

CAMBRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS LTD.

# Rhos-y-gilwen, Pembrokeshire.



Archaeological Watching Brief



By  
**Richard Scott Jones, MA**



CAP Report No. 349

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**Rhos-y-gilwen,  
Pembrokeshire.**

**BY *Richard Scott Jones MA***

Prepared for:  
**Mr M. Matthews  
Price & Sons  
St. Davids,  
Pembrokeshire**

On behalf of:  
**Mr & Mrs Symonds  
Rhos-y-gilwen,  
St. Davids,  
Pembrokeshire.**

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**Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd  
Old Chapel  
Llanidloes  
Montgomeryshire  
SY18 6JR**

**Telephone: 01686 413857 / Fax: 01686 411280  
e-mail: [info@cabmrian-archacology.co.uk](mailto:info@cabmrian-archacology.co.uk)**

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## ii) IFA Standards and Guidance

### THE INSTITUTE OF FIELD ARCHAEOLOGISTS (IFA)

#### *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*

##### **The Standard**

An archaeological watching brief will record the archaeological resource during development within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices. These will satisfy the stated aims of the project, and comply with the *Code of conduct*, *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology*, and other relevant by-laws of the IFA.

##### **Definition of an archaeological watching brief**

The definition of an archaeological watching brief is a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive.

This definition and *Standard* do not cover chance observations, which should lead to an appropriate archaeological project being designed and implemented, nor do they apply to monitoring for preservation of remains *in situ*.

##### **Purpose of a watching brief**

The purpose of a watching brief is:

- ◆ to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
- ◆ to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.

A watching brief is not intended to reduce the requirement for excavation or preservation of known or inferred deposits, and it is intended to guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

The objective of a watching brief is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

*The Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief was formally adopted as IFA approved practice at the Annual General Meeting of the Institute held on 14th October 1994.*



## Non Technical Summary

*The following report is the result of work undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd. on behalf of Price & Sons, Surveyors, as part of a condition attached to a planning application submitted by Mr & Mrs Symonds to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Planning Authority. This brief report details the archaeological results of the ground work undertaken during a watching brief for the development of an extension to the north-east side of the house known as 'Rhos-y-gilwen'.*

*This report follows on from the results of an archaeological evaluation already undertaken in 2003 (CAP Report No: 263), wherein a series of early medieval stone coffins were exposed within the area of the proposed development. Following the results of this former evaluation and in line with current guidance, it was agreed that the buried archaeological remains be preserved in situ. As such ground clearance for the proposed development was left to the removal of only a portion of the overlying overburden. As such, no archaeological remains were disturbed.*

## 1 Introduction

The following text details the result of work undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd (CAP Ltd.) on behalf of Price & Sons, as part of a condition attached to a planning application submitted by Mr & Mrs Symonds to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Planning Authority. This brief report details the archaeological results of the ground work undertaken during a watching brief for the development of an extension to the north-east side of the house known as 'Rhos-y-gilwen'.

This report follows on from the results of an archaeological evaluation already undertaken in 2003 (CAP Report No: 263), wherein a series of early medieval stone coffins were exposed within the area of the proposed development. Following the results of this former evaluation and in line with current guidance, it was agreed that the buried archaeological remains be preserved in situ. As such ground clearance for the proposed development was left to the removal of only a small portion of the overburden.

CAP Ltd. submitted a tender and specification in accordance with the design brief laid out by Cambria Archaeology (Dyfed Archaeological Trust). This application was accepted and the work was carried out accordingly by CAP Ltd. in November 2004.

All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IFA's *Standards and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* and current Health and Safety legislation.

### 1.1 Planning Background

Price & Sons, Surveyors, have submitted a planning application (Planning application No: NP/03/149) to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Planning Authority, on behalf of the landowner, Mr & Mrs Symonds. The site of the proposed development is located at NGR SN 77552930 and involves the construction of an extension on the north-east side of the house known as 'Rhos-y-gilwen'.

### 1.2 Site Description

The site of 'Rhos-y-gilwen' is located approx. ¼ Km south-east of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path., along the line of the old Roman Road that runs from St. Davids to Cardigan (see Fig 3). The house itself is located at the edge of the road on a flat moorland area at a height of approx. 80m O.D. in an area known as 'Waun beddau', or 'Moorland of Graves'.

The proposed area of the development, on the north-eastern side of the main house, is raised up from the road by approx. 1m. The area of ground to be cleared covered an area of approx. 6m x 12m. The area had already been disturbed prior to the earlier archaeological evaluation by the insertion of service trenches running E-W as well as the earlier building foundations of the main house itself.

The site lies within an area of great archaeological interest, being both not only directly within an ancient burial ground of early Christian origin, but also within very close proximity to several prehistoric ritual monuments and other early medieval sites.

### 1.3 Geology

According to the Geological Map of Wales the underlying geology is Ordovician sedimentary rock known as Arenig.

### 1.4 Archaeological Background

The site of Rhos-y-gilwen is located within the grounds of an ancient burial ground of both prehistoric and early Christian origin. Monuments in close proximity to the development include the remains of an early Christian priory to the south across the road from the house, a series of round barrows or Cromlechs in close proximity to the house, and a series of prehistoric enclosures around the base of a large rock outcrop called Pen Berry immediately to the west of the house (see Fig 3). It is also of significance that the old Roman Road ran immediately alongside the early cemetery. In terms of an understanding of the transition from paganism to Christianity in this region of Wales, the site is of great interest and significance.

In response to the results from the earlier archaeological evaluation undertaken by CAP Ltd in 2003 (CAP Report No: 263), Cambria Archaeology Curatorial section prepared a design, which allowed the extension to be built with only minimal effect on the buried archaeology. In line with current guidance it was decided to see the buried archaeological remains preserved in situ. The former evaluation recognised that there was a 400mm clearance from the top of the current ground levels to just above the top of the archaeology. As such it was decided to construct a concrete raft for the extension within the 400mm safety zone.

## 2 Aims and Objectives

In accordance with IFA's *Standards and guidance* for a Watching Brief, the primary objective of this assessment ;

- to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
- to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- A watching brief is not intended to reduce the requirement for excavation or preservation of known or inferred deposits, and it is intended to guide, not replace, any requirement for

contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

- The objective of a watching brief is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

As a precautionary measure, should any human remains become disturbed during the ground work, a bone sampling program had been prepared, for which C14 dating was intended.

### 3 Methodology

For the purpose of the ground clearance, a mechanical excavator with a 2m wide grading bucket was used for the removal of topsoil and modern overburden to the required 250mm depth.

After removal of this overburden the archaeological contractor then '*field walked*' the area recovering any significant dateable material where evident.

Following removal of the overburden to a depth of 250mm maximum, the former service trench which already had been cut in the 1960's/70's was re-opened for the replacement of a damaged pipe.

During the watching brief records, when required, were too be kept in the following formats;

- i) *Photographic record* - Photographs where required, were taken in digital format (TIFF file)
- ii) *Drawn record* – Where required, site drawings, plans and sections, were too be produced at scales of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 on drafting film. Finished drawings were to be related to Ordnance Survey datum and published boundaries where appropriate.
- iii) *Written record* - Written records were to be produced using a continuous numbering sequence for all contexts.

An environmental sampling and sampling and processing strategy was in place should the archaeological deposits warrant it. However, in this instance it was not felt that the deposits encountered required sampling.

All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IFA's *Standards and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* and current Health and Safety legislation.

### 4 Results of the Watching Brief

For a complete series of archaeological contexts please see former evaluation report (CAP Report No: 263). In the following, numbers contained within brackets ( ), refer to context numbers allocated during the watching brief and also tie in with those already allocated by the earlier evaluation (CAP Report No: 263).

#### 4.1 The Ground Clearance

As with the results from the earlier archaeological evaluation, the overburden or topsoil (1) was a mid brown brown silty loam with extensive rubble inclusions, in the form of breeze blocks, occasional bricks and stones. The removal of this overburden to a depth of 250mm did not expose any other underlying deposits, other than the fill of the former cut service trench (3). The concrete path running alongside the north-east side of the house was also removed revealing the same rubble filled deposit (1)



beneath.

Following removal of part of the overburden across the whole extent of the development site to the required depth, the fill of the former service trench was partially removed for the replacement of a broken pipe.

During the whole of the proposed ground work no archaeological deposits were encountered nor any human remains disturbed in anyway. As such all archaeology below the surface of the proposed development remains preserved in situ.

## 5 Conclusion

No archaeological deposits or features were located during the course of this watching brief. The groundwork only cleared the overburden deposit to a depth of 250mm maximum, as recommended in the design brief. Again, during the partial removal of the fill of earlier service trenches, no archaeological deposits were disturbed. As such all archaeology below the surface of the proposed development remains preserved in situ.

## 6 Acknowledgements

Thanks to; Kevin Blockley for his help and advice during the compilation of this report, Mike Matthews of Price & Sons, the building contractor, the digger driver and Mrs Symonds the owner of Rhos y gilwen for her tea and patience.

## 7 References and Bibliography

### 7.1 References

CAP Report No: 263

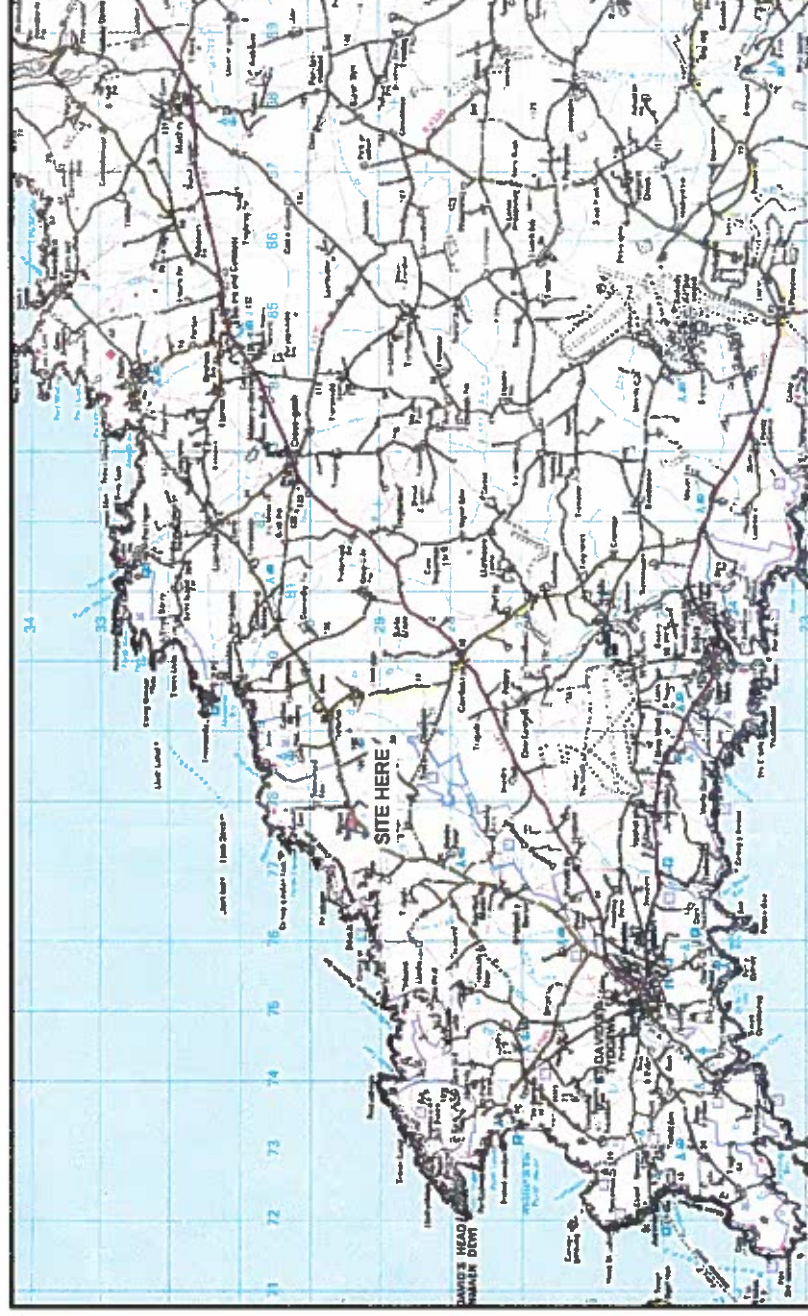
### 7.3 Cartographic Sources

OS 1:25000 map

OS 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6 inch 1906 map

British Geological Service, 1979, *Geological Survey Ten Mile Map: South Sheet*. BGS.

Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983, *Soils of England and Wales: Sheet 2 Wales*. SSEW.



**Figure 1:** Location map showing site of 'Rhos-y-gilwen' (1:25000).



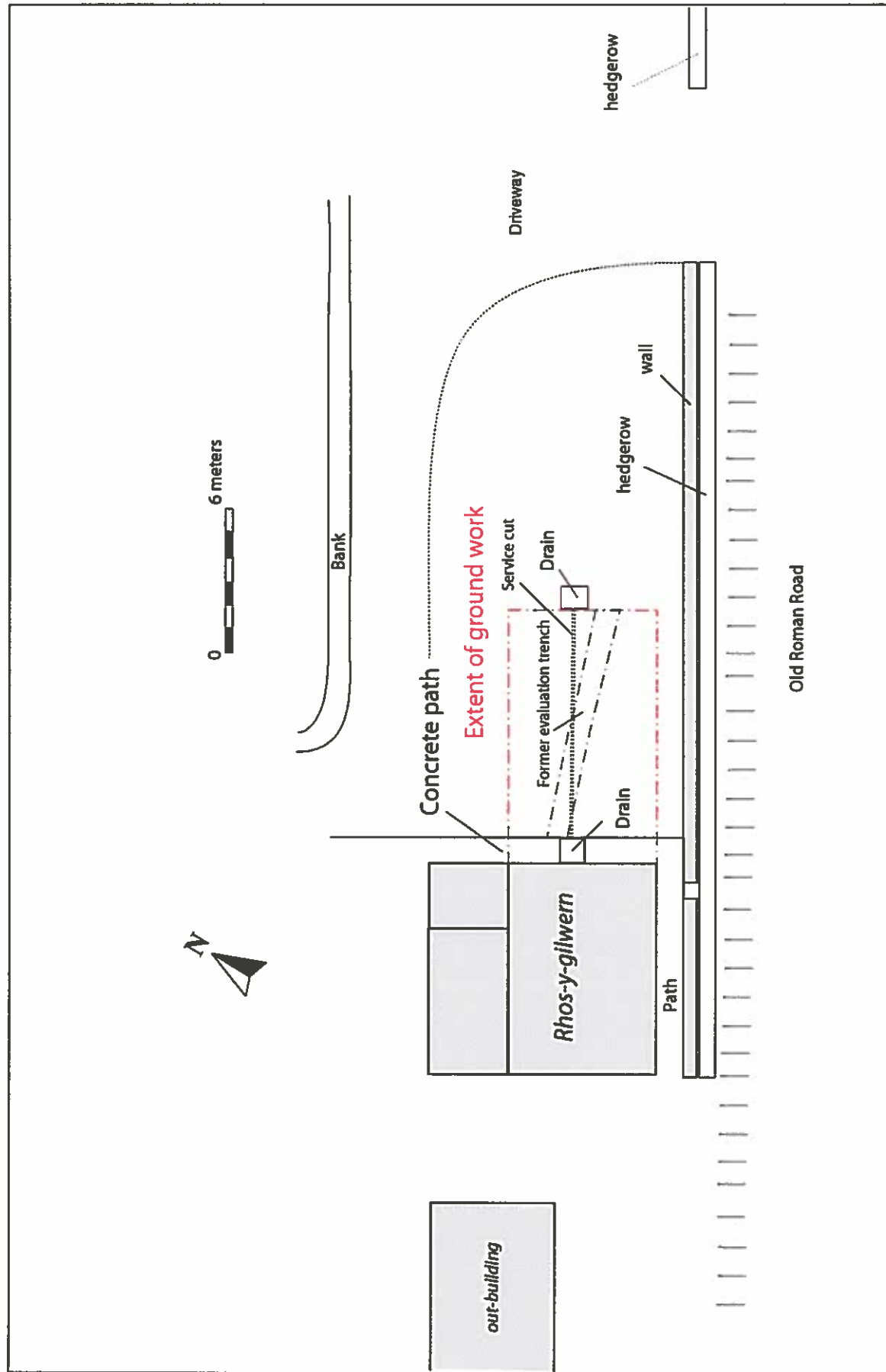


Figure 3: Ground plan showing extent of ground work for east extension of Rhos-y-Gilwen.



## **APPENDIX I:** **Archive Cover Sheet**

**ARCHIVE COVER SHEET****RHOS-Y-GILWEN, PEMBROKESHIRE****ARCHIVE DESTINATION – RCAHMW**

Site Name:	<b>Rhos-y-gilwen</b>
Site Code:	<b>RYG/WB/04</b>
PRN:	
NPRN :	<b>N/A</b>
SAM:	<b>N/A</b>
Other Ref No:	<b>CAP Report No. 349</b>
NGR:	<b>SN 77552930</b>
Site Type:	<b>Early Christian cemetery</b>
Project Type:	<b>Watching Brief</b>
Project Officer:	<b>Richard Scott Jones</b>
Project Dates:	<b>Nov 2004</b>
Categories Present:	<b>N/A</b>
Location of Original Archive:	<b>RCAHMW</b>
Location of duplicate Archives:	<b>N/A</b>
Number of Finds Boxes:	<b>0</b>
Location of Finds:	<b>N/A</b>
Museum Reference:	<b>Not assigned</b>
Copyright:	<b>CAP Ltd</b>
Restrictions to access:	<b>None</b>





## **APPENDIX II:** **Context Register**

# SUMMARY OF CONTEXTS

## RHOS-Y-GILWEN, PEMBROKESHIRE

### CONTEXTS

- 1     Modern overburden
- 3     Fill of former service trench



## **APPENDIX III:**

# **Photographic plates**



*Plate 01: Area of development looking northwards after ground clearance of site to required depth.*



*Plate 02: Rhos-y-gilwen house with proposed extension area in foreground after removal of overburden.*