

LAND AT GREEN MEADOW, PILOT STREET ST. DOGMAELS, CEREDIGION ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL



Prepared
by
Cambria Archaeology
for
Chalcroft Construction Ltd.



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ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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**LAND AT GREEN MEADOW, PILOT STREET
ST. DOGMAELS, CEREDIGION
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

Report by
Cambria Archaeology Field services

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**LAND AT GREEN MEADOW, PILOT STREET, ST. DOGMAELS
ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL**

CONTENTS	PAGE
Summary	1
Introduction	2
Summary of historic landscape development	3
The archaeological resource	5
Potential impacts of development	6
Suggested further archaeological works	7
Appendix 1: Extract from Historic Landscape Characterisation	8
Sources	9
Figure 1: Location plan showing proposed development site	3
Figure 2: Extract from the St Dogmaels parish tithe map	4
Figure 3: Schematic site plan showing the location of the former smithy	5
Plate 1: General view east across the site	1
Plate 2: red brick building on site of former smithy	7

LAND AT GREEN MEADOW, PILOT STREET, ST. DOGMAELS ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

SUMMARY

Proposals for a residential development on a plot of land at Green Meadow, Pilot Street, St. Dogmaels (NGR SN16304631), required an archaeological appraisal in order to rapidly assess the archaeological resource and the potential impact of development on that resource.

Willis and Hole Architects, on behalf of Chalcroft Construction Ltd., commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Services to undertake the appraisal in October 2007.

The appraisal showed that the site has remained undeveloped since at least the early – mid 19th century, although this area of St. Dogmaels was used for shipbuilding during the 18th and 19th centuries. The relatively small-scale shipbuilding that took place would probably leave little or no trace in the archaeological record.

The only site of possible archaeological interest was a former smithy marked on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps that may partially survive in a small red brick building in the extreme southwest corner of the site.



Plate 1: General view east across the site.

INTRODUCTION

Project proposals and commission

Proposals for a residential development on land at Green Meadow, Pilot Street, St. Dogmaels (NGR SN16304631), required an archaeological appraisal. The appraisal was recommended to the Local Planning Authority by their archaeological advisor, Cambria Archaeology Heritage Management, in a letter dated 22 November 2005.

Willis and Hole Architects, on behalf of Chalcroft Construction Ltd., commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Services to undertake the appraisal in October 2007.

Scope of the project

The appraisal consisted of the examination of readily available sources of information such as maps, published works and aerial photographs, and a site visit. The results are intended to inform the final design plans for the site and, if required, to outline a possible programme of further works to mitigate the archaeological impact of the proposed development. The appraisal should be seen only as the first stage of the archaeological process and it does not preclude the possibility that further archaeological works may be required prior to, or during, any proposed development.

Abbreviations used in this report

All sites recorded on the county Historic Environment Record¹ (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.

¹ Held and managed by Cambria Archaeology, The Shire Hall, Llandellio.

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT

The site location

The site occupies c.0.8ha (c.2 acres) between Pilot Street and the Afon Teifi (NGR SN16304631). The site lies c.3-5m below the level of Pilot Street and although much of the site is fairly flat there is a gentle slope down towards the Afon Teifi to the east. A low cliff to the river forms the eastern boundary of the site, while the southern and western boundaries are formed by 19th century and modern housing. The site is for the most part grass covered with mature hedges forming the boundaries.

The site lies within the St. Dogmaels section of the Lower Teifi Valley Landscape of Special Historic Interest as included in the *Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales* (Cadw/ICOMOS 2002). This part of St. Dogmaels is characterized by urban expansion and therefore it is felt that this development will not significantly alter or impact on the character of the Lower Teifi Valley registered area.

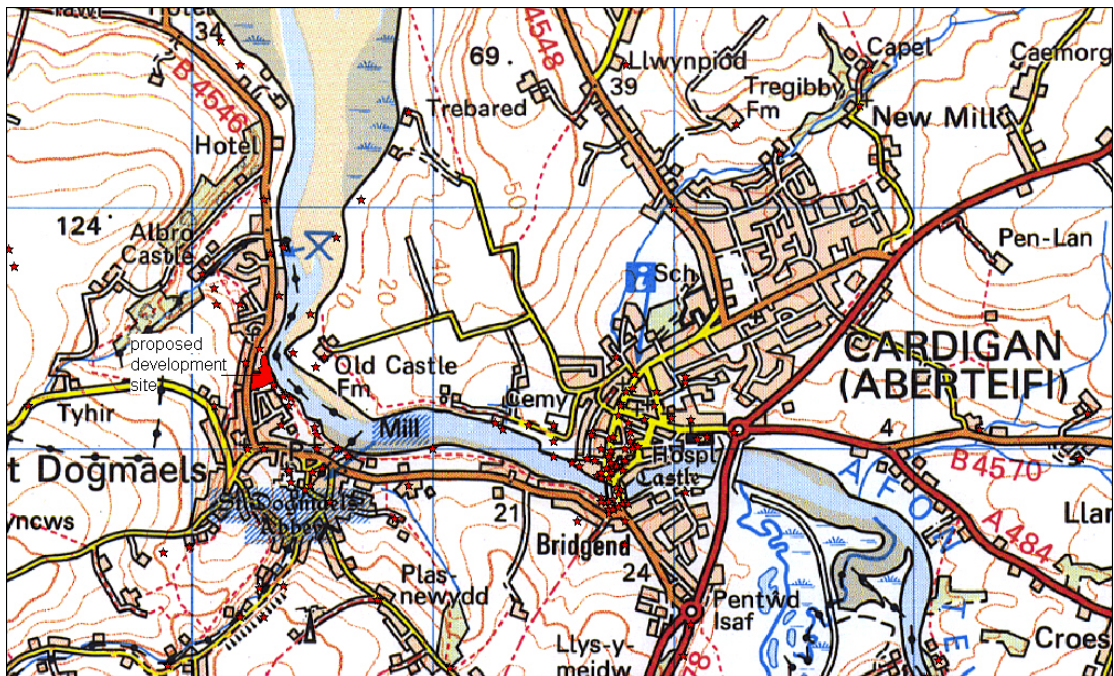


Figure 1: Location plan showing proposed development site (in red).

Reproduced from the 1995 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Pathfinder 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.

Landscape development

The present layout of the proposed development area had been established by the mid to late 19th century, although it sits within an area with a much longer history. It is opposite the site of Old Castle, also known as Din Geraint (PRN 1068), a Scheduled Ancient Monument, thought to have been the site of a motte and bailey castle established in the late 11th century on the site of an Iron Age hillfort (Lewis 1990, 1). It is possible that there would have been a crossing point across the Teifi somewhere in this area, but it seems likely to have been a short distance to the south where a landing point has been recorded (PRN 31984 – see below).

Pilot Street was developed during the post-medieval period along what on the parish tithe map of 1838 appears to have been a trackway that led north from St. Dogmaels to, and beyond, what was formerly common land (Fig. 2). Most of the Pilot Street properties date from the later 19th century or early 20th century.

The site lies just to the north of an area formerly known as Netpool Bank (Fig. 2), which was associated with shipbuilding, particularly during the 18th and 19th centuries. Shipbuilding took place on the mud banks exposed by low tides in the Teifi. It is likely that it extended as far north as the development site, which may have been used as a storage yard for materials. A photograph of 'Shipbuilding at Netpool' (reproduced in Lewis 1990, between pages 66 and 67) shows several ships on the mud banks, with the fields on the riverbank used for stockpiling timber. This type of riverside activity leaves little, if any, trace in the archaeological record. Any evidence of shipbuilding on the mud banks would have long been removed by tidal action and the stockpiling of timber and other materials on the riverbank was confined to the surface, therefore, even if the development site was used during shipbuilding activities it is unlikely that any evidence will survive.

Cartographic evidence suggests that the proposed development site itself has always been undeveloped (see Fig. 2).

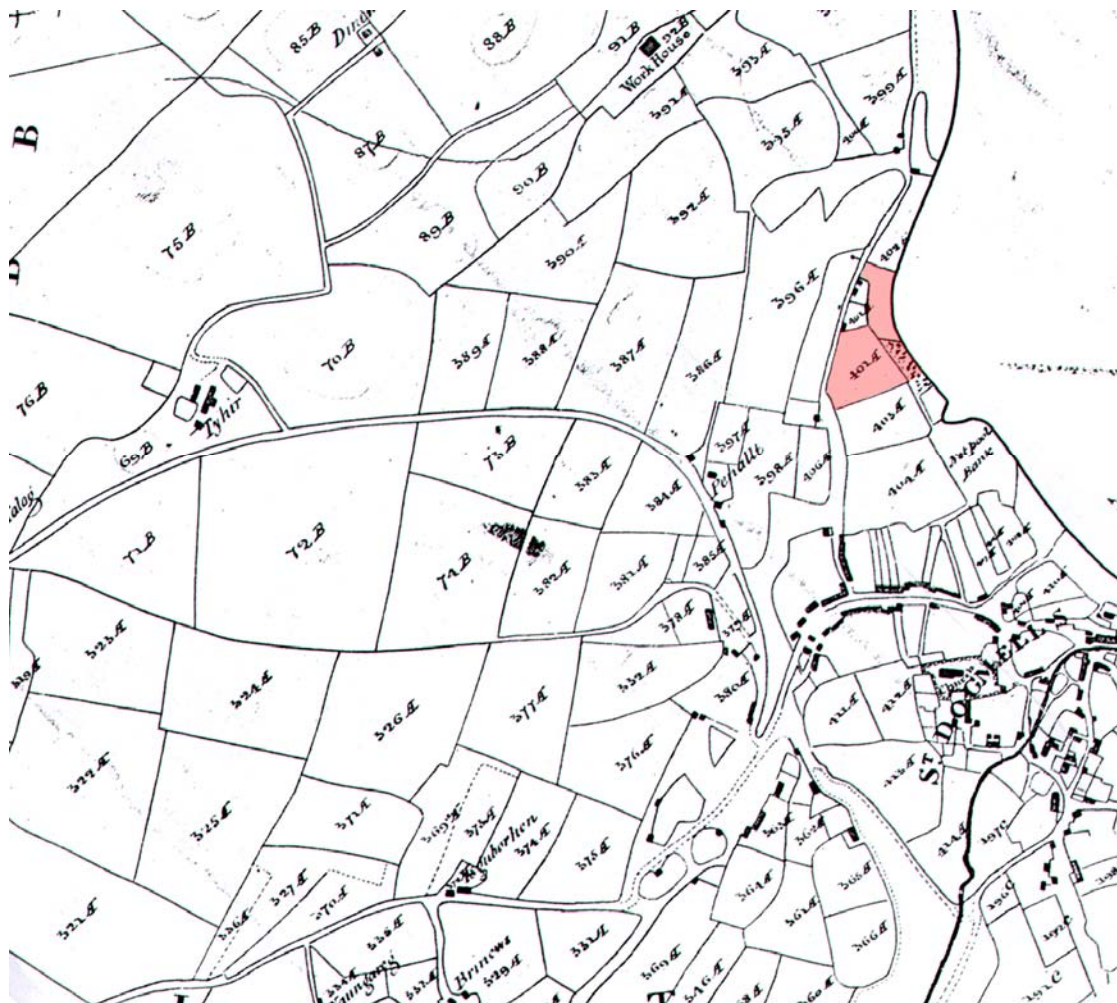


Figure 2: Extract from the St Dogmaels parish tithe map (1838) showing the proposed development site in red and Netpool Bank just to the south.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

Known archaeological sites

There is only one known archaeological site within the proposed development area; a smithy is marked on the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition map in the southwest corner of the site. The smithy was not shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map produced in the late 19th century, or on later mid 20th century editions. A small, semi-derelict red brick structure present on the site may have been part of the smithy, or it may have been built later on the footprint of the earlier smithy.

The smithy is considered to be of local significance only and its archaeological value extremely limited.

A number of sites are recorded close to the proposed development area including a possible building platform with a shed on it (PRN 31983) on the southern edge of the area. Possible WWII defensive or practice features (PRN 30833), a landing point (PRN 31984) and Carreg y Fendith, the Blessing Stone (PRN 39181), all lie further to the south. The site of Old Castle (PRN 1068) lies on the opposite bank of the Teifi.

Archaeological potential

The potential for the recovery of evidence of the shipbuilding industry has been discussed above, but it is worth re-emphasising the fact that shipbuilding on the scale carried out at Netpool may leave little, or no, trace in the archaeological record.

The buried archaeological resource is unknown and frequently unpredictable. With a site of this size, and given its location, there will always be potential for previously unknown buried remains to be present across the site.

However, on the evidence recovered during this appraisal that potential is considered to be low.

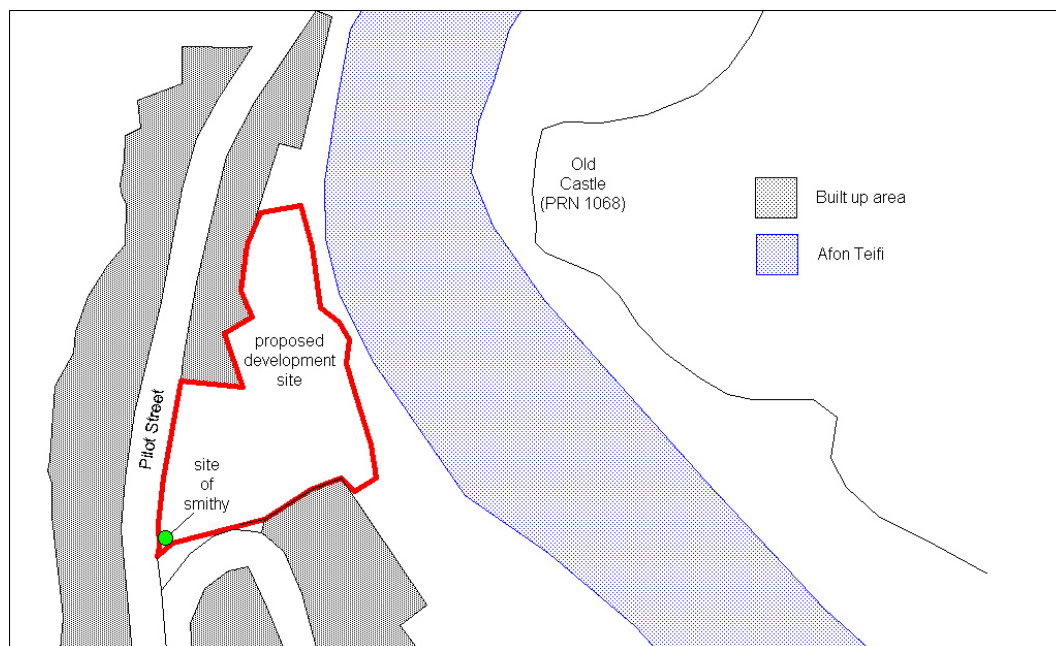


Figure 3: Schematic site plan showing the location of the former smithy.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT

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

All building works require physical intervention, 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 impacts on the historic landscape

Any development of this site will fundamentally alter its existing rural, riparian character, although as urban expansion has already been established along the west and south sides of the site development is not without precedent.

The existing boundaries that form the proposed development area have been in place for at least 160 years and they should, where possible, be retained.

If the red brick structure is within the site boundary it may be demolished or renovated, which could impact on any surviving fabric or on any buried remains of the smithy. The impact of development on the smithy is considered to be small.

Potential impacts on the buried archaeological resource

The nature and extent of any underlying archaeological deposits is at present unknown. However, given that the potential for buried remains is considered to be low, any impact will be small.

SUGGESTED FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS

The following further works are included as suggestions only as the Local Planning Authority's archaeological advisors will determine the scope and extent of any further archaeological works that may be required.

Standing remains

Any works that affect the red brick structure could be monitored to record any evidence of the smithy that may survive either within the existing structure or below ground.

The buried archaeological resource

The potential for buried archaeological remains is considered to be low. Therefore, no further works are suggested here.



Plate 2: red brick building on site of former smithy.

APPENDIX 1: EXTRACT FROM HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION

St Dogmaels is a small, built-up historic landscape character area located on the southern bank of the tidal Afon Teifi. Most of the settlement lies on relatively level ground between sea level and 30m, but on the southwestern periphery streets and houses are located on very steep slopes up to 80m above sea level. Also included are two wooded minor valleys, the larger of which, Cwm Degwell, has a minor road with dwellings along its floor. An open area containing the imposing ruins of a medieval abbey with the adjacent mid 19th century parish church lies at the centre of village. An early 19th century stone-built corn mill in working condition lies immediately to the east of the abbey ruins, on a medieval site. Streets meander from this centre in an organic fashion. There is no indication of planned settlement. Tightly-packed buildings, usually two-storey terraces, curving and straight, with some semi-detached and detached houses line these streets. Almost the whole pre 20th century housing stock dates to the 19th century, and most to the mid 19th century, with very little evidence of anything earlier. Terraces are generally multi-build, that is buildings have been fitted between existing buildings. However, there are a few examples of short single-build terraces. This pattern suggests buildings had to be fitted into existing building plots, plots that may have been established several centuries prior to the rebuilding during the 19th century. Teifi valley slate is the principal building material and north Wales slate the roofing material of these 19th century houses. Many houses are cement rendered (stucco). Occasional use is made of red brick – sometimes cement rendered. A very distinctive characteristic of some of the St Dogmaels houses is the use of pale blue/silver Teifi valley slate laid in strongly coursed bands which is separated by courses of rich brown squared stone (possibly Preseli dolerite). In some instances the slate banding has been emphasised by paint. This banding technique has been noted elsewhere, such as at Newport and Dinas in Pembrokeshire and at Cardigan, but no other location has the strong polychrome effect seen on the St Dogmaels houses, several of which are listed. Many of the 19th century houses have good period detail, such as door cases, bay windows, bargeboards and low street frontage walls with railings. Few of the terraces are single build. This mixture of narrow crowded streets rising up the steep valley side and small houses of great individual variety, but with an overall coherence of date and design, provides St Dogmaels with its strong historic landscape character.

Modern housing, individual dwellings and small estates lie at the periphery of the village and infill gaps in the historic core. Albro Castle, one of the best examples of a 19th century workhouse in Wales is located on the periphery of this area. There is a school, but few shops in the village and little in the way of modern commercial development. Concrete slipways and other facilities are provided for the launching of small boats along the river frontage, but apart from limekilns and 19th century warehouses in banded stone (now converted to other uses), there are few structural remains to indicate the former importance of the sea trade to the community. Recorded archaeology mainly consists of standing structures and buildings as described above, but also included are the early medieval inscribed stones in the abbey, church and chapel sites, burnt mounds and a Roman coin hoard.

St Dogmaels is a very distinctive historic landscape character area and contrasts strongly with the neighbouring areas of fields and farms.

Extract taken from Cambria Archaeology website

(<http://www.cambria.org.uk/HLC/lowerteifivalley/lowerteifivalleyarea.htm#stdogmaels>)

SOURCES

Cartographic sources

1838 St. Dogmells parish tithe map and apportionment.

1891 Ordnance Survey 1st edition map sheet Cardigan XXXVII NE

1891 Ordnance Survey 1st edition map sheet Pembrokeshire II SE

1907 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition map sheet Cardigan XXXVII NE

1907 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition map sheet Pembrokeshire II SE

Published sources

Cadw ICOMOS	2002	<i>Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales.</i>
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Lewis W	1990	<i>The Gateway to Wales: a history of Cardigan.</i> Carmarthen. Dyfed County Council.
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL**

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This report has been prepared by Nigel Page

Position: Senior Project Manager

Signature Date

This report has been checked and approved by Ken Murphy

on behalf of Cambria Archaeology, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Position: Director

Signature Date

As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any comments you may
have on the content or presentation of this report

