

P26-123



HEOL CAE'R BONT, PORT TALBOT

Archaeological and Historical Hedgerow Assessment

for Laing O'Rourke

28/05/2026

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PROJECT MANAGER, AUTHOR, SITE VISIT, GRAPHICS	Kit Byrom
APPROVED BY	Owen Raybould
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL HEDGEROW ASSESSMENT

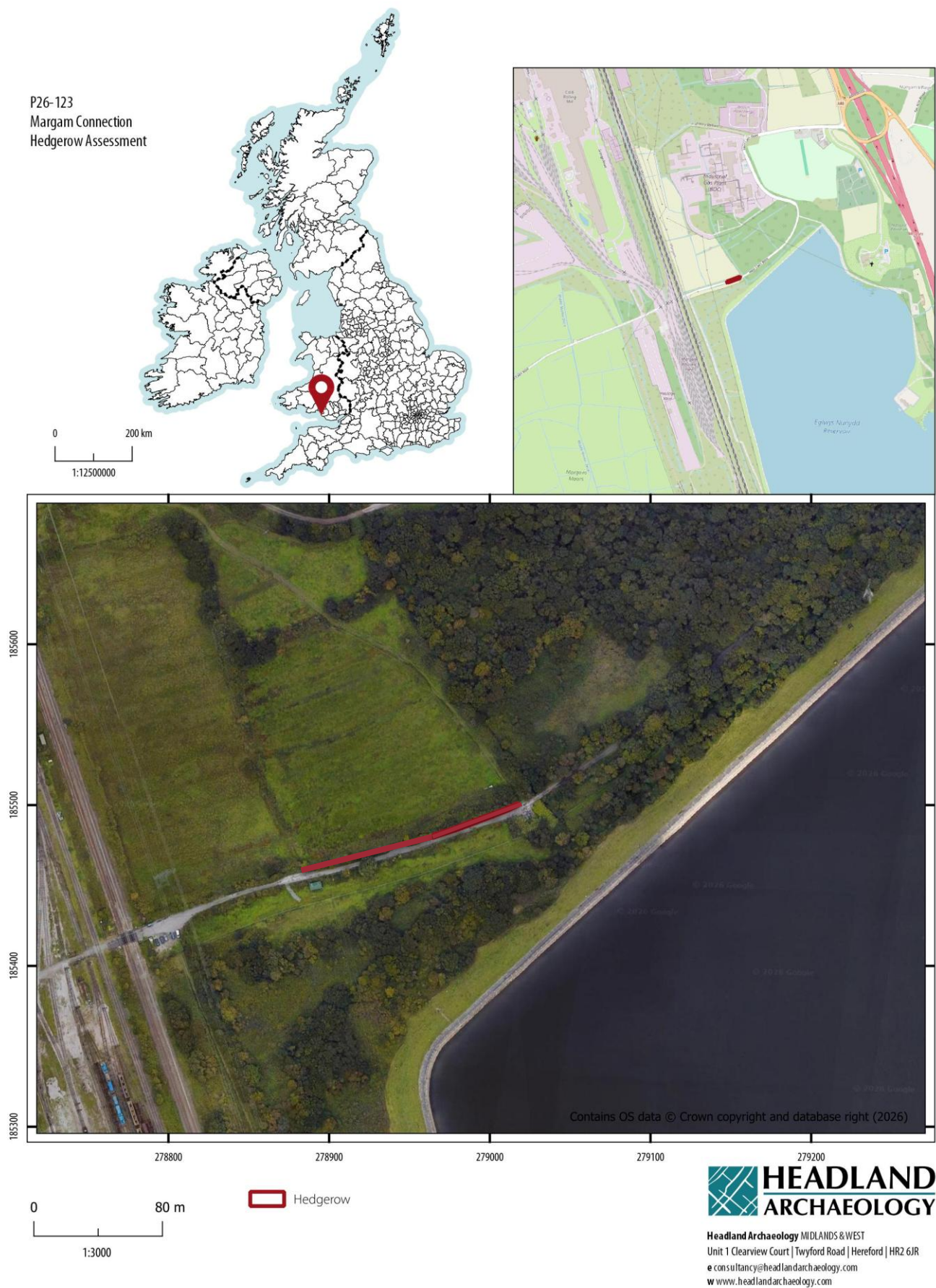
1. Introduction

1.1. *Planning Background*

- 1.1.1. This report was commissioned by RSK Environment on behalf of Laing O'Rourke and presents the results of an archaeological and historical hedgerow assessment to inform the Client and Local Planning Authority on the potential status of a hedgerow proposed for partial removal as part of the construction of a proposed access track at Heol Cae'r Bont, Port Talbot Steelworks, Margam Moors, Neath Port Talbot (NGR 279001, 185494) (see Illus 1).
- 1.1.2. The 135m stretch of hedgerow proposed for partial removal is located on the northern side of Heol Cae'r Bont, which runs from the M4 740m to the north east to Morfa Mawr 1.7km to the south west. To the south of Heol Cae'r Bont is the Eglwys Nunydd Reservoir. To the north of the hedgerow is an area of scrubland which appears to have drainage running from east to west. To the north east is a wooded area, beyond which is an industrial gas plant (BOC) and Western Wood Energy Plant.
- 1.1.3. This report provides an assessment of the hedgerow proposed for partial removal against the archaeological and historical criteria for determining importance within the Hedgerows Regulations, 1997.

1.2. *Professional Standards*

- 1.2.1. Headland Archaeology (UK) is a Registered Organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), an audited status which confirms that all work is carried out in accordance with the highest standards of the profession.
- 1.2.2. Headland Archaeology (UK) operates a quality management system to help ensure all projects are managed in a professional and transparent manner, which enables it to qualify for ISO 9001 (Quality Management), ISO 45001 (health and safety management) and ISO 14001 (environmental management).



Illus 1 Site and hedgerow location

2. Legislation, Policy and Guidance

2.1.1. This assessment has been carried out with reference to

- The Hedgerows Regulations (1997 SI 1997 No. 1160)
- The Hedgerows Regulations 1997, A Guide to the Law and Good Practice

2.2. *The Hedgerows Regulations*

2.2.1. The Hedgerows Regulations came into force on 1st June 1997; their purpose is to impose controls on the removal of hedgerows in England and Wales.

2.2.2. Applicants wishing to remove a hedgerow must apply to their local District (or Unitary) Authority, which may prohibit such removal if the hedgerow is classed as "important" and is exercised under the Environment Act 1995 s.97.

2.2.3. The criteria used to assess hedgerows relate to the value from an archaeological, historical, landscape, or wildlife perspective. They exclude hedgerows that are less than 30 years old.

Criteria relating to archaeological and historical value, in compliance with the Hedgerows Regulations Schedule 1, Part II Criteria (Archaeology and History):

1. *The hedgerow marks the boundary, or part of the boundary, of at least one historic parish or township; and for this purpose "historic" means existing before 1850.*

2. *The hedgerow incorporates an archaeological feature which is—*

(a) included in the schedule of monuments compiled by the Secretary of State under section 1 (schedule of monuments) of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979; or

(b) recorded at the relevant date in a Sites and Monuments Record. [Note – or Historic Environment Record].

3. *The hedgerow—*

(a) is situated wholly or partly within an archaeological site included or recorded as mentioned in paragraph 2 or on land adjacent to and associated with such a site; and

(b) is associated with any monument or feature on that site.

4. *The hedgerow—*

(a) marks the boundary of a pre-1600 AD estate or manor recorded at the relevant date in a Sites and Monuments Record [Historic Environment Record] or in a document held at that date at a Record Office; or

(b) is visibly related to any building or other feature of such an estate or manor.

5. *The hedgerow—*

(a) is recorded in a document held at the relevant date at a Record Office as an integral part of a field system pre-dating the Inclosure Acts; or

(b) is part of, or visibly related to, any building or other feature associated with such a system, and that system—

(i) is substantially complete; or

(ii) is of a pattern which is recorded in a document prepared before the relevant date by a local planning authority, within the meaning of the 1990 Act, for the purposes of development control within the authority's area, as a key landscape characteristic.

2.3. Guide to the Law and Good Practice

- 2.3.1. In summary, incorporating Good Practice guidance, a hedgerow is "important" if it:
- Marks a pre-1850 parish boundary (Criterion 1)
 - Physically incorporates or is part of a known and listed heritage asset; where the hedgerow is a contemporaneous or related part of that heritage asset (Criteria 2 & 3)
 - Marks the boundary of, or is associated with, a pre-1600 estate or manor (Criterion 4)
 - Is part of a pre-Parliamentary Inclosure field system (that is recorded before 1845 on any Tithe, Estate or Ordnance Survey map) (Criterion 5)
- 2.3.2. The Regulations refer to records made before the 'relevant date' (i.e. 1st June 1997), however, for completeness, if a hedgerow is associated with a known heritage asset designated or added to the Historic Environment Record (HER) after this date, the hedgerow is nevertheless classified as "important".
- 2.3.3. The guide states that *"Whether the hedgerow is an 'integral part' of the field system is a matter of judgement, on the basis of what the field system now is (rather than that recorded in the document) and whether that pattern would no longer be discernible if the hedgerow was removed."* This note relates to the 'landscape' (or Historic Landscape Character) element of the Regulations – i.e. this element of the Regulations (notwithstanding the ecological elements) is designed to protect an appreciation of the historic landscape grain rather than the physical hedgerow itself. Thus, if the development proposal requires only partial removal/removal of a section of a hedgerow, or if the hedgerow can be reinstated following the construction phase of the development, and the field pattern may still be discernible, the effect would be reduced. Nonetheless, if the hedgerow meets this criterion, it is noted as "important", regardless of the likely effect.

2.4. Amendment to Guide

- 2.4.1. Concerning the meaning of Schedule 1, Part II paragraph 5 of the 1997 Hedgerows Regulations, Paragraph 5(a) reads *"The hedgerow is recorded in a document held at the relevant date at a Record Office as an integral part of a field system pre-dating the Inclosure Acts"*. In May 2002, Judicial Review case Flintshire County Council v NAW & Mr T Morris determined that the earliest Inclosure Act mentioned in the Short Titles Act 1896 was made in 1845. Thus, a hedgerow marking a boundary as depicted on any map pre-dating 1845 is understood to be "important" in accordance with the 1997 Regulations.

3. Methodology

3.1. Criterion 1

- 3.1.1. In order to assess whether the hedgerow marks a pre-1850 parish boundary, a review of current parish boundaries was made through <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>, along with comparison with modern and historical Ordnance Survey mapping loaded into QGIS software for analysis (see appended Illus 2-4).

3.2. Criteria 2 & 3

- 3.2.1. In order to assess whether the hedgerow is associated with a heritage asset, data on non-designated historic assets from Henneb's Historic Environment Record (HER) data was collected and reviewed within a 500m study area.
- 3.2.2. Assessment of associations with designated heritage assets within the 500m study area (world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, registered historic parks and gardens, listed buildings and registered historic battlefields) was also undertaken through review of Historic Assets GIS data maintained by Cadw and available for download from <https://datamap.gov.wales/maps/cadw-historic-assets/>.

3.3. *Criterion 4*

- 3.3.1. In order to assess whether the hedgerow is associated with a pre-1600 estate or manor a review was made of any available pre-1600 manorial records, survey, terrier, charter, or other 17th century map evidence. Archives also contain useful published research into the history of hedgerows or parishes.
- 3.3.2. A review of historic landscape characterisation (HLC) data, provided by Heneb at https://heneb.org.uk/archive/ggat/cadw/historic_landscape/kenfig/english/merthyr_mawr_main.html, was also undertaken.

3.4. *Criterion 5*

- 3.4.1. In order to assess whether the hedgerow marks part of a pre-parliamentary Inclosure field system, the available historic mapping sequence for the parish was reviewed. As per Judicial Review in May 2002, a hedgerow marking a boundary as depicted on any map pre-dating 1845 is understood to be "important" in accordance with the 1997 Regulations. The West Glamorgan Archive Service¹ confirms that no tithe map or apportionment was made for the area and therefore could not be reviewed for this assessment. The OS Drawings Bridgend, Cardigan by Thomas Budgen map extract dating to 1813 (Illus 2) and 1830 OS Old Series 1 inch Sheet XXXVII map extract (Illus 3) are relevant in this regard.

4. Results

4.1. *Criterion 1*

- 4.1.1. The hedgerow does not form part of a pre-1850 parish boundary and therefore does not qualify as important under Criterion 1 of the 1997 Hedgerows Regulations.

4.2. *Criterion 2*

- 4.2.1. The hedgerow is not scheduled and is not associated with any scheduled monument or other designated asset and therefore does not qualify as important under Criterion 2 of the 1997 Hedgerows Regulations.

4.3. *Criterion 3*

- 4.3.1. There are six non-designated historic assets located within the study area (Illus 2):
- Margam Moors Bronze Age recumbent stone (00747w), which was removed to Margam Park for its protection during the construction of the Eglwys Nunydd reservoir;
 - Ogmore Valleys Post-Medieval railway extension (05000.1s);
 - A spring marked on the 1st edition OS map of 1877 and 2nd edition OS map of 1899 (12355w);
 - Upper Mother Post-Medieval ditch (12356w);
 - Post-Medieval drainage ditches visible of LiDAR imagery (12357w); and
 - British Oxygen Company Works built in 1953 (12358w).
- 4.3.2. The hedgerow does not incorporate and is not associated with any known historic asset and therefore does not qualify as important under Criterion 3 of the 1997 Hedgerows Regulations.

¹ https://www.swansea.gov.uk/media/580/Tithe-Maps/pdf/2r4_Tithe_maps.pdf

4.4. *Criterion 4*

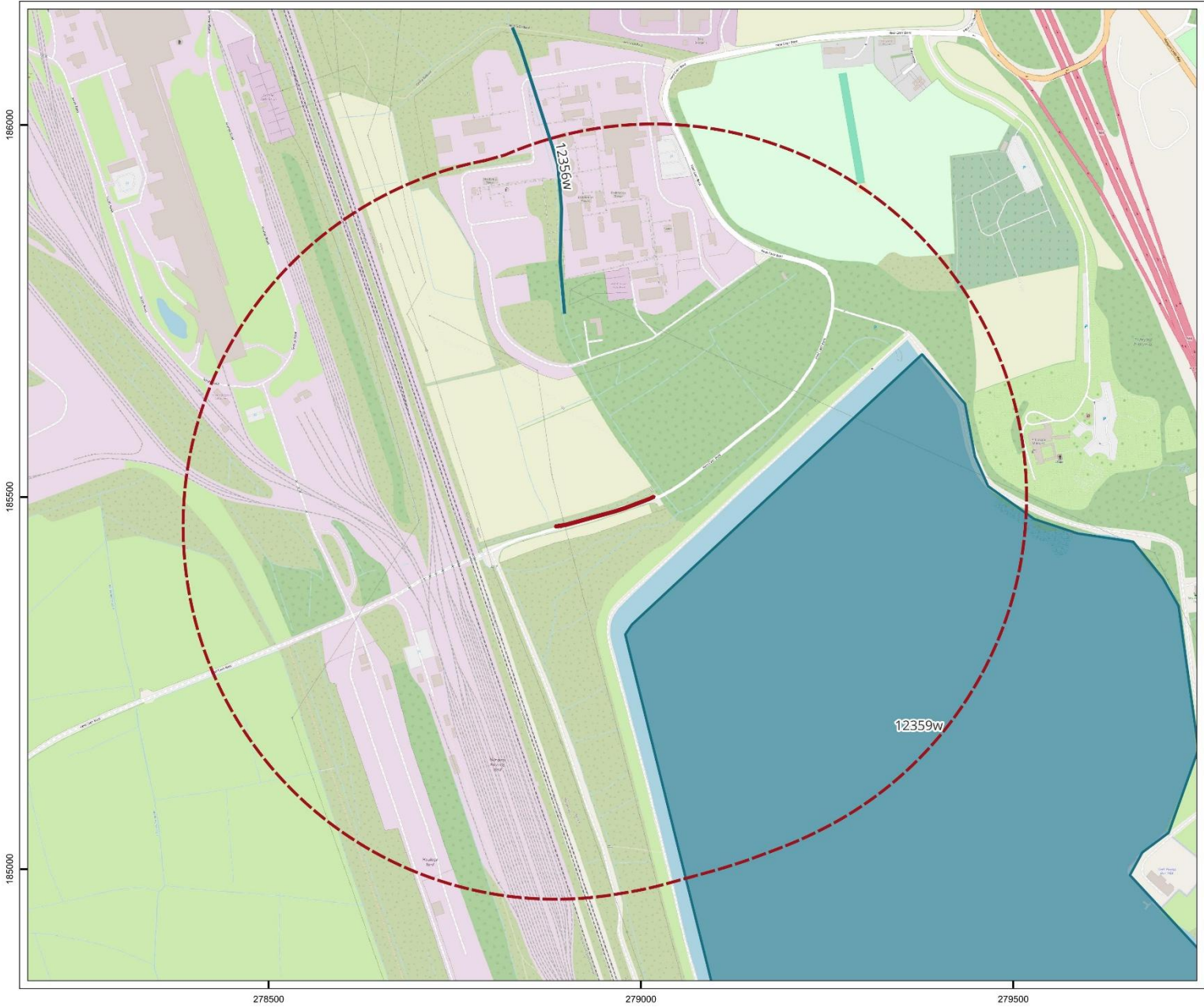
- 4.4.1. No pre-1600 map evidence for the study area has been identified. There is a record of a Medieval rabbit warren in HER data and HLC data located in the vicinity of the hedgerow, but the exact location and extent of this historic asset is currently unknown. The nearest known estate is located c.1.6 km east of the hedgerow at Margam Park, which has its roots as a 12th century Cistercian Monastery. The boundaries of this estate have been inspected on estate mapping and were located a sufficient distance from the hedgerow that it can be stated confidently that their boundaries are very unlikely to have extended as far as the hedgerow. There is therefore no evidence to suggest that the Hedgerow formed the boundary of a pre-1600 estate or manor and therefore does not qualify as important under Criterion 4 of the 1997 Hedgerows Regulations.

4.5. *Criterion 5*

- 4.5.1. Mapping dating to 1813 (Illus 3) by Thomas Budgen shows that the pre-parliamentary field layout was markedly different to configurations shown on later OS mapping/today (see Illus 4). The hedgerow that is the subject to this assessment lies in the centre of a field on this map and is therefore not related to the pre-parliamentary field layout.
- 4.5.2. OS mapping dating to 1830 (Illus 4) does not show this earlier field layout in detail. It is unclear if this is due to the earlier field system being removed, or it not being mapped. Given the later mapping (below), it would appear that the pre-parliamentary field system was entirely removed at the same time of the establishment of the Great Western Railway. The 1830 mapping shows a new road system roughly following the Modern layout of Heol Cae'r Bont and the hedgerow that is the subject to this assessment appears to have been established at this time. The hedgerow defines the road network, and not the later field system.
- 4.5.3. Later 1883 OS mapping (Illus 5) shows that the new road system was retained and is preserved to the modern day, and that the earlier field system was entirely replaced with a different field system. Heol Cae'r Bont is annotated at this date as bounded by a drainage ditch and the later field system may therefore have related to a widescale concerted land-drainage and reclamation programme.
- 4.5.4. The historic mapping sequence therefore demonstrates that the hedgerow is not part of a pre-parliamentary Inclosure field system and therefore does not qualify as important under Criterion 5 of the 1997 Hedgerows Regulations.

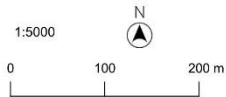
5. Conclusions

- 5.1.1. This assessment concludes that the hedgerow running along Heol Cae'r Bont is not important according to the Archaeology and History Criteria of the 1997 Hedgerows Regulations.
- 5.1.2. Subject to confirmation against the Ecological Criteria of the Regulations, it is anticipated that permission would not be required from the LPA to remove any or part of this hedgerow.



- Key**
- Hedgerow
 - Study area
 - Non-designated linear
 - Non-designated area

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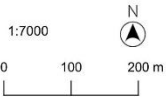


Illus 2 Non designated assets located within the study area



Key
 Hedgerow

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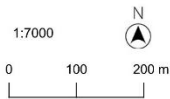


Illus 3 1813 OS Drawings Bridgend, Cardigan by Thomas Budgen map extract

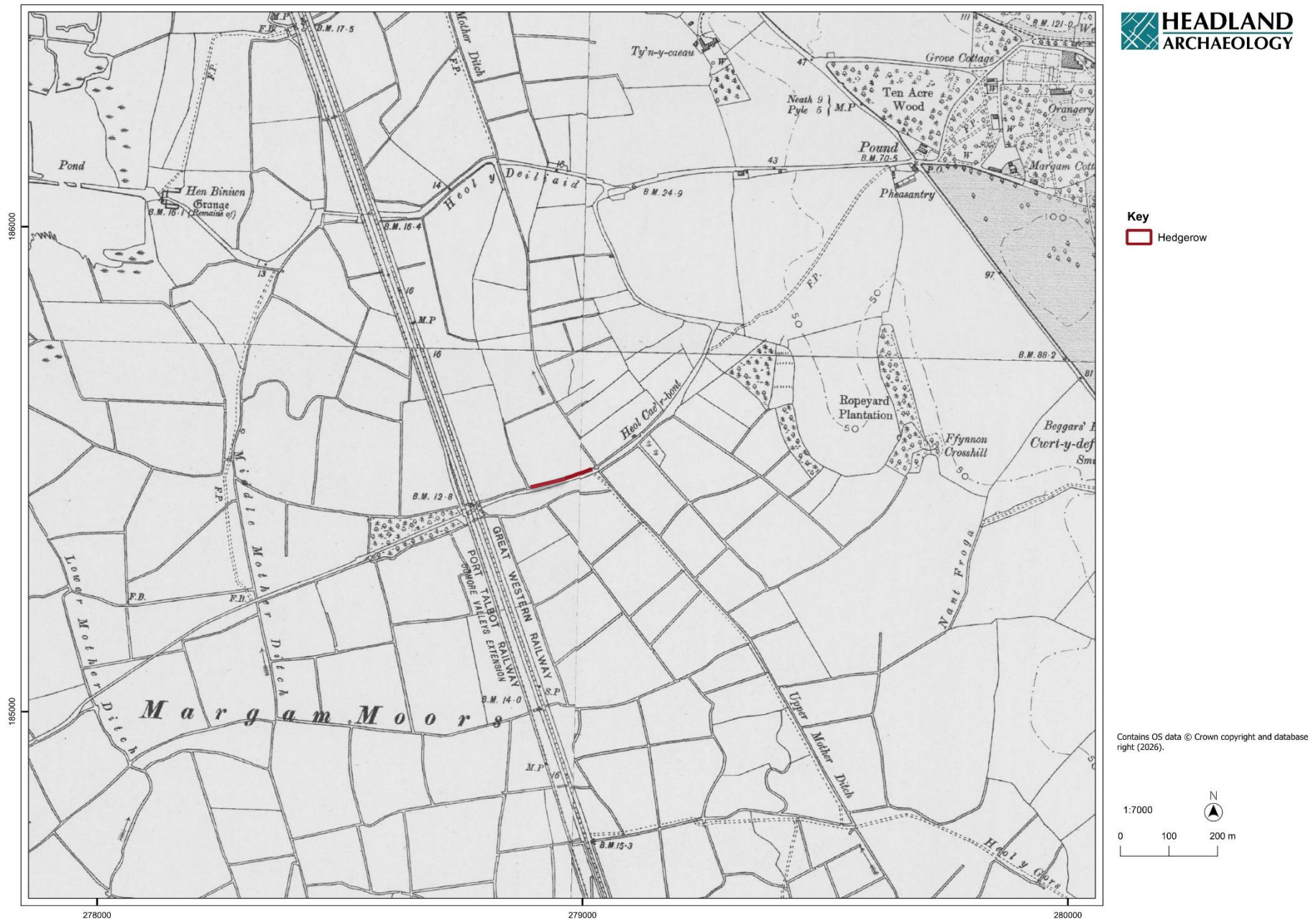


Key
Hedgerow

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Illus 4 1830 OS Old Series 1 inch Sheet XXXVII map extract



Illus 5 1883 OS 6 inch England and Wales Glamorgan Sheet XXXIII map extract



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Headland Archaeology Scotland
13 Jane Street
Edinburgh EH6 5HE
t 0131 467 7705
e scotland@headlandarchaeology.com

Headland Archaeology Yorkshire & North
Units 23–25 & 15 | Acorn Business Centre | Balme
Road Cleckheaton BD19 4EZ
t 0127 493 8019
e yorkshireandnorth@headlandarchaeology.com

Headland Archaeology South & East
Building 68C | Wrest Park | Silsoe
Bedfordshire MK45 4HS
t 01525 861 578
e southandeast@headlandarchaeology.com

Headland Archaeology Midlands & West
Unit 1 | Clearview Court | Twyford Rd
Hereford HR2 6JR
t 01432 364 901
e midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com

Headland Archaeology North West
Fourways House | 57 Hilton Street
Manchester M1 2EJ
t 0161 236 2757
e northwest@headlandarchaeology.com

www.headlandarchaeology.com