

Waun Maenllwyd, Ceredigion

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Waun Maenllwyd Wind Energy Hub Ltd



January 2023

Version 1

Hampton Heritage Design & Consultancy Ltd



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SUMMARY

Over three days during November 2022 an archaeological watching brief was conducted at National Grid Reference SN 68168 52825 for the installation of a meteorological mast as part of the Waun Maenllwyd wind energy hub development. The watching brief of up to 2m deep groundworks did not reveal any archaeological deposit or feature, but the deposit sequence showed a thin topsoil of peat which came down on to clay and shale.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of report

This archaeological watching brief report has been commissioned by Waun Maenllwyd Wind Energy Hub Ltd to address the archaeological condition placed on planning permission for erection of a temporary 90m meteorological mast as a preliminary study for a proposed wind farm. This report presents the results of the watching brief. An archaeological written scheme of investigation was approved by Dyfed Archaeological Trust in October 2022¹.

1.2 Planning background

Ceredigion County Council (CCC) granted temporary planning permission on 27th September 2022 (A220288) for: *Installation and operation of a 90m temporary meteorological mast and associated instruments, power supply and security infrastructure for a period of 3 years*. Pre-commencement Condition 14 relates to archaeological monitoring of construction work:

No development shall take place until a qualified and competent archaeologist has submitted a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for approval in writing by the local planning authority. This WSI will describe the different stages of the work and demonstrate that it has been fully resourced and given adequate time.

On behalf of the local planning authority, their archaeological advisors (DAT DM) will monitor all aspects of this work through to the final discharging of the condition.

This work will not be deemed complete until all aspects of the WSI have been addressed and the final report submitted and approved.

1.3 Location and landuse

The planning application located the site (the proposed development area) at “*Land 3km South East of Mountain Road (Unclassified Road U1518), Llanddewi Brefi, Tregaron*”. The permitted mast is to be erected on localised moorland at Rhysgog in Ceredigion, 3km east of Llanddewi-Brefi and 14km northeast of Lampeter (National Grid Reference SN 68168 52825) (Figure 1). It is surrounded by commercially operated forestry, and the land is currently used for rough grazing (Figures 3-6).

1.4 Geological and Topographical background

The desk-based assessment (DBA) that supported the planning application describes the hard geology as Rhuddnant Grits Formation, a mix of mudstone and sandstone, overlaid by glacial till and diamicton deposits, with small pockets of shallow peat on the edges of the site. The highest part of the site is at c.450m AOD in the south-western corner, descending to c. 400m AOD in the north-east.

¹ Hampton Heritage Design and Consultancy 2022 Waun Maenllwyd, Ceredigion Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation V3.



Figure 1 Site location National Grid Reference SN 68168 52825 shown as a red dot and arrowed

1.5 Archaeological and historical background

1.5.1 Heritage Assets

An archaeological DBA has been undertaken which presents the historic context for the site.² This revealed three medieval assets within the site, and a total of 97 within 2km, including one scheduled monument. The majority of the historic assets listed within the Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Historic Environment Record (HER) comprise abandoned medieval and post-medieval cottages and farms, and boundary markers. There are also prehistoric burial mounds and standing stones. It is likely that an ancient routeway crossed the study area, and transhumance stock management was of historic importance to the local economy, with the land lying partly within the Bishop of St David's Llanddewi Breifi estate.

The accuracy of the location for the known assets is uncertain, and a site visit found evidence for only one of the sites listed in the HER. Groups of stones were identified beneath the highest part of the site in the north, which might have been evidence of further human activity, but could also have originated from glacial action.

1.5.2 Historic mapping

Historic mapping from the 1842 Tithe map up until modern times showed that the site was called Cerig Bela and set within generally open moorland, with isolated farm buildings to the north and north-west. A small road is depicted on all maps running north-west – south-east along the edge of the site. Only by 1982 does the OS mapping show forestry plantations developing to the south. This map also depicts the site as a field but without the rough grazing, moorland symbol used for the surrounding land.

2.0 Nature of the development

The 90m high monopole is supported by 8 x high tensile guywires anchored to the ground at a 25 and 50 metre radius. The guywires are made from galvanised steel wiring measuring 10mm in diameter. The guying intervals on the pole are 12.5 and 15 metres.

No foundation or concrete is present for either the mast or the anchor points. When upright, the mast rests on several timbers laid on the ground while the anchor points are secured using timber ground anchors (Figure 2). A small digger was used in excavations and restoration of the land. Installation time took around c. 3-4 days. Following the mast installation, a solar array was mounted on a timber frame to provide a power source for data logging and transmission, and for aviation lighting. Security measures are in place, but these have no impact on the historic environment.

Ground disturbance was kept to a minimum with low pressure vehicles being used during installation. Vehicle use was limited to two 4 x 4s, one tracked dumper and one tracked 8t excavator.

² Nikolic, L. 2022 *Waun Maenllwyd Mountain Road MetMast: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* Headland Archaeology P22-219

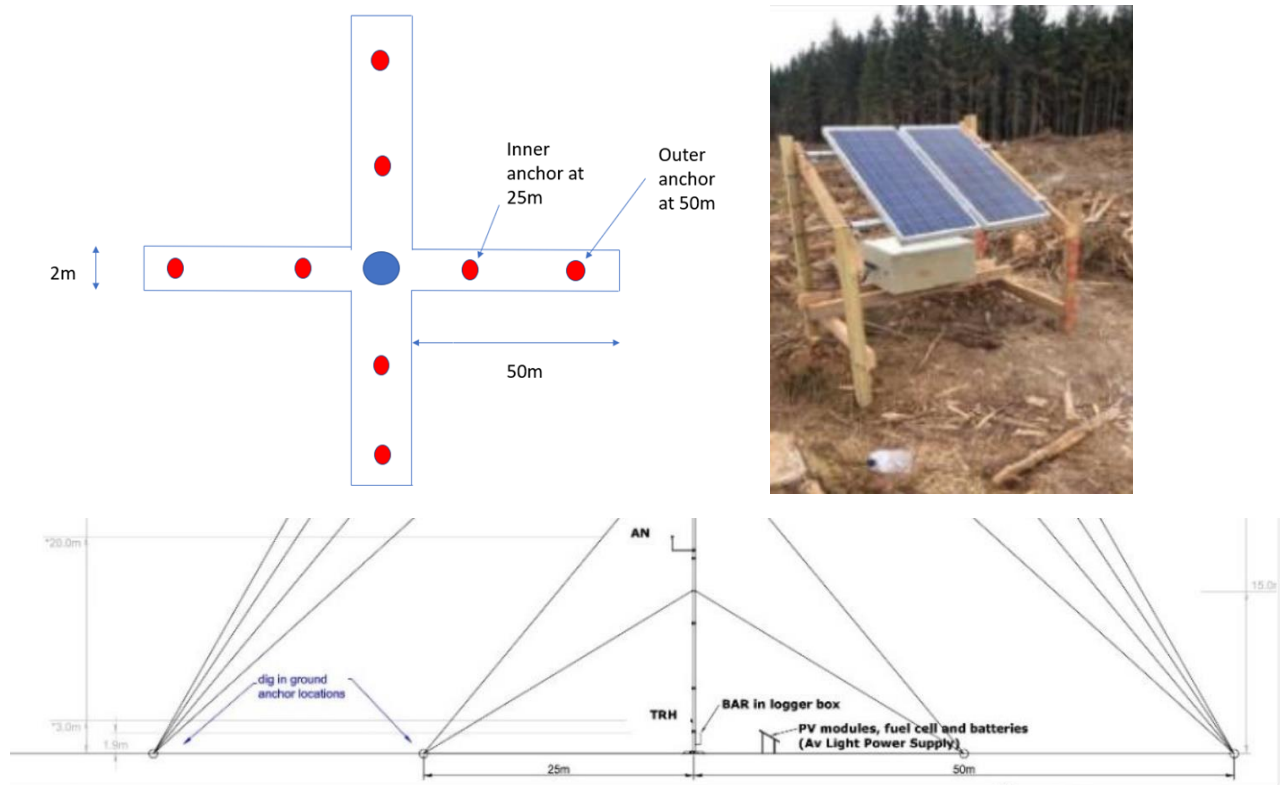


Figure 2 Foundation design ground plan and example of solar power unit

3.0 Archaeological watching brief

3.1 Results

A Watching Brief was conducted during excavation works for the erection of a new meteorological mast. This took place over the course of three days on November 28th, 29th and 30th 2022 (scans of site records are included as Appendix 1). All works were conducted with a 2.5 ton mechanical excavator.

Nine pits were excavated. Throughout, each pit was approximately 2m long, by 1m wide. All pits were excavated to an initial depth of 0.40m and then recorded photographically. All pits, except the central mast location (Figure 11), were subsequently excavated to a depth of approximately 2m.

Throughout, all pits revealed a peaty topsoil 0.10m deep, overlying a bright yellowish-grey clay 0.20-0.25m deep. This in turn overlay a frost-effected shale approximately 0.30m deep (Figures 7-16).

The northern pits revealed a grey clay which seemed to continue down to 2m, albeit becoming stonier as the depth increased (Figures 7-8). In the southern pits, excavation to the full 2m depth revealed a mixture of solid bedrock and a harder, less brittle shale (Figures 12-14).

In conclusion, the pits revealed completely undisturbed natural stratigraphy and no archaeology was uncovered.



Figure 3 General Shot looking North East



Figure 4 General Shot looking North West



Figure 5 General shot looking South West. Solar equipment in distance denoting mast location



Figure 6 General shot looking North East. Note solar equipment in the distance



Figure 7 North outer anchor pit. The peaty topsoil around 0.10m deep is clearly visible as is the yellowy grey clay beneath that and the shale 0.30m below the surface.



Figure 8 North Inner anchor Pit. The peaty topsoil around 0.10m deep is clearly visible as is the yellowy grey clay beneath that and the shale 0.30m below the surface



Figure 9 East Inner anchor pit. The peaty topsoil around 0.10m deep is clearly visible as is the yellowy grey clay below that



Figure 10 East outer anchor pit. The peaty topsoil up to 0.50m deep is clearly visible as is the yellow grey clay below that



Figure 11 Main Mast Pit. The peaty topsoil around 0.10m deep is clearly visible as is the yellowy grey clay beneath that



Figure 12 South Inner anchor pit at full depth. The peaty topsoil around 0.10m deep is clearly visible with a band of clay beneath just above the shale



Figure 13 South inner anchor pit. Also shows the peaty topsoil around 0.10m deep and the shale beneath that



Figure 14 South outer anchor pit. The peaty topsoil around 0.10m deep is clearly visible as is the shale beneath that



Figure 15 West Outer anchor pit. The peaty topsoil around 0.10m deep is clearly visible as is the yellowy grey soil clay beneath that



Figure 16 West Inner anchor pit. The peaty topsoil around 0.10m deep is clearly visible as is the yellowy grey clay soil beneath that

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

This document presents the results of a watching brief on the groundworks for construction of a meteorological mast at Waun Maenllwyd. It concludes that there were no archaeological finds, and that a thin layer of peat overlay clay which itself rested upon a layer of shale and bedrock.

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists defines a sterile archaeological project as one that produces nothing of evidential value. As a sterile project with no archaeological results, this report comprises a sufficient record without the need for deposition of a material or digital archive.



5.0 Appendix 1: Site Records

HHD&C HAMPTON HERITAGE DESIGN & CONSULTANCY		Watching Brief Record	
PROJECT NAME Waun Maenllwyd	PROJECT CODE		
NGR SN 68468 52825	DATE(S) 30/11/22		
RECORDED BY J.S.D	TIME(S) 10.30am -		
PHOTOGRAPHIC FILM/FRAME Nos			
DESCRIPTION (drawings overleaf)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further excavation of pit• Construction of mark <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"><div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> North stay outer <input type="checkbox"/> North stay inner</div><div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Mast Pier location</div><div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> East stay inner <input type="checkbox"/> East stay outer</div></div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"><div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> West stay Outer <input type="checkbox"/> West stay Inner</div><div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> South stay inner <input type="checkbox"/> South stay outer</div></div>			



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Waun Maenllwyd Met Mast, Ceredigion
Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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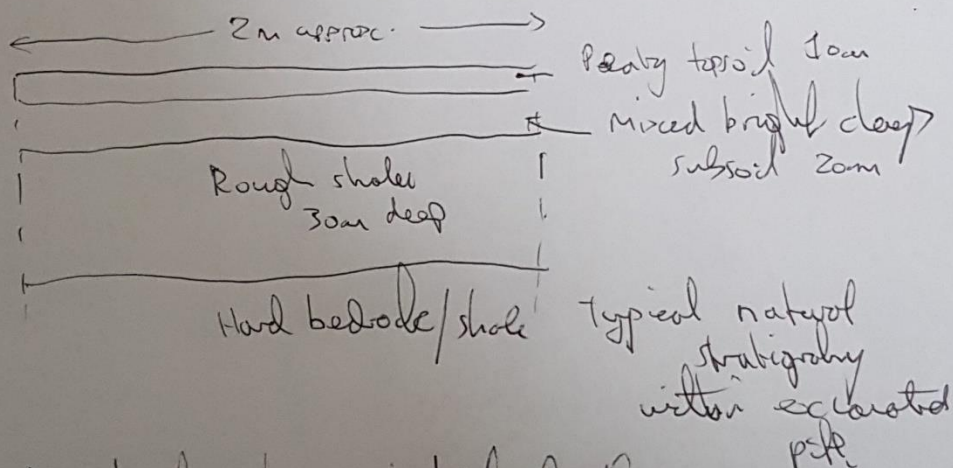
Watching Brief Record

PROJECT NAME <i>Woen Maenllwyd</i>	PROJECT CODE
NGR <i>SN 68468 52825</i>	DATE(S) <i>28/11/22</i>
RECORDED BY <i>J.S.D</i>	TIME(S) <i>10.30am - 4.30pm</i>

PHOTOGRAPHIC FILM/FRAME Nos

DESCRIPTION (drawings overleaf)

- Machine arrived at 11am
- Excavation began 1.30pm
- Excavation in wrong place. Re-start tomorrow



All pits dug to an initial depth of approx 0.4m. All subsequently dug to a depth of approx. 2m



Watching Brief Record

PROJECT NAME <i>Wau Maenllwyd</i>	PROJECT CODE
NGR <i>SN 68468 SZ825</i>	DATE(S) <i>29/11/22</i>
RECORDED BY <i>J.T.D</i>	TIME(S) <i>10.15 - 3.15pm</i>
PHOTOGRAPHIC FILM/FRAME Nos	
DESCRIPTION (drawings overleaf) <i>Re-siting of mark location. Work began at 1.00pm</i> <i>All pits excavated to previous dimension</i> <i>No archaeology</i>	



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Written Scheme of Investigation
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Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment
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