

CPAT Report No. 1527

# The Wrekin Telecoms Mast, Shropshire

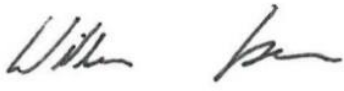
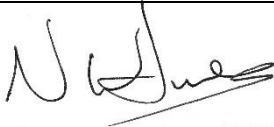
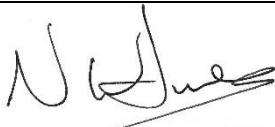
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL CLWYD-POWYS

CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Entrust  
 CPAT Project No: 2235  
 Project Name: The Wrekin Telecoms Mast, Shropshire  
 Grid Reference: SJ 62892 08274  
 County/LPA: Shropshire / Telford and Wrekin  
 Planning Application: TWC/2017/0455  
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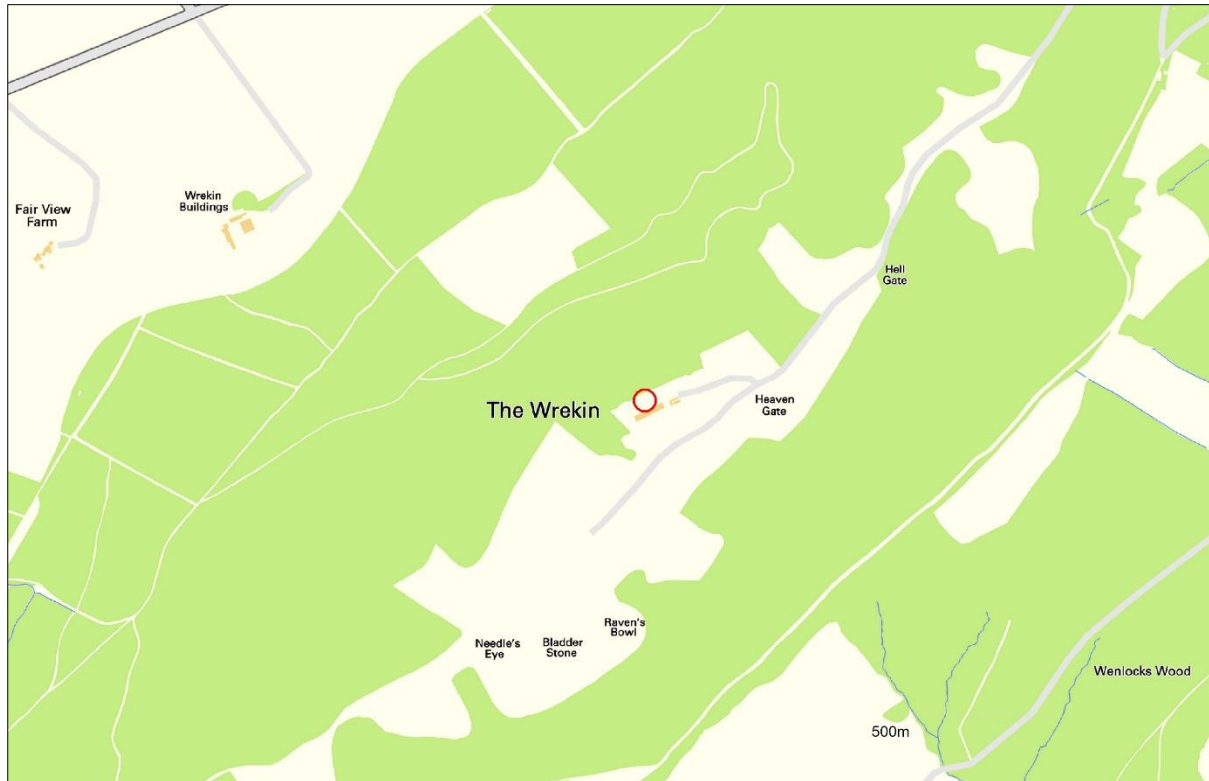
## **Summary**

In September 2017 the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) carried out a watching brief during the excavation of footings and cable trenching for a new back-up generator at the Wrekin Telecoms Mast, Shropshire.

Groundworks revealed modern gravel road surfacing overlying redeposited material. No archaeological features were revealed and no artefacts were recovered.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust carried out a watching brief during groundworks for the installation of a back-up power generator on a concrete foundation pad and ancillary development at the Wrekin Telecommunications Mast, The Wrekin, Telford, Shropshire (NGR SJ 62892 08274; planning application TWC/2017/0455).



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Fig. 1 Location of the site on the Wrekin

- 1.2. The development site lies within a large multivallate and univallate hillfort (Scheduled Monument No: SM 34933, HA 1021275). In addition to the hillfort the designated area also contains a round barrow, a late Bronze Age settlement and WWII military remains. Subsequently the installation of the concrete pad and ancillary trenching has the potential to cause some truncation of possible below ground features and deposits.
- 1.3. Planning permission was granted in May 2017, with the inclusion of the following condition:
2. No development approved by this permission shall commence until the applicants, or their agents, or their successors in title have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (advised by Shropshire Council's Historic Environment Team) prior to the commencement of works. The applicant may wish to contact

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the Senior Archaeological Advisor, Shropshire Council, who can advise on and, if required, issue a brief for the WSI.

1.4. Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) was granted by Historic England in May 2017, with the inclusion of the following conditions:

(a) The works to which this consent relates shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State, who will be advised by Historic England. At least 4 weeks' notice (or such shorter period as may be mutually agreed) in writing of the commencement of work shall be given to Alison MacDonald ([alison.macdonald@historicengland.org.uk](mailto:alison.macdonald@historicengland.org.uk)) in order that an Historic England representative can inspect and advise on the works and their effect in compliance with this consent.

(b) No ground works/ building works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of an archaeological watching brief during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by Historic England.

(c) All those involved in the implementation of the works granted by this consent must be informed by the developer that the land is designated as a scheduled monument under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended); the extent of the scheduled monument as set out in both the scheduled monument description and map; and that the implications of this designation include the requirement to obtain Scheduled Monument Consent for any works to a scheduled monument from the Secretary of State prior to them being undertaken.

(d) Equipment and machinery shall not be used or operated in the scheduled area in conditions or in a manner likely to result in damage to the monument or cause ground disturbance other than that which is expressly authorised in this consent.

## 2 Historical Background

2.1. The following is reproduced from Silvester 2005.

2.2. The earliest visible archaeology on the Wrekin is the putative Bronze Age cairn, now with a triangulation station set on it, at the south-west end of the hilltop.

2.3. The large multivallate Iron Age hillfort perhaps had its origins in a Late Bronze Age settlement on the hill top which then went through several phases of development to produce the earthworks visible today. These extend along the crest of the hill and have been the subject of various episodes of archaeological survey and excavation over the last century, most notably Kathleen Kenyon's excavation in 1939 and Stan Stanford's in 1973, and this has provided evidence of the complexity of the structure. That it may have been attacked and taken by the Roman military, probably in 49 AD, is suggested by the discovery of two Roman javelin heads. It has been suggested that this was the original tribal capital of the Comovii, and that in the Roman era it was

- 
- succeeded by the cantonal capital at Wroxeter, otherwise Uriconium. No firm evidence for Romano British occupation of the hill has been identified.
- 2.4. In the Anglo-Saxon era the people dwelling in the area of the hill were known as the Wreocensaetan, being referred to in the Tribal Hidage which may be as early as the late 7th century as well as in later Old English charters. This group almost certainly took their name from the hill and Margaret Gelling believes that this was probably known as Uriconio which in turn was based upon a personal name, Virico. The hill itself was termed Wrocene in a source which may go back to 975 and La Wrekene in 1278.
  - 2.5. In medieval times the Wrekin gave its name to a royal forest, more generally as Mount Gilbert, which lay to the east of the Severn, Wrekin Hill itself lay on the western edge of the forest which extended over the whole Domesday hundred of Recordine and just into Staffordshire. In 1190 Shrewsbury Abbey and Wenlock Priory divided up the woods on the Wrekin which their tenants had previously shared, and in 1234 the trenches or linear clearances that defined Little Wenlock's portions were renewed (V CH 1989, 48). Some vills retained intercommoning rights, which finds a reflection in the fact that it was divided up between several ecclesiastical parishes - Wellington, Little Wenlock and Wroxeter - up to and including the 19th century. The woods on and around the Wrekin were also intensively used for pasture and for pannage to which pigs were sometimes brought from distant estates.
  - 2.6. It is reported that by the 1530s the Wrekin was almost denuded of its woodland and pasture, probably through over-grazing and through pannage, although other agencies may have played a part. Leland stated that it 'standithe as a Pharos, baren of wood'. By the early 18th century those woods that remained were more carefully managed and John Rocque's map of Shropshire from 1752 reveals that the lower slopes of the Wrekin were planted with conifers. But the Wrekin also offered common grazing and Aston township had large flocks of sheep, reflecting this resource, in the later 17th and early 18th century, although it has been suggested that common rights were in decline by this time. Notwithstanding such occasional references, there seems to be relatively little documented information about the later history of the hill.
  - 2.7. In the modern period the Wrekin has been used for diverse activities, most of which have left little in the way of permanent markers on the landscape. However, the ridge crest shows the remains of a World War II searchlight battery, and the television transmission station mast erected in 1973 on the northern periphery of the hillfort.

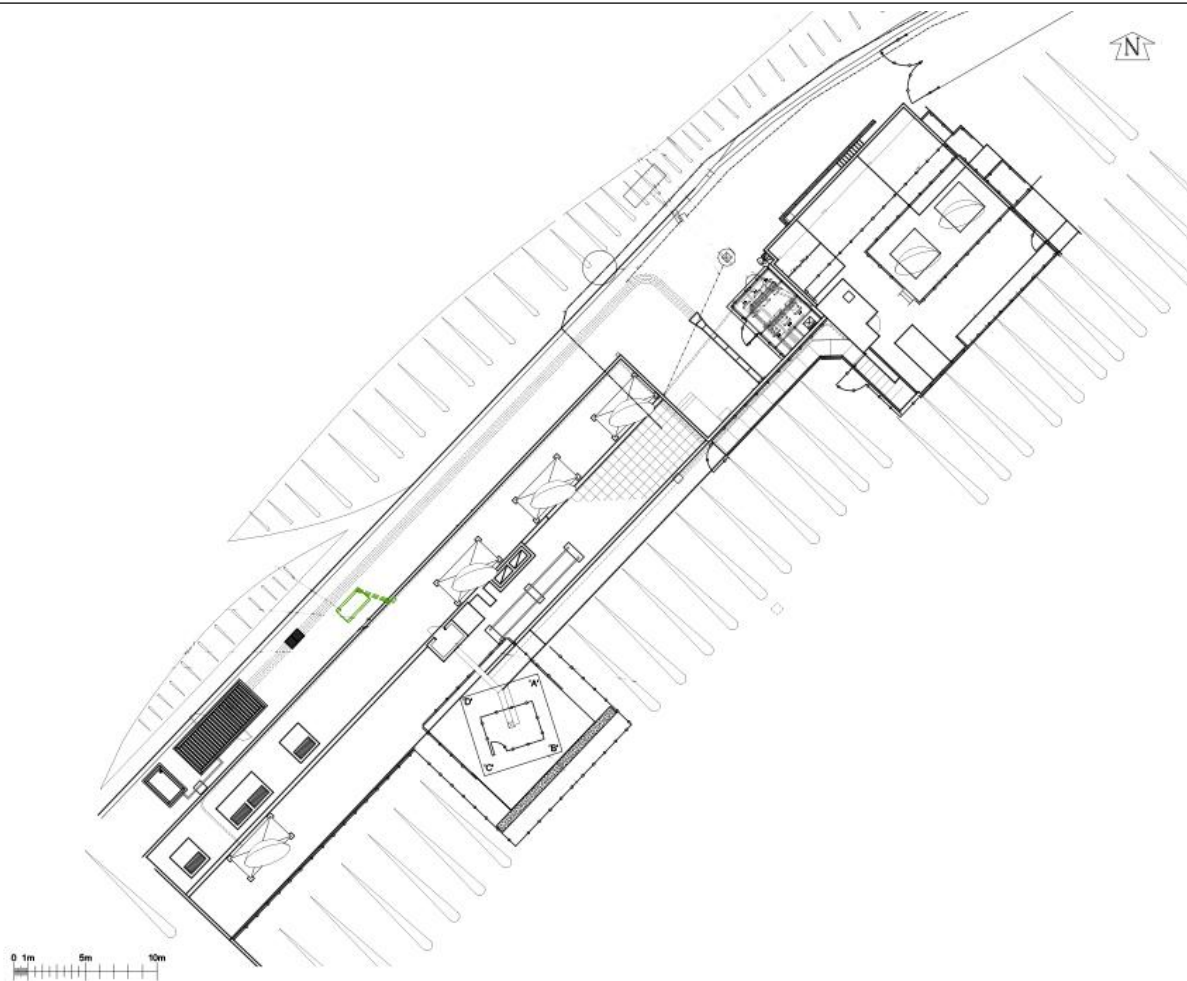


Fig. 2 Plan of the transmission mast and station with the groundworks area marked in green (Reproduced from the client's plan)

### 3 Watching Brief

- 3.1. The groundworks area comprised the footprint of the generator pad (Fig. 2), which measured 2.25m by 1.22m and was excavated to a depth of 0.2m. Additionally, a cable trench, 0.6m in depth, was excavated between the pad and the main station building.





Fig. 3 North-eastern facing section of the cable trench CPAT 4400-010

- 3.2. The uppermost deposit was a modern gravel hardstanding deposit (001) 0.1m thick. Underlying this was a layer of redeposited natural subsoil (002), comprising light reddish sand silt >0.6m thick, which contained frequent stones. No finds or features of archaeological significance were revealed during the groundworks.



Fig. 4 View from the north-east of the generator plot following excavation.  
Photo CPAT 4400-009

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## 4 Conclusion

- 4.1. The site for the television transmission station appears to have been cut into the hillside during the construction work in the early 1970s. It seems most unlikely that any archaeological features or associated material survive within the development area of the transmission station, despite its location on the circuit of the earlier hillfort defences.

## 5 References

### *Published Sources*

Silvester, R. J., 2005. *The Wrekin: An Archaeological Survey*, CPAT Report No. 705.

## 6 Archive deposition

- 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 digital archive only will be deposited with the regional Historic Environment Record, maintained by Shropshire Museums. A summary of the archive is provided in Appendix 1.

### **Archive Summary**

10 digital photographs Film No CPAT-4400

1 watching brief recording form

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## Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 1828

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been invited by Kieran Tarpey, Entrust, Daresbury Innovation Centre, to submit a proposal for undertaking a watching brief during groundworks associated with the installation of a back-up power generator on concrete foundation pad and ancillary development at the Wrekin Telecommunications Mast, The Wrekin, Telford, Shropshire (planning application TWC/2017/0455).
- 1.2. The Historic Environment Team, Shropshire Council, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local authority, together with Historic England (West Midlands Office) have determined that the watching brief is required to ensure the preservation by record of any archaeological remains which may be disturbed by the development.
- 1.3. The proposed development site lies within a large multivallate and univallate hillfort (Scheduled Monument No: SM 34933, HA 1021275, NGR SJ 62892 08274). In addition to the hillfort the designated area also contains a round barrow, a late Bronze Age settlement and WWII military remains. Subsequently the installation of the concrete pad and ancillary trenching has the potential to cause some truncation of possible below ground features and deposits.
- 1.4. Planning permission (TWC/2017/0455) was granted in May 2017, with the inclusion of the following condition:
- 1.5. 2. No development approved by this permission shall commence until the applicants, or their agents, or their successors in title have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (advised by Shropshire Council's Historic Environment Team) prior to the commencement of works. The applicant may wish to contact the Senior Archaeological Advisor, Shropshire Council, who can advise on and, if required, issue a brief for the WSI.
- 1.6. Reason: The site is known to hold archaeological interest.
- 1.7. Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) was granted by Historic England in May 2017 with the inclusion of the following conditions:
  - (a) The works to which this consent relates shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State, who will be advised by Historic England. At least 4 weeks' notice (or such shorter period as may be mutually agreed) in writing of the commencement of work shall be given to Alison MacDonald ([alison.macdonald@historicengland.org.uk](mailto:alison.macdonald@historicengland.org.uk)) in order that an Historic England representative can inspect and advise on the works and their effect in compliance with this consent.

(b) No ground works/ building works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of an archaeological watching brief during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by Historic England.

(c) All those involved in the implementation of the works granted by this consent must be informed by the developer that the land is designated as a scheduled monument under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended); the extent of the scheduled monument as set out in both the scheduled monument description and map; and that the implications of this designation include the requirement to obtain Scheduled Monument Consent for any works to a scheduled monument from the Secretary of State prior to them being undertaken.

(d) Equipment and machinery shall not be used or operated in the scheduled area in conditions or in a manner likely to result in damage to the monument or cause ground disturbance other than that which is expressly authorised in this consent.

## 2 Objectives

2.1. The objectives of the mitigation are:

- to conduct a watching brief during groundworks;
- to prepare a report outlining the results of the work;
- 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 Methodology

The archaeological works will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014). 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.

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- All photography will be taken using a digital SLR camera with a minimum resolution of 12 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.
- 3.1. 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 watching brief will be deposited with an appropriate museum, subject to the permission of the owner.

## Report

- 3.2. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:
- Non-technical summary
  - Location and NGR
  - Statutory designations
  - Date of record, recorder and archive deposition
  - Introduction
  - Site location
  - Methodology
  - Archaeological background
  - Watching brief results
  - Conclusions
  - References
  - Appropriate appendices on archive and finds

## Archive deposition

- 3.3. The archive will be assembled in accordance with the guidelines published in *Standards in the museum care of archaeological collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission 1994), *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term*

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*storage* (UKIC, 1990) and *Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in compilation, transfer and curation* (AAF 2007). The resultant research archive will be checked and ordered according to MoRPHE (EH, 2006) criteria.

- 3.4. The Shropshire HER participates in the OASIS scheme, a form for which will be completed at each reporting stage.
- 3.5. Any artefacts recovered during the excavation will be deposited with an appropriate museum, subject to the permission of the owner and the provision of the Treasure Act 1996, if appropriate.

#### **4 Resources and programming**

- 4.1. The assessment will be undertaken by a team of skilled archaeologists 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).
- 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. At present CPAT would be in a position to undertake the watching brief during September 2017, subject to the receipt of sufficient advanced notice from the client.
- 4.4. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.5. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

I Grant

13 Sept 2017