



ARCHAEOLOGY
& PLANNING
solutions

**Land North/North-
East Castle Oaks,
Usk,
Monmouthshire**

**Ref. nos. CS0033 &
ASN064**

Archaeological Assessment

Prepared for:
Barratt Homes
(Representor Ref. 2324)

9th May 2013



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Non Technical Summary

This report presents an assessment of the archaeological potential of two areas (Sites A and B) proposed for residential development to the north of the historic town of Usk. There is no recorded evidence for prehistoric or Romano-British activity within Sites A or B or their immediate environs, although this may be due to a lack of archaeological research. Both sites would have been located within the agricultural hinterland of the Roman fortress and later settlement in Usk although it is perhaps unlikely that any associated settlements would have been located on the steep hillside which Sites A and B occupy. During the Medieval period both sites are again likely to have been under agricultural use serving the inhabitants of the town of Usk or any Medieval predecessor to Little Castle Farm. However, the site lies close to the battlefield of Pwll Melyn which took place in 1405 and it is not inconceivable that Site A actually lay within or on the fringes of the battlefield.

Both sites probably continued to be under agricultural use in the Post Medieval period and historic maps demonstrate that this has been the case since at least the late 18th century. Some of the existing hedgerows are marked as field boundaries on 1779 and 1846 mapping and can therefore be regarded as historically important under the Hedgerow Regulations of 1997. These hedgerows consist of the north-western boundaries of fields 1 and 2, the boundary between fields 1 and 2, the boundary between fields 3 and 4, the eastern boundary of field 4 and all of the field boundaries around field 5.

Given the above it is considered unlikely that buried archaeology of prehistoric or Romano-British date will be affected by future development within Sites A or B. Medieval and Post Medieval archaeology is likely to mostly consist of agricultural remains (e.g. former field boundaries) of little significance. The main archaeological interest appears to be a potential connection with the historic battlefield of Pwll Melyn. Although it is far from clear whether Site A in particular lay within the sphere of the battlefield it is recommended that both Cadw and the curatorial division of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust are consulted regarding any archaeological fieldwork requirements here. It is likely that an initial metal detector survey over Site A could help determine whether any artefacts associated with the battle survive in the topsoil/subsoil. As such it is concluded that archaeology does not constitute a constraint to the future residential development of the land.

1 Introduction

1.1 This report presents the results of an assessment of the potential archaeological resource on two blocks of land (Sites A and B) north of Monmouth Road in Usk. Site A covers an area of approximately 5.8ha and is centred on NGR: SO 3802 0160 and Site B covers approximately 2.9ha and is centred on NGR: SO 3840 0153 (Figure 1). The aim of the assessment is to inform on the archaeological implications should Sites A and B be taken forward for residential development.

1.2 Site A consists of four pasture fields (Figure 1, F1-F4) and Site B consists of a single field (Figure 1, F5) with an approach off Monmouth Road along the overgrown southern boundary of a further pasture field (F6). The southern part of Site A is bounded by residential development with fields elsewhere although part of Cockshoot Wood also bounds the site to the north-east. Site B is bounded by Monmouth Road to the south, residential development to the west and fields elsewhere. The eastern boundary of the Site is also marked by a trackway leading to Little Castle Farm which is located close to the northern site boundary.

1.3 Both Sites A and B are located on the western side of a valley containing the Olway Brook with the River Usk located approximately 450m to the west. Site A is mostly located on a steep south-east facing slope which drops from around 50m to around 30m AOD although the slope is much less pronounced in Field 3. Site B is located on a south-facing slope which drops from around 50m to around 20m AOD. The geology of both Sites A and B is recorded as the Raglan Mudstone Formation (www.bgs.ac.uk).

2 Methodology

2.1 This report has been produced in accordance with guidelines in the *Standard and Guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (revision 2011) and a standard *Brief and Specification for Archaeological Assessment* issued by the Curatorial Division of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust. The report is concerned with the potential for the site to contain buried archaeological remains only rather than potential visual effects on designated heritage assets in the wider vicinity.

2.2 The assessment included consultation of readily available archaeological and historical information from documentary, cartographic and aerial photographic sources. The major repositories of information comprised:

- the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record (HER) for records of known archaeological sites and findspots within 750m of Sites A and B. The on-line Coflein database maintained by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales was also consulted. Relevant details are listed in Appendix 1;
- Gwent Archives for historic maps. The consulted maps are listed in Appendix 2;
- the Welsh Government Aerial Photography Unit. The consulted aerial photographs are listed in Appendix 3; and
- the results of a site walkover.

2.3 Section 3 of this report summarises relevant national planning legislation and guidance for buried archaeological remains. Section 4 summarises relevant recorded heritage assets close to the application site and these are marked on Figure 1. Section 5 details the results of cartographic and aerial photographic research along with a site walkover and extracts from historic maps are shown in Figures 2-7 and site photographs in Figures 8-10. The conclusions of the report are summarised in Section 6.

3 National Planning Legislation and Guidance

3.1 A key piece of legislation relating to archaeology is the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979). However, this Act is most relevant to scheduled monuments of which there are none inside or adjacent to the site.

3.2 Detailed planning advice on archaeology is contained in Welsh Office Circular 60/96 *Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology*. More recently the Welsh Government has produced *Planning Policy Wales (Edition 5, November 2012)* in which Chapter Six covers the historic environment. Paragraphs 6.5.1 to 6.5.5 state the following:

The desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining a planning application, whether that monument is scheduled or unscheduled. Where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings are likely to be affected by proposed development, there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation in situ. In cases involving lesser archaeological remains, local planning authorities will need to weigh the relative importance of archaeology against other factors, including the need for the proposed development.

The needs of archaeology and development can be reconciled, and potential conflict very much reduced, if developers discuss their proposals for development with the local planning authority at an early stage. Archaeological assessments commissioned by developers (sometimes as part of a wider Environmental Impact Assessment) can help to provide information on the archaeological sensitivity of a site before submitting a planning application. If important remains are thought to exist at a development site, the planning authority should request the prospective developer to arrange for an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out before any decision on the planning application is taken¹⁶. The results of any assessment and/or field evaluation should be provided as part of a planning application. If this information is not provided, authorities should consider whether it is appropriate to direct the applicant to supply further information, or whether to refuse permission for inadequately documented proposals.

Where local planning authorities decide that physical preservation in situ of archaeological remains is not justified in the circumstances of the case, and that development resulting in the destruction of the archaeological remains should proceed, before granting planning permission the authority needs to be satisfied that the developer has made appropriate and satisfactory provision for the archaeological

investigation and subsequent recording of the remains and the publication of the results. Archaeological investigations should be carried out before development commences, working to a project brief prepared by the planning authority.

Local planning authorities may impose conditions to protect a monument and require that an archaeological watching brief is carried out. In order to secure the provision of an appropriate archaeological investigation and subsequent recording of remains, a negative condition may be imposed prohibiting the carrying out of the development until such time as works or other action (for example, an excavation), have been carried out by a third party.

Archaeological remains may only become apparent when development has commenced. Where such remains are deemed by the Welsh Government to be of national importance, the remains may be scheduled. In these circumstances, developers would need to seek separate Scheduled Monument Consent before continuing work. The local planning authority or the Welsh Government may revoke planning consent if deemed necessary.

4 Relevant Recorded Heritage Assets

4.1 The scheduled monuments of Usk Castle and Usk Priory are respectively located approximately 350m to the south-west and 650m to the south. The northern boundary of An Area of Archaeological Sensitivity, which covers the historic core of the town of Usk, is marked on the Monmouthshire Unitary Development Plan (Usk Inset) approximately 200m to the south.

4.2 No known archaeological sites or artefact findspots are recorded within Sites A or B on the Glamorgan-Gwent HER, although numerous non-designated heritage assets are recorded within 750m. However, most of these are located within the built up area of the town and only those entries considered to be relevant to Sites A and B are summarised below. However, it should be emphasised that the HER is constantly being updated as new discoveries are made and must not be interpreted as a definitive list of all surviving archaeological remains.

4.3 A cropmark of a possible later prehistoric settlement enclosure may be located approximately 250m to the west of Site A (Figure 1, no. 1). Three findspots of prehistoric flints are also recorded on the HER within 750m (HER refs. 02004g, 05632g and 05634g), although none are within close vicinity of the sites.

4.4 The Roman Legionary Fortress of Burrium was established in Usk in the 50's AD and at its maximum extent covered an area of around 19.5ha at a time when the River Usk probably marked the western edge of the Roman Empire in Britain. The centre of this fortress was located approximately 850m to the south of Site A. As this border moved progressively west a much smaller fort covering around 1ha was built within the redundant larger fortress. In the 2nd century AD a civil settlement, possibly for military veterans, was established in Usk utilising the streets of the fortress and this continued to be occupied until the end of the Roman period (Coflein 93470). However, no Roman sites or artefact findspots are recorded within or adjacent to either Sites A or B.

4.5 Usk Castle was established in the late 12th century approximately 350m to the south-west of Site A (HER ref. 02021g; Coflein PRN 94856). The western end of a former 170m long east-west aligned embankment crossing a small shallow valley (now largely destroyed by housing) is located approximately 125m to the south of Site A (Figure 1, no. 2). The proximity of Usk Castle to the south suggests this earthwork may have formed a castle defensive outwork.

4.6 In May 1405 Gruffydd, the eldest son of Owen Glyndwr, attacked Usk and a decisive

battle was fought at the hill of Pwll Melyn (Yellow Pool) near Usk Castle where the Welsh were defeated by an English force led by Lord Grey of Codnor with the loss of 1500 men. The pool still survives approximately 150m to the south of Site A (Figure 1, no. 3). In 2005, Usk Civic Society attached a commemorative metal plate to a rock at Castle Farm to the west of Site A (Figure 1, no. 4).

4.7 A barn and granary at Little Castle Farm, which are both located close to the northern boundary of Site B have been the subject of photographic surveys and have since been converted into residential dwellings (Figure 1, no. 5).

Summary

4.8 There is no recorded evidence for prehistoric or Romano-British activity within Sites A or B or their immediate environs, although this may be due to a lack of archaeological research. Both sites would have been located within the agricultural hinterland of the Roman fortress and later settlement in Usk although it is perhaps unlikely that any associated settlements would have been located on the steep hillside which Sites A and B occupy. During the Medieval period both sites are again likely to have been under agricultural use serving the inhabitants of the town of Usk or any Medieval predecessor to Little Castle Farm. However, the site lies close to the battlefield of Pwll Melyn which took place in 1405 and it is not inconceivable that Site A actually lay within or on the fringes of the battlefield.

5 Historic Mapping, Aerial Photography & Site Visit

Historic mapping and Aerial Photography

5.1 The earliest consulted map of Sites A and B was an estate map of 1779 (Figure 2) which shows both sites to be under field parcels. The predecessor to Little Castle Farm is also shown close to the northern boundary of Site B. The fieldnames within and adjacent to Sites A and B site are recorded as follows:

Table 1: 1779 estate map field details

<i>Field number</i>	<i>Fieldname</i>
1	The House, Yard and Garden
2	Caier Philips
3	Coed Wern Y Fyride
4	Cae Tumpin
5	Cae Bach Dan Y Worlod
7	Worlod Y Price Vach
8	Worlod Y Park
9	Cae Adam Nesure Y Tee
10	Cae Mawr
17	Cae Thloedd Bach
18	Caier Thloedd Vawr
19	Caier Thloedd Vawr
20	Cae Night
21	Cae Daw Glwyd

5.2 Sites A and B are shown to be under a similar field layout on the Gwehelog tithe map of 1846 (Figure 3). Little Castle Farm is again marked (plots 744 and 745) and a linear orchard had been planted directly to the south-west (fields 746 and 748). Castle Barn had also been constructed to the west of Site A and a building is marked in a field (755) to the south of Site A where a rickyard is mentioned in the accompanying tithe apportionment. The Turnpike Road from Usk to Monmouth (now the Monmouth Road) had also been constructed and this now forms the present day southern boundary to Site B. Fieldnames are not recorded in the tithe apportionment for Gwehelog although the field numbers and the cultivation regime for both Sites A and B are as follows:

Table 2: 1846 Gwehelog tithe map field details

<i>Field number</i>	<i>Cultivation</i>
634	Arable
635	Arable
739	Arable
743	Meadow
750	Pasture
757	Brake
758	Pasture

5.3 Sites A and B are again shown as unchanged on an Ordnance Survey map of 1882, although the building shown in field 755 on the 1846 Gwehelog tithe map is now part of a Brick & Tile Works with claypits immediately to the west (Figure 4). By the Ordnance Survey map of 1901 (Figure 5), an auction map of 1910 (Figure 6) and an Ordnance Survey map of 1921 (Figure 7) the field layout within both Sites A and B remained unchanged.

5.4 Aerial photographs dating to between 1940 and 2006 in collections held by the Welsh Government Aerial Photography Unit were also accessed. No features of potential archaeological origin were observed with Sites A or B in any of the consulted photographs.

Site Visit

5.5 At the time of a site visit undertaken on 1st May 2013 both Sites A and B were observed to be under pasture fields and no earthworks of potential origin were identified. Selected site photographs are shown in Figures 8-10 and these illustrate the fact that both Sites A and B are located on the northern slope of a broad valley.

Summary

5.6 Study of historic mapping has demonstrated that both Sites A and B have been under an agricultural regime since at least the late 18th century. In this regard some of the existing hedgerows are marked on 1779 and 1846 mapping and can therefore be regarded as historically important under the Hedgerow Regulations of 1997. These hedgerows consist of the north-western boundaries of fields 1 and 2, the boundary between fields 1 and 2, the boundary between fields 3 and 4, the eastern boundary of field 4 and all of the field boundaries around field 5.

6 Conclusions

6.1 There is no recorded evidence for prehistoric or Romano-British activity within Sites A or B or their immediate environs, although this may be due to a lack of archaeological research. Both sites would have been located within the agricultural hinterland of the Roman fortress and later settlement in Usk although it is perhaps unlikely that any associated settlements would have been located on the steep hillside which Sites A and B occupy. During the Medieval period both sites are again likely to have been under agricultural use serving the inhabitants of the town of Usk or any Medieval predecessor to Little Castle Farm. However, the site lies close to the battlefield of Pwll Melyn which took place in 1405 and it is not inconceivable that Site A actually lay within or on the fringes of the battlefield.

6.2 Both sites probably continued to be under agricultural use in the Post Medieval period and historic maps demonstrate that this has been the case since at least the late 18th century. Some of the existing hedgerows are marked as field boundaries on 1779 and 1846 mapping and can therefore be regarded as historically important under the Hedgerow Regulations of 1997. These hedgerows consist of the north-western boundaries of fields 1 and 2, the boundary between fields 1 and 2, the boundary between fields 3 and 4, the eastern boundary of field 4 and all of the field boundaries around field 5.

6.3 Given the above it is considered unlikely that buried archaeology of prehistoric or Romano-British date will be affected by future development within Sites A or B. Medieval and Post Medieval archaeology is likely to mostly consist of agricultural remains (e.g. former field boundaries) of little significance. The main archaeological interest appears to be a potential connection with the historic battlefield of Pwll Melyn. Although it is far from clear whether Site A in particular lay within the sphere of the battlefield it is recommended that both Cadw and the curatorial division of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust are consulted regarding any archaeological fieldwork requirements here. It is likely that an initial metal detector survey over Site A could help determine whether any artefacts associated with the battle survive in the topsoil/subsoil. As such it is concluded that archaeology does not constitute a constraint to the future residential development of the land.

Appendix 1: The Relevant Recorded Heritage Resource (from the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust HER & Coflein)

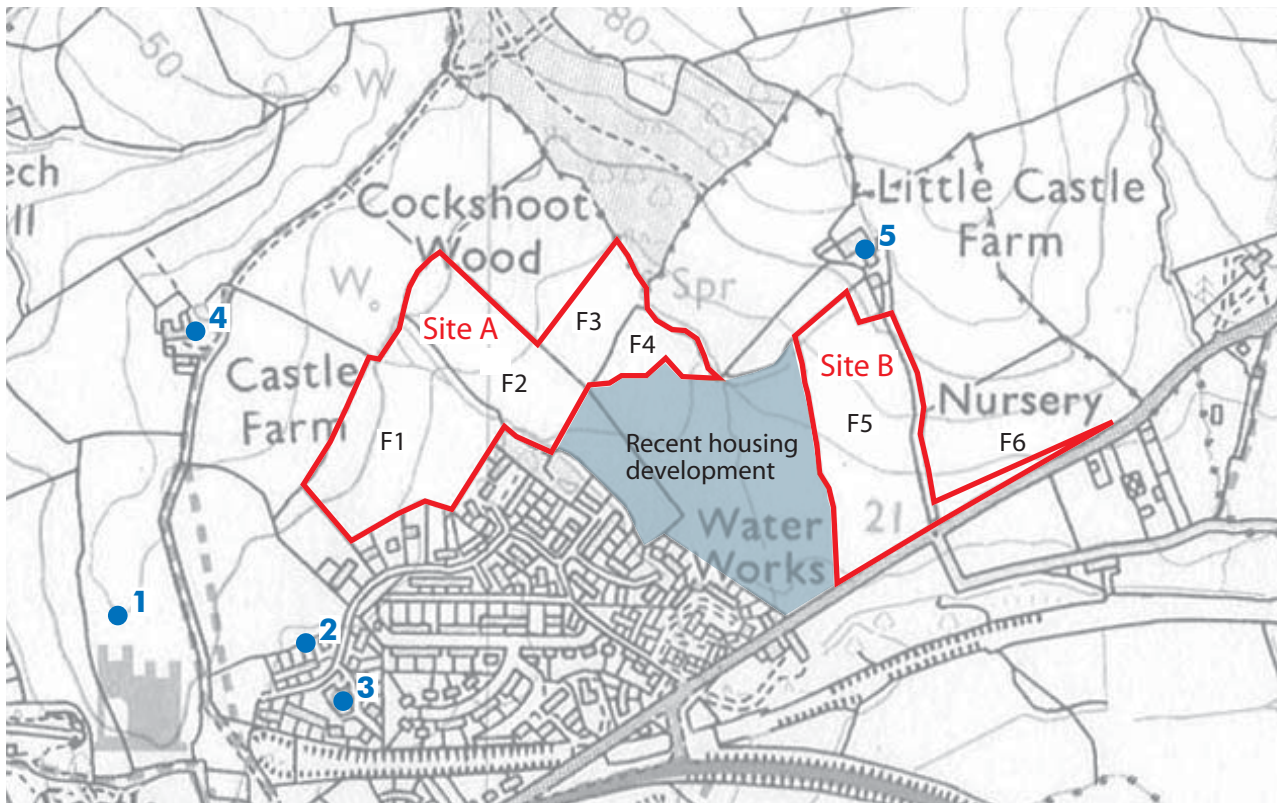
Figure 1	HER no.	Date	Description
1	Coflein 407343	Prehistoric	A possible later Prehistoric style settlement enclosure set on a ridge top to the north of Usk Castle. A curving ditch is visible as a cropmark feature here on aerial photographs taken in 1996.
2	HER 02025g Coflein 91943	Medieval	A 170m long east-west aligned embankment crossing a small shallow valley which has now been largely destroyed by housing development. However, the earthwork survives to a height of 0.3m at its western end. The proximity of Usk Castle to the south suggests this earthwork may have formed an outwork.
3	HER 02058g Coflein 402320 Coflein 415737	Medieval	Pwll Melyn Battlefield. In May 1405 Gruffydd, the eldest son of Owen Glyndwr, attacked Usk and a decisive battle was fought at the hill of Pwll Melyn (Yellow Pool) where the Welsh were defeated by an English force led by Lord Grey of Codnor with the loss of 1500 men. The pool still survives.
4	Coflein 402320	Modern	In 2005, Usk Civic Society attached a metal plate commemorating the Battle of Pwll Melyn in 1405 to a rock at Castle Farm.
5	HER 09415g HER 09416g	Post Medieval	Barn and granary at Little Castle Farm. The barn is built of stone built rubble with squared off stone block quoins. The building is T-shaped in plan retaining a number of what appear to be original openings with wooden lintels. Now converted to a dwelling. The granary was built with roughly squared stone blocks and has also since been converted to a dwelling.

Appendix 2: Consulted Historic Maps (from Gwent Archives)

1779	Map of the castle and lands thereto belonging in the parish of Usk
1846	Plan of the hamlet of Gwehelog in the parish of Usk
1882	Ordnance Survey
1901	Ordnance Survey
1910	Auction map
1921	Ordnance Survey

Appendix 3: Consulted Aerial Photographs (from the Welsh Government Aerial Photography Unit)

17.8.1940	4017 MWO 10
123.4.1947	CPE UK 1997
12.5.1951	5112 1172 58 RAF 676
5.6.1951	5117 1192 540 RAF 525
10.5.1967	6738 OS 67 089
1.6.1971	7144 BKS
24.4.1975	7576 OS 75 037
10.6.1984	8402 MAFF
29.3.1990	9002 OS 90 032
6.6.2006	20061 COWI



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Site boundary



HER/Coflein entries

F1

Field numbers

PROJECT

**Land north of Monmouth Road,
Usk, Monmouthshire**

TITLE

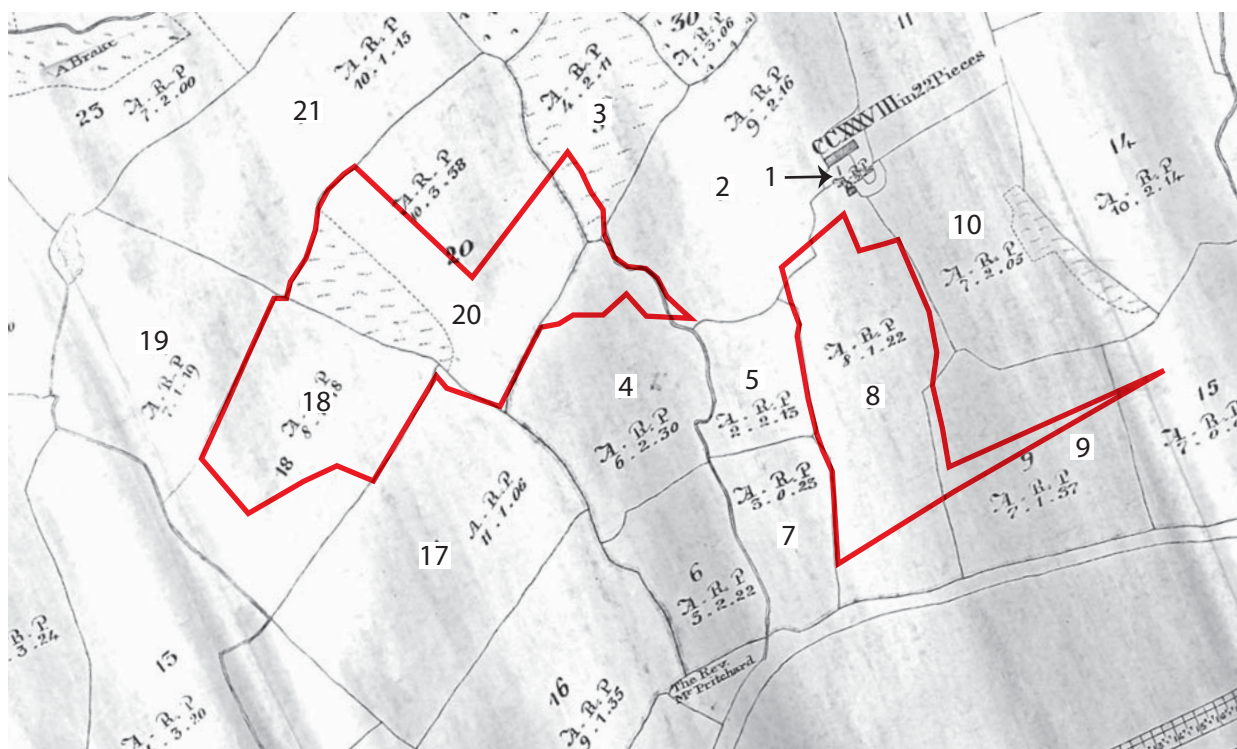
**Figure 1: Relevant heritage
assets**

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Site boundary
(approximate)

PROJECT

**Land north of Monmouth Road,
Usk, Monmouthshire**

TITLE

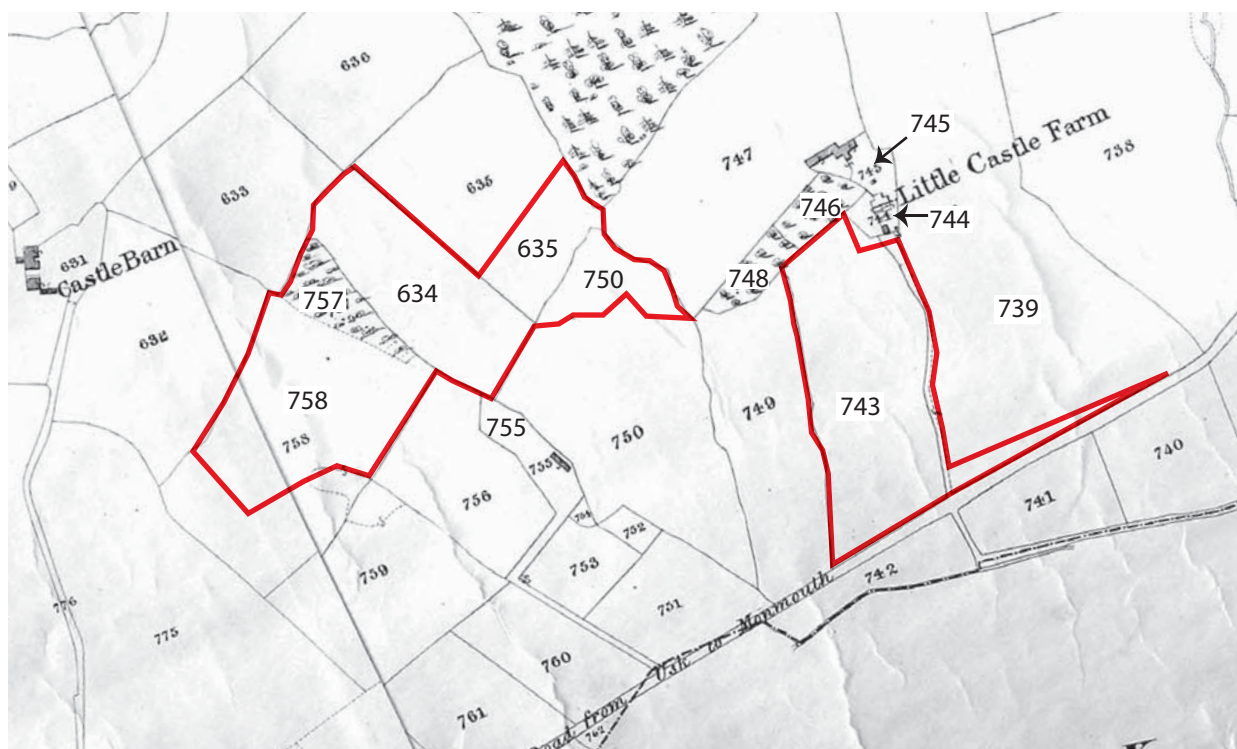
**Figure 2: Extract from an estate
map of 1779**

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Site boundary
(approximate)

PROJECT

**Land north of Monmouth Road,
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TITLE

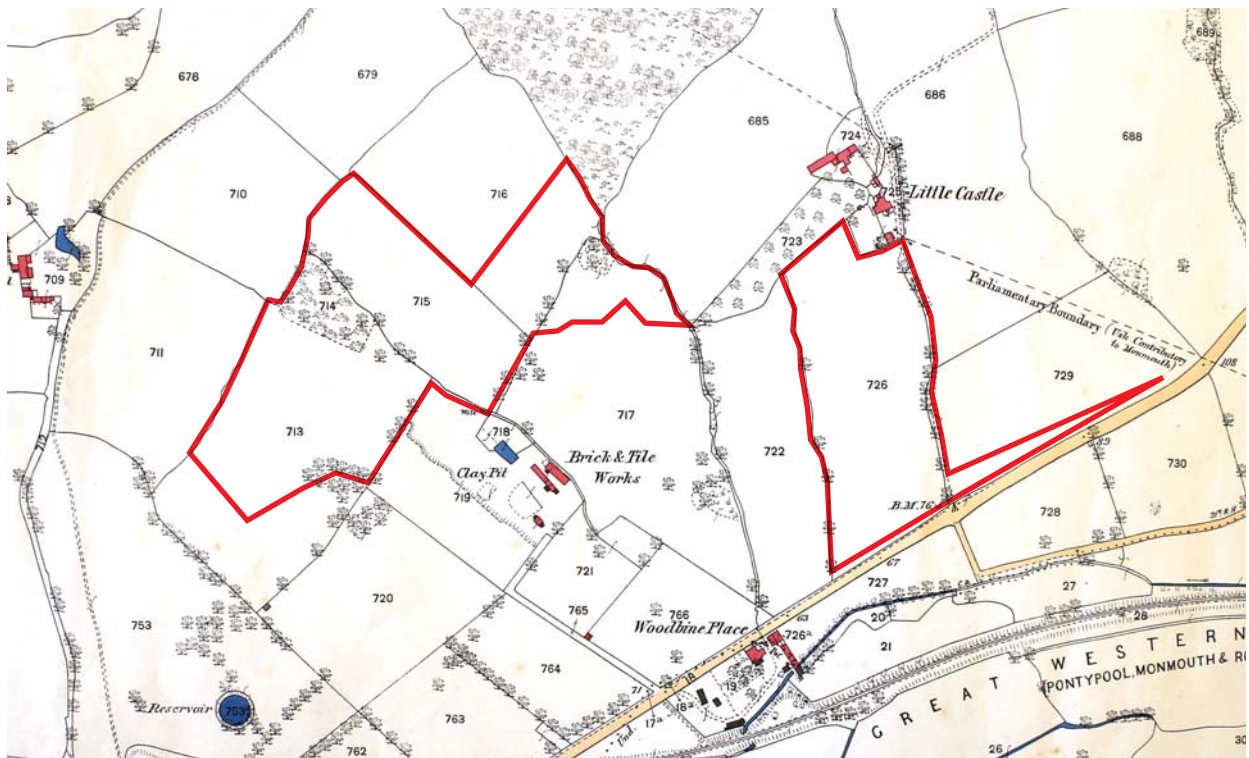
**Figure 3: Extract from the
Gwehelog tithe map of 1846**

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Site boundary
(approximate)

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**Land north of Monmouth Road,
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TITLE

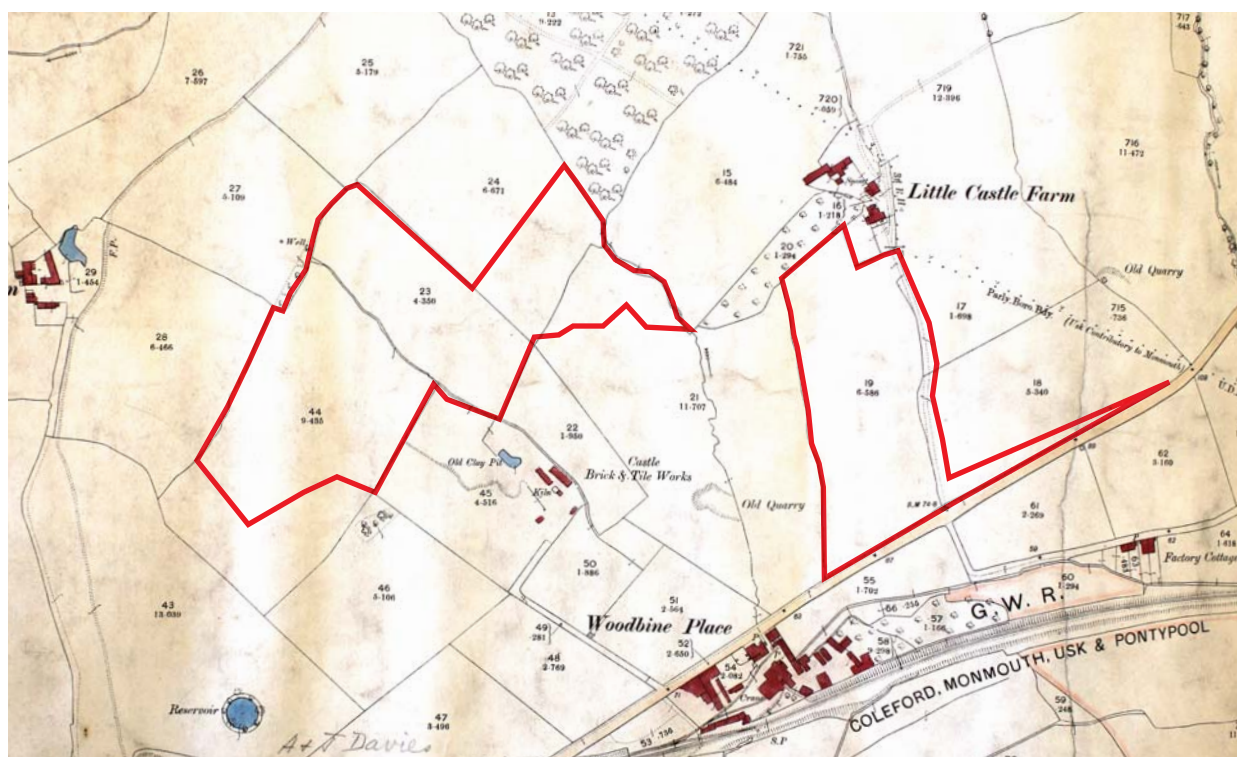
**Figure 4: Extract from an
Ordnance Survey map of 1882**

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Site boundary
(approximate)

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TITLE

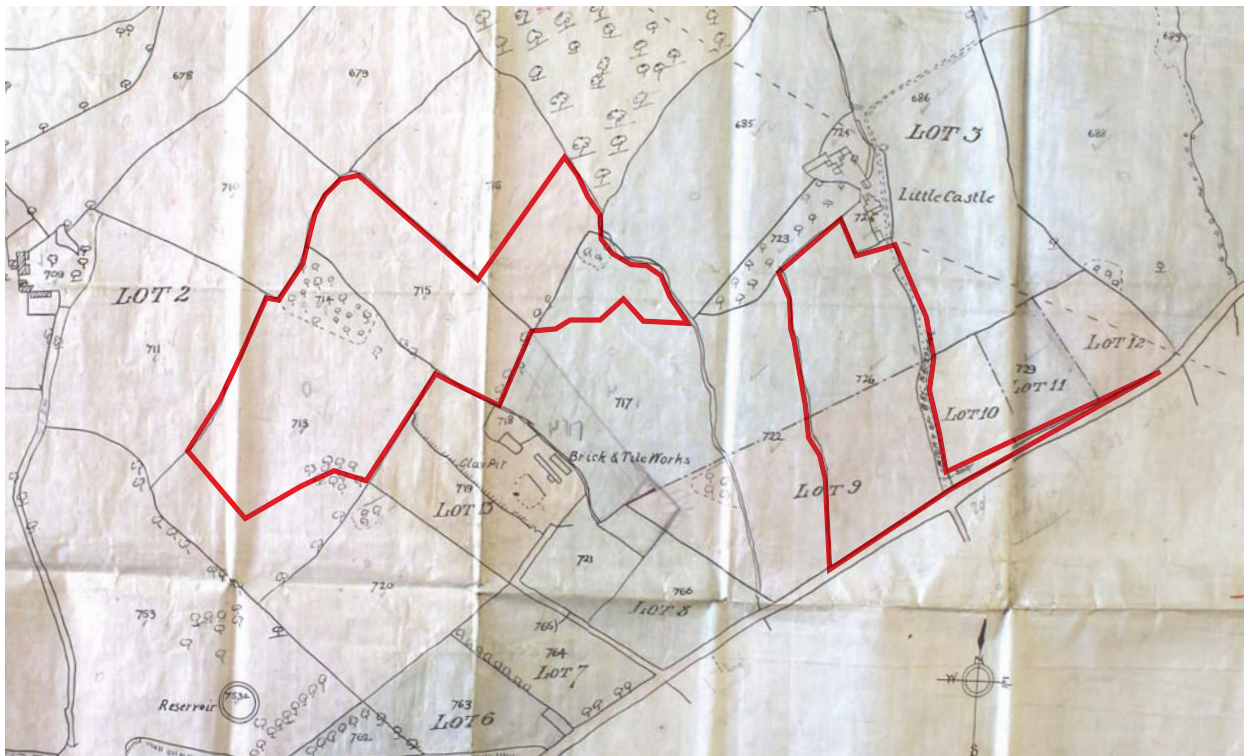
**Figure 5: Extract from an
Ordnance Survey map of 1901**

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Site boundary
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**Figure 6: Extract from an auction
map of 1910**

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Site boundary
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**Figure 7: Extract from an
Ordnance Survey map of 1921**

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Plate 1: Field 1 looking upslope to the west



Plate 2: Field 1 looking downslope to the east



Plate 3: Field 2 looking upslope to the north-west



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Figure 8: Site photographs

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Plate 4: Field 2 looking downslope to the south-east



Plate 5: Field 3 looking north-east



Plate 6: Field 4 looking south



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Figure 9: Site photographs

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Plate 7: Field 5 looking upslope to the north



Plate 8: Field 5 looking downslope to the south



Plate 9: Field 6 looking north-east along the Monmouth Road



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Figure 10: Site phototgaphs

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