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TORCOED QUARRY, LLANDDAROG

REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

December 1993

Commissioned by: Wimpey Hobbs Ltd

Report by: K. Murphy BA MIFA
Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd
The Old Palace, Abergwili, Carmarthen,
Dyfed SA31 2JR. Tel 0267 231667

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INTRODUCTION

This archaeological evaluation arises from an application by Wimpey Hobbs Ltd to Dyfed County Council (application no. D4/22833) for an extension to Torcoed Quarry, Llanddarog. Details of the application were referred to the Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Curatorial Section for comment upon any archaeological implications.

The application involved the removal of a significant portion of land. Existing information on Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Sites and Monuments Record indicated that the area contained features of industrial archaeological interest and field systems and associated features of uncertain date. Furthermore the area had never been subject to adequate archaeological survey, and potentially contained further evidence of past human activity.

Consequently, recommendations were made to the County Planning Authority that, in accordance with Welsh Office Planning and Policy Guidance (PPG 16: Archaeology & Planning, Nov 1992), the area be subject to an archaeological evaluation prior to determination of the application. The applicant commissioned the Dyfed Archaeological Trust to carry out the evaluation.

The aims and objectives of the evaluation were to undertake a desk top study including consultation with Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Sites and Monuments Record, reference to aerial photographs, examination of documentary and cartographic sources and a rapid field assessment of the application site. The evaluation was carried out in compliance with the appropriate Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standard.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

To the south and south-west of the application area on common land known as Mynydd Llangyndeyrn is a well-known and quite well studied group of neolithic and bronze age monuments. These chambered tombs, cairns and standing stones dating from *circa* 3500BC to 1300BC have been the subject of excavation and survey by Ward (1976 and 1983). Part of Ward's survey area lay within the application site under discussion here. No diagnostic prehistoric monuments were recognised within it, though two small field clearance cairns (Fig.1, site no. 7714) were identified. The date of these is unknown.

On Mynydd Llangyndeyrn Ward (1989) also identified a field system. This, he argued, was laid out in the second or early first millennium BC. Part of this system lies within the application site. However here it is of a different character from that on the unenclosed common of Mynydd Llangyndeyrn and it was not possible to reach any firm conclusions regarding its date.

The first historical reference to Torcoed is in the Lay Subsidies of 1543-4 when Tor-y-Coed was in the possession of David Llwyd ap Robert. The marriage of his daughter Elizabeth to Sir William Vaughan led to part of this holding being subsumed into the Golden Grove estate. Tor-y-Coed house (the current Torcoed Fawr Farm) was assessed at 12 hearths in the Hearth Tax of 1670 (Jones 1987, 181-2). This clearly indicates a holding of considerable size and probably included, at the least, the present-day Torcoed Fawr, Fach, Uchaf and Quarry farms.

Of interest in this survey are the three cottages of Careg-Eidon, Clos-yr-Yn and Pen-Hil (reference no. of the latter = 27280). These were all in existence by the time of the tithe survey in 1847 with Careg-Eidon and Clos-yr-Yn established by 1784. Only Pen-Hil is in the application site, but it is likely that all three were established as landless labours' holdings in the 17th or 18th century on poor quality land on the fringe of Mynydd Llangyndeyrn common. By the time of the tithe survey Pen-Hil had acquired a small amount of land (Fig. 3).

There is extensive archaeological and historical evidence for limestone quarrying and lime burning around Torcoed Quarry from at least the 18th century onwards. The three surviving lime kilns in the application site date collectively from the late 18th century to the early 20th century. The earliest kiln, 27115, survives as a low earthwork and was in use in 1784. Site 27217 is slightly larger and stone-built and was probably active in the early decades of the 19th century. The bank of two large stone-built kilns, 27221, was built in the mid-19th century and may have continued in use into the early years of the 20th century.

CATALOGUE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

The reference numbers are those on Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Sites and Monuments Record. Surveying instruments were not used for the positioning of sites, their location was estimated from field boundaries and other features marked on large-scale Ordnance Survey maps. The location of all sites is shown on Fig. 1.

7714 Two small cairns. The western one is 3m in diameter flat topped and only 0.5m high. The eastern one is 4m in diameter, conical and about 1m high. These cairns are probably the result of field clearance and are probably associated with the field system 27212. First recorded by Ward (1976, 11), though incorrectly located. Their correct position is shown here.

22197 Possible holy well of dark age or medieval date. The name of the farm adjacent to this spring was known as Ffynnon Gydychog in 1784 and Ffynnon-cadachog in 1878. This would seem to indicate a rag-well. Ten rag-wells were recorded by Francis Jones (1954) in Wales, none was in Carmarthenshire. Their antiquity and function is unclear. Rags would be left hanging near the well to decay. Jones suggests four reasons for this: rags represent riddances - the clothes of a dead person would be left; offerings - part of a garment left; rags as preservation against 'sorceries of druids' and rags as signs of expiation - a sign of penance. There has been extensive quarrying, 27218, up-slope of this spring which has probably contributed to it now being dry. There were no earthworks or other evidence to suggest the former presence of buildings or other structures in the vicinity of the spring.

27115 Lime kiln in use in 1784 (Fig.2). This kiln survives as a penannular earthwork about 4m diameter and 2m high. The kiln has been built into a natural slope. On its up-slope side are quarries, 27218, and on the down-slope side spoil heaps of burnt lime.

27116 Lime kiln in use in 1784 (Fig. 2). Now destroyed.

27170 Lime kiln in use in 1878, disused by 1906. Now destroyed.

27171 Lime kiln in use in 1878, disused by 1906. Now destroyed.

27208 (Fig. 4) This was an unnamed tenement with just five small fields belonging to it according to the 1847 tithe map of Llangyndeyrn Parish. Named as Pen-hil on the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map surveyed in 1878, but shown abandoned on the 1906 edition. The dwelling house survives as a ruined, single-celled structure of one storey with a large fireplace in the west gable end and a smaller one in the east gable end. It probably dates to the 18th or early 19th century. Four upright lengths of railway track attest to the later use of the building for agricultural storage. There are some small ruined outbuildings to the west of the dwelling. These are now in very poor condition.

27209 A small quarry. Not in existence in 1878, marked on the

1906 Ordnance Survey map. Long abandoned.

27211 A small quarry pit not marked on published or manuscript maps.

27212 Field system covering an area *circa* 250m by 200m. This system has been described by Ward (1989), though more boundary banks are now visible than at the time of his survey. Most of the boundaries of this system consist of low rubble banks with occasional large upright slabs of stone set firmly in the ground, although there are some more substantial banks present. The latter are marked on modern maps. Some of the more insubstantial banks are recorded on recent Ordnance Survey maps as vegetational changes. Apart from this evidence the low rubble banks are not marked on any map and seem to pre-date the modern field system first mapped in 1784 (Fig. 2, CRO Cawdor Vaughan 5854). Ward (1989, 53) noted a roughly rectangular enclosure or foundation associated with this field system. This was noted in the present survey at SN 49281373 as a slight, amorphous earthwork of uncertain morphology. The two clearance cairns, 7714, are probably associated with this field system.

27213 An area of woodland shown cross-hatched on Fig. 1. There is much evidence for the management and exploitation of this woodland including coppiced ash stools over 1.8m across.

27214 A series of shallow quarry pits testifies to limestone quarrying. These quarries are not marked on published or manuscript maps.

27215 A small spoil heap of burnt lime attests to lime burning in the area. There was no evidence for a lime kiln in the vicinity.

27216 A quarry about 30m diameter and 4-5m deep. Probably abandoned by 1878, possibly by 1847. This quarry supplied the kiln 27217.

27217 Lime kiln. Probably abandoned by 1878, possibly by 1847. It is built into a natural bank immediately down-slope of the quarry 27216. Stone-built to at least 2.8m high, it is now in very poor condition.

27218 A extensive area, *circa* 100m by 30m, of small quarry pits and spoil heaps of burnt lime. Some of these quarries would have served the lime kiln 27115.

27219 An extensive area, *circa* 200m by 30m, of small quarry pits with spoil heaps of burnt lime on the down-slope side of them. So intensive has been lime burning in the past that the whole of the wooded slope is in effect one large spoil heap. This spoil was derived from the kilns 27116, 27170-1.

27220 A pair of lime kilns in existence by 1878, redundant by 1906. They are now destroyed.

27221 A pair of kilns in existence by 1878, redundant by 1906. Built into a bank and facing a road. They are stone-built, about

8.5m high and 24m long. The two pots have been in-filled but otherwise they are in good condition.

27306 A lime kiln is use in 1784 (Fig. 2). No trace of this kiln now survives.

REFERENCES AND AUTHORITIES CONSULTED FOR THIS STUDY

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Ordnance Survey, 1972 1:2500, SN 4813-4913 and 4814-4914.

Ward, A. H., 1976 'The cairns on Mynydd Llangyndeyrn: a focal point of the Early Bronze Age in south east Dyfed', *Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, 12, 3-21.

Ward, A. H. 1983 'Excavations around two standing stones on Mynydd Llangyndeyrn, Dyfed', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 132, 30-48.

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8625
1-830ha

CURRENT PERMITTED AREA

PROPOSED LIMITS OF QUARRYING

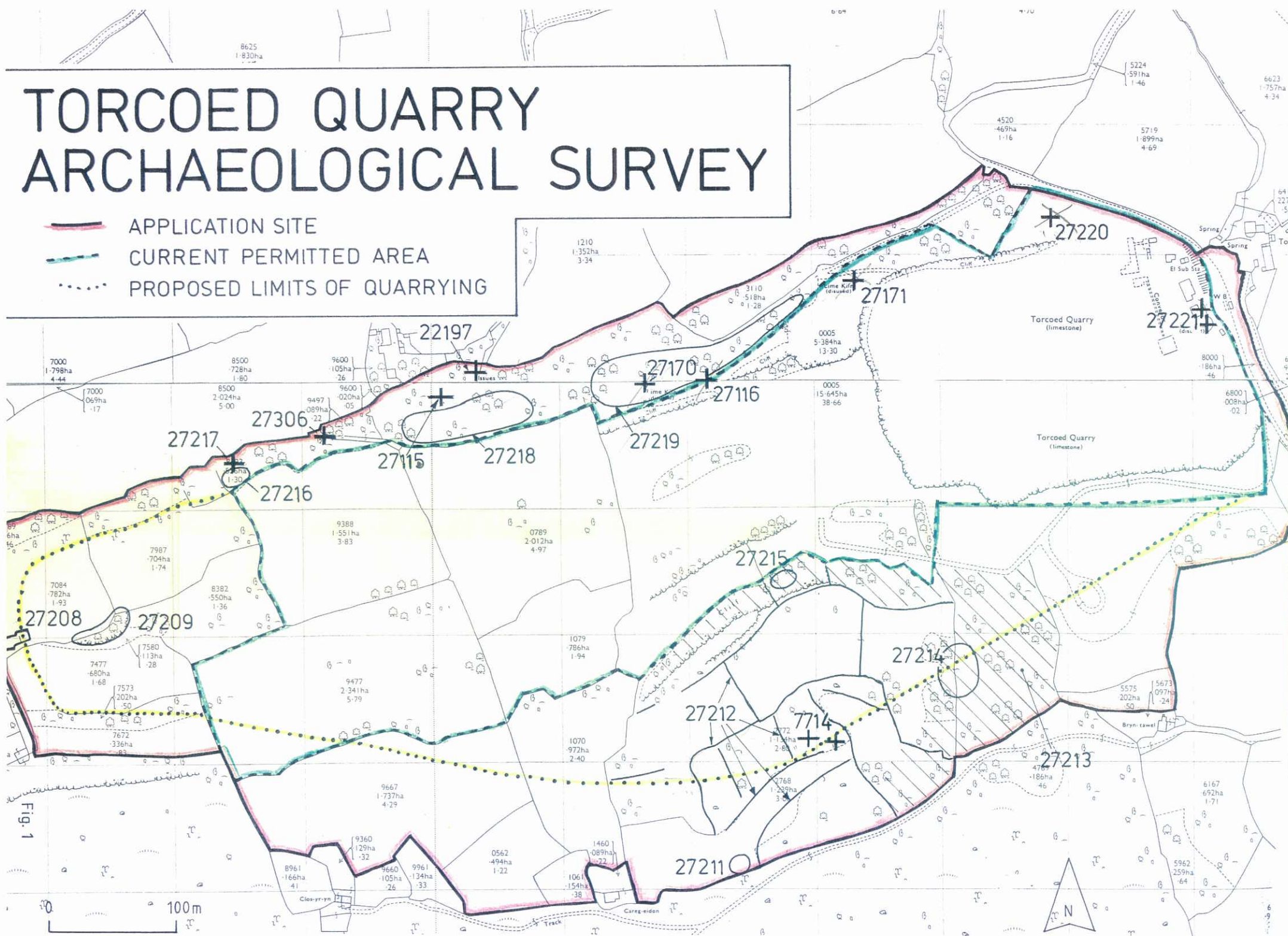
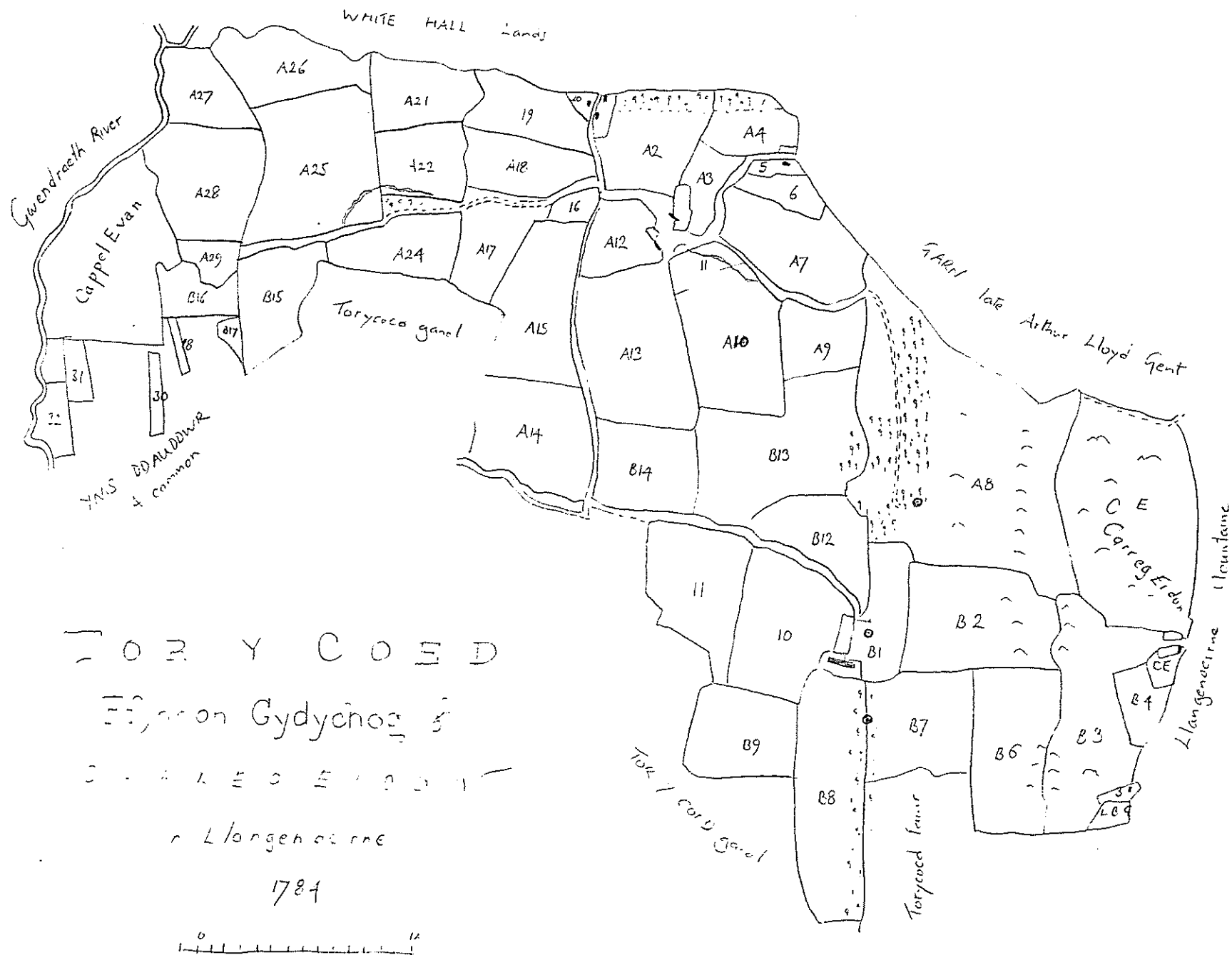


Fig. 1



TOR/COED UCHLAF		1784
1 Houses gardens and close	1 0 0	
2 Lleine bach	4 1 0	area pthilly wood
3 Beillan	1 1 15	arable
4 Cae cwm bach	2 0 20	d. pthilly wood
5 Cottage & two gardens	0 1 20	
6 Wern fach	1 0 5	pasture
7 Cae sticket mawr	4 2 25	arable
8 The Pal	19 3 0	rocky p the wood
9 Cae sticket bach	2 2 20	dry pasture
10 Cae canol	5 1 5	d.
11 Cae pound	0 3 25	dry pasture
12 Llain hlauws	2 1 25	arable
13 Cae'r Scuror	7 2 20	d.
14 Cae awm	5 2 20	d.
15 Cae graban	5 0 35	d.
16 A Small Close	0 2 0	pasture & old walls
17 Wern	3 1 0	albers
18 Wawn caer wern	3 0 20	meadow
19 Wawn arm	2 2 30	dry pasture
20 The Cottages & gardens	0 2 35	
21 Cae Twiner	2 3 25	d.
22 Wawn cae Twiner	3 0 0	meadow
23 Patch outside D.	0 1 15	brownwood
24 Blaendir	2 3 35	dry pasture
25 Cae'r bont	7 2 10	arable
26 Cae newydd bach	3 1 35	d.
27 Wawn uchaf	2 1 35	meadow
28 Wawn isaf	4 3 30	d.
29 Lladid groat	1 0 5	d.
30 Lladid dry geinog	0 2 0	meadow
31 Lladid fair	0 2 20	d.
32 Lladid chwech	1 0 10	d.

105 1 20

FFYNNON FIDYCHOG

1 House gardens & arable	3 1 30	rocky pasture &c
2 Pal mawr	6 3 0	d. arable
3 Pal uchaf	7 1 15	dry pasture and rock
4 Wawn Twr	15	meadow
5 Cottages & garden	0 0 35	
6 Pal canol	5 2 30	dry pasture and rock
7 Pal bach	4 2 30	dry pasture
8 Ddol cwr	7 0 10	arable
9 Cae bach	3 3 25	d.
10 Cae don'ty	5 2 20	d. & dry mea
11 Cae isaf don'ty	4 3 0	arable
12 Wawn oar & Ffynnon	3 0 25	pasture
13 Cae canol	7 3 5	area dr p. pthilly
14 Caer gof	4 0 15	dry pasture
15 Wawn Ffynnon Fidycho	3 0 30	meadow
16 Lladid naw ceirios	1 1 25	d.
17 Lladid ainman	0 0 35	d.
18 Lladid ceirion	0 0 30	d.

70 3 15

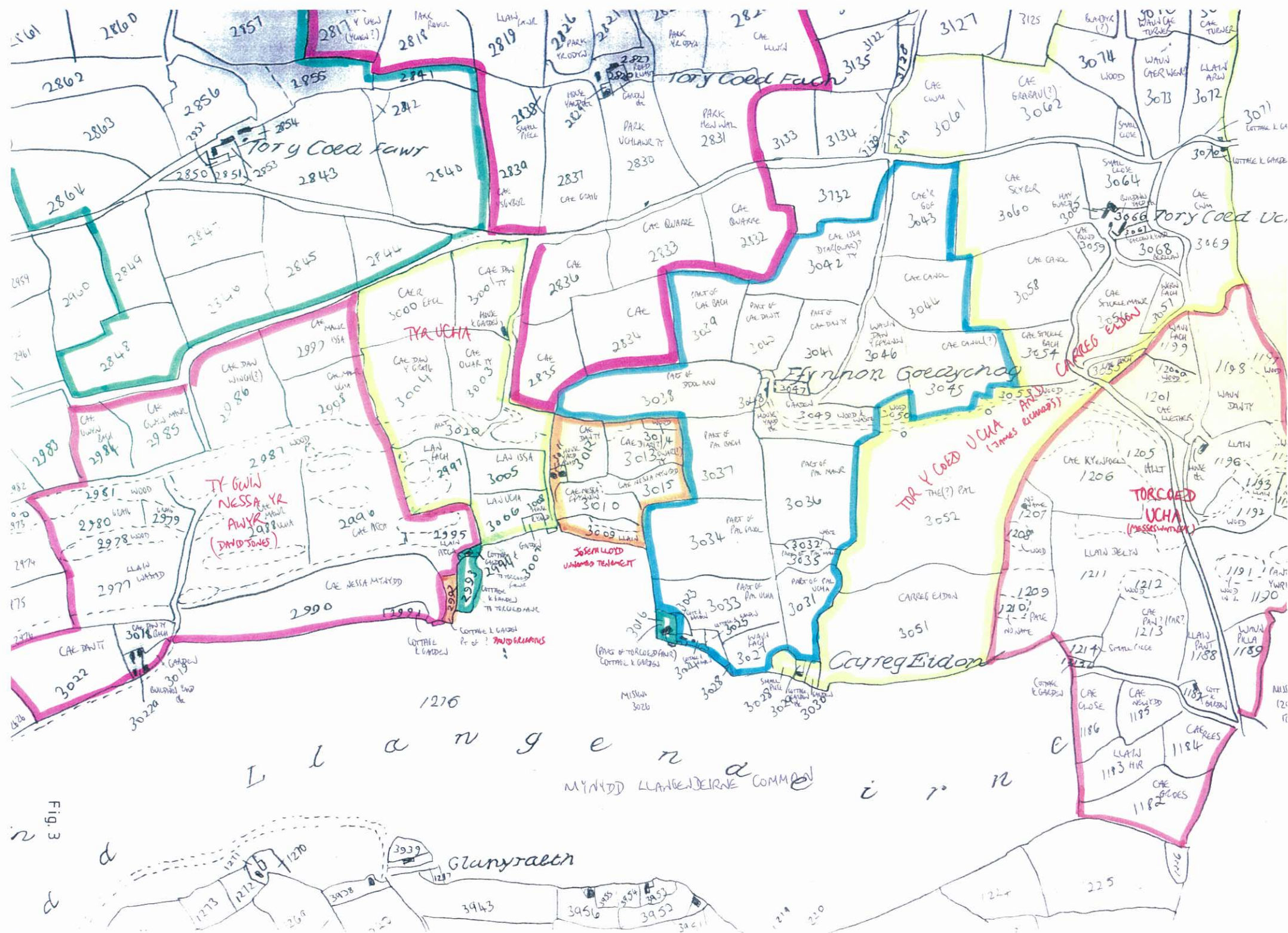


Fig. 3

27208 PEN HIL. PLAN 1:50

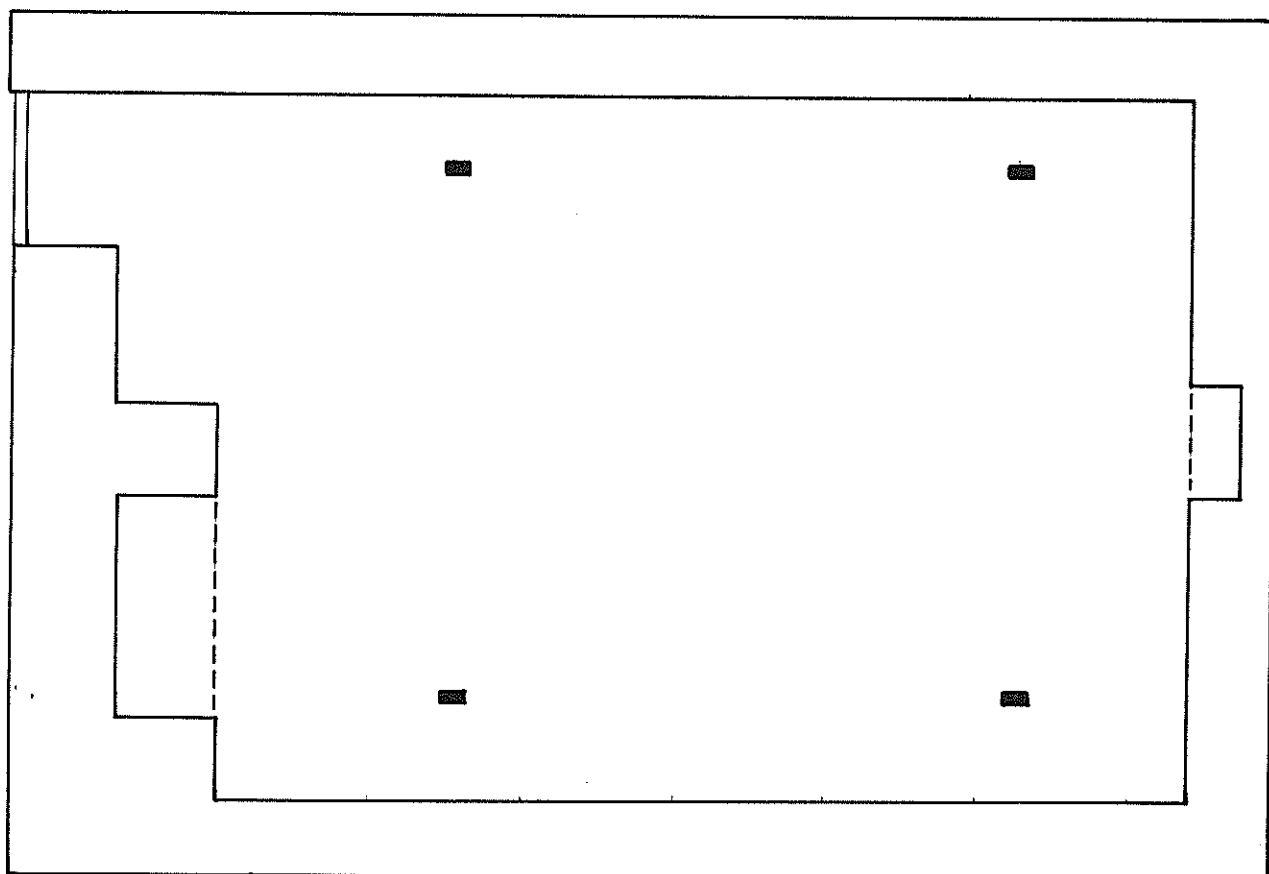


Fig 4



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DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD

Yr Hen Blas, Abergwili, Caerfyrddin, Dyfed SA31 2JG
The Old Palace, Abergwili, Carmarthen, Dyfed SA31 2JG

Tel: Carmarthen (0267) 231667 / 230723 / 231453

REGISTERED CHARITY No. 504616

4th January 1994

Planning Officer,
Dyfed County Council,
40, Spilman Street,
CARMARTHEN SA31 1LQ.

FAO Mr P. Kendall.

Dear Sir,

Extension to Torcoed Quarry, Wimpey Hobbs Ltd.

We understand that a condition of the Planning Consent granted for the above quarry extension was that the owners undertake an archaeological survey. The Trust was contacted by Mr Glyn Williams, Regional Estates Manager, who commissioned our Contracts Section in November to undertake the Archaeological Survey. I enclose a copy of their Report. This letter has been added to that Report since it contains the Curatorial Section's Recommendations.

We appreciate the concern shown by Wimpey Hobbs for the general conservation of the northern wooded slopes bounding the area of the quarry. The Report locates and describes the archaeological features, mostly lime kilns, sited in this area. In addition there are the two kilns (27221) at the entrance of the quarry.

We therefore recommend that these structures be included in all conservation measures undertaken in this area to ensure their preservation.

The Report describes a ruined tenement at the western edge of the proposed quarry extension. Although likely to be of 18th or 19th century date, it may well be on an earlier site. In any case it forms part of the evidence for past land use in the area.

We recommend that this building and outbuildings be left as a ruin and not quarried or cleared away.

The most significant archaeological features are on the central southern side of the area, partly within the proposed extension area. These comprise early field boundaries and small clearance cairns (see nos 27212, 7714). This field system certainly predates the 18th century pattern of land boundaries. It may even be prehistoric in date, part of the complex of Bronze Age ritual, burial and farming monuments preserved on Mynydd Llangyndeyrn, areas of which are scheduled as Ancient Monuments.

29.4.94

We recommend that serious consideration be given to the preservation of the whole of this area (see annotated map below). Failing that over half the system could be preserved by a small alteration in the quarry extension area. We additionally recommend that if any part of the field system is quarried away, the site owners should make adequate provision for more detailed archaeological investigation and recording than that carried out for this Archaeological Evaluation.

We await your comments on the Report and these Recommendations,

Yours sincerely,

Heather James.

Heather James,
Principal Archaeological Officer (Curatorial).

