

LAND AT LONGSTONE FARM, STATION ROAD, LETTERSTON, PEMBROKESHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL



Prepared
by
Cambria Archaeology
for
Eatonfield Developments Ltd.



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By

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SUMMARY

Eatonfield Developments Ltd are intending to prepare a planning application for a residential development on land at Longstone Farm, Station Road, Letterston, Pembrokeshire at NGR SM94902976. The Pembrokeshire Joint Unitary Development Plan advises that the site may lie within an area of archaeological interest.

To enable a judgement as to the likelihood of the need for a full archaeological assessment, as part of the planning process, Eatonfield Developments commissioned Cambria Archaeology to undertake an archaeological desktop appraisal of the proposed development area.

The results of the appraisal show that there are no known sites of archaeological interest within the development area itself. However, the development area lies within a landscape containing an important complex of prehistoric, mainly Bronze Age, archaeological sites, and the potential for the survival of below-ground archaeological features and deposits associated with them is high.

This report suggests that, should a planning application for the development be submitted, it is likely that the planning authorities would impose archaeological constraints prior to its determination in order to assess the extent of the archaeological resource. During the planning process for a similar development, in 1999, on a green field site immediately to the north of Longstone Farm, a planning constraint required that an archaeological evaluation be carried out to assess the presence or otherwise of archaeological features or deposits. There is little reason to suppose that the planning authority would act any differently for the Longstone Farm development given its location within such an archaeologically sensitive area.

1. INTRODUCTION

Project proposals and commission

Eatonfield Developments Ltd. are currently acquiring, unconditionally, land and buildings at Longstone Farm, Station Road, Letterston, Pembrokeshire (NGR SM94902976) with the intention of preparing a planning application for a residential development at the site.

Eatonfield Developments consulted the Pembrokeshire County Council Joint Unitary Development Plan, which indicated that the site may be of archaeological importance. In order to assess the potential archaeological resource Eatonfield Developments commissioned Cambria Archaeology to undertake an archaeological appraisal of the site in October 2007.

Scope of the project

This appraisal was designed to provide enough information to allow an assessment of the potential archaeological resource within the proposed development area and the likely impact of development on that resource. The appraisal was a non-intrusive process and consisted of the examination of a wide variety of source material held at local repositories, and a brief site visit.

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). Suggestions for possible further archaeological works based on the results of Sections 3 and 4 are given in Section 5.

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). References to cartographic and documentary evidence and published sources are given in brackets throughout the text, with full details listed in the sources section at the rear of the report.

2. THE STUDY AREA

The proposed development site occupies c.1.6ha (c.3.94 acres) of farmland, including the area occupied by Longstone farmhouse and its outbuildings, adjacent to and south of Station Road in Letterston, Pembrokeshire at NGR SM94902976. The site is situated some 400m to the east of the A40 trunk road that passes through the village of Letterston at the Pendre crossroads on its route from Haverfordwest to Fishguard (Fig.1). Longstone farm lies on the 125m contour on ground that slopes gently downslope from the southwest to the northeast. Ysgubor Mountain, a 232m high western outlier of the Preseli hills, overlooks the site from the northeast.

The enclosed field, which forms the major part of the study area, is rectangular in shape and given over to rough, badly drained pasture that is currently overgrown with vegetation. The northern boundary fronts onto Station Road whilst to the south and east there are pasture fields. Approximately half of the western boundary of the proposed development area consists of residential property and gardens with the remainder being farmland.

Longstone farmhouse and its outbuildings are situated in an approximately square shaped plot of land that fronts onto Station Road to the north with the main field of the study area forming its western boundary. Elsewhere the plot is bounded by farmland (Fig. 2).



Figure1: Map showing the location of the proposed development site

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The solid geology of the study area is represented by Ordovician grey mudstone sediments of the Llanvirn Series which are occasionally interrupted by fine-grained dolerite igneous intrusions. The geology becomes even more complex because Station Road follows exactly an underlying interface between older Arenig Series mudstone sediments and the younger sediments of the Llanvirn Series (*British Geological Survey 1994*). Deposits of sand, clay, gravel and erratic boulders characterise the glacial drift geology of the area where these deposits

have survived the ravages of erosion and quarrying: however, no detailed geological drift maps of the area are available to be more specific about their locations. The only available soil survey maps of the area indicate that generally the soils in the Letterston area are typical acidic brown earths.

3. SUMMARY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

The historic landscape

There are several prehistoric monuments in close proximity to the study area. The earliest of these are a possible Neolithic henge monument (PRN 2393) at NGR SM94822998 and a late Neolithic embanked stone circle (PRN 9036) at NGR SM94732976. These monuments probably date from around 2500 BC, and are thought to have served in a ceremonial or ritual capacity, which suggests that this area, formerly Letterston Common, was seen as an important ritual landscape at that time.

A Bronze Age round barrow cemetery (PRN 48335) comprising three barrows arranged in a linear fashion (marked as *Tumuli* in Fig.2) lies to the northwest of the study area. These are a common type of prehistoric funerary monument and date to around 2000 BC. The most southerly of the barrows (PRN 2381) was excavated in 1961 (Savory 1961) and was shown to have been constructed directly over the previously mentioned embanked stone circle PRN 9036. The re-use of this monument in the Bronze Age would appear to indicate that the area continued to be seen as an important ritual landscape at this later date (Savory 1963). Vestiges of the barrow still remain in the gardens of numbers 18 and 20 Station Road and it is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No. Pe062). The remaining two barrows (PRNs 2379 and 2380), now destroyed, lay on a fairly good alignment with henge monument PRN 2393, again emphasising the important ritual significance attached to this landscape during the Bronze Age (Cook 2004). There is documentary evidence (Fenton 1811) for the presence of a Bronze Age standing stone (PRN 2398) at NGR SM94932985, directly opposite the study area on the north side of Station Road. During an archaeological evaluation undertaken prior to a building development in 1999 the site was excavated but no stone was revealed. However, a spread of possibly intentionally laid quartz was found in the location, which may represent a pavement associated with the standing stone (Tavener 1999). It is possible that the Longstone farm place name is also derived from a previously standing stone.

There are no Iron Age/Romano British sites listed in the HER as being in close proximity to the proposed development area; the nearest major site is Buckette Camp (PRN 2586) defended enclosure at NGR SM94993103 about 1.2km due north of the study area.

Generally, the typical early medieval land settlement pattern in north Pembrokeshire tended to consist of small dispersed farmsteads. No sites of this type are recorded in the HER as being in or close to the study area although a study on village origins (Kissock 1997) argues that the area at the western edge of Letterston village, close to Great Letterston Farm, could be part of an original Celtic settlement pattern (NGR SM93652960).

The village of Letterston itself has its origins in the early 12th century when the area to the west of Pendre crossroad was 'planted' with immigrant Flemings who were forced from their homeland, modern day northern Belgium, either by population pressures or severe flooding causing a shortage of land. The strip field system (PRN 6421) and formal village layout from that time are readily detectable in the landscape to this day. It seems that the carefully planned and laid out settlement, consisting of two rows of properties facing each other, was made possible via the agency of facilitators known as '*locatores*' (Kissock 1997) who were employed by the conquering Normans to establish settlements in order to colonise their newly acquired Welsh territory. The facilitator for Letterston was a Fleming named Letard from whom the village took its name. Other '*locatores*'

active in Pembrokeshire at this time were Wizo and Tancred who set up the villages of Wiston and Tancredston, respectively. Normally in such a settlement the Normans would initially build a motte and bailey castle as a defence against Welsh incursions, but in the case of Letterston there is some doubt as to whether the earthwork on the village green (PRN 2394, NGR SM93752948) represents such a monument.

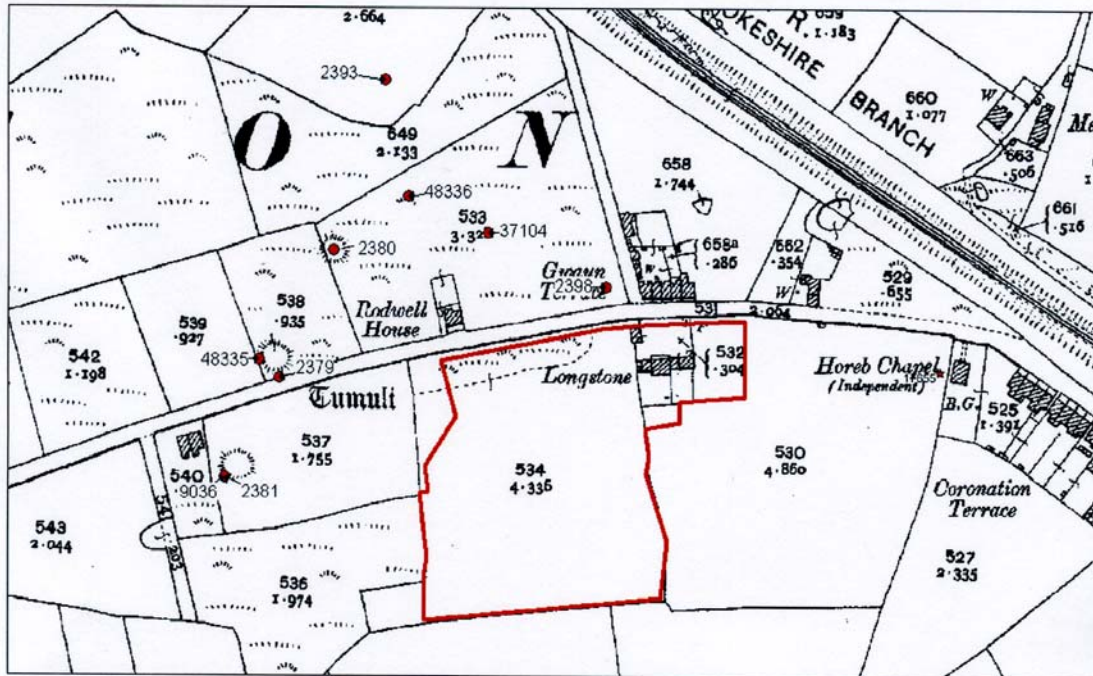


Figure 2: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25" map showing the proposed development site and the location of the three round barrows (Tumuli) to the northwest.

There is no evidence of medieval settlement within the study area itself but cartographic evidence appears to indicate a relict medieval strip field system (PRN 6421) some 400m to 600m east and northeast of Longstone farm centred on NGR SM95703010. A boundary ditch and boundary stone (PRN 10472) discovered at NGR SM95412960, some 500m southeast of the study area, may also be of medieval date.

The expansion of Letterston eastwards across the A40 trunk road from Pendre crossroads along Station Road occurred largely in the 20th century. However, map evidence from 1814 (Ordnance Survey original surveyor's drawings) shows that there was an enclosed field, at least, marked in the position of the study area. The map does not show clearly that there are any buildings in the study area but the name Longstone does appear below the enclosure. The Letterston parish tithe map of 1844 shows quite clearly the study area with the same enclosed fields, complete with buildings, more or less as they appear today. The tithe schedule and apportionment document shows the farm as unnamed, with the farm name "Longstone" given to farm buildings at NGR SM95252948 some 450m southeast of the present day Longstone farm house. The development area field name is listed as "No.294, Park y ffynt" with the enclosure containing the farm buildings named as "No.296 Park y Ydlan". The Welsh word "ffynt" could be derived from ffynnon (a well) but is otherwise untranslatable, whilst Ydlan can be translated as a rickyard. The area across the road from the study area is still unenclosed common land on the tithe map, but an Enclosure Act award map of 1865 shows further enclosure of Letterston Common at that time. The first edition 6" Ordnance Survey map of 1890 shows Longstone named and enclosed as it is

today. By the time of publication of the second edition 6" Ordnance Survey map in 1906 the railway station, and a whole new community, had been built some 300m from the study area. The Fishguard and North Pembrokeshire railway was opened in 1895 and with it Letterston Station, Coronation Terrace, Station Terrace and eventually the building of Horeb Chapel in 1901.

Recent years have seen quite an expansion of modern residential building development along Station Road to the north and west of Longstone Farm.

Archaeological features within the proposed development site

There are no known sites recorded in the local Historic Environment Record within the area of the proposed development. No above ground features of archaeological interest were observed on the ground during the site visit and scrutinisation of aerial photographs and maps also failed to reveal any new features of archaeological interest within the study area. However, the proximity of the known Letterston prehistoric monument complex (PRN 48336) may mean that some below ground prehistoric features are present within the development site.

Longstone farmhouse and its outbuildings are the only features of apparent archaeological interest within the proposed development site. These buildings do not yet have PRN numbers so are not yet formally recorded in the HER.

Archaeological features in the vicinity of the development site (Fig. 2)

The following is a list of records, held on the Historic Environment Record, which are relevant to the proposed development area.

PRN 2393 NGR SM94822996 Henge? Neolithic/Bronze Age?

PRN 9036 NGR SM94732976 Embanked Stone Circle/Henge Neolithic

PRN 2381 NGR SM94822996 Round Barrow Bronze Age

PRN 2379 NGR SM94762981 Round Barrow Bronze Age

PRN 2380 NGR SM94792987 Round Barrow Bronze Age

PRN 48335 This is a group record for the Round Barrow Cemetery comprising PRNs 2379, 2380 and 2381 Bronze Age

PRN 2398 NGR SM94932985 Standing Stone Bronze Age

PRN 37104 This is a project record number for the archaeological evaluation and assessment undertaken for the residential development opposite Longstone farm (Tavener 1999)

PRN 48336 This is group record, recording the Prehistoric Complex of monuments on Letterston Common *i.e* all the Neolithic and Bronze Age sites noted above

4. POTENTIAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT

This study has shown that, other than the farm buildings, there appear to be no known sites of archaeological interest within the proposed development area. However, the development area does lie within a landscape containing an important complex of prehistoric archaeological sites, and the potential for the survival of below ground archaeological features and deposits associated with them is high.

Without specific design plans it is not possible to be definitive about the impact of development on the archaeological resource within the proposed development area. However, the processes of construction are well enough known to be able to make general statements that can be used to inform the final design plans.

New building involves a range of processes that have immediate and obvious archaeological implications. The main processes are:

1. Site Clearance
2. Demolition of standing remains.
3. Excavations for new foundations and service trenches.
4. Construction of new roads.
5. Landscaping.
6. Heavy machinery moving across the site.

Although it is not intended to discuss all of the above processes it is worth expanding on a few of them in order to highlight the potential negative implications for the archaeological resource that such developments may have.

Most building projects involve a certain degree of ground intrusive activity, from site clearance works, to topsoil stripping, levelling, through to the excavation of foundation and service trenches prior to construction. All of these have the potential to damage or remove previously unknown buried archaeological features or deposits.

Potential impact on the Longstone Farm complex

It is not known at present if the house and farm buildings are to be retained and renovated within any proposed scheme, or demolished and removed. It seems unlikely that they are to be left in their current unoccupied state and, therefore, they are vulnerable to some level of damage or loss.

Potential impact on the buried archaeological resource

The nature and extent of any underlying archaeological deposits is at present unknown, however, the proposed development area lies within a landscape containing an important complex of prehistoric sites. The potential, therefore, for the presence of buried archaeological features or deposits within the development area is high and in such an archaeologically sensitive area any ground works would inevitably result in the destruction of valuable and unique archaeological evidence.

5. SUGGESTED FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS

There is no doubt that further archaeological works are required on this site in order to fully evaluate likely impacts of development. The following is intended to be a reasonable and wide-ranging programme of further works that will provide the information required to allow the development of final design plans and allow an assessment of the likely impact of those plans at all stages of development.

The programme is divided into pre- and post- determination works. At present there is not enough evidence on the potential buried remains to allow a planning decision on any submitted scheme. Therefore, it is suggested that provision be made for intrusive investigation of the site.

Pre-determination works

An archaeological field evaluation will be required to assess the character, extent and condition of any buried remains across the site. The evaluation would consist of a number of trial areas positioned to maximise the potential retrieval of archaeological information. This potential could be increased by the inclusion of a geophysics survey prior to the evaluation in order to target the evaluation areas.

It is important to note that the pre-determination works will be required before any planning decision is made and that there may be further works required after determination.

Post-determination works

These works will be required to mitigate the affects of development. The extent and scope of the works will depend on the results from the pre-determination evaluation.

The mitigation works may include the full excavation of any features revealed during the evaluation. It will also include some level of recording of the Longstone Farm buildings and a watching brief during construction.

Mitigation could also include identifying areas that should be excluded from development and used as green space in order to preserve significant archaeological remains *in situ*.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Plate 1 View of Longstone farmhouse and outbuildings, looking WSW.



Plate 2 View northeast across the study area towards Longstone farm Ordnance Survey.

SOURCES

Databases

The Historic Environment Record, housed with Cambria Archaeology

Written sources

Cook, N 2004 *Prehistoric Funerary and Ritual Sites Project: Pembrokeshire 2003-2004*. Cambria Archaeology Report No. 2004/85 for CADW

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Fenton, R 1811 *A Historical Tour through Pembrokeshire*. 3rd Edition

Kissock, J 1997 'God Made Nature and Men Made Towns': *Post-Conquest and Pre-Conquest Villages in Pembrokeshire*. (from Edwards, N. pp 124-137)

Tavener, N 1999 *Land Adjacent to 47, Station Road, Letterston, Pembrokeshire*. Cambrian Archaeological Projects Report No.84

Cartographic sources

Bowen E 1729 Map of South Wales

Ordnance Survey 1814 Original Surveyor's Drawings: 2" to 1 Mile

Ordnance Survey 1890 1st Edition 6" Pembrokeshire Sheet XVI NE

Ordnance Survey 1907 2nd Edition 1:2500 Pembrokeshire Sheet

Aerial Photographs

Meridian Airmaps 190/230 frame 10526, 1955

Various oblique photographs held by Cambria HER in Qtr. Sht. file cabinet