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PENYGARN ROAD, TYCROES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF,
JULY 2002



Report No. 2002/61

Report Prepared for:
ROGER BUFFEE



A R C H A E O L O G

CAMBRIA

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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

REPORT NO. 2002/61
PROJECT RECORD NO. 45242

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By

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PENYGARN ROAD, TYCROES: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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1.0 SUMMARY

Cambria Archaeology was commissioned. by Roger Buffee, to undertake a watching brief on the development of two building plots at Penygarn Road, Tycroes.

The presence, nearby, of the site of a possible round barrow suggested that the watching brief should concentrate on the groundworks associated with the development, in order to check for the presence of associated, 'satellite' burials, and any other related features that may have existed within the vicinity of the development. In the event, no archaeological features of prehistoric date were exposed by the groundworks.

Three historic buildings were to be demolished as part of the development, all of them 19th century with later additions. One, a dwelling - with abutting modern Dutch barn - had been largely demolished in the later 20th century. The others, a smithy and its ancillary building were largely intact. All the buildings were subject to basic recording.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

2.1 Site location and geology

The development site lies on the southern side of the village of Tycroes, 3km SW of Ammanford, at NGR SN 605 099. It lies on gently sloping ground near the head of the valley of a small tributary of the Afon Llŵchwr, at an altitude of 80m above sea level (Fig.1). The site comprises an open field and four buildings, flanking the north side of Penygarn Road, which leads SE from the A489(T) connecting Ammanford to the M4.

The geological map suggests that the underlying solid geology is represented by Middle and Upper Coal Measures, with a band of Pennant Sandstone running just north of the site (British Geological Survey, 1994). Soils are classified as Brickfield 2, giving rise to Grade 4 land (MAFF 1990).

2.2 Site description

The site was considered to be of archaeological interest as it was thought that it may have contained sub-surface archaeological features associated with a possible Bronze Age burial mound or barrow (recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record for Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire as PRN 4854), at Pen-y-garn immediately south of the development area (NGR SN 6063 0981). The site is represented by place-name evidence (Penygarn – 'summit of the cairn'), see Fig. 1. It was visited by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments (Wales) in 1917 who noted the place-name but concluded that 'nothing of archaeological interest' was present (RCAHM(W) 1917, 114 No. 331).

However, a possible burial mound has been identified, on an aerial photograph, to the southeast of Pen-y-garn (RAF AP ref. CPE\UK\2079\ 19th May 1947, frame no. 1206; see Fig. 1). If it is a burial mound, it was thought possible that associated, 'satellite' burials, and other related features and mounds may have existed within the vicinity of the development.

In addition, the development site contained four buildings, three of them historic - a smithy with an ancillary building, and another building labelled 'Banc-y-ffynnon' on historic maps. In their present form, the smithy and its ancillary building are late 19th – early 20th century buildings of masonry and brick. Banc-y-ffynnon has largely gone, and was represented solely by brick footings resting upon concrete foundations. Abutting the north end of Banc-y-ffynnon was a Dutch barn.

Fig. 1 - Site location

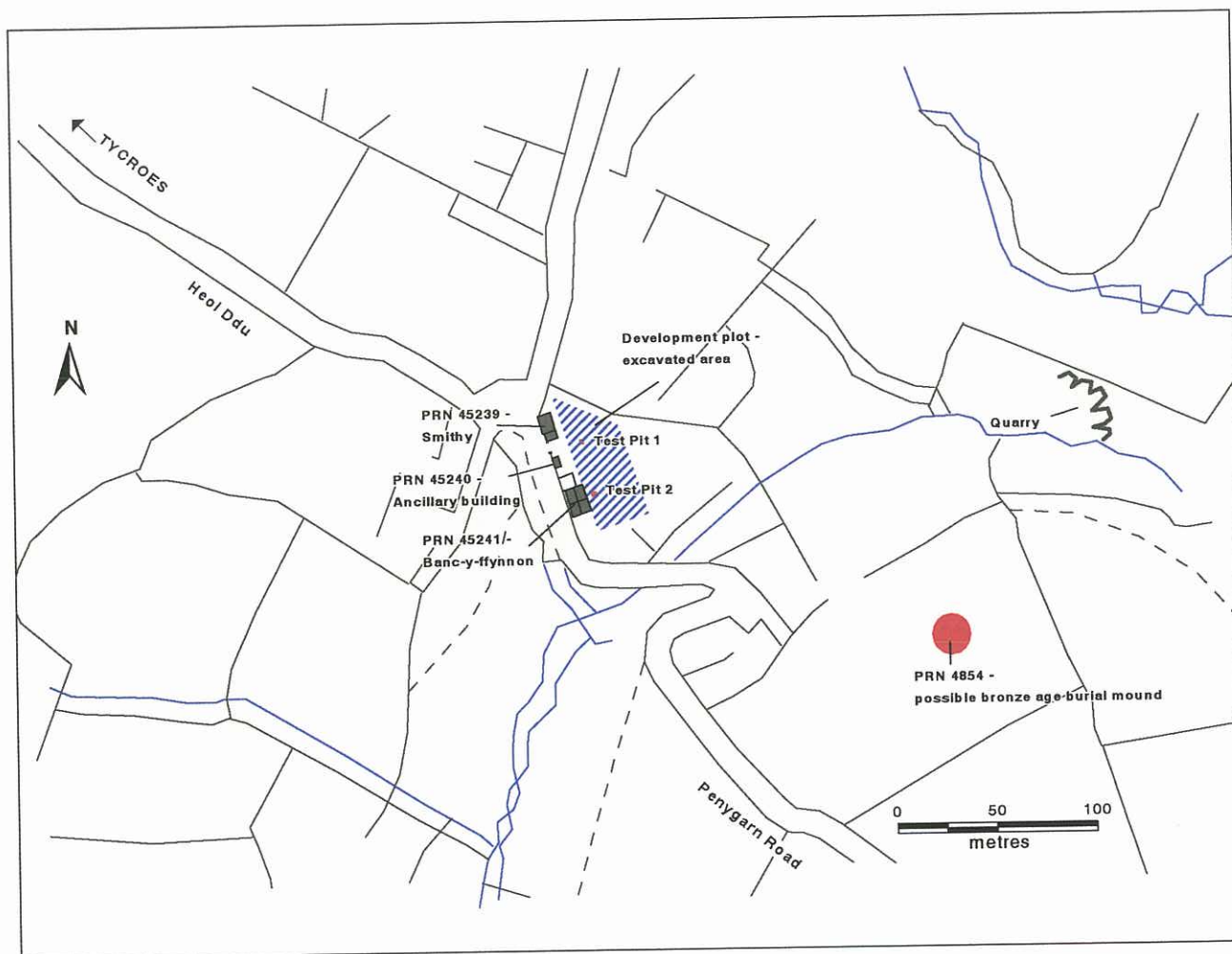


Fig. 2 - The site before excavation, looking east-northeast



3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The project comprised an archaeological watching brief on the soil strip for the house plots, and the excavation of two test pits, in order to observe, investigate and record any archaeological features or deposits revealed during the works. This was a slight change to the original brief dated 08/02/2002 from Cambria Archaeology–Heritage Management, a change agreed in consultation with the Development Control Officer, Lucy Rowley-Williams.

In addition, the buildings occupying the site were subject to basic recording prior to their demolition, which was not anticipated and also not included within the brief, in order that they may be 'preserved by record'.

4.0 METHODOLOGIES

4.1 Documentary search

A documentary search was undertaken prior to the commencement of the scheme, to allow the archaeological structures and features to be set in their geographical, topographical, archaeological and historical context. This included searches of the Sites and Monuments Record for Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire and the National Library of Wales, a search of primary historic documents for archaeological information relating to the study area and a review of published sources for information relating to the study area.

4.2 Fieldwork

Fieldwork consisted of a watching brief, and outline recording of the buildings. An archaeologist was present during all topsoil stripping and the test pit excavations. Archaeological features or deposits revealed during the groundworks were examined and recorded to an appropriate level, including archaeological monitoring of top-soil clearance, inspection of subsoil for archaeological features, recording of all archaeological features in plan, rapid sample excavation to investigate features and further inspection to identify archaeological features and recording.

In addition, the soon to be demolished buildings were subject to rapid photographic recording.

5.0 RESULTS

5.1 The excavation

An area measuring approximately 70m N-S by 25m E-W was mechanically stripped, to a varying depth of 0.20m - 0.25m, using a JCB with a 1.8m wide toothless grading bucket.

The topsoil (or ploughsoil) removed on the northern side of the site was a 'made ground', comprising re-deposited dark brown humic silty clay soil which contained coarse components of coal, stone and assorted urban rubbish and building debris. A test pit was machine dug to a depth of approximately 1.8m, close to the location of the footings for the northernmost of the two proposed buildings. The test excavation showed that the made ground was 1.3m deep and overlay a 0.10m deep homogeneous layer of dark brown humic silty clay soil which probably represented a buried soil horizon. The buried soil horizon, in turn, overlay a 0.40m depth of natural dark orange brown silty clay subsoil.

On the southern side of the site the made ground was much shallower, averaging 0.10m deep, and again overlay a 0.10m depth of buried soil. A second test pit in the location of the footings for the southernmost of the proposed buildings revealed a natural yellowish grey subsoil overlying a degrading shale bedrock at a depth of some 0.45m.

No prehistoric archaeological deposits or features were observed, and no finds or other artefactual/ecofactual evidence were revealed.

Fig. 3 – Site plan

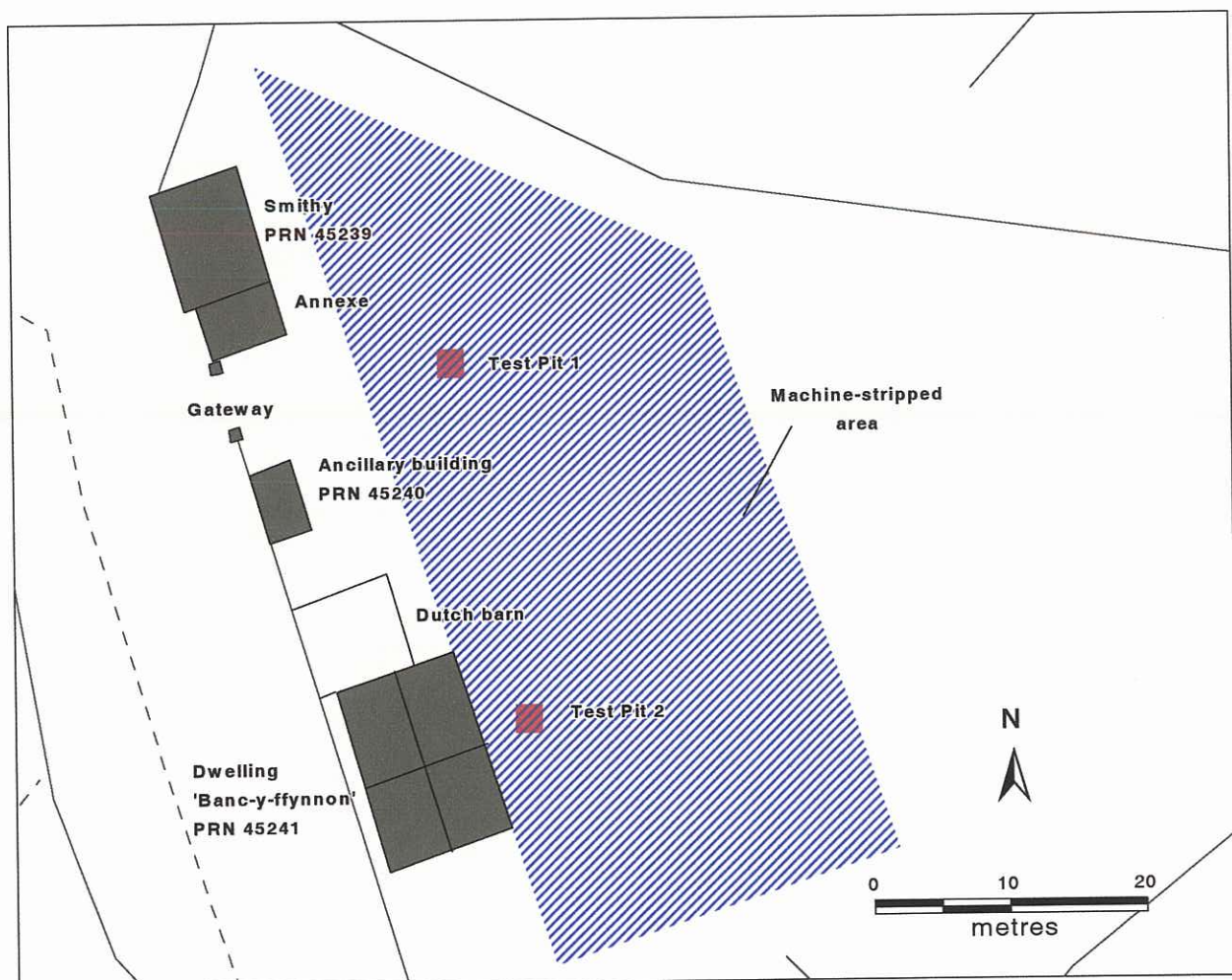


Fig. 4 - The site during excavation, looking north



5.2 The buildings

The three historic buildings and the Dutch barn were to be demolished as part of the development, but were not included in the brief. Nevertheless, they were subject to superficial photographic recording.

They comprised a smithy and an ancillary structure, and another building labelled 'Banc-y-ffynnon' on historic maps. Only Banc-y-ffynnon is marked (but not labelled) in the Llanedy parish tithe map of 1841, when the site was part of Gelli-geidrim, which belonged to the larger holding of Pen-y-garn. The smithy and Banc-y-ffynnon are marked and labelled on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1891 (Ordnance Survey 1891, XLVIII. SE) and 1908 (Ordnance Survey 1891, XLVIII. SE) and the smithy appears to have remained operational into the 20th century.

The smithy (PRN 45239)

The smithy (PRN 45239; NGR SN 60518 09923) is a rectangular, gabled building of a single storey, aligned NW-SE and measuring 9.0m x 7.0m. At its southern end is an adjoining lean-to annexe set back from the western side by 1.0m and measuring 4.0m x 6.0m. It is constructed from medium, angular, random shale rubble with red-brick surrounds. Much of the building is under a heavy external growth of ivy.

Its western side wall fronts onto Pen-y-garn Road, and is pierced by a non-vehicular doorway at its southern end. The entry has a brick surround and probably therefore secondary, with a concrete lintel that is may be later still. To the north, this wall is pierced by a window with a simple rubble surround, probably primary, and a timber lintel. The present timber frame is ?later 20th century. The forge occupies the north, gable wall and has a projecting rubble-masonry hood, sloping back, with an intervening string-course, to a slightly projecting, square stack which, externally, lies beneath heavy ivy. All appear to be primary features and the presence of red brick in the hood is probably due to repair rather than rebuild.

The east wall is pierced, to the north, by a simple square window with a red-brick surround and a ?later 20th century timber frame. Red-brick was not apparent in the similar window at the south end of this wall, and the wider window which lies between them, but the exterior face of this wall could not be discerned beneath the ivy. The latter window also exhibited a ?later 20th century timber frame. The south wall is blind with the exception of a small square air vent opening into the lean-to.

The present roof is in corrugated asbestos sheeting, on A-frame trusses (some with 'king-posts') which may be contemporary with the raising of the eaves-line in red brick. The southern half of the building has a plank-floored loft in the roof-space. The floor lies beneath a mass of scrap metal and fittings, not all of them derived from the forge, and its nature could not be determined but is probably concrete as is the floor of the lean-to annexe.

The adjoining lean-to annexe has a vehicular doorway on its western side. It may have been a coal store.

Primary features are late 19th century, before 1891; the secondary red-brick features are very probably early 20th century.

A roadside wall leads SE from the SW corner of the smithy. Its north end butts against the smithy annexe as one of a pair of red-brick gate-posts, with pyramidal concrete caps, either side of a simple entrance gap into the site. It continues south for 2m as a shale-rubble and red-brick and the whole may be contemporary with the red brickwork in the smithy ie. early 20th century.

Fig. 5 - The smithy from the west



Fig. 6 - The interior of the smithy north wall



Fig. 7 - The smithy, ancillary building, and roadside wall from the south



Fig. 8 – The ancillary building from the northwest



The ancillary building (PRN 42540)

The ancillary building (PRN 45240; NGR SN 6052 0990), like the smithy, is a rectangular building constructed from medium, angular, random shale rubble with red-brick surrounds. It is set back slightly from the roadside wall, which butts against its NW corner. The building is aligned NW-SE and measures approximately 5.0m by 4.0m. It is constructed from medium, angular, random shale rubble which may be primary ie. early 19th century, but is not shown on any maps. It lies under a heavy external growth of ivy. The north gable end is pierced by two doorways and the present roof is of corrugated iron. Ivy growth prevented description of any other architectural features and access was not gained to the interior.

Its west (ie. roadside) wall-line continues southwards and now forms the west wall of the Dutch barn. The remainder of this barn comprises steel girders with a sheet-metal covering, all from the 20th century. It measures approximately 7m by 7m and abuts the north end of Banc-y-ffynnon.

Fig. 9 - The Dutch barn from the southwest, showing its ?earlier west wall



Fig. 10 – The ancillary building from the northeast, with the Dutch barn and Banc-y-ffynnon in the background



Fig. 11 – Banc-y-ffynnon footings from the southeast, with the Dutch barn in the background



Banc-y-ffynnon (PRN 45241)

Banc-y-ffynnon (PRN 45241; NGR SN 6053 0988) is marked on the tithe map of 1841. However, the building is now only represented by the lowest 7 courses of a brick cavity wall from the mid-late 20th century, which define a rectangular area measuring 14m N-S by 10m E-W. The remains of internal walls divide the area into 4 rooms, but the interior is now under grass which is level with the uppermost course. The ground works revealed part of the concrete foundations and showed these to have been dug into the subsoil. In addition the topsoil strip revealed evidence, in the form of discrete *in situ* patches of cobbling, for either a courtyard or hard standing frontage to the east side of the building. although the limited excavation did not reveal the extent of this.

The building was clearly a dwelling. The name 'Banc-y-ffynnon', used on the 1891 OS map, suggests that its predecessor was also a dwelling. It was largely rebuilt in brick in the mid-late 20th century, and largely demolished in the late 20th century.

The removal of the topsoil immediately east of Banc-y-ffynnon revealed patches of *in situ* stone cobbling and stone slabs, but this former surface was largely disturbed and it was difficult to establish its true extent, or indeed its date. However, it may pre-date the brick building.

6.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fieldwork was undertaken by Richard Ramsey of Cambria Archaeology. The project was managed by Neil Ludlow, also of Cambria Archaeology and co-writer of this report with Richard Ramsey. Thanks are due to Roger and Kate Buffee and the JCB driver for their help and co-operation during the watching brief.

7.0 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

The archive, which will be indexed according to the National Monuments Record (NMR) material categories, is held by Cambria Archaeology, Llandeilo, and contains the following:-

- A.** Copy of the final report and disk
- B.** Field notes
- C.** Copies of planning specifications and site drawings
- D.** Photographs
- G.** List of references
- J.** Final drawings
- L.** General administrative notes
- M.** Project correspondence

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

8.0 REFERENCES

Sites and Monuments Record for Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire

Unpublished Maps

National Library of Wales, Parish of Llanedy, Tithe Map and Apportionment, 1841.

Published maps

British Geological Survey, 1:250000, 'The Rocks of Wales: Geological Map of Wales', 1994.

Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), 1:50000 series, Sheet 230 (Drift Edition), 1977.

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, 1:250000, Agricultural Land Classification, Sheet 140, 1990.

Ordnance Survey, 1" to the mile Old Series, Sheet XLI, 1831.

Ordnance Survey, 1: 10560, Carmarthenshire Sheet XLVIII.SE, First Edition, 1891.

Ordnance Survey, 1: 10560, Carmarthenshire Sheet XLVIII.SE, Second Edition, 1908.

Ordnance Survey, 1:10560, Sheet SN 61 SW, 1964.

Aerial photographs

RAF CPEUK2079\1206, 1946

Published works

RCAHM(W), 1917, Inventory: Carmarthenshire

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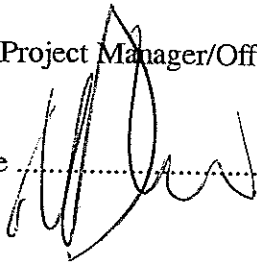
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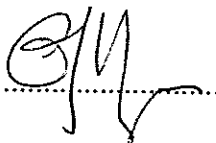
Date

23/9/02

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

Position Director

Signature



Date

23/9/02

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