
The Walled Garden, Henllys Hall, Llanfaes



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Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
Craig Beuno, Ffordd y Garth, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2RT

The Walled Garden,
Henllys Hall,
Llanfaes,
Ynys Mon

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Prepared for John Moore and Partners

by

David Longley

A watching brief in the area of the Walled Garden, Henllys Hall, Llanfaes.



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Summary

Construction works were proposed within the area of the walled garden on the west side of Henllys Hall, Llanfaes. Archaeological recording, which included a detailed photographic record of the garden wall, geophysical survey and trial trenching, was undertaken in April and May 2003 by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust. This work found no direct evidence of use earlier than that associated with landscaping and horticultural use during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was, however, suggested that the unusual layout of the enclosure might reflect the former presence of earlier boundaries, possibly associated with the site of the 'llys' or royal estate of the Medieval commote of Dindaethwy. A watching brief during earthmoving was recommended. This report details the results of that watching brief. In addition an intermittent watching brief was maintained in other areas of the development site at Henllys Hall where significant earthmoving determined it to be appropriate (GAT report 488). An additional note of recording in the area of Block U and the golf clubhouse extension to the south of the walled garden is appended to this report.

The garden is first recorded on a survey undertaken in 1786. The wall is of lime mortared, local, undressed stone and stands to a height of around 3.5m. Three entrances shown on a map of 1889 and possibly indicated on a survey of 1830, are still visible, although much altered. A fourth, depicted on the map of 1786, in the east wall, may be represented by a straight joint in the wall's masonry close to the north-east corner of the garden. A glass house is marked on the 1889 OS map against the northern wall and the presence of peach houses was inferred from mortar marks and wire espaliers on the western wall. The presence of a vegetable garden was interpreted from the evidence in trial trench 2 (Hopewell, 2003). Apple trees stood close to the northern wall until recently.

List of Figures

Fig 1. Henllys Hall location map

Fig 2. The walled garden from 1786 to 2004

Fig 3. The walled garden at commencement of topsoil strip, July 2003

Fig 4. Earthmoving in progress, July 2003

Fig 5. The completed development from the south, May 2005

Fig 6. The walled garden, July 2003, archaeological trial trench and former garden path revealed after stripping

Fig 7. Stripped surface with access track, July 2003

Fig 8. The walled garden, July 2003, foundation trenches being dug

Fig 9. Similar viewpoint to figs 3 and 7 after completion of construction work

Fig 10. The clubhouse extension excavation, July 2003

Fig 11. The completed works at Block U and the walled garden

Introduction

Construction works were proposed within the area of the walled garden on the west side of Henllys Hall, Llanfaes. Archaeological recording, which included a detailed photographic record of the garden wall, geophysical survey and trial trenching, was undertaken in April and May 2003 by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust. This work found no direct evidence of use earlier than that associated with landscaping and horticultural use during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was, however, suggested that the unusual layout of the enclosure might reflect the former presence of earlier boundaries.

The location has archaeological potential as the possible site of the 'llys' or royal estate of the Medieval commote of Dindaethwy. An archaeological assessment and evaluation undertaken on the site by Lancaster University Archaeology Unit in 2001, identified limited evidence for structures pre-dating the substantial re-building programme of 1852-3. Their report concluded that medieval remains relating to the llys may have stood on the site now occupied by the present

hall and may not have survived the 19th century building works. Nevertheless, a watching brief was recommended in areas of significant earthmoving and in areas where undated archaeological features had been identified in the 2001 assessment. A recommendation of the 2003 walled garden evaluation (GAT Report 485) was that a watching brief be undertaken during groundworks on the site.

This report details the results of that watching brief. In addition an intermittent watching brief was maintained in other areas of the development site at Henllys Hall where significant earthmoving determined it to be appropriate. An additional note of recording in the area of Block U is appended to this report.

A brief for the archaeological works at Henllys was prepared by Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service who monitored the project on behalf of the Local Authority. A copy of the project design in respect of this brief has been included as an Appendix to previous reports. This watching brief conforms both to the brief prepared by Gwynedd

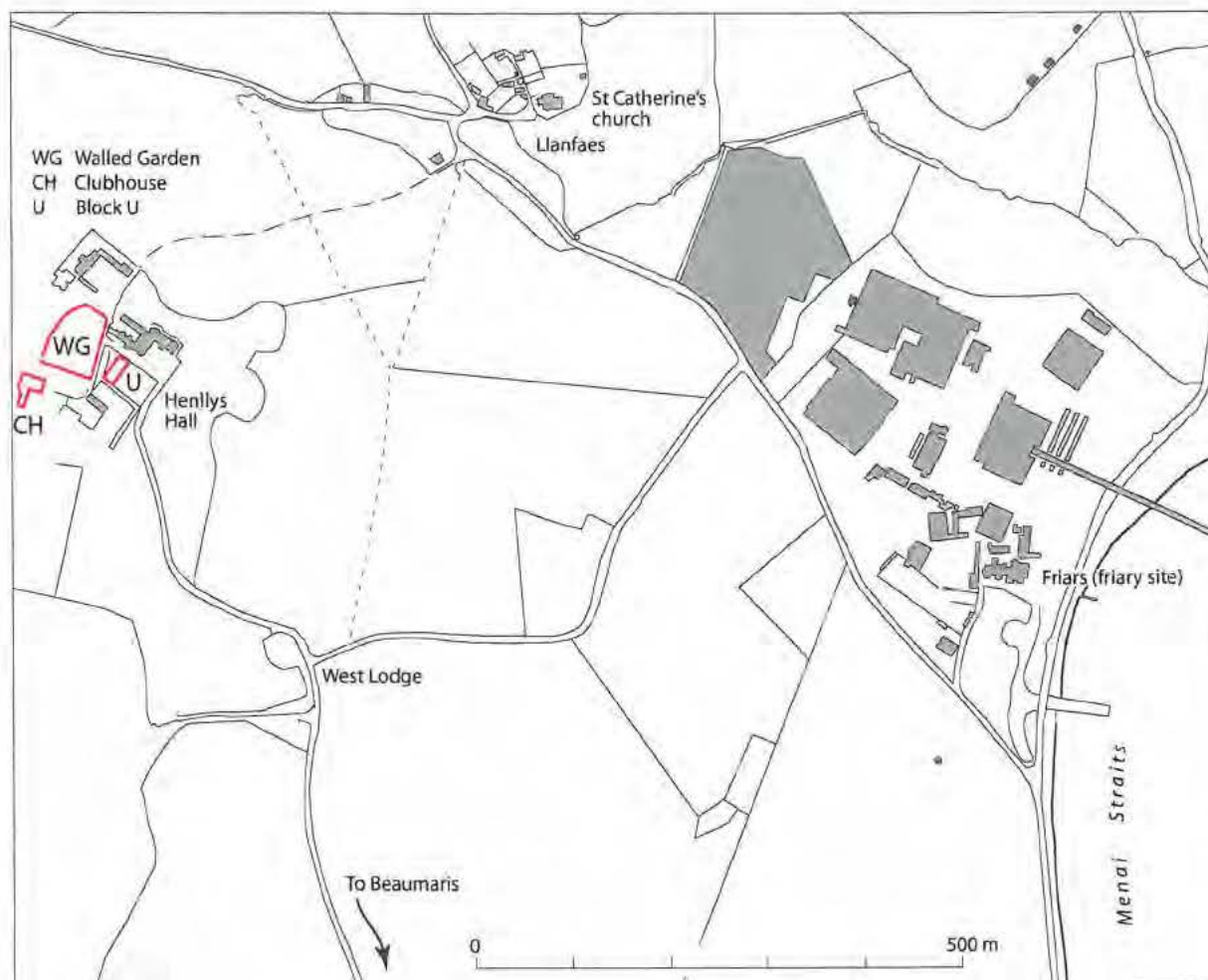


Fig 1.

Archaeological Planning Service and to IFA guidelines as given in Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching brief (IFA 1994, revised 1999). In this, a watching brief is defined as 'formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area of site... where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the

preparation of a report and ordered archive'. The objective of this programme of archaeological works was to create a record of any archaeological deposits or structures that may be revealed through on-site construction activity. Features are described and mitigatory recommendations are offered in the context of the proposed development. Consideration is also given to the group value and integrity of the component parts where appropriate.

The Walled Garden

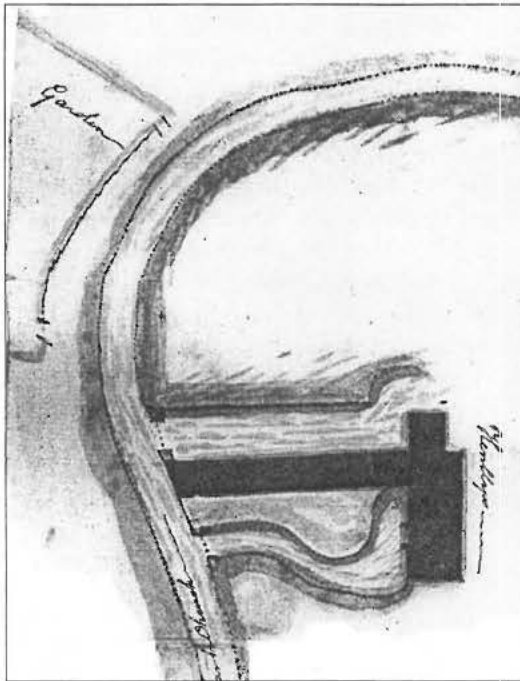
The walled garden lies immediately to the west of the main complex of buildings at Henllys Hall but separated from these buildings by a narrow lane running north-south. The northward continuation of this lane leads across the former fields of Henllys Demesne to St. Catherine's church, Llanfaes; the southward continuation once extended across country towards Bodgylched and, perhaps, continuously to the maerdref of Rhosyr in the adjacent commote. By the 1830s this lane extended no more than 250 metres southward alongside an area of woodland, coming to an abrupt end in adjacent fields. Landscaping and new building work in the 1850s terraced up the ground surface over the aforementioned lane, although its route was preserved, against the eastern wall on the garden.

The following account summarises the detailed description and conclusions included in GAT report 485 (Hopewell 2003) with minor additions which, in particular, make reference to the depiction of the garden on a plan of 1786 and the potential for a straight joint in the wall, referred to in GAT report 485, being one of the entrances shown in 1786.

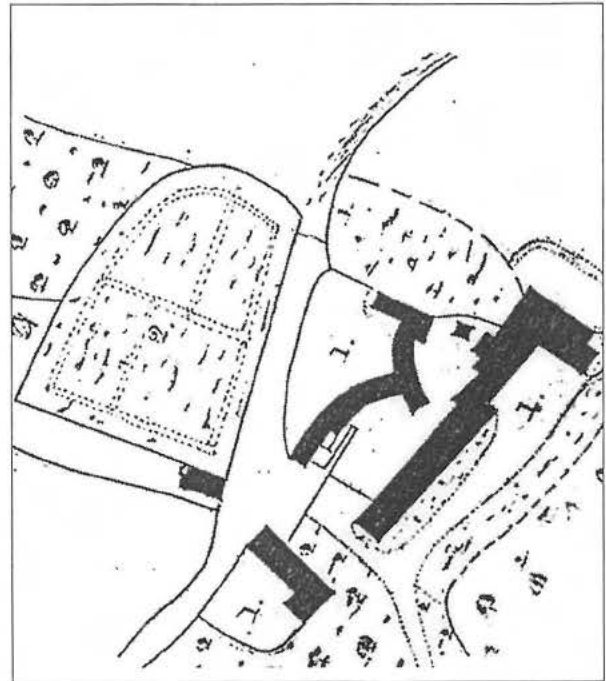
The garden is first recorded on a survey undertaken in 1786 in preparation for the construction of a new road from Henllys Lane to St. Catherine's church. Henllys Hall is shown, as is the 'Old Road' which, at that time passed through Henllys, between the hall and the walled garden, en-route to the church via a northerly route. Little detail of the garden is visible, although two gates or entrances are shown at the north and south ends, respectively, of the wall flanking the road. Forty years later a more detailed survey of Henllys Demesne (UWB Henllys MS 1191) shows the garden clearly. It is subrectangular in plan with curving north and east walls. A path is shown running around the inside of the wall. The garden is bisected in an east-west direction by another path and two additional paths run north and south from this. A small building is shown abutting the outside of the eastern end of the southern wall. The area is

next portrayed in detail on the 1889 first edition 1:2500 OS map. A new building is shown on the outside of the north-eastern apex of the wall along with what appears to be a glasshouse in a corresponding position on the inside of the wall but offset slightly to the east. The paths have been modified and now run to three entrances; one in the southern corner, one in the western corner and one in the north east wall, to the west of the glasshouse and running into the building on the outside of the wall. Two east-west paths are shown along with deciduous trees. The layout is unchanged on the 1900 1:2500 map although the trees are not shown. The 1919 map shows no details of the interior apart from the glasshouse outline. Discussion with a local gardener suggests later use as a vegetable garden and the presence of peach houses on the north-western wall.

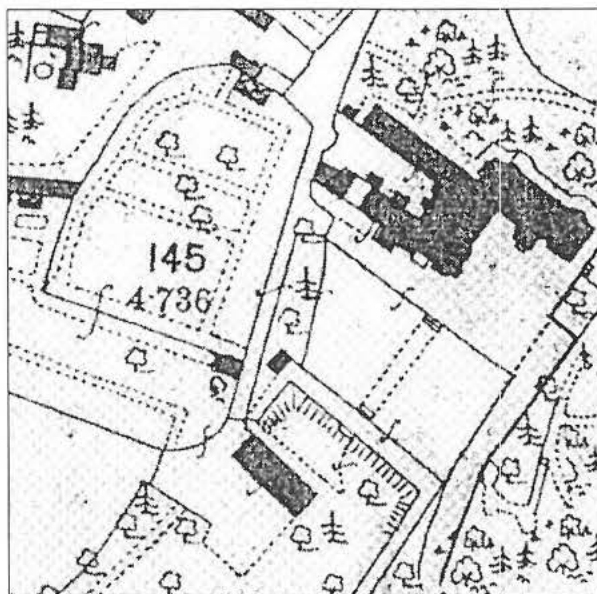
Before redevelopment, the garden had retained its subrectangular plan, with dimensions of 68m x 54m, as shown on the 1830 map. The wall is of lime mortared, local, undressed stone and stands to a height of around 3.5m. The top of the wall is built to an inverted V-shape in section. The building shown at the south of the garden on the 1830 map still stands. The building incorporates the garden wall and may be contemporary with it. A change in the masonry style beneath the eaves suggests that the roof line has been lifted. The building is currently of two stories with a door in the west wall along with a window and door facing into the garden. A small fireplace and chimney can be seen in the eastern gable. The two buildings at the north of the garden had been lost before redevelopment. An increase in the height of the wall presumably marked the position of the building to the outside and brick foundations marked the site of the glass house. The site of the peach houses was marked by mortar marks on the west wall and the remains of wire espaliers. All three entrances shown on the 1889 map were still visible. The two southern entrances had been widened in recent years by demolition of lengths of the wall but enough of the masonry surrounds have survived to



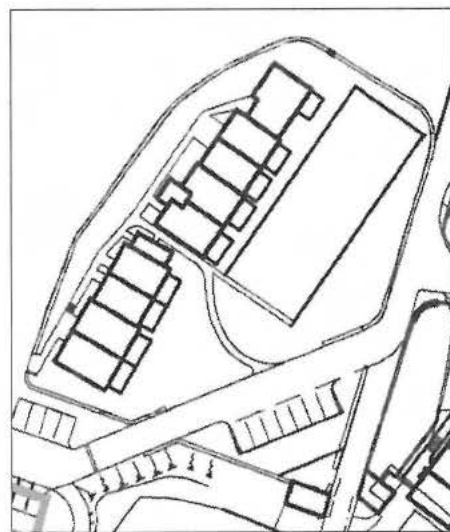
1786



1830



1889



2004

Fig 2. The walled garden from 1786 to 2004

suggest that all three were of a similar construction. The northern entrance is a 1.8m high and 0.7 wide doorway constructed from dressed sandstone. This originally appears to have held a wooden frame and door but numerous holes and minor modifications suggest that a series of different gates have subsequently been used.

A prominent straight joint could be seen in the masonry close to the north-east corner of the garden. The upper half of the wall shows signs of repair with patches of reused dressed sandstone and brick. The function of the straight joint is open to debate. It may be one side of an early blocked entrance, perhaps one of those indicated on the 1786 plan. The stonework to the north of the straight joint is more massive than to the south. This change in masonry style continues for some distance and may represent two phases of garden wall. The eccentric shape of the garden suggests the reuse of earlier field boundaries or a modification of a more conventionally shaped enclosure. There was a slight break of slope running across the garden from the straight joint and it is possible that this represents an earlier line of the wall or a boundary predating the garden.

Three trial trenches produced evidence for horticultural use of the walled garden. The surviving features in the upper contexts produced evidence for use as a vegetable garden in the late 19th early 20th

century. Over 1m of loamy soil was identified in all three trenches possibly representing two phases of deposition. The upper 0.7m or so contained lime and occasional 19th century pottery and the lower part yielded no finds apart from some charcoal of uncertain origin in trench 3. A layer of gravel between the two contexts in trench one suggests that the difference between the two contexts may not simply be the effects of horticulture in the upper part of an unusual depth of humic soil. Trench one revealed two clearly defined contexts suggesting that there has been a substantial amount of soil brought into this area, presumably during landscaping before or at the time of the construction of the garden. It should be noted that dating evidence, even in the 19th century contexts was sparse and wider excavation would be needed to confirm the presence of landscaping at this time.

The excavations uncovered no evidence for earlier use relating to the medieval activity in the area. All residual finds in the agricultural soil, with the exception of a single flint core, related to 19th century and later activity.

Watching Brief

This was undertaken between the 2nd and 24th July 2003 with additional photography in May 2005.

Earthmoving and other works within the walled garden included:

- Breaching the wall on the eastern side to allow access for machinery and materials.
- Soil stripping within the walled garden from south of a point midway along the east wall to the south west corner to allow hardcore for a vehicle track to be laid.
- Soil stripping in the area of the proposed foundations for structures within the walled garden. Trenching for the foundations themselves.

Recording

A 5m gap was created in the eastern wall at about 23m from the south-eastern corner of the garden. An original entrance, later widened to a gap of 2.5m survives close to the south-east corner, defined by dressed stone jambs. A similarly enlarged original entrance, with a brick jamb on the south side, stands at the south-west corner. Topsoil was stripped to a depth of c.200mm between the gate in the south-

west corner and the new gap in the eastern side to a width of c.10m at its western end, narrowing to c.5.5m where it approached the original south-western entrance. A field drain was exposed at about 1.20m from the eastern wall and parallel with it. Orange clay and stones were exposed at either end of the access track close to the garden wall with more gravel close to the south-eastern gate. Good brown topsoil was exposed along the rest of its length. The track was surfaced with hardcore.

Soil stripping continued north of the track over the entire western part of the walled garden to a depth of around 300mm. The greatest depth of soil removed was in the northern part of the garden, at about 600mm. A garden path, characterised by the presence of orange-brown gritty soil, was identified c.2.5m from the western wall. Trenches 1 and 2 of the archaeological evaluation of May 2003 were identified as were several lengths of 3½ inch square lead and round sectioned ceramic water conduits. A concentration of lime mortar and brick was observed close to the northern entrance where a glass house is marked on the 1889 OS 1:2500 map.

Foundation trenches were machine dug to a depth of c.1m up to 1.5m in total, below the pre-existing turf line in the western part of the garden. A large gap was knocked through the southern wall to facilitate the movement of machinery. The exposed sections of the foundation trenches were observed but no features of archaeological significance were identified.

Conclusions

The garden wall was damaged in two places. Breaches were made on the eastern side and on the southern side to facilitate access and movement for the works within. Topsoil removal within the walls revealed garden features associated with the nineteenth and twentieth century garden. No features of archaeological significance earlier than the construction and use of the garden itself were identified.

Block U

An exposed north-south section on the western periphery of the former formal terraced garden in the area south of the main hall and now occupied by Block U was observed and recorded. This section revealed an exposure of rock, cut back and cut into to a depth of between 700mm and 1050mm. The rock was revetted on the northern side by a stone wall and was, presumably, similarly revetted on the eastern side as indicated on the OS 1:2500 map of 1889. Behind this wall, to the west there lay, over the

rock, a deposit of shaley rubble up against the wall and, to the south of this, a deposit of orange brown soil to a depth of between 650mm and 970mm. Between the rock and the orange brown soil there extended a thin spread of lime mortar. To the south of the formal garden an exposed section of the terrace above, on which a tennis court once stood revealed a similar exposure of cut-back rock.

It would seem that the formal garden had been terraced to some depth into the local rock. The mortar spread might be explained as resulting from the demolition of the early nineteenth-century structures in this area (referred to in Report No.488) as was the case in the exposures adjacent to block K. The demolition horizon overlay the rock, the formal garden itself was terraced into the rock as part of the re-design of the central area of the demesne around 1852. This work may well have removed much, if not all of the evidence of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century structures in this area.

The area of the clubhouse extension south of the Walled Garden

An extension to the golf course clubhouse involved substantial earthmoving into the hillside sloping up behind and to the south of the walled garden. The excavation was observed. Nothing of archaeological significance was identified or recorded.

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Fig 3. The walled garden at commencement of topsoil strip, July 2003



Fig 4. Earthmoving in progress, July 2003



Fig 5. The completed development from the south, May 2005



Fig 6. The walled garden, July 2003, archaeological trial trench and former garden path revealed after stripping



Fig 7. Stripped surface with access track, July 2003



Fig 8. The walled garden, July 2003, foundation trenches being dug



Fig 9. Similar viewpoint to figs 3 and 7 after completion of construction work



Fig 10. The clubhouse extension excavation, July 2003



Fig. 11 The completed works at Block U and the walled garden

