

# *Archaeology Wales*

## **Dol Newydd Wind Turbines, Blaenffos**

Archaeological Appraisal



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Report No. 1024

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## **Summary**

*An Archaeological Appraisal was carried out for the site of two proposed wind turbines on land adjacent to Dol Newydd Farm, Blaenffos. The aim of the work was to carry out a brief assessment of the archaeological potential of the area to enable Dyfed Archaeological Trust to determine whether further archaeological work would be required. The research determined that the site lies within a landscape of known archaeological significance, with a Bronze Age barrow cemetery located on the summit of Frenni Fawr, less than 1km from the site of the proposed turbines and a number of medieval and post-medieval sites in the wider landscape. A walkover survey of the proposed development site revealed a possible earthwork feature and areas of preserved peat. The archaeological potential of the site is considered to be moderate.*

### **1. Introduction**

In August 2011, Archaeology Wales was commissioned by Gareth Tucker of Seren Energy to carry out a brief archaeological appraisal of a proposed wind turbine site near Blaenffos, Pembrokeshire (NGR SN 2005 3632 (centre); fig. 1). The archaeological work followed recommendations from Zoe Bevans-Rice, Planning Archaeologist at Dyfed Archaeological Trust – Heritage Management.

The appraisal involved a brief assessment of data recorded on the HER held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, a brief map regression exercise, a brief assessment of aerial photographs held by the RCAHMW in Aberystwyth and a rapid walkover survey. The work does not include an assessment of the potential significance of the site in the local, regional and national context, nor does it include an assessment of the impact of the proposed turbines on scheduled monuments in the local area. Both of these lie outside the scope of the current work, but should be assessed as part of a full desk-based assessment, if considered necessary.

### **2. Site Description**

The proposed development site is located 800m to the south-east of the village of Blaenffos, north Pembrokeshire, centred on the farm of Dol Newydd. The proposed development area includes approximately 25 fields and an area of woodland covering an area of approximately 250 acres.

The landscape comprises predominantly fields of pasture on a gentle north-west facing slope. The site ranges in height from 175m, at the bottom of Cwm Rhew-erwyll to 285m at the point where the improved land meets the edge of the moorland on Frenni Fawr.

### **3. HER Data**

There are 3 sites listed on the HER within a 1km radius of the centre of the proposed development site (put at Dol Newydd Farm), although a further 12 sites lie within 1km of the proposed development site boundary.

#### Castellan Parish Church (PRN 997)

The site of the former parish church lies less than 100m from the western boundary of the proposed development area, above the woodland within Cwm Rhew-erwyll. The chapel is now ruinous, but is thought to date to the early twelfth century – it is recorded as having been granted to the Knights Hospitallers of Slebech by William

Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, in 1130. The chapel remained in use until around 1700 and was in ruins by 1842.

Llain-ddu, Blaenffos (PRN 59386)

Llain-ddu is a Grade II listed building in Blaenffos, located 400m to the north-west of the proposed development boundary. The HER contains no information about the date or significance of the building.

Castellan Farm (PRN 5725)

The HER lists Castellan Farm as a site of potential archaeological significance, based on the place name evidence, which might suggest it as the site of a prehistoric defended enclosure.

Frenni Fawr Cemetary Complex (PRNs 48372, 1001, 1091, 1092, 1093)

Five Bronze Age round barrows are recorded on the upper slopes of Frenni Fawr, including the four Scheduled Ancient Monuments (PRN 1001, PE292; PRN 1091, PE291C; PRN 1092, PE291B; PRN 1093, PE291A) that make up the scheduled cemetery complex. The barrows are located between 500m and 800m to the south of the proposed development boundary.

St Cristiolus' Church, Penryhdd (PRN 4330/17383)

A church of probable medieval date with a roughly oval churchyard. The church lies within the extant remains of medieval field boundaries and 200m north-west of Ffynnon Dwysant holy well (PRN 5086). The church was completely rebuilt around 1841.

Felin Fach Watermill (PRN 12631/15460)

A medieval watermill is recorded in woodland 500m to the east of the proposed development area. Two sites are listed for the mill on the HER.

Wernddofn (PRN 59400)

Wernddofn is a Grade II listed building located 400m to the east of the proposed development area. The HER contains no information about the date or significance of this building.

Woollen Factory (PRN 45390)

A woolen factory of probable post-medieval date is located 500m to the east of the proposed development area. It was identified on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS map and no further details are provided.

Pontbren (PRN 15461)

A post-medieval bridge is located 600m north-east of the proposed development area.

Rhydhowell (PRN 59391)

Rhydhowell is a Grade II listed farmhouse 200m north of the proposed development area. The HER contains no information about the date or significance of this building.

Maen Gwyn (PRN 4979)

The possible site of a prehistoric standing stone has been identified through place name evidence 500m north-east of the proposed development area.

#### Maen Coch (PRN 4980)

The possible site of a prehistoric standing stone has been identified through place name evidence 700m north-east of the proposed development area.

#### School (PRN 19982)

A post-medieval school located in Blaenffos is recorded as 800m north-west of the proposed development area.

#### Blaenffos Baptist Chapel (PRN 59385)

The Grade II listed chapel is located 700m north-east of the proposed development area.

### **4. Map Regression**

#### Tithe Map

The Tithe map of 1840 (not reproduced) shows the proposed development area with open fields of improved pasture to the north and enclosed fields of unimproved moorland to the south, on the flanks of Frenni Fawr. The boundary between the land taken in for grazing and the moorland of the mountain is in existence, although no drainage of the land has evidently occurred. No features of historic or archaeological significance are depicted on the map, and the field names, as listed in the apportionment, do not suggest any historic origin.

#### OS 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 1891

The OS 1<sup>st</sup> Edition map of 1891 (fig. 2) shows no change within the proposed development area from the Tithe map, with improved pasture on the northern side of the site and rough grazing to the south. No features of archaeological or historic interest are depicted within the proposed development area.

The mapping evidence for 1907 to 1963 shows no changes to the land, with the southern part of the site characterised by rough grazing. By 1984, however, the rough land has been largely drained and further areas of moorland taken in.

### **5. Aerial Photographs**

The 1946 aerial photograph shows the proposed development area much as it is today, with the improved pasture to the north and unimproved land to the south (fig. 3). The extent of the stream channels draining from Frenni Fawr can be clearly seen. No features of archaeological significance are evident, although it is clear that the peat moorland remained largely intact at the southern end of the site at this time.

### **6. Site Visit**

A rapid walkover of the proposed development area was carried out in dry and sunny conditions. The majority of the area comprised square, fairly large fields of pasture bounded by hedgebanks (fig. 4). At the southern end of the site the boundary was relatively substantial, comprising a large bank with a ditch on the outer side (fig. 5). This ran along what must have been the original boundary between the improved land and the moorland of the hillside, although additional land has been taken in since its construction. At the south-eastern corner of the proposed development area in a field of rough grassland containing swathes of bog grass patches of peat had been exposed demonstrating that the landscape has not been fully drained (fig. 6). A large quartz boulder sat in the north-western corner of this field – a probable glacial erratic. The

landscape immediately to the south of the proposed development area comprises heather-covered peat moorland rising to the summit of Frenni Fawr (fig. 7).

The remainder of the fields comprised flat pasture, with some evidence for former stream channels, particularly on the southern side of the proposed development area. The only feature of possible archaeological interest identified during the walkover survey was located in one of the fields adjacent to the southern boundary of the proposed development area. In the north-eastern corner of the field a roughly circular raised area was identified (fig. 8). This had possible ditches surrounding the western side and a depression through the centre – it is possible that this feature is natural, associated with the drainage of the land, however its form was reminiscent of archaeological features such as round barrows or enclosures.

The woodland on the northern boundary of the proposed development site lies within the steep-sided valley of Cwm Rhew-erwyll. The whole area was not walked, owing to the topography and vegetation cover, however no features of potential archaeological significance were identified.

## **7. Discussion and Conclusions**

The brief appraisal of documentary, cartographic and aerial photographic sources together with a rapid walkover survey, has revealed that the site lies within a landscape of known archaeological significance. The presence of the Bronze Age round barrows on the summit of Frenni Fawr attests to the use of the local area in the prehistoric period. Indeed, it has been proven through excavation and fieldwork throughout Britain, that Bronze Age populations often constructed burial monuments on high ground overlooking areas of occupation. It is possible, therefore, that evidence for Bronze Age occupation and agricultural activities exists within the proposed development area. The presence of possible standing stone sites (based on place name evidence) to the north of the proposed development area also attests to the prehistoric occupation of the area, as does the place name evidence for Castellan Farm.

Continuity of activity within the wider landscape is attested by the presence of the two medieval churches close to the proposed development boundary. St Christiolus' Church is surrounded by field walls and boundaries of probable medieval date, demonstrating the use of the wider landscape. A medieval water mill is also recorded, to the south of St Christiolus'. The post-medieval period probably saw the construction of some or all of the listed buildings (although this is not confirmed by the HER data), together with the construction of a woollen mill, a school and a non-conformist chapel in Blaenffos. The cartographic evidence reveals that the layout of fields within the proposed development area was in place by the early 1800s, and it is likely that the substantial ditch and bank boundary defining the southern edge of the improved land dates from the late eighteenth century.

While the HER does not record any sites of archaeological potential within the proposed development area, the presence of significant archaeology within the wider landscape suggests that sites could survive. During the walkover survey, a possible feature was recorded, although this may be natural. More significantly is the survival of peat in fields on the southern edge of the proposed development area, within which archaeological remains may be preserved.

## **8. Sources Consulted**

### **Data Sources**

HER for 1km from Dol Newydd Farm (held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust)

### **Cartographic Sources**

1845 Tithe Map for the Parish of Manordeifi (NLGW)

1891 OS 1<sup>st</sup> Edition map of Blaenffos (Promap)

### **Aerial Photographs (held by RCAHMW)**

106G/UK.1424.15April46.4248



Fig. 1  
Location of  
proposed  
development  
site



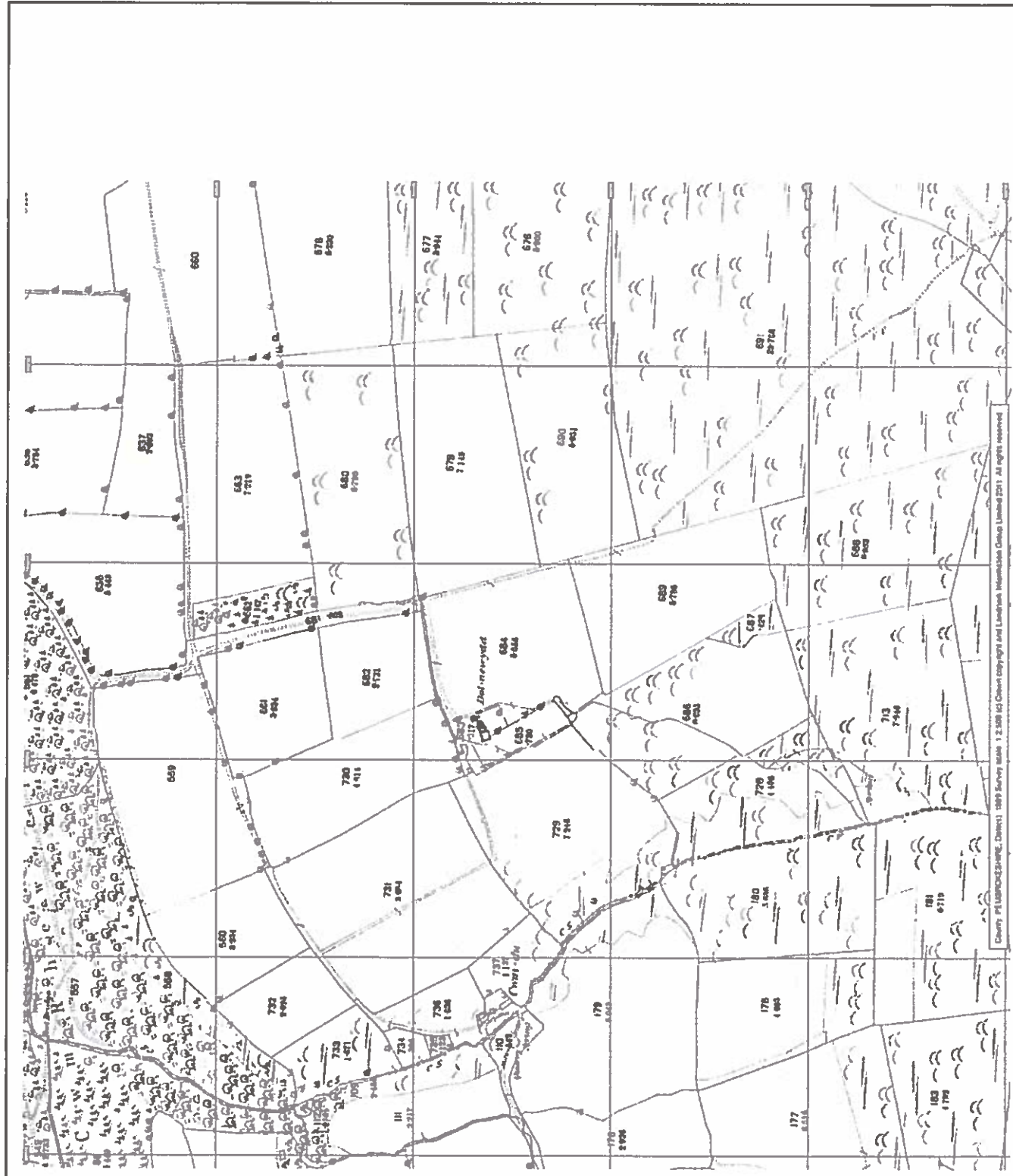


Fig. 2  
Os 1st Edition map  
of 1891 showing  
the proposed  
development area.  
Note the improved  
land to the north  
and the  
unimproved but  
enclosed land to  
the south



Fig. 3  
Aerial photograph  
of the proposed  
development  
area - outlined  
in red





Fig. 4  
View across  
proposed  
development area  
(outlined in white)  
from Frenni Fawr

Fig. 5  
View along the  
bank and ditch  
boundary defining  
the south-eastern  
side of the fields







Fig. 6  
Area of peat  
exposed within  
a field on the south  
side of the  
proposed  
development area



Fig. 7  
View across  
improved pasture  
towards the fields  
on the slopes of  
Frenni Fawr



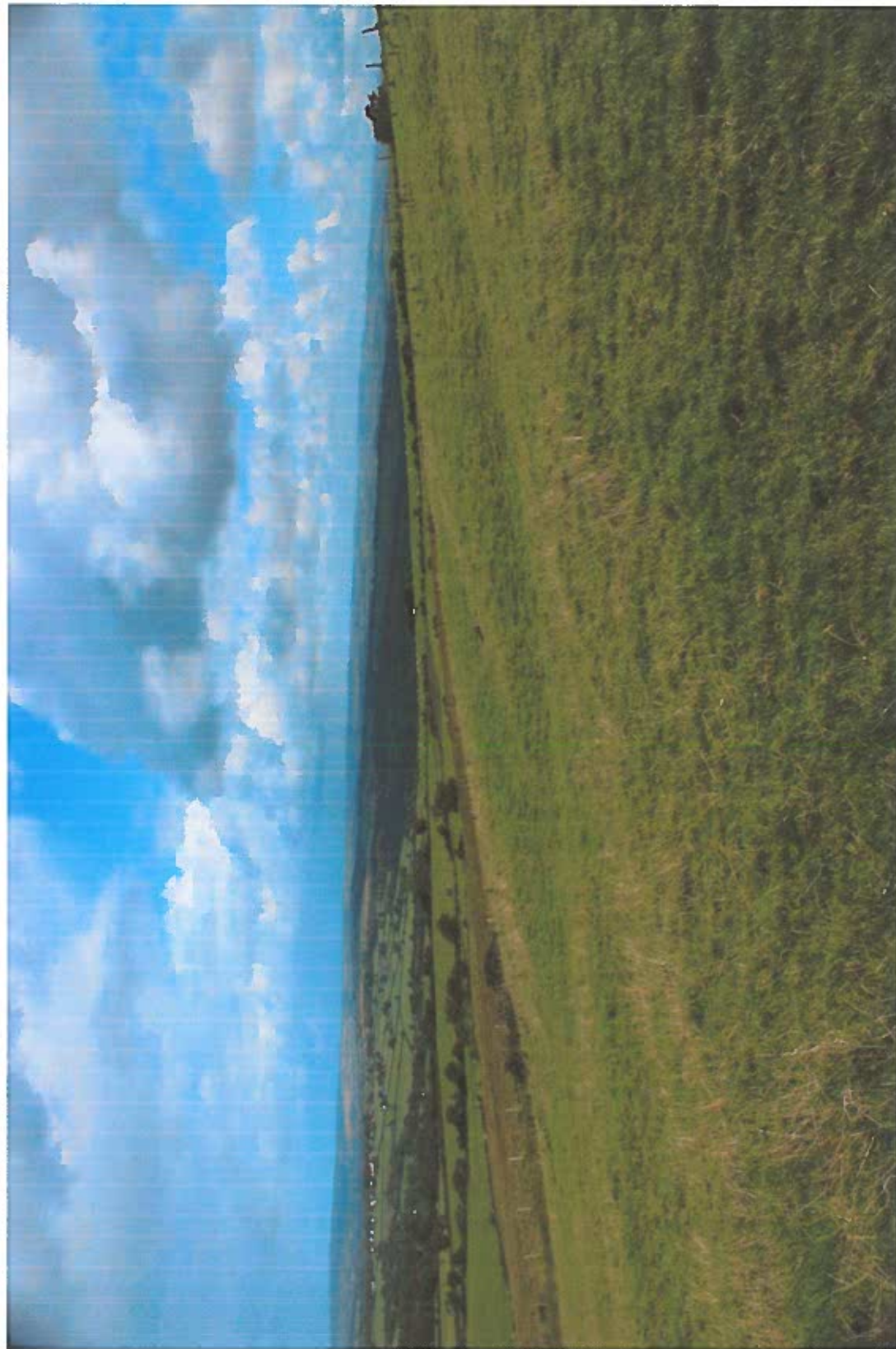


Fig. 8  
Possible earthwork  
feature in a field on  
the southern side  
of the proposed  
development area