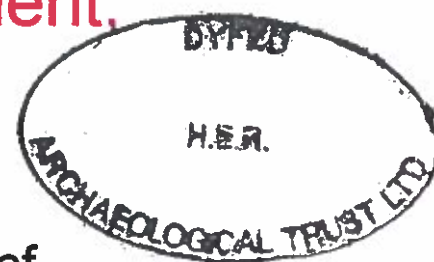


**Glasshouse Development,
I.G.E.R.
Aberystwyth**



Archaeological Watching Brief



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Archaeological Watching Brief

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NON - TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The following report details the results of an archaeological Watching Brief undertaken at the site of a new Glasshouse development at the I.G.E.R centre, Aberystwyth during March 2008. No deposits, features or artefacts of archaeological significance were exposed during the Watching Brief.

1. INTRODUCTION (Figs 01 & 02)

This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken at the site of a new Glasshouse development within the I.G.E.R (Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research) centre, Aberystwyth (NGR SN63155/83570) (Figs 01 & 02) during March 2008.

I.G.E.R have planning consent (Planning Ref: A070985) for the construction of two new glasshouses and access road to be located at the eastern edge of the I.G.E.R buildings complex. As part of the planning consent an archaeological watching brief was required during the ground excavation works as the area is deemed to have significant archaeological potential.

2: OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the archaeological 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 potentially disruptive works" (Source: IFA Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief).

The primary objective of this assessment was to ensure that any previously unrecorded archaeological features and deposits exposed during the ground disturbance works and subsequent development of the site were adequately recorded, interpreted and reported.

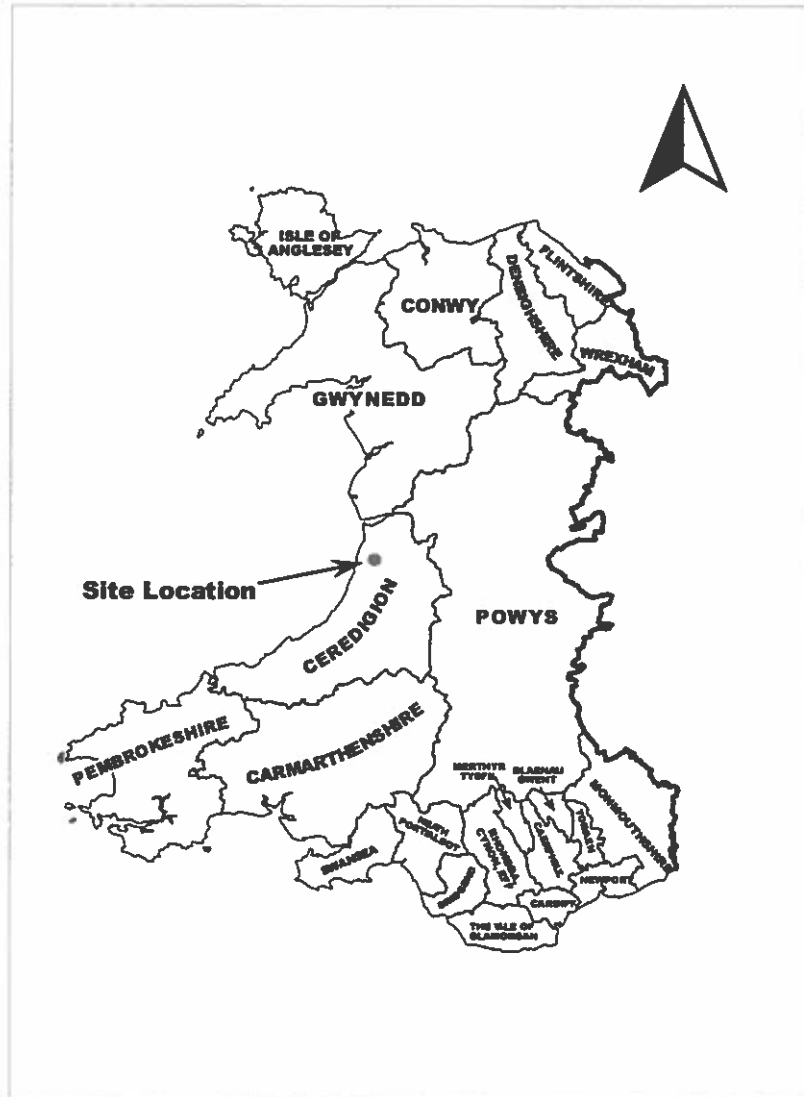


Figure 01: Site Location

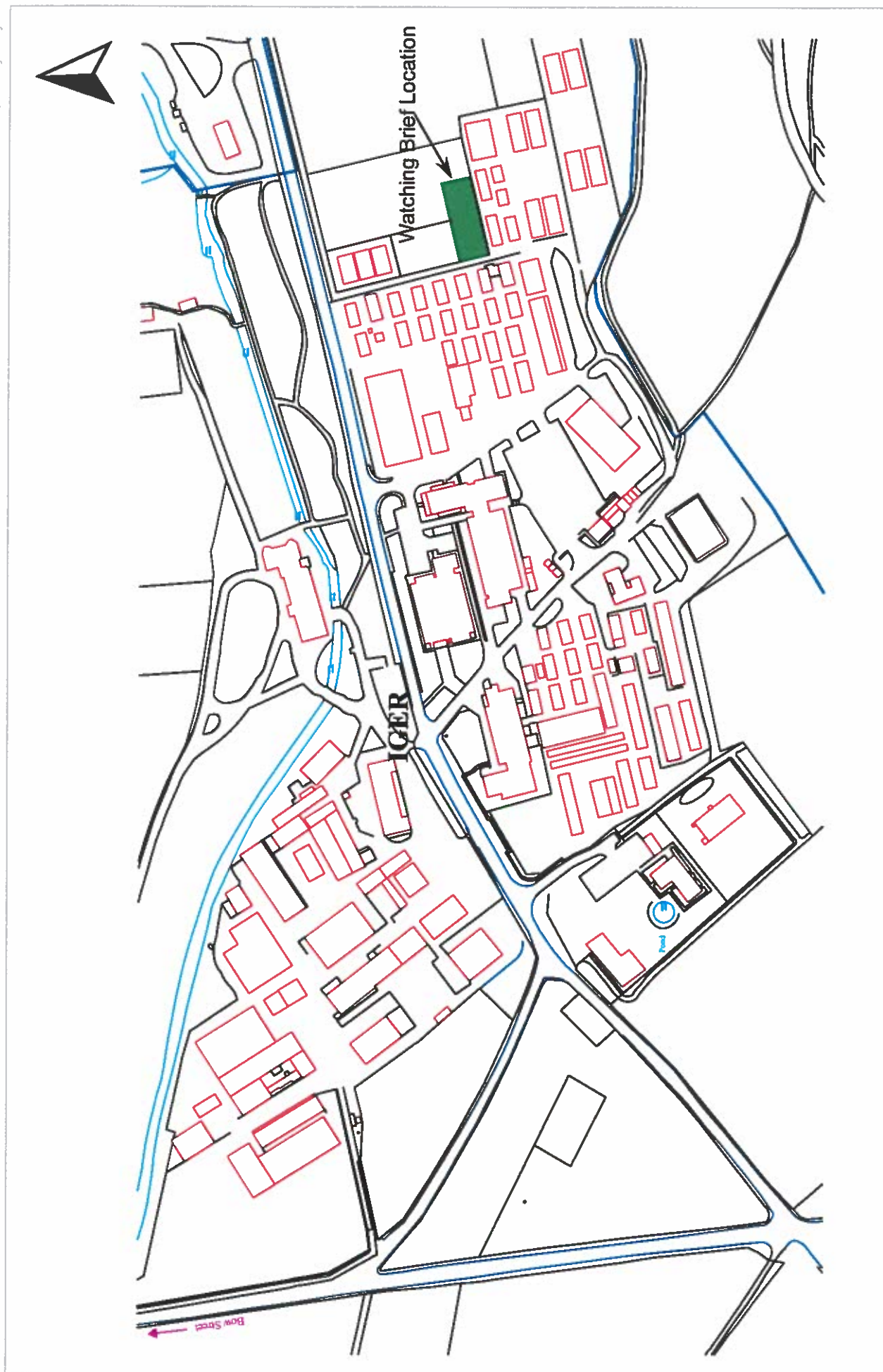


Figure 02: Watching Brief Location (measuring 35 x 18m)

3. METHODOLOGY

The groundworks required the stripping by machine of the soils (topsoil & subsoil) within the whole of the development area. A mechanical excavator with a 5ft. ditching blade was used for the removal of the soil material. A watching brief was maintained throughout the duration of the soil stripping operation. The construction work was undertaken by J.U. Bowen Construction Ltd.

During the soil removal and following its completion, the archaeologist 'field walked' the stripped area looking for any datable material or archaeological features that may have been evident on the exposed surface.

Recording of the stripped area was in three formats:

- i) Photographic record shots were taken in digital and 35mm colour print formats.
- ii) Drawn records were produced at scales of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 on drafting film.
- iii) Written records were produced using a continuous numbering system for all contexts.

Where necessary limited hand excavation of the exposed surface was undertaken in order to ascertain that no archaeological features were present.

An environmental 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 conducted whilst adhering to current Health and Safety regulations.

All works were undertaken in accordance with The Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

4. THE WATCHING BRIEF (Plates: 01 - 03)

The site of the proposed new glasshouse buildings and access road lie on the eastern edge of the I.G.E.R buildings complex, adjacent to a number of pre-existing glasshouses. The development area was previously used for experimental field plots and this continues to be the land usage to the east of the new development.

The whole of the area to be developed was machine stripped of topsoil and subsoil in order to facilitate the new construction. This stripped area measured 35m (east-west) x 18m (north-south) and each of the glasshouses will be 31.5m (east-west) x 5m (north-south) with the remaining stripped area to be used for vehicle access around the glasshouses.

The development area is situated on a low-lying area of ground close to the base of the valley, on an old river terrace. As a result of the previous cultivation of the development area there was a well-developed topsoil 'A' horizon with a depth of 0.3m. This topsoil horizon was a mid brown silty loam containing occasional small sub rounded stone inclusions. This location produces fertile well drained soils and has probably been under cultivation for a considerable time. The topsoil horizon was very 'clean' with no pottery or other datable material recovered from this horizon.

Underneath the topsoil horizon was the subsoil 'B' horizon, which was an orange-brown silty clay containing a moderate amount of small sub-rounded stones. The frequency and size of the stone inclusions increased with depth, as did the clay component of this horizon. Occasional patches gleying were evident, indicating some areas may be prone to localised seasonal waterlogging. Again no pottery or datable material was recovered from this horizon, although occasional flecks of charcoal were incorporated within this horizon. The only disturbance within this horizon were three modern stone filled French drains that were evident on the western side and extended 10m into the development area. The underlying natural 'C' horizon undulated somewhat which meant that the subsoil 'B' horizon varied in depth between 0.2 – 0.5m with a more distinct boundary evident between the 'A' & 'B' horizons.

Beneath the subsoil horizon was the natural 'C' horizon. The boundary between the 'B' and 'C' horizons was very diffuse with a considerable amount of intermixing between the two. The natural 'C' horizon consisted of fluvial gravels within a reddish brown clay matrix. There was no evidence of any disturbance to the underlying natural and no pottery or datable material was recovered from this horizon.



Plate 01: View of Watching Brief area prior to stripping, looking NW



Plate 02: View of Watching Brief area during soil stripping, looking NW



Plate 03: View of Watching Brief area following completion of soil stripping, looking NW

5. CONCLUSIONS

No deposits, features or artefacts of archaeological significance were located during the course of this watching brief. The only evidence for any disturbance of this area were the three modern French drains that were exposed on the western side of the watching brief/development area. Given that the development area lies on well drained low lying fertile soils it is likely that it has been under cultivation for a considerable time.