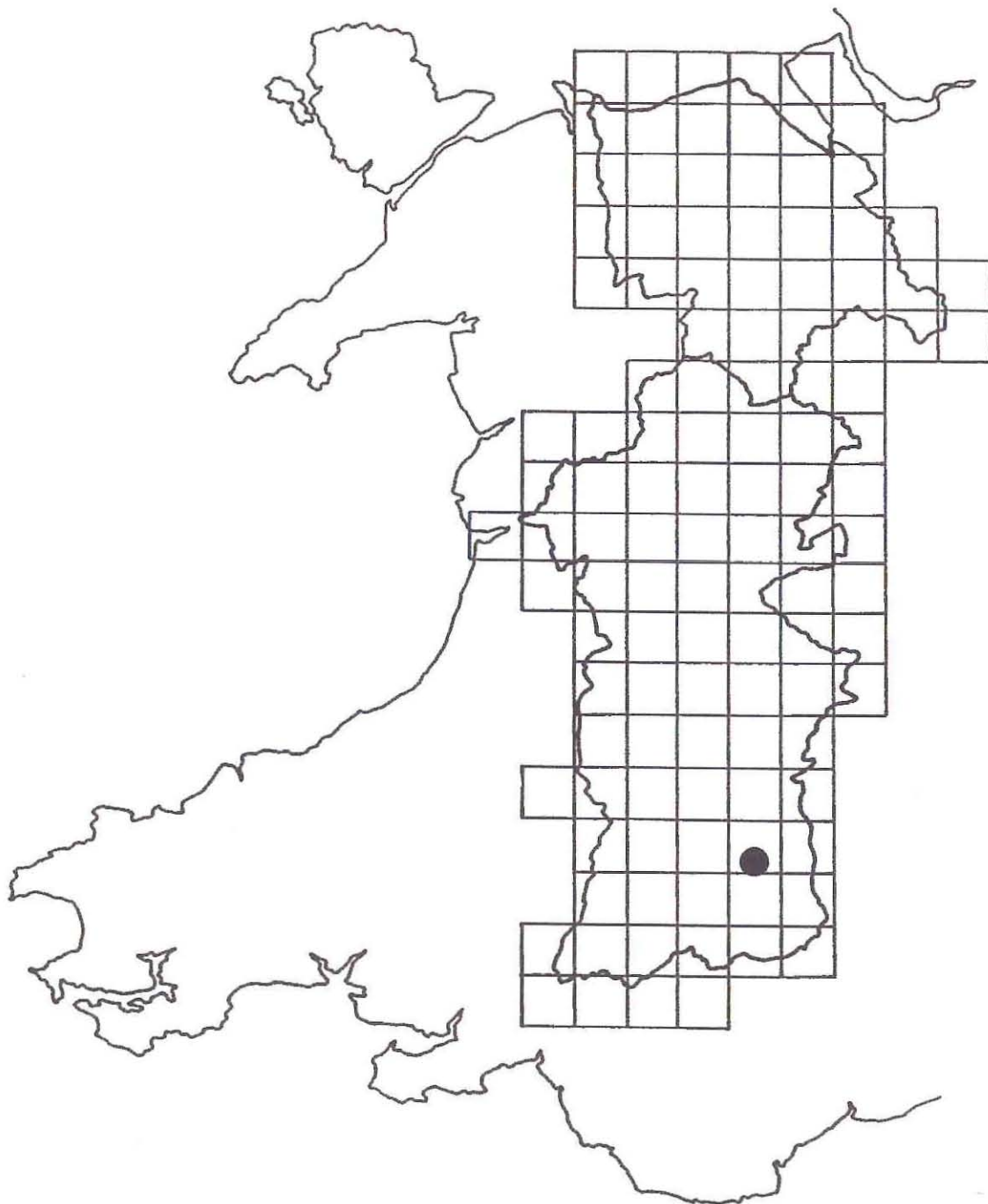


Proposed Bronllys By-pass:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

by A.M. Gibson
May 1996

Report prepared for Powys County Council Highways & Property Directorate


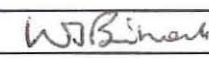
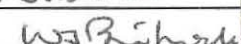
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CPAT Report Record

Report and status

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CPAT Project Name	Bronllys By-pass		
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In February 1996, the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (hereafter CPAT Contracts) was requested by Powys County Council Highways and Property Directorate to submit a specification and quotation for undertaking archaeological work connected with the proposed construction of the Bronllys Bypass (centering on SO143347).
- 1.2 CPAT Contracts submitted a specification and tender for this work on 28th February 1996. This specification was approved and the tender accepted by Powys County Council Highways and Property Directorate on 12th April 1996 (letter ref: JRB/K420).
- 1.4 The desktop and walkover surveys were subsequently completed on 29th May 1996.

2 TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Bronllys lies at 130m OD in the northern valley of the Llynfi/Dulas river system.
- 2.2 The proposed development lies between SO139348 and SO146347 and passes through Ordnance Survey (OS) enclosures 0073, 0082, 3574 and 5863. The construction corridor will be 60m wide with roundabout links to the existing road corridors at the eastern and western extremes (fig 1).
- 2.3 The corridor of the proposed development lies on sloping ground to the south of the present village on the valley side of a small brook feeding into the river Dulas.
- 2.4 The solid geology of the area consists of Devonian sandstone (Pringle & George 1970) covered by reddish well-drained soils of the Milford Soil Association (Rudeforth *et al.* 1984).

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The history and archaeology of Bronllys has already been researched in *The Brecknock Borough Historic Settlement Survey* (Martin & Walters 1993) which describes Bronllys (lit. the hill near the court) as a 'larger nucleated settlement occupying a slight spur on the gently sloping northern valley of the Llynfi/Dulas river system'.
- 3.2 The village is a largely linear development along the main Hay-Brecon road though the church still acts as a focus of settlement. The medieval settlement was probably centred on this church rather than the C12th castle to the south.
- 3.3 Throughout the C12th and C13th, Bronllys belonged to the Clifford family and was the principal seat of Cantref Selyf which was originally the Welsh administrative unit of the kingdom of Deheubarth which covered the remoter areas to the east and north of Brecon. Under Bernard de Neufmarche, Bronllys became part of the lordship of Brecon.
- 3.4 Both the Church and the masonry castle may have been C12th foundations built by the Clifford family. The castle was originally an earth and timber monument though it is recorded as a masonry castle in 1175. The visible remains of the round keep probably date to the mid C13th while the 'Great House', formerly the domestic range of the castle, dates to the C16th-18th. Refortified against Glyndwr in 1400 and 1409, the site had fallen into decay by 1521 when it was used as a prison.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Immediately west of the Church lies a moated site (Primary Record No (hereafter PRN) 546) comprising a raised rectangular platform surrounded by a single bank and partially water-filled

ditch (SO14313435). This site is typical of medieval moated sites to the east of Brecon and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No.B58) (figs 1 & 2).

- 4.2 Around the village are earthwork traces of the settlement's field system in the form of ridge and furrow cultivation (fig 2).

5 DESK-TOP SURVEY

- 5.1 The earliest known archaeological activity at Bronllys is represented by a Neolithic cushion macehead which was found in the bed of the Llynfi at SO144349 in or before 1971. This stray find was probably originally used for ceremonial purposes and may allude to Neolithic settlement in the area.
- 5.2 The presumed lines of two Roman Roads, RR63B and RRX88 (fig 2) also pass through the area. The former, running between Brecon Gaer and Kenchester, is presumed to underlie the present road to the west of the village. The latter, running south to Pen-y-Gaer, west-north-west of Tretower, presumably underlies the present road from Bronllys to Talgarth.
- 5.3 The medieval history of Bronllys has been outlined in *The Brecknock Borough Historic Settlements* study (Martin & Walters 1993) and has been summarised above.
- 5.4 The first edition OS map of 1888 (fig 3) records Bronllys as a small settlement centred on St Mary's church but already extending to the west and east along the Brecon-Hay road which runs to the north of the village.
- 5.5 The tithe map of 1840 (fig 4) shows a field system somewhat similar to that of today but with strip fields of medieval character still in operation to the north-west of the village.
- 5.6 Consultation of the County Sites and monuments Record held by CPAT has highlighted areas of ridge and furrow cultivation representative of Bronllys's medieval field system which are directly affected by the proposed by-pass (fig 2).
 - 5.6.1 These are situated to the west of the present town and to the south of the proposed western roundabout at SO140347 (PRN 5561) occupying OS enclosure 0073.
 - 5.6.2 A second group lies to the south of the moated site. They centre on SO143347 (PRN5560) occupying OS enclosures 5863 and 3574.

6 WALK-OVER SURVEY (fig 2)

- 6.1 Sites already recorded on the County Sites and Monuments Record are given their PRN identifications. Sites recorded in the *Brecknock Borough Historic Settlements* survey but without PRNs and/or located during the present survey are given numbers prefixed by 'Bron'. All sites are graded as to their archaeological importance and sensitivity from A (important) to C (less important).
- 6.2 The walkover survey was undertaken in cloudy conditions with intermittent drizzle on 29th May 1996.
- 6.3 The entire proposed road corridor was walked in two transects roughly 30m apart and in both directions.
- 6.4 All affected fields were within pasture with long grass, presumably awaiting silage cutting.
- 6.5 **Results**
 - 6.5.1 Ridge and furrow (PRN 5560) (SO14373475)
Only faint traces of the ridge and furrow were noted. The ridge and furrow has been virtually totally ploughed out by modern agriculture.

Category C

6.5.2 Ridge and furrow (PRN 5561) (SO140347)

This was better preserved with the individual ridges and furrow clearly visible sloping in a SW-NE direction.

Category B

6.5.3 Field banks (Bron 1) (SO139347)

Banks associated with the ridge and furrow just described. These low banks, presumably field boundaries, are situated at the top of the slope and to the west of field 0073 by Watson's Cottages.

Category B

6.5.4 Ridge and furrow and associated field banks (Bron 2) (SO140346)

Well-defined ridge and furrow orientated NW-SE in OS enclosure 0057. There are associated field banks.

Category B

6.5.5 Ridge and furrow (Bron 3) (SO140348)

Moderately defined ridge and furrow orientated NE-SW in OS enclosure 0082.

Category C

6.5.6 Field Boundary (Bron 4) (SO142346)

Curving shallow ditch running in a south-easterly direction from the hedge at the NW corner of OS enclosure 3247 and visible over a distance of some 20m.

Category C

6.5.7 Holloway (Bron 5) (SO142347)

Well-defined track, overgrown but edged with hedges running from the village into OS enclosure 3247. The track is visible on the 1st Edition OS map but not on the tithe map of 1840. The track may well be medieval in origin leading from the village to the outfield system.

Category B

6.5.8 Bank (Bron 6) (SO140348)

Low bank with stone visible in its makeup extending for 8m in the western corner of OS enclosure 0082. The bank defines a roughly level platform to the west. Interpretation of this feature is difficult but it may represent the dry stance for a timber building designed to elevate the building well above the brook. Immediately to the east of this bank is a grassed-over oval area defined by a ditch surrounding a rectangular raised area. This is interpreted as a former feeding site, the ditch being caused by repeated treading around a rectangular trough. This may add strength to the interpretation of Bron 6 as the site of an agricultural building. The area of this site is shown as marshy on the 1888 first edition OS Map (fig.3).

Category B

6.5.9 Well (Bron 7) (SO140348)

A circular well head is located by the brook. It is brick built and does not appear on the 1st Edition OS Map.

Category C

7 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Sites directly affected by the proposed road construction are PRN 5560 (ridge & furrow), PRN 5561 (ridge & furrow), Bron 3 (ridge & furrow), Bron 5 (holloway), Bron 6 (presumed building platform) and Bron 7 (well).

7.2 PRN 5560, 5561, and Bron 3 are low priority sites and will only be partially affected by the proposed road construction. A watching brief during the topsoil stripping of the road corridor is may be an appropriate course of action for these sites.

- 7.3 Bron 5 (holloway) will also only be partially affected by the proposed road construction. The track is nevertheless well-defined and an evaluation excavation may be appropriate at this site prior to topsoil stripping to attempt to record the stratigraphy and date of the track.
- 7.4 Bron 6 will be completely destroyed by the proposed development. The age and nature of this feature cannot be determined from surface features alone and consequently an evaluation excavation may be appropriate in order to attempt to clarify the site's nature and to allow a considered recommendation to be made regarding the future recording of this site.
- 7.5 Bron 7 will also be destroyed by the road. The site does not appear to be of great antiquity though the basal sediments may contain potential palaeoenvironmental data.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer would like to thank Caroline Earwood for accessing the County Sites and Monuments Record and to Nigel Jones for undertaking the Desk-top survey.

9 REFERENCES

- Martin, C.H.R. & Walters, M. 1993. *The Brecknock Borough Historic Settlements*. Report No 60: CPAT.
- Pringle, J. & George, T.N. 1970. *British Regional Geology - South Wales. Third Edition*. London: HMSO
- Rudeforth, C.C., Hartnup, R., Lea, J.W., Thompson, T.R.E. & Wright, P.S. 1984. *Soils and their use in Wales*. Bulletin 11. Harpenden: Soil Survey of England & Wales.

10 LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig 1 Route of the proposed road corridor
- Fig 2 Archaeological sites in proximity to the proposed development
- Fig 3 First Edition OS Map, surveyed 1886, published 1888.
- Fig 4 Tithe map of 1840

11 SOURCES CONSULTED

- 11.1 Martin & Walters 1993
- 11.2 1st Edition OS Map 1888 (surveyed 1886)
- 11.3 Tithe map 1840
- 11.4 County Sites and Monuments Record.
- 11.5 CPAT Aerial photographic archive: Photographs 87-MB-0262, 87-MB-0263, 94-03-0031, 94-C-0082
- 11.6 CPAT Photographic archive: photographs 137.19-20, 137.22-28.

APPENDIX 1

**Pontybat-Hereford Class I Road A438
Proposed Bronllys By-pass Archaeological Investigation**

**SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE INVESTIGATION
BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST:
STAGES 1&2, DESK-TOP ASSESSMENT AND WALKOVER SURVEY**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed development of a strip of land to the south of the present village of Bronllys involves the construction of a new road corridor and associated landscaping works totalling 60m wide and located between SO139348 and SO146347.
- 1.2 This area lies within 120m of the historic core of Bronllys as identified in the *Brecknock Borough Historic Settlements Survey* (CPAT Report No.60, 1993). Other sites of archaeological interest directly affected by the road works include the lines of two Roman roads (RR63B; RRx88), and areas of medieval and later field systems (PRN 5561, 5560). Other archaeological sites may well lie within or adjacent to the areas affected.
- 1.3 The Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in their capacity as archaeological curators for the county have determined that an Archaeological Site Investigation is necessary to assess the implications of the proposed development on the archaeological resource. Accordingly a brief (No. INV160 dated 30th January 1996) has been prepared by CPAT Curatorial which describes the scheme of archaeological works required.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the evaluation are:
 - 2.1.1 to reveal by means of a combination of desk-based assessment and walkover survey, the presence, nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the archaeology within the area of the proposed development in so far as these aims are possible;
 - 2.1.2 to record any archaeology revealed in the assessment;
 - 2.1.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the field evaluation and incorporating sufficient information on the archaeological resource for a reasonable planning decision to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the area affected by the proposed development;
 - 2.1.4 to identify and recommendations options for the management of the archaeological resource, including any further provision for that resource where it is considered necessary.

3 Methods

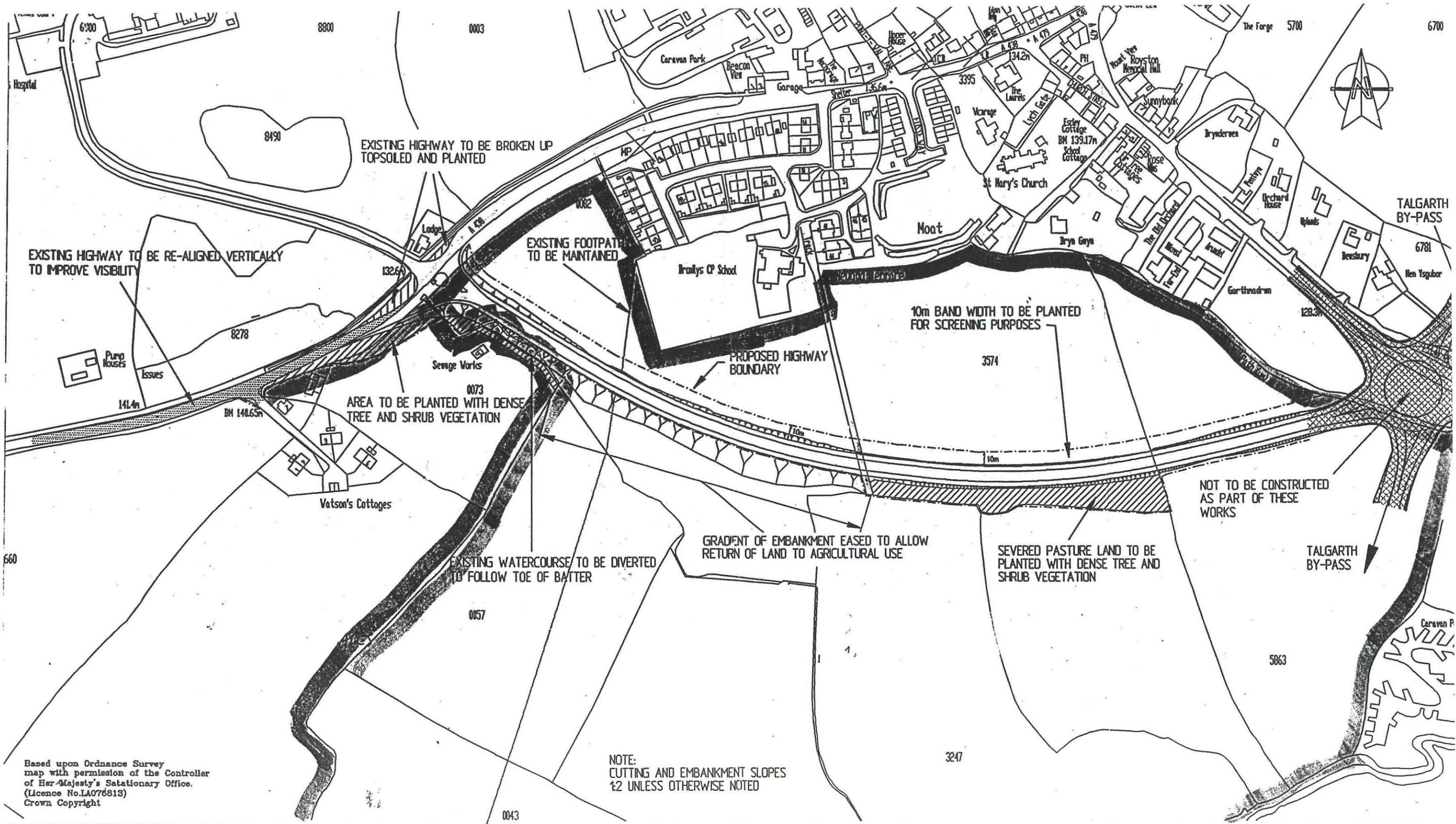
- 3.1 Stage one of the evaluation will involve the examination of all the readily available primary and secondary records relating to this part of the town, including documentary and cartographic sources. Archives and repositories will include the County Sites and Monuments Record, the County Record Office, The National Library of Wales, and RCAHMW
- 3.2 Stage two will take the form of a walkover survey of the proposed road corridor subject to relevant landowners' permissions having been obtained by Powys Highways and Properties Directorate.
 - 3.2.1 Sites identified in 3.2 above, with the exception of ridge and furrow cultivation, will be recorded and drawn on an appropriately scaled plan/map and the relative importance of each site will be estimated in the report. Ridge and furrow cultivation will only be conventionally illustrated but its location and direction will be recorded.

- 3.3 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared. This will be in A4 format and contain conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Historic Background; Survey; Conclusions and Recommendations and References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds.
- 3.4 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991).

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The evaluation will be undertaken by a small team of 2 skilled archaeologists under the direct supervision of an experienced field archaeologist, who will also be responsible for undertaking the desk-based assessment. Overall supervision will be by Dr A Gibson, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by the same field archaeologist who conducted the evaluation.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the assessment and evaluation will take no more than 10 days in all including the preparation of the report, dependent on the client's instructions and the arrangement of a suitable timetable. The date of commencement, at the time of writing, has yet to be agreed with the client, and will be dependent on the state of the site and negotiated access. The archaeological curator will be informed of the detailed timetable and staffing levels when agreement has been reached with the client.
- 4.4 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.5 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

A.M. Gibson
28th February 1996



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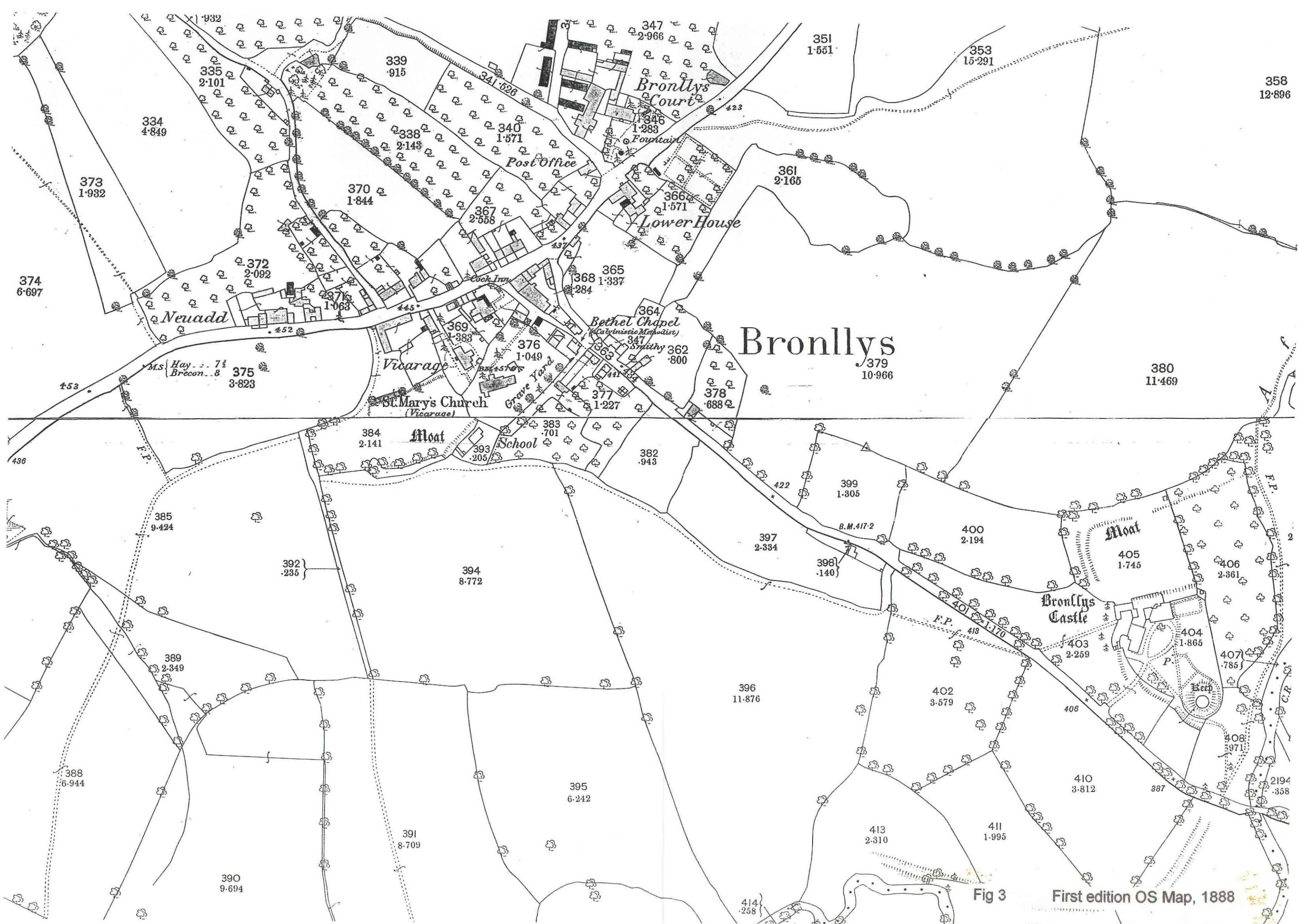
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Fig 1 Route of the proposed road corridor



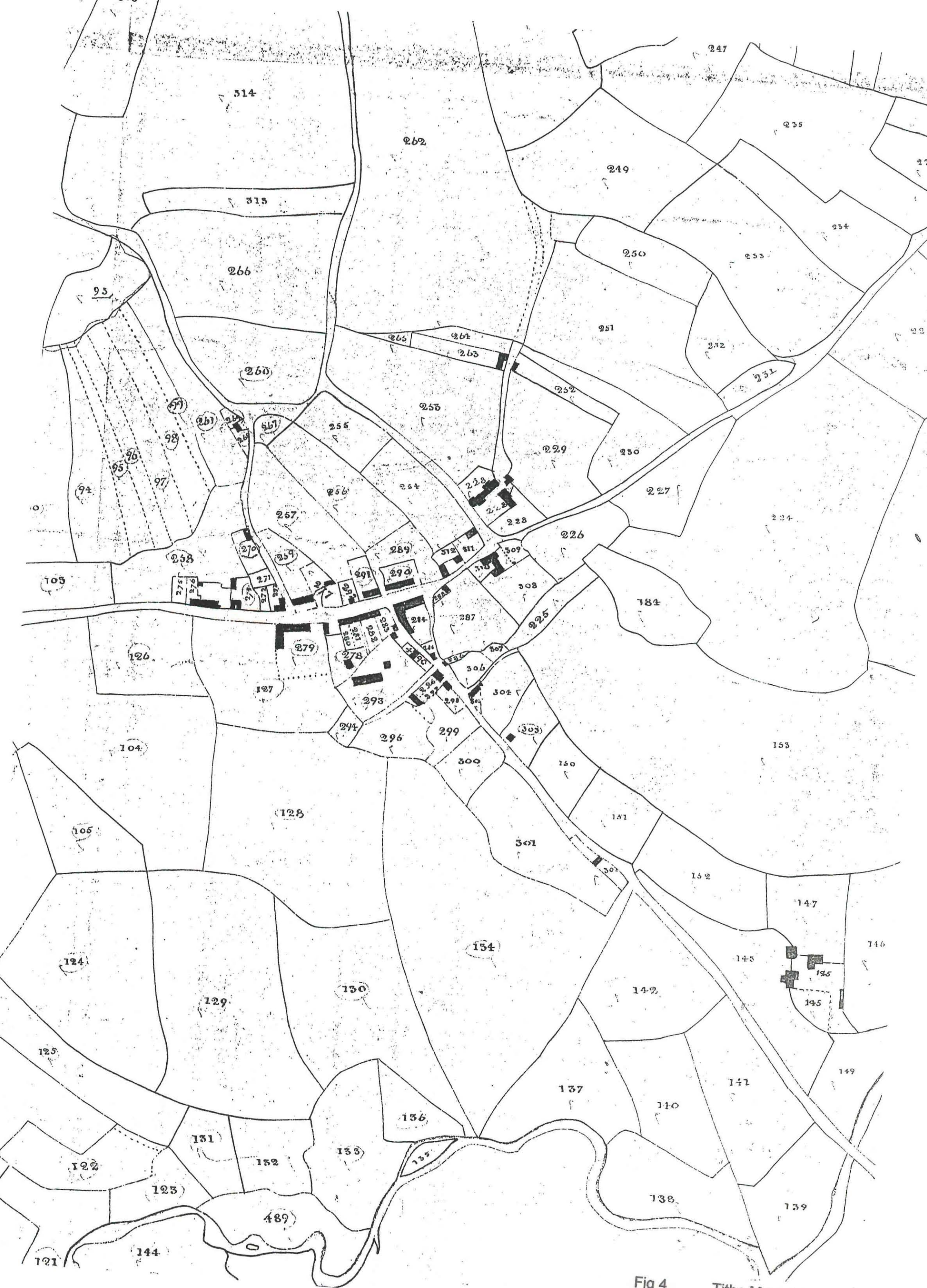


Fig 4 Tithe Map, 1840