

**ORCHARD PARK ESTATE, LAUGHARNE,  
CARMARTHENSHIRE  
PLANNING APPLICATION NO: W/31918  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**



*View southwest towards development site during de-turfing*



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust  
For: Meryl Hatfield



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CARMARTHENSHIRE  
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By

**Hubert Wilson**

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**ORCHARD PARK ESTATE, LAUGHARNE, CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**PLANNING APPLICATION NO W/31918**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

<b>Client</b>	Meryl Hatfield
<b>Event Record No</b>	126xxx
<b>Report No</b>	2021-xx
<b>Project Code</b>	FS19-045
<b>Report Prepared By</b>	Hubert Wilson
<b>Fieldwork Undertaken By</b>	Fran Murphy
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<b>Report Approved By</b>	Fran Murphy

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**ORCHARD PARK ESTATE, LAUGHARNE, CARMARTHENSHIRE**  
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned to undertake a watching brief during ground works associated with the construction of a residential plot on land adjacent to 29, Orchard Park Estate, Laugharne, Carmarthenshire (centred on NGR SN 3002 1046). No significant archaeological features or artefacts were recorded.*

**CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL**

Comisiynwyd Gwasanaethau Archeolegol YAD i ymgymryd â brîff gwyllo yn ystod gwaith daear sy'n gysylltiedig ag adeiladu llain breswyl ar dir ger 29, Orchard Park Estate, Talacharn, Sir Gaerfyrddin (wedi'i ganoli ar NGR SN 3002 1046). Ni chofnodwyd unrhyw nodweddion archeolegol nac arteffactau arwyddocaol.

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**1.1 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Project Commission**

- 1.1.1 DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned by Meryl Hatfield to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a residential plot with off-street parking and amenity space, on land adjacent to 29, Orchard Park Estate, Laugharne, Carmarthenshire (centred on NGR SN 3002 1046, Figures 1-4).
- 1.1.2 The original plan for the development was submitted in 2015 (Planning Application No W/31918), this was amended in 2020 and the dwelling rotated to become parallel with the pavement.
- 1.1.3 The development area lies in close proximity to an Early Bronze Age cist which contained a crouched inhumation (PRN 2171). This was discovered during levelling works at the field in 1949, prior to the estate being built.
- 1.1.4 Consequently, there was a possibility that the ground works for the proposed development would reveal and destroy archaeological artefacts and features associated with the cist burial.
- 1.1.5 An archaeological condition (Condition No 9) was therefore attached to the planning permission for the development (W/31918) following advice from the Development Management section of Dyfed Archaeological Trust.
- 1.1.6 The condition placed on the planning permission states:
- No development shall take place until a qualified and competent archaeologist has submitted a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for approval in writing by the local planning authority. This WSI will describe the different stages of the work and demonstrate that it has been fully resourced and given adequate time. On behalf of the local planning authority, their archaeological advisors (DAT DM) will monitor all aspects of this work through to the final discharging of the condition. This work will not be deemed complete until all aspects of the WSI have been addressed and the final report submitted and approved.*
- Reason: To protect historic environment interests whilst enabling development, Policy: Local Development Plan – Policies 8 (Special Qualities), 15 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park)*
- 1.1.7 No archaeological deposits were detected during groundworks.

**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 which was approved by the planning authority prior to the works commencing. The WSI outlined methodologies for:



- Provision of a written scheme of investigation to outline the methodology for the watching brief which DAT Archaeological Services will undertake (this document).
- To establish the state of preservation, character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits identified.
- Production of a report and an archive of the results.

#### 1.2.2 The overall work was summarised as:

*Archaeological attendance during groundworks associated with the construction of a residential plot with off-street parking and amenity space on land adjacent to 29, Orchard Park Estate, Laugharne, Carmarthenshire (centred on NGR SN 3002 1046).*

#### 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 provides a summary and discussion of the archaeological watching brief and its results.

### 1.4 Illustrations

#### 1.4.1 Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale. On maps, north is towards the top of the page unless otherwise indicated.

### 1.5 Timeline

#### 1.5.1 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.

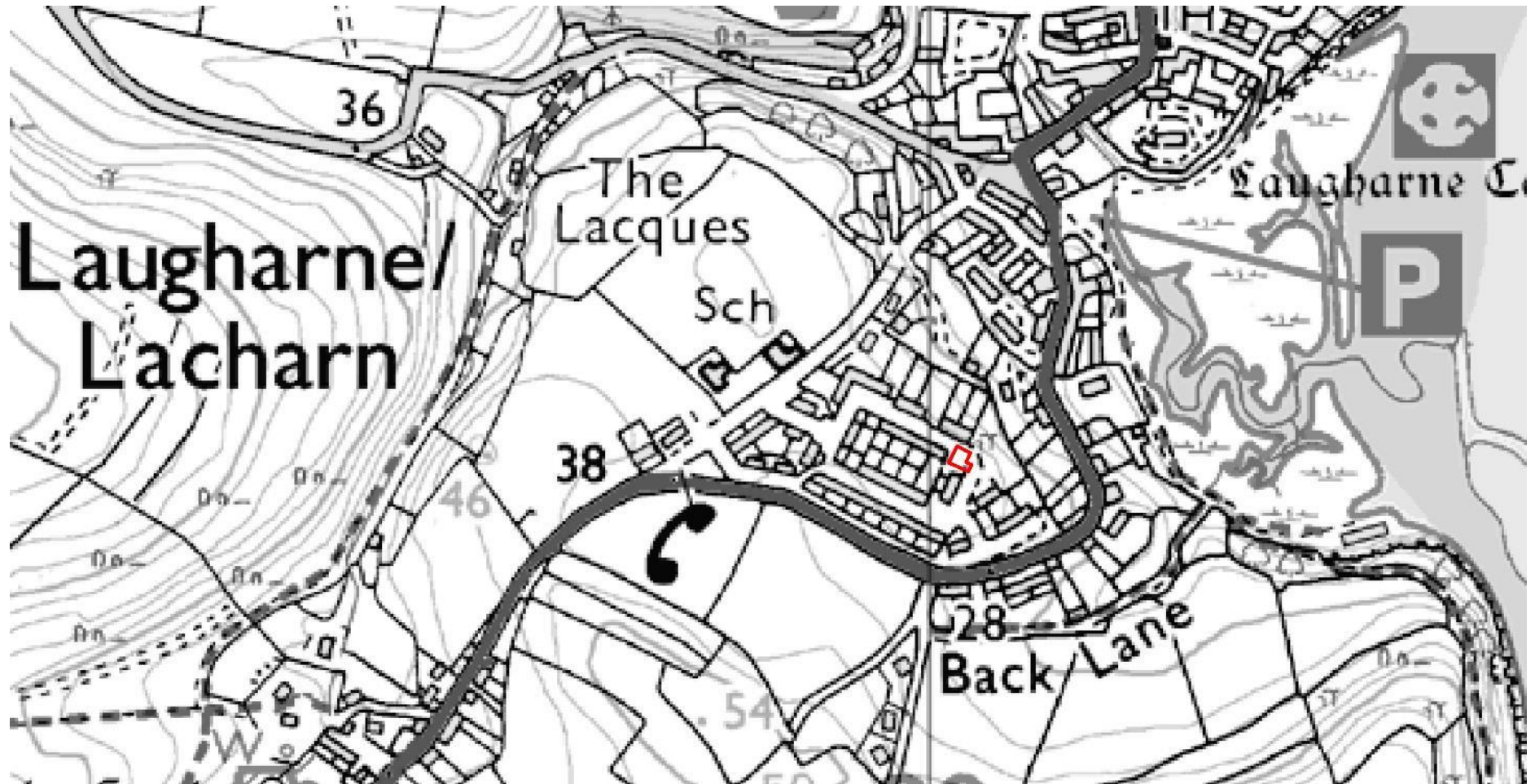
**Table 1:** Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales.

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

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<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

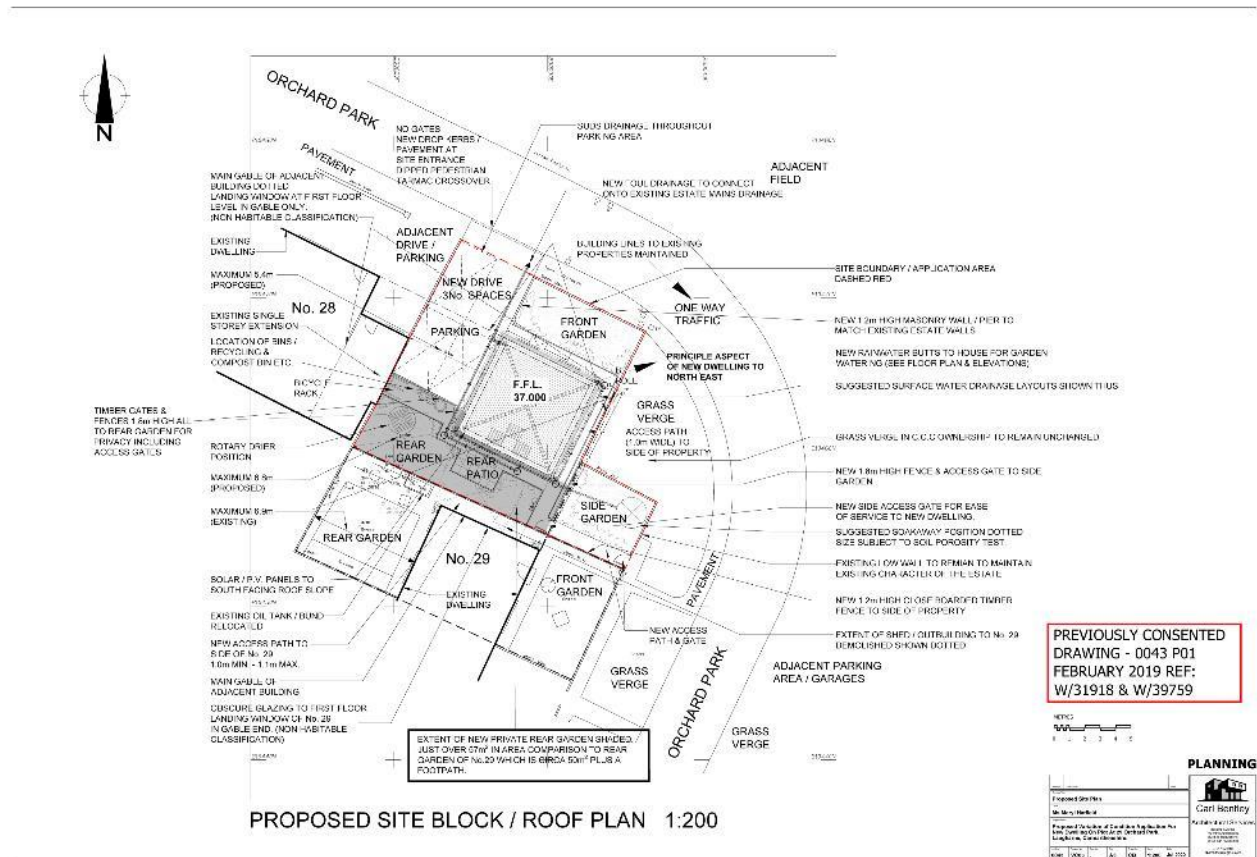


**Figure 1:** Map extract showing the location of development area (within red boundary)

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**Figure 3:** Detail plan of development (not reproduced to original scale).



**Photo 1:** Looking northeast towards Laugharne Castle and the Taf estuary from the development site.

## **2. THE SITE**

### **2.1 Location and Archaeological Potential (Figures 1 - 3)**

- 2.1.1 The development plot occupied a level parcel of land measuring approximately 12.5m square, on the northeast corner of Orchard Park estate. It was bounded by a road and residential premises. The estate occupied an elevated position on the south side of the township of Laugharne in Carmarthenshire and the plot itself overlooked Laugharne Castle and the Taf estuary (Photo 1).
- 2.1.2 The development site was once a vegetable garden which was cleared (under archaeological supervision) of turf and a concrete garden path on 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2020 (Photo 2). By the next visit on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the ground was weed strewn with patches of bare earth.
- 2.1.3 The site was situated in close proximity to an Early Bronze Age cist (PRN 2171) that contained a crouched burial. This was discovered in 1949 during ground levelling prior to Orchard Park Estate being built. An article in the 1951 Carmarthen Antiquary describes the burial thus:

#### **ORCHARD PARK BEAKER BURIAL**

*It has to be recorded with regret that an Early Bronze Age burial was found and spoilt at Orchard Park in 1949. Orchard Park is a fairly level field immediately south of Laugharne and west of Gosport, situated just above the 100 foot contour-line. It fall precipitously to the north-east into Laugharne and commands an excellent view of the castle and of the Taf estuary. Ther are no traditions earlier than Civil War days associated with the field, nor has it any surface indications of an antiquarian nature.*

*When the field was being levelled for conversion into a building-site in May 1949 an ancient burial was uncovered on the 100 foot contour-line at the eastern side. Much of the following account is taken from the Police Report of the find, a copy of which has been deposited at the County Museum, Carmarthen, by Mr T. Hubert Lewis, OBE, the Carmarthenshire Chief Constable.*

*About 4pm on Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1949, William Frederick Langdon of Laugharne noticed that the bull-dozer driven by Donald Owen of Tonypany, had uncovered a large flat stone. This slab or 'clegger' measured 6 ft. 3 ins., at its greatest length, by 5 ft. 8ins. Wide with a thickness of about 9 ins., and an estimated weight of one ton. 'Approximately a foot of earth had been removed before uncovering the slab'*

*It was not until early the following (Sunday) morning that the slab was pushed aside 'with the blade of the bull-dozer. Nothing was visible where the stone had lain except soft soil, but there appeared to be a kind of vault. It was rectangular in shape and consisted of four slabs...*

*These four slabs of limestone, possibly from the nearby Coygan Carboniferous Limestone outcrop, 'were set on edge forming the walls of a grave or vault. Their dimension were –*

*North slab: 3 ft. 1 in long*

2 ft. 1 in wide

4 ins thick

South slab: 3 ft. 1.5 ins long

2 ft. wide

4.5 ins thick

East slab: 4 ft. 1 in. long

2 ft. 3.5 ins. wide

6 ins. thick

West slab: 4 ft. 3 ins. long

2 ft. 3 ins wide

4.5 ins thick

*'The soil inside the rectangular wall was not pressurised and crumbled easily in the hand. We decided to dig down to see what was there. We discovered the remains of a human skeleton and as we dug down further we came across further bones of the human anatomy. The head was lying towards the bay and the skeleton lying with the backbone down and as if the person buried there had been so laid that his knees were brought up underneath the chin. They were taken out of the grave and the decaying bones were laid out on paper. The bones disintegrated when touched. We dug down deeper in case of anything else being disclosed but we found nothing.'*

*'According to statements obtained it would appear the head of the skeleton was touching the north slab and the skeleton had the appearance that the person placed inside had been doubled up so that the knees were tucked under the chin. The remains of the skeleton which had disintegrated on touch had been removed from the cave before my arrival and were kept in the workmen's hut on the site for safe custody.'*

*After being invited by the Police to inspect the bone fragments and to give an approximate dating to the burial, accompanied by Mr J M Lodwick of Carmarthen I visited the site on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> May. Nothing was visible except the four side-slabs in-situ and the large 'clegger' The grave itself had been excavated to a depth of over four feet. The bones had been removed from Orchard Park. They are now in the custody of the Rev. Chancellor S B Williams MA at Laugharne Church. Two teeth from the broken jaw are preserved at the County Museum, Carmarthen.*

*The burial was undoubtedly of the Early Bronze Age, being one of the Beaker Folk who practised inhumation in a crouched position. Dr V E Nash-Williams, MA Keeper of Archaeology at the National Museum of Wales, has assigned it to circa 1800-1400BC.*

*Extract from 'The Antiquities of Laugharne' by Mary Curtis (1880, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition):*

*'In 1842 quarrymen in digging for stone in Coigan, found on its northern slope the skeleton of a man of very large size, in a sort of cell cut in the rock 4.5 ft in length, 2.5 feet in breadth and 2 feet deep: but in parts its size varied. It was lying on its side, with the head to the north, the knees bent up. On top of this grave was a huge stone called a clegger, nearly circular, about 5 feet in diameter, 10 or 11 inches thick; and as it is all limestone here, it must have been brought from the adjoining hill. The top of the covering -stone was about a foot below the surface of the earth; around the edges of it a sort of dry wall had been built; the whole*

*overgrown with turf and quite concealed from view, till the opening being made at the side displaying the skeleton...'*

*This 1842 find of another grave of the Beaker Folk was made exactly a mile south-west of the Orchard Park burial.*

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### **3. WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Fieldwork**

- 3.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014).
- 3.1.2 A written scheme of investigation was prepared by DAT Archaeological Services detailing the proposed archaeological works, which was approved by Dyfed Archaeological Trust – Development Management in their capacity as advisors to the local planning authority prior to the works 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 Manual<sup>2</sup> used by DAT Archaeological Services. A written, drawn and photographic record was maintained throughout this watching brief. All contexts encountered during this watching brief were recorded.
- 3.1.4 The groundwork on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2020 was undertaken using a 360° excavator fitted with a flat bladed bucket. The groundwork on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021 was undertaken with a 360° excavator fitted with a toothed bucket.

#### **3.2 Timetabling of Fieldwork**

- 3.2.1 The watching brief took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2020 and 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

#### **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.
- 3.3.3 A report fully representative of the results of the fieldwork has been prepared.

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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.

#### **4. WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS (Photos 2 – 5)**

- 4.1 The watching brief consisted of two visits to the development site. The first on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020, to monitor the de-turfing and the removal of a concrete garden path (Photo 2). This resulted in the exposure of the brown, silty-loam topsoil (Photo 3). A 360° excavator fitted with a grading bucket was used to remove the turf and garden path.
- 4.2 The second visit on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021 was to monitor the excavation of the foundation trenches for the house. The trenches were 0.8m wide and c. 1m deep (Photo 4). Beneath 0.3m of brown, silty-loam (topsoil) stood approximately 0.7m of subsoil - this was a reddish-brown, silty, stone matrix containing medium to large stones (Photo 5).
- 4.3 No significant archaeological deposits or features were identified during the excavation of the foundation trenches within the development area.



**Photo 2:** View southeast across development site during turf removal a lifting of garden path.





**Photo 3:** Looking south towards site after removal of turf and garden path – showing topsoil beneath.



**Photo 4:** Looking north across site – showing excavated foundation trenches.





**Photo 5:** Representative section of foundation trench (1m scale)

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 A watching brief was conducted during ground works associated with the construction of a residential plot with off-street parking and amenity space on land adjacent to 29, Orchard Park Estate, Laugharne, Carmarthenshire (centred on NGR SN 3002 1046).
- 5.2 The development was situated in close proximity to a recorded find - a Bronze Age cist burial (PRN 2171) discovered during ground-levelling works in 1949, in preparation for the estate to be built – and, following advice from the Development Management section of the Dyfed Archaeological Trust, the Planning Authority placed a condition on planning permission requiring an archaeological watching brief during ground reduction works.
- 5.3 The monitored groundworks comprised all the foundation trenching associated with the proposed development. This was undertaken with a mechanical digger fitted with a grading bucket during the initial de-turfing and lifting of a concrete garden path and with a mechanical digger fitted with a toothed bucket during the excavation of the foundation trenches.
- 5.4 The watching brief established that the topsoil consisted of 0.3m of brown silty loam, below which stood a reddish-brown, silty, stone matrix approximately 0.7m deep.
- 5.5 No significant archaeological deposits or features were identified in the development site during the groundworks.

