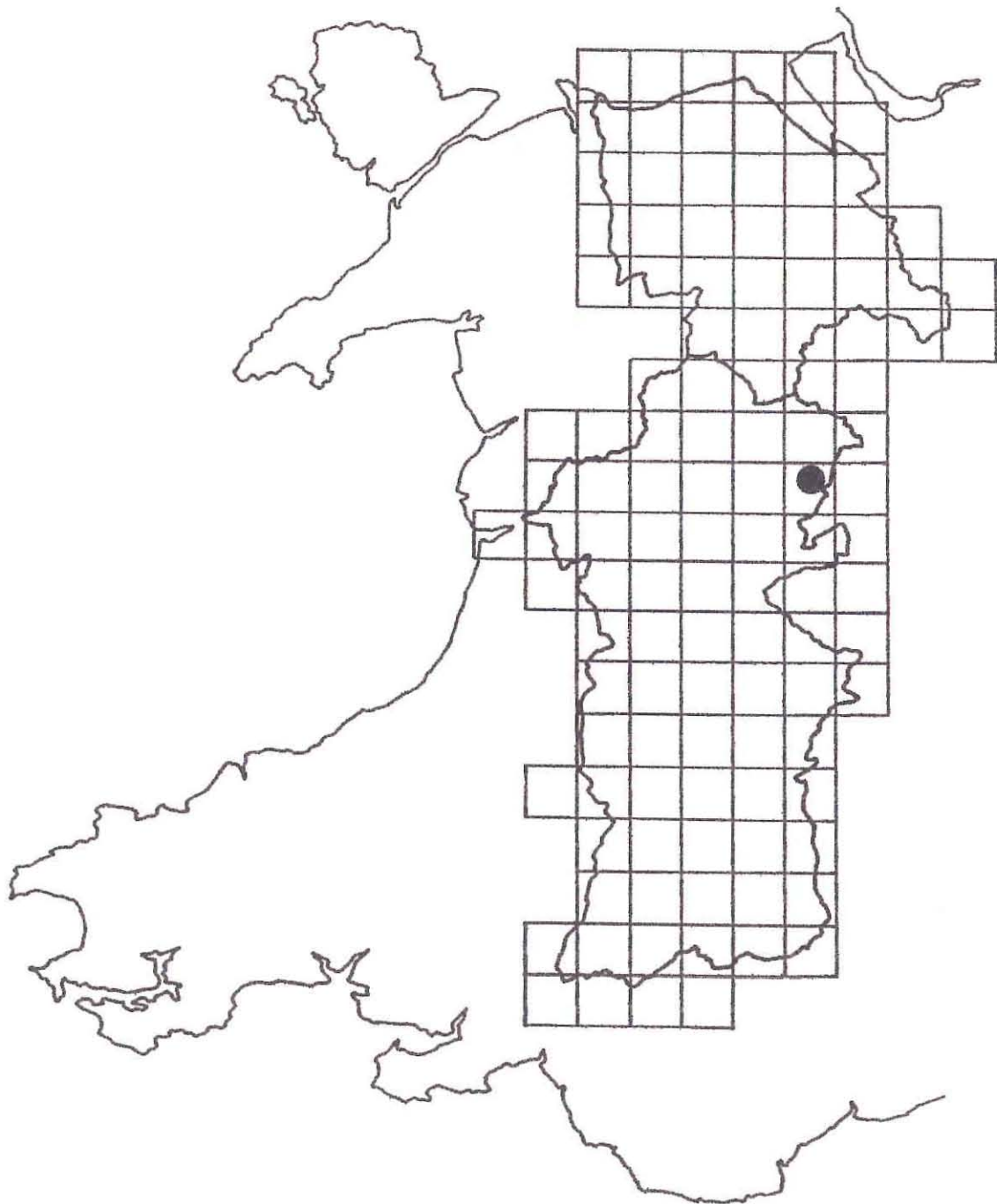


Domgay Lane, Four Crosses, Powys:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

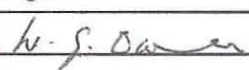
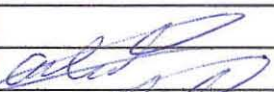



CPAT Report Record

Report and status

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Internal memo

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Domgay Lane, Four Crosses, Powys:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

by W. G. Owen
August 1996

Report prepared for Mr & Mrs P Fowler, Maes Derwen, Domgay, Four Crosses

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Contracting Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (hereafter CPAT Contracts) was invited by P.H. & G.M. Fowler of Maes Derwen, Domgay, Four Crosses, Powys to carry out a watching brief during the stages of topsoiling, foundation trench and service trench excavation involved in the construction of a new bungalow with garage and septic tank adjacent to Domgay Lane, Four Crosses (NGR SJ 27561899).
- 1.2 A watching brief was considered necessary by the Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust acting in their role as advisers to the local authority as a condition for granting the planning application for the development (Powys County Council M96178). This was because the proposed development lay within 50m of a large complex of subsurface remains of Prehistoric and possibly Medieval date consisting of ring-ditches, pit alignments, field boundaries and enclosures. Given the close proximity of these sites, there was a reasonable chance that excavation would expose previously unrecorded evidence related to this buried landscape. A Design Brief was subsequently prepared by the Curatorial Section (WAT 169) which described the requirements for the scheme of work.
- 1.3 A specification for the watching brief was prepared by CPAT and the work was subsequently carried out on 25th June and 24th July, 1996 and this report prepared immediately afterwards.

2 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY(Figs.1 & 2)

- 2.1 The development site is located in a pasture field approximately 0.7km north-east of Four Crosses and is immediately adjacent to Domgay Lane on its southern side.
- 2.2 Topographically, the site lies on the Upper Severn outwash plain which is composed of glacial or fluvioglacial deposits forming shallow depressions and low ridges overlying glaciolacustrine alluvium. The site itself appears to be located on the southern side of a low ridge which slopes away gradually to the south and south-east.
- 2.3 Soils in the immediate vicinity vary from brown earths over gravelly river or lacustrine drifts to fine silty, stagnogley soils containing mudstone and sandstone derived from Lower Palaeozoic Rocks (Thompson, 1982, 35, 77-78). At the development site, this variation is reflected in the more gravelly subsoil in the eastern half grading to finer gravelly silts to the west.

3 HISTORIC BACKGROUND (Fig 3)

- 3.1 Much of the early history of the Four Crosses/Domgay area derives from aerial photographic evidence which suggested the presence of an extensive barrow cemetery and elements of the field system mentioned above (Par 1.2). The excavation of eight of the possible fifteen ring-ditches thus identified showed periods of activity dating from the middle to late Neolithic through to at least the middle Bronze Age. Earlier activity dating to the Mesolithic Period was suggested by several items of flintwork from ring-ditches 5 and 6 and two radiocarbon dates from ring-ditch 2. Evidence of Iron Age activity, evidence suggesting nearby Romano-British settlement, and evidence of re-use during the early post-Roman period also emerged from ring-ditch 2. Excavation at several sites yielded sherds of medieval and early post-medieval origin. There is evidence, therefore, indicating a span of activity extending over eight millennia in the area.(Warrilow *et al.* 1986; Barford *et al.* 1986).
- 3.2 Excavation at four points along the pit alignments (Sites 8,9,10 & 11; fig. 3) failed to produce any dating evidence nor were they associated with any surviving contemporary earthworks. The Powys Sites and Monuments Record attributes a putative Bronze Age date to them but medieval and post-medieval dates have also been suggested (Owen and Britnell 1989, 38; Silvester 1992, 56), although these two latter dates have both been disputed (Hankinson 1995, 4-5). Two of the pit alignments to the north and north-west fall within 70m of the development site whilst a third linear ditch is located 80m to the east. No cropmark features, however, are visible within the development plot.

- 3.3 The Enclosure Award of 1799, the Tithe map of 1840 and subsequent Ordnance Survey maps all show that the development site formed part of an enclosed field with no indication of extant buildings within it.

4 THE WATCHING BRIEF

- 4.1 On June 24th, 1996 topsoil was removed mechanically from the area of the proposed bungalow, garage and entrance driveway (Fig 3), revealing, at an average depth of 0.25m a buff-yellow subsoil which was more gravelly in the eastern half of the site as previously stated (Par 2.3). This surface was then cleaned mechanically removing totally any remaining topsoil in order that any archaeological features at this level would be clearly visible. No such features were noted and no finds earlier in date than the late post-medieval period were recovered either from the subsoil or the topsoil.
- 4.2 On July 24th, 1996 a watching brief was maintained during the course of the mechanical excavation of foundation trenches and the position of the proposed septic tank. Foundation trenches were 0.50m wide and an average of 0.80m deep below the level of the yellow subsoil exposed during the topsoil stripping stage. This layer overlay coarse silty gravels at c 0.40m below the surface over most of the site. Towards the western quarter of the area, however, it overlay finer gravelly silts which contained lenses of coarser gravels.
- 4.3 No features of archaeological interest were recorded during this phase of the watching brief and no finds recovered.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The subsoils exposed during the course of excavation were typical of the gravel terrace soils encountered elsewhere in the Domgay Lane area and which are most suited to crop and parchmarks indicating the presence of sub-surface archaeological features. Examination of available aerial photographs suggested that no archaeological features were present in the development area and excavation confirmed this to be the case.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 5.1 The writer would like to thank the owners, Mr and Mrs Fowler for their kind assistance during the course of the watching brief.

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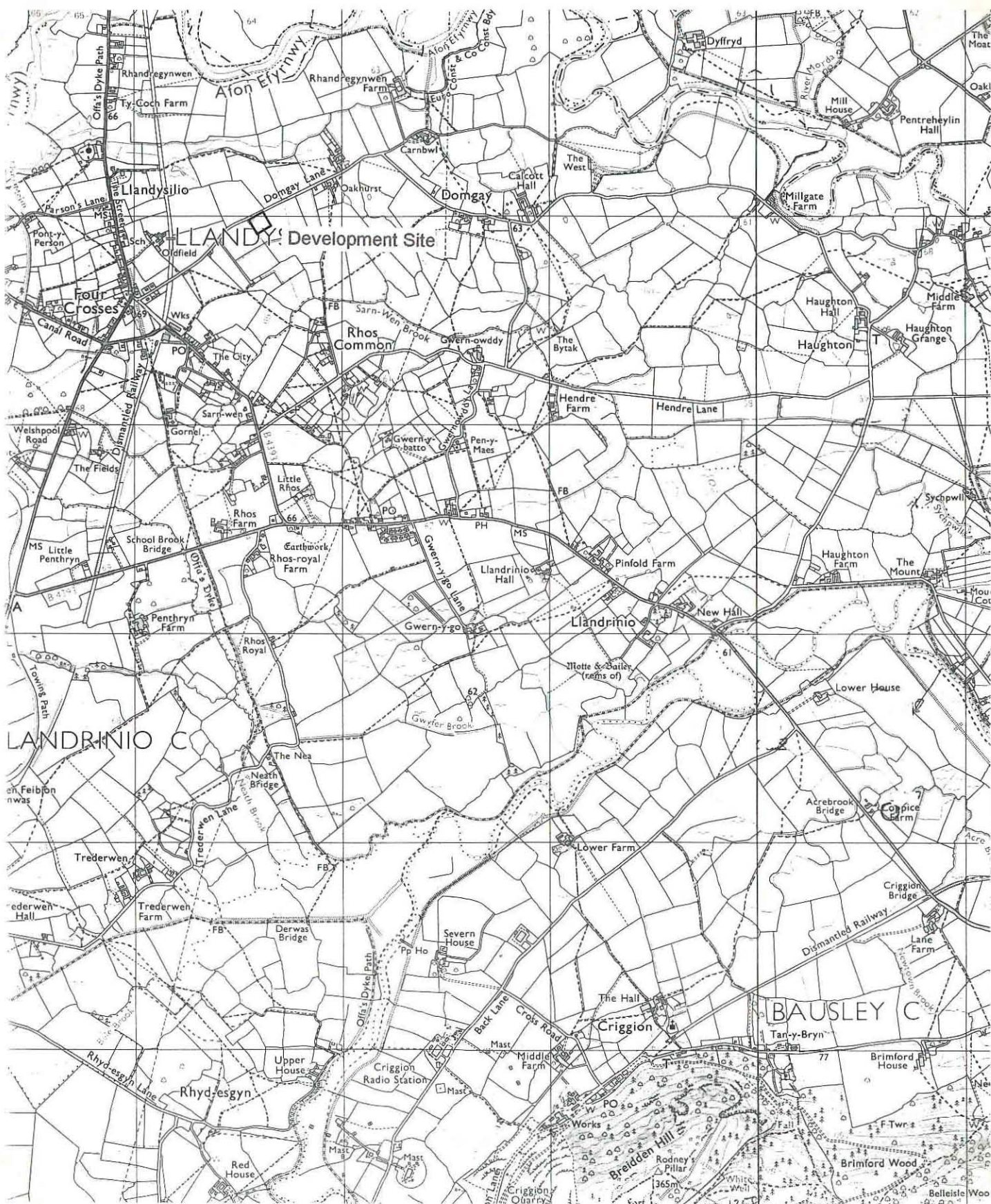


Fig. 1 Location, scale 1:25,000

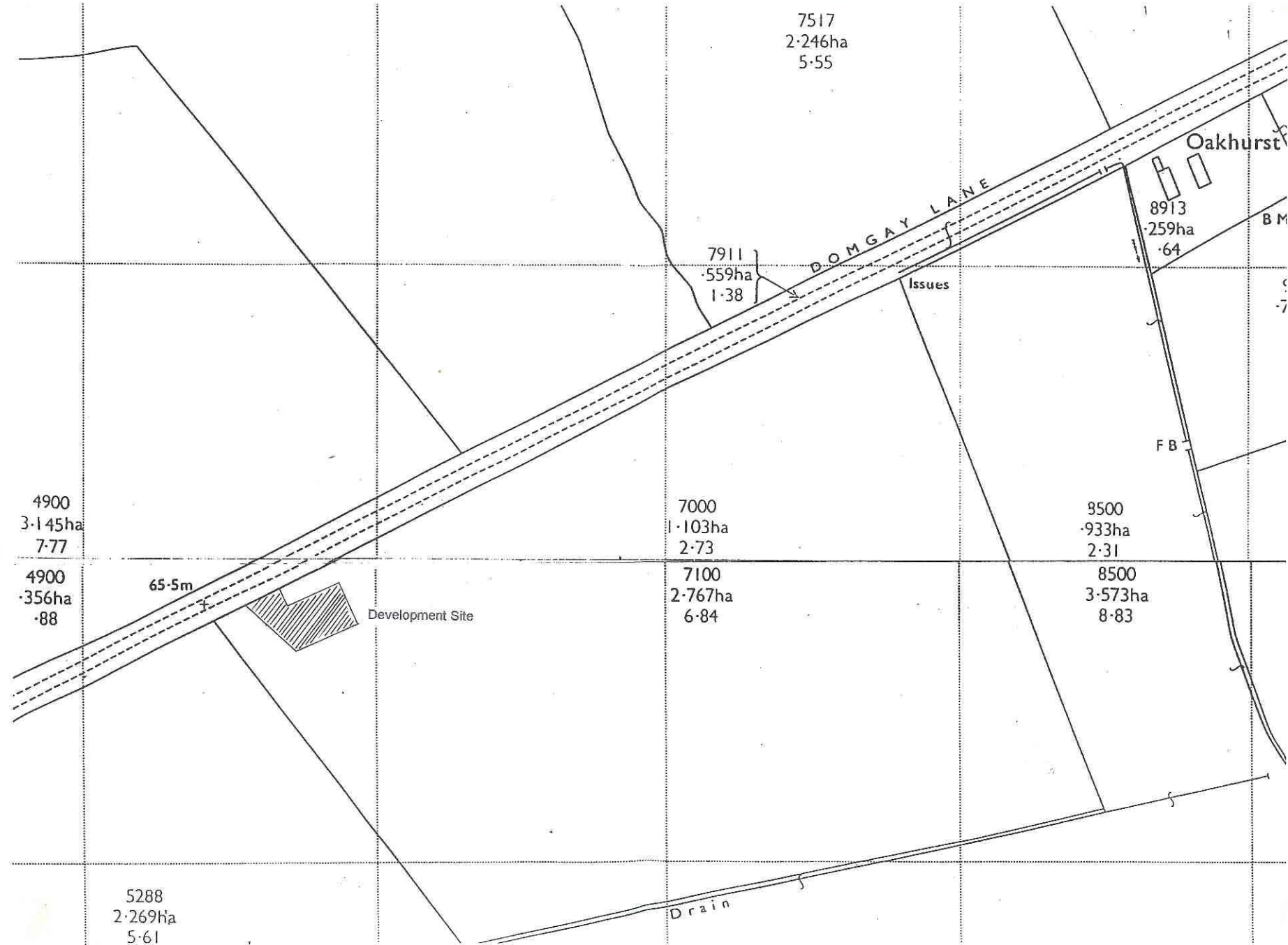


Fig. 2 Location, scale 1:1,250

