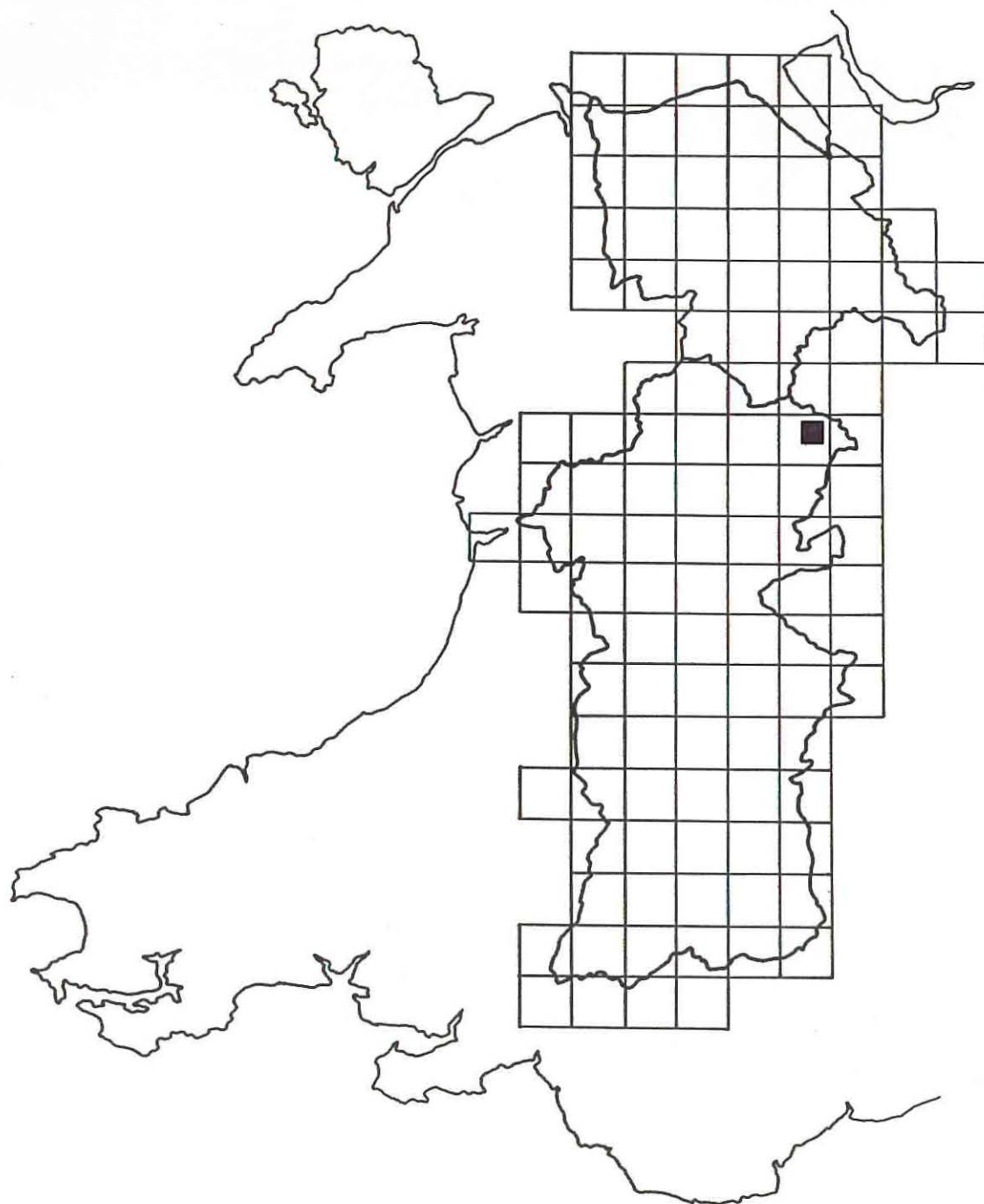


The Fortex Environmental Assessment

FIELD EVALUATION



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Report prepared for Cobham Resource Consultants

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1 Introduction

1.1 In March 1993 the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was commissioned by Cobham Resource Consultants (CRC) of Abingdon, Oxfordshire to carry out an archaeological fieldwork evaluation of the area around Penthryn Fach, Llandrinio, Powys. This, together with a desktop assessment previously prepared (CPAT Report No. 50), was designed to be incorporated into an Environmental Statement currently being prepared by CRC on behalf of Fortex.

1.2 The fieldwork was carried out on March 24th and 25th, 1993 by the writer and the report prepared immediately afterwards. The reader is referred to CPAT Report No. 50 for further information on the background and setting to the Fortex project.

2 Approach

2.1 Each individual field contained within the assessment area was examined in detail by transect strips approximately 30m wide between the existing field boundaries. Areas of possible archaeological significance were recorded. Woodland zones and the wetland bordering the Maerdy Brook, where a transect system of survey was inappropriate, were examined as closely as local conditions permitted.

2.2 The locations of those features noted during the desktop assessment were closely examined by narrowing the transect width to approximately 5.0m. Any structural feature or find in these areas was recorded.

3 Archaeology (Fig 1)

3.1 Prehistoric Features

3.1.1 A partly disturbed ring-ditch of probable Bronze Age origin lies within the proposed development area (PAR 4626; SJ 2672 1690). The field in which it is located had recently been cultivated and it was possible that tangible evidence of its existence, such as a local concentration of flint fragments, might be recovered from the soil surface. An area of c.1000 square metres around its reported location was examined intensively but in the event no artefacts were recovered.

3.2 Buildings

3.2.1 PAR 7764 (SJ 2683 1698) No evidence for the former existence of this demolished structure was observed.

3.2.2 PAR 7765 (SJ 2700 1710) Both buildings, now demolished, were formerly located on the edge of a local gravel terrace. Some evidence for the former position of the northernmost of these buildings was indicated by a distinctly higher concentration of brick fragments in the immediate area. A small quantity of post-medieval pottery sherds and clay-pipe fragments were also recovered, perhaps demonstrating a relatively recent date for this structure. The position of the southernmost building was occupied by a stack of bales.

3.2.3 PAR 7766 (SJ 2717 1732) The location of this demolished building was marked only by a locally higher concentration of brick fragments.

3.2.4 PAR 7855 (SJ 2718 1683) The site of this demolished cottage and garden was marked uniquely by a local concentration of daffodils in full bloom spread over an area of approximately 1200 square metres of pasture. No house platform or any other earthworks that might have defined the extent of the building further were apparent. It is known locally that this cottage was occupied within living memory.

3.2.5 No other traces of buildings, whether as scatters of debris or as earthworks, were located during the field evaluation.

4 Medieval Field Patterns

4.1 No field cultivation features such as ridge and furrow cultivation strips or features associated with the set of quilllets (PAR 7769) were observed during the survey. At the extreme south end of the proposed development area, (SJ 2728 1620), an area of uneven ground contours may indicate hidden archaeological features although an identifiable pattern could not be detected.

5 Other Features

5.1 PAR 7854 (SJ 2685 1685) A causeway, 22.0m long and 5.00 wide and about 0.50m high, crosses the Maerdy Brook in a north-north-east/south-south-west direction. At its southern end the ruinous remains of bridge abutments are visible on each side of the brook. These are of roughly dressed stone and fragments of mortar are visible in places. To the west of the former bridge, a stone slab about 1.3m by 1.0m by 0.15m, perhaps formerly a part of the bridge pavement, is visible although partly obscured by silt. At its northern end, a brick-arched culvert spans the former dried-up course of the brook. There were no indications of trackways in adjacent fields that could be associated with the causeway.

5.2 PAR 7763 (SJ 2676 1705 - SJ 2670 1678) The line of this section of the former Welshpool - Oswestry railway is visible at its southern end where it crosses the Maerdy Brook as a raised causeway some 51.0m long and 8.0m wide with a vertical height of 1.2m. Beyond this point, its course is now visible only as a slight depression in the field.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Fieldwork carried out within the proposed development area revealed no earthworks or other features of archaeological significance other than the causeway and bridge abutments in the region of the Maerdy Brook (PAR 7854).

6.2 The intensity of past and present land cultivation and improvement is likely to have eliminated surface indications of any earlier archaeological features once present. This is evident from the almost complete destruction of such relatively recent features as the railway and other standing structures recorded in earlier documentary and cartographic sources. However, the possibility that sub-surface features other than the ring ditches exist in the proposed development area cannot be discounted entirely, although these are only likely to be revealed when conditions are at an optimum for the recognition of cropmarks or soilmarks from the air, or accidentally during earthmoving activities.

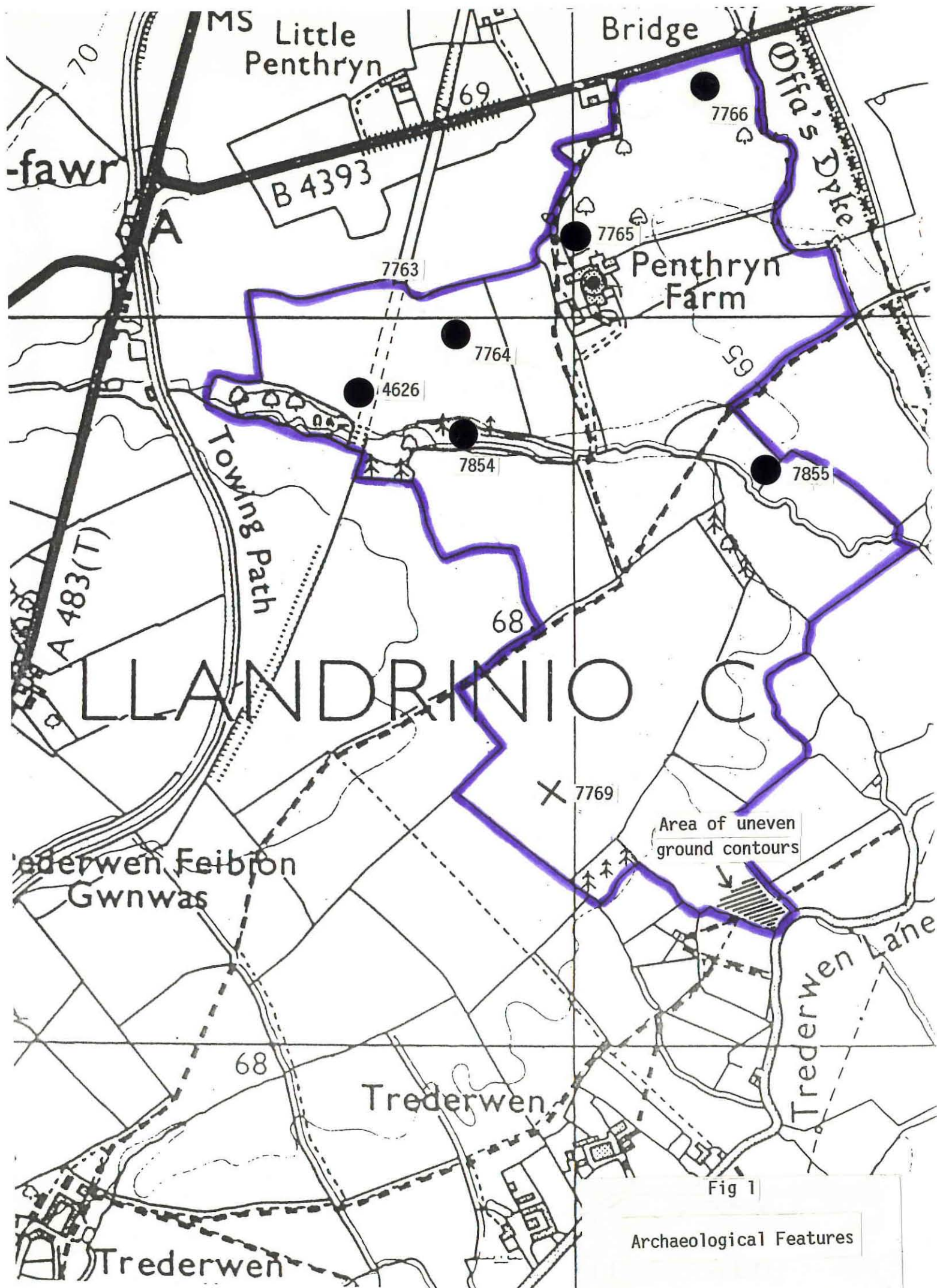


Fig 1

Archaeological Features