

LLANLLECHID STW - RISING MAIN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (G1351)

REPORT NO. 177

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

LLANLLECHID STW - RISING MAIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (G1351)

prepared for Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water

by A. Davidson

illustrated by H. Riley

September 12th 1995

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Report No. 177

LLANLLECHID STW - RISING MAIN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT.

1. INTRODUCTION

Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water are proposing to lay a new sewer pipeline in the fields north and west of the Llanllechid sewage treatment works. The proposed pipeline runs from Llwyn Bleddyn road at SH 61656782 to just south of Llanllechid church SH 62136861, a distance of c. 1Km, and will affect a corridor approximately 15m wide.

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (Contracts Section) was commissioned by Welsh Water to carry out an archaeological assessment of the proposed route in accordance with a brief prepared by Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service acting as the Archaeological Curator.

2. ASSESSMENT BRIEF

An initial report was requested from Gwynedd Archaeological Trust assessing the importance of all the archaeological remains, ranging from the Prehistoric through to the Industrial period.

The basic requirement was for a desk-top survey and field-search of the route of the pipeline, whilst paying particular attention to the longhouse and associated remains situated south of Talysarn farm. The importance and condition of known archaeological remains were to be assessed and new sites identified. Measures to mitigate the effects of the proposed extension on the archaeological resource were to be suggested.

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);
- c) to recommend ways in which damage to the cultural heritage could be minimised.

3. METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

3.1 Desk-top study

Consultation of ordnance survey maps, tithe maps, written records and reference works was undertaken at the Caernarfon office of the Gwynedd Archives Service, and at University of Wales, Bangor, where the Penrhyn estate records are kept. Archaeological site records which form part of the Sites and Monuments Record, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, were consulted, and aerial photographs were inspected at the offices of the Countryside Council for Wales.

3.2 Field Search

This was undertaken on the 1st September, 1995, by two members of Trust staff. Features identified were marked both on the current 1/10,000 OS map and on the 1914 OS 25" County Series.

3.3 Report

All available information was collated and transferred onto a single set of maps at a scale of 1:2500 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 site and specific recommendations for further evaluation or mitigatory measures, as appropriate, are given in the relevant sections of this report.

In some cases, further investigation may result in sites being moved into different categories. 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 worthy of scheduling or listing *i.e.* those which would meet the criteria 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, 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. By the end of the assessment there should be no sites remaining in this category.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

The route crosses a mixture of improved pasture in fairly well drained land, and semi-improved land which has been partly cleared of surface stone, and partly drained. These latter areas are those which contain visible remains of archaeology. Above and to the west are the higher Llanllechid hills, upon which there are numerous archaeological sites dating to the Prehistoric and later periods. Particularly important in this respect are the group of scheduled Prehistoric fields and settlements west of Pant Hwfa, which are interspersed with later Medieval settlements and all overlain with more recent field boundaries. East of Talysarn is the important Prehistoric settlement (also scheduled) at Coed Uchaf. The area through which the pipeline runs was thus largely cleared and settled by Roman times, and was continuously occupied from that date onwards. The more marginal areas which did not respond easily to cultivation and improvement, were only periodically settled, and this applies to the area between the two streams crossed by the pipeline, where the rectangular building (site 2) is situated.

The church at the north end of the route is a modern structure, built slightly to the south of an earlier church. The original church boundary is north of the present one, and thus further from the area to be disturbed. It is therefore unlikely that remains associated with the church will be revealed by the construction of the pipeline.

The present pattern of fields is of various ages, and some of the changes are revealed on the Penrhyn Estate maps of 1765 and 1855, and the Tithe map of 1840. None, however, show the building foundations (site 2) or any associated fields, implying that the structure was deserted by at least 1700 AD.

In the 18th century Talysarn was located at the buildings closest to the proposed pipeline, and the farm to the west also called Talysarn were known as "Buarth y Rhos" (the cowshed of the moor). The track east of the original Talysarn is certainly 18th century in date, and may well be Medieval, whereas the track south leading to the present Talysarn was built after 1768.

4.2 Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites

1. Area of early field remains SH620681 *Category E*

A strip of low-lying ground forming a narrow valley through which runs a small stream, almost dry when visited. Within the low-lying ground are a series of stone walls, mostly visible as single lines of boulders, some of which appear to be part of small enclosures. These enclosures are not shown on any of the maps consulted, and it is difficult to guess at a date or function. They may have been constructed during field clearance, but they appear too regular to be the result of random dumping. They may be remains of Prehistoric/Roman settlements, and certainly parallels are known for similar locations. The existing route of the pipeline does not disturb visible walling, but passes between two such areas.

2. Rectangular structure SH62016819 *Category B*

A rectangular structure measuring c. 16m by 8m overall, with walls 1m - 1.2m wide and up to 0.5m high. It is orientated NW-SE, and situated on low lying ground beside a stream. There are probable entrances in the centre of the NW wall and the north corner of the NE wall. This structure is most likely a dwelling house, of Medieval or immediately Post-medieval date (that is, occupied sometime between the 13th century and the 17th century). It is not marked on any of the available maps, and the field name on the 1768 map is *Rhosydd* (i.e. moorland).

North of the structure is an open area of ground containing a jumble of uncleared boulders, probably dumped during the glacial period, with occasional clearances and lengths of walling. The proposed pipeline will cut through one of these cleared areas to the NE of the rectangular structure: the south side of this area is terraced, and so is the south end of the east side, but the

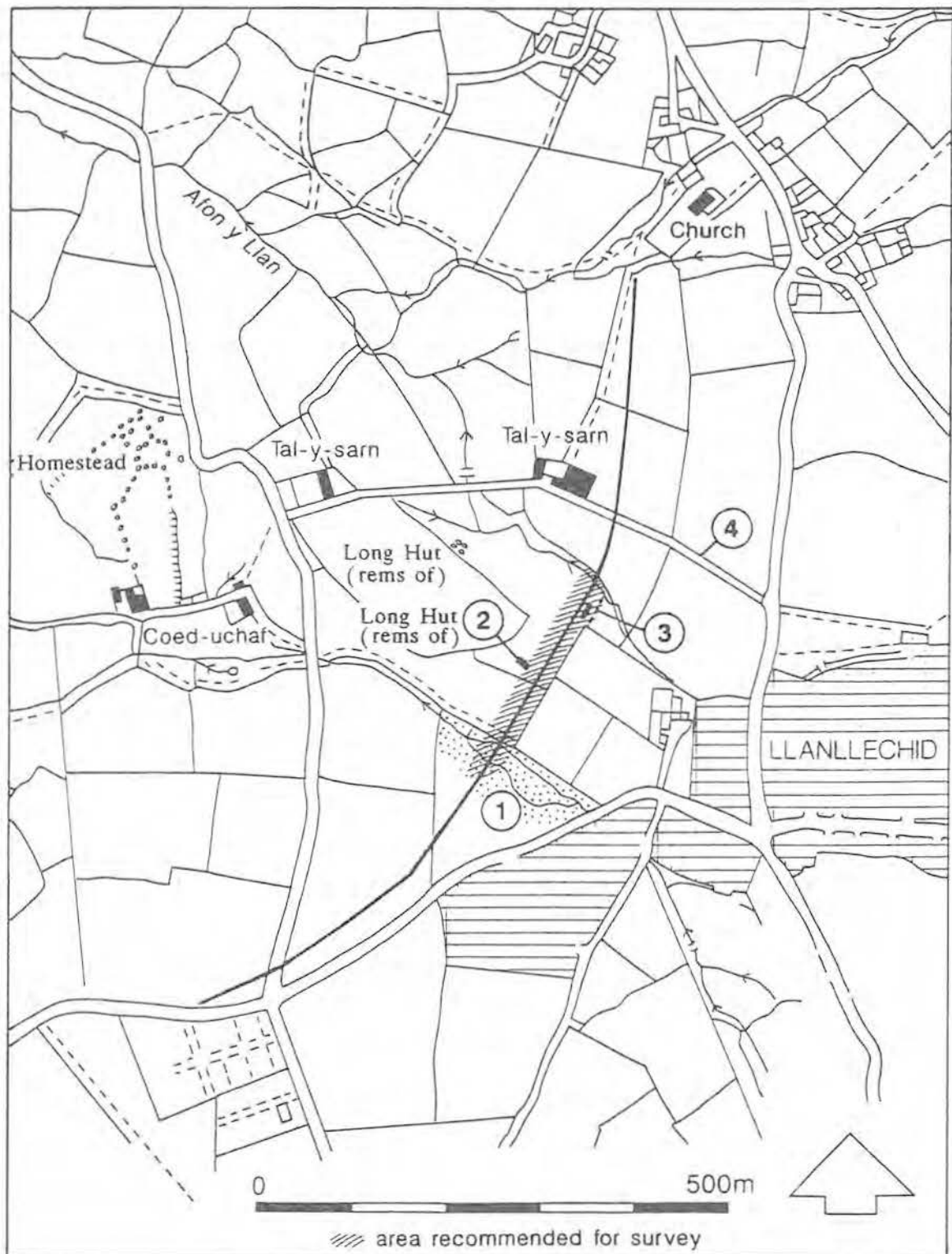


Fig. 1 Location map

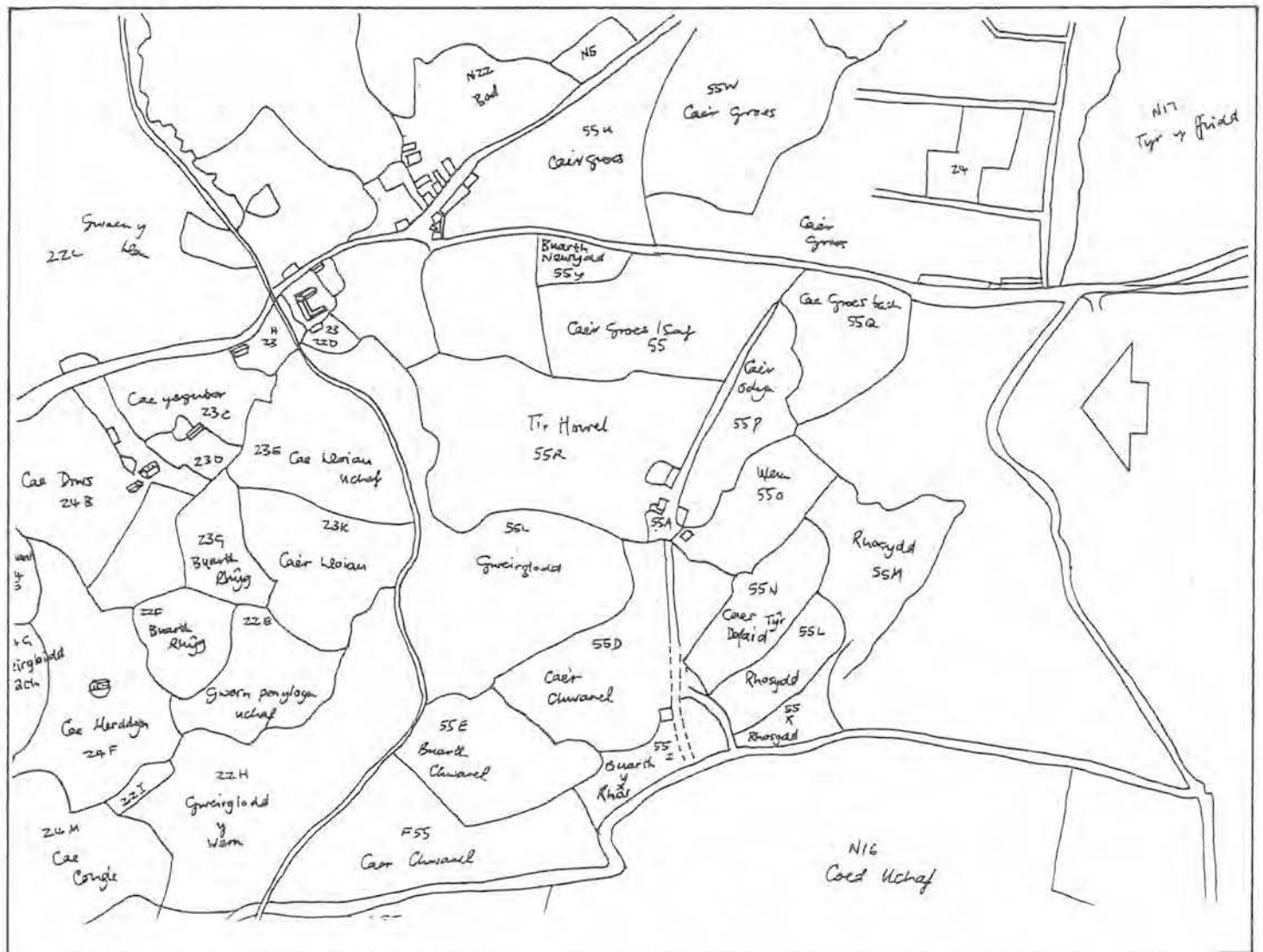


Fig. 2 Penrhyn Estate map (c.1768)

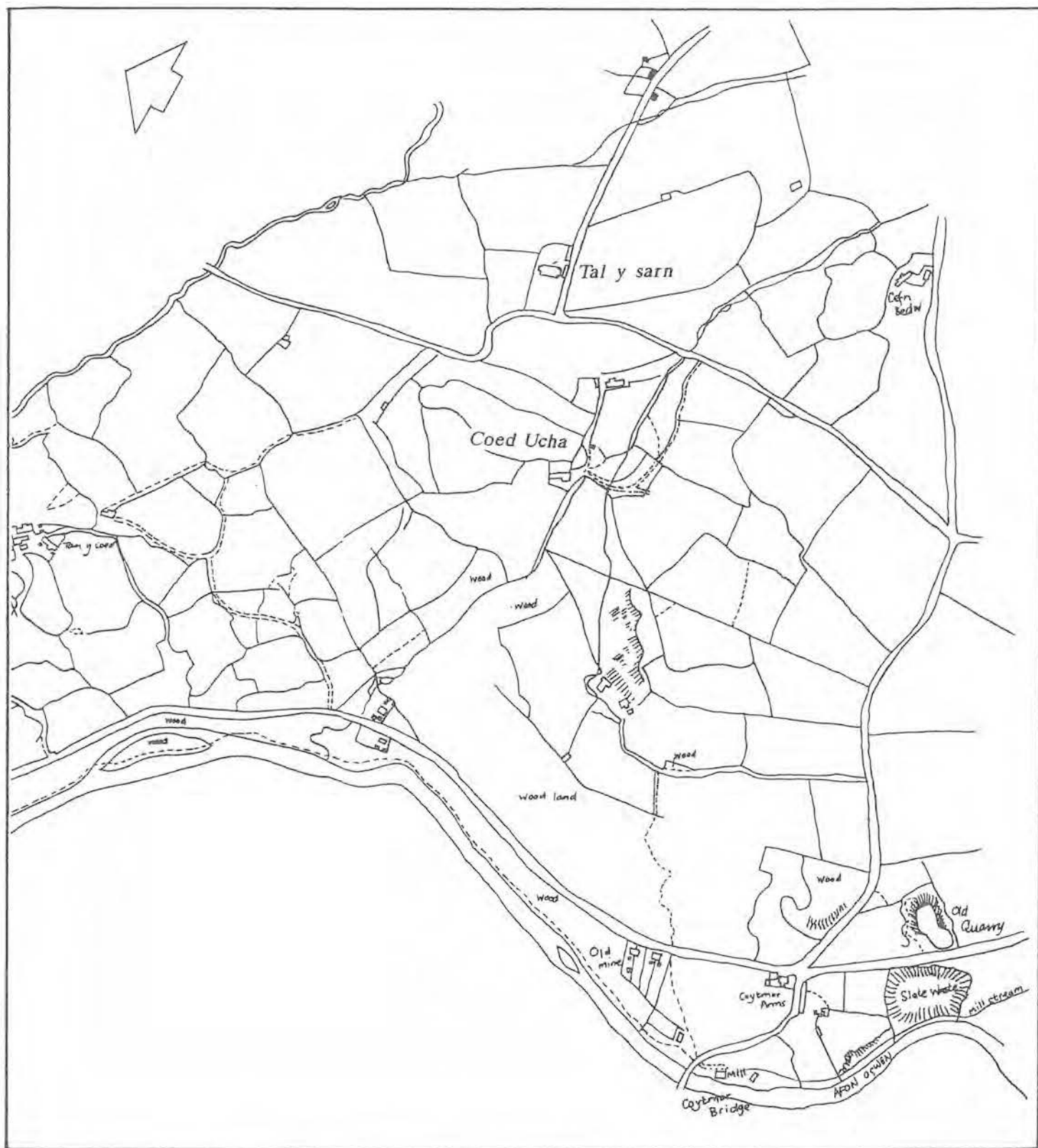


Fig. 3 Penrhyn Estate map (c.1855)



Fig. 4 Tithe map of Llanllechid Parish (1840's)

north end of the area is not clearly visible. Immediately west of this platform, and slightly below it, are other scattered stones and possible walls.

3. Raised path SH62096825 *Category C*

What appear as wall foundations, but are more likely to be the remains of a raised trackway, are visible south of a small stream and below and parallel to the remains of a ruined field boundary. The remains take the form of a raised stone platform 2.5 m wide, 0.2m high and 4-5m long crossing a boggy area.

4. Trackway, Talysarn *Category C*

A trackway running approximately east-west past the two settlements of Talysarn. The east part of this track (i.e. that section to be crossed by the pipeline) is shown on the 1765 map as the principal route to the farm of Talysarn. The track runs between two high stone walls, the upper parts of which are c. 19th century in date (as evidenced by the presence of blast holes in the stones) but the lower parts of which look earlier.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations will be divided into two sections: (i) recording work which is recommended, and which would need to be carried out before the commencement of construction work; and (ii) recommended work which would be carried out after construction work had started. It is assumed that site 2, the rectangular structure, will lie outside the corridor, and that the pipeline will run east of this building.

5.1 Recording work

It is recommended that a total station survey is carried out over that area which contains sites 1, 2 and 3, i.e. between the two streams and south of the southern stream. This survey may need to include some items outside the pipeline corridor, for example site 2, to enable the results of the survey to be put into context.

5.2 Watching brief

It is recommended that a watching brief is carried out over the entire length of the pipeline, and that particular attention is paid to the area around site 2. This will involve examining the pipeline trench following the topsoil strip, and investigating any visible features. In addition a section through the field walls either side the trackway 4 should be examined, and also a section through the trackway itself.

6.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

6.1 Manuscript sources

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust: SMR information
OS 1:2500 County Series, Sheet XII.2, 1914
OS 1" to 1 mile First series (David and Charles reprint)
Tithe schedule for parish of Llanllechid (microfilm copy)
UWB Penrhyn 2203 Map of Llanllechid 1768
UWB Penrhyn 2213 Map of lower part of pa. Llanllechid *ante* 1840
UWB Penrhyn 2944 Plans of Penrhyn Estate, 1768

6.2 Published sources

Davies W, 1810, *Agriculture of North Wales*
Hall E Hyde, 1952, *A Description of Caernarfonshire 1809-11*
Hughes H D, 1866, *Hynafiaethau Llandegai a Llanllechid*
Lewis S, 1833, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*
RCAHM, 1956, *Inventory of Ancient Monuments of Caernarfonshire Vol III*

