

LAND ADJACENT TO IVY COURT COTTAGES, IVY COURT, LLYS Y FRAN, PEMBROKESHIRE:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF 2012



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For: M A Rees Construction Ltd



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Gan / By

James Meek

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE
BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf
Neuadd y Sir, Stryd Caerfyrddin, Llandeilo, Sir
Gaerfyrddin SA19 6AF
Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyffredinol 01558 823121
Adran Rheoli Treftadaeth 01558 823131
Ffacs: 01558 823133
Epost: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk
Gwefan: www.archaeolegdyfed.org.uk

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited
The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo,
Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF
Tel: General Enquiries 01558 823121
Heritage Management Section 01558 823131
Fax: 01558 823133
Email: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk
Website: www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk

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SUMMARY

A planning application was submitted to Pembrokeshire County Council, for the erection of three new holiday letting units on land adjacent to Ivy Court Cottages, Ivy Court, Llys-Y-Fran, Pembrokeshire (Planning Ref: 07/1381/PA). Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present within the development area, the archaeological advisors to the Local Planning Authority recommended that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during groundworks associated with the development. Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services were commissioned by M A Rees Construction Ltd to undertake the watching brief.

The watching brief was undertaken on the 21st March 2012 during the initial topsoil strip and ground reduction across the northern part of the proposed new holiday lets development. The watching brief indicated that the majority of this area of the building's footprint comprised a thin layer of turf overlying redeposited material containing later 20th century debris. The southern part of the site area was not topsoil stripped, as the area will be built up to create the formation level for the new building. The archaeological potential of this area is negligible due to previous landscaping work.

A terrace had evidently been excavated into the slope of the land at some point in the later 20th century, possibly when the adjacent reservoir was constructed and Ivy Court Cottages were used as offices. The terrace was backfilled at a later date to create a smoother slope for the garden, using redeposited natural 'rab', soil and rubbish.

Adjacent to Ivy Court Cottages an area of backfill had been laid down possibly in the 1990s when the cottages were converted to holiday lets. The backfill contained rubbish associated with the conversion, such as electric cabling, paint pots and bottles.

The watching brief revealed no evidence for occupation or activity during the medieval or early-medieval period, even though the site lies close to the main road leading to the church and castle site. Although no significant archaeological remains were revealed within this development area due to previous disturbance, there is still potential for significant archaeological deposits to be present in the vicinity of the Ivy Court complex.

INTRODUCTION

Project Commission

In response to a request from Mr Mark Rees, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services provided an archaeological watching brief during initial topsoil stripping and groundworks for the construction of three new holiday units adjacent to Ivy Court Cottages, Ivy Court, Llys Y Fran, Pembrokeshire (Figure 1 & 2; centred on NGR SN 0403 2430).

An archaeological condition had been attached to planning permission for the development (planning application ref: 07/1381/PA) requiring an archaeological watching brief during groundworks.

Following an initial enquiry from the client as to what might be required, an initial site visit was undertaken to discuss the requirements, proposals and ascertain what archaeological work might be required. An outline written scheme of investigation was prepared for the archaeological works prior to this site visit in the event that groundworks could be commenced. In the event the area for groundworks was defined and it was agreed that the topsoil strip could be undertaken.

Scope of the Project

The main scope of the project was laid out within the WSI as '*An archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of three holiday let cottages on land adjacent to Ivy Farm, Llys Y Fran, Clarbston Road, Pembrokeshire (SN 0403 2430). The proposed works will include ground reduction across part of the footprint of the holiday lets and foundation excavation which may expose, damage or destroy any underlying archaeological remains, if present.*'

The WSI also stated that the project objectives were:

- Provision of a written scheme of investigation to outline the methodology by which Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services will undertake the watching brief.
- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To appropriately investigate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Report Outline

This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background before summarising the watching brief results and the conclusions based on those results.

Abbreviations

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record¹ (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National

¹ Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Shire Hall, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, SA19 6AF.

Grid Reference (NGR). Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services – DAT-FS;
Written Scheme of Investigation – WSI

Illustrations

Record photographs are included at back of the report. Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale and are illustrative only.

Timeline

The following timeline is used within this report to give date ranges for the various archaeological periods that may be mentioned within the text (Table 1).

Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic –	c.450,000 – 10,000 BC	Prehistoric
Mesolithic –	c. 10,000 – 4400 BC	
Neolithic –	c.4400 – 2300 BC	
Bronze Age –	c.2300 – 700 BC	
Iron Age –	c.700 BC – AD 43	
Roman (Romano-British) Period –	AD 43 – c. AD 410	Historic
Post-Roman / Early Medieval Period –	c. AD 410 – AD 1066	
Medieval Period –	1066 – 1536	
Post-Medieval Period –	1536 – 1899	
Modern –	20th century onwards	

Table 1: Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales

Land Adjacent To Ivy Court Cottages, Ivy Court, Llys Y Fran, Pembrokeshire:
Archaeological Watching Brief

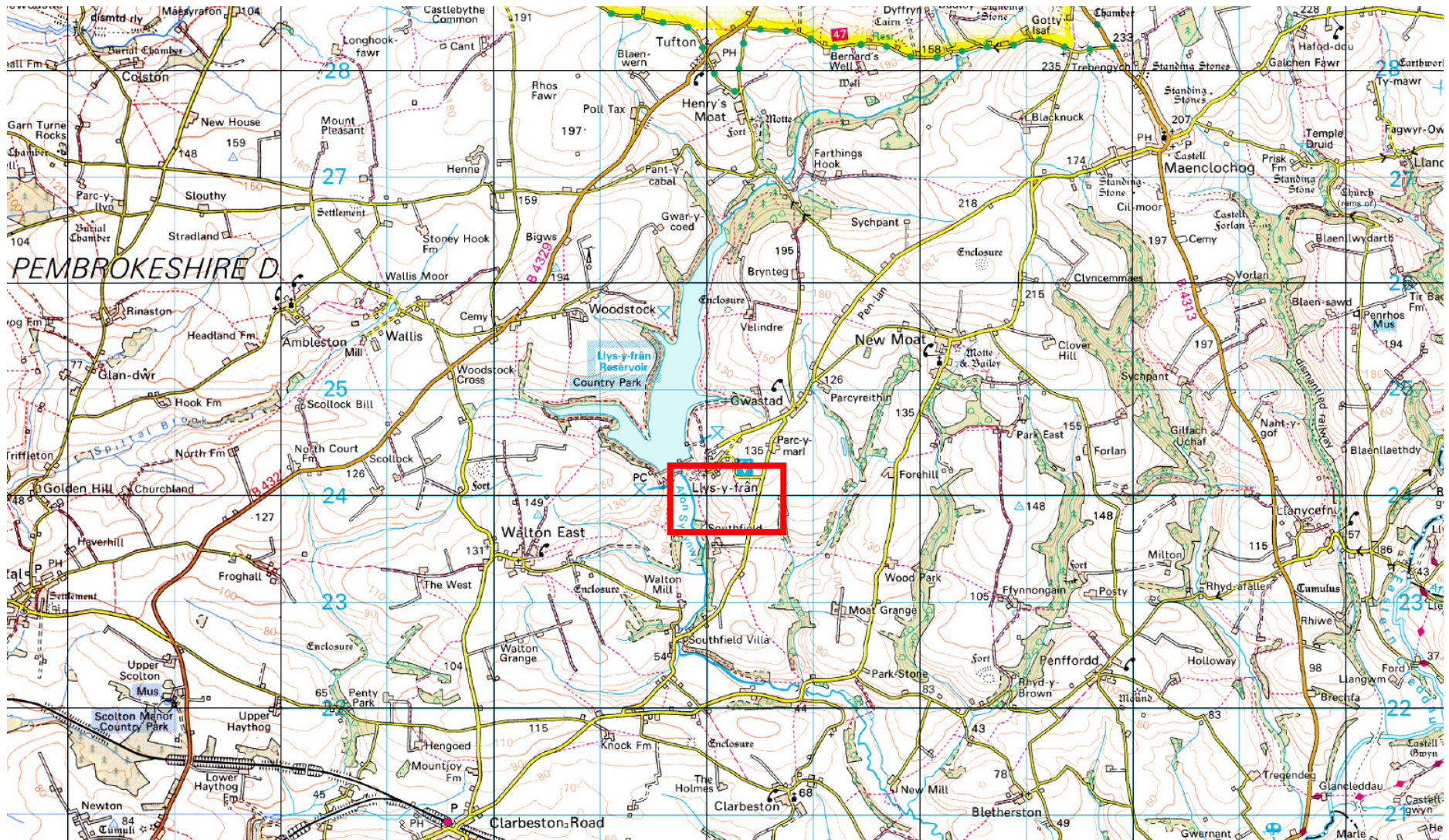


Figure 1: Location plan of Llys-Y-Fran, Pembrokeshire

(Reproduced from the 1995 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd., The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842A

THE SITE

Location and Topography

Ivy Court Cottages lie within the Ivy Court holiday complex which is situated in the village of Llys Y Fran directly southeast of the reservoir. The proposed development area lies on the western side of Ivy Court Cottages, which are situated close to the centre of the village, some 130m northeast of the parish church. The three letting units will be included in a single L shaped structure projecting west from the end of the existing cottages before turning to the south.

The development was located on a south-facing slope with at least two breaks of slope suggesting that the area had been landscaped in the past.

Archaeological and Historical Background

No archaeological sites are known to exist directly within the proposed development area; however a search of the Regional Historic Environment Record database revealed that a total of ten sites of archaeological and historic interest are located within a c.500m radius centred on the development. These are listed in Table 2 below.

The majority of these sites are of medieval date and are associated with early settlement. The site of Y Castell (PRN 1349) a medieval motte, the earthwork mound for a timber castle keep is situated 125m to the southwest of the development. The parish Church of St Meilyr, located 130m southwest is recorded on the HER for its dedication to an early medieval saint (PRN 10330). The existing building is Grade II Listed (PRN 4459). The churchyard is D-shaped, which is thought to be associated with an early medieval (pre 12th century) church (PRN 46829). A further earthwork has been recorded in the vicinity of the church, although its date and function is not known (PRN 7545). It is thought likely that a pre-Norman settlement or church was present at Llys Y Fran, which was subsequently taken over by Anglo-Norman or Flemish invaders in the early 12th century. At this point a castle site was established (earthwork mottes generally being of Norman origin associated with the post-Norman Conquest occupation of Wales). Over time the village, like many others nearby such as New Moat, were laid out and settled. During the medieval period a market fair was granted to the village (PRN 13213). Common land was also established around the village in the medieval period, which remains today to the northeast of the village (PRNs 13913 & 14020).

Other sites recorded on the HER are post-medieval structures including the minor farmstead of Oak Valley (PRN 99955) located 160m to the southwest and a former cottage located 400m to the southwest (PRN 99956).

Ivy Court Cottages are shown on the first Ordnance Survey map of the 1880s (Figure 3), beneath the label for Ivy House. No structures are shown within the development area, although a northern extension to Lower House nearly encroaches into the development area. The map indicates a property boundary aligned roughly north to south and curving to the northwest, lying directly to the west of Ivy Court Cottages, which runs through the eastern end of the development site. Through discussion with the owners it was ascertained that the cottages were originally a barn which was converted in the 1960s as offices during the construction of Llys-y-Fran reservoir. The Ivy Court holiday complex was initially set up in the 1990s, with the present owners taking it over in more recent years.

PRN	Site Name	Description	Grid Reference	Period
1349	Y Castell	Earthwork Motte	SN 0396 2420	Medieval
4459	St Meilyr's Llys-Y-Fran Parish Church	Medieval parish church, small, comprising chancel and nave with bapistry. Grade II Listed Building	SN 0397 2418	Post-medieval, Medieval
7545	Llys-Y-Fran	Earthwork of unknown significance.	SN 040 242	Unknown
10330	St Meilyr Dedication	Early medieval saint dedication	SN 040 242	Unknown
13213	Llys-Y-Fran	Fair	SN 042 244	Medieval
13913	Llysyfran Common And Green	Common Land	SN 044 245	Post-medieval, Medieval
14020	Llysyfran Common	Common Land	SN 043 245	Post-medieval, Medieval
46829	Llys-Y-Fran Parish Church; St Meilyr's	Early medieval D site, ie. possible early medieval origins. Llys-y-fran parish church with a tradition of multiple patronage along 'native', Welsh lines? with early origins?	SN 0397 2419	Medieval, Early Medieval
99955	Oak Valley	Minor farmstead comprising three detached buildings arranged around a yard recorded on the 1889 Ordnance Survey 1st edition	SN 0366 2412	Post-medieval
99956	Cottage	An unnamed building is identified at this location on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map (1889). No longer marked on recent maps. It is not known what survives of the building today.	SN 0388 2424	Post-medieval

Table 2: Archaeological and Historical Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record within 500m of the centre of the proposed development

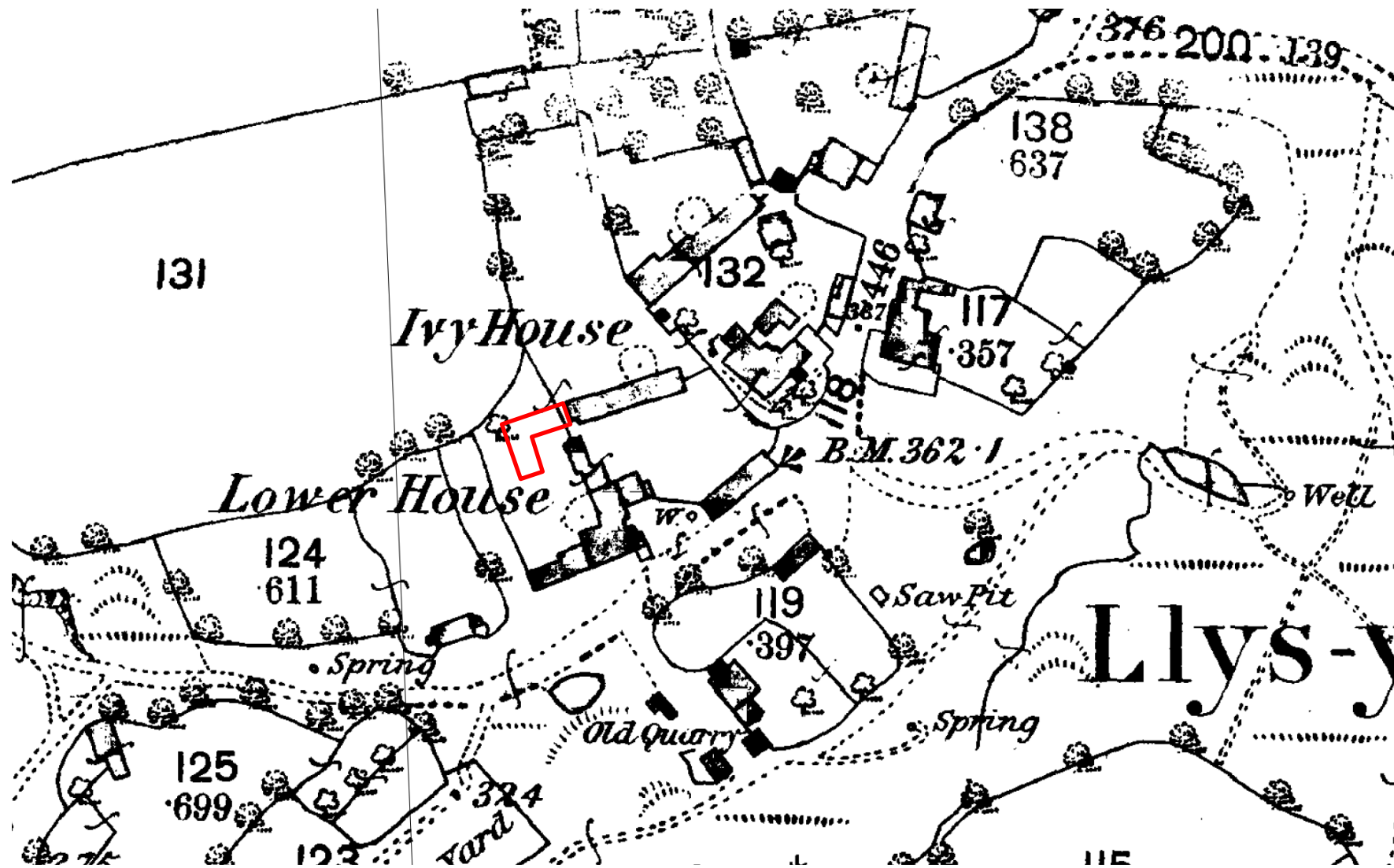


Figure 3: Extract from the Ordnance Survey first edition map of 1880s and approximate location of development area in red

WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

The detailed methodology for the watching brief was laid out within the WSI. The relevant methodology can be summarised as follows.

Fieldwork

A 'watching brief' was undertaken during initial ground works within the proposed development site that had the potential to expose, damage or destroy underlying archaeological remains.

All archaeological deposits revealed during the groundworks were examined and recorded to an appropriate level.

Recording of all archaeological features or deposits conformed to best current professional practice and was carried out in accordance with the Recording Manual² used by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services.

Post-Fieldwork Reporting and Archiving

All data recovered during the fieldwork will be collated into a site archive structured in accordance with the specifications in *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (Brown 2007), and the procedures recommended by the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.

The results of the fieldwork have been assessed in local, regional and wider contexts. The report includes a desk-based research element to ensure that the site is placed within its wider archaeological context.

A report fully representative of the results of the fieldwork has been prepared.

Timetabling of Fieldwork

The watching brief involved monitoring of groundworks during a single day on 21st March 2012. The weather was clear and dry. The topsoil was stripped with a mini digger.

² Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services have adopted the Recording Manual developed by English Heritage Centre for Archaeology.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

The development area was laid to grass, forming part of the gardens of the Ivy Court complex (Photo 1). There was no indication of the property boundary shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map being present within the area. It was considered very likely that the garden had been terraced to some degree in the past, as at least two very regular breaks in slope were visible, one along the northern edge of the development area and a second one further to the north. A lowered pathway was also present running along the northern side of Ivy Court Cottages, with a breeze block retaining wall.



Photo 1: View northeast across the proposed development plot, showing western gable end of Ivy Court Cottages

A mini-digger fitted with a flat bladed bucket was used to strip the topsoil of the area on the western side of the cottages covering the footprint of all but the southern part of the L-shaped footprint of the proposed new structure (Photo 2), and it was in this area that a watching brief was carried out (Figure 2). The topsoil comprised merely a thin layer of turf lying on a compact level of redeposited material across the majority of the development area. A line of concrete flag stones was noted in the turf which had become overgrown and hidden (Photo 2).

Adjacent to the western end of Ivy Court Cottages the ground was less substantially compacted, and numerous bits of detritus including batteries, bottles and old paint pots were present (Photo 3). A large long stone was noted at the base of the wall footings for the cottages, which following further excavation was shown to be the very base of the wall foundations (Photo 3).



Photo 2: Topsoil stripping of the site area showing line of impressions of concrete flag stones in the excavated surface



Photo 3: Area of looser backfilled material adjacent to Ivy Court Cottages and large stone in footings

Due to the slope of the ground, it was necessary to reduce the height of much of the building footprint area. This was also observed by the attending archaeologist to confirm the nature of the redeposited ground. To create a level building platform, the northern edge of the development area was reduced in height by 1m in the northeastern corner lowering to 0.7m at the northwestern end. The southern edge of the site area was not reduced in height, and the remaining southern part of the L shaped footprint for the structure would need to be raised in level.

In the northeastern corner the end of the breeze block retaining wall was visible (Photo 4). Adjacent to this wall it could be seen where a steep cut had been terraced into the natural 'rab' bedrock (Photo 4). The redeposited material lying above the bedrock (and below the thin turf layer) was 0.25m thick in the northeast corner of the exposed south facing section. The material backfilled into the terrace adjacent to the breeze block wall contained substantial quantities of modern debris (including very modern building materials).



Photo 4: Northeastern corner showing breeze block retaining wall and terrace in natural 'rab' bedrock

The remainder of the south facing section exposed along the northern edge of the machined area (Photo 5) had varying depths of redeposited material compressed onto the underlying bedrock (0.7m depth in the central part of the section, lowering to 0.4m depth in the northwestern corner). Parts of scaffolding poles and a piece of railway track were recovered from this layer, as well as modern ceramic, glass and plastic. Railway tracks had been used as supports for the breeze block wall as well, so were presumably brought to the site at the same time.

The area adjacent to the cottage had been infilled with soil, stone and building material debris (plastic, cables, paint pots etc). A compact natural 'rab' layer was exposed adjacent to the building onto which the insubstantial footings of the western gable end wall of Ivy Court Cottages had been built (Photo 6).



Photo 5: Northwestern part of exposed south facing section of development area



Photo 6: View towards western gable end wall of Ivy Court Cottages showing insubstantial footings on 'rab' bedrock

CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief within the footprint of the proposed three new holiday letting units on land adjacent to Ivy Cottage has indicated that the majority of the site area had been landscaped in the recent past.

A steep sided terrace had been excavated into the slope of the land on the western side of the existing building. It is possible this may have been done when the cottages were used as offices during the construction of the reservoir (perhaps using the ground for parking, an access route to the reservoir or as a storage area). At a later date the terrace was infilled, using redeposited 'rab' natural mixed with topsoil and late 20th century detritus. The surface had then been compacted before having a thin layer of turf laid upon it. A line of stepping stones (concrete slabs) had been laid within the turf leading from the cottage towards the northern part of the garden area and a gate in the boundary.

Directly adjacent to Ivy Cottage, the ground had been terraced to provide a walkway around the northern side of the property. A breeze block revetment wall supported by steel railway tracks had been erected around the path. On the western side of the building the path had been infilled and the level raised in more recent years. This infill contained detritus presumably originating from when Ivy Cottages were converted in the 1990s (with cables, bottles, paint pots etc).

Although the topsoil strip did not cover the southern part of the proposed footprint of the new holiday lets, the archaeological potential of this part is negligible due to previous landscaping work. The southern part of the site area will also be built up to create the formation level for the new building and therefore the extent of the watching brief undertaken for this development is considered adequate and no further work is required.

No indication of the area having been used for occupation during the medieval or early-medieval period was discovered within the stripped area of the groundworks. This could have been a result of the terracing that had been undertaken which would have removed any features or finds that may have been present. From the morphology of the village, there seems to have been a main road through the settlement leading from the church and earthwork castle site (presumably dating from the 12th century), on either side of which it is very likely that medieval burgrave plots were located. These were apparently not regularly spaced out, as can be seen in other villages with Norman origins (for example at Templeton), which suggests it was not a planned village layout. This could suggest occupation of a pre-existing settlement which was later occupied by the Anglo-Norman / Flemish invaders, which may also be indicated by the early medieval Saint dedication of the church (St Meilyr).

Although no significant archaeological remains were revealed within this development area, there is still a potential that significant archaeological deposits could be present in the vicinity of the Ivy Court complex.

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**Ebrill 2012
April 2012**

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by

JAMES MEEK

Swydd / Position: HEAD OF FIELD SERVICES

Llofnod / Signature ..



Dyddiad / Date:

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith
This report has been checked and approved by:

ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.
on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position:

Llofnod / Signature.....

Dyddiad / Date

*Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau sydd
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