

CPAT Report No. 1394

35 Union Street, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire



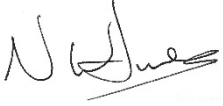
Watching Brief



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CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Mr and Mrs Thornton
 CPAT Project No: 2052
 Project Name: 35 Union Street, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire
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 County/LPA: Shropshire
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Cover photograph: CPAT 4121-0009 View from the north east of the house at 35 Union Street.

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Summary

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was invited in January 2016 to carry out a watching brief on groundworks for a single storey extension to the rear of a dwelling at 35 Union Street, Bishop's Castle (SO 32279 88916).

The development site lies within the medieval urban form of Bishops Castle, as defined by the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey, and on the edge of the area which is believed to represent the original 13th-century planned town, bounded by the town defences. In addition, the development is located within a historic tenement plot which lies between Union Street and High Street. Land within the development boundary appears to have remained relatively undisturbed until the recent past.

Excavation of four interlinked foundation trenches revealed deep, poorly stratified garden soil deposits overlying the natural soils which were revealed at a depth of 0.6m to 1m below current ground level. Nothing of archaeological significance was identified during the course of this work.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) were invited by Mr and Mrs Thornton to carry out a watching brief on groundworks for a single storey extension to the rear of a dwelling at 35 Union Street, Bishop's Castle (SO 32279 88916).
- 1.2. Groundworks for a porch, to be constructed at the same time on the frontage of Union Street, were also due to be carried out under archaeological supervision. However, owing to the low impact and shallow depth of these foundations, and following consultation with Charlotte Orchard of Shropshire Council no watching brief was deemed necessary.
- 1.3. The development site lies within the medieval urban form of Bishops Castle as defined by the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey, and on the edge of the area which is believed to represent the original 13th-century planned town, bounded by the town defences. In addition, the development is located within a historic tenement plot which lies between Union Street and High Street. Land within the development boundary appears to have remained relatively undisturbed until the recent past.



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Fig. 1. Location map showing the site of the Development

- 1.4. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Appendix 2) was prepared by CPAT in August 2015 which presented a detailed programme of works to be undertaken as part of the evaluation. The WSI was approved by the Historic Environment Team at Shropshire Council.

2 Methodology

- 2.1. The watching brief consisted of an observation upon four interlinked trenches, excavated on a parallel west-northwest east-southeast orientation as the existing dwelling. All groundworks were monitored. All spoil was scanned for artefacts following removal.

3 Historical Background

- 3.1. There is no evidence for a settlement at Bishop's Castle before the foundation of the castle in *c.* 1127, although Kerry Lane forms part of a possible prehistoric and later routeway from Wales, known as the Kerry Ridgeway.
- 3.2. The earliest recorded form of the placename is Bisshopescastle in 1282, although it was documented as *Castrum Episcopi* in 1255. The archaeological and documentary evidence indicates that urban occupation commenced in the 13th century but probably developed from the nucleus of a medieval rural settlement (probably originating in the 12th century).
- 3.3. The castle was built by the Bishop of Hereford on a new site between 1085 and 1127, and is documented between 1150 and 1163. The castle was called Lydbury Castle in the 12th century and only gradually acquired the name 'Bishop's Castle' in the 13th century. The lordship of Bishop's Castle was a marcher lordship, one of only three ecclesiastical lordships of any significance in the Marches. The castle was an episcopal palace and although there is little documentary evidence for the buildings it contained, it is probable that they were of high quality since Bishop Cantilupe stayed here often in the mid-13th century, and it was one of the episcopal palaces maintained as residences by the bishops of Hereford after 1356.
- 3.4. In 1203 the bishop granted a market charter to the settlement. The market was thought to be located at the north end of High Street. A total of 46 burgages were recorded in *The Red Book of the Bishop of Hereford*, a survey of the lands held by the bishop dated 1285.
- 3.5. The medieval town defences were thought to enclose an area centred on the High Street. The defensive circuit is no longer extant but is thought to be represented by the line of Union Street to the south and west, Station Street to the south and east and Salop Street to the north.
- 3.6. The medieval church of St John the Baptist was constructed to the south of the urban settlement, and was probably built during the 13th century.
- 3.7. Bishop's Castle expanded during the post medieval period, with the urban settlement expanding beyond the town defences. A royal charter was granted in the late 16th century, with Bishop's Castle becoming a borough corporation and a parliamentary borough by 1584. The town was apparently badly affected by the plague in 1593 and was later badly damaged by opposing forces during the English Civil War.
- 3.8. During the 18th and 19th centuries, Bishop's Castle was a rotten borough. Votes of the burgesses of the town were bought to ensure the election of candidates supported by

the landowners. The cost of this ruined the Walcot family who owned the town and the surrounding lands, having purchased them from the Crown during the time of Elizabeth I. In 1763, their estates were bought by the wealthy Clive family. The Clive family controlled the constituency of Bishops Castle and its elections until the Reform Act of 1832 which deprived 56 Rotten Boroughs, including Bishop's Castle, of both their Members of Parliament.

- 3.9. Historic mapping (Ordnance Survey, 1883 and 1976) suggests that the study area was subdivided into three open plots, oriented broadly north-south and accessed from the unnamed lane running east off Union Street.

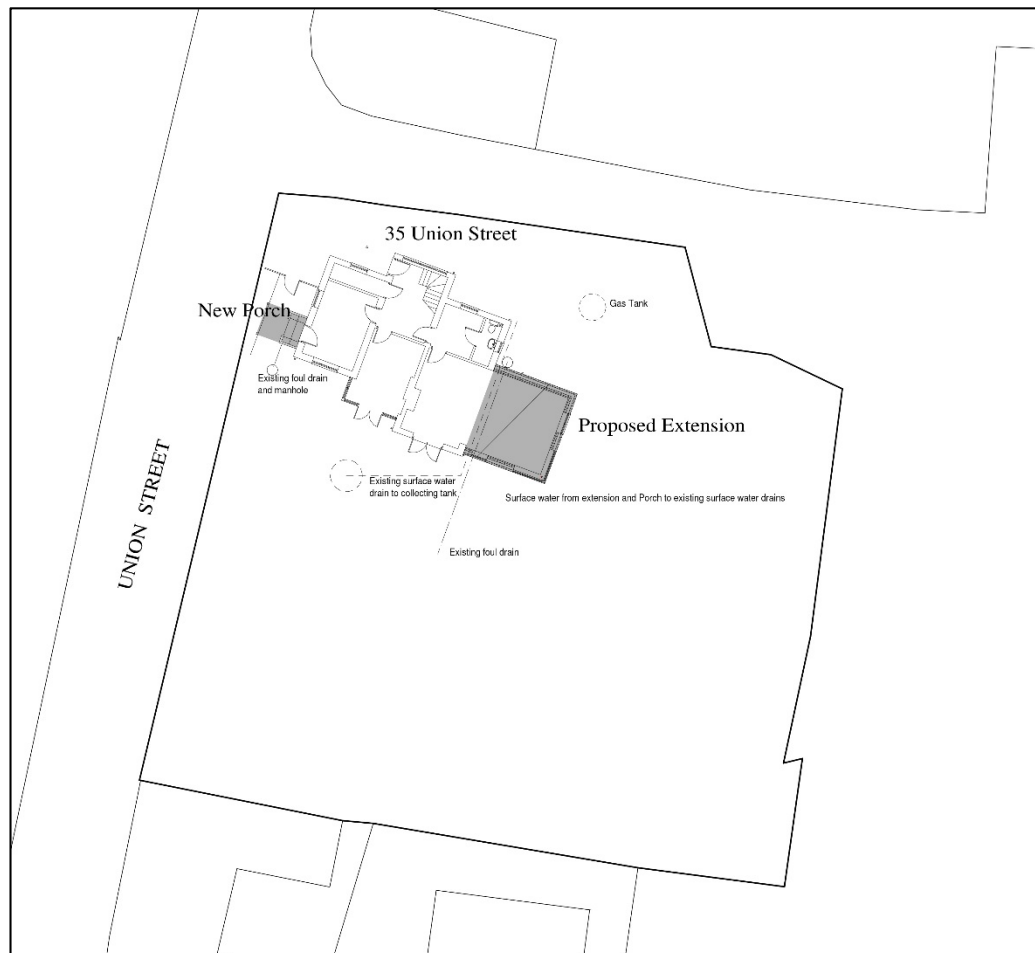


Fig. 2. Architects plan (north is top) showing the extension and porch (shaded grey)

4 Watching Brief

- 4.1. The groundworks comprised four interlinked foundation trenches, extending 5m east-west by 5.5m north-south, across an area immediately to the east of the existing dwelling (Fig. 2).
- 4.2. The topsoil (101) and underlying garden soils (102) were similar dark loamy rather gritty silt deposits. The topsoil was 0.1m in thickness and extended across the excavated area. The garden soil varied in depth across the site from 0.5m at the north

extent to 0.9m thick at the south end, suggesting that the soils had been artificially levelled.



Fig. 3. View from the south of section on south extent of excavations CPAT 4121-0001.

- 4.3. Underlying the topsoil and cutting the subsoil was a modern pit [104]. The fill (103) contained a dump of metal artefacts, probably objects which could not be burnt or otherwise disposed of.
- 4.4. Underlying the garden soil was a firm light brown gritty silt undisturbed natural deposition (105) sloping away to the south.



Fig. 4. View from the east of groundworks following completion CPAT 4121-0005.

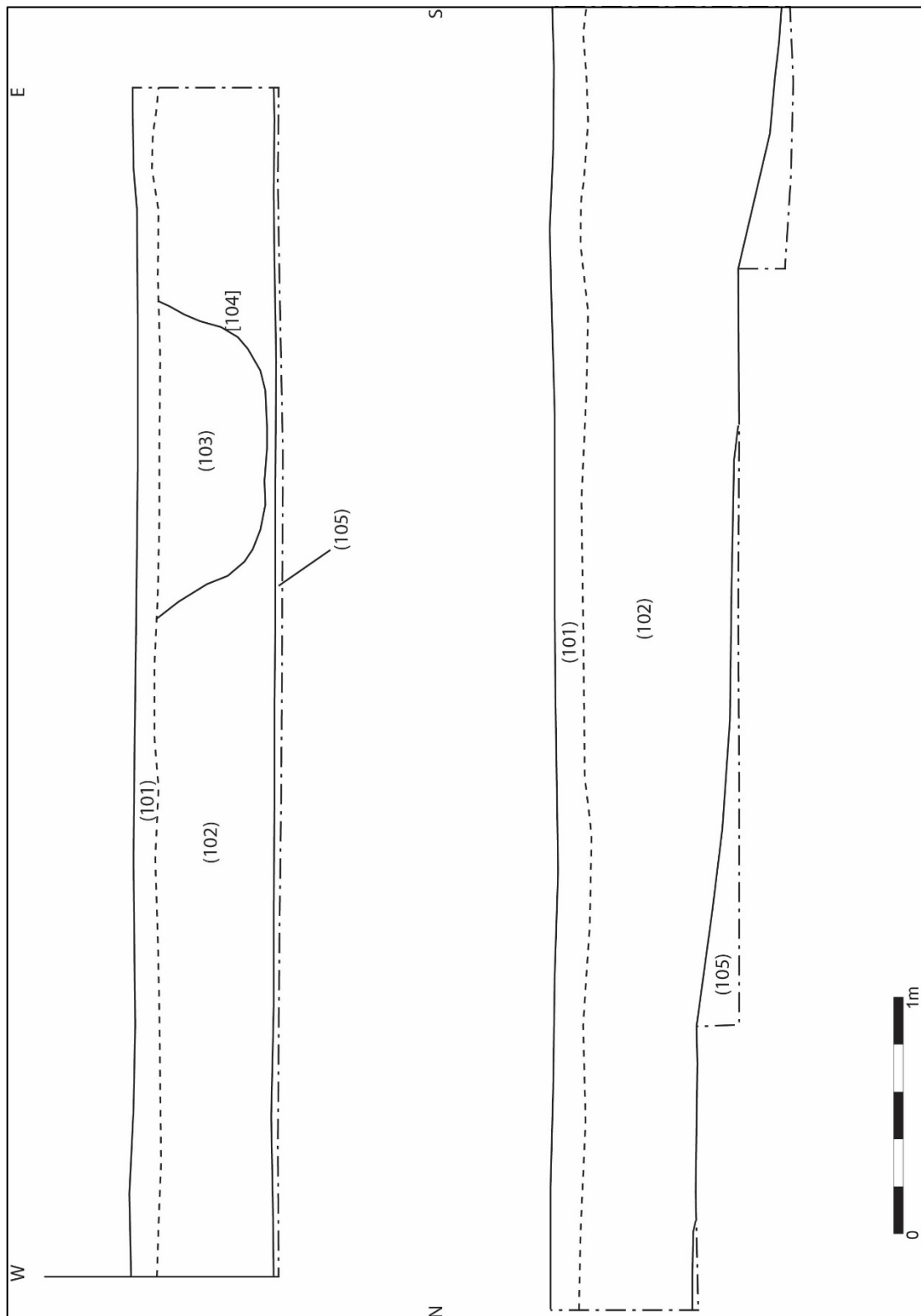


Fig. 5 South-facing and west facing sections of the trench system

5 Conclusions

- 5.1. Nothing of archaeological significance was identified during the course of this watching brief.
- 5.2. The garden soils (102) were notably quite clean for urban soils of this type. There was very little bone recovered, and only a few pieces of pottery or ceramic building material, the latter being 19th-century or later in date.
- 5.3. It seems possible that the soils encountered on the site were imported, and it is likely that was a fair degree of landscaping following the construction of the modern house.

6 Archive deposition Statement

- 6.1. 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 will be deposited with Shropshire Museums. A summary of the archive is provided in Appendix 1.

7 Sources

Published Sources

Dalwood, H., 1996, *Archaeological Assessment of Bishop's Castle, Shropshire*. Central Marches Historic Towns Survey (unpublished report).

Cartographic Sources

1883-84., Ordnance Survey 25 inch map LXII. Bishop's Castle and Whitcot Style Farm.

1976, Ordnance Survey 1,2500 Plan Series. Bishop's Castle.

Appendix 1: Site Archive

1 Watching Brief Visit Form

1 Architects plan (annotated)

9 digital photographs, CPAT film No 4121

Appendix 2: CPAT WSI 1587

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) has been invited by Philip Humphreys, on behalf of Mr And Mrs Thornton, to submit a proposal for an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a single storey extension and a porch at 35 Union Street, Bishop's Castle.
- 1.2 The development site lies within the medieval urban form of Bishops Castle as defined by the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey (HER PRN 05153), and on the edge of the area which is believed to represent the original 13th-century planned town, bounded by the town defences (HER PRN 05145). In addition, the development is located within a historic tenement plot which lies between Union Street and High Street (HER PRN 05148). Land within the development boundary appears to have remained relatively undisturbed until the recent past. Despite the disturbance caused by recent building works the development site may still have some archaeological potential and any below ground archaeological remains may be affected by the construction of the proposed new extension.
- 1.3 Planning permission was granted in December 2014 (ref: 14/05439/FUL), with the inclusion of Condition 5 relating to the cultural heritage:

No development approved by this permission shall commence until the applicant, or their agent or successors in title, have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) that makes provision for a watching brief during any ground disturbance. This written scheme shall be approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works.

Reason: *To ensure that any archaeological evidence is recorded satisfactorily, in accordance with Policies CS6 and CS17 of the Shropshire Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy. This inspection is required prior to commencement of the works in general since it relates to matters which need to be confirmed before subsequent phases proceed in order to ensure a sustainable development.*

2 Objectives

- 2.1 to reveal by means of a watching brief, the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the cultural heritage within the area of the proposed development in so far as these aims are possible;
- 2.2 to record any archaeological features identified during the watching brief;
- 2.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the watching brief;
- 2.4 to prepare a final publication of the results in an appropriate regional or national journal, depending on the nature and significance of any archaeology.

3 Methods

Watching brief

- 3.1 The watching brief will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2014).
- 3.2 Groundworks will be undertaken under close archaeological supervision to facilitate the identification of any significant archaeological features, deposits or finds. Should any such remains be identified sufficient time should be allowed within the construction programme to enable an appropriate level of investigation and recording to ensure their preservation by record.
- 3.3 The groundworks will be monitored by a single archaeologist. All excavation will be conducted by hand unless otherwise agreed with the Curator in advance. Should any significant archaeological remains be revealed the client and Curator will be informed and a site meeting may be necessary in order to determine the most appropriate course of action and any additional resources which may be required.

General

- 3.4 Contexts will be recorded on individual record forms and be drawn and photographed as appropriate. All photography will be in digital format to a minimum resolution of 12 mega pixels. All features will be located as accurately as possible with respect to buildings and boundaries identified on modern Ordnance Survey maps and levels will be related to Ordnance Datum where possible, with the use of total station surveying.
- 3.5 All artefacts will be related to their contexts from which they were derived and treated in a manner appropriate to their composition and will be processed by trained CPAT staff. Provision has been included for sampling deposits for dating, environmental and technological evidence as appropriate.

Reporting

- 3.6 Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing:
- Non-technical summary
 - A location map of study area showing area of the proposed development;
 - Details of the methodology used;
 - A plan showing the location of any archaeological features which have been identified;
 - Conclusions, including a statement regarding the importance of the archaeological remains in a local, regional or national context, and an indication of the potential for significant archaeological deposits within the development area;
 - Archive location;
 - Supporting illustrations as appropriate;
 - References.
- 3.7 The report will be provided in PDF format, copies of which will be made available to the client and the regional HER.

Archive

- 3.8 Prior to the commencement of the project CPAT will contact the Curator of Archaeology, Museum Services, Shropshire Council, who will advise on an appropriate repository for the project archive, the provision for any finds, and, when

applicable, the fee level for depositing the archive. The deposition of any finds will only take place following receipt of written consent from the owner(s).

- 3.9 The site archive, including finds and environmental material, will be ordered, catalogued, labelled and conserved and stored according to the UKIC Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage and the *CIfA Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* (2014). The project archive will be presented to an appropriate Museum or recipient body within 12 months of completion of the field work, subject to the agreement of the site owner with regards to any finds.
- 3.10 The Shropshire HER participates in the OASIS scheme, a form for which will be completed at each reporting stage.

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The archaeological works will be undertaken by a skilled archaeologist under the overall supervision of Nigel Jones MCI(A), a senior member of CPAT's staff. CPAT is also a CIfA Registered Organisation (RAO No 6) and as such agrees to abide by their *Code of Conduct* (2014) and the *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (2014).
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the fieldwork.
- 4.3 The client is advised that should significant archaeological remains or artefacts be revealed additional services may be required for which a contingency should be allowed. The requirements for any addition specialist services will be determined following discussions with the curator and would be subject to a separate WSI and costing.
- 4.4 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

N W Jones
14 August 2015