

Archaeological Desktop Study
of land at
**LLYNFI ROAD,
MAESTEG, SOUTH WALES.**
for
Morbaine Ltd.



Report No. 889/2004 update



Bristol and Region Archaeological Services

Archaeological Desktop Study
of land at
LLYNFI ROAD,
MAESTEG, SOUTH WALES.

Centred on
N.G.R. SS 8500 9160

Client: Morbaine Ltd.
Agent: White Young Green

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NOTE

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October, 2004

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SUMMARY

A desk-based archaeological assessment of a site at Llynfi Road, Maesteg was undertaken for Morbaine Limited. Maesteg was a rural area until the nineteenth century. A horse-drawn tramway was laid up the valley and through the site in the 1820's. The Llynfi iron works was established on the present site in the late 1830's, expanding to become a large complex by the mid-1870's. The business failed in 1885, with most of the buildings being removed before the end of the century. The Port Talbot Railway laid a new line across the valley in the late 1890's. This closed in 1964, although some lines survived in NCB use. After the end of the coal industry two industrial units were erected, and a sports centre was built next door (incorporating the old engine house). No iron works structures survive on the present site, although the blast engine house and former no.1 blast furnace still stand next door.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A revised desk-based assessment of the archaeological potential of a site at Llynfi Road, Maesteg in the Bridgend County Borough Council area of Glamorgan was carried out in 2004 by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services for White Young Green Planning on behalf of Morbaine Limited. A planning application has been submitted by Morbaine to develop a foodstore in the north-west corner of the site, with customer car parking in the present Sports Centre and rugby club parking areas; vehicular access would be by way of a new road from a junction on Castle Street, with new rugby supporters' car parking to the north of the existing ground. An earlier desk-based assessment in 2001 (BaRAS Report 889/2001) related to a previous application (subsequently approved by Bridgend County Borough Council) for a slightly smaller foodstore in the same part of the site.
- 1.2 The study involved examination of the readily available documentary and printed sources, maps and plans, photographs and other illustrative material. Archaeological evidence recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) was also examined.
- 1.3 This report was compiled by John Bryant, BA, AMA. Additional documentation was provided by David Cranstone of Cranstone Consultants, who also looked at the below-ground potential and degree of importance of the former ironworks site. A further study of the site, looking at it in relation to other ironworks sites in the Llynfi valley, was undertaken by M. W. Ponsford of Cardiff Archaeological Consultants.
- 1.4 A copy of this report will be deposited with the National Monuments Record (Wales) at Aberystwyth.

2. THE SITE (Fig. 1)

- 2.1 The site is located at Llynfi Road, approximately 250 metres north-west of the centre of Maesteg (**Cover and plates 1 & 2**). It is roughly C-shaped in plan and is centred on NGR SS 8500 9160 (although that exact point is within the Maesteg RFC ground and not on the development site proper). Adjoining the site to the south-west is the Sports Centre (**Plate 3**), although its accompanying car park (**Plate 4**) lies on the site itself.
- 2.2 An area of about 3.2 hectares is involved. Two industrial units (**Plate 5**) stand towards the western end of the northern site boundary, with the Sports Centre car park south of them. Other areas are open ground. At its eastern end, beyond a culverted section of the Llynfi River (Afon Llynfi), the site includes part of Castle Street.
- 2.3 Bridgend County Borough Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) has the whole of the site zoned as R8(7), 'Key Retail Re-development Site'. None of the site lies within a conservation area. The Blast Furnace adjacent to the western boundary of the study area (**Plate 6**) is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The former Blast Engine House (**Plate 3**) is a listed building, Grade 2*, the Blast Furnace Grade 2.
- 2.4 The underlying geology of the Maesteg area is from the Carboniferous period, in the form of Pennant Measures and Productive Coal Measures. Ground level at the northern end of Llynfi Road, north-west of the doctors' surgery, is 133.2m aOD, while there is a spot height of 135.0m in Castle Street at the eastern end of the site. However, the majority of the site lies at a higher and relatively uniform level, reflected in the spot height of 144.2m aOD close to the north-west corner of the rugby ground. South-west of the rugby ground there is a steep drop down to road level (**Plate 7**), while another descent occurs to the north-east towards Castle Street. The north-western corner of the site includes the bottom part of the valley side.
- 2.5 Two modern industrial units stand adjacent to the northern boundary of the site (**Cover**). To their south is the Sports Centre car park, with, on the opposite side of the access road, a large gravel-surfaced car park (**Plate 1**). Close to the industrial units is a small concrete-block structure. North of the rugby ground is a practice pitch, illuminated by four lighting posts along its southern edge. Between there and the Llynfi River and Castle Street is a scrub-covered slope with occasional lumps of slag visible, some being of substantial size. The river is culverted at this point (**Plate 8**). Beyond the river is a two-storey double-pile house and outbuilding of nineteenth century date, although the dwelling has modern rendering, roofing and fenestration (**Plate 9**). There is a small rubble-built outbuilding with a slate roof to the north of the house. Some slag is visible in the steep grassy bank alongside the northern end of Llynfi Road. At the base of the bank are two brick arched features of unknown function, now bricked up (**Plate 10**). Parts of one of the original stone field walls survive nearby. North of the blast furnace a zig-zag path climbs to the open ground above to the west.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

- 3.1 This part of the Llynfi Valley was rural until the arrival of industry in the early nineteenth century. Most of the archaeological sites are therefore of that date or later. The National Monuments Record (NMR) identifies 6 archaeological sites in or near the study area; the county Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) lists 4 sites. With one exception (Ffynnon Fair) the sites were either on the ironworks site itself or within 100 metres or so of it.
- 3.2 Two sites pre-date the arrival of industry in the valley. There was a holy well of medieval origin, Ffynnon Fair (SMR 01156m), a short distance up-valley from the current study area. Its exact location is uncertain (although thought to be approximately SS 8592), and all trace may have disappeared as a result of subsequent coal-mining in the area. The nineteenth-century Llynfi Iron Works was established on the fields associated with Nantycrynwydd Farm (SS 8487 9147). The farmhouse (NMR NPRN 19,393; SMR 01434m) was listed Grade II but demolished about 20 years ago: it lay just south of what is now the sports centre. Photographic evidence suggests that it was probably of late eighteenth or early nineteenth century date. The brief SMR description is "regional house with chimney backing on entry, outside cross-passage and fireplace stairs".
- 3.3 Close to the south-east corner of the rugby ground is a cast-iron bridge crossing the Llynfi (NMR NPRN 43,136; SMR 01436m). This is at NGR SS 85116 91531 (not as given by the NMR and SMR). The bridge carries the date 1835 and is listed Grade 2*. A hundred metres to the east-north-east of the bridge lies the Zoar Chapel of 1911, listed Grade 2 (NMR 9,824). Both of these sites are to the east of the ironworks site.
- 3.4 To the south of the farmhouse lay the NCB (National Coal Board) locomotive shed (NMR NPRN 34,822, but has since been removed. Approximately 85 metres long by 9 metres wide, it was centred on NGR SS 8490 9141 (NB - the NMR grid reference is incorrect).
- 3.5 The final two archaeological sites are the iron works itself and the engine house. There is the complete works (NMR NPRN 327 and 34,095; SMR 01321m), centred on about SS 849916. The former engine house is NMR NPRN 33,714 (NGR SS 8487 9153). Above-ground remains of the ironworks are scheduled (Glamorgan 418).
- 3.6 Archaeological recording of the southernmost blast furnace at this site (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) was undertaken by M. W. Ponsford in 1994 in advance of consolidation of the remains (Ponsford 1995b).

4. HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

- 4.1 The Llynfi valley was a rural area until the nineteenth century. This section of the valley was part of the parish of Llangynwyd (Llangonoyd), the village of which lies 2.5 kms. south of the present study area, complete with castle erected by the de Clares (of which some remains still survive). Maesteg appeared on the map as a result of the ironworking industry arriving in the area in the nineteenth century. The 1841 Tithe map showed a few streets together with the place-name Maesteg, although the accompanying apportionment puts the present site in the hamlet of Cwm Du. Ironworking had been introduced in South Wales in the eighteenth century. Early in the nineteenth century an iron works was opened at Maesteg (the Old Works), further down on the opposite side of the valley from the present study area. Up-valley from Maesteg, at Caerau (then called Spelters), four furnaces and a calciner were built by James H. Allen of Neath (Richards 1982, 93). Zinc ore was brought up the valley from Porthcawl, the zinc product then returning to the same port for shipping.
- 4.2 Transport of the volume of raw materials inland and the finished product down to the coast was not easy along the existing roads and lanes. A tramway was therefore constructed to link Spelters with the port of Pwll-y-Cawl (modern Porthcawl), its route following the west side of the Llynfi valley north of Tondu. The present site was just 16 miles from the southern terminus. Authorised by Act of Parliament in 1825, construction commencing in the next year, the line being opened for traffic on 22 June 1828. John Hodgkinson of Newport was the engineer and the cost approximately £60,000. This was known as the Duffryn Llynvi and Porthcawl Railway. The route ran along the middle of what is now Commercial Street in Maesteg, up Llynfi Road and beneath what is now the western boundary of the rugby ground site before continuing up the valley. Gauge was 4 feet 6 inches (1370mm), with fish-bellied 3 foot or 3 foot 10 inch rails on stone blocks (Smith 1985, 8; **Plate 11**). The line was single track with passing loops, each train pulled by a team of three horses (ibid, 10).
- 4.3 Having noted that the valley was sufficiently rich in resources to support a second iron works, Allen formed a partnership that acquired 53 acres at Nantycrynwydd Farm, Maesteg. He later sold the lease to the 'Cambrian Iron & Spelter Company', which had been formed by a group of London businessmen in 1837; the first sod was cut for the new works in 1838. It appears to have operated at first as a two-furnace cold-blast pig-iron producer, supplying forges elsewhere (neither forge buildings nor hot-blast stoves are shown on the 1841 Tithe Map). Two furnaces were built (shown on the Tithe Map), the blast to these supplied by a 52½ inch beam blowing engine purchased in 1838 from the Neath Abbey Iron Company (Ince 1993, 152). In 1839 four furnaces were said to be building, but the records for that year show none built, with two built and in blast two years later (Riden & Owen 1995, 19). Further furnaces followed in the next few years, with four listed before the end of the decade, although it was the mid-1850s before as many as three were listed as in blast in one year (ibid). The 1842 Tithe Award records the owner of the land as Christopher Rice Mansell Talbot, the occupier as The Cambrian Company. By the 1850's and 1860's this was the site of a large integrated iron works, undertaking all processes from the preparation of ore to the manufacture of bar iron and rails of wrought iron (Lewis op.cit, 8).
- 4.4 The 1841 Tithe map showed several ironworks buildings, although none were identified by function (**Fig. 2**) All were located along the western edge of the present site, at the bottom of the valley side. Attached to the west side of the main building or casting house at its northern end were two furnaces, served by blast pipes leading from the western end of the engine house. Both of these furnaces and virtually the entire casting house now lie within the north-western corner of the present site. The ironworks was part of parcel 49 'Ty a cae pompwn Brandy', eight acres and one rood in area and described as uncultivated. Bisecting the present site was the tram or rail road, with, between it and the ironworks, a small triangular meadow, parcel 48 'Gwaun daw ty'.

Beyond the south-west corner of the meadow lay a bridge carrying a track across a brook that flowed down from the west side of the valley to meet the Llynfi at the point where the iron bridge now stands. This watercourse was later culverted and now emerges immediately downstream of said bridge. On the northern bank of the brook lay parcel 47 'Wayn daw ty' with, at the confluence with the Llynfi, parcel 46 'Ynys bach' or small meadow. North of these two, sandwiched between tram road and river, lay parcel 45 'Ynys y foe'. All three were in use as pasture. Immediately outside the south-west corner of the study area lay the T-shaped Nantycrynydd farmhouse.

- 4.5 It appears from the 1841 map that the Llynfi curved rather further to the west than it does now. Across the river was the road following the valley bottom, with, east of it, the southern end of a terrace of houses (identified as Cambrian, later Cavan, Row elsewhere). South of the terrace was parcel 710 'Cac du' (pasture). Between the road and river were parcels 712 'Waste' and 713 'Ynys newydd' or new meadow, both listed as pasture.
- 4.6 March 1844 saw the works put up for sale (Lewis op.cit, 11). It is clear that the place was incomplete because the sales notices mention two blast furnaces and the foundations of two more, the blast engine house and casting house, and foundations for a forge and mill (ibid.): also listed were 72 cottages built for the workforce. At this time the Llynvi Vale Iron Works name was changed to that of the Llynvi Iron Company. Dr. John Bowring was to become associated with the works, to the extent that this part of the valley became known as Bowrington. The foundation stone of the Forge Works was laid on 17 June 1845 with the building operating from the following February. Lewis says that this building was 275 feet long by 44 feet wide (84m x 13.4m) with 12 puddling and 8 reheating furnaces (op.cit, 13). In August the new rail mill commenced production. By late 1847 the weekly wages bill was then £1,000 (op.cit, 14).
- 4.7 In 1852 the works was again up for sale and the company was re-formed, with a new name, the Llynvi Vale Iron Company. Weekly output in 1853 was 400 tons. A large rail mill was opened in 1855. In 1856 the workforce numbered about 1,500 men and women. The list of facilities was impressive: 4 blast furnaces, 30 puddling furnaces, 2 squeezers, 2 muck rolls and 4 rolling mills, with 10 steam engines, 2 patches, 9 smithies and 3 carpenters' shops. An additional 40-inch beam blowing engine was acquired from the Neath Abbey Ironworks in 1855. There was a pattern-shop, 107 coke furnaces, and a brickworks producing about 17,000 bricks per week (Richards, op.cit.).
- 4.8 A plan of c.1855 showed both the 9-foot (coal) seam at the Gin Pit and also the principal surface structures (**Fig.3**). These included the 'blast engine' house, and the casting house (unnamed) immediately to its north, and the 'bridge house' (in reality probably a range of hot-blast stoves) to the west of the latter, although none of the blast furnaces were shown. Parallel to and east of the casting house was the 'new mill', with a boiler house between the two. North of the boiler house lay the 'mills and forges' with, to their east, the 'new puddling' house. Further structures lay to the north again but are outside the present study area. An illustration of the upper part of Maesteg appeared in the Illustrated London News of July 15th 1858 (**Fig.4**). The southern end of the works were shown including the blast engine house and adjacent boiler house, the new mills, the works reservoir and substantial spoil heaps. Cavan Row was in the background, although without detail being shown.
- 4.9 In 1858 work was begun on a railway to run from Tywith, half a mile up-valley from the present site, down to Bridgend and Porthcawl. This was on a new route following the valley bottom, most of which is still utilised by the modern railway. Officially opened for mineral traffic in 1861 as the Llynvi Valley Railway, this replaced the old tramway. However, the gauge was 7 feet ¼ inch, the same width as Brunel's broad gauge on the South Wales Railway. Later in the 1860's mixed gauge track was provided, the broad gauge finally disappearing in 1872. In 1866 the Llynvi and Ogmere Railway Company was formed by an amalgamation of the L.V.R. and the standard gauge

Ogmore Valley Railway. An agreement made in the following year enabled construction of a rail connection between the L. & O.R.Co. and the Llynvi Iron Works. This branched off the main line at Tywith, following the route of the old tramway down to the iron works. At the same time a rail connection was proposed between the Llynvi and Maesteg iron works. This involved culverting a short stretch of the Llynfi River (**Plate 8**) and building an elliptical-arched bridge over the valley road (Castle Street), with a similar bridge across the main L. & O.R. line (**Plate 12**).

- 4.10 Again in 1866 the name of the ironworks business was changed, to the Llynvi Coal and Iron Company Limited. The 1860's were good years: in 1865 the works were producing pig iron, bar and rails; other products included angle iron, gas strip, hoops, sheets and nail rod. In 1874-5 James Colquhoun published a report on improvements made to the blast furnaces, c1870, when they had each been about 45 feet in height (**Figs.13 & 14**). The southernmost three were square in plan, of traditional masonry-casing construction; the fourth and northernmost was circular, designed for a height of 60 feet but only built to 46 feet and consequently not fully efficient until altered by Colquhoun. This latter furnace may have been built in the later 1860's: it appears that this had replaced the northern of the pair shown on the Tithe Map. In 1871 there were in operation the 4 blast furnaces, also 33 puddling furnaces and 4 mills (Lewis op.cit, 19). Further expansion a year later saw a large new mill opened. All the assets were sold to the Brogden syndicate in 1872 (**Fig.5**), but the company was soon in liquidation. The Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan surveyed in 1876 recorded the ironworks buildings together with a complex of railway tracks and extensive areas of spoil heap (**Fig.6**). It appears that the area from the blast furnaces on the west to the railway crossing the L. & O.R. on the east was more or less level. The main valley road was then named High Street rather than Castle Street.
- 4.11 Alongside Castle Street on the strip between there and the river, currently lies no.102 (**Plate 9**). This is a house of mid- to late- nineteenth century date. Although not shown on the 1841 Tithe map, it had been constructed by the time of the 1876 survey.
- 4.12 A receiver was appointed to the ironworks in 1878, whereupon the name was changed yet again, this time to the Llynvi and Tondy Coal and Iron Company. This company failed in turn seven years later and 1885 saw the end of iron production in the valley, the older Maesteg ironworks (the Old Works) having ceased in 1873. What remained of the industry at the New Works site was taken over by North's Navigation Collieries. The 1897 revision of the OS 1:2500 plan recorded most of the iron works complex as having been removed (**Fig.7**). However, all four blast furnaces survived, as did the old blast engine house, and parts of the hot-blast stoves. Lewis (op.cit, 22) records that the stonework from three of the blast furnaces was removed for re-use in the building of St. Michael's Church. The old blast engine house found a new use as a provender store, storing feed for the many local pit ponies, hence its later name of 'the Cornstore' (ibid, 30). Some walls of the former mills building still stood in the area now occupied by the rugby club car park. There was no rugby ground, instead a large spoil heap extended about as far south as the present-day Somerfield store.
- 4.13 On 31 July 1894 the Port Talbot Docks and Railway Company was incorporated. Amongst its aims was to provide a rail link between the Llynfi Valley and an improved Port Talbot Docks. One of the promoters was Colonel J. T. North, of the North's Navigation Collieries at Maesteg. The line from Port Talbot to Maesteg and beyond was opened for goods traffic on 31 August 1897. From the south it approached the site of the Llynfi Works as a single track line behind the reservoir before curving around on an embankment between the blast engine house and southernmost blast furnace (**Fig.**). The line was joined by a second coming in from the north, the pair then running parallel along the old route across the Llynfi and Castle Street in the direction of North's colliery. A siding ran under the main P.T.R. line to serve the brick works on the west side of Llynfi Road; a short branch ran alongside the former blast engine house, which was now in use as a cornstore. The brick works siding ran partly within a shallow cutting.

- 4.14 By 1914 three of the blast furnaces had been removed leaving only the present example remaining (**Fig.8**). Also gone were the remains of the bridge house and ruins of the mills building. A football ground had been created at the northern end of the tip beside Llynfi Road.
- 4.15 Not much changed between 1914 and the next revision, in 1939-40 (**Fig.9**). A few sidings had been laid around the northern boundary of the present site; two small buildings had been erected, one near the sidings, the other east of the former blast engine house (**Fig.11**). The second small building was an electricity sub-station (Lyons & Jones 1996, caption to plate 15).
- 4.16 January 1908 saw an agreement signed between the P.T.R. and Great Western Railway for the latter to work the railway side of things. Later, on and from the 1st January 1922, the P.T.R. & Docks Company became absorbed into the G.W.R. Passenger services were withdrawn between Maesteg and Port Talbot in 1933. Sections of the line to the east were gradually closed down over the years; the last freight train from Maesteg to Port Talbot ran on 28th August 1964, 300 tons of coal in 17 wagons, hauled by G.W.R. 2-8-0T no. 5213. The final piece of line, between Cwmdru and the National Coal Board workshop at Exchange Street, was transferred to N.C.B. control. Preserved pannier tank 9642 was photographed on the line in 1971 (**Fig. 11**), but the line had been lifted by the time that the Sports Centre was opened in 1983.
- 4.17 At the beginning of the 1950's the OS 1:2500 was again revised (**Fig. 10**). Another railway siding had appeared and the adjacent building had been extended. Two long parallel structures labelled as 'Omnibus Depot' now stood west of the football ground, the western 51m by 9m, its companion 41m by 11m. A later photograph, taken at about the time that the Sports Centre was opened in 1983, shows a ridge roof to the longer building, an arched roof to its neighbour, with double-deck 'buses outside the latter (Lyons & Jones 1996, plate 15). The second building was probably an ex-MOD 'Romney' shed.
- 4.18 During the 1950's the sole-surviving blast furnace was robbed of the majority of its facing stone, which was re-used in 1958 to build the final stage of the tower of St. Michael's Church (Lyons & Jones 1994, caption to plate 83).
- 4.19 The railway bridge crossing Castle Street was narrow, and hazardous to pedestrians. In 1964 a subway was driven through the embankment adjacent on the east side. Finally, in February 1983, the bridge was removed and the embankments either side graded. This was a controversial action carried out despite opposition from both the Llynfi Valley Historical Society and the Llynfi Valley Civic Society (Isaac 1983). Also in 1983, the Cornstores building was re-opened as the reception area for the Maesteg Sports Centre; a car park has been laid out to the north. Two industrial units were erected at the western end of the northern boundary of the study area. The surviving blast furnace has been renovated and is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- 4.20 A block of four shops was erected off Llynfi Road in the latter half of the 1990's in the area formerly occupied by the spoil heap south of the rugby ground between the road and river. At the Llynfi Road side of the car park is a short stretch of reconstructed tramway together with a plaque (**Plate 11**).

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Until the early nineteenth century this part of the Llynfi Valley was rural, and Maesteg did not exist as even a hamlet. The creation of an iron works slightly further down the valley was followed in the late 1830's by the establishment of a second, on the present site and land immediately to its north. By the time of the Tithe map of 1841 there had already been erected the blast engine house, two blast furnaces and the casting house, of which only the first-named was outside the present site. A horse-tramway had been laid north-south through the site in the 1820's. In 1841 some of the site remained as fields, with a small watercourse running along the southern edge. This joined the Llynfi River, beyond which was the valley road and the southern end of a terrace of houses (later Cavan Row).
- 5.2 Development was rapid if at times erratic. By the mid-1850's there was a new mill building, a boiler house between there and the casting house, and further structures to their north (including some that lay outside the present study area). Four blast furnaces were by then in use. A newspaper illustration of 1858 shows that there were already extensive spoil heaps associated with the works. Early in the 1860's a broad gauge steam-locomotive operated railway line was opened on the east side of the valley, and the old tramway was closed down, although it continued in use north of the present site for rail access to the iron works. Another rail connection, this time across the valley, involved bridging the river, road and new valley line and included some unusually-shaped elliptical arches to the bridges.
- 5.3 The first edition of the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan showed the works at about its height, including extensions to east and west of the 1850's mill. A complex rail system served the works and extended to the brick works off Llynfi Road. All this would soon change, for in 1885 the company finally failed, the remnants being bought up by North's Navigation Colliery. However, activity on the site did not cease completely, because the Port Talbot Railway laid a line across the valley in the 1890's. This is shown on the 1897 Ordnance Survey revision, which also records that most of the former iron works buildings had gone, the main survivors being the engine house (now in use as a provender store), the four blast furnaces, and some walls of the 1870's mill extension. Shortly after the surveyors had left, three of the furnaces were dismantled to provide stone for a new church.
- 5.4 Little else changed in the early decades of the twentieth century, apart from the creation of a football ground on its present site. After the Second World War an omnibus depot was established at what is now the rugby club car park. In 1958 the sole surviving blast furnace was robbed of its facing. The Port Talbot line remained in use until 1964, and even after that some of the line continued in use by the NCB. All railway activity had ceased by the early 1980's. The former engine house was restored in 1983 to become part of the new Maesteg Sports Centre, with a car park created to its north. In the same year the railway bridge over Castle Street was removed. Two industrial units were erected along the northern boundary of the study area.
- 5.5 There is now a proposal to erect a foodstore in the north-western corner of the site (Figs. 1 & 12). This will lie largely or partly over the sites of the two earliest Blast Furnaces, within approximately 7 metres of the next Blast Furnace site to the south, and within about 20 metres of the surviving standing example (which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument). In addition, the northern third of the c.1840 Casting House will lie beneath the new building, also parts of the 1840's Forge and Mills and the Rail Mill of 1855 (part of the New Mill), a corner of the Boiler House, and other buildings of unspecified function. Regrading of the slope crossing the Llynfi River down to Castle Street will take place, with a new intersection at the bottom. Landscaping of the bank to the west of the store, where some of the hot-blast stoves and the furnace charging platform formerly stood, will also be undertaken. Each of these areas of the former ironworks is

vulnerable to damage during construction of the new store and associated engineering and landscape works. This is covered in more detail in the assessments by Cranstone Consultants and Cardiff Archaeological Consultants (reproduced in Appendices 2 & 3, below).

- 5.6 It is likely that the modern surface lies slightly above the ground/floor surfaces of the ironworks. Remains could include blast furnace bases, building foundations and floors, substructures for major internal structures, deposits (including possibly casting beds), conduits, ducts and flues, slag tips, and evidence for the ironworks tramways and stockyards. There may also be more informal deposits, including the potential for the study of workplace culture from artefacts and features.
- 5.7 On the western edge of the site were the furnace bank and charging structure, remains of which may survive close to the surface. These survivals could be vulnerable to disturbance from landscaping or regrading of the current steep slope.
- 5.8 The importance and archaeological value of this site is as a whole, including the survival of slags and other residues. Such sites are, in general, more common in South Wales than in Britain as a whole. However, the ironworks, both on its own and as part of the Llynfi Valley group of mid-19th-century ironworks, is of certain regional importance. This site is also of interest due to its relatively late date of establishment and short life (less than 50 years) Although not a first rank site in the South Wales context as a stand-alone site, the Llynfi Ironworks is nevertheless of importance and merits full archaeological recording (including analysis of archaeo-metallurgy) where it is affected by redevelopment.

The Settings of the Blast Furnace and Engine House

- 5.9 As noted in paragraph 5.5, the proposed foodstore will be sited approximately 20 metres away from the Blast Furnace, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). This distance is to the main furnace structure itself.
- 5.10 South of the Blast Furnace is the Leisure Centre, which incorporates the former ironworks Blast Engine House, which pumped air for the furnaces. This building has been renovated and is listed at Grade 2*, which is indicative of its importance at least in South Wales. It is the tallest element within the Leisure Centre group of buildings and thrusts forwards of the remainder of the frontage, probably intentionally. With its size, construction and forward position it advertises the whole modern leisure complex. It lies at a distance of over 50 metres from the closest part of the proposed new foodstore.
- 5.11 Paragraph 6.5.1 of Planning Policy Wales states that the “desirability of preserving an **ancient monument** and its setting is a material consideration in determining a planning application”.
- 5.12 Paragraph 6.5.7 of Planning Policy Wales states that “where a development proposal affects a listed building or its setting, the primary consideration is the statutory requirement to have a special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, or its setting”.
- 5.13 The matter of the relationship of the proposed new building to the existing historic structures is an aspect that is being dealt with in the design statement which has been prepared by Gordon White and Hood.
- 5.14 In this context, it is noted that the northern part of the sports centre (squash courts) immediately adjoins the blast furnace (approximately 4m in distance). The blast furnace already sits within a changed environment and the proposed foodstore will not affect its setting.

6. CONSULTANTS ADVICE

- 6.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services advise that, although there are currently no visible remains of the iron works above ground within the study area, that there may be substantial below-ground remains of the former structures. Whilst recognising that part of the site has already been substantially redeveloped by the construction of the industrial units, further damage may be suffered during construction of the foodstore and landscaping of the adjacent bank.
- 6.2 The development of the site is likely to be subject to archaeological considerations; however, these are unlikely to be sufficient as to inhibit development.
- 6.3 The extent to which the modern industrial units have affected the archaeological resource is unknown at this point in time. The presence of the industrial units and their yards, combined with the sports centre car park to the south, make it impractical to evaluate the site by trial trenching prior to determination of the planning application. It is considered that the archaeological issues involved can be satisfactorily dealt with by conditioning any planning permission. This approach was adopted in relation to the earlier planning application relating to a proposed foodstore on this site, when it was decided that no archaeological evaluation would be necessary prior to determination. The present application gives rise to no additional archaeological concerns.
- 6.4 It is proposed to design the foundations of the new building so as to avoid, as far as is practicable, below-ground remains of the ironworks. This will involve the careful positioning of piles, but will also include the suitable design of ground beams and considered location of service runs. In order to achieve this, it will be necessary to accurately locate the positions of the ironworks structures and other features below ground, and also to determine the depths of the surviving archaeology beneath proposed floor and beam levels. This should be possible using a combination of geophysical survey and selective trial excavation. In areas where disturbance is unavoidable during redevelopment, then preservation by record (i.e. archaeological excavation) will be carried out. This policy will reduce the amount of damage likely to be sustained by the archaeological resource within the area of the footprint of the building. Outside the footprint of the new store, it is proposed wherever possible to utilise existing service runs for the provision of services to the new building, which also will reduce any impact on the archaeology.

7. REFERENCES AND SOURCES CONSULTED

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(also see Maps and Plans, above)

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services would like to thank the staffs of Glamorgan Record Office and the Local Studies Library, Bridgend for their assistance. The Sites and Monuments Record print-out was provided by the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust.

APPENDIX 1: Policy Statement

This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local authority policies.

NATIONAL POLICIES

Statutory protection for archaeology is enshrined in national legislation, including the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), amended by the National Heritage Act (1983). Nationally important sites are listed in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments (SAM). Scheduled Monument consent is required for any work which would affect a SAM.

Welsh Office Circular 60/96 – Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology

Paragraph 8 states that:

“Development plans should reconcile the need for development with the interests of conservation including archaeology. They should include policies for the protection, enhancement and preservation of sites of archaeological interest and their settings.”

Paragraph 10 states that:

“The desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining a planning application whether that monument is scheduled or unscheduled.”

Paragraph 18 states that:

“There will be occasions, particularly where remains of lesser significance are involved, when planning authorities may decide that the significance of the archaeological remains is not sufficient when weighed against all other material considerations, including the need for development, to justify their physical preservation in situ, and that the proposed development should proceed. Planning authorities will, in such cases, need to satisfy themselves that the developer has made appropriate and satisfactory arrangements for the excavation and recording, or other investigation, of the archaeological remains and the publication of the results.”

Paragraph 19 states that:

“From the archaeological point of view excavation should be regarded as a second best option.”

It also states that:

“The preservation in situ of important archaeological remains is therefore to be preferred.”

Paragraph 20 states that:

“Archaeological investigations, such as excavation and recording should be carried out before development commences, working to a project brief prepared by the planning authority (with reference to their archaeological advisors). Investigation can be achieved through agreements reached between the developer, the archaeologist and the planning authority. Such agreements should secure and implement an appropriate scheme of archaeological investigation, to an agreed timetable, and provide for the subsequent publication of its results.”

Planning Policy Wales (2002)

Planning Policy Wales (2002, section 6.5) indicates that archaeology forms a material consideration in the planning process and states that there should be a presumption in favour of the preservation of nationally important archaeological features and sites, whether scheduled or not. Where local authorities decide that preservation *in situ* is not justified and destruction of the archaeological remains may proceed, they must be satisfied that the developer has made appropriate provision for archaeological investigation, recording and publication (ibid, para. 6.5.3).

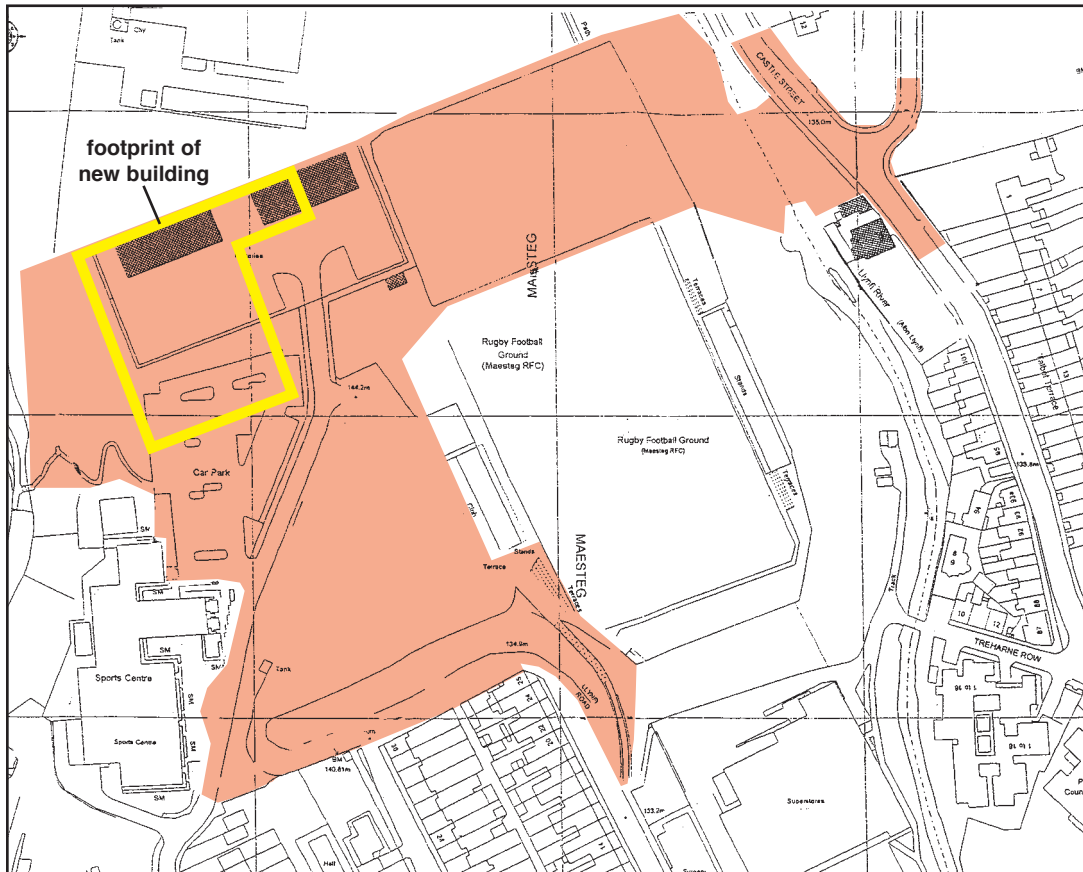
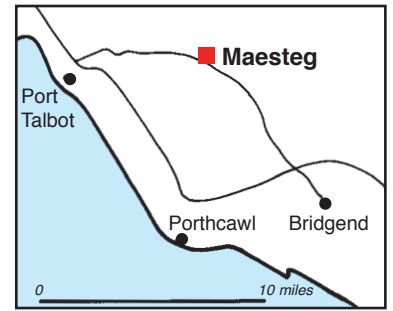


Fig.1 Site location plan, 1:2500

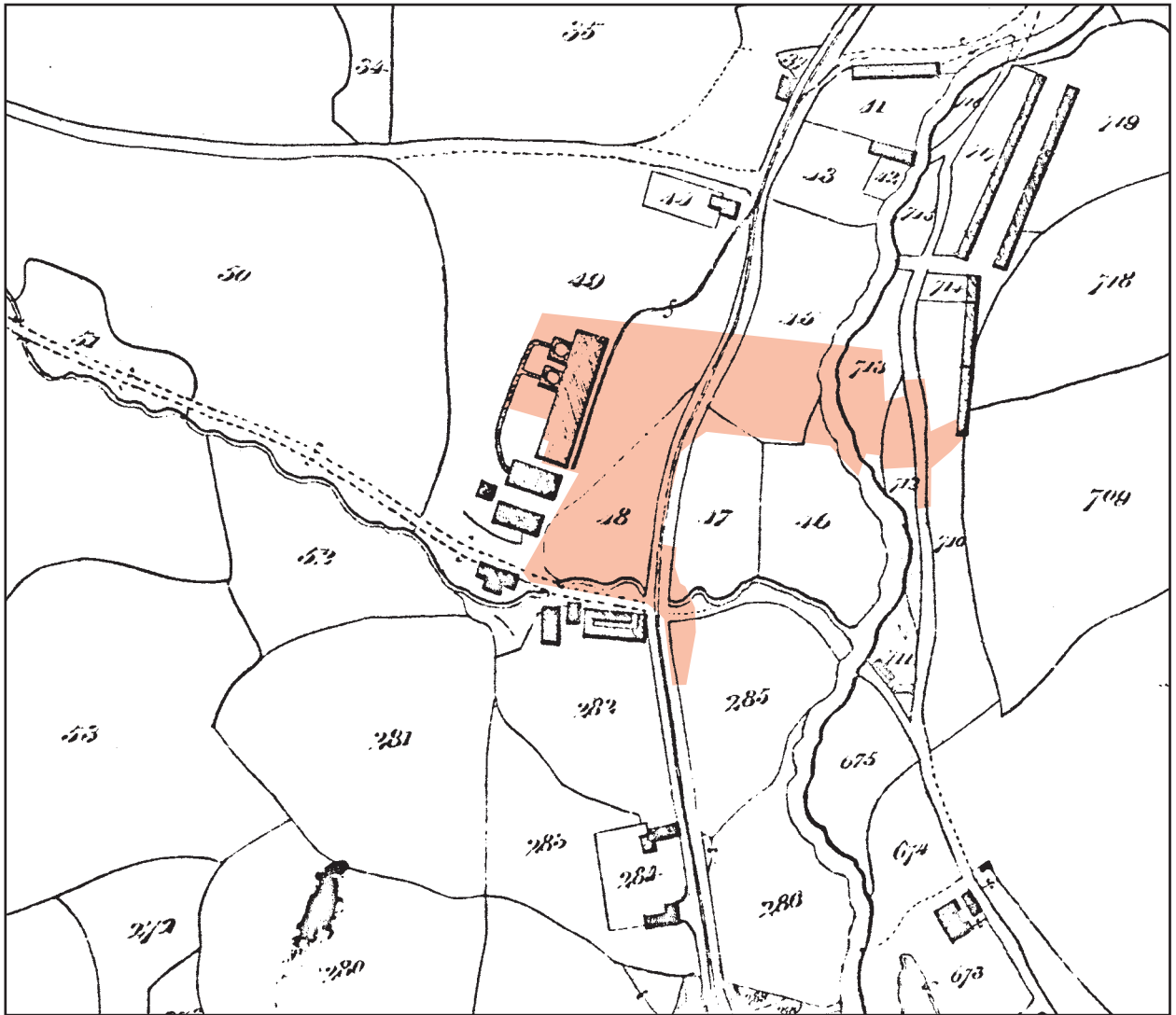


Fig.2 Tithe map, 1841

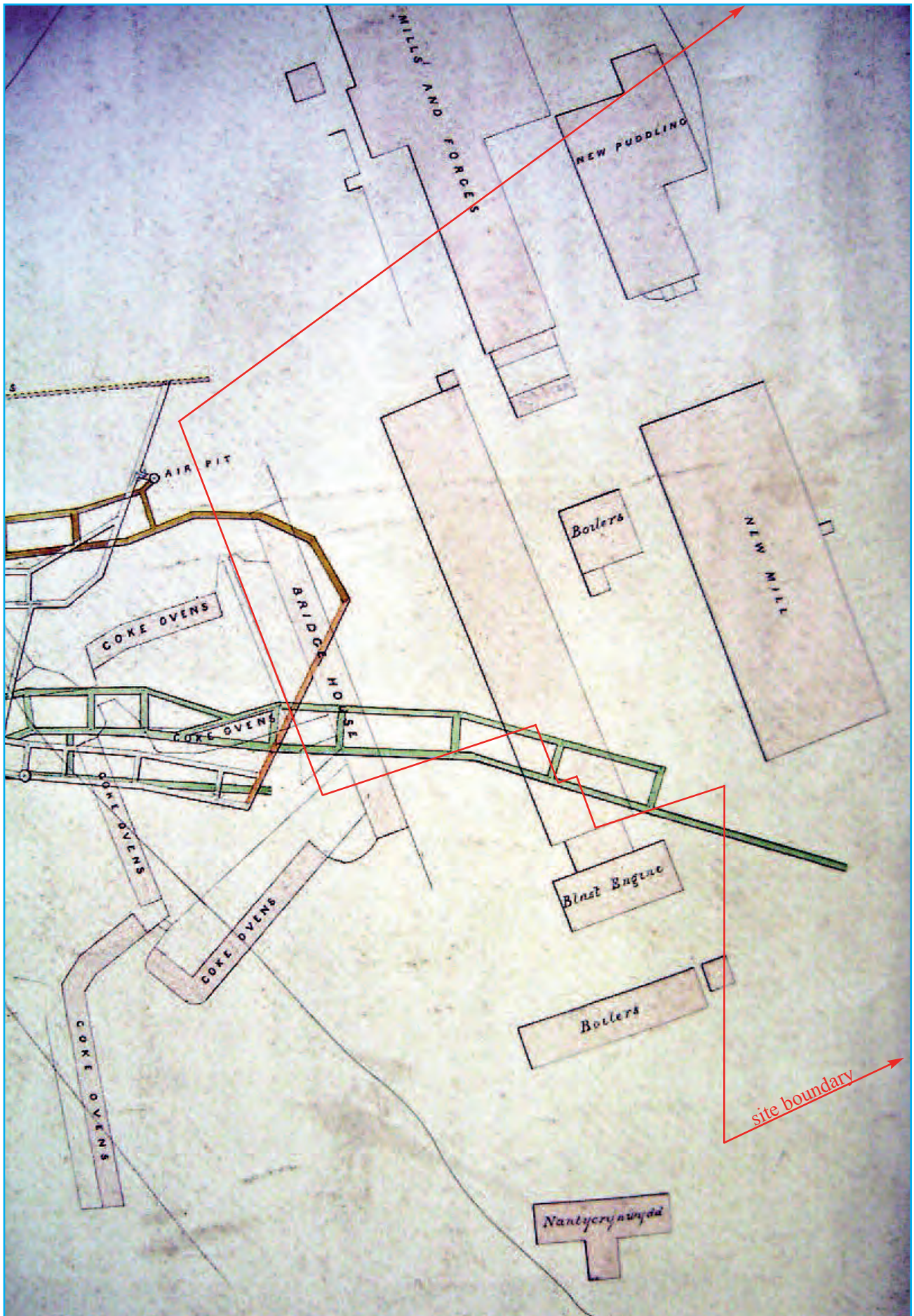
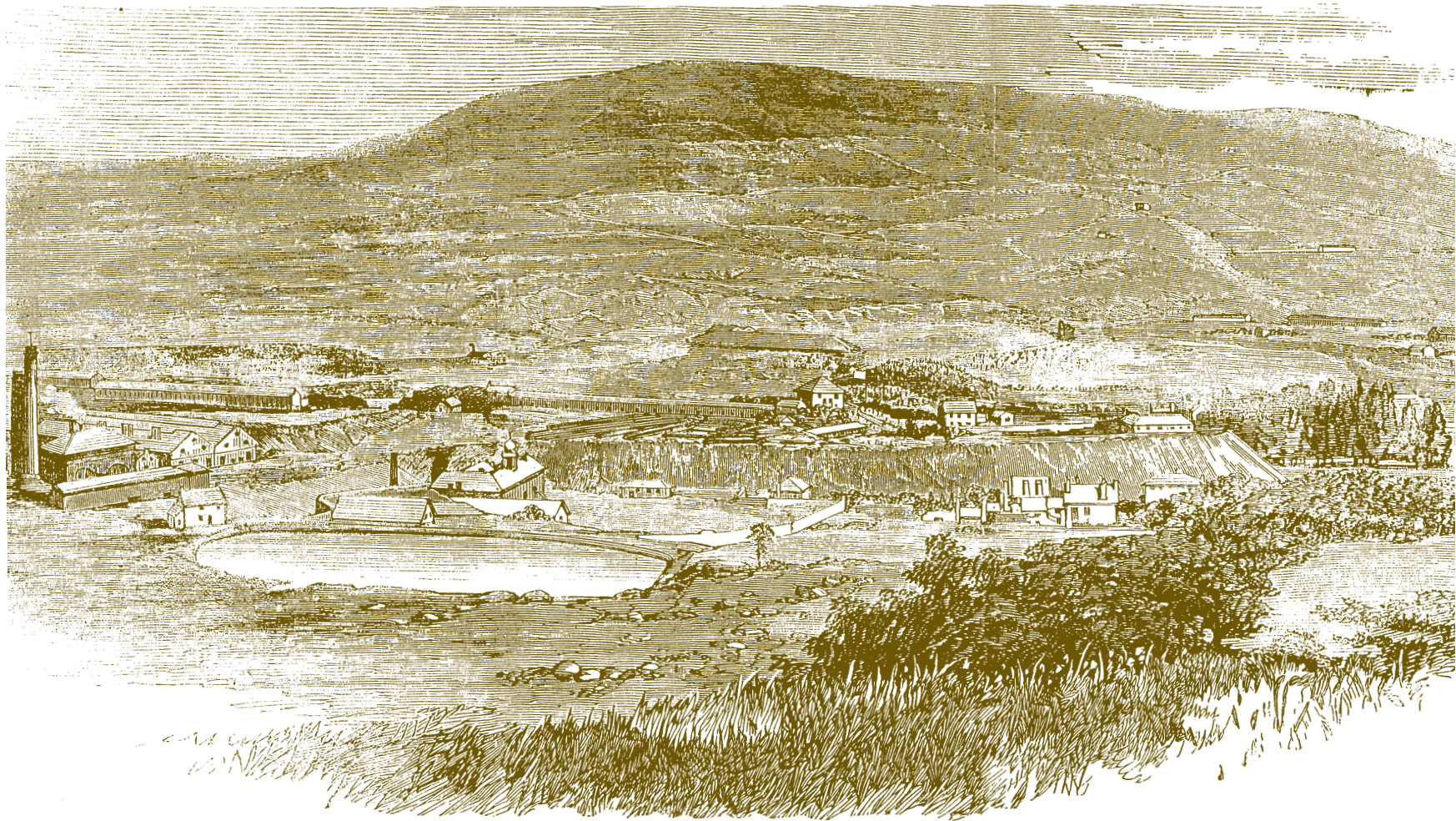


Fig.3 Plan of Llynfi Iron Works and 9 foot coal seam c.1855



43 Taken from the Illustrated London News of July 15th 1858 this magnificent print shows the following (left to right) Llynfi Iron Works (Gwaith Newydd) with the blast engine-house (Corn Stores), Nant-y-Crynwydd Farm, Bryant's Pond (Works Reservoir). In the background are Cavan Row (formerly Cambrian Row), Talbot Terrace (formerly Puddler's Row), Zoar Chapel, Castle Hotel, Plasnewydd House; in the foreground are Llynfi Lodge (formerly Bowrington Lodge), with the New Works School (formerly Bowrington School) adjacent

Fig.4 View across Llynfi Valley, 1858, present site on left

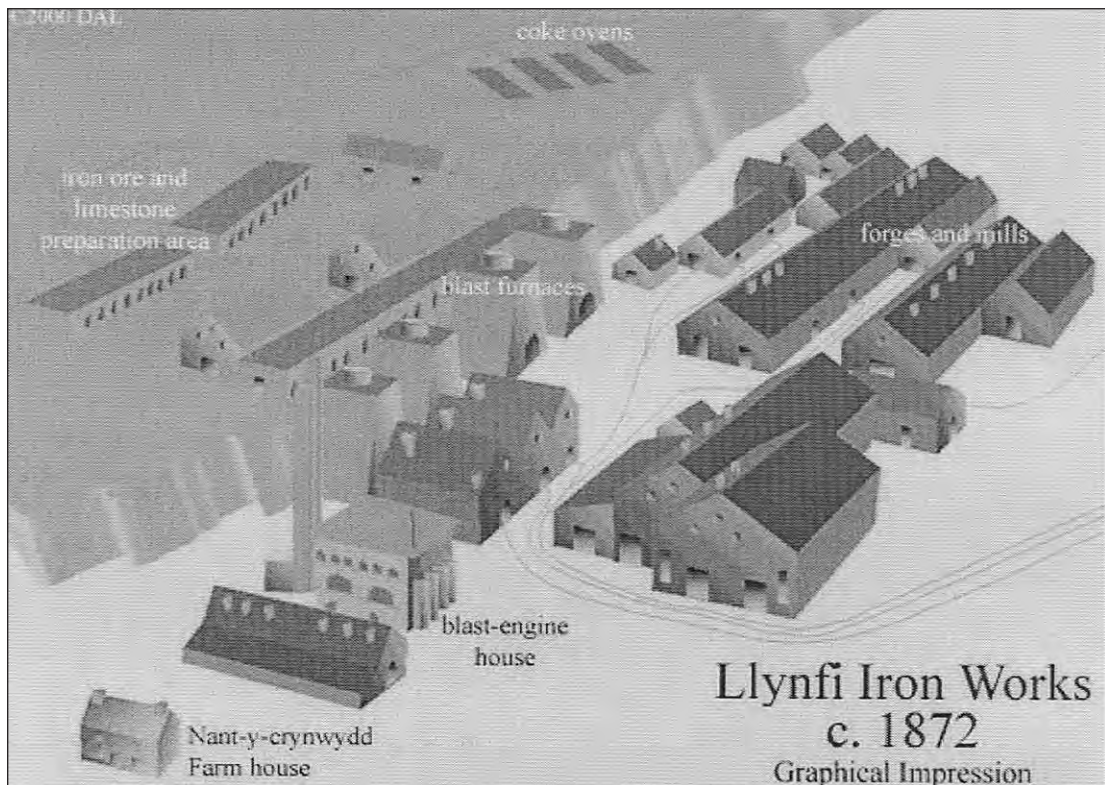


Fig.5 Reconstruction aerial view of works from the south-east c.1872



Fig.6 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 (reduced), surveyed 1876

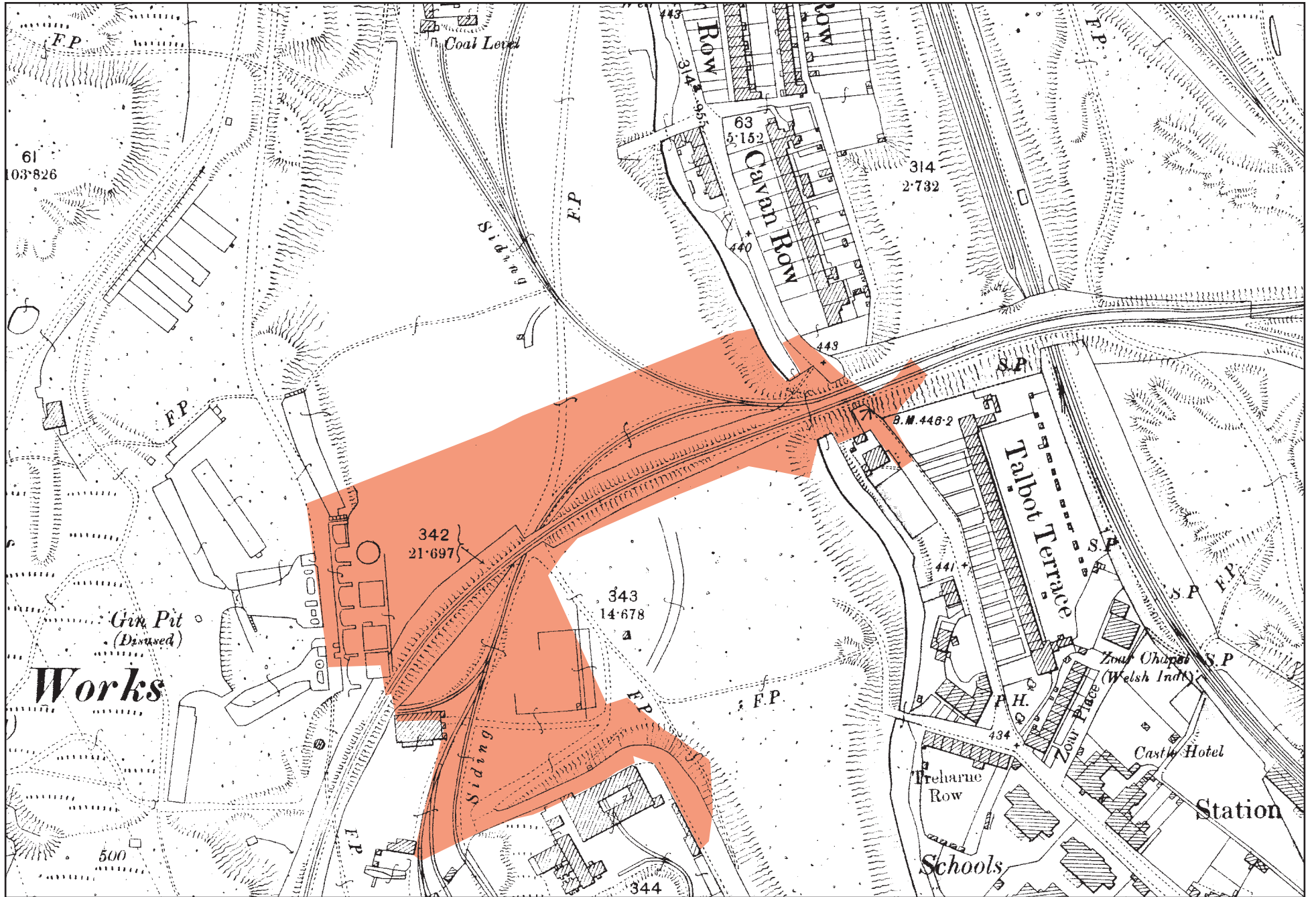


Fig.7 Ordnance Survey 1:2500, revised 1897

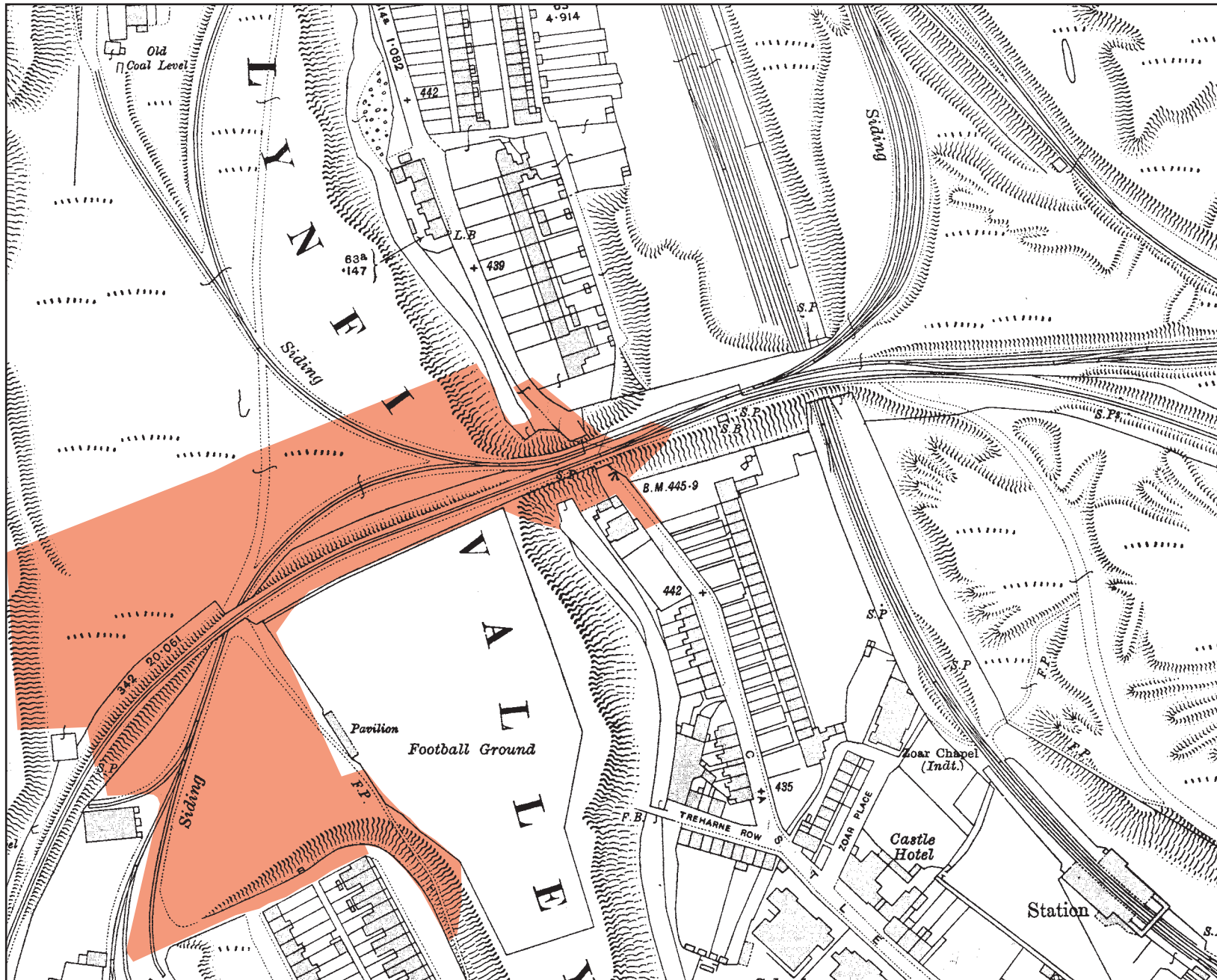


Fig.8 Ordnance Survey 1:2500, surveyed 1914

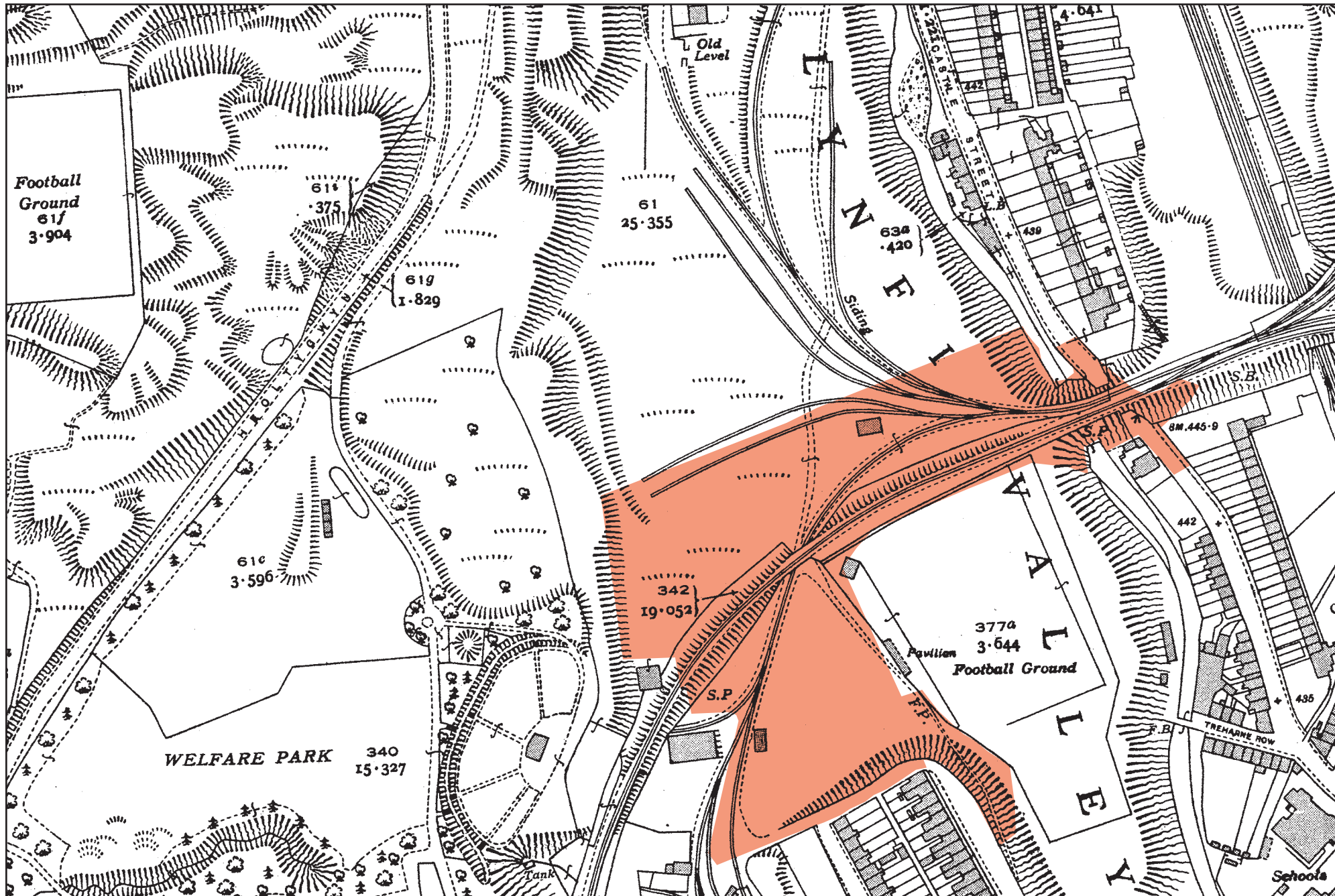


Fig.9 Ordnance Survey 1:2500, surveyed 1939-40

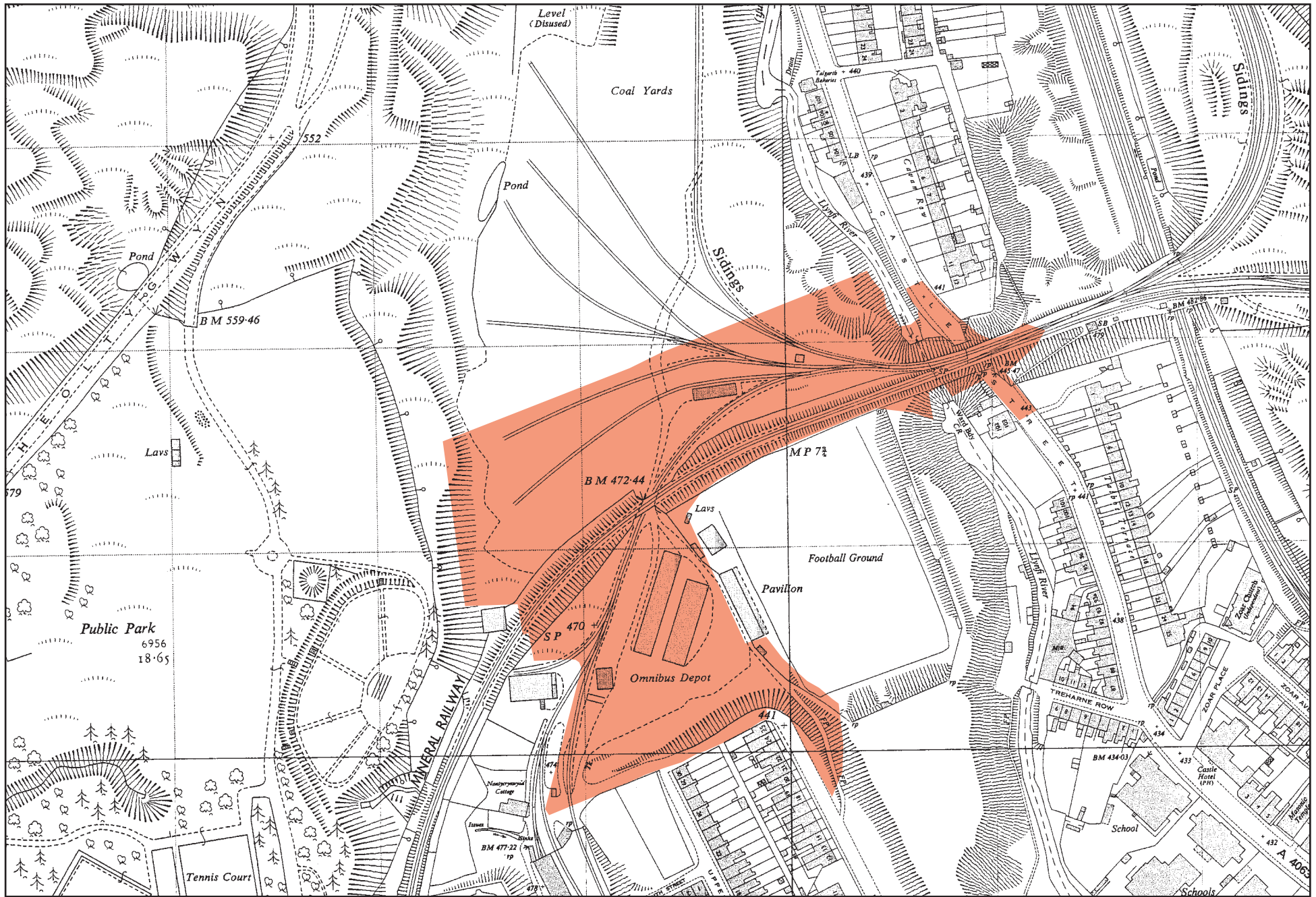


Fig.10 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 surveyed early 1950's



Fig.11 Blast Engine House, farmhouse and sidings c.1971

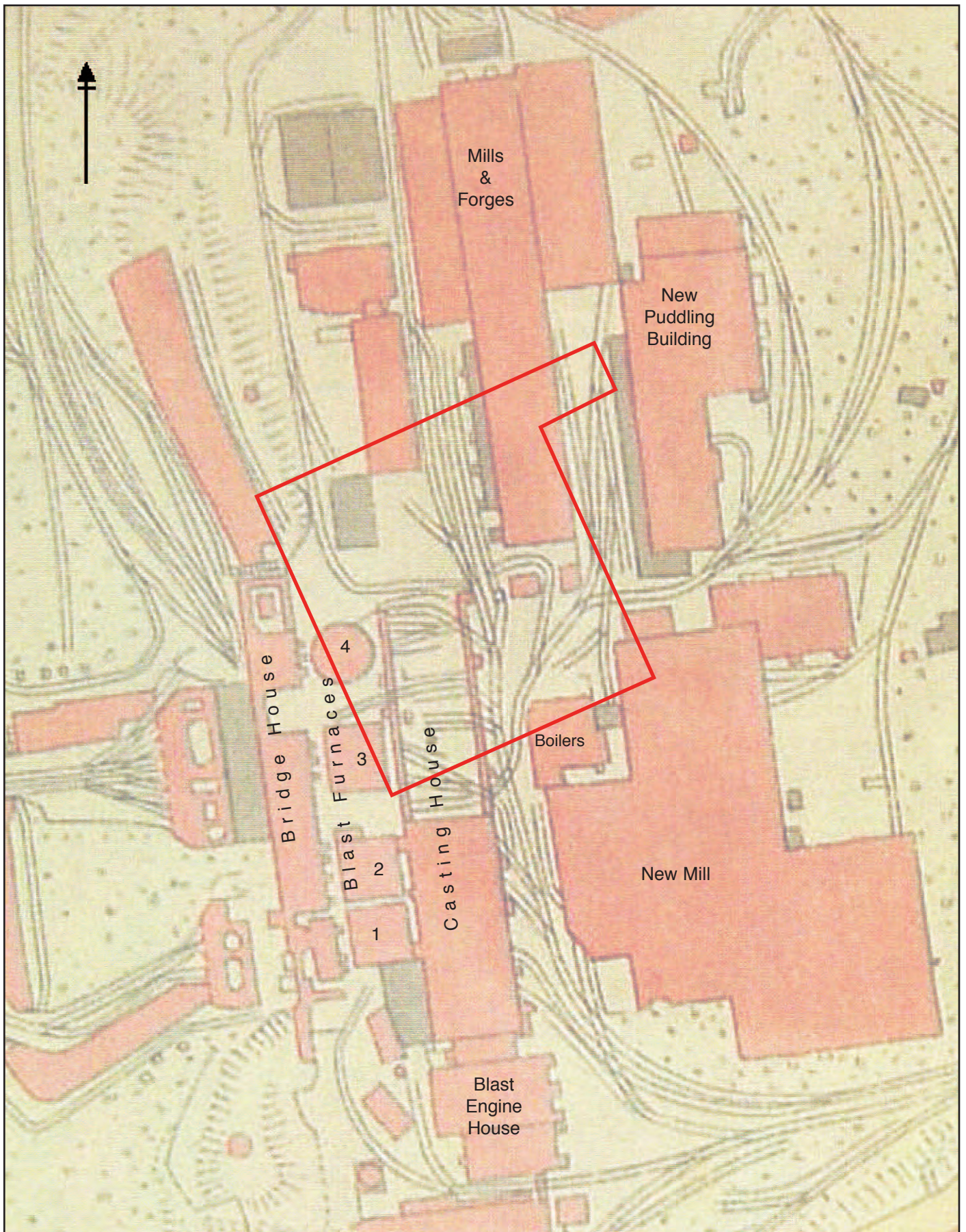


Fig.12 Principal iron works structures with the footprint of the proposed foodstore superimposed, scale approx. 1:1000

Scale 8 feet - 1 inch

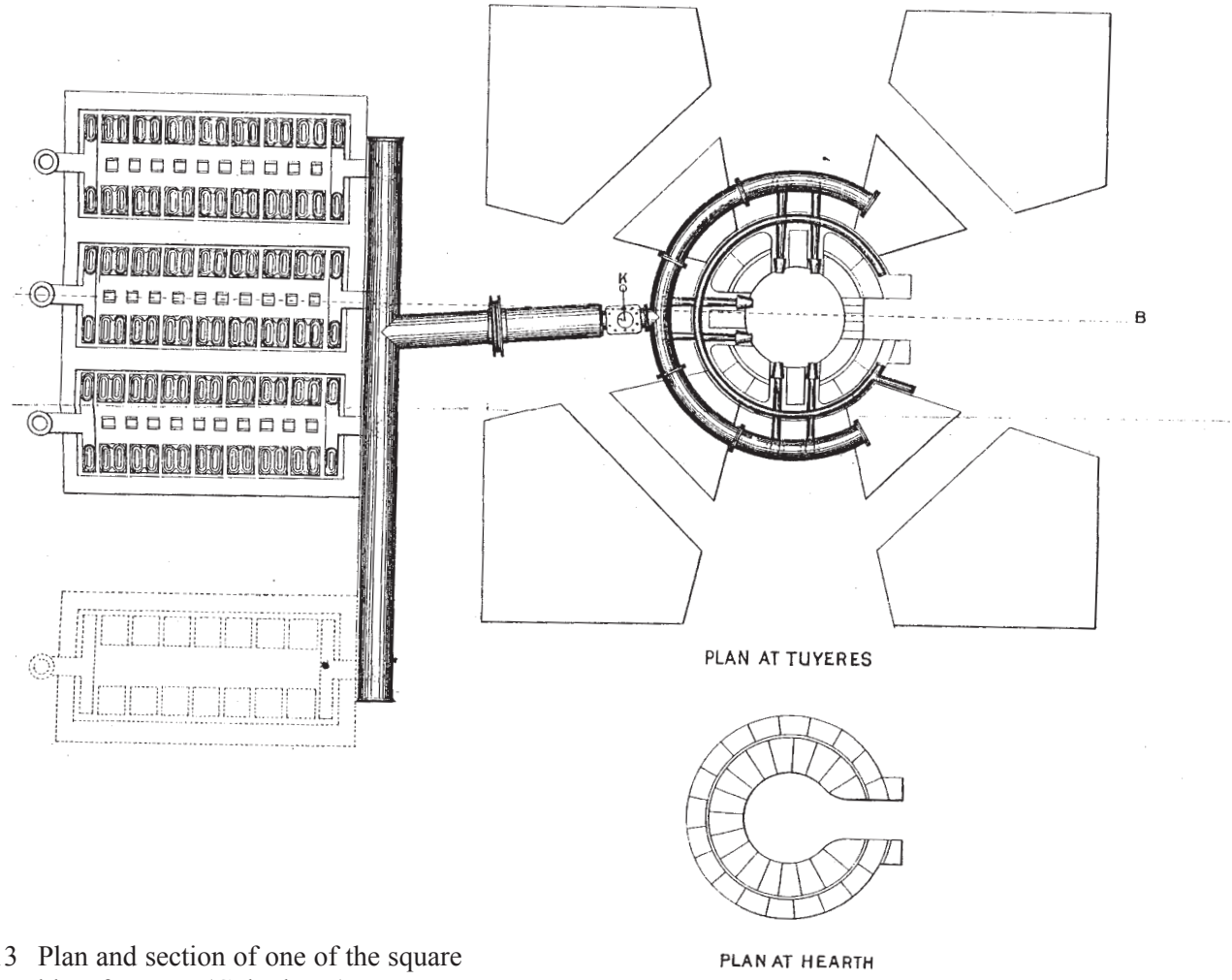
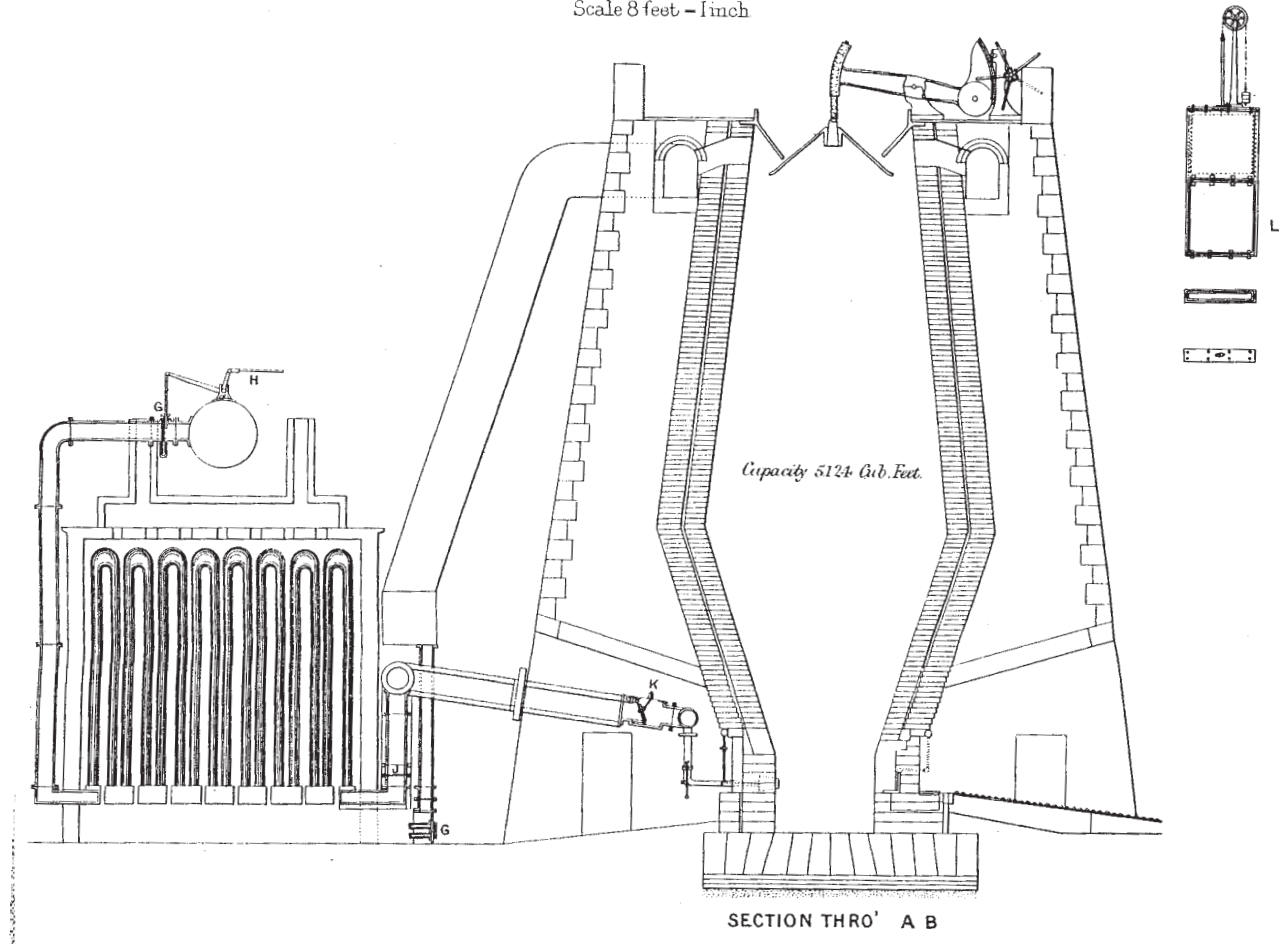


Fig. 13 Plan and section of one of the square blast furnaces (Colquhoun)

ON IMPROVEMENTS IN BLAST FURNACES.

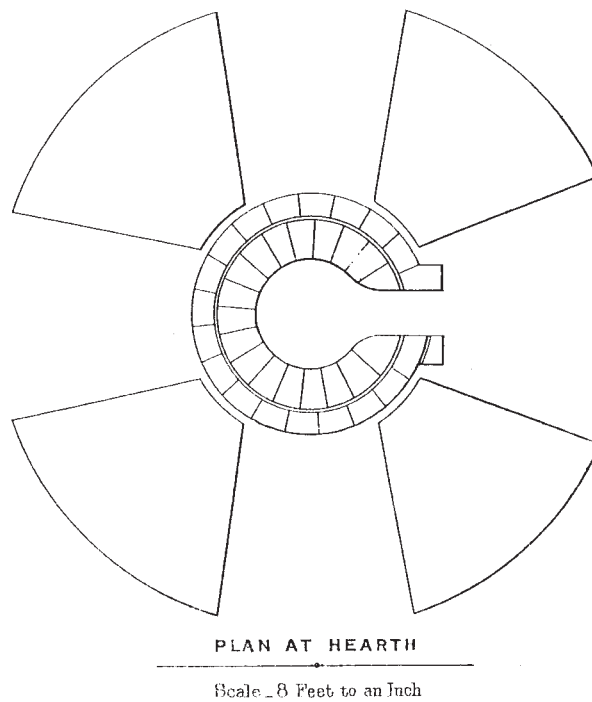
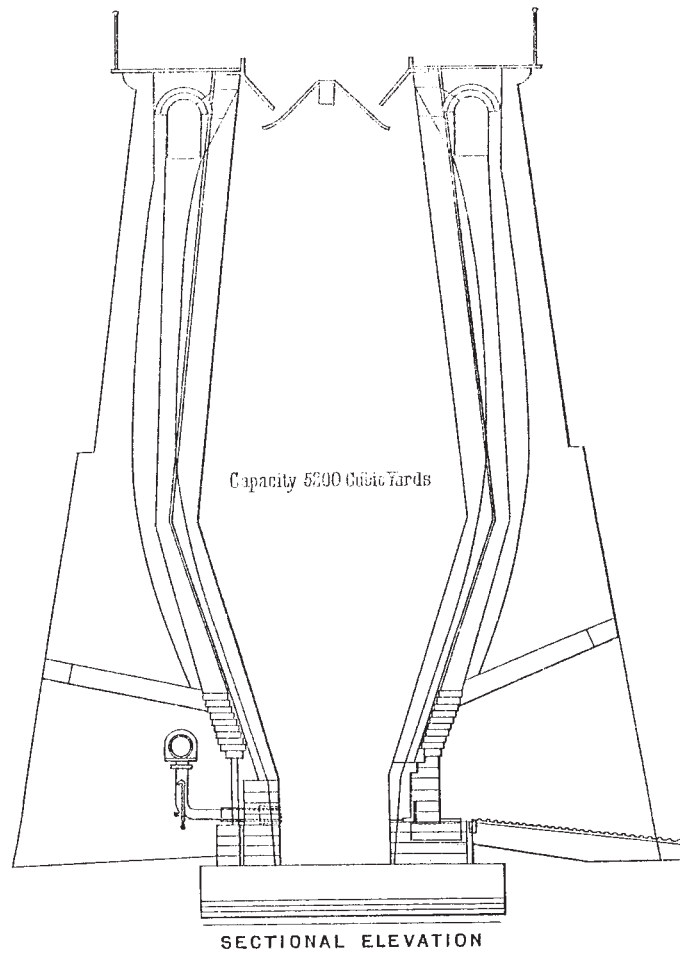


Fig.14 Plan and section of the circular northern blast furnace (Colquhoun)



Plate 1 South-western part of the site, with blast furnace in foreground



Plate 2 View westward across the valley, rugby ground in centre

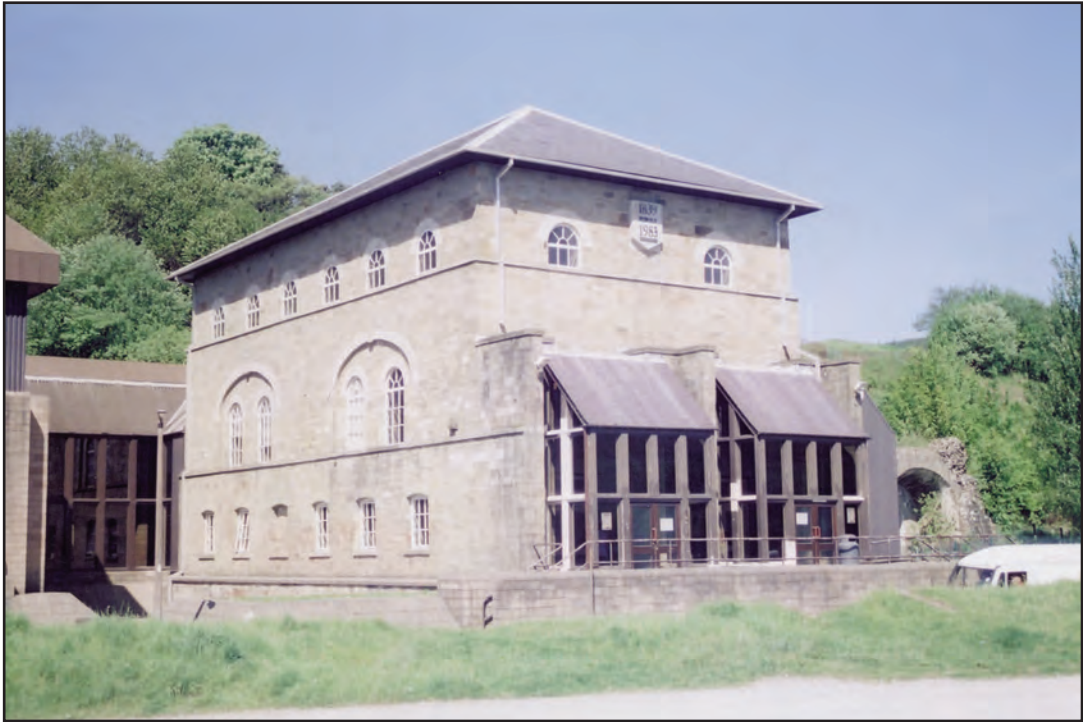


Plate 3 Former blast engine house, now sports centre



Plate 4 Sports Centre car park



Plate 5 Industrial units



Plate 6 Former No.1 blast furnace



Plate 7 Site from Llynfi Road



Plate 8 Southern end of Llynfi River culvert



Plate 9 No.102 Castle Street, from the south-west



Plate 10 Brick arched features at Llynfi Road



Plate 11 Section of reconstructed tramway



Plate 12 Bridge crossing Llynfi Valley Railway