



Ymddiriedolaeth Genedlaethol
National Trust

Proposed Visitor Centre, Henfaes, Aberdaron.

Archaeological Assessment

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Plate 1: General View of Henfaes

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Summary

An archaeological assessment has been carried out for the site of the proposed new visitor centre at Henfaes Aberdaron. No archaeological sites are known to occur or were observed on the area of the development and the potential for encountering subsurface archaeological remains is assessed as being low. Existing structures, to be removed by the proposed development are C20th in date and the impact of their removal is assessed as being low. There remains the possibility, however, of encountering the remains of C19th structures upon their removal. The core of Aberdaron village is distinctive and of historic merit. It is inevitable that there will be some visual impact. Building design sympathetic to local styles should ensure that this impact is relatively low.

1. Introduction

Centred on SH 17242 26450 Henfaes car park is located immediately west of the centre of the village of Aberdaron at the southern end of the Llyn Peninsula (Figure 1). Topographically the car park sits on a level area, bounded by the base of a cliff to the north, and the Afon Daron, now canalised, to the south. The car park contains a series of relatively modern buildings, a large domestic building functioning as holiday apartments, two outbuildings currently used for storage, and a public toilet (Plate 1).

Aberdaron is located in the Llyn and Ynys Enlli Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest (Cadw, 1998).

Proposals have been made to locate a new building on the car park to function as a visitor centre. The proposed new building would be located at the eastern end of Henfaes car park, adjacent to the holiday apartments, and would necessitate the removal of the existing out buildings (Figure 2). The proposal has prompted the need to provide an archaeological assessment for the proposed new visitor centre, which identifies, records and evaluates the archaeology and the historic environment of the area affected (Appendix 2). Recommendations for a programme of archaeological work as necessary to mitigate the impact of the development have also been made.

2. Desk Top Appraisal

Prehistoric activity is noted at not too great a distance from Aberdaron, flintwork from Pared Llechmynydd, 3km to the south west, Castell Odo hillfort, 3 km to the north east and Anelog hut circles 2.5 km to the north west. The immediate environs of Aberdaron, however, are somewhat lacking in evidence for early archaeology. This is largely because of an intensive agricultural regime which stretches back to the medieval period.

A 1 km search, centred on Aberdaon, of records held by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales reveals almost exclusively medieval and post medieval sites and buildings (Appendix 1). One exception is the find spot of a Prehistoric stone axe at a location 0.5 km to the north east (PRN 3292).

Aberdaron village has its origins in the early medieval period. The nave of the parish church, possibly dates to the 12th century and is on the site of an earlier clas church, a quasi-monastic institution. A clas came into being as a result of an agreement between the leaders of a community to donate their land, or part of it, for the purpose of building and maintaining a church. This community would have had close associations with the monastic house on Ynys Enlli, with Aberdaron traditionally identified as one of the crossing points for pilgrims to Ynys Enlli. The core of the village centres on the confluence of two streams, the Daron and the Cyllyfelin and the parish church of St Hywyns. Land around the village is largely a patchwork of fields reflecting the shape and tennorial demarcations of a medieval arable cultivation regime. Today although remaining small, modern settlement has extended along the roads which approach the village from the north.

The core of the village remains compact and has a number of listed buildings and structures (Figure 2, Appendix 1). St Hywyn's Church has a C12th nave, C14th and C15th additions and significant C19th restoration (Plate 2). Y Gegin Fach probably dates to the C17th (Plate 3). Rhiw Road Cottages are a row of C17th cottages (Plate 4). The Post Office is a 1950's house by Sir Clough Williams Ellis, formerly the village post office (Plate 5). Y Felin is an early C19th corn mill. Pont Fawr and Pont Fach are C19th stone bridges, Pont Fach with an early milestone. Glasfor, Gwnfor and Uwch y Don are all post medieval cottages.

Two scheduled monuments, early medieval inscribed stones, are located within the church of St Hywyns (CN089 and 090). Memorials to 6th Century priests these are of great significance in a local context. The stones, however, are not in their original position, having been found originally near to Anelog, 2 km to the west.

Historic mapping demonstrates that there has been a structure at Henfaes since at least 1836. Both the 1836 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 3) and the 1845 Tithe map (Figure 4) show a single building at the location of the Henfaes holiday apartments within the field immediately west of Aberdaron village centre. The 1845 Tithe schedule states that this field was partly waste, partly under arable cultivation at this time. Subsequent Ordnance Survey mapping shows developments and additions to the buildings and subdivisions appear within the adjacent land (Figures 5, 6 and 7).

Early 20th Century photographs held at the Gwynedd Archives in Caernarfon show the field subdivided and variously ploughed or under grass (Plate 6). The photographs suggest that there is little in the way of physical boundaries, walls or banks, between the fields. Today the buildings are essentially modern in appearance although it is possible that some slightly older elements may be preserved within. Recently used as garages and for storage, local knowledge suggests that they were once cow houses (*pers com* Paul Lewis, Llyn Head Ranger). No evidence for subdivisions within the adjoining land, the car park, survives today.

3. Field Evaluation

The site was visited on 30th March 2012. There is no evidence on the site for upstanding archaeological features (Plate 7). Examination of weathered spoil around the top of a recently installed Propane tank, immediately west of the holiday apartments, revealed a flint artefact at SH 17260 26466.

This is a flint end scraper with a straight distal end made on a fragment of polished tool, most likely an axe. There is a small area of inverse retouch. The scraper is very slightly rolled but not to a large extent. The scraper is likely to be a late Neolithic or early Bronze Age recycling of a Neolithic flint axe (*pers.com*. Dr I. P. Brooks) (Plate 8 and 9). The artefact is considered very likely to be residual as it is known that the previous site owner stored resurfacing materials close to this location.

The holiday apartments occupy a building of late C19th date with C20th additions and recent renovation work. This building likely occupies the site of an earlier structure seen on the 1845 Tithe map but will not be affected by the development.

The desk top study indicates that outbuildings on the site first appeared in the late 19th century. The current layout of the outbuildings does not appear to conform to any of the layouts seen on early Ordnance Survey maps (Figures 5-8). Equally they do not appear to be the buildings shown in early 20th century images (Plate 6). The outbuildings are largely constructed of a modern grey brick. The western gable end of the more northerly structure incorporates a section of roughly constructed stone walling perhaps representing the partial remains of an earlier structure (Plate 10, 11 and 12).

It would seem therefore that these are later 20th century rebuilds possibly incorporating some remains of, or re-use of materials from late 19th century structures.

4. Geotechnical Test Pits

On the 16th July 2012 five test pits were excavated for geotechnical purposes in the area of the proposed development. The author was able to observe the excavation of the test pits to assess for the presence of archaeological deposits.

Geological mapping indicates that the site is covered by superficial deposits of glacial till overlying Llanviran mudstones, siltstones and sandstones of Ordovician age (British Geological Survey, 2012)

The test pits were located as shown in Figure 8. All five pits were 0.5 m wide and between 2.2 and 2.9 m in length. They were excavated to varying depths according to obstacles encountered and the stability of deposits, with the greatest depth being 2.7 m (T3). T1 was only excavated to a depth of 0.6 m because a modern service pipe was encountered.

The deposits were notably comparable between all five pits. A dark brown humic topsoil to between 0.3 and 0.5 m below the ground surface, above a red brown sandy clay subsoil to between 1.5 and 2 m below the ground surface. These sat above sands and gravels including water worn cobbles (Plates 13 - 15).

No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered with the exception of T2 where the topsoil contained a certain amount of demolition material, stone and mortar fragments, likely to be associated with the rebuilding of adjacent outbuildings which although of a relatively modern build may incorporate elements of earlier structures.

5. Historic Character

Aberdaron village is the largest settlement on the south coast of the Llyn Peninsula. It is remote and unspoilt and has a strong sense of its own identity rooted in traditional Welsh culture. While the village saw much expansion in the twentieth century the core of the settlement retains a traditional coastal character, with buildings invariably rendered or whitewashed against the elements. The roads leading into the village are narrow with surviving early C19th stone bridges crossing the Daron and the Cyllyfelin on the approach to the village centre.

The historic character of Aberdaron village core is one of mixed messages to a certain extent reflecting its changing fortunes and development. The C12th elements of the parish church of St Hywyn are a reminder of this once key location in the medieval ecclesiastical history of Llyn and its connection to Ynys Enlli. Simple stone cottages are reminders of the efforts of past communities of fishermen, labourers and craftsmen, to make a living at this remote village location. One of these cottages, Y Gegin Fawr, is thought to be C17th in date but is traditionally the gathering point for pilgrims to Ynys Enlli. Today it is a café. The C19th buildings, including the Ship Inn, Ty Newydd and Henfaes itself mark the start of village expansion and the shift in emphasis towards the tourist trade. A few corrugated iron structures of more recent date are a reminder of the community making do during hard times. While the polite architecture of the 1950's Post Office by Clough Williams Ellis seems to simply be asking to be admired.

6. Assessment of Impact

6.1. Direct Impact

There will be a direct impact on the current out buildings at Henfaes as it is proposed that these will be demolished as part of the development. The buildings date to the C20th and are not considered to be of great architectural merit, the impact is therefore assessed to be low.

There is also the potential for direct impact on unknown sub surface archaeological features. The assessment suggests that the likelihood of encountering archaeological features is low although it can not be ruled out completely. The impact is therefore considered to be low.

6.2. Indirect Impact

There will be an indirect visual impact on the historic setting of the village of Aberdaron. The greatest impact is likely to be from the approach to the village from the west (Plate 1) rather than from within the village. The use of traditional pitched roofs and traditional materials and the alignment of the building in tune with adjacent structures lessen the impact. The overall impact is assessed as being low.

7. Conclusions

Aberdaron has its origins in the medieval period. The development site is close to the core of Aberdaron village. The only surviving medieval structure today is the church of St Hywyns. The most likely position for structures of medieval date on the Henfaes site is at its eastern limit at the location currently occupied by a C19th building which will not be affected by the development.

The area affected by the development has been agricultural land from at least the C19th century with original outbuildings on the site likely serving an agricultural purpose. The current outbuildings on the site are modern replacements of limited architectural merit.

8. Recommendations

1. It is recommended that a photographic record of buildings to be demolished should be made.
2. It is recommended that an archaeological inspection be made immediately post demolition to record any remains of earlier structures.
3. It is recommended that an archaeological watching brief be carried out on all ground disturbance associated with the development to observe and record any sub surface archaeological deposits.

9. Sources

British Geological Survey 1:625000 Onshore Geology
www.bgs.ac.uk/data/services/digimapgb625kml.html

Cadw, 1998. Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales

Cadw listed building records viewed through “Historic Wales”
<http://jura.rcahms.gov.uk/NMW/start.jsp>

Gwynedd Archives, Caernarfon

XS/2721/1-2 Aberdaron, general views from the west showing sailing ship on the beach, black and white, early C20th.

XS/3324/9 The village from the west with fields and the river in the foreground, black and white, early C20th.

XS/3324/10-11 The village from the west, black and white, early C20th.

XS/3324/13 The village from the west with a cart and hay in the field, 1904.

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record

Ordnance Survey Old Series 2 inch map, 1836

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Caernarfonshire XLIII.6, 1888

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Caernarfonshire XLIII.6, 1900

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Caernarfonshire XLIII.6, 1918

RCHAMW Coflien Database

Tithe Map for the Parish of Aberdaron, 1845

Tithe Schedule for the Parish of Aberdaron, 1845

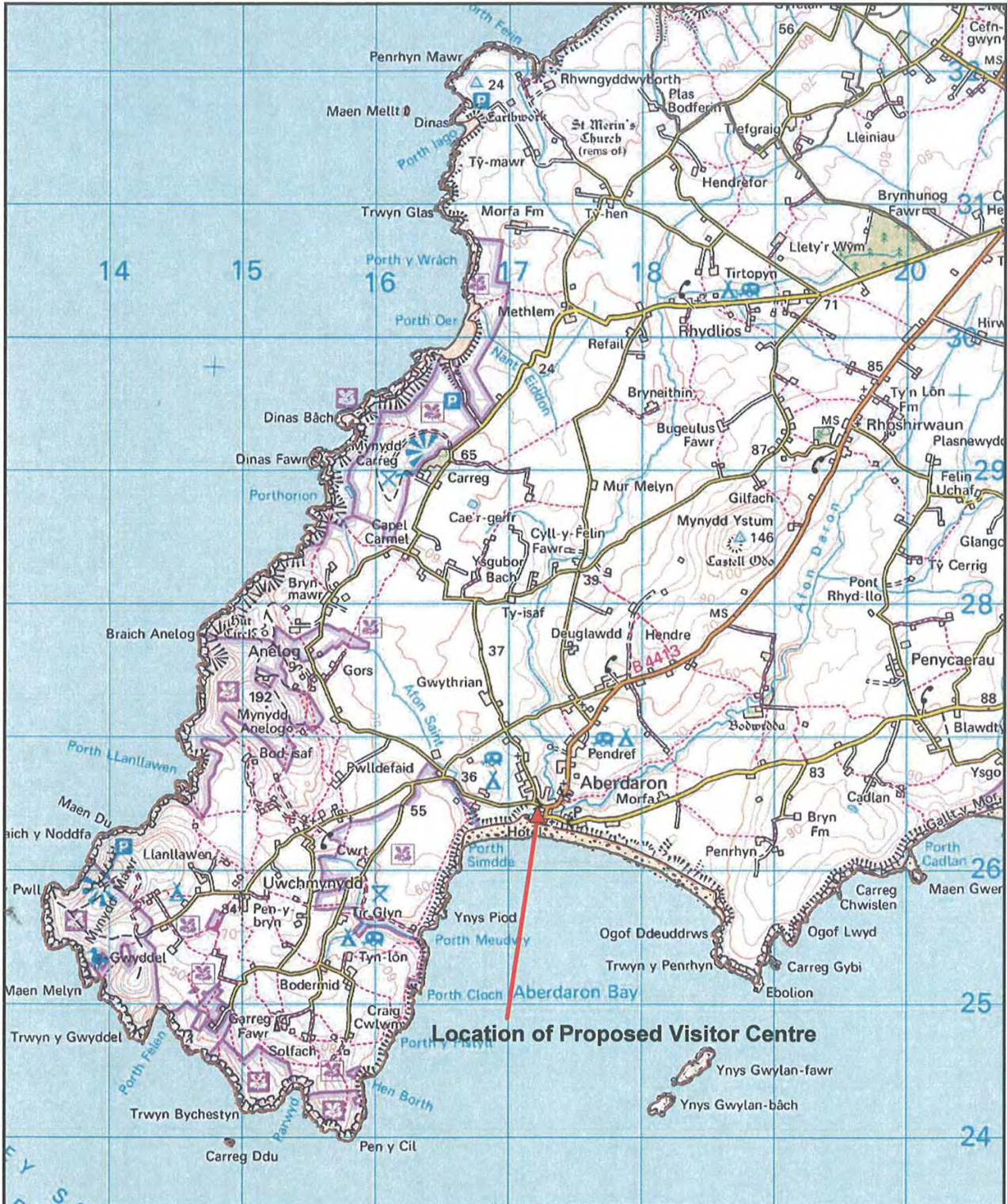


THE NATIONAL TRUST

HISTORIC BUILDINGS, SITES
AND MONUMENTS RECORD

ARCHAEOLOGY SECTION
CONSERVATION DIRECTORATE

TITLE	Figure 1: Location of Proposed Visitor Centre	
PROPERTY	Henfaes	
SCALE	Scale 1:40000	
COMPILED BY	K.Laws	
DATE	12 September 2012	




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THE NATIONAL TRUST

HISTORIC BUILDINGS, SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

ARCHAEOLOGY SECTION
CONSERVATION DIRECTORATE

 **Scheduled Monuments**

 **Listed Buildings**

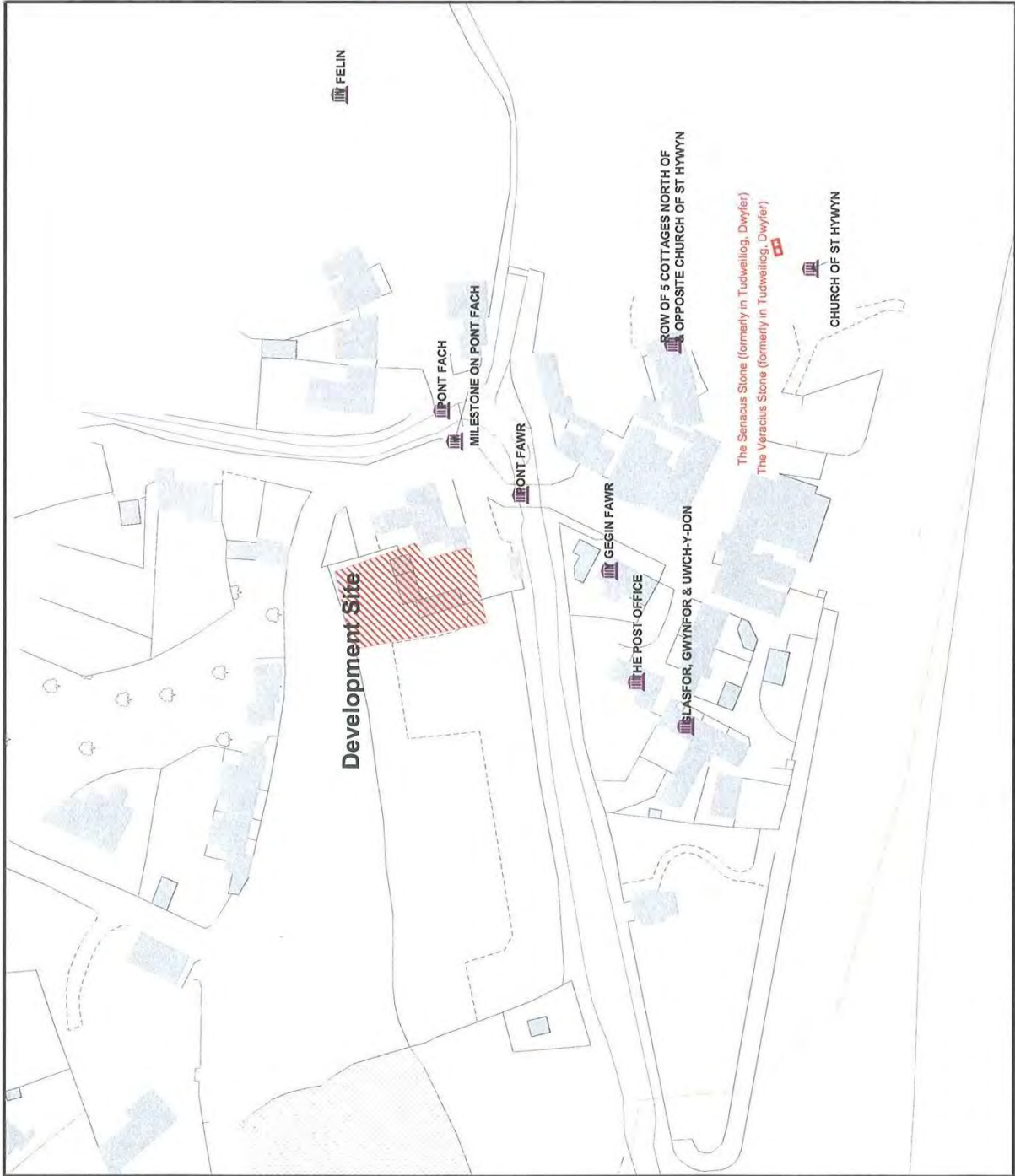
TITLE
Figure 2:
Location of Development,
Listed Buildings and
Scheduled Monuments

PROPERTY
Herfaes

SCALE
Scale 1:1250

COMPILED BY
K.Laws

DATE
12 September 2012



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The National Trust, Heelis, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2NA. Additional map layers derived from measured survey © The National Trust.



Figure 3: Extract from Ordnance Survey 2" Map of 1836

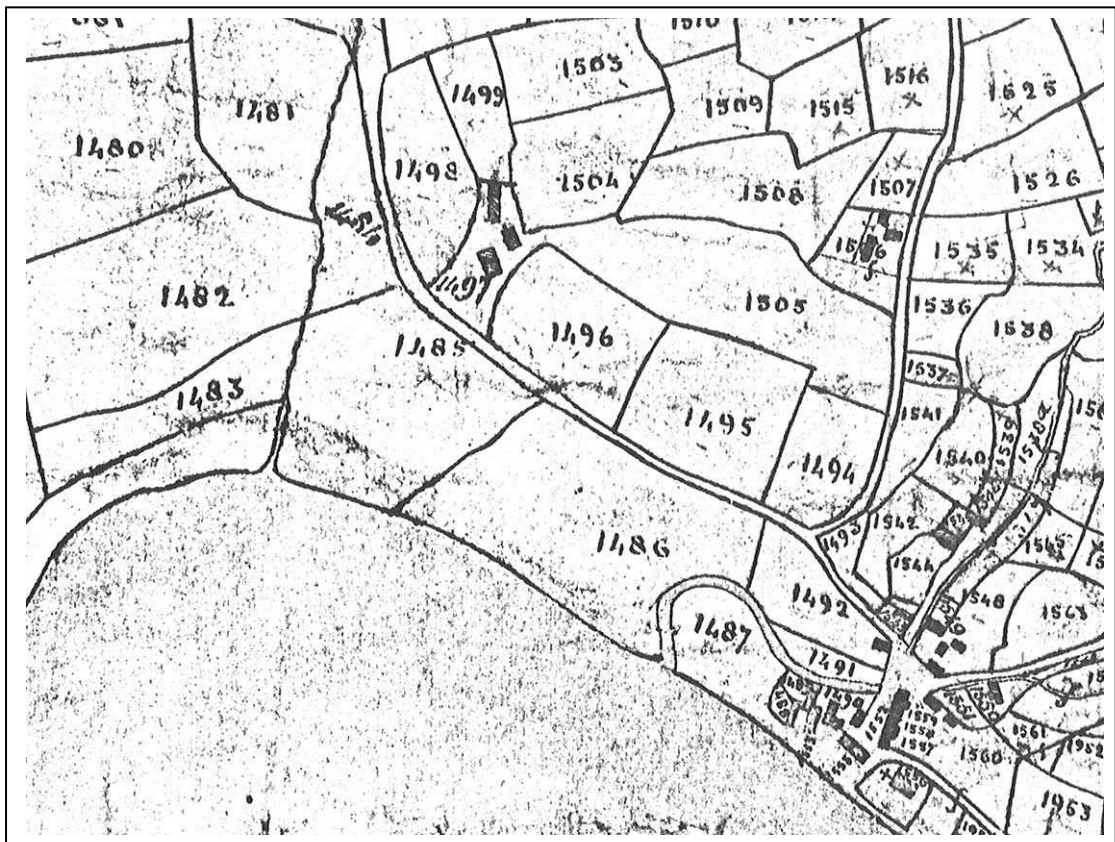


Figure 4: Extract from the 1845 Tithe Map for the Parish of Aberdaron

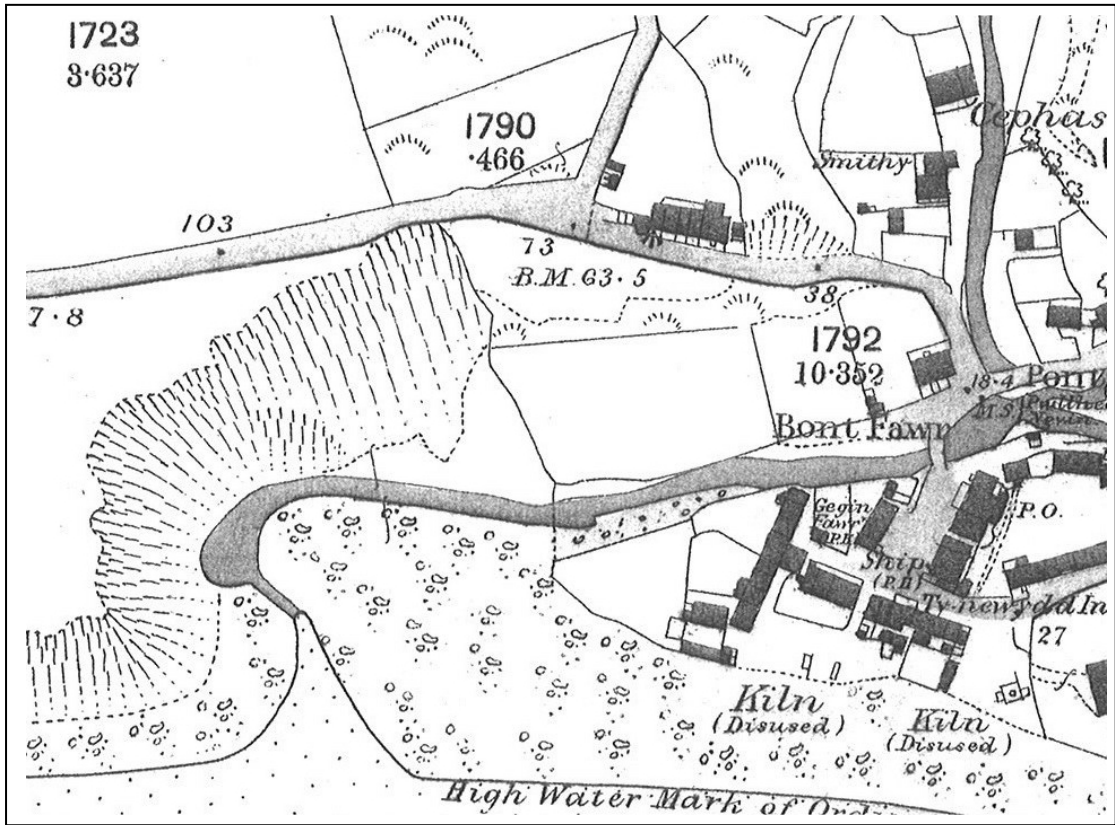


Figure 5: Extract from the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1888

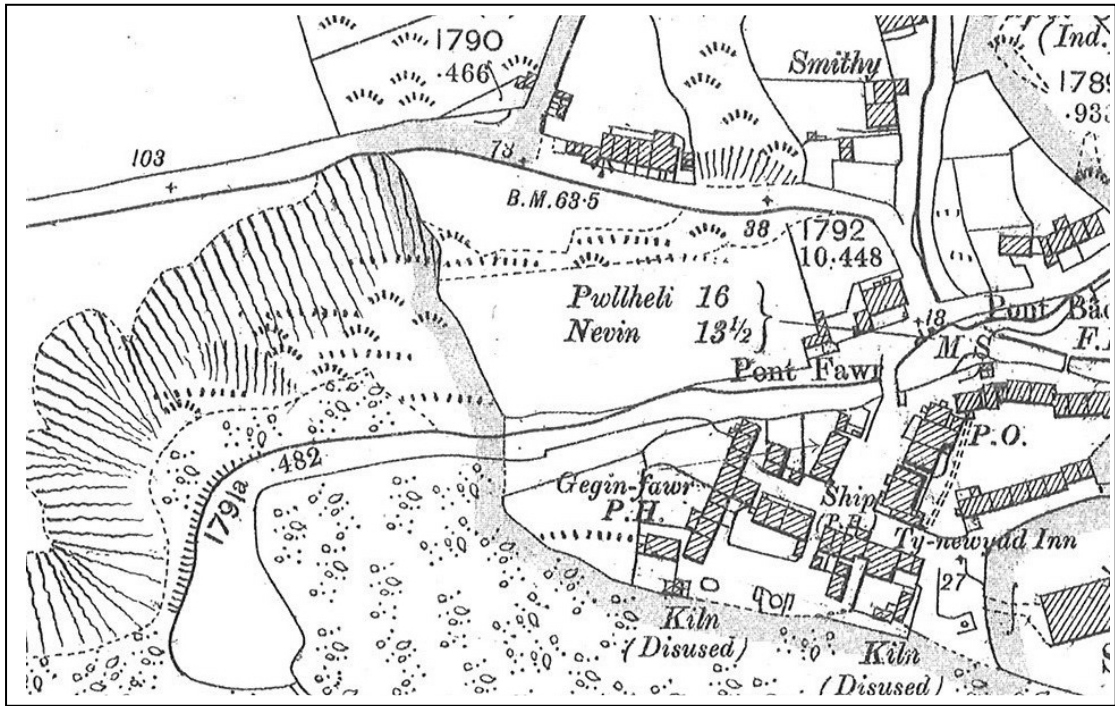


Figure 6: Extract from the Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1900

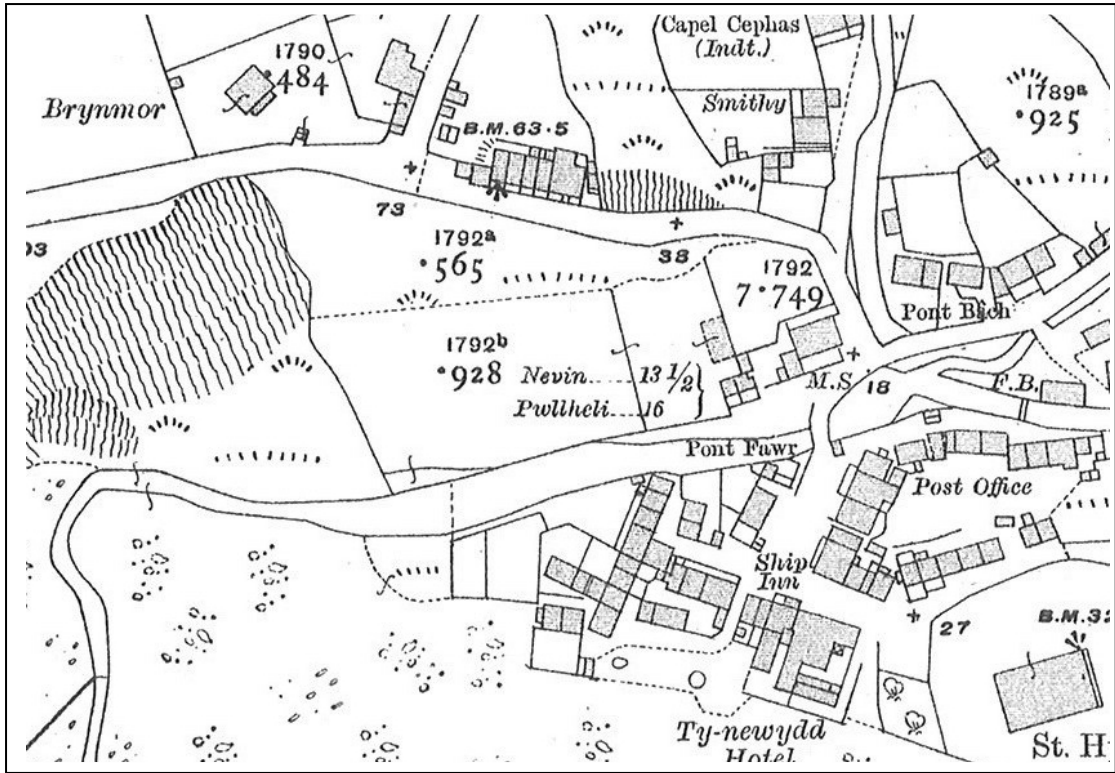


Figure 7: Extract from the Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1918


TITLE	Figure 8: Location of Geotechnical Test Pits	
	 Test Pits	
PROPERTY	Henfaes	
SCALE	Scale 1:314	
COMPILED BY	K.Laws	
DATE	12 September 2012	





Plate 2: St Hywyns Church



Plate 3: Gegin Fawr



Plate 4: Rhiw Road Cottages



Plate 5: The Post Office



Plate 6: Early 20th Century photograph of Henfaes and Aberdaron



Plate 7: View of Henfaes from the west



Plate 8: Flint Scraper, dorsal surface



Plate 9: Flint Scraper, ventral surface



Plate 10: Outbuildings from the north



Plate 11: Outbuildings from the south



Plate 12: Detail of west gable



Plate 13: Test pit 2, looking west



Plate 14: Test pit 4, looking west

Appendix 1: Sites and features within a 1 km radius.

Derived from information held by the GAT HER Charitable Trust copyright, RCHAMW Coflien Database and Cadw listed building records.

LB = Listed Building

SAM = Scheduled Ancient Monument

PRN	NPRN	Name	Site Type	Status	NGR	Period
11444	16799	Rhiw Road, Aberdaron	Building	LB II	SH17322640	Post medieval
11536	16967	Uwch y don, Aberdaron	Building	LB II	SH17302645	Post medieval
11674	23766	Bridge, Aberdaron (Pont Fawr)	Bridge	LB II 4227	SH17272644	Early C19th
11675	23767	Bridge, Aberdaron (Pont Fach)	Bridge	LB II 4228	SH17282645	Early C19th
1936	26042	Bodermabwy, Aberdaron	Building	LB II	SH17412721	Post medieval
1202		Inscribed Stone, Cefn Amlwch (Veracius Stone)	Inscribed Stone	SAM CN090	SH17302630	Early medieval
12035	26249	Cegin Fawr, Aberdaron	Building	LB II 4229	SH17232640	C17th
12155		Glasfor, Aberdaron	Building	LB II	SH17302645	Post Medieval
12191	26563	Gwynfor, Aberdaron	Building	LB II	SH17302645	Post Medieval
1571		Inscribed Stone, Aberdaron (Senacus Stone)	Inscribed Stone	SAM CN089	SH17302630	Early Medieval
21677		Pompren Mine	Barytes Mine		SH16702630	Post Medieval
3290	43749	St Hywyn's Church, Aberdaron	Church	LB I 4225	SH17322637	Medieval
3291		Clas Monastery, Site Of, St Hywyn's	Monastery		SH17322637	Early Medieval
3292		Stone Axe, Findspot,	Findspot		SH17292636	Medieval

		Caerau Farm				
7240		Eglwys St Hywyn's Churchyard	Cemetery		SH17302640	Medieval
776		Fynnon Saint, Holy Well, Minafon	Holy Well		SH16532671	Early Medieval
	411332	Corn Mill, Aberdaron	Corn Mill	LB II	SH1636426472	Post Medieval
		Milestone on Pont Fach	Milestone	LB II 19991	SH1728626447	Early C19th
		The Post Office	Building	LB II 19990	SH1723226406	1950
	16974	Tyn Llan	Cottage		SH1729326395	Post Medieval
	26398	Deunant	House		SH17082678	Post Medieval

Appendix 2: Project Specification

Proposed New Visitor Centre, Henfaes, Aberdaron, Archaeological Assessment

1. Site Location and Description:

- 1.1 A development is proposed within the National Trust owned car park located immediately west of the centre of the village of Aberdaron at the southern end of the Llyn Peninsula.
- 1.2 The car park is centred on SH17242 26450, see map attached.
- 1.3 The development consists of a new building to act as a visitor information point.

2. Archaeological Background:

- 2.1 Aberdaron is a historic village which has retained a small compact traditional village core. A number of buildings and structures within the village have listed building status.
- 2.2 Aberdaron was a clas community with origins in the early medieval period. A clas came into being as a result of an agreement between the leaders of a community to donate their land, or part of it, for the purpose of building and maintaining a church.
- 2.3 In around 1200 the clas community was suppressed in favour of the establishment of a community of Augustinian canons on Bardsey.
- 2.4 The church of St Hywyn at Aberdaron has a 12th Century Romanesque arched doorway. There is the potential for an earlier, perhaps wooden, church at the same location.

3. Objectives:

- 3.1 To provide an archaeological assessment for the proposed new visitor centre at Henfaes, Aberdaron, which both identifies, records and evaluates the archaeology and characterises the built historic environment of the area affected.
- 3.2 To make recommendations for a programme of archaeological works as necessary to mitigate the impact of the development.

4. Methodology:

- 4.1 Desk top analysis:

- 4.1.1 Examination of readily available cartographic and documentary material to provide an overview of the known or potential archaeological resource of the area in which the development is located.
- 4.1.2 To include the presence or absence, character and extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and relative quality of the potential archaeological resource.
- 4.1.3 To include analysis of the character of the local built heritage and how the proposed development might impact upon it.

4.1.2 Sources investigated to include:

- Records held by the Gwynedd Historic Environment Record
- Records held by the National Trust.
- Records and cartographic materials held by Gwynedd Archive Services.
- Records and cartographic materials held by Bangor University Department of Manuscripts.
- Records and cartographic materials held by the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.
- Archive material and aerial photographs held by the RCHAMW, Aberystwyth.

- 4.1.3 Copies of key maps and photographs to be included in the assessment report where copyright restrictions allow.
- 4.1.4 All sources consulted to be listed in the report whether or not they have been productive.

4.2 Site visit:

- 4.2.1 A walk over survey of the whole area will be carried out.
- 4.2.3 All features identified as part of the desk top analysis will be visited, their location and record details checked and updated as necessary.
- 4.2.4 Any previously unrecorded features identified will be recorded in full to include:

- NT Preferred Reference Number
- Site name
- Grid reference
- PRN/NPRN/SAM numbers
- Site type
- Period
- Summary description
- Description
- Assessment of significance, vulnerability, condition and threats
- Assessment of the impact of the development proposal
- Management recommendations as appropriate
- A digital photograph with appropriate scale

4.2.5 A selection of key photographs of the location and the wider environs will be taken to help assess impact on local built historic character and significant views.

4.2.6 An assessment of the site will be made with a view to suitability/potential for further evaluation.

5. Reporting:

5.1 A full report of the findings will be completed for subsequent submission to the Gwynedd Historic Environment Record Office.

5.2 The report will include:

A non technical summary

The results of the desk top analysis

Copies of historic maps where copyright restrictions allow

Results of the site visit

Results of any geotechnical work if available/relevant

A map locating all recorded features

An assessment of the impact of the development on the known or potential archaeological resource

An appraisal of the historic character of the village and any impact the development may have on local architectural distinctiveness and significant views

Recommendations for further evaluation if appropriate

Recommendations for mitigation

Conclusions

Sources

Summary list of sites

Photographic index

A gazetteer of all sites and features

6. Access and Monitoring Arrangements:

6.1 The project will be monitored by the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service.

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(version 2, amended 11th June 2012)