

# Mount Pleasant Gas Main Replacement Phase II Conwy, Conwy

*Archaeological Watching Brief*



for  
Grontmij

on behalf of  
Wales and West Utilities

CA Project: 5093  
CA Report: 15162

August 2016



Mount Pleasant Gas Main Replacement  
Phase II  
Conwy, Conwy

Archaeological Watching Brief

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## CONTENTS

SUMMARY .....	2
1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	4
3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	5
4. METHODOLOGY .....	5
5. RESULTS (FIG 2) .....	5
6. DISCUSSION.....	6
8. REFERENCES.....	6
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS .....	8

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)

Fig. 2 The site, showing location of groundworks (1:750)



## SUMMARY

**Project Name:** Mount Pleasant Gas Main Replacement Phase II  
**Location:** Conwy, Conwy  
**NGR:** SH 7787 7753  
**Type:** Watching Brief  
**Date:** 1 - 20 October 2014  
**Location of Archive:** To be deposited with RCAHMW  
**Site Code:** CONY 14

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with replacement of a gas main along Mount Pleasant road and Sychnant Pass Road, Conwy.

A possible former cobbled road surface and a possible buried soil were observed during groundworks.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In October 2014, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Grontmij on behalf of Wales and West Utilities (WWU), during Phase II of a gas main replacement works at Mount Pleasant Road and Sychnant Pass Road, Conwy (centred on NGR: SH 7787 7753; Fig. 1).

1.2 A gas main replacement was carried out by WWU, as a requirement of the Health and Safety Executive and Ofgem to update and rationalise the gas main network. The gas main replacement route, excavated in two phases, lay just outside the Town Walls Scheduled Monument boundary (ref. CN014). While Scheduled Monument Consent was issued by Cadw, no intrusive works were required within the Scheduled Monument boundary. Following consultation with Cadw and Ashley Batten (Senior Planning Archaeologist for Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS)), it was agreed that archaeological mitigation would be required during the works. Phase I of the replacement works occurred to the northeast of these works, focused around Mount Pleasant Road, and was subject to an archaeological watching brief (CA 2014).

1.3 The watching brief on Phase II of the groundworks was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)* produced by CA (2013) and approved by Ashley Batten (GAPS). The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014), the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991), and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006)

### **The site**

1.4 The gas main replacement works were located to the south-west of the historic core of Conwy (Fig. 1), and followed the alignment of Mount Pleasant Road and Sychnant Pass Road. The route slopes down to both the south-west and north-east away from the Watch Tower, on land that slopes steeply from south-west to north-east (see Fig. 2 for location of observed groundworks).

1.5 The underlying bedrock geology of the route is mapped as Conwy Mudstones Formation of the Ordovician period with superficial deposits Devensian Till, of the

Quaternary period (BGS 2015). Conwy Mudstone was not encountered within the excavated trenches but was visible as surface exposures, to the side of Mount Pleasant Road at its southern extent.

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The gas main replacement route lay just outside the Scheduled Monument boundary of Conwy Town Walls (SM ref. CN014; Grade I Listed Building 3233), but inside the Conwy Conservation Area. The following background is derived from a Historic Environment Record search surrounding the route and general background sources.
- 2.2 Pre-medieval evidence is scant in the vicinity of the gas main replacement route. The Iron Age hillfort at Castell Caer Lleion, Conwy Mountain represents the most significant example of late prehistoric to Roman archaeology, and is located 1.8km to the west of Conwy. The hillfort is substantial and contains approximately 50 hut sites, some of which have stone walling (Smith 2012).
- 2.3 Conwy Castle and the associated town walls were built as part of the wider process of consolidation of power by Edward I. This followed the second of his military campaigns in the region during the period 1282-3.
- 2.4 Recent excavations adjacent to the northern boundary of the town have been undertaken at Castle Street (EAS 2012). This demonstrated the existence of material and structures possibly dating from the 16th century onward against the outside of the town wall.
- 2.5 The first detailed cartographic evidence for the area is the Holland Estate map, revised in 1810 (Bangor Records Office Ref. UWB Bangor 2383). This depicts a possible ditch outside the town wall. Phase I of the watching brief on the gas main replacement observed backfill deposits possibly associated with the town ditch, but this was not definitively resolved (CA 2014, Trenches 1 to 9; Fig 2).
- 2.6 The 1889 Ordnance Survey (OS) map 1:2500 scale does not show the possible ditch outside the walls, but does show the current road layout including Wind Street and buildings to the north of the Watch Tower and buildings against the Town Wall from the northern end of the car park alongside Mount Pleasant down to the quay.

### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:

- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
- at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2013,). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks associated with replacement of the gas main along Mount Pleasant Road and Sychnant Pass Road, Conwy (see Fig. 2 for the extent of observed groundworks). Non-archaeologically significant deposits were removed by the contractors under archaeological supervision. Where mechanical excavators were used, these were equipped with a toothless bucket.

4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*. Trenches from Phase II of the watching brief were numbered 20 to 27 and given the site code COWY 14 to differentiate them from Phase I trenches.

4.3 The archive from the watching brief is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble and will be deposited with the RCAHMW.

### 5. RESULTS (FIG 2)

5.1 Eight trenches were excavated to a depth of up to 1.1m below present ground level (bpgl). The natural substrate of alluvium was only identified in Trench 23, at approximately 0.2m bpgl. Buried soils were observed at the limit of excavation in Trench 20, though these were tenuous at 0.05m in thickness. Both the alluvium and buried soils were cut by modern services. All other trenches only revealed fills

associated with the original gas main and other services. These were overlain by 1.1m of road bedding that was in turn sealed by Tarmac. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in Trenches 21-22 and 24-27

- 5.2 In Trench 23 a deposit of pitched angular cobbles, 0.88m in length and 0.2m in thickness, was identified, suggesting the presence of a former road surface. This was sealed by road bedding.

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The limited nature of the archaeology identified, consisting of a possible buried soil and a fragment of a possible former road surface, means little further interpretation can be made. It is possible that the road surface may related to a similar deposit identified in Phase 1 of the watching brief (CA 2014), but no definitive conclusion of date or form was possible.

- 6.2 Overall, the relative lack of observed archaeological deposits was the result of the impact of previous service trench groundworks combined with the limited 'new' disturbance caused by the observed groundworks.

## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Peter Busby, assisted by Luke Brannlund. The report was written by Peter Busby and Luke Brannlund. The illustrations were prepared by Leo Heatley. The archive has been compiled by Peter Busby, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Ian Barnes.

## 8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2014 *Geology of Britain Viewer*. Online resource at <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Viewed October 2015

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2013 *Mount Pleasant Gas Main Replacement Phase II, Conwy, Conwy: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

CA 2014 *Mount Pleasant Gas Main Replacement, Conwy, Conwy: Archaeological Watching Brief*. CA Report No. **13715**



GAT (Gwynedd Archaeological Trust) 1993 *Newborough Terrace, Conwy: Archaeological Watching Brief*. GAT Report No. **51**

GAT 1996 *14 and 14a Upper Gate Street, Conwy: Archaeological Watching Brief* GAT Report No. **209**

Smith, G. 2012 'Re-assessment of two hillforts in North Wales: Pen-y-Dinas, Llandudno, and Caer Seion, Conwy', in *Archaeology in Wales* Vol. **51**

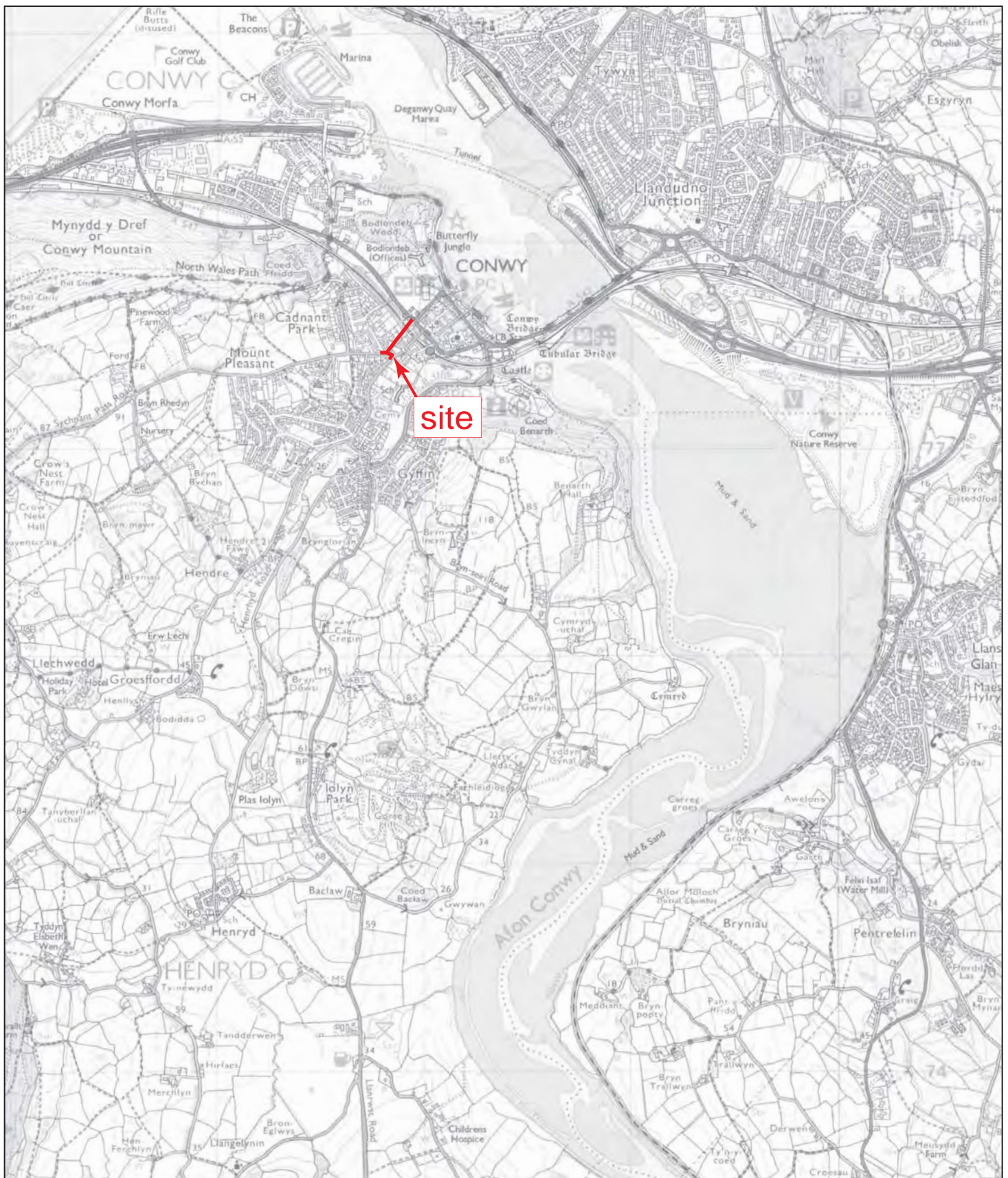


## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)
20	2001	Layer		Road	Tarmac	>5.5	>1	0.18
20	2002	Fill		Service trench fill	Roadstone	>1	0.52	0.23
20	2003	Cut		Service trench	NE/SW linear with moderately sloping sides and concave base	>1	0.52	0.23
20	2004	Fill		Service trench fill	Very dark brown silt clay with modern ceramic pipe in base	>1	0.32	0.3
20	2005	Cut		Service trench	NE/SW linear with steep sides and flat base	>1	0.32	0.3
20	2006	Layer		Buried relic soil	Dark blue brown silt clay mudstone gravel. Same as MOP 13 context 111 (CA 2014)	>1.4	>1	0.04
20	2007	Layer		? Subsoil	Brown silt clay	>1.4	>1	>0.46
20	2008	Fill	2009	Service trench fill	Roadstone with 15% tarmac pebbles/boulders	>2.95	>1	>1
20	2009	Cut		Service trench	NW/SW linear cut with vertical sides base not seen	>2.95	>1	>1
20	2010	Layer		Service trench fill	Layers of grey brown silt clay gravel, crushed grey blue roof slates, same as MOP 13 contexts 107, 108, and 109 (CA 2014)	>1.4	>1	0.38
21	2101	Layer		Road	Tarmac	>5.2	>0.9	0.15
21	2102	Fill		Service trench fill	Roadstone, cut not seen, fill of Trench 9 of MOP 13	>5.2	>0.9	>0.55
22	2201	Layer		Road	Tarmac	>4.5	>4	>0.6
22	2201	Layer		Service trench fill	Roadstone, same as MOP 13 context 1002	>4.5	>4	>0.6
23	2300	Layer		Road	Tarmac	>5.15	>1	0.1
23	2301	Layer		Road sub-base	Roadstone	>5.15	>1	0.1
23	2302	Layer		Natural	Orange brown Glacial Till	>5.15	>1	>0.6
23	2303	Cut		Service trench	Number of modern cuts containing services (gas, electricity, water)			
23	2304	Fill	2303	Service trench fill	Roadstone			
23	2305	Layer		Road	Pitched angular cobbles	0.88		0.2
24	2400	Layer		Road	Tarmac	>10.5	>1.1	0.1
24	2401	Layer		Road sub-base	Roadstone	>10.5	>1.1	0.1
24	2402	Fill		Early service trench fill	Mixed rubble in grey brown silt clay with tarmac and concrete. Cut not seen			
24	2403	Cut		Service trench	Number of modern cuts containing services (gas, electricity, water)			
24	2404	Fill	2403	Service trench fill	Roadstone			
25	2500	Layer		Road	Tarmac	>0.6	>0.5	0.1
25	2501	Layer		Road sub-base	Roadstone	>0.6	>0.5	0.1
25	2502	Fill		Early service trench fill	Mixed rubble in grey brown silt clay with tarmac and concrete, Cut not seen			
25	2503	Cut		Service trench	Number of modern cuts containing services (gas, electricity, water)			
25	2504	Fill	2503	Service trench fill	Roadstone			
26	2601	Layer		Road	Tarmac	>1.1	>0.7	0.12
26	2602	Fill		Service trench fill	Mixed fill of roadstone, tarmac, and grey brown silt clay. Cut not seen	>1.1	>0.7	>0.48
27	2701	Layer		Road	Tarmac	>4	>0.9	0.15
27	2702	Fill		Service trench fill	Mixed fill of roadstone, tarmac, and grey brown silt clay. Cut not seen	>4	>0.9	>0.75

## APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	Mount Pleasant Gas Main Replacement Phase II, Conwy	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with replacement of a gas main along Mount Pleasant road and Sychnant Pass Road, Conwy.  A possible former cobbled road surface and a possible buried soil were observed during groundworks.	
Project dates	1 - 20 October 2014	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location	Conwy, Conwy	
Study area		
Site co-ordinates	SH 7787 7753	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator		
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Ian Barnes	
Project Supervisor	Peter Busby	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>		
	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>		
	None	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	N/A	N/A
Paper	RCAHMMW	Trench recording forms, digital photographic register
Digital	RCAHMMW	Digital photos
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 <i>Mount Pleasant Gas Main Replacement, Phase I, Conwy, Conwy: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report <b>15162</b>		



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**PROJECT TITLE**

Conwy Gas Main Replacement  
 Conwy, Conwy

**FIGURE TITLE**

Site location plan

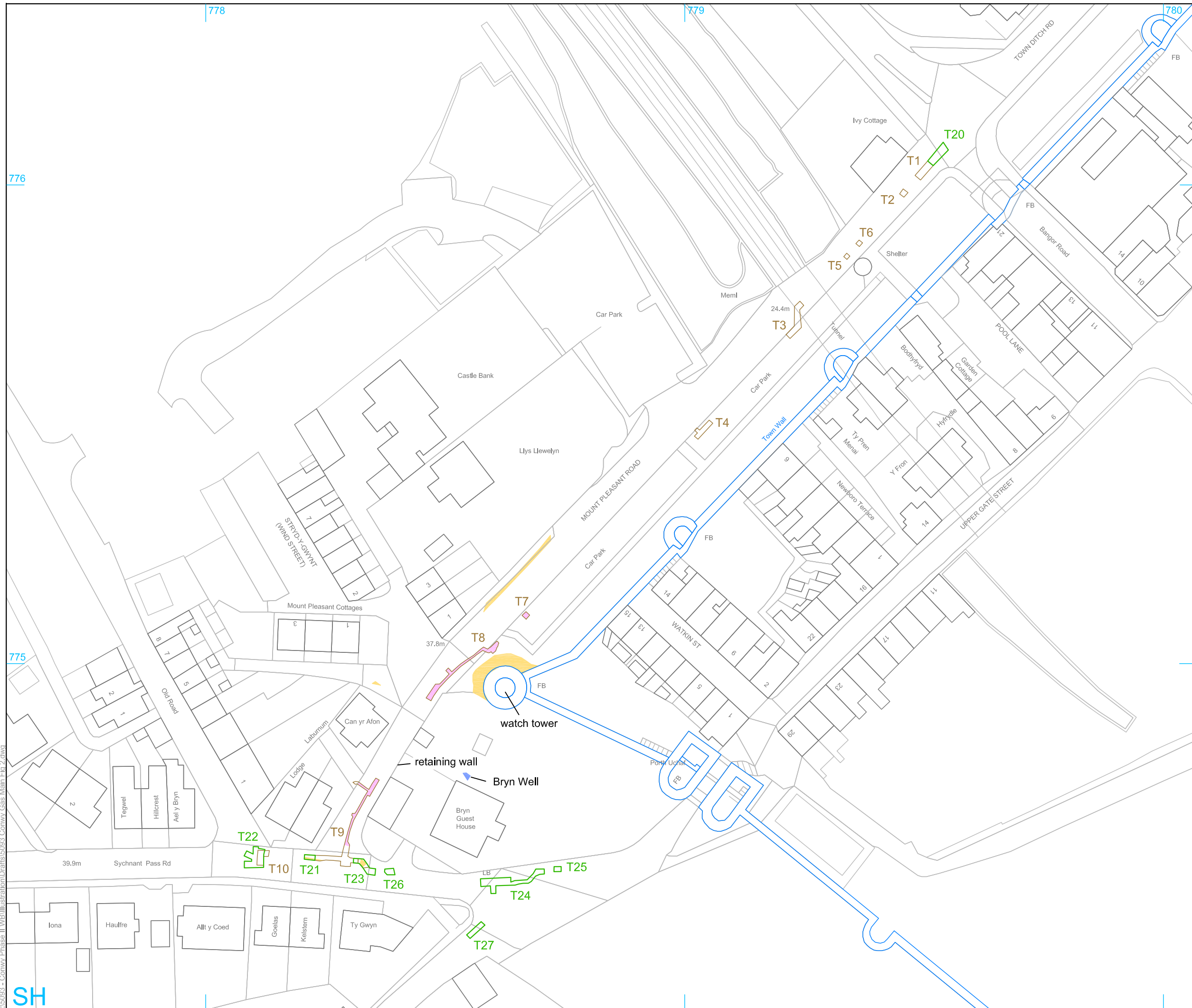


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PROJECT NO. 5093 DATE 04-11-2014  
 DRAWN BY LJH REVISION 01  
 APPROVED BY JB SCALE@A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

1



- ▬ current watching brief (WB)
- ▬ previous WB trench (CA 2014)
- ▬ town wall
- well
- geology
- deposit A



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Mount Pleasant Gas Main Replacement  
 Conwy, Conwy

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Area of groundworks

PROJECT NO. 5093	DATE 03-11-2014	FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY LJH	REVISION 01	2
APPROVED BY JB	SCALE@A3 1:750	

P:\5093 - Conwy Phase II\WB\Illustration\Drafts\5093 Conwy Gas Main Fig 2.dwg



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