

CPAT Report No. 1589

# St Cynhafal's Church, Llangynhafal, Denbighshire




ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL CLWYD-POWYS

CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Client name: Parochial Church Council of St Cynhafal's Church  
 CPAT Project No: 2293  
 Project Name: Llangynhafal Church  
 Grid Reference: SJ 13296 63402  
 County/LPA: Denbighshire  
 Pre-Planning Ref: N/A  
 CPAT Report No: 1589  
 Event PRN: 140243  
 Report status: Final  
 Confidential until: N/A

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7 June 2018	11 June 2018	11 June 2018

Bibliographic reference:

Grant, I., 2018. *St Cynhafal's Church, Llangynhafal: archaeological evaluation*. Unpublished report. CPAT Report No. 1588

Cover: Evaluation trench, viewed from the south-east. Photo CPAT 4507-0021



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## Summary

In May 2018 an archaeological evaluation was conducted by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT), on behalf of the Parochial Church Council, to undertake an archaeological evaluation in connection with proposals for a small extension to St Cynhafal's church, Llangynhafal in Denbighshire.

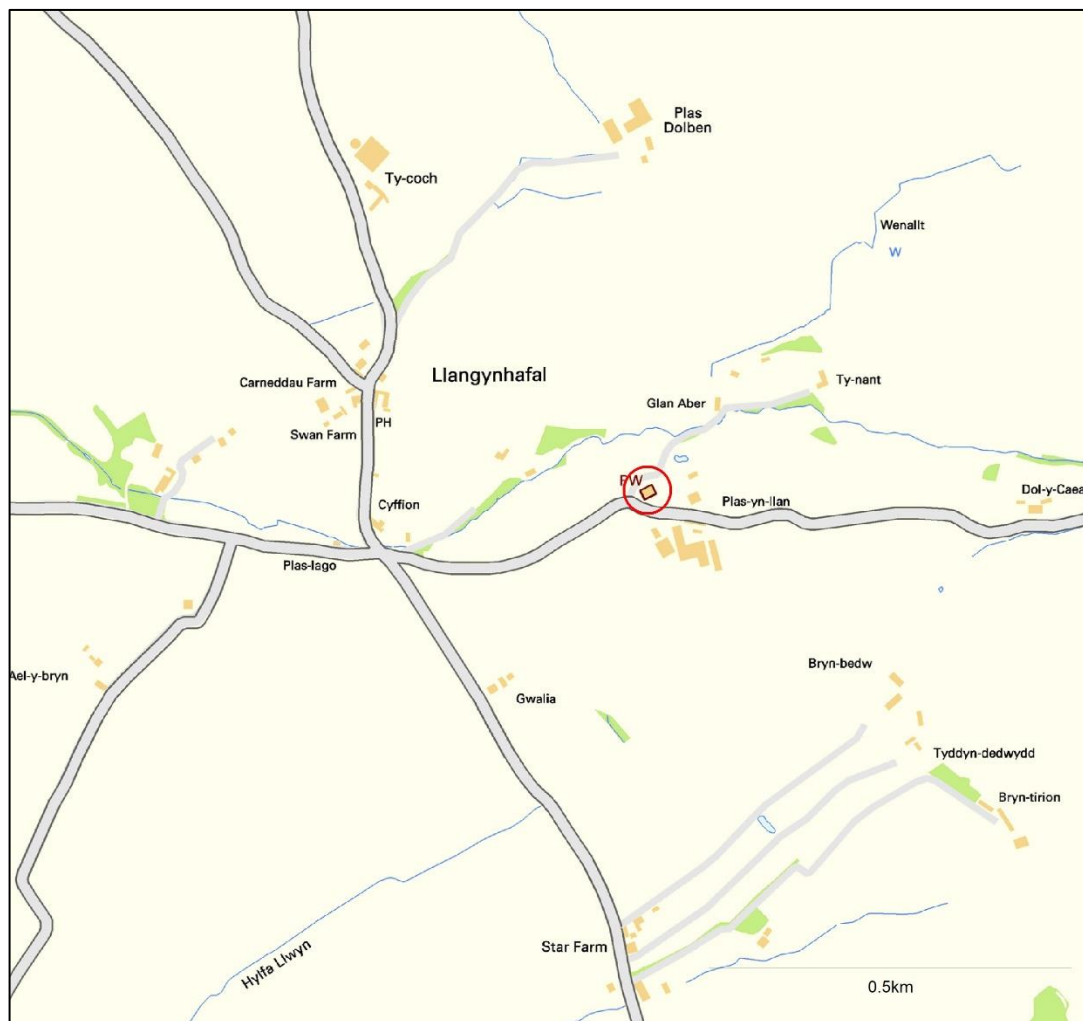
During the course of the excavations no insitu inhumations were encountered or disturbed, although the deposits at the base of the excavated ring beam footings, together with the amount of disarticulated human remains recovered, suggests the possibility of in-situ burials below the level at which the foundations will be constructed. It is also possible that further human remains may be encountered if the two tombs (09 and 10) are re-located.

No artefacts of medieval origin or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered during the excavation, although the opportunity for further investigation may arise later in the scheme when it is proposed to unblock the western doorway.

The scheme, if approved, will also require the installation of a septic tank and drainage, which it is currently proposed would be located within the path on the south side of the church. While it is impractical to evaluate this area it is assumed that in situ burials may well be encountered and that these would be excavated and recorded appropriately as part of a watching brief during the construction.

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Graham Holland Associates, on behalf of the Parochial Church Council, to undertake an archaeological evaluation in connection with proposals for a small extension to St Cynhafal's Church, Llangynhafal, in Denbighshire (Fig. 1; SJ 13296 63402). The new extension at the west end of the church, which would measure around 5m by 2.8m, would include the provision of a lavatory and kitchenette to be accessed via an existing, but blocked, doorway from the nave (Fig. 2).



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Fig. 1 Location of St. Cynhafal's Church, Llangynhafal

- 1.2. It is evident that the ground level against the west end of the church has been raised by up to 0.25m since perhaps the later 18<sup>th</sup> century. The proposed construction method would involve the construction of a ring beam foundation supported on piles bored into the ground. Although the piles have the potential to disturb in situ burials the extent of disturbance is considerably less than would be the case with tradition foundations. Given this method of construction it was considered impractical to evaluate the entire footprint of the extension to the maximum depth of disturbance. There was, however, a need for a general reduction of the ground level in order to

match the floor level of the extension with that of the church interior. A small evaluation trench was therefore proposed within the area of the extension to assess the potential for in situ deposits and burials up to the maximum depth of ground disturbance.

- 1.3. The evaluation was conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (Cifa) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014).

## 2 Historical Background

- 2.1. St Cynhafal's church lies on the lower western slopes of the Clwydians, five miles from Denbigh. The dedication, location and churchyard morphology point to an early medieval origin for Llangynhafal church; this is the only dedication to St Cynhafal in Wales, who was supposedly a 7<sup>th</sup>-century saint. However, there is no documentary evidence to support such an early foundation date.
- 2.2. The first reference to the church is the Norwich Taxation of 1254. A small double-naved church typical of the Vale of Clwyd, its external walls are rendered allowing little insight into its structural development in the medieval period. It certainly reached its present form in the Perpendicular period and several windows, though heavily renewed, together with the south door and a figure set into its reveal, date to this time. There is evidence of renovation in 1669 and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and restoration in 1869-70 and 1884. It retains its late medieval roofs and a medieval font, a fine range of 17<sup>th</sup> century and 18<sup>th</sup> century wooden fittings, and a fairly typical set of 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century wall memorials. The churchyard was originally sub-oval and its original eastern perimeter is still discernible as a low earthwork; interesting 18<sup>th</sup> century graveslabs survive in situ.



Fig. 2 Blocked doorway, west wall of the north nave, revealed during restoration in 2007. Photo G. Holland.

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### 3 Evaluation

- 3.1. The evaluation was conducted between 22-24 May 2018, with all excavation being undertaken by hand. Further to a site meeting (22/05/18) between Ian Grant (CPAT Senior Archaeologist) and Graham Holland (Architect), the evaluation specification was modified to include the excavation of the ring beam footing. The trench, located alongside the west wall of the north nave and orientated north-west to south-east, measured 5.6m by 2.8m (Figs 3 and 12). The general ground level within the footprint was reduced by approximately 0.3m. Thereafter, the foundations for the ring beam, which measured 0.5m wide, were excavated to a depth of between 0.46m and 0.5m below the present ground surface. A chest tomb (10) (see Figs 4 and 5) extended into the area of the evaluation, but will be relocated as part of the proposed development.
- 3.2. The initial ground reduction of up to 0.3m revealed a salt-glazed pipe-drain (03), located at the base of the west wall (06) at a depth of 0.1m below the present ground surface. The drain, of 1920-30's date, had been placed above, and along the line of an earlier 'French drain' (08), which was 0.5m wide and at least 0.28m deep. At the southern-most end the pipe exited a grid and continued westwards, at a depth of 0.2m, along the line of the ring beam footings. In order to preserve the integrity of the drainage neither were removed and subsequently there was no further opportunity to investigate and record earlier church foundations.
- 3.3. At a depth of 0.1m below the present ground surface an electrical service cable, orientated east to west, was recorded at a point adjacent to the blocked doorway in the west wall. It is unknown whether or not the cable, which extended beyond the bounds of the excavation, is redundant (Fig. 7).
- 3.4. Two deposits (02 and 04) constituted the bulk of the cemetery deposits removed during the ground reduction. Deposit 02, which was up to 0.12m thick, consisted of a dark brown, sandy silt containing demolition debris, including slate, brick and mortar, probably associated with refurbishment work undertaken on the church in 1975. This overlay deposit 04, a loose, pinkish-brown silty sand, up to 0.2m thick. This deposit also contained an amount of demolition/refurbishment debris but the material appeared to be associated with earlier restoration works dating to the mid - 19<sup>th</sup> century.

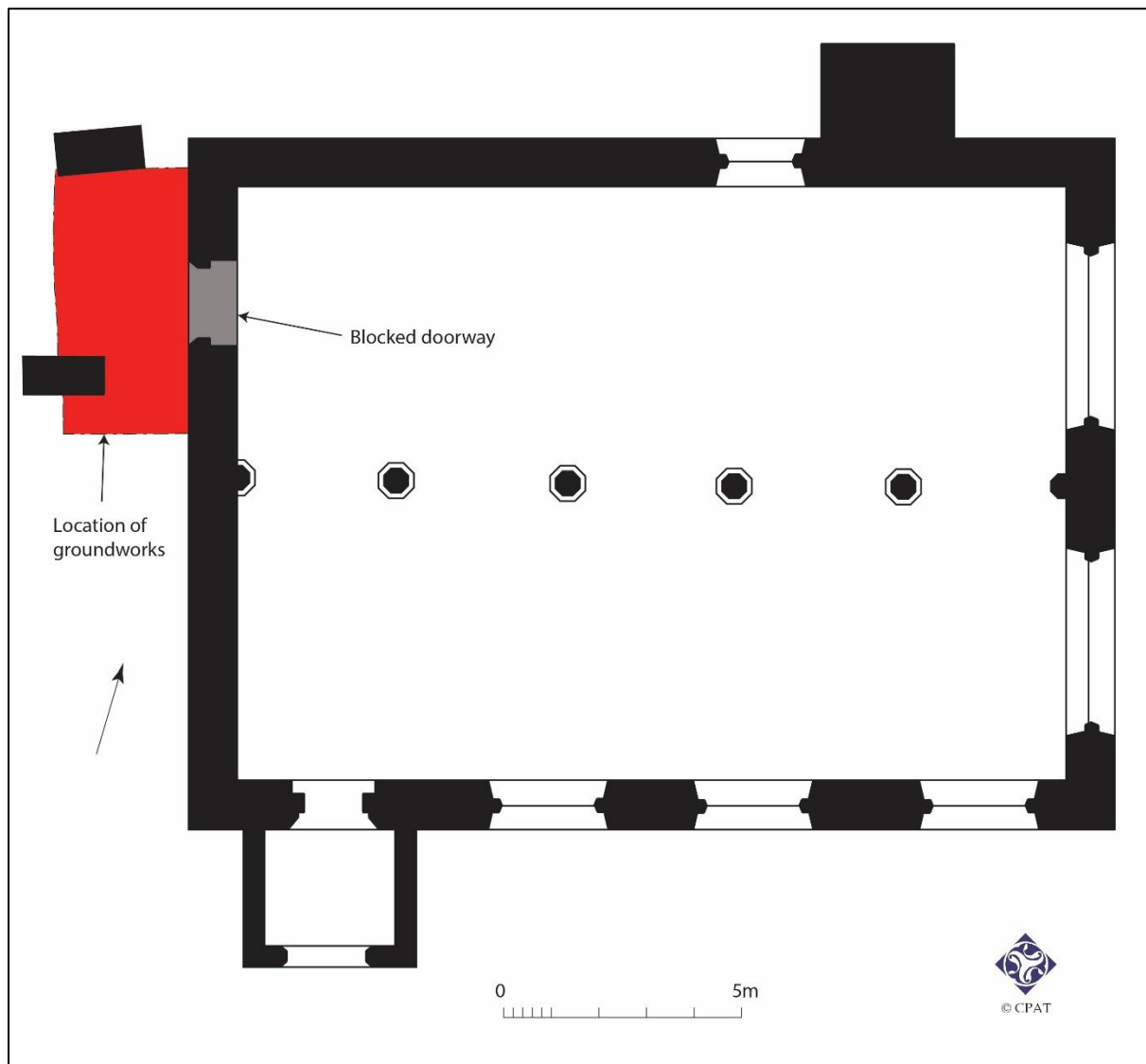


Fig. 3 Plan of St Cynhafal's Church, showing the location of the evaluation trench





Fig. 4. The excavation viewed from the north. Photo CPAT 4507-0002



Fig. 5. The excavation viewed from the south. Photo CPAT 4507-0016

- 3.5. Underlying deposit 04, and partially excavated within the bounds of the footings, was a firmer deposit of fine yellowy brown silty sand (05). Two grave cuts (15 and 16) associated with the two tombs (09 and 10) were recorded at this level, approximately 0.5m below the present ground surface. This concluded the excavation. No further deposits of archaeological significance were recorded.

Artefacts recovered from deposits 2, 4 and 5 are discussed later in this report (Section 4).



Fig. 6. South-east-facing section. Photo CPAT 4507-0005



Fig. 7. Excavated ring beam footings, deposit 04 *in-situ*. Electrical cable (13) to the right. Viewed from the west. Photo CPAT 4507-0003

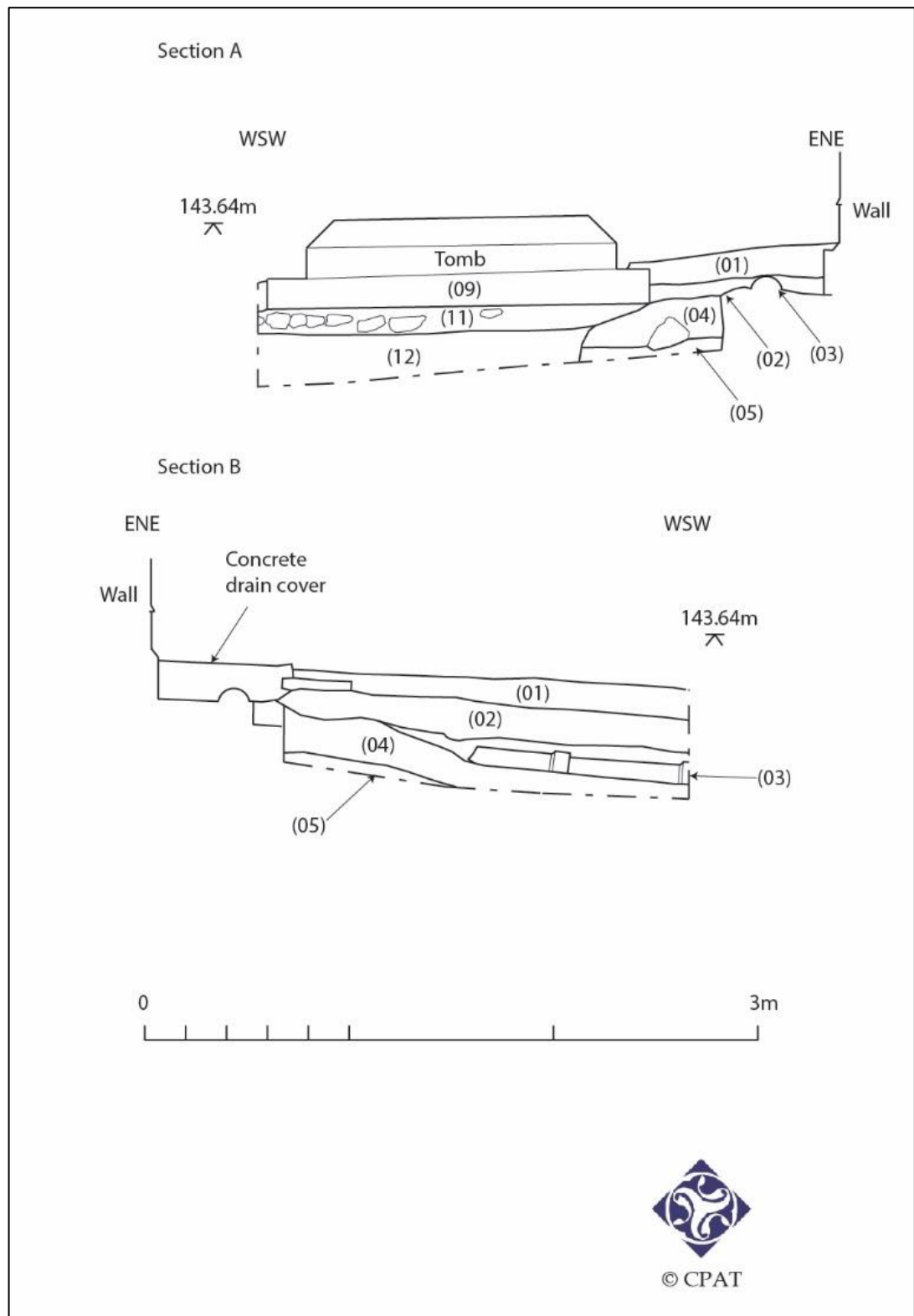


Fig. 8. St Cynhafal's Church evaluation. Sections A and B.



Fig. 9. South-west corner footings, drainage (03) and tomb (10). Viewed from the east. Photo CPAT 4507-0014



Fig. 10. East-facing section. Photo CPAT 4507-0007



Fig. 11. View of the west wall showing the location of the south-east footings and drainage (03). Viewed from the west. Photo CPAT 4507-0013

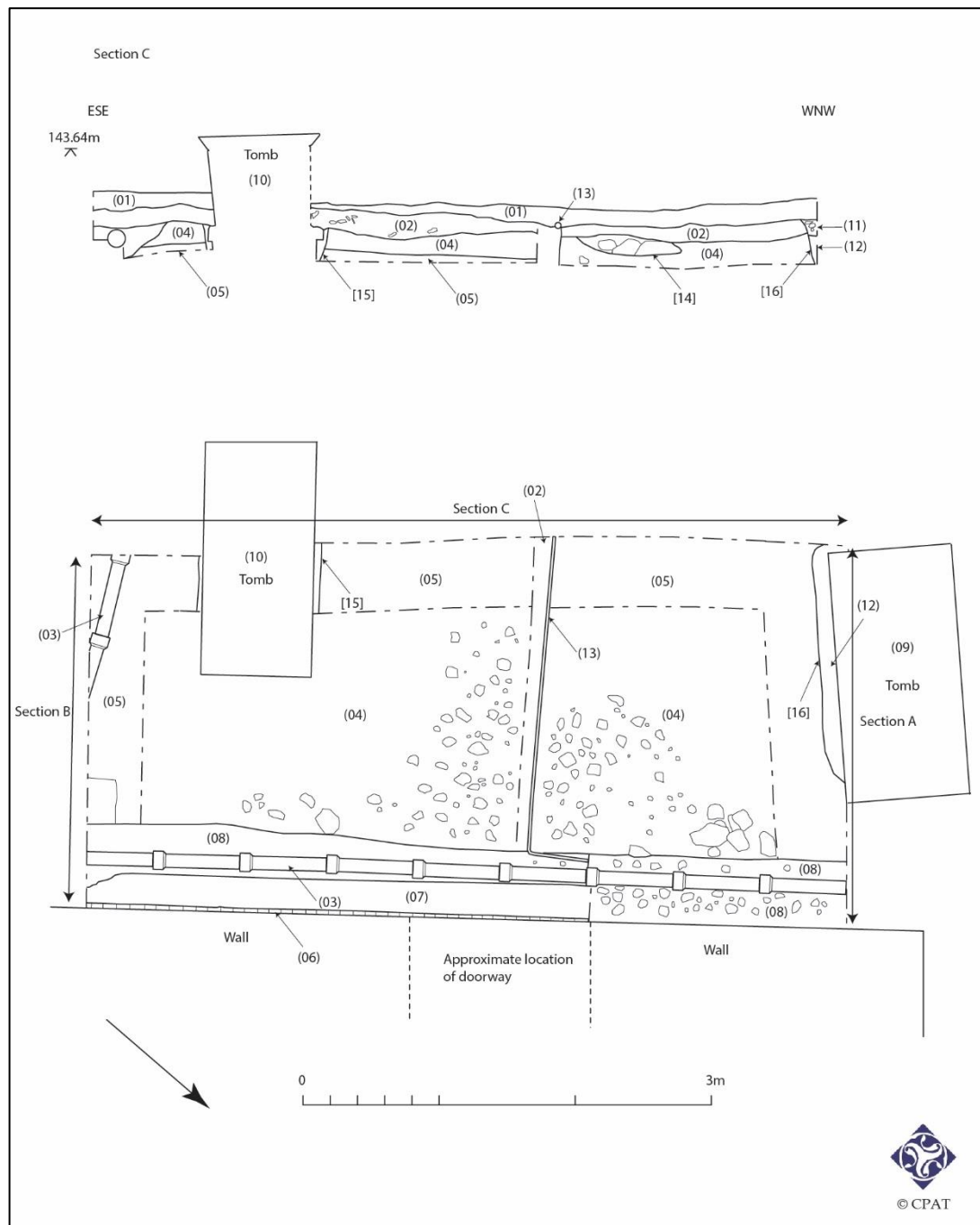


Fig. 12. St Cynhafal's Church evaluation. Section C and Overall Excavation Plan.

## 4 Finds

- 4.1. A small collection of fragmented late 18<sup>th</sup>-century and early 19<sup>th</sup>-century black-glazed earthenware, whiteware and industrial teaware was recovered from the overlying topsoil (01). Other finds included iron, square-sectioned funerary nails and fixtures, a fragment of olive-coloured window glass, clay pipe stems and lead window tracery.
- 4.2. The following were recovered from the underlying cemetery deposits (04 and 05):

- 
- Deposit 4 – small collection of late 18<sup>th</sup>-century and early 19<sup>th</sup>-century black-glazed earthenware; mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century Mottledware; iron square-sectioned funerary and building nails; fragment of olive-coloured window glass; and lead window tracery..
  - Deposit 5 – a single rim sherd of late 18<sup>th</sup>-century black-glazed fine earthenware; a rim-herd of late 17<sup>th</sup>-century black-glazed earthenware; fragments of olive-coloured window glass; lead window tracery; clay pipe stems; and a George II Halfpenny coin c. 1729.
- 4.3. As part of the ongoing development scheme, all of the recovered material has been retained for deposition with the Parochial Church Council of St Cynhafal's Church, pending further archaeological investigations at the church.
- 4.4. A small amount of disarticulated human remains were recovered from deposits 02, 04, and 05. These were retained in a labelled container and stored in the church vestry for later reburial. With the exception of tombs 09 and 10, no in situ inhumations were encountered or disturbed during the course of the evaluation.

## 5 Conclusions

- 5.1. The evaluation has provided useful information regarding the site for the proposed extension which will assist in development mitigation measures should the scheme proceed.
- 5.2. No in situ inhumations were encountered or disturbed during the course of the evaluation. However, the firmer nature of deposit 05, encountered at the base of the ring beam footings, together with the frequency in which disarticulated remains were encountered at this level (0.5m below the present ground surface) suggests a strong possibility of in-situ burials below. Any proposed modification to the existing design plan should take this in to account. It is likely that further human remains may also be encountered when the table top tomb (10) is re-located. In addition, the grave cut (16) (see Fig. 7, Section A) associated with the overlying tomb (09) (c. 1930's), lies just within the projected line of the ring beam footing and some caution will be required if and when the tomb is relocated further north.
- 5.3. No artefacts of medieval origin or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered during the excavation. The modern drainage encountered prevented any further investigation of the earlier church foundations of the north nave or indeed any earlier graveyard deposits underlying the wall. The opportunity for further investigation may arise later in the scheme when it is proposed to unblock the western doorway.
- 5.4. The scheme, if approved, will also require the installation of a septic tank and drainage, which it is currently proposed would be located within the path on the south side of the church. While it is impractical to evaluate this area it is assumed that in situ burials may well be encountered and that these would be excavated and recorded appropriately as part of a watching brief during the construction.

## 6 Acknowledgements

- 6.1. The author would like to thank: Helen McCahill, CPAT; Graham Holland, Graham Holland Associates; Reverend Philip Chew and Mr John Davies, Parochial Church Council. Report illustrations were prepared by Will Logan, CPAT.

## 7 Sources

Silvester, R. J., 1998. *Welsh Historic Church Project. The Historic Churches of Denbighshire and the Vale of Clwyd*. Unpublished report. CPAT Report no. 276.

## 8 Archive deposition Statement

The project archive has been prepared according to the CPAT Archive Policy and in line with the Cifa *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives guidance* (2014). The digital archive only will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and the paper/drawn/digital archive with the National Monuments Record (RCAHMW).

### Archive Summary

CPAT Event PRN: 140243

2 Photographic Register Form (Film No. 4507);

61 Digital photographs; CPAT Film Number: 4507

16 Context Record forms

2 Levels sheets

1 Drawing Register Form (Drawing Nos 01 - 04)

1 x A2 drawings sheet

1 x A3 drawings sheet

Digital site drawings (Adobe Illustrator and JPEG):

### Finds

Table 1. Summary of the pottery

Context	Sherd Type	Sherd No.	Comment
01	Handle	1	Late 18 <sup>th</sup> -century black glazed earthenware. Fine tableware.
01	Body	1	Body sherd, 19 <sup>th</sup> -century industrial teaware.
01	Body	1	Body sherd, purple-brown glazed earthenware. Some evidence of salt tempering. Orange fabric.



04	Rim	3	Rim sherds of orange-red earthenware. Interior splash black-brown glazing. Two adjoining sherds and a sherd from a different vessel. Late 18 <sup>th</sup> -century.
04	Body	1	Body sherd of mid-18 <sup>th</sup> -century Mottleware. Buff fabric.
04	Base	1	Basal sherd of mid-18 <sup>th</sup> -century Mottleware. Buff fabric.
04	Base	2	Basal sherds of black-brown glazed earthenware. Two separate tableware vessels. Interior glaze only. Late 18 <sup>th</sup> -century, early 19 <sup>th</sup> -century.
04	Base	1	Basal sherd of black-brown glazed earthenware. Interior and exterior glaze. High fired coal measures clay, orange fabric. 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> -century.
04	Body	1	Adjoining body sherd to the above.
04	Body	1	Body sherd of fine earthenware/tableware. Orange fabric. Black-brown glaze, interior and exterior. 19 <sup>th</sup> -century.
04	Body	1	Body sherd of fine earthenware/tableware. Buff fabric. Black-brown glaze, interior. 19 <sup>th</sup> -century.
04	Body	1	Body sherd of earthenware/tableware. Orange fabric. Black-brown glaze, salt tempered interior and exterior. Mid-18 <sup>th</sup> -century.
05	Rim	1	Rim sherd of fine earthenware/tableware. Orange fabric. Black-brown glazed, interior and exterior. Late 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> -century.
05	Rim	1	Rim sherd of fine earthenware/tableware. Orange fabric. Black-brown glazed, interior and exterior. Late 17 <sup>th</sup> -century.

Table 2. Summary of miscellaneous finds.

Context	Type	No.	Comment
01	Fe	12	Assorted iron square-sectioned funerary/roofing nails. Medieval-post medieval.
01	Fe	1	Iron funerary ring. Post medieval
01	Glass	2	Thin olive-coloured window glass. Date unknown.
01	Glass	1	Green window glass. Post medieval.
01	Pb	1	Fragment of lead window tracery. Post medieval

01	Slate	1	Sample of roofing slate with lime mortar attached.
01	Clay pipe	4	Assorted clay pipe stems. 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> -century.
04	Fe	9	Assorted iron square-sectioned funerary/roofing nails. Medieval-post medieval.
04	Clay pipe	12	Assorted clay pipe stems and bowl. 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> -century.
04	Glass	1	Thin olive-coloured window glass. Date unknown
04	Pb	1	Fragment of lead window tracery. Date unknown
05	Cu-Alloy	1	George II Halfpenny coin c. 1729
05	Clay pipe	4	Assorted clay pipe stems. 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> -century.
05	Glass	1	Thin olive-coloured window glass. Date unknown
05	Pb	1	Fragment of lead window tracery. Date unknown
05	Fe	2	Iron square-sectioned funerary/roofing nails. Medieval-post medieval.

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## Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 1792

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been invited by Graham Holland, on behalf of the Parochial Church Council, to submit a specification and costing for undertaking an archaeological evaluation in connection with proposals for a small extension to St Cynhafal's Church, Llangynhafal, in Denbighshire (SJ 1331 6340). The new extension at the west end of the church, which would measure around 5m by 2.8m, would include the provision of a lavatory and kitchenette to be accessed via an existing, but blocked, doorway.
- 1.2. St Cynhafal's church lies on the lower western slopes of the Clwydians, 5 miles from Denbigh. The dedication, location and churchyard morphology point to an early medieval origin for Llangynhafal church; this is the only dedication to St Cynhafal in Wales, who was supposedly a 7<sup>th</sup>-century saint. However, there is no documentary evidence to support such an early foundation date. The first reference to the church is the Norwich Taxation of 1254. A small double-naved church typical of the Vale of Clwyd, its external walls are rendered allowing little insight into its structural development in the medieval period. It certainly reached its present form in the Perpendicular period and several windows, though heavily renewed, together with the south door and a figure set into its reveal, date to this time. There is evidence of renovation in 1669 and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and restoration in 1869-70 and 1884. It retains its late medieval roofs and a medieval font, a fine range of 17<sup>th</sup> century and 18<sup>th</sup> century wooden fittings, and a fairly typical set of 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century wall memorials. The churchyard was originally sub-oval and its original eastern perimeter is still discernible as a low earthwork; interesting 18<sup>th</sup> century graveslabs survive in situ.
- 1.3. There is a chest tomb within the area which will need to be relocated. It is evident that the ground level against the west end of the church has been raised by up to 250mm since perhaps the later 18<sup>th</sup> century. The proposed construction method would involve the construction of a ring beam foundation supported on piles bored into the ground. Although the piles have the potential to disturb in situ burials the extent of disturbance is considerably less than would be the case with tradition foundations. Given this method of construction it is considered impractical to evaluate the foundations themselves. There is, however, a need for a general reduction of the ground level in order to match the floor level of the extension with that of the church interior. A small evaluation trench is therefore proposed within the area of the extension to assess the potential for in situ deposits and burials up to the maximum depth of ground disturbance.
- 1.4. The scheme will also require the installation of a septic tank and drainage, which it is currently proposed would be located within the path on the south side of the church. While it is impractical to evaluate this area it is assumed that *in situ* burials may well be encountered and that these would be excavated and recorded appropriately as part of a watching brief during the construction.

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## 2 Objectives

2.1. The objectives of the evaluation are:

- to reveal by means of a field evaluation, the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the cultural heritage within the area of the proposed development in so far as these aims are possible;
- to record any archaeological features identified during the evaluation;
- to prepare a report outlining the results of the evaluation;
- to prepare a final publication of the results in an appropriate regional or national journal, depending on the nature and significance of any archaeology.

## 3 Methodology

3.1. The evaluation will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014) and *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment* (2014).

3.2. The evaluation will consist of a single hand-excavated trench, 5m long and 1.2m wide, located within the area of the proposed extension. A small sondage will extend from the trench to the base of the church wall. The evaluation will be essentially non-destructive and designed to determine whether any archaeologically sensitive deposits survive within the maximum depth of ground reduction required for the construction.

3.3. The turf will be removed by hand and stored adjacent to the trench, together with spoil from the excavation, for later reinstatement upon completion. Plastic barrier fencing will be used to surround the excavation for the duration of the work.

3.4. The excavation of archaeological features or deposits will be undertaken by hand using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation:

- Where features of archaeological interest are identified they will be systematically investigated by hand with sufficient work being undertaken to determine their date, character and function, using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation and in accordance with CIfA Standard and Guidance.
- All features will be located as accurately as possible on an overall plan of the development at an appropriate scale, showing boundaries depicted on Ordnance Survey mapping.
- Contexts will be recorded on individual record forms, using a continuous numbering system, and be drawn and photographed as appropriate.
- Stratigraphic units will be assigned a record number and entered along with a description on an individual record form or trench recording sheet as appropriate.
- Plans will be drawn on permatrace to a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50, as appropriate.
- All photography will be taken using a digital SLR camera with a minimum resolution of 12 mega pixels, including a metric scale in each view, with views logged in a photographic register.

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- In the event of human burials being discovered the Ministry of Justice will be informed. The remains will initially be left *in situ*, and if removal is required, a MoJ licences will be applied for under the Burial Act 1857.
  - In the event of finding any artefacts covered by the provisions of the Treasures Act 1996, the appropriate procedures under this legislation will be followed.

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## 5 Artefacts

5.1. All artefacts and environmental samples will be treated in a manner appropriate to their composition and a sampling strategy will be developed as appropriate:

- All stratified finds will be collected by context, or where appropriate, individually recorded in three dimensions. Unstratified finds will only be collected where they contribute significantly to the project objectives or are of particular intrinsic interest.
- All finds and samples will be collected, processed, sorted, quantified, recorded, labelled, packed, stored, marked, assessed, analysed and conserved in a manner appropriate to their composition and in line with appropriate guidance.
- arrangements to assess and study any artefacts, assemblages and environment samples.
- Any artefacts recovered during the evaluation will be deposited with an appropriate museum, subject to the permission of the owner.

6

## 6.1. Report

6.2. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:

- Non-technical summary
- Introduction
- Site location
- Archaeological Background
- Evaluation
- Conclusions
- References
- appropriate appendices on archives and finds

6.3. The site archive will be prepared to specifications in English Heritage's Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) system and the CifA *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* (2014), to be deposited with the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER). Any artefacts recovered during the evaluation will be deposited with an appropriate museum, subject to the permission of the owner.

## 7 Resources and programming

7.1. The assessment will be undertaken by a team of skilled archaeologists under the overall supervision of Nigel Jones, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CifA). CPAT is also a CifA

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Registered Organisation (RAO No 6) and as such agrees to abide by their *Code of Conduct* (2014) and the *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (2014).

- 7.2. All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the evaluation.
- 7.3. It is anticipated that the trial excavation will be completed within three working days with a team of two archaeologists, and the report prepared immediately thereafter. At present CPAT would be in a position to undertake the evaluation in May 2017, subject to the receipt of sufficient advanced notice from the client.
- 7.4. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 7.5. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

N W Jones

18 April 2017