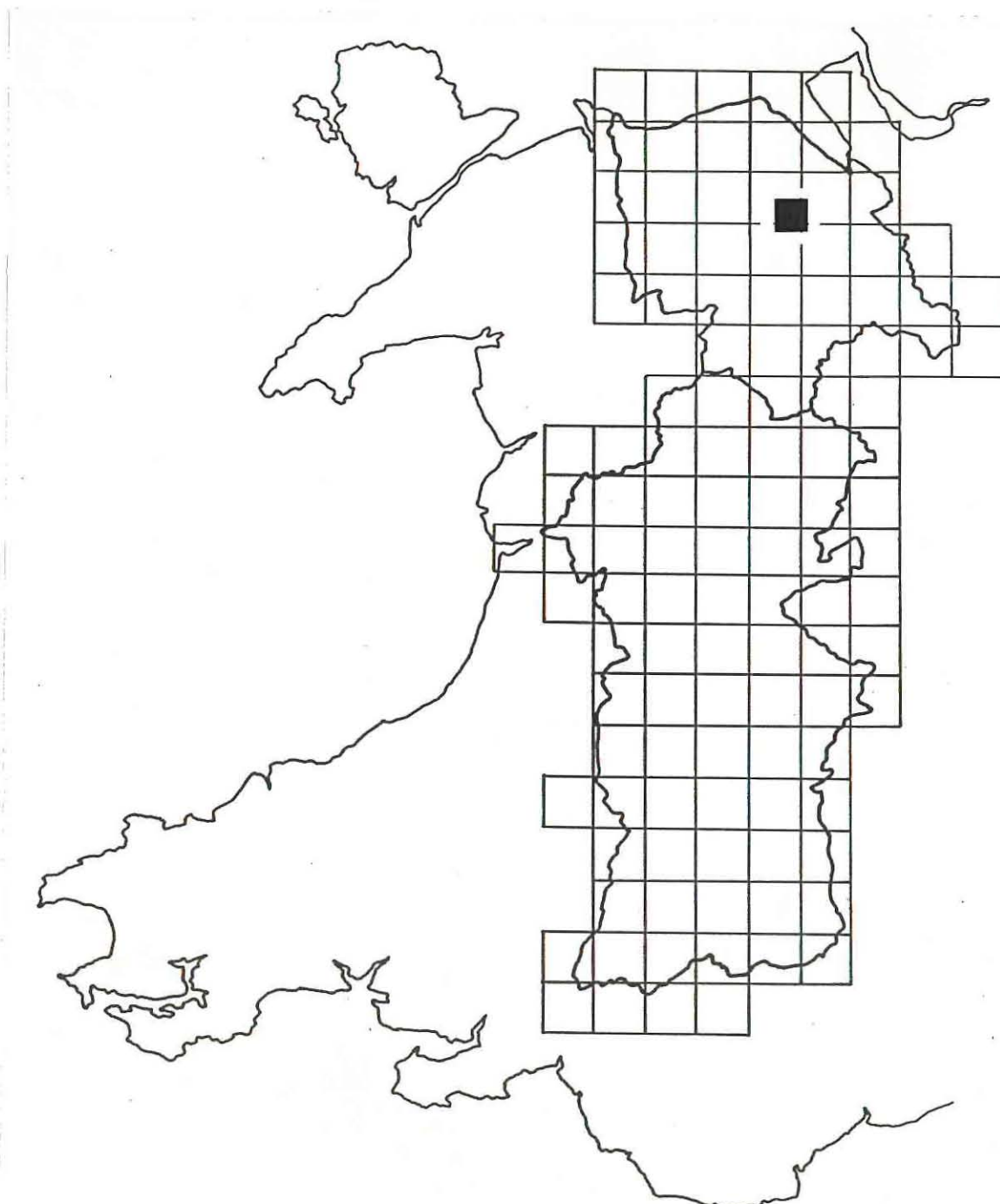


Tyn Llan, Llanferres, Clwyd

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



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by W G Owen and R J Silvester

June 1993

Report prepared for Allen Homes (North Wales) Ltd

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1 Introduction (Fig 1)

1.1 Llanferres (at SJ 188 605) is a small village lying beside the A494 trunk road which links Mold with Ruthin in Clwyd. It overlooks the valley of the River Alyn and is overshadowed by the heights of the Clwydian range to the west.

1.2 The village consists of a church, an adjacent farm, two public houses and two relatively small groups of modern houses on the north and south. Tyn Llan farm and a pasture field to the west of it were purchased recently by Allen Homes (North Wales) Ltd with the aim of developing the area north of the churchyard for housing.

1.3 The origin of Llanferres is unknown, though it is first referred to as 'Lanverrys' in 1291. While there is no direct evidence of an early medieval origin for Llanferres church the dedication, possibly to the obscure St Berres, and the llan prefix point to early beginnings. A residual, stone-faced curving bank within the present churchyard points to a sub-circular enclosure which could also indicate an early date and although there is no surface evidence of this bank extending into the Tyn Llan holding, it was a reasonable assumption that the original churchyard had once extended further northwards.

1.4 A planning application for the proposed development was submitted to Glyndwr District Council in November 1992. The Clwyd Archaeology Service, a section of Clwyd County Council, which acts as archaeological adviser to the local planning authority, recommended that an archaeological evaluation be conducted in the area of the putative former churchyard to enable the archaeological significance of the site to be taken into account when the planning decision was determined.

1.5 Glyndwr District Council decided instead to include a condition on the planning permission granted to Allen Homes requiring that a programme of archaeological work be undertaken in advance of the site development. Clwyd Archaeology Service in their advisory capacity decided that a two-phase approach was necessary, the first involving a field evaluation to determine the nature of the archaeological resource in the development area. In the event that the results from the first stage proved positive, a fuller programme of archaeological preservation (by record or in situ), might be required.

1.6 Allen Homes (North Wales) Ltd contracted the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) to conduct the first-stage evaluation. The fieldwork together with a desk-top assessment was undertaken in the week beginning 24 May 1993, and this report was prepared shortly afterwards. A copy of the specification submitted by CPAT for the approval of the client and the local authority is included in this report as Annex 1.

2 Desk top Assessment

2.1 The object of the desk-top element of the evaluation was to clarify the sequence of development in the vicinity of Llanferres church and churchyard utilising the available cartography and other easily accessible secondary sources. It was hoped that this work might throw some light on the putative reduction of the churchyard in the past. This desk-top work was conducted concurrently with the field evaluation.

2.2 A range of 19th-century maps was examined, but unfortunately nothing

earlier than 1818 survives. A number of local and regional histories were also consulted.

2.3 Incorporated in what follows, at the request of the client, are details of the footpath and graveyard to the west of the church.

2.4 The present wall around the churchyard is thought to have been built in the 1720s on the evidence of the parish accounts. Previously it had been fenced.

2.5 The road running along the side of the Alun Valley passed around the eastern side of the churchyard prior to 1818, but in addition an old road ran around the western perimeter. The eastern road, or new road as it was called in 1818, was probably part of the 18th-century turnpike road from Ruthin to Mold, though this has not been confirmed by detailed analysis. In that year local Justices of the Peace ordered the old road to be closed. It was 4 yards wide, and the sketch plan accompanying the closure order shows it hugging the edge of the churchyard before converging on the course of the new road, north of Ty'n-llan. This house, not relevant to the closure order, was not depicted on the sketch map. It seems certain that the cobbled track found during the evaluation (see section 3) can be equated with the old road.

2.6 The western edge of the churchyard in the early 19th century conformed to the low, stone-faced bank still visible, though no longer functioning, in the modern churchyard. In 1838 when the Tithe Map for Llanferres was drawn the picture had changed very little. A single large field, Erw Eglwys, lay to the west of the church. The village at this time consisted of the church, the Druid Inn, Ty'n-llan and the Rectory which had been purchased by the Church in 1813.

2.7 There is nothing on any of the 19th-century maps to confirm the former existence of the churchyard further north.

2.8 The survey for the first edition of the large-scale Ordnance Survey map (1:2500) was conducted in 1871 and published a year later. Erw Eglwys remained as a single field but was crossed by a footpath from the direction of the rectory to a point on the northern side of the field identical with the present iron kissing-gate. A path across the churchyard also converged on this spot. This would seem to have replaced a footpath further south which was also closed under the order of 1818.

2.9 The churchyard was extended in 1905 across the northern part of Erw Eglwys. The footpath continued across the extension but by the time that it was depicted on the third edition of the large-scale Ordnance Survey map in 1912, it no longer reached the northern edge of the new graveyard but curved back into the old churchyard. None of the 19th-century maps examined shows the footpath continuing across the field west of Ty'n-llan.

3 The Evaluation (Fig 2)

3.1 Two evaluation trenches constituting the second stage of the evaluation were excavated and recorded between 24th and 26th May 1993.

3.2 Trench 1, originally 6.0m long by 2.0m wide, but subsequently extended by 2m to allow the complete examination of a feature, was aligned parallel to the northern churchyard wall, and located across the line of the putative early enclosure perimeter where traces of a ditch were anticipated.

3.3 Trench 2, 2.0m square, was located some 7.0m to the north-east of Trench 1, to evaluate a small part of the putative early churchyard enclosure.

3.4 The modern overburden was removed mechanically from both trenches and archaeological levels below excavated manually. All features revealed were recorded using the standard numbered context system employed by CPAT and all significant contexts were drawn on plan at a scale of 1:20 and, where appropriate, in section. Additionally, a photographic record in monochrome and colour was kept.

3.5 Trench 1 (Fig 3)

3.5.1 At the north-western end of the trench, the overburden was removed to a maximum depth of 0.64m below which a stiff boulder clay was exposed. This varied in colour from a buff-yellow to light orange with local grey patches. Contained within the clay were both angular shattered stone and rounded pebbles. A similar but more stony undisturbed subsoil was exposed at a depth of approximately 0.10m below the modern ground surface at the south-eastern end of the trench. Between these two areas, at a depth of between 0.25 and 0.40m, a thin, continuous layer of rounded pebbles and angular limestone fragments, firmly bedded in a matrix of grey, gritty clay and overlying the natural subsoil extended the full width of the trench for a length of approximately 3.0m. Four continuous linear gullies, (Fig 3, A,B,C and D) cut through this layer across the width of the trench on an approximately north-east/south-west line and extended below it to a maximum depth of 0.20m into the undisturbed boulder clay. Gullies A and C contained a predominance of small angular limestone fragments in a light grey coloured gritty clay and could be distinguished on the basis of these contents from Gullies B and D which contained mainly rounded water-washed pebbles again in a grey gritty clay matrix. These gullies were interpreted as two pairs of wheel ruts each pair approximately 1.40m apart and the stone fills of these gullies seemed to represent two distinct repair phases to what was clearly a cobbled track. It was also evident that the two pairs of ruts followed the line of the track in the excavated area.

3.5.2 The few finds recovered from the trench were all associated either with the cobble track surface or the wheel ruts and consisted of glazed pottery sherds of post-medieval origin and unidentified iron fragments (see excavation archive section).

3.6 Trench 2 (Fig 4)

3.6.1 Organic overburden to a depth of approximately 0.20m was removed mechanically to expose large randomly deposited stone. Some lumps had traces of lime mortar and appeared to represent part of the foundation of a farm building, now demolished (Fig 4). This layer extended down to a maximum depth of 0.85m below the modern ground surface and rested directly on stiff, grey clay, 0.15m thick, containing closely packed rounded cobbles which extended across the base of the trench. Both were cut vertically in the northern corner of the trench by a posthole containing the basal part of a wooden telephone or electricity pole. The presence of charcoal fragments and the reddish colour of the cobbles in the west corner of the trench indicated a burnt area although none of the stones were heat-shattered. This basal stone layer was very similar to that exposed in Trench 1 and it is reasonable to assume that

Trench 2 lay astride the same cobbled trackway.

4 Conclusions

4.1 The cobblestone/clay layer exposed in Trench 1 represents a trackway approximately 2.70m wide which approached the western end of the churchyard wall from a north-easterly direction. The similar surface exposed in Trench 2 appears to represent a continuation of the same trackway. This feature may be interpreted with some confidence be tied in with the old road passing to the west of the churchyard which was closed in 1818.

4.2 The track surface rested directly on undisturbed subsoil in both trenches. There were no indications in Trench 1 of a ditch either below this surface or beside it. Excavation, therefore, could not confirm the former presence of an ecclesiastical boundary in this area. It may be of significance, however, that there is a difference in level of at least 1.0m between the present surface of the area under evaluation and the modern ground surface to the north of the cemetery wall. While this could in part be due to a build up of material as a result of churchyard burial in recent centuries, it may also point to the lowering of the ground surface in the vicinity of the farm: if so, it is possible that all traces of a perimeter ditch could have been removed at some time after 1720 when the present churchyard wall was built and that might have formed the southern boundary of the Ty'n Llan holding which itself appears to have been erected during that period.

4.3 The results from Trench 2 were negative regarding the putative early enclosure to the north of the present churchyard wall. While this negative evidence cannot rule out its existence entirely, it now seems rather less likely than the circumstantial details outlined in section 1.3 suggested.

5 Acknowledgements

5.1 CPAT wishes to acknowledge the assistance given by the staff of Allen Homes (North Wales)Ltd and their subcontractors, the staff of the Clwyd County Council Records Office and also Mr Ian Sanderson of the Clwyd Archaeology Service.

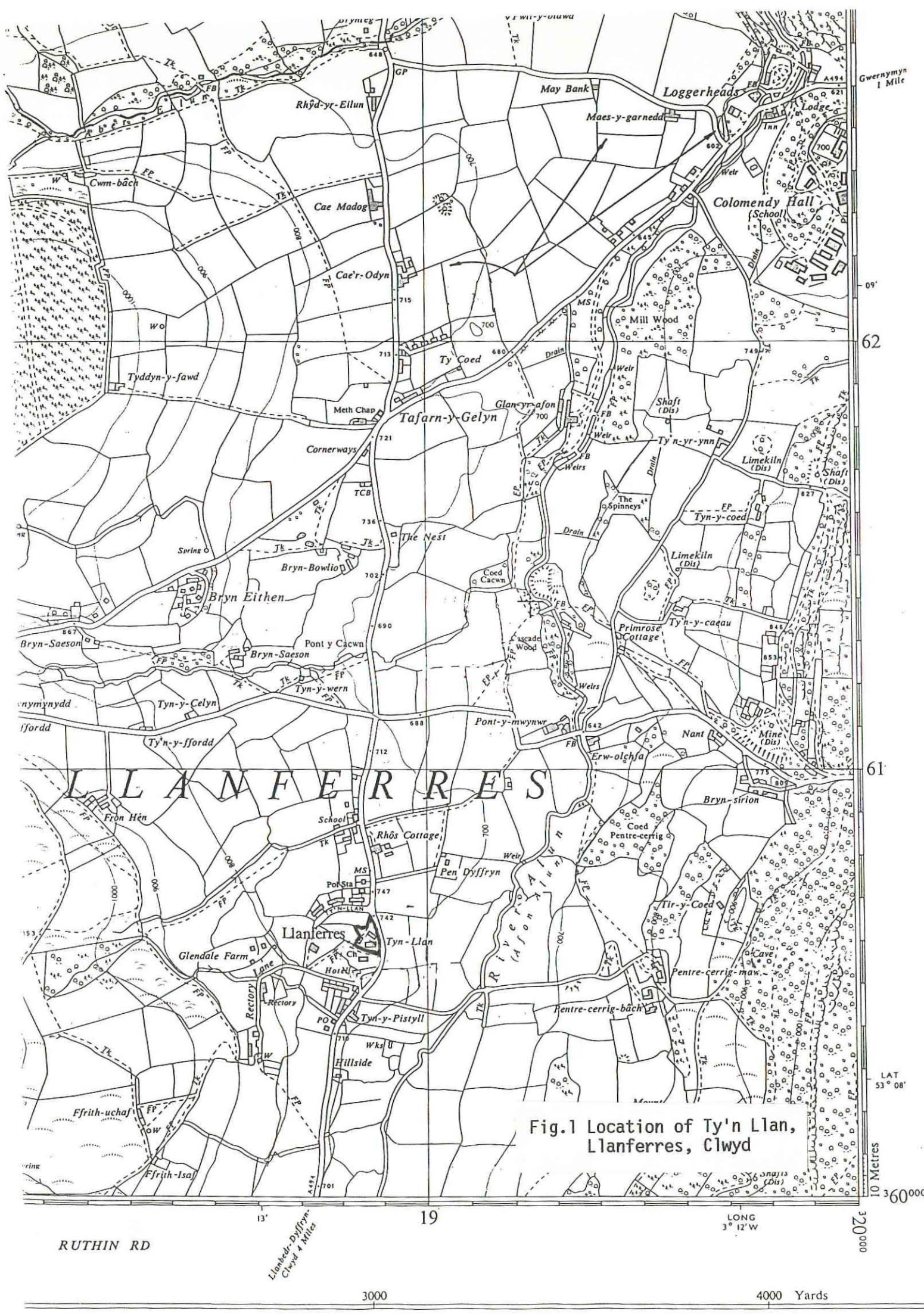


Fig.1 Location of Ty'n Llan, Llanferres, Clwyd

RUTHIN RD

Llanbedr-Dyffryn
Clwyd 4 Miles

3000

19

LONG
3° 12' W

4000 Yards

10 Metres
36000
20000

LAT
53° 08'

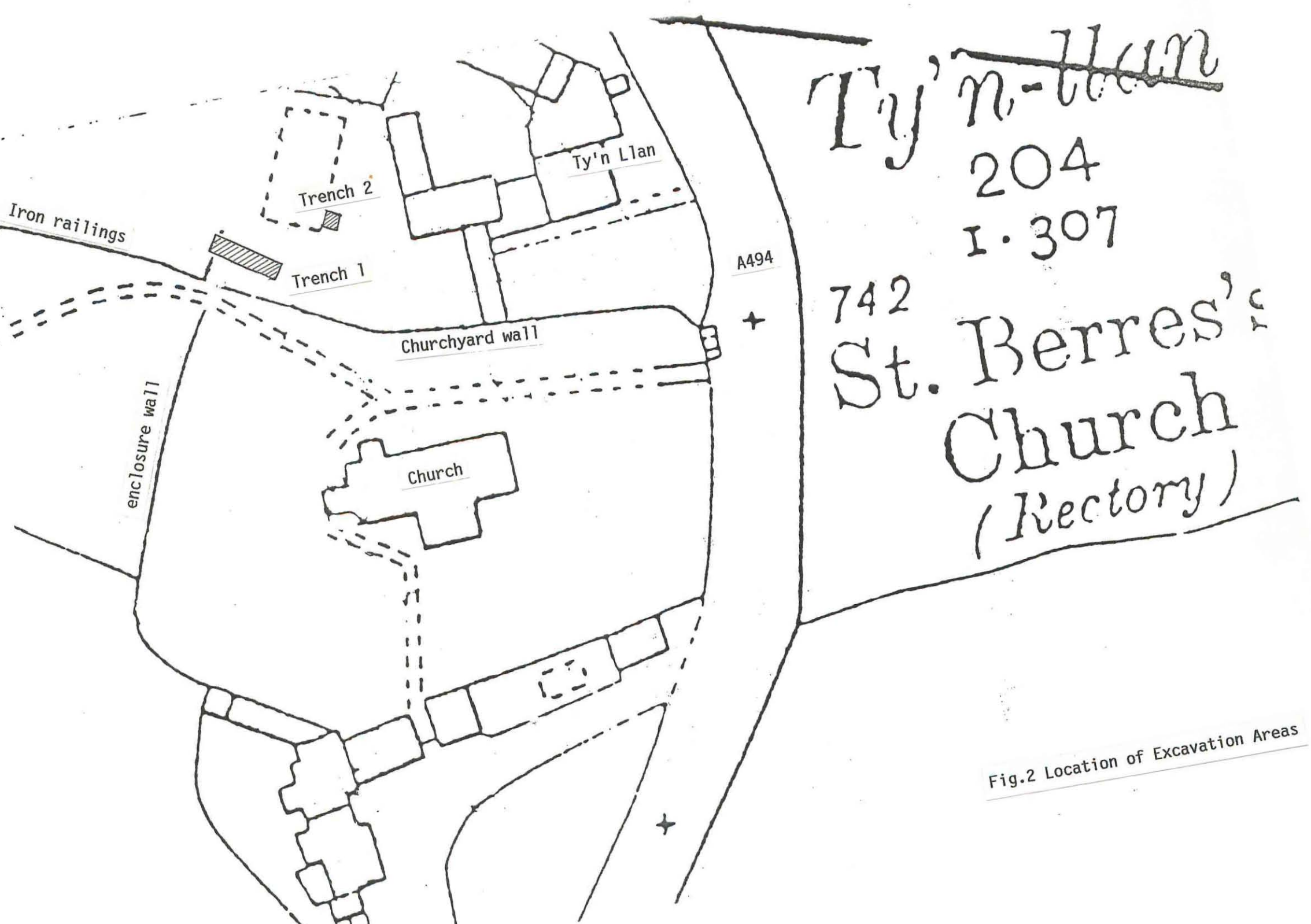


Fig.2 Location of Excavation Areas

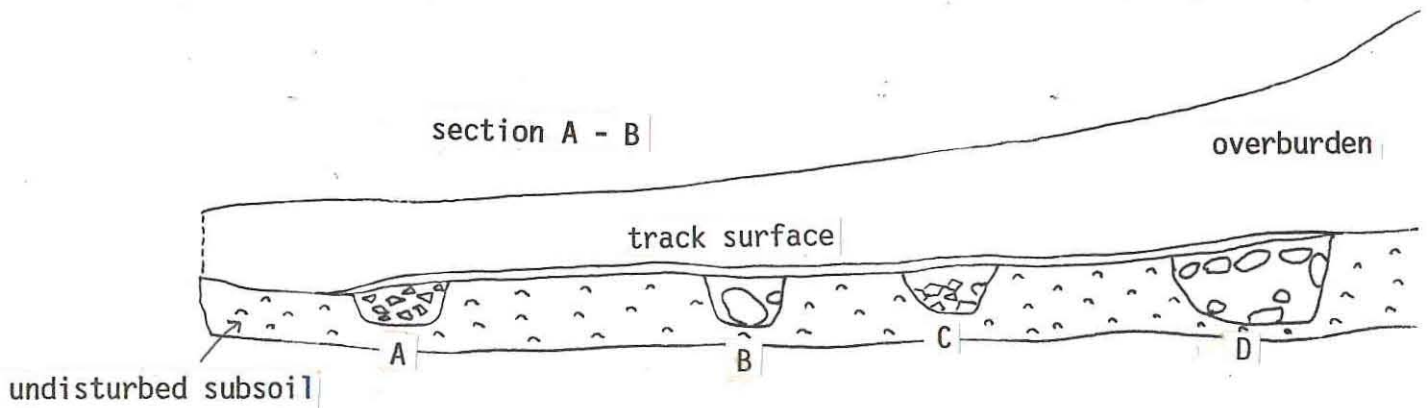
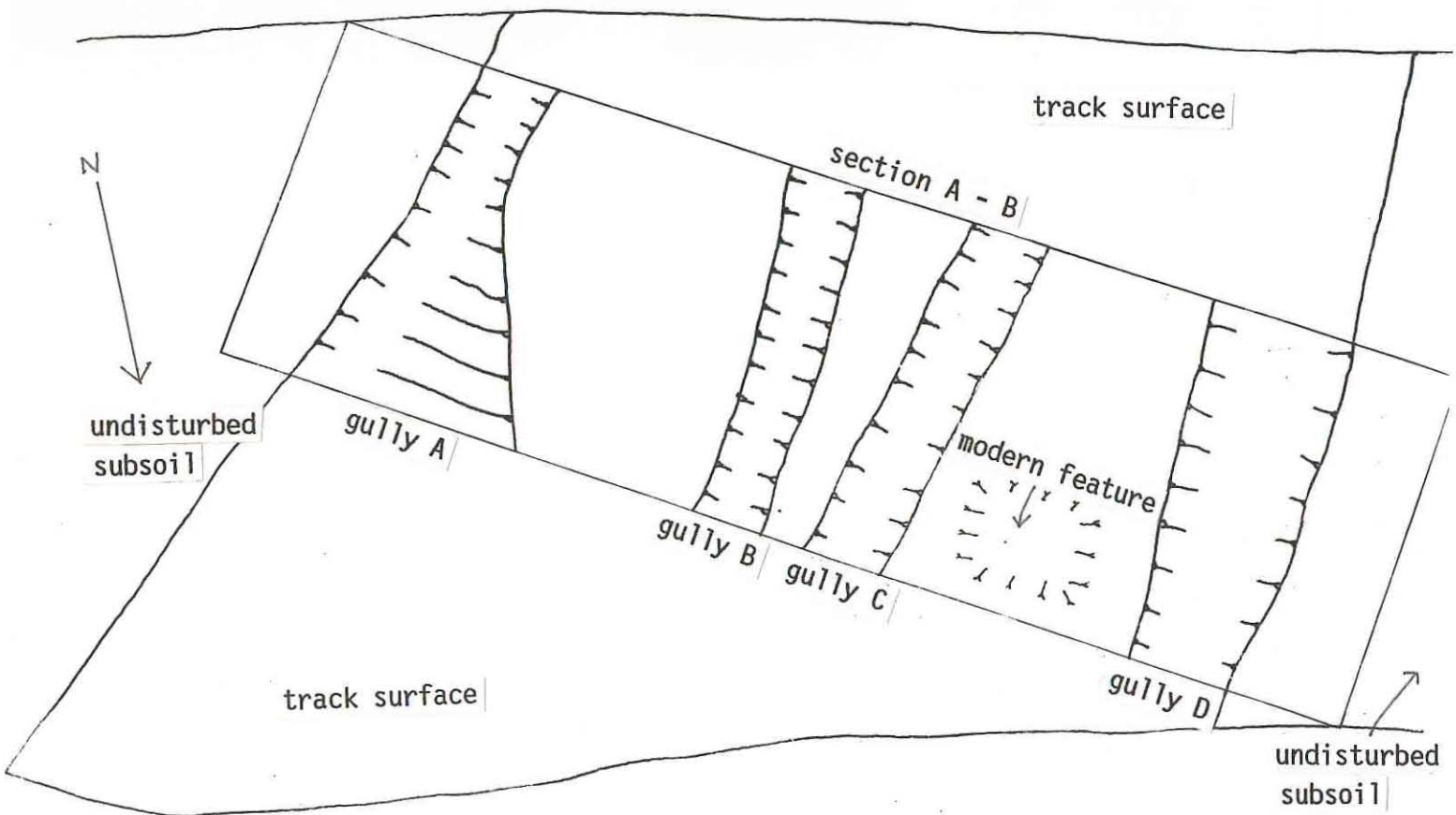


Fig.3
Trench 1 Plan and section
Scale 1:20

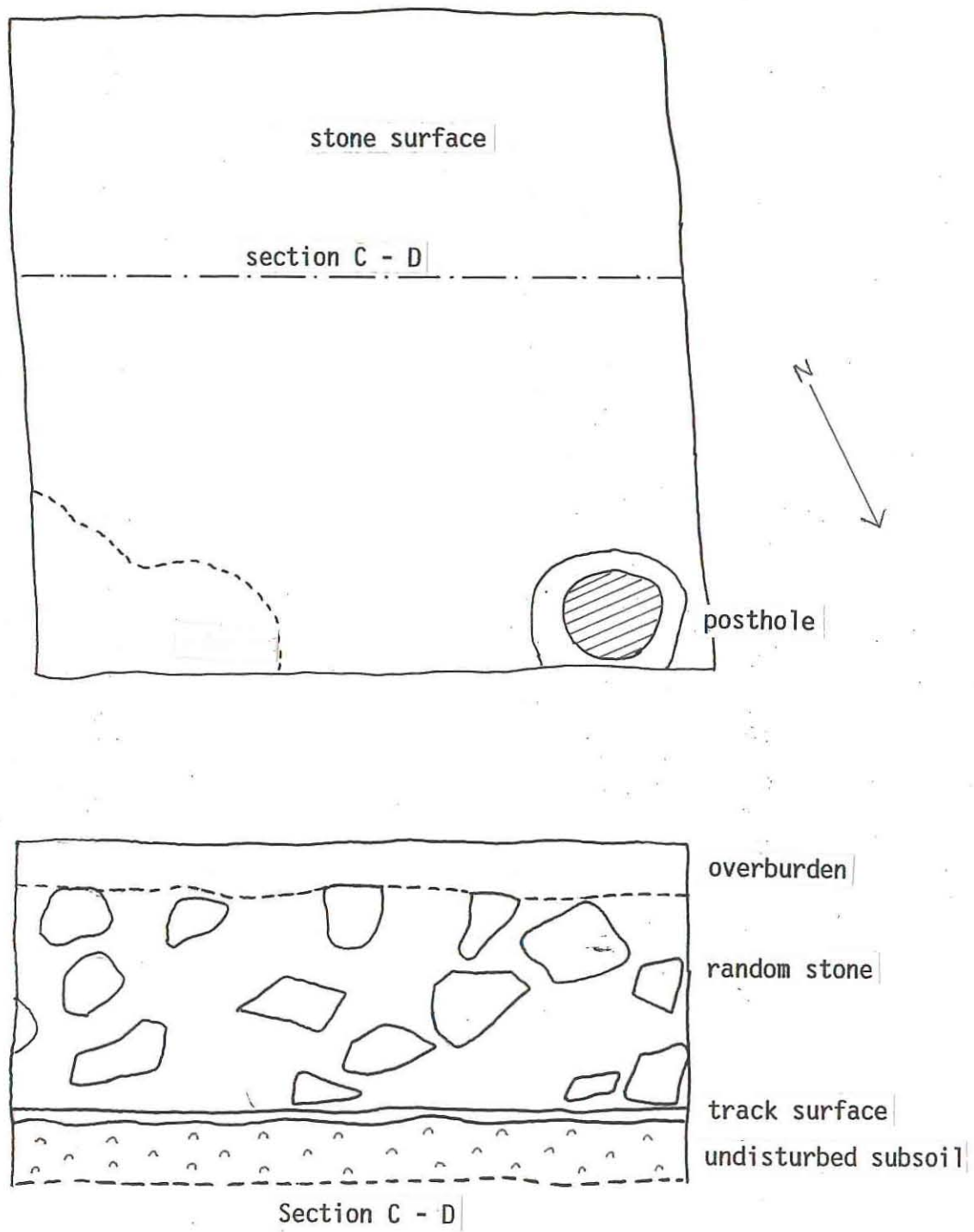


Fig.4

Trench 2 Plan and section

Scale 1:20

6 Excavation Archive

6.1 The excavation archive currently comprises the following records and materials.

6.2 Site Records

6.2.1 Plans and sections archive

One annotated A1 plan of Trench 1 and section
One annotated A4 plan of Trench 2 and section

6.2.2 Photographic archive

35mm colour transparencies of excavation trenches and surrounding area
35mm black and white prints of excavation trenches and surrounding area

6.2.3 Context record archive

Catalogue and description of contexts

6.2.4 Finds record archive

Catalogue of finds by context

6.3 Finds

6.3.1 Pottery

Three sherds of coarse post-medieval pottery

6.3.2 Metalwork

Five heavily corroded unidentified iron fragments

7 Sources

Enclosure Award for Llanferres and Cilcain, 1801

Lewis, S. 1833 A Topographical Dictionary of Wales

Ordnance Survey 25" Maps for 1872, 1899 and 1912

Record of Quarter Sessions for Denbighshire, 1818

Thomas, D.R. 1911 The History of the Diocese of St Asaph (Revised Edition)

Thomas, O. 1959 Llanferres Parish Church

Tithe Survey and Apportionment for Llanferres 1838

ANNEX 1: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT: TYN LLAN, LLANFERRES, nr MOLD
SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

1.0 Introduction

1.1 A proposed housing development by Allen Homes (North Wales) Ltd within the curtilage of Tyn Llan farm on land on the north side of Llanferres churchyard (SJ 188 605) near Mold in Clwyd may fall within part of an earlier and larger church enclosure. While there is no direct evidence of an early medieval origin for Llanferres church the dedication to the otherwise unknown St Berres and the Llan prefix point to early beginnings. A residual, stone-faced curving bank within the present churchyard points to a sub-circular enclosure and this can be extended northwards into the development area.

1.2 This is thus an area of potential archaeological sensitivity, and Glyndwr District Council have imposed a condition on the planning permission granted to Allen Homes requiring that a programme of archaeological work be undertaken in advance of the site development.

1.3 Clwyd Archaeology Service who are archaeological curators for the County and advisers to Glyndwr District Council have decided that a two-phase approach is necessary, the first involving a field evaluation to determine the nature of the archaeological resource in the development area, the second a fuller programme of archaeological preservation (by record or in situ), the nature and scale of which will be dependent on the results emerging from the first stage.

1.4 Because the requirement was put in place as a condition of planning permission, no brief has been prepared by the archaeological curator, and this specification represents the only written record of the nature of the work required during the first phase of the programme.

2 Objectives

2.1 The objectives of the evaluation are:

2.1.1 to reveal by means of a combination of desk-based assessment, evaluation trenches, and a watching brief during the excavation of service trenches, the nature, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the archaeology within that area of the proposed development that affects the putative early medieval church enclosure in so far as these aims are attainable;

2.1.2 to record any archaeology revealed in the evaluation trenches and service trenches;

2.1.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the desk-based assessment, field evaluation and watching brief, incorporating sufficient information on the archaeological resource for the archaeological adviser to the planning authority to assess the implications of the development, with a view to implementing a phase two programme of work if this is considered necessary by the local authority.

3 Methods

3.1 The initial stage of the evaluation will examine all the readily available primary and secondary records relating to the area. These are primarily earlier maps (Tithe, Ordnance Survey and, if they exist, estate and enclosure maps), the relevant Sites and Monuments Records, and local and regional histories and surveys.

3.2 The second stage will take the form of two trenches, the location of which were agreed on site by the developer and a representative of Clwyd Archaeology Service and marked by pegs. One, approximately 6m long by 2m wide, will run parallel to the present churchyard wall, and across the line of the putative earlier enclosure bank. A second trench to the north-east, approximately 2m square, will evaluate a small part of the interior of the putative early enclosure.

3.3 The excavation will be undertaken using standard evaluation procedures:

3.3.1 removal of modern overburden and sterile lower levels by a machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket or the equivalent.

3.3.2 evaluation of the archaeological deposits by hand trowelling to establish their importance and integrity, but avoiding any unnecessary disturbance of the deposits. All features encountered will be examined as fully as appropriate within the constraints imposed by time and safety considerations.

3.3.3 all archaeological contexts recorded using the standard numbered context system employed by CPAT. All significant contexts will be planned and/or drawn in section at appropriate scales (normally 1:20 and 1:10 respectively), and photographed in monochrome and colour. All drawn records will be related to control points depicted on modern maps.

3.3.4 all archaeological artefacts and environmental samples will be recorded and processed in a manner appropriate to the material involved. Those requiring conservation or other specialist treatment will be stored in a stable environment until such times as they can be examined by a specialist. All finds, except those deemed to be Treasure Trove, are the property of the landowner. It is anticipated that they will be donated to an appropriate museum, subject to agreement being reached with the landowner and the museum curator.

3.4 A watching brief will be maintained during the mechanical excavation of service trenches which will run from the main entrance off the Mold Road across the area earmarked for the development. Any features of archaeological significance will be recorded and located in their spatial context.

3.5 Following the on-site work a report, including descriptive text and plans, will be prepared according to the standard principles laid out for evaluations.

3.6 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991), and will be deposited in the Sites and Monuments Record for Clwyd maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust.

4 Resources and Programming

4.1 The evaluation will be undertaken by a small team of two or three skilled archaeologists under the direct supervision of an experienced field archaeologist. The desk-based assessment and the watching brief will also be undertaken by members of this team. Overall supervision will be by a senior member of CPAT's staff who will also be 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, watching brief and evaluation could take up to seven days in all, though it is hoped that some parts of the programme could be run concurrently. The subsequent report would be prepared thereafter. Confirmation is 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 finalised with the client, but Monday 24 May 1993 has been targeted provisionally.

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.

R. J. Silvester
18 May 1993