DOLWYDDELAN
RAW WATER MAIN UPGRADE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (G1210)

REPORT NO. 115

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Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (G1210)

prepared for Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru

by A. Shallcross

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Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Report No. 115

DOLWYDDELAN RAW WATER MAIN UPGRADE (GAT Project G1210)

FIELD WALK-OVER REPORT - July 25 1994

1. INTRODUCTION

Welsh Water have proposed the upgrade of an existing raw water main running between the dammed reservoir on Ceunant y Garnedd and the covered reservoir above Dolwyddelan castle, to enable scouring of the pipe to take place. The Planning Advice Section of the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust was consulted by Welsh Water to advise on any likely archaeological implications. The County Sites and Monuments Record identified several known sites in the general area of the proposed development (see Fig.1 'Known Sites'). Although no new areas were to be excavated, it was determined that there was a possibility that areas adjacent to the existing pipeline could be disturbed by vehicular activity whilst the upgrade took place and that this might threaten previously unidentified sites or features. It was therefore recommended that a quick fieldwalk be undertaken in the area surrounding the pipe to identify any archaeologically sensitive areas, so that if necessary, access routes could be diverted away from these. A project brief was supplied to Welsh Water identifying a recommended programme of archaeological work. Subsequently Welsh Water commissioned the Trust's Contracts Section to carry out the work and provide a report.

2. PROJECT BRIEF (summary)

The proposed work will involve scraping and swabbing out the existing pipe in sections. This should not in itself generate archaeological implications. Access pits will be excavated above the pipe at 100-200m intervals and new permanent chambers will be put in at the side of the pipe at c.500m intervals to facilitate cleaning operations in future. Both of these operations will involve ground which has been disturbed in the past, during the construction of the pipeline in the 1950's. Access for the necessary machinery may however lead to the disturbance of archaeology. The area is rocky and access difficult. Maintenance tracks to facilitate upkeep of the pipeline do exist, but the contractors have intimated that parts of the route will require plant to traverse open ground. This may lead to the inadvertent disturbance of archaeological features.

The brief is to carry out a rapid reconnaissance survey of the area on either side of the pipeline with a view to identifying any archaeological sites which may exist and which may be affected by the plant accessing the works. The location of any such sites will be marked on a map and a brief written description made. If conditions (time, weather) allow, photographs could be taken.

In carrying out the above, it should be borne in mind that a working corridor between 6m to 10m was probably in place when the pipeline was originally installed and the survey should concentrate on ground beyond this strip as any sites there may have been within this corridor have probably already been destroyed.

3. METHODOLOGY

Unfortunately the exact line of the proposed plant access routes was not known at the time of the survey. It was therefore decided to field walk the widest possible corridor between the two reservoirs in order to cover all possible routes.

The corridor was walked on two successive days, March 24 and 25 1994, by two members of Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Contracts Section staff. Any potential new archaeological sites and features in the immediate vicinity of the existing pipeline as well as the surrounding area

were identified and located. Recording involved scaled black and white photographs of each feature with colour slides of the general landscape and selected features, all at 35mm format. Brief site notes were made recording the salient details of each feature and it was then located as accurately as possible on enlarged copies of 1:10000 OS maps.

4. FINDINGS

The locations of all features are marked on the accompanying plan, and were as follows, working from the western end of the walk-over corridor:

(1) Field Wall.

This wall of dry stone construction had already been cut by the existing pipe when it was laid, the gap measured 2m in width. The remaining wall ran a short distance downhill, with the majority running uphill, both at a 45 degree angle to the vertical. The overall length of the wall was 90m, and it remained to a maximum height of 1.0m, maximum width 0.7m. The condition of the wall was poor and the incline it was situated on removed the possibility of it being further disturbed by vehicles during the present scheme.

(2) Rectangular Depression.

This depression lies between two outcrop faces and a large boulder and forms what could be a habitation site, however without a more thorough investigation this is impossible to verify and it is entirely possible that it is a natural feature or a small quarry site. Whatever its true nature, the area is inaccessible to vehicles and would not be disturbed.

(3) Field Drain.

The full extent of this drain was impossible to determine in the thick undergrowth, however a short length was uncovered which revealed the drain to be 0.4m wide and made up of rough flat slabs placed upon loose stone beneath. The difficulty in ascertaining the precise line of the drain made it impossible to define a feasible exclusion zone. However, it is likely that because it is a linear feature, the development would disturb only a short length.

(4) Linear Bank.

This linear bank was visible only as a very slight rise and was otherwise indistinguishable from the area surrounding it. The most likely interpretation is that it represents an obsolete field boundary. Its dimensions are 100m in length, 1.0m wide and 0.4m high. It is unlikely that it will be disturbed as it is a reasonable distance from the line of the pipe.

(5) Curved Wall/Bank.

This curved stone field wall/bank ran adjacent to one of the larger streams which criss-cross the area. It runs along the line of the stream which probably accounts for its curved nature, and suggests that it is an old boundary. There is around 50m in length remaining, and it is 1.0m wide and 0.6m high. Its condition is poor and the existing pipe has cut through it. Its location and construction means it will not be affected by vehicles in the present upgrade.

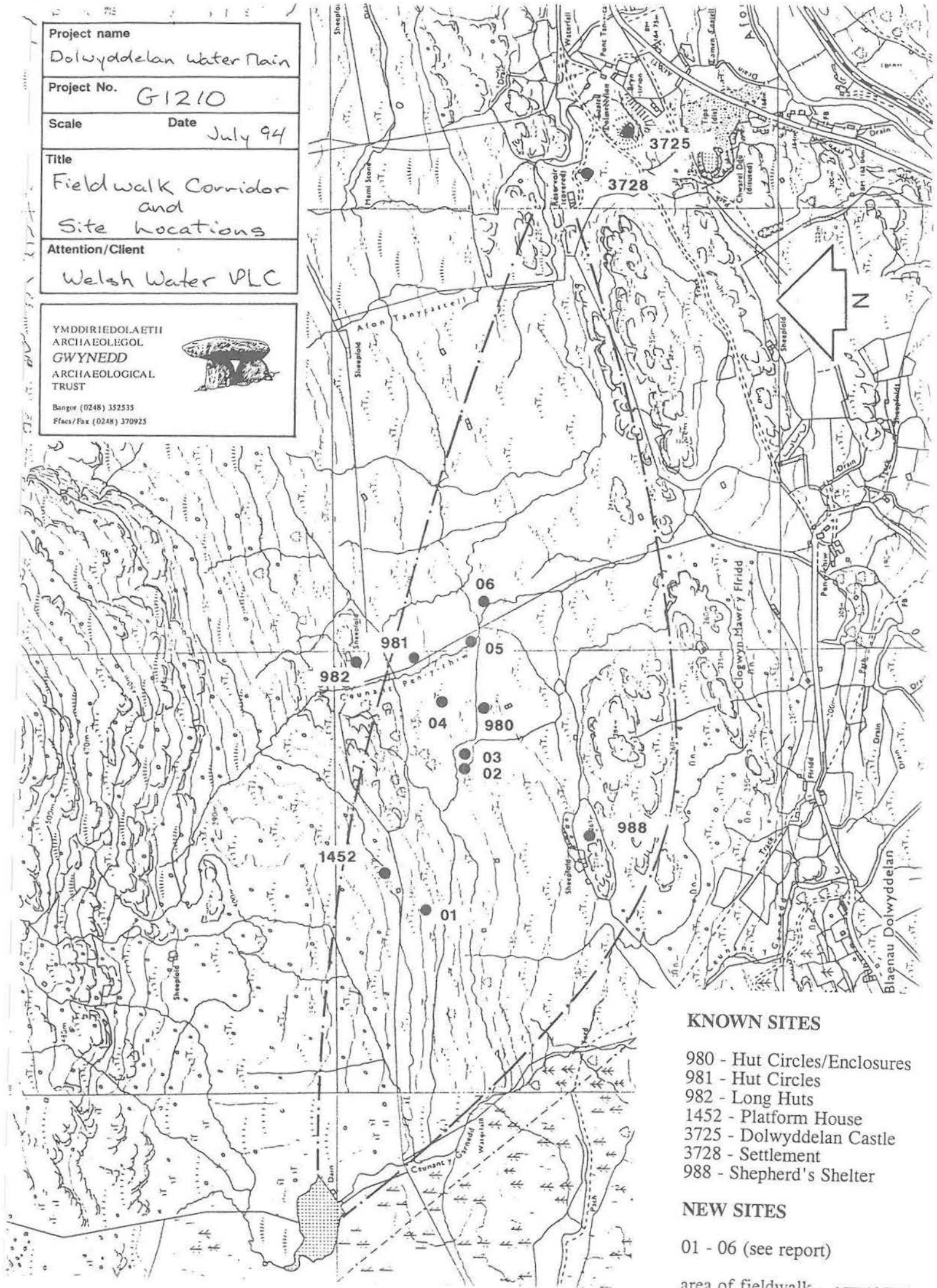
(6) Curved Wall/Bank.

This is a lower stretch of (5) above but only remains to a length of 30m here.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Although the exact line of the proposed access routes for the machinery and vehicles involved in the upgrade was not known, it is felt that the survey has fairly comprehensively assessed the area so that whatever the route finally used it impacts will have been evaluated.

The majority of the features identified in the vicinity of the pipe and the immediate surrounding area appear unlikely to be disturbed by the works. Those features which may be under threat (Field Wall (1), Field Drain (3)) are linear features so that a majority of their length is likely to survive any disturbance. Considering their low status and the limited information which they represent, the present level of recording carried out during the survey would seem to be sufficient. All other features in the region are further afield or in inaccessible positions and should therefore not be affected by the proposed works.


Project name
Dolwyddelan Water Main
Project No.
G1210
Scale
Date
July 94
Title
Fieldwalk Corridor and Site locations
Attention/Client
Welsh Water PLC
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N
3725
3728
06
05
04
03
02
01
981
982
980
988
1452
Clogwyn Hawr y Ffridd
Blaenau Dolwyddelan
KNOWN SITES
980 - Hut Circles/Enclosures
981 - Hut Circles
982 - Long Huts
1452 - Platform House
3725 - Dolwyddelan Castle
3728 - Settlement
988 - Shepherd's Shelter
NEW SITES
01 - 06 (see report)
area of fieldwalk