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# A470 DOLWYDDELAN TO PONT-YR-AFANC IMPROVEMENT
(G1722)

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
## PONT-AR-LLEDR

REPORT No 501

INTERIM REPORT

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# INTERIM REPORT ON A WATCHING BRIEF AT PONT-AR-LLEDR, 6 NOVEMBER 2003. G1722

## Introduction

Pont-ar-Lledr is a grade II listed bridge adjacent to the A470 between Dolwyddelan and Pont yr Afanc. The current road improvements necessitated the removal of a part of the eastern wing wall of the bridge. Gwynedd Archaeological Trust was asked to monitor works here as part of a wider program of archaeological recording during the road improvements.

## Aims and Methods

The outer face (i.e. facing away from the road) of the wing wall had not been recorded during the pre-works archaeological recording because of dense vegetation. The wall was therefore photographed and the photographs annotated where necessary (Plates 1 and 2). A watching brief was kept during the dismantling of the wall in order to record any constructional details that were uncovered. The wall was dismantled using a JCB to loosen the masonry and then by hand.

## Description

There were clearly two phases of masonry here (Fig. 1). The end of the bridge wing wall had partially collapsed but could be seen to differ in several respects from the adjacent roadside wall although both phases were superficially of a similar construction. The wing wall was found to be of rough local slate slabs and retained traces of lime mortar. The outer face was standing between 1.4 and 1.6m from the current ground level. The basal courses were of local field stone (not slate). The wall was capped with flat slate coping stones with dimensions of 1.4m x 0.5m x 0.2m. Part of the upper part of the wall had been rebuilt using cement mortar presumably after being damaged by traffic. Two openings in the lower part of the outer face (indicated on Plate 1) acted as drains from the road. The drain on the right hand side was carefully constructed with a slate base and cap. The drain on the left was roughly built and could possibly be the result of a stone falling out of the wall facing. It was however still channelling water. It was noted that much of the eastern wing wall and bridge parapet was in a poor condition. The roadside wall contained some reused local slate but also contained field stone and quarried Anglesey black limestone. This was roughly bound using a coarse cement mortar. Flat coping was also used but the stones were irregular and smaller. This phase of the wall probably dates from the last time the road was upgraded (?1970s). The flat coping stones and use of some slate suggests that this was a previous attempt to reconstruct the end of the wing wall.

## Actions

A 3.2m length of the wing wall was dismantled. The two flat coping stones and the rest of slate from the wall was stored by the side of the road on the eastern side of the bridge. The stone from the roadside wall was also stored here but was kept separate.

## Recommendations

The wing wall will be rebuilt on a different alignment in order to tie in with the new retaining wall. It is recommended that as much of the original stone is used as possible. It was noted that some of the slate had degraded and was very friable and may have to be replaced. It is suggested that local slate could be recovered from Prince Llewellyn quarry tips as a replacement. This should consist of rough undressed slabs. It is recommended that the original masonry style should be emulated and that lime mortar should be used. A straight joint should be incorporated in the masonry between the reconstructed wing wall and reconstructed roadside wall in order to indicate the two different phases of masonry.

The roadside wall will also be rebuilt on a different alignment and will form part of the new retaining wall. This will have a core of reinforced concrete. It is recommended that the stone retained from the original wall should be reused. The choice of mortar is less important here but lime would be more aesthetically pleasing and would emphasise the difference between the new retaining wall to the north-east and the partly reconstructed masonry. The retention and reuse of the flat coping stones is again recommended.

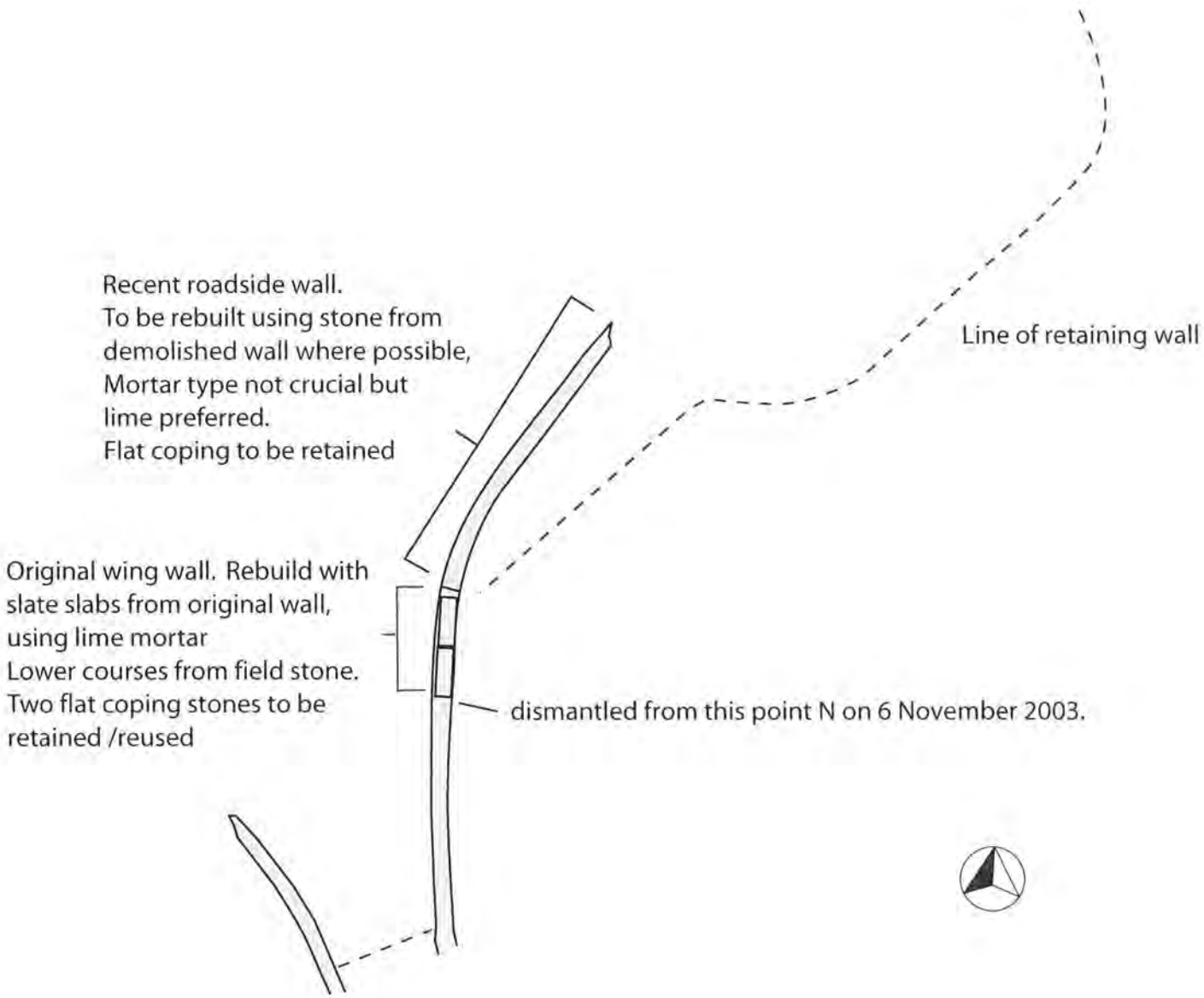


Fig. 1 Pont-ar-Lledr, sketch plan at 1:200 showing mitigatory recommendations

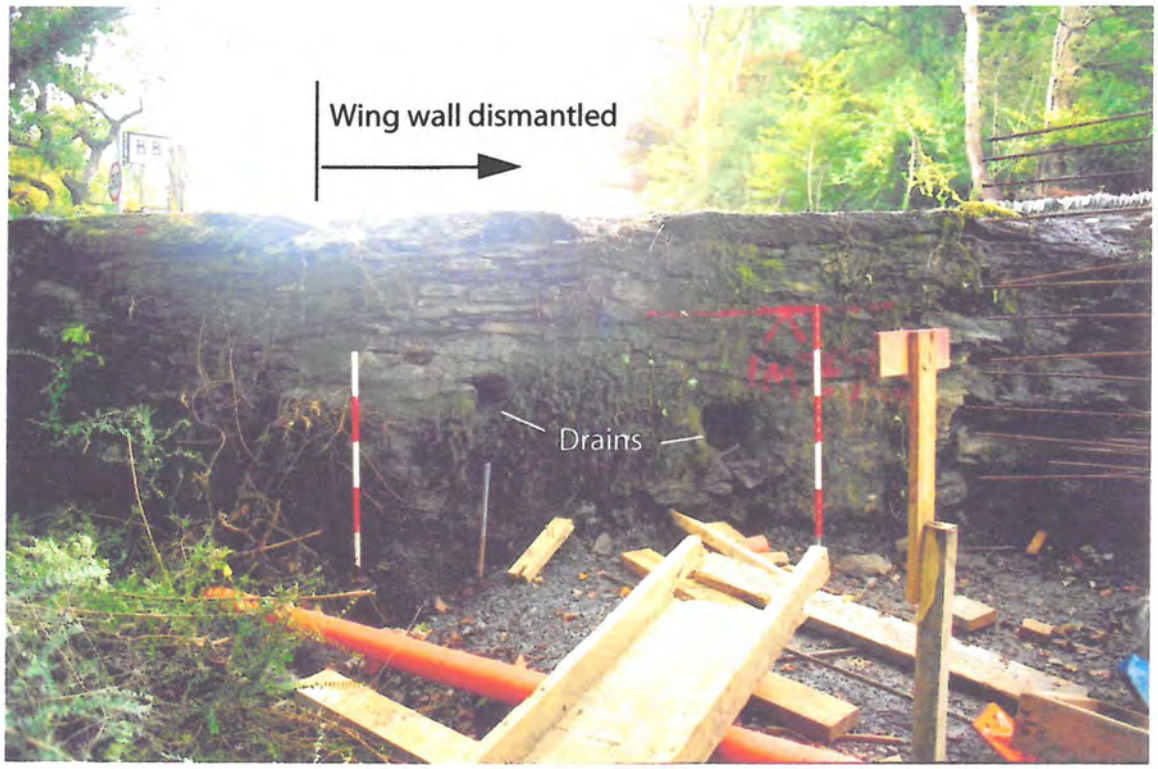


Plate 1 Pont-ar-Lledr wing wall, eastern face

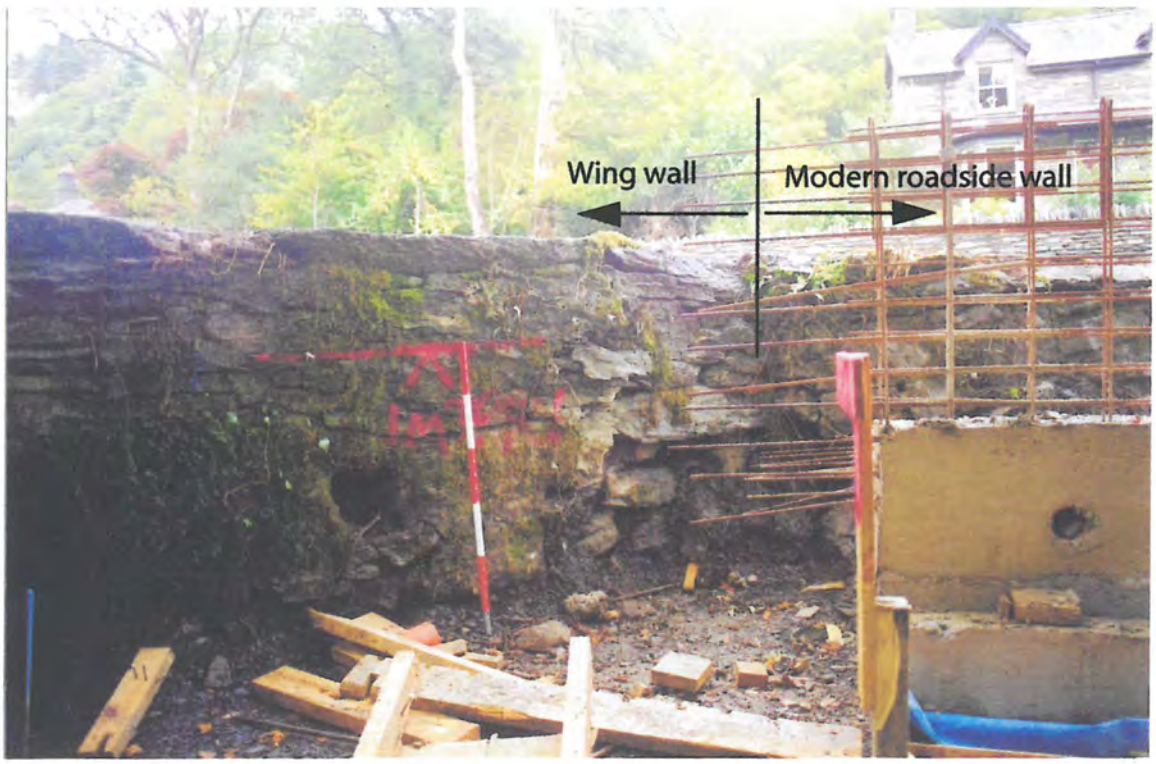


Plate 2 Pont-ar-Lledr wing wall, eastern face and adjacent roadside wall