



Ymddiriedolaeth Genedlaethol
National Trust

Proposed Composting Facility, Bodnant, Eglwysbach, Conwy.

Archaeological Desk Top Assessment

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Summary

New composting facilities and associated access works are proposed for a location at the southern tip of Bodnant Gardens. The desk top assessment suggests that there is very limited potential for archaeological deposits to be encountered during ground works associated with these facilities and therefore no recommendations for further work or mitigation are made. There is the potential for indirect impact on a nearby listed building. This constitutes a visual impact on the setting of the building; the impact is assessed as being low and can be mitigated against with careful planting around the facility.

1. Introduction

The site of the proposed composting facility is located at SH 79832 71406 at Bont Newydd at the southern tip of 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 I Registered Park and Garden, PWG (Gd) 5 (CON), (Cawd/ICOMOS UK, 1998). The proposed development lies within the park boundary but in a peripheral position in relation to the key features of the park and garden (Figure 1).

The development has a footprint area of 24 m by 27 m and consists of a concrete slab base with composting bays above, reaching a maximum of 5 m in height above the level of the slab. The site slopes south east to north west with a fall of 2m to the north west across the development area. The ground level would be reduced by up to 1.8 m on the south east side of the development footprint to accommodate the concrete slab. There would also be a soak away to the north east of the structure.

Associated with the new composting building, a new section of garden track and a new bridge crossing the Afon Hiraethlyn are proposed (Figure 2). These are situated in woodland to the north east of the composting facility and to the south of a pond which is part of the garden. They link into existing garden access arrangements. The level of ground disturbance associated with these is likely to be minimal.

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 1st 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 but its location through the heavily improved pasture close to Caerhun can only be guessed at.

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). Near by, 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 composting facility.

Bodnant house, sited in the north-eastern part of the garden was built by Colonel Forbes in 1792, at a small distance from the original house (Old Bodnod), which dates to the late 16th or early 17th century. The gardens were begun by Henry Pochin who took over the property in 1874, and subsequently developed by the 2nd Lord Aberconwy (Cadw/ICOMOS UK, 1998).

The 1841 Tithe map and schedule for the Parish of Eglwys Fach states that the landowner of apportionment 281, in which the development lies, was owned by William Hanmer (Figure 4). The occupier was John Thomas of Ty Gwyn, the farm to the south. The state of cultivation is given as “Old Pasture”. William Hanmer was owner of Bodnod Demesne at this time having married Colonel Forbes daughter in 1820. Ty Gwyn farm included lands to the west of the Afon Hiraethlyn which are now part of the gardens.

The available historic map sequence for the area specific to the development demonstrates relatively little change through the period 1819 to 1875 (Figures 3 to 5). By 1900 a small pond has appeared to the west of the Afon Hiraethlyn to the north of the development area (Figure 6). By 1913 a much larger pond has been created, known at the property today as “The Skating Pond” (*pers. com.* Bryn Hughes) (Figure 7). This demonstrates that features at the very southern end of the garden were not developed until the beginning of the 20th Century.

A number of historic assets are identified in the immediate area of the composting site (Figure 2) 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 20th centuries. 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 (Cadw/ICOMOS UK, 1998).

Barn at Bont Newydd: Located immediately south east of the proposed composting facility, the barn at Bont Newydd is a Grade II Listed Building. It is a sub medieval vernacular barn, probably of early 17th Century date (Cadw Listed Building Record, 2009, Listed Building Reference 17567).

Ddolhyfryd Farmhouse: Located 280 m east of the proposed composting facility. Ddolhyfryd Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building. It is an early 19th Century two storey square farmhouse retaining a symmetrical three bay façade (Cadw Listed Building Record, 2009, Listed Building Reference 17568).

Ty Gwyn Farmhouse: Located 120 m south west of the proposed composting facility, Ty Gwyn Farmhouse is a two story irregular plan house dating to the 17th Century. It is described by the Royal Commission on Historic and Archaeological Monuments in Wales as a “picturesque vernacular building” (RCHAMW NPRN 35442).

3. Field Visit

The site of the proposed composting facility was visited on the 18th June 2012. The site is currently under grass with random trees. The footprint of the facility would be located amongst a clump of trees at the south eastern limit of the site (Plate 1). Trees at the location would significantly limit the use of archaeological investigation techniques prior to construction.

It was apparent that the ground surface immediately to the north west of the footprint, is artificially made up, potentially from the excavation of the Bodnant skating pond in early 1900's and subsequent cleaning out of the same.

While trees in the area would largely screen the composting facility, the removal of trees during construction would result in some visibility of the site to nearby Bont Newydd Barn.

No archaeological features were observed during the visit.



Plate 1: Site of proposed composting facility under trees to the top right of view, looking south east.

4. Assessment of Impact

4.1. Archaeological Features

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

4.2. Historic Assets

A small number of listed and notable historic buildings are located within the locality of the development site. There is no direct impact on these assets. There is a potential indirect visual impact upon the nearest of these buildings to the development site, Bont Newydd Barn. The level of this impact is considered to be low.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that careful planting be carried out to screen the composting structure in order to mitigate against any potential visual impact upon Bont Newydd Barn (Listed Building 17567).

6. Sources

6.1. Primary

Ordnance survey 2" map 309 surveyed 1819-21
Tithe map for the Parish of Eglwys Fach, 1841
Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Denbighshire VI.5 1875
Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Denbighshire VI.5 1900
Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Denbighshire VI.5 1913

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>)

Cawd/ICOMOS UK, 1998. *Register of Parks and Gardens in Wales. Conwy, Gwynedd and the Isle of Anglesey*.

Driver, T and Hopewell, D, 2008. A Medieval Church and Township Re-Discovered at Llwydfaen, Caerhun, Conwy. *Archaeology in Wales* **48**, 77-81.

RCAHMS, 1914. Denbighshire Inventory.

RCAHMS, 1956. Caernarfonshire Inventory.

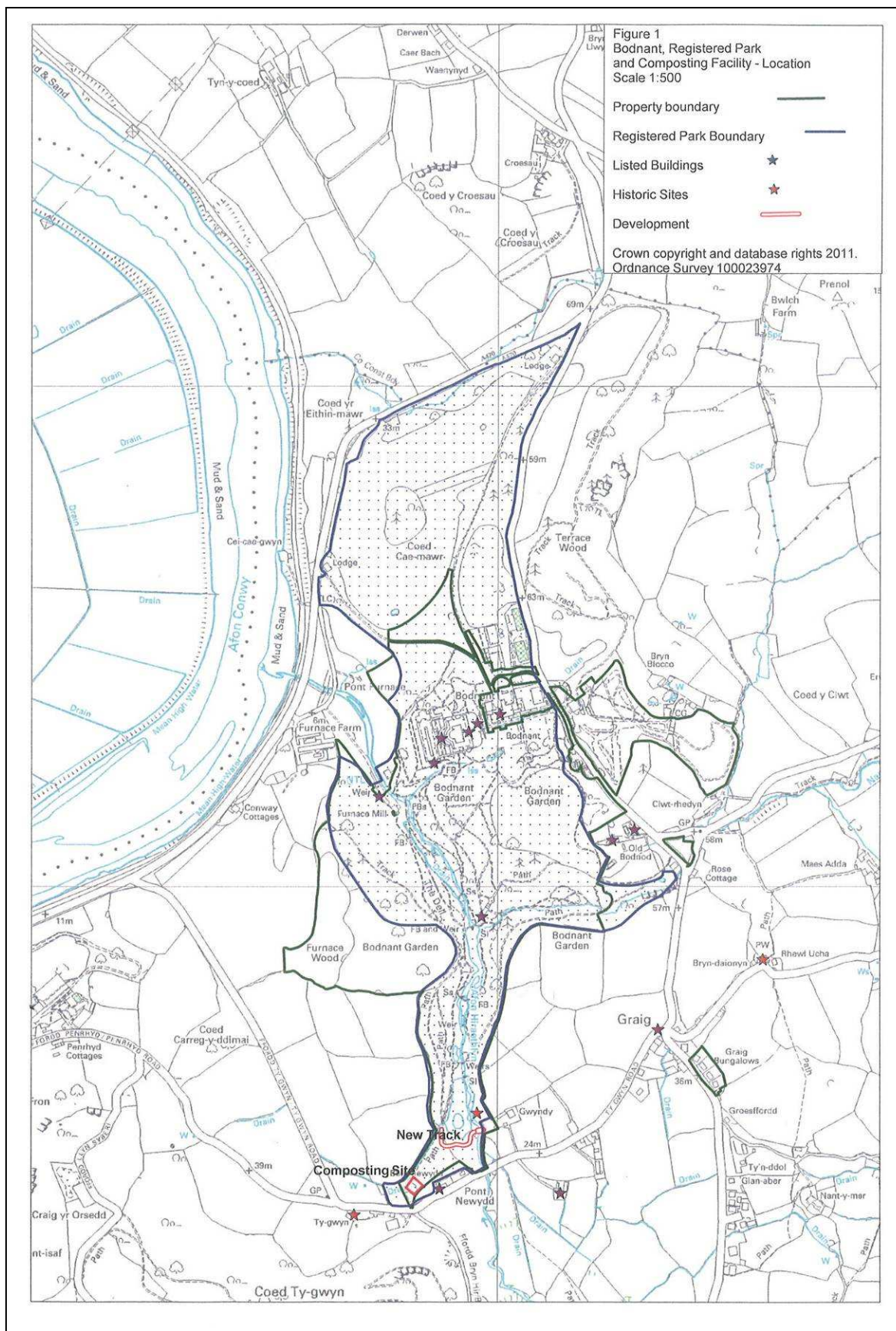


Figure 1: Location of Bodnant, the Registered Park and the composting facility

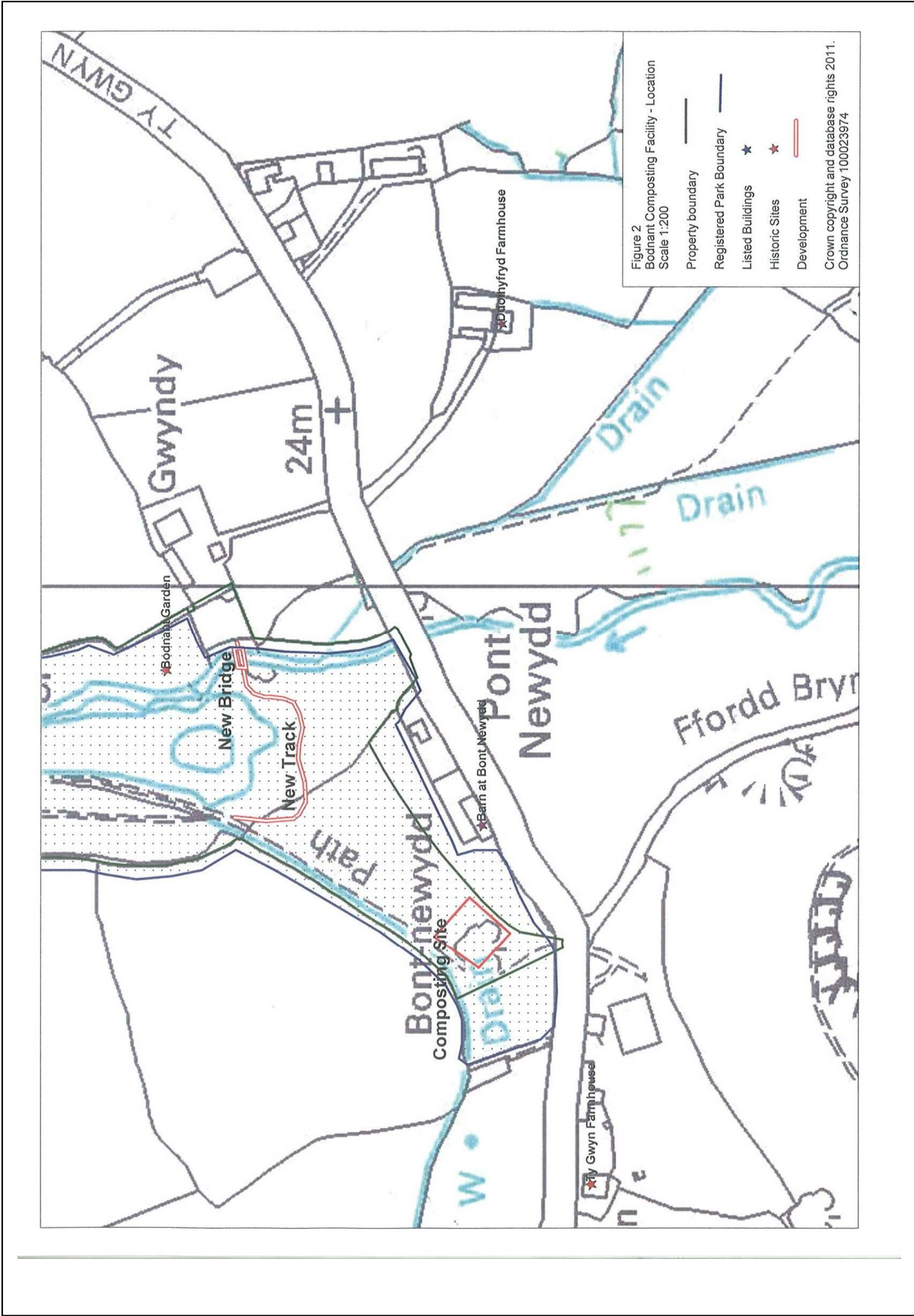


Figure 2: Location of the Composting Facility and Nearby Historic Assets



Figure 3: Extract of the Ordnance survey 2'' map 309 surveyed 1819-21 (enlarged)

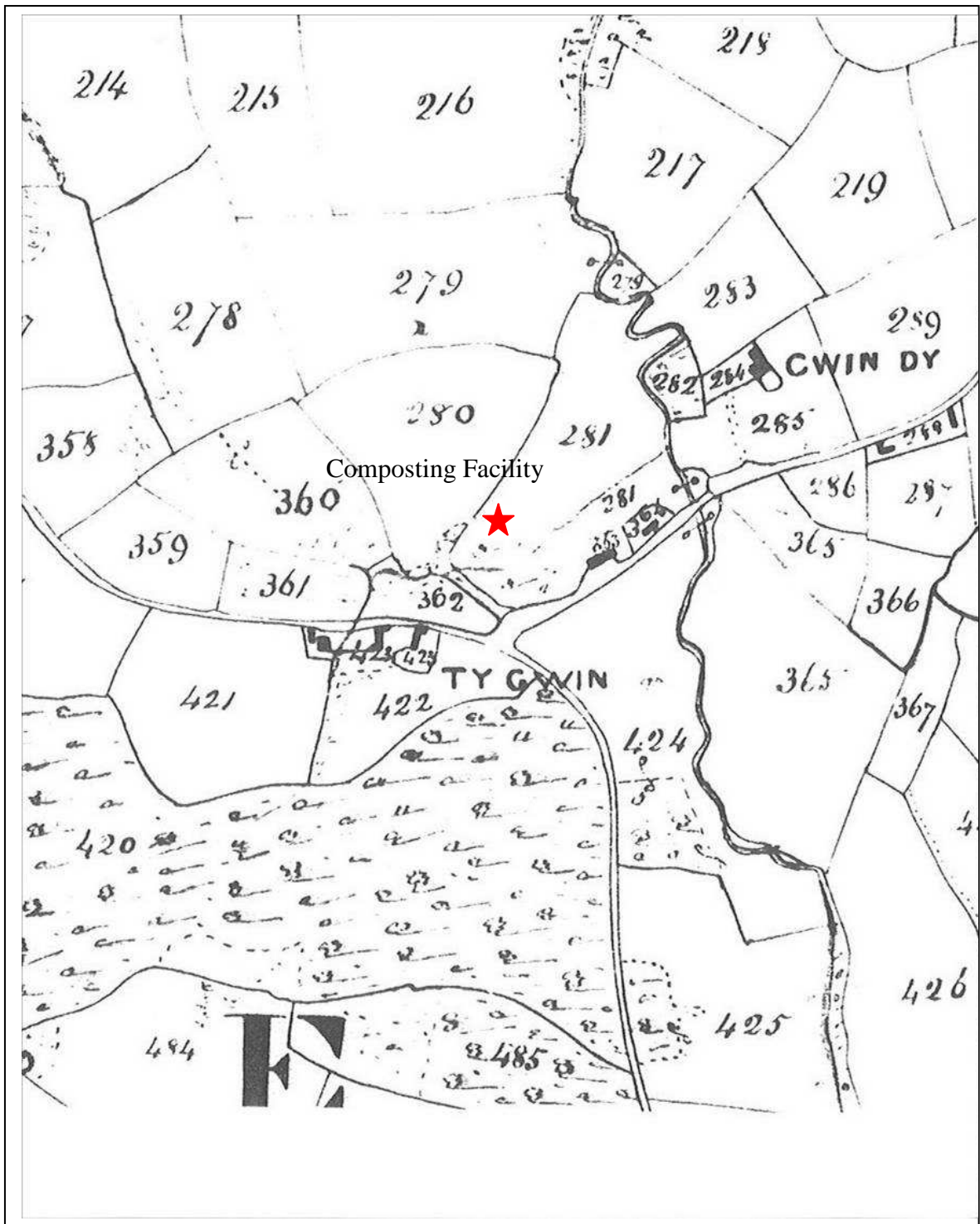


Figure 4: Extract of the Tithe map for the Parish of Eglwys Fach, 1841

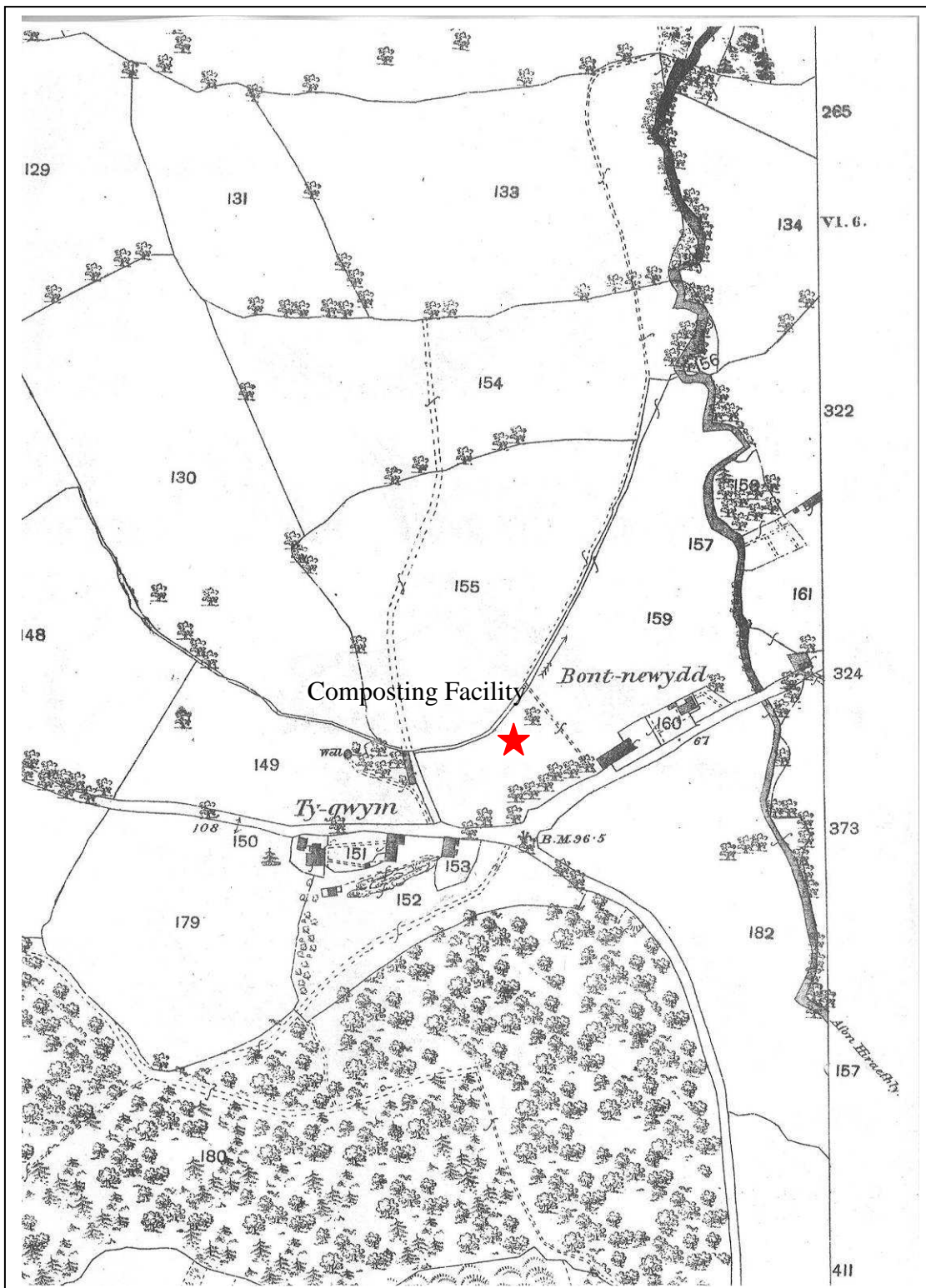


Figure 5: Extract of the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Denbighshire VI.5 1875

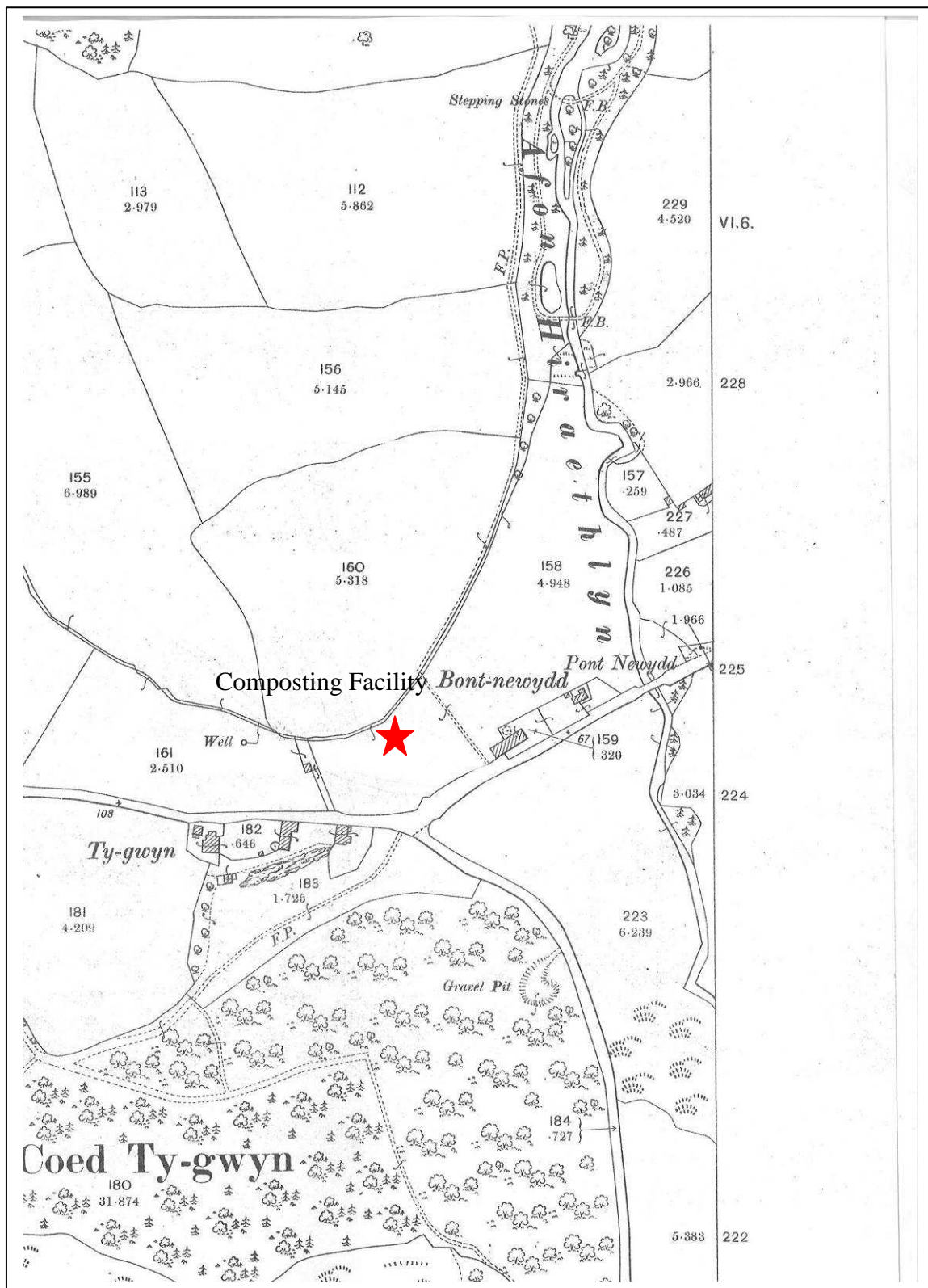


Figure 6: Extract of the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Denbighshire VI.5 1900

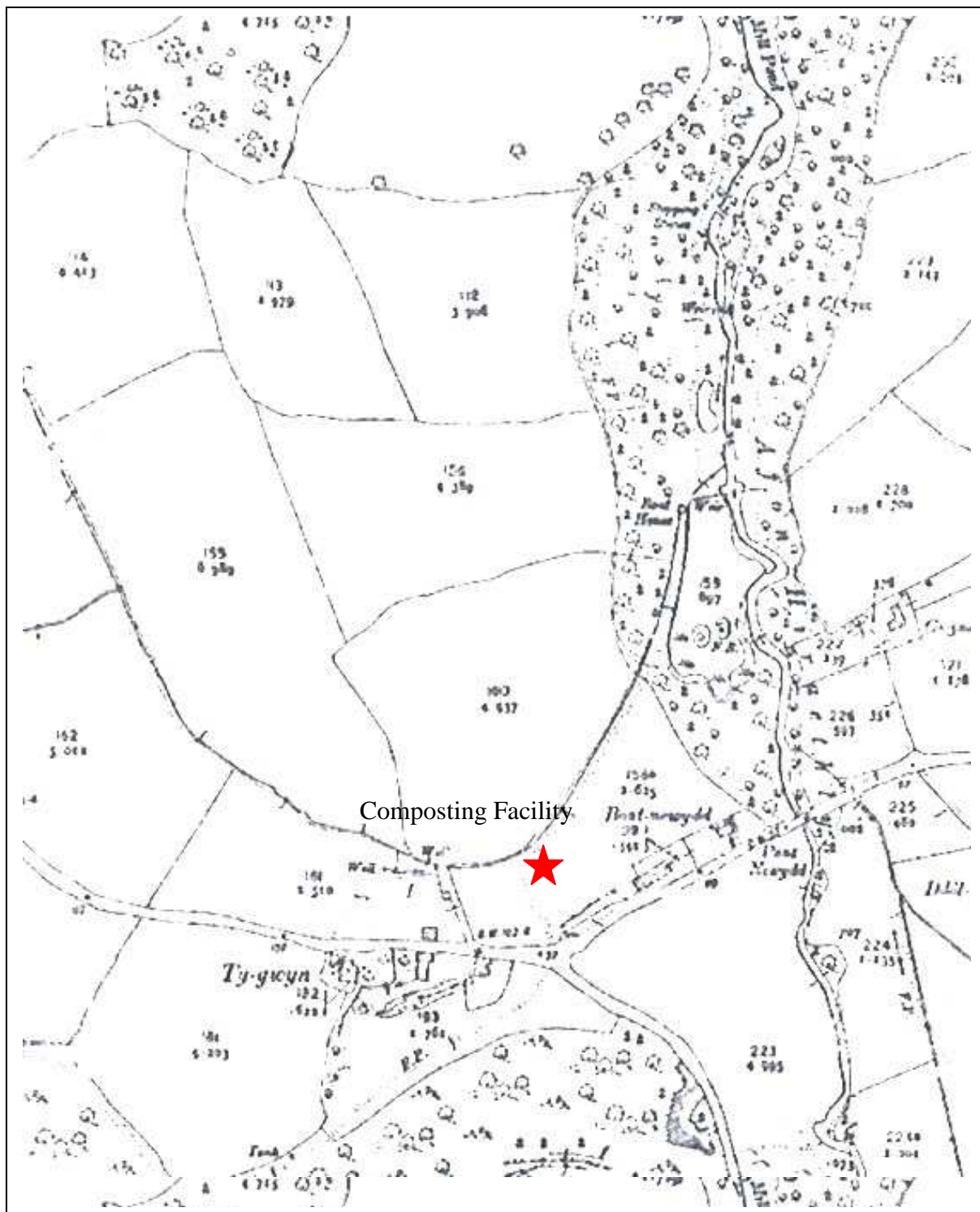


Figure 7: Extract of the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Denbighshire VI.5 1913