

**SURF TELECOMS RADIO MAST,
BRONYSCAWEN FARM, LLANBOIDY,
CARMARTHENSHIRE
SN 21315 26101
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

October 2011



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For: SURF Telecoms / Western
Power Distribution



ymddiriedolaeth archaeolegol



archaeological trust

DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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Gan / By

JAMES MEEK

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SUMMARY

This report has been produced by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services in response to a request from Mr Kelvin Walker of Surf Telecom / Western Power Distribution, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the extension of the existing Radio Mast compound and erection of a new equipment shed on land near Bronyscawen Farm, Llanboidy, Carmarthen shire (NGR SN 21315 26101).

The development site lies within the area of a known barrow cemetery, of which three survive as visible earthworks and are designated as scheduled ancient monuments. It was considered that the proposed development could potentially impact upon underlying archaeological remains, and thus a condition was placed upon the planning permission requiring an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken during groundworks that had the potential to expose, damage or destroy any underlying archaeological remains.

The watching brief undertaken during the initial topsoil strip associated with the construction of a new equipment shed and compound at the Llanboidy Radio Mast revealed no significant archaeological remains or finds. If any remains associated with the barrow cemetery had been present within the development area, it is possible that they had subsequently been damaged or removed through agricultural activities (levelling or ploughing) or during the construction and use of a former trackway which passed through the site to access a former quarry directly to the west.

The cable trench and inspection box for BT cables were recorded within the site area. The site of a former inspection chamber was also noted. The former chamber had been replaced when the existing Radio Mast compound was built, replaced with the new cable and chamber. These are of low archaeological significance, but do serve to demonstrate that if archaeological remains had been present, they would have been visible within the exposed surface of the development area.

INTRODUCTION

Project Commission

In response to a request from Mr Kelvin Walker of Surf Telecoms / Western Power Distribution, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services provided an archaeological watching brief during initial groundworks and topsoil stripping for the construction of a new equipment building at Bronyscawen Farm, Llanboidy, Carmarthenshire (Figure 1; centred on NGR SN 21315 26101).

An archaeological condition was attached to the planning permission for the development (planning application ref W/24625). The condition stated:

'No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of building recording in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.'

It was confirmed and accepted that the condition should have stated '**archaeological**' recording as opposed to building recording. The requirement for a watching brief was thus confirmed and accepted by all parties.

An approved archaeological written scheme of investigation for the watching brief was prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services prior to the commencement of the watching brief.

Scope of the Project

The main scope of the project was laid out within the WSI as *'Archaeological attendance and recording during groundworks associated with the construction of an extension to an existing Radio Mast Compound at Bronyscawen Farm, Llanboidy, Carmarthenshire. The groundworks will involve ground reduction which may expose, damage or destroy any underlying archaeological remains, if present.'*

The WSI also stated that the project objectives were:

- Provision of a written scheme of investigation to outline the methodology by which Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services will undertake the watching brief.
- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To appropriately investigate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Report Outline

This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background before summarising the watching brief results and the conclusions based on those results.

Abbreviations

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record¹ (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services – DAT-FS; Written Scheme of Investigation – WSI; SAM – Scheduled Ancient Monument

Illustrations

Record photographs are included at back of the report. Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale and are illustrative only.

Timeline

The following timeline is used within this report to give date ranges for the various archaeological periods that may be mentioned within the text (Table 1).

Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic –	c.450,000 – 10,000 BC	Prehistoric
Mesolithic –	c. 10,000 – 4400 BC	
Neolithic –	c.4400 – 2300 BC	
Bronze Age –	c.2300 – 700 BC	
Iron Age –	c.700 BC – AD 43	
Roman (Romano-British) Period –	AD 43 – c. AD 410	Historic
Post-Roman / Early Medieval Period –	c. AD 410 – AD 1066	
Medieval Period –	1066 – 1536	
Post-Medieval Period –	1536 – 1899	
Modern –	20th century onwards	

Table 1: Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales

¹ Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Shire Hall, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, SA19 6AF.

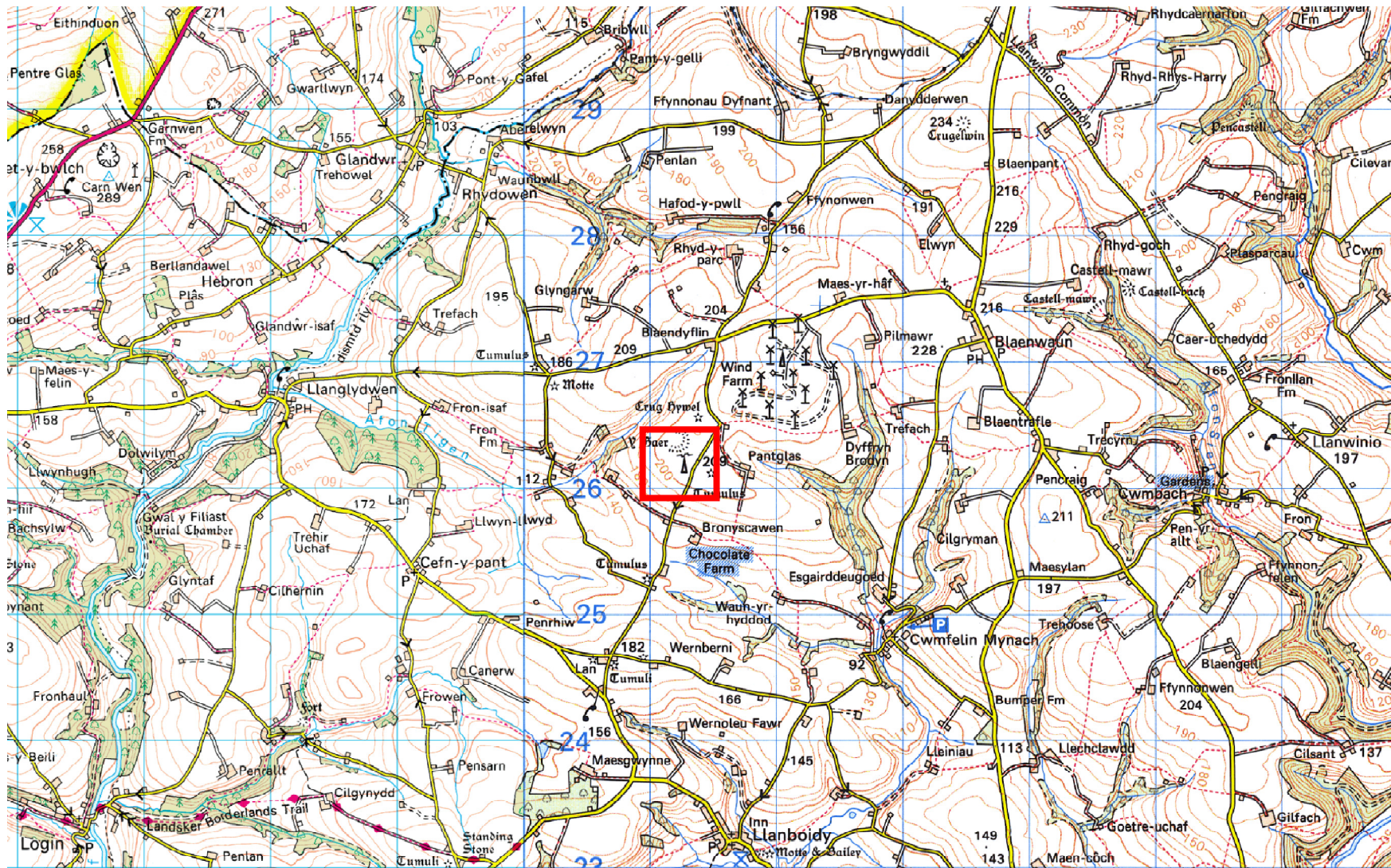
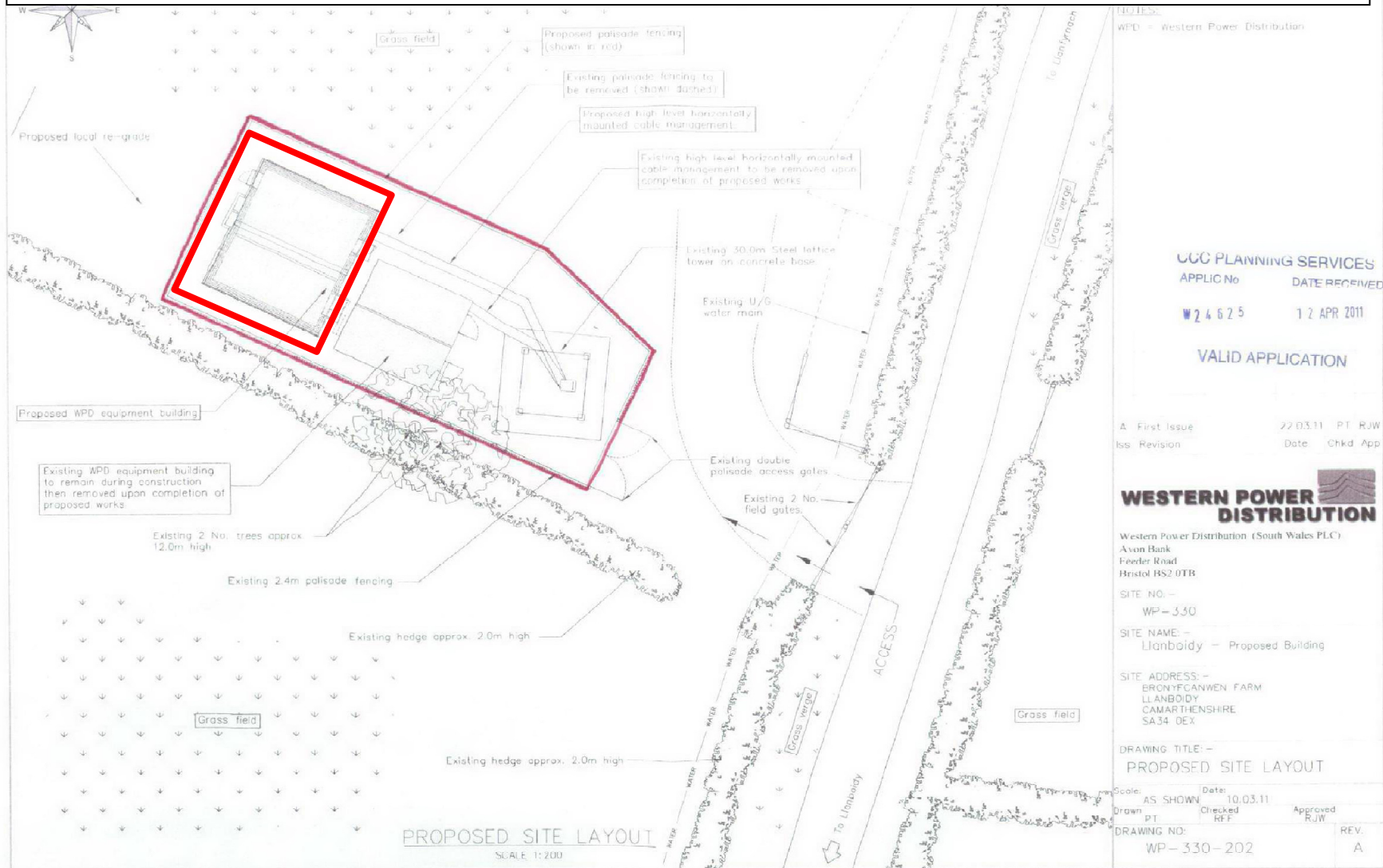


Figure 1: Location plan of Llanboidy Radio Mast, Carmarthenshire

(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 AL51842A

Figure 2: Detailed location and proposals taken from planning application (Carmarthenshire County Council website).
The thick red line indicates the watching brief area.



THE SITE

Location and Topography

The site area lies in an upland part of Carmarthenshire, just above the 200m OD contour. It is located approximately 2.9km north of Llanboidy at the top of a southwest facing slope close to Bronyscawen Farm (Figures 1 & 2, centred on NGR SN 21315 26101).

Generally the site area was relatively level, defined by the existing radio mast complex to the east and a field boundary hedge bank to the south. The remainder of the site area had been marked out prior to the start of the watching brief.

Archaeological Background

The following information is taken from the Dyfed Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record; individual records are listed in Table 2 below for archaeological interests lying within 500m of the centre of the proposed development area and are noted by their site name and Primary Record Number (PRN).

As can be seen a large number of these records relate to sites of Bronze Age Round Barrows (PRNs 3926, 3934, 3935, 3936, 5825, 8048, 12038, 12040, 12041, 12042, 12044, 12045 and 42511). The barrows all form part of a large Bronze Age Barrow Cemetery (PRN 12039). Many of the barrow sites have been destroyed, presumably through agricultural activity ploughing them level. Below ground remains of the barrows may still survive, demonstrated by the cropmarks of two former barrows (PRNs 8048 & 12040) that can be seen from the air, indicating that the ditches that surrounded the barrow mounds are still present below ground. The features become visible from the air due to their effect on the vegetation growth above. The sites of two well preserved barrow earthworks survive 160m to the east of the proposed development area; called the Pantglas Tumuli (PRN 3934). This site comprises a large barrow and a smaller one directly adjacent on its eastern side and is a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM CM133). The closest former barrow site lies around 35m to the south of the development site. The furthest barrow, Crughywel barrow (PRN 3926), lies around 490m to the north. It still survives as a visible earthwork and is also a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM CM132).

The former site of a Bronze Age standing stone is also recorded 50m to the east of the proposed development area on the opposite side of the road and was presumably moved in the past during agricultural works (PRN 12043).

A possible Iron Age Hill Fort, known as Y Gaer, lies 200m to the northeast of the development area (PRN 3927). The fort is visible as a slight earthwork. A Roman Coin hoard was found within Y Gaer in the 19th century (PRN 3920).

The first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map of the 1880s (Figure 3), indicates that the site area contained no structures. It lay within the southeastern corner of a large field with boundaries remaining similar to those which exist today, although the northern field boundary has been removed. The line of an access track to a quarry to the northwest is shown. The earthworks associated with the quarry are still visible today.

The first edition Ordnance Survey map clearly shows the site of Y Gaer hillfort (PRN 3927) which is also labelled with 'Roman Silver Coins Found' (PRN 3920). The Crug Hywel barrow is also indicated labelled on the map (PRN 3926; SAM CM 132). The map also indicates the site of the Pant Gals barrow, labelled as 'tumulus' (PRN 3934; SAM CM133).

The proposed development lies within an area of high potential archaeological activity. The majority of known records indicate that the proposed development lies within a Bronze Age Barrow Cemetery, of which many of the former earthworks have been ploughed out, so that no visible remains survive above ground. Barrow sites lie to the east, west and south of the proposed development area. There is considered good potential for associated below ground remains to survive within the area of proposed development.

PRN	Site Name	Description	Period	Grid Reference
3920	Y Gaer	Roman Coin Hoard	Roman	SN 2122 2634
3926	Crugywel; Crughywel	Round Barrow Earthwork scheduled ancient monument CM132	Bronze Age	SN 2139 2654
3927	Y Gaer	Hillfort Earthwork	Iron Age	SN 2122 2634
3934	Pantglas Tumuli	Round Barrow Earthwork scheduled ancient monument CM133	Bronze Age	SN 2147 2613
3935	Bronyscawen	Former site of a Bronze Age Round Barrow. Site destroyed	Bronze Age	SN 212 261
3936	Bronyscawen	Former site of a Bronze Age Round Barrow. Site destroyed	Bronze Age	SN 212 261
5825	Pantglas Tumulus	Round Barrow Earthwork	Bronze Age	SN 2146 2611
8048	Pantglas	Unknown, Round Barrow Cropmark	Bronze Age	SN 2152 2606
12038	Pantglas	Former site of a Bronze Age Round Barrow. Site destroyed	Bronze Age	SN 2150 2613
12039	Pantglas	Round Barrow Cemetery	Bronze Age	SN 21 26
12040	Pantglas	Unknown, Round Barrow, Cropmark	Bronze Age	SN 2158 2605
12041	Pantglas	Former site of a Bronze Age Round Barrow. Site destroyed	Bronze Age	SN 2155 2614
12042	Pantglas	Former site of a Bronze Age Round Barrow. Site destroyed	Bronze Age	SN 2162 2613
12043	Pantglas	Former site of a Bronze Age standing stone. Site destroyed	Bronze Age	SN 2136 2608
12044	Pantglas	Former site of a Bronze Age Round Barrow. Site destroyed	Bronze Age	SN 2130 2607
12045	Pantglas	Former site of a Bronze Age Round Barrow. Site destroyed	Bronze Age	SN 2128 2600
15259	Post-medieval Quarry	Quarry	Post-medieval	SN 2122 2615
42511	Bronyscawen; Pant Glas	Round Barrow Earthwork	Bronze Age	SN 2119 2617
43835	Fron Farm	A large artificial pond is positioned to the south of the farmstead which appears on the tithe map of 1843. It is now largely drained and overgrown in places.	Post Med	SN 2087 2626

Table 2: Archaeological and Historical Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record within 500m of the centre of the proposed development

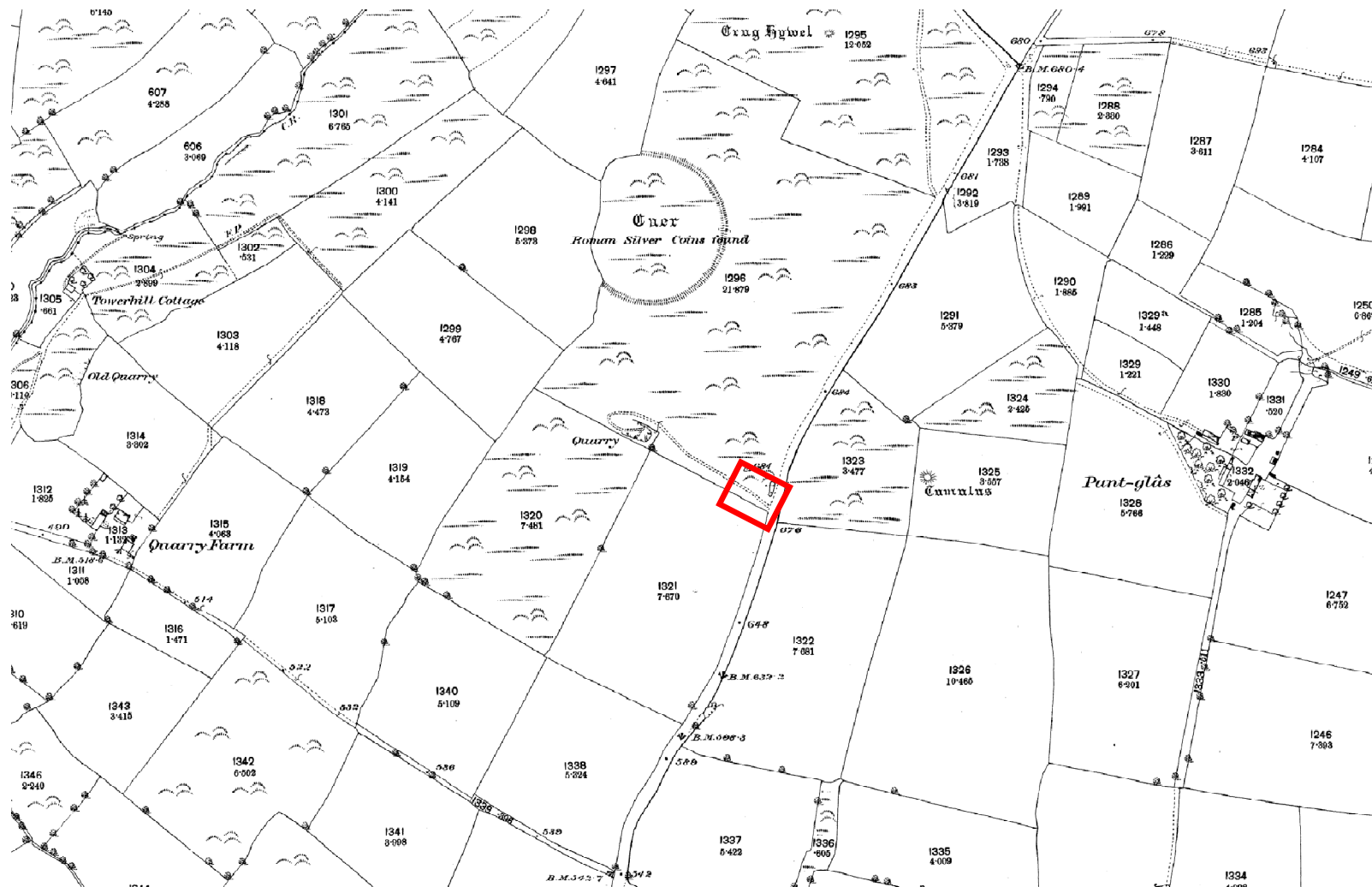


Figure 3: Extract from the Ordnance Survey first edition map of 1880s and approximate location of development area

WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

The detailed methodology for the watching brief was laid out within the WSI. The relevant methodology can be summarised as follows.

Fieldwork

A 'watching brief' was undertaken during initial ground works within the proposed development site that had the potential to expose, damage or destroy underlying archaeological remains.

All archaeological deposits revealed during the groundworks were examined and recorded to an appropriate level.

Recording of all archaeological features or deposits conformed to best current professional practice and was carried out in accordance with the Recording Manual² used by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services.

Post-Fieldwork Reporting and Archiving

All data recovered during the fieldwork will be collated into a site archive structured in accordance with the specifications in *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (Brown 2007), and the procedures recommended by the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.

The results of the fieldwork have been assessed in local, regional and wider contexts. The report includes a desk-based research element to ensure that the site is placed within its wider archaeological context.

A report fully representative of the results of the fieldwork has been prepared.

Timetabling of Fieldwork

The watching brief involved monitoring of the initial topsoil strip across the entire development site on 31st October 2011. The weather was overcast with occasional rain showers. The topsoil was stripped with a mini digger fitted with a flat bladed bucket.

² Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services have adopted the Recording Manual developed by English Heritage Centre for Archaeology.

RESULTS

The footprint of the development site was topsoil stripped using a mini-excavator fitted with a flat bladed bucket (Photo 1). The subsequent stripped area measured approximately 11m square.

The slope of the adjacent hedge bank and associated vegetation projected into the southern part of the development area.

The topsoil comprised a dark brown silt sand clay soil containing occasional small to medium sized fragments of stone. A small number of modern ceramic sherds were noted in the topsoil.

The exposed surface below comprised decayed bedrock (Abergwilli formation mudstones). This material ranged in colour from dark brown orange through to very light orange. The resultant underlying natural surface lay at between 0.20m and 0.35m depth below the ground surface.

An existing BT cable ran through the site area, the trench for which could be defined (Photo 2) and an inspection chamber was also revealed (Photo 3). A former inspection chamber for the cabling was also recorded in the southeastern quarter of the site (Photo 4). It was known that this was moved when the existing radio mast was built.

On completion of the topsoil strip of the site area (Photo 5) it was confirmed that no significant archaeological finds or features had been revealed.



Photo 1: Start of machining of the development area with existing Radio Mast, compound and equipment shed behind, viewing east



Photo 2: BT cable trench exposed in eastern part of site area, looking south



Photo 3: Existing BT inspection chamber, installed when existing mast compound was built, viewing east



Photo 4: Former location of BT inspection chamber removed when existing Radio Mast compound was built, viewing east



Photo 5: View of exposed surface following topsoil strip, viewing west

CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief undertaken during the initial topsoil strip prior to the construction of a new equipment shed and compound at the Llanboidy Radio Mast revealed no significant archaeological remains or finds.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken due to the development being situated within the area of a former Bronze Age barrow cemetery. A number of the barrows are still visible as earthworks; two of which have been designated as scheduled ancient monuments. Other barrow sites originally recorded as earthworks have subsequently been destroyed through activities associated with agricultural regimes implemented in the area. This presumably involved ploughing or levelling which has removed all above ground evidence of the majority of the barrows. The probability of below ground remains surviving is demonstrated by the presence of cropmarks³ indicating buried ditches around the former barrow earthworks.

Features associated with the former and existing BT cabling were visible in the exposed ground surface within the area stripped of topsoil, confirming that the correct level had been reached for archaeological features to be revealed (the exposed surface being natural geology). If any buried remains of barrows had been present (ditches or burials) then they would have been visible within the exposed surface. It is possible that as the individual barrows within the cemetery are quite dispersed, the development area lies outside the locations of any barrows.

It is probable that the development area has been previously disturbed by levelling / ploughing as noted above but it may also have suffered from the construction of the former trackway that led through the development area to the quarry to the west (as shown on the 1880s first edition Ordnance Survey map Figure 3). It is therefore possible that any archaeological remains that were present in the development area have been removed.

Although no significant archaeological remains were revealed within the development area, the potential for archaeology to be present in the vicinity is still considered to be high.

³ Cropmark – features visible on aerial photographs in certain conditions, created by differential growths in surface vegetation caused by underlying archaeological features.

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Ebrill 2012
April 2012

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by

James Meek

Swydd / Position: Head of Field Services

Llofnod / Signature  Date 26/04/12

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

Fran Murphy

ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.
on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: ARCHAEOLOGIST

Llofnod / Signature Date 26/04/12

*Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau
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