

**Four Fields  
Cefn Yr Hendy  
Pontyclun  
Rhondda Cynon Taf**

*Archaeological Watching Brief*



for:  
The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd

on behalf of:  
Taylor Wimpey South Wales

CA Project: CR1300  
CA Report: CR1300\_1

November 2023



# Four Fields Cefn Yr Hendy Pontyclun Rhondda Cynon Taf

## *Archaeological Watching Brief*

CA Project: CR1300  
CA Report: CR1300\_1

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Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)

Fig. 2 The site, showing geophysical survey results and monitored groundworks (1:1000)

Fig. 3 Photographs

Fig. 4 Photographs

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project name:</b>	Four Fields, Cefn Yr Hendy
<b>Location:</b>	Cefn Yr Hendy, Pontyclun, Rhondda Cynon Taf
<b>NGR:</b>	304549 181932
<b>Type:</b>	Watching brief
<b>Date:</b>	24 July 2023
<b>Planning reference:</b>	16/1385/13
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with National Museum of Wales (Cardiff) and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)

In July 2023, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with residential development at Four Fields, Cefn Yr Hendy, Pontyclun, Rhondda Cynon Taf.

A single pit was observed towards the north corner that remained un-excavated. No artefactual material was recovered.

Ym mis Gorffennaf 2023, cynhaliodd Cotswold Archaeology briff gwylio archaeolegol yn ystod gwaith tir sy'n gysylltiedig â datblygiad preswyl yn Four Fields, Cefn yr Hendy, Pont-y-clun, Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Arsylwyd ar un pwll tuag at y gornel ogleddol a oedd yn dal heb ei gloddio. Ni ddaethpwyd o hyd i unrhyw ddeunydd arteffactaidd.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In July and August 2023, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Four Fields, Cefn Yr Hendy, Pontyclun, Rhondda Cynon Taf (centred at NGR: 304549 181932; Fig. 1). This watching brief was undertaken for The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP), who are acting on behalf of Taylor Wimpey South Wales.
- 1.2. Rhondda Cynon Taf Council (RCTC) has granted planning permission for residential development of the site (planning ref: 16/1385/13). Condition 19 of this planning permission requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an approved WSI.
- 1.3. The scope of the programme of archaeological work was agreed through consultation between EDP and Rob Dunning, Archaeological Planning Officer, Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) Curatorial, the archaeological advisor to RCTC. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) prepared by CA (2023) and approved by Rob Dunning.
- 1.4. The watching brief was also in line with *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

### The site

- 1.5. The development site is c. 2.2ha in extent. It lies on the northern outskirts of Cefn Yr Hendy, Pontyclun. The site currently comprises a series of agricultural fields and is bounded to the north by further fields and forest, to the east by the A4119 and Cefn-parc Farm and to the south and west by residential dwellings and Ffordd Cefn-Yr-Hendy road. The site lies at approximately 85m AOD, with the ground level dropping away towards the north-west until reach 80m. The area under watching brief measured 2.6ha in extent and was the agreed focus of the archaeological investigation due to the presence of HER records.
- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology within the central and south-eastern part of the site is mapped as Mercia Mudstone Group (marginal Facies) – Conglomerate, which formed during the Triassic Period (BGS 2023). South Wales Middle Coal Measures

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Formation - Mudstone, siltstone and sandstone, formed during the Carboniferous period, is recorded along the north-western edge of the site, with a small area of South Wales Lower Coal Measures Formation - Mudstone, siltstone and sandstone, also formed in the Carboniferous period, noted in the south-western corner of the site. Superficial deposits of Till, Devensian – Diamicton, formed during the Quaternary period, are also recorded (ibid.).

## **2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. The site has previously been subject to Archaeology Desk-Based Assessment and Setting Assessment (WYG 2016) and a subsequent geophysical survey (HA 2016). The following is a brief summary of information taken from these assessments.

### **Prehistoric**

- 2.2. There is no recorded evidence for Palaeolithic or Mesolithic activity within the vicinity of the site, and evidence for Neolithic activity is limited to a findspot for a small Neolithic axe-head found c. 1km to the north of the site (WYG 2016). Findspots of Bronze Age material in the vicinity of the site includes two bronze axe heads recovered c. 840m to the south and c. 785m to the south-east of the site (ibid.). There are no recorded Iron Age sites within the general vicinity of the site.
- 2.3. A number of ring-shaped cropmarks have been identified within the site itself (GGAT HER refs. 02181-02186), and a further possible enclosure has been noted towards the western edge of the site (GGAT HER ref. 02179m). These features have been interpreted as possible prehistoric ring ditches; however, similar features, investigated during an archaeological evaluation c. 600m to the south of the site, were recorded as relating to charcoal-burning platforms (WYG 2016).

### **Roman**

- 2.4. Evidence for a possible Roman industrial site, comprising a series of small slag dumps associated with pottery dated to the 3rd to 4th centuries AD, was identified c. 700m to the south-east of the current site (GGAT HER ref. 03346m). The Scheduled Miskin Roman Fort (Cadw List Entry no.: GM591; GGAT HER ref. 02255m) is located c. 1.13km to the south of the site, along with an associated settlement and extensive iron production site, which appears to have been active during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD (WYG 2016).

### **Medieval and post-medieval**

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- 2.5. The site of Afon Clun Mill Leat is located c. 250m to the north-east of the site and includes the eroded remains of a leat which formerly served a medieval mill on the south bank of the Afon Clun. The site may represent one of several mills mentioned in medieval accounts as being destroyed in the late 13th or early 14th centuries (WYG 2016).
- 2.6. Iron smelting was carried out in the vicinity of Mwyndy House in the 16th century, c. 940m to the east of the site. Originally, the mines associated with this industry. were open cast and drift workings and were extensively worked as quarries in the 18th and 19th centuries. This may have destroyed any traces of earlier workings, suggested to be of Roman date; wooden shovels of Roman form were said to have been found in the old workings (WYG 2016).
- 2.7. The former Bute Haematite Works were located c. 210m to the south of the site and are recorded on the 1885 First Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map as a number of open quarry pits, works buildings, an engine house, ironstone shaft openings and connecting tramways. A mine shaft is also recorded in the southern part of the site (WYG 2016).

### Geophysical Survey

- 2.8. A magnetometry survey undertaken within the site identified numerous discrete anomalies, which have been interpreted as being geological in origin, along with linear trends likely relating to modern agricultural activity (HA 2016). Anomalies associated with the ring-shaped cropmarks (see above) were not identified by the survey; it was noted that if these related to charcoal burning, it is unlikely that they would have been detectable as a magnetic anomalies.

## 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objectives of the watching brief were:
- to monitor the development groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record any significant buried archaeological deposits/features thus revealed;
  - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated project archive and a report setting out the watching brief results and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

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- 3.2. The specific objective of the watching brief was to investigate the ring-shaped cropmarks that are recorded by the HER but were not identified the preceding geophysical survey (HA 2016)

## 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The watching brief comprised the observation by a competent archaeologist of all intrusive groundworks associated with the proposed development. These works comprised the machine stripping of topsoil and subsoil (see Fig. 2 for location and extent).
- 4.2. Records were maintained in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*. No deposits were identified that required sampling.
- 4.4. CA will make arrangements with National Museum of Wales for the deposition of the project archive. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW) maintained by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020), with RCAHMW guidelines (Edwards 2013) and with the submission guidelines for Welsh Archaeological Trust (2022).
- 4.5. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix B, will be entered onto the NMRW online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. RESULTS (FIGS. 2-4)

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the watching brief results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A.
- 5.2. The natural geological substrate, 102, comprising mid yellow-brown sandy clay and was revealed at an average depth of 0.57m below present ground level (bpgl). This

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was overlain by a mid brown sandy clay silt subsoil averaging 0.4m in thickness, which was sealed in turn by 0.17m of topsoil.

- 5.3. During the trial excavation of a sondage was excavated deeper than needed in the northern part of the site. A single pit, 203, was observed and not excavated. It measured 0.68m in diameter and contained a single exposed dark grey brown silt clay fill, 204, which remained undated.

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1. The natural geological substrate was only encountered in the southern part of the site due to the depth of groundworks undertaken. In the northern parts of the site a progressively thicker deposit of subsoil, perhaps associated with the Afon Clu, a subsidiary of River Ely was encountered sealing this deposit.
- 6.2. Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see *Archaeological Background*, above), the only archaeological feature of note identified during the observed groundworks comprised a single undated pit identified in an isolated sondage towards the north of the site.
- 6.3. The identified pit was recorded below the level of impact of the proposed groundworks and it was therefore preserved *in situ*. As the pit remained unexcavated, little can be said as to its date or function.
- 6.4. The lack of archaeological features within the site may indicate that the anomalies recorded by the preceding geophysical survey (i.e. possible ring-like anomalies) and cropmarks may represent changes in the natural geology of the site or they may be still present below the subsoil.

## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Noel Boothroyd and Richard Scurr. This report was written by Noel Boothroyd. The report illustrations were prepared by Ken Lymer. The project archive has been compiled by and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Monica Fombellida.

## 8. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey 2022 *BGS Geology Viewer* <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/bgs-geology-viewer/> Accessed october 2023

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CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2023 *Four Fields, Cefn Yr Hendy, Pontyclun, Pontyclun, Rhondda Cynon Taf: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

HA (Headland Archaeology) 2016 *Four Fields, Cefn Yr Hendy, Pontyclun, Vale of Glamorgan: Geophysical Survey*

WYG Environment Planning Transport Limited 2016 *Four Fields, Cefn yr Hendy, Mwyndy: Archaeology Desk-Based Assessment and Setting Assessment*

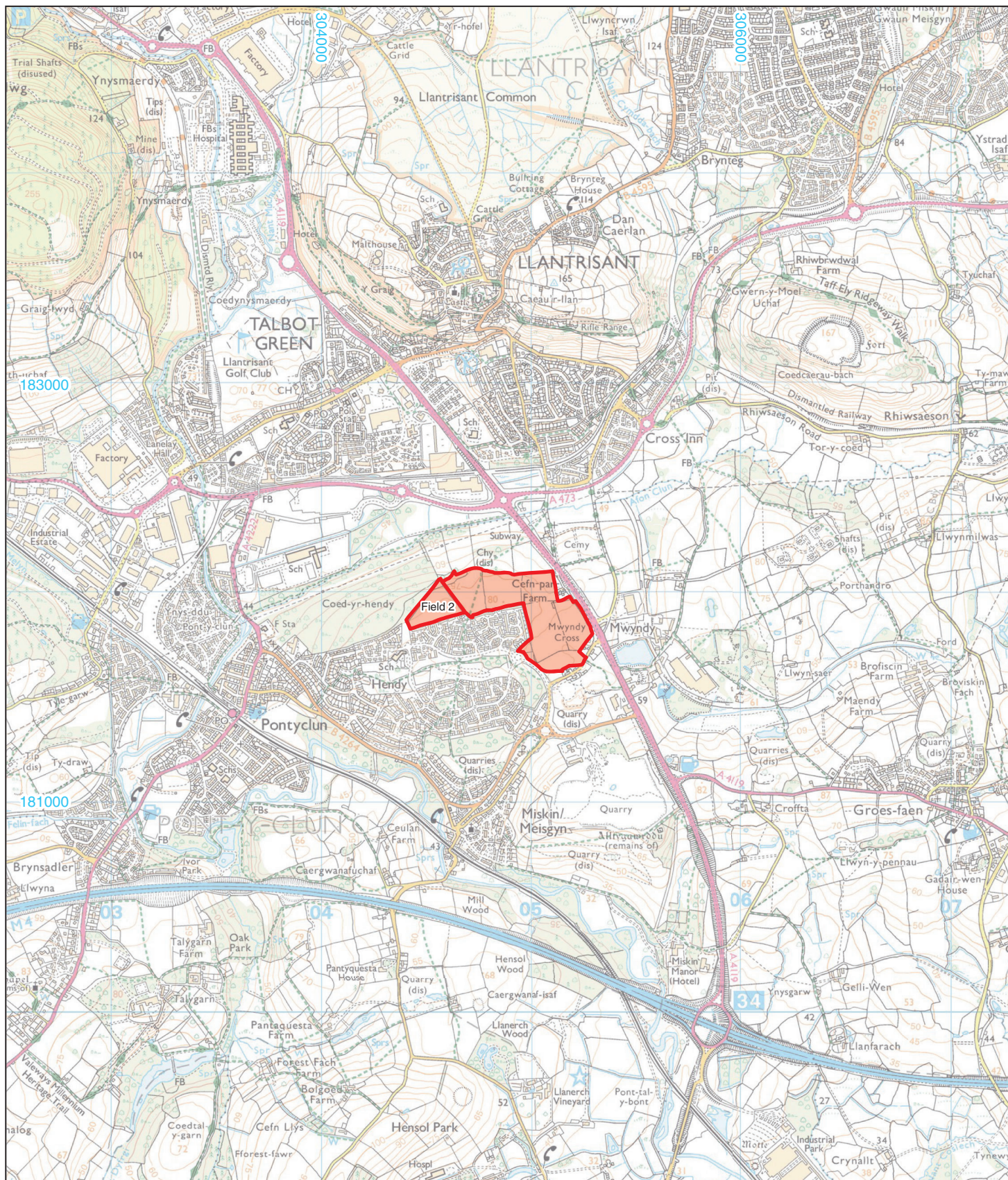
## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Area	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Mid/Dk brown sandy silt			0.17
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clayey silt			0.4
1	102	Layer		Natural	Light/mid yellow brown sandy silty clay			n/a
1	203	Cut		Pit	Rounded	0.68	0.68	n/a
1	204	Fill	204	Fill of pit	dark grey brown silt clay fill	0.68	0.68	n/a

## APPENDIX B: NMRW REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Four Fields, Cefn Yr Hendy, Pontyclun, Rhondda Cynon Taf	
Short description	<p>In July 2023, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with residential development at Four Fields, Cefn Yr Hendy, Pontyclun, Rhondda Cynon Taf.</p> <p>A single pit was observed towards the north corner that remained un-excavated. No artefactual material was recovered.</p>	
Project dates	July 2023	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	<p>Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Setting Assessment (WYG 2016)</p> <p>Geophysical Survey (HA 2016)</p>	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	304549 181932	
Study area (m <sup>2</sup> /ha)	2.6ha	
Site co-ordinates		
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold archaeology	
Project brief originator	Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Monica Fombellida	
Project Supervisor	Richard Scurr and Noel Boothroyd	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	National Museum of Wales	<b>None</b>
Paper	National Museum of Wales	Context and trenches sheets
Digital	National Museum of Wales	Photographs and site plans
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
<p>Cotswold Archaeology 2023 Four Fields, Cefn Yr Hendy, Pontyclun, Rhondda Cynon Taf:  <i>Archaeological Watching Brief</i> CA typescript report <b>CR1300_1</b></p>		





Site boundary

0  1km

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#### PROJECT TITLE

Four Fields, Cefn Yr Hendy, Pontyclun,  
Rhondda Cynon Taf

#### FIGURE TITLE

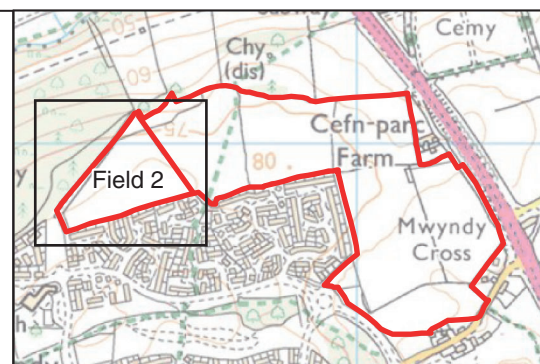
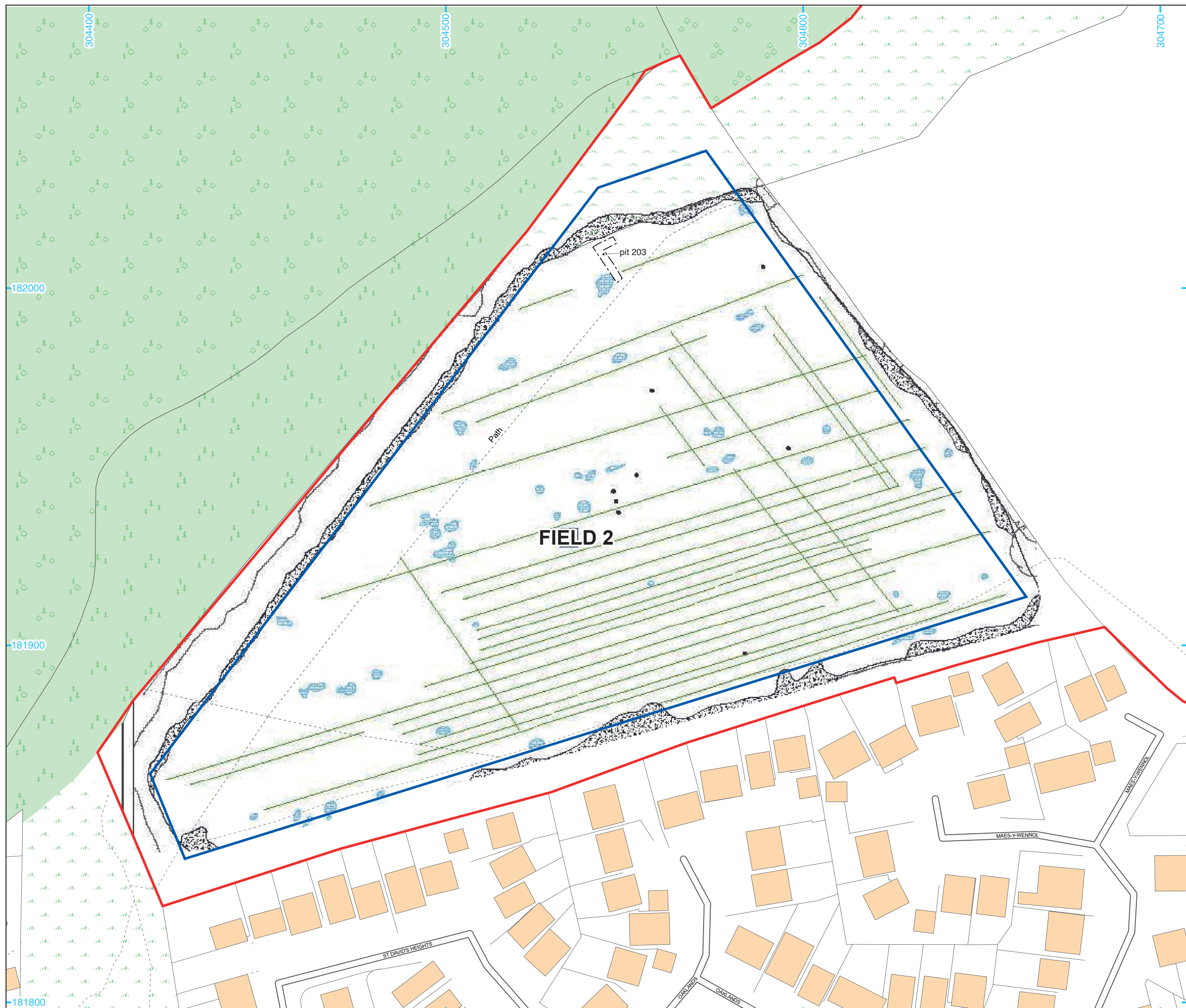
Site location plan

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APPROVED BY MF  
PROJECT NO. CR1300  
DATE 03/01/2023  
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FIGURE NO.

1



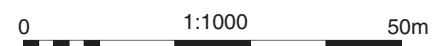


- Site boundary
- Monitored area
- Sondage
- Archaeological feature



### Geophysical Survey Results (Headland 2016)

TYPE OF ANOMALY	INTERPRETATION
dipolar isolated	ferrous material
magnetic disturbance	ferrous material
linear trend	agricultural
magnetic enhancement	geology



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PROJECT TITLE  
Four Fields, Cefn Yr Hendy, Pontyclun,  
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FIGURE TITLE  
The site, showing geophysical survey  
results and monitored groundworks

DRAWN BY CHECKED BY APPROVED BY	KL DB MF	PROJECT NO. DATE SCALE@A3	CR1300 03/10/2023 1:1000	FIGURE NO. <b>2</b>
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*The site, looking north-east*



*Southern limit of excavation, looking south (1m scale)*



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**FIGURE TITLE**

**Photographs**

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**FIGURE NO.**

**3**





*Sondage towards the north corner of the site and pit 203*



*Reduction of ground at the northern corner of the site*



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**FIGURE TITLE**

**Photographs**

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**FIGURE NO.**

**4**

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