



The Grove, Caerphilly Castle Caerphilly Archaeological Watching Brief

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Client: Cadw

RRA Project Code: RR1139



**Red River
Archaeology**

The Grove, Caerphilly Castle, Caerphilly

Archaeological Watching Brief

Client Cadw

Project Code RR1139

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1. SUMMARY

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken on behalf of Cadw at The Grove, Caerphilly Castle, Caerphilly in connection with EV car charging points installation at the site. The watching brief was conducted from 17 to 18 January 2024 and entailed the monitoring of associated groundworks.

The site is located within Caerphilly Roman Fort, and immediately south of Caerphilly Civil War Redoubt and Caerphilly Castle Scheduled Monument.

No finds or features of archaeological significance were encountered. The site may have previously had Roman or Civil War activity, but any such remains have been totally removed by landscaping relating to the Post Medieval development of the Grove House and associated outbuildings and parking.

CRYNODEB

Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn cyflwyno canlyniadau briff gwylio archaeolegol a gyflawnwyd ar ran Cadw yn The Grove, Castell Caerffili, Caerffili mewn cysylltiad â gosod manau gwefru ceir trydan ar y safle. Cynhaliwyd y briff gwylio rhwng 17 a 18 Ionawr 2024 ac roedd yn golygu monitro gwaith paratoi'r tir cysylltiedig.

Mae'r safle wedi'i leoli o fewn Caer Rufeinig Caerffili ac yn union i'r de o Amddiffynfa Allanol Caerffili sy'n dyddio o adeg y Rhyfel Cartref ac ardal Heneb Gofrestredig Castell Caerffili.

Ni ddaethpwyd o hyd i unrhyw ddarganfyddiadau na nodweddion o arwyddocâd archaeolegol. Mae'n bosibl bod gweithgarwch Rhufeinig neu weithgarwch yn gysylltiedig â'r Rhyfel Cartref wedi digwydd ar y safle yn y gorffennol ond mae unrhyw olion o'r fath wedi'u dileu gan waith tirlunio sy'n ymwneud â'r gwaith a wnaed yn y cyfnod Ôl-ganoloesol i ddatblygu Grove House ac adeiladau allanol a lleoedd parcio cysylltiedig.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

2.1.1 This report presents the results of the archaeological watching brief carried out in relation to EV car charging points installation at The Grove, Caerphilly Castle, Caerphilly CF83 3FJ (Figure 1). Red River Archaeology Ltd. have been contracted by Cadw to carry out an archaeological watching brief on groundworks at the site, centred on NGR 315406, 187192.

2.1.2 The Senior Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Cadw has advised that the development requires archaeological mitigation due to potential for the development to encounter archaeological features relating to Caerphilly Roman Fort and Caerphilly Castle, a Scheduled Monument and Grade 1 listed building (GM002; LB 13539).

2.2 Site Location & Description

2.2.1 The development site is located at The Grove, Caerphilly Castle, Caerphilly CF83 3FJ (NGR 315406, 187192) (Figure 1).

2.2.2 The site is in a parking zone within a wooded area to the northwest of Caerphilly Castle, immediately outside the moat. 'The Grove' is a Victorian building on an unnamed road off Nantgarw Road to the northwest.

2.2.3 The underlying solid geology for the Site is Grovesend Formation - Mudstone, siltstone, and sandstone. Sedimentary bedrock formed between 309.5 and 308 million years ago during the Carboniferous period. Superficial deposits are recorded as Glaciofluvial Deposits, Devensian - Sand and gravel. Sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 116 and 11.8 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period. (BGS 2024).

3. AIMS & METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims of Works

3.1.1 The aims of the archaeological monitoring were to:

- Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered.
- Establish the nature of the activity on the site.
- Establish the presence or absence of any Roman or Post Medieval activity on site.
- Identify any artefacts relating to the occupation or use of the site.
- Provide further information on the archaeology of the site from any archaeological remains encountered.
- Determine the geological and soil formation at the site and establish the depths of topsoil.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

3.2 Methodology of works

3.2.1 The overall scope of the work was to carry out a watching brief to the satisfaction of Cadw as detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Red River Archaeology 2023). The archaeological works comprised a watching brief on any groundwork being undertaken during construction, including foundations and cable trenches.

3.2.2 All modern demolition rubble and other material considered of little or no archaeological significance were removed by machine under the direction of a suitably experienced archaeologist. A toothless ditching /grading bucket was used.

3.2.3 All information identified during the site works were recorded stratigraphically, with sufficient pictorial record created to identify and illustrate individual features. It should be noted that, where possible, data was collected and stored digitally and, in a format, suitable for long term storage by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW). Primary records were always available for inspection.

3.2.4 The investigations were undertaken in accordance with the relevant Standards and Guidance published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2023a, CIfA 2023b) and in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (RRA 2023) for the works.

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- 3.2.5 The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the CIfA in that organisation's code of conduct (CIfA 2022). The archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines published in *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation 1990), *National Standards for Wales for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives - Welsh Museum Federation* (2017) and the *Archaeological Archives' Forum Archaeological Archives: a best practice in creation, compilation, transfer, and curation* (Brown 2011).
- 3.2.6 The results of the archaeological work form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage, 2008; Historic England, 2015), and comply with RCAHMW guidelines of Wales (RCAHMW, 2015) and the ADS digital records (Richards et al 2000).
- 3.2.7 Digital archives will be submitted to RCAHMW while the physical site archive will ultimately be deposited with Amgueddfa Cymru/Museum Wales (formerly National Museum Wales), which will also include a copy of the report.
- 3.2.8 A copy of the final report will be deposited with the regional Historic Environment Record in accordance with the guidelines set out in the *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs)* (2022).

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 4.1.1 Caerphilly Castle (GM002; LB 13539) was built by Gilbert de Clare between 1268 and 1271 to secure the area from the Welsh, with the south and north lakes surrounding the castle forming an almost impregnable barrier. However, by 1283 the threat of Welsh independence had been largely extinguished, though the castle remained occupied into the 14th century, but fell into ruin from the 15th century onwards (Cadw).
- 4.1.2 The site of the works is also the location for a probable Roman auxiliary fort (NPRN 301345) dating from the late 1st to early 2nd century. This appeared to consist of a rampart and double ditch enclosing an area of c.1.7ha (Evans 2010).
- 4.1.3 The site is also the location of a Civil War redoubt (NPRN 300400) built to defend Caerphilly Castle in the mid-17th century, substantial earthworks of which remain measuring 44m northeast and 40-50m southwest to a height of c.2m in places (RCAHMW 2000). This was excavated in 1963 at which point the Roman fort was also discovered (Lewis 1966).
- 4.1.4 The development location is to the immediate south of the remaining earthworks of the Civil War redoubt (Plate 1) and within the projected southwestern corner of the Roman auxiliary fort (Lewis 1966).
- 4.1.5 The south side of the redoubt was “extensively levelled in the nineteenth century for a house, The Grove, now demolished, which stood on the site now occupied by a works hut (‘Gerran Bungalow’)... The house now known as The Grove occupies the stables of the original house.” (Lewis 1966).
- 4.1.6 The Grove does not appear on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of the area (surveyed 1875, published 1885), nor on an 1886 plan of the Castle and Redoubt area (Banks 1886), but is present and labelled as such on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map (revised 1898-1899, published 1901, Figure 2).
- 4.1.7 The boundary around the redoubt appears to have remaining unchanged since an 1842 map of the castle area (Clark 1850) but the current drystone walling appears quite loose and has likely been disturbed and rebuilt in Modern times.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1.1 The watching brief was carried out from 17 to 18 January 2024. Three pits were excavated, two for EV charging point spaces and one for a feeder pillar location (Figure 3). A duct trench connecting the pits to the feeder was also excavated, and a further trench connecting the feeder pillar location to the existing electricity pole.
- 5.1.2 A consistent soil sequence was recorded across the excavations for the EV charging point spaces and the duct trenches connecting them to the feeder pillar location (Figure 4; Plate 3). The gravel hardstanding was mixed with loamy topsoil (001) with frequent rooting throughout. The loam hillwash was deeper towards the wall (marking the edge of the surviving redoubt earthworks) immediately north of the EV charging point locations. This overlay a layer of Modern pink substrate gravel (002), which in turn overlay a discontinuous layer of charcoal, ash and slag (003), in various concentrations, with some pieces of slag over 0.20m in length. Layers (001) and (002) extended to the edge of the hardstanding, just north of the electricity pole.
- 5.1.3 The feeder pillar location and the trench linking it to the electricity pole had the same layer of loose loamy topsoil with frequent rooting (001), but without any gravel. There was no pink substrate, and although there was a thin ashy layer below the topsoil, it was insubstantial and there was no slag or charcoal.
- 5.1.4 Across all pits and trenches was a thicker layer of mid-brown sandy silt with occasional to moderate rounded pebbles and small stones (004). This contained occasional fragments of brick and thin Modern CBM floor tiles throughout, more frequent in the EV charging point locations. Below layer (004) was a layer of light-yellow brown silty sand (005) with moderate amounts of small and medium pebbles. It appeared sterile though it was unclear whether it was a subsoil or natural layer as it was not bottomed during the excavation.
- 5.1.5 There was a cement drainage channel parallel to the wall on the northern side of the hardstanding (Plate 2) which crossed the EV charging point locations and aligned with the protected slab to the east. It was filled in and covered with the topsoil layer (001) but not the gravel hardstanding. It was below the stairs to the west of the western charging point. There was a deeper metal pipe parallel to the south of it, cut through (004) found at the base of the eastern charging point but left in situ. There were also two thinner southwest-northeast aligned white metal pipes cut through (004), crossing the connecting trenches, not in use.

6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND MITIGATION

6.1 Known Heritage Resource

6.1.1 The site is located within Caerphilly Roman Fort and immediately adjacent to Caerphilly Civil War Redoubt. The site is also immediately adjacent to the Caerphilly Castle Scheduled Monument (GM002) area.

6.2 Potential Archaeological Resource and Significance

6.2.1 All upper deposits within the excavations were modern in origin. Although no datable material was recovered from the basal deposit this appeared to be a subsoil or natural layer. There were no features or finds of any archaeological significance uncovered.

6.3 Impact of Development

6.3.1 The impact of the development on the heritage resource is therefore nil. The site may have previously had Roman or Civil War activity, but any such remains have been totally removed, most likely by landscaping relating to the Post Medieval development of the Grove House and associated outbuildings and parking.

7. REFERENCES

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Cartography

- 1st Edition Ordnance Survey. Monmouthshire XXXII. Surveyed 1875, published 1885.
- 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey. Glamorgan XXXVII.NW. Revised 1898-1899, published 1901.

APPENDIX 1 ARCHIVE STATEMENT

The Site archive is comprised of the following materials:

Item	Quantity
Field recording sheets	2 (A4)
Photographs	52 (JPEG)
Registers (photo, drawing)	2 (A4)

The archive material is contained within one box.

The archive is currently stored in the offices of Red River Archaeology Ltd, Unit K7, Capital Point, Capital Business Park, Cardiff, CF3 2PU, Wales.

APPENDIX 2 CONTEXT REGISTER

n.b. = not bottomed

Context no.	Type	Thickness (m)	Description
001	Layer	0.15- 0.26	Blackish brown loam, frequent rooting. Modern rubbish. Frequent gravel hardstanding in parking area – appears to be built up hillwash along northern side. No gravel in area behind hut – appears to be dumped cleared soil from elsewhere and weeds as very loose and surface not level.
002	Layer	0.08-0.10	Pink substrate. Frequent irregular shaped sub-angular stones up to 0.03m with gritty sand matrix. Mixed horizons at interfaces with (001) and (003). Modern.
003	Layer	0.20	Charcoal-rich non-continuous layer of gritty sandy silt with moderate pieces of slag inclusions up to 0.20m and areas of concentrated white-grey ash.
004	Layer	0.18-0.31	Mid brown sandy silt with occasional rounded stones, thin broken CBM tile (Modern bright orange, with square pattern underneath suggesting floor tiles) and brick (no mark on frogs found). Modern
005	Natural	0.30 n.b.	Light yellow-brown silty sand. Sterile. Moderate small to medium sub-rounded stones.