

Penoffa Farm

Heritage Setting Assessment

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2006: Penoffa Farm, Powys

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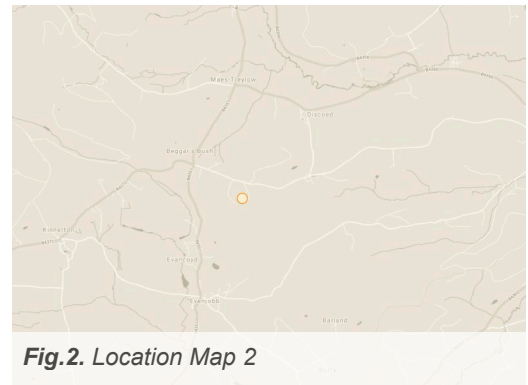
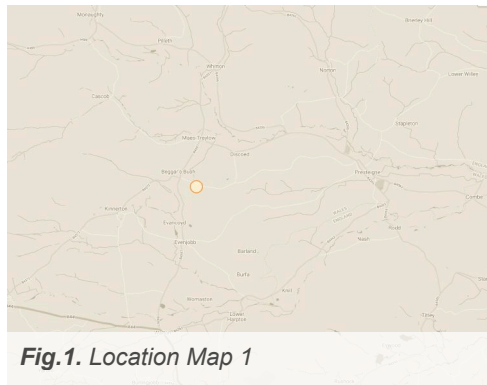
1. Project Context

1.1. Introduction

- a) This statement, commissioned by the owners of Penoffa Farm, Mr Stuart Dopson and Miss Miranda Roberts proposes to convert one of the sites existing barns into an entertainment venue. The venue would be used to accommodate events such as weddings, corporate and community events.
- b) The site is located within 0.5km of two Scheduled Ancient Monuments and as such Cadw must be consulted regarding the impact of the development on the setting of the monuments. In accordance with National legislation this document is provided to aid Cadw's assessment.
- c) The statement follows the format and assessment process as set out in Cadw's (2017) *Managing the Setting of Historic Assets in Wales*.
- d) The statement identifies the heritage assets and sets them in context. It considers the existing site, the proposal and evaluates the impact of the proposed works on the setting.
- e) The assessment is written by James Lingard of Nidus Architects. James is an RIBA chartered Architect with a background in Conservation Architecture. Having completed both the RIBA conservation course and Advanced Conservation course he is a current Registrant on the RIBA Conservation Register.

1.2. The Site

- a) Penoffa Farm is located in a rural landscape in the community of Old Radnor, it is approximately 1.6km north of Evenjobb and 6km west of Presteigne. The site is set within a landscape of hills along the northern edge of the Walton Basin Plain. It is dominated by rolling pasture and woodland, with a very low density of development and the Offa's Dyke path running along its eastern boundary. The main farm range is towards the centre of the wider site.



1.3. Identified Historic Assets

- a) Within 0.5km of the site there are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Please see Appendix A for copies of the SAM listing descriptions. The SAM sites are;
- **RD062** - Castle Ring
 - **RD022** - Offa's Dyke, section extending 1960m from Yew Tree Farm to Quarries NE of Granner Wood
- b) The proposal is split between two locations on the site. The barn is an existing cow shed and a field allocated to parking sits near the sites main entrance. Both areas of development are within 0.5km of either SAM site. The barn sits approximately 150m from the Castle Ring and 130m from Offa's Dyke whilst the parking field sits approximately 200m from Castle Ring and 50m from Offa's Dyke.

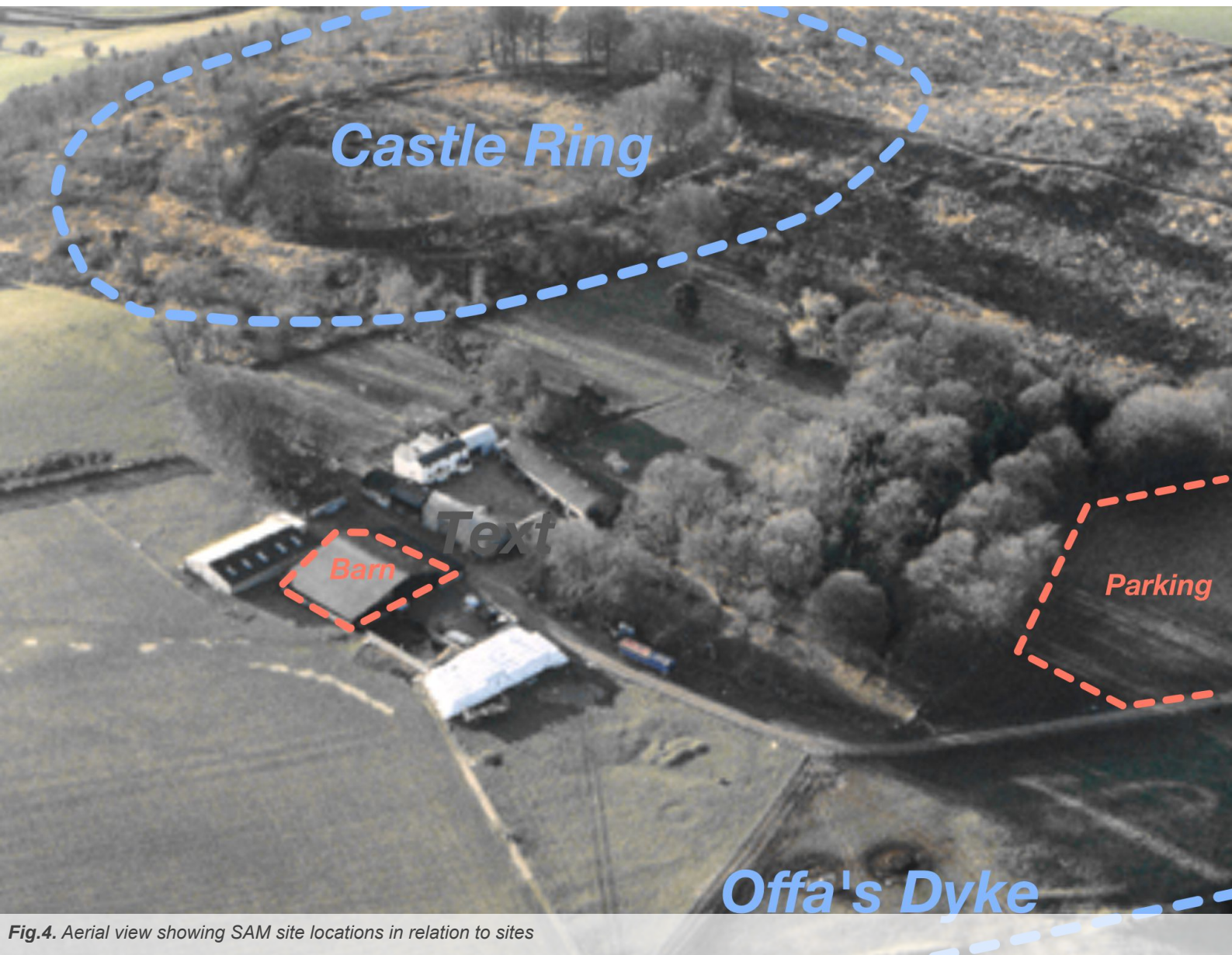


Fig.4. Aerial view showing SAM site locations in relation to sites

1.4. Lines of sight

- a) As highlighted in fig. 5 visibility of the development site from the Castle ring is concealed by the presence of dense, mature trees (mixed native species such as Oak, Chestnut and Sycamore). There is a clear line of sight from the Offa's Dyke trail which extends for approximately 450m.

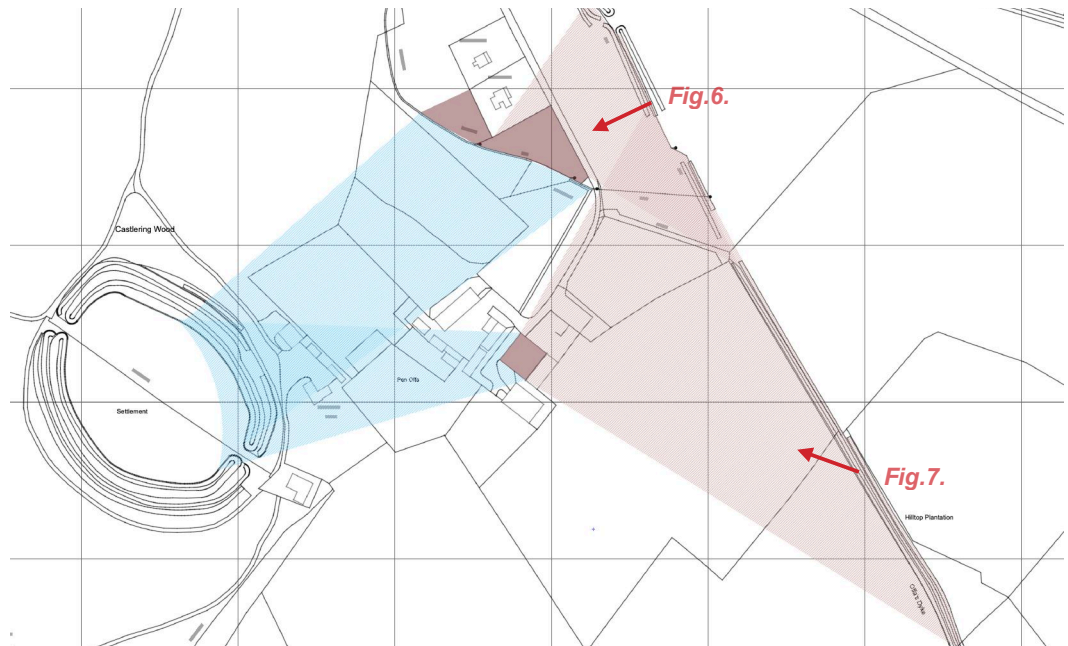


Fig.5. Plan highlighting lines of sight from the SAM sites, red hatched zones represent full visibility, blue hatched represent views that are hidden by mature trees (however if the trees were removed full visibility would be afforded). The sites are highlighted in dark red.



Fig.6. View towards parking area from Offa's Dyke Path



Fig.7. View of barn from Offa's Dyke Path, Castle Ring Trees in background

2. Historic Setting Analysis

2.1. The Walton Basin

- a) Penoffa farm lies on the north eastern edge of the Walton Basin, a natural amphitheatre on the border between England and Wales. The basin is renowned for its outstanding pre-historic archaeology but the remains also include much Roman and Medieval archeology. The area falls within the communities of Old Radnor and New Radnor in the modern Welsh county of Powys, created during local government reorganisation in 1974. It formerly lay in the county of Radnorshire, created from earlier lordships by the Laws in Wales Acts 1535–1542, with New Radnor as its original county town.
- b) The Scheduled Ancient Monument of a medieval or prehistoric hillfort and the Offa's Dyke path are immediately adjacent to the site.
- c) These sites give an indication of the violent nature of the border and the need for defence and safe routes on the part of the Welsh tribes. It would seem that the border landscape was perhaps previously more densely occupied than it is now, in more peaceful times. These remains also indicate the importance of the area in Medieval times, as also shown by the substantial remains of the former walled county town at New Radnor and many other Medieval castles in the local area as well as other recorded Medieval features in the local vicinity, such as Holloways, pottery and other finds.

2.2. Description of RD062: Castle Ring

- a) The Scheduled Ancient Monument reference RD062 and named 'Castle Ring' sits directly west of Penoffa farm. The farms mid point on the western boundary almost adjoins the SAM sites outer boundary before cutting around a small group of buildings known as Castle Ring Wood (dwelling and outbuildings which can be seen top left corner of the Castle ring in Fig. 8).
- b) The site is elevated above the surrounding landscape and comprises the remains of an earthwork enclosure. Unfortunately little research has been undertaken at the site. The age or precise use of the site is unknown, but it is considered likely to be later prehistoric or medieval.
- c) The elevated position would have allowed good views out over the surrounding landscape, although mature tree growth now encircles the mound obscuring any views. The 'ring' itself is more oval in shape and measures approximately 136m north-west to south-east and around 100m south-west to north east. It is

surrounded by mature woodland on all sides, but the central area remains clear barring a few self seeded saplings.



Fig.8. Aerial view of Castle Ring taken from the north

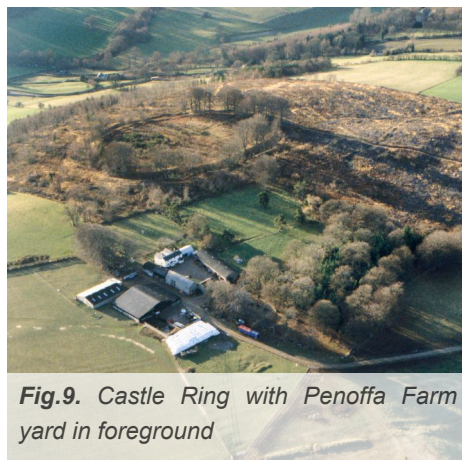


Fig.9. Castle Ring with Penoffa Farm yard in foreground



Fig.10. Castle Ring with Scarp and counterscarp clearly visible

- d) There is a notable flattening to the ring on its north western edge at the point the access track enters the site and where one of the two entrance gap's can be observed. The other entrance gap is on the south east corner, although this is less pronounced, perhaps suggesting this was a secondary entrance, with the main front facing north west.
- e) The defences consist of a bank that stands around 3m above the base of a 3m wide ditch with an external counterscarp (Fig. 10) approximately 1.5m high. The counterscarp only remains on the south west and south east edges.

- f) The Ring is a prominent feature of the landscape, although it is relatively hard to understand from ground level and at a distance due to the heavy tree growth around its perimeter. The proximity of the Ring to Offa's Dyke is also an important part of the wider setting and historical development of the area. The two features are linked to the violent past of the area and from similar periods.

2.3. Description of RD022: Offa's Dyke Path

- a) Offa's Dyke is a 177mile long walking path. It is named after and closely follows a Dyke King Offa ordered to be constructed in the 8th century. It is thought to have been built to divide the Kingdom of Mercia from rival Kingdoms in (what is now) Wales. The popular walk, officially established in 1971, starts at Sedbury in the south and ends at Prestatyn in the north, it broadly follows the Wales/England border.



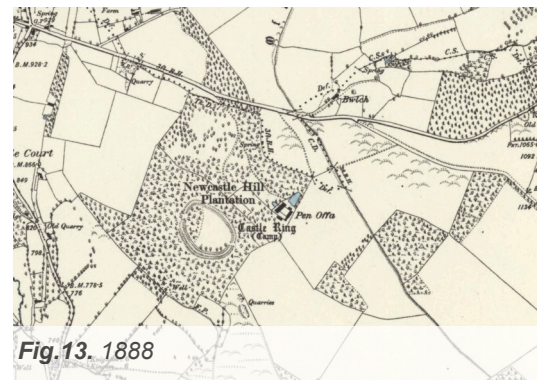
Fig.11. Walker on the trail as it runs parallel to the sites main entrance road.

- b) This section of the path has been designated Scheduled Ancient Monument RD022 and named 'Offa's Dyke: Section extending 1960m from Yew Tree Farm to Quarries North East of Granners Wood'. Working north to south the path runs parallel and 50m offset to the sites eastern boundary for around 240m. The site boundary then steps out and runs directly alongside eastern edge of the path for approximately 140m before stepping again to the western edge. The path then runs for around 150m through an area of established woodland referred to as Hilltop Plantation before passing through the farms boundary and continuing on towards Evenjobb and Burfa.

- c) The northernmost part of this section of the path consists of a substantial bank of around 3m high. Where the path passes Penoffa farm it is for the most part flattened, although as it passes towards the mid section of the site the remains of earthwork banks are clearly visible up to around 1m in height. It is possible that evidence of past earthworks remain buried on the flatter sections of the site which have been subjected to centuries of farming practice.

2.4. Site History and Description of the Existing Development

- a) The current owners, Mr Stuart Dopson and Mrs Miranda Roberts, purchased the site in 2020.
- b) The site is approximately 17.2 Hectares in size and broadly diamond shaped on a north/south to east/west axis. The main farm house is located towards the centre of the site and accessed via the sites main entrance road which enters at its northern most point. To the west of the site is Scheduled Ancient Monument RD062 known as Castle Ring, to the East runs the Offa's Dyke National Path which is designated Scheduled Ancient Monument RD022. From the northern end of the site the path runs along the sites boundary for approximately 370m, the site boundary then steps out to include 150m of the path.
- c) The site or buildings are not shown on the 1840's Tithe map (Fig 12). Gaps in tithe map coverage occur for a number of reasons and Penoffa Farms absence from the map does not mean the site was not yet in use.



- d) The first map recording of the site is in 1888 (Fig 13) which shows Penoffa farmhouse to the south edge of the yard, a stone cattle barn to the east and large barn to the west, today referred to as the round barn due to its Dutch style roof. At the north end of the yard a small outbuilding can be seen.
- e) The buildings and farmyard remain unchanged through to the 1949 map, after which the farmhouse was significantly enlarged, alongside the addition of a bungalow to the south west corner of the yard and the demolition of the small outbuilding on the northern side of the yard.
- f) Today Penoffa Farm is a modest farm range with the main group of barns consisting of a large cow shed (the subject of this application), a smaller cow shed a Georgian threshing barn made of stone, two modern storage buildings and the farmhouse range. Building heights vary between a storey two stories with all buildings of a vernacular pitched roof or dutch barn style construction.

2.5. Description of the Proposed Development

- a) The proposed development would allow use of the sites large cow shed as an entertainment venue. This would accommodate events such as weddings and small community events. No additional buildings are required to enable this, however car parking facilities on the site will be required.
- b) It is proposed that a field near to the sites entrance would be used for car parking. The car park would have space for approximately 60 cars.

3. Setting Impact Assessment

3.1. The Barn

- a) The barn is not visible from the Castle Ring due to the existing trees. In terms of massing and scale the barn will remain unchanged. Its impact upon the setting and the SAM sites in this regard is considered **neutral**.
- b) Visually the barns existing cladding will be removed and replaced with stained timber vertical boarding. The existing cladding is a mixture of timber and patched corrugated metal. It is generally in a poor state of repair. The replacement with vertical cladding stained a dark , muted red colour is considered appropriate to the typology and draws reference from the area agricultural palette of muted reds, greens and blacks. Overall the new cladding is considered to enhance the appearance of the barn and reenforce its rural character. Whilst this does not enhance the historical values of either SAM site and could be considered neutral is has been elevated to **positive** for its contribution to the wider setting and general rural character of the area.



Fig.16. The existing barn is proposed to be re-clad with timber, stained to match with the local agricultural palette.

3.2. Parking Area

- a) As with the barn the parking field will not be visible from the Castle Ring due to the existing trees.
- b) The parking area will be visible for approximately 190 metres of the Offa's Dyke path as it passes along the Eastern edge of the Farm.
- c) Cars are an inevitable part of modern living, and economically vital, however when parked they generally have a detrimental impact upon historical settings and will be incongruous in this largely unspoilt landscape. The impact of the car parking is therefore considered to have a **negative** impact upon the Offa's Dyke path. At present the impact upon the Castle Ring is considered **neutral** due to the trees obscuring the field, however in the (highly) unlikely event that the trees are removed in the future it would also become **negative**.

4. Mitigation Proposals

4.1. The Barn

- a) It is considered that this part of the proposal will impact on the setting somewhere between neutral and positive. Mitigation measures are therefore not considered necessary.

4.2. Parking Area

- a) The impact of the parking area upon Offa's Dyke path, is considered negative. To mitigate this harm the following measures are proposed.
- b) The parking will retain the appearance of a field. This will be achieved by using grass protection mats, with the grass being allowed to grow through the mats. Blocks of spaces will be minimally defined by square oak posts driven directly into the ground. If car parking is no longer required the mats and stakes can be removed to quickly return the field to its existing form.
- c) Use of the car park is transitory and within limited hours. It is anticipated that around 1-2 events per week will take place on average. The amount of time that the parking will be in place can therefore be considered both limited and temporary.
- d) New tree planting is proposed between the edge of the parking field and Offa's Dyke path. This is shown in fig. 17 and will screen the parking area to mitigate the visual impact of parked cars.



Fig.17. Hatched area highlighting mitigation planting between parking and Offa's Dyke Path

5. Conclusions

- a) This assessment has shown that the proposed works have taken into account the impact they will have upon the setting of both monuments.
- b) It is however considered that the parking area has the potential to negatively impact upon the Offa's Dyke path. This potential has been mitigated against with a combination of a design approach that maintains the appearance of a field when not in use and by planting new trees to screen the parking area from view.
- c) It is considered that the assessment demonstrates a good understanding of the sites setting and makes appropriate and considered proposals to mitigate against the identified negative impacts, as such is hoped that the proposal can be deemed acceptable.

6. Appendices

6.1. Appendix A: List Descriptions

Scheduled Monuments- Full Report




Summary Description of a Scheduled Monument

Reference Number	Name	Date of Designation	Status
RD062	Castle Ring		Designated

Location

Unitary Authority	Community	Easting	Northing
Powys	Old Radnor	326645	263609

Broad Class	Site Type	Period
Monument	Enclosure	Prehistoric

Description

Summary Description and Reason for Designation

The following provides a general description of the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The monument comprises the remains of an earthwork enclosure. The date or precise nature of the enclosure is unknown, but it is likely to be later prehistoric or medieval. Castle Ring is set on the edge of a spur overlooking the Walton Basin, but the natural slopes only really afford any protection on the south-west. It is roughly oval in shape, measuring c.136m north-west to south-east by c.106m, though there is an angular corner on the north. The defences consist of a bank up to c.3m high above the bottom of a c.3m-wide ditch, with an external counterscarp bank up to c.1.5m high; the latter is only really clearly marked on the south-west and north-west, though a short section survives on the north-east. There are simple entrance gaps at the north-west and south-east.

The monument is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of later prehistoric or medieval defensive organisation and settlement. The site forms an important element within the wider surrounding landscape. The site is well preserved and retains considerable archaeological potential. There is a strong probability of the presence of evidence relating to chronology, building techniques and functional detail.

Scheduled Monuments- Full Report



Summary Description of a Scheduled Monument

Reference Number	Name	Date of Designation	Status
RD022	Offa's Dyke: Section extending 1960m from Yew Tree Farm to Quarries NE of Granner Wood		Designated

Location

Unitary Authority	Community	Easting	Northing
Powys	Whitton	327055	264017

Broad Class	Site Type	Period
Monument	Linear earthwork	Early Medieval

Description

Summary Description and Reason for Designation

The following provides a general description of the scheduled ancient monument.

The monument includes the earthwork and buried remains of a section of the linear earthwork known as Offa's Dyke. Offa's Dyke consists of a substantial bank and ditch extending, with some gaps, N-S through the border area between modern Wales and England from Treuddyn in Flintshire to Sedbury near Chepstow. The actual dyke only covers 132 km (82 miles) out of the total distance of 240 km (149 miles), the intervening gaps being filled by natural features such as slopes, valleys and rivers. The dyke generally consists of a bank, up to 3.5m high, with an intermittent parallel quarry-ditch on the western side giving a total width of up to 18 metres.

It is traditionally thought to have been built by the Mercian King Offa in the later 8th century, but may incorporate earlier earthworks. Whilst its exact function and original form are still the subject of debate Offa's Dyke is significant as the longest and one of the earliest surviving and long-lived territorial boundary monuments in Europe marking a nominal

frontier between Saxon Mercia and Welsh kingdoms to the west. It represents one of the great engineering achievements of the pre-industrial age and the most dramatic built structure to survive from the early medieval (c410-1100) period in Britain. Offa's Dyke now survives in various states of preservation in the form of earthworks and, where sections have been levelled and infilled, as buried features. Although some sections of the dyke no longer survive visibly, sufficient evidence does exist for its position to be accurately identified for most of its length. Offa's Dyke is scheduled in multiple different sections on both sides of the present border. These display their own local physical characteristics but all share and contribute to the overall significance of the monument and have potential to enhance our knowledge of the monument as a whole.

This scheduled section of the dyke is approximately 2.1 km long and runs from the B4356 450m W of Discoed southwards to the north side of Lower Dunns Plantation at SO 2745 6320. The remains included within the scheduled area vary in scale. The northern stretch of 800m consists of a substantial bank, standing up to c.3m high on its eastern side with the ditch 3m deep on its western side. In places along this northern section, there are traces of a counterscarp bank outside the western lip of the ditch. To the south of this, from SO 2697 6439, the dyke becomes much slighter although still clearly visible as an earthwork bank generally up to c.1m high, overlain for much of the length by later boundaries, with occasional slight traces of the ditch.

The monument is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of early medieval territorial organisation and settlement. The remains of the Dyke retain significant archaeological potential, with a high probability of the presence of archaeological features providing evidence of its construction use and decay, and deposits containing environmental and dating evidence. The upstanding earthworks are likely to seal pre-Dyke ground surfaces and soils which may provide evidence of the landscape and environment in which it was constructed. This section of the monument coincides with the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail.

The scheduled area comprises the remains described and areas around them within which related evidence may be expected to survive.