

Investigation of Disturbance within the Scheduled Area at Trefignath Burial Chamber



Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Investigation of Disturbance within the Scheduled Area at Trefignath Burial Chamber

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Cover photograph: Trefignath chambered tomb

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INVESTIGATION OF DISTURBANCE WITHIN THE SCHEDULED AREA AT TREFIGNATH BURIAL CHAMBER (G2431)

Prepared for *Cadw*, July 2015

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INTRODUCTION

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) has been commissioned by Cadw to undertake an archaeological investigation of disturbed ground associated with illegal excavations at Trefignath Burial Chamber (PRN 2500), near Holyhead, Ynys Môn (NGR SH25858056). Trefignath Burial Chamber is a Neolithic chambered tomb constructed in three separate phases, throughout the Neolithic period, with early Neolithic occupation deposits below the tomb. It was fully excavated between 1977 and 1979, then consolidated and reconstructed (Smith and Lynch 1987). The tomb is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (AN011) and the scheduled area covers all the fenced off enclosure around the tomb, protecting the whole of the top of the small knoll on which the tomb stands (figure 1).

A small excavation undertaken to bury a pet dog was reported and a second area of disturbance had also been identified. The contractors managing the monument confirmed that the dog had been there for about 6 weeks but the other disturbance had been noticed in March 2015. Cadw requested that GAT re-excavate the areas of disturbance and record their location and the extent of any damage to archaeological deposits. This work was done as urgent works under the class 5 consent order for health and safety purposes and so did not require scheduled monument consent.

This document reports on the findings of the investigation.

METHODOLOGY

The archaeological investigation consisted of the location and re-excavation of both areas of disturbance. The project design just specified the re-excavation of one pit but discussion once on site with Cadw led to an agreement to re-excavate both pits.

The western area of disturbance (pit 1) was investigated on 21/07/2015. The dead dog had not yet been removed from the eastern area of disturbance (pit 2) by that date due to a delay while it was confirmed whether the police wanted to investigate. Pit 2 was therefore photographed and located on 21/07/2015 but not re-excavated until 23/07/2015, when the dog had been removed. The dog was taken to a pet cemetery for cremation.

The re-excavation of both pits used hand tools and the cuts were cleaned and photographed. Hand drawn plans were made of the cuts and notes made on GAT proforma sheets to describe the fill and cut of the pits and the deposits they were cut into.

The outline of the pits and the baselines of the hand drawn plans were located by survey grade Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment (model: Trimble GNSS/R6/5800). The accuracy of this was poor (with an

error of up to 0.1m) around pit 1 due to the tree cover in this area blocking satellites but the accuracy was considered sufficient for the location of this pit.

Photographs were taken before investigation, when the pits were fully re-excavated and after backfilling. All photographs were taken with a Nikon digital SLR camera and recorded as RAW files at the highest resolution setting. Appropriate photographic scales were used.

Reference was made to the guidelines specified in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014), where these were appropriate.

RESULTS

Both pits were located close to the southern boundary of the scheduled area at the base of a fairly steep slope (figure 1). The steep slope appears to be a natural scarp, probably an outcrop of bedrock covered with a thin layer of soil. Much deeper soil had accumulated at the base of the slope, as could be seen when the cuts were cleaned out.

The western area of disturbance (pit 1, SH 25867 380533) was a neat oval pit measuring 1.42m by 0.75m and was 0.6m deep (figure 1, plates 1 and 4). It was mainly filled by poorly rotted leaf-mould with brown silt towards the sides and base. The pit had cut through topsoil and turf 0.15m thick and through a layer of mid brown loamy silt (0.38m thick) that represented the main A horizon of the soil under the active topsoil. In the base of the pit a yellow-brown clayey silt was just visible and this appeared to be the B horizon of the soil, i.e. the surface of the natural substrate under the A horizon (plate 5). No archaeological deposits were seen.

The eastern area of disturbance (pit 2, SH 25894 80542) contained a dead pet dog which appeared to have been partially wrapped in a blanket (plates 3 and 6). The pit appeared to be too small for the animal, which was probably placed in it after *rigor mortis* had set in and could not be repositioned to fit in the pit. This led to the head almost projecting from the pit and being covered only by a thin layer of turf.

The pit was an irregular oval measuring 1.00m by 0.65m and was 0.60m deep (plate 7). It was filled by brown friable loamy silt with some stones and recent glass. The pit had cut through the topsoil, which was 0.16m deep, and through a layer of mid brown loamy silt below, which was 0.2m deep. The pit had also cut about 0.24m into the friable schist bedrock (plate 8). No archaeological deposits or features were visible in the sides of the pit.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The two pits were dug illegally within the scheduled area. One was certainly dug to bury a pet dog and the other may have been dug for this purpose but for some reason was not used. Both pits were located away from the chambered tomb and neither had damaged any archaeological features or deposits. The location of the pits at the base of a steep slope on the edge of the scheduled areas was far from the known archaeological features associated with the tomb.

LIST OF SOURCES CONSULTED

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation*

Smith, C. A. and Lynch, F. M., 1987. *Trefignath and Din Dryfol*, Cambrian Archaeological Monographs 3, Cambrian Archaeological Association

PROJECT DESIGN

TREFIGNATH BURIAL CHAMBER (G2431): PROJECT DESIGN FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

Prepared for *Cadw*, July 2015

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INTRODUCTION

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) has been commissioned by *Cadw* to undertake an archaeological investigation of disturbed ground associated with an illegal excavation at Trefignath Burial Chamber, Ynys Môn (NGR SH25858056). Trefignath Burial Chamber is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (AN011) and is a Neolithic chambered tomb constructed in three separate phases, around 3750-2250 B.C.

Based on information received from Cadw (email correspondence 16/07/15), in the very southeast corner of the site, there is an area of disturbed ground approx. 1m x 0.5m (w x l) where the turf has been lifted and a small excavation undertaken to bury a pet dog and the turf replaced. Cadw have requested that GAT attend site to lift the turf and re-excavate the disturbed ground in order to investigate the impact of the disturbance on below ground deposits. *Note: the dog has been removed from site by Cadw.*

Note: Cadw have requested that GAT also locate an area of previous disturbance on site. This previous area of disturbance will not include any excavation by GAT.

The GAT investigation is scheduled for 21/07/14. The content of this design must be approved by Cadw prior to the start of works. Cadw will maintain a monitoring role for the duration of the project and will approve all report content.

GAT have been advised by Cadw that Scheduled Monument Consent is not required for the works.

Reference will be made to the guidelines specified in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014).

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

The archaeological investigation will comprise the re-excavation of the 1m x 0.5m (w x l) hole excavated on site by persons unknown. This will include cleaning the excavated area, recording exposed sections and locating the disturbed area. The archaeological investigation will be completed by one GAT archaeologist (Jane Kenney). No plant, security or welfare are required due to the small scale and short duration of works. *Note: GAT will also be locating a previous area of disturbance at the request of Cadw; this will not require excavation.*

The work is currently scheduled for 21/07/15, 1 day scheduled on site and half a day reporting.

Note: Any variation to the size of the excavation area, including expansion of the trench to accommodate safe working, will need to be agreed in advance with Cadw.

Note: if any significant archaeological activity is identified with the confines of the investigation area, fieldwork will cease to allow Cadw to be notified and a suitable response defined.

The following methodology will be applied:

- The targeted area will be excavated by hand using digging tools.
- Any archaeological features/deposits encountered will be manually cleaned. Any features or layers seen in section or plan will be recorded by digital SLR photography and on context sheets and by section and/or plan drawings as necessary.
- No further investigation or recovery of samples will be undertaken without agreement with Cadw as this will involve expansion of the disturbed area. Such work will require a new project design and costs.
- A complete table of metadata with details of each image, including descriptions and directions of shot will be produced using Microsoft Access.
- Images will be converted to TIFF and JPEG format for archiving
- The targeted area will be located using survey grade (not handheld) GPS with <10cm accuracy (model: *Trimble GNSS/R6/5800*). Appropriate photographic scales will be used where possible.

2.3 Small Finds

Only loose small finds will be recovered. No further digging to find and recover finds will take place. Any finds recovered are the property of the landowner; however, it is Trust policy to recommend that all finds are donated to an appropriate museum where they can receive specialist treatment and study. All finds would be treated according to advice provided within *First Aid for Finds* (Rescue 1999). Any analysis and assessment of recovered artefacts will be discussed and agreed with Cadw.

2.4 Human Remains

As the monument has been entirely excavated and reconstructed it is highly unlikely that any human remains are present. If encountered any human remains will be left *in-situ*, covered and protected, and Cadw will be informed. If removal is necessary it will take place under a Ministry of Justice licence and with due regard for health and safety issues. This work would be carried out under a new project design.

2.5 Further Archaeological Works

If the initial investigation discovers archaeological features, layers or artefacts that Cadw consider worth sampling or further investigation a new project design and costs will be produced and agreed.

2.6 Monitoring Arrangements

Cadw will need to be informed of the project start date and of the subsequent progress and findings.

2.7 Data processing and report compilation

The results of the investigation will be included in a GAT produced report submitted to Cadw on completion of fieldwork. If finds are recovered and analysis of these agreed a full report will be produced after the analysis has been completed.

The final report will include photographs of the investigated area. Illustrations will include a location plan. Note: if archaeological activity is identified, then a Primary Reference Number will be required for inclusion in all reporting. The Primary Reference Number is a unique identifier prepared by and used by the Historic Environment Record. GAT is responsible for sourcing Primary Reference Numbers from the Historic Environment Record.

Immediately upon completion of the finalised report, the report and any data or other documentation produced shall be integrated into the site archive.

The report will include the following sections as a minimum:

- Summary
- Introduction
- Aims and purpose
- Specification
- Methods and techniques, including details and location of project archive.
- Results
- Summary and conclusions
- List of sources consulted.

3 DISSEMINATION AND ARCHIVING

The following dissemination procedures will be applied on completion of the project:

- one hard copy and one digital copy each for GAPS;
- one hard copy and one digital copy will be sent to the Historic Environment Record Archaeologist for the area (HER, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Craig Beuno, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2RT);
- one hard copy and one digital copy to the Historic Environment Record. In line with the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) requirements, the HER must be contacted at the onset of the project to ensure that any data arising is formatted in a manner suitable for accession to the HER. At the onset, the HER Enquiry Form provided by the HER, will be completed and submitted.
- Submission of digital information to the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. Digital information will include the photographic archive and associated metadata.

4 PERSONNEL

The project will be managed by John Roberts, Principal Archaeologist GAT Contracts Section. The 1No archaeologist on site will be Jane Kenney, Senior Archaeologist. The Senior Archaeologist will be responsible for fieldwork duties, including liaison with Cadw, as well as report output. The project manager will be responsible for reviewing and approving the report, which will then be submitted as per the arrangements defined in para. 3.

5 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Trust subscribes to the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers) Health and Safety Policy as defined in **Health and Safety in Field Archaeology** (2006).

A site specific risk assessment will be completed prior to the start of fieldwork.

6 INSURANCE

Public Liability

Limit of Indemnity- £5,000,000 any one event in respect of Public Liability

INSURER Aviva Insurance Limited

POLICY TYPE Public Liability

POLICY NUMBER 24765101CHC/000405

EXPIRY DATE 22/06/2016

Employers Liability

Limit of Indemnity- £10,000,000 any one occurrence.

The cover has been issued on the insurers standard policy form and is subject to their usual terms and conditions. A copy of the policy wording is available on request.

INSURER Aviva Insurance Limited

POLICY TYPE Employers Liability

POLICY NUMBER 24765101CHC/000405

EXPIRY DATE 22/06/2016

Professional Indemnity

Limit of Indemnity- £5,000,000 in respect of each and every claim

INSURER Hiscox Insurance Company Limited

POLICY TYPE Professional Indemnity

POLICY NUMBER

HU PI 9129989/1208

EXPIRY DATE 23/07/2016

7 SOURCES CONSULTED

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation* (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014).

Cadw email correspondence.

FULL LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

File reference	PRN	Contexts	Description	View from	Scale (s)	Type	Date	Originating person	Originating organisation
G2431_001.JPG	2500	01, 02	Illegal pit 1 at Trefignath before investigation	N	1m	Photograph	21/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_002.JPG	2500	01, 02	Illegal pit 1 at Trefignath before investigation	W	1m	Photograph	21/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_003.JPG	2500		Illegal pit 2 at Trefignath before investigation, still containing dead dog	NE	1m	Photograph	21/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_004.JPG	2500		Illegal pit 2 at Trefignath before investigation, still containing dead dog	NE	1m	Photograph	21/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_005.JPG	2500		Illegal pit 2 showing location	NE	1m	Photograph	21/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_006.JPG	2500	01, 02	Illegal pit 1 showing location	W	1m	Photograph	21/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_007.JPG	2500	02	Illegal pit 1 fully re-excavated	W	1m	Photograph	21/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_008.JPG	2500	02	Illegal pit 1 fully re-excavated	N	1m	Photograph	21/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_009.JPG	2500	03, 04, 05	Deposits visible in side of pit 1	S	1m	Photograph	21/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_010.JPG	2500	03, 04, 05	Deposits visible in side of pit 1	S	1m	Photograph	21/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_011.JPG	2500		Pit 1 backfilled	W	1m	Photograph	21/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_012.JPG	2500		Pit 1 backfilled	N	1m	Photograph	21/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_013.JPG	2500	06, 07	Dog exposed in pit 2	SW		Photograph	23/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_014.JPG	2500	06, 07	Dog being removed from pit 2	SW		Photograph	23/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_015.JPG	2500		Pit 2 fully re-excavated	NE	1m	Photograph	23/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_016.JPG	2500		Pit 2 fully re-excavated	E	1m	Photograph	23/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

File reference	PRN	Contexts	Description	View from	Scale (s)	Type	Date	Originating person	Originating organisation
G2431_017.JPG	2500	08, 09, 10	Deposits cut by pit 2	S	1m	Photograph	23/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_018.JPG	2500	08, 09, 10	Deposits cut by pit 2	N	1m	Photograph	23/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_019.JPG	2500	08, 09, 10	Deposits cut by pit 2	E	1m	Photograph	23/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_020.JPG	2500		Pit 2 backfilled	NE	1m	Photograph	23/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_021.JPG	2500		Trefignath tomb with Road King Truck Stop in background	SE		Photograph	23/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
G2431_022.JPG	2500		Trefignath tomb with Road King Truck Stop in background	E		Photograph	23/07/2015	Jane Kenney	Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

FIGURES AND PLATES

Figure 1: Location of pits with insets showing plans of the pits

Plate 1. Pit 1 before investigation showing location

Plate 2. Pit 2 before investigation showing location

Plate 3. Pit 2 before investigation showing dead dog and blanket *in situ*

Plate 4. Pit 1 fully re-excavated

Plate 5. Deposits visible in the side of pit 1

Plate 6. Dead dog exposed in pit 2

Plate 7. Pit 2 fully excavated

Plate 8. Deposits visible in the side of pit 2

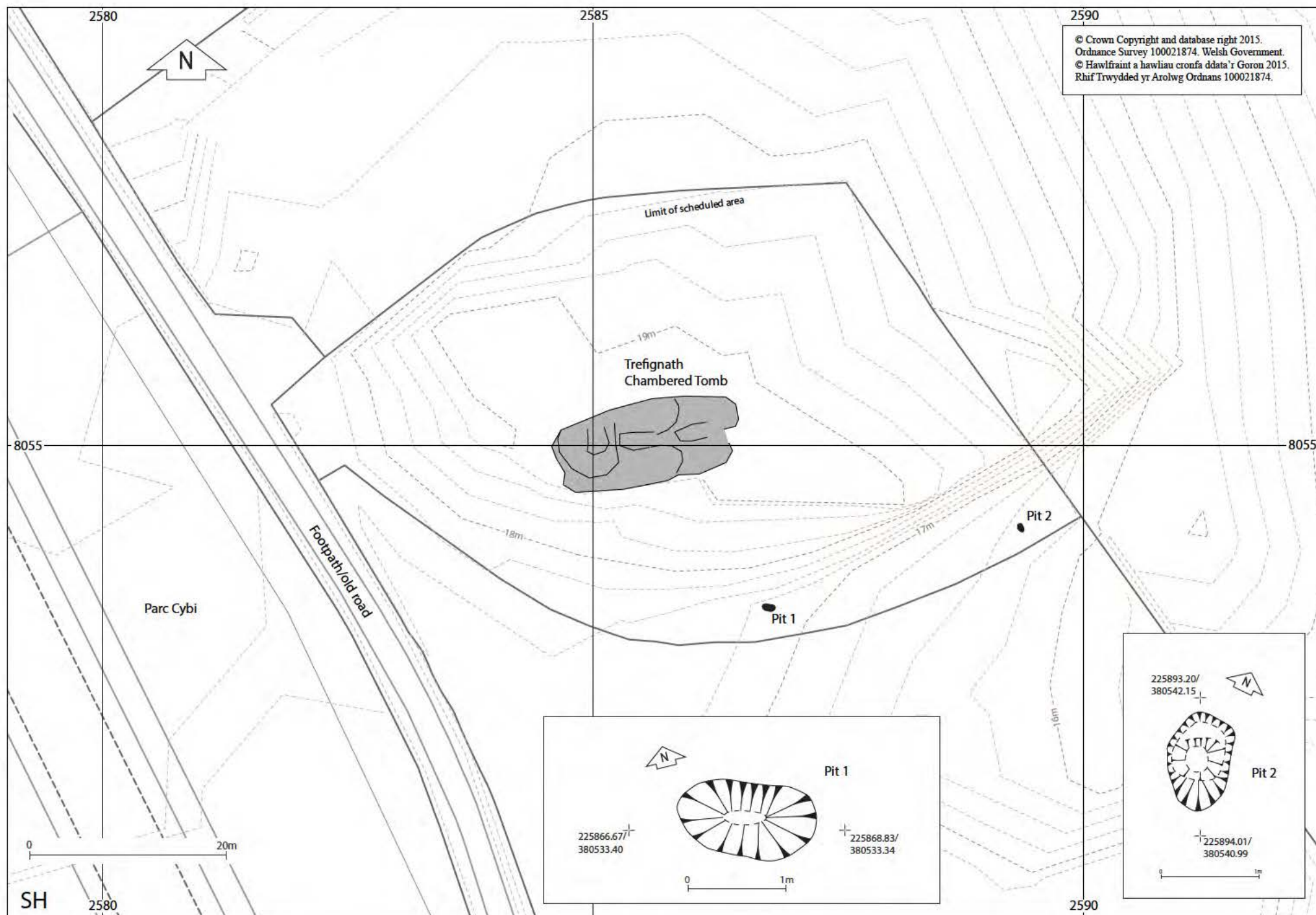


Figure 1: Location of pits with insets showing plans of the pits



Plate 1. Pit 1 before investigation showing location



Plate 2. Pit 2 before investigation showing location



Plate 3. Pit 2 before investigation showing dead dog and blanket *in situ*



Plate 4. Pit 1 fully re-excavated



Plate 5. Deposits visible
in the side of pit 1



Plate 6. Dead dog exposed in pit 2



Plate 7. Pit 2 fully excavated



Plate 8. Deposits visible in the side of pit 2



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
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