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**PROPOSED NEW VISITOR CENTRE, COED Y BRENIN**  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (G1797)**

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GAT Report No. 503



Prepared for Symonds Group Ltd

October 2003

By  
G.H. Smith



**Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd**  
**Gwynedd Archaeological Trust**

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# **PROPOSED NEW VISITOR CENTRE, COED Y BRENIN**

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (G1797)**

**Prepared for Symonds Group Ltd 23/10/03**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Forestry Commission is proposing to build a new cyclists' visitor centre to replace the present facilities at the Maesgwm Centre. The original centre lies on the west side of the A470 road in the valley of the Afon Eden, between Ganllwyd and Trawsfynydd. The proposed new centre will be close by but on the east side of the road.

The centre will comprise a complex of buildings, a car park and an access road. The area covered in total will be approximately 4.6ha (11.4acres).

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (Contracts Section) has been contracted by Symonds Group Ltd to carry out an archaeological assessment of the area of the proposed development.

### **2. SPECIFICATION AND PROJECT DESIGN**

There is no brief for this project but the work has been carried out in consultation with the Snowdonia National Park Authority archaeologist, Peter Crew. The work will form part of a general environmental assessment and will be carried out and presented in a way appropriate to an Environmental Statement with regard to Cultural Heritage.

The assessment was carried out according to the project design produced by GAT Contracts (Appendix 1). This proposed a desk-top study followed by a field walkover and an initial report, presented here. This initial report might recommend further more detailed field evaluation because sub-soil archaeology cannot always be assessed from documentary and visible surface evidence alone.

The assessment was designed to assess the impact of the proposals on the archaeological and heritage features within the development area shown on Symonds Figure 2, 14.07.03, plotted onto a general map of the area (Fig. 1). The area immediately adjoining was also included in case it might be affected if the development area should differ from that shown on the plan provided. The importance and condition of known archaeological remains were to be assessed and any other areas of archaeological interest were to be identified. Measures to mitigate the effects of the development on any road scheme on the archaeological features were to be recommended.

Where further evaluation is necessary, and until it has been carried out, it is not possible to make recommendations for mitigation.

The work has been carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments*.

### **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 and reference works - see bibliography) were also consulted at the County archives at Dolgellau.

### 3.2 Field Search

The field search was undertaken on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> October 2003. The whole area of the development was walked, as was practical considering the forestry and undergrowth, which was overgrown and the terrain difficult in places. Visibility of possible features was not good, because of the obscuring vegetation, tree-felling remnants and the broken and rocky terrain. Known features close to the development were also visited to provide reference for similar features which might occur within the development area. The nearby features comprise walls, sheepfolds and two medieval iron-working sites at Llwyn Du PRN 5495 and Cae Cyrach PRN 5496 (Fig. 1).

Features identified were marked on 1:5000 enlargements of the 1:10 000 Ordnance Survey maps. Features were also described by written notes and photographs were taken of significant features.

### 3.3 Report

All available information was collated, and transferred onto an overlay of the OS 1:2,500 map. 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, for ease of reference; 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 Annex 3 to *Welsh Office Circular 60/96*.

### 3.4 Categories

The categories listed below follow the guidelines given in the Volume 11 of the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB)* 1993 revised August 1994, Section 3, Part 2, Paragraph 3.4. The allocation of a site to a category defines the importance of the archaeological resource of that site.

#### ***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 that are scheduled or listed have legal protection.

#### ***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 judged by Cadw to 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 road construction.

#### ***Category D - Minor and damaged sites***

Sites that are of minor importance or so badly damaged that too little remains to justify their inclusion in a higher category. For Category D sites, basic recording, either in advance of, or during road construction 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 and evaluation there should be no sites remaining in this category.

### **3.5 Definition of Impact**

The area of direct impact was defined by the drawing of the proposed improvements provided by Symonds Fig. 2 14<sup>th</sup> July 2003 (no drawing number) (Appendix 2).

The impact has been defined as none, slight, likely or considerable as follows:

***None:*** There is no improvement or construction impact on this particular site. (Sites identified as of particular importance are, where possible, avoided by the improvement proposals. Such sites have been identified in the tables).

***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. a boundary or a track at right angles to the A470.

***Likely:*** In some instances the site in question would not fall within the widened section of road 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.

### **3.6 Definition of Mitigatory Recommendations**

For the purposes of this report the mitigation and rescue archaeology proposals as suggested by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust have been summarised as:

***None:*** No impact, so no requirement for mitigation measures.

***Detailed recording:*** Detailed recording requires a photographic record, surveying and the production of a measured drawing prior to the commencement of the works on site.

Archaeological excavation works may also be required, depending upon the particular feature and the extent and effect of the impact. Some of the sites would require dismantling by hand, to provide a detailed record of the method of construction and in the case of a listed structure, the salvage of materials for re-use and re-building.

***Basic recording:*** Recording by photograph and description requires a photographic record and written description prior to the commencement of works on site. A measured survey may be required in certain cases.

***Watching brief:*** Observation of particular identified features or areas during works in their vicinity. This may be supplemented by detailed or basic recording of exposed layers, structures or sections.

***Avoidance:*** Features which may be affected directly by the scheme, or by the construction of the scheme, should be avoided.

***Reinstatement and/or relocation:*** The feature should be reinstated with archaeological advice and supervision.



## **4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The area is steep and poor land that has not consequently been the scene of much economic or settlement activity. It has however been affected by its proximity to an important north-south route and by its proximity to mineral resources. The historical sources therefore relate to these other activities rather than to the area itself. The main evidence for Cae Cyrach itself is that of the visible remains together with the map evidence. The area of the farm was included in the first edition of the Ordnance Survey 6 and 25 inch maps and had also been surveyed, less accurately for the map accompanying the 1841 Tithe Apportionment. The Apportionment itself recorded the field names, which can provide useful pointers to earlier features or phases of use (Appendix 3). Earlier estate records might also exist in Denbigh Archives, Ruthin, but could not be consulted within the scope of the assessment.

Lists supplied by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments provide information about listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments. There are no scheduled ancient monuments or listed buildings within the areas of the scheme but there are two scheduled ancient monuments, a Romano-British period settlement at Bwlch y Ffordd (PRN 5515, SAM Me046) within 1km to the north of the area of the scheme and another, the gold mine of Cwm Heisian West (PRN 12184, SAM Me204) 1.6km to the east and one listed building, the bridge of Pont Dol-gefeiliau (listed Grade II), just to the west.

### **4.2 Topographic description and assessment**

The proposed development area adjoins the A470 trunk road, which runs along the base of the valley of the Afon Eden. The valley is quite steep sided here and all the land is medium to steep rising quickly from about 100m OD on the base of the valley to about 250m OD on the ridge 0.8km to the east. The ground rock consists of Cambrian shales, sandstone and quartzite but not far to the east are intrusions of basalt and dolerite associated with mineral deposits including zinc, lead, copper and gold.

The rock is ill drained producing poor, acidic soils and on the more level areas of the ridges are deposits of blanket peat. The land of the area as a whole is classified as Non-agricultural (MAFF 1977) although there are occasional farms, dependent on hill pasture. In terms of archaeological potential for early settlement or agriculture the immediate area of the proposed development must be classed as low. The majority now is part of the Coed y Brenin softwood forestry plantation although there are remnants of secondary native hardwood woodland along the valley floors.

### **4.3 The Archaeological Background (Fig. 1)**

#### *4.3.1 Prehistoric and Roman (up to 400AD)*

There are no known features of the prehistoric period within the development area but within 1km is a burnt mound (PRN 1438). This type of feature, consisting of a mound of burnt stone, where excavated and dated have mainly been found to be of the second millennium BC. They are usually found to be associated with trough-shaped pits, the sites of fires and spreads of charcoal and found, as here, alongside streams. They are believed to be the remnants of cooking sites involving the cooking of meat in water-filled troughs by means of heated stones. They are found scattered through the landscape with little evidence of associated settlement so have been interpreted as associated with hunting activities rather than permanent settlement. However, the quantities of material found show that they were used continuously or intermittently for long periods so seem unlikely to be the result of transient temporary activity. There is the possibility that the associated settlement was not immediately contiguous or else was of a form that would not easily be identifiable, for example built entirely of timber with no earthwork enclosure. The situation of the burnt mound here however would clearly not be attractive to early settlement in terms of agricultural quality so a repeatedly visited site associated with hunting or herding seems more likely. The remains of settlement associated with such activity would be relatively localised. However, similar types of activity could be found close to any streams in the area.

The most significant site of this general period is an enclosed settlement of roundhouses at Bwlch y Ffordd on the ridge 700m to the north, a scheduled ancient monument (Me046). This is within an area of improved farm land and therefore probably chosen because it was an area of better quality soils. It consists of a group of four or five substantially built stone walled roundhouses lying within a curvilinear enclosure. Although there has been no excavation here, a good number of similar houses and settlements have been excavated in north-west Wales and all found to be within the Romano-British period but occasionally with origins in the first millennium BC. It is quite an isolated example of such settlement within this general area and it may be associated with the presence alongside it of a major trackway along the crest of the ridge that is believed to lie on the line of a Roman road between the Roman forts of Tomen-y-mur, Trawsfynydd and Brithdir, Dolgellau. This trackway passes within 200m of the proposed development area.

#### *4.3.2 Medieval (400AD – 1485 AD)*

The study area lies within the Medieval cantref of Ardudwy in the commote of Ardudwy Uwch Artro, and formed part of the lands of the township of Trawsfynydd. Population in the area generally was centred around the better quality agricultural land of the coastal strip and fringes with an administrative centre at Ystumgwern in the parish of Llanenddwyn. However, the uplands formed an important part of the economy during the period of the Welsh Princes for summer grazing, particularly of cattle, whether as the rights of freemen, as part of the dues of bondsmen or as part of leased rights. There were numerous cattle farms around the castles of Dolwyddelan and Dolbadarn. In Uwch Artro the upland pasture was centred around Castle Prysor close to the actual township of Trawsfynydd. However, the land constituting this township was particularly large (Beverley Smith 2001, 35-6). Despite being upland Trawsfynydd had one of the largest numbers of taxable households in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, with 105 households (Thomas 2001, 169). However, because of the area involved, the actual density of settlement was very low with much of the land rocky or boggy waste. Rural settlement of the Earlier Medieval period in north-west Wales is characterised by the rectangular long hut platforms but there are no examples within or close to the area of interest. Later Medieval settlement is characterised by platforms for larger rectangular houses and by a variety of smaller rectangular structures. There are several small rectangular structures which may be of medieval date just to the south of the farmhouse of Bwlch y Ffordd, 600m to the north (PRNs 972-4) which suggest the farm there may have Medieval origins although the name does not appear in any surviving documents. There are no known platform houses here although there is one 2km to the north-east at Coed y Beddwr (PRN 6189) in the adjoining parish of Llanfacreth where settlement might be expected because of there was considerable gold mining activity there.

Although there is little evidence of settlement in the immediate area of Cae Cyrach in the Medieval period there is more plentiful evidence of industrial activity in the form of a number of iron-working sites exploiting bog iron-ore deposits, the nearest about 150m to the west in the valley bottom at Dol Gyfeilliau (PRN 5514), now destroyed by road building. The next is 400m to the east on the ridge (PRN 5496). There are two others further to the north at Tap mawr (PRN 5498) and Llwyn Du (PRN 5495). The latter is the subject of ongoing research excavation and has been shown to date to the late 14<sup>th</sup> century and possibly associated with Cymer Abbey (Crew 1984 and 2001). It involved the use of large amounts of wood charcoal and it is not certain whether the charcoal was produced on site or in the neighbourhood. No typical charcoal burning platforms are known but such activity can be expected to be widely scattered in the area because of the huge weight of wood that was required in relation to the small weight of charcoal eventually produced. Unfortunately identification of such sites is made more difficult here because of the large number of fire sites resulting from clearance of brash from the modern forestry operations.

#### *4.3.3 Post-Medieval and later (1485 AD to the present day)*

The possible Roman road continued to be the main route up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and a milestone still survives there just to the north-east, inscribed 'Dolgeley 7m' (PRN 976). The road lay mainly along the ridge but to the south changes into a hollow-way (PRN 977) as it dips down the slope at the end of the ridge towards the junction of the Eden and the Mawddach where there was ford. The present road follows approximately the line of the turnpike road nearer to the base of the valley crossing the river



on the Pont Dol Gyfeiliau, which is now bypassed. The turnpike from Maentwrog to Dolgellau was made under the Merioneth Turnpike Trust of 1777 (Dodd 1925) and must have been a considerable improvement on the previous wandering and hilly route.

It has been recorded that attempts were made to exploit iron in the Ganllwyd Valley by the Nannau family in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries (Thomas 2001, 659). The family had acquired new land in several places, including Trawsfynydd from c. 1400 and had been accused of destroying woodlands belonging to Cymer Abbey and the Crown, eventually leading to prosecution. These iron-workings must be presumed to be of the same bog iron ores as exploited in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and may be indistinguishable from them without better documentary evidence or excavation. The Trawsfynydd Tithe Map of 1841 marks a large enclosure Llwyn Du (Black Grove) across the ridge here and the name element 'Black' is likely to be associated with charcoal burning for the iron-working sites there as was similarly the case at the Blackdown Hills, Somerset. Iron working at Coed y Brenin is still recorded in the name of a cottage, Dol Gefeiliau – Meadow of the Smithies, on the opposite side of the river to Cae'r Cyrrech where there was also a bloomery site, which was destroyed during making of the modern road.

Although there is little evidence of settlement activity in the valley in the Medieval period and the area may be expected to have been mainly woodland there were was a patchwork of small farms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as recorded in the Tithe Apportionment for Trawsfynydd of 1841. There were four farms in this area, Bwlch y Ffordd, Cae'r Cyrrech, Tyddyn Gwladus and Cefndauddwr. Each consisted of a nucleus of small regular enclosures immediately around the farm with further larger more irregular enclosures more outlying. The smaller 'infields' would have been more intensively cleared and perhaps cultivated, while the outlying enclosures would have been just pasture. The area of the proposed development falls entirely within the land of the farm of Cae'r Cyrrech (Fig. 2), Cae-cyrch (OS 1890-1891), Cae-Cyrach (OS 1900). The farm name is not easy to explain but probably means '(Field on edge or borders' from 'cwr' – border, edge or corner or 'cyrrau' (plural) relating to its position on the edge of a narrow neck of land between the Afon Eden and the Afon Gain which formed the borders of a narrow projecting part of Trawsfynydd Parish as well as of the larger Medieval territory of Ardudwy Uwch Artro. The Tithe Apportionment records that in 1841 Cae'r Cyrrech belonged to Lord Edward Mostyn and the tenant was William Parry. The land that had previously belonged to the Nannau Estate passed to the Mostyn family by marriage in 1791 (Lloyd 1977, 30).

Cae'r Cyrrech consisted of a small sub-rectangular fields being subdivisions of a curvilinear enclosure. The wall of this outer enclosure is massively built where it survives, up to 2m high and 2m wide. It probably represents an original enclosure with much stone from primary clearance. The other subdivisions were field walls of a more normal height and width. The few entrances that have survived the forestry operations are narrow, not designed for carts or machinery. There were seven main farm buildings of which the farmhouse was the largest, c. 17.5m by 7.5m externally. This was set perpendicular to slope whereas the other buildings were set parallel to the slope. The farmhouse, subsidiary buildings and fields are shown in better detail on the OS 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 6 inch map of 1890-1891 (Fig. 3) and in even more detail on the OS 25 inch map of 1900. The Tithe Apportionment provides field names (Appendix 3), which provide some information about the farm. It raised cattle, sheep and goats and produced hay but no mention of arable or other crops. The field names do not suggest any Medieval origins. Of interest are 2092 Cae tyr simnai, close to the Pont Dol-gefeiliau, perhaps referring to a smithy at Dol Gefeiliau, and 2096 Cae'r Gottel by the (Roman?) road where a building is marked.

The farm was apparently still extant when the forestry plantation was established after the First World War, known as the Vaughan Forest, changing to Coed y Brenin after a visit by King George V in 1935. The farmhouse and three of the subsidiary buildings were destroyed during the establishment of the forest. One of the buildings is still extant and three others survive as ruined structures, demolished during forestry operations. These and other features will be described in the results of the field survey and discussed further in the final discussion.

#### 4.4 Conclusions

The development area falls within the fields of a former small farmstead and in documentary terms there are no known features of any other activity. The farm was in existence in 1841 and may be entirely the creation of 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure but there is the possibility that it had Medieval origins, partly because there is known to have been iron-working close by from at least the 14<sup>th</sup> century AD. Its infields also lie within a large curvilinear enclosure defined by a strongly built stone wall. If the farm was entirely an 18<sup>th</sup> century estate creation its outline might be expected to be regularly rectilinear in outline. The curvilinear enclosure may therefore be an earlier feature, possibly a cattle fold rather than a Medieval farmstead.

#### 4.5 Existing statutory protection

There are no listed buildings within the study area but within 1km is the bridge of Pont Dol-Gefeiliu, Listed Grade II.

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the study area but within 1km are the Iron Age/Romano-British settlement of Bwlch y Ffordd (SAM Me046) and about 1.4km away is the post-Medieval Cwm Heisian West gold and lead mine (SAM Me204).

### 5. GAZETTEER OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES (Fig. 4)

This section enumerates those sites that are likely to be affected by the development. These were all remnants of the 18<sup>th</sup> century farm and so are numbered and are plotted on Fig. 4, the OS 25 inch map of 1887/1900. Most of these have been damaged by previous forestry operations and so the recommendations will take that into account.

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures.* Where the information is considered sufficient, mitigatory measures are suggested. The recommendations will only apply if the site is to be disturbed by the proposed construction.

The supplied plans indicate and it has been assumed that no occupied dwellings will be affected by the scheme and all such buildings have been allocated an impact rating of *none*.

#### 1. Sheep/cattle fold SH72152730 (Fig. 5)

*Category: C Impact: Likely*

A rectangular walled enclosure. Ruined. Walls up to 1.8m high and 0.8m wide. Post-medieval. Not marked on 1841 Tithe map so probably more recent.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Avoidance or basic recording.*

#### 2. Farmhouse, Site of, Cae'r Cyrrech PRN 8748 SH72152725

*Category: C Impact: Likely*

The farmhouse was demolished during building of the access track for the forestry plantation. Its site now lies beneath a mound of bulldozed rubble at the west side of the trackway and just north of the barn, Feature 3. This means it may not be further damaged. The remains of the house walls and floors probably survive but buried. They could provide evidence as to whether the farmstead has Medieval origins. Potentially it could be cleared and its remains exposed in plan and consolidated as a historic feature.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Avoidance or basic recording.*

### **3. Hay barn/Cattle shed SH72162723 (Figs 6-7)**

*Category: B Impact: Slight*

A rectangular two-storey standing building, c. 7m by 6m with a single door at the east, uphill side. Built on a terrace deeply cut into the hillside. Very strongly built, the walls restored and re-roofed in tin with new timbers. Originally the upper floor was a hay loft, the lower has animal feed racks. There is a single window to the upper floor at the south and a single door in the centre of the east side. Now used as a store and will probably continue to be used as part of the new visitor complex. It provides a useful and attractive visible historic landscape feature and should be retained, preferably eventually re-roofed in traditional style.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Avoidance or detailed recording.*

### **4. Barn/Shed, remains of SH72172722**

*Category: D Impact: Likely*

A small rectangular building, part of the farmyard complex marked on the 1841 Tithe map, demolished during the forestry establishment. Its remains now exist under a heap of rubble overgrown with brambles just to the south of building 3. Potentially it could be cleared and its remains exposed in plan and consolidated as a historic feature.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Avoidance or basic recording.*

### **5. Cattle shed, remains of SH72242722**

*Category: C Impact: Slight*

Ruined rectangular building, c. 12m by 6m externally. Uncoursed dry stone construction of probably quarried stone, walls surviving up to 1.5m high externally, and 1m high internally. Built on a terrace cut into and parallel to the slope. There was single entrance 1m wide in the centre of the north gable end. Two fallen roof timbers remain. Marked on the 1841 Tithe map as No. 2097 Beudy Uchaf – Upper cowshed. A terraced, walled trackway led off to the north. The ruins of the building lie above the existing forestry trackway and may not be affected by development.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Avoidance or basic recording.*

### **6. Shed/barn remains of SH72252720**

*Category: D Impact: Slight*

The low walls of one corner of a rectangular building left after removal of the majority during construction of the forestry access road. This was another part of the farm buildings, marked on the OS 25 inch map of 1887/1900 but not on the 6 inch map of 1890-1891 so probably built between these dates.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: None.*

### **7. Cattle shed, remains of SH72282703 (Fig. 8)**

*Category: C Impact: Likely*

The ruined walls of a strongly built rectangular building, 8m by 6m externally, with walls 0.8m wide of drystone, uncoursed trimmed boulders and surviving up to 1.4m high. The building is deeply terraced end-on into the slope with a single entrance, 0.8m wide at the west, down-slope end. Several roof timbers of round and half round oak lie within it. It has a well-preserved slab floor. It must have

been deliberately demolished and there are clay ridge tiles and small, single peg-hole slates pushed to one side nearby at the north. Marked on the 1841 Tithe map and on OS maps up to the present day.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Avoidance or basic recording.*

#### **8. Cattle shed, remains of SH72302688**

*Category: C Impact: Likely*

Ruined rectangular building 8m E-W by 6m N-S, built on a terrace perpendicular to the slope. Walls 0.8m wide and surviving up to 0.8m high internally, 1.8m high externally. Its floor must survive. A single entrance at west gable. Marked on the 1841 Tithe map No. 2106 – 'Cowhouse &c'. Complete but on the upper edge of the deeply cut modern forestry track so unlikely to be possible to retain as a historic feature. An adjoining smaller building shown on the modern map has been removed by construction of the trackway.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Avoidance or basic recording.*

#### **9. Farmstead main enclosure wall SH72362695 (centre) (Fig. 9)**

*Category: B Impact: Considerable*

A wall which seems to have formed the original outer boundary of the infields of the farm. In plan it is curvilinear and where it survives runs along the contour. It is much more massively built than the other sub-dividing field walls. It is up to 2m wide and 2m high. It survives to its full height in only one short stretch, parts of it have been demolished by the forestry road construction and most of the rest has been partly levelled, spoiling its value as a historic feature. Its size may be attributable to the fact that the farmstead was an estate creation, not that of a single farmer and was the result of primary clearance of the land by an employed workforce, when large amounts of stone would have been available.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Avoidance or detailed recording.*

#### **10. Gateway SH72332705**

*Category: C Impact: Considerable*

A narrow gap, the only surviving gateway through wall 9.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Avoidance or basic recording.*

#### **11. Water tank (?) SH72322687**

*Category: D Impact: Considerable*

A small terraced area on the side of the small valley here on which is an *in situ* dilapidated steel man-hole cover. This must be a water tank although the pipes to or from it are not visible. Nearby on the surface is a rusted section of 3 inch diameter iron pipe. This may be a disused feature used when the forest was first laid out and established but its purpose is not clear.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: None.*

#### **12. Cae'r Cyrrech landscape, PRN 8767 SH722727008 (Centre)**

*Category: C Impact: Considerable*

This number was allocated to the general agricultural landscape of the former farmstead consisting of the farmyard with its enclosure walls and minor buildings and the infields and associated features of a

number of ruinous field walls (Fig. 10), gateways and tracks. The farmyard itself has been obliterated by the forestry road construction. The fields and associated features have been damaged by forestry operations but in parts are still intact and the overall outline of them is still traceable. A watching brief during clearance of the ground might identify features not visible on the surface, such as remains of burnt mounds, charcoal burning or iron-working.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Watching brief.*

## 6. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Further assessment work

There are no features requiring further assessment.

### 6.2. Mitigatory measures

This section lists the remaining sites according to category of assessed value.

#### Category A – National Importance

None

#### Category B – Regional Importance

3. Hay barn/Cattle shed SH72162723	<i>Avoidance or detailed recording</i>
9. Farmstead main enclosure wall SH72362695 (centre)	<i>Avoidance or detailed recording</i>

#### Category C – Local Importance

1. Sheep/cattle fold SH72152730	<i>Avoidance or basic recording</i>
2. Farmhouse, Site of, Cae'r Cyrrech PRN 8748 SH72152725	<i>Avoidance or basic recording</i>
5. Cattle shed, remains of SH72242722	<i>Avoidance or basic recording</i>
7. Cattle shed, remains of SH72282703	<i>Avoidance or basic recording</i>
8. Cattle shed, remains of SH72302688	<i>Avoidance or basic recording</i>
10. Gateway SH72332705	<i>Avoidance or basic recording</i>
12. Cae'r Cyrach landscape, PRN 8767 SH722727008 (Centre)	<i>Watching brief</i>

#### Category D – Minor and damaged sites

4. Barn/Shed, remains of SH72172722	<i>Avoidance or basic recording</i>
6. Shed/barn remains of SH72252720	<i>None</i>
11. Water? tank SH72322687	<i>None</i>

## 7. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

An initial archaeological assessment was carried out of the area of the proposed development, consisting of a desktop study and field walkover.



The desktop study included examination of those records that make up the Gwynedd Sites and Monuments Record, held at Gwynedd Archaeological Trust and maps and archives were examined at the County Archives at Dolgellau.

The field walk involved one person walking the entire route of the proposed road improvement, when sites discovered from the desktop study were examined and the location of additional sites noted, and a written description made of each. All of the sites were allocated to one of five categories (ranging from A to E) and mitigation proposals were made for each.

A total of 12 sites were recorded (Fig. 4). The sites identified within or close to the route corridor are predominantly from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

No sites were allocated to Category A (national importance).

2 sites were allocated to Category B (regional importance).

7 sites were allocated to Category C (local importance).

3 sites were allocated to Category D (minor or damaged sites).

No sites were allocated to Category E (sites needing further investigation).

One category B site is an extant building that has already been restored with modern roofing materials and re-used. It provides a useful building as well as an attractive historic feature if it is restored with a traditional slate roof. The other site is the main enclosure wall of the farmstead, a major construction although some of it has been removed by forestry track construction. It is worth retaining as a part of the historic landscape.

The majority of the features are recorded as of Category C – District or local importance and belong to the relict 18<sup>th</sup> century (or earlier) agricultural landscape of the farmstead of Cae'r Cyrrech. If this landscape had not already been badly damaged by forestry operations it would be recorded as of Category B – Regional importance. The field walls may need to be entirely removed but consideration could be given to retaining the three remaining cattle sheds, 5, 7 and 8, partly demolished for the forestry but substantially built and still retaining low walls, entrances and intact floors. These could be cleared, consolidated retained as historic features, possibly reused as picnic areas. Whether demolished or re-used these buildings would need basic recording by planning and photography.

## **8. DOCUMENTARY SOURCES**

### **8.1 Unpublished sources**

Tithe maps and schedules for the parish of Trawsfynydd 1841.

Gwynedd Sites and Monuments Record.

CARN On-line Archaeological Record, Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments Wales.

Ordnance Survey Roman roads annotated 25 inch scale maps, RCAHMW, Aberystwyth.

### **8.2 Published sources**

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Pennant T. 1991, *A Tour in Wales 1770* Vol. II.

Smith, G.H. 1996. *Afon Gain, Ganllwyd, Gwynedd: Archaeological Assessment*, GAT Report No. 228.

Thomas, C. 2001. In J. and L. Beverley Smith 2001, 168-224.

Thomas, D. 1998. *Coed y Brenin Archaeological Assessment*, CPAT Report no. 282.

Williams-Jones, K. 1957. Llywelyn's Charter to Cymer Abbey in 1209, *Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society*, III 45-78.

### 8.3 Cartographic

Evans, John, Map of North Wales 1797.

Ordnance Survey 1 inch 1<sup>st</sup> ed. c. 1838.

Ordnance Survey 25 inch Sheet 27.11 1887, Rev. 1900.

Ordnance Survey 6 inch 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1890-1891.

Ordnance Survey 6 inch 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1901.

British Geological Survey 1982, 1:50 000 Series, Sheet 135, Harlech

# **Appendix 1 Project Design**

## **PROPOSED NEW VISITOR CENTRE, COED Y BRENIN**

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (G1797)**

Prepared for Symonds Group Ltd, 31/07/03

#### **1. PROJECT BACKGROUND**

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust have been asked by Symonds Group Ltd to provide a quotation for carrying out an archaeological assessment in advance of a new visitor centre at Coed y Brenin.

A brief has not been prepared for this project, but Gwynedd Archaeological Planning will monitor the work on behalf of the Local Planning Authority and Symonds Group. This design will conform to the guidelines specified in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment* (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 1999).

#### **2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AIMS**

A desk-based assessment is defined as "a programme of assessment of the known or potential archaeological resource within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. It consists of a collation of existing written, graphic, photographic and electronic information in order to identify the likely character, extent, quality and worth of the known or potential archaeological resource in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate" (*Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*).

The aims of the assessment are:

- to identify and record the cultural heritage within the defined study area;
- to evaluate the importance of what has been identified;
- to recommend ways in which impact upon the cultural heritage can be avoided or minimised.

#### **3. PROGRAMME OF WORK**

##### **3.1 Introduction**

The first stage of the assessment is to undertake a desktop study and field visit. In some instances it is also necessary to undertake a programme of field evaluation after the assessment. This is because some sites cannot be assessed by desktop or field visit alone, and additional fieldwork is therefore required, which forms the second stage of the assessment. This typically takes the form of geophysical survey or trial excavation, although measured survey is also a possible option. A full programme of assessment and evaluation may therefore consist of:

- Desktop study
- Field walkover
- Initial report
- Field evaluation
- Draft report
- Final report

This design covers the first three phases, and recommendations will be made for any field evaluation considered necessary in the initial report.

### 3.2 The study area

The proposed site of the visitor centre is indicated two drawings provided by Symonds (Figure 1 and 2). The site is located at SH722272, with access following an existing footpath and forest track off the A470 north of Dol-gefeiliu at SH719275. The proposed site lies adjacent to the post-medieval farmstead of Cae Cyrach, with mining remains in the vicinity.

### 3.3 Desktop

An initial scoping study will be undertaken involving a study of the SMR information for the area, and secondary sources. This will include an examination of the core SMR, and secondary information held within the record which includes unpublished reports, the 1:2500 County Series Ordnance Survey maps, and the National Archaeological Record index cards. The National Monuments Record (NMR) will be checked for sites additional to the SMR. Secondary sources will be examined, including the Inventories of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments for Wales, and indices to relevant journals, including the county society transactions, and *Archaeologia Cambrensis*. Vertical aerial photographs will be examined. Information about Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments will be obtained from Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments.

If it is considered necessary to examine primary records following the scoping study, recommendations will be made for examination of records at the regional archives, the National Library of Wales the archives at University of Wales, Bangor, and the Public Records Office.

### 3.4 Field survey

This part of the assessment will involve visiting the study area and assessing the sites identified during the desk-based study and assessing the impact of the development upon the historic landscape. Any additional sites noted will also be assessed.

The aims of this stage of the work are to:

- verify the results of the desk based assessment
- identify any further archaeological sites which may exist as above ground features
- photograph and record the present condition of all sites noted.

Access onto land is to be arranged by the Clients, although GAT staff will notify all landowners prior to gaining access.

### 3.5 Initial report

Following completion of the desk based assessment as outlined above, a report will be produced incorporating the following:

1. Introduction
2. Specification and Project Design
3. Methods and techniques
4. Archaeological Background
5. Site gazetteer - including areas of archaeological interest
6. Assessment of impacts
7. Proposals for field evaluation and mitigatory measures
8. Summary and conclusions
9. List of sources consulted.

Copies of all maps consulted (where copyright allows) will be included in an appendix, and overlays of maps showing the results of map regression analysis will be provided if relevant.

To assess the importance of sites and to allow the appropriate mitigatory action to be proposed for each, a framework of categories will be used with each site allocated to a particular category according to its relative importance:

*Category A - Sites of National Importance.*

This category includes Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings as well as those sites which would meet the requirements for scheduling (ancient monuments) or listing (buildings) or both. Sites that 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 Importance*

These sites are those 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*

These sites are not of sufficient importance to justify a recommendation for preservation if threatened, but nevertheless merit adequate recording in advance of damage or destruction.

*Category D - Minor and Damaged Sites*

These are sites which are of minor importance or are so badly damaged that too little remains to justify their inclusion in a higher category. For these sites rapid recording either in advance or during destruction, should be sufficient.

*Category E - Sites needing further investigation*

Sites, the importance of which 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.

### **3.6 Archive**

A project archive will be produced consisting of an indexed paper record, photographs and copies of source material, and a digital record of the report. This will be lodged with the Gwynedd Sites and Monuments Record.

## **4. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The Trust subscribes to the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers) Health and Safety Policy as defined in **Health and Safety in Field Archaeology** (1997, updated September 1999). Risks will be assessed prior to and during the work.

## **5. INSURANCE**

The Trust holds public liability insurance with an indemnity limit of £2,500,000 through Russell, Scanlon Limited Insurance Brokers, Wellington Circus, Nottingham NG1 5AJ (policy 01 1017386 COM), and Professional Indemnity Insurance for £2,000,000 per claim (policy No. 59A/SA11818791).

## **6. STAFF**

The work will be supervised by one of the Trust's Project Manager's Mr Andrew Davidson, who graduated in archaeology in 1979. During his career he has been involved with all aspects of archaeological work, including excavation, topographic survey, heritage management, assessments and field evaluations. For the past seven years he has been Project Manager (now Principal Archaeologist) for the Contract Section of the Trust, and has been responsible for carrying out or overseeing the production of all contract work, including road schemes, pipeline installations and major construction schemes.



## Appendix 2 Archaeological features within 1km of the proposed Coed y Brenin visitor centre

PRN	SITENAME	STATUS	NO	NGR
972	RECTANGULAR STRUCTURE, BWLCH FFORDD			SH72172802
973	RECTANGULAR STRUCTURE, BWLCH FFORDD			SH72152796
974	RECTANGULAR STRUCTURE, BWLCH FFORDD			SH72152794
975	ENCLOSURE, TAP MAWR			SH72192792
976	MILESTONE, CAE CYRRACH			SH72372770
977	ROAD, CAE CYRRACH			SH72502745
978	CIRCULAR STONE STRUCTURE, DOL GEFEILIAU			SH72052700
1438	BURNT MOUND, CAE CYRRACH			SH72332766
5495	BLOOMERY MOUNDS, LLWYN DU			SH72402790
5496	BLOOMERY MOUND, CAE CYRACH			SH72532750
5497	BLOOMERY MOUNDS, E OF TAP MAWR			SH72192772
5514	BLOOMERY MOUND - SITE OF - DOL GYFEILIAU			SH71942715
5515	HUT GROUP (ENCLOSED), S. OF BWLCH Y FFORDD	M046		SH72172811
8594	DOLGYFEILIAU MILESTONE			SH72132678
8608	CAE CYRACH MOUND II			SH72332765
8609	CAE CYRACH SHEEPFOLD			SH72582756
8610	CAE CYRACH BUILDING			SH72502740
8611	LLWYN DU BLOOMERY PLATFORM			SH72402791
8612	LLWYN DU LEVEL			SH72402794
8613	AFON GAIN LEVEL I			SH72652805
8614	AFON GAIN TRIAL LEVEL I			SH72662806
8615	AFON GAIN LEVEL			SH72632808
8616	LLWYN DU SHEEPFOLD			SH72532799
8617	AFON GAIN BUILDING			SH72692818
8621	CEFN DEUDDWR CLEARANCE CAIRN I			SH73102680
8622	CEFN DEUDDWR CLEARANCE CAIRN II			SH73202680
8623	CEFN DEUDDWR CLEARANCE CAIRN III			SH73222684
8624	CEFN DEUDDWR SHEEPFOLD			SH73222684
8625	CEFN DEUDDWR CLEARANCE CAIRN IV			SH73102678
8626	CEFN DEUDDWR CLEARANCE CAIRN V			SH73102670
8627	CEFN DEUDDWR CLEARANCE CAIRN VI			SH73102669

PRN	SITENAME	STATUS NO	NGR
8628	PISTYLL Y CAIN		SH73222754
8712	TYDDYN GWLADYS LEVEL I		SH73282661
8713	TYDDYN GWLADYS LEVEL II		SH73362677
8714	TYDDYN GWLADYS STONE		SH72732699
8715	TYDDYN GWLAD		SH72642707
8716	TYDDYN GWLADYS		SH73162743
8737	PENMAEN BUILDINGS		SH72602790
8739	ABER SERW FARMSTEAD		SH71172824
8740	COED GELLI GOCH LEVEL		SH71912783
8741	MAESGWM		SH71562768
8747	DOLGYFELLIAU STONE STRUCTURE		SH72002700
8748	CAE CYRACH FARMSTEAD		SH72192723
8767	CAE CYRACH LANDSCAPE		SH72272708
8771	TYDDYN GWLADYS LANDSCAPE		SH73052754
11740	PONT DOL-GEFELLIAU	GII	SH72102690
20906	GOLD/COPPER MINE, BWLCH Y FFORDD		SH72502820
20915	GOLD LEVEL, CEFN DEUDDWR (2)		SH72902640
20919	GOLD LEVEL, PONT GWYNFYNYDD		SH73102780
21738	CAE CYRACH MINE		SH72202730
21906	TYDDYN GWLADYS (2) MINE		SH72702710

## Appendix 3

### Trawsfynydd Tithe Apportionment 1841

#### Field name details for Cae'r Cyrrech (See Fig. 2)

Owner: The Hon Edward Mostyn Lloyd Mostyn

Occupier: William Parry

2080 Graig	Crag/Rock
2081 Cae tan y ffordd	Field under or at the end of the road
2082 <i>do</i>	
2084 <i>do</i>	
2085 Cae Main	Thin field
2086 House, Yard and Garden	
2087 Cwrt	(Court) yard
2088 Cae'r ty coch	Field of the red house
2089 Gwair(?) fawr	Big hay (field)
2090 <i>do</i>	
2091 Garden	
2092 Cae tyr simnai	Field of the house with a chimney
2093 Geulan	Riverbank (field)
2094 Cae'r ty coch	Field of the red house
2095 Buarth ty'r defaid	Yard of the sheep house
2096 Cae'r Gottel	Field of the (?)
2097 Beudy uchaf	Cowshed
2098 Cowhouse & c	
2099 Cae'r Lloi	Field of the calves
2100 Cae'r pen crach	Field of the top of the scar (crag)
2101 Buarth y ty cyneifio	Yard of the shearing house
2102 Cae pen ty crach no. 2	Field of the top of the scar (crag)
2103 Buarth y ty cyneifio no.2	Yard of the shearing house
2104 Coed	Wood
2105 Cae ty'r geifr	Field of the goat house
2106 Cowhouse & c	
2107 Cae isaf	Lower field
2108 Cae ty'r geifr	Field of the goat house

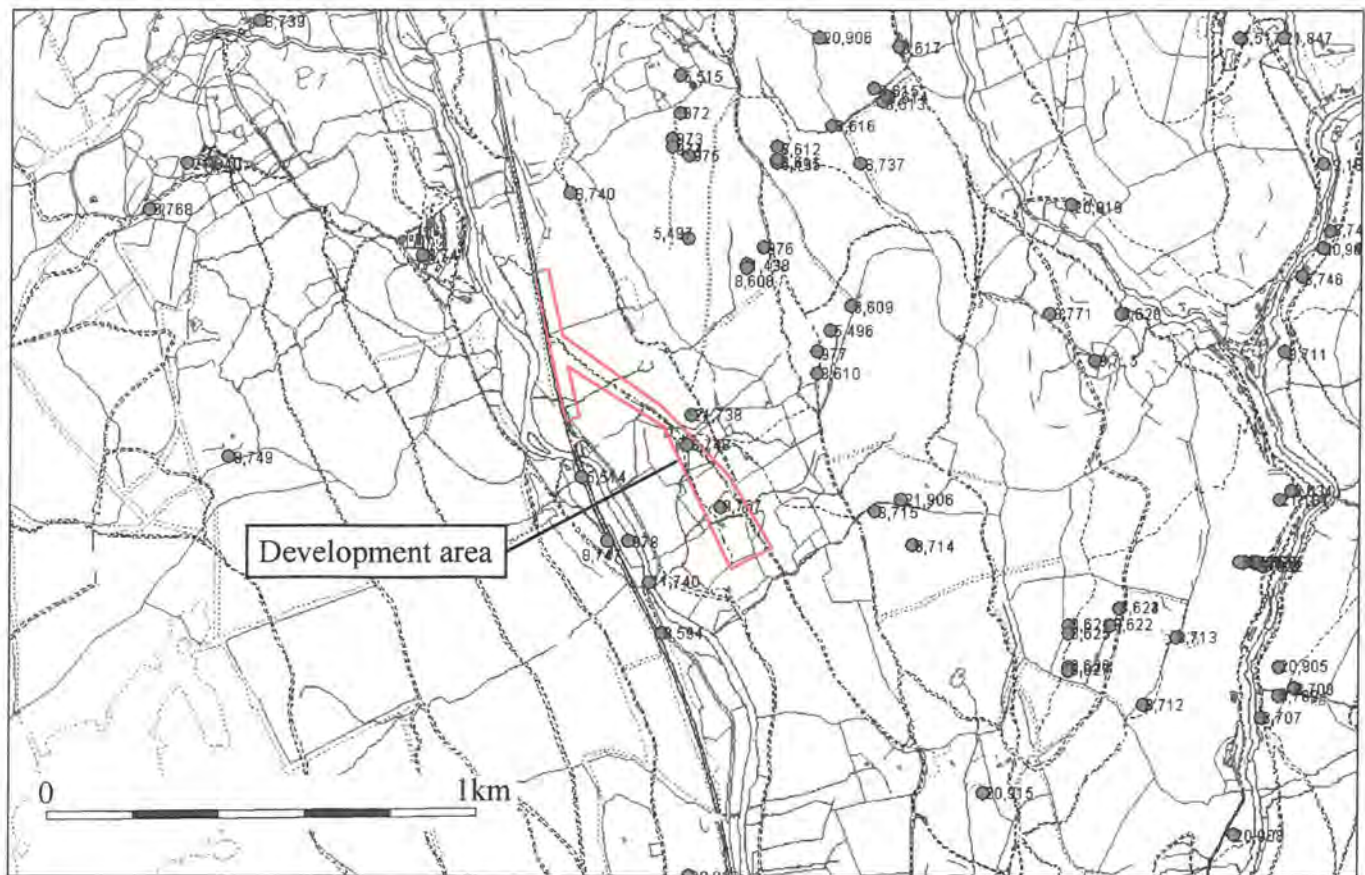


Fig. 1 Coed y Brenin proposed new visitor centre:  
Archaeological features within 1km of the development area recorded  
in the Gwynedd Sites and Monuments Record.  
© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100020895.



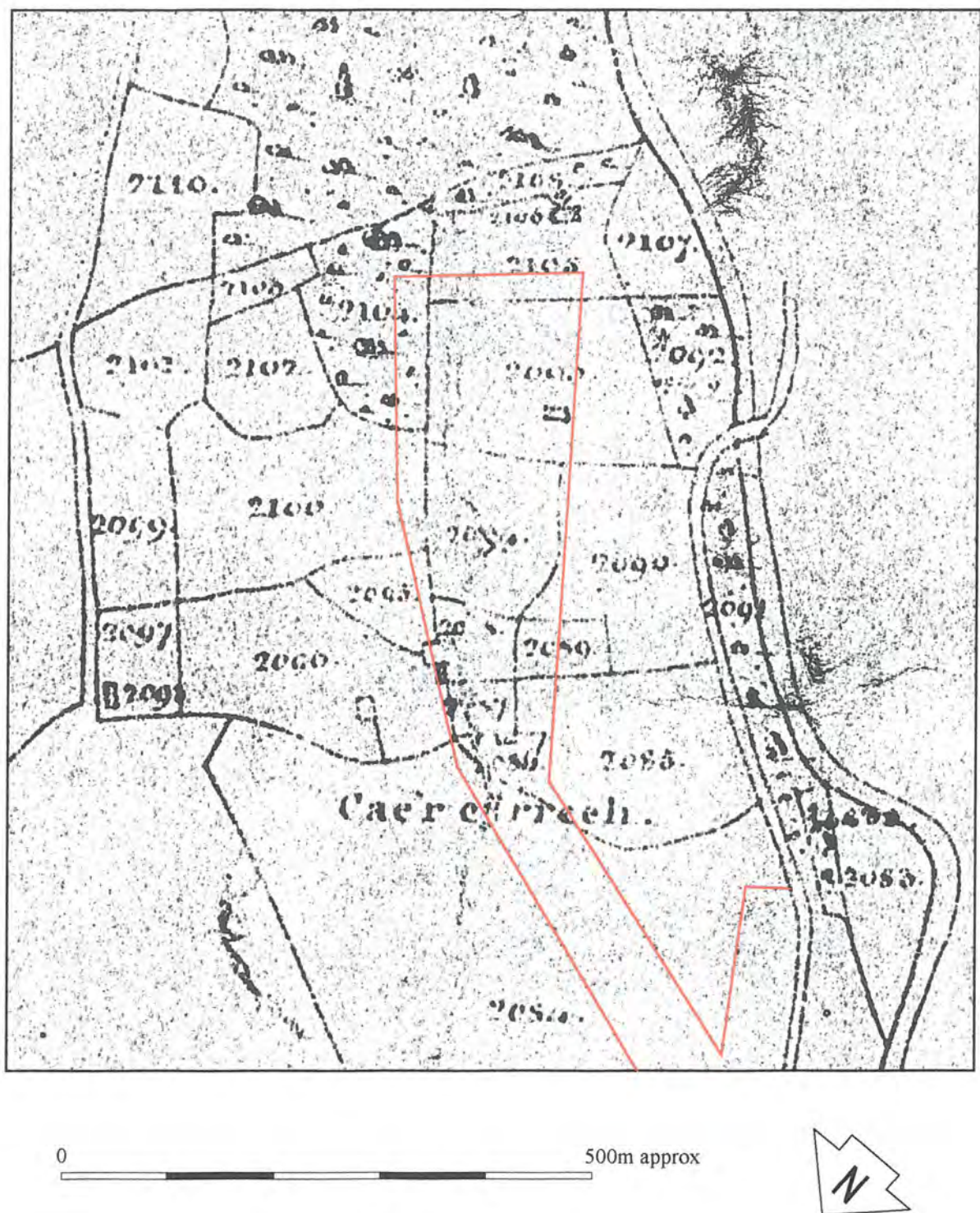


Fig. 2 Coed y Brenin proposed new visitor centre  
1841 Tithe map (part) showing Cae'r Cyrrech farm holding and proposed development area



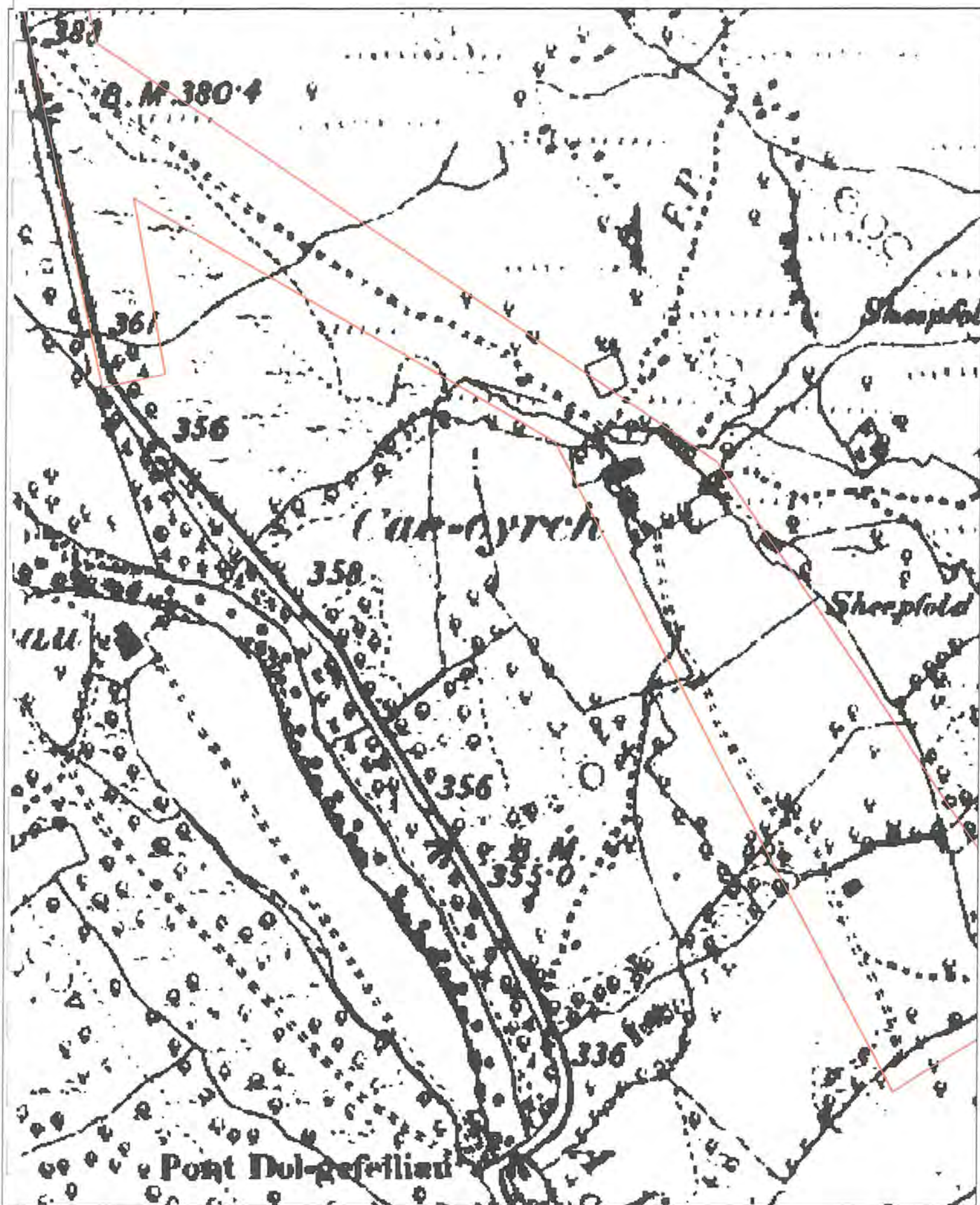


Fig. 3 Coed y Brenin proposed new visitor centre: OS 6 inch scale map 1st ed., 1890-1891, showing development area. Enlarged to scale 1:2500 approx.









Fig. 5 Sheep/cattle fold, Feature 1. From S, 1m scale



Fig. 6 Hay barn/Cattle shed, Feature 3. From SW, 1m scale



Fig. 7 Hay barn/cattle shed, Feature 3.  
Detail of door. From SE, 1m scale



Fig. 8 Cattle shed, Feature 7. From NE, 1m scale



Fig. 9 Farmstead main enclosure wall, Feature 9.  
From SW, 1m scale



Fig. 10 Example of damaged farm wall at south-west  
edge of area. From SW, 1m scale

