

CPAT Report No. 1635

Rhosgoch Mill, Powys


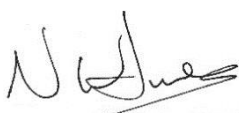
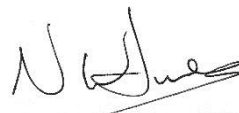
Archaeological Watching Brief



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CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Janet Russell
 CPAT Project No: 2331
 Project Name: Rhosgoch Mill Watching Brief
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 with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

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Summary

A watching brief was carried out at Rhosgoch Mill, near Painscastle, during the removal of existing floors within the building, as part of the conversion of the derelict mill into living accommodation.

The building had been the subject of an assessment in 2017 which identified an earlier floor within the mill house. The watching brief revealed further evidence for earlier flooring within the house, together with structural evidence within the mill for an earlier layout of machinery, predating its refurbishment in 1867.

Crynodeb

Cynhaliwyd briff gwyllo ym Melin Rhos-goch, ger Castell-paen, yn ystod gwaith tynnu lloriau presennol yn yr adeilad, fel rhan o waith trosi'r felin adfeiliedig yn breswylfa.

Bu'r adeilad yn destun asesiad yn 2017, a nodwyd llawr cynharach o fewn tŷ'r felin. Fe ddatgelodd y briff gwyllo ragor o dystiolaeth o lawr cynharach yn y tŷ, ynghyd â thystiolaeth strwythurol yn y felin o beirianwaith ar gynllun cynharach, yn dyddio o gyfnod cyn ei hailwampio ym 1867.

1 Introduction

1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was invited by Janet Russell to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the redevelopment of a derelict grade II listed mill and mill house (LB 8737; PRN 25843) at Rhosgoch, near Painscastle in Powys (Fig. 1; SO 18569 47523). Planning permission (P/2018/0252) for the development was granted by Powys County Council on 11 October 2018, with the inclusion of the following condition relating to archaeology:

3. No development shall take place within the application area until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological programme of work will be undertaken and completed in accordance with the relevant Standards and Guidance laid down by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

Reason: To secure preservation by record of all archaeological remains which will be impacted by the development.

1.2. A written scheme of investigation (Appendix 1) was produced for the watching brief during ground disturbance within the building, which was approved by Mark Walters of CPAT, acting in his role as the archaeological advisor to Powys County Council. The watching brief was carried out on 3 January 2019 and this report written immediately thereafter.



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Fig. 1: Location of Rhosgoch Mill

2 Background

- 2.1. An assessment of the building was conducted by CPAT in 2017 at the pre-planning stage. This comprised a survey of the mill buildings and an adjacent barn, a topographical survey of the surrounding area, and an assessment of potential impacts (Jones 2017). The following information relating to the mill and its history is largely taken from the assessment report.
- 2.2. Documentary evidence suggests that there has been a mill, then called Melyn Hothnant, on this site since at least the mid-16th century, and this is recorded as 'decayed' in a lease of 1563. It was a Crown Mill in 1608, but the present buildings date from the late 18th or early 19th centuries. The earliest available depiction of the mill is on a survey of 1837 (Fig 2), which shows the layout of the mill, barn and pond as they appear today, the schedule identifying the owner as Thomas Powell.

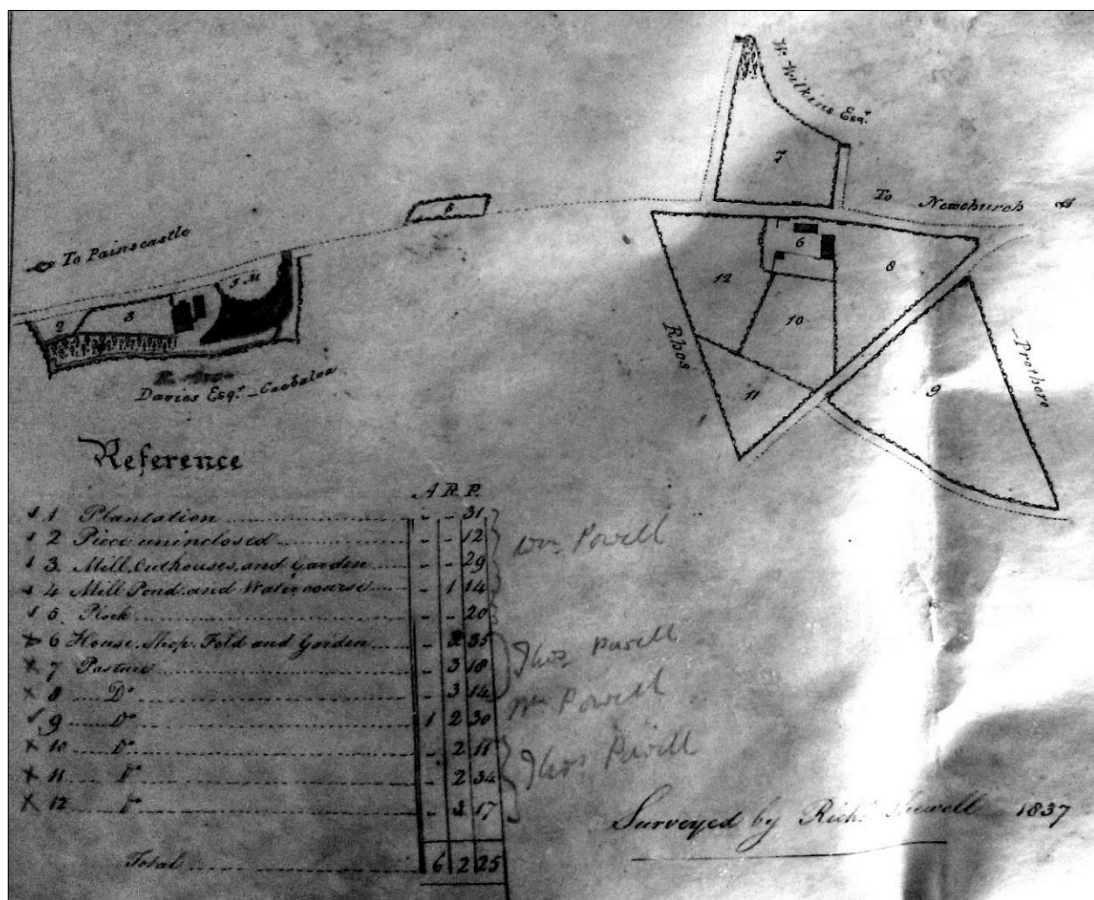


Fig. 2: 1837 plan showing Rhosgoch Mill

- 2.3. The mill is also depicted, although not in detail, on the 1847 Tithe Survey of Bryngwyn parish (Fig 3). The apportionment shows that the owner was still Thomas Powell and the map also shows a second building to the west of the mill pond which, although allocated a number, does not appear in the apportionment.

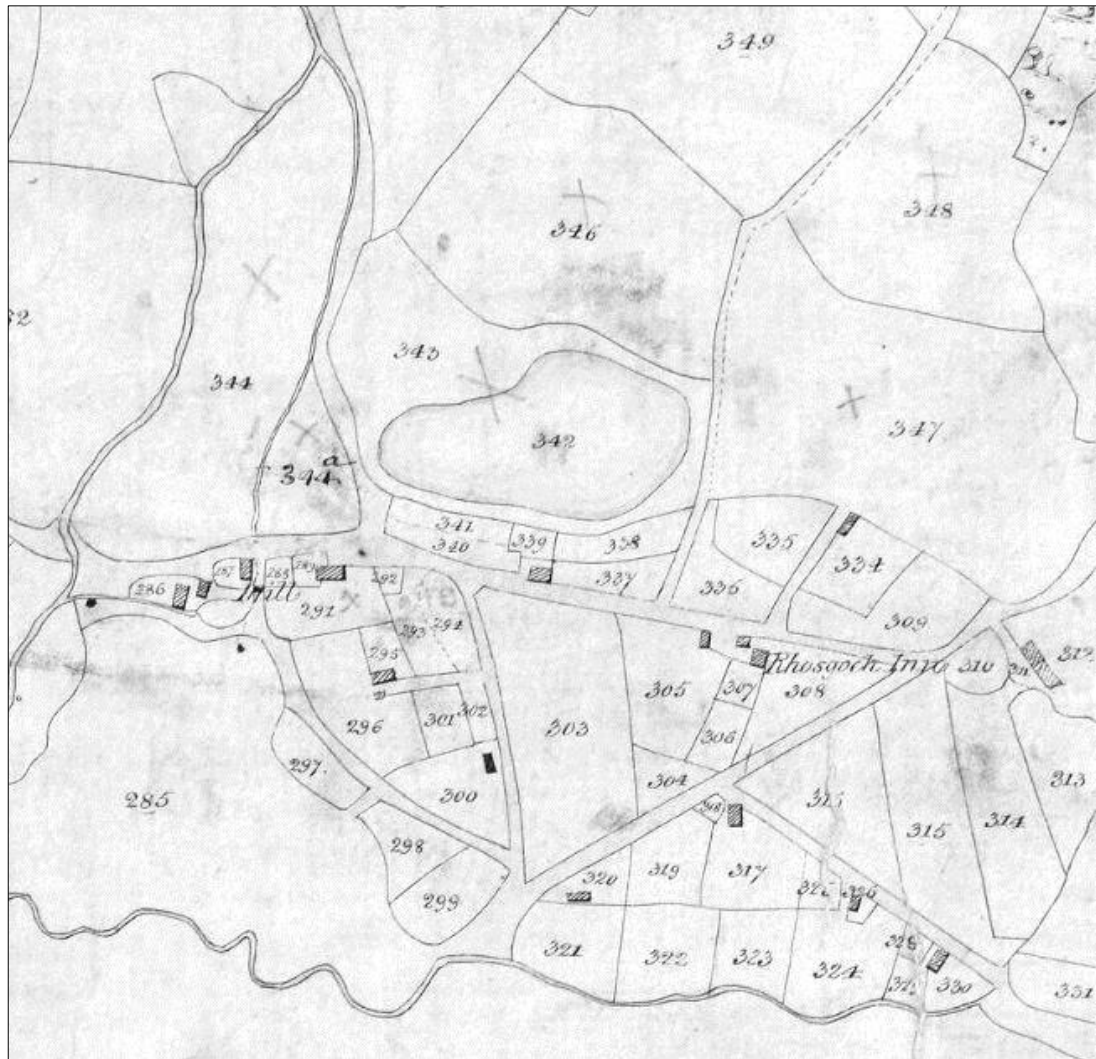


Fig. 3: Extract from the Bryngwyn Tithe Survey of 1847

- 2.4. It is evident from this and information provided by the client that the mill has belonged to the Powell family from the late 18th century until the present day. A stencil for W. Powell is affixed to the inside of the mill (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4: The Powell stencil. CPAT 4343-0083

- 2.5. Given the proximity of Rhosgoch to Clyro it is perhaps not surprising that it was visited on 26 March 1870 by the 19th-century diarist Francis Kilvert, who was curate at the latter church and noted the following (Plomer 2011):

'I decided to explore the lane running parallel with the brook towards Painscastle and discover the old Rhos-Goch Mill. There was a good deal of water and suddenly I came upon the mill pond and the picturesque mill with an overshot wheel. I crossed one of the streams on a larch felled across the water for a bridge and came back around the front of the cosy old picturesque ivy-grown mill house with its tall chimney completely covered in ivy. A handsome young man with a fine open face, fresh complexion and dressed as a miller was having a romp with a little girl by the door. He said his name was Powell, his father was dead and he carried on the business and with the most perfect politeness and well bred courtesy asked me to come in and sit down. So this is the place that I have heard old Hannah Whitney talk of so often, the place where the old miller sleeping in the mill trough used to see the fairies dancing of nights upon the mill floor.'

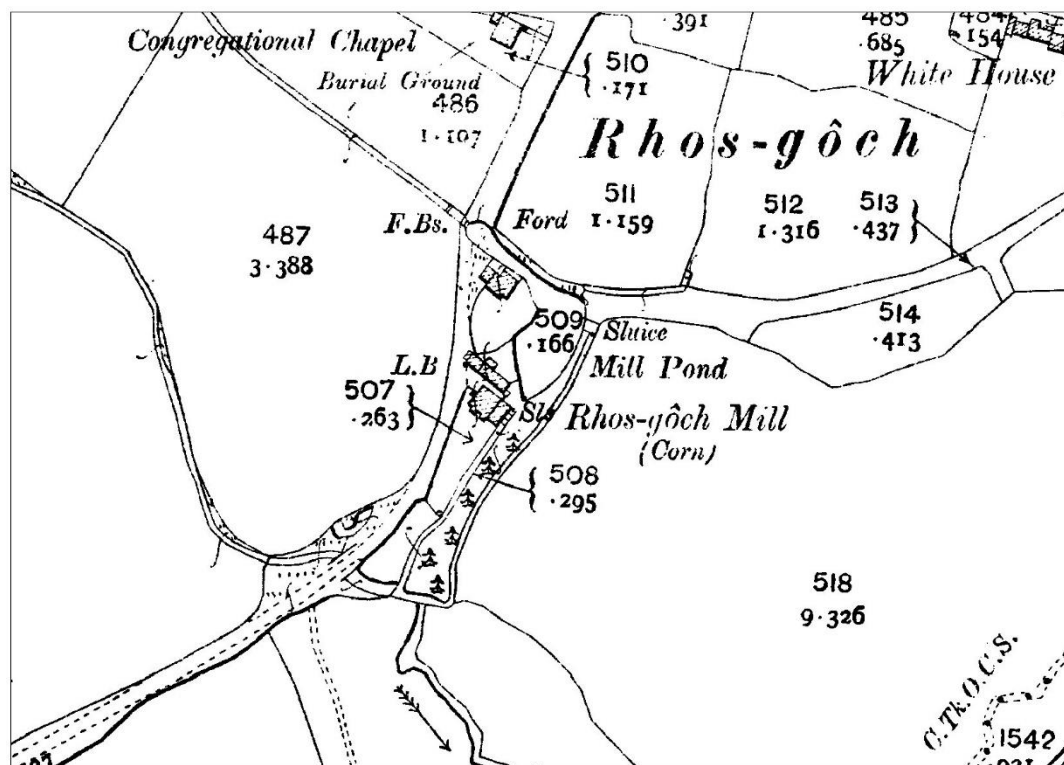


Fig. 5: Extract from the 1904 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25" map

- 2.6. The earliest accurate depiction of the mill is the 1889 Ordnance Survey 25" map, although the detail is clearer on the 2nd edition map of 1904 (Fig. 5). This shows the combined mill and mill house, with a pond to the north, together with a tail race and bypass leat.
- 2.7. The mill remained in operation until the 1960s, with the client remembering it having still been in use in 1967. This makes it one of the last watermills in use in the county; it is shown in two photographs from the 1950s provided by the client (Figs 6 and 7).



Fig. 6: Photograph taken in the 1950s showing the north-west elevation of the mill and adjoining barn



Fig. 7: Photograph taken in the 1950s showing the view across the mill pond, towards the mill

3 Watching Brief

- 3.1. The watching brief was carried out during the removal of the existing floors within the building, in preparation for the installation of modern flooring, and was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CifA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.
- 3.2. In some areas the removal of the old floor and the underlying deposits was relatively uninformative, but two areas added further to existing knowledge and the evidence is depicted on Fig. 8, which is an enhanced ground floor plan of the mill building.

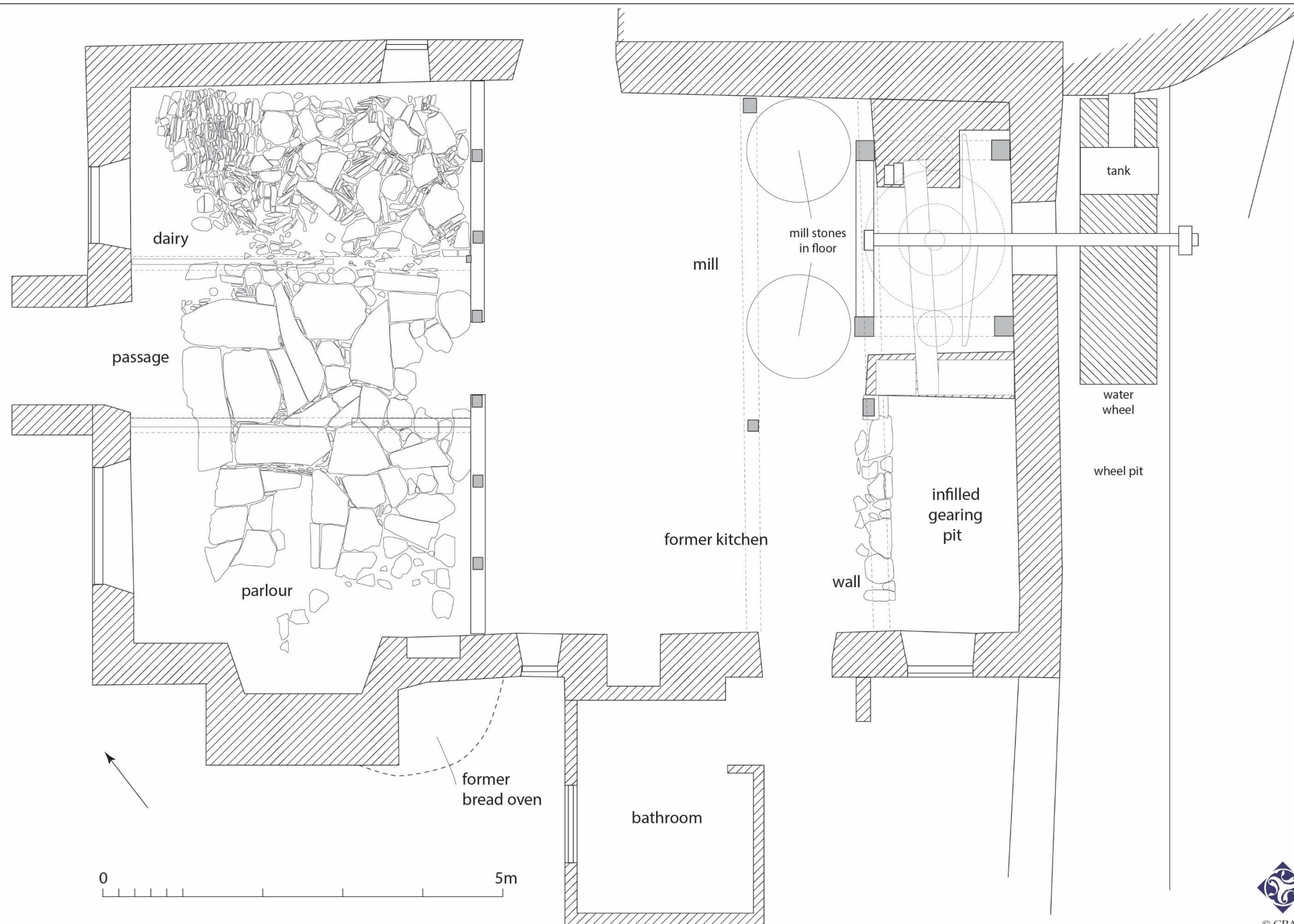


Fig. 8: Ground floor plan of the mill building, showing the additional information revealed by the watching brief

- 3.3. The floor of the mill building was reduced by approximately 0.5m, and over much of the area this only revealed made up ground on which the pre-existing floor had been laid. While this is interesting in that it suggests the floor level in this part of the building was originally lower and had been raised at some point in the past, it was uninformative about the layout of the mill; the material dated to the late 18th or 19th century, which would fit with the age of the current building.



Fig. 9: The section of walling which defined the extension to the gearing pit, from the west. CPAT 4580-0001

- 3.4. Of more significance was a section of walling (Fig. 9), approximately 2.1m in length and 0.5m wide, that was discovered under the floor at the south-east end of the former kitchen. This demonstrated that the existing gearing pit in the mill building originally extended further to the south-west to occupy almost the full width of the building, but had later been reduced in size, the redundant part being levelled and infilled with loose silt and stones. This indicates that there was once an additional gearing mechanism in this area, most likely used to operate further milling machinery. The stub wall which defines the south-west side of the current gearing pit is therefore a later insertion, as is the vertical post next to it that was placed to support the end of the beam that forms the main support for the mill machinery and stones on the first floor; this beam is likely to have run across the entire width of the building and was clearly cut when the gearing pit was reduced in size. There is a blocked opening at ground-floor level in the south-east wall, the timber lintels for which survive internally and externally, and it seems likely this relates to the machinery that had been removed from the gearing pit; whether this has any implications for changes to the size and location of the water wheel is not known.
- 3.5. It is worth noting that the gearing pit wall does not quite extend as far as the south-west wall of the mill and this implies that the building was widened at some point.

This is supported by the presence of a masonry joint in the south-east wall of the mill which demonstrates that the south-west wall of the mill is a later addition, though whether this dates to the last refurbishment of the mill in 1867 or some earlier alterations cannot be determined. The yellowish sandy lime mortar in the gearing pit wall seemed to be different to that used in the main building.

- 3.6. The north-west part of the building was the mill house, with the ground floor divided by wooden partitions into a parlour and dairy, between which a passage linked the main entrance to the mill. At the time of the assessment this area had a stone slab floor which was examined by the removal of a small number of slabs in the dairy, revealed cobbling beneath which was thought to be too rough to have formed a floor and could have been part of a yard predating the construction of the present building. In part, this suggestion was also led by the presence of humic material in the hollows between the cobbles.



Fig. 10: The cobbled flooring of the dairy, from the south-west. CPAT 4580-0014

- 3.7. The slab flooring was removed in advance of the watching brief and this demonstrated that the cobbling was confined to the dairy (Fig 10), and had a rather more regular surface than had been appreciated in the small area seen in the assessment. It was perhaps significant that the cobbling did not extend across the full length of the dairy, and terminated between 0.3m and 0.8m from the north-west wall of the building. As with the wall in the former kitchen, this could be evidence that the flooring related to a slightly smaller and earlier structure, though it was not possible to be sure with the limited evidence that was revealed.
- 3.8. Once the cobbling had been photographed and recorded, a section was removed down to the level required to prepare the ground for the new floor. This revealed an underlying layer of stone and gravel, all of local origin, which provided the base for

the flooring. Whether this material represents the natural subsoil or an imported levelling deposit could not be determined. However, the depth of made ground within the mill suggests that there may originally have been a height difference of at least 0.5m between the two parts of the building.

- 3.9. In the parlour section of the mill house and the adjoining passageway, a layer of about 0.1m of loose small stone was removed during the watching brief, below which a thin layer of yellowish clay was identified. This was removed to reveal a second layer of stone slab flooring (Fig. 11) which also did not extend as far as the north-west wall, terminating between 0.6m and 0.9m from it. The gaps between the stones contained the same humic material that had been seen in the dairy, so that although the floor was different in composition, the likelihood is that it was broadly contemporary. Again, it could be related to an earlier building.



Fig. 11: The stone slab floor in the parlour and main passage leading to the mill, which lies to the left of the image. CPAT 4580-0009.

- 3.10. A small area of slabs was removed and this revealed the same material as had been found beneath the dairy; the same thoughts regarding its origin as those expressed in para 3.8 apply.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1. The watching brief examined the interior of the mill during the removal of the existing flooring and reduction of levels to allow for the insertion of a new floor. The results revealed the full extent of an earlier cobbled floor beneath the dairy, which had previously been noted in 2017, and also identified an earlier stone slab floor beneath the adjoining passageway and parlour. These seemed to be contemporary as the same humic material was found in gaps between the stones and both sections of

flooring terminated before the north-west end of the building was reached. They might relate to an earlier structure on the site, but this could not be confirmed.

- 4.2. In the part used for milling, the level reduction showed that the interior there had been built up by at least 0.5m, the groundworks being insufficient to attain the original levels which might contain evidence for earlier phases of the mill. At the south-east end of the building, however, the remains of a wall were identified that indicated the gearing pit had once extended for another 2.1m to the south-west, showing that the mill machinery had been reduced in extent at some point in the past; this probably dated to 1867 when it is known that the machinery was replaced as part of a refurbishment.

5 Sources

Published sources

Plomer, W., 2011. *Kilvert's Diary 1870-1879 – Selections from the Diaries of the Rev. Francis Kilvert*, Read Books Ltd.

Unpublished sources

Jones, N. W., 2017. *Rhosgoch Mill, Rhosgoch, Powys: Heritage Impact Assessment*. CPAT Report No. 1504.

Documentary sources

1563 Lease mentioning Hothnant Mill – National Library of Wales Duchy of Cornwall Welsh Records (D1. vtls005184659)

Cartographic sources

1817 Ordnance Survey Surveyors' Drawing 196

1847 Tithe Survey for Bryngwyn Parish

1889 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" map, Radnorshire 33.14

1904 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25" map, Radnorshire 33.14

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 is entirely digital and will be deposited jointly with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and the National Monuments Record (RCAHMW). No artefacts were retained.

Archive summary

CPAT Event PRN: 140274

15 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4580

2 photogrammetric digital images (JPEG/TIFF)

1 watching brief recording form

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 1995

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) have been invited by Janet Russell to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for undertaking a watching brief during internal groundworks associated with the renovation and conversion of Rhosgoch Mill, near Painscastle, Powys (planning application P/2018/0252; SO 18569 47523). Planning permission was granted on 11 October 2018, with the inclusion of the following condition relating to archaeology:

3. No development shall take place within the application area until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological programme of work will be undertaken and completed in accordance with the relevant Standards and Guidance laid down by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. A copy of the resulting report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and the Development Control Archaeologist, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (41 Broad Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7RR, email: markwalters@cpat.org.uk Tel: 01938 553670). After approval by the Local Planning Authority, a copy of the report and resulting archive should also be sent to the Historic Environment Record Officer, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust for inclusion in the regional Historic Environment Record.

Reason: To secure preservation by record of all archaeological remains which will be impacted by the development in accordance with policy SP7 of the Powys Local Development Plan (2010), Technical Advice Note 24 - The Historic Environment (2017) and Planning Policy Wales (2016).

- 1.2. The mill and mill house is a grade II listed building (LB 8737; PRN 25843) and consent has been granted separately (planning application P/2018/0254).
- 1.3. It is believed that there has been a mill on this since at least 1550, although the present structure dates from the late 18th century. The milling machinery was replaced as part of a refurbishment in 1867 and continued in use until the 1950s. The mill was listed grade II in 1960 as what was even then a rare survival.
- 1.4. The building was subject to a detailed measured survey and small-scale evaluation as part of a heritage impact assessment conducted by CPAT in 2017 (Jones 2017). This revealed an earlier cobbled floor, or possibly external yard surface, beneath the stone slab floor in the mill house.



The stone surface revealed beneath the stone slab floor. Photo CPAT 4343-0108

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 within the building to reduce levels for the installation of underfloor heating.
- 2.2. The stone slab floor within the mill house will be lifted carefully by building contractors without archaeological supervision, but under strict instruction to undertake no further groundworks once the slabs have been removed. The area will then be cleaned rapidly by an archaeologist to enable the investigation and recording of any archaeologically significant levels which survive.
- 2.3. Within the mill the existing concrete floor will be broken and removed by building contractors without archaeological supervision, but under strict instruction to undertake no further groundworks once the concrete has been removed. The area will then be cleaned rapidly by an archaeologist to enable the investigation and recording of any archaeological evidence for earlier floors, machinery, or other evidence for an earlier mill structure on the site.
- 2.4. 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.
- The recording of stone floors or structures may be conducted using rectified photography if appropriate.
- 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.

2.5. 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.

2.6. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:

- Non-technical summary
- Introduction
- Site location
- Historical Background
- Watching brief
- Conclusions
- References
- Appropriate appendices on archives and finds

- 2.7. The report summary will be provided in English and Welsh, in accordance with the *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs) V1* (July 2018).

Site archive

- 2.8. The overall archive will conform to guidelines described in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE), Historic England 2006, the CIfA (2014) *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* and *The National Standard and Guidance to Best Practice for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives in Wales* (NPAAW, 2017) and *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs) V1* (July 2018).
- 2.9. The paper and digital archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record (NMR), RCAHMW, including a copy of the final report. This archive will include all written, drawn, survey and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken. NMR Digital archives will follow the standard required by the RCAHMW (RCAHMW 2015). A copy of the digital archive only will also be lodged with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.

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. If appropriate, a short report will be published in *Archaeology in Wales*.
- 3.3. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 3.4. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

4 References

- Jones, N. W., 2017. *Rhosgoch Mill, Rhosgoch, Powys: Heritage Impact Assessment*. CPAT Report No. 1504.

N W Jones

30 October 2018