
Conservation Area Appraisal: **Dolbenmaen**



GAT Project No. 2155

Report No. 917

January 2011

DOLBENMAEN: CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General introduction

This report contains the results of an appraisal of the Conservation Area of Dolbenmaen undertaken by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust on behalf of Snowdonia National Park Authority.

The aim of the appraisal is to describe and explain the historic character of the settlement in order to inform and support positive conservation and regeneration programmes. This will help improve the quality of planning advice, and contribute to local interpretation strategies. The survey will define the distinctive historical character of Dolbenmaen, and identify the variety of character within it. The aims of the survey are based upon the understanding that the variety of character identified during the survey is fundamental to local distinctiveness and pride of place, and these are to be seen as assets within the process of regeneration.

1.2 Acknowledgements

Gwilym Jones, Snowdonia National Park Authority, instigated the project, and generously provided help and information to aid the project.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

A brief was provided by Snowdonia National Park Authority. The methodology employed to answer the brief is based upon that developed by Cadw following initial urban characterization projects undertaken by Welsh Archaeological Trusts. These in turn were based upon a methodology developed in England for urban characterization and assessment, and also include English Heritage guidelines for Conservation Area Appraisal.¹

The following methods were used to achieve the stated aims.

Data collection

This phase included the collection of data from regional and national historic environment records, including those kept at Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, RCAHMW, Cadw and National Museums and Galleries of Wales. Archive records were obtained from Gwynedd Archives, University of Wales, Bangor and National Library of Wales. The records were entered onto a database that was compatible with the regional Historic Environment Record, and their location identified through a geographical information system (MapInfo). Additional records and information sources were identified from historic maps, prints and photographs, and literature sources, including early antiquarian works.

Characterisation

The characterisation process combined the understanding gained from the desk-based phase with comprehensive fieldwork and a visual assessment of the surviving historic fabric. The development of the topography of the settlement was noted, and phases of historic change identified. Distinctive architectural forms, materials and significant elements of town and streetscapes were recorded. This process allowed the identification of areas of distinctive character, and these formed the basis of the character areas presented in this report.

2.2 Bibliographic sources

A list of works consulted, combined with bibliographic references is given at the end of this report.

¹ English Heritage 2006

The principal studies of the development of the township are by Colin Gresham.² Professor J E Lloyd gives an outline history of the medieval commote of Eifionydd.³ The church and other buildings are described by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales⁴ and further by the Listed Building descriptions⁵ and the Gwynedd volume of *Buildings of Wales* series.⁶

Contemporary descriptions of Dolbenmaen by topographical writers of the 19th century include Hyde-Hall 1810; Fenton 1810; and Lewis 1833.⁷

2.3 Previous archaeological work

No known previous archaeological work has been undertaken at Dolbenmaen.

3. PLANNING AND THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Details of the planning process and how it affects management of the conservation area can be found in Appendix I.

4. THE PHYSICAL SETTING

4.1 Extent of Area

The extent of the area included within this study is shown on figure 1. It includes the conservation area and adjacent areas.

4.2 Landscape and Setting

Dolbenmaen refers to both the parish and the small settlement clustered around the church and the motte. Though the parish has since been amalgamated with several adjoining parishes, in 1839 (at the time of the tithe survey) it was still in its medieval form, and coterminous with the medieval township, and it is these boundaries which will be used within this report when referring to the parish or township. The parish lay in the centre of the medieval commote of Eifionydd and between two rivers, the Afon Dwyfor to the east and Afon Dwyfach to the west. Both rivers run south and merge before flowing into the sea at Llanystumdwy. The northern part of the parish is higher ground, dominated by Craig y Garn (300m OD). North of the parish the land continues to rise, eventually reaching the Nantlle ridge (700m OD). The south part of the parish is lower lying, though with outcropping rock reducing some of the agricultural value.

A principal routeway runs from Caernarfon in the north through to either Tremadog before crossing the estuaries of the Afon Glaslyn and Afon Dwyryd or through to Beddgelert. Another route lay south past the medieval township of Ystumcegid and on to the coast at Criccieth some 5Km away. To the north Cwm Pennant (down which flows the Afon Dwyfor) provided a route into the uplands. Copper and slate were extracted from mines and quarries during the 18th and 19th centuries within Cwm Pennant.

The settlement of Dolbenmaen is located at a height of 90m OD, alongside the ford which crossed the Afon Dwyfor and amongst flat river meadows which, though partly prone to flooding, provided some of the best agricultural land in the parish. To the north of the settlement the flat meadow land ends in a steep rock escarpment, partly tree covered, which leads up to Craig y Garn. South of the river the rock outcrop of Bryniau Tyddyn marks the southern edge of the flatter lands. The farm of Plas Dolbenmaen, lying at the heart of the parish and making up a substantial part of the medieval manor, was, in 1846, 69 acres of which 31 acres were arable, 25 acres were pasture and 13 acres were meadow.

² Gresham 1956; 1973.

³ Lloyd 1905.

⁴ RCAHMW 1960

⁵ Cadw

⁶ Haslam, Orbach, Voelcker 2009

⁷ Jones 1952; Fisher 1917; Lewis 1833.

5. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Prehistoric origins

Two late prehistoric defended settlements lie to north and south of Dolbenmaen, reflecting, perhaps, predecessors of the existing village. South of the river, close to Tyddyn Mawr on a rock outcrop above the flood plain lies a small defended enclosure, with an enclosed settlement of round houses alongside. Several other groups of round houses lie within the vicinity. To the north of Dolbenmaen, on a spur projecting south from Craig y Garn, is another, more heavily defended, small enclosure called Castell Caerau. No structures are visible inside, however traces of round houses are visible on Craig y Llan, midway between Dolbenmaen and Castell Caerau, and others lie further west by Garn Dolbenmaen. These all denote intensive settlement within the late prehistoric period, utilizing the good soils and ample resources of the area. Earlier remains, typically burial or ritual sites, denote occupation of the area from Neolithic and Bronze Age times, though the evidence is barely sufficient to give a clear understanding of the nature or intensity of settlement.

5.2 Medieval origins

Dolbenmaen lies at the centre of the medieval commote of Eifionydd. This commote, with Ardudwy, originally formed the Cantref of Dunoding, though in 1284 it was transferred to the newly created county of Caernarfonshire. Each commote was served by a court or *llys* which lay alongside the ruler's demesne or *maerdref*. A number of *llys* sites contain mottes, earthen castle mounds introduced by the Normans, though subsequently used, and perhaps built, by Welsh rulers. Dolbenmaen was a bond township, the tenure described in 1352 as *Tre'r Gyfrif*, a very restrictive bond tenure, and the only one of its type in Eifionydd. The combined evidence of location, tenure and fortification has led to the identification of Dolbenmaen as the most likely location for the original commotal *llys* of Eifionydd.⁸ The date of its establishment is vague, but mottes were introduced into Gwynedd during the first Norman campaigns of the 1080's, and whether the motte is a Norman or Welsh foundation it still argues for the presence of a commotal centre here in the 11th century. The significance of the site at this time is further emphasised by the inclusion of Dolbenmaen in the fourth branch of the Mabinogi, a narrative cycle set down in the 12th century, though with earlier origins. In the 1230's a new castle was established by Llywelyn ap Iorwerth at Criccieth, and the *llys* was moved south to the coast to take advantage of the improved accommodation. The bond township of Dolbenmaen was surrounded by free lands of Pennant and Penyfed. The former included Cefn y Fan and Ystumcegid, lands immediately south of Dolbenmaen township, and from these rose the houses of Bryncir and Clennau, significant estates in later times. Bryncir lies at the lower end of Cwm Pennant, on the opposite bank of the Afon Dwyfor to Dolbenmaen, whereas Clennau is in the next valley east.

In 1352 the rents from the Dolbenmaen township went to Isabella, Queen of England and wife of Edward II. It has been suggested that the township was subdivided into a manor with its demesne of some 120 acres surrounding the motte, and the remainder which, following the decline of bond tenure in the late 15th century, would have been parceled into a number of farms, including Tyddyn y Graig, Tyddyn Mawr and Rhwngddwryd. The 120 acres of manor was subsequently divided between the farms of Tyddyn y Llan and Dolwgan, with part of Tyddyn y Graig. Tyddyn y Llan included the land around the motte and church, and became Plas Dolbenmaen in the 18th century.⁹

A complex series of land exchange and litigation has been traced from the 16th century to the early 17th century,¹⁰ at which point (1603) the township was leased from the crown by Griffith Williams, whose brother Ellis Williams farmed Tyddyn Mawr to the south. Following the death of Griffith Williams his wife, Elinor, assigned the lease to her son, Giles in 1613, and he shortly after demised it to Sir Richard Trevor of Trevalyn, Denbighshire. At this point Tyddyn y Llan was rented to a Humphrey Rowlands, but Sir Richard made an exchange with Rowlands, whereby the latter moved to Tyddyn y Graig, and Sir Richard took Tyddyn y Llan into his own hands, and built a house there in 1620, seemingly on the site of

⁸ Lloyd 1905

⁹ Gresham 1973

¹⁰ Gresham 1973, 372-7

the present Plas Dolbenmaen. Tyddyn y Llan was then leased to Rev. John Ellis, son of Ellis Williams, who in 1630 was complaining that Plas Trevor was in need of repair, and that Tyddyn y Llan was an inconvenient farm because of the common highway which ran through it.¹¹ In 1637 the lands were demised to Sir Richard's son-in-law John Griffith of Cefn Amwlch, by which time, or shortly after, the lands were purchased from the crown.¹² John Griffith's heir and brother sold the township in 1719 to William Brynker, son of James Brynker of Brynker. A rental of 1721 includes the farm of Plas Dolbenmaen, which is the earliest found reference of the farm under this name. William ran into financial problems, and the lands, with the exception of Dolwgan, were sold to William Owen of Clennau and Brogyntyn in 1736, and so passed by marriage to the Ormesby (later Ormesby-Gore) family.

The church owned various glebe lands within the parish, including a small plot west of the cemetery where the rectory was built. The date of the first rectory is not known, though the rear wing overlooking the cemetery pre-dates the new rectory built by Rev. Jeffrey Holland of Teyrndan, Denbighshire following his appointment in 1782. The house was completed in fine Georgian style, with regular front, sash windows and gothic windows to the side. Jeffrey Holland later volunteered for naval service, and served aboard the *Audacious* under Lord Howe when it was involved against the French in the Battle of the Glorious First of June 1794. He returned to Dolbenmaen after a second period of service in 1810.¹³ From its style, it is possible that Plas Dolbenmaen was rebuilt about this time also, and the road bridge is also of this approximate date, indicating a period of restructuring and rebuilding at Dolbenmaen in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

At the time of the tithe survey of 1839 the farm of Plas Dolbenmaen contained 69 acres, which included the motte. The church and rectory were counted as glebe land. A small cottage and yard, Ty Canol, lay alongside the rectory garden, and further west again was a small building named 'School' on the tithe map, and 'Ysgoldy' on the first edition OS map (1889). By 1913 the name had changed to Min y Ddol.

The lands were finally sold in plots by Lord Harlech in 1911. Plas Dolbenmaen was advertised as 'Plas Dolbenmaen Castle', and sold as a Licensed Inn with 50½ acres of land.¹⁴ The other properties mentioned in the sale are Ty Canol and Min y Ddol. Ty Canol was described as a cottage 'with productive garden' and store sheds and small piggery. Min y Ddol was still referred to as 'Ysgoldy Cottage' in the sale, though interestingly the cottage was not advertised, only the land around it, implying the former school was already in separate ownership. Very few subsequent developments occurred at Dolbenmaen until the construction of the new road and bridge in 1973 which by-passed the village. Later, in the mid-1980's, the house at Ty Canol was rebuilt, and a hauliers yard developed on the site. The house at Plas Dolbenmaen has lain empty for some thirty years, though the farm buildings have been renovated. Plas Holland was sold by the church into private ownership.

6. PRESENT SETTLEMENT CHARACTER: A SUMMARY

6.1 The topographic development of the settlement

The settlement character is formed from the close juxtaposition of the motte and Plas Dolbenmaen (the Plas is the most likely location of the medieval manor house) and the church and rectory (now Plas Holland). Three of these, at least, were established in medieval times, their location determined by the presence of slightly higher land above the flood plain but close to the river crossing. The road is the common factor here, and all subsequent development lies adjacent to the road. Court buildings and a small nucleated settlement would have lain close to the motte in medieval times, but this settlement was severely reduced in size following removal of the commotal centre to Criccieth in the 13th century. The settlement was reduced to serve a single farm, Tyddyn y Llan, which was rebuilt as Plas Trefor in 1620, and as Plas Dolbenmaen in

¹¹ Cefn Amwlch 282-3; Gresham 1973, 377.

¹² The Cefn Amwlch manuscripts (Caernarfon Record Office) contain many references to Dolbenmaen

¹³ Morris 1963, 106-7.

¹⁴ Gwynedd Archives XSC/720

the late 18th century, from when date the construction TyCanol, the new rectory by Jeffrey Holland, and possibly Ysgoldy (Min y Dol). Development occurred on land carved out of Plas Dolbenmaen fields.

Considerable industrial development in Cwm Pennant in the 19th century had little physical impact on the settlement, though Dolbenmaen provided certain rural services, including the church, an inn, and the school which subsequently became a shop at Min y Ddol. All development took place alongside the road, and it is the communication routes – the road south from Caernarfon, its junction with Cwm Pennant, and the river crossing which have been so influential both in the original choice of site and its development.

The construction of the new road in 1973 resulted in the closure of the road past Plas Dolbenmaen from the junction with Cwm Pennant, and closure of the old bridge. The motte, church, farm and rectory are now by-passed, and their former importance marginalised. The traffic which passes through is now either for Dolbenmaen or Cwm Pennant.

6.2 The character of building

6.2.1 Wall materials and finishes

With the exception of ‘The Bungalow’ all walls are of stone, mostly local quarried stone. This produces relatively small uneven blocks, which are laid in rough courses. The stone is generally a darkish grey, though lighter, more buff coloured, stones are also found. Larger blocks of the darker stone are used for lintels and quoins. The rectory is rendered and painted white, and Min y Ddol is painted white also, though is not rendered. The other buildings are of mortared stone walls. The Bungalow, of corrugated iron, is clearly visible from the road, and is one of a number of similarly clad buildings visible from the A470.

6.2.2 Roofs

An abundance of slate was produced locally in Cwm Pennant, and with the exception of the Bungalow all buildings are roofed in slate. Apart from Plas Dolbenmaen all roofs are relatively late (late 19th century onwards) and of thin blue slates laid in regular courses. Plas Dolbenmaen has been re-roofed in thicker less even slates laid in reducing courses. Dominant stone gable chimneys are a feature on the stone-built houses, though those on Ty Canol were removed in 1985.

6.2.3 Architectural detail

Whereas the dominant window type would have been small pane sash windows, these are now only found in Plas Holland. The windows in Plas Dolbenmaen are late 19th century four-pane sash windows, though these are currently boarded over. Other windows have been renewed in recent years.

6.3 Building types

With the exception of the church, the buildings are of domestic or agricultural use. The farm buildings at Plas Dolbenmaen form a courtyard from two principal ranges, with a stackyard behind (to the west). The houses at Plas Dolbenmaen and Plas Holland represent the higher end of the social scale, whereas Ty Canol, Min y Ddol and the Bungalow were built as cottages.

7. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

Though there are no known prehistoric sites from the immediate study area there is a wealth of sites known from the wider area which would suggest settlement and farming have taken place here from prehistoric times. Intensive agricultural use will have removed any upstanding monuments within the lower lands, which explains their absence when so much remains in the marginal uplands. There is potential, therefore, for the survival of buried prehistoric and Roman archaeology within the study area.

The motte and the church are the two principal archaeological upstanding sites. However the site is known to have been the commotal centre for Eifionydd, and as such can be expected to have housed a suite of buildings similar, perhaps, to the *llys* at Rhosyr and Aber Gwynnregyn, where a hall and additional

buildings have been found. At Aber the hall lies next to the motte, and a similar relationship can be expected at Dolbenmaen. The most likely location is under the house and farm buildings of Plas Dolbenmaen, though there is also good potential in the fields to the west of the motte, and north-east across the road from the motte and farm.

The standing buildings, in particular Plas Dolbenmaen and Plas Holland, have long histories, and at present it is difficult to identify which elements of earlier structures remain built into the existing buildings. A more careful examination of buildings and roofs might reveal longer histories and more complex buildings than currently realised.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the settlement lies in the juxtaposition of medieval motte, church and manor house, with the subsequent addition of the rectory. Following sale of the crown lands development occurred in small plots alongside the road at Ty Canol and at Ysgoldy. Though the settlement is small, and by urban standards the properties dispersed, the characteristics displayed at Dolbenmaen are those of a nucleated settlement, though in genesis only. The site is therefore of archaeological significance because of its medieval origins. It is of cultural significance because of its origins as one of the commotal centres of the Welsh princes and its inclusion in the fourth branch of the Mabinogion. The medieval origins of the site are well preserved, and its growth in the late 18th century can be clearly identified. The buildings of Plas Dolbenmaen, the church of St Mary and Plas Holland with the motte form a significant group of buildings and structures which is rare to find in Gwynedd.

9. PRESENT USAGE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The area is now reached by turning off the main Caernarfon road to Cwm Pennant. The Bungalow, Min y Ddol and Ty Canol lie directly alongside the road to the north. To the south lies an open field with the motte at the far end, though this is only just visible through trees. Plas Holland is set well back from the road, which widens shortly after outside the lych gate. The lych-gate, church, motte and buildings of Plas Dolbenmaen create the potential atmosphere of a significant space, though this is presently lessened because Plas Dolbenmaen is empty. The stackyard, which backs on to this space, would benefit from more positive management. The old road then passes the farm and leads to the now redundant bridge.

The significant elements are:

- The views across the open field to the motte
- The views north up Craig y Garn
- The character of The Bungalow and Min y Ddol
- Plas Holland and views of the house up the drive and from the cemetery
- The lych-gate and widening of the road which creates a significant space
- The old bridge

Potential for enhancement of the conservation area include:

- The former stackyard at Plas Dolbenmaen
- The house and front garden at Plas Dolbenmaen
- View of the motte from the main road.

Alterations to the present conservation area boundary to be considered:

Inclusion of 'The Bungalow' to the west of the area

An extension north to reflect current boundaries at Ty Canol

The field opposite Plas Dolbenmaen and a part of the river. These are crucial elements within the area, and contribute to significant views whether traveling on the new road or the road to Cwm Pennant.

10. LIST OF SOURCES CONSULTED

10.1 Manuscript collections

10.1.1 National Library of Wales

Brogdyntyn Collection

10.1.2 University of Wales, Bangor

Mostyn Mss

10.1.3 Gwynedd Archives – Caernarfon

Tithe Map of Dolbenmaen (1839)
Plas Amwlch Collection

10.1.4 Ordnance Survey

1” first edition c. 1830

25” County Series 1889, 1900, 1913 Caernarfonshire Sheets XVIII.12; XVIII.16; XIX.13

10.2 Published sources

Bingley, W., 1800 *A tour round North Wales, performed during the summer of 1798*.

Cadw, nd *Listed building descriptions for Dolbenmaen*

English Heritage, 2006 *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*

Evans, E., 1952 ‘The Tithe Schedule for the parish of Garn Dolbenmaen’, *Transactions of the Caernarfonshire Historical Society*, 76-118.

Evans, J., 1812 *The Beauties of England and Wales: North Wales*; London.

Fisher, J. (ed), 1917 *Tours in Wales 1804-1813 by Richard Fenton*, Arch Camb Supplement, 1917.

Gresham, C. A., 1956 ‘The township of Dolbenmaen’, *Transactions of the Caernarfonshire Historical Society*, 23-40.

Gresham, C. A., 1973 *Eifionydd: A study in land ownership from the medieval period to the present day*.

Haslam, R., Orbach, J and Voelcker, A., 2009 *The buildings of Wales: Gwynedd*.

Jones, E. G., 1952 *A description of Caernarvonshire 1809-1811 by Edmund Hyde Hall*.

Jones, G and Jones, T., 1949 *The Mabinogion*; Everyman edition, London.

Lewis, E. A., 1912 *The Medieval Boroughs of Snowdonia*; London.

Lewis, S., 1833 *Topographical Dictionary of Wales*; London.

Lloyd, J. E., 1905 ‘Some notes on medieval Eifionydd’, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 295-302

Morris, T., 1963 ‘Penmorfa Panorama 1782-1833’, *Transactions of the Caernarfonshire Historical Society*, 98-152.

Pennant, T., 1781 *Journey to Snowdon*; London.

RCAHMW, 1960 *An inventory of the ancient monuments of Caernarfonshire Vol II Central*.

Smith, L. T., (ed), 1906 *The Itinerary in Wales of John Leland 1536 to 1539*; London.

Soulsby, I., 1983 *The Towns of Medieval Wales*; Chichester.

Smith, J. B., 1998 *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd Prince of Wales*, Cardiff.

Williams, W. O., 1949 ‘The County Records’, *Transactions of the Caernarfonshire Historical Society*, 79-103.

APPENDIX I

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Current legislation

The local Planning authorities are recognised and identified as having the key role in protecting our archaeological heritage. Government advice and planning case law clearly establish archaeology as a 'material consideration' in the planning authorities' assessment and determination of a planning application. This is seen both in national and regional policy documents and guidelines.

The protection of the vulnerable historic environment falls into two broad categories: Statutory protection and non-statutory protection.

Statutory protection is provided by the following Acts and Orders:

- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, as amended by the National Heritage Act 1983
- The Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- The Planning and Compensation Act 1991
- Statutory Instrument 1199, the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988
- Statutory Instrument 1995 No. 419, The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995

Designations arising from these Acts and Orders are Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

Non-statutory protection is provided by national policies and guidelines contained within:

- Planning Policy Wales, March 2002
- Welsh Office Circular 60/96, Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology, December 1996
- Welsh Office Circular 61/96, Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas, December 1996.

The key document in Wales which expands on the legislative background and provides detailed guidance on the handling of archaeology within the planning process is Welsh Office Circular 60/96 - *Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology (1996)*. This Welsh Assembly guidance expands on Planning Policy Wales (March 2002), Chapter 6 'Conserving the Historic Environment'; particularly paragraphs 6.5.1 to 6.5.6 (see Appendix I for extracts from 60/96).

Local Plan Policies

The town lies entirely within the Snowdonia National Park. Current regional and local plan policies are defined in *Gwynedd Structure Plan* (adopted 1993) and *Eryri Local Plan* (adopted 1999). The plan can be consulted in the offices of the National Park, or online at http://www.eryri-npa.co.uk/images/eryri_local_plan/elp_english.pdf. Policies concerning archaeology, including historic towns, are given in section 5, policies AR 1-4. Policies concerning the built heritage, including listed buildings and conservation areas, are given section 6, policies TA 1-12.

Conservation Areas in Dolbenmaen

The 1990 Town and Country Planning Act defines a conservation area as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. The location and extent of the Dolbenmaen Conservation Area is shown in Fig. 2.

Heritage and Local Planning Context

Advice on the management of the archaeological heritage is provided by the National Park Archaeologist, who, together with the Park’s building conservation and planning officers contribute to the decision making processes to inform on the likely impact of development on the historic environment and how best to mitigate the impact. Advice on Conservation Areas and the Built Heritage is given by the National Park Planning Department through their Building Conservation Officer.

Archaeology is the process by which we can understand past societies through their material remains. These archaeological remains are a finite and non-renewable resource. They are vulnerable to modern development and can, in a short space of time, be entirely destroyed by modern machinery and building methods.

The level of archaeological response is guided by the nature of the archaeological remains and the significance of the impact. Archaeological mitigation is usually imposed through planning conditions, and a relevant programme of archaeological works is advised by the National Park archaeologist. On occasion a programme of assessment and evaluation may be required prior to the determination of a planning application, so that the appropriate mitigation can be advised.

Regional Historic Environment Record

The regional Historic Environment Record (HER) is a database of archaeological sites and finds with details of interventions (surveys, excavations, previous work etc) and references. It consists of both a computerised record and a paper record, and is maintained at the offices of the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust in Bangor. The digital record combines database and GIS functionality, and forms the key component of the planning and archaeology decision making process. The experience and knowledge of the development control archaeologists is used to interpret the record, and provide relevant advice to the planning officers.

Extracts from Welsh Office Circular 60/96

Archaeological remains are a finite, and non-renewable resource, in many cases highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction. [Paragraph 3]

Archaeological remains are part of our cultural heritage, not least in terms of the information they provide about the past, valuable both for their own sake, and for their role in education leisure and tourism. [Paragraph 3]

The key to the future of the great majority of archaeological sites and historic landscapes lies with local authorities, acting within the framework set by central government, in their various capacities as planning, highways, education and recreational authorities. [Paragraph 7]

Local planning authorities should expect developers to provide the results of such appraisals, assessments and/or evaluations as part of their applications for sites where there is good reason to believe there are remains of archaeological importance. [Paragraph 14]

Authorities will need to consider refusing permission for proposals which are inadequately documented. [Paragraph 14]

When planning applications are made without prior discussion with the local planning authorities, the authorities should seek to identify those applications which have archaeological implications, and to

assess their likely impact by consulting the local authority Archaeological Officer, National Park Archaeologist or regional Welsh Archaeological Trust. [Paragraph 15]

In the case of a development proposal that is likely to affect the site of a scheduled ancient monument, planning authorities are required to consult the Secretary of State (Cadw). [Paragraph 15]

Where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation in situ i.e. a presumption against proposals which would involve significant alteration or cause damage, or which would have a significant impact on the setting of visible remains. [Paragraph 17]

It may be possible to preserve important archaeological remains where developers prepare sympathetic designs using, for example, foundations which avoid disturbing the remains altogether or minimise damage by raising ground levels under a proposed new structure or by careful siting of landscaped or open areas. [Paragraph 17]

Archaeological investigations such as excavation and recording should be carried out before development commences, working to a project brief prepared by the planning authority (with reference to their archaeological advisers). [Paragraph 20]

It is open to the local planning authority to impose conditions designed to protect a monument. [Paragraph 22]

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF SITES BY PRN

161 DOLBENMAEN CASTLE MOUND (MOTTE)

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: SAM Cn 063

The mound stands on a low ridge running east-west parallel to the river, and forming a natural approach to the river crossing. The ridge ends in a tongue occupied by a house and farm buildings which may cover the site of a bailey. The mound is 6.6m high. The east half has been mutilated and the lower slopes are cut into by farm buildings. The ditch, 1.3m deep, remains on the west side. The summit, 14.6m by 12.6m, is hollowed and surrounded by a low bank. Loose stones suggest that masonry buildings may once have occupied the top.

Easting: 250650

Northing: 343070

2367 and 6927 ST MARY'S CHURCH, DOLBENMAEN

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: LB II* Ref: 4278 (Church) and LB II Ref: 21522 (Lychgate)

The parish church of St Mary's is a single cell church of the 15th century. It was heavily restored in the 19th century, when new windows and doors were inserted and the west wall rebuilt. The masonry also changes at the west end of the north wall, and this may, in part, be rebuilt also. The masonry of the remaining walls is thought to be contemporary with the 15th century roof timbers.

The shape of the original cemetery can be identified by a raised roughly circular area around the church. By the mid-19th century the cemetery had been extended on all sides but the west, and it was further extended to the east by 1927. A lychgate lies south of the church alongside the road. On the west wall of the passage is a slate inscribed 'Built 1847 by the Rev'd G Owen MA'. Below is a second inscribed stone reading 'WE HR ward 1747'. A gabled passageway, entered from the south through a two centred gothic arch with stone voussoirs, is flanked by wide storage rooms either side with large doors and slate roofs.

The walls are built of local stone with long quoins. The roof is slate, supported on a 15th century five-bay roof of arch—braced collar beam trusses with large cusped windbraces and vertical posts to support the principal rafters. There is a boarded soffit over the east bay at arch-brace level forming a shallow barrel vault.

Easting: 250550

Northing: 343170

5257 and 12603 PLAS DOLBENMAEN

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: LB II Ref's 4280 (house), 4281 (NW building range), 21551 (washhouse), 21552 (NE building range)

A disused farmhouse lying east of the motte, with farm buildings lying to the west around the motte. The walls and roof look fairly sound, but the windows are boarded up. The interior was not inspected. The site is thought to be that on which Sir Richard Trefor built a new house in 1620, possibly on the site of an earlier house called Tyddyn y Llan. Details of Sir Richard's house can be found within the Cefn Amwlch Mss, which state the stone was obtained locally and the walls were plastered. Repairs were required fairly soon after its construction. The style of the present house would suggest that Plas Trevor was either rebuilt or remodeled in the mid- to late-18th century, which may be when the house and farm were renamed Plas Dolbenmaen, though some of the present masonry could be earlier. The house later became an inn, and was renamed the Plas Dolbenmaen Castle, though it was never a substantial inn. It is described in 1911 as having 'Bar, Smoke room, Bar Parlour, Kitchen, Back Kitchen, Pantry and 4 bedrooms'.¹⁵ It later reverted to a farmhouse, and was occupied up to the 1980's.

The front of the farmhouse faces north towards the former road, with a single storey monopitch extension on the left gable, and a rear wing on the right, which in turn has a catslide extension on the right, and so

¹⁵ Gwynedd Archives XSC/720

extends beyond the right gable of the main wing. There is an attached washroom on the front right corner. The house is of two storeys, built of roughly coursed rubble stonework, with a slate roof of diminishing courses. There are tall stone end chimneys on the front range, and a third chimney on the rear wing. The front of the house has a central door with windows either side and a small window to the left adjacent to the fireplace. The windows are boarded over, but earlier photographs show them to be four pane sash windows with an earlier 12 pane sash window on the left extension.

To the north-west of the house lie two ranges of farm buildings and a washhouse.¹⁶ To the south-west of the house lies a range of derelict pig-sties. With the exception of the pig-sties the farm buildings have been renovated and re-roofed recently. All are stone built with roughly coursed local quarried rubble stone. The washhouse is single storey, with a door and window opening onto the yard. The easterly of the two ranges of farm buildings lies parallel to the old road, and end-on to the west range, though with a small opening between which forms a gate onto the road. The range is two storey with a granary above, reached by an external stair, and stable below. The western range, at right-angles to the road, is single storey, has a catslide extension to the rear and a single pitch extension on the north-east gable. The interior is described as containing cattle stalls, though part, at least, may well have started life as a corn barn.

Easting: 250680

Northing: 343050

5259 and 11441 PLAS HOLLAND

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: LB II Ref: 4279

The former rectory lying west of the church, and adjoining the cemetery. The front part of the house was built in 1786 by Rev. Jeffrey Holland, but part of the rear of the house is earlier. It was formerly known as Ty'n y Llan, and as 'Rectory'. It was owned by the church at the time of the Tithe survey in 1846. It is now a private house, and was renamed after its builder. It is a two storey house with attics, the walls and end chimneys painted white. Slate roof with overhanging eaves. The front has a central door with flanking 16 pane sash windows on the ground floor, and a range of three sash windows above. In the left gable are small gothic windows lighting the parlour. The rear wing is 1½ storeys with end chimney and two gabled dormers on the east side (looking on to the churchyard) and 20th century extensions on the west side. On the west gable of the main house is an inscribed slate dated 1786 containing an englyn

Fy nghell am Castell costfawr – am hurddas

Am harddwch hŷd Elawr

Fe'th gwelir di'n deg eilwawr

Pan byddwni'n llŵch bêdd y llawr.

Quisquis hoc sustulerit, aut iusserit Ultimus suorum

Moriatur. Jeff^y. Holland. A:M:

It is thought the inscription was placed on completion of the house, and possibly also to commemorate the death of his father and brother, both of whom died in 1786.¹⁷

Easting: 250640

Northing: 343160

5258 TY CANOL

Assessment of Importance: C

Site Status Reference:

A small house and yard had been carved out of the field adjoining the Rectory in the later 18th century, and are shown on the tithe survey of 1846. It was formerly a Listed Building (Grade II), when it was described as 'Early 18th century, 2 storey 2 window house, with advanced wing at right angles, together forming an L on plan. Mortared rubble masonry, with projecting footings. Main roof of old small slates. Wing has thin new slates. Massive square chimneys with dripstones and capping'. It was de-listed in 1987, following rebuilding in 1985. The house has been heavily modernized and extended, and it is difficult to reconcile the

¹⁶ The description given by the Listed Building information. The yard and farm buildings were not accessible at the time of the appraisal visit.

¹⁷ Morris 1963, 106. The plaque has been reset in its present position – its original location is not known.

present building with the earlier description. Whilst the original plan is still largely evident, the walls have been rebuilt, and the chimneys removed. The associated yard, now a haulier's yard with large modern agricultural sheds along the west and north sides, is much larger than the original yard, and occupies the south end of the field between Plas Holland and Min y Ddol.

Easting: 258097

Northing: 331301

11689 PONT DOLBENMAEN

Assessment of Importance: A

Site Status Reference: LB II Ref: 4213

A reference occurs in the county records in July 1634 to spending £40 'for edifying and making up of Dolbenmen bridge'¹⁸, and Ogilby's atlas of the late 17th century shows a bridge here. The present bridge is roughly contemporary with the creation of the turnpike road in 1810. It is a wide single segmental arch with radiating voussoirs and an extrados arch ring above. The deck of the bridge is marked by a horizontal string course, and the parapet above is of different masonry, perhaps later.

Easting: 250750

Northing: 342980

31847 Min y Ddol, Dolbenmaen

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

A building is shown here on the tithe map of 1846 named 'School', and on the OS map of 1889 it is called 'Ysgoldy', though it had changed its name to Min y Ddol by 1915. A shop was kept here in the early to mid-20th century according to local information. When the school was founded is not known, nor who it was founded by. It is a single storey cottage with white painted stone walls, modern slate roof and end chimneys. The cottage fronts on to the road, with a central door and flanking windows.

Easting: 250543

Northing: 343148

31848 Bunaglow, Dolbenmaen

Assessment of Importance: B

Site Status Reference:

A small one storey building with walls and roof of corrugated iron. It was formerly owned by Ty Canol, though now is in separate ownership. The present owner believes it to have been built in the 1950's, however a building is visible in this location on an aerial photograph of 1946 – it is not possible to confirm it is the same structure, though this is likely. It is, indeed, probable that the structure was first built between the two World Wars. It fronts onto the road, and has a central door flanked by windows, and a small rear kitchen wing. Inside it is lined with tongue and groove boarding, and consists of living room, kitchen, bathroom and two bedrooms.

Easting: 250514

Northing: 343147

31849 Milestone, Dolbenmaen

Assessment of Importance: C

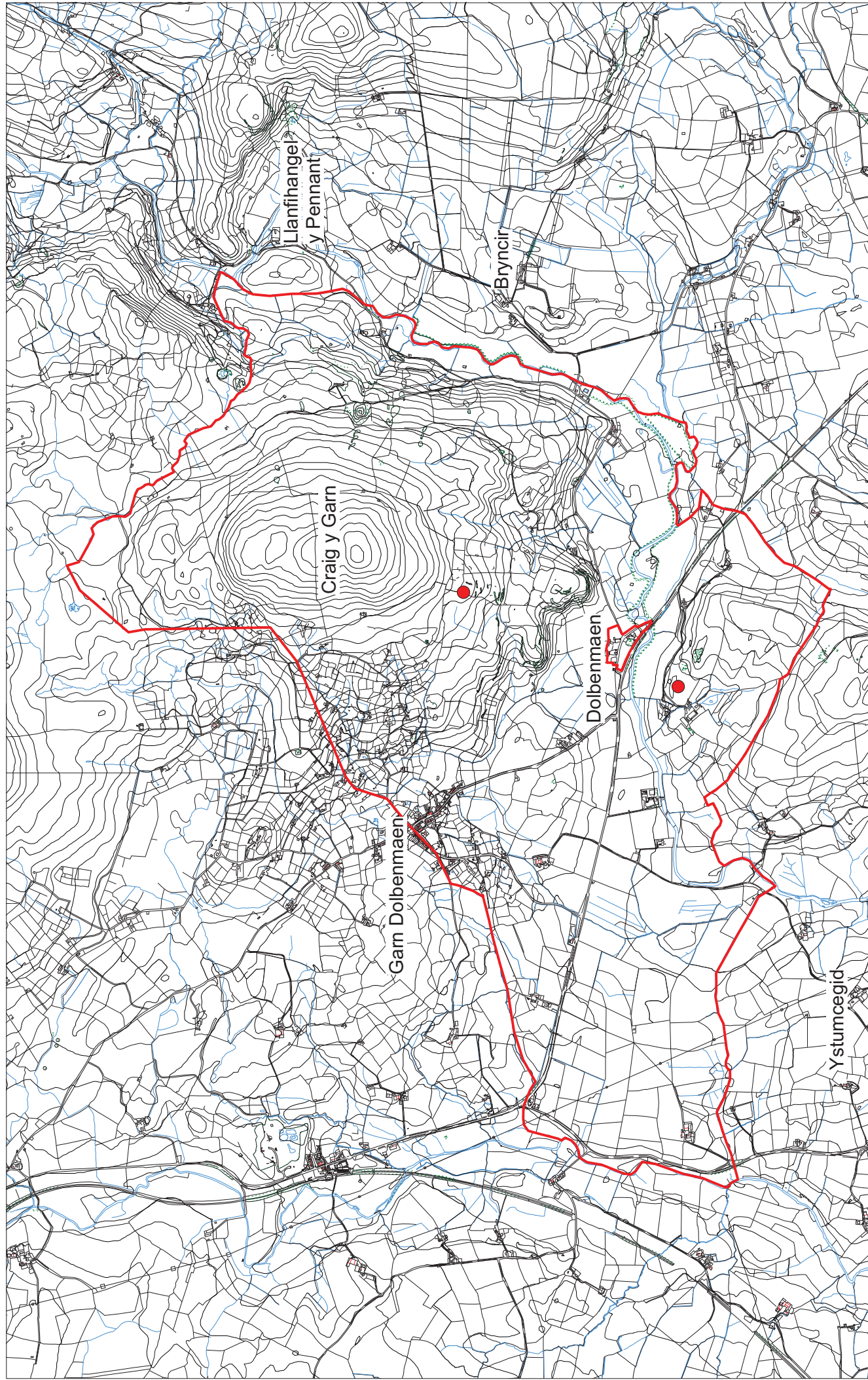
Site Status Reference:

Located on the stone wall outside Ty Canol is a metal plate bearing, in raised letters, the inscription 'BEDDGELERT 6³/₄ ^{MLS}'

Easting: 250544

Northing: 343136

¹⁸ Williams, 1949, 95

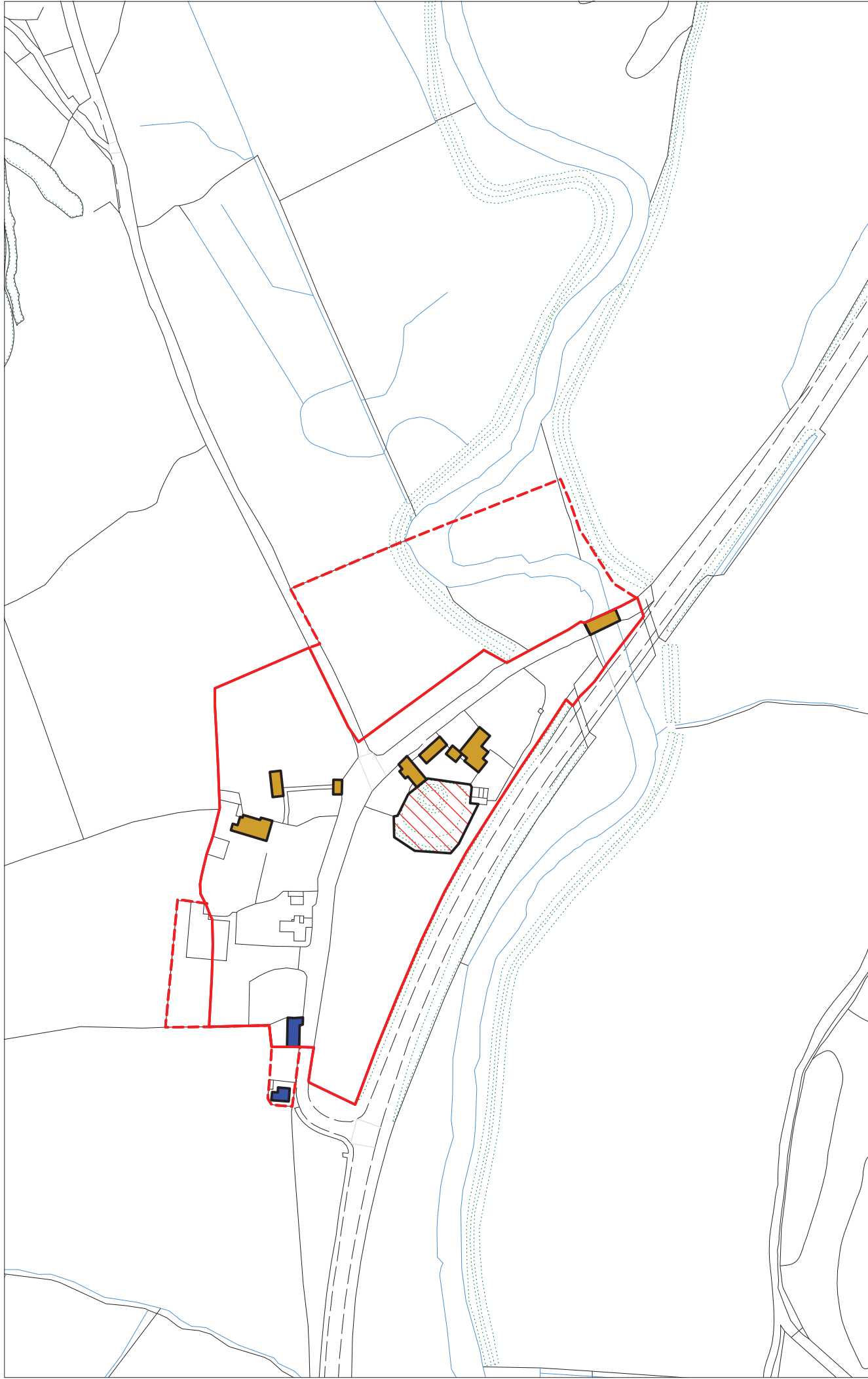


— Medieval township and parish boundary
● Prehistoric defended enclosures

Scale: 1:25000



Dolbenmaen Conservation Area
Character Appraisal
Figure 1 Location within medieval parish

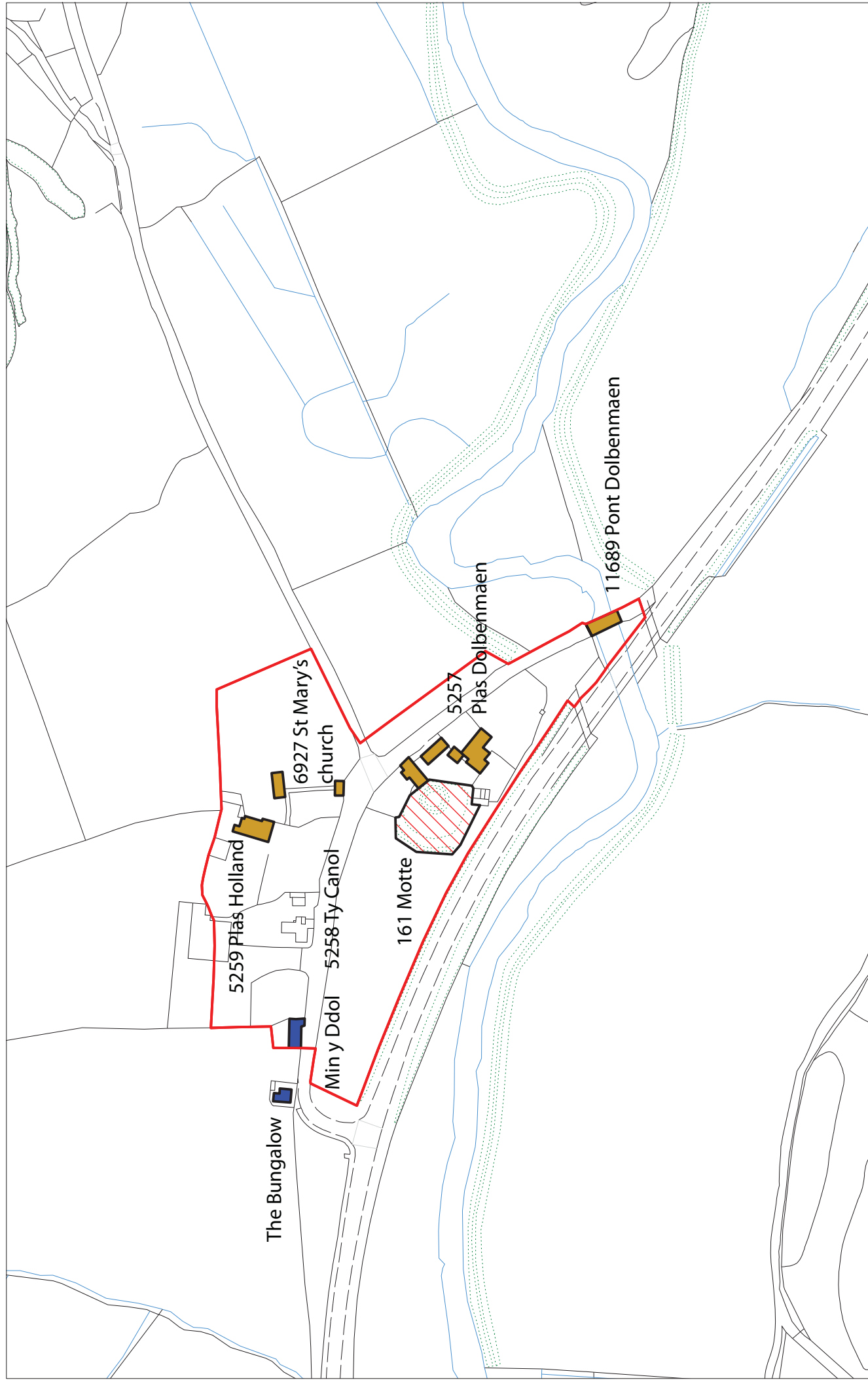


Dolbenmaen Conservation Area
Character Appraisal
Figure 2 Conservation Area

Scale: 1:2500



- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|  | Listed building |  | Conservation area boundary |
|  | Building of local note |  | Proposed conservation area extension |
|  | Scheduled ancient monument | | |

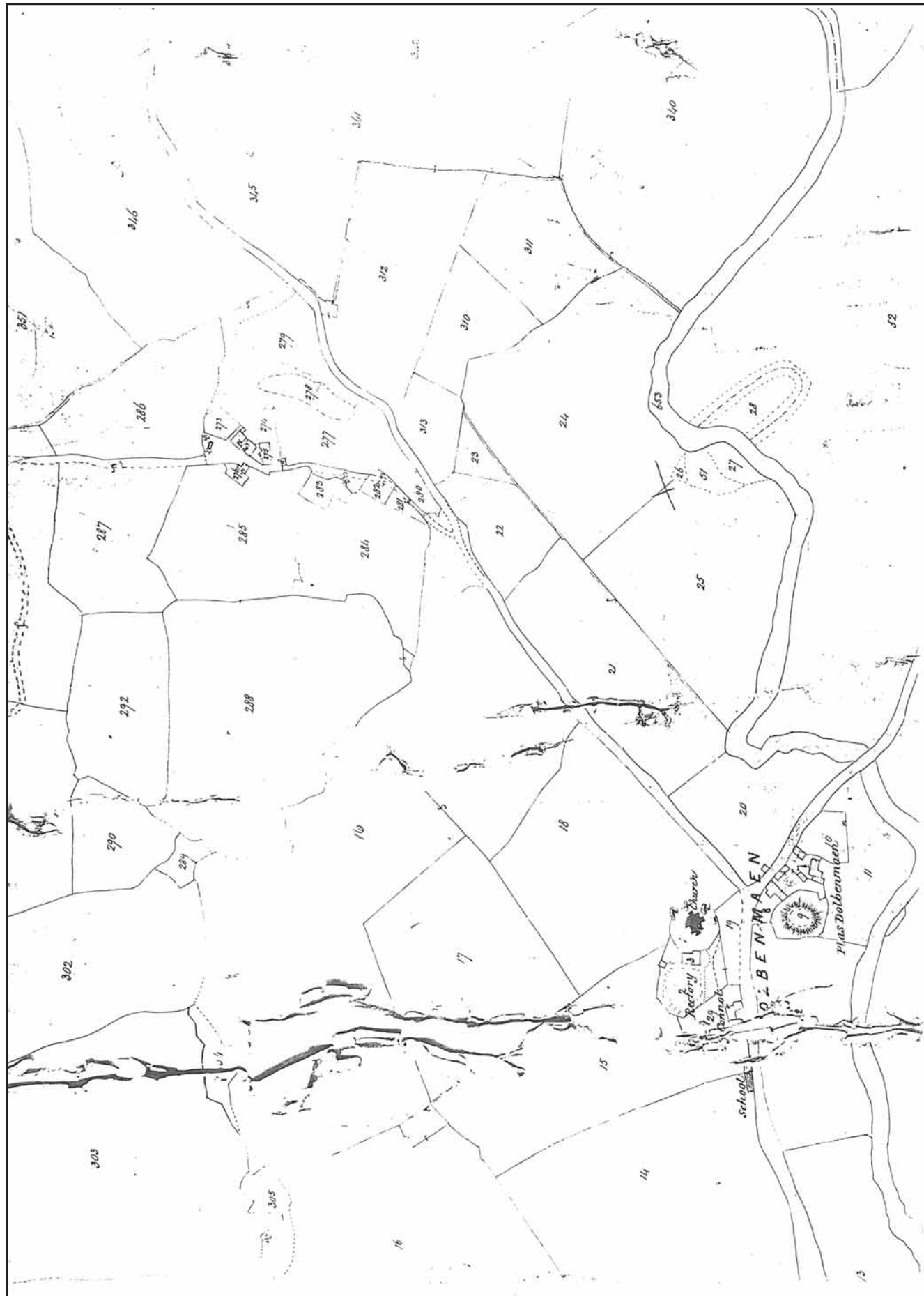


Dolbenmaen Conservation Area
Character Appraisal
Figure 3 Principal sites

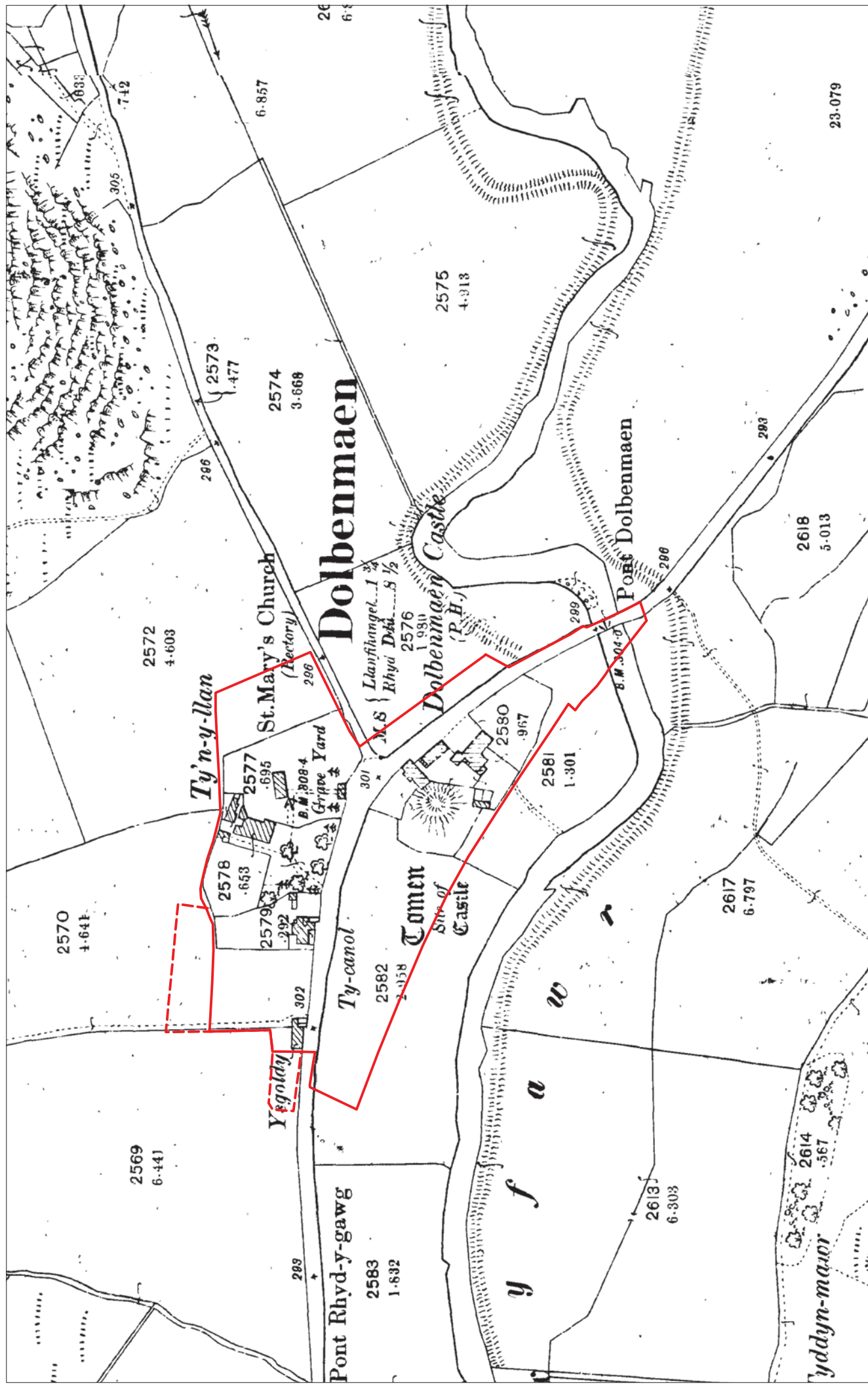
Scale: 1:2500

Legend:

- Listed building
- Building of local note
- Scheduled ancient monument
- Conservation area boundary
- Proposed conservation area extension



Dolbenmaen Conservation Area
Character Appraisal
Figure 4 Tithe map 1839



Dolbenmaen Conservation Area
Character Appraisal
Figure 5 Ordnance Survey 1900

Scale: 1:2500

Conservation area boundary

Proposed conservation area extension





YMDDIRIEDOLAETH
ARCHAEOLEGOL
GWYNEDD



GWYNEDD
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
TRUST

Craig Beuno, Ffordd y Garth, Bangor, Gwynedd. LL57 2RT
Ffon: 01248 352535. Ffacs: 01248 370925. email: gat@heneb.co.uk