

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF LAND SOUTH OF BRONHAUL, CYNGHORDY, LLANDOVERY CARMARTHENSHIRE

February 2009



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
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Gan / By

Andrew Shobbrook

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Summary

Due to the proximity of a post-medieval chapel site to a proposed development on land south of Bronhaul, Cyngordy, Llandovery (centred on NGR SN 80264 40084), an archaeological appraisal was requested by the archaeological advisors to the Local Planning Authority in order to inform decisions on the planning application. Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field services were commissioned to undertake the assessment by ECF Property Finance plc.

Documentary and cartographic evidence for the actual location of the chapel site is ambiguous and there appears to be no above ground archaeological evidence present on the proposed development site. However, aerial photographs indicate the presence of a circular feature of possible archaeological significance immediately outside the southern edge of the site.

The possibility of undertaking a geophysical survey or archaeological evaluation to characterise the archaeological potential of the site prior to development is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Project outline

A proposed development on land south of Bronhaul, Cynghordy, Llandovery Carmarthenshire (centred on NGR SN80264 40084), lies in close proximity to the site of a post-medieval chapel (PRN29792). The Local Planning Authority's (LPA) archaeological advisors recommended that an archaeological appraisal of the site be carried out before the planning application (Planning Application E/20540) was decided. Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field services were commissioned to undertake the assessment by ECF Property Finance plc.

Methodology

The appraisal consisted of the examination of available sources of information such as maps, published works and aerial photographs held in the Historic Environment Record¹ (HER) and a site visit. The results are intended to identify the extent and character of the archaeological resource, to assess the likely and potential impacts of the scheme on that resource and, if required, to outline a possible programme of further works to mitigate those impacts. The appraisal should be seen only as the first stage of the archaeological process and does not preclude the possibility that further archaeological input may be required prior to, or during, the proposed development.

Abbreviations used in this report

All sites recorded on the county 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 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 Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Llandeilo.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

Known Archaeological Sites

PRN 29792 Capel Newydd (NGR SN803400)

Capel Newydd was said to have replaced an earlier church called St. Cynfab's church that was said to be left in a state of decay after 1522. (Arber-Cooke, 1978).

Cartographic Resource

There appear to be two different chapel sites with similar names in the parish of Llanfair-ar-yr-Bryn. A chapel at the Glanbran estate has two spelling versions "Capel Newith" and "Capel Newydd". This makes it difficult to ascertain which chapel the early maps (and other sources) are referring to. This report will therefore cover both sites, firstly the chapel site said to be positioned on the Glanbran estate and secondly the chapel site positioned near to the proposed development.

The chapel at Capel Newydd was first illustrated on Saxton's map of Radnorshire, Brecknockshire, Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire published in 1579. Capel Newydd was also recorded on maps by John Speed in 1610, however, Speed's map is less detailed and is based on a re-drawing of Saxton's map (Arber-Cooke, 1978).

John Ogilby's map of "The road from Prestaine in Com. Radnor to Carmarthen" in 1675 shows "Llanbrayn, Mr. Gwinns house," and beyond it a nameless building, possibly the chapel. The date that the chapel was abandoned is not known, however, it is likely that the site was not maintained after 1726 since Sackville Gwynne built Eglwys Newydd (the church in which he is buried) in 1726. (Arber-Cooke, 1978).

Although no building now survives, field number 1271 is named 'Cae Fynwent' ('the churchyard field') on the parish tithe map of 1843.

The Chapel that is supposedly situated close to the proposed development area is also called Capel Newydd (PRN 29792), and is said to have been founded after the earlier church of Llangynfab was abandoned: Llangynfab church itself is located 1.2 miles to the southwest of Capel Newydd. Arber-Cooke mentions that Capel Newydd was probably of 16th century date and was situated on the road to Llandovery from Cynghordy, on the left, "a little beyond the desolation that was Glanbran" (Arber-Cooke, 1978). Arber-Cooke does not, however, mention the source of this information on the location of the chapel.

In the tithe apportionment the name of the field in which the proposed development is located (field number 1275 on the 1843 map) is illegible. The first and second edition Ordnance Survey 6-inch maps both show the field in question, but no chapel is represented on either of these. Arber-Cooke also mentions that there was no visible trace of the chapel in the neighbouring field (no.1274 on the tithe map), named as 'Waun y Edwyn' in the 1843 tithe apportionment.

Aerial photographic evidence

Three aerial photographs taken by the Royal Air Force in 1946 show a circular feature outside the southern edge of the proposed development. This circular feature can also be seen on digitised Aerial Photographs held at the Dyfed Archaeological Trust's office and also on the 'Google Earth' website. The feature appears to have a diameter of approximately 20 metres. The photographs also appear to indicate the presence of a system of modern field drains.

Site visit

A site visit was made to assess the archaeological potential of the site. No evidence for the survival of the circular feature as an earthwork was apparent, although this does not preclude the possibility that the feature does survive below ground. The site is currently covered in scrub growth, making recognition of any potentially archaeologically significant features on the ground difficult in places. A rapid walkover survey of the site, however, revealed no above ground features

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

A rapid assessment of documentary, cartographic and photographic evidence held in the HER has not provided conclusive proof for the presence or absence of a chapel site (or associated features) within the proposed development area. Historic mapping cannot be relied upon to provide accurate locations for sites that are depicted. Likewise, the absence of a site on historic map depictions is not necessarily conclusive proof of its non-existence. Evidence of the site may still lie below ground.

The aerial photographs do not show cropmarks that can be readily interpreted as representing evidence for the presence of a chapel site. The visibility of sites as cropmarks is, however, dependent upon ground conditions at the time the photograph was taken, and this fact must be taken into consideration when assessing their value as indicators of the presence, or not, of archaeological sites.

The documentary evidence is ambiguous, and the possibility remains that the existence and locations of the two possible chapel sites have become confused over time.

A possible circular feature just outside the southern end of the development area that is consistently visible over time on aerial photographs, may be of archaeological significance. The character of this feature is uncertain. It could represent an enclosure ditch around a small chapel site, or it may represent a prehistoric burial monument for example. It may suggest the presence of other features in the vicinity that are not visible on the aerial photographs.

If further assessment of the archaeological potential of the site is desired prior to granting of planning permission, or as a condition placed upon development of the site, options could include geophysical survey of the field, and/or trial trenching in advance of development to ascertain the presence or absence, depth and sensitivity of any archaeological features that may be present. If the option to undertake a geophysical survey on the site is chosen a certain amount of scrub removal will be necessary prior to the survey being carried out.

SOURCES

Database

The Regional Historic Environment Record, housed with Dyfed Archaeological Trust in Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire

Cartographic

Saxton's map of Radnorshire, Brecknockshire, Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire. 1679.

Llanfair-ar-y-Bryn Parish Tithe Map and Apportionment 1843.

Ordnance Survey, 1964, Quarter Sheet SN84SW 1:10,560

Ordnance Survey, 1891, Carmarthenshire Sheet XVIII NE 1st edition 1:10,560

Ordnance Survey, 1907, Carmarthenshire Sheet XVIII NE 2nd edition 1:10,560

Published Sources

Arber-Cooke, AT, 1978 *Pages from the History of Llandovery*, Vol II, pp.83-85.

Unpublished Sources

Sambrook, P, & Page, N, 1995 *Dinefwr Settlements Project Gazetteer of Settlements*. Dyfed Archaeological Trust Report

Aerial Photographs

RAF Vertical APs 1946 106G/1471 frames 4184 to 4186

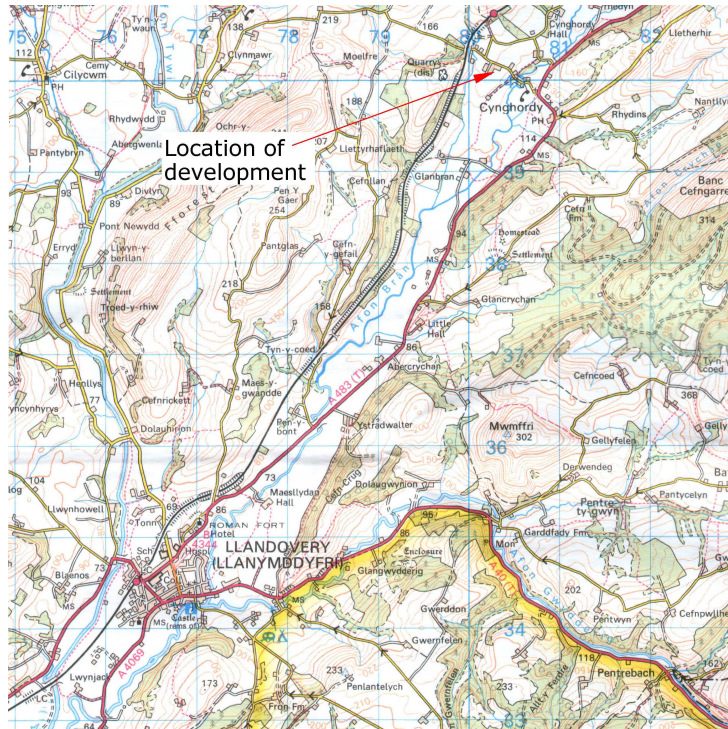


Figure 1: Location plan.

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: Area of proposed development



Figure 5: Ordnance Survey 1891 Carmarthenshire Sheet XVIII NE 1st edition 1:10560, extract showing development area location

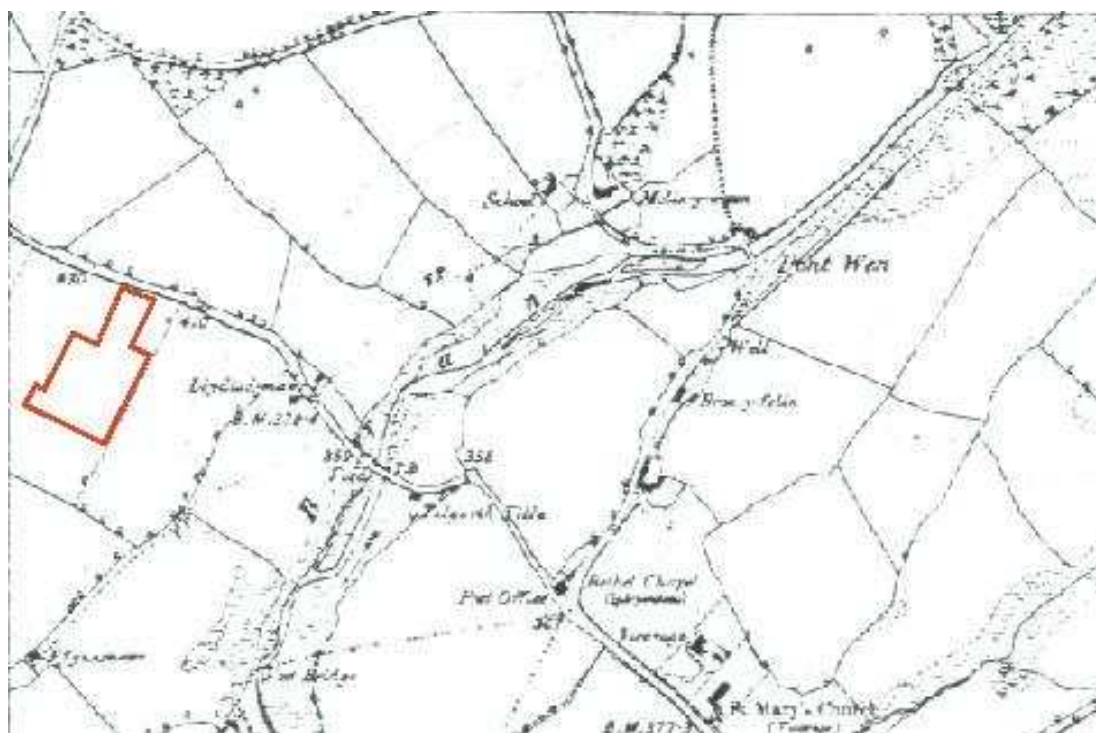


Figure 6: Ordnance Survey 1907 Carmarthenshire Sheet XVIII NE 1st edition 1:10560.



Plate 1: RAF photograph 4184.



Plate 2: RAF photograph 4185.



Plate 3: RAF photograph 4186.



Plate 4: View north showing proposed development area.



Plate 5: View south from the proposed development site.



Plate 6: View south showing proposed development site.

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Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith
This report has been checked and approved by

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Llofnod / SignatureDuncan Schlee..... Date 4/3/09

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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