

DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD



CROESGOCH

PEMBROKESHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
on
ACCESS ROADS THROUGH OS 7729
Project Record No. 30750
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CROESGOCH, PEMBROKESHIRE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary

A proposed residential development at Croesgoch, Pembrokeshire, lies adjacent to the site of a medieval chapel and cemetery.

The access roads for the development were deeply cut, and were examined for archaeological evidence for the cemetery and chapel. The observations provided a sample evaluation of the archaeological resource within the remainder of the site.

No archaeological features were observed.

1.2 Planning History

The planning application for the proposed residential development at Crofty and Albany House, Croesgoch (field number OS 7729), was forwarded to the Development Control Officer of Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Heritage Management Section, as part of the weekly list of planning applications, by Preseli Pembrokeshire District Council's Planning Department on 18 April 1994.

Following the initial comments made by the Curatorial Section of the Trust, the Planning Department were advised, on 18 May 1994, to impose an archaeological condition on the application in view of its location near a medieval religious site. The Planning Department accepted the recommendation and agreed that a programme of archaeological work should accompany the scheme.

The applicant contacted Dyfed Archaeological Trust in January 1995 prior to confirmation of the success of the application, but thought that work on the development would soon commence.

In the event Dyfed Archaeological Trust were notified of the commencement of the work by the Planning Department's Enforcement Officer on 10 July 1995. The applicant was advised that an archaeologist from the Trust would be visiting the site to carry out a watching brief on the development, and the site visit took place on 17 July 1995.

1.3 Site History

The former presence of a medieval chapel and cemetery at Croesgoch (Dyfed SMR PRN 2836) has been long known, lying within an area rich in ecclesiastical history.

Medieval sources (summarised by Rees, 1932) indicate the presence of a chapel, and later antiquarian sources (Fenton, 1903, 22; Jones and Freeman, 1856, 229) document the presence of burials on the site. The Pembrokeshire Archaeological Survey of 1897-1906 (Laws and Owen, 33/9) states that cist burials (stone-lined graves) and bone had been observed in the area. Furthermore, such burials may have origins within the Early Christian Period.

The exact locations of the chapel and cemetery are not known.

However, field number OS 6829 was formerly known as Parc-y-Fynwent ('cemetery field') suggesting that the cemetery lay at least partly within this field. This was confirmed in the early 1960s when, during house construction within the field, the then Post Office manager for Croesgoch noted the presence of a stone coffin in one of the construction trenches.

The present field boundaries offer little evidence of the nature or extent of any churchyard/cemetery enclosure. However, field number OS 7729, the 1995 development area, lies next to Parc-y-fynwent and thus the suggested chapel/cemetery site may well have extended into it.

1.4 Content and scope of the watching brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during an operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons - normally a development or other construction project - within a specified area where archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report.

The watching brief will be intended to allow, subject to resources, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits in advance of their disturbance or destruction and to provide an opportunity, if necessary, for the watching archaeologist to alert all interested parties to the presence of an archaeological find for which the resources allocated to the watching brief are insufficient to support satisfactory treatment.

The watching brief is not intended as a substitute for contingent excavation.

The client will be supplied with 3 copies of an archaeological report of the results of the watching brief. The report will be fully representative of all the information recovered. Normally it will be read in conjunction with a desk-top assessment for the scheme which provides the historical framework for the watching brief. A copy of the report will also be deposited with Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record.

1.5 Purpose and methodologies of the watching brief

The purpose of the watching brief is to undertake as complete a record as possible of any archaeological features affected by the client's scheme of works. In the case of larger archaeological sites it will seldom be possible or necessary to undertake a record of the entire site; the record will be undertaken only on those areas of the site that may be affected.

The primary stage of the watching brief for any scheme normally involves consultation of the desk top assessment for the scheme and/or consultation of Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record, which is maintained by Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Heritage Management Section, for those sites affected by the scheme.

The client will normally advise Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Field Operations Section of any changes in the proposed works resulting from their consultation of the desk top assessment, and of any sites which may still be affected by the scheme. The client will also provide the Field Operations Section with a proposed schedule of works in order that a full field study may be performed on any affected site prior to the commencement of the works.

Work on or around those affected sites will be subject to the watching brief. The work will be closely observed by an archaeologist from the Field Operations Section who will also undertake a full drawn, written and photographic record of any archaeological features which may be disturbed by the scheme, and any artefact or find exposed during the works. Recording will be carried out where necessary and when convenient: it is the Field Operations Section's aim to minimise any disruption to the client's schedule. However, if archaeological features may be lost during the scheme, it may be necessary for the Field Operations Section to request a postponement of the works in order that the archaeology may be recorded. Larger areas affected may require fuller excavation and/or survey.

2.0 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

2.1 The Site

The development area lies within field number OS 7729 at SM 827 303. At present it comprises small, regular fields of pasture on the northern edge of a plateau, 107m above sea level.

Two access roads were cut across almost the full length and width of field OS 7729 as part of the development. One runs east-west for 45m, just within and parallel to the northern boundary of the field, the other running north-south for 35m to meet the centre of the first road, forming a T-junction. The east and south ends were widened to form turning bays.

The access road cuts were 9m wide. They were deepest in the north-west, adjoining the existing road, reaching a maximum depth of 1m, shallowing out to the west and south to subsoil level where they terminated in the turning bays.

The access roads, and specifically their sections, were regarded as a sufficient sample of the site to evaluate the archaeological potential of the remainder of the site.

2.2 Observations

Both the sections of the access road cuts and the adjacent areas of stripped turf were examined for archaeological features.

In section, the cuts demonstrated that below a ploughsoil lay a weathered shale subsoil, much affected by cryoturbation. Seven soil filled intrusive features were noted, in section and (in the shallow areas) in plan. These varied in width from 0.5 to 5m and, where the depth was known, reached 0.5m deep. A number were associated with heavily cryoturbated areas. One of these features was examined in detail. It had a fill which merged with the bed-rock, and upon which was formed a very developed soil. The features were clearly of natural, probably periglacial, origin. A somewhat different feature had a fill of small stones but it ran under ?cryoturbated natural and must also be seen as natural.

2.3 Conclusions

All features present in plan and section were natural and of periglacial origin, no archaeology being present.

The roads provide a good sample of field 7729. Although the sampled areas were not, on the whole, immediately adjacent to the suggested cemetery site, field number OS 6829, given the complete absence of archaeology further action was not considered necessary.

3.0 THE FINDS

No finds were encountered during the watching brief.

4.0 REFERENCES

Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record.

Fenton, R., 1903, *An Historical Tour through Pembrokeshire*.

Jones, M., Freeman, E., 1856, *History and Antiquities of St Davids*.

Laws, E., Owen, H., 1897-1906, *Pembrokeshire Archaeological Survey*.

Rees, W., 1932, *South Wales and the Border in the XIVth century*, SW Sheet.

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Preseli Pembrokeshire
District Council
28 MAR 1994
Development Control
Section

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5.1 Site plan showing location of access roads

