

*Survey Commissioned  
by  
Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd Cyf  
Fieldwork  
by  
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Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.*

*registered in England  
Nº 2869678*

*Maes y Priordy, Llandderfel  
Archaeological Watching Brief*

*August 2008*

**EAS Client Report 2008/15**

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## **NGR**

***Centred on SH 9860 3745***

### ***Location and Topography (Figures 1, 2 and 3)***

*The development site occupies a plot of land to the west of Maes y Priordy, Llandderfel, Gwynedd.*

*The site is immediately North West of the St Derfel's Church yard and is bordered to the west by open farmland. The site surrounds three sides of an area of yew trees at the end of Maes y Priordy which are protected by 'Tree Preservation Orders'.*

*The site slopes gently down towards the south west and was stripped of topsoil before the first of the monitoring visit.*

### ***Archaeological Background***

*The site lies adjacent to the 15<sup>th</sup> century parish church of Llandderfel. This building sits within a curvilinear enclosure which has been considered to be possible evidence for an early Medieval origins for the church. Local tradition suggested that the development site may have been the site of an early chapel or priory, as reflected in the road name.*

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust in 1992. This found no evidence for a structure on the site, but did recover several sherds of medieval pottery.*

*An archaeological watching brief was therefore recommended by the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service.*

## ***Aims of Survey***

*To record any archaeological features or deposits disturbed during the construction of the development at Maes y Priordy, Llandderfel.*

## ***SUMMARY OF RESULTS***

*Only one feature of possible archaeological interest was recorded, although this remains undated. Other features recorded were related to the modern use of the site including a probable test pit related to the investigation of the plot before development, a brick drainage chamber and an electrical supply crossing the site.*

## **Methods**

*The digging of the footings for Plots 1 and 2 were subjected to a continuous watching brief with an archaeologist present during the ground works. Plots 3 and 4 had already been trenched before the archaeologist had been notified and backfilled with concrete to a level below the level of the subsoil. This allowed the footings to be inspected for features cutting into the top of the subsoil. On a request from the site manager (Dennis Gelder) the footings for Plot 5 were also monitored with a continuous watching brief.*

## **Results:**

*Five new houses are being constructed on a plot of land to the west of Maes y Priordy, Llandderfel. These consist of two semi-detached properties and a single detached property. Of these Plots 1 and 2 (Plate 1) form a semi-detached unit near to the boundary of St Derfel's Churchyard (Figures 2 and 3). Plots 3 and 4 (Plate 2) occupy the middle of the development site and Plot 5 (Plate 3) the northern edge.*

*Only a limited number of features were recorded during the course of the watching brief suggesting that the level of archaeological activity was very limited. These features and deposits are summarised in Appendix 1.*

*Two features were recorded in the footings of Plots 1 and 2. These consisted of a modern feature (Feature 7, Figures 3 and 4, Plate 4), probably a test pit, cut into the SE corner of Plot 2 and a possible linear features (Feature 10, Figures 3 and 4, Plate 5) seen in the NE trench of Plot 1. Feature 7 consisted of a rectangular trench running approximately east-west, appearing in the eastern side of the footings for Plot 2, but only just impinging on the opposite side of the footing trench. It was approximately 0.8 m wide and at least 0.95 m deep (extending below the level of the footings) and filled with a series of layers of loosely packed gravels and vegetation (Contexts 1 – 6). It is assumed that this feature was a modern test-pit, probably part of the site investigation prior to the construction of the development.*

*Feature 10 only occurred in the north eastern face of the footings of Plot 1. It would appear to*

*represent a linear feature which just impinges with the area disturbed by the ground works. It does not appear in the opposite face of the footings trench, nor the trenches at right angles, thus it is likely that the original features either curves slightly or turns to the north east. The feature is at least 0.65 m deep and extends for 3.3 m along the footings. It was filled by a layer of clast supported gravel up to 0.40 m thick (Context 8) over a grey/brown silt deposit (Context 9). Unfortunately no finds or dating materials were recovered from this feature. It is possible that the feature is aligned on the extension of Maes y Priordy and that the feature is therefore relatively modern, however not enough of this feature was exposed to confirm this assumption.*

*The only other features exposed by the development were a modern brick drainage chamber in the south eastern corner of Plot 3 and two electricity cables in plastic ducting which crossed Plot 5 in an east – west direction.*

## **Conclusions**

*Only one feature of archaeological interest was recorded. This linear feature was only exposed in the north eastern footing of Plot 1. Its possible alignment would suggest that it may be associated with the modern construction of the extension to Maes y Priordy towards the south east. No dating evidence, however, was recovered from this feature and it is therefore also possible that the feature may be much earlier. All other features recorded were modern in origins.*

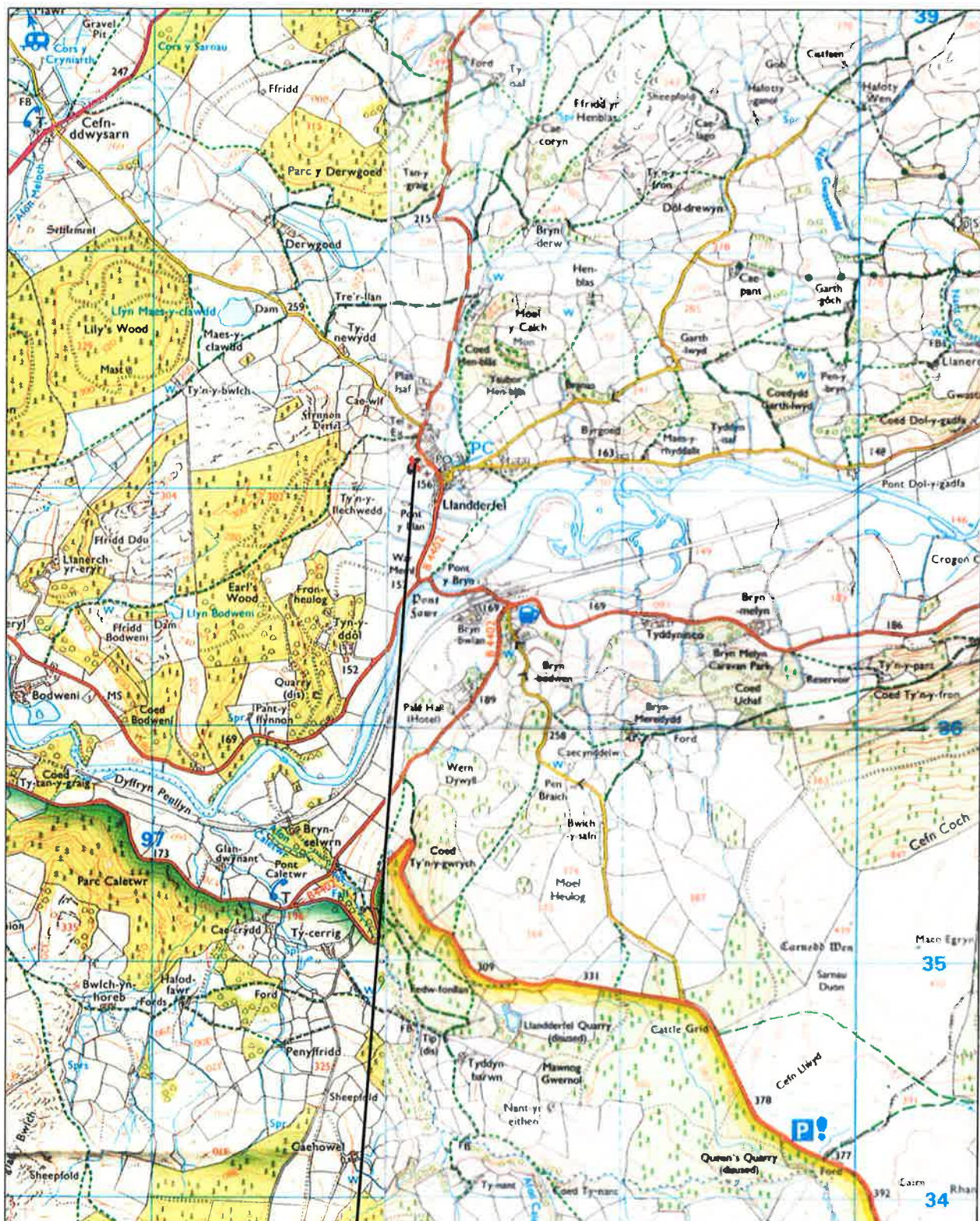
## **Acknowledgements**

*The watching brief was commissioned by R. Bryn Davies of Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd Cyf based on advice from Ashley Batten, Development Control Archaeologist for the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service. On site, the site manager was Dennis Gelder for WD Stant Ltd and the ground works were carried out by R. Sudlow.*

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Development Site

Figure 1: Maes y Priordy, Llandderfel  
Location  
Scale 1:25,000

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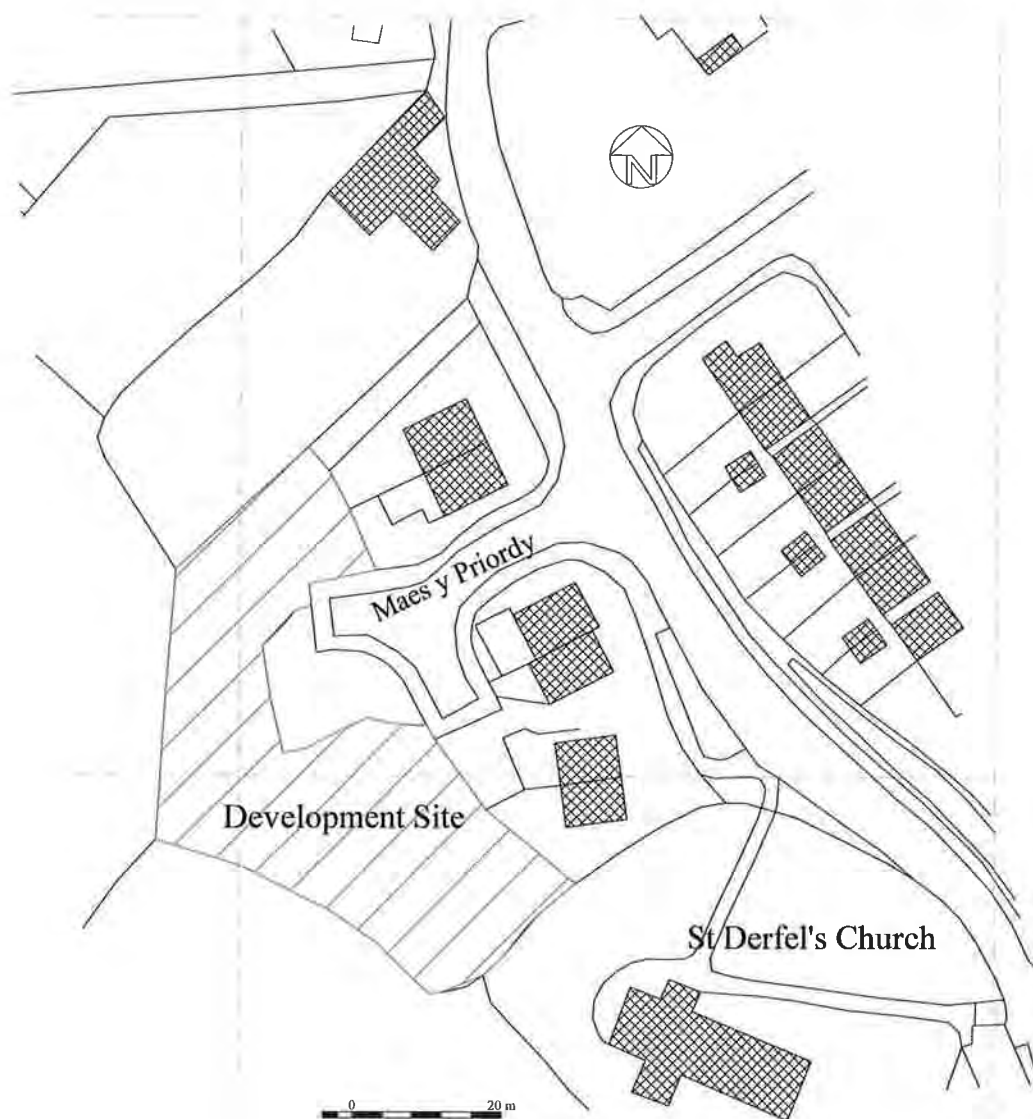
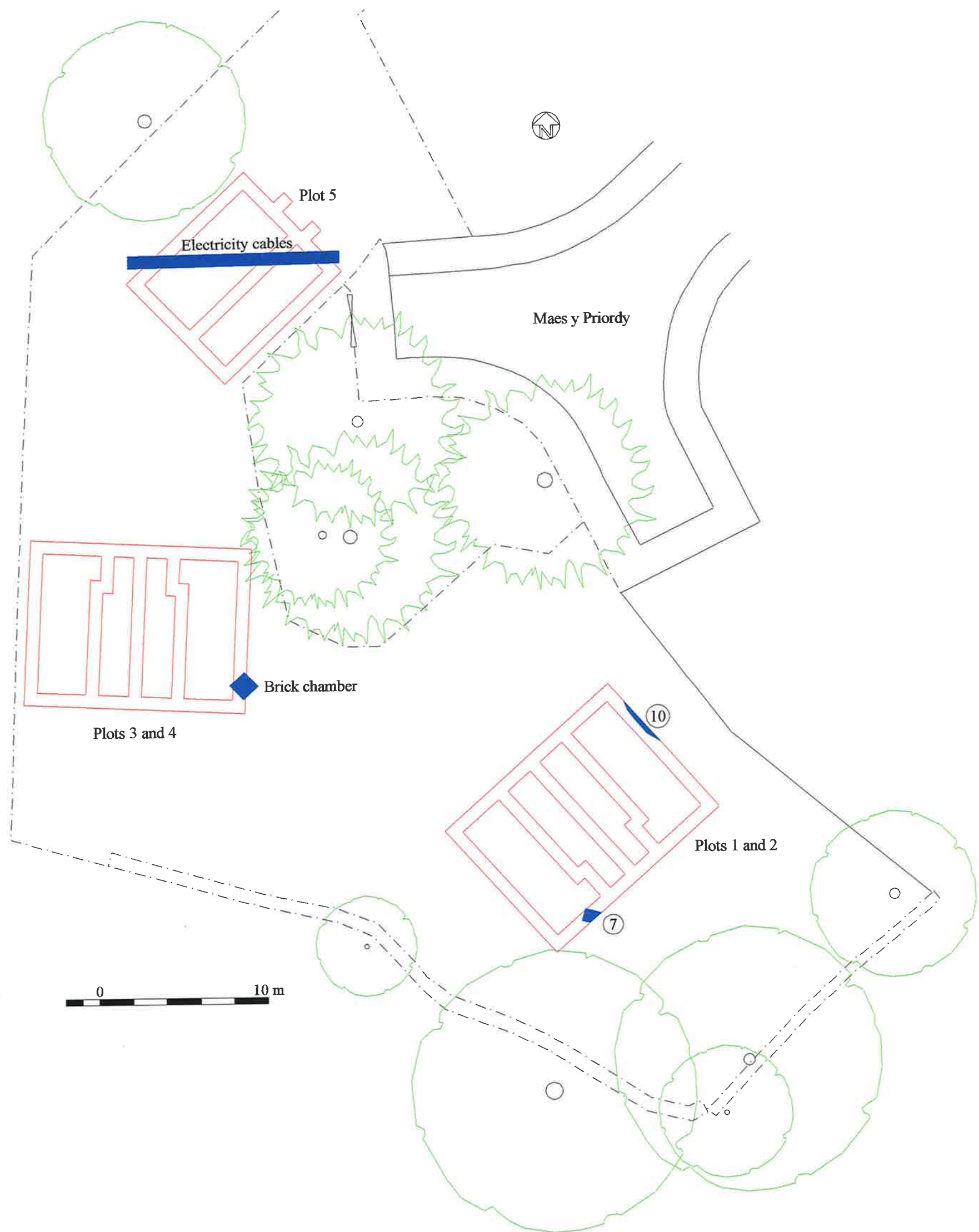


Figure 2: Maes y Priordy, Llandderfel  
Location of the development site  
Scale 1:1000

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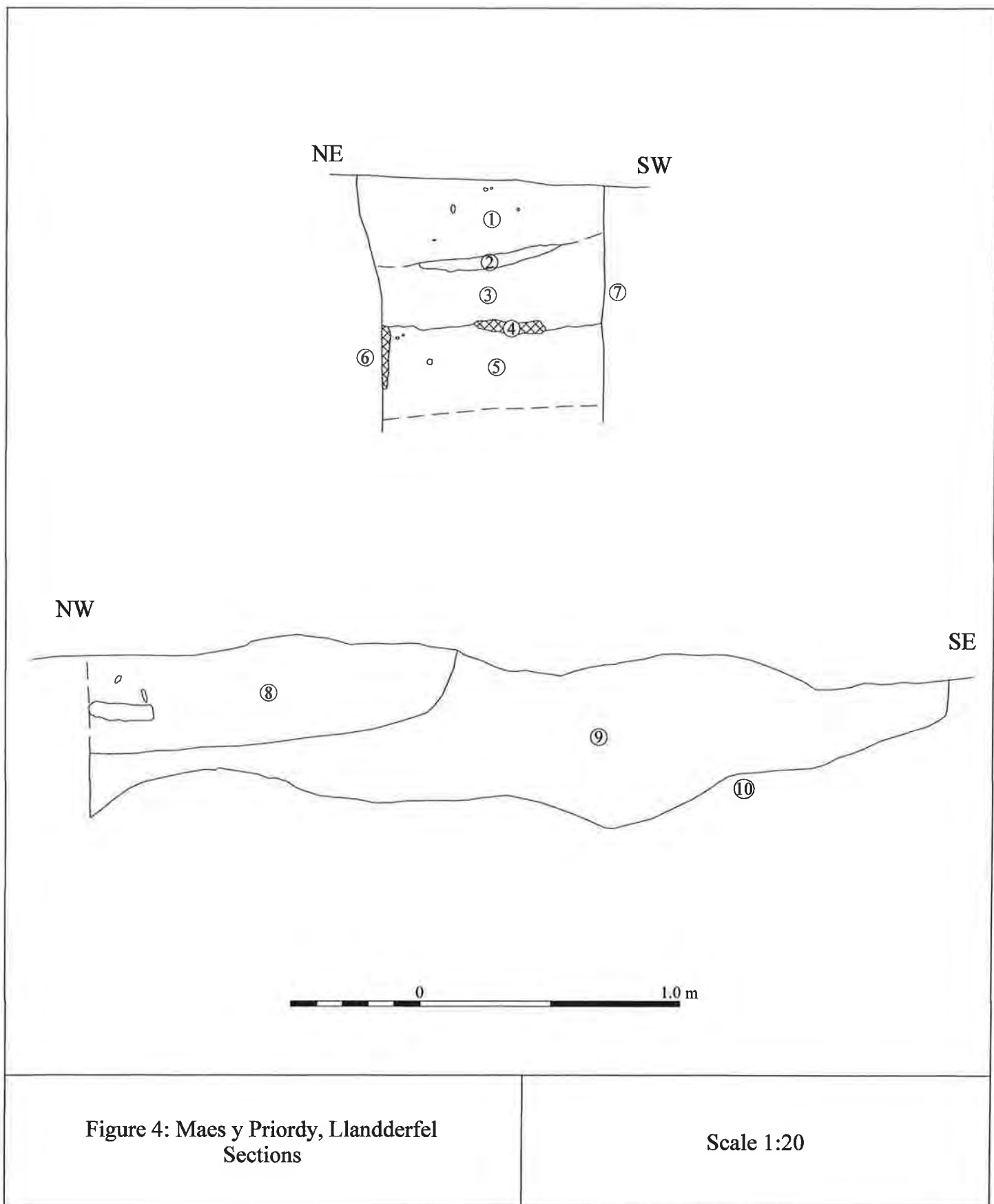


Figure 4: Maes y Priordy, Llandderfel  
Sections

Scale 1:20



Plate 1: Plots 1 and 2 looking east



Plate 2: Plots 3 and 4 looking south





Plate 3: Plot 5 looking south west



Plate 4: Feature 7





Plate 5: Feature 10



Plate 6: Brick chamber, Plot 3

## Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Plot	Relationships	Description	Section	Plan	Photo
1	2	Above 2 Within 7	Very loose yellow/grey gravel	Fig. 4		Llandderfel_001 Llandderfel_002 Llandderfel_003 Llandderfel_009
2	2	Below 1 Above 3 Within 7	Layer of poorly decayed turf	Fig. 4		Llandderfel_001 Llandderfel_002 Llandderfel_003 Llandderfel_009
3	2	Below 2 Above 4, 5 Within 7	Very loose grey gravel	Fig. 4		Llandderfel_001 Llandderfel_002 Llandderfel_003 Llandderfel_009
4	2	Below 3 Above 5 Within 7	Poorly decayed vegetation including long grass	Fig. 4		Llandderfel_001 Llandderfel_002 Llandderfel_003 Llandderfel_009
5	2	Below 4, 3 Abuts 6 Within 7	Re-deposited grey/brown gravel	Fig. 4		Llandderfel_001 Llandderfel_002 Llandderfel_003 Llandderfel_009
6	2	Below 3 Abuts 5 Within 7	Poorly decayed vegetation including long grass	Fig. 4		Llandderfel_001 Llandderfel_002 Llandderfel_003 Llandderfel_009
7	2	Contains 1,2,3,4,5,6	Probably machine dug feature [test pit]	Fig. 4	Fig. 3	Llandderfel_001 Llandderfel_002 Llandderfel_003 Llandderfel_009
8	1	Above 9 Within 10	Yellow/brown clast supported gravel with stone typically in the 10 – 50 mm size range, although reaching a maximum size of 250 mm. Some root disturbance.	Fig. 4		Llandderfel_007 Llandderfel_008 Llandderfel_010 Llandderfel_011



Context	Plot	Relationships	Description	Section	Plan	Photo
9	1	Below 8 Within 10	Dark grey/brown silt with a moderate number of small, rounded, stones up to 20 mm in size and the occasional fleck of charcoal	Fig. 4		Llandderfel_007 Llandderfel_008 Llandderfel_010 Llandderfel_011
10	1	Contains 8, 9	Possible linear feature running approximately parallel to the extended line of Maes y Priordy. The feature only impinges on part of the north eastern trench of Plot 1.	Fig. 4	Fig. 3	Llandderfel_007 Llandderfel_008 Llandderfel_010 Llandderfel_011
11	3		Modern brick built chamber		Fig. 3	Llandderfel_005
12	5		Modern electricity cables in plastic ducting.		Fig. 3	

## *Appendix 2: Photographic Register*

<b>Photograph</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Description</b>
Llanderfel_001	1 m	SE	Section through possible test pit, Feature 7
Llanderfel_002	1 m	SE	Section through possible test pit, Feature 7
Llanderfel_003		E	General view of site looking towards Plots 1 and 2
Llanderfel_004		NW	General view of site looking towards Plots 3 and 4
Llanderfel_005		W	Brick drainage chamber, Plot 3
Llanderfel_006		E	General view of site looking towards Plots 1 and 2
Llanderfel_007	2 m	NE	Section through Feature 10
Llanderfel_008	2 m	NE	Section through Feature 10
Llanderfel_009	1 m	SE	Section through possible test pit, Feature 7
Llanderfel_010	2 m	E	Section through Feature 10
Llanderfel_011	2 m	NE	Section through Feature 10
Llanderfel_012			Detail of site information board
Llanderfel_013		S	General view of yew trees
Llanderfel_014		S	General view of yew trees
Llanderfel_015		E	Plots 1 and 2 after digging of footings
Llanderfel_016		NE	Plots 1 and 2 after digging of footings
Llanderfel_017		NE	Plots 1 and 2 after digging of footings
Llanderfel_018		NW	Plots 3 and 4 under construction
Llanderfel_019		NW	Plots 3 and 4 under construction
Llanderfel_020		NNW	General view of yew trees
Llanderfel_021			Detail of ground contactors machine
Llanderfel_022			Main Contactors sign
Llanderfel_023		NE	Plot 5 during excavation
Llanderfel_024		E	Plot 5 during excavation including electricity cables
Llanderfel_025		S	Plots 3 and 4 during construction
Llanderfel_026		NE	Plot 5 under excavation
Llanderfel_027		SW	Plot 5 under excavation
Llanderfel_028		S	General view of site with Pale Hall in background
Llanderfel_029		SW	Partial excavated Plot 5
Llanderfel_030		SW	Plot 5 fully excavated
Llanderfel_031		SW	Plot 5 fully excavated
Llanderfel_032		SW	Plot 5 fully excavated

## ***Appendix 3: Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief at Safle Maes Priordy, Llandderfel, Y Bala, Gwynedd.***

### ***1 Background***

- 1.1 Cymdeith Tai Clwyd intended to construct five new houses on a plot of land adjacent to St Derfel's church in Llandderfel. (Planning application C07M/0127/04/LL)
- 1.2 The site is adjacent to the 15<sup>th</sup> century parish church of Llandderfel, which is considered to have an early medieval origin. It has also been considered that the proposed plot for development may be the site of an early chapel or priory. An archaeological evaluation carried out by the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust in 1992 found no evidence of a possible chapel on the site, but did recover a few sherds of medieval pottery which might suggest a level of activity on the site.
- 1.3 Planning consent for the project specifies that an archaeological watching brief should be carried out during initial ground works.
- 1.4 This specification is based on the letter from Ashley Batten, Gwynedd Development Control Archaeologist, 1008ab02/D1165 dated 8<sup>th</sup> October 2007 and a telephone conversation with Ashley Batten on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2008
- 1.5 It is considered that the main area of archaeological concern is nearest to the church and therefore slightly different responses can be adopted for the plots further away from the church.

### ***2 Objectives***

The principal objectives of the proposed archaeological watching brief are as follows:

- 2.1 To identify and record, any archaeological features or deposits disturbed by the development.

### ***3 Fieldwork Program***

A program of field work is proposed for this area that will include:

- 3.1 The watching brief on the removal of any topsoil or superficial deposits to a level where the natural subsoil is encountered and on the excavation of any trenches for footings or services for Plots 1 and 2.
- 3.2 An inspection of any footings or service trenches dug for the construction of Plots 3, 4 and 5.
- 3.3 Archive preparation.
- 3.4 Report preparation.

### ***4 Methodology***

- 4.1 The archaeologist will be present during all the ground works which involve the removal of topsoil and superficial deposits to a level where the natural subsoil is encountered during the excavations associated with Plots 1 and 2.
- 4.2 The archaeologist will inspect all footings and trenches for services associated with the construction of Plots 3, 4 and 5.

- 4.3 Where appropriate features encountered will be recorded by means of plans, sections, elevations, written description and photographs.
- 4.4 Digital Photographic records will be at a minimum resolution of 4.0 Mp and include a metric scale.
  - 4.4.1 Photographs will be converted to .TIFF format for archiving
- 4.5 Section drawings will be at a minimum 1:10 scale.
- 4.6 Plans will be at a minimum 1:20 scale.
- 4.7 Each deposit, feature or layer will be identified by a unique context number to which all other records will be related.
- 4.8 Where appropriate, deposits will be sampled for environmental, dating or technological evidence.
- 4.9 Samples will be fully recorded and packed appropriately for future analysis.
- 4.10 Sampling will be carried out in accordance with the procedures outlined in 'A guide to sampling archaeological deposits for environmental analysis' - P Murphy and P Wiltshire 1994.
- 4.11 Any artefacts recovered will be related to their archaeological context. Typologically distinct or closely datable artefacts will be recorded in three dimensions.

## **5 *Finds and Conservation***

- 5.1 Conservation of archaeological materials will be carried out by K. Laws for Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.
- 5.2 Any flint or chert artefacts will be studied by Dr. I.P. Brooks
- 5.3 Any pottery will be studied by an appropriate specialist
- 5.4 Any metal or other special finds will be studied by K. Laws
- 5.5 All ceramic, bone and stone artefacts will be cleaned and processed immediately following the watching brief.
- 5.6 Metal artefacts will be stored and managed on site according to the UK Institute of Conservation Guidelines. They will be evaluated prior to conservation by K. Laws.

## **6 *Report and Archive***

- 6.1 On completion of the watching brief a report shall be produced which will contain:
  - 6.1.1 A location plan of the development area identifying excavated areas, archaeological features and structures located.
  - 6.1.2 A detailed description of the structures and features recorded, their character, function, date and relationship to other features.
  - 6.1.3 A description of artefacts recovered.
  - 6.1.4 Plans and sections as appropriate.
  - 6.1.5 Specialist reports as appropriate.
  - 6.1.6 An assessment of the archaeological importance in a local, regional and national context.

- 6.1.7 Recommendations for further work if appropriate.
- 6.1.8 A bibliography.
- 6.2 Up to five copies of the report will be deposited with the client within one month of the completion of the field work.
- 6.3 A copy of the report will be deposited with the archaeological curator.
- 6.4 A copy of the report will be supplied to the Gwynedd Historic Environment Record.
- 6.5 A full archive including plans, photographs, written material and any other relevant findings will be lodged in an appropriate place and in appropriate order within six months of the completion of the project.
- 6.6 If the results of the watching brief are of sufficient merit they will be published in a suitable journal. Assuming some archaeology is recorded the minimum will be a note in Archaeology in Wales.

## **7 *Liaison***

- 7.1 Measures will be adopted, as appropriate; to facilitate the monitoring of the project by the Archaeological Curator and arrangements will be agreed in advance.

## **8 *Staff***

- 8.1 The project will be directed by Dr Ian Brooks MIFA or Kathy Laws, MIFA.
- 8.2 Project staff will include Dr. Ian Brooks, MIFA, and Kathy Laws, MIFA.

## **9 *General***

### **9.1 IFA Code of Conduct**

- 9.1.1 All staff will abide by, and all procedures be carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct.
- 9.1.2 EAS Ltd. will abide by the Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology.

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## ***10 Timetable and Staffing***

### **10.1 Watching Brief:**

10.1.1 It is anticipated that one person will be required on site to carry out the watching brief. The watching brief on the trenching will be carried out by either Ms K.Laws or Dr Ian Brooks.

10.1.2 The precise timing for the ground works has not yet been determined and costs have therefore been estimated on a daily rate basis.

### **10.2 Reporting**

10.2.1 The report will be written by either Dr Ian Brooks or Ms K. Laws.

10.2.3 The report will be produced within one month of completion of the fieldwork.