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Specification

For Archaeological Desk Based Assessment and Site Visit:

Former Llantarnam Community Primary School, Croeswen,
Oakfield, Cwmbran

Prepared for:
Lovell Partnership Ltd

Project No: 2488

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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This Specification details the proposal for an archaeological Desk Based Assessment and Site Visit associated with the proposed construction of residential units at the former Llantarnam Community Primary School, Croeswen, Oakfield, Cwmbran. It has been prepared by Archaeology Wales Ltd for Lovell Partnership Ltd as part of an application for planning permission.

1. Introduction

The proposed development comprises plans for the construction of approximately 78 new dwellings on the site of the former Llantarnam Community Primary School, Croeswen, Oakfield, Cwmbran (henceforth – the site), centred on NGR ST 29888 93890 (Figure 1 and 2). The local planning authority is the Torfaen County Borough Council (henceforth –TCBC).

This Specification has been prepared by Philip Poucher, Archaeology Wales Ltd (Henceforth - AW) at the request of Asbri Planning, on behalf of their clients, Lovell Partnership Ltd. It provides information on the methodology that will be employed by AW during a Desk Based Assessment and Site Visit.

The purpose of the proposed Desk Based Assessment and Site Visit is to provide the TCBC with the information they are likely to request in respect of the proposed development, the requirements for which are set out in Planning Policy Wales 8 (Ed.8 January 2016), Section 6.5, and Welsh Office Circular 60/96. The work is to highlight and assess the impact upon standing and buried remains of potential archaeological interest to ensure that they are adequately preserved or fully investigated and recorded if they are disturbed or revealed as a result of subsequent activities associated with the development. During the statutory pre-application consultation Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (henceforth – GGAT), who act as archaeological advisers to TCBC, responded to state that:

“due to the sites proximity to Llantarnum Abbey and St Michaels Church an archaeological desk-based assessment should be conducted to determine any potential effects on the archaeological resource, both directly and in-directly.”

This specification is to be approved by the GGAT prior to the work being undertaken.

All work will conform to the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (CIfA December 2014) and be undertaken by suitably qualified staff to the highest professional standards.

2 Development Details & Site description

Details of the proposed development can currently be found on the Asbri Planning website at <http://www.asbriplanning.co.uk/statutory-pre-application-consultation/proposed-development-on-former-llantarnam-primary-school-cwmbran-pre-application-consultation/>

It is understood that planning permission will be sought to develop the site for approximately 78 new housing units, along with associated infrastructure, to replace the existing use of the site as a school. The existing school has been closed, and these buildings will be demolished.

The site is currently occupied by a school constructed in the 1960s, comprising a two-storey framed building clad in aluminium with a mixture of pitched and flat roofs. These buildings are generally described as in poor condition. The school buildings are surrounded by areas of hardstanding, including car parking and tarmac play areas, along with large areas laid to grass for use as school playing fields. The site as a whole measures 2.2 hectares. The existing ground surface generally slopes from north to south at approximately 50mOD.

The site is currently accessed off Croeswen Road to the south, and lies in a largely mid to late 20th century suburban residential area within the centre of Oakfield village, in Llantarnam, which itself lies 1.72km to the south of the centre of Cwmbran. Residential development along Croeswen and Clos Hogarth form the southern boundary to the site, with further residential development along Greenwillows to the west and Llantarnam Road to the east. Residential development also forms the northern boundary along the southern edge of Heol Oakfield, beyond which lies an area of parkland.

The landscape falls gradually southward towards the Dowlais Brook, and eastward towards the Afon Lwyd.

Geologically the proposed development area sits upon interbedded sandstone and mudstone of the Raglan Mudstone Formation (BGS 2016).

3 Site specific objectives

The primary objective will be to assess the potential impact of the development proposals on the historic environment by means of a detailed desk top study and site visit. This will help inform future decision making, design solutions and potential mitigation strategies. The aim will be to make full and effective use of existing information in establishing the archaeological significance of the site, to elucidate the presence or absence of archaeological material, its character, distribution, extent, condition and relative significance.

The work will include a comprehensive assessment of regional context within which the archaeological evidence rests and will aim to highlight any relevant research issues within national and regional research frameworks.

The work will result in a report that will provide information of sufficient detail to allow informed planning decisions to be made which can safeguard the archaeological resource. Preservation *in situ* will be advocated where at all possible, but where engineering or other factors result in loss of archaeological deposits, preservation by record will be recommended.

4 The proposed archaeological work

The proposed archaeological work relates to the whole of the site, i.e. all of the application area.

The aim of the work will be to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site. The work will include the following elements:

- A detailed desk top study (Stage 1)
- A site visit (Stage 2)
- The production of an illustrated report and the deposition of the site archive (Stage 3)

5 Method statement for a detailed desk top study (Stage 1)

The assessment will consider the following:

- a) The nature, extent and degree of survival of archaeological sites, structures, deposits and landscapes within the study area. It will involve the following areas of research:
 1. Collation and assessment of all relevant information held in the regional HER at Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust in Swansea, within 1km from the centre of the proposed development area.
 2. Collation and basic assessment of the impact on all Designated archaeological sites (Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Historic Parks & Gardens, landscapes, Conservation Areas) within 5km from the centre of the aforementioned area.
 3. Assessment of all available excavation report and archives including unpublished and unprocessed material affecting the site and its setting.
 4. Assessment of all readily available aerial photographic (AP) evidence.
 5. Assessment of archive records held at the County Archives, and as appropriate, site files held by RCAHMW
 6. Records held by the developer e.g. bore logs, geological/geomorphological information, aerial photographs, maps, plans.
 7. Map regression analysis using all relevant cartographic sources e.g. All editions of the Ordnance Survey County Series, Tithe and early estate maps (as available).
 8. Place name evidence.
 9. Internet sourced satellite imagery and Lidar imagery as available.
 10. Assessment of the records held at the Portable Antiquities Scheme.
 11. Historic documents (e.g. Charters, registers, estate papers).
- b) The significance of any remains in their context both regionally and nationally and in light of the findings of the desk based study.
- c) The history of the site, based on the areas of research outlined above.
- d) The potential impact of any proposed development on the setting of known sites of archaeological importance (this will constitute a brief assessment, rather than a formal assessment such as that detailed in the Design Manual of Roads and Visits).

e) The potential for further archaeological remains to be present, which have not been identified in pre-existing archaeological records.

f) The potential for further work, with recommendations if requested and where appropriate for a suitable investigative and/or mitigation methodology.

6 Method statement for a Site Visit (Stage 2)

The site visit will be a visual walked search of the entire development area. The ground surface will be visually inspected for all earthworks, structures and finds. The location of any environmental archaeological deposits, or areas which may have a potential for such **deposits, will also be taken into account along with the more traditional 'visible' archaeology.**

All located sites or finds will be accurately fixed by means of GPS. Each individual find or site location will have an accurate NGR reference attached. Where a close cluster of related features is identified a single NGR for the centre of the cluster will be used, and each constituent feature separately described in the text.

The character, function, condition, vulnerability, potential dating and relationship to other features of each identified site or find will be described fully. The importance of the site or find will be assessed in terms of local, regional or national significance.

A sketch survey of each identified site layout will be made with accompanying metric measurements

Written, drawn and photographic records of an appropriate level of detail will be maintained throughout the course of the project. Digital photographs, including metric scales, will be taken using cameras with resolutions of 10 mega pixels or above.

Illustrations will be drawn to a scale of 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 as required, and these will be related to Ordnance Survey datum and published boundaries where appropriate.

The site visit will also assess the visual impact of the proposed development on the setting of known sites of archaeological importance. Photographs will be taken from the proposed development to help illustrate and assess this visual impact and Designated sites within the study area will also be visited with photographs taken towards the proposed development to help illustrate and assess this visual impact on these sites.

7 Method statement for the production of an illustrated report and the deposition of the site archive (Stage 3)

A report will be produced which synthesises the results of stages 1 and 2 and thereby assesses the total archaeological resource within the development area.

The results will be presented in a report and will be detailed and laid out in such a way that data and supporting text are readily cross-referenced. The HER Officer will be contacted to ensure that any sites or monuments not previously recorded in the HER are

given a Primary Record Number (PRN) and that data structure is compatible with the HER. The historical development of the site will be presented in phased maps and plans comprising clearly, the outline of the site.

Within the report an attempt will be made to indicate areas of greater or lesser archaeological significance and the sites will be ranked in level of overall archaeological importance (locally, regionally and nationally).

All relevant aerial photographs, re-plots and historic maps will be included and be fully referenced. Any site photographs included in the report will be appropriately captioned and clearly located on a suitably scaled site plan.

The report will specifically include the following:

1. a copy of the design brief
2. a location plan
3. all identified sites plotted on an appropriately scaled plan of the proposal site
4. a gazetteer of all located sites with full dimensional and descriptive detail including grid reference and period

Copies of the report will be sent to Asbri Planning for dissemination with the client, and to GGAT and for inclusion in the HER. Digital copies will be provided in pdf format if required.

Any further stages of archaeological work, after the submission of the report for stages one and two outlined above, will be the subject of an additional GGAT curatorial brief against which a further AW specification will be drawn up.

The site archive

A project archive will be prepared in accordance with the National Monuments Record (Wales) agreed structure and be deposited with the National Monuments Records, held and maintained by the RCAHMW, Aberystwyth, on completion of site analysis and report production. It will also conform to the guidelines set out in 'Management of Archaeological Projects Two, Appendix 3' (Historic England 2015). The digital archive will be deposited with the NMR.

Although there may be a period during which client confidentiality will need to be maintained, the report and the archive will be deposited not later than six months after completion of the work.

Other significant digital data generated by the survey (ie AP plots, EDM surveys, CAD drawings, GIS maps, etc) will be presented as part of the report on a CD/DVD. The format of this presented data will be agreed with the curator in advance of its preparation.

8 Resources and timetable

Standards

The desk based assessment will be undertaken by AW staff using current best practice.

All work will be undertaken to the standards and guidelines of the CIfA.

Staff

The project will be undertaken by suitably qualified AW staff. Overall management of the project will be undertaken by Philip Poucher.

Equipment

The project will use existing AW equipment.

Timetable of archaeological works

The work will be undertaken at the convenience of the client and is likely to commence imminently.

Arbitration

In the event of any dispute arising out of this Agreement (including those considered as such by only one of the parties) either party may forthwith give to the other notice in writing of such a dispute or difference and the same shall be and is hereby referred for decision in accordance with the Rules of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators' Arbitration scheme for the Institute for Archaeologists applying at the date of this Agreement.

Health and safety

All members of staff will adhere to the requirements of the *Health & Safety at Work Act, 1974*, and the Health and Safety Policy Statement of AW.



Figure 1: Location map, 1:50,000 @ A4

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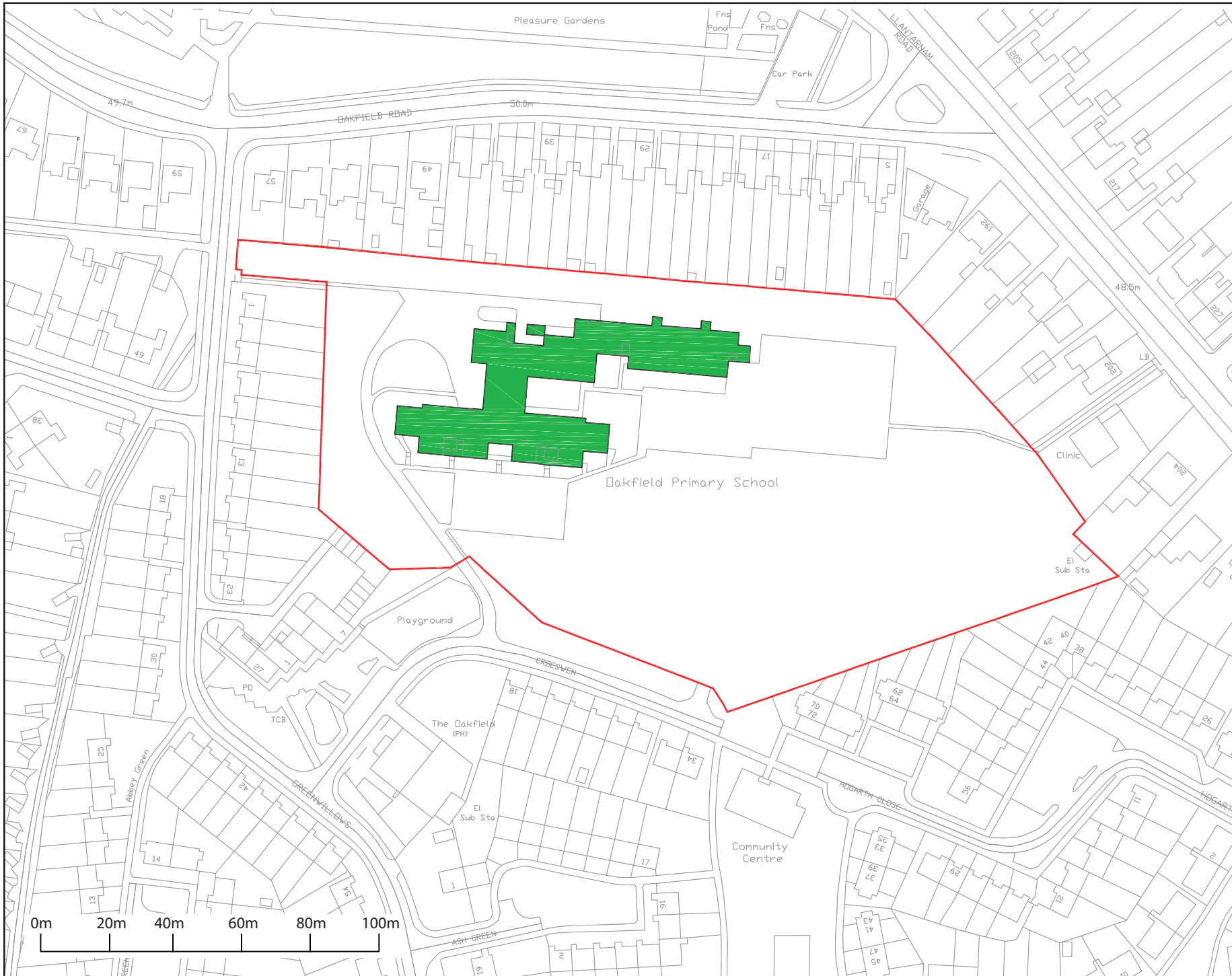


Figure 2: Site location plan with the development area marked in red.