

PROPOSED WIND FARM  
PRYSAN, ANGLESEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

INITIAL REPORT NO. 119

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Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

PROPOSED WIND FARM  
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

prepared for Renewable Energy Systems Ltd.

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Gwynedd Archaeological Report No. 119

# **PROPOSED WIND FARM, PRYSAN, ANGLESEY**

## **INITIAL REPORT**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Planning permission is to be sought for a wind farm to be constructed on land surrounding Prysan, a dis-used farm in the parish of Llanddyfnan, Anglesey. The application involves an area of land covering some 160 ha, with 20 suggested turbine locations.

As part of an Environmental Statement being prepared to accompany the planning application, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (Contracts Section) have been contracted by Renewable Energy Systems Ltd to carry out an archaeological assessment.

### **2. ASSESSMENT BRIEF**

An initial report was requested from Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, assessing the likely archaeological impact of the plans and suggesting mitigatory measures. The assessment is to comply with the conditions specified in the "Brief for Initial Archaeological Assessment" prepared by Gwynedd Sites and Monuments Record for Anglesey Borough Council.

The basic requirement was for a desk-top survey and field search of the proposed area in order to assess the impact of the proposals on the archaeological and heritage features within the area concerned. The importance and condition of known archaeological remains were to be assessed and areas of archaeological potential and new sites to be identified. Recommendations regarding the appropriate siting of the turbines, tracks and service trenches were to be made.

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust's proposals for fulfilling these requirements were, briefly, as follows:

- a) to identify and record the cultural heritage of the area to be affected by the proposals;
- b) to evaluate the importance of what was identified (both as a cultural landscape and as the individual items which make up that landscape); and
- c) to recommend ways in which damage to the cultural heritage can be avoided or minimised.

This initial report will contain the results of the desktop study and walkover, with recommendations for further assessment work if this is necessary, and recommended mitigatory measures.

### **3. METHODS AND TECHNIQUES**

#### **3.1 Desk-top Study**

Consultation of maps, computer records, written records and reference works, which make up the Sites and Monuments Record, was undertaken at Gwynedd Archaeological Trust. Records held by the County Archives in Llangefni (including early Ordnance Survey maps, tithe maps and schedules, Land Tax Assessments) were consulted, and their index was checked for other sites of interest. The archives at UCNW, Bangor, were searched for relevant estate maps and documents, however access to the Baron Hill Manuscripts deposited at these archives was not allowed, and this meant that certain relevant estate maps could not be consulted. These maps may have aided the interpretation of the Medieval and Post-Medieval landscape, but are

unlikely to have contributed additional sites. Aerial photographs were inspected at the offices of the Countryside Council for Wales.

Lists supplied by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments were consulted for information about listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments. There are no scheduled ancient monuments or listed buildings within the study area.

### 3.2 Field Search

This was undertaken on the 2 August, 1994, by two members of Trust staff. Conditions for field walking were very good, the weather being mostly dry and sunny. The fields containing proposed turbine locations, and service trenches were walked. The remaining fields within the study area were not systematically walked, but were viewed from adjoining fields and roadside locations.

Sites identified were marked on copies of 1:10,000 OS maps as accurately as possible without surveying. Forms were filled in assessing each site, and detailed notes made of the more important. Photographs were taken of all potential sites identified.

### 3.3 Report

All available information was collated, and transferred onto a single set of maps at a scale of 1:10,000 for convenience. The sites were then assessed and allocated to the categories listed below. These are intended to give an idea of the importance of the site and the level of response likely to be required; descriptions of the sites and specific recommendations for further evaluation or mitigatory measures, as appropriate, are given in the relevant sections of this report.

The criteria used for allocating sites to categories are based on those used by the Secretary of State when considering ancient monuments for scheduling; these are set out in Annex 3 to Planning Policy Guidance 16 (Wales): Archaeology and Planning.

### 3.4 Categories

The following categories were used to define the importance of the archaeological resource.

#### *Category A - Sites of national importance.*

Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and sites of schedulable or listable quality, i.e. those which would meet the requirements for scheduling (ancient monuments) or listing (buildings) or both.

Sites which are scheduled or listed have legal protection, and it is recommended that all Category A sites remain preserved and protected *in situ*.

#### *Category B - Sites of regional or county importance.*

Sites which would not fulfil the criteria for scheduling or listing, but which are nevertheless of particular importance within the region.

Preservation *in situ* is the preferred option for Category B sites, but if damage or destruction cannot be avoided, appropriate detailed recording might be an acceptable alternative.

#### *Category C - Sites of district or local importance.*

Sites which are not of sufficient importance to justify a recommendation for preservation if threatened.

Category C sites nevertheless merit adequate recording in advance of damage or destruction.

*Category D - Minor and damaged sites.*

Sites which are of minor importance or so badly damaged that too little remains to justify their inclusion in a higher category.

For Category D sites, rapid recording, either in advance or during destruction, should be sufficient.

*Category E - Sites needing further investigation.*

Sites whose importance is as yet undetermined and which will require further work before they can be allocated to categories A - D are temporarily placed in this category, with specific recommendations for further evaluation.

## **4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Introduction** (the numbers in brackets refer to the site gazetteer numbers)

The Sites and Monuments Record held by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust recorded four sites within the study area: the Castell Cadarn earthworks (site 1), the burial cairn near Prysan (site 5), the building foundations also near Prysan (site 15), and the site of Llech Talmon burial chamber (site 14).

A number of possible archaeological sites were noted from aerial photographs, and these were checked on the ground, none were readily identifiable as archaeological sites.

Archive material consulted at the Local Record Office, mainly tithe maps, and Land Tax Assessments, were useful for indicating the farm boundaries and landowners during the 18th to 19th centuries, and the early Ordnance Survey maps also helped elucidate changing patterns of farm boundaries and tracks.

### **4.2 The Archaeological Background**

This section provides a summary of the archaeology and history of the surrounding area so that the findings of the assessment can be put into a wider context.

#### *4.2.1 Prehistoric*

A 5 km circle drawn around the study area includes a number of sites of Prehistoric date. There are three Neolithic (5,000 - 3,000 BC) burial chambers at Lligwy, Pant-y-saer and Glyn. A number of burnt mounds of Bronze Age date (c. 1500 BC): these are mounds of burnt stone, usually in a horse-shoe shape surrounding a small pit, with the open ends of the horse-shoe typically facing a stream. They are thought to have been used for cooking, by heating stone in a fire and then using the hot stone to heat water in the pit. Also from this period are the finds of two bronze palstaves. There are two Iron Age (500 BC - 48 AD) hillforts, one at Parciau and one at Pentraeth, both associated with round huts. In addition there are a number of settlements of round huts dating from the Iron Age and Roman periods, with a particularly dense concentration around the Lligwy area.

Many of the Prehistoric sites are to be found on the triangle of Limestone rock, the corners of which are at Lligwy, Llangefni and Pentraeth. Areas where limestone occurs are often associated with early activity and settlement. Large limestone outcrops provided slabs and suitable boulders for megalithic monuments and material for dwellings and enclosures. Environmentally the countryside is well drained, soil is light and good for cultivation and lightly wooded, often with open areas.



#### *4.2.2 Roman*

The round hut settlements mentioned in 4.2.1 above continued in use throughout this period, and the excavated settlement at Din Lligwy has produced a quantity of pottery of Roman date.

#### *4.2.3 Medieval and later*

There are very few remains of medieval domestic buildings on Anglesey, and it would be unusual to find a house or farm building older than the 17th century, although earlier buildings may have stood on the sites now occupied by more modern farmsteads. However the foundations of houses of this date are sometimes found, and site 15 within the study area may be one of these.

During the Medieval period land was divided into areas known as townships. Medieval townships close to the study area are recorded at Castell-bwlch-gwyn, Erddreiniog and Llanddyfnan. Prysan is recorded as being a hamlet within the township of Llanddyfnan in 1612, and this site may be Medieval in origin, although the present site is occupied by a 19th century house and farm buildings. Just outside the study area at Rhuddlan Fawr is the site of a Medieval quarry used for obtaining high quality gritstone for millstones.

#### *4.2.4 Post Medieval*

Estate records in the archives suggest that by the mid 15th century most of the land within the study area was owned by the Bulkeley family (Baron Hill Estate), and the Land Tax Assessments for 1744 show that with the exception of part of Fagwyr fawr, which was owned by Lord Stanley (Penrhos Estate), and Rhuddlan-bach, which was owned by Lord Dinorben (Llysduelas Estate), all the land within the study area was owned by the Bulkeley family. This is also confirmed by the later tithe maps and schedules for the area (1840's).

The field systems now visible, in all probability, date from the early 19th century when many boundaries were re-aligned to open up areas for progressive farming techniques, again this is confirmed by the 1840 tithe map of the area. The overall extent of farm boundaries, particularly where they occur with parish boundaries, remain fairly stable, which makes them of particular archaeological interest, because their method of construction and ecology can often provide useful information concerning the date of construction and previous land use.

#### *4.2.5 Conclusions*

The region around Prysan contains a number of sites of archaeological and historical interest. There is potential for the survival of sites of Prehistoric date within the study area, and elements of the Medieval landscape are preserved within the present pattern of farms and tracks.

There are a number of houses and farms dating from at least the early eighteenth century, though possibly older, which together with their associated farm buildings, enclosures and field boundaries form an important element in the historic landscape.

### **4.3 Archaeology of proposed development area.**

#### *4.3.1 Introduction (N.B. the numbers refer to the site numbers in the gazetteer)*

The area proposed for the development is a limestone plateau, with pockets of sandstone and conglomerates. The top of the plateau and the fields on the downslope of the outcrop are used for pasture. Some areas are heavily wooded with old coppiced hazel groves. Low lying

ground around the base of the plateau is wet and marshy. The soils on the lower ground are brown earths of high base status, but on higher ground the limestone rock is dominant, with thin soils overlying.

Prehistoric activity within the study area is suggested by the site of the Neolithic burial chamber at Llech Talmon, and the site of the burnt mound at Castell Cadarn (1).

The present landscape is made up of a number of discrete farms, largely consolidated into the present pattern during the 15th and 16th centuries, although the site of some of the present farmsteads (e.g. Prysan) may be Medieval in origin. Similarly, some of the farm boundaries could be Medieval in origin, although most of the present rectilinear field systems appear to date from the 19th century, with traces of earlier systems on top of the limestone plateau.

#### *4.3.2 Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites*

**1. Castell Cadarn (site of) SH 48688073 *Category D***

This site was recorded by the RCAHM in 1930-1940 as a series of collapsed stone wall enclosures of unknown date, but appearing to include a Bronze Age burnt mound. The site was called Castell Cadarn on the 1818-1823 OS map. The site is now buried by spoil tips from the Rhyddlan Quarry.

**2. Rhuddlan-bach (derelict) SH48788850 *Category B***

A stone-built rendered farm house with surrounding enclosures and associated agricultural buildings in varying states of decay. Parts of the house may be of 17th century date, but has been much altered in the 19th century. Many features of interest remain including a donkey mill, and numerous items of small machinery of 19th century date.

**3. Prysan-bach (derelict) SH48858060 *Category C***

A small rendered cottage of 19th century date.

**4. Oval-shaped features SW of Tan-yr-allt SH49168065 *Category E***

Large oval-shaped feature, possibly an enclosure, delineated by bracken growth.

**5. Cairn SH 48858047 *Category E***

A mound comprising of a number of large boulders. Possibly the remains of a prehistoric burial cairn, although the random appearance of the piled stone would suggest a clearance cairn.

**6. Field boundaries SH48758045 (centred) *Category D***

A number of derelict field boundaries on top of the plateau north of Prysan. Although of unknown date, they appear to pre-date the extant enclosures of the 19th century.

**7. Cairn SH48618036 *Category E***

A small mound made up of several large boulders. Probably resulting from field clearance, and of relatively recent date, although could be Prehistoric in origin.

**8. Lime quarry and kiln (site of) SH49028032 *Category D***

The kiln is marked on the 1900 1:2500 OS map as dis-used. The quarry is now overgrown with bushes and large trees, with no visible evidence of a kiln.

**9. Track to Prysan SH48658018 (centre) *Category C***

Track leading to Prysan, from where it continues to Fagwyr -fawr and Ty'n lliidiart. The track is lined on both sides with well built dry stone walls from the old lime kiln to just beyond Prysan. For most of the remainder the track is open on both sides, but is again lined on both sides as it leads into Fagwyr-fawr.

**10. Prysan (derelict) SH48908020 *Category C***

Brick-built two storey 19th century farm house, now derelict, with a range of stone-built farm buildings, also 19th century. Within the front garden there are two small stone buildings, one of which appears earlier in date than the rest of the complex.

**11. Track S of Prysan SH48938012 *Category C***

Well defined track leading from Prysan into nearby fields. Lined on both sides by earth banks topped with hawthorn and blackthorn. The track was probably used for access to fields but may have Medieval origins.

**12. Rectilinear raised area W of Prysan SH48718010 *Category E***

Large sub-rectangular raised area c. 40 m x 15 m, height c. 1.5m. with approximately 5 circular and irregular shaped depressions of varying depths. The site may be a settlement of Iron Age/Roman date which has been heavily robbed, or may be a natural outcrop which has been quarried.

**13. Old boundary or track SH48757992 *Category C***

The remains of an old field boundary delineated by a row of evenly spaced medium sized boulders which run parallel to the existing boundary, at a distance of approximately 4-5m. Possibly the remains of an early track; though there is nothing marked on any of the maps.

**14. Llech Talmon (site of ) SH 486800 *Category D***

Possible site of a dolmen or Prehistoric burial chamber. Documentary evidence for the existence of a burial site comes from several early sources: Angharad Llwyd (*A History of the Island of Mona* 1833) said that there used to be a dolmen at Llech Tal y Mon. This information appears to have been copied from Thomas (*Cambrian Register* 1799, D Thomas) and describes it as 'now demolished'. Jones (*Arch Cam* 1855) refers to an erect stone at Llech Talmon possibly destroyed which was possibly the supporter for a capstone. There is nothing now visible on the ground within the area to suggest such a site.

**15. Rectangular building (remains) SH 48528003 *Category C***

Building foundations of a Medieval or later hafod type dwelling discovered during field work carried out in 1985 by staff of the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust. The site was not clearly visible due to dense bracken and gorse growth.

**16. Fagwyr-fawr (derelict) SH48507960 *Category B***

Stone built, rendered, two storey farmhouse with associated stone agricultural buildings, c.18th century. Like Rhyddlan-bach, many features of interest including a donkey mill, outbuilding with hearth (smithy or bakery?), barn with power take-off for *in situ* grain crusher.

**17. Lime kiln SW of Fagwyr-fawr SH48467958 *Category C***

Lime kiln, shown on the 1920 1:2500 OS map as in use. Now disused and overgrown, although appears to be in fairly good condition.

**18. Field boundaries, etc.**

The pattern and nature of field boundaries are an important part of the historic landscape. Their construction, linear plan and ecological diversity can provide valuable information about the landscape and its evolution. The most common types of field boundary in this area are the stone faced bank and drystone walls.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 General**

In this section, it is necessary to assess the likely impact of the proposed scheme on the cultural heritage, and to make recommendations to mitigate that impact. Specific recommendations are made for each site when there is sufficient information to enable a reasonable assessment of its



importance. However where the status of the site is not yet known (Category E sites), then recommendations are made for further assessment to establish the status of that site. It will only be necessary to carry out this further assessment if the site is to be disturbed. In addition, the high density of sites in the surrounding area has implications for those areas of unknown archaeological potential, and recommendations are also made for assessing these areas.

## **5.2 Recommendations for further assessment**

**4. Oval feature SW of Tan-yr-allt** No impact. This site should be assessed by trial trenching if it becomes necessary to disturb it.

**5. Cairn** Possible impact from construction of turbine 5 and service trenches. It is recommended that turbine 5 and its service trenches are sited so as not to cause any physical damage to this site. To avoid damage by vehicular activity it is recommended that the site is clearly marked or fenced off.

**7. Burial cairn** Possible impact from construction of track and service trenches. It is recommended that the cairn is clearly marked or fenced off so that constructors vehicles are aware of the existence and location of the cairn, and avoid any disturbance during construction.

**12. Rectilinear raised feature W of Prysan** No impact.  
It is recommended that any future change to the layout of the turbines and associated services will avoid this site.

## **5.3 Recommendations for mitigatory measures**

### **5.3.1 Known sites**

**1. Castell Cadarn (site of)** No Impact. The site is covered by spoil tips from Rhuddlan quarry.

**2. Rhuddlan-bach** Potential impact from turbine 1 and associated services. It is recommended that turbine 1 and its service track and trench is sited so that it does not cause any physical damage to the existing farmstead and associated enclosures at Rhuddlan-bach.

**3. Prysan-bach** No impact.

**6. Field Boundaries** Partial direct impact. At least one of these boundaries will be crossed by a service track and trench. It is recommended the bank is crossed at right angles, and that every effort is made to minimise disturbance of the bank.

**8. Lime quarry and kiln** No impact.

**9. Track to Prysan** Direct impact from service tracks and associated trenches. It is recommended that every effort is made to minimise disturbance of this track when it is crossed by crossing it at right-angles, and at a place where least disturbance to existing structures will occur. Contractors vehicles should avoid unnecessary disturbance to the track. A section across the track should be recorded by an archaeologist: this could take place as part of the watching brief recommended in 5.3.2 below.

**10. Prysan** Direct impact from service track linking turbines 12 and 15. It is recommended that the track is re-routed to avoid cutting through the existing farmstead, and that it follows the line of the existing field boundary around the house and buildings.

**11. Track S of Prysan** Direct impact from service trench between turbines 12 and 15. It is recommended that the service trenches are re-routed so that they lie outside the track following the field boundary around the farm.

**13. Old boundary or track** Direct impact from service trench linking turbines 13 and 14. It is recommended that damage to this track is minimised by crossing the track at right-angles, ensuring that contractors vehicles cause the minimum of disturbance necessary. A section across the track should be recorded by an archaeologist: this could take place as part of the watching brief recommended in 5.3.2 below.

**14. Llech Talmon** Possible direct impact from turbine 13. It is recommended that the site of turbine 13 is examined by geophysical survey and trial trenching, to ensure that no Prehistoric remains survive.

**15. Rectangular building (remains)** No impact.

**16. Fagwyr-fawr** No impact.

**17. Lime kiln S of Fagwyr-fawr** No impact.

**18. Field boundaries** It is recommended that where a significant part of any field boundary is to be disturbed, then it should be recorded in advance by photograph and written description.

### *5.3.2 Recommendations for areas of unknown archaeological potential*

Previous results have shown that many sites can only be detected once soil removal has commenced. It is recommended that a continuous watching brief is undertaken during soil stripping operations for the turbines and associated services. This is an important part of the mitigatory strategy, with potential for discovering sites which would otherwise go unrecorded.

## **6. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER WORK AND MITIGATORY MEASURES**

### **6.1 Further assessment work**

This section summarises the work which is recommended to evaluate those archaeological remains whose status and extent are not yet established, i.e. sites in Category E. If it is necessary to disturb these areas, then they will be reclassified and suitable mitigatory measures suggested following evaluation.

#### *Category E - Sites needing further investigation*

4. Oval feature	Trial trenching
5. Burial cairn	Trial trenching
7. Burial cairn	Trial trenching
12. Rectilinear raised area	Geophysical/trial trenching
14. Llech Talmon	Geophysical/trial trenching

### **6.2 Mitigatory Measures**

This section lists the remaining sites according to category (as described in Section 3.4 above).

#### *Category A - National importance*

None

*Category B - Regional importance*

2. Rhuddlan Bach
16. Fagwyr Fawr

*Category C - Local importance*

9. Track to Prysan
10. Prysan
11. Track S of Prysan
13. Boundary /track
15. Rectangular building (remains)
17. Lime kiln

*Category D - Minor and damaged sites*

1. Castell Cadarn (site of)
6. Field Boundaries
8. Lime quarry and kiln

## **7. SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **7.1 Unpublished Sources**

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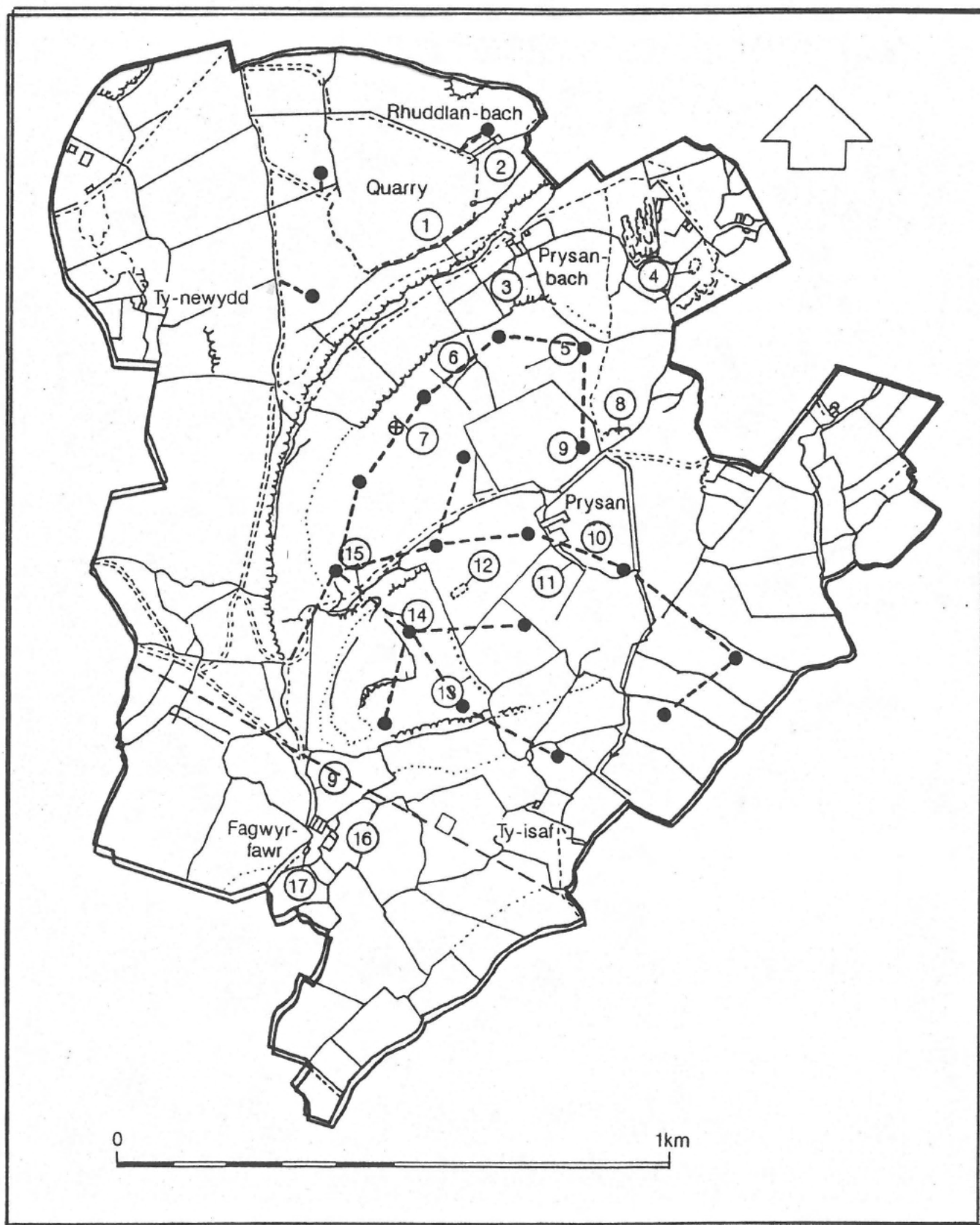
## 8. Non Technical Summary

An initial assessment of the proposed development area has identified a number of actual and some possible sites. Recommendations for further assessment are made for those sites whose archaeological status is not yet known, and mitigatory measures are recommended for the remaining sites.

Five sites of unknown archaeological status have been identified, but of these only site 14, the site of a possible burial chamber, is likely to be directly affected, and assessment in the form of geophysical survey and trial trenching is recommended for this site. The two cairns, sites 5 and 7, and site 12, should be clearly marked, so that no damage is occasioned by contractors vehicles during construction work.

Two sites are identified as Category B status: the farmsteads at Rhuddlan Fach and Fagwyr Fawr. It is recommended that the location of the turbines and associated services is designed to avoid any physical impact upon these buildings and adjacent enclosures.

The remaining sites are primarily linear features such as tracks and field banks. Where it is necessary to disturb these it is recommended that the method of working is designed to minimise any physical impact upon the upstanding remains, and that details of the sites are recorded before and during construction work.



Location of proposed turbines and service trenches.

Fig. 2 Location of archaeological sites listed in the gazetteer.