



Archaeological Watching Brief

Groundworks being undertaken at 'Holt Hill', Green Street, Holt, Wrexham. LL13 9JF

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Client	Chris Eaton
Location	NGR SJ 41019 54311 (341019 354311)
Site Code	HH20
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Application No: P/2020/0065

CRYNODEB

Yn unol ag amod 6 yr hysbysiad cynllunio uchod, comisiynwyd Archaeoleg y Capel gan Mr Chris Eaton i gynnal gwyliadwriaeth yn Holt Hill, Holt.

Y prif amcanion oedd:

- Cynnal briff gwylio dros yr holl rannau hynny o'r datblygiad sy'n ymgorffori gwaith daear.
- Cofnodi unrhyw nodweddion archeolegol, ac i adfer unrhyw ddarganfyddiadau, os ydynt yn bresennol.
- Cwblhau'r archif a pharatoi adroddiad yn manylu ar unrhyw ganfyddiadau perthnasol.

Cloddiwyd 5 ffos i ddyfnder uchaf o 1 m. Roedd pob un yn cynnwys tir colur yn bennaf neu 'aflonyddu' gan wasanaethau cyfleustodau neu ddraeniau maes.

Roedd unig nodweddion unrhyw nodyn wedi'u lleoli yn ardal arfaethedig Patio; Tanc Ffynnon a Septig / Pwll Slyri (gweler isod).

Roedd Darganfod / Arteffactau yn brin iawn, yn anarferol felly ar gyfer adeilad mor hirsefydlog a oedd wedi cael cymaint o newidiadau ers yr 17^{eg} ganrif.

SUMMARY

In compliance with condition 6 of the above Planning Notice, Chapel Archaeology was commissioned by Mr Chris Eaton to undertake a watching-brief at Holt Hill, Holt.

The primary objectives were:

- To carry out a watching brief over all those parts of the development incorporating groundworks
- The recording of any archaeological features, and to recover any finds, if present
- The completion of the archive and preparation of a report detailing any relevant findings.

Five Trenches were dug to a maximum depth of 1m. Each was primarily composed of made-up ground or 'disturbed' by utility services or field-drains.

The only features of any note were located in the proposed patio area; a well and a septic tank/slurry pit (see below).

Finds/Artefacts were extremely scarce, unusually so for such a long-established building that had undergone so many changes since the 17th century.

METHODOLOGY

Archaeological deposits and any structural remains were to be recorded employing a continuous context recording system.

Any archaeological features present, and their distribution, to be drawn up to a relevant scale

Any significant profiles to be drawn.

Deposits and structural remains to be levelled and related to a known datum point

A photographic record of all significant features to be maintained throughout the course of the groundworks

Any artefacts and eco-facts present to be collected and kept for identification and analysis

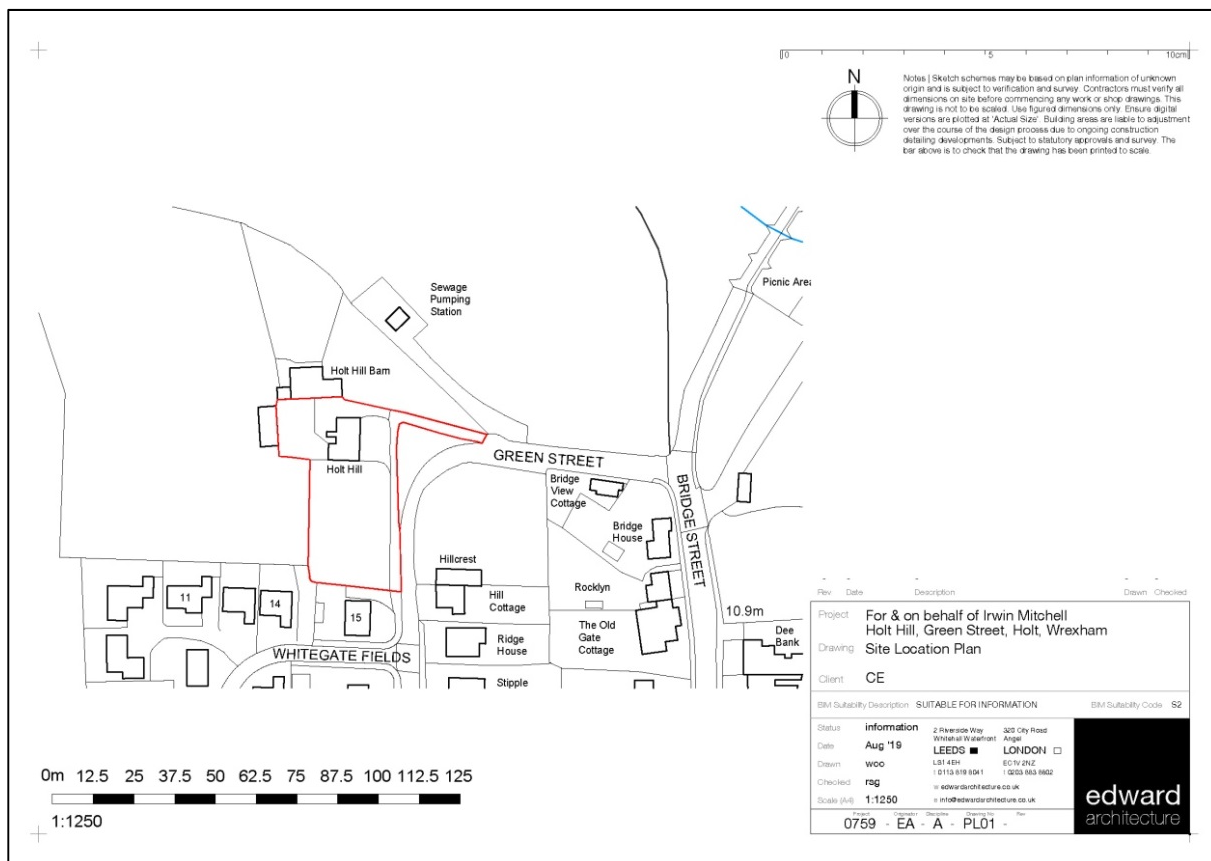
After cleaning, any finds to be sorted, catalogued and stored by period and material, following approved guidelines (IFA)

Pottery and any building materials to be recorded by fabric type and form, where possible

A sherd count to be made to enable comparisons between groups of materials

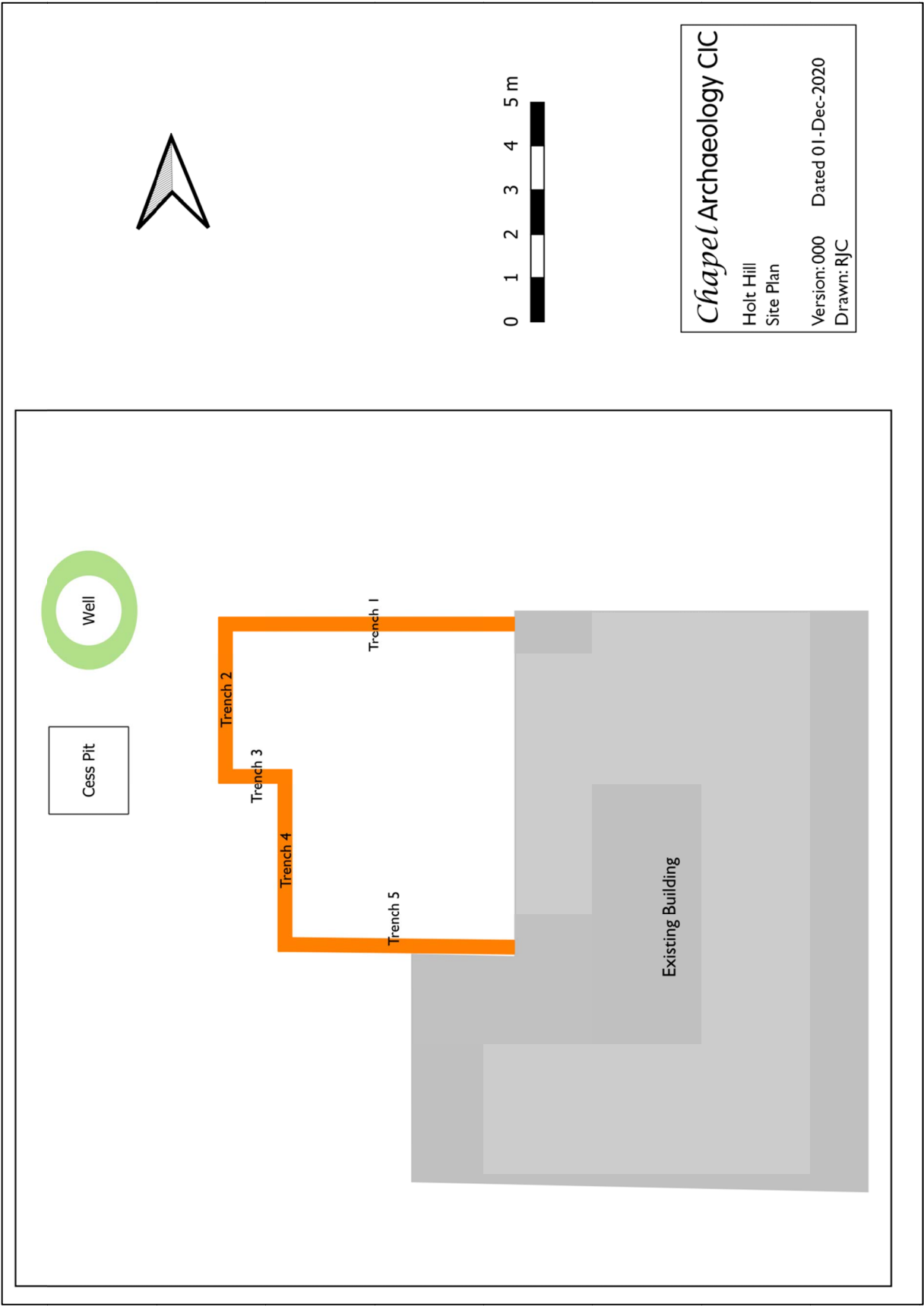
Individual sherds and objects recovered to be discussed, if present, to determine the date or functional context of a deposit.

SITE LOCATION MAP (grid ref: 341019 354311)



LOCATION OF TRENCHES/PATIO

The site of the proposed development had been badly disturbed by late 19th/20th century utility services, with further disturbance from a levelling of the site in the early 18th century. Field-drains were also present in the western sector of the development area.



TRENCHES 1-5



The site prior to excavation from the south-west. *Alan Wilmshurst*

No archaeological features were present in Trenches 1–5, nor any finds recorded, apart from those dating to the 18th–20th century. These were all recovered from ‘made-up ground’ that reached an average depth of 0.63m from the present day ground level (OD 16.5m).



A selection of the finds. *Alan Wilmshurst*

Below this was a sand and fine pebble layer that measured 0.17m in depth. This would appear to relate to the early 18th century redevelopment of the house.

The 'natural' dense boulder-clay (OD 15.70m) underlay the above, at which point the agreed foundation level was attained, 0.20m into the clay. The maximum depth of all trenches did not exceed the OD 15.50 level.



Trench 1 from the south-west. Alan Wilmshurst

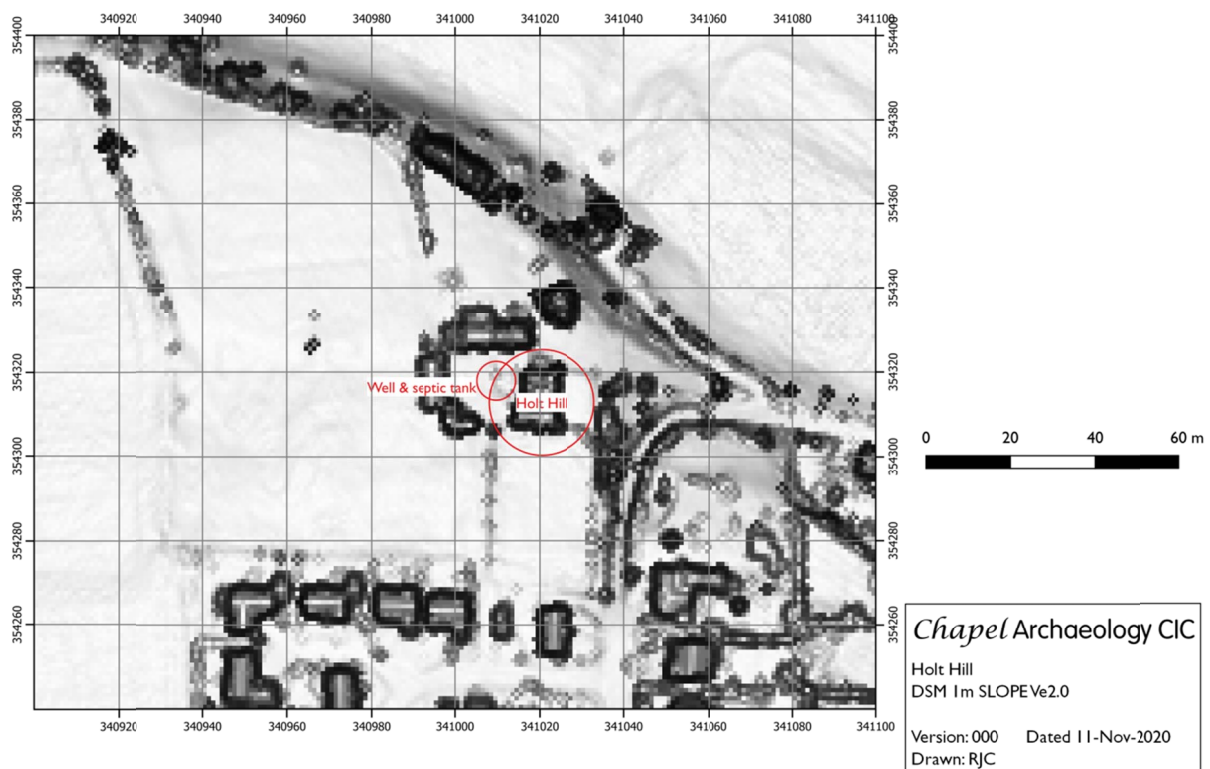
At no point was bedrock reached.



Trenches 1–5 from the north-west. Alan Wilmshurst

PATIO

Two features appear on a Lidar Survey.



Well Feature



The well feature. Alan Wilmshurst

Immediately to the west of trenches 1–5 an area was cleared to a depth of 0.60m, at which point a circular/oval well was revealed (OD 15.90m), consisting of fine-hewn sandstone blocks; this would have originally stood proud of the existing ground-surface. At the behest of the client, the well has been retained, and no further excavation was undertaken.

The extant, surviving, sandstone block course-structure was circular to oval in form. On its N-S axis it measured 2.70m (outer edge); its E-W alignment registered 2.20m. The visible top course bore traces of white/grey mortar. Its inner 'diameter/oval' measured 1.50m x 1.60.

The major sandstone block components measured 0.62m x 0.40 x 0.20. The smaller blocks averaged 0.42m x 0.30 x 0.20.

It is probable that this feature relates to one of the earliest phases of the 17th/18th century structure, though no artefacts were present, at this level, to positively identify its date of origin.

This feature was located 8.62m west of Holt Hill.

Septic Tank/Slurry-Pit



Septic-tank/slurry-pit. Alan Wilmshurst

A large rectangular feature was located 8.48m west of the house, and 1.30m to the south of the well, 0.60m below ground level. Its dimensions measured 2m x 1.80 x 1.50. Its concrete structure was pierced on its northern side by a ceramic drain. The whole structure was covered by a concrete plinth.

REPORT

The ground-works were undertaken on Monday/Tuesday 09/10-Nov-2020.

The site affected by groundworks covered an area 160m².

Five trenches were machine-dug to an average depth of 0.9-1m x 0.70m width below present ground/garden surface levels. Individual layers were assessed and filtered by hand for possible presence of finds. This was supplemented by a metal-detector assessment.

Finds present were primarily of brick/tile fragments.

Each trench was badly disturbed by late 19th/20th century activity to an average depth of 0.60-65m. These disturbances overlay a fine layer of sand/gravel, which in turn overlay the natural boulder clay. No finds were recorded.

Profiles were photographed, but it was deemed unnecessary to draw them to scale.

A site-plan recorded their location in relation to the rear end of 'Holt Hill'. No finds were recorded, other than of 18th-20th century origin.

The only features present were a finely preserved well (which is to be retained in its entirety) and a 20th century septic/slurry tank.

The client is extremely keen for a resistivity survey of the rectangular field adjoining the main house, immediately to the south (appears on Tithe-Map of 1843), which has retained its configuration to the present day. The rectangular field warrants further investigation not only because it might shed further light on the history of the Holt Hill property itself, but also due to its close proximity to a known Roman tile works and a Roman road. Holt Hill was for many years owned by the Crew(e) family, wealthy landowners and members of the gentry, before passing on to the Jones family of Pentref in the 1740s. The property was also connected with the prominent aristocratic Leche family via the 1789 marriage of John Leche of Stratton Esq. and Margaret Jones. The Leche family were Lords of the Manor of Nether Carden from the early fifteenth century to the early twentieth century. The census returns for 1871 until 1901 record the Beard family farming at Holt Hill. Shortly afterwards, the Thomas family of Holt became the owners of Holt Hill. Chapel Archaeology has agreed to undertake the non-invasive survey, at no cost and purely for research purposes. If there are no objections to this proposal the survey will be undertaken in the near future. The results of the survey will be forwarded to the client, LPA and other relevant bodies.

Archive

Following approval, a high-resolution PDF copy of the report alone will be sent direct to the HER via Gary Duckers (HER Officer) (gary.duckers@cpat.org.uk). The digital archive will be sent to the NMR, RCAHMW, Aberystwyth.



Section from the 1843 Tithe Map with the survey area highlighted. The National Library of Wales



View across the survey area from the south-east. Alan Wilmsburst