

# **FRON VILLA, CRYMYCH, PEMBROKESHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust  
Ltd.  
For Mr & Mrs Aled Francis



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**FRON VILLA, CRYMYCH, PEMBROKESHIRE:  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

Gan / By

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**SUMMARY**

*A planning application (07/1630/PA) was submitted by Mr & Mrs Aled Francis to develop land adjacent to Fron Villa in Crymych, Pembrokeshire at NGR SN 18206 33740. The site lies in close proximity to a Bronze Age round barrow, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, in an area likely to contain archaeologically significant remains.*

*Given the potential for the presence of buried archaeological deposits on the site, possibly associated with the Bronze Age round barrow, planning permission was granted with a condition that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during all groundworks at the site that had the potential to expose, damage or destroy archaeological remains. The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record any such archaeological deposits.*

*In order to comply with the planning condition Mr & Mrs Francis commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to carry out the watching brief in September 2008.*

*Topsoil stripping on the site, in preparation for the excavation of foundation trenches for a new dwelling and garage, revealed only natural subsoil and shale bedrock.*

*No archaeologically significant features or deposits were encountered during the groundworks for the development. Although the potential for prehistoric remains associated with the Bronze Age round barrow was highlighted, the development had no impact on the archaeological resource. These results do not preclude the possibility that prehistoric, or later, archaeological features lie buried elsewhere in the vicinity of Fron Villa, Crymych.*

## INTRODUCTION

### Project background

A planning application (07/1630/PA) was submitted by Mr Mrs A Francis to develop land adjacent to the north side of Fron Villa, Crymych at NGR<sup>1</sup> SN 1820633740 (Figure 1).

The development site lies in close proximity to the site of a Bronze Age round barrow (PRN<sup>2</sup> 966), a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No. Pe 325). Human burial sites such as these are of archaeological importance and often form part of a wider cemetery complex, consequently there was a strong possibility that associated features or deposits may be exposed, damaged or destroyed during the groundworks for the proposed development.

Given the potential for the presence of buried archaeological features or deposits on the site Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management, as archaeological advisors to the Local Planning Authority<sup>3</sup> (LPA), recommended that an archaeological watching brief be carried out in order to protect the archaeological interests. In granting planning consent, an obligation to undertake an archaeological watching brief was placed on the application by the LPA.

To comply with the condition Mr & Mrs Francis commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to carry out the watching brief in September 2008.

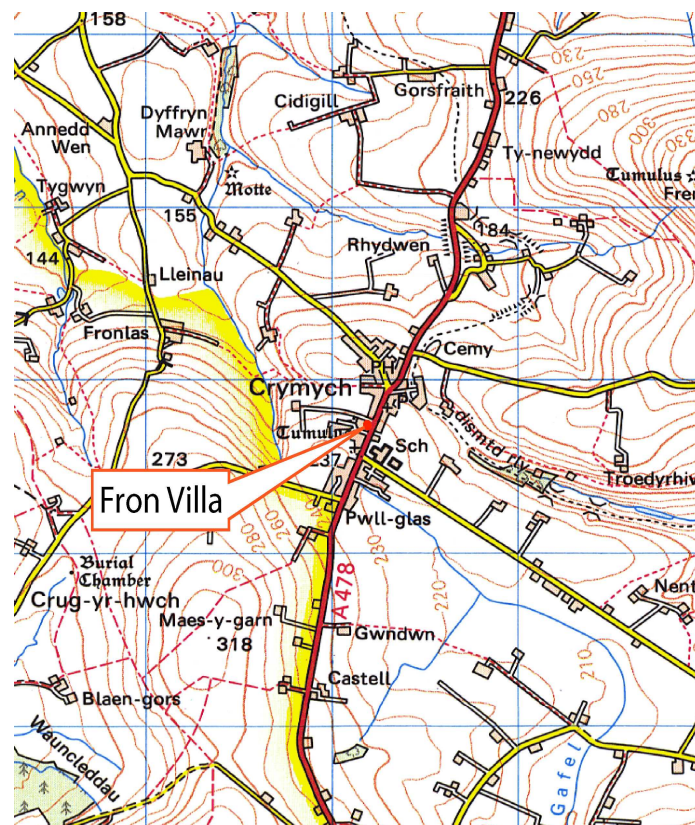


Figure 1. Location map, based on Ordnance Survey.

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 Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842

<sup>1</sup> National Grid Reference

<sup>2</sup> Primary Record Number

<sup>3</sup> Pembrokeshire County Council Planning Department



## **The watching brief methodology and scope of the report**

The watching brief comprised the on-site attendance, over the course of several days, of an archaeologist during the topsoil and subsoil strip for the footings of the new buildings. All excavations were undertaken by machine, a 360° tracked mechanical excavator, using a toothless grading bucket.

Records were made of all excavated deposits and digital photographs were taken.

This report summarises the archaeological background to the site before discussing the results of the watching brief.

Any archaeological sites mentioned in the text that are recorded in the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER) held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust are identified, for reference and location, by their Primary Record Number (PRN), National Grid Reference (NGR), and Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) number where appropriate. The HER is housed with Dyfed Archaeological Trust at its offices in Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire.

Printed map extracts included in this report are for illustrative purposes only and are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale.

## **SITE LOCATION AND BRIEF ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

The development area is situated fronting onto the west side of the A 478 main road in the village of Crymych at NGR SN 18206 33740 (Figures 1 & 2) on the 231m contour (Ordnance Datum). The north side of the development is bounded by a lane that leads to Fron Lwyd farm some 0.38km to the west, whilst the south side is bounded by Fron Villa (formerly Henffordd). At the time of the watching brief the property on the west side of the development was itself undergoing redevelopment.



Figure 2. Location of development area, marked in red, on Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 6" map extract, dated 1907

The rectangular building plot for the Fron Villa development measured approximately 28m by 13m and appeared to have until recently been the garden for Fron Villa. The ground was raised above both the road on the east frontage and the lane to the north and retained by stone walls that were demolished during the development works and replaced by new build.

The underlying solid geology of the area is represented by Ordovician shales of the Caradoc series (British Geological Survey 1994).

Some 90m to the west-northwest of the development lies the Bronze Age round barrow of Crug Bach (PRN 966; SAM No. Pe 325). The Bronze Age, as it occurred in Britain, is the period of prehistory from c.2000 BC to c.600 BC. Characteristic of the period was the evolution of new style pottery 'beakers', the first use of metalwork (copper and bronze), the erection of standing stones, and the building of a wide variety of small circular monuments used for both ritual and funerary purposes. Few early Bronze Age settlement sites have been discovered in west Wales but the presence of 'burnt mound' sites (possible cooking places) comprising heat affected shattered stones and scorched earth, usually situated close to a water supply, are the most common indicator of Bronze Age activity. Later Bronze Age settlement throughout Wales is represented in the landscape by hillforts and promontory forts, the construction of which became more common in the succeeding Iron Age after c.600BC.

Crug Bach round barrow (PRN 966; SAM Pe 325) is a typical Bronze Age human burial site. The site as it appears today is a 1.75m high circular grass covered mound c.23m in diameter and divided by a hedge with the eastern side located in a well kept garden (Photo 1) and the west side covered in brambles and dumped material. Despite its partially unkempt appearance the round barrow is a statutorily protected Scheduled Ancient Monument.

There are no other known archaeological sites in the immediate vicinity of the development area.

## **WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS**

A total of three site visits were required to carry out the watching brief. Two visits oversaw the removal of the turf and topsoil on the footprint of the new house and the removal of the retaining walls on the north and east boundaries of the development site. A final visit was made to watch the excavation for the garage footings in the southwest corner of the site.

The groundworks for the footprint of the new house (Figure 3) and the demolition of the retaining walls saw the removal of an average depth of 0.25m of a dark brown homogeneous silty clay humic topsoil containing occasional small angular fragments of shattered shale. This layer was seen to overlie a c.0.15m deep layer of orange brown silty clay soil containing 60% small and medium size angular fragments of shattered or degrading shale bedrock. This layer was a natural subsoil layer and overlay natural shale bedrock. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during these excavations. The demolition of the retaining walls also revealed only natural bedrock, but allowed a view of the excavated, stratified, deposits in section (Photo 2).

Excavation of the footprint for the new garage (Figure 3) in the southwest corner of the building plot revealed identical natural deposits to those seen during the excavations for the new house. The only feature noted during this part of the groundworks was a modern rectangular concrete platform designed to hold a rotating washing line (Photo 3), with no archaeological features or deposits associated with the Bronze age round barrow being encountered.

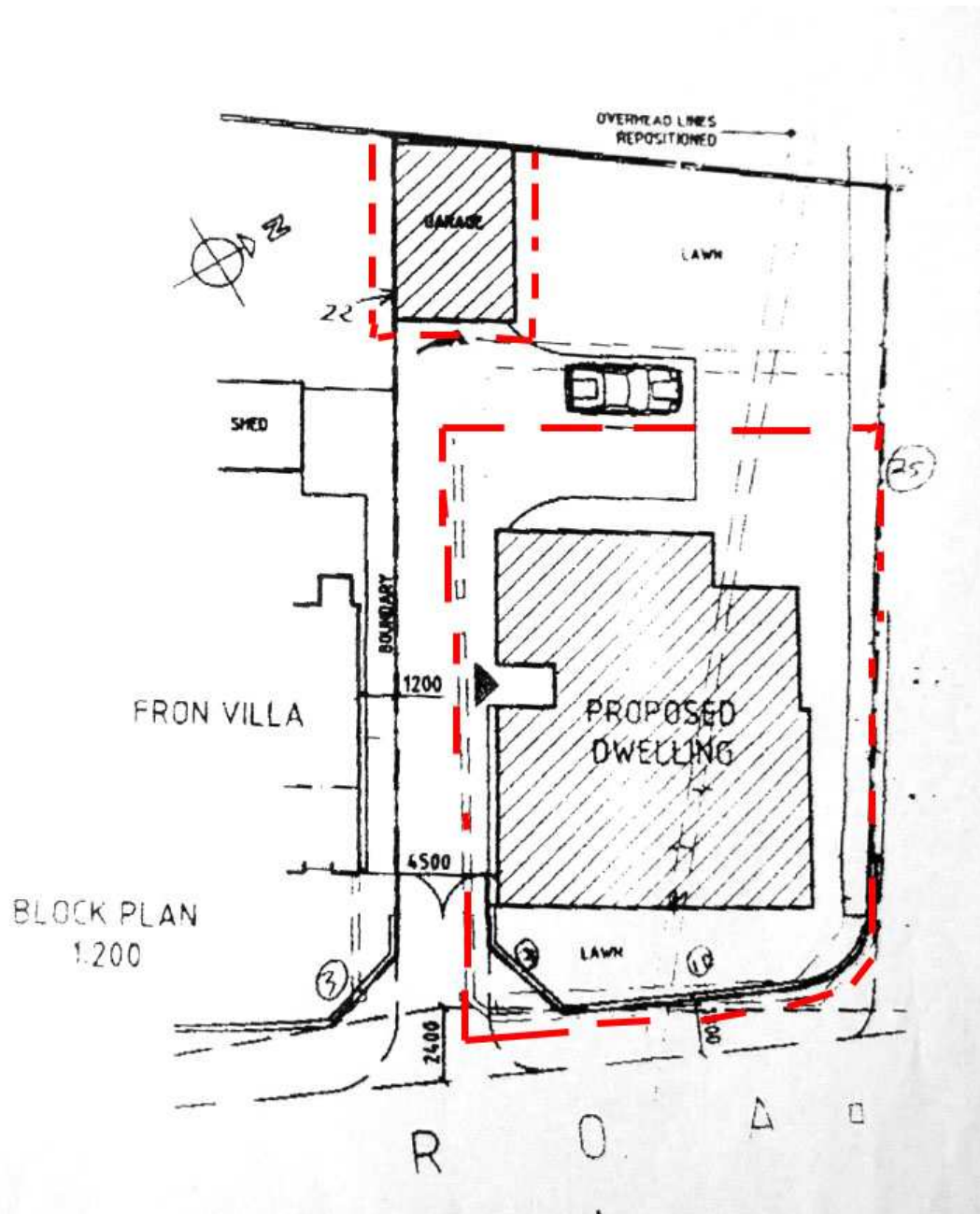


Figure 3. Annotated copy of the development plan. Excavated areas are within the red dashed lines. Original plans supplied by clients.



## **CONCLUSION**

The proposed development site lay close to the location of Crug Bach Bronze Age round barrow, considered to be of high archaeological importance. The proposed development site was therefore considered to have the potential to contain associated archaeological remains.

The archaeological watching brief was required, by way of a condition on the planning permission, in order to create a record of any archaeological remains that may have been exposed, damaged or destroyed by the proposed works.

Despite the potential for the presence of important archaeological deposits associated with the Bronze Age round barrow to be located within the development site, only natural deposits were revealed by the groundworks.

The archaeological watching brief has demonstrated that no archaeological remains were impacted upon by the development proposals. These results do not preclude the possibility that prehistoric, or later, archaeological features lie buried elsewhere in the vicinity of Fron Villa.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**



Photo. 1: View of eastern side of Crug Bach round barrow (PRN 966) looking NW.

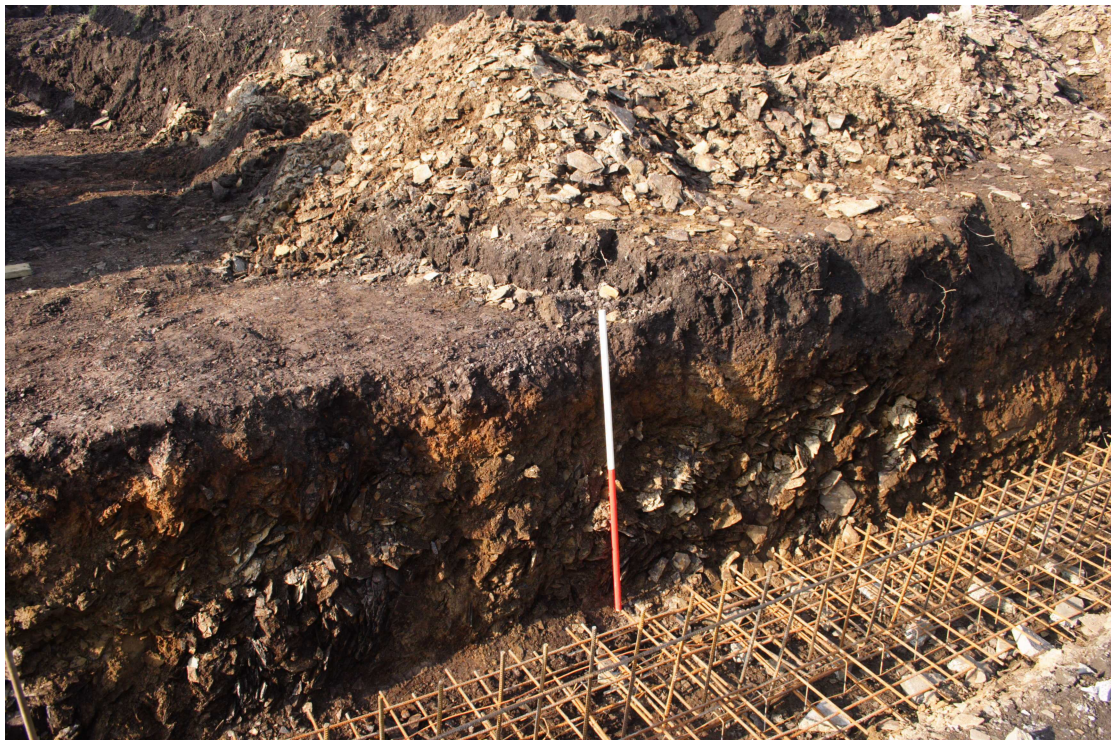


Photo. 2: The natural stratigraphy revealed after removal of the retaining wall at the northern edge of the site, looking southwest. Scale is 1m.





Photo. 3: View of garage site immediately prior to excavation. Looking northwest.



Photo. 4: View of site after site clearance and during construction of new retaining walls. Looking southwest.

## **SOURCES CONSULTED**

### **Database**

The Regional Historic Environment Record, housed with Dyfed Archaeological Trust

### **Bibliographic**

Cook, N, 2004 *Prehistoric Funerary & Ritual Sites Project: Pembrokeshire 2003-2004*. Dyfed Archaeological Trust Report No. 2004/85 for CADW: Welsh Historic Monuments

Grimes, WF, 1951 *The Prehistory of Wales*. The National Museum of Wales

### **Cartographic**

British Geological Survey, 1:250000 Geological Map of Wales 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Solid 1994

Ordnance Survey, 1:10560 Quarter Sheet SN13SE 1964

Ordnance Survey, 1:10560 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Pembrokeshire Sheet XII NW 1891

Ordnance Survey, 1:10560 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Pembrokeshire Sheet XII NW 1906

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**July 2009**

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan /  
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Swydd / Position: **Project Manager**

Llofnod / Signature ..... Dyddiad / Date

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This report has been checked and approved by: **James Meek**

ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf. /  
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Swydd / Position: **Head of Field Services**

Llofnod / Signature ..... Dyddiad / Date

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

*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*