

CPAT Report No. 1576

Boscobel House, Shropshire


ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



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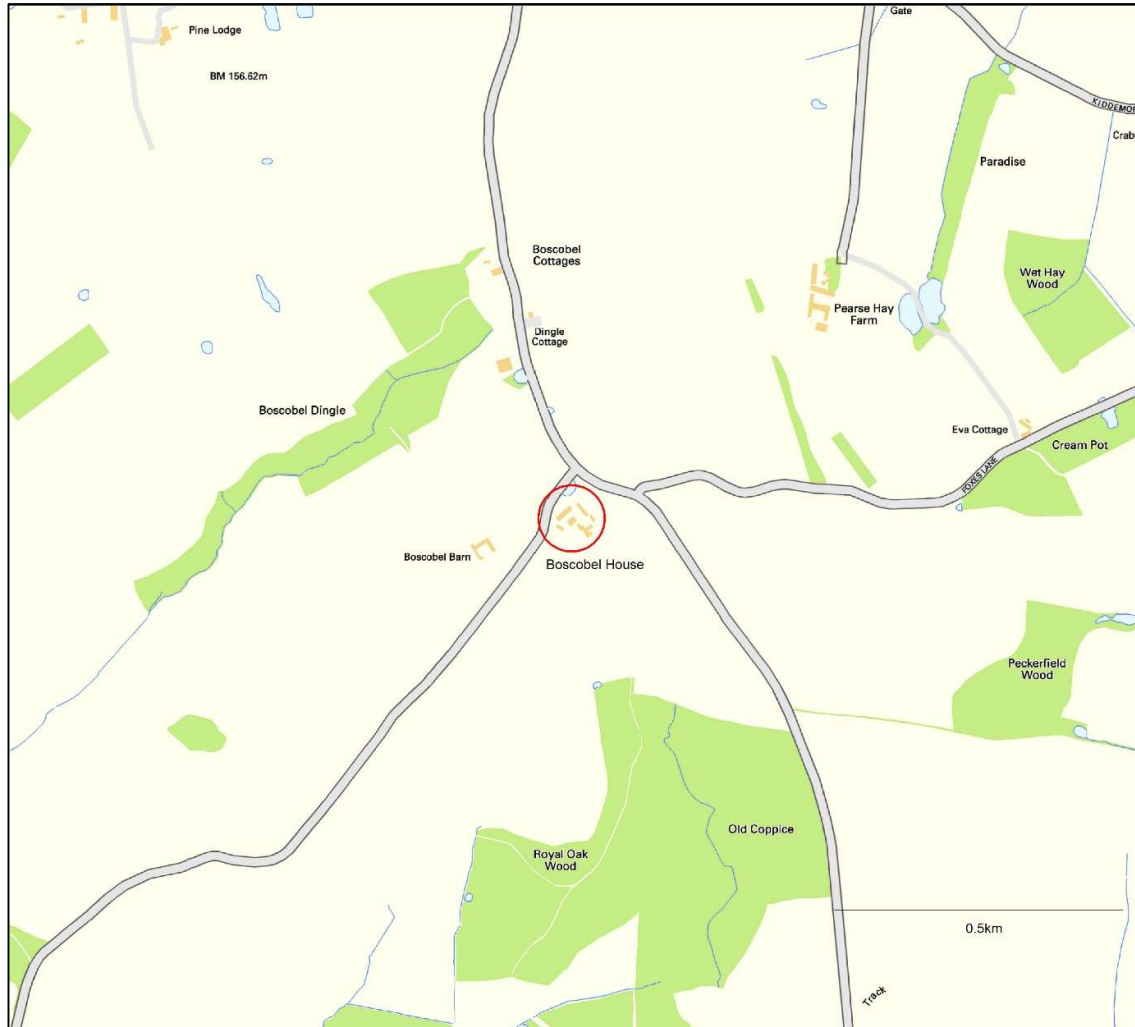
Summary

In March 2018 Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) carried out an archaeological watching brief on behalf of English Heritage during the groundworks for a drain at Boscobel House in Shropshire.

Trenching work unearthed an assemblage of mid-to late-19th century domestic and agricultural artefacts within the topsoil. No features or earlier structural remains were encountered.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by English Heritage to undertake a watching brief during the groundworks for a drain at Boscobel House in Shropshire (SJ 83757 08241).



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Fig. 1 Location of Boscobel House

- 1.2. The groundworks comprised a single hand-excavated trench extending between the southernmost corner of a 19th century farm building (now the site cafeteria) and a drain chamber approximately 22m to the north-west (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 Groundworks location plan, supplied by English Heritage

Historical Background

- 1.3. Boscobel House is located 14km north-west of Wolverhampton, on an unclassified road between the A5 and A41. To the south and west of the house the ground falls away, and from its upper floors and the prospect mound in its garden there are views south to the Royal Oak, and the woods beyond and west towards Telford.
- 1.4. Boscobel House, listed grade II* is a 16th-century timber-framed farmhouse (the present North Range), that was remodelled and extended c 1630 as a hunting lodge by John Giffard, the eldest son of Edward Giffard of White Ladies. The Giffards were Recusant Catholics, who allowed the future King Charles II to take refuge at the property in a nearby oak tree, which subsequently became known as the Royal Oak, following the parliamentary victory at the Battle of Worcester in 1651.

- 1.5. North of the House is a farmyard. Although it incorporates a large, 17th-century timber-framed barn, most of the buildings are of 19th-century date.
- 1.6. The Royal Oak, a successor of the original pollard, stands as an isolated tree in an arable field c200m south of the House and 100m north of Boscobel Wood. Three copper plaques recording the royal association are mounted on a post on the south side of the tree.
- 1.7. The farm building to the south-west of the farmyard was constructed between 1816 and 1882, when it was recorded on Ordnance Survey 1st edition mapping. The area immediately to the south-west of the building is depicted as open ground on the 1816 map but as a wooded area, bordered by a roadside verge on the 1885 map.



Fig. 3 The 19th century farm building (now a cafeteria) to the south-west of the farmyard.
Photo CPAT 4482-0007

2 Archaeological Watching Brief

- 2.1. The trench ran between a downpipe on the southern corner of the cafeteria and a drain chamber approximately 22m to the north-west. The trench was 0.30 to 0.35m in width and 0.25m to 0.60m in depth, to allow for the fall of the drain. The trench was hand excavated.
- 2.2. Two contexts were identified. The topsoil (01) comprised a soft mid-greyish brown silty sand, containing frequent small pebbles up to 0.4m thick. A number of mid-late 19th century artefacts were recorded in the topsoil deposit, including pottery, ceramic building material, metal implements, building fasteners and door furniture. Underlying the topsoil was a soft reddish brown sand layer (02), >0.20m thick. This was interpreted as a natural.



Fig. 4 View from the north of the trenching along the south-west elevation of the cafeteria.
Photo CPAT 4482-0005



Fig. 5 North-east facing section of trench adjacent to the cafeteria. Photo CPAT 4482-0004

3 Conclusion

- 3.1. The watching brief revealed no evidence relating to occupation of the site before the mid-19th century.

4 References

Published Sources

Historic England List Entry- *Boscobel House*. historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001115 accessed February 2018.

Cartographic Sources

1816 Ordnance Survey Old Series one-inch map of England & Wales, Sheet 61NE Shrewsbury

1882 Ordnance Survey 25 "map Shropshire XLV.1

5 Archive deposition Statement

- 5.1. 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 digital archive will be deposited with English Heritage. No artefacts were retained for archiving. A summary of the archive is provided in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1: Site Archive

2 Watching Brief Visit Forms

13 Digital Photographs Film No. CPAT 4482

Appendix 2: CPAT WSI 1892

1 Introduction

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- 1.2. Boscobel House stands 14km north-west of Wolverhampton, on an unclassified road between the A5 and A41. To the south and west of the house the ground falls away, and from its upper floors and the prospect mound in its garden there are views south to the Royal Oak, and the woods beyond and west towards Telford.
- 1.3. Boscobel House, listed grade II* is a 16th-century timber-framed farmhouse (the present North Range), that was remodelled and extended c 1630 as a hunting lodge by John Giffard, the eldest son of Edward Giffard of White Ladies. The Giffards were Recusants, who allowed the future King Charles II to take refuge at the property in an oak tree, which subsequently became known as the Royal Oak, following the parliamentary victory at the Battle of Worcester in 1651.
- 1.4. North of the House is a farmyard. Although it incorporates a large, 17th-century timber-framed barn, most of the buildings are of 19th-century date.
- 1.5. The Royal Oak, a successor of the original pollard, stands as an isolated tree in an arable field c200m south of the House and 100m north of Boscobel Wood. Three successive copper plaques recording the royal association are mounted on a post on the south side of the tree.
- 1.6. The groundworks (marked in red on the location plan) are located along the south elevation of the cafeteria to the south of the farmyard. The trench is to be hand excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m.

2 Methodology

- 2.1. The watching brief will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (2014). The watching brief will be undertaken to monitor groundworks associated with the construction of the new detached recreational building. The 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.

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- 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 8 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 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.
- 2.2. 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 evaluation will be deposited with an appropriate museum, subject to the permission of the owner.
- 2.3. 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

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- References
 - Appropriate appendices on archives and finds
- 2.4. In addition to copies submitted to the client, a copy of the report will be provided to the Shropshire Historic Environment Record.
 - 2.5. The site archive 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.

3 Resources and Programming

- 3.1. The watching brief will be undertaken by a skilled archaeologist under the overall supervision of Nigel Jones, 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 (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).
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. 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.
- 3.4. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 3.5. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

W Logan

02 February 2018