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DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON THE

SCRAPING AND RELINING

of the

WATERMAINS

FROM PONTRHDYGROES TO CWMYSTWYTH, CARDIGANSHIRE (CON 9407)

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Commissioned by: **DWR CYMRU**

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REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON THE SCRAPING AND RELINING OF THE WATERMAINS FROM PONTRHYDYGROES TO CWMYSTWYTH, CARDIGANSHIRE (CON 9407)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Details of the proposed scraping and relining of the watermains from Pontrhydygroes to Cwmystwyth were forwarded to the Heritage Management Section of Dyfed Archaeological Trust by Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water for comment in May 1994.

Following the initial comments made by the Heritage Management Section of the Trust, Dwr Cymru were advised of the need for a detailed archaeological desk top assessment of the project to be prepared in order for detailed mitigatory measures to be drafted. This desk top assessment was produced by Dyfed Archaeological Trust in September 1994. Dwr Cymru accepted the recommendations in the report and commissioned a watching brief to be carried out on any archaeological sites affected by the scheme prior to and/or during the work, as part of the mitigation strategy. An archaeological report on the results of the watching brief was also commissioned.

1.1 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 should be read in conjunction with the 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.

1.2 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 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 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 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

2.1 General

This watching brief was required because of ground disturbance adjacent to Hafod mansion (see desk-top study compiled for this scheme).

2.2 Construction Techniques

Due to deterioration, the 15 year old iron water main required scraping and relining. This involved the excavation of pits about 120m apart on the line of the existing main to enable access into the pipe. Little new ground disturbance is required for this process.

2.3 Observations

Two pits or trenches were found to contain remains of archaeological interest. Both lie close to Hafod mansion (see location map, Figure 1).

Trench 1 (Figure 1), located on the edge of a terrace created for a carriage drive, was of greater interest. It comprised a pit 3.5m by 1.2m and 1.8m deep with a SE facing section composed entirely of man-made deposits. These consisted of:

1. Topsoil. A dark brown silty loam about 20cm thick.

2. Layer of shattered shale fragments and gravel in a matrix of dark brown silty-loam. This layer seems to consist of a mixture of subsoil and topsoil - a dump of material to create the terrace for the carriage drive.

3. Layer of fine gravel. This is really a lens within 2, but its angle of rest indicates that it and 2 were deposited from the NE.

4. A 5cm thick layer consisting of a silty-clay loam with a small percentage of small stones and charcoal specks. This seems to be a thin buried soil or turf line.

5. A band, up to 20cm thick, of grey-white crushed mortar with some shattered stone fragments. This has the appearance of being a demolition layer deposited after the removal of larger reusable stones.

6. A thick, 0.8m, layer of banded gravel ranging in size from the very fine (2-3mm) up to shattered shale of 5-6cm and varying in colour from orange to olive brown. This layer has the appearance of a undisturbed fluvio-glacial deposit but the presence of layer 7 below it clearly demonstrates that it was laid down by man in recent times.

7. A thin layer of charcoal. The charcoal seemed to consisted of hardwood, not oak, twigs and branches up to 4cm dia-

meter. Also present were what appeared to be small fragments of degraded mortar and a iron object, possibly a nail.

8. Gravel, orange brown in colour, possibly the undisturbed geological subsoil.

9. Trench for a modern drainage pipe.

Trench 2 was not recorded in detail and not drawn. The trench exposed a section consisting of banded gravels similar to layer 6 in Trench 1 but here assumed to be undisturbed geological deposits over which lay a very thin, less that 10cm, topsoil.

2.4 Conclusions

The exposure in Trench 1 is of interest as there seems to be two phases of construction present over an original ground surface at an unknown depth though perhaps at about the level of layer 7. Phase 1 consists of the charcoal deposit over which the massive dump of gravel, 6, was laid. A thin soil, 4, had formed over this gravel. This soil is at approximately the same level as the ground surface to the SW (see sketch section). Phase 2 comprises a dump of demolition material, layer 5, and a gravel deposit, layers 2 and 3. Clearly the purpose of this dump was to create the terrace for the carriage drive. In Trench 2 it would appear that the geological deposits have been cut into in order to create a terraced area. It is probable that the gravel deposits quarried here were redeposited in the area of Trench 1. The source of the demolition layer 5 in Trench 1 is unknown.

3.0 THE FINDS

No finds were retained during the watching brief.

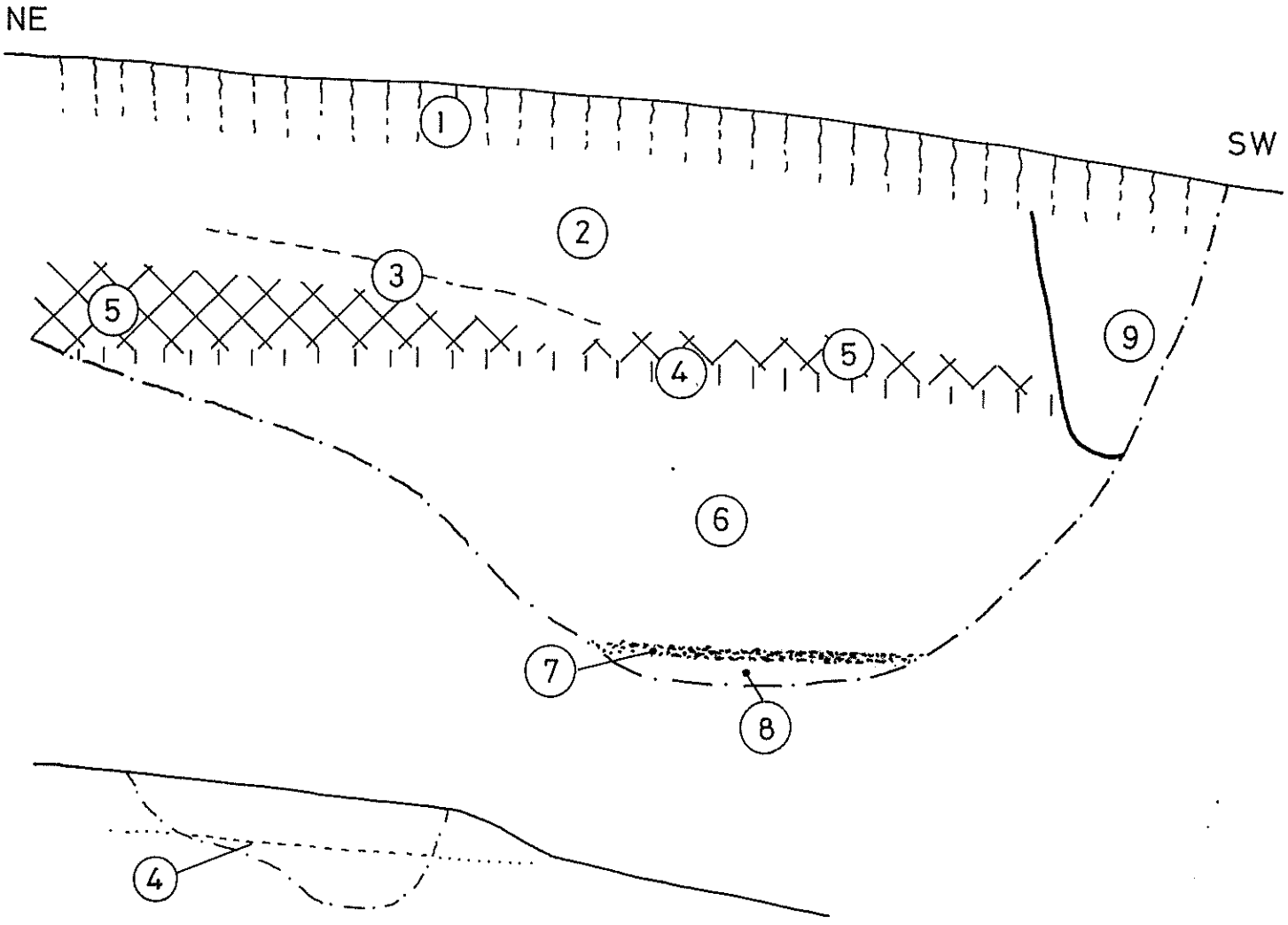
4.0 THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists:

two colour sides - Trench 1 and Trench 2

two B/W negatives - Trench 1 and Trench 2

TRENCH 1 · SE FACING SECTION · 1:20



SKETCH SECTION