Wrexham Gateway, Wrexham

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

July 2025

PREPARED FOR

Cushman and Wakefield



Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

Prepared By	Natalie Poundall
Reviewed By	Katie Fletcher
Report Reference	61080_Wrexham Gateway_Archaeological Assessment
Issued	03/07/2025
Front Cover	1884 1:500 Ordnance Survey Town Plan, surveyed 1872, printed 1784, reprinted 1884, courtesy of the National Library of Scotland

This report is the copyright of Civic Heritage and is for the sole use of the person/organisation to whom it is addressed. It may not be used or referred to in whole or in part by anyone else without the express agreement of Civic Heritage. Civic Heritage do not accept liability for any loss or damage arising from any unauthorised use of this report. Civic Heritage is a trading name of Civic Heritage Ltd (registered number 15913145), which is a limited company registered in England, registered address Carver's Warehouse, 77 Dale Street, Manchester M1 2HG.

© Civic Heritage 2025

Acknowledgements	Civic Heritage would like to thank Cushman and Wakefield for commissioning the project. Further thanks are given to Mark Walters, Neil Bayliss and Giles Carey of Heneb: Trust for Welsh Archaeology for their advice and assistance. The desk-based research and report were compiled by Natalie Poundall, and illustrations were provided by Richard Ker.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS 1
1. Introduction 2
1.1. Background 2
1.2. Designations 3
2. Methodology 4
2.1. Introduction 4
2.2. Research sources 4
2.3. Site walkover 4
2.4. Significance and impact assessment methodology 4
3. Planning Policy 6
3.1. Introduction 6
4. Historical and archaeological background 8
4.1. Introduction 8
4.2. Prehistoric (pre-10,000 BC to AD 43) 8
4.3. Roman (AD 43 – AD 410) 8
4.4. Medieval (AD 410 – AD 1540) 9
4.5. Post-medieval (AD 1540 – *c* AD 1750) 10
4.6. Industrial (*c* AD 1750 - 1914) 10
4.7. Modern (post-1914) 11
4.8. Development of the site 12
4.9. Previous archaeological works 24
5. Site walkover 25
6. Gazetteer 35
7. Significance 40
7.1. Policy context for heritage assets 40
7.2. Designated heritage assets 40
7.3. Significance of the archaeological resource 40
7.4. Summary of significance 42
8. Impact Assessment 44
8.1. Site conditions 44
8.2. Proposed development 44
8.3. Review of impact on the archaeological resource 44
9. Conclusions 45
9.1. Planning policy 45
9.2. Recommendation for further work 45
Appendix 1 - Figures 49
Appendix 2 - Digital Data Management Plan 50

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cushman and Wakefield are devising proposals for commercial development at Wrexham Gateway (centred on NGR 333004, 350855). Cushman and Wakefield have commissioned Civic Heritage to carry out an archaeological desk-based assessment to support the planning application for the proposed development. The desk-based study aimed to identify as far as possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the archaeological resource within the site so that an informed decision may be made regarding the nature and scope of any further scheme of archaeological works that may be required in relation to the proposed development.

Wat's Dyke was established either within or immediately west of the site in the early medieval period, representing the boundary between Wales and the Kingdom of Mercia. The scheduled remains of Wat's Dyke are to the north and south of the site, indicating that the projected line of the dyke is through the west of the site.

Historic mapping indicates that in the mid-19th century, the proposed development site comprised enclosed fields. A municipal boundary passed through the west of the site, following the projected line of Wat's Dyke. By 1872, the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway, and the Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay Railway were constructed within the site, with associated railway stations, a turntable and goods shed. The railways expanded in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and new stations were constructed. A steam saw mill and timber yard had also been established in the site by the late 19th century, with a direct line to the railway.

Between 1872 and 1900, Cambrian Iron Works was constructed within the site. The iron works complex and the steam saw mill expanded in the early 20th century. Nursery structures were also constructed in the south-west of the site.

The potential for the site to contain buried archaeological remains is considered to be high. Remains may include the 19th-century Wrexham Station, the original Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay Railway Station and railway line (including a turntable), a steam saw mill. Any such remains that do exist within the site are likely to be of low significance

The Grade II Listed Wrexham General Station will not be physically affected by the current development proposals, which will take place within the south-east and north of the site.

Following consultation with Heneb: Clwyd-Powys Archaeology, archaeological monitoring and recording will be required at the site in the first instance. In addition, an archaeological evaluation may be recommended to establish the presence or absence of the potential steam saw mill buildings and nursery buildings in the south-east of the site.

The projected line of Wat's Dyke may be directly impacted by a potential pedestrian link bridge (proposals currently not included in the Outline Planning Application). Preservation of Wat's Dyke is recommended, although harm may be offset by archaeological monitoring and recording in order to mitigate the impact of the proposals on any surviving buried remains.

Further excavation may be necessary if significant archaeological remains are encountered during the monitoring and recording and archaeological evaluation. This would offset the harm of the development of the buried archaeological resource, in line with the guidance provided by the Planning Policy Wales National Plan and the Local Plan. Full details of the proposals will be required in order to inform the decision. It is also recommended that a Level-3 historic building survey will be undertaken on the 19th-century goods shed.

The scope of any such further investigation will be determined by Heneb: Clwyd-Powys Archaeology.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

1.1.1. Purpose

Cushman and Wakefield are devising proposals for a new commercial office building, the creation of public realm and landscaping, and the conversion of existing buildings to brewery, with an associated museum and taproom/restaurant (centred on NGR 333004, 350855). In accordance with National, Regional and Local Planning Policies, Cushman and Wakefield have commissioned Civic Heritage to carry out an archaeological desk-based assessment for the proposed development site. The assessment will support the outline planning application for the scheme.

The desk-based study aimed to identify as far as possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the archaeological remains within the site so that an informed decision may be made regarding the nature and scope of any further scheme of archaeological works that may be required in relation to the proposed development. The archaeological resource may include below-ground remains, earthworks, standing buildings and other structures. A detailed consideration of the above-ground historic environment is not considered within this assessment, which is focused on below-ground heritage assets.

1.1.2. Location

Cushman and Wakefield are preparing a planning application for a new commercial office building, the creation of public realm and landscaping, and the conversion of existing buildings to brewery, with an associated museum and taproom/restaurant, on land at Wrexham Gateway, Wrexham (centred NGR 333004, 350855; Plate 1; Figs 1-2). The site is located in the north-west of Wrexham Town and is bounded by houses on Spring Gardens to the north, houses on Grosvenor Gardens and Gerald Street to the east, Regent Street to the south and Crispin Lane to the west. The site currently comprises Wrexham General Railway Station with associated railway lines, bridges and platforms. The site forms part of the station approach and associated car parking. The site also comprises a parcel of vacant land in the east and two modern buildings in the south-east that are currently in use a guide and scout huts. A modern L-shaped warehouse/ facility occupies the north-east of the site.



Plate 1 Recent satellite image of the site, showing the red line development boundary

1.1.3. Topography and Landuse

Topographically, the Wrexham Town Landscape Character Area is located on a lowland plateau that is surrounded by farmland, historic estates and sand quarries. The area comprises a gently undulating terrain with views toward Ruabon and Esclusham Mountain. Landuse in the area currently comprises a central historic and retail core that is surrounded by areas of non-residential uses and remaining areas of older housing. Buildings and other development are the dominant features of the landscape (Wrexham County Borough, 2007). The River Gwenfro flows 236m south of the site, and the River Clywedog flows *c.* 1.5km south of the site.

1.1.4. Geology and Soils

The underlying solid geology of the development area comprises the mudstone of the Eturia Formation, which formed between 319 and 308 million years ago during the Carboniferous period. The solid geology is of the northern section of the site is overlain by superficial deposits Devensian (sand and gravel) that formed between 116 and 11.8 thousand years ago, during the Quaternary period (BGS, 2025).

1.2. Designations

The site contains one heritage asset that is afforded statutory protection, comprising the Grade II Listed Wrexham station entrance is within the site boundary (Ref 1855). The site does not contain any Scheduled Monuments, or any Registered Parks and Gardens and does not lie within a Conservation Area.

The site is located within 500m of 33 statutory Listed Buildings. In total, seven Listed Buildings and two Scheduled Monuments are within 250m of the site (Table 1). The Grosvenor Road Conservation Area is approximately 100m east of the site (HER 141587). The proposed development will not have a physical impact on these designated heritage assets, and so they are not considered further in this report; however, it may have an indirect impact on the setting of the designated heritage assets. A detailed consideration of the above-ground historic environment is not considered within this assessment, which is focused on below-ground heritage assets.

Description	Designation	Record Number	National Grid Reference
Wrexham General Station: Entrance Building	Grade II Listed Building	1855	332963, 350796
Wat's Dyke: Section SSW of Wrexham Station, 130m Long	Scheduled Monument	600 / DE191	332883, 350665
Wat's Dyke at Crispin Lane, Wrexham	Scheduled Monument	3946 / DE286	332998, 351188
The Former Mines Rescue Centre	Grade II Listed Building	87623	332811, 350744
Offices and Lodge to Wrexham Lager Brewery	Grade II Listed Building	1765	332985, 350501
Adult Education Centre, University College of North Wales	Grade II Listed Building	1805	333053, 350560
Former Wrexham Infirmary	Grade II Listed Building	1805	333080, 350517
No.1 Grosvenor Road (NW Side), Clywd	Grade II Listed Building	1830	333162, 350560
Boundary Wall and Gates to Roman Catholic Cathedral	Grade II Listed Building	1802	333167, 350496
Church of St James	Grade II Listed Building	1854	333233, 351141

Table 1 list of desingated heritage assets within 250m of the site

2. Methodology

2.1. Introduction

The aim of the desk-based assessment is to consider the potential impact of the proposed development upon any buried archaeological remains within the site. The production of the assessment followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) standard and guidance for undertaking archaeological desk-based assessments (CiFA, 2020).

Guidance on how the planning system considers the historic environment is outlined in TAN 24 – *The Historic Environment*, which should be considered in conjunction with PPW (Welsh Government, 2017). Best practice guidance relating to the historic environment has also been considered within this assessment, including Conservation Principles (Cadw, 2011) and Managing Historic Character in Wales (Cadw, 2017).

2.2. Research sources

The desk-based assessment consists of existing written, cartographic, photographic and electronic information, which have been analysed in order to identify known and unknown heritage assets. These include:

- National Library of Scotland historic maps;
- The National Library of Wales tithe maps;
- The Historic Environment Record supplied by Heneb (Received: 27/01/2025; Reference: E7006);
- Cadw designation data (downloaded 22/01/2025);
- Records held by National Monuments Record Wales;
- Google Earth;
- Welsh Government Aerial Photograph Archive;
- Reports of archaeological work carried out in the Study Area;
- LiDAR from DataMapWales; and,
- Historic Landscape and Cultural Landscape information through LANDMAP.

The Wrexham Archives and Local Studies online catalogue was searched for potential documents relating to the site, however, no potential sources were identified.

2.3. Site walkover

The aim of the site walkover was to relate the findings of the desk-based study to the existing land use of the application area, in order to identify any evidence for surviving below-ground remains.

2.4. Significance and impact assessment methodology

The Welsh governments criteria for the scheduling of ancient monuments, outlined in 'Understanding Scheduling in Wales' (Welsh Government, 2019) and in Annex A of Technical Advice Note 24 (Welsh Government, 2017) provides a methodology for assessing archaeological significance. These criteria have been utilised in Chapter 7.3 of this assessment.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) issued '*Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties'* in January 2011 (ICOMOS, 2011), which outlines an option on assessing heritage value. In line with the ICOMOS guidance, this document states that an archaeological asset's significance can be assessed as very high, high, medium, low, negligible or unknown (Chapter 7.4).

The impact assessment assesses the potential impact of the proposed development upon the significance of the archaeological resource within the Site. Mitigation strategies may be recommended in order to reduce the level of impact on the significance of the identified assets (Chapter 0).

3. Planning Policy

3.1. Introduction

This assessment accords with National, Regional and Local Planning Policies which relate to the historic environment. National planning policies relevant to heritage asset management are contained within the National Planning Policy Wales (Welsh Government, 2024).

3.1.1. National Planning Policy Wales (PPW)

The Planning Policy Wales (Welsh Government, 2024) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government and is supplemented by Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: *The Historic Environment* and associated best practice guidance on the historic environment produced by Cadw. The primary objective of the PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Section 6.1 of the PPW deals specifically with conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraphs 6.1.1 – 6.1.32). The section states that 'the historic environment can only be maintained as a resource for future generations if the individual historic assets are protected and conserved' and that 'the planning system must take into account the Welsh Government's objectives to protect, conserve, promote and enhance the historic environment as a resource for the general well-being of present and future generations'. Historic assets can range from World Heritage Sites to archaeological remains, to historic assets of special local interest.

Paragraph 6.1.6 sets out the Welsh Governments specific objectives for the historic environment, which seek to:

- protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Sites;
- conserve archaeological remains, both for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and the economy;
- safeguard the character of historic buildings and manage change so that their special architectural and historic interest is preserved;
- preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas, whilst the same time helping them remain vibrant and prosperous;
- preserve the special interest of sites on the register of historic parks and gardens; and
- protect areas on the register of historic landscapes in Wales.

Paragraph 6.1.7 states that "it is important that the planning system looks to protect, conserve and enhance the significance of historic assets. This will include a consideration of the setting of an historic asset which might extend beyond its curtilage. Any change that impacts on an historic asset or its setting should be managed in a sensitive and sustainable way".

Paragraph 6.1.9 states that "any decisions made through the planning system must fully consider the impact on the historic environment and on the significance and heritage values of individual historic assets and their contribution to the character of place".

The PPW also sets out the Welsh Governments approach to the range of historic assets. Paragraphs 6.1.10 concern listed buildings and state that "there should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of a listed building and its setting, which might extend beyond its curtilage. For any development proposal affecting a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses" (paragraph 6.1.10).

Paragraphs 6.1.14 - 6.1.17 concern conservation areas and state that "there should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas or their settings" (paragraph 6.1.14) and "there is a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission for developments, including advertisements, which damage the character or appearance of a conservation area or its setting to an unacceptable level" (paragraph 6.1.15).

Paragraphs 6.1.18 – 6.1.19 concern historic parks and gardens and state that "Planning authorities should value, protect, conserve and enhance the special interest of parks and gardens and their settings included on the register of historic parks and gardens in Wales" (paragraph 6.1.18).

Paragraphs 6.1.20 – 6.1.21 concern historic landscapes and state that "the Welsh Government seeks to protect areas on the register of historic landscapes in Wales" (paragraph 6.1.20) and that "planning authorities should protect those assets included on the register of historic landscapes in Wales".

Paragraph 6.1.22 concerns the approach to World Heritage Sites and states that "the planning system recognises the need to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage Sites in Wales. The impacts of proposed developments on a World Heritage Site and its setting and, where it exists, the World Heritage Site buffer zone and its essential setting, is a material consideration in the determination of any planning application".

Paragraphs 6.1.23 – 6.1.27 concern archaeological remains and state that "the planning system recognises the need to conserve archaeological remains. The conservation of archaeological remains and their settings is a material consideration in determining planning applications, whether those remains are a scheduled monument or not" (paragraph 6.1.23). Regarding undesignated archaeological remains "planning authorities will need to weigh the relative importance of the archaeological remains and their settings against other factors, including the need for the proposed development" (paragraph 6.1.25) and "where archaeological remains are known to exist or there is a potential for them to survive, an application should be accompanied by sufficient information, through desk-based assessment and/or field evaluation, to allow a full understanding of the impact of the proposal on the significance of the remains" (paragraph 6.1.26).

3.1.2. Local Development Framework

The PPW outlines the need for development plans to consider locally specific policies relevant to the historic environment. Wrexham County Borough Council adopted a Local Development Plan (LDP) in December 2023 and covers the period 2013-2028. The LDP forms the basis for decisions on land use planning in the area. *Policy SP15: Historic and Cultural Environment* sets out the approach to the Historic Environment.

Policy SP15 states that:

"Development will only be supported where it conserves, protects, preserves or enhances the following cultural and historic assets of the County Borough and their setting:

i. Listed Buildings;

ii. Conservation Areas;

iii. Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site;

iv. Registered Historic Parks, Gardens and Landscapes; and

v. Scheduled Monuments and Archaeological Remains."

Wrexham County Borough Council is advised on archaeological matters by the Heneb: Clwyd-Powys Archaeology.

4. Historical and archaeological background

4.1. Introduction

The historical background provides context for the Site.

4.2. Prehistoric (pre-10,000 BC to AD 43)

Archaeological evidence for human activity in North East Wales during the prehistoric period is limited. The earliest evidence of prehistoric activity dates to the Palaeolithic period, and evidence of early Neanderthals have been recorded at Pontnewydd Cave. Although throughout the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods, human presence was influence by the glacial-interglacial cycle and accompanying climatic and environmental changes which has led to scant evidence of early human presence (Anon., 2001).

The earliest evidence of activity in the Wrexham area dates to the Mesolithic period. Tools made from flint have been discovered at Borras, which is located to the east of the town. Although no evidence of permanent settlement has so far been discovered (NPRN 33102; https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/33102/).

Evidence of settlement in North East Wales during the Neolithic and early Bronze Age periods is more common, with examples of well-preserved structural and associated artefactual and ecofactual domestic data identified. Less substantial but more prolific settlement date derives from flint scatters from these periods also. Upland areas within the region have a high potential for remains of Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement due to the acid soils and areas of bog. Although, much of the structural data comes from protected contexts below later monuments so the good preservation of later documents contributes to the potential preservation of earlier domestic data. Within North East Wales, evidence of industrial sites comprising flint, stone and ore extraction sites have also been recorded. However, burial and ceremonial sites form the most archaeological visible remains of the period (Gibson, 2001).

Within Wrexham, evidence of Neolithic and Bronze Age tools have been recorded which suggest that the area was exploited from these periods. Bronze Age burial mounds have also been identified at Fairy Road and Hillbury Road, to the south of the modern town, *c.* 1.1km south-east of the site (NPRN 33102; https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/33102/).

Evidence of Iron Age activity in North East Wales mainly comprises hillforts, although promontory forts, defended enclosures, enclosed settlements and huts have also been recorded (Gale, 2001).

No evidence of prehistoric activity has been identified within the site and the immediate area and the potential for remains is considered to be **low**.

4.3. Roman (AD 43 – AD 410)

Within North East Wales, there is a lack of evidence of settlement pattern, urban centres or civitas (small towns), although evidence of military activity is more common. The region has the largest number of marching camps in Wales and all known auxiliary forts have been subject to some excavation, as well as a number of vici at fort sites. A Roman industrial complex was identified as Holt which served the needs of the legionary fortress at Chester and produced brick and tiles (Ref DE013). Holt is located *c.* 8.2km north-east of the site. Remains of a Roman settlement were also discovered, at Ffrith, Llanfyndd, *c.* 6.2km north-west of the site (Ref FL164).

The first evidence of permanent settlement in the Wrexham area dates to the Roman period. An excavation at the site of Roman farm at Plas Coch revealed evidence of buildings, agriculture, and trade (NPRN 33102; https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/33102/). The site of the farm is *c.* 980m north-west of the site. In total, two Roman coins were found in Wrexham in 1999 and 2000, approximately 342m east of the site (HER 120206).

There is no known evidence of Roman activity within the site and the potential for remains is considered to

be **low.**

4.4. Medieval (AD 410 – AD 1540)

4.4.1. Early medieval (AD 410 – 1066)

The early medieval period in Wales begins with the end of Roman administration and ended with the Norman incursions of the 11th century. Placename evidence can provide an indication of possible settlement and land use during the early medieval period. The name Wrexham was first documented in 1161 as *Wristlesham* and derives from the Old English personal name and *hamm*, meaning 'Wryhtel's water-meadow' (Mills, 2011). The area to the south of St Giles Church has been identified as the location of the original water meadow. The land drops away to the River Gwenfro, whilst the crossroad or Church Street, High Street, Town Hill, and Hope Street in the modern town centre and which formed part of the historic core of Wrexham, used the high ground to the north of the church. The water meadow could provide high-quality grazing for animals which would have likely fuelled the growth of the town during the medieval period (NPRN 33102; https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/33102/).

Wrexham was also developing as a border town. To the west of the modern town centre, scheduled remains associated with Wat's dyke survive. The dyke was constructed as an attempt to mark out and formalise the boundary between the Welsh Kingdom of Powys and the English Kingdom of Mercia in the 8th century. Wat's dyke mostly comprised an earthen bank with a ditch to the west and runs south from Holywell to the Morda Valley near Maesbury. The dyke survives as scheduled remains in two parts within proximity to the site, *c.* 62m south (DE191; HER 106675) and 97m north (DE286; HER 85247).

The location of the two areas, as recorded on the HER, would indicate that the line of the dyke ran through the western site area. However, a section of Wat's Dyke was excavated in 1972, *c.* 82m west of the site, suggesting that the route was further west than the site. Although many of the original site records were lost and details of the excavations have been confused. According to the Offa's Dyke Project archive, the original ground level was not reached, and no dating evidence was recorded. The bank was badly damaged but was recorded from layers of cobbles and pebbles. A further excavation was undertaken in 1977 but was abandoned due to bad weather. A final excavation took place in 1978, but the ditch could not be located due to past quarrying activity on the site

The site is located away from the potential early medieval settlement, within the vicinity to Wat's Dyke; an early medieval earthen bank. However, the later construction of the railway within the site may have affected any remains associated with the dyke, if the line did pass through the site, and the site therefore has **unknown** potential for remains from this period.

4.4.2. Late medieval (AD 1066 – 1540)

Wrexham was not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and the area was likely not yet dominated by the Normans. The princes of Powys conquered the area in the early 12th century which paved the way from Wrexham developing as a trading town (Wrexham County Borough Council, 2009). Medieval development was likely centred around the church of St Giles which was established in the 14th century *c.* 840m south-east of the site (Cadw Ref 1769).

Several markets were established in the town by the 14th century and the area formed a significant local centre. The main medieval market occupied High Street to the north of the church. During the late medieval period, settlement spread from the first tenement plots close to the church in the centre of the town, northwards toward Lambpit Street, *c.* 630m south-east of the site.

The prospering woollen and leather trade encouraged economic immigrants to the town and by 1391 over half of the inhabitants were economic migrants (Wrexham County Borough Council, 2009). The advent of

coal mining and iron working in the 15th century added to the town's importance.

Modern and historic mapping (Plate 2) shows a pond to the east of the site. Local legend described the pond and the witch's or hag's pool, which is believed to be the place where ducking took place (HER 121772). This was an occurrence that took place throughout Britain from the medieval period to 18th century.

The site was located beyond the historic core of Wrexham, which was developing from the late medieval period, and likely lay within undeveloped land close to Wat's Dyke. The site has **low** potential for remains from the late medieval period.

4.5. Post-medieval (AD 1540 – *c* AD 1750)

During the post-medieval period Wrexham continued to develop as an important regional market town that attracted travelling merchants and fairs from Yorkshire, Manchester and Brimingham. The markets and fairs made the town central to the North Wales economy. Poultry, eggs, butter and vegetable produce was sold on Hope Street, butchers traded on Abbot Street and craftsmen sold their goods on High Street (Wrexham County Borough Council, 2009).

Purpose-built market courts were also established in Wrexham in the late 18th century, including Jones' Hall for linen and fancy goods on Queen Street, *c.* 610m south-east of the site. Market Courts for cloth dealers, cattle drovers, and farmers were also established. In addition, many thriving workshops such as blacksmiths, braziers, tin platers, skinners, tanners, curriers and leather sellers were located close to their suppliers and markets (Wrexham County Borough Council, 2009). Wrexham became known for its leather-making and nail-making industries in the 18th century and by the mid-18th century, Wrexham was a small market town with a population of around 2000 people (NPRN 33102; https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/33102/).

The site is located away from any known post-medieval activity, away from the historic core of Wrexham, and the potential for remains is considered to be **low**.

4.6. Industrial (*c* AD 1750 - 1914)

The population of Wrexham continued to grow throughout the industrial period, rising from 5,500 people in 1833 to over 15,000 people by 1900. New shops and businesses opened, catering to those who were employed through the local industry and markets. A purpose-built Butcher's Market was constructed in 1848, a Butter Market in 1879 and a Vegetable Market in 1910. In 1857, a charter of incorporation was granted, and Wrexham became a Borough (Wrexham County Borough Council, 2009).

Traditional workshop industries which began in the 18th century in Wrexham, such as brewing, skinning, tanning and blacksmithing, expanded rapidly during the 19th century. The brewing industry also began to dominate the town's industry in the 19th century and by the 1860s there were 19 local breweries mostly located on the banks of the River Gwenfro, utilising the water source (Wrexham County Borough Council, 2009), including a lager brewery established in 1882 (*c.* 220m south of the site; HER 34389).

In the 19th century, Wrexham was developing beyond its historic core, towards the site. Regent Street, immediately south of the site, was established in the mid-19th century as a major axis route out of the west of the town. Important civic buildings were constructed along the road, including Wrexham Infirmary constructed in 1838-39 (*c.* 190m south-east of the site; HER 32744). The Roman Catholic Cathedral of St Mary was also built in 1857, *c.* 91m west of the hospital (HER 32743), along with several villas reflecting the Wrexham's late 19th century development. King Street was laid out in 1828 as one of the first residential streets to be formally laid out in Wrexham, and between 1861-1881 Grosvenor Road and Grove Road were laid out as prestigious residential areas for the emerging middle class, located around 200m east of the site. In the 1890s, Gerald Street was laid out immediately east of the site and comprised high status semi-detached and terraced housing (Wrexham County Borough Council, 2009).

Wrexham was made a municipal borough in 1857 and in 1878 was described as 'the chief market town of the (Denbighshire) county' that derived support from the numerous mining villages surrounding it (Eyre Bros 1878).

Advances in transport links spurred the expansion of the town. Stagecoaches initially connected Wrexham to London, Shrewsbury and Chester. However, it was accepted by industrialists in the early 19th century that the Denbighshire district would benefit from the railway. Attempts to gain approval for a proposed line from Wrexham to Chester in 1839, 1841 and 1842 failed due to opposition from the landed gentry. In 1843, a further attempt was made by railway engineer Henry Robertson and his partners, Roy, Betts, Ross and Mackenzie who formed the Brymbo, Mineral and Railway Co. However, this attempt also failed (Lloyd Jones, 2023).

In 1844, the North Wales Mineral Railway was incorporated. In 1845, a private Act of Parliament was authorised for the construction of the Shrewsbury, Oswestry & Chester Junction Railway. The line was originally intended to form a junction to the south-east of Chester that would bypass the North Wales Mineral Railway between Wrexham and Chester. However, in 1846, the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway (HER 119857) was formed by the amalgamation of the North Wales Mineral Railway and the Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Chester Junction Railway. A section of the line, between Chester and Rhosymedre opened in November 1846, bringing the railway to Wrexham (http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/features/shrewsbury_and_chester_railway/index.shtml). The line was located in the west of the site.

In 1854, the Great Western Railway (GWR) took over the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway. In the early 20th century, a GWR station building was constructed, as a replacement for an earlier station building provided by Henry Robertson, for the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway Company. The station building currently survives as a Grade II Listed building within the site, known as Wrexham General (Cadw Ref 1885; HER 32796).

In 1862, the Wrexham, Mold and Connah's Quay Railway (WM&CQR) Company was formed. The railway was to include a junction with the Shrewsbury and Chester line of the GWR at its Wrexham Station (Anon., 1862). The new line would connect Wrexham to the port of Connah's Quay, providing access to coastal markets and to the River Dee (Lloyd Jones, 2023). A station for the railway was opened at Wrexham in 1866 to the west of Wrexham General (formerly the GWR), and *c.* 29m west of the site, where the Wrexham, Mold and Connah's Quay line terminated. The Wrexham, Mold and Connah's Quay Railway later became known as the Great Central Railway and is currently known as Wrexham Exchange (HER 144375).

In 1885, the WM&CQR was extended half a mile from Wrexham Exchange Station to a new station known as Wrexham Station. The work involved tunnelling under the GWR railway, and the train first ran in November 1888 (HER 119867). The line of the extension was around 300m south of the site, with Wrexham Central located approximately 400m south-east (HER 70894)

Historic mapping indicates that development had taken place within the site by the early 19th century. The site therefore has **high** potential for remains from the industrial period, including remains associated with the railways and 19th-century industrial works.

4.7. Modern (post-1914)

Brewing remained one of Wrexham's main industries in the 20th century, although many closed in the late 20th century due a change in tastes and rationalisation of the industry. The larger brewery *c.* 220m south of the site remained open until 2000 (HER 34389). The Wrexham and Minera line remained as the main railway branch which supported the steelworks at Brymbo and the limeworks at Minera. Although the network of railway branch lines were torn up in the 1960s and '70s when a period of economic depression began in Wrexham (Wrexham County Borough Council, 2009).

From the 1980s and 1990s, the Welsh Development Agency, with partnership with local authorities, attempted to improve the town through Town Improvement Grants and Environmental Improvement Grants to boost the area's employment prospects. In the early 21st century, improved railway links to Cardiff were established. Several retail and mixed-use developments have been established across the town (Wrexham County Borough Council, 2009).

4.8. Development of the site

The 1846 tithe map of Wrexham is one of the earliest maps to show the site (Plate 2; Fig. 3). The map shows that the site comprised enclosed undeveloped fields in the mid-19th century. Regent Street had been laid out to the south of the site and the witch's/ hag pool is shown adjoining to the east (HER 121772).

The tithe map apportionments reveal that the land within the site was in use as hay/ pasture and arable in 1846 (Table 2). The tithe map apportionments for the field in the north of the site are not available. William Samuels occupied two of the pastural fields, which were owned by 'Glebe'. In addition, plot 356 was also named 'part of glebe field'. A glebe field was a piece of land that provided additional income to support a parish priest and would be passed from vicar to vicar (Manley, et al., 2019).

Plot 356 was owned by the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway Company in 1846, although no details of the railway were provided on the tithe map. The plot was irregular in shape, with an elongated area to the south-east, roughly representing the route of the modern-day Station Approach. Plot 250 was named 'gravel hole field' indicating that previous extraction had taken place within the field (Table 2). In addition, a land boundary was marked in red in the north of the site, later labelled as a municipal boundary (Plate 3). The boundary to the west of the site, roughly aligns with the projected line of Wat's Dyke which is scheduled to the south and north of the site, if the route was constructed in a straight linear route.



Plate 2 Extract from the 1846 tithe map of Wrexham

Field No.	Field Name	Land Use	Occupier	Landowner
357	Part of Do	Hay, Pasture	William Samuels	Glebe
356	Part of Glebe field	Arable	Selves	Shrewsbury and Chester Railway Company
355	Pond Field	Hay, Pasture	William Samuels	Glebe
350	Gravel hole field	Arable	Meredith Jones	Foulkes Emma

Table 2 1846 Wrexham tithe map apportionments (courtesy of Tithe Maps of Wales)

The Shrewsbury and Chester Railway opened at Wrexham in 1846, with to the west of the site, within the western arm of the site. In 1866, the WM&CQR opened, terminating to the west. The next map to capture the site is the 1874/ 1884 Ordnance Survey map, which shows the developments of the railway in the site in

the mid- to late 19th century (Plate 3; Fig. 4). The map was surveyed in 1872 and therefore shows the original Wrexham Station, before it was replaced with the GWR station building. The earlier station formed a long rectangular building, labelled for Passengers and Goods. A footbridge to the south, close to Regent Street, provided access to the western platform. The Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay Railway Station was also to the west of the site, with a railway line in the western arm.

In 1872, a goods shed was to the north of Wrexham Station, with a line of the railway going directly into the shed (Plate 3). A line also passed to the east of the shed, heading south to a turntable that was situated between Wrexham Station and the goods shed. Several lampposts labelled 'L.P' were scattered throughout the railway yards and several areas of hachured lines indicated a change in topography throughout the site. The municipal boundary was to the east of the WM&CQR station and east across the railway lines and goods shed, north of the field boundary.

A steam saw mill had also been established within the site by 1872. The mill comprised a series of narrow rectangular buildings with a timber yard to the south. A travelling crane was connected the saw mill directly to a line of the Great Western Railway. A row of smaller buildings to the south may have been associated with the timber yard. The works were established by at least 1860, when William Thomas was advertised as a timber merchant in Wrexham (*Wrexham Advertiser* 23rd June 1860). William Thomas was also recorded as the proprietor of the steam saw mill at 'railway station' in Wrexham in 1880 (Slater 1880). The mill was one of only two saw mills recorded in Wrexham in the late 19th century.



Plate 3 Extract from the 1874/ 84 Ordnance Survey map with site boundary. The map was surveyed in 1872, and was published in 1874, before being reprinted in 1884

A photograph was taken of Wrexham Station in 1869, showing the passengers waiting on the platform of the railway (Plate 4). The station was a one and two-storey building with a balcony on the second first floor. Steps leading to the footbridge were to the right of the station on the image, reflecting the footprint shown on the 1974/84 OS map (Plate 3).



Plate 4 Photograph showing the original Wrexham Station c. 1869 (courtesy of Peter Chadwick/ Clwyd Family History Society)

In 1875, the Great Western Station was described as 'by no means a convenient one or in any way adequate to the important of the town, its platforms especially being narrow and somewhat dangerous. The Station of the Wrexham, Mold and Connah's Quay line stands adjacent' (Anon., 1875, p. 4). This may explain why a new GWR station was eventually constructed within the site (HER 32796). The HER and CADW Listed Building report for the station building states that the GWR station building was built in 1875 as a replacement of the original, and that later extensions and enlargement of platforms took place in 1909-12 (https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=en&id=1855). However, historic mapping indicates that a newer station building was in fact constructed between 1900 (Plate 5) and 1912 (Plate 7). In addition, a plaque at Wrexham General Station states that the present buildings were constructed between 1909-1912. The newer Western General Station building currently survives as a Grade II Listed Building and currently remains in use as a railway station.

In 1895, Arthur Edgcumbe was the station manager of the Great Western Railway line. George Weston was the goods agent and J. B. Murless was the carrier. George Jones was the station master central at Exchange station and Tom Johnson was recorded as the 'master'. Slater's directory records that Thomas William remained at the saw mill as a timber merchant (Slater 1895).

The 1900 Ordnance Survey map is the next map to capture the site, which shows the railway station comprising two rectangular buildings to the east and west of the railway line, with a connecting bridge (Plate 5; Fig. 5).

By 1900, the steam saw mill and timber yard had been extended with a long narrow buildings constructed to the south (Plate 5). In 1890, a fire broke out at the timber yard of William Thomas. The fire was at a stable

described in the centre of the yard. The stable building formed ‘part of a chain of erections, near which are the engine house and steam saw mills. Above the stalls for the horses is the hay-lost where the chaff-cutting is done’ indicating that the stable formed part of the new range shown on the 1900 OS map (*Wrexham Advertiser* 16th August 1890).

The 1900 OS map shows that a further building has been constructed in the south-east of the site, which was likely associated with the nursery that was to the south-east. Cambrian Iron Works was also shown on the 1900 Ordnance Survey map, to the north of the saw mill (Plate 5). The works comprised several buildings adjacent to a line of the GWR railway. The Cambrian Iron Works were established by the Powell Brothers in 1876, originally under the company name of Messrs Powell and Whitaker. The company were described as ‘iron and brass founders and agricultural and general engineers’. The works produced a variety of agricultural machinery and implements (https://archives.library.wales/index.php/powell-brothers-limited).

The Powell Bros & Whitaker were recorded as engineers and Strachan & Evans were recorded as nurserymen in the site in 1895 (Slater 1895).

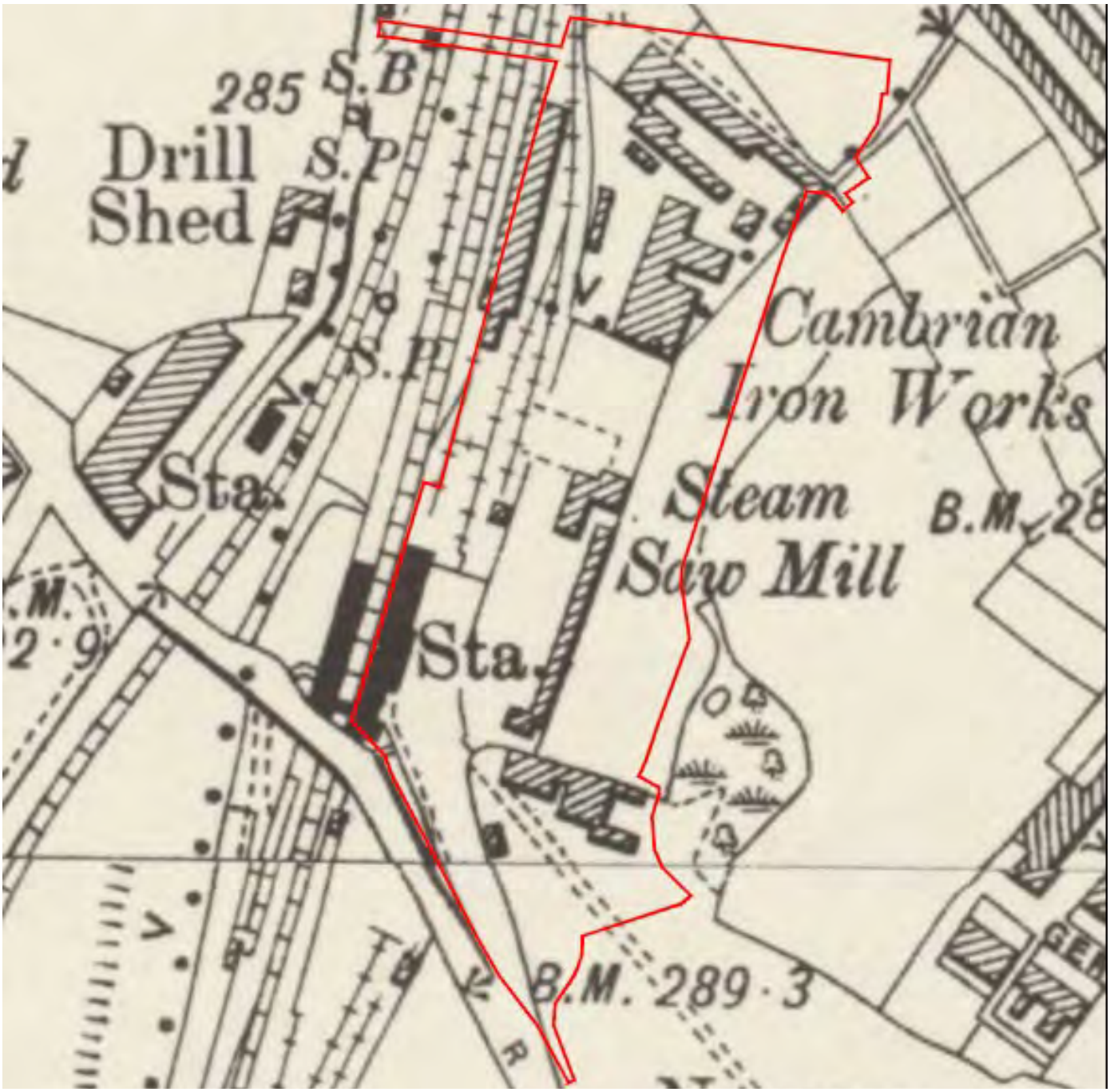


Plate 5 Extract from the 1900 Ordnance Survey map with site boundary



Plate 6 Image advertising the 'Cambrian' mower, produced at the Cambrian Iron Works (Anon., 1896)

The next map to capture the site is the 1912 Ordnance Survey map (Plate 7; Fig. 6). The map showed the newer Wrexham Station comprising several adjoining buildings along the railway platform. The footprint of the newer building was slightly north of the earlier building. The footbridge to the south of the station and the building to the east had been removed. Between 1872 and 1912, the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway/ GWR line had expanded to the west, with a platform constructed between the eastern lines and the lines of the WM&CQ Railway, to the west of the site. A footbridge had been constructed to the north of the station, with a platform canopy/cover connected to the station and footbridge, and the eastern platform. The footprint on the 1912 map reflects the modern-day footprint.

The buildings in the south-east of the site were shown as glasshouses/ hothouses in 1912, likely associated with the nursery to the south-east and south (Plate 7). Further buildings had been constructed to the north of the steam saw mill between 1900 and 1912. No further development had taken place within the site.



Plate 7 Extract from the 1912 Ordnance Survey map with site boundary

In 1914, Messrs Powell Brothers and Whitaker of the Cambrian Iron Works became known as Powell Brothers Ltd. Between 1914-1918 the company shifted towards the production of munitions to assist with the war effort and during this period, J. E. Powell's sons, J. W. Powell and R. Glyn Powell were in partnership with their father (https://archives.library.wales/index.php/powell-brothers-limited). In 1915, a shell factory was proposed at the existing Powells agricultural engineering in the north of the site. The munitions factory opened in 1916. The factory produced 10,000 high-explosive shells and manufactured 1500 trench mortar bombs a week, with steel provided from Brymbo and picric acid from Monsanto at Cefn. Coal was provided from local collieries. The factory also had its own railway sidings running off the GWR mainline. In total, over 500 women were employed at the factory as munition workers, although in 1918 the female workforce was laid off (HER 142605).

During the 1920s the Powell Brothers experimented with the Powell Motorcycle but were unsuccessful (Graces Guide 2013) and in 1927, the Powell Brothers Limited were described as 'furnishing ironmongers,

iron and steel merchants and cycle agents'. That same year the Cambrian Iron Works were acquired by Rogers and Jackson Limited, a subsidiary of the Rubery Owen group of companies. They became engineers' merchants, and R. J. Glyn Powell, the grandson of Evan Powell became one of the company's directors (https://archives.library.wales/index.php/powell-brothers-limited).

Historic mapping indicates that the Wrexham General Station was extended between 1912-1944 (Fig. 7). No further developments took place in the rest of the site. William Thomas and Sons were still recorded as timber merchants at Wrexham in 1958 indicating that the saw mill remained with the same family (*Cheshire Observer* 27th September 1958).

The next map to capture the site is the 1964 Ordnance Survey map which shows that General Station, the goods shed, and Roger and Jackson Limited works remained within the site (Plate 8; Fig. 8). A further building had been built in the west of the former iron works complex. The steam saw mill appears to have been demolished and modern warehouse/ factory constructed over the footprint by 1964.

The 1974 Ordnance Survey map shows that no further development took place at the site, except for the construction of the guide and scout huts in the south-east of the site in 1964 and 1968 (Fig. 9).

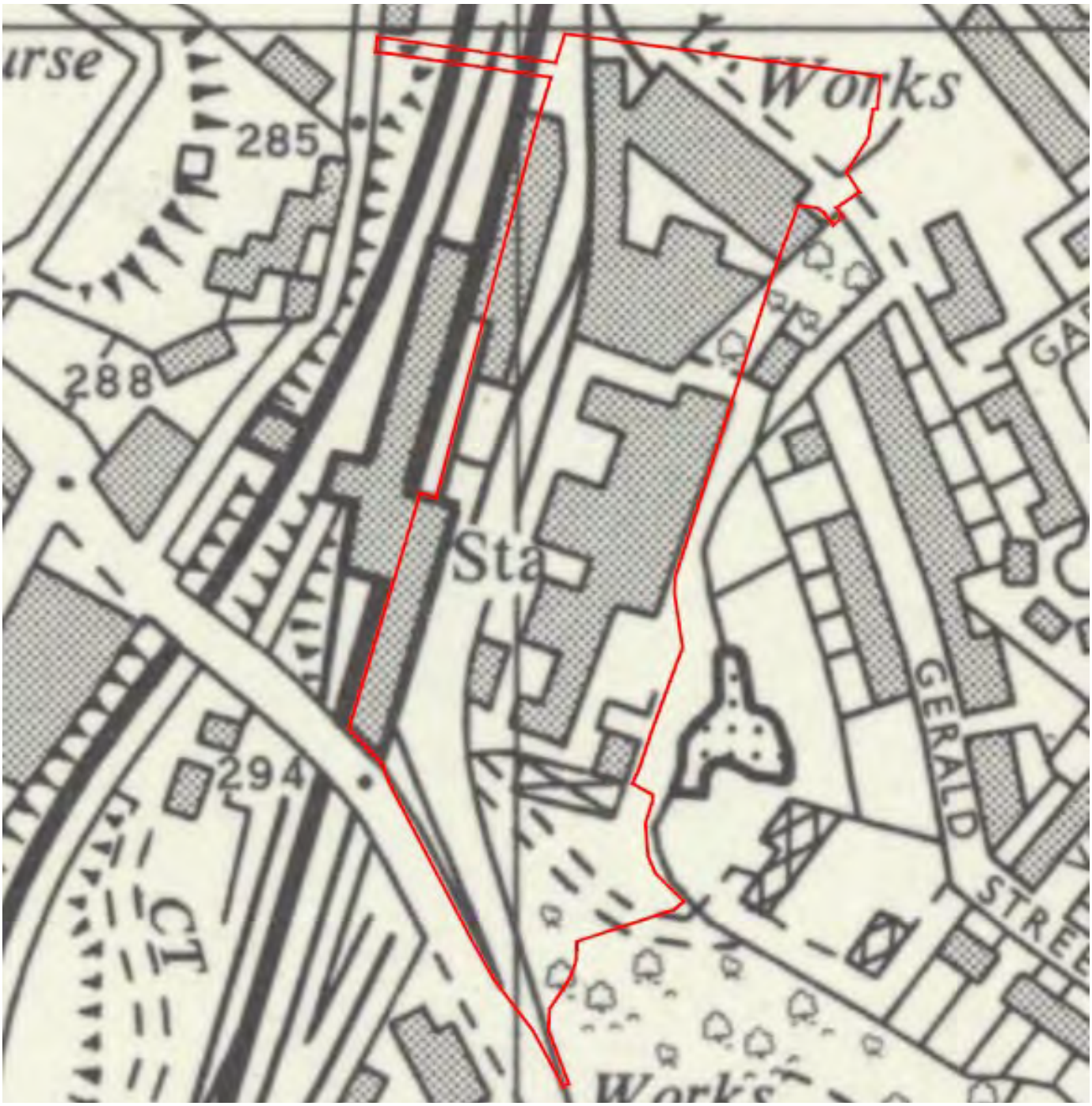


Plate 8 Extract from the 1964 Ordnance Survey map with site boundary

Aerial imagery of the site indicates that that the former iron works complex has been demolished and replaced with a modern warehouse/ industrial facility, also known as Cambrian works by 2006 (Plate 9). The facility is still currently within the site and was formerly occupied by Jewsons. The image also shows a modern structure adjoining to the south, which was a country store and has since been demolished. In addition, two modern buildings currently occupied by girl guides and scouts were constructed in the south-east of the site which also remain upstanding along with the Grade II listed Wrexham General. The former goods shed is also visible within the photo, to the west of Cambrian works, which currently also remains upstanding within the site.



Plate 9 Aerial photograph of the site, 2006 (courtesy of Google Earth)

The Welsh Government Aerial Photographic Archive (https://datamap.gov.wales/maps/apu-welsh-government-aerial-photography/view#/) was also consulted for this assessment. However, the earliest aerial photo available is dated to 2013, and shows the site with the same footprint as that in 2006.

According to reports from 2017, one wall of the former Cambrian iron works factory survived, and the site was a countryside and farming store (HER 142605). However, this was not visible during a site walkover undertaken as part of this assessment.

The 2021 DTM LiDAR was consulted as part of this assessment, courtesy of DataMapWales (Plate 10). The LiDAR imagery shows the outline of the known upstanding buildings within the site, comprising the modern scout and guide huts, Cambrian Works/ Jewsons building, the Wrexham General Station and associated railway lines, and the goods shed to the north. A bank surrounds the buildings in the south-east of the site, representing lines of trees and elevated topography is visible in the south-west of the site. The LiDAR provides no indication of below ground archaeological remains at the site.



Plate 10 LiDAR with site boundary (courtesy of DataMapWales)

4.9. Previous archaeological works

In total, one archaeological event has been carried out within the site, comprising a photographic survey on Wrexham General Railway Station in 2008 (HER 129163).

In total, nine archaeological events have been recorded within 500m of the site. Non-intrusive events include three photographic surveys, two heritage assessments, and a building survey. Intrusive events include an excavation and two watching briefs.

A section of Wat's Dyke was excavated in 1972, *c.* 82m west of the site, although many of the original site records were lost and details of the excavations have been confused. According to the Offa's Dyke Project archive, the original ground level was not reached, and no dating evidence was recorded. The bank was badly damaged but was seen as recorded from layers of cobbles and pebbles. A further excavation was undertaken in 1977 but was abandoned due to bad weather. A final excavation took place in 1978, but the ditch could not be located due to past quarrying activity on the site (HER 106674).

In 2002, a watching brief was carried out by Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust along the line of Wat's Dyke *c.* 117m south of the site. The watching brief indicated that extensive quarrying within the area had removed a large proportion of the dyke, although the remnants of an embankment was constructed of natural deposits was identified and was regarded as a surviving section of Wat's Dyke, although a fraction of its original dimensions (HER 113068).

A second watching brief was conducted by Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust on the site in 2012. The 2012 work comprised the controlled stripping of overburden across the area of the Dyke to allow the protection of surviving deposits beneath a membrane prior to the reconstruction of its profile (HER 12829).

5. Site walkover

A site walkover was carried out on 7th February 2025. Weather conditions were clear, with some slight light rain.

Access to the site was afforded from Regent Street to the south. The south-eastern site area currently comprises the Wrexham General station approach with associated hard-standing car parking spaces (Plate 11; Plate 12). Pedestrian footpaths border the approach to the north-west and south-west. Landscaping bordered by a stone wall is along the south-west edge of the area, separating the site from Regent Road which sits in slightly elevated position affording access over the railway lines to the south of the site. The land at station approach gradually decreases towards the south-east and towards the railway station. A bus stop and mini roundabout are also within this area.



Plate 11 View showing station approach from the entrance to the site, with Wrexham General Station in the background, facing north-west



Plate 12 View showing the northern end of station approach, with Wrexham General station to the right, facing south

In total, two modern two-storey buildings currently in use as scout and guide huts to the east of Station Approach. Foundation stones on the buildings state that they were established in 1964 and 1968. The buildings are accessed from station approach with the land decreasing towards the buildings (Plate 13). Areas of hard-standing are to the south and west of the buildings, providing a car parking area (Plate 14). An area of landscaping with trees and vegetation borders the area between the station approach car park and the scout and guide huts area, showing the change in elevation. Vegetation is to the north-west of the modern-buildings.

Soil beds border this area to the north, with evidence of tree cutting. Red bricks indicating possible demolition material were visible within the borders (Plate 15).

The north of this area is bordered by metal fencing. A pathway runs along the north of this, accessed from station approach, although the area was inaccessible. A second pathway area adjoins to the north, which is also accessed from station approach and runs east providing access to Grosvenor Gardens to the east of the site.



Plate 13 View showing entrance from station approach to the guide & scout huts to the south-east, facing east



Plate 14 View showing areas of hard-standing and the two modern buildings, with vegetation and trees to the north-east, facing north-east



Plate 15 View showing red bricks in soil bed border to the north of the entrance to the guide & scout huts, facing north-east

Land to the south of Cambrian Works (the former Jewson's warehouse) currently comprises a vacant plot of brownfield land, bordered by metal fencing on all sides, which was formerly the location of a saw mill and timber yard before it was redeveloped in the second half of the 20th century into a modern warehouse/factory associated with Cambrian Works (Plate 16; Plate 17). The vacant plots consisted of demolition material, small spoil heaps and gravel likely used to level the Site (Plate 18; Plate 19).



Plate 16 Geneal view showing the north-eastern area (Site A), taken from the entrance to the plot, facing north-east



Plate 17 Geneal view showing the north-eastern area (Site A), facing south-west



Plate 18 View showing bordered area of vegetation in the west of the plot with Wrexham General in the background, facing south-west



Plate 19 View showing northern boundary of the unoccupied parcel of land (Site A), facing west

Station Approach continues between the former good's shed and Cambrian Works (the former Jewson's

warehouse) and was accessed via metal gates on Station Approach (Plate 20). A small section of stone wall borders Station Approach and additional car parking spaces to the south of Cambrian Works (the former Jewson's warehouse). Station Approach and the hard-standing area in the north of the Site comprise block paving (Plate 21 and Plate 22). The Cambrian Works building seemingly comprises a modern orange/red-brick warehouse with grey cladding. The west face of the building is mostly open, providing double-height access into a covered bay for loading and unloading goods.



Plate 20 View showing stone wall bordering Station Approach and vacant land, facing east



Plate 21 View of continuation of Station Approach, showing the former Jewson's building on the right and the former goods shed on the left, facing north