

LAND ADJACENT TO TALIESIN, NANTGAREDIG, CARMARTHENSHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

NGR SN 4941 2108



*Ffynnon Newydd Henge (CM042), Nantgaredig, visible as a semi-circular parchmark
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Prepared by DAT Archaeological Services
for: Janet Lewis



DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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NANTGAREDIG,
CARMARTHENSHIRE:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

By:

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LAND ADJACENT TO TALIESIN, NANTGAREDIG:
TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned to undertake a trial trench evaluation ahead of proposed development on land adjacent to the property known as Taliesin, Nantgaredig, Carmarthenshire. The proposed development area lies approximately 20m from the Scheduled Monument of Ffynnon-Newydd Henge (CM042), and 320m from the Scheduled Monument of Maes y Crug Bronze Age round barrow (CM328).

Following a geophysical survey two trial trenches were excavated targeting possible archaeological features. The features survived as very shallow gullies, likely denuded by generations of ploughing but no conclusive evidence that they were significant archaeological remains was recorded.

CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL

Comisiynwyd Gwasanaethau Archeolegol YAD i gynnal gwerthusiad ffos prawf cyn y datblygiad arfaethedig ar dir ger yr eiddo o'r enw Taliesin, Nantgaredig, Sir Gaerfyrddin. . Mae'r ardal ddatblygu arfaethedig tua 20m o Heneb Rhestredig Hengor Ffynnon-Newydd (CM042), a 320m o Heneb Gofrestredig crug crwn Oes Efydd Maes y Crug (CM328).

Yn dilyn arolwg geoffisegol, cloddiwyd dwy ffos prawf yn dargedu nodweddion archeolegol posibl. Goroesodd y nodweddion fel gyliau bas iawn, a oedd yn debygol o gael eu gwadu gan genedlaethau o aredig ond ni chofnodwyd unrhyw dystiolaeth bendant eu bod yn weddillion archeolegol sylweddol.

**LAND ADJACENT TO TALIESIN, NANTGAREDIG:
TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION 2021**

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Commission

- 1.1.1 DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned by Janet Lewis to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation to assess the survival of buried archaeological remains within the area proposed for the development of a single dwelling.
- 1.1.2 The proposed development plot lies along the western boundary of a field adjacent to Station Road (B4310), Nantgaredig, Carmarthenshire (centred on SN 49404 21097; Figure 1).
- 1.1.3 The proposed development area lies within a landscape rich in prehistoric funerary and ritual sites; the NE corner of the development is approximately 20m south of the Scheduled Monument of Ffynnon-Newydd Henge (CM042), and 320m north of the Scheduled Monument of Maes y Crug Bronze Age round barrow (CM328). A further two undesignated Bronze Age round barrows, in addition to Bronze Age finds and flint scatters of Mesolithic date have also been recorded in the surrounding area.
- 1.1.4 Based on this information it was recommended that a geophysical survey be undertaken at the development site. This was conducted by DAT Archaeological Services in April 2021 (Enright 2021) and the results indicated the presence of several potential prehistoric archaeological features that may have had associations with Ffynnon-Newydd Henge (CM042). Therefore, the potential for the development to disturb buried remains was considered high.
- 1.1.5 Based on the findings of the geophysical survey, an evaluation was requested by the archaeological advisors to the planning authority, Dyfed Archaeological Trust – Development Management (DAT-DM) in order to assess the impact of the development upon potential archaeological remains.
- 1.1.6 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.
- 1.1.7 Prior to the commencement of works a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by DAT Archaeological Services and approved by DAT-DM in their role as advisor to the planning authority.
- 1.1.8 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. This outlined the methodology by which the trial trenching was 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 proposed new residential development on land adjacent to Taliesin, Nantgaredig, Carmarthenshire. The archaeological trial trench 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 based 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 its 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; 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

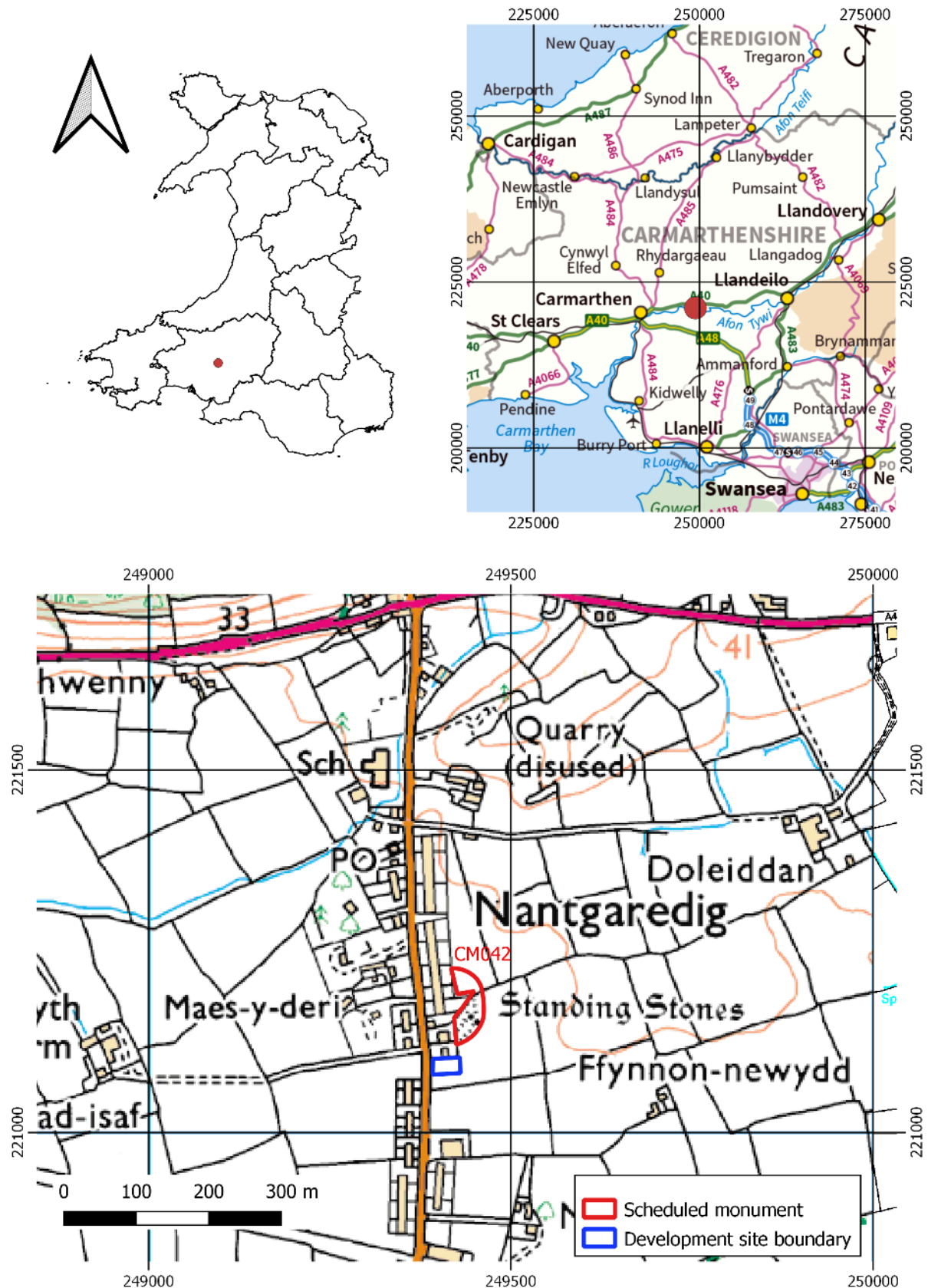


Figure 1: Location of development area

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2. THE SITE

2.1 Site Location

- 2.1.1 The development plot is situated in Nantgaredig, a small village in Carmarthenshire, West Wales that straddles the B4310 (Station Road) on the northern edge of the Towy Valley floodplain, 8.1kms northwest of the county town of Carmarthen (Figure 1). The surrounding landscape is largely pastoral, with dispersed farms and dwellings.
- 2.1.2 The development plot is under grass and measures approximately 40m by 21m. Until it was fenced off it was once part of a larger field. It lies on the east side of Station Road (B4310) adjacent to the property Taliesin. The Scheduled Monument CM042 is situated 20m from the development plot (Figure 1).
- 2.1.3 The superficial geological deposits are River Terrace Deposits - Sand and gravel: a sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 2.588 million years ago and the present during the Quaternary period. Bedrock geology is Felin-Wen Formation – Mudstone: a sedimentary bedrock formed between 465.5 and 458.4 million years ago during the Ordovician period (BGS 2021).

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The proposed development area lies within a landscape rich in prehistoric funerary and ritual sites. Approximately 40m northeast of the development area lies the partial remains of the Neolithic Scheduled Monument of Ffynnon-Newydd Henge (CM042) which includes two standing stones positioned on top of the henge bank; the majority of the henge lies beneath modern residential development.
- 3.2 330m to the south of the development plot lies the Bronze Age Scheduled Monument Maes-y-Crug Barrow (CM328); the southern half of the monument has been truncated by a former railway line.
- 3.3 A further two undesignated Bronze Age round barrows are also within the immediate surrounding area, whilst other prehistoric activity in the surrounding area is evidenced by Bronze Age finds and flint scatters of Mesolithic date.
- 3.4 In 2020 a geophysical survey (Enright 2020) recorded possible archaeological features within the development area, potentially of prehistoric date, that may have been associated with the nearby henge monument.

4. TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

4.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 4.1.1 To ascertain the significance and the state of preservation of potential archaeological features within the development plot, two evaluation trenches were excavated. These were located in areas designed to target the discrete anomalies identified in the geophysical survey.
- 4.1.2 A tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 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 Following machine excavation, the trenches were cleaned to best determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains.
- 4.1.4 All deposits were recorded in accordance with DAT Archaeological Services Recording System. Trench plans and sections were recorded by means of measured sketches, GPS survey and photography.
- 4.1.5 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 met 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.

5. RESULTS (Figures 5 and 6)

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The excavation was undertaken over two days during 12th to 13th of June 2021. The weather was very dry with limited cloud cover.
- 5.1.2 In accordance with the WSI, the two evaluation trenches were positioned so as to target the possible archaeological features detected in the 2020 geophysical survey.
- **Trench 1:**
A right-angled trench measuring 10m and 8m x 1.6m targeting circular anomaly with central anomaly and strong linear anomaly to the south.
 - **Trench 2:**
10m x 1.6m trench targeting strong curving anomalies.
- 5.1.3 In each trench the initial topsoil layer, consisting of a fine, brown silt deposit, up to 0.10m thick, was removed to reveal the underlying natural. In both trenches this was made up of a friable, brown coloured silty sand with frequent stone inclusions.
- 5.1.4 After the initial cleaning a number of features became apparent in each trench. These were discernible by their siltier fill which contrasted well with the surrounding natural deposits (Photo 1 and 2). Prior to excavation the location of these features were recorded by GPS survey and overlaid onto the greyscale plot of the geophysical survey results (Figure 2). This demonstrated that the locations of the features corresponded to anomalies in the geophysical survey.



Photo 1: Trench 1 after initial cleaning showing possible features. View west; 1m scale.



Photo 2: Trench 2 after cleaning showing a possible feature at the south end of the north-south branch of the trench. View south; 1m scale.

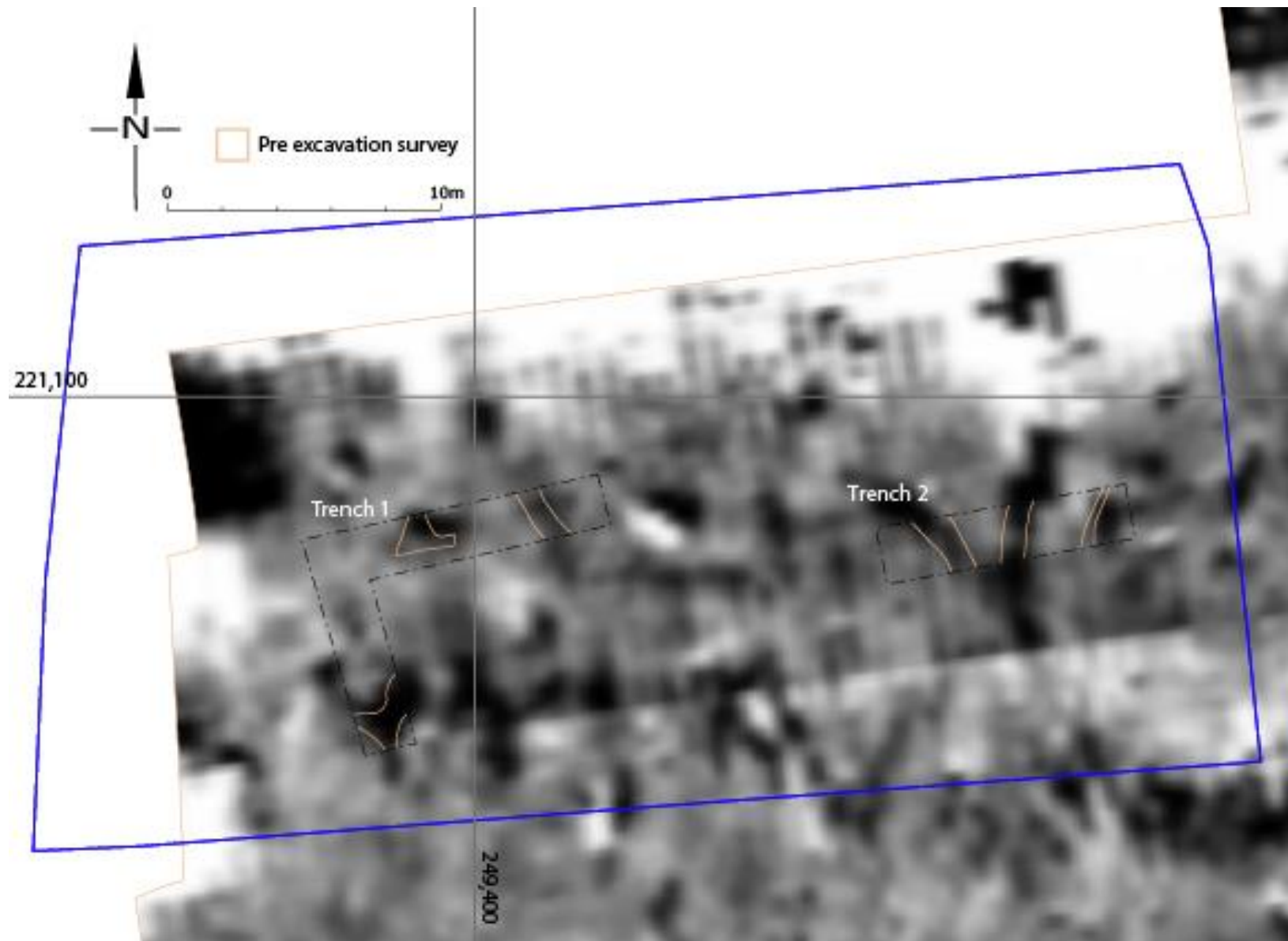


Figure 2: Plan of excavated features superimposed onto 2020 geophysical survey.

5.2 Trench 1 (Figure 3, Photos 3 – 6)

- 5.2.1 Beneath a thin layer of topsoil (100), three features were exposed. These cut into the underlying natural deposits (101) that extended throughout the trench. As previously mentioned, the location of these features corresponded to anomalies in the geophysical survey plot. At the southern end of the north-south branch of the trench a natural clay horizon was exposed.
- 5.2.2 Feature (102) appeared to be a linear cut extending north-south across the trench, measuring approximately 0.70m wide. The feature was half sectioned to reveal gently sloping sides down to an almost flat base at a depth of approximately 0.15m. At the base of the cut a natural grey silty clay was exposed. A possible stake hole was revealed at the base of the cut measuring approximately 0.07m in diameter (photo 3).
- 5.2.3 At the southern end of the north-south branch of Trench 2 a large feature (106) was observed defined by a silt deposit (Photo 4). In plan the feature was initially very amorphous in shape, indicating a likely natural origin. However, when the feature was half sectioned a well-defined edge was observed with almost vertical sides on the south edge and a moderately steep slope on the north (Photo 5 and 6). The excavated half section appears to show a gully feature emerging from the west section of the trench and curving to the south; it possibly converges with another gully emerging from the east section of the trench.
- 5.2.4 Each feature was filled with a friable, reddish-brown, clay-silt with frequent small stone inclusions. A small fragment of charcoal was observed at the base of [106].



Photo 3: Feature [102] and possible stakehole. View south; 0.5m scale.



Photo 4: Feature [106] pre-excavation. View north; 1m scale.



Photo 5: Feature [106] half sectioned. View east; 1m scale.



Photo 6: Feature [106] half sectioned. View north; 1m scale

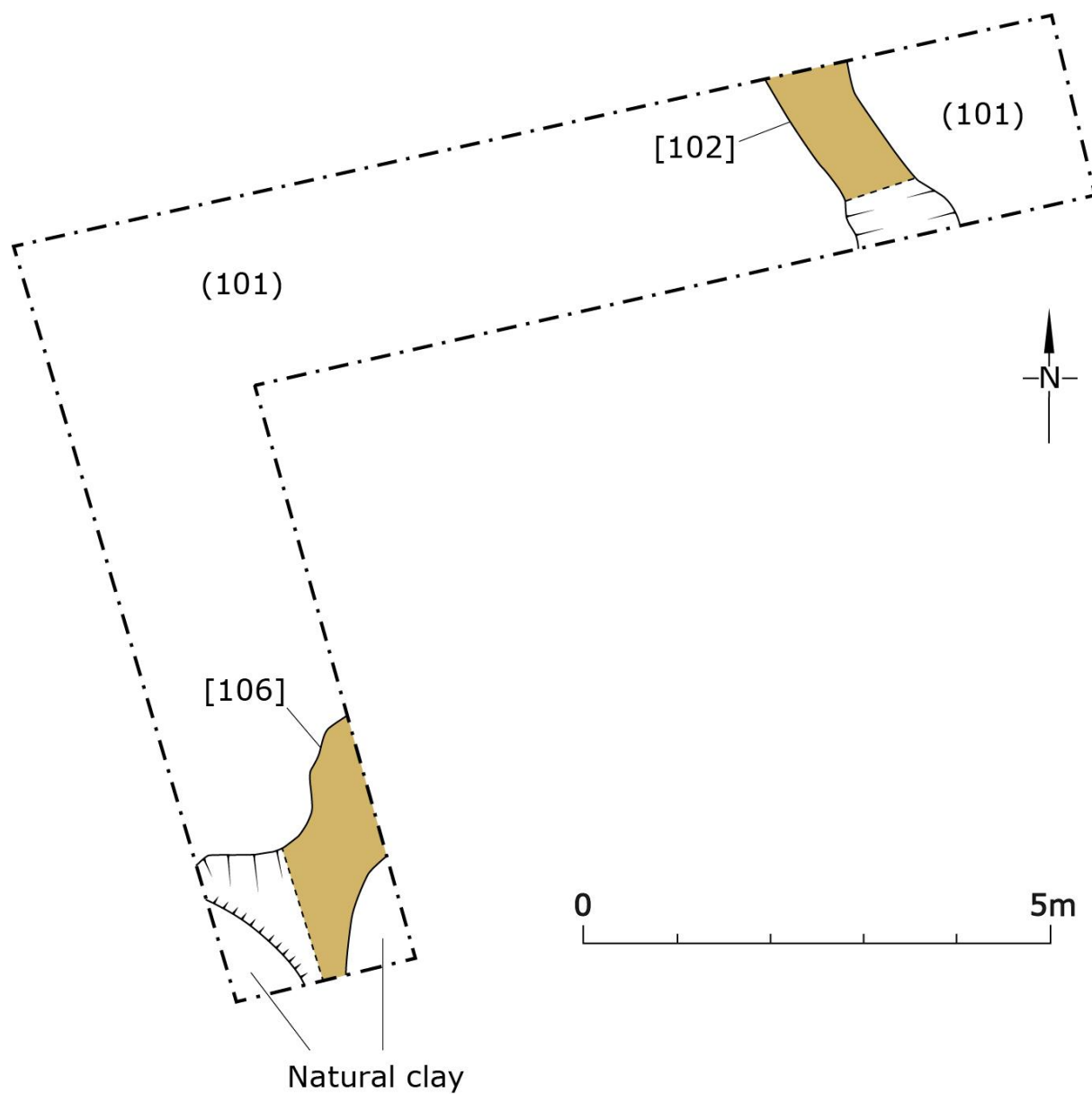


Figure 3: Plan of Trench 1.

5.3 Trench 2 (Figure 4, Photo 7 – 9)

- 5.3.1 A layer of silty topsoil (200) overlay the natural deposits (204) which extended across most of the trench. Cutting into (204) were three linear features [201] [202] & [203] orientated roughly north-south across the trench and corresponding with the location of anomalies seen on the geophysical survey.
- 5.3.2 Feature [201] measured approximately 0.28m wide and 0.10m deep with shallow sloping edges (Photo 7). Feature [202] was the most substantial of the three, measuring approximately 0.60m wide and up to 0.18m deep (Photo 8). Its sides were moderately deep with a slightly concave base. At the bottom of the feature the natural underlying deposit (205) was observed consisting of a firm, grey, clay-silt. Feature [203], the most westerly feature in the trench, measured approximately 0.80m wide but on excavation was revealed to be very shallow measuring 0.05m deep with gradual sloping edges and a slightly concave base (Photo 9).
- 5.3.3 Each of these features had a similar fill consisting of a reddish-brown, clay-silt with occasional small and medium sized stones. A single coal fleck was found in the fill of [202].

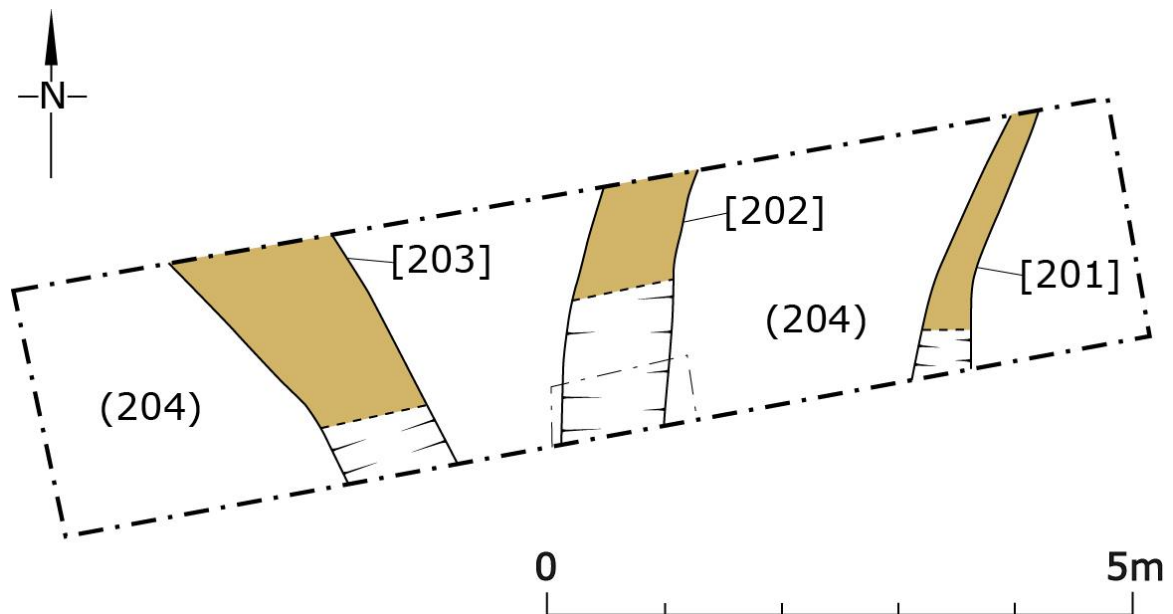


Figure 4: Plan of Trench 2



Photo 7: Feature [201]. View south; 0.5m scale.



Photo 8: Feature [202]. View south; 0.5m scale.



Photo 9: Feature [203]. View south; 0.5m scale

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1 During the archaeological evaluation two trenches were excavated down to the underlying natural deposits (101) and (204). Apart from a deposit of natural clay in the southern end of Trench 1, these deposits were similar in both trenches. Several possible features were seen within (101) and (204); visible by their reddish-brown, silty fill. A pre-excavation GPS survey of the features, overlain onto the 2020 geophysical plan, demonstrated that the features corresponded with anomalies identified in the geophysical survey.
- 6.2 Each feature was investigated, and the majority found to be shallow with no evidence of archaeological material within the fills. It is possible that these were once the remnants of archaeological features which have been abraded by generations of ploughing.
- 6.3 The most substantial features were [102] and [106] in Trench 1 and [202] in Trench 2. The fills of [102] and [201] contained flecks of charcoal and coal respectively.
- 6.4 The evaluation has demonstrated that although the geophysical survey has successfully detected a series of features, the archaeological excavation of these features has not provided any significant artefact or biofact that would prove that these are archaeological in origin; such shallow features are difficult to characterise within the confines of an evaluation trench.
- 6.5 Due to the lack of archaeological artefacts, the shallow nature of most of the features investigated and the confines of narrow trenches, the evaluation has been unable to prove that the features visible in Trenches 1 and 2 were archaeological in origin. Nevertheless, scrutiny of the geophysical survey of the plot suggests that these features are possibly man-made. Any recommendation for further archaeological mitigation rests with the Archaeological Advisor to the Planning Authority.

7. SOURCES

Published

CIfA, 2014 Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation

Unpublished

Enright, C. 2020, *Land adjacent to Taliesin Nantgaredig Geophysical Survey Report*, DAT Unpublished Report 2021-51.

Poucher, P. 2020, *Land off Station Road, Nantgaredig, Carmarthenshire: Setting Impact Assessment*, DAT Unpublished Report 2020-46

Database

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

Online resources

British Geological Survey [online] Date Accessed 23rd March 2021, 2020. <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>.

