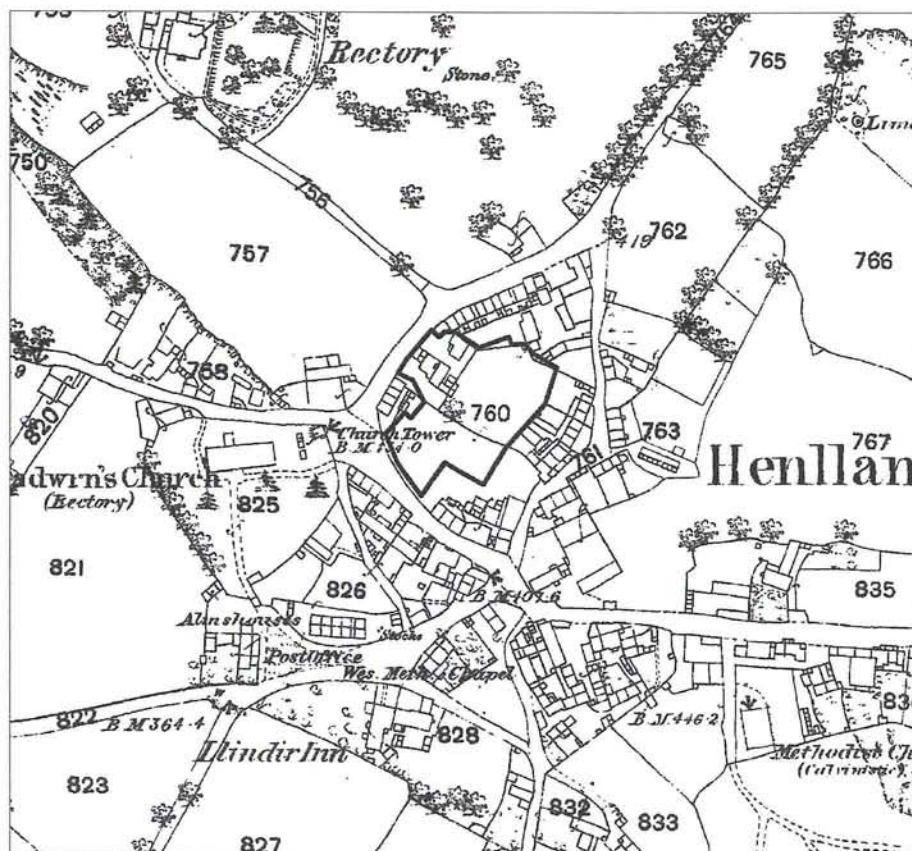


CPAT Report No 968

Ty Coch, Henllan, Denbighshire

ARCAHEOLOGICAL ASESSEMENT



THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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December 2008

Report for Swayne Johnson Solicitors

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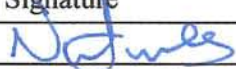

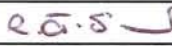
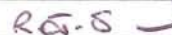
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CPAT Report Record

Report and status

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In September 2008 the Contracts and Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was invited by Tarmaster Jones Architects, acting as agents for Mr Edward Lloyd of Swayne, Johnson, to submit a tender for undertaking an archaeological evaluation in connection with proposals for the construction of fifteen new dwellings with landscaping, garaging and access on land at Ty Coch Farmhouse, Ty Coch Street, Henllan (SJ 02336819). The Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local authority, had determined that an archaeological evaluation was required to identify the potential impact on the archaeological resource. Accordingly, a brief was prepared which details the works required (CPAT EVB 709).
- 1.2 The curatorial brief specified that the evaluation should comprise a desk-based study, to be followed by a field evaluation consisting of four excavation trenches. A site visit in October revealed that much of the area of the proposed development was currently occupied by farm buildings and debris associated with the current use of the area as a scrap and salvage yard. It was clear that at present it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to undertake any form of field evaluation and following discussions with the curator it was agreed that the evaluation should proceed with the desk-based study alone. It is understood that the field evaluation will be required as a condition of planning permission, to be undertaken in advance of any development, but following the clearance of the site.

2 LOCATION

- 2.1 Henllan lies less than 3km north-west of Denbigh on the B5382. Its location is interesting in as much as the early village was established on the top and upper flanks of a limestone ridge, with the detached church tower occupying an outcrop and the church itself lower down the slope. Westwards is a deep valley cut by Afon Meirchion, with to the south a small, dry re-entrant. The modern village (see below) has spread over the flattish plateau behind.

3 HENLLAN HISTORY

- 3.1 The name of the village is potentially significant. Perhaps it has an ecclesiastical origin, but at what point the name 'old church' was applied to the settlement cannot be determined. However, the name could refer to an otherwise unknown enclosure, probably not associated with a church, but one albeit of very early date. The church dedication to St Sadwrn may indicate an early medieval (*i.e.* pre-Conquest) origin, but the first documentary reference to it is in 1291 when it was described as a chapelry attached to St Asaph though with the relatively high value of £16 10s which might just hint that the church in earlier centuries was of greater importance. The presence of a possible holy well – Ffynnon Sadwrn – close to Fox Hall, immediately to the south-east of the village, also focuses in on this obscure saint, and probably strengthens the argument for an early medieval foundation.
- 3.2 What is clear however is that from documentary evidence alone it is impossible to determine whether there was a village clustering around the church in the Middle Ages. It is only long after the Reformation that information becomes available. By the time that John Ogilby was at work in the later 17th century, Henllan was 'a little village seated on an eminence', and Edward Lhwyd a few years later reported about thirteen houses around the church and another eighteen not far off.

The Village plan

- 3.3 The layout of Henllan is intriguing, with its numerous roads and lanes forming an irregular network of thoroughfares and 'islands', unusually complex for north-east Wales. It is the lanes themselves that provide both hints and uncertainties about the origins and development of Henllan. Some can be dismissed as recent additions to the village-scape. The narrow lane that runs down from the church tower to Llindir Street past the Institute cuts across an existing 'island', while the zig-zagging lane beside Pas-meifod give the appearance of a road established in a pre-existing landscape.
- 3.4 At the core of Henllan are four or probably five routeways coming in from various points of the compass, and focussing not on the church itself which would almost certainly have been here long before any settlement developed, but on the ground immediately to the east of it. Some of these tracks certainly had a long history, originating back in the Middle Ages if not earlier. That approaching from the north-west was referred to as 'the way leading from the parish church of Henllan towards Abergley' in 1537, that coming up from Nantglyn to the south was referenced in 1518, and there are various 16th-century references to the road from Denbigh which came in from the east. The pattern created however is slightly irregular, particular with the lane coming down from the north-east and exiting to the south-west, and this suggests that there was probably not a well-defined thoroughfare through Henllan but an area of open ground through which tracks threaded an irregular course.
- 3.5 Such open ground might be a small common, but in this area of Denbighshire, too, there were greens, an essentially English landscape form, seen nearby at Denbigh Green (and also went under the name of Lleweni Green) which was a large tract of open land until its enclosure between 1802 and 1814. On and around this common dwellings would have been established in random fashion and the lanes across the common would gradually have become formalised to create the irregular layout 3.6 visible today. What this common might have been called in the past is not clear. Elizabethan and later documents refer to various commons close to Henllan such as *Craig Henllan*, *Y Llindir* and Henllan Common, and a number together with Denbigh Green should be traceable from detailed analysis of the Enclosure Map.
- Ty Coch*
- 3.6 On the face of it identifying Ty Coch in the existing documentary records for Henllan ought to be straightforward. In practice it is not because of the prevalence of that name in the parish.
- 3.7 One Ty Côch lies on the west bank of the River Clwyd, to the west of Trefnant. Today there is Ty-côch (SJ 0727 7060) and also Ty-côch Farm (SJ 0724 7034), but the latter is of modern origin for in the late 19th century it was known as Melin-y-green. Ty côch, however, certainly goes back well into the 19th century and probably before.
- 3.8 An estate map, probably of the later 18th century, displays another Ty-coch, this one on the edge of Denbigh Green in the eastern part of Henllan parish. Close scrutiny of the field pattern reveals this as the house and lands of what is now known as Plas Newydd (SJ 053696), an identification confirmed by the Ordnance Survey surveyors' plan of the 1830s. Sometime in the 19th century Ty Coch was transformed into what appears to be a small gentry home. It is not however quite as straightforward as that for there are documentary references to the existence of a property called Plas Newydd in the 18th century and this conundrum has yet to be unravelled.
- 3.9 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map of 1874 (Fig. 2) shows a building within the development plot which does not appear on the Tithe map, and other admittedly small-scale maps of the first half of the 19th century seem to indicate that there was no building here but just a angled inset in the road, implying that the it was built on a convenient piece of open space. The Tithe apportionment does record the name Ty Coch but as a holding without a dwelling, just a single block of meadow central to the island and tenanted by Hugh Hughes (Fig 1).



Fig. 1 Tithe Survey for Henllan Parish, 1842

- 3.10 The 2nd edition map of 1899 (Fig. 3) shows this building as the Ty-côch Inn, with the lane edging it on the north as Ty-côch Street. The origin of neither the inn nor street name can be established with confidence, although it may be that the street took its name from the inn.

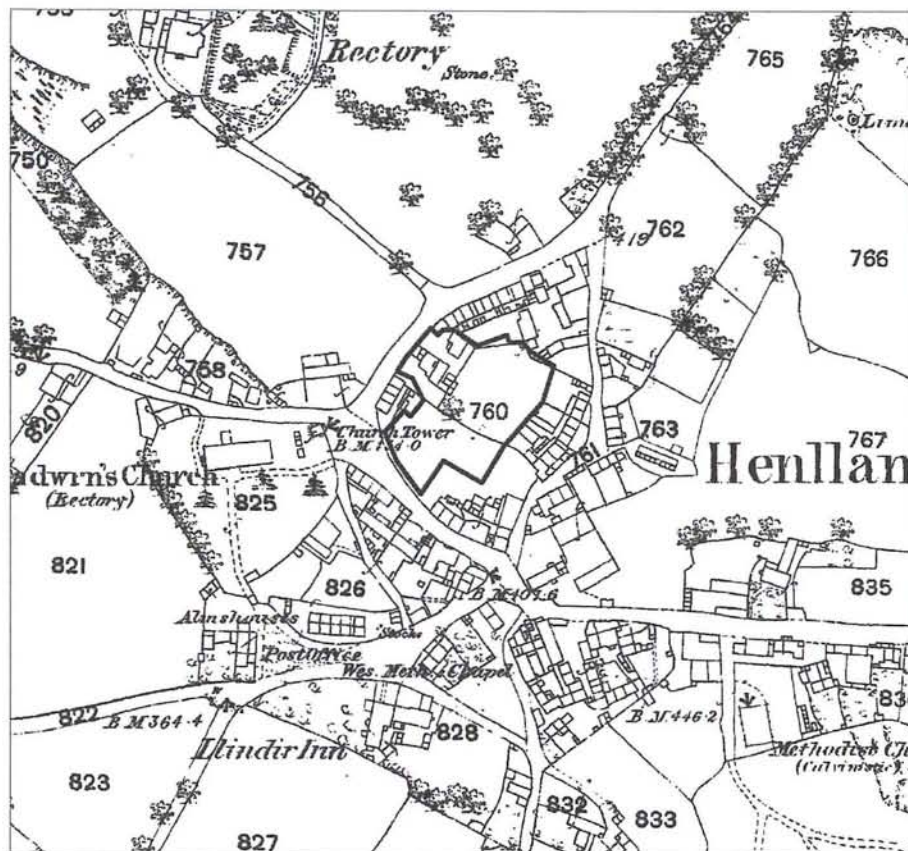


Fig. 2 Ordnance Survey 1st edition, 1874

The development area

- 3.11 Earlier 19th-century maps reveal that there was little in the way of dwellings or other buildings in the area earmarked for development. The row of four cottages in the north-west portion of the area, as noted above, had not yet been built in the 1840s, and the only dwelling on this tract of land to the east of Church Street (and outside the development area) was in the extreme southern angle where the school now is. It may be that this was Tyn y Clochty occupied by Margaret Roberts in 1842, and that the rest of the ground including the development area was a pasture field. This is not to indicate that in earlier centuries there weren't dwellings in the area, just that by the 19th century the area was largely clear of them.
- 3.12 In 1999 two evaluation trenches were excavated, one on the north-west side of the development area on the street frontage of Ty-coch Street, the other on the south-west side, on the street frontage of Church Street (Fig. 4). The latter uncovered modern features but no remains or artefacts of archaeological interest. The trench against Ty-coch Street uncovered building foundations and a floor which the excavators argued could belong to a building depicted on the 1842 Tithe Map, and perhaps originating in the second half of the 18th century as there was earlier 18th-century pottery sealed beneath the stone flooring. The correlation with the structure of the Tithe Map is not precise, but might be explained by the small scale of that map and a lack of precision on the part of the mapmaker. There can be little doubt that the later 19th-century Ordnance Survey maps do not depict a building in this position.

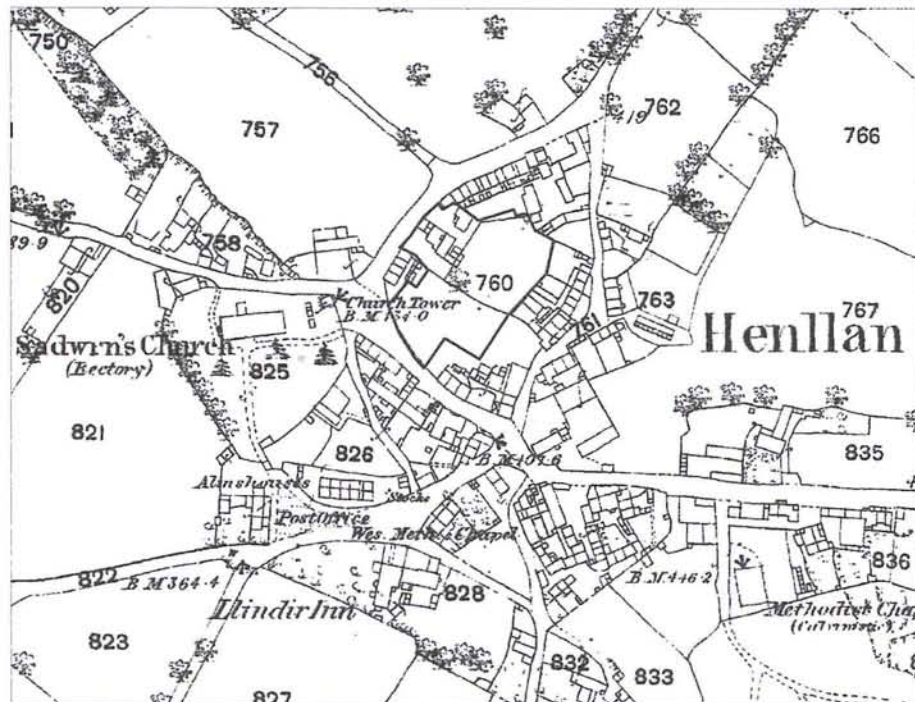


Fig. 3 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition, 1899

- 3.13 The evaluation revealed that there was no obvious evidence for medieval activity where the trenches were excavated, and that secondly the limestone bedrock generally lay not far below the surface of the ground.

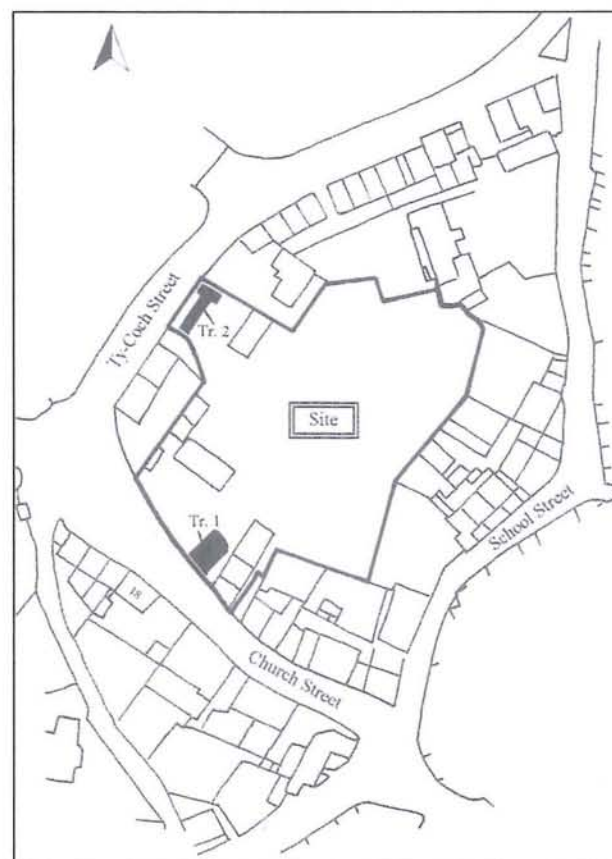


Fig. 4 Location of 1999 evaluation trenches (after Dodd & Walker 1999, Fig. 1)

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The desk-based study has produced evidence which indicates that the origins of Henllan are likely to date from the medieval period, and that there was a chapel here from at least 1291. The origins of the village itself, however, are rather more uncertain and there is no clear evidence for a settlement until the 17th century.
- 4.2 Within the area of the proposed development there is no cartographic evidence available before the early 19th century, when maps reveal that there was little in the way of dwellings or other buildings. However, this cannot be taken as an indication that there were no dwellings in this area in the preceding centuries.
- 4.3 An archaeological evaluation of the same development plot was undertaken in 1999, comprising two trenches along the street frontages. This revealed the remains of a presumed 18th-century building along Church Street, although the excavations did not extend beneath the flooring of the building and it is therefore unknown whether there was any earlier activity.
- 4.4 The curatorial brief for the present evaluation originally included four trial trenches, to be excavated at the pre-planning stage. Problems over access subsequently led to the excavations being deferred, presumably to be undertaken as a condition of consent. The evaluation undertaken in 1999 has already evaluated part the streetfrontage, although there has been no investigation of the interior of the plot.

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