

DELTA LAKES COASTAL LINK ROAD LLANELLI

ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL



Report No. 2005/51
Project Record No. 54169

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Carmarthenshire County Council

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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By

Nigel Page

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REPORT NUMBER 2005/51

May 2005

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have on the content or presentation of this report

DELTA LAKES, COASTAL LINK ROAD, LLANELLI ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

SUMMARY

The proposed redevelopment of part of Llanelli's former industrial district, Delta Lakes (NGR SS50829861), required a programme of geotechnical investigation. The archaeologically sensitive location of the development site meant that an archaeological appraisal of the area was needed to assess the likely impact of the investigations on any surviving below ground archaeological interests. The results from the appraisal and the results of the geotechnical investigation will be used to inform the future design plans for the site in order to minimise and mitigate the impact on the archaeological resource.

Map searches revealed extensive industrial buildings on the site during the later 19th and early 20th century, consisting of a steel works, workers' housing, a dock, a wharf, a brickworks, a reservoir, railways and coal yards. By the early 20th century the site was virtually covered by the South Wales Steel and Tin Works. The site has been cleared of all standing structures, except part of a stone wharf, and the dock and reservoir have been filled in. The extent and condition of any below ground remains is at present unknown.

The proposed geotechnical investigations have the potential to encounter buried remains on any part of the site.

A revised report will be prepared following the completion of the geotechnical investigations in order to incorporate analysis of the below ground stratigraphy revealed in the test pits and boreholes.

INTRODUCTION

Project proposals and commission

Carmarthenshire County Council are currently developing plans for redeveloping the Delta Lakes area in Llanelli. The scheme will include the construction of a number of industrial units and the associated infrastructure required to service them. Delta Lakes occupy the site of a former dock, New Dock, and the whole area has a long and rich industrial tradition. Therefore, it was felt that an important archaeological resource could exist within the proposed development site and an archaeological appraisal was required to assess the potential impact of the proposals on that resource. Carmarthenshire County Council commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field operations to carry out the appraisal in March and April 2005.

Scope of the project

The project has two elements: a rapid appraisal of the potential archaeological resource within the proposed development area; and to monitor the geotechnical test pits and boreholes in order to assess the potential of the buried deposits to contain archaeological information.

The appraisal results may be used to inform the locations of the test pits and boreholes.

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 the proposed scheme on that resource (Section 4). 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.

Abbreviations used in this report

All sites recorded on the county Historic Environment Record (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). New sites have been assigned a PRN and located by their NGR. References to cartographic and documentary evidence and published sources will be given in brackets throughout the text, with full details listed in the sources section at the rear of the report.

THE STUDY AREA

The proposed Delta Lakes development site occupies c.10.7ha (26.5 acres) of former industrial land on the southern edge of Llanelli at NGR SS50829861. The site is bounded on its north side by Delta Lakes, on its eastern side by the B4304 road and on its south and east sides by the Llanelli Coastal Road.

The site is currently semi-cleared open ground, with the remains of a 19th century wharf along the north edge. The eastern half of the site is rough grass covered land and the western half has been levelled and is now gravel covered (Plate 1).



Plate 1: general view east across the former site. In 1880 this area was occupied by coal yards and by 1916 it had been built over as part of the South Wales Steel and Tin Works.

SUMMARY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

Landscape development within the proposed redevelopment site

The present landscape is the direct result of natural processes and human actions interacting and influencing each other since the end of the last ice age, *c.*12,000 years ago (Rackham 199,6). Nowhere are these interactions more evident than in coastal areas where the constant battle between natural and human forces has resulted in the construction of sea defences, docks, drained marshes, shipwrecks and areas of drowned landscape (Page 1997, 2).

There is little doubt that the most important factor in the shaping of the Llanelli landscape was the extraction and transportation of coal. Without it, it is unlikely that the town of Llanelli, or many of the other settlements in the area, would have developed to any great extent. By the mid-19th century Llanelli was the third largest South Wales port for the export of coal, behind Swansea and Neath (Morris and Williams 1958, 95). Without coal it is extremely unlikely that the metal processing industries, which were central to the expansion of Llanelli, would have been established.

The proposed redevelopment site covers an area of former industrial works, which included a steel and tinplate works, a reservoir, a chemical works, a coal yard, many railway lines, a watch house, a wharf, part of a large dock and terraces of workers' houses (Fig. 1, Fig. 3 and Table 1). By 1916 almost the entire site was covered by the massive South Wales Steel and Tin Works (Fig. 2 and Fig. 4).

PRN	NGR	SITE NAME	SITE TYPE
7744	SS51009865	Great Western Railway Dock	Scouring basin
8425	SS51109875	Neville's Shipyard	Shipyard
8764	SS51109875	Great Western Dock	Dock
8768	SS50859867	Richard Thomas' Wharf	Wharf
30708	SS50699846	South Wales Iron & Tinplate Works South Wales Steel & Tin Works	Tinplate works
31425	SS50499857		Limekiln
34012	SS50759843	Machynys Buildings	Workers' housing
34019	SS50819845		Reservoir
34027	SS50759863		Coal yard
34028	SS5090298547	Dock Terrace	Workers' housing
34071	SS50869843	Brickfield Chemical Works	Chemical works

Table 1: Known archaeological sites and features within the proposed development site.

Current condition of the archaeological resource

The only above ground traces on the site today are the remains of Richard Thomas' Wharf (PRN 8768 – Plate 2) and the sluice that was used to back up the New Dafen River to form a scouring basin (PRN 7744 – Plate 3). It is not certain how much below ground disturbance has taken place during the clearance of the site, but it is likely that the former reservoir and dock were infilled with rubble from the buildings on the site. Foundations and below ground features, such as tanks and pits may also survive across the site.

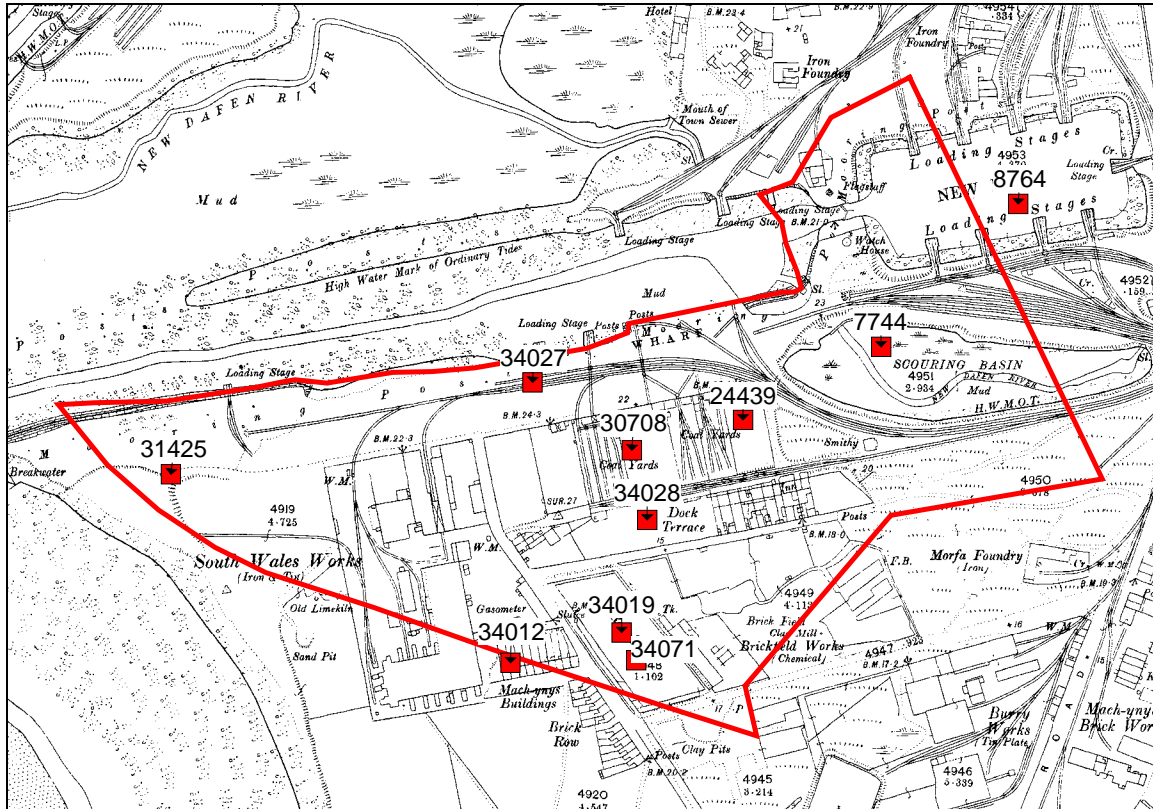


Figure 1: Extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 1880 edition map showing the known archaeological sites within the proposed development site.

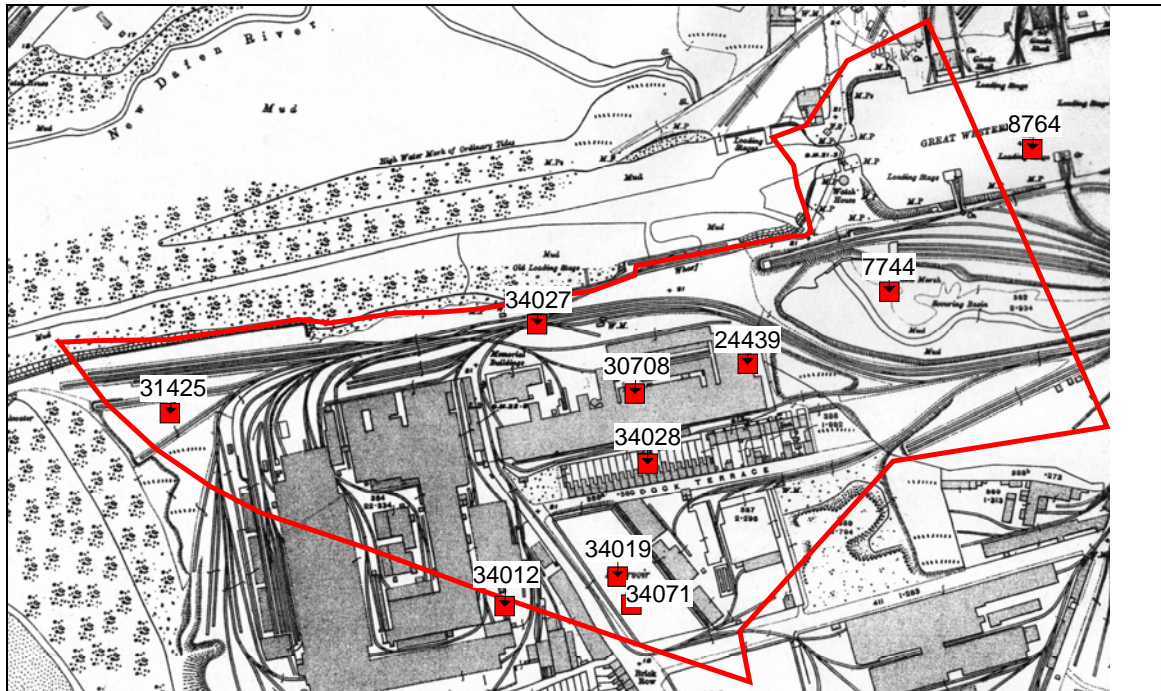


Figure 2: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1916 edition map.



Plate 2: Richard Thomas's Wharf (PRN 8768).



Plate 3: The remains of the sluice at the west end of the scouring basin (PRN 7744).

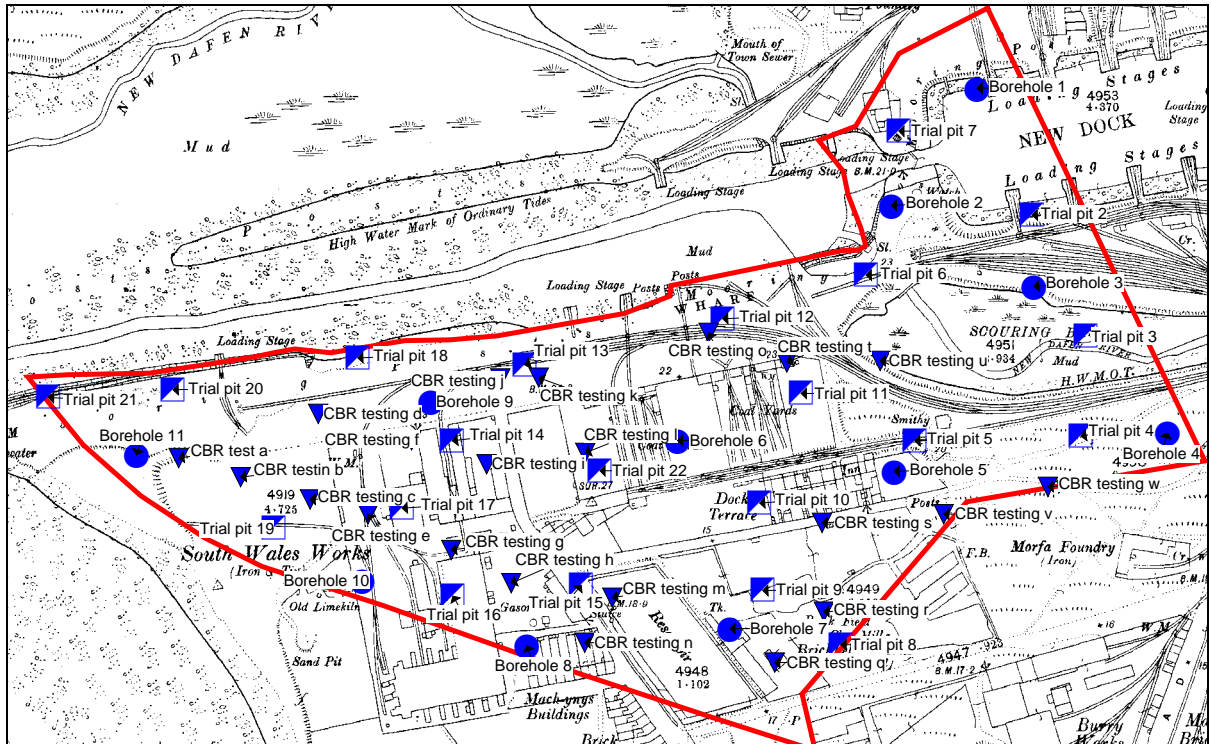


Figure 3: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1880 edition map showing the proposed development site and positions of geotechnical ground investigations. Blue and white squares = trial pits; blue circles = boreholes; blue triangles = CBR testing.

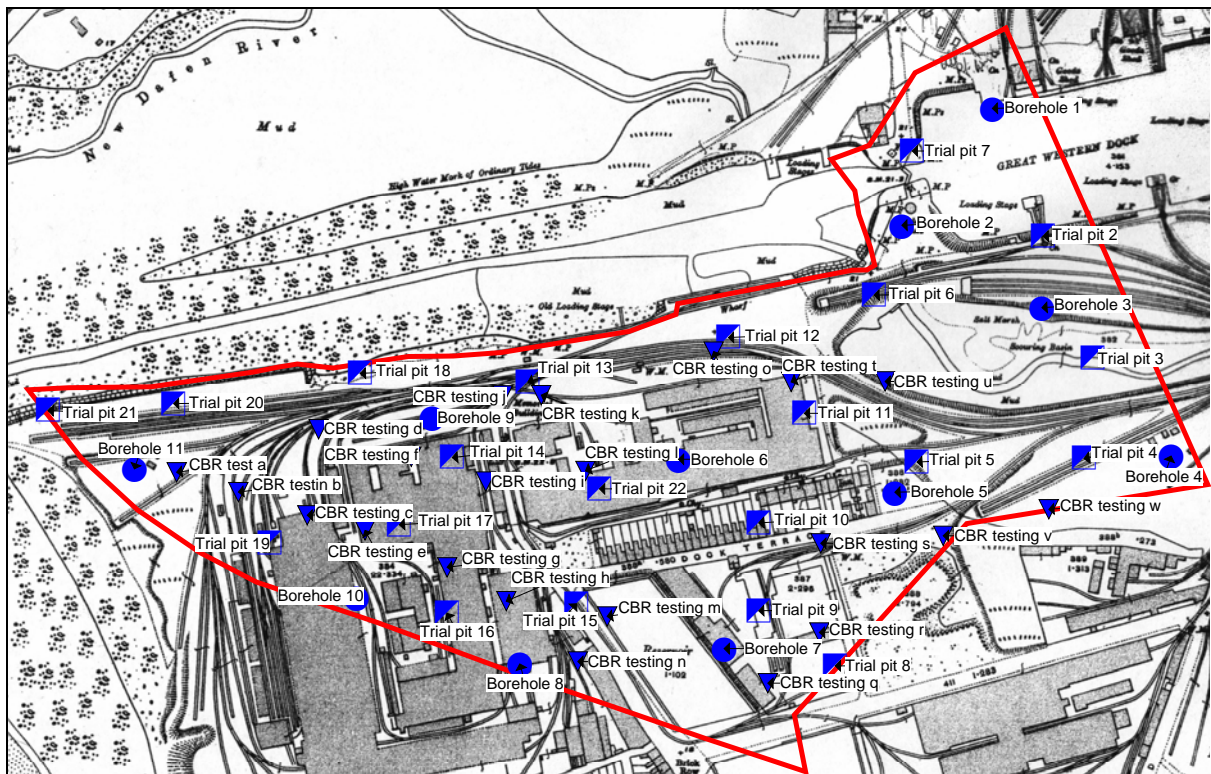


Figure 4: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1916 edition map.

IMPACT OF PROPOSED SCHEME ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

The extent of the archaeological resource

Figures 1 and 2 clearly show that the entire site has been developed in the past for industrial use. It is not unusual on brownfield sites to find that the entire area has been developed in the past and that any subsequent redevelopment will have significant archaeological implications.

The locations of the geotechnical investigations

The proposed locations of the 21 trial pits, 11 boreholes and 22 CBR tests have obvious archaeological implications. All of the investigation points have the potential to impact on the archaeological resource, depending on the extent and preservation of any below ground deposits.

Given the possible extent of the archaeological resource there is little point in re-locating any of the investigation points.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Archaeological monitoring

An archaeologist will monitor the geotechnical investigations in order to record, as far as is possible, the below ground stratigraphy across the site and to identify areas of archaeological interest.

The information from these investigations will be used to produce a map of the underlying deposits. This will enable a better assessment of the extent and condition of the below ground archaeological resource and the likely impacts of the proposed redevelopment on that resource.

APPENDIX ONE: CATALOGUE OF RESEARCH 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.
- M.** Miscellaneous correspondence

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

The project archive is currently held by Cambria Archaeology Field Operations, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, as project number 54169.

SOURCES

Published sources

- Morris J & Williams L 1958 *The South Wales coal industry*. Cardiff. The university of Wales Press.
- Rackham O 1994 *The illustrated book of the countryside*. London. George Weidenfeld and Nicholson Ltd.

Unpublished sources

- Page N 1997 *Llanelli and Loughor Wetlands: archaeological assessment*. Llandeilo. Cambria Archaeology report for Cadw.

DELTA LAKES, COASTAL LINK ROAD, LLANELLI
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CONTENTS	PAGE
Summary	1
Introduction	2
The study area	3
Summary of the archaeological resource	4
Impact of proposed scheme on archaeological resource	8
Recommendations	9
Appendix One: Catalogue of research archive	10
Sources	11
Figure One: Extract from 1 st edition OS map (1891) showing known archaeological sites within the development site	5
Figure Two: Extract from 2 nd edition OS map (1891) showing known archaeological sites within the development site	5
Figure Three: Extract from 1 st edition OS map (1891) showing positions of geotechnical investigations	7
Figure Four: Extract from 2 nd edition OS map (1891) showing positions of geotechnical investigations	7
Plate 1: General view west across the proposed development site	3
Plate 2: Richard Thomas' Wharf (PRN 8768)	6
Plate 3: The sluice at the west end of the scouring basin	6