

Plot between 5 & 6 Ysgyfarnog, Birchgrove, Swansea, SA7 9NH Watching Brief



Report by: Trysor

For: Kevin McComas
11 Heol y Waun
Pontlliw
Swansea
SA49EL

February 2014



Plot between 5 & 6, Ysgyfarnog, Birchgrove, Swansea, SA7 9NH Watching Brief

By

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Trysor Project No. 2014/315

For: Kevin McComas

February 2014

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Cover photograph: The development site in August 2013 after removal of the some of the material that has been dumped on the plot during development of the surrounding estate, looking north northwest.

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RHIF YR ADRODDIAD - REPORT NUMBER: Trysor 2014/315

DYDDIAD 28^{ain} Chwefror 2014

DATE 28th February 2014

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan bartneriad Trysor. Mae wedi ei gael yn gywir ac yn derbyn ein sêl bendith.

This report was prepared by the Trysor partners. It has been checked and received our approval.

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Croesawn unrhyw sylwadau ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn.

We welcome any comments on the content or structure of this report.

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Trysor is a Registered Organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists and both partners are Members of the Institute for Archaeologists, www.archaeologists.net .

Jenny Hall (BSc Joint Hons., Geology and Archaeology, MifA) had 12 years excavation experience, which included undertaking watching briefs prior to becoming the Sites and Monuments Record Manager for a Welsh Archaeological Trust for 10 years. She has been an independent archaeologist since 2004 undertaking a variety of work that includes upland survey, desk-based appraisals and assessments, and watching briefs.

Paul Sambrook (BA Joint Hons., Archaeology and Welsh, MifA, PGCE) has extensive experience as a fieldworker in Wales. He was involved with Cadw's pan-Wales Deserted Rural Settlements Project for 7 years. He also undertook Tir Gofal field survey work and watching briefs. He has been an independent archaeologist since 2004 undertaking a variety of work including upland survey, desk-based appraisals/assessments, and watching briefs.

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1. Summary

1.1 In January 2014, Trysor undertook a watching brief at SS7088897671, in a vacant plot on Heol Ysgyfarnog, Birchgrove, Swansea. The site had also been visited in August 2013 during the preparation of the Written Scheme of Investigation, see Appendix A. On both occasions only late 20th century dumped material was observed. No significant archaeological layers or artefacts were recorded.

2. Copyright

2.1 Trysor hold the copyright of this report and of the paper and digital archive. Further paper copies may be made of this report without gaining permission to reproduce but it must be noted that Figure 2 and 3 include other copyright material and should not be copied.

3. Introduction

3.1 Kevin McComas of 11 Heol y Waun, Pontlliw, Swansea, SA49EL has commissioned Trysor heritage consultants to write a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) on groundworks for a new 3 bedroomed dwelling relating to planning application number: 2012.1507.

4. The development

4.1 The development consists of a 3 bedroomed dwelling with 2 car parking spaces to the side with garden behind. Former mining in the area and dumped material on site led to uncertainties about the stability of the ground at the development site, and the whole of the house footprint would be excavated to a typical depth of 0.25m to allow a metal grid to be inserted.

5. Conditions on the consent

5.1 In granting approval for the application, the Local Planning Authority imposed conditions on the consent; one condition specifies the actions necessary to mitigate the impact of the development on the archaeological resource.

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To identify and record any features of archaeological interest discovered during the works, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource.

6. Specification

6.1 Trysor prepared a specification for the watching brief in the Written Scheme of Investigation, see Appendix A. This was passed to the client for approval by the LPA.



Figure 1: Location of the watching brief in Birchgrove, Swansea.

7. Historical and Archaeological Overview

7.1 A more detailed discussion of the previously recorded archaeology in the area is given in Appendix A, section 4, but the former presence of a small post-medieval farmstead in the area was the main reason for the watching brief.

According to the contractor on site, the plot was said to have been left undeveloped as it was used to house offices and storage facilities when the surrounding housing estate was constructed.

8. Methodology

8.1 On 28th August 2013 a site visit was undertaken to inform the Written Scheme of Investigation and areas of exposed stratigraphy inspected.

8.2 On Friday 24th January 2014, an exploratory trench, 0.25 metres deep, was excavated across part of the footprint of the house using a mechanical excavator and a toothed bucket. This process was observed by Trysor.

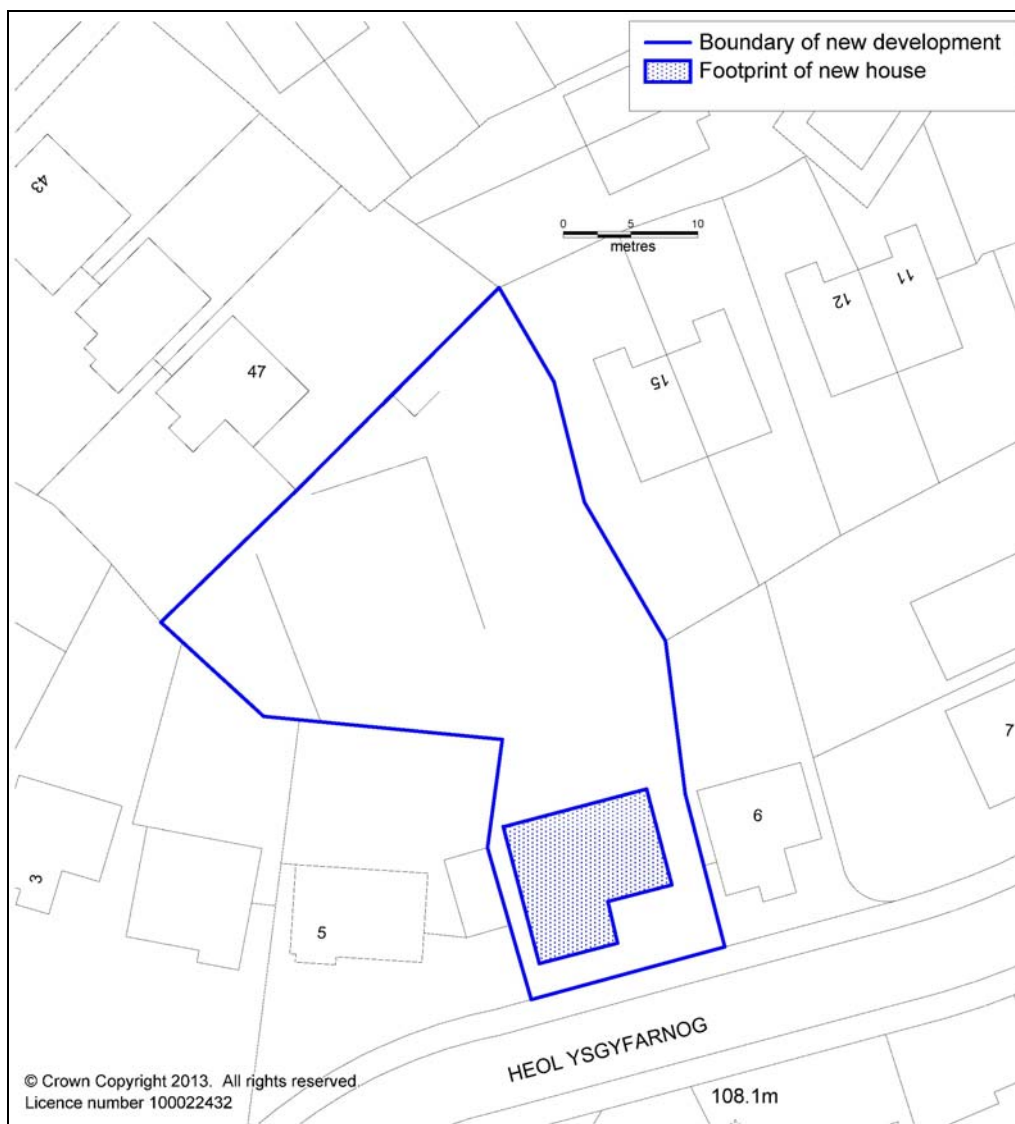


Figure 2: The development area and the house footprint.

9. Site Stratigraphy

9.1 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (Institute for Archaeologists, 2008). Part of the mechanical excavation of the house footprint was watched by Trysor and the stratigraphy of the site recorded. Examination of this excavation and other points around the site showed that all material to the depth affected was later 20th century.

9.2 Only one context was recorded. This was the material previously dumped across the site consisting of layers of clay, rubble and coal, all containing plastics and other late 20th century artefacts. It was at least 2 metres deep in places.

10. Photographs

10.1 Colour digital photographs were taken of topsoil stripping and excavation of trenches using a 16M pixel camera. The following table describes the content of each photograph included in the project archive and their locations are provided in the following map, see Figure 3. The photographs are included in Appendix B at the end of the report.

Photo Number	Description	Date Taken	Direction
YGF2014_001	The development site after some landscaping to redistribute dumped material.	28/08/2013	Looking north northwest.
YGF2014_002	The development site after some landscaping to redistribute dumped material.	28/08/2013	Looking south southeast
YGF2014_003	The development site after some landscaping to redistribute dumped material.	28/08/2013	Looking west southwest.
YGF2014_004	The development site after some landscaping to redistribute dumped material.	28/08/2013	Looking north northeast
YGF2014_005	Section on the eastern side of the development site showing layers of dumped material.	28/08/2013	Looking north northwest
YGF2014_006	Section in the middle of the development area showing layers of dumped material.	28/08/2013	Looking south southeast.
YGF2014_007	Section through dumped material at the southern edge of the area	24/01/2014	Looking north northwest.
YGF2014_008	Section through material to be removed across the house footprint.	24/01/2014	Looking northwest.

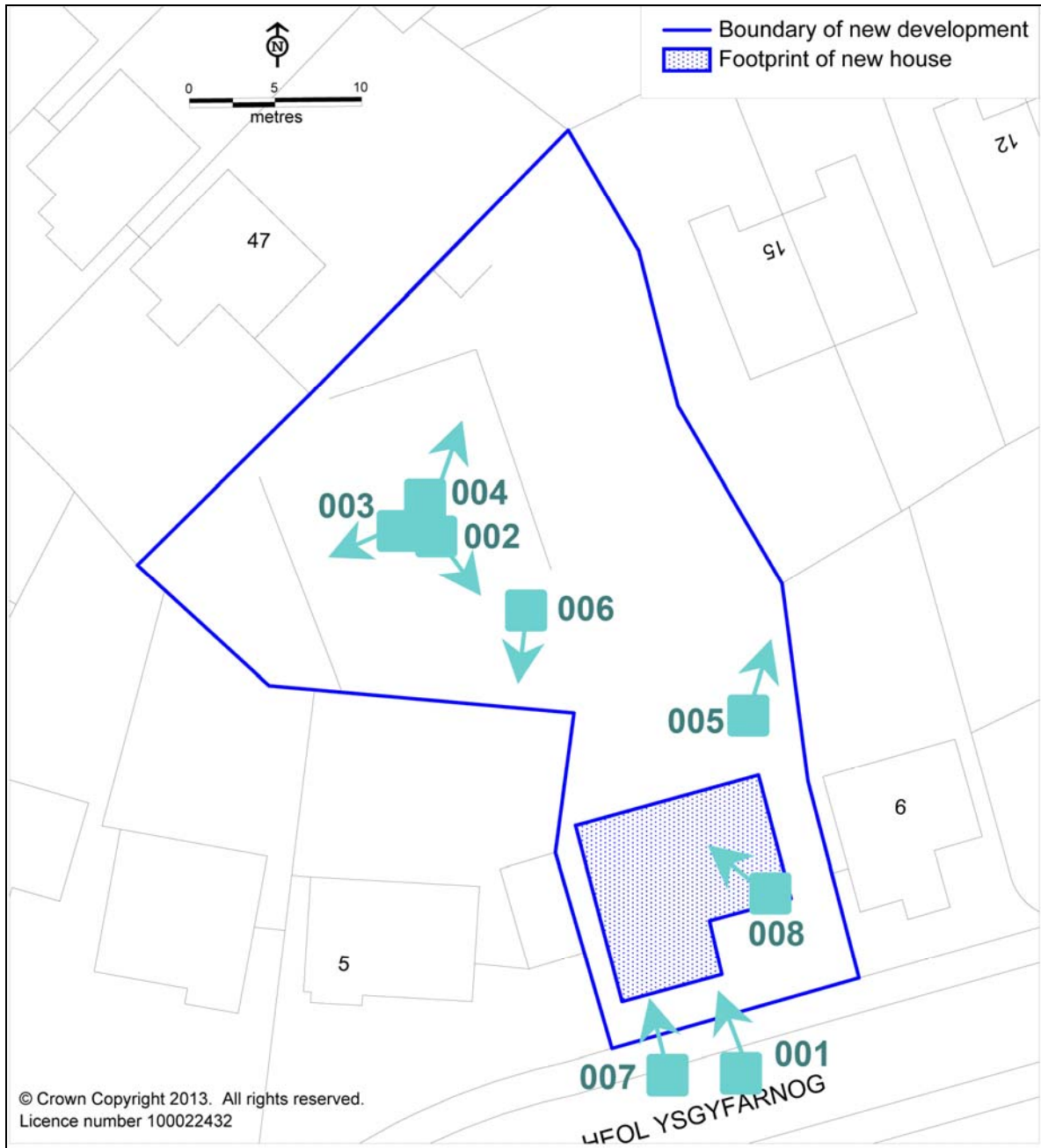


Figure 3: Location of photographs

11. Conclusion

11.1 All material observed during groundworks was late 20th century material dumped on the site during and since the construction of the housing estate around it.

12. Archive

12.1 The archive and a copy of the report and photographs will be deposited with the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth. Photographs are in TIFF format, following the standard required by the RCAHMW.

Further copies of the report have also been supplied to Mr McComas, and the Historic Environment Record at Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust, Swansea.

13. Sources

Institute for Archaeologists, 2008 (revised), Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief, available online from the IfA website, www.archaeologists.net

APPENDIX A – Watching Brief Specification

PLOT BETWEEN 5 & 6 HEOL YSGYFARNOG, BIRCHGROVE WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

Planning application – 2012/1507

1. Introduction

1.1 Kevin McComas of 11 Heol y Waun, Pontlliw, Swansea, SA49EL has commissioned Trysor heritage consultants to write a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) on groundworks for a new 3 bedroomed dwelling relating to planning application number: 2012.1507.

1.2 The location of the dwelling is at SS7088897671, in a vacant plot on Heol Ysgyfarnog, Birchgrove, see Figure 1

2. The development

2.1 The development consists of a 3 bedroomed dwelling with 2 car parking spaces to the side with garden behind.

3. Conditions on the consent

3.1 In granting approval for the application, the Local Planning Authority imposed conditions on the consent; one condition specifies the actions necessary to mitigate the impact of the development on the archaeological resource.

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To identify and record any features of archaeological interest discovered during the works, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource.



Figure 1: Location of Heol Ysgyfarnog in Birchgrove, Swansea

4. Nature of the archaeological resource

4.1 Further to the condition imposed by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), a letter from Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust, the LPA's archaeological advisers, on 19th December 2012 gives further detail: "...there is a structure within the area of the proposed development, which is shown on the Old Series OS map published in 1830 and surveyed in the first quarter of the 19th century, and the on First edition OS map published in 1879 where it is shown as part of a small complex of buildings. The form of the building suggests that it may have been a longhouse, where the living elements of the house are alongside the animals' quarters and storage, forming a long narrow building with an enclosure around the house. The buildings are clearly at least 180 years old and may be of later medieval origin...

4.2 In order to prepare the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), Trysor has reviewed the available historic Ordnance Survey mapping, to define more precisely the nature of the potential resource. The set of maps examined are the
1813 2" to 1 mile Original Surveyors Drawing, see Figure 2
1830 1" to 1 mile, see Figure 3
1879 1st edition 1:2500

4.3 Since 1813 there has been continual change in the landscape south of the original house called Birchgrove, see Figures 2 and 3. This has included new roads, and changes to field boundaries as well as growth in housing. The history of the farmstead over which Heol Ysgyfarnog and Cwrt Coed Saeson has been built before 1830 is ambiguous. It may be shown on the 1813 map as two buildings to the southwest of a track with *Coedsaison* to the northeast.

4.4 On the 1830 map the farmstead that Heol Ysgyfarnog and Cwrt Coed Saeson have been built over is shown as two small buildings. Another small farmstead to its east consisting of one building is labelled as *Coedseison*

4.5 The 1879 map shows both of the farmsteads again, the one to the west now called *Coed y Saeson* and the one to the east called *Brithdir Bach*. The farmstead to the west is the one which will be partially overbuilt by a new dwelling between 5 & 6 Heol Ysgyfarnog, see Figure 4.



Figure 2: 1813 Original Surveyors map showing Coedsaison.



Figure 3: The 1830 1" to 1 mile map which shows Coedsaison to the east of two other buildings located where Heol Ysgyfarnog is currently

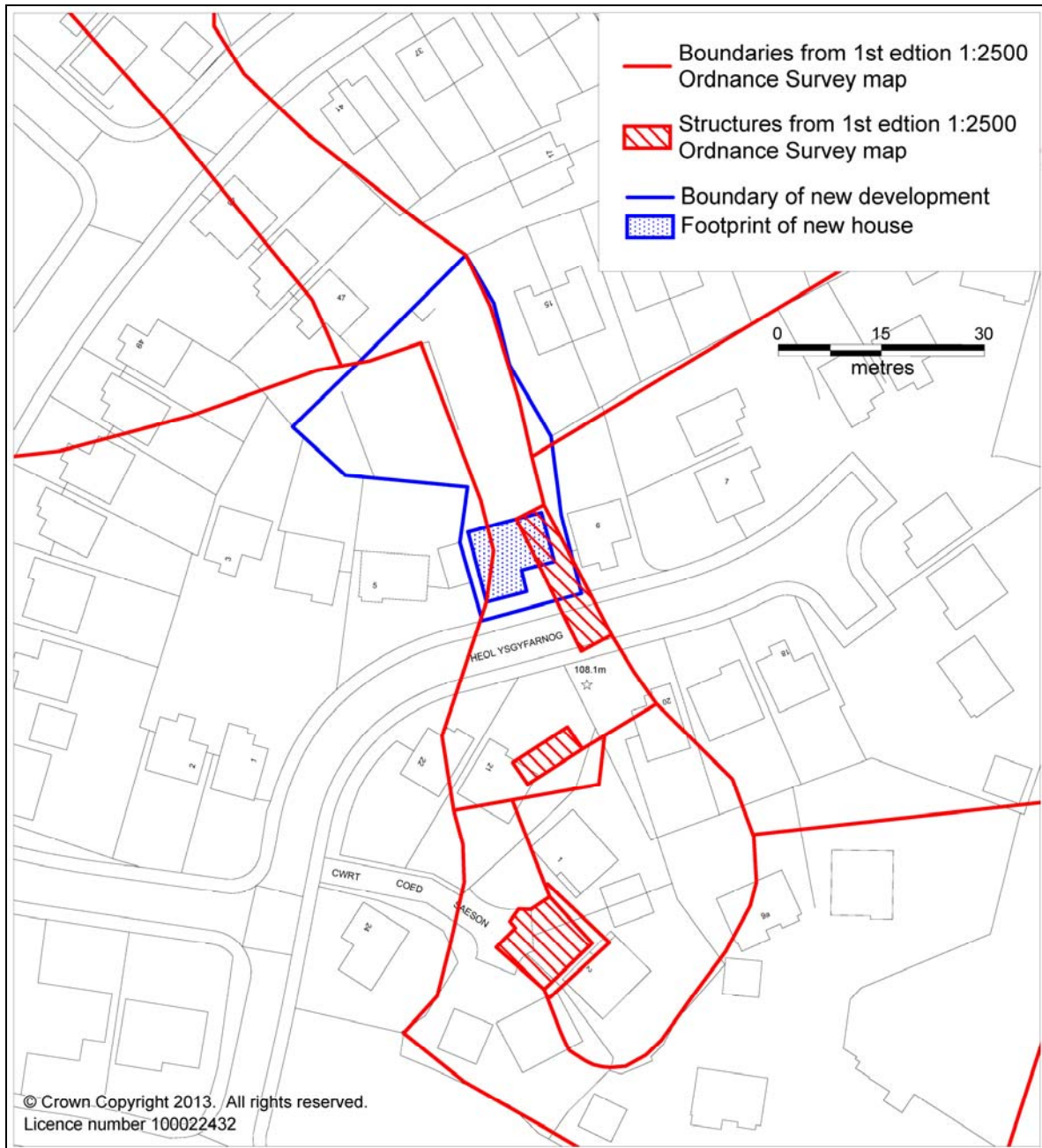


Figure 4: Detail taken from a geo-referenced 1st edition Ordnance Survey map compared with modern mapping, showing that the late 19th century farmhouse at Coed y Saeson lay under the eastern end of Cwrt Coed Saeson. The long building to the north of the farmhouse will be partially overlain by the new house and its car parking area.

5. Effect of development on the archaeological resource

5.1 The location of the new house is at the front of the plot between 5 & 6 Heol Ysgyfarnog, with a parking area to its east. Placing the 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map over Ordnance Survey mapping suggests that the northern end of the long building shown on the 1879 map was located where the car parking area and eastern walls of the house will be built.

5.2 It is not clear from other 19th century mapping how old this long building is and a site visit suggests that there is a build up of modern dumping through which foundation trenches will be excavated masking any remains on the site.

5.3 Trysor propose that a simple watching brief is undertaken, observing the foundation trenches when they are dug to record any archaeological features exposed.

6. Proposed archaeological intervention

6.1 According to the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological 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.”

6.2 Trysor propose that the excavation of the foundation trenches for the house will be observed and any archaeological features recorded.

7. Field methodology

7.1 The watching brief will be carried out in accordance with Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (IfA, 2013a)*.

7.2 A two-person team will examine the exposed stratigraphy of the groundworks undertaken in association with the development. All trenches will be examined and features of archaeological interest recorded. Excavation of any features will be limited to that necessary to establish their extent and character, unless their excavation is required to allow the development to proceed.

8. Contingency arrangements if archaeological features are discovered

8.1 In the event that archaeological remains are encountered, where appropriate investigation falls outside the scope of this watching brief specification, a meeting between Trysor, the applicant, Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust Planning Services Section and the Local Planning Authority case officer will be convened in order to agree a course of action. The applicant will be responsible for paying for any further work necessary.

9. Health & Safety

9.1 Trysor will undertake a risk assessment in accordance with their health and safety policy.

10. Recording

10.1 A plan of the groundworks, and representative sections of the trenches, will be drawn, at an appropriate scale, to record all features of archaeological interest. The plan will be based on the applicants' survey drawings of the development area.

10.2 A written record of all activity will be kept in a project specific notebook. If archaeological contexts are encountered they will be recorded following the *Central Excavation Unit Manual: Part 2: Recording*, 1986, using a consecutive numbering system.

10.3 Any artefacts will be dealt with in accordance with the guidance provided in the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA, 2008b). Any artefacts will be retained, cleaned and stored. Following reporting they will be returned to the applicant.

10.4 Should any human remains be encountered, the Coroner and Regional Archaeological Trust will be immediately informed and the remains left *in situ*.

10.5 Colour digital photographs will be taken, as appropriate, using a 14M pixel camera. A written record will be made on site of the photographs taken. Appropriate photographic scales will be used.

11. Reporting

11.1 A report on the watching brief will be prepared according to the requirements of Annexe 1 of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (IfA, 2008a) following the completion of the work. Copies of the report will be provided to the client, the Regional Historic Environment Record and the National Monuments Record.

12. Dissemination

12.1 A summary of the work undertaken and its findings will be submitted to *Archaeology in Wales*.

13. Archive

13.1 The paper archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record, including a copy of the final report in accordance with the IfA's *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (IfA, Undated). This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken. Photographs will be supplied in TIFF format in a file size greater than 11MB, following the standard required by the RCAHMW for Upland Survey (RCAHMW, 2011).

14. Resources to be used

14.1 Two members of staff will undertake the watching brief. They will be equipped with standard field equipment, including digital cameras, GPS and first aid kits.

14.2 Trysor have access to the computer hardware and software required to deliver the completed final report and archive to a professional standard.

15. Bibliography

15.1 Published Sources

IfA, 2008a, *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*

IfA, 2008b, *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.*

IfA, Undated, *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*

15.2 Unpublished sources

Central Excavation Unit, 1986, *Central Excavation Unit Manual: Part 2: Recording*, 1986

RCAHMW, 2011, *Form AB12: "Notes for Guidance" in the preparation of applications for Uplands Archaeology Initiative projects 2012-13*

15.3 Ordnance Survey maps

Ordnance Survey, 1813, 2" to 1 mile

Ordnance Survey, 1830, 1" to 1 mile

Ordnance Survey, 1879, 1:2500

16. Qualification of personnel

16.1 Trysor is a Registered Organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists and both partners are Members of the Institute for Archaeologists, www.archeologists.net.

16.2 Jenny Hall (BSc Joint Hons., Geology and Archaeology, MIfA) had 12 years excavation experience, which included undertaking watching briefs prior to becoming the Sites and Monuments Record Manager for a Welsh Archaeological Trust for 10 years. She has been an independent archaeologist since 2004 undertaking a variety of work that includes upland survey, desktop assessments and watching briefs.

16.3 Paul Sambrook (BA Joint Hons., Archaeology and Welsh, MIfA, PGCE) has extensive experience as a fieldworker in Wales. He was involved with Cadw's pan-Wales Deserted Rural Settlements Project for 7 years. He also undertook Tir Gofal field survey work and watching briefs. He has been an independent archaeologist since 2004 undertaking a variety of work that includes upland survey, desktop assessments and watching briefs.

17. Insurance & Professional indemnity

17.1 Trysor has Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance.

18. Project identification

18.1 The project has been designated Trysor Project No. 2013/315

Jenny Hall & Paul Sambrook
Trysor
September 2013

APPENDIX B



Plate 1: YGF2014_001, the development site after some landscaping to redistribute dumped material, looking north northwest, August 2013



Plate 2: YGF2014_002, the development site after some landscaping to redistribute dumped material, looking south southeast, August 2013



Plate 3: YGF2014_003, the development site after some landscaping to redistribute dumped material, looking west southwest, August 2013.



Plate 4: YGF2014_004, the development site after some landscaping to redistribute dumped material, looking north northeast, August 2013



Plate 5: YGF2014_005, Section on the eastern side of the development site showing layers of dumped material, looking north northwest, August 2013



Plate 6: YGF2014_006, Section in the middle of the development area showing layers of dumped material, looking south southeast, August 2013



Plate 7: YGF2014_007, Section through dumped material at south end of site, looking north northwest, January 2014



Plate 8: YGF2014_008: Section through material in centre of area to be taken down 0.25 metres, looking northwest, January 2014.