

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

**A40 Llansantffraed/Talybont-on-Usk
Embankment Stabilisation
and Junction Improvement, Powys**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

CPAT Report No 546.2

**A40 Llansantffraed/Talybont-on-Usk
Embankment Stabilisation
and Junction Improvement, Powys**
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

R. J. Silvester
August 2005

Report for Halcrow Group Ltd

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust
7a Church Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7DL
tel (01938) 553670, fax (01938) 552179
© CPAT 2005

CPAT Report Record

Report and status

CPAT Report Title	<i>A40 Llansantffraed/Talybont-on-Usk Embankment Stabilisation and Junction Improvement, Powys</i>		
CPAT Project Name	A40 Llansantffraed Junction		
CPAT Project No	1081/1302	CPAT Report No	544
Confidential (yes/no)	yes		draft/final

Internal control

	Name	signature	date
prepared by	R. J. Silvester		28/05/2003
checked by	N. W. Jones		28/05/2003
approved by	R. J. Silvester		28/05/2003

Revisions

no	Date	made by	checked by	approved by
1	August 2005	R J Silvester		R J Silvester

Internal memo

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

7a Church Street Welshpool Powys SY21 7DL

tel (01938) 553670, fax 552179

© CPAT

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION
2	LAND USE, SOIL AND TOPOGRAPHY
3	METHODOLOGY
4	DESIGNATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS
5	ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMPONENT OF THE CORRIDOR
6	ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE
7	MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS
8	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
9	SOURCES

APPENDIX 1: Gazetteer of archaeology within the area of interest

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Halcrow Group Ltd, of Newport road, Cardiff, (henceforward Halcrow) are currently engaged in planning the improvement of the junction of the A40(T) and a minor road from Talybont-on-Usk at Llansantffraed in the Usk Valley in southern Powys. In May 2003 Halcrow asked the contracting section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (henceforward CPAT Contracting) to undertake an archaeological assessment of the area in the immediate vicinity of the junction to establish its archaeological and historic sensitivity, this corridor also being termed by Halcrow the 'Area of Interest'.
- 1.2 The work was identified by Halcrow as a Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment as defined in the Department of Environment, Transport and Regions' *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* Volume 11 Section 3 Part 2, Section 8/1 (1993). The Design Manual lays out the procedures for conducting a Stage 1 assessment and the report that follows conforms to these guidelines.
- 1.3 The objective of such a Stage 1 exercise is 'to identify the known archaeological constraints within [the] route corridor to ensure that proper regard is given to the potential archaeological resource during route selection' (*DMRB* Vol 11 Section 3 Part 2, Section 8/11), and 'to undertake sufficient assessment to identify the constraints, caused by the presence of historic buildings' (*DMRB* Vol 11 Section 3 Part 2, Section 13.4).
- 1.4 The procedures include both a desk-top study and a rapid assessment of the archaeology in the field for the Area of Interest, in order to inform the present report. A preliminary but incomplete desk-top study had already been prepared by an unknown agency (undated document passed to CPAT in May 2003).
- 1.5 Both the enhancement of the desk-based element of the work and the field assessment were completed in week beginning 19 May 2003, and a draft report (CPAT no 546) was prepared immediately thereafter.
- 1.6 In July 2005, Halcrow requested an additional assessment of a further, limited tract of land on the north-east side of the existing A40, and the incorporation of any results into a revised version of the report (CPAT no 546.2). This additional assessment was undertaken in early August 2005.

2 LAND USE, SOIL AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.1 The area of interest tracks across the major river terrace of the River Usk immediately to the west and south of Llansantffraed, the settlement itself being set back only a little from the lip of the terrace. Part of the area of interest occupies the floor of the Usk valley to either side of the dismantled railway line, while a further part extends across the gently shelving land above the terrace scarp on which lie the church, one house and parts of several fields. The remainder straddles the terrace scarp itself.
- 2.2 The soils of the corridor fall under two headings. The soils of the valley floor are categorised within the Lugwardine Association (Rudeforth *et al* 1984, 174), and classified as river alluvium with deep, stoneless, permeable fine silty soils, occasionally with coarser soils locally and on occasions prone to flooding. The soils above the valley floor fall within

Eardiston 1 Association (Rudeforth *et al* 1984, 132), which are defined as well-drained, reddish coarse loamy soils over sandstone, though shallow in places.

- 2.3 Beyond the built-up area of Llansantffraid and the adjacent road system land use appears to be wholly given over to permanent pasture.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The basis of the assessment as determined in the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* Volume 11 Section 3 Part 2, Section 8/12 (1993) required the following:

- i) the collation of all data held in the regional SMR;
- ii) a review of readily available vertical and oblique aerial photographic information;
- iii) a review of first edition Ordnance Survey maps and other readily available historic maps;
- iv) field visits to determine the present condition of all known sites.

- 3.2 The following archives and repositories were consulted in person:

- i) the regional Sites and Monuments Records (SMR) held by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust; sites already identified during the preliminary desk-top exercise (see 1.4 above) were confirmed; a statement on listed buildings, supplied by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, was consulted, some other information on local designations was provided;
- ii) the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth; for early Ordnance Survey maps and other readily available historic maps;
- iii) the National Monuments Record, a department of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales (RCAHMW), in Aberystwyth; for site records and for access to vertical aerial photography held by the Central Register of Air Photography for Wales, a section of the Welsh Assembly in Cardiff. The NMR's own holding of vertical aerial photography was not available at the time of the consultation.
- iv) the Brecon Beacon National park Authority; verbal information was provided informally on local designations, with the caveat that such designations would need to be checked officially and confirmed in writing in a subsequent stage.

- 3.3 The second element of the assessment was a rapid field assessment. This allowed both a review of those sites and features already known to exist, and also a skeletal record to be prepared of any new sites encountered during the survey. These are referred to in the sections below and are listed in the accompanying gazetteer of sites (Appendix 1). Sites of archaeological and historic landscape interest which were discovered during the survey were located with reasonable accuracy by establishing the relative positions of the sites to mapped boundaries and where necessary by the use of hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment.

- 3.4 All of the sites recorded during the desk-top and field survey exercises were entered into a Foxpro database and, where appropriate, mapped in relation to the corridor using MapInfo software. Archaeological sites are distinguished by a single dot which gives no guide to the overall size of the site that it denotes, while significant linear features, if present, are indicated by lines.
- 3.5 Only those archaeological sites which are within, or on the perimeter of the area of interest have been shown on the accompanying plan. A simple consecutive numbering system has been adopted.

4 DESIGNATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

- 4.1 In accordance with the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* Volume 11 Section 3 Part 2, Section 13.5 (i) (1993), the following designations have been identified:

i) Landscape of Special Historic Interest. Much if not all of the area of interest falls within the Middle Usk Valley Landscape of Special Historic Interest (area no. 58) (Cadw 2001, 91).

ii) Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. The area of interest impacts on a small portion of the Buckland House parkland landscape (Cadw 1999, 36).

iii) Conservation Area. There is no conservation area currently designated for Llansantffraed (information from source at Brecon Beacons National Park)

iv) Scheduled Ancient Monuments. On the evidence available to CPAT Contracting there are no scheduled ancient monuments within the area of interest.

v) Listed buildings. The area of interest includes part of the church of St Ffraed and the Gwynne Holford monument in the churchyard, both Grade II listed (information from source at Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments).

vi) National Trust inalienable land. It has not been possible in the time available to establish whether any inalienable land is present in the area of interest.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMPONENT OF THE CORRIDOR

- 5.1 In this relatively short corridor, there is a significant amount of archaeological interest (listed in Table 1), although this is perhaps not surprising in view of its proximity to a historic settlement.
- 5.2 Chronologically, the earliest feature ought to be the Roman road running up to the Usk from the south-west, towards a reputed junction with another road of similar date which supposedly ran along the Usk valley itself, and is claimed to have been followed by the much later turnpike road, itself the predecessor of the present A40 Trunk road. Presently, however, there is no substantive evidence for either road at present. The main Usk Valley route (Margary's RR62a) is a possibility, but other courses, higher up the valley side, have

also been postulated. The route crossing the valley is at best speculative, and has been dismissed by some authorities (Silvester and Owen 2003).

- 5.3 Llansantffraed church and its surrounding churchyard may have had their origins in the early medieval (pre-Norman Conquest) period. Certain the church dedication, the former curvilinearity of the churchyard boundary, and the riverine location all suggest early beginnings. The church itself is Victorian, a replacement for what was probably a medieval building perhaps with 17th-century alterations (Silvester 1999). The church is a grade II listed building, and two structures within the churchyard, the grave of Henry Vaughan (outside the area of interest) and the tomb of Gwynne Holford, are separately listed as Grade II entities.
- 5.4 Whether a settlement developed around the church in the Middle Ages is unknown, but the evidence from similar sites elsewhere in Brecknock hints at the possibility. What is more certain is that the slopes of the valley were divided into strip fields for farming purposes and in many cases were almost certainly cultivated. The boundaries of some of these fields, which continued to function in later centuries as well, are still visible above and around the settlement, but some relict traces can be identified running into the fields below the A40 which form part of the 'area of interest'.
- 5.5 The parkland associated with Buckland House could be a development of the later 18th century but more likely the 19th century (Cadw 1999, 36). Its extreme northern tip as defined by Cadw extends into the area of interest, and in practice includes the main drive to Buckland House which appears to have fallen out of use after the sale of the property in 1935. But the lodge, also probably a 19th-century structure, has disappeared beneath the trunk road.
- 5.6 The introduction of the railway in the 19th century had a profound effect on this part of the Usk Valley. The railway itself was carried on embankments and in cuttings, but it is likely that it may have also influenced the construction of the road bridge across the Usk and the road down to Talybont.
- 5.7 Other minor features of the landscape such as the village pound at Llansantffraed and the milestone beside the turnpike road seem to have disappeared, though others such as the quarry pit have remained.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

- 6.1 The archaeology of the area of interest is classified according to its perceived significance (Table 1 below and Appendix 1). The categories, with the exception of Category E, are based on those given in the Department of Environment, Transport and Regions' *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* Volume 11 Section 3 Part 2 (1993).

i) *Category A* sites are those believed by CPAT to be of primary significance, either potentially of national importance or already designated by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments as being of scheduled ancient monument status. Two or perhaps three sites in this category have been identified in the area of interest or its immediate vicinity.

ii) *Category B* sites are sites of regional importance. These sites are not of sufficient importance to justify scheduling, but are nevertheless important in aiding the understanding and interpretation of the archaeology of the region. One site in this category has been identified in the area of interest or its immediate vicinity.

iii) *Category C* sites are sites of local importance. These sites are of lesser importance, but are nevertheless useful in aiding the understanding and interpretation of the archaeology of the local area. Five sites in this category have been identified in the area of interest or its immediate vicinity.

iv) *Category D* sites are either sites of minor importance or those which are so badly damaged that too little now remains to justify their inclusion in a higher grade. One site in this category has been identified in the area of interest.

v) *Category E* sites are sites which have been identified, but whose importance cannot be assessed from fieldwork and desk-top study alone. An archaeological evaluation would generally be required to categorise such a site more accurately if the proposal was likely to affect it in any way. Six sites in this category have been identified in the area of interest or its immediate vicinity.

Table 1: Archaeological features within the area of interest

1	Llantsantffraed church	Church	Medieval	A
2	Llantsantffraed churchyard	Churchyard	Early Medieval	A
3	The Allt	Building	Post Medieval	B
4	Buckland House lodge	Lodge	18/19 th century	E
5	Buckland House park	Park	18/19 th century	A?
6	Roman road	Road	Roman ?	E
7	Railway	Railway	19 th century	C
8	Talybont road bridge	Bridge	19 th century	C
9	Pound	Pound	Post Medieval	E
10	Milestone	Milestone	18 th century	E
11	Llantsantffraed platform	Platform	Unknown	E
12	Llantsantffraed boundary I	Boundary bank	Medieval ?	C
13	Llantsantffraed boundary II	Boundary bank	Medieval ?	C
14	Llantsantffraed boundary III	Boundary bank	Medieval ?	C
15	Allt quarry	Quarry	Post Medieval	D
16	Buckland House drive	Drive	18/19 th century	E
17	Llantsantffraed boundary IV	Boundary bank	Medieval ?	C
18	Llantsantffraed boundary V	Boundary bank	Medieval ?	C

7 MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The potential impact on the known archaeology has been considered and appropriate mitigation measures are outlined below. It should be noted that these recommendations are offered solely for the guidance of the Design Organisation by their archaeological advisor (in this instance, CPAT Contracting) and they should be aware that the archaeological curator for the region might offer other recommendations in the event that he were consulted.

7.2 **Terminology.** The following standard archaeological terms are used below as recommended mitigation measures.

- i) Preservation in situ: where a site is considered to be of sufficient significance it may be considered appropriate to preserve the site in its present form, condition and location.
- ii) Preservation by record: where proposals will inevitably lead to the loss of a site, sufficient recording should be undertaken to provide a full, accurate and permanent record of its nature, form, significance and dating. Preservation by record can take a number of forms, depending on the nature of the site in question, and may be achieved with or without excavation and could include any or all of the following: written record; drawn record; photographic record; artefactual record; survey and environmental sampling.
- iii) Evaluation: where insufficient information exists for a decision to be made regarding an archaeological sites future management, a programme of investigative work may be proposed. Such investigation may include geophysical survey, topographical survey and trial excavation.
- iv) Watching brief: a watching brief may be recommended to include archaeological monitoring of all relevant groundworks, including topsoiling, in order to identify and record any previously unknown archaeological remains which may be revealed. Sufficient time should be allowed for adequate recording of any remains that are encountered or exposed, and it may be necessary for groundworks to be progressed in a way which allows for such recording.

Table 2: Archaeological features and recommended mitigation

1	Llantsantffraed church	A	Preservation in situ
2	Llantsantffraed churchyard	A	Preservation in situ
3	The Allt	B	Preservation in situ
4	Buckland House lodge	E	Watching brief
5	Buckland House park	A?	Preservation in situ
6	Roman road	E	Watching brief
7	Railway	C	Preservation by record
8	Talybont road bridge	C	Preservation by record
9	Pound	E	Watching brief
10	Milestone	E	Watching brief
11	Llantsantffraed platform	E	Evaluation
12	Llantsantffraed boundary I	C	Evaluation and/or watching brief
13	Llantsantffraed boundary II	C	Evaluation and/or watching brief
14	Llantsantffraed boundary III	C	Evaluation and/or watching brief
15	Allt quarry	D	No mitigation required
16	Buckland House drive	E	Watching brief
17	Llantsantffraed boundary IV	C	Evaluation and/or watching brief
18	Llantsantffraed boundary IV	C	Evaluation and/or watching brief

- 7.3 The fact that the area of interest falls within a designated Landscape of Special Historic Interest (Cadw 2001, 91) might be considered as a significant constraint. However, the method used for assessing developments in such sensitive areas – known as an Assessment of the Significance of Impact of Development on Historic Landscape Areas or ASIDOHL – are normally applied only

to developments of a larger scale than that being promoted at Llansantffraed, and Cadw had indicated that in this specific instance an ASIDOHL is not required (letter from Mr R Avent, Cadw to Halcrow, 18 December 2003).

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 The writer would particularly like to thank the staff of: the Regional Sites and Monuments Record, CPAT, the National Monument Record in Aberystwyth; and of the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth.

9 SOURCES

9.1 References

Cadw, 2001, *Register of Landscapes of Special Historic Interest in Wales; part 2.2 of the Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales*, Cardiff; Cadw

Rudeforth, C C, Hartnup, R, Lea, J W, Thompson, T R E, and Wright, P C, 1984, *Soils and their use in Wales*, Bulletin No 11, Harpenden: Soil Survey of England and Wales.

Silvester, R J, 1999 *The Historic Churches of Breconshire*: CPAT Report no. 308

Silvester, R J and Owen, W, J, 2003 *Roman Roads in Mid and North-East Wales* Welshpool: CPAT Report no. 527

Waddelove, E, 1999, *The Roman roads of north Wales. Recent discoveries*, Ruthin

9.2 Cartographic sources (printed)

1983 Soils of England and Wales (Sheet 2 - Wales) Soil Survey of England and Wales map and legend.

1994 *The Rocks of Wales* (Solid), Nottingham: British Geological Survey map.

9.3 Cartographic sources (manuscript)

c.1820 OS surveyor's draft map

1845 Tithe survey: Llansantffraed, Brecknock

1887 First edition Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map (Brecs 34.08 & 34.12)

1889 First edition Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map (Brecs 34 SE)

1904 Second Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 (Brecs 34.12)

Estate Maps: none identified

11.4 Aerial photographic sources (verticals)

Ordnance Survey 72/325/450-1; 543; dated 21-08-1972

MAFF 667/182-3; dated 19-05-1977

Appendix 1: Archaeological Sites within the Area of Interest

Site no: 01 **Name:** Llantsantffraed Church **NGR:** SO12222350
Site type: Church **Category:** A

St Bridget's church entirely rebuilt in 1884, replacing a medieval building which may even have had origins in the early medieval centuries.

Site no: 02 **Name:** Llantsantffraed churchyard **NGR:** SO12242349
Site type: Churchyard **Category:** A

Small churchyard, partially curvilinear and perhaps early medieval in origin. Contains the tomb of the poet Henry Vaughan, and also the tomb of Gwynne Holford (1847).

Site no: 03 **Name:** The Allt **NGR:** SO12272341
Site type: Building **Category:** B

House of uncertain date.

Site no: 04 **Name:** Buckland House lodge **NGR:** SO12392328
Site type: Lodge **Category:** E

Lodge at north end of lane to Buckland House. Appears to have been completely destroyed during 20th-century road improvements.

Site no: 05 **Name:** Buckland House Park **NGR:** SO12422319
Site type: Park **Category:** A?

Garden and park designated in the Cadw Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Powys (1999).

Site no: 06 **Name:** Roman road **NGR:** SO12252331
Site type: Road **Category:** E

Course of Roman road shows on early editions of large-scale OS maps (Brecknock 34.12), running north-eastwards, beside the later road. If authentic it would have crossed the Usk next to the road bridge and emerged on the northern bank. Its course, however, has never been confirmed and no trace of it was detected during recent fieldwork.

Site no: 07 **Name:** Railway **NGR:** SO12132351
Site type: Railway **Category:** C

19th-century railway, the line dismantled but the cutting, embankment and bridge abutment still in place.

Site no: 08 **Name:** Talybont road bridge **NGR:** SO12252335
Site type: Bridge **Category:** C

Metal and concrete bridge spanning river.

Site no: 09 **Name:** Pound **NGR:** SO12302339
Site type: Pound **Category:** E

Small pound shows on early editions of large-scale OS maps (Brecknock 34.12). Probably, but not certainly, now destroyed.

Site no: 10 **Name:** Milestone **NGR:** SO12132368
Site type: Milestone **Category:** E

Milestone shows on early editions of large-scale OS maps (Brecknock 34.08). Not identified during the field assessment or on modern Ordnance Survey maps and probably lost.

Site no: 11 **Name:** Llansantffraed platform **NGR:** SO12042364
Site type: Platform **Category:** E

A small platform cut into the base of the river terrace scarp. About 5m SW/NE by 3m and up to 0.5m deep. Function unknown.

Site no: 12 **Name:** Llansantffraed boundary I **NGR:** SO12062362
Site type: Boundary bank **Category:** C

Relict field boundary, an extension of the medieval strip fields above and to the north-east of the road.

Site no: 13 **Name:** Llansantffraed boundary II **NGR:** SO12142357
Site type: Boundary bank **Category:** C

Relict field boundary, an extension of the medieval strip fields above and to the north-east of the road.

Site no: 14 **Name:** Llansantffraed boundary III **NGR:** SO12442319
Site type: Boundary bank **Category:** C

Relict field boundary, an extension of the medieval strip fields above and to the north-east of the road. It survives for a short distance in the post-medieval parkland.

Site no: 15 **Name:** Allt quarry **NGR:** SO12392331
Site type: Quarry **Category:** D

Quarry of uncertain age but showing on late 19th-century OS maps.

Site no: 16 **Name:** Buckland House drive **NGR:** SO12422321
Site type: Drive **Category:** E

Terraced lane that led from Buckland House to the church and to the railway station at Talybont.

Site no: 17 **Name:** Llansantffraed boundary IV **NGR:** SO12382337
Site type: Boundary bank **Category:** C

Relict field boundary consisting of a low lynchet c. 8m wide and up to 0.6m high.

Site no: 18 **Name:** Llansantffraed boundary V **NGR:** SO12412331
Site type: Boundary bank **Category:** C

Relict field boundary consisting of a lynchet up to 1.2m high with a post and wire fence on top which deviates from the crest of the lynchet by up to 3m towards the south-west end.

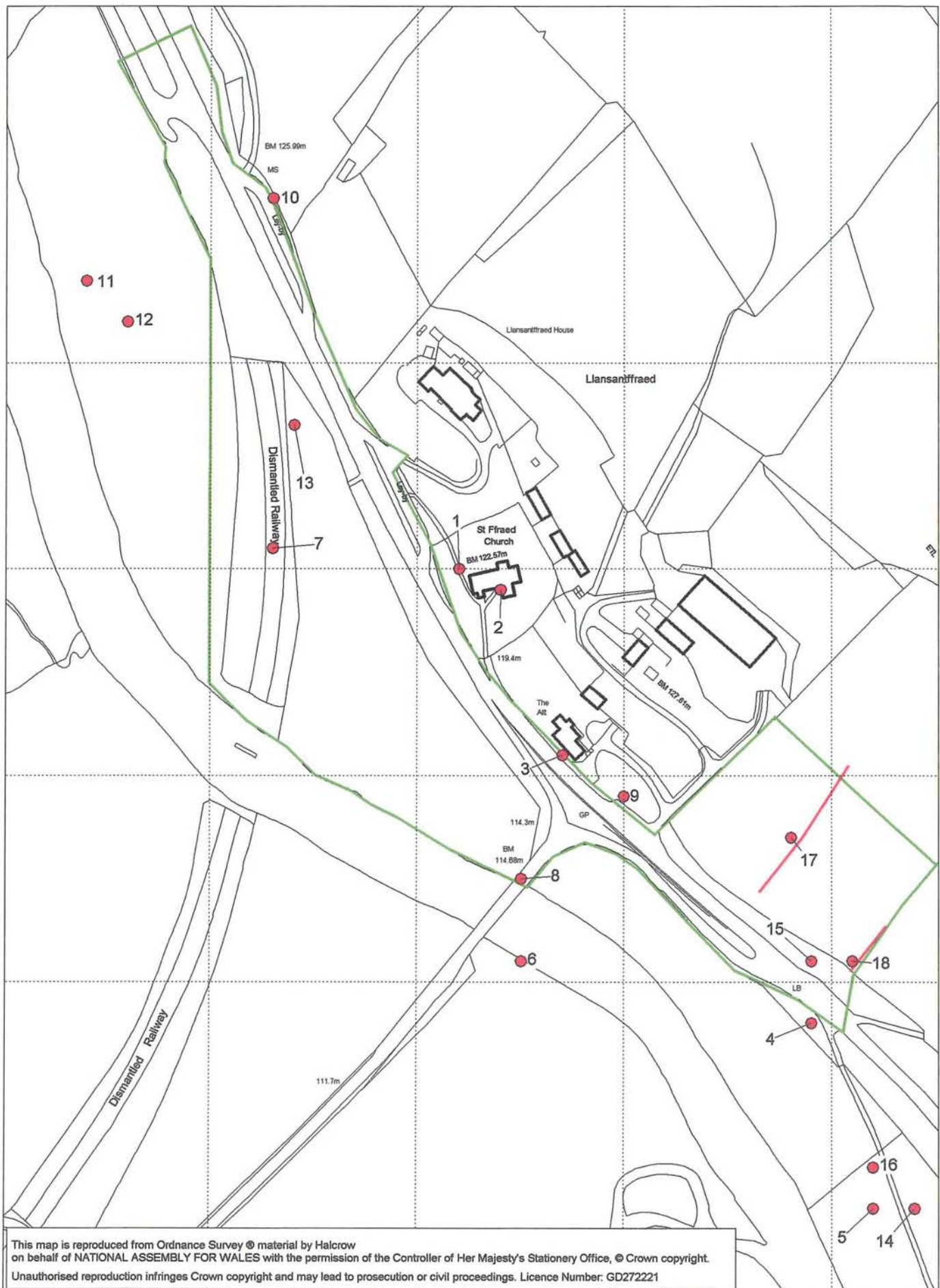


Fig. 1 A40 Junction, Llansantffraed/Talybont-on-Usk: known archaeological sites, 1:2,500