

Abergwyngregyn Conservation Area Appraisals



Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

Abergwyngregyn Conservation Area Appraisals

Project No. G2155

Report No. 1040

Prepared for: The Snowdonia National Park Authority

August 2012

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Published by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
Craig Beuno, Garth Road,
Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2RT

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Mae Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd yn Gwmni Cyfyngedig (Ref Cof. 1180515) ac yn Elusen (Rhif Cof. 508849)
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Contents

Introduction	1	List Of Sources Consulted	15
1.2 Acknowledgments	1	10.1 Maps	15
Methodology	1	10.1.1 Gwynedd Archives	15
2.1 Introduction	1	10.1.2 Bangor University	15
2.2 Bibliographic Sources	1	10.2 Visual Material	15
2.3 Previous Archaeological Work	1	10.2.1 National Library Of Wales	15
The Planning Background	1	10.2.2 Other	15
The Physical Setting	2	10.3 Archival Sources	15
4.1 Extent of Area	2	10.3.1 Caernarfon Record Office	15
4.2 Landscape & Setting	2	10.3.2 Bangor University MSS	15
Historical Development	2	10.3.3 Bangor University - Welsh Rare Books	15
5.1 Prehistoric To Early Medieval	2	10.4 Unpublished Sources	17
5.2 The Medieval Settlement & Llys	3	10.5 Published Sources	17
5.3 Later History	4	10.6 Online Sources	17
5.4 Travel & Communications	5	Appendix I	18
5.5 Development In The 19th & 20th Centuries	5	The Planning Process	18
Present Settlement Character	8	Appendix II	19
6.1 Topographic Development Of The Settlement	8	Listed Building In Abergwyngregyn	19
6.2 The Character Of The Conservation Area	9		
6.3 The Character Of Building	10		
6.3.1 Wall Materials & Finishes	10		
6.3.2 Roofs	10		
6.3.3 Architectural Detail	10		
6.4 Building Types	13		
Archaeological Resource	14		
Statement Of Significance	14		
Management Recommendations	15		

1. Introduction

This report contains the results of an appraisal of the Conservation Area of Abergwyngregyn undertaken by David Gwyn of Govanon and Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) on behalf of the Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA).

The aim of the appraisal is to describe and explain the historic character of the settlement in order to inform and support positive conservation and regeneration programmes. This will help improve the quality of planning advice, and contribute to local interpretation strategies. The survey will define the distinctive historical character of Abergwyngregyn, and identify the variety of character within it. The aims of the

survey are based upon the understanding that the variety of character identified during the survey is fundamental to local distinctiveness and pride of place, and these are to be seen as assets within the process of regeneration.

1.2 Acknowledgements

Gwilym Jones, Snowdonia National Park Authority, instigated the project, and generously provided help and information to aid the project. The authors are grateful to John Roberts, Snowdonia National Park Archaeologist, and to Hywel Thomas of Abergwyngregyn for all their help.

2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

A brief was provided by the SNPA. The methodology employed to answer the brief is based upon that developed by Cadw following initial urban characterisation projects undertaken by Welsh archaeological trusts. These in turn were based upon a methodology developed in England for urban characterisation and assessment, but also include English Heritage guidelines for Conservation Area Appraisal (English Heritage 2006).

The following methods were used to achieve the stated aims.

Data Collection

This phase included the collection of data from regional and national historic environment records, including those kept at GAT, RCAHMW, Cadw and National Museums and Galleries of Wales. Archive records were obtained from Gwynedd Archives, Conwy Archives, University of Wales, Bangor and National Library of Wales. The records were entered onto a database that was compatible with the regional Historic Environment Record, and their location identified through a geographical information system (MapInfo). Additional records and information sources were identified from historic maps, prints and photographs, and literature sources, including early antiquarian works.

Characterisation

The characterisation process combined the understanding gained from the desk-based phase with comprehensive fieldwork and a visual assessment of the surviving historic fabric. The development of the topography of the settlement was noted, and phases of historic change identified. Distinctive architectural forms, materials and significant elements of town and streetscapes were recorded. This process allowed the identification of areas of distinctive character, and these formed the basis of the character areas presented in this report.

2.2 Bibliographic Sources

A list of works consulted, combined with bibliographic references is given at the end of this report.

2.3 Previous Archaeological Work

Archaeological studies have been largely devoted to the area around the Norman motte, known as y Mŵd, and around the dwelling Pen y Bryn to the east of the main focus of settlement. Dendrochronology was also undertaken at Pen y Bryn in 2010 (EAS 2010, <http://www.oxford-dendrolab.com/caernarfonshire.asp>). Limited excavation was undertaken during the construction of the A55 dual carriageway. Other excavations have been undertaken within the valley south of the village.

Right:

Plate 01 -
The village is
situated at the
point where the
valley meets
the narrow
coastal plain



3. The Planning Background

Details of the planning process and how it affects management of the Conservation Area can be found in Appendix 1.

There are two scheduled ancient monuments within the Conservation Area; these are Aber motte (CN 007), and the Enclosure at Pen y Bryn (CN 208).

There are fourteen listed buildings within the conservation area; these are listed in Appendix 2.

The conservation area lies within the North Arllechwedd Landscape of Outstanding Historic

Interest in Wales (CCW, Cadw, ICOMOS 1998). The landscape is described as 'A dissected, mainly upland, area situated on the northern flanks of the Carneddau ridge in north Snowdonia, containing well-preserved relict evidence of recurrent land use and settlement from the prehistoric to medieval and later periods. The area includes: a Neolithic axe factory site; dense and remarkable concentrations of Bronze Age funerary and ritual monuments; iron Age hillforts, settlements, field systems; prehistoric trackways; a Roman road; medieval settlements, field systems, a motte and commotal centre at Abergwyngregyn; recent mining and quarrying remains'.

4. The Physical Setting

4.1 Extent Of Area

The extent of the area included within this study is shown on **Figure 01**. It includes the built-up area of the settlement and the house and associated gardens of Pen y Bryn to the east.

4.2 Landscape & Setting

Abergwyngregyn is situated at the point where the Aber valley, a deep and steep-sided north-flowing narrow valley with glacial origins,

enters onto a narrow coastal plain formed of the outwash delta of glacial materials from the mountains around. The valley floor, though only narrow, extends some 3Km south, to where the land rises steeply, down which flows the waterfall of Rhaeadr Fawr (**Plate 01**).

5. Historical Development

5.1 Prehistoric To Early Medieval

There is no direct evidence for Prehistoric remains within the study area, though a Neolithic stone axe, an Early Bronze Age stone axe-hammer and two mounds of burnt stone, thought to represent cooking places of the 2nd millennium BC, have been identified nearby. There is archaeological evidence for farming on the plain in the Iron Age and Roman period, and it is believed that the Roman road ran along its landward edge, connecting the forts at Caerhun and Caernarfon. Its position has been identified by the discovery of a Roman milestone at Madryn Farm 1km to the north-east of Aber and by traces seen on aerial photographs as crop marks in fields near

Madryn Farm to the east, as well as to the west near to Tal-y-Bont. The alignment shown by these cropmarks suggest that close to Aber the Roman road lay on a similar line to the later Turnpike road and so has been removed or overlain by it and probably crossed the river at a similar place.

Both the valley floor and the higher lands which surround the village contain numerous remains of prehistoric monuments of all periods, which suggests the presence of a flourishing population throughout much of prehistory from the Neolithic period onwards.



Above:

Plate 02 -
The motte at
Aber looking
south.

5.2 The Medieval Settlement & Llys

The village of Abergwyngregyn, commonly referred to as 'Aber', and evidently at one time also recognised as 'Llanbodfan', is associated with the llys of the Princes of Gwynedd situated within the study area. The precise location of all of the llys' various buildings and the extent of the complex is unclear, but it has been associated with a motte known as the mŵd in the centre of the present village, which may be of Norman construction or may represent a defensive work erected by the Gwynedd dynasty itself (Plate 02).

The llys is referred to as one of the favourite residences of the princes of Gwynedd in the 13th century. Princess Joan and Dafydd, wife and son of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth both died there. It formed the maerdref (administrative centre) of the commote of Arllechwedd Uchaf which extended over several thousand acres from the estuary of the Afon Aber to the high upland above Rhaeadr Fawr. These lands, though now considered marginal, were used as large cattle

ranges by the princes of Gwynedd. The cattle represented their wealth, and the upland grazing was of crucial importance for the princes.

The bond tenants of the maerdref held tenure under tir cyfrif ('register land'), which involved a redistribution of the plots of bond land on death of the head of a tenant family. This arrangement was conducive to the formation of nucleated hamlets within the royal township; sheriff's & other ministers' accounts show that a community of around twenty-four families worked on the estate in what was probably a nucleated village on the banks of the Afon Aber (Jones Pierce 1962, 37ff).

Leland identified the site of the llys from its proximity to the parish church.

'The Moode, in the parochie of Aber otherwise Llan Boduan, wher Tussog lluelin uab Gerwerde Trubdon had a castel or palace on a hille by the Chirch, wherof yet parte stondith.' (Leland 84)



Above:
Plate 03 -
The hall house
below the
motte during
excavations in
2010

Most travelers associate the llys with the mŵd until the 20th century when it is sometimes associated with the site occupied by Pen y Bryn house (GAT report Pen y Bryn Aber Archaeological Assessment Report 55 [1993]).

The house itself is of 16th and 17th century construction, though the tower on the east and the cellar are of earlier construction than the datable parts (EAS 2010, 3-4, 7; Remfry 2012).

Excavations undertaken in 1994 identified the remains of a building on the south side of the motte as a three-unit hall house which had undergone modification to reach its final phase in the 14th century, of comparable size and plan to other 14th century dwellings in the region such as Penrhyn, and associated with pottery of 13-14th century date with a few sherds of the 14th and 15th centuries (GAT report Ty'n y Mwd Archaeological Excavation Report 1092 [1994]).

Subsequent excavations undertaken in 2010 by Snowdonia National Park Authority revealed the full plan of the hall house, and alongside an earlier large walled enclosure of uncertain function. In the late 13th century 24 families were recorded as living at Aber (Lewis 1912, 175) (**Plate 03**).

In 1287 the manor of Aber was granted to Henry Somur for five years. In 1352 it was held by Edmond de Dynieton, in 1327 by John de Houseum. In the 1390s Henry de Coton claimed the title of the Manor but it was seized by the Prince's escheator, and de Coton was compensated with the grant of the Manor of Walton on Trent. In 1417 the Manor was granted to John de Pont, and in 1437 a petition for the grant of the Manor provides for the maintenance of the houses, woods, closes and gardens appertaining thereunto. In 1480 the Manor was granted to Richard Vaughan, together with Cemmaes.

Right:
Plate 04 -
Aber mill in the
early 19th cen-
tury (from Beau-
ties of England
and Wales, J.
Evans 1812.)



5.3 Later History

By the 16th century locally-based gentry families are recorded as owning land in the parish; a marriage settlement of 1558 required William Coetmor to enfeoff his daughter Ales and son-in-law Roberts with lands in Aber and elsewhere. Rice Thomas of Coed Helen near Caernarfon was the lessee in 1551, and two years later he and his wife acquired the grant. Dendrochronology indicates building dates of 1563-1585 for the main house, and the conversion of the tower into a plaisance in the period 1619-1624 (<http://www.oxford-dendrolab.com/caernarfonshire.asp>, EAS 2010, 3-4). In 1610 Sir William Thomas, Rice's grandson, purchased both the lease and the grant outright. The family were Royalists in the

civil war, but do not seem to have reaped much benefit from the Restoration, as in 1678 John Thomas began negotiations with the Bulkeley of Baron Hill for the purchase of land within the

Manor. Though John Thomas remained Lord of the manor of Aber until his death in 1705, from the end of the 17th century the Bulkeley were the main owners, and themselves held the Lordship of the Manor from at least 1715. In 1753 William Thomas brought an action against Lord Bulkeley, claiming the advowson of the church. Aber mill was in existence by 1731 (BU Bangor ms 12110), and may be much older (**Plate 04**).

5.4 Travel & Communications

Until the 18th century, Aber formed a point on the main route from Cheshire and the English west midlands to Anglesey and hence to Ireland, from Tal y Cafn in the Conwy valley through Bwlch y Ddeufaen to Aber. At this time the road lay on the high ground above the coastal plain, and came down into the village from the south (**Plate 05**). From Aber it continued across the sands to Penrhyn Safnas/Gallows Point on Anglesey. Though road books continued to show the track across the Lafan sands to the late 18th century, and the John Evans map of 1795 shows two tracks across the sands converging at the 'Ferry House'

at the promontory on the Anglesey side, in 1767 it was noted that few travellers actually made their way across the straits by this route any longer (Davies 230). One who did was the author of A Pedestrian Tour through North Wales, in a Series of Letters, written in 1795, who describes walking, and for part of the way, wading, from Aber to the Anglesey side (Hucks 34-5). Improvements to the road at Penmaenmawr funded by the Westminster and Dublin parliaments c. 1772 discouraged travel over the mountains and meant that the road south of the settlement ceased to be the main highway. Instead, Aber became a point on



Left:
Plate 05 -
The original north-south route came through the village onto the coastal plain-road from the east originally came down the valley



Far left:
Plate 06 -
The site of the smithy on the road to the former river crossing

near the church Ty'n llan, first noted in 1732, but which was developed by its tenant, James Sumpster, who recognized Aber's potential as a stopping point now that traffic was increasingly passing on the east-west axis rather than north-south. A lease of 1788 permitted him to extend the dwelling, and further work was carried out in 1830. Increasingly known as the Bulkeley Arms, it continued to function until the mid-19th century when it became a farm-house, the name passing to the hotel near the station (Strange 2004) (Plate 06).

In the early 19th century the Telford road from Bangor to Conwy confirmed Aber as a stage on an east-west route (Quartermaine, Trinder and Turner 72-4). In 1839 the existing road alignment here (represented by the present-day Bryn Tirion) was replaced by a straighter road and the construction of the present Pont Aber. The footings of the old bridge, made up of large boulders, survive on the west bank, and a house has been built on the on the rest (NPRN 23770 – SH 6562 7278). The surviving map shows 'Aber village' focused on Bryn Tirion, Gadlys on a different alignment to the present one, and the tithe barn at approximately the site of the present dwelling 'Ardudwy' (SH 6553 7272).

an east-west route. From the first of the land tax assessments in 1746 a smithy is mentioned (CRO: X/QA/LTA/4/1), and a sketch of the road from the church hill looking east by Rowlandson dated 1797 shows a building which may be it, at SH 6562 7274, still marked as such on the 1925 sale plan. It is recalled in the names Tre'r Gof and Erw Refail. The dwelling nearby now known as Prince Llewelyn (SH 6560 7273) was a tavern, and may date from the late 18th century. In 1797, 'Shop newydd' appears for the first time (CRO: X/QA/LTA/4/1). The land tax assessments mention a 'Bull Head' (sic), from 1792. This was the small-holding

5.5 Development in the 19th & 20th Centuries

The 1839 map does not show the southern part of the village but confirms a lane to Glanrafon, and does not conflict with the evidence of the tithe map of 1848. This confirms the present-day triangular street-plan at Bryn Tirion, Gadlys and the village lane, around which a cluster of houses has grown, and a further cluster around the mill, petering out along the road to Bwlch y Ddeufaen and to Tal y Cafn. The village's first Calvinistic Methodist chapel was built on the southern perimeter of this settlement in 1822, a vernacular structure with an entrance in one of the long walls (NPRN 97180 – SH 6576 7249; it was converted to residential use in 1897. Tremynfa, a double-fronted two storey house of the 1820s, was formerly the miller's house.

Far right:

Plate 07 -
The Almshouses

The present village then belonged in its entirety to the Bulkeley family. Sir Thomas Williams' almshouses (NPRN 23254 – SH 650 720) – a row of three, single storey cottages with small gabled porches and walled gardens to the front – are believed to have been erected in 1811 (Plate 07). Hyde Hall describes the village (1809-1811) as 'a small cluster of houses among which is the mill' (Hyde Hall 91). Fenton, visiting at much the same time, is more complementary – 'most pleasingly situated at the entrance to a

charming Romantick little valley.' The fact that the railway was built some little way to the north of the village in 1846-8 meant that it did not develop as a tourist destination like Llanfairfechan, though the Bulkeley Arms Hotel was constructed on the road to the station (outside the study area).

In 1863 the Bulkeley family sold the land to the Penrhyn estate, in whose hands it remained until 1925. The Penrhyn estate set about creating a



Right:

Plate 08 -
A typical Penrhyn Estate house, possibly designed by George Benmore



picturesque estate village between the 1860s and 1890s - the Pevsner volume suggests some of the houses may be by George Benmore, one of the Penrhyn estate's favoured architects (Pevsner 232) (Plate 08). The estate also sponsored the rebuilding of the parish church by Pugin, Ashlin and Pugin in 1878 (Pevsner 232). Chapels had been built in the village from the 1820s; the first Methodist chapel dates from this period (SH 6576 7249) and Soar, the Wesleyan chapel, was constructed in 1827, though the present building is likely to be later (NPRN 6669 – SH 65712 72575). Capel Bethlehem, which replaced the first Methodist chapel (CM; NPRN 6668 – SH 6557 7266) was built in the late 19th Century.

A substantial multi-storey water-powered corn mill was erected on the site of the earlier mill by 1889, on the evidence of the first 25" ordnance survey (NPRN 54193 – SH 6574 7256). It is built of stone walls under a slate roof, with a mill race on east. The north wing has blocked first-floor openings in the southwest gable end; there is a lateral chimney stack in the northwest elevation where some openings are blocked or boarded. The corn mill had an enclosed waterwheel on the east side. In 2006 part of yr hen felin (as it is now known) was opened as a community centre (Plate 09).

Some-scale industrial development also took place on the periphery of the settlement. A small slate quarry was already out of use by 1809-1811 'on account of the coarse nature of the material' (Hyde Hall 91). In 1875 the brothers John and William Williams built a writing slate mill by the railway, outside the study area (Hughes 76). This was converted into a margarine factory pre-1912 (NPRN 303148).

Following the sale of the village by the Penrhyn estate in 1925, the triangular plot of land between Bryn Tirion and the 1839 road was developed as the Aber Falls Hotel & garage, reflecting not only the development of tourism in North Wales but also the fact that it was less based on rail travel & the traditional two-week seaside holiday. The land was rented by Miss Jones of Prince Llywelyn cottage, who with her two sisters developed the site; Smith suggests it was constructed in the 1930s (Smith 2008, 6). The hotel is a good example of inter-war roadhouse architecture, and the garage was built of corrugated iron. The 'Café Royal', which survives as a bungalow, and the 'Tuck Shop' on Bryn Tirion reflect the same tourist drive; the first owners were from a circus family, before it was taken over by Frederick Taylor, a dance-band musician, and his wife Hilda in 1937 (Furno, 11, 21).



Left:
Plate 09 -
Soar Chapel
with corn mill
beyond

6. Present Settlement Character

6.1 Topographic Development

The layout of the settlement is considerably influenced by its location within a narrow river valley giving access to the coastal plain, and by the way in which a north-south transport route was succeeded by one running east-west.

Right:
Plate 11 -
A view of
the garage
and hotel in
the mid-20th
century



6.2 Character Of The Conservation Area

The essence of Abergwyngregyn is its location and topography, firstly and most significantly as a place where a medieval north-south route that ultimately led from London to the embarkation point for Ireland had to be guarded at the point at which it led to the Menai Strait; secondly, as a staging point on an east-west route of the Early Modern period from the north-west of England to Bangor and beyond. Its strategic significance is reflected in the mŵd and in the remains of buildings associated with it. Its later significance is reflected in its taverns and hotels to meet the needs of travelers, especially those whose reasons for journeying were recreational.

The fact that the main Telford post road from London to Holyhead via Betws y Coed came nowhere near Aber, and the main line railway avoided it, made it possible for the village to develop as a quiet estate dormitory and as a tourist settlement. As such it proved attractive to the Penrhyn estate when it came on the

Right:
Plate 10 -
20th century
houses built
by the Univer-
sity College of
North Wales for
staff working on
the college farm



market, who developed it on lines similar to their estate village of Llandygái. Other factors were changes in the rural economy of 19th century Wales, which led to the enlargement of the mill, and to the erection of the College houses to accommodate staff employed at the University College of North Wales' farm (**Plate 10**).

Architecturally, the essence of Abergwyngregyn is its diversity. No one building style predominates, and the settlement has grown in an ad-hoc way around an early system of roads and laneways, modified by east-west main roads in the 19th and 20th centuries. Compact stone-built 18th century dwellings survive in the triangle of roads that Smith suggests may once have formed the village green. The hotel and the area associated with it are good examples of inter-war development associated with the motor car (**Plates 11 & 12**). The area around the mill, with its substantial double-fronted houses of late 18th and early 19th date, forms another

focus, with a strong sense of the 'estate village' in the dwellings in between. Plots that had remained undeveloped were filled by late 20th century housing; these attempt to acknowledge traditional idioms by the use of pitched and slated roofs and by the use of some native stone as a structural material. The southern end of the settlement is different in character once again, with more informal traditions of building; it is difficult to reconcile this lane winding into the mountains with a road along which Lords Lieutenant of Ireland would have had to travel.



Left:
Plate 12 -
The garage
and former
hotel today



Above:

Plate 13 -

This mid-19th century painting by Harper shows the use of course random slates on the roof, with thatch on the agricultural building

Right:

Plate 14 -

Rowlandson's view of Pen y Bryn in 1797



6.3 The Character Of Building

6.3.1 Wall Materials & Finishes

The principal building material in Abergwyngregyn is stone – the Pevsner volume describes it as ‘local granite’, and the 1925 sale catalogue refers often to ‘stone’ or ‘stone and roughcast’. Many of the older buildings are built out of locally-gathered fieldstones; Harper’s painting suggests that these were common before the Penrhyn estate took over.

6.3.2 Roofs

Slate roofs predominate, mostly from the Arfon quarries, and in all probability from Penrhyn. Harper’s painting of the mid-19th century shows thatch mingled with roofs of rough random slates (**Plate 13**). All the surviving roofs are of regular late-19th century slates. Bron Derw makes attractive use of variegated slates in blue and red.

6.3.3 Architectural Detail

For a small village, Abergwyngregyn exhibits a remarkable variety of architectural styles, reflecting the influence of Sir William Thomas, of the Baron Hill estate, followed by the Penrhyn estate, and the period since 1925. Pen y Bryn, on the hill east of the river, is a two storeyed house of Snowdonian type flanked by kitchens to the east and a four-story plaisance tower to the west. House and tower have ovolo-moulded mullioned windows (**Plate 14**).

There are several houses of presumed 18th century construction such as the Prince Llywelyn. These have seen some alteration in terms of the shape of windows and in the form of rooflines but their general proportions are little altered. Although the two successive estates clearly brought their own architectural priorities to the village in the 19th century, they did not set out to control its development in every respect. Substantial ‘vernacular-Georgian’ dwellings, double-fronted and two-storeyed, make their appearance, such as Glanrafon by the mill-stream, Tremynfa, Ty Newydd Isaf/Ceris and the Post Office.

The tradition of building cottages ornées begins with the almshouses, with their end gable stacks, and their two gabled porches, each with miniature bargeboards mimicking king-post trusses. It is even evident, in rather feeble form, in the two-storey college houses (**Plate 10 & 15**).

It is continued by the Penrhyn estate. Bryn Hyfryd and Bro Dawel, for example, exhibit projecting end gabled cross wings with king-post trusses suspended between bargeboards; three-light window below and fancy chimney-stacks set diamond-wise. There is a ‘Lutyens’ feel to Tan y Dderwen, the pair of late 19th century estate cottages, shown on the 1889 ordnance survey (NPRN 54199 - SH65617264), with coursed Penmaenmawr stone on the ground floor, edged



Left:

Plate 15 - The almshouses are indicative of the cottage ornées style of the late 18th/early 19th century

in brick, and the slate-hung upper floors (**Plate 15a**). Tan y Dderwen also makes interesting use of carved and shaped slates in the recessed entablature and in the window sills (**Plate 16**).

The parish church is in the Decorated style, the work of Pugin, Ashlin and Pugin in 1878 at the behest of the Penrhyn estate (**Plate 18**). The three chapels, only one of which is now a place of worship, are all built in different styles. The first Methodist chapel, on the old road to the south of the main settlement, is of the style common in the 1820s with a long-wall entry. Soar combines the sub-classical and the vernacular. It is of the short wall entry type, with a gable facade to the north-west. The exterior of the chapel is pebble-dashed with stuccoed dressings, including eared architraves and bands. The chapel is entered via a gabled porch below a central round-arched

window with flanking segmentally-headed windows. To the right hand side elevation there are three tall first floor sash windows and a sill bank above a central ground floor window, to the left hand side there are three first floor sash windows; a further building joins the chapel at ground level. The rear elevation has two sash windows to the ground floor. Bethlehem is in the Gothic style of the long-wall entry type, with a large arch in the facade (**Plate 17**).

The buildings of the 20th century in the main reflect non-local assumptions about architectural style, though the most recent attempt to retain traditional proportions and rooflines. There is some infill building post-1945 and a row of social houses constructed in the mid-1950s. Though these may appear intrusive, they continue the tradition in different form of the 'estate vernacular'

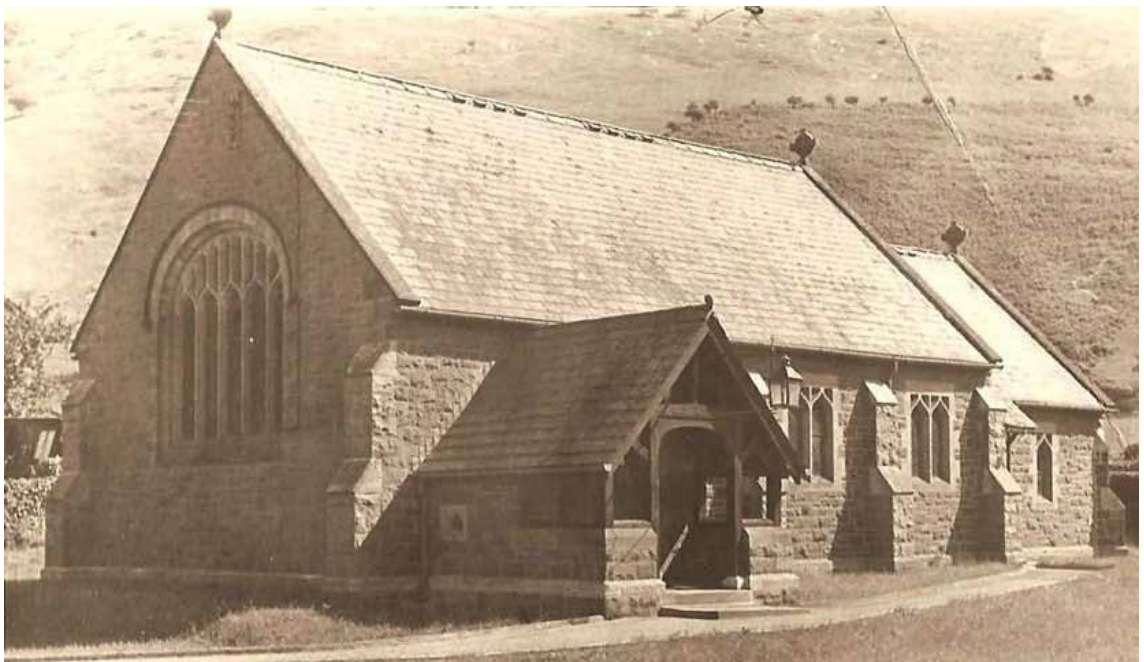
Far right:
Plate 16 -
Tan y Dderwen



Right:
Plate 15a -
Bro Dawel
with external
decorative
timberwork



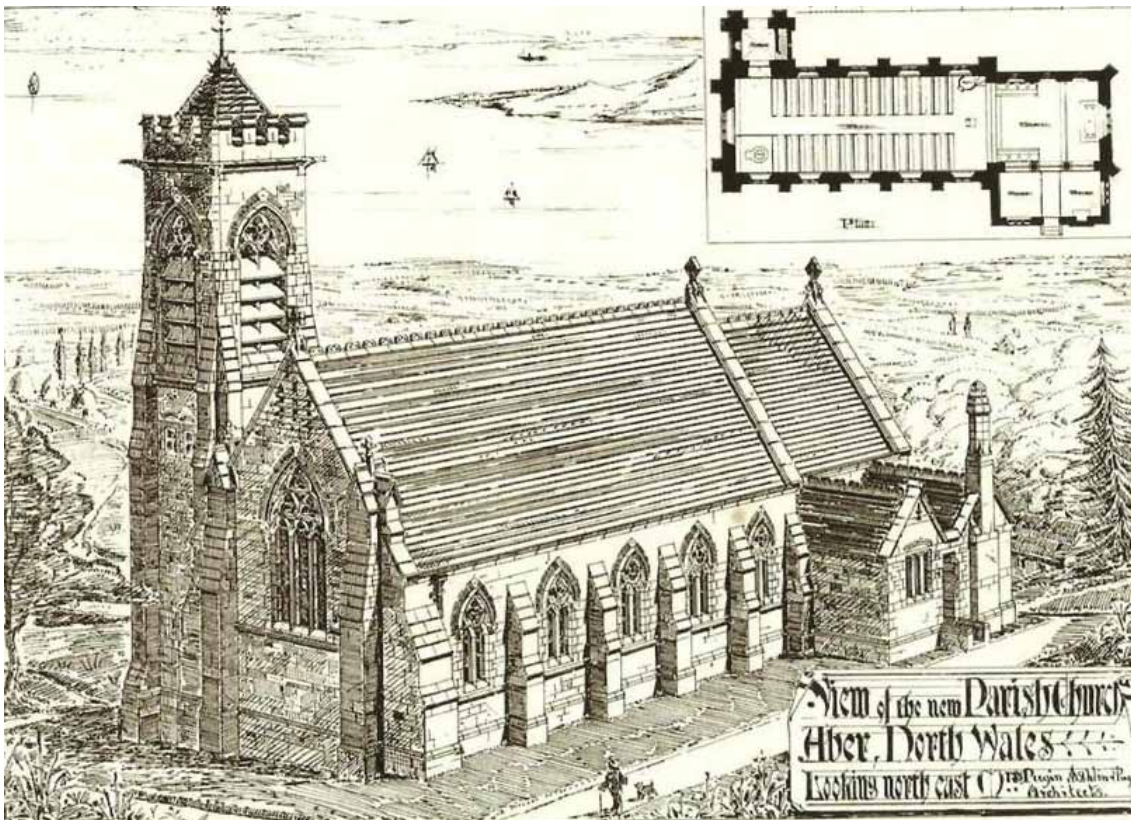
Right:
Plate 18 -
St Bodfan's
church rebuilt
1878 by Pugin,
Ashlin & Pugin



6.4 Building Types

developed by the Penrhyn estate & its predecessors. The prominent hotel is typical of inter-war 'roadhouse' architecture which reflects the growing availability of private cars and the construction of ring roads and arterial roads post-1918. This is a site-type little studied by archaeologists, though it is hard to better J.B. Priestley's description of them as having been 'inspired by the idea of Merrie England popular in the neighbourhood of Los Angeles' (Stratton and Trinder 154-5)(Plate 19).

Domestic buildings predominate, the dwellings of estate workers and tenants and of local functionaries such as the postmaster and schoolteachers. The majority of commercial buildings, including shops and cafes, have now been converted to domestic accommodation.



Left:
Plate 17 -
Capel Bethlehem, built 1896
to designs by
Richard Davies



Left:
Plate 19 -
Aber Falls Hotel
in the mid-20th
century

7. Archaeological Resource

Abergwyngregyn was on a major regional transport route from at least Roman times until the opening of the railway in 1848. As a river crossing and a bridging point, there is the possibility of chance finds of single objects or occasionally caches of coins.

The extent of the llys and of any nucleated Medieval settlement is still far from clear. The hall of the llys lay close to the motte and within a curvilinear enclosure which may represent the limits of the bailey or castle yard, probably defined by the roads to the west. The village grew up around the west side of this bailey enclosure.

It is suggested by Smith that the triangle formed by the three roads Bryn Tirion, Gadlys and Tan y Derwen may have formed the village green, that this could have been the site of the weekly market and that the village also once extended on the north side of this triangle of land where the Aber Falls Hotel came to be built. This may be the case, but it may be significant that the 1839 map shows Gadlys Road on a different alignment, joining Bryntirion a little to the east, which would have made any such green smaller, and that no maps or documentation suggest that the village had expanded north of Bryntirion until the 1920s/1930s.

8. Statement Of Significance

The village of Abergwyngregyn is of national (Welsh) significance for its associations with the princely llys and the motte, for its subsequent development as a settlement on important road transport routes and as an estate village, as well as for its location within a rich historic landscape. The village has considerable archaeological potential as the site of the maerdref of

Arllechwedd Uchaf. Important post-Medieval buildings include the house at Pen y Bryn and associated structures, as well as the distinctive exercises in 'estate vernacular' and in the varied nature and ad-hoc location of other dwellings. The village's streetscape is a testament to the changes in patterns of travelling from the Medieval period to the 20th century.

9. Management Recommendations

- The present conservation area boundaries are fit for purpose, as including the core of the historic settlement
- The area has considerable below-ground archaeological potential
- The pattern of wandering laneways is an important part of the study area's historic development and 'sense of place', and should be safeguarded
- The distinctive estate vernacular of the 19th century buildings is an important part of local character and should be maintained
- The distinctive inter-war 20th century ambience of the hotel and associated buildings is an important part of local character and should be developed and maintained
- The architectural variety of dwellings within the study area is an important part of local character and should be maintained.
- Consideration should be given to listing the parish church (St Bodfan), Bryntirion, and Capel Bethlehem.

10. List Of Sources Consulted

10.1 Maps (see pages 20 & 21)

10.1.1 Gwynedd Archives

XPE-156-106: A Map and Survey of the Glebe land of the Parish of Aber belonging to the Revd Mr Roberts 1776
25" ordnance survey Caernarvonshire 7 vii and xi

10.1.2 Bangor University

Penrhyn maps 274. A List of Properties held by the Penrhyn Estate.

10.2 Visual Material

10.2.1 National Library of Wales

Dwg Volume	Page	Date	Subject
9	25	1810	Aber
9	27	1810	Valley
9	26	1810	Valley
10	17	1810	Valley
10	18	u/k	View
12	61	u/k	Pen y Bont

10.2.2 Other

Henry A Harper: Aber N. Wales (no date, in private possession)

10.3 Archival Sources

10.3.1 Caernarfon Record Office

CRO: X/QA/LTA/4/1 (land tax assessments, 1746-1810)

10.3.2 Bangor University Mss

Baron Hill papers

3013	Marriage settlement (1558); William Coetmor to enfeoff his daughter Ales and son-in law Robert with lands in Aber and elsewhere - schedule annexed.	3135	Final concord (1675) at the great Sessions between Owen Hughes esq., plaintiff/Robert Lord Bulkeley Viscount Cashel and Griffith Thomas esq. and Jane his wife, deforcians, concerning the Manor of Aber
3133	Concord in Court of Great Sessions (1668) between Thomas Bulkeley and Lewis Meyrick, plaintiffs/Lord Bulkeley and John Thomas deforcians, concerning the Manor of Aber elsewhere & advson of the church at Aber.	3136	Release (5 January 1676-7) by Thomas Bulkeley of Dinas to Robert Lord Bulkeley of various lands in North Caernarvonshire.
3134-5	Summary of transactions relating to the Manor of Aber (1674-5), & extract of Plea Roll of the Court of Great sessions held at Caernarfon 24 July 1615 (Latin).	4590	Disagreement (c. 1770) between Bulkeley/Thomas of Aber (also Coedhelen) over right and title to the advowson of the rectory of Aber - account of the living from 1676 onwards.

4591-2	Lease with counterpart (1776) by Lord Bulkeley to William Jones, joiner, upon plot of land in Aber by the Bangor-Conwy road, for three lives, £1 per annum.	4726	Rentroll (1689) Bulkeley properties in the parish of Aber.
4593	Lease counterpart (1788), Lord Bulkeley to James Sumpter of the Bull's Head, Aber.	4727iv	Rentroll (1690) Bulkeley properties in commote of Arllechwedd Uchaf.
4594	Deed of lease (1789) seventh Viscount/Jones Yeoman, Gwem Engan, two lives, £4 1 0/- per annum.	4727vi	Rentroll (1690) Bulkeley properties in Caernarvonshire.
4595	Lease (1789) Lord Bulkeley/Mary Evans widow and Wm Rowlands yeoman of Pentre'r Wern, Aber, 2 lives, £4 15/- per annum.	4727ix	Rentroll (1691-6) Bulkeley properties in commote of Arllechwedd Uchaf.
4596	Lease (1789) Lord Bulkeley/Evans Richard, yeoman, of part of Brynmeddyg, two lives £29 per annum.	4733-41	Rentroll (1699) Bulkeley properties in commote of Arllechwedd Uchaf.
4597	Lease (1797) Lord Bulkeley/Jane Hughes widow and John Thomas yeoman, of Lerpwl, Aber, two lives, 6gs per annum.	4743	Rentroll (1699) Bulkeley properties in Caernarvonshire.
4597-2	Lease (1798) Lord Bulkeley/Ellen Williams widow and William Thomas yeoman, of Tan'rallt, two lives, £11 per annum - expired 1849.	4744	Rentroll (1713) Bulkeley properties (unspecified).
4598	Copy of schedule of deeds (1790) relating to the manor of Aber handed over to GD Fleetwood.	4745	Rentroll (1713-5) Bulkeley estate.
4599	Assignment of lease (1794) by John Wms, yeoman, with consent of Lord Bulkeley/Owen Jones yeoman of a piece of land whreon to build, 3 lives, 14/- per annum.	4752	Rentroll (1719-20) Bulkeley properties in Caernarvonshire.
4600	Counterpart lease (1831) by Sir Richard Bulkely Williams Bulkeley to Mr Edward Smith, of a dwelling house, 21 yrs, £11 0/- per annum.	4754	Rents and arrears (1721-3) Bulkeley properties in the parish of Aber.
4691	Rentroll (1580) Bulkeley properties in Caernarvonshire.	4755	Rentroll (1722) Bulkeley properties in Caernarvonshire.
4697	Rentroll (1617-8) Bulkeley properties in commote of Arllechwedd Uchaf.	4757	Rentroll (1725-8) Bulkeley properties in Caernarvonshire.
4701	Rentroll (1628) Bulkeley properties in Caernarvonshire.	4758	Rentroll (1728-1741), Bulkeley properties in Caernarvonshire.
4714	Rentroll (1617-8) Bulkeley properties in commote of Arllechwedd Uchaf.	4759	Rentroll (1730), Bulkeley properties in Caernarvonshire.
		4760-6	Rentals (1731-1750), Bulkeley properties, area not specified.
		4770	Rental (1755), Bulkeley properties in Caernarvonshire.
		4771	Rental (1756-7), Bulkeley properties, area not specified.
		4773	Rental (1756-7), Bulkeley properties in Caernarvonshire.
		4774-4954	Rentals, tithe rent charges, etc (to 1899), Bulkeley properties.

- 4961 Estimate and valuation (1778) of Bulkeley estate in Caernarvonshire.
- 4965 Valuation (1807) of Bulkeley estate in Caernarvonshire.
- 4969 Valuation (c. 1828) of Bulkeley estate in Caernarvonshire.
- 4972 Survey (1831) of Aber estate.
- 4973-4 Survey (c. 1840) of fields, acreage, etc.
- 5087-8 Acquittance (nd) by Receiver General, includes 'Tir Bleddyn Rwth in Uchaf'.
- 6611-6643 Plans and references (1840s) of sale of land in Aber for the Chester-Holyhead Rly.
- 6894 Exchange of land (1839 between Sir Robert Bulkeley Williams Bulkeley & Caernarvonshire Old Tumpike Trust.
- 6895 Plan of above.
- Penrhyn British Records Association papers.
- Draft conveyance (1927) of Aber mill.

10.3.3 Bangor University - Welsh Rare Books

X/KG79PWL Act relating to the road through Aber (17 Geo. 111).

Penrhyn rental, 1863, pp. 115-7

10.4 Unpublished Sources

Engineering Archaeological Services 2010: North West Wales Dendrochronology Project Pen-y-bryn, Abergwyngregyn, Gwynedd (for North West Wales Dendrochronology Project and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales.). Gwyn D 2001: 'Assessment of historical documentary resources' in Gwyn D, Roberts JG and GAT 1994: 1 Ty'n y Mwd Archaeological Excavation Report 1092. Johnstone N 1995: Llys and Maerdref (GAT report 167) Kelly RS 1994: A55 North Wales Expressway Aber Improvements (GAT 1073), Archaeological Assessment (GAT Report 88) Smith G 2008: Aber Falls Hotel Abergwyngregyn Archaeological Assessment (GAT Report)

Thompson D: Coedydd Aber NNR: Historic Landscape Resource Management Survey. Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, report 419: 2-6

10.5 Published Sources

Jones-Pierce T (1962): 'Aber Gwyn Gregyn', Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society 23, 37-43
Johnstone N (1991): 'The Location of the Royal Courts of Thirteenth Century Gwynedd' in Nancy Edwards (ed.) Landscape and Settlement in Medieval Wales (Oxford: Oxbow Monograph, 81)
Furno AT 1998: A Village to Grow In (pp)
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Owen TJ 1953: 'The records of the parish of Aber' Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society 14, 74-93
Quartermaine J, Trinder B and Turner R 2003: Thomas Telford's Holyhead Road (CBA Research Report 1235)
Strange W 2004: The Bull's Head Inn, Aber: A Caernarvonshire coaching inn', Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society 65, 41-57.
Stratton M and Trinder B 2000: Twentieth Century Industrial Archaeology (London: Spon)

10.6 Online Resources

<http://www.oxford-dendrolab.com/caernarfonshire.asp>
<http://www.castles99.ukprint.com/Essays/Aber.html> (Remfry PM 2012: A Brief Report on Pen y Bryn and Aber, Gwynedd)

Appendix I

The Planning Process

Current Legislation

The local Planning authorities are recognised and identified as having the key role in protecting our archaeological heritage. Government advice and planning case law clearly establish archaeology as a 'material consideration' in the planning authorities' assessment and determination of a planning application. This is seen both in national and regional policy documents and guidelines.

The protection of the vulnerable historic environment falls into two broad categories: Statutory protection and non-statutory protection.

Statutory protection is provided by the following Acts and Orders:

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, as amended by the National Heritage Act 1983
The Town and Country Planning Act 1990
The Planning and Compensation Act 1991
Statutory Instrument 1199, the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988
Statutory Instrument 1995 No. 419, The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995

Designations arising from these Acts and Orders are Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

Non-statutory protection is provided by national policies and guidelines contained within:

Planning Policy Wales, March 2002
Welsh Office Circular 60/96, Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology, December 1996
Welsh Office Circular 61/96, Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas, December 1996.

The key document in Wales which expands on the legislative background and provides detailed guidance on the handling of archaeology within the planning process is Welsh Office Circular 60/96 - Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology (1996). This Welsh Assembly guidance expands on Planning Policy Wales (March 2002), Chapter 6 'Conserving the Historic Environment; particularly paragraphs 6.5.1 to 6.5.6 (see Appendix I for extracts from 60/96).

Local Plan Policies

The town lies entirely within the Snowdonia National Park. Current regional and local plan policies are defined in Gwynedd Structure Plan (adopted 1993) and Eryri Local Plan (adopted 1999). The plan can be consulted in the offices of the National Park, or online at http://www.eryri-npa.co.uk/images/eryri_local_plan/elp_english.pdf. Policies concerning archaeology, including historic towns, are given in section 5, policies AR 1-4. Policies concerning the built heritage, including listed buildings and conservation areas, are given section 6, policies TA 1-12.

Conservation Areas

The 1990 Town and Country Planning Act defines a conservation area as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

Heritage & Local Planning Context

Advice on the management of the archaeological heritage is provided by the National Park Archaeologist, who, together with the Park's building conservation and planning officers contribute to the decision making processes to inform on the likely impact of development on the historic environment and how best to mitigate the impact. Advice on Conservation Areas and the Built Heritage is given by the National Park Planning Department through their Building Conservation Officer.

Archaeology is the process by which we can understand past societies through their material remains. These archaeological remains are a finite and non-renewable resource. They are vulnerable to modern development and can, in a short space of time, be entirely destroyed by modern machinery and building methods.

The level of archaeological response is guided by the nature of the archaeological remains and the significance of the impact. Archaeological mitigation is usually imposed through planning conditions, and a relevant programme of archaeological works is advised by the National Park archaeologist. On occasion a programme of assessment and evaluation may be required prior to the determination of a planning application, so that the appropriate mitigation can be advised.

Regional Historic Environment Record

The regional Historic Environment Record (HER) is a database of archaeological sites and finds with details of interventions (surveys, excavations, previous work etc) and references. It consists of both a computerised record and a paper record, and is maintained at the offices of the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust in Bangor. The digital record combines database and GIS functionality, and forms the key component of the planning and archaeology decision making process. The experience and knowledge of the development control archaeologists is used to interpret the record, and provide relevant advice to the planning officers.

Extracts From Welsh Office Circular 60/96

Archaeological remains are a finite, and non-renewable resource, in many cases highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction. [Paragraph 3]

Archaeological remains are part of our cultural heritage, not least in terms of the information they provide about the past, valuable both for their own sake, and for their role in education leisure and tourism. [Paragraph 3]

The key to the future of the great majority of archaeological sites and historic landscapes lies with local authorities, acting within the framework set by central government, in their various capacities as planning, highways, education and recreational authorities. [Paragraph 7]

Local planning authorities should expect developers to provide the results of such appraisals, assessments and/or evaluations as part of their applications for sites where there is good reason to believe there are remains of archaeological importance. [Paragraph 14]

Authorities will need to consider refusing permission for proposals which are inadequately documented. [Paragraph 14]

When planning applications are made without prior discussion with the local planning authorities, the authorities should seek to identify those applications which have archaeological implications, and to assess their likely impact by consulting the local authority Archaeological Officer, National Park Archaeologist or regional Welsh Archaeological Trust. [Paragraph 15]

In the case of a development proposal that is likely to affect the site of a scheduled ancient monument, planning authorities are required to consult the Secretary of State (Cadw). [Paragraph 15]

Where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation in situ i.e. a presumption against proposals which would involve significant alteration or cause damage, or which would have a significant impact on the setting of visible remains. [Paragraph 17]

It may be possible to preserve important archaeological remains where developers prepare sympathetic designs using, for example, foundations which avoid disturbing the remains altogether or minimise damage by raising ground levels under a proposed new structure or by careful siting of landscaped or open areas. [Paragraph 17]

Archaeological investigations such as excavation and recording should be carried out before development commences, working to a project brief prepared by the planning authority (with reference to their archaeological advisers). [Paragraph 20]

It is open to the local planning authority to impose conditions designed to protect a monument. [Paragraph 22]

Appendix II

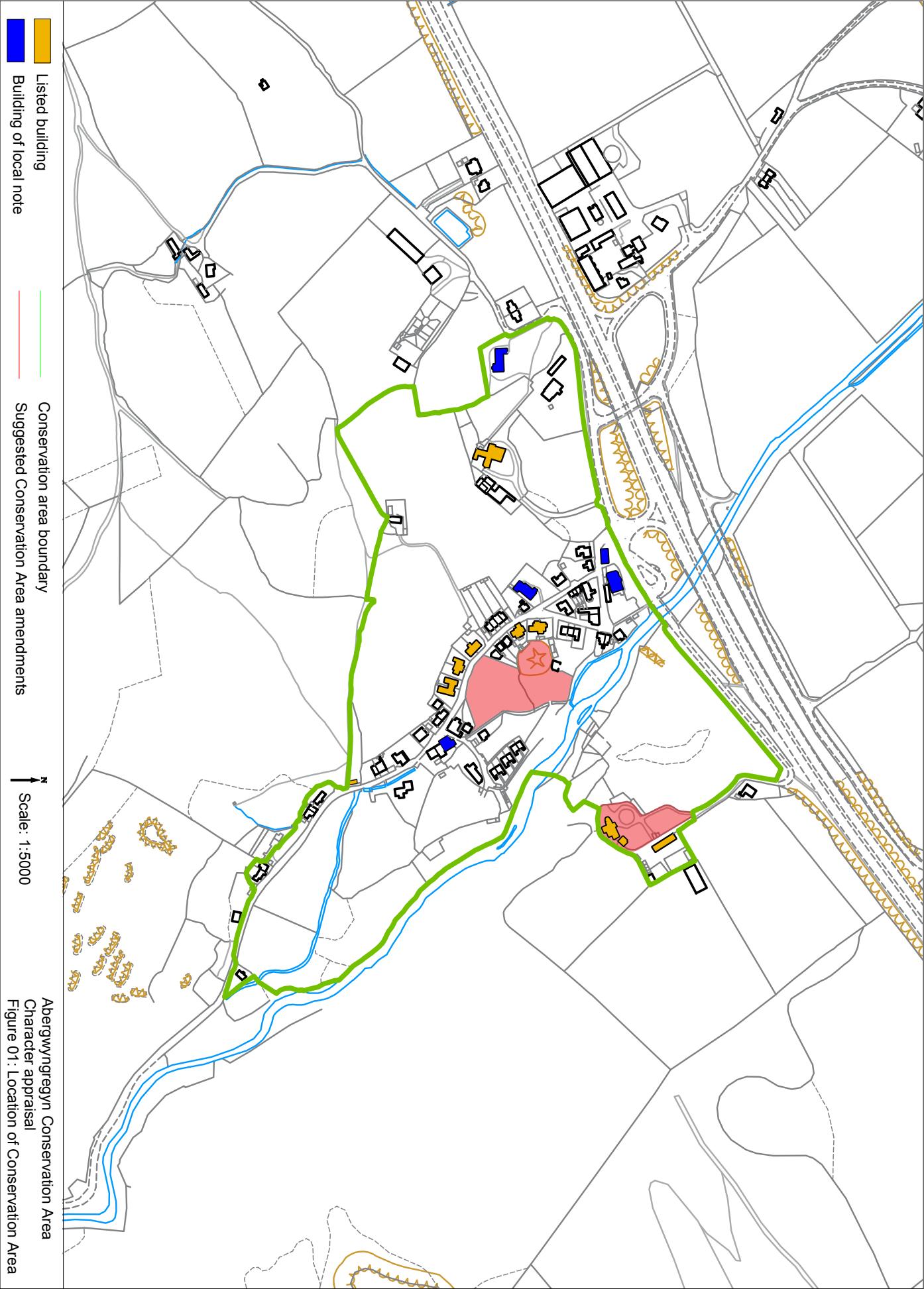
Listed Building In Abergwyngregyn

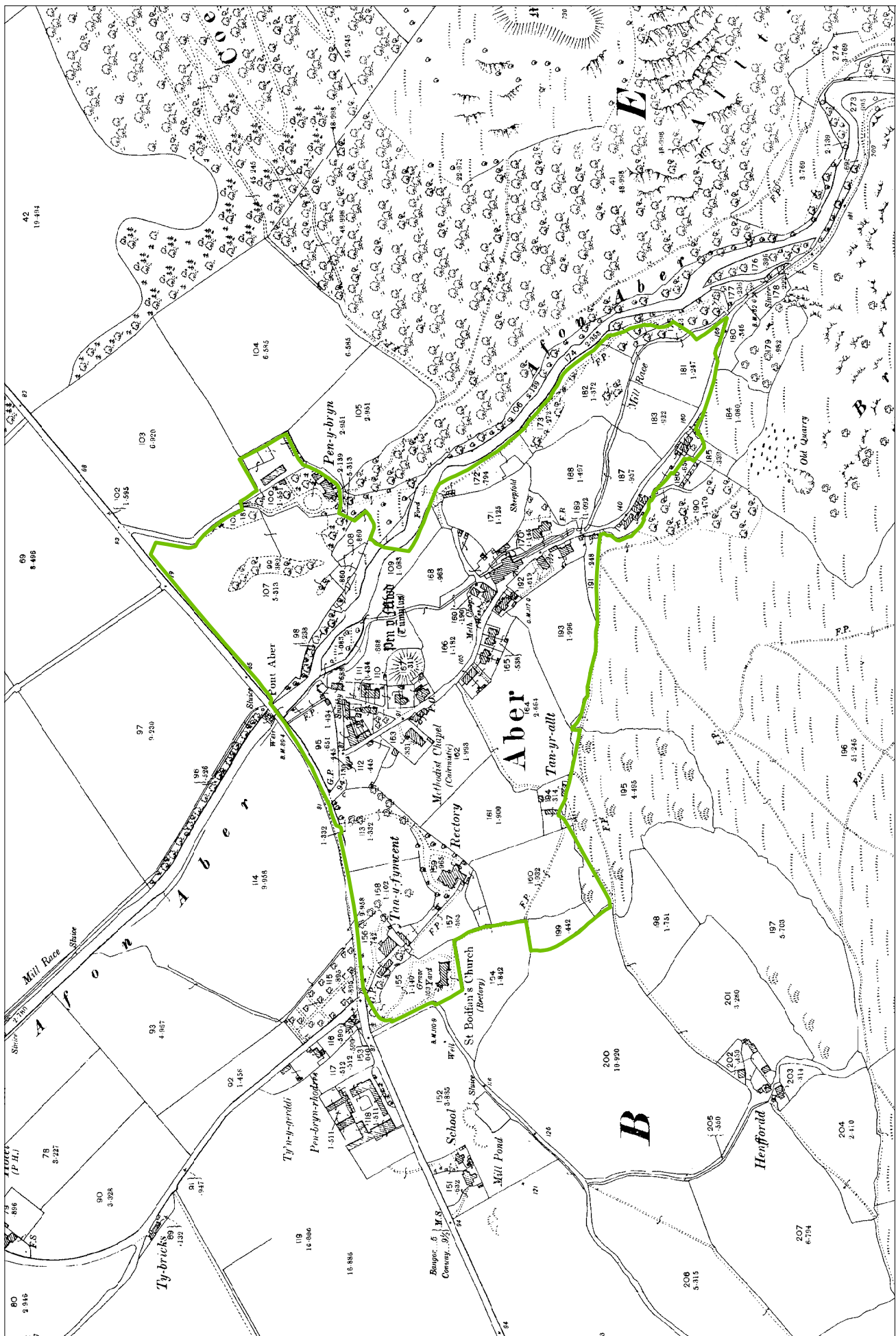
Within the Conservation Area:

Bro Dawel - Grade II
Bron Derw - Grade II
Bryn Hyfryd - Grade II
Cart shelter, barn, granary and smithy
at Madryn Farm - Grade II
Ddol Cottages - Grade II
Ddol Cottages - Grade II
Fron - Grade II
Gatehouse/Barn at Pen-y-bryn - Grade II*
Pen-y-bryn - Grade II*
Pen-y-bryn Cottage - Grade II
Stable range in yard at Madryn Farm - Grade II
Tan-y-bryn - Grade II
Tan-y-dderwen - Grade II
Tan-y-dderwen - Grade II
Tyn-y-buarth - Grade I

Outside the Conservation Area:

Bont Newydd - Grade II
Ty'n Ffridd - Grade II
The Old Rectory - Grade II
Nant Rhaeadr - Grade II
Gatehouse range including stabling, cowhouses and
walls enclosing yard to south at Madryn Farm - Grade II
Wig - Grade II





Abergwyngregyn Conservation Area

Character appraisal

Figure 2: OS County Series map 1900

Scale: 1:5000

Conservation area boundary



Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
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