

LAND SEARCH AT CAPEL BANGOR ABERYSTWYTH

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



Report No. 2002/96

Report Prepared for:
RPS CHAPMAN WARREN

A R C H A E O L O G Y

CAMBRIA

A R C H A E O L O G Y

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

REPORT NO. 2002/96
PROJECT RECORD NO. 44856

NOVEMBER 2002

INDUSTRIAL LAND SEARCH AT
CAPEL BANGOR
ABERYSTWYTH
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

By

Pete Crane BA Hons MIFA

Cambria Archaeology is the marketing name of the Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited.

The report has been prepared for the specific use of the client. The Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd can accept no responsibility for its use by any other person or persons who may read it or rely on the information it contains.

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

The Trust is both a Limited Company (No. 1198990) and a Registered Charity (No. 504616)

CADEIRYDD CHAIRMAN: B.C.BURNHAM, MA PHD FSA MIFA. CYFARWYDDWR DIRECTOR: E G HUGHES BA MIFA

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	1
SITE HISTORY	1
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	2
METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS	2
DISCUSSION.....	5
CONCLUSION	6
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
ARCHIVE DEPOSITION.....	6
REFERENCES	6
APPENDIX 1:	7
Photo 1: Feature 204, view N, Scale 0.5m	8
Photo 2: Feature 206, view S, scale 0.5m.....	8
Photo 3: Feature 415, view N, scale 0.5m.....	9
Photo 4: Feature 413, view S, scale 0.5m.....	9
Photo 5: Feature 505, view N, scale 0.5m.....	10
Photo 6: Trench 7 mound, view S	10
Photo 7: Trench 7 as excavated, view E, scales 1m	11
Photo 8: Trench 8 mole run, view S, scale 0.5m.....	11
Figure 1: Location	12
Figure 2: Proposed development area and known archaeological sites	13
Figure 3: Geophysical features and aerial cropmarks with location of evaluation trenches ...	14
Figure 4: Topographic survey with location of evaluation trenches	15

SUMMARY

In advance of a proposed development of an industrial estate, eight archaeological trial trenches were dug across a number of potential archaeological features. These had been identified from topographic and aerial evidence during an earlier desk-based assessment, and also from a targeted area of geophysical survey undertaken as an initial part of this evaluation. No archaeological features were found in the test trenches and it would appear that the supposed potential archaeological features were caused by geological anomalies and animal- and root-disturbance.

INTRODUCTION

The project was undertaken in advance of a proposed planning application for construction of an industrial estate. Chapman and Warren, Cardiff commissioned this work on 8th August 2002. Two weeks' fieldwork commenced on 16th September and the weather remained good throughout.

The site covers c.15.5 hectares and is at Ordnance Survey grid reference SN 663800 (Figure 1). It is located 8km to the east of Aberystwyth, immediately on the south side of the A44 trunk road and the Afon Melindwr, a small tributary of the Afon Rheidol that passes further to the south. The site is at the eastern end of a broad terrace, part of the Rheidol Valley, with a view down it to the west. The ground rises very steeply immediately beyond the eastern edge of the site. The ground to the south is similar to that within the site, which is flat on the western side at c. 35m OD, and rises just before its eastern edge to a highest point of c. 60m OD.

Apart from the small number of buildings in the adjacent village of Capel Bangor, the landscape is rural with dispersed farmsteads, containing irregular fields that probably evolved in the later Medieval or modern period and were established before the tithe maps of the 1830-40s. The land use is pasture with some improved pasture. The underlying geology is Lower Palaeozoic slaty mudstone and siltstone overlain by gleyed brown earths of the Clwyd and Conway Series.

The site lies within an area designated as a Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest (Upland Ceredigion) 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 proposed developments such as this one within its area.

Abbreviations used in this report

Sites recorded on the county Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). All archaeological features and contexts are referred to using the three-figure numbering system employed by Cambria Field Operations.

SITE HISTORY

It is not intended here to reiterate the history as this has been covered in two previous desk-based studies (Crane 2000 and Page 2001). The first desk-based assessment looked at five potential locations for industrial development close to Aberystwyth, including the Capel Bangor site. The second report concentrated on a study of the Capel Bangor site. Both reports indicated four potential archaeological sites within this proposed development: three cropmark sites identified on aerial photographs (Figure 2: PRNs 40282; 40283; 40284) and a mound (Figure 2: PRN 40323).

Neither the nature of the cropmark features nor the mound was known. However, it was considered that the mound could be natural. Two field-names immediately to the south of the proposed development area suggested kilns sites, probably of post medieval.

In April 2002, a geophysical survey on part of the proposed development area indicated a large number of potential archaeological features (Taylor 2002). However, the geophysical survey did not pick up any of the cropmarks identified from aerial photographs (Figure 3).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this evaluation was to test the validation and nature of the features identified from the site topography, from aerial photographs and from the geophysical survey. The results of this project were to inform any archaeological constraints on the future development of this site.

METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS

There was no archaeological brief from the area's Heritage Management Development Control Officers, as this project was pre-planning application. However, there was considerable discussion between Chapman Warren, Cambria Archaeology Field Operations and the Heritage Management Development Control Officer of Cambria Archaeology. It was agreed that the first stage was to undertake a geophysical survey (Taylor 2002) covering the area of the potential archaeological features recorded in desk-based assessment, in the eastern part of the proposed development area (a topographic survey was also due to take place in Stage 1, but due to a number of circumstances this was delayed until later). The evaluation trenches were also all in the eastern area of the proposed development covered by the geophysical survey plus trenching of a mound to the west.

Eight 2m wide trenches of slightly varying length were excavated (Figures 3 and 4), totalling 164m in length. This represents 0.25% of the total proposed development area (125,736 sq m), and 1.03% of the geophysical survey area (27900 sq m). The reasoning for the location of the trenches and the results are discussed below. All trenches were machine excavated using a toothless bucket down or into the subsoil, and sometimes through the subsoil to check there were no archaeological features beneath colluvium. The trench bottom and sections were then hand cleaned and any features were further investigated. Trenches had sections or part sections drawn as necessary and all tops and bottoms of trenches along with features were included in the topographic survey. Charcoal samples were taken, where possible, for later analyses, if necessary. Owing to the virtual absence of archaeological features, detailed plans and sections of individual trenches are not included in this report.

Trench 1

This trench was 2m wide by 20m long and was targeted to encounter two narrow "L" shaped features indicated by the geophysical survey.

No archaeological features were revealed except for one small area with a few charcoal flecks, possibly a tree root hole. There were a number of geological subsoil changes, but nothing that correlated with the features indicated in the geophysical survey.

The lowest layer encountered (104), approximately 0.5-0.6m below the ground surface, was a mixed geological deposit, probably fluvial or fluvial-glacial in origin, comprising a grey-brown silty-clay with varying amounts of grit/gravel. Above this, c. 0.3m below the ground surface was a

layer (103) of grey-brown silty-clay with 10% grit/gravel; this layer may be a later geological fluvial deposit, possibly ancient hill wash (colluvium). Above this, c. 0.17 below the ground surface was a grey-brown slightly humic clayish-loam with 15% gravel or small stones; this layer (102) is probably an earlier plough soil. Above this there was a surface layer (101) of turf and topsoil, the soil was a grey-brown humic clayish-loam with 10% gravel/grit.

Finds recovered during machining and cleaning consisted of: 1 iron fragment (nail?), 1 small fragment of gravel tempered pottery, 1 black-glazed pottery sherd, two fragments of china and one shard of glass. All appeared to be post medieval and would be consistent with rubbish being spread with farmyard manure.

Trench 2

This trench was 30m long and targeted to investigate the possible rectilinear cropmark PRN 40283 and the linear cropmark PRN 40284, both located by aerial photography, and a small sub linear geophysical anomaly and a circular geophysical anomaly.

No archaeological features were revealed. Two probable tree-root holes (204) and (206) were identified and investigated (Photos 1 and 2). The layers in the trench section were similar to those in Trench 1, except that the "hill wash" layer (203) was deeper and was only excavated through at the western end of the trench. The lower plough soil (202) and topsoil (201) layers were also thicker (c. 0.25m deep each).

Finds recovered during cleaning consisted of 1 iron "L" shaped object with a rivet and a patterned blue and white china sherd. Both objects are likely to be post medieval.

Trench 3

This trench was 24m long and targeted to encounter an area of a possible kiln site and some linear features, all recorded by the geophysical survey, along with a break of slope of a possible former boundary. The trench was not quite located in the correct position and did not therefore cut the linear features.

No archaeological features were found and the layers revealed were similar to Trench 1. Part of one brick, probably late post medieval rather than modern in date was found and 1 very worn light brown glazed pottery sherd, again probably late post medieval.

Trench 4

This trench was 20m long and targeted to encounter the linear cropmark PRN 40284 located by aerial photography, several other linear features and some possible pits, all identified in the geophysical survey. The whole north section of the trench was drawn (archive drawing 1012). The layers revealed were similar to Trench 1.

There were a number of features in the trench, but only one that was definitely artificial - a shallow gully that probably correlates to one of the geophysical features (Photo 3). This gully (415), with its fill of 60% gravel, was clearly visible only in the northern section where it cut the "hill wash". This gully appeared to diminish across the trench, or its fill became similar to the adjacent layer. It is possible that this gully is associated with the banks and other gully indicated in the geophysical survey, but no of these other features were identifiable in the excavation trench. However, it is possible that all these features are the ruts and humps of a trackway (rather than a former boundary) which, except for the one gully, do not extend into the subsoil, and exists mainly in the lower

plough soil where they were not archaeologically detectable. It may be significant that this “trackway” runs from a small quarry rather than the corner entrance in the northeast corner of the field.

Possible artificial features in the trench were two small irregular holes, only cut to a maximum of 40mm and 70mm into the top of the “hill wash” layer. The fills of both of these holes contained some charcoal flecks and the surface of some of the surrounding “hill wash” layer was heat affected. These features could be the result of tree stump burning.

There were two tree holes, one near the middle of the northern section and the other towards the eastern end of the southern section (Photo 4, Feature 413). Mole runs had disturbed the fill of this latter tree hole down to 0.6m below the surface.

Finds recovered during cleaning came from the plough soil, and consisted of one pot sherd of green-brown glazed gravel tempered ware and one sherd of black or very dark brown glazed hard fired pottery. Both are post medieval in date.

Trench 5

This trench was 10m long and targeted to encounter a line of possible pits indicated in the geophysical survey. Only one small feature was present (Photo 5), near the centre of the northern section, the fill of which contained some 10% charcoal flecks and a few flecks of lime. However, the size and shape of this feature indicated that it was probably a rabbit hole, and it may have filled soon after the field was limed in the later post medieval or modern periods. There were some fluvial features in the western end of the trench. The northern end of the trench cut into shaley mudstone, above which the layers were similar to those found in Trench 1.

There was one rim sherd of brown glazed stoneware found during machining, probably the top of a bottle, and post medieval in date.

Trench 6

This trench was 20m long and targeted to encounter a possible kiln and a number of narrow linear features indicated in the geophysical survey. No such features were present in the trench. The eastern end of the trench cut into the top of the underlying shaley mudstone bedrock. The base of the rest of the trench consisted of a slightly mixed orange clay with 60% grit/gravel. Above this there was a similar layer or part of the same layer. Again there was a layer of probable lower plough soil, not as deep as in the previous trenches and it did not appear to extend to the eastern end of the trench. The upper topsoil and turf was subsequently deeper and this field has probably been improved more recently.

One piece of iron tube was found in the lower plough soil.

Trench 7

This was an “L” shaped trench with equal arms 10m long extending from the top of a prominent mound (Figure 3; Photo 6). Prior to trenching this mound was considered to be natural but could have been artificially enhanced. It lay outside the area of the geophysical survey.

The mound was found to be a natural outcrop with the top bedrock only 75mm in below the ground surface on the top of the mound (Photo 7). The outcrop was a sedimentary mudstone from the Borth Mudstone Formation, exhibiting a near vertical dip and a N-S strike. There were no glacial or

fluvio-glacial drift deposits overlying the bedrock. The topsoil and turf became deeper, up to 220mm, at the base of the mound.

There were a few finds from the turf and topsoil: 1 fragment of iron slag or concretion, 1 iron object of a large iron bent hoop with one smaller iron link (possibly a plough horse fitting), 1 glass stem, 2 fragments of china, 1 large black glazed pottery sherd of Buckley-type ware, and. All the objects would appear to be later post medieval or modern.

Trench 8

This trench was 20m long and targeted to encounter a cropmark circular feature PRN 40323, seen on aerial photographs, and three narrow sub-linear geophysical anomalies. No artificial features were present. One deep mole run, more than 0.5m below the surface (Photo 8), possibly coincided with one of the geophysical anomalies.

Finds from trench cleaning consisted of 1 black glazed rim pottery sherd of Buckley-type ware, and 1 fragment of blue patterned china. Both are of late post medieval date.

Topographic Survey

A survey of all the fields in the project area was subject to a topographic survey using a total station theodolite, marking all boundaries and breaks of slope (Figure 4). This survey was tied into the Ordnance Datum. The only features of significance were a possible quarry and possibly a former field boundary in the same fields as Trenches 2 to 5.

DISCUSSION

On the evidence of aerial photographs and the three features (PRNs 40282; 40283; 40284), this site appeared to have some archaeological potential. The subsequent geophysical survey failed to confirm these cropmarks, but did record a large number of anomalies, in particular: a potential circular feature (location cut by evaluation Trench 2), a large boundary of ditches and banks (cut by Trench 4), and a number of possible pits and kilns.

The evaluation trenches failed to find any traces of the cropmarks, suggesting that these three features were only present as surface anomalies when the aerial photographs were taken, and were not archaeological features extending into the subsoil.

This evaluation was unsuccessful in finding any of the narrow geophysical anomalies, other than the probable correlation with a mole run in Trench 8. It would seem likely that these minor features are either agricultural features within the plough soil or mole runs, which were numerous throughout the field and could be up to 0.5m deep (Photos 5 and 8). The potential pits indicated in the geophysical survey could be tree or animal holes but there was no secure association with those features seen in the evaluation trenches. There was no evidence for any of the potential kiln areas: these could be areas of burning within the plough soil or geological anomalies. The positive and negative anomalies evaluated by Trench 4 only found a small number of actual features, confirming that these anomalies are likely to be mainly within the plough soil; it is suggested that they are relics of a trackway rather than a substantial boundary.

The “hill wash layer” was found above the bedrock and upper geological mixed clays and gravel and, to a greater or lesser extent, below the plough soils in all the evaluation trenches. The date of this hill wash or colluvium is not known, but it probably accumulated as a result of human activity,

perhaps forest clearance and/or cultivation, on the slopes above the site. There were a very few small fragments of charcoal within this “hill wash layer” but these are considered to be due to worm action that went deep into the plough soil and below. The levels of the plough soil probably accumulated from the later post medieval period, when the field boundaries were firmly established, and up to the Second World War. Most of the artefacts recovered probably came from the plough soil and went out onto the fields as rubbish with farmyard manure. The two sherds of black glazed rim of Buckley Ware type from Trenches 7 and 8 could come from the same vessel and appear to confirm this spread rubbish interpretation. After this period a pastoral farming with occasional grass improvements appeared to have become the norm.

CONCLUSION

This project has shown that there is no significant archaeological material within the intended development area and no archaeological conditions need to be implemented other than the recording of the current field boundaries should their removal be proposed. However, only 0.25% of the proposed development area was examined in the evaluation trenches and archaeological deposits and features could therefore have been missed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mr B Jones of Ty Llwyd Farm, Capel Bangor. Richard Ramsey and Hubert Wilson, both of Cambria Archaeology, for fieldwork and post excavation assistance.

ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

Finds and charcoal samples were discarded after consultation with the Archaeological Development Control Officer.

REFERENCES

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Crane P 2000 | Industrial Land Search at Aberystwyth: archaeological desk-based assessment. Unpublished Cambria Archaeology report for Chapman Warren. Project No: 40265. Copy held by Cambria Archaeology SMR, Llandeilo |
| Page N 2001 | Industrial Land Search at Capel Bangor: archaeological desk-based assessment. Unpublished Cambria Archaeology report for Chapman Warren. Project No: 42559. |
| Taylor K I 2002 | Geophysical Survey carried out at Ty Llwyd Farm, Capel Bangor, Aberystwyth. Unpublished report by Stratascan for Cambria Archaeology. Ref No: 1618. Copy held by Cambria Archaeology SMR, Llandeilo |

Cartographic Sources

1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales: Sheet 163

1984 British Geological Survey 1:50000 Series: Sheet 163, Aberystwyth. Solid

1989 British Geological Survey 1:50000 Series: Sheet 163, Aberystwyth. Drift

APPENDIX 1:

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

- A. Copy of final report.
- B. Site records, including context record sheets and site notebook.
- C. Drawing catalogue and site drawings.
- D. Site photographs - catalogue, colour slide and B/W contact sheets.
- E. Finds catalogue, individual finds record and finds report.
- G. List of references, including primary and secondary sources.
- I. Archive report and draft copies of final report.
- J. Publication drawings.
- M. Miscellaneous correspondence.

There is no material in categories F, H, K, L and N.

The archive is currently held by Cambria Archaeology Field Operations, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, as project number 44856.



Photo 1: Feature 204, view N, Scale 0.5m

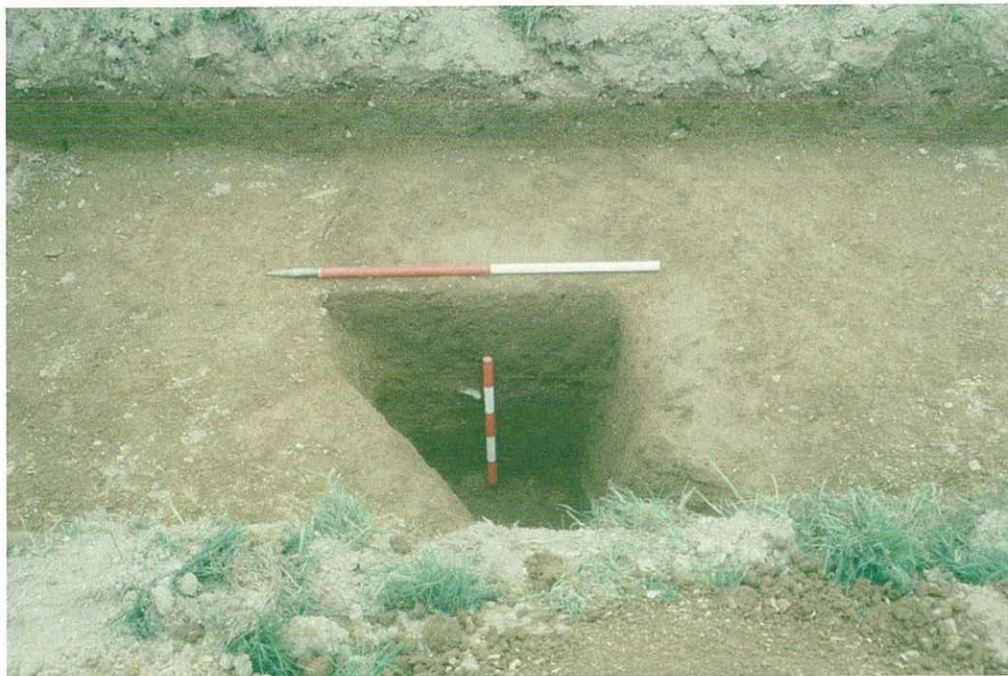


Photo 2: Feature 206, view S, scale 0.5m



Photo 3: Feature 415, view N, scale 0.5m



Photo 4: Feature 413, view S, scale 0.5m



Photo 5: Feature 505, view N, scale 0.5m



Photo 6: Trench 7 mound, view S



Photo 7: Trench 7 as excavated, view E, scales 1m



Photo 8: Trench 8 mole run, view S, scale 0.5m

Figure 1: Location

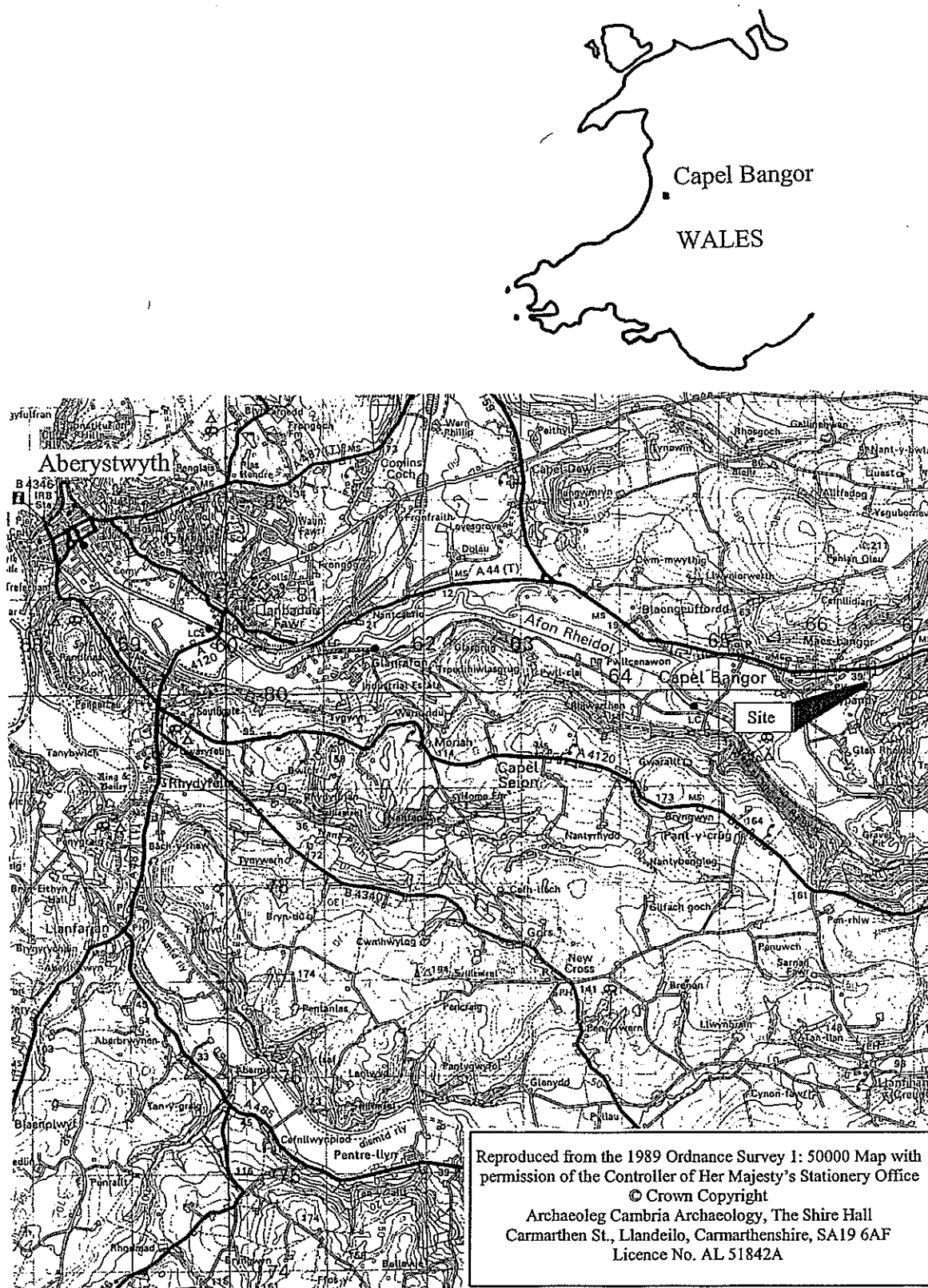


Figure 2: Proposed development area and known archaeological sites

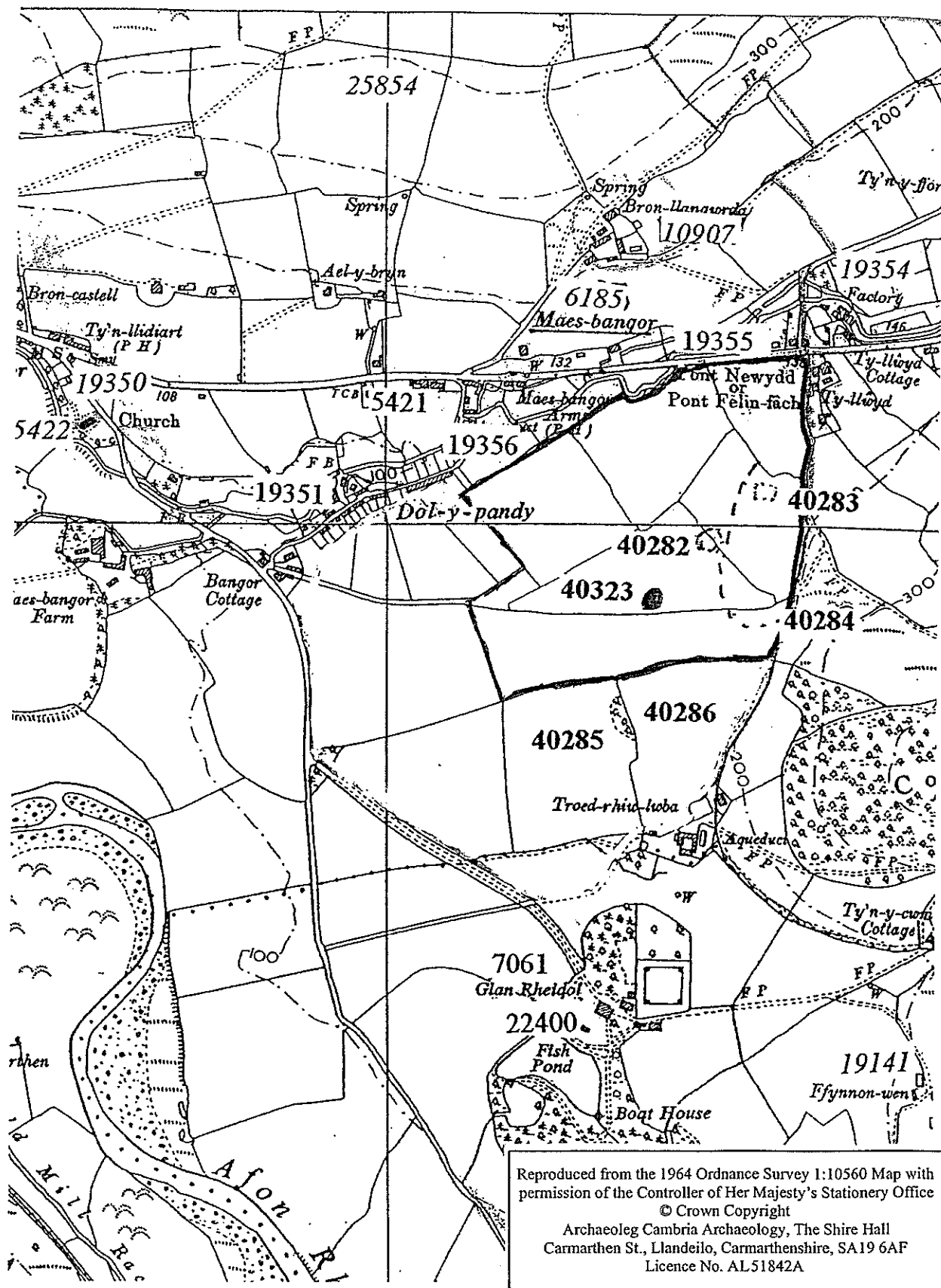


Figure 3: Geophysical features and aerial cropmarks with location of evaluation trenches



Figure 4: Topographic survey with location of evaluation trenches




INDUSTRIAL LAND SEARCH AT
CAPEL BANGOR
ABERYSTWYTH
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

REPORT NUMBER 2002/96

NOVEMBER 2002

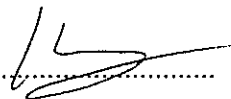
This report has been prepared by Pete Crane

Position Senior Archaeologist

Signature  Date 11 November 2002

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

Position Principal Archaeological Officer

Signature  Date 11 December 2002

As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any comments you may have
on the content or presentation of this report