

BRYN COWLYD TO GORS WEN
LINK MAIN (G1401)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

REPORT NO. 203

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

prepared for Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water

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1. INTRODUCTION

Welsh Water are proposing to construct a pipeline between the proposed Bryn Cowlyd CWT at SH81306590 and the existing Gors-wen SRV at SH83216148. The proposed pipeline lies within the civil parishes of Llanrwst, Llanddoged and Maenan, and Eglwysbach in Dyffryn Conwy.

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (Contracts Section) was commissioned by Welsh Water to carry out this assessment with Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service acting as the Archaeological Curator.

2. ASSESSMENT BRIEF

An initial report was requested from Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, assessing the likely archaeological impact of the proposed pipeline and suggesting mitigatory measures.

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. Measures to mitigate the effects of the proposed pipeline 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); and
- c) to recommend ways in which damage to the cultural heritage can be avoided or minimised.

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 (including early Ordnance Survey maps, tithe maps and schedules, estate maps and papers and reference works - see bibliography) were consulted in the library and the archives of the University College of North Wales, Bangor, and the County archives at Caernarfon. Aerial photographs were inspected at the offices of the Countryside Council for Wales.

3.2 Field Search

This was undertaken on the 12, 14 and 15 March 1996 by two members of Trust staff. The whole of the proposed area was walked. Conditions were generally good for fieldwork, despite light snow falls, and light and visibility were good.

Sites identified were marked on copies of 1:2500 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 the potential sites identified.

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 sites 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 Annexe 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. By the end of the assessment there should be no sites remaining in this category.

3.5 Definition of Impact

The impact is defined as *none, slight, likely* or *considerable* as follows:

None:

There is no construction impact on this particular site.

Slight:

This has generally been used where the impact is marginal and would not by the nature of the site cause irreversible damage to the remainder of the feature, *e.g.* part of a trackway or field bank.

Likely:

In some instances the site in question would not fall within the area to be directly affected by the proposed pipeline, but would fall within the construction area and therefore may, subject to its nature, be removed or damaged.

Considerable:

The total removal of a feature or its partial removal which would effectively destroy the remainder of the site.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

Archive material consulted during the desk-top study provided dating evidence for known sites and maps of successive dates allowed an appreciation of the development of the landscape. The estate map coverage of the area was generally poor and late, but the Tithe map and Ordnance Survey coverage was good.

The administrative history of the area is complicated, a consequence of its having formed part of the territory of the Cistercian Abbey of Aberconwy during the Medieval period, and of it having been subject to a number of unusual circumstances when the Abbey was dissolved in 1538. The situation may be outlined in the following way.

The proposed pipeline begins within the present civil parish of Eglwysbach, in the County of Gwynedd, though it formed part of Denbighshire until 1974. The pipeline then crosses into the present-day civil parish of Maenan, in the present county of Gwynedd. Maenan was formerly a township of the parish of Eglwysbach, though, unlike that parish, formed part of Caernarfonshire; even though it lay east of the Afon Conwy. The borders of the parish of Maenan are known to be contiguous with lands in the area granted to the Abbey of Aberconwy in 1283-1284 by King Edward I. As the pipeline continues to the south-east it re-enters the old county of Denbighshire and the parish of Llanrwst (rural).

4.2 The Archaeological Background

4.2.1 Prehistoric (up to 48AD)

There are few known remains belonging to this period, the earliest are mainly finds such as the Neolithic (c. 4,000 - 2,500 BC) polished stone axe of Graig lwyd stone found at Farm yard farm. There are a number of Bronze Age burial cairns within the area, including that at Cae Newydd excavated in 1913, and another at Henblas, 10000m to the west of the corridor. Other finds dating from the period and which may be of significance are the concentration of spindle whorls found at Cae Newydd, Farm Yard Farm (Davies 1929).

4.2.2 Roman (48AD - 400AD)

Little appears to survive from the period in the immediate area, however the present road running along the west side of the Conwy valley may follow the Roman road from the Roman fort at Caerhun to the fort at Bryn y Gefeliau between Bettws y Coed and Capel Curig.

4.2.3 Medieval

The area originally lay within Medieval Cantref of Rhos, in the commote of Uwch Dulas and the lands were then held by the townships of Cefn-y-coed, Maenan, Mathebrwd, Garthgyfannedd. With the creation of the County of Caernarvon in 1284, the alienation of the land of Maenan to the Cistercian Order caused the border of Rhos to change and the township of Maenan, although east of the Afon Conwy, became part of the Commote of Arllechwedd Isaf.

Archaeologically this period is represented by the small fortress at Garreg Olau (SH79306660), which is located just to the west of the study area, and thought to represent a native adaptation of the "motte and bailey" plan on an unusual site. Situated on a narrow ridge, the site comprises a drystone-built "D" shaped enclosure, which contains a small ditch, thought to be the foundations for a round wooden tower. The northern approach to the site is protected by a ditch.

Of slightly later date is the site of the Cistercian Abbey church at Maenan and of parts of the buildings associated with it, dating from the late 13th century. The earliest documentary history of the area effectively starts in 1198, with the granting of the neighbouring lands of Ardda and Dar-lâs (in the parish of Dolgarrog) to the recently founded Abbey of Aberconwy by Llywelyn Fawr; these lands were to form the nucleus of an upland grange, centred on Tai isaf Ardda, on the south-eastern slopes of Penardda, west of Dolgarrog (Gresham 1939). In 1284 King Edward I transferred the Abbey of Aberconwy from its site in Conwy, making way for a new planted borough and castle, to a new site at Maenan. The core of lands belonging to the Abbey at Maenan included those of the grange, and other lands granted after 1283 in Maenan, the bounds of which appear to be contiguous with the parish of Maenan (Butler 1981).

4.2.4 Post-Medieval (1538-c. 1996)

Following the dissolution of the Abbey in 1538 much of the lands fell to speculators from outside the area. The Abbey demesne, however, a compact holding of 185 acres, survived as an estate, and passed through the Puleston family to the Cloughs of Denbigh, the Wynns of Melai and then to the Wynns of Bodvean and Glynllifon (ennobled as Newborough of Glynllifon in the late eighteenth century).

Evidence both from before and following the dissolution indicates that the process of dividing up the lands into various holdings was well advanced by the sixteenth century, and that for some time prior to the dissolution the monastic estates were no longer being farmed directly by the monastic community. Indeed the dissolution appears to have caused little alteration to the way in which the estate of Maenan was farmed. The resulting pattern of medium-sized estates and tenanted farms generally appears to have survived into the modern period, though since the 19th century many farms have become the property of owner-occupiers.

Most of the remainder of what is now the civil parish of Maenan passed through various owners until in 1683 it became part of the Wynnstay estate, and remained in their hands well into the 19th century. The Wynn family of Gwydir were established to the south, in the northern part of Llanrwst by the 15th century; their ancestral lands, which covered half the township Mathebrwd and were centred on the seat of Henblas, were granted in exchange to the family by the Earl of Lincoln, Henry Lacy. The estate at Henblas remained in the Gwydir family till the end of the 18th century.

The houses of the gentry to some extent survive as reminders of their period of power and influence; little remains of the old Newborough seat at the Abbey, substantially rebuilt in 1848-52, but Maenan hall survives in its seventeenth century form. A farmstead remains at Henblas, ancestral home of the Gwydir family, in outward appearance however, the present building appears to date from the 18th century. A number of late 17th and early 18th century farmsteads exist in the area, including Cefn-y-coed-isaf, Pant-yr-ych-mawr, Nant and Maes-y-groes-uchaf.

4.2.5 Conclusions

Much of the area of the proposed pipeline lies along a high ridge and the land tends to comprise a mixture of improved upland pasture and well ploughed enclosures. Although the general area contains a cross section of remains from most periods, comparatively little appears to survive within the development corridor itself. The reasons for this is probably a combination of the landscape's upland nature, and of a high level of agricultural activity since the 19th century; it is highly likely that the area of the development corridor has never supported a large population, and that existing settlements overlaid and largely obscure their precursors.

4.3 Existing statutory protection

There are a number of listed buildings in the area, the nearest being the late 17th century farmhouse of Pant-yr-ych-mawr (grade II), however neither this building or any other are to be affected by the scheme as proposed. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the corridor of development.

4.4 Archaeology of the Proposed Development Area.

4.4.1 Introduction

The development corridor proposed for the pipeline affects the area of hill land to the eastern side of Dyffryn Conwy.

The Conwy valley constitutes a fault between the Silurian system to the east and the Ordovician to the west. The proposed pipeline would be constructed on rocks of the Denbigh Grit group in the Wenlock series overlain by boulder clay in places.

4.4.2 Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites

1. Quarry scoops SH79656789C

Category D Impact: Slight

An area of rough land at the west end of the field to the north of Pant-yr-ych-mawr; the area is typified by surface outcropping which has been quarried. At least two quarry scoops were noted; probably the result of local domestic or agricultural use.

2. Area of possible features SH80056731

Category E Impact: Considerable

An area of possible archaeological features, including two low linear banks and two very low mounds arranged along a ridge; the latter may be natural features. However, the name of the field, "Ffridd Cefn Bedd Uchaf" or upper grave ridge sheep walk is of interest and indicates the possibility of early burials in the area.

3. Rectangular features SH81536544

Category D Impact: None

The remains of two rectangular features, part of a single structure, comprising low grassed over banks situated within a kink in the associated field boundary. The features, which have been heavily eroded by cattle, may be the remains of animal pens.

4. Low mound SH81756521

Category E Impact: Considerable

A low mound with possible, though very slight, indications of an accompanying ditch. The feature is situated within the corner of a large field, now fenced off and left in an unimproved state. There are a number of drains and an improved trackway in the area and it is possible that the feature is connected with recent land improvements that have taken place.

5. Spindle whorls and stone axe - find spots SH80--62--A

Category D Impact: Unknown

A number of spindle whorls (PRN 2466) have been found in the field of Ffridd Cerrig Cae Newydd; the exact positions at which the finds were located is not known.

A stone axe (PRN 2467), probably of Graig Lwyd material was found in 1914 in the same field, 4 yds from the cairn (site 6), however, the exact spot is no longer known.

6. Cairn, (site of) - Ffridd Cerrig Cae Newydd SH82956332

Category C Impact: Likely

A tumulus (PRN 2465) excavated at this point in 1913 was found to contain a small central cairn covering an urn cremation; two secondary cremations were found in inverted urns, one being in a rough cist of stones. No trace of the tumulus remains.

7. Possible cairn SH82946321

Category E Impact: None

In an enclosure immediately to the west of the cairn excavated in 1913 is a slightly elevated spur with the possible remains of a cairn, indicated by a slight grassed over mound. The site may be a natural feature.

8. Area of low banks SH83406200C

Category D Impact: Slight

An upland enclosure containing a number low linear banks arranged on a north - south alignment. The banks appear to divide the larger enclosure into smaller strip fields; however, there is little indication that the fields were ever used for arable farming and it is likely that these features may be the result of recent drainage improvements. The farmer mentioned the existence of field drains in the area.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Much of the scheme is along a high ridge of steep slopes, rock outcrops and cleared upland pasture, enclosed during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, the remainder of the lower land crossed by the scheme has been well ploughed; the area as a whole contains few upstanding archaeological remains.

The assessment located a small number of minor or damaged sites and additional possible sites of archaeological potential which will be affected by the proposed pipeline. It is considered that no further recording prior to the scheme is necessary for the sites allocated to category D. The sites allocated to category E can be adequately covered by the watching brief proposed below.

It is recommended that a watching brief is carried out along the entire length of the pipeline, and that particular attention is paid to the area around sites 2, 4 and 6. This will involve examining the pipeline trench following the topsoil strip, and investigating any visible features.

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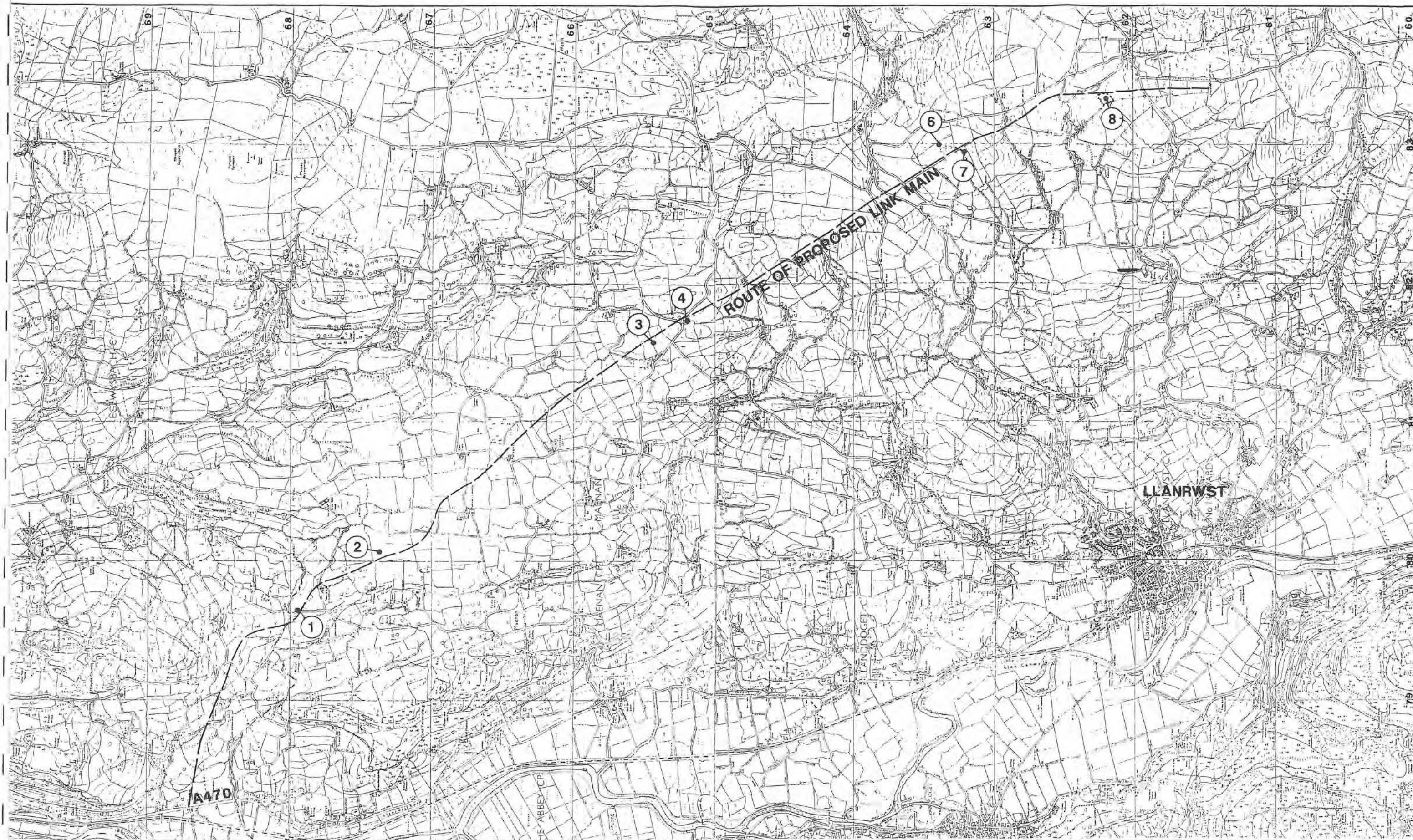
Aerial photograph held by the Countryside Council for Wales.
Gwynedd Archives Service Caernarfon, including Glynllifon papers
Tithe schedules held at County Archives, Caernarfon
Listed buildings information - Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments

6.2 Maps

Ordnance survey
1" 1839 (David and Charles reprint)
25" (1900 and 1913)

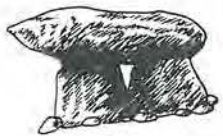
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Project name BRYN COWLYD CWT TO GORS-WEN SRV LINK MAIN Archaeological Assessment	Description LOCATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES
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Project no. G1401	Date 27/3/96
Scale 1:25000	Key — — — PIPELINE
Client DWR CYMRU/WELSH WATER	

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