

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Plot Adjacent to Church House, Llanigon,
Powys
WATCHING BRIEF

CPAT Report No 230

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R. Hankinson
July 1997

Report for Richard Davies Builders and Contractors.

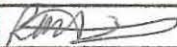

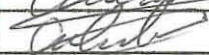
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In May 1997, the Contracting Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT Contracts) was asked by Richard Davies Builders and Contractors of Builth Wells to provide a quotation for an archaeological watching brief in the village of Llanigon, near Hay-on-Wye, Powys (SO 213399). The watching brief was required by the planning authority as part of the consent for the building of a new house on land adjacent to Church House.
- 1.2 CPAT Contracts quotation was subsequently accepted by Richard Davies and the watching brief was carried out on the 13th of June.

2 GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The village of Llanigon is located on the south side of the Wye valley approximately 2km to the south-west of Hay-on-Wye and adjacent to the Digated Brook, a stream which flows north-westwards towards the Wye. The plot in which the house was being constructed (SO 21313996 - See Figs 1 and 2) is located on a gentle north-west facing slope on the north-east side of the road leading from the church towards Llanthomas Farm, adjacent to Church House.
- 2.2 The underlying geology of the area is composed of Old Red Sandstone of the Devonian period (George 1970). The soil derived from these underlying rocks is a deep well drained reddish loamy soil belonging to the Escrick 1 Soil Association (Rudeforth et al. 1984).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The plot of land in which the house is being constructed falls partly within the historic core of the village of Llanigon as defined by the CPAT study of historic settlements in the Brecon Beacons National Park (Silvester & Dorling 1993, 56-7), carried out for the planning authority. The area of the historic core is approximately oval in shape, centred on the church and extending as far as the site of Ffynnon Eigon to the north-east of the Digated Brook.
- 3.2 The church which is thought to have formed the focus of the historic settlement dates to the 14th century and later (Silvester & Dorling 1993, 56), although a 13th century font is preserved in its porch, suggesting there was an earlier church on the site. The possibility of medieval occupation in Llanigon is further suggested by small blocks of strip fields which are said to have existed near the village and the likely relationship between the settlement and the motte at Llanthomas, some 0.7km to the north-west (Silvester & Dorling 1993, 56). It would therefore appear that the village is of medieval origin; no evidence of earlier occupation in the immediate vicinity of the site has been recognised.
- 3.3 The remainder of the buildings in Llanigon are of Post medieval or Modern date. Of particular architectural interest is the Grade II listed building of Ty-mawr to the north-east of the church, which is a half-timbered house of early 17th century date (Haslam 1979, 351).
- 3.4 Examination of the first edition 1:2,500 Ordnance Survey map for the area (Fig 3), surveyed in 1886, demonstrated that at the time of survey there was a building within the plot which adjoined its south-eastern boundary. This building was still depicted on the 1973 Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map (Fig 2) but is no longer extant; its location falls outside the area of ground disturbance associated with this project.

4 WATCHING BRIEF

- 4.1 Preparation of the area for house construction comprised two stages, an initial topsoil removal followed by excavation of foundation trenches in an approximately rectangular pattern measuring 17m north-east/south-west x 8m north-west/south-east. The topsoiling was carried out over an area of approximately 25m north-east/south-west x 22m-25m north-west/south-east.

- 4.2 The topsoil removal had just been completed upon arrival on site. The topsoiled area was examined for features and finds, and the removed soil was also examined. A thickness of 0.3m of brown clayey loam had been removed onto the top of a disturbed red/brown clay loam layer; the only feature seen in the topsoiled area was a modern drainage pipe which crossed the site from north to south. Examination of the red/brown clay loam layer resulted in the recovery of four sherds of 14th- to 16th-century pottery, probably of local manufacture.
- 4.3 The foundation trenches were excavated to a depth of between 1.1m and 1.8m below the ground surface prior to the removal of 0.3m of topsoil. The soil profile which was revealed by the excavation of the trenches comprised an upper layer of disturbed red/brown clay loam varying from 0.45m thick in the trench along the north-west side to 0.6m thick at the south corner. Underlying this layer was a layer of clean yellow/brown clay, 0.2m to 0.25m thick, which rested on natural red boulder clay. No features were seen in any of the exposed trench sections.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The ground which was disturbed during the watching brief revealed no traces of buildings or other structures in the area. The only feature seen was a modern pipe which crossed the site in a north-south direction.
- 5.2 Examination of the soil profile revealed by excavation of the foundation trenches suggested that this plot had been subjected to some form of disturbance. The appearance of the layer of soil underlying the topsoil gave the impression that the plot had either had its level raised by earth movements or, more likely, that it had functioned as a garden plot. Pottery finds from this layer suggest that it dates to the 14th- to 16th-century.
- 5.3 The layer of yellow/brown clay which was seen to overlie the natural clay subsoil may be of natural origin, although there is a possibility that it relates to a former ground surface buried by the disturbed red/brown clay loam underlying the topsoil.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 The writer would like to thank Mr N.W. Jones of CPAT for the identification and description of the pottery finds from the watching brief.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Appendix 1

Finds Archive

All recovered finds from disturbed red/brown clay loam underlying topsoil.

1 fragment of strap handle from a jug, 14th- to 16th-century probably of local manufacture.

1 base sherd from a jug or jar, possibly 14th- to 16th-century probably of local manufacture.

1 base sherd from a jug or jar, externally glazed with thumb impressions, 14th- to 16th-century probably of local manufacture.

1 body sherd from a jug or jar, internally glazed, 14th- to 16th-century probably of local manufacture.

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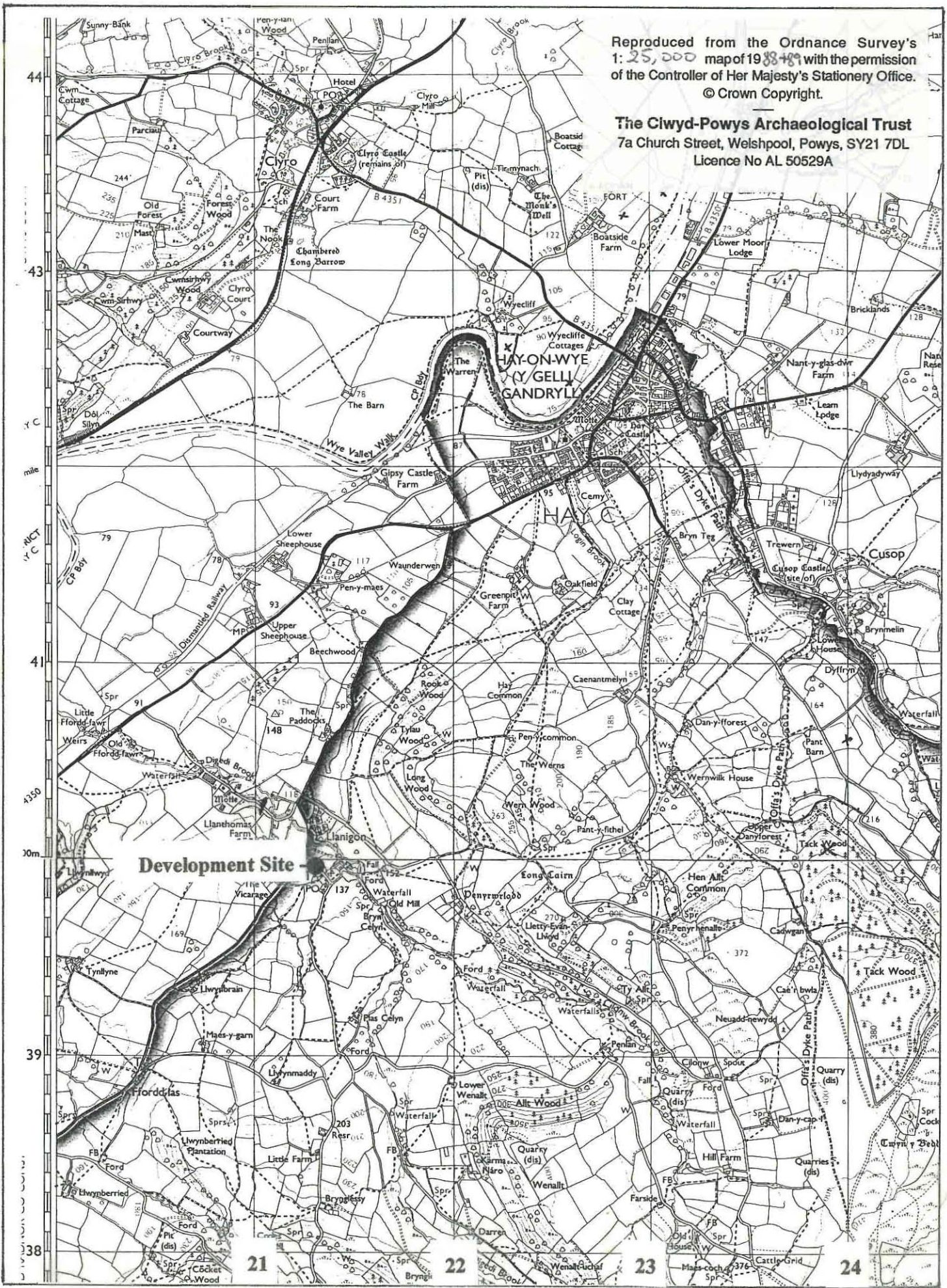
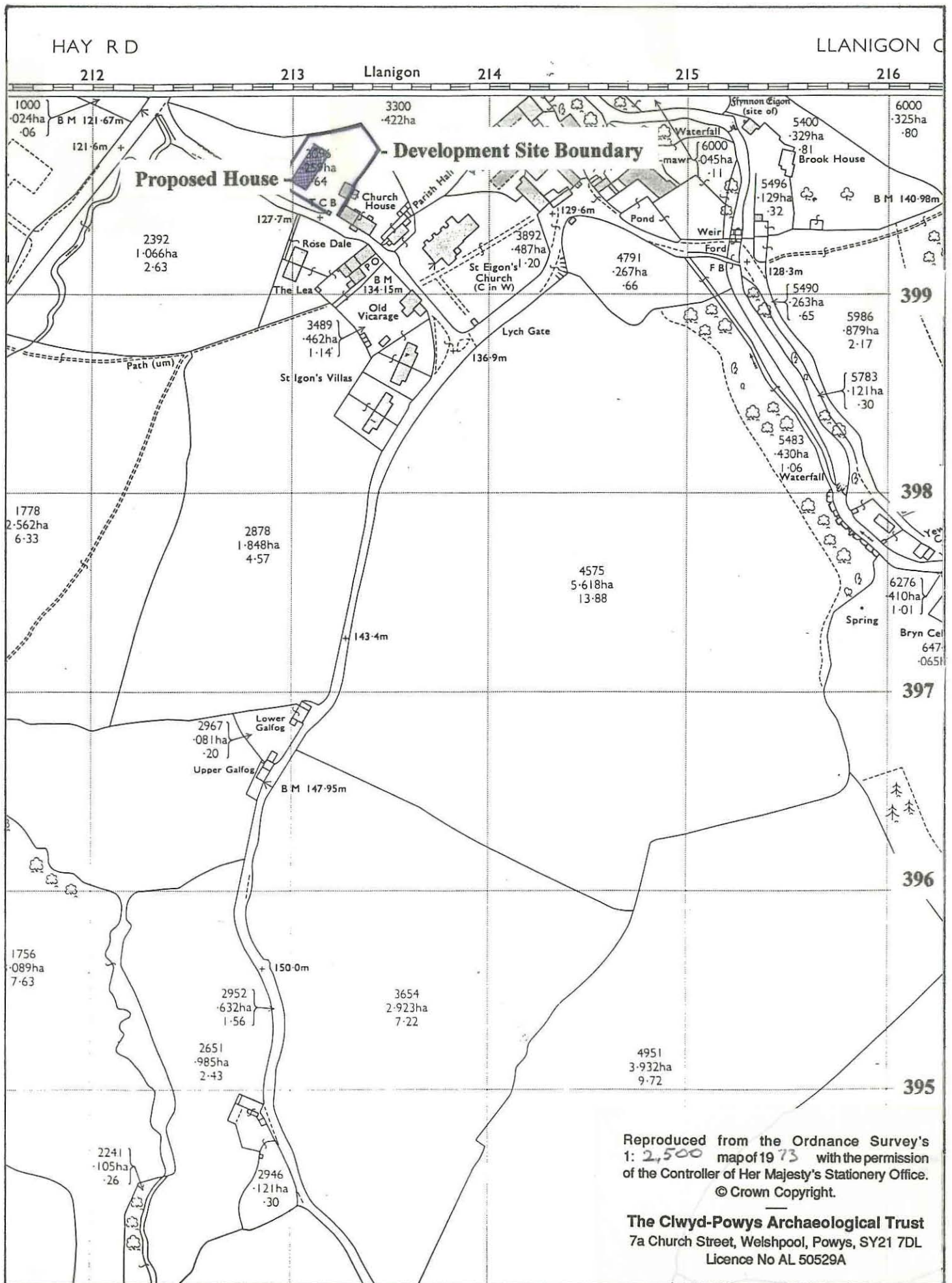


Fig 1 Location of Development Site (Scale 1:25,000)



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Fig 2 Location of Proposed House Within Development Site (Scale 1:2,500)

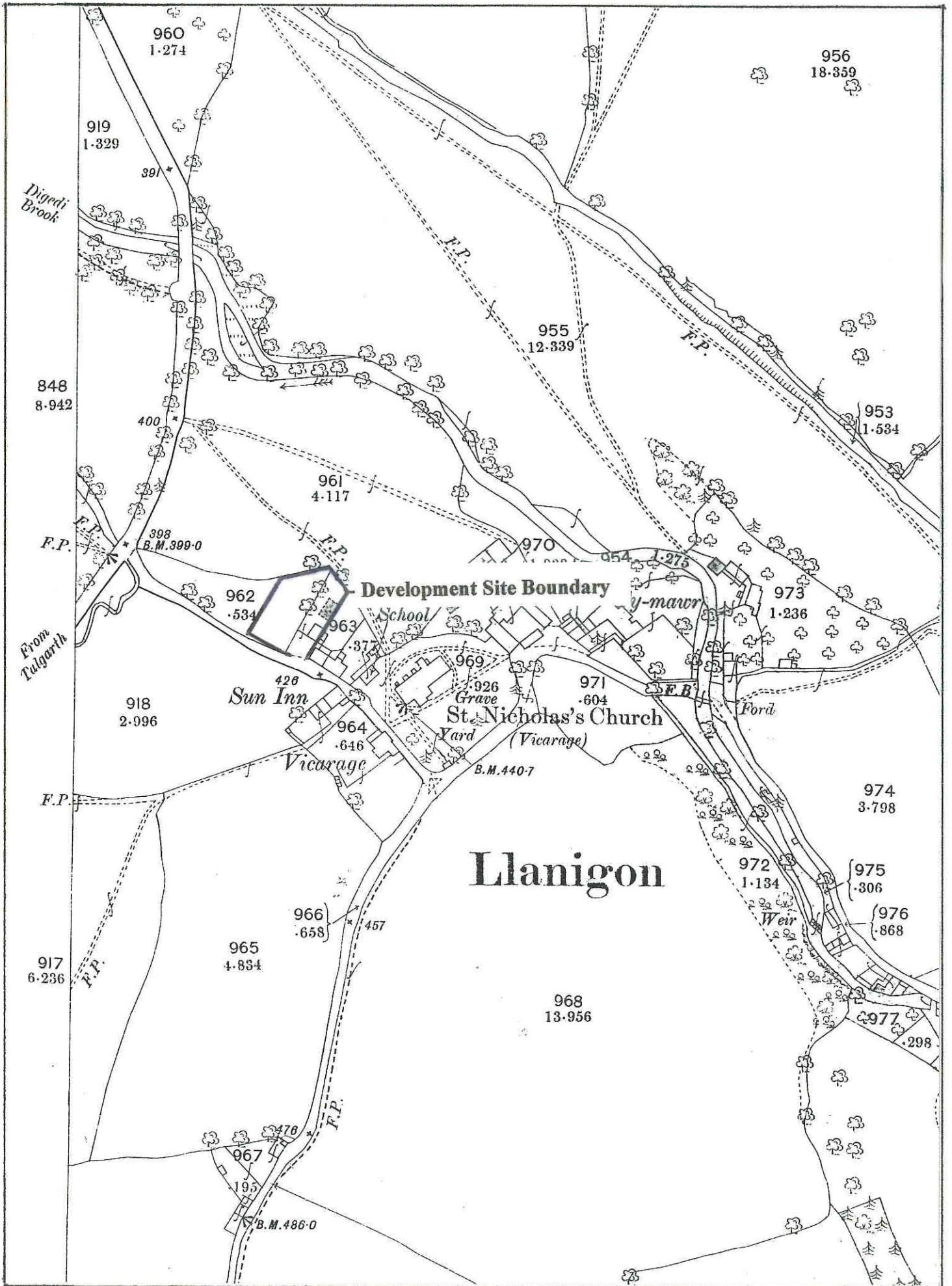


Fig 3 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (Breconshire 17.16), Surveyed in 1886
 (Scale 1:2,500)