

CPAT Report No. 1571

# Berrington Hall, Herefordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



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CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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 with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

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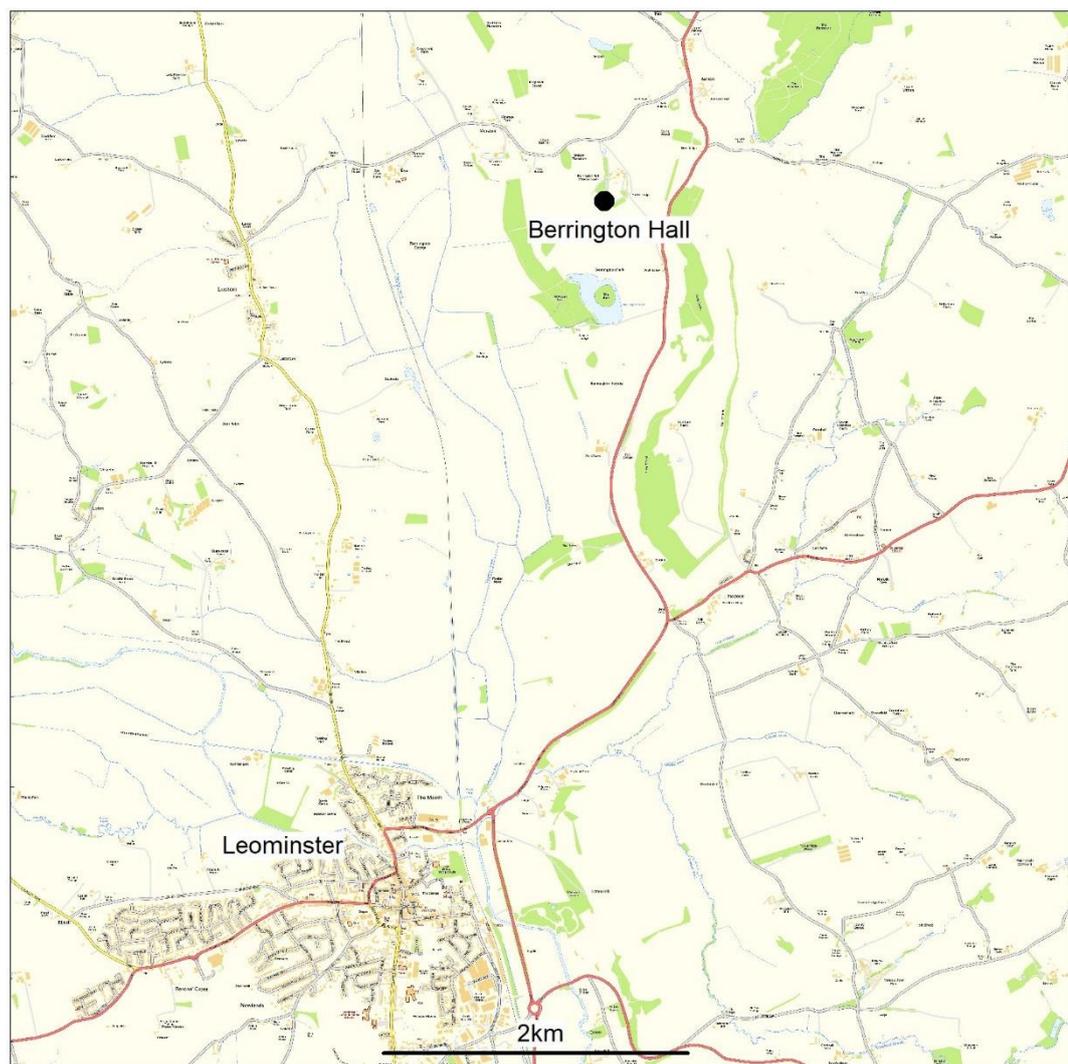
## Summary

A watching brief was undertaken by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, on behalf of the National Trust, during the excavation of a narrow trench for the installation of fibre optic cabling to the east of Berrington Hall, Herefordshire. The cable route extended for around 300m between a minor road and the Gatehouse, now the Visitor Reception, crossing parkland for the majority of its length.

No further evidence was revealed for two linear features known to cross the route, a possible medieval road and a linear ditch, although the work did reveal part of a light well for the cellar at the northern end of the Gatehouse east elevation.

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by the National Trust to undertake a watching brief during the installation of new ducting and cabling for a 300m-long fibre optic service at Berrington Hall in Herefordshire.
- 1.2. Berrington Hall is a country house located about 3 miles (4.8 km) north of Leominster, Herefordshire (Fig. 1). It is a neoclassical country house which was designed by Henry Holland in 1778-81 for Thomas Harley and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was the seat of the Cawley family.



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Fig. 1 Location of Berrington Hall

- 1.3. The cable route extended north from the main road (A49) and continued in existing roadside ducting before heading westwards across parkland to the Gatehouse, now the Visitor Reception (Fig. 2, A).

 <b>NATIONAL TRUST</b> HISTORIC BUILDINGS, SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD ARCHAEOLOGY SECTION CONSERVATION DIRECTORATE	TITLE	WAN Enhancement Programme Route map (orange) LiDAR survey/HER	
	PROPERTY	Berrington Hall	
	SCALE	1:2,688	
	COMPILED BY	Viviana Culshaw	
	DATE	14/11/2017	
			

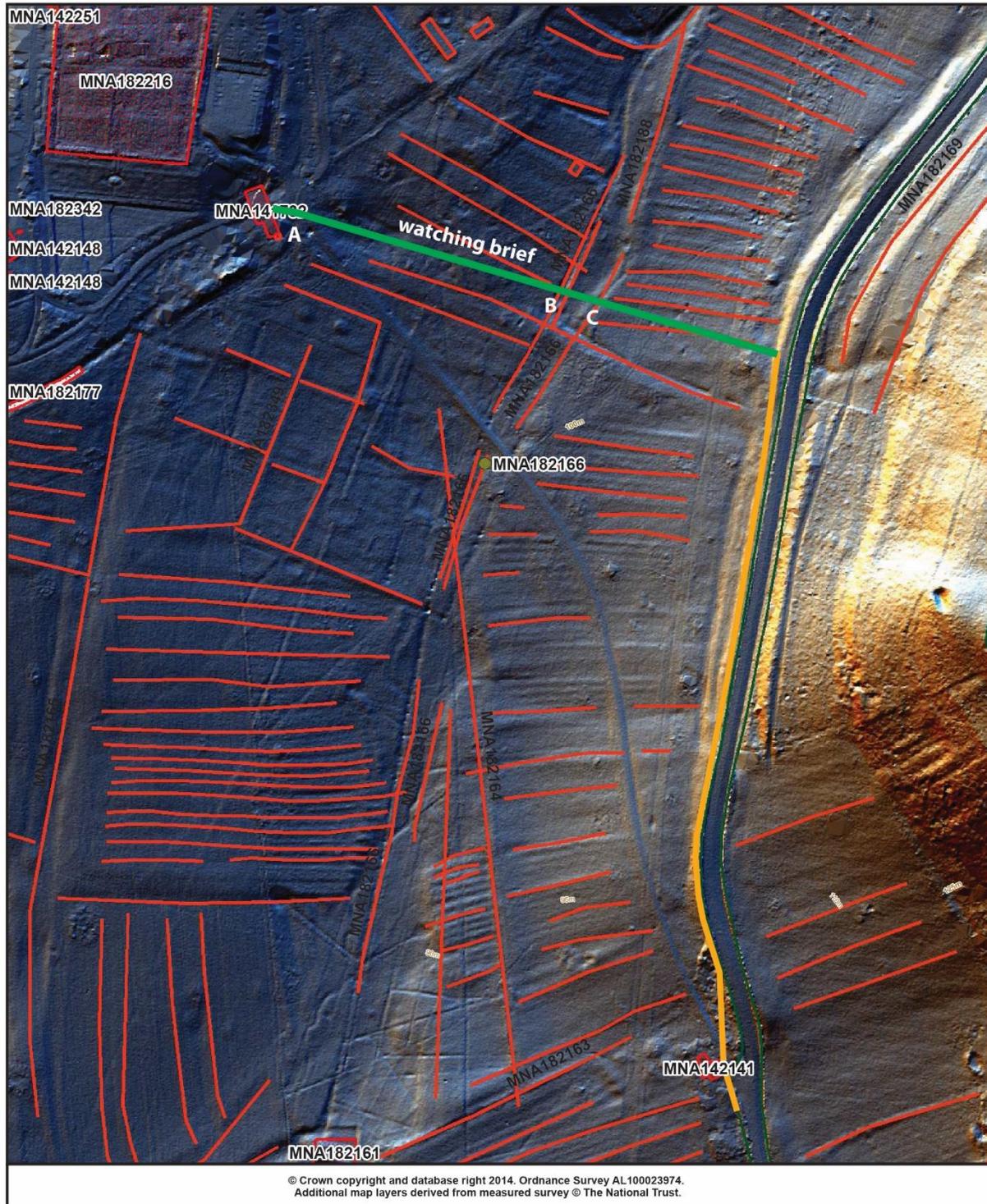


Fig. 2 Route of the underground cable subject to the watching brief

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## 2 Background

- 2.1. Berrington Hall is a remarkable example of Georgian design on a compact scale. The Grade II\* listed Parkland, Garden and Pleasure Grounds were Capability Brown's last landscape and are a significant and rare example of an intact Georgian estate with a curved walled garden. The house and parkland was acquired by the National Trust in 1957.
- 2.2. Berrington was essentially created by one man, Thomas Harley, who bought the estate around 1775. He made his fortune as a banker and government contractor in London, but had long family links with Herefordshire, to which, in his mid-40s, he was keen to retire from the hurly-burly of City politics.
- 2.3. Harley commissioned Capability Brown to lay out the park, which has spectacular views west towards Wales and the Black Mountains. Around 1778 he also called in Brown's son-in-law, Henry Holland, to design him a new house in the latest French influenced Neo-classical style, using the finest London craftsman.
- 2.4. Harley had no male heir, but was delighted when in 1781 his daughter Anne married the son of Admiral Lord Rodney, a great naval commander. On Harley's death in 1804, Berrington passed to the Rodney family, who lived there for the next 95 years. Unfortunately George, the 7th Lord Rodney lost the family wealth in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. First selling off furniture and paintings, he was finally forced to sell the house in 1901.
- 2.5. The house was purchased in 1901 by Frederick Cawley MP (later to become Lord Cawley), a wealthy Lancashire cotton finisher who bought a new lease of life to Berrington. He redecorated the house with considerable sympathy and many of his schemes still survive. He replaced ugly Victorian fire grates with more appropriate Georgian models but otherwise did little to disturb Holland's beautiful original design.

## 3 Watching brief

- 3.1. The watching brief was conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014). Monitoring of trenching operations took place over eight days between 15-25 February 2018.
- 3.2. Excavations to connect the cable to the Gatehouse (Fig. 2, A) revealed the outer edge of a light well for the cellar on the north side of the east elevation (Fig. 3), although no useful architectural or structural information was forthcoming.



Fig. 4 cable trench and light well for Gatehouse cellar

- 3.3. From the Gatehouse the trench connected to a small junction box before heading eastwards, across the tarmac drive. This revealed the natural subsoil, a soft, light reddish brown clay silt, beneath the road makeup. No features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were revealed.
- 3.4. The cable trench extended for around 145m across parkland, in an east-south-easterly direction. The topsoil here was generally around 0.2m thick and lay directly above the natural subsoil. At a point slightly beyond the centre of this section of trenching the cable route crossed the line of a possible roadway (MNA 182166; Fig 2, A), as well as a ditch (MNA 182188; Fig. 2, B; Fig. 4) associated with a former army camp, both recorded in the National Trust HBSMR. However, within the confines of the trench there was no evidence to further elucidate the nature and date of these features. The remainder of the trenching also failed to produce any archaeologically significant features or finds.



Fig. 4 Cable trenching at the point where the route crossed the ditch MNA 182188



Fig. 5 Excavations for a junction box within the parkland, showing the shallow topsoil lying directly above the subsoil

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## 4 Conclusions

- 4.1. The watching brief monitored the excavation of a narrow trench for the installation of fibre optic cabling to the east of Berrington Hall, Herefordshire. The cable route extended for around 300m between a minor road and the Gatehouse, now the Visitor Reception, crossing parkland for the majority of its length.
- 4.2. No further evidence was revealed for two linear features known to cross the route, a possible medieval road and a linear ditch, although the work did reveal part of a light well for the cellar at the northern end of the Gatehouse east elevation.

## 5 Archive deposition Statement

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

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## Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 1859

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) have been invited by the National Trust to undertake a watching brief during the installation of new ducting and cabling for a 300m-long fibre optic service at Berrington Hall in Herefordshire.
- 1.2. Berrington Hall is a country house located about 3 miles (4.8 km) north of Leominster, Herefordshire. It is a neoclassical country house which was designed by Henry Holland in 1778-81 for Thomas Harley and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was the seat of the Cawley family.
- 1.3. The route begins on the main road (A49) where the fibre node is present (annotated on picture above). The route will then continue in the current road side ducting up to the point where it then diverts towards the NT property. A new access chamber will be installed on the NT side and link to the road side chamber via duct. The route then will be mole-ploughed across the soft field towards the visitor reception. Just before the reception building there is a solid driveway/footpath which will need open trench work for the duct install. The fibre will then enter in to the reception building basement where a fibre gas box will be installed and the fibre will begin the internal route. New access chambers will be installed at every approx. 250m.

### 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 installation of the new cable and ducting. 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.
  - 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.

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- 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
  - 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 Herefordshire 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)

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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. If appropriate, a short report will be published in *Archaeology in Wales*.
- 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.

N W Jones

18 October 2017