

GRAIANOG QUARRY  
WATCHING BRIEF (G1369)

REPORT NO. 186

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

## **WATCHING BRIEF AT GRAIANOG QUARRY (G1369)**

Prepared for Wimpey Minerals Ltd

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Wimpey Minerals Ltd proposed to extend the working area at Graianog quarry by the inclusion of a narrow strip on the west side of the existing quarry. Planning permission already existed for this area, but because of the nearby location of an early settlement (see 2.0 below), Wimpey Minerals Ltd contracted Gwynedd Archaeological Trust to maintain a watching brief during the initial stages of soil removal.

### **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

In August, 1994, in response to a planning application to extend the area of the existing quarry at Graianog, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (Contracts Section) were contracted by Alfred McAlpine Minerals Ltd carry out an archaeological assessment of the proposed quarry extension. This consisted of a desk-top study plus a site walk-over of the area of the proposed extension. That assessment identified a number of potential sites, one of which, a stone clearance cairn, falls into the area with which this project is concerned. The only other visible man-made feature within the extension area was the stone field boundary along the existing edge of the quarry. The clearance cairn consisted of large boulders contained within a roughly triangular kink within the field wall on the quarry side.

In addition, however, the proposed extension lies adjacent to the Graianog hut group, a small homestead consisting of three round huts, a long sub-rectangular building and a small sub-rectangular building. These are known to date from the late Iron Age and Roman period (200 BC to 200 AD), with some re-occupation in the early Medieval period (800 - 1100 AD).

### **3.0 FINDINGS**

Work commenced on the topsoil strip on the land adjacent to the existing quarry on 27 November, 1995. The topsoil was removed with a large, toothed, bucket, which left a disturbed surface. All the soils were extremely stony, and quite thin, overlying the fluvio-glacial silts, sands and gravels. Any potential alignment of stones below the surface was investigated. Amongst these was a collection of stones, lying on a gentle slope at the base of a steep slope. Within these stones were several medium sized ones, averaging 0.4m, which appeared to form a line. Subsequent investigation showed this to be a natural occurrence with no indication of any facing to suggest the presence of a wall. No other potential sites were revealed.

The topsoil stripping was monitored for three days, but the nature of the revealed ground surface suggested that further monitoring would be of no archaeological benefit. The area not monitored contained the field wall and the collection of large boulders, but previous quarrying had revealed that these were sitting directly on the silts, and it was felt no further archaeological information would have been gained by monitoring their removal.

### **4.0 CONCLUSIONS**

Though the general area is rich in archaeological sites, and the monitored area is close to a known settlement site, the general topography, *i.e.* a steep slope which then more gradually slopes away at its base, limited the potential for new discoveries. This proved to be the case, and no previously unrecorded man-made structures or artifacts were noted during the top-soil removal.

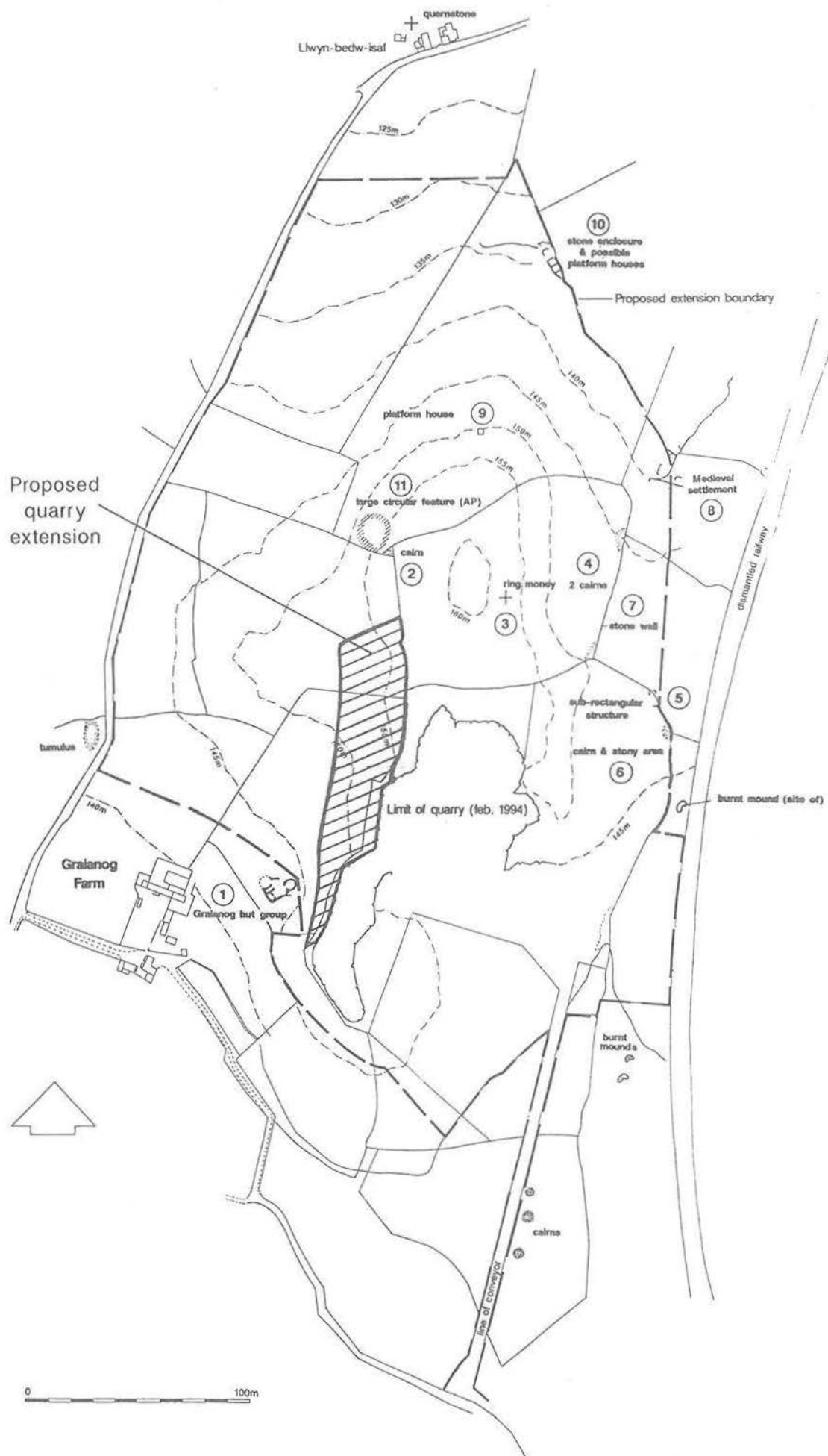


Fig. 1 Location plan of area.

