

MANORBIER COMMUNITY HUB, PEMBROKESHIRE TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION 2020



Prepared by:
DAT Archaeological Services
For: Archaeology Collective



DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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PROJECT RECORD NO. 2020-31

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**MANORBIER COMMUNITY HUB,
PEMBROKESHIRE
TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION
2020**

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MANORBIER COMMUNITY HUB, PEMBROKESHIRE

TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

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**MANORBIER COMMUNITY HUB, PEMBROKESHIRE
TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned to undertake a trial trench evaluation ahead of proposed development of Manorbier Community Hub, Pembrokeshire (roughly centred on SS 07426 97902). Two trenches were excavated, but no finds, features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered.

CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL

Comisiynwyd Gwasanaethau Archeolegol YAD i ymgymryd arfarniad ffos prawf cyn datblygu arfaethedig Hwb Cymunedol Manorbier, Sir Benfro (wedi'i ganoli'n fras ar SS 07426 97902). Cloddiwyd dwy ffos, ond ni ddaethpwyd o hyd i ddarganfyddiadau, nodweddion na dyddodion o ddiddordeb archeolegol.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Commission

- 1.1.1 DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned by Archaeology Collective (acting on behalf of the overall client, the South Ridgeway Community Association) to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation in association with the proposed development of a new Manorbier Community Hub building, associated access, parking and recreation area on the edge of Manorbier, Pembrokeshire, forming the study area, or site, for this report.
- 1.1.2 The proposed development area (the study area) is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) SS 07426 97902 (Figure 1). It lies to the southwest of the junction of the B4585 and the road leading to Skrinkle Haven. Hounsell Avenue lies to the east with an agricultural field to the south and a playing field to the west. The development area measures approximately 1.4ha in area.
- 1.1.3 The archaeological trial trench evaluation is intended to clarify the results of a geophysical survey undertaken on the site (Shobbrook 2020), suggesting there was some potential for archaeological features of prehistoric and post-medieval date to survive within the development area.
- 1.1.4 The aim of the evaluation was to provide information on the character and significance of any below ground archaeological remains that may be present within the development area as indicated by the geophysical survey. The evaluation was requested by the archaeological advisors to the planning authority, Dyfed Archaeological Trust – Development Management (DAT-DM) in order to assess the potential impact of the development upon potential archaeological remains.
- 1.1.5 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the trial trench evaluation was produced by DAT Archaeological Services (Appendix I), and was approved by DAT-DM within their role as advisors to the planning authority prior to the commencement of works.
- 1.1.6 All works undertaken were in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists (CifA) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (S&G AFE) (CifA 2014). Dyfed Archaeological Trust is a Registered Organization with CifA.

1.2 Scope of Project

- 1.2.1 A WSI for trial trenching was prepared by DAT Archaeological Services prior to the commencement of works (Appendix I). This outlined the methodologies by which the trial trenching should be undertaken.
- 1.2.2 The purpose of field evaluation as laid down in the CifA S&G AFE is:
to gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including its presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality), in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following:

- The formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource
- The formulation of a strategy to mitigate a threat to the archaeological resource
- The formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research

1.2.3 The overall scheme of work was summarized as follows:

The implementation of a scheme of archaeological evaluation within the development area of the new Manorbier Community Hub building, Pembrokeshire. The archaeological field evaluation will determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the nature of the archaeological resource within this specified area using appropriate methods and practices. These will satisfy the stated aims on the project, and comply with the code of conduct and other relevant regulations of CIfA. A report shall be prepared on the results of the evaluation and an archive created of all finds, records, photographs and plans created by this mitigation strategy. Further mitigation is possible where significant remains are identified; the scope of which would be determined following this stage of work.

1.3 Report Outline

This report describes the location of the study area, reviews the historical and archaeological background, and provides a summary and discussion of the trial trenching and their results.

1.4 Abbreviations

- 1.4.1 All sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record¹ (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Dyfed Archaeological Trust Development Management – DAT-DM; Scheduled Monument – SM; Written Scheme of Investigation – WSI; National Monument Record – NMR, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales – RCAHMW.

1.5 Illustrations

- 1.5.1 Printed map extracts are not necessarily produced to their original scale.

¹ Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Corner House, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo SA19 6AE.

1.6 Timeline

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

Table 1: Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales.

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 ² –	1536 – 1750	
Industrial Period –	1750 – 1899	
Modern –	20 th century onwards	

² 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

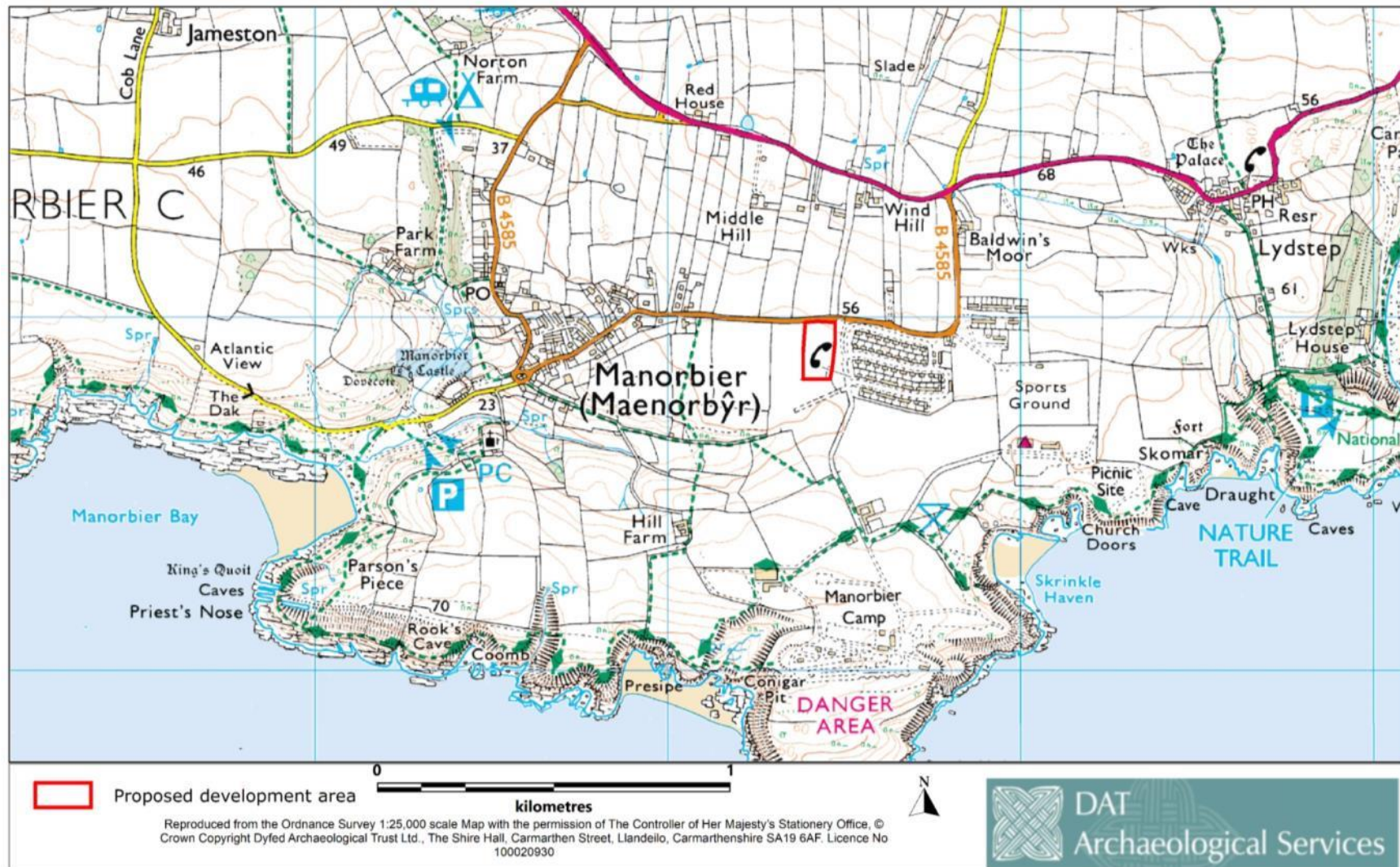


Figure 1: Location map of study area (outlined in red).

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Figure 2: Geophysical survey results presented as a greyscale plot (Shobbrook 2020).

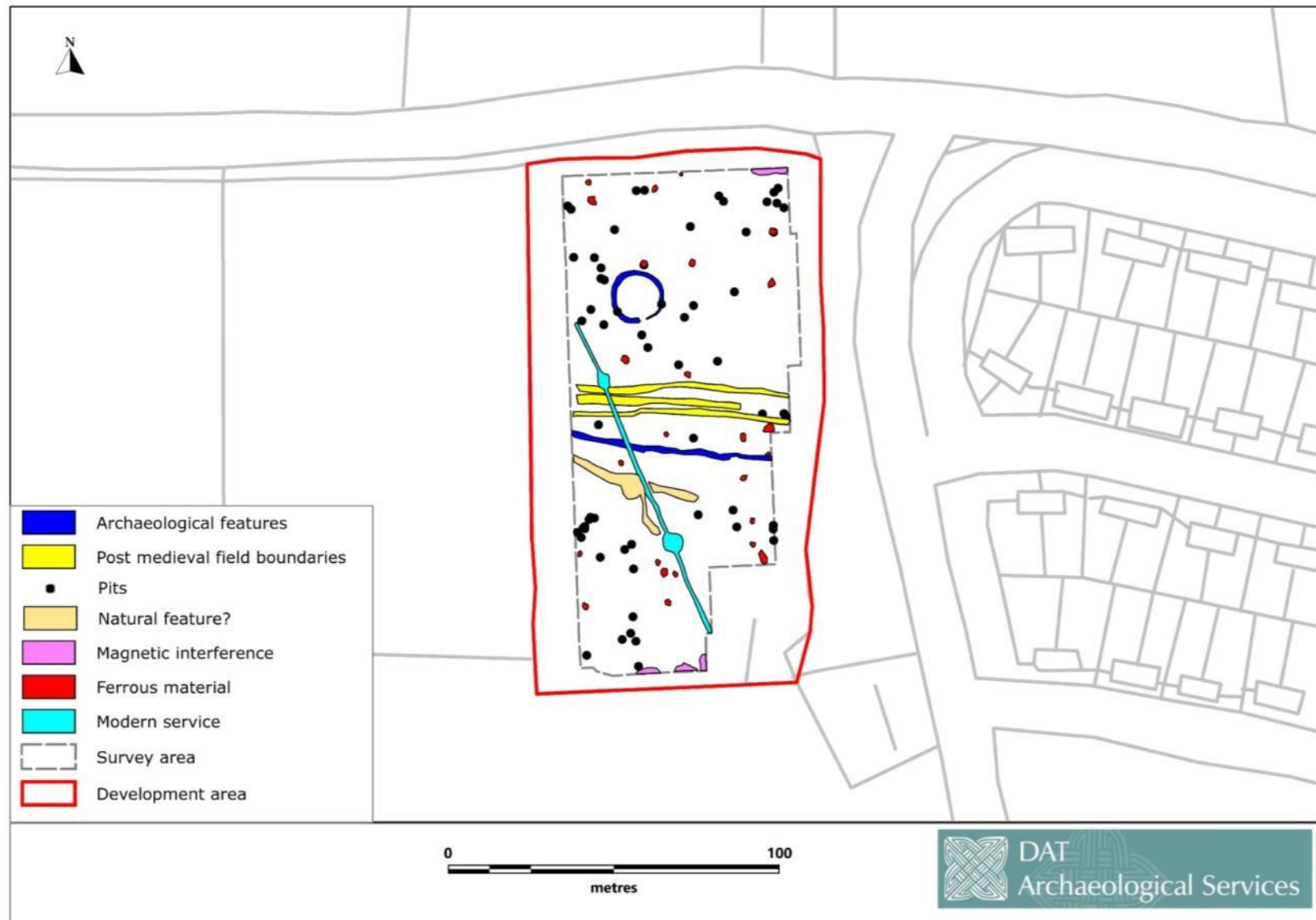


Figure 3: Interpretation of geophysical survey results (Shobbrook 2020).



Figure 4: Proposed development plan overlaid on the interpretation of the geophysical survey results. The location of the evaluation trenches are also shown (Archaeology Collective).

2. THE SITE

2.1 Site Location

- 2.1.1 The site lies within a field presently laid to grass on the southern side of the B4585 some 500m to the east of Manorbier village, and adjacent to a residential development built in the 1960s (Figure 1).
- 2.1.2 The site occupies ground that slopes gently down to the south, which continues to fall for a further 100m or so, before gently rising to a low coastal ridge. The shoreline of the South Pembrokeshire coast lies approximately 1km to the south. To the north the land continues to rise gradually. The surrounding landscape is a largely pastoral one, interspersed with villages such as Manorbier and Jameston to the west, dispersed farms and dwellings, and holiday parks.
- 2.1.3 The underlying geology of the site is recorded as limestone, largely from the Pembroke Limestone Group with some more mixed Black Rock Subgroup and Gully Oolite Formation to the south.



Photo 1: View southwest across the site, looking out towards the coast.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Historical Background

- 3.1.1 An examination of records held within the regional Historic Environment Record indicates that the earliest recorded evidence of human activity found within proximity to the site comprises a Mesolithic flint working site (PRN 4208) found at Hill Farm, approximately 1km to the southwest.
- 3.1.2 Within a similar area to the southwest lies the well-preserved Kings Quoit (PRN 4213), a Neolithic burial chamber, with a second, less well-preserved burial chamber lying nearby. This suggests the nearby coastline was a significant area during this period, but there is little indication as to the level of activity surrounding the actual development area. Burial monuments are also recorded during the subsequent Bronze Age, although the nearest recorded site is a barrow cemetery (PRN 47443) at Bier Hill, some 2.6km to the northeast of the development site. These monuments appear to be focussed along the line of the Ridgeway, an east – west routeway that appears to be the focus of much prehistoric activity.
- 3.1.3 Iron Age promontory forts, enclosures defended by banks and ditches on coastal promontories, are a feature of the nearby coastline. Such sites are known at Old Castle Head 1.2km to the south, and Skomar Camp 1.1km to the east, but the extent of activity further inland is less well-recorded in this area.
- 3.1.4 There is very little recorded evidence of activity during the Roman period in the area. During the early medieval period there is some suggestion that the Iron Age enclosure at Old Castle Head may have been the site of continued, or renewed, occupation. At Trefloyne, some 3.5km to the northeast, lies a potential settlement and church (PRNs 46847 – 8) recorded in the early 11th century, and cited as the birthplace of St Teilo in the mid-6th century. The church in Manorbier also has potential early medieval origins (PRN 46832), although pre-Norman origins appear uncertain.
- 3.1.5 Much of the current landscape settlement and enclosure pattern has origins in the medieval period. By the early 12th century a castle had been established at Manorbier, recorded as under the ownership of the de Barry family by the mid-12th century. The nearby parish church of St James also dates to the 12th century, and it is likely the settlement of Manorbier began to emerge around these focal points from that period. Remnants of strip field agriculture, a medieval method of agricultural land division, has been fossilised in the fields to the north of the village, extending along the northern edge of the B4585. It is likely the development site lay within the managed agricultural land surrounding the medieval settlement.
- 3.1.6 The area remained a predominantly agricultural one during the post-medieval period. The settlement at Manorbier expanded, and a number of new farmsteads and mills are recorded throughout the landscape during this period. Industrial activity is represented by small quarry sites, mining features and lime kilns, largely of 18th and 19th century date.
- 3.1.7 During the Second World War RAF Manorbier was established to the south, formed to guard against enemy aircraft and also to plot shipping passing through the Bristol Channel. Although little survives above ground the camp once covered a large area, in close proximity to the development site. A former pillbox (PRN 101248) is recorded on the northeast edge of the site, and a fuel storage tank (PRN 101259) to the southeast.

3.2 Historical Mapping

- 3.2.1 Historical mapping provides some detail to the more recent development of the site.

Manorbier Tithe map of 1842

- 3.2.2 The tithe map depicts a landscape relatively similar to the present one. The development site lies largely within 'East Park', a small rectangular field, part of a subdivision of larger fields on the south side of the main road into Manorbier. There is a marked difference with the strip field enclosures on the north side of the road, which may indicate the fields to the south are later post-medieval divisions of medieval open-grazing, as opposed to the medieval arable strip fields to the north.

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1866 (Figure 5)

- 3.2.3 The essential enclosure pattern across the local landscape is largely unchanged from the tithe map, although a larger number of dispersed farmsteads are depicted in the surrounding countryside. Local subdivision is indicated within the site itself, with the field sub-divided by an east – west boundary not marked previously. Small enclosures, or unenclosed but distinct areas of probable rough ground or ponds are marked in the northwest and southeast corners of the northern field, with similar enclosures down the eastern side of the southern field. Possible old quarrying activity is depicted to the south and southwest of the site.

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1907

- 3.2.4 Little obvious change is noted into the early years of the 20th century, other than a re-arrangement of the informal enclosures within the development area.

Ordnance Survey 1:10560 map of 1953

- 3.2.5 This is the first map to depict episodes of development surrounding the proposed development site. An access track runs to the east of the site, accessing Skrinkle Farm to the south, but also a collection of building in the field immediately to the south of the site. These buildings are presumably associated with the Second World War RAF Manorbier. Buildings continue into the field immediately to the west of the site, which may also be related to the former airfield, but was labelled as a football ground. The main camp lies at the southern end of the new access track, some buildings of which still stand.

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1968

- 3.2.6 No change from the previous map is noted on an Ordnance Survey map of 1964, however by 1968 the housing development to the east is shown, as is the current layout of the development site. Buildings are still depicted in the field immediately to the south, still apparent on a subsequent map of 1971, but cleared by the next map of 1986.

3.3 Previous Archaeological Investigations

- 3.3.1 The site was subject to a recent geophysical survey (Shobbrook 2020), the results of which are illustrated in Figures 2 and 3. The survey identified a sub-circular anomaly in the northern half of the field, approximately 15m in diameter. This was interpreted as a potential prehistoric ring ditch. Evidence of the former post-medieval east – west field boundary depicted on the 1866 Ordnance Survey map (see 3.2.3) was also identified, with a linear anomaly on a similar alignment to the south. A number of discrete

anomalies were identified throughout the surveyed area. The nature of these features was uncertain, but they were considered potentially archaeological in origin, particularly given the presence of the possible ring ditch.

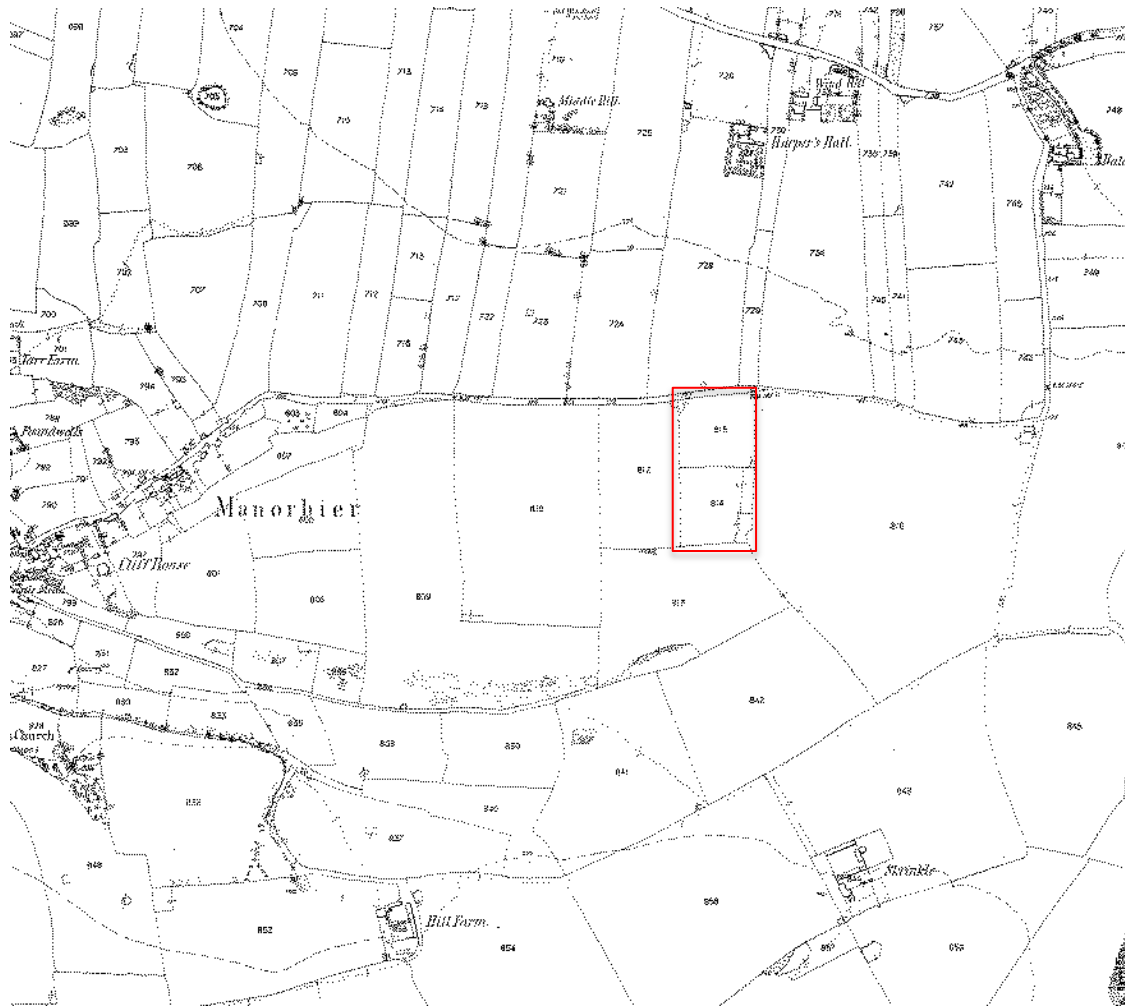


Figure 5: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1866. Approximate Site area is marked in red.

4. TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

4.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 4.1.1 To ascertain the significance and state of preservation of potential archaeological features within the development area, two evaluation trenches were planned. Design proposals meant that the potential prehistoric circular anomaly would not be disturbed, and similarly much of the subsurface deposits across the southern half of the site would also remain undisturbed. Therefore the evaluation trenches were located in areas designed to target the discrete anomalies identified in the geophysical survey, and in areas where ground works were proposed as part of the development (see Figure 4).
- 4.1.2 A tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a flat bladed grading bucket was used to open the trenches under archaeological supervision. All non-archaeologically significant overburden was removed, and the trench was excavated down onto archaeological levels or undisturbed natural ground, whichever was reached first.
- 4.1.3 Each trench was intended to measure 30m long, by 1.6m wide. In the event trench 1 was dug to a length of 32.5m and trench 2 was dug to a length of 33.1m to aid in the practical considerations of access into the trenches.
- 4.1.4 Following machine excavation, the trenches were appropriately cleaned to best determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains.
- 4.1.5 All deposits were recorded in accordance with DAT Archaeological Services Recording System. Trench plans and sections were recorded by means of measured sketches and GPS survey. A photographic record was maintained using digital cameras.
- 4.1.6 A small number of pottery artefacts were identified within topsoil deposits, readily identified as late post-medieval of limited archaeological interest. Once noted, these artefacts remained on site.
- 4.1.7 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered during the archaeological fieldwork.

4.2 Post-Fieldwork Reporting and Archiving

- 4.2.1 The WSI stated that an archive would be prepared if it would meet the requirements of the Dyfed Archaeological Trust archive retention policy (2018). In this case, due to the negative archaeological results, the project does not meet the requirements and as such this report forms the archive for the project.
- 4.2.2 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.

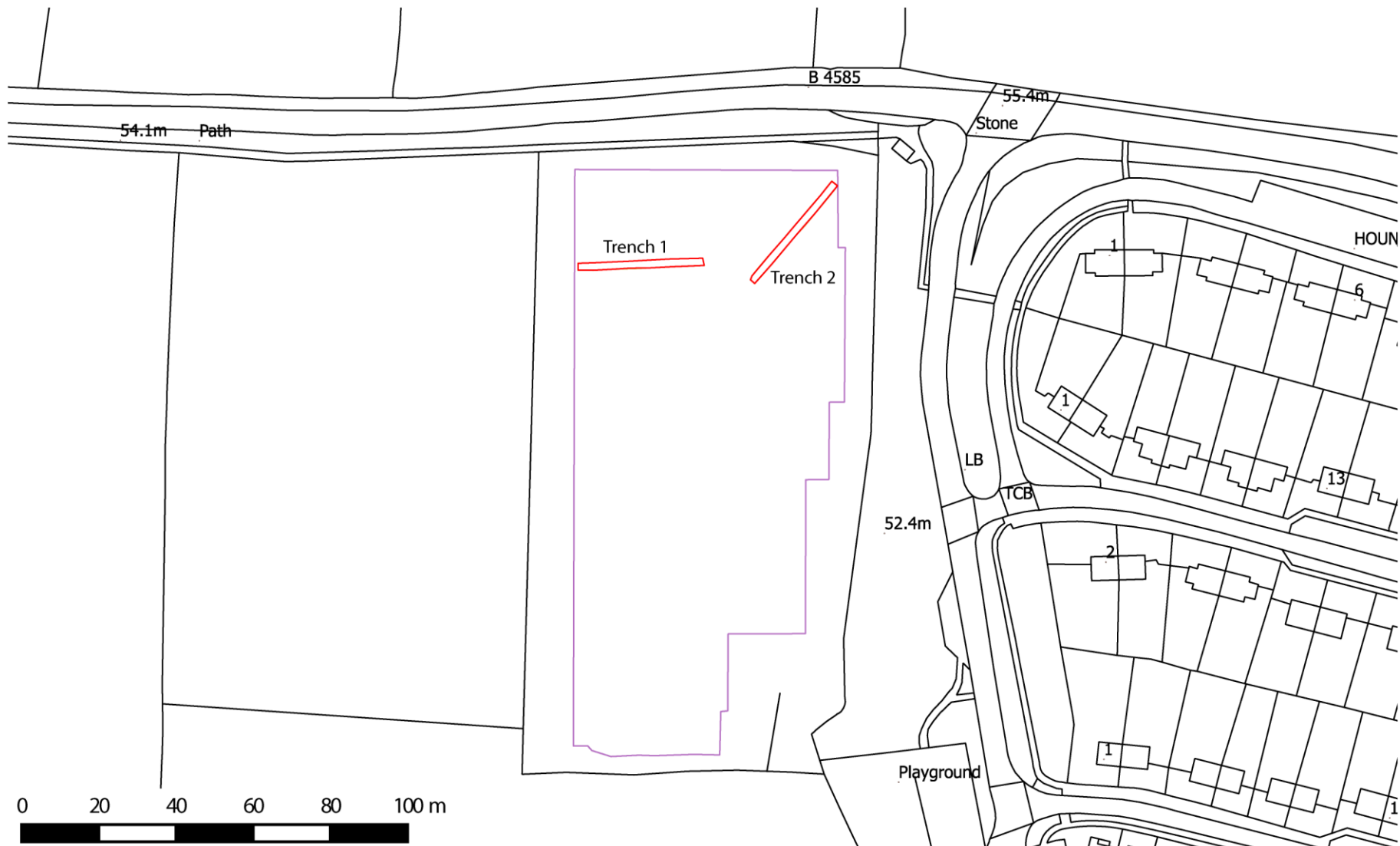


Figure 6: Location plan of excavated evaluation trenches (in red), with outline of geophysical survey plot in blue. Scale 1:1500.

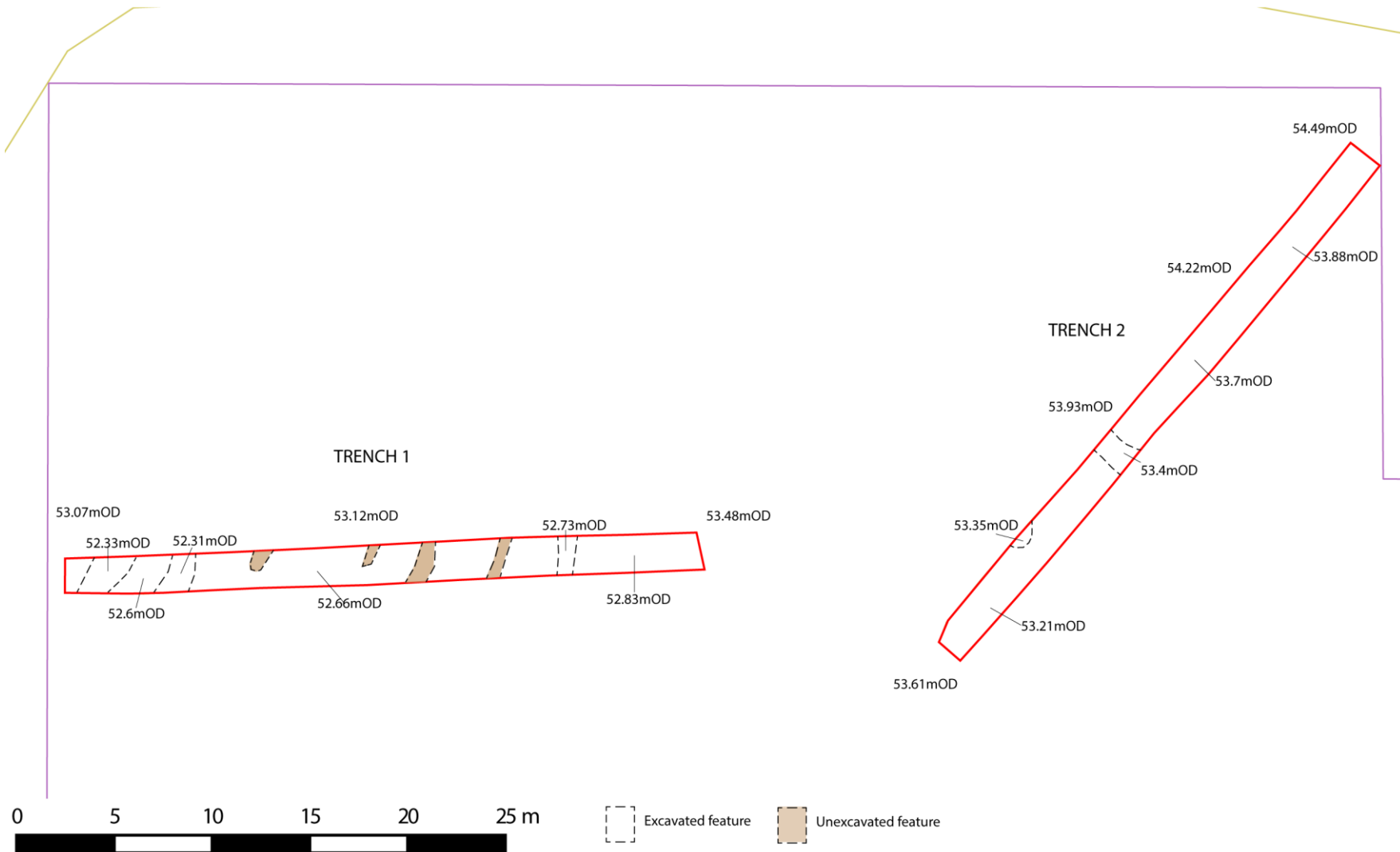


Figure 7: Detail plan of evaluation trenches.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Excavation was conducted over three days from the 17th to the 19th of June 2020 by Andrew Shobbrook (on-site Supervisor) and Luke Jenkins (Archaeologist).
- 5.1.2 Two trenches were excavated during the course of the evaluation. Trench 1 was located to the north of the potential prehistoric circular feature, the trench was aligned east – west, measuring 32.5m by 1.6m, excavated to a typical depth of 0.5m. Trench 2 was located in the northeast part of the site, aligned northeast – southwest, measuring 33.1m by 1.6m, excavated to a typical depth of 0.5m. Both trenches targeted discrete anomalies identified on the geophysical survey.
- 5.1.3 Trench 1 was excavated to levels of exposed bedrock and superficial geology. Trench 2 was excavated to levels of exposed superficial geology.
- 5.1.4 This results chapter describes the deposits recorded within each trench. Interpretation of these results is reserved for the discussion and conclusion.

5.2 Trench 1 (Figures 6 & 7, Photos 2 - 6)

- 5.2.1 Trench 1 was located to investigate the area surrounding the potential prehistoric circular feature, and targeting potential discrete feature that may have been associated with it.
- 5.2.2 A superficial geological deposit (103) of firm light yellow clay was exposed throughout the trench, at a depth of 0.36m to the east, and 0.27m to the west. A series of linear striations ran through the deposit in a northeast – southwest alignment, comprising similar material but of a browner hue. Two slots were excavated to test the nature of the darker material, within each slot no distinct cut edges to the darker material was identified, and an indistinct transition between the light yellow, and yellow-brown clay was noted. Each slot also exposed underlying limestone bedrock at a depth of 0.73m below current ground levels.
- 5.2.3 Overlying the superficial geological layer was a firm subsoil deposit of light brown clay (102), containing few inclusions and no archaeological material. This deposit was 0.19m thick to the east, thinning to 0.11m thick to the west.
- 5.2.4 This was overlaid by a topsoil deposit of friable dark brown silty-clay, 0.17m thick. A small number of post-medieval pottery fragments were recovered from this deposit.
- 5.2.5 No significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were encountered in Trench 1.



Photo 2: View southwest of supervised excavation of Trench 1.



Photo 3: View west of excavated Trench 1. 2 x 1m scales.



Photo 4: View east of excavated Trench 1. 2 x 1m scales.



Photo 5: View northwest of sondage excavated to investigate striation in superficial geological material at the western end of the trench, exposing underlying bedrock. 1m scale.



Photo 6: View north of sondage excavated to investigate a striation in the superficial geological material at the eastern end of the trench, also illustrating a representative section of the trench deposits. 1m scale.

5.3 Trench 2 (Figures 6 & 7, Photos 9)

- 5.3.1 Trench 2 was located to investigate a number of discrete anomalies identified on the geophysical survey results.
- 5.3.2 The trench was excavated down to a level exposing the superficial geological deposit at depths of between 0.26m to 0.27m. This comprised a firm light yellow clay (203), very similar in nature to deposit (103) exposed in Trench 1, but containing a higher frequency of small stones. Bedrock was not exposed within this trench. A number of striations of browner clay on a northeast to southeast alignment were also encountered within this trench, these were not marked in plan as they were clearly continuations of the striations visible in Trench 1. One striation of a brown-grey clay was noted in the centre of the trench on a northwest to southeast alignment, along with a sub-circular patch of similar brown-grey clay material towards the southern end of the trench. These features were further investigated, and found to be shallow and very ephemeral in nature, with amorphous edges, and containing material of a very similar nature to the surrounding superficial geology.
- 5.3.3 The superficial geology was overlaid by a subsoil deposit of firm light brown clay (202), with occasional small angular stone inclusions. This deposit was 0.12m thick.
- 5.3.4 Overlying this was a topsoil deposit of friable, mid brown silty-clay (201), between 0.14m to 0.16m thick. No finds were recovered from this deposit.
- 5.3.5 No archaeological finds, features or deposits were encountered in Trench 2.



Photo 7: View south across excavated Trench 2.



Photo 8: View southwest of excavated Trench 2.



Photo 9: View northeast of excavated Trench 2.



Photo 10: View Northwest of sub-circular feature excavated towards the southern end of Trench 1, of ephemeral nature, with representative trench section above. 1m scale.



Photo 11: View southeast of linear striation investigated in the centre of Trench 2. 1m scale.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The two evaluation trenches were excavated to levels exposing naturally occurring superficial geological deposits. This appeared consistent throughout both trenches, comprising a yellow clay representing an alluvial deposit, overlying limestone bedrock. A number of darker linear striations were noted within the clay, but they appeared to consist of very similar material with amorphous edges, and contained no evidence of archaeological material, appearing entirely natural in origin. These striations likely represent variations in the fluvial deposition of this material. This would also appear to be the case for a shallow sub-circular feature within trench 2.
- 6.2 Overlying deposits were also consistent throughout both trenches, comprising a subsoil deposit that contained no archaeological material, and the topsoil deposit which contained a small quantity of post-medieval pottery, typical of most agricultural soils in the region.
- 6.3 No finds, features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered. This would suggest that the discrete anomalies visible within the geophysical survey results may be a result of the natural variations in the superficial geology, features of the underlying bedrock, or more recent objects spread throughout the topsoil deposit. There was no evidence within the evaluated area that these discrete anomalies represented features of archaeological interest. Similarly no material was uncovered to assist in the interpretation of the potential circular anomaly visible on the geophysical survey results.

7. SOURCES

Cartographic

1842 - Tithe Award map of 1842 for the parish of Manorbier
1866 - First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of Pembrokeshire
1907 - Second Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of Pembrokeshire
1953 - Ordnance Survey 1:10560 map of Pembrokeshire
1964 - Ordnance Survey 1:10560 plan
1968 - Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan
1971 - Ordnance Survey 1:10560 plan
1986 - Ordnance Survey 1:10000 plan

Published

Cadw 1998. Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales.

Unpublished

Meek, J. 2020, *Written Scheme of Investigation: Archaeological Investigation. Manorbier Community Hub, Pembrokeshire*. Archaeology Collective.

Shobbrook, A. 2020, *Manorbier Community Hub, Manorbier, Pembrokeshire: Geophysical Survey*, Unpublished DAT Report No 2020/19

Database

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

8. CONTEXT REGISTER

Context No.	Description
101	Turf and topsoil - Friable, dark brown silty-clay. Common, small-medium, sub-angular stone inclusions Throughout trench. 0.17m thick. Late post-medieval pottery
102	Subsoil – Firm, light brown clay. Rare, small-medium sub-rounded stone inclusions Throughout trench. 0.19m thick. No finds
103	Superficial geology – Firm light yellow clay. Striations of light brown-yellow clay, varying widths, on northeast – southwest axis throughout Throughout trench. No finds
104	Bedrock – Solid limestone bedrock
201	Turf and topsoil - Friable, dark brown silty-clay. Common, small-medium, sub-angular stone inclusions Throughout trench. 0.16m thick. No finds
102	Subsoil – Firm, light brown clay. Rare, small-medium sub-angular stone inclusions Throughout trench. 0.12m thick. No finds
103	Superficial geology – Firm light yellow clay. Rare, small sub-rounded stone inclusions Striations of light brown-yellow clay, varying widths, on northeast – southwest axis throughout Throughout trench. No finds

