

Archaeology Wales

Land adjacent to Parc Clomendy, Llansteffan, Carmarthenshire

Archaeological Evaluation



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Report No. 1020

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Summary

In July 2011, Archaeology Wales was commissioned to carry out a brief archaeological evaluation on the site of proposed development in Parc Clomendy, Llansteffan, Carmarthenshire. The site is located close to the centre of the medieval village of Llanstaffan, to the east of the Church. The evaluation revealed a shallow posthole and a modern cut, but no finds.

1. Introduction

In July 2011, Archaeology Wales was commissioned by Phil Williams to carry out a small scale archaeological evaluation on the site of a proposed housing development in Parc Clomendy, Llansteffan, Carmarthenshire (NGR: SN 35094 10816, fig. 1). The planning application number is W/20173 and the planning authority is Carmarthenshire County Council.

The site lies close to the centre of the medieval village of Llansteffan, to the east of the Norman Church. As a result, Charles Hill of Dyfed Archaeological trust – Heritage Management (DAT-HM), in his capacity as archaeological advisor to Carmarthenshire County Council, requested that a small-scale evaluation was carried out to assess the archaeological potential of the site.

The work was carried out by Hywel Keen on the 13th July.

2. Site Description

The site lies on gentle east-facing ground at approximately 90m AOD. The site is located in an area of wasteland immediately adjacent to a modern housing estate (Parc Clomendy) on the eastern side of the village (fig. 2).

The underlying geology is Old Red Sandstone.

The village of Llansteffan lies on the western bank of the Tywi River, just above where it enters the sea. The village dates back to the medieval period, although the history of the local area extends back into prehistory – the Norman castle was built on the site of an Iron Age Hillfort. The strategic position of the village allowed it to prosper during the medieval period, when it became a borough. The prosperity of the village dwindled in the tudor period, although it continues to attract tourists.

3. Evaluation Results

Following discussions with Charles Hill, it was decided that a 10m long trench would be cut along the line of a proposed new sewerage pipe which runs roughly east/west across the whole of the proposed development site. Due to the layout of the site, it was decided that two trenches would be cut instead of the single trench, one 7m in length and one 6m in length. Both were excavated using a 7t mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching blade.

3.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was located on the western side of the site and was orientated south-west/north-east (fig. 3). It measured 7m in length, 0.5m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.7m. The trench cut through a thick deposit of modern building rubble, including gravel and bricks (002). This was 0.5m deep at the south-western end and 0.2m deep at the north-eastern end, and filled a U-shaped pit the full extent of

which was not revealed in the trench. At the north-eastern end of the trench was a small area of turf and topsoil (001). Underlying the turf and topsoil (001) and truncated by the modern pit containing rubble (002) was a red brown silty clay subsoil, 0.15m deep at the south-western end and 0.4m deep at the north-eastern end. This contained occasional inclusions of rounded stones, but no charcoal or finds.

The subsoil overlay the red brown clay natural (006). Towards the centre of the trench a small circular posthole [004] 0.25m in diameter was revealed (fig. 3). This had been severely truncated, only surviving to a depth of 0.05m. It had vertical sides and a rounded base and was filled by a black greasy substance of possible organic origin (005). It was not possible to positively identify the material.

3.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was located 20m to the north-east of trench 1 and was also orientated south-west/north-east. The trench measured 6m in length by 0.5m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.7m (fig. 4).

A thin layer of turf and topsoil (001), up to 0.1m deep, overlay a thick layer of reddish brown silty clay subsoil (002) containing frequent rounded stones. This was up to 0.5m deep and overlay the red brown clay natural (003).

A large cut was identified in the centre of the trench [004]. It was 2.4m wide, U-shaped in profile and was filled by a loose mix of topsoil, subsoil and rubble (005). At the base of the cut a thin layer of compact yellow clay (006) was identified. The full extent of the cut was not revealed in the trench. It is modern and probably cut by machine.

4. **Discussion and Conclusions**

The evaluation did not reveal any features of archaeological significance. The posthole identified in trench 1 is of possible interest, despite any clear understanding of its date or function. It is not a modern feature, as it underlies the subsoil, and may relate to the use of this area during the medieval period or earlier. The compact clay deposit (006) within the modern cut in trench 2 was tentatively identified as a trampled floor, however it does not extend outside the cut and is therefore modern.

The evaluated area was small, and it is possible that features relating to the medieval or earlier use of this part of the village exist elsewhere on the site.

5. **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to Hywel Keen for carrying out the fieldwork.

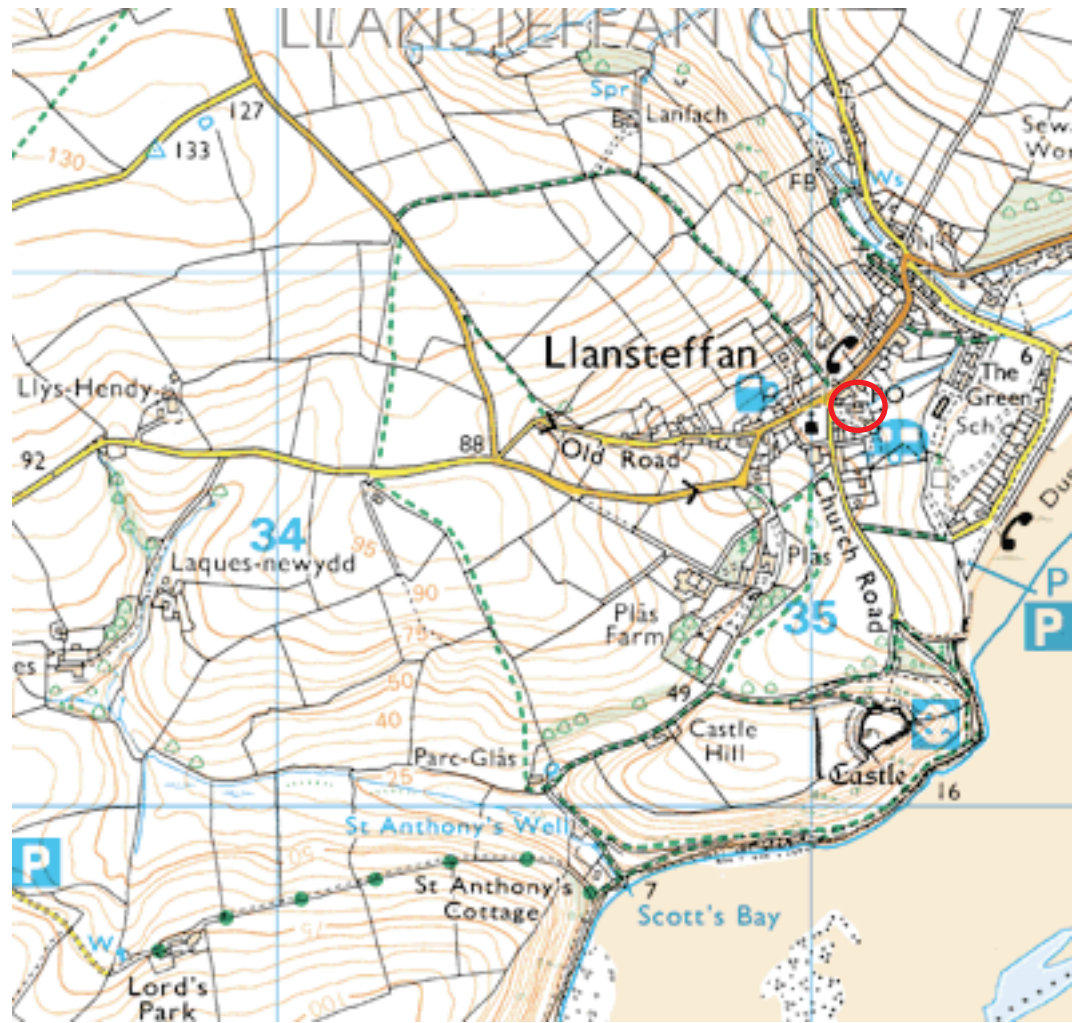
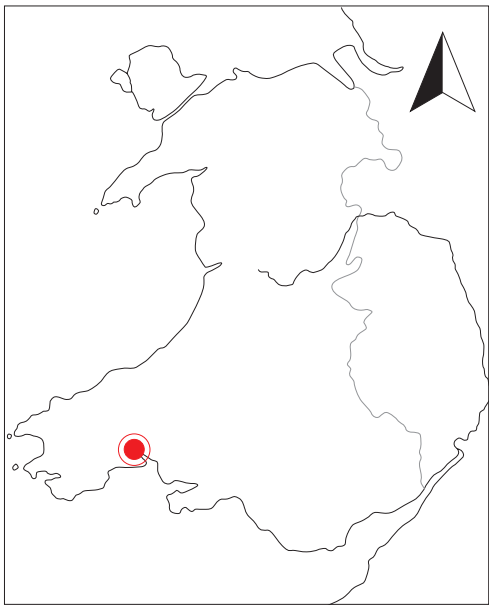


Fig. 1
Location of
development
site



Fig. 2
Trench locations
(looking south-west)

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Looking south-west along trench 1



Posthole [004]

Fig. 3
Trench 1



Fig. 4
Trench 2

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