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Gnoll Park, Neath
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment:
Written Scheme of Investigation

THE GNOLL, NEATH PORT TALBOT: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document has been prepared by DAT Archaeological Services on behalf of Andrew Scott Ltd to provide a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a historic environment desk-based assessment for proposed works within the Gnoll Estate and Country Park, Neath Port Talbot (NGR SS 7680 9764; Figures 1-2).
- 1.2 The site lies in an area of significant historic and archaeological interest. The park itself is a Grade II* listed formally designed parkland with its main phases of construction dating from the early 18th century through to the late 19th century (PGW(Gm)60(NEP), and includes numerous parkland features, listed buildings and structures, and the site of the original mansion associated with the parkland. The Gnoll estate can be dated back to the Evans family in the mid-16th century, but the visible mansion remains were built by Humphrey Mackworth in the early 18th century, extended in the late 18th century, but demolished in 1957 with only the foundation and cellars surviving. The formal gardens were developed by the Mackworth's in the early 18th century with the introduction of features from the French tradition, including a formal terrace, parterres and chestnut-tree avenue. In the 1720s Thomas Greening was engaged to redesign the grounds, with the introduction of new views, a ha-ha and cascades. Further features were added in the 1730s and 1740s, including a grotto and gazebo, and other 18th century features include the Fishpond Cottage and Grade II listed Ivy Tower. During the 19th century tennis courts and a unique circular bowling green were added, and in the early 20th century white marble memorial gates were erected to commemorate World War 1. The surrounding parkland includes wide open areas, a 19th century arboretum, around 240 acres of woodland, and three main ponds.
- 1.3 A variety of projects are proposed throughout the park to assist in the restoration and enhancement of the Gnoll Estate and Country Park and include repair and restoration work around the original mansion and cellars, restoration work on Fishpond Cottage and the kitchen garden area, repair works on walls, cascades, footpaths, landscape features and the grotto, along with some new development including footpaths, footbridges, play areas and car parking. These proposals have been drawn up by Hiraeth Architects along with a number of consultants, and the project is soon to be submitted to the local planning authority.
- 1.4 The historical significance of the parkland has been examined within the Conservation Management Plan (Baggott 2022), which draws together a detailed history of the site and identifies the main structural and built elements within the park, identifies the main risks and lays out the main aims for the conservation of the park. The proposals for the restoration and enhancement of the park have been drawn up with this in mind. An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been requested to assist in assessing the potential impact of these proposals and outline possible mitigation measures, to be submitted alongside the planning application.
- 1.5 The desk-based assessment will identify any known archaeological or historical sites within the development area and its environs and identify the potential impacts of proposed works upon these sites, as well as identifying potential setting impacts on significant historic assets in the vicinity, identifying any historic landscape areas that may be affected by the proposals and assess the potential for hitherto unknown archaeological remains to be present within the proposed development areas. An indication of what further archaeological works might be required in advance of or during the proposed development, if any, would also be prepared.

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- 1.6 The scope of this assessment follows the *Standard And Guidance For Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* as laid down by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014). The standard states that:

A desk-based assessment will determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area. Desk-based assessment will be undertaken using appropriate methods and practices which satisfy the stated aims of the project, and which comply with the Code of conduct and other relevant regulations of CIfA. In a development context desk-based assessment will establish the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the historic environment (or will identify the need for further evaluation to do so), and will enable reasoned proposals and decisions to be made whether to mitigate, offset or accept without further intervention that impact.

- 1.7 A desk-based assessment is defined by CIfA as:

A desk-based assessment is a programme of study of the historic environment within a specified area or site on land, the inter-tidal zone or underwater that addresses agreed research and/or conservation objectives. It consists of an analysis of existing written, graphic, photographic and electronic information in order to identify the likely heritage assets, their interests and significance and the character of the study area, including appropriate consideration of the settings of heritage assets....

- 1.8 The Trust always operates to best professional practice. DAT Archaeological Services is the contractual arm of Dyfed Archaeological Trust that has its own Health and Safety Policy, and all works are covered by appropriate Employer's Liability and Public Liability Insurances. Copies of all are available on request.

- 1.9 ***Dyfed Archaeological Trust is a CIfA Registered Archaeological Organisation.***

- 1.10 ***All permanent staff members of DAT Archaeological Services are CSCS¹ registered.***

2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

- 2.1 This document provides a scheme of works for:

The preparation of an Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment of the proposed works within the Gnoll Estate and Country Park, Neath Port Talbot. This report will assess the potential impact that the development might have on any archaeological remains, if present, within the area, and an assessment of the impact of the development on the wider historic environment.

- 2.2 Provision of a written scheme of investigation to outline the methodology by which DAT Archaeological Services will undertake the desk-based assessment.

¹ Construction Skills Certification Scheme (Health and Safety Tested)

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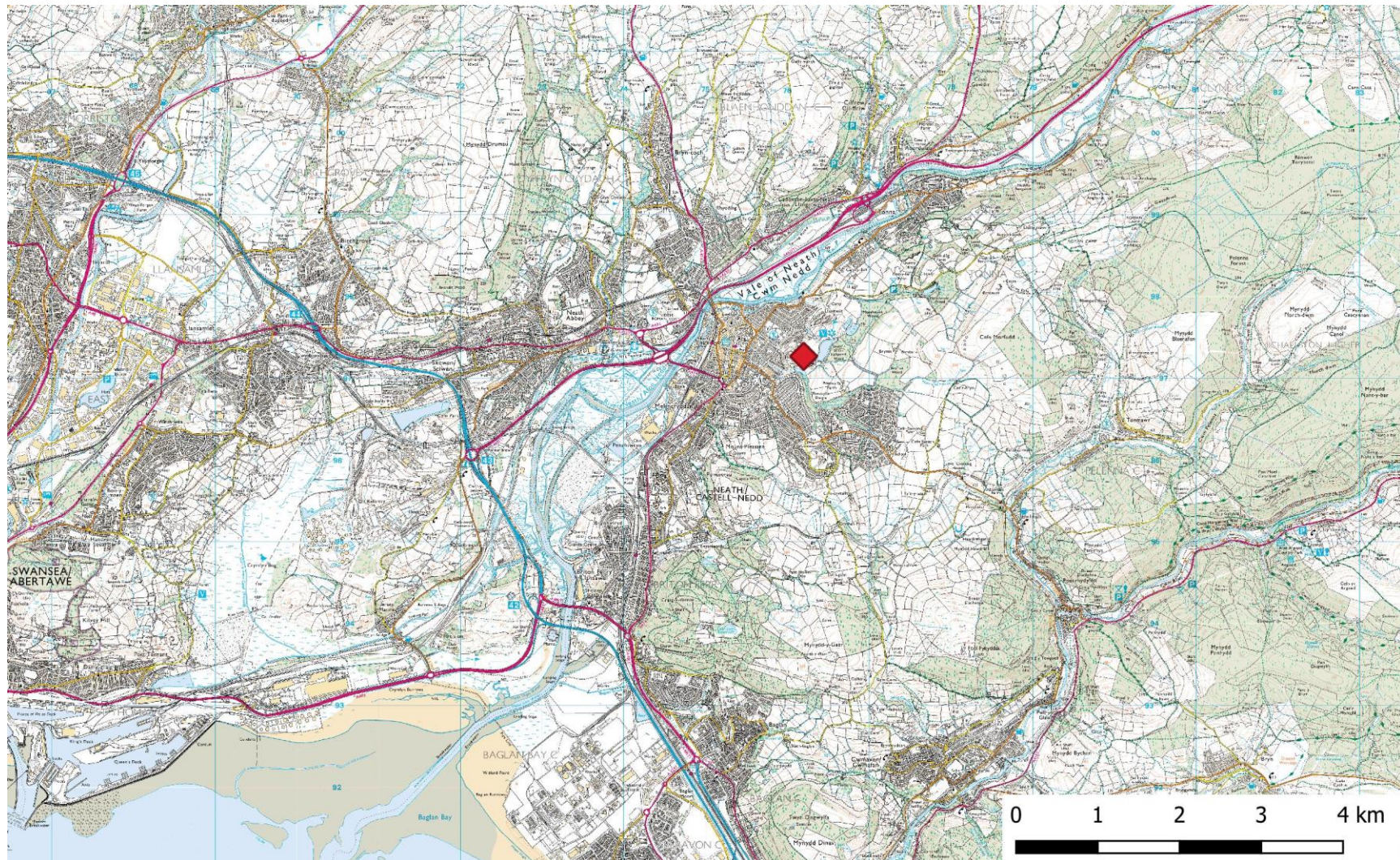


Figure 1: Proposed development location in red.

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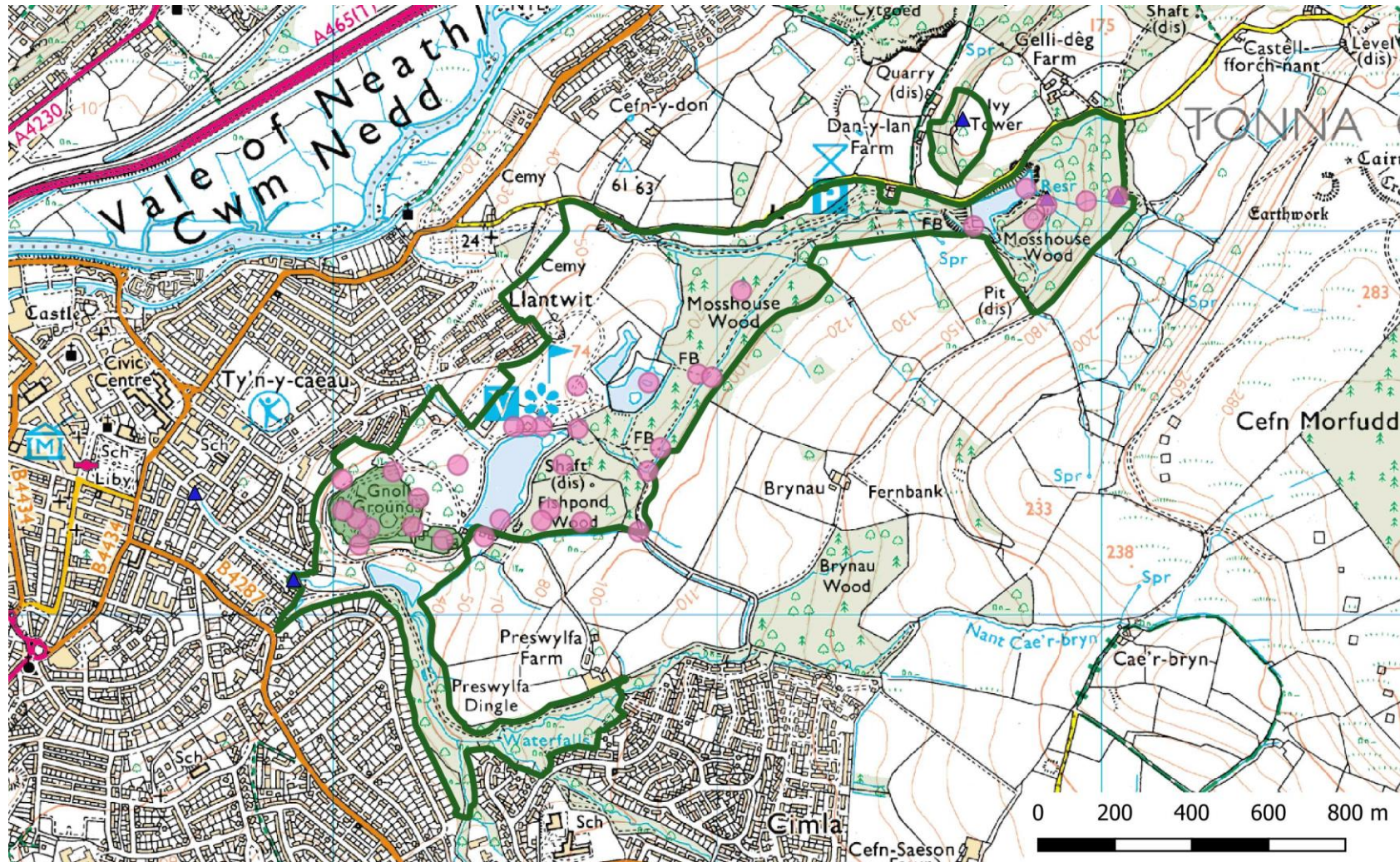


Figure 2: Detailed location map, showing the outline of the registered parkland in green, associated listed buildings in blue, and the focal points of proposed restoration and enhancements works in pink.

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3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The archaeological assessment will involve the preparation of a stand-alone report. The report will be prepared using relevant information from a number of sources, and will comprise a number of elements, including:
- Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) Historic Environment Record (HER) data and other relevant information;
 - National Monuments Record of Wales information as held by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales in Aberystwyth (RCAHMW offices in Aberystwyth);
 - Identification of any Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Parks and Gardens, Historic Landscape Character Areas, or Conservation Areas within or in the vicinity of the site area;
 - Accessible bibliographic, cartographic and photographic information held at the National Library of Wales and potentially information held at the Local Studies Library;
 - Historic and current aerial photographs, including those held at the Central Register of Aerial Photographs for Wales, Cardiff (CRAPW);
 - Relevant web-based information, including cartographic information, satellite imagery, geological information and LiDAR data;
 - Relevant information held by the landowner/developer, including the Conservation Management Plan (Baggott 2022)
 - Site visit and walkover survey;
 - Assessment of the archaeological potential of the area; and
 - Assessment of likely impacts on any identified remains (or potential remains) and likely requirements, if any, for further stages of archaeological work.
- 3.2 The study area will include the area of the registered parkland of Gnoll Park, along with a search radius buffer of 1km from the edge of the registered parkland boundary, in order to identify the presence of designated historic assets including Scheduled Monuments, Historic Landscape Character Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens and Listed Buildings and non-designated archaeological sites recorded on the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) Historic Environment Record (HER). It is anticipated that this area will incorporate all relevant records to assist in establishing the archaeological background and potential for the proposed development area, but it is likely this will also include many unrelated records, therefore only results within the parkland, and pertinent results within the wider study area, will be included in the assessment report. Should wider ranging impacts become apparent on designated historic assets during the course of the assessment then such assets beyond this search radius will be considered.
- 3.3 A site visit will be undertaken to provide an assessment of the presence of any visible archaeological remains, potential for further remains, and to assess potential impacts to the settings of surrounding significant archaeological sites. All located sites or finds will be located by means of GPS and ascribed an accurate NGR reference. The character, function, condition and relation of any features will be recorded, and written, drawn and photographic records to an appropriate level of detail will be maintained.
- 3.4 The report will be fully representative of the information gained from the above methodology. The report will include the following:
- a) A concise non-technical summary of the appraisal results;

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- b) The report will contain plans showing the development area in respect to the local topography and surrounding archaeological sites;
 - c) The report will list all the sources consulted;
 - d) Where necessary, the report will also contain suitably selected plans and maps (including historic maps for map regression) of significant archaeological features;
 - e) Short written descriptions of all archaeological features observed during the site visit;
 - f) Statement of the local and regional context of the historic assets identified. Consideration, where appropriate, of the National Archaeological Research Agenda;
 - g) An assessment of the relative value or significance of each recognised historic asset;
 - h) An impact assessment of the proposed development on the known and potential archaeological resource.
- 3.5 Once completed, a draft copy of the report will be submitted to the client for comment. Once the comments of this draft have been addressed, a final version of the report will be prepared and submitted. A further copy of the report will be provided to the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust for deposition within the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER). A hard copy will also be supplied to the NMR. Digital copies will be supplied to all parties on suitable media.
- 3.6 Where appropriate, a summary report on any new significant archaeological discoveries will be submitted for publication to a national journal (e.g. Archaeology in Wales) no later than one year after the completion of the work.
- 3.7 Although there may be a period during which client confidentiality should be maintained, the report and the archive should normally be deposited in the appropriate repository not later than six months after completion of the work.

4. QUALITY ASSURANCE

- 4.1 DAT Archaeological Services has considerable experience of undertaking historic environment desk-based assessments and always operates to best professional practice; adhering to CIfA guidelines where appropriate. The Trust is a Registered Organisation with CIfA and all staff abide by their code of conduct and adhere to their relevant standards and guidance.
- 4.2 DAT Archaeological Services operate robust internal monitoring procedures that ensure that the standard of each project is maintained from commencement to completion.

5. STAFF

- 5.1 The project will be managed by P Poucher MCIfA, Project Manager at DAT Archaeological Services.
- 5.2 The report will be prepared by experienced members of staff from DAT Archaeological Services.

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6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 6.1 All permanent members of DAT Archaeological Services staff are CSCS² registered.
- 6.2 DAT Archaeological Services will carry out a health and safety risk assessment prior to the site walkover survey to ensure that all potential risks are minimised.
- 6.3 All relevant health and safety regulations must be followed, including compliance with Welsh Government guidelines on working practices during the current Covid-19 Pandemic, and guidance issued by CIfA.
- 6.4 CIfA advise that Registered Organisations should ensure they are familiar with the latest *Site Operating Procedures*, published by the Construction Leadership Council (Version 4, updated 18th May 2020) and the latest *Covid-19 Working Advice Ver.1.1*, published by Prospect (5th May 2020), which addresses potential issues relating to archaeological site work. These procedures will be attached to the project risk assessment. If any site-related work cannot be carried out in line with this guidance then the project archaeologist will not be allowed to attend.
- 6.5 The project risk assessment will detail the precautions put in place to reduce the spread of Covid-19 Coronavirus during fieldwork.

² Construction Skills Certification Scheme (Health and Safety Tested)

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DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

This Data Management Plan (DMP) is produced in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014, updated 2020)*. The table below is based on the Work Digital / Think Archive guidance for digital archives prepared by DigVentures, on behalf of Archaeological Archives Forum and in partnership with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. The project was funded by Historic England (Project No. 7796).

Section 1: Project Administration

Project Ref. No and name
FS22-070 – Gnoll Park, Neath
ERN (if known)
Project Type
Desk Based Assessment
Client
Andrew Scott Ltd
Project Manager / Data Contact
Philip Poucher
Principal Archaeologist on site
Philip Poucher
Date DMP created
09/05/2023
Date DMP last updated
Related data management policies
Written Scheme of Investigation Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) <i>Standards & Guidance</i> Dyfed Archaeological Trust, 2018, archive retention policy Brown 2011, Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation NPAAW, 2017, The National Standard and Guidance to Best Practice for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives in Wales 2017 RCAHMW, 2015, RCAHMW guidelines for Digital Archives, Version 1 WAT, 2022, Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs)

Section 2: Data Collection

Data Type (Delete as appropriate)
Documents Written Scheme of Investigation, Risk Assessment – Word doc & PDFs site notes - paper copies, scanned and saved as PDFs. Site plans – permatrace, scanned and saved as PDFs. Final report – Word doc & PDF

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Images Site photographs – Jpeg & Tiff (for archive)
GIS Mapinfo files, Esri Shapefiles.
Data acquisition All data will be collected as per the methodologies and guidance stated in the WSI (Fieldwork / Methodology).
Section 3: Documentation and metadata
Documentation and metadata accompanying the data All data recovered will be archived in accordance with the guidance stated in the WSI (Post Fieldwork Reporting & Archiving)
Section 4: Ethics and legal compliance
Management of any ethical, copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues All personal data collected during the course of the project will be handled in accordance with Dyfed Archaeological Trust's <i>Personal Data Protection Policy</i> (2018, revised 2020) and current <i>Code of Practice</i> . Licence agreements will be established and Copyright permissions will be sought as appropriate (eg reproduced mapping extracts, archive material, specialist reports) prior to the submission of the data and/or inclusion in the publication of the project results.
Section 5: Data Security: Storage and Backup
Data storage, accessibility, and safety during research All site-produced data will be stored digitally at the first available opportunity. All digital information is stored on the DAT server, accessible by members of the staff. This will be checked regularly by the Project Manager. All digital data on the server is backed-up at regular intervals. The server contains ample capacity for all anticipated site data, and appropriate protocols are in place to manage any potential digital malfunction or cyber attack.
Section 6: Selection and Preservation
Data retention, sharing, and preservation Data will be retained as per Dyfed Archaeological Trust <i>Archive Retention Policy</i> (2018).
Long-term preservation plan for the dataset The digital archive relating to the project will be deposited with the NMR, held and maintained by the RCAHMW, Aberystwyth and will be created in accordance with their practices. The final report will be submitted to the regional Historic Environment Record in PDF format, along with any additional information they require. If a different digital repository to the NMR is used, their own procedures will be established at the outset of a project and followed. If a project includes artefacts to be deposited at a museum, arrangements will be made prior to the commencement of the project, and a copy of the digital archive will be sent with the artefacts. Archiving costs are included within the project budget.
Section 7: Data Sharing
Sharing and accessibility The dissemination of data is detailed in the WSI (Post-Fieldwork Report and Archiving).
Section 8: Responsibilities
Data collection, storage and manipulation will be carried out by the site team. The Project Manager will be responsible for the implementation of the data management

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plan.