

**ACCESS ROAD FOR CSN PRECISION ENGINEERING,
NEATH ABBEY
NEATH,
NEATH PORT TALBOT.**

NGR: SS 7450 9747 (CENTRED)

**WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION
FOR A WATCHING BRIEF**

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DRAFT

Quality Assurance

This Document has been compiled and authorised in accordance with
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Figure 1: Site Location Plan

ACCESS ROAD FOR CSN ENGINEERING, NEATH ABBEY, NEATH PORT TALBOT: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out details of an additional Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a watching brief during the construction of an access road for CSN Engineering, Neath Abbey, Neath Port Talbot (NGR: SS 7450 9747 (centred), in accordance with the general principles of GGAT and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).
- 1.2 Foundations Archaeology is certified to ISO 9001:2015 for quality assurance in the provision of archaeological and heritage services. The company is a Registered Organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and subscribes to that organisations Code of Conduct. All relevant CIfA Codes of Practice will be adhered to throughout the course of the project.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There is currently a proposal to remodel the access road at CSN Engineering, Neath. Due to it's close proximity to known significant archaeological remains there will be a requirement for archaeological mitigation during all groundworks. The mitigation will initially be for a watching brief during groundworks, however, if archaeological features are identified during these works then there may be a requirement for archaeological excavation.
- 2.2 The proposed development is within an area of high archaeological potential. A Scheduled Monument (GM 215) in the form of a Roman fort (*Nidum*) is located approximately 200m northeast of the site. A vicus to the fort is known to the east of the monument and a road is known on the western side. It is possible that a vicus may exist on the west, or that the cemetery associated with the fort might also lie on this side. It is believed (N. Maylan pers com) that the Roman road should approximately run along the northeast-southwest aligned part of Llys-y-Coed and would cross the site in a straight line extrapolated from the end of that road.
- 2.3 The Roman settlement at Neath occupied a low plateau on the western bank of the River Neath and the first fort, covering approximately 3.3ha, was probably constructed between AD 75 and 80. This was followed by the construction of a slightly smaller fort of 2.3ha between AD 80 - 90 which was continuously occupied until abandonment around AD 125. It was re-occupied between AD 140 and 170, and there is also evidence of a later military phase between AD 275 and 320.

- 2.4 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken across the site in 2008 by Foundations Archaeology. The evaluation identified well preserved archaeological deposits within Trenches 1, 2 and 3, in the northwestern half of the site. These consisted of a probable Roman road roughly aligned west northwest-east southeast, along with stone demolition rubble and cut features, which predominately dated to the Roman period. It was considered likely that the road was associated with the nearby fort. Within the site, the road was found to post-date a large linear ditch(es), which may have been part of an earlier phase of fortification.
- 2.5 The excavation by Foundations Archaeology in 2021 (report forthcoming) has revealed evidence for a probable early Roman fort within the site in the form of two parallel defensive ditches. Following this work, it is now clear that the stone surface previously identified as a possible road was part of these early Roman fortifications.
- 2.6 A Cistercian Abbey (GM 006) lies slightly less than 1km to the southwest of the proposed development area. The Abbey was initially founded in 1130 by Savigniac monks and was absorbed by the Cistercian monastic order in 1147.
- 2.7 The geology within the site comprises *Swansea Member - Sandstone* with superficial deposits of *Glaciofluvial Sheet Deposits, Devensian - Sand and Gravel* recorded (BGS – on line viewer). The site is currently open ground and slopes down slightly from north to south towards the River Neath, from approximately 7.5m to 6m AOD.
- 2.8 The site therefore contains the potential for archaeological features and deposits, predominantly dating to the Roman period onwards. This will not prejudice the works against the recovery of data relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological investigation is to gather high quality data from the direct observation and recording of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains.
- 3.2 These aims will be achieved through pursuit of the following objectives:
- i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
 - ii) to attempt to characterise the nature and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning and extent of features present on the site;

- iii) to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence which will attempt to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;
- iv) to determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 All groundworks for the proposed remodelling of the access road that have the potential to impact upon archaeological deposits will be undertaken whilst under the constant observation of an archaeologist.
- 4.2 Where machine excavation is required this will be used only for the removal of overburden that has no archaeological significance. Plant will be suitable for the task and will be equipped with a **toothless grading bucket** as appropriate. Archaeological hand-excavation and recording will be required should significant archaeological deposits be encountered. In the event that unexpected archaeological remains of high significance are discovered, work will cease and the archaeological officer for GGAT will be notified in order that an assessment of the remains and suitable provision for their recording or preservation may be made. Should archaeological features be encountered during these works, then time and resources will be made available in order to carryout any necessary hand excavation and potentially open area excavation work.
- 4.3 All archaeological deposits and features that would be destroyed by the groundworks will be subjected to appropriate levels of investigation.
- 4.4 Archaeological deposits and features will be subjected to the following sampling levels:
 - i) structural features, or those relating to a specialised activity, such as funerary, hearths and industrial features, will be subject up to a 100% sample;
 - ii) postholes and stakeholes that relate to specialised activities and/or are related to a recognisable building/structure will be subject to a 100% sample. Others will be subject to a 50% sample;
 - iii) a minimum 50% sample of all pits will be excavated;
 - iv) a minimum 10% of all linear features, will be excavated;
- 4.5 Each excavation context will be excavated, wherever possible, in such a way as to produce at least one representative cross-section of the deposit.

- 4.6 Decisions about the relative value of archaeological deposits and features will be made in consultation with the archaeological representative of Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust.
- 4.7 Any human remains which may be encountered will initially be left *in situ* and reported to the appropriate authorities. If removal is necessary this must comply with the relevant Ministry of Justice guidelines and current archaeological best-practice.
- 4.8 Suitable contexts will be subjected to environmental sampling at an appropriate scale, in accordance with the Centre for Archaeology Guidelines *Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods from sampling and recording to post-excavation*; 2nd ed (English Heritage 2011) and any specific requirements made by the environmental coordinator or suitable member of his team, who will visit the site as appropriate. Bulk environmental soil samples will be a minimum of 40 litres, and if appropriate up to 100%, will be taken from fills of well-dated or significant features or fills with good preservation of organic or burnt organic plant remains. Decisions regarding which contexts are suitable for environmental sampling will be made on site in consultation with the archaeological representative of Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust and the environmental coordinator.
- 4.9 Appropriate contexts will be sampled in order to provide material suitable for C14 dating.
- 4.10 All artefactual and ecofactual remains, whether stratified or not, will be collected, bagged and labelled. Artefacts will be subject to preliminary study on site in order to help date archaeological features and contexts. All artefactual and ecofactual evidence will be treated in accordance with the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 4 (Finds Manual) and *First Aid for Finds*.
- 4.11 Normal conditions will apply with regard to finds ownership and the Treasure Act 1996.

5 STAFF

- 5.1 The field team will consist of a minimum of one experienced operative, which may be supplemented by additional staff as required. The project will be directed by Mr. R. King BA, MCIfA who has wide experience of performing, monitoring and managing fieldwork projects of different periods throughout Britain. He is the Director of Foundations Archaeology and is a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.
- 5.2 Specialists who are likely to advise and report on specific aspects of the

project include Dr Rob Scaife (environmental coordinator), Dr Jane Timby, Paul Blinkhorn and Roy King (pottery), Dr Lynne Bevan (small finds, glass and metalwork), Kate Brayne of the Rudyard Consultancy (human bone), Matilda Holmes (bone) and Dr. Tim Young GeoArch (metalworking residue). Any other categories of specialist report will be provided by Museum of London Specialist Services.

6 SURVEY CONTROL

- 6.1 Horizontal survey control of the site will be by means of a coordinate grid, using metric measurements, relative to the National Grid. The geo-referenced site plan will be produced by use of a *Topcon FC-5000* global positioning system (GPS). Complex/detailed site plans will be drawn by hand, as appropriate. These will be tied into the site grid by use of the GPS.
- 6.2 Vertical survey control will be tied to the Ordnance Survey datum. Details of the method employed will be recorded.

7 RECORDING

- 7.1 All site recording will be undertaken in accordance with Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3 (Excavation Manual).
- 7.2 Each archaeological feature or deposit will be recorded by means of a measured plan at an appropriate scale. Spot heights will be taken on the deposit and their location recorded on the plan.
- 7.3 Cross-sections will be recorded by means of a measured drawing at an appropriate scale. The height of a datum on the drawing will be calculated and recorded. The locations of cross-sections will be recorded either on the site plans, or relative to the site grid. Cut features will be recorded in profile and plan at an appropriate scale and their location accurately identified.
- 7.4 All drawn records will be clearly marked with a unique site number and will be individually identified. The scale of the plan will be recorded. All drawings will be drawn on dimensionally stable media. All plans will be drawn relative to the site grid and at least two grid references marked on each plan.
- 7.5 Each archaeological context will be recorded separately by means of a written description. The stratigraphic relationships of each context will be recorded. Foundations Archaeology pro-forma record sheets will be used throughout. An index will be kept of all record types.

- 7.6 A digital photographic record of the excavation and watching brief will be compiled. Each excavation context will be recorded photographically prior to removal. All photographs will feature an appropriately sized scale.

8 POST-EXCAVATION

- 8.1 A typescript report will be prepared once all site works are completed to fulfil the requirements set out in the WSI. This will include a full written description and interpretation of the results, including specialist reports. The report will contain a front sheet which will detail the following: Site name, NGR, Site activity, Date and duration, Site code, Area of site, Summary of results, Monuments identified (referenced to the Thesaurus of Monument Types) and Location of the archive. All recording, cleaning and conservation of finds will comply with ClfA Guidelines for Finds Work.
- 8.2 As a minimum, the report(s) will include a full written description and interpretation of the results, including specialist reports. The report will contain a front sheet which will detail the following: Site name, NGR, Site activity, Date and duration, Site code, Area of site, Summary of results, Monuments identified (referenced to the Thesaurus of Monument Types) and Location of the archive. All recording, cleaning and conservation of finds will comply with ClfA Guidelines for Finds Work. The summary will be translated into Welsh and this translation will be included in the final report.
- 8.3 The report will be fully illustrated with drawings to an appropriate scale showing location, recorded features and deposits and section drawings. The report will be produced within six months of completion of fieldworks unless delayed by circumstances beyond the control of Foundations Archaeology. In some cases specialist reports (e.g. Radiocarbon dating) may take several months to be produced. In such circumstances an interim report will be provided, if required.
- 8.4 An indexed and internally consistent archive will be prepared in accordance with MAP2/MoRPHE and Foundations Archaeology's internal quality control systems, which are certified to ISO 9001: 2015. These standards comply with *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long- term Storage* (UKIC 1990), *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (MGC 1994) and the *National Panel for Archaeological Archives in Wales- Archaeological Archives: Selection, Retention and Disposal Guidelines for Wales* (2019). Arrangements will be made for the deposition of the finds and the site archive with Neath Museum and Art Gallery prior to the commencement of fieldwork. If space in the stores is available, deposition will take place as soon as possible following the completion of final site works.
- 8.5 Copies of the report will be supplied to the archaeological representative of

Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust and an additional copy will be deposited with the site archive. The report will become a public document after a period not exceeding six months.

- 8.6 The report will be published in an appropriate form in a relevant journal(s) within 12 months from completion of fieldwork. An OASIS record will also be completed and submitted on completion of the project and the digital data will be deposited with ADS. Copies of the photographs will be supplied to the HER as required.

9 MONITORING

- 9.1 An appropriate level of monitoring will be undertaken by the archaeological representative of Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust.

10 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 10.1 The project will be undertaken with regard to all relevant Health and Safety legislation, in accordance with the *Foundations Archaeology Safety Management System* (2021).

11 INSURANCE

- 11.1 Foundations Archaeology carries appropriate levels of Public Liability, Employers Liability Insurance and Professional Indemnity Insurance. Copies of the certificates are available on request.

12 TIMETABLING

- 12.1 A reasonable period of notice will be required in order to agree monitoring arrangements for the archaeological representative of Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust.

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