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## Tynllan, Llansilin Oswestry

Archaeological Watching Brief



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Report No. 601

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## Tynllan, Llansilin, Oswestry

### Archaeological Watching Brief

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# Non Technical Summary

*This report results from work undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd (CAP) for Mr Ian Hill. A watching brief was carried out during ground levelling and excavation of foundation trenches by a mechanical excavator for the construction of two residential dwellings at Tynllan, Llansilin, Oswestry. The watching brief was required by the Clwyd – Powys Archaeological Trust as part of the planning process, because of the proximity of the area to the historic core of the medieval settlement. The results of the watching brief have shown no significant finds or features in the excavated area. However, two small rubbish pits of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were uncovered.*

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In December 2009 and January 2010 Cambrian Archaeological Projects (CAP) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land at Tynllan, Llansilin, Oswestry. This was in respect of a planning application for development (Planning ref: P2008/1320)

1.1.2 The site is located at NGR SJ 2083 2826 (Fig 1).

1.1.3 The work carried out consisted of levelling the ground within the development area prior to the construction of two residential dwellings and the excavation of foundation trenches for those dwellings, landscaping and parking.

1.1.4 All groundworks were excavated by a mechanical excavator under the archaeological supervision of CAP staff.

### 1.2 Topography & Geology

1.2.1 The rural village of Llansilin (Llan-Silin) is situated about six miles west of Oswestry along the B4580. The topography of the area is composed of rolling hills, with Gyrn Moelfre laying north-west of the village, rising up to 523 metres. The river Gynllaith runs north to south, on the east side of the village.

1.2.2 The natural soils of the assessment area are mainly composed of Cegin, drift from Palaeozoic slaty mudstone and siltstone. These are described as slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine silty and clayey soils (Soil Survey of England & Wales, 1983). The underlying solid geology in the area is mainly composed of the Llandeilo and Llanvirn & Arenig sedimentary formation of the Ordovician era (British Geological Survey, 1979).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 Llansilin is mentioned in "A Topographical Dictionary of Wales" by Samuel Lewis, (Lewis 1849), who wrote the following: LLANSILIN (LLAN-SILIN), a parish, in the union of Oswestry, principally in the Cynlleth division of the hundred of Chirk, county of Denbigh, North Wales; extending also into the English county of Salop, in which it comprises the township of Sychdin, or Soughton; and containing 2083 inhabitants, of whom 1832 are in the county of Denbigh, which contains the village, 6 miles (W. S. W.) from Oswestry. This parish is from seven to eight miles in length, and from four to five in breadth, and is finely situated on the river Cynlleth: the lands are inclosed and in a high state of cultivation; the soil is fertile and productive. The surrounding scenery is richly varied, and the views over the adjacent country abound with variety.
- 1.3.2 Glâsgoed, an ancient seat of the family of Kyffin, afterwards conveyed by marriage to Sir William Williams, Speaker of the House of Commons, and now the property of his descendant, Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, Bart., is an interesting feature in the scenery of the place. Plâs Newydd, formerly the seat of a branch of the Myddeltons of Chirk Castle; and Pen-y-Bont, at one period the property of the family of Maurice, are also within the parish. Here was likewise a residence of Owain Glyndwr's, called Sycharth, which was seated on an eminence, and surrounded by a park, containing fish-ponds, deer, &c., the beauties of which are described by his bard, Iolo Gôch, in a poem still extant. It was occupied by this chief before his removal to Glyn-Dyvrwy, or the Valley of the Dee, between Llangollen and Corwen, where Sycharth has commonly, but erroneously, been supposed to have stood. The court of the manor of Cynlleth Owain was kept in the parlour of the mansion, until towards the close of the last century: at present there are scarcely any remains of the building. Above the house are the ruins of a keep, or castellet, surrounded with a high mound and deep ditch. The manufacture of flannel is carried on to a small extent: on the river Cynlleth is a fulling-mill, which prepares the flannel for the Montgomeryshire markets; and another small concern is chiefly employed in spinning yarn for the manufacturers at Oswestry. Fairs, chiefly for the sale of live stock, are annually held in the village on April 5th, July 10th, and September 21st. The living is a vicarage, rated in the king's books at £8; present net income, £307, with a house; patron, the Bishop of St. Asaph. The tithes of the Welsh portion of the parish, consisting of several townships, have been commuted for £655, of which a sum of £431. 2. 2. is payable to the Dean and Chapter of St. Asaph, with a glebe attached of nearly 5½ acres; £219 to the vicar, who has also two small glebes; and £5 to the parish-clerk. The church, dedicated to St. Giles, is a spacious and handsome structure, in the later style of English architecture, with a very neat tower, erected in 1831. At Rhydycroesan, on the confines of the parish, is a second church, consecrated in August 1838, and containing 300 sittings, of which 200 are free: the living is a perpetual curacy, in the Bishop's gift; income, £100. There are places of worship for dissenters; a day school in connexion with the Church, having an endowment of £4 per annum; another school belonging to no particular religious body; and five Sunday schools, one of which is conducted on Church principles.

## 2 **Aims and Objectives**

### 2.1 **Watching Brief**

- 2.1.1 The watching brief was designed to record the archaeological resource during the undertaking of groundworks within the area (Fig 2).

## 3 **Watching Brief Methodology**

### 3.1 **Scope of Fieldwork**

- 3.1.1 The work undertaken involved the excavation of foundation trenches and landscaping of the surrounding area by mechanical excavator.
- 3.1.2 Groundworks were undertaken using a mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision.
- 3.1.3 Site Supervisor Irma Bernardus undertook the watching brief. All groundworks were photographed using high resolution digital photography.
- 3.1.4 All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IFA's *Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* and current Health and Safety legislation.

### 3.2 **Finds**

- 3.2.1 An assemblage of early 20<sup>th</sup> century finds consisting of pottery sherds, glass bottles and iron objects were located during the watching brief, but not retained.

### 3.3 **Palaeo-environmental evidence**

- 3.3.1 No deposits suited to environmental sampling were located during the watching brief.

## 4 **Watching Brief Results**

### 4.1 **Soils and ground conditions**

- 4.1.1 The site and weather conditions were cold and overcast during the watching brief in December. During the work in January the weather conditions were cold, but sunny. The ground was frozen and covered in ice and snow.

### 4.2 **Distribution of deposits**

- 4.2.1 The distribution of deposits was mainly uniform within the assessment area, although the thickness of the topsoil and subsoil did vary slightly in places due to the slope of the ground. After removal of the topsoil, measuring approximately 0.4 m in thickness, a silty and clayey subsoil was exposed, measuring approximately 0.5 m in thickness. This layer was situated on top of the natural geology. The maximum depth of excavation was 1.5 metres (Plate 1).

### **4.3 Description**

- 4.3.1 Owing to the gradient of the slope on which the site was located, levelling of part of the development area had to be undertaken prior to the excavation of the foundation trenches of both dwellings. The area measured approximately 600 m<sup>2</sup>. Elsewhere, the exposed deposits mainly consisted of natural geology (Plates 2 & 3).
- 4.3.2 During the removal of the topsoil two small rubbish pits were located west of the development site. They contained small glass bottles and a few iron objects, dating from around AD 1930. These were possibly associated with a surgery that was situated in the main house adjacent to the development area (plate 4).
- 4.3.3 Following the consultation with CPAT, the watching brief was cancelled prior to the excavation of the foundation trenches. This was because the natural subsoil had already been exposed in these areas.

## **5 Discussion and Interpretation**

### **5.1 Reliability of field investigation**

- 5.1.1 The works were unhampered by modern activity.

### **5.2 Overall interpretation**

- 5.2.1 The watching brief has established that, at least in the area of this development, no archaeological remains were present.

## **6 Acknowledgements**

- 6.1.1 Thanks are to Ian Hill for his on site help and Mark Walters of Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust for his advice.

## 7 Bibliography and references

Lewis, S 1849, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*, 'Llansilin – Llanvabon', pp. 98-111. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=47857>  
Date accessed: 13/01/2010

British Geological Survey. 1979, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Solid Geology Map, UK South Sheet

Soil Survey of England & Wales, 1983



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**APPENDIX I:**  
Figures & Plates

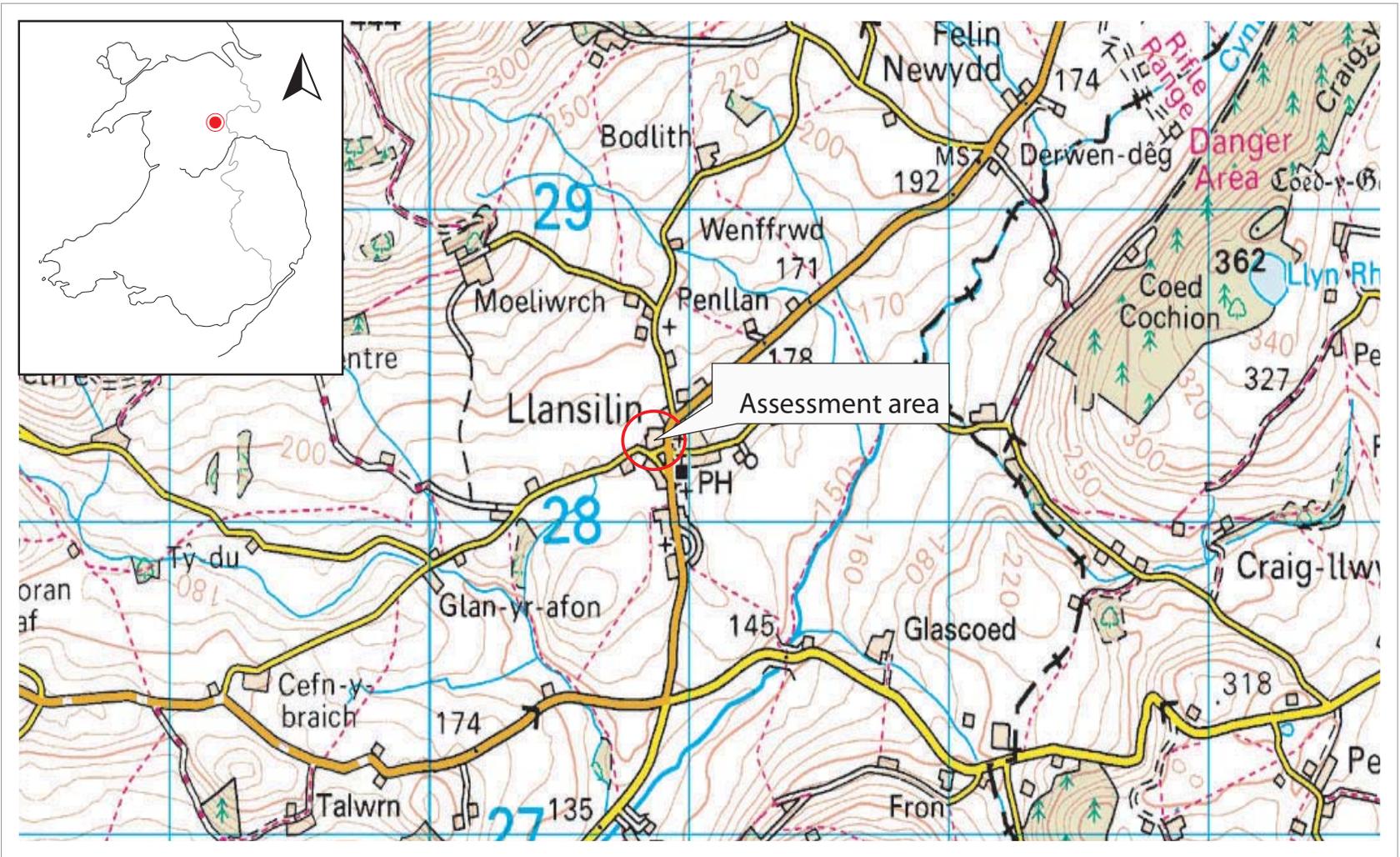


Fig 1: Map showing general location of assessment area

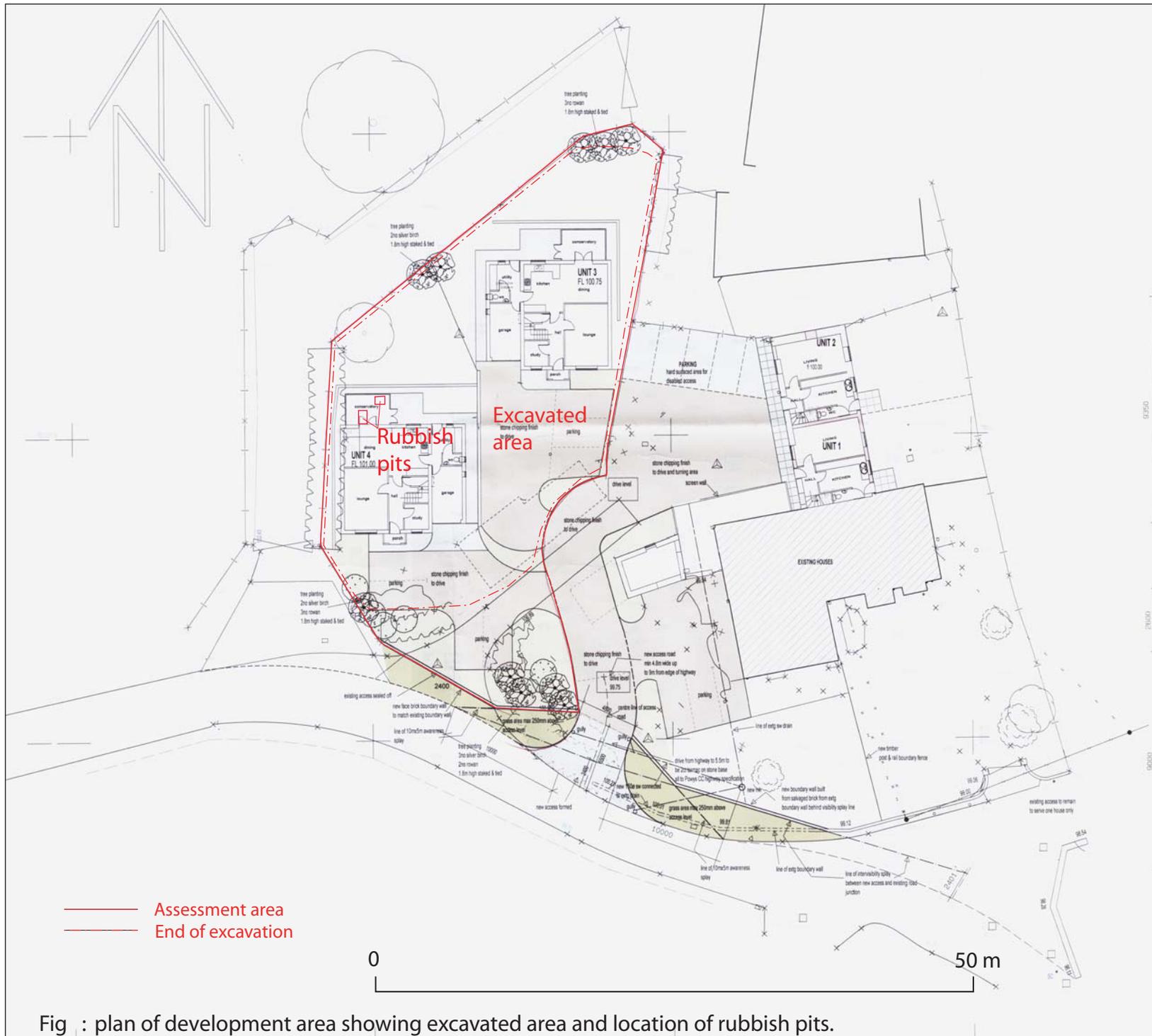


Fig : plan of development area showing excavated area and location of rubbish pits.



Plate 1: Photo showing depth of ground excavations, looking west. Scale 1 x 1m.



Plate 2: General view of levelled development area, looking north. Scale 1 x 1m.



Plate 3: General view of levelled development area, looking east. Scale 1 x 1 m.



Plate 4: Photo of rubbish pit. Scale 1 x 1 m. Inset: assemblage of bottles collected from the rubbish pits. Scale 0.2 m.



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**APPENDIX II:**  
Archive Cover Sheet

## ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Site Name: **Tynllan, Llansilin, Oswestry**

Site Code: **TL/09/WB**

PRN: **N/A**

NPRN : **N/A**

SAM: **N/A**

Other Ref No: **CAP project No 983**

NGR: **SJ 2083 2826**

Site Type: **Rural**

Project Type: **Archaeological Watching Brief**

Project Officer: **Chris E. Smith**

Project Dates: **December 2009 & January 2010**

CAP report number: **Report 601**

Categories Present: **N/A**

Location of Original Archive: **N/A**

Location of duplicate Archives: **N/A**

Number of Finds Boxes: **N/A**

Location of Finds: **N/A**

Museum Reference: **Not assigned**

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Restrictions to access: **None**



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