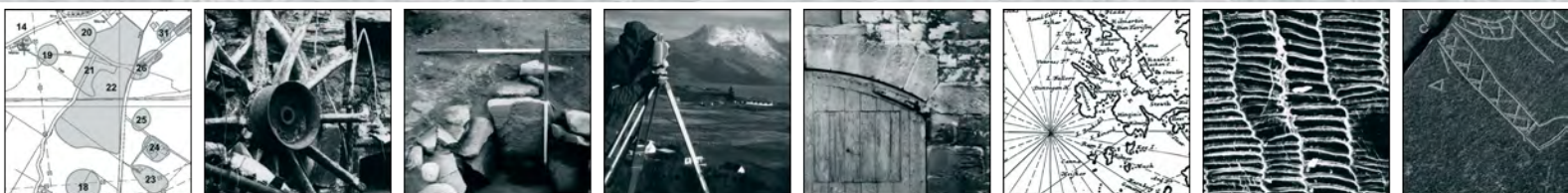


RWCW



RADYR WEIR, CARDIFF

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

commissioned by Dawnus Construction Ltd

11/02203/DCO

February 2018

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project info

HA JOB NO. RWCW
HAS NO. 1184
NGR ST 13106 80786
PARISH Radyr
LOCAL AUTHORITY Cardiff Council

project team

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Headland Archaeology undertook a watching brief on land adjacent to Radyr Weir near Cardiff during the dismantling of a construction compound associated with the installation of a hydroelectric turbine. No archaeological finds or features were identified during the works.

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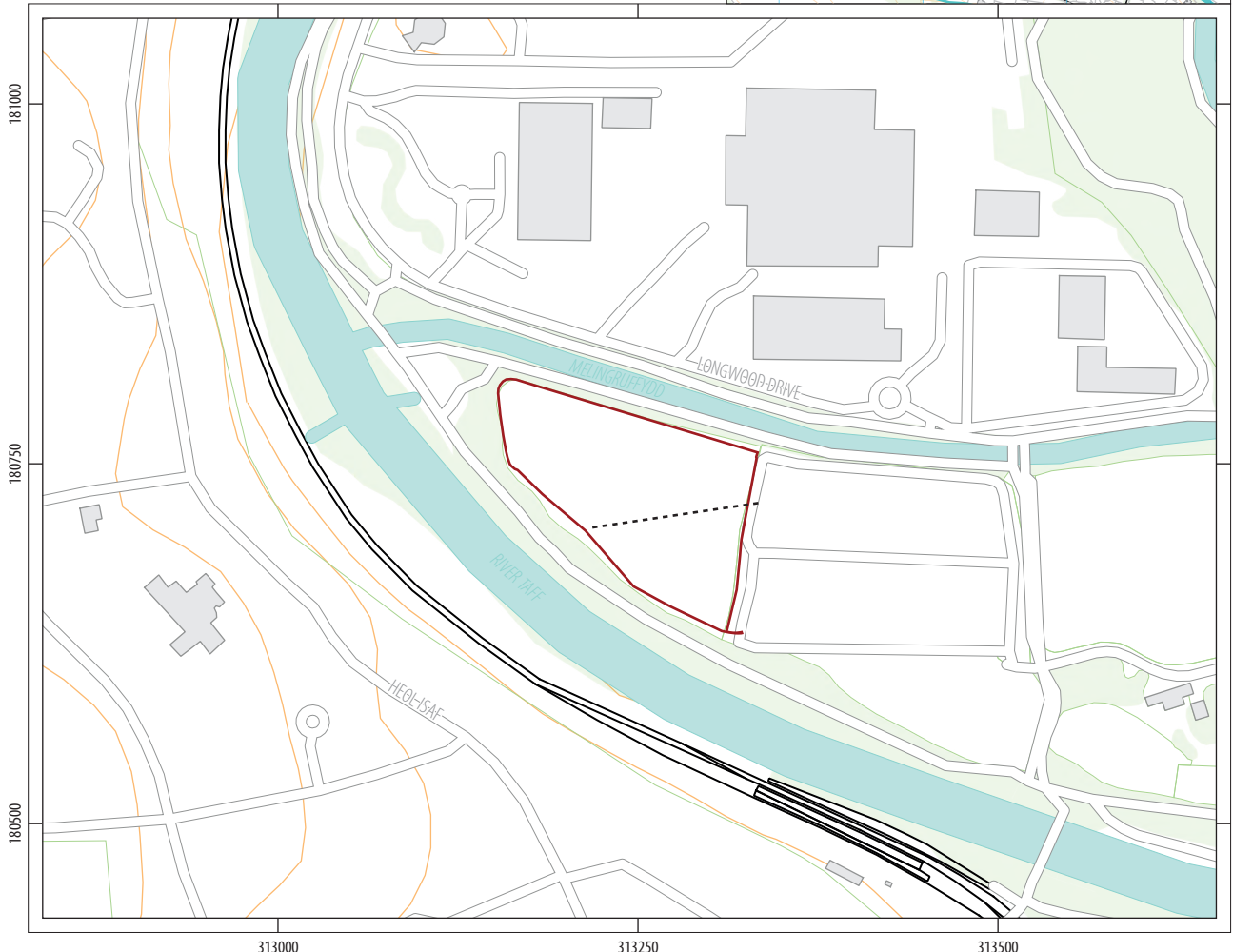
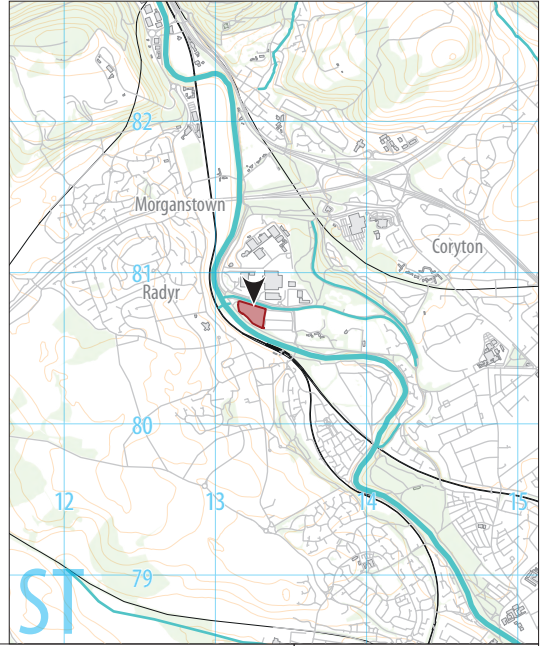
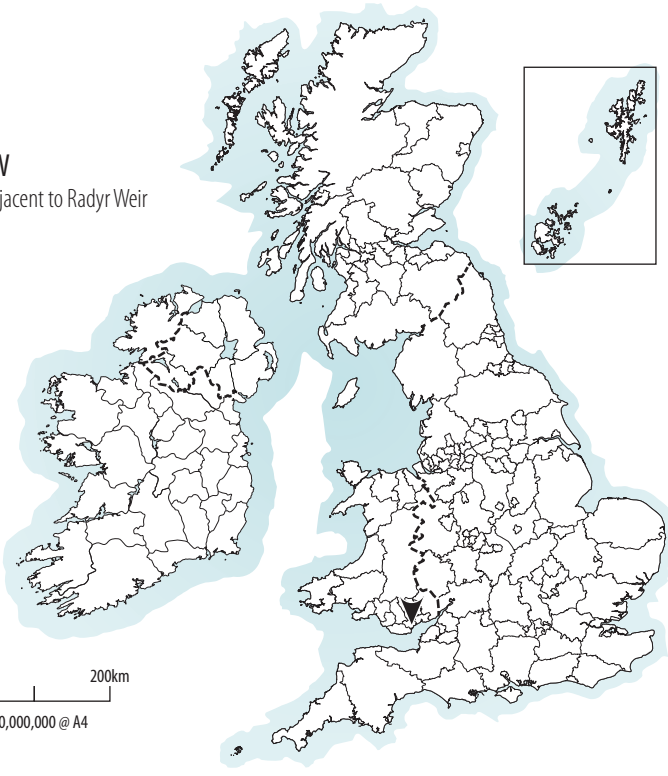
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RWCW
land adjacent to Radyr Weir
Cardiff

0 200km
1:10,000,000 @ A4



0 100m
1:5,000 @ A4

KEY
 observed area of former site compound
 - - - modern path

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ILLUS 1 Site location

RADYR WEIR, CARDIFF

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken on land at Radyr Weir, Cardiff, from 18th to 29th April 2016, as part of an attempt to mitigate the excavation of extensive groundworks connected with the construction of a hydroelectric installation next to the River Taff (Planning Ref; 11/02203/DCO).

1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND

Planning consent for the construction of a hydropower station on the River Taff was granted in 2012 subject to conditions. Those relating to the historic environment were as follows;

Condition 11

'No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the LPA.'

Condition 12

'No site works shall be undertaken until the implementation of an appropriate programme of structural recording and analysis has been agreed with the LPA, to be carried out by a specialist acceptable to the LPA and in accordance with an agreed written specification.'

Due to a misunderstanding of the planning conditions, the main contractors on the project, Dawnus Construction Ltd, failed to engage an archaeological contractor to submit the required WSI prior to the commencement of site works in 2015.

Upon realising the oversight, Dawnus contacted Headland Archaeology for advice. Following discussions between the archaeological advisors to the local planning authority (Glamorgan Gwent Archaeology Trust) and Headland Archaeology, it was agreed that an archaeological watching brief would be undertaken during the remainder of the project.

Although all primary excavation had already been undertaken, it was agreed that monitoring would take place during the removal

of the temporary compound surface, which had been installed at the start of the project. It was agreed that this methodology would be sufficient to satisfy Condition 11 of the planning consent. Archaeological monitoring was undertaken in April 2016.

The programme of structural recording and analysis required by Condition 12 will be the subject of a separate report.

1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The application area covered an area of approximately 3,750m² centred on the eastern end of Radyr Weir (Illus 1), where it meets the eastern bank of the River Taff (ST 13106 80786). The underlying bedrock is sandstone of the Llanishen Conglomerate overlain by superficial deposits of alluvium. The application site is located at a height of approximately 29m OD.

The 'Taff Trail' cycle path passes through the site adjacent to the River Taff. To the east of the cycle path is a sparsely wooded area containing the continuation of a feeder channel into the Taff, and an overflow channel which formerly returned water from the feeder channel back into the river. The landscape in the wooded area is undulating, and appears to have been used as an off-road cycle park, although it is recorded as a picnic area on Ordnance Survey mapping.

The development plans consisted of two Archimedean screw turbines installed in a new channel immediately to the east of the current weir, as well as the installation of new fish pass facility, and the building of a new housing facility for equipment associated with the turbines.

The scheme involved work on the eastern bank of the river Taff and within the river channel itself, with the deepest excavations taking place immediately adjacent to the river. The depth for the installation of the turbines was approximately 9m below ground level, with dredging of the river bed also taking place.

Located within the application area were features associated with the current weir, and the former site of the Melingriffith Tinplate works (Illus 2).



ILLUS 2 Glamorgan XLIII (includes: Cardiff; Whitchurch), published 1886 – Ordnance Survey Six-inch England and Wales, 1842–1952 (Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)

During construction, a site compound area measuring c.120m x 60m had been located to the east of the development area, which comprised a large triangular shaped plot, identifiable on the 1875 OS map, bordered to the north by the Melingriffith stream, and to the south by the River Taff, a north-south hedge formed the eastern border.

1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A desk-based assessment of the development area was prepared by Headland Archaeology (Craddock-Bennett 2012) and submitted with the planning application. The following text summarises the findings of the DBA.

The current weir was constructed between 1774 and 1775 to provide a water supply for Melingriffith Tinplate Works. The weir is believed to have been built near the site of an earlier one, potentially of medieval origin. It was thought likely that any archaeological remains discovered during the watching brief would be associated with the Melingriffith Tinplate Works.

Melingriffith, as an industrial unit, was in existence long before the advent of the Industrial Revolution and of the development of the modern metallurgical industries. Prior to the establishment of the tinplate works in the 1740s the site is believed to have been the location of a corn mill driven by water power from the River Taff, and it was probably the existence of

this power that encouraged the adaption of the mill site for the purposes of iron and tinplate manufacture (Chappell 1940).

The weir directed water along a feeder channel to the Tinplate Works, which was controlled by a sluice gate of which there are still remains. The course of an overflow channel running south from the feeder stream is still visible, and enters back into the Taff beneath a brick arched tunnel which runs beneath the Taff Trail cycle path.

Archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric up to the medieval period are known from the surrounding area, but none have been identified within the development area itself.

2 AIMS

The aims of the watching brief were to;

- › observe the removal of the remaining hardcore/overburden of the compound area, and record any features of archaeological significance discovered during these groundworks.
- › produce and deposit a satisfactory archive and disseminate the results of the work via grey-literature reporting and publication as appropriate.



ILLUS 3 Working shot of machine stripping, facing NE **ILLUS 4** Machine stripping in progress **ILLUS 5** Modern path, facing E **ILLUS 6** Stripped area showing modern path

3 METHOD

3.1 GROUND MONITORING

Monitoring was undertaken over an 11 day period during the mechanical removal of the compound surface.

All monitoring was undertaken by an archaeologist of ACIfA level experience. Excavation works were undertaken by the principal contractor using a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-bladed bucket. The excavated areas were closely examined for any features and the spoil was re-examined in order to collect any artefacts. Sufficient time was afforded to the archaeologist to undertake recording of the exposed deposits.

3.2 RECORDING

All recording followed ClfA Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (ClfA 2014). A plan was made of the stripped area and deposits were recorded on pro forma record sheets.

Excavated areas were photographed using 35mm black and white film. Digital photographs were taken for reference and reporting purposes but will not form part of the site archive.

4 RESULTS

The area observed measured approximately 120m long x 60m wide (Illus 3 & 4). The overburden measured approximately 0.4m thick and was composed of a brown, dry, friable, sandy silt overlain by Type 2 aggregate which formed the temporary compound surface.

No features of any significance were identified, but a modern path measuring approximately 2m wide, edged with concrete curbs, was located running east-west across the full length of the site (Illus 5).

The natural substrate was composed of a reddish orange silty sand (Illus 6).

5 CONCLUSIONS

Cartographic evidence in the form of the 1886 Ordnance Survey Map suggests that the watching brief area was located outside the main focus of industrial activity, so the expectancy of finding significant remains was low. The modern path is likely associated with the former presence on the site of allotments.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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