



Ymddiriedolaeth
Genedlaethol
National Trust

Chirk Castle Removable Bollards Proposal



Figure 1: Chirk Castle approach road with current temporary barrier in place at position proposed for removable bollards.

HERITAGE STATEMENT

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1. Project Background

A proposal has been made to install three removable bollards to prevent access when necessary to a section of the Chirk Castle approach road which, because of the one-way traffic system used, is now an exit route only from the Castle, except for emergency vehicles.

The proposed bollards (posts) will replace a temporary arrangement shown in Figure 1.

The posts will be 140mm square in cross section. The receivers for the posts will sit in the ground to a depth of 500mm (0.5m) maximum. When in position the posts will protrude above ground to a height of 1,000mm (1m).

Ground disturbance will consist of 3 x excavated holes slightly larger than the posts (approx. 300 x 300mm x 500mm deep) in which to set the post receivers.

The location of the bollards and relationship to key Heritage Assets at Chirk is shown on Figure 2.

2. Archaeological and Historic Background

A small number of prehistoric artefacts recovered both by chance during gardening activities (MNA177850/NT Heritage Records) and during community excavation projects (Grant and Jones 2019) along with a pit stratigraphically earlier than Offa's Dyke producing prehistoric dates (Grant and Logan 2020 (dating results forthcoming)) all point to the presence of prehistoric communities near Chirk Castle.

Offa's Dyke is a key feature in the landscape at Chirk. This early medieval bank and ditch runs as an upstanding earthwork to the west of Chirk Castle and is for the most part a Scheduled Monument. It is traditionally associated with the reign of King Offa of Mercia during the 8th Century AD. An unscheduled section was subject to excavation in 2018 and 2019 with excellent results and new dating (Grant and Logan 2020 (dating results forthcoming)).

Chirk Castle itself was originally built between 1295 and 1310 by Roger Mortimer, who had been granted the Lordship of Chirk and Chirkland by Edward 1 in 1282. It has subsequently been owned by many prominent families and has seen many developments and changes to the historic fabric most notably following damage during the civil war. Although in external appearance it reflects the medieval pattern with ranges of buildings around a central rectangular courtyard with massive circular towers at the corners and midway along the northern wall.

The gardens at Chirk are also potentially of a relatively early date. An account roll dating to 1329 contains a reference to the "wages of William le Gardener for the repair of the chief



Figure 2: Chirk Castle - location of proposed removable bollards, key heritage assets noted.

fishpond10s” (Gallagher 1996). This hints at the existence of a garden at Chirk during the late medieval period. While the flatter land to the east where the present garden sits is a potential site for an early garden, there is currently no archaeological evidence to pinpoint its exact location.

One of the earliest detailed visual representations of the gardens at Chirk Castle is a 1738 engraving by Thomas Badeslade and William Henry Thoms (Figure 3). This image represents the formal gardens at Chirk in the early 18th century having been developed by successive generations of the Mydleton family. Remnants of these early formal gardens and other 18th Century features were investigated to the front (north) of the Castle as part of the Chirk Community Excavation Project (Grant and Jones 2019, Grant and Logan 2020).

Not long after this engraving was made work was underway to make changes to a less formal garden design. By 1764 William Emes had taken over directions to improvements to both the landscape park and the garden. The formal garden was largely swept away in favour of Pleasure Grounds with meandering paths through naturalistic plantations and a limited number of garden structures seen clearly on the 1775 Estate map for Chirk (Figure 4). The approach to the castle from the north shown on the 1775 map is reflected by the modern approach road today. It was not until the end of the 19th Century that the garden reverted to a more formal design.

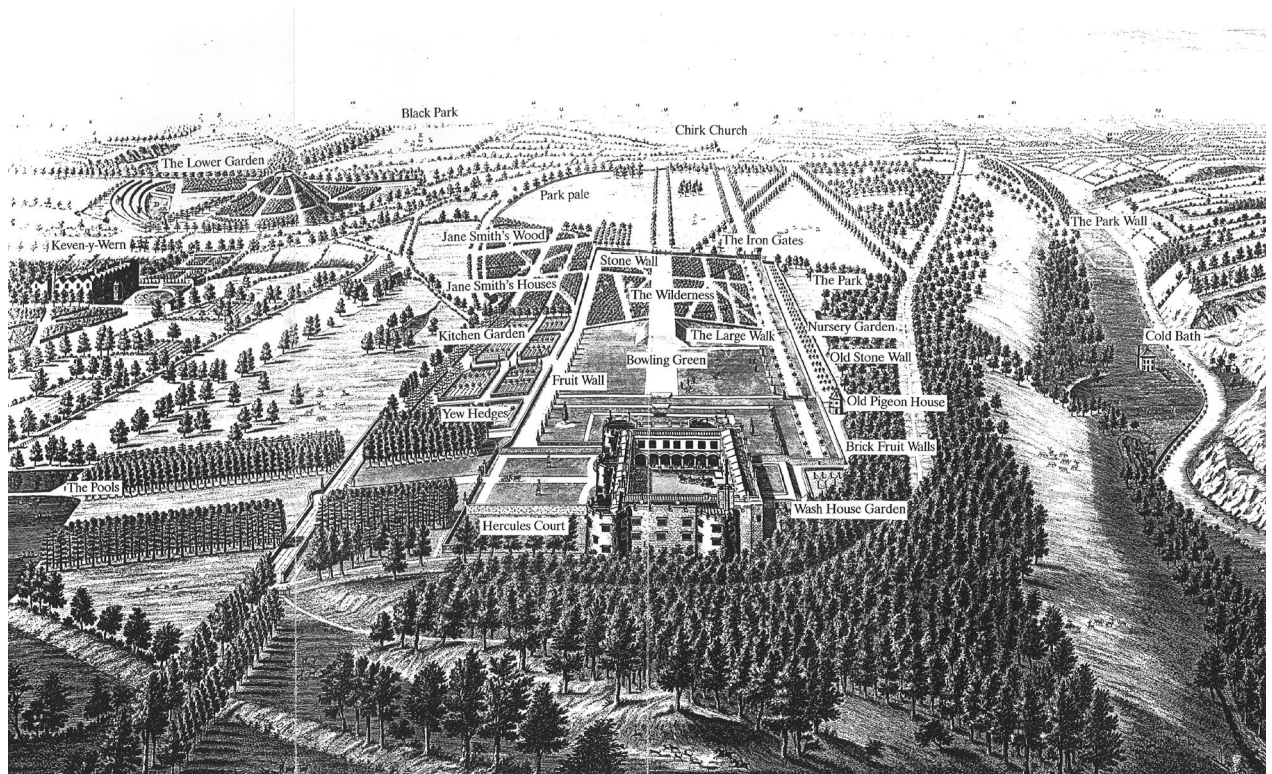


Figure 3: The West Prospect of Chirk Castle by Thomas Badeslade and William Henry Thoms 1738, facing east (captions by Christopher Gallagher 1996)



Figure 4: 1775 Estate Map for Chirk (National Library of Wales)

3. Heritage Assets

Chirk Castle is a Grade 1 listed structure (LB 598) (Cof Cymru), with its parkland and gardens being a Grade 1 Registered Park and Garden (PGW(C) 63) (Cadw 1995). The garden and environs of the castle contain several Grade II listed structures. These are largely garden structures and ornaments dating to different periods within the garden development along with some of the buildings and structures at Home Farm.

Pertinent to this proposal is the Ha or sunken fence (Listed Building 20247, grade II) which is located immediately to the south of the proposed location of the bollards (Figure 2). This was built as part of the landscaping of the grounds by Emes in the less formal 18th Century style.

Offa's Dyke, Scheduled Monument DE198 runs to the west of Chirk Castle.

4. Assessment of Impact

Groundworks associated with the siting of the three removable bollards is minimal. Whilst archaeological potential across the estate is high, the location of the new bollards is not in an area of known potential subsurface archaeological remains. There are no direct physical

impacts on Historic Asset LB 20247, the Ha Ha just to the south of the location for the new bollards.

Visual impacts are negligible and could be considered positive in the replacement of the makeshift temporary arrangement.

5. Recommendations

An archaeological watching brief is not considered necessary for this piece of work.

6. References

Cadw/ICOMOS UK, 1995. *Register of Landscapes Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales. Part 1: Parks and Gardens – Clwyd.*

Cof Cymru – National Historic Assets of Wales

<http://cadw.gov.wales/historicenvironment/recordsv1/cof-cymru/?lang=en>

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