

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

**Proposed Windfarm at Pawl Hir,
Penybont, Powys**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

CPAT Report No 514

Proposed Windfarm at Pawl Hir, Penybont, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

R. J. Silvester
February 2003

Report for Mr P Kendrick

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9.1 INTRODUCTION

9.1.1 In September 2002 the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was invited by Dulas Ltd (of Dyfi Eco Park, Machynlleth), on behalf of Mr P Kendrick of Cwmbrith Farm, Cefnlllys, near Llandrindod Wells, to undertake an archaeological assessment of a site within the Windworks programme. The proposed windfarm lies on an upland ridge to the south of the River Ithon.

9.1.2 The purpose of this archaeological assessment was to establish the nature of the archaeological resource within the boundary of the proposed windfarm, and also to assess the impact of the proposal both on archaeological sites in its vicinity and on the historic landscape. A further purpose was to recommend mitigation measures where the proposed development was likely to have an impact, whether direct or indirect, on the archaeological resource.

9.2 GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

9.2.1 The proposed windfarm, comprising a group of three turbines, falls within a defined area (henceforward termed the proposal area) of 0.78km². It is centred at SJ 105594, a little under 5km to the south-south-east of Llandrindod Wells in central Powys.

9.2.2 The heart of the proposal area is a broad and flattish ridge from which knolls project to a maximum height of 408m above sea level (OD). To the south the ground drops steeply into a valley carrying a small stream that is a tributary of the River Edw, while on the north-west and north-east there are further, though less pronounced, valleys with streams, all of them falling at least in part in the proposal area. The ridge is linked by a saddle to the slightly higher Gilvern Hill and its associated hills (maximum height 431m OD) and together they form one of the frequent upland ranges that form the central Radnorshire commons.

9.2.3 Pawl Hir is effectively divided into two zones by a trackway or green lane that runs along the spine of the ridge. South of this lane the ground has been enclosed with a number of large rectilinear fields dividing up the ridge and the valley to the south by means of post and wire fences. But to the north the ground is largely unenclosed, except for one abandoned intake (see below).

9.2.4 The soils on the ridge and the adjacent upper valleys appear to fall within the Manod Association of well-drained, but sometimes shallow, fine loamy or silty soils over mudstone and sandstone, and the Malvern Association of well-drained very stony, loamy soils on medium to steep bouldery slopes which form over igneous rock (Soil Survey of England and Wales map and legend; Rudeforth *et al*, 1984, 181; 183).

9.3 METHODOLOGY

- 9.3.1 The proposal area, and thus the area of the assessment, was initially identified by National Wind Power in conjunction with Mr P Kendrick as a block of land defined almost entirely by existing land boundaries. Its extent is depicted on the accompanying plan (Fig 9.1).
- 9.3.2 The methodology adopted for the assessment consisted of an initial desk-top study of readily available, primary and secondary sources. The main basis for the study was the data held in the regional Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) which is maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust at Welshpool in Powys, and equivalent material held in the National Monument Record (NMR), a department of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales (RCAHMW) in Aberystwyth. Information from the former was derived by a written enquiry, while the latter was searched by the writer, the RCAHMW also providing access to vertical aerial photography held by themselves and by the Central Register of Air Photography for Wales, a section of the Welsh Assembly in Cardiff. The National Library of Wales (NLW), also in Aberystwyth, was searched for relevant material, both documentary and cartographic, but particularly the latter. The material sources that proved to be relevant to the study are detailed in Section 9.10, below, as are the printed works that were consulted.
- 9.3.3 The search for information was restricted to those repositories listed above, as these were considered to be the primary sources of information likely to be relevant to the study, and the available resources did not permit a comprehensive examination of documentation in other, smaller archives which may contain potentially useful material.
- 9.3.4 A second element of the assessment was a field survey. This allowed both a review of those sites and features already known to exist, and also a record to be prepared of any new sites encountered during the walkover survey. Such was the extent of the proposal area that it was not possible to examine all of it methodically in the time available, but it was possible to assess satisfactorily that part of the proposal area where the turbines are to be sited. It was not possible, either to examine known sites of archaeological and historic landscape interest beyond the boundaries of the proposal area, and the records of these given in Appendix 1, part 2 are derived in part from the information held in the regional SMR and the NMR.
- 9.3.5 A visual search was also made for areas which might contain surface deposits that could have a palaeoenvironmental potential. It is evident that peaty soils do cover the ridge and it is possible that deeper pockets may exist in some places on the ridge, as well as in the valleys.
- 9.3.6 The survey was carried out on foot and consisted of an examination of the area in a systematic manner. Wherever possible, regular transects were walked, and the field pattern was such that the ground could be covered in this way in as an efficient a manner as possible. The sites of archaeological and historic landscape interest which were discovered during the survey were located with reasonable accuracy by establishing the relative positions of the sites to mapped boundaries and where necessary by the use of hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment.

- 9.3.7 All of the sites recorded by the desk-top and field survey assessments were entered into a Foxpro database and, where appropriate, mapped in relation to the proposal area using the Mapinfo software package. It should be noted that if there are any important archaeological sites identified within the proposal area these are defined by zones of archaeological sensitivity on Fig 9.1. This treatment has, however, not been extended to comparable sites outside the proposal area as it has to be assumed that there is no likelihood of any disturbance to these sites under the current proposals. Other archaeological sites are distinguished by a single dot which gives no guide as to the overall size of the site that it denotes, while linear features, if present, are indicated by lines.
- 9.3.8 Only those archaeological sites which are within, or near to, the proposal area have been mapped on Fig 9.1. An extract of the information within the database is included in this report as Appendix 1. Part 1 of this appendix refers to sites within the proposal area, and Part 2 to sites around the proposal including some that fall beyond the limits of Fig 9.1. A simple numbering system, based on existing Primary Record Numbers (PRNs), has been adopted. Newly identified features have been given new PRNs, courtesy of the curatorial section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.
- 9.3.9 The importance attributed to each site which has been identified in the proposal area and its locality is given in Appendix 1. Sites have been graded in importance from A to E, adopting the following criteria which are based on those used in the Department of Transport's 1994 *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (Volume 11, Section 3, Part 2).

Category A - Sites which are statutorily designated as being of national importance under the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act* of 1979, or those considered by us during the current work to merit such a designation.

Category B - Sites of regional importance; these are not of sufficient importance to merit a statutory designation but are nevertheless of particular relevance to the understanding of the archaeological resource of the region.

Category C - Sites of local importance; these are considered to be of lesser merit but are nevertheless useful in understanding the archaeological resource of the local area.

Category D - Damaged or minor sites which are of interest but which, due to their condition or nature, are unlikely to provide much significant information on the archaeological resource of the area.

Category E - Sites which could not properly be evaluated from the information revealed by this assessment. Some form of further assessment may be required to ensure that these sites can be properly assessed; otherwise, specific mitigation which takes into account the uncertainty of the results of the evaluation should be considered.

9.4 RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENT: THE ARCHAEOLOGY

- 9.4.1 Archaeologically, Pawl Hir (otherwise Pawl-hir on Ordnance Survey maps, and consequently in SMR records) is an upland tract that is relatively typical of this part of central Powys. Only one site had previously been registered in the regional Sites and Monuments Record and in the National Monuments Record, though with a significant number of others in the vicinity. Desk-top analysis and fieldwork identified a handful of other more features, some of more interest than others but some of these were just beyond the boundaries of the proposal area.
- 9.4.2 There is one probable prehistoric site (PRN 17542), although, on its purpose, opinion is divided between a Bronze Age funerary monument such as a ring cairn, or a hut circle of similar date. Circumstantial evidence favours the former, but either way it is a scheduled ancient monument, the only one in the proposal area. Fieldwork also revealed a second possible cairn (PRN 64203), though such is the damage that has been inflicted on this feature that there can be no real certainty as to its origins. Other cairns lie just to the south on the northern flanks of Gilwern Hill (PRNs 2717, 2719 and 4098). There are thus a number of sites of funerary or ritual origin and probably of Bronze Age date in and around Pawl Hir.
- 9.4.3 No incontrovertible traces of prehistoric settlement have been identified, but this cannot be taken as an indication that prehistoric communities avoided the high ground. Their presence nearby can be inferred from the burial cairns, and the only question is whether there was settlement on the ridge and its upper slopes or whether it was restricted to the possibly more attractive reaches in the valleys below. Earthwork traces of such settlements are not frequently encountered and it is more likely that their presence will be detected through scatters of finds, particularly tools and waste materials, during ground disturbance.
- 9.4.4 Evidence of activity later in the prehistoric period and throughout the first millennium AD is absent. Even for the medieval centuries there is little obvious visible evidence of activity, except perhaps for the green lane that traverses it from east to west. This is clearly a portion of a much longer trackway that ran across the former Radnorshire commons. Possibly it might even have had its origins in the prehistoric era. During the medieval centuries it is highly likely that much of Pawl Hir was open 'waste', used for hill grazing but not for cultivation and certainly not enclosed. Seasonal settlements may have been established close to the ridge though not necessarily on it - this was certainly the pattern on other commons in this part of central Powys. However, no traces of such activity have been identified around Pawl Hir.
- 9.4.5 Only in the post-medieval centuries - perhaps from the 16th or 17th century but certainly during the 18th century - was there an increasing level of human activity around Pawl Hir that can be readily distinguished. Small farmholdings and cottages were established in the valleys, many of them the result of encroachment and enclosure. Fields bounded by earth and stone banks, trackways edged by similar banks, and small homesteads were all imposed on a previously open landscape. Thus, the holding known as The Bog (PRN 64202) developed at the eastern end of Pawl Hir, while others such as Careg-grog (PRN 64209) and Ffos (PRN 64208) emerged in the valleys below, and less readily identifiable examples materialised to the west (e.g. Ffrwd: PRN 36950). Finally the pillow mounds on Bwylch-y-cefn

(PRN 17900) a short distance to the east of Pawl Hir indicate another facet of upland exploitation in the 18th century, namely the use of marginal lands for rabbit farming.

- 9.4.6 The partial enclosure of the ridge to create pasture fields occurred some time after the 1840s, but the earliest published Ordnance Survey plans suggest the process was underway, if not far advanced, by the early 1890s. During the 20th century or perhaps the last years of the 19th century The Bog and other local upland holdings were abandoned.

9.5 RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENT: THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

- 9.5.1 The historic landscape of Pawl Hir as now visible is largely a creation of the post-medieval era. The banks, quarries and farms, on and around the ridge, all combine to produce the picture of an open upland encroached upon and utilised, but not heavily adapted. In this respect it is typical of other former commons in Radnorshire, lying between those which remain as unenclosed uplands and those that have been completely altered by modern agricultural practice.
- 9.5.2 The Bronze Age monuments and perhaps, too, the trackway signal an earlier, prehistoric landscape, but of this little can be said, for it is only these fragments that survive. Palaeoenvironmental analyses such as pollen analysis would provide a framework for conceptualising such a landscape but no such analyses have been undertaken, and currently all we can do is speculate that the landscape at that time was relatively open.

9.6 PREDICTED IMPACTS

- 9.6.1 A number of archaeological sites lie within the proposal area, and the predicted impacts range from visual intrusion on the settings of monuments to the possibility of physical impacts by elements of the site infrastructure, including the turbines themselves. In the absence of full details of the infrastructure associated with the proposed windfarm (e.g. road lines, service trenches etc), the impact on all of the archaeology cannot be fully established at this stage.
- 9.6.2 Each site and any potential impacts will be dealt with in site PRN number order, below. A limited consideration of the impact of the proposal on the historic landscape setting has also been attempted.
- 9.6.3 **PRN 17542** *Pawl-hir structure. Category A.* Two turbines lie within 200-300m of this structure, but will not have direct physical impact on it, unless any of the site infrastructure is carried further to the west which seems unlikely. There will, however, be a visual impact.
- 9.6.4 **PRN 64199** *Pawl-hir earthworks. Category E.* These features lie at some distance from the more westerly turbines and should not be affected physically by the construction of the windfarm.

- 9.6.5 **PRN 64200** *Pawl-hir shelter. Category D.* The nearest turbine is more than 100m away and should not have any direct physical impact on this feature.
- 9.6.6 **PRN 64201** *Pawl-hir quarry complex II. Category D.* The nearest turbine is more than 200m away and should not have any direct physical impact on these surface features.
- 9.6.7 **PRN 64202** *The Bog. Category C.* This steading and its enclosures are several hundred metres away from any of the turbines, and should not therefore be physically affected. It is possible that the access way for the windfarm together with other elements of the infrastructure may pass closer to the site, but not close enough to have an impact.
- 9.6.8 **PRN 64203** *Pawl-hir cairn. Category E.* The nearest turbine is more than 100m away and should not have any direct physical impact on this feature.
- 9.6.9 **PRN 64204** *Pawl-hir holloway. Category C.* The nearest turbine is more than 100m away and should not have any direct physical impact on this feature.
- 9.6.10 **PRN 64205** *Pawl-hir quarry complex I. Category D.* In view of the fact that this quarry has probably been exploited and thus enlarged in recent years, any physical change to this feature - e.g. further exploitation for road materials - is not considered to be of significance.
- 9.6.11 **PRN 64212** *Pawl-hir cultivation ridges I. Category D.* The nearest turbine is no more than 100m away but should not have any direct physical impact on these features.
- 9.6.12 **PRN 64214** *Pawl-hir cultivation ridges II. Category D.* The nearest turbine is more than 100m away and should not have any direct physical impact on these features.
- 9.6.13 The impact of the proposal on this landscape should also take account of the view both from and to monuments in the immediate environs of the proposal area. Particular emphasis must be placed on any monuments that are statutorily protected through scheduling and those which are considered to be of similar significance even though (for whatever reason) they are not statutorily protected. All three turbines will probably be visible from PRN 17542, a scheduled monument and there are several other monuments in the vicinity of the proposal area where there will be some visual impact once the turbines are constructed, namely the Gilwern Hill cairns II and III (PRNs 2719 & 4098) and others further to the south.

9.7 PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

- 9.7.1 A range of mitigation measures for the significant number of sites identified in the last section is proposed to reduce or negate the impacts which have been predicted in the previous section. These range from a proposal for a watching brief to the careful control of any ground works and are dealt with in site number order, below, in the same way as the previous section. There are also impacts which are

not specific to any single site, and suitable methods of mitigation for these are considered briefly in paragraph 9.7.24, after the mitigation responses for site specific impacts.

- 9.7.2 It is assumed that all turbine construction works will be limited to those areas defined in the proposal. Any subsequent alterations to the turbine positions and the determination of the infrastructure that links them will inevitably necessitate a reconsideration of the impacts and mitigations proposed here.
- 9.7.3 **PRN 17542** *Pawl-hir structure*. Despite the fact that this site is at some distance from any currently identified construction works it is recommended that, in consultation with Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, the whole of the scheduled area be surrounded by barrier fencing for the duration of the work programme. No mitigation can be suggested to alleviate the visual impact.
- 9.7.4 **PRN 64202** *The Bog*. There is no obvious threat to this complex, assuming that all works traffic adheres to the existing trackway. If there is a perceived need for traffic to divert from the track, barrier fencing should be employed to protect the earthworks.
- 9.7.5 **PRN 64205** *Pawl-hir quarry complex I. Category D*. No mitigation is required for this feature.
- 9.7.6 In view of the separation distances between other known sites of archaeological and historic landscape interest and the proposed turbine locations, no further mitigation is recommended.
- 9.7.7 There is a possibility that sites which have only sub-surface traces, and have not therefore been revealed by this assessment, are present within the area of the proposal. If any such site is present, there is a potential that elements of the site might be disturbed during the initial ground works which precede construction. In order to provide some mitigation for this potential impact, a watching brief should be carried out during ground works, with the aim of properly recording any archaeological features which are revealed. The archaeologist carrying out the watching brief must be allowed a reasonable time to carry out any necessary archaeological recording before the recommencement of site works.

9.8 CONCLUSIONS

9.8.1 As a result of the archaeological assessment the following conclusions can be drawn:

- there are a reasonable number of archaeological sites and historic landscape features within the proposal area and more in the immediate vicinity;
- one site within the proposal area and some in its vicinity are either scheduled sites or sites of equivalent importance;
- the proposed turbines will have a visual impact on many monuments, of both national and local significance. The impacts might be marginally reduced by radical re-siting of the turbines towards the eastern end of the proposal area, but are unlikely to be removed completely;
- the proposal lies in a landscape area of considerable historical interest, where there is a mix of prehistoric and 18th to 19th-century features, the latter predominating;
- not all the details of the infrastructure associated with the windfarm were available at the time that this study was undertaken, and it is therefore impossible to assess their impact on the known archaeology; and
- an appropriate archaeological response to the proposal is thus, in the view of the writer, the careful design of the windfarm layout which prevents physical disturbance to any of the monuments, necessitates minimal disturbance to the existing historic landscape, and a watching brief during construction works. But due consideration must be given to the presence of a scheduled monument within the proposal area and others close by, and consultation with Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments at any early stage is recommended.

9.9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9.9.1 The writer would like to thank the staff of the following repositories for their help and assistance:

The Regional Sites and Monuments Record held by Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust at Welshpool;

The National Monument Record administered by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Aberystwyth;

The National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth.

9.10 REFERENCES

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OS Vertical APs: 84/078/252, dated 25-04-1984
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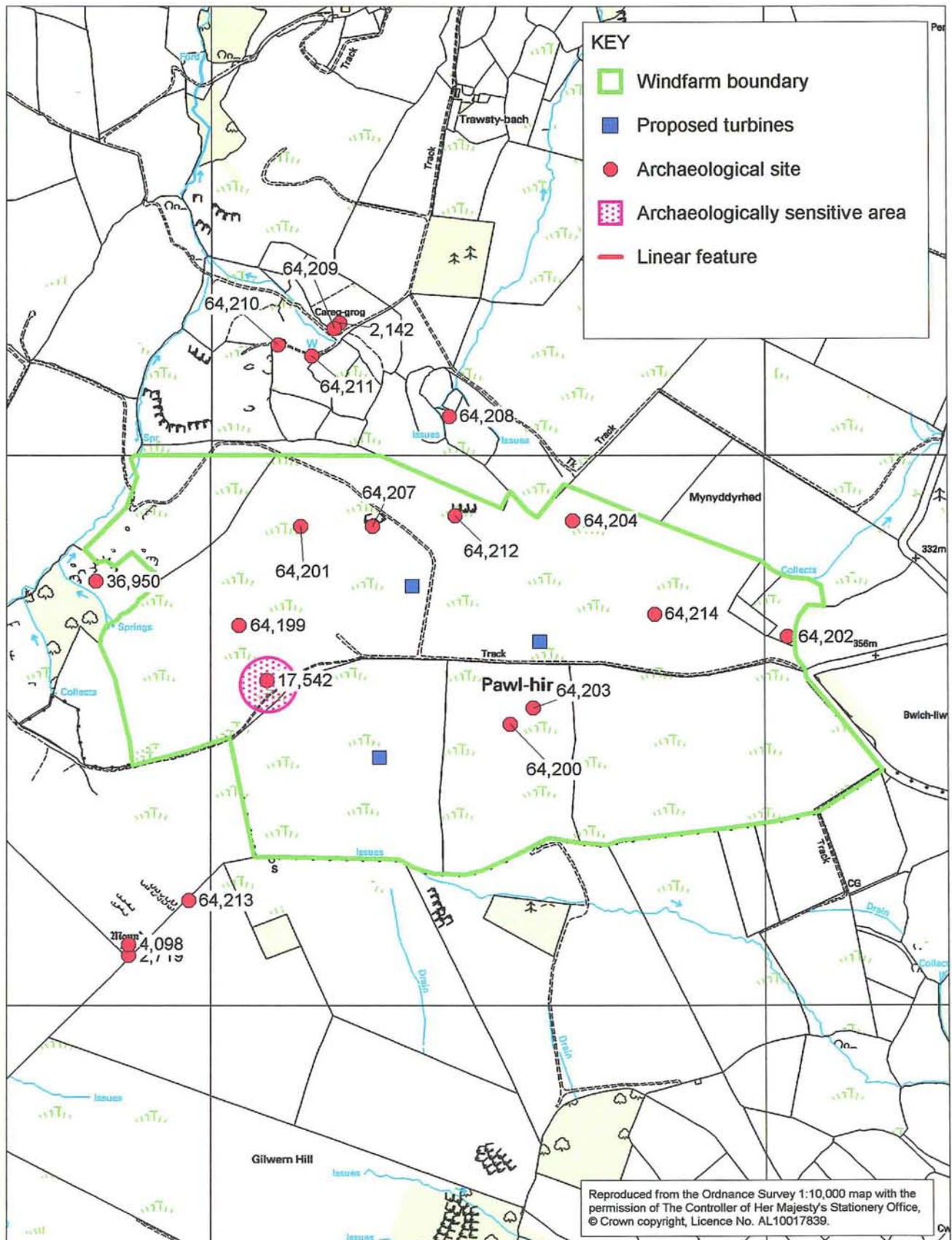


Fig 9.1 Pawl Hir Windfarm proposal area. Scale 1:10,000

Appendix 1 (Part 1): Archaeological sites within the proposal area

PRN: 17542 Site no: Pawl-hir structure **NGR: SO10105959**
Site type: Hut ? **Category : A**

It is unclear whether this is a round hut or a ring cairn. It is located in a prominent position on an upland ridge. The structure comprised a well-defined bank forming an oval shape and measuring 10 x 11.7m externally. The bank averages 0.3m in height. Internal revetment stones are visible including one particularly large stone on the western side and a row of stones on the south-eastern side. The bank shows the presence of stonework although much of it is grassed over. There are loose stones in the interior of the ring bank (Cadw, 1999).

PRN: 64199 Site no: Pawl-hir earthworks **NGR: SO10055969**
Site type: Mound **Category : E**

A series of small mounds of varying shape and size. The most obvious, an oval-shaped example with a moon-shaped hollow beside it, is 4m N/S x 2.5m E/W x 0.5m high. Other lie off to the NW and W and most have associated hollows, suggesting that they may fall within the ill-defined category of scoop-graves. At least seven of these mounds were recognised, but a thorough search of the immediate area might indicate double that number.

PRN: 64200 Site no: Pawl-hir shelter **NGR: SO10545951**
Site type: Shelter **Category : D**

A possible shelter in the lee of a rock outcrop, about 6m long by 3.5m wide. Not wholly convincing.

PRN: 64201 Site no: Pawl-hir quarry complex II **NGR: SO10165987**
Site type: Quarry **Category : D**

A complex of surface quarries, some grouped, some isolated but clearly exploiting seams or outcrops.

PRN: 64202 Site no: The Bog **NGR: SO11045967**
Site type: House **Category : C**

Cottage and outbuildings (to NW) known as The Bog in 1889 when still occupied. The ruined structure is now 10.2m NW/SE x 6.2m NE/SW and the walls still stand up to 1m high, particularly on the SW where it is set back into the slope. Around it area range of earthworks and relict boundaries that describe the enclosures and paddocks of the holding.

PRN: 64203 Site no: Pawl-hir cairn **NGR: SO10585954**
Site type: Round barrow (cairn) **Category : E**

A possible ring cairn but the material is very spread and the feature generally much degraded. Only one large stone visible. Depressed centre. 8.2m WSW/ENE x 8.6m x 0.5m high. Superb aspect to S down valley.

PRN: 64204 Site no: Pawl-hir holloway **NGR: SO10655988**
Site type: Hollow Way **Category : D**

Holloway running off unenclosed upland into enclosed fields at lower level. Well-defined.

PRN: 64207 Site no: Pawl-hir quarry complex I **NGR: SO10295987**
Site type: Quarry **Category : D**

Quarry shows on 1984 AP, but an earlier AP of 1946 indicates that formerly there was a series of small quarry pits. Still clearly visible.

PRN: 64212 Site no: Pawl-hir cultivation ridges I **NGR: SO10445989**
Site type: Ridging **Category : D**

RAF AP suggests an area of ridging here, though the possibility of a natural agency cannot be ruled out (RAF 106G/UK 1190/4006). This could not be readily identified during fieldwork.

PRN: 64214 Site no: Pawl-hir cultivation ridges II **NGR: SO10805971**
Site type: Ridging **Category : D**

RAF AP suggests an area of narrow ridging here (RAF 106G/UK 1190/3006). This could not be readily identified during fieldwork.

Appendix 1 (Part 2): Archaeological sites in the vicinity of the proposal area

PRN: 2142 Site no: Garreg y Grog Placename **NGR: SO10236024**
Site type: Cross ? **Category : E**

Name apparently suggestive of a cross (Tithe map, citing RCAHMW, 1913). no such feature noted by RCAHMW visit in 1913. No further detail.

PRN: 2719 Site no: Gilwern Hill Cairn II **NGR: SO09855909**
Site type: Round barrow **Category : A**

Cairn. 18m diam x 1.6m max height. Turfed over. Cut by fence from NE/SW. Disturbed on SW.

PRN: 4098 Site no: Gilwern Hill Cairn III **NGR: SO09855911**
Site type: Round barrow ? **Category : E**

Probable cairn 7.5m diam. 0.5m high. Possibly built on outcrop. A trench 2.5m long 0.6m wide and 0.3m deep cut through centre.

PRN: 17900 Site no: Farm Mounds **NGR: SO119606**
Site type: Pillow mound **Category : C**

Four mounds c.6m long by 3m wide by 0.3m high; bracken covered in the 1980s?

PRN: 23318 Site no: Bwlch Llwyn Farm, Cefnlllys flint f **NGR: SO11405960**
Site type: Find **Category : E**

A single flint point found on the farm.

PRN: 36950 Site no: Ffrwd building I **NGR: SO09815978**
Site type: Farmstead **Category : C**

1946 vertical AP shows building and surrounding enclosures (RAF 106G/UK 1190/4006)

PRN: 64205 Site no: Upper Cwm-brith **NGR: SO10286084**
Site type: Building **Category : B**

Farm house of Plan type A but originally D. Some alterations carry date of 1760, and there is a date over barn doorway of 1759. No other dating available (NMR)

PRN: 64208 Site no: Ffos **NGR: SO10436007**
Site type: House **Category : C**

Cottage still in use in 1889 amongst small irregular fields; not standing in 1993 (NMR)

PRN: 64209 Site no: Careg-grog **NGR: SO10226023**
Site type: House **Category : C**

19th-century stone-built cottage-farmhouse, now a roofless ruin (NMR). Cottage still in use in 1889 amongst small irregular fields.

PRN: 64210 Site no: Careg-grog outbuilding **NGR: SO10126020**
Site type: Building **Category : C**

Outbuilding, perhaps barn near Careg-grog.

PRN: 64211 Site no: Careg-grog well **NGR: SO10186018**
Site type: Well **Category : D**

Well probably serving Careg-grog.

PRN: 64213 Site no: Pawl-hir enclosure **NGR: SO09965919**
Site type: Enclosure **Category : E**

Polygonal enclosure set in lee of rock outcrop (RAF 106G/UK 1190/4006)

PRN: 64215 Site no: Cwm-mawr **NGR: SO11415863**
Site type: House **Category : C**

A small farmstead on a platform, at the head of a valley. Gable-end chimney of the stone-built house remained in the mid 1990s but all the farm buildings have gone. Further details in NMR.

PRN: 64216 Site no: Bwlch Llwyn **NGR: SO11375953**
Site type: House **Category : C**

19thC farmhouse of central stair-passage type, with farmbuildings in range (NMR)

PRN: 64217 Site no: The Green **NGR: SO111605**
Site type: House **Category : C**

Sub-medieval farmstead, back to back fireplaces, beams and wooden mullioned window (NMR)