



Brechfa Forest West Carmarthenshire, South Wales

Archaeological Evaluation Report



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wessexarchaeology



**Brechfa Forest West Wind Farm
Carmarthenshire,
South Wales**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Brechfa Forest West Wind Farm Carmarthenshire South Wales

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Archaeological Evaluation Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Amec Foster Wheeler to carry out trial trenching evaluations on a 1.04 ha area of land within Brechfa Forest West, Carmarthenshire, South Wales, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SN 48733 32728. The proposal was granted a Development Consent Order (DCO) by the Secretary of State on 12th March 2013. The evaluation was implemented under requirement 26 of the DCO as a result of consultations with Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT), who act as Carmarthenshire County Council's (CCC) archaeological advisors, and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) who acted as the land manager.

The fieldwork took place between the 25th and the 28th October 2016. Ten trenches were opened, none of which revealed any significant archaeological remains.



Brechfa Forest West Wind Farm Carmarthenshire South Wales

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Amec Foster Wheeler. The fieldwork was undertaken by Roy Krakowicz and Liam Powell. The report was compiled by Tracey Smith with illustrations by Nancy Dixon. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Matt Williams.



Brechfa Forest West, Wind Farm Carmarthenshire South Wales

Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Amec Foster Wheeler (hereafter 'the Client') to carry out a trial trench evaluation on a 1.04 ha area of land in Brecha Forest West (hereafter referred to as 'The Site'). The Site is centred on National Grid Reference NGR 48733 32728 (**Figure 1**). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was previously submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC), as the Local Planning Authority and Natural Resources Wales (NRW), as the land manager of Brechfa Forest which is subject to this development proposal (Amec 2015).

1.1.2 It is proposed to construct a new wind farm in the Brechfa Forest land, comprising up to twenty eight new wind turbines, measuring a maximum of 145m in height, designated a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project', as defined in sections 14 and 15 of the Planning Act 2008. The WSI refers specifically to evaluation trenches within the footprints of five of the wind turbines, numbered 13, 17 to 19 and 23 (**Figure 1**).

1.1.3 As a result of consultations with Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT), who act as advisors to CCC, an archaeological requirement (26) has been attached to the DCO. In addition NRW were also consulted with regard to the environmental sensitivity of the Site. To comply with Requirement 26, WA, as the appointed contractor, were responsible for undertaking the evaluation and for maintaining the standard of fieldwork and reporting. As a Registered Organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeology, and holding ISO9001 accreditation, WA adheres to National professional and industry standards, guidelines and current legislation and policies for planning and the historic environment.

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The Site is located within Brechfa Forest, 10km northeast of Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire in south-west Wales, on a ridge of land forming the south-western tail of the Cambrian Mountains. The Site lies between the Cothi Valley (located to the south-east) and the Teifi Valley (located to the north-west). The elevation of the Site ranges from 260m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the south-west to 358m aOD in the north-east. Brechfa Forest covers an area of approximately 5,273ha.

1.2.2 The land is owned by the Welsh Government and managed by NRW. The Forest is divided into two parts by the common land of Mynydd Llanfihangel Rhos y Corn and Mynydd Llanllwni. The site of Brechfa Forest West, Wind Farm is located in the western part of the Forest, which lies between the village of Brechfa to the south-east, and the A485, to the north-west. The Site is intersected by the Afon Pîb river which flows south-east towards Brechfa.

1.2.3 The Site occupies an area of approximately 1,041ha, although the actual development (including all infrastructure components such as access tracks, turbine bases, borrow pit, meteorological masts, and temporary and permanent compounds) will only occupy



approximately 4.1% of this. The majority of the Site is used for upland rotational forestry, with only 8% of the site being improved agricultural grassland used for sheep grazing.

- 1.2.4 The Site of Brechfa Forest West, Wind Farm is also classed as dedicated open access land, whereby NRW has voluntarily dedicated the land for use for public access under the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*. There are five public footpaths within the Site and numerous other footpaths surrounding the site, including a public footpath that runs along the western boundary of the neighbouring operational Alltwalis Wind Farm.
- 1.2.5 The Site predominantly lies on interbedded sedimentary mudstones and sandstones of the Rhuddnant Formation. However, a small portion of the southernmost Site (turbines 5 to 7, 11 and 12) is situated upon similar deposits, but of the Glanyrafon Formation. The linear Site protrusion, to the north-west (main access), is located upon sedimentary mudstone of the Claerwen Group, laid down around 428 to 439 million years ago when the area was dominated by deep seas (AFW, 2015).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The following is partly summarised from the approved WSI (AFW 2015);

2.2 Prehistoric

- 2.2.1 Three round barrows are recorded on the HER (Historic Environment Record; 1816 to 1818) within the north-west part of the Site, all of which are designated as Scheduled Monuments (SM; CM033a, CM33b and CM034). A cropmark, which was identified as a possible round barrow, lies to the south of these monuments, within the Site boundary (HER 10746). Further Scheduled round barrows were identified in the vicinity of the Site, including one (CM035) 150m to the east of an existing access track and 900m north-east of Turbine 23, and another (CM164) c. 1.25km north of Turbine 24. These are associated with a round barrow cemetery (HER 42592), also outside the Site.
- 2.2.2 Although no known Bronze Age settlement sites are known in South West Wales, the number of round barrows and standing stones in the study area and surrounding landscape clearly indicate a landscape utilized in the Bronze Age period. Settlement would have largely been confined to the good quality soils of the lowlands or upland fringes, so may not reasonably be expected within the proposed Site.

2.3 Iron Age and Romano-British

- 2.3.1 There are no known Iron Age or Roman remains within the Site. However, such activity is known in the wider area: there is a possible Iron Age hillfort known as Nant-Y-Castell, c. 1.6km to the east of the site and a defended enclosure of possible Iron Age date (HER 11832) c. 2.3km to the south-west. This may also have been in use during the Roman period.
- 2.3.2 The presence of the Roman road along the Tywi Valley to the south, the known Roman forts at Carmarthen, Llandeilo and Llandovery, and the gold mine and fort at Pumsaint to the west of Llansawel suggest that the Site would have been under Roman influence. However, there is no evidence to suggest any remains of this date within the Site.

2.4 Saxon

- 2.4.1 There are no known remains of post-Roman or Early-medieval dates in the Site.



2.5 Medieval

2.5.1 It is likely that during the medieval period the Site lay beyond the settlements and isolated dwellings present across the region, with settlement activity concentrated in the valley bottoms and along the Afon Cothi. The landscape may have remained predominantly wooded or have featured areas of open common used for grazing cattle or sheep.

2.6 Post-medieval and modern

2.6.1 During the Post-medieval period, the character of Brechfa Forest was one of an agricultural community. The parish tithe maps provide the earliest detailed mapping for the study area. The Site predominantly remained open common with small areas of enclosed fields present across the south and western extent of the site and along the Afon Pib Valley.

2.6.2 The 1886-1891 published edition Ordnance Survey map shows that the Site was predominantly unenclosed, although areas of enclosed land had increased along the periphery of the study area and along the valley of the Afon Pib. Large parts of the Site are depicted as rough pasture. The three SM round barrows (CM033-CM034) are marked. The Post-medieval farmsteads/cottages and quarry activity recorded in the HER are clearly shown. The 1907 OS plan shows little change, though some additional cottages are shown. Alterations are limited to the increased number of arable fields or varying fields of arable to pasture.

2.6.3 The 1948 edition OS plan shows widespread tree plantation across the site. The 19th-century farmsteads and cottages previously present within the Site have been removed. The 1986 edition OS plan shows increased woodland plantation across the site. Forestry tracks are clearly marked crossing the site.

2.6.4 A walkover survey was conducted prior to the evaluation; however, no useful data could be collected due to the impact on the land from forestry.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1.1 With due regard to the ClfA *Standard and guidance for archaeological evaluation* (ClfA 2014b), the aims of the project are to:

- *To locate, identify and to investigate and record the presence/absence of archaeological features or deposits which may be present within the footprint of turbines 13, 17 to 19 and 23;*
- *The evaluation, where possible, would confirm the extent, date, character, relationship, condition and significance of archaeological features, artefacts and deposits within the proposed development area;*
- *To inform the scope and nature of any requirements for any potential further mitigation strategy and appropriate management of the archaeological resource, which may be affected by the proposed development;*
- *To enable the preservation by record of any archaeological features or deposits uncovered; and to place any identified archaeological remains within their historical context;*
- *Produce a fully illustrated report on the results for dissemination to DAT, CCC, NRW & the Client.*



4 FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

- 4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the methodology set out within the WSI (AMEC 2015) in compliance with the standards outlined in the ClfA's *Standard and guidance for archaeological evaluation* (ClfA 2014a).
- 4.1.2 A total of 10 trial trenches each measuring 20m in length and 1.80m wide were excavated; two trenches within the footprint of each of the five turbine bases as shown in **Figure 1**. The evaluation trenches were accurately located using a Leica Viva series GNSS unit using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network with a 3D accuracy of 30mm or below. All survey data was recorded using the OSGB36 British National Grid coordinate system.
- 4.1.3 The excavation of the trenches was carried out using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket.
- 4.1.4 Topsoil and subsoil/overburden deposits were stored separately and stored at a minimum of 1m from the trench edge. The spoil from the trenches was scanned for artefacts. The trenches were backfilled with the excavated spoil, topsoil last in order to preserve the soil stratigraphy.
- 4.1.5 A full photographic record was maintained using digital cameras, and archaeological features and deposits were surveyed using GPS equipment and related to Ordnance Survey Datum.
- 4.1.6 A unique Site code T22546 was allocated to the evaluation, and was used on all records.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The results of the subsequent evaluation are summarised below, with a tabulated context list provided in **Appendix 1**. Full details of all contexts are contained in the project archive.

5.2 Trench 1

- 5.2.1 Trench 1 was located over the western side of the footprint of turbine 13 and orientated north-west to south-east, being 20 m in length and 1.80 m wide (**Plate 1**). Natural pale grey with yellow mottling degraded bedrock (context **104**) was exposed at the base of the trench, 0.45 m below the modern ground surface. Overlying this was layer **103**, a 0.10 m thick band of natural orange-brown (possibly iron stained) natural degraded bedrock and silt. Above this was layer **102**, a 0.10m thick band of pale pinkish-grey silty-clay containing occasional degraded bedrock fragments, probably due to bioturbation. The uppermost deposit was layer **101**, a 0.25 m thick dark reddish-brown to black, humic silt, heavily disturbed by tree roots and containing very occasional inclusions of mudstone and quartz fragments.

5.3 Trench 2

- 5.3.1 Trench 2 was located over the eastern side of the footprint of turbine 13 and orientated north-east to south-west, being 20 m in length and 1.80 m wide (**Plate 2**). The stratigraphic sequence within the trench was identical to that of trench 1; natural degraded bedrock (**204**) at 0.42 m below ground level, overlain by 0.10 m thick natural **203**, above which was a layer of subsoil (**202**), also 0.10 m thick and dark reddish brown humic topsoil (**201**), 0.25m thick.

5.4 Trench 3

5.4.1 Trench 3 was located over the northern side of the footprint of turbine 17 and orientated north-east to south-west, being 20 m in length and 1.80 m wide (**Plate 3**). The stratigraphic sequence within the trench was identical to that of trench 1; natural degraded bedrock (**304**) at 0.60 m below ground level, overlain by 0.17 m thick natural (**303**), above which was a layer of subsoil (**302**), 0.08 m thick and dark reddish brown humic topsoil (**301**), 0.35m thick.

5.5 Trench 4

5.5.1 Trench 4 was located over the southern side of the footprint of turbine 17 and orientated north-west to south-east, being 20 m in length and 1.80 m wide (**Plate 4**). The stratigraphic sequence within the trench was identical to that of trench 1; natural degraded bedrock (**404**) at 0.50 m below ground level, overlain by 0.20 m thick natural (**403**), above which was a layer of subsoil (**402**), 0.10 m thick and dark reddish brown humic topsoil (**401**), 0.20m thick.

5.6 Trench 5

5.6.1 Trench 5 was located over the eastern side of the footprint of turbine 18 and orientated east-north-east to west-south-west, being 20 m in length and 1.80 m wide (**Plate 5**). The stratigraphic sequence within the trench was similar to that of trench 1; natural degraded pale grey and yellow mudstone (**503**) at 0.40 m below ground level, overlain by a 0.10 m thick deposit (**502**), consisting of a mixture of 503 and 502 caused by bioturbation in the soils, above which was a layer of dark reddish brown humic topsoil (**501**), 0.30m thick.

5.7 Trench 6

5.7.1 Trench 6 was located over the western side of the footprint of turbine 18 and orientated north - south, being 20 m in length and 1.80 m wide (**Plate 6**). The stratigraphic sequence within the trench was identical to that of trench 5; natural degraded pale grey and yellow mudstone (**603**) at 0.35 m below ground level, overlain by a 0.10 m thick deposit (**602**), consisting of a mixture of 603 and 602 caused by bioturbation in the soils, above which was a layer of dark reddish brown humic topsoil (**601**), 0.20m thick.

5.8 Trench 7

5.8.2 Trench 7 was located over the eastern side of the footprint of turbine 19 and orientated south-east to north-west, being 20 m in length and 1.80 m wide (**Plate 7**). The stratigraphic sequence within the trench was the same as that of trench 5; natural degraded pale grey and yellow mudstone (**703**) at 0.50 m below ground level, overlain by a 0.25 m thick deposit (**702**), consisting of a mixture of 703 and 702 caused by bioturbation in the soils with an orange-brown clay, above which was a layer of dark reddish brown humic loam topsoil (**701**), 0.20m thick.

5.9 Trench 8

5.9.1 Trench 8 was located over the western side of the footprint of turbine 19 and orientated north - south, being 20 m in length and 1.80 m wide (**Figure 1 Plate 8**). The stratigraphic sequence within the trench was the same as that of trench 7; natural degraded pale grey and yellow mudstone (**803**) at 0.50 m below ground level, overlain by a 0.25 m thick deposit (**802**), consisting of a mixture of 803 and 802 caused by bioturbation in the soils with an orange-brown clay, above which was a layer of dark reddish brown humic peaty-loam topsoil (**801**), 0.20m thick.

5.10 Trench 9

5.10.1 Trench 9 was located over the northern side of the footprint of turbine 19 and orientated east - west, being 20 m in length and 1.80 m wide (**Figure 1 Plate 9**). The stratigraphic sequence within the trench was similar to that in trench 8; natural degraded pale yellow mudstone (**902**) at 0.25 m below ground level, overlain by a 0.25 m thick deposit of dark reddish brown humic peaty loamy topsoil (**901**), 0.20m thick.

5.11 Trench 10

5.11.1 Trench 10 was located over the southern side of the footprint of turbine 19 and orientated north - south, being 20 m in length and 1.80 m wide (**Figure 1 Plate 10**). The stratigraphic sequence within the trench was the same as that in trench 9; natural degraded pale yellow mudstone (**1002**) at 0.22 m below ground level, overlain by a 0.25 m thick deposit of dark reddish brown humic peaty loamy topsoil (**1001**), 0.22m thick.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1.1 No archaeologically significant features or finds were uncovered during the evaluation. The lack of residual finds or any cut features suggests that there has never been any significant archaeological activity in the areas of the Site evaluated.

7 STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

7.1.1 The designated repository will be Carmarthen Museum. The Curator of Archaeology has been contacted in advance of the fieldwork for a temporary Site code and to obtain information regarding the appropriate archive preparation standards.

7.2 Preparation of Archive

7.2.1 On completion of the report a cross-referenced and internally consistent archive will be produced. The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Carmarthen Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; Brown 2011; ADS 2013; ClfA 2014c). The digital archive will be submitted to the National Monuments Record Wales, and a digital copy of this report will be lodged with the Dyfed Historic Environment Record.

7.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the unique WA Site T22546 code, the Museum temporary code (tbc) and a full index will be prepared. The archive comprises the following:

- *1 document case of paper records & A4 graphics*
- *92 jpeg digital photographic images*

7.2.3 Until final deposition with the museum the archive will be stored at the offices of WA West in Bristol.

7.3 Copyright

7.3.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the site will be retained by WA Ltd under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The Museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profitmaking, and conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*.



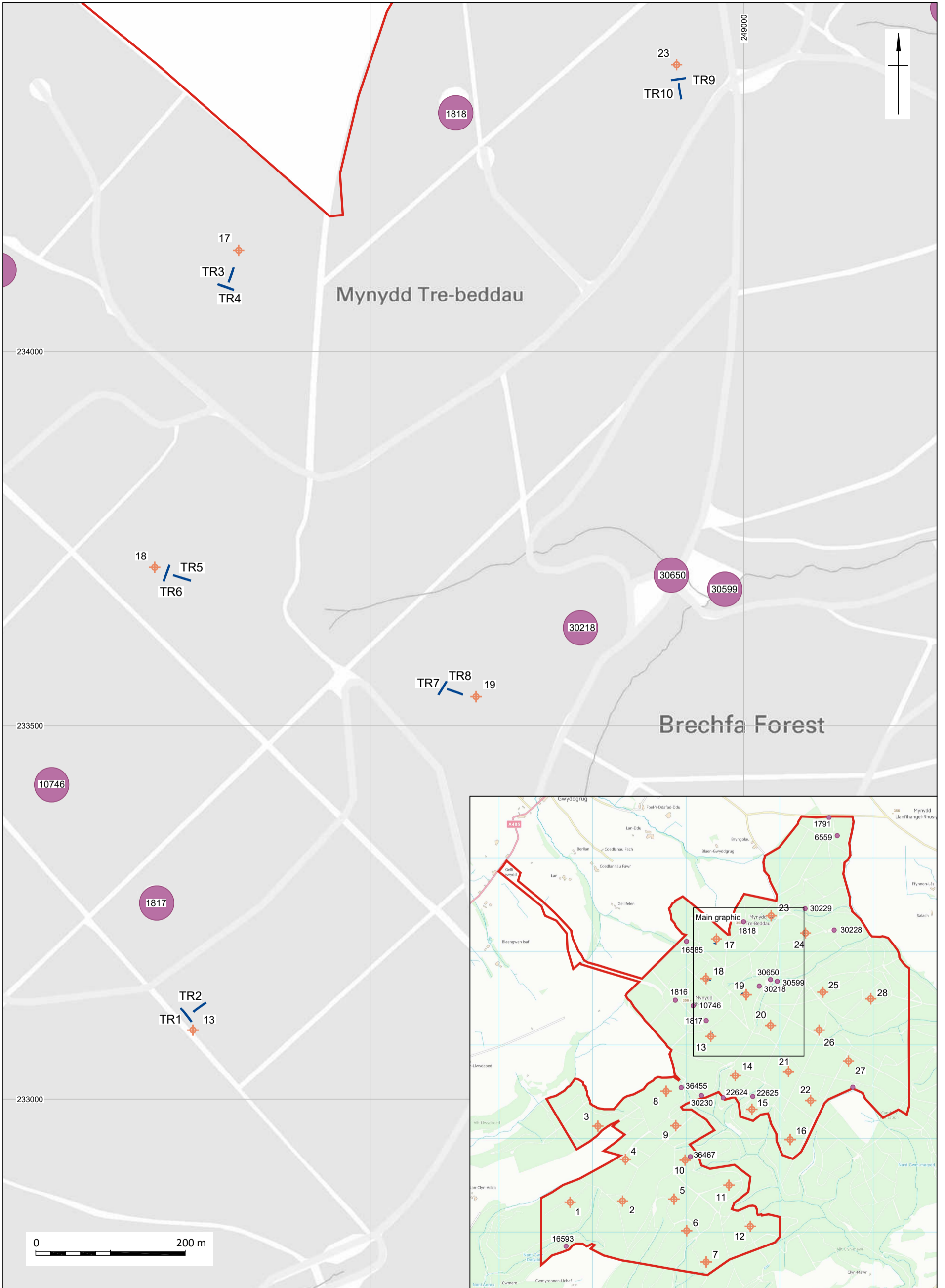
7.4 Security Copy

- 7.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

8 REFERENCES

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Coordinate system:
OSGB36 (OSTN15/OSGM15)

- Site boundary
- Trench
- Proposed turbine site
- Scheduled Monument

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Site Location Plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: Trench 1, viewed from the south-east



Plate 2: Trench 2, viewed from the north-east


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Plate 3: Trench 3, viewed from the north-east



Plate 4: Trench 4, viewed from the west


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Plate 5: Trench 5, viewed from the west



Plate 6: Trench 6, viewed from the south

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Plate 7: Trench 7, viewed from the south-west



Plate 8: Trench 8, viewed from the west


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Plate 9: Trench 9, viewed from the west



Plate 10: Trench 10, viewed from the south

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9 APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix 1: Context summary list

| Context | Category | Description | Depth (bgl) |
|-----------------|----------|---|--------------|
| Trench 1 | | | |
| 101 | Deposit | Topsoil: Dark reddish-brown to black humic loam very occasional fragments of mudstone and quartz pebbles | 0.0 - 0.25m |
| 102 | Deposit | Subsoil: Pale pinkish-grey silty-clay with fragments of degraded natural | 0.25 – 0.30m |
| 103 | Natural | Band of orange-brown natural | 0.30 – 0.45m |
| 104 | Natural | Degraded bedrock, pale grey mudstone and silts | 0.45m |
| Trench 2 | | | |
| 201 | Deposit | Topsoil: Dark reddish-brown to black humic loam very occasional fragments of mudstone and quartz pebbles | 0.0 – 0.25m |
| 202 | Deposit | Subsoil: Pale pinkish-grey silty-clay with fragments of degraded natural | 0.25 – 0.30m |
| 203 | Natural | Band of orange-brown natural | 0.30 – 0.42m |
| 204 | Natural | Degraded bedrock, pale grey mudstone and silts | 0.42m |
| Trench 3 | | | |
| 301 | Deposit | Topsoil: Dark reddish-brown to black humic loam very occasional fragments of mudstone and quartz pebbles | 0.0 – 0.35m |
| 302 | Deposit | Subsoil: Pale pinkish-grey silty-clay with fragments of degraded natural | 0.35 – 0.43m |
| 303 | Natural | Band of orange-brown natural | 0.43 – 0.60m |
| 304 | Natural | Degraded bedrock, pale grey mudstone and silts | 0.60 m |
| Trench 4 | | | |
| 401 | Deposit | Topsoil: Dark reddish-brown to black humic loam very occasional fragments of mudstone and quartz pebbles | 0.0 – 0.20m |
| 402 | Deposit | Subsoil: Pale pinkish-grey silty-clay with fragments of degraded natural | 0.20 – 0.30m |
| 403 | Natural | Band of orange-brown natural | 0.30 – 0.50m |
| 404 | Natural | Degraded bedrock, pale grey mottled mudstone and silts | 0.50 m |
| Trench 5 | | | |
| 501 | Deposit | Topsoil: Dark reddish-brown to black humic loam very occasional fragments of mudstone and quartz pebbles | 0.0 – 0.30m |
| 502 | Deposit | Subsoil: mixture of darker brown and light grey silts and mudstone, a bioturbated interface between 501 and 503 | 0.30 – 0.40m |
| 503 | Natural | Degraded bedrock, pale grey mottled mudstone and silts | 0.40 m |
| Trench 6 | | | |
| 601 | Deposit | Topsoil: Dark reddish-brown to black humic loam very occasional fragments of mudstone and quartz pebbles | 0.0 – 0.20m |
| 602 | Deposit | Subsoil: mixture of darker brown and light grey silts and mudstone, a bioturbated interface between 601 and 603 | 0.20 – 0.30m |
| 603 | Natural | Degraded bedrock, pale grey mottled mudstone and silts | 0.30 m |
| Trench 7 | | | |
| 701 | Deposit | Topsoil: Dark reddish-brown to black humic loam very occasional fragments of mudstone and quartz pebbles | 0.0 – 0.20m |



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| 702 | Deposit | Subsoil: mixture of darker brown and light grey silts and mudstone, a bioturbated interface between 701 and 703 | 0.20 – 0.50m |
| 703 | Natural | Degraded bedrock, pale grey mottled mudstone and silts | 0.50 m |
| Trench 8 | | | |
| 801 | Deposit | Topsoil: Dark reddish-brown to black humic loam very occasional fragments of mudstone and quartz pebbles | 0.0 – 0.26m |
| 802 | Deposit | Subsoil: mixture of darker brown and light grey silts and mudstone, a bioturbated interface between 801 and 803 | 0.26 – 0.37m |
| 803 | Natural | Degraded bedrock, pale grey mottled mudstone and silts | 0.37 m |
| Trench 9 | | | |
| 901 | Deposit | Topsoil: Dark reddish-brown to black humic loam very occasional fragments of mudstone and quartz pebbles | 0.00 – 0.28m |
| 902 | Natural | Degraded bedrock, pale grey mottled mudstone and silts | 0.28 m |
| Trench 10 | | | |
| 1001 | Deposit | Topsoil: Dark reddish-brown to black humic loam very occasional fragments of mudstone and quartz pebbles | 0.00 – 0.22m |
| 1002 | Natural | Degraded bedrock, pale grey mottled mudstone and silts | 0.22 m |



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