

THE FORMER RHOSDDU LOCOMOTIVE WORKS, RAILWAY ROAD, WREXHAM



Archaeological Watching Brief

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This archaeological method statement has been prepared by NSE Ltd. on behalf of Gower Homes Ltd. and Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. It describes the methodology for carrying out a watching brief during groundwork investigations for The Sidings (former Remploy Factory), off Railway Road, Stansty, Wrexham, LL11 2DN. The aim of the watching brief is to record any archaeological deposits which may be present within the area of the site and to produce a report describing them and the methodologies employed.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document is an Archaeological Method Statement for a watching brief and has been prepared by NSE Ltd. on behalf of Gower Homes Ltd. This document relates to a proposed scheme of archaeological works that is included within the planning conditions of the site (Planning Ref: P/2013/0519). The residential development lies within a segment of land that stands immediately west of the Chester to Shrewsbury Railway line, on the site of a late 19th century locomotive works. This engineering works comprised a series of rectangular workshops and locomotive sheds that were connected to the mainline via a series of single-line branches.

The watching brief will be undertaken in line with national planning policy on archaeology and planning (Welsh Circular 60/96). The watching brief will monitor all groundworks within the site boundary. Despite the site's industrial history, according to the various online repositories, including *Archwilio*, there are no designated assets within the curtilage of the site.

The monitoring authority – Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has within their planning condition recommends that:

No development / works shall commence until the applicant has secured the maintenance of an on-site watching brief by a suitably qualified archaeologist during construction works in accordance with details which have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. In the event of the discovery of important archaeological features outside the scope of the watching brief, all works shall cease until otherwise advised in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

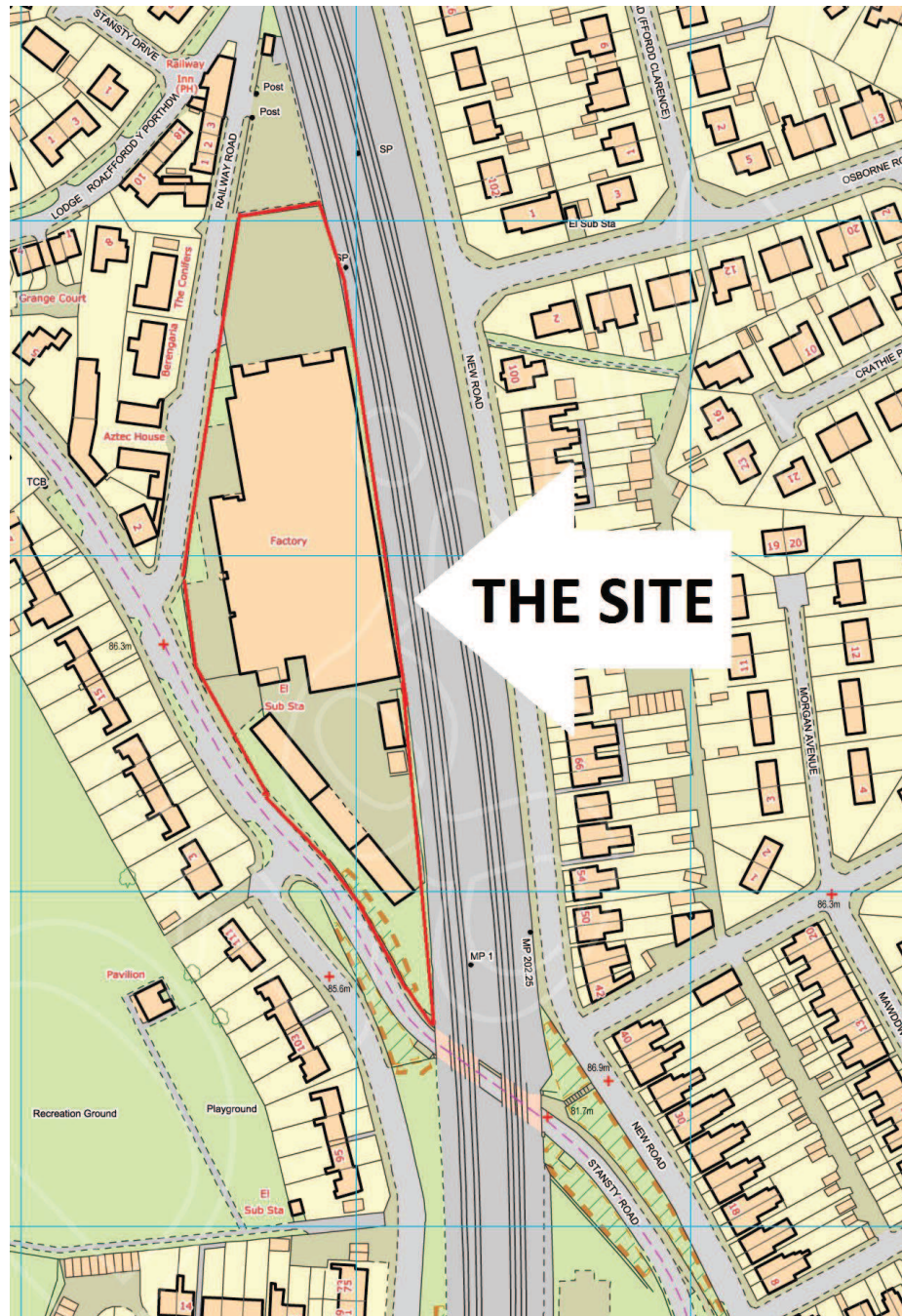
This WSI has been prepared with reference to specific guidelines provided by the Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Watching Brief* (2001 and 2008).

NSE Ltd. operates a quality management system to help ensure all projects are managed in a professional and transparent manner. Employees of NSE Ltd. are Members (MIFA) of the Institute for Archaeologists and undertakes work to the highest professional standards.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site is located within the north-west part of Wrexham, immediately west of the Chester-Shrewsbury railway line (centred upon NGR SJ 32991 51602). The western boundary of the site stands east of Railway Road and Stansty Road. The site is currently occupied by a series of modern light industrial units. According to mapping, none of the original 19th century railway sheds stand.

Figure 1: Site Location (marked in red)



3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The Rhos Ddû (also referred to as *Rhosddu*) Locomotive Works formed part of the Wrexham, Mold & Connahs Quay Railway (WM&CQR). The locomotive works was located north of the southern end of the companies Wrexham and Buckley Railway. This small private line was open for a goods service only on the 1st of January 1866, followed by a passenger services in May 1866. The works, comprising several large rectangular sheds/workshops was on the western side of the line. The WM&CQR line ran parallel with the Great Western Railway (GWR) Chester and Shrewsbury line, forming two lines (as it does at present).

By 1869, the locomotive works comprised several sheds and a newly installed turntable, along with sidings, the latter used for storing repaired and built locomotives. By 1876 a fitting shed had been erected which allowed the company to expand their engineering capabilities. The WM&CQR shed continued to develop over the years but it was always considered very much a dysfunctional operation. Over the next 40 years the works (or *Shed*) continued to service WM&CQR locomotives. At this time, the company acquired further branch lines (e.g. Brymbo in 1889) which extended the company network to link in with the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railways (MS&LR) Chester Northgate to Shotton line. This expansion resulted in the network serving many brickworks, collieries and foundries. At this time, 18 locomotives were in operation and in 1897 the company changed its name to the Great Central Railway (GCR); by 1905 the GCR had acquired all the holdings of the WM&CQR and as a result most of the original [dilapidated] sheds were replaced by a new shed layout by 1912 (known as the *Rhosddu Shed*).



Figure 2. The Rhos Ddû Works, image dated to 1954 (image: G.J. Griffiths)

In 1923 the site became part of the London North Eastern Railway (LNER). During this time the function of works changed very little. Following Nationalisation in 1948 the Rhos Ddû Works became part of the British Railways Western Region and was named shed code 6E. During the 1950s both former GWR and LNER locomotives were serviced as well as BR class

engines. The Rhos Ddû Works closed on the 4th of January 1960 and operations were to Wrexham Croes Newydd. Following closure, many of the building were demolished and the land becoming a small business park.

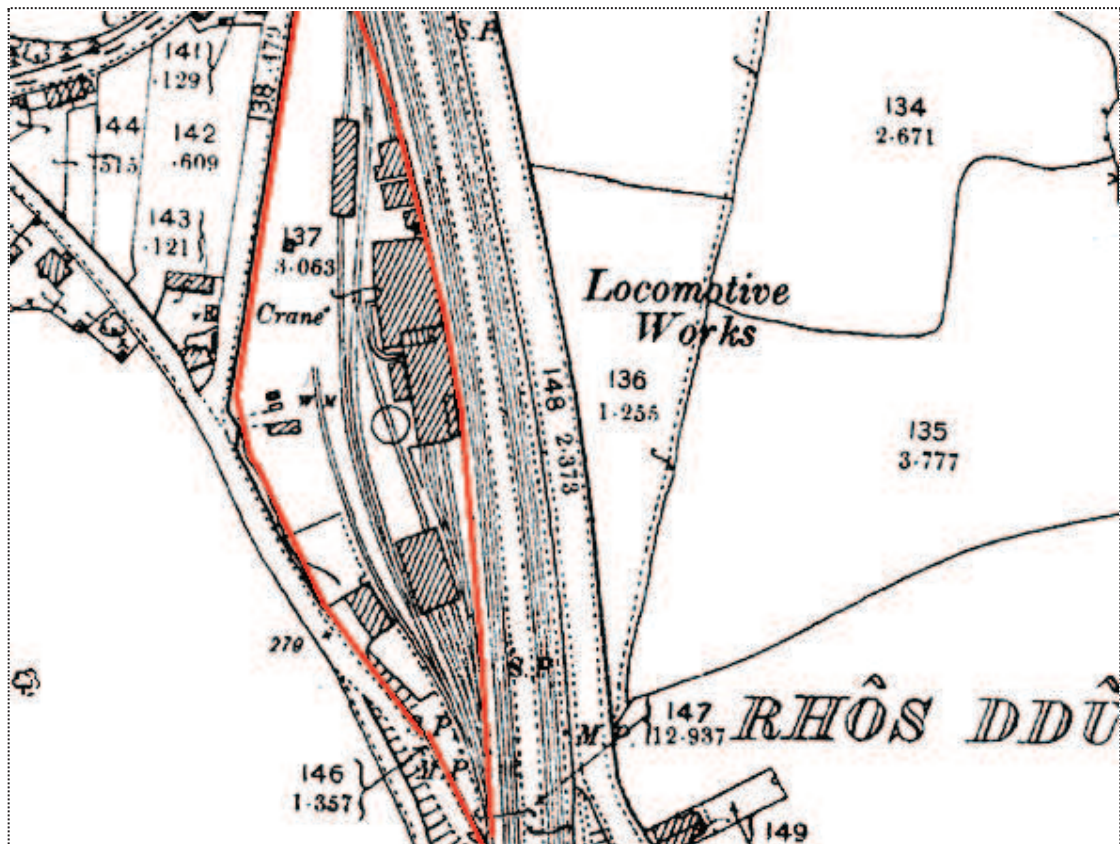


Figure 3. 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey (1912) showing the Locomotive Works and its site boundary

4.0 POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

Although the site has been heavily developed during the latter part of the 20th century, sub-surface remains may survive, in the form of shed and workshop foundation and railway track beds (amongst other features and structures. The boundary of the former Rhos Ddû Locomotive works incorporates the current development boundary.

5.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

5.1 Aims

The aim of the watching brief is to provide information on the presence/absence, location and characteristics of any archaeological remains at the site.

5.2 Objectives

The specific objectives can be summarised as follows:

- To undertake an archaeological watching brief during the specified groundworks phase of development;
- To recover all artefacts and, where necessary, palaeoenvironmental samples from deposits of potential significance;
- To analyse the site records, artefacts and ecofacts to produce a report on the archaeology of the site;
- To identify the significance of any archaeological remains; and
- To submit an ordered archive to a suitable local repository.

6.0 METHODOLOGY

6.1 Preparation and Access

Prior to commencement of the fieldwork a Health and Safety risk assessment will be prepared by NSE Ltd. for the archaeological work. A site-specific safety induction for all site staff will be organised by the Sub-contractor.

NSE Ltd. will conform to the Gower Home's arrangements for notification of entering and leaving the site. The works shall not commence until access has been arranged with the Sub-contractor.

It is Gower Home's responsibility to identify and mark the location of all services in the development area prior to commencement of fieldwork. There will be no excavation of live cables by or on behalf of archaeological staff.

Any variations to the archaeological programme will only be undertaken after consultation with, and the approval of both CPAT and Gower Homes Ltd. Any variations will be fully recorded and circulated to all parties beforehand.

6.2 The Watching Brief

A watching brief will be required during the groundworks phase.

All archaeological deposits, features and structures will be investigated and recorded by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist.

It is Gower Home's responsibility to ensure that any groundworks subcontractors undertaking intrusive works at the site are aware of the need to have a monitoring archaeologist present throughout the excavation of deposits. Stripping works will not commence without the presence of an archaeologist.

Gower Homes Ltd. will supply a copy of this method statement to their groundworks subcontractors.

Gower Homes Ltd. will give at least one week's notice of the commencement of works in order that site staff can be made available. NSE Ltd. will notify CPAT of the start date as soon as it has been confirmed.

All excavation will be undertaken using a machine excavator equipped with a toothless "ditching" bucket.

The work will be organised in such a manner as to minimise plant traffic movements over the stripped areas until they have been checked for archaeological remains and declared free of such material.

CPAT will be informed if any remains are identified, and given an opportunity to view them.

Additional archaeological staff may be required if extensive remains are exposed which cannot readily be investigated and recorded by a single individual. The use of additional staff

will be arranged only with the approval of the Client in light of the demands of the programme and extent of remains exposed.

6.3 Recording

Where archaeological features are identified a localised area will be cleaned by hand (hoe/trowel) and the surface examined. The rationale for hand excavation of individual features is summarised in Table 1 below (although it is unlikely that such ephemeral features exist within the site boundary). The rationale may be varied if necessary following discussion with CPAT's monitor.

Table 1: Excavation Strategy for Individual Features

Feature Type	Excavation Method (minimum sample sizes required. Percentages are by volume of exposed feature)
Pits and postholes	50% of each intrusive feature
Linear features	25% of exposed area, plus all terminals and intersections
Structural features (beamslots, ring ditches)	50% of exposed features
Domestic/industrial working features (hearths, ovens)	50-100%
surviving structural elements (walls, collapse/debris fields)	expose, clean and preserve for excavation in more appropriate circumstances

All structural/cut features will be drawn in plan and hand excavated. Palaeoenvironmental samples will be taken from those deposits considered to be of potential. Sample sizes and overall rationale may need to be determined in discussion with an environmental archaeologist (see project staffing below, however bulk samples would normally comprise of up to 40 litres and column samples may be taken where appropriate.

All archaeological deposits will be recorded using a fully cross-referenced single context *pro-forma* recording system.

The photographic record will comprise high-resolution digital images with a supporting index in accordance with IfA guidelines.

The drawn record will comprise plans of the site at a suitable scale, typically 1:20 for features and sections at scale 1:10.

Artefacts/ecofacts will be collected and recorded stratigraphically. All artefacts will be labelled, packed and stored in appropriate materials and conditions to ensure that no deterioration occurs. All artefact/ecofact processing/storage will be carried out in accordance with UKIC (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation) guidelines and will accord with relevant Institute of Field Archaeologists Guidelines on Finds Work.

Any human remains identified will be initially left *in situ* until the relevant authorities have been informed of the discovery and any necessary licenses arranged.

Under the Treasure Act 1996 four categories of object are now classed as treasure:

- Any object other than a coin which is at least 10% silver or gold by weight and more than 300 years old;
- Any coins that are at least 10% silver or gold by weight and come from a single find provided the find contains at least two coins with a gold or silver content of at least 10%. The coins must be at least 300 years old at the time of discovery. Where finds consist of coins that are less than 10% gold or silver by weight, there must be at least 10 coins in the find and they must be at least 300 years old at the time of discovery for the find to be considered treasure;
- Any object, of whatever, composition, that is found in the same place as, or that had previously been together with, another object that is treasure; and
- Any object that would previously have been treasure trove but does not fall within the specific categories given above. The Act also introduces a Code of Practice for the voluntary recording of archaeological finds (DNH, 1996).

Any objects recovered that are deemed to qualify as treasure will be notified to the local coroner within fourteen days of discovery, in accordance with *The Treasure Act 1996 Code of Practice (Revised)*.

6.4 Monitoring

The monitoring authority – CPAT will be advised of the start date and likely duration of the works at the earliest opportunity. If significant archaeological remains are encountered during the works it may be necessary to arrange an interim meeting to discuss the findings and mitigation in more detail.

6.5 Reporting

A report setting out the results of the watching brief will be prepared within four weeks of completion of the site works.

The report will contain the following elements as a minimum:

- A non-technical summary;
- A table of contents;
- An introduction with acknowledgements, including a list of all those involved in the project and the location and description of the fieldwork area;
- A statement of the project aims;
- An account of the project methodology undertaken, with an assessment of the same;

- A description of the archaeological works, including any archaeologically significant anomalies/features/deposits or potential features/deposits identified within the site during the watching brief;
- A discussion of the location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any archaeological deposits/features uncovered, together with a discussion of their relationship with known archaeology in the vicinity;
- Plans and section drawings at appropriate scales;
- Other maps, plans, drawings and photographs as appropriate;
- A description of the finds and palaeoenvironmental samples collected including an exposition of the methodologies employed; a statement on the presence or absence of material and an assessment of preservation. An interpretation of the finds including reference to any unusual or important features of the assemblage will also be included. Specialist reports will be included of all important groups of finds, materials and samples as necessary;
- An interpretation of the results with a statement of the significance of any identified archaeological features/sites on a local, regional and national scale;
- An identification of any research implications arising from the work;
- A bibliography of sources consulted and a supplementary bibliography of any sources identified, but not available for consultation; and
- An index to the project archive and a statement of its location/proposed repository.

Appendices to each report will include the agreed WSI.

Any observations on the content of draft reports made by the Client and the Historic Environment Officer will be taken into account before the final version is issued.

Copies of each report will be issued to the Client, the Historic Environment Officer and the Regional HER (held by CPAT at Welshpool).

6.6 Archive

The project archives will consist of all original records, artefacts, ecofacts/samples and all documentation that relates to the archaeological works. Copies of the WSI and any relevant correspondence will be included.

The archives will be prepared according to the methodology set out in MAP2, as updated by MoRPHE (*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*, English Heritage 2006).

The archives will comply with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (Archaeology Section) Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage (1990) the Society of Museum Archaeologists Towards An Accessible Archive (1995) and to the reasonable requirements of the recipient Museum.

6.7 Copyright

NSE Ltd. will retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act of 1988 with all rights reserved; the contractor will provide an exclusive licence to the Client for the use of such documents by the Client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in this WSI.

6.8 Health and Safety

NSE Ltd. operates in accordance with the health and safety procedures as set out in:

- The Health and Safety Work Act (1974) and related legislation
- CDM regulations 2007
- The Standing Conference of Archaeology Unit Managers Health and Safety Manual (2002)
- The Council for British Archaeology Handbook no. 6, Safety in Archaeological Fieldwork (1989)

NSE Ltd. will prepare a health and safety risk assessment and plan for the site, to be read and acknowledged by all site staff.

Gower Homes Ltd. will provide NSE Ltd. with any information regarding hazardous contaminants present in the surface materials and sub-surface strata at the site. Appropriate measures will then be taken to ensure the health and safety of staff who may come into contact with such contaminants. Measures may include on-site adaptation of the agreed works.

All necessary protective clothing and equipment will be used. The archaeologists on site will wear hard hats, reflective jackets and protective footwear at all times.

A first-aid kit and accident book will be kept on site.

The activities undertaken by archaeologists on site are covered by the appropriate insurance, and those of the subcontractors by their respective companies. Details of these can be provided if necessary.

7.0 RESOURCES AND ORGANISATION

This section outlines key staff, specialists and aspects of the organisation of the fieldwork.

7.1 Company Roles

NSE Ltd. to liaise between the Client and CPAT on all archaeological matters, to undertake periodic QA reviews and sign-off on key documents. Overseeing site work and to prepare technical documentation for submission to CPAT and to prepare a Health and Safety risk assessment for archaeological work. NSE Ltd. will oversee all site work.

Archaeological Illustrator

Abby George: Finds Drawings, supervision of site drawings.

Archaeologist

Thomas Wellicome (MA)

Palaeoenvironmentalist

Palaeoecology Research Services Ltd will be engaged to assess any palaeoenvironmental samples considered potentially significant.

7.2 Timetable

The site works timetable may vary depending on the groundworks schedule prepared by contractors working on behalf of Gower Homes Ltd. A report will be prepared within four weeks of completion of the fieldwork for submission to CPAT.

8.0 CLOSURE

This report has been prepared by NSE Ltd. with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the manpower and resources devoted to it by agreement with the client. Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

This report is for the exclusive use of Gower Homes Ltd.; no warranties or guarantees are expressed or should be inferred by any third parties. This report may not be relied upon by other parties without written consent from NSE Ltd.

NSE Ltd. disclaims any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the agreed scope of the work.