

ABERFFRAW WASTE WATER TREATMENT
WORKS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

G1751

Report number : 475

Prepared for

GALLIFORD

FEBRUARY 2003

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

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By

David Hopewell

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1. INTRODUCTION

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust was asked by Galliford Northern to carry out a watching brief during construction of a waste water treatment works and associated access road to the south of Aberffraw at SH 350689.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

An archaeological assessment was carried out prior to the planning application for the works by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT report 454, 2002). No known archaeological sites were found to fall within the development area although it was once thought that the medieval Llys (royal court) stood in fields to the south and west. Excavations were carried out in 1957 but nothing was found. The Llys has since been shown to lie under a housing estate built in the 1960s within the present village of Aberffraw. Prehistoric sites, comprising a burial cairn overlying a Mesolithic working floor and an Iron Age hut circle lie to the south of the development area at Trwyn Ddu. A small walled enclosure was identified alongside the gate leading to the access track. This was thought to be a structure built to house a small roadside hand pump in the late 19th or early 20th century. This was unaffected by the works.

3. METHODOLOGY

The site was visited at regular intervals during topsoil stripping between October and December 2002 by arrangement with Galliford. The majority of the access road, development area and works compound was observed soon after stripping and in a relatively undisturbed state. The line of a pipe trench running about 70m to the east of the works site was also inspected after topsoil stripping. Deeper pipe trenches were examined in order to record the soil profile. The topsoil was stripped using a tracked excavator with a toothless bucket.

4. RESULTS

The topsoil was typically 0.2m deep, moderately humic and contained wind-blown sand. Frequent finds of 19th century pottery, coal fragments and clinker were recovered from this context. These were presumably derived from agricultural manuring.

Underlying the topsoil was clean, mid orange-brown sandy clay containing occasional patches of manganese panning. The excavations did not generally penetrate very far into this horizon and the access road was laid at this level. No artifacts were present and this could perhaps be classified as a transitional horizon between buried uncultivated topsoil containing wind blown sand and the subsoil B-horizon. The mechanical digger occasionally cut into intensely gleyed glacial till (C-horizon). Examination of the deeper trenches showed that the glacial deposits occurred at a depth of 0.3 to 0.5m.

No archaeological features were identified during the watching brief and no pre-19th century material was recovered from the topsoil.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The development area was not found to contain any archaeological sites. The presence of frequent 19th century finds in the topsoil suggests fairly intensive agricultural activity during this period.



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