



NEXUS
HERITAGE

Dee Park, Holt

Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief



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INTRODUCTION

Ms C. de Grey Homer has been granted planning permission to erect a bungalow and single garage at land adjoining 11 Dee Park, Holt, Wrexham, LL13 9YS (Planning Application Appeal Ref: APP/H6955/A/11/2151056).

An archaeological planning condition was applied to the planning permission. The condition, recommended by the Clywd-Powys Archaeological Trust, advising Wrexham Borough Council, was applied to ensure that an adequate record of any archaeological features revealed by the development can be made in compliance with the relevant policy. The condition states:

Condition 2: No development shall take place within the appeal site until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The principal archaeological interest at the site is an infilled ditch running roughly north-east to south-west probably of late or post-medieval date and possibly related to the layout of the medieval planned settlement of Holt. This ditch was discovered in 2010 during archaeological evaluative works undertaken to inform the planning application for the proposed bungalow and garage. Liaison with Mr M. Walters (Development Control Archaeologist of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust- advisor to Wrexham Borough Council) has determined that the spirit and intent of Condition 2 can be addressed by means of a programme of archaeological work in the form of a watching brief.

Nexus Heritage has been commissioned by Ms C. de Grey Homer to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation which sets out how an archaeological watching brief will be undertaken in order to identify and record items of archaeological and historic interest. This document (Nexus Report 3138.R01) has been prepared with reference to the relevant provisions in Welsh Office Circular 60/96 (*Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology*), Planning Policy Wales (Chapter 6 – Conserving the Historic Environment – specifically para. 6.5.3) and in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (2008 edition).

SITE LOCATION

The location of the site at Holt (centred at NGR SJ 340915 353562) is shown in Figure 1. The site is characterised open land within the built environment of Holt.



Figure 1: Site Plan (reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO ©Crown Copyright Nexus Heritage-SRI Licence No. 100048549)

The site is located towards the southern end of the village of Holt and is rectangular in plan, orientated approximately east-west and bounded to the south by a residential unit and grounds called Lilacs and to the north by the carriageway of Dee Park. To the west is an electricity sub-station and the carriageway of Francis Lane. To the east is a boundary which defines the rear of the garden to the residential premises of No.11 Dee Park (Fig. 1).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Until the archaeological evaluation undertaken in 2010 (Moles Archaeology 2010) no formal archaeological assessment of the site had been undertaken. Information from the Regional Historic Environment Record maintained by CPAT indicated that the site is located in an area of high archaeological sensitivity within the medieval historic core of Holt.

In the wider landscape the archaeological potential of the site can be gauged in the light of various archaeological and historic information. Four Bronze Age Urns containing cremated remains, were excavated in close proximity to the river Dee near the site of a Roman kilns (see below). Other prehistoric sites in the vicinity include a possible ring-ditch to the south-west of Holt located by aerial photography, which due to its form; also has the possibility of being Bronze Age. During the Roman period a military-run ceramics production site was located just north-west of the later Medieval settlement of Holt. The site was characterised by a walled area of around 8ha containing accommodation, workshops and bath-houses. This is possibly the ancient settlement of *Bovium* providing for Chester's ceramic needs, both military and possibly civilian.

The earliest record of a settlement at Holt dates to the reign of Edward I when he granted the lordship of Bromfield and Yale to John de Warenne, the Earl of Surrey in 1282, (Lilley *et al*, 2005, citing Pratt). It is to be assumed that a castle would be built soon after this point, but a castle is not recorded until the year 1315. At this time the settlement at Holt is recorded as Castle Lyon. According to a Royal confirmation of 1563 a Borough Charter was issued for Holt in 1285. In 1315 Holt is recorded as having 152 Burgesses in residence, making it one of the largest towns in North Wales, larger than Conwy and Aberystwyth. The town appears to have declined during this later period, possibly as a result of the strife between England and Wales, until in 1620 only 65 freeholders and Burgesses were left.

St Chad's Church, was originally constructed in the 13th century, and was rebuilt in the late C15th. The bridge, dating to 1338, and the ferry which preceded it were probably one of the main reasons why Holt had a castle imposed on it, being one of the few bridging places on the River Dee. The bridge had a fortified tower and drawbridge on it which still existed until the late 18th century. The town also had a quay nearby the bridge for small boats from Chester, (Lilley *et al*, 2005).

Very little of note is in the immediate vicinity of the site, it is possible, according to Lilley *et al*, (2005) that the main medieval settlement of Holt was a distance to the north with the present market cross forming the southernmost extremity of the medieval settlement.

The site occupies a street frontage area which was considered likely to contain well preserved sub-surface archaeology including evidence of former dwellings, plot boundaries, rear yard areas, light industrial activity, rubbish pits and artefacts of all periods. However, the archaeological evaluation of 2010 (Moles Archaeology, 2010), whilst it confirmed a common stratigraphic sequence across the site (comprising a topsoil, a mixed modern make up layer probably used to level off the ground in this area, a subsoil derived from the geologically lain sandstone and the and the sandstone) encountered only one feature of note - a ditch towards the eastern end of the site, which contained three postholes. The ditch itself cut through the subsoil, but was buried by the modern levelling deposit, dating it to at least pre-19th century.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The watching brief entails a presence on site during the ground works, with the intention of identifying, investigating and recording any archaeological remains encountered during the works so far as is reasonably practicable given the conditions on site and health and safety considerations. The aims of the watching brief are:

- to allow, within the resources available, the opportunity to gain information about and record the presence/absence, nature and date of any archaeological remains on the site affected by excavations for the development, the presence and nature of which could not be established with sufficient confidence in advance of works which may disturb them.
- to provide the facility to signal to the relevant authorities, before irreversible impact to remains that an archaeological and/or historic find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are inadequate to support their treatment to an adequate and satisfactory standard.

The specific objectives of the watching brief are:

- to further investigate the infilled ditch encountered during the 2010 evaluative works and secure dating evidence for the construction, use and disuse of the ditch.
- to observe and recover any artefacts of archaeological significance
- to record the location, dimensions and nature of any deposits, features, structures or artefacts of archaeological significance
- to recover samples of any deposits considered to have potential for analysis for palaeoenvironmental data.
- where the raw data allows, to construct a model of the depositional processes and stratigraphic sequence for the relevant parts of the site.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the watching brief has been prepared with reference to the Institute of Field Archaeologists document *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (2008) and will be kept under constant review during the project, in order to see how far it is meeting the terms of the aims and objectives, and in order to adopt any new questions which may arise.

Curatorial monitoring of the archaeological work on behalf of Wrexham Borough Council will be carried out by an officer(s) of Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. To facilitate the curatorial monitoring, the officer shall be provided with a minimum of two weeks' notice of the start of the archaeological work. Mr M. Walters (Development Control Archaeologist of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust- advisor to Wrexham Borough Council) was informed of the intention to undertake the ground works on site which require the archaeological watching brief to be maintained during week 21st-25th January 2013 by telephone on Wednesday 9th January 2013.

Nexus Heritage will supply suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist(s) for the maintenance of the watching brief. On arrival on site, the archaeologist(s) will report to the site manager and conform to the arrangements for notification of entering and leaving site. The archaeologist(s) will keep a record of the date, time and duration of all attendances at site, the names and numbers of archaeologists deployed and any actions taken. The archaeologist will wear a safety helmet, safety footwear and high visibility jacket/vest at all times.

If deposits and or artefacts are exposed during excavations for the development which require recording and recovery, it may be necessary to delay works whilst the proper investigation and recording takes place. Watching brief recording can often be undertaken without delay to groundworks, depending upon the specific circumstances and flexibility of all the staff on site. Within the constraints of the terms of the watching brief work, the archaeologist will not cause unreasonable disruption to the maintenance of the work schedules of other contractors on site.

In the event of archaeological discoveries the treatment of which (either arising from the volume/quantity of material and/or the complexity/importance of the material) is beyond the resources deployed Nexus Heritage will notify Ms C. de Grey Homer and arrange a site meeting with representatives of Wrexham Borough Council. The aim of the meeting will be to confirm 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 and identify measures which would be sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard prior to destruction of the material in question..

Any archaeological deposits, features and structures identified which can be investigated and recorded under the terms of the watching brief will be excavated manually in a controlled and stratigraphic manner sufficient to address the aims and objectives of the project – subject to the limitations on site access.

It may not be necessary to excavate the complete stratigraphic sequence to geologically lain deposits but the inter-relationships between archaeological deposits, features and structures will be investigated sufficient to address the aims and objectives of the project and the complete stratigraphic sequence to geologically lain deposits will be investigated where practicable. The method of recording will follow the normal principles of stratigraphic excavation and the stratigraphy will be recorded in written descriptions even where no archaeological deposits have been identified. The archaeologist will record archaeological deposits using *proformae* recording forms and locate them on a large-scale site plan related to

the Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum references. The drawn record will comprise plans at scale 1:20 and sections at scale 1:10; proprietary electronic hardware and software to prepare site drawings may be used as appropriate.

All finds work will be carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists publication *Guidelines on Finds Work* (1991). All artefacts discovered will be retained for processing and analysis except for unstratified items dating to the twentieth or twenty-first centuries AD which will be recorded by material type, form, identification and weight, and discarded. All finds will be assessed in order to recover information that will contribute to an understanding of their date and function. Artefacts pre-dating the 20th century may be discarded and a project specific discard policy will be agreed with the landowner, the Clywd-Powys Archaeological Trust and the recipient archive repository. All retained finds will be stabilised and packaged in accordance with best practice and the requirements of the organisation nominated to receive the archive. The terms of the *Treasure Act* (1996) will be followed with regard to any items discovered to which the Act would apply. Such items will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner as required. Where removal cannot be effected on the day of discovery the archaeological contractor will deploy suitable security measures to protect the items from unlawful removal.

Samples for scientific dating will be taken if suitable material is encountered during the watching brief.

The retention of artefacts and samples will only take place where appropriate measures are in place to mitigate the risks and hazards associated with toxic, chemical or biohazard contamination.

Recommendations for discard/further analysis will be made in the report in accordance with the English Heritage guidance documents *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-Excavation* (2002) and *Geoarchaeology – Using Earth Sciences to Understand the Archaeological Record* (2007). A sampling strategy will be agreed with a suitably qualified and experienced bio-archaeologist and any deviation from the sampling procedures outlined in the above guidance documents will be discussed and agreed with Wrexham Borough Council in advance of implementation.

Any human remains discovered will be left *in situ* and protected. Nexus Heritage will notify the police, Ms C. de Grey Homer and Wrexham Borough Council of the presence of human remains at the earliest opportunity. If removal is necessary, mandated by the relevant regulatory authorities and appropriate funding is provided to Nexus Heritage the remains will be excavated archaeologically in accordance with the English Heritage document *Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England* (2005) and any conditions imposed by the Ministry of Justice and/or the Local Planning Authority Environmental Health Directorate. Any assessment and reporting work on recovered human remains will be undertaken in accordance with the English Heritage document *Human Bones from Archaeological Sites: Guidelines for Producing Assessment Documents and Analytical Reports* (2004).

Nexus Heritage will survey the watching brief works with respect to the nearest Ordnance Survey datum point and with reference to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The observed areas, trenches, works, deposits, features and structures within them will be accurately located on a site plan prepared at most appropriate and largest scale. The photographic record will be secured by black and white film, colour slide film and will be supplemented by photographs taken using digital camera.

At the conclusion of the fieldwork, a brief summary of the results will be prepared for Ms C. de Grey Homer. The report will be prepared after the retained artefacts have been cleaned, identified (if possible), labelled, assessed and dated (if possible). The artefacts will be 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 should accord with the Institute for Archaeologists document *Guidelines on Finds Work*. Soil or other samples recovered will be processed as appropriate by a qualified and experienced bio-archaeological scientist. Where the need for dating of individual contexts/features arises, material suitable for scientific dating will be identified and Ms. C. de Grey Homer advised.

ASSESSMENT, ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

After the completion of the fieldwork a report will be prepared which encompasses the results of the archaeological watching brief. The report would normally contain the following, but the contents may be adapted to take account of project specific circumstances:

- 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 site
- A statement of the project aims
- An account of the project methodology undertaken, with an assessment of the same to include a statement on preservation bias and the means of data collection and sampling strategies
- A factual summary of the history, development and use of the site
- A statement setting out the nature, quantity and condition of the material archive (artefacts and ecofacts) including commentary on any bias observed due to collection and sampling strategies and commentary on long-term storage requirements
- A statement setting out the nature and quantity of the documentary archive (notes, photographs, drawings, digital data)
- A general site plan indicating the position and size of the areas subject to watching brief and the locations of archaeological deposits identified and recorded during the works
- Plans and sections at appropriate scales, augmented with appropriate photographs. All plans and sections will be related to the Ordnance Survey datum levels and to the National Grid
- Other maps, plans, drawings, stratigraphic matrices and photographs as appropriate
- Summary assessment reports on the artefact, bio-archaeological, dating and other assessments/analyses
- A discussion of the location, extent, date, nature, condition, quality and significance of any archaeological deposits and finds identified during the project.
- A discussion of any research implications arising from the archaeological work.
- Notes on consultations with conservators and the nominated archive repository related the immediate and long-term conservation and storage requirements for the data held in the site archive and recommendations of retention/discard of artefacts and ecofacts.
- A bibliography sources consulted.
- Appendices to the report will include artefact catalogues, reports on assessments/analyses and an index to the project archive and a statement on its location/proposed repository

One digital .PDF copy of a draft version of the report will be made available for comment within six weeks of the completion of the fieldwork.

Should the delivery of the report depend on the incorporation of reports arising from specialist and/or laboratory work then a revised timetable for delivery of the draft report may be agreed upon conclusion of the fieldwork stage. Nexus Heritage will take into account any observations on the content of the draft report made by Ms C. de Grey Homer, the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and Wrexham Borough Council.

A digital .pdf copy of the final report will be submitted to Ms C. de Grey Homer for retention (1) and onward submission to the Planning Department of Wrexham Borough Council (1 copy) and Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (1 copy). Nexus Heritage will be responsible for submitting the required copies of the final report to the regional Historic Environment Record, and the RCAHMW in appropriate hard and digital formats.

A summary report on the archaeological works will be provided to a suitable local journal if this is appropriate to the significance of the results, with a record note presented to the appropriate national period journal(s). These reports/notes will include the collaborative role of Ms C. de Grey Homer and Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in the completion of the archaeological works.

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COPYRIGHT

Copyright to any commissioned reports and any other project documents will be retained by Nexus Heritage under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act of 1988; excepting that an exclusive licence will be provided to Ms C. de Grey Homer and Wrexham Borough Council for the use of such documents by Ms C. de Grey Homer and Wrexham Borough Council in all matters directly relating to the project. The copyright of this document remains with Nexus Heritage, subject to the same exclusive licence.

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CONFIDENTIALITY

Nexus Heritage will treat as confidential all information obtained directly or indirectly from Ms C. de Grey Homer in connection with these archaeological investigations and will not, without the prior consent of Ms C. de Grey Homer, disclose any information relating to the project or publicise the project in any way. Nexus Heritage will manage, on behalf of Ms. C de Grey Homer, all matters pertaining to publicity arising from the archaeological works and for any public education/outreach events or matters, as appropriate.

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

Nexus Heritage will obtain all relevant certification from Ms C.de Grey Homer regarding Health and Safety prior to any site works and will conform to arrangements for notification of entering and leaving the site.

Nexus Heritage will be guided by the *Health and Safety at Work Act* (1974), the *Standing Conference of Archaeology Unit Managers Health and Safety Manual* (1991), *Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations* (2002), *Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations* (2007), *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations* (1999), the *Work at Height Regulations* (2005), the *Confined Spaces Regulations* (1997), the *Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations* (2002) and the Council for British Archaeology Handbook No. 6, *Safety in Archaeological Fieldwork* (1989).

While carrying out the archaeological investigations Nexus Heritage will operate in accordance with all applicable Health and Safety Legislation.

Nexus Heritage will provide its staff with all necessary protective clothing and equipment. The archaeologist will wear a safety helmet and reflective jacket/waistcoat at all times on site. Ear defenders and eye goggles would be used as required when machinery is in operation

Ms C. de Grey Homer will supply to Nexus Heritage any information regarding hazardous contaminants present in surface materials and sub-surface strata at the site. Where contaminated material is present in the surface or sub-surface deposits at the site appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the health and safety of staff which may come into contact with contaminants. In case of encountering contaminated soil, Nexus Heritage will inform Ms C. de Grey Homer immediately.

In the event of encountering contaminated soil, it may be necessary for Nexus Heritage to produce a revised method statement for approval by Ms C. de Grey Homer. Once approved, Nexus Heritage will forward the revised method statement to the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust for reference.

A First-Aid Kit and Accident Book will be kept on site at all times for the duration of the archaeological works

ARCHIVE

Nexus Heritage will conform to the arrangements for archive preparation and submission prior to commencing fieldwork and will be responsible for requests to transfer the legal title to the artefact archive from the landowner to a repository approved by Wrexham Borough Council.

The archive generated during the project will be offered to a suitable local museum with Museum and Galleries Commission approved storage facilities. In this instance the ***** Museum is identified as the archive repository. Every effort would be made to deposit the archive in an appropriate location with the agreement of C. de Grey Homer and to secure an agreement with the relevant repository to accept the archive prior to the commencement of the fieldwork.

Nexus Heritage will maintain the archive until the period of report preparation is complete and will be responsible for necessary conservation work on the artefact archive to be undertaken to ensure the long-term stability of the artefacts and their availability for future study.

The archive is to be prepared, compiled and presented for long term storage according to the requirements of the receiving institution and as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists document *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials* (2008).

Nexus Heritage will be responsible for the security of any excavated materials/records relating to the archaeological investigations prior to the submission of the archive. An indexed project archive will be prepared for inclusion as an appendix to the report. The project archive will comprise all primary written, documents, drawn plans and sections, photographic negatives and a set of labelled photographic prints.

The archive will comprise the stratigraphical/structural, artefact, environmental and other catalogues and all other records as well as details of the methods employed. Each separate data group should be cross-referenced to related data groups, to the final publication, and if necessary to a general context index to allow users maximum accessibility to the contents. The archive will contain some or all of the following elements:

- context information: recording (on duplicate copies) any amendments to original field records resulting from analysis
- photographic catalogue: listing all photographs taken during fieldwork, assessment and analysis
- digital photographs
- drawing index
- drawings, sketches, plans, sections, artefact drawings
- artefact catalogue
- x-ray catalogue and x-rays
- conservation records: details of conservation undertaken during analysis, cross-referred to objects conserved
- soil sample catalogues: details of samples selected for analysis
- human bone catalogues: details recorded for analysis
- animal bone catalogues: details recorded for analysis
- a copy of the site narrative
- copies of artefact, ecofact and scientific dating reports:

A synopsis of the archive would be lodged with the regional Historic Environment Record.

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RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING

The timing of the archaeological presence on site will depend on the nature, extent and timing of groundworks. It is anticipated that the ground works requirement the watching brief will be completed in one day.

The archaeological work will be undertaken by a team of demonstrable competence provided by Nexus Heritage. Archaeological staff engaged on the project will have appropriate and relevant experience.

Post-excavation support will be provided to Nexus Heritage by the University of Leicester Archaeology Service as follows:

Wood: Matthew Beamish BA

Lithics: Lynden Cooper BA

Prehistoric and Roman Ceramics/Small Finds: Nick Cooper BA

Prehistoric and Roman Ceramics: Elizabeth Johnson BSc. MA

Post Roman Finds: Debbie Sawday BA:

Charred Plant Remains/Mollusca/ Environmental Sampling: Angela Monckton B.Sc. MIFA

Animal Bone: Jennifer Browning BA, MA

Human Bone: Harriet Jacklin BA, MA

Conservation, X-radiography and Industrial residues: Dr Graham C Morgan MPhil PhD FIIC FSA AMUKIC

Nexus Heritage is happy to consider the use of alternative sub-consultants for post-excavation support, as suggested by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

MONITORING

Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust will monitor the archaeological works on behalf of Wrexham Borough Council

Reasonable access to the site works will be provided by Ms. C. de Grey Homer to representatives of Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and Wrexham Borough Council in order to monitor the works. A site tour and opportunity to scrutinise artefacts and site records will be provided to the monitors.

Nexus Heritage will ensure that any significant results recovered during the archaeological investigations are brought to the attention of Ms C. de Grey Homer and will notify the relevant organisations as soon as is practicably possible, and certainly within 24 hours.

A consultation between the Nexus Heritage, Ms C. de Grey Homer, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and Wrexham Borough Council will be convened towards or at the conclusion of the ground works requiring the archaeological watching brief. The purpose of the meeting is to advise the monitors on the manner in which the objectives of the project have been addressed and secure agreement that the fieldwork element of the project has been concluded to the satisfaction of the Wrexham Borough Council.

SOURCES

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