

RHAYADER CASTLE, RHAYADER (RD132)

Archaeological Watching Brief



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Welsh Historic Monuments

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NON - TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The following report details the results of an archaeological Watching Brief undertaken at Rhayader Castle, Rhayader on 18th February 2008. No deposits, features or artefacts of archaeological significance were exposed during the Watching Brief.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken at Rhayader Castle, Rhayader, (NGR SN968/680) (Figs 01) on the 18th February 2008. This work follows on from the damage report submitted in August 2007, which resulted in Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) being granted for the excavation of two trenches in order to facilitate the construction of two picnic benches. Please see the damage report for further details.

2. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the archaeological watching brief is: "To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or potentially disruptive works" (Source: IFA Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief).

The primary objective of this assessment was to ensure that any previously unrecorded archaeological features and deposits exposed during the ground disturbance works and subsequent development of the site were adequately recorded, interpreted and reported.

3. METHODOLOGY

The groundworks required the machine stripping of the topsoil material (0.2m in depth) covering the two picnic bench areas. These two trenches have been assigned the numbers 5 and 6 as trenches 1 – 4 relate to the earlier trenches dug and reported on in the damage assessment report.

Cleaning and recording of the exposed areas was then undertaken by the archaeologist.

Recording of the trenches was in two formats:

- i) Photographic record shots were taken in digital and 35mm colour print formats.
- ii) Written records were produced using a continuous numbering system for all contexts.

Where necessary limited excavation of the trenches was undertaken in order to ascertain that no archaeological features were present.

An environmental sampling and processing strategy was in place should the archaeological deposits warrant it. However, in this instance it was not felt that the deposits encountered required sampling.

All works were conducted whilst adhering to current Health and Safety regulations.

All works were undertaken in accordance with The Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

4. THE WATCHING BRIEF (Photos: 01 - 03)

A watching brief was maintained throughout the course of the machine excavation works. The works involved the excavation of two square trenches (Trenches 5 & 6), both measuring 1.9 x 1.9m, that were located within the centre of the Castle on the west side of a small stand of trees.

Trench 5 – was the northernmost trench of the two and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.16m, which was deep enough to remove the topsoil 'A' horizon exposing the upper portion of the underlying deposit. The topsoil was a humic mid brown silty clay that contained occasional sherds of modern porcelain and pottery. Below the topsoil was a mid brown stoney deposit that appeared to have been redeposited. No datable material was recovered from this underlying deposit.



Photo 01: View of Trench 5 (scale 1m), looking SE

Trench 6 - was excavated to a depth of 0.13m, which was deep enough to remove most of the topsoil 'A' horizon exposing the upper portion of the underlying deposit. The sequence of deposits was the same as that exposed in trench 5 - The topsoil was a humic mid brown silty clay that contained occasional sherds of modern porcelain and pottery. Below the topsoil was a mid brown stoney deposit that appeared to have been redeposited. No datable material was recovered from this underlying deposit.



Photo 02: View of Trench 6 (scale 1m), looking SE



Photo 03: View of Trenches 5 & 6, looking NE

The soil material excavated from Trenches 5 and 6 was used to backfill Trenches 2 and 3 that were still lying open following the suspension of works in August 2007.

5. CONCLUSIONS

No deposits, features or artefacts of archaeological significance were located during the course of this watching brief. The only material recovered was modern 20th century pottery from the topsoil horizon.

7. ARCHIVE LOCATION

A Digital copy of this report will be archived with Cadw, along with copies of the digital photographs and the 35mm colour print photographs.

All site records (context sheets, sections, plans and elevations) will be archived with the Cadw Field Monument Warden, who will also retain a digital copy of the report and copies of the 35mm colour print photographs.

All digital copy of the report will be archived with the Sites and Monuments Record Office – The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, Welshpool.