

# MANOR FARM LYDSTEP ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



Prepared by DAT Archaeological  
Services for: Mr John Meyrick



**DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

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**MANOR FARM, LYDSTEP  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**By**

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**MANOR FARM LYDSTEP  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**Client** Mr John Meyrick

**Event Record No** 125652

**Report No** 2021-03

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**MANOR FARM LYDSTEP  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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**MANOR FARM LYDSTEP**  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a new dwelling in the grounds of Manor Farm, Lydstep, Pembrokeshire (centred on NGR SS 0857 9834).*

*The watching brief recorded the remains of a north-south aligned linear ditch and a single post hole within the development area. No datable finds were recovered from either feature.*

**CRYNODEB GWEITHEREDOL**

*Comisiynwyd Gwasanaethau Archeolegol YAD i ymgymryd brîff gwylio archeolegol yn ystod gwaith daear sy'n gysylltiedig ag adeiladu annedd newydd ar dir Fferm Manor, Lydstep, Sir Benfro (wedi'i ganoli ar NGR SS 0857 9834).*

*Cofnododd y brîff gwylio olion ffos linellol wedi'i alinio o'r gogledd i'r de ac un twll post yn yr ardal ddatblygu. Ni ddaethpwyd o hyd i ddarganfyddiadau dyddiadau o'r y ddau nodwedd.*

## **MANOR FARM LYDSTEP ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Project Proposals and Commission**

- 1.1.1 DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned by Mr John Meyrick to provide an archaeological watching brief during the construction of a new managers dwelling in grounds at the rear of Manor Farm, Lydstep (centred on NGR SS 0857 9834). The site is situated within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 The proposed location of the new managers dwelling lies in close vicinity to The Old Palace, Lydstep which is a scheduled monument and a Grade I listed building (PE403, LB Ref 5991), that dates to the medieval period.
- 1.1.3 The Old Palace, Lydstep comprises the remains of a late medieval domestic house with a vaulted undercroft, also known to have had a jurisdictional role as a court of the manor of Manorbier. There was, apparently, another late medieval masonry building in the village, called the 'Palace of Arms', but its location is not known. Lydstep Palace lies at the village core that consists of an unplanned cluster of buildings along the A4139.
- 1.1.4 Consequently, there was thought to be a possibility that groundworks for the proposed development could reveal and destroy archaeological features and deposits of medieval date, and a condition was attached to the planning decision by the local authority following advice from their archaeological advisor, Dyfed Archaeological Trust-Development Management (DAT-DM). To fulfil the planning condition an archaeological watching brief during groundworks was recommended.

#### **1.2 Scope of the Project**

- 1.2.1 To comply with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIFA) Standards and Guidance and Code of Conduct, and before the commencement of works, a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a watching brief was prepared by DAT Archaeological Services and approved by DAT-DM in their capacity as advisors to the local authority. This WSI sets out the methodology by which the watching brief was undertaken and defines the project objectives as:
  - To monitor groundworks 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 groundworks.
  - To appropriately investigate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the groundworks.
  - To produce an archive and report of any results.
- 1.2.2 The aim of the watching brief was to provide information on the character and significance of any below ground archaeological remains that may be revealed within the trial trenches and inspection pits. Should any significant archaeological deposits be present, then a programme of further mitigation could be formulated and potentially implemented prior to development.

- 1.2.3 The archaeological works were undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs and their codes of conduct (CIfA 2014).

### 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). 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

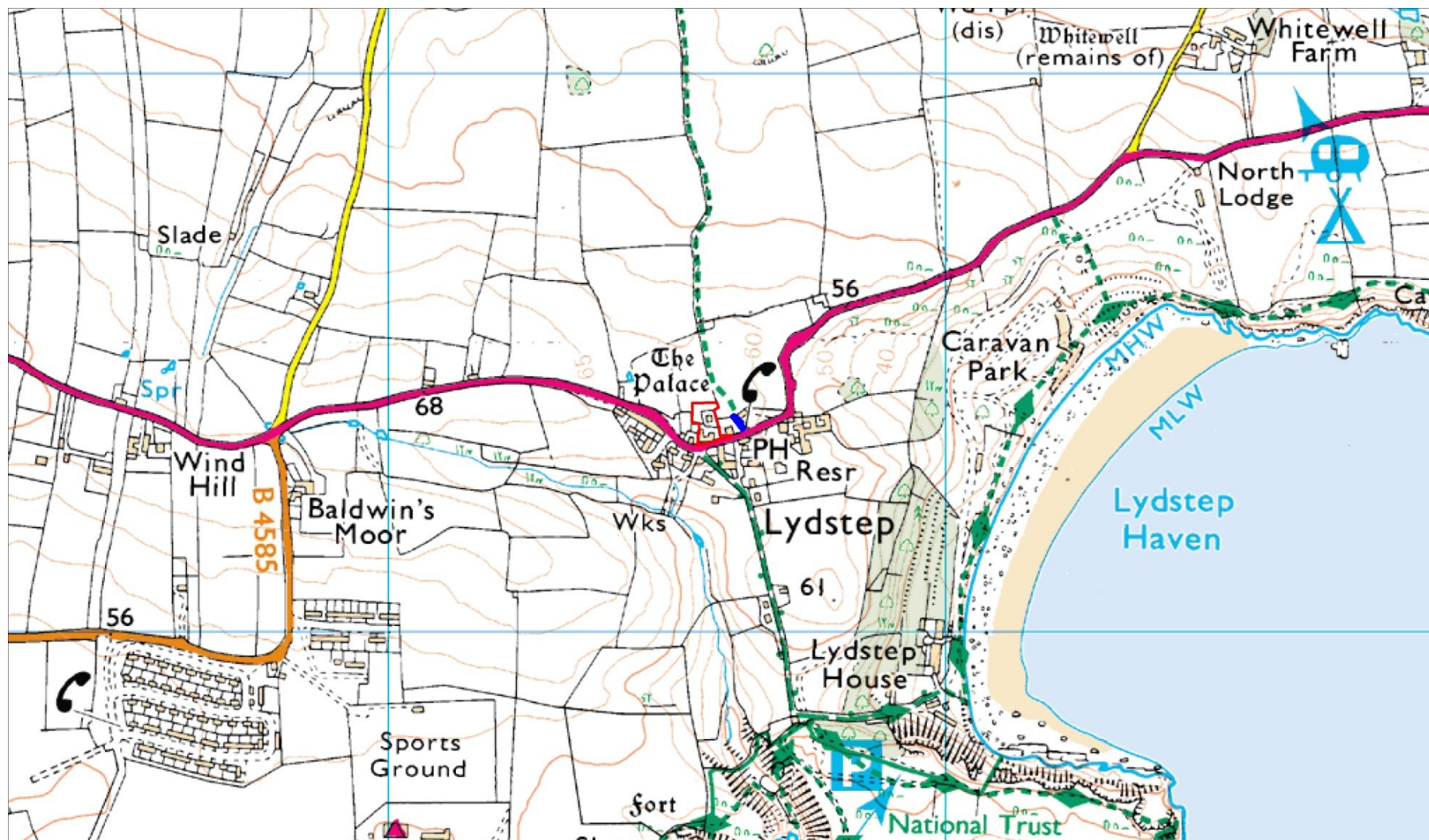
- 1.6.1 The following timeline is used within this report to give date ranges for the various archaeological periods that may be mentioned within the text.

**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 <sup>1</sup> –	1536 – 1750	
Industrial Period –	1750 – 1899	
modern –	20 <sup>th</sup> century onwards	

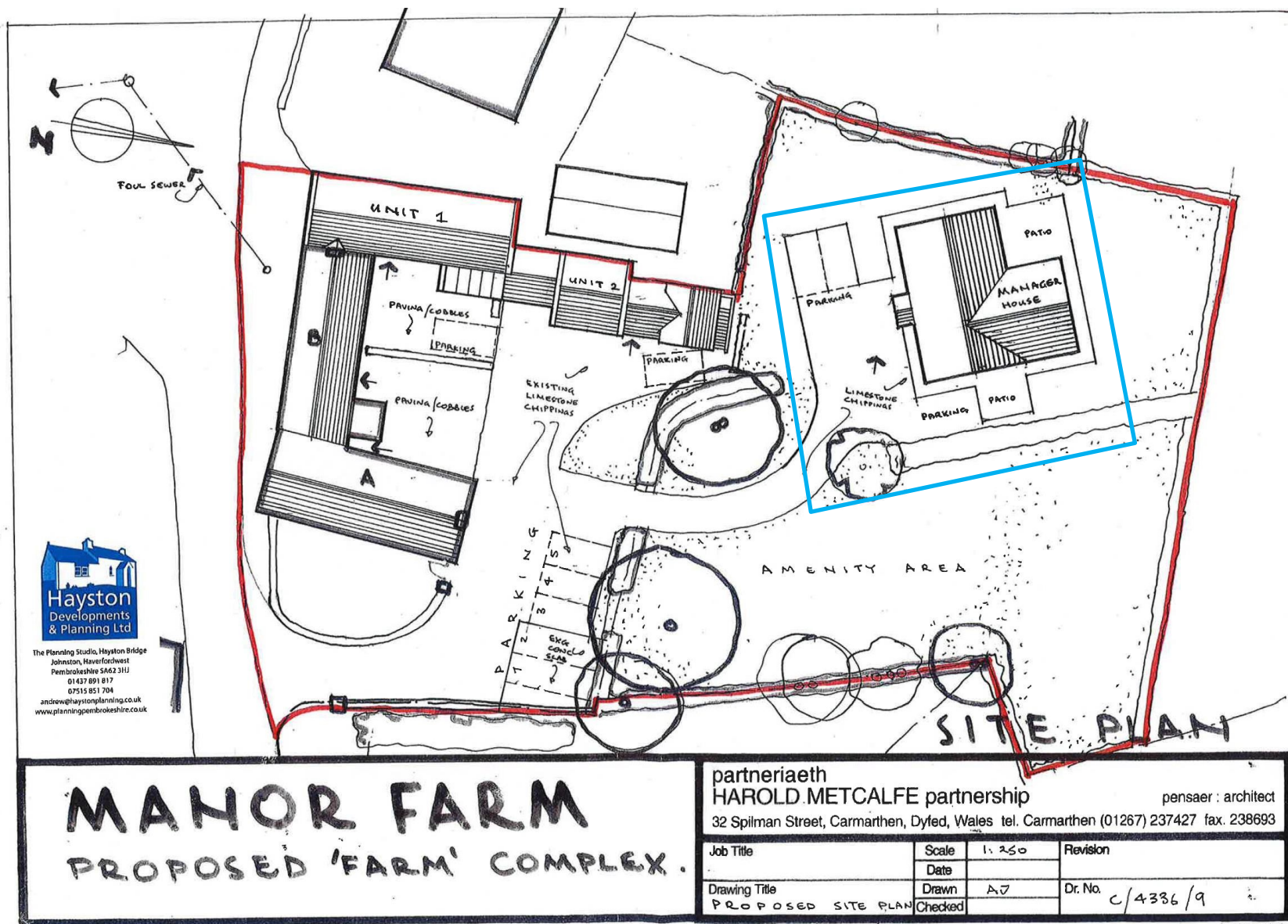
<sup>1</sup> The post-medieval and industrial periods are combined as the post-medieval period on the Regional Historic Environment Record as held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust





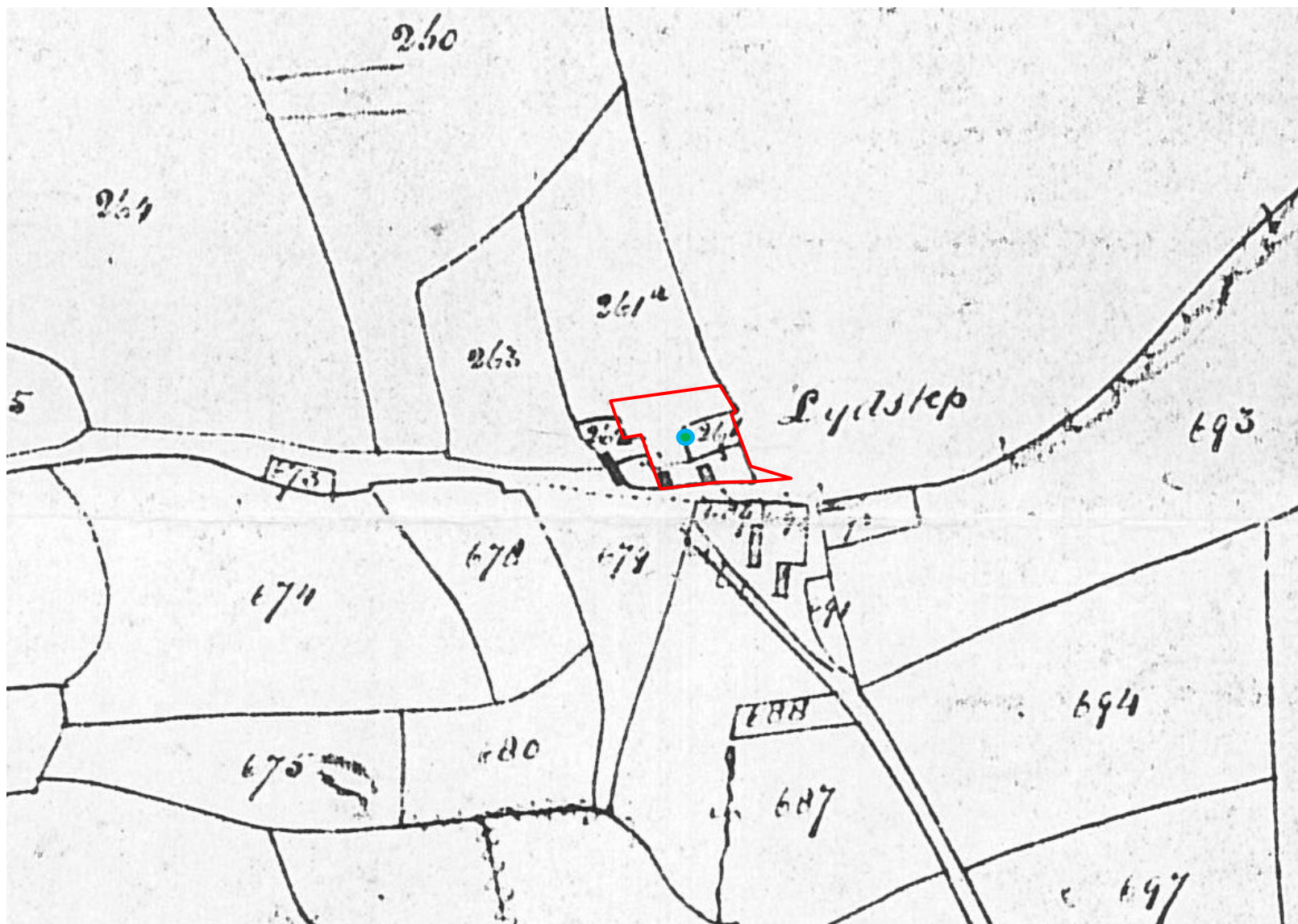
**Figure 1:** Site location map showing location of development area outlined in red and the Old Palace, Lydstep shaded in blue.

Reproduced from the 2012 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 scale map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office,  
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**Figure 2:** Plan of proposed new manager's dwelling (outlined in blue) provided by client.





**Figure 3:** Extract of the Manorbier parish tithe map of 1842 showing the approximate location of the development area (outlined in red) and new managers dwelling (blue circle).

## **2. SITE LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 2.1 The development area is located within the grounds of Manor Farm, in the village of Lydstep, Pembrokeshire (NGR SM 0857 9834) (Figures 1 and 2).
- 2.2 The area to be developed measured roughly 13m x 13m square and comprised land previously occupied by an agricultural shed and more recently by two static caravans and sits at around 60m OD. Agricultural land lies to the north of the development area. The land drops gently to a shallow valley before rising sharply to a high ridge of land called 'The Ridgeway' which forms the horizon to the north. The development area prior to the commencement of works comprised an area of rough hard core/gravel surface and grass lawn and sat at around 60m OD.
- 2.3 The underlying solid geology of the site comprises the Bishopston Mudstone formation – Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone. Sedimentary – bedrock which was formed 319 to 329 million years ago during the Carboniferous period (British Geological Survey 2020).

## **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The area surrounding Lydstep village contains a wide array of archaeological sites dating from prehistoric times through to the post-medieval and modern periods.
- 3.2 Sites dating to the Palaeolithic period are sparsely recorded within Pembrokeshire, although to the east of Lydstep at Penally, Hoyle's Mouth Cave (PRN 3682) has produced several flint artefacts dating to this period and may indicate the location for an early occupation site.
- 3.3 Mesolithic remains can be found at several nearby locations and are mainly represented in the form of flint working sites. These early flint working sites can be found at Lydstep Haven (PRN 11678), Proud Giltar (PRN 11684), Lydstep Cavern (PRN 11687), Lydstep Bay (PRN 12241) and Lydstep Haven (PRN 12242). The remains of Mesolithic footprints have also been found in preserved peat deposits located at Lydstep beach. The footprints comprised a mixture of both human and animal footprints and were collectively assumed to represent possible hunting episodes that had taken place around a wetland area.
- 3.4 Remains dating to the Neolithic period can be found within the wider area in the form of Kings Quoit chamber tomb (PRN 4213) which is located southwest of the proposed development; near the village of Manorbier.
- 3.5 Bronze Age activity can be demonstrated within the area by the presence of a series of ritual and funerary sites that are placed along a high ridge of land known as 'The Ridgeway'; located north of the development area. Closer to the development area are the remains of a Bronze Age round barrow (PRN 8168). The barrow is located around 210m north of the development area and is described on the Dyfed Historic Environment Record as follows:

*'A rectangular enclosure is shown in the NW corner of this field on the 1971 Ordnance Survey 1:10000 map (SS09NE). The area was completely overgrown with brambles in 2003, but is no longer 'enclosed'. The feature instead appears to be a sunken rectangular platform c.0.3m deep and measuring 30m east-west by 15m north-south. Within this area there appears to be a lot of dumped material including stone and a recently demolished corrugated iron and wooden structure. At the southeast corner of this feature and lying just outside it, there is a slight low circular mound. The mound is dug into slightly on its north side, exposing some angular blocks of Old Red Sandstone. The mound itself measures some*

*16m in diameter and currently stands to a height of c.0.2m, with a covering of gorse. It is possible that this is a round barrow. Its location is good, with excellent views of the ridge and coast. N Cook PFRS 2004'*

- 3.6 Later prehistoric remains in the surrounding area include the Iron Age promontory fort of Skomar Camp (PRN 4210) which is located southwest of the proposed development.
- 3.7 Few, if any Roman and later Early Medieval sites are recorded within the surrounding area of Lydstep village. However, to the east at Penally excavations at Longbury bank; Little Hoyle Cave (PRN 14286) produced artefacts dated to both the Roman and later Early Medieval periods. Some of the ceramics found during the excavation were considered to be 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century in date and may represent the remains of a high status Early Medieval settlement at the site.
- 3.8 The Old Palace, Lydstep (PRN 4222) is the only recorded medieval building in Lydstep village. It is a scheduled monument (PE403) and a Grade I listed building (LB Ref 5991). It is recorded on the Cadw database Cof Cymru thus:

**PE403**

*The monument consists of the remains of a domestic house dating to the medieval period also known to have had a jurisdictional role as a court of the manor of Maonorbier and Penally. It comprises an undefended first-floor hall built of limestone masonry, roughly coursed and measures c. 20 x 7m. The hall of originally one large chamber was constructed above a vaulted undercroft of two unequal sections, a longer longitudinal vault and a smaller cross vault. It was entered via an external stair on the south west side where a corbelled lateral fireplace was also situated. Later divided into two rooms, the smaller parlour contains a gable end fireplace and chimney. Clearance of in-situ deposits suggested that the hall was likely to have had a suspended timber floor over the vault apices. A cottage appended to the south end of the building was occupied down to the nineteenth century and survives as a ruin.*

**Grade I LB 5991**

*One of 2 mediaeval houses which survived in Lydstep until the late C19. It has been credited with prestigious origins. It was known traditionally in the vicinity as the 'Place of Arms', and that name may have been corrupted to 'palace'. Whatever its medieval origins, it was probably the place where the manorial court of Manorbier and Penally was held. The large field immediately to its N is Longstone Park; the Palace is marked as within this field on the Bush estate plan of 1772. The manorial court was known as 'curia de Langstone'. A cottage was appended to the S end of the building and occupied down to the C19. It survives in ruin. Another cottage, adjacent to the NE side, is hinted at in Barnwell's description, but of this nothing remains. Barnwell (1867) provides a valuable drawing of the Palace. He shows that the external stairs were then in place, the windows to the parlour were barred or had small sashes, and the parlour was roofed in thatch. The SE gable chimney was complete with a stone capping. He also shows, but does not comment on, a corbelled projection probably for a lateral fireplace in the SW wall of the ruined hall. His illustrator ignored the cottage at the SE end and any other post-mediaeval appendages there may have been.*

- 3.9 The short description below was obtained from the Historic Landscape Characterisation of Manorbier and Penally that describes Lydstep village during the post-medieval period:

*The present settlement of Lydstep may then largely be a creation of the 17th century and later. Its form suggests little nucleation and certainly no planned elements. By the late 18th century the northern side of what is now Lydstep village had been acquired by the Norchard estate. Maps of the 'Demesne and Lordship of Norchard', from 1772 and 1774-5, show a loose cluster of five or six buildings in the village, including Lydstep Palace. The picture is similar to the tithe survey of 1841. Any importance that Lydstep Palace possessed had, by the early 19th century, entirely diminished, but its use as a dwelling continued; the tithe map depicts the building and the field within which it lay as a 'cottage and garden' occupied by one Thomas Lewis, a tenant. There appears never to have been any connection between the Lydstep Palace and Lydstep House, the mansion that still stands on the foreshore of Lydstep Haven, occupied by the Adams family in the 19th century (see Lydstep Haven character area). Its home farm was erected on the east side of Lydstep village in the 1840s-50s. Subsequent maps show very little change has occurred in village size and morphology. Lydstep House West Lodge and 20th century houses have been built in a piecemeal fashion.*

- 3.10 During the Second World War RAF Manorbier (PRN 101244) was established southwest of the development area, to guard against enemy aircraft and also plot shipping passing through the Bristol Channel. Although little survives above ground of the camp it once covered a large area.

## **4. WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Fieldwork**

- 4.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken following the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014).
- 4.1.2 A written scheme of investigation was prepared by DAT Archaeological Services detailing the proposed archaeological works, which was approved by DAT-DM in their capacity as advisors to the local planning authority.
- 4.1.3 Recording of all archaeological features or deposits conformed to best current professional practice and was carried out following the Recording Manual<sup>2</sup> used by DAT Archaeological Services. A written, drawn and a photographic record were maintained throughout this watching brief. All contexts encountered during this watching brief were recorded and assigned a unique context number. These numbers are enclosed in brackets in the following text.
- 4.1.4 This watching brief monitored the groundworks associated with the construction of the new manager's dwelling. The foundation trenches were mechanically excavated with a tracked 360° excavator equipped with a toothed bucket. Any topsoil stripping was carried out using a tracked 360° excavator equipped with a grading bucket. All archaeological deposits revealed during the groundworks were examined and recorded to an appropriate level.

### **4.2 Timetabling of Fieldwork**

- 4.2.1 The watching brief took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2020.

### **4.3 Post-Fieldwork Reporting and Archiving**

- 4.3.1 All data recovered during the fieldwork will be collated into a site archive structured following 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.
- 4.3.2 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.

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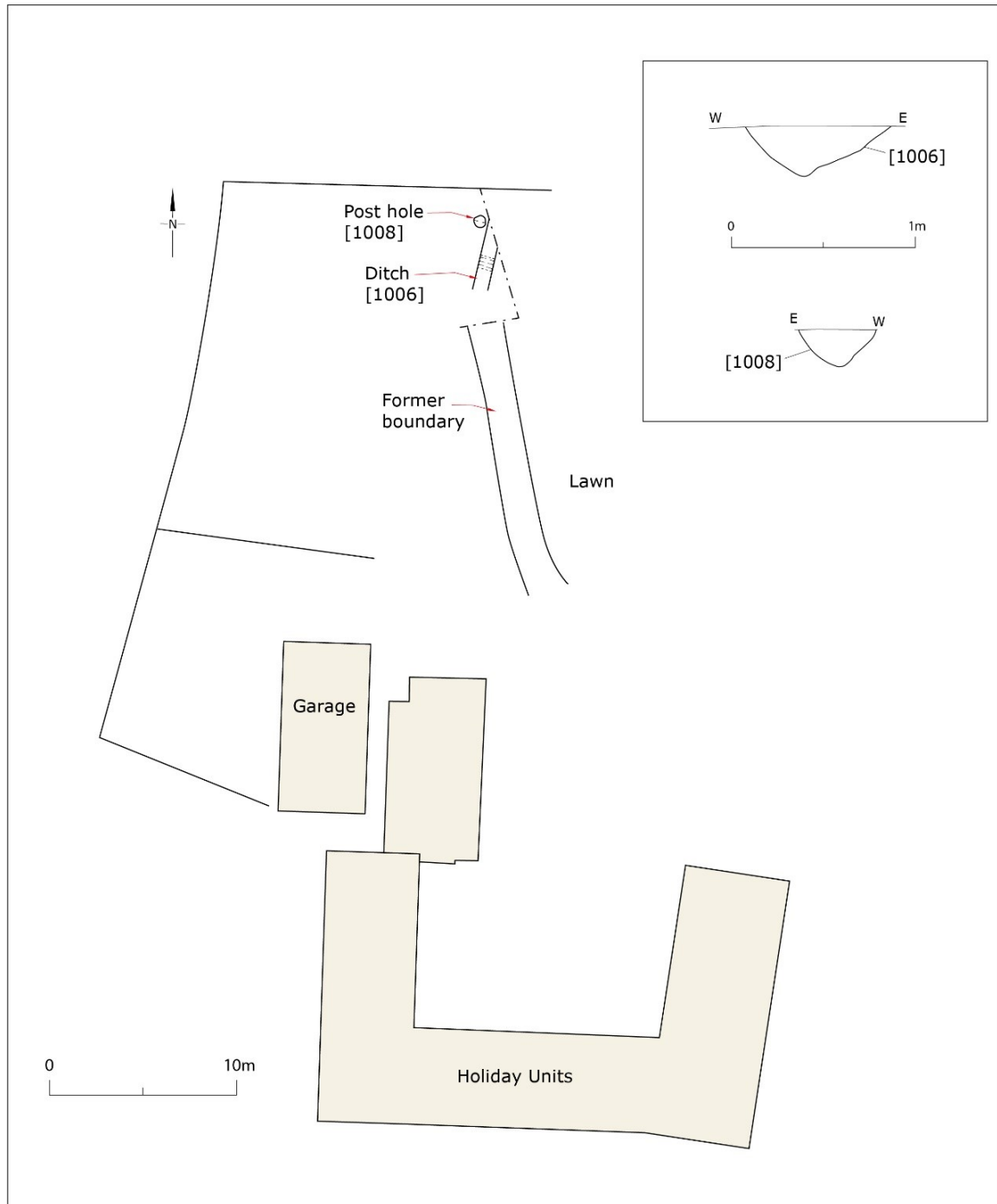
<sup>2</sup> DAT Archaeological Services have adopted the Recording Manual developed by English Heritage Centre for Archaeology. A copy will be available on-site for inspection if required.

## **5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

- 5.1 Groundworks were undertaken within the proposed building footprint that measured roughly 13m by 13m square (Photo 1). It appeared that the area had been subjected to some form of landscaping in the past to accommodate a former agricultural outbuilding.
- 5.2 Initial ground works involved the cutting of a foundation trench around the perimeter of the roughly square footprint of the building (Photo 2). The foundation trench measured roughly 0.40 wide and between 0.40m and 0.90m deep, and defined an area approximately 12m square. The variation in depth was due to the slope of the ground down to the south.
- 5.3 The development area had previously been slightly terraced into the south facing slope within the centre and western half of the area, and here the natural superficial geology of greyish yellow clay [1002] was revealed at around 0.26m below existing ground level.
- 5.4 A layer of dark brown silty clay [1001], approximately 0.13m deep lay above [1002] that appeared to be the remains of buried topsoil. Sequentially the latest deposit recorded within the terraced area was a gravel stone surface [1000] which measured 0.13m deep and is assumed to have been laid after the agricultural outbuilding was removed (Photo 3).
- 5.5 Within the eastern half of the development area, where the ground had not been terraced, a far greater depth of soil deposits was recorded (Photo 4). This area had been occupied by a hedge bank which had enclosed a lawned area to the east. The hedge bank had been removed prior to the commencement of the watching brief.
- 5.6 The superficial geology [1002] within this location was first viewed at around 0.46m below existing ground level and had been cut by two separate archaeological features; a linear ditch [1006] and post hole [1008] (Figure 4, Photo 5). The former north-south aligned hedge bank would have partially overlain the remains of the ditch [1006].
- 5.7 The exposed length of ditch [1006] measured 4m long and 0.80m wide. The ditch was aligned roughly northeast-southwest. The southern end of the ditch was obscured by water inundation. A small section was excavated at right angles across the ditch and this revealed that the ditch at this point had a maximum depth of 0.27m and contained a single fill of dark brown silty clay [1007] which contained moderate inclusions of charcoal flecks and a single pig's tooth (Photo 6).
- 5.8 A single post hole [1008] was found immediately west of ditch [1006]. The post hole measured roughly 0.60m in diameter and was 0.20m deep. Within the confines of the post hole a single fill of yellow grey clay [1009] was recorded along with two medium sized stones placed upright which are assumed to be the remains of post packing (Photos 7 & 8). No finds were recovered from the fill of the post hole.
- 5.9 Light brown-grey silty clay [1005] lay above [1002] sealing the archaeological features. Three struck flint flakes and two sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from this deposit (Photo 9). Deposit [1005] measured 0.28m deep and was considered to be the remains of a former buried plough soil.
- 5.10 Above buried plough soil [1005] a deposit of light greyish black silty clay [1004] was recorded; measuring 0.16m deep. Above this was a layer of turf [1003].



- 5.11 It was noted that the superficial geology continued to the base of the foundation trench within all areas of the development area (Photo 10).
- 5.12 No further archaeological features or artefacts were recorded over the course of the watching brief.



**Figure 4:** Plan showing archaeological features recorded during the watching brief along with respective sections.



**Photo 1:** View northeast of foundation trenches marked out prior to excavation.



**Photo 2:** View southeast of foundation trench being excavated within previously terraced area. 1 x 1m scale.





**Photo 3:** Representative southwest facing section through southern foundation trench, showing modern gravel surface [1000] above buried soil [1001].  
1 x 1m scale.



**Photo 4:** View northeast of excavation within lawn area.





**Photo 5:** View north of ditch [1006] and post hole [1008] revealed after hand cleaning of machined area. 1 x 1m scale



**Photo 6:** View north of south facing section through ditch [1006].  
1 x 1m scale





**Photo 7:** View roughly east of ditch [1006] and post hole [1008].  
1 x 1m scale



**Photo 8:** View south of north facing section through post hole [1008].  
1 x 1m scale





**Photo 9:** Post-medieval pottery sherds and residual prehistoric flint flakes found during the watching brief from deposit [1005].



**Photo10:** View southwest of the completed foundation trenches for the new manager's dwelling.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1. This watching brief monitored the groundworks undertaken in association with the construction of a new manager's dwelling at Manor Farm, Lydstep.
- 6.2. During the watching brief the remains of a linear ditch [1006] and a single post hole [1008] were recorded within the eastern portion of the development area.
- 6.3. No datable artefacts were recovered from the ditch fill [1007] during the excavations. However, it was clear that the ditch predated the overlying north/south aligned hedge bank depicted on the 1842 parish tithe map of Manorbier (Figure 3).
- 6.4. The sterile nature of the ditch fill suggested it had some age and could possibly be medieval in date; the absence of coal fragments also supports this theory.
- 6.5. The fill [1009] of the post hole also produced no dateable artefacts, but the loose nature of the fill suggested it was more recent in date than the ditch.
- 6.6. The three prehistoric flint flakes found within the buried post-medieval plough soil [1005] were considered to be residual finds, but the presence of worked flint indicated the potential for prehistoric activity in the immediate and wider surrounding area.
- 6.7. The watching brief appropriately recorded the surviving archaeological features revealed during groundworks at Manor Farm, Lydstep. Although of local importance the recorded archaeological features are not considered significant in themselves, but their preservation suggests that similar preserved pockets of archaeology may survive in the immediate area that when recorded collectively could become far more informative and significant.
- 6.8. During the watching brief no further archaeological features or artefacts were revealed.

## 7. CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context No	Description	Location
1000	Gravel surface	Mid and western parts of development area
1001	Dark brown clay	
1002	Greyish-yellow natural clay	All areas
1003	Turf layer	Eastern half of development area
1004	Light greyish black silty clay	
1005	Light brownish grey silty clay contained residual flint flakes and pots-medieval pottery sherds	
1006	Cut of northeast/southwest orientated ditch	
1007	Fill of ditch [1006]	
1008	Cut of post hole	
1009	Fill of post hole [1008]	

## 8. SOURCES

### Published

Brown, D.H., 2011. Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

### Unpublished

Manor Farm Lydstep, Archaeological Watching Brief 2020 Written scheme of Investigation. DAT Archaeological Services. FS20-035.

Manorbier Parish Tithe Map of 1842

### Database

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

RCAHMW Coflein Database: -<http://www.coflein.gov.uk/>

Cof Cymru - National Historic Assets of Wales: -  
<http://cadw.gov.wales/historicenvironment/recordsv1/cof-cymru/?lang=en>

Historic Wales: - <http://historicwales.gov.uk>

### Websites

British Geological Survey mapping portal. Available at:  
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> [Accessed 23/December 2020]



