

# **Results of Archaeological Assessment at**

## **Pont Fawr, Llanrwst Scour Protection Scheme**

**NGR SH 79845 61490**



**Report Number CR183a-2019**



**CR ARCHAEOLOGY**

Compiled by C. Rees and M. Jones  
On Behalf of Cadarn Consulting Engineers

## Summary

CR Archaeology have been instructed by Cadarn Consulting Engineers to conduct an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment at Pont Fawr, Llanrwst associated with a proposed Scour Protection Scheme. The bridge is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (DE025) and a Grade I Listed Building (Cadw Id 16951 and 3612). The datestone on the bridge records its erection in 1636 and it is recorded that the West arch was rebuilt in 1675, and again in 1703. The bridge design is traditionally attributed to Inigo Jones although there is no firm evidence to support this.

This Desk Based Assessment examines the historic context, archaeological potential and statutory protections in place at the site.

It highlights possible constraints to the programme of works.

## Crynodeb

Mae Archeoleg CR dan gyfarwyddyd gan Beirianwyr Ymgynghorol Cadarn i ymgymryd Asesiad Wrth Ddesg yn Bont Fawr, Llanrwst yn gysylltiedig gyda Chynllun Amddiffyniad Sgwrfa. Mae'r bont yn Heneb Restredig (DE025) a'r Adeilad Cofrestredig Gradd I (Cadw Id 16951 a 3612). Mae'r garreg dyddio ar y bont yn cofnodi ei adeilad yn 1636 a gofnodwyd fod y bwa Gorllewin ei ail-adeiladu ym 1675, ac eto yn 1703. Mae cynllun y bont yn nodwedd draddodiadol i Indigo Jones, er bod nid oes yna dystiolaeth gadarn i gadarnhau hwn.

Mae'r Asesiad Wrth Ddesg hon yn archwilio'r cyd-destun hanesyddol, potensial archeolegol ac amddiffyniadau statudol mewn lle ar safle hon.

Mae'n pwysleisio'r cyfyngiadau posib i'r rhaglen o waith.

## Results of Archaeological Works at Pont Fawr, Llanrwst Scour Protection Scheme

<b>Planning Application Number:</b>	N/A
<b>National Grid Reference:</b>	SH 79845 61490
<b>Client:</b>	Cadarn Consulting Engineers
<b>Report Author:</b>	Catherine Rees and Matthew Jones
<b>Report Number:</b>	CR183a-2019
<b>Date:</b>	09/08/2019

## Contents

### **1.0 Introduction**

### **2.0 Project Aims**

### **3.0 Scheme of Works – Methodology**

#### 3.1 Desk Based Research

#### 3.2 Walk Over Survey

##### 3.2.1 Equipment

#### 3.3 Consideration of Setting of Identified Heritage Assets

#### 3.4 Timetable for Proposed Works

#### 3.5 Staffing

#### 3.6 Monitoring

#### 3.7 Health and Safety

#### 3.8 The Report

##### 3.8.1 Copyright

### **4.0 Topological and Geological Background**

#### 4.1 Topography

#### 4.2 Geology

### **5.0 Historical Background**

#### 5.1 A Brief History of Llanrwst

#### 5.2 Pont Fawr Historical Background

#### 5.3 Cartographic and Pictorial Evidence for Pont Fawr

#### 5.4 Results of Historic Environment Record Search of Surrounding Area

##### 5.4.1 Prehistoric

##### 5.4.2 Roman/Romano-British

##### 5.4.3 Early Medieval/Medieval

##### 5.4.4 Post Medieval

#### 5.5 Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations - Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings

#### 5.6 Archaeological Works Carried Out in the Vicinity of the Proposed Development

### **6.0 Results of Site Visit**

### **7.0 Conclusion**

### **8.0 Bibliography**

### **Appendices**

#### **Appendix A.** Location and Direction of Photographic Plates

## **Illustrations**

**Figure 1.** Site Location Map

**Figure 2.** 1770 Gwydir Estate Map

**Figure 3.** 1770 Mostyn Estate Map

**Figure 4.** Mostyn Estate Map dated 1800

**Figure 5.** Llanrwst Bridge Detail Shown on Mostyn Estate Map dated 1800

**Figure 6.** 1839 Tithe Map of Llanrwst

**Figure 7.** 1875 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Llanrwst

**Figure 8.** 1900 Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Llanrwst

**Figure 9.** 1913 Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Llanrwst

**Figure 10.** Undated Plan of Pont Fawr

**Figure 11.** 1790 Engraving of Pont Fawr

**Figure 12.** 1904 Photograph of Pont Fawr

**Figure 13.** 1905 Photograph of Pont Fawr

**Figure 14.** 1912 Photograph of Pont Fawr

**Figure 15.** 1940 Photograph of Pont Fawr

**Figure 16.** 1970 Photograph of Pont Fawr

**Figure 17.** Location of Previous Archaeological Works and Listed Buildings in the Immediate Vicinity of Pont Fawr

## **1.0 Introduction**

**1.0.1** CR Archaeology were instructed by Cadarn Consulting Engineers to conduct an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment at the proposed site of a Scour Protection Scheme (figure 1). The proposed works will involve providing protection to the riverbanks and bridge abutments by installing gabion baskets. No work will take place to the existing structure although it has been indicated that it may be necessary that the baskets directly abut the bridge. The precise scale and location of the proposed defences is not known at this time.

**1.0.2** The site runs along the riverside immediately adjacent to both sides of Pont Fawr, Llanwrst. The bridge is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (DE025) and a Grade I Listed Building (Cadw Id 16951 and 3612). It is situated within the Llanwrst Town Conservation Area.

**1.0.3** The datestone on the bridge chronicles its erection in 1636 and it is recorded that the West arch was rebuilt in 1675, and again in 1703. The bridge design is traditionally attributed to Inigo Jones although there is no firm evidence to support this.

**1.0.4** This document has been prepared to supply the client and statutory bodies including Cadw and the Local Planning Authority Archaeologist with information as to the archaeological potential, impact and constraints on the aforementioned scheme.

**1.0.5** It is intended that the results of this work will inform decisions as to the nature of any additional heritage considerations/consultations which the scheme must be afforded and archaeological mitigation strategies or evaluation methodologies which may be required.

**1.0.6** This Desk Based Assessment examines the historic context and archaeological potential of the proposed development area and determines the possible impact of the development on the setting of the local area.

## **2.0 Project Aims & Objectives**

**2.0.1** This programme of works for the development site aimed to undertake a Desk Based Assessment and site visit during which a photographic record was compiled.

**2.0.2** The aim of this scheme of works was to undertake desk based historical research exploring the history/archaeology of the site. This information includes a map progression and archival research in order to compile a coherent narrative history of the site and its environs.

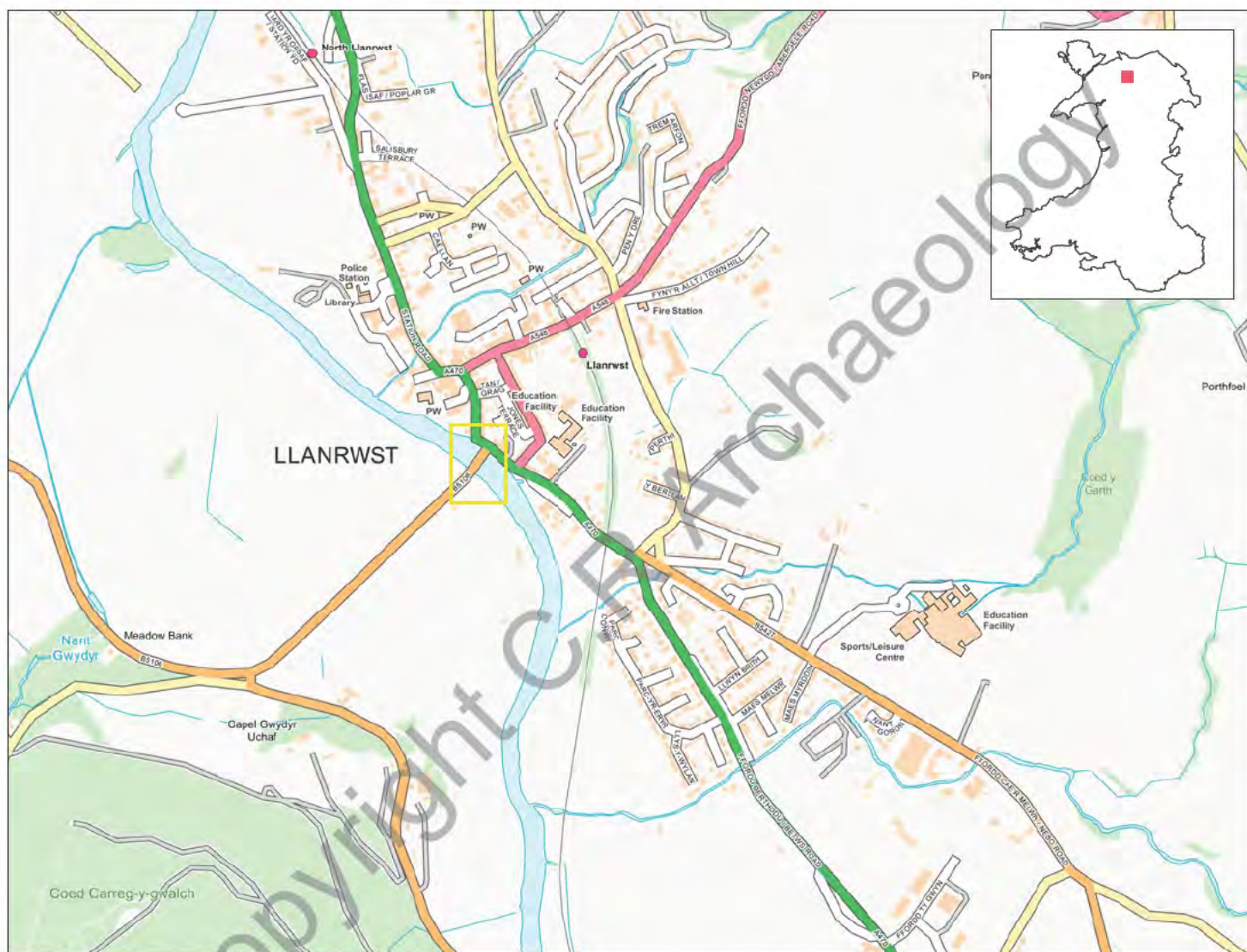
**2.0.3** The Gwynedd Historic Environment Record (HER), the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments Wales (RCAHMW) database, Cadw database, Conwy Archives, Bangor University Archives, Gwynedd Archives and relevant publications were consulted to compile a record of known archaeological sites in the vicinity. Aerial photographs were also examined.

**2.0.4** It is intended that this document be utilised to inform further archaeological planning decisions, conditions and considerations at the site. It will also inform the design/nature of works at the site.

**2.0.5** The objectives of this programme of works were:

- To make full and effective use of existing information to establish the archaeological significance of the site
- To assess the impact of the development proposals on surviving sites, monuments or remains both within the development area and in the surrounding landscape





**Figure 1.** Site Location Map - Source: OS Open Data  
(Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019)

- To help inform future decision making, design solutions, further evaluation & mitigation strategies.

### **3.0 Scheme of Works - Methodology**

**3.0.1** The archaeological works were conducted in three sections and each is detailed separately below.

#### **3.1 Desk Based Research**

**3.1.1** A complete and coherent history of the site was compiled utilising material sourced from Conwy Archives, Bangor University Archives and Gwynedd Archives. This allowed as comprehensive a history as possible to be compiled. A full map progression of the area was undertaken, and the archive information was supplemented with information from the HER, Cadw & RCAHMW databases and specialist interest websites & journals.

**3.1.2** In order to identify the character of archaeological remains in the vicinity of the proposed development site a search of the Gwynedd HER was conducted covering a 500m search radius. The RCAHMW database and aerial photographs of the site were examined. The information collected is discussed within the main report text.

**3.1.3** The works were carried out accordance with the CIfA Standards and Guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment (CIfA (Revised 2014).

**3.1.4** This material forms the historical background for an archaeological report which includes the results of the site visit.

#### **3.2 Walk Over Survey**

**3.2.1** A site visit was conducted, and a photographic record was compiled detailing the bridge structure, it's setting and environs and illustrating the general topography of the site. The location and direction of all photographs are noted on a site plan (included as Appendix A).

##### **3.2.1 Equipment**

**3.2.1.1** Survey photographs were undertaken using a 20 mega-pixel Sony A58 digital camera with an 18-55mm lens. Images were captured in RAW format for later processing into high resolution JPG and TIF files.

#### **3.3 Timetable for Proposed Works**

**3.3.1** The walkover survey was undertaken on the 16<sup>th</sup> July. Time has been allotted for archive research, report compilation and site archiving.

#### **3.4 Staffing**

**3.4.1** The project was managed and undertaken by Catherine Rees (BA (Archaeology), MA (Archaeology) Postgraduate Diploma (Historic Environment Conservation) & Matthew Jones (BA (Archaeology), MA (Archaeology)).

**3.4.2** All staff have a skill set equivalent to the CIfA ACIfA/MCIfA level. C.Vs for all staff employed on the project can be provided on request. All projects are carried out in accordance with CIfA *Standard and Guidance* documents.

#### **3.5 Health and Safety**

**3.5.1** A risk assessment was conducted prior to the commencement of works and site staff were familiarised with its contents. A first aid kit was located in the site vehicle.

**3.5.2** All staff were issued with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the site work. This consisted of:

- Hi-visibility vests (EN471)
- Mobile Telephone (to be kept in site vehicle)
- Suitable Walking Boots & Waterproofs

**3.5.3** All staff have passed at least a CITB health and safety test at least operative level and will carry a Construction Related Organisation (CRO) White Card for Archaeological Technician (Code 5363).

### **3.6 The Report**

**3.6.1** The report clearly and accurately incorporates information gained from the programme of archaeological works. It presents the documentary evidence gathered in such a way as to create a clear and coherent record. This includes illustrations of cartographic/pictorial sources. The report contains a site plan showing the locations of any photographs taken.

**3.6.2** The desk-based assessment considered the following:

- the nature, extent and degree of survival of archaeological sites, structures, deposits and landscapes within the study area
- the significance of any remains in their context both regionally and nationally
- the history of the site
- the potential impact of any proposed development on the setting of known sites of archaeological/historic importance
- the potential for further work with appropriate recommendations

**3.6.3** The report also includes:

- a bilingual summary
- a location plan
- a full bibliography of sources consulted
- a digital copy of the report and an archive compact disc/USB file

**3.6.4** It is intended that this report will inform decisions as to the necessity and nature of any further archaeological mitigation strategies which may be required. It is also intended that this report will inform the design/development of the project.

**3.6.5** A copy of the report in Adobe PDF format will be sent to the appropriate monitoring archaeologist for approval before formal submission. A bound paper copy and PDF digital copy of the report will be submitted to GAPS as part of the formal submission. A digital Adobe PDF version and a bound paper copy of the final report and will be lodged with the Gwynedd Historic Environment Record within six months of completion of fieldwork.

#### **3.6.1 Copyright**

**3.6.1.1** C.R Archaeology and sub-contractors shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides a licence to the client and the local authority for the use of the report by the client and the local authority in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project.



## 4.0 Topographical and Geological Background

### 4.1 Topography

**4.1.1** The application site is located on the flanking sides of the Afon Conwy. It is crossed by the B5106 which runs across Pont Fawr bridge into the town of Llanrwst. It spans the border between Trefriw and Llanrwst Communities.

### 4.2 Geology

**4.2.1** The bedrock geology at the site is recorded as “*Denbigh Grits Formation - Mudstone, Siltstone And Sandstone. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 427 to 433 million years ago in the Silurian Period. Local environment previously dominated by deep seas. These sedimentary rocks are marine in origin. They are detrital and comprise coarse- to fine-grained slurries of debris from the continental shelf flowing into a deep-sea environment, forming distinctively graded beds*” (www.bgs.ac.uk).

**4.2.2** The superficial geology of the site is recorded as “*Alluvium - Clay, Silt, Sand And Gravel. Superficial Deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. Local environment previously dominated by rivers. These sedimentary deposits are fluvial in origin. They are detrital, ranging from coarse- to fine-grained and form beds and lenses of deposits reflecting the channels, floodplains and levees of a river*” (www.bgs.ac.uk).

## 5.0 Historical Background

### 5.1 A Brief History of Llanrwst

**5.1.1** The Afon Conwy is the traditional boundary between the historic counties of Denbigh and Caernarfon. The town of Llanrwst is located on the bank of the Afon Conwy at the first location where the river could be crossed by means of a ford. During spring tides, the river is tidal as far as Tan Lan near Llanrwst.

**5.1.2** The ability to cross the Afon Conwy at this point is the likely genesis for the siting of the town of Llanrwst in this specific location. No evidence for a pre-Medieval origin for the town has been uncovered but it is not unlikely and the RCAHMW entry for Llanrwst (Urban) records “*Late Celtic Bronze Armlet. A fine bronze armlet decorated with repousse designs in the finest Late Celtic style, was found in 1897 when digging the foundations of Primrose Cottage, near Llanrwst, and sold in 1904 to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*”. It also records that “*along with the armlet are said to have been found but no information of their character or present whereabouts could be obtained*” (RCAHMW 1914: 148). The Historic Environment Record records additional Prehistoric artefacts have been found in the area. This information is discussed in detail in section 5.4.1.

**5.1.3** In his 1833 Topographical Dictionary of Wales, Samuel Lewis writes “*this town is of very great antiquity and in the year 952 was the scene of an important battle in the contests maintained at this period for the of Wales between the sons of Hywel Dda and those of Edwal Voel when the former, assembling their forces in South Wales, laid waste the of North Wales as far as the river Conway but opposed by the latter at the town of Llanrwst where after an obstinate conflict in which many of considerable rank were slain on both sides, the sons of Edwal Voel were victorious, and pursuing their enemies into South Wales, they retaliated upon their territories the ravages which had been inflicted on their own*” (Lewis 1833).

**5.1.4** The town and church appear in the Norwich taxation of 1254 and the Lincoln taxation of 1291. It is first mentioned as having a market in 1328, although presumably its origin predates this by some time given its location (Soulsby 1983: 172). The church is recorded by Pennant as “*dedicated to St. Rystyd, or Restitutus (the name involved in Llanrwst was Grwst or Gwrwst, the exact equivalent of the Goidelic Fergus), archbishop of London in 361, present at the council of Arles in 353. The ground on which it is built, is said to have been given by Rhun, the son of Nefydd Hardd, to expiate the foul murder of prince Idwal,*

*a son of Owen Gwynedd (1100-1170), slain by order of his foster-father, Nefydd, to whom he had been intrusted*” (Pennant 1883 ed: Vol II p.302-3).

**5.1.5** Llanrwst was to suffer greatly during the uprising of Owain Glyndŵr and the Welsh War of Independence, and the attack on the town in 1401 “*brought such a desolation that greene grasse grewe on the market place...and the deare fed in the churchyard*” (Sir John Wynne, quoted in Ballinger 1927: 52-53).

**5.1.6** The parish church appears to have been rebuilt in the late fifteenth century (RCAHMW 1914: 148), as the town recovered after the Glyndŵr uprising. The next significant period of investment and building works were undertaken during the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, many financed by the Wynns of the nearby Gwydir Estate. During this phase of works the alms houses and free school (c.1610-12), Gwydir Chapel was added to the church (1633-4) and Pont Fawr (1636) was constructed. The details surrounding the bridge will be returned to in the following chapter.

**5.1.7** Pont Fawr connected the estate elements of the Wynn family on either side of the Afon Conwy and the current road from the seat at Gwydir over the river is likely to date from this period. The bridge later becomes incorporated into the turnpiked road (Evans 2010: 4).

**5.1.8** The town was further improved in 1661 when a town hall (demolished 1963) was added to the market square (ibid). Pennant (writing in 1782) describes the town of Llanrwst as “*small and ill built and has nothing remarkable except the church*” (Pennant 1883 ed: Vol II p.302-3). Reverend Bingley writing in 1814 continues along this line of description writing “*nothing to recommend it to notice: the streets are narrow, and the houses very irregular*” (Bingley 1814: 303).

**5.1.9** Writing in 1833, Lewis very much disagrees with these descriptions writing “*the town is pleasantly situated on the eastern bank of the river Conway, which here forms the boundary between the two counties, four miles to the north of the road to Holyhead, and in the spacious and beautiful Vale of Llanrwst environed by majestic and wellwooded hills, the land at the foot of which is well watered and exceedingly productive. It is large, well built, and amply supplied with water, but consists principally of small houses and shops the streets are spacious and well paved*”.

**5.1.10** He continues: “*excellent roads have lately been made with the London, Liverpool and Holyhead roads also with Denbigh and St Asaph, the improved of which has caused a considerable increase of visitors during the summer months, to the picturesque and admired scenery of this neighbourhood. Llanrwst formerly noted for the making of harps: at present spinning of woollen yarn, and the knitting of stockings constitute the principal branches of trade, the town being situated at the north western extremity of hosiery district of North Wales and next to Bala the principal market for that article. The river is navigable from its mouth to Trefrin, three miles from this town, for vessels of sixty tons burden bring coal, lime, timber and grocery for the of the inhabitants of Llanrwst and the neighbourhood and and carry back the produce of the slate quarries mines of the adjoining parishes. The market, which is on Tuesday, is well supplied, particularly with corn, which is not sold by sample, but in small quantities to the circumstances of the purchaser. It is the mart for the inhabitants of the surrounding district to a distance of twenty miles in every direction. Fairs chiefly for the sale of cattle, corn and wool are on the first Tuesday in February, March 8<sup>th</sup>, April 25<sup>th</sup>, June 21<sup>st</sup>, August 10<sup>th</sup>, September 17<sup>th</sup>, October 25<sup>th</sup>, December 11<sup>th</sup> and the second Tuesday after that day at the June fair. A great quantity of wool is sold to clothiers in Yorkshire, and at the September and October fairs great numbers of cattle are sold to English drovers.*

**5.1.11** *The market place is a spacious square area in the centre of which stands the town hall, a plain substantial structure erected at the expense Maurice Wynne Esq of Caer Melwr, as appears a stone over the principal entrance bearing the of the Wynnes, and the initials of the founder with the date 1661. Above this is a clock, with a cupola containing the market bell and surmounted by a large gilt eagle. The general quarter sessions for the county were formerly held in this hall, which practice has discontinued since the removal of the assizes from Denbigh to Ruthin*

*The petty sessions for the Uchdulas of the hundred of Isdulas are held here; and Llanrwst has, by the late Boundary Act, been made a polling-place in the election of knights for the shire” (Lewis 1833).*

**5.1.12** The arrival of the railway at the town in 1863 encouraged further development in the town (Evans 2010: 4), and the 1868 National Gazetteer describes the town at that time. “LLANRWST, a parish and market town in the hundred of Isdulas, county Denbigh, and hundred of Nant-Conway, county Carnarvon, 10 miles S. of Conway, 16 S.W. of Denbigh, and 218 from London. The Conway and Llanrwst branch of the Chester and Holyhead railway has its terminus here. It is situated on the river Conway, which is here crossed by a steep bridge of three arches, built under the direction of Inigo Jones about 1636. The parish includes 7 townships, Garth-Garmon and Tre-ydre being among the principal.

**5.1.13** *The town, which is nearly surrounded by mountains, has of late years undergone great improvements, both in the buildings and general appearance of the place. There is a good townhall, in which the county court sits monthly, a market-place, and a branch bank. It is a polling-place for the county elections. The trade of the place is of no great extent, consisting chiefly of woollens, stockings, tanning, and malting. There are several corn mills. In the neighbourhood are stone-quarries, also coal and iron mines. Formerly Llanrwst was famous for the manufacture of the Welsh harp” (www.genuki.org.uk/big/wal/DEN/Llanrwst/Gaz1868).*

**5.1.14** Llanrwst continues to be a popular market town and tourist destination. Recent flooding events in the town have caused damage to the town and placed a number of important historic buildings at risk. Flood defences are being considered which may have an impact on the bridge and its setting.

## **5.2 Pont Fawr Historical Background**

**5.2.1** A date stone of 1636 is positioned on Pont Fawr, and there is surviving contemporary documentation of the construction of the bridge, and limited details of its predecessor which is believed to have been a wooden structure. The Denbigh Quarter sessions of 1626 record that the bridge was declared unsafe and in 1627 it is stated that the bridge was in a very poor state describing it as being “*in the greatest decay so that neither the King's subjects, nor horses, carts nor carriages, could come and go without great danger to life*” (www.penmon.org/page46.htm).

**5.2.2** Writing in the early nineteenth century, Fenton records a valuable manuscript collection in the possession of Paul Panton Esqr of Plas Gwyn, Anglesey which included a record of the Quarter Sessions for Denbighshire dated 1634. It recorded that the bridge, having become ruinous, was directed to be rebuilt by a letter from the Privy Council in the 9th year of Charles the First, Inigo Jones being then surveyor of the Board of Works. A £1000 estimate for the works is noted, which was to be levied equally on the Counties of Denbigh and Carnarvon (Fenton 1917: 166). The RCAHWM notes that the bridge is likely to have replaced an important ford across the river (RCAHWM 1914: 148).

**5.2.3** The current bridge is of sufficient architectural merit that it is noted upon by most of the eighteenth and nineteenth century travel writers touring this part of Wales. A sample of these descriptions has been included below.

**5.2.4** Writing in 1791, Pennant describes Pont Fawr as having been “*the boasted plan of Inigo Jones*”. He details it as consisting of “*three arches; the middle fifty-nine feet wide: two are extremely beautiful, and mark the hand of the architect: the third differs greatly, having been rebuilt in 1703, by a very inferior genius. I wish I could do more honour to my country, and suppose Inigo to have been a native of this neighbourhood: but he seems to have been by birth a Londoner, the son of a clothworker, who, in all probability, was of this part of Wales; our claim, however, to the son is supported by the universal tradition of the country. The turn of his countenance, and the violence of his passions, at least legitimate no distant descent. He was patronised by the earl of Arundel, and*

*William earl of Pembroke; and by one or other sent into Italy. His real Christian name was Ynyr, which he changed to Inigo, or Ignatius. Thus, John Cooper, master of the Viol de Gamba to Charles I. after he had been in Italy, assumed the name Giovanni Coperario. It is vain to give the life of a man, which has been so amply written by one of the ablest pens in the fine arts. Let it suffice to say, that the first Sir Richard Wynn procured from Jones the plan of this bridge, of which he was the founder, in 1636; determined to do his country all possible honor, by the beauty of the design, invented by an architect to which Wales had at least a near relation” (Pennant 1883 ed: Vol II p.301-2).*

**5.2.5** He adds “*The river here makes a handsome appearance, extending in a direct line far above the bridge, and often enlivened with the coracles, the vitilia navigia of the antient Britons, busied in taking salmon; and in the mnths of February and March, numbers of smelt. The tide does not flow nearer than Llyn y Graig, a mile and half below the bridge, where, in spring tides, boats of twelve tonnes may come” (Pennant 1883 ed: Vol II p.302).*

**5.2.6** Within two years of Pennant’s visit it became necessary that further repair works were undertaken to the bridge and the river defences. In 1793 it was decreed that “*the present walls along the river being out of repair [are] to be taken down and rebuilt from a mark in the...of the Bridge in a line to the west corner of the present turnpike house. To have the bottom of the walls set in ..and flushed with hot mortar to the level of the road, four feet thick at the bottom, to batter from the river one inch to the foot and to be three feet thick at the level of the road and one foot six inches thick above the road at least three feet six inches high including the coping which is to be of the best stone from Trefrin, not less than three feet six inches in length worked to the thickness of the battlement... The whole road to be raised on an average two feet six inches high to the south gable of the house in Llanrwst called Ty Mawr, and the other way past the Turnpike Gate to a barn belonging to Miss Hughes. The road along the cottages that face the bridge, a wall of strong stones to be built a convenient distance from the houses to the level of the road, and a good post and double rail of Oak along the said property plained and painted. A good flagged path before these houses and a stone drain to be made across the street at a place to be fixed of a proper size to take away the water...The floor of the large bridge [Pont Fawr] to be effectually repaired as likewise the battlements. The whole of the roads to have a top covering of Chestry gravel from a place called Bryn Rhydd near Maynan, ten inches thick in the middle and seven inches on each side seven yards wide. Where the foundations of the walls cannot be laid on the rock they must be laid two feet below the bed of the river with large flat stones...” (DRO QSD/AB/1/425(a) - taken from Evans 2010).*

**5.2.7** The slightly later account written by Richard Fenton and included in his *Tours in Wales* (1804-1813) (published 1917) provides details of a document which was contemporary with the erection of Pont Fawr. “*Return and cross the Conway into Carnarvonshire by the celebrated bridge said to be the work of Inigo Jones after a design he borrowed from Italy. Its great lightness and symmetry are generally admired, and I had once the pleasure of hearing the late ingenious Mr. Raveley add his testimony to the justice of such admiration, and in his company of witnessing that oscillating property so much talked of, the consequence of the delicacy and perfection of the structure in all its component parts. In support of the supposition that Inigo Jones was the Architect, there is in the valuable MS. Collection of my friend Paul Pantton Esqr of Plas Gwyn, in the Isle of Anglesey, a record of the Quarter Sessions for Denbighshire, that this Bridge, having become ruinous, was directed to be rebuilt by a letter from the Privy Council in the 9th year of Charles the First (1634), Jones being then surveyor of the Board of Works, according to an estimate which amounted to £.1000, to be levied equally on the Counties of Denbigh and Carnarvon. That he was of Welsh parentage, who most probably traced themselves to this part of the principality, there is every reason to believe,\* though Lord Orford goes rather too far in his fancifulness’ when he says, “the very cast of his countenance (which certainly argues no great share of placability) might bespeak his country” (Fenton 1917: 166).*

**5.2.8** In his 1811 writings, Edmund Hyde Hall details Pont Mawr as “*built in 1636 by Inigo Jones. It has three arches, is about sixty paces long, and of a width not more than sufficient to allow the passage of two carriages at once. The vibratory motion of the structure is very sensibly perceived by a person placed against the centre stone of one parapet, while the opposite one is struck with violence by the cicerone of the place. Whether seen from above or below, the bridge forms a very pleasing specimen of this interesting department of architecture. The lightness*

*and elegance of the elliptical arches are beautifully reflected in the broad and pellucid stream beneath them; whilst the picture is completed by the exquisite scenery about it*" (Hyde Hall 1952 Edition:123).

**5.2.9** An 1833 account by Samuel Lewis adds further detail: "*Over the river is an elegant bridge of three arches, built about the year 1636, under an order from the privy council of Charles I., from a plan by Inigo Jones, who is erroneously stated to been a native of this place. The expense of its erection amounting to about one thousand pounds, was conjointly defrayed by the two counties which it connects two of the arches are exceedingly handsome; the third having been rebuilt in 1703 is somewhat inferior centre arch, which forms a much larger segment of circle than the other two, is nearly sixty feet in span*" (Lewis 1833).

**5.2.10** The 1902 Gossiping Guide to Wales is somewhat less enthusiastic about the bridge describing it as "*the bridge is called by some the Gwydir Bridge, and it is said Sir John Wynn's son, Sir Richard, and his friend Inigo Jones, designed and carried out the work. Others say that it was built at the expense of the county, and there is nothing in its design to raise one's opinion of the powers of the Welsh architect. A man will perhaps be standing on it who for a small fee, by a bump against the parapet, will show you how the bridge shakes. At the further end a footpath on the left is the beginning of the nearest way to Bettws-y-coed; and on the right is a path to Trefrin*" (1902: 222-3).

**5.2.11** There is a further description for the bridge which many locals will recognise, given the narrow width and the limit to visibility as a result of the hump-back design which is summed up by the local nickname "*Pont y Rhegi*" or "*the bridge of swearing*" ([www.historypoints.org/index.php?page=pont-fawr-llanrwst](http://www.historypoints.org/index.php?page=pont-fawr-llanrwst)). It remains in use as a road bridge and has a tarmac surface, carrying traffic and pedestrians across the Afon Conwy.

### **5.3 Cartographic and Pictorial Evidence for Pont Fawr**

**5.3.1** No contemporary site drawings/plans have survived for the erection of the bridge. The earliest cartographic source identified was the 1770 Gwydir Estate Map (Conwy Archives CX252/22, figure 2). This image is not sufficiently clear to show any specific details other than the town of Llanrwst on the north eastern side of the bridge and open fields on the south western side. Although a little unclear due to the map quality it does appear that Tu-Hwnt-y'r-bont is shown adjacent to the bridge on the south western side.

**5.3.2** Of the same date but containing more detail is the 1770 Mostyn Estate Map (Bangor University Archives MMS 8535, figure 3). The bridge is shown but there is no information on the area on the south west of the river be due this forming the county boundary. Llanrwst is shown clearly and the buildings are stepped back from the bridge showing a large open road. The bank on this side is marked with a dark line suggesting that there was revetment.

**5.3.3** A slightly later Mostyn Estate Map dated 1800 (Bangor University Archives MMS 8534, figures 4 & 5) also only shows the properties in Denbigh, with the area to the south west of the bridge not included in the document. Llanrwst town is shown and there appears to have been development closer to the road. There is a clear depiction of the bridge and a deposit of "shlyery agrillite rock" is shown on the town side of the river. The opposite side shows a large deposit of gravel building up around bridge and bank (figure 5). This map is of sufficient detail that the refuges along the bridge are shown.

**5.3.4** The 1839 Tithe Map (Conwy Archive, figure 6) is not detailed enough to show any specific details of the town of Llanrwst to the north east side of the bridge. Due to the position of the county/parish boundary, the area to the south west of the Afon Conwy is detailed on a separate sheet. This document shows there was an enclosed field system along the river with the current B5106 crossing the bridge ([www.places.library.wales/browse/53.135/-3.8/16?page=1&alt=](http://www.places.library.wales/browse/53.135/-3.8/16?page=1&alt=)).





**Figure 2.** 1770 Gwydir Estate Map  
(Source: Conwy Archives CX252/22)



**Figure 3.** 1770 Mostyn Estate Map  
(Source: Bangor Archives MMS 8535)





**Figure 4 (Above).** Mostyn Estate Map dated 1800  
(Source: Bangor University Archives MMS 8534)

**Figure 5 (Below).** Llanrwst Bridge Detail Shown on Mostyn Estate Map dated 1800  
(Source: Bangor University Archives MMS 8534)



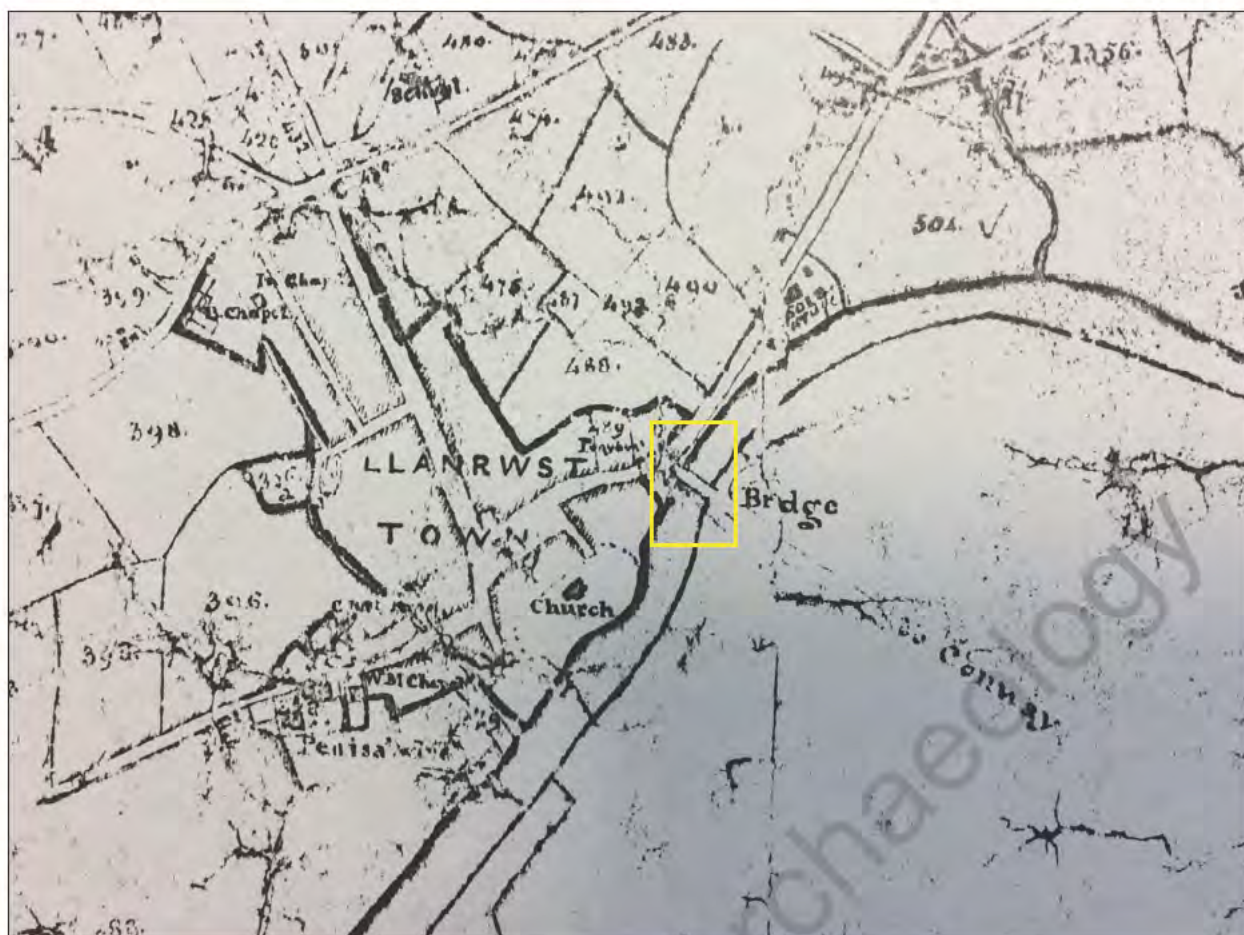


Figure 6. 1839 Tithe Map of Llanrwst (Source: Conwy Archives)

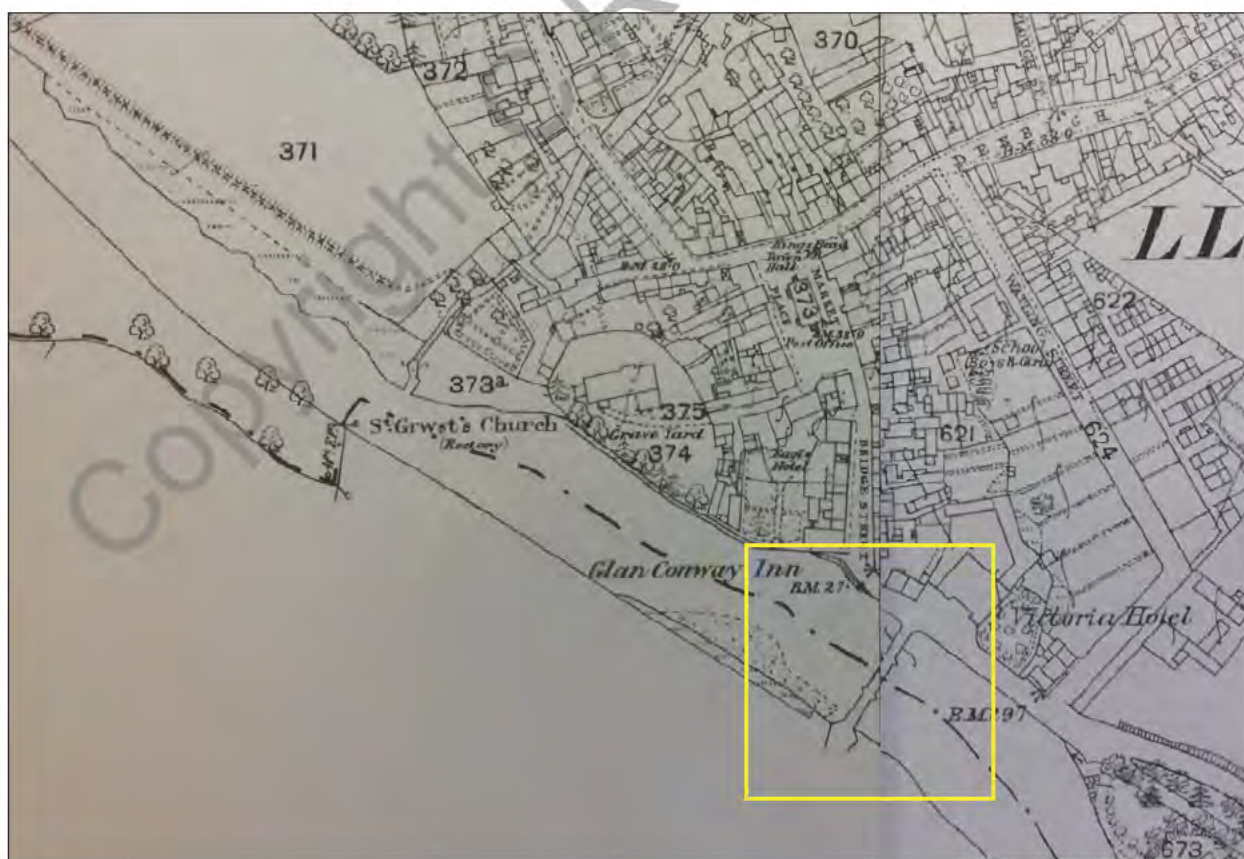


Figure 7. 1875 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Llanrwst (Source: Conwy Archives)

**5.3.5** The Ordnance Survey data for the area shows both the Caernarfon and Denbigh areas in detail, although the first edition for Denbigh (dated 1875, figure 7) predates that for Caernarfon which is dated 1889. The 1875 map edition shows the gravel bank continues to be shown on the south west side of the bridge. This bank has considerably increased in size by the 1900 Ordnance Survey edition (figure 8). The 1889 map edition shows that there is an area planted as a nursery along the south western riverbank upstream of Pont Fawr and there is an associated riverside structure. This map edition was not held by local archives, but a copy can be viewed at [www.maps.nls.uk /view/101606577](http://www.maps.nls.uk/view/101606577).

**5.3.6** The 1900 Ordnance Survey edition showed the football and cricket field had been created by this date with pavilions added by the 1913 edition (figure 9). The 1913 map edition shows that the gravel bank had once more reduced in size, although a ford is now shown upstream of the bridge. This ford is also shown on the 1948 map edition ([www.maps.nls.uk/view/101606568](http://www.maps.nls.uk/view/101606568)).

**5.3.7** In addition to the cartographic sources the picturesque nature of Pont Fawr has led to numerous artists and photographers recording the site. A sample of these images has been included as figures 10 – 16. These images date from the late eighteenth through to the late twentieth century and demonstrate the significance of the buildings on both sides of the river on the setting of the bridge. Key buildings include St Grwst's Church on the northern side of the bridge and Tu-Hwnt-y'r-bont on the southern bank. Also of importance are the walls flanking the bridge on the town side. This is discussed in further detail below.

## **5.4 Results of Historic Environment Record Search of Surrounding Area**

**5.4.1** Due to Pont Fawr being located in an urban area, a search of the Historic Environment Record returned a large number of results – 61 within a 500m search radius, and 89 within a 1000m search radius. Within a 500m search radius there were 4 entries of Medieval date, 54 of Post Medieval date, 1 of Modern date, 1 of multiperiod date and a single entry recorded as of unknown date.

**5.4.2** When the search is expanded to 1000m the majority of the results continue to be predominantly of Post Medieval date. At 1000m there was 1 Prehistoric entry, 2 entries of Roman date, 6 entries of Medieval date, 76 of Post Medieval date, 1 of Modern date, 1 of multiperiod date, and 2 entries recorded as of unknown date.

**5.4.3** There are 39 Listed Buildings within a 500m radius of Pont Fawr and 51 within a 1000m search radius due to the prominent position of the bridge within the old town.

### **5.4.1 Prehistoric**

**5.4.1.1** There is a single entry of Prehistoric date within the 1000m search radius – PRN 2461 details a stone axe findspot recorded as “A polished stone axe and possible hammer stone were found to the SW of Pen-y-Fron farmhouse which is about ½ a mile east of Llanrwst (axe possibly Graig Lwyd). Mr Jones said his father found the stone axe and possible hammer, but he was unable to indicate the find site”.

**5.4.1.2** As mentioned in section 5.1 a bronze armlet is recorded by the RCAHMW as having been found in the town. This item is recorded as PRN2469 although it is unclear as to why it has been re-evaluated and assigned a Post Medieval date.





Figure 8. 1900 Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Llanrwst (Source: Conwy Archives)

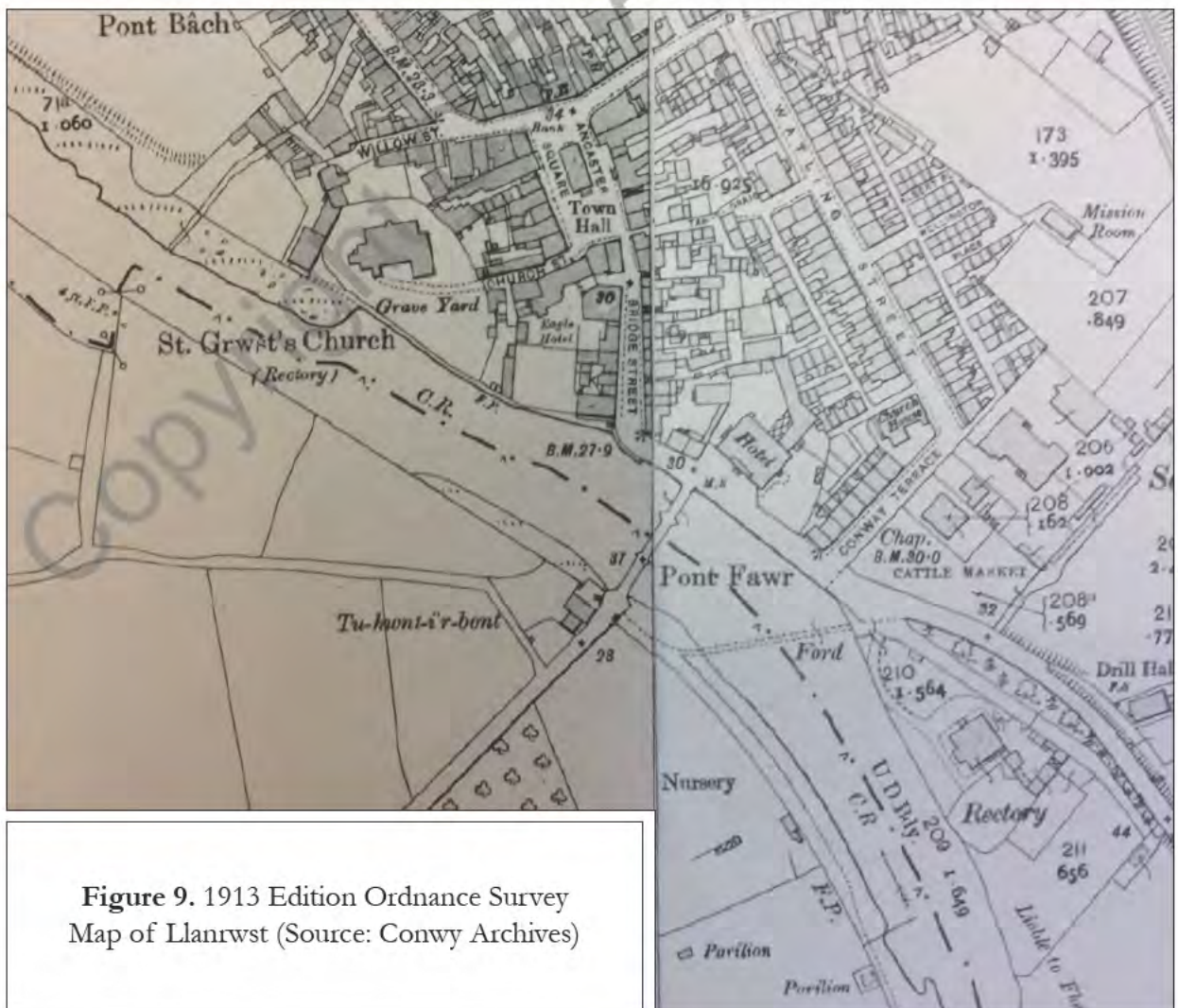


Figure 9. 1913 Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Llanrwst (Source: Conwy Archives)





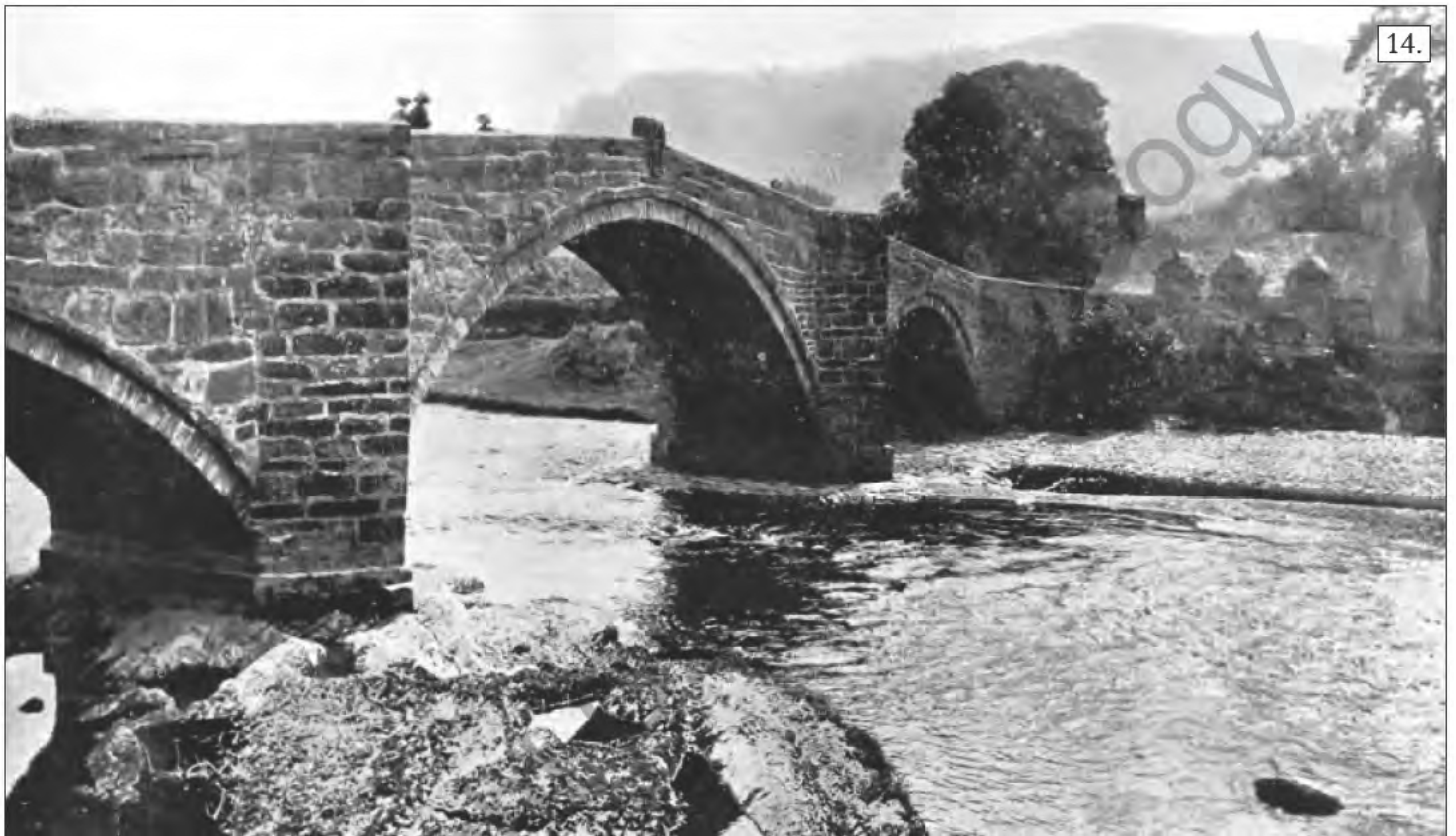




© Gwasanaeth Archifau Conwy Archive Service



© Gwasanaeth Archifau Conwy Archive Service



© Gwasanaeth Archifau Conwy Archive Service



© Gwasanaeth Archifau Conwy Archive Service

**Figure 12.** 1904 Photograph of Pont Fawr (Source: Gwynedd Archives)

**Figure 13.** 1905 Photograph of Pont Fawr (Source: Gwynedd Archives CP1162)

**Figure 14.** 1912 Photograph of Pont Fawr (Source: RCAHMW 1914)

**Figure 15.** 1940 Photograph of Pont Fawr (Source: Gwynedd Archives CP80213108)

**Figure 16.** 1970 Photograph of Pont Fawr (Source: Gwynedd Archives CP39524231)



## 5.4.2 Roman/Romano-British

**5.4.2.1** There are two entries of Roman/Romano-British date – both of which are findspots. PRN 2458 is a spindle whorl described as *“a spindle whorl was found in 1919, on a heap of stones picked up from the surface of a field called Yr Hafod, belonging to Penllan”*. A second artefact, PRN 2459 is recorded as *“a perforated stone disc, 3 ½ inches by 3 ½ inches across, was found in the garden in front of Cae Groes Farm Cottage in 1926 by Mr R. Thomas, the occupier. Two holes had been driven through the centre of the stone”*.

## 5.4.3 Early Medieval/Medieval

**5.4.3.1** Within a 500m radius of Pont Fawr are 4 entries of Medieval date. This rises to 6 when the search area is extended to 1000m. Llanrwst is believed to be a town of Medieval origin although some form of earlier settlement and/activity is very likely given its location as a crossing point on the Afon Conwy. PRN 3194 records the existence of the Medieval Township of Llanrwst. The Gwydir Medieval Township (PRN 6830) is also recorded as having been located in the area.

**5.4.3.2** PRN 4633 refers to the Medieval origins of Gwydir Castle. It is recorded as *“Principal seat of the Wynn Family for over 200 years. Originally built by Maredudd ap Ieuan having purchased the site from Hywel Coetmor around 1500. Much of the building as it stands today is the work of Sir John Wynn, great grandson of Maredudd ap Ieuan and the author of The History of the Gwydir Family. Much of the building work utilises stone from Maenan Abbey after its dissolution.”* This site develops over centuries of use and the gardens and associated features are recorded as entries of Post Medieval date. Within the castle itself PRN 31986 records *“the cut-down head of a small slab has been built into the wall at the foot of the spiral staircase at the back of the principal block, which was built in the early and mid-16th century. It is of dark red-brown sandstone and has a bold moulding at the top, but this has been trimmed from the sides. It measures 1ft by 10.5in. The carving is well preserved and the cross is designed in a quatrefoil with a six-petalled flower at the centre, and decorative motifs between the arms inturning in the form of curled and lobed leaves. It has been suggested that this slab may have been brought from Maenan Abbey, and this may be so, as the design resembles one at the other Cistercian Abbey of Valle Crucis in general design and detail. C.1300”*.

**5.4.3.3** The remaining 2 entries (PRN's 7034 & 4617) of Medieval date both refer to the Parish Church – St Grwst's. It is described as *“An interesting church of c.1500, with a chapel added in 1633. A number of restorations and modern additions have been carried out, including the tower and north aisle. The site is older than the present church; it is mentioned in the Valuation of Norwich of 1254, and it is possible that the church had to be rebuilt following destruction by William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, during the Lancastrian wars. It was visited by Pennant during his Tour of Wales in 1781 who described the tombs and brasses inside the church. Although largely rebuilt this medieval church retains some features of note, in particular the rood screen and loft, and the Wynn chapel with its fittings.*

**5.4.3.4** *The churchyard is approached from the centre of Llanrwst along Tan y Eglwys between almshouses, founded by Sir John Wynn c.1610. The curvilinear churchyard is bounded by Afon Conwy to the south. It has been encroached by the adjacent property to the north west where there is now a linear boundary. The churchyard is entered through a 19th century arch, to the south east of the church, of squared rubble with freestone coping and arch voussoirs. The broad arch has a hood-mould with head stops and ornamental wrought iron gates beneath.*

**5.4.3.5** *The church was built in the late 15th century. It consists of a continuous nave and chancel with an early 19th century west tower, a later 19th century north aisle, a south porch and the Gwydir Chapel at the south east corner.*

**5.4.3.6** *The south wall of the nave has square headed windows surmounted by hood-moulds. The most westerly and the most easterly are 19th century windows with a central 15th century window of three cinquefoil lights. To the north east of the tower the nave has a window of three lights under a three-centred arch. The east window of*

*the nave c.1500 has four lights with brattished transom and panel tracery. The nave has a 15th century arch-braced roof with small cusped wind braces.*

**5.4.3.7** *Gnydir Chapel, in late Perpendicular style, was added to the south of the chancel in 1633-4 by Sir Richard Wynn. It has a castellated parapet with pinnacles to the south and stepped buttresses. The east and west windows are of four cinquefoil cusped lights under panel tracery. The two south bays have similar windows but of three lights. The round headed entrance doorway has a heraldic shield over it recording the founding of the chapel. The chapel has an elaborate low-pitched camber-beam oak ceiling, wall panelling, stalls and screens.*

**5.4.3.8** *The church still retains its 15th century rood screen and loft at the entrance to the chancel. A detailed description and illustrations of these features can be found in Crossley's article in Archaeologia Cambrensis Vol XCIX.*

**5.4.3.9** *The west tower and south porch were rebuilt in the early 19th century and the north aisle c 1880. The main church was largely rebuilt in 1882-1884 by Paley and Austin.*

**5.4.3.10** *The square castellated tower has three storeys. The ground floor stage has single light windows with Gothic arches under square lintels. The second stage has single light windows with arched heads in the north and south walls and a window of two light under a four-centred arch in the west wall. The bell stage has two arched windows on each face. The tower is stepped up to the west to support the carved stone cross and has diagonal buttresses.*

**5.4.3.11** *The north wall of the north aisle has three windows, two of three lights and one of two lights, with panel tracery above. There are stepped buttresses between the windows. The west gable of the aisle has an arched doorway with a two-light window to the north. The arcade of three bays has elongated octagonal piers.*

**5.4.3.12** *The 19th century south porch is half timbered with a Perpendicular doorway.*

**5.4.3.13** *Gnydir Chapel contains contemporary woodwork and several memorials. These include a large stone coffin, said to be that of Llewelyn the Great who died in 1240, a stone effigy of Hywel Coetmor c1440, described in 'Medieval Stone Carving in North Wales', and another to members of the Wynn family including Sir John Wynn, who died in 1559, and his wife Sydney, who died in 1639. A series of 17th century engraved brasses have been moved from the floor to the walls of the chapel.*

**5.4.3.14** *The church is built of uncoursed grey rubble with pale limestone dressings. The tower is of roughly coursed rubble with limestone dressings and Gnydir Chapel is of coursed grey stone with pale limestone dressings.*

**5.4.3.15** *The floor of Gnydir Chapel is stone flagged.*

#### **5.4.4 Post Medieval**

**5.4.4.1** The majority of entries for the town of Llanrwst belong to this period, with 54 entries of Post Medieval date within a 500m search radius, rising to 76 within 1000m. Of the 39 Listed Buildings within a 500m radius of Pont Fawr, 37 are of Post Medieval date.

**5.4.4.2** As would be expected within a market town like Llanrwst the majority of the entries fall into the categorisation of “commercial” (15 entries), “domestic” (7 entries) and “transport” (7 entries). Also represented are “agriculture and subsistence” (2 entries) referring to the field systems on the southern side of the Afon Conwy, “education” (6 entries) including the old infants school, grammar school and schoolmaster’s house, “transport” , “parks, gardens and urban spaces” recording the Gwydir estate gardens and walkways, “religious” related to the Parish church and “water supply and drainage” (2 entries).

## 5.5 Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations - Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings

**5.5.1** The site runs along the riverside immediately adjacent to both sides of Pont Fawr, Llanwrst. The bridge is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (DE025) and a Grade I Listed Building (Cadw ID 16951 and 3612).

**5.5.2** The Scheduled Ancient Monument description records “*a bridge consisting of three segmental arches, with cut-waters continuing upwards to form triangular refuges. It is built of roughly coursed local slate and gritstone rubble. The central and east arches are formed of sandstone voussoirs, but the W arch was rebuilt in 1675 and again in 1703. Stone panels surmounted by a double ogee capping are set in the apex of each parapet over the central arch. That on the S, which is well preserved, contains the Stuart arms in an enriched frame bearing the date 1636; on top of the cap is a later sundial. The inner or road face is plain. The inner face of the N panel carries the date 1636; its outer face, now weathered, contains the Prince of Wales' feathers in a less elaborate frame than the S panel. The monument is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of transport and construction. It retains significant archaeological potential, with a strong probability of the presence of associated archaeological features and deposits. The scheduled area comprises the remains described and areas around them within which related evidence may be expected to survive*” ([www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/sam/FullReport?lang=&id=207](http://www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/sam/FullReport?lang=&id=207)).

**5.5.3** Pont Fawr is also a Grade I Listed Building (Cadw ID 16951 and 3612) and the listing description adds “*Steeply ramped stone road bridge of three segmental arches. Central arch circa 18 metres span, outer arches circa 13.5 metres span. Cutwaters to each side continue upwards to form refuges in parapet. Coursed local gritstone and slate rubble. Arch voussoirs set slightly back. West arch masonry in smaller blocks. Parapet with heavy chamfered coping stones with iron cramps. Flared approach walls. Above apex of central arch, S parapet has stone relief of Stuart Arms (plus initials 'CR') set in frame with superimposed fluted columns supporting floral entablature and ogee cresting; below arms is date '1636'. Sundial above installed for tercentenary of bridge. North parapet has, in same position Prince of Wales feathers springing from crown; flanked by initials 'CP'; framed by columns, ogee cresting above with weathered relief pinnacles. Behind this, on inner parapet, date '1636'. Inner parapet has carriage stones to protect masonry. Stone on inner S parapet above rebuilt W arch has initials 'TR'. Tarmacadam carriageway surface*” ([www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3612](http://www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3612)).

**5.5.4** In addition to Pont Fawr itself being Grade I Listed, there are two further Listed structures connected with the bridge. The walls to the north and south of the bridge on the town side are both Grade II Listed with the northern wall stretch (ID 3613) recorded as being of late eighteenth/early nineteenth century date. The description states that the wall is a “*rubble wall with flat slate copings acting as revetment to bank of Afon Conwy. Wall connects (to S) with parapet of approach to Llanwrst Bridge. Length of wall c37m; height 0.8m-1m above pavement*” ([www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3613](http://www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3613)). The southern wall is Listed as 3614 and is contemporary with the northern structure. It is described as “*wall connects (to N) with parapet of approach to Llanwrst Bridge. Length of wall c94m; height 0.8m-1m above pavement. Rubble wall with flat slate copings, approximately 7m length to S has replacement copings*” ([www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3614](http://www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3614)).

**5.5.5** Tu-Hwnt-y'r-bont is located immediately adjacent to Pont Fawr, at a right-angle with the B 5106 and immediately at the SW approach of the Pont Fawr spanning the River Conwy at Llanwrst. It is a Grade II Listed structure (ID 3162) recorded as “*Mid-late C17 single-storey cottage, partially rebuilt to the W in the C18, when divided into two dwellings; a dormer storey was also added during this later phase. Of rubble construction with an old, graded rough-dressed slate roof; simple end stacks with cornices and plain louvres, that to the R (NW) slightly taller. Off-centre (L) entrance to river side with boarded stable doors; a former, similar entrance to the R is blocked. Flanking C20 12-pane casement windows with exposed, stopped-chamfered lintels.*”

**5.5.6** *Further square window to far L. Similar casements to 3 rubble gabled dormers to roof (boarded-up at time of inspection 1996). Boarded entrance to rear at L with further window at R. Small single-storey outshuts to sides, that to R semicircular and with small light to front, and that to L square with similar light to NW side and boarded entrance to NE. Fireplaces to gable ends of large ground floor space, that to the E primary and that to the W later; stopped chamfered E ceiling beam and some joists, the remainder replaced. Listed as a fine example of a vernacular C17 house in a prominent location at the bridge end. Group value with Pont Fawr” (www.cadwpublic-api.Azure websites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3162).*

**5.5.7** The proposed area for works lies within the Llanrwst Town Conservation Area and just outside the limits of the Eryri (Snowdonia) National Park.

**5.5.8** The gardens at Gwydir are listed Grade I within the Register of Parks and Gardens in Wales (Cadw et al, 1998). This is a non-statutory designation but is to be taken into account when making planning decisions. The reference number is PGW (Gd) 4 (CON). This includes within its essential setting the parkland to the north and west that lies within or immediately adjacent to the study area, and the raised, or Chinese, walk from the garden to the river.

**5.5.9** There are 39 Listed Buildings within a 500m radius of Pont Fawr and 51 within a 1000m search radius due to the prominent position of the bridge within the old town. Although the majority of these structures will be unaffected by the proposed works it is vital that any works undertaken as part of this scheme consider any possible negative impact on the setting of neighbouring Listed Buildings and steps are taken to mitigate any effect.

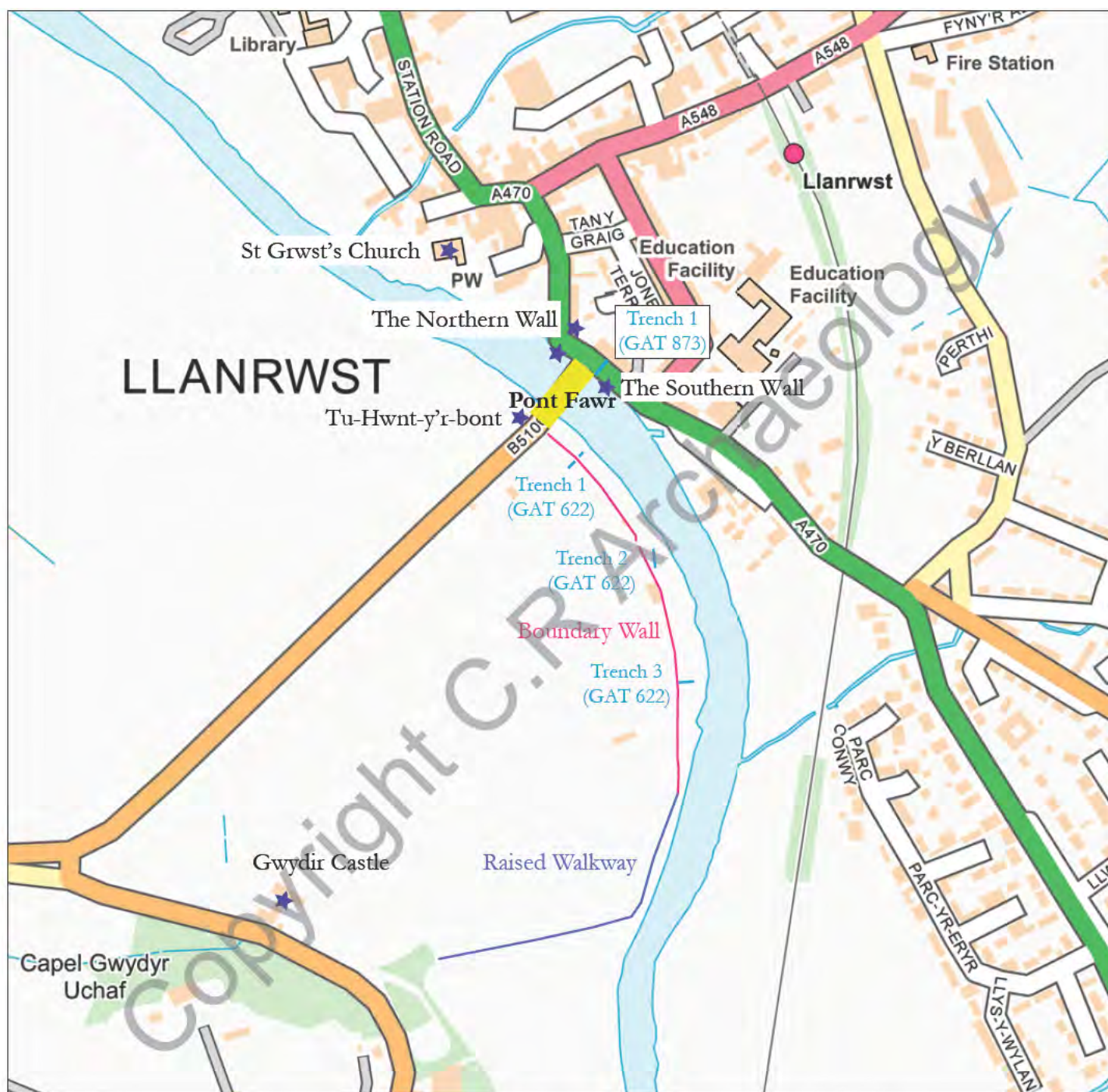
**5.5.10** Any works which affect the setting of the bridge will have also have a direct effect on the setting of Tu-Hwnt-y’r-bont on the southern bank and the vistas to and from this structure. The bridge and Tu-Hwnt-y’r-bont form a significant grouping, which feature prominently in the Llanrwst townscape and the views of the group feature prominently in historic paintings and photographs. Also of significance is the relationship between the church and the bridge, and the bridge and Gwydir Castle with their historic linking walkways.

## **5.6 Archaeological Works Carried Out in the Vicinity of the Proposed Development**

**5.6.1** Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) have carried out extensive works in the Llanrwst area associated with the Dyffryn Conwy Flood Alleviation Scheme. Of direct relevance to this project are the results detailed in GAT reports 618, 622 and 873.

**5.6.2** Report 618 records an archaeological assessment undertaken on an area of land alongside the Afon Conwy between Llanrwst and Trefriw. The work was undertaken in advance of the flood alleviation scheme and five sites of national importance were identified in the area - this included Pont Fawr. A general watching brief was recommended during all new construction works in order to identify and record any below ground archaeology not previously recognised, and attention was drawn to the potential for the recovery of timber remains in waterlogged deposits.

**5.6.3** Of relevant to the current project, this report records “*The principal features now visible on the ground relate to flood protection and agricultural improvements. The earliest dateable features belong to the 17th century, and to improvements initiated by the Gwydir Estate. The two principal features from this period are the raised walk leading from Gwydir to the river, and the road leading to the bridge. The bridge was built in 1636, on the site of an earlier structure, and on the site of a ford. A footpath leads south from the west side of the bridge towards Gwydir and alongside the river.*”



**Figure 17.** Location of Previous Archaeological Works and Listed Buildings in the Immediate Vicinity of Pont Fawr  
(Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019)



**5.6.4** *After some 60m this runs alongside the remains of a strong stone wall that is of the same build as the raised walk leading from Gnydir to the river, and though it is relatively fragmentary in places, it is possible to trace its course to the point where the wall from Gnydir reaches the river. The raised walk appears to have been designed to act as a flood defence system, a wall-walk, and the southern edge to a deer-park. Masonry remains by the river, where the riverbank is heavily revetted, may indicate the remains of a former quay.*

**5.6.5** *The road that leads from the west side of the valley to the bridge built in 1636 was almost certainly constructed at the same time or just after construction of the bridge. The road is clearly indicated on the earliest known estate map of c. 1780, and little major building and estate development was undertaken between the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century and the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The walls on either side are overgrown and partially rebuilt, however some remnants of better quality walling are visible in patches, particularly on the north side towards the east end” (pg 6).*

**5.6.6** *“Across the low lying lands, joining the bridge at Llanrwst with Trefriw and also with Tan Lan to the north of Llanrwst are the remains of several tracks, and though these are not possible to date, they are marked on the 1785 map, and may well be the line of medieval trackways, though they would have been vulnerable to flooding until the construction of the flood defence banks” (ibid).*

**5.6.7** *Of the current and historic flood defences in the area the report notes “The flood defences presently consist of a series of strong earth and stone banks, approximately 2m high and some 6m wide at the base and just under 2m wide at the top. They are designed to constrain the R Conny on the west side, whilst other banks are constructed to constrain the feeders into the Conny that run down from the hills on the west side of the valley. They were originally constructed within the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Gnydyr estate, but have since been regularly maintained and occasionally altered” (ibid).*

**5.6.8** *Report 622 records the results of watching brief and evaluation works within the study area. The test pitting conducted lay outside of the Llanrwst bridge environs but a number of trenches were excavated along the south western river bank upstream of the bridge (figure 17).*

**5.6.9** *Three trenches were excavated which revealed important information about the Post Medieval river defences and usage as a walkway. The results of the works are detailed below:*

**5.6.10 Trench 1 (15.0m x 1.60m)**

*Trench 1 was located c.20.0m south of Llanrwst Bridge on a southwest to northeast alignment. The trench was positioned to incorporate a 19<sup>th</sup> century flood embankment, a narrow modern concrete pathway running along the river and a wide terrace that slope down to the river. The terrace was visible running southwards along the riverbank for at least ninety metres until it reached a modern fence and public footpath gate. The terrace was thought to be the remains of a rough cobbled track visible from 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs. The embankment stood to a height of c.0.50m and was built from irregular stone covered in earth that sloped southwestwards away from the pathway into local parkland. The embankment ran parallel to the pathway, curving gradually southwards for c.65m before being replaced by a 19<sup>th</sup> century stone wall. As stated above, it was understood that the raised walkway built for the Gnydir Estate continued as far the bridge, but that it had been superseded by later improvements to the local area, including the flood embankment and the modernisation of the footpath along the riverbank. It was hoped the trench would reveal further information about the extent of the walkway, its proximity to the modern embankment and the extent of its survival. The trench was opened either side of the modern pathway, cutting through the flood embankment to the west side of the path and across the terrace to the east of the path towards the riverbank. The modern pathway was not removed as it was constructed from reinforced concrete. The embankment was constructed from a 1.00m wide stone built wall, which was cut into the natural silt. The wall stood to a height of c.0.50m and was sealed with a long sloping bank of earth. To the immediate northeast of the embankment wall was a cobbled surface (context 102), directly below the modern path. The narrow gap between the cobbles and the wall was filled with a deposit of stone rich silt and was interpreted as a foundation cut backfill for the embankment wall. The opposite side of the path, also contained the cobbled path, which extended for 1.80m towards the river. The path was constructed from*



mainly sub-rounded pebblestones of various sizes, with larger elongated stones used along the edge of the path. There were no obvious signs of repair work at any point. The cobbled path had been built onto a thick construction layer (context 102), which contained a series of sand and gravel layers deposited to level out the riverbank. This construction layer was partially covering a redundant, disturbed wall (context 104). The wall was constructed from large subrectangular blocks of stone, with at least three surviving courses cut into and climbing the riverbank. The wall was at least 2.20m wide and 1.10m high. To the northeast of this wall, leading towards the river, was a deposit of stone (context 107) that acted as a riverbank reinforcement and was built from irregular sub-rounded and sub-rectangular stone. This feature was separated from the wall by a narrow gap backfilled with stone-rich clay-silt (context 109). This deposit was partially removed in an attempt to understand the temporal relationship between the wall and the stone surface. The section revealed that the stone surface did not extend any closer to the wall and that it had been built against the natural bank and that the surface had been built onto a construction layer of stone and gravel.

#### **5.6.11 Interpretation**

The disturbed stone wall towards the centre of the trench could be interpreted as the remains of either a stone revetment to prevent the erosion of the river bank or the raised walkway, or indeed both. It was difficult to infer from the level of survival whether it was indeed the walkway as it did not have the distinctive large flat stones which characterise that structure, whilst a stone revetment is visible further south along the riverbank largely buried in the grass, suggesting the wall may be part of the same structure. The cobbled surface is a later addition, partially built onto the wall and extending towards the flood embankment. It is presumably the same surface visible from the 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs and can be interpreted as forming the distinctive terrace which runs southwards from the bridge, acting as a precursor to the narrower concrete path. The stone surface at the base of the riverbank, sloping towards the river away from the wall, was presumably laid to prevent erosion of the riverbank. Its temporal relationship to the wall could not be determined and may have been at anytime since the inception of the Gnydir Estate.

#### **5.6.12 Trench 2 (15.0m x 1.60m)**

Trench 2 was located 50m southeastwards of Trench 1, between the riverbank and a 19th century boundary wall. The trench was aligned north to south and was positioned to investigate the distinct terrace described above and to also locate any remnants of the raised walkway. The northern end of the trench contained a substantial stone wall, c.1.50m wide and extant to a length of 5.0m. The wall was constructed from irregular sub-angular stone and was aligned south-southeast to northnorthwest. The full extent of the wall within the trench could not be determined as it was partly covered by a cobbled surface (context 204) built onto 0.30m thick construction layer of gravel and sand. The cobbles were partly disturbed but covered an area of c.5.5m. The remaining 4.5m of the trench at the southern end was dominated by a backfilled tree hole that contained modern rubbish material mixed into a dark, humic soil. An attempt was made to investigate the depth of the wall but was prevented by the friability of the silt deposit alongside the wall, which caused immediate trench collapse when excavated to any substantial depth.

#### **5.6.13 Interpretation**

This trench contained a relatively straightforward temporal relationship, with the wall succeeded by a cobbled surface, in much the same manner as Trench 1. The cobbled path had also been replaced in this area by the concrete path.

#### **5.6.14 The wall in this instance appeared to be a riverbank revetment.**

#### **5.6.15 Trench 3 (15.0m x 1.60m)**

Trench 3 was located 50m south of Trench 2. This area differed in appearance to that of Trenches 1 and 2: the distinctive terrace was no longer apparent and the riverbank was much flatter and wider and the ground more uneven due to alluvial activity. The modern path was replaced by a simple eroded path in the ground, whilst this area was fenced off from the area to the north containing the other trenches and was accessed by a simple gate. The trench was aligned east to west running from a 19th century boundary wall towards the river's edge. The intention here was to locate any evidence for the walkway, to see if it had been replaced by the 19th century wall. The wall was c.1.40m high, built from irregular sub-angular stone (Figure 5 and Plate 7). The trench was cut away from the wall, revealing

that this structure had been built in one phase, with a 0.30m deep foundation course cutting the natural gravel. Running parallel to the wall, at a width of 4.6m was a gravel path faced at its eastern end by a narrow revetment wall, cut into alluvial silt (Figure 5; Plate 7). The wall was a simple construction, c.0.25m wide and 0.30m high, built from irregular sub-angular stone. There were no underlying structures beneath this path and the remainder of the trench was devoted to alluvial silts.

#### **5.6.16 Interpretation**

*This trench did not match Trenches 1 and 2 in revealing evidence for major structural activity. From the confines of the trench at least, it did not appear that a revetment wall or a cobbled surface continued in this direction this far south. The simple gravel path that had been used did not continue below the boundary wall and was assumed to be contemporary or later to that structure” (Roberts 2006: 11-13).*

**5.6.17** Further works in the riverside area were undertaken as GAT 873. Evans reports works on the opposite riverbank within the town of Llanrwst. Of relevance to this report are the results of the excavations directly associated with the Pont Fawr structure (location shown on figure 17). This trench identified evidence of earlier bridge construction and road surfaces.

**5.6.18** *“The road surface noted 1.1m below the ground surface in trench 1 is probably the road that pre-dates the raising of the embankment by the building of the retaining wall in 1794. The presence of grooves marked by cart wheels in the metalled surface of the road can probably be explained by the friction caused by carts needing to pull up the relatively steep incline towards the Bont Fawr.*

**5.6.19** *This incline was lessened after the raising of the ground surface with a substantial make up layer (021), behind a revetment wall 1.9m high. This activity, carried out in 1794 involved the truncation of the 17<sup>th</sup> century bridge parapet (1001), and the construction of a revetment wall (1002), and subsequent make up and road sub surface layers.*

**5.6.20** *The eastern end of the Demountable 1 trench contained a large stone lined culvert [032] cut into the natural sub soils (045), overlaid with capping stones and an adjacent floor surface. This is clearly earlier than the make-up layer (005) and subsequent road surfaces and service trenches, and is cut into a demolition layer (042). This demolition layer is probably associated with the construction of the revetment wall, and suggests that the stone-lined culvert post-dates, or is contemporary with, the raising of the ground surface in 1794, as suggested by the documentary evidence” (Evans 2010: 7).*

**5.6.21** These works have highlighted the significant potential for archaeological discoveries to be made during works in the vicinity of the bridge, particularly discoveries related to the construction of Pont Fawr and subsequent phases of repair/modification and rebuilding. The potential for the discovery of unknown features to be uncovered, including the possibility that waterlogged deposits is highlighted.

## **6.0 Results of Site Visit**

**6.0.1** A site visit was undertaken on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and a photographic record of the bridge, its environs, setting and key views compiled. These images are included as plates 1 – 24. The location and direction of these photographs is recorded in Appendix A.





**Plate 1.** Pont Fawr, Taken from the South East



**Plate 2.** Pont Fawr, Taken from the South East



**Plate 3.** Pont Fawr, Taken from the South East



**Plate 4.** Pont Fawr, Taken from the South East Showing Riverside Area





**Plate 5.** South Western Bank of Afon Conwy  
to the South East of Pont Fawr



**Plate 6.** Pont Fawr, North Eastern Pillar



**Plate 7.** Pont Fawr North Eastern Bridge Span



**Plate 8.** Pont Fawr North Eastern Bridge Span





**Plate 9.** Pont Fawr Taken From the North Eastern Bank



**Plate 10.** Pont Fawr Landscape Shot, Taken from the South Western Bank



**Plate 11.** Pont Fawr, Taken from the North West



**Plate 12.** Pont Fawr, Taken from the North West





**Plate 13.** South Western Bank of Afon Conwy  
to the North West of Pont Fawr



**Plate 14.** South Western Bank of Afon Conwy  
to the North West of Pont Fawr



**Plate 15.** Pont Fawr, Taken from the North West  
South Western and Central Span



**Plate 16.** Pont Fawr, Taken from the North West  
North Eastern and Central Span





**Plate 17.** South Western Bank of Afon Conwy  
to the North West of Pont Fawr



**Plate 18.** South Western Bank of Afon Conwy  
to the North West of Pont Fawr



**Plate 19.** View of the Afon Conwy Facing North West.  
Taken from the North Eastern River Bank



**Plate 20.** South Western Bank of Afon Conwy  
to the North West of Pont Fawr





**Plate 21.** South Western & North Eastern Bank of Afon Conwy to the North West of Pont Fawr



**Plate 22.** North Eastern Banks of Afon Conwy to the North West of Pont Fawr



**Plate 23.** South Western & North Eastern Banks of the Afon Conwy to the North West of Pont Fawr



**Plate 24.** South Western & North Eastern Banks of the Afon Conwy to the North West of Pont Fawr

## 7.0 Conclusion

**7.0.1** Pont Fawr is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Grade I Listed Building and is situated within the Llanrwst Town Conservation Area. It is therefore vital that any interventions proposed for the bridge and its surrounding area not only consider the potential physical impact on the structure itself, but also ensure that there is no negative impact on the setting of Pont Fawr and associated heritage assets. Early consultation with relevant heritage bodies, in particular Cadw and Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Services, is recommended prior to the continuation of the scheme to ensure that the scale/design of any proposed works are considered to be appropriate for such a sensitive location. Alternative strategies which minimise the impact upon the structure and its setting such as the removal of gravel build up around the bridge must be examined prior to enacting substantial works. This is not to imply that the setting of Pont Fawr and associated structures takes precedent over the physical risk to the structure/structures, but that it must be factored into any decision making to minimise the risk of a negative outcome.

**7.0.2** The flood risk to nearby Grade I Listed Gwydir Castle (Cadw ID 3161), gardens and associated structures is a significant issue and the possible impact of any works within this area must include an assessment of the impact of any works on these heritage assets and their setting.

**7.0.3** Works undertaken by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust in the vicinity of the proposed scheme have highlighted the significant potential for archaeological discoveries to be made during works in the vicinity of the bridge - particularly discoveries related to the construction of Pont Fawr and subsequent phases of repair/modification and rebuilding. There is also the potential for encountering buried archaeological deposits (including the potential for the survival of waterlogged remains). All below ground works undertaken must be conducted under a programme of appropriate archaeological mitigation.

## 8.0 Bibliography

Ballinger, J. 1927. *History of the Gwydir Family*. (Cardiff)

Berks, T. 2007. *Dyffryn Conwy Flood Alleviation Scheme: Archaeological Watching brief*. (GAT Report 696)

Bingley, Rev. W. 1814. *North Wales*

Davidson, A. 2005. *Dyffryn Conwy Flood Alleviation Scheme: Archaeological Assessment*. (GAT Report 618)

Evans, R. T. J. 2010. *Trefriw Borrow Pit. Archaeological Excavation*. (GAT Report No. 864)

Evans, R. T. J. 2010. *Conwy Valley Flood Alleviation Scheme: Llanrwst, Gwynedd*. (GAT Report No. 873)

English Heritage. 2006. *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE)*

Fenton, R. 1917. *Tours in Wales (1804-1813)*. Cambrian Archaeological Association

Lewis, Samuel. 1833. *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*

Pennant, T. 1883 edition. *Tours in Wales Volume 3*. H Humphreys. Caernarfon

Roberts, A & Woodall, E. 1902. *Gossiping Guide to Wales: North Wales and Aberystwyth*. Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. London

Roberts, J. 2006. *Dyffryn Conwy Flood Alleviation Scheme: Archaeological Watching Brief*. (GAT Report 622)

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. 1985 (Revised 2014). *Code of Conduct*

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. 1990 (Revised 2014). *Code of Approved Practice For the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. 1994 (Revised 2014). *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. (Revised 2014). *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives*

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales. 1914. *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire: IV - County of Denbigh Volume 4*

#### **Websites – all sites were visited 30/07/2019**

[www.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html)

[www.data.gov.uk/data/map-preview](http://www.data.gov.uk/data/map-preview)

[www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3161](http://www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3161)

[www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3162](http://www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3162)

[www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3610](http://www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3610)

[www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3612](http://www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3612)

[www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3613](http://www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3613)

[www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3614](http://www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3614)

[www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3622](http://www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=3622)

[www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=16951](http://www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=16951)

[www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/sam/FullReport?lang=&id=207](http://www.cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/sam/FullReport?lang=&id=207)

[www.genuki.org.uk/big/wal/DEN/Llanrwst/Gaz1868](http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/wal/DEN/Llanrwst/Gaz1868)

[www.historypoints.org/index.php?page=pont-fawr-llanrwst](http://www.historypoints.org/index.php?page=pont-fawr-llanrwst)

[www.maps.nls.uk/view/101606577](http://www.maps.nls.uk/view/101606577)

[www.maps.nls.uk/view/101606568](http://www.maps.nls.uk/view/101606568)

[www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk)

[www.penmon.org/page46.htm](http://www.penmon.org/page46.htm)

[www.places.library.wales/browse/53.135/-3.8/16?page=1&alt=](http://www.places.library.wales/browse/53.135/-3.8/16?page=1&alt=)

#### **Archive Sources:**

##### **Bangor University Archives**

1770 Mostyn Estate Map (Bangor Archives MMS 8535)

Mostyn Estate Map dated 1800 (Bangor University Archives MMS 8534)

##### **Conwy Archives**

1770 Gwydir Estate Map (Conwy Archives CX252/22)

1839 Tithe Map of Llanrwst

1875 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Llanrwst

1900 Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Llanrwst

1913 Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Llanrwst

**Gwynedd Archives**

Undated Plan of Pont Fawr (Gwynedd Archives XS1491.106)

1790 Engraving of Pont Fawr (Gwynedd Archives XS175.5)

1904 Photograph of Pont Fawr (Gwynedd Archives)

1905 Photograph of Pont Fawr (Gwynedd Archives CP1162)

1940 Photograph of Pont Fawr (Gwynedd Archives CP80213108)

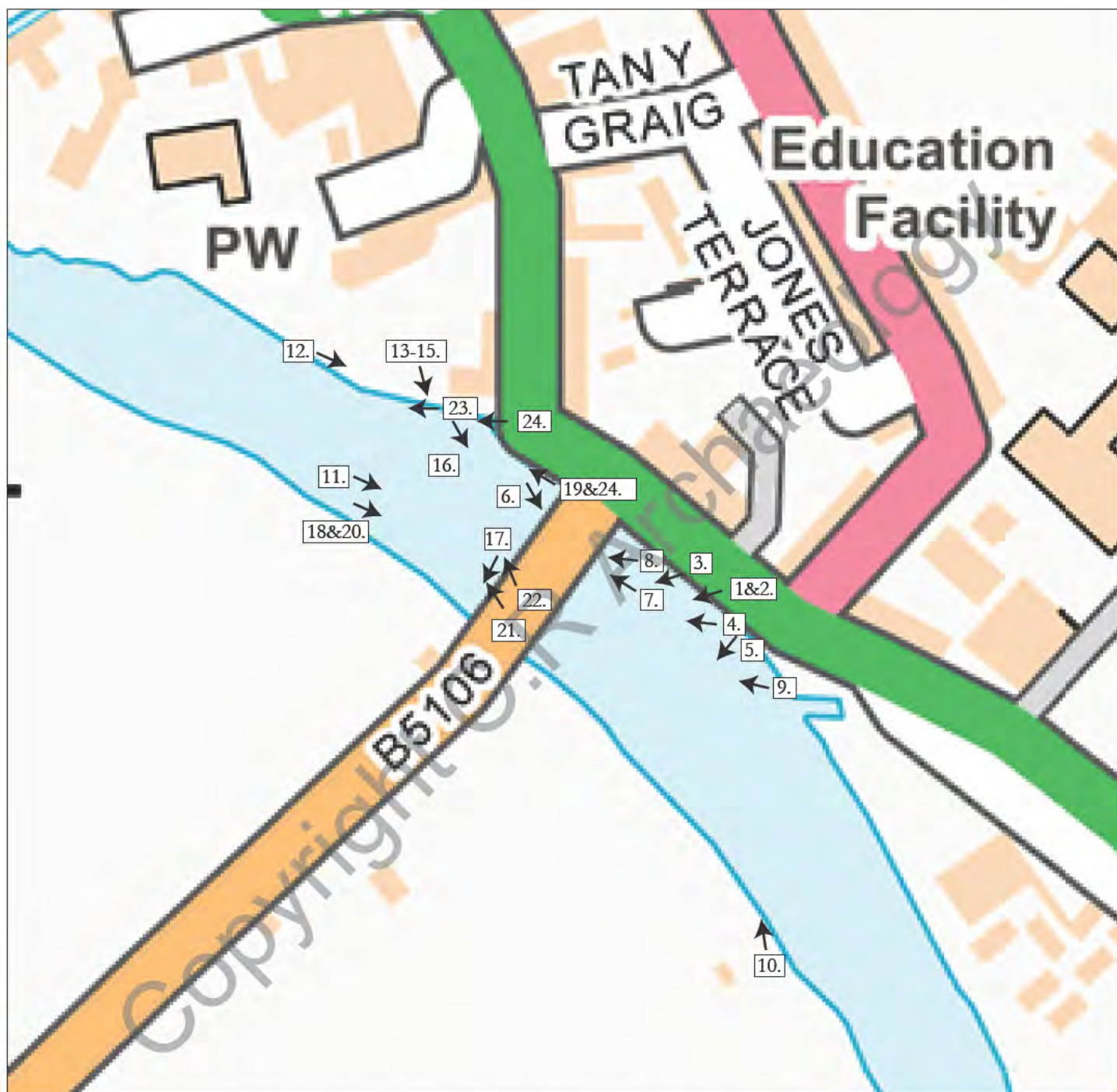
1970 Photograph of Pont Fawr (Gwynedd Archives CP39524231)

Copyright C.R Archaeology



## Appendix A. Location and Direction of Photographic Plates

Copyright C.R Archaeology



**Appendix A. Location and Direction of Photographic Plates**  
 (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019)