
110-114 High Street Bangor



Archaeological Assessment

GAT Project No. 1837

Report No. 544

October 2004

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Final Plan 54481

Prepared for Hattrell and Partners

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110 – 114 STRYD FAWR, BANGOR

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (G1837)

Summary

An archaeological assessment has been carried out in advance of proposed development at 110-114 High Street, Bangor. This has revealed that the site formed part of the urban core of the medieval town of Bangor, and that in early modern times, until the latter part of the 19th century, the site was largely occupied by a public house called the Red Lion. In the 1930's the site was converted into a garage, and in the 1970's a new warehouse was erected for use as a furniture store. The potential for archaeological survival is considered low, and thus no specific recommendations are made for the principal development area. However, there may be survival of archaeological remains close to the street frontage, and thus a watching brief is recommended for this part of the site should it be within the development area.

1. INTRODUCTION

A new development has been proposed on the site of 110-114 High Street, Bangor. The former existence of medieval dwellings within the area suggests there is potential for the recovery of archaeological information from the study area, and therefore a pre-determination archaeological assessment has been requested to assess the level of impact of the proposals upon any archaeological remains that may exist upon the site.

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (Contracts Section) has been asked by Hattrell and Partners to undertake an archaeological assessment of the proposed site. A brief has been prepared for this work by Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (D822). The assessment has been conducted to a level specified in the Brief, and according to the guidelines specified in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment* (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 1999).

2. ASSESSMENT BRIEF

The basic requirement is for a desk-top survey and field search in order to assess the impact of the proposals on the archaeological and heritage features within proposed development area and close enough to it to be affected. The importance and condition of known archaeological remains is to be assessed and areas of archaeological potential and new sites identified. Measures to mitigate the effects of the proposals on the archaeological resource are to be suggested.

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust's proposals for fulfilling these requirements are 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.

It is possible that certain features will be not be capable of being assessed by a desktop and field visit, and that subsequent field evaluation may be necessary in the form of trial excavation or geophysical survey. This report will contain recommendations for any field evaluation required.

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 section 6, list of

sources consulted) were also examined in the library and the archives of the University College of North Wales, Bangor, and the County archives at Caernarfon.

3.2 Field Search

A site visit was made on 29 September, 2004. Access was not gained into the interior of the building, but the exterior was examined from the High Street, and from Lôn Pobty at the rear.

3.3 Existing Statutory status

The site is neither listed nor scheduled by Cadw. Neither is Bulkeley Terrace to the south-west, nor the row of buildings adjacent to the north-east that includes 120 High Street, the former public house 'The Goat'.¹

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Historical background

The study area (centred on SH 57997180) lies on Bangor High Street, towards the upper (south-west) end. Bangor is situated in the narrow valley of the Afon Adda, that opens up into a relatively wide and sheltered bay, at the east end of the Menai Strait, an area that provides excellent anchorage. The Adda has cut deeply into the Menian plateau, creating a narrow and steep-sided valley, which has dictated the physical layout of the town.²

Though there is evidence for prehistoric settlement within the valley, the origin of the development of Bangor (meaning 'wattle fence', and applied to the fence that enclosed the earliest Christian settlement here), almost certainly lies in the 6th century, with the founding of the church by Deiniol.³ In the 12th century territorial dioceses were created, and Bangor became a Cathedral church, with its first Bishop appointed in 1120.⁴ The origins of the present Cathedral date back to this first episcopate of Bishop David.⁵ A 'town' of Bangor is mentioned in 1211 when it was burnt by King John's troops,⁶ though the full extent of the urban development is not known. The first map of Bangor is that by John Speed, published in 1610 (fig 2). It clearly shows the Cathedral, at the south end of a large oval enclosure, with the R. Adda to the west and the high street to the north-east. The market cross lies at the junction between the High Street and Glanrafon. The High Street continues up to the area now known as Kyffin Square, and includes the present study area.

Minimal developments occurred during the 17th and 18th centuries, but the city grew at a fast rate during the 19th century. This included the development of a maritime quarter next to the coast at Hiracl, with associated quays and industries. Development at Dean street followed later, which filled in the area between the medieval urban area and Hiracl. The arrival of the Chester & Holyhead Railway, with Bangor station being constructed between two tunnels on the south-west side of the town, lengthened the high street as far as the station. Subsequently, housing developments of the 20th century at Glanadda on the far side of the railway from the centre increased the urban limits further to the south-west, whilst Upper Bangor developed following the establishment of the University there in the early part of the 20th century.

4.2 The study area

History

Red Lion PRN29709 Sh 5799 7182

The study area is a block of land occupying the properties of 110, 112 and 114 High Street (fig. 1). This area lies on the limits of the medieval town, as shown on the map of Bangor by John Speed (dated 1610), where High Street is shown lined by properties to about this limit. The next clear map evidence we have is the town map of John Wood, dated 1834 (fig. 3). At this point the area is partly occupied by a public house called the Red Lion. A public house is marked also on the 1890 and 1900 OS maps, though not on the 1914 OS map,

¹ Cadw 1988 and Register of Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

² See Carter 1965 and Jones 1970 for descriptions of the morphological development of Bangor.

³ See Longley 1994 and 1995 for the monastic development of Bangor.

⁴ See Clarke 1969 and Carr 1994 for a history of the diocese of Bangor in medieval times.

⁵ See RCAHMW for an architectural history of the Cathedral.

⁶ Brut y Tywysogion, quoted in Soulsby 1983, 77.

where a laundry is indicated, though this may be in the buildings to the rear of the High Street (see fig's 4-6). Business directories confirm the presence of a public house here. Pigot and Slaters Directory of 1844 record the Red Lion Inn on the High Street, with Robert Williams the landlord. The Postal Directory of 1886 records M J Lawless as the landlord at 114 High Street. Slater's Directory of 1896 records the Red Lion Inn at 114 High Street and William Jones, Plumber and gas fitter at 110 High Street. The last entry for the inn found in a business directory was in 1910. A short distance up the High Street at 120 was another inn called 'The Goat', now Jo Potts shop.⁷ An early 20th century source calls the Red Lion 'an old house', and says the 'former ample curtilage of the old tavern, which took in the site of the house attached to the Bulkeley terrace as well as a more extended liberty at the back, was the commercial centre of the local pig trade'.⁸ There did exist a plot of undeveloped land behind the Red Lion, which could well have been used for this purpose, identified on the 1914 OS map by the word 'Laundry'.⁹ It would appear that the Red Lion occupied the area of 114 High Street, and possibly part of 112. Different activities have been undertaken at 110 High Street, for example Slater's Directory of 1896 lists William Jones, Plumber and Gas Fitter, whilst by 1936 it is a Stationer's run by William T Jones (Bennetts Directory of 1936).

During the 1930's a garage (Central Garage) occupied the site, certainly of the Red Lion, and possibly of 112 High Street also. Later the garage came to occupy the three plots of 110 to 114 High Street. Petrol was sold from here, though it is not known if underground tanks were installed. After closure as a garage it became a hardware store (Chester and North Wales Hardware) selling goods to the trade. In the mid-1970's the furniture store of N&F was established on the site.

Archaeology

The plot of land to be developed is presently occupied by a large warehouse building that appears from its design to be of early 1970's date, and presumably dates from the conversion to a furniture store. The interior of the store was not examined as part of this project. The rear of the store appears to have been partly terraced into the steep hillside that rises up to Lôn Pobty behind.

5. IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The potential for archaeological survival is considered to be low. The use of the site as a garage is likely to have removed previous medieval and early modern evidence, and subsequent clearance for the furniture store would also have had a negative impact. Given this low potential for archaeological survival, no specific recommendations are made for further work within the proposed development area. However, it is possible that parts of the medieval street frontage remain between the proposed development and the present street front, and thus if this area is to be developed then a watching brief is recommended within that area.

The area behind the store, that lies outside the proposed development, rises steeply up to Lôn Pobty, and would always have been unsuitable for settlement or industrial use.

6. SOURCES CONSULTED

OS Maps

25" County Series Caernarfonshire VI.12 1890, 1900

25" County Series Anglesey XIX.12 1914

6" County Series Caernarfonshire Sheets XI NE surveyed 1887 revised 1923

OS 1:10,000 map sheet 57SE 1972

Manuscript Sources

⁷ An inn is shown on this site on all the early OS maps. No. 120 High Street is described as probably of 17th century origin (RCAHMSW 1960, 15-16).

⁸ Unpublished manuscript in the possession of the Dean and Chapter of Bangor Cathedral called *Some Bygones of Bangor* collected and edited by Robert J Humphreys 1904. I am very grateful to David Price for this information.

⁹ According to the Tithe Survey of 1840 the buildings alongside the High Street and the plot immediately behind formed part of the Bishop of Bangor's lands, whilst the land outside this belonged to Penrhyn Estate.

Gwynedd Record Office, Caernarfon
John Wood Map of Bangor, 1834
Tithe maps for Bangor (1840)
University of Wales, Bangor
Penrhyn Papers

Published sources

- Bassett T. M., and Davies, B. L. (eds), 1977 *Atlas of Caernarvonshire*. Caernarfon.
Cadw, 1988 *Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, Bangor*. Cardiff.
Carter, H., 1966 *The Towns of Wales: A study in Urban Geography*. Cardiff.
Hyde-Hall, E., 1952 *A Description of Caernarvonshire 1809-11*. Caernarfon.
Ingman, J., 1952 'Glimpses of Social Life in Bangor 1790-1850' *THSC* 13, 36-41.
Jones, P. E., 1970 'The City of Bangor and its Environs at the Time of the Tithe Survey, 1840', *THSC* 31, 64-77.
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Longley, D., 1995 'Excavations at Bangor, Gwynedd, 1981-89', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, CXLIV, 52-70.
RCAHMW, 1960 *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments of Caernarvonshire* Vol II. London.
Soulsby, I., 1983 *The Towns of Medieval Wales*. Phillimore, Sussex.
White, S. I. (ed), 1994 *Bangor: From a Cell to a City*. Bangor.



Plate 1. High Street, Bangor, 1910. (Cowell. J, *Bangor. A Pictorial History*, (1994))



Plate 2. High Street, Bangor, 2004.

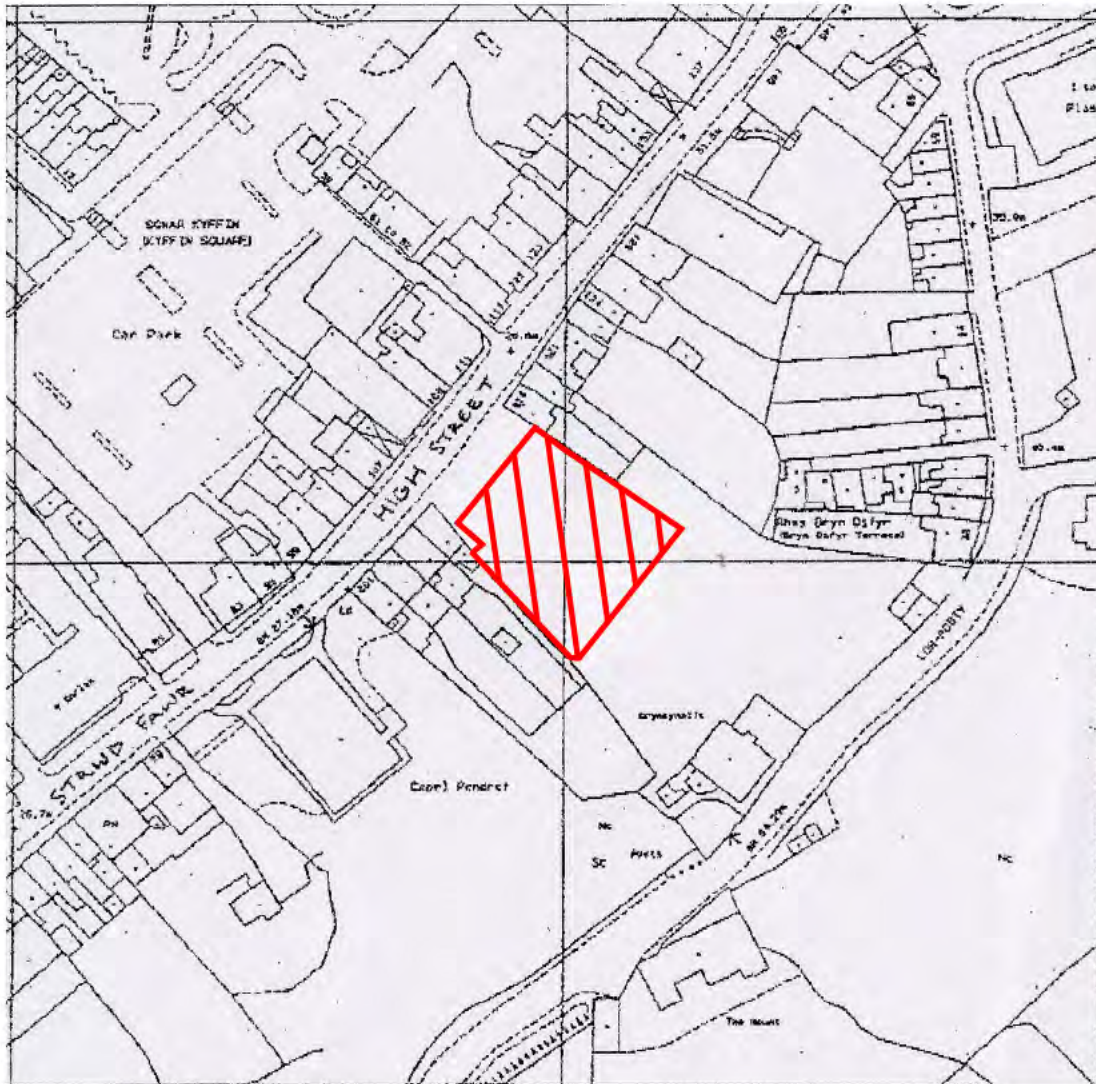


Figure 1. Site location map from Hattrell and Partners. (1:1250)

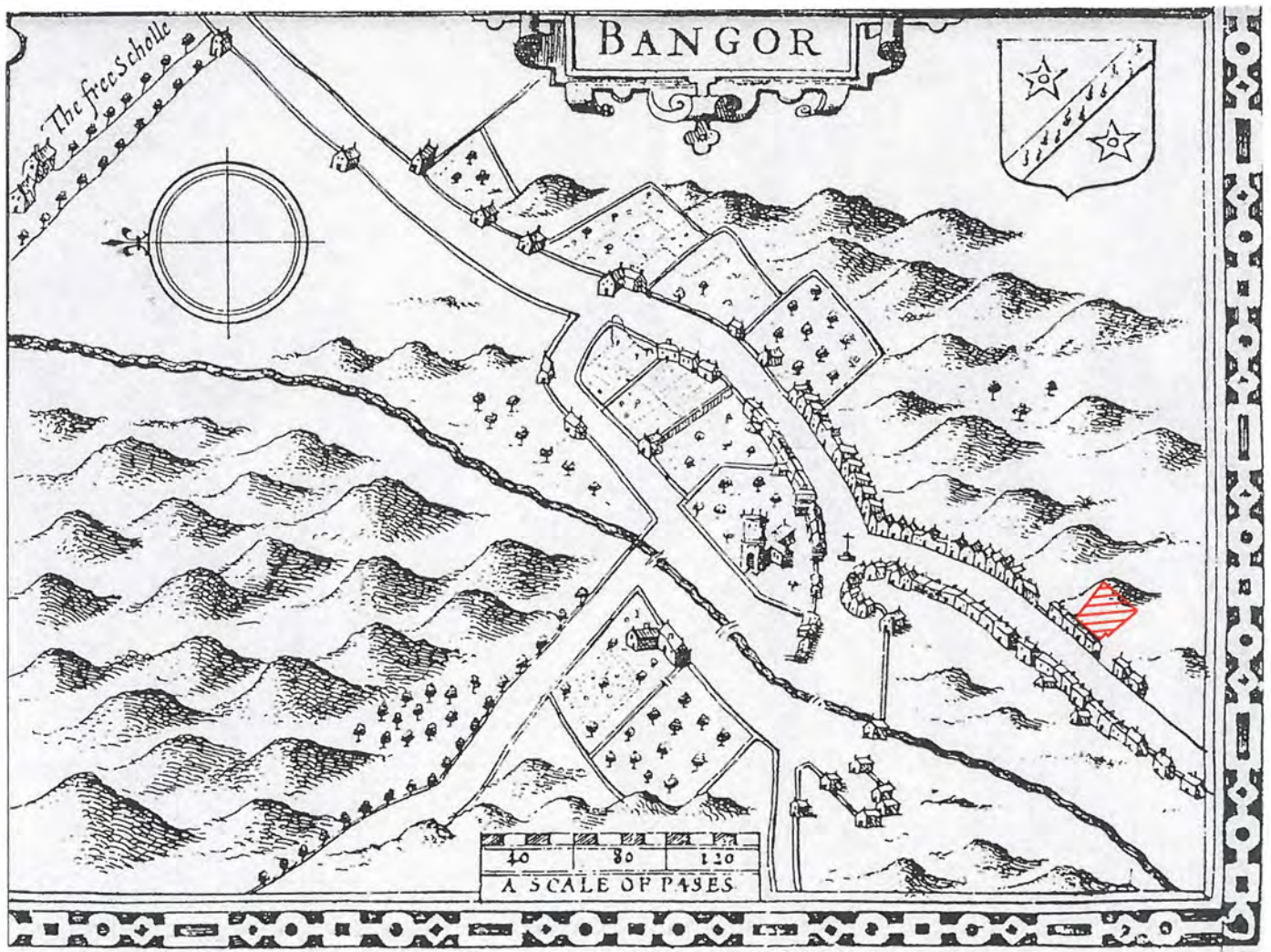


Figure 2. Map of Bangor. 1610 John Speed

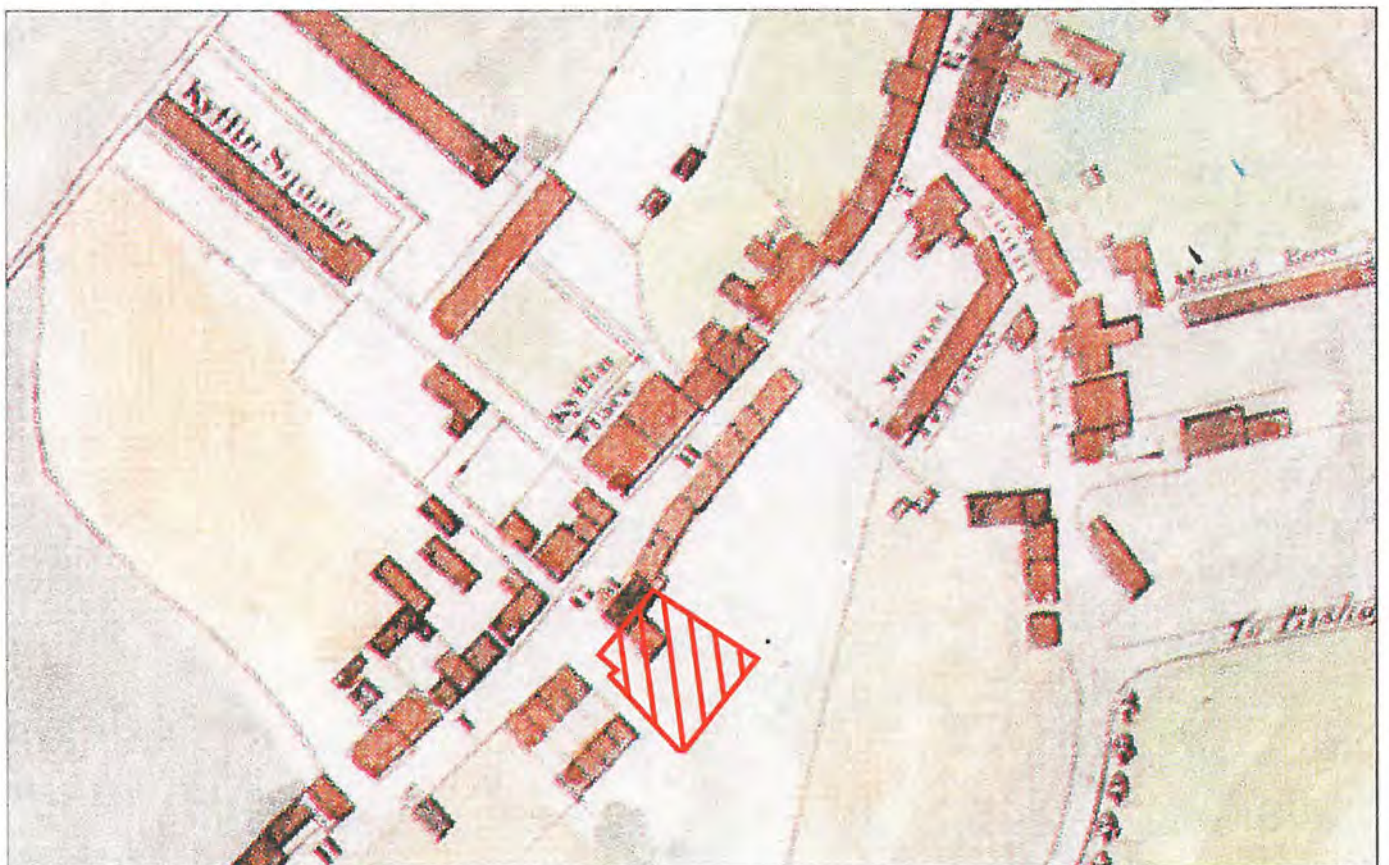


Figure 3. Map of Bangor. 1834 John Wood

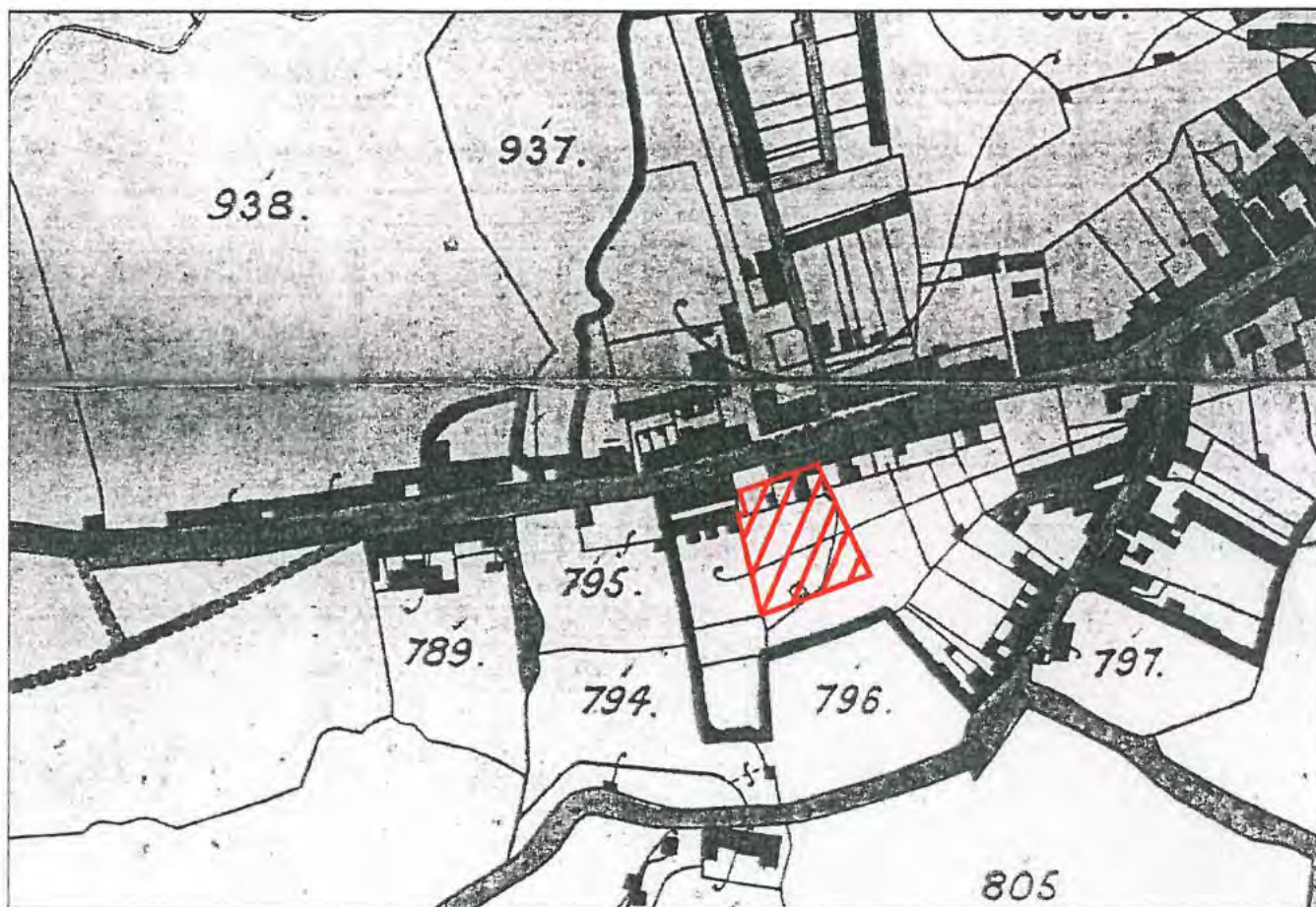


Figure 4. Map of Bangor, 1840 Tithe Map

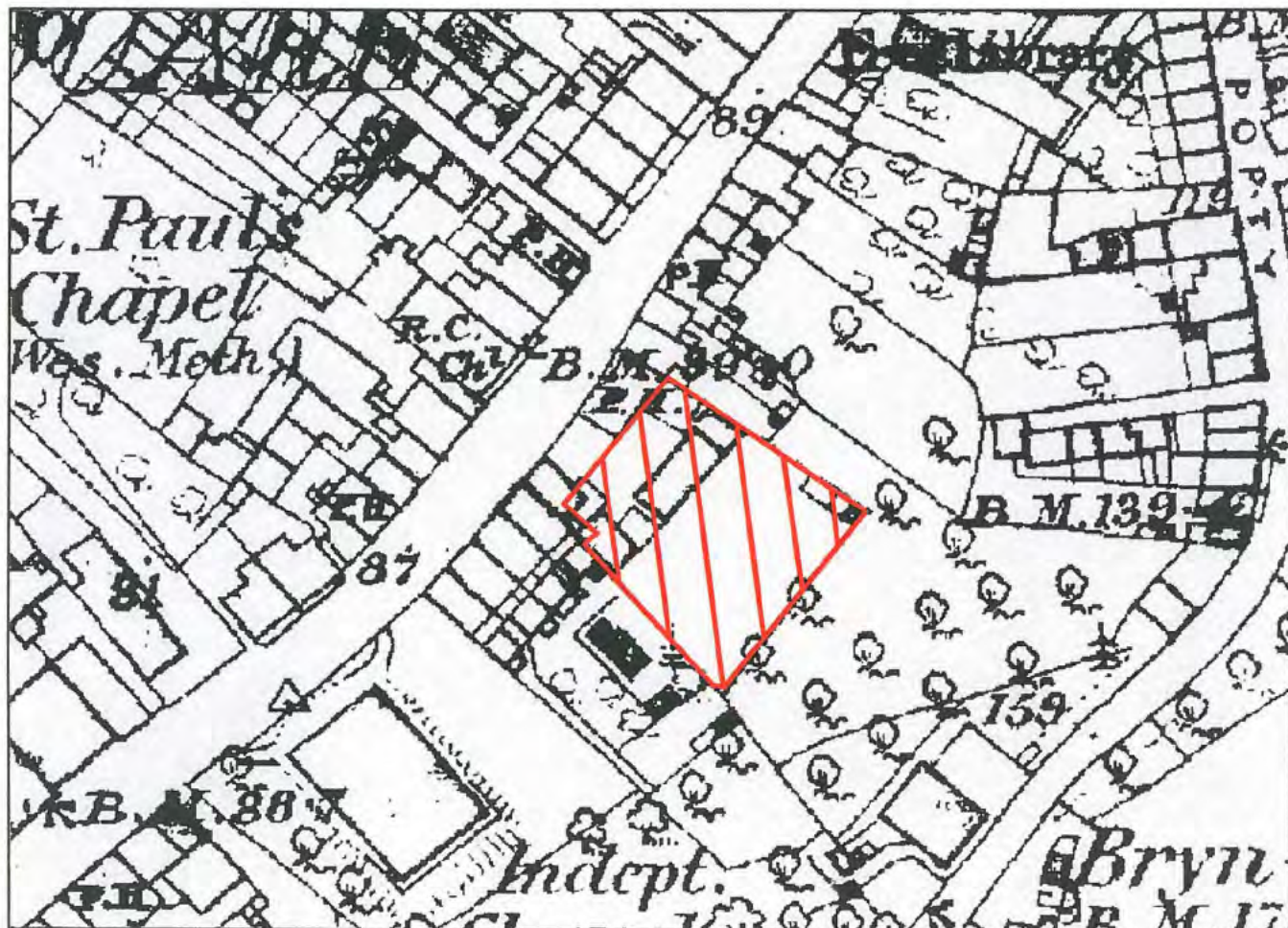


Figure 5. Ordnance Survey 25", Caernarfon VI. 12, 1890 (1:1000)

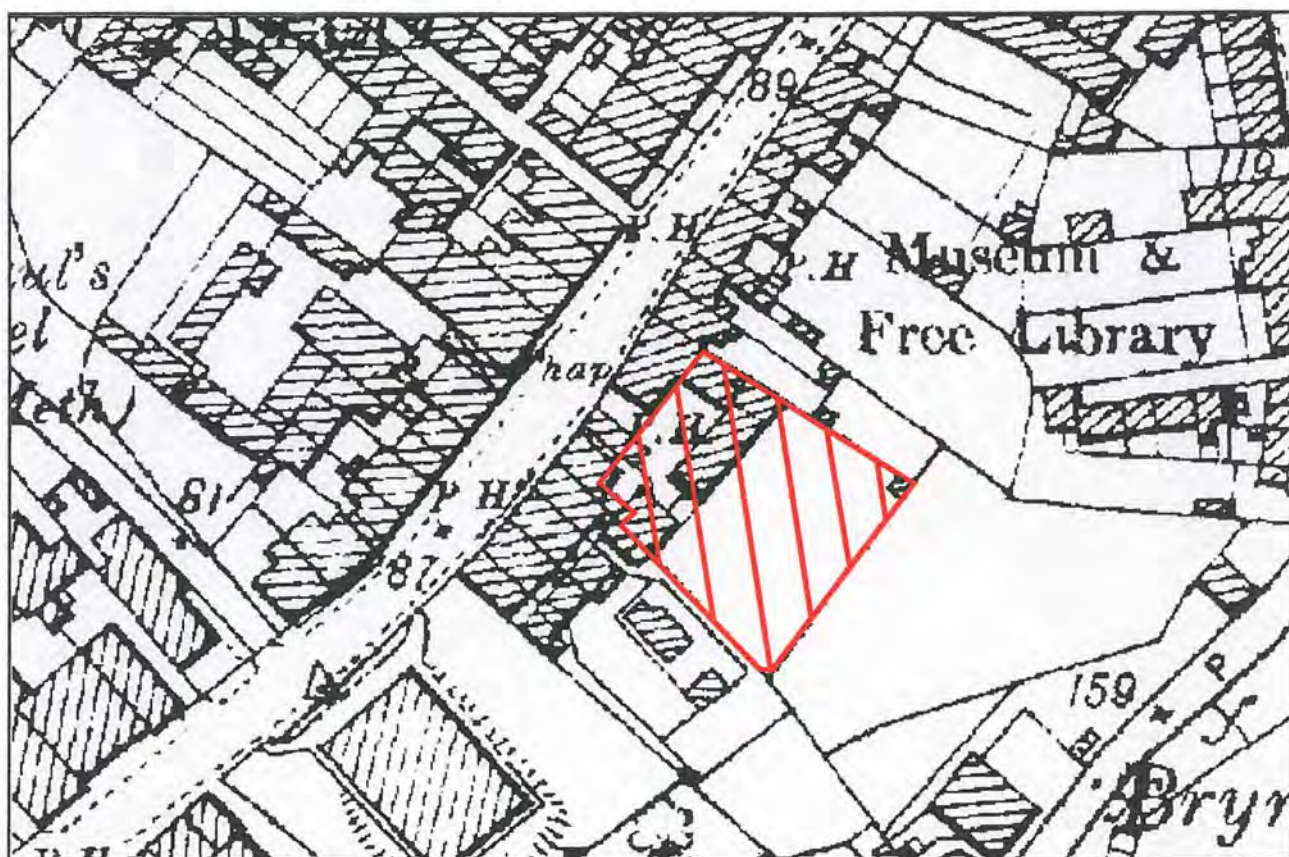


Figure 6. Ordnance Survey 25". Caernarfon VI. 12. 1900 (1:1000)

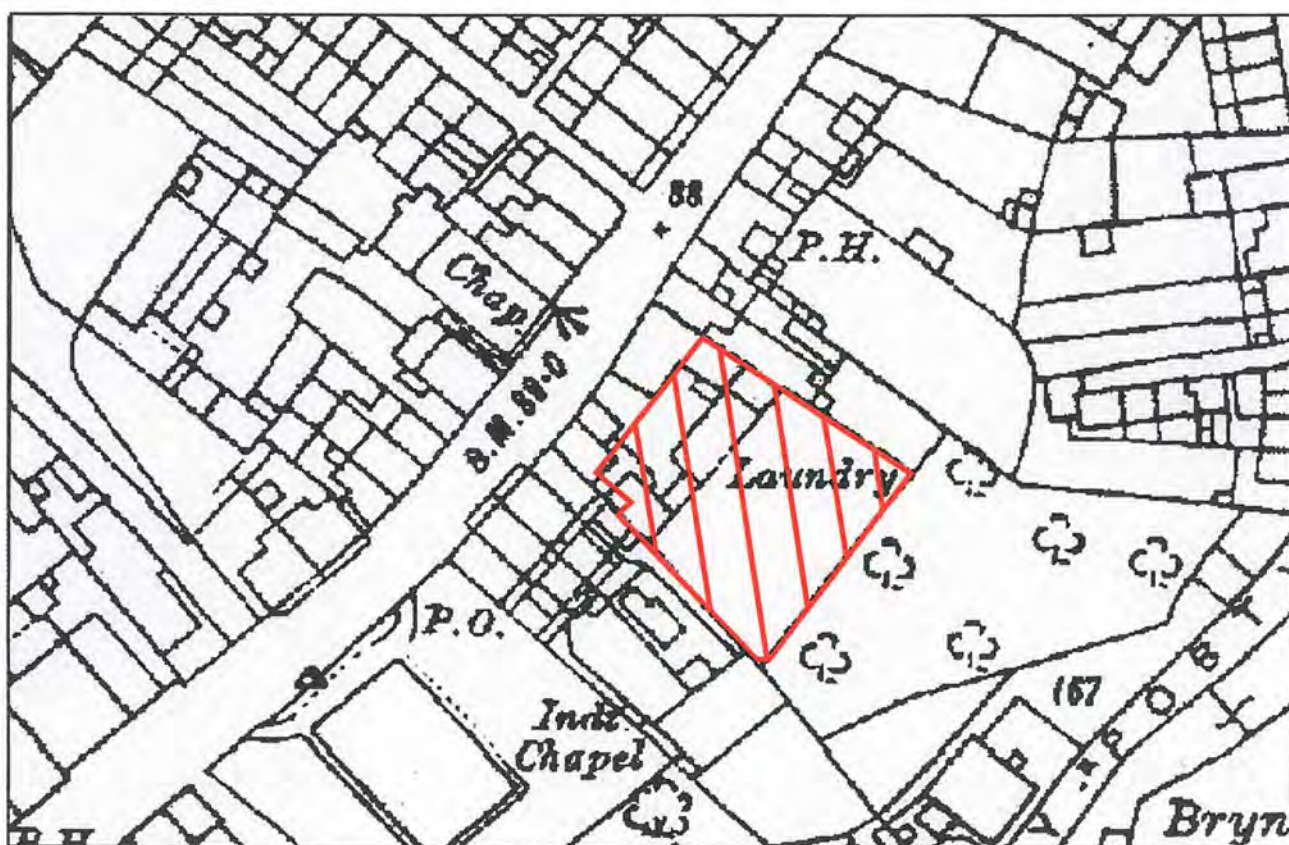


Figure 7. Ordnance Survey 25". Anglesey XIX. 12. 1914 (1:1000)



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