

LAND OFF B4310 NANTGAREDIG, CARMARTHENSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

FEBRUARY 2007



Paratowyd gan: Archaeoleg Cambria
Ar gyfer: Lloyd Thomas
Prepared by: Cambria Archaeology
For: Lloyd Thomas



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LAND OFF B4310, NANTGAREDIG, CARMARTHENSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Gan / By

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SUMMARY

Five evaluation trenches were excavated at land adjacent to the B4310 at Nantgaredig, Carmarthenshire, in order to ascertain whether an application to construct a small housing estate would impact on the archaeological resource. Nothing of archaeological significance was found. It is suggested that no further archaeological work is necessary.

INTRODUCTION

Cambria Archaeology Heritage Management, as advisors to Carmarthenshire County Council Planning Department, identified potential impacts on the archaeological resource of a proposed small housing development at Nantgaredig, Carmarthenshire (National Grid Reference SN 49332167, planning application no E/13718).

The site lies at the south foot of a very steep hill slope. Just above the foot are a number of dwellings terraced into the hill-slope alongside the main Carmarthen to Llandeilo (A40) road. Immediately to the east of the site is the B4310. To the south there is a school playing field. To the west there is a pasture field that slopes down to the field of the proposed development.

The original proposal, in May 2005, was for six dwellings and an access road from the B4310. This was subsequently revised to a different layout of five dwellings and modified access road.

THE EVALUATION AREA

The development of Nantgaredig

Modern Nantgaredig is largely a creation of the mid to later 20th century. Prior to that it was a dispersed hamlet with a small nucleus around the crossroads at the north end of the village. This situation is clearly shown on the Abergwili parish tithe map produced in c.1840. Even the opening of Nantgaredig Railway Station in the mid 1860s failed to stimulate any growth or development in the area. The Ordnance Survey 1st and 2nd edition maps (1891 and 1907) show that no significant development had taken place during the later 19th and early 20th century.

The historic nucleus of the village lies around the crossroads at its north end - the Ordnance Survey 1st edition shows a public house called New Inn, an Independent Chapel, a Post Office and four or five houses. A few more houses had been built by the early 20th century and it appears that the post office had been moved.

Archaeological features around the development site

Even though most of Nantgaredig is modern there are a number of prehistoric and Roman sites in and around the village. These include a Neolithic or Bronze Age henge at Ffynnon Newydd, a Bronze Age round barrow (PRN 9958), Llechwenny, that lies just outside the western boundary of the site and the line of a Roman road (PRN 11089), linking the forts at Llandeilo and Carmarthen, passes 200m to the south of the site. A quern stone (PRN 9959) of Iron Age or Roman date has also been recorded from the village.

The number of prehistoric sites in the area and the Roman road through the village attest to the long history of human land use in the Towy Valley.

PRN 9958 Llechwenny Round Barrow

The earthwork remains of a possible Bronze Age round barrow lie just outside the western boundary of the site. It is thought that part of it could extend into the development site (Fig. 2).

The site was visited in 2000 when the barrow was described as:

'A low but clearly visible mound, much denuded and spread, located at a point where three boundaries meet, with the greater portion of the surviving barrow located in the local park/playing field of a school. The site is predominantly grass-covered but the portions of the monument in the adjoining fields are overgrown with long grass, trees and shrubs' (Cook 2001, gazetteer, PRN 9958).

On further observation during this project it is considered that this mound (Photo. 1) is likely to be formed by a flattening of a former field boundary and levelling of the adjacent hedge bank so a water tank could be used from two fields. This tank, observed in 2000, has now gone. However, it cannot be ruled out that this is the remains of a Bronze Age barrow.

This is the only known archaeological feature that falls within the development site.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The original archaeological specifications were for no less than five trial trenches, each up to 10m x 2m, based on the first development proposal of six houses. However, on arrival at the site the revised housing scheme had been partly pegged out. There is also a sewer pipe crossing the site which had to be avoided. Cambria Archaeology Heritage Management were contacted regarding the revised plan and services, with a request that the proposed evaluation trenches were moved to cover the new house plots, (except for plot 5 as this was on a steep slope and disturbed by a field entrance) with a fifth trench on part of the access road, missing the sewer pipe. The locations of the trenches do not quite correlate with the proposed plan but were as pegged out for plots 2 and 3 with estimates from these for the other plots and road (Fig. 2, Photo 2).

The evaluation took place on 5th February 2007 with ideal weather and soil conditions. A JCB-type digger using its backhoe with a 1.5m wide toothless bucket undertook excavation; all trenches were dug c.1.6m wide and dug to the top of the geological topsoil of mixed gravels and silts. The site was all pasture in good condition, except for one spoil tip where a sewer pipe had very recently been repaired. This spoil tip contained a lot of modern ceramics.

Trench 1 (Plot 1): this trench was cut approximately north - south, 11m long and 0.6m deep. Modern ceramics were recovered from the base of the upper topsoil/ former plough soil, which was of brown clay loam with a few stones 0.3m deep. Below the former plough soil there was a layer of orange grey brown silty clay, friable with some coal flecks, about 0.3m deep. There was one feature in the northwest corner of the trench, with a silty fill that was considered likely to be of geological rather than archaeological formation.

Trench 2 (Plot 2): this trench was cut approximately east-northeast – west-southwest, 11m long and 0.6m deep. Modern ceramics were also recovered from the base of the upper topsoil, both the topsoil and lower soils were similar in both depth and type to Trench 1. Nothing of interest present.

Trench 3 (Plot 3): this trench was cut approximately northwest – southeast, 10m long and 0.55m deep. The topsoil was 0.3m deep, and lower soil 0.25m and the natural were all similar to the other trenches. Nothing of interest present.

Trench 4 (Plot 4): this trench was cut on the same alignment as Trench 3, and of similar dimensions. The northern end of the trench encountered the base of the hill slope where there was a greater overburden of soil, up to 1m deep, due to hill wash. Other than this the soils were similar to that of the other trenches. Nothing of interest present.

Trench 5 (over part of proposed access road): this trench was cut approximately north – south, 9m long and 0.55m deep. The topsoil was 0.3m deep and the lower soil 0.25m deep. There was one geological feature cutting at an angle across the south part of the trench.

CONCLUSION

Nothing of any archaeological value was observed in any of the trenches. Although it cannot be guaranteed that there is nothing of archaeological significance on this site, it is suggested that no further archaeological constraints are place on the development. However, it is possible that there are the remains of a very reduced barrow in the southwest corner of the site, but the footprint of the proposed houses will not affect this.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks to Hubert Wilson for assistance with the fieldwork and production of figure 2. Also to Nigel Page for setting up the project and part of the text.

ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

The archive consisting of: a copy of the report, a few digital photos, plan of trenches and site notes, will be sent to National Monuments Record of Wales at Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Plas Crug, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, Wales, SY23 1NJ

SOURCES

Unpublished sources

Cook N 2001 *Prehistoric funerary and ritual sites project, West Carmarthenshire 2000-2001*. Llandeilo. Unpublished Cambria Archaeology report for Cadw. Report No. 2001/25.

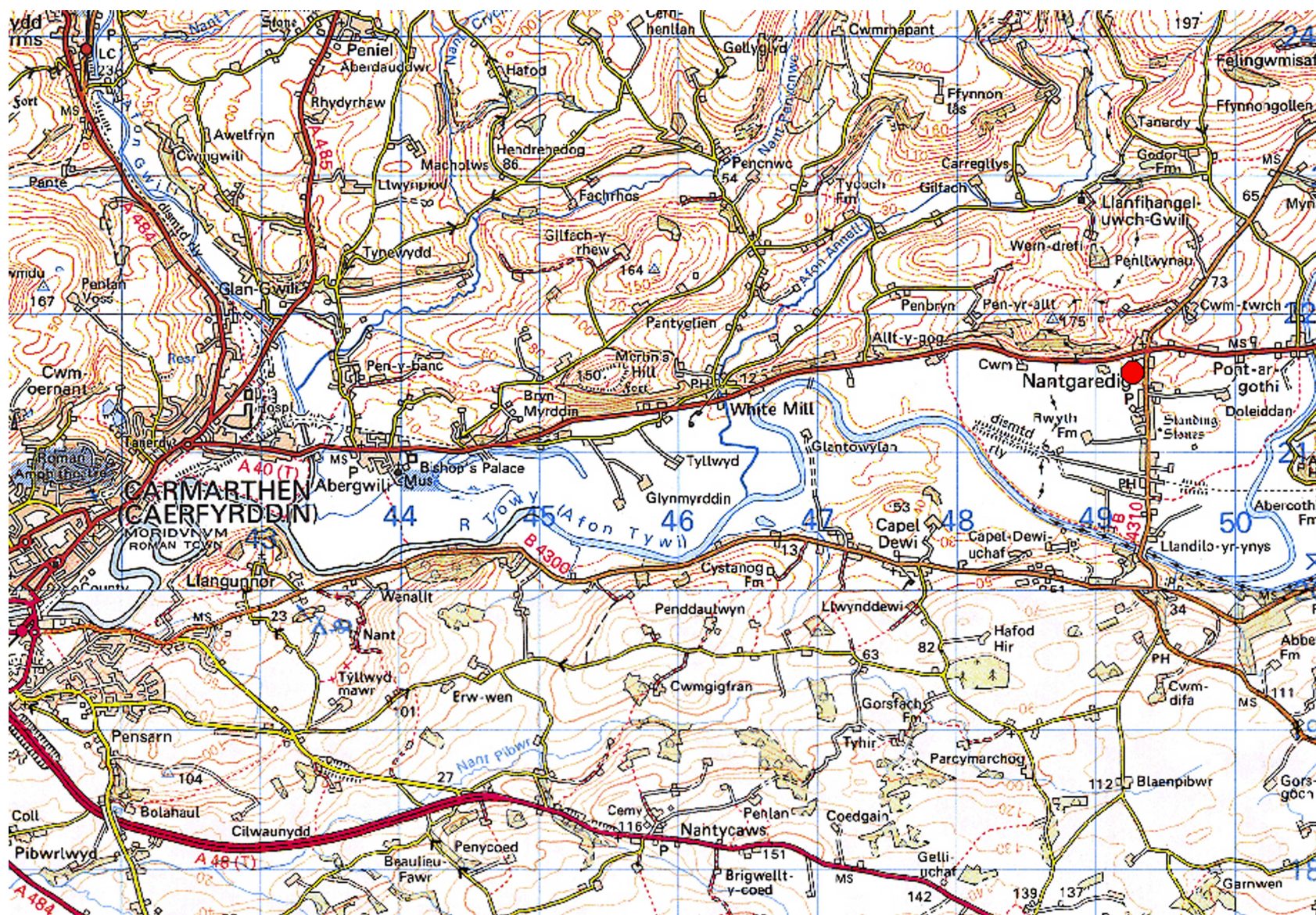


Figure 1. Location map, based on the Ordnance Survey

Reproduced from the 1995 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright Cambria Archaeology, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842A

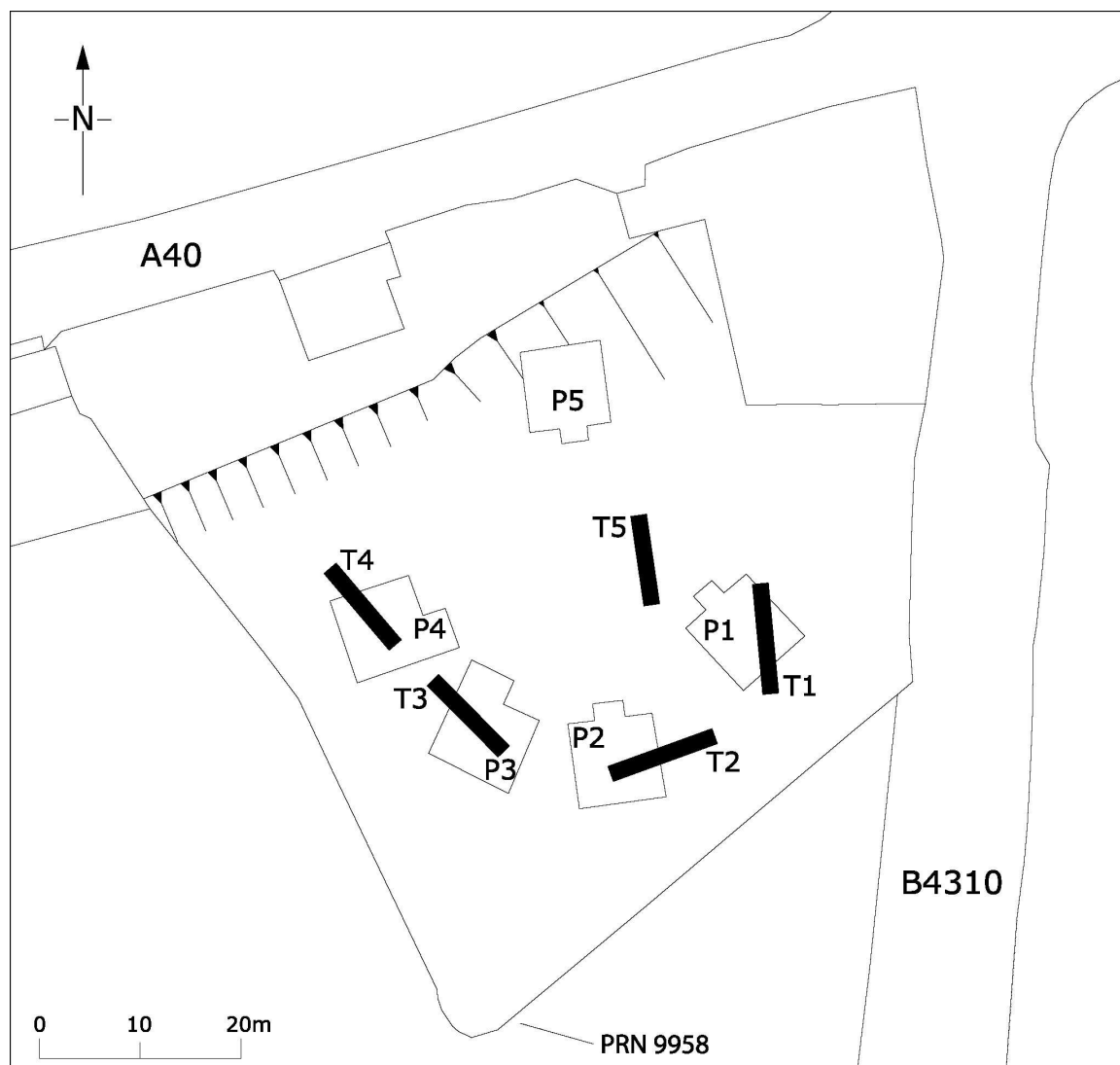


Figure 2. Location of trenches, house plots and PRN 9958



Photo. 1: PRN 9958. Slight mound adjacent to location of former water tank.
View N



Photo. 2: General view completed trenches. View SE

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ar ran Archaeoleg Cambria, Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.
on behalf of Cambria Archaeology, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

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