

**FALCONRY CENTRE,
NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDEN OF WALES,
CARMARTHENSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
(SN 51895 81940)**



Prepared by DAT Archaeological Services
For: National Botanic Garden of Wales



DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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**FALCONRY CENTRE,
NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDEN OF WALES,
CARMARTHENSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Gan / By

Hubert Wilson

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Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf
Corner House, 6 Stryd Caerfyrddin,
Llandeilo, Sir Gaerfyrddin SA19 6AE
Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyffredinol 01558 823121
Adran Rheoli Treftadaeth 01558 823131
Ebost: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk
Gwefan: www.archaeolegdyfed.org.uk

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited
Corner House, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo,
Carmarthenshire SA19 6AE
Tel: General Enquiries 01558 823121
Heritage Management Section 01558 823131
Email: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk
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**FALCONRY CENTRE,
NATION BOTANIC GARDEN OF WALES, CARMARTHENSHIRE:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

An archaeological trial evaluation was undertaken on the proposed site of a Falconry Centre west of the Science Block at the National Botanic Garden of Wales, Llanarthne, Carmarthenshire. Although no archaeological planning condition was placed on the development proposals, an archaeological evaluation was requested from NBGW following the discovery of a possible stone wall during test pitting in advance of the construction.

An aerial photograph taken in 1948 by the RAF shows a series of linear marks running along the hillside in the vicinity of the test pit. There was the potential therefore that these linear marks could be the remains of walled terraces associated with the former Middleton Estate. Further linear marks corresponding with those on the aerial photograph are visible on Lidar imagery of the site. These linear marks are interpreted as 'ridge and furrow' (PRN 30794) in the Regional Historic Environment Record database.

Louise Austin of NBGW commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Services to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the proposed site of the Falconry Centre in order to confirm if walls, possibly relating to former garden terrace were present below ground.

The watching brief was undertaken on the 9th and 10th of March 2017. Two evaluation trenches were positioned downslope at right angles to the linear marks shown on the aerial photograph and Lidar imagery. Both trenches were excavated down to the underlying natural geology making it possible to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains.

The bases of both trenches revealed bands of Red and green sandstone with intervening natural silts crossing the site from east to west. In Trench 2 a band of naturally deposited sandstone, blockish in appearance was revealed. This is very likely to account for the possible stone walling revealed in the initial test pit.

The origin of the linear marks shown on the 1948 RAF aerial photograph and the Lidar imagery is uncertain. It is considered that they are too straight and lie on a different orientation to the underlying bedrock to be interpreted as geological in origin. It is possible that they are the remnants of modern ploughing or ridge and furrow whose remains were too ephemeral to be revealed in the trench sections. This would confirm the HER entry for possible ridge and furrow earthworks within the field. Alternatively the markings could be as a result of soil slumping down the hillside, causing slight natural terraces.

No significant archaeological remains or finds were revealed during the evaluation of the area of the proposed Falconry Centre at the National Botanic Garden of Wales.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Proposals and Commission

- 1.1.1 DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned by Louise Austin of National Botanic Gardens of Wales to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land southwest of the Science Block at the National Botanic Garden of Wales (NGR SN 51895 18194) to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains prior to the construction of a Falconry Centre.
- 1.1.2 The proposed Falconry Centre has been granted planning permission (W/34994) without any archaeological conditions placed upon the proposed works. During initial test pitting at the site in advance of the works a possible stone wall was revealed, and further investigation of aerial photographic images suggested that a series of garden terraces may have laid within this area.
- 1.1.3 National Botanic Garden of Wales determined that further investigation of the site would be beneficial in terms of learning more about the history and layout of this part of the garden and an archaeological evaluation was requested. The evaluation comprised two trenches running downslope at 90 to the potential garden terraces, with the aim of confirming the presence or absence of the terraces and learning more about their date and character.

1.2 Scope of the Project

- 1.2.1 A written scheme of investigation (WSI) for a watching brief was prepared by DAT Archaeological Services prior to the commencement of the works. The project objectives were:
- Provision of a written scheme of investigation to outline the methodology for the intrusive trial trench evaluation which DAT Archaeological Services will undertake (this document);
 - To establish the state of preservation, character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits identified;
 - To use the information to design a future mitigation at the site which will enable any identified remains to be appropriately investigated and recorded where they will be affected by the proposed development;
 - Production of a report and an archive of the results.
- 1.2.2 The overall work was summarised as: *"The implementation of a scheme of archaeological evaluation using trial trenches within the area of the proposed Falconry Centre, National Botanic Garden of Wales, Llanarthe, Carmarthenshire. A report shall be prepared on the results of the evaluation, and an archive created of all finds, records, photographs and plans created. Further mitigation may possibly need to be implemented where significant archaeological remains are identified, the scope of which will be determined following the results of the evaluation."*

1.3 Report Outline

- 1.3.1 This report describes the location of the development works along with its archaeological background, and provides a summary and discussion of the archaeological watching brief and its results.

1.4 Abbreviations

1.4.1 Sites recorded on the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Sites recorded on the National Monument Record (NMR) held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) are identified by their National Primary Record Number (NPRN). Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). Altitude is expressed to Ordnance Datum (OD). References to cartographic and documentary evidence and published sources will be given in brackets throughout the text, with full details listed in the sources section at the rear of the report.

1.5 Illustrations

1.5.1 Photographic images are to be found within the report. Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale.

1.6 Timeline

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

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 1086	
medieval Period –	1086 – 1536	
post-medieval Period ¹ –	1536 – 1750	
Industrial Period –	1750 – 1899	
modern –	20 th century onwards	

Table 1: Archaeological and historical timeline for Wales

¹ The post-medieval and industrial periods are combined as the post-medieval period on the Regional Historic Environment Record as held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust

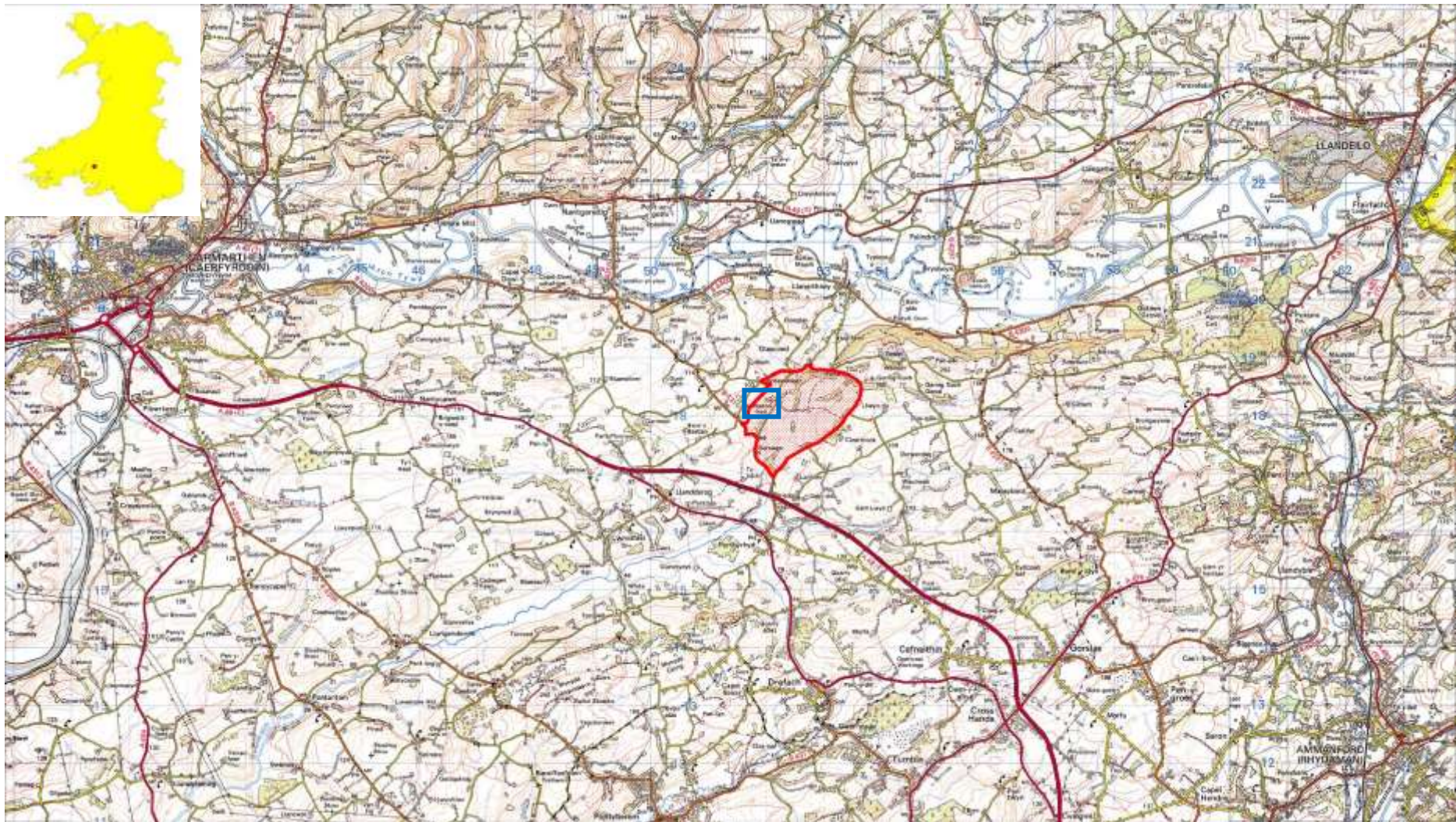


Figure 1: Site location plan showing the area of the National Botanic Garden of Wales (red boundary) and approximate location of site (blue)

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Figure 2: Site location and block plan for the proposed Falconry Centre
(as submitted for the Planning Application, plan available via Carmarthenshire County Council Planning Website)

2. THE SITE

2.1 Site Location and Topography

- 2.1.1 The development site is located within the former Middleton Hall Estate and is located 340m west of the former mansion site (PRN 3759). Middleton Hall itself is situated 10.5km east of Carmarthen and 2.5km south of the village of Llanarthne (Figure 1).
- 2.1.2 The evaluation trenches were situated on a southeast facing, grassy slope approximately 40m southwest of the Science Block (Figure 2). A small sandstone quarry (PRN 30976) is situated c.40m to the northwest of the site. The bottom of the slope is bounded by a small path beyond which is a walled garden (PRN 30968).
- 2.1.3 The superficial geology is Devensian Till – Diamicton and the bedrock is Raglan Mudstone Formation – Argillaceous Rocks and Sandstone. (Source; British Geological Survey).

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

Brief site history (Schlee 2015)

- 2.2.1 The Middleton Hall Estate dates from at least the 17th century, but almost certainly has earlier origins. At some time between 1584 and 1609 Christopher Middleton appears to have obtained possession of a large estate (probably Middleton Hall); possibly on behalf of his brothers in the East India Company. By the 1620s Henry Middleton had Middleton Hall and by the 1640s the Middletons were well integrated into the gentry families of the region.
- 2.2.2 Various features that date from the 17th century (or even earlier) survive within the estate landscape. The Middletons eventually sold the estate to the Lawyer John Gawler in 1776. The estate was probably in a state of decay by this time.
- 2.2.3 William Paxton purchased the estate between 1787 and 1789 and set about creating the new hall and its designed landscape in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.
- 2.2.4 Paxton's waterpark was created by taking advantage of two streams that run through the estate, the Clearbrook, which runs from north to south, and the Afon Gwynon which runs from east to west. These streams meet near the northern boundary of the parkland before leaving the estate and flowing northwards into the Tywi valley. The Clearbrook was used to create a chain of lakes. In the Afon Gwynon Valley, the drained remains of an upper fish pond survive along with several other features including bridges, a waterfall, cascade and a chalybeate spring. The whole designed landscape was recorded in a series of watercolour paintings made by Thomas Hornor in 1815. Only some of these paintings survive.
- 2.2.5 Following Paxton's death in 1824, the estate was sold to the Adams (later Abadams) family in 1824. In 1919 it was sold on to Lt Col. William N. Jones. The house burnt down in 1931. During this period the waterpark began to decline relatively quickly and became an increasingly wooded landscape.
- 2.2.6 After Paxton's mansion was destroyed by fire in 1931, the estate passed into the control of Carmarthenshire County Council. The Llyn Mawr embankment dam was partially breached at this time, probably to avoid complying with the 1930s Reservoirs Act. By 1948 the lakes held little water.

- 2.2.7 Dyfed County Council succeeded Carmarthenshire County Council, who let out the land and buildings as small holdings and in 1985 instituted a Manpower Services Commission scheme which undertook some unsympathetic restoration work on several of the features in the waterpark. The parkland remained divided into small holdings until the late 1990s when the National Botanic Garden of Wales was created.
- 2.2.8 The upper lakes (Llyn Uchaf and Llyn Canol) were restored when the Botanic Gardens were created. The two lowest lakes to the north, Llyn Mawr and Llyn Felin are now drained and their lake beds are overgrown with self-seeded trees and laurel.
- 2.2.9 The apportionment for the 1847 tithe map shows the area of development to be free of structures and field boundaries (Figure 3). The accompanying apportionment describes the parcel of land (975) thus: *Graig including land got in Exchange* (Figure 4).



Figure 3: Detail of 1847 tithe map showing approximate location of evaluation trenches (in red).

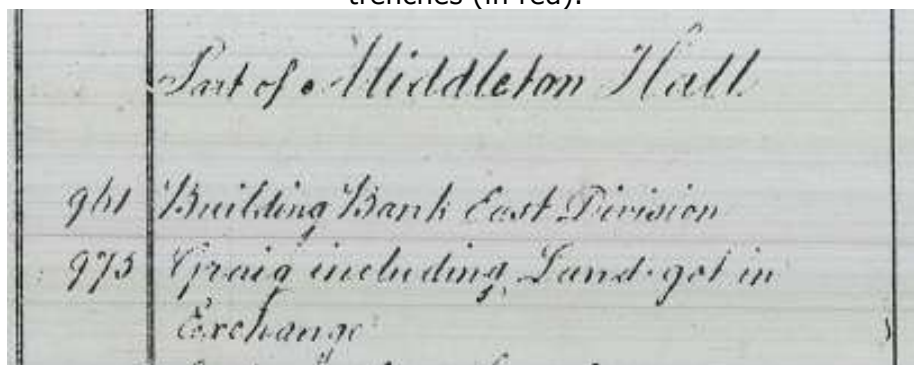


Figure 4: Detail of 1847 apportionment showing parcel of land 975, recorded as being owned by Henry Jones

- 2.2.10 The first edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map shows the layout of the area in 1888 (Figure 5). The site area is again shown as lying within a

field with no topographic features shown within the area of the evaluation. The same layout is shown on later Ordnance Survey maps.



Figure 5: Extract from the Ordnance Survey first edition map of 1880s showing approximate positions of evaluation trenches (in red).

- 2.2.11 The Dyfed Historic Environment Record lists six known sites of archaeological significance within close proximity to the proposed Falconry Centre (Table 2; Figure 6). Most of these relate directly to structures associated with the former Middleton Hall including two icehouses (PRNs 17533 and 61179), the walled garden (PRN 30968) and a barn (PRN 32474). A sandstone quarry is also recorded in the area, apparently disused by 1815 (PRN 30976).
- 2.2.12 The site of ridge and furrow earthworks (PRN 30794) have been previously noted within the proposed Falconry development area. These are said to have been very pronounced on aerial photographs and presumably relate to linear marks that can be seen on an aerial photograph of 1948 taken by the RAF (Figure 7). Similar linear marks are visible on a Lidar image of the site area (Figure 8).
- 2.2.13 A site visit to the proposed development area by the archaeological advisor to the planning authority (Dyfed Archaeological Trust - Development Management) during consultation on the development proposals did not identify any clear evidence for ridge and furrow earthworks surviving at the site and thus no further archaeological works were considered necessary as part of the planning application. It is possible that any such earthworks were very slight or that slumping on the hillside produced an effect similar to ridge and furrow on the aerial photographs.

PRN	Site Name	Period	Type	Description	NGR
17533	Middleton Hall	Post-medieval	Icehouse	A brick-lined domed chamber and vaulted passage excavated in 1987 and restored by the MSC. NL 1995	SN 519 181
30794	Middleton Hall	Medieval	Ridge and furrow	Earthworks of uncertain origin but probably representing ridge and furrow. Very pronounced on aerial photographs	SN 5188 1822
30968	Middleton Hall	Post-Medieval,	Walled garden	Established by 1815 (Horner). Designed by S P Cockerell. Inner brick wall almost intact up to 2m in parts.	SN 5199 1815
30976	Middleton Hall	Post-medieval	Quarry	Sandstone quarry apparently disused by 1815.	SN 5182 1818
32474	Middleton Hall	Post-Medieval	Barn	By 1849 NE wall constructed in orchard. A long unrendered sandstone building forms part of the wall.. Characteristic of a barn or cartshed, the building has a slate hip-roofed loft over a ground floor with a number of doorways to the northeast.	SN 520 182
61179	Middleton Hall	Post-medieval	Icehouse	Grade II listed icehouse	SN 51797 18081

Table 2: Known archaeological and historic sites recorded within 150m of evaluation trenches (Figure 6)



Figure 6: Archaeological and Historic Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environmental Record within 150m of the evaluation trenches

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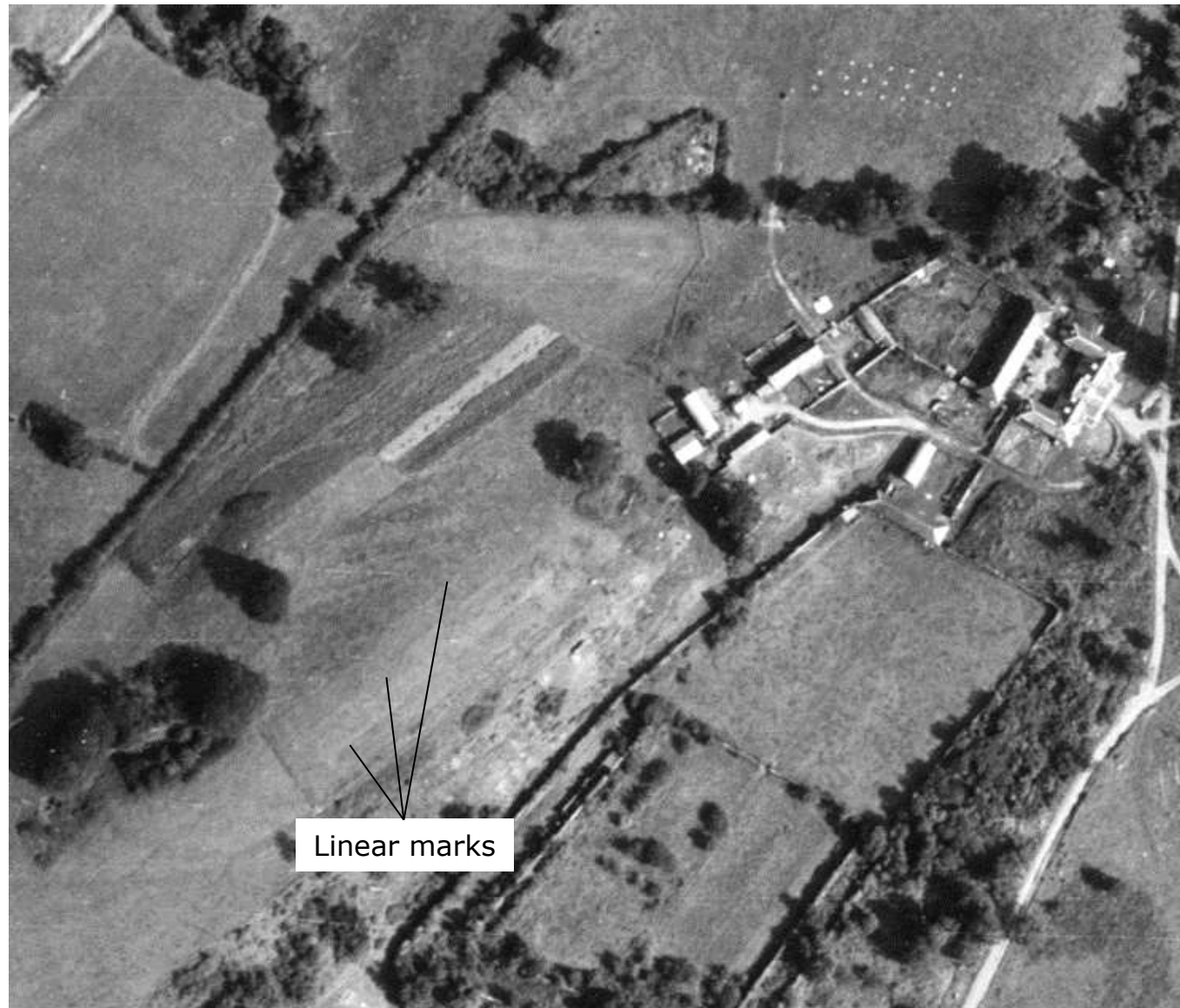


Figure 7: Aerial photograph taken by the RAF in 1948 showing linear marks within development site (North to bottom).

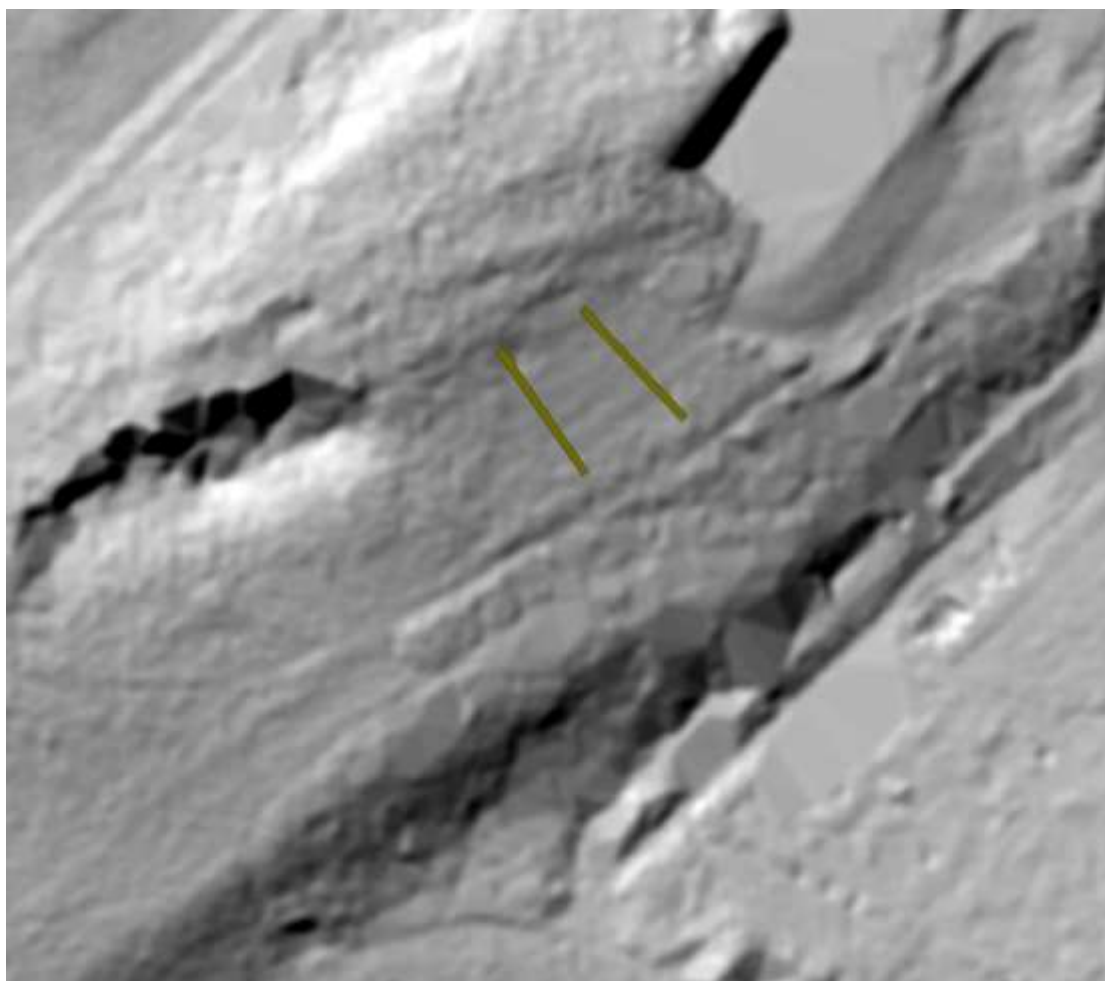


Figure 8: Lidar image of development site showing evaluation trenches in relation to linear marks

Natural Resources Wales and database right. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v2.0.

3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork

- 3.1.1 This evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists' (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation (2014).
- 3.1.2 A written scheme of investigation was prepared by DAT Archaeological Services detailing the proposed archaeological works prior to the evaluation commencing.
- 3.1.3 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 DAT Archaeological Services. A written, drawn and photographic record was maintained throughout this work. All contexts encountered during the evaluation were recorded and assigned a unique context number. Elevation levels were taken relative to an on-site datum.
- 3.1.4 Excavation work was undertaken by a 360°, 8.5 ton tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. All archaeological deposits revealed during the groundworks were examined and recorded to an appropriate level.

3.2 Timetabling of Fieldwork

- 3.2.1 The evaluation took place on the 9th and 10th of March 2017.

3.3 Post-Fieldwork Reporting and Archiving

- 3.3.1 All data recovered during the fieldwork will be collated into a site archive structured in accordance with specifications in *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (Brown 2011), and the procedures recommended by the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.
- 3.3.2 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.

² DAT Archaeological Services have adopted the Recording Manual developed by English Heritage Centre for Archaeology. A copy will be available on-site for inspection if required.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Two parallel evaluation trenches 30m long by 1.6m were excavated by a mechanical digger using a flat-bladed bucket. They were positioned so as to reveal in section and plan the possible linear features shown on aerial photographs and Lidar imagery (Figure 7 and 8). These were considered likely to represent walled terraces running parallel with the contours of the SE facing hillside. The trenches were approximately 18m apart; their long axes directed down a moderate slope (Figure 9).

Trench 1

- 4.2 Trench 1 measured 30m in length and 1.6m wide (Photos 1 and 2; Figure 9).
- 4.3 The topsoil (reddish-brown, silty-clay) at the NW end of the trench was 0.12m deep and lay directly above the bedrock. At the SE end of the trench the depth of topsoil had increased to an average of 0.30m
- 4.4 Approximately 11m from the NW end of the trench a depression in the bedrock, approximately 6.5m wide and 0.75m deep, was visible. Initially this was thought to be possibly an archaeological feature but further investigation revealed that no cut was present and that the fills of the hollow were natural – light reddish brown silt below which lay a grey sandy-silt (Photo 3; Figure 10).
- 4.5 Approximately 4.5m from the SE end of the trench a curvilinear band of orange brown silt was revealed intruding into the fragmented red sandstone. A small sondage was excavated into this deposit which revealed feature to be of natural origin – possibly periglacial (Photo 2).
- 4.6 The overall appearance in plan of trench 1 was of bands of bedrock and intervening bands of natural silts crossing the trench in approximately an east-west direction.

Trench 2

- 4.7 Trench 2 measured 30m in length and 1.6m wide, was positioned to target the possible linear features and also to investigate the nature of a small hollow situated at the upper levels of the slope (Photos 4 and 5; Figure 9).
- 4.8 The topsoil (reddish-brown, silty-clay) at the NW end of the trench was 0.10m deep and lay directly onto the bedrock. At the SE end of the trench the depth of topsoil had increased to 0.30m.
- 4.9 The edge of the hollow targeted by the trench was visible as a sharp break of slope in the bedrock c.5m from the NW end of the trench and was approximately 0.2m deep. It is probably of natural origin but a small quarry scoop cannot be ruled out.
- 4.10 Approximately 7m from the NE end of the trench a band of red sandstone, which had fractured into discrete blocks of various sizes crossed the trench (Photo 6).
- 4.11 The overall appearance in plan of trench 2 was of bands of bedrock and intervening bands of natural silts crossing the trench in approximately an east-west direction.

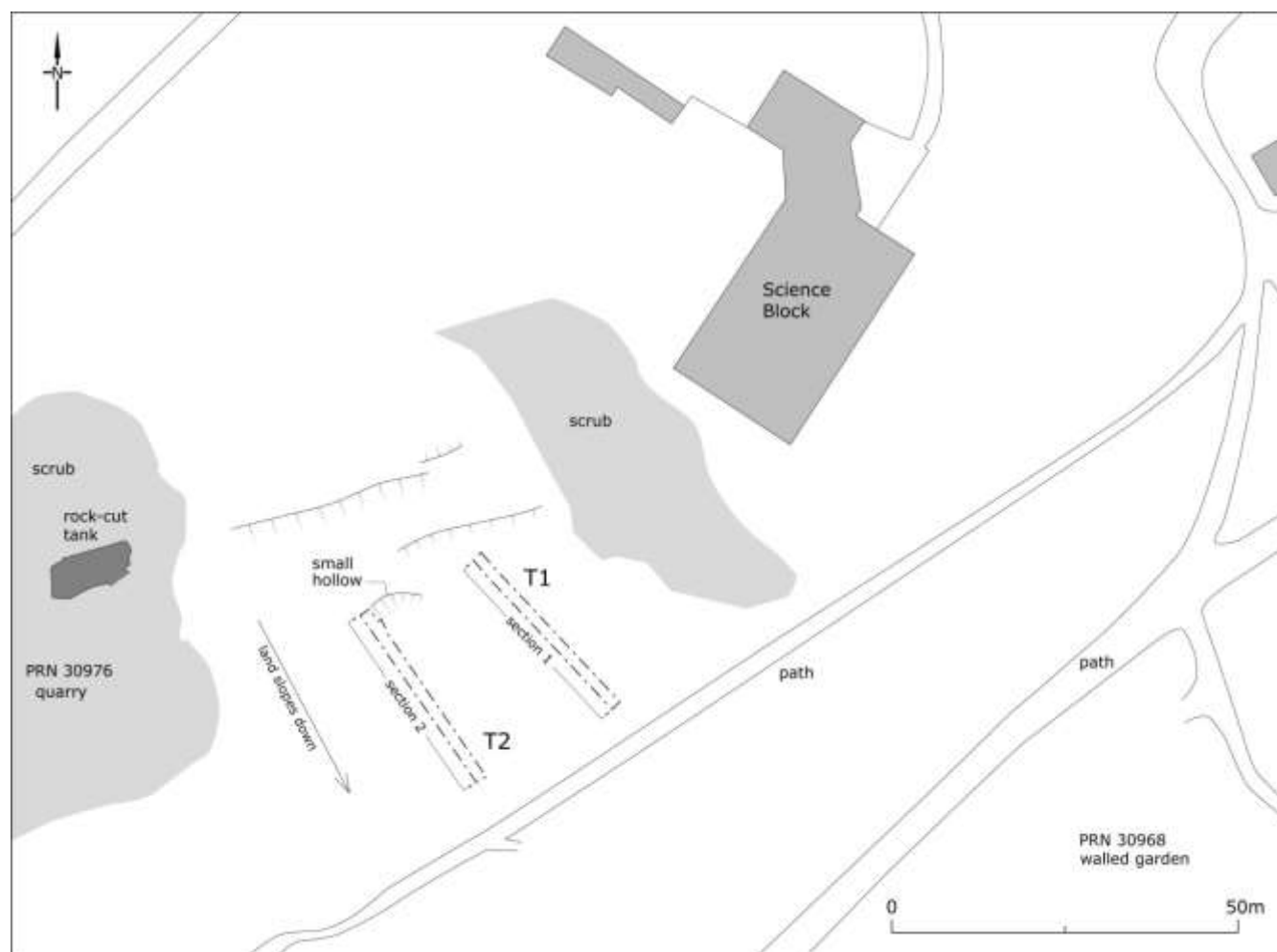


Figure 9: Plan of evaluation trenches in relation to NBGW Science Block and quarry (PRN 30976).

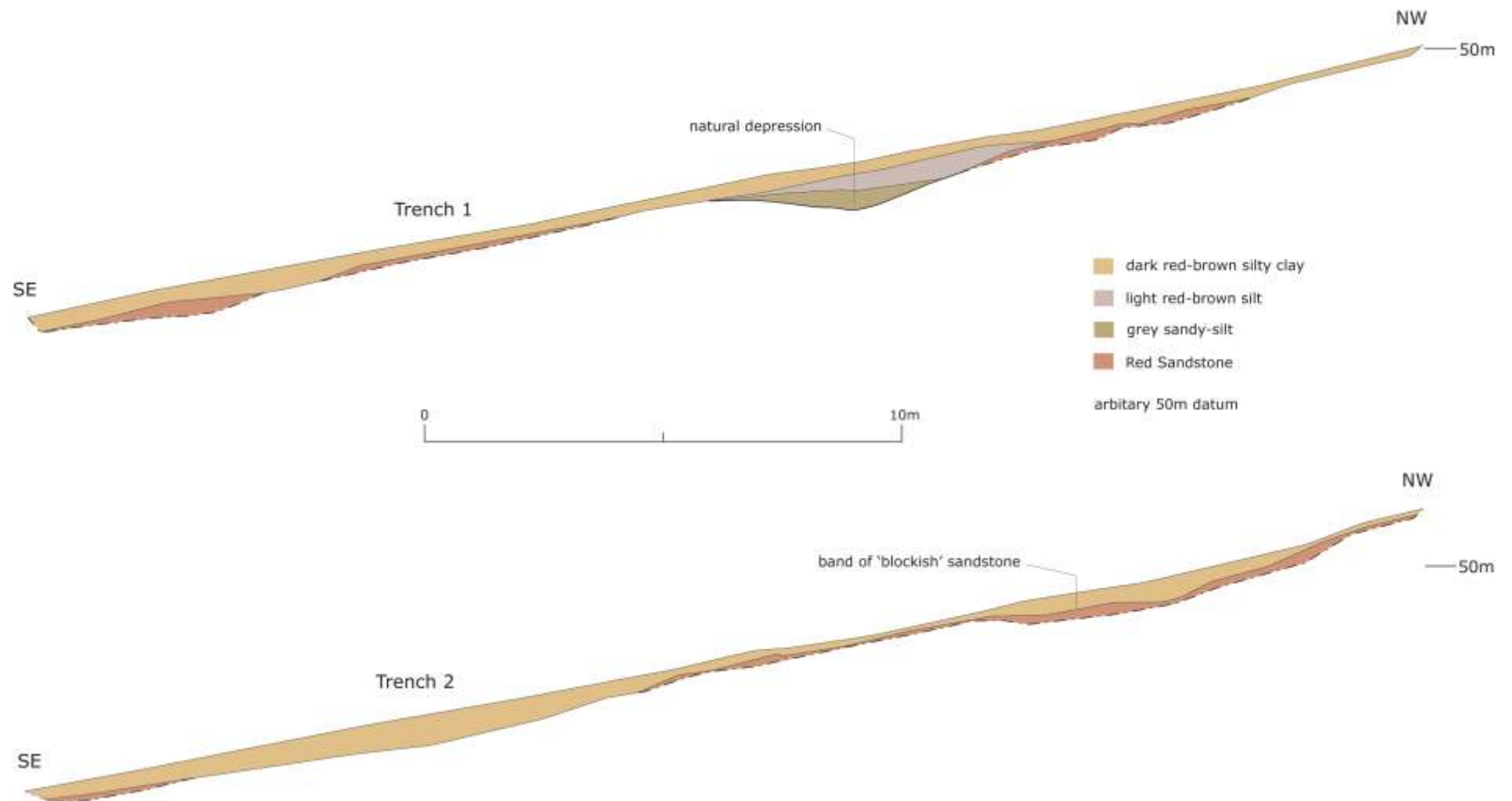


Figure 10: NE facing sections of evaluation trenches

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 An archaeological trial evaluation was undertaken on the proposed site of a Falconry Centre west of the Science Block at the National Botanic Garden of Wales, Llanarthne, Carmarthenshire. Although no archaeological planning condition was placed on the development proposals, an archaeological evaluation was requested from NBGW following the discovery of a possible stone wall during test pitting in advance of the construction.
- 5.2 Following further analysis of aerial photographs and Lidar imagery, evidence for possible garden terraces were identified. An RAF aerial photograph taken in 1948 clearly showed parallel linear marks within the same location (Figure 7) as the possible wall revealed in the test pit. Lidar imagery of the area also showed parallel linear marks within the development site (Figure 8). NBGW then requested that an archaeological evaluation be undertaken of the site area consisting of two 30m long parallel trenches to assess and characterize the possible stone structures and linear marks.
- 5.3 The two trenches were excavated down to the underlying geology using a 360 degree excavator fitted with a flat-bladed bucket.
- 5.4 The bases of both trenches revealed bands of Red and green sandstone with intervening natural silts crossing the site from east to west.
- 5.5 In Trench 2 a band of naturally deposited sandstone, blockish in appearance was revealed. This is very likely to account for the possible stone walling revealed in the initial test pit (Photo 6, Figure 10).
- 5.6 Apart from the possible small quarry scoop at the NW end of Trench 2, no significant archaeological remains were identified within the two trenches.
- 5.7 The origin of the linear marks shown on the 1948 RAF aerial photograph and the Lidar imagery is uncertain. It is considered that they are too straight and lie on a different orientation to the underlying bedrock to be interpreted as geological in origin. It is possible that they are the remnants of modern ploughing or ridge and furrow whose remains were too ephemeral to be revealed in the trench sections. This would confirm the HER entry for possible ridge and furrow earthworks within the field. Alternatively the markings could be as a result of soil slumping down the hillside, causing slight natural terraces.

6. SOURCES

British Geological Survey: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>
(Accessed 19th Jan 2016)

Cadw 2014. Listed Buildings: www.historicwales.gov.uk (Accessed 20th Jan 2016)

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record, housed with Dyfed Archaeological Trust in The Corner House, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, SA19 6AE

Schlee, D, 2015, National Botanic Garden of Wales Regency Restoration Project: Phase 1 Archaeological Investigations and Structure Recording 2015 Interim report, DAT Report No. 2015/61

7. PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1: Trench 1 looking SE (downslope) showing Red sandstone beds diagonally crossing trench.



Photo 2: Trench 1 looking NW (upslope) showing bands of red and green sandstone diagonally crossing the trench. Note band of band brown silt in the foreground – possible periglacial feature. 1m scale.



Photo 3: Trench1 looking SW at natural silts filling a depression in the bedrock.
1m scale.



Photo 4: Trench 2 looking NW (upslope) showing bands of red sandstone and intervening silts diagonally crossing the trench.



Photo 5: Looking SE along trench 2. Note 'blockish' band of Red sandstone crossing the trench in the middleground .



Photo 6: Looking SE towards band of 'blockish' sandstone. Some stones have been removed from the left side of the band. 1m scale.

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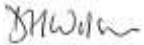
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HUBERT WILSON

Swydd / Position: **Archaeologist**

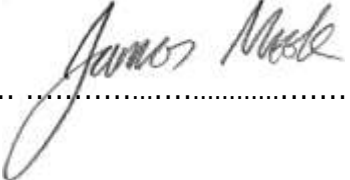
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Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith
This report has been checked and approved by

JAMES MEEK

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

Swydd / Position: **Head of DAT Archaeological Services**

Llofnod / Signature  Date: 20/04/2017

*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*



