

CPAT Report No 1213.1

Dolgarrog to Pentir Overhead Powerline, Gwynedd

Excavations adjacent to tower AD26



THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Interserve Industrial Services Ltd
CPAT Project No: 1892
Project Name: AD Line Mitigation
Grid Reference: SH 7177 7159
County/LPA: Gwynedd

Report Title: Dolgarrog to Pentir Overhead Powerline, Gwynedd. Excavations adjacent to tower AD26
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Signed:

Checked on: 07 August 2013

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Summary

A small-scale excavation was undertaken by the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust on behalf of Interserve Industrial Services Ltd as part of a wider programme of mitigation works associated with the refurbishment of a 132kV overhead powerline between Dolgarrog and Pentir, in Gwynedd. The excavation was carried out with the approval of Cadw in advance of a test excavation by the powerline contractors on one of the sub-surface supports of tower AD26 (NGR SH 7177 7159), which lies within the designated area of scheduled ancient monument CN131.

The 4m by 3m area that was evaluated archaeologically lay adjacent to the west leg of the tower, and was designed to assess the nature of the archaeological resource in order that a decision could be made regarding further mitigation. No evidence of significant in-situ archaeological features or layers was revealed in the evaluated area, although thin layers of peat were encountered which had been buried by spoil from the construction of the tower.

Subsequently, a watching brief was carried out during machine excavations to inspect the tower foundations, these being conducted within the archaeologically excavated area. No archaeological features or finds were revealed and no archaeological material was disturbed.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In March 2013 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) produced a written scheme of investigation (WSI) (CPAT WSI 1300) on behalf of Iberdrola Engineering and Construction in support of an application for scheduled monument consent for a programme of investigations and foundation upgrades as part of a wider programme of mitigation works associated with the refurbishment of a 132kV overhead powerline, known as the AD Line, between Dolgarrog and Pentir, in Gwynedd. A cultural heritage assessment for the scheme as a whole was conducted by CPAT in 2012 (Jones 2012) and revised in 2013 (Jones 2013). CPAT was subsequently commissioned by Interserve Industrial Services Ltd, on behalf of Iberdrola Engineering and Construction, to conduct any further necessary stages of investigation and mitigation relating to the cultural heritage for the scheme as a whole.
- 1.2 The application to Cadw for scheduled monument consent related to works at tower AD26 (Fig. 1), which lies within the area of SAM CN131, a group of Bronze Age burial cairns. The tower lay at least 35m from the nearest known archaeological site (Fig. 2) and no archaeology had been identified within the immediate surrounds. The WSI was produced following discussions with the regional inspector of Cadw, Mr I. Halfpenny, and SMC was granted in May 2013, subject to a number of conditions (Appendix 2) which determined the scope and methodology of the investigations.



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Fig. 1 Location plan showing the position of tower AD26

- 1.3 Consent was granted for the refurbishment works to be undertaken in two stages, the first of which will comprise foundation investigations to assess the condition of the sub-surface foundations of one corner of the tower. The archaeological excavation, reported on here, was designed to precede the foundation investigations and was designed to assess the potential for archaeological remains within this part of the scheduled area. It involved the excavation by hand of an area measuring 4m by 3m to the surface of the natural subsoil.

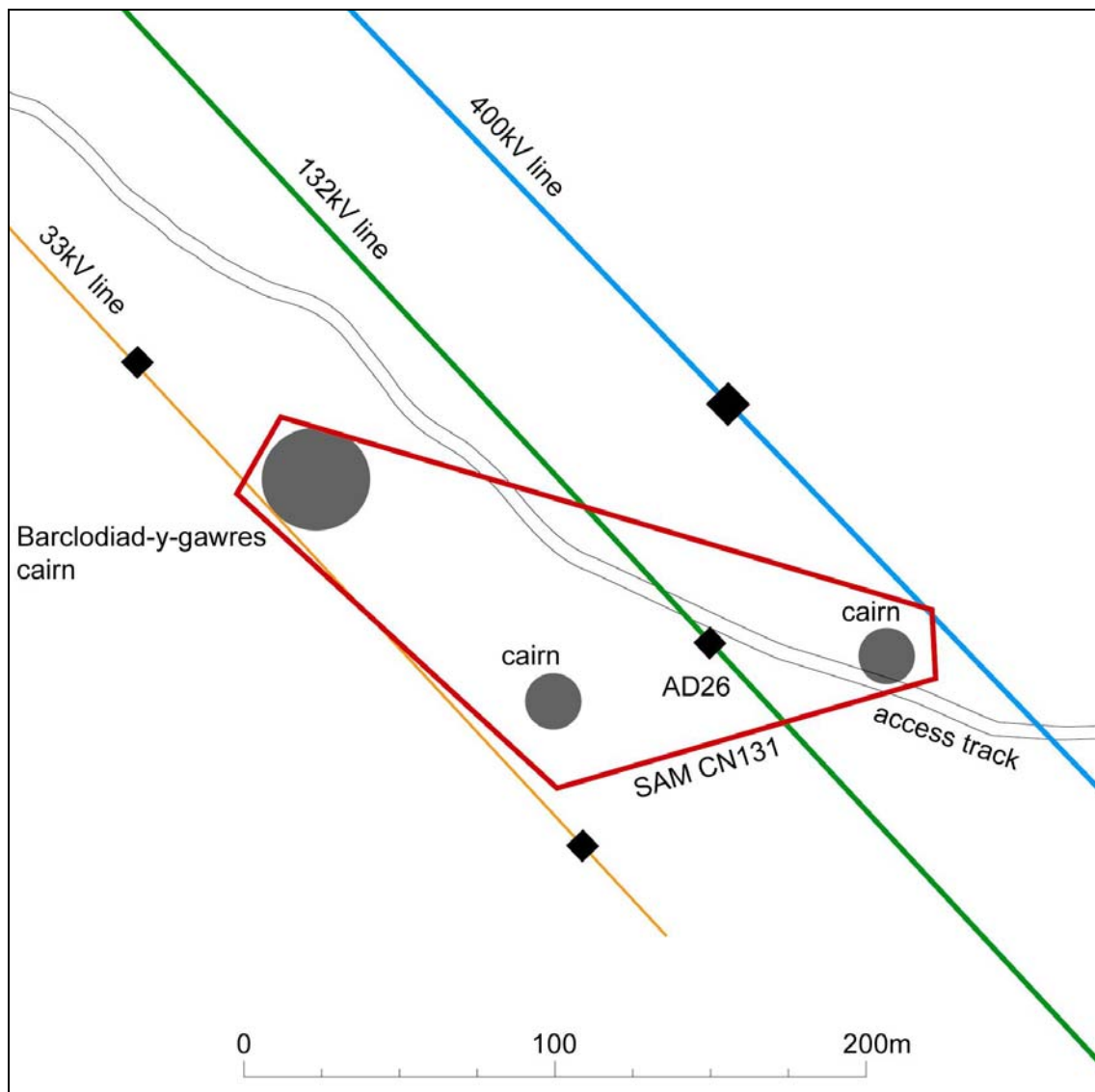


Fig.2 Location of tower AD26 in relation to the cairns within the scheduled area of SAM CN131

- 1.4 The excavation was conducted on 25 and 27 June 2013 and Cadw were kept informed of the work programme, but they were not able to undertake a monitoring visit.

2 Excavation

- 2.1 The excavation trench measured approximately 4m north-east/south-west by 3m north-west/south-east and was placed alongside the west leg of the tower, such that the leg was approximately equidistant from the north-east and south-west ends of the trench (Fig. 4). All work was conducted by hand and consisted of the removal of turf and soil deposits down to the natural subsoil. On completion of the excavation the trench was reinstated using excavated material and re-turfed, restoring the original profile of the site.
- 2.2 During the excavation a full drawn, written and photographic record was compiled, details of which are provided in Appendix 1. Numbers appearing in brackets in the following text and illustrated on the site plans refer to the individual contexts recorded in the site archive.



Fig. 3 View of the excavation with the west leg of tower AD26 visible; the backfill of the foundation excavation is readily apparent.

Photo CPAT 3656-0004

- 2.3 Removal of the modern turf, including brown silty topsoil (1), up to 40mm thick, revealed a deposit of yellow-orange friable, clay silt (2), containing a significant quantity of small stones. Further investigation demonstrated that this was a layer of redeposited natural subsoil, up to 120mm in thickness, which was derived from the foundation pits at the time when the tower was erected. Layer 2 sealed the uppermost of three thin deposits of peat, a grey-brown layer (3), up to 50mm thick. The removal of layer 2 also exposed the extent of the tower foundation (6), cutting through the peat deposit and measuring 1.8m north-east/south-west by at least 0.9m north-west/south-east; it was filled by a material (7), which was of identical composition to layer 2.

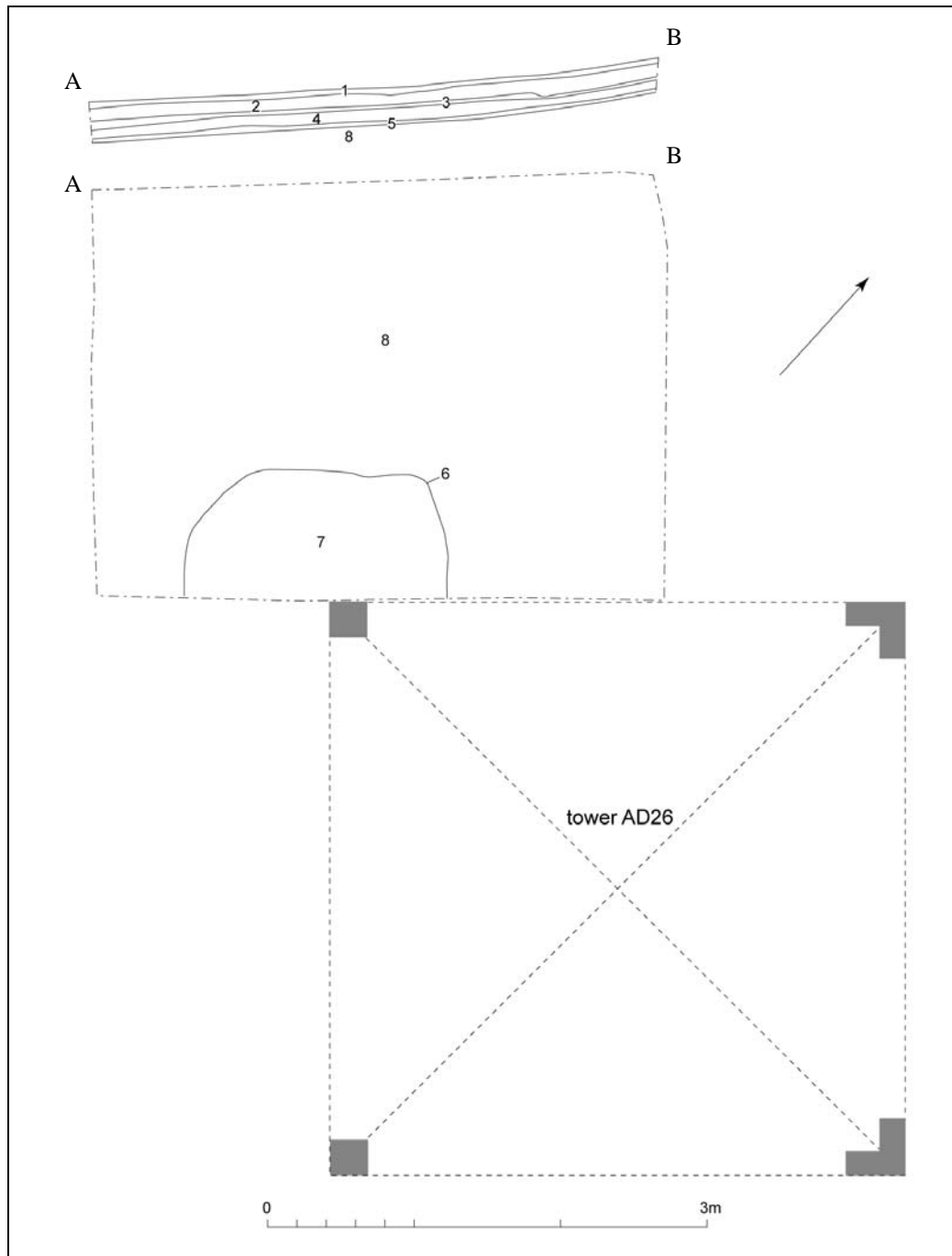


Fig. 4 Plan and section of the excavated area

- 2.4 The upper layer of peat (3) sealed dark brown peat (4), up to 80mm in thickness, which in turn overlay a grey-brown peat (5), up to 50mm in thickness. The removal of these peat deposits revealed the natural subsoil, a pale to mid-grey stony, clay silt (8).
- 2.5 No archaeological deposits, features or artefacts were observed during the excavation.



Fig. 5 The south-east facing section of the excavation trench, showing the sequence of deposits
Photo CPAT 3656-0015

3 Watching Brief

- 3.1 A watching brief was carried out on 5 August 2013 during machine excavations to investigate the tower foundations. The excavations were restricted to the 4m by 3m area which had been archaeologically evaluated to ensure that there was no additional disturbance to the scheduled area identified on Fig. 2.
- 3.2 Work commenced with the removal of the turf by hand. The backfilled soil from the archaeological evaluation and the natural subsoils were removed by machine to allow sufficient space for the investigation into the structural integrity of the foundations of the leg of the tower. No deposits of archaeological significance were identified and no additional information was forthcoming, over and above the results from the evaluation. Once the investigations had been completed, the material was backfilled into the trench and the turf was replaced.



Fig. 6 Machining of the tower foundation investigations. Photo CPAT 3656-0021

4 Conclusions

- 4.1 The evaluation investigated an area measuring about 4m by 3m against the north-west side of the west leg of tower AD26. No significant archaeological features or layers were revealed, although three distinct layers of peat were identified beneath a layer of material which had been redeposited over the area when the tower was built.
- 4.2 The machine excavation alongside the west leg of the tower was carefully controlled and it can be confirmed that there was no ground disturbance outside the area that was archaeologically evaluated. This was in accordance with the scheduled monument consent granted by Cadw (Appendix 2).

5 References

- Jones, N. W., 2012. *Scottish Power Energy Networks Dolgarrog to Pentir 132kV Overhead Powerline Refurbishment: Cultural Heritage Assessment*. Unpublished report. CPAT Report No. 1132.2.
- Jones, N. W., 2013. *Scottish Power Energy Networks Dolgarrog to Pentir 132kV Overhead Powerline Refurbishment Ground Investigations and Cable Connection: Cultural Heritage Assessment*. Unpublished report. CPAT Report No. 1188.

APPENDIX 1

PROJECT ARCHIVE

Site records

8 context record forms

Context Register

1 A3 drawing (plan and section drawing of the excavation)

31 digital photographs, CPAT film 3656

Photographic register

APPENDIX 2

SCHEDULED MONUMENT CONSENT

Rory Daines
Iberdrola Engineering and Construction
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Old Hall Road
Bromborough
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Eich cyfeirnod
Your reference

Ein cyfeirnod
Our reference

Dyddiad
Date

Llinell uniongyrchol
Direct line

Ebost
Email:

IH

8 May 2013

01443 336096

Suzanne.whiting@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Dear Mr Daines,

ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS ACT 1979

SECTION 2 AND SCHEDULE 1

APPLICATION FOR SCHEDULED MONUMENT CONSENT

PROPOSED WORKS AT: BARCLODIAD-Y-GAWRES ROUND CAIRN (CN131)

I refer to your application dated 13 March 2013, for scheduled monument consent for ground investigations and foundation upgrades at the site of the above scheduled ancient monument.

You declined the opportunity of appearing before, and being heard by, a person appointed for that purpose, afforded to you by Cadw in the letter dated 1 May 2013. Nor have you submitted any further representations in support of your case.

The proposed works can be carried out without detriment to the historic or archaeological integrity of the monument. Accordingly, the Welsh Government hereby grants scheduled monument consent for the works described at paragraph 4 of the application dated 13 March 2012, subject to the following conditions:

1. that Cadw shall be given at least two weeks notice, in writing, of the date of the commencement of the work or of any subsequent adjustment to this date, to allow Cadw's representatives to monitor on site activity;
2. that access to the site shall be afforded to representatives of Cadw;
3. that all of the works shall be undertaken as per the detailed specification submitted with the application and that any deviation from the specification shall be agreed with Cadw prior to being undertaken;
4. that during the course of the excavation and investigation works Cadw shall be kept informed of any developments on site and that at least one on-site monitoring meeting shall be held between the contractor/contract archaeologist and Cadw, in order to review progress. It is the responsibility of the applicant to minute the on-site meeting (using the Cadw template provided) and to circulate written minutes from the meeting within two weeks of the meeting having taken place;
5. that any additional elements of excavation and investigation works not agreed in the specification shall be discussed and agreed at these meetings. A methodology for these additional works shall be agreed on site and detailed in the meeting minutes;
6. that as per the specification no upgrades shall be undertaken to the track running through the scheduled area;

7. that all excavated material shall be used to infill the excavation areas and any excess shall be removed from the scheduled area;
8. that representatives from Cadw are afforded access to the site to monitor the progress of the works and carry out site inspections as necessary;
9. that the applicant shall ensure that all on-site contractors and staff are made fully aware that the area of works form part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument that is protected from damage under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979;
10. that the archaeologist shall submit a full and detailed digital report of the results of the excavation and investigation work to Cadw within 1 month of the work having been completed. A digital copy of the final report shall also be sent for inclusion on the Historic Environment Records database held by the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust;
11. that the site shall be left in a stable and tidy condition on completion of the work;
12. NB – This Scheduled Monument Consent covers Phase I (excavation and investigation) of the works. The Consent also offers ‘in principle’ support to the Phase II works (maintenance, repair and upgrade to the pylon and line). However, full consent for the Phase II works shall only be issued following the submission of a detailed written scheme of investigation that is agreed to by Cadw;
13. that any modification to the proposed work shall require the written approval of Cadw, before it is undertaken; and
14. that Cadw shall be informed in writing immediately upon the completion of the works (notification via email is acceptable).

Section 2(6) of the 1979 Act provides that non-compliance with a condition attached to a grant of scheduled monument consent shall be an offence.

By virtue of Section 4 of the 1979 Act if no works to which this consent relates are executed or started within 5 years from the date of this letter, the consent shall cease to have effect at the end of that period (unless it is revoked in the meantime).

This letter does not convey any approval or consent required under any enactment, bylaw, order or regulation other than Section 2 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

Your attention is drawn to the enclosed note (SMC19) which sets out your right to challenge the above decision.

Yours sincerely,

Suzanne Whiting
Diogelu a Pholisi/Policy and Protection

Enc. SMC19