

# **ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT**

**INDUSTRIAL LAND SEARCH AT CAPEL BANGOR, ABERYSTWYTH,  
CEREDIGION**

Report No. 2001/2

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RPS CHAPMAN WARREN

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT INDUSTRIAL LAND SEARCH  
AT CAPEL BANGOR, ABERYSTWYTH, CEREDIGION

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By

Nigel Page

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ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA  
Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf  
Neuadd y Sir, Stryd Caerfyrddin, Llandeilo, Sir Gaerfyrddin SA19 6AF  
Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyffredinol 01558 823121  
Adran Rheoli Treftadaeth 01558 823131  
Ffacs: 01558 823133  
Ebost: cambria@acadat.com Gwefan: www.acadat.com

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY  
Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited  
The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF  
Tel: General Enquiries 01558 823121  
Heritage Management Section 01558 823131  
Fax: 01558 823133  
Email: cambria@acadat.com Website: www.acadat.com

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## SUMMARY

An on-going assessment into the potential of various sites around Aberystwyth for possible future industrial development has identified a site at Capel Bangor (centred on SN66257990). This site was first identified during 1999/2000 and an initial archaeological assessment carried out in early 2000 highlighted a number of archaeological features within the proposed development area (Crane 2000). Therefore, this project was commissioned by RPS Chapman Warren, Cardiff, to provide a more detailed assessment of the archaeological potential of the site and the likely implications of development. The project was undertaken during December 2000 and January 2001.

The proposed development site covers an area of small, irregular fields, most of which had been established since at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The archaeological sites identified during the initial assessment consisted of several possible prehistoric cropmarked and parchmarked features and field names which indicate the former presence of one, or more kilns in the southern sector of the site. Unfortunately, the nature of the cropmarked and parchmarked features precluded any further investigation of their nature and extent. Furthermore, the location(s) of the possible kilns was not established. A programme of geophysical investigation and field evaluation has been recommended to try to determine the character and extent of the cropmarked and parchmarked features, and to locate the possible kiln sites.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 PROJECT PROPOSALS AND COMMISSION**

This project is part of an environmental impact assessment into the suitability of a site at Capel Bangor, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion Bangor (centred on SN66257990). Archaeology and the cultural heritage are now a material consideration in any development and RPS Chapman Warren commissioned Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology Field Operations to carry out this study. This site was first identified during 1999/2000 and an initial archaeological assessment carried out in early 2000 highlighted a number of archaeological features within the proposed development area (Crane 2000).

Five possible development sites were studied for the initial archaeological assessment (Crane 2000). The assessment concluded that the Capel Bangor site was the least favoured option from an archaeological viewpoint, but other factors have made this site the most likely option overall. Therefore, this project was commissioned by RPS Chapman Warren, Cardiff, to provide a more detailed assessment of the archaeological potential of the site and the likely implications of development. The project was undertaken during December 2000 and January 2001.

### **1.2 SCOPE OF THE PROJECT**

The project was designed as a detailed assessment of the potential archaeological resource within the proposed development site and of the likely archaeological implications should the site be taken forward for development.

### **1.3 REPORT OUTLINE**

This report describes the physical environment of the study area (Section 2) before summarising the archaeological resource (Section 3) and the likely impact of development on that resource (Section 4). Outline recommendations based on the results of Sections 3 and 4 are given in Section 5. Detailed supporting data are presented in a series of appendices.

### **1.4 ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT**

All sites recorded on the county Sites and Monuments Record will be identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). New sites discovered during the course of this study have been assigned a PRN and located by their NGR. The study areas are identified using the Area Number given on the location maps supplied by Chapman Warren. References to primary cartographic and documentary evidence and published sources will be given in brackets and full details will be found in the references.

## 2. THE STUDY AREA

### 2.1 THE CAPEL BANGOR SITE

The Capel Bangor site covers *c.*38 acres (15.5ha) of pasture land on a west facing slope above the Afon Rheidol. The site slopes fairly gently from its highest point of *c.*60m OD along its eastern boundary to *c.*35m OD along its western edge. Underlying the site are Lower Palaeozoic strata overlain by gleyed brown earths of the Clwyd Series and Conway Series.

This site lies within an area designated as a Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in the *Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales* (issued by CCW, Cadw, ICOMOS UK, 1998). This is a non-statutory designation, but it does have a significant bearing on the level of any archaeological response to development within such an area.

### **3. SUMMARY OF THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAPEL BANGOR SITE**

#### **3.1 THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE**

The landscape is a dynamic and ever changing place as people adapt it to their changing needs. The present landscape, with its often bewildering juxtaposition of sites and features from all periods, is the 'primary record' of how people fulfilled those needs. It is possible through careful study to unravel and read that record and to chart how the development of each landscape element, be it a building, road or a boundary, has helped to shape the region. The study area is a modern and fairly arbitrary division which, although defined by existing physical boundaries, for most part does not respect the historic landscape in which it is located.

#### **3.2 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE**

##### **3.2.1 PREHISTORIC**

A series of cropmarked features (PRNs 40282; 40283; 40284; 40323 - fig 4) identified from aerial photographs within the proposed development may be prehistoric in origin.

##### **3.2.2 ROMAN**

A Roman fort (PRN 7719) is located at Pen Llwyn 1km northwest of Capel Bangor and a Roman road, the Sarn Helen (PRN 5222 - fig 4), runs north between the fort and the proposed development.

##### **3.2.3 EARLY MEDIEVAL**

There are no known early medieval sites within the proposed development. However, the placename Bangor is taken to refer to an enclosure around a monastery or church, and it derives from the name given to part of a wattle fence (Thorburn 1988, 42). Therefore, the various placenames and field names that include the Bangor element, such as Maes Bangor (PRN 6185 - fig 4) just north of the study area, suggests that there was an early medieval religious settlement nearby.

##### **3.2.4 MEDIEVAL**

Bron-llangwrda Farm (PRN 10907 - fig 4), 0.25km north of the proposed development possibly has medieval origins.

##### **3.2.5 POST MEDIEVAL AND MODERN**

Even though it contains many important earlier features, the present landscape of this part of the Rheidol Valley is largely a product of the post-medieval and early modern periods. Agricultural enclosure has been the dominant force in shaping the landscape, particularly since the later post-medieval period. It has been suggested that hedges were common in Ceredigion during the medieval period (Chater 1994, 65), but there is

no evidence to suggest that any of the boundaries within the site are earlier than the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, the possibility cannot be ruled out. Estate maps show that the present layout of fields was in place by the later 18<sup>th</sup> century and comparison with the present landscape shows that it has changed relatively little since that time. The boundaries within the study areas comprise, for the most part, earth banks topped with hedges; there are also some plain hedges and modern fences.

Like most parts of the country, industry has had a significant influence on the development of the Capel Bangor area. Historically industry was small-scale and agriculturally based such as milling and lime burning. There is good evidence for both in the area, with a corn mill (PRN 5421) and a fulling mill (PRN 19351) recorded at Capel Bangor, just outside the north boundary of the proposed development. The placename Dolypandy translates as the meadow of the fulling mill (pandy = fulling mill). Within the proposed development, the field names Cae'r olyn and Cae'r olyn Ucha (PRNs 40285 and 40286) indicate the potential locations of one or more kilns in the southernmost fields. It is not known what sort of kilns the names refer to; they could have been corn-drying kilns or pottery kilns, although it is more likely that they were limekilns.



## 4. CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 SITES WITHIN THE STUDY AREAS

Six sites are recorded within the study area (Table 1).

PRN	NGR	NAME	TYPE	PERIOD	STATUS
40282	SN 66408000		cropmark	Pre-historic?	
40283	SN 66508007		cropmark? parchmark?	Iron Age? Roman?	
40284	SN 66447990		Cropmark	Pre-historic? Medieval?	
40285	SN 66237967	Cae'r odyd and penymaes	Kiln? placename	Post Med.	
40286	SN 66387970	Cae'r odyd Ucha	Kiln? placename	Post Med.	
40323	SN 66357990		Mound	Pre-historic? Natural?	

Table 1: Sites within the study area.

### 4.2 DISCUSSION OF IDENTIFIED SITES

Aerial photographs revealed a number of cropmarked and parchmarked features (PRNs 40282; 40283; 40284) in the northeast sector of this area. At present the nature of the features is unclear. However, work in other areas of Britain has shown that gravel terraces such as that within the site have been extensively settled from prehistory onwards (Fulford and Nichols 1992). A mound (PRN 40323) located near to the cropmarked and parchmarked features may also be associated with them, although it could be a natural feature. The cropmarked and parchmarked features are thought to be prehistoric in origin. However, there is a possibility that the large curvilinear cropmark PRN 40282 may be part of the 'bangor' referred to in the name Capel Bangor. The two field names, Cae'r odyd and Cae'r odyd Ucha (PRNs 40285; 40286), indicate the presence of a kiln somewhere in the southeast section of the area. There is no above ground evidence for a kiln, but there may be some surviving remains below ground.

### 4.3 IMPLICATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

The site is archaeologically sensitive and it lies within an area designated as a Landscape of Outstanding Historical Interest (*Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interests in Wales* - issued by CCW, Cadw, ICOMOS UK, 1998). All registered landscapes are being included in an on-going pan-Wales project, the Historic Landscape Characterisation project, grant-aided by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments. As the name suggests, the project aims to define the special character of each of the registered landscapes by identifying the historic processes and events that have helped shape them.

Capel Bangor and its surroundings (including the proposed development site) was included in the Upland Ceredigion Historic Landscape Characterisation area surveyed in 1999-2000, as Historic Character Area 112 (Murphy 2000). Appendix One contains the relevant extract from that survey. The Capel Bangor Character Area covers 330.8ha of the lower Rheidol Valley and the 15.5ha proposed for development makes up 4.7% of that total area. This is considered to be a low impact development on the Historic Character Area as a whole, but the individual archaeological sites within the development boundaries are vulnerable and the likely impact on those sites is considered severe. However, it should be possible to incorporate the archaeological sites and features into open spaces within the final design plans.

Guidelines for assessing development within the registered landscapes are soon to be published. The guidelines clearly set out the criteria and methods for assessment and it is recommended that if the Capel Bangor site is taken forward for development the detailed design plans should be assessed against the guidelines.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 FURTHER WORK**

The assessments carried out on this site have clearly demonstrated the potential of the site for significant archaeological discoveries. However, at present that potential is unknown and difficult to define, so it is recommended that a programme of field evaluation be instigated to further investigate the site.

### **5.2 FIELD EVALUATION**

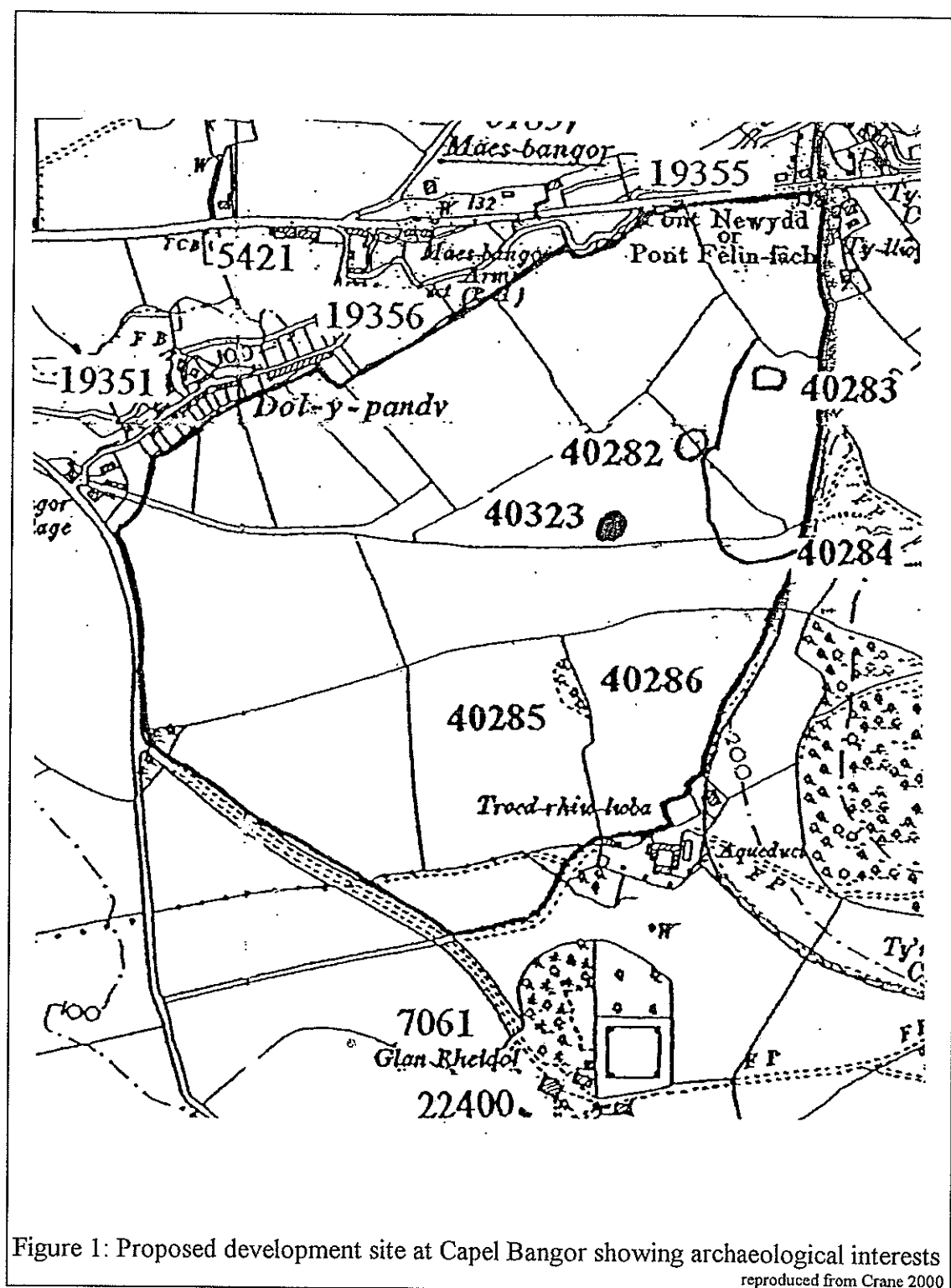
The recommended programme should be targetted at the known areas of potential, the possible kiln sites and the cropmarked and parchmarked sites. The programme should initially comprise of non-intrusive and intrusive techniques.

#### **5.2.1 NON-INTRUSIVE INVESTIGATION**

Geophysical investigation should be undertaken on the identified cropmarked and parchmarked features to try to define their extent and if possible their form. Also, the kiln sites may be located using geophysical techniques.

#### **5.2.2 INTRUSIVE TECHNIQUES**

Depending on the geophysical investigation, a field evaluation, including trial evcavation may be required to 'ground-truth' the results and to further investigate the nature and extent of the identified sites.



## APPENDIX ONE: EXTRACT FROM UPLAND CEREDIGION HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION PROJECT

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### HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA: 112 CAPEL BANGOR

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**GRID REFERENCE:** SN 660800

**AREA IN HECTARES:** 330.8

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#### **Historic Background**

The history of this area has not been researched. The place-name 'Bangor' is presumed to refer to a pre Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical establishment. There is no other evidence to support this. The maes element of Maes Bangor may indicate the former presence of an open- or sub-divided field system, though there is no other documentary evidence for this. However, the present pattern of small irregular fields and dispersed farmsteads may have evolved from such a system in the later Medieval Period or early modern period. It is clear that by the time of the first large-scale mapping of the area, the tithe map of 1845 (Llanbadarnfawr parish), the current settlement pattern of dispersed farms and small fields had been established. Superimposed onto this agricultural landscape is that of rural industry and crafts. Capel Bangor village in 1845 consisted of five or six dwellings at 'Pandy', presumably indicating a fulling mill, and a smithy, with a 'Factory' located upstream. A chapel was constructed here in 1790 (Percival 1998, 517), and later a church and another chapel. The village continued to develop throughout the second half of the 19th century and the 20th century. A by-pass has been constructed to avoid the core of the old village.

#### **Description and essential historic landscape components**

This area encompasses a terrace of the Afon Rheidol at about 30m-50m OD and the lower valley sides up to about 170m. Agricultural land is almost entirely composed of improved pasture, with hardly any rougher ground and no arable. The underlying settlement pattern is of dispersed farms. These are generally stone-built with slate roofs, and have steel-frame and other modern farm buildings associated with them. Included in the area is the early 19th-century listed mansion of Glan Rheidol and its historic garden (Welsh Historic Gardens Database). Superimposed over this pattern is the 19th- and 20th-century village of Capel Bangor. This consists of a core of 19th century stone-built terraced cottages, interspersed with which are more substantial 19th century houses and 20th century development of brick and concrete. A church, chapel and school are present. The core has now been by-passed. Petrol stations and other services have developed alongside the new road and a small caravan park lies close to the village centre. Field patterning comprises small irregular enclosures. Boundaries of these fields are of earth banks topped with hedges. Hedges are generally well maintained on the river terrace with only a small percentage neglected. On higher ground they are less well managed and a larger proportion are becoming derelict. Wire fences supplement most hedges. Deciduous woodland and individual trees of park-land close to Glan Rheidol lend a wooded appearance to this part of the area. Remains of small metal mines lie close to the northern boundary.

Recorded archaeology of this area consists mainly of post-Medieval domestic and industrial buildings and the remains described above. Bronze Age finds are the only indication of pre Dark Age occupation in this area.

This is a particularly difficult area to define as many of the neighbouring areas contain similar historic landscape characteristics. To the east areas 56 and 68 are different, though an exact boundary cannot be drawn. Higher ground (areas 68, 69, 82) of larger enclosures and less settled land provides better boundary definition, but again no exact boundary can be drawn. The historic landscape area to the west has yet to be described.

(Extract from Murphy 2000)

## APPENDIX TWO: SOURCES

### CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Date	Title	Reference
1579	Saxton's Map of Radnorshire, Brecknockshire, Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire	
1770	An Exact Survey of Penybanc and Troedrihiwlwba - Part of the estate of Thomas Lloyd of Abernant	NLW - Abernant Deposit Collection No 88 97
1791	Farms and Tenants of Lands of Llanbadarn Fawr and County of Cardigan belonging to Mrs. Margaret Pryse	NLW - Powys Castle 164
1810-14	Ordnance Survey original survey, sheets 57 and 58 (reprinted by David and Charles)	
1932	South Wales and the Border in the Fourteenth Century (William Rees' map)	
1969	Soil Survey of England and Wales: sheet 163	
1977	Ordnance Survey 1:250000 Series Agriculture Land Classification, Wales	
1983	Soil Survey of England and Wales: sheet 163	
1984	British Geological Survey 1:50000 Series: Sheet 163, Aberystwyth. Solid Geology	
1989	British Geological Survey 1:50000 Series: Sheet 163, Aberystwyth. Drift Geology	

### PUBLISHED SOURCES

Cadw CCW & ICOMOS	1998	<i>Register of Landscapes Of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, Part 2.1.</i> Cadw. Cardiff.
Chater A O	1994	The Higher Plants and Vegetation of Cardiganshire. In Davies and Kirkby (Eds.) 1994.
Crane P	2000	<i>Industrial Land Search at Aberystwyth: archaeological desk-based assessment.</i> Unpublished Cambria Archaeology report for Chapman Warren. Project Record No. 40265. Cambria Archaeology, Llandeilo.
Davies J & Kirkby D P	1994	<i>Cardiganshire County History: Volume 1, From the Earliest Times to the Coming of the Normans.</i> Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society. Cardiff.
Fulford M & Nichols E	1992	<i>Developing Landscapes of Lowland Britain. The Archaeology of the British Gravels: a Review.</i> Occasional Papers Vol 14. The Society of Antiquaries. London.
Murphy K	2000	<i>Upland Ceredigion Historic Landscape Characterisation.</i> Cambria Archaeology Report for Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments.

Thorburn J     1988   *Archaeology in the Capel Bangor-Trefeurig Area.*  
Ceredigion Archaeological Survey report. Lampeter.

### **APPENDIX THREE: CATALOGUE OF PROJECT ARCHIVE**

The project archive has been indexed and catalogued according to National Monument Record (NMR) categories and contains the following:

- A.** Copy of the report.
- B.** Notes from site visits.
- D.** Site photographs - catalogue, colour slides, B/W contact sheets.
- G.** Documentary data, including primary and published sources.
- I.** Draft copies of report.
- J.** Publication drawings.
- M.** Miscellaneous correspondence

There is no material for classes **C**, **E**, **F**, **H**, **K**, **L** and **N**.

The project archive is currently held by Cambria Archaeology Field Operations, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire as Project Record Number 42559. Report Number 2001/2.



# INDUSTRIAL LAND SEARCH AT CAPEL BANGOR, ABERYSTWYTH, CEREDIGION

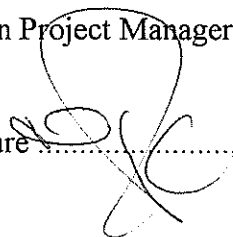
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This report has been prepared by Nigel Page

Position Project Manager

Signature



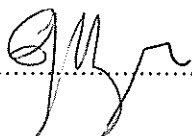
Date

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This report has been checked and approved by Gwilym Hughes on behalf of Cambria Archaeology, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Position Director

Signature



Date

23/01/01

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