

Archaeology Wales

Gelligaer and Merthyr Common

Heritage Impact Assessment



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Report No. 1822

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Heritage Impact Assessment

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August 2019

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Non-technical Summary

Archaeology Wales were commissioned to carry out a Heritage Impact Assessment in relation to a proposal to create anti-vehicular installations across a number of sites on Gelligaer and Merthyr Common to combat fly-tipping and unauthorised off-roading.

The proposed development area currently comprises of an open and isolated common land. The assessment focuses on four Scheduled Monuments (SMs) located along the course of the proposed development (GM496, GM 556, GM260 & GM261).

Proposed works at Deserted Iron Mining Village, Ffos-y-Fran (GM496) comprises a bank and ditch system to the south and southeast of the SM. There will be no direct impact upon the SM, and minimal detrimental impacts on the value of the site, there is unlikely to be a significant change to the SM.

Proposed works at Roman Road (GM556) comprises retaining existing stone block deterrents within and immediately adjacent to the SM. This will be extended to the east and west, but either a ditch and bank system, or an extension of the stone block system, is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the values of the site, whilst it is likely to have a beneficial effect of reducing vehicle access and erosion.

Proposed works at Dyke 315m E of Tyla-Glas (GM260) comprises craning in stone blocks to sit on the surface within the SM, and using bank and ditch system along the roadside to the northeast and south. There will be no direct impact on the SM, although some potential minimal detrimental impacts on the values of the site. The work is likely to have a beneficial impact of reducing vehicle access and erosion.

Proposed works at Dyke 387m E of Clawdd Trawscae Farm (GM261) comprises retaining an existing roadside bank within and immediately adjacent to the SM, and extending a bank and ditch system to the northeast and south. There will be no direct impact on the SM, although some potential minimal detrimental impacts on the values of the site. The work is likely to have a beneficial impact of reducing vehicle access and erosion.

Crynodeb Annechnegol

Comisiynwyd Archaeology Cymru i gynnal Asesiad Effaith Etifeddiaeth mewn perthynas â chynnig i greu rhwystrau atal cerbydau ar draws nifer o safleoedd ar Dir Comin Gelligaer a Merthyr i fynd i'r afael â thipio anghyfreithlon a gyrru oddi ar y ffordd anawdurdodedig.

Ar hyn o bryd, mae'r ardal ddatblygu arfaethedig yn cynnwys tir comin agored ac ynysig. Mae'r asesiad yn canolbwyntio ar bedwar o Henebion Cofrestredig sydd wedi'u lleoli ar hyd llwybr y datblygiad arfaethedig (GM496, GM 556, GM260 & GM261).

Mae'r gwaith arfaethedig ym Mhentref Mwynglawdd Haearn Diffaith, Ffos-y-Fran (GM496) yn cynnwys system llethr a ffos i'r de a'r de-ddwyrain o'r Heneb Gofrestredig. Ni fydd effaith uniongyrchol ar yr heneb, a bydd yr effeithiau niweidiol lleiaf ar werth y safle, ac mae'n annhebygol y bydd newid sylweddol i'r heneb.

Mae'r gwaith arfaethedig yn y Ffordd Rufeinig (GM556) yn cynnwys cadw'r rhwystrau bloc carreg sy'n bodoli o fewn yr heneb gofrestredig ac yn union gyferbyn â hi. Bydd hyn yn cael ei estyn i'r dwyrain a'r gorllewin, ond mae'n annhebygol y bydd naill ai system ffos a llethr, neu estyniad o'r system bloc carreg, yn cael effaith niweidiol ar werth y safle, tra bydd yn debygol o gael effaith fuddiol ar leihau mynediad i gerbydau ac erydu.

Mae'r gwaith arfaethedig yng ngorglawdd 315m i'r dwyrain o Tyla-Glas (GM260) yn cynnwys gosod blociau carreg ar yr arwyneb o fewn yr heneb, a defnyddio system llethr a ffos ar hyd ochr y ffordd i'r gogledd-ddwyrain a'r de. Ni fydd effaith uniongyrchol ar yr heneb, er bod posibilrwydd o'r effeithiau niweidiol lleiaf bosibl ar werth y safle. Mae'n debygol y bydd y gwaith yn cael yr effaith fuddiol o leihau mynediad cerbydau ac erydu.

Mae'r gwaith arfaethedig yng ngorglawdd 387m i'r dwyrain o Fferm Clawdd Trawscae (GM261) yn cynnwys cadw llethr ar ochr y ffordd sy'n bodoli eisoes o fewn yr heneb ac yn union gyferbyn â hi, ac estyn system llethr a ffos i'r gogledd-ddwyrain a'r de. Ni fydd effaith uniongyrchol ar yr heneb gofrestredig, er bod posibilrwydd o'r effeithiau niweidiol lleiaf bosibl ar werth y safle. Mae'n debygol y bydd y gwaith yn cael yr effaith fuddiol o leihau mynediad cerbydau ac erydu.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2019 Archaeology Wales (AW) was commissioned to carry out a Heritage Impact Assessment. This assessment has been undertaken in relation to proposed work by the Gelligaer & Merthyr Commoners Association for habitat improvement and vehicle prevention measures on Gelligaer and Merthyr Common. (Plate 1 & 2; Figures 1-4; AW Project Number 2745). This report focuses on the construction of anti-vehicular installations to combat fly-tipping and unauthorised off-roading due to the potential for this to impact on a number of Scheduled Monuments (SMs) across the Common.
- 1.2 The anti-vehicular installations consist of two different methods; a ditch and bank system and the use of stone “blocks”:
 - A ditch and bank system is proposed where the development will not enter into a scheduled area. The system will approximately be 1.5m in width, including a 0.3m deep ditch backed by a 0.4m high bank.
 - The stone blocks will be approximately 1 tonne in weight, with dimensions up to 1m wide and long, and in the region of 0.5m high. These will be used within the designated area of a SM (Plate 3 & 4).
- 1.3 A large number of SMs lie across the Common, these have been taken into consideration within the assessment, but the report focusses on four specific SMs where the proposed works lie either adjacent to or within the Scheduled Areas. A ditch and bank system will be adopted around and approaching all four of the SMs discussed in this report but will not enter the Scheduled Areas. Within the Scheduled Areas a stone block system will be adopted.
- 1.4 The four specific SMs include the Deserted Iron Mining Village, Ffos-y-Fran (GM496), the Gelligaer Common Roman Road (GM556), the Dyke 315m E of Tyla-Glas (GM260) and the Dyke 387m E of Clawdd Trawscae Farm (GM261). The specific work proposals for each site are discussed in Section 5.
- 1.5 This assessment has been prepared in support of a Section 38 application for work, as well as Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) for work on a SM. This assessment has been prepared in accordance with the guidance laid out within *Managing Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales*, produced by Cadw in May 2017.

2 Site Description

- 2.1 The proposed development site(s) comprise of an area of high upland moor. The ridgetop occupied by the Common rises gently from about 250m above OD at Gelligaer to over 470m above OD at the summits of Pen Garnbugail and Mynydd Fochriw. Whilst on either side of the Common the slopes tumble steeply into Cwm Bargoed on the west, and into the valley of the Bargoed Rhymney on the east.
- 2.2 The geology beneath the proposed development areas vary. At the northern extent of the common, south of the A465, it is a combination of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone belonging to the Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation and South Wales Middle Coal Measures Formation. This sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 309

to 312 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period. At the southern extent of the common, east of Bedlinog and west of Deri, the geology consists of sandstone belonging to the Hughes Member. This formed approximately 308 to 310 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period (BGS, 2019).

3 Methodology

- 3.1 The primary objective of this assessment is to assess the impact of the development proposals on the historic environment, specifically the SMs. It will gather enough information to understand the significance of any heritage assets affected and assess the impact of the proposals on those assets. This will help inform future decision making, design solutions and potential mitigation strategies.
- 3.2 This report provides information of sufficient detail to allow informed planning decisions to be made which can safeguard the archaeological resource.
- 3.3 The assessment considers the following:

a) The significance of the existing sites and their setting and their relationship to adjacent and non-designated heritage assets, through assessment of various readily available primary sources:

1. Assessment of all available reports and archives including unpublished and unprocessed material affecting the site and its setting.
2. Assessment of all relevant extant photographic evidence, including available historic photos.
3. Map regression analysis using all relevant cartographic sources e.g. all editions of the Ordnance Survey County Series, tithe and early estate maps (as available).
4. Place name evidence.
5. Historic documents (e.g. Charters, registers, estate papers).

b) The significance of the assets in their local, regional and national context and in light of the findings of the assessment.

c) The potential impact of any proposed development on existing historical assets and their setting.

This work conforms to the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*, as produced by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014) and follows the guidance laid out in *Managing Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales* (Cadw 2017).

4 Understanding Significance: Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1 Previous Archaeological Studies

- 4.1.1 There are three known previous archaeological investigations recorded on the regional Historic Environment Record for the Scheduled Monuments. The details are listed below.
- 4.1.2 PRN 02263.0m – Dyke (GM260) was featured in a report by GGAT about cross ridge dykes in south-east Wales where a number of dykes were surveyed and excavated for the report. At this dyke six boreholes were examined. A wide gap was noted going through the centre of the earthwork, it is believed that this has been caused by agricultural vehicles and motorcycles.
- 4.1.3 PRN 02264.0m – Dyke (GM261) was also featured in the above report. Seven boreholes were examined. Damage was noted at this monument, and it is believed that this has occurred due to horse riding and motorcycles riding over it.
- 4.1.4 PRN 00066m – An archaeological assessment was carried out at the Deserted Iron Mining Village, Ffos-y-Fran (GM496) by GGAT as part of the proposed open cast mining at Helid Colliery.

4.2 The Historic Landscape

- 4.2.1 The four Scheduled Monuments that this report considers all lie within Registered Historic Landscapes. The deserted iron mining village of Ffos-y-Fran (GM496) is located within the registered landscape of Merthyr Tydfil HLW (MGL) 2. These landscapes are subdivided into specific Historic Landscape Character Areas (HLCAs), GM496 lies within HLCA 039 Ffos-y-Fran. This area is focussed on remains of 19th century industrial activity, of which GM496 forms an important component.
- 4.2.2 The Gelligaer Common Roman Road (GM556), the Dyke 315m E of Tyla-Glas (GM260), and the Dyke 387m E of Clawdd Trawscae Farm (GM261) are located within the registered landscape of Gelligaer Common HLW (MGL) 4. GM556 lies within HLCA 006 Pen Garnbugail/ Mynydd Fochriw Open Common, an upland landscape with a number of Prehistoric monuments, and with the Roman road forming a key landscape feature. GM260 and GM261 both lie within HLCA 005 Central Open Common, a very similar upland landscape but distinguished by the presence of these cross dykes.

4.3 Scheduled Monuments

- 4.3.1 Scheduled Monuments are sites considered to be of national importance and have statutory protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. There are a number of Scheduled Monuments throughout the Gelligaer and Merthyr common area from a wide date range between the Prehistoric and post Medieval periods. However, four Scheduled Monuments have been highlighted as being of specific importance to this assessment (Table 1). These are described below

from the Scheduled Monument Reports (Cof Cymru):

4.3.2 *Deserted Iron Mining Village, Ffos-y-Fran (GM496)*

The monument consists of the remains of a deserted iron mining village and adjacent mining earthworks, probably dating to the 18th or 19th century (Plate 5, 6 & 7). The village was recorded in about 1879 as abandoned. It probably grew up around the early 19th century as a squatter settlement on the common, permitted by the Lord of the Manor in order to provide labour for the isolated upland iron ore mines. As many as a hundred people may have lived in the village. The foundations of at least fifteen cottages and outlines of gardens nestle under the quarry faces and former spoil tips in irregular pattern. Several paths criss-cross the area between the cottages and the mines. The monument is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of 18th or 19th century iron working and other industrial practices. It retains significant archaeological potential, with a strong probability of the presence of associated archaeological features and deposits. The structure itself may be expected to contain archaeological information concerning chronology and building techniques. An iron forge may be part of a larger cluster of monuments and their importance can further enhanced by their group value. The scheduled area comprises the remains described and areas around them within which related evidence may be expected to survive.

4.3.3 *Gelligaer Common Roman Road (GM556)*

The monument consists of the remains of a road, dating to the Roman period (1st to 5th century AD). The Gelligaer Common road is part of the Roman road from Brecon to Cardiff (Plate 8, 9, 10). It was associated with the auxiliary fort at Gelligaer and may have a similar chronology to the fort. The road is about 900m long and comprises a central causeway, or agger, some 4.0m wide and 0.5m high. It is flanked by ditches 2.0m wide and 0.5m deep, and external counterscarp banks also 2.0m wide and 0.5m in height. The road runs north to south across the common from SO 1046 0308 in the south to SO 1015 0390 in the north. The monument is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of Roman military organisation/medieval transport systems. The monument forms an important element within the wider context of the Roman occupation/medieval settlement of Wales and the structure may contain well preserved archaeological evidence concerning chronology, layout and building techniques. The scheduled area comprises of the remains described and areas around them within which related evidence may be expected to survive.

4.3.4 *Dyke 315m E of Tyla-Glas (GM260)*

The monument consists of the remains of a dyke, a defensive boundary or earthwork, dating to the later prehistoric/medieval period (Plate 11, 12 & 13). The bank and ditch are clearly defined, running east-west across the ridge top. The ditch is 3m wide, 1.5m deep at the east end and not as deep towards the west end. The bank is 0.5-0.75m high, with a 4m wide gap in the middle and a 3m gap incorporating a trackway at its west end. The monument is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of later prehistoric/medieval defensive organisation and settlement. It retains significant archaeological potential, with a strong probability of the presence

of associated archaeological features and deposits. A dyke may be part of a larger cluster of monuments and their importance can further enhanced by their group value. The scheduled area comprises the remains described and areas around them within which related evidence may be expected to survive.

4.3.5 Dyke 387m E of Clawdd Trawscae Farm (GM261)

The monument consists of the remains of a dyke dating to the medieval period. The bank and ditch run south-west-north-east along the top of the ridge (Plates 14, 15 & 16). The ditch, on the north-west side, is small, c. 1m wide. The bank is 2m wide and 0.5m high. There is a 2m gap, made by a trackway, in the middle. The monument is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of medieval defensive organisation and settlement. It retains significant archaeological potential, with a strong probability of the presence of associated archaeological features and deposits. A dyke may be part of a larger cluster of monuments and their importance can further enhanced by their group value. The scheduled area comprises the remains described and areas around them within which related evidence may be expected to survive

Table 1: Scheduled Monuments

Reference Number	Name	Period	Site Type	NGR
GM496	Deserted Iron Mining Village, Ffos-y-Fran	Post-Medieval	Industrial Monument	SO07132 05639
GM556	Gelligaer Common Roman Road	Roman	Road	SO10403 03318
GM260	Dyke 315m E of Tyla-Glas	Prehistoric	Ditch	SO11478 01162
GM261	Dyke 387m E of Clawdd Trawscae Farm	Early Medieval	Dyke	SO11773 00306

4.4 Listed Buildings

4.4.1 No listed buildings lie within the area that may affected by the proposed development area.

4.5 Known Archaeological Remains and Historical Development

4.5.1 Prehistoric

There is significant prehistoric activity within the Merthyr Common and Gelligaer Common area. The prehistoric activity is well represented by Bronze Age burial and ritual sites. At the northern extent of the Common there are the remains of a round barrow (GM2424m), but perhaps the best examples of prehistoric activity comes from the southern and western extent of Gelligaer and Merthyr Common. Laid out along the ridge later surmounted by the Roman road (GM556) are eleven burial cairns associated with the Bronze Age. These cairns are also scheduled (GM220). On the uplands east of Pentrebach there is another SM; this relates to six burial cairns, again, associated with the Bronze Age (GM222). There are also hut sites and settlements sites across Gelligaer and Merthyr Common connected with the Iron Age. Dyke 315m E of Tyla-Glas (GM260), which is considered in this report (see section 4.3.4), is

considered to be an example of a later prehistoric settlement/defensive organisation.

4.5.2 *Roman*

Gelligaer and Merthyr Common also have evidence of Roman occupation. Two Roman auxiliary forts are located in close proximity of the commons; Penydarren to the west and Gelligaer to the south. These forts were part of a chain that also included Cardiff, Caerphilly and Brecon (Jarrett, 1969). The Roman fort at Penydarren was established in c. 75 AD and then abandoned in the Hadrianic period (2nd century AD). It is believed that the garrison moved to the newly built fortress at Gelligaer. There were two forts at Gelligaer; one was decommissioned in the early 2nd century, and a second stone-built fort was established adjacent to the former fort (RCAHMW, 1976). The auxiliary forts were linked by a road (GM556) that ran from Cardiff to Brecon, and this is the road considered in this report (see section 4.3.3).

4.5.3 *Medieval*

During the Early Medieval period Gelligaer and Merthyr Common were part of the lordship of Morgannwg, and there is evidence of medieval activity on the Common. In the western area of the Common, similarly to the prehistoric activity, there are a series of settlement sites. West of GM556 and GM220 there is a medieval hut platform, consisting of the platforms for two houses (GM314). South of this monument is the dyke considered in this report – GM261 (see section 4.3.5). Approximately 1km south-east of GM261 is the remains of Capel Gwladys (GM309), a medieval chapel possibly pre-dating the 12th century.

4.5.4 *Post-Medieval*

Merthyr Tydfil and its associated landscape underwent a rapid transformation in the latter half of the 18th century. In the 1750s it was a modest village, but by 1801 it was the largest town in Wales (Cadw, 1998; pp. 47-49). The Dowlais Ironworks was one of the first to be established in 1759. Subsequently, a number of others were established in the area in the final decades of the 18th century. The areas now known as Merthyr Common and Gelligaer Common were dominated by heavy industry in this period, and one of the SMs considered in report testify to this; Deserted Iron Mining Village, Ffos-y-Fran (GM496) (see section 4.3.2).

4.5.5 *Modern*

The present appearance of Gelligaer and Merthyr Common, to some extent, has been influenced by the rapid growth of the iron and coal industries in the 19th century. This is especially true at the north-western edge of the Common. Disused tips and quarries are evident here, and coal extraction is still a modern-day activity in this area. Further south the Common still shows signs of industrial activity but these are not on a scale similar to that found further north. The southern area of the Common retains its upland moor landscape, with frequent monuments connected to its prehistoric, Roman and medieval history.

4.6 Map Regression

Deserted Iron Mining Village, Ffos-y-Fran (GM496)

4.6.1 *Tithe Map, 1850*

No buildings or structures in relation to the village appear on the tithe map.

4.6.2 *Ordnance Survey Map, 1885, 6-inch map*

This is the first detailed Ordnance Survey map of the deserted mining village. The map shows a number of structures within the village; however, they look in a state of disrepair. This corresponds with the documentary evidence that states that the village was abandoned in 1879.

To the south of the village, the area through which the development will pass, there are a series of ironstone levels and some earth works, but no indication of a spread of settlement activity. To the east the roadway, along which the anti-vehicular installations will run, had already been established by this date, with no indication of activity alongside the route.

To the north of the site there is a tramway possibly connecting the ironworks in the area. To the north-east of the village there is an air shaft as well as an engine house. The pit is no longer in use, and this could suggest the decline and eventual desertion of the mining village.

4.6.3 *Ordnance Survey Map, 1901, 6-inch map*

In this version of the map, the mining village is no longer visible.

The series of ironstone levels noted in the previous map are now disused and labelled as “old ironstone levels” and “old levels”.

To the south of the site there are old quarries which were not there on the 1885 map. This means that they have opened and closed between 1885 and 1901, a relatively short time span.

The majority of the buildings associated with the disused pit noted in the previous map have now disappeared, and only a few remain.

4.6.4 *Subsequent Ordnance Survey Maps*

No real change is noted in the area of the mining on subsequent Ordnance Survey maps of 1905, 1922, 1946 and 1951. By the 1960s the track along which the anti-vehicular installations will run to the south of the SM, had been established.

Gelligaer Common Roman Road (GM556)

4.6.5 *Tithe Map, 1842*

The route of the Roman road is noted on the map. There is no indication of the east – west cross road along which the anti-vehicular installations will run to the south of the SM. The area surrounding the road is made up of common land with pastureland surrounding the common land.

4.6.6 *Ordnance Survey Map, 1885, 6-inch map*

To the west of the Roman road there is a series of cairns (GM220) labelled on the map. These cairns are also Scheduled Monuments but will not be impacted by the proposed development. There are eleven burial cairns in total and are thought to date from the Bronze Age.

To the east of the road there is a standing stone labelled. This standing stone (GM221) is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument that supposedly dates to the Bronze Age, but again, it will not be impacted by the proposed development.

It is also worth noting that in this version of the map the Roman road extends further to the north and south than the current designated area. This map also shows that the east – west road cutting across the line of the Roman road had been established by this time. A series of small quarries had also been dug along the north side of the road, disused by this date but still visible in the current landscape.

4.6.7 *Subsequent Ordnance Survey Maps, 1901, 6-inch map*

Ordnance Survey maps of 1901, 1922, 1947 and 1961 but they demonstrate very little change in the site or surrounding area affected by the anti-vehicular installations. The only change of note is that by the 1960s the route of the Roman Road to the south of the east – west road is no longer marked on the maps.

Dyke 315m E of Tyla-Glas (GM260)

4.6.8 *Tithe Map, 1842*

No trace of the dyke can be seen on this map, no features are marked in this area other than the line of the north – south track to the east. Tyla Glas farmstead is marked on this map, but no access track is depicted

4.6.9 *Ordnance Survey Map, 1873, 1:2500.*

The dyke is marked on the Ordnance Survey of 1873, as a simple boundary line with a central opening, running from the north – south trackway to the east, to the boundary of the common land to the west. The earthworks of the dyke are not shown, and no features in the vicinity are noted. The access track to Tyla Glass, along which the anti-vehicular installations will run, has been established by this time.

4.6.10 *Subsequent Ordnance Survey Maps,*

Ordnance Survey maps of 1900, 1911, 1922, 1938 were examined, and all show the same simple line boundary with central opening.

4.6.11 *Ordnance Survey Map, 1959, 1:2500*

This is the first available map that shows the dyke earthworks in detail. This also clearly demonstrates that the dyke extends beyond the western boundary of the common land. Small earthworks are also noted one either side of the main north – south trackway in line with the dyke. This trackway is also labelled as the continuation of the Roman road for the first time.

Dyke 387m E of Clawdd Trawscae Farm (GM261)

4.6.12 Tithe Map, 1842

No trace of the dyke can be seen on this map. No features are marked in the area, other than the main north – south track across the common, the line of which may have altered slightly since this point, with the route depicted on the tithe map potentially following the line of the Roman Road slightly further to the west. The current track that runs off to the northeast is not depicted on this map.

4.6.13 Ordnance Survey Map, 1875, 1:2500

No trace of the dyke can be seen on this maps, however, the current track layout to the west and north of the dyke had been established by this point. Also of particular note is a small quarry that had been opened, and appears to be in operation, potentially immediately adjacent (north) to the dyke.

4.6.14 Subsequent Ordinance Survey Maps, 1900, 1919, 1938

The quarry had fallen out of use by the turn of the century. Otherwise no change is noted on the maps in the surrounding area until 1959.

4.6.15 Ordnance Survey Map, 1959-60, 1:2500

The 1959 map is the first to depict the dyke, marked as earthworks running east of the north-south track, which forms the western extent of the site. The remains of the small quarry also appear to be marked immediately to the north of the dyke.

4.7 Aerial Photos

4.7.1 Deserted Iron Mining Village, Ffos-y-Fran (GM496)

The earliest image examined from 1945 is not very clear, however, the outline of the village is just about visible. To the north and south lie spoil tips from the nearby industrial activity.

A subsequent image from 1969 does not show the site in any discernible detail. Subsequent clearer images from 1991, and the 2001 onwards are a lot clearer than the previous images. The outline of the former structures within the village are visible. Immediately to the north and south of the deserted village are the remnants of industrial activity, i.e. tips. Beyond this, the area appears to be open common land. Recent images from 2001 onward show a number of tracks developing across the southern part of the SM area, seemingly accessed from the main road that runs down between Ffos-y-Fran and the neighbouring SM of Sarn Howell Pond and Watercourse to the northeast. Fly-tipping is also evident on these tracks from 2010 onward.

4.7.2 Gelligaer Common Roman Road (GM556)

The first image available is from 1945. In the image the modern road is visible running adjacent to the apparent location of the Roman road from the north and west. However, the Roman road itself is not visible from this aerial picture. The line of the road that runs east – west is of note however. One image from 1945 images shows the route dog-legging to the north of the current route at the western end, with a

slightly later image from 1945 showing it running along its current route, this would suggest disturbed ground along to the route of the anti-vehicular installations to the west of the Roman Road.

The route of the Roman road can be clearly seen on images of 1991 running north to south. The road is surrounded by common land and agricultural land. By 2001 a series of clearly marked tracks can be seen entering the common the west of the Roman Road, and a small layby has been created on the east – west road close to the point at which it crosses the line of the Roman Road. In 2004 and 2006 there are clearly worn tracks developing across the line of the Roman Road to the north that would appear to be at least partly accessed from the east – west road along which the anti-vehicular installations will run. By 2010 stone blocks had been laid around the layby and across the main track accessing the common, although track erosion is still noted on subsequent aerial photographs to the present day.

4.7.3 *Dyke 315m E of Tyla-Glas (GM260)*

The dyke can be seen on the 1945 aerial images, running in a straight line, and extending beyond the boundaries of the common land. The 1991 image shows the dyke clearly, but shows no evidence of it extending beyond the line of the road to the east, nor of any features to the south. A trackway is also shown extending from the junction of the main commons track and the Tyla-Glas access route, crossing the dyke and causing erosion. This erosion is shown on all subsequent aerial images.

4.7.4 *Dyke 387m E of Clawdd Trawscae Farm (GM261)*

The dyke is visible on the images from 1945, extending to the west of the track that currently forms the western boundary of the SM. It would appear to extend almost as far as the line of the Roman Road to the west. To the east it appears to fade out before the edge of the common, the visible remains are contained within the scheduled area. The former quarry, marked on early Ordnance Survey maps, is also clearly visible to the north of, and separate to, the dyke.

There is a suggestion of a second linear feature approximately 60m to the south, on a similar orientation, although taking a more southerly line at the western end. It is unclear if this extends to the line of the Roman Road, as the line is lost by a small quarry on the west side of the modern north – south track. There is a suggestion this linear features extends as far as the edge of the common to the east, and potentially just beyond.

Both features are visible on aerial imagery from 1991 and 2001 onwards, although the eastern end of the SM, and the central section of second linear feature to the south, are obscured by vehicle track erosion running north – south cross the common.

4.8 Lidar

4.8.1 There is no lidar data available for the following monuments considered in this report; Gelligaer Common Roman Road (GM556), Dyke 315m E of Tyla-Glas (GM260) and Dyke 387m E of Clawdd Trawscae Farm (GM261).

4.8.2 There is lidar data for Deserted Iron Mining Village, Ffos-y-Fran (GM496). The data shows the outline of some of the structures that would have made up the deserted mining village. The available lidar data coverage is at a 2m resolution for digital terrain models (DTM), which illustrates the topography of the site but does not allow for much detail. There does not appear to be any potential archaeological features that are unknown around the SMs.

4.9 Site Visit

4.9.1 A site visit was undertaken on the 9th July 2019. Conditions were dry with high cloud cover with occasional sunny spells, and visibility was very good.

4.9.2 The site was as described in Section 2. The Common is covered in grassland with sporadic vegetation, and in a number of locations the land is used as grazing land for sheep and horses. A number of public roads cross through the Common, along with public footpaths.

4.9.3 The Common itself occupies almost 8,000 acres of land. At the north-eastern extent of the Common there is the current coal opencast of Ffos-y-Fran. At the northern extent of the Common is the Heads of the Valleys dual carriageway (A465). To the west of the Common is the village of Bedlinog, to the south is Gelligaer, and to the east is Bargoed.

4.9.4 The proposed development sites are accessible via a number of public roads and public footpaths.

5 Impact Assessment

5.1 Archaeological Potential

5.1.1 The proposed development sites extend over a large area of Gelligaer and Merthyr Common. There are a number of designated sites across this area, but this report is concerned with the proposed developments that will have the potential to impact the four SMs that have already been discussed.

5.1.2 There is considered to be a high potential for archaeological remains within the SMs designated areas; with periods ranging from the prehistoric to post-medieval. These designated areas are drawn around the many of the visible archaeological elements relating to specific archaeological sites, however there remains a strong potential for further archaeological remains to exist below-ground throughout the landscape. The proposed developments lie in an area that clearly saw a range of activities in the Prehistoric, Roman, medieval and later post-medieval periods

5.1.3 In terms of archaeological potential specifically identified in the areas of proposed development however the evidence is mixed. The designated area surrounding Ffos-y-Fran GM496 is drawn around the visible remains of the both the village and contemporary and near-contemporary industrial activity and spoil tips surrounding the site. These remains appear relatively well defined on mapping and aerial images, as well as at surface level. The line of the anti-vehicular installations will run around

the southern edge of these features. There is no indication that settlement activity extends into this area, although there is the possibility for spoil tips to extend across the line of the works.

- 5.1.4 The designated area around the Roman Road GM556 incorporates the visible surface remains. It is however clear that the road itself would extend beyond this area, and that is suggested on map sources. No associated archaeological remains have been determined in the area of proposed works surrounding this feature, although a number of prehistoric monuments are noted in the area. The anti-vehicular installations extend along the roadside to the west, although mapping and aerial imagery would suggest that quarrying activity and changes in road alignments are likely to previously disturbed large sections of this planned route, reducing any archaeological potential along it.
- 5.1.5 The designated area around Dyke to the east of Tyla-Glas GM260 would appear to incorporate all the visible remains of the dyke as depicted on mapping and aerial imagery and at ground level. There is no clear indication of any further associated activity extending into the line of the planned works to the south of the monument, although clearly there is the potential for associated remains of both the dyke, and the Roman Road line (the two of which appear to be linked), to exist along the line of the works to the east and north of the monument.
- 5.1.6 The designated area around the Dyke to the east of Clawdd Trawscae Farm incorporates the visible remains of the monument, however aerial imagery would suggest it extended further west originally. There is also the suggestion of associated remains to the south, comprising a ditch line along a similar orientation. There is therefore the potential for dyke features to exist within the line of the proposed anti-vehicular installations both within the SM designated area and approximately 60m to the south.

5.2 Archaeological Significance

5.2.1 All of the monuments are Scheduled Monuments and are therefore deemed to be of national importance.

5.2.2 Evidential Value

- GM496 – the village is of national importance due to its potential to enhance our knowledge of 18th or 19th century iron working and other industrial practices. The structures associated with the village also have the probability of containing archaeological information, and an iron forge may be part of these structures. This value is likely largely contained to the scheduled area
- GM556 – the Roman road is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of Roman military organisation and transportation systems. The monument is also important in the wider context of the Roman occupation of Wales. This value will extend beyond the limits of the scheduled area, as the line of the road continues to the south (and north).
- GM260 – the dyke is of national importance for its potential to enhance our

knowledge of later prehistoric defensive organisation and settlement. There is the potential for this evidential value to extend beyond the scheduled area.

- GM261 – the dyke is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of medieval defensive organisation and settlement. There is the potential for this evidential value to extend beyond the scheduled area.

5.2.3 *Historical Value*

- GM496 – the village has the potential to illustrate the life of the villagers via the buried remains, and the role such settlements played in the significant industrial expansion of the region.
- GM556 – the road could provide us with answers on the effect it had on the people who used the road, both in the Roman period and post-Roman period. The association of the dykes with the road illustrates its continued importance into the post-Roman period.
- GM260 – the dyke has a strong probability of the presence of associated archaeological features and deposits that could help us effectively date the monument and better understand its function.
- GM261 – the dyke retains significant archaeological potential, with a strong probability of the presence of associated archaeological features and deposits that could explain the date and function of the feature.

5.2.4 *Aesthetic value*

- GM496 – as the village's origins could be that of a squatter settlement it could provide key evidence of the design, layout and construction of this type of settlement. The village also has commanding views over the town of Merthyr Tydfil. It lies in an area where industrial heritage forms a key visual element of the surrounding landscape.
- GM556 - the road may contain well preserved archaeological evidence concerning the chronology, layout and building techniques of Roman roads. It occupies a prominent ridge-top route across open moor, an important visual element of its setting.
- GM260 – the dyke may contain evidence concerning its construction and the building techniques adopted with such a structure. The setting of this monument also has value with views of Deri to the east and Bedlinog to the west, although views of the monument are limited at ground level.
- GM261 – this dyke may also contain evidence concerning its construction and the building techniques adopted with such a structure. This dyke has similar commanding views as GM260, but there are also limited views of the monument at ground level.

5.2.5 Communal value

- GM496 – the site will have value as part of the origins of modern settlement in the region, and its open accessibility could allow the site to be explored and appreciated. Unfortunately this openness has also led to erosion damage and fly-tipping, and the site is probably under appreciated by many who visit it.
- GM556 – This is an important historical monument in the landscape, and its accessibility is important in allowing the public to gain a better understanding of it
- GM260 & GM261 – both monuments are probably little appreciated for their communal value. That being said, it is important for all four monuments to maintain their accessibility to the public, as they are currently. The development has the potential of enhancing the SMs communal value as the designated area would be cleaner, safer and more appealing to visitors.

5.3 Potential Impacts of the Proposed Development

5.3.1 The proposed development includes a series of anti-vehicular installations across various sites on the Gelligaer and Merthyr Common. The nature of these installations are outlined in the introduction, with further specific installation methodologies given below. The location, design, scale and method of installation for these developments are considered to potentially impact upon four SMs, described below.

5.3.2 At Deserted Iron Mining Village, Ffos-y-Fran (GM496) a ditch and bank system has been proposed up to the SM, and to the south-east of it. No ditches will be dug within the scheduled area. The ditch and bank system is a relatively simple design, and will presumably be machine excavated but will not require the installation of access tracks, constructor compounds or other ancillary works. Development work will also presumably be confined to the route of the proposed bank and ditch, and will therefore not require machine tracking across adjacent features. The archaeological potential would suggest this work is unlikely to directly impact upon known archaeological remains despite its proximity to the SM. Although initially very visible during and immediately following construction, once the bank and ditch has revegetated it is unlikely to be visually intrusive, particularly given the scale of earthworks that represent the post-medieval industrial activity that forms part of the SM. The work will discourage vehicular access into the SM from the south, and similarly discourage vehicular access onto the common to the south, potentially discouraging any vehicles attempting to move through the SM area to get access onto open common to the south. This may reduce some areas of erosion across the monument, however it is unlikely to significantly impact upon the main current access into the SM, which would appear to be further to the north, therefore the problem of fly-tipping within the SM is likely to remain. With reduced access onto the common to the south there is the potential to concentrate activity within the limits of the SM, equally it could simply reduce any vehicular movements in the area, these effects are impossible to accurately predict. Generally therefore the proposed works are unlikely

to have a significant effect on this SM.

- 5.3.3 At the Roman Road (GM556) stone blocks are already situated at the southern extent of the SM, adjacent to the roadside. On the site visit it was determined that these blocks would remain in place and therefore there would be no requirement to undertake works within, or immediately adjacent to the SM. The anti-vehicular installations would be extended to the east and west of this, along the roadside. It is not clear if this would comprise a continuation of the use of blocks, or the use of bank and ditch. Where the blocks are used they will be placed in location by machine, but will sit on the surface, and given their location it is likely machine access will utilise the existing tarmac road. The visual impact of the blocks will be relatively minimal given their size, and the fact the blocks already form a recognisable component of the roads through the common. The bank and ditch method will clearly have some impact on below-ground deposits. The indications are however that there is likely to be limited archaeological potential within the line of the proposed development works. The installations will not prevent access to the SM, as this will remain accessible to the east and north, but it should nevertheless help reduce access from one of the main access points to the south. Works alongside the road are unlikely to be significantly visually obtrusive, and do not prevent foot access. There is the potential that this may encourage greater access from the north and east which may require further mitigation measures in the future, but this is difficult to predict with any accuracy. Generally therefore the development is considered to be beneficial to the SM.
- 5.3.4 At the Dyke 315m E of Tyla-Glas (GM260) a ditch and bank system will be used to the south of the SM and then extending north of the SM. Within the designated area of the SM stone blocks will be placed as a deterrent. These blocks will be craned into position using a HIAB vehicle to mitigate any impact on the SM. Also, the blocks located within the designated area are planned to be placed several metres away from the monument itself and closer to the roadside (Plate 17). There is unlikely therefore to be any direct impact upon the monument itself, and the visual impact of the blocks will be minimal. However the use of bank and ditch excavations to the north does have the potential to uncover or disturb elements of the Roman Road that is believed to pass through this area, and which would appear to have a relationship with the dyke. Excavations are likely to be relatively shallow at 0.3m, and therefore the potential direct impact is also likely to be minimal. Given the nature of the dyke itself, it would be detrimental if the proposed bank and ditch excavations were to confuse the interpretation and understanding of the remains of the dyke, itself essentially a bank and ditch feature, so there would need to be a clear separation between the use of the bank and ditch and the monument itself. The proposed works should serve to protect the SM from further erosion, potentially also helping to make it more visible and identifiable in the landscape without significantly visually impacting upon it.
- 5.3.5 At the Dyke 387m E of Clawdd Trawscae Farm (GM261) it was determined that there will not be a need of anti-vehicular installations within or immediately adjacent to the

SM. The current existing banks on the roadside were deemed high enough not to warrant additional work. Either side of the SM, however, a ditch and bank system will be adopted. Similar to GM260, there is the potential for excavation work associated with extending the bank and ditch to impact upon a potential further ditch feature 60m to the south, and potential parts of the Roman Road to the south, although excavations and impacts are likely to be minimal. There is also the potential visual confusion in the use of bank and ditch excavations, however, given this is extending an existing bank and ditch along the roadside it is unlikely to be confused with the monument itself. The work is likely to have a beneficial impact by reducing the vehicular erosion that is affecting the eastern part of GM261 in particular.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 This Heritage Impact Assessment has examined the impact of proposed anti-vehicular installations across Gelligaer and Merthyr Commons, focussing particular on four Scheduled Monuments, namely Deserted Iron Mining Village, Ffos-y-Fran (GM496), Roman Road (GM556), Dyke 315m E of Tyla-Glas (GM260) and Dyke 387m E of Clawdd Trawscae Farm (GM261). The guidance offered within *Managing Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales* (Cadw 2017) has been used.
- 6.2 Deserted Iron Mining Village, Ffos-y-Fran (GM496) comprises the remains of a deserted iron mining village and adjacent mining earthworks, likely dating to the 18th and 19th centuries. The site is an important one, with strong evidential and historical value, some aesthetic and potential communal value. The site has been suffering from vehicle erosion and fly-tipping however. The proposed development comprises plans to excavate a line of ditch (0.3m deep) and bank (0.4m high) 1.5m wide, alongside an existing road to the east, and across open ground to the south of the SM. Excavation works are not considered to impact greatly upon the potential remains associated with the site, and visual impacts are likely to be limited to the short term. Therefore there is likely to be a minimal detrimental impact on the values of the SM. The work is also unlikely to significantly change the detrimental impact on the site from the north, therefore there is unlikely to be any significant change to the SM.
- 6.3 Roman Road (GM556) is drawn around the best preserved remains of a Roman road that crosses the ridge of the common, comprising a central causeway about 4m wide, flanked by ditches. This site also has strong evidential, historical and aesthetic value, although communal value may be limited. The site has been suffering from vehicular erosion. Proposed works will retain existing stone block installations along the modern roadside within and adjacent to the SM, extending anti-vehicular installations to the east and west. Although the Roman Road remains are likely to extend beyond the scheduled area, the proposed works are unlikely to have any direct impact upon it or associated remains, and visual impacts will be very limited. The works should however help reduce erosion of the monument, although not prevent it entirely. The overall impact is considered to be beneficial.

- 6.4 Dyke 315m E of Tyla-Glas (GM260) is a possible late prehistoric or early medieval feature, and comprises a 3m wide ditch, up to 1.5m deep in places, with an accompanying bank up to 0.75m high, all running east – west across the ridge from the line of the Roman Road. The site has important evidential value, some aesthetic value, although more limited historical and communal value. The site has been affected by vehicle erosion. The proposed works include the craning in of stone blocks to sit on the surface along the roadside within the scheduled area, and bank and ditch excavations along the roadside to the northeast and south. There will be no direct impact from the use of the stone blocks, and the visual impact will be minimal. There is the potential for the bank and ditch excavations to disturb associated remains, and potential confuse the appearance of the monument, however excavations are relatively minimal, and as long as sufficient distance is maintained from the monument it should be visually distinct. The works should also help to reduce or prevent the erosion of the monument and is therefore considered to be beneficial.
- 6.5 Dyke 387m E of Clawdd Trawscae Farm (GM261) is a possible late prehistoric or early medieval feature, and comprises 1m wide ditch and accompanying 2m wide, 0.5m high bank, all running southwest – northeast across the ridge. The site has important evidential value, some aesthetic value, although more limited historical and communal value. The site has been suffering from vehicle erosion. No development works are planned within or immediately adjacent to the monument as existing roadside banks are present. The works would extend the roadside bank and ditch to the north and southwest of the monument. There is the potential for excavation works to impact on associated archaeological remains to the south, although works will be relatively minimal. Given the presence of the existing roadside banks there is unlikely to be any significant visual impact. The works should however help to reduce the erosion, and is therefore considered to be beneficial.

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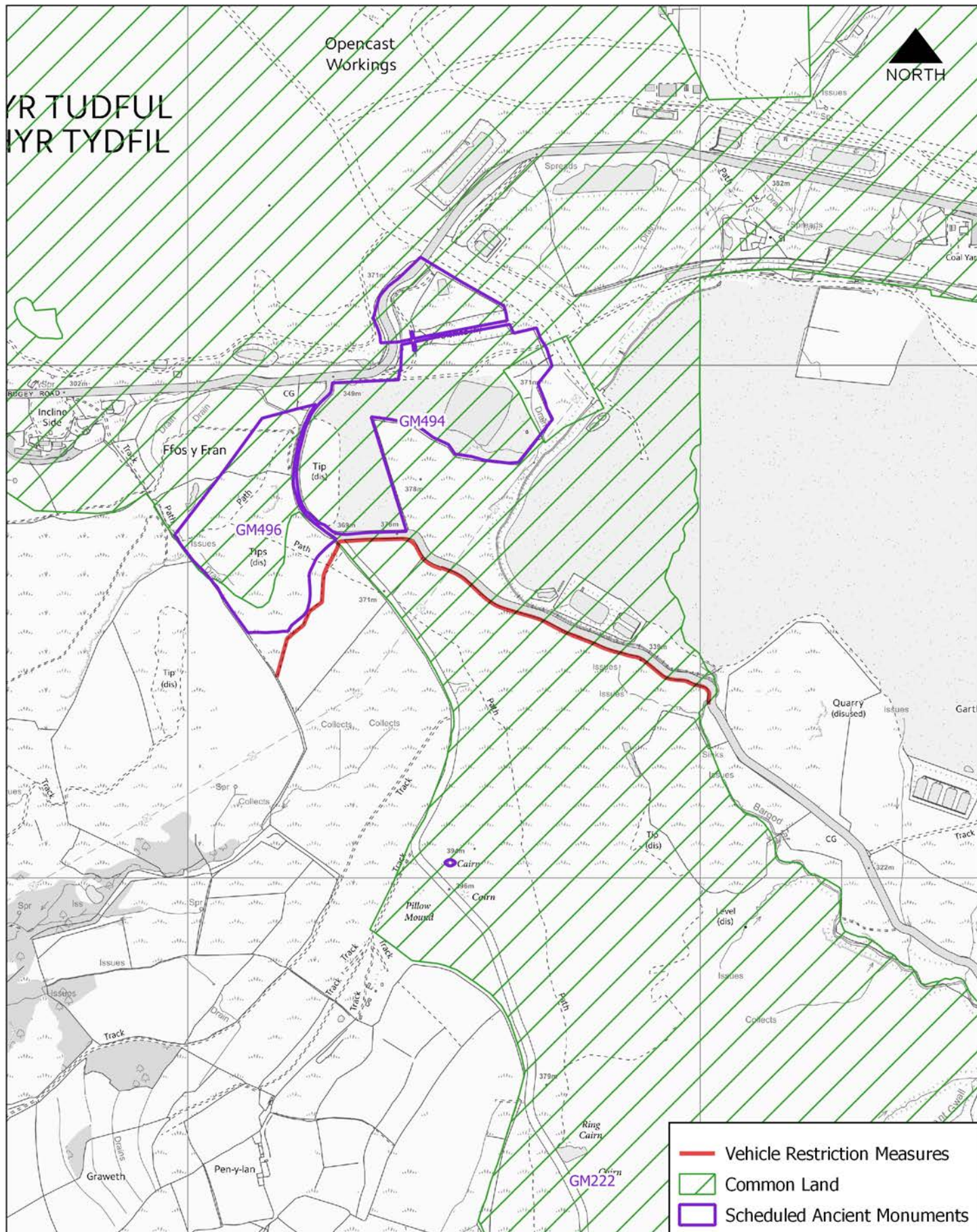
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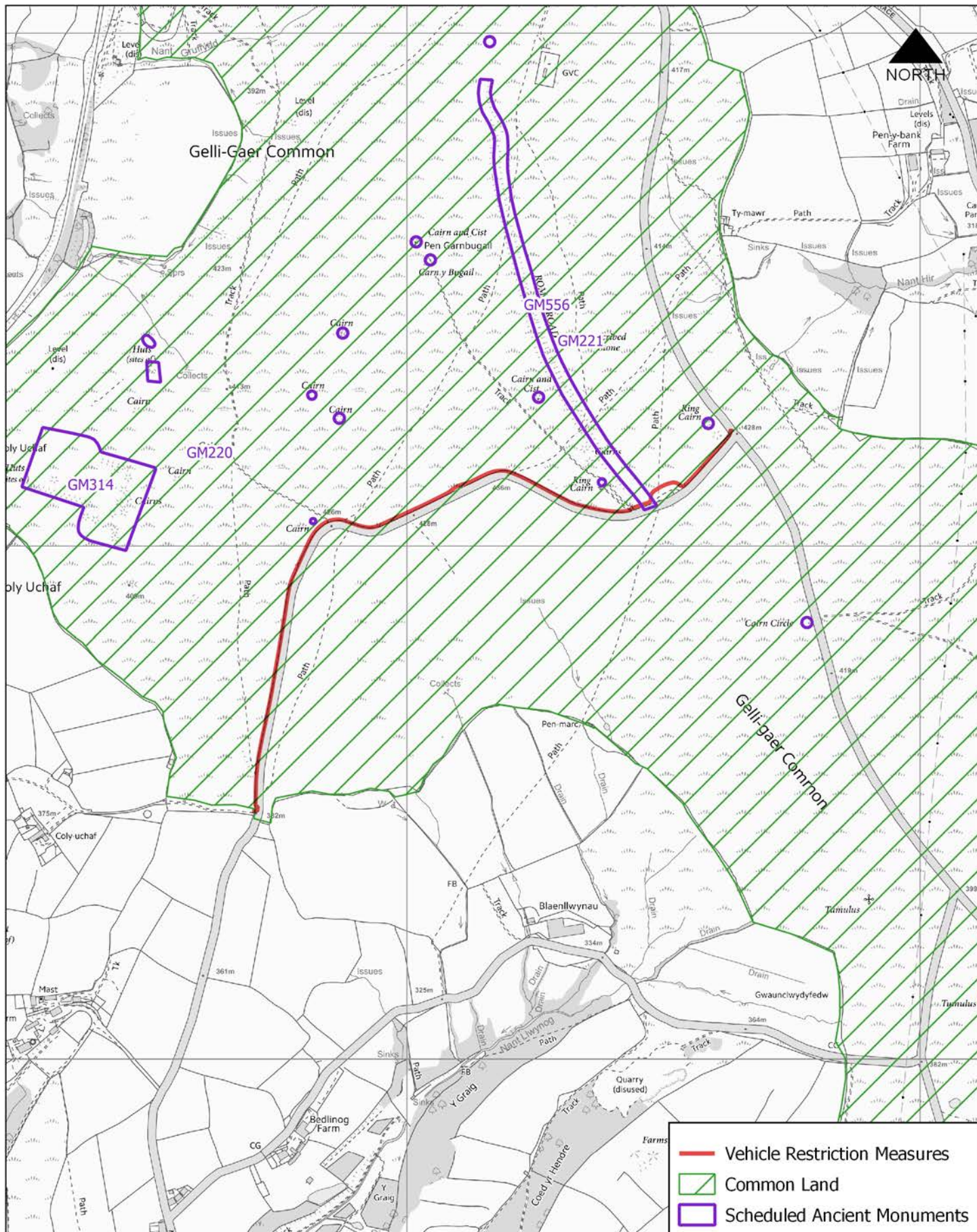
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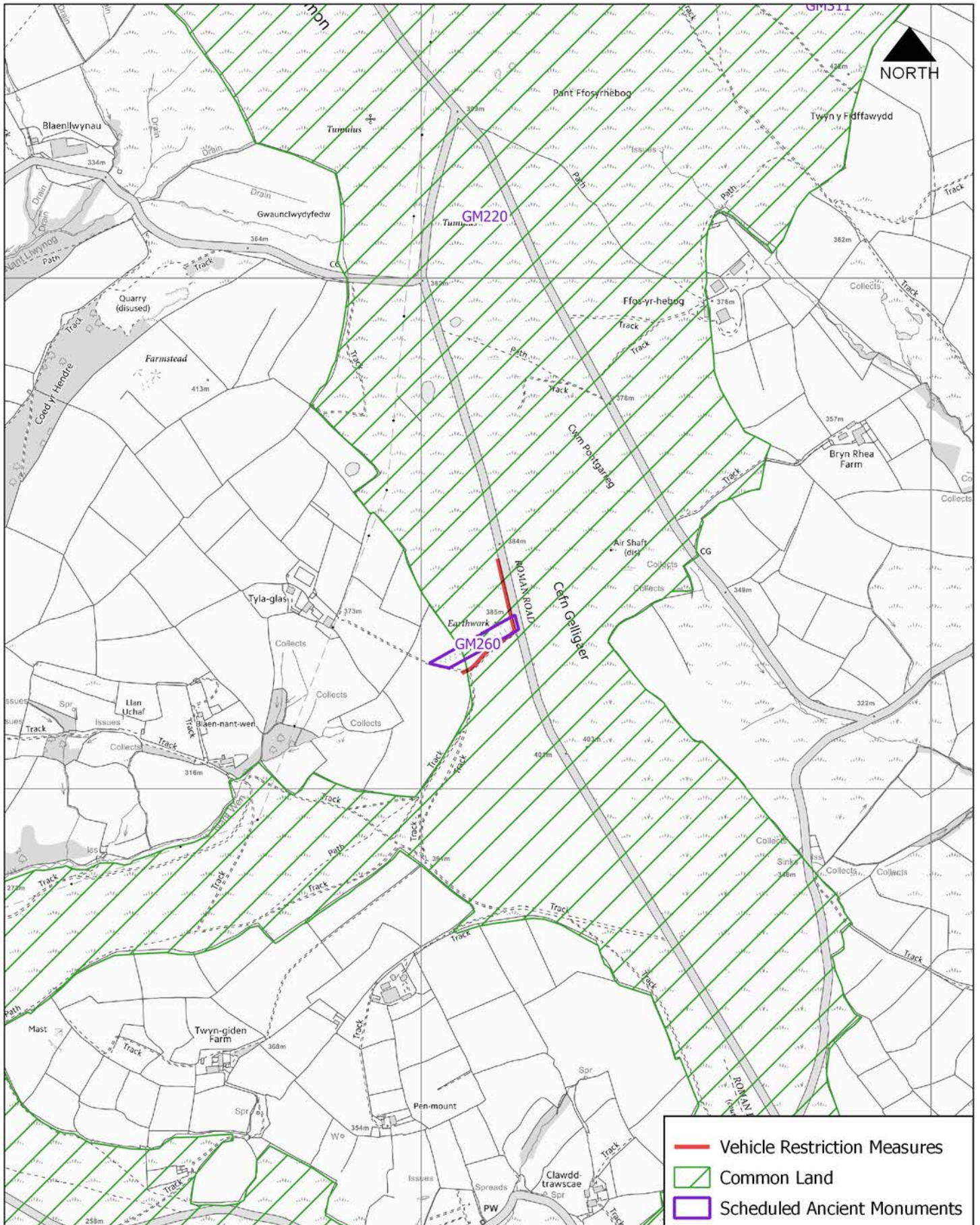
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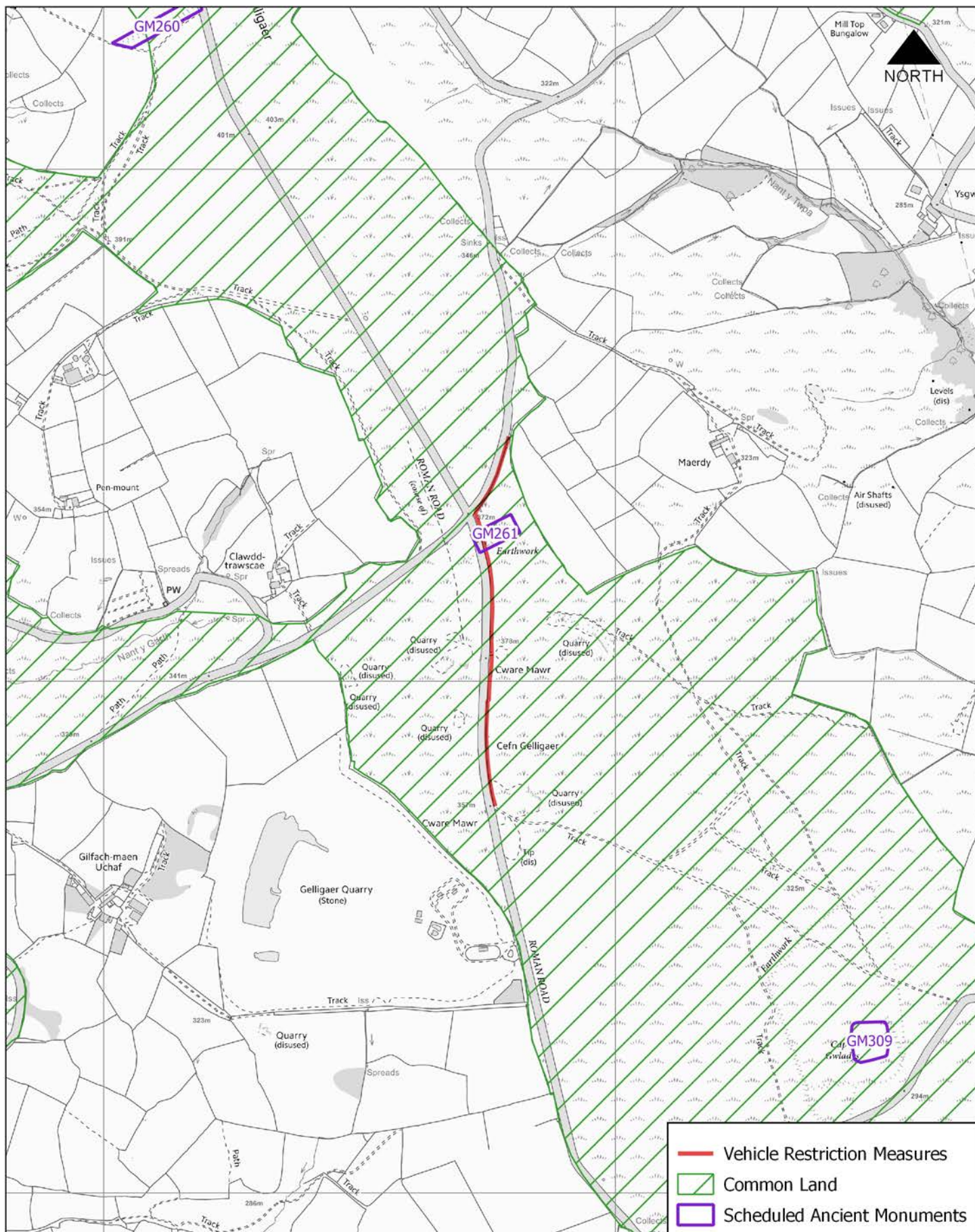
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APPENDIX I: Figures









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APPENDIX II:
Plates



Plate 1. Example of fly-tipping seen on Gelligaer and Merthyr Common



Plate 2. Damage caused by unauthorised off-roading, west of GM260, 1m scale



Plate 3. Example of block to be used as anti-vehicular installation, 1m scale



Plate 4. Example of how stone blocks will look upon completion



Plate 5. Deserted Mining Village in background, south-west facing



Plate 6. Deserted Mining Village, south-west facing, 1m scale



Plate 7. Deserted Mining Village, west facing, 1m scale



Plate 8. Roman Road, north-west facing, 1m scale



Plate 9. Roman Road, south-east facing, 1m scale



Plate 10. Roman Road extending north, north-east facing, 1m scale



Plate 11. Eastern extent of GM260, north-west facing, 1m scale



Plate 12. Western extent of GM260, east facing, 1m scale



Plate 13. Side profile of GM260, south facing, 1m scale



Plate 14. Eastern extent of GM261, north-west facing, 1m scale



Plate 15. Eastern extent of GM261, west facing, 1m scale



Plate 16. View towards GM261 from roadside, north-east facing, 1m scale



Plate 17. GM261 to the east, road to the west, 1m scale



Plate 18. Roadblocks at GM556 showing wear from livestock, 1m scale



Plate 19. Example of ditch and bank system, west facing towards Merthyr Tydfil



Plate 20. Example of roadblocks, north-west facing

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