

Cae Einion

ISLAW'R-DREF, DOLGELLAU

Archaeological Building Record



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Archaeological Building Record

Project No. 2203

Report No. 969

Prepared for:
Morris Higham (architect)

August 2011

By: Richard Cooke

**Cyhoeddwyd gan Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol
Gwynedd**

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Cae Einion

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Cae Einion

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING AT CAE EINION, ISLAW'R-DREF, DOLGELLAU

1 INTRODUCTION

Morris Higham (architect) has commissioned Gwynedd Archaeological Trust to carry out a building survey of the grade II Listed Building (ref **15603**) of Cae Einion in Islaw'r-dref, Dolgellau in advance of proposed alteration and refurbishment. The building is located at NGR **SH 67917 16171** and is located within pasture fields on the slopes of Cader Idris, overlooking the Gwynant watercourse. Islaw'r-dref is a dispersed, strongly rural settlement south of the Mawddach estuary and within the Snowdonia National Park. The archaeological mitigation is being completed as part of a planning condition (Planning Reference: NP5/52/LB241).

The proposed works are to include the alteration and refurbishment of the farmhouse and consolidation of the ground at the site of the former waterwheel, specifically, the replacement of flooring, opening up of fireplaces and removal of plaster.

2 SPECIFICATION AND PROJECT DESIGN

Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS) has requested an historic building record commensurate with *English Heritage* equivalent Level 2/3 of the existing structure in advance of development; this will include a written account to provide basic background and historical information; drawings including any existing plans of the site and architect's drawings; and high quality, detailed photographs showing all features, details, room spaces, and elevations to illustrate the setting, appearance, and structure of the building.

A limited desk-top study, involving a visit to the Gwynedd Archives, Meirionydd Record Office, Dolgellau to access records of the building was required.

3 METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The significance, origins and development of the site are discussed with reference to the available historical sources. A detailed floor plan and elevation drawings were provided by the architect.

A photographic record was made recording all features, room spaces and elevations. The direction of photographs are shown on figures 5 and 6. The report conforms to the requirements for a building record at level 2/3 as set down in *English Heritage's Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (2006).

A return visit was made once refurbishment work had begun to record any features revealed by the removal of internal fabric.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RECORD

4.1 Historical Background

The cottage known as Cae Einion is first depicted cartographically on the tithe map of 1838 (see figure 3), with the tithe schedule listing the occupier as being a Richard Evans, with the land belonging to Hugh Jones Esq. Cae Einion is a Grade II listed late 17th or early 18th

century farmhouse, which retains some interior details despite significant 19th century alteration.

It forms part of the local settlement pattern of scattered 17th century farms which are generally considered likely to be located at the sites of medieval settlement. Evidence that this may be the case at Cae Einion is suggested by its downslope position and incorporation of a reused truss (J. Emmett, Design Brief.).

The 25" first edition 1888 Ordnance Survey map (see figure 4) depicts Cae Einion much as it exists today, with two large outbuildings and surrounded by trackways running through unenclosed fields. The OS map also depicts the former existence of an agricultural waterwheel on the north-eastern elevation of the cottage, and the area to the immediate west is labeled 'sluice'.

4.2 General description

4.2.1 External description

Cae Einion is located within pasture fields on the slopes of Cader Idris, overlooking the Gwynant watercourse. It is a one and a half storey rubble built farmhouse, of probable late seventeenth century date. A substantial rubble built square chimney with capping and weather coursing flanks both roof pitches, centred over the west gable. A second, rubble built square chimney piece with ceramic pot is located projecting from the northwest roof pitch at the eastern gable. The roof is double-pitched with a catslide over the northwest elevation. It has recently been re-roofed and is of blue-grey slate, with a single newly inserted roof-light on the south-east facing pitch, and six on the north-western.

The southeast elevation (plate 1) has three nineteenth century upstairs rubble gabled dormer windows, the west of which is slightly offset to the west. Each is a white painted, four-pane sash window with overlapping slate dormer heads, stone lintels and sills. Two white painted twelve pane recessed sash windows are aligned beneath the east and west upstairs dormer windows, again with stone lintels and sills. A stone lintel heads a pegged doorcase and a recessed, ribbed and boarded door with small glazed panel, aligned beneath the central upstairs dormer window.

A rubble built lean-to extension is mortared on to the north-eastern gable (plate 2). The structure is roofed in blue-grey slate with two small roof-lights. The remains of a rubble built agricultural overshot waterwheel housing is located to the immediate northeast of the lean-to, driven by a sluice and race which tapped a nearby stream to the west.

The northwest elevation (plate 3) has a single nineteenth century, white painted four pane sash window with stone lintel and sill. A slightly less coarse, rubble built extension is bonded by mortar on to the northwest face of the cottage. A single nineteenth century, white painted two pane window with stone lintel and sill is located within the north-western elevation of the extension, and a white painted boarded door with stone lintel provides access through the northeast elevation of the extension.

A one and a half storey, rubble and mortar outbuilding is mortared on to the south-western elevation of the cottage. The roof is of blue-grey slate and a rise in the land slope to the southwest permits access to the upper storey, presumably having functioned as a hay barn and/or Hafod. The lower storey is divided into two outer-rooms, the north-eastern functions as a general storage area, while the south-western retains three original horse stalls and was clearly utilised as a stable.

4.2.3 Internal description (ground floor)

The southeast entrance gives way to a rectangular hallway (plate 4) measuring 6.0m by 3.0m, orientated northwest to southeast. The room is separated from the living room to the northeast and dining room to the southwest by two large roughly chamfered main beams with run-out stops, and connected by thinner rough split wooden beams. The upstairs floorboards are visible between, and are painted white. The internal partitions separating the living room and dining room are of post-and-panel screens, painted white and forming a cross-passage to an opposing entrance, and the original rear door to the cottage prior to the construction of the north-western extension. The door is a dark brown painted pegged doorcase with a recessed, ribbed and boarded door with small glazed panel. A part boarded nineteenth century stair with plain newels and stick balusters in the southern corner permits access to the upper level. The floor is of large slate slabs, and an area of concrete some 2.50m by 1.50m located in the western corner may suggest an earlier internal division.

The parlour (plate 5) is located to the northeast of the hallway. The room is rectangular in shape, measuring 6.0m by 3.0m orientated on a northwest to southeast axis. The room is separated from the hallway to the southwest by a large wooden beam, with a second beam marking the external wall. These are connected by roughly split beams, with a white painted plastered ceiling. There is white painted plaster on all walls, with a four pane sash window in the northwest elevation and a twelve pane recessed sash window in the southeast. A fireplace is located on the northern corner wall, with a red brick and slate surround. The floor is of fairly narrow wooden boards.

The former hall/dining room (plate 6) is located to the southwest of the hallway, and is a rectangular room measuring 6.0m by 3.50m orientated on a northwest to southeast axis. The room is separated from the hallway to the northeast by a large wooden beam, with a second beam spanning the length of the southwest gable wall. The two beams are connected by roughly split beams, with the ceiling plastered and painted white. A second large wooden beam sits beneath the structural gable wall beam, and spans area some 3.0m in length marking the start of the inglenook fireplace which is currently blocked with breeze-blocks. An open fire is set into the blocked inglenook wall, with a red brick and tile surround. The south-eastern elevation has a twelve pane recessed sash window, and along with the southwest and northwest walls is of white painted, coarse rubble. Access is permitted through the north-western elevation into the later kitchen extension via a wooden board door. The floor is of speckled blue and grey terrazzo. It is probable that prior to the construction of the northwest extension to the cottage that this room functioned as the principle room, with meals being prepared and cooked on the large inglenook fireplace.

The northwest extension to the cottage is accessed via the former hall, and served as a kitchen (plate 7) to the house once constructed. The room is rectangular and measures 3.0m by 2.0m orientated on a northeast to southwest axis. The ceiling slopes to the exterior wall to the northwest, is plastered and has a single inserted roof-light. The south-eastern, and originally external cottage wall, as well as the northwest and southwest elevations are all white painted plaster over coarse rubble. The kitchen is separated from a bathroom to the northeast by a white painted stud wall, with access through a green painted wood boarded door. A white painted two pane window is located on the northeast side of the northwest elevation, beneath which sits a white ceramic square sink, resting on a white painted brick plinth. The floor is of black and white terrazzo.

The bathroom (plate 8) is located to the northeast of the kitchen, and is a rectangular room measuring 2.50m by 2.0m orientated southwest to northeast. The ceiling slopes to the exterior wall to the northwest, is plastered and has a single inserted roof-light. The south-eastern, and originally external cottage wall, is of plastered and white painted coarse rubble, while the

northwest and northeast elevations are of a smooth white painted plaster, covering the coarse rubble wall. The southwest elevation is a stud wall, while the northeast elevation gives access via a green painted wood boarded door to a small hallway. A white ceramic stand-alone bathtub stands against the northwest wall, as does a wall mounted white ceramic sink with electric water heater. The floor is of red-orange terracotta tile.

A toilet (plate 9) and small hallway occupies the northeast part of the cottage extension. The room measures 2.0m by 2.0m, with a plastered and white painted ceiling sloping towards the northwest elevation. An inserted roof-light is shared by the hallway and toilet, which are divided by a stud wall. All elevations are of a white painted coarse rubble, and a white painted wood boarded door gives access through the northeast elevation to the rear of the cottage. A white ceramic toilet with plastic cistern and black metal toilet seat is attached to the northeast elevation. The floor is of red-orange terracotta tile.

4.2.4 Internal description (first floor)

A large bedroom (Br1) (plate 10 and 11) occupies the upstairs southwest part of the cottage. It is a rectangular room set in the eaves, with four visible large split chamfered through-purlins, connecting the southwest gable with a partially visible, collar-beam truss with pegged mortise and tenon collars. The ceiling is plastered and painted white, and a single roof-light has been inserted in the northwest pitch. The southwest gable, northwest and southeast elevations are all of white painted plaster, with a gable dormer four pane sash window set in the southeast wall. The northeast elevation is boarded, with access to the upstairs landing via a dark brown painted pegged wood boarded door. The floor is of wooden boards.

The landing (plate 12) measures 4.0m by 1.0m orientated southwest to northeast, and has four through-purlins visible as well as a central ridge-piece. The ceiling is plastered and painted white, with a single inserted roof-light above the staircase. Thin stud partition walls to the northwest and southeast create two small bedrooms and a conventional cross-passage landing, in what would have been an open space in the eaves. Both rooms are accessed via dark brown painted wood boarded doors. The southeast bedroom (Br2) (plate 13) is quite small, measuring only 2.0m by 2.0m with the ceiling sloping to the southeast. A single chamfered through-purlin is visible, and the ceiling is plastered and painted white. The walls are plastered and painted white, and a four pane gable dormer sash window is in the southeast wall. The northwest (Br3) (plate 14) bedroom is rectangular in shape and measures 2.0m by 3.0m orientated southwest to northeast. The ceiling slopes down towards the northwest elevation and is plastered and painted white with a single inserted roof-light. A single chamfered through-purlin is visible but has been plastered and painted. The walls have been papered in light blue and white striped paper, with earlier floral patterns visible where parts have been stripped away. The floor is of wooden boards.

The upstairs northeast part of the cottage would have originally been a single large bedroom similar in dimensions to the large bedroom (Br1) on the southwest side of the house. At some point it was divided in two, creating a bedroom (Br4) on the northwest side of the house and a bedroom on the southeast side of the house (Br5). The northwest bedroom (Br4) (plate 15) has a plastered and white painted ceiling with a single inserted roof-light. Two chamfered and split through-purlins are visible connecting the northeast gable with the northwest half of what appears to be a reused cruck with a lap-joint for a lost tie-beam, marking the southwest partition wall. The northwest, northeast and southwest walls are plastered and painted white, and the southeast partition wall is a thin stud wall. Access through to the landing is via a dark brown painted wood boarded door in the southeast wall. The floor is of wooden boards. The southeast bedroom (Br5) (plate 16 and 17) is rectangular in shape, measuring 3.0m by 2.5m orientated northwest to southeast. The room constitutes the south-eastern half of what would have been one large bedroom. Two split and chamfered through-purlins are visible connecting the east gable wall with the south-eastern half of the reused cruck, marking the partition

between the bedroom to the southwest (Br2). The ceiling is plastered and painted white. The northwest and southwest internal partition elevations are thin stud walls, painted white. The southeast and northeast elevations are of white painted plaster over rubble, with the former having a four pane sash gable dormer window. Access to the landing is via a dark brown painted wood boarded door in the northwest wall. The floor is of wooden boards.

4.3 Further works

A return visit was made to Cae Einion once work had begun, to inspect any hidden features that may have been revealed by the work.

The parlour fireplace (plate 18) had been removed revealing the flue. It was constructed from red-brick bonded on to the rubble stonework with an orange-grey mortar. Occasional red-brick repairs could be seen within the rubble wall where the plaster had been removed. The floorboards had also been lifted in places, revealing an earth and rubble floor.

Two slates had been lifted in the hallway. The slabs measured 0.04m in thickness and were laid upon a 0.07m thick layer of crushed slate, beneath which was bare earth.

In the former hall the terrazzo floor had been lifted (plate 19) revealing an uneven surface comprised from large and small slate slabs, and occasional small ceramic, red floor tiles with no clear arrangement. The slates and tiles rested upon a 0.07m thick layer of crushed slate, beneath which was bare earth. It appears likely that the floor surface is the original, and contemporary with the slate slabs found in the hallway.

The fireplace and breeze blocks had been removed, revealing a large inglenook fireplace (plate 20) measuring 1.37m deep and 3.15m wide. The hearth, presumably an iron brazier, was missing and the fireplace was partially plastered and painted white. The remains of a seat constructed from mortared rubble with a slate capping was on the left hand side, beneath an oven constructed from brick and painted white, set upon a wooden joist. The oven measured 1.05m in width by 1.20m in height, by 0.90m in depth. A small water filled drain with slate capstones lay in front of the fireplace but it was not clear whether this had been inserted due to water ingress down the large chimney, or whether it was original.

5 CONCLUSION

The building is a well preserved example of a late seventeenth century rubble built, vernacular farmhouse. Despite probable nineteenth century alteration, and the construction of a rubble built extension, the farmhouse still retains much of its original character and fabric. The ground floor has seen some extensive alteration since the original build, with the former hall becoming a dining room, and the addition of the northwest extension providing a kitchen, bathroom and toilet. The first floor has also seen extensive alteration, with the insertion of internal partitions to create extra bedrooms. The overall development of the property can be split into three separate phases, the first of which is of Medieval origins suggested by the reuse of the cruck-truss above the parlour. The second phase is of the late seventeenth century and is represented by the traditional Snowdonia house of a developed three-unit type with central stair passage. The third phase of the property is of the nineteenth century and is represented by the construction of the lean-to extension at the rear, as well as the insertion of sash windows and the sub-division of the first floor with the addition of new dormer windows.

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First Edition 1888 Ordnance Survey Map
Second Edition 1901 Ordnance Survey Map

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Tithe Map and Schedule: Sg.DEGWM

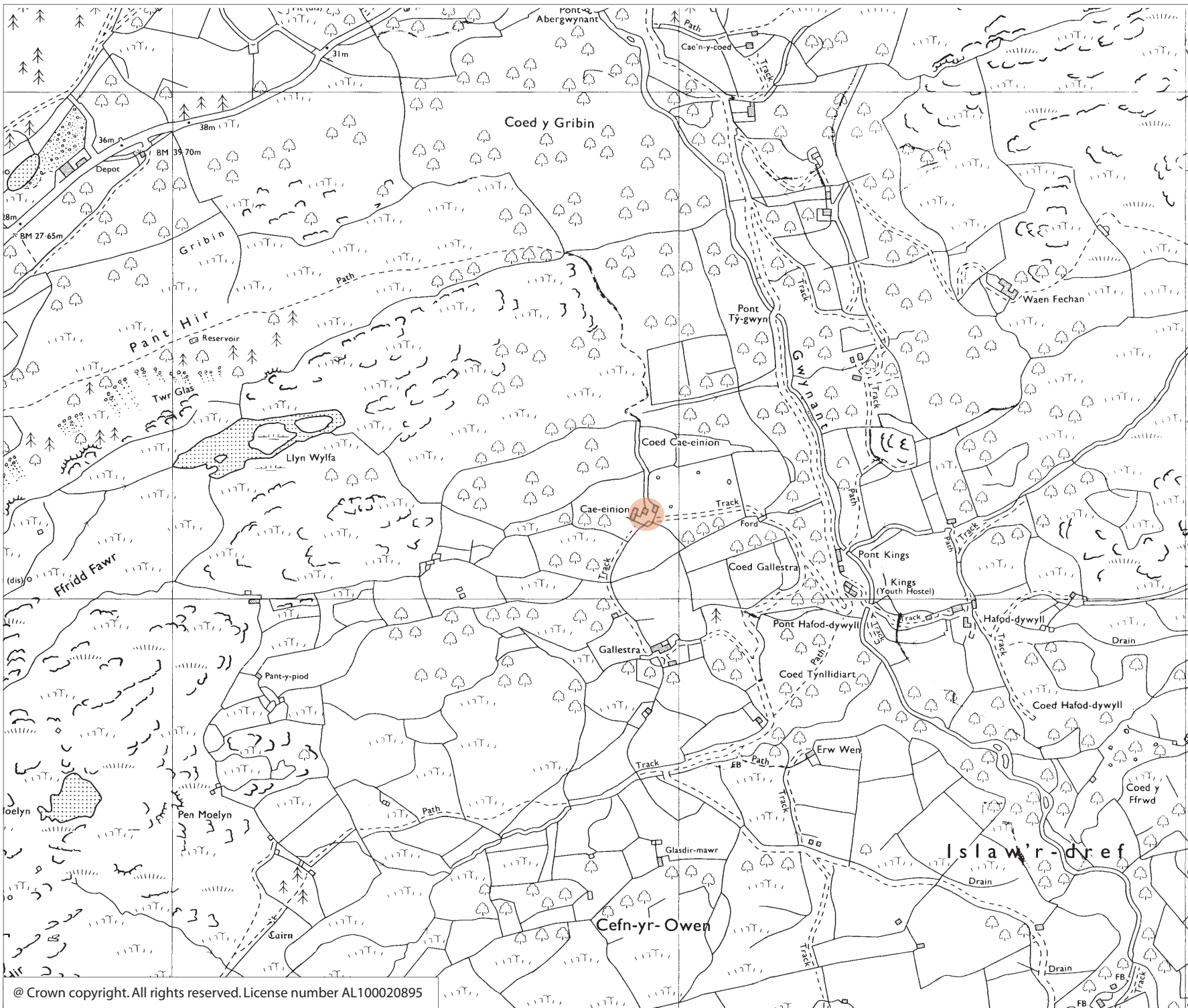
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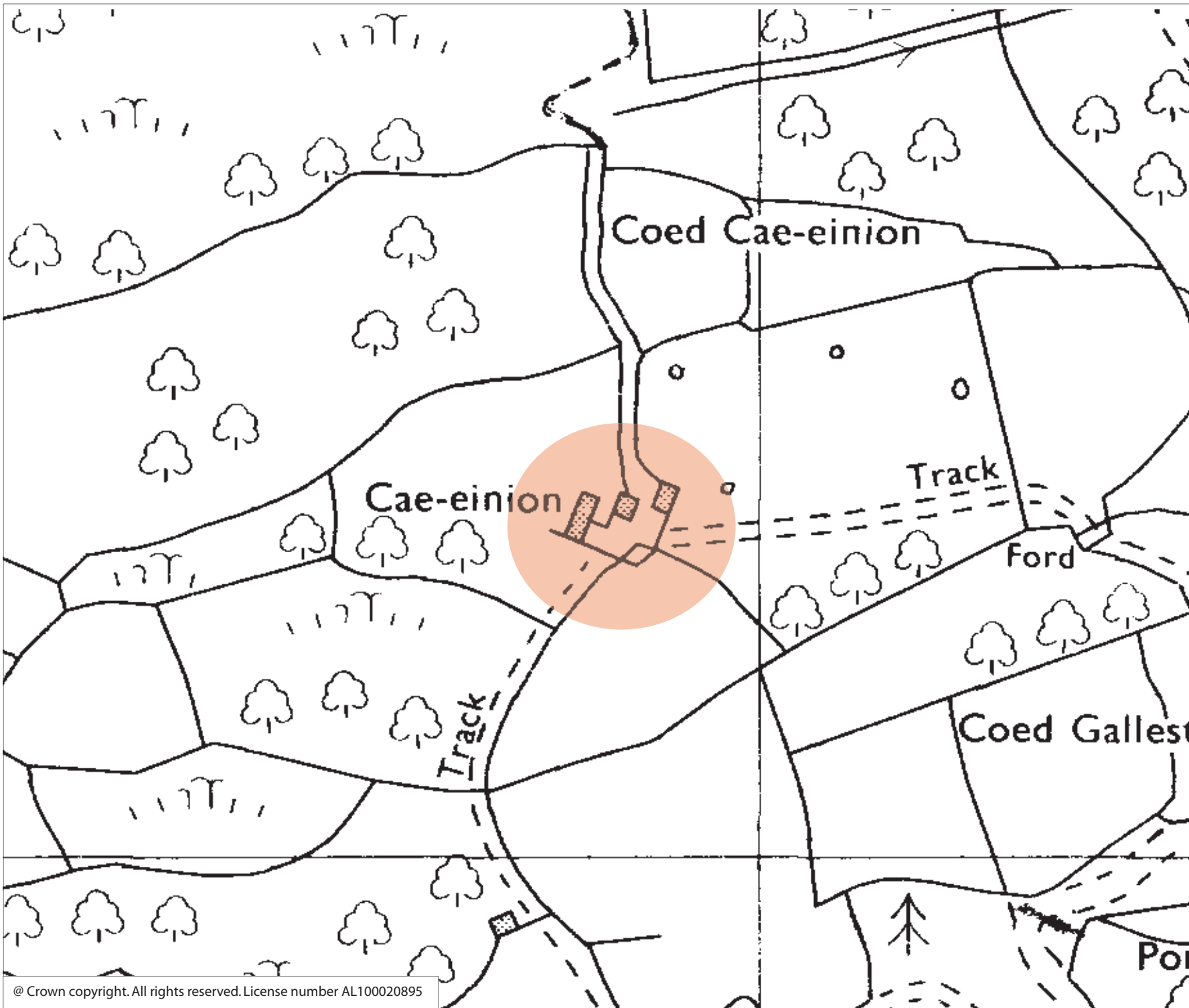


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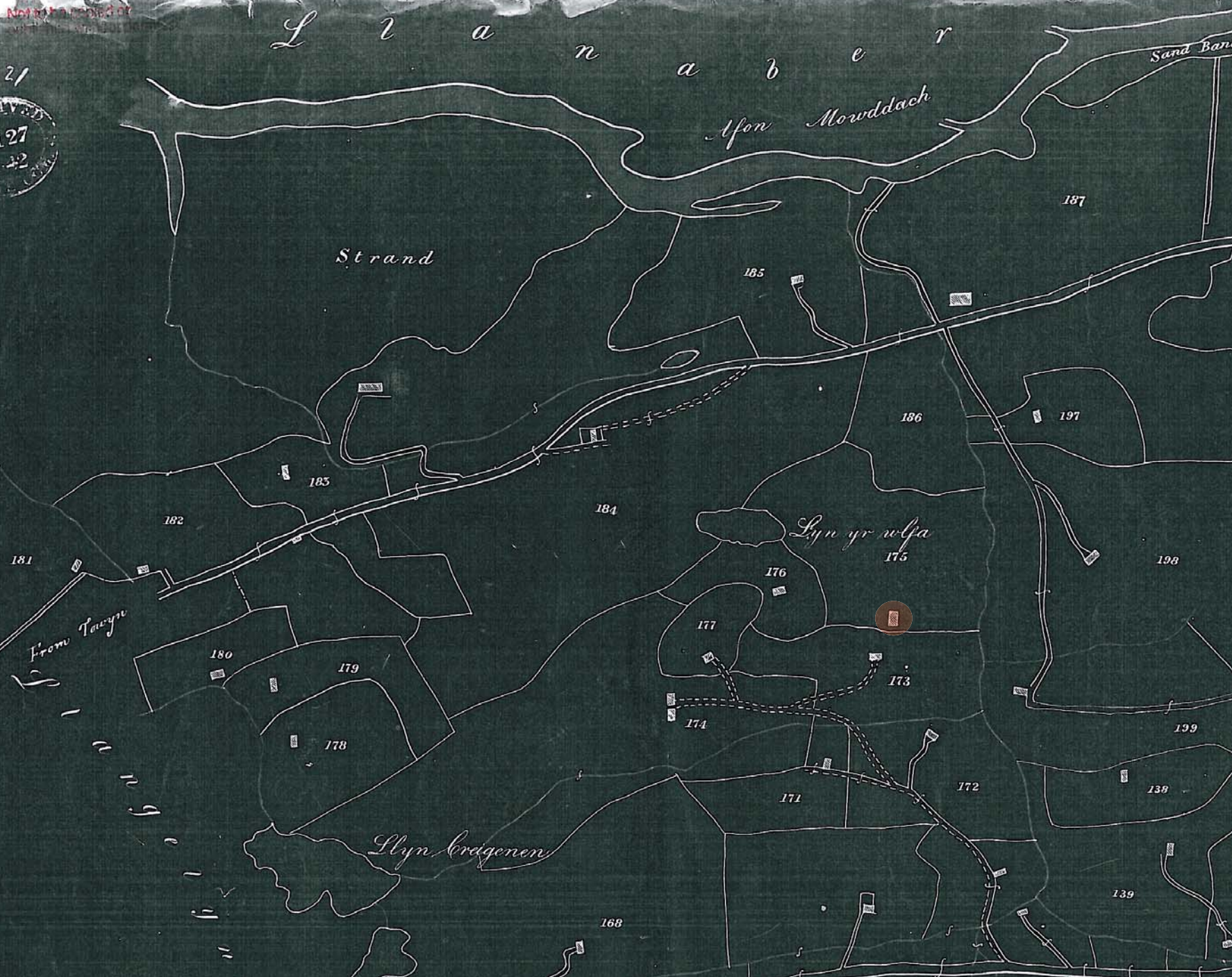
**Figure 1: Cae Einion location
1:10,000 at A4**



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Figure2: Cae Einion location
1:2,500 at A4

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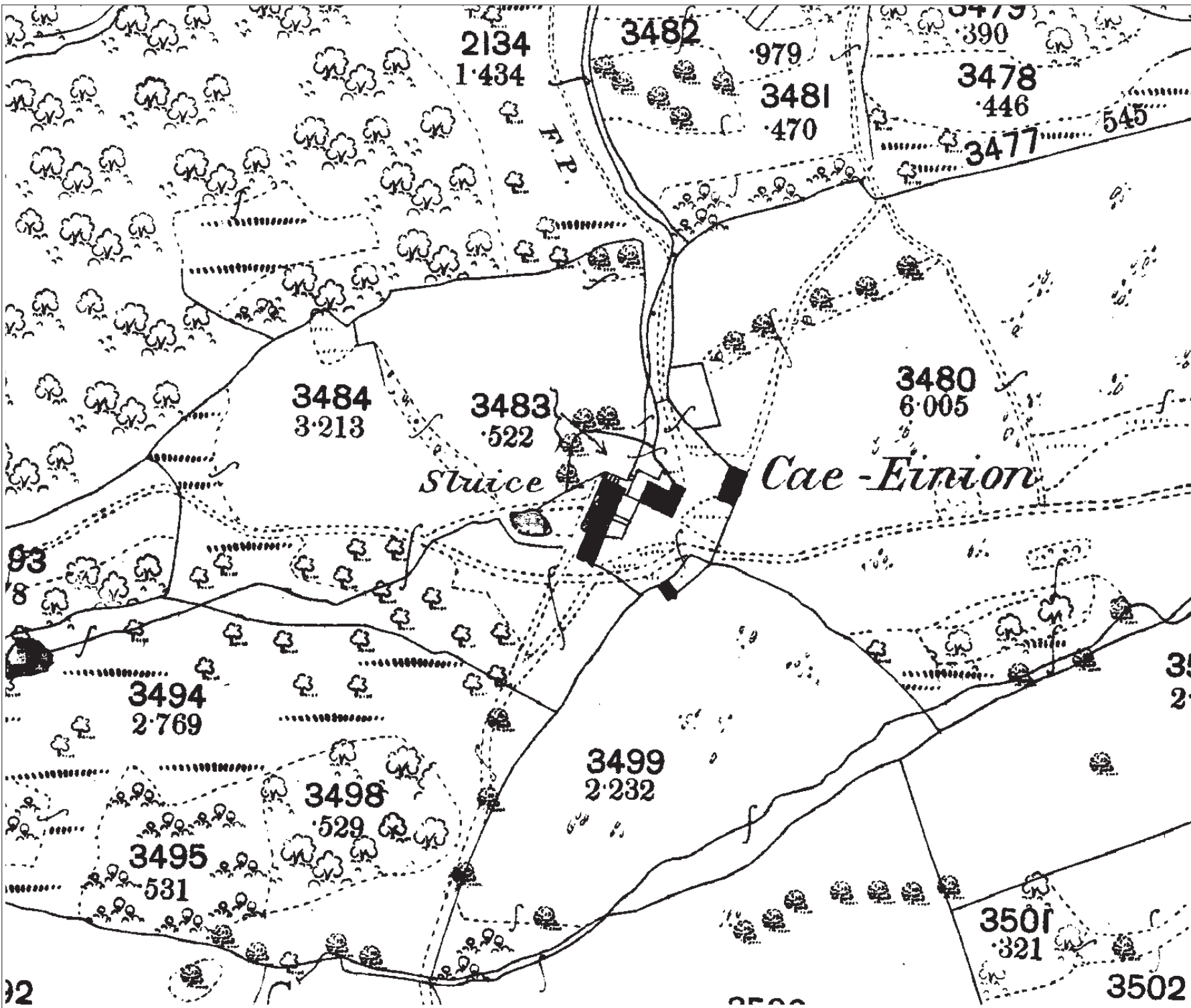
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**Figure3: Cae Einion 1838
Tithe Map**



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Figure 4: Cae Einion 1888
OS Map

Figure 5: Direction of photographs (ground floor)

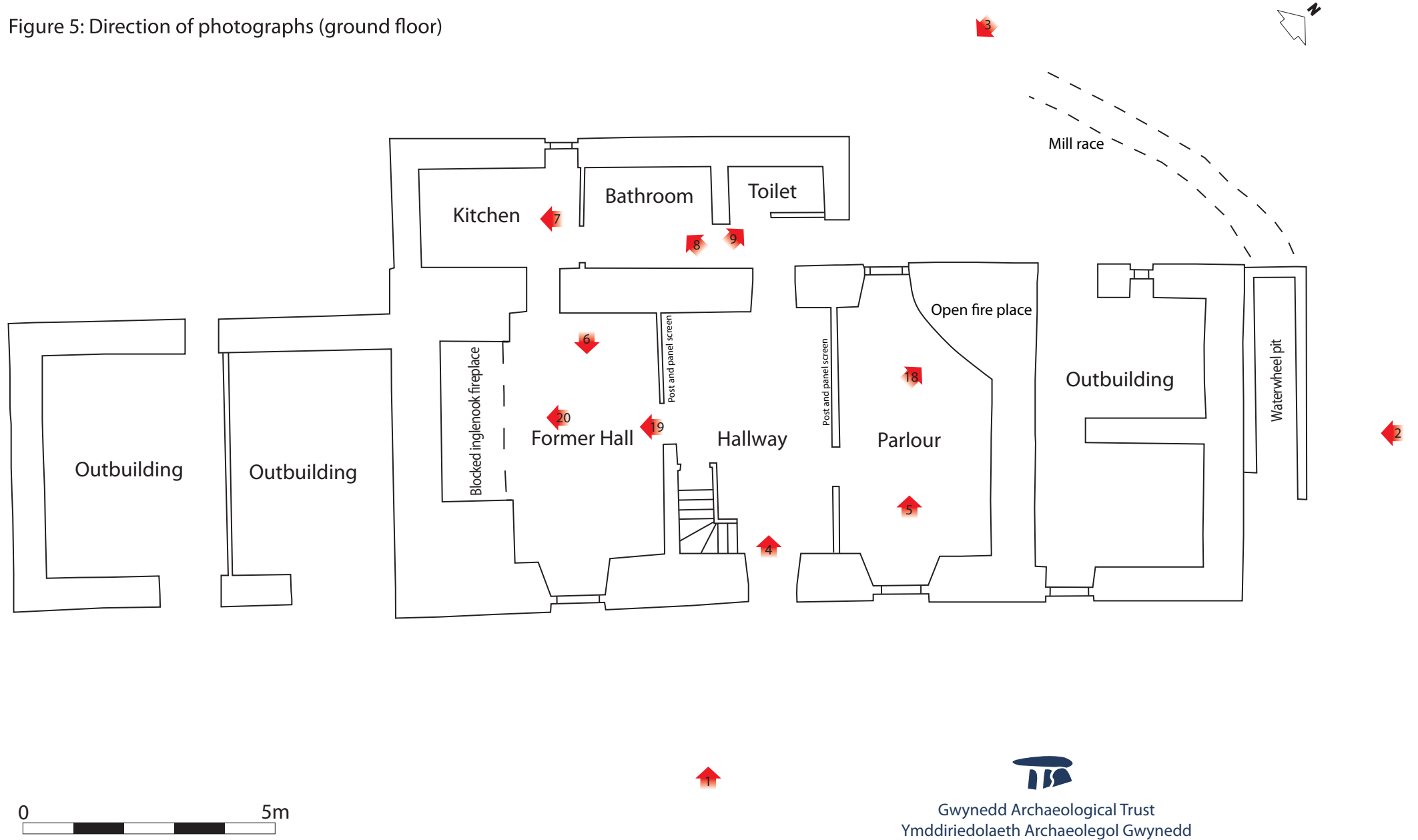


Figure 6: Direction of photographs (first floor)

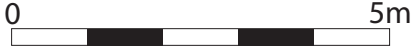




Plate 1: Southeast facing external elevation



Plate 2: Northeast external elevation showing waterwheel pit



Plate 3: Northwest facing external elevation



Plate 4: Hallway from the southeast



Plate 5: Parlour from the southeast



Plate 6: Former Hall from the northwest



Plate 7: Kitchen from the southwest



Plate 8: Bathroom from the east



Plate 9: Toilet from the south



Plate 10: Bedroom 1 showing truss from the south



Plate 11: Bedroom 1 from the northwest



Plate 12: Upstairs landing from the southwest



Plate 13: Bedroom 2 from the west



Plate 14: Bedroom 3 from the northeast



Plate 15: Bedroom 4 from the south



Plate 16: Bedroom 5 from the west



Plate 17: Bedroom 5 showing roof truss from the northeast



Plate 18: Parlour fireplace removed, from the south



Plate 19: Former Hall floor revealed, from the southeast



Plate 20: Former Hall inglenook fireplace revealed, from the southeast



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