

# MOELFRE LIFEBOAT STATION MOELFRE, YNYS MON

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

# Moelfre Lifeboat Station, Moelfre, Ynys Mon

## Archaeological Watching Brief

Project No. G2104

Report No. 1150

Prepared for: Royal HaskoningDHV

November 2013

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## SUMMARY

*This report sets out the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) during the ground works associated with the demolition of the existing Moelfre Lifeboat Station and slipway, and the construction of a new one on an enlarged footprint (centred on SH 5150 8640). The work was commissioned by Royal HaskoningDHV.*

*A large area of disturbed ground relating to the construction of the original Lifeboat Station was uncovered within the compound area during the watching brief. No other archaeological features were uncovered, however only part of the site was stripped down to the natural geology and it is possible that archaeological remains survive in these areas.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This report was commissioned by Royal HaskoningDHV and forms the report for the archaeological watching brief carried out during the ground works, comprising of an access road and a compound area, associated with the demolition of the existing Moelfre Lifeboat Station and slipway, and the construction of a new one on an enlarged footprint (centred on SH 5150 8640) (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). See Figure 1.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared (Appendix I) which sets out the legislation framework and planning background in detail. The work was carried out as part of a staged programme of archaeological works which included an archaeological assessment/ Level 2 building recording of the existing lifeboat station (Evans 2010).

This report has been prepared in accordance with the *Standards and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation, and research of archaeological materials* specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 2001), as well as the *standard and guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

## 2 SITE LOCATION

The site is located at the eastern end of the village of Moelfre and consists of a two fields of grassland lying directly to the southwest of the shoreline and the existing lifeboat station and slipway. The underlying geology of the area consists of glacial till over Limestone bedrock of the Clwyd Limestone Group (British Geological Survey Mapping).

### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust completed an archaeological assessment/ Level 2 building record of the existing lifeboat station in 2009 (Evans 2010), in advance of an Environmental Impact Assessment. The report summarised that the lifeboat house and slipway were constructed on their current site in 1909, replacing a lifeboat house built 200m to the south in 1875. Moelfre had become well known as a place of maritime tragedy following the loss of the 'Royal Charter' in 1859.

The building was seen to be constructed on a limestone plinth of squared blocks, dating from the earliest phase of building in 1909. The lifeboat house was altered a number of times, most notably in 1930 and 1992 in order to accommodate larger vessels. The slipway has also been lengthened on a number of occasions. A significant amount of fabric from the 1909 and 1930 buildings was identified. The boathouse is considered to be a significant element in the cultural heritage of Moelfre, particularly as Moelfre has been the scene of a number of well known rescues, notably that of the 'Hindlea' by Coxswain Evans and his crew in 1959.

### 4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

As specified in the WSI (Appendix I) the objective of the archaeological watching brief was to:

- 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 establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on a site.

### 5 METHODOLOGY

All works were carried out in accordance with the WSI for the works (Appendix I) and the GAT standard operating procedures as set out in the GAT fieldwork Manual (*in prep*)).

All groundbreaking was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision. Topsoil and turf layers were removed by a 360° tracked excavator, fitted with a flat bladed bucket, down to the natural geology or formation layer, whichever was encountered first. Areas where only the turf was to be removed were not monitored.

A running photographic record was maintained using a Nikon digital SLR camera set to maximum resolution.

## 6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

The access track and the compound area (Figure 1) were both stripped down to the natural geology which was reached at an on average 0.4m below ground level and consisted of a light reddish brown sandy clay (102). The remaining areas of the site were either not stripped at all or only stripped of turf before the laying down of terram and subsequent stoning up.

A single stone gatepost which was still standing within the field was removed from the compound area and its location noted so as to reinstate it at the end of the current works. No evidence of any field boundaries or another gatepost relating to this one were revealed during the works.

Two modern field boundaries were partially truncated by the access road, neither of which showed any evidence of an earlier date. A large area of disturbance measuring at least 10m x 5m was uncovered during the stripping for the compound area. A large quantity of brick, plastic, and metal was visible within this area and it is likely that this relates to the original construction of the lifeboat station in 1992. No other features were uncovered on the site.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The natural topography of the site was only revealed within the access road and the compound area, lying on average 0.4m below ground level. It sloped down gradually from the southeast to the northwest and consisted of a light reddish brown sandy clay (102).

The only features uncovered on the site relate to modern field boundaries and the construction/ alteration of the lifeboat station in 1993. The stone gatepost was location within an area of disturbed ground relating to the construction/ alteration of the lifeboat station in 1993 and it is possible that it was placed in the ground at this time since no evidence of a field boundary or another gatepost relating to this one were uncovered.

Although no features of archaeological significance were uncovered during the watching brief it is possible that such features do survive within the areas not stripped down to the natural geology. Therefore any further work in these areas should be monitored.

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author would like to thank Royal HaskoningDHV Limited for commissioning the work and Ben Goodman from BAM Nuttall Ltd for all his assistance on site. The work on site was carried out by Dave McNicol.

## 9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

British Geological Survey Mapping

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Evans, R 2010 G2104 Moelfre Lifeboat Station, Gwynedd, Archaeological Assessment. Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Unpub. Report # 844

GAT in prep Archaeological Site Manual

Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), supplement 2001, *By-Laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute of Field Archaeologists: Standards and guidance for the collection, documentation conservation and research of archaeological materials*

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) 2008, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*



## **APPENDIX I: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION**

MOELFRE LIFEBOAT STATION,  
MOELFRE, YNYS MON

WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF (G2104)

**Prepared for**

Royal HaskoningDHV

**June 2013**

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

# MOELFRE LIFEBOAT STATION, MOELFRE, YNYS MON.

## WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF (G2104)

Prepared for *Royal HaskoningDHV*, June 2013

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) has been asked by *Royal HaskoningDHV* to provide a Written Scheme of Investigation for completing an archaeological watching brief during the demolition of the existing Moelfre Lifeboat Station and slipway and the construction of a new boathouse and slipway for a Tamar class lifeboat on an enlarged footprint. The lifeboat station is located at Moelfre Lifeboat Station, Ynys Môn (NGR **SH51508640**). The new boathouse would be around 4.8m longer, 1.6m higher and 2.2m wider than the existing boathouse, which has dimensions of 20.1m long, 11.6m wide, and 7.7m high (to parapet). The current scheme information is based on *Royal HaskoningDHV* Environmental Statement *Chapter 2 – Description of the proposed development and consideration of alternative options*.

The construction programme will include:

- Mobilise construction plant (excavation plant, piling rig etc.);
- Establish working area and site compounds;
- Demolish existing boathouse and slipway;
- Install piles for proposed boathouse's foundations;
- Excavation in abutment for proposed boathouse's boat well;
- Construct proposed boathouse;
- Install piles for proposed slipway widening and extension;
- Construct slipway;
- Install services;
- Fit out of proposed boathouse;
- Complete public information area.

(Information based on *Royal HaskoningDHV* Environmental Statement *Chapter 2 page 12*).

Based on information received from the client, the Construction programme is due to commence during summer 2013 and last approximately 18 months.

## 1.1 Background

GAT completed an archaeological assessment/Level 2 building record of the existing lifeboat station in 2009 (GAT Report **844**), in advance of an Environmental Impact Assessment.

The report summarised that the lifeboat house and slipway were constructed on their current site in 1909, replacing a lifeboat house built 200m to the south in 1875. Moelfre had become well known as a place of maritime tragedy following the loss of the 'Royal Charter' in 1859. The building was seen to be constructed on a limestone plinth of squared blocks, dating from the earliest phase of building in 1909. The lifeboat house was altered a number of times, most notably in 1930 and 1992 in order to accommodate larger vessels. The slipway has also been lengthened on a number of occasions. A significant amount of fabric from the 1909 and 1930 buildings was identified. The boathouse is considered to be a significant element in the cultural heritage of Moelfre, particularly as Moelfre has been the scene of a number of well known rescues, notably that of the 'Hindlee' by Coxswain Evans and his crew in 1959. An archaeological watching brief was recommended during groundworks on the site, as there is some possibility that archaeological evidence could be recovered during the excavation of previously undisturbed ground.

## 1.2 Standards and Guidance

A mitigation brief has not been prepared for this work by **Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Services** (GAPS) GAPS must approve the content of this WSI prior to undertaking any archaeological mitigation.

Reference will also be made to the guidelines specified in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (Institute for Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 2001& 2008).

## 2.0 REQUIREMENTS OF THE BRIEF

The **watching brief** will consist of the following:

- Observation of non-archaeological excavation works.
- A drawn, written and photographic record of any archaeological structures and deposits that may be revealed.
- Preparation of full archive report.

The watching brief will monitor:

- Foundation level groundworks during the construction of the new boathouse and slipway, including the activities listed in para. [1.0](#). The construction compound and off road site access points listed on *Royal HaskoningDHV* Environmental Statement Chapter 2 – Figure 2.3 (reproduced as Figure 01).

**The monitoring of works is to be undertaken in a manner that allows for the immediate cessation of groundworks for the recording of archaeological evidence, if identified.**

The subsequent report should include:

1. A copy of the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation;
2. A location plan;
3. A drawn, written and photographic record of any archaeological structures and deposits that may be revealed, including full dimensional and descriptive detail;
4. Discussion of the archaeological significance and research potential of any findings;
5. A full bibliography of sources consulted.

## 3.0 METHOD STATEMENT

### 3.1 Definition of an archaeological watching brief

(Reproduced from *Institute for Archaeologists 2001 Standard and Guidance for 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*.

An archaeological watching brief is divided into four categories according to the IFA. 2001. *Institute for Archaeologists 2001 Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*:

- comprehensive (present during all ground disturbance)
- intensive (present during sensitive ground disturbance)
- intermittent (viewing the trenches after machining)
- partial (as and when seems appropriate).

A **partial** watching brief is recommended by GAT in report **843**: targeting all intrusive groundworks listed in para. [1.0](#), with attendance dictated by the contractor programme. The main focus will be the construction compound and off-road site access (cf. Figure 01) as well as the new lifeboat station footprint foundation works that exceed the original lifeboat station footprint.

### 3.2 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 a site.

### 3.3 Occurrence

A watching brief may arise:

- in response to a development which threatens the archaeological resource
- as part of the planning process (within the framework of appropriate national planning policy guidance notes) and/or development plan policy
- as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- outside the planning process (e.g. ecclesiastical development, coastal erosion, agriculture, forestry and countryside management, works by public utilities and statutory undertakers) A watching brief may therefore be instigated or commissioned by a number of different individuals or organisations, including local planning authorities, national advisory bodies, government agencies, private landowners, developers or their agents.

### 3.4 Methodology

#### 3.4.1. Archaeological Watching Brief

- **The watching brief is to be undertaken in a manner that allows for the immediate cessation of the main contractor groundworks for the recording of archaeological evidence. This will involve close liaison between the archaeologist and the site agent.**
- A photographic record will be maintained throughout, using a digital SLR camera set to maximum resolution.
- Any subsurface remains will be recorded photographically, with detailed notations and a measured survey.
- The archive will then be held by GAT under an appropriate project number (**G2104**).



## 4.0 FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS

- The identification of significant archaeological features during the groundworks/archaeological watching brief may necessitate further archaeological works. This may require the submission of new cost estimates to the contractor and a further archaeological works design for approval by GAPS.
- This design does not include a methodology or cost for examination of, conservation of, or archiving of finds discovered during the watching brief, nor of any radiocarbon dates required, nor of examination of palaeoenvironmental samples. The need for these will be identified in the post-fieldwork programme (if required), and a new design will be issued for approval by the GAPS Archaeologist.

## **5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES**

If necessary, relevant archaeological deposits will be sampled by taking bulk samples (a minimum of 10.0 litres and maximum of 30.0 litres) for flotation of charred plant remains. Bulk samples will be taken from waterlogged deposits for macroscopic plant remains. Other bulk samples, for example from middens, may be taken for small animal bones and small artefacts.

## **6.0 HUMAN REMAINS**

Any finds of human remains will be left *in-situ*, covered and protected, and both the coroner and the GAPS Archaeologist informed. If removal is necessary it will take place under appropriate regulations and with due regard for health and safety issues.

## 7.0 SMALL FINDS

The vast majority of finds recovered from archaeological excavations comprise pottery fragments, bone, environmental and charcoal samples, and non-valuable metal items such as nails. Often many of these finds become unstable (i.e. they begin to disintegrate) when removed from the ground. All finds are the property of the landowner, however, it is Trust policy to recommend that all finds are donated to an appropriate museum where they can receive specialist treatment and study. Access to finds must be granted to the Trust for a reasonable period to allow for analysis and for study and publication as necessary. All finds would be treated according to advice provided within *First Aid for Finds* (Rescue 1999). Trust staff will undertake initial identification, but any additional advice would be sought from a wide range of consultants used by the Trust, including National Museums and Galleries of Wales at Cardiff.

## **8.0 PROCESSING DATA, ILLUSTRATION, REPORT AND ARCHIVING**

Following completion of the watching brief as outlined above, a report will be produced incorporating the following:

- Non-technical summary
- Introduction
- Specification and Project Design
- Methods and techniques
- Archaeological Background
- Description of the results of the watching brief
- Summary and conclusions
- Bibliography of sources consulted.

Illustrations, including plans and photographs, will be incorporated within the report.

A full archive including plans, photographs, written material and any other material resulting from the project will be prepared. All plans, photographs and descriptions will be labelled and cross-referenced, and lodged in an appropriate place (to be decided in consultation with the regional Historic Environment Record) within six months of the completion of the project. All digital data will be written to CD-ROM and stored with the paper archive.

- one or more copies (as required) will be sent to the client
- one or more copies (as required) will be sent to GAPS
- one or two copies (as required) sent to the Historic Environment Record Archaeologist for the area (HER, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Craig Beuno, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2RT);
- copies of all key digital files on optical media should be provided to GAPS and the Regional HER, including report, photographs, scans of maps etc.
- a copy of the report and/or digital files on optical media should be provided to the National Monument Record (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales, Aberystwyth, SY23 1NJ) dependant upon their requirements.

## **9.0 STAFF**

The project will be supervised by a Senior Archaeologist at GAT Contracts Section. The work will be carried out by fully trained Project Archaeologists who are experienced in conducting watching briefs and working with contractors and earth moving machinery. (Full CV's are available upon request).

## **10.0 HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Trust subscribes to the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers) Health and Safety Policy as defined in **Health and Safety in Field Archaeology** (1999).

## 11.0 INSURANCE

*Liability Insurance - Aviva Policy 24765101CHC/00045*

- Employers' Liability: Limit of Indemnity £10m in any one occurrence
- Public Liability: Limit of Indemnity £5m in any one occurrence
- Hire-in Plant Insurance: £50,000.00 any one item;  
£250,000.00 any one claim

The current period expires 21/06/13

*Professional Indemnity Insurance – RSA Insurance Plc P8531NAECE/1028*

- Limit of Indemnity £5,000,000 any one claim

The current period expires 22/07/13



## 12.0 SOURCES CONSULTED

Evans, R. 2010, *G2104 MOELFRE LIFEBOAT STATION, Gwynedd Archaeological Assessment*. Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Report **844**

Historic Environment Record, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Craig Beuno, Garth Road, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2RT

*Opus International Consultants (UK) Ltd.* Drawing # FA E-G 6552/02

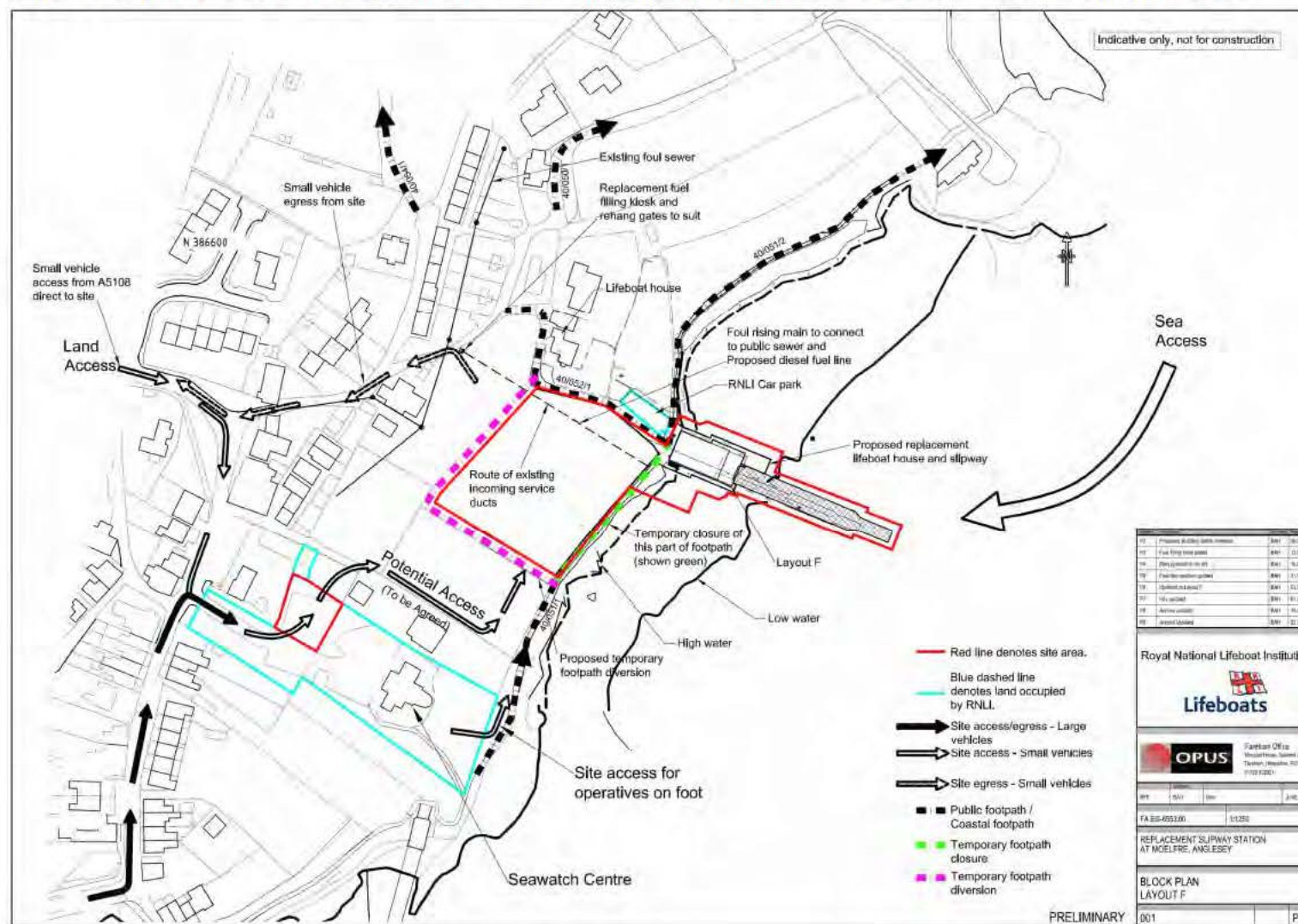
*Royal HaskoningDHV* Environmental Statement *Chapter 2 – Description of the proposed development and consideration of alternative options.*

Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (Institute for Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 2001 & 2008)

## **FIGURE 01**

**Reproduction of Royal HaskoningDHV Environmental Statement  
Chapter 2: Figure 2.3**

Figure 2.3 Indicative site access (construction compound shown in red and Seawatch Centre shown in blue)





0  
Scale @ A4: 1:1250  
50 m

 Watching Brief Area

Fig. 1: Site Location

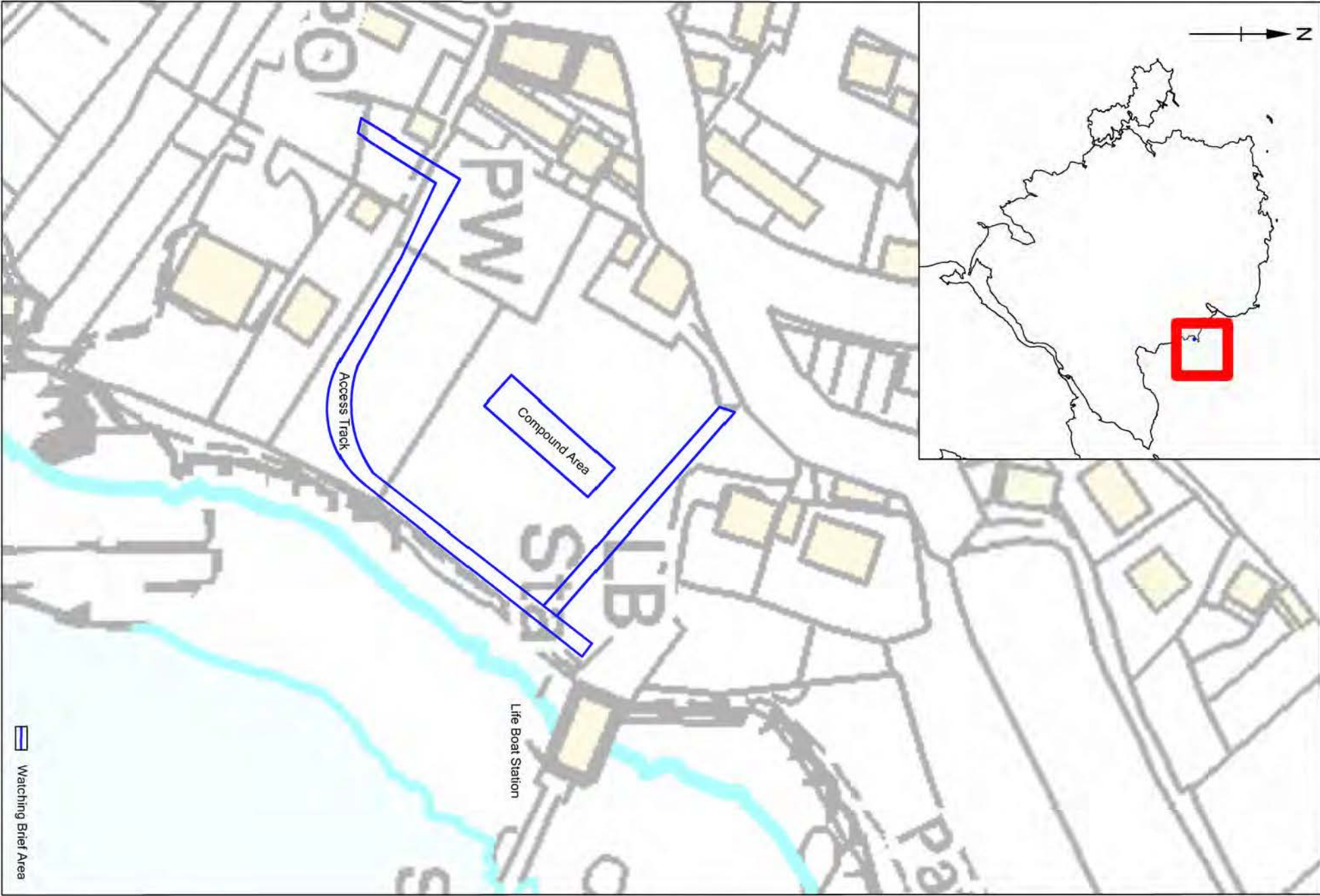






Plate 01: Stripping of Access Road. View from the southwest.



Plate 02: Stripping of Compound Area. View from the southwest.