

LAND ADJACENT TO BRIG-Y-COED, PENRHIW-LLAN, LLANDYSUL, CEREDIGION ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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SUMMARY

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services were commissioned by Trevor Hopkins Associates to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground works to prepare footings for a housing development plot on land adjacent to Brig-y-coed Penrhiw-llan, Llandysul, Ceredigion (SN 37174 42167).

The development site is located approximately 150m to the east of a well preserved motte named Castell Nant-y-Garan at SN36974214. This medieval earthwork castle (PRN 2340) is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (CD052).

The location of the development plot had the potential to contain archaeological deposits relating to the medieval castle, such as a bailey, or a settlement around the castle. Due to this potential an archaeological condition was placed upon the planning permission (Planning ref A100071).

The watching brief was undertaken on the areas of Plots 3, 4 & 5 of the proposed five plot development site. No archaeological finds or features were present within the development area. From the results of the watching brief and lack of any medieval archaeological remains or finds revealed, it seems likely that any settlement associated with the motte and bailey castle is located closer to the monument, and, on the evidence of the HER description, possibly immediately south of it.

Although no significant archaeological remains were revealed within plots 3,4 and 5 of the development site, there is still a potential that significant archaeological deposits could be present in the vicinity. Further building plots are being developed at the same site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Commission

- 1.1.1 An archaeological condition was placed upon planning permission (application number A100071) for a proposed five plot development on land adjacent to Brig-Y-Coed, Penrhiw-Ilan, Ceredigion. The condition was placed upon permission to mitigate against any impacts from the housing development may have on any archaeological remains that might be present at the site.
- 1.1.2 The plot is located approximately 150m to the east of a well preserved motte named Castell Nant-y-Garan at SN36974214. This medieval earthwork castle (PRN 2340) is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (CD052).
- 1.1.3 The location of the development plot had the potential to contain archaeological deposits relating to the medieval castle, such as a bailey, or a settlement around the castle. The assessed potential for archaeological remains of medieval date to be present within the proposed development area was considered to be enough to warrant the archaeological condition.
- 1.1.2 The condition on planning permission stated: *"No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority"*.
- 1.1.3 Only three of the 5 proposed building plots were being developed at the time of the watching brief.
- 1.1.4 Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services were commissioned to undertake the archaeological works by Trevor Hopkins Associates.

1.2 Scope of the Project

The project was designed to record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during episodes of earth moving and ground breaking. A WSI for the development was prepared and approved prior to the groundworks commencing.

1.3 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.

1.4 Illustrations

Record photographs are included at back of the report. Printed map extracts are not reproduced at their original scale.

2 THE SITE

2.1 Site Location

- 2.1.1 Penrhiwllan is situated on the north side of the Nant Iago, on the north side of the Teifi Valley, approximately 4.5km northwest of Llandysul.
- 2.1.2 The site is located on a more or less level field, with a slight slope up to the east in the vicinity of the development plot (SN3717442167).
- 2.1.3 The plot is effectively infill on the southern half of an agricultural pasture field between existing housing.

2.2 Archaeological Background

- 2.2.1 No archaeological work has previously occurred in this location or the immediate surrounding area.
- 2.2.2 The morphology of Penrhiw-Ilan settlement does not suggest it is based on a planned medieval settlement associated with the motte.
- 2.2.3 A documentary study of the history of Penrhiw-Ilan did not form part of this watching brief.
- 2.2.4 The medieval motte of Castell Nant-y-Garan (PRN 2340; Scheduled Ancient Monument CD052) is described on the Historic Environment Record (HER) thus:

A well preserved motte standing 5m above the surrounding moat. The circumference of the motte top is 22m. The moat is 7m wide and 2m deep and water filled in part. There is no sign of a bailey although a kink in the track to the south of the site may reflect a former boundary to the bailey.

3 METHODOLOGY

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

3.1 Fieldwork

- 3.1.1 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.
- 3.1.2 The watching brief was undertaken on the initial groundworks to prepare the footprints and foundation trenches for three buildings (plots 3, 4, and 5) to ascertain the presence or absence of archaeologically significant features within the development.
- 3.1.3 In the event, on the arrival of the attending archaeologist, the development plot had already been stripped and levelled.
- 3.1.4 The machine excavation of foundation trenches was initially observed, until it could be established that further observation was unnecessary.
- 3.1.5 All archaeological deposits revealed during the groundworks were examined and recorded to an appropriate level.
- 3.1.6 Recording of all archaeological features or deposits conformed to best current professional practice and was carried out in accordance with the Recording Manual¹ used by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services.

3.2 Post-Fieldwork Reporting and Archiving

- 3.2.1 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.
- 3.2.2 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.
- 3.2.3 A report fully representative of the results of the fieldwork has been prepared.

3.3 Timetabling of Fieldwork

- 3.3.1 The watching brief involved monitoring of groundworks during a single day on 21st March 2012.

¹ Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services have adopted the Recording Manual developed by English Heritage Centre for Archaeology.

4 RESULTS

- 4.1 On arrival the ground preparation had already commenced. The entire footprint area of the three dwellings had been stripped of topsoil (Photos 1 and 2).
- 4.2 Approximately the eastern two thirds of the plot had been machine excavated into the underlying mid grey shale bedrock ('rab'). In the final third, light brown clay silts overlying the bedrock remained in situ.
- 4.3 Within the area of surviving sub-soil the excavation of the westernmost foundation trench was observed (Photos 3 and 4). No archaeological features were present.
- 4.4 The depth to which the plots had been stripped was sufficient to ascertain that no cut features or buried deposits of archaeological significance were present within the development area, at the interface between topsoil and bedrock. In areas in which the ground level had been reduced to below the upper level of the bedrock, there was no reason to suppose that any archaeological features had been damaged or destroyed. Since all further work would involve the excavation of foundation trenches through shale bedrock, there was no further need for an archaeological watching brief.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The watching brief has ascertained that no archaeological features or deposits are present within Plots 3, 4 & 5 of the proposed development site on land adjacent to Brig-Y-Coed at Penrhiw-Ilan, Ceredigion.
- 5.2 Although the majority of the groundworks had already been undertaken before the watching brief was undertaken, on the available evidence it seems unlikely that there were any archaeological features present within the development area. The stripped level only just exposed the underlying bedrock. If cut archaeological remains were present, they would be seen at this level. No finds were recovered to indicate archaeological activity. The observation of the excavation of the foundation trench confirmed that the stripped ground surface was natural bedrock.
- 5.3 The second (westernmost) half of the development plot has however, not yet been undertaken. A watching brief on groundworks in this area would ascertain if any significant archaeological deposits are present in this location.
- 5.4 The potential for medieval settlement remains had been highlighted due to the proximity of the medieval earthwork motte of Castell Nant-y-Garan (PRN 2340; Scheduled Ancient Monument CD052). Such mottes demonstrate defensive structures generally erected in the earlier part of the medieval period. They would be often be a focus for associated settlement.
- 5.5 At Penrhiw-Ilan it seems likely that any settlement associated with the motte and bailey castle is located closer to the monument, and, on the evidence of the HER description, possibly immediately south of it.
- 5.6 Although no significant archaeological remains were revealed within plots 3, 4 & 5 of the development site, there is still potential that significant archaeological deposits could be present in the vicinity, especially closer to the motte.
- 5.7 A brief search of readily accessible references listed in the HER indicated that the only sources of information about the site were either CADW monitoring notes or cartographic references.

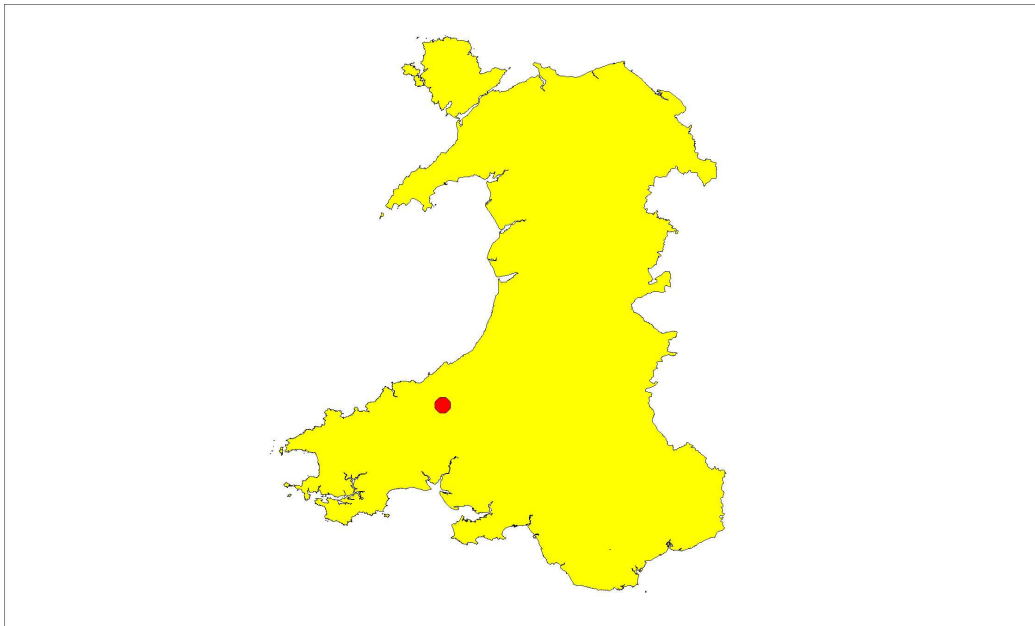


Figure 1: Location of Penrhiw-Ilan

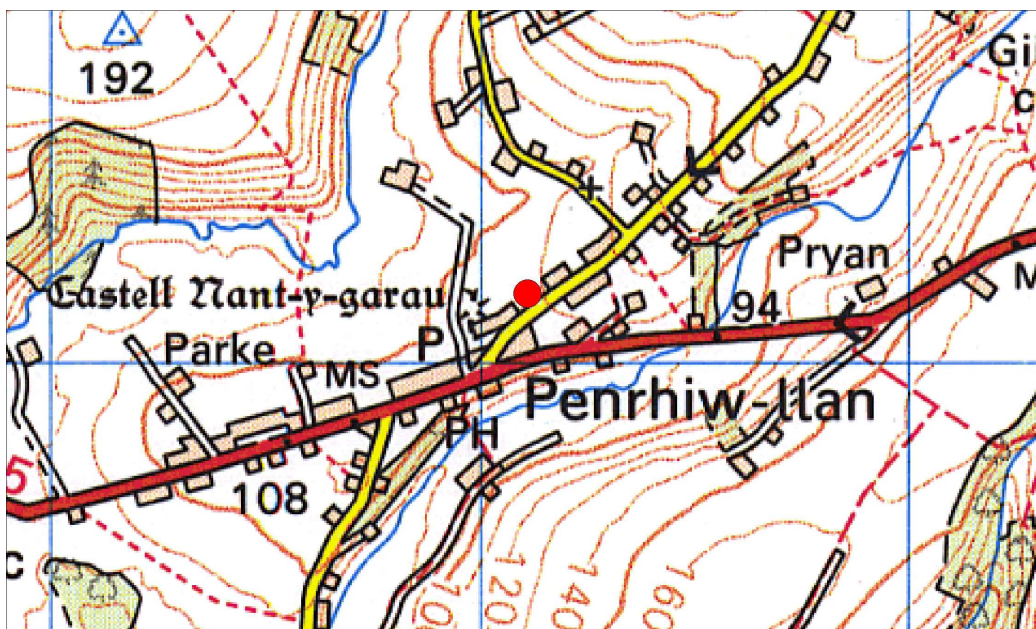


Figure 2: Location of the site within Penrhiw-Ilan

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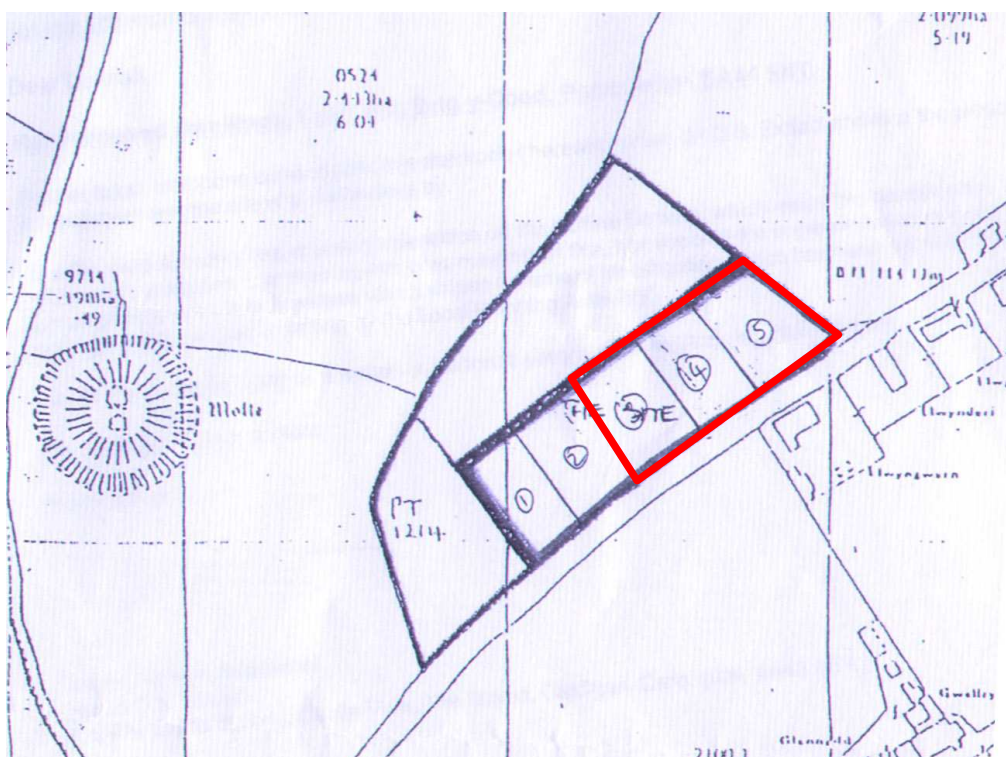


Figure 5: Plan of development area from planning application, with Plots 3, 4 & 5 highlighted



Photo 1: Topsoil stripped area looking east



Photo 2: Building plots 3, 4 and 5 looking west following topsoil strip



Photo 3: Representative portion of foundation trench profile



Photo 4: Foundation trench at west end of plot, looking southeast

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This report has been prepared by: **Duncan Schlee**

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Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

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This report has been checked and approved by: **James Meek**

ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf. /
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Swydd / Position: **Head of Field Services**

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

*Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau
sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn*

*As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any
comments you may have on the content or presentation of this report*