

ABERFFRAW WATER MAINS REFURBISHMENT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING AND WATCHING BRIEF (G1421)

Report No. 239

**Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust**

ABERFFRAW WATER MAINS REFURBISHMENT

Archaeological Recording & Watching Brief (G1421)

prepared for Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water carried out the refurbishment of an existing water main at Aberffraw, Ynys Môn, for a three week period commencing on November 18th 1996. The works involved accessing the existing cast iron pipeline at various intervals between 10m and 100m . The works affected the central part of the village only, with substantial trenches being located on Llywelyn, Chapel and Church Streets and Bodorgan Square (see fig 1).

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (Contracts Section) tendered successfully to carry out a watching brief during the scheme.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The site was visited at intervals during the course of the work, specifically between November 18th and December 11, 1996. Visits were timed to coincide with the completed excavation of particular access trenches, but before the installation of new sections of pipe, wherever possible.

Ten of the twelve trenches investigated were in excess of 2.5m x 1m and averaged 1.4m deep. The dimensions of each trench were recorded and where appropriate were cleaned and examined in some detail. Each was both wide enough and deep enough to provide an appreciable stratigraphic sequence through the exposed deposits. Numerous lesser excavations, though inspected, were deemed not to warrant any further examination.

3.0 RESULTS

Some distance north of the archaeologically sensitive areas, trenches 1 & 2 provided an opportunity to assess the character of the underlying local geology - *predominantly a moderately stony red-brown boulder clay (great northern drift) which overlies green schists of the Mona complex, occasionally visible in some of the trenches. In places wind blown sand can be seen to overlie the boulder clay* - and the nature of the backfill within the cuts for existing pipe trenches.

Localised variations in the natural clay notwithstanding, all the trenches with the exception of trench 6 were found to be archaeologically sterile. The depth of deposits comprising the make up of the present road and the components within the visible service trenches were noted at each trench location, however.

Trench 6, measuring some 2.7m x 1.1m and 1.2m deep was located on the east side of Bodorgan Square at the junction of Llywelyn Street, orientated north-south. The kerb of the present pavement formed the eastern boundary of the trench in which were exposed the existing water pipe and an assortment of other modern service trenches. To the west and south the trench exposed evidence of earlier activity directly overlying and cutting through the natural clay. The north facing section revealed a layer of cobble stones (1) set into natural clay overlaid by a thin slab of local stone and bounded by a 'U' profile cut (2) to the west. The (up to fist size) cobbles extended for some 0.6m east-west and the cut was some 0.6m wide x 0.5m deep (projected) filled by a dark red/brown silty clay (3).

The west facing section revealed feature (3) to have extended at least 2.0m northwards but was in turn cut by a later feature (4), filled with sand (5), which appears to have a slanting ('V'?) profile in the south facing section. The interface between fill (4) and cut (5) was compacted and contained an amount of charcoal. In both sections a brown mottled sandy clay (6), incorporating rounded beach cobbles similar to (1), was seen to seal all the above features. Above (6) were the components of the modern road surface.

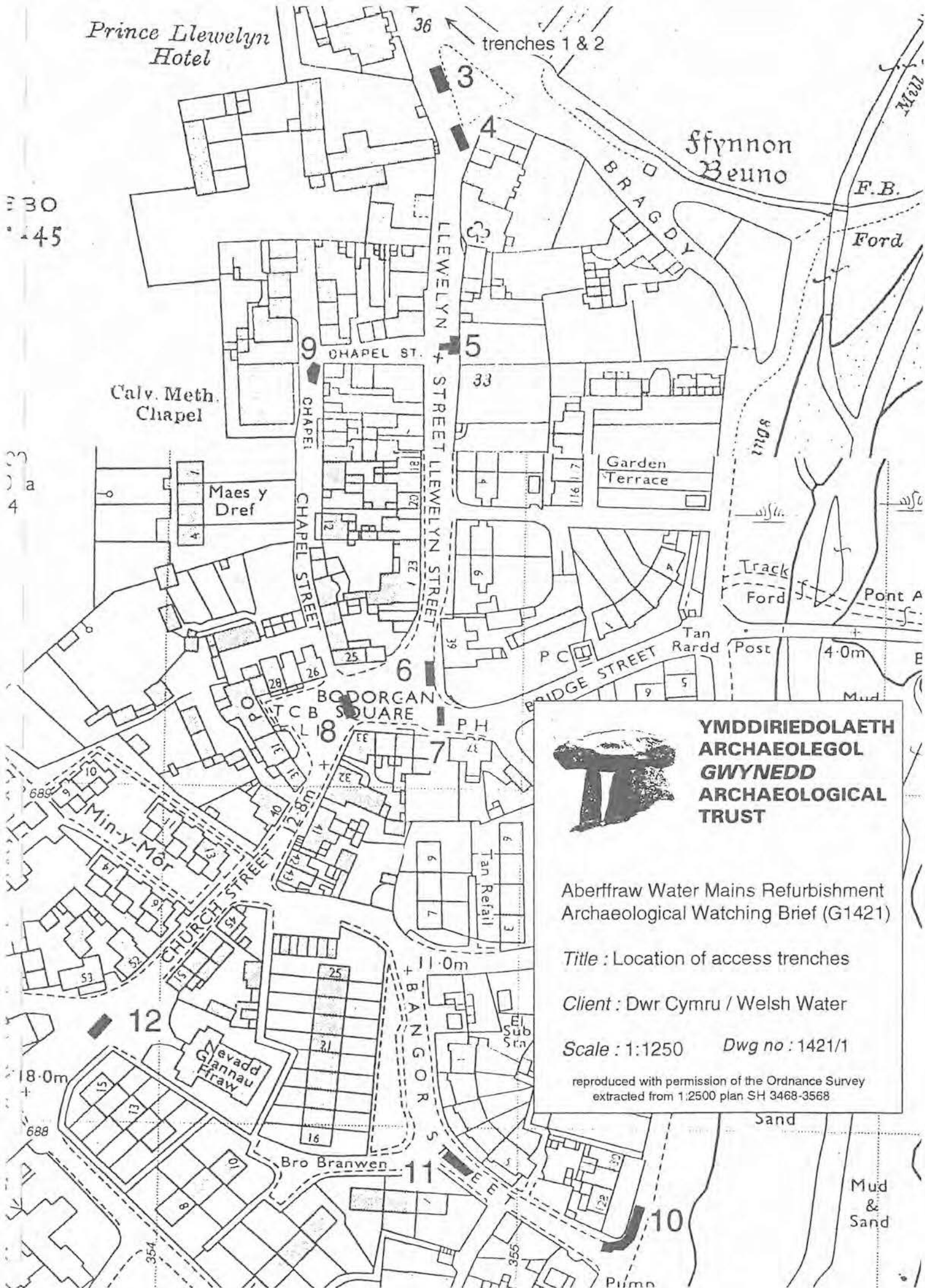
4.0 INTERPRETATION

The cobbled surface (1) is probably the remains of a more widespread feature, perhaps a road or yard. Feature (2) may well be cut from the same level as (1) although the fill

(3) does butt against it. Feature (2), a linear feature and once also more extensive, is perhaps a shallow ditch or drain bounding a contemporary cobbled road orientated north-south, and it is tempting to see the slab overlying the cobbles as part of a displaced drain capping. The extent and character of feature (4) could not be ascertained and although stratigraphically later than (2) was likewise directly sealed by layer (6) which incorporates what may be displaced cobble stones. Although there was no artefactual evidence to date these features both the cobbled surface and the adjacent ditch/drain seem characteristically early and may well date from the medieval period or earlier.

5.0 SUMMARY

Of all the trenches investigated only trench 6 provided any discernible evidence of human activity pre-dating the presence of modern service trenches. This may in part be due to the physical location of the access trenches which revealed to some extent the interface of modern disturbance with the natural ground surface. However, it may also be a further indication, suggested by archive evidence (see GAT Report 167 *Llys and Maerdref* N Johnstone 1995) that the nucleus of the original village in medieval or earlier times lay further to the south and west of the present village.



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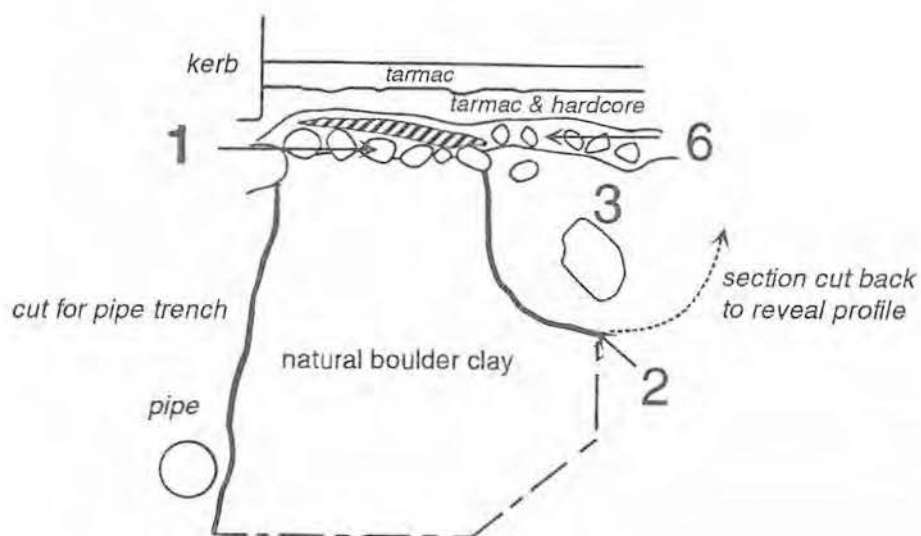
Title : Location of access trenches

Client : Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water

Scale : 1:1250 Dwg no : 1421/1

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Trench 6 : north facing section



Trench 6 : east facing section

