

# **PROPOSED HOUSING AT GLASFRYN ST. CLEARS, CARMARTHENSHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**July 2006**



Prepared by Cambria Archaeology  
For Regan Norris Partnership



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# ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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## PROPOSED HOUSING AT GLASFRYN, ST. CLEARS, CARMARTHENSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

By

Richard Ramsey

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Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau sydd  
gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn

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## SUMMARY

*An archaeological evaluation carried out on the proposed building development site at Glasfryn, St. Clears, demonstrated that no archaeologically significant deposits or features were present in four of the five trial trenches excavated. A number of features were revealed in Trench 3 of which only one has potential archaeological significance.*

## INTRODUCTION

In July 2006, Cambria Archaeology Field Services was commissioned by Regan Morris Partnership, on behalf of their clients Bassett and MacGregor Construction Ltd., to carry out an archaeological evaluation on the site of the proposed housing development at Glasfryn in St. Clears, Carmarthenshire situated at NGR SN 228470 217260 (Figs. 1 and 2)).

This evaluation was undertaken in response to a condition placed on the planning application **W/09075: Proposed Housing development on Land Immediately east of Glasfryn Estate, St. Clears, Carmarthenshire**. The planning authority had been alerted by Cambria Archaeology Heritage Management to the presence of remains of the main Roman road from Roman Carmarthen (*Moridunum*) to west Wales some 200m or so to the north of the proposed development site. With the possibility that archaeological remains associated with the Roman road might lie within the proposed development area it was recommended that an archaeological condition be imposed in line with Planning Guidance (Wales): Planning Policy and Welsh Office Circular 60/96 'Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology' Section 23.

This evaluation has been guided by Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1999).

## **METHODOLOGY and TRIAL TRENCH LOCATION**

Five trial trenches (Fig. 4) were machine excavated and then cleaned by hand. Trench 1 measured 16m long by 1.60m wide. Trenches 2 to 5 inclusive each measured 15m in length and 1.60m wide.

Trenches 1 to 3 were concentrated at the northern end of the development site, nearest to the location of the Roman road. Documentary searches and consultation of historic and modern maps revealed no evidence for any archaeological remains or non-agricultural usage of the land within the development area. The only cartographic feature, other than the still extant field boundaries, was a footpath making its first appearance on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6" Ordnance Survey map published in 1907. The path still exists and is well used to this day although somewhat altered by the Glasfryn housing estate development of the late 1990s immediately to the west of the site. Aerial photographs were also consulted and showed no features within the proposed development area.

Topographically the development area slopes gently down from north to south for the northern half of its length before levelling out at its southern end where it appears less well drained. Trench 4 was placed near to the break of slope whilst Trench 5 was situated on the flat ground more or less in the centre of the site and virtually in line with the newly created entrance on the western boundary adjacent to the Glasfryn housing estate. No other topographic features were noted on the site.

## **RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION**

### **Trench 1**

Removal of the topsoil and plough soil to an average depth of 0.4m revealed a fairly stiff but friable natural yellowish brown silty clay sub-soil. No archaeological features were apparent within the revealed subsoil.

A 1.0m wide area of burning containing discrete patches of heat affected clay and a high percentage of charcoal was recorded crossing the centre of the excavation trench from north to south. This feature lay at the interface between the topsoil and the plough soil at a depth of 0.20m below the existing ground surface and was 0.04m thick. A small fragment of melted plastic was found within one of the discrete patches of burnt clay. The rather superficial appearance of this feature, and its relatively shallow depth, together with the plastic find, suggests that it represents the remains of a fairly recent bonfire.

### **Trench 2**

Removal of the topsoil and plough soil to an average depth of 0.35m revealed a fairly stiff but friable yellowish brown silty clay sub-soil. No archaeological features were encountered either within the removed soil or in the revealed sub-soil.

### **Trench 3**

Removal of the topsoil and plough soil to an average depth of 0.38m revealed a fairly stiff but friable yellowish brown silty clay sub-soil. Three features were shown to have cut through the plough soil and into the sub-soil. All three features were test excavated by half section and were shown to have uniform fills of a friable orange brown silty clay soil containing less than 20% medium to small rounded and sub-rounded stones, and occasional inclusions of stiff yellowish clay

derived from the sub-soil. The bases of all the features were uneven and were pitted with small rounded, occasionally linear, hollows all of which appeared to have their derivation as a result of organic root action. No artefacts were found in the fills of the features.

The two most southerly features are almost certainly wholly derived from the removal of either trees or shrubs and are therefore not archaeological. The more northerly feature (Photo. No.3) was linear in shape and prior to excavation had the appearance of a possible ditch or gully extending diagonally across the excavation trench. On excavation it was seen to have an homogeneous fill and exhibited the same results of organic root action present in the other features. It is possible that a tree or shrub had invaded a previously artificially dug gully or ditch but no direct evidence to support this hypothesis was established during the excavation. There remains, however, an element of doubt about the origins of this feature.

#### **Trench 4**

Removal of the topsoil and plough soil to an average depth of 0.35m revealed a fairly stiff but friable yellowish brown silty clay sub-soil. A charcoal rich layer was revealed within the plough soil at the northeast end of this trench. The extent of the layer was 0.25m in depth by 0.40m wide, and at least 0.90m long extending beyond the southwest edge of the excavation. The base of this layer was seen at the interface between the plough soil and sub-soil but it lay only on the surface of the sub-soil. The deposit appeared to be undisturbed and was therefore apparently unaffected by any agricultural activity. This suggests that it is likely to be the result of fairly recent activity on the site, although there were no finds within the layer to confirm this hypothesis.

#### **Trench 5**

Removal of the topsoil and plough soil to an average depth of 0.40m revealed a fairly stiff but friable yellowish brown silty clay sub-soil. No archaeological features were encountered either within the removed soil or in the revealed sub-soil.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The excavation of the five trial trenches clearly demonstrated that the potential for significant archaeological features or deposits in the proposed development area is slight, at least in or close to the areas investigated. It must be realised, however, that only a small percentage of the total area of the site has been sampled and that the presence of significant archaeological features elsewhere cannot be ruled out.

This is the case with the feature located at the northern end of Trench 3 where monitoring during a watching brief would provide an opportunity to more fully characterise the potential archaeological resource during the ground works for the proposed development.

## **SOURCES**

### **Databases**

The Regional Historic Environment Record, housed with Cambria Archaeology

CARN-Core Archaeological Record Index hosted by the Royal Commission of Ancient and Historic Monuments in Wales

### **Maps**

Ordnance Survey 1891, *Carmarthenshire Sheet XXXVIII.SW* 1st Edition 6" to 1 mile

Ordnance Survey 1907, *Carmarthenshire Sheet XXXVIII.SW* 2nd Edition 6" to 1 mile

Ordnance Survey 1964, *Quarter Sheet SN21NE* 1:10,000

### **Aerial Photographs**

Photographs held with the Regional Historic Environment Record, Llandeilo

Meridian Airmaps frames 27007, 27008 and 27009 1955



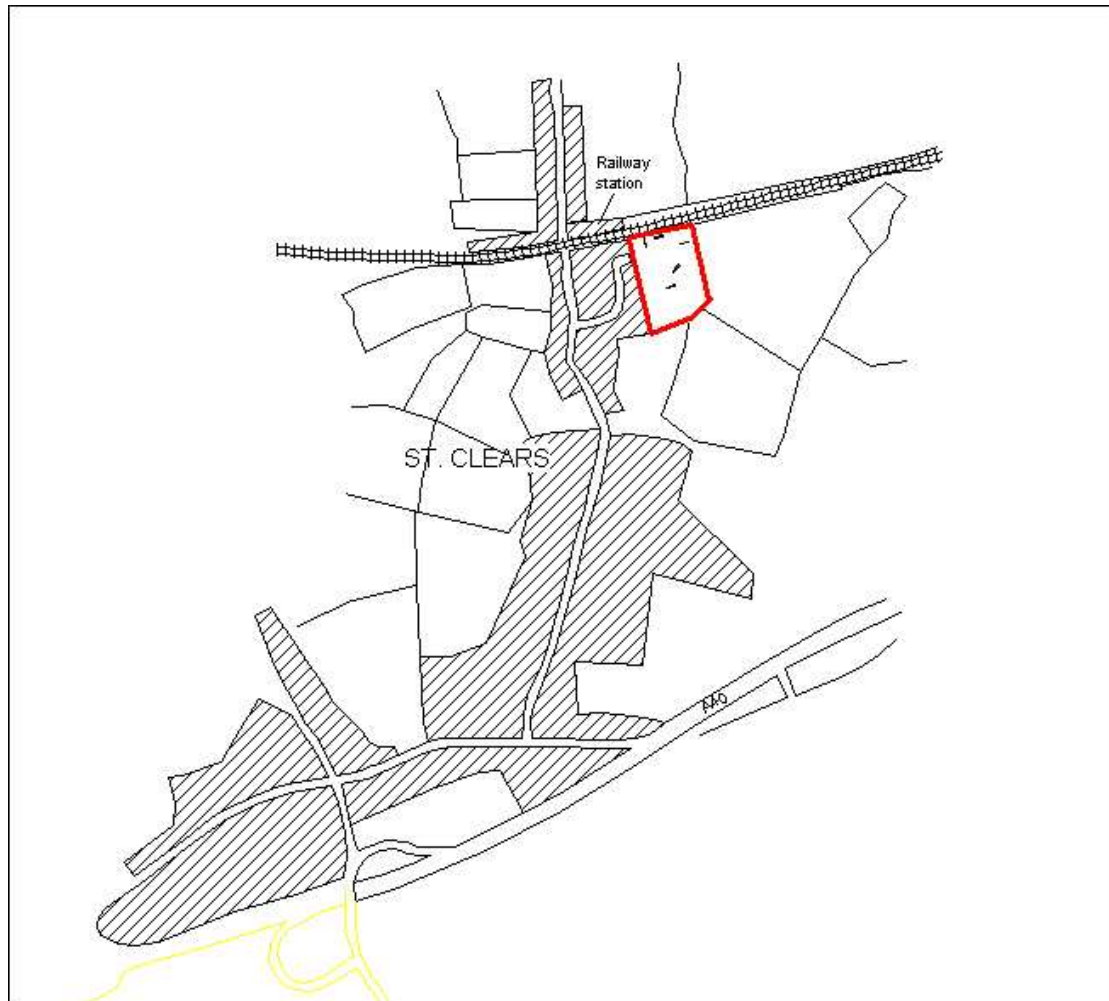


Figure 1. Site Location plan

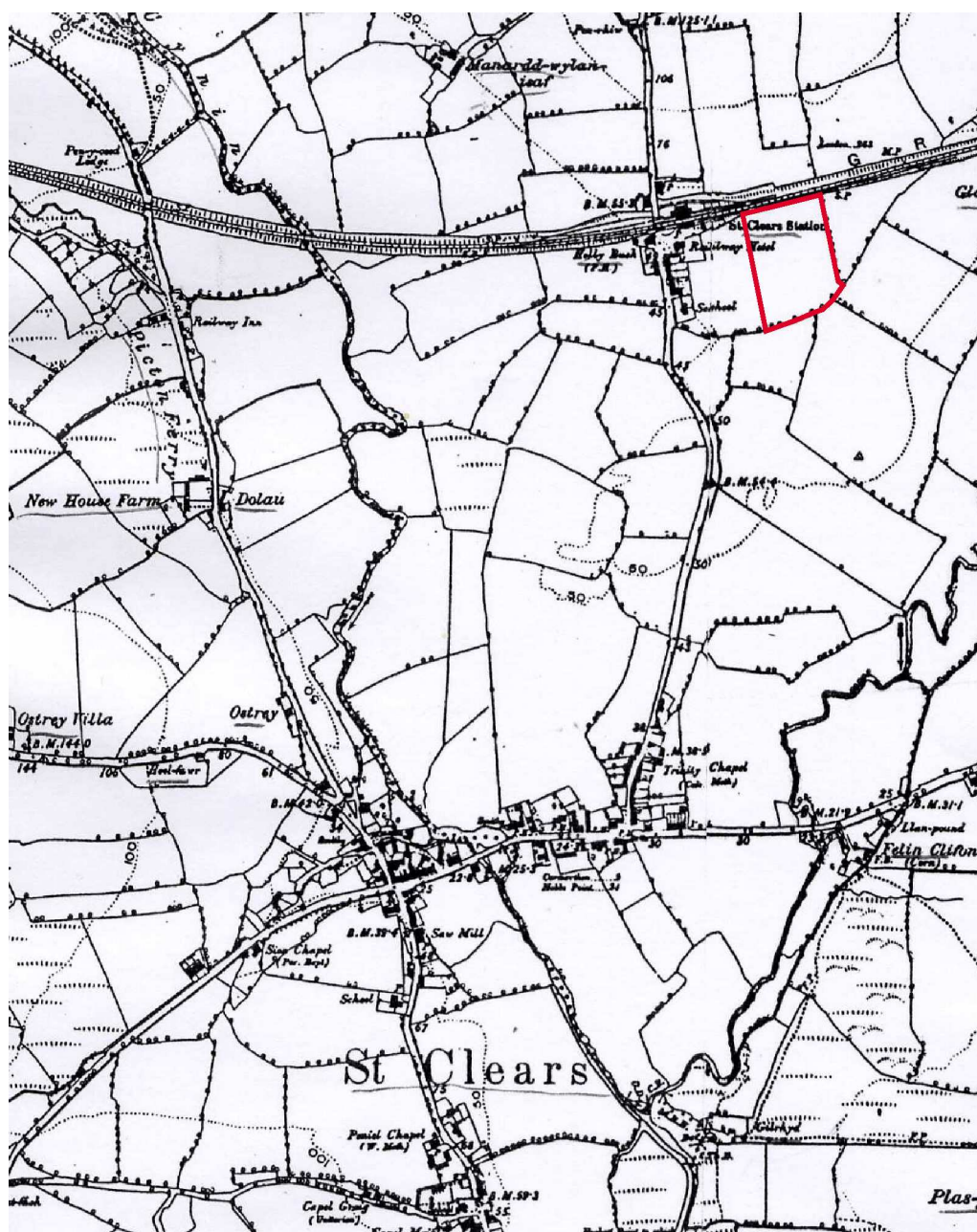


Figure 2. Extract from the 1891 6" Ordnance Survey map



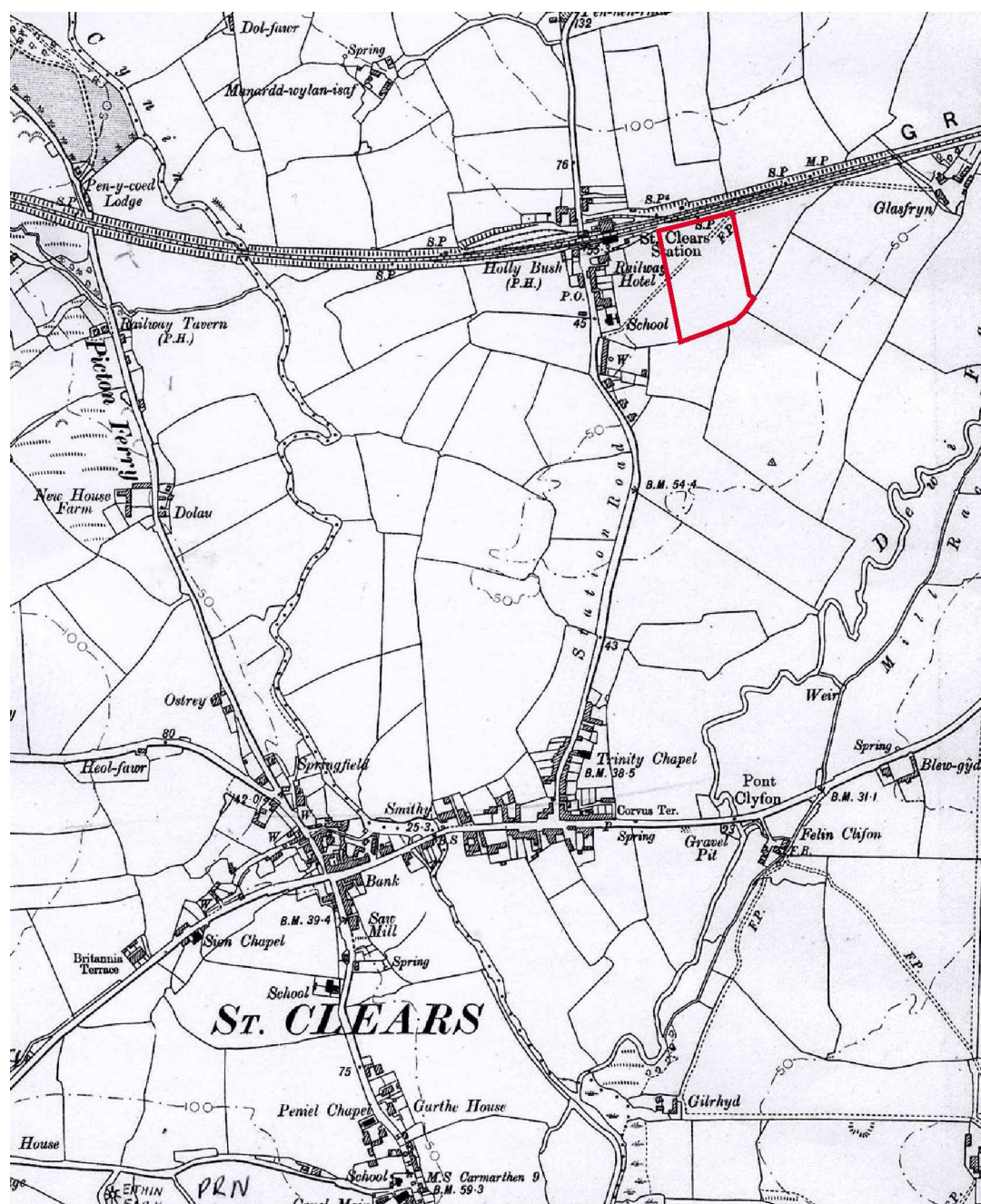


Figure 3. Extract from the 1907 6" Ordnance Survey map

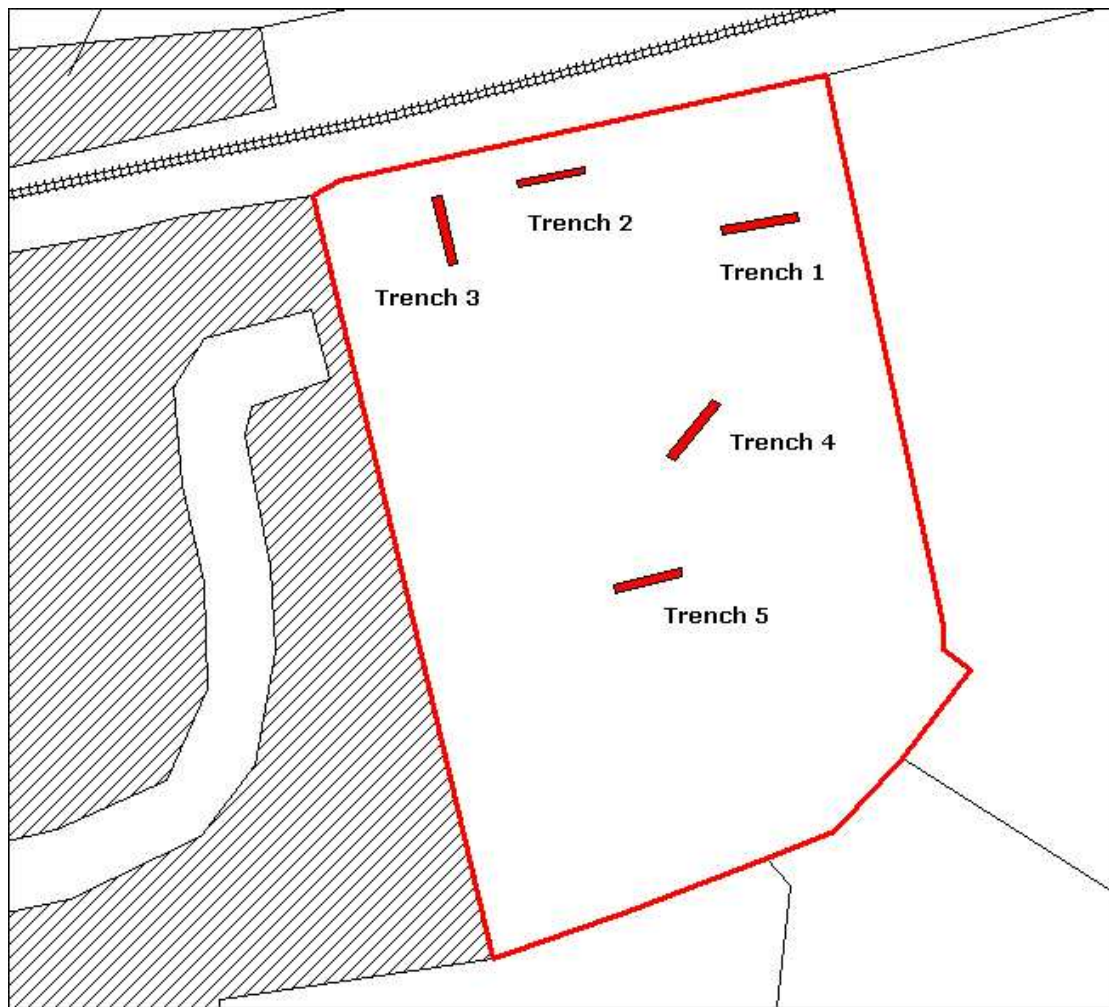


Figure 4. Location of Trial Trenches





Photo.1 Looking west across northern side of the development area



Photo.2 View of Trench 3 after initial cleaning, looking north





Photo.3 View of partially excavated feature at north end of Trench 3, looking SW