

Archaeology Wales

Plot 2, Brynderwen, Abermule Newtown, Powys

Archaeological Watching Brief



By
Chris E Smith BA (Hons) MA MIfA
Report No. 1059

Archaeology Wales Limited,
Rhos Helyg, Cwm Belan,
Llanidloes, Powys, SY18 6QF
Tel: +44 (0) 1686 440371
Email: admin@arch-wales.co.uk

Archaeology Wales

Plot 2, Brynderwen, Abermule Newtown, Powys

Archaeological Watching Brief

Prepared For: Mr Darren Ralph

Edited by:

Signed:

Position:

Date:

Authorised by:

Signed:

Position:

Date:

By

Chris E Smith BA (Hons) MA MIfA

Report No: 1059

Date: **March 2012**

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Location and scope of work	1
1.2	Geology and topography	1
1.3	Archaeological and Historical Background	1
2	Aims and Objectives	2
2.1	Watching Brief	2
3	Methodology	3
3.1	Watching Brief	3
3.2	Finds	3
3.3	Palaeo-environmental evidence.....	3
4	Watching Brief Results	3
4.1	Soils and ground conditions	3
4.2	Distribution of deposits	3
4.3	Description (Plates 1-3).....	4
5	Discussion and Interpretation.....	4
5.1	Reliability of field investigation.....	4
5.2	Overall interpretation	4
5.3	Acknowledgements	4
6	Bibliography and references.....	5

List of Figures

Figure 1	Location map
Figure 2	Detailed Location Map

List of Plates

Plate 1	General post excavation view of foundation trenches
Plate 2	View along example of foundation trench
Plate 3	View of excavation underway and a section edge

Copyright Notice:

Archaeology Wales Ltd. retain copyright of this report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, and have granted a licence to Mr Darren Ralph to use and reproduce the material contained within.

The Ordnance Survey has granted Archaeology Wales Ltd a Copyright Licence (No. AL 52163A0001) to reproduce map information; Copyright remains otherwise with the Ordnance Survey.

Non-Technical Summary

This report results from work undertaken by Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) for Mr Darren Ralph of Gelli-Aur, Llanfair Caereinion, Powys. It draws upon the results gained by a watching brief on the excavation of foundation trenches at Plot 2, Brynderwen, Abermule, Newtown, Powys. Previous archaeological investigations on the adjacent Plot 1, undertaken by CPAT in 2010, revealed curvilinear ditches of potential prehistoric date, possibly extending into Plot 2. However, no evidence of any archaeological features was noted during the watching brief at Plot 2.

1 Introduction

1.1 Location and scope of work

In March 2012 Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Plot 2, Brynderwen, Abermule, Powys NGR SO 16393 95178 (Fig 1).

The watching brief was carried out as part of the planning process at the request of Mark Walters (Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust). A Brief was provided by CPAT against which a works Specification (No: T1241) was drawn up by Mark Houliston (Archaeology Wales Ltd).

1.2 Geology and topography

The assessment area lies on the boundary between two distinct solid geological formations. The formation beneath the north and west of the assessment area is undifferentiated Wenlock rocks comprised of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. The formation to the south and east is undifferentiated Ludlow rocks, again comprising mudstone, siltstone and sandstone (British Geological Survey 2001).

The assessment area is located on the northern outskirts of the small village of Abermule within the Severn valley, and adjacent to the course of the river Severn and the Shropshire Union Canal. The assessment area is located on relatively flat ground at a height of approximately 90m OD. Land to the north-west and south-east, either side of the Severn valley, rises to heights of 238m and 211m OD respectively.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

Abermule is located within the parish of Llandyssil. Lewis (1833) states:

LLANDYSSIL (LLAN-DYSSUL), a parish in the upper division of the hundred of NEWTOWN, county of MONTGOMERY, NORTH WALES, 2 miles (W. by S.) from Montgomery, containing 914 inhabitants. The village is pleasantly situated on the left of the road from Montgomery to Newtown, and the neighbourhood commands some interesting views and varied and extensive prospects. From the Goronddu hill the rich Vale of Severn is seen to great

advantage, with the windings of the river, which forms the northern boundary of the parish. The manufacture of flannel is here carried on upon a limited scale. The living consists of a rectory and a vicarage, in the archdeaconry and diocese of St. Asaph, united by an act of parliament in the 29th and 30th of the reign of Charles II.: the former, which was a sinecure, is rated in the king's books at £ 14, and the latter at £7.10.10.: it is in the patronage of the Bishop. The church, dedicated to St. Tysul, is an ancient structure. There is a place of worship for Wesleyan Methodists. A Sunday school for the gratuitous instruction of poor children is principally supported by the rector, by whom it was originally established. Jeremiah and Anne Reynolds, in 1711, bequeathed certain lands producing about £ 4 per annum ; Mr. Hugh Lewis gave a rent-charge of £2 ; and Charles Jones and John Griffiths bequeathed rent-charges of ten shillings each, the produce of all which benefactions is annually distributed among the poor. On the lofty hill of Goronddu, and on the banks of the Severn opposite to Glanhavren, are remains of several ancient British encampments in a greater or less degree of preservation. This is one of the eighteen parishes and townships forming the united district of Montgomery and Pool, incorporated for the joint maintenance of their poor in the house of industry at Forden, under acts of the 32nd and 36th of George III.: the average annual expenditure for the support of the poor of Llandyssil amounts to £312.7.

The National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland (Hinson, 1868), written some 35 years later, states:

"ABERMULE, a village in the parish of Llandyssil, in the county of Montgomery, North Wales, 5 miles N.E. of Newtown. It is pleasantly situated at the confluence of the river Mule with the Severn."

The earthwork remains of Brynderwen motte and bailey are located to the west of Plot 2. This is a scheduled ancient monument (MG054). Two further castle sites, Dolforwyn (MG114) and Cefn Bryntalch (MG014) are located within a 1km radius of Brynderwen.

The bridge over the river Severn adjacent to the assessment area, Brynderwen bridge and bridge 147 over the Shropshire Union Canal, are both classed as a grade II* listed structures.

Previous archaeological work in the area includes an initial investigation undertaken by the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust in 2010. A curvilinear ditch of possible prehistoric date was noted within the adjacent Plot 1. Its location and orientation suggested that it may have continued into Plot 2 (Walters, Pers. Comm).

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 Watching Brief

The watching brief was undertaken:

- To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
- To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- The main objective of a watching brief is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on a site.

3 Methodology

3.1 Watching Brief

The watching brief was carried out during the excavation of foundation trenches for a dwelling on plot 2, Brynderwen, Abermule (Fig 2). Excavation was carried out by mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision.

The on-site work was undertaken by watching brief archaeologist Pete Brown. The overall management of the project was undertaken by Chris E Smith (MIfA). All areas were photographed using high resolution digital photography.

All works were undertaken in accordance with the IfA's *Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* and current Health and Safety legislation.

3.2 Finds

Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental evidence

No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the excavation.

4 Watching Brief Results

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

Generally the ground conditions were dry, as the ground of the assessment area was gravelly and well drained. A lack of rain in the period preceding the watching brief also contributed to this.

4.2 Distribution of deposits

The topsoil was of a reasonably uniform distribution in all areas, varying little in depth, between 0.2 & 0.3m. It was mainly composed of a friable mid brown silt with occasional gravel inclusions.

4.3 Description (Plates 1-3)

- 4.3.1 An area measuring approximately 20m x 15m was stripped of topsoil which revealed the top of the subsoil horizon. This consisted of stony, silt clay, mid brown/orange in colour. No features were noted at this level.

4.3.2 Foundation Trenches

Foundation trenches for the new dwelling were cut by mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision. All of the trenches were cut into the stony, silt clay, subsoil horizon described above, to a maximum depth of 0.6m on the eastern side of the site and 0.9m on the western side (to compensate for a natural topographic slope across the site). The subsoil was composed of extremely friable material with abundant gravel banding.

All sections and trench bases were cleaned and examined for evidence of archaeological features and deposits, in particular for traces of the continuation of the ditches identified in the adjacent plot. Despite this no features were identified. No finds of any period were recovered.

5 Discussion and Interpretation

5.1 Reliability of field investigation

The overall findings of the watching brief were not consistent with the findings made by CPAT on the adjacent Plot 1 in 2010.

5.2 Overall interpretation

The lack of a continuation of the ditches identified by CPAT suggests that either they continue in a different direction or they terminate before reaching Plot 2.

The lack of anthropogenic finds or features from Plot 2 does not preclude their existence from the immediately surrounding area.

5.3 Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Pete Brown (AW) for his on-site assistance and Mark Walters for his information on Plot 1.

6 **Bibliography and references**

British Geological Survey. 2001, 4th Edition. Solid Geology Map, UK South Sheet

Hinson, C. 1868. National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland. - www.genuki.com – Accessed 12/03/2012

Institute for Archaeologists. 2008. Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief.

Lewis, S. 1833. *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales* - www.genuki.com – Accessed 12/03/2012

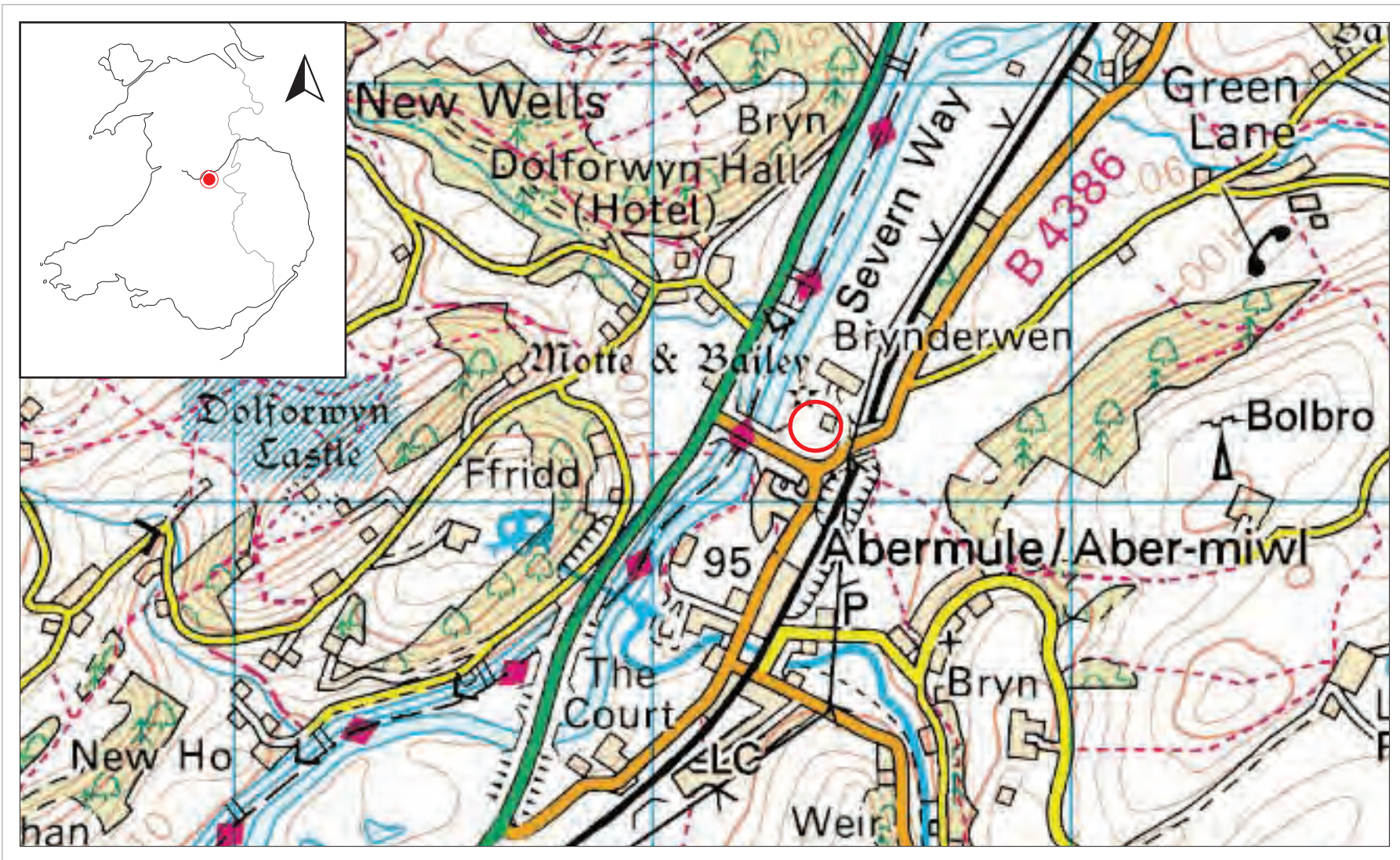


Fig 1: Map showing general location of assessment area

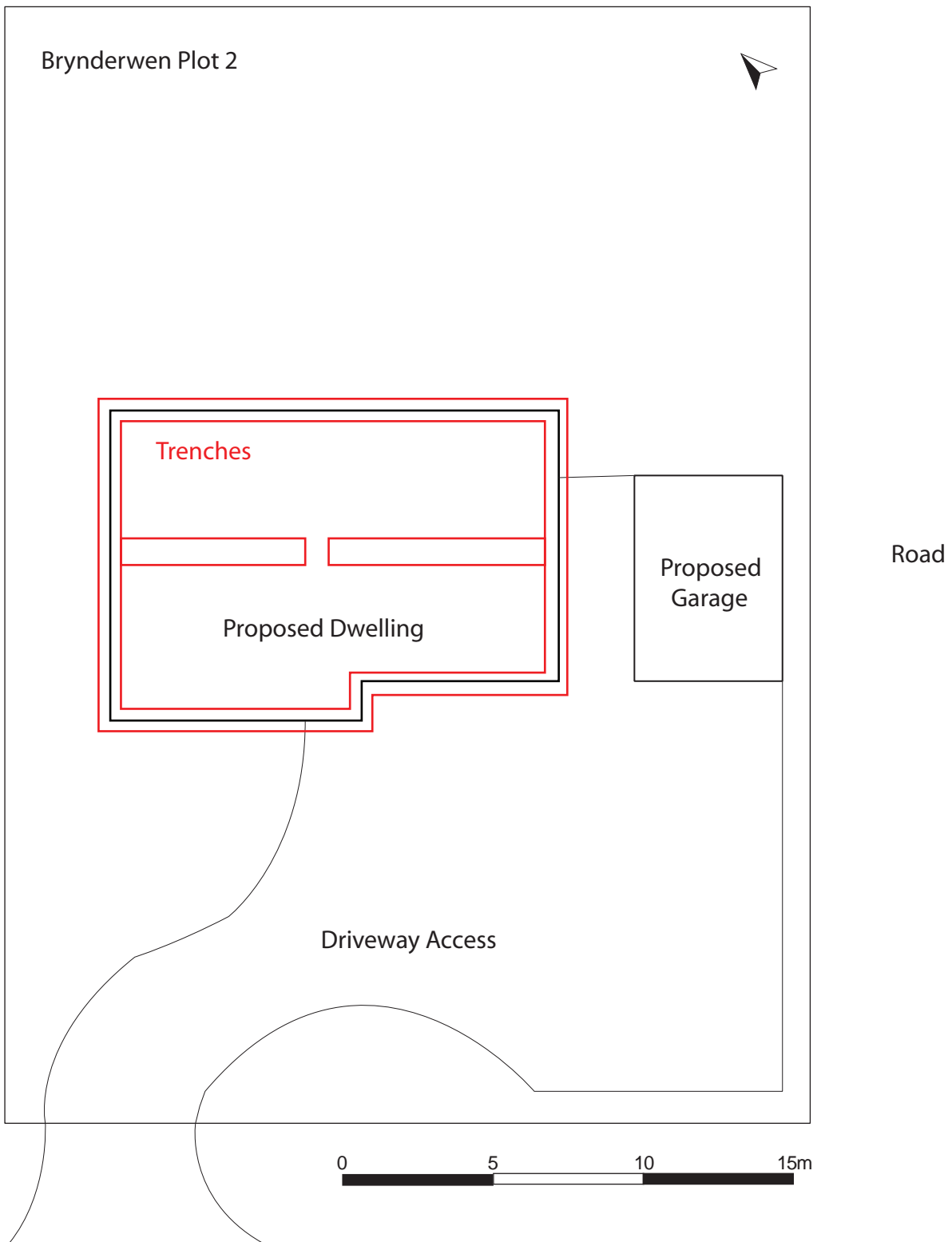


Fig 2:Plan showing location of trenches within PLOT 2 at Brynderwen, Abermuel.



Plate 1: View of excavated foundation trenches at Plot 2. Looking South



Plate 2: View along cleaned foundation trench
Looking west



Plate 3: View of trench under excavation and detail of section. Looking North east

Archaeology Wales

APPENDIX I: Archive Cover Sheet

ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Plot 2, Brynderwen, Abermule, Newtown, Powys

Site Name:	Plot 2, Brynderwen
Site Code:	BAM/12/WB
PRN:	-
NPRN:	-
SAM:	-
Other Ref No:	-
NGR:	NGR SO 16393 95178
Site Type:	Poss Prehistoric
Project Type:	Watching Brief
Project Manager:	Chris E Smith
Project Dates:	March 2012
Categories Present:	None
Location of Original Archive:	AW
Location of duplicate Archives:	-
Number of Finds Boxes:	-
Location of Finds:	-
Museum Reference:	-
Copyright:	AW
Restrictions to access:	None

Archaeology Wales