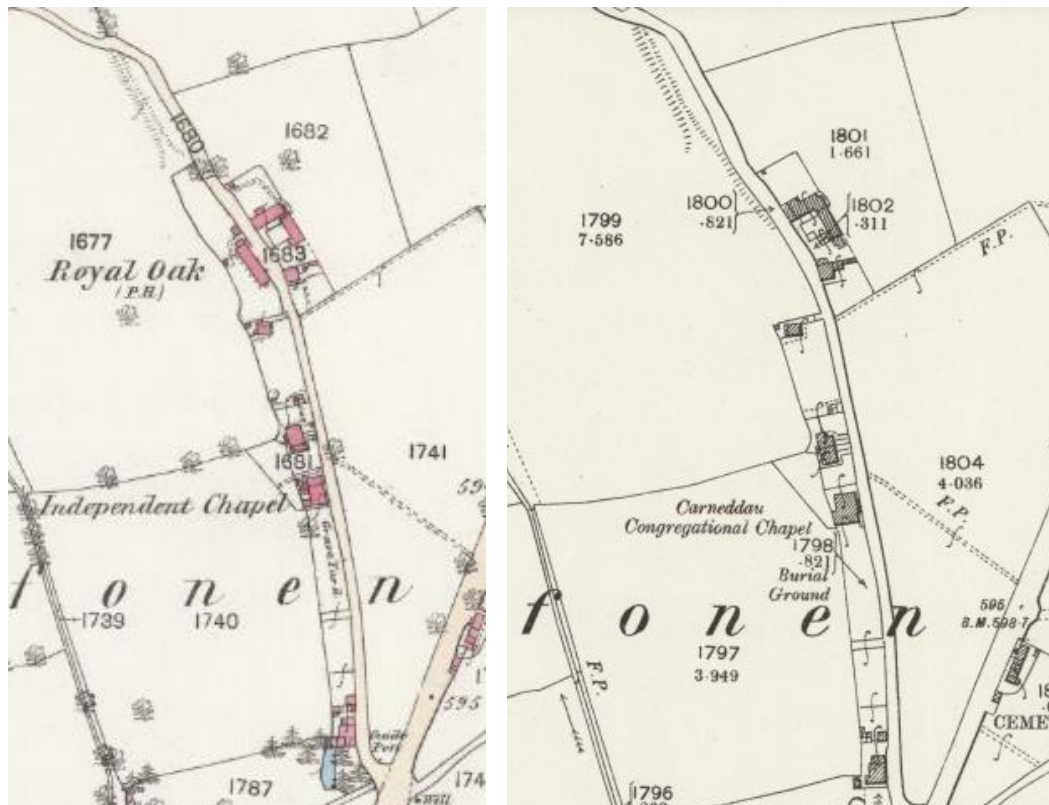


Fig. 9 1st and 2nd editions Ordnance Survey maps (1881 and 1901 Shropshire XIX.5) of Chapel Lane, Trefonen, showing Offa's Dyke earthwork at north end of field, Trenant Chapel (Independent/Carneddau Congregational Chapel) and burial ground further south

6 Sources

Cartographic sources

1881 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" to the mile Shropshire XIX.5

1901 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25" to the mile Shropshire XIX.5

7 Archive deposition Statement

The project archive has been prepared according to the CPAT Archive Policy and in line with the Cifa *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives guidance* (2014). The archive is entirely digital and will be deposited jointly with the Historic Environment Record

Archive summary

Shropshire HER Event PRN: tbc

30 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4975

1 recording sheet and sketch plan

1 section drawing

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 2609

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been instructed by Mr Miles Ackerman, to submit a proposal for undertaking an archaeological evaluation in connection with an extension to an existing domestic residence. The proposal involves changes to an historic chapel which has been converted into a house, and which lies adjacent to the line of Offa's Dyke. Shropshire Council's Historic Environment Team, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local authority, have determined that an archaeological investigation is required to identify the potential impact on the archaeological resource before any determination of an application can be made.
- 1.2. The development is located at SJ 2596 2696 on the northern side of Trefonen. Trenant Chapel lies on the west side of Chapel Lane with housing to the north and west, whilst to the south a cemetery is located, associated with its former use as a chapel (Figures 1 and 2).
- 1.3. A proposal is being prepared for a reconfiguration and small enlargement to the rear of the former chapel, so that new kitchen facilities and an enhanced reception room with conservatory would replace the existing arrangements (Figure 2).



Figure 1 Site location plan

2 Objectives

- 2.1. The objectives of the evaluation are:
 - to conduct a targeted archaeological trial trench exercise within the areas proposed for disturbance, which minimises potential damage to the dyke (Figure 3);
 - to excavate through topsoil and modern deposits to reveal whether any remains of Offa's Dyke might lie within the development zone;
 - to prepare a report outlining the results of the evaluation; and
 - to advise whether the proposed development might harm the dyke, and if so what further work would be recommended

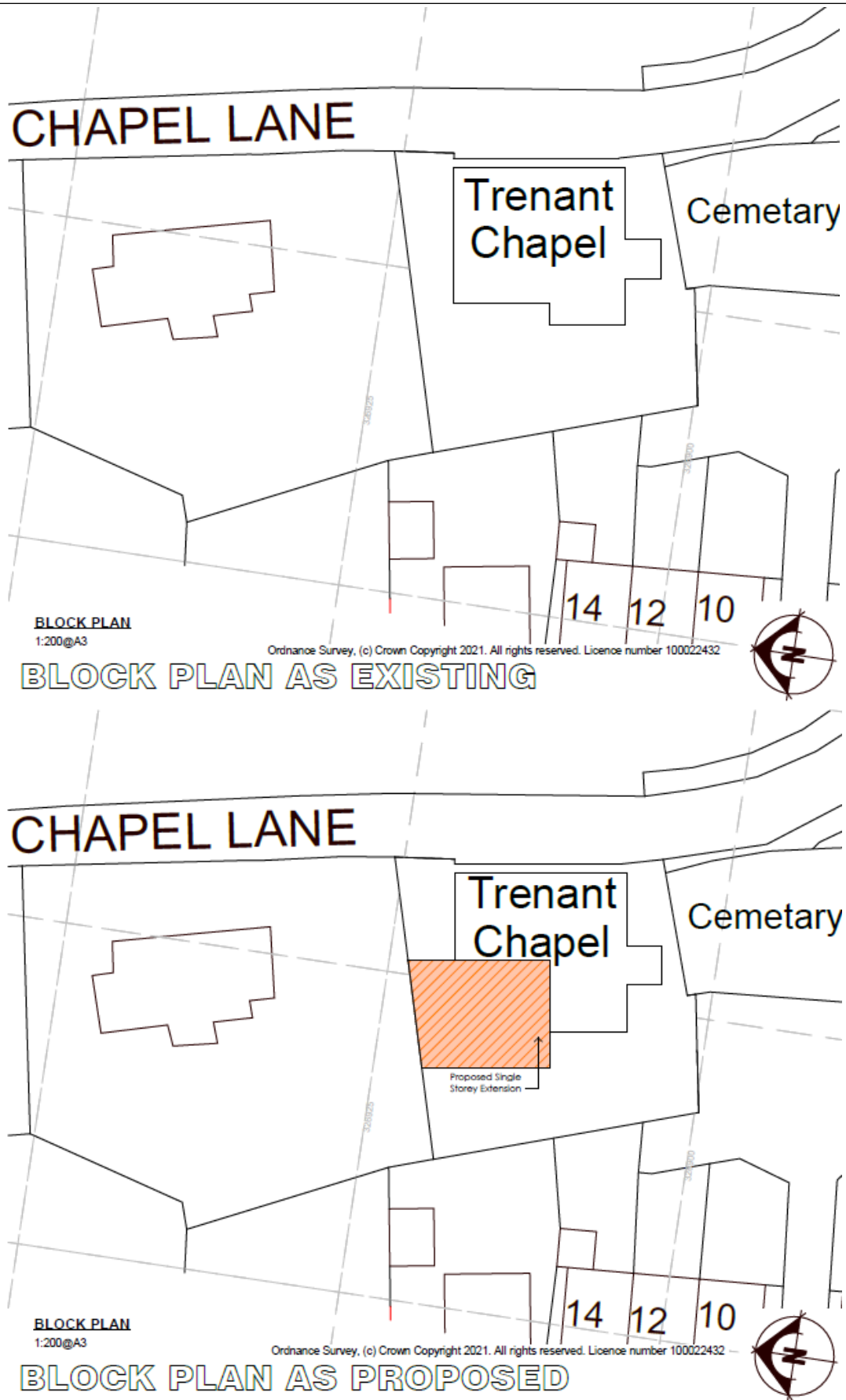


Figure 2 Block Plan of existing and proposed development

3 Methodology

Fieldwork

- 3.1. The evaluation will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation* (revised 2020). The investigation will be undertaken within the area of groundworks associated with the construction of the new build (Figure 3). Excavation of any archaeological features or deposits will be undertaken by hand using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation:
- The presence or absence of archaeological features encountered during the ground works will be noted.
 - Where features of archaeological interest are identified during the ground works they will be systematically investigated by hand with sufficient work being undertaken to determine their date, character and function, using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation and in accordance with CIfA Standard and Guidance.
 - All features will be located as accurately as possible on an overall plan of the development at an appropriate scale, showing boundaries depicted on Ordnance Survey mapping.
 - Contexts will be recorded on individual record forms, using a continuous numbering system, and be drawn and photographed as appropriate.
 - Plans will be drawn on permatrace to a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50, as appropriate.
 - All photography will be taken using a digital SLR camera with a minimum resolution of 12 mega pixels, including a metric scale in each view, with views logged in a photographic register.
 - In the event of human burials being discovered the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) will be informed. The remains will initially be left in situ, and if removal is required, a MoJ licences will be applied for under the Burial Act 1857.
 - In the event of finding any artefacts covered by the provisions of the Treasures Act 1996, the appropriate procedures under this legislation will be followed.

Selection Strategy

- 3.2. Unstratified finds will only be collected where they contribute significantly to the project objectives or are of particular intrinsic interest. All artefacts will be retained from stratigraphically secure contexts of 18th-century date or earlier. In the case of later or disturbed contexts, all 18th-century or earlier material will be retained, together with a sample of later finds to assist with dating and phasing, unless later deposits/artefacts are deemed to be of high archaeological value.

- 3.3. CPAT has a retention policy for artefacts which prioritises as follows:

High priority for retention

- Rare finds from stratified and unstratified contexts
- Prehistoric and early medieval assemblages
- Key stratigraphic dating assemblages crucial to the structural development of the site
- Assemblages which are not well represented in museum collections

High priority for disposal

- Unstratified material unless intrinsically dateable and unusual/rare
- Artefacts from residual/intrusive contexts unless of key stratigraphic importance to the site
- Assemblages already well represented in museum collections
- Unprocessed environmental/soil samples

Post-excavation and reporting

- 3.4. All artefacts and environmental samples will be treated in a manner appropriate to their composition and a sampling strategy will be developed as appropriate:
- All stratified finds will be collected by context, or where appropriate, individually recorded in three dimensions. Unstratified finds will only be collected where they contribute significantly to the project objectives or are of particular intrinsic interest.
 - All finds and samples will be collected, processed, sorted, quantified, recorded, labelled, packed, stored, marked, assessed, analysed and conserved in a manner appropriate to their composition and in line with appropriate guidance.
 - arrangements to assess and study any artefacts, assemblages and environment samples.
 - Any artefacts recovered during the watching brief will be deposited with an appropriate museum, subject to the permission of the owner.
- 3.5. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:
- Non-technical summary
 - Introduction
 - Site location
 - Archaeological Background
 - Watching brief
 - Conclusions
 - References
 - Appropriate appendices on archives and finds
- 3.6. The report summary will be provided in English and Welsh, in accordance with the *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs) V1* (July 2018).

Site archive

- 3.7. The overall archive will conform to guidelines described in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE), Historic England 2015, the CIfA (2020) *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives*.
- 3.8. The paper and digital archive will be deposited with the Shropshire Museum Service, if archaeological remains are found, Negative results would not result in an archive significant enough for deposition.

Data management plan

- 3.9. The project will be conducted in accordance with CPAT's data management policy. All paper records will be collated, catalogued and labelled with the unique project code. All digital data will follow strict file naming, to include the unique project code, and be sorted into a standard series of sub-folders. The digital data will be catalogued, including a list of file types and relevant software.

4 Resources and programming

- 4.1. The watching brief will be undertaken by a skilled archaeologist under the overall supervision of Tim Malim, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). CPAT is also a CIfA Registered Organisation and as such agrees to abide by their *Code of Conduct* (2019).
- 4.2. All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the site work. Copies of the report will be deposited with the client and the regional Historic Environment Record within one month of the completion of

-
- on-site works. If appropriate, a short report will be published in *The Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society*.
- 4.3. The client should be aware that in the event that significant archaeological remains are revealed there may be a requirement for more detailed excavation and specialist services. Any further work over and above the original watching brief and report would be the subject of a separate WSI and costing. The following figures provide an indication of the types of additional services and indicative costs which might be required, for which the client is advised to make some provision.
 - 4.4. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
 - 4.5. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

Tim Malim

7th March 2022

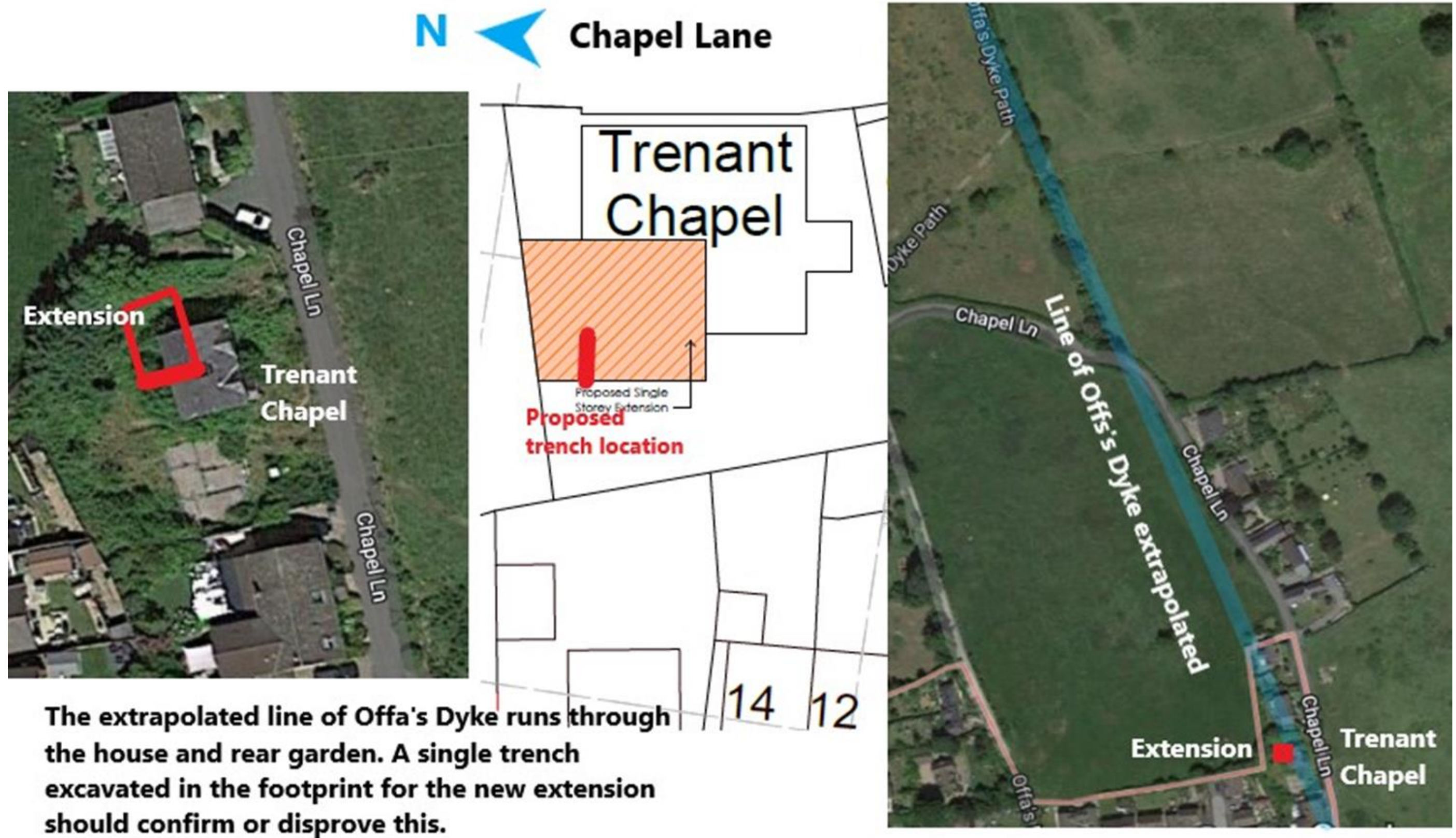


Figure 3 Trench plan