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# Ports and Harbours of Gwynedd

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## A Threat Related Assessment

GAT Project No. 1824

Report No. 641

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Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
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## **G1824 PORTS AND HARBOUR (2005-6)**

### **Introduction**

Recent research on coastal archaeology undertaken for Cadw by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts has highlighted the lack of archaeological knowledge of harbour locations and remains (Davidson A (ed), 2002 *The Coastal Archaeology of Wales*, 134-5). This includes both the archaeology of early landing places, the development of the medieval port, and the early post-medieval ports until they were superseded by the larger railway-linked ports of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a consequence a Cadw funded study of ports and harbours is being undertaken by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts. This report contains the results of the second year's work on five harbours around the Gwynedd coast. The report is laid out so that each of the five studies can be printed off separately from the remainder. This will allow relevant copies to be given to interested persons. It is intended to circulate copies of relevant reports to the respective harbour master, the conservation and coastal officer in each local authority, marina companies, and other relevant parties.

The second phase of this project has assessed the harbours of Conwy, Beaumaris, Criccieth, Harlech and Port Dinorwic. The first four were chosen to examine the relationship of Edward I's castles and boroughs with maritime communications. It was usual for each castle to have its own dock, that would have allowed protected passage between the ship and the castle. This was certainly the case at Conwy, Beaumaris and Harlech. Criccieth was initially designed by Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, and was apparently not constructed to allow protected passage between ship and castle. In addition to the castle dock each borough had its own quay, which was where the majority of the trading took place. Again, quays are readily identifiable at Conwy and Beaumaris. The borough at Harlech was small, and perched high on the rock above the sea, so a harbour never developed here. At Criccieth the trading harbour apparently developed in the bay east of the castle, and below the Edwardian borough.

The slate harbour at Port Dinorwic was examined as a comparison with the slate harbours of Penrhyn, Caernarfon and Porthmadog which were assessed in the first year of the study. It bears close resemblance to the development at Penrhyn, as both were owned and managed by a single estate, and were dependent upon a single quarry. Port Dinorwic is of particular interest as a late example of an engineer designed dock, with an entrance lock, inner basin and dry dock, built 1897-1902.

### **Aims of the Project**

The aims of the 2005-6 project are to undertake an archaeological assessment of five harbours in Gwynedd, and to recommend management proposals that clearly reflect the use and management of the harbour, and will be useable by those involved with the management of ports and the coastal zone.

### **Methodology**

A desk-based assessment has been undertaken for each. The regional Sites and Monuments Record formed the starting point, but the high number of standing buildings involved with the project meant that the records of Listed Buildings have also provided significant relevant information. Primary source material has included the OS County Series maps from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (usually c. 1888-1890) to the early 1920's. County Tithe maps, and relevant estate maps, in particular for Conwy, though less so for the others, have proved useful.

Secondary sources, in particular railway histories by Boyd and Baughan, have been of particular use. R. Chamber Jones has undertaken a considerable amount of work on Felinheli, and Lewis Lloyd at Harlech. The Cadw guides to the castles have been of considerable use, as well as earlier descriptions of the castles by writers such as Harold Hughes and Sidney Toy. The works by Colin Gresham in the area around Criccieth have provided information on the development of the borough.

## **CONWY HARBOUR**

### **Introduction**

This report contains the results of an archaeological assessment undertaken as part of a wider assessment of ports and harbours throughout Wales. The assessments have been undertaken by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts and funded by Cadw. The report has been compiled by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust.

### **Aims of the project**

The aim of the project is to identify the nature and status of the heritage resource within the study area, and to aid and encourage the incorporation of the resource into the management and future development of the coastal zone.

### **Location and topography**

The large bay of Conwy is bounded by the Great Orme, the north Wales coast to the south, and Anglesey and the mouth of the Menai Strait to the west. Alongside the Great Orme is the mouth of the Conwy, one of the largest rivers within Gwynedd, and a significant topographical feature that marks both physical and cultural changes. West of the river lie the dramatic uplands of Snowdonia, of igneous and Ordovician rocks, and the stronghold of the native princes of Gwynedd. To the east is the cantref of Rhos, part of the Perfeddwlad or Four Cantrefs of north-east Wales, with a wide, agriculturally productive, coastal belt overlying rocks of Silurian age, and a tendency for the occupants to look east rather than west for cultural influences. Conwy lies on the west bank of the river, some 2Km from the river mouth. Like the Rivers Mawddach and Dyfi on the west coast of Wales, the Conwy was used for transporting goods along its navigable length, which reached nearly to Llanrwst. Timber, lead and slate would be carried down river to be exchanged at Conwy onto larger ships, whereas general trading goods would be taken upriver from Conwy to the market towns of Trefriw and Llanrwst.

The relatively flat coastal plain along the north coast of Wales was, and still is, a much-used communication route, albeit hampered by the massive intrusion of Penmaenmawr, whilst the Conwy valley allowed for communications from the coast into the mountainous interior. The location was therefore a relevant one, combining good harbourage, good landward communication and a site where 'east met west, a kind of frontier zone' (Carr 1989, 13).

The site of the castle and town lies between the R. Conwy to the east, the R. Gyffin to the south and the coast to the north, whilst being partly protected by Conwy mountain to the west. The castle was built on a dramatic craggy rock outcrop, whilst the town lay on ground sloping up to the west – a more defensible position than its predecessor on the east side of the river at Deganwy. The exact location of the harbour that served Deganwy is not known, though if a direct line between the castle and the coast is assumed, it may have lain north of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century quay constructed as part of the railway improvements. A quay at Conwy must have been established when the Cistercian abbey was founded, but again its location remains unknown, and it was not until the construction of the Edwardian castle and borough that masonry quays were constructed of which remains still exist.

## **HISTORIC BACKGROUND**

### **Prehistoric and Roman**

The presence of submerged peats off the north and west shores of the Great Orme, and off Morfa Conwy, accompanied by finds of Bronze Age date, suggests the coast line in prehistoric times was quite different to that of today, and that much of the outer estuary was once land (Smith 2002, 25-6).

The evidence for prehistoric settlement in the area prior to the Iron Age is limited to casual finds and occasional burial and ritual sites. Evidence for exploitation of the copper ores on the Orme in prehistoric times is growing as a result of excavations undertaken by the Great Orme Mines, though we are a long way from understanding trade and communication patterns. A bronze axe was found on Castle Rock at Conwy.

Later prehistoric and Roman settlements, as is typical in north Wales, are better evidenced. Tremlyd was a fort of this period on the west side of the Orme, and though recorded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it has since been destroyed by coastal erosion. Other hillforts occupied Conwy Mountain on the west side of the Conwy and the hill at Bryn Euryn on the east side. Evidence for settlements can be found adjacent to the forts and on the Vaerdref by Deganwy.

The Romans chose to build a fort some 8Km south of the mouth of the river, at Canovium (Caerhun). The principal Roman routes also went through there, over Bwlch y Ddeufaen to Aber.

Deganwy castle, built on two adjoining rocks on the east side of the R. Conwy, is a site with Roman or earlier origins, and was certainly of some importance by the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It was utilised by the Normans when Robert of Rhuddlan built a castle there during his campaigns of the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, and Llywelyn ap Iorwerth and Henry III both refortified the site (RCAHMW 1956, 152-5; Alcock 1967). However, when Edward I came to build a castle at the mouth of the Conwy, he chose a different site on the west bank of the river, already occupied by a Cistercian monastery.

### **Conwy castle and town**

The first known settlement at Conwy dates from the establishment of a Cistercian monastery in c. 1192 on the west bank of the river and close to the confluence with the River Gyffin. The monastery had been established by monks from Strata Florida, who had first settled in north-west Caernarfonshire in 1186, but had moved to Aberconwy by 1192. The importance of the monastery grew under the patronage of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, who was buried there in 1240, and who kept a hall there for his use. However Edward's decision to use the site for a new town and castle required the monks to move up river to Maenan, where they were granted new lands in compensation for the loss of their old ones (Hays 1963).

The building of the castle and town were started in March 1283, within days of the arrival of the King to the site. On 17 March Sir Peter of Brampton, who had previously been in charge of diggers at Flint, was on his way to recruit 200 woodcutters and 100 diggers; he was now ordered to hurry them to Conwy, if necessary paying their journey wages out of his own pocket (Taylor 1974). Construction was largely complete by 1287, although works continued into the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

### **The Medieval Quay**

Although ships would have passed up and down the Conwy estuary from earliest times, and ferries crossed from side to side, no quays or jetties associated with these activities are likely to have been constructed before the arrival of the Cistercians. However, if they did build a quay, it would have been subsumed by that built by Edward, who saw the construction of a strong stone or timber quay as an essential part of the defence of the town and castle. The Edwardian castles were usually designed with both a castle dock and a town quay, the principal function of the former to aid defence, and of the latter for trading. Conwy was no exception to this, and possessed both a town quay and a castle dock.

### **The castle water gate and dock**

The castle water gate led through a door in the north-west corner of the east barbican, from where steps, similar to those that remain at Harlech, led round the east side of the barbican to the centre tower. Here a cleft was made in the rocks, and ships could moor alongside to load and discharge cargo and passengers. The line of the steps can still be seen on the outer face of the tower alongside the gate through the barbican wall. The remains of the steps and dock were finally destroyed during construction of the suspension bridge in the early 1820's, but are shown on the Hatfield House map of c. 1600 and again on a view engraved by the Buck brothers in 1742. The level platforms on which two of the towers were built were



still visible on the north side of the road in the 1950's (see RCAHMW 1956, fig 60; Hemp 1941), but these were destroyed when the road bridge was constructed in 1958.

### **The town quay**

The quay at Conwy stretched along the east side of the town walls, along the west bank of the river. Access could be gained through the town walls at two points: through the Lower Gate (Porth Isaf), which was a heavily defended twin towered gateway, and through the smaller, lesser defended Postern Gate. The quay was protected on the north by a spur wall which ran some 60m east from the north-east corner of the town walls, and terminated in a round tower in the River Conwy. The wall was designed to act both as a breakwater and as a military defence. A small gateway through it allowed access onto the quay from the outside of the town walls. The spur wall was built in two stages: the stone used in the upper part of the wall is of a different character to the lower, and historical records indicate the lower 12ft was built during the years 1285-6, whilst the upper levels may not have been completed until the early 14<sup>th</sup> century (Taylor 1974, 352). Severe flooding took place in about 1313 which caused damage to the town walls, and in 1315 costs of £93 15s 3 ½d are recorded as being expended on the repair and emendation of the quay of Conway (Taylor 1974, 350). Minor repairs continued to be made to the quay during the later Middle Ages, and official expenditure on the quay is recorded as late as 1535 (Lewis 1912, 105).

Archaeological and later historical evidence shows the medieval quay was located in the area between the Lower Gate and the spur wall. There is a quay, or at least a sea wall, depicted on the Hatfield House plan of c. 1600 (reproduced in Taylor 1990, 8); the map is not entirely accurate in detail as it shows the spur wall leaving from just north of the lower gate rather than the corner of the town walls. However, the quay is located in the area between the lower gate and the spur wall to the north, and this must be the medieval town quay that was still being maintained in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Several structures are shown along the quay, though south of the lower gate there are no structures depicted. There are two ships shown drawn up on the beach outside the lower gate. Pennant's map (drawn before 1781) marks the quay as a wall running out from the spur wall and parallel with the town wall, and in the text he states "In front [*i.e.* of the town] is an extensive quay, from which is a delightful view up and down the river". No structures are marked anywhere between the town wall and the sea. Similarly another late 18<sup>th</sup> century map (UWB Mostyn 7289) marks the 'key' between the lower gate and spur wall, but again depicts no structures. High tide is shown on both maps to reach the quay, though the Mostyn map shows dry land immediately alongside the spur wall. The Holland map of 1777 (also showing revisions of 1810 coloured pink) is in greater detail, and marks 'Strand' along the quay, and shows at least two houses built against the town wall just outside the lower gate (marked 'c' and 'd' on plan). The strand is the first depiction of Lower Gate Street. Two mid-18<sup>th</sup> century engravings are available, one by the Buck brothers and one by Boydell. The Buck Brother's print of 1742, entitled "The south-east view of Conway Castle, in the County of Caernarvon" is not very clear, although it appears to show buildings lying against the town wall north of the lower gate, but once again no structures between the lower gate and the castle. Boydell's print of 1749 more clearly shows structures lying between the lower gate and spur wall, as well as the quay wall along the same length.

A well built stone wall was found running along the length of the quay during a watching brief in 1993 and again in 1994. The wall foundation comprised a single course of large squared stone blocks, whilst the upper fabric was irregularly coursed and shaped, but well faced. The wall was 2.3m wide and survived to a height of 2.2m on the seaward face (GAT Report 111). The wall is best interpreted as the front face of the medieval quay that lay between the spur wall and the gate at Porth Isaf.

### **The quay in later times**

The port of Conwy in the late medieval period had not been of great economic importance, and its principal function was the import of essential goods, and its use as a fishing port (Lewis 1912 p 195). This continued up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the expansion of the fishing industry combined with the transport of metal ores and slates, led to an increase in the demand for port facilities. In addition, a quay higher up the river had become unusable following changes in the course of the river, possibly caused by the construction of the embankment and bridge. The flat-bottomed boats bringing slates and metal ores down-river from Trefriw

were therefore now unloaded at Conwy quay. One other industry associated with Conwy was the production of pearls, which were found in the mussels collected in the estuary. An exceptionally large pearl in the Crown Jewels was presented to Catherine, the consort of Charles II by her chamberlain Sir Richard Wynne of Gwydir. In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century there are said to have been some 40 people employed in the pearl industry, which produced an average of 160 ounces of pearl a week (Williams 1996).

In order to handle the increased shipping a new quay was constructed in 1833. This was designed by W A Provis, who had been the resident engineer in charge of the building of the suspension bridge. The scheme had been approved by the burgesses in 1830 (CRO XB2/16) and in 1831 the minutes state "At a general meeting of the Aldermen, Bailiffs and Burgesses held at the Guild Hall and the said Borough on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of February ordered a Contract to be made out with Messrs William Hughes, John Hughes, John Jones and William George, Masons and their Bail for the building of the New Quay under the town according to the plans and specifications of Provis for the sum of £1260". Although a copy of the specifications has not been found, this is taken to be that section of the present quay which projects beyond the line of the remainder, and is constructed of strong, squared stone blocks. A contemporary account is given by Williams (1835) who states "The harbour is now made extremely commodious by a very fine quay of excellent masonry and great extent, which was undertaken by the corporation, and completed, at an expense to them of thirteen hundred pound in 1833".

### **Description of archaeological features**

#### North of spur wall

North of the medieval spur wall lay the workshops of the Conwy River Boatyard (PRN 19746), established in 1904 by Cumberland boat builder John Crossfield on the site of earlier works. Three workshops, constructed of timber framing clad with various materials including plywood and corrugated iron, were demolished in 1993 (GAT Report 73), and there are no upstanding remains. Perhaps associated with the boat building works were the remains of a stone and timber wharf recorded within the inter-tidal silts in 1994 (PRN 19762-3; GAT Report 111).

Remains of earlier masonry structures (PRN 19761) thought to be of 18<sup>th</sup> century date were noted close to the spur gate (Porth yr Aden). Further east the remains of a possible early timber quay were found against the spur wall within the inter-tidal silts, consisting of three layers of 'substantial horizontal timbers' (PRN 19757; GAT Report 34).

#### South of the spur wall to the Lower Gate

Between the spur wall and the lower gate lay the medieval quay, the remains of which have been described above. A test pit dug in 1991 revealed the base of the spur wall to be some 3m below the present surface (PRN 19759; GAT Report 34). A timber pier (PRN 19748) was built at the end of the spur wall at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to serve the river steamers. Nine upright timbers are still visible in the silt. A large boat house lay south of the pier, and a long timber baulk (PRN 19758) once projected at right-angles to the wall, was probably part of this arrangement. The baulk has been taken up and now lies alongside the wall. Mortared masonry at the end of the spur wall marks the remains of the medieval round tower that once stood out in the water.

The street is on two levels, the lower level being nearer the houses on the west side, and is that area called the 'strand' on the Holland map of 1776. A stone revetment separates the two parts. The Holland map seems to indicate the first development of structures on the 'strand' or Lower Gate Street, and No. 10, the Smallest House and No's 11 and 12 are all of c. 1800 – they are not indicated on the map, but are of late 18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> century style (Cadw Listed Building description). No's 13 to 18 are a terrace of 2 storey cottages of mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century date, and a similar row formerly lay between the Liverpool Arms and the Smallest House. The Liverpool Arms does appear to be marked on the 1776 map, and is described as 'house and garden through ye gate' (UWB Bangor 2383).

In 1965 (CRO XB2/562) a new jetty was built together with the construction of a concrete platform by Pochin for a cost of £6,630. This is the curved stepped concrete platform opposite the Lower Gate and north of the 1833 quay to which this new jetty was attached.

#### Porth Isaf to the road bridge

The northern part of this area is occupied by the quay of 1833, for the development of which see above.

There is no pre-18<sup>th</sup> century development recorded between Porth Isaf and the castle, and topographical prints show a beach with boats drawn up, but no buildings. The first development was a lime kiln built c. 1800 (it is shown on the 1810 revisions of the 1776 Holland map), and this was later replaced by a small terrace of cottages called 'Rodyn, named after the limekiln. The cottages were demolished in the 1920's (*pers comm.* Mrs Pattison).

Archaeological trial pits excavated in 1992 (Shallcross 1993), the monitoring of a pipeline in 1993 (Carver 1994), and test pitting in 1996 (Jones 1996) all revealed 19<sup>th</sup> century deposits under the present quay. In 2005/6 the front of the quay was further extended into the estuary when a new training wall was built in front of the harbour master's office.

Between Porth Isaf and the Mussel Plant lie a range of functional buildings constructed against the medieval town wall. These all post-date the construction of the quay in 1833, and though a range of buildings existed by the time of the first edition OS in 1889, many of these have since been replaced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The public lavatories are built against Porth Isaf, and are probably of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century date. The former aquarium and adjacent warehouse are of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century date, on the site of late 19<sup>th</sup> century structures. The brick-built office of the harbour boat shop is probably of early 20<sup>th</sup> century date. The Conwy harbour boat shop consists of two warehouses, an early- to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century warehouse, and a later one alongside. The building at the end of the row was where ice was produced for the fishing industry (PRN 19749). Other buildings, now gone, lay on the quay and in front of the lifeboat station.

The harbour master's office is a 19<sup>th</sup> century two-storey building. The gabled front elevation has a projecting bay window for good views of the harbour. Custom House Terrace is a row of 5 houses backing onto the medieval town wall, of late 19<sup>th</sup> century date.

#### The Bridges

Throughout the medieval period, and up until the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Conwy was crossed by ferry. Indeed a ferry is recorded here before the establishment of the borough, although the exact location of the crossing is not known. In 1247 Henry III let the passage of the Conwy, and in 1256 orders were sent to the Jusiciar of Chester "to permit the Friars Preachers of Bangor and their Men to cross freely and without interference at the water of Gannoc and elsewhere" (Davies 1966 p 2). The ferry passed back to the control of Welsh princes until 1282, although the monks of the Cistercian abbey were granted free passage. After the conquest the ferry was let by the King, and it continued in use until the construction of Telford's bridge. The ferry journey was not always easy, and a number of accidents are recorded. On Christmas day 1806, owing to a heavy swell, the ferry capsized and only two of the fifteen passengers escaped (Williams 1835 p 111). In addition to the physical difficulties of crossing, it would appear that passengers were also occasioned distress by the poor behaviour of the ferry operators. Bingley in 1798 states "I have been told of many shameful impositions that are continually practised by the ferrymen at this place upon strangers" and mentions overcharging and frequent delays (Bingley 1798 p 105). Similarly in 1813 a Mr Hamilton Fulton stated that "If this last stage, and every other on the line, were in as complete a state as it is possible to put them, still the Ferry of Conwy, under its present management, would deter travellers from passing this road" (Davies 1966 p 215).

The first crossing of the river was the suspension bridge designed by Telford's, which was built between 1822-5. This was followed by the construction of Stephenson's tubular bridge to carry the railway, constructed between 1846-9. The greater part of the estuary was crossed by a long embankment from an

island in the river to the east bank, a distance of 2015 ft, whereas the bridges crossed the smaller distance of some 330 ft between the west shore under the castle and the island. Access to the suspension bridge necessitated the demolition of part of the town wall to allow the road to sweep under the castle and over the bridge. Telford built a replacement tower to terminate the broken wall.

In 1958 the last road bridge was opened, it was designed by H W Fitzsimons, and constructed by the firm of Sir William Arrol and Co Ltd. The majority of traffic now passes under the estuary through the tunnel opened in 1992.

### The Gyffin estuary

The Gyffin is a relatively small river that discharges into the Conwy south of the castle. Paintings and topographical prints of the 18<sup>th</sup> century show ships mooring here, and though the river was not navigable, there would have been a deep pool where it enters the River Conwy. The River Gyffin drove at least three mills, and the medieval town gate that opened onto the valley has always been called the Mill Gate. In 1296 it is recorded that a new mill and leat were constructed at Gyffin for £8 19s 5d (Taylor 1963, 350), probably following their destruction during the revolt of Madog ap Llywelyn in 1294. The mills were granted by the Crown to the burgesses, and were subsequently inherited by the borough, remaining in use until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The present bridge over the River Gyffin is called Pont Pensarn (the bridge at the head of the causeway), and the name refers to the former dam across the river which would have held back the tidal water for driving the mill. References to repair of the mill dam occur within the Borough records (e.g. Conwy Record Office XB2/2) in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, though the salt mill seems to have gone out of use by the time of the 1776 survey (UWB Bangor 2383) because no mention of the mill occurs within the schedule. The map depicts a bridge across the river, and a derelict building on the town side that may have been the mill. Several paintings by Turner of c. 1800 show a similar view from upstream. The view of the river by the Buck brothers does not show any dam or bridge across it, though Greenville Collins plan of c. 1693 shows a bridge and/or dam across it.

The bridge across the river was connected to a new opening in the town walls, and a road was made to the estate and house of Benarth, when a new house was built in classical style in 1790 for Samuel Price of Lincoln Inn Fields. When the railway was built the road leading from Mill Gate to Gyffin was closed, and the southern Benarth road over Pont Pensarn was extended to meet the original Gyffin road on the south side of the river.

The south bank of the river became a timber yard in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, occupying the land to the east and west of Pont Pensarn, and timber would have been delivered to the estuary by boat, though there is very little evidence for purpose built quays, and boats would have moored within the silts at the side of the river.

The railway was constructed during 1847-8, and a quay built adjacent to the small island on the east side of the tubular bridge. A crane remains on the quay, though the quay is no longer used. The Gyffin estuary was the scene of considerable activity during the construction of the bridge, and a steam engine and several buildings are shown here in contemporary prints and pictures. The timber yard may be a direct descendant of these works.

## **MANAGEMENT**

### **Harbour management**

The harbour is managed by Conwy County Borough Council, who employ a full time harbour master with offices on the quay at Conwy. Some 400 moorings are supervised by the council, and an additional 500 moorings are available at the marina.

The quay and the structures on it are principally managed by the Council. As part of a three-stage development a new training wall has recently been built close to the approach to the bridges, and this has extended the sea-ward face of the quay at the southern end, so that the front face of the Provis quay no



longer protrudes forward of the quay wall to the south of it. The next two phases of development will include re-development of the buildings between Porth Isaf and the Mussel purification plant, and new hard surfacing of the entire quay, including the area north of Porth Isaf.

The buildings at the south end of the quay, primarily the harbour master's office, the lifeboat station and the mussel purification are unlikely to undergo redevelopment in the near future.

Within the Gyffin estuary, proposals have been made for redevelopment of the site at Billington's garage, though this has been turned down. No other development is currently proposed in this area.

## Statutory and non-statutory designations

### Environmental designations

#### *Special Area of Conservation*

The Conwy estuary is part of the **Y Fenai a Bae Conwy / Menai Strait and Conwy Bay SAC** (Site code UK0030202).

### Heritage Designations

#### *World Heritage Status*

Conwy castle is part of the World Heritage Site **Castles and town walls of King Edward I in Gwynedd** (reference 374) as defined by UNESCO. The essential setting and significant views identified within the Management Plan include both the site of the medieval quay and the former castle dock (Cadw 2004, Map CO2.4.7)

#### *Landscapes of Historic Interest*

Conwy lies within the **Creuddyn and Conwy** Historic Landscape, as defined within the *Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales*, reference HLW (GW) 5.

#### *Scheduled Ancient Monuments*

The following monuments lie close to the waterfront in Conwy:

- Cn 4 Conwy Castle (also in Guardianship)
- Cn 14 Conwy town Walls (also in Guardianship)
- Cn 167 Conwy Tubular Bridge

Note that the destroyed tower at the end of the spur wall is not included within the scheduled area Cn 14.

### *Listed buildings*

The following listed buildings lie on or close to the waterfront at Conwy

3233	Town Walls	I
3234	Telford Suspension Bridge	I
3236	Tubular Bridge	I
3242	Section of south retaining wall to River Gyffin, extending from Pont Pensarn to site of former Stephenson	II
3250	The Castle	I
3281	Harbourmaster's Office	II
3312	Southern arch of railway bridge over Llanrwst road	II
3313	Pont Pensarn	II
3315	Retaining wall of quay including steps at NW end	II
3316	Liverpool Arms PH	II
3317	10-12 Lower Gate Street	II
	Railway quay and crane	II
	Telephone kiosk on quay	II

### **Archaeological potential and recommendations**

A high level of protection is currently afforded to Conwy through existing designations. However, a number of sites, though not of national significance, do contribute to the character of the harbour, and some of these have been proposed for demolition. These include:

- The range of buildings between Porth Isaf and the Mussel processing plant
- The remains at Billingtons Garage

A record of the above sites should be undertaken prior to any impact or significant alterations.

The architectural character of the quay reflects the medieval origins of the town and the maritime influence, and any future development should respect these themes.

Areas of research potential related to the development of the harbour are:

- The nature of the medieval quay between Porth Isaf and the medieval spur wall;
- The chronology and nature of the development of the quay in the 19<sup>th</sup> century between Porth Isaf and the harbour master's office;
- The nature of the medieval dock below the castle, and its access path and stairs – nearly all the evidence for this has now gone, but should work be undertaken to the bridges or alongside then evidence for the dock should be sought.
- Evidence for the tide mill and dam on the River Gyffin.

Many harbours contain areas that are now silted, but which were formerly used for mooring and/or transhipment of people and goods, and which therefore retain good potential for the preservation of remains, including organic archaeology and shipwrecks. A slate carrying vessel of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the remains of a fish weir were found in 1988 in the silts on the north side of the river (report in Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Historic Environment Record). There is good potential for the recovery of organic remains within the river silts, and within the mouth of the River Gyffin.

Archaeological assessment and evaluation should precede any development within these areas of archaeological potential.

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## CONWY GAZETTEER

The gazetteer is divided into three sections, Group A are extant sites that are upstanding, often remaining as buildings in use. Group B are sites with good potential for the recovery of archaeology, whilst Group C are sites with little or no potential for the recovery of archaeology. Within the gazetteer the sites are identified by their primary reference number (PRN) as used within the Gwynedd Historic Environment Record, and are assessed according to their importance, that is national (A), regional (B), Local (C), Other (D) and unknown (E). The site names are printed in capitals if they are already part of the Historic Environment Record, and in lower case if they have been identified during the course of this project.

### GROUP A: EXTANT SITES

#### 2851 CONWY CASTLE

Assessment of Importance: A      Site Status Reference: SAM C004

One of a series of castles built by Edward I following the conquest of Wales in 1283. Work started in March 1283, and was substantially complete by 1287. The castle is built on a rock outcrop on the west side of the Conwy, with an accompanying walled town on sloping ground to the west. The plan of the castle is restricted to the rock outcrop, and consists of inner and outer wards aligned east-west, with an outer barbican at both ends. The principal entrance was through the west barbican, but a small dock lay below the east barbican, with a protected walkway rising from the dock up to the north wall of the barbican where there was a small entrance gate.

Easting: 278380

Northing: 377460

#### 2858 TUBULAR BRIDGE, CONWY

Assessment of Importance: A      Site Status Reference: SAM C167

A railway bridge built 1846 to 1848 as part of the Chester to Holyhead Railway. It was designed by Robert Stephenson; Francis Thompson was the architect responsible for the masonry towers, and Alexander McKenzie Ross was the supervising engineer. It is a tubular bridge with a span of 400 ft between masonry piers. The piers are built in medieval style with crenellations to match the castle.

Easting: 278500

Northing: 377470

#### 11631 CIVIC HALL & LIBRARY

Assessment of Importance: B      Site Status Reference: GII 3253

A stone building which was originally built in the mid 19th century on the site of an old town house called Plas Isa, owned by the Holland family. Plas Isa was in ruins by the mid 19th century, and has been described as a stone building, of two or three storeys, with boxed in shutters; while the staircase was handsome (Lowe 1912 p 324). A market place was built on the site of the house in the 1850's, and this was replaced by the present town hall in 1897. Detailed plans have not been located, but the Borough records record that the Borough Surveyor presented plans for the alterations to and the conversion of the market hall to Public Buildings and Municipal Offices in 1893 (CRO X/B/2/29). In 1897 the Council accepted the tender of Edward Thorpe and Sons of Llandudno for the erection of new municipal buildings, but whether to the plans drawn up in 1893 or not is not made clear. In December 1898 the Council accepted a report from Richard Davies, an architect from Bangor, where additional work was approved, and Thorpes were also given the contract for this work which cost £67 9s 6d. It is possible that Richard Davies was the architect for the main building, but this is not stated anywhere. The rear part of the building burnt down in the 1960's, and was rebuilt in its present form, which is a large square concrete structure sitting over the lower part of the earlier stone building. The rear wall of the building uses part of the medieval town wall

on its east side, and also part of the lower gate on the north-east side.

Easting: 278210

Northing: 377640

#### **11943 BODLONDEB SOUTH LOGDE**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: GII 3363

Bodlondeb is a large house designed by T A Lockwood, and built 1877. The south gatehouse, located close to Porth yr Aden, was built shortly after the main house. It is of two storeys, with a gabled front elevation, the ground floor of stone, and the first floor faced with timber framework.

Easting: 278117

Northing: 377779

#### **12199 HARBOUR MASTER'S OFFICE**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: GII

A 19th century building of two storeys with a slate gable roof. The walls are heavily pebble dashed, and decorated with flat rendered bands. The gabled front elevation has a projecting bay window on the first floor with horned sash windows, and on the ground floor a much shallower bay window with small panes. There is a flat roofed extension to the north.

Easting: 278337

Northing: 377543

#### **12269 LIVERPOOL ARMS INN**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII 3316

A building of the late 18th century (Cadw Listed building detail), which incorporates the north tower of the lower gate on the south side and the town wall on the west side. The front gable faces the river, and has a central door with pediment and two sash windows with stuccoed surrounds on the ground floor, three similar windows on the first floor, and two similar window on the second floor. All but one of the windows are without glazing bars. There is a chimney stack on the north side of the building, and a flat roofed extension on the north-west. There is a small extension on the south side which is in the same character as the main building.

Easting: 278214

Northing: 377673

#### **12286 LOWER GATE STREET 10, 11 +12**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: GII 3317

No 10 is a small two storey house built against a tower of the town wall, with a single pitch slate roof which slopes from back to front. Its south wall is higher than the roof, and belongs to an earlier set of cottages, whereas the north wall is formed from the house to the north. It has been suggested that it was built in a small gap between two existing rows of cottages, and this would certainly appear to be the case. The exterior walls are painted red. The front wall contains a single door to the south and a small window on the ground floor, and a two-light casement window above. It is advertised as the smallest house in Britain. No. 11 is a two storey stone built house with pitched slate roof. Painted stucco surrounds to the windows, door, quoins and dado. On ground floor is central door with a 16 pane sash window on either side. Two similar windows, but with only 12 panes, above. Probably late 18th century in date. No. 12 is a stone built house of two storeys and attic, and pitched slate roof. Similar stuccoed surrounds to No. 11, but sash windows have no glazing bars. Two small gabled dormers in roof. This building was formerly a public house called the Royal Oak.

Easting: 278178

Northing: 377718

#### **12725 RAILWAY BRIDGE OVER LLANRWST ROAD, CONWY**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: GII 3312

Built c. 1848 as part of the Chester to Holyhead Railway, it carries the railway over the Llanrwst road, and

on high embankments either side. The arch is shallow pointed, and is flanked on either side by a stone pier in the form of a turret with castellated parapet. Thought to be designed by Francis Thompson, the resident engineer was Frank Forster.

Easting: 278320

Northing: 377400

#### **12743 CONWAY SUSPENSION BRIDGE**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: GII 3234

A suspension bridge designed by Thomas Telford, and built 1822-6 as part of the London to Holyhead road. It crosses the channel between a small island in the river to the rocks on the west shore, and consists of two supporting pillars which carry two sets of 4 chains. The pillars are designed as twin battlemented towers with central gateway in order to harmonise with the castle. The remainder of the river was crossed by a long causeway.

Easting: 278500 Northing: 377500

#### **19749 Ice plant, Conwy Quay**

Assessment of Importance: C Site Status Reference:

A pebble-dash rendered brick building, where ice was produced for use by the fishing industry. It has a slate pitched roof. The gabled front has a 16 pane sash window on the first floor, and a small door and shuttered horizontal window on the ground floor. The south side has a door and 3 sash windows on the first floor, and 2 doors on the ground floor. There is a brick chimney towards the east end of the building. It probably dates from the last part of the 19th century, or early part of the 20th century. A modern lean-to is attached to the north side.

Easting: 278289

Northing: 377594

#### **19750 19th century quay, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: GII 3315

This quay was built in 1833 to a design by W A Provis. It is faced with large blocks of coursed quarried stone, and is some 100m long and projects some 5m into the river. There is a flight of stone steps at the north end. Also at the north end on the quay is a stone commemorating the crew of the fishing vessel Katy, which left Conwy on 16th January, 1994 but did not return.

Easting: 278267 Northing: 377649

#### **19751 Stone wall, Conwy Quay**

Assessment of Importance: C Site Status Reference:

A stone built boundary wall at an angle to the medieval wall, of 19th century date. It forms the boundary wall to the ice plant. It is marked on the 1898 OS map. The angle of the wall reflects that of the 1833 quay, it may therefore be of similar date, although in appearance it is late 19th century.

Easting: 278295

Northing: 377589

#### **19752 Lodge to Suspension Bridge, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: GII\*3235

Thought to be contemporary with the suspension bridge, and designed by Telford, this building was originally used as the lodge for the bridge supervisor. It is of one storey, with battlemented parapets and turrets with loops. Now disused and locked.

Easting: 278367

Northing: 377505

#### **19754 Custom House Terrace, Conwy Quay**

Assessment of Importance: B Site Status Reference:

A row of five terraced houses backing on to the medieval town wall. They are late 19th century in date, but have all been modernised. No. 5 has a large wing projecting to the east.



Easting: 278348

Northing: 377527

**19759 Spur wall, Medieval town walls, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: Cn 014

A spur wall runs out from the corner of the town walls for a length of some 56 metres. It formerly had a round tower at the east end, and blocks of masonry belonging to the tower were noted in 1993. A change in masonry occurs approximately 4m above the ground, and this may reflect the construction of the upper part of the wall in 1325-6. The lower part of the wall was built during the construction of the remainder of the town walls in 1285-6. A small postern lies in the wall 9m from the corner of the town wall. (see Taylor 1963, History of the Kings Works, for a history of the construction of the walls). A test pit dug alongside the south face of the spur wall at Conwy Quay revealed that the base of the wall lay some 3m below the present surface, on a foundation of loose rubble, dug into a layer of natural orange sand. A change in the nature of the masonry of the wall was noted at the current ground level, suggesting this may have been the medieval ground surface also. A blue/grey organic clay layer, over 2m in depth, lay some 1.2m below the surface, corresponding to that found in T2 on the north side of the wall where buried timbers were noted (see PRN 19757 and GAT Report 34, 1991). A trial excavation was undertaken on the south side of the spur wall in May 1992. The change in masonry noted in T1 above was no longer apparent, and the foundations were more apparent here at a depth of some 2.8m, where a broad masonry platform projected some 0.35m from the face of the wall. The platform was 1.10m deep and lay on top of a rubble fill, as in T1 (see GAT Report 34a, 1992).

Easting: 278175

Northing: 377756

*2-* **19764 Mussel purification tanks, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

Mussel purification tanks and a laboratory were founded here in 1913, though construction of the centre was primarily undertaken in the early 1920's. It became part of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries with Dr R Dodgson as Director, who undertook experimental work during the 1920's and 1930's. Now used as offices by various businesses - the tanks are still there but disused.

Easting: 278494

Northing: 377274

*2-* **19764 Pont Pensarn, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

*PRN 66259*

In the late 18th or early 19th century a new opening was made in the town walls between mill gate and the castle. It led initially to the estate and house of Benarth, crossing the R Gyffyn over Pont Pensarn. The bridge is thought to lie on the site of, or close to, the dam belonging to the tide mill that operated here. Several late 18th century topographical prints show the bridge much as it is today.

Easting: 278320

Northing: 377389

**19767 Railway quay and crane, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference:

A small stone quay lies on the south side of the island where the rail and road bridges cross to the west bank of the Conwy. It was built to aid construction of the bridge, but remained in use as quay to serve the railway. A crane still stands on the quayside, though it is no longer used. It was known as Cei Ynys.

Easting: 278641

Northing: 377514

**19768 Road bridge, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

The present road bridge across the Conwy, a single arched span of steel and concrete, was officially opened on 18 December, 1958. The contractors were Sir William Arrol and Co. Ltd.

Easting: 278529

Northing: 377537

**19769 Jetty, Conwy Quay, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

A jetty was built here in 1965. It consists of a stepped, projecting concrete platform, with a curving south side. A wooden jetty is attached to the platform. The jetty and platform were built by Pochin in 1965, replacing an earlier wooden jetty (see GAS XB2/562 which states 'This contract is for the demolition of the existing timber jetty at the quay, Conwy, and the construction of a new 215 ft long timber jetty together with the construction of a concrete platform at its landward end'. It cost £6630 to build.

Easting: 278222

Northing: 377692

**GROUP B: BURIED SITES WITH ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

**930 Watching brief Conwy Sewage Scheme GAT 1054**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust conducted a watching brief for Welsh Water's consultants Wallace Evans. Four trial trenches were opened by Wallace Evans on the foreshore, near the medieval town wall, in preparation for the construction of a sewage pumping station on the site. One trench yielded significant organic remains including a three-tiered timber feature, which may have been part of an earlier quayside structure on the foreshore (see PRN 19757).

Easting: 278183

Northing: 377762

**1771 Cobbled surface at Porth yr Aden, Conwy Quay**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

A wall and cobbled surface were revealed in section during work carried out by Gwynedd Highways Department in January 1987 (see photographs in FI file for PRN 1771). A series of test pits to the north of the gate revealed that the ground level had been raised during the 19th century. Earlier stone surfaces were found, though these were not dated (see GAT Report 63, 1993), but are possibly the same as that found in 1987.

Easting: 278145

Northing: 377764

**19745 Medieval quay, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

The name Lower Gate Street is usually applied to that part of the street which lies north of the Lower Gate and as far as the spur wall. The present area is on two levels, the lower level being nearer the houses on the west side. This would appear to be the street proper, and is called the Strand on Holland's 1777 map. The east side is separated from the street proper by a stone revetment 10cm high. This revetment appears to be shown on the 1777 map, and is clearly marked on the 1898 map. It is difficult to interpret its original date and function. However pictorial and documentary evidence suggests the medieval quay formerly ran from the lower gate to the spur wall. This is backed up by archaeological evidence: a strong stone wall has been noted during watching briefs just to the north of the lower gate running parallel to the street, but turning at the south end towards the towers of the gate. This was interpreted as a former quay of at least 18th century in date, which was buried some time in the 19th century (GAT 1994). However, it is unlikely that a quay was built between medieval times and the 18th century and it is therefore probable that this is the medieval quay.

Easting: 278202

Northing: 377705

**19747 Site of medieval tower, spur wall, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference:

The site of a round tower built at the end of the spur wall. The tower is recorded in a building account of 1286 (see Talyor 'History of the Kings Works' (1974); Cadw Guide to Conwy Castle). Though no longer standing, its former location can be ascertained from the presence of curving lengths of masonry which were noted in the river close to the present end of the wall in 1994 (GAT Report 111, 1994).

Easting: 278214

Northing: 377768

#### **19748 Timber pier (demolished), Conwy harbour, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

A timber pier was built here at the end of the 19th century to serve the Steamer trade. It is shown on the 1898 OS map. Nine upright timbers are still visible, marking the rectangular shape of the former pier. A large boat house once lay south of the pier, and the timber baulk recorded in 1991 probably relates to this activity (PRN 19758).

Easting: 278209

Northing: 377764

#### **19753 Conwy Quay, southern section, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: C

Site Status Reference:

At the south end of the quay is a modern slipway running parallel to the quay wall. At this point, and for the next 120m the present quay is retained by a roughly coursed wall of quarried undressed stone. This then joins on to the 1833 quay designed by Provis. Photographic evidence would suggest that the southern quay wall is early 20th century in date, although a rough wall existed prior to this on the northern part. The monitoring of trial pits in advance of the construction of the existing mussel purification unit led to the conclusion that the west side of the quay was built up in the late 18th early 19th century with shale and burnt debris, though towards the east side was a greater concentration of quarried stone. A layer of burning present in test pit 2 may have been from the former presence of a lime kiln in this location. (see GAT Report 216, 1996; and GAT Report 63, 1993). The steel training wall which protects the southern section of the quay was erected in the 1960's and was subsequently repaired, though is presently (November 2005) in the process of being renewed.

Easting: 278333

Northing: 377568

#### **19755 Site of limekiln at lifeboat station, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

A modern building with pebble dashed walls and pitched slate roof now houses the Inshore Rescue Boat. A row of cottages formerly stood on this site, which were taken down in the 1920's. They were called 'Rodyn' after the lime-kiln (odyn=kiln) which preceded them and which is shown on the 1777 Holland map. The cottages are visible on a number of photographs and on a painting by Warren. A layer of burning was found during a watching brief here in 1996 (GAT Report 216).

Easting: 278325

Northing: 377553

#### **19756 Test pit T1, 1991, Conwy Quay**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

A test pit dug alongside the south face of the spur wall at Conwy Quay revealed that the base of the wall lay some 3m below the present surface, possibly on a foundation of loose rubble, and on a layer of orange sand. A change in the nature of the masonry of the wall was noted at the current ground level, suggesting this may have been the medieval ground surface also. A blue/grey organic clay layer, over 2m in depth, lay some 1.2m below the surface, corresponding to that found in T2 on the north side of the wall where buried timbers were noted (see PRN 19757 and GAT Report 34, 1991).

Easting: 278183

Northing: 377757

#### **19757 Timber remains north of Conwy quay**



Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

A test pit opened 2m from the north face of the medieval spur wall at Conwy quay revealed three layers of substantial horizontal timbers, at depths of approximately 1.3, 1.42 and 1.72m below the surface. The timbers were approximately 130mm thick, but no other dimensions were obtained. They lay in a black organic sand (becoming more clayey and blue deeper down) that lay between 1.2m and 2.42m deep. This overlay natural orange sand. The depth equates roughly to that of the wall foundations noted in T1 on the south side of the wall (PRN 19756). Animal bone and leather were preserved in the silts. The timbers may be part of an early quay. (See GAT Report 34, 1991).

Easting: 278182

Northing: 377761

#### **19758 Timber baulk, south of spur wall, Conwy Quay**

Assessment of Importance: C

Site Status Reference:

During archaeological evaluation works undertaken in 1991 a large baulk of timber some 9m long, 250mm wide and 300mm deep was noted lying at right-angles to the end of the spur wall. The timber was butted up to six round timber posts on the east side. No date or function can be clearly ascribed, but it may be part of a former quay. Its stratigraphic relationship with the timber remains found in Test pit 2 undertaken at the same time is not known (see PRN 19757 and GAT Report 34, 1991). There was a large boathouse just to the south, and in line with the timber baulk, with a pier alongside. All this is late 19th century, and the baulk probably dates from this period.

Easting: 278204

Northing: 377761

#### **19760 Lean-to structure on Conwy Town Wall, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: C

Site Status Reference:

The stone foundations of a rectangular building, the south wall of which was formed by the town wall, were discovered during a watching brief undertaken in 1993 (see GAT Report No. 73). The remains are thought to date from the 19th century, and belong to a boatyard that preceded the establishment of the Conwy River Boatyard in 1904 (see PRN 19746). Vertical timbers were recorded, perhaps for roof supports, and also possibly for a timber floor. Horizontal beams in the town wall indicate where the roof may have been attached to the wall.

Easting: 278169

Northing: 377757

#### **19761 Stone-built structure adjacent to Conwy Town Wall, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

The foundations of a stone-built structure were recorded during a watching brief in 1993 (see GAT Report No. 73). The structure was defined by a curved stretch of walling, roughly constructed of large cobbles bonded with clay. The wall remained to a height of 0.5m, and was 0.45m in width. Only a small part of the structure was exposed. A map of 1776 (UWB Bangor 2383) shows a rectangular enclosure at this location, and refers to 'pigsty etc', so this could be part of an 18th century sty.

Easting: 278165

Northing: 377756

#### **19762 Stone and timber wharf - site of, Conwy Quay, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: C

Site Status Reference:

The remains of a stone and timber boundary, or possible wharf, were recorded during a watching brief in 1994 (see GAT Report No. 111). The remains ran north from the town wall, before turning at nearly right-angles towards the shore. The structure consisted of a stone-built revetment wall, which had been extended in two successive phases, with part built from railway sleepers. It was interpreted as a possible wharf, used in conjunction with boat-building sheds on the shore. A further line of posts (P31 in the report - PRN 19763)) running from the west end to the town wall, is thought to have belonged to the first phase of the structure.

Easting: 278196

Northing: 377774



**19763 Timber revetment, Conwy Quay, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: C

Site Status Reference:

A timber revetment of disused railway sleepers lay between the town wall and PRN 19762. It was approximately 10m long, and ran parallel to the shore. The exact function is unknown, though it may have been used for mooring boats, and associated with the boat-building industry.

Easting: 278188

Northing: 377765

**19765 Site of former tide mill, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

A water tide mill formerly lay within this area. The town of Conwy had three mills, two of which were on the R Gyffin, and the lower one was a tide mill. The mills originate from at least the time of the establishment of the borough in the late 13th century, and continued in use until c. 1800. It is probable that Pont Pensarn marks the former dam behind which the tide would have been dammed to create a mill pool. The mill must have lain at one end of the dam, and a building is visible here on paintings of the castle in the late 18th century. The remains are likely to have been removed during the construction of the railway.

Easting: 278279

Northing: 377373

**GROUP C: BURIED SITES WITH LITTLE OR NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

**19746 Former boatyard, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: D

Site Status Reference:

The Conwy River Boatyard was established in 1904 by Cumberland boat builder John Crossfield. Three workshops, constructed of timber framing clad with a various materials including plywood and corrugated iron, were demolished in 1993 (see GAT Report 73 for a basic record). Two of the workshops included brick and concrete tidal docks for the repair of craft. Access to the docks was achieved either by high tides or by hauling craft up the beach on wooden 'skids'. Following demolition of the boatyard a watching brief revealed the presence of a masonry structure (referred to as structure 1) that had been a lean-to against the medieval spur wall (horizontal timbers in the wall probably denote the former roof line of the building), and a curving masonry wall that, from map evidence, may have been a former pig-sty (structure 2).

Easting: 278165 Northing: 377762

**19766 Site of former wood yard, Conwy**

Assessment of Importance: D

Site Status Reference:

A wood yard existed on the site of the present garage, south of the railway and on the south side of the Gyffin, and east towards the sea. It is shown on photographs of the early 20th century, and marked on the early OS maps. Ships with cargoes of timber used to moor at the mouth of the Gyffin to supply the yards with timber.

Easting: 278294

Northing: 377344

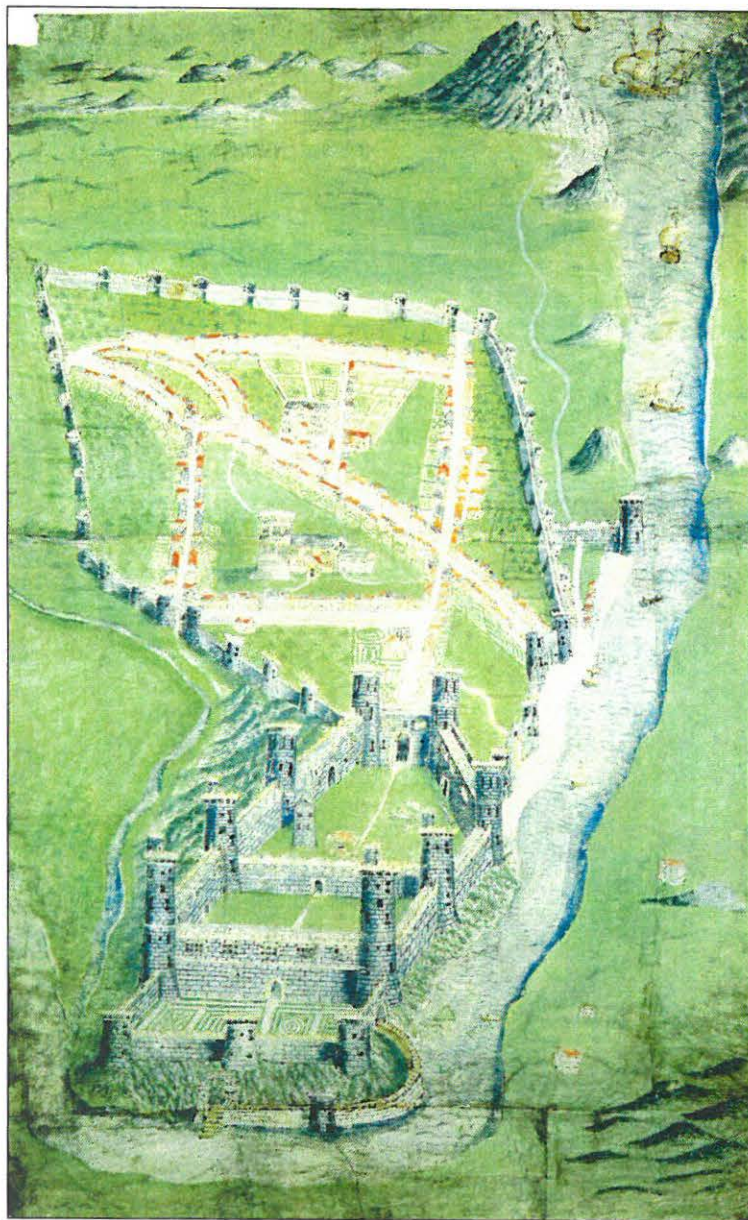


Figure 1. Conwy about 1600 (ref CPM 1/62)  
(After CADW Guide, 2003, p8)

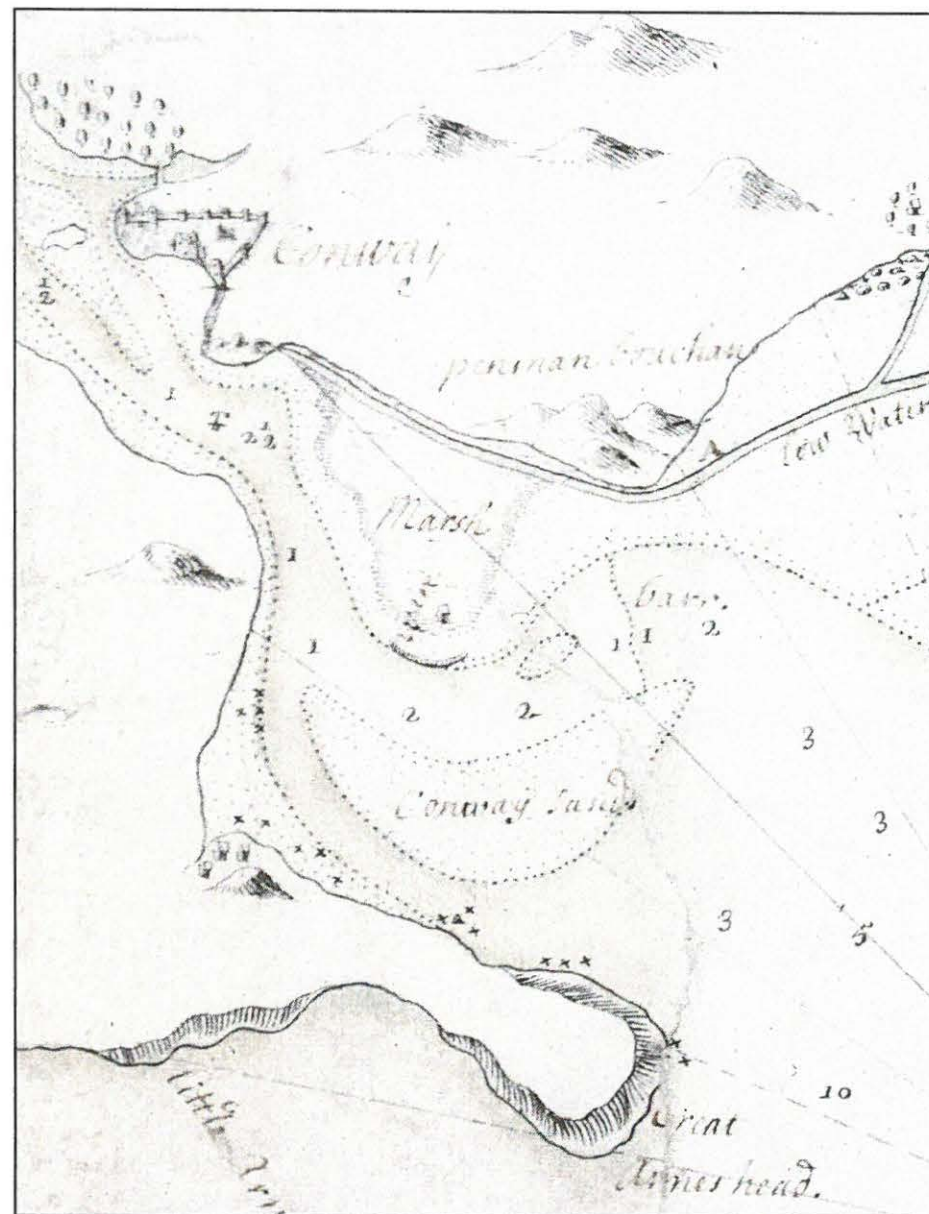
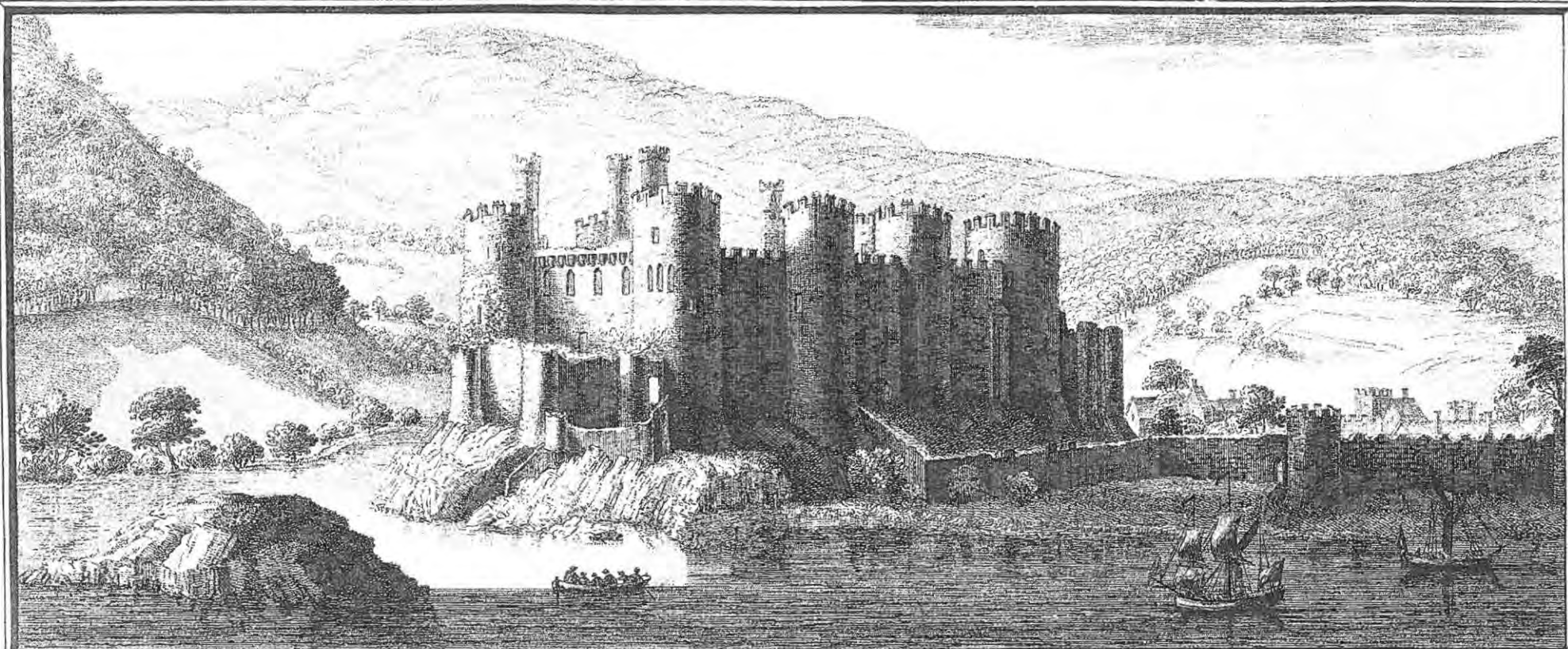


Figure 2. Collins, G. 1693. Map of Conwy.  
From 'Great Britain Coasting Pilot'



THE NORTH EAST VIEW OF CONWAY CASTLE, IN THE COUNTY OF CAERNARVON.



*THIS* Castle of Aber Conway pleads greater Antiquity than the town for it was fortified by Hugh Earl of Chester, in the Reign of William the Conqueror; but afterwards being damaged in the Wars, and falling to decay, was rebuilt by King Edu<sup>d</sup>. I. In the beginning of the late Civil Wars D<sup>r</sup>. John Williams Arch Bishop of York, a native of this Place, having made his Escape from Yorkshere thither, did at his own Expence fortify this Castle for the King, and held it till May 1645. when it was seized by S<sup>r</sup>. John Owen, by virtue of a Commission from Prince Rupert; and on 10. January 1646. It was delivered up to the Parliament

*Sam<sup>l</sup>. Smith<sup>l</sup>. Buck del. et sculp. Published according to Act of Parliament April 3. 1720.*

Figure 3. Views of Conwy by S and N Buck. 1742. Showing castle ditch.



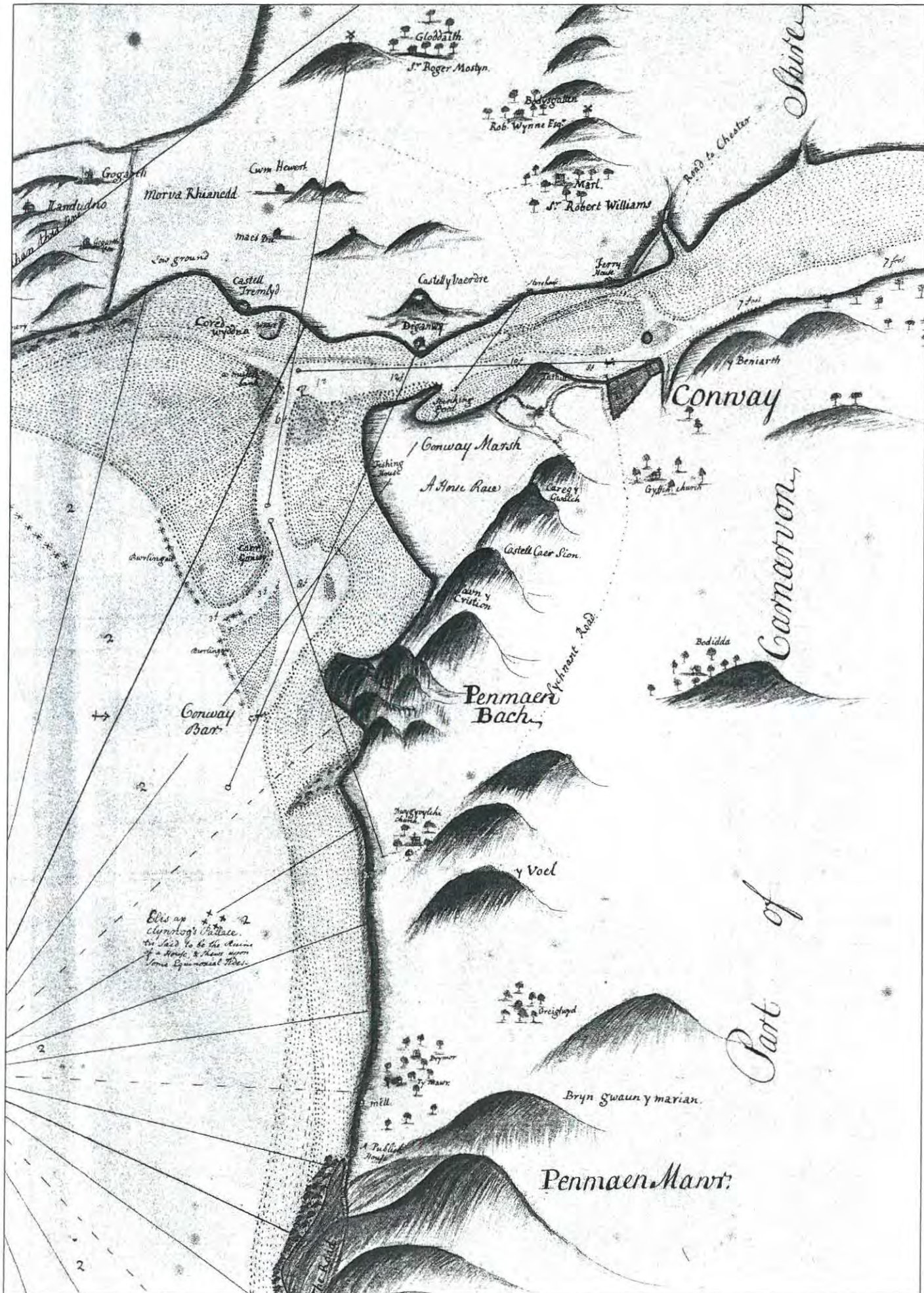


Figure 4. Lewis Morris. 1735-6. Cambrian Coasting Pilot. (Anglesey Record Office WM/1905)



*Plan of the River at Conway in the county of Caernarvon*

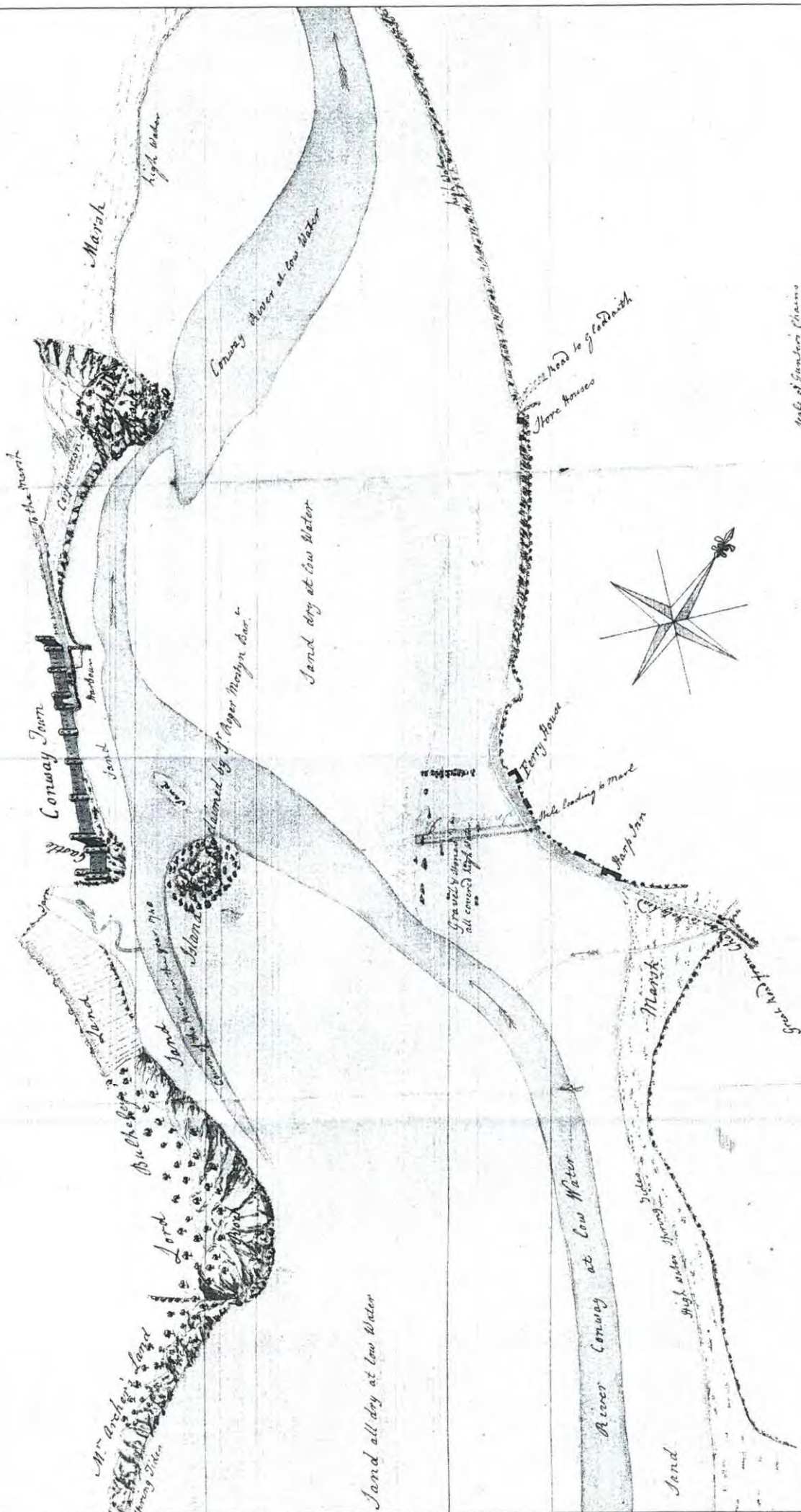


Figure 5. Map of Conway river. c.1790 (UWB Mostyn 7289)

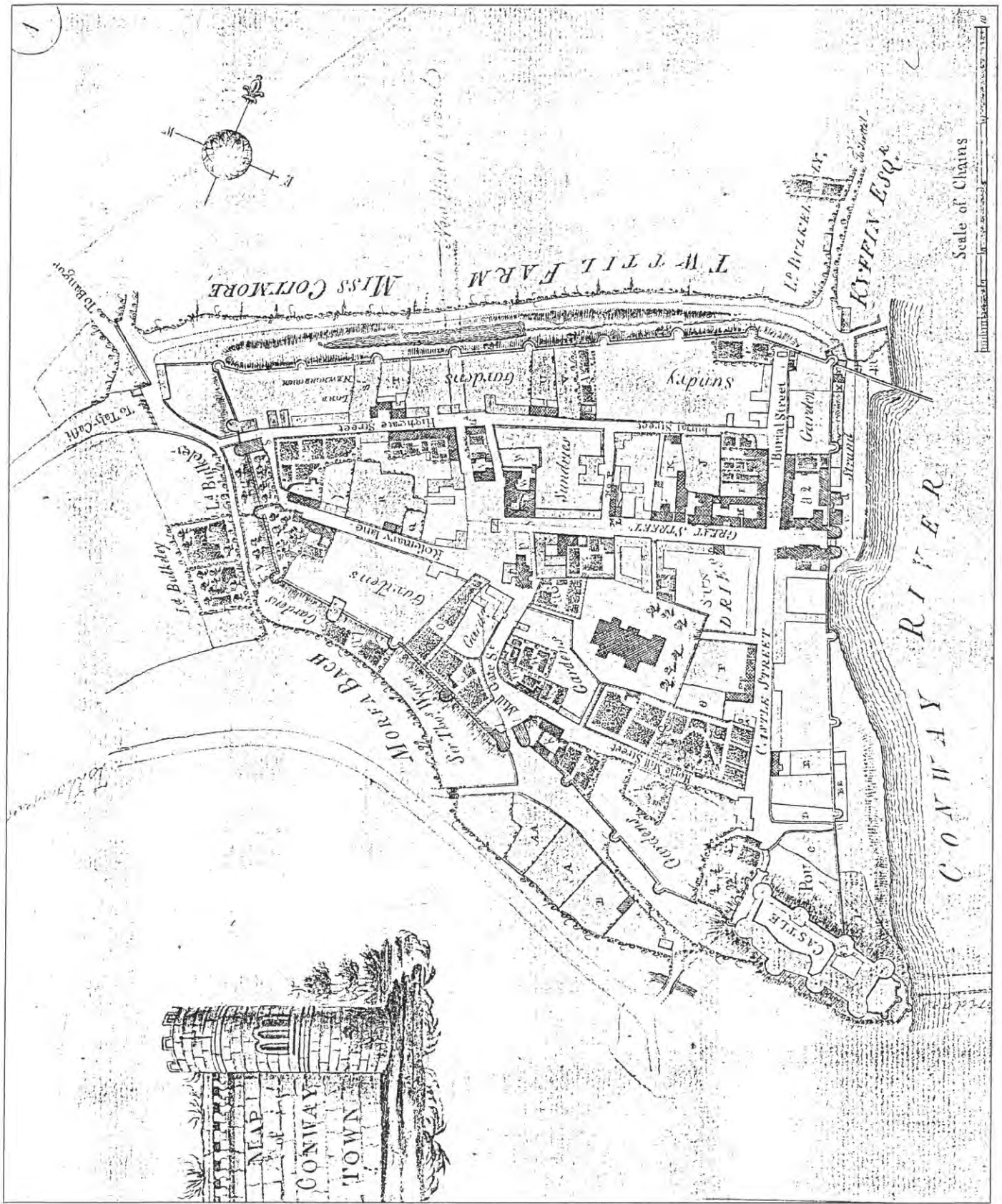


Figure 6. Map of Conway Town. 1776 revised 1810. (UWB Bangor 2383)



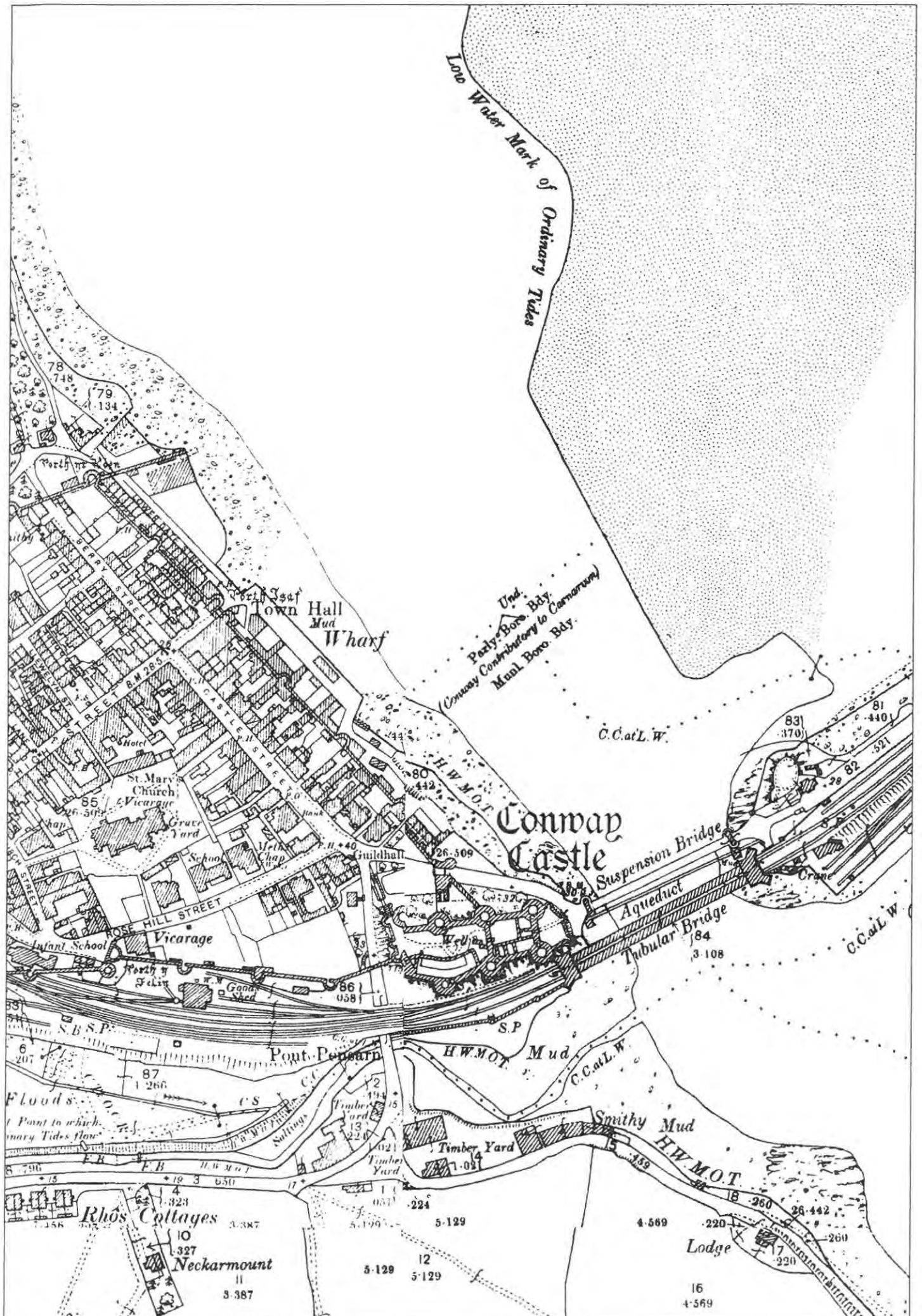


Figure 7. Ordnance Survey 25" County Series. Caernarfon. XIL.2, L.9, XLI.6 and LI.3. 1901. Scale 1,3000



Figure 8. Castle and harbour at Conwy, c. 1846. Hughes.H (NLW ref 02186)



Figure 9. View of Conwy Castle from River Gyffin. c. 1800. JMW Turner (Tate TW2276\_9.jpg)



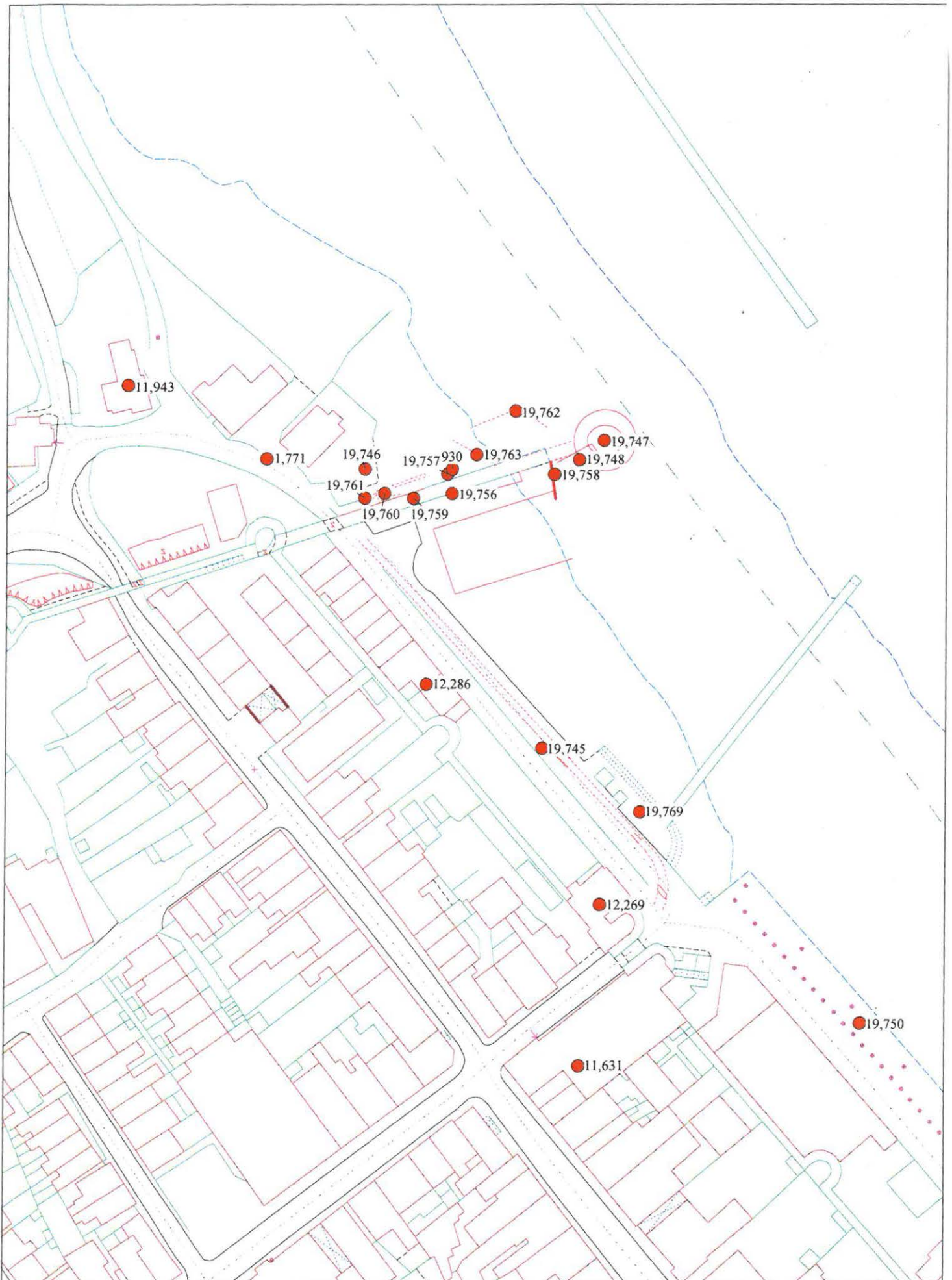


Figure 10. Location of sites at the north end of Town Quay. Scale. 1,1000

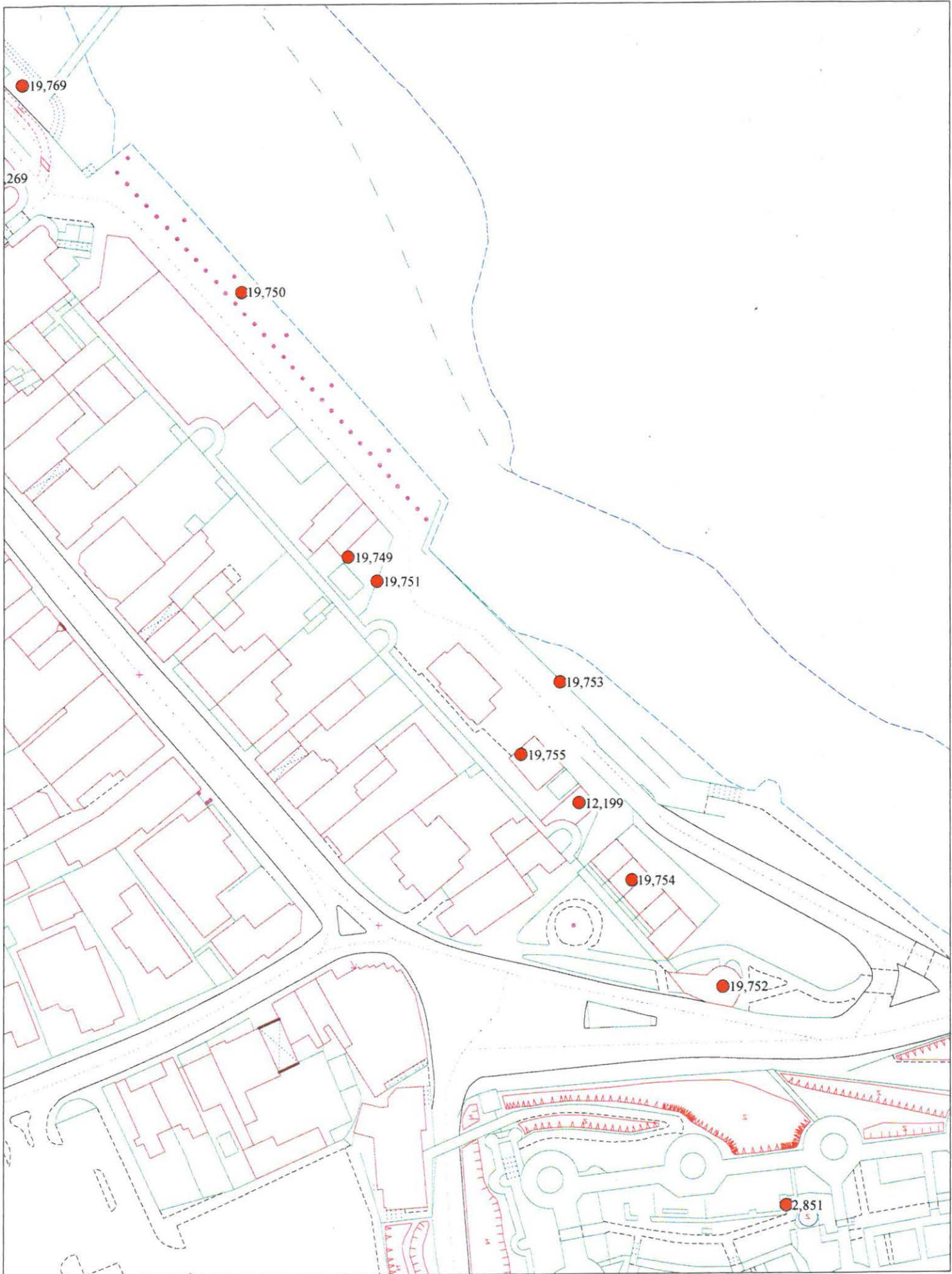


Figure 11. Location of sites at the south end of Town Quay. Scale. 1, 1000



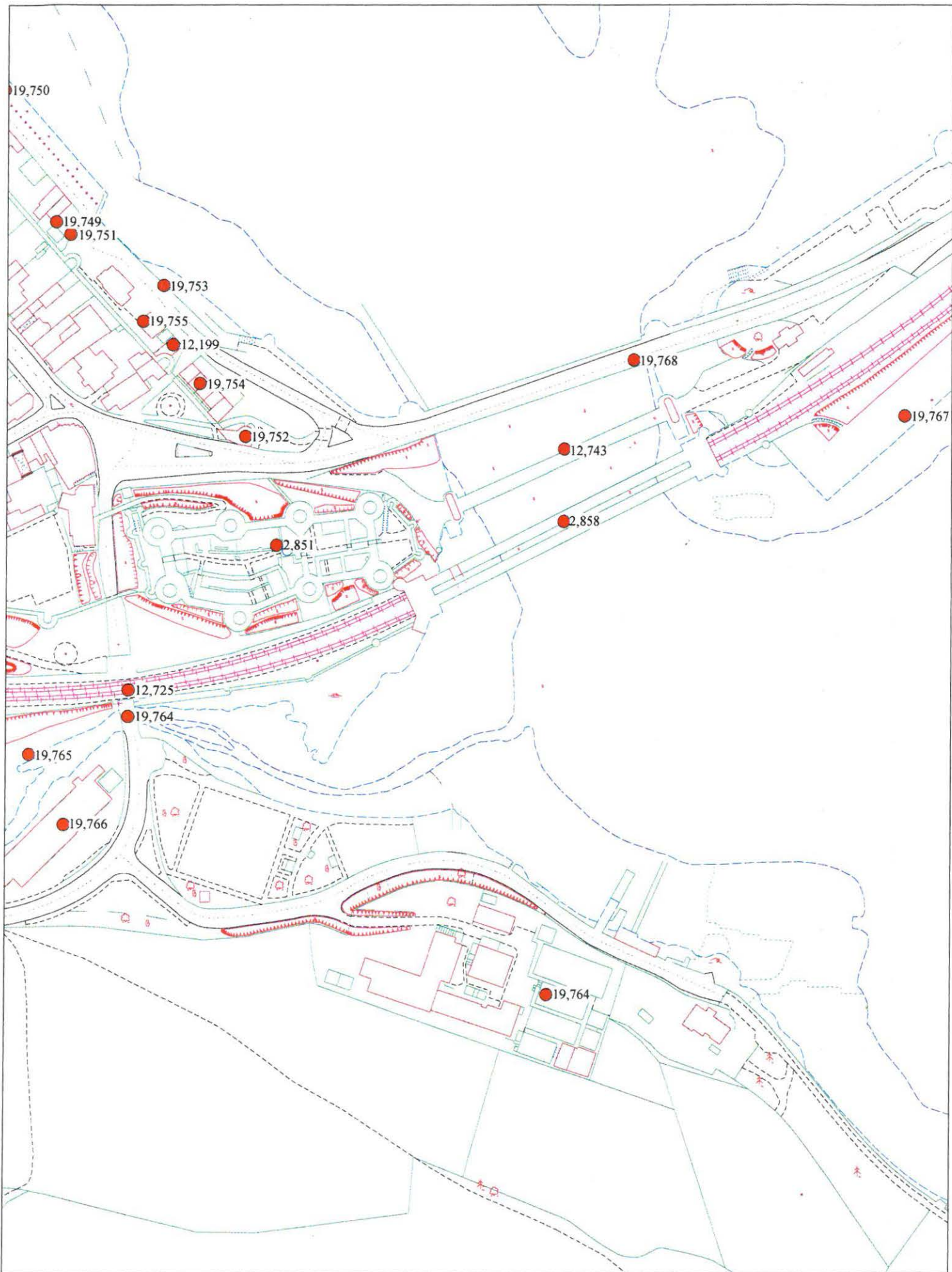


Figure 12. Location of sites between Town Quay and R Gyffin. Scale. 1, 2000





**Figure 13. The quay built in 1833 (PRN 19750)**



**Figure 14. General view of Lower Gate Street and the 1965 jetty (PRN 19769)**





**Figure 15. General view of Lower Gate Street.**



**Figure 16. The former street pier (PRN 19748)**





**Figure 17. View of the three bridges (PRN 12743, 2858, 19768)**



**Figure 18. View at the mouth of the River Gyffin and former fisheries research station behind.**

## BEAUMARIS HARBOUR

### Introduction

This report contains the results of an archaeological assessment undertaken as part of a wider assessment of ports and harbours throughout Wales. The assessments have been undertaken by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts and funded by Cadw. The report has been compiled by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust.

### Aims of the project

The aim of the project is to identify the nature and status of the heritage resource within the study area, and to aid and encourage the incorporation of the resource into the management and future development of the coastal zone.

### Location and topography

Beaumaris lies on the south coast of Anglesey on the Menai Strait, some 6.5Km south-west of Penmon Point. Beaumaris Bay is the wide mouth of the Strait, encompassing Penmaenmawr Head, Lavan Sands and Penmon Point. At the north-east end of the Strait between Penmon and Beaumaris the navigable channel lies between the Anglesey shore and the Lavan Sands. The latter are uncovered at low tide, and form a vast expanse of wet sand that was formerly crossed on foot or horseback by travellers to reach the ferry crossing at Beaumaris. The earliest sea charts show the channel close to Penmon as suitable for good anchorage. Called 'Cross Road' and later 'Outer Road', ships could anchor here to shelter from storms, though it was less comfortable when the wind was from the north-east. South of Cross Road is Friars Bay and Friars road, another good anchorage, and the location of the former harbour for Llanfaes. Beaumaris is a kilometre south-west again, where the Strait bends to the west, around a low glacial hill rising to a height of some 20m (called 'Mount' on Lewis Morris's chart of 1736), below which lies the level green fronting Beaumaris. Boats presently moor in the bay south of the town, between the pier and Gallows Point, and this is the most likely location of the medieval quay. When the castle was first built there was also access to the Castle dock, possibly along a channel or canal across the marshy area that was to become the green.

Early topographical writers agree on the excellent anchorage within Beaumaris Bay, for example Pennant says 'There is very good anchorage for ships in the bay which lies before the town; and has seven fathom water even at the lowest ebb. Vessels often find security here in hard gales. The town has no trade of any kind, yet has its custom house for the casual reception of goods' (Pennant 1781, 255). The description by Lewis Morris to accompany his chart is more practical, but still emphasizes the qualities of the port 'You may run up to Beaumaris town side keeping in mid channel according to the direction of the land taking care of a sunken rock which lies off the mount; you may lie under the town on soft clay ground or come in to the channel. South south east from the town is 7 and 8 fathoms water at low water, an excellent road. The Irish frequently use Beaumaris to land their American goods, in order to pay the British duties. A vessel without cable or anchor may run ashore half a mile east and south of the town on soft clay ground at a place called Penrhyn Safnas point, by some called Gallows Point, and there lie with safety (Morris, 1736, 17).

### Historic background

#### Llanfaes

Beaumaris was the principal medieval port of North Wales, subordinate to that of Chester. It dates from the time of the construction of the castle, started April, 1295. It replaced, however, the former port of Llanfaes, that lay just over a kilometre to the north. The medieval town of Llanfaes, centred on the commotal *llys* and *maerdref* settlement, was the principal urban centre of the Welsh princes. The 1294



extent records a total levy of £1 6s 8d for harbour dues at 4d per ship, which suggests around 80 ships calling during the year (Carr 1982, 232). The nature of the wide bay at Llanfaes, lying protected in the Menai Strait, makes it unlikely any quays or jetties were constructed here, and boats would have discharged straight from the beach. The road leading from the shore and west of the former friary would have connected the town with the harbour. Lewis Morris says that within Friars Bay 'you may anchor in six fathom, a stiff clay ground, or lie aground on soft mud'. The location of the earliest ferry associated with Llanfaes is uncertain, though Davies (1942, 21) suggests the same site as that used by the Beaumaris ferry, off the Green, before it was moved to Gallows Point, reasoning that if this was the best crossing place, it would have been used throughout as the most convenient site. However, a landing place within Friars Bay would be more relevant prior to 1294-5, though perhaps less practical. The ferry site off the Green is clearly indicated on Collin's map of 1695, close to the site of a fish wear.

The construction of Beaumaris castle and town, initiated by the uprising of Madog ap Llywelyn, led to a forced decline of Llanfaes by the English authorities in favour of the new planted borough. This eventually led, in 1302-3, to the wholesale removal of the inhabitants of Llanfaes to Rhosyr, where a new borough was created east of the commotal centre, to be called Newborough. Whilst still at Llanfaes, a petition from the residents claimed they were not allowed to trade, nor were ships allowed to use the port (Carr 1982, 234). The last known reference to the port was when safe conduct was issued to the master of a ship which had loaded goods there in April 1295 (*ibid*, 234-5). It is inevitable that low-level usage continued for the Friary, and later for the inhabitants of Friars, the house established on the site, but from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century on it was eclipsed by the new harbour at Beaumaris.

Later development off Llanfaes includes the establishment of a lifeboat house and slipway in 1914 that combined the former Beaumaris and Penmon lifeboats, which was abandoned and demolished in 1991. The marine aviation company of Saunders Roe moved its works to Friars in 1940, where repairs and alterations were made to sea planes. A small jetty remains on the beach from which the planes were launched. Remains of a boat shed and slipway lie closer to Beaumaris under the north edge of the mount. They date from the 1890's, and by local repute were used by the Henllys family. Just to north were a series of shelters where 'gentleman's bathing' took place, well away from the women's bathing area which was on the site of the later outdoor baths on the south side of the mount (both bathing places and the slipway are clearly marked on the OS map of 1900, County Sheet XV.13), and are thought to have developed in the 1860's (Cowell 2005, 10).

#### Medieval Beaumaris and the castle dock

As at Caernarfon and Conwy, provision was made for mooring at both the castle and the town quay. The principal trading harbour lay alongside the town, whereas the castle was provided with a more secure dock, protected by a walkway, and provided with a door through the outer curtain wall to allow passengers and goods to pass direct from ship to the castle.

The castle dock was an integral part of the original design, and this point is clearly made in the report of February 1296, by James of St George who states that a forty ton vessel fully laden could sail at high tide up to the biggest gate in the face of any Welsh enemy (Morris 1901, 268-9; Cadw 2004, 9). The length of the castle dock is just over 14m, which would be a tight fit for a forty ton vessel (see discussion and illustration in Redknap 1998, 136-150). The dock at Beaumaris is more elaborate than those at Conwy and Caernarfon, perhaps the result of the experience of the 1294 uprising, where ships played a major role in relieving the garrisons at Harlech, Criccieth and Aberystwyth, and following which Edward I found it necessary to retain a naval force in the Menai Strait in order to ensure continued delivery of stone, timber and other supplies necessary to build the castle.

The means of entry into the castle dock is not clear. Speeds map of 1610 shows the castle moat land-locked. Either the sea formerly lay over the present green, or, more likely, a channel linked the sea to the moat. Whether this channel existed naturally or had to be dug out is not known, though the most likely scenario is the enhancement of an existing channel. Pennant records that 'he [i.e. Edward I] also cut a canal, in order to permit vessels to discharge their lading beneath the walls' quoting the Sebright Mss



(unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1808). He also records that 'the marsh was in early times of far greater extent than at present, and covered with fine bullrushes' (Pennant 1781, 242-3). Similarly, in 1812 it is said 'part of this canal, till very lately, was visible under the name of *Llyn y green*' (Evans 1812, 107). Several references in the Corporation accounts refer to 'Afon y Castell' or 'the old watercourse', when referring to repairing a highway and carrying water in a gutter 'from a place called Plas Coch to the Cross of Bewmares and thence forward to the River called Afon y Castell' (Owen 1932, 84). There were only two natural outlets for water to the sea at Beaumaris, one was at the west end of the town, down Nant y Felin (also called Nant Meugan), and the other was across the present Green from the moat to the sea. The reference quoted above, dated June 1718, locates the problem in the east side of the town, and the name Afon y Castell must either relate to the moat itself or to a river that lay between the moat and the sea. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century this had been culverted, as revealed in a description of the town lands undertaken in 1823 which states 'the right of the Corporation extends over and includes the whole of the part of the Green which lies between the town and the south west side of the covered drain or water course from the castle mote to the sea shore'. However, despite these references, the evidence from Speeds map would indicate that the castle dock went out of use during the later Middle Ages, and that all shipping made use of the town quay further to the west.

#### The town wall and town quay

The borough was not initially defended by a wall or ditch, unlike Conwy and Caernarfon, and it was as a direct consequence of the Glyndwr revolt that a wall was eventually erected, though an attack on the borough by a small Scottish landing party in 1381, when a number of houses were damaged, must have encouraged the idea, and as early as 1315 the burgesses had been petitioning the King for a wall (Carr 1982, 240). In 1407 a grant of ten pounds was made for the construction of a ditch, and the returns of 1413-14 reveal that some thirty burgages had been destroyed by the construction of a new stone wall (Carr 1982, 245-6).

In the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century it is recorded that land was lost or laid waste by sea encroachments, and in 1459-60 a portion of the town wall was 'wholly broken by the inundation of the sea' (Davies 1942, 108-9). Repairs were undertaken to the wall in 1536-8 for which detailed accounts survive (Knoop and Jones 1935). In the first year's accounts the stone is initially described as being carried from 'the quarre to the Water syde' and 'from ye water side to ye walles', but later in the document it is described as being carried 'from the quarre to the key', which suggests the presence of a quay, though gives no indication of its nature, and it could refer simply to a wall along the coast edge. In 1562 sea walls and banks were being 'devastated and destroyed by the great flow and ebb of the sea and by winds and tempests' (Davies 1942, 109).

Though much of the northern part of the wall had been destroyed by the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century (Owen 1775, 22), and only two short lengths of the wall now remain, its line has been reconstructed (RCAHMW 1937, cxlvii – cxlviii and p 4). The reconstruction makes use of Speed and later maps, though not Yates's map of 1829, which more clearly shows the line of the wall, particularly along the sea front. There is some debate as to the route of the original wall at the south-west corner, with the suggestion that the diagonal route shown on both Speed's and Yates's map is a later course, taken following the destruction in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, possibly before the rebuilding of the 1530's, or after that which occurred in 1562.

We are never entirely sure of the nature of the town quay, nor of its location. It is reasonable to assume, however, that if a stone or timber quay were built, it would be in a location that was readily accessible from one of the town gates. There were three gates through the town walls, located on the north, south and west sides. The north gate at the top end of Church Street need not concern us further. The location of the south gate is not known with certainty, but may have been close to the castle, somewhere between Green Edge and Victoria Terrace. Interestingly there would appear to have been no exit to the sea at the south end of Church street. There is no gap shown on Yates's map, and the small street leading past the town hall is called Wall Street, implying the street ended at the wall. Similarly Speed's map shows no route from the town to the sea through the wall. Access to the harbour must therefore have been through the west gate, also called the water gate, and then either directly south along the route of the present Alma Street, or more probably west along lower Castle Street (also called Watergate Street). The encroachments by the sea

almost certainly took place in the area between the pier and West End, so if a medieval quay lay here, it would have been destroyed. The most sheltered part of the bay is the area between West End and Gallows Point, and along Townsend. This is where, in the post-medieval centuries, boats discharged their cargo onto the beach. The construction of a track onto the beach at Townsend in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century helps confirm this, as does the house name of Porth Hir at the west end of Townsend. The stream (the Nant y Felin) that flows into the centre of the bay would have been useful for watering the ships. It is within this area that the medieval quay is most likely to have been sited.

That the port was a busy one during the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries has been clearly demonstrated by Aled Eames (1973, 103-13). The records collected following the 1786 Act, which required the recording of details of all ships belonging to a port, show that Beaumaris was handling more tonnage than any other Welsh port, and ranked 14<sup>th</sup> on the national list (*ibid*, 104). It is difficult to be precise about the quantity of shipping using Beaumaris, because the legal definition of the port included a number of smaller creeks. However, though it is probable that the majority of trade recorded took place at Beaumaris in the earlier years, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the evidence points to the harbour being in decline.

Whilst by far the majority of the trade was coastal, in relatively small sloops manned by a crew of two or three, larger ships such as the *Unicorn* of Woodbridge, a 50 ton vessel with a crew of seven, took a cargo of corn from Beaumaris to London in May 1730 (*ibid*, 107-8). However, whilst the 18<sup>th</sup> century saw a general increase in the quantities of merchant shipping, this largely took place at harbours associated with quarries and mines, and the shipping of stone, slate, copper and iron. The trade at Beaumaris, having no associated industries, declined, and is described by writers of the period as having little trade, for example John Evans says 'The bay which lies before the town has good anchorage for ships of heavy burthen, having seven fathom at the lowest ebb. Notwithstanding this local advantage for maritime adventure the place has none, or very little trade, and depends principally for support on the numerous vessels, which lie here waiting for winds, or that run in, during heavy gales, to find security' (Evans 1812, 178). Though the harbour remained active, much of the activity was now related to a rise in leisure activities as opposed to work and trade. The archaeology related to these later periods will be described below.

## **Description of features**

### The Green

Though Beaumaris did not witness the construction of stone piers and docks that we find at the industrial harbours of Amlwch, Penrhyn and Caernarfon in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, developments of a different nature ensued. The increase in visitors, and the rise of the trading steamers along the north Wales coast, combined with the business interests of those serving on the Beaumaris Corporation led to several improvements in the vicinity of the town Green.

Our understanding of the early development of the Green is slight. Speed shows no development between the town wall and the coast edge, and this area was almost certainly still marshy in 1610. The town wall formed a clear division between the edge of the town and the coast from the castle to the water gate. The green was divided from north to south by the parish boundary of Llanfaes, and the Corporation would have been responsible for the western part only, and therefore only able to develop within that area. On the eastern side Speed marks a small structure towards the coast edge, which on later charts is shown as a 'watch house', though it had been demolished by 1895. The structure on Speed's map may be related to the ferry crossing that went from the Llanfaes side of the Green until its transfer to the point in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, a custom house also stood somewhere on the Green according to Evans who states 'The custom-house stands on the green near the water's edge, and is the comptrolling office not only to the different ports on the island, but also to those on the Caernarfonshire side of the Menai' (Evans 1812, 174). By 1836 it had moved to Townsend.

In 1821 it was ordered that a 'landing quay' be constructed at the expense of the corporation of sufficient length and depth at the Green for the accommodation of persons landing from small boats (UWB

Beaumaris and Anglesey I.14, p 201). The whereabouts of this quay is not known, though it must have been close to where the pier now lies.

On the Beaumaris side of the Green there was little development before 1800, though a gaol and house for the gaoler were constructed there, outside the town walls. However, concerned that the rise in prosperity from industrial developments, visible at Penrhyn and Caernarfon, was passing them by, the Corporation of Beaumaris was determined to capitalise on its assets, and ensure that the town became a fashionable resort. A committee was formed to oversee the development of the Green in 1823, and they concluded that 'as a means for the improvement of the town, and advancing its prosperity, as well as promoting the interest of this Corporation, the present available funds of the Corporation be laid out in building upon the Corporate ground on Beaumaris Green six new houses with suitable office and a billiard room and a public mess room .... As prepared by Mr Hall' (UWB Beaumaris and Anglesey I.14 p. 222). Hall was a Bangor architect who also undertook some work at the church (Colvin 1995, 448), though later became involved with engineering projects, including the Nantlle Railway (Skempton 2002, 293). The terrace was constructed by 1825, and the Beaumaris Book Society, a society formed in 1802 primarily as a lending library but with strong maritime interests, presented its books to the Corporation, and moved its effects and meetings to No. 6 Green Edge. Initially the Beaumaris News Room, it eventually became in 1885 the Royal Anglesey Yacht Club (Eames 1973, 419-30).

Further developments on the Green were hampered by the presence of the county gaol and a house alongside called Ty yn y Green. Consequently a new gaol was built 1828-9 west of the church to designs by Hansom and Welch, and the old gaol site and adjoining house purchased by the Corporation. Meanwhile, Hansom and Welch designed a new hotel for the Williams-Bulkeley family that lay in a prime position overlooking the bay. Construction of the Williams-Bulkeley hotel (now the Bulkeley Hotel) was started in 1829. In order to develop the land between the hotel and Green Edge the Corporation held a competition for a new terrace of houses. This was won by Hansom and Welch, and construction of Victoria Terrace was started in 1830 (Nottingham 1994, 26-40; UWB Beaumaris and Anglesey Mss). Victoria Terrace still dominates the Green today, though the interior of the houses was altered during renovations undertaken by the architect Colwyn Ffoulkes in 1936-7 (Nottingham 1994, 50-53; Cadw Listed Buildings No. 5636).

The Green had been levelled in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but was further improved immediately prior to 1830 (UWB Baron Hill 3696; Davies 1966, 241).

### The pier

Though the increase in visitors arriving by steamer was beneficial to the merchants of Beaumaris, there remained the problem of landing and boarding the boats. The small pier already built could only be used at high tide, so at other states of the tide it was necessary for small boats to ferry visitors off, or even for visitors to be carried on the backs of ferrymen. This led in 1840 to the proposal to construct a pier so that passengers could embark and disembark at all stages of the tide. Despite financial problems, and the need for the council to step in to complete the project, the pier was completed in 1843/4, only for it to be severely damaged in a storm in May 1844. Rebuilding was finally complete again by May 1846 (Cowell 2005, 12). In 1865 the pier was badly damaged again when an iron paddle steamer collided with it, and it was 1871 before repairs were once again complete (Cowell 2005, 13).

### West End, Alma Street, Bulkeley Terrace and Raglan Street

This area was redeveloped in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (1860's) in a development initiated by Baron Hill Estate. It included the site of a former hot baths, built c. 1828, of which only the chimney now remains. It has been suggested that the style of the chimney is similar to work undertaken by Hansom and Welch, particularly at the gaol, and that they may have had designed the baths and chimney (Cadw Listed Buildings, Ref 84766). West End is a terrace that fronts the east side of the bay, between the east ends of Water Street and Chapel Street. A terrace of seven houses, of which no's 1 to 6 were built in 1869, and no 7 slightly later. Earlier buildings are shown on Yates's map of 1829 and on Speed's map of 1610. The wall that runs along the coast edge between the pier and chimney corner may date from c. 1830, as it is in



the same style of masonry as the chimney. A schedule of works for 'making a wall or quay to extend on the sea shore or beach to extend from the south of the Green to the east part of the town wall' dated 1830 gives instructions for the building of a wall, though it is not entirely clear if this is the same wall (UWB B&A I.596). The schedule is of interest, because it records using stones from the old town wall and the dwarf quay, and is therefore quoted in full:

'To bring up footing with large stones 9'9" stonework to be diminished on the front 3" in every foot high to height of 1' above the top of the old culvert. From there to be built level all its length. The back to diminish 1½ inches in every foot high. The front to be built with large stones from Penrhyn Quarry. All to be laid edgeways in the wall, like those in the quay at the south end of Water Gate Street. All the backing to be of the best stones which can be had from the Old Town Wall and the dwarf quay. All and every stone well bedded in mortar. The mortar to consist of 1 fourth part lime to 3 fourths sharp gravel. Stairs to be built with good sound stones' (UWB B&A I.596).

This could refer to the extant wall, though the quarry, and hence the stone used, has not been identified with certainty, though it could relate to one by Gallows Point, or round the coast beyond Fryars Bay. The present wall can, at Chimney corner, be clearly seen to be sitting on top of the wall that runs around West end. This latter is constructed of blocks laid vertically with a batter on the lower 2m. One set of stairs remain in the lower part of this wall – the upper part of the wall has been rebuilt. This wall continues on along Townsend to where the trackway comes off the beach.

Bulkeley Terrace and Raglan Street (including 31 Castle St) were also built at about the same time as West End. The medieval water gate, shown on Speed's map, lay close to the junction of Castle Street with Steeple Lane. The harbour was then presumably reached along the west part of Castle Street, called Watergate Street on Yates's map. Speed shows a through route from Steeple Lane along the later Alma Street, but this is not an area where ships could moor with ease. Once at the end of Watergate/Castle street (at what is now West End), there would be easy access all along the edge of the bay to Porth Hir and beyond to Gallows Point. There are a number of reports in later medieval times to loss of land by erosion, and it would have been this area between West End and the pier that was most vulnerable, and where erosion is most likely to have occurred.

#### Porth Hir and Townsend

Townsend forms the west side of Beaumaris, and originally included what is now West End. It continues as far as the stream, Nant Meugan or Melin y Nant, that runs down onto the beach. East of Nant Meugan is the house of Porth Hir. This sits in front of the hill Y Bryn, the site of a former civil war earthwork, built to command the castle and harbour in 1642 and dismantled in 1643 (RCAHMW 1937, 16). Speed's map of 1610 shows a substantial building on top of the hill, though the present house is early 18<sup>th</sup> century (Cadw Listed Building ref. 5644). Porth Hir was formerly two small cottages, one at right angles to the other. There is a date '1605' painted over the door, though the present building is largely 19<sup>th</sup> century in character (Cadw Listed Building ref. 5677). The name would suggest associations with the harbour, and the building lies close to the area where boats discharged their cargoes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and were taken up *via* the cart road.

The majority of the buildings that line the front of Townsend are mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, but Cleifiog is shown on Yates map of 1829 as the custom house, though by the 1860's this had moved to what is now the front garden of Llwyn Celyn. the former custom house, is early to mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, and Pilot House, further to the east, is also 18<sup>th</sup> century (Cadw Listed Building ref. 5675 and 5673).

Improvements were undertaken at Townsend during the years 1808 to 1812. A coal yard had been established there in 1802 to store coal for subsequent resale (UWB Beaumaris and Anglesey I.14, 96), and in 1813 a saw pit was erected there and let at a rent of £10.00, with the adjoining piece of land let to William Jones, 'ships carpenter' (UWB Beaumaris and Anglesey I.14, 154). A well made track (that still exists) was constructed down on to the beach, possibly in 1829 (Davies 1966, 236). A weighing machine was installed alongside the saw pit for use by the Corporation in 1836. The commercial nature of this area is confirmed with the comment in 1836 that 'the collection of timber and rubbish on the beach and also by

Tros yr Afon bridge, for which no compensation is given, we look upon as a great nuisance and is injuring the approach to the town' (UWB Beaumaris and Anglesey I.15, 11).

### Tros yr Afon

Tros yr Afon lies on the west side of the Nant Meugan, a small river also called Brittainy Brook in 17<sup>th</sup> century documents. Speed's map of 1610 shows two mills called Britons Mills higher up the river. A medieval chapel called Capel Meugan formerly lay in the valley (for river name see Jones 1989, 87-8). Remains still exist of the mills, the lower of which was converted into a slate mill in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Speed shows a building on the site of Tros yr Afon, which may partly be preserved in No. 2 Tros yr Afon, around which No's 1, 3 and 4 were added in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Cadw Listed Building: ref. 5680). The road crosses the river over a stone-built bridge, which was repaired and widened in 1817, though the present bridge may be a later construction (UWB Beaumaris and Anglesey I.595). The river has been curtailed within a stone built open culvert, and runs under the road through a bridge visible on the north side only. The arch is of limestone voussoirs, with a protruding arch ring of horizontal stones above. Tros yr Afon marks the end of the built-up part of the town.

### Gallows Point

Gallows Point is the remains of a gravel ridge that stretches south into the Menai Strait, and forms the west end of Beaumaris Bay and the harbour. In 1736 Lewis Morris says 'A vessel without cable or anchor may run ashore half a mile east and south of the town on soft clay ground at a place called Penrhyn Safnas point, by some called Gallows Point, and there lie with safety' (Lewis Morris, 1736, 17) – this is the earliest recorded use of the name 'gallows point', though its significance is not known.

The name of the point was formerly Penrhyn Safnas, translated as 'the headland of the bitch's mouth', probably due to its shape. Leland refers to 'Pen ryn Savyn ast' in 1538/9. An alternative name often used was 'Osmundes Eyre', first recorded in use in 1456-8. This is Viking in origin, and is a compound of personal name *Asmundr* and Old Norse *Eyrr*, meaning a gravel bank (Jones and Roberts 1980, 602-3; Jones and Roberts 1996, 136-7).

A fish weir formerly lay off the south end of the point, pointing towards Bangor. It is shown on Grenville Collins map of 1693, and is referred to in documents as early as 1451 (Carr 1982, 110). In 1590 Sir Richard Bulkeley leased 'Osmonds Air', described as extending between Beaumaris and Bangor, and granted liberty to build weirs or fishponds thereon, and to build a fish-house on a plot 21ft square, to be completed by 1591 (UWB Baron Hill, 564 and 650). A building is shown on Collins map towards the end of the point.

The Corporation accounts of 1756 to 1841 refer to Owen Meyrick leasing 'a sight of a weir in Osmund's Aire', though no weir was apparently worked then (UWB Beaumaris and Anglesey I.FB1). An increase in the quantity of larger stone in the inter-tidal area on the south-east corner of the point may represent the remains of the weir.

The ferry was transferred from its landing place on the Green to a new landing place on the point around the year 1690 (Davies 1966, 118-119). A ferry house lay at the landward side of the point, but few other improvements appear to have been made until 1799, when the Corporation minutes record many boat loads of stone and carloads of faggots being taken to the Point 'to make the embankment near the ferry' (quoted in Davies 1966, 236). Several similar records of repairs at the point continue until 1829. In 1825 costs of £27 4s. 6d. were laid out on quarrying, carting, setting stones and cutting faggots and cartage for strengthening and preserving the Point (Davies 1966, 237). No substantial jetty appears to have been built, and the repairs appear to be principally for repairing the gravel bank where it is eroding. The ferry appears to have worked up to 1831 (Davies 1966, 240).

A structure is shown on Grenville Collins chart of 1693 (perhaps connected with the fish weir – see above), but no structures are shown on Lewis Morris's chart of 1736/7, nor on the Baron Hill Estate Survey of 1776 (Baron Hill 4959), though a small building is shown on the far side of the road on the latter which must be



the ferry house. This building is called a 'public house' on the later estate survey of 1865 (Baron Hill S8225), and is marked 'ferry house' on the first edition one inch Ordnance Survey map of c. 1840. None of these later maps show any development on the point, though the Corporation accounts record leasing, in 1862, a piece of land on Gallows Point where a battery and magazine have been erected (UWB B&A IV.364).

The first accurate survey that records development on the point is the 25" OS map of 1889. This shows a row of six sheds along the east side, a small square structure called 'Dead House' with another building just to the east, an enclosure with a flag staff and small building towards the end of the point, and another small rectangular building on the south-west side of the point. Local tradition states that it was the building alongside the flag staff that was the former magazine, and that it was constructed of strong stone walls, with a stone-flagged floor and a fireplace on one side. The function of the 'Dead House' is not known with certainty, but may have been for storing bodies that were washed up from the sea prior to burial.

The date of the establishment of the ship building industry must have occurred in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. A painting in the National Library of Wales dated 1857 shows loose timber, several small boats and a larger one under construction on the east edge of the point (Herbert Copton Herries, *Beaumaris with Boats*, ref. Framed Works TH02). The row of sheds clad in corrugated iron along the east side of the point are interesting survivors of the use of corrugated iron dating from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. The OS map of 1914 shows a crane at the north-east corner of the point.

The point now houses the Anglesey Boat Company, and on the north-east side winter storage for boats moored in the bay managed by the Borough Council. The North West Venturers Yacht Club have their home here, in a building first erected in 1964.

## **Management**

### General harbour management

Beaumaris Harbour is managed jointly with Menai Bridge harbour by Isle of Anglesey County Council, and the limits are approximately Fryars Bay to Menai Bridge. A single harbour master with an office in Menai Bridge is responsible for both. The Council leases the sea bed from the Crown, and in turn issues a license to use part of the sea bed for a mooring. The licensee then arranges for the mooring tackle to be laid down. The boats are taken out of the water for the winter months, many of them laid up on Gallows Point, which is owned by the Council and who rent space for laying up (confined to the north-east side of the point). The north-west side of the point is leased from the Council by Anglesey Boat Company.

The pier is managed by the Council, who look after its maintenance. Boats using the pier for fee-paying passengers need to obtain a license from the Council.

### Environmental designations

#### *Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)*

Beaumaris lies within *Anglesey's AONB* as defined by Countryside Council for Wales.

#### *Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)*

The area between mean high and mean low water to the north-east of the castle is designated a SSSI (*Glannau Penmon – Biwmaris*, code 31WYW). The area of park land north of the castle has been designated as *Baron Hill Park SSSI*, code 31WYA.

#### *Special Area of Conservation*

The Menai Strait below mean high water is designated a Special Area of Conservation as part of *Y Fenai a Bae Conwy / Menai Strait and Conwy Bay*, site code UK0030202.

#### *Marine Nature Reserve*

The Menai Strait has been proposed as a Marine Nature Reserve.

### Heritage designations

#### *World Heritage Status*

Beaumaris castle is part of the World Heritage Site *Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd* (reference 374) as defined by UNESCO. The essential setting as defined within the management plan includes the Green and the coast edge to the pier, but does not include Townsend, where the medieval town quay is likely to have been sited (Cadw 2004, Map B2.4.7).

#### *Landscape of historic interest*

Beaumaris lies within the *Penmon Historic Landscape* as defined within the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, reference HLW (GW) 15.

#### *Scheduled Ancient Monuments*

The following scheduled ancient monuments lie within Beaumaris:

A001 Beaumaris Castle (also in Guardianship of State)  
A045 Beaumaris Courthouse  
A066 Old County Gaol  
A123 Beaumaris Town Walls  
A134 Franciscan Friary, site of  
A140 Gorad Friars Bach Fish Weir

#### *Listed Buildings*

Beaumaris has a high percentage of listed buildings, including seven Grade I and seven Grade II\* buildings (Cadw: Listed buildings in Beaumaris). All buildings of interest within the study area are listed, with the exception of the pier which retains too little of its original structure. The pier is, however, currently recommended for inclusion within the Conservation Area (see below).

#### *Conservation Area*

The Beaumaris Conservation Area presently includes the entire waterfront from the north-east side of Gallows Point to the north edge of the Green. The pier has been recommended for inclusion, but presently lies outside the defined boundary (Isle of Anglesey County Council, Beaumaris Conservation Area Character Appraisal, Draft document, not dated but 2005-6). Gallows Point lies outside, and so does Fryars Bay.

### **Management recommendations**

A high level of protection is currently afforded to Beaumaris through existing designations. However, a number of sites are not currently protected by listed building status or scheduled ancient monument status, but are considered to be of significance to the development of the harbour at Beaumaris. These include:

- The pier, in particular the stone causeway and entry gates
- The sea wall between the pier and chimney corner
- The sea wall between chimney corner and Townsend
- The access track to the beach at Townsend
- Townsend bridge over the stream called Nant y Felin (Nant Meugan)
- The sheds on Gallows Point associated with 19<sup>th</sup> century ship building and maintenance. These are due for demolition, and yet are the best examples of this type of structure to survive in north-west Wales. Similar structures formerly existed at Conwy, but these were demolished in 1992. A single example remains at Caernarfon on the west shore of the Seiont.

A detailed record of the above sites should be undertaken prior to any impact or significant alterations.

Areas of research potential related to the development of the harbour are:

- The method by which ships gained access to the castle dock;
- the location of the town walls along the coast edge;
- the location of medieval fish weirs at ferrymans warth both off the Green and off Gallows Point;
- the nature of any structures associated with the ferry both on the Green and at Gallows point;
- the growth and location of industries and ship building/repair at Townsend;
- the nature and growth of ship building and repair on Gallows Point.

Many harbours contain areas that are now silted, but which were formerly used for mooring and/or transshipment of people and goods, and which therefore retain good potential for the preservation of remains, including organic archaeology and shipwrecks. At Beaumaris the best potential for such archaeology exists between the present coast edge and the castle moat, where it is thought a passage or canal formerly existed. It is feasible for medieval ship remains to be preserved within this area. There is less potential at Llanfaes, though silts within the bay, and particularly at the north end where the stream flows into the sea, could preserve buried remains. Similarly, the silts of Beaumaris Bay may contain remains of sunken ships or boats.

Archaeological assessment and evaluation should precede any development within these areas of archaeological potential.

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## **BEAUMARIS GAZETTEER**

The gazetteer is divided into three sections, Group A are extant sites that are upstanding, often remaining as buildings in use. Group B are sites with good potential for the recovery of archaeology, whilst Group C are sites with little or no potential for the recovery of archaeology. Within the gazetteer the sites are identified by their primary reference number (PRN) as used within the Gwynedd Historic Environment Record, and are assessed according to their importance, that is national (A), regional (B), Local (C), Other (D) and unknown (E). The site names are printed in capitals if they are already part of the Historic Environment Record, and in lower case if they have been identified during the course of this project.

### **GROUP A: EXTANT SITES**

#### **GORAD FRIARS BACH FISH WEIR, BEAUMARIS**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: A140

A small weir with an unusually elongated outer arm. The inner arm runs from the shore at 90 degrees for 75m. The outer arm then runs at 90 degrees from this (to the SW) and is 88m long. A spur turns back towards the shore at an angle of 45 degrees for 20m. An unusual further spur then turns back into the interior of the trap. This can be traced for about 15m. The stonework is well preserved, much of the trap is defined by a 4m wide bank standing to a height of about 0.5m. The outside of the outer arm is defined by large facing stones standing to a height of 0.8m in places. The remains of a row of posts runs along the centre of the wall. Two lines of possible facing stones stand to either side of the posts making a 'wall' 1.6m wide and 0.2m high. The weir was used until the mid 1960's by the Girling family who still live in Gorad bach cottage (Hopewell 2000).

Easting: 261502

Northing: 377747

#### **1573 BEAUMARIS CASTLE**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: A001

Beaumaris was the last of the ring of Edwardian Welsh castles to be built, and was constructed following the uprising of 1294 led (in the north) by Madog ap Llywelyn. The castle with its associated borough supplanted the Welsh town of Llanfaes, and became the foremost port in north Wales. The castle, because its design was not constrained by topographical features but built on low lying flat land next to the Menai Strait, is the most perfectly concentric of all the castles. Though huge resources were allocated to its construction in the first few years, the castle was never fully completed. It was garrisoned for the King during the Civil War, but surrendered in 1646. The site is listed grade 1, is a scheduled ancient monument and a world heritage site.

Easting: 260742 Northing: 376261

#### **1720 JETTY (REMAINS OF), LLANFAES**

Assessment of Importance: C Site Status Reference:

A slipway that led down from the workshops of Saunders-Roe (later to become Lairds) on the site of the Friary. Saunders-Roe moved to the site at Friars in October 1940, where they modified Catalina flying boats, and later built torpedo boats and other aluminium framed craft.

Easting: 261111 Northing: 377427

#### **6378 TROS YR AFON, BEAUMARIS**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: GII

A small terrace of houses of mainly 19th century date. No. 2 retains vestiges of a 16th or early 17th century house of lobby-entry plan. It possibly became the rear wing of No. 1 in the early 19th century, though was a separate house by 1829, by which time no.'s 3 and 4 had also been built (Cadw listed building description).

Easting: 260098 Northing: 375838

**7490 PARISH BOUNDARY STONE, BEAUMARIS**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

A parish boundary stone (separating Beaumaris from Llanfaes) set into the low wall enclosing the eastern side of Beaumaris castle, inscribed with the names of the two parishes.

Easting: 260758 Northing: 376161

**11000 BULKELEY TERRACE, 1, 2 & 3**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference: GII

A terrace of 3 houses between Raglan Street and Alma Street. Built in the mid-19th century as part of a major re-development initiated by Baron Hill estate.

Easting: 260484 Northing: 375992

**11002 ALMA STREET, 1-4 CONSEC.**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference: GII

A terrace of 4 houses built as part of a re-development of this area of Beaumaris by Baron Hill in the mid-19th century.

Easting: 260467 Northing: 375967

**11017 BULKELEY TERRACE, 4-8**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference: GII

A terrace lying between Raglan Street and Alma Street. Built in the mid-19th century as part of a major re-development initiated by Baron Hill estate.

Easting: 260508 Northing: 376007

**11068 CLEIFIOW TOWNSEND**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

An 18th century house, which by 1829 had the custom house alongside. A plan of the custom house dated 1852 shows a rectangular house of drawing room and dining room at the front with dairy and kitchen behind. The block to the right contains custom store room on the ground floor with offices over, and external stairs to the offices (Yates map of 1829; Cadw Listed Building description; Anglesey Record Office WH/21/1).

Easting: 260222 Northing: 375937

**11085 GLAN-YR-AFON, TOWNSEND; TOWNSEND NO. 12, PILOT**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

One of a relatively small number of surviving 18th century houses at Townsend. It formerly incorporated the adjoining house of Glan y Don.

Easting: 260303 Northing: 375967

**11088 GREEN EDGE, 1-6, THE GREEN**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII\*

Green Edge was built in 1825 to a design by John Hall. The development was promoted by the Corporation of Beaumaris in an attempt to ensure the town would flourish as a fashionable resort. It is a terrace of 6 houses, with a seventh at the rear. No. 6 was designed for the Beaumaris Book Society, which became the Beaumaris News and Billiards room. The society later became the Royal Anglesey Yacht Club, who still occupy No's 6 and 7. Verandah's were added c. 1860.

Easting: 260734 Northing: 376128

**11092 GWYNFA, THE GREEN**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

A house probably built c. 1870, and extended in 1896. In late Georgian style of 2 storeys and attic, of pebble-dashed walls with rock-faced quoins, and slate roof. The 3-bay front has a segmental-headed doorway with replacement glazed door, side panels and overlight. It is flanked by 12 pane horned sash windows (Cadw Listed Buildings description).

Easting: 260625 Northing: 376060



**11099 HENDREF**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

Built in the late 19th century as one of a pair (Llwyn Celyn is alongside), and influenced by the houses of Hansom and Welch in the town. (Cadw Listed Building description). Easting: 260253 Northing: 375946

**11116 LLWYN CELYN**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: GII

One of a pair of houses built between 1889 and 1900 at Townsend, and influenced by the houses of Hansom and Welch built in the town. (Cadw Listed Building description and comparison of first and second edition OS maps). In 1861 the custom house lay within what was to become the front garden of Llwyn Celyn, having moved from Cleifiog sometime after 1852 (UWB Baron Hill 8224). Easting: 260255 Northing: 375949

**11176 PORTH HIR, TOWNSEND**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

Two adjoining cottages now form one property. A date of 1605 was visible above the door, though does not appear to be there now. A one and half storey house of whitened pebble-dashed walls, renewed steep slate roof and pebble-dashed end stacks (Cadw Listed Building description). Easting: 260174 Northing: 375916

**11177 PORTH HIR, HOUSE ADJ. TO S.W.**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

A 2 storey wing built onto the left side of Porth Hir and at right-angles to it. Shown on Yates 1829 map. (Cadw Listed Building description). Easting: 260168 Northing: 375908

**11193 SEAVIEW, TOWNSEND;TOWNSEND NO. 10**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

Now called Ty Anne. It is one of a pair of houses built by Baron Hill estate in the mid 19th century, replacing the warehouses shown on the 1829 map. (Cadw Listed Building description). Easting: 260310 Northing: 375968

**11209 TOWNSEND HOUSE, ADJ. TO EAST**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: GII The former custom house built onto Cleifiog house. It is shown on Yates 1829 map. See also PRN 11068). Easting: 260235 Northing: 375942

**11218 TREWYN, TOWNSEND;TOWNSEND NO. 8**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

Trewyn is one of a pair of houses built by Baron Hill estate in the mid 19th century, replacing the warehouses shown on the 1829 map. See also PRN 11193. (Cadw Listed Building description). Easting: 260318 Northing: 375973

**11224 TROS-YR-AFON, 1 & 1A**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

See PRN 6378.

Easting: 260107 Northing: 375857

**11225 TROS YR AFON, 2**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

See PRN 6378.

260104 Easting: Northing: 375840

**11226 TROS YR AFON, 3**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

See PRN 6378.

260095 Easting: Northing: 375835

**11248 VICTORIA TERRACE, 1-20**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GI

A prominent terrace on the Green, built in 1833 to a design by Hansom and Welch for the Corporation. The terrace was the centrepiece of a plan to regenerate the declining port of Beaumaris by creating a fashionable resort. The houses were sold by the corporation in 1937 and were refurbished and converted into apartments by the architect Colwyn Foulkes. (Cadw Listed Building description).

Easting: 260690 Northing: 376074

**19770 Sea wall, West End, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

The sea wall from Chimney corner to the track onto the beach at Townsend is some 6m high. The lower part, nearly 4m high, is heavily battered and is constructed of rectangular blocks set vertically in rough courses. The top 2 metres has been rebuilt. One set of steps within the lower part of the wall lies towards Chimney corner. It is likely that this wall was built during the major improvements undertaken at Townsend in the early years of the 19th century, and at the corner the lower wall can be seen to predate the chimney of the bath house that was built in 1829. If the lower part is this early, the upper part may date from 1879, when maintenance work was undertaken on the wall (UWB Caernarfon and Anglesey IV.381)

Easting: 260427 Northing: 375943

**19771 Town wall, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

The borough was not initially defended by a wall or ditch, unlike Conwy and Caernarfon, and it was as a direct consequence of the Glyndwr revolt that a wall was eventually erected, though an attack on the borough by a small Scottish landing party in 1381, when a number of houses were damaged, must have encouraged the idea, and as early as 1315 the burgesses had been petitioning the King for a wall (Carr 1982, 240). In 1407 a grant of ten pounds was made for the construction of a ditch, and the returns of 1413-14 reveal that some thirty burgages had been destroyed by the construction of a new stone wall (Carr 1982, 245-6). In the first half of the 15th century it is recorded that land was lost or laid waste by sea encroachments, and in 1459-60 a portion of the town wall was 'wholly broken by the inundation of the sea' (Davies 1942, 108-9). Repairs were undertaken to the wall in 1536-8 for which detailed accounts survive (Knoop and Jones 1935). In 1562 sea walls and banks were being 'devastated and destroyed by the great flow and ebb of the sea and by winds and tempests' (Davies 1942, 109). Though much of the northern part of the wall had been destroyed by the mid 18th century (Owen 1775, 22), and only two short lengths of the wall now remain, its line has been reconstructed (RCAHMW 1937, cxlvii cxlviii and p 4). There is some debate as to the route of the original wall at the south-west corner, with the suggestion that the diagonal route shown on both Speed's and Yates's map is a later course, taken following the destruction in the 16th century, possibly before the rebuilding of the 1530's, or after that which occurred in 1562, and that the original course once continued into where the sea has now encroached.

Easting: 260585 Northing: 376007

**19772 West End, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

A terrace of seven houses, of which numbers 1 to 6 were built in 1869 on land owned by Baron Hill. No. 7 was added later, but before 1889. Three storey buildings, with bay windows on one side.

Easting: 260391 375965 Northing:

**19773 Track to beach, Townsend, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

An elaborate track leading from the road onto the beach. It formerly led down on both east and west sides, supported by a terraced wall, but only the east side remains open, and the terraced wall on the west side has been surmounted by a later wall. Two lines of boulders separated by some 1.5m with their flattened upper faces level with the surface appear to form the original bed of the track. The track is clearly shown on Yates map of 1829, and probably dates from the improvements carried out at Townsend c. 1808.

Easting: 260293 Northing: 375933

**19775 Open-air baths, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

A bathing area for ladies was established at Beaumaris as early as the 1830's, and in 1855 bathing huts were provided here. The gentleman's bathing area lay on the north side of the mount, at the south end of Fryars Bay. By 1919 an outdoor swimming pool was established here. The pool, with alterations, remained open into the 1970's.

Easting: 260959 Northing: 376303

**19776 CHAUNTRY HOUSE, THE GREEN, BEAUMARIS**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

Built by Joseph Hansom and Edward Welch, and completed by 1833. It was occupied by the chief trainer employed at the stables at Baron Hill. A late Georgian house of 2 storeys and attic, and 4 bays, of limestone ashlar with moulded stone cornice and parapet (Cadw Listed Building description).

Easting: 260625 Northing: 376060

**19781 Boat building sheds, Gallows Point, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

A row of sheds, generally timber framed and clad in corrugated iron sheets. They were erected in the second half of the 19th century, and are clearly indicated on the 1889 edition of the OS 25" County series. They must be related to the boat building/maintenance industry carried out here. Some have been entirely replaced by modern examples, but some 10 of the 11 sheds are of late 19th or early 20th century date. These are rare examples of structures that are considered ephemeral and temporary, and relate to an industry that leaves few archaeological traces. Similar examples at Conwy were demolished c. 1992, and no comparable extant examples are known from the harbours of north-west Wales. A row of later examples, dating from the mid-20th century lie to the south-east.

Easting: 259785 Northing: 375232

**19785 Slipway, Fryars Bay, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: C

Site Status Reference:

A small slipway that was connected with the Saunders-Roe works across the road on the site of the medieval Friary. Saunders-Roe moved to the site at Friars in October 1940, where they modified Catalina flying boats, and later built torpedo boats and other aluminium framed craft.

Easting: 260980 Northing: 377244

**19791 Pier, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

A pier was first proposed here in 1840, to allow passengers to embark and disembark at all stages of the tide. Despite financial problems, and the need for the council to step in to complete the project, the pier was completed in 1843/4, only for it to be severely damaged in a storm in May 1844. Rebuilding was finally complete again by May 1846 (Cowell 2005, 12). In 1865 the pier was badly damaged again when an iron paddle steamer collided with it, and it was 1871 before repairs were once again complete (Cowell 2005, 13). The pier is in two parts - the outer landward part is a stone causeway, some 100m long and 8m wide. Rails used for transporting passengers luggage can still be seen on the floor of the pier. The stone causeway may date from the original construction of the pier. The outer part (some 50m long) consists of a timber deck on steel girders supported on timber piles. These are of various dates, the timber deck being of post-war date, though the piles are possibly earlier. The pier originally had a larger L-shaped end with a large pavilion on it, but this was demolished in the 1950's. The pier is not listed, though it is proposed to include it within the Conservation Area.

Easting: 260683 Northing: 375854

**19792 Sea wall, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

A sea wall runs from chimney corner to the pier. The lower 4m in height is built of limestone blocks, and appears to be contemporary with the chimney, and therefore dated to c. 1828. The upper part of the wall is in a different style, and later.

Easting: 260509 Northing: 375966



**19793 Bridge, Townsend, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

A small stone-built bridge with segmental arch of limestone voussoirs and projecting ring over. Upstream of the bridge the river is fed by a stone-built culvert, whereas downstream it now passes through a modern culvert before discharging onto the beach. The bridge carries the road from Beaumaris to Gallows Point over the Nant y Felin, a stream that formerly fed two mills higher up the valley. The date of the present bridge is not known with certainty. The bridge was repaired and widened in 1817, but the present structure may be later than this (UWB Caernarfon and Anglesey Mss, I.595).

Easting: 260174 Northing: 375878

**19794 The Bulkeley Hotel**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GI 5588

The hotel was commissioned by the Baron Hill estate, and designed by Hansom and Welch. Construction started in 1829, and according to one source took down part of the town wall along the sea edge, using its stone to help construct the hotel (Lewis 1833). Further work was undertaken c. 1899, and extensions added in the 1930's to designs by Colwyn Foulkes. It is a neo-classical hotel of 3 storeys with attic and basement, of ashlar to the main elevations, slate roof behind coped gables and on a deeply moulded stone cornice, and ashlar stacks. (Cadw Listed Building description).

Easting: 260585 Northing: 376054

**19799 Boathouse and slipway, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: C

Site Status Reference:

The remains of a former boat house and slipway at the south end of Fryars Bay. From its appearance it would appear to be 20th century in date, perhaps the first half of the century. Its purpose and use are not known.

Easting: 260986 Northing: 376683

**GROUP B: BURIED SITES WITH ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL****2573 FRANCISCAN FRIARY - SITE OF, LLANFAES, BEAUMARIS**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: SAM A134

The site of a Franciscan Friary founded by Llywelyn ap Iorwerth following the death of his wife Joan in 1237.

Easting: 260922 Northing: 377335

**2580 BRYN BRITAIN PROMONTORY FORT - SITE OF, BEAUMARIS**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

An earthwork situated on an isolated promontory overlooking Beaumaris Bay. The site is identified with that of a fort built in 1642 during the Civil War. It is now heavily built over, though parts of the earthwork are visible on the north and west.

260139 Easting: Northing: 375981

**14606 FERRYMAN'S WARTH WEIR**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

Two weirs are known in the vicinity of the Green from medieval times, one described as the 'lyme kylne' fishery lay on the shore extending from the lyme kiln below the town of Beaumaris as far as the ferryman warth. The second lay on the shore between the lime kiln fishery and the house of the Friars Minor. Grenville Collins chart shows a weir off what is now the centre of the Green, and Lewis Morris shows a similar weir. This is presumably the 'lyme kylne' weir, and the other would have lain further round to the north-east, close to or under the mount. The more northerly weir is possibly visible on aerial photographs as a broad band of stones, set amongst rectangular oyster beds.

Easting: 260989 Northing: 376300

**19779 Watergate, town wall, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

The site of the west gate through the town wall, it lay in Castle Street, and is clearly marked on Speed's map of 1610. It would have been built in the early 15th century (c. 1413), and taken down sometime in the later 18th century. Access to the town quay would have been through this gate. A surviving stretch of town wall lies just north of the location of the gate.

Easting: 260487 Northing: 376005

**19780 Custom House, Townsend, Beaumaris (site of)**

Assessment of Importance: C

Site Status Reference:

A plan of Beaumaris dated 1861 shows the custom house in this location, on the corner of New Street and Townsend. A plan of the custom house dated 1852 shows the custom house attached to Cleifiog, and this site occupied by a barn and rickyard owned by the Bulkeley family. By 1900 the site had been redeveloped, and two adjoining houses, Llwyn Celyn and Hendref, built on the plot.

Easting: 260267 Northing: 375942

**19782 Windmill, The Mount, Beaumaris (site of)**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

A post mill is shown on John Speed's map of Beaumaris (1610) on the mount north of Beaumaris. No other map shows a mill in this location, although the Lewis Morris chart of 1736 does show a building at the northern edge of the mount, but this is not depicted as a mill, and appears too far north of the hill to be a suitable site for a mill. In 1327 Einion ap Ieuan was granted a licence to build a windmill on the Mill Hill by Beaumaris (Carr 1982, 248).

Easting: 260903 Northing: 376422

**19783 Ferry landing, Gallows Point, Beaumaris (site of)**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

The ferry was moved from the Green to the point c. 1690. The ferry house lay to the north-west at the base of the point, and no structures are known from the point itself, though several structural repairs to the gravel bank are recorded between 1799 and 1829. A row of wooden posts is visible in the shingle at the point, and an increase in larger stones also, which may indicate remains of a temporary jetty. The ferry ceased operation in 1831. (Davies 1966, 236-40).

Easting: 259951 Northing: 375145

**19786 Building, Gallows Point, Beaumaris (Site of)**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

A small rectangular building is shown here on the OS maps of 1887, 1900 and 1914. Its function is not known, and no remains are visible.

Easting: 259711 Northing: 375158

**19787 Mortuary, Gallows Point, Beaumaris (site of)**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

A mortuary is marked here on the OS 1887, 1900 and 1914 maps, though it is called 'dead house' on the earlier two maps, and mortuary on the later one. It has been suggested the building was used for the reception of the bodies of persons drowned in the sea, and brought on shore (Gwyn 2004, 15). No visible remains survive.

Easting: 259771 Northing: 375189

**19788 Magazine, Gallows Point, Beaumaris (site of)**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

The former site of a magazine and gun battery. A building is marked on the OS maps of 1887 to 1914, within an enclosure and with a flagstaff indicated. This is probably the site of the battery and magazine, mentioned in a lease of 1862 which says 'draft release for 7 years of a piece of ground in Gallows Point where a battery and magazine have been erected' (UWB Caernarfon & Anglesey IV.364). Local tradition records that the building was the former magazine, and that it was constructed of strong stone walls, with a stone-flagged floor and a fireplace on one side. Some limestone blocks remain on site.

Easting: 259772 Northing: 375161

**19789 Weighbridge, Townsend, Beaumaris (site of)**

Assessment of Importance: E Site Status Reference:

A weighbridge was built close to the site of the saw pit at Townsend in, or shortly after, 1836 (UWB Caernarfon and Anglesey I.15). It is likely to have gone out of use when York Terrace was constructed c. 1890, though local tradition recalls a weigh machine in the vicinity well into the 20th century.

Easting: 260280 Northing: 375947

**19790 Watch house, The Green, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: E Site Status Reference:

A structure generally called the 'watch house' is shown on several 19th century maps and charts, including Robinson's chart of 1835. It is located close to the end of the Green, and in a similar location to a structure on Speed's map of 1610. Robinson uses it for taking bearings on, so it must have been visible from some distance. It may have been associated with the custom house, also described as being on the Green (Evans 1812, 174).

Easting: 260866 Northing: 376099

**19796 Chimney, Bath Corner, Castle Street, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: E Site Status Reference: GII

Hot baths were erected at the lower end of Castle Street c. 1828. They were still standing in 1861, but were demolished by 1889 to make way for the houses at Alma Street and the lower end of Castle Street. The chimney is the only part of the baths remaining, forming a prominent landmark on what is now known as Chimney Corner. The style and quality of work are similar to the work of Hansom and Welch, and they may have been responsible for its design. (Cadw Listed Building description).

Easting: 260464 Northing: 375946

**19797 Fish weir, Gallows Point, Beaumaris (site of)**

Assessment of Importance: E Site Status Reference:

A fish weir formerly lay off the south end of the point, orientated towards Bangor. It is shown on Grenville Collins map of 1693, and is referred to in documents as early as 1451 (Carr 1982, 110). In 1590 Sir Richard Bulkeley leased 'Osmonds Air', described as extending between Beaumaris and Bangor, and granted liberty to build weirs or fishponds thereon, and to build a fish-house on a plot 21ft square, to be completed by 1591 (UWB Baron Hill, 564 and 650). A building is shown on Collins map towards the end of the point. The Corporation accounts of 1756 to 1841 refer to Owen Meyrick leasing 'a sight of a weir in Osmund's Aire', though no weir was apparently worked then (UWB Beaumaris and Anglesey I.FB1). An increase in the quantity of larger stone in the inter-tidal area on the south-east corner of the point may represent the remains of the weir.

Easting: 259816 Northing: 375121

**19798 Ferry House, Gallows Point, Beaumaris (site of)**

Assessment of Importance: E Site Status Reference:

A structure is shown at this location on the Baron Hill estate survey of 1776, and is later referred to as a 'public house' (Baron Hill Mss 4959-60 and 8225). This is thought to be the ferry house, though by the time of the Ordnance Survey edition of 1889 there is no sign of a building.

259704 Easting: Northing: 375238

**GROUP C: BURIED SITES WITH LITTLE OR NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

**19774 Crane, site of, Gallows Point, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: D Site Status Reference:

A crane is shown at this location on the 1914 edition of the 25' OS map, but not on earlier editions, so suggesting it was erected between 1900 and 1914. It was presumably associated with the ship building and repair industry, though its exact function is not known.

Easting: 259806 Northing: 375295



**19777 Bathing place, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: C

Site Status Reference:

This area is indicated on the 1889 edition of the OS map as a bathing place for gentlemen. Structures, presumably timber bathing huts, are indicated on the map. The ladies bathing place lay further south, on the site of the later open air baths (see PRN 19775).

Easting: 260979 Northing: 376750

**19778 Former gaol, Beaumaris (site of)**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

The county gaol formerly lay outside the town wall on the Green under where Victoria Terrace was to be built. It was replaced by a new gaol designed by Hansom and Welch in 1829. The earlier gaol is clearly shown on Yates's map of 1829.

Easting: 260686 Northing: 376114

**19784 Former lifeboat house and slipway, Fryars Bay, Beaumaris**

Assessment of Importance: C

Site Status Reference:

The site of the former lifeboat house lay alongside the fishweir. It was established in 1913, taking over the role of the Penmon lifeboat. The first lifeboat was the Frederick Kitchen. The station was closed in July 1991, and demolished shortly after.

Easting: 261575 Northing: 377726

**19795 Saw pit, Townsend, Beaumaris (site of)**

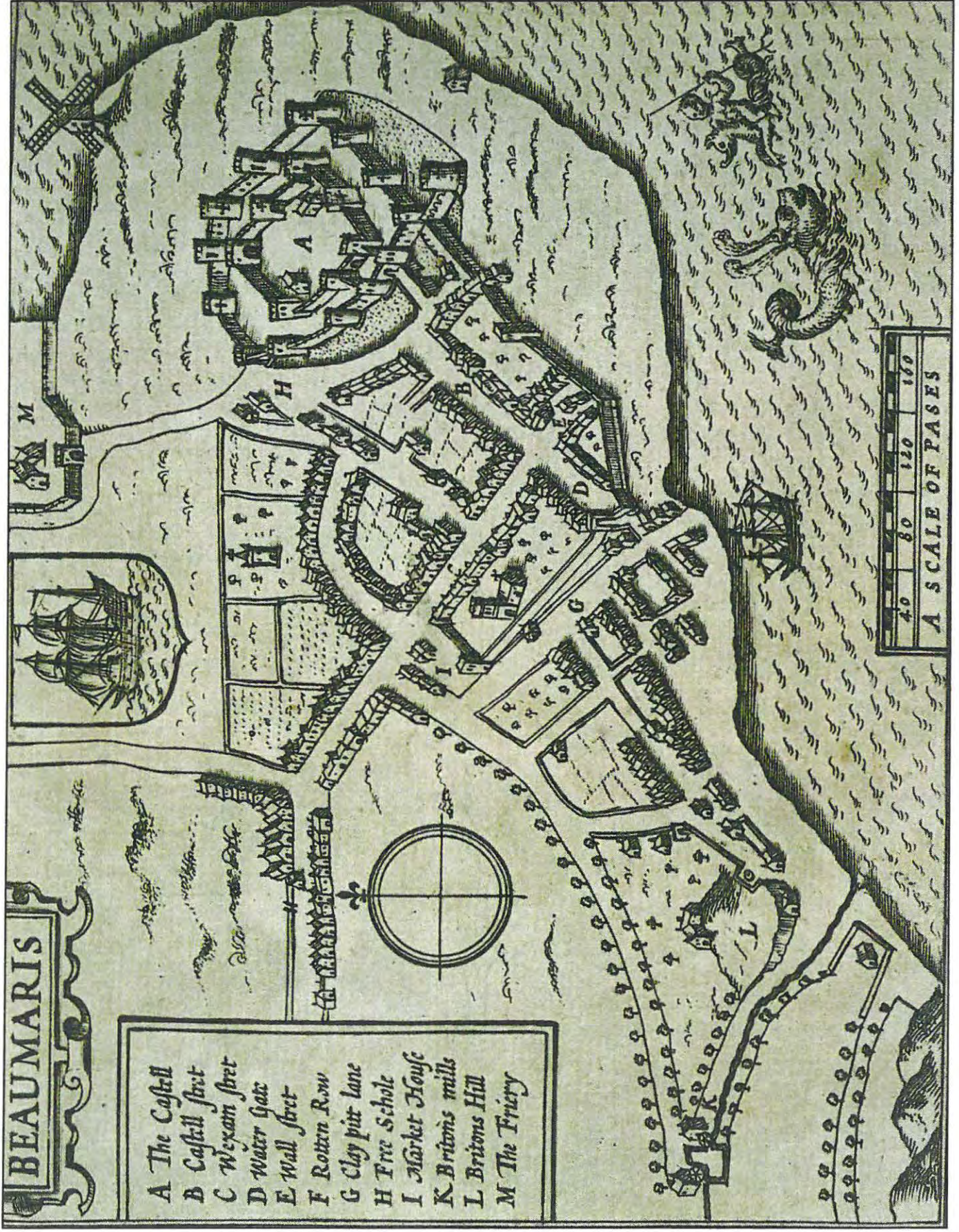
Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

Townsend was the more industrial and maritime part of Beaumaris, where there were several storehouses. A saw pit was erected here in 1813 and let for £10 pa. The adjoining plot of land was let to William Jones, Ships Carpenter. The site was built over by the construction of York Terrace c. 1890.

Easting: 260278 Northing: 375949





**BEAUMARIS**

- A The Castell
- B Castell street
- C Wexam street
- D Water Gate
- E Wall street
- F Rotten Row
- G Clay pitt lane
- H Tree Schole
- I Market House
- K Britons mills
- L Britons Hill
- M The Frury

40 80 120 160  
A SCALE OF PASES

Figure 1. Map of Beaumaris. 1610. J. Speed.





Figure 2. G. Collins. Extract from 'Chart of Menai Strait', 1695.



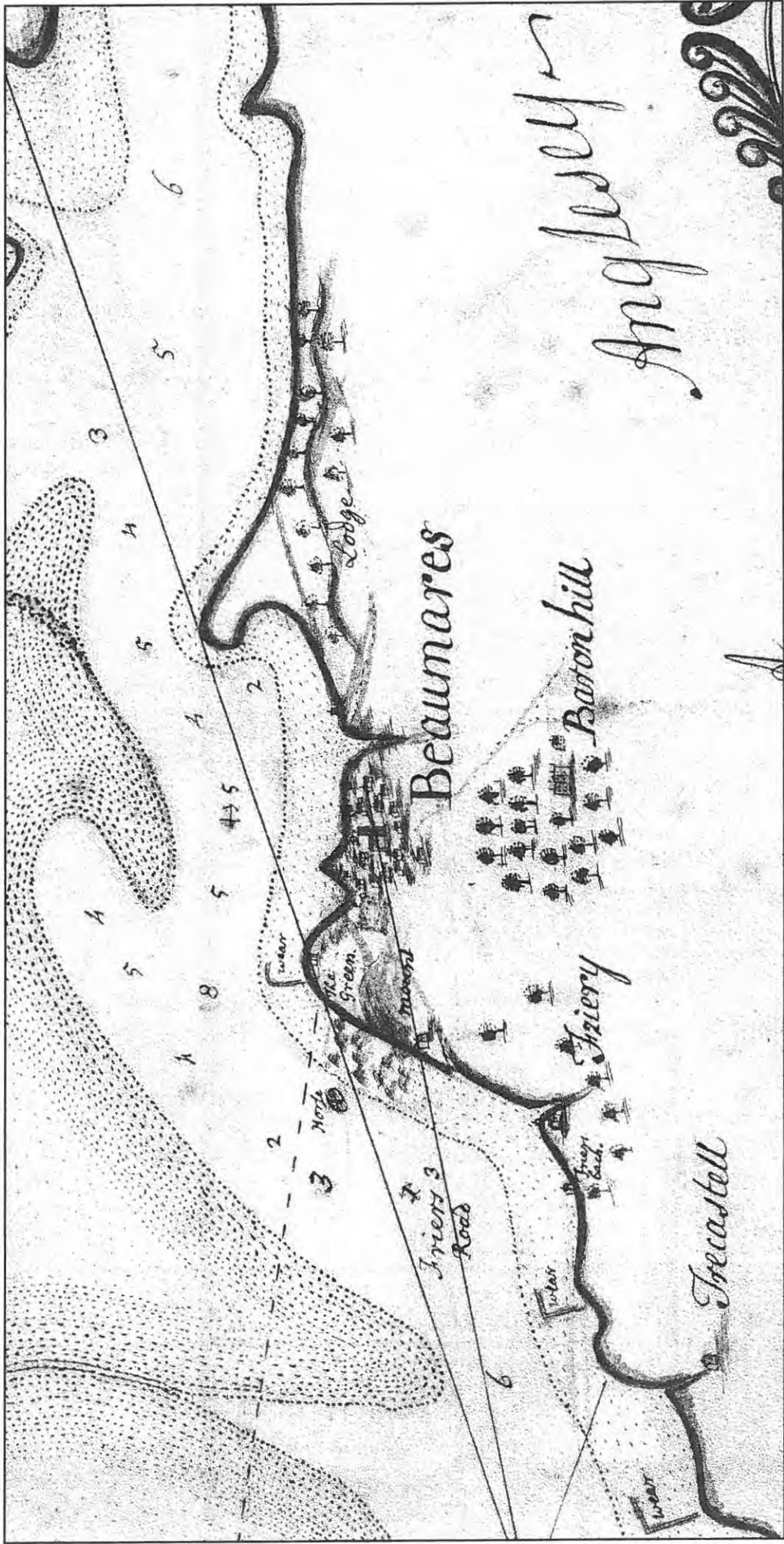


Figure 3. Lewis Morris. Cambrian Coasting Pilot, 1737/8. (Anglesey Record Office WM/1905)



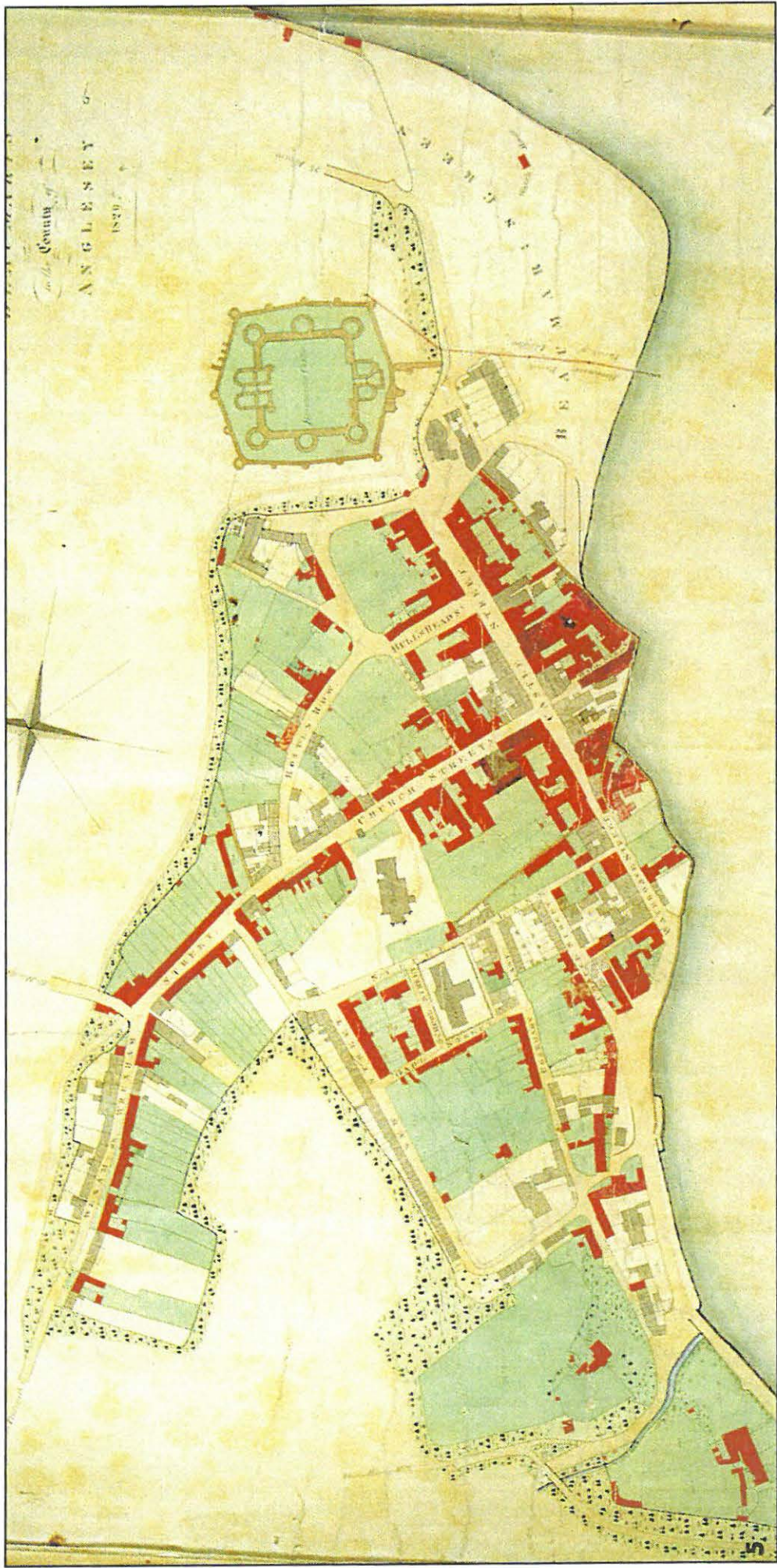


Figure 4. Yates map of Beaumaris, 1829. ( UWB Baron Hill 6486).



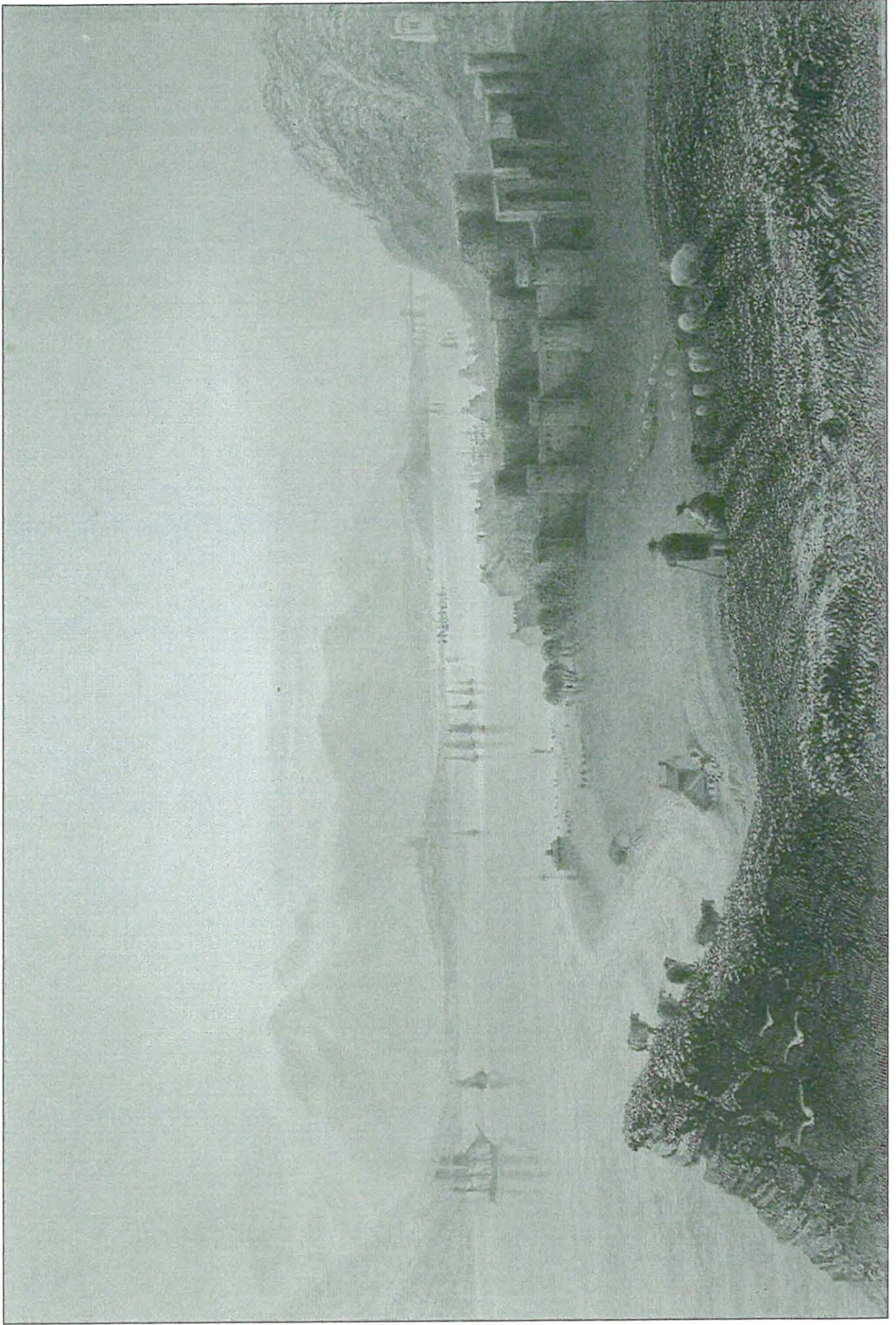


Figure 5. General view of Beaumaris. c. 1830. H. Gesteineau.



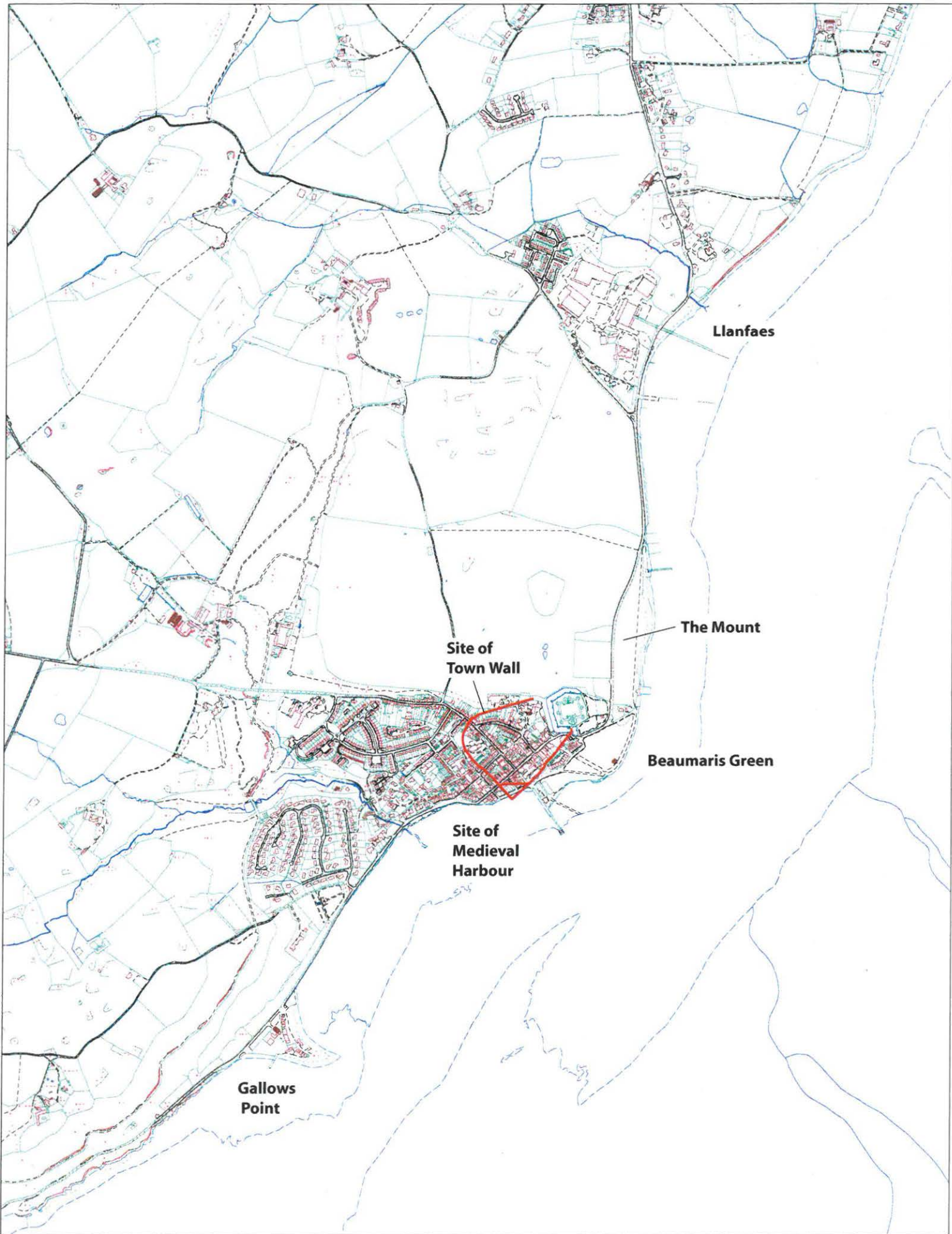


Figure 6. General location of the harbour. Scale 1,7500

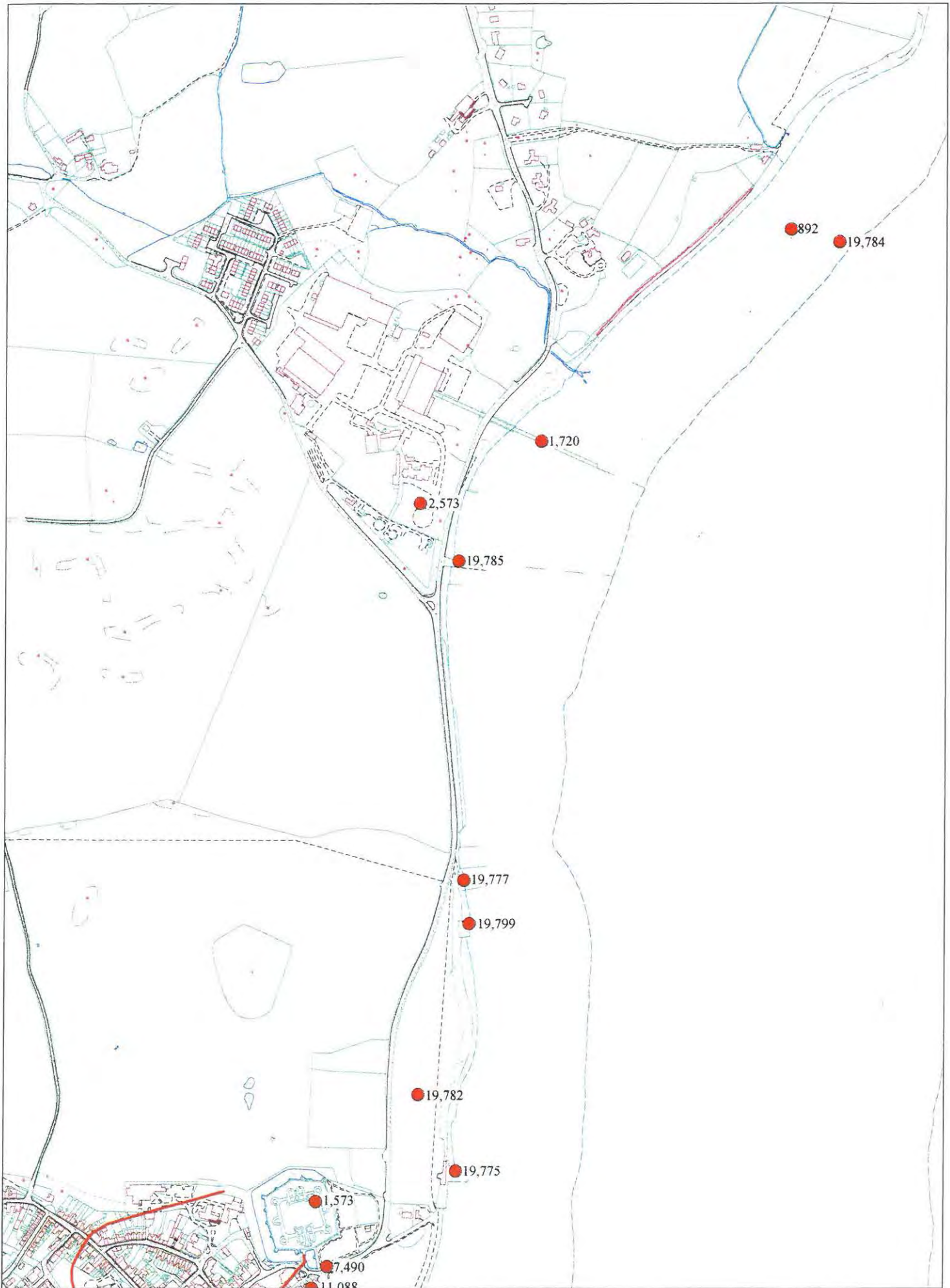


Figure 7. Location of sites: Llanfaes Bay. Scale 1,7500



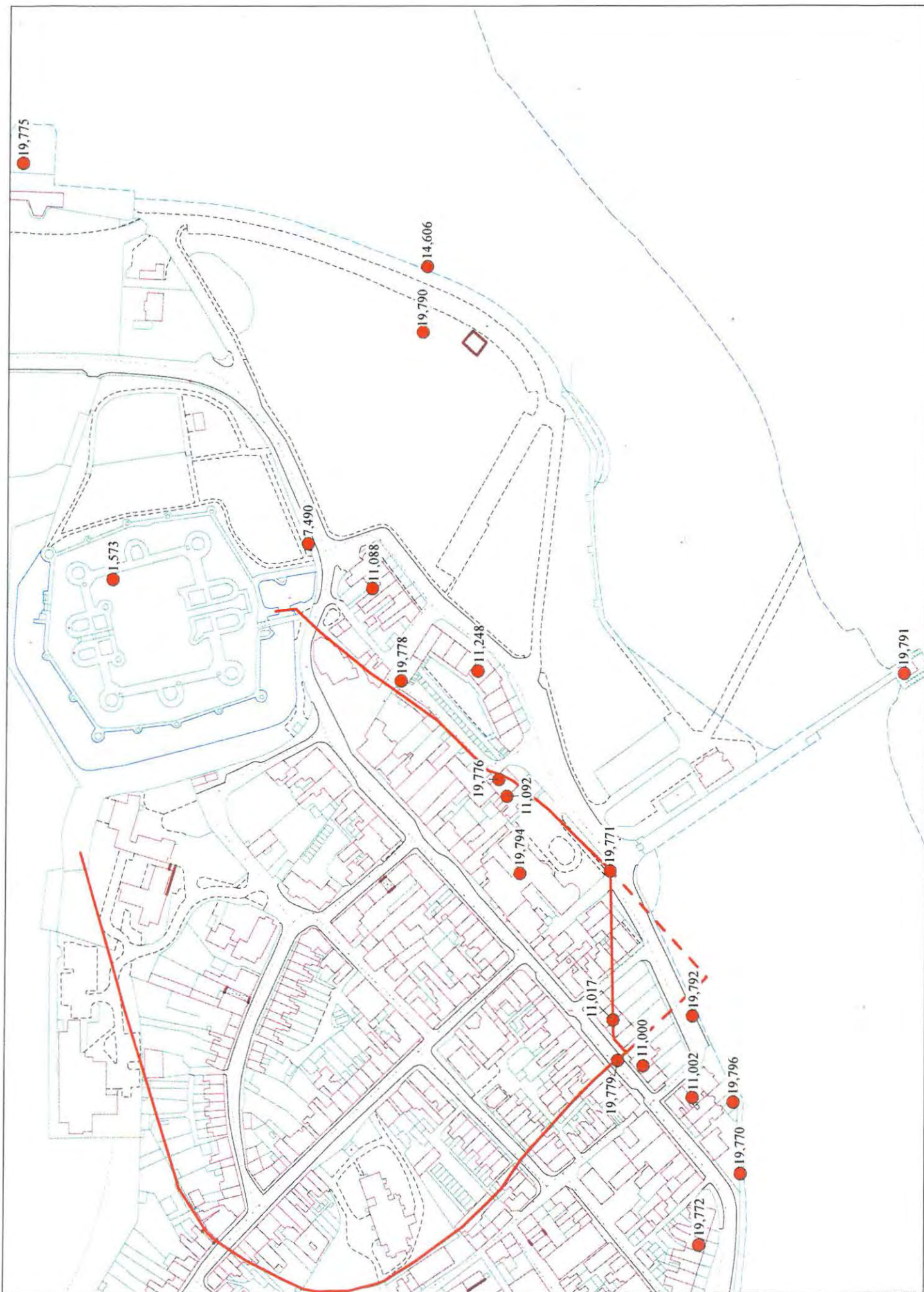


Figure 8. Location of sites in Beaumaris. Scale 1,2500



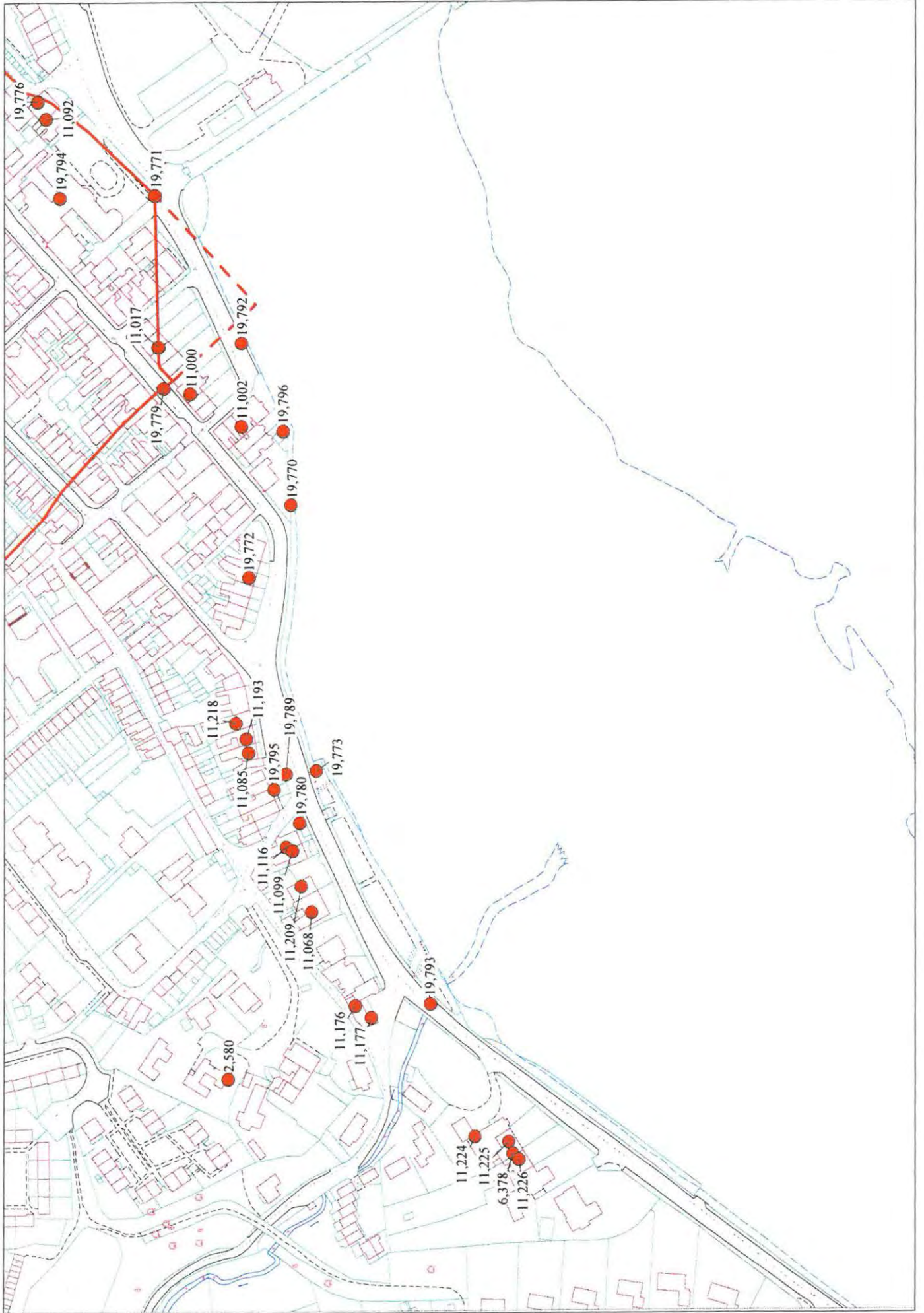


Figure 9. Location of sites at Townsend. Scale 1,2500

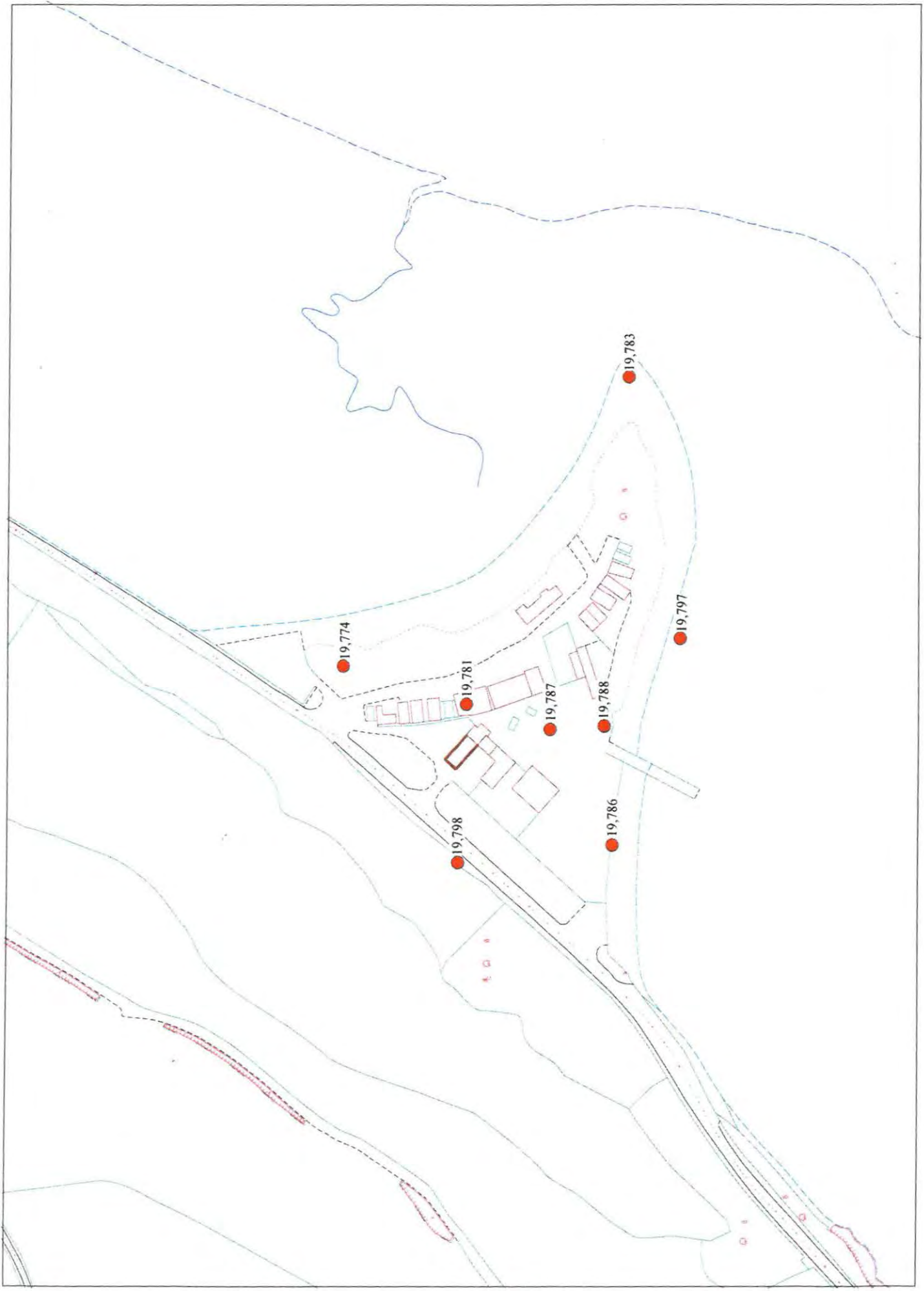


Figure 10. Location of sites and Gallows Point. Scale 1 : 2500

## **CRICCIETH**

### **Introduction**

This report contains the results of an archaeological assessment undertaken as part of a wider assessment of ports and harbours throughout Wales. The assessments have been undertaken by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts and funded by Cadw. The report has been compiled by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust.

### **Aims of the project**

The aim of the project is to identify the nature and status of the heritage resource within the study area, and to aid and encourage the incorporation of the resource into the management and future development of the coastal zone. Though no major harbour ever developed at Criccieth, it is included in the study as a comparison with the later Edwardian castles and boroughs, where harbours and defended castle docks played a central role in their morphological development.

### **Location and topography**

Criccieth lies on the south side of the Llŷn peninsula, mid way between Pwllheli and Porthmadog. Sailing directions for the coast between these two say that 'the shore is low and sandy, backed by hills increasing in height to the eastward, and is interrupted by four headlands. These are, from west to east, Pen y Chain point, Criccieth Point, Graig Ddu and Ynys Cyngar. This stretch of coast offers no protection, and dries out up to ¼ mile offshore' (Glazebrook 1970, 61). The coastline does not lend itself well to the development of harbours, and Criccieth, despite being an Edwardian borough, never developed a harbour of any consequence, the nearest being Pwllheli to the west and Ynys Cyngar (to be later replaced by Porthmadog) to the east. The former was a Welsh medieval borough, and as well as developing a ship building and quarrying industry, served a large portion of the Llŷn peninsula as its principal market town. Ynys Cyngar developed to serve the hinterland of the Glaslyn and Dwyrdd estuaries, including export of slate from the Ffestiniog quarries. Interestingly a small harbour is marked on Lewis Morris's chart of 1736/7 within the estuary of the Dwyrdd, possibly serving two limekilns that were built there, but also, perhaps, with a wider remit for Ynysgain, Abercain or Llanystumdwy.

The location of Criccieth was determined by the decision to build a masonry castle there c. 1230, utilising a dominant rock outcrop set within a coastline of dunes, shingle beaches and saltmarsh, occasionally overlain by glacial till. Criccieth became the commotal centre of Eifionydd, supplanting that of Dolbenmaen lying some 5Km inland. Llywelyn was less concerned than Edward when it came to defending his castles from the sea, and there is very little evidence for specific castle and borough access to a harbour or dock as was the norm at the later Edwardian castles (but see discussion below).

No major exporting of minerals or metals was to take place here, and coastal trade and fishing, with very limited boat building, were the only sea related activities. Typically these take place at a river mouth, and Criccieth is no exception, with the principal activities centred at Abermarchnad, where a small river discharges into the sea.

Inland communications to and from Criccieth were slow to develop. Coastal routes were hampered by Traeth Mawr and the wet marshy lands at Ystumllyn (a former coastal estuary) to the east, and the Afon Dwyrdd at Llanystumdwy to the west. The turnpike road from Tremadog through Criccieth to Pwllheli and Porth Dinllaen was built shortly after 1803. Previous to the construction of this road, writes one commentator, 'the way to Criccieth and the southern parts of the county was either by a circuitous route over the mountains, or along the sands of the Traeth Mawr, impassable when the tide was in, and dangerous when it was out' (Evans 1812, 241). The railway was opened to Criccieth in 1867.



## Historic background

A short distance north-east of Criccieth lies the Neolithic burial chamber of Cae'r Dynni, but other evidence for prehistoric occupation is slight, and is reliant firstly upon an account of the finding of a probable Bronze Age urn within the outer castle ditch, and secondly upon the interpretation of the outer castle ditch as the defences of a former late prehistoric promontory fort (O'Neil 1944, 20-21). The section of this ditch was formerly visible in the eroding coast section east of the castle, but within the last few years has been hidden from view by new coastal defences (O'Neil 1944, 21 and plate 5; Gwyn and Dutton 1996, 33 and fig 7). Two clear phases of the ditch were recorded when renovations were made to the visitor centre, but unfortunately neither could be dated (Flook 1992, 77).

A settlement may have existed at Criccieth prior to the construction of the castle, perhaps based around the church to the north, and perhaps also around the small estuary at Abermarchnad, but there is no surviving evidence. The township of Trefferthyr (the township of the martyr) is thought to have been created by Llywelyn ap Iorwerth to accompany the construction of the first castle, when the church was dedicated to St Catherine. Trefferthyr was much larger in extent than the later Edwardian borough of Criccieth (Gresham 1966, 5-12; 1973a, 169-84). The earliest part of the present church is dated c. 1300, but remains of an earlier structure were noted during alterations in 1993 (RCAHMW 1960, 57-58; Ward 1993, 85).

The reasons for transferring the commotal centre from Dolbenmaen to Criccieth and for constructing a new masonry castle are not clear. The earliest mention of the castle is usually taken to be 1239, when it is recorded in the *Brut* that Dafydd, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's son, imprisoned his half brother Gruffudd and Gruffudd's son, Owain, in the castle. In 1234 Gruffudd had been granted half of Llŷn and substantial lands in Powys, and by 1238 he had obtained the remainder of Llŷn. However, Dafydd removed his Powys lands from him in 1238, and subsequently had Gruffudd imprisoned in Criccieth castle. There is, it should be noted, some doubt over the veracity of the 1239 date, and it may well be late in the next year that the imprisonment of Gruffudd takes place, following intense rivalry between the two, and after the death of their father (Williams, G. A., 1962-4, 393-413; Smith 1998, 32-3).

The date of construction of Criccieth is usually taken to be between 1230 and 1240, and if this is the case, its construction may be associated with the desire to control Gruffudd within his lordship of Llŷn, and it may have been further fortified by Dafydd, either during conflict with Gruffudd after the death of their father, or to hold Gruffudd and his son prisoner.

Further work, possibly the outer wall and one or more of the rectangular towers, were built under the authority of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd. Following the conquest of 1283, Edward I refortified the castle, and either re-faced or built/rebuilt parts of it (see Avent 1989 for a description of the remains and their possible dated sequence, with references to alternative models). The borough was founded by Edward I, and lay below and to the north of the castle.

In the winter of 1294-5 the castle was besieged during the revolt of Madog ap Llywelyn, and was finally relieved in April, when supplies were sent over from Ireland.

During the first part of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Edward II invested over £250 on repairs, including rebuilding towers and heightening the gatehouse (Avent 1989, 6). During the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the castle was home to Sir Hywel ap Gruffudd, who was made constable of the castle c. 1359 where he remained until his death in 1381. The castle was probably burnt down during the Glyndwr revolt in 1404. It is known it was being besieged in 1403, and both Harlech and Aberystwyth capitulated in 1404, when Criccieth is also likely to have surrendered. Considerable parts of the masonry show evidence of burning, and burnt layers were found during excavations within the castle (Avent 1989, 8-9; Davies 1997, 252-3; O'Neil 1944). Following its destruction the castle was never rebuilt, and the borough declined.

Leland, writing in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century describes it as 'At Crikith be a 2 or 3 poore houses, and there is a smaule rylle. There hath beene a franchised toune, now clene decayed' (Smith 1906, 88). Pennant describes it as a 'poor borough town' (1781, 191-2) and Hyde Hall, writing in 1812, describes it in the following terms 'The place itself is formed of a single street of mean houses lying along a kind of bay of no

very good anchorage even for small vessels. Some trade in the export way is however carried on by the sale of herrings taken in the adjoining bays by half-decked vessels of scanty tonnage and limited number. They are cured about the village, but, I fear, with no great attention of skill than what are but too commonly bestowed upon them in the county' (Jones 1952, 248-9). A slightly later description reinforces the image of a borough in poor economic condition, though with still limited trading taking place by sea – 'an inconsiderable village of mean appearance: from its contiguity to the shore of Cardigan bay the situation is favourable for commerce, but only a few vessels touch here, bringing limestone in ballast, and taking away slates from Port Madoc, and there is neither harbour nor any facility for unloading vessels: only a few fishing-boats belong to the town. The market, which was on Wednesday, has been disused for several centuries; but three fairs, chiefly for horses and cattle, are held annually ...' (Lewis 1833, Vol I, Cri).

### **The medieval harbour**

'The borough of Criccieth', it is said, 'was the smallest of the Carnarvonshire boroughs, and possessed no port to facilitate its victualling' (Lewis 1912, 195). Whilst the 'new' castles of the Edwardian conquest were designed to allow both borough and castle access to the sea for defence and trade, the design of Criccieth in its original form does not allow for this in the same manner, and what access there is appears more of a secondary nature, incorporated into the borough created by Edward I. The nature and extent of any Welsh settlement here is not known, however the new borough was laid out with its main street running eastward down hill from the castle to the sea. Whether there was any access to the sea at the north-east end of the outer ditch of the castle cannot be now ascertained, but this would certainly have served as a defended entry to the castle (O'Neil 1944, 21). The principal harbour (if such it can be called) developed where the main street of the borough reached the beach, at the mouth of a small river, which also powered the borough corn mill. A small collection of houses and commercial properties grew up here in later times, though it is always likely to have been a focus for settlement (Gresham 1966, fig's 2 and 3). The Welsh princes used local rock, derived from the felsite that makes up the promontory and adjacent rock outcrop of Dinas, and from dark shales visible behind Marine Terrace. Edward I, however, used sandstone, probably derived from his Anglesey quarries from where he obtained stone for Beaumaris and Caernarfon castles, and this must have been shipped in and transported up to the castle, though there is no evidence for any quays used to assist with this work.

### **Post-medieval development**

Criccieth was never to develop as a trading port in the same way as Caernarfon, Conwy and Beaumaris in the immediate post-medieval and early modern period, and nor did it develop as an industrial port in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Gresham (1966; 1973a) has charted the development of the medieval borough into a number of discrete agricultural land holdings, but no urban development would take place until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The tithe map of 1839 indicates the degree of development during this transitional period. Settlement is concentrated on the old borough lands north of the castle, and on the street leading down to the sea front. This street contains one of the earliest surviving houses, Ty Mawr, home of the Lloyd family who held a large part of the former Borough lands. It dates from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. The tithe map shows buildings at Abermarchnad, and limited development on the road leading north to St Catherine's church, including properties at Glanrafon (built c. 1700) and Cwrt (built c. 1700, and used as a courthouse, though later to become the present café). The arrangements of fields around the church suggest former settlement here, though there is no concentration of houses indicated on the tithe map. The turnpike road crosses in a straight line from east to west, and the majority of new development now focused on the road, which was to become the present High Street. Other farms later to become submerged by expansion of the town include Muriau, Parciau, Bryn Hir and Ty'n Llan.

Following the construction of the railway in 1867, and the development of Criccieth as a seaside resort the old borough town was largely neglected in favour of new development along the High Street to the north, and Marine Terrace to the west. The construction of the Esplanade in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century pushed the limits of the resort further east, to the point now marked by Clough Williams Ellis's Moranedd café built in 1948. A breakwater and slipway were built c. 1900 just to the west of Abermarchnad.

The buildings at Abermarchnad were partially destroyed by a fierce storm in 1927, and subsequently removed, though the mill survives as a reminder of the commercial activity here, and the lifeboat house still contains the inshore rescue boat.

## **Management**

There is no harbour at Criccieth, owing to the lack of protection from the open sea, though fishing boats and coastal traders have used the beaches both to the east and west of the castle for landing. There was a concentration of commercial structures at Abermarchnad, but these were destroyed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Environmental designations

*Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)*  
None.

*Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)*  
The SSSI site *Tiroedd a Glannau Rhwng Criccieth ac Afon Glaslyn* lies between Criccieth and the Afon Glaslyn.

*Special Area of Conservation*  
The sea off Criccieth lies within the *Lleyn Peninsula and the Sarnau* candidate Special Area of Conservation, under the EC Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 1992).

*Marine Nature Reserve*  
None.

### Heritage designations

*World Heritage Status*  
None.

*Landscape of historic interest*  
None.

*Scheduled Ancient Monuments*  
The following scheduled ancient monuments lie within Criccieth:

Cn 015 Criccieth Castle (also in Guardianship of State)  
Cn 173 Criccieth Castle (Additional area)  
Cn 081 Caer Dynni Burial Chamber

*Listed Buildings*  
The range of listed buildings at Criccieth is not as great as at other Edwardian boroughs, which reflects the lesser status and lack of subsequent development that occurred here, in contrast with, for example, Beaumaris or Caernarfon. However, some significant buildings remain within the town and though none are directly related to the development of a port here, they do reflect the gradual occupation of borough lands by local landowners who built new houses for themselves. Ty Mawr is, perhaps, the best example within the borough proper, but Glanyrafon, Cwrt and 21 to 25 Castle Street are also examples of pre-19<sup>th</sup> century buildings that are Listed. Moranedd café reflects the growth of Criccieth as a seaside resort.



### *Conservation Area*

There are two conservation areas within Criccieth, one to the north of the railway, and one to the south. The latter includes the castle, Castle Street, and the rock outcrop of Dinas, thus most of the area formerly occupied by the medieval borough. The coastline east and west of the castle is excluded, as is the esplanade and Moranedd café to the east and Marine Terrace to the west.

### **Management recommendations**

A high level of protection is currently afforded to Criccieth through existing designations. All buildings of relevant status within the study area are listed. There are, however, a number of buildings that make a valid contribution to the maritime nature of the town, but which are not listed. These include the Lifeboat house, the breakwater and the esplanade.

Areas of research potential concerning Criccieth and the sea include:

- The means by which access was gained from the castle to the sea
- The nature and date of the outer ditch around the castle
- The origins and development of settlement at Abermarchnad, and the relationship of the settlement there with that of the old borough.
- The extent to which the beach west of the castle was used by ships for loading/unloading.

A watching brief undertaken in 1994 within the borough did not locate any archaeology of significance, though it was largely confined to existing roads (Shallcross 1994).

Many harbours contain areas that are now silted, but which were formerly used for mooring and/or transhipment of people and goods, and which therefore retain good potential for the preservation of remains, including organic archaeology and shipwrecks. There is less potential for this at Criccieth because there has been little accretion on the coast edge.

Archaeological assessment and evaluation should precede any development within areas of archaeological potential.

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## CRICCIETH SITE GAZETTEER

The gazetteer is divided into three sections, Group A are extant sites that are upstanding, often remaining as buildings in use. Group B are sites with good potential for the recovery of archaeology, whilst Group C are sites with little or no potential for the recovery of archaeology. Within the gazetteer the sites are identified by their primary reference number (PRN) as used within the Gwynedd Historic Environment Record, and are assessed according to their importance, that is national (A), regional (B), Local (C), Other (D) and unknown (E). The site names are printed in capitals if they are already part of the Historic Environment Record, and in lower case if they have been identified during the course of this project.

### GROUP A: EXTANT SITES

#### 1328 CRICCIETH CASTLE

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: C015

A medieval castle that may be built on the site of an earlier Iron Age hillfort. It is first recorded in 1239, and may pre-date then by some 10 years. It was built by Llywelyn ap Iorwerth and his son Dafydd, who later used it to imprison his half-brother Dafydd. Following its initial construction, further work was undertaken by Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, and again by Edward I and II following the conquest. It is not possible to date the different phases of construction with any degree of certainty. The most recent interpretation suggests the inner gatehouse and curtain wall is the earliest phase, and that the outer curtain wall and at least two of the rectangular towers is part of the second phase. Work under Edward I and II involved re-building or re-facing a number of the towers, and raising the height of the inner gatehouse. Entrance into the castle would always appear to have been around the east side of the rock and in through the outer gatehouse on the south side. The castle was partially burnt during Glyndwr's revolt, and never subsequently inhabited.

Easting: 249990

Northing: 337730

#### 4334 WELLINGTON TERRACE, CRICCIETH

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

A pair of cottages probably built in the late 17th century. Each is a 2 unit, one and half storeyed house, with doorway towards the centre. (see Listed Building description).

Easting: 250010

Northing: 338030

#### 4335 PORTH YR AUR, CRICCIETH

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

No's 21 and 23 Castle Street were probably built c. 1700, though were remodelled in the 19th century when No's 25 and 27 were also remodelled or built. No 21 was originally a 2-unit plan, into which a central stair was inserted in the 19th century. (See Listed Building description).

Easting: 249991

Northing: 337844

#### 5675 TY MAWR, CRICCIETH

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

A late 16th century house, with later alterations including insertion of windows at some time in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and remodelling of internal layout to create a central stair hall. At one time in use as a public house. (see Listed Building description).

Easting: 250040

Northing: 337850

#### 7250 MORANNEDD CAFE, CRICCIETH

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

The café is situated at the far eastern end of the esplanade. It was designed by Clough Williams Ellis, and built c. 1948. It is a concrete construction with a flat concrete roof reinforced with iron and carried with a bold overhand on a series of cast iron brackets. It is single storeyed, of two curved wings with the entrance in the centre. (See Listed Building description).

Easting: 250570

Northing: 338130



**11363 TY MAWR, 12 CASTLE STREET, CRICCIETH**

Assessment of Importance: A                      Site Status Reference: GII  
See PRN 5675.  
Easting: 250036                      Northing: 337848

**11433 PORTH-YR-AUR, CASTLE STREET**

Assessment of Importance: A                      Site Status Reference: GII  
See PRN 4335.  
Easting: 249994                      Northing: 337846

**24513 Hen Felin, Criccieth**

Assessment of Importance: B                      Site Status Reference:  
A small single-storey stone building, now converted to a house. It was a corn water mill, driven by the Afon Cwrt. It is possibly on the site of the medieval mill that belonged to the borough. In later times the mill formed part of the lands of Ty'n y Grisiau and Bach y Saint.  
Easting: 250141                      Northing: 337971

**24514 Lifeboat house, Criccieth**

Assessment of Importance: B                      Site Status Reference:  
A lifeboat operated here from 1854 until 1931. The present lifeboat house now houses an inshore rescue boat.  
Easting: 250138                      Northing: 337952

**GROUP B: BURIED SITES WITH ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

**1291 BURIAL CHAMBER S.E. OF CAERDYN I**

Assessment of Importance: A                      Site Status Reference: C081  
A Neolithic burial chamber lying north-east of the town. A small partially collapsed chamber consisting of four upright stones on the E. S. and W. The largest of the southern stones is damaged. The capstone has fallen to the S. All surviving uprights are of local shaley stone. Two uprights on the N have fallen into the chamber. The larger of these is buff sandstone. Mound is irregular and mostly robbed out but could have extended for up to 15m.  
Easting: 251100                      Northing: 338209

**1317 CRICCIETH CASTLE (ADDITIONAL AREA)**

Assessment of Importance: A                      Site Status Reference: C173  
This area includes the outer ditch of the castle, which has been interpreted as a possible ditch of an Iron Age hillfort, though no dating evidence has been found. In 1993, during alterations to the entrance shop, two clear phases of ditch fill were recognised. The ditch is most clearly visible west of the castle shop, and was also visible in the eroding cliff face on the east side of the castle before structural repairs were undertaken to stop the erosion.  
Easting: 249951                      Northing: 337785

**2285 URN - FINDSPOT, CRICCIETH**

Assessment of Importance: E                      Site Status Reference:  
An urn was reportedly found in the outer ditch of the castle prior to 1930. It is believed to have been a Bronze Age urn. Its present whereabouts is unknown. (O'Neil 1944, 21).  
Easting: 249969                      Northing: 337789

**3190 CRICCIETH MEDIEVAL TOWN**

Assessment of Importance: B                      Site Status Reference:  
The medieval borough was founded by Edward I following his conquest of Wales in 1283. The nature and extent of any earlier Welsh town is not known. The borough was always small, consisting of only some 20 to 30 burgesses, and lay north and east of the castle, with the town lands beyond. The borough fell into

decay following damage to the castle during Glyndwr's revolt, and though a number of the burgage plots can still be traced underlying later properties, no medieval structures remain above ground.

Easting: 249942                      Northing: 337822

**16949 MEDIEVAL ARROWHEAD, FINDSPOT, CRICCIETH CASTLE**

Assessment of Importance: E Site Status Reference:

An iron arrowhead was found 26 April, 2003, on the surface by the big latrine chute in the angle of the curtain wall and the northwest tower of the inner gatehouse.

Easting: 249987                      Northing: 337750

**24511 Site of limekiln, Criccieth**

Assessment of Importance: C                      Site Status Reference:

A limekiln was formerly sited here, and was in use into the first part of the 20th century. Coal and limestone were brought in by ship. The kiln does not appear to be marked on the 1839 tithe map, but is shown on the 1889 OS map.

Easting: 250138                      Northing: 338006

**24512 Abermarchnad, Criccieth**

Assessment of Importance: C                      Site Status Reference:

A small group of houses and warehouses on the coast edge that formed the nucleus of the port of Criccieth. It is likely that there would have been a settlement here from at least medieval times, as this may have been the location of the medieval harbour also. The houses are shown on the tithe map of 1839. They were destroyed by a fierce storm in 1927. The area was also known as Ty'n y Grisiau, which referred to a small landholding owned in conjunction with a larger holding, Bach y Saint, which lay to the north (see Gresham 1973, 180-4). Ty'n y Grisiau may have got its name from a set of stone steps that formerly led down to the beach alongside.

Easting: 250163                      Northing: 337987





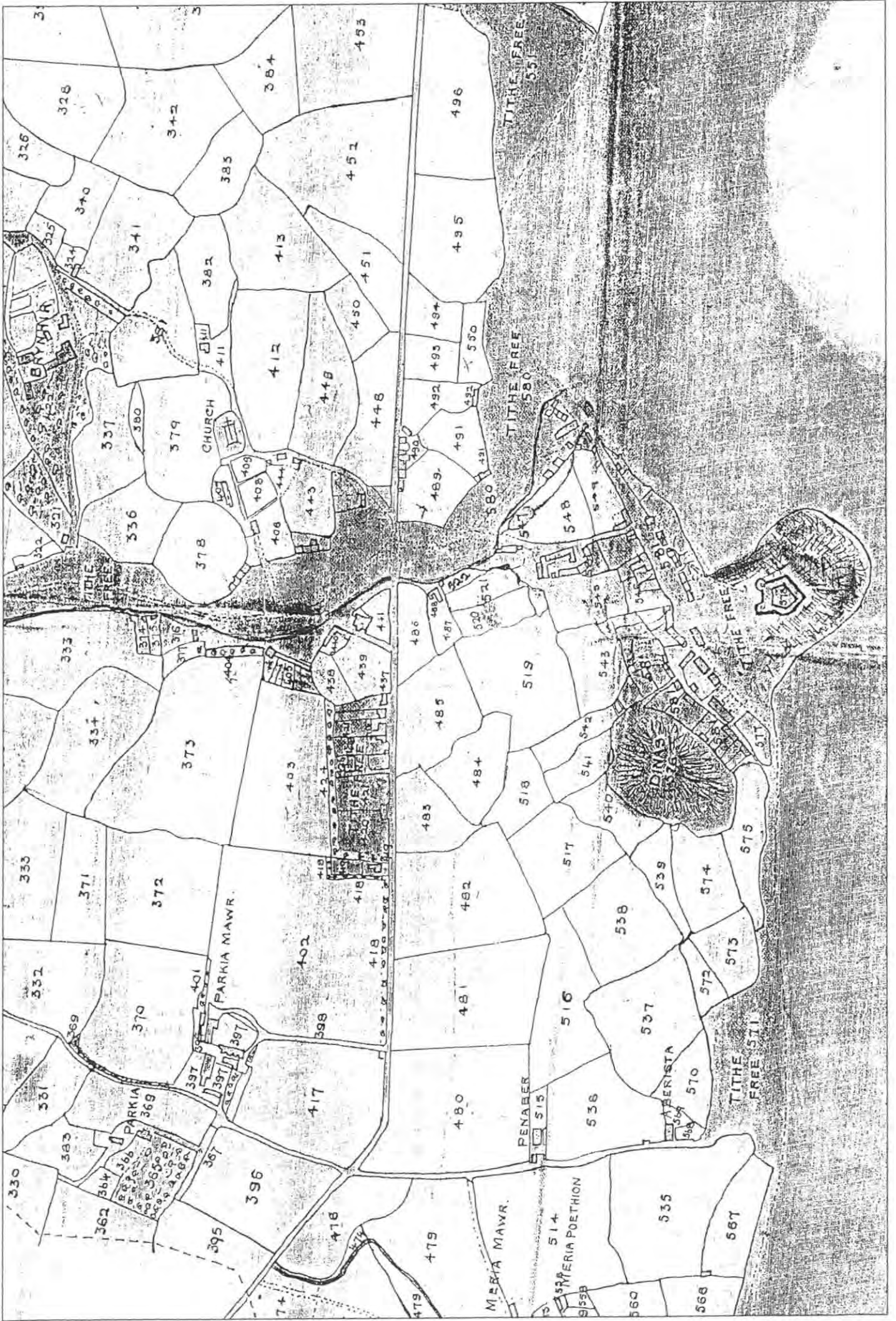


Figure 2. Tithe Map of Criccieth, 1839. (Gwynedd Archives).

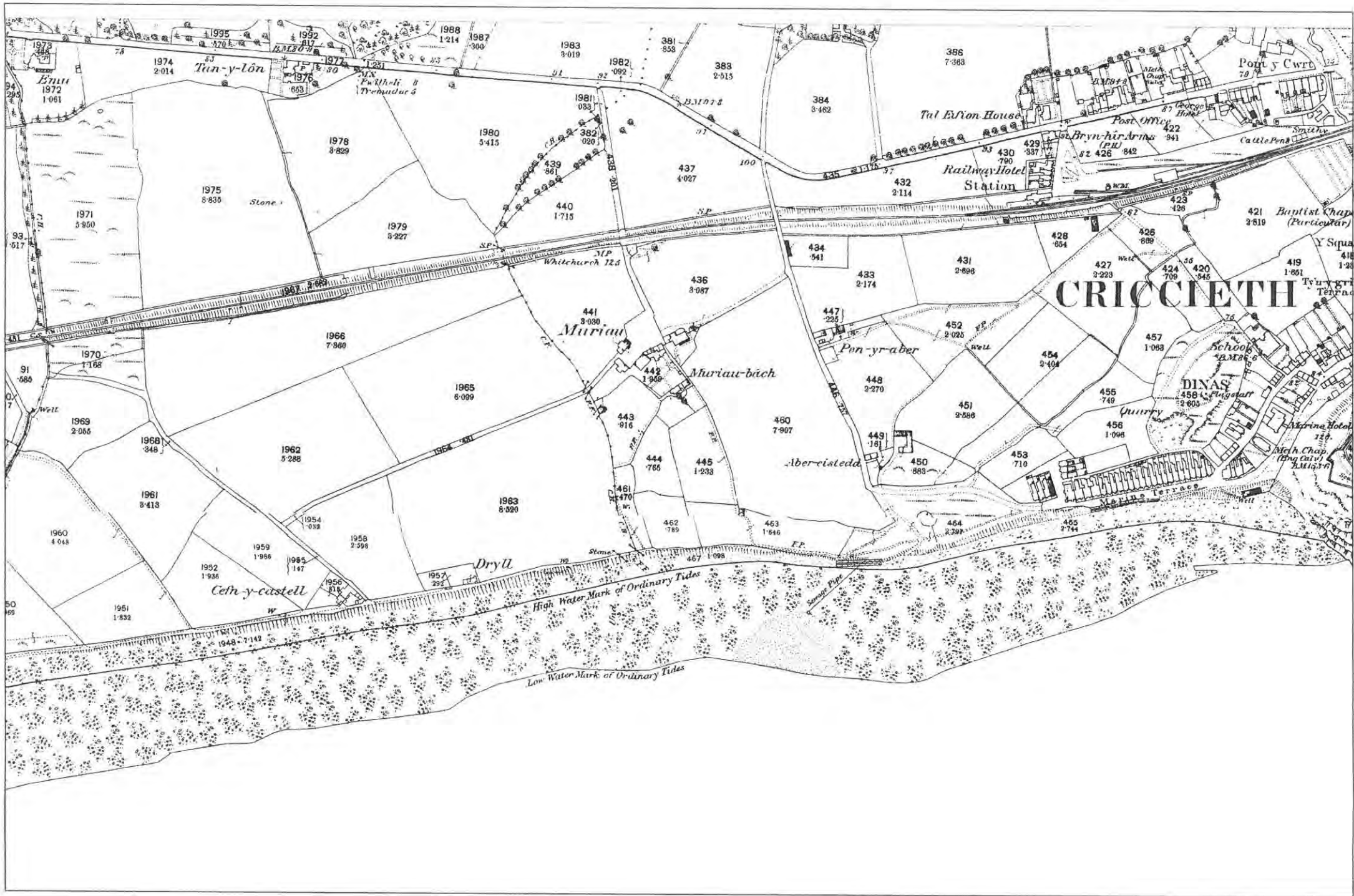


Figure 3. Ordnance Survey 25". County Series. Caernarfon. XLI.1, XX.1. 1889. Scale 1,500



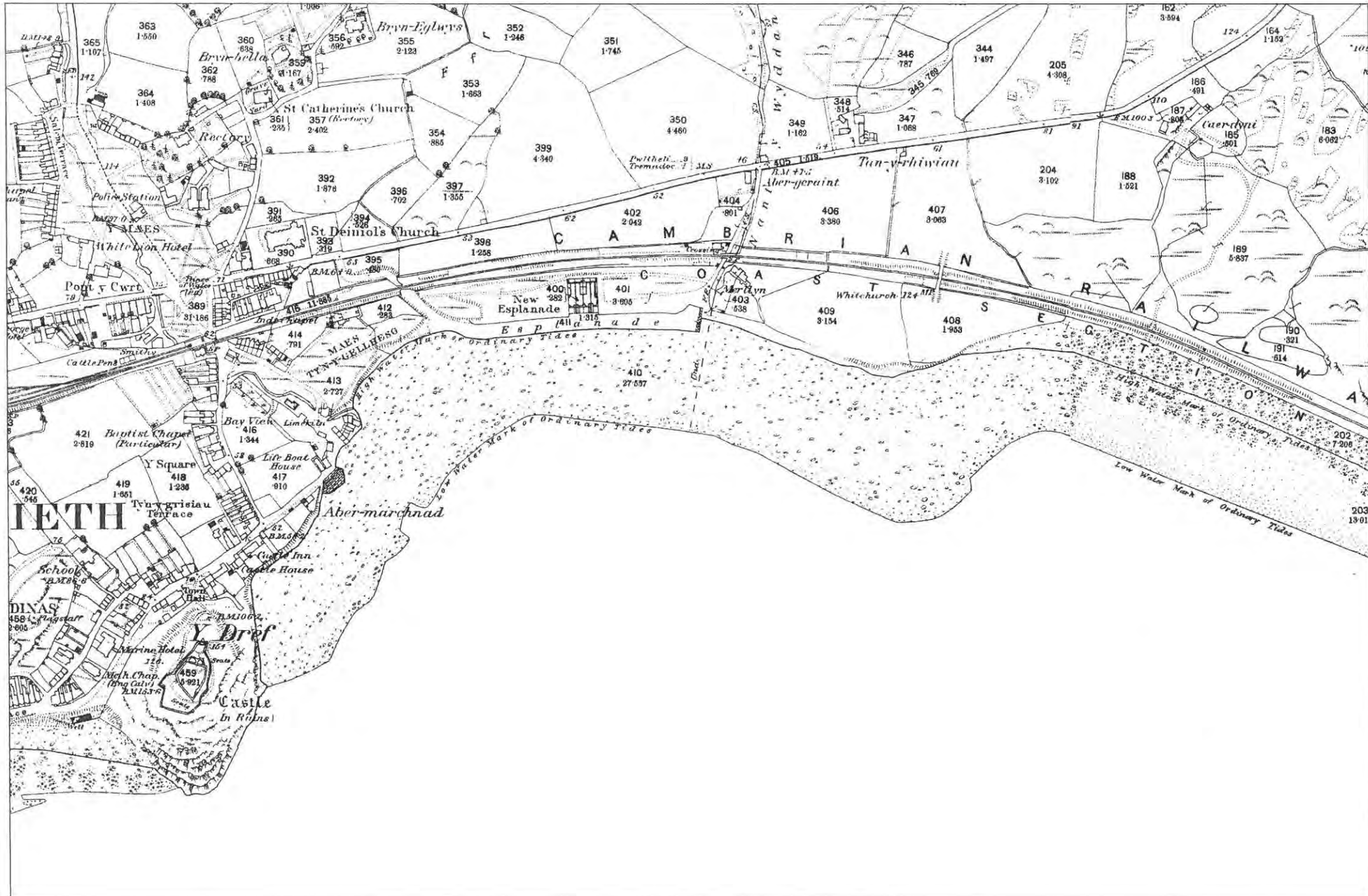


Figure 4. Ordnance Survey 25". County Series. Caernarfon. XLI.3, XX.1, XLI.4, XX.2. 1889. Scale 1,5000



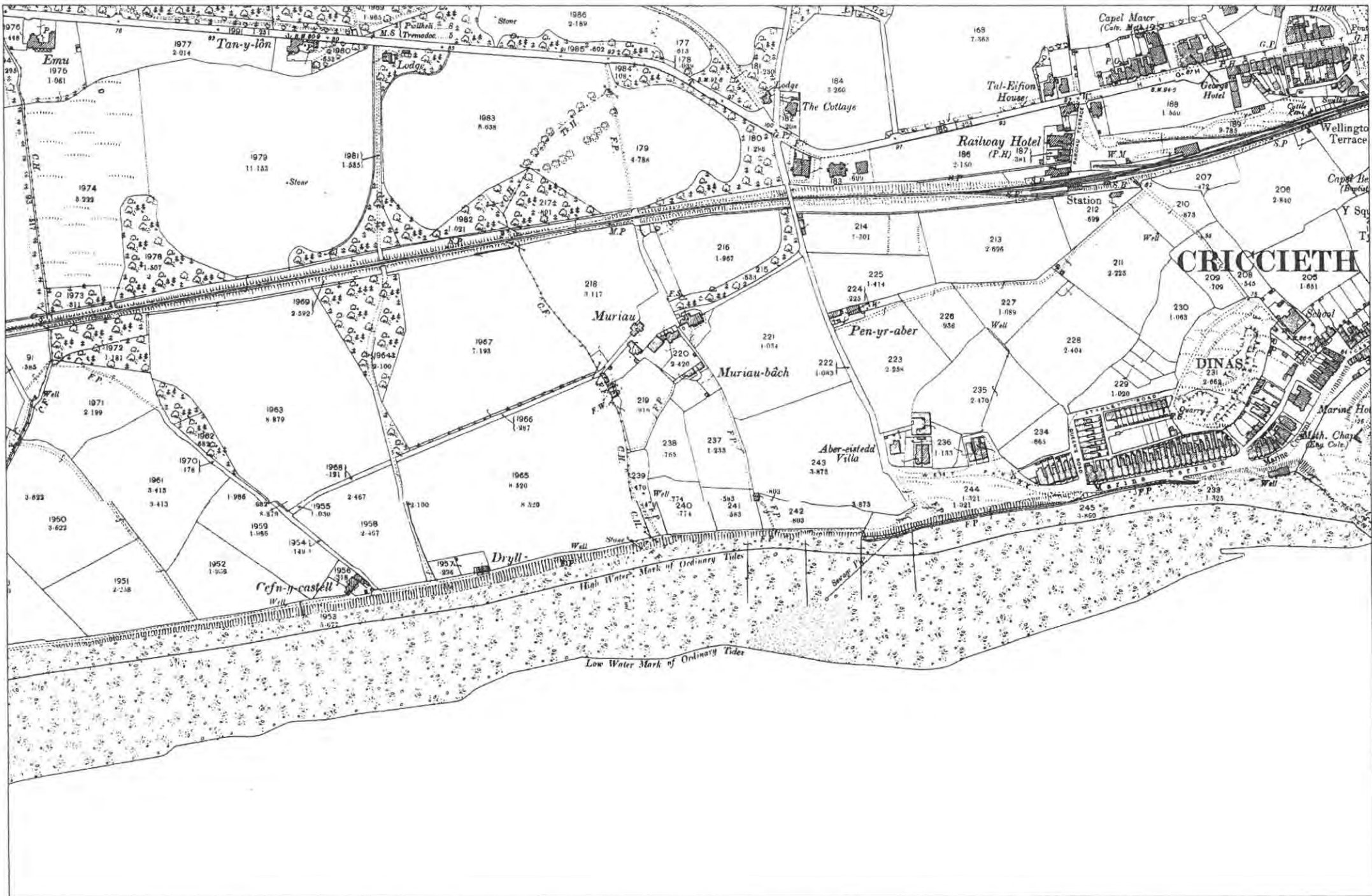


Figure 5. Ordnance Survey 25". County Series. Caernarfon. XLI.3, XX.1. 1901. Scale 1,5000



Figure 6. Ordnance Survey 25". County Series. Caernarfon. XLI.3, XX.1, XLI.4, XX.2. 1901. Scale 1,5000





**Figure 7. Criccieth castle with harbour to the east. Late 19th century.  
George Wolfe (NLW ref 03514.jps)**



**Figure 8. View of Abermarchnad. c. 1900 (Courtesy of R.D. Cadwalader)**





**Figure 9. Abermarchnad following the storm of 1927. (Gwynedd Archives).**

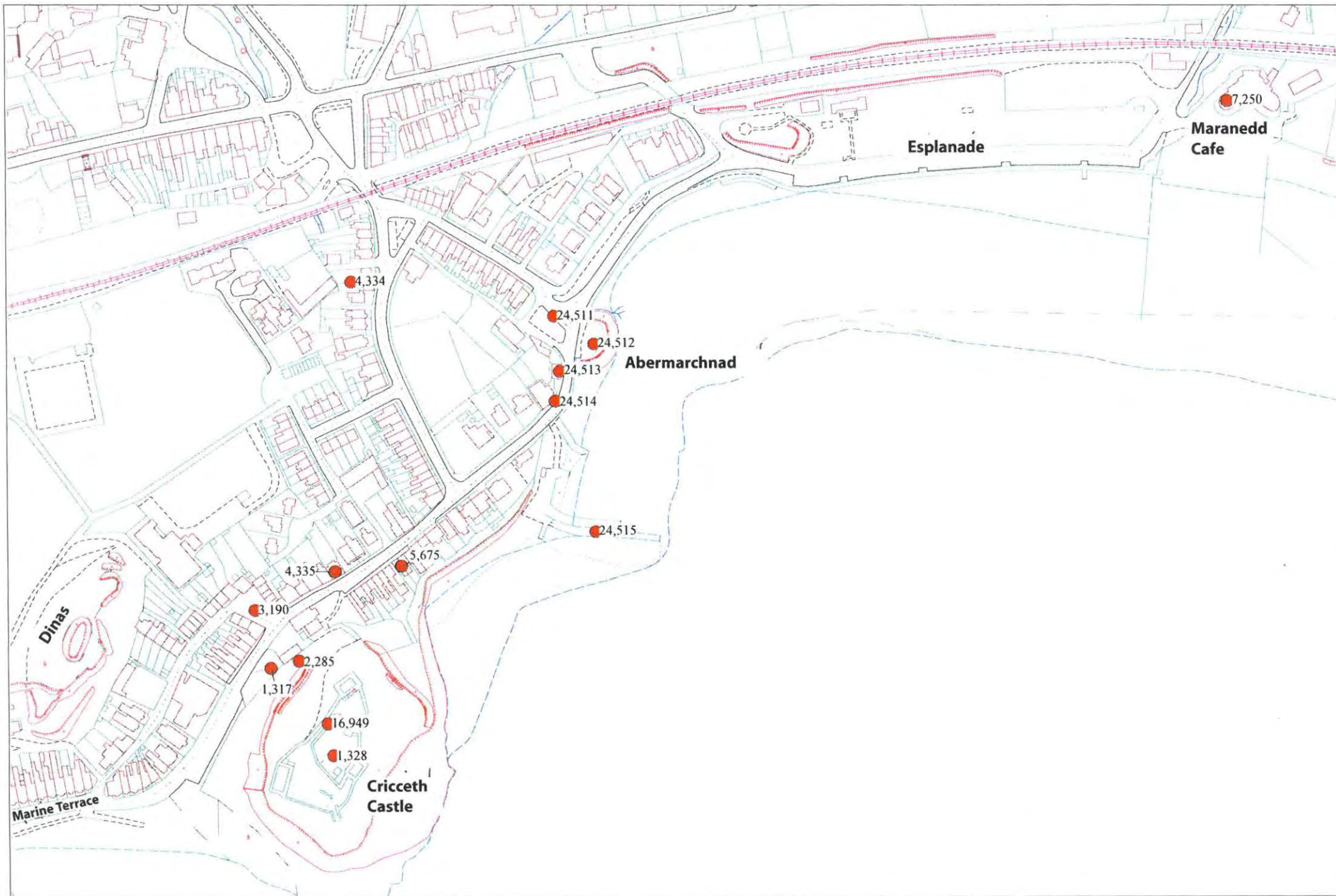


Figure 10. Location of sites in Criccieth. Scale 1,2500



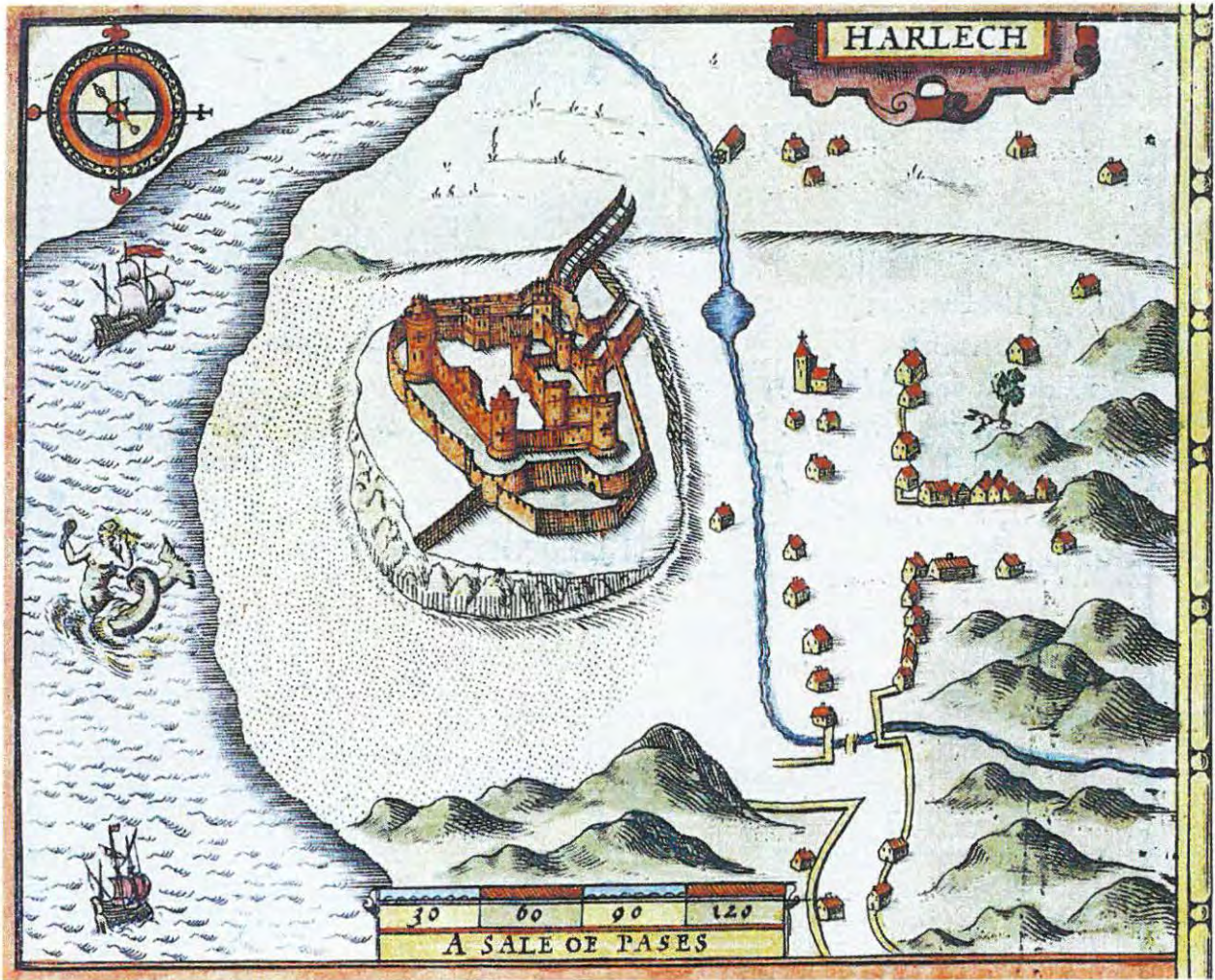


Figure 1. Map of Harlech by J. Speed. 1610.

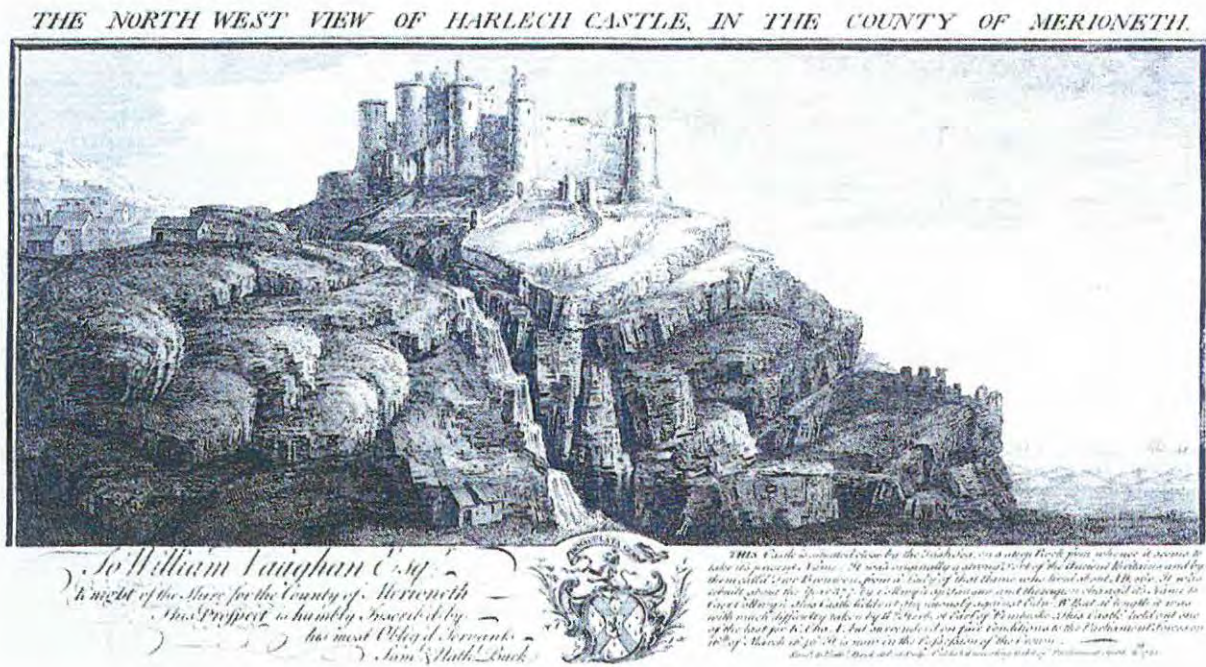
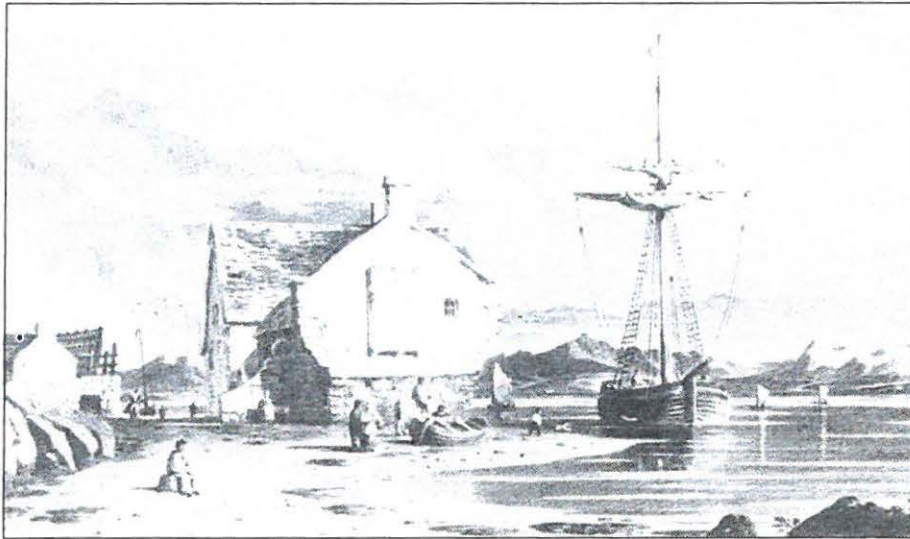


Figure 2. View of Harlech by S and N Buck. 1742

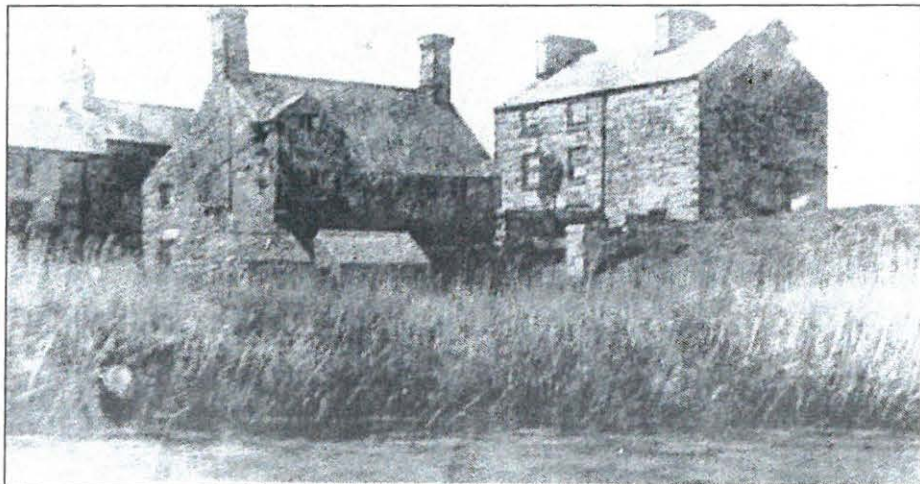




**Figure 3. Turner. 1799**



**Figure 4. Ty Gwyn. 1900.**



**Figure 5. Ty Gwyn. J. Varley. 1827.**



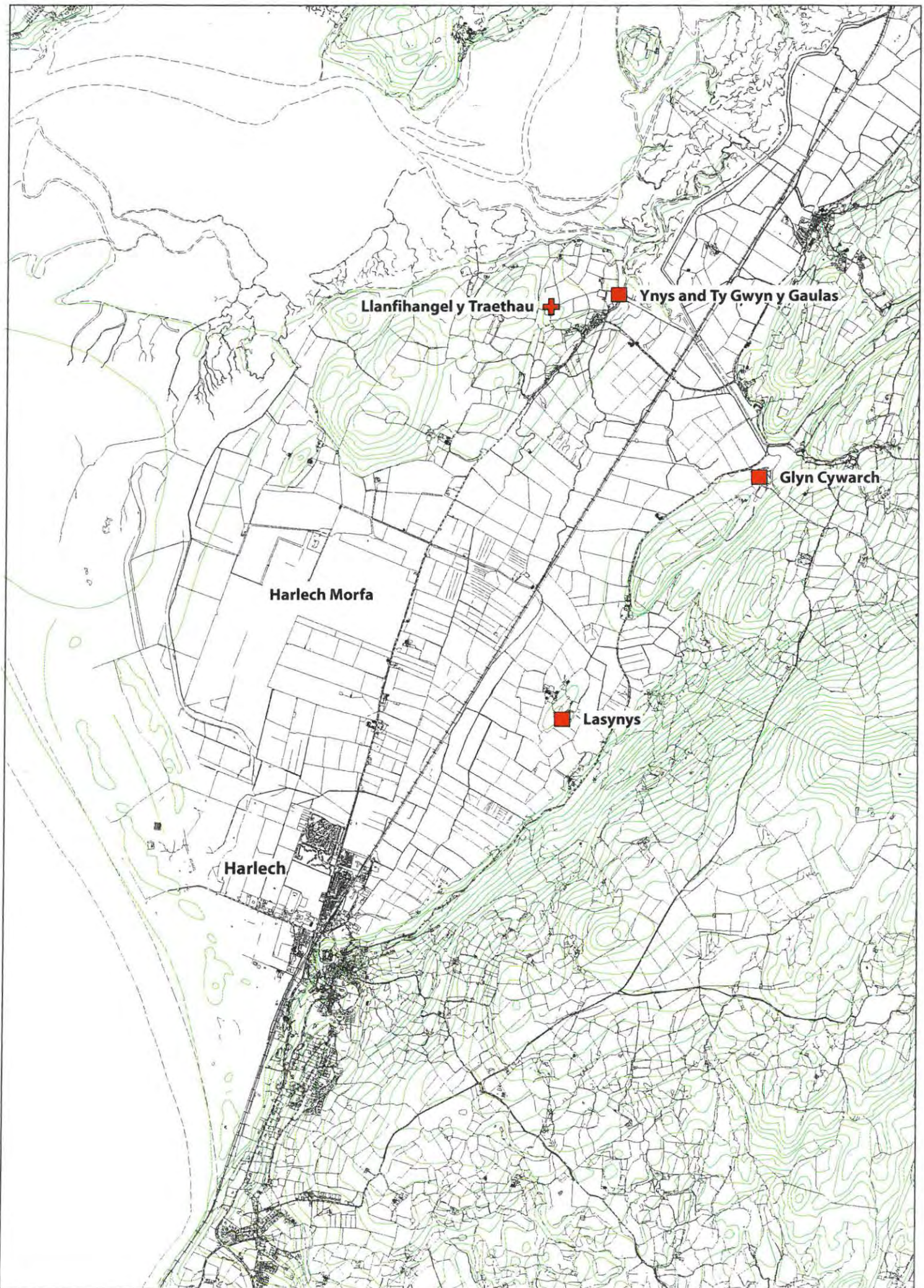


Figure 6. General location of Harlech



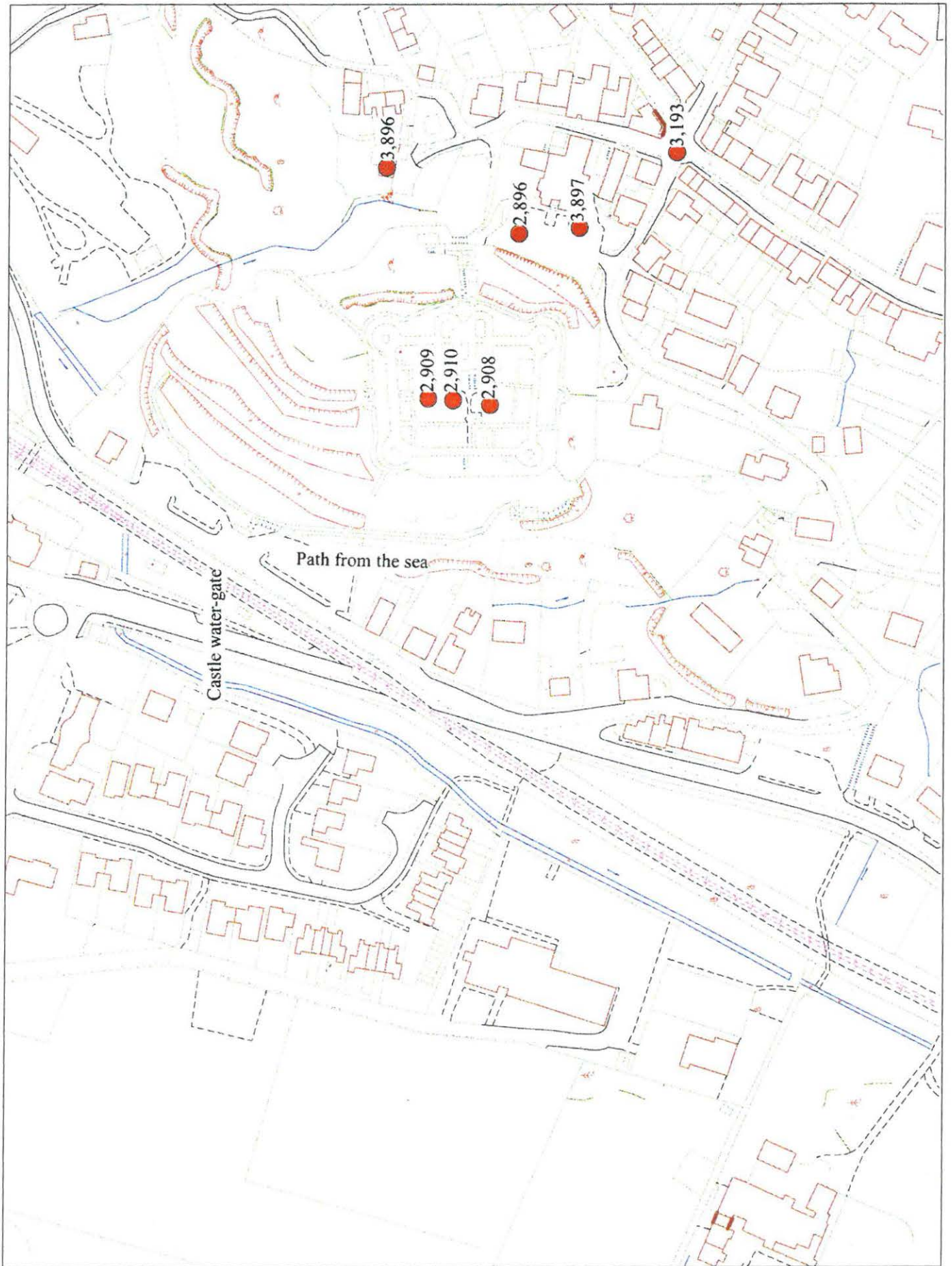


Figure 7. Harlech: Location of sites.



## THE MEDIEVAL CASTLE AND BOROUGH OF HARLECH

### Introduction

This report contains the results of an archaeological assessment undertaken as part of a wider assessment of ports and harbours throughout Wales. The assessments have been undertaken by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts and funded by Cadw. The report has been compiled by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust.

### Aims of the project

The aim of the project is to identify the nature and status of the heritage resource within the study area, and to aid and encourage the incorporation of the resource into the management and future development of the coastal zone. Though no major harbour ever developed at Harlech, it is included in the study as a comparison with the other Edwardian castles and boroughs, where harbours and defended castle docks played a central role in their development.

### Location and topography

Harlech lies at the north end of Cardigan Bay, a short distance south of the Dwyryd and Glaslyn estuaries. The castle is sited on a dramatic rock outcrop that is part of the Harlech Dome, but sits slightly seaward of the rest of the cliff edge. It overlooks Morfa Harlech, a large low-lying area now nearly all reclaimed though formerly much of it was salt marsh. Morfa Harlech forms a triangle with the point at Harlech, the west side along the coast edge, the east side along the edge of the Harlech Dome, and the north side along the Dwyryd estuary. It is very low lying, and prior to the construction of a sea wall from Llanfigangel y Traethau to Glyn Cywarch along the north edge in 1805 much of it must have been tidal. Small islands, of which the largest is at Ynys on which stands the church of Llanfihangel y Traethau, and a smaller one at Lasynys, birthplace of the writer Ellis Wynne, stand above the tidal limits.

There is still much that remains unknown about the development of Morfa Harlech, and yet an understanding of its growth and chronology is essential for an understanding of how ships may once have reached the castle. There is little doubt that the area now known as the Morfa is much larger than it was in medieval times, and that the dunes that line the western edge are largely a development of post-medieval times. It is thought the spit was once quite small, and started as a shingle ridge, and grew both northwards and westwards, with much of the material coming from Cardigan Bay (Steers 1964, 132-6). It has been suggested that the River Dwyryd may once have passed between Ynys and the higher lands of the Harlech Dome, and fed into the sea much further south. The Morfa, is therefore 'a fine example of a sand spit developing across an infilling estuary' (May 2003, 453). May (*ibid*), goes on to suggest that 'most of its growth appears to have occurred during the last 700 years, but, unlike many other such forms, it does not appear to have been seriously affected by the worldwide tendency for such features to be affected by erosion'. He attributes this to the large source of sediments in Cardigan Bay and the Glaslyn estuary. In conclusion, May (*ibid*, 453) states 'Morfa Harlech is the result of several phases of as yet undated spit growth, and the progressive sedimentation and land-claim of the area between the beach and the former rocky sea cliff upon which Harlech Castle stands'. The question of the sea gate at the castle is discussed again in the historical section below.

### Historic background

Though the references within the *Mabinogion* to Harlech suggest a site of some significance prior to Edward I's choice of site for a castle, there is no archaeological evidence for settlement pre-dating 1283, other than hints provided by the find of a gold torque, and a find of Roman coins (Bowen and Gresham 1967, 124 and 259). There is, however, a wealth of sites within, and finds from, the marginal uplands that

fringe the Harlech Dome, which reveal the presence of a flourishing population in the area from Neolithic times to the present (see Bowen and Gresham 1967).

We are, however, concerned here with the very narrow objective of examining the evidence for a harbour associated with the castle and borough. The history of both has been examined on several occasions, and it need only be stated here that the castle was built between 1283 and 1289 as part of Edward I's conquest of Wales following the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd in 1282, and the capture of Dafydd, his brother, in 1283. The borough was founded at the same time, and lay on level ground to the south and east of the castle. The castle is based around the gatehouse, with an inner and outer ward, and an outer moat on the south and east sides. The rock outcrop on the north was later further protected by an outer encircling wall. On the west, seaward, side a wall and stepped walkway lay down the cliffs to end at the 'gate next the sea' or water gate. This 'way from the sea' was part of the original design, and is comparable to the steps leading down to the castle dock from the east barbican at Conwy (Taylor, 1974; Taylor 2002; Hughes 1913; Peers 1921-2).

In 1294 the castle was besieged during the revolt of Madog ap Llywelyn, and had to be eventually relieved by sea, as was Criccieth and Aberystwyth. The castle was taken by Glyndwr's forces in 1404, and held by Owain until 1409. Though the castle and borough were damaged in the Glyndwr wars, the castle was home, for a short while, to Queen Margaret of Anjou in 1460, and was held by its Welsh constable Dafydd ab Ieuan ab Einion for the Lancastrians until the siege of 1468, when it succumbed to the Yorkists led by the Herberts of Raglan.

There is no record of any maintenance being carried out at the castle after this period, and it is likely it was never fully repaired after the damage occasioned when it was held by Glyndwr, and it saw no more military action until the Civil War. The castle was, however, used for various municipal and judicial functions (the Merioneth Assizes were held here, and it was strongly argued that keeping them at the castle would ensure the castle was, at least in part, maintained). In 1644 the castle was being held for the King by Colonel William Owen of Brogyntyn. It eventually fell to the parliamentarians in March 1647, the last royalist stronghold to be lost.

The borough of Harlech is variously described by visitors of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century as 'a very humble village, consisting of a few miserable looking cottages, little better than huts' (Evans 1812, 901) or 'little more than a village of inferior size and insignificant appearance' (Lewis 1833, HAR). Development of the town occurred after the improvement in communications in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and the rise of Harlech as a resort.

### **The castle dock**

The castle is largely built from local grit stone, though limestone from Anglesey and freestone from Egryn was being shipped in, as was iron and steel from Chester (Taylor 1974, 358-9). The workforce, at its height in the summer of 1286, was over 900 strong, and food would need to be imported by boat. Access to the sea was, therefore, crucial to the successful construction of the castle. However, both castle and borough were built some 50m above sea level, and there could be no bustling harbour in front of the town as developed at Conwy, Beaumaris and Caernarfon. The usual advantages of transporting by sea were severely curtailed when it meant carrying all goods from the castle dock up a narrow stepped path some 150m long and rising some 50m along its length.

During 1289 Ralf de Ocle was paid £124 15s 11d for building the path from the sea to the castle and its accompanying wall. Further work was undertaken following the 1294/5 uprising, when the outer wall around the castle rock was built from the north-east tower to the water gate (Taylor 1974, 364-5). The outer wall of the water gate has not survived, but it has been suggested that the indent that the wall makes outside the gate may be the remains of a former dock. Clark (1875, 110) records that a 'roadway of about five or six yards long, cut in the rock, rises from the marsh ten or twelve feet, and upon it, in front of the portal, was a drawbridge with a pit twelve feet deep'. There is now no evidence for a roadway, though the site of the drawbridge pit is still visible.



Speed's map of 1610 clearly shows the castle landlocked, and the area to the west is stippled on the map, presumably to indicate sand. It is interesting that a 16<sup>th</sup> century survey refers to the path as the 'weye from the marshe' and no longer the 'way from the sea' as in the 13<sup>th</sup> century documents (documents reprinted in Wynne 1846).

Archaeological evidence for the existence of a dock outside the water gate is minimal, but circumstantial evidence strongly supports the notion that when the castle was built it was possible for ships to come alongside the castle and tie up outside the water gate. A shingle spit out to the west around which the dunes later gathered may have partly protected the dock, and ships would have had to approach from the northern side. If this assumption is correct, the dock was certainly out of use by the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.

It has been suggested that the spit developed from the south to the north, slowly blocking access to the castle. Once access was no longer available south of Ynys, the only way into the former estuary would have been east of Ynys, on the south shore of the Dwyryd estuary where the small river from Harlech flows into the sea. This was the site of Ty Gwyn y Gamlas, a small harbour, which still contains a good example of a dock-side warehouse of three storeys. A 16<sup>th</sup> century house formerly lay alongside, though it was damaged and taken down in 1927 (Lloyd 1987, 47). Shipbuilding was undertaken here, and the harbour was painted by both Turner and Varley (see fig's 3-5). Gamlas can be translated as 'canal', and it has been suggested that a canal lay through the marsh from here to the castle (Lloyd 1987, 38-9). Certainly prior to the construction of the embankment at Ty Gwyn y Gamlas across to Glyn Cywarch the sea would have flooded towards the castle, and access could have been aided by canalising the course of the river, but no archaeological evidence has been found to confirm this. In a Jury verdict dated 1650 it is said 'the bailiffs of the said liberties were accustomed to have, & had, of every ship, or other vessels, lading of any kind of grain or salt, unlading, or selling the same, at Bermouth, Machres, & Gamlas, one Winchester measure, to be used in selling and venteing the said lading' (reprinted in Wynne 1847, 54). The three harbours associated with Harlech at this time were, therefore, Barmouth, which was well to the south, Mochras a short distance south at Pensarn, and Ty Gwyn y Gamlas to the north. In 1833, it was said of the latter 'vessels of small burden can ascend the river as far as Ty Gwyn y Gamlas, within a few hundred yards of the church, where they receive or discharge their freight' (Lewis 1833, LLA).

Later developments subsequent to the 1806 enclosure include the construction of the present road from Ynys to Harlech in the 1830's, and the Cambrian Railway in 1867, both agents for the rise of Harlech as a fashionable resort. It was never to achieve the dizzy heights of, for example, Barmouth, as a seaside resort, but instead attracted the new middle classes who staged well-received music festivals, and encouraged the development of the golf course on the Morfa (Lloyd 1987).

## **Management**

### Environmental designations

#### *Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)*

None.

#### *Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)*

Morfa Harlech is a designated SSSI (*Morfa Harlech* code 31WNT).

#### *National Nature Reserve*

Morfa Harlech is a designated NNR.

#### *Special Area of Conservation*

The sea off Harlech is part of the *Cardigan Bay* Special Area of Conservation.

#### *Marine Nature Reserve*

None.

### *National Park*

Harlech lies within Snowdonia National Park.

### Heritage designations

#### *World Heritage Status*

Harlech castle is part of the World Heritage Site *Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd* (reference 374) as defined by UNESCO. The importance of the view over the Morfa and to the sea is stressed within the Management Plan (Cadw 2004, 65).

#### *Landscape of historic interest*

Harlech lies within the *Arduwy Historic Landscape* as defined within the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, reference HLW (GW) 2.

#### *Scheduled Ancient Monuments*

The following scheduled ancient monuments lie within Harlech:

Me 044 Harlech Castle (also in Guardianship of State)

#### *Listed Buildings*

There are relatively few buildings of listable quality within Harlech when compared with the other Edwardian boroughs, which must reflect the lower economic status of Harlech, and its lack of growth in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Of maritime related features at Harlech only the water gate remains, a scheduled ancient monument. Ty Gwyn Mawr, the warehouse at Ty Gwyn y Gamlas is listed Grade II.

#### *Conservation Area*

A conservation area includes the castle and the area of the medieval borough to the east and south.

### **Management recommendations**

The castle and water gate is a scheduled ancient monument and is in the guardianship of the state. No further recommendations for this are therefore necessary. Related features that are of relevance to this study are:

- The warehouse and house at Ty Gwyn y Gamlas which is listed Grade II
- Harlech Morfa – the stretch of low-lying land between the Harlech Dome and the sea that runs from Harlech to Llanfihangel y Traethau.

A relevant programme of archaeological work should be undertaken prior to any development at Ty Gwyn y Gamlas or on the Morfa.

Areas of research potential related to Harlech and its maritime connections include:

- The method by which ships were able to access the castle dock;
- The development of the Morfa, including dating its progression, and examining the existing waterways for evidence of canals;
- The development of the harbour at Ty Gwyn y Gamlas.

Many harbours contain areas that are now silted, but which were formerly used for mooring and/or transhipment of people and goods, and which therefore retain good potential for the preservation of remains, including organic archaeology and shipwrecks. At Harlech there is potential for the recovery of such archaeology from the Morfa, and from the estuary at Ty Gwyn y Gamlas.

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## **HARLECH: SITE GAZETTEER**

The gazetteer is divided into three sections, Group A are extant sites that are upstanding, often remaining as buildings in use. Group B are sites with good potential for the recovery of archaeology, whilst Group C are sites with little or no potential for the recovery of archaeology. Within the gazetteer the sites are identified by their primary reference number (PRN) as used within the Gwynedd Historic Environment Record, and are assessed according to their importance, that is national (A), regional (B), Local (C), Other (D) and unknown (E). The site names are printed in capitals if they are already part of the Historic Environment Record, and in lower case if they have been identified during the course of this project.

### **2896 BRONZE AGE GOLD TORC - FINDSPOT, NEAR HARLECH**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

A gold torc was dug up here in the 17th century. The find is reported in Gough's edition of Camden's Britannia, which says 'In 1692 an antient golden torquis was dug up in a garden near this castle. It is a wreathed bar, or rather three or four rods twisted together, about four feet long, flixible, but bending naturally only one way in form of hatband. It had hooks at each end, not twisted or sharp, but plain and cut even. It is of round ofrm, about an inch in circumference and weighs eight ounces' (quoted in Hist of Mer Vol. 1, p 124). The torc is now in the National Museum at Cardiff.

Easting: 258000 Northing: 331000

### **2908 HARLECH CASTLE**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: M044

Harlech castle is one of a series of masonry castles built by Edward I following his conquest of Wales in 1283. The design of the castles is thought to have been largely that of Master James of St George, who was Master of the Kings Works in Wales. The castle uses a series of concentric defences based around the gatehouse, including an inner ward with curtain wall, outer ward with lower curtain wall and a deep ditch on the south and east sides. Construction of the castle started in 1283, and it was nearly complete by 1289. A protected path, called 'the way to the sea' leads to the former dock at the base of the cliff, which it is assumed was accessible by boat either via a short canal or by the sea that may then have reached the castle cliffs. The large outer rock to the north was enclosed after 1294.

Easting: 258100 Northing: 331250

### **2910 URN WITH ROMAN COINS FOUND AT HARLECH CASTLE**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

A hoard of Roman coins was reported to Edward Lhuyd in a letter from C N Eyre, Constable of Harlech Castle, dated 1704. Eyre reported 'An urn of Porphyry filled with medalls, dug up at Harlegh Castle about 8 or 9 years since. I am told by a Medalist they are of the lower Empire, Constatnius, Gallienus, Claudius Gothicus, Tetricus, Cictroinus Posthumus , and Severall others' (quoted in Hist of Mer Vol 1 p. 259). The present whereabouts of the coins is unknown.

Easting: 258100 Northing: 331250

### **3193 HARLECH MEDIEVAL TOWN**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

The borough was founded at the same time as the construction of the castle, and it received its charter in 1283. It was the smallest of Edward I's planned boroughs and only 12 taxpayers appear in the Subsidy Roll of 1292-3. By 1305 the burgage total stood at 24.5, and by 1312 had risen to 29. The borough lay on a level terrace west and south of the castle. It had its own mill and chapel. Following Glyndwr's occupation of the castle the borough remained largely dormant until its growth as a resort in the 19th century.

Easting: 258200 Northing: 331100

### **3896 MILL - SITE OF, HARLECH**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

The site of the medieval mill. Topographical prints of the 18th century show a mill here, but there is also pictorial evidence to show it was rebuilt and continued in use into the 19th century.

Easting: 258180 Northing: 331280



### **3897 CHAPEL -SITE OF, HARLECH**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

The site of the borough chapel. Speed (1610) marks it on his map, but says it was out of use at that date.  
Easting: 258150 Northing: 331200

### **7003 LLANFIHANGEL Y TRAETHAU PARISH CHURCH**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

A church of continuous chancel and nave, of which the chancel is later than the nave. The masonry is mostly medieval, but no architectural features survive the 19th century restorations. Of particular interest is the inscribed stone in the cemetery describing the construction of a church in the 12th century. The churchyard is rectilinear in form with a stone-walled boundary. The north-west corner is curved. The churchyard is raised 0.1-0.5 m on the east and south sides, 1.5 m on the north side where it is bounded by a lane, and there is a quarry on the west side. The churchyard was used for burial until recently. The entrance to the churchyard is on the south side. The most interesting feature of this church, is the 12th century inscribed stone to the west of the church, which records the construction of a church on this site in the 12th century. It reads "Hic est sepulcrum Wleder matris [H]odeleu qui primum edificavit hanc ecclesiam in tempore Ewini Regis" translated as "Here is the tomb of Wleder mother of Hoedliw who first built this church in the time of King Owain". The church consists of a continuous nave and chancel with bell-cote and west door. The masonry is essentially medieval in date. There is a joint in the north wall between the central and eastern window which has been keyed in showing that the nave originally predated the chancel. The west doorway was originally pointed, of the 13th to 15th century (Glynne 1901, 138). The western upper jambs and springings of the arch of earlier windows of uncertain date can be seen to the west of the inserted central and east windows in the south wall. The east window, although modern, may have copied an original 14th-century window. The church had been restored before 1861 when new windows were inserted and the roof was renewed. In 1884 the church was restored by Henry Kennedy from which plans and elevations have survived (GAS Z/PE/6/17). The western porch and the north vestry were built and the modern existing windows inserted. Underfloor ventilation was introduced and a drainage trench dug along the south wall. In 1909 five inscribed stones, possibly later gravestones, were noted as being broken up and used for the padstones of the roof of the chancel. Panelling was added behind the altar in 1958 (GAS Z/PE/6/19). The walls are of local rubble with modern dressings. Modern slate roof. The external south, east and west elevations are pointed with good stone definition. The north external elevation is heavily pointed with poor stone definition. The internal elevations are hidden by plaster and panelling. The central aisle and sanctuary are tiled and there are timber boards beneath the pews. The floor appears to have been lowered 0.5 m. There are no visible signs of drainage trenches around the church. (GAT Report 276)

Easting: 259520 Northing: 335260

### **7263 BUILDINGS AT LLANFIHANGEL Y TRAETHAU**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII

A large four-storey warehouse and dwelling of nineteenth century construction, at the end of the road from Harlech to the former Ty Gwyn ferry. It remains in use as a house and a workshop. This was a relatively busy harbour, where both trading and shipbuilding was undertaken. The dyke for enclosing the Morfa was built 1806. It has been suggested that prior to the construction of the dam, ships could have sailed some way towards Harlech castle on Spring tides.

Easting: 259920 Northing: 335500

## **Y FELINHELI HARBOUR**

### **Introduction**

This report contains the results of an archaeological assessment undertaken as part of a wider assessment of ports and harbours throughout Wales. The assessments have been undertaken by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts and funded by Cadw. This report has been compiled by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust.

### **Aims of the project**

The aim of the project is to identify the nature and status of the heritage resource within the study area, and to aid and encourage the incorporation of the resource into the management and future development of the harbour and coastal zone.

### **Location and topography**

The harbour at Y Felinheli lies on the south, Caernarfonshire, side of the Menai Strait approximately mid-way between Bangor and Caernarfon. It lies within the parishes of Pentir and Llanfair Isgair, and close to, and was partly in the ownership of, the estate of Vaynol. The harbour was developed by the estate for the purpose of shipping slates from its quarries at Dinorwic, and came to occupy nearly 1Km of coastline, from the estuary of Nant y Garth (or Afon Heilyn) in the north to the hill fort of Dinas to the south. Prior to its development as a slate harbour it had little use other than for limited local trading, and as a landing place for the Moel y Don ferry. The original name of the harbour was Aberpwl, but this later became Felinheli following the establishment of a tide mill in the estuary. The bay south of the estuary was also known as Moel y Don because of the ferry jetty. The south end of the bay is known as Dinas after the hill fort on the promontory. The harbour was called Port Dinorwic after the construction of the first quarry railway in 1824, though the village has reverted back to the name 'Y Felinheli' since the closure of the railway and the quarries.

The formative influence on the location of the harbour was the small estuary of the Afon Heilyn. Greenville Collins chart of 1695 shows the estuary and marks 'mill' by its side, but does not indicate a place of specific anchorage. Lewis Morris's chart from his Cambrian Coasting Pilot of 1737-8 marks the mill and estuary, another small estuary to the south at 'Gardd von' (remembered in the name of the present inn) with the farm of 'Holly Bush' in between. South again, and under the lee of the promontory fort at Dinas, was a small bay called 'Porth gwelwern' with anchorage at 6 fathoms.

### **Historic background**

#### **a. Pre slate-port**

A mill, driven by the Afon Heilyn, was apparently established here prior to the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, when it is traditionally stated that a new tide mill was built, (Jones 1992, 9). Greenville Collins chart of 1695 does not show the estuary closed to form a tidal pool, though Morris's chart of 1736 appears to show a dam across the estuary. The tide mill had gone out of use by 1783. If the estuary had a dam across the entrance with tidal doors to allow tidal water in, it would have prohibited the estuary from use as a harbour, and it is likely that boats at this stage moored further round towards Garddfon and Dinas, where the ferry jetty was built.

#### **b. Ferry port**

A ferry operated between Port Dinorwic and Moel y Don on Anglesey from at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Its landing place on the Caernarfonshire side is thought to have been at Aberpwl, at the point where Snowdon Street (Pen Ceunant) emerges by Garddfon. The early ferry pier was apparently under the present slate quay that forms the right side of the bay, and was moved west to its present location when the quay was extended in 1853-4 (Jones 2004, 24-5; Davies 1942, 317).

### c. Slate port

The development of the harbour in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century was directly associated with its use for shipping slate from the Llanberis quarries owned by the Assheton Smith family of Vaynol. The location at Aberpwl was chosen not only because of its topographic suitability, but because both the creek and much of the land between it and the quarries was owned by the Assheton Smith family, which allowed improvement of communication between the two.

Though Thomas Assheton Smith of Vaynol did not originally work the quarries directly himself, he did encourage their working, and he let the quarries to a partnership of three, two of whom were lawyers. However, following the death of one of the partners in 1807, Assheton Smith gradually took over control (Lindsay 1974, 56-7). The slate was originally shipped partly from Caernarfon, and partly Aberpwl. Hyde Hall, writing in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century of Llanberis, says 'These slates constitute the chief, if not the only, material for exportation hence, and are raised in the mountain above the lake, down which they were formerly brought in boats to the wharf at Penllyn..... The port where they are sent is near Moeldon Ferry on the Menai, to which they are painfully conveyed in carts to the great injury of agriculture, from which the force of the parish in men and horses is thus abstracted' (Jones 1952, 172-3). At about the same time John Evans describes the slates being shipped along the lakes at Llanberis, and then taken to Caernarfon or 'considerable quantities are taken on board at a small creek, opposite Moel y don ferry, down to which a new road for the purpose, has lately been opened from the quarry, over the mountains' (Evans, 1812, 422). Traditionally, this 'slate road' is said to have been built 1807-8, and was eventually replaced by a tramway linking the quarries to the port in 1824 (Boyd 1986, 9-12). The first improvements at the harbour, then often referred to as Moel y don after the ferry crossing from Anglesey, were carried out between 1780 and 1793, and are said to have consisted of a wharf, or new sea wall, extending along the foreshore from the south side of the inlet to a point near Garthfon Inn (Jones 1992, 43-4). This allowed easier loading of slates onto boats, but larger vessels still had to anchor in the Straits and be supplied by rowing boats or small sailing boats.

Though there were to be continuous improvements carried out at the harbour following the initial works of 1780, the exact location and nature of the improvements is not known with certainty, as much of the information comes from accounts within the Vaynol and Dinorwic manuscripts which merely state the amount of money paid, and does not describe the work undertaken. The manuscript version of the first OS map of c. 1816 shows 'Porth Aberpwl' at the estuary, and further south a road to the centre of the bay midway between the estuary and Dinas, which must be the ferry terminal. In contrast the first edition 1" OS map of c. 1839 shows a 'slate pier' along the south side of the estuary, a 'basin' within the estuary, and 'ferry house' within the centre of the bay, an area which does not appear to have been used for slate shipping at this time. The Tithe map of 1839 similarly shows a basin or inner dock within the estuary. The 1824 tramway approached the port down Nant y Garth, and onto the north side of the creek, crossing to the south side over a swing bridge on the site of the present vertical swing bridge (Boyd 1986, 26-8).

The accounts record that in 1829 Thomas Roberts was paid £2,621 15s for the new dock at Velin Heli (GAS Vaynol 4493). The agents account book for 1834 includes payment of £370 for erecting a new pier at Port Dinorwic (UWB Vaynol 4378). In 1833 it was possible to state that 'the harbour, which has been recently enlarged, is capable of accommodating thirty vessels, which may lie here in safety while waiting for their freight, and the quay has been greatly improved' (Lewis 1833, Port-Dinorwic). A 'new quay' was built between November 1839 and January 1841 (Jones 2004, 48 citing UWB Porth yr Aur 29092), and in 1867 a new quay was proposed 'on a portion of the foreshore of the Menai Straits lying between Port Dinorwic and Dinas (Jones 2004, 48, citing GAS Vaynol 2379).

The latter may have been the quay built opposite the two limekilns in the centre of the bay (GAS Vaynol 6898). The work between 1829 and 1834 may have included the construction of the southern outer basin, now surrounded by houses, though still used as part of the marina. However, precise dating of the outer quay wall and outer basin has not proved possible, and these may have been constructed at any time between 1829 and 1879.



A new tramway from the quarry to the port was started in 1841. It reached the harbour through a tunnel at the base of a long incline which emerged onto the quay opposite the swing bridge, and alongside the steps that lead up to the village (see plate XXXIX in Boyd 1986).

The Bangor & Carnarvon Railway, which connected to the Chester & Holyhead Railway by Britannia Bridge, opened in 1852, with a station at Port Dinorwic some 200m north of the later station that still stands and opened in 1874. In 1856 a branch line was built connecting the port to the Bangor & Carnarvon Railway, and standard gauge lines were laid out along the quay accompanying those of the narrow gauge quarry railway.

The next major phase of improvements took place between 1897 and 1902, and has been described by the engineer Frank Oswell (1902). This phase of works saw the construction of the present tidal lock, the inner basin divided into two by the lift-bridge, and the dry dock at the eastern end. Lock gates were employed to allow ships to move around the basin when at low tide, whereas previously the inner basins were tidal, and ships were grounded on the mud floor at low tide. Maintenance workshops were built alongside the dry dock, of which only the former carpenters workshop (now sailmakers) remains.

Oswell (1902, 290) describes the earlier docks as being constructed 'of roughly squared limestone laid without mortar and backed in the roughest possible manner with rubble and slate refuse, with a coping of rough-hewn slate slabs'. He also says the old quays 'were for the most part made ground, consisting of such loose materials as slate rubbish, sea sand, copper dross (from the old mines at Amlwch) and rough stones'. The quay wall from the outer lock gates to the old tidal dock was not rebuilt during this phase of works. The docks, limited in width by the nature of the topography, were designed to allow two vessels to pass, one of which would be moored to the south side, whilst the north side was kept free for passage. This allowed berths for 8 vessels, or 9 if the lock was used for berthing (Oswell 1902, 291).

The upper walls of the lock are of limestone blocks, from Moelfre, Anglesey, and the lower part of concrete. The remainder of the quay walls and those of the dry dock are of concrete on the lower section and brick above, which Oswell calls hard-burnt brindles, or blue fire-bricks, backed by hard-burnt red bricks. The cast-iron double-span swing bridge was replaced by the present single span lift bridge. The gate of the dry dock is an unusual steel gate that is hinged on the base and lies flat in a pit at the entrance when not in use, and then is winched up to vertical when needed.

The quarry railway stopped working in 1967, and the port lay dormant until its conversion into a marina in the 1980's. Despite the construction of houses on all the quays, the survival of the tidal basin and related quays walls, and the survival of the lock, inner basin and dry dock from the 1897-1902 works, ensure the remains provide a significant example of a harbour that shipped some 25% of the output of the north Wales slate quarries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **d) Dinas shipbuilding yard**

Shipbuilding was undertaken at Dinas from c. 1780 onwards, with vessels such as the Lady Caroline, a sloop of 40 tons, built in 1786, and the Earl of Uxbridge, a brig of 120 tons built in 1783 (Jones 2004, 29). Shipbuilding was given a boost in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century when Rev. Rees Jones moved his business from Barmouth to Dinas. The company, trading as Rees Jones & Son, built some 29 vessels there, including the 853 ton *Ordovic*, the largest vessel built in north Wales (Jones 2004, 30-31). Shipbuilding ceased at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The shipyard was used during the second world war to build flat-bottomed tug boats, that were tested on the Menai Strait. The present slipway probably dates from this period, though one had been built during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. No 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings survive on site.

#### **Management**

##### General harbour management

Port Dinorwic is managed as a marina by NWS Dock Management Ltd. All parts of the tidal dock, the quay walls and the inner basin are used as part of the marina. Certain elements of the dock require regular

maintenance, these include the lock gates and opening mechanism, and the dry dock gate and pumping mechanism. The former are maintained on a regular basis (the chains are renewed regularly), though the outer lock gates will require a more major overhaul in the near future. The dry dock gate is presently overlain by silts, and requires dredging before it could be lifted. The wires that aided lifting have been removed. The pump has been stripped down and refitted, but the electric motor that drives it is still being overhauled.

#### Environmental designations

##### *Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)*

None.

##### *Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)*

None.

##### *Special Area of Conservation*

The Menai Strait below mean high water is designated a Special Area of Conservation as part of *Y Fenai a Bae Conwy / Menai Strait and Conwy Bay*, site code UK0030202.

##### *Marine Nature Reserve*

The Menai Strait has been proposed as a Marine Nature Reserve.

#### Heritage designations

##### *World Heritage Status*

None.

##### *Landscape of historic interest*

Port Dinorwic lies within the *Dinorwig Historic Landscape* as defined within the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, reference HLW (GW) 6.

##### *Scheduled Ancient Monuments*

The following scheduled ancient monuments lie close to the harbour:

Cn 47 Dinas Promontory Fort

##### *Listed Buildings*

The following are buildings that form part of the harbour or are immediately adjacent:

<i>PRN</i>	<i>LB</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Grade</i>
12705	4141	Chimney Stack at South Dock	II
15881- 15889	17380	Dock System at Y Felinheli	II
24507	17381	Former Dock Offices at Y Felinheli	II
15880; 24501	18343	South Dock and quay walls at Y Felinheli	II
24505	18344	Vaynol Park Wall	II

##### *Conservation Area*

None.

#### **Management recommendations**

Considerable changes have taken place at Port Dinorwic over the last two decades, and nearly all the buildings have been removed, and the slate quays have been built over. However, the harbour has become a marina, and this ensures that the quay side and dock basins are maintained.

The south tidal dock is listed, as is the quay to the north that links it to the outer lock, inner basin and dry dock. The last three are also all listed. The majority of the remaining structures are therefore currently protected under existing legislation. However some doubt remains over the related elements which are not always explicitly mentioned within the listed building description. These include the following:

15882 Lamp post  
15891 Dockside crane  
Mooring rings and bollards.

A number of other sites are not currently protected by existing legislation, but are considered to be of regional significance to the development of the harbour. These include:

15890 Sailmaker's workshop  
20744 Bangor and Caernarfon Railway – Port Dinorwic Siding (only partially remaining at east end of docks)  
24502 Ferry jetty  
24504 Slipway and site of shipbuilding works

A detailed record of the above sites should be undertaken prior to any impact or significant alterations.

Areas of research potential related to the development of the harbour relate primarily to the dating of the different phases of construction. Knowledge of the development of the pre-1897 quays is still very slight, and any works that may impact upon the quays should be closely monitored to aid understanding of the chronological and structural development of the quays and harbour.

Many harbours contain areas that are now silted, but which were formerly used for mooring and/or transhipment of people and goods, and which therefore retain good potential for the preservation of remains, including organic archaeology and shipwrecks. There is less potential for this at Port Dinorwic, as the construction of the new basins in 1897-1902 would have removed much of the former evidence. There is, however, some potential under the ballast that was dumped within the bay along beach road, an area that also contains remnants for former quays, and under the quays south of the inner basin and outer lock, much of which is also, according to Oswell (1902) ground that has been made up with ballast waste and other material.

Archaeological assessment and evaluation should precede any development within these areas of archaeological potential.

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## **PORT DINORWIC HARBOUR: GAZETTEER OF SITES**

The gazetteer is divided into three sections, Group A are extant sites that are upstanding, often remaining as buildings in use. Group B are sites with good potential for the recovery of archaeology, whilst Group C are sites with little or no potential for the recovery of archaeology. Within the gazetteer the sites are identified by their primary reference number (PRN) as used within the Gwynedd Historic Environment Record, and are assessed according to their importance, that is national (A), regional (B), Local (C), Other (D) and unknown (E). The site names are printed in capitals if they are already part of the Historic Environment Record, and in lower case if they have been identified during the course of this project.

### **GROUP A: EXTANT SITES**

#### **3682 DINAS PROMONTORY FORT, Y FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: C047

Dinas, a cliff fort bordering the Menai Strait near Port Dinorwic. The interior contains a natural ridge which rises to 70ft above OD and then falls away to the Strait in a cliff which forms a natural defence on the north north west. The landward side is protected by a rampart, in plan almost a semi-circle 390ft in diameter with an entrance near the middle. East of the entrance the rampart has been almost levelled, to the west it survives as an artificial scarp capped by a rubble bank about 12ft wide, giving an external height of 10-20ft. Against the bank are the footings of two rectangular buildings, probably medieval (PRN 3683). A hoard of Roman coins is said to have been found on the site.

Easting: 251888 Northing: 367131

#### **11934 BODARBORTH NOS 1,2**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII 4141

A pair of mid-19th century estate cottages with original cast-iron windows. Built c. 1850-60 by Vaynol estate. There is a later addition of c. 1900 built on to No. 1.

Easting: 252772 Northing: 367800

#### **12668 FELINHELI TELEPHONE CALL BOX**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII 4147

George VI Telephone Kiosk, K6 type. A red square kiosk of cast iron, constructed according to G. G. Scott's design of 1936.

Easting: 253161 Northing: 368094

#### **12705 VAYNOL ESTATE GASWORKS CHIMNEY**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII 4141

A chimney stack built of squared slate slabs. It has a square base with diagonally-set tall square shaft and battered sides. It is now set within part of the marina housing, but formerly formed part of Vaynol estate workshops that lay here. A steam engine was installed to drive the machinery in the carpenters workshops etc. Mid to late 19th century in date.

Easting: 252429 Northing: 367559

#### **15880 OUTER TIDAL QUAY, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII 18343

A length of tidal quay side some 140m long which runs between the outer lock gates and the large tidal dock to the south-west. It was not rebuilt during the 1897-1900 phase of works, and though not closely datable, may form part of the works undertaken in the 1860's. It is built of large limestone blocks with some slate slabs filling smaller spaces. The top of the quay has been relaid with large slate slabs. Iron mooring rings can be seen in the grass along the top of the quay beyond the slate slabs, set at intervals of about 11m, and two iron mooring bollards survive of the symmetrical 'waisted' type. A series of iron ladders are attached to the wall. The wider quayside, where there once lay rails and slate storage is now occupied by housing. The quay is, however, still in use as part of the marina, and a landing pontoon has been placed alongside the quay.

Easting: 252504 Northing: 367826

**15881 LOCK GATE CONTROL MECHANISM, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: GII 17380

A pair of iron lock gate controls are situated either side of the outer lock gate. These formed part of the 1897 works, and were originally manually operated, but electrical motors have been added in more recent times. Similar controls remain by the inner lock gates (PRN 15886).

Easting: 252558 Northing: 367844

**15882 LAMP POST, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: II 17380

A cast iron lamp post set in a square concrete base. The lower stand exhibits a decorative Acanthus leaf design above a mock Corinthian column while the upper shaft which accommodated two lamps is much plainer and is probably a replacement. It is possible that this was originally powered by gas - the gasworks was installed to the south of the tidal dock c. 1853 and was closed in 1893.

Easting: 252548 Northing: 367842

**15883 OUTER LOCK GATE, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: II 17380

This is part of the 1897-1902 works. A set of wooden gates, built of greenheart, they were made and erected by Messrs Cleghorn and Wilkinson of Northwich under the supervision of the engineer Frank Oswell. There is a walkway over the top supported by iron brackets, and with an iron post and chain fence. The original chain pulley system for opening the gate paddles to release water prior to opening the gates is still in use. The gate is now electrically operated from a modern control box on the quay side.

Easting: 252560 Northing: 367852

**15884 OUTER LOCK, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: II 17380

This is part of the harbour improvements undertaken 1897-1902 and supervised by the engineer Frank Oswell. The outer lock is essentially a straight sided channel facilitating access to the enclosed inner lock. It is 60m long and 10m wide. It is constructed of large limestone blocks and has the outer and inner lock gates situated at either end. A depth gauge close to the outer lock gate records a maximum depth of 21 ft, a second depth gauge close to the inner lock gate records a maximum depth of 22ft. Access to the lock is via two iron ladders, one on the south side close to the outer lock gate, the other on the north side close to the inner lock gate. Seven iron mooring points are situated at regular intervals of c. 9m down each side. A full description of the construction of the dock has been written by the engineer (Oswell 1902).

Easting: 252588 Northing: 367854

**15885 INNER LOCK GATE, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: II 17380

This is part of the 1897-1902 works. A set of wooden gates, built of greenheart, they were made and erected by Messrs Cleghorn and Wilkinson of Northwich under the supervision of the engineer Frank Oswell. There is a walkway over the top supported by iron brackets, and with an iron post and chain fence. The original chain pulley system for opening the gate paddles to release water prior to opening the gates is still in use. The gate is now electrically operated from a modern control box on the quay side.

Easting: 252612 Northing: 367856

**15886 LOCK GATE CONTROL MECHANISM, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: II 17380

A pair of iron lock gate controls are situated either side of the outer lock gate. These formed part of the 1897 works, and were originally manually operated, but electrical motors have been added in more recent times. Similar controls remain by the inner lock gates (PRN 15881).

Easting: 252611 Northing: 367850

**15887 INNER BASIN, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: A Site Status Reference: II 17380



The inner enclosed basin has curving sides and is crossed about a quarter of the way along its length by a lift bridge ( PRN 15888). It is 340m in length and varies in width from 20m to 30m. From a point just inside the inner lock gate the construction is of bricks, described by the engineer as 'hard burnt brindles' or blue fire-bricks, and these are backed by hard-burnt red bricks. The coping and quoins are of limestone blocks from Traeth Bychan quarry. Iron ladders were supplied at every berth, and mooring bollards 'of the hook pattern, weighing 8 cwts each, were fixed at the edge of the coping about 50ft apart on the south side and between that distance and 100ft apart on the other side'. These were supplemented with iron mooring rings, and have, in recent times, have been supplemented by smaller mooring points with twin angled posts. Easting: 252780 Northing: 367920

#### **15888 LIFTING BRIDGE, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: II 17380

A lifting bridge, that replaced a former swing bridge, was inserted during the 1897-1902 harbour works. It was built and erected by Messrs Pearson and Knowles, of Warrington. It was designed to be lifted by a hand-winch at the side, with a work gearing into a worm-wheel on a pinion shaft. Balance weights of about 18 tons lie in chambers below the quay. The bridge is now electrically powered, but apparently still using the same cog system. The bridge lifts from the south side, and has sides of steel plates fastened to girders that reduce in height to the north in order to lower the weight on that side. Iron railings surmount the steel plates and girders. The deck has been renewed.

Easting: 252703 Northing: 367870

#### **15889 DRY DOCK, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: II 17380

The dock forms part of the 1897-1902 improvements designed by the engineer Frank Oswell. It is situated at the far end of the floating dock, and is 60m long and 15m wide. The walls and floor are of concrete, the former clad in the same blue fire-brick as the adjoining dock walls. The altars (stepped sides) were built 1'6" wide and 5' 1/2" high, coped with large bricks specially made by the Castle Firebrick Company. Spring water was piped away. Two Gwynne centrifugal pumps were fitted to drain the dock, though a drainage pipe fitted with valves was also constructed to speed up the drainage process. The entrance was closed by a steel falling-gate hinged at the bottom. The gate was designed by G A Hobson and built and erected by Messrs Cleghorn and Wilkinson of Northwich.

Easting: 252962 Northing: 367985

#### **15890 SAIL MAKERS' WORKSHOP, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

Adjacent to the dry dock this building is the remaining usable building of a group of workshops which were built following the 1897-1902 dock improvements. The original buildings were largely of corrugated iron, so this may have post-dated the original buildings. It is a machine made brick built structure, using English bond this building has clearly been much altered. The building is 13m long and 6.4m wide. It originally had one central door at ground level, 2.4m square, with a wooden lintel and moulded brick jambs. This door is still in use, but a second has been added at a first floor level, accessed by an external wooden staircase. Four windows now exist, two at ground level, two at first floor level. These replace the two original windows which can be seen blocked at a level part way between the present ground and first floor levels. The added door and the windows all have concrete lintels. Galvanised guttering is also probably a more recent addition. The roof is of slate with ceramic ridge tiles and sky lights. A cast iron chimney vents at one end. Both gable ends show the remnants of previously attached buildings. The western gable has iron girders attached - a remainder of a large girder constructed workshop which once stood here. The eastern gables have the roof lines of at least two attached structures. A small hole with an iron lintel, now bricked up, and iron fixings sunk into the ground are suggestive of a link between the buildings, perhaps a power source for machinery (Laws, K., 2001).

A door from the first floor opens onto railway behind, presumably to receive timber direct from the line. The first floor has been heavily strengthened with close-spaced joists to take heavy machinery. The roof trusses are unusually made of light steel. Oswell (1902) says the buildings were sheeted with galvanised corrugated iron, so perhaps the slate roof is secondary. The building is presently in use as a sail-makers and rigging shop.

Easting: 252983 Northing: 367970

**15891 DOCK SIDE CRANE, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

Cast iron stationary pivoting crane. Manual winch system based on an 'A' frame with lowerable jib. There was formerly a second crane that was scrapped c. 1980.

Easting: 252983 Northing: 367970

**15892 PUMP HOUSE, DRY DOCK, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference: II 17380

Small hut situated to the south of the dry dock entrance contains the pump for pumping the dry docks.

Captain Parry of NWS says the pump has been rebuilt, and a heavy DC motor is presently being renovated to drive it. The hut is 4.7m wide and 3.2m wide. The walls of the hut were possibly originally constructed with wood but are now of modern brick. The roof is of wooden planks covered with roofing felt with a skirt of reveted iron sheet between the roof and brick wall. A small staircase near the hut leads to a small door directly below it which is presumed to give access to the pump mechanism itself.

Easting: 252935 Northing: 367972

**15894 DREDGING BUCKET, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

Old iron dredging bucket which has been salvaged and positioned close to the lift bridge (PRN 15888).

Easting: 252720 Northing: 367860

**20740 PORT DINORWIC PORT**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference:

Slate was being exported from Felinheli by about 1700, albeit in small quantities. At this time, access to the shore was via Allt Gam, emerging at a point near the Garddfon Inn. The new harbour, built over 4 years to cope with the vast increase in the amount of slate being exported, was completed in 1793, by which time a new sea wall had been built to redeem some of the foreshore as an area for storing slate.

Early in the 19th century, Thomas Assheton-Smith built a new road to the port which descended Nant y Garth to the inlet as Aberpwll, one of the former names of Port Dinorwic. The port was also referred to as Moelydon in 1820 but was renamed as the Port of Dinorwic soon after. The construction of a railway from the quarries co-incided with expansion of the port. The final phase of works was to take place 1897-1902.

Easting: 252546 Northing: 367851

**20744 BANGOR-CAERNARVON RAILWAY, PORT DINORWIC**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

The Port Siding of the Bangor & Carnarvon Railway was opened in 1856. It entered the port at the east end, and lay on the south side of the inlet, before crossing and running alongside the quarry tramway where it emerged from the tunnel. The route of the standard gauge track bed is still visible where it approaches the quay side of the inner lock, and then runs behind the new houses built on the quay, before it is overlain by the widening of the approach road to the harbour. The track bed measured approximately 8m wide in total.

Easting: 252974 Northing: 367955

**24501 South Tidal Dock, Felinheli**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII 18343

A large tidal dock 155m by 54m. It was probably built c. 1850 during a number of improvements to the harbour at this time, and following the lease from Lord Boston in 1844 of the land on the south side of the creek. It is a large rectangular basin with walls of massive squared stone blocks and with massive stone slab capstones. The opening lies at the NW corner. The south side of the entrance has a rounded terminal. The north side of the entrance has been partly rebuilt. This corner of the dock forms the south end of the tidal quay and continues to the outer lock gates of the inner harbour. The south side of the dock continues as a quay south to Garddfon. Houses now line the dockside where formerly tracks were laid down and slates were stored ready for shipping. The basin forms part of the marina.

Easting: 252409 Northing: 367707

**24502 Ferry jetty, Felinheli**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

A jetty that was built here c. 1850 following the construction of the new quay at Garddfon, where it formerly lay. A ferry continued in use well into the 20th century. The beach here was used for dumping ballast, and much of the present foreshore is made ground.

Easting: 252313 Northing: 367501

**24504 Slipway and site of shipbuilding works, Felinheli**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

Though ship building and maintenance had been carried out at Dinas since at least 1780, the industry was given a boost when Rev. Rees Jones moved his business here from Barmouth c. 1850. A patent slip was built, and several sheds were erected. The business employed some 40 men, and built some 29 vessels, including the 'Ordovic', of 853 tons, the largest vessel to be built in north Wales. No 19th century buildings remain on site, and the area remains in use for light industry. The slipway remains, though this was largely rebuilt in the 1940's, when the yard was used for making flat-bottomed tugs.

Easting: 252020 Northing: 367159

**24505 Vaynol park wall and store, Port Dinorwic**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: GII 18344

Vaynol park wall was built between 1863 and 1870, and is considered one of the finest estate walls in Wales. The wall is of rubble stone, with coping of rough slate slabs laid on edge. It borders the north side of the dock. At the east end of the dock is a slate roofed boat store with double ledged doors. It was used by the Assheton-Smith's for their personal boats, and was constructed about 1900. Now used for storage and owned by NWS Ltd.

Easting: 252986 Northing: 368007

**24506 Culvert, Port Dinorwic**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

A culvert carries the stream (Afon Heilyn) around the dry dock and discharges into the inner basin. It was built as part of the 1897-1902 works at the harbour.

Easting: 253003 Northing: 368005

**24507 Former dock offices, Port Dinorwic**

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference:

Offices and clerks office and the former location of a weighbridge, sited where the trucks emerged from the tunnel entrance of the 1843 quarry railway. The present building is thought to date from when the port was redeveloped in 1902, though the 1913 OS map shows a simple square building that is the same as that shown on the 1897 map, so perhaps the present structure post-dates 1913. The walls are slatehung with fish-scale slates in three colour bands of grey, purple and green. Slate hipped roofs, with rendered chimneys on the front and rear ridges. It is now used as a restaurant, and has a conservatory built on. A new building is presently under construction (March 2006) alongside, and over the site of the former weigh bridge.

Easting: 252737 Northing: 367838

**24508 Tunnel entrance, Port Dinorwic**

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

The entrance to the tunnel of the 1843 railway that led to the Penscoins incline and on to the quarries. It is blocked at the port end by a block wall.

Easting: 252743 Northing: 367827

**24510 Slate wall, Y Felinheli**

Assessment of Importance: C

Site Status Reference:

A terraced wall that is constructed from slate waste marks the tidal edge around the base of the rock on



which Plas Dinorwic was built. Modern housing now lies inside the walls.  
Easting: 252539 Northing: 367882

## **GROUP B: BURIED SITES WITH ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

### **15879 TIDAL MILL, Y FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

A mill, situated at the head of the inlet, used water diverted from the Afon Heilyn to provide power for the water wheel and, prior to the silting of the river and inlet, boats had been able to pass from the open sea at suitable times of the tide, as far as the mill. Initially this mill was called Aber Heilyn and then the name became Aber y Felin. According to a report in Yr Herald Gymraeg of the 8 October 1864, a Mr Williams of Vaenol had decided in 1633 to build a new mill on the side of the inlet within reach of the sea and located in a position where the maximum benefit would be derived from the tides. The name Felinheli derived from this second mill. The last recorded miller was William Gray. The report stated that by about 1783 the building had fallen into disuse as a mill but, much to the consternation of the local people who deplored such activity, the site had thereafter been used for cock-fighting, which was a popular sport in the late 18th century (Jones, R. C., 2004).

Easting: 252564 Northing: 367861

### **24503 Pier, Felinheli**

Assessment of Importance: E

Site Status Reference:

The site of a former pier, prior to the dumping of ballast on the beach that created a new shore line further north. The pier is marked on a plan of 1860 (Vaynol 6898). Dumping of ballast took place in the early years of the 20th century, when the pier would have been put out of use. It may have been partly used to bring stone and coal to the adjacent two limekilns that are also shown on the map of 1860.

Easting: 252280 Northing: 367366

### **24509 Plas Dinorwic (site of), Felinheli**

Assessment of Importance: C

Site Status Reference:

The site of the former port manager's house. Photographic evidence shows it as a late 19th century house with a hipped roof and verandah. It was demolished in the 1980's, and a hotel now occupies the location. Some original outbuildings remain to the east of the hotel.

Easting: 252596 Northing: 367910

## **GROUP C: BURIED OR DESTROYED SITES WITH LITTLE OR NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

### **15893 ELECTRICITY SUPPLY HOUSE, SITE OF, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: D

Site Status Reference:

Situated close to the entrance to the dry dock this structure is built of red machine made brick with a brushed finish and using Flemish bond. Originally a running shed and ash pit it was situated at the end of the quay side tramway and was presumably the area where engines were taken for cleaning out and maintenance. Two bearings present in the roof, above the positions of the tramways, suggest vertical shafts for a wire pulley system for bringing wagons into the building. The building is essentially rectangular in shape with double doors at the western end into which two tramways ran. The outside face of the walls have a moulded brick plinth at close to ground level, brick arches over the iron framed windows and the main doorway. The floor at the western end of the building is plate metal above a pit. At the eastern end the building has subsequently altered for use as an electricity supply house. Walls have been added internally to make a smaller room but the upper floor appears to have been raised and the roof replaced. Within this room electrical switching boards of at least two different dates are present. One, the older, is attached to an end wall, the other is free-standing. Another small room has been added onto the front of the building probably at the same time as the internal alterations. Rafters protruding from the gable end indicate that it was connected to an adjoining building. A large beam attached to the eastern gable may

have some connection to the attached building or may have been a form of tie beam in an attempt to address subsidence problems. The roof is of slate with small windows in a "clerestory" on the central portion of the ridge. The ridge tiles are ceramic. (Laws 2001).  
Former brick built engine or 'running' shed with ash pit. It was demolished in 2002, but formed part of the maintenance workshops erected at the time of the construction of the new docks in 1897-1902, and later became the electricity supply house (Laws 2001).  
Easting: 252929 Northing: 367948

**15895 BRICK EDGING LINE, FELINHELI**

Assessment of Importance: C Site Status Reference:

A line of purply red moulded bricks with a diamond pattern presumably for grip on the upper surfaces may represent the edge of the Carnarfon to Bangor branch line where it ran along the quay side. (Laws 2001). This apparently marked the line of the gas pipe from the gas works to the end of the dock (pers comm. Captain Parry).  
Easting: 252780 Northing: 367880

~~24509~~ Gas works, site of, Port Dinorwic

PRN 24505

Assessment of Importance: D

Site Status Reference:

A gas works was established at Felinheli by the Vaynol Estate about the middle of the 19th century, but certainly before 1860, and was closed about 1900, following the early introduction of electricity to the port.  
Easting: 252343 Northing: 367586

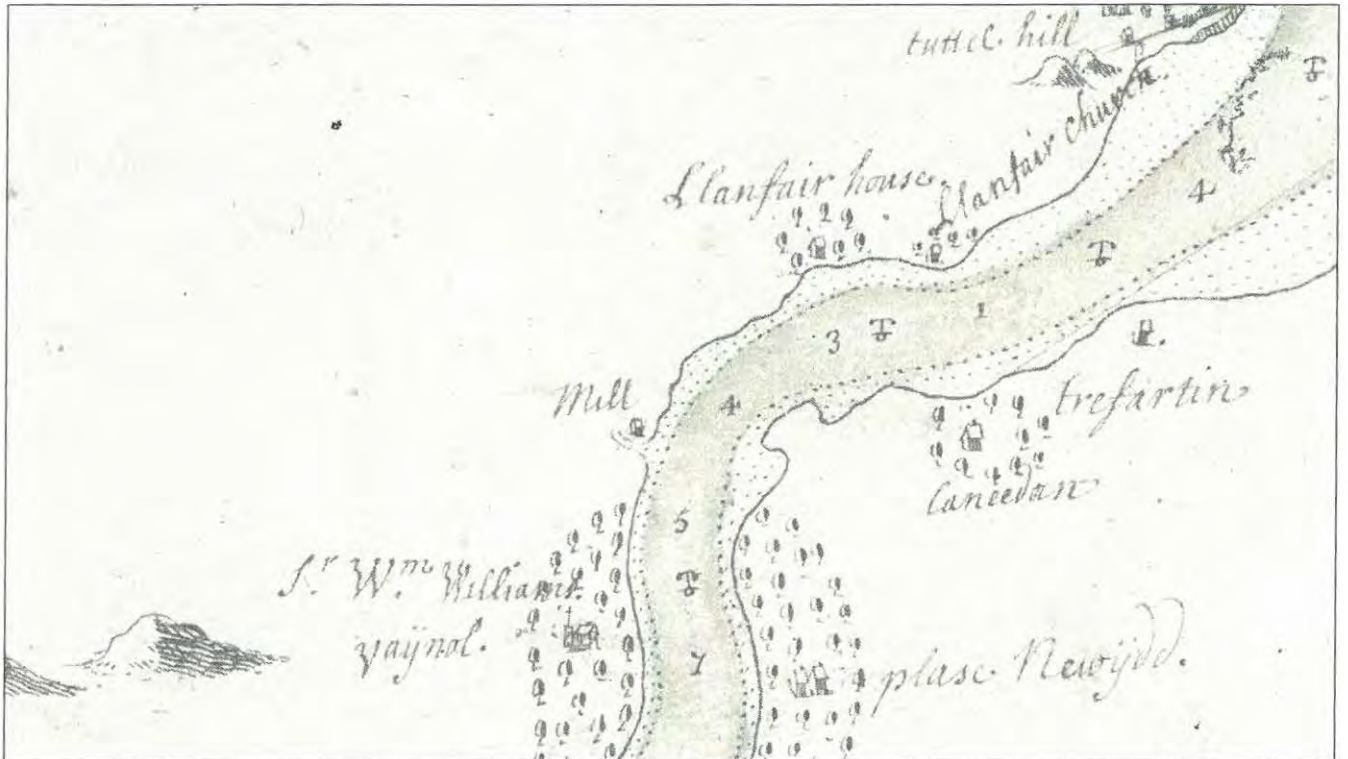


Figure 1. G. Collins. 1695. 'Great Britain Coasting Pilot'.



Figure 2. Lewis Morris Chart. 1737/8. (Anglesey Record Office WM/1903/1)





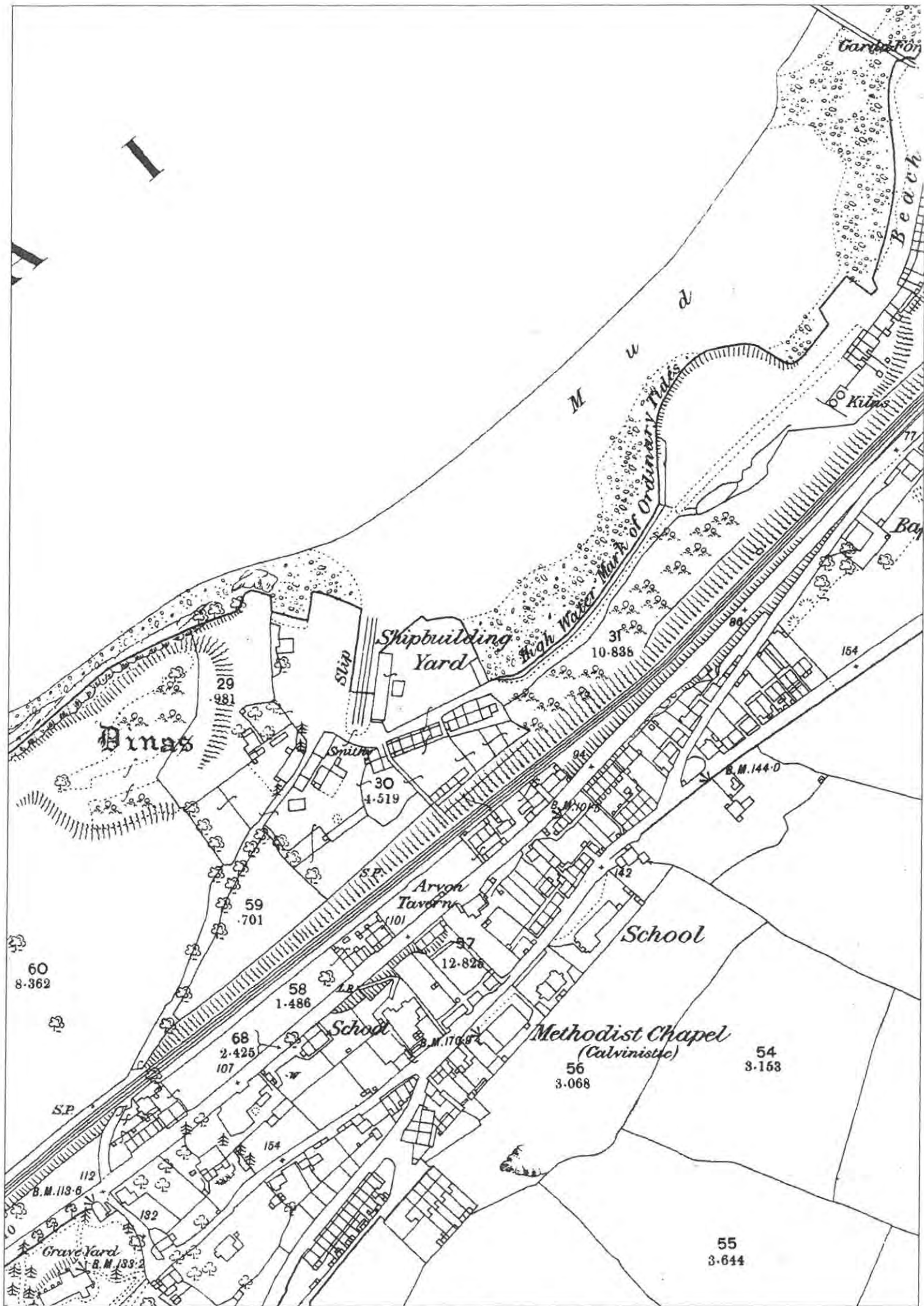


Figure 4. Dinas ship building yard. Ordnance Survey 25". County Series. Anglesey. XXX.6. 1889. Scale 1,2500

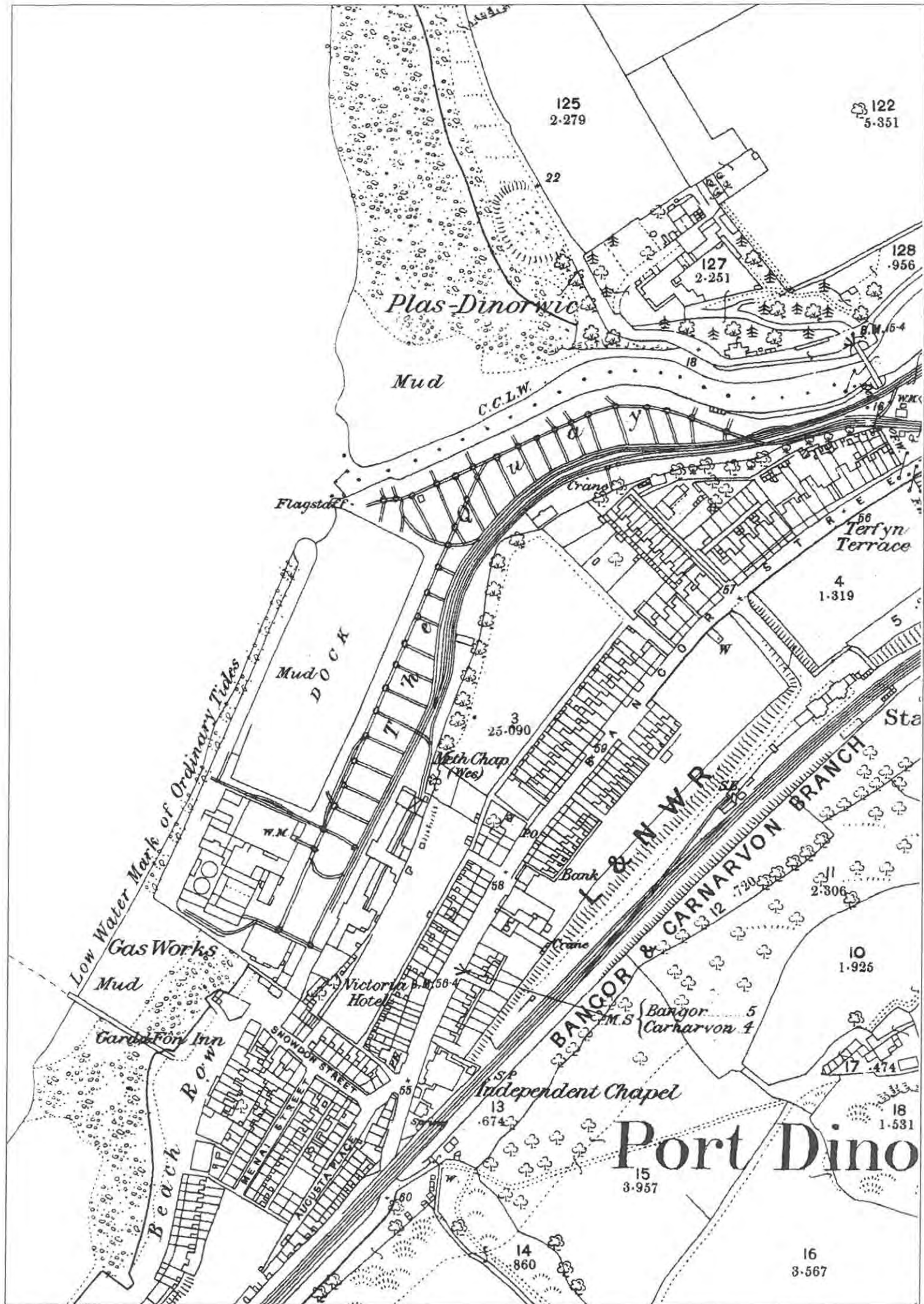


Figure 5. Tidal dock. Ordnance Survey 25". County Series. Anglesey. XXX.6. 1889. Scale 1,2500



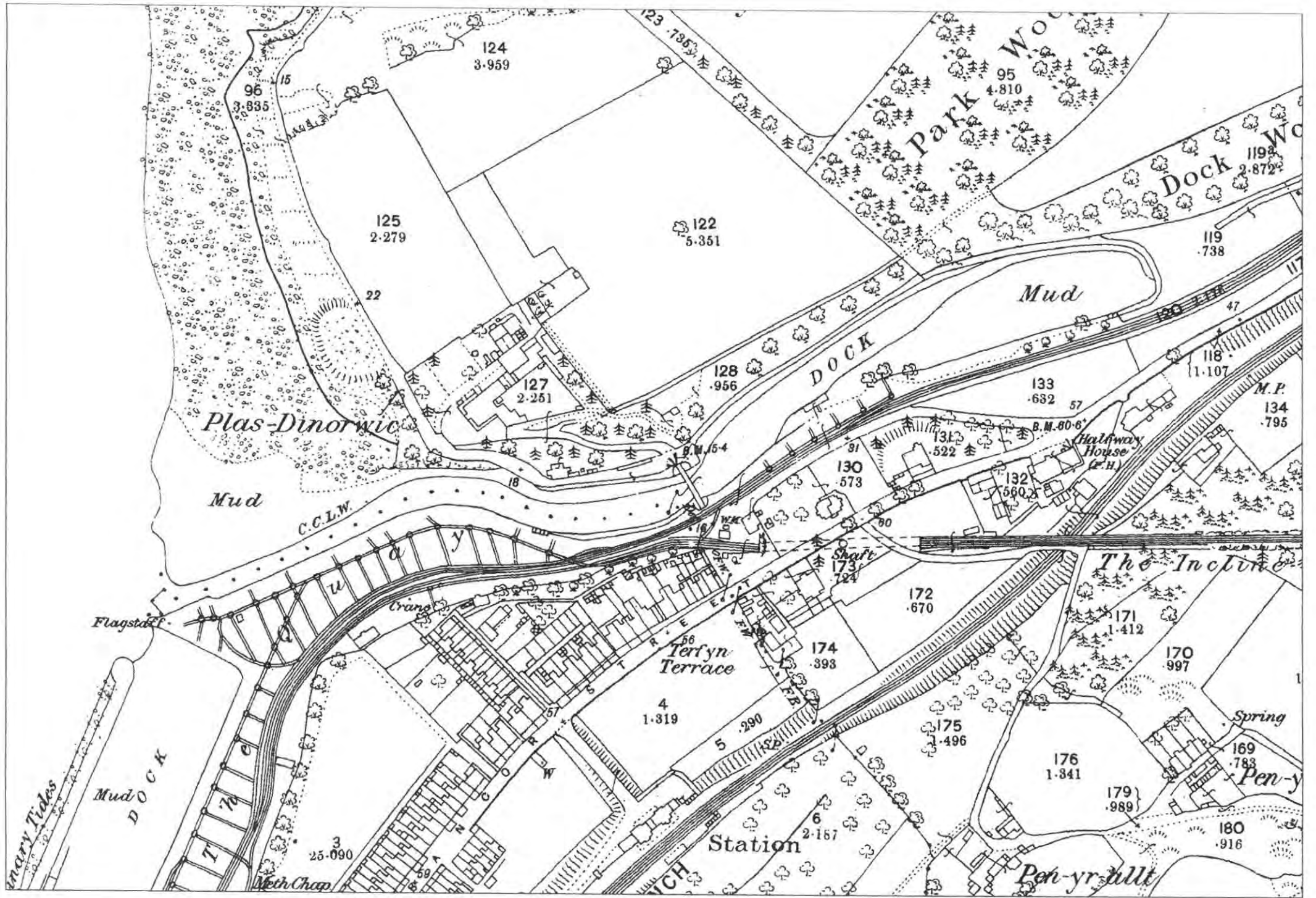


Figure 6. Inner basin. Ordnance Survey 25". County Series. Anglesey YXX 6. 1890. Scale 1:2500

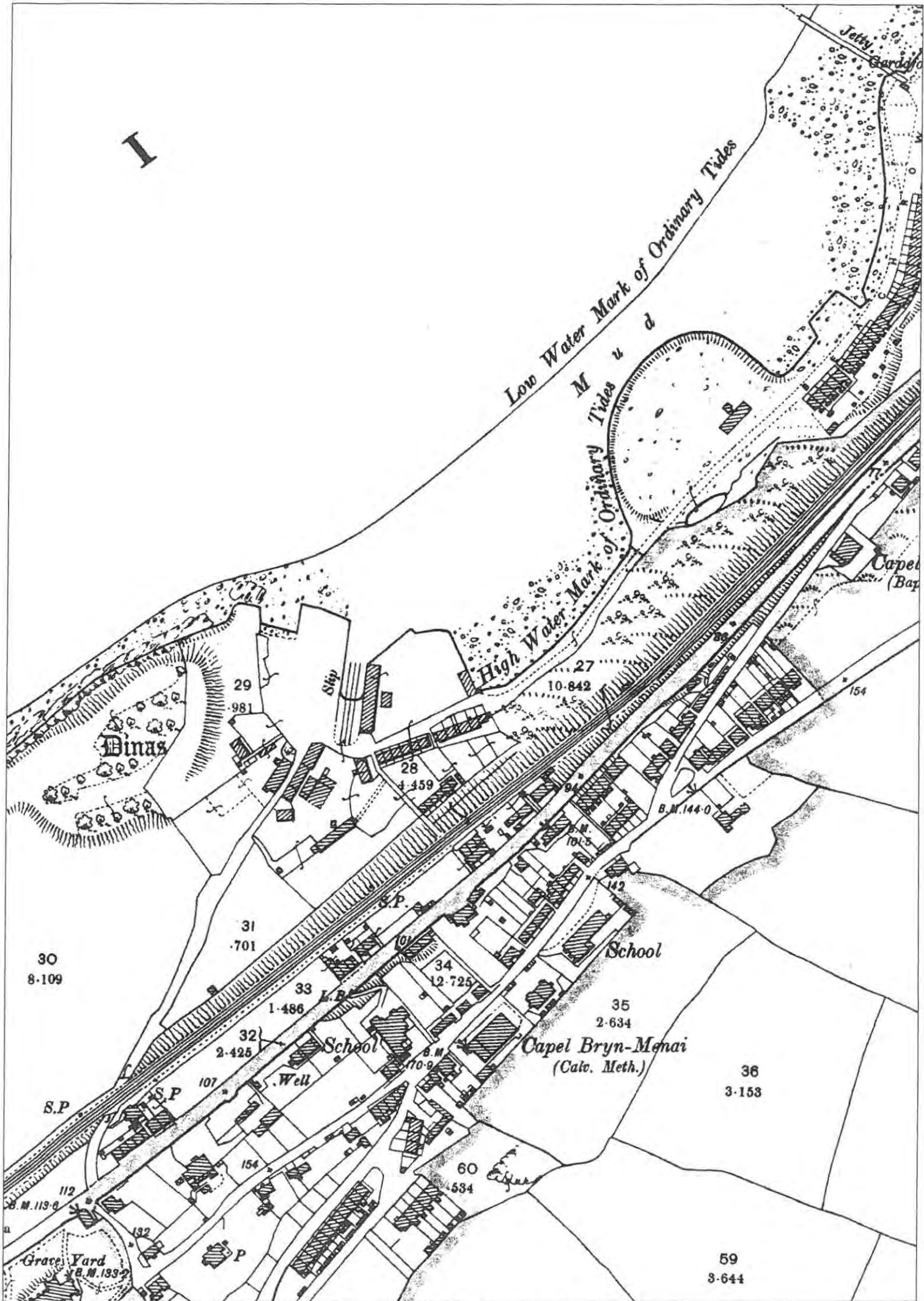


Figure 7. Dinas ship building yard. Ordnance Survey 25". County Series. Anglesey. XXX.6. 1900. Scale 1,2500



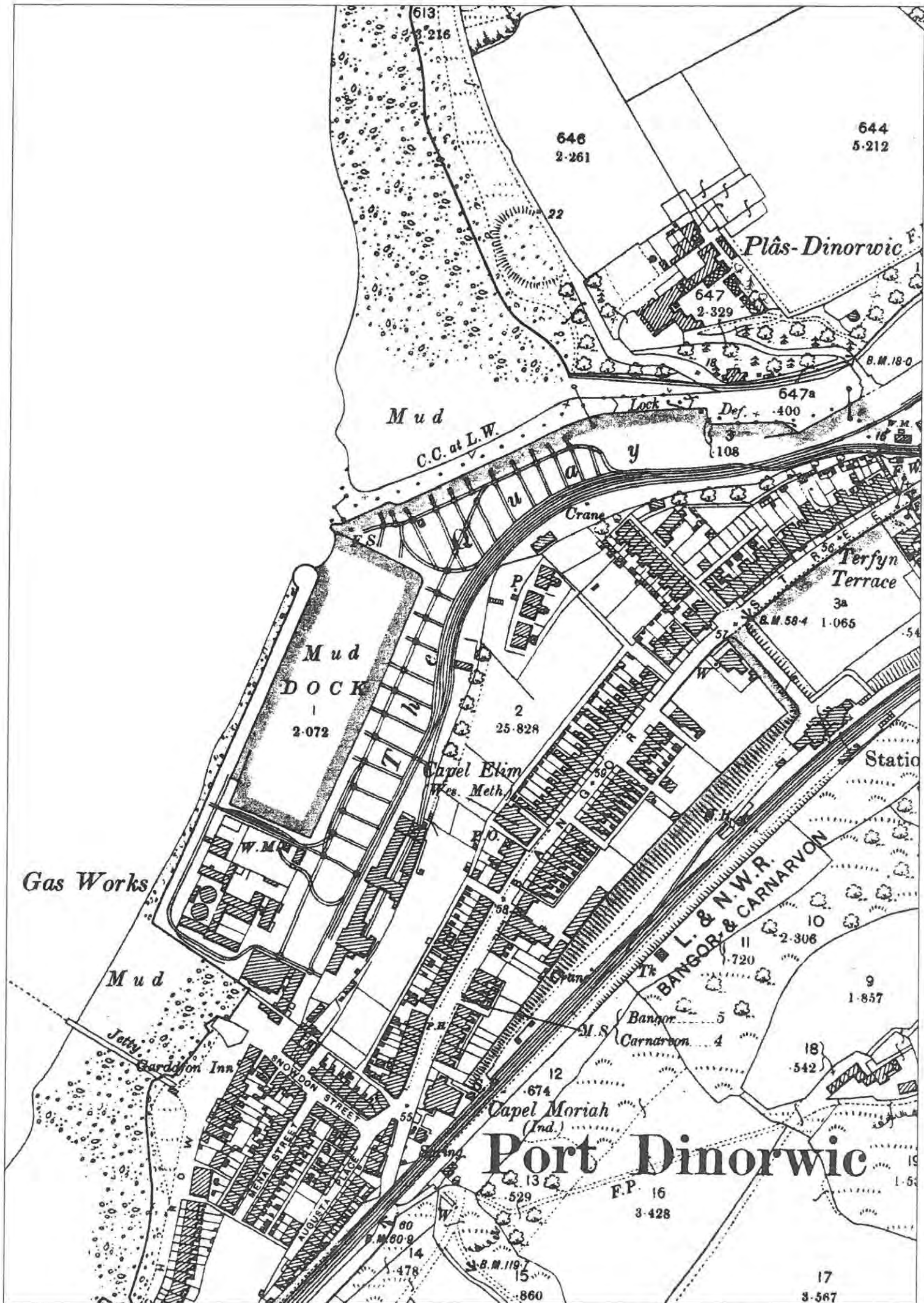


Figure 8. Tidal dock. Ordnance Survey 25". County Series. Anglesey. XXX.6. 1900. Scale 1,2500



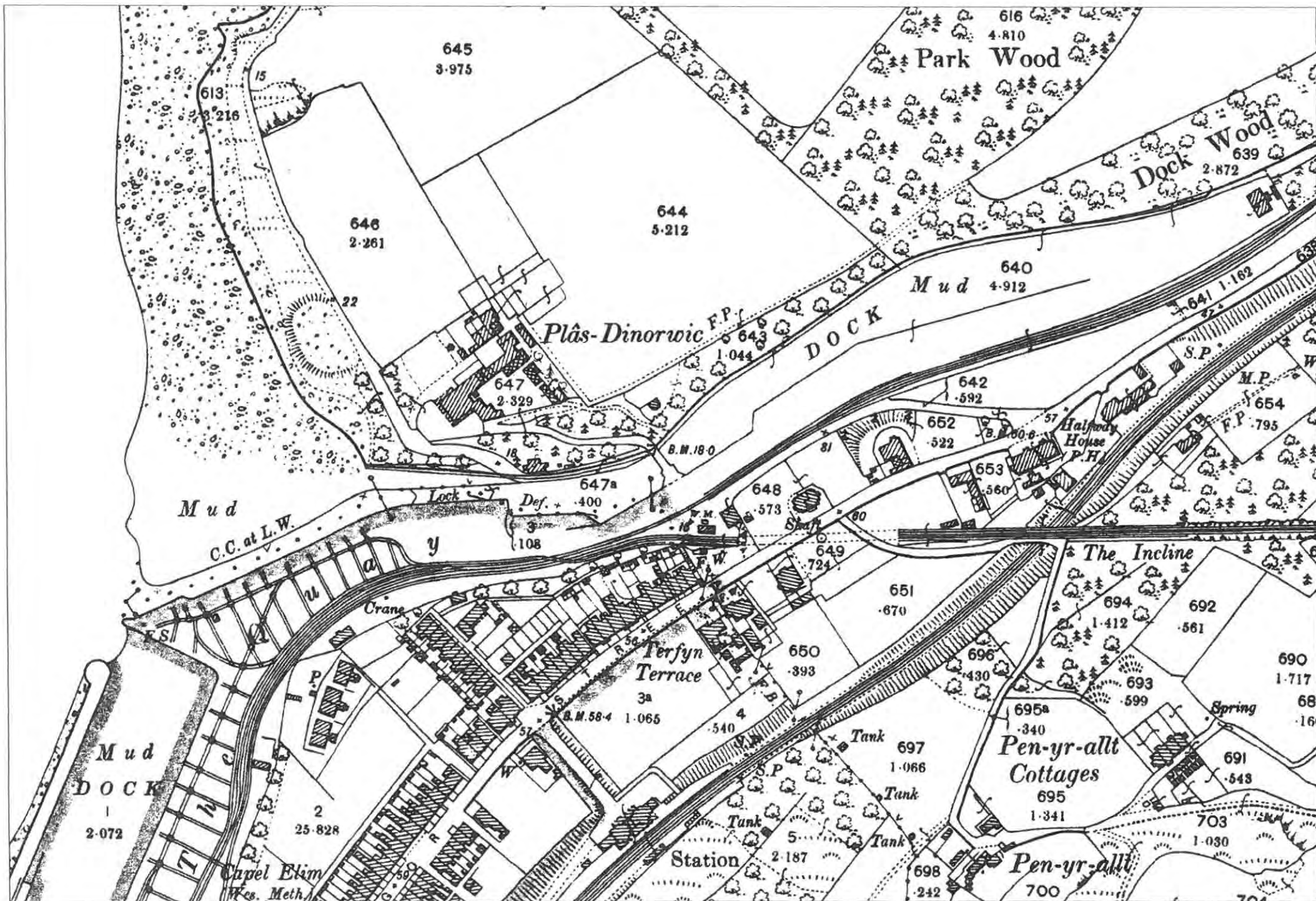


Figure 9. Inner basin. Ordnance Survey 25". County Series. Anglesey. XXX.6. 1900. Scale 1,2500

# Port Dinorwic

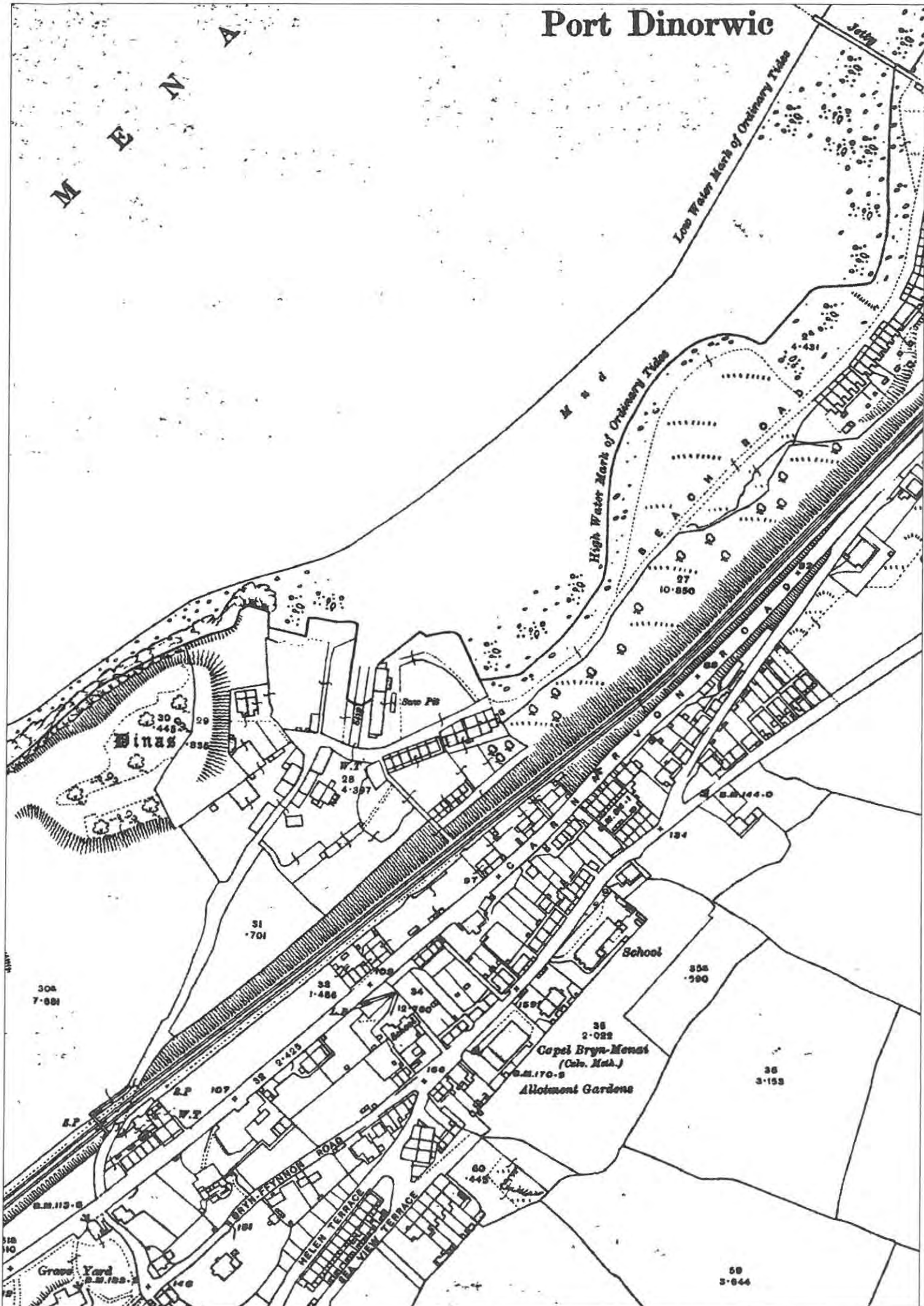


Figure 10. Dinas ship building yard. Ordnance Survey 25". County Series. Anglesey. XXX.6. 1916. Scale 1,2500



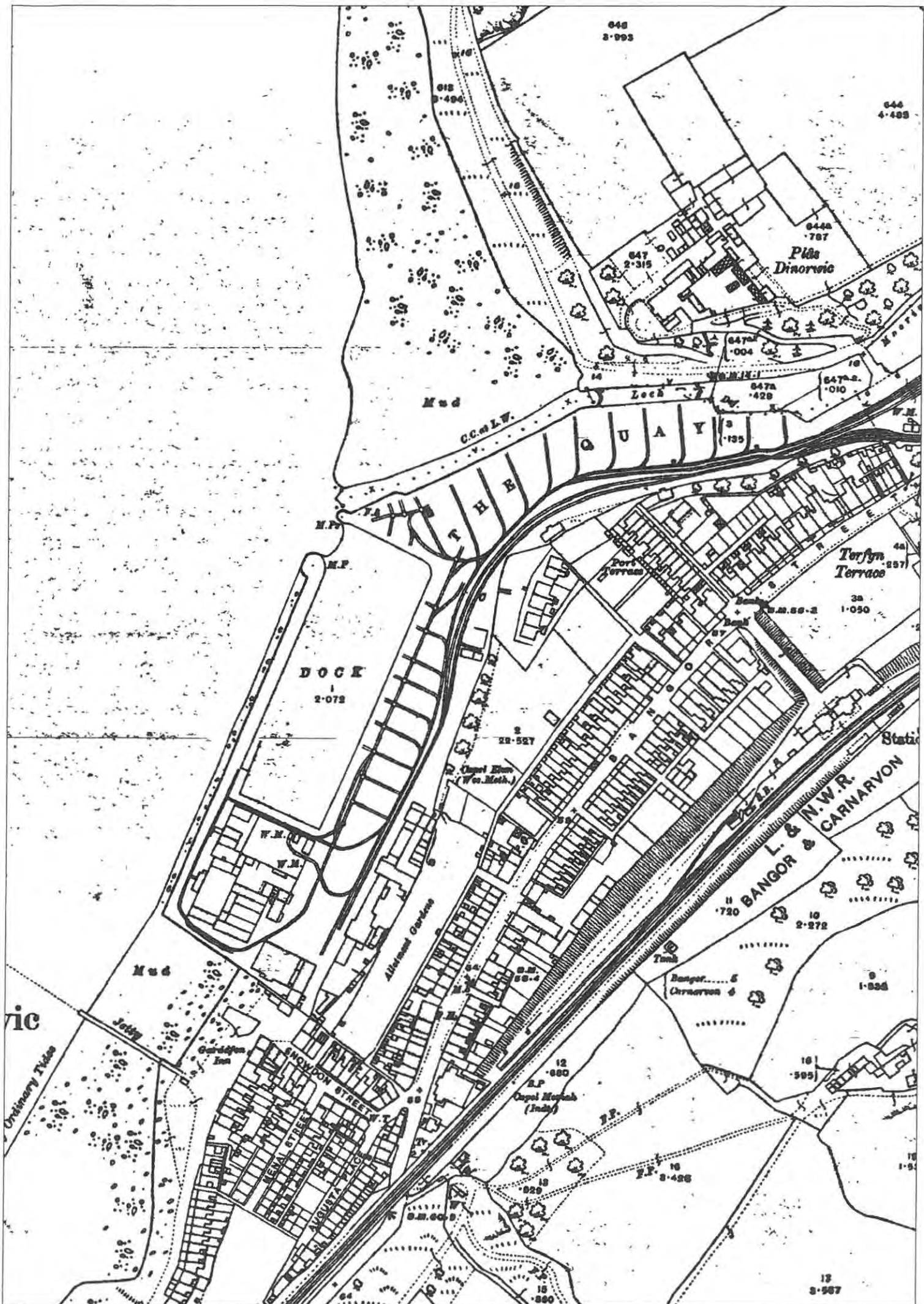


Figure 11. Tidal dock. Ordnance Survey 25". County Series. Anglesey. XXX.6. 1916. Scale 1,2500



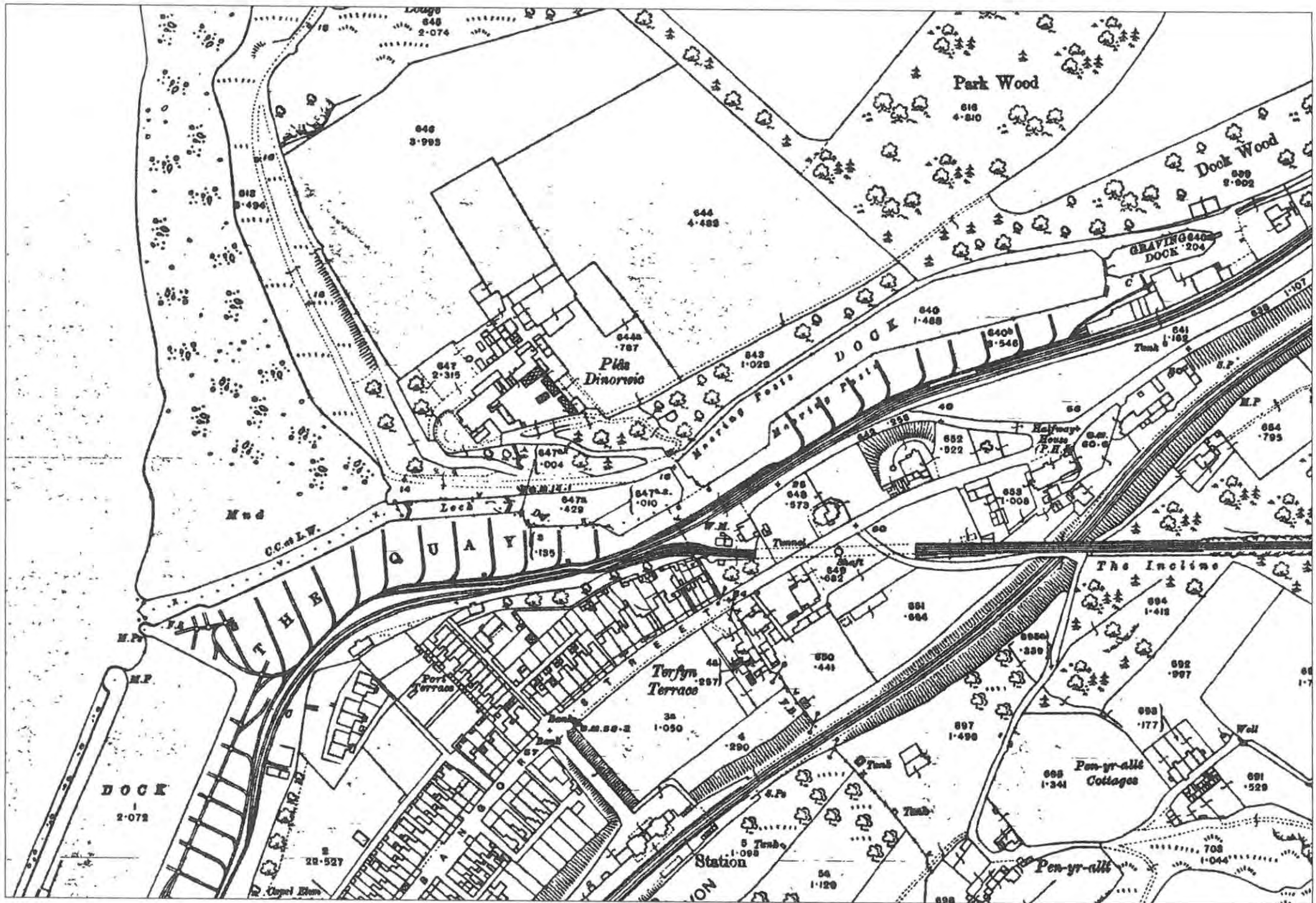
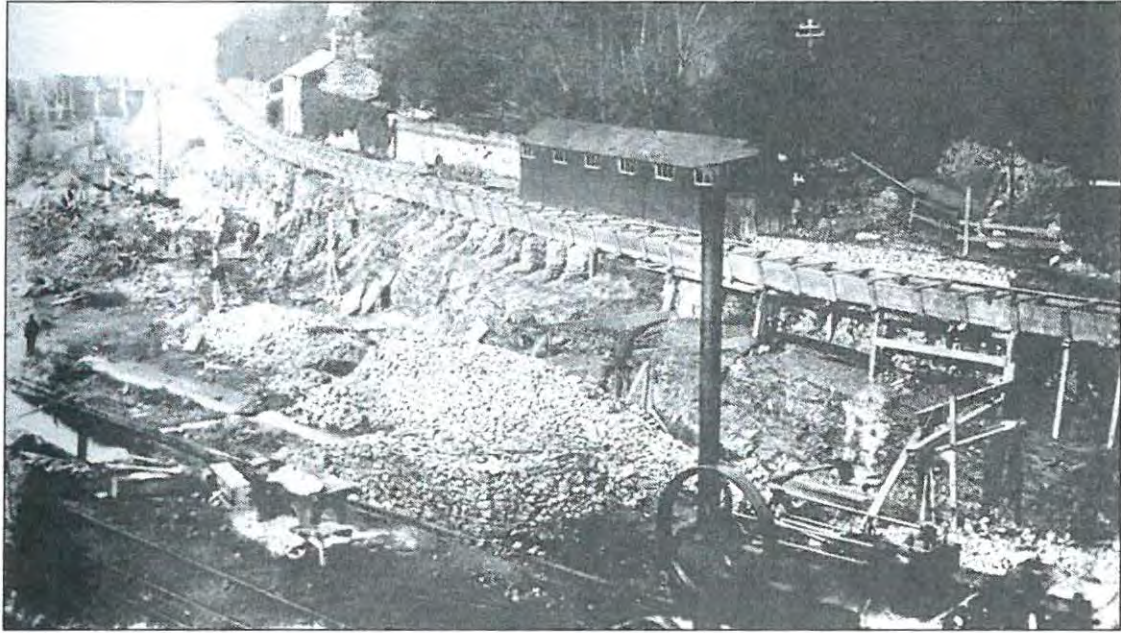


Figure 12. Inner basin. Ordnance Survey 25". County Series. Anafsev. XXX.6. 1916. Scale 1:2500



**Figure 13. Dock of 1897-1902 under construction (Source Jones 2004. p.49)**



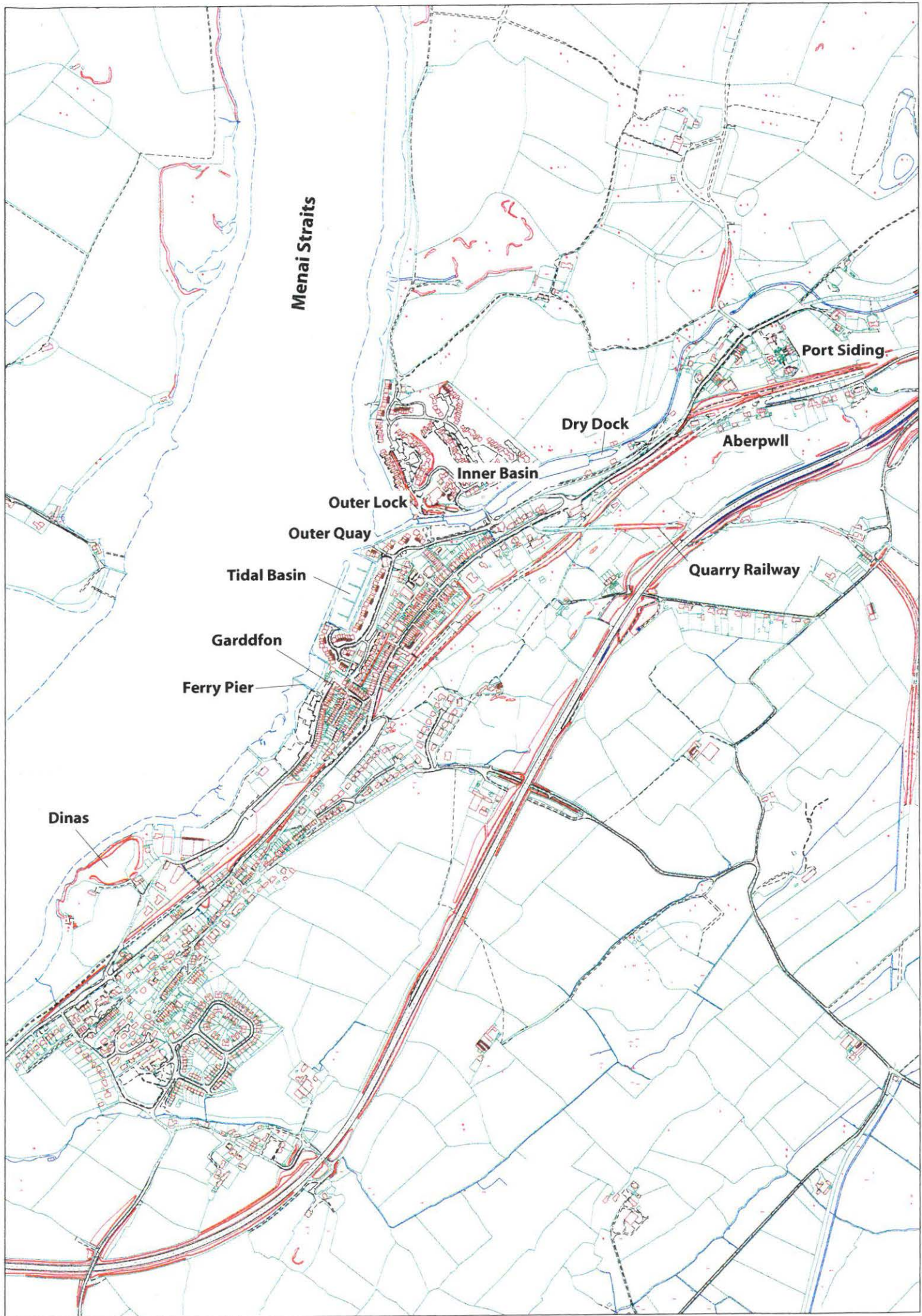


Figure 14. Y Felinheli: Location of main features.



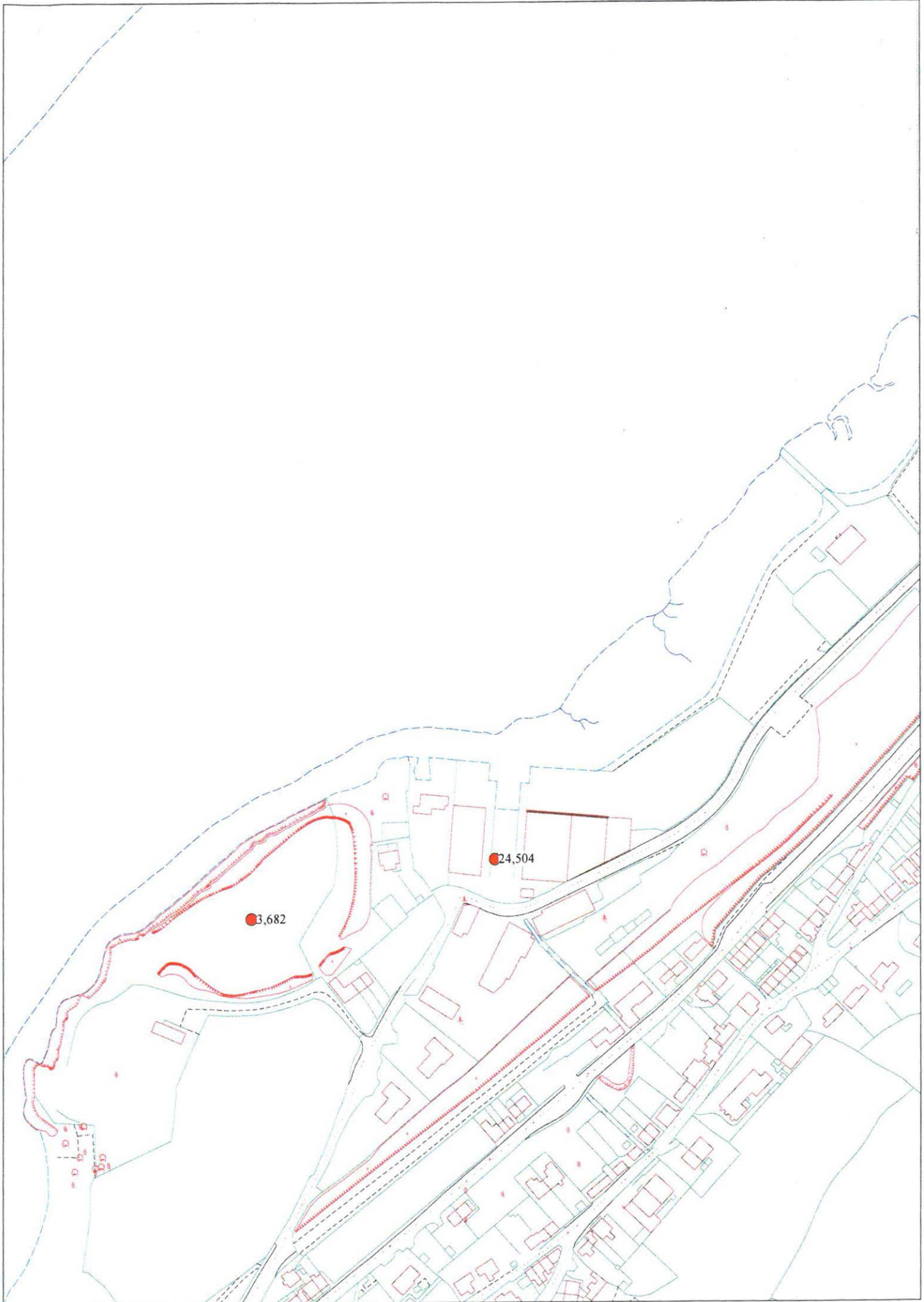


Figure 15. Y Felinheli locaton of sites at the south end of the study area. Scale 1,2500

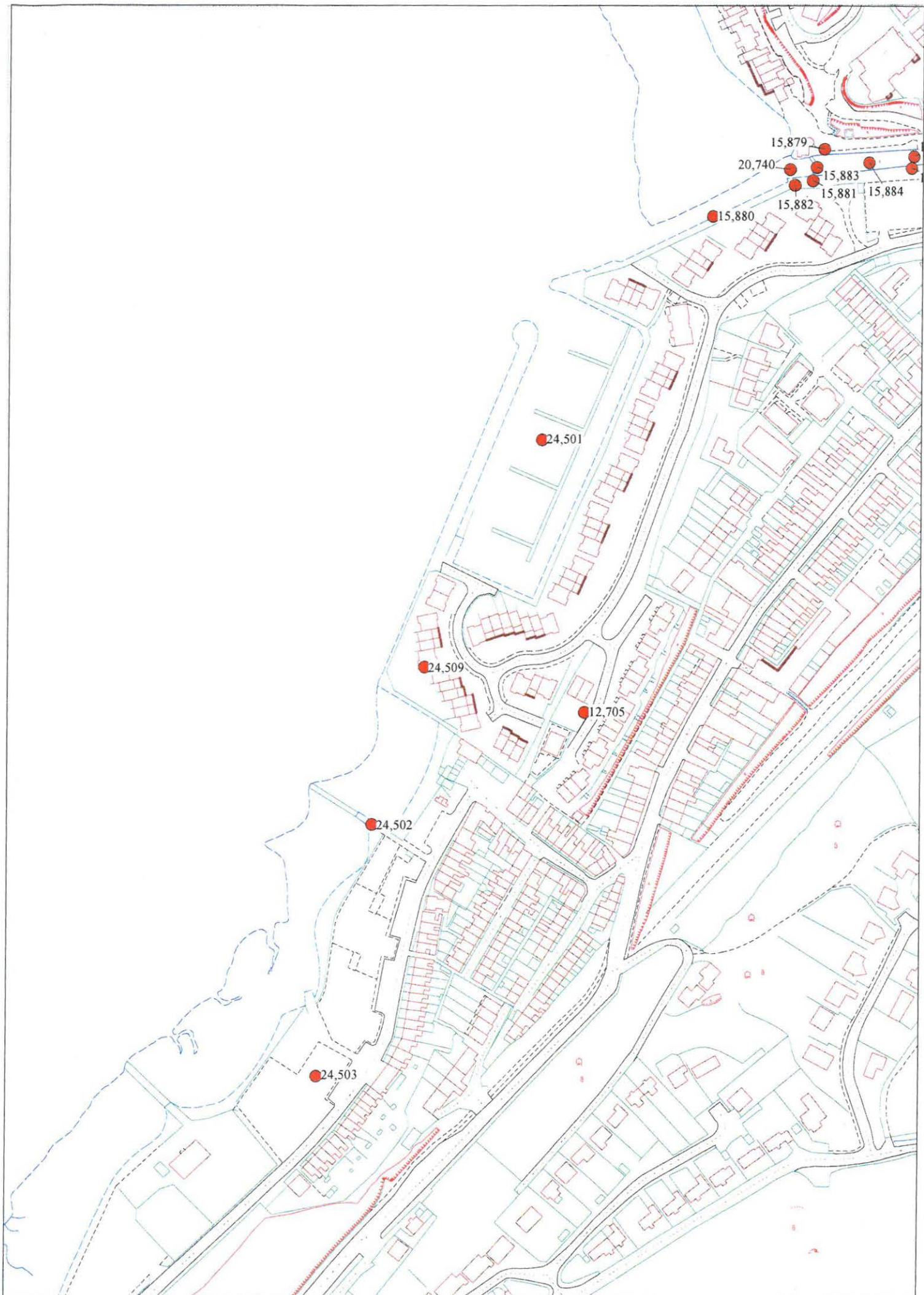


Figure 16. Y Felinheli location of sites in the central section of the study area. Scale 1,2500



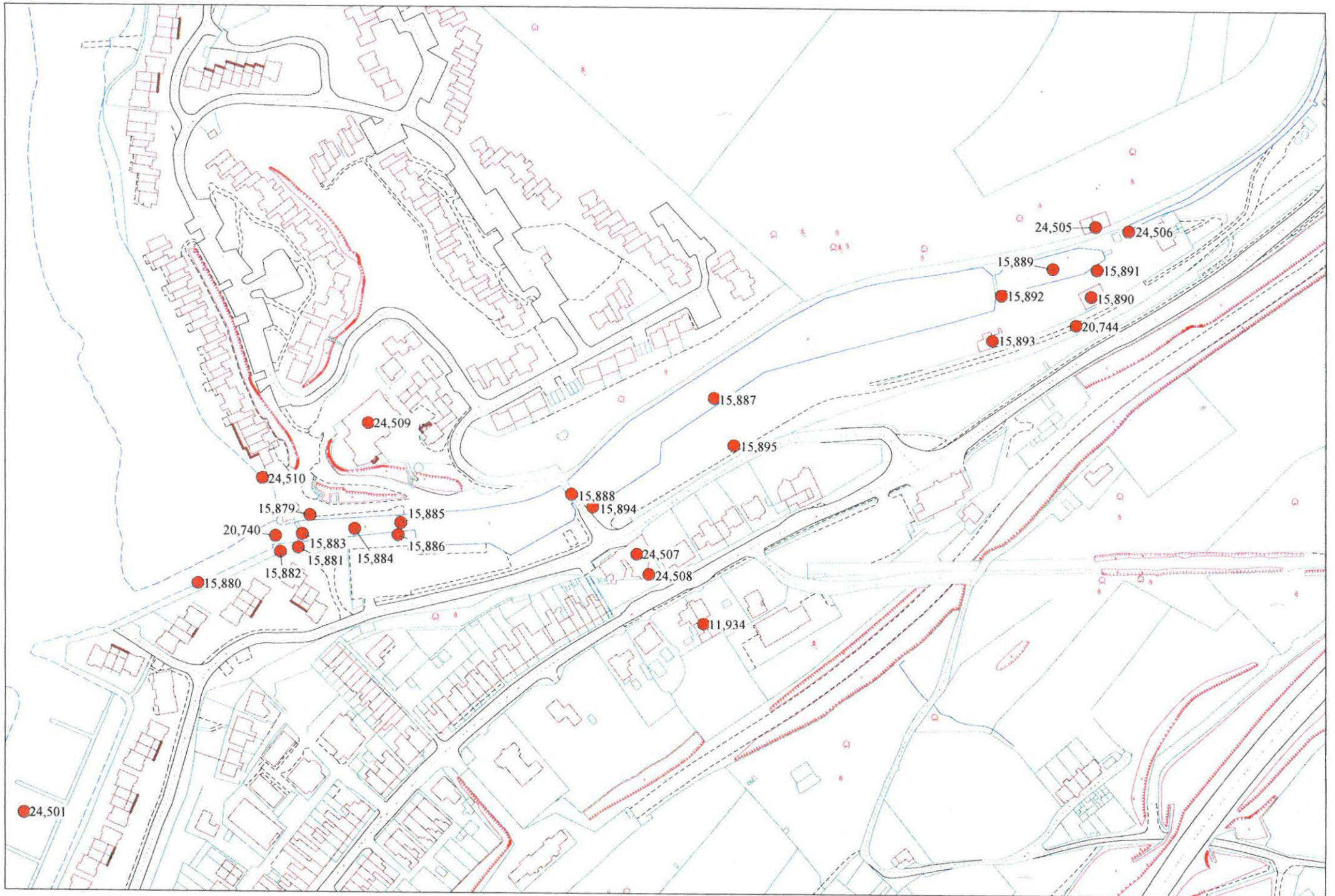


Figure 17. Y Felinheli location of sites at the north end of the study area. Scale 1,2500