

CPAT Report No. 1937


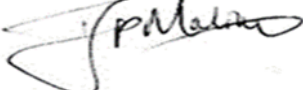
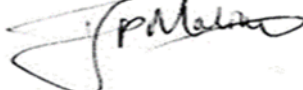
# Dinas Brân Gatehouse, Llangollen

Excavation and Watching Brief



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL CLWYD-POWYS  
CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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| Organisation       | Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust       |
| Client Name        | Denbighshire County Council (OPL Team) |
| CPAT Project No    | 2569                                   |
| Project Name       | Dinas Brân Gatehouse                   |
| Project Type       | Excavation & Watching Brief            |
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| Grid Reference     | SJ 2224043060                          |
| County/LPA         | Denbighshire County Council            |
| Planning Reference | N/A                                    |
| CPAT Report No     | 1937                                   |

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| 24/03/2023   | 24/03/2023   | 24/03/2023   |
| <b>Report Status</b>   | Draft  |  |
| <b>Confidential until</b>  | N/A  |  |

Bibliographic reference: Grant, I., 2023. *Dinas Brân Gatehouse, Llangollen, Excavation & Watching Brief*. Unpublished report. CPAT Report No. 1937.



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## Summary

In August/September 2021, and September/October 2022, the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT), on behalf of Denbighshire County Council (Our Picturesque Landscape Team) undertook an archaeological evaluation and watching brief in connection with the conservation and further interpretation of Castell Dinas Brân (scheduled monument DE 022), Llangollen (SJ 22240 43060).

The 2021/22 excavations have identified the sequence of the defensive arrangements of the gatehouse, confirming the location of the portcullis, main gate door jamb, and the associated draw-bar holes, footings, and the elaborately carved base for one of the wall pillars. There is good evidence for additional buried high-status masonry, in good condition that has subsequently not been eroded by the natural elements. Such masonry features have the potential to provide typological dating evidence and point to whether the princes of Powys were employing Welsh or Marcher masons.

The excavations also confirmed the location of the doorway into the southern turret guardroom. Surviving medieval floor levels were recorded within the gate passageway at the eastern and central points, buried beneath demolition and landscaping debris. It can be assumed that similar deposits will survive at the western end of the passageway. Owing to the excessive depth of backfill material within the southern turret it was not possible to expose the original floor levels although they almost certainly survive.

Artefactual evidence for the medieval periods was limited to two decorated sherds of 13th century pottery retrieved from the in-situ floor surface at the eastern entrance to the gatehouse. However, there is a high potential for further dating evidence now that it has been demonstrated that in-situ medieval deposits are known to survive beneath the extensive layers of demolition and deliberate landscaping debris.

## Crynodeb

Fis Awst/ Medi 2021, a mis Medi/ Hydref 2022, bu Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys (CPAT), ar ran Cyngor Sir Ddinbych (ein Tîm Tirwedd Bictiwresg) yn gwneud gwerthusiad archaeolegol a briff gwyllo mewn cysylltiad â chadwraeth a dehongliad pellach o Gastell Dinas Brân (heneb gofrestredig DE 022), Llangollen (SJ 22240 43060).

Mae gwaith cloddio 2021/2022 wedi nodi cyfres o drefniadau amddiffynnol y porthdy, gan gadarnhau lleoliad y porthcwllis, cilbost y prif borth, a thyllau'r barrau tynnu cysylltiedig, sylfeini a gwaelod pileri'r wal â cherfiadau cywrain. Mae yna dystiolaeth dda o waith cerrig ychwanegol claddedig, uchel ei statws, mewn cyflwr da, nad yw'r elfennau naturiol wedi'i erydu yn ddiweddarach. Mae'n eithaf posibl y gall nodweddion gwaith cerrig o'r fath ddarparu dystiolaeth dyddio teipolegol ac awgrymu a fyddai tywysogion Powys wedi cyflogi seiri meini o Gymru neu o'r Gororau.

Cadarnhaodd y gwaith cloddio hefyd leoliad y drws i mewn i'r warchodfa yn y tyred deheuol. Cofnodwyd lefelau'r llawr canoloesol oedd wedi goroesi o fewn tramwyfa'r porth yn y pwyntiau dwyreiniol a chanolog, wedi'u claddu o dan rwbol dymchwel a thirlunio. Gellir tybio y bydd dyddodion tebyg wedi goroesi ym mhen gorllewinol y dramwyfa. Oherwydd dyfnder eithafol y deunydd ôl-lenwi o fewn y tyred deheuol, nid oedd yn bosibl datgelu lefelau gwreiddiol y llawr er ei bod bron yn sicr eu bod wedi goroesi.

Roedd dystiolaeth arteffactau o'r cyfnodau canoloesol wedi'i chyfyngu i ddau o deilchion addurnedig o grochenwaith o'r 13eg ganrif a adferwyd o wyneb y llawr yn y fan a'r lle ger mynedfa ddwyreiniol y porthdy. Fodd bynnag, mae'n debygol iawn bod yna fwy o dystiolaeth dyddio nawr ei bod yn hysbys bod dyddodion canoloesol wedi goroesi yn eu lle o dan yr haenau helaeth o rwbol dymchwel a thirlunio bwriadol.



# 1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation and watching brief by Denbighshire County Council (Our Picturesque Landscape Team (OPL)) in connection with conservation of the castle structure, and post-covid public engagement, at Castell Dinas Brân (scheduled monument DE 022), which occupies the top of a prominent hill above Llangollen and the Dee Valley (SJ 22240 43060) (Fig. 1).



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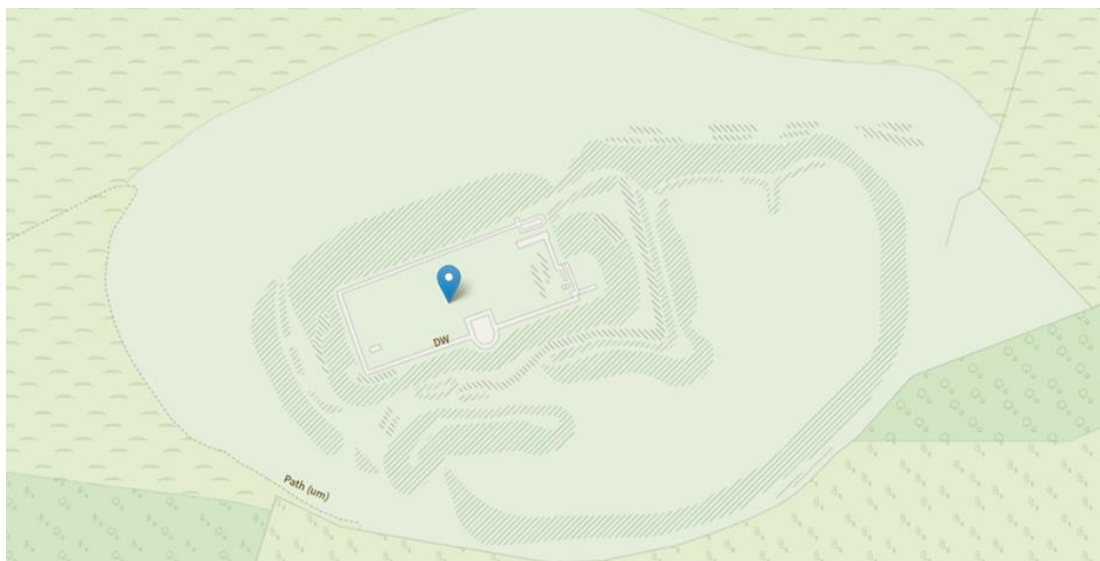


Fig. 1 Location of Dinas Brân Castle (DE 022).

- 1.2. Following the archaeological evaluation, initial structural conservation was to be undertaken to implement the high priority recommendations identified within the report commissioned from Donald Insall Architects in 2020. The aim was to undertake reconsolidation work of the gatehouse at Castell Dinas Brân and the works would ensure the gatehouse was structurally sound and safe and able to be open to allow access for the public at certain times when appropriate.
- 1.3. The results of the evaluation (2021) and watching brief (2022), detailed within this report, identified significant in-situ masonry and deposits that may possibly require further mitigation to aid with the interpretation of the gatehouse. Subsequently, although the programme of works is ongoing, the overall project is subject to review. The castle is a scheduled monument (DE022) and Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) was given for the works by Cadw in August 2021.
- 1.4. Summary of existing archaeological knowledge:

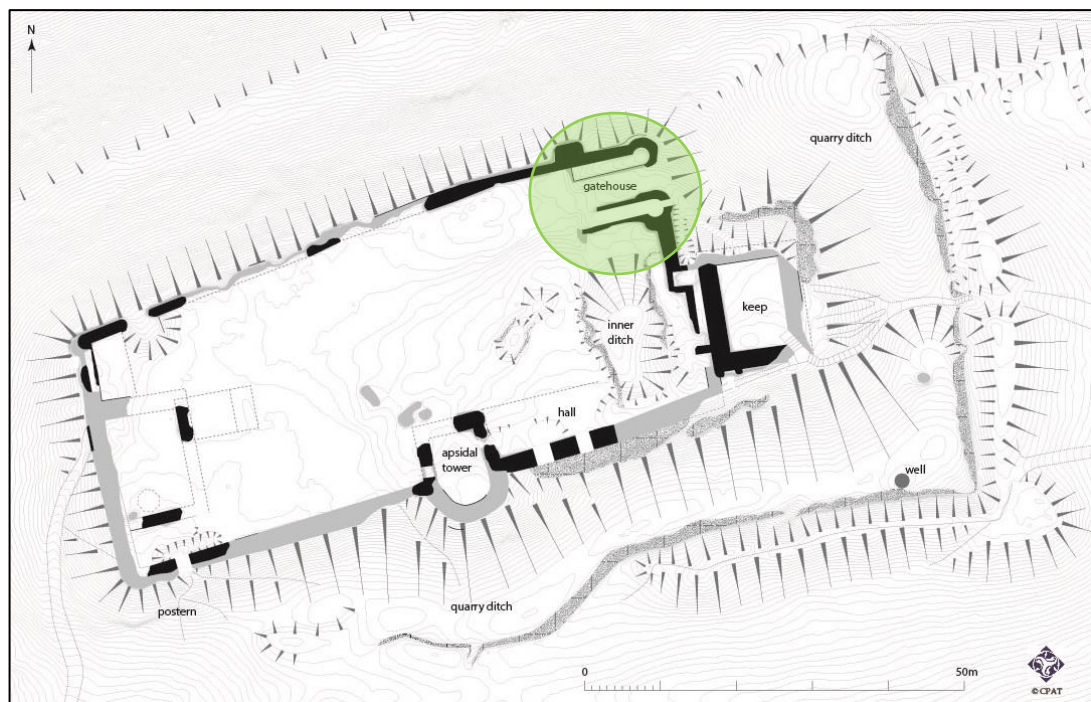
The masonry has been described in detail by Cathcart King (Arch Camb CXXIII 1974) and there should be (at Denbighshire County Council or the RCAHMS) a set of Tim Morgan annotated drawings of the principal elevations of the gatehouse and possibly a written report / notes, which will accurately describe the overall layout in detail.

In the context of the proposed excavation there were several key characteristics and gaps in our knowledge –

- The gatehouse has few direct parallels and is probably best considered a variant of a later 13th century twin-towered design crammed into the tight space between the edge of the headlong slopes to the north and below the outcrop on which the earlier keep stands to the south. As such it provided the overall effect of small twin-towered gatehouse but in superficial appearance rather than function. The flanking 'towers' are probably better regarded as turrets, being thinly walled, remarkably narrow, elongated and barely projecting forward of the presumed gate threshold and adjoining curtain walls, for which they cannot have provided flanking fire. Other than a possible door into the southern turret indicated by a break in the masonry towards the inner end of the passage there are no signs of flanking loops or other communication with the passage common in contemporary gates of this type and the exceptionally narrow 'guardrooms' are unlikely to have provided adequate accommodation. Cathcart King may have been right to suggest that a Marcher lord would have built the turrets as solid structures. There was probably one upper floor, which is likely to have contained a single long room above the gate passage and served by the latrine in the northern turret.
- Only the southern 'turret' retains any architectural details, notably a continuous plain barrel vault supporting the lost upper floor and the remains of a forward / eastern facing loop or small window in the drum itself, which effectively formed its rear embrasure. This opening has been broken through and robbed of its external dressings, the pointed relieving arch now appearing like a doorway but the splayed sandstone jambs of the window survive internally. That these dressing stones sit at the current internal floor level suggests that the medieval floor is likely to have been at least 0.5m below – this can be tested with a small trench. Similarly, a much higher external plinth can be assumed as the former loop is at ground level. Access to the

upper storey must have been via the adjacent wall walks or from the upper level of the court. There is unlikely to have been direct communication between the floors as there is no space for, or indication of, a stair, or break in the barrel vault to admit a ladder.

- Other than the latrine projecting over the precipice in the north-west corner, the remains of the northern turret are featureless and buried internally towards the gate passage. Its present internal floor is over 1m below that of the passage and southern turret but it cannot be assumed that the bases of both towers were originally founded on the same level. The latrine must have been accessible from the upper floor or the north curtain wall. Excavation within this turret is unlikely to provide new information on its layout.



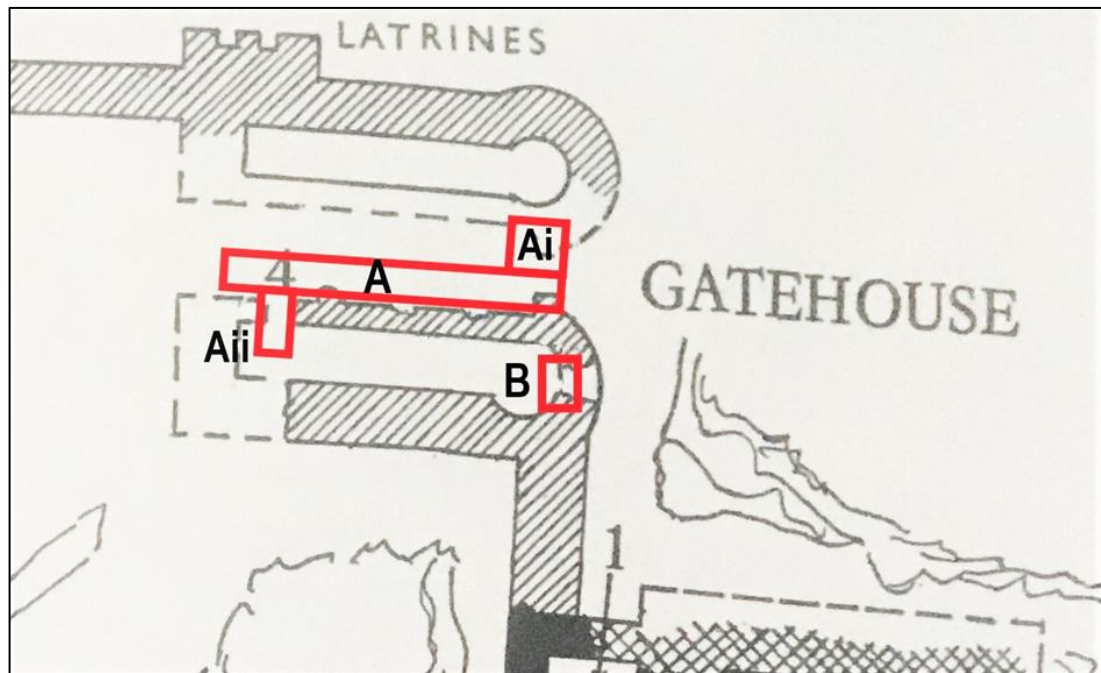
*Fig. 2 Plan of Dinas Brân Castle (after C. King - 1974).*

## 2 Evaluation and Watching Brief

- 2.1. The evaluation (excavation) was undertaken with the assistance of OPL staff over a period of 10 days between 23<sup>rd</sup> August – 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021. During the initial reconsolidation works that followed, a watching brief was maintained from the 22<sup>nd</sup> September - 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022. The excavations were undertaken in accordance with both the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (See Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 2569) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2020).
- 2.2. The evaluation of the gatehouse consisted of four trenches, A, Ai, Aii and B (See Fig. 3).
- 2.3. All work was undertaken by hand and the turf and topsoil was removed and stored adjacent to the trenches for subsequent reinstatement. Excess post-medieval backfill deposits, removed from inside the southern turret of the gatehouse (Watching Brief 2022), were used to reconsolidate areas of substantial erosion to the surrounding earthworks. Any fragments of



worked or dressed stone were retained for possible reuse in the reconsolidation of the gatehouse.



*Fig. 3 Trench location plan, Dinas Brân Castle (2021).*

***Trench A, Ai-Aii (Figs 4 - 18 & Appendix 2 Fig 22-23)***

- 2.4. The main trench (A), 12.4m long by 1.64m wide and orientated east to west, was located against the passage elevation of the southern turret of the gatehouse, running from the presumed position of the outer arch / threshold to the rear of the possible turret doorway. The trench was located to hopefully clarify the layout of the better-preserved half of the gatehouse passage and enable masons to conserve its lower courses.
- 2.5. Two extensions, up to 1.7m wide, extended from the main trench, the first across a full section of the passage at the location of its outer threshold and possible portcullis slot (Ai), the second into the southern turret through the presumed position of the doorway into a possible guardroom passage (Aii), taking the opportunity to assess floor levels.
- 2.6. Upon removal of the modern topsoil (001) it became clear that there would be substantial underlying levelling and demolition material (002-003) within the passageway of the gatehouse. Therefore, given the constraints of time, the trenches were stepped in and reduced to a width of up to 0.65m. This then allowed for the recording of a representative sample of any surviving medieval masonry and floor surfaces.
- 2.7. The excavations at the eastern end of the excavations confirmed that the passageway was up to 2.6m wide. A firm trampled deposit (005) of large flat shale-stone bonded in a matrix of charcoal flecked silty clay, was revealed at a depth of 0.5m from the present ground surface. The surface is believed to be the first significant in-situ layer of medieval origin found at Dinas Brân. Two small sherds of pottery, an orange-glazed orange sandy-ware, were recovered from the floor surface. The fabric, with traces of rouletted decoration, is of 13<sup>th</sup> century origin.

- 2.8. Along the northern extent of the trench (Ai) the fragmented remains of the south wall (013) of the northern turret of the gatehouse were revealed (See Fig. 4-6). The wall, up to 1m wide and reduced to a height of 0.3m, was constructed with a rubble core of lime mortar and shale stone (014). There was no surviving trace of exterior dressed facing stones.



*Fig. 4 Remains of rubble core (014) within the northern gatehouse turret wall (013). Viewed from the west. Photo CPAT 4946-0090.*

- 2.9. The passageway, over time, has been subjected to considerable footfall and this had caused significant erosion in the gateway threshold along the southern side (012). The floor deposit 005 had been completely truncated such that overlying demolition and backfill material (002-004) of 19<sup>th</sup> century origin, was up to 0.9m thick along the face of the wall (011) of the gatehouse southern turret (See Fig. 16, Fig. 22 – Section A – B, and Fig. 23 plan of excavation, showing location of sections).





*Fig. 5 Remains of rubble core (014) within the northern gatehouse turret wall (013). Floor surface 005, in the foreground. Viewed from the south. Photo CPAT 4946-0089.*



*Fig. 6 East facing section through the demolition rubble (003), gatehouse passageway. Photo CPAT 4946-0093.*



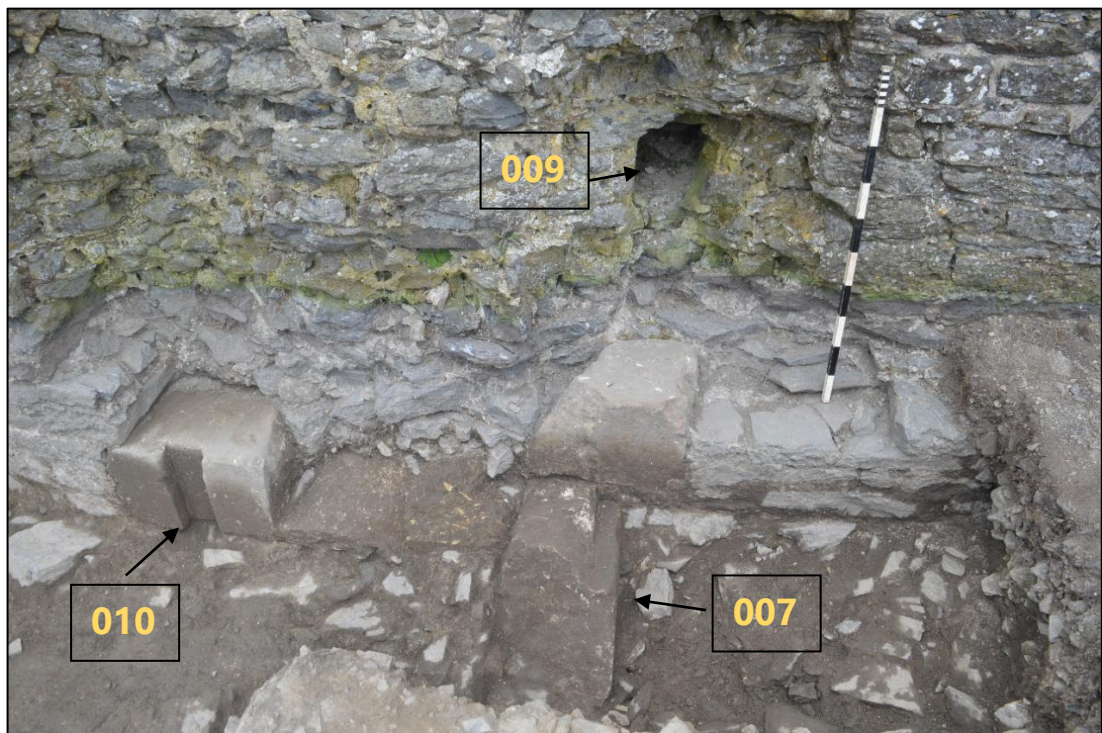
*Fig. 7 East facing section through the overlying demolition rubble (003), revealing medieval surfaces (005 and 006). Photo CPAT 4946-0091.*

- 2.10. As has been previously noted (section 1.4) the elevation of the southern turret passageway wall has been studied in detail (King 1974, RCAM 1913). The gatehouse passageway has been described as, at the entrance, consisting of a massive portal arch followed by the main gate, with door jambs and draw-bar holes and then an elaborately ornate vault consisting of three cross-vaulted bays. All that remains now of the latter is a large part of the third wall-shaft, with the whole dressed sandstone base in-situ. Evidence of the moulded wall ribs that supported the vaulted roof could still be seen on an engraving of the gatehouse by Thomas Rowlandson c.1797. (See Fig. 8).
- 2.11. The excavation of trench A alongside the passageway wall afforded the opportunity to reveal the nature and extent of the lower courses, including the foundation footings, of the structure (011). At the eastern end of the gatehouse, just set back from the location of the portal arch the excavation confirmed the location of the portcullis gate. This was revealed as a carved sandstone block (010) set into the footings (008) of the wall (See Fig. 9-10, Appendix 2 Fig. 23). The block, 0.36m in height with a carved guiding slot approximately 10cm wide, was all that remained of the wall-shaft that would have guided and held in place the portcullis gate. There was no evidence of a corresponding guide-block in the remains of the northern turret wall, opposite.
- 2.12. The dressed sandstone wall footings (008/018) were set on a crudely constructed footing of shale blocks (19). As the excavation progressed along the passageway east to west it became evident that the footings stepped slightly upwards at intervals corresponding with the door jambs and missing wall-shafts.





*Fig. 8 View of the gatehouse from the north-west, c. 1797. Engraving by Thomas Rowlandson*



*Fig. 9 South turret wall, with, from left to right, portcullis slot (010), door jamb (007) and draw hole (009). Viewed from the north. Photo CPAT 4946-0076.*

- 2.13. At a point 0.9m west of the portcullis block (010) the remains of a door jamb (007) for the main gate were revealed (See Fig. 9 and 11). This was aligned just in front of the draw-bar hole (009), evident in the adjacent wall (011). The surviving medieval ground surface (006) to the west of the door jamb was recorded at a depth of 0.45m below the present ground surface (See Fig. 7).





*Fig. 10 Portcullis slot (010), viewed from the north. Photo CPAT 4946-0077.*



*Fig. 11 Door jamb (007) overlying medieval surface (006). Photo CPAT 4946-0078.*

- 2.14. Given the constraints of time, a sondage, 0.65m wide, was excavated westwards along the base of the wall. This revealed that all the footings, a pinkish coloured dressed sandstone

(008/018), survived in-situ. In addition, further evidence of the base of the third wall-shaft (17) was also recorded, located 5.8m west of the main gate door jamb (See Fig. 12-15).



*Fig. 12 Dressed pillar base (017) and footings (018). Photo CPAT 4946-0096*

- 2.15. The elaborately dressed sandstone pillar base (017) was well preserved, having not been exposed to the erosive natural elements. Whether or not the corresponding basal plinth survives in-situ on the northern turret is unknown. However, a sondage excavated outside the opening to the guardroom of the southern turret demonstrated that there is up to 0.75m of demolition rubble infilling the passageway between the two turrets at this point (See Fig. 17, Appendix 2 Fig. 22-23 Section E-F). Therefore, it is possible that not all the dressed masonry has been removed.
- 2.16. As has been previously stated, the general overburden within the passageway consisted of at least three deposits (001-003) of deliberate backfilling material. The bulk deposit (003) consisted of shattered shale in a matrix of yellowish grey sandy silt, between 0.35-0.45m thick. This contained numerous fragments of bottle glass, white stoneware including ginger beer bottles, clay pipe stems and bowls, and animal bone (principally bird bones) all of which were of late 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century origin (Fig. 16).
- 2.17. At the western end of trench A, earlier demolition deposits underlying the deposit 003 were recorded. They consisted of a deposit (015) of voided rubble containing large shale blocks and silty clay 0.25m thick overlying a firm deposit (016) of yellow/brown gritty silty clay and fragmented lime mortar at least 0.2m thick. The extent of the thickness of the deposit 016 is unknown. Both deposits, devoid of artefactual evidence, remain undated and it is extremely likely that they seal in situ medieval deposits within the passageway.





*Fig. 13 South turret wall. Base of dressed colonette/pillar (017), viewed from the north. Photo CPAT 4946-0100*



*Fig. 14 Pillar base (017) viewed in profile. Photo CPAT 4946-0098*



*Fig. 15 Detail of the carving on the pillar base (017), viewed from the west. Photo CPAT 4946-0108*

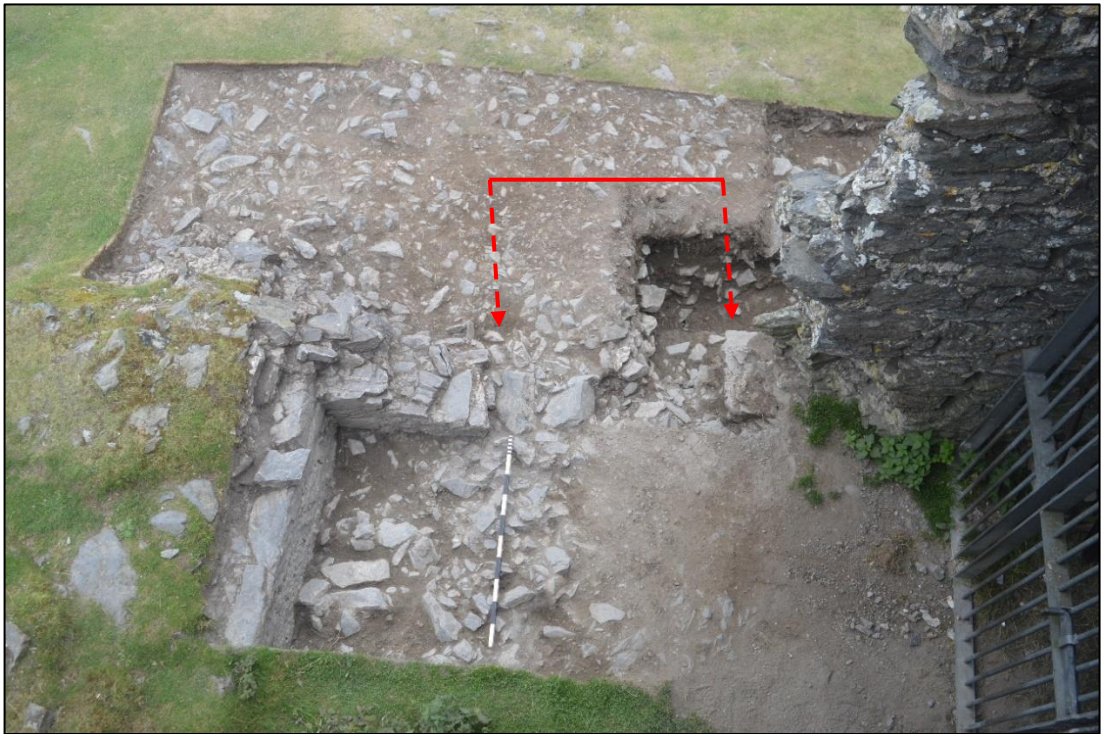




*Fig. 16 West facing section through post-medieval demolition and levelling material. Gatehouse passageway, eastern end. Photo CPAT 4946-0087*

- 2.18. Within the bounds of Trench Aii, it was revealed that the possible guardroom passage had been deliberately backfilled with demolition debris (003) consisting of shattered shale and rubble up to 0.3m thick. In order to preserve the integrity of the ground surface adjacent to the modern security, no further excavation took place within the guardroom. As previously stated, (section 2.17) it was evident from the excavation undertaken adjacent to the guardroom doorway that there was a considerable amount of overburden (at least 0.78m thick) within this area (See Fig. 17-18). Excavations undertaken within the interior of the southern turret (2021-22) also alluded to the fact that there was a high possibility that surviving floors would be found in situ at some depth within the bounds of the turret and guardroom. Additionally, the removal of a similar depth of material from within the west end of the gatehouse passageway, adjacent to the outer wall (20) of the guardroom, would probably enhance the overall presentation of the guardroom.





*Fig. 17 Remains of the south-west guardroom wall (020), south turret. Demolition rubble (003) still in situ. Location of doorway arrowed. Photo CPAT 4946-0115*



*Fig. 18 Possible location of entrance into the guardroom (020). North-east facing section through later demolition material. (003, 015-016). Photo CPAT 4946-0111*

***Trench B (Figs 19-21 & Appendix 2 Fig 22-23)***

- 2.19. Test pit B, located inside the southern gatehouse turret, incorporated the window embrasure at the eastern end of the turret. It was hoped that the excavation would evaluate the form and presence of any internal floors. Upon removal of the initial modern demolition debris (023), 0.1m thick, the test pit was excavated to a depth of 1.2m (See Appendix 2, Fig 22 Section G-H). This revealed a fill (026), of voided rubble containing large blocks of shale. The fill, at least 0.85m thick, had been deliberately placed inside the turret as backfill. Based on the artefactual evidence of clay pipe stems, bowls and bottle glass, this event took place around the late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century. The deposit was sealed by an internal floor surface consisting of a thin layer (0.05m thick) of limestone chippings (025) sealed with a compacted earthen floor (024), 0.1m thick. The latter contained sherds of pottery dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2.20. The backfilling deposits abutted the base of the east window and therefore we must assume this deliberate act was to allow the window embrasure to be converted into a 'ground floor' access into the turret. It was noted that within the newly exposed lower courses of the embrasure, all the dressed ashlar corner stones (quoins) had been removed in antiquity (See Fig. 19).

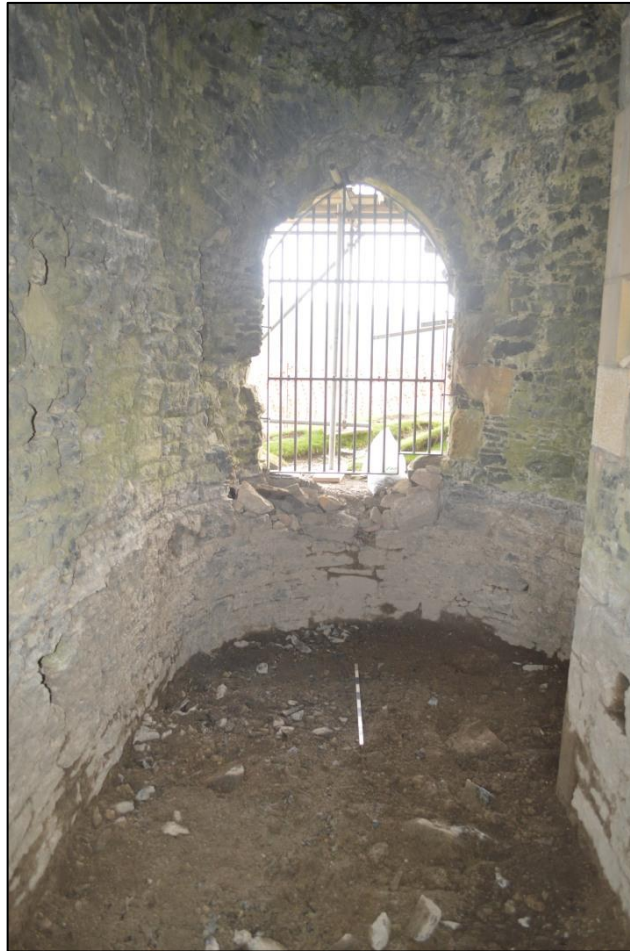


*Fig. 19 Test pit (2021 excavations) through 18<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> century backfill, east end of south turret. Viewed from the west. Photo CPAT 4946-0057*

- 2.21. Further excavations within the gatehouse turret (2022) revealed that the voided demolition debris (026) continued in depth. A few larger worked/dressed sandstone blocks were recovered during the excavations and these were retained for possible re-use in the reconsolidation programme that follows. As the excavation progressed westwards it was apparent that after the removal of a considerable depth of material, up to 1.2m thick, the likelihood of recording in situ medieval floors as a part of the existing work programme was



remote (See Fig. 20). However, it is almost certain that medieval floor levels and associated deposits do survive below the debris.



*Fig. 20 Internal view of the east end of the south turret, 18-19<sup>th</sup> century deposits partially removed (2022 watching brief). Photo CPAT 4946-0193*

- 2.22. Two additional features were recorded during the watching brief (2022). As the backfill material was removed, a pair of draw-bar holes were revealed, one in each side wall of the turret (See Fig. 21). The hole in the northern wall was a continuation of the main gate passageway draw-bar hole (009). The hole was 0.24m<sup>2</sup> and 0.44m deep (although the outer face was truncated – the width of the wall is 0.6m). The hole in the opposite wall measured 0.19m<sup>2</sup> and 0.47m deep.
- 2.23. Given that the internal passageway of the south turret is 1.9m wide, this allows for a drawbar up to 3m long – enough to extend behind the main gate in the passageway, which is 2.6m wide.



*Fig. 21 Draw-bar holes for bracing the gatehouse door, north wall and south wall, south turret. Photo CPAT 4946-0199, 4946-0188*

### 3 Conclusions

- 3.1. At the outset of the project there were several key questions that it was hoped the results from the trial investigations would possibly answer (See Appendix 1, WSI 2569, Section 2 Aims and Objectives).
- 3.2. The sequence of the defensive arrangements of the entrance passage from the threshold of the outer arch to the rear of the building have been confirmed. This now includes the position of the hitherto unknown (but assumed) portcullis. The site of the main gate door jamb has also been revealed together with the associated draw-bar holes, the latter revealed in the excavations within the south turret.
- 3.3. Although the excavations within the guardroom were somewhat limited owing to the requirement to preserve the integrity of the security gate into the vaulted turret, the location of the doorway was confirmed. The excavated sondage revealed that the guardroom exterior wall did not continue through to adjoin with the main gatehouse.
- 3.4. Owing to the excessive depth (in excess of 1.2m) of backfill material within the southern turret it was not possible to expose the original floor levels although they almost certainly survive. Surviving floor levels were recorded within the gate passageway, at the eastern and central points, at depths of between 0.45m-0.5m below the present ground surface. We may assume that similar deposits will survive at the western end of the passageway, but they are buried beneath up to 0.75m of rubble.

- 3.5. The investigations within the southern turret revealed no further information with regards to the form of the internal window embrasure. All dressed ashlar corner stones (quoins) had been removed in antiquity. However, they may well be buried underneath the layers of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century debris which had been deliberately placed inside the turret to allow the vaulted room to be converted into an accessible room. There are records of the turret being used as storage for a Victorian Tea room.
- 3.6. The exposed portcullis block, door jamb, footings and base for one of the wall pillars, all dressed and constructed from imported sandstone, demonstrated that there is good evidence for additional buried high-status masonry, in good condition that has subsequently not been eroded by the natural elements. As has been previously stated, if the masonry survives in better condition below ground the unusually fine surviving masonry dressings may be comparable to contemporary high-status sites (secular and ecclesiastical such as Valle Crucis which is only a short distance away). Such masonry features have the potential to provide typological dating evidence and point to whether the princes of Powys were employing Welsh or Marcher masons.
- 3.7. Artefactual evidence for the medieval periods was limited to two decorated sherds of 13<sup>th</sup> century pottery retrieved from the in-situ floor surface at the eastern entrance to the gatehouse. However, there is a high potential for further dating evidence now that it has been demonstrated that in-situ medieval deposits are known to survive beneath the extensive layers of demolition and deliberate landscaping debris.

## 4 Acknowledgements

- 4.1. The author would like to thank the following for their assistance with the project: Will Davies, Ian Halfpenny, Ashley Batten and Fiona Grant, Cadw; Tim Malim, Rufus Malim, Sophie Cooledge and Harri Twigg CPAT; A special thanks to Kate Thompson and all of the staff of both the Our Picturesque Landscape Team and the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB who assisted with the excavations.

## 5 Sources

Published sources.

RCAHMW, 1914, *An inventory of the Ancient Monuments of Denbighshire* p.121, Figs 43, 45

Cathcart King, D. J., 1974. *Two Castles in Northern Powys: Dinas Brân and Caergwrle*. Archaeologia Cambrensis, Volume CXXIII (1974).

## 6 Archive Selection Strategy Summary

- 6.1. The project archive has been prepared according to the following guidance;
- *CIfA Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives guidance* (2020b).
  - *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs) Version 2* (2022).















- *National Standard and Guidance for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives in Wales* (2017).
  - *CPAT Archive Policy and Selection and Retention Guidelines* (2022)
  - *CPAT Digital Data Management Plan* (2022)
- 6.2. All projects will generate digital data, with at minimum, a copy of the grey literature report being selected to archive with an external repository such as the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW). A copy of the project report will also be lodged with the appropriate regional Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 6.3. All project data, including digital, documentary, artefactual or environmental will be recorded in the Archive Summary table, a copy of which will be included as an appendix in all project reports. Data that has been selected for retention, and/or deposition with a suitable repository beyond CPAT is recorded therein.
- 6.4. Sensitive data is stored within the Project's digital Admin folder, which will automatically de-selected for archive due to the nature of the data within. All de-selected project data will be retained on the CPAT servers for a period of 6 years, at which point it will be reviewed and managed as required to conform to the requirements of the CPAT Digital Data Management Plan (2022).
- 6.5. Projects that produce a comprehensive range of drawn or paper records will require deposition with the RCAHMW or for sites of high significance, the National Museum of Wales.
- 6.6. Significant artefacts or environmental samples recovered will be deposited externally with the relevant museum, where possible.

## 7 Archive Summary

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Archives and Information Officer</b> | Sophie Watson  |
| <b>Regional HER</b>                     | Clwyd-Powys  |
| <b>HER Enquiry Number</b>               | N/A  |
| <b>HER Event PRN</b>                    | 215557   |
| <b>Digital Archive Repository</b>       | Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) |
| <b>Documentary Archive Repository</b>   | N/A  |
| <b>Finds Archive Repository</b>         | N/A  |
| <b>Museum Accession Number</b>          | N/A  |

### Digital Archive

| Project sub-folders  | Contents  | Retained by CPAT | Selected for Archive |
|--|---|------------------|----------------------|
|  Admin    | Client data, correspondence and financial records | Y                | N                    |
|  Drafting | 2569_Drw No 1-2.jpg<br>2569_Drw No 3.jpg          | Y                | N                    |

|  |  |                  |                  |
|--|--|------------------|------------------|
|  | 2569_Drw No 4-5_part 2.jpg<br>2569_Drw No 5_part 1.jpg<br>2569_Drw No 6.jpg<br>2569_Drw No. 7.jpg                |                  |                  |
|  Finds data           | N/A  | N/A              | N/A              |
|  GIS data             | dinas21.dxf  | Y                | N                |
|  Metadata             | 2569_Metadata.docx<br>2569_RCAHMW_Archives_Deposit_Agreement.doc   | Y<br>Y           | Y<br>Y           |
|  Photography          |  |                  |                  |
|  Film_4946            | 207 digital photographs (.tif)<br>207 digital photographs (reduced.jpg)<br>4946_Photo_Reg                        | N<br>Y<br>Y      | Y<br>N<br>Y      |
|  Report               | 2569_CPAT_Report_1937.docx<br>2569_CPAT_Report_1937.pdf  | Y<br>Y           | Y<br>Y           |
|  Report Illustrations | 2569_sections-01<br>2569_exc_plan_revised-01   | Y<br>Y           | N<br>N           |
|  Research Data       | Research data  | Y                | N                |
|  Site data          | 2569_Context_Form.pdf (x 28)<br>2569_Watching_Form.pdf<br>2569_Drawing_Register.jpg<br>2569_Context_Register.jpg | Y<br>Y<br>Y<br>Y | Y<br>Y<br>Y<br>Y |
|  Temporary          | Temporary storage for temporary files – always deleted at project completion                                     | N                | N                |

**Documentary Archive**

|                      | <b>Hard copy</b> | <b>Retained by CPAT</b> | <b>Selected for Archive</b> |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Context register     | 1                | Y                       | Y                           |
| Drawings register    | 1                | Y                       | Y                           |
| Finds register       | -                | -                       |                             |
| Levels register      | 2                | Y                       | Y                           |
| Photo register       | -                | Y                       | Y                           |
| Context sheets       | 28               | Y                       | Y                           |
| Watching brief forms | 4                | Y                       | Y                           |
| A2 plans             | 1                | Y                       | Y                           |
| A3 plans             | 3                | Y                       | Y                           |

**Finds Archive**

Owing to the possibility that there will be a Phase 2 of excavation the finds from Phase 1 are to be temporarily held by CPAT. Upon completion of the project all the finds shall be collated as one archive, an appropriate retention and discard policy will be invoked and archive repository assigned.

***Finds Deposition***

***Agreement obtained*** Y/N  
***Archive Repository*** XXXX  
***Accession Number*** XXXX / N/A

***Pottery/Ceramics***

|                 | <i>collected</i> | <i>processed</i> | <i>catalogued</i> | <i>specialist</i> | <i>conserved</i> | <i>discarded</i> |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Prehistoric     |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Roman           |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Medieval        | Y                | Y                |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Post-medieval   | Y                | Y                |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Modern          |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Undated         |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| CBM             |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Clay Pipe       | Y                | Y                |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Other (specify) |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |

***Stone***

|                    | <i>collected</i> | <i>processed</i> | <i>catalogued</i> | <i>specialist</i> | <i>conserved</i> | <i>discarded</i> |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Stone Artefacts    | Y                | Y                |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Roofing Tile/Slate |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Building Materials |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Flint/Chert        |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Other (specify)    |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |

***Metalwork***

|                       | <i>collected</i> | <i>processed</i> | <i>catalogued</i> | <i>specialist</i> | <i>conserved</i> | <i>discarded</i> |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Ironwork              | Y                | Y                |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Copper Alloy          |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Lead                  |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Silver                |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Metalworking Residues |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
| Other (specify)       |                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |

**Bone/Animal Remains**

Animal Bone  
Human Skeletal Material  
Shell  
Other (specify)

| <i>collected</i> | <i>processed</i> | <i>catalogued</i> | <i>specialist</i> | <i>conserved</i> | <i>discarded</i> |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Y                | Y                |                   |                   |                  |                  |
|                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
|                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
|                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
|                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |
|                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |                  |

**Samples**

Bulk soil  
Charcoal  
Other (specify)

| <i>collected</i> | <i>processed</i> | <i>catalogued</i> | <i>specialist</i> | <i>discarded</i> |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
|                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |
|                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |
|                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |
|                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |
|                  |                  |                   |                   |                  |

**Finds Catalogues****Box Catalogue***yes/no*

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |

**Number of boxes**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

## Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 2569

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) have been commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation by Denbighshire County Council (Our Picturesque Landscape Team) in connection with conservation of the castle structure, and post-covid public engagement, at Castell Dinas Brân, which occupies the top of a prominent hill above Llangollen and the Dee Valley (SJ2224043060) (Figure 1).

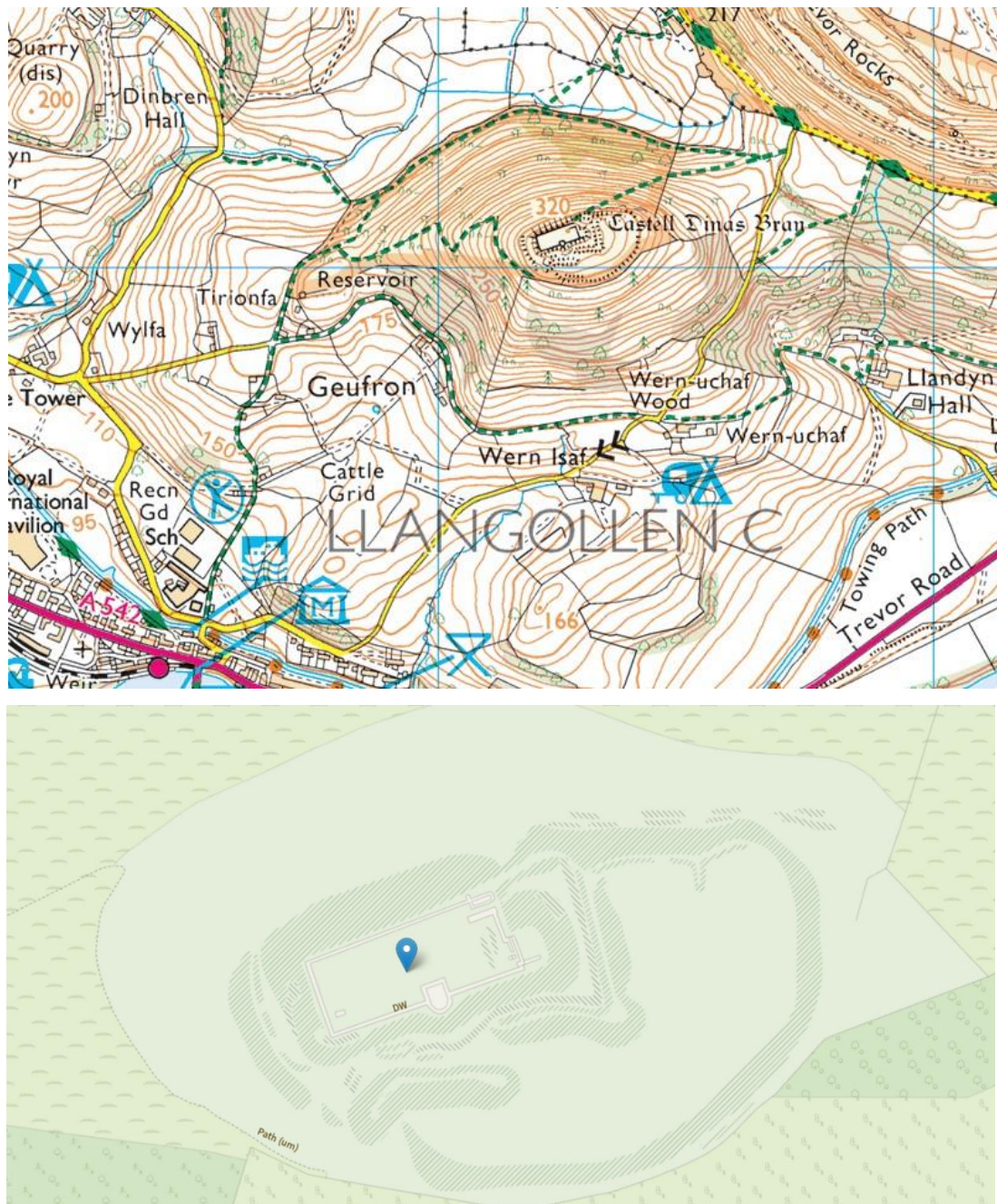


Fig. 1: Location of Dinas Brân



1.2. Structural conservation will be undertaken to implement the high priority recommendations identified within the report commissioned from Donald Insall Architects in 2020. The aim is to undertake reconsolidation work of the gatehouse at Castell Dinas Brân. The works will ensure the gatehouse is structurally sound and safe and able to be open to allow access for the public at certain times when appropriate. The castle is a scheduled monument (DE021) and Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) was given for the works by Cadw in August 2021.

1.3. Summary of existing archaeological knowledge:

The masonry has been described in detail by Cathcart King (Arch Camb CXXIII 1974) and there should be (at Denbighshire County Council or the RCAHMS) a set of Tim Morgan annotated drawings of the principal elevations of the gatehouse and possibly a written report / notes, which will accurately describe the overall layout in detail.

In the context of the proposed excavation there are several key characteristics and gaps in our knowledge –

- The gatehouse has few direct parallels and is probably best considered a variant of a later 13th century twin-towered design crammed into the tight space between the edge of the headlong slopes to the north and below the outcrop on which the earlier keep stands to the south. As such it provided the overall effect of small twin-towered gatehouse but in superficial appearance rather than function. The flanking 'towers' are probably better regarded as turrets, being thinly walled, remarkably narrow, elongated and barely projecting forward of the presumed gate threshold and adjoining curtain walls, for which they cannot have provided flanking fire. Other than a possible door into the southern turret indicated by a break in the masonry towards the inner end of the passage there are no signs of flanking loops or other communication with the passage common in contemporary gates of this type and the exceptionally narrow 'guardrooms' are unlikely provided adequate accommodation. Cathcart King may have been right to suggest that a Marcher lord would have built the turrets as solid structures. There was probably one upper floor, which is likely to have contained a single long room above the gate passage and served by the latrine in the northern turret.
- Only the southern 'turret' retains any architectural details, notably a continuous plain barrel vault supporting the lost upper floor and the remains of a forward / eastern facing loop or small window in the drum itself, which effectively formed its rear embrasure. This opening has been broken through and robbed of its external dressings, the pointed relieving arch now appearing like a doorway but the splayed sandstone jambs of the window survive internally. That these dressing stones sit at the current internal floor level suggests that the medieval floor is likely to have been at least 0.5m below – this can be tested with a small trench. Similarly, a much higher external plinth can be assumed as the former loop is at ground level. Access to the upper storey must have been via the adjacent wall walks or from the upper level of the court. There is unlikely have been direct communication between the floors as there is no space for, or indication of, a stair, or break in the barrel vault to admit a ladder.
- Other than the latrine projecting over the precipice in the north-west corner, the remains of the northern turret are featureless and buried internally towards the gate

passage. Its present internal floor is over 1m below that of the passage and southern turret but it cannot be assumed that the bases of both towers were originally founded on the same level. The latrine must have been accessible from the upper floor or the north curtain wall. Excavation within this turret is unlikely to provide new information on its layout.

## 2 Aims and Objectives

2.1. The aims of the excavation are to enable masons to point the bases of elevations and to confirm or better understand elements of the layout and detail of the gatehouse, specifically:

- The sequence of defensive arrangements of the entrance passage from the threshold of the outer arch to the rear of the building, including the position and form of the presumed door to the southern turret;
- To test survival for original floor levels within the gate passage and southern turret;
- To investigate the form of the internal window embrasure of the southern turret and the level of the turret floor at this point;
- To investigate the relationship between the southern gatehouse turret and east curtain wall;
- To record evidence for the condition of buried masonry, and look for further evidence for robbing and later landscaping / backfill.
- To look for diagnostic or dateable dressed stone in situ or within collapse deposits;
- To investigate any evidence of destruction or post medieval activity; and
- to prepare a report outlining the results of the evaluation.

2.2. Research objectives

These details will hopefully help us to better understand the construction, layout and development of the gatehouse, its relationship to the east curtain wall and enable comparison with broadly contemporary Welsh and northern Marcher gatehouses. If they survive in better condition below ground the unusually fine surviving masonry dressings may be comparable to contemporary high status sites (secular and ecclesiastical such as Valle Crucis which is only a short distance away). Such masonry features have the potential to provide typological dating evidence and point to whether the princes of Powys were employing Welsh or Marcher masons. There is also potential for further dating evidence from pottery or other finds.

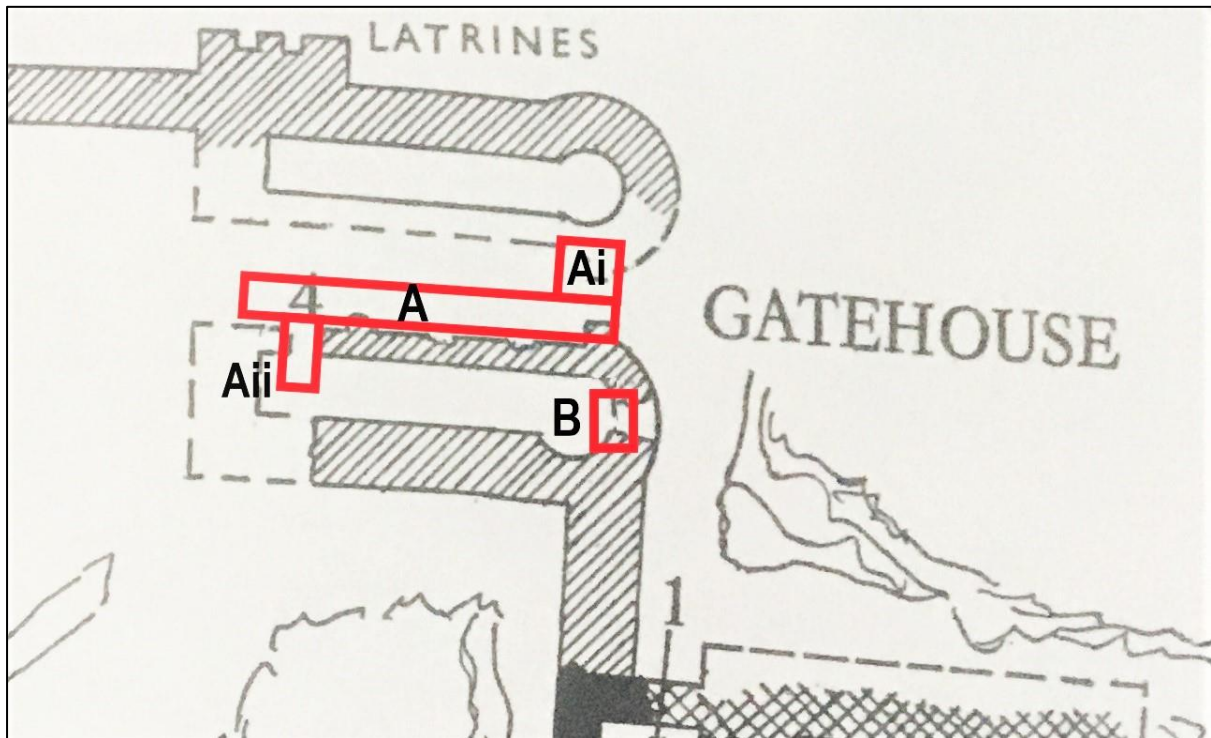
## 3 Methodology

3.1. Cadw's inspector has specified that the area of the refurbishment should be archaeologically evaluated. The archaeological works will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (2020). There are certain requirements that are specified in the Ministry of Justice licence for the removal of human remains that will be adhered to if remains are encountered.

### Evaluation

3.2. The main trench (A) will measure some 12m long by up to 1.5m wide against the passage elevation of the southern turret, running from the presumed position of the outer arch / threshold to the rear of the possible turret doorway (Figure 2). This will hopefully clarify the layout of the better preserved half of the gatehouse passage and enable masons to conserve its lower courses.

- 3.3. Two extensions up to 1.5m wide will extend from this trench (Figure 2), the first across a full section of the passage at the location of its outer threshold and possible portcullis slot (Ai), the second into the southern turret through the presumed position of the doorway from the passage (Aii), taking the opportunity to assess floor levels.
- 3.4. A small trench or test pit (B) within the window embrasure of the southern turret will evaluate its form and presence of any internal floor, which may be directly onto bedrock (Figure 2).



*Fig. 2 Plan of gatehouse and eastern curtain wall from Cathcart 1974, with proposed trenches marked in red*

- 3.5. An additional small test pit (not shown on plan) on the outer side of the turret wall will confirm the stratigraphic relationship between the turret and east curtain wall.
- 3.6. The trenches will be carefully excavated by hand, down to the first recognisable archaeological horizon, with subsequent sampling to be agreed with Cadw once the excavation is opened to its full extent. Any subsequent excavation would be carried out by hand. The base and sections of each trench would be cleaned by hand.
- 3.7. Any features or layers identified in the trenches will be appropriately excavated, recorded and sampled to allow for the determination of their nature and possible dating. Any that are seen to have particular significance will be left in-situ until a decision can be made on an appropriate course of action by the Cadw Inspector.
- 3.8. All relevant material will be subject to appropriate sampling and analysis, subject to agreement between Cadw and Denbighshire County Council.
- 3.9. The excavation of any archaeological features or deposits will be undertaken by hand using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation:



- Where features of archaeological interest are identified in the trenches they will be systematically investigated by hand with sufficient work being undertaken to determine their date, character and function, using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation and in accordance with CIfA Standard and Guidance and the Ministry of Justice licence which is in force for any burials at the site.
- All features will be located as accurately as possible on an overall plan of the development at an appropriate scale, showing boundaries depicted on Ordnance Survey mapping.
- Contexts will be recorded on individual record forms, using a continuous numbering system, and be drawn and photographed as appropriate.
- Plans will be drawn on permatrace to a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50, as appropriate.
- All photography will be taken using a digital SLR camera with a minimum resolution of 12 mega pixels, including a metric scale in each view, with views logged in a photographic register.
- In the event of finding any artefacts covered by the provisions of the Treasures Act 1996, the appropriate procedures under this legislation will be followed.

## Artefacts

3.10. All artefacts and environmental samples will be treated in a manner appropriate to their composition:

- All stratified finds will be collected by context, or where appropriate, individually recorded in three dimensions. Unstratified finds will only be collected where they contribute significantly to the project objectives or are of particular intrinsic interest.
- All finds and samples will be collected, processed, sorted, quantified, recorded, labelled, packed, stored, marked, assessed, analysed and conserved in a manner appropriate to their composition and in line with appropriate guidance.
- Arrangements will be made to assess and study any artefacts, assemblages and environmental samples.
- Any artefacts recovered during the evaluation will be deposited with Aura Museums and Leisure. The artefacts will be deposited along with a copy of the site report including a detailed list of all artefacts recovered.
- All artefacts will be retained from stratigraphically secure contexts of 18<sup>th</sup>-century date or earlier. In the case of later or disturbed contexts, all 18<sup>th</sup>-century or earlier material will be retained, together with a sample of later finds to assist with dating and phasing.

3.11. The sampling strategy and dating strategy will comprise:

- Bulk sampling of contexts with potential to contain significant environmental and/or technological evidence, and/or contain material suitable for radiocarbon dating
- Samples to comprise 30 litres from each context, or 100% sample from smaller contexts, collected in sealable 10 litre plastic containers. However, the amount of each sample will be dependent on the nature of the deposit, with a presumption in favour of retaining as much material in-situ as possible while fulfilling the aims of the work
- Individual charcoal samples for radiocarbon dating will be collected, wrapped in foil and placed within a sealed and labelled finds bag

- 3.12. If any further human remains are recovered they will be examined by the specialist currently responsible for the analysis of the existing skeletal material at Archaeological Services, Durham University, who will be able to draw up a suitable scheme for their analysis and dating. It is intended that there should be a comparative analysis of human remains recovered in the course of this evaluation with those recovered during previous work on the site.
- 3.13. CPAT has a retention policy for artefacts which prioritises as follows:

**High priority for retention**

- Rare finds from stratified and unstratified contexts
- Prehistoric and early medieval assemblages
- Key stratigraphic dating assemblages crucial to the historic development of the site
- Assemblages which are not well represented in museum collections

**High priority for disposal**

- Unstratified material unless intrinsically dateable and unusual/rare
- Artefacts from residual/intrusive contexts unless of key stratigraphic importance to the site
- Assemblages already well represented in museum collections
- Unprocessed environmental/soil samples

## Report

- 3.14. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:
- Non-technical summary
  - Introduction
  - Site location
  - Archaeological Background
  - Evaluation
  - Conclusions
  - References
  - Appropriate appendices on archives and finds
- 3.15. Specific additional requirements requested by Cadw include the following:
- Trench sections containing walling to be drawn to include the wall elevations above them.
  - An interpreted elevation drawing combining the above and below-ground evidence for the gate passage sequence. Donald Insall Architects have produced photogrammetric elevations which should be adaptable.
  - Separate PDF files of elevations and plan as this will enable them to be used by the client on future conservation projects.
- 3.16. The report summary will be provided in English and Welsh, in accordance with the *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs) V1* (July 2018).

## 4 Site archive

- 4.1. The overall archive will conform to guidelines described in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE), Historic England 2015, the CIfA (2014) *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives*

and *The National Standard and Guidance to Best Practice for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives in Wales* (NPAAW, 2017) and *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs) V1* (July 2018).

- 4.2. The paper and digital archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record (NMR), RCAHMW, including a copy of the final report. This archive will include all written, drawn, survey and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken. NMR Digital archives will follow the standard required by the RCAHMW (RCAHMW 2015). A copy of the digital archive only will also be lodged with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.

## 5 Resources and programming

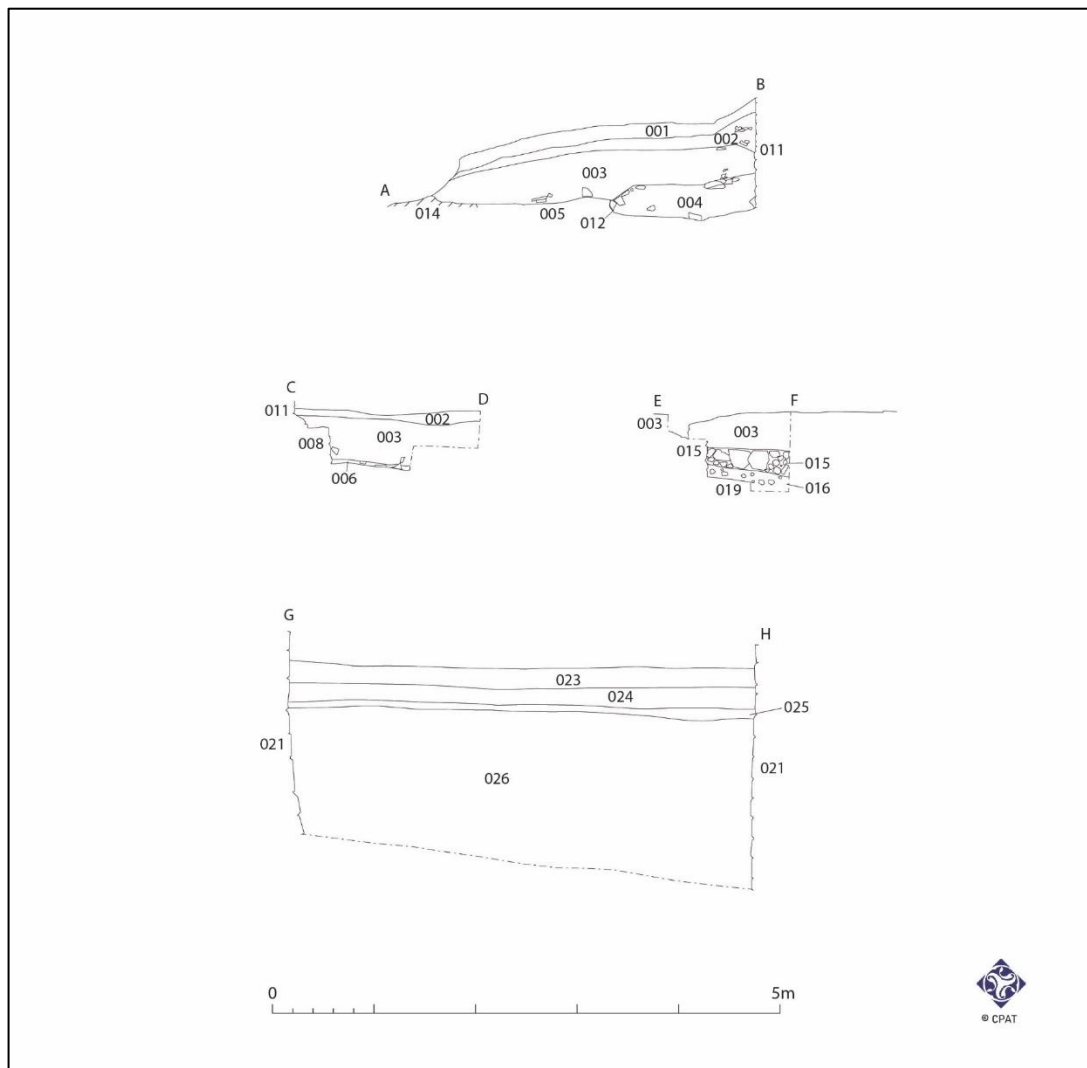
- 5.1. The evaluation will be undertaken by a team of two skilled archaeologists led by Ian Grant (MCIfA) under the overall supervision of Tim Malim, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). CPAT is also a CIfA Registered Organisation and as such agrees to abide by their *Code of Conduct* (2014) and the *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (2014).
- 5.2. All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the site work. Copies of the report will be deposited with the client and the regional Historic Environment Record within one month of the completion of on-site works, if appropriate.
- 5.3. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 5.4. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

Tim Malim

18<sup>th</sup> August 2021



## Appendix 2: plans and sections



*Fig. 22. Sections for Trenches A, Ai, Aii and B, Dinas Brân Gatehouse excavations 2021-22.*

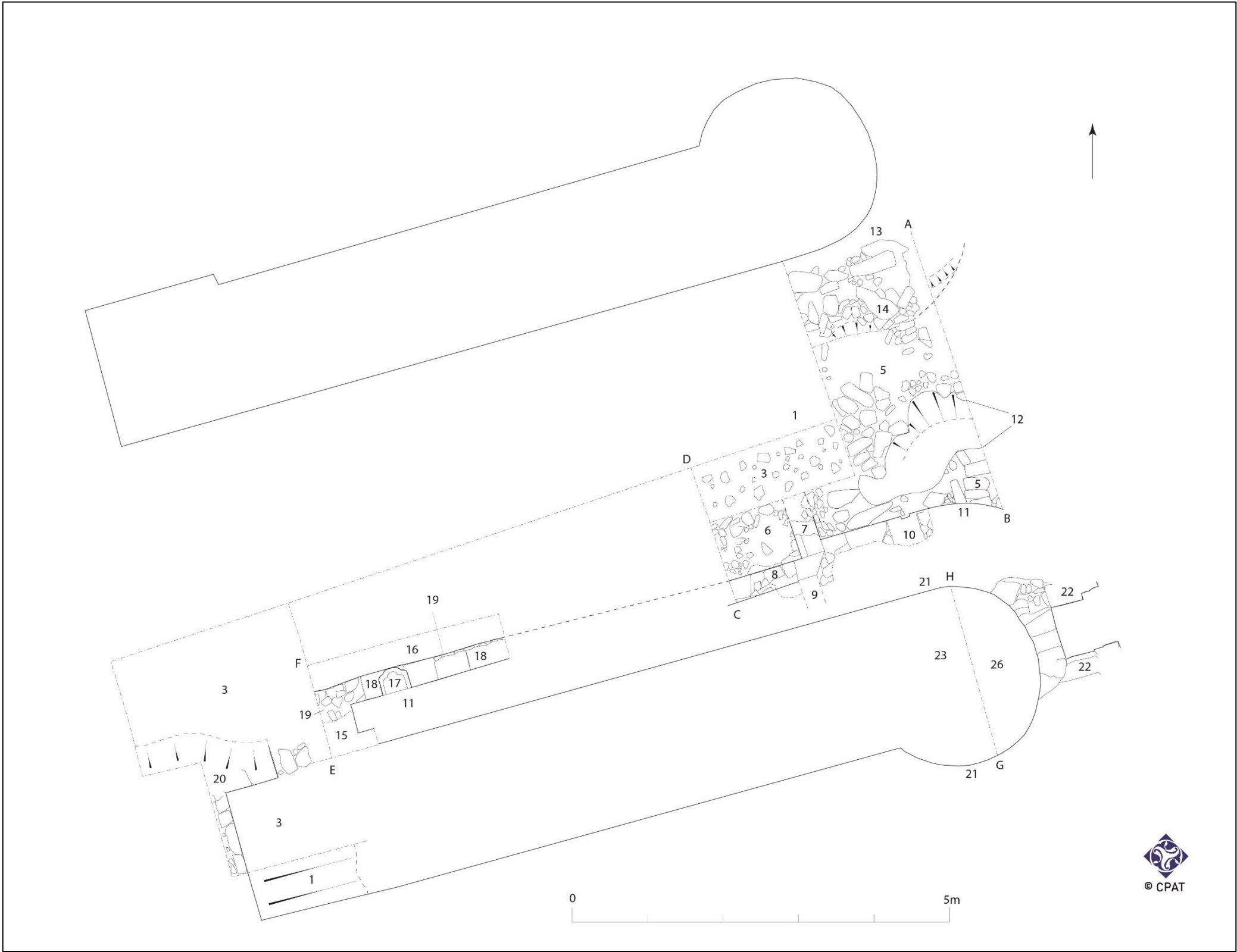


Fig. 23 Plan of the Dinas Brân Gatehouse excavations 2021-22.