

CPAT Report No. 1825

Plas Mostyn Bach, Minera

Historical Building Survey



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL CLWYD-POWYS
CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Katy Davies
 CPAT Project No: 2578
 Project Name: Plas Mostyn Bach, Minera
 Grid Reference: SJ2803352794
 County/LPA: Wrexham County Borough
 Planning Application: P/2017/0758
 CPAT Report No: 1825
 Event PRN: 140382
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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	II
CRYNODEB.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	2
3 HISTORICAL BUILDING SURVEY	4
4 CONCLUSIONS	18
5 SOURCES	18
6 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION STATEMENT.....	18
APPENDIX 1: CPAT WSI 2578.....	19
1 INTRODUCTION	19
2 OBJECTIVES	20
3 METHODOLOGY.....	20
BUILDING SURVEY	20
4 SITE ARCHIVE.....	20
DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN.....	21
5 RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING	21

Summary

In October 2021, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust were commissioned by private clients to carry out a historical building survey of a disused farm building at Plas Mostyn Bach, Minera, near Wrexham. The survey was in response to a planning condition set on plans to repurpose a 19th century barn by converting it into a modern dwelling. The barn was of typical long-house design, constructed of sandstone blocks, and divided into three rooms with haylofts above the western and eastern ends. Stone built extensions were located at the western end and on the northern side, and a later addition was a brick-built room attached to the eastern side of the northern range. The primary function appears to have been associated with animal husbandry.

Crynodeb

Fis Hydref 2021, fe gomisiynodd cleientiaid preifat Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys i gynnal arolwg adeilad hanesyddol o adeilad fferm segur ym Mhlas Mostyn Bach, Mwynglawdd, ger Wrecsam. Roedd yr arolwg mewn ymateb i amod cynllunio ar gyfer cynlluniau i addasu ysgubor o'r 19eg ganrif at ddiben gwahanol trwy ei throsi'n annedd fodern. Roedd yr ysgubor ar ddyluniad tŷ hir nodweddiadol, wedi'i hadeiladu o flociau tywodfaen ac wedi'i rhannu yn dair ystafell gyda lloffttydd gwaith uwchben y pennau gorllewinol a dwyreiniol. Daethpwyd o hyd i estyniadau wedi'u hadeiladu o gerrig ar y pen gorllewinol a'r ochr ogleddol, ac roedd ystafell wedi'i hadeiladu o frics wedi'i hychwanegu yn ddiweddarach at ochr ddwyreiniol y rhesaid ogleddol. Mae'n debyg mai magu anifeiliaid oedd y brif swyddogaeth.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was appointed by Ms Katy Davies to undertake an archaeological building survey in connection with planning permission (P/2017/0758) for the conversion of a disused barn into a dwelling, and the demolition of the attached milking parlour. The planning permission has been granted on the condition that a historical building survey is undertaken. The condition in full is as follows;

"15. Development shall not begin until an appropriate photographic survey, equivalent to an Historic England Level 1 study of the existing buildings has been carried out in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and Development Control Archaeologist (Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust). (...) After approval by the Local Planning Authority, a copy of the photographs should also be sent to the Historic Environment Record Officer, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust for inclusion in the regional Historic Environment Record Officer, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, for inclusion in the regional Historic Environment Record."

- 1.2. The barn and attached milking parlour is located at Plas Mostyn Bach, Minera, (NGR: SJ 28033 52794) in Wrexham County Borough. The work was undertaken on the 12th October 2021 and consisted of a photographic building recording survey equivalent to an Historic England Level 1 building survey. The building is a disused barn structure built in the 19th century which has had a 20th century milking parlour attached to its northern wall.

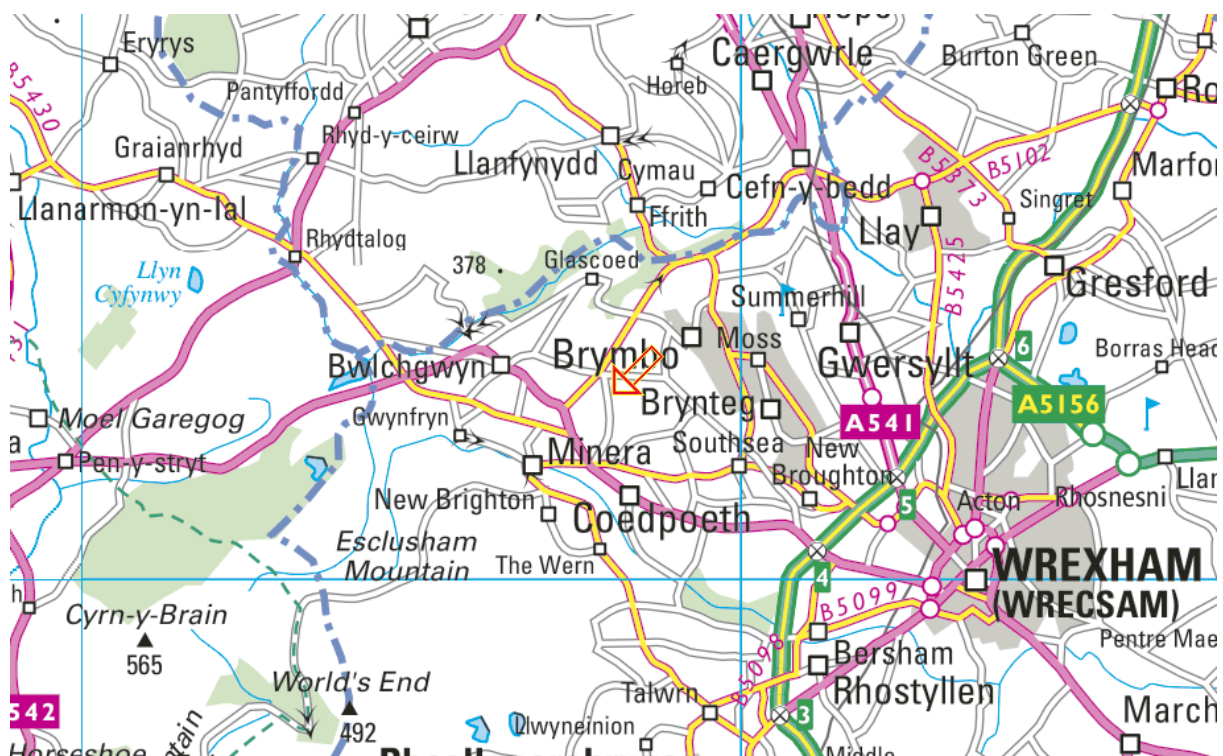


Fig. 1a Location of Plas Mostyn Bach, Minera (general)



Fig. 7b Location of Plas Mostyn Bach, Minera (detail)

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018

2 Historical Background

- 2.1. Plas Mostyn Bach is in an area between Brymbo and Minera and sits in area of Wrexham County Borough that is rich in history. Minera has had traces of human occupation since the prehistoric period. Neolithic cup-marks were found on a stone in the fields of Minera less than 2 miles from Plas Mostyn Bach. Minera is believed to take its name from Latin for "mine" and "ore" (which is reflected in the Welsh name for Minera – Mwynglawdd), and has been exploited for its lead since the Roman era.
- 2.2. The area of Minera became known for its mines and quarries by the 18th and 19th centuries, and had extensive infrastructure to facilitate the lead mines and silica quarries. Near to Plas Mostyn Bach, there are old mine shafts for the lead mines and landscape scarring from the quarries, as well as the original mid-19th century North Wales Mineral Railway; a branch of the Great Western Railway.
- 2.3. Plas Mostyn Bach itself takes its name from the estate to which it once belonged, differentiating it from the still surviving Plas Mostyn Mawr farm buildings. Plas Mostyn was an estate that was formed in the 17th century by the aristocratic Mostyn family of Flintshire, which is still a large land-owning family today. In the 18th century, the estate became a tenanted farm and was no longer a primary residence for the Mostyn family.

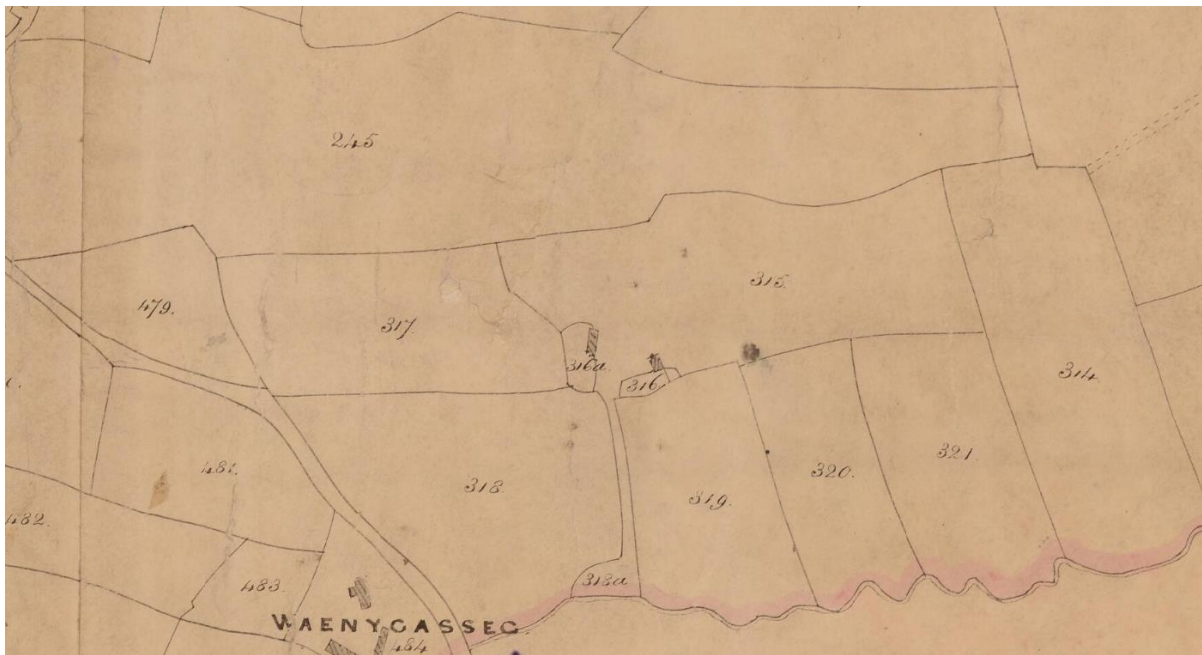


Fig. 2 Tithe map for 1839 showing the building that is now the cottage to the east of Plas Mostyn Bach, labelled as 316a and given no name on map or apportionment. NB: north is to the left of the map.

- 2.4. Plas Mostyn house was demolished in the 1960s, and the current Plas Mostyn Bach is a 19th century farm that is now a remnant of the estate that once existed. The barn is to the east of a farmhouse/cottage in a similar style with similar sandstone fabric used in its construction. Tithe maps suggest that the cottage predates the barn, as the cottage appears on an 1839 tithe map (marked as 316a) but not the barn or any other farm building, only another cottage nearby (fig. 2). By 1872 however, surveyors record a longer building at Plas Mostyn Bach, indicating the existence of the complete barn in similar size (if not exact) to how it appears presently (fig. 3).



Fig. 3 1879 Ordnance Survey map for Denbighshire, showing Plas Mostyn Bach and its proximity to the main house at Plas Mostyn to the south-east, as well as the Great Western Railway (Minera and Wrexham Branch) to the west.

3 Historical Building Survey

- 3.1. The historical building survey was designed to meet an objective as stated in the written scheme of investigation;

“to provide a basic visual record of the stable at Plas Mostyn Bach in order to identify the building’s location, age and type, and to make a record of any surviving architectural features and alterations to the original fabric. ”

- 3.2. The historical building survey was conducted on 12th October 2021 in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists’ (CIfA) (2014) *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures*. A plan of the building showing direction of photographs is included as fig.26, and contact sheets of all photographs as fig. 27. These are landscape pages at the end of this report.
- 3.3. The barn building is of a typical longhouse design, a common style in Wales for barns that are located on a slope or may experience higher winds from particular directions. Although the immediate terrain is relatively flat, the area is locally known for strong westerly prevailing winds. The building is of a sandstone block construction, and uses longer stones as lintels over the door frames. It comprises three rooms to full height, plus a lower annex at the west end, and currently has a corrugated steel roof with cast-iron guttering. Although the building has functioned as a barn for most of its history, it is now currently used for storage. Fig. 4 shows the building in its current state as a general view from the south-west. Figs. 5 through 7 show more detailed views of the building as viewed from the south. The sandstone lintel blocks used can be viewed clearly above each doorway, and exterior access to the eastern hay loft is visible in fig. 5, whereas access to the western hay loft is visible fig. 7.



Fig. 4 Plas Mostyn Bach as viewed from the south-west. CPAT photo 4950-0001



Fig. 5 Detail view of southern face of barn, east end, viewed from south. CPAT photo 4950-0037



Fig. 6 Detail view of southern face of barn, central zone, viewed from south. CPAT photo 4950-0038



Fig. 7 Detail view of southern face of barn, west end, viewed from south. CPAT photo 4950-0039

- 3.4. The entrances for the building have a single lintel block supporting the upper wall fabric. The wooden panel doors used at each entrance are of varying age, most of them being modern constructions designed to improve the security of the barn. The interior doorways and the interior side of the exterior access doorway, used a wooden lintel with wooden doorframe. This can be seen in fig. 8, which shows wooden lintels across interior doorways and interior sides of the exterior access doorways.



Fig. 8 Interior view of exterior doorway and an interior doorway. CPAT photo 4950-0013

- 3.5. The eastern-most room of the barn had agricultural cleaning facilities for animals. These appeared to be mid- to late-20th century, and probably represent the last period when the barn was used for agricultural purposes. The room measured approximately 3.8m x 4.3m, and was plastered on the interior walls. The room is currently used exclusively for storage by the occupants of the attached cottage. Figs. 9 & 10 show the interior of the room, with 20th century installations for cleaning cattle.



Fig. 9 cattle cleaning stations in the easternmost room. CPAT photo 4950-0004



Fig. 10 Cattle cleaning stations in the easternmost room. CPAT photo 4950-0006

- 3.6. The central room of the barn has a sandstone extension attached to the north with a large hay manger. The central room has ground floor access to both the north and west parts of the barn and also has access to the hay lofts at first floor level above the eastern and western rooms. None were accessible during the building survey due to safety concerns, but from the ground they appeared to be in a well-preserved and original state (figs. 11 & 12).
- 3.7. The roof structure uses a ridgeboard that has rafters attached to it. The stone gable walls have grooves that the purlins sit in, which provides the support for the rafters. This is apparent in figs. 11 & 12. The main central room has no joists, but they are employed in the eastern and western parts to hold the floor to the hay lofts (fig. 13). The current roof is corrugated metal.



Fig. 11 Western hay loft entrance. CPAT photo 4950-0023



Fig. 12 Eastern hay loft entrance., possibly not primary entrance. CPAT photo 4950-0036



Fig. 13 Joists forming the floor to the hay loft above the easternmost room. CPAT photo 4950-0011

- 3.8. The main central room has a stone-built extension protruding to the north (fig. 22) that forms a currently inaccessible room. It features a loft space and a long wooden hay manger (fig. 14). The period of the hay manger could not be determined from a distance, but it is of a basic design that makes use of simple nail through wood construction, rather than employing traditional joinery techniques. Although also constructed of sandstone, this northern range has smaller and more irregular stonework (apart from the quoins) than the main barn, and is therefore probably a later 19th century extension.



Fig. 14 Inaccessible northern room with hay manger integrated into eastern wall. CPAT photo 4950-0033



Fig. 15 Loft space above northern room. Inaccessible due to unstable floors. CPAT photo 4950-035

- 3.9. A small wooden kit-like structure is present in the main central area of the barn, as pictured in fig. 16. It is unclear as to what it is, but it measures 4ft by 6ft (1.22m x 1.83m), and is 6ft (1.83m) in height. It has a stable door (half-door) and single pane of transparent plastic for a window. It looks to be made of repurposed wood, and has scars of formerly nailed together wood that is spaced similar to the roof rafters, indicating it may have once been part of the roof fabric.



Fig. 16 Small shed structure within central room of barn. CPAT photo 4950-0028

- 3.10. The large western room is approximately 8m x 4.8m. It is unclear what the use of the room was, but it is plastered and painted, as well as having a tiled floor. It has a trough going through the centre of the room, which could suggest that it may have been a milking parlour. It can be seen in figs. 17 & 18.



Fig. 17 Large room in the west of the barn, looking west. CPAT photo 4950-0044



Fig. 18 Large room in the west of the barn, looking east. CPAT photo 4950-0043

- 3.11. At the very west of the barn, there is a room that is of unclear use. It had no windows left open to outside light so visibility was limited during the survey. It had some agricultural animal management installations, such as a small pen that may be for pigs or sheep (figs. 19 & 20). The southern wall of the room had indications that it may have had a small entrance designed for animals (fig. 21). The walls were not keyed into the rest of the structure, indicating that it may be a later addition. The roof sloped away from the rest of the barn, and the stone had a distinctly different colour. It is likely that this structure was added onto the barn after the main building was constructed, probably in a later period of use.



Fig. 19 Smaller room with sloped roof, interior. CPAT photo 4950-0064



Fig. 20 Small animal pen with head hole in gate. CPAT Photo 4950-0068



Fig. 21 Edited photograph with red box showing former points of ingress which may indicate animal pens. From CPAT photo 4950-0072

- 3.12. A brick extension is attached to the eastern wall of the northern room (fig. 22). It is a small room that is currently plastered and painted with relatively modern equipment installed. It has a window on its northern wall with a gauged brick arch (fig. 23). The interior of the room is mostly from the modern era (figs. 22 & 23).



Fig. 22 The brick extension in relation to the northern room (viewed from the north). CPAT photo 4950-0048



Fig. 23 Brick gauged arch with wooden framed window. CPAT photo 4950-0057



Fig. 24 Interior of brick extension. CPAT photo 4950-0051



Fig. 25 Interior of brick extension. CPAT photo 4950-0053

4 Conclusions

- 4.1. The barn has several well-preserved features that are associated with 19th century agricultural functions. The haylofts and stone fabric are typical and indicative of the 19th century agricultural character of the local area, but the lower rooms appear to have been reused and repurposed during its utilisation as an agricultural building through the last century, as can be seen with the installation of relatively modern agricultural equipment.
- 4.2. With the repurposing of the barn as a modern domicile, the impact this will have on the surviving 19th century characteristics of the building will be minimal, as the stone fabric of the exterior and interior walls will remain. The changes to the interior features will be noticeable with the destruction of the haylofts, but as the majority of the interior has seen heavy reuse since the 19th century, there would be no significant impact to features that characterise the 19th century agricultural style and design of the locale, which have not been lost already due to the upgrading and repurposing of rooms over preceding decades.

5 Sources

Cartographic sources

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1839 | Tithe apportionment for Brymbo Parish |
| 1879 | Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1 st edition Denbighshire XXVIII |

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 digital archive only will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and the paper/drawn/digital archive with the National Monuments Record (RCAHMW).

Archive summary

CPAT Event PRN: 140382

73 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4950

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 2578

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been appointed by Mr R Owen to undertake an archaeological building survey in connection with planning permission (P/2017/0758) for the conversion of a disused barn into a dwelling, and the demolition of the attached milking parlour.

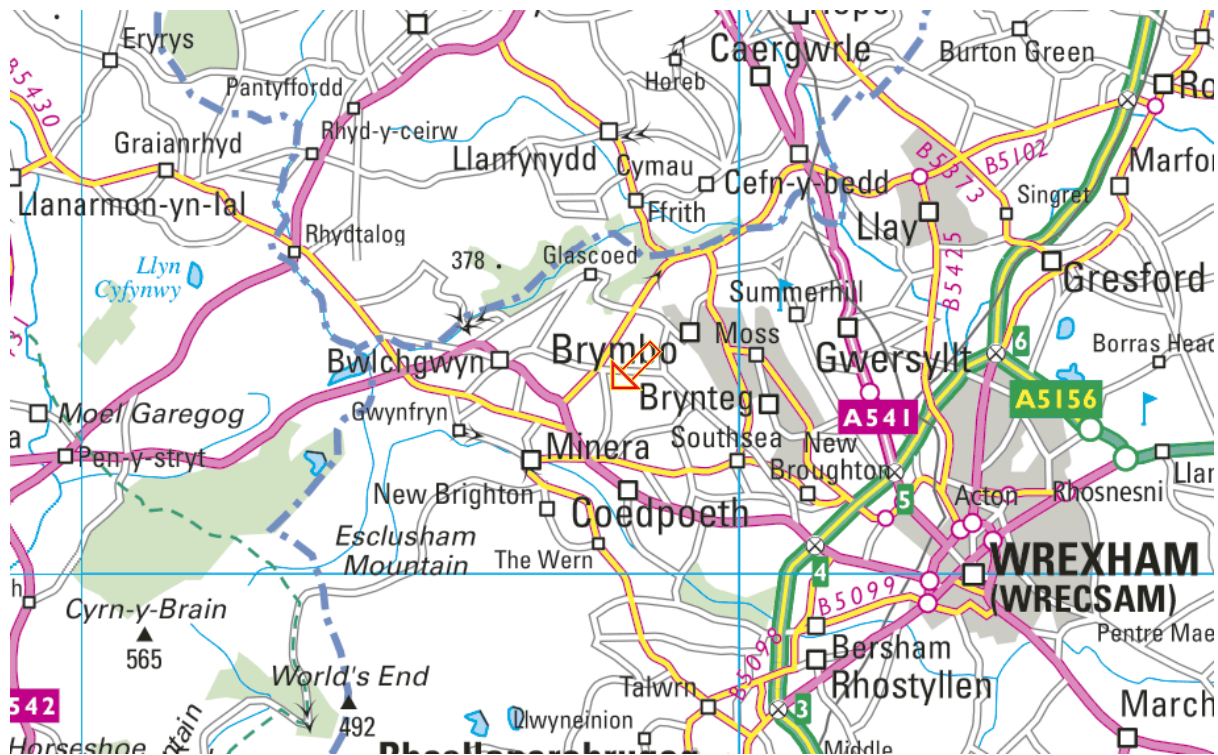


Fig. 1: Location of Plas Mostyn Bach

- 1.2 Permission for the renovation of the barn building and demolition of the milk parlour is granted on the basis of Condition 15 of the planning permission, relating to an historic building record survey being undertaken. It is as follows;
- 15. Development shall not begin until an appropriate photographic survey, equivalent to an Historic England Level 1 study of the existing buildings has been carried out in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and Development Control Archaeologist (Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust). (...) After approval by the Local Planning Authority, a copy of the photographs should also be sent to the Historic Environment Record Officer, Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust for inclusion in the regional Historic Environment Record Officer, Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust, for inclusion in the regional Historic Environment Record.*
- 1.3 Plas Mostyn Bach is located at SJ 28033 52794, and is located to the north west of Plas Mostyn Mawr, and to the north east of Minera. It is located directly east to the historic and now disused Wrexham to Minera railway run of the Great Western Railway (GWR). The brick outbuilding at Plas Mostyn Bach is believed to be of 19th Century date, and is of local architectural importance.

2 Objectives

2.1. The objectives of the survey is:

- to provide a basic visual record of the stable at Plas Mostyn Bach in order to identify the building's location, age and type, and to make a record of any surviving architectural features and alterations to the original fabric.

3 Methodology

3.1. The archaeological works will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (2020) and *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment* (2020).

Building Survey

3.2. The survey will take the form of the equivalent to an Historic England Level 1 Building Survey - Understanding Historic Buildings, 2016, 5.2, p.25), and will include:

- External photographs, with some internal photographs if necessary to record significant details
- Sketch drawings, if required to record any additional architectural details.

3.3. The photographic survey will be conducted using digital photography with a minimum resolution of 12 mega pixels to include:

- general views
- external appearance
- internal views (if necessary)
- elevations and structural detail
- overall appearance
- fixtures, fittings etc

4 Site archive

4.1. The overall archive will conform to guidelines described in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE), Historic England 2015, the CIfA (2020) *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).

4.2. The archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record (NMR), RCAHMW. 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, within two months of the approval of the project report.

Data management plan

- 4.3. The project will be conducted in accordance with CPAT's data management policy. All paper records will be collated, catalogued and labelled with the unique project code. All digital data will follow strict file naming, to include the unique project code, and be sorted into a standard series of sub-folders. The digital data will be catalogued, including a list of file types and relevant software.

5 Resources and programming

- 5.1. The survey will be undertaken by a single skilled archaeologist under the overall supervision of Tim Malim, CPAT's Principal Archaeologist who is also a member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). CPAT is also a CIfA Registered Organisation and as such agrees to abide by their *Code of Conduct* (2020).
- 5.2. All report preparation will be carried out by, or with the assistance of, the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the fieldwork and completed within two months of the commencement of the survey.
- 5.3. Monitoring will be undertaken by Powys Council's Archaeological Advisor who will be notified of the start of works, and if significant remains are revealed so that a site visit can be arranged. 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. The following figures provide an indication of the types of additional services and indicative costs which might be required, for which the client is advised to make some provision.

Curatorial monitoring	£150 per visit
Finds conservation etc	£300 per day
Radiocarbon dating	£375 each
Finds specialist	£300 per day

- 5.4. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 5.5. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance. A project-specific Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) will be prepared prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

H Twigg

1st October 2021

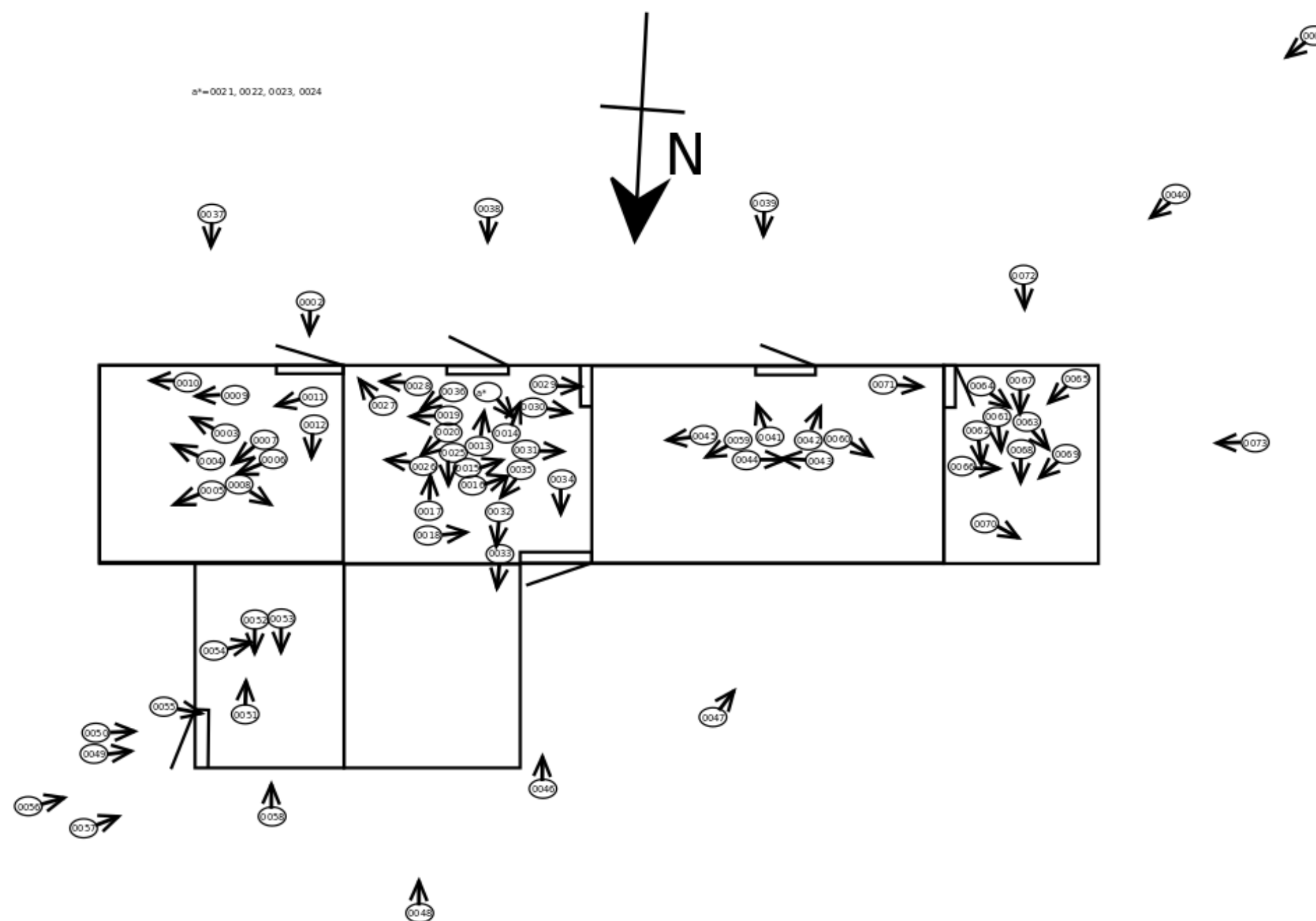


Fig. 26 Photograph locations of film no. 4950 overlaid on building outline. Not to scale.

Fig. 27 Contact sheet for film 4950

