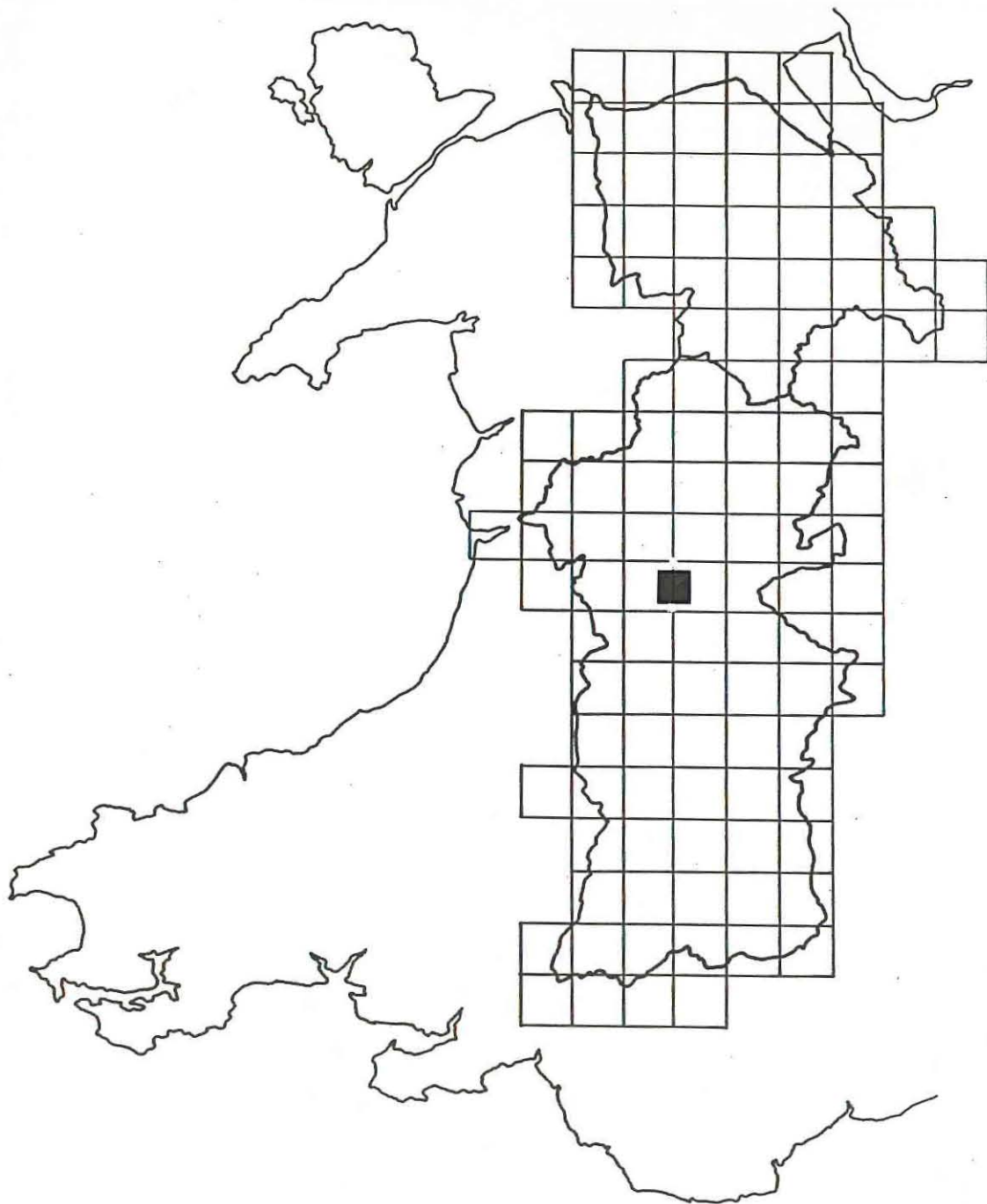


*Caersws to Llanidloes Gas Pipeline, Powys*  
FIELD EVALUATION



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**FIELD EVALUATION**

**by R Hankinson**  
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Report prepared for British Gas plc (Wales)

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## **1 Introduction**

1.1 In November 1992, as a result of the consultative procedure between British Gas (Wales/Cymru) and the curatorial section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT), the latter was informed of the details of the proposed construction of a gas pipeline from Moat Lane, Caersws to a point south of Llanidloes in Powys.

1.2 Following interrogation of the County Sites and Monuments Record the curatorial section of CPAT decided that there was a possibility that sites of archaeological interest might be disturbed during the pipeline construction. M.J.Walters of the curatorial section prepared an outline recommendation for an archaeological field assessment of the preferred route in order to identify features of potential archaeological sensitivity while plans for the pipeline works were still at an early stage. This recommendation was accepted by British Gas and on 5th April 1993 they commissioned CPAT to carry out the work, the survey being conducted during April 1993.

## **2 Location**

2.1 The preferred route for the pipeline runs from near Moat Lane, Caersws (SO 0433 9103) to the east of the village of Llandinam before meeting the A470 trunk road to the south of Llandinam and broadly following its line as far as Dolwen bridge. The route then leaves the road and takes a south-westerly course past the village of Newchapel before terminating at a point (SN 9715 8168) adjacent to the B4518 road, 1.5km to the north of Tylwch village, a total length of approximately 12.5km.

## **3 Topography and Land Use**

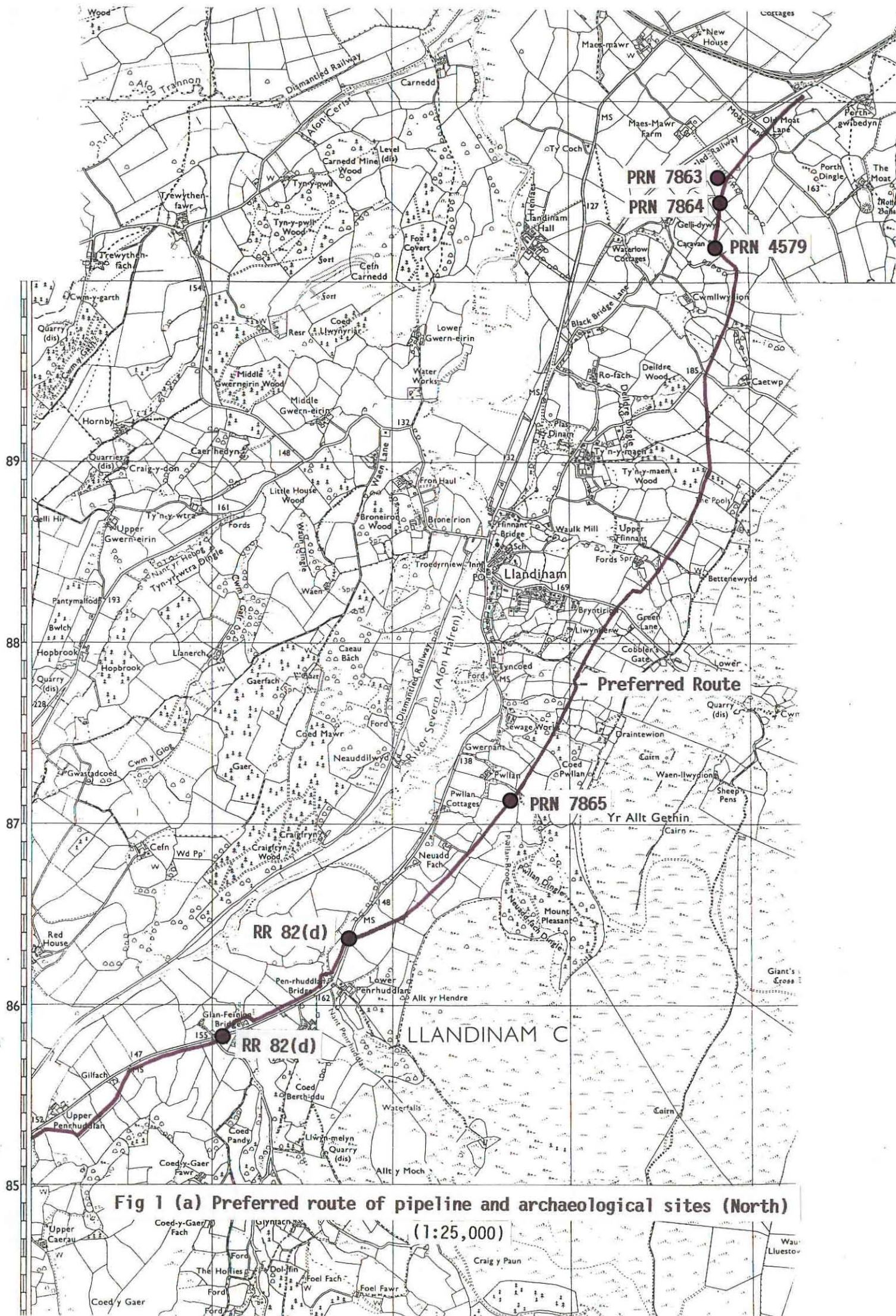
3.1 From its start on the Severn flood plain at 125m OD, the route ascends a steep slope onto a gradually sloping, north-west facing shelf which lies at the base of the line of hills situated to the east and south of Llandinam. This shelf is utilised until its south-western end where the route climbs up a steep slope in the direction of Pen-y-banc farm. The remainder of the route follows a line of hilltops up to a maximum elevation of almost 350m OD, descending slightly to its terminal on the watershed between the streams of Nant y Bradnant and Dwr Tenau at a height of 320m OD.

3.2 Land use on the route is almost entirely agricultural pasture except for two small areas of woodland known as Ty'n y Maen Wood and Coed Pwllan. At the time of the assessment the shelf referred to in the previous paragraph was very wet despite a spell of reasonable weather, suggesting that the area is likely to be one requiring much drainage, both now and in the past. Support for this hypothesis is provided by the various drainage features seen during fieldwork.

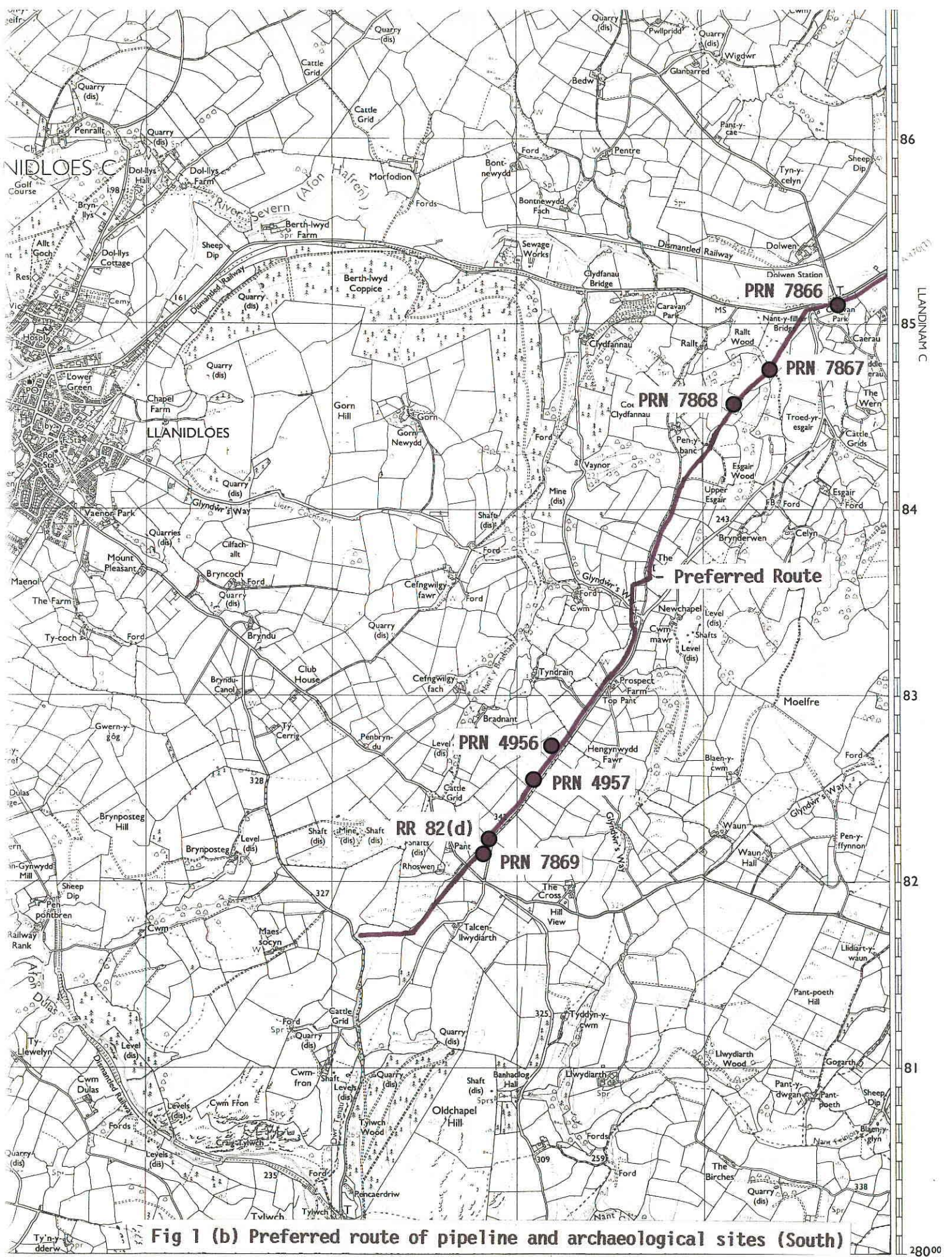
## **4 Archaeological Methodology**

4.1 The field work was carried out by the normal practice of obtaining permission from the respective landowner and then systematically walking the course of the preferred route across every field. Any features of archaeological interest were measured, recorded and photographed in an appropriate fashion.









**Fig 1 (b) Preferred route of pipeline and archaeological sites (South)**

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 ST HARMON C  
 97 3 km or 2 miles  
 B-4518  
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(1:25,000)

99

300000m



## 5 Archaeology

5.1 Archaeological sites on or near the line of the preferred route are as follows:-

5.1.1 PRN 7863 (SO 0382 9060) is a possible house site of medieval or post-medieval date first seen as an earthwork during fieldwork. It is situated immediately above the flood plain of the River Severn and has a trackway leading towards it from the south-west. The site appears as a bank 0.3m high, apparently of rectangular shape although its north-western side is missing, probably due to erosion. The central area of the site is disturbed and cannot be easily interpreted but may indicate internal divisions or structures.

**Recommendation** The site is approximately 20m from the route of the pipeline but there may be a possibility of its disturbance during pipeline works. It would therefore be preferable if the area was marked prior to the commencement of pipeline works to ensure that the site is avoided. When topsoil stripping has commenced, the watching of operations in this area would also be of archaeological interest.

5.1.2 PRN 7864 (SO 0384 9044) is a portion of redundant trackway first seen during fieldwork. It consists of a raised central area with a hollow or ditch at either side approximately 7m apart, which are then bounded by hedgerows. The trackway continues to both the north-west and south-east with the north-western part appearing to curve round to the south-west and head in the direction of Gellidywyll farm.

**Recommendation** The trackway will be cut by the preferred route. Its features suggest it is of sufficient archaeological interest for a watching brief to be carried out during topsoil stripping, with the likelihood that some recording may be necessary.

5.1.3 PRN 4579 (SO 0381 9019) is an enclosure, currently thought to be of Roman date on the basis of both its morphology and on the recovery of a single sherd of Samian pottery during fieldwork by CPAT in November 1991. It shows as a cropmark on an aerial photograph taken in 1976 (Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography, CBI 16). Archaeologically it is a highly significant site. Nothing is visible on the ground, but this is a fairly common occurrence and should not be taken as an indication that the site no longer exists.

**Recommendation** The pipeline is due to cut through the enclosure (see fig 2) and it would be preferable, from an archaeological point of view, if the site could be completely avoided by the works, and a watching brief carried out during topsoil stripping in the vicinity. This may not be considered feasible due to other non-archaeological considerations, in which case the area of pipeline wayleave would require full excavation prior to the pipeline operations, a operation which would be both expensive and time consuming. Trial excavation alone would not be an appropriate course of action for the extent and nature of the site are already known.

5.1.4 PRN 7865 (SO 0266 8707) is a mill leat first seen during field work. The leat begins at Pwllan brook and runs in a north-westerly direction towards Pwllan house. The visible remains of the leat end at a field boundary before reaching the preferred route, but the presence of millstones in the garden of Pwllan house would suggest that it originally continued to Pwllan and that this was the site of a mill. The lack of evidence for the supposed line of the

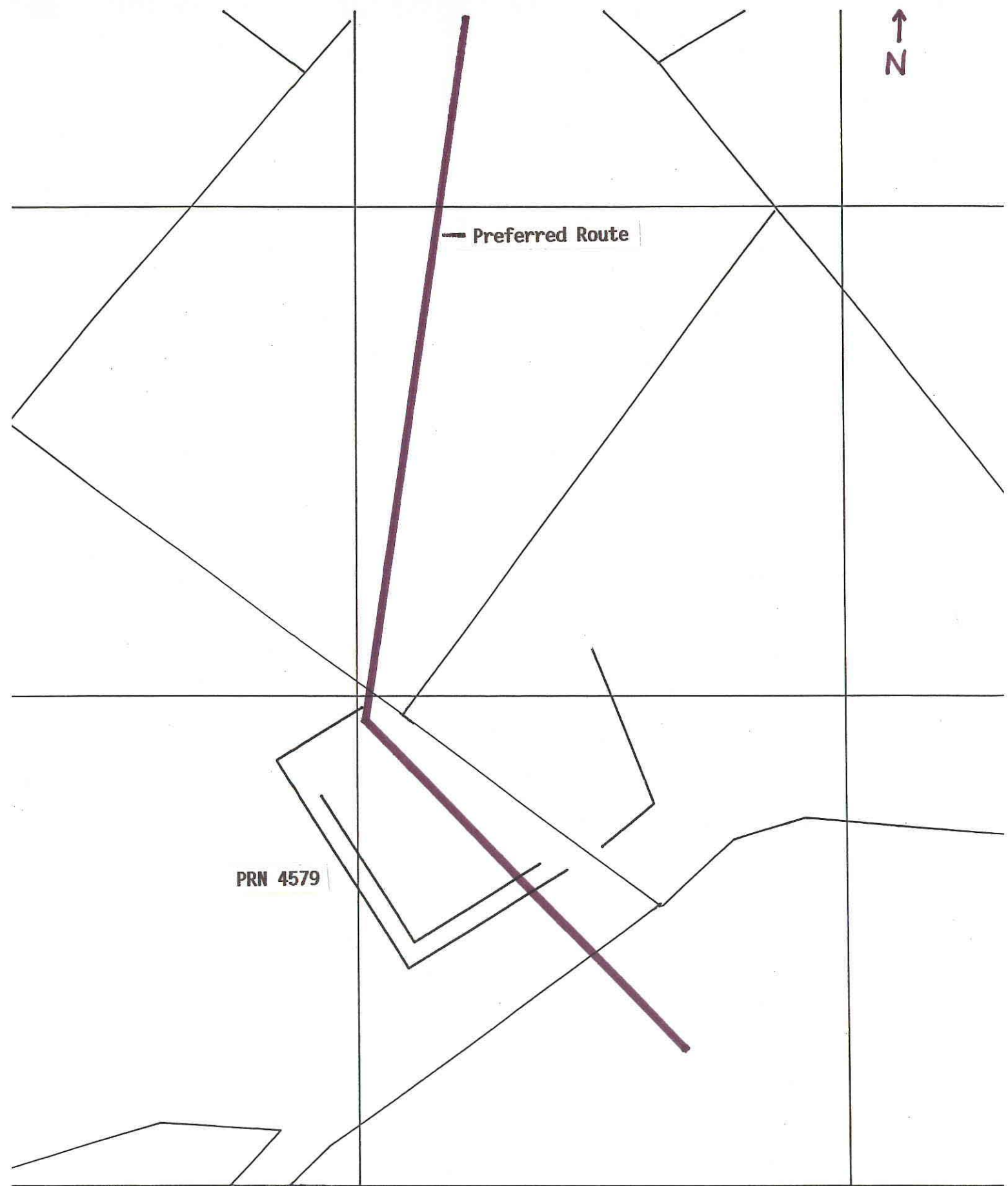


Fig 2 Relationship of PRN 4579 with preferred route  
Scale 1:1000



leat in the field crossed by the preferred route (SO 0267 8715) seems to indicate that it has been levelled by ploughing or other agricultural activity.

**Recommendation** A watching brief during topsoil stripping in this area may produce more information on the nature and possible dating of the leat.

5.1.5 RR 82(d) (Crossed at:-SO 0178 8636, SO 0108 8583 and SN 9785 8223) is a putative Roman road which, it is suggested, follows the line of the present A470 and then the minor road past Newchapel village.

**Recommendation** The actual line of the road is, at present, unknown and further information which may be obtained by a watching brief as the different areas are crossed is a matter of some archaeological interest.

5.1.6 PRN 7866 (SN 9972 8513) is a possible trackway running towards Dolwen bridge on the opposite side of the A470. The feature is a bank with a slightly flattened top which is noted on the 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey map of the area as a public right of way. The composition or surface of the bank may be represented by an area of small stones, although this part now acts as a gateway and the stone may be related to that use.

**Recommendation** This feature is due to be cut by the preferred route and a watching brief during topsoil stripping may reveal more about its nature and possible date.

5.1.7 PRN 7867 (SN 9937 8476) is a trackway shown as a public right of way on the 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey map of the area and which forms an extension to a track noted on the 1:2,500 site plan. The trackway is 3m in width and may have another track joining it from the south at this point, although this track could possibly have been formed by natural erosion, as it runs down a steep slope.

**Recommendation** A watching brief during topsoil stripping may reveal more about the nature and possible dating of these features.

5.1.8 PRN 7868 (SN 9917 8454) is a possible area of ridge and furrow cultivation in a field through which the preferred route passes. It is visible as a series of parallel furrows 4m apart, running down a moderate north-east facing slope. Alternatively, the possibility exists that these features may relate to land drainage.

**Recommendation** Ridge and furrow is normally considered to be a feature of the medieval landscape and a watching brief at this point may confirm its presence and have relevance to our understanding of the medieval landscape of the area.

5.1.9 PRN 4956 (SN 9815 8275) is noted in the Powys Sites and Monuments Record as a possible burial mound. Fieldwork during the evaluation would suggest that it is more likely to be a natural landform.

**Recommendation** A watching brief during topsoil stripping is needed to confirm this hypothesis.



5.1.10 PRN 4957 (SN 9810 8255) appears to be similar in nature to PRN 4956.

**Recommendation** A watching brief during topsoil stripping would be needed to confirm this hypothesis.

5.1.11 PRN 7869 (SN 9784 8219) is what appears to be a length of redundant field boundary in the field to the north of the crossroads at SN 9782 8200. The boundary shows as a curving bank approximately 150m in length, 2m in width and 0.3m high. It may be archaeologically significant as showing the line of a road which predates the present one. The significance of the locality is further suggested by the proximity of the putative Roman road (RR 82d) previously mentioned.

**Recommendation** In these circumstances a watching brief carried out at this point may provide more information on the nature and dating of the features in the area.

## 6 Conclusions

6.1 One site - a probable Roman farmstead enclosure (PRN 4579) - through which the preferred route passes has a high degree of archaeological significance. If it is at all possible, it is recommended that the pipeline and its wayleave should be realigned to avoid this area.

6.2 One site - a possible house site of medieval or post-medieval date (PRN 7863) - although not on the line of the wayleave would require marking to ensure its avoidance by the scheme and a watching brief in case there were other features of archaeological interest in its vicinity.

6.3 Nine other sites identified during fieldwork require some form of watching brief to attempt to determine more about their nature and chronology.

6.4 The potential damage which would be caused by the preferred route to a site of known archaeological significance (PRN 4579), and the recognition of other areas of archaeological interest which would be disturbed during pipeline installation, has demonstrated the relevance of an archaeological input into the early stages of pipeline schemes when features of the archaeological landscape are still undisturbed and time is available for their relative importance to be assessed.

6.5 **Recommendation** In the case of the Roman enclosure (PAR 4579) the only evidence of its existence, other than a fragment of Roman pottery, is a single aerial photograph taken twenty-five years ago. Other archaeological sites lacking surface traces may also lie on the course of the pipeline and it would be valuable archaeologically for a rapid field survey of the wayleave to be undertaken when the topsoil has been stripped away.

## 7 Acknowledgements

CPAT is grateful to the landowners of the area for their permission to visit the preferred route and their interest during the fieldwork.