

Proposed Photovoltaic Array, Bodnant, Eglwysbach, Conwy

Archaeological/Historic Environment Desk Top Assessment

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Plate 1: Location of photovoltaic array, Bodnant overflow car park

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## **Summary**

*A photovoltaic array and associated cable trench are proposed for a location to the east of Bodnant Garden in the car parking area. The assessment suggests that there is very limited potential for archaeological deposits to be encountered during ground works associated with the development and therefore no recommendations for further work or mitigation are made. There is the potential for indirect impact on listed buildings to the south west of the development. This constitutes a potential visual impact on the setting of the buildings. The impact is assessed as being low but care should be taken to minimise the impact.*

## **1. Introduction**

The site of the proposed Photovoltaic Array is located at SH 8039 7230 in the overflow car park at the eastern extent of the National Trust managed estate at Bodnant Gardens (Figure 1). Bodnant Gardens lies on the east side of the Conwy Valley in an area of improved agricultural land.

Bodnant Gardens is a Grade 1 Registered Park and Garden, PWG (Gd)5 (CON), (Cadw/ICOMOS UK, 1998). The proposed development lies just outside the park boundary but within an area defined as essential setting by Cadw.

The Photovoltaic Array, in three sections, covers an area 30m by 15m, on a south facing rocky slope. The area of the Array is likely to be stripped of topsoil to allow direct fixing to underlying bedrock. A cable trench 281m long, 600mm wide and 600mm deep will be required running between the array and the National Trust tea room, crossing the car park.

In order to assess the potential impact on the historic environment a basic desk top appraisal and field visit of the site were undertaken.

## **2. Desk Top Appraisal**

Despite the intensive agricultural regime the lower Conwy valley boasts a number of key known archaeological sites.

Hendre-Waelod (Allor Moch) Prehistoric Burial Chamber is located 3.5 km to the north of Bodnant (NPRN 94817, RCAHMW, 1914). There are also reports of a second possible tomb close to Tal y Cafn, 1.5 km west of Bodnant (PRN 2489, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust HER).

The Roman fort of Canovium (Caerhun), 2.5 km to the SW of Bodnant, was the last of the intermediate forts between the legionary fortresses of Deva (Chester) and Segontium (Caernarfon). The fort was founded in the late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and continued in use until around AD 145 (Burnham and Davies, 2010). A section of the Roman road linking these forts is known crossing the uplands to the west with a river crossing point at Tal y Cafn. Two different alignments have been suggested for the road to the east of the river Conwy, one to the north and one to the south of Bodnant Gardens (Hopewell, 2013).

At Llwydfaen, 1.5 km north west of Bodnant, a medieval township and church were located during aerial reconnaissance in 2006. The Church may have been established around 1088 in an attempt to

exert Norman control and establish a settlement in the lower reaches of the Conwy valley (Driver and Hopewell, 2008). Nearby, close to the river crossing at Tal y cafn, is the site of Bryncastell (Castell Maelgwyn) medieval motte (NPRN 303128, RCAHMW, 1956).

These sites occur largely on the western side of the valley floor with no known sites occurring within the immediate locality of the photovoltaic array.

The 1841 Tithe map and schedule for the Parish of Eglwys Fach states that the landowner of apportionments (fields) 66, 106 and 110, in which the development lies, was owned by William Hamner (Figure 2). The occupier was Mr Jones, with the fields all forming part of Clwt Rhodyn Farm. The state of cultivation for field 66 is “Hay”, for 106 is “Oats”, and for 110 is “Fallow”. William Hanmer was owner of Bodnod Demesne at this time having married Colonel Forbes daughter in 1820.

The Ordnance Survey map dating to 1914 confirms that this area remained as fields into the twentieth century (Figure 3) with conversion of the area for car parking presumably not beginning until after the gardens were given to the National Trust in 1949.

A number of historic assets are identified in the locality of the photovoltaic array site (Figure 1) as follows:

**Bodnant Gardens:** Grade I Registered Park and Garden, PWG (Gd) 5 (CON). The main phases of construction belong to the late eighteenth, the nineteenth and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The gardens were begun by Henry Pochin who took over the property in 1874, and subsequently developed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Aberconwy. Key features include formal terraced gardens with views, woodland and water gardens and small areas of parkland. The gardens include a number of listed structures (Cawd/ICOMOS UK, 1998).

**Bodnant House:** Grade II Listed Building, 25063. Built by Colonel Forbes between 1770 and 1821. Rebuilt from 1875 by Henry Pochin.

**Old Bodnod:** Grade II Listed Building, 81. Late C16th or early C17th sub medieval storied house.

**Barn East of Old Bodnod Barn:** Grade II Listed Building, 82. Late C16th or early C17th barn associated with Old Bodnod house.

**The Poem Mausoleum:** Grade II Listed Building, 17565. Built 1882/3 as a mausoleum by Henry Davies Pochin.

**The Pin Mill:** Grade II Listed Building, 65. Originally built as a gazebo at Woodchester, Gloucestershire, later used as a pin mill. The building was moved to Bodnant gardens and reconstructed in 1938/9 as a pavilion.

**Furnace Mill:** Grade II Listed Building, 83. Estate flour mill built in simple Italianate classical style in 1837. Later converted to a saw mill.

**Walls, Steps and Terraces:** Grade II Listed Buildings, 17562, 17563, 17564. Built between 1905 and 1914 as additions to the original garden design.

### **3. Field Visit**

The development site was visited on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014. The area of the arrays is a south facing rocky slope within the overflow car park for Bodnant Gardens (Plate 1). The cable trench runs from the array site to a modern building used as the tea rooms, through the main car park, for the most part along the routes of existing paths (Plates 3, 4, and 5).

No archaeological features were seen at the time of the field visit.

It was observed that the site of the PV Array sits in a slight bowl with trees masking certain sight lines. Only to the south west is there a sight line where visual impact may be an issue.

### **4. Assessment of Impact**

#### **4.1. Archaeological Features**

No above ground archaeological features were seen during the site visit and there are no archaeological monuments evident in the immediate area of the development. Desk top survey indicates that the potential for subsurface archaeological deposits at this location is extremely unlikely. The impact upon archaeological features, either direct or indirect is considered to be negligible.

#### **4.2. Historic Assets**

A small number of listed buildings are located within the locality of the development site. There is no direct impact on these assets. There is the potential for indirect visual impact upon two listed buildings, Old Bodnod House and the Barn East of Old Bodnod, to the south west. This impact is assessed as being low.

### **5. Recommendations**

Mitigation for archaeological features during implementation of the scheme is not thought necessary.

Consideration should however be given to the potential for visual impact to listed buildings to the south west and minimising any potential impact whether that be by the type of PV panel used or by screening.

### **6. Sources**

#### **6.1. Primary**

Tithe map for the Parish of Eglwys Fach, 1841

Tithe schedule for the Parish of Eglwys Fach, 1841

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Denbighshire, 1914

#### **6.2. Secondary**

Burnham, B C and Davies, J L, 2010. *Roman Frontiers in Wales and the Marches*. RCAHMS.

Cadw, 2009. Listed Building Records (<http://jura.rcahms.gov.uk/NMW/start.jsp>)

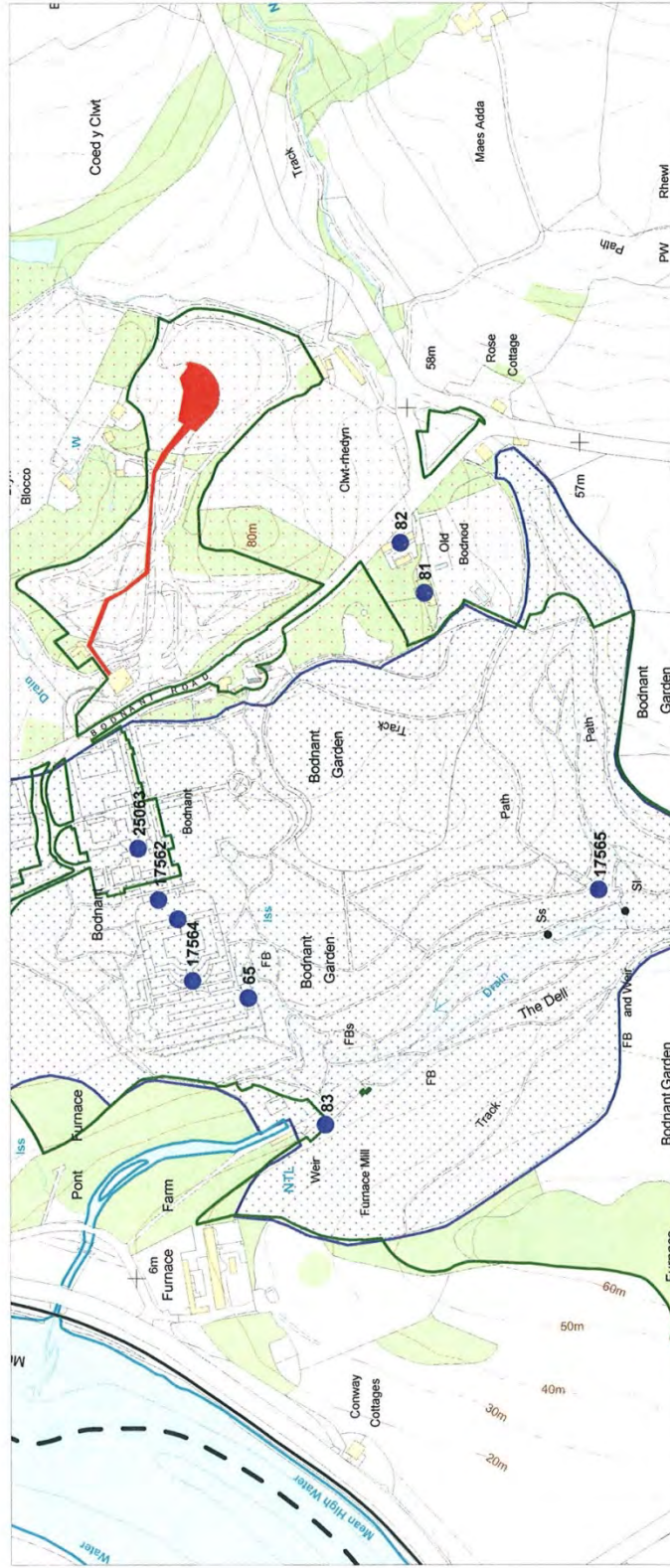
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Hopewell, D, 2013. Roman Roads in North-West Wales.

RCAHMW, 1914. Denbighshire Inventory.

RCAHMW, 1956. Caernarfonshire Inventory.



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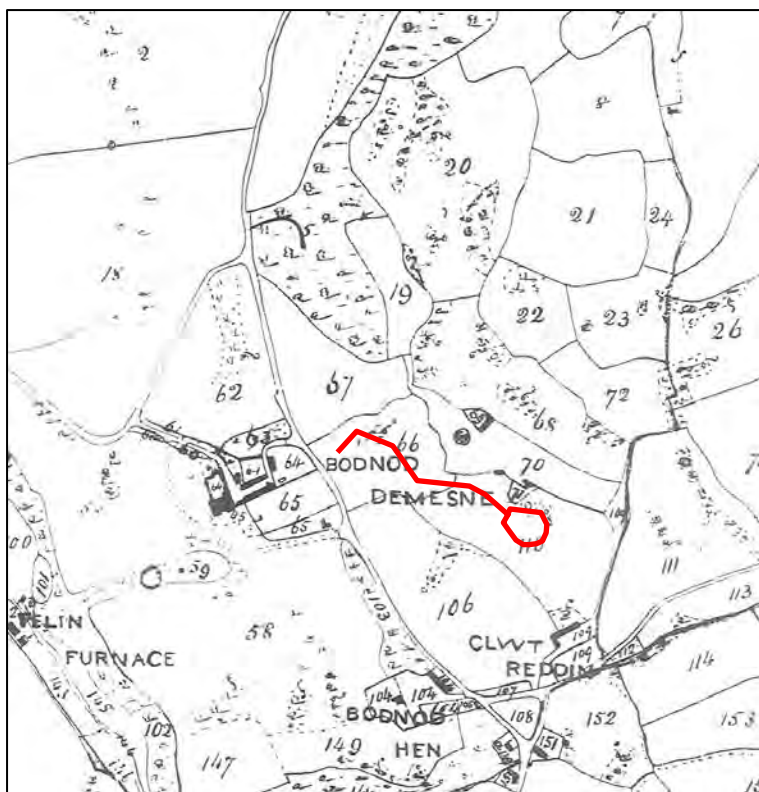


Figure 2: Extract of the Tithe Map for the Parish of Eglwys Fach, 1841 (proposed location of development in red)

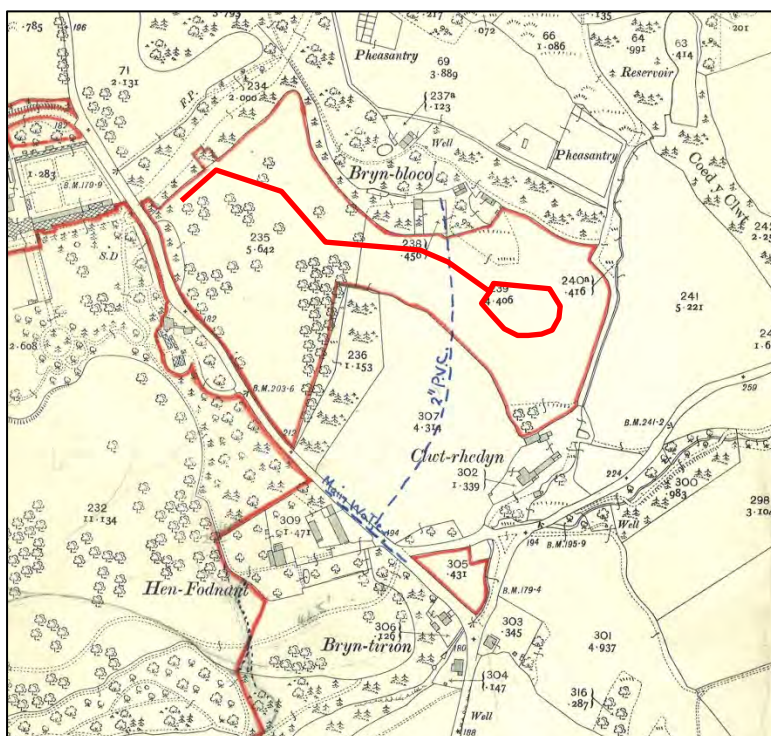


Figure 3: Extract of the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Denbighshire Map, 1914 (proposed location of development in red)





Plate 1: Location of Photovoltaic Array



Plate 2: Location of cable trench, easterly section





Plate 3: Location of cable trench, middle section



Plate 4: Location of cable trench, westerly section