

TAN Y FYNWENT PUBLIC PARK AREA Bangor

Archaeological Watching Brief



Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

TAN Y FYNWENT PUBLIC PARK AREA

Bangor

Archaeological Watching Brief

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TAN Y FYNWENT, BANGOR

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF (G2252)

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TAN Y FYNWENT, BANGOR

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF (G2252)

Summary

An archaeological watching brief has been completed by the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust during access and landscaping groundworks within a public park area at Tan y Fynwent, Bangor. The park was formerly a Victorian graveyard that was replaced by the public park area in 1951. The watching brief monitored all intrusive groundworks associated with the replacement of an existing pathway and grassed area with a new paved surface and the replacement of the existing raised plantation/tactile garden at the northern portion of the site. The groundworks did not exceed the topsoil horizon and no evidence for the burials and/or gravestones were identified within the confines of the excavated areas. This was due to the deliberate application of shallow dig engineering techniques by the site contractor to avoid exposing the burials and/or gravestones.

1 INTRODUCTION

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) was commissioned by *Ymgynghoriaeth Gwynedd/Gwynedd Consultancy* to complete an archaeological watching brief during access and landscaping groundworks within a public park area at Tan y Fynwent, Bangor (centred on NGR **SH58147216**; Figure 1). The watching brief was completed as part of Planning Application **C11/1112/11/R3**.

The existing public park area comprised a 0.37ha trapezoidal plot of land, bounded on the north by Garth Road, to the east by Tan y Fynwent Road, to the south by the Gwynedd Museum and Art Gallery and to the west by a telephone exchange building, a public car park and the Public Library. The area has been laid out as a garden since 1951, and has been encroached upon in 1956 by road widening along Ffordd Gwynedd and Tan y Fynwent, the construction of a bus shelter and office along Garth Road in 1957, and public conveniences in 1959. The bus waiting area was also extended in 1983. The garden area is crossed with paths and planted with mature trees, which were laid out in 1951 (cf. Figure 1 for existing layout).

The access and landscaping groundworks included alterations to the path layout and planting areas within the park as well as the entrance points from the public car park to the northwest and the bus stops to the southeast (the alterations are detailed on client drawing **3247GA101B**; reproduced as Figure 2). Specifically, these alterations included:

- Creation of two new access points: a 5.0m wide access/egress located at the northwestern end of the park, linking the park to the existing public car park at NGR SH58117217 and a 12.0m wide access/egress at the southwestern end of the park, linking the park to the bus stop at NGR SH58187216. In both cases the existing park wall was removed and the exposed ends of demolished wall rebuilt with pillars constructed using stone taken up from demolition. Existing steel fencing along the top of the wall was built into the pillars.
- The creation of a 1650m² paved surface, utilising 450 x 450 x 50mm smooth ground concrete paving.
This paved surface partially replaced the existing pathway along the northwestern portion of the park (estimated length: 35.0m); an additional spur was also added to the existing path network, connecting the centre of the park to the new entrance point linked to the public car park (estimated spur length: 24.0m). The southeastern quadrant within the park (formally extant as a grassed area) was replaced by the paved surface (this area connected to the new bus stop entrance point). To accommodate the paved surface within this quadrant and along the spur, the existing grassed area was excavated to a mean depth of 100mm; where the existing path was replaced along the northwestern end, the existing surface was removed and the existing bedding replaced (excavation depth for existing bedding was not exceeded).
- The re-laying of the existing paving at the southwestern and northeastern ends of the park onto new bedding material (existing bedding depth not to be exceeded).
- Installation of 5No illuminated bollards along the proposed direction of travel through the park garden; completed in tandem with the paved surface works.

- Installation of 5No planting areas of varying size within the paved southeastern quadrant; these did not exceed the existing 100mm paved surface excavation depth
- Redesign of existing tactile garden located at the northeastern portion of the site, incorporating original footprint but with the incorporation of a new planter and the reuse of stone from demolished walling (sourced from new access points), to construct new stone edging wall; these did not exceed existing 100mm paved surface excavation depth

The groundworks were completed by *Dawnus Construction Limited*. GAT monitored the paved surface groundworks and the tactile garden replacement groundworks; the remaining scheme elements were not monitored by GAT as they did not involve ground level reduction.

1.1 Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Services

A mitigation brief has not been prepared for this scheme by Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Services (GAPS) but in correspondence directed to Gwasanaeth Cynllunio Cyngor Gwynedd (dated 13th January 2012; ref.: 0113ab01/D1226), GAPS has stated that:

an intensive archaeological watching brief (must be completed) during topsoil stripping, vegetation clearance or any ground disturbing activity. Sufficient time must be allowed for the archaeological investigation and recording of any remains encountered during the works (p.1).

It is also stated in the letter that:

No intrusive archaeological investigation has been undertaken within the Garden of Rest and it is therefore impossible to determine the level of survival of the *circa* 240 burials or whether any gravestones remain at the site. The depth of any such remains is unknown and any ground disturbance therefore has the potential to reveal archaeological information (p. 1).

1.2 Institute for Archaeologists

This design will conform to the guidelines specified in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (Institute for Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 2001, 2008).

1.3 Acknowledgements

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust would like to thank Ioan Roberts and the site team from *Dawnus Construciton Limited* as well Dylan Rhys Parry, Engineer, and Rhydian Roberts, Environmental Officer both from *Ymgynghoriaeth Gwynedd/Gwynedd Consultancy*, for all their cooperation and assistance on site.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

GAT completed an archaeological assessment report of the Tan y Fynwent site in 2008 (Evans, R. 2008. GAT Report **750**). The report summarised:

An archaeological desk based assessment was carried out on the Garden of Rest, Tan Y Fynwent, Bangor, Gwynedd. It had been open fields, the property of the Dean of Bangor until 1840 when a cemetery was opened on the site as an extension to the main Bangor Cathedral churchyard that was becoming overcrowded. Over the next 22 years the burial ground was heavily used, with over 300 burials recorded. It was closed in 1862, when the municipal cemetery was opened at Glanadda. In 1938 the graveyard was handed over to the civic authorities, and in 1951 the Garden of Rest was laid out. Road widening schemes and the construction of the bus shelter, Crosville Enquiry Office, and public conveniences on the Garth Road side of the graveyard between 1956 and 1959 resulted in encroachment upon the boundaries of the old burial ground, and the exhumation of 57 burials. This also involved the rebuilding of the boundary walls. The waiting shelter was extended in 1983. However at least 240 burials remain under the Garden of rest (Evans, R. 2008. GAT Report **750**: 01).

3 METHODOLOGY

The watching brief was completed between the 23rd April 2012 and the 8th May 2012; GAT was in attendance during the initial topsoil strip and path removal for the central and eastern portion of the park.

The topsoil was stripped to a mean depth of 100mm using a 360° rubber tracked excavator with fitted with a toothless bucket (plates 03 to 09). Once removed, the stripped area was sealed with a geotextile membrane, followed by a geocell earth retention layer that was sealed by a slate waste sub-base which supported the finished surface (plates 06 and 07). Two parallel ducting pipes were laid atop the stripped surface, beneath the geotextile membrane (plates 07 and 08): these ducts were used for the illuminated bollards cabling.

The existing path was removed in stages starting with the lifting of the slabs forming the path surface and the subsequent removal of the concreted sub-base (both by machine, cf. plates 03 to 05); the slabs were retained for reuse.

Where the existing path was not removed at the centre of the park, but was sealed by the new surfaces, the existing path was perforated with a pecker attached to the tracked excavator, to allow free drainage once it was sealed (plate 10).

To avoid unnecessary disturbance to the lawned areas within the park, the tracked excavator utilised the existing pathways for transit.

The existing plantation area/tactile garden at the northern end of the site was removed, with the bedding material reduced and the surrounding drystone wall demolished (plates 11 and 12). The plantation area was elevated from the surrounding park area and the reduction of the bedding area/removal of the wall did not exceed the surrounding ground level (plate 11). The plantation area was replaced by a redesigned tactile garden utilising re-used stone sourced from the boundary wall breaches at the eastern and north-northwestern portions of the site (cf. figure 02).

GAT maintained a photographic record throughout attendance using a digital SLR camera (Nikon D40X) set to maximum resolution.

The photographic and written archive is held by GAT under project number (G2252). The archive contains 79 JPEG images.

4 RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

Prior to the removal of the topsoil from the central/southern portion of the park, two shrubby plantations were removed by a tracked excavator: the shrubbery was planted within a bioturbated soil and their removal did not reveal any deposits past that horizon (plates 01 and 02).

The topsoil was stripped in a sequence starting from the southern end of the park (plate 03) and finishing at the centre of the park (plate 09). The topsoil was stripped to a mean depth of 100mm and did not exceed the topsoil horizon. Where tree roots were encountered at the southeastern and northern portions of the strip, the topsoil strip was reduced to 80mm to avoid root damage. No archaeological activity was identified within the topsoil horizon, nor within the exposed stripped areas.

The existing path that ran along the eastern and northeastern boundaries of the park were removed by tracked excavator: the path comprised slabs set onto bedding mortar set onto a concreted sub-base atop a primary layer of clinker type material. The foundations did not exceed the topsoil horizon and had a total depth of 110mm along the eastern portion and 170mm along the northeastern portion next to the refurbished café. The excavation of the path did not exceed the topsoil horizon and no archaeological activity was identified within the topsoil horizon.

The existing plantation area/tactile garden at the northern end of the site was removed: the wall constructed from drystone dressed slabs, four courses high. The planter wall was removed by a 3 tonne 360° rubber tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Both the upstanding and foundation portions of the wall were removed: the latter proved to be set within a shallow (<150mm) foundation trench cut into a bioturbated soil. The foundation trench averaged <200mm in width. No evidence of archaeological activity was identified. The replacement plantation area, utilised the same footprint as the existing and was built up from the existing ground level.

5 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological watching brief did not identify any archaeological activity within the confines of the groundworks footprint.

No evidence of the *circa* 240 burials or gravestones were identified within the limit of excavation for the paved surface nor the tactile garden replacement and no information was gained as to what depth the burials/gravestones might exist. This was due to the shallow excavation used, which did not exceed the existing topsoil horizon and the deliberate application of shallow dig engineering techniques to avoid exposing the burials and/or gravestones. The tactile garden replacement also avoided exceeding the ground surface and the foundations for the existing garden wall were set into the topsoil horizon. The existing pathways were partly retained for reuse or were replaced by the paved surface: to accommodate the latter, the paving slabs and sub-base were removed, but the groundworks did not exceed the topsoil horizon; in the centre of the park the existing path was retained but perforated by a machine pecker prior to sealing with the new surface, to allow for drainage.

6 SOURCES CONSULTED

Dawnus Construction Limited drawing 3247GA101B

Evans, R. 2008. *THE GARDEN OF REST, BANGOR, GWYNEDD*
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT. Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Report **750**

Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Services (GAPS) correspondence ref.:
0113ab01/D1226 (13th January 2012);

Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (Institute for
Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 2001 & 2008)

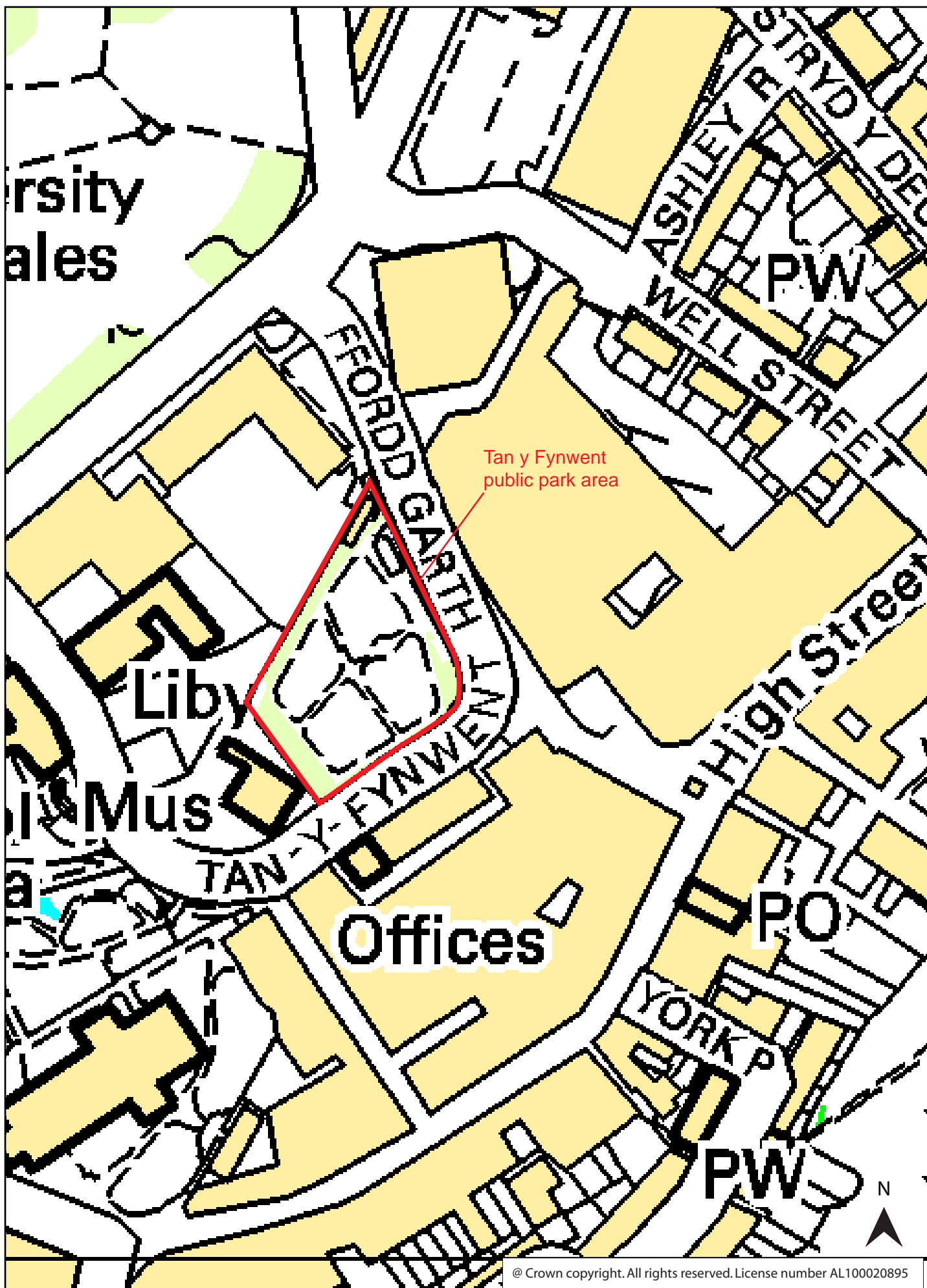
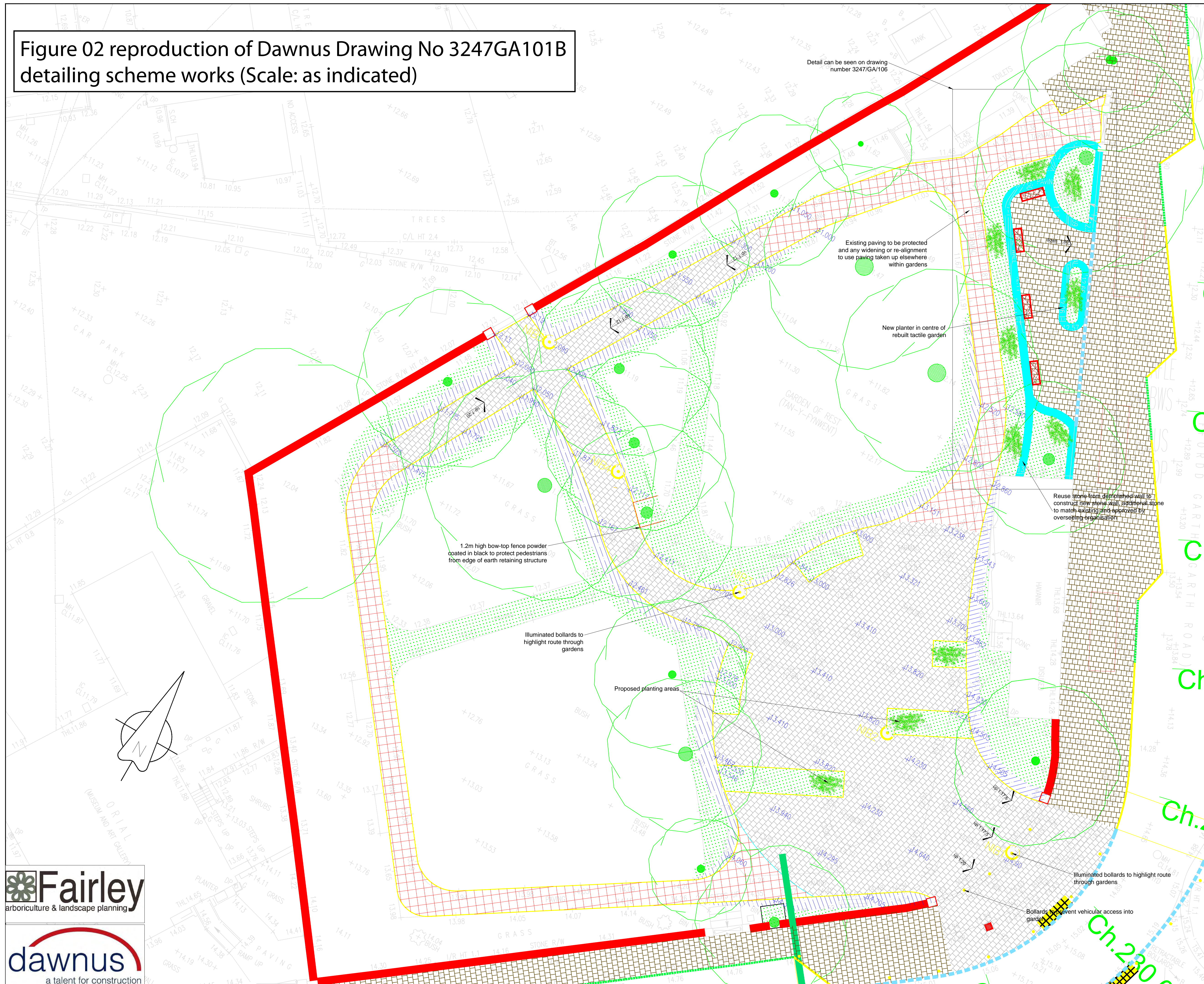


Figure 01: Site location plan (NGR SH58147216) detailing Tan y Fynwent public park area (outlined in red). See Figure for a detailed map of the alteration work. Scale: 1 to 1500@A4.

Figure 02 reproduction of Dawnus Drawing No 3247GA101B
detailing scheme works (Scale: as indicated)



CLEIENT/CLIENT :

NODIADAU/NOTES

1. All dimensions in millimetres unless otherwise stated.
2. All levels in metres above Ordnance Datum.
3. All chainages in metres.
4. All landscaping to be detailed in landscaping drawing, planting on all General Arrangement drawings are indicative only and do not represent type or size of soft landscaping intended for the area

Legend

- | | |
|--|--|
| | Recently constructed paving to be protected during works |
| | 450 x 450 x 50mm smooth ground concrete paving natural coloured, spaces between paving to be pointed using a natural gray coloured specialist mortar |
| | Illuminated Bollards, details shown on drawing number 3247/SL/100C |
| | Proposed planting areas, detail on landscaping drawing to be issued at a further date |
| | 300 x 300 x 80mm concrete paving with a natural rough hewn finish in a black fleck colour, spacing to be pointed using a charcoal coloured specialist mortar |
| | Reused concrete paving within gardens |
| | Proposed areas of existing walls to remain |
| | Proposed bollards to prevent vehicular access to footways |
| | Proposed areas of new natural stone wall using recycled stone from demolished existing wall |
| | Proposed new heuguard gully covers, covers to be raised where necessary to match new road profile |
| | Proposed pre cast concrete bus stop kerbs as detail |
| | Proposed exposed aggregate pre-cast concrete kerbs |
| | Proposed pre cast concrete kerbs |
| | Proposed exposed aggregate pre cast concrete edging kerbs |
| | Proposed tactile crossing, 400 x 400 x 70mm buff coloured concrete paving |
| | Proposed 1.0m high V8 visirail fencing powder coated in black |

[illegible]

CYNLLUN/SCHEME :
TAN Y FYNWENT
PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS

TEITL LLUNIAD/DRAWING TITLE :

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT OF TAN Y FYNWENT GARDEN

DARLUNWYD GAN : DRAWN BY : DRP	DYDDIAD DARLUNWYD : DATE DRAWN : 24/1/2012
GWIRWYD GAN : CHECKED BY : RGJ	DYDDIAD GWIRWYD : DATE CHECKED : 25/1/2012
of sheet 2 of 6	GRADDFYDD : SCALES : 1:75 @ A1

Rhif Lluniad	3247/GA/101
Drawing No.	



Plate 01 - View east of shrub plantation removal ahead of stripping.
This plantation area was located towards the centre of the publicpark area and was replaced both by the new concrete paving as well as a rectangular shaped plantation area



Plate 02 - View north of shrub plantation removal after stripping. This plantation area was located towards the centre of the publicpark area and was replaced both by the new concrete paving as well as a rectangular shaped plantation area. The grassed area in the foreground was also removed to accommodate the new concrete paving



Plate 03 - General view of southeastern corner of site during stripping; excavation depth is less than 100mm; note that the strip has not exceeded the topsoil horizon; the former location of the plantation in Plates 01 and 02 is visible in the centre as a darkened area



Plate 04 - General view of eastern corner of site during removal of existing pathway foundation material (visible in Plate 03). Beneath the pathway slabs were a concreted deposit followed by a thin clinker type deposit that was specifically laid as part of the foundation construction. This area was replaced by a new pathway. Limit of excavation was 100mm



Plate 05 - General view of the eastern corner of site during removal of the pathway foundation material; this included a concreted deposit followed by a thin clinker type deposit that was specifically laid as part of the foundation construction. Note the portion of pathway foundation retained beneath the tree canopy. This area was used for the new pathway that encompassed the southeastern end of the site.



Plate 06 - General view of the eastern corner of site during the foundation groundworks for the new pathway. Note the use of geotextile membrane, followed by a geocell that was sealed by imported slate waste (used as a sub-base). A small portion of stripped ground can be seen in the foreground: the limit of excavation was 100mm or less. the pathway slabs also visible in the foreground were also removed and replaced.



Plate 07 - General view of the centre/eastern corner of the park, after completion of the topsoil strip. Note the shallow excavation depth (less than 100mm) and the orange ducting laid beneath the geotextile membrane: the ducting was used for running cables that powered illuminated bollards; the ducting was not buried into the stripped are, but laid onto the surface.



Plate 08 - Detailed view of the centre/eastern corner of the park, after completion of the topsoil strip. Note the shallow excavation depth (less than 100mm) and the orange ducting laid beneath the geotextile membrane: the ducting was used for running cables that powered illuminated bollards; the ducting was not buried into the stripped are, but laid onto the surface. The darkened area is a shrub plantation previously removed (cf. Plates 01 and 02).



Plate 09 - View southeast of topsoil strip for the new pathway. The spray painted red line on the grass denotes the northern extent of the strip. Note the shallow depth, which is less than 100mm and deliberately kept higher to avoid damage to tree roots. As with the area visible to the top left of the image, the strip deposit was sealed with geotextile membrane, geocell and imported sub-base. The path was also removed.



Plate 10 - Alternative view of stripped area detailed in Plate 09; the stripped area can be seen at the top of the image, whilst the original pathway can be seen in the foreground. Note the perforations in the pathway: the geotextile, geocell and sub-base were laid directly on top of the path at this location, rather than the path removed, due to the change in levels; the perforations allowed the original path to drain freely.



Plate 11 - View northeast of removal of an original planter. The planter had been built up from ground level and edged with unbonded stone (four courses high). The depth of the built up material forming the centre of the planter can be seen at the back of image close to the bus shelters. The exposed surface beneath the machine bucket was not breached: the area was subsequently built up and edged with re-dressed stone recovered from the boundary wall demolition zones.



Plate 12 - View north-northwest of the planter area after the removal of the existing wall visible in Plate 11. There was no significant foundation cut or foundation course: the wall was set into a topsoil deposit. The area was subsequently built up and edged with re-dressed stone recovered from the boundary wall demolition zones.



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