
PARCIAU HOME FARM, MARIANGLAS YNYS MÔN



Archaeological Watching Brief

GAT Project No. 2195
Report No. 964
July 2011

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Prepared for
Gwyn Jones

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By

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PARCIAU HOME FARM, MARIANGLAS YNYS MÔN

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Parciau Home Farm, Marianglas, Ynys Môn: Archaeological Watching Brief (G2195)

Summary

An archaeological watching brief has been conducted during groundworks in advance of the construction of a new livestock building at Parciau Home Farm, Marianglas. The groundworks plot was located within an area of fairly intensive archaeological activity, of a predominantly Roman date, thus requiring an intensive level of watching brief. However despite being a fairly large plot, a significant proportion was disturbed by the foundations of a previous structure, and by various service trenches and access tracks. No archaeology was identified within the remaining undisturbed areas of the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) was commissioned by *Gwyn Jones* to complete an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a new livestock building. The groundworks area was located on a plot to the immediate south of a track that leads to Parciau Home Farm, Marianglas, Ynys Môn (centred on NGR **SH 49348449**). The plot included an existing livestock building and open areas to the immediate north-west and south-west; the development plot measured c. 53.0m x 25.0m (1325m²).

The groundworks included:

- The demolition of an existing L-shaped livestock building
- The leveling of a strip of land to the north-west of the original structure
- Topsoil strip of an area to the south-west of the original structure
- The excavation of a foundation for a replacement track running north-east/south-west

1.1 Mitigation/Standards

A mitigation brief was not prepared for this work by **Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Services** (GAPS), but GAPS recommended an intensive archaeological watching brief during groundworks (GAPS ref.: D1465).

Reference was also made to the guidelines specified in Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (Institute for Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 2001 and 2008).

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

According to information held within the regional Historic Environment Record (Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Craig Beuno, Ffordd y Garth, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2RT), archaeological activity within the immediate area includes:

- Scheduled Ancient Monument **AN041** - Parciau Hillfort; located c.210.0m to the northeast of the development area (NGR **SH49408460**);

- PRN **1,902** – Holloway/Platforms/Enclosures; located c.150.0m to the west of the development area (NGR **SH49208450**). Provenance of these features is unknown, but information within the regional Historic Environment Record, suggests the Holloway is linked to Parciau Hillfort; the platforms and enclosures are postulated either side of the trackway.

A walkover survey within the development area, undertaken prior to the commencement of work by the GAT site agent, revealed no potential upstanding features, or undulating topography indicative of underlying archaeological activity.

3 METHODOLOGY

The watching brief was completed between the 7th and 8th of June 2011. The watching brief monitored excavation by a tracked mechanical excavator using a wide toothless ditching bucket. Spoil was removed from the site using a tractor and trailer.

The bulk of the site was heavily disturbed by the foundations of the previous structure; these foundations covered an area of some 40.0m x 15.0m and were located in the north-east corner of the site. As the ground here had already been levelled to an appropriate depth, prior to the previous phase of construction, no further excavation here was required.

The main area of excavation therefore cut into the hillside along the north-western side of the plot. This was required in order to continue the level base for the construction of the new structure. This excavation involved the removal of a wedge shaped strip of land some 5.0m in width and 53m in length. At its deepest point these excavations reached a depth of 0.6m. The area to the south-west of the original structure, was topsoil stripped only, in order to create an area of hard standing outside the new building.

A fairly substantial gravel/hardcore track, leading up to Parciau Home Farm from the south-west, lay partially within the development plot. This track was some 3m wide and had a foundation cut some 0.4m in depth. A second track of similar construction led off this main track way and ran south-east across the south western half of the development plot to a yard below.

In order to replace the portion of north-east/south-west running track removed during the excavation of the development plot, a foundation trench for a replacement track was excavated immediately to the north-west. This foundation trench was 17m in length and was a maximum of 6m wide. The average depth was 0.3m

A photographic record was maintained using a digital SLR camera (Nikon D40) set to maximum resolution.

The photographic and written archive is held by GAT under project number (**G2195**)

4 TOPOGRAPHY

The groundworks area was situated on a moderate north-south slope which continued down to the base an elevated 'step' of limestone rock. These limestone 'steps' characterise this area, and on a wider scale provide plenty of potential for shelter and defence.

5 RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

As the bulk of the site was not stripped to a depth lower than the point disturbed by the foundations of the previous structure, we can make few assumptions about this area. It remains unknown whether or not any archaeological activity survives below this level, however it seems unlikely, given the level of the natural elsewhere on the site.

The areas included within the new building plot to the immediate north-west and south-west of the previous structure, although not disturbed by foundations did contain several track ways and service trenches. Two north-east/south-west running water pipes some 0.5m apart were observed starting in the northern corner of the plot and running along its entire length. The earlier of the two was located close to the surface and is likely to date to the 1930s (Gwyn Jones *pers comm.*), this pipe is no longer in use, but remains in situ. The later pipe was made of plastic and was buried some 0.6m below the surface. This pipe remains in use, and provides the main water supply to Parciau Home Farm.

Excavation revealed a topsoil of pale, orange-brown fine sand-silt containing occasional sub-rounded cobbles. This deposit was approximately 0.2m in depth and overlay a very similar colluvial deposit of a slightly darker shade, with a maximum proven depth of 0.4m. The interface between these two deposits was very diffuse. Below this an undulating bedrock was observed rising close to the surface in places. The nature of this second deposit was unclear, it resembled natural, but it is possible that it was a post glacial colluvial deposit which may overlie archaeology.

The only feature observed was a small sub-rounded tree-bowl which contained a small quantity of charcoal, indicating it may have been burnt. A section cut across the feature revealed it to be very shallow in depth. Such features are very common in such agricultural areas. This was not deemed significant enough for further investigation.

6 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological watching brief carried out during groundworks associated with the construction of a new livestock building at Parciau Home Farm did not disturb any identifiable archaeological deposits. The groundworks were located in relative proximity to two known sites, Parciau Hillfort (Scheduled Ancient Monument **AN041**) and a group of possible sites associated with the hillfort, including a holloway, platforms and enclosures (PRN **1,902**). However no positive evidence that these sites extended into this area was found.

This lack of archaeological evidence may be attributed to several factors. Firstly, although the overall development plot was large, the areas of undisturbed deposits under investigation were relatively small. Secondly the deposits revealed, in places, fairly thick layers of probable colluvial material, overlying undulating bedrock. There is still potential that this colluvial material could be obscuring archaeology at a greater depth. The close proximity of the bedrock to the surface, observed in other parts may have inhibited building in certain areas, or may have hindered the survival of what would have been out of necessity fairly ephemeral features.

Based on the results of this watching brief we may conclude that due to the thick colluvial nature of some deposits that appear to characterise this area, the potential for identifying surface features in the wider area is limited. We may infer that there is still considerable potential for the survival of archaeology within the wider area, however none was identified within the confines of these works.

7 SOURCES CONSULTED

Institute for Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 2001 and 2008 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief*

Historic Environments Record, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Craig Beuno, Ffordd y Garth, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2RT.

Ordnance Survey 10k Map of 1977, SH48SE

First edition 25 inch Map 1889 Anglesey sheet VII.12, VIII.9, VII.16, VIII.13.

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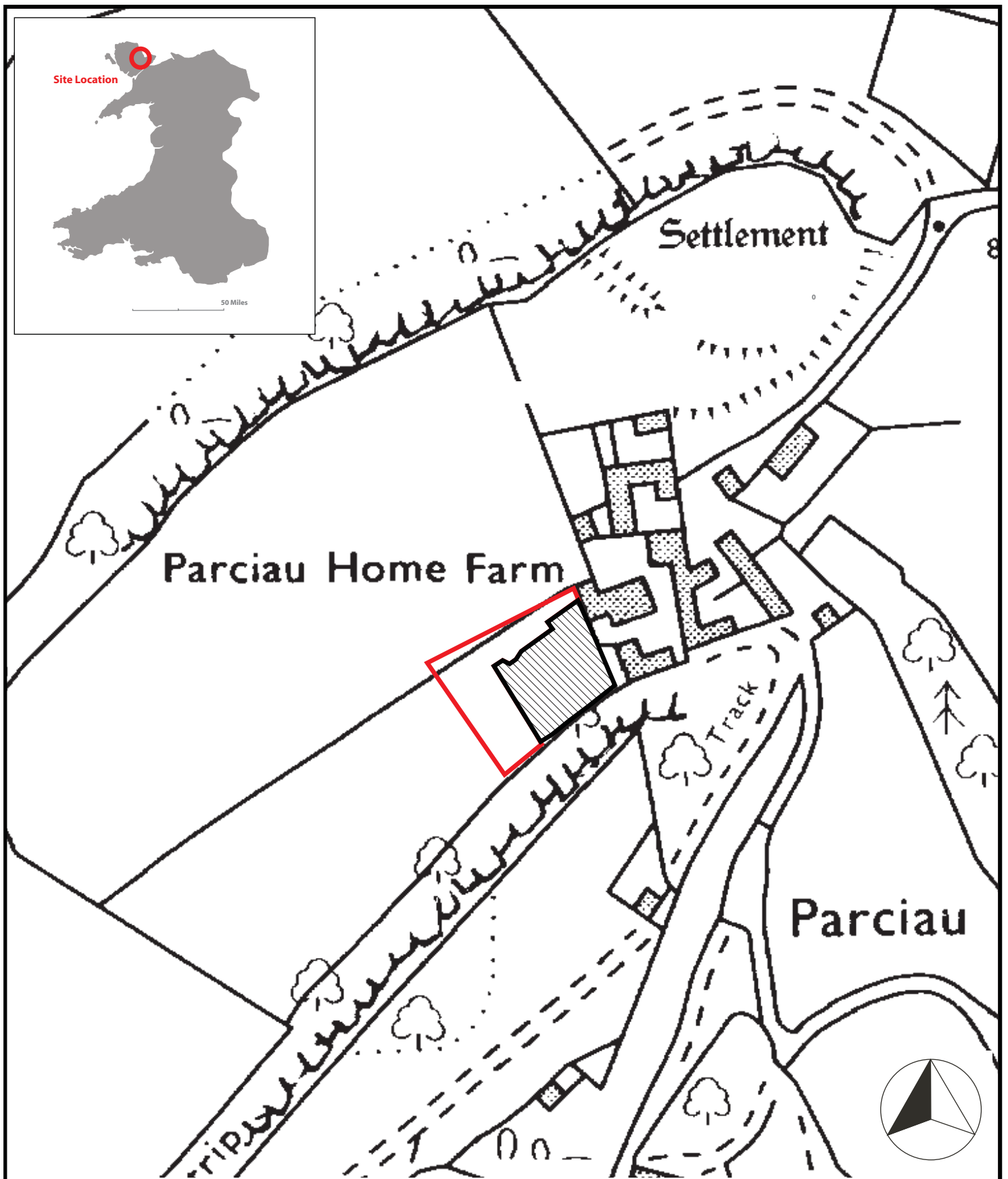


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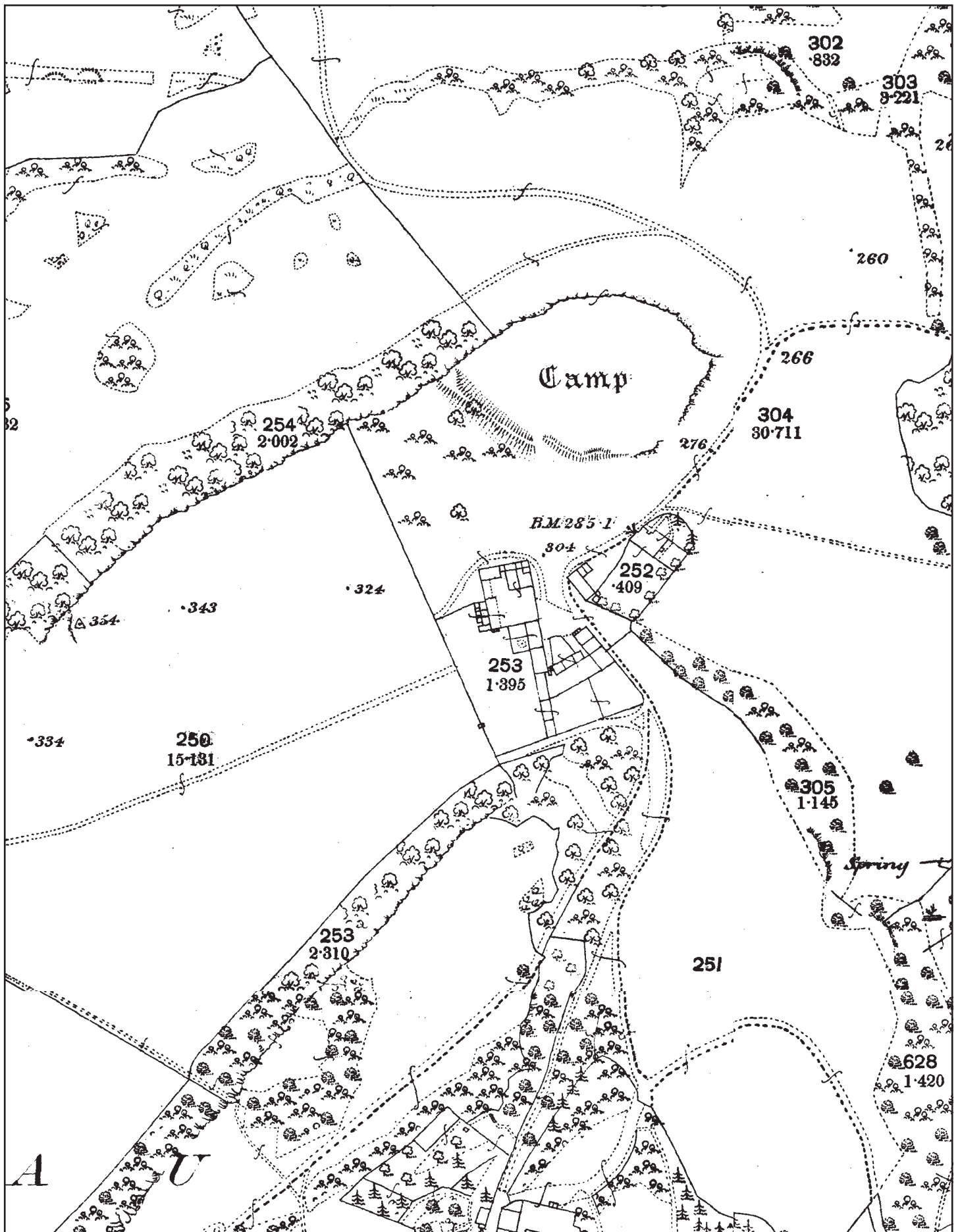


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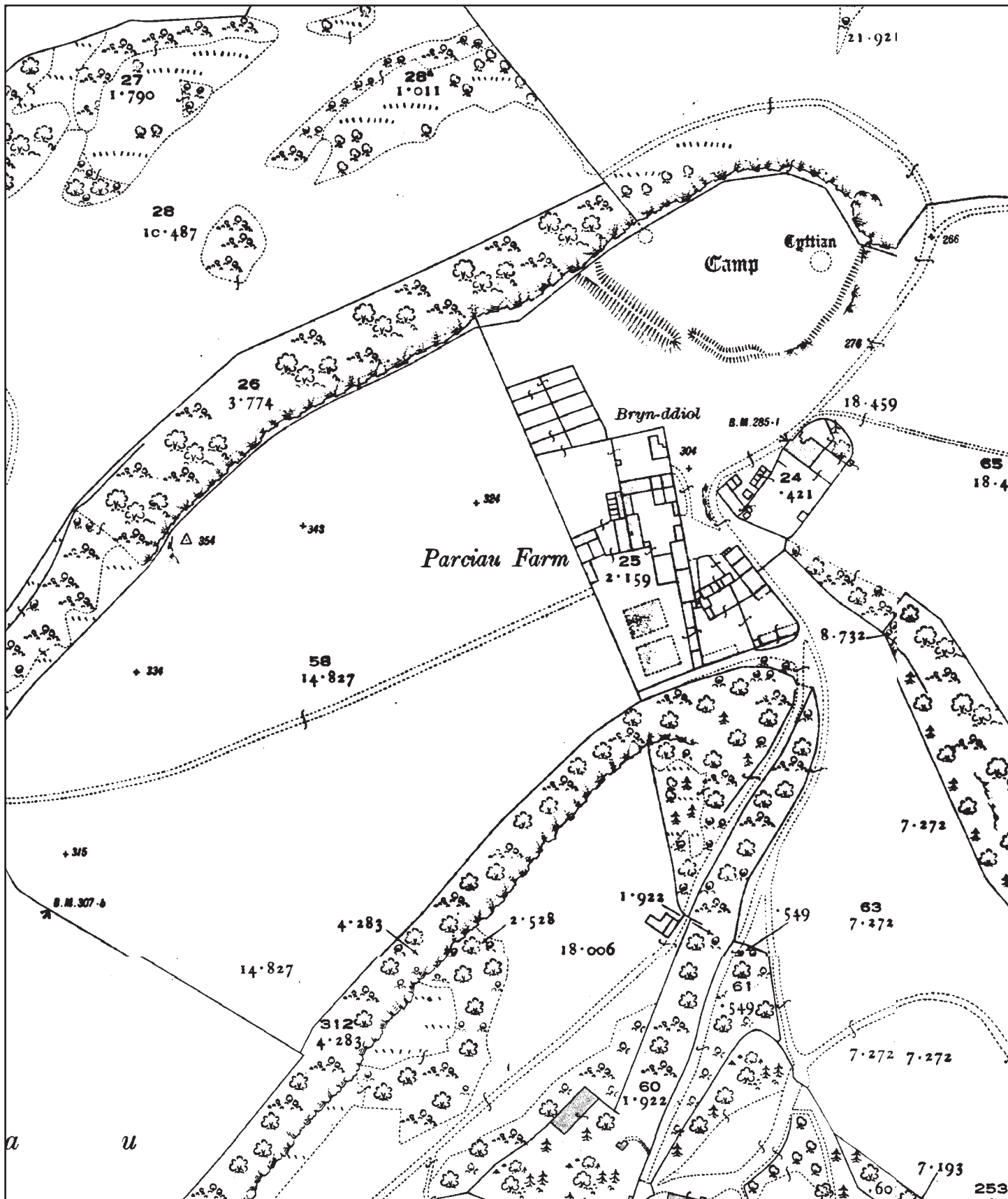


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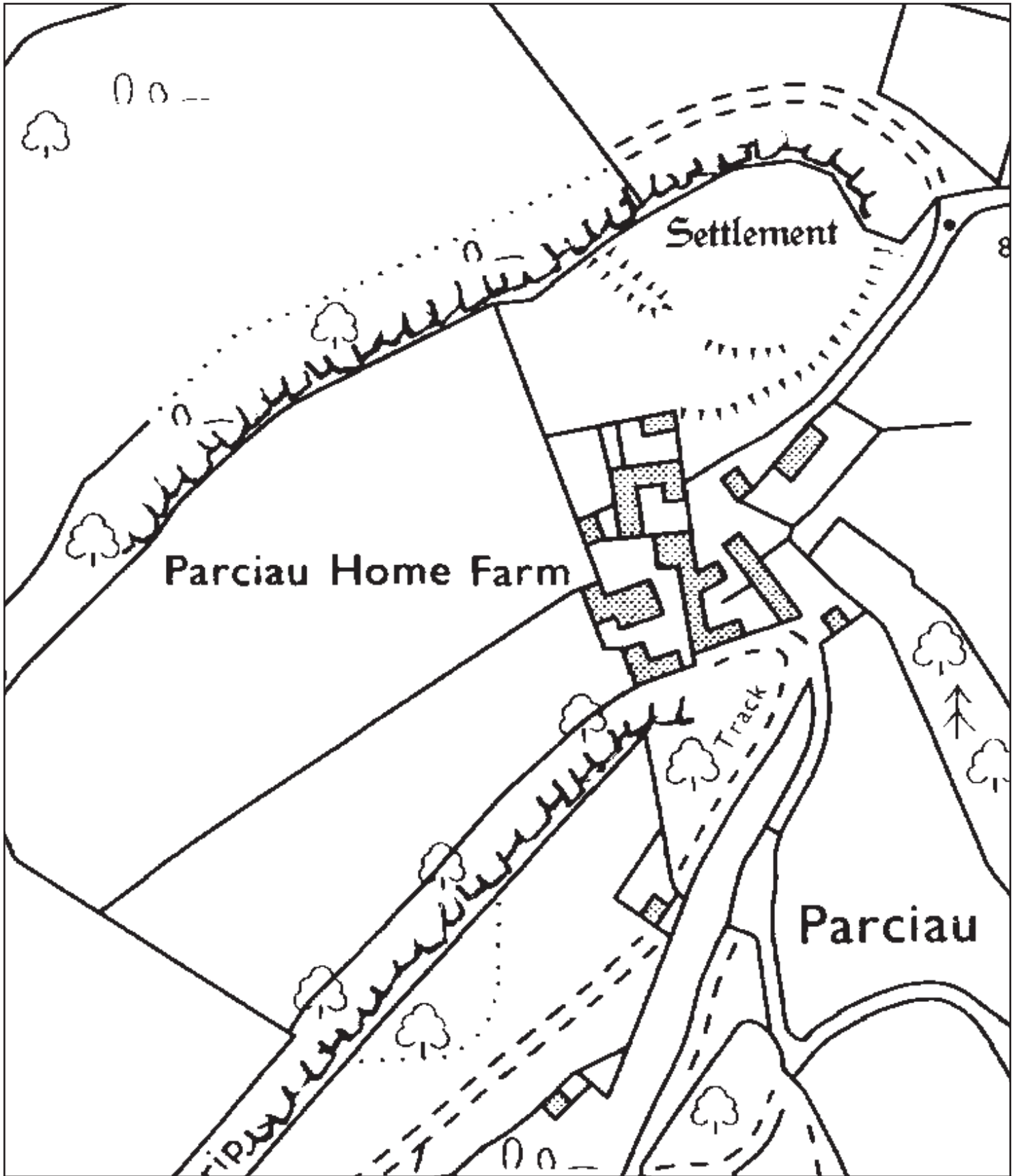


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Plate 9: Post-excavation shot of the foundation trench for the replacement track (view from the south-west).



Plate 10: Post-excavation shot of the foundation trench for the replacement track (view from the north-east).



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