

Archaeology Wales

Newlyn, Castle Street, Whittington Shropshire

Watching Brief



By

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Report No. 1155

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Watching Brief

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Report No: 1155

Date: **September 2013**

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Non-Technical Summary

This report results from work undertaken by Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) for Mr & Mrs C Smith, Newlyn, Castle Street, Oswestry. It draws upon the results gained by an archaeological watching brief on groundworks carried out during the erection of an extension to the above address. The watching brief covered the excavation of approximately 11m of foundation trench, each trench with a width of 1m and with an average depth of 1.2m. No finds or features of archaeological significance were located.

1 Introduction

1.1 Location and Scope of work

- 1.1.1 In July 2013 Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land to the rear of Newlyn, Castle Street, Whittington, Shropshire (SJ 32663 31009 - Fig 1), at the request of their clients, Mr & Mrs C Smith. The watching brief was carried out during the excavation of foundation trenches required for the erection of a new extension to the rear of the property. The planning application no. is 13/00570/FUL.
- 1.1.2 The foundation trenches for the extension were located to the rear (south west) of the property (Fig 2), and totalled approximately 11m in length. The average width of the trenches was 1m and the depth was 1.2m. The trenches were arranged to form three sides of a rectangle, the fourth side of the extension being formed by the standing property.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The underlying solid geology of the area is comprised of undifferentiated Permian and Triassic sandstones including Bunter and Keuper (British Geological Survey, 2001).
- 1.2.2 The village of Whittington is located adjacent to the A495 between the larger urban areas of Oswestry and Ellesmere. The village is located at approximately 90m OD. The surrounding landscape appears reasonably flat. It is sparsely wooded and characterised by irregularly shaped fields given over to grazing.
- 1.2.3 Newlyn is an early 20th century semi-detached property lying in the centre of the village of Whittington. It is located 50m to the south of the scheduled ancient monument (1019450) of Whittington Castle. It forms one of a row of similar properties on the west side of Castle Street.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 1.3.1 The following is an extract from Lewis' (1831) Topographical Dictionary of England:

“WHITTINGTON, a parish in the hundred of OSWESTRY, county of SALOP, 3 miles from Oswestry, containing 1749 inhabitants. The living is a rectory, in the archdeaconry and diocese of St. Asaph. The church, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, is supposed to have been built, in the reign of Henry II., by Fulk Fitz-warine, lord of the manor, who procured a market and fair to be held here, both which have been long disused: it was rebuilt in 1806. The river Perry runs through the parish; also the Ellesmere canal, which here divides into four branches, called the Chester, Llangollen, Montgomeryshire, and Weston canals. Lloyd, in his " Archaeologia," imagines this place to have been celebrated, under the name Drdv Wen, or the White Town, by Llowarch Hen, a noble British bard, who nourished about the close of the sixth century; and describes it as the place where Condolanus, a British chieftain, was slain, in an attempt to expel some Irish invaders. According to the bards, it was subsequently the property and chief residence of Tudor Trevor. After the Conquest it was given to Roger, Earl of Shrewsbury, and, on the defection of his son, Earl Robert, and the confiscation of that nobleman's immense estates, in the reign of Henry I., the castle and barony were granted to the Peverells, from whom, by the marriage of Mellet, second daughter of William Peverell, to Guarine de Mets, who received her hand as the reward of his distinguished prowess in a tournament held at the castle in the Peak, in Derbyshire, they passed to the illustrious race of Fitz-warine, whose feats of chivalry and valorous exploits have furnished a subject for romance, and, in modern times, have been beautifully illustrated in a poem by J. F. M. Dovaston, Esq., of West Felton, in the vicinity. The Fitz-warines were lords of the place for nearly four hundred years, and every heir, for nine descents, preserved the Christian name of Fulk. The castle then became a border fortress, and the neighbourhood the frequent scene of battle between the lord's retainers and the Welsh; in these conflicts the building, probably, sustained considerable injury, since license was granted by Henry I. to the renowned Fulk Fitz-warine, for repairing and fortifying it. The remains consist of one large tower, with traces of four others, and the exterior gateway, which is inhabited by a farmer”.

- 1.3.2 Whittington Castle was founded as a motte and bailey fortification in the 12th century. The Norman earthworks were built within the northern end of a possible Iron Age hillfort. Little evidence, other than extensive earthworks, has been located for the presence of a hillfort.
- 1.3.3 Although not recorded in the Domesday Book, local legend claims that a series of primitive castles has existed here since the 9th century. The present castle ruins date from 1221 when the fitz Warren family applied to King Henry III for permission to build a stone fortress. Originally, the stone castle had 7 towers, each about 18 metres high, with walls 3.7 metres thick and a drawbridge over 12 metres long. The castle fell into decay after the English Civil War and it is recorded that one of the towers collapsed into the moat after a severe frost in 1760. The ruins were subsequently plundered for

stone to surface roads and build houses. The present condition of the castle is a result of restoration and clearance work dating from 1967 (Northall, 2009).

- 1.3.4 The assessment area at Newlyn, Castle Street, is located immediately south of the line of the extensive earthworks which presently surround Whittington Castle.

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 Watching Brief

- 2.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken:

- To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
- To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- The main objective of the watching brief was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

3 Methodology

3.1 Watching Brief

- 3.1.1 Excavation of the foundation trenches was undertaken by a mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket under close archaeological supervision.
- 3.1.2 The base and sides of each trench were subsequently hand cleaned by the attendant archaeologist prior to being photographed.
- 3.1.3 The on-site archaeological work was undertaken by Ian Davies (AW). The overall management of the project was undertaken by Chris E Smith (MifA). All areas were photographed using high resolution digital photography
- 3.1.4 All on-site illustrations were undertaken on drafting film using recognised conventions and scales (1:10, 1:20, 1:50) as appropriate.
- 3.1.5 All works were undertaken in accordance with the IfA's *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (2011) and current Health and Safety legislation.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 Finds recovered by hand during the course of the excavation work were inspected, recorded and subsequently discarded.

3.3 Palaeo-Environmental Evidence

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the excavation.

4 Watching Brief Results

4.1 Soils

- 4.1.1 The topsoil deposit (001) observed across all areas of the trench was a dark brown, almost black, friable gritty silt deposit with occasional stone inclusions.
- 4.1.2 The subsoil deposit (002) was composed of a mid-yellow/brown clay silt with frequent stone inclusions.
- 4.1.3 A further subsoil deposit (003) was located beneath (002) and was composed of light yellow/grey stoney silt.
- 4.1.4 Natural grey silty clay interspersed with patches of gravel (004) was exposed at a depth of 1.3m below the current ground surface.

4.2 Ground Conditions

- 4.2.1 The watching brief was undertaken on an overcast, warm, day. A short period of rain preceded the on-site works though ground conditions were largely dry.

4.3 Descriptions (Plates 1-5)

- 4.3.1 Removal of concrete, brick and modern paving slab overburden was undertaken by mechanical excavator.
- 4.3.2 Revealed by the removal of the overburden was a modern pit [005], 1 m deep. It was located within the north facing section of the most southerly foundation trench. The pit was lined with mortar (006) and contained three distinct fills (007-9) composed of mixed silt, clay, rubble and mortar. The pit was seemingly capped by cement. The feature, with its mortar lining, is suggestive of a mortar mixing pit.
- 4.3.3 The topsoil deposit (001), cut by pit [005] and elsewhere lying directly beneath the modern overburden, was approximately 0.3m deep across all areas of the trench. It contained occasional sherds of early 20th century ceramic.
- 4.3.4 Beneath the topsoil, the mid-yellow/brown subsoil (002) was found to be 0.35m deep across the trench and contain no finds.

- 4.3.5 Located beneath subsoil horizon (002) was a light yellow/grey stoney soil deposit (003). Again, no finds were located from within this horizon. This layer was found to be approximately 0.2m deep and to be located directly above the natural silty clay/gravel horizon (004).
- 4.3.6 No further finds or features of archaeological significance were noted in any of the foundation trenches.

5 Discussion and Interpretation

5.1 Overall Interpretation

- 5.1.1 The results of the work undertaken at Newlyn, Castle Street, Whittington, revealed no remains of archaeological significance and, in particular, showed no evidence of the castle/hillfort earthworks extending into this area. No materials other than early 20th century ceramics were recovered.
- 5.1.2 The presence of the mortar lined pit, possibly a mortar mixing pit which had seemingly been capped with cement, likely relates to the early 20th century construction of the property at Newlyn, Castle Street.
- 5.1.3 It should be acknowledged, however, that the work undertaken as part of this watching brief was extremely keyhole in nature. Thus the presence of significant archaeological features in this area and at this depth cannot be ruled out.

5.2 Acknowledgements

- 5.2.1 Thanks are due to: Ian Davies for undertaking the watching brief.

6 Bibliography and References

British Geological Survey. 2001, 4th Edition. Solid Geology Map, UK South Sheet

Institute for Archaeologists. 2011, *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Lewis, S. 1831. *Topographical Dictionary of England*

Northall, J. 2009 *cited on* <http://www.castlewales.com/whittng.html> - accessed 2/9/13

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APPENDIX I: Figures

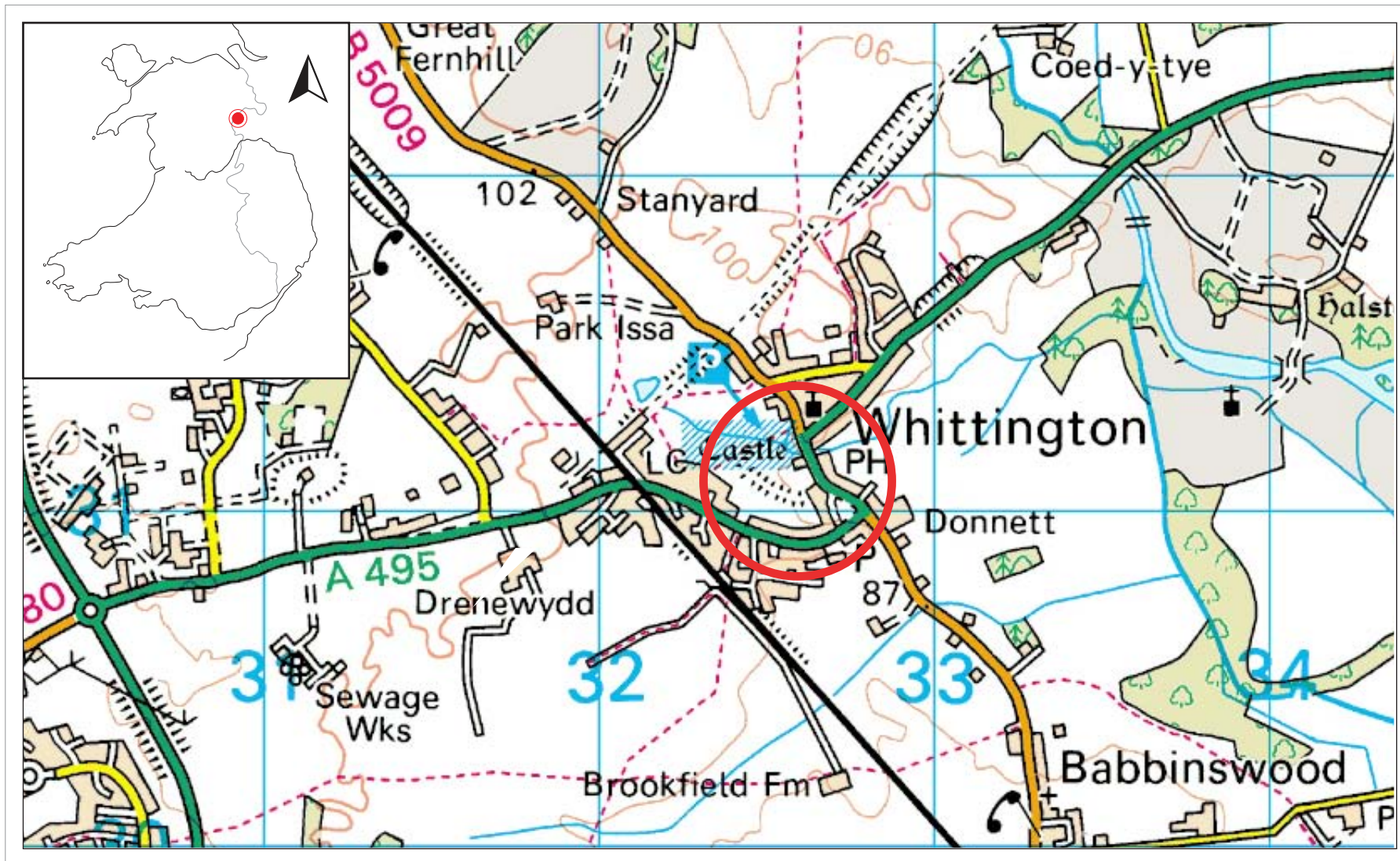
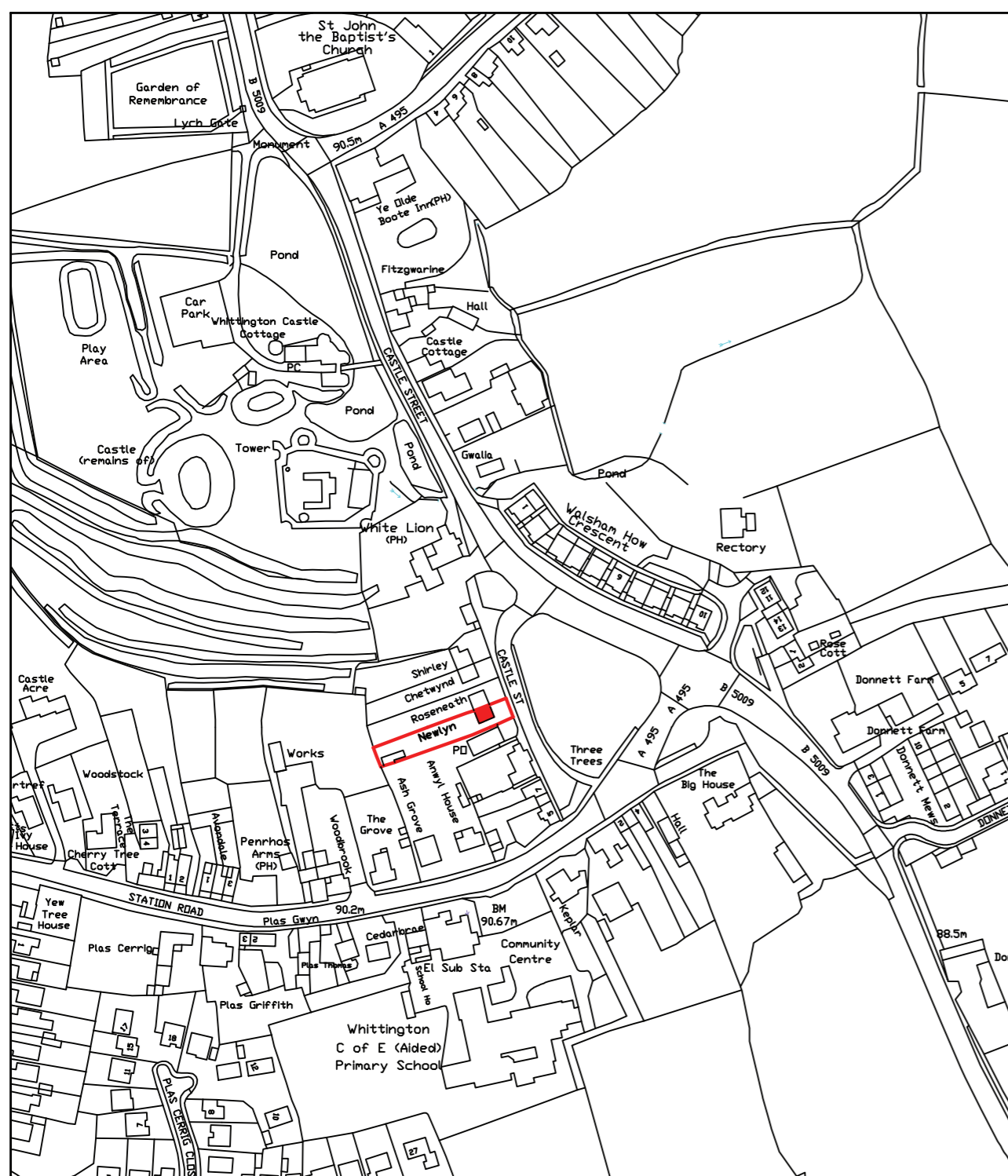
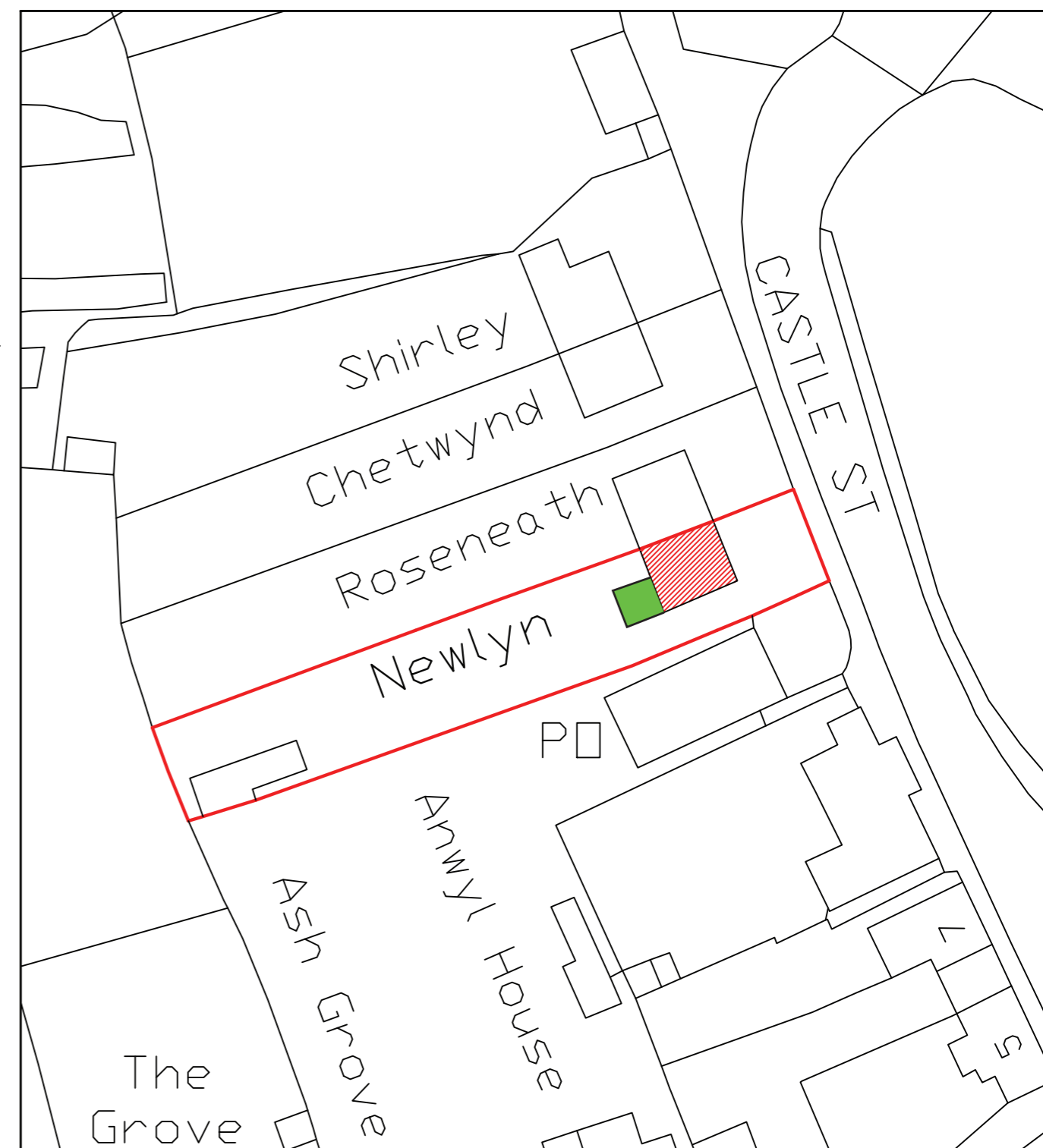
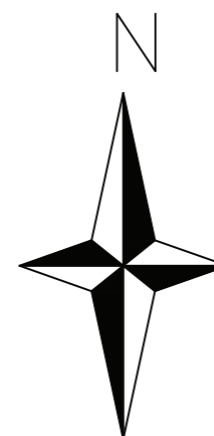


Fig 01: Map showing location of assessment area



Location Plan 1:2500



Block Plan 1:500

Extension

Figure 2:

Proposed to extension to Newlyn, Castle Street, Whittington,
Nr Oswestry, Shropshire

Scale : As shown
Revision :

Date : Jan 2013
Drwg No : 1

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APPENDIX II: Plates



Plate 1: View east across the site



Plate 2: East facing section of western foundation trench



Plate 3: North facing section of southerly foundation trench



Plate 4: South facing section of northerly foundation trench



Plate 5: View of modern mortar mixing pit in section. Looking south

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APPENDIX III: Specification

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SPECIFICATION
FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT
Castle Street, Whittington

Prepared for:

Mr & Mrs C Smith
Newlyn, Castle Street
Whittington
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Shropshire

22nd July 2013

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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This Written Scheme of Investigation details the proposal for an archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks associated with construction at Newlyn, Castle Street, Whittington, Oswestry, Shropshire (Planning Application No. 13/00570/FUL).

1. Introduction and archaeological background

This Written Scheme of Investigations (WSI) has been prepared by Mark Houliston (MIfA), Managing Director, Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) at the request of Mr & Mrs C Smith. It provides information on the methodology which will be employed by AW during an archaeological watching brief at the site. The planning application number is 13/00570/FUL

The methodology set out in this WSI has been agreed with Dr Andy Wigley, Principal Archaeologist, Historic Environment Team, Shropshire Council (HET-SC). HET-SC have recommended that a watching brief is carried out during all groundworks due to be carried out on the site.

All work will be undertaken in accordance with the standards and guidelines of the Institute for Archaeologists (2011).

2 Site specific objectives

The aims of the watching brief, as defined by the IfA (2011) are:

- To allow a rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features that are uncovered during the proposed groundworks within the application area.
- To provide the opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief are not sufficient to support the treatment to a satisfactory or proper standard

3 Watching Brief Methodology

General

The archaeological watching brief will be undertaken by AW staff using current best practice.

All work will be carried out by a suitable qualified archaeologist with relevant level membership of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) and will follow the IfA Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (2011).

Detailed

The Watching Brief will be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist during the construction of foundation trenches and all other associated work (levelling, service trench excavation etc) where the sub-soil is likely to be exposed or cut into. The mechanical excavation will be undertaken by a machine using a toothless ditching

bucket wherever possible.

If archaeological features, finds or deposits are uncovered, work will be stopped in the area of the exposed feature in order that the supervising archaeologist can clean and identify the extent and nature of the feature and for excavation and recording to take place.

All archaeological deposits that are identified will be mapped, cleaned, recorded and fully excavated. The developer will provide a safe working area and sufficient time to record and excavate all features to the satisfaction of AW and HET-SC. Full excavation of identified features will not be compromised by the construction programme.

Contingency Arrangements

In the event of significant archaeological features being discovered all activities in this area of the site can be temporarily suspended. This will allow a period of consultation with the HET-SC and if required the opinion of specialists.

Following such consultation, recommendations will be presented to the Developer and the Local Planning Authority.

The methodology and timescale of additional archaeological work to investigate such features will be presented and included in the Developers Programme; the feature will be fenced off and secured thus allowing the site programme to continue

Recording

Recording will be carried out using AW recording systems (pro-forma context sheets etc), using a continuous number sequence for all contexts.

Plans and sections will be drawn to a scale of 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 as required and related to Ordnance Survey datum and published boundaries where appropriate.

All features identified will be tied in to the OS survey grid and fixed to local topographical boundaries and related to the developer's site plan. The location of all features will also be recorded using a Topcon GTS725 total station.

Photographs will be taken in digital format, using a 14MP camera with photographs stored in Tiff format. Should significant remains be identified that require excavation, photographs will also be taken in black and white and colour slide (35mm film).

The archaeologist undertaking the watching brief will have access to the AW metal detector and be trained in its use.

Artefacts

Archaeological artefacts recovered during the course of the excavation will be cleaned and labelled using an accession number, which will be obtained from the local museum. A single number sequence will be allocated to all finds. The artefacts will be stored appropriately until they are deposited with a suitable local museum.

All finds of gold and silver will be removed to a safe place and the Environment Agency, HET-SC and the local coroner informed, within the guidelines of the Treasure Act 1996.

Any finds which are considered to be in need of immediate conservation will be referred

to a UKIC qualified conservator (Phil Parkes at Cardiff University).

Human remains

In the event of burials or cremations being found all work will be halted in the area of the burials and their extent and nature established. The client, HET-SC and the Ministry of Justice will be informed and a methodology of excavation agreed which will adhere to Ministry of Justice Guidelines.

Environmental and technological samples

Environmental samples will be taken where necessary when significant deposits are located. Technological samples will be taken where necessary when significant deposits are located.

Specialists

In the event of certain finds/features etc. being discovered, the site archaeologist may have to seek specialist opinion for assistance. Such specialists will be accessed either internally within AW itself or from an external source. A list of external specialists is given in the table below.

Type	Name	Tel No.
Flint	Dr Amelia Pannett	02920 899509
Animal bone	Jen Kitch	07739 093712
CBM, heat affected clay, Daub etc.	Rachael Hall	01305 259751
Clay pipe	Hilary Major	01376 329316
Glass	Andy Richmond	01234 888800
Cremated and non-cremated human bone	Malin Holst	01759 368483
Metalwork	Kevin Leahy	01652 658261
Neo/BA pottery	Dr Alex Gibson	Bradford University
IA/Roman pottery	Jane Timby	01453 882851
Post Roman pottery	Mr Stephen Clarke	
Charcoal (wood ID)	John Carrot	01388 772167
Waterlogged wood	Nigel Nayling	University of Wales (Lampeter)
Molluscs and pollen	Dr James Rackham	01992 552256
Charred and waterlogged plant remains	Wendy Carruthers	01443 233466

4 Post-Fieldwork Programme

Conservation

After agreement with the landowner arrangements will be made for the long term conservation and storage of all artefacts in an appropriate local or county museum.

Archive

The site archive will be prepared in accordance with MAP 2, Appendix 3 (English Heritage 1991). It will comprise all the data recovered during the fieldwork and shall be

quantified, ordered and indexed and will be internally consistent. The archive will be deposited with the finds in a suitable local museum.

Reporting

The results of the watching brief will be submitted in an illustrated and bound report, which will include the following material:

- Non-technical summary
- Location plan showing the area/s covered by the watching brief, all artefacts, structures and features found
- Plan and section drawings with ground level, ordnance datum and vertical and horizontal scales.
- Written description and interpretation of all deposits identified, including their character, function, potential dating and relationship to adjacent features. Specialist descriptions and illustrations of all artefacts and soil samples will be included as appropriate.
- An indication of the potential of archaeological deposits which have not been disturbed by the development
- Statement of local, regional and national context of the remains
- A detailed archive list at the rear listing all contexts recorded, all samples finds and find types, drawings and photographs taken. This will include a statement of the intent to deposit, and location of deposition, of the archive.

Monitoring

Any changes to the specification that the contractor may wish to make after approval will be communicated to HET-SC for approval on behalf of the Planning Authority.

Representatives of HET-SC will be given access to the site so that they may monitor the progress of the watching brief. HET-SC will be kept regularly informed about developments, both during the site works and subsequently during any potential post-excavation.

Archive Format & Deposition

The full site archive will be deposited within one month of the completion of the client report.

The paper/drawing/digital archive will be deposited at the offices of HET-SC with the finds will be deposited with the appropriate local museum. AW will agree the location and timing of the deposition of the archive before the contract commences.

The archive will include all site notes, finds, documents, drawings, photographs, digital data and a copy of the final report and any prior draft versions. All of these items will be clearly quantified in tabular form in an 'archive deposition statement' located at the rear of the clients report, and their ultimate location and proposed date of deposition stated.

5 Resources and timetable

Standards

The watching brief will be undertaken by AW staff using current best practice.

All work will be undertaken to the standards and guidelines of the IFA.

Staff

The project will be undertaken by suitably qualified AW staff.

Equipment

The project will use existing AW equipment.

Timetable of archaeological works

The watching brief will be undertaken at the convenience of the client.

Insurance

AW is an affiliated member of the CBA, and holds Insurance through the CBA insurance service.

Health and safety

All members of staff will adhere to the requirements of the *Health & Safety at Work Act*, 1974, and the Health and Safety Policy Statement of AW.

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APPENDIX IV: Archive Cover Sheet

ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Castle Street, Whittington

Site Name:	Castle Street
Site Code:	CSW/13/WB
PRN:	-
NPRN:	-
SAM:	-
Other Ref No:	-
NGR:	NGR SJ 32663 31009
Site Type:	Domestic Extension
Project Type:	Watching Brief
Project Manager:	Chris E Smith
Project Dates:	July 2013
Categories Present:	None
Location of Original Archive:	AW
Location of duplicate Archives:	-
Number of Finds Boxes:	-
Location of Finds:	-
Museum Reference:	-
Copyright:	AW
Restrictions to access:	None

Archaeology Wales

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