

Wrexham Gateway, Wrexham

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

July 2025

PREPARED FOR

Cushman and Wakefield



Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

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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

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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.

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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 as 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 influenced 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 Borrass, 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 data 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, Llanfynydd, 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 *ham*, 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 Birmingham. 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 pastoral 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 1874/84 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 importance 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
Civic Heritage

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

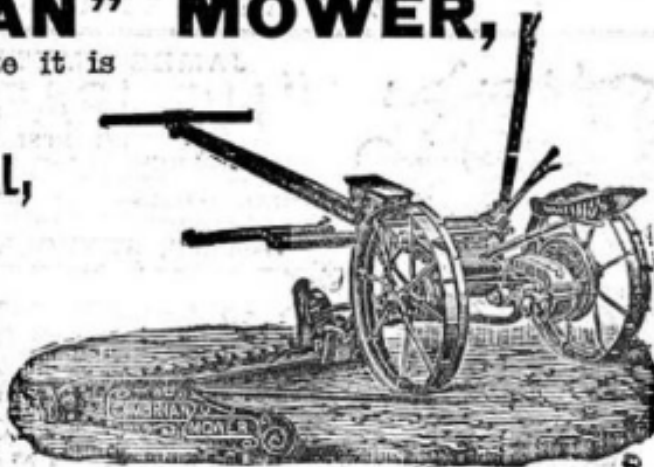
MOWING MACHINE BUYERS

Should obtain

THE "CAMBRIAN" MOWER,

Because it is

- ☛ LIGHT IN DRAUGHT,
- ☛ MADE OF BEST MATERIAL,
- ☛ EASILY MANAGED,
- ☛ FREE FROM BREAKAGES,
- ☛ AND ONE OF THE CHEAPEST
- ☛ IN THE MARKET.



1-Horse, £15 ; 2-Horse, £17 10s. ; 2-Horse Mower and Reaper, £20 6s.

USERS SAY:—

It is a most useful machine—simple, and does its work well."

USERS SAY:—

"It can be used on the roughest land without the least injury, being light and strong."

USERS SAY:—

"It gives the greatest satisfaction in corn and hay."

POWELL BROTHERS & WHITAKER, CAMBRIAN IRON WORKS, WREXHAM.

7

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).

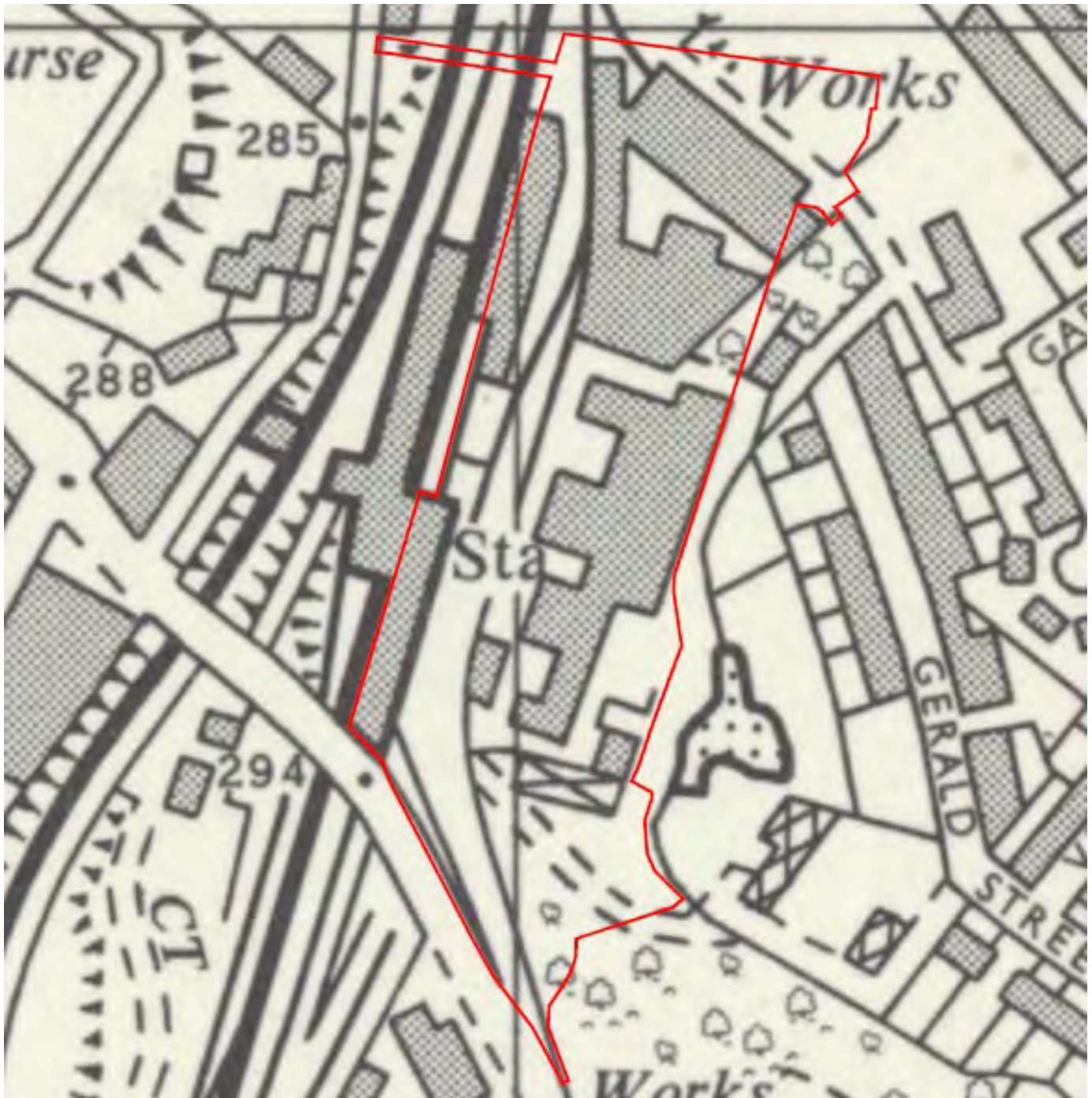


Plate 8 Extract from the 1964 Ordnance Survey map with site boundary

Aerial imagery of the site indicates that 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 General view showing the north-eastern area (Site A), taken from the entrance to the plot, facing north-east



Plate 17 General 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

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



Plate 22 View showing the eastern elevation of the former Jewsons building, facing south

A long narrow building borders lies within the west of the Site (Plate 23; Plate 24). The building aligns with a former goods shed shown on historic mapping (Fig 2 and Figs 4-9) and consists of a rectangular building of multiple phases, comprising a brick range, a stone single-storey range, a further brick single-storey range and a red brick two-storey range. The windows on the eastern and northern elevation of the building are boarded up and holes are evident in the roof of the single-storey ranges. Loading doors are visible throughout the west-facing elevation of the building, which directly adjoins the railway line. Several parts of the range have been filled with modern brick and breezeblocks. The building is of historic interest and may be considered to be of low (local) significance.



Plate 23 View showing the remains of the 19th-century goods shed, facing south-west



Plate 24 View showing the remains of the 19th-century goods shed, taken from platforms 2/3 in Site C, facing east

The stone-built Grade II Listed Wrexham General Railway Station (Plate 25) occupies land in the southern part of the Site, to the west of Station Approach. A red brick extension is to the south with the station entrance situated between the stone and brick buildings (Plate 26).



Plate 25 View showing the Grade II listed Wrexham General Railway Station, taken from Station Approach, facing north-west



Plate 26 View showing later extension to Wrexham General Station, facing west

No additional archaeological features were identified during the site walkover.

6. Gazetteer

The following gazetteer sites (GS) summarise the sites of potential archaeological interest and elements of the historic landscape within the Site and its immediate vicinity. The identification of these heritage assets is drawn primarily from the historic map regression analysis, Cadw designation data, and the HER data, and includes both designated and non-designated heritage assets. The locations of the gazetteer sites are shown on Figure 10 within Appendix 1 – Figures.

Gazetteer Site (GS)	01
Site Name	Wat's Dyke
Designation	Scheduled Monument
HER number	106674
Period	Early medieval
NGR	332993, 351187; 332884, 350666
Description	Wat's Dyke was an 8 th -century linear earthwork/ historic boundary marker that was probably associated with the border of the kingdom of Mercia. Both Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke likely represent separate attempts to formalise the boundary between the early historic kingdoms within Wales and Mercia to the east. Wat's Dyke runs south from Holywell to the Morda Valley near Maesbury and mostly consists of an earthen bank fronted by a ditch to the west. Scheduled remains of the earthwork are to the north and south of the site. The location of the dyke to the north and south of the site indicates that the projected route of the bank was possibly through the site, although no evidence has so far been identified. Excavations to the west of the site in 1972 revealed that the bank was badly damaged. A final excavation took place in 1978, but the ditch could not be located due to past quarrying activity on the site.
Assessment	Remains associated with the earthwork may survive within the site, however they have likely been impacted by the later construction of the railway within the western site area. A footbridge connection will be established near to the projected route of the dyke, which has the potential to affect any remains.

Gazetteer Site (GS)	02
Site Name	Field boundaries
Designation	Non-designated heritage asset
HER number	-
Period	Post-medieval
NGR	Various
Description	The 1846 tithe map shows the site comprising enclosed fields.
Assessment	Remains of field boundaries were likely damaged by later intensive development of the site.

Gazetteer Site (GS)	03
Site Name	Gravel hole field
Designation	Non-designated heritage asset
HER number	-
Period	Mid-19 th century
NGR	333015, 350724

Description	A field on the 1846 tithe map named 'gravel hole field' indicating that gravel extraction or a gravel pit was located within the field. Extraction may have therefore taken place within the site. The field was in use as arable, was occupied by Meredith Jones and owned by Emma Foulkes.
Assessment	Remains of former extraction may survive within the site. The site of any extraction may have damaged or removed any earlier archaeological remains.

Gazetteer Site (GS)	04
Site Name	Municipal boundary
Designation	Non-designated heritage asset
HER number	-
Period	Mid-19 th century
NGR	332958, 350926 - 333118, 350962
Description	A land boundary shown on the 1846 tithe map and then on subsequent OS maps as a municipal boundary. The boundary roughly follows the projected route of Wat's Dyke.
Assessment	Remains associated with the boundary may have been affected by the construction of the railway and works within the site. Remains associated with the boundary may be affected by the proposed development.

Gazetteer Site (GS)	05
Site Name	Original Wrexham station
Designation	Non-designated heritage asset
HER number	-
Period	19 th century
NGR	332959, 350800
Description	A railway station was established on the western side of the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway, first shown on the 1874 OS map. The building was possibly established around 1854 and was provided by Henry Robertson. The station building was demolished in the late 19 th or early 20 th century when a newer station building was constructed.
Assessment	Remains associated with the railway station may survive within the site. No development proposals have currently been devised over the footprint of the station.

Gazetteer Site (GS)	06
Site Name	Shrewsbury and Chester Railway
Designation	Non-designated heritage asset
HER number	119857
Period	19 th century
NGR	332997, 350967 - 332941, 350769
Description	In 1844, the North Wales Mineral Railway was incorporated and 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. In 1854, the Great Western Railway took over the line. The 1846 tithe map apportionments show that the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway Company owned land within the west of the site and the line is first shown on the 1874 OS map. The railway

	and platforms expanded in the early 20 th century, over the footprint of the earlier WM&CQ railway (GS06) and roughly aligning with the modern-day line on the eastern side of platform 3. The railway is still currently in use within the site.
Assessment	Remains associated with any earlier railway lines may survive within the site. Remains associated with the railway may be affected by the proposed development.

Gazetteer Site (GS)	07
Site Name	Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay Railway
Designation	Non-designated heritage asset
HER number	-
Period	19 th century
NGR	332985, 350971 - 332934, 350789
Description	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 and terminated at Wrexham. 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). The railway was extended in 1885, to the south and south-east of the site, towards Wrexham Central (HER 119867). The 1900 OS map indicates that the line was moved to the west, roughly aligned with the modern-day platform 4 line. The move was possibly as a result of the earlier extension and the expansion of the GWR (GS05).
Assessment	Remains associated with the earlier railway lines may survive within the site, although, any remains may have been affected by the later development of the railway. Remains associated with the railway may be affected by the proposed development.

Gazetteer Site (GS)	08
Site Name	Turntable
Designation	Non-designated heritage asset
HER number	-
Period	19 th century
NGR	332982, 350858
Description	A turntable associated with the Chester and Shrewsbury/ GWR (GS05). The turntable was first shown on the 1874 OS Map and remained in the site until at least 1944.
Assessment	Remains associated with the turntable may survive within the site. Remains associated with the turntable may be affected by the proposed development.

Gazetteer Site (GS)	09
Site Name	Steam Saw Mill and Timber Yard
Designation	Non-designated heritage asset
HER number	-
Period	19 th century
NGR	333021, 350856
Description	A steam saw mill and timber yard were constructed within the site by 1872. A line of the GWR connected to the works and a travelling crane was used to load goods. The mill was occupied by Thomas William in 1880. The complex expanded in the early 20 th century. By 1900, a row of buildings possible associated with the steam saw mill were constructed to the south of the complex. The mill and timber yard was demolished in the mid-20 th century.

Assessment	Remains associated with the steam saw mill and timber yard may survive within the site and may be affected by the proposed development.
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Gazetteer Site (GS)	10
Site Name	Goods shed
Designation	Non-designated heritage asset
HER number	104152
Period	19 th century
NGR	333001, 350932
Description	A goods shed established within the site by 1872. The shed is recorded within the HER as being part of the Cambrian Iron Works (GS13), although it was established before the works and may initially have been associated with the railway or nearby steam saw mill. During a field visit undertaken in 1985, the buildings were described as still intact but very run down and one was being used for timber storage. A site inspection has confirmed that the buildings currently survive within the site.
Assessment	Remains of the goods shed currently survive within the site and will be converted into a museum and taproom as part of the proposed development.

Gazetteer Site (GS)	11
Site Name	Wrexham General Station
Designation	Grade II Listed building
HER number	32796
Period	20 th century
NGR	332961, 350799
Description	The Cadw database of listed buildings states that the Great Western station building was built c. 1875 as a replacement to the original that was provided by Henry Robertson for the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway Company in 1854 (GS04). However, historic mapping and a plaque at the site indicates that the station was constructed between 1909 and 1912. The station was extended in the 20 th century.
Assessment	The station building currently survives within the site as a Grade II listed building and will not be affected by the proposed development. However, the proposed development may affect the setting of the designated asset.

Gazetteer Site (GS)	12
Site Name	Cambrian Iron Works
Designation	Non-designated heritage asset
HER number	142605; 104152
Period	19 th century
NGR	332961, 350799
Description	The Cambrian Iron Works were established by the Powell Brothers in 1876, originally under the company name of Messrs Powell and Whitaker. The works produced a variety of agricultural machinery and implements. Between 1914-1918 the company shifted towards the production of munitions to assist with the war effort and during this period. 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. In 1927, the Cambrian iron works were acquired by Rogers and Jackson Limited, a subsidiary of the Rubery Owen group of companies. They became engineers' merchants. The works were demolished between 1974 and 2006.
Assessment	Remains associated with the iron works likely survive within the site and may be affected by the proposed development.

Gazetteer Site (GS)	13
Site Name	Possible nursery building
Designation	Non-designated heritage asset
HER number	-
Period	20 th century
NGR	333012, 350743
Description	A cluster of buildings first shown on the 1900 OS map. Strachan & Evans were recorded as nurserymen on Regent Road in 1895. The structures were depicted as glasshouses / hothouses on the 1912 OS map and therefore were likely part of the nursery which extended to the south-east of the site.
Assessment	Remains associated with the nursery buildings may survive within the site and may be affected by the proposed development.

7. Significance

7.1. Policy context for heritage assets

Under both national and local planning policy, both designated and non-designated heritage assets are to be considered within the planning process (as previously stated in Chapter 3). The PPW emphasises that it is the responsibility of all those with an interest in the planning system to appropriately care for the historic environment in their area. Therefore, *Policy SP15: Historic and Cultural Environment* of Wrexham County Borough Council's Local Development Plan (adopted December 2023) was consulted as the key Development Plan Document in the Local Development Framework (LDF).

7.2. Designated heritage assets

There is one Grade II Listed Building within the site, comprising the Wrexham General Station Entrance Building (Ref 1855).

The site is situated within 500m of 33 designated heritage assets, however, the proposed development will not have a physical impact on these designated heritage assets, and so they are not considered further in this report (see Chapter 1.2).

7.3. Significance of the archaeological resource

The Welsh governments criteria for the scheduling of ancient monuments, outlined in Annex A of Technical Advice Note 24 (Welsh Government, 2017) and in Chapter 2 of 'Understanding Scheduling in Wales' (Welsh Government, 2019) provides a methodology for assessing archaeological significance. This criterion has been used to assess archaeological significance, below.

7.3.1. Historical and archaeological interest

The line of Wat's Dyke (GS01) may have passed through or within the immediate vicinity of the site. The dyke represents early medieval attempts at formalising the boundary between Wales and the historic kingdom of Mercia. Remains of the dyke could further knowledge of land use and landscape in the 8th century, as well as the cultural context the dyke was constructed in and relates to the expansion of Mercia during the period. Remains associated with the dyke are therefore of historic and archaeological interest.

Remains associated with the railways, Cambrian Iron Works and steam saw mill connect to the industrial development of Wrexham in the 19th century and also the wider regional development of transport and infrastructure. The former goods shed currently survives within the site, which shows multiple phases of use and development, which adds to the historic and archaeological interest of the site. In addition, the steam saw mill formed one of only two examples in Wrexham in the late 19th century and therefore contribute to the historical and archaeological interest of the site.

7.3.2. Baseline Significance conditions

Period

No prehistoric, Roman or late medieval activity is known to have taken place within the site and the potential for remains is considered to be low. The site is located within close proximity to Wat's Dyke (GS01) and the potential for remains from the early medieval period is considered to be unknown.

Gravel extraction may have taken place within the site during the post-medieval or industrial period.

The most likely remains to be encountered within the site would date to the industrial period, including remains associated with 19th-century railways (GS05-08) and 19th-century industry (GS09;12) and a 19th-century nursery (GS13). The development of industry and the railways were integral to the development of Wrexham

during the industrial period. Therefore, sites reflecting the city's industrial heritage may be considered significant due to period.

Rarity

Research has recently been undertaken on industrial era site types across Wales, including early (pre-1850) railways (Gerrard & Bailey, 2017). In addition, there are several surviving examples of 19th-century railway lines, buildings and goods sheds. Therefore, remains associated with the railways would not be considered significant due to rarity.

Recent research in Wales has also focused on the new technologies of production and transport with examples of iron works, copperworks, and lead works investigated. Whilst supporting industries have seen little attention. Therefore, remains associated with the steam saw mill and Cambrian Iron Works would not be considered significant due to rarity (*ibid*).

Documentation

The historical development of the site can be traced reasonably well from cartographic and other primary sources. Further documentary research would undoubtedly furnish additional evidence, although this is unlikely to alter the outline and conclusions presented in this assessment.

Group value

Buried remains within the site may hold group value in that they are contemporary features. In addition, remains associated with the development of the railways may be considered to hold group value.

Survival / condition

The survival, extent and condition of any below-ground archaeological remains within the site is presently unknown. The expansion and development of the railway may have damaged remains within the west of the site. In addition, modern buildings were constructed over the footprint of the Cambrian Iron Works (GS12) and the steam saw mill and timber yard (GS09) which may have affected any remains, although the modern buildings may not have been constructed with basement levels and deep foundations.

Upstanding remains of the Wrexham General Station (GS11) and a 19th-century goods shed (GS10) currently survive within the site.

Fragility / vulnerability

Any buried archaeological remains, should they be present and survive *in situ*, are vulnerable to damage or destruction during any earth-moving works associated with the development scheme.

Diversity

The heritage assets within the site are likely associated with development of Wrexham during the 19th century and therefore may not be considered significant due to diversity.

Potential

There are no prehistoric, Roman or post-medieval sites within the site or its environs, and the potential for remains from these periods is considered to be low.

The scheduled remains of Wat's Dyke are to the north and south of the site, which would indicate that the projected line of the dyke may have passed through the site. However, excavations to the west of the site in the 1970's revealed the bank which formed part of Wat's Dyke, indicating that the dyke was in the vicinity of the site. Remains associated with Wat's Dyke have the potential to address research agendas outlined in the current *Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales*, which was updated in 2017. The framework states that the landscape relationship between Wat's Dyke and Offa's Dyke needs further attention. In addition, strategies put forward for Offa's Dyke should also be applied to Wat's Dyke, including detailed

survey of key stretches to extend 'knowledge and understanding of the landscape, cultural context, construction and engineering of the dyke, as well as its functions'. A strategy for radiocarbon and OSL dating should be put forward (<https://www.archaeoleg.org.uk/documents2017.html>).

In 2020-2016, revised recommendations of the framework included:

Early medieval period recommendations
Developing an understanding of the archaeological and related evidence for power and authority
Further work is required to develop a better understanding of the Dyke systems in Wales

The potential for remains associated with Wat's Dyke is considered to be unknown. The WM&CQ Railway was later constructed through the projected line of the dyke which may have affected the survival of any remains associated with it. The site therefore has unknown potential for remains associated with Wat's Dyke. The proposed development will not affect any potential remains.

The Shrewsbury and Chester Railway, the Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay Railway and several associated stations were constructed within the site in the 19th century. Wrexham General Station (GS11) currently survives as a Grade II Listed Building within the site. The 'significance, form and archaeological survival of transport corridors', including railways, and 'their engineering, the industries they served and the settlements they sustained' has been highlighted as a priority for assessment in the *Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales*. *Transport* has been identified as a key theme for further research (Gerrard & Bailey, 2017).

The site has high potential for remains associated with the development of the 19th-century railway and therefore has the potential to contribute to further knowledge of the significance and development of the railway in Wrexham.

In addition, the site has high potential for remains of Cambrian Iron Works (GS12) and a steam saw mill (GS09). *Processing*, including metal, has also been identified as a key theme for further research in the *Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales*.

Possible nursery buildings were shown on historic mapping within the site by the late 19th century. *Economy* is a further key theme identified for further *Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales*. This includes assessing food production and consumption and truck/ allotments/ kitchen gardens. Remains associated with the nursery buildings therefore may have some potential to contribute to knowledge of 19th- and early 20th-century gardening and consumption. However, historic mapping indicates that the structures comprised glass houses or hothouses and therefore, the survival of remains associated with them is considered to be low.

7.4. Summary of significance

A summary of the potential and significance of the archaeological remains within the site is outlined in the table below (Table 3). These conclusions have been informed by the above criteria, professional judgment, the ICOMOS guide to assessing the value of heritage assets, as well as contributions that could be made towards local and regional research agendas.

Identified Asset	Period	Potential	Archaeological significance
Wat's Dyke (GS01)	Early medieval	Unknown	High
Field boundaries (GS02)	Post-medieval	Low	Low
Gravel Hole Field (GS03)	Post-medieval	Low	Negligible
Municipal boundary (GS04)	Post-medieval	Low	Low

Original Wrexham Station (GS05)	Industrial	Medium	Low
Shrewsbury and Chester Railway (GS06)	Industrial	High	Low
Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay Railway (GS07)	Industrial	High	Low
Turntable (GS08)	Industrial	High	Low
Steam Saw Mill and Timber Yard (GS09)	Industrial	High	Low
Goods Shed (GS10)	Industrial	High	Low
Wrexham General Station (GS11)	Industrial	High	Low
Cambrian Iron Works (GS12)	Industrial	High	Low
Possible Nursery Building (GS13)	Industrial	Low	Low

Table 3 Summary of potential archaeological sites and their significance

This assessment concludes that the site is of archaeological interest and has the potential to contain buried remains of low to high significance that date to the early medieval and industrial period.

8. Impact Assessment

8.1. Site conditions

A modern L-shaped building is within the north-east of the site, known as Cambrian Works. Dependent upon the construction methods of the building, the building may not have a basement level or deep foundations. LiDAR indicates that the former modern building to the south indicates some ground remodelling with the creation of the platform, decreasing the potential for survival of below ground archaeology. A railway was established within the site in the 19th century. The construction and expansion of the railway will have likely truncated and damaged any earlier archaeological remains within these areas.

A historic field name indicates that former extraction took place in the south-east of the site, which may have affected the survival of any earlier archaeological remains.

8.2. Proposed development

The proposed development is for a commercial development forming one building comprising office, retail, and reception space in the south-east of the site. The development will be surrounded by associated car parking and soft landscaping. The goods shed and Jewsons warehouse will be retained as part of the proposed development. The Jewsons warehouse will be converted into a brewery with associated grain silos and apparatus to the rear. The goods shed will be converted into a taproom/ restaurant and museum. This will involve minimal internal and external works, with no requirement to dig beneath the current hardstanding.

The Grade II Listed Wrexham General Station will not be physically affected by the current development proposals.

8.3. Review of impact on the archaeological resource

The development proposals will involve ground-breaking works within the south-east of the site, and in the north the site. Any ground-breaking works have the potential to impact on buried archaeological remains.

The site has high potential to contain non-designated archaeological remains of low to high significance. Remains may include those associated with Wat's Dyke, the Shrewsbury, Chester Railway and WM&CQ Railway, an associated turntable, a 19th-century railway station, Wrexham Exchange Station, a steam saw mill and Cambrian Iron Works.

Without a programme of mitigation, the proposed development could damage or destroy these remains.

9. Conclusions

9.1. Planning policy

The PPW makes clear that where the loss of the whole or a material part of a non-designated heritage asset's significance is justified by a development, the developer should be required to record that asset and advance understanding of its significance, and to make this evidence publicly accessible.

9.2. Recommendation for further work

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.

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28/01/2025

Appendix 1 - Figures

- Figure 1: Site location
- Figure 2: Site boundary superimposed onto modern mapping
- Figure 3: Site boundary superimposed onto 1846 tithe map
- Figure 4: Site boundary superimposed onto the 1874 Ordnance Survey map
- Figure 5: Site boundary superimposed onto the 1900 Ordnance Survey map
- Figure 6: Site boundary superimposed onto the 1912 Ordnance Survey map
- Figure 7: Site boundary superimposed onto the 1944 Ordnance Survey map
- Figure 8: Site boundary superimposed onto the 1964 Ordnance Survey map
- Figure 9: Site boundary superimposed onto the 1974 Ordnance Survey map
- Figure 10: Location of Gazetteer Sites superimposed onto modern mapping
- Figure 11: Areas of archaeological potential superimposed onto modern mapping

Appendix 2 - Digital Data Management Plan

Data Management Plan	
Project Name	Wrexham Gateway, Wrexham
Project ID / Number	61080
Site Code	61080-WGW
Date Created	13/02/2025
Version	1
Date Last updated	14/02/2025

Personnel	
Director / Project Manager	Katie Fletcher
Principal Investigator / Researcher	Natalie Poundall
Archivist	Lorraine McVinnie (independent)
Client	Cushman and Wakefield
Funding body	Cushman and Wakefield

Revision	Date	Description of Amendment	Authorisation
1.0	13/02/2025	Creation of DMP	KF

1. Project Administration

1.1	Description
1.1.1	Archaeological desk-based assessment (to assess the nature, character, condition, significance and extent of known archaeological remains within the site, the significance of potential remains and the potential impact of the development).
1.1.2	Site walkover (to relate the findings of the desk-based study to the site)
1.2	Management
1.2.1	Katie Fletcher
1.3	Investigating Body
1.3.1	Civic Heritage
1.4	Contact for Data Management
1.4.1	Katie Fletcher
1.5	Related Data Management Policies

2. Data Collection

2.1	Data to be generated or collected
2.1.1	Production of report
2.1.2	Digital photographic record of site walkover
2.1.3	Cartographic sources with superimposed redline site boundary (Appendix 1)
2.1.4	HER data obtained from the Clwyd-Powys Historic Environment Record
2.1.5	Cadw designation data
2.1.6	Historic research from primary and secondary sources, including newspapers, trade directories, reports of archaeological work carried out in the study area, and the Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales
2.2	Method for data collection
2.2.1	Maps obtained from the National Library of Scotland and the National Library of Wales
2.2.2	HER data obtained from the Clwyd-Powys Historic Environment Record
2.2.3	Photographs taken on digital camera (108mp)

3. Documentation and Metadata

3.1	What documentation and metadata will accompany the data?
3.1.1	PDF copies of the desk-based assessment report /appendices will be linked to the digital archive; these will include accompanying tables, illustrations, photos and drawings.

4. Ethics and Legal Compliance

4.1	How will you manage any ethical, copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues?
4.1.1	The copyright for the reports and documentation resulting from the archaeological work will be deemed the intellectual property of Civic Heritage.
4.1.2	All data will be treated according to the Policy for Data Protection of the Civic Group, which sets out the rules on data protection, the legal conditions that must be met in relation to the obtaining, handling, recording, editing, revising, use, storage, transfer and destruction, and other processing of personal information.
4.1.3	Formal permissions (such as those from archival bodies) and/or license agreements (such as map licenses or permissions to reproduce) will be included in the reports and the archaeological project archive.

5. Data Security and Backup

5.1	How will the data be stored, accessed and backed up during the research?
5.1.1	During the production of the assessment, data will be regularly downloaded, stored and backed-up.

5.1.2	All project data will be stored within Civic Heritage servers and stores on the premises. The domain is secured through two factor authentication.
5.1.3	Off-site cloud storage will be used to back-up data.

6. Selection and Preservation

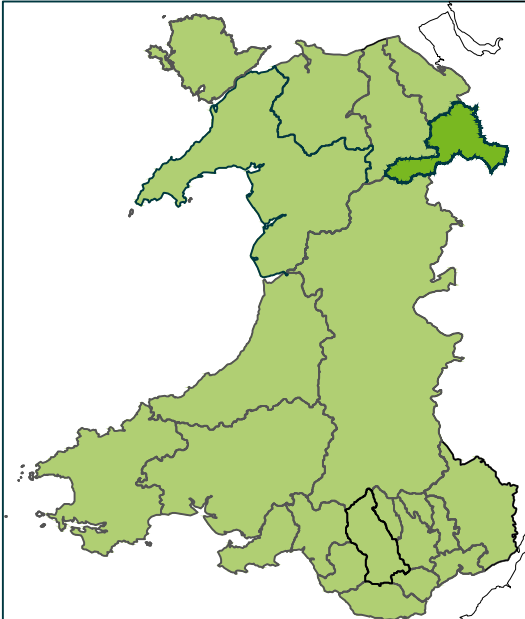
6.1	Which data should be retained, shared and / or preserved?
6.1.1	Selection of the data to be retained will be informed by an updated by an updated Project Design, and the aims and objectives of the projects, which are likely to be developed and enhanced during the course of the project.
6.2	Long term preservation plan
6.2.1	The digital dataset for the desk-based assessment and site walkover will be deposited with the Clwyd-Powys Historic Environment Record HER and the ADS for long-term preservation.
6.3	Have you contacted the data repository?
6.3.1	No.
6.4	Costs for the archive fully considered
6.4.1	Yes, archiving costs are included in the budget

7. Data Sharing

7.1	Related Data Management Policies
7.1.1	Digital data will be made publicly available via the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) once the archive has been signed off.
7.2	Restrictions on sharing data
7.2.1	No restrictions on sharing data have been identified.

8. Responsibilities

8.1	Responsibility for implementing data management plan
8.1.1	Natalie Poundall, Katie Fletcher

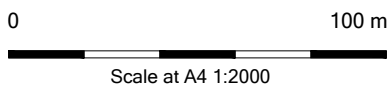
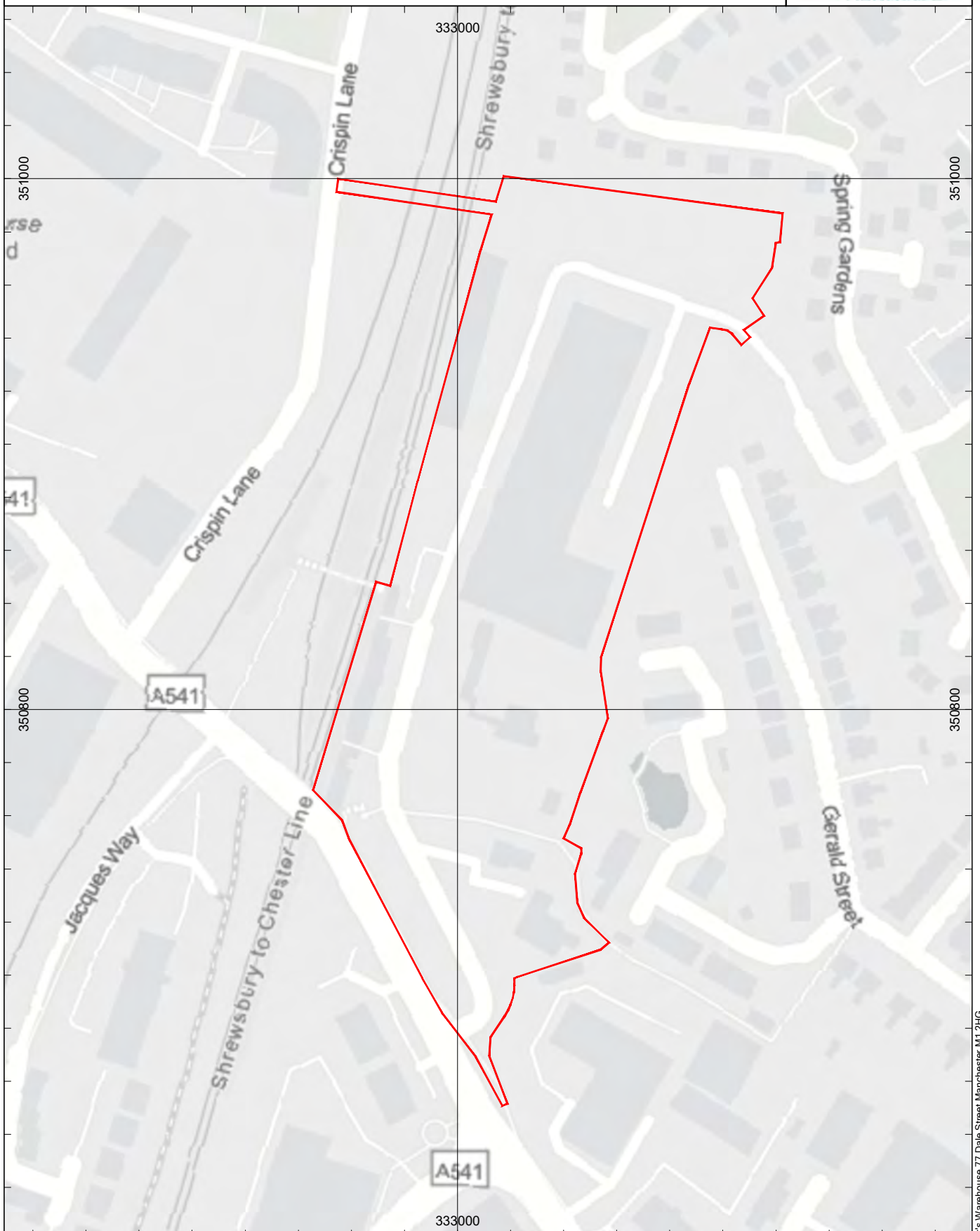
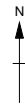


Wrexham Gateway
Project Code: 61238
Figure 1: site location

CIVIC

HERITAGE




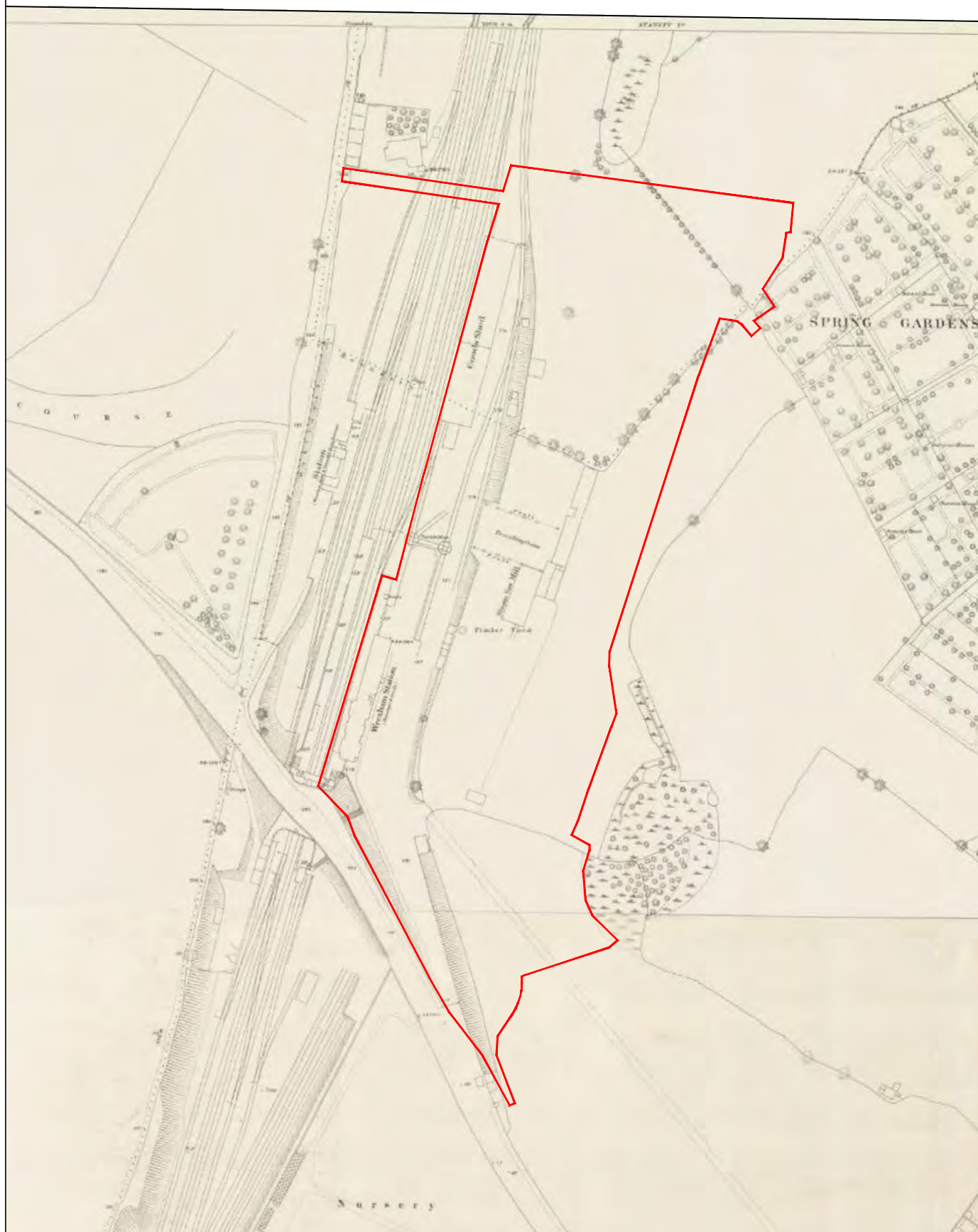


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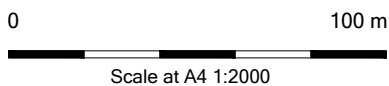
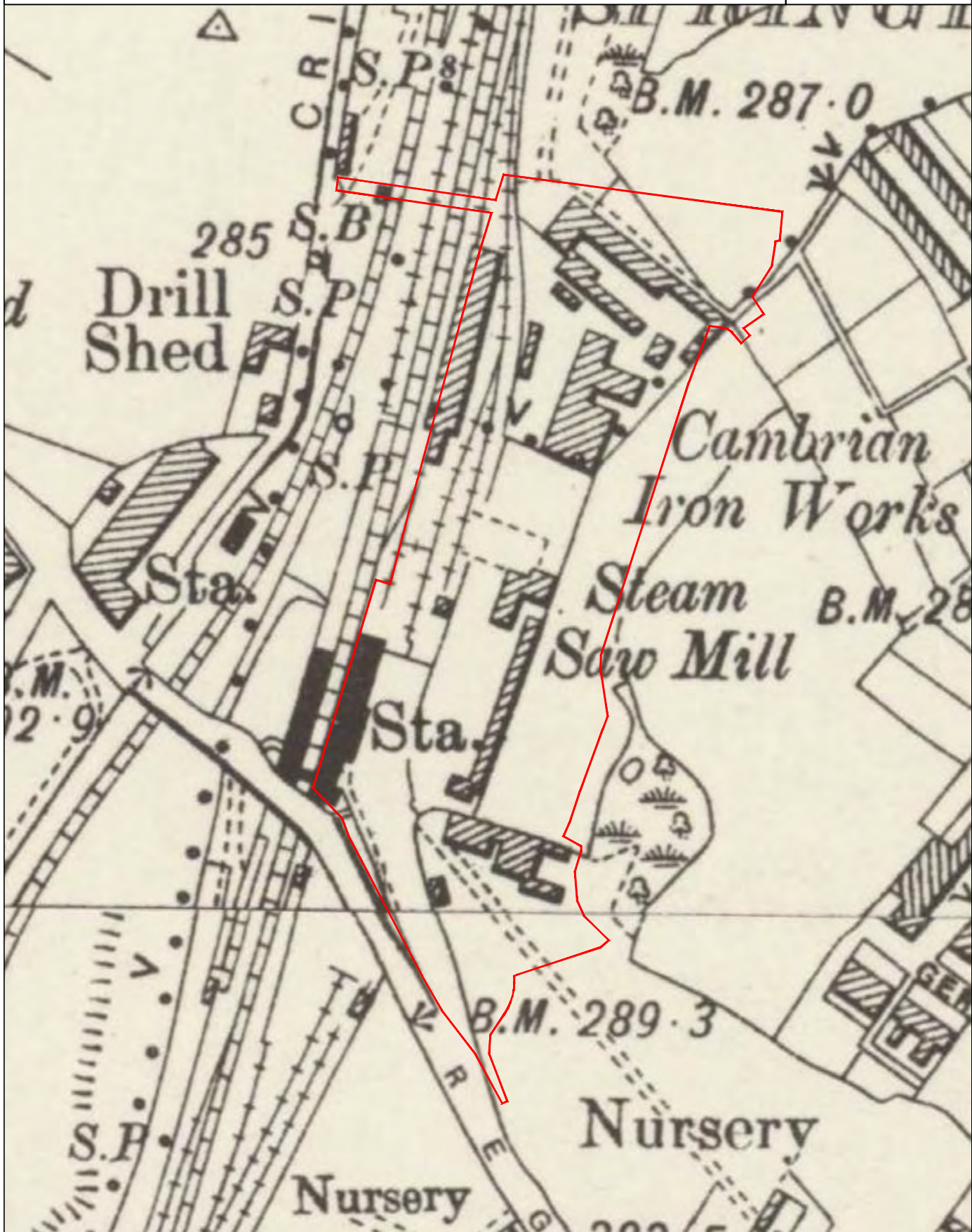


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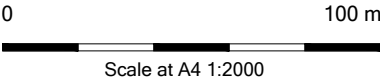


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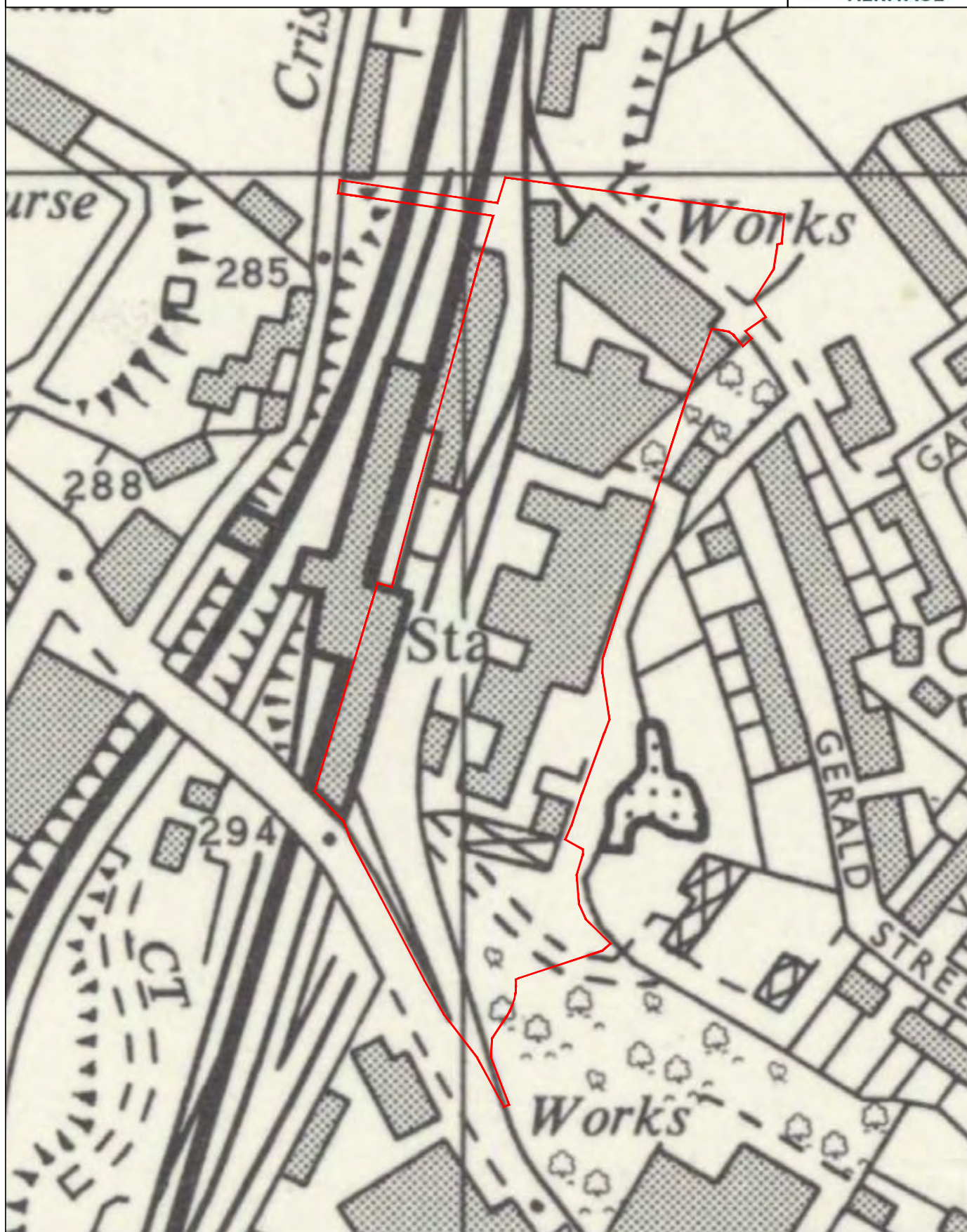


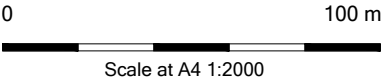
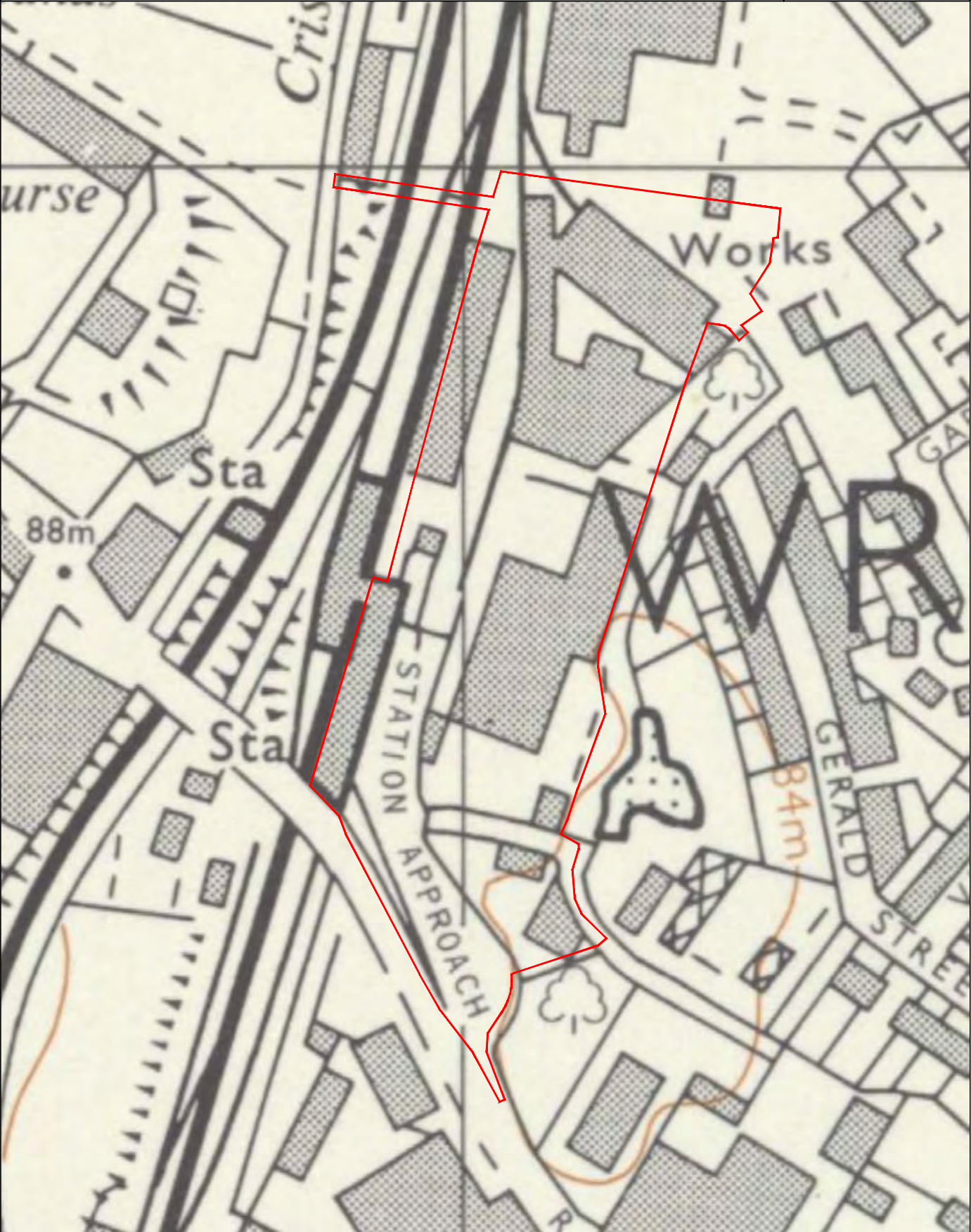
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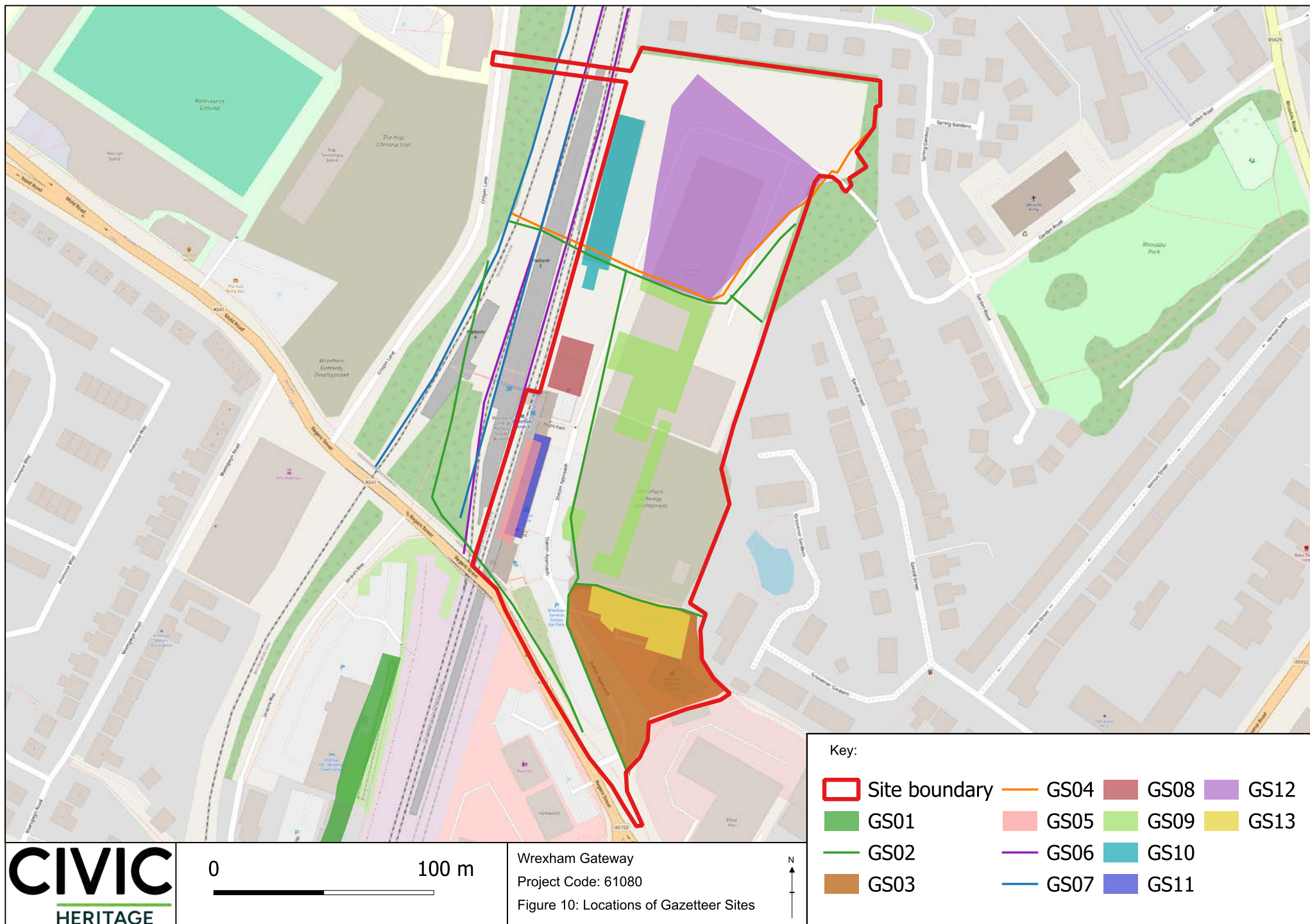


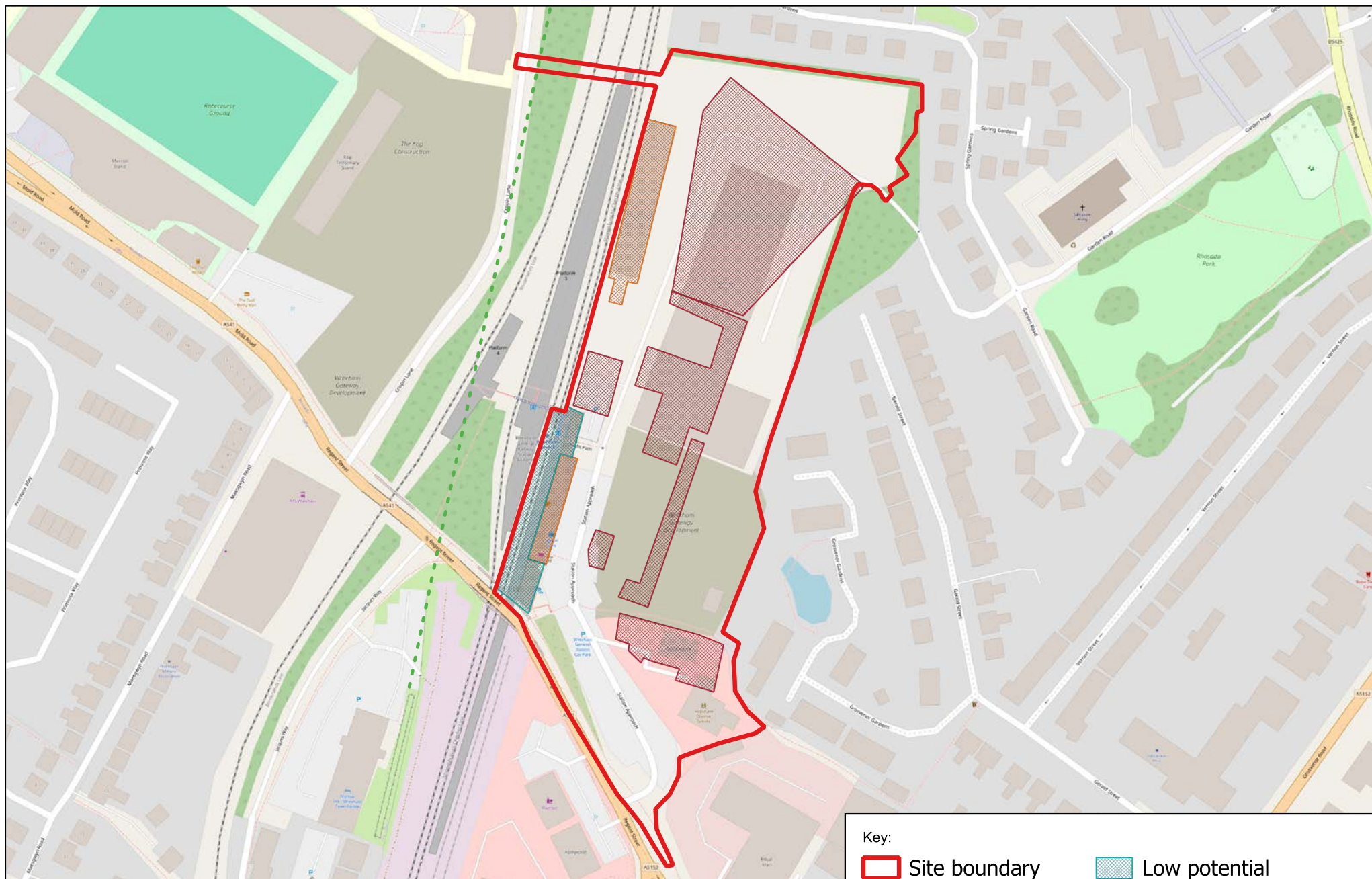
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Key:

- Site boundary
- Unknown potential
- Low potential
- Currently upstanding
- High potential

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