

YBMP18



# YSGOL BRO HYDDGEN, MACHYNLLETH, POWYS

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

commissioned by The Environmental Design Partnership  
on behalf of Dawnus Construction

December 2018



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#### PROJECT INFO:

HA Project Code **YBMP18** / HAS No. **1320** / NGR **SH 74312**  
**00538** / Parish **Montgomeryshire** / Local Authority **Powys County Council** / Archive Repository  
**RCAHMW**

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by Dawnus Construction, through their agents The Environmental Design Partnership, to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation on the playing field of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen, Machynlleth, Powys. The work was undertaken to inform plans to develop the site as a new school complex. Four trenches were excavated in November 2018 over possible archaeological features identified by a previous geophysical survey. Two ditches were uncovered towards the north of the site, which appeared to be agricultural in nature, and contained post medieval and modern pottery.

Comisiynwyd Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd gan Dawnus Construction, trwy eu hasiantau Environmental Design Partnership, i wneud gwaith gwerthuso archaeolegol mewn rychauarbrofolarfaeschwarae Ysgol Bro Hyddgen, Machynlleth, Powys. Diben y gwaith oedd darparu sail ar gyfer cynlluniau i ddatblygu'r safle fel cyfadail ysgol newydd. Cloddiwyd pedair rych ym mis Tachwedd 2018 dros nodweddion archaeolegol posibl a oedd wedi'u nodi mewn arolwg geoffisegol blaenorol. Datgelwyd dwy ffos tuag at ogledd y safle a oedd, mae'n debyg, yn amaethyddol eu natur, ac roeddent yn cynnwys crochenwaith ôl-ganoloesol a modern.



# CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE	1
3	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	1
4	OBJECTIVES	3
5	METHOD	3
6	RESULTS	3
	6.1 GENERAL SITE STRATIGRAPHY	3
	6.2 TRENCH 1	3
	6.3 TRENCH 2	3
	6.4 TRENCHES 3 AND 4	3
7	DISCUSSION	4
8	REFERENCES	4

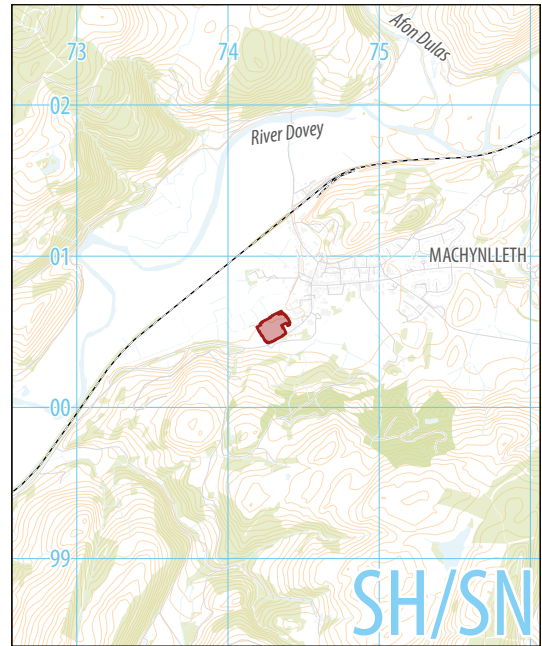
# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<b>ILLUS 1</b>	SITE LOCATION	VIII
<b>ILLUS 2</b>	SITE PLAN	2
<b>ILLUS 3</b>	SOUTH FACING SECTION OF [0104]	4
<b>ILLUS 4</b>	SOUTH-WEST FACING SECTION OF [0106]	4

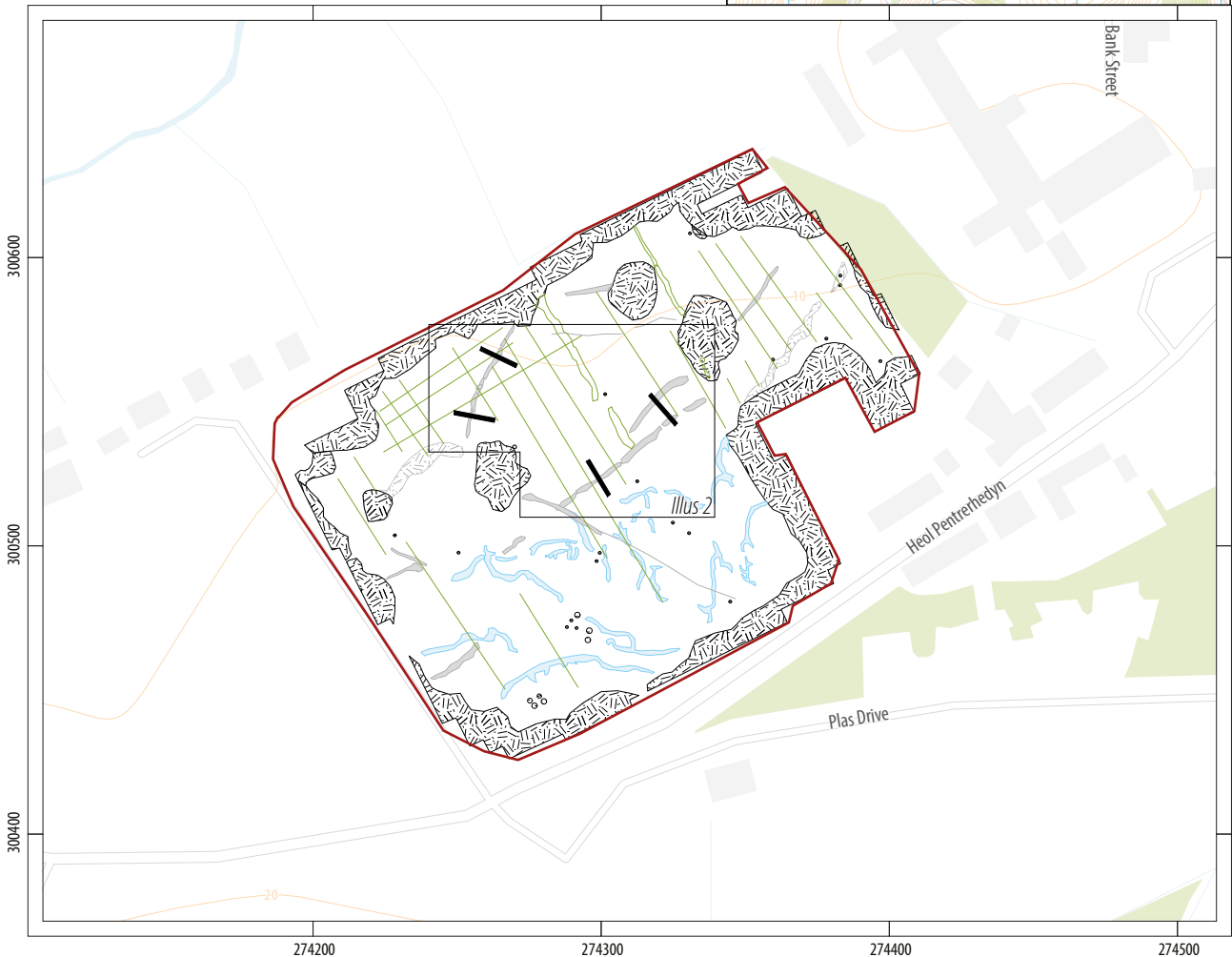
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen  
 Pentrerhedyn Street  
 Machynlleth  
 Wales



0 200km  
 1:12,500,000 @ A4



SH/SN



0 50m  
 1:2,500 @ A4

- development boundary
- trench location
- linear trend
- magnetic enhancement
- dipolar/spread magnetic disturbance
- agricultural geology
- archaeological?
- ferrous material

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ILLUS 1 Site location



# YSGOL BRO HYDDGEN, MACHYNLLETH, POWYS

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Dawnus Construction, through their agents The Environmental Design Partnership, commissioned Headland Archaeology to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation on the playing field of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen, Machynlleth, Powys. The works were undertaken in support of a planning application for the development of the site as a new school complex. A planning application at PAC stage was submitted on 22nd October 2018. A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by Headland Archaeology for the trial trench evaluation (Craddock-Bennett 2018). This evaluation was intended to provide further information about the archaeological resource, to enable appropriate decisions to be reached regarding the need, or otherwise, for further investigatory work.

### 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The site is located approximately 300m south-west of the centre of Machynlleth, in the playing fields of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen (NGR SH 74312 00538) (Illus 1). The site occupies a flat area in the bottom of the Dyfi Valley, bounded by the A487 road to the south and east, further fields to the west, and further fields and the Machynlleth urban area to the north. A small stream runs along the northern and eastern boundaries.

The underlying geology comprises mudstone and sandstone of the Devil's Bridge Formation. Superficial deposits are composed of gravel from alluvial fan deposits (NERC 2018).

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

### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site's potential for containing unrecorded archaeological remains has been assessed (EDP 2018). Consideration of HER and NMRW data, coupled with an observation that the site comprises a low gravel terrace above the flood plain of the River Dyfi, indicated a low-moderate potential for remains from the Bronze Age – Iron Age, the Roman period and the medieval period. However, it was also apparent that development of the site for a school in the early – mid 20th century would have resulted in considerable disturbance of the ground surface.

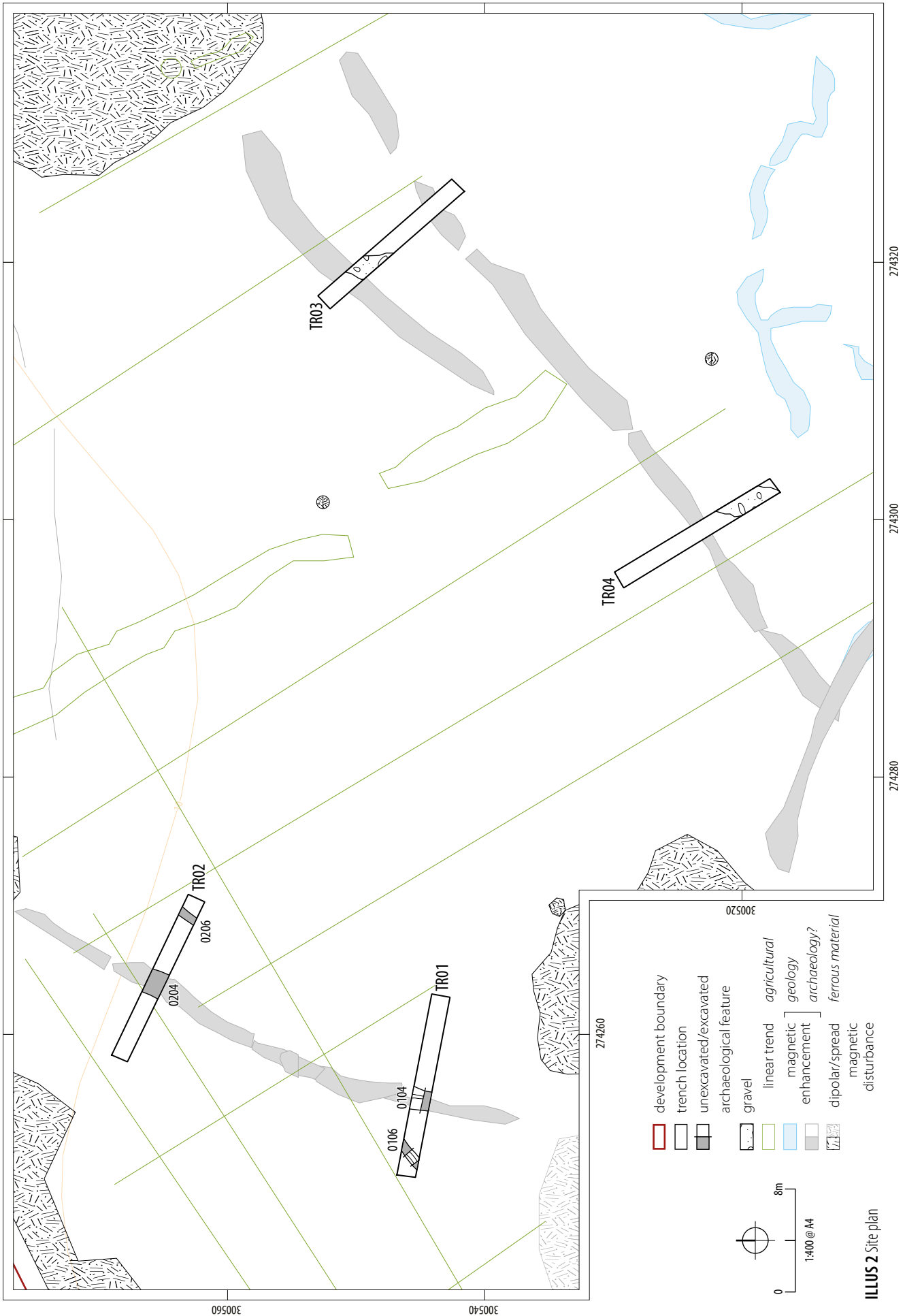
A geophysical survey was carried out across the open, south-western parts of the site (Magnitude 2018). This did not detect any magnetic responses of certain archaeological origin. Linear anomalies were recorded, most of which probably reflect the buried infilled remains of the ditches of former field boundaries, as recorded on historic maps. Some of the linear features were not found on historic maps and were therefore thought to possibly reflect the presence of ditches predating the establishment of the post-medieval field system. As such, these features were thought to possibly represent archaeological remains, or equally possibly drainage features related to the site's agricultural history, that were simply unrecorded.

These previously unrecorded linear features identified by geophysical survey was targeted by the trial trenching exercise.

### 4 OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the programme of works were as follows:

- › to gather further information to try and establish the presence/absence, character, and extent of any archaeological remains



ILLUS 2 Site plan

within the areas to be impacted by the proposed development, and to inform further strategies should they be necessary, and

- › to produce and deposit a satisfactory archive and disseminate the results of the work via grey-literature reporting and publication as appropriate.

## 5 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 four trenches (each measuring 15m x 1.6m) were excavated over the previously unrecorded ditch features identified by the geophysical survey (Illus 2). All trenches were opened by a 360° tracked excavator equipped with a 1.6m wide ditching bucket under direct archaeological supervision and were excavated in controlled spits. Machine excavation terminated at the top of the natural geology, with spoil being stored beside the trench. All fieldwork was carried out on 1st November 2018.

Exposed archaeological remains were recorded on pro forma record sheets and identified features were excavated by hand. The stratigraphic sequence was recorded in full in each of the trenches, even where no archaeological deposits were identified.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). The recorded contexts were assigned unique numbers and recording was undertaken on Headland Archaeology pro forma trench and context record sheets. Digital raw photographs were taken of all trenches and identified features, with a graduated metric scale clearly visible, and were supplemented by corresponding jpeg images for illustrative purposes. An overall site plan of the trenches and recorded features was digitally produced and was accurately linked to the National Grid and heights to AOD. Digital surveying was undertaken using a Trimble dGPS system.

## 6 RESULTS

### 6.1 GENERAL SITE STRATIGRAPHY

The soil profile was generally consistent in all trenches across the site. The natural geological deposit encountered in all trenches was a mid-brownish orange slightly clayey sand and poorly sorted gravel, with small patches of light greyish gravels in places. This was encountered at depths from 0.35m to 0.45m below ground surface.

Overlying this deposit was a mid-brownish grey silty clay subsoil, which contained frequent small sub rounded stones. This deposit was seen to be shallower to the north of the site, with a thickness varying between 0.09m and 0.14m in trenches 1 and 2. Towards the south of the site in trenches 3 and 4, it was seen to be deeper, with thicknesses between 0.18m and 0.20m.

Overlying the subsoil was a mid-greyish brown silty clay topsoil, which contained frequent small sub rounded stone inclusions. This deposit showed a generally consistent thickness across the whole site, varying between 0.21m and 0.28m.

### 6.2 TRENCH 1

Trench 1 uncovered two linear features. Feature [0104], located near to the centre of the trench, was a north-south orientated ditch. It measured 1.75m wide and 0.32m deep and had a generally 'U' shaped profile, with the east side being slightly steeper than the west (Illus 3). It was filled with a loose mid-brownish grey clayey silt, that contained frequent small sub rounded stones. This was interpreted as being the result of gradual sedimentation over time. One piece of post-medieval pottery was recovered from this fill. One large piece of slate, visible in section at the edge of the trench seemed to imply that this feature was cut through the subsoil, although no cut line was visible in the section. This feature is likely to be some form of agricultural boundary or land division.

Feature [0106] was a north-east/south-west orientated ditch, located in the north-west of the trench. It was 0.75m wide and 0.13m deep and had a very shallow 'U' shaped profile (Illus 4). It contained a single fill, which was a mid-brownish grey silty clay with frequent small and medium sub-rounded stones. As with (0105), this also appeared to be the result of sedimentation of this ditch over time. Two pieces of pottery were recovered from this ditch, one being post-medieval and the other modern in date. It is likely that this feature was some form of drainage ditch.

### 6.3 TRENCH 2

Two features were identified in Trench 2. Feature [0204] was a NNE-SSW running linear, located near to the centre of the trench. It measured 1.90m wide. It was seen to be a continuation of ditch [0104] and was therefore recorded in plan only. The fill of this ditch (0205) appeared to be the same as (0105).

Feature [0106] was a north-east/south-west aligned linear, located towards the south-east end of the trench, which measured 0.58m wide. It was apparent that this feature was a continuation of feature [0106] in Trench 1, with its fill (0207) being the same deposit as (0107). As such this feature was recorded in plan only, as with [0204].

### 6.4 TRENCHES 3 AND 4

No archaeological features or deposits were identified in Trenches 3 and 4. A 2-3m wide natural band of gravel was noted running roughly NE – SW across the two trenches, appearing in the north-west end of Trench 3 and the south-east end of Trench 4.



ILLUS 3 South facing section of [0104] ILLUS 4 South-west facing section of [0106]

## 7 DISCUSSION

Features [0104] and [0204] in Trenches 1 and 2 correspond with the linear geophysical anomaly upon which these trenches were targeted. This feature appears to be some form of agricultural boundary of post-medieval date. Features [0106] and [0206] appear to be the same ditch, running roughly north-east/south-west across the site, and appear to be a relatively modern drainage ditch. It was not picked up on the geophysical survey, likely due to its shallow nature.

No evidence was found in Trenches 3 and 4 for the linear geophysical anomaly that these trenches were targeted over. It is possible that this anomaly was caused by something more recent within the topsoil or subsoil, but there is nothing to confirm this. The band of natural gravels noticed in these two trenches may have accounted for the other linear geophysical anomaly towards the north-west of Trench 3.

## 8 REFERENCES

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