

CPBP18



# LAND AT CAE PRIOR, BRECON, POWYS

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

PLANNING REF. 18/16268/OUT

commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership  
on behalf of Mr Ray Fellowes

March 2019



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#### PROJECT INFO:

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

Archaeological field evaluation, via trial trenching, was undertaken by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd on Land at Cae Prior, Brecon, Powys between the 10th and 12th of December 2018. No archaeological remains were recorded or artefacts recovered, with only natural features and colluvial deposits recorded. Indications of manuring during the post-medieval period and more recent times were suggested through the presence of more recent glazed ceramics and clay tobacco pipe fragments in the topsoil.

Gwnaethpwyd gwerthusiad maes archaeolegol, trwy ffosio treial, gan Headland Archaeology (UK)Ltd ar y tir yn Cae Prior, Aberhonddu, Powys rhwng y 10 fed a'r 12 fed o Ragfyr, 2018. Ni chwiliwyd artefactau na gweddillion archaeolegol. Yr unig beth a recordiwyd oedd nodweddion naturiol a dyddodion coliwfylol. Mae presenoldeb darnau o serameg gwydrog a pipellau tobaco clai yn awgrymu bod gwrteithio wedi digwydd yn ystod y cyfnod ol-ganoloesol ac yn fwy diweddar.

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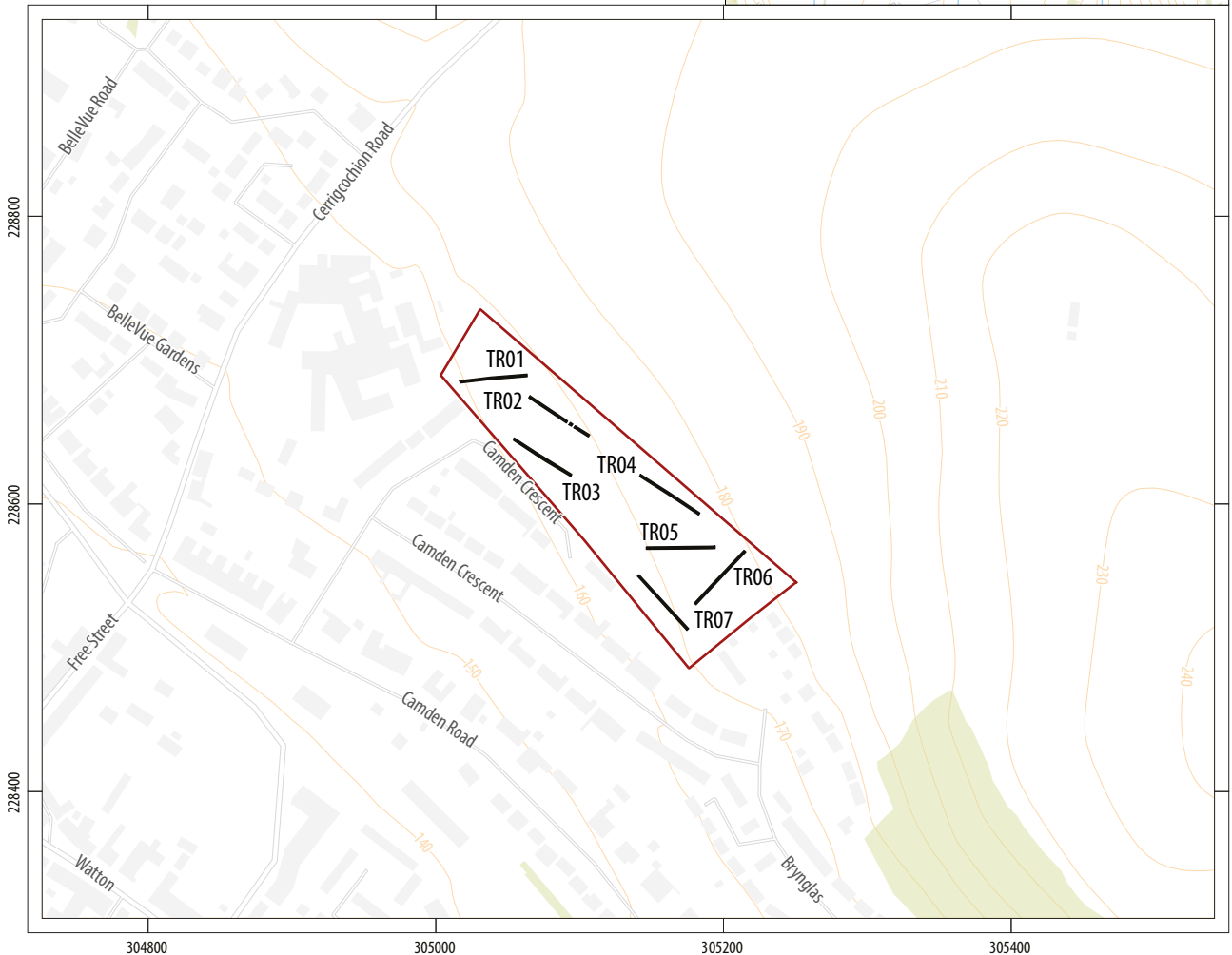
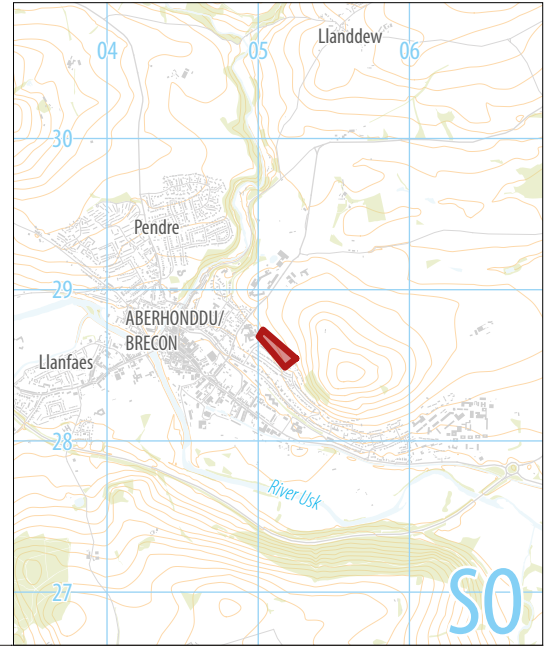
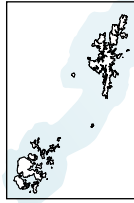
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Cae Prior  
Camden Crescent  
Brecon  
Powys

0 200km  
1:10,000,000 @ A4



0 100m  
1:5,000 @ A4

development boundary  
trench location



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# LAND AT CAE PRIOR, BRECON, POWYS

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### 1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological site investigation on land at Cae Prior, Brecon, Powys.

#### 1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND

Mr Ray Fellowes (through his agent The Environmental Dimension Partnership) commissioned Headland Archaeology to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Cae Prior, Brecon, Powys.

The proposed works were undertaken in support of an outline planning application for a housing development on the site (Planning ref: 18/16268/OUT). The site is allocated for housing development in the Local Development Plan (site located to the north of Camden Crescent and east of Breconshire War Memorial DBR-BR-A).

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by Headland Archaeology (Craddock-Bennett 2018) and approved by the Brecon National Parks Archaeological Advisor, Alice Thorne.

#### 1.2 SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

The site is bound by immature woodland associated with the hospital to the west, residential developments to the south, and further pasture land to the north and east.

The underlying geology comprises argillaceous rock and sandstone of the St Maughan's Formation overlain by superficial

deposits of Glaciofluvial Ice Contact and Devensian sand and gravels (NERC 2018).

The soil consists of freely draining slightly acid loamy soils (Cranfield University 2018).

#### 1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site's potential for containing unrecorded archaeological remains has been assessed (Skinner 2017). The assessment concluded that there are no known archaeological remains or any other non-designated historic assets within the site.

The hill to the east of the site is the location of two Scheduled Monuments, Slwch Tump (BR038) and St Eluned's Chapel (BR236).

Slwch Tump is an Iron Age hillfort defined by an earthwork bank and ditch that occupies the summit of Slwch Hill and which has been integrated into a later post-medieval field system.

Approximately 14m north-east of the site and within the same field part occupied by the site, a record in the Historic Environment Record (HER) made in 1972 indicates the possible existence of the buried remains of an undated enclosure on the slopes to the west of the hillfort at Slwch Tump.

A geophysical survey was undertaken by Sumo in May 2017 (Gater 2017). The survey identified no responses of archaeological interest and provided no evidence to support the existence of the prehistoric earthwork feature recorded in the HER. The geophysical survey extended beyond the application area to the northern field boundary.

## 2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the evaluation were outlined in the WSI prepared by Headland Archaeology (Craddock-Bennett 2018). The primary objectives were:

- › To gather further information to try and establish the presence/absence, character, and extent of any archaeological remains within the areas to be impacted by the proposed development, and to inform further strategies should they be necessary.
- › To produce and deposit a satisfactory archive and disseminate the results of the work via grey literature reporting and publication as appropriate.

The results of the evaluation were used to describe the significance of any identified heritage assets potentially affected by the development, allowing the planning authority to make an informed assessment of any potential impacts on the historic environment in line with Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The resulting archive has been organised and is currently stored at Headland Archaeology's Hereford premises until deposited with The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit. A digital copy of the report and all digital data generated by the project will conform to the RCAHMW Guidelines for Digital Archives. It will be deposited with the RCAHMW and Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT).

## 3 METHOD

The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the above mentioned WSI and method statement and in accordance with the following documents:

- › Code of Conduct (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014a)
- › Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014b)

A total of seven trenches measuring 50m long and 1.80m wide were excavated in two fields, laid out predominantly in an array and targeting identified geophysical anomalies (Illus 2). The work was carried out between the 10th and 12th December 2018. Prior to excavation, utility plans were consulted and a cable avoidance tool was used to check for the presence of potential buried services. A 15m stand-off from overhead power lines was in place relative to the positioning of Trench 01 and its south-west end repositioned to ensure avoidance of the power line. Trenches were excavated using a 13t tracked, 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a bladed ditching bucket to depths where archaeological features were identified or geological deposits encountered.

Exposed archaeological remains and stratigraphic deposits (contexts) were recorded on Headland Archaeology pro forma record sheets with each recorded context assigned a unique number. Identified features and potential features were subsequently sample excavated

by hand to determine form, function and retrieve dateable material. The general stratigraphy of the site and interventions made were recorded photographically and digitally surveyed. Where appropriate, scale hand drawings were reproduced of sections through the exposed archaeological remains and the stratigraphic sequence identified on the site.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). Digital and black and white film photographs were taken of all trenches and identified features, with a graduated metric scale clearly visible. An overall site plan of the trenches and recorded features was digitally produced. Digital surveying was undertaken using a Trimble dGPS system.

## 4 RESULTS

Results are presented below with a preceding summary and description of the general stratigraphy across the entire site.

A summary of trenches and recorded contexts is presented in Appendix 1.

### 4.1 GENERAL STRATIGRAPHY

The soil profile across the site displayed general consistency in form between both fields.

The earliest deposit encountered was a mid-pinkish red, stoney, silty clay geological deposit (eg (0104), (0403)) identified as a probable glacial till or boulder clay, laid down by ice sheet movement. This was recorded at variable depths, between as little as 0.35m below ground level (bgl) in Trenches 05 and 07 and at over 1.00m bgl in Trench 01, indicating a variable and undulating geological horizon on the hillslopes.

Within Trench 03, an approximately 21m wide band of more pinkish red clay was also observed and its extent recorded.

Large boulders, measuring greater than 1m in length, were identified protruding out of identified geological deposits in Trench 02.

Underlying geological deposits were variably overlain by reddish brown stoney, silty clay colluvial deposits (eg (0103)) (Illus 3). A machined Sondage at the western end of Trench 01 revealed the colluvial sequence to continue beyond 1m bgl, measuring between 1.0m and 1.2m in thickness (Illus 4).

Sealing colluvial deposits was a reddish-brown silty clay subsoil (eg (0102)) which varied in thickness between 0.15 and 0.45m. Animal burrowing was observed and test-excavated in the subsoil in Trench 05, with a fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem recovered from the subsoil but not retained.

A dark brownish grey clayey silt topsoil (eg (0101)) formed the final deposit in the stratigraphic sequence. The deposit measured an average of 0.35m thick except in the vicinity of Trench 03, towards lower ordnance datum and slightly more level ground, where the thickness was as little as 0.20m. Quantities of glazed ceramic,



Legend:

- development boundary
- trench location
- non-archaeological feature

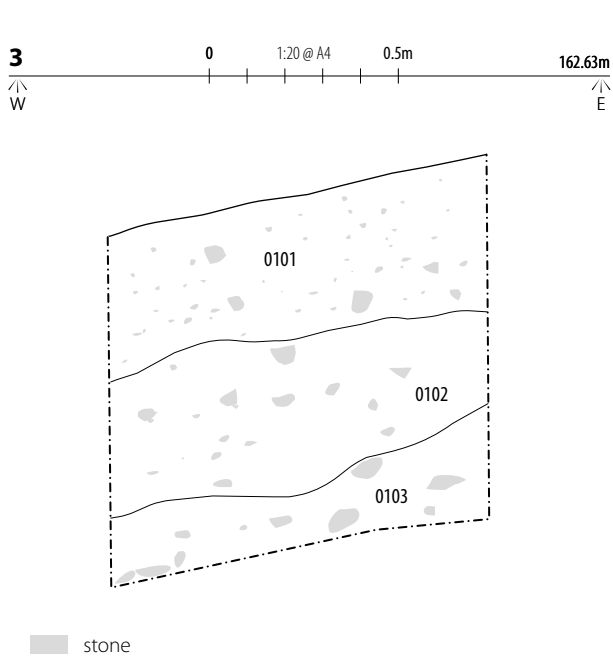
PREVIOUS GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY, SUMO 2017

- former field boundary (conjectural)
- uncertain origin (trend)
- natural
- ploughing
- ferrous

Scale: 0 25m  
1:1,250 @ A3

ILLUS 2 Trench plan showing geophysical anomalies





**ILLUS 3** South facing section through stratigraphic sequence, Trench 01  
**ILLUS 4** Machine sondage, Trench 01, looking south

including white glaze and blue and white transfer printed pottery, were observed within the topsoil though not retained, along with black bottle glass and clay tobacco pipe fragments.

## 4.2 NATURAL FEATURES

Within Trench 03 two irregular features were identified and test excavated (Illus 2). Feature [0307] measured a maximum of 1.63m wide, narrowing at its north-east extent, with an uneven base and irregular shallow sides. The feature contained a heterogeneous, stone silty clay fill (0308) with no identifiable anthropogenic inclusions. It was believed to represent a natural depression in the geology or possibly a shallow hill gully (Illus 5a).

Lying to the east of this, a broadly linear feature [0305] was identified containing a similarly heterogeneous, very stoney fill (0306) (Illus 5). The feature displayed no signs of having been deliberately cut and was very irregular, with suggestions of the fill undercutting and continuing below geological deposits. The feature was likely to have been natural in origin, probably representing root disturbance and/or animal burrowing.

In Trench 04, an irregular feature was test excavated and found to represent a tree bowl (Illus 6).

No archaeological remains were identified in any of the excavated trenches.

## 5 DISCUSSION

The most noticeable factor identified during the investigation was the variability in the depth of the trenches, often within individual trenches themselves. This appeared largely reflective of the general topography of the hillslope and an undulating underlying geology, with areas of steeper gradient evident and a slight natural 'terrace'

in the vicinity of Trenches 05, 06 and 07. Colluvial deposits were evidenced in greater depth towards the base of the hillslope, with a slight shallowing of the present topsoil towards the lower part of the site in the vicinity of Camden Crescent.

A general lack of artefactual evidence was noted in largely sterile, colluvial and subsoil deposits and was contrasted with numerous sherds of more recent glazed ceramic, glass and clay tobacco pipe fragments scattered through the topsoil. The depth of the topsoil and interface with the subsoil suggested that ploughing of the site had not occurred for some time with the land having been utilised as pasture for a protracted period. It is likely that the artefactual material observed may have derived from manuring of the site in the past. This could corroborate some of the linear trends identified by geophysical survey, perhaps either representing ploughed out remains of post-medieval ridge and furrow agriculture or indications of later plough activity. Though it should be noted that no plough-scarring or remnants of furrows were observed cutting into subsoil deposits following stripping of the topsoil.

Identified geophysical anomalies, particularly the linear trends, were not corroborated by evaluation and it is likely that these were signals resulting from changes within the topsoil. Large boulders within Trench 02, matched the position of geophysical anomalies described as natural in origin.

## 6 CONCLUSION

Archaeological evaluation of land at Cae Prior, Brecon identified no remains of archaeological interest. Modern or more recent artefacts observed within the topsoil suggested former ploughing of the site and more recent utilisation of the land for pasture for a protracted period. The evaluation has corroborated the conclusions of the geophysical survey, in that no responses of archaeological interest were identified.



**ILLUS 5** A General view of natural feature [0305], looking east B West facing section through [0307] **ILLUS 6** South-west facing section, Trench 04, showing tree bowl

## 7 REFERENCES

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014a *Code of Conduct* (Reading) <http://httpwww.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CodesofConduct.pdf> accessed November 2018

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## 8 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 TRENCH AND CONTEXT REGISTER

DBGL = depth below ground level

TR01	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	E-W	50	1.80	1.00
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DBGL (M)		
0101	Topsoil - Dark brownish grey, clayey silt containing frequent pea gravel, occasional sub-angular stones, glazed ceramic and clay pipe fragments	0-0.35		
0102	Subsoil - Mid reddish-brown silty clay containing frequent sub-angular stones and pea gravel	0.35-0.75		
0103	Colluvial deposit - Light reddish brown stoney, silty clay containing frequent gravel and occasional manganese fragments	0.75+		
0104	Geological deposit - Mid reddish pink, stoney silty clay	1.00+		
SUMMARY: NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS				



TR02	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NW-SE	50	1.80	0.60
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DBGL (M)		
0201	Topsoil - Dark brownish grey, clayey silt containing frequent pea gravel, occasional sub-angular stones, glazed ceramic and clay pipe fragments	0-0.35		
0202	Subsoil - Mid-reddish-brown silty clay containing frequent sub-angular stones and pea gravel	0.35-0.60		
0203	Geological deposit - Mid reddish pink, stoney silty clay	0.60+		
SUMMARY: NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS				



TR03	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NW-SE	50	1.80	0.50
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DBGL (M)		
0301	Topsoil - Dark brownish grey, clayey silt containing frequent pea gravel, occasional sub-angular stones, glazed ceramic and clay pipe fragments	0-0.35		
0302	Subsoil - Mid-reddish-brown silty clay containing frequent sub-angular stones and pea gravel	0.35-0.50		
0303	Geological deposit - Mid reddish pink, stoney silty clay	0.50+		
0304	Geological deposit - Pinkish brown, stoney silty clay	0.50+		
0305	Irregular feature, broadly linear, variably steep and gradually sloping sides, uneven base, NE-SW orientation 1.50m wide, 0.40m deep maximum - Natural feature	0.50		
0306	Fill of 0305 - Brownish grey stoney, silty clay	0.50		
0307	Broadly linear feature, NE-SW orientation, 1.63m wide x 0.24m deep, gradually sloping uneven sides, uneven base	0.50		
0308	Fill of 0307 - mid brown, stoney silty clay	0.50		



SUMMARY: NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS



TR04	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NW-SE	50	1.80	0.80
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DBGL (M)		
0401	Topsoil – Dark brownish grey clayey silt containing frequent sub-round and sub-angular stones, pea gravel, occasional glazed ceramics and clay pipe fragments	0–0.35		
0402	Subsoil – Dark reddish brown, silty clay containing frequent sub-angular stones and gravels	0.35–0.60		
0403	Geological deposit, Mid-pinkish red stone and silty clay containing occasional manganese fragments	0.80+		
0404	Colluvial deposit - Mid pinkish brown stoney, silty clay	0.60+		
SUMMARY: NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS – SINGLE TREE BOWL				



TR05	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	E-W	50	1.80	0.50/1.00
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DBGL (M)		
0501	Topsoil – Dark brownish grey clayey silt containing frequent sub-round and sub-angular stones, pea gravel, occasional glazed ceramics and clay pipe fragments	0–0.35		
0502	Subsoil – Dark reddish brown, silty clay containing frequent sub-angular stones and gravels	0.35–0.70		
0503	Geological deposit, Mid-pinkish red stone and silty clay containing occasional manganese fragments	0.70–1.00		
0504	Colluvial deposit - Light reddish brown, silty clay containing frequent sub-angular stones	1.00+		
SUMMARY: NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS				



TR06	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NE-SW	50	1.80	0.60
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DBGL (M)		
0601	Topsoil – Dark brownish grey clayey silt containing frequent sub-round and sub-angular stones, pea gravel, occasional glazed ceramics and clay pipe fragments	0–0.35		
0602	Subsoil – Dark reddish brown, silty clay containing frequent sub-angular stones and gravels	0.35–0.60		
0603	Geological deposit, Mid-pinkish red stone and silty clay containing occasional manganese fragments	0.60+		
SUMMARY: NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS				



TR07	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NW-SE	50	1.80	0.50/0.95
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DBGL (M)		
0701	Topsoil – Dark brownish grey clayey silt containing frequent sub-round and sub-angular stones, pea gravel, occasional glazed ceramics and clay pipe fragments	0–0.35		
0702	Subsoil – Dark reddish brown, silty clay containing frequent sub-angular stones and gravels	0.35–0.95		
0703	Geological deposit, Mid-pinkish red stone and silty clay containing occasional manganese fragments	0.95+		
SUMMARY: NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS				







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