CPAT Report No. 1715

Clawdd Llesg Dyke, Meifod, Powys

Heritage Impact Assessment





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Summary

In December 2019 a heritage impact assessment was carried out by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, on behalf of Scottish Power Energy Networks, in relation to a proposed new overhead power line which would cross the Clawdd Llesg Dyke, near Meifod in Powys. The assessment had been required by Cadw as the dyke is a scheduled monument and there was concern about the impact of the proposed line on its setting.

The assessment concluded that although the overhead line would cross the dyke, the potential impact would be relatively slight and there would be no direct impact on the monument. The setting of this section of the dyke is very localised, with restricted visibility from most directions. Alternative routes, particularly if they crossed the section of dyke to the south, would probably have a greater impact on the way the monument is viewed in the landscape.

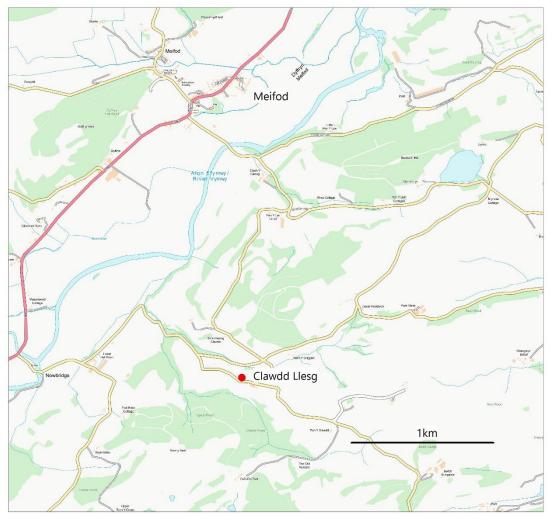
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Ym mis Rhagfyr 2019, bu Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys yn cynnal asesiad o effaith ar dreftadaeth ar ran Scottish Power Energy Networks, mewn cysylltiad â llinell bŵer uwchben newydd arfaethedig a fyddai'n croesi Clawdd Llesg, ger Meifod ym Mhowys. Roedd Cadw wedi gofyn am yr asesiad gan fod y clawdd yn heneb restredig ac roedd yna bryder ynglŷn ag effaith y llinell arfaethedig ar ei amgylchedd.

Daeth yr asesiad i'r casgliad mai cymharol ysgafn fyddai'r effaith bosibl, ac na fyddai unrhyw effaith uniongyrchol ar yr heneb ei hun, er y byddai'r llinell uwchben yn croesi'r clawdd. Mae'r hyn sydd i'w weld yn yr adran hon o'r clawdd yn lleol iawn, ac nid yw'n weladwy o'r rhan fwyaf o gyfeiriadau. Byddai llwybrau amgen, yn enwedig pe baen nhw'n croesi'r adran o'r clawdd i'r de, fwy na thebyg yn cael effaith fwy ar y ffordd y gwelir yr heneb yn y dirwedd.

1 Introduction

1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) to undertake a heritage impact assessment in connection with a proposed new overhead electricity line in the vicinity of the Clawdd Llesg Dyke, near Meifod in Powys (NGR: SJ 1575 1130; Fig. 1). The proposed line runs from an existing pole near Tanybryn (SJ 1587 1127) and is designed to serve a dwelling at Bronyfedw to the west, where there is a section of underground cable to be installed; the last pole is at SJ 1558 1136, giving a total length of approximately 0.3km (see Fig. 5).



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Fig. 1: Location of Clawdd Llesg

- 1.2. Cadw had been consulted as part of the application, given that the route crosses the Clawdd Llesg Dyke, which is a Scheduled Monument (MG 098). Their opinion was that although the proposed line will not cause physical damage to the monument, the presence of the proposed lines above it, along with the proposed poles on either side of it, may have an adverse impact on the setting of the dyke.
- 1.3. This relates to Planning Policy Wales (2018) section 6.1.23, where TAN 24 states: 'The conservation of archaeological remains is a material consideration in determining a planning application. When considering development proposals that affect scheduled monuments or

other nationally important archaeological remains, there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation in situ, i.e. a presumption against proposals which would involve significant alteration or cause damage, or would have a significant adverse impact causing harm within the setting of the remains'.

- 1.4. Consequently, Cadw have asserted that there is a need for an assessment in order to ascertain the scale of the impact of the proposed overhead line on the setting of the scheduled monument and also to show that all viable alternatives to the proposed route of the line have be considered.
- 1.5. The route and the surroundings of the dyke were examined on the 20th December 2019 and this report written immediately thereafter.

2 Scope and Guidance

- 2.1. The cultural heritage is a broad concept that embraces archaeological remains, the built heritage and historic landscapes. Cultural heritage is deemed to include the full range of manmade features that have been imposed on the landscape from the Palaeolithic, more than two hundred and fifty thousand years ago, to the 20th century. Some of these features will be visible as upstanding remains on the ground; others will be buried and only become apparent during ground disturbance. Some will have an archaeological interest and importance; others will be more historical in their origin. Collectively these features are known as heritage assets.
- 2.2. At a national level it is Cadw, the historic environment service within Welsh Government, which holds the remit for the cultural heritage resource. Another national body, Natural Resources Wales, has a particular interest in historic landscapes.
- 2.3. At a regional level, the cultural heritage resource is monitored by the regional Welsh Archaeological Trusts, and in this instance the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust acts as archaeological adviser to Powys County Council.
- 2.4. The legislative framework for the historic environment in Wales was revised by the *Historic Environment (Wales) Act* 2016. The 2016 Act amended the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act* 1979 and the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act* 1990. It extended the definition of scheduled monuments and enhanced their protection, as well as making changes to the process of scheduled monument consent. Changes were also made to the protection of listed buildings. The 2016 Act also provided for a statutory register of historic landscapes, a statutory list of place names, and imposed a statutory duty on Welsh Ministers to compile and maintain Historic Environment Records (HERs).
- 2.5. National policy within Wales is set out in *Planning Policy Wales* (10th edition, 2018) (PPW). Issues relating to the historic environment are set out in Chapter 6, Distinctive and Natural Places. This notes that the 'protection, conservation and enhancement of historic assets is most effective when it is considered at the earliest stage' of a project; hence the need for a reasonable and proportionate impact assessment to ensure that any proposed development is sustainable and to prevent unnecessary harm to historic assets.
- 2.6. PPW is supported by *Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment* (TAN 24). It is designed to assist local authorities with developing their local plans and for determination of planning applications or listed building consent in relation to historic assets. PPW is also supported by associated Cadw best practice guidance on the historic environment.

- 2.7. The assessment follows guidance produced by Cadw, on behalf of the Welsh Government, for managing historic assets: Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales (2017); The Setting of Historic Assets in Wales (2017); and Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales (2011). The assessment of potential impacts to the Registered Historic Landscape will utilise the Guide to Good Practice on Using the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in the Planning and Development Process (2nd edition, 2007), produced jointly by Cadw and CCW.
- 2.8. The revised *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (DMRB), Volume 11 Section 3 Part 2, HA 208/07 (August 2007), though not specifically focused on developments of this nature, provides a suitable, general framework for assessing the cultural heritage (see Appendix 1).

3 Baseline Assessment

- 3.1. The assessment is based on fieldwork conducted on 20 December 2019, comprising a thorough walkover survey of the route, together with an assessment of potential visual impacts on the scheduled monument.
- 3.2. The route for the proposed overhead line crosses a scheduled monument known as Clawdd Llesg. The field survey identified no other archaeological features along the route. There are two other scheduled monuments approximately 500m distant from the proposed overhead line, the enclosures known as Clawdd Wood Camp (MG 099), to the south-east, and Broniarth Hill Camp (MG 097), to the north-east. The nearest listed building is Ty Brith farmhouse (No 15966), some 800m to the west-south-west, which is not visible from the proposed overhead line.

Clawdd Llesg Dyke, scheduled monument MG 098

- 3.3. Clawdd Llesg is a short linear earthwork, the name possibly translating as 'Eliseg's Dyke' after an early Prince of Powys, crosses a narrow interfluvial ridge lying between two streams on the south-east side of Dyffryn Meifod, approximately 2km south of Meifod village. It is divided in two by a minor road running approximately east/west.
- 3.4. The morphology of the southern part of the dyke, leading up to the road, comprises a low broad bank with a shallow and broad ditch on its east side. This part of the dyke is oriented broadly north-south. On the north side of the road, the dyke is in a similar form; it runs to SJ 1575 1133, beyond which it turns slightly to run north-north-east. This final section, as it descends steeply towards the northern end at a stream (SJ 1577 1136), consists of a substantial bank, up to 2m high, with a corresponding ditch on its east (uphill) side. This appears to be the only part of the dyke where much of the original earthwork survives; it has a total width of 15.4m, unlike the denuded sections which are much wider, around 21m across, but also much lower.
- 3.5. Comparisons with similar earthworks in the region suggests the dyke has its origins in the early medieval period, and it was probably constructed somewhere between the 5th and 7th centuries AD.

Evidential value

3.6. Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. The dyke has significant evidential value in the earthwork remains of the monument

which may retain important artefactual and ecofactual evidence relating to its period of construction.

Historical value

3.7. Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. If the dyke dates from between the 5th and 7th centuries AD, then it may have formed part of a series of boundary markers demarcating what later became the *cantref* (a medieval Welsh political division) known as Mechain. The origins of the cantref were probably as an area of land under the control of a local prince and his family following the departure of Roman military forces in the 5th century AD. Mechain is known to have been significant as the church at Meifod later became the place of burial of the Princes of Powys. As such the dyke provides important evidence for territorial divisions in the early medieval period, an era for which there is often little tangible evidence in this part of Wales.

Aesthetic value

3.8. Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. As a low earthwork monument in a relatively remote location the dyke is not seen as having significant aesthetic value.

Communal value

3.9. Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values, but tend to have additional and specific aspects. As with aesthetic value, communal value is not particularly relevant to the monument, although the historical evidence for territorial boundaries has the potential to contribute to a sense of place for local residents. In the past, this would have been a major focus for local residents as it would have been used to identify the extent of the land under their control.

Setting

3.10. The main aspect of the earthwork is to the east and it is probably from this side that it is best appreciated as it was no doubt intended to form a physical statement of ownership relating to the land to the west. Despite this, it is really only the part to the south of the road that is readily visible, the northern section of the dyke being hidden by a fold of ground until it is approached more closely. The wider setting is mostly focussed on the ridge on which the dyke sits for a distance of about 300m to both the east and west. It is readily visible from the adjoining interfluvial ridges to the north and south, but these are probably of less significance.

Statement of Significance

3.11. The dyke is one of a rare monument type that illuminates the interaction of different groups in the early medieval period and is therefore of considerable significance in our understanding of that period, particularly given its historical and evidential value. Although Clawdd Llesg has not been scientifically dated, an early medieval origin is probable; with the advent of new dating techniques there is little doubt that the earthwork will have retained evidence that will allow dating to be carried out in the future. Although now perhaps not appreciated for its original function, the site has the potential to contribute to the sense of place of local residents if that function can be explained in the future.

4 Assessment of impacts

- 4.1. The assessment of impacts has been conducted according to the methodology outlined in Appendix 1.
- 4.2. Neither of the two scheduled enclosures nor the listed building, mentioned in paragraph 3.2, will be visible from the proposed overhead line under current conditions of vegetation cover, and all are at a sufficient distance for the proposed overhead line to have no impact on their setting. There are no other designated heritage assets that merit further consideration.
- 4.3. In terms of the potential for other routes, it is difficult to envisage any others being practicable for the line, as the proposed direct route is bounded by mature trees along the road and in the valley to the north. A line of telephone poles also currently follows the approximate line of the road and would be an impediment to using this route. While a line through the pasture fields to the south of the road would perhaps be simpler from a logistical point of view, this would also be more visually intrusive to the setting of the dyke owing to the greater visibility of this section.

Direct Impacts

4.4. The layout of the proposed overhead line has been designed to avoid any direct impact on the monument, with poles placed to either side of the scheduled area, no closer than about 15m, such that there will be no impact on the evidential or historical values of the monument.

Indirect Impacts

- 4.5. The dyke crosses the ridge on relatively level ground: the ridge slopes down steeply from the east, levels out where the dyke crosses, and then turns north-west before dropping more steeply down to the confluence of the two streams that define it. Despite this, the ditch is to the east of the bank, and the monument as a whole is more prominent from this direction. Given that it faces uphill, and could be easily bypassed at either end, a purely defensive function seems unlikely. Instead the deliberate siting of the earthwork, together with its design, suggest that it may have been a boundary marker created by the occupiers of the Meifod valley (seen at a distance in Fig. 2). It should also be noted that there is a second dyke of rather different character at Bwlch Aeddan, some 1.5km to the east, which faces west and could be seen as a rival earthwork, if the two are contemporary.
- 4.6. There is a marked difference in visibility between the north and south parts of the dyke (see Fig. 2), so although the southern part is prominent in the views from the east, the same is not true of the northern part, which sits in a fold of ground on the northern flank of the ridge, leaving it only visible on close approach. The overall visibility of this northern section has been compromised in recent years by the growth of scrub vegetation as the field is no longer grazed (see Figs. 3 and 4) and there are already electricity poles close to the local dwellings which will be present in some views from and to the northern part of the dyke.



Fig. 2: The setting of Clawdd Llesg, from the east-south-east. The dyke (arrowed) can be seen crossing the field beyond the farm and running parallel to a fence on the left (south), but is hidden by a fold of ground on the right (north). The large tree immediately to the left of the house on the right hand side of the image is growing on top of the dyke, though the dyke itself is not visible at that point. The proposed overhead line (black line) will travel along the bracken covered field from near the house on the right, note the presence of existing poles on the boundary of that field. Photo CPAT 4721-0011



Fig. 3: The bank of the dyke (arrowed) crossing the proposed route of the overhead line (black line), from the east. Photo CPAT 4721-0003

4.7. The proposed overhead line would oversail the dyke midway across the northern section, carried on single wooden poles, with one pole 15m to the east of the scheduled area and another 55m to the west.



Fig. 4: The northern section of the dyke (arrowed) just visible crossing the middle distance beyond scrub growth. This was taken from the west at SJ 15672 11344, on the approximate route of the overhead line (black line) and 85m distant from the dyke, demonstrating the reduced visibility. Photo CPAT 4721-0006

- 4.8. While there will be some intrusion on the setting of the dyke by the proposed powerlines, the effect of this will be less than might be anticipated owing to the reduced visibility of the northern section of the dyke. Unlike the southern section, which is readily visible from a distance, the northern section lies in a fold of ground on the northern flank of the ridge, and this masks it from more distant views.
- 4.9. When seen from the east there is already some visual intrusion on the setting of the monument from electricity and telephone poles serving the local dwellings. Therefore there is already an impact on the setting, albeit a relatively minor one.
- 4.10. The assessment has therefore determined that the magnitude of the visual impact on the monument and its setting will be minor. As a scheduled monument the dyke is considered to be a high value asset, so that the significance of the visual impact would be *moderate/slight*.

5 Mitigation

- 5.1. No mitigation is proposed with respect to indirect impacts, but the following measures should be implemented to ensure that there is no ground disturbance within the scheduled area:
 - Cadw must be informed of the timetable for the works to facilitate monitoring if required
 - all contractors must be made aware of the scheduled nature of the monument

- the scheduled area must be marked clearly on all site plans
- an exclusion zone around the scheduled area should be marked on the ground using readily visible and identifiable means by a suitably qualified archaeologist, prior to the commencement of works
- no vehicles to across the scheduled area
- no storage of materials within the scheduled area
- no ground disturbance within the scheduled area
- depending on the method of pole installation, Cadw may consider a watching brief during the installation of the two nearest poles to be appropriate.

6 Sources

Published sources

Cadw, 2007. Setting of Historic Assets in Wales. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Cadw, 2011. Conservation Principles. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Unpublished sources

Hankinson, R., 2006. Further Work on the Short Dykes of Mid and North-east Wales. Unpublished report. CPAT Report 782.

Silvester, R. J. and Hankinson, R., 2002. *Short Dykes of Mid and North-East Wales*. Unpublished report. CPAT Report 458.

7 Archive deposition Statement

7.1. 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 archive is entirely digital and will be deposited jointly with the Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and the National Monuments Record (RCAHMW).

Archive summary

CPAT Event PRN: 140326

12 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4721

Appendix 1: Methodology for assessing the potential impacts of development on heritage assets

General

The primary aim of any assessment is to identify the heritage assets within a development area in as far as constraints such as varying land-use allow, and to provide a report on them which should enable the reader to understand their historical context, offer guidance on their level of importance, whether national, regional or local, identify the significance of impact that the development might have upon them, and recommend mitigation to limit the impact of the development on them.

Impacts and Effects

The development may affect a heritage asset in one of several ways:

- i) **Direct Impact:** A direct impact upon a heritage asset involves the physical alteration or destruction of the latter as a result of the construction, operation or decommissioning of a development. Direct impacts could include the site clearance, reduction of levels, foundations, services, access roads etc.
- ii) **Indirect Impact:** Sometimes known as a secondary impact. An indirect impact arises where the connection between the development and the asset is remote or unpredictable and can affect an asset lying outside the development area. An indirect impact can be physical or visual, and in certain circumstances noise, smell and the like might also be considered under this heading. It should be noted too that in Wales, visual intrusion is normally considered to be indirect, but in England it appears to be classed as a direct impact.

More detailed descriptions are offered in Guide to Good Practice on Using the Register of landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales in the Planning and Development Process (Cadw 2007).

iii) **Cumulative Impact**: A cumulative impact may arise from the multiple effects of the same development on a single asset, or the multiple effects of the development and of other developments on an asset.

It should be noted that the terms impact and effect are frequently used interchangeably, although there are fine gradations in the meanings of the two words. On occasions these are both used in reports though without explanation.

The Assessment Methodology

It is a general tenet in conservation strategies that heritage assets represent a non-renewable resource, and should be avoided wherever this is feasible in order to avoid damage or destruction. All sites can be classified according to a system based on that provided for the assessment of heritage assets in the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (HA 208/07; Volume 11, Section 3, Part 2), revised in August 2007.

The classification of any undesignated asset is based on the collective professional judgement and expertise of the field staff of CPAT using information both from existing records and the field visits to selected assets.

The relative value (importance) of a heritage asset, as given in greater detail in DMRB (2007) is laid out in Table 1.

Table 1 Factors for Assessing the Value of Heritage Assets

Factors for Assessing the Value of Heritage Assets					
Very High	World Heritage Sites (including those nominated).				
	Assets of acknowledged international importance.				
	Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged international research objectives.				
High	Scheduled Monuments (including those proposed).				
	Undesignated monuments of which could potentially be worthy of scheduling.				
	Listed Buildings.				
	Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged national research objectives.				
Medium	Conservation Areas.				
	Designated or undesignated assets that contribute to regional research objectives.				
Low	Designated and undesignated assets of local importance.				
	Assets compromised by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations.				
	Assets of limited value, but with the potential to contribute to local research objectives.				
Negligible	Assets with very little or no surviving heritage interest.				
Unknown	The importance of the resource has not been ascertained.				

Factors that need to be considered in assessing the magnitude of the impact are given in Table 2, based on the DMRB (2007), but in modified form, for each historic environment sub-topic (archaeological remains, historic buildings, historic landscapes etc) has its own set of factors, which are set out in great detail in the Design Manual.

Table 2 Factors in the Assessment of the Magnitude of Impacts

Factors in the Assessment of Magnitude of Direct Impacts					
Major	Change to most or all key heritage elements, such that the resource is totally altered.				
Moderate	Changes to many key heritage elements, such that the resource is clearly modified.				
Minor	Changes to key heritage elements, such that the asset is slightly altered or different.				
Negligible	Very minor changes to heritage elements.				
No Change	No change.				

The significance of the impact of a development on a particular heritage asset is then established from the matrix (Table 3) also taken from the DMRB (2007).

Table 3 Matrix for Assessing the Significance of Direct Impacts of the Proposed Development upon Heritage Assets

Magnitude	Value/Sensitivity of Heritage Asset						
of Impact	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible		
Major	Very Large	Large/ Very large	Moderate/ Large	Slight/ Moderate	Slight		
Moderate	Large/Very	Moderate/ Large	Moderate	Slight	Neutral/ Slight		
Minor	Moderate/ Large	Moderate/ Slight	Slight	Neutral/ Slight	Neutral/ Slight		
Negligible	Slight	Slight	Neutral/ Slight	Neutral/ Slight	Neutral		
No change	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral		

The Setting of Heritage Assets

The setting of heritage assets is the subject of recent advice published by Cadw (2017), the purpose of which is to explain what setting is, how it contributes to the significance of a historic asset and why it is important. It also outlines the principles used to assess the potential impact of development or land management proposals within the settings of World Heritage Sites, ancient monuments (scheduled and unscheduled), listed buildings, registered historic parks and gardens, and conservation areas. These principles, however, are equally applicable to all individual historic assets, irrespective of their designation. The guidance is not intended to cover the setting of the historic environment at a landscape scale, which is considered by separate guidance.

The setting of a historic asset can include physical elements of its surroundings. These may be boundary walls, adjacent fields or functional and physical relationships with other historic assets or natural features. For example, the setting of a listed farmhouse might be its physical agricultural surroundings, both built and landscape features such as buildings, boundaries or fields. Equally, the setting of a scheduled industrial steam engine house might be its associated industrial landscape of quarries, tramways or waste heaps.

The setting of a historic asset can also include less tangible elements. These may include function, sensory perceptions or historical, artistic, literary and scenic associations.

Although views to and from a historic asset are often the most obvious factors, other sensory elements can also affect setting — for example, the noise from a road set in a cutting, noise intrusion from above such as aircraft or drones, or the sounds and smells of a new industrial process in an existing building. Such elements can be more subjective and more difficult to assess than physical factors, but might also contribute to the setting of a historic asset.

The setting of a historic asset is not fixed and may change through time as the asset and its surroundings evolve. These changes may have a negative impact on the significance of an asset; for example, the loss

of the surrounding physical elements that allow an asset to be understood or the introduction of an adjacent new development that has a major visual impact. But changes can also have a positive impact that may enhance the setting, such as the removal of traffic from part of a historic town or the opening up of views, or the return of a sense of enclosure to sites where it has been lost.

Factors Contributing to the Setting of a Historic Asset

Setting describes the relationship of a historic asset to the surrounding landscape or townscape. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of a historic asset. Setting may include a range of factors:

- functional and physical relationships with other structures/historic assets and how these have changed over time
- topographic features that influenced its location
- physical character of the surrounding landscape or townscape, including any formal design or land use
- the original layout of the historic asset and how this has changed
- potential buried or archaeological elements surrounding the historic asset
- views to, from and across the historic asset or place
- formal or planned vistas
- the prominence of the historic asset in views throughout the surrounding area
- views associated with the aesthetic, functional or ceremonial purpose of the asset; for example, defensive sites, beacons or designed landscapes
- historical, artistic, literary, place name, cultural or scenic associations might all contribute to the significance of a historic asset
- other sensory elements noise or smell associated with the historic asset
- tranquillity, remoteness, 'wildness'.

Assessing the impact change or development within the setting of historic assets

The Cadw guidance outlines four stages of assessment:

Stage 1: Identify the historic assets that might be affected by a proposed change or development.

Stage 2: Define and analyse the settings to understand how they contribute to the significance of the historic assets and, in particular, the ways in which the assets are understood, appreciated and experienced.

Stage 3: Evaluate the potential impact of a proposed change or development on that significance.

Stage 4: If necessary, consider options to mitigate or improve the potential impact of a proposed change or development on that significance.

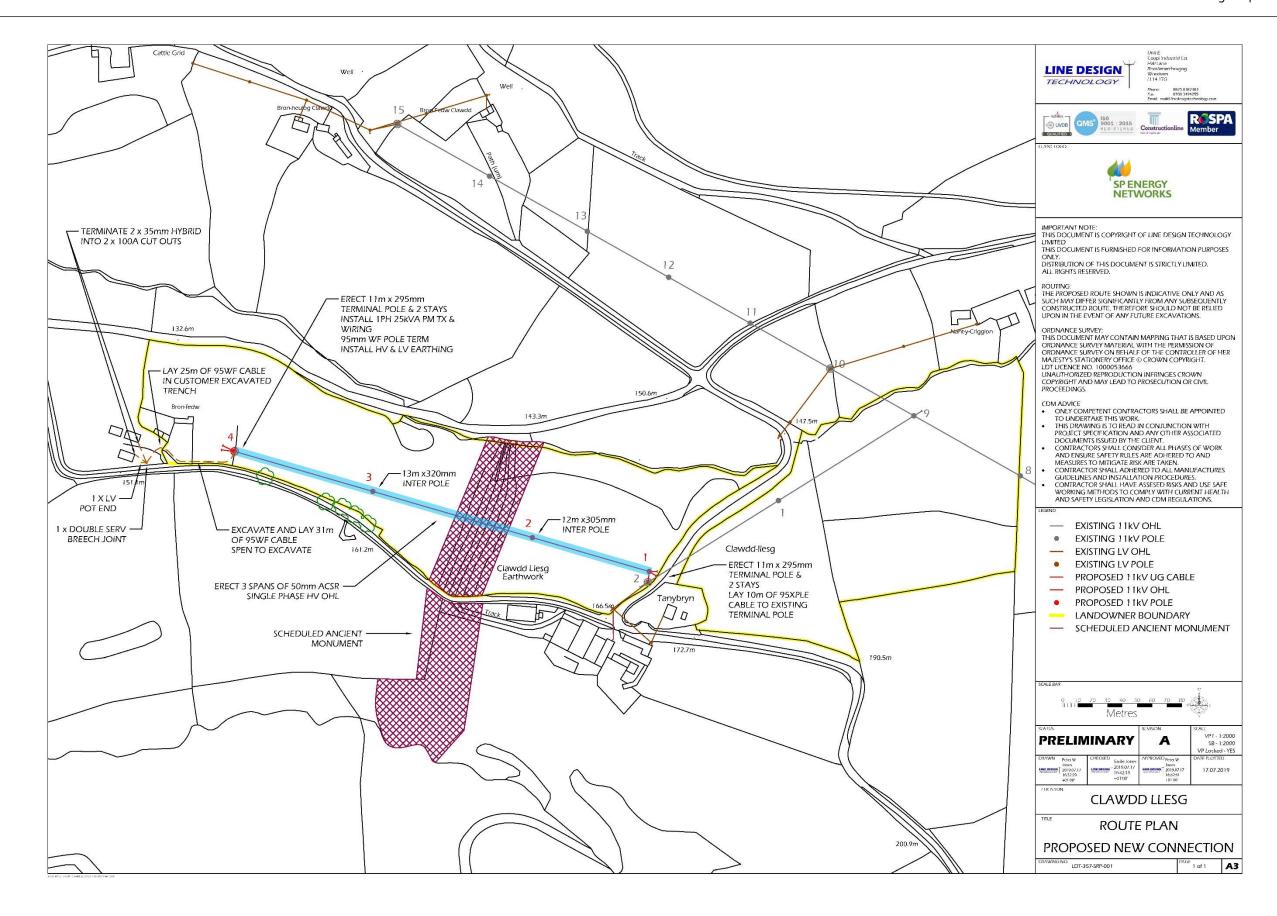


Fig. 5: Proposed Overhead line, showing the scheduled area of Clawdd Llesg (MG 098)