

**Results of Archaeological Watching Brief at  
Parish Church of St. Mary, Penllech**

NGR SH 21995 34400



**Report Number CR109-2015**



**C.R Archaeology**

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on Behalf of Friends of Friendless Churches

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## **Results of Archaeological Watching Brief at**

**Parish Church of St. Mary, Penllech**

**Planning Application Number:**

N/A

**National Grid Reference:**

SH 21995 34400

**Client:**

Friends of Friendless Churches

**Report Author:**

Catherine Rees

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## **1.0 Introduction**

C.R Archaeology were instructed by Friends of Friendless Churches to conduct an intermittent archaeological watching brief on drainage works at the church.

St. Mary's Church is a Grade II\* Listed Building (Cadw ID: 4380, NPRN 43791, PRN 3649 & 7052) set in a rural location. Although now within the parish of Tudweiliog, St. Mary's Church was once the Parish Church of Penllech.

Penllech Parish was a medium-sized parish on the north-western coast of the Llŷn and consists primarily of low-lying rough pasture. The church is located at the southern end of the old parish and is reached via a farm lane associated with the neighbouring farm yard (figure 1). The site is under the stewardship of the Friends of Friendless Churches and it is open to the public.

The works carried out at the church consisted of the hand excavation of three drainage trenches which ran along the northern and southern church walls. The trenches were up to 0.96m in depth and were on average 0.40m in width. The first trench was located along the southern wall and ran from the centre of the church, through the graveyard to the western boundary wall. The second trench was attached to trench 1 but ran in the opposite direction, along the southern wall to the eastern boundary wall. The third drain was located on the northern side of the church and ran the full length of the church from the north-eastern to the northern-western corners and continued through the graveyard to the western boundary wall. This trench had to be slightly kinked to avoid a possible stone cist encountered during excavation.

A single slate capped grave was encountered in trench 1. Due to the mixed nature of the soil no actual cut could be identified for recording purposes. The grave lay below the development area and was therefore not excavated. An earlier stone built grave was encountered in trench 2 and the drainage trench was slightly modified so as to avoid damaging the monument.

The foundations of the church were exposed during the works and it was evident from their construction method that they belonged to the Medieval phase of the churches construction. The foundations were built using large local boulders and were earth bonded with an earthen and smaller stone core. The foundations were stepped out at the eastern end of the church.

## **2.0 Project Aims & Objectives**

The aim of this programme of works was to monitor the works in the churchyard and to record any archaeological remains exposed.

The objective of the archaeological programme was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

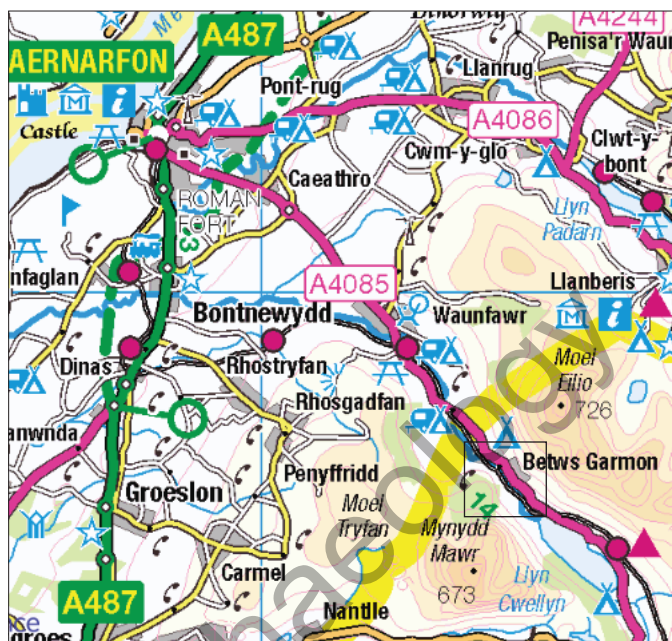
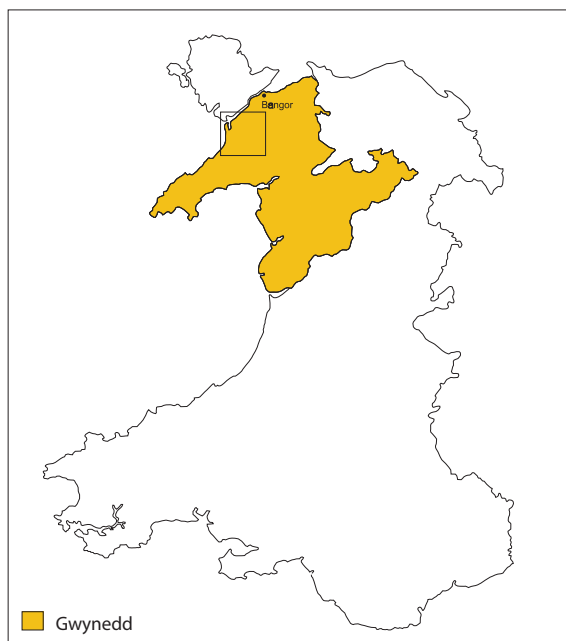
## **3.0 Scheme of Works - Methodology**

### **3.1 Desk Based Research**

A history of the site was compiled utilising material sourced from Bangor University and Gwynedd Archives, Caernarfon. A map progression of the area was undertaken.

The RCAHMW database and the commission's survey of the area were also consulted together with the Cadw Listed Building Description. The information collected is discussed within the main report text.

The works were carried out accordance with the CIfA Standards and Guidance (2014).



**Figure 1. Site Location Map**  
 (Source: OS Open Data Mapping Contains Ordnance Survey data  
 © Crown copyright and database right 2015)

This material forms the historical background of the full archaeological report. This report includes the results of the watching brief.

### **3.2 Methodology for Archaeological Watching Brief**

An intermittent watching brief was carried out on the site and all trenches were examined and recorded by an archaeologist from C.R Archaeology prior to backfilling with gravel. The drainage trenches were hand excavated by the on site contractor.

It was originally proposed that all trenches would be excavated and left open until Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October when an archaeologist from C.R Archaeology would visit the site and record them. This methodology was however modified when C.R Archaeology visited the site on Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> to deliver fencing. During this visit the contractor expressed concern that due to the sandy nature of the soil it would be unwise to leave trenches exposed as it was feared they may collapse should it rain over night. The decision was taken to record each trench immediately following its excavation and visits were made to the site on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> and Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> October.

For trench 1 this resulted in the photographs being taken using a 20 mega pixel Sony Ericsson phone camera without scales as it was considered more important to backfill the trench that day than to return to the site with scales. The church foundations were also not trowel cleaned as they were in the other trenches but they were examined in detail.

Fieldwork was conducted by Catherine Rees of C.R Archaeology.

#### **3.2.1 Recording**

The record forms at C.R Archaeology are based on the English Heritage system and full written, graphic and photographic records were made in accordance with the English Heritage *Field Recording Manual*. Sample forms can be provided on request. The written record comprises completed *pro-forma* record sheets.

A high-resolution 14.2mp Sony Alpha digital camera was used to create a photographic record of the site.

#### **3.2.2 Additional Mitigation/Contingency Measures**

No additional mitigation or contingency measures were required.

#### **3.2.3 Recovery, Processing and Curation of Artefactual Material**

Disarticulated human remains were not analysed and were reburied on site. No other artefactual material was recovered during works.

The works were carried out in accordance with The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (Revised 2014).

#### **3.2.4 Archive Compilation**

All records created during the fieldwork have been checked for consistency and accuracy and will form part of the *Primary Site Archive (PI)* (EH 2006). The archive will contain all data collected, including records and other specialist materials. It will be ordered, indexed, adequately documented, internally consistent, secure, quantified, conforming to standards required by the archive repository and signposted appropriately to ensure future use in research, as detailed in the English Heritage *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) methodology.



The archive will be assembled in accordance with the guidelines published in, *Standards in the museum care of archaeological collections* (Museums & Galleries Commission 1994), *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage* (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, 1990) and *Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (AAF 2007).

All materials contained within the *Primary Site Archive (P1)* that are subsequently identified by the *Assessment Report (P2)* as appropriate for analysis will be processed by suitable specialists and the resultant *Research Archive (P3)* will be checked and ordered according to *MoRPHE* criteria.

The paper archive will be deposited with the RCAHMW, Aberystwyth.

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

Works at St. Mary's Church commenced on October 12<sup>th</sup> 2015 and visits to site were made on 3 days.

### **3.4 Staffing**

The project was managed by Catherine Rees (MCIfA, BA Archaeology, MA Archaeology, PgDip Historic Environment Conservation). Site work was conducted by Catherine Rees. Stefanie Vincent (MSc), (osteoarchaeologist at Salisbury Museum) acted as consultant when required.

All projects are carried out in accordance with CIfA *Standard and Guidance* documents.

### **3.5 Monitoring**

The project was not subject to monitoring by Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Services. GAPS were however notified that the works were to be undertaken.

### **3.6 Health and Safety**

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.

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

- Safety Helmets (EN397)
- Hi-visibility vests (EN471)
- Safety footwear – steel toecap and mid-sole boots and Wellingtons (EN345-47)

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

C.R Archaeology staff were also compliant with any Health and Safety Policy or specific on-site instructions provided by the client or their appointed Principal contractor or H&S coordinator.

### **3.7 The Report**

This 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. The report contains a site plan showing the locations of photographs taken.

This report includes:

- A location plan
- Drawings detailing the locations of all excavated areas
- All identified features plotted on an appropriately scaled plan of the development site
- A plan illustrating the location and direction of any photographs or drawings
- A full bibliography of sources consulted
- An archive compact disc

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.

### **3.7.1 Copyright**

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 Specification.

## **4.0 Geographical and Geological Context**

### **4.1 Topography**

Penllech Parish was a medium-sized parish on the north-western coast of the Llŷn and consisted primarily of low-lying rough pasture. The church is located at the southern end of the old parish and is reached via a farm lane associated with the neighbouring farm yard.

### **4.2 Geology**

The underlying bedrock is recorded as “*Gwna Group - Breccia. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 508 to 635 million years ago in the Cambrian and Ediacaran Periods. Local environment previously dominated by sub-aqueous slopes. These rocks were formed from the material accumulated by movements on underwater slopes, in both marine and lacustrine settings including slumps on the delta front, continental slope and along submarine canyons*”.

The superficial geology is recorded as “*Till, Devensian - Diamicton. Superficial Deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. Local environment previously dominated by ice age conditions. These rocks were formed in cold periods with Ice Age glaciers scouring the landscape and depositing moraines of till with outwash sand and gravel deposits from seasonal and post glacial meltwaters*” (Source: [www.mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html](http://www.mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html)).

## **5.0 Historical Background**

Penllech Parish was a medium-sized parish on the north-western coast of the Llŷn and consisted primarily of low-lying rough pasture. The church was located at the southern end of the old parish and is reached via a farm lane associated with the neighbouring farm yard.

Due to the focused nature of the works undertaken, and the lack of recovery of any finds which are unrelated to the church itself, a wider examination of the archaeological resource in the surrounding area was not conducted. This section details the history of the church only.

The earliest recorded reference to the church is in the 1254 Valuation of Norwich although as with many of the other churches on this part of the Llŷn may well have much earlier origins (RCAHMW 1964:85).



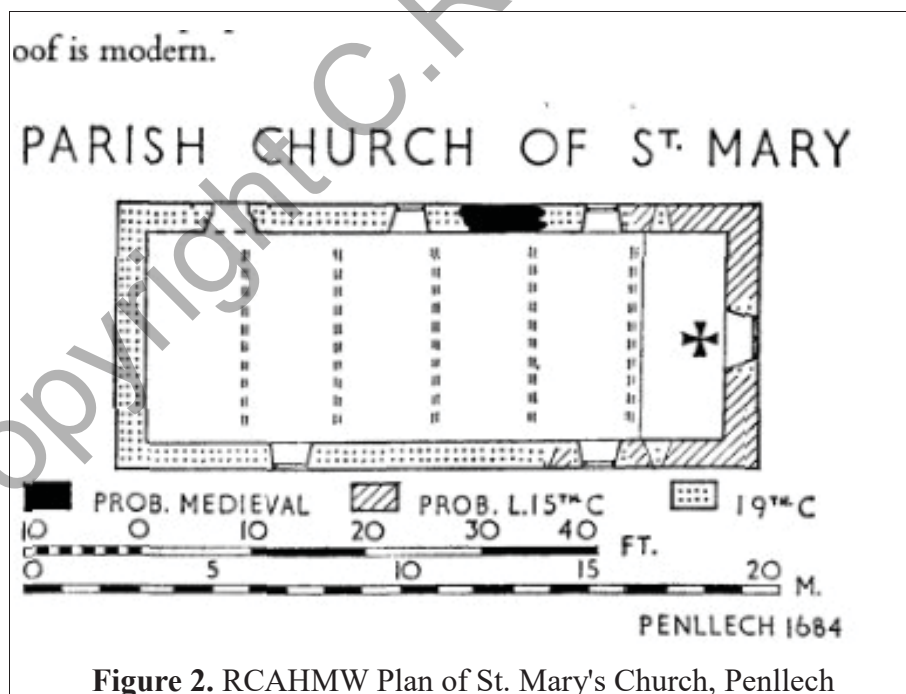
The following passage is taken from the RCAHMW Inventory 1964 and details the church interior and exterior at this time.

*“The Parish Church of St. Mary stands near the S. end of the parish and is reached from the farmyard beside Plas-ym-Mhenllech., the direct approach from the S.E having been closed. The church has no division other than a chancel step, part of which remains beneath the pulpit. The walls are built of rubble. The slate roof is modern.*

*The church was partly rebuilt in 1840; most of the S. and W. walls and all the existing openings appear to be of this date, which is cut on the door and on one of the roof trusses. In the older, roughly coursed, masonry remaining mostly in the lower part of the N. wall the junction between nave and chancel has been masked by patching, but there is enough of a difference between the two to suggest that they were built in succession as in other churches of this region. As the chancel bears traces of three slit windows it seems likely that both parts were medieval in origin”* (RCAHMW 1964: 85).

A number of items within the fittings list are also of interest as they are still retained within the church – these are: communion table with turned legs, 18<sup>th</sup> century, communion rails: plain, early nineteenth century, font: plain cylindrical bowl, 2ft in diameter, standing on modern square base: bowl possibly Medieval, stone drum, 11 ½ ins in diameter, 1 ft 2 ins high, roughly squared at base and kept beside the font is probably the original stand or part of it, pulpit, octagonal, panelled with suspended sounding board decorated with fret and moulding at edge, eight rayed sun in relief beneath; early 19<sup>th</sup> century. contemporary reading desk beside it, seating; to the E. are three panelled box-pews; to the W. the rest is of fixed open benches; all early 19<sup>th</sup> century” (RCAHMW 1964: 85).

An interpretive plan of the church is also included with the entry and is reproduced below.



As mentioned above the building is a Grade II\* Listed Building, listed thus for the unaltered early C19 interior, with box pews. The listing description is included below.

## ***“History***

*Anglican parish church of Penllech. Medieval origins, much rebuilt in 1840, but never given a full Gothic Revival restoration, such that the interior remains late Georgian in type. Probably the E end is C15 added to an earlier church of which only some rough masonry low on the N wall remain.*

## ***Interior***

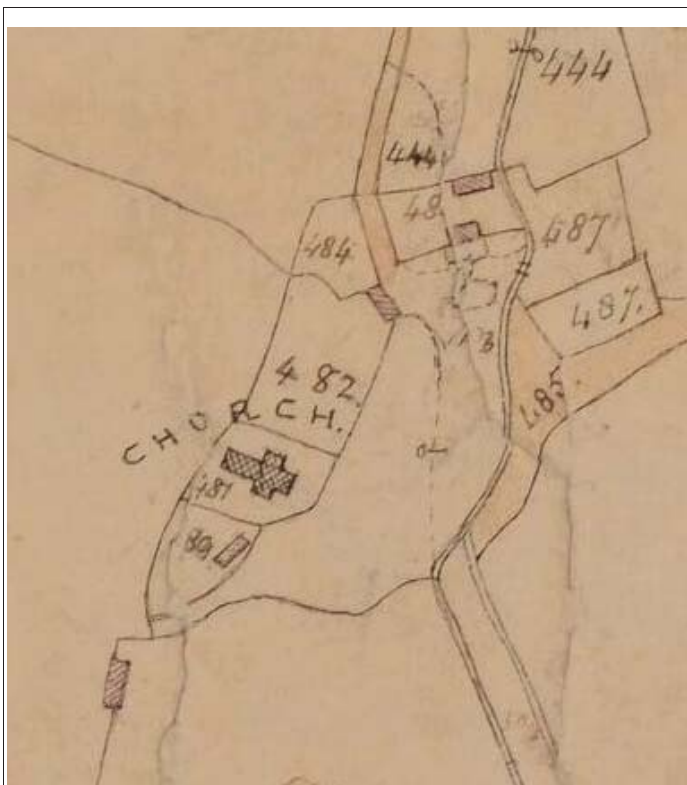
*Simple plastered walls and 5 whitewashed pine roof trusses. These roof trusses are of collar type with diagonal bracing below and wishbone struts above collars, one dated 1840. Fittings of the early C19 all in painted grained pine. NE end complete group of 2 box-pews and three-decker pulpit, the pulpit comprising a pew-type enclosure in front of the pulpit itself and a panelled cupboard-cum-reading desk. The pulpit, to N of and slightly higher than desk, is octagonal (the diagonal faces shorter) and has single candle-holder and added bookrest. Above, to similar octagonal shape, is a suspended sounding board with moulded cornice and underside decorated with 8-ray sun. SE corner has single box pew in angle, higher than 2 more to W. Rest of the church is furnished each side with 8 early C19 open-back pews fixed to rails along walls and simple curved bench-ends to aisle. Benches along W wall and S side facing font. Floor of quarry tiles. At SW end a rough circular medieval font bowl set into a roughly square whitewashed rendered pier. By the base is whitewashed lower half of a medieval font pedestal.*

## ***Exterior***

*Parish church, rubble stone with purple slate single roof. W end coped gable with bellcote. Stonework is mostly coursed and of 1840, as on windowless W end. Bellcote is gabled with rectangular single bell-opening, bell dated 1894, bell-pull to outside. Plain pointed windows with stone voussoirs and wooden Y-tracery, 2-light glazing, 2 windows each side, one larger at E end (tracery apparently of cement). Ledged door to N side right, with cambered head, dated 1840. Traces of blocked slit windows in chancel N and S”(Cadw Listed Building Description ID 4380).*

The church is however more generally referred the 1833 “*Topographical Directory of Wales*” and Samuel Lewis writes of the parish “*PENLLECH (PEN-LLECH), a parish in the hundred of COMMITMAEN, Lley division of the county of CARNARVON, NORTH WALES, 10 miles (W.) from Pwllheli, containing 268 inhabitants. This place derives its name, signifying " the head of the rock," from its situation at the extremity of some rocks on the coast of St. George's channel. It is composed of comparatively a small portion of arable and pasture land, which is enclosed and in a good state of cultivation. The inhabitants are principally employed in agricultural pursuits, except during the season of the herring fishery, which is carried on here to a considerable extent. Of the great quantity of herrings taken on this coast part is salted and sent coastwise for the supply of distant markets. The living is annexed to the rectory of Llaniestyn, in the archdeaconry and diocese of Bangor. The church, dedicated to St. Mary, is not distinguished for any architectural details of importance. There are some trifling benefactions in money, the interest of which is annually distributed among the poor of the parish, in conformity with the intentions of the benefactors. Cevnamwlch, the birthplace of Bishop Griffith, which, under the head of Llaniestyn, has been erroneously described as being in that parish, is included within the limits of this. The average annual expenditure for the support of the poor is £184.4”.*

This dismissal of the church by Lewis is somewhat characteristic of the interest expressed in the church by visitors of this era and is there is very little mention of the church in the tours of Wales journals and travelogues made during the eighteen and nineteenth centuries and no descriptions of the earlier church could be sourced during research.



**Figure 3.** 1840's tithe Map Showing St. Mary's Church, Penllech

## 5.1 Cartographic Evidence

No estate maps could be sourced which show the church prior to the compilation of the 1840's Tithe map.

### Tithe Map c.1840 (figure 3)

The Tithe map (figure 3) shows the church in its current location and graveyard boundary is shown as the distinctive five sided shape which has been retained to this day. The tithe does however show the church as having a cruciform plan. This was not evident during excavation and this is believed to have been the shape chosen to denote a church rather than a true representation of the earlier church layout.

### Ordnance Survey Maps 1888 – 1949 (figures 4-7)

There are no changes to the church building itself shown on the Ordnance Survey Maps between 1888 and 1949. There are also no changes shown to the graveyard boundaries. The First Edition shows 2 small outbuildings against the

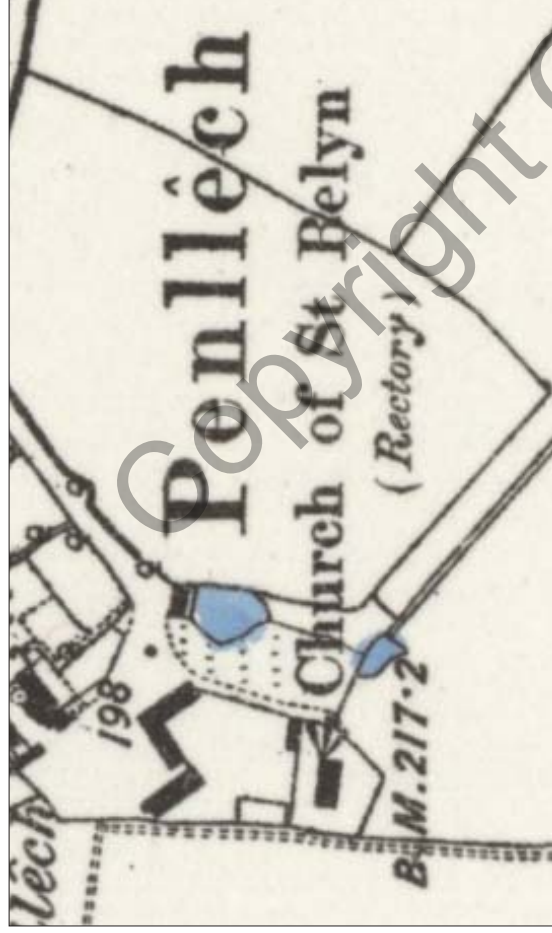
outside of northern boundary wall. The eastern most of these buildings has been removed by the 1899 survey for the Second Edition map and the larger western building is absent by the 1914 survey. There is a further possible small structure which is only shown on the 1888 map edition. It is located in the entranceway to the graveyard and may have been a lynch gate.

The most interesting feature of the Ordnance Survey data is the dedication of the church which is recorded as Church of St Belyn. A number of sources refer to an association between Belyn and a Romano-Celtic deity Belenos (other versions of this name include Belinos, Belenus, Belinus & Belin). He is frequently linked to the Roman god Apollo and he is associated primarily with northern Italy although as an oracle and health-giving deity the tradition is widespread. The name is commonly interpreted as meaning “bright one” (Koch & Minard 2012: 88).

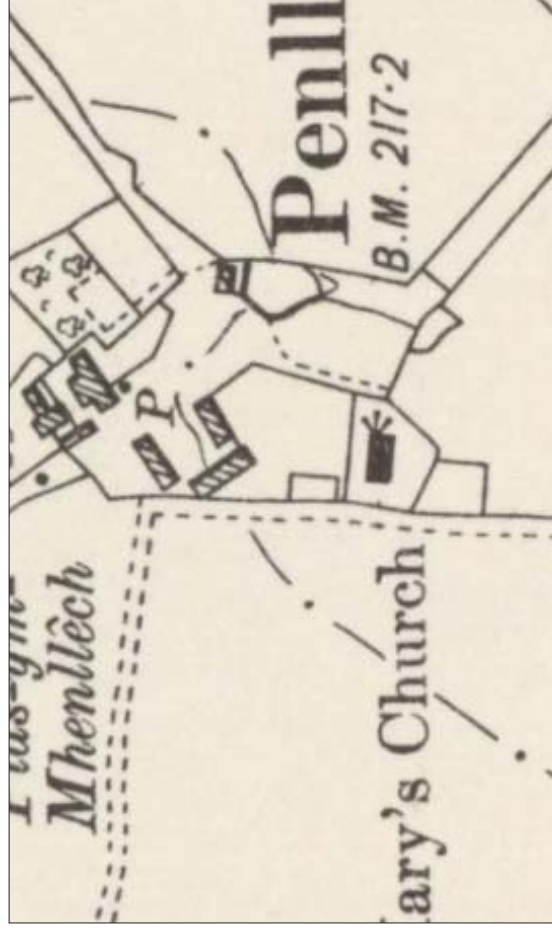
Belyn the Brythonic spelling and there is a strong connection between Belyn and the Llŷn. Belyn o Llŷn is referred to in Early Welsh manuscripts as a warrior who died fighting for Cadwallon ap Cadfan against the Northumbrian Edwin in Rhos around 627, and in her translation and interpretative work on the “Triads of Prydein” Dr Rachel Bronwich records a number of instances in which he appears.

Pickering also makes reference to Belyn in his 1873 paper and cites that that Welsh sources record that the battle was fought at Bryn Ceneu'r Rhos and that the fight was so obstinate the Belyn's men fettered themselves two and two, being resolved to die or keep the field (1873: 32).

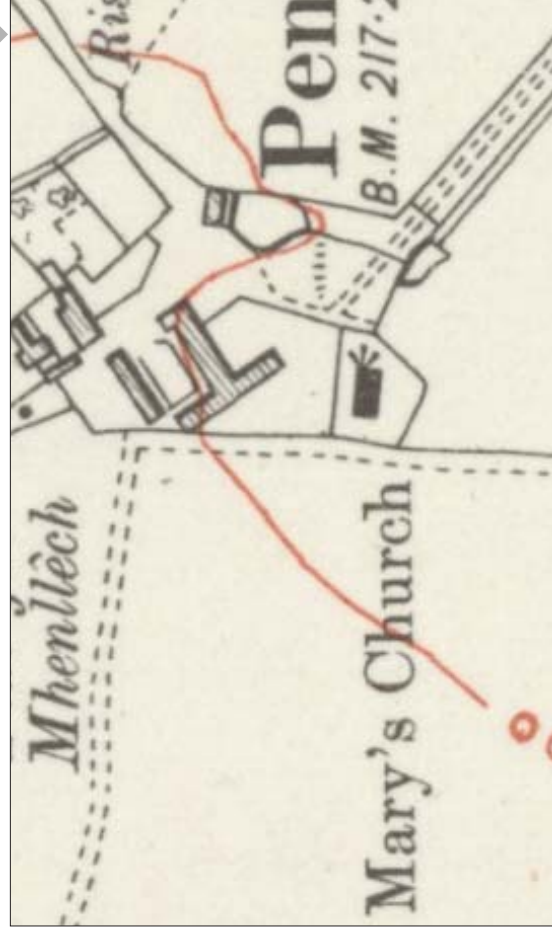




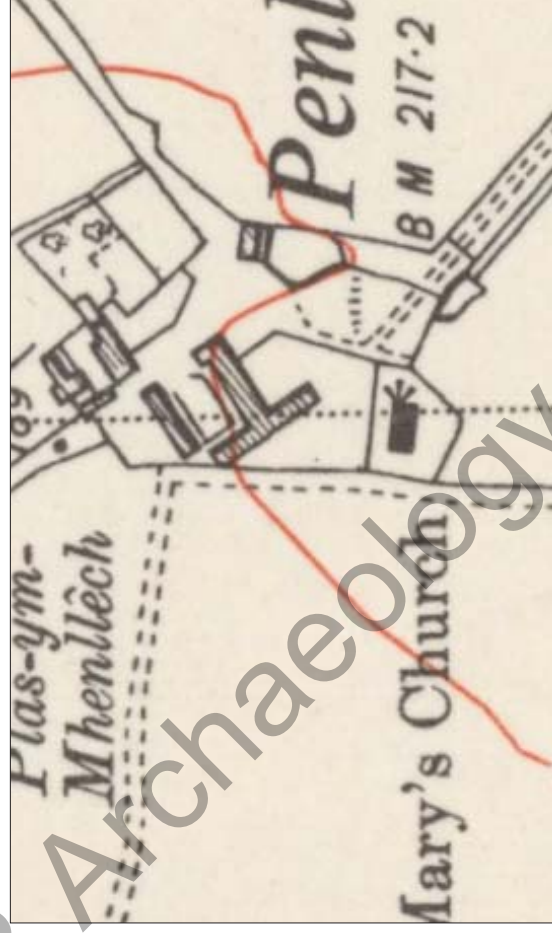
**Figure 4.** 1888 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map  
Showing St. Mary's Church, Llyn



**Figure 5.** 1901 Edition Ordnance Survey Map  
Showing St. Mary's Church, Llyn (Revised 1899)



**Figure 6.** 1920 Edition Ordnance Survey Map  
Showing St. Mary's Church, Llyn (Revised 1914)



**Figure 7.** 1953 Edition Ordnance Survey Map  
Showing St. Mary's Church, Llyn (Revised 1949)

This is expanded upon by Davies 2014 who writes “*the forces raised by the kings of Gwynedd for their clashes with Northumbria in the early seventh century also seem to have been composed of the combined war bands of various lords or petty kings. In the Triads, one of the “Three Noble Retinues” was that of Belyn of Llŷn who was killed with his men when Edwin invaded Gwynedd in 628. Cadwallon escaped to Ireland with the majority of his force and it may be speculated that Belyn's gosgordd was detached to delay Edwin and give Cadwallon time to get away*” (Davies 2014: 65).

There is a strong local association with Belyn in the form of place name evidence and a Tyddyn Belyn is located near nearby (Bronwich 2014). Although circumstantial the association of the church with a 7<sup>th</sup> century patron could be taken as an indication of a very early foundation date for Penllech Church although as yet there is little supporting evidence. As mentioned above there is very little recorded of the church in the tours of Wales journals and travelogues made during the eighteen and nineteenth centuries. Indeed in his tour Pennant rather enigmatically notes of this area of the Llŷn “*the churches in this country are of very ancient foundation. Some cause or other prevented me from seeing several old inscriptions*” (Pennant 1883: 376)

An alternative origin for the church dedication is given by [www.snowdoniaheritage.info](http://www.snowdoniaheritage.info) which states “*we have no information about Belyn, but Belyau was one of the daughters of Brychan Brycheiniog and sister of Nyfain (Nefyn). Near the church there is a house called ‘Tyddyn Belyn’ (smallholding + Belyn)*”.

## **6.0 Results of Archaeological Works (Figure 8)**

The works carried out at the church consisted of the hand excavation of three drainage trenches. The trenches were excavated by the principle contractors and as archaeological works were conducted as an intermittent watching brief archaeologists were not on site during the majority of the excavation works. The trenches were recorded by an archaeologist from C.R Archaeology prior to backfilling.

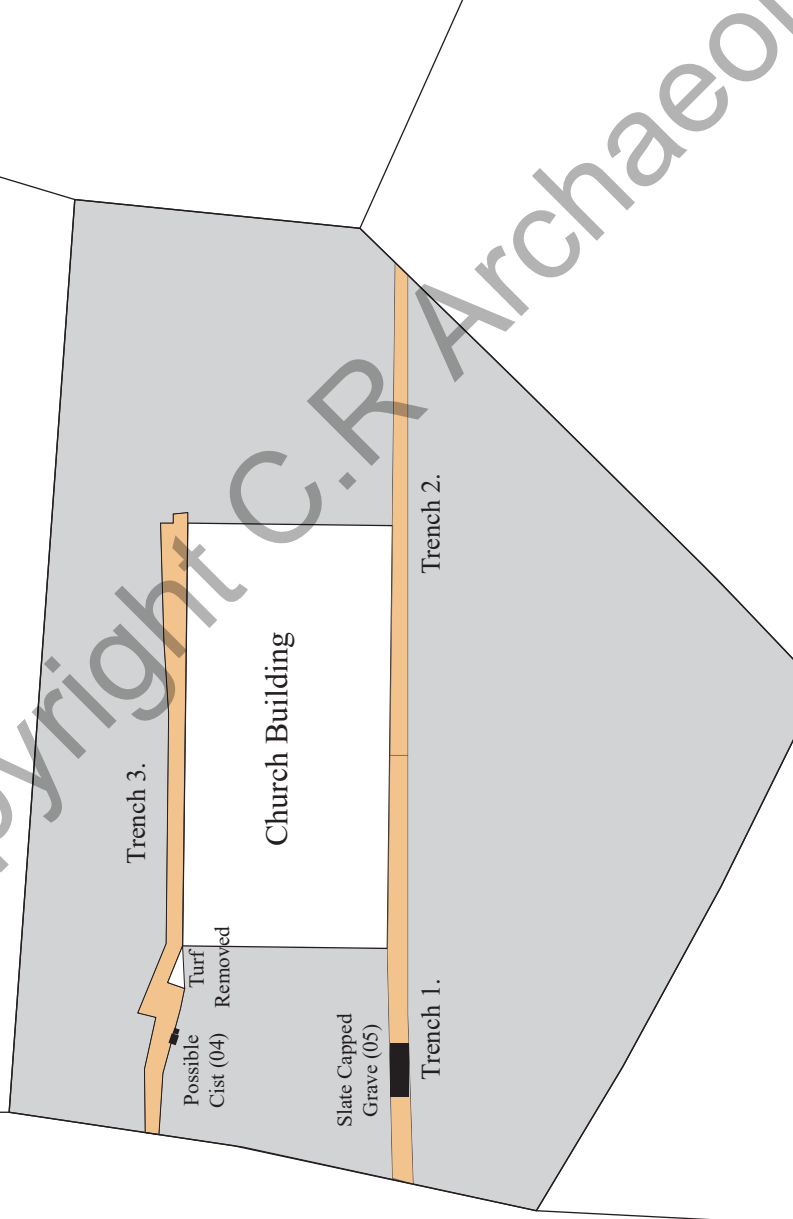
A photographic survey of the church was made and this is included as plates 1 -13.

### **Drainage Trench 1 (Plates 14 - 17)**

Drainage trench 1 was orientated on a east-west axis and ran from roughly the centre of the southern church wall to the western enclosure boundary wall, a distance of 18.15m. The trench had an average width of 0.40m and had a maximum depth of 0.90m.

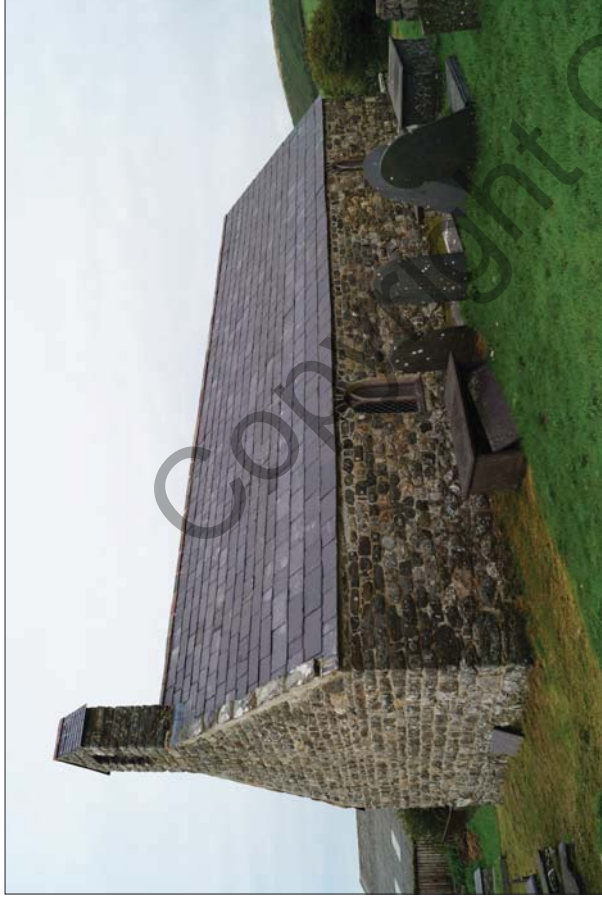
Three contexts were identified within this trench. The topsoil/turf layer (01) had an average depth of 0.20m, and was a mid-brown sandy clay with occasional small slate and angular stone inclusions. Context (02) had a maximum depth of 0.65m and was a mid-brown sandy-clay-silt mixed graveyard soil. It contained occasional small slate and angular stone inclusions. A small number of very degraded human bone fragments were recovered during works and were placed at the base of the trench and reburied. The deposit was very mixed as a result of frequent digging within the graveyard. Context (03) was the underlying light-mid brown clay natural. It was reached at an average depth of around 0.60 – 0.70m.

A single grave (context 05 see plates 14 & 15) was encountered during works. It was located 4.93m from the south-western corner of the church and was 0.90m below the ground level. The grave was not fully exposed as it lay partially outside the excavation limits. The grave was not disturbed as it lay below the required depth for works. It was slate-capped with six slate pieces and was 2.10m in length. They were not lifted for closer examination but the slates appear to have been roof tiles which had been re-purposed as a grave cover. Given the incorporation of slate into the grave it is likely that the grave was of nineteenth century date.



**Figure 8. Trench Location Plan**  
(Scale is Approximate Only)





**Plate 1.** St. Mary's Church, Penllech.  
Southern and Western Elevations



**Plate 2.** St. Mary's Church, Penllech.  
Western and Northern Elevations



**Plate 3.** St. Mary's Church, Penllech.  
Eastern and Southern Elevations



**Plate 4.** St. Mary's Church, Penllech.  
Eastern Elevation (2m Scale)





**Plate 5.** St. Mary's Church, Penllech.  
Northern and Eastern Elevations



**Plate 6.** St. Mary's Church, Penllech.  
Southern Elevation (2m Scale)



**Plate 7.** Southern Elevation Showing Nineteenth Century Window Flanked by the Remains of Two Lancet Windows



**Plate 8.** Southern Elevation Showing Nineteenth Century Window Flanked by the Remains of Two Lancet Windows (Wider Angle)





**Plate 9.** Western Elevation



**Plate 10.** Doorway in Northern Elevation



**Plate 11.** St. Mary's Church, Penllech. Northern Elevation  
Note Medieval Stonework at Base of Wall



**Plate 12.** Northern Elevation Showing Patching with Smaller Stone Between Chancel and Nave and Remains of Lancet Window



**Plate 13.** St. Mary's Church, Penllech.  
Eastern & Northern Elevations (2m Scale)



## Trench 1.



**Plate 14.** Trench 1 Facing East  
Showing Slate Capped Grave (05)



**Plate 15.** Trench 1 Facing East  
Showing Slate Capped Grave (05)



**Plate 16.** Trench 1 Facing East  
Showing Stone Rubble Foundations



**Plate 17.** Trench 1 Facing West  
Showing Stone Rubble Foundations



As was observed within the other trenches the church foundations were earth bonded and no traces of mortar were found on any of the stones. The foundations were constructed using the same mix of rubble stone as was observed within the church walls themselves, although larger stones were generally used. The foundations in this portion of the church were partially stepped out from the walls above. This was a maximum of 0.16m from western elevation but were almost flush for the upper layers along the southern church wall. It was however evident that at the base of the trench the foundations stepped out further and are presumably from an earlier construction phase. The use of this construction method would indicate that the foundations belong to the Medieval church and had been reused when the western gable was rebuilt in 1840. The foundations for the church were very substantial and continued below the limit of excavation.

### **Drainage Trench 2 (Plates 18 -26)**

Drainage trench 2 was orientated on a east-west axis and ran from roughly the centre of the southern church wall to the eastern enclosure boundary wall, a distance of c.20m. The trench had an average width of 0.40m and had a maximum depth of 0.96m.

Three contexts were identified within this trench. The topsoil/turf layer (01) had an average depth of 0.20m, and was a mid-brown sandy clay with occasional small slate and angular stone inclusions. Context (02) had a maximum depth of 0.65m and was a mid-brown sandy-clay-silt mixed graveyard soil. It contained occasional small slate and angular stone inclusions. A very small number of very degraded human bone fragments were recovered during works and were placed at the base of the trench and reburied. The deposit was very mixed as a result of frequent digging within the graveyard. Context (03) was the underlying light-mid brown clay natural. It was reached at an average depth of around 0.60 – 0.70m. No burials were encountered in this trench.

The church foundations uncovered in trench 2 showed that the foundations also step out at the chancel end of the church. They jut out up to 0.19m from the church walls above. This continues at ground level for 4.1m from the south-eastern corner the foundations. The foundations continue at this width at the lowest level of the trench but are stepped inwards to become almost flush with the church at the upper level. This is best demonstrated in plates 24 – 26. These upper foundations are also earth bonded and therefore also presumably Medieval but belong to a later phase than those encountered below .

### **Drainage Trench 3 (Plates 27 - 37)**

Drainage trench 3 was orientated on a east-west axis and ran from the north-eastern corner of the church, along the entire length of the northern church wall (a distance of 16.4m), through the graveyard to the western boundary wall, (a distance of 9.5m). The trench had an average width of 0.60m at its eastern end and 0.40m at the western extent. The trench had a maximum depth of 0.75m.

Three contexts were identified within this trench. The topsoil/turf layer (01) had an average depth of 0.20m, and was a mid-brown sandy clay with occasional small slate and angular stone inclusions. Context (02) had a maximum depth of 0.65m and was a mid-brown sandy-clay-silt mixed graveyard soil. It contained occasional small slate and angular stone inclusions. A larger number of human bones were recovered during the excavation of this trench and the bone was much better preserved than the bone encountered in trenches 1 & 2. It did not appear to have decayed significantly and the fragments were much larger and did not have the “spongy” texture of those encountered in trenches 1 & 2. The remains were placed at the base of the trench and reburied following the completion of works. Deposit (02) was very mixed as a result of frequent digging within the graveyard. Context (03) was the underlying light-mid brown clay natural. It was reached at an average depth of around 0.50 – 0.60m.



## Trench 2



**Plate 18.** Trench 2 Facing East



**Plate 19.** Trench 2 Facing West



**Plate 20.** Trench 2 Sample Section



**Plate 21.** Trench 2 Projecting  
Earth Bonded Church Foundations



## Trench 2

### Plate 22-6. Projecting Earth Bonded Church Foundations







**Plate 27.** Trench 3 Graveyard Stretch Facing West



**Plate 28.** Trench 3 Graveyard Stretch Facing East



**Plate 29.** North Facing Section of Trench 3 Showing Remains Of Possible Eighteenth Century Cist Grave (04)



**Plate 30.** Early Eighteenth Century Grave Stone. Supported on Smaller Stone Slabs. Same Construction as Seen in Plate 29



**Plate 31.** Trench 3 Sample Section of Graveyard Stretch



### Trench 3



**Plate 32.** Eastern End of Trench  
Showing Foundations



**Plate 33.** Eastern End of Trench  
Showing Foundations



**Plate 34.** Eastern End of Trench  
Showing Foundations



**Plate 35.** Trench 3 Facing East  
Showing Foundation Level



**Plate 36.** Trench 3 Showing Foundation Level Section Detail



**Plate 37.** Trench 3 Showing Foundation Level Section Detail



A single possible cist burial (context 04, see plate 29) was encountered during works. It was located approximately 3.1m from the north-western corner of the church. It was not excavated as the trench was repositioned so as to avoid disturbing the grave, although the trench section was cleaned to reveal an upright stone slab at the western head end of the grave and a possible base or side slab at 90° to it. The grave cut could not be identified due to the mixed nature of the soil but it did appear that the grave had more than likely been disturbed by later burials. The grave was of what appeared to be limestone construction and was similar to another grave found in the cemetery which was dated to the 1730's (plate 30).

A 0.35m in width (from the wall above, see plates 32 & 33) the church foundations uncovered in the eastern end of this trench were wider than those encountered in the other two trenches and confirm that the church is built on the foundations of an earlier structure. The current church is actually a little narrower and on a slightly different orientation than the earlier foundations, hence the significant stepping out of the foundations. It is also clear that the chancel and the nave are of different phases and presumably the church was lengthened when it was rebuilt.

## **7.0 Discussion**

The Medieval church foundations uncovered during the drainage works tie in rather neatly with the building phasing which can be determined from the church elevations, and largely support the interpretation of the building provided by both Cadw and the RCAHMW although the survival of Medieval stonework is considered to be greater than is shown on the RCAHMW plan (figure 2).

From the examination of the excavation records it would seem most likely that the wider foundations of the eastern end of the church belong to a twelfth or thirteenth century church. The church is later extensively remodelled and the current chancel built. The RCAHMW dates this to the late 15<sup>th</sup> century although the actual date may be a little earlier. An examination of the northern, southern and eastern elevations reveals the extent of the survival of this earliest phase.

On the northern elevation (see plates 10 – 13) the stonework for the chancel is clearly seen to survive to until just after the eastern window, although it is possible that the lower course of the wall continues until around the second window. The window itself is a nineteenth century modification but to the east of the current window the remains of a lancet window can be seen which is contemporary with the chancel. To the west of this nineteenth century window the stonework is noticeably different and there is a clear area of “patching” where the chancel and nave meet (see plate 12). Here much smaller stone has been used to infill between the two areas. It would seem most likely that the nave is of a slightly later date than the chancel given that it respects the change in building orientation noted above.

The nave is however considered to be of Medieval date with the window and door representing nineteenth century modifications. The upper courses of stonework from approximately level with the lower point of the doorway header upwards are also clearly part of the 1840's rebuilding of the church and the coursing is much more regular and a more uniform stone size is utilised (see plate 11).

The Medieval stonework is clearly evident on the eastern elevation of the chancel and one can observe the much more irregular coursing and stone size (see plate 4). The window opening in this elevation is a nineteenth century modification and no trace of the earlier opening has survived.

The southern elevation (plates 6 – 8) is also partially of Medieval date and the eastern end of the building retains the traces of two lancet windows flanking the nineteenth century window (see plates 7 & 8). The extent of the Medieval stonework is best illustrated in plate 25 which shows the earlier construction stands slightly raised in comparison to the later nineteenth century work.

The western elevation (plate 9) is largely of nineteenth century date, and the upper wall portion and bell tower all exhibit the characteristic neatness and regularity of the later masons. The lower section of the wall is however far less regular and is of the same phase as the nave remains observed on the northern elevation.

## 8.0 Conclusion

The excavation of the three drainage trenches alongside the church provided an invaluable opportunity to examine the church foundations. From this work it was possible to establish that the church phase mentioned in the 1254 Norwich Valuation Records was located in the same position as the current church, although the current building was very slightly reorientated. The earlier building was of earth bonded construction and large stones were used to create substantial foundations which were in excess on 1m in depth. The larger facing stones have a core containing smaller stones. The church may have been extended in length when the nave was remodelled. The chancel was shown to have been of an earlier date than the nave and several successive phases of Medieval modification were identified in the church stonework.

Little skeletal material was recovered during the excavation of trenches 1 & 2 and the small number of fragments of remains which were encountered were in a very poor state of preservation. There were a greater number of human remains encountered in trench 3 and these remains were very well preserved. It is unclear as to whether this was due to a difference in the age of the material or to very localised differences in ground conditions causing differing decay rates.

It is considered that should any further works be required at the site in the future it would be prudent to have an archaeologist on site for the duration of the works rather than as an intermittent presence. This is due to the high potential of encountering human remains given the exceptional preservation of some material encountered during this phase of works and the possibility of uncovering early burials of potentially Medieval or Early Medieval date which will greatly enhance our knowledge of the period in this region.

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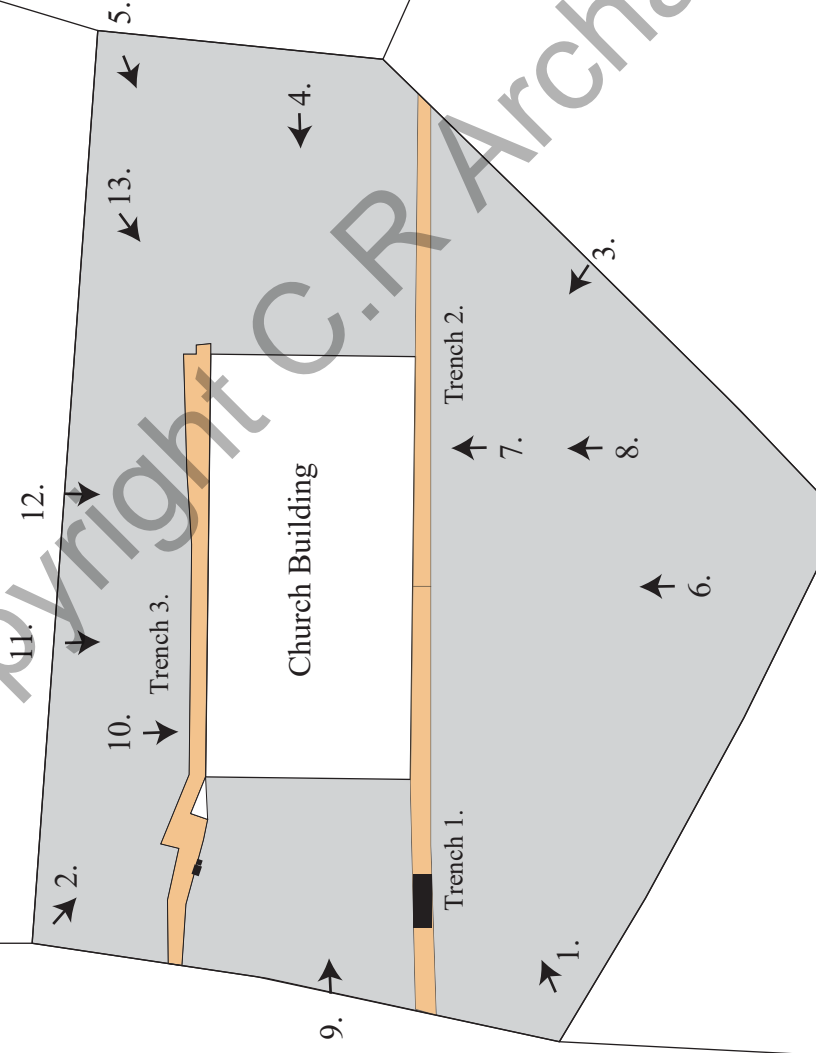
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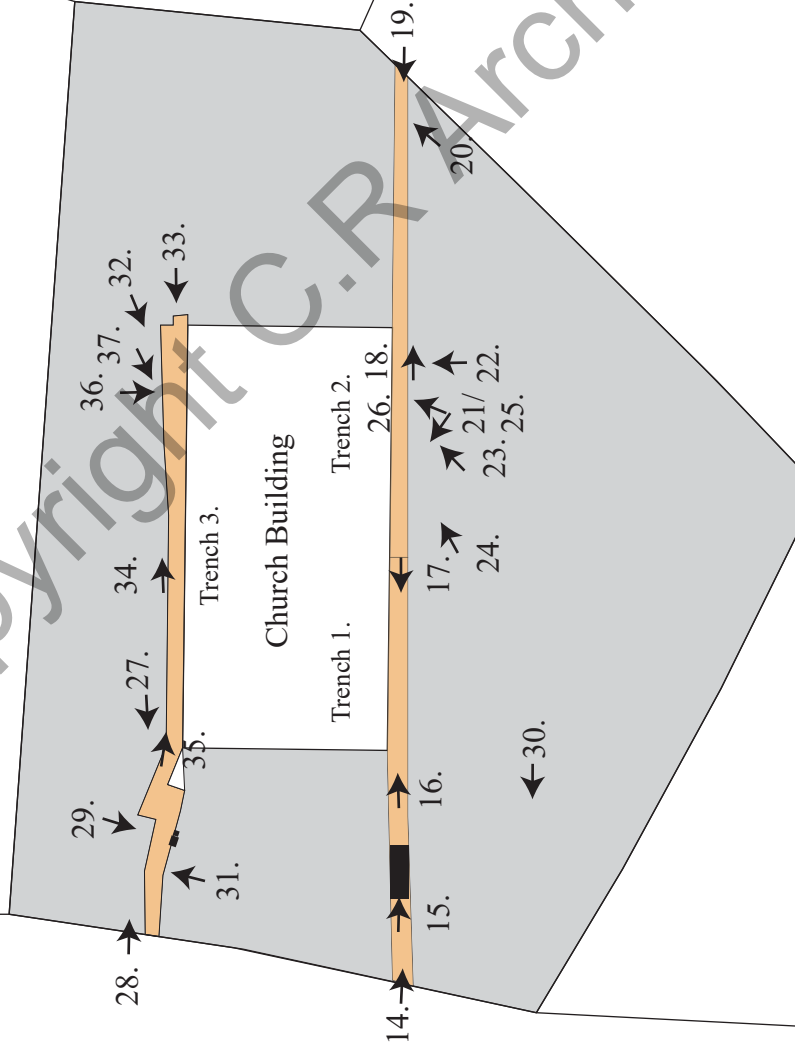
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**Appendix A.**  
Location and Direction  
Of Photographic Plates  
Building Exterior  
(Scale is Approximate Only)



**Appendix A.**  
Location and Direction  
Of Photographic Plates  
Trench Photographs  
(Scale is Approximate Only)