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Land adjacent to Hengoed Farm, Four Roads, Carmarthenshire

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Archaeological Appraisal



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Report No. 1083

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Summary

An Archaeological Appraisal was carried out for the site of two proposed wind turbines on land adjacent to Hengoed Farm, Four Roads, Carmarthenshire. The aim of the work was to carry out a brief assessment of the archaeological potential of the area in advance of the determination of the planning application. The research determined that the site lies within an area of known archaeological significance, with sites dated from the Bronze Age to the post-medieval period recorded within the local landscape. This includes several Bronze Age standing stones, a possible Iron Age hillfort, several medieval sites and a large number of post-medieval remains associated with quarrying. There are six Scheduled Ancient Monuments and two Listed Buildings within a 2km radius of the proposed development site, together with a Grade II Listed historic park and garden. A walkover survey of the proposed development site did not identify any feature of potential archaeological significance, and therefore the archaeological potential of the site itself is considered to be low.

1. Introduction

In October 2012, Archaeology Wales was commissioned by Steve Allen of Quiet Revolution to carry out a brief archaeological appraisal of a proposed wind turbine site near Ludchurch, Pembrokeshire (NGR SN 44468 10558; fig. 1; planning application number W/26884). Planning permission has already been granted for the erection of a single turbine on the site (planning application number W/19856) with no archaeological conditions attached. The current application is for an additional two turbines on the site, each 18m high.

It was considered by Charles Hill, Planning Archaeologist at Dyfed Archaeological Trust – Heritage Management (DAT-HM), advisor to Carmarthenshire County Council, that the additional turbines could have a greater impact on the historic environment than the single turbine alone. DAT-HM requested that a brief appraisal is carried out to assess the impact of the additional turbines.

The appraisal involved a brief assessment of data recorded on the HER held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, a brief map regression exercise, a rapid walkover survey, and an assessment of the potential impact of the development on surrounding historic sites. The work does not include an assessment of the potential significance of the site in the local, regional and national context as this lies outside the scope of the current work.

2. Site Description

The proposed development site is located 1.2km north-west of the village of Four Roads in Carmarthenshire, within a field belonging to Hengoed Farm. The site is currently under pasture.

The surrounding landscape comprises predominantly fields of pasture and clumps of woodland. The site sits on the top of a gently rounded hill at approximately 180m AOD. To the north, east and west of the site the ground drops relatively steeply, while to the south the rounded ridge of the hill continues. A single wind turbine is located approximately 1km to the south of the proposed development site.

3. HER Data

There are 202 sites listed on the HER within a 2km radius of the centre of the proposed development site, although several sites have multiple entries and PRN numbers (fig. 2; see Appendix I).

Bronze Age sites

The HER lists nine sites of probable Bronze Age date within 2km of the proposed development site. This includes seven standing stones and two possible round barrows. Five of the standing stones are Scheduled Ancient Monuments:

- Gwempa
- Meini Llwydion
- The Pulpit
- Llechdwnni
- Maen Llwyd

Three of the scheduled standing stones are located at Llechdwnni: Maen Llwyd and Llechdwnni which form a pair, and The Pulpit which is located 120m to the north-east of the pairing.

Iron Age sites

One possible Iron Age hillfort is recorded within the study area, Maen Sant. The hill on which it was recorded has been extensively quarried it has been suggested that the possible earthworks thought to be defensive banks are in fact quarry spoil. The HER records that the interpretation of this as a prehistoric defensive site is unlikely to be correct.

Medieval sites

There are seven sites of probable medieval date within the study area. Two of these sites are possible Church lands, their designation based on placename evidence (Llan Ucha and Llan Nessa). The field recorded in the Tithe Apportionment as Llan Ucha is located immediately to the west of the proposed development area. The site of Cae Cadog, 1.6km to the south-east of the site, is thought to be the site of a medieval chapel, also based on placename evidence.

The mansion of Llechdwnni is thought to have medieval origins. It has four listings within the HER, relating to the standing building (Grade II listed building), the site of a former mansion, the site of a former chapel and the remains of ridge and furrow within the surrounding landscape.

Post-medieval

The majority of the sites listed on the HER are post-medieval in date and relate to the quarrying of limestone in the local area. The majority of the quarries are small in scale and survive as depressions in the ground and earthworks. The large modern Blaenyfan Quarry is located to the north-east of the proposed development site and has its origins in the post-medieval period. A total of 30 lime kilns are recorded in the study area, the majority (21) are located around the rim of the Blaenyfan Quarry, with the remainder located on the ridge to the south of the proposed development site. The lime kiln at Penymyndd, 1.1km to the south-west of the proposed development site is Grade II Listed and a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The remainder of the post-medieval listings are related to dwellings, the agricultural use of the landscape, water supplies and small scale industrial locations such as a blacksmiths workshop.

The Grade II Register Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest in Wales lies 1.7km to the south-west of the proposed development site. The seventeenth century walled garden associated with the Grade II listed Llechdwnni Mansion. It is in private ownership and not open to the public.

4. Map Regression

Tithe Map

The Tithe map for Llandyfaelog Parish, dated 1842 (not reproduced) shows the proposed development site as two rectangular field of pasture. The surrounding landscape comprises small fields and isolated farmsteads.

OS 1st Edition 1880

The OS 1st Edition map of 1880 (fig. 3) shows no change to the proposed development area from the Tithe Map.

The mapping evidence throughout the twentieth century shows that the proposed development site remains unchanged until the mid 1960s when the field boundary dividing the site into two rectangular fields was removed. Maps from 1968 onwards show the site as the single roughly square field it is today.

5. Site Visit

A rapid walkover of the proposed development site was carried out in dull and damp conditions. The site comprises a roughly square field of pasture on the summit of a rounded hill (fig. 4). The ground drops away to the north, east and west to further fields of pasture, while to the south are two fields of pasture at roughly the same elevation as the proposed development site. There are extensive views in all directions, except directly south, towards the surrounding low hills. Long distance views were restricted by the weather conditions. To the south of the site a modern wind turbine is clearly visible, while a pair of high voltage electricity lines runs across the landscape to the north. The field is surrounded by relatively ancient hedgebank boundaries, with a stone built boundary along part of the southern edge. The remains of a former field boundary are just visible as a low earthwork running north/south across the centre of the field. No features of archaeological interest were identified within the proposed development site.

An assessment of the potential impact of the proposed development on the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings within the study area was carried out. The majority of these lie on private land and were not accessible, however locations were chosen as close to them as possible in order to carry out the impact assessment.

Meini Llwydion standing stone lies on the eastern edge of a field of pasture 500m to the north of the proposed development site. It lies directly beneath a modern high voltage electricity line, and approximately 50m from the large pylon. The proposed development site is skylined to the south of the standing stone. While the high

hedgerows and local vegetation will restrict views of the site, the proposed turbines will be clearly visible. The impact on the setting of the standing stone will therefore be major.

Gwempa standing stone lies 1.7km to the north-east of the proposed development site. It occupies an elevated position within a field of pasture and there are extensive views towards the proposed turbine location. The impact on the setting of the standing stone will be major.

The three standing stones at Llechdwnni (The Pulpit, Llechdwnni and Maen Llwyd) are located in fields of pasture around 1km to the south-west of the proposed development site. The proposed development site is skylined on the horizon to the north-east and the turbines will be clearly visible. The impact on the three standing stones will therefore be major (fig. 5). Similarly, at the Grade II listed Llechdwnni Mansion and associated listed park and gardens, the proposed development site will be skylined on the horizon (fig. 5). It is likely that local vegetation will restrict views of the proposed turbines, although it was not possible to determine this. The potential impact on the setting of the house and garden is major. It is suggested that Cadw are consulted regarding the potential impact on the setting of the park and garden.

The lime kiln at Penymyndd is located on the south-east facing slopes of the hill, with views towards the proposed development site blocked by the rise of the topography. The proposed turbines will not, therefore be visible, and there will be no impact on the setting of the kilns.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

The brief appraisal of documentary and cartographic sources together with a rapid walkover masurvey has revealed that the site lies within a landscape of known archaeological significance. The presence of sites dated from the Bronze Age to post-medieval period demonstrates a continuity of occupation in the local area.

No sites or features of potential archaeological significance have been identified within the proposed development area, although it does lie adjacent to a field thought (through placename evidence) to have links with the Church. The concentration of archaeological sites within the local landscape means that it is possible that unrecorded features of archaeological significance survive below ground level, although the potential is considered to be low. The potential impact of the development on any sites or features within the proposed development area would, however, be major.

The potential impact of the proposed development on Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and the Registered Park and Garden recorded in the HER was assessed during the site visit. This has been carried out following guidance provided by DAT-HM for an appraisal but does not conform to Cadw guidelines for assessing the impact of development on Scheduled Ancient Monuments, as that level of detailed work lies beyond the scope of this report. The proposed turbines will be visible from all of the Scheduled and Listed sites within the study area, with the exception of the Penymyndd lime kilns. These sites lie within a landscape already impacted by post-medieval quarrying, modern electricity pylons and an existing wind turbine. In addition, the turbines are relatively low, c. 18m in height. When put into this context

it is the contention of the author that the impact on the settings of known archaeological sites would be moderate/low.

7. Sources Consulted

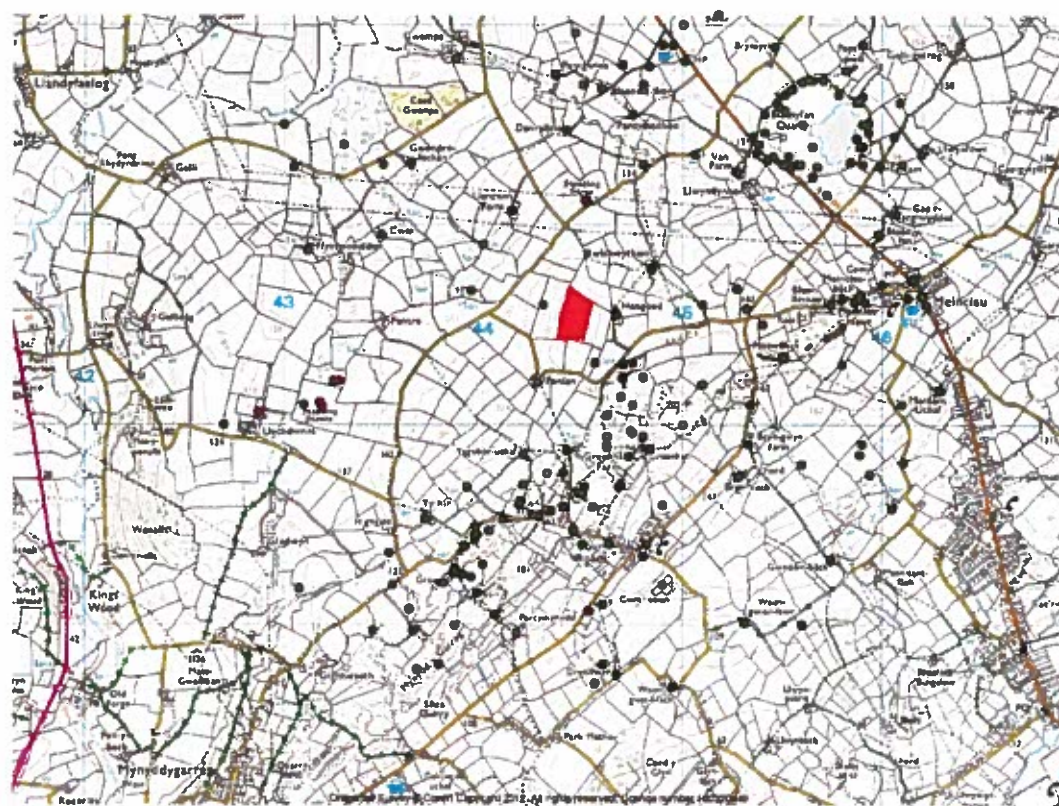
Data Sources

HER data for 2km from SN 44468 10558 (held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust)

Cartographic Sources

1842 Tithe Map for the Parish of Llandyfaelog (NLGW)

1880 OS 1st Edition map of Hengoed (Promap)



-  Site location
-  SAM/LB
-  HER data point

Fig. 2
Sites listed on the
HER within study
area

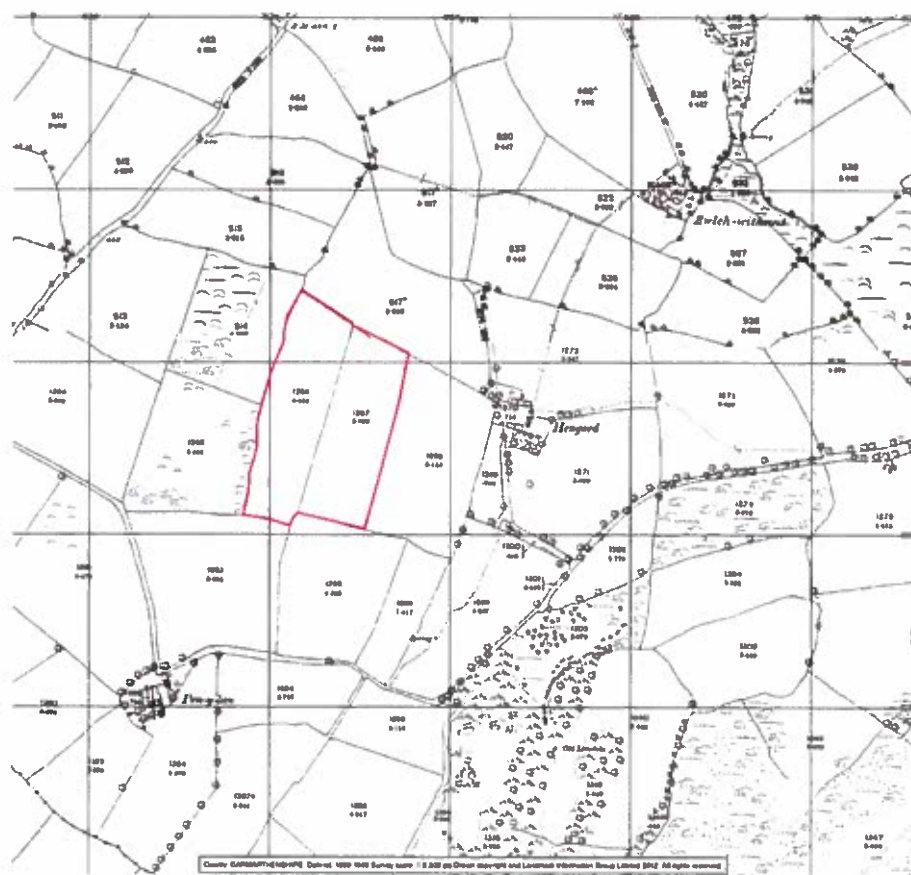


Fig. 3
1st Edition OS map
of 1880 showing
the location of the
site



Fig. 4
View northwards
across site



Fig. 5
View north-west
from Llechdwnni
towards the site