

October 2000

ABERPORTH AIRFIELD

CEREDIGION



Archaeological Assessment Report

Aberporth Airfield, Cardigan
Ceredigion

Archaeological Assessment Report

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	4
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1 Project Background.....	5
1.2 Methods Statement.....	5
2. PLANNING AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	7
2.1 Planning Background	7
2.2 Historical Background	7
2.3 Geological Background.....	8
3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS	9
3.1 The Sites and Monuments Record	9
3.2 Bronze Age burials.....	9
3.3 The Pre-Airfield Landscape	10
3.4 The Airfield.....	10
3.5 The Polish Resettlement Camp	11
4. SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT	13
4.1 Schedule of Significance.....	13
4.2 Impact of the Development Proposals	13
5. MITIGATION.....	15
5.1 Site 1	15
5.2 Sites 11 and 12	15
5.3 Site 15	15
6. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	16
6.1 Primary Sources	16
6.2 Published Maps.....	16
6.3 Secondary Sources	16
6.4 Internet Resources.....	16
APPENDIX 1.....	17
Project Design	
APPENDIX 2.....	22
Gazetteer	
ILLUSTRATIONS	27
Fig 1 Aberporth Location Map	
Fig 2 Aberporth OS 6" to 1 mile map (1904, revised 1948)	
Fig 3 Aberporth Site Map	
Fig 4 Airfield Buildings - Sites 11 and 12	

PLATES.....28

Plate 1 Aerial Photograph of Aberporth Airfield looking north-east

Plate 2 Putative Round Cairn (Site 1) looking north

Plate 3 Putative Round Cairn (Site 1) looking north-east

Plate 4 Bellman Hanger (B1) looking north

Plate 5 Barrack Blocks B30/31 looking north-east

Plate 6 Barrack Block B19 (Whittle) looking north

Plate 7 Barrack Block B25 (Newton) looking north-east

Plate 8 Barrack Block B26 (Marconi) looking south

SUMMARY

The Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) were invited by White Young Green Environmental Consultancy to undertake an archaeological assessment of Aberporth airfield (SN 255 495) as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment. It is proposed to develop the airfield for the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA). The assessment involved a desk-based study of the development of the site in conjunction with a walk-over survey of the site.

The desk-based study involved investigation of pertinent documents held by the Welsh National Assembly, the Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record, the National Library of Wales, the Cardigan Archives, the archives of DERA, and those of the Defence Estates (Brecon). The walk-over survey involved a systematic examination of the extent of the airfield and of the exteriors of the airfield buildings.

The SMR recorded the existence of a Bronze Age round cairn at the western edge of the study area, which had been identified on the basis of a local place name, Crug-gwyn (white cairn). The walk-over survey identified a low mound (at SN 2454 4942) on the line of the field boundary, which has been truncated by a boundary ditch and has been reduced in height as a result of the landscaping of the airfield.

The desk-based study examined the development and history of the airfield complex which was identified by the archaeological curator (Cambria Archaeology) as being a significant resource. The airfield was planned at the start of the Second World War. Vacant possession of the site was given to the Air Ministry on 29th September 1939 and the airfield opened in December 1940, although negotiations for the freehold were still ongoing in 1941. The current tarmaced runway was completed in 1952. Although some of the second world war buildings have been demolished, for the most part the airfield structures have been largely unaltered. Around the outskirts of the airfield is an integrated network of pillboxes which provided for the defence of the airfield. The reason for the extensive nature for these defences is that the airfield formed part of a defensive stop line against coastal invasion and consisted of additional entrenchment fortifications to the east of the airfield, which have now been filled in.

The sites have been graded in terms of archaeological significance. The possible cairn has been graded as of regional importance, reflecting its potential prehistoric date and its degraded condition. Similarly the airfield perimeter defensive system, formed by pillboxes, is considered to be of regional importance, reflecting the integrated nature of the system and its relatively good survival.

It is recommended that the possible prehistoric cairn be subject to evaluation trenching, and subject to the results there may be a requirement for further recording. It is also recommended that the military buildings and the pillboxes of the defensive system be subject to photographic recording in advance of the development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LUAU wish to thank the numerous individuals and organisations who assisted in finding the information necessary to compile this report. In particular Donald Booth of DERA for arranging access to the airfield and to the various archives relating to the airfield. Steve Barrett and Dr Steve Mustow of White Young Green were also helpful in this respect. Clive Thomas and Andrew Williams of the Defence Estates office in Brecon both assisted the documentary research. Thanks are also owed for providing access to material to Louise Austin and Eleanor Breen of Cambria Archaeology and Helen Palmer, County Archivist for Ceredigion Archives. In addition information was kindly supplied by Elfyn Rees and Mary Bott of the Aberporth History Society, John Edwards of the British Legion and Medwyn Parry of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales. LUAU are also grateful to the staff of Aberporth Airfield and Amey Comax for their assistance and provision of plans and photographs.

The data gathering, field visit and report writing was undertaken by Richard Newman. The project was managed by Jamie Quartermaine who also edited the report and provided the illustrations.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 The Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) were invited by White Young Green Environmental Consultancy to undertake an archaeological assessment of Aberporth airfield as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment. It is proposed to develop the airfield for the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA). The airfield is situated to the north of the settlement of Blaenannerch within the parish of Aberporth, Cardiganshire, West Wales centred at Ordnance Survey reference SN 255 495.
- 1.1.2 The airfield was planned at the start of the Second World War. Vacant possession of the site was given to the Air Ministry on 29th September 1939 and the airfield opened in December 1940, although negotiations for the freehold were still ongoing in 1941. The current tarmaced runway was completed in 1952. The site remains in the ownership of the Ministry of Defence.

1.2 METHODS STATEMENT

- 1.2.1 **Public Record Office and Welsh National Assembly:** internet-based searches revealed that the Public Record Office in Kew did not contain any records relevant to the Ministry of Defence's ownership of the site, though one set of documents, in the process of being transferred from the Welsh National Assembly to the Public Record Office (BD 54) and entitled '*Plans of airfields in Wales*', may contain some information. The present location of this document bundle could not be established by employees at the Welsh National Assembly, and consequently the documents were not available for consultation. The Air Photographic Registry of the Welsh National Assembly was consulted by telephone and they informed LUAU that no air photographic coverage of the area was held by them. Subsequent consultation with RCAHMW revealed that they do hold the 1946 air photo coverage of the area and that a copy is held by RCAHMW, but there was insufficient time to consult this source.
- 1.2.2 **Sites and Monuments Record:** details of the known and recorded archaeological resource of the airfield and its immediate vicinity were requested from the Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) in Carmarthen. Copies of the relevant section of the Aberporth tithe map and the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6 inch to 1 mile map of the area were forwarded by the SMR.
- 1.2.3 **National Library of Wales and Ceredigion Archives:** visits were made to the National Library of Wales and the Ceredigion Archives, both in Aberystwyth, to examine any relevant documents or maps. In the National Library of Wales the tithe apportionment was checked and an estate map dated 1810 for Plas Aberporth was examined (NLW Morgan Richardson Deposit No. 2), but the area lay to the north of that later used for the airfield. In the Ceredigion Archives no useful information was found other than that contained on Ordnance Survey maps. Air photographic coverage of Ceredigion, dated 1956, deliberately excluded Cardigan and Aberporth, presumably because of the military sensitivity of the area.
- 1.2.4 **Local sources:** visits were also made to the Aberystwyth Town Library and the Ceredigion Museum also in Aberystwyth for background information but nothing of relevance was noted.

- 1.2.5 **DERA:** a meeting was held with representatives of DERA and access was granted to their maps and plans archive, allowing an assessment of the development of the site from 1940 to the present day. A recent air photograph of the site was downloaded to disk (Plate 1).
- 1.2.6 **Defence Estates:** a subsequent visit was made to the offices of the Defence Estates at Brecon Barracks to examine the archives held there relating to the Defence Estates holdings at Aberporth. Little of relevance was found other than a 1:2500 map of the airfield area dated 1940.
- 1.2.7 **Cardiff University:** background information on the archaeology and history of the Aberporth area was sought at the Humanities and Main libraries of Cardiff University.
- 1.2.8 **Expert and local consultation:** following the initial data-gathering exercise, telephone inquiries were made of the Aberporth History Society and of the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales (RCAHMW), to gain further details about the history and development of the airfield.
- 1.2.9 **Field survey:** a site visit was made and the entire airfield was walked. Notes were made on the location of a number of features and photographs taken of one feature from outside the airfield. Access was not available for the area to the west of the B4333 road which is proposed to be impacted by a runway extension, and consequently this area was not examined at this stage. All features identified by the present survey were adjacent to modern field boundaries and were located with respect to these topographic features. No photography was allowed within the site itself for security reasons, though DERA agreed to supply photographs of extant buildings which were found to date in their origins to c1940 (Plates 4-8).
- 1.2.10 **The report:** the noted features of archaeological interest are interpreted, graded for significance and the impact upon them of the proposed development proposals considered. Mitigation measures are recommended where appropriate. All features noted within the study area are given a site number and are summarily described within a site gazetteer. In addition the fields to the west of the airfield which did not form part of the main study area, but might be affected by a possible rerouting of the B4333, have had the impact of the route on any known archaeological remains assessed.

2. PLANNING AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The study area does not contain any scheduled monuments or listed buildings. It does not form part of a conservation area, nor is it part of a Registered Park and Garden. Close by the study area is one grade II listed structure: a milestone at Blaenannerch, to the south of the airfield and 400m to the east of the B4333 (Cadw nd).
- 2.1.2 Five items of archaeological interest are noted on the Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record within the vicinity of the study area. In particular the curatorial archaeological organisation, Cambria Archaeology, consider the airfield itself and a Polish resettlement camp, which occupied some of the Air Ministry buildings after the Second World War, to be of historic importance (White Young Green 2000).

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.2.1 As with much of Ceredigion, the Aberporth area has good potential for the survival of prehistoric remains. Limited arable farming and low intensity land-use throughout much of the historical period has ensured a better than average chance for the survival of early remains. As well as cairns there are numerous defended hilltop sites within the region, the nearest to the study area being about a kilometre away at Rhyd-y-gaer. However, there is little documented evidence for surviving prehistoric remains in the Aberporth vicinity. Evans' turn of the nineteenth century survey of the antiquities of Ceredigion does not mention Aberporth in connection with any known antiquities (Evans 1903).
- 2.2.2 No Roman remains are known of in the immediate vicinity of the study area. After the ending of Roman Britain, Ceredigion developed as a distinct sub-kingdom in the border region between the powerful kingdoms of Deheubarth and Gwynedd. Aberporth lay in the medieval commote of Iscoed, which was centred on Cardigan (Lloyd 1937).
- 2.2.3 By the early post-medieval period Aberporth was the principal herring port of Wales (Jenkins 1982, 112). By the eighteenth century it was developing wider commercial interests on the back of herring industry-associated imports, in particular salt which was brought from Ireland, France and the ports of Chester and Lancaster (Jenkins 1982, 113). By the end of the eighteenth century the maritime trade of the south Cardiganshire ports was considerable, with Cardigan the largest port and much larger by volume of trade than Cardiff for example (Jenkins 1982, 114).
- 2.2.4 During the nineteenth century Aberporth continued to export salted fish, along with other primary products including oak bark for tanning. Its imports included salt, timber, lime and in particular culm – anthracite dust used for fuel – which was unloaded on the beach (Jenkins 1982, 118). Trade declined in the later nineteenth century as the south Cardiganshire ports were out-competed by those of south Wales. Nevertheless, Aberporth families played a role in the development of the new trade with several figuring prominently in Cardiff-based shipping (Jenkins 1982, 125-6).
- 2.2.5 In the twentieth century the former port developed as a minor seaside resort and following the Second World War much of the land to the south of Aberporth, requisitioned during the War, remained in government hands as military installations.

2.3 GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.3.1 The solid geology of the study area is formed of Llandeilo to Ashgill rocks, comprising Argillaceous rocks with subequal interbedded strata of sandstones.

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

3.1 THE SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

- 3.1.1 Four sites were noted on the SMR within or immediately adjacent to the proposed development area, with one other within the vicinity. The sites are as follows:

PRN 5216	find spot of a cremation urn, probably Bronze Age;
PRN 5834	cairn, probably Bronze Age;
PRN 30592/5	Polish resettlement camp, post Second World War;
PRN 30594	airfield, 1940.

3.2 BRONZE AGE BURIALS

- 3.2.1 PRN 5834 is the putative site of a cairn thought to have existed in the vicinity as the result of the house named Crug-gwyn, SN 2454 4942. The house is situated on the opposite side of the road to the airfield and was present and so named in 1887-8 (OS 1st edn 6 inch to 1 mile), although there are no sites marked as 'crug' on this map. The house was still present in 1948 (OS revised edn 6 inch to 1 mile) but had gone by 1976 (OS 1:2500, 1977). The place-name element 'crug' means a mound or cairn, with the element 'gwyn' possibly meaning white (Davies nd). The 'gwyn' element is very common in the area, however, and is used as a suffix at Gwndwn-gwyn, SN 2455 4980, to the south of Rhosygadair Newydd and known as Maes-y-coed by 1976, and at Llwyn-gwyn, SN 2550 4924 (Air Ministry 1: 2500, 1940; OS 1:2500, 1977).
- 3.2.2 A further property called Crug-gwyn was depicted on both the OS 1st and 2nd edition maps within Blaennerch, to the south of the present A 487(T) at SN 2484 4905 (OS 1st edn 6 inch to 1 mile 1887-8; OS 2nd edn 1:2500, 1905); it was no longer in existence by 1976 (OS 1:2500, 1977). This property appears to have derived its name from the tumulus (Site 22) situated in the adjacent field at SN 2496 4900 (OS 1:2500, 1977). This association lends further credence to the other Crug-gwyn being associated with a cairn.
- 3.2.2 The burial mound was believed to have been removed during the construction of the airfield. Nevertheless, during the walk-over survey a pronounced mound was noted crossed by the western perimeter fence line (Site 1). This mound is situated approximately 75m north of the south-western corner of the airfield, just to the south of the gap in the road bund of the B4333 and about 100m to the south of the former site of Crug-gwyn. Approximately 6m in diameter and 0.75m high, it is cut by the roadside ditch of the B4333 and may well be the cairn indicated by the name Crug-gwyn. Such a cairn is likely to be of Bronze Age date and may be associated with the activity represented by a likely Bronze Age cremation urn found in the neighbouring parish of Tremain and now lost (PRN 5216). This urn is recorded on the OS record cards held by Cambria Archaeology as possibly being found at SN 235 487, outside the study area and within the settlement of Tremain (Eleanor Breen pers comm). Whilst urns are often associated with others in cemeteries, there is no reason to assume that a cremation burial at Tremain has any significance for the study area other than as a further signifier of the seeming density of later prehistoric burial activity in the vicinity.
- 3.2.3 There are other place-names within the area that might be taken to denote prehistoric burial activity. Two buildings are shown on the tithe map of 1839 close to and within that

part of the airfield which extends to and abutts the A487 trunk road, at SN 2465 4909 and SN 2461 4910 (NLW Aberporth tithe map). The former appears to have occupied the property that later became Blaenannerch post office, and the latter had been removed by 1887 (OS 1st edn 6 inch to 1 mile 1887-8). These properties are recorded in the tithe apportionment as Pen y cnwc. The suffix is derived from ‘cnwch’ meaning a small mound and thus the place-name is the hill of the small mound (Davies nd). A Pen-cnwc farm still existed in 1887 at SN 2494 5010, to the north of the airfield. It is unclear whether or not these two cottages derived their name from being part of the Pen-cnwc estate or whether their name was independent of it. There is no obvious immediately local topographical reason for these cottages to be so named in 1839, but the occurrence of the ‘cnwc’ place-name element within the study area is further possible evidence for the local occurrence of burial mounds.

3.3 THE PRE-AIRFIELD LANDSCAPE

- 3.3.1 The settlement pattern of Ceredigion which developed in the Middle Ages was one of dispersed farms surrounded by enclosed fields set within a landscape containing much open land used for common grazing (Parkinson 1985, 118). By the 1790s in south Cardiganshire most of the open fields had been enclosed (Davies 1979, 101), and a landscape created which was similar to that depicted on the Aberporth tithe map of 1839: highly enclosed with dispersed small settlements consisting of isolated farms and hamlets.
- 3.3.2 The hamlet of Blaenannerch, strung along what is now the modern A487 trunk road, may in the form depicted in 1839 have been of relatively recent origin, developing as part of the post-medieval rationalisation of the landscape. The missing cottage referred to as Pen y cnwc on the tithe map, and whose former location is within the airfield (Site 15), may have been of relatively recent origin in 1839 even though it had been abandoned by 1887. Labourer’s cottages in eighteenth and early nineteenth century west Wales were often poorly-built and lacked durability, thus they tended to exist for perhaps a century at best (William 1995). Walter Davies, writing in 1810, refers to houses of the rural poor as having no more than one smoky hearth for a kitchen and a damp little cell for a bedroom (Parkinson 1985, 111). This may well have been the type of house shown on the 1839 tithe map and referred to as Pen y cnwc in the apportionment.

3.4 THE AIRFIELD

- 3.4.1 Aberporth airfield currently consists of a set of buildings in its north-west corner with similar structures across the B4333 within a small compound. A tarmaced runway runs east/west across the middle of the airfield with an emergency grass strip on a north-east to south-west diagonal on the northern side of the tarmac runway. The grass strip is marked by ‘L’-shaped strips of concrete at each of its corners. The airfield occupies land under the ownership of several estates in 1939 and vacant possession was gained in that year by the Air Ministry. The freehold was purchased between 1939 and 1941 and the conveyance deeds are dated 1942 (information from the Defence Estates). The airfield opened for operations in 1940.
- 3.4.2 An Ordnance Survey map dated 1953, but surveyed in 1948, along with plans held by DERA and the Defence Estates, indicate that the majority of the buildings on the site were original to the site in 1940-1. The site was little altered by 1976 (OS 1:2500, 1977), though subsequently several original structures have been demolished (Figs 3 and 4).

Amongst the Second World War structures surviving, although altered and adapted, are the southernmost Bellman hangar, Whittle, Newton (B25), Edison (B18) and Marconi (B26) accommodation blocks on the main site, and Hilary (B53), Drake (B52), Scott (B48), Bonnington (B51) and Cook (B50) accommodation blocks in the compound across the B4333, which was formerly used by the Royal Navy (information supplied by Amey Comax; DERA drawing C:\DWGS\2460-86)

- 3.4.3 In addition to these buildings, there is other Second World War fabric associated with the airfield, consisting of a perimeter defence system of pillboxes (Sites 2-10 and 17-20). The pillboxes are marked on the OS 1:2500, 1977. Field inspection showed them to consist of two types, a smaller hexagonal concrete structure and a larger structure with five flat faces, three of which contained the gun ports, and a rounded protrusion at the rear. Consultation with Medwyn Parry of the RCAHMS, and a member of the 'Defence of Britain' project team, confirmed that the smaller pillboxes were of Type 27 and the larger, Type 24. The pillboxes were generally located at angular breaks along the perimeter circuit; they provide cover for each other and form an integrated defence system. This system comprises six Type 24 and three Type 27 pillboxes around the edge of the airfield and, in addition, outside the study area but forming part of the airfield defence system, are four Type 24 and one Type 27 pillboxes. All of the pillboxes within the study area are reasonably intact, although most are extensively vegetated.
- 3.4.4 Outside the airfield are a number of pillboxes which form part of the airfield's defence system, including one which might be affected by ancillary works to the development proposals. Situated at SN 2452 4936 is a Type 24 pillbox (Site 21), to the north of which marked on the 1976 1:2500 OS map is a small rectangular structure (Site 23) which may be associated with the airfield and its defences. Neither structure was visited as no access had been granted to the fields to the west of the airfield.
- 3.4.5 Aberporth airfield seems to have been unusually well defended. The reason for this is that it formed part of a defensive stop line against coastal invasion consisting of other fortifications and now filled in entrenchments (Medwyn Parry pers comm).

3.5 THE POLISH RESETTLEMENT CAMP

- 3.5.1 PRN 30592 and PRN 30595 are listed within the SMR as Polish resettlement camps. The camps are shown on an OS map dated 1953 but based on the 2nd edition survey of 1904 with the most recent additions dating to 1948 (Fig 2). Little appears to be known about these camps and no documentation, other than the map, was found relating to them. Local inquiries, directed through the Aberporth History Society and the British Legion, unearthed a few details. Two camps existed, one using the Air Ministry structures on the airfield and the other lying to the south of the present A487 trunk road (OS ref SN 244 488). Both were post-Second World War camps set up for Polish refugees. The camps included women and children (John Edwards pers comm) and at least one girl from there attended the local school (pers comm Mary Bott). There is little local knowledge of Poles assimilating into the local community and it is believed that most were repatriated.
- 3.5.2 The camp on the airfield used the buildings formerly occupied by military personnel during the Second World War. The buildings consist primarily of barracks and were erected in 1940-1. Although present in 1948 it is not known when the camp was closed and the site reoccupied by the military, however, nationally most Poles had been repatriated by the early 1950s.

4. SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT

4.1 SCHEDULE OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 4.1.1 The sites are graded 1-4. Grade 1 sites are of national importance and include those that would merit being scheduled and or listed grade I or II*; such sites should always be preserved wherever possible. Grade 2 sites are of regional importance and should be preserved for preference, but if this proves difficult within a development scheme they must be fully recorded including if necessary by total excavation. Grade 3 sites are of local importance and again preferably should be preserved, but where this would be inconvenient appropriate measures should be taken to ensure they are adequately recorded before removal. Grade 4 sites are of little or no importance and no further investigation beyond that undertaken to complete this report is deemed necessary.
- 4.1.2 No sites within the study area are considered to merit a grading of 1. The possible cairn (Site 1), would merit this status if it was not so badly damaged, but fence posts have been sunk into the mound, and the western edge of the putative cairn has been cut by a deep roadside drainage ditch, exposing massive stone slab-like blocks. Even so, this site should be graded 2.
- 4.1.3 The airfield perimeter defensive system formed by the pillboxes (Sites 2-10) also merits a grading of 2, though individually each pillbox can only be considered to be of local significance. Together, however, they form an integrated system which is quite unusual and should be retained in its current form.
- 4.1.4 The airfield building complex (Site 11) consists of a series of structures erected c1940; though adapted, modernised and altered, many of these structures are recognisably Second World War military buildings. Whilst such buildings are quite commonplace, and built to a standard pattern, their significance is emphasised by their later use as a Polish resettlement camp. The building group is thus of local significance and graded 3. Similarly the compound of buildings on the other side of the B4333 (Site 12) is graded 3.
- 4.1.5 The site of the building named Pen y cnwc and marked on the tithe map of 1839, but for which there is no surviving surface evidence (Site 15), is also considered to be of local significance and thus graded as 3.
- 4.1.6 Sites 13, 14 and 16, which all equate with foundations of modern origin, are all graded 4.

4.2 IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- 4.2.1 The development will be undertaken in two phases (1 and 2); the first phase will involve the redevelopment of the airfield buildings at the north-west part of the site. Phase 2 encompasses the rest of the airfield, but will affect mostly the northern part of the airfield. Phase 2 will also involve a south-westerly extension to the runway, which will entail rerouting of the B4333. The overall development will have primary and direct adverse impacts on the archaeological resource, removing all the buildings associated with the 1940s airfield and the Polish resettlement camp (Phase 1), and will also require the removal of the putative cairn (Phase 2).
- 4.2.2 The removal of all the structures associated with the Second World War airfield at Site 11 (Phase 1) is inevitable since the purpose of the proposals is to redevelop this site. The

removal of the structures at Site 12 (Phase 1) could be avoided since it is only proposed to turn this area into tennis courts. However, the structures at Site 12 are already derelict and unsafe and without reuse will in any case collapse.

- 4.2.3 The putative cairn (Site 1) (Phase 2) would appear to be an obstacle in the way of extending the runway and providing an access road. If it can be avoided, however, it should be.
- 4.2.4 An additional impact would include an effect on the site named as Pen y cnwc in 1839 (Phase 2), if the proposal to develop the area of its site for residential land was carried out.
- 4.2.5 The pillboxes forming the perimeter defence system to the airfield are unlikely to be affected by the development proposals (Phase 2). It should be possible to avoid any impact on them other than the visual masking which will be caused by the development.
- 4.2.6 A proposed rerouting of the B4333 would take it close to the pillbox and rectangular structure (Phase 2).

5. MITIGATION

5.1 SITE 1

- 5.1.1 The site of the putative cairn should be evaluated in the first instance to establish whether or not it is a prehistoric cairn, and to clarify the impact of past disturbances and its current state of preservation. If it is confirmed as a cairn with good potential then it should be excluded from the development proposals if at all possible. If not, provision should be made for preservation by record, that is by complete excavation, full recording, and the subsequent analysis and publication of the results.

5.2 SITES 11 AND 12

- 5.2.1 The military buildings at these two sites should be recorded by scaled photography prior to their removal. In addition, a fuller search of plans and air photographs should be undertaken than was possible within the context of this assessment, to ensure that all original fabric is identified and that a complete developmental history can be established. Moreover, further research should be undertaken on the Polish resettlement camp. This could take the form of local investigations into people's memories of the site and wider documentary research. Two sources may be of use, a book by K Sword *et al The Formation of the Polish Community in Great Britain* and Treasury document bundle T236 held in the Public Record Office, Kew and containing details of amongst other relevant information the activities of the Polish Armed Forces Resettlement Corps and the Official Committee for Polish Forces and Civilian Refugees. Contact could also be established with the Federation of Poles in Great Britain to see if they have contacts with recollections of the camps at Aberporth.
- 5.2.2 In addition to the recording of the buildings at these two sites, the pillboxes which will be masked by the development should be photographed in their current setting to provide a record of their original context.
- 5.2.3 The entire archive formed by the photographic recording and documentary research should be deposited with the Ceredigion Archives.

5.3 SITE 15

- 5.3.1 If this site is to be redeveloped it should be evaluated in order to establish the existence and nature of any archaeological remains, with particular reference to the possibility of remains associated with the former house named as part of Pen y cnwc in 1839. Any further mitigative response could await the results of such an evaluation.

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NLW Aberporth tithe map and apportionment

Air Ministry 1:2500 map, 1940

DERA C:\DWGS\2460-86

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6.2 PUBLISHED MAPS

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6.4 INTERNET RESOURCES

<http://www.zem.co.uk/polinuk/fed>

APPENDIX 1 PROJECT DESIGN

**Lancaster
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OCTOBER 2000

ABERPORTH AIRFIELD CARDIGAN CARDIGANSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Proposals

The following project design is offered in response to a request from White Young Green Environment, for an archaeological assessment of Aberporth Airfield, near Cardigan in advance of the development of the airfield for commercial, industrial and office premises.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) have been requested by White Young Green Environment to submit a project proposal for an archaeological assessment of Aberporth Airfield to be undertaken in advance of the development of the site for commercial, light industrial and office premises. There are two proposed phases of development, the first involves the redevelopment of the existing airfield buildings in the north-western part of the site, and will entail the demolition of some of the present buildings. The second phase incorporates the airfield itself and in addition to the construction of further light industrial premises will involve the construction of a combined heat and power scheme; it may also entail the extension of the runway to the west. The requirement for the assessment is for a basic level of survey to identify the extant and documented archaeological resource.

1.2 BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1 The airfield was built at the outset of the Second World War, and became operational in December 1940 as an Anti-Aircraft support base for gunnery ranges in Cardigan Bay; in the later stages of the war it was used for training. Following the war the airfield buildings (Phase 1) were used as a Polish Resettlement Camp and in 1956 the present runway was constructed. The site is currently operated by the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA) which tests aircraft and surface weapons.
- 1.2.2 The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) has identified four sites either within or in the environs of the study area, comprising the Polish Resettlement Camp (PRN 30592), the airfield itself (PRN 30594), a Bronze Age round barrow (PRN 5834) which is at the western end of the main runway, and a Bronze Age cremation cemetery (PRN 05216), its precise location being unknown. The presence of the round barrow and the cremation cemetery demonstrate significant activity during the Bronze Age and could be an indication that there are other contemporary sites in the environs. As a consequence there is a need to undertake the proposed archaeological programme to provide a reliable indication of the extant resource.

1.3 LANCASTER UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT (LUAU)

- 1.3.1 LUAU has considerable experience of the assessment of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large scale projects during the past 18 years. Assessments and evaluations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. LUAU has considerable experience of this type of study and has undertaken detailed assessment surveys of similar sites throughout Britain including an assessment and landscape impact study at Montgomery in Powys to inform a public enquiry.
- 1.3.2 Projects have been undertaken to fulfil the different requirements of various clients and planning authorities, and to very rigorous timetables. LUAU has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. LUAU is a registered organisation (No 27) with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA).

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The following programme has been designed in accordance with a verbal brief from Cambria Archaeology to provide an archaeological assessment of the designated area. The principal purpose of the assessment is to collate existing information about the archaeology of the site, to determine the significance of the identified archaeological resource, and to provide recommendations for any further archaeological investigation. The required stages to achieve these ends are as follows:
- 2.2 **Desk Top Survey:** to accrue an organised body of data to inform the identification survey.
- 2.3 **Identification Survey:** to record the character of the surface archaeology within the study area and provide an assessment of the archaeological significance of any remains.
- 2.4 **Assessment Report:** a written assessment report will be generated for the site, which will assess the significance of the data generated by this programme within a local and regional context. This will advise on the requirements for further recording measures as necessary.

3. METHODS STATEMENT

- 3.1 The following work programme is submitted in line with the stages and objectives of the archaeological work summarised above.

3.2 HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-TOP STUDY

- 3.2.1 This will entail the preparation of an assessment report to place the study area in its historical, archaeological and topographical context, and to assess the historic and archaeological significance of the site.
- 3.2.2 **Documentary and Cartographic Material:** The documentary research will involve the examination of written, cartographic, and pictorial sources; it will primarily examine records held by the Record Office: Cardiganshire Archives, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, SY23 2DE (01970 633697), but will also investigate sources such as the Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record at Cambria Archaeology, Llandeilo, the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth and the RCAHM(Wales) Aberystwyth. This work will address the full range of potential sources of information and will examine early histories, early maps, and such primary documentation (tithe and estate plans etc.) as may be reasonably available. Any photographic material lodged in either the County Sites and Monuments Record or the County Record Offices will also be studied. Published documentary sources will also be examined and assessed. The study will undertake a search for Second World War records held by the Ministry of Defence and the Welsh Office, Cardiff. A series of documents (BD54) presently held by the Welsh Office, but shortly to be transferred to the Public Record Office, comprise plans of the airfield compiled during the Second World War. If copies of these or similar plans can not be obtained via the client then there will be a requirement to visit the Welsh Office, assuming that access to these documents will be allowed.
- 3.2.3 A scan of published sources is also proposed, to provide a context and chronology for the development of the site. Local societies, local libraries and local museums will also be consulted.
- 3.2.4 **Aerial Photography:** a survey of the extant air photographic cover will be undertaken; this may indicate the range and survival of archaeological and structural features in the designated area. Identified features will be accurately plotted at 1:10,000. This will examine sources of information held by the client, the local planning authority, and Dyfed County Council. Aerial photographic work will entail liaison with the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments (Wales), Aberystwyth.

3.3 IDENTIFICATION SURVEY

- 3.3.1 **Access:** liaison for basic site access will be undertaken through White Young Green Environmental.
- 3.3.2 It is proposed to undertake an LUAU 'level 1' survey (*Appendix 1*) of the airfield (Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas). This is a rapid survey undertaken alongside a desk-top study as part of a site assessment. It is an initial site inspection intended to identify the extant archaeological resource. It represents the minimum standard of record and is appropriate to exploratory survey aimed at the discovery of previously unrecorded sites. Its aim is to record the existence, location and extent of any such site. The emphasis for the recording is on the written description which will record type and period and would not normally exceed c50 words. The extent of a site is defined for sites or features greater than 50m in size and smaller sites are shown with a cross.
- 3.3.3 The reconnaissance will be undertaken in a systematic fashion, walking on approximately 30m wide transects, within the extent of the defined study area. It is proposed to use a combination of Global Positioning System (GPS) techniques and manual survey techniques to locate and record the features. GPS instrumentation uses electronic distance measurement along radio frequencies to satellites to enable a positional fix in latitude and longitude which can be converted mathematically to Ordnance Survey National Grid. The use of GPS techniques has proved to be an essential and extremely cost effective means of locating monuments, and can achieve accuracies of better than +/- 1m.
- 3.3.4 A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously. An early surface inspection such as this is highly recommended, as such work can frequently double the amount of archaeological information for an area. This fieldwork will result in the production of plans at a scale of 1: 2500 or any other appropriate scale required, recording the location of each of the sites listed in the gazetteer. All archaeological information collected in the course of field inspection will be recorded in standardised form, and will

include accurate national grid references. This will form the basis of a gazetteer, to be submitted as part of the report.

- 3.3.5 LUAU provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Unit Safety policy. All site procedures are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (1997) and risk assessments are now being implemented for all projects.

3.4 ASSESSMENT REPORT

- 3.4.1 **Archive:** the results of Stages 3.2-3.3 will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition, 1991*). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. It will include summary processing and analysis of any features and finds recovered during fieldwork. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation's code of conduct.
- 3.4.2 This archive can be provided in the English Heritage Central Archaeology Service format, both as a printed document and on computer disks as ASCII files (as appropriate), and a synthesis (in the form of the index to the archive and the report) will be deposited with the Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record, as appropriate. LUAU practice is to deposit the original record archive of projects (paper, magnetic, and plastic media) with the appropriate County Record Office, and a full copy of the record archive, should any material be recovered, with the material archive (artefacts, ecofacts, and samples, at this stage from surface collections) with an appropriate museum.
- 3.4.3 **Collation of data:** the data generated by 3.2 and 3.3 (above) will be collated and analysed in order to provide an assessment of the nature and significance of the known surface and subsurface remains within the designated area. It will also serve as a guide to the archaeological potential of the area to be investigated, and the basis for the formulation of any detailed field programme and associated sampling strategy, should these be required in the future.
- 3.4.4 **Assessment Report:** one bound and one unbound copy of the report will be submitted to the Client, and a further copy submitted to the Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record Office. The report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above and will include a full index of archaeological features identified in the course of the project, together with appropriate illustrations, including maps and gazetteers of known or suspected sites identified within or immediately adjacent to the study area. It will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which the data has been derived, and a list of further sources identified during the programme of work, but not examined in detail. The report will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived, and a list of further sources identified during the programme of work, but not examined in detail.
- 3.4.5 The report will identify areas of defined archaeology, an assessment and statement of the actual and potential archaeological significance of any features within the broader context of regional and national archaeological priorities will be made. Illustrative material will include a location map, which can be tailored to the specific requests of the client (eg particular scales etc.), subject to discussion. The report will be in the same basic format as this project design; a copy of the report can be provided on 3.5" disk (IBM compatible format).
- 3.4.6 **Confidentiality:** the assessment report is designed as a document for the specific use of the client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and this project design, and should be treated as such; they are not suitable for publication as an academic report, or otherwise, without amendment or revision. Any requirement to revise or reorder the material for submission or presentation to third parties beyond the project brief and project design, or for any other explicit purpose, can be fulfilled, but will require separate discussion and funding.

4. WORK TIMETABLE

The phases of work will comprise:

- 4.1 **Desk Top Study**

A four day period is required to collate all the available data.

4.2 ***Identification Survey***

A one day period is required for the identification survey.

4.3 ***Prepare Assessment Report***

A three day period would be required to complete this element.

4.4 LUAU can execute projects at very short notice once an agreement has been signed with the client. The project is programmed to start on the 9th of October 2000 subject to being provided with four working days notice.

4.5 ***Staffing:*** the project will be under the management of **Jamie Quartermaine, BA, Surv Dip, MIFA** (Unit Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed. The assessment will be undertaken by **Richard Newman, PhD, BA, FSA, MIFA** (Unit Director) who is a landscape historian of considerable experience, and was formerly project officer at Glamorgan and Gwent Archaeological Trust; he has considerable familiarity with the archaeology of South Wales.

APPENDIX 2

GAZETTEER

Site Number	1
Site Name	Crug-gwynn cairn
PRN	5834
NGR	SN 2452 4923
Designation	-
Site Type	Cairn
Period	Bronze Age?
Source	Field visit/SMR
Description	6m diameter, 0.75m high. It has fence posts inserted into mound and is extensively damaged on its western side by the cutting of a roadside ditch.
Site Number	2
Site Name	Aberporth airfield
PRN	part of 30594
NGR	SN 2459 4918
Designation	-
Site Type	Pillbox
Period	1940s
Source	OS
Description	Type 27 pillbox. Not visited in the field as behind hedgeline, mainly outside of the airfield.
Site Number	3
PRN	Aberporth airfield
Site Name	part of 30594
NGR	SN 2521 4922
Designation	-
Site Type	Pillbox
Period	1940s
Source	OS/Field visit
Description	
Site Number	4
Site Name	Aberporth airfield
PRN	Part of 30594
NGR	SN 2528 4932
Designation	-
Site Type	Pillbox
Period	1940s
Source	OS/Field visit
Description	Type 27 pillbox.
Site Number	5
Site Name	Aberporth airfield
PRN	Part of 30594
NGR	SN 2537 4937
Designation	-
Site Type	Pillbox
Period	1940s
Source	OS/Field visit
Description	Type 24 pillbox.
Site Number	6
Site Name	Aberporth airfield
PRN	Part of 30594
NGR	SN 2538 4963

Designation -
 Site Type Pillbox
 Period 1940s
 Source OS/Field visit
 Description Type 24 pillbox. More ruinous than the others.

Site Number **7**
 Site Name Aberporth airfield
 PRN Part of 30594
 NGR SN 2519 4976
 Designation -
 Site Type Pillbox
 Period 1940s
 Source OS/Field visit
 Description Type 27 pillbox.

Site Number **8**
 Site Name Aberporth airfield
 PRN Part of 30594
 NGR SN 2527 4987
 Designation -
 Site Type Pillbox
 Period 1940s
 Source OS/Field visit
 Description Type 24 pillbox.

Site Number **9**
 Site Name Aberporth airfield
 PRN Part of 30594
 NGR SN 2497 4991
 Designation -
 Site Type Pillbox
 Period 1940s
 Source OS/Field visit
 Description Type 24 pillbox.

Site Number **10**
 Site Name Aberporth airfield
 PRN Part of 30594
 NGR SN 2483 4977
 Designation -
 Site Type Pillbox
 Period 1940s
 Source OS/Field visit
 Description Type 24 pillbox.

Site Number **11**
 Site Name Aberporth airfield
 PRN Part of 30594 and 30592
 NGR SN 2470 4950 centred
 Designation -
 Site Type Military airfield buildings
 Period 1940
 Source SMR/OS/Defence Estates
 Description Consists of barracks, guardroom, bellman hanger and other structures originating in 1940. The complex was used as a Polish resettlement camp immediately after World War II. Still in use.

Site Number **12**
 Site Name Former Naval compound
 PRN 30592?

NGR	SN 2456 4955
Designation	-
Site Type	Military buildings
Period	1940s
Source	OS/Field visit
Description	A series of barracks. Now derelict having formerly been occupied by the Royal Navy and thus distinct from the main site which was RAF. It is not known whether this compound formed part of the Polish resettlement camp but it probably did.
Site Number	13
Site Name	Aberporth airfield
PRN	Part of 30594 and 30592
NGR	SN 2455 4915
Designation	-
Site Type	Former building
Period	1940s
Source	OS/Field visit
Description	Concrete base to building standing in 1948.
Site Number	14
Site Name	Aberporth airfield
PRN	Part 30594 and 30592
NGR	SN 2465 4915
Designation	-
Site Type	Former building
Period	1940s
Source	OS/Field visit
Description	Concrete base to building standing in 1948.
Site Number	15
Site Name	Pen y cnwc
PRN	-
NGR	SN 2463 4910
Designation	-
Site Type	Site of building
Period	Pre-1839
Source	Tithe map
Description	House site. Building present in 1839 gone by 1887. No evidence on the ground.
Site Number	16
Site Name	Aberporth airfield
PRN	Part of 30594
NGR	SN 2536 4965
Designation	-
Site Type	unidentified
Period	post-1939?
Source	Field visit
Description	A low mound, about 3m diameter, with mortared bricks showing through the turf. Its location on the airfield perimeter suggests that it is derived from a structure associated with the airfield.
Site Number	17
Site Name	Aberporth airfield
PRN	part of 30594
NGR	SN 2499 4916
Designation	-
Site Type	Pillbox
Period	1940s
Source	OS
Description	Type 24 pillbox.

Site Number **18**
Site Name Aberporth airfield
PRN part of 30594
NGR SN 2560 4959
Designation -
Site Type Pillbox
Period 1940s
Source OS
Description Type 24 pillbox.

Site Number **19**
Site Name Aberporth airfield
PRN part of 30594
NGR SN 2462 4978
Designation -
Site Type Pillbox
Period 1940s
Source OS
Description Type 24 pillbox.

Site Number **20**
Site Name Aberporth airfield
PRN part of 30594
NGR SN 2444 4973
Designation -
Site Type Pillbox
Period 1940s
Source OS
Description Type 24 pillbox.

Site Number **21**
Site Name Aberporth airfield
PRN part of 30594
NGR SN 2451 4935
Designation -
Site Type Pillbox
Period 1940s
Source OS
Description Type 24 pillbox.

Site Number **22**
Site Name Crug-gwyn
PRN -
NGR SN 2484 4905
Designation -
Site Type Round Cairn
Period Bronze Age
Source OS
Description A property called Crug-gwyn is depicted on the OS 1st and 2nd edition maps, which is adjacent to a tumulus shown on the same maps and the modern 1:2500 OS map. The cairn is outside the study area and was not visited during the present survey.

Site Number **23**
Site Name Aberporth airfield
PRN -
NGR SN 2450 4940
Designation -
Site Type Rectangular Structure
Period 1940s
Source OS

Description OS map is a small rectangular structure. It is outside the study area and was not visited during the present survey.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig 1 Aberporth Location Map

Fig 2 Aberporth OS 6" to 1 mile map (1904, revised 1948)

Fig 3 Aberporth Site Map

Fig 4 Airfield Buildings (Phase 1 development)



Fig 1: Aberporth Location Map

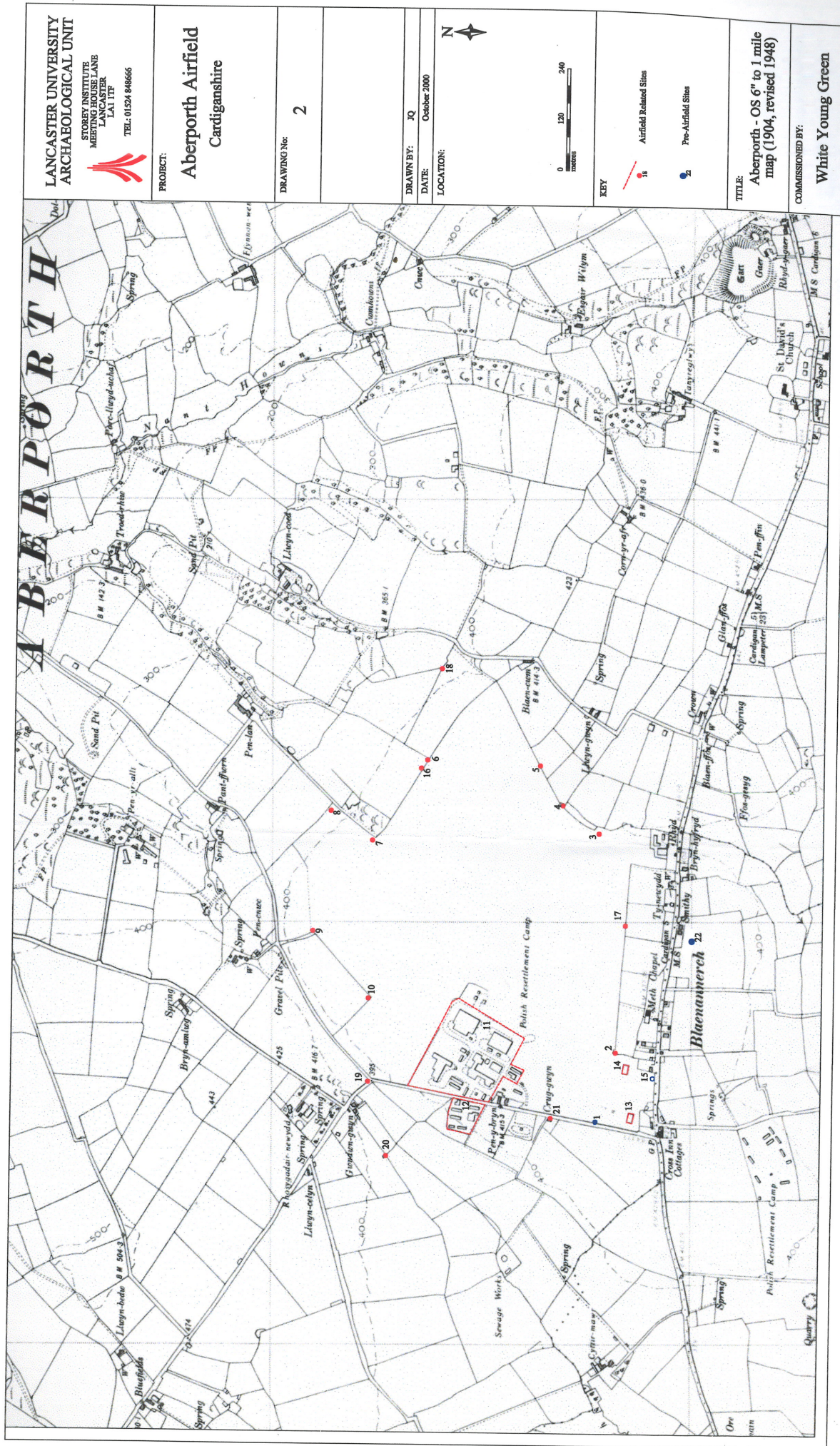


Fig 2: Aberporth Airfield - OS 6" to 1 mile map (1904, revised 1948))

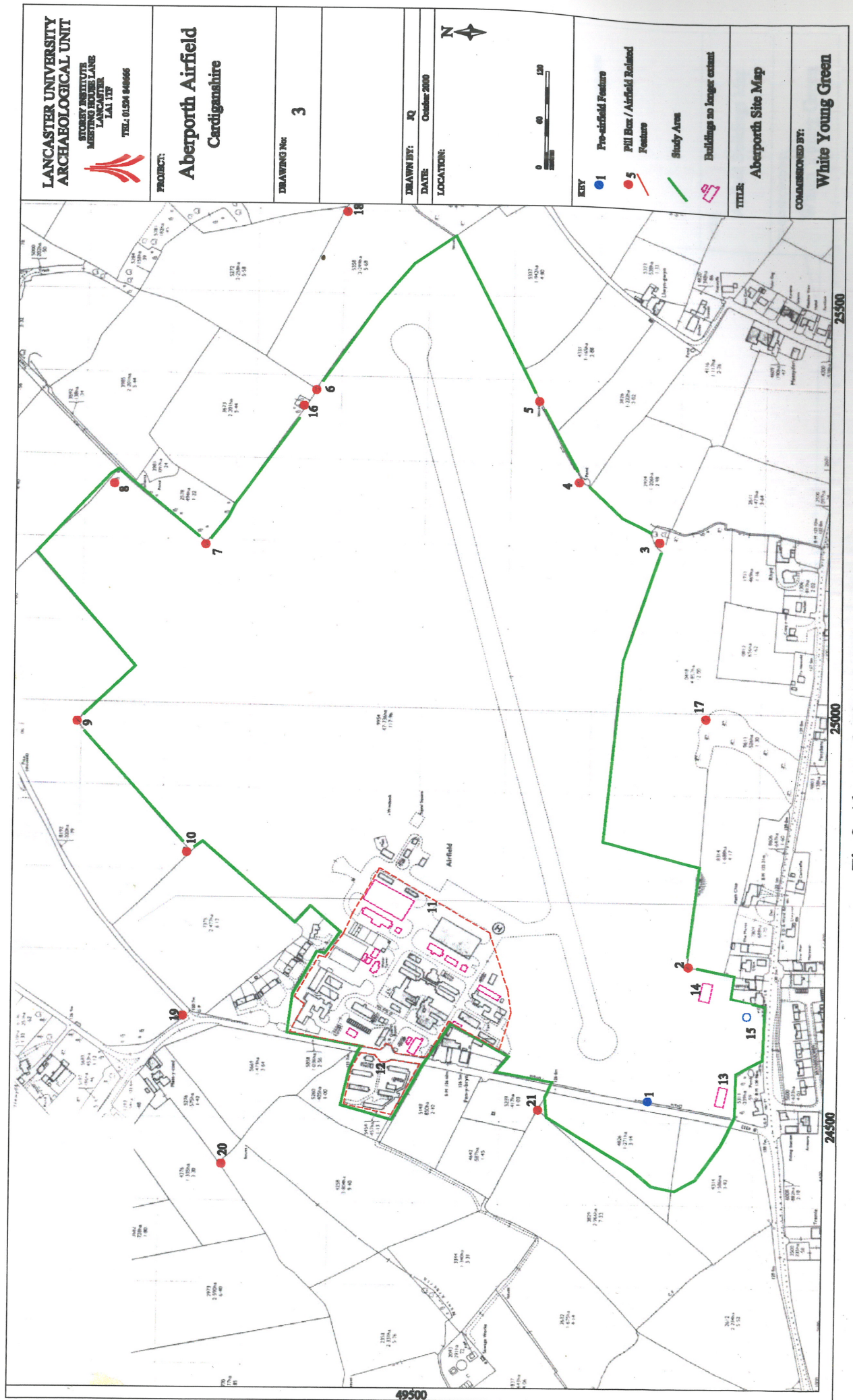


Fig 3: Aberporth Site Map



Fig 4: Airfield Buildings - Sites 11 and 12

PLATES

- Plate 1 Aerial Photograph of Aberporth Airfield looking north-east
- Plate 2 Putative Round Cairn (Site 1) looking north
- Plate 3 Putative Round Cairn (Site 1) looking north-east
- Plate 4 Bellman Hanger (B1) looking north
- Plate 5 Barrack Blocks B30/31 looking north-east
- Plate 6 Barrack Block B19 (Whittle) looking north
- Plate 7 Barrack Block B25 (Newton) looking north-east
- Plate 8 Barrack Block B26 (Marconi) looking south



Plate 1 Aerial Photograph of Aberporth Airfield looking north-east



Plate 2 Putative Round Cairn (Site 1) looking north



Plate 3 Putative Round Cairn (Site 1) looking north-east



Plate 4 Bellman Hanger (B1) looking north



Plate 5 Barrack Blocks B30/31 looking north-east



Plate 6 Barrack Block B19 (Whittle) looking north



Plate 7 Barrack Block B25 (Newton) looking north-east



Plate 8 Barrack Block B26 (Marconi) looking south