



Brechfa Forest West, Wind Farm Carmarthenshire, South Wales

Watching Brief Report



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County

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Statutory designations dedicated open access land

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Planning reference -

Museum name Carmarthen Museum

Museum accession code TBC

WA project code 114931

Dates of fieldwork 25/10/2016 – 09/10/2017 intermittant visits

Fieldwork carried out by R Krakowicz and L Powell

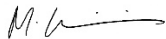
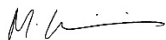
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3			



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Plate 1 Representative SW facing section from strip along access road showing natural deposits below topsoil. 1m scale,

Plate 2 Natural deposits below topsoil in a NE facing representative section from the new compound area. 1m scale.



Summary

Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Amec Foster Wheeler to carry out an archaeological watching brief on a 1.04 ha area of land in Brecha Forest West.

The Site is centred on National Grid Reference NGR 48733 32728, 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 covers an area of approximately 1,041ha, although the actual development only occupies approximately 4.1% of this.

As a previous evaluation on the site had not exposed any archaeological remains, it was decided to undertake a limited programme of archaeological monitoring during groundworks in specific areas of the development believed to have the most archaeological potential.

The watching brief uncovered only natural soil deposits and no archaeological finds or features were exposed, suggesting a lack of any significant activity within the site.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Amec Foster Wheeler, for commissioning the archaeological evaluation, in particular Hilary Valler and James Glynn for their assistance. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Development Management (DAT DM), who monitored the project for Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC), and to Farrans and Innology for their cooperation and help on site.



Brechfa Forest West, Wind Farm Carmarthenshire South Wales

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Amec Foster Wheeler (hereafter 'AFW' or 'the Client') to carry out an archaeological watching brief 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 (**Fig 1**).

1.1.2 The watching brief was required as part of the Development Consent Order granted for the erection of up to 28 wind turbines at the Brechfa Forest site. Requirement 26 of the DCO states that:

- 1) No authorised development shall commence until a scheme of archaeological investigation has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority.
- 2) The scheme of archaeological investigation shall incorporate:
 - a) A walkover survey before commencement of the authorised development;
 - b) Trial trenches at the sites of wind turbines W13, W17, W18, W19 and W23; and
 - c) A watching brief during construction to record both established archaeological remains and any remains subsequently identified at present.
- 3) The scheme of archaeological investigation shall be implemented as approved.

1.1.3 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the WSI which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed (Amec 2015). Dyfed Archaeological Trust Development Management (DAT DM) approved the WSI on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing. The watching brief was undertaken intermittently between the 25th October 2016 and the 9th October 2017.

1.2 Scope of the report

1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the watching brief, to interpret the results within their local or regional context (or otherwise), and to assess their potential to address the aims outlined in the WSI, thereby making available information about the archaeological resource (preservation by record).

1.3 Location, topography and geology

1.3.1 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).

1.3.2 The proposed wind farm 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.



- 1.3.3 The elevation of the Site ranges from 260m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the south-west to 358m aOD in the north-east.
- 1.3.4 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 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.
- 1.3.5 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 (AMEC, 2015).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

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

2.2 Previous investigations related to the development

Archaeological Evaluation

- 2.2.1 In October 2016 an archaeological evaluation consisting of ten trenches was carried out at key locations within the site. No in-situ archaeological finds or features were exposed during the evaluation and the lack of any residual finds suggests the site had been devoid of any significant activity (WA 2017).

2.3 Archaeological and historical context

Prehistoric Period (500,000- 700 BC)

- 2.3.1 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.
- 2.3.2 Although Bronze Age settlement sites are scarce in South West Wales they are not unknown, e.g. Carn Ingli and Carn Llwyd, Pembrokeshire and Garreg Las, Carmarthenshire (DAT DM), the number of round barrows and standing stones in the study area and surrounding landscape 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 be expected within the proposed Site.

Iron Age and Romano-British (700 BC- 410)

- 2.3.3 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.

- 2.3.4 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.

Saxon (410- 1066)

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

Medieval (1066-1500)

- 2.3.6 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.

Post-medieval and modern (1500-present)

- 2.3.7 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.
- 2.3.8 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.
- 2.3.9 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.
- 2.3.10 A walkover survey was conducted prior to the 2016 evaluation; however, no useful data could be collected due to the impact on the land from forestry.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief, as stated in the WSI (Amec 2015) and as defined in the ClfA' *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a), were:
- To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of the development or other works;
 - To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been



made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and

- 4) To guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the objectives of the watching brief, also defined in the WSI (Amec 2015), were:

- 5) To determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified works area;
- 6) To record and establish, within the constraints of the works, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains (a preservation by record);
- 7) To place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- 8) To make available information about the archaeological resource on the site by preparing a report on the results of the watching brief.

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the WSI (Amec 2015/2016) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

4.2.1 The Technical note to the WSI of January 2017 (Revision 2) identified the following areas to be monitored:

- monitoring associated with the east end of access track from A485 to the forest;
- monitoring for construction compound hardstanding;
- site visit to be undertaken during the topsoil strip at the substation building groundworks;
- site visit to be undertaken during the topsoil strip at the monitoring for electrical compound groundworks;
- no monitoring for turbines 13, 18, 23, 24 and trackway groundworks;
- monitoring for cable trenching between 13 and 18.

4.2.2 Following initial negative results, it was decided after consultation between AFW and the DAT DM that monitoring turbines 13, 18, 23, 24 and trackway groundworks would not be required (see Appendix 2).

4.2.3 During works the cable route between T13 and T18 was changed from a direct route between the turbines to a route following the trackway. The links from the turbines to the trackway were monitored and the works along the trackway route were intermittently monitored (Fig 1).

4.2.4 Works on the trackways, compounds and substation were monitored as agreed (Fig 1).



- 4.2.5 Spoil derived from both machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for artefacts. No archaeological finds were recovered.

Recording

- 4.2.6 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of monitored areas. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSGM15 and OSTN15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.
- 4.2.7 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Artefactual and environmental strategies

- 4.3.1 Appropriate strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of artefacts and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Amex 2015/1026). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b) and *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011).

4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 DAT DM, on behalf of the LPA, monitored the watching brief. The variations to the WSI including the reduction in areas to be monitored were agreed in advance with both the client and DAT DM.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The watching brief recorded no archaeological finds or features. There was no evidence for archaeological activity in any of the areas monitored.

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

- 5.2.1 Soil sequences followed a similar pattern across the watching brief, with natural degraded bedrock, normally a mixture of mudstones and clays (1103, 1203, 1303), at between 0.20 m and 0.40 m below ground surface (BGS).
- 5.2.2 Overlaying this was a more disturbed layer that formed an interface between the natural bedrock and the topsoils, with evidence for bioturbation and root disturbance (1102, 1202, 1302). The uppermost topsoils were generally recorded as being dark reddish-brown humic peaty silts, heavily disturbed by rooting and containing frequent small fragments of mudstone and occasional fragments of quartz (1101, 1201, 1301) (**Plates 1 and 2**).

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Summary

- 6.1.1 The archaeological watching brief confirmed the results of the previous evaluation and indicated that the site had not been subject to any intensive occupation during its history. No evidence was found was short term settlement or activity across the land, with no



residual finds being recovered. It is likely that the heavy rooting caused by the forestry plantation would have destroyed any traces of activity, had there been any.

7 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

7.1.1 The archive resulting from the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Bristol. Carmarthen Museum has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project, under an accession code (TBC with Carmarthen Museum). Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.

7.2 Preparation of the archive

7.2.1 The archive, which includes paper 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 following nationally guidelines (NPAAW 2017).

7.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the WA Site 114931 code, the Museum temporary code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 1 file/document case of paper records and A3/A4 graphics;

7.3 Selection policy

7.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows national guidelines on selection and retention (SMA 1993; Brown 2011, section 4). In accordance with these, and any specific guidance prepared by the museum, a process of selection and retention will be followed so that only those artefacts or ecofacts that are considered to have potential for future study will be retained. The selection policy will be agreed with the museum, and is fully documented in the project archive.

7.4 Security copy

7.4.1 In line with current best practice (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.

7.5 Reporting and OASIS

7.5.1 Once approved by DAT DM, the report will be submitted to the Dyfedd HER. The HER will create an event and upload the event data and report to OASIS.

8 COPYRIGHT

8.1 Archive and report copyright

8.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was



produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. 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 conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*. In some instances, certain regional museums may require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

- 8.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

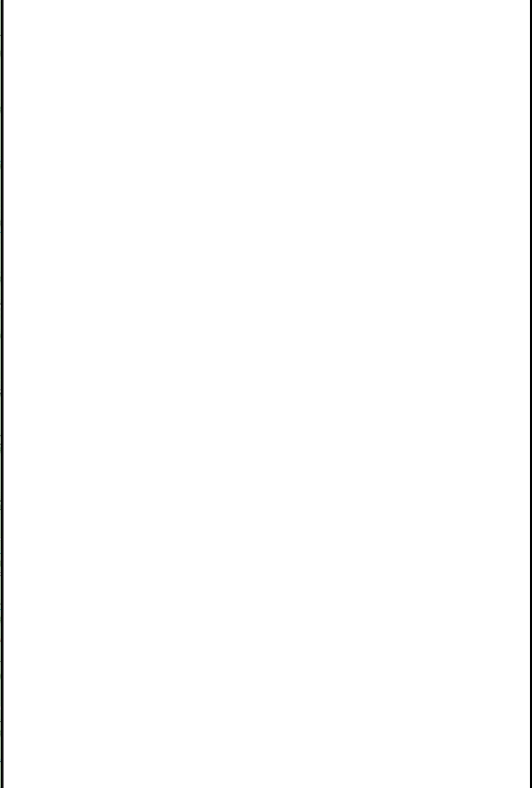
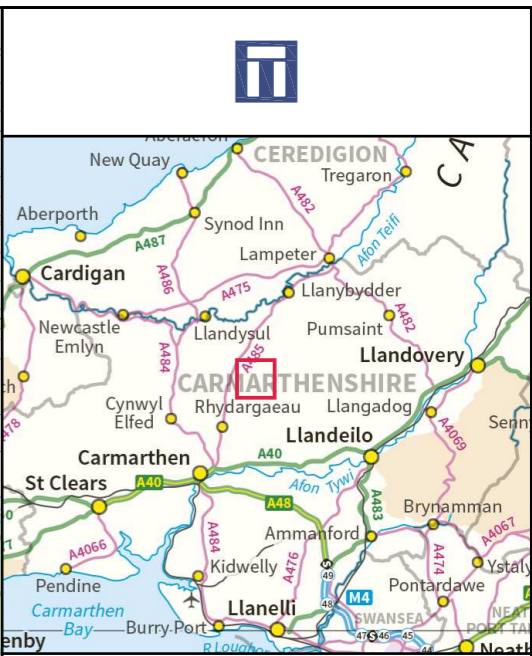
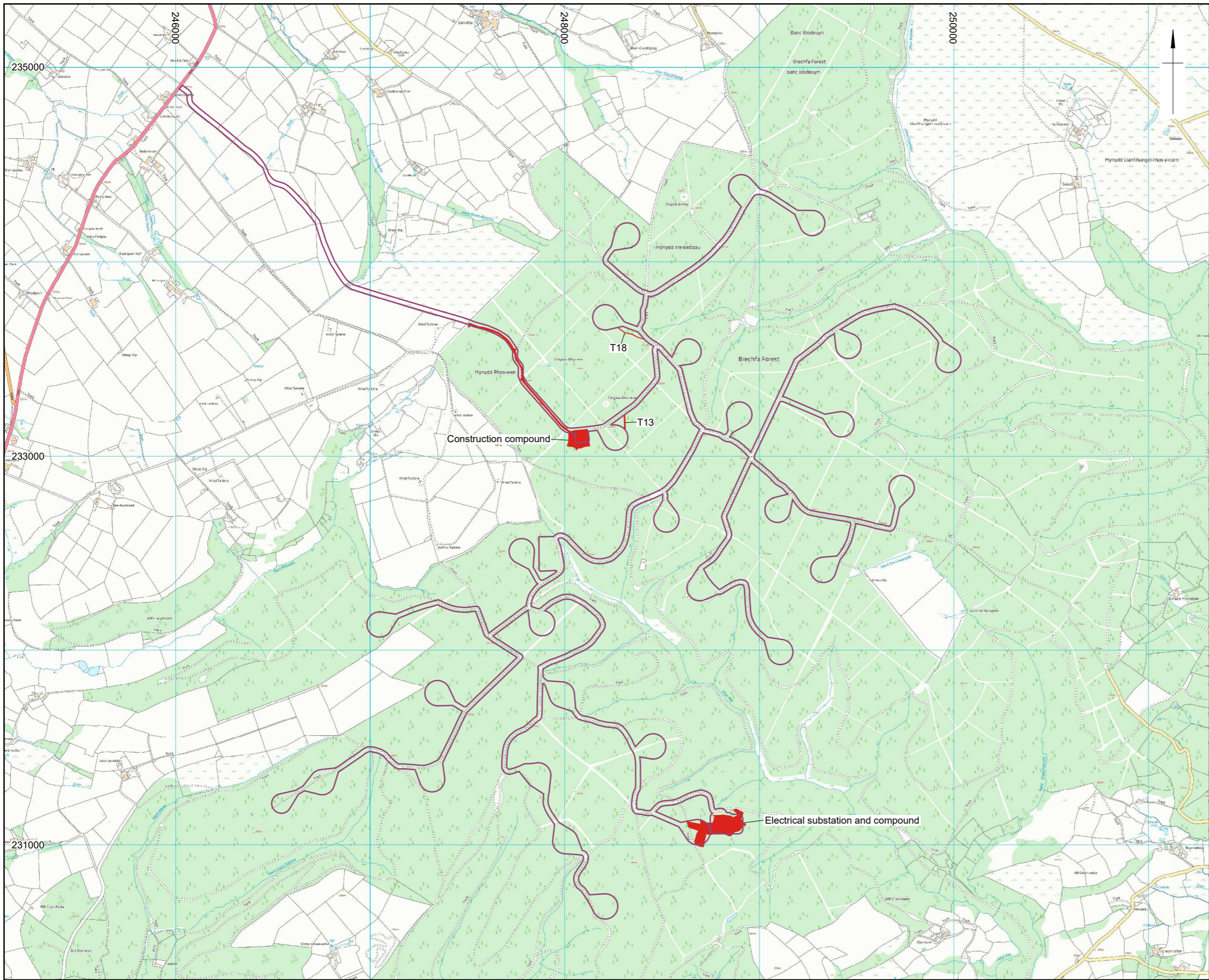
8.2 Third party data copyright

- 8.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (eg, Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.



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Scheme
 Watching brief area

Base mapping supplied by the client.
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Site location plan



Plate 1: Representative south-west facing section from strip along access road showing natural deposits below topsoil. 1m scale



Plate 2: Natural deposits below topsoil in a north-east facing representative section from the new compound area. 1m scale

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9 APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix 1: Context summary list

Context	Category	Description	Depth (bgl)
		access road to new compound and track	
1101	Deposit	Topsoil: Dark reddish-brown to black humic silt, peaty, very occasional fragments of mudstone and quartz pebbles, heavily root disturbed	0.0 - 0.30m
1102	Deposit	Subsoil: Pale pinkish-grey silty-clay with fragments of degraded natural, interface deposit	0.30 – 0.40m
1103	Natural	Degraded bedrock, pale grey and orange mudstone and silts	0.40m +
1104	Layer	Hardcore, crushed mudstone surface of existing forest track over topsoil	0.0-0.40m
1105	Cut	Cut of modern drainage ditch running alongside existing forest track. 1.60 m wide.	0.0-0.40m
1106	Deposit	Spoil/upcast from modern ditch 1105	-
1107	Fill	Silting up of ditch 1105	0.0-0.40
Trench 2			
1201	Deposit	Topsoil: Dark reddish-brown to black humic silt, peaty, very occasional fragments of mudstone and quartz pebbles, heavily root disturbed	0.0 – 0.10m
1202	Deposit	Subsoil: Pale pinkish-grey silty-clay with fragments of degraded natural	0.10 – 0.20m
1203	Natural	Degraded bedrock, pale grey mudstone and silts	0.20 – +
Trench 3			
1301	Deposit	Topsoil: Dark reddish-brown to black humic silt, peaty, very occasional fragments of mudstone and quartz pebbles, heavily root disturbed and furrowed	0.0 – 0.14m
1302	Deposit	Subsoil: Pale pinkish-grey silty-clay with fragments of degraded natural	0.14 – 0.20m
1303	Natural	Degraded bedrock, pale grey mudstone and silts	0.20 – 0.50m



9.2 Appendix 2: Revised monitoring requirement

From: [Valler, Hilary](#)
To: [Matt Williams](#)
Cc: [Glynn, James](#)
Subject: FW: Update of Archaeological Monitoring at Brechfa Forest
Date: 30 January 2017 09:15:06

Good morning Matt,

Please find comment from Mike Ings regarding the revised monitoring requirements. I will revise the WSI and get this issued in the next couple of days but in the meantime please only undertake the work as noted below.

- monitoring associated with the east end of access track from A485 to the forest (completed);
- monitoring for construction compound hardstanding (completed/ongoing);
- site visit to be undertaken during the topsoil strip at the substation building groundworks;
- site visit to be undertaken during the topsoil strip at the monitoring for electrical compound groundworks;
- no monitoring for turbines 13, 18, 23, 24 and trackway groundworks;
- monitoring for cable trenching between 13 and 18.

Any queries please let me know, I look forward to receiving the information regarding the revised programme.

Kind regards,
Hilary

From: Mike Ings [mailto:M.Ings@DYFEDARCHAEOLOGY.ORG.UK]
Sent: 27 January 2017 12:44
To: Valler, Hilary <Hilary.Valler@amecfw.com>
Subject: RE: Update of Archaeological Monitoring at Brechfa Forest

Dear Hilary

Thanks for your email – I'm happy for you to revise the WSI in line with the proposals you've set out.

With best regards
Mike

From: Valler, Hilary [mailto:Hilary.Valler@amecfw.com]
Sent: 26 January 2017 15:34
To: Mike Ings
Subject: Update of Archaeological Monitoring at Brechfa Forest

Good afternoon Mike,

I hope all is going well.

Just to update you with progress of the archaeological monitoring to this point, the results have

been negative (excavations are through the mulch and straight onto bedrock, no deposits or cuttings have been identified) with the east end of the access track from the A485 and construction compound excavation monitored, please see below in regard to the areas originally agreed.

- monitoring associated with the east end of access track from A485 to the forest;
- monitoring for construction compound hardstanding;
- monitoring for substation building groundworks;
- monitoring for electrical compound groundworks;
- monitoring for turbines 13, 18, 23, 24 and trackway groundworks;
- monitoring for cable trenching between 13 and 18.

Following the negative results which have been observed during the monitoring, I would like to propose the reduction of the areas to be archaeologically monitored going forward. With the substation and electrical compound a good distance from the scheduled monuments I would like to suggest that monitoring is not undertaken and instead we would propose to undertake a site visit whilst these areas are being stripped and that no monitoring is undertaken at turbines 13, 18, 23 and 24 (areas where trial trenching was undertaken).

I do think that the cable trenching between 13 and 18 should be undertaken due to the near vicinity of the scheduled monuments. Therefore, we would propose that the WSI be updated to comprise the following activities:

- monitoring associated with the east end of access track from A485 to the forest (completed);
- monitoring for construction compound hardstanding (completed/ongoing);
- site visit to be undertaken during the topsoil strip at the substation building groundworks;
- site visit to be undertaken during the topsoil strip at the monitoring for electrical compound groundworks;
- no monitoring for turbines 13, 18, 23, 24 and trackway groundworks;
- monitoring for cable trenching between 13 and 18.

I would appreciate it if you could provide me with your thoughts and please contact if you wish to discuss this further.

Kind regards,
Hilary

Hilary Valler

Principal Consultant, Historic Environment
Amec Foster Wheeler Environment & Infrastructure UK Limited

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From: Valler, Hilary
Sent: 19 December 2016 14:40
To: 'Mike Ings' <M.Ings@DYFEDARCHAEOLOGY.ORG.UK>
Subject: RE: WSI for Archaeological Monitoring at Brechfa Forest

Merry Christmas and happy new year to you too.

Best wishes,
Hilary

From: Mike Ings [<mailto:M.Ings@DYFEDARCHAEOLOGY.ORG.UK>]
Sent: 19 December 2016 14:37
To: Valler, Hilary <Hilary.Valler@amecfw.com>
Subject: RE: WSI for Archaeological Monitoring at Brechfa Forest

Thanks Hilary, all good.

Wishing you a very happy Christmas
Mike

From: Valler, Hilary [<mailto:Hilary.Valler@amecfw.com>]
Sent: 19 December 2016 14:28
To: Mike Ings
Subject: RE: WSI for Archaeological Monitoring at Brechfa Forest

Good afternoon Mike,

Please find attached the amended WSI document for your approval.

Kind regards,
Hilary

From: Mike Ings [<mailto:M.Ings@DYFEDARCHAEOLOGY.ORG.UK>]
Sent: 16 December 2016 09:19
To: Valler, Hilary <Hilary.Valler@amecfw.com>
Subject: RE: WSI for Archaeological Monitoring at Brechfa Forest

Hi Hilary

Document looks fine – just one minor point, could you amend the two references in para.1.1.4 to make it clear that it is Dyfed Archaeological Trust Development Management or DAT DM.
Thanks.

Best wishes
Mike

From: Valler, Hilary [<mailto:Hilary.Valler@amecfw.com>]
Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2016 6:18 PM
To: Mike Ings
Cc: Glynn, James
Subject: WSI for Archaeological Monitoring at Brechfa Forest

Hi Mike,

Please could you review this very brief document which sets out the locations of the monitoring and references the original approved WSI.

We are intending that monitoring may start next week but more probably in the new year.

Kind regards,
Hilary

Hilary Valler

Principal Consultant, Historic Environment
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