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LAND ADJACENT TO WOODHOUSE, FURNACE, LLANELLI

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Report No. 2003/23

Report Prepared for:
MR. STUART ASHFORD



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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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LAND ADJACENT TO WOODHOUSE, FURNACE, LLANELLI

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By

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LAND ADJACENT TO WOODHOUSE, FURNACE, LLANELLI

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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SUMMARY

A planning application was made by Mr Stuart Ashford to construct a new house with garage on a plot of land adjacent to Woodhouse, Furnace, Llanelli, a few metres to the east of the remains of a late 18th century blast furnace, Raby's Furnace – a Scheduled Ancient Monument (PRN 4491; NGR SN50390151; SAM Carm.219). Because of the close proximity to the remains of the furnace an archaeological watching brief was required and Mr Ashford commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Operations to carry out the work in February 2003.

The development plot lies in an area thought to be formerly occupied by ancillary buildings associated with the furnace, in particular the ore and charcoal fuel stores. In the event the watching brief revealed little of archaeological interest, although two lengths of angle iron were exposed, which were initially thought to be the remains of a tramway associated with the furnace. However, there were no associated deposits or structures to suggest that the lengths of iron were in situ, so their function remains unclear.

It seems from cartographic sources and the evidence recovered during the watching brief that all the buildings of Raby's Furnace, except for the furnace itself, were removed during the early – mid 19th century following the closure of the furnace in 1820.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT COMMISSION

A planning application by Mr Stuart Ashford to construct a new house with garage on a plot of land adjacent to Woodhouse, Furnace, Llanelli, a few metres to the east of the remains of an 18th century blast furnace, Raby's Furnace – a Scheduled Ancient Monument (PRN 4491; NGR SN50390151; SAM Carm.219) – required an archaeological watching brief. Mr Ashford commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Operations to carry out the watching brief in February 2003.

1.2 SCOPE OF PROJECT

The watching brief was intended to record any archaeological structures, features or deposits exposed during the site clearance and foundation excavations through a series of site visits timed to coincide with the main phases of groundworks, with the information gained compiled into a report. This report describes the physical environment of the site and summarises the watching brief results (Section 2).

1.3 ABBREVIATIONS

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).

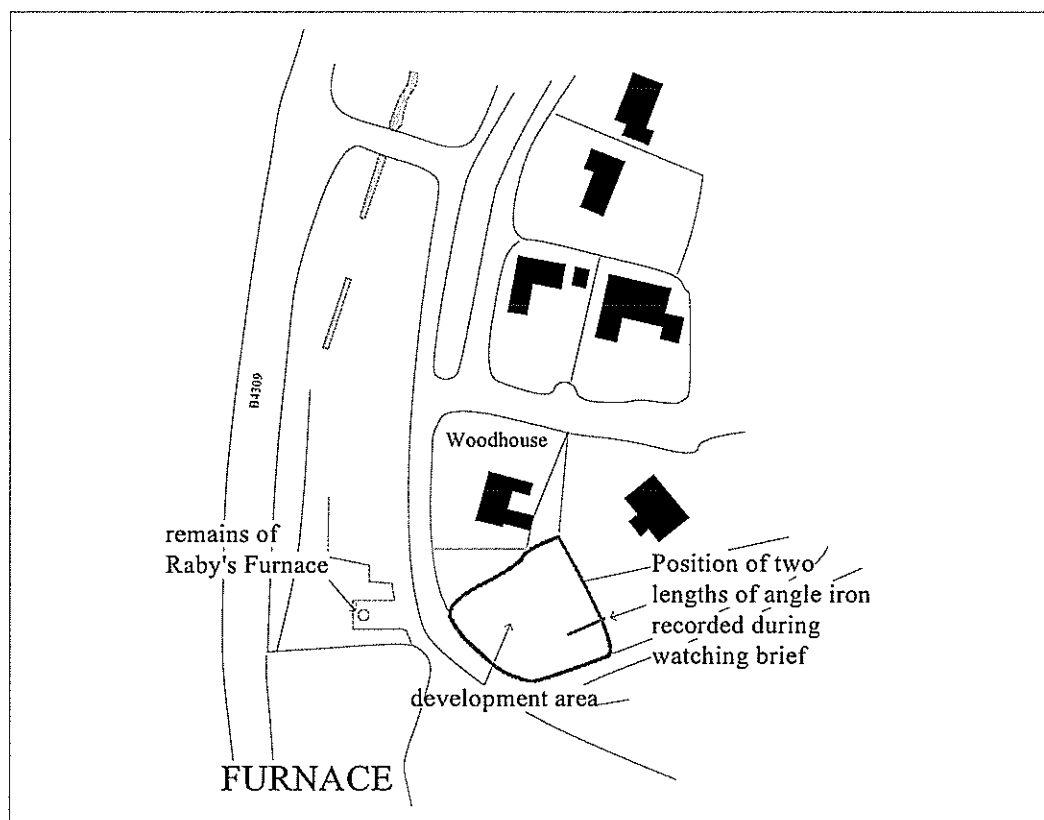


Figure 1: *Location plan showing development site and the positions of the two lengths of iron.*

2. THE WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

2.1 LOCATION

The development site lies in a plot of land adjacent to two existing properties, Woodhouse and Harddfan, on the northern outskirts of Furnace, Llanelli. Prior to development the site consisted of a raised area of grass, with trees and shrubs covering the lower part around the west and south edges. The site lies a few metres east of the Scheduled remains of Raby's Furnace (PRN 4419; SAM Carm.219), which was constructed sometime around 1793-1800, although, it is believed that it replaced an earlier furnace built before 1750 (Page and Wilson 2002, 3). The later furnace was short-lived as it blew in 1815 and the site was closed in 1820.

2.2 LANDSCAPE CHANGE WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT SITE

Raby's Furnace occupied a split-level site, with the furnace constructed against a steep, high bank to facilitate feeding the ore and charcoal into the furnace pot from the top. The lower level of the site would have contained the furnace, with its blowing and casting houses, and the leat (now partially culverted) to drive the waterwheel that powered the bellows. The upper level would have been occupied by ancillary buildings such as the fuel and ore stores, which are likely to have stood close to the development site.

All the buildings except for the furnace itself were removed during the 19th century. By the time the Ordnance Survey surveyed the site in the 1880s and published the 1st edition 1:10560 maps in 1891 the site consisted only of the remains of the furnace, with the development site shown as open ground. Between 1891 and 1916 the development site was laid out as an area of informal gardens between two minor mansions, Glyncoed to the north and Llwyn-eithin to the southeast. This layout remained the same until Woodhouse was constructed in the 1970s or 1980s.

2.3 THE WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

Monitoring of the groundworks revealed little of archaeological interest. In general, the deposits were a light brown clayey stony soil, with some areas of dark brown/black loamy soil and large stones, which may have derived from the demolition of the structures associated with Raby's Furnace.

Two short lengths of angle iron were exposed towards the southeast corner of the site forming a short, roughly east-northeast – west-southwest line. It was initially thought that they may have been one of the rails of a tramway associated with the furnace, but there were no apparent structures or *in situ* deposits associated with them and their function remains uncertain. In fact it is by no means certain if the lengths of iron were *in situ*, or if they were deposited when the furnace buildings were removed in the early – mid 19th century.



Plate 1: *General view of the site showing the raised lawn area during groundworks.*



Plate 2: *One of the two lengths of angle iron during excavation.*

APPENDIX ONE: CATALOGUE OF WATCHING BRIEF ARCHIVE

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 site notes.
- D.** Site photographs – digital images.
- M.** Miscellaneous correspondence.

There is no material in categories **C, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L** and **N**.

The archive is currently held by Cambria Archaeology Field Operations, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, as project number 47478.

SOURCES

CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Ordnance Survey

1891 1st edition 1:10560 map (sheet Carms.LVIII.NE)

1916 1st edition 1:2500 map (sheet Carms.LVIII.2)

1916 1st edition 1:2500 map (sheet Carms.LVIII.3)

Unpublished sources

Page N & Wilson H	2002	<i>The charcoal-fuelled ironworking industries of Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire.</i> Cambria Archaeology Report for Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments. Report No. 2002/26; Project Record Number 44754.
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