

# *Archaeology Wales*

## **Land at Pentre Perfa Farm, Maesbrook Shropshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



By  
Kate Pitt ACIfA

Report No. 1503

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# Archaeology Wales

## Land at Pentre Perfa Farm, Maesbrook Shropshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Prepared For: The Environment Agency

Edited by: Mark Houlston  
Signed: *Mark Houlston*  
Position: Managing Director  
Date: 22/11/16

Authorised by: Mark Houlston  
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Position: Managing Director  
Date: 22/11/16

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**October 2016**

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

*This report results from work undertaken by Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) for The Environment Agency at Pentre Perfa Farm, Maesbrook, Shropshire. It details the results of an archaeological watching brief, undertaken during groundworks for flood embankment repair works.*

*The only feature encountered was the river embankment itself, associated with an area of ridge and furrow adjacent to the River Morda. The embankment was seen to be built of homogenous clay in one phase. It was ensured that works were kept discretely within the site strip to prevent any damage to the ridge and furrow in the surrounding fields. No evidence for any other anthropogenic activity was identified in any of the exposed or excavated deposits during the watching brief.*

*This watching brief was undertaken to the standards set in the CIfA's Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological watching brief (2014) and current Health and Safety legislation.*

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Location and scope of work**

1.1.1 On 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August, and 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 Archaeology Wales Limited (AW) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Pentre Perfa Farm, Maesbrook, Oswestry, North Shropshire, SY10 8QG, SJ 30188 20558 (Figures 1 & 2).

1.1.2 The monitored works were by the Environment Agency, being flood embankment repair works.

1.1.3 The Local Planning Authority is Shropshire Council (SC). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the archaeological investigation has been prepared by AW at the request of The Environment Agency. This was subsequently approved by Dr Andy Wigley, Principle Archaeologist, Shropshire Council Historic Environment Team (SC-HAT) prior to work being undertaken on the site. The WSI is included as Appendix III of this report.

1.1.4 The AW project number for the work is 2445 and the site code is NSER/16/WB. The project details are summarised on the Archive Cover Sheet (Appendix IV).

### **1.2 Geology & Topography**

1.2.1 The development site is underlain by bedrock geology of sandstone of the Kinnerton Sandstone Formation. The superficial deposits mapped are alluvial clay, silt, sand and gravels (British Geological Survey, 2016).

1.2.2 The development site is located in level fields immediately adjacent to the River Morda.

### **1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

1.3.1 Medieval ridge and furrow (PRN: 29038, Ridge and Furrow south of Gwern Y Dawbll) are recorded at the site of the embankment repair works, seen as earthworks and mapped from aerial photographs. Several fields of medieval ridge and furrow are visible as earthworks on aerial photographs and have been mapped by RCHME's Marches Uplands Mapping Project. The ridge and furrow described in this record covers about 25 hectares, and is part of a larger area of medieval fields on the flood plain alongside the Rivers Morda and Vrynwy (Discovering Shropshire's History, 2016).

The 'ridge and furrow' in the fields at Pentre Perfa could actually relate to, or were adapted into, a water meadow system. The current lane to Dyffryd Farm is largely a mid-late 19th century rationalisation of an earlier road layout, and overlies the ridging. There is also a historic drain that cuts through the ridging. These features are of local level significance (Wigley, pers.comm.).

## **2 Aims and Objectives**

### **2.1 Watching Brief**

2.1.1 The purpose of the watching brief, as defined by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014), is:

- 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;
- To establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

## **3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Fieldwork**

3.1.1 The methodology for the archaeological watching brief followed that set out within the approved WSI (Appendix III). This work included the following key elements:

- The site overburden was removed in spits with a 360° tracked excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. The watching brief was maintained on all groundworks within the development site.
- The fieldwork was undertaken by Des Threlfall. Management of the project was undertaken by Kate Pitt (ACIfA). The watching brief was carried out in August and September 2016.
- All areas were photographed using high-resolution (14mp+) digital photography. The on-site illustrations were drawn on drafting film using recognised conventions and scales (1:10, 1:20, 1:50, as appropriate). All the deposits were recorded in the field on pro-forma context sheets.
- The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the CIfA's *Standards and Guidance: for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014) and current Health and Safety legislation.

### **3.2 Finds**

- 3.2.1 No archaeological finds were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

### **3.3 Palaeo-environmental Evidence**

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for sampling were encountered during the fieldwork.

## **4 Results of the Watching Brief**

### **4.1 Description**

- 4.1.1 The weather conditions were dry during the fieldwork. The watching brief was undertaken during excavations of the site strip (Plates 1-8). A swathe of topsoil was stripped on the inner face of the embankment, 1-1.5m in width, and a further strip on the interior of the bank, up to 3m in width.
- 4.1.2 The soil sequence encountered in this area consisted of clay loam topsoil, approximately 0.15m in depth, overlying natural geological deposits, which comprised a mid-brown clay with rare gravel inclusions.
- 4.1.4 The embankment consisted of a semi-circular bank approximately 245m in length, seen to be a bank constructed from the clay natural 3m in width and 0.6m in height. Figure 2 shows the areas of the embankment cut away, as shown in blue, with the areas of site strip marked in yellow. During these works, a section of the embankment was recorded, as seen in Figure 4 and located on Figure 2. The embankment was comprised of homogenous mid-brown clay with rare gravel inclusions, built up on the natural geology and sealed

with topsoil. From this information, it appears the bank was constructed in one phase. No finds came from the embankment deposit.

- 4.1.5 No further archaeological features were identified during the watching brief. In addition, no residual archaeological artefacts were retrieved from the topsoil deposits. A selection of modern debris was revealed in the topsoil to the bank interior, likely to be from river-flooding events.

## **5 Conclusions**

### **5.1 Overall Interpretation**

- 5.1.1 The upper soil sequence identified during the investigation comprised topsoil and natural clay deposits. The only feature encountered was the river embankment itself, which appears to have been constructed as one event. It was ensured that works were kept discretely within the strip to prevent any damage to the ridge and furrow in the surrounding fields. No evidence for any other anthropogenic activity was identified in any of the exposed or excavated deposits.

### **5.2 Assessment of Archaeological Potential**

- 5.2.1 There remains a general potential for archaeology to be found within the scheme area, being within an area of ridge and furrow.

### **6.3 Storage and Curation**

- 6.3.1 The project archive will be prepared in accordance with: Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives (CifA, 2014) and the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment, MoRPHE (Historic England, 2006). The archive will be deposited with Shropshire Council. There is no material archive to deposit with Shropshire Museum Service.

## **6 Bibliography and References**

British Geological Survey: Geology of Britain Viewer  
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/> (Accessed 28/09/16)

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. 2014, *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*.

Discovering Shropshire's History

[http://search.shropshirehistory.org.uk/collections/getrecord/CCS\\_MSA33078/](http://search.shropshirehistory.org.uk/collections/getrecord/CCS_MSA33078/)  
(Accessed 31/10/16)

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## **APPENDIX I:** Figures





**North Shropshire  
Embankment Repairs**

**Figure 1: Location**

**Scale:** 1:8500 A3

**Date:** 1.11.2016

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Key (AW Ltd)

- Cutting works
- Topsoil strip

Legend

- Hostile Sites
- Live Flood Warnings (Points)
  - Severe Flood Warning
  - Flood Warning
  - Flood Alert
- Live Flood Warnings (Areas)
  - Severe Flood Warning
  - Flood Warning
  - Flood Alert
  - All Clear Given
  - Warning no longer in force

**North Shropshire  
Embankment Repairs**

**Figure 2**

**Scale:** 1:2000 A3

**Date:** 1.11.2016

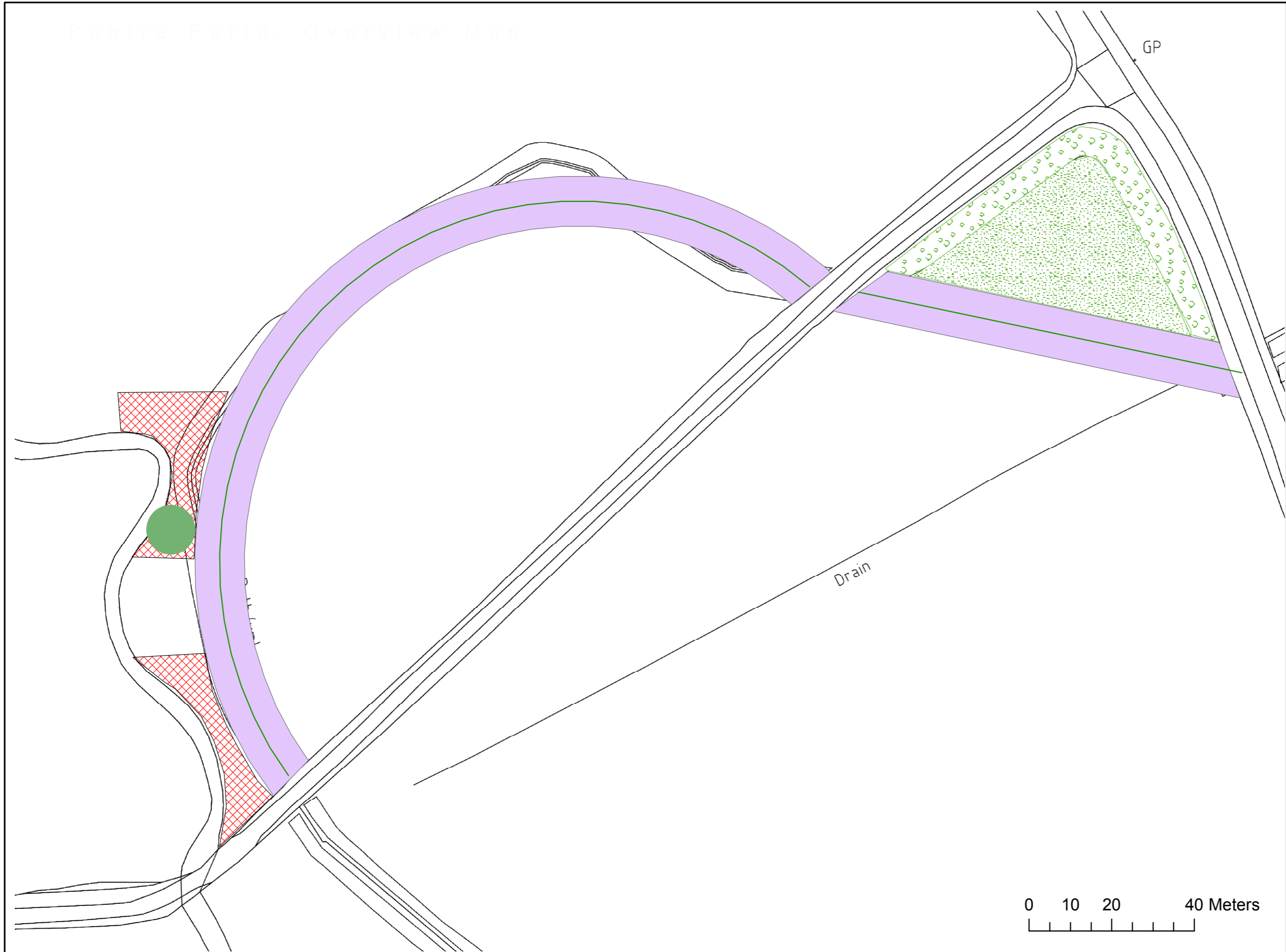
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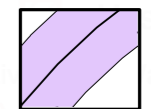
Figure 2: Site plan showing area of monitored groundworks, in yellow and blue; information supplied by







**Legend**



Watching brief monitoring

**North Shropshire Embankment Repairs**

**Figure 3**

**Scale:** 1:1000 A3

**Date:** 1.11.2016

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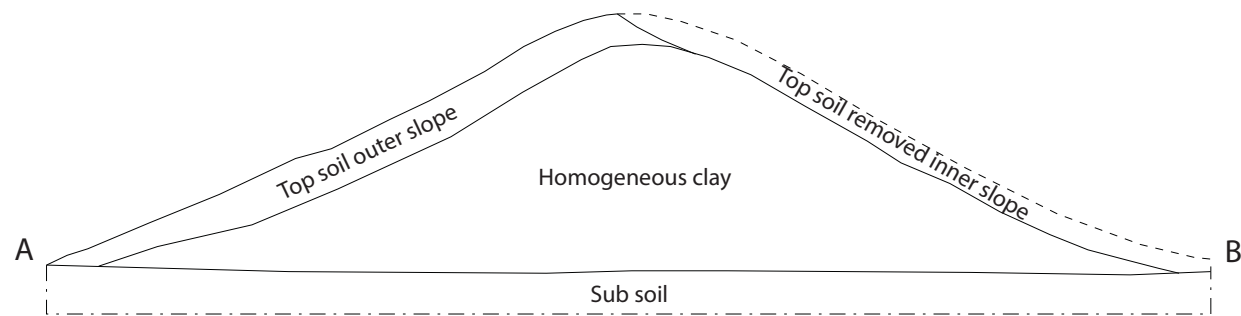
Figure 3: Site plan showing detailed area of monitored groundworks, information supplied by



Profile section of Embankment

N

S



Scale 1:20 @ A4

Figure 4  
Section of Embankment

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## **APPENDIX II: Plates**



Plate 1. West facing view of flood embankment prior to main groundworks, 1m and 0.3m scales



Plate 2. East facing view of flood embankment prior to main groundworks, 1m and 0.3m scales





Plate 3. South facing view of flood embankment site strip



Plate 4. East facing view of flood embankment site strip



Plate 5. West facing view of flood embankment site strip



Plate 6. East facing view of flood embankment site strip





Plate 7. East facing view of flood embankment site strip



Plate 8. East facing view of flood embankment site strip

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## **APPENDIX III:** Written Scheme of Investigation

# *Archaeology Wales*

## **SPECIFICATION**

### **FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

#### **AT**

### **Pentre Perfa Farm, Maesbrook, North Shropshire**

#### **Prepared for:**

The Environment Agency

**15<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

Archaeology Wales Limited

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## NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

*This Written Scheme of Investigation details the proposal for an archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks associated with embankment repair works, at Pentre Perfa Farm, Maesbrook, Oswestry, North Shropshire, SY10 8QG.*

### **1. Introduction and archaeological background**

This Written Scheme of Investigations (WSI) has been prepared by Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) at the request of The Environment Agency. It provides information on the methodology which will be employed by AW during an archaeological watching brief at Pentre Perfa Farm, Maesbrook, Oswestry, North Shropshire, SY10 8QG, SJ 3018820558 (Henceforth - the site).

The Environment Agency will be undertaking flood embankment repair works at the site. Please see the three figures supplied by the Environment Agency, included in this WSI, for location and works details.

The methodology set out in this WSI has been agreed with Dr Andy Wigley, Natural & Historic Environment Manager, Shropshire County Council – Historic Environment Team (SCC-HET). SCC-HET 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 Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

Medieval ridge and furrow (PRN: 29038, Ridge and Furrow south of Gwern Y Dawbll) are recorded at the site of the embankment repair works, seen as earthworks and mapped from aerial photographs.

The 'ridge and furrow' in the fields at Pentre Perfa could actually relate to, or were adapted into, a water meadow system. The current lane to Dyffryd Farm is largely a mid-late 19th century rationalisation of an earlier road layout, and 'overlies' the ridging. There is also a historic drain that cuts through the ridging. These features are of local level significance (Wigley, pers.comm.).

The scheme should aim to minimise the impacts upon the 'ridge and furrow' as far as possible. Access for plant should be designed to take the shortest route across them as possible, and if possible works undertaken in dry conditions and/ or temporary ground reinforcement used to minimise ground disturbance along the access route.

Any sections cut through the flood banks themselves will be recorded as part of the archaeological watching brief. They are historic features but that their exact dating remains uncertain.

### **2 Site specific objectives**

The aims of the watching brief, as defined by the CifA (2014) 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 Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and will follow the CIfA Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (2014).

#### Detailed

The Watching Brief will be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist during the excavation of all foundation trenches, service trenches and/or reductions in ground level associated with the proposed developments.

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 SCC-HET. 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 SCC-HET 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 The Shropshire Museums Service.

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, SCC-HET 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.

<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>
Animal bone	Jen Kitch
CBM, heat affected clay, Daub etc.	Rachael Hall
Clay pipe	Hilary Major
Glass	Andy Richmond
Cremated and non-cremated human bone	Malin Holst
Metalwork	Kevin Leahy

Neo/BA pottery	Dr Alex Gibson
IA/Roman pottery	Jane Timby
Post Roman pottery	Paul Blinkhorn
Charcoal (wood ID)	John Carrot
Waterlogged wood	Nigel Nayling
Molluscs and pollen	Dr James Rackham
Charred and waterlogged plant remains	Wendy Carruthers

## 4 Post-Fieldwork Programme

### Conservation

After agreement with the landowner arrangements will be made for the long term conservation and storage of all artefacts with the Shropshire Museums Service.

### Archive

The site archive will be prepared in accordance with Morphe (English Heritage 2006). 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 SCC-HET for approval on behalf of the Planning Authority.

Representatives of SCC-HET will be given access to the site so that they may monitor the progress of the watching brief. SCC-HET 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.

An OASIS record will also be established and uploaded for the site.

## **5 Resources and timetable**

### Standards

The field work will be undertaken by AW staff using current best practice and in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (CIfA 2014).

### Staff

The project will be undertaken by suitably qualified AW staff. Overall management of the project will be undertaken by Kate Pitt ACIfA.

### Equipment

The project will use existing AW equipment.

### Timetable of archaeological works

The work will be undertaken at the convenience of the client. No start date has yet been agreed, although works are expected to commence during late July-early August 2016.

### Insurance

Archaeology Wales Limited (AW) holds Insurance through Towergate insurance services.

### 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.

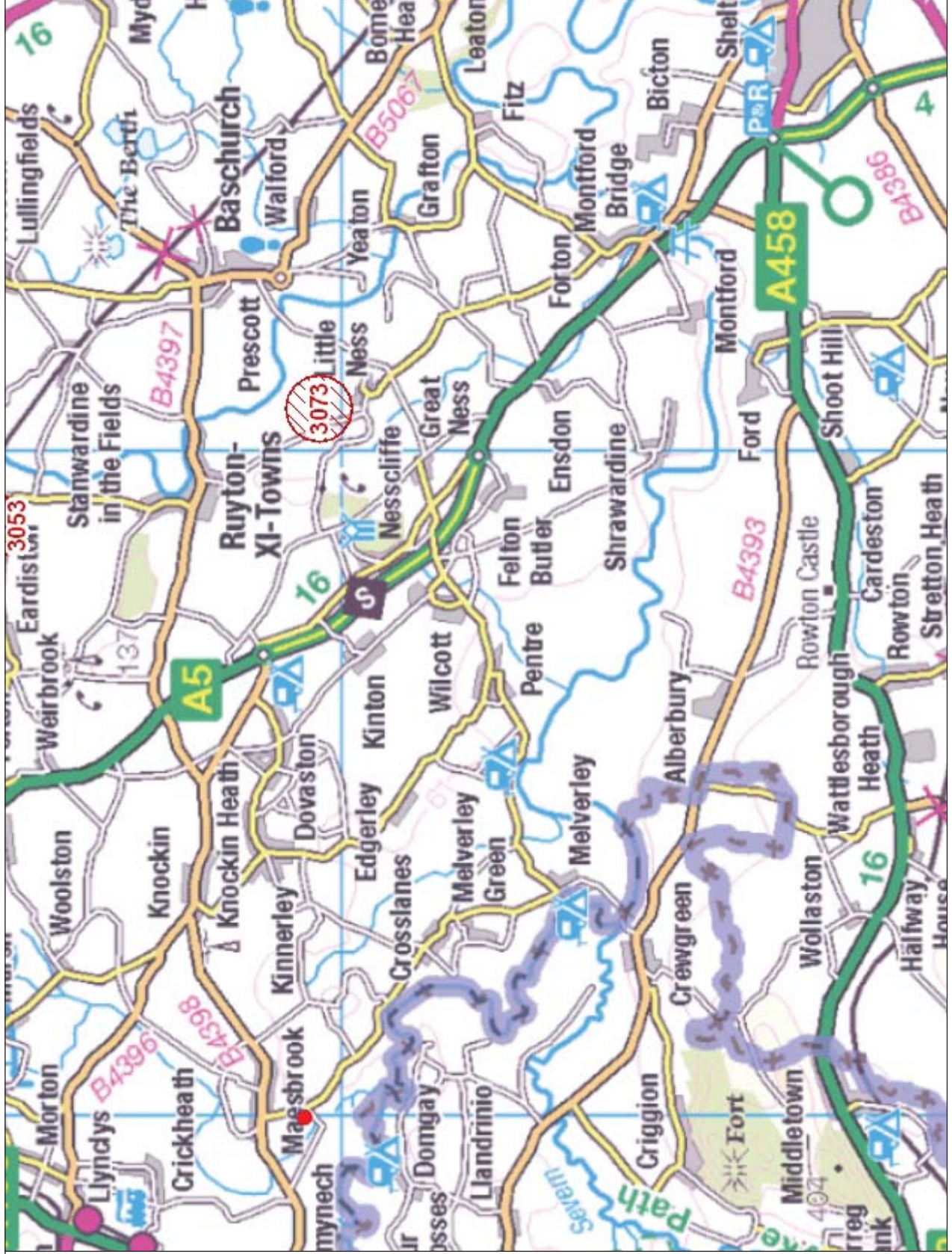
AW will produce a detailed Risk Assessment for approval by the client before any work is undertaken.



# Location Map

## Legend

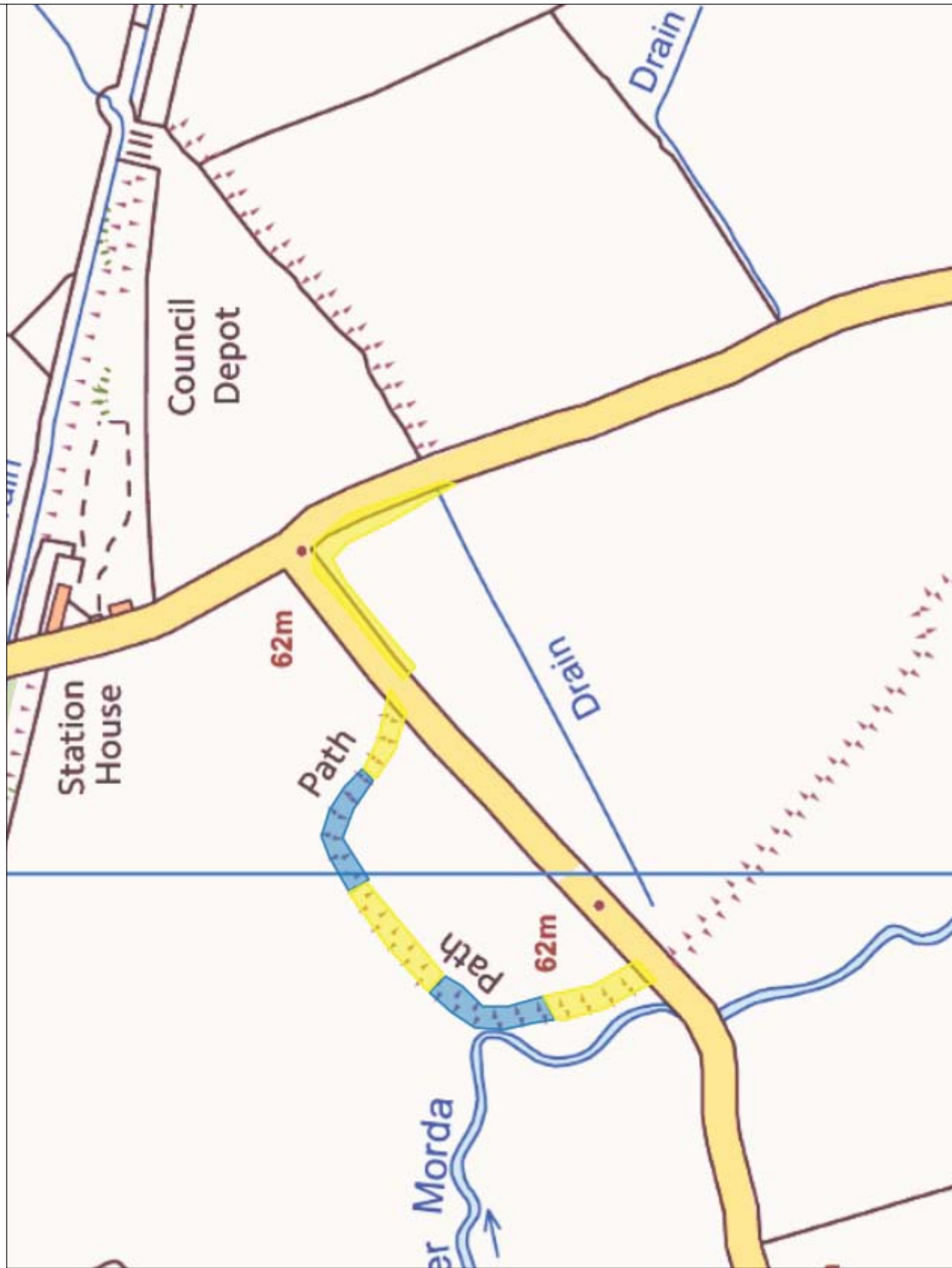
-  Hostile Sites
-  Live Flood Warnings (Points)
-  Severe Flood Warning
-  Flood Warning
-  Flood Alert
-  Live Flood Warnings (Areas)
-  Severe Flood Warning
-  Flood Warning
-  Flood Alert
-  All Clear Given
-  Warning no longer in force
-  OS Traditional Maps














0 851 1,702 2,553

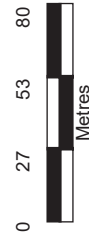
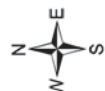


# Pentre Perfa- Archaeologist Supervision



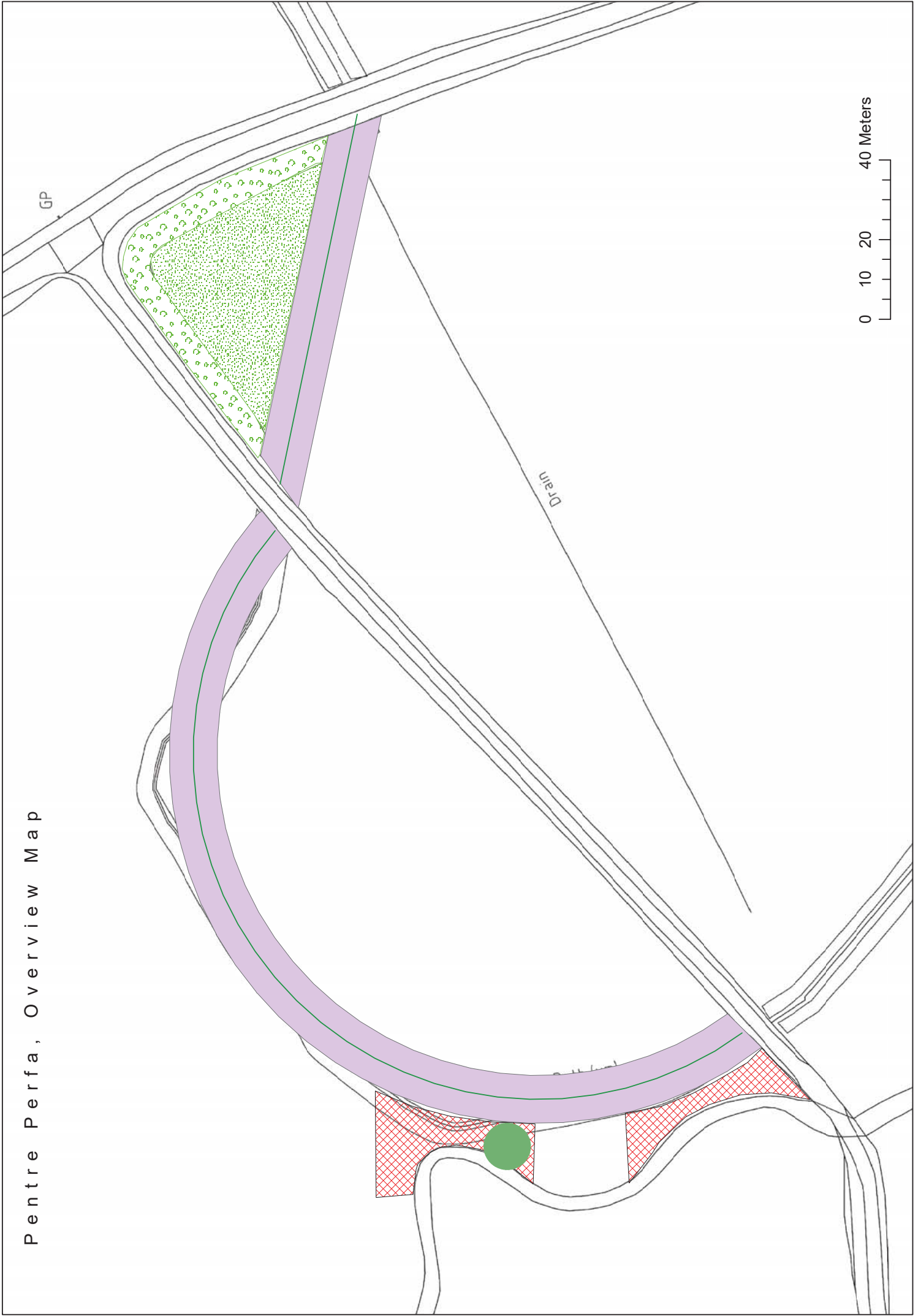
## Legend

-  Hostile Sites
-  Live Flood Warnings (Points)
  -  Severe Flood Warning
  -  Flood Warning
  -  Flood Alert
-  Live Flood Warnings (Areas)
  -  Severe Flood Warning
  -  Flood Warning
  -  Flood Alert
  -  All Clear Given
  -  Warning no longer in force





Pentre Perfa, Overview Map



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## **APPENDIX IV:** Archive Cover Sheet

# ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

## Land at Pentre Perfa Farm, Maesbrook, Shropshire

Site Name:	Pentre Perfa, Maesbrook
Site Code:	NSER/16/WB
PRN:	-
NPRN:	-
SAM:	-
Other Ref No:	-
NGR:	NGR SJ 30188 20558
Site Type:	Green Field
Project Type:	Watching Brief
Project Manager:	Kate Pitt
Project Dates:	September 2016
Categories Present:	Post-Medieval to Modern
Location of Original Archive:	AW
Location of duplicate Archives:	Shropshire Museums Service
Number of Finds Boxes:	NA
Location of Finds:	NA
Museum Reference:	NA
Copyright:	AW
Restrictions to access:	None

# *Archaeology Wales*

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