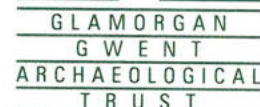


SMR 279  
94/02



GLAMORGAN  
GWENT  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
TRUST

**GLAMORGAN-GWENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST  
CONTRACTS SECTION**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT  
ABBAY FARM LANDS  
LLANTARNAM, GWENT**

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**MARCH 1994**

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**PROJECT No. A178  
REPORT No. 94/017**

Glamorgan Gwent  
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# ABBEY FARM LANDS, LLANTARNAM, GWENT

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## **ABBEY FARM LANDS, LLANTARNAM, GWENT**

### **Summary**

Prior to submission of a planning application for the development of a parcel of land southeast of the present A4042 Newport Road, Gwent County Council commissioned **GGAT Contracts** to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment of the potential impact of any proposals on the archaeological resource. This study revealed that whilst there are no visible archaeological features on the study area there is a high probability of encountering buried deposits during development of the study area.

Extensive archaeological evaluation and excavation of the area bounding the E of the study area has revealed the presence of substantial remains of the medieval and post-medieval village of Llantarnam. The medieval village appears to have been roughly aligned along a trackway or road and may extend into and across the S section of the study area. Aerial photographs revealed a number of features on the study area: the nature of these features is uncertain, and it is possible that they may be associated with the early settlement of Llantarnam.

### **Acknowledgements**

The report was prepared by N A Page BA, Project Officer, **GGAT Contracts**, with assistance from other Trust staff. The author is grateful to the staff at the Central Register of Air Photographs for Wales, Cardiff, the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth and Newport Reference Library for their assistance during the documentary searches.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Development proposal**

Prior to preparation of a planning application for the development of a parcel of land currently part of Abbey Farm, Llantarnam, Gwent County Council commissioned **GGAT Contracts** to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment of the likely impact of any proposals on the archaeological resource.

### **1.2 Specification for the report**

The specifications for the report were drawn up by **GGAT Contracts** to conform to the Standard in British Archaeology for Archaeological Desk-Based Studies, issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists in September 1993, and was carried out in accordance with the GGAT Contracts Guidelines for the Execution of Assessment Projects.

### **1.3 Scope of the report**

The report outlines the physical environment of the study area (Section 2) before summarising the archaeological resource (Section 3) and the likely impact of any proposals on that resource (Section 4). Possible mitigatory measures to protect that part of the archaeological resource affected are detailed in Section 5. Supporting data is presented in a series of appendices.

### **1.4 Abbreviations**

Sites previously recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record are listed by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and their National Grid Reference (NGR). New sites are numbered in a new sequence and are prefixed with AB (e.g. AB 1). All sites mentioned in the text are shown on Figure One.

## **2. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **2.1 Location (Fig 1)**

Llantarnam is situated 7.5km north of Newport, Gwent, on the old Newport-to-Pontypool road. The village lies on the southeast end of a northwest - southeast ridge of undifferentiated river terrace deposits. On the northeast side the ridge slopes towards the flood plain of the Afon Lwyd, whilst on the southwest side it slopes towards the flood plain of the Dowlais Brook.

### **2.2 The site**

The proposed development study area (centred on NGR SO 3030 9300) is located on the southwest slope of the ridge and is currently used as pasture land. Its western side is marked by the present A4042 Newport Road, whilst its northern limit is defined by the car park for The Greenhouse public house and the line of a former mill leat. On the east, the study area is bounded by the line of the new A4042 Llantarnam Bypass (currently under construction), and its southern edge follows the line of the present fence of the storage lagoons, constructed in the early 1980s to alleviate the periodic flooding of the area.

### 3. SUMMARY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

#### 3.1 General

At present, the study area is flat pasture land with no visible archaeological features. A visit to the study area and searches of primary historical data and published sources did not reveal any features of archaeological interest. However, extensive archaeological assessment (Geake 1990) and fieldwork (Mein 1982, Maylan 1992) including large scale excavations in 1993 (Page 1994), carried out in the area bounding the east of the study area, revealed substantial archaeological remains, which suggests that there may be buried features on the study area. The archaeological potential of the study area is outlined below.

#### 3.2 Prehistoric

Twenty flints, both artefacts and waste flakes, of Neolithic or Bronze Age date, were recovered during the 1993 excavations. The flints showed no sign of abrasion or other damage, indicating that they had not travelled far by either water or soil movement, suggesting the presence of a settlement nearby. There is no evidence at present to determine the location of the settlement. The distribution of the flints was fairly random across the adjacent site, although the majority were recovered from the lower half of the site.

#### 3.3 Roman

A small amount of Roman pottery was recovered during the 1993 excavation, although there is no suggestion of any Roman settlement in the immediate vicinity. However, as Caerleon is only c.4km southeast of the study area, the recovery of a small amount of residual Roman material is not unusual.

#### 3.4 Medieval

There is much evidence for the medieval settlement of Llantarnam including, the parish church, the abbey and the remains of the village.

The church (PRN 622g; NGR ST 3070 9315) - The earliest evidence of medieval settlement at Llantarnam are the two Norman chancel arches in the parish church, St Michael's. Although the present building dates largely from the 15th

century, the two early arches indicate that the area was a focus for significantly earlier religious activity.

The abbey (PRN 624g; NGR ST 3117 9290) - Founded in 1179 by Hywel ap Iorwerth, lord of Caerleon, Llantarnam Abbey was a house of the Cistercian Order (the White Monks). It appears that the study area has always been a part of the abbey estate.

The village - There has been a village at Llantarnam since at least the 13th century. During the 1993 excavations one of the buildings (AB 1) from this village was uncovered only some 20m from the eastern boundary of the study area. There is as yet no data to determine the western extent of the village, although it is possible that it formerly spread further towards the church, and therefore into the study area.

Finds - A number of stray finds have been recovered from the study area, including coins, and a lead seal-matrix showing a squirrel in profile surrounded by an inscription in middle English I crack nuts. The recovery of chance finds is not necessarily an indication of significant, or settled, human activity on the study area, as they may have been deposited there by a variety of processes, such as; accidental loss whilst crossing the site, soil movement or ploughing.

### 3.5 Post-Medieval

The northern limit of the site is bounded by the line of an in-filled mill leat (AB 2), that supplied water to the corn and fulling mill that formerly occupied the site of Mill Barn. A series of weirs controlled the water flow along the leat which fed into a mill pond that was located at the northeast corner of the site. It is not certain if the mill pond extends into the site or whether it was slightly to the north of the site, confined to the area of the old nursery.

During the early development of the present village a number of buildings were constructed alongside the Newport Road, including The Greenhouse public house and a smithy (no longer standing). Although there is no evidence to suggest that the village ever extended south of The Greenhouse the possibility cannot be ruled out (AB 3). Particularly in light of the discovery of the substantial remains of one of the original buildings (AB 4) of the village during the 1993 excavations which was not shown on cartographic representations of the area, nor mentioned in any documentary sources. The abandonment of the excavated building may have been part of a contraction of the village. If so the contraction may have taken place at both ends of the village, thereby removing any structures from south of the Greenhouse.

The study area is crossed by at least two post-medieval field-drains. These were visible on the air photographs, and were encountered during 1993 excavations.

### **3.6 Undated**

A series of features (AB 5) of uncertain function visible on air photographs of the study area are at present undatable.



#### **4. IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE**

##### **4.1 General**

Since the study area is currently a flat field site it is difficult to be unequivocal about the likelihood of encountering archaeological deposits. However the fact that a large amount of work has been undertaken in such close proximity to the study area means it has been possible to make reasonable assumptions regarding the potential nature and extent of the archaeological resource in the study area, and to assess the likely impact of development on that resource.

##### **4.2 Character of potential archaeological resource**

As no direct archaeological investigation has taken place within the study area it is difficult to assess the likely character of the potential archaeological resource. That said, the 1993 excavations immediately to the east revealed substantial remains of stone-built structures, and other features of the medieval and post-medieval village 0.2m-0.3m below the topsoil.

##### **4.3 Impact of development**

As any archaeological remains are likely to be at a shallow depth they would be damaged by the removal of topsoil during the initial stages of development, although the damage at this stage may be slight. Potentially the most damaging stage of the development would be the excavation of foundation and service trenches that would cut through any archaeological deposits. Another element of any development to consider is the post-construction landscaping of the site, as many landscaping techniques have a direct archaeological impact.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

The potential of encountering buried archaeological deposits, outlined above, means that a programme of further archaeological work will be required in order to accurately assess the impact of the development of the study area in advance of its execution.

### **5.2 Further work**

A programme of further archaeological work, comprising two stages, is recommended

#### Stage 1

Archaeological field evaluation of 2% of the study area to locate and assess the nature and extent of any archaeological deposits. Evaluation at this early stage would identify the areas of potential archaeological interests and allow informed decisions to be taken on the possible nature of any development in order to minimise both the damage to the archaeological resource and the cost of the development.

Decisions taken regarding the nature of any development, based on the results of stage 1, would dictate whether any stage 2 work would be necessary.

#### Stage 2

This stage would consist of further evaluation, or the excavation, of areas identified during stage 1 as having high archaeological significance in order to allow development to proceed.

### **5.3 Timing of further work**

Further evaluation would be required on submission of planning application for proposed developments. In view of the important implications of the nature of the archaeological resource on the density and form of the proposed developments, it may be considered worthwhile to commission stage 1 works prior to the preparation of firm development proposals.

## APPENDIX ONE: SPECIFICATIONS

### Definition of study

The project will conform to the Standard in British Archaeology for Archaeological Desk-Based Studies, issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists in September 1993, and will be carried out in accordance with the GGAT Contracts Guidelines for the Execution of Assessment Projects.

### 1. Objectives

- 1.1 Assessment of existing information to determine the extent, character and significance of archaeological interests, in local regional, and wider contexts, and the likely effects of the proposed development on such interests, by means of documentary study and field visit.
- 1.2 Identification of areas or features requiring further assessment where present archaeological knowledge is insufficient for informed decisions to be made during the planning process.

### 2. Documentary searches

- 2.1 Collation of information about sites recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).
- 2.2 Search of cartographic sources for additional archaeological information, and collation of information relating to archaeological interests.
- 2.3 Analysis of aerial photographic coverage held by the Central Register of Air Photography for Wales for additional archaeological information, and collation of information relating to archaeological interests.
- 2.4 Analysis of relevant primary historic documents and published sources for additional archaeological information, and collation of information relating to archaeological interests.
- 2.5 Analysis of borehole data, geotechnical studies, etc., for additional information relating to archaeological interests.

### 3. Fieldwork

- 3.1 Site visit to check the present condition of archaeological features identified by 2.1 - 2.5, and to assess factors that

may have influenced the condition or visibility of these features.

3.2 Identification of previously-unknown archaeological features.

3.3 Rapid recording of archaeological features (e.g. sketch plotting and photography).

#### 4. Assessment

4.1 Assessment of the information acquired from the execution of 2 and 3.

4.2 Assessment of the impact of the development proposals on the defined archaeological interests.

#### 5. Reports

The results of the study will be reported in a series of reports.

5.1 Client - A bound report comprising a synthesis of data gathered through the execution of 2 & 4, placing the archaeological resource within its wider context, with supporting evidence in appendices, and identification of features of archaeological interest onto scale drawings, or listing of features by eight-figure National Grid References. The identification of legal constraints (e.g. scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings) relating to archaeological interests. A copy of this report will be deposited with the SMR.

5.2 Academic - A digest report of significant archaeological information in an appropriate outlet (e.g. regional or national academic journal).

#### 6. Archive

6.1 preparation of an ordered archive of records made during the assessment in accordance with NMR cataloguing procedures.

6.2 Deposition of the assessment archive with an appropriate organisation (usually **GGAT Contracts** records).

6.3 Submission of a copy of the report for inclusion in the SMR, within 6 months of the completion of the work.

#### 7. Staff

- 7.1 The project will be managed by the Principal Archaeological Officer (Contracts), AG Marvell BA MIFA, and the Projects Manager (Assessments), M Locock BA AIFA, and carried out by one of **GGAT Contracts** Project Officers, all of whom have wide experience of such work.

8. Insurance

- 8.1 **GGAT Contracts** holds insurance cover for all risks involved in this type of project, including substantial Professional Indemnity cover.

9. Scope of the work

- 9.1 The work outlined in this specification will be carried out to the highest professional standards, and the conclusions drawn will be based on a considered review of the evidence available. However, the archaeological resource is unpredictable, and the encountering of unexpected archaeological deposits on the site cannot be ruled out.

## APPENDIX TWO: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION ON THE COUNTY SMR

SITE No 622g  
 SITE NAME St Michael's Church  
 TYPE Church  
 PERIOD Medieval  
 NGR ST 3070 9315

SITE No 623g  
 SITE NAME St Michael's Church  
 TYPE Churchyard cross  
 PERIOD Medieval  
 NGR ST 3070 9314

SITE No 624g  
 SITE NAME Llantarnam Abbey  
 TYPE Abbey  
 PERIOD Medieval  
 NGR ST 3117 9290

SITE No 625g  
 SITE NAME Llantarnam Abbey  
 TYPE Dwelling (mansion house)  
 PERIOD Post-Medieval  
 NGR ST 3117 9290

SITE No 627g  
 SITE NAME Llantarnam Abbey  
 TYPE Tithe Barn  
 PERIOD Post-Medieval  
 STATUS Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM MM 137)  
 NGR ST 3120 9301

SITE No 630g  
 SITE NAME Llantarnam Abbey  
 TYPE Convent  
 PERIOD Post-Medieval  
 NGR ST 3117 9290

SITE No 3790g  
 SITE NAME Lodge Farm  
 TYPE Barn  
 PERIOD Medieval/Post-Medieval  
 NGR ST 3025 9282

SITE No 4379g  
 SITE NAME Llantarnam  
 TYPE Find (Pb mount in shape of a male face)  
 PERIOD Medieval  
 NGR ST 305 931

### APPENDIX THREE: AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

An examination of all aerial photographic coverage held at the Central Register of Air Photographs for Wales, Cardiff, revealed a number of features of potential archaeological interest.

#### Features identified

Clearly visible, on the 1947 coverage, crossing the site were two parallel E - W linear crop marks that were crossed by a third crop mark, aligned N - S. Two further linear crop marks, aligned ENE - WSW were visible at the S end of the site. Visible on coverage from 1951 was a N - S rectangular enclosure which by 1962 appeared to have been destroyed by a massive linear feature that extended N - S across the site and beyond. On later coverage, 1967 and 1975, a number of amorphous features were visible on the site. On much of the coverage a water-filled ditch is visible along the N boundary of the the site.

#### Interpretation

The linear features visible on the 1947 coverage are likely to have been post-medieval field drains, two of which were encountered during the 1993 excavations. The rectangular enclosure on the 1951 coverage may have been the remains of a building, but as it was destroyed by the insertion of a water main by 1962 this interpretation is not certain. The amorphous spreads visible on the later coverage are of uncertain nature. The water-filled ditch is the mill-leat that supplied the post-medieval corn and fulling mill.

#### Coverage

| SORTIE             | SCALE   | DATE     | FRAME NUMBER                 |
|--------------------|---------|----------|------------------------------|
| RAF SORTIES        |         |          |                              |
| 106g/UK1502        | 1:9840  | 13/05/46 | 4128-4131                    |
| CPE UK1828         | 1:9840  | 04/11/46 | 3820-3123, 4117-4120         |
| CPE UK1997         | 1:9840  | 13/04/47 | 2037-2039                    |
| 58/676             | 1:10000 | 12/05/51 | 3187-3189                    |
| 524/RAF/211        | 1:10000 | 15/07/55 | 0003-0005                    |
| 58/RAF/5154        | 1:10000 | 01/06/62 | F21 0121-0122, F22 0120-0121 |
| 58/RAF/5502        | 1:10000 | 03/10/62 | F21 0193-0194                |
| ORDNANCE SURVEY    |         |          |                              |
| OS 67-089          | 1:7500  | 10/05/67 | 014-016                      |
| COMMERCIAL SORTIES |         |          |                              |
| BKS                | 1:12000 | 1971-72  | 157766-67                    |
| JA Storey          | 1:20000 | 28/04/85 | 0985-112-114                 |

#### APPENDIX FOUR: CATALOGUE OF RESEARCH ARCHIVE

The research archive classified to the NMR material categories is held by **GGAT Contracts**, Swansea, and includes the following:

- A. Copy of the report.
- B. Notes from site visit.
- C. Photocopies of OS and other maps at various scales, annotated by the researcher.
- D. Photographs from site visit.
- G. Notes made during research, including transcripts of relevant documents and notes from secondary sources.
- I. Annotated drafts of the report.
- L. Brief and specification for the report.
- M. Correspondence.

There is no material for classes E, F, H, J, K and N.



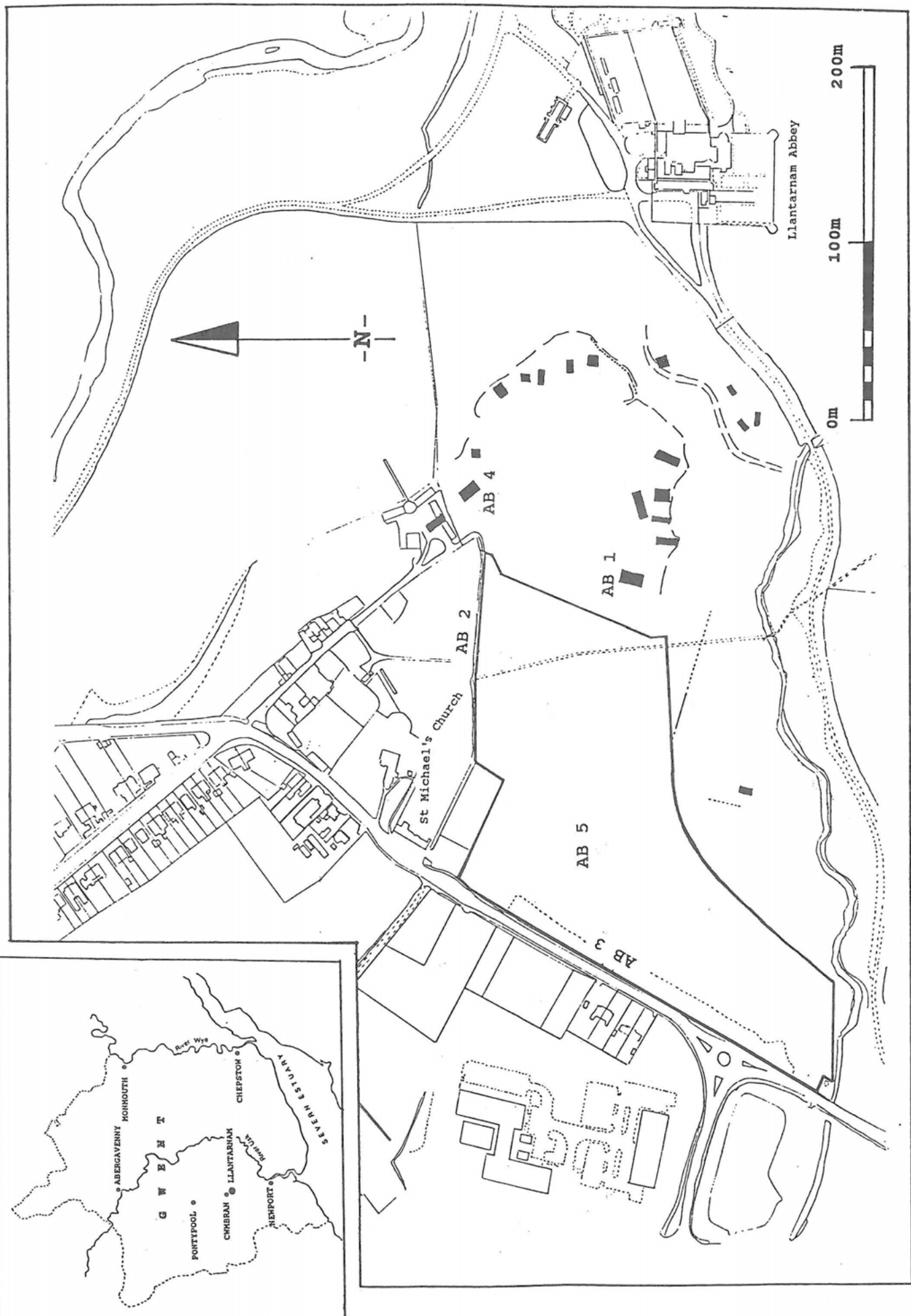


Figure One: location plan showing sites mentioned in text

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