



Hafod Commemorative Woodland, Hafod Road, Wrexham LL14 6ET

Heritage Impact Statement

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Ridge and furrow surviving at Hafod with mature hedges marking the field boundaries (1m scale)

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Summary

A desk top review identified two listed buildings and three non-designated historic assets within 500m of the planting site. There are no physical impacts of the planting scheme on the listed buildings and the impact on the settings of these buildings is considered to be slightly positive. There are not considered to be any impacts on the non-designated assets.

Within and on the planting site boundary, four new features have been recorded. The archaeological potential of these features is considered to be minimal with the planting scheme having a slight negative impact on only one feature.

The planting scheme and associated site infrastructure is therefore considered to have a negligible impact on the Historic Environment at Hafod overall. Re-instatement of historic hedgerows and an historic pond, and avoidance of an area of ridge and furrow allows the scheme to embrace the history of the site.

1 Introduction

A commemorative woodland planting site is proposed for nine hectares of grazing land known as Hafod House Grazing.

The site is located at SJ 31334 46311, on the southern edge of the Erddig Estate, Wrexham, adjacent to the Bonc yr Hafod Country Park and the old Hafod Brickworks (Figure 1). The site consists today of three fields divided by mature hedges, with the most easterly field truncated by the A483 road. The scheme extends to a small area to the north-west to encompass new public access arrangements between the planting site and the adjacent Wrexham County Borough Council car park. A pond to the south of the site is a modern natural feature.

The scheme includes new planting, creation of additional ponds, a network of surfaced footpaths, new gates, reinstatement of hedgerows and the installation of a bike rack and a number of benches.

A heritage impact assessment of the planting proposal and associated site infrastructure has been undertaken by National Trust Cymru to inform the planning submission for the commemorative woodland scheme.

2 Methodology

A desk top review of available Historic Environment data relevant to the planting site and its locality was undertaken to inform the assessment. This included the following sources and reports:

Sources

Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Records (Archwilio on-line resource)

Coflein online catalogue provided by the Royal Commission on Archaeological and Historic Records Wales

National Trust Historic Buildings Sites and Monuments Record

Welsh Tithe Maps, National Library of Wales online resource

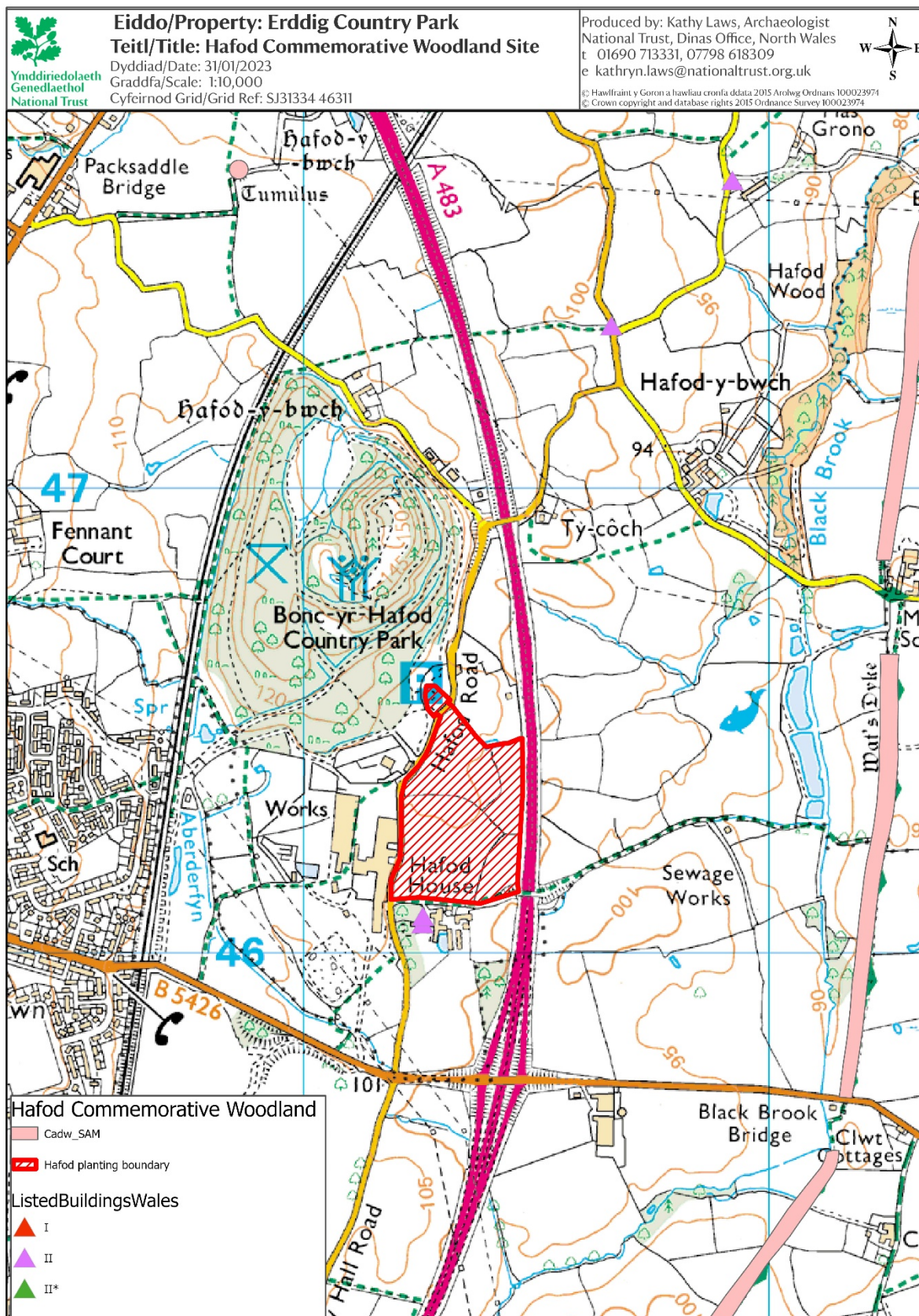


Figure 1: Planting Site Location (not to scale)

Lidar data available via the Lle Geo-Portal for Wales (Welsh Government/Natural Resources Wales)

Early Ordnance Survey 25" mapping for Denbighshire, available through NT GIS browser.

Cof Cymru the Cadw online resource for designated historic assets

Reports:

Grant, I, and Jones, NW, 2019. Wat's Dyke, Erddig, Wrexham: Community Excavation. CPAT Unpublished Report No. 1600.

A field visit was made on the 4th of February 2022 when the site was walked, and features of potential archaeological interest recorded.

An impact assessment was then undertaken to assess physical impact on previously known and newly recorded heritage assets. Impact on the setting of designated assets, two listed buildings, was also considered.

3 Archaeological and Historic Background

Hafod y Bwlch Round Barrow (Scheduled Monument DE047) just over a kilometre to the north of the planting site, probably dating to the Bronze Age (c 2,300-800 BC) points to at least some level of Prehistoric activity in the general area. This is further supported by dating evidence from excavation work within the Erddig Parkland (Grant and Jones 2019 and Grant *pers comm*).

Wat's Dyke (Scheduled Monument DE 153), traditionally thought to be an 8th Century AD defensive bank and ditch, snakes its way across the landscape 750m to the east of the planting site.

This area seems to have been intensively farmed from the medieval period onwards with ridge and furrow earthworks surviving extensively within the Erddig Parkland. These are perhaps focussing on the medieval mott and baily castle (Scheduled Monument DE 017) to the north of Erddig Country Park.

The post medieval landscape is that of scattered farms, gentry farmhouses and country estates with the Registered Park and Garden at Erddig (PGW(C)62(WRE) grade 1) being an outstanding example of an early eighteenth-century formal garden in the Dutch style set within an eighteenth-century park designed by William Emes.

The second half of the 19th Century saw the industrialisation of the area with collieries and brick works located along the train line, originally the North Wales Mineral Railway, opened in 1946, which runs to the west of Hafod.

While the Hafod planting site is now part of the Erddig Estate it would seem that it is a relatively recent addition. The 1844 Tithe map and schedule for the Township of Esclusham in the Parish of Wrexham indicates the fields to be divided between two different owners and occupiers (tenants). Six fields are shown (Figure 2) with a mixture of pasture, arable and hay meadows recorded in the schedule. The buildings to the south and others to the west are both named as Hafod y Bwlch.



Figure 2: Extract from the 1844 Tithe map

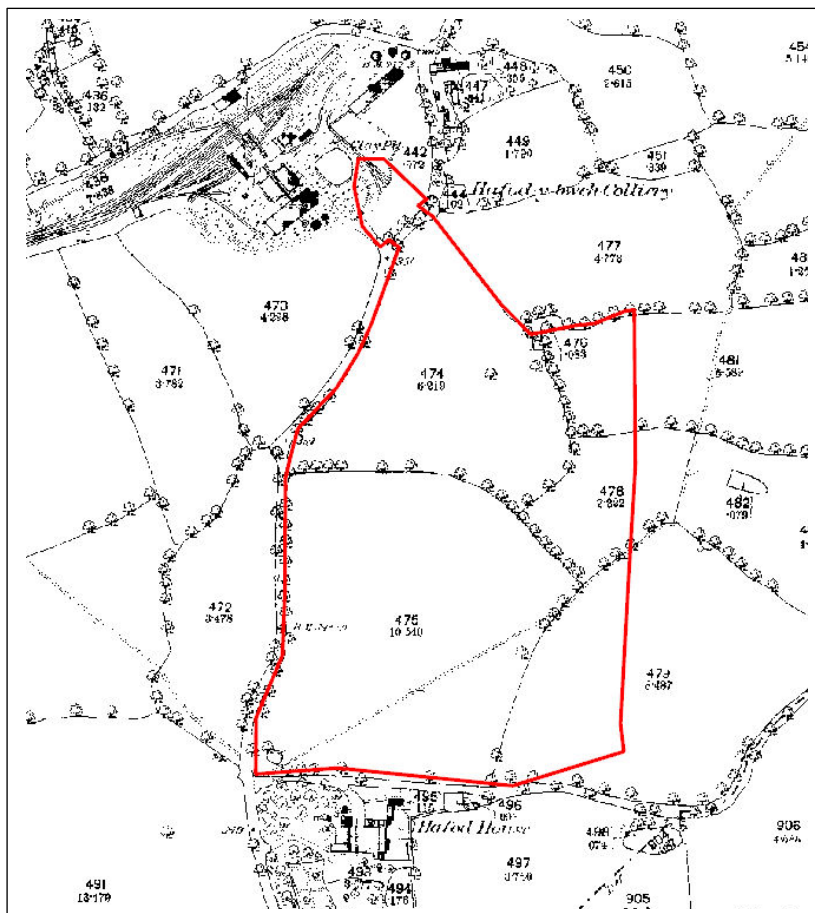


Figure 3: Extract of First Edition Ordnance Survey 25" map (not to scale)

The first edition Ordnance Survey mapping of the late 1800's shows five fields (Figure 3). The field boundaries show mature trees along most of the boundaries. A footpath can be seen running diagonally across the southern most field and a feature drawn in the southwest corner of the site may have been a pond, a second pond is seen to the north and just outside the site boundary. Ponds in this area may well have started life as small extraction pits for clay and marl. The buildings to the south have been re-named Hafod House (Figure 3). Hafod House (Listed Building 1588, grade II) dates to 1690 and is listed as a fine example of a 17th Century gentry house. It has been divided into two with the rear wing, adjacent to the planting site, forming a separate dwelling, Hafod Farm Farmhouse (Listed Building 1589, grade II).

The most significant change is the appearance of the Hafod y Bwch Colliery immediately to the northwest of the planting site. The Hafod y Bwch Colliery (CPAT PRN 104347) opened in 1863 and closed in 1968. The site of the colliery is now the Bonc yr Hafod Country Park.

The second edition Ordnance Survey mapping shows the addition of the Hafod Red Brick Works immediately to the west of the planting site (Figure 4). The brick works, also known as the Hafod Brick and Tile Works (CPAT PRN 17054) and more recently as the Dennis Ruabon Brickworks (RCAHWW NPRN 40776), was founded in 1878 producing bricks, ridge tiles, chimney pots and Ruabon quarry tiles. The factory was modernised in the 1980's but ceased production in 2008.

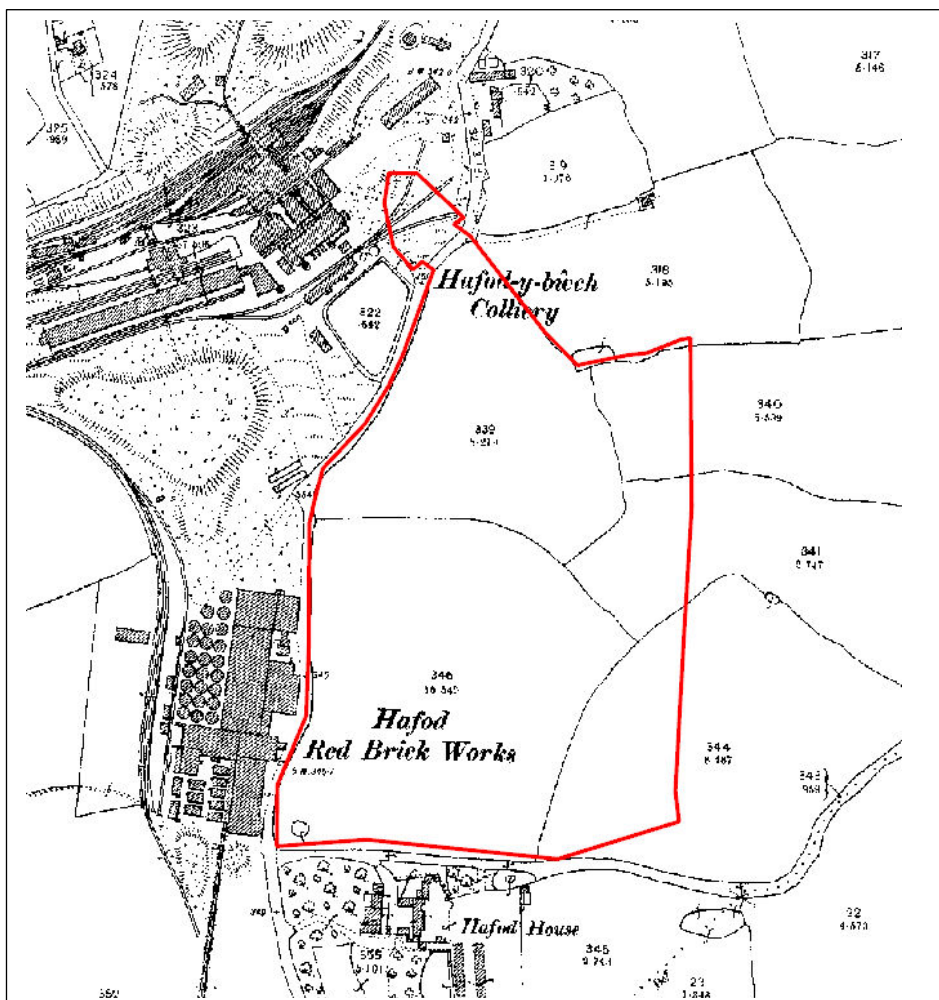


Figure 4: Extract of Second Edition Ordnance Survey 25" map (not to scale)

4 Field Survey

The site was visited on 4th February 2022. Four features of potential archaeological significance were recorded as follows (see also Figure 6).

- 1 Small pond (SJ 31402 46447), located on the northern boundary and just outside the site. Evident on early Ordnance Survey mapping. May originally have been a clay or marl pit.
- 2 Old field boundary (SJ 31439 46370), marked by a notable drop in ground level between two small fields as depicted on the Tithe and early Ordnance Survey mapping.
- 3 Area of surviving ridge and furrow earthworks (centred on SJ31436 46318) in one of the smaller fields on the eastern side of the site. Distance between ridges is 3.4 m. (Image on title page)
- 4 Area of disturbance (SJ 31205 46127) in the southwest corner of the site. This was difficult to define clearly but corresponds to a feature, possibly a pond (clay or marl pit) marked on the (early Ordnance Survey mapping. (Figures 3,4 and 5)

Also of note were the mature hedges which mark the existing field boundaries, and reflect the historic field boundary pattern seen on the historic mapping



Figure 5: Area of disturbance potentially indicating location of filled in historic pond (1m scale).

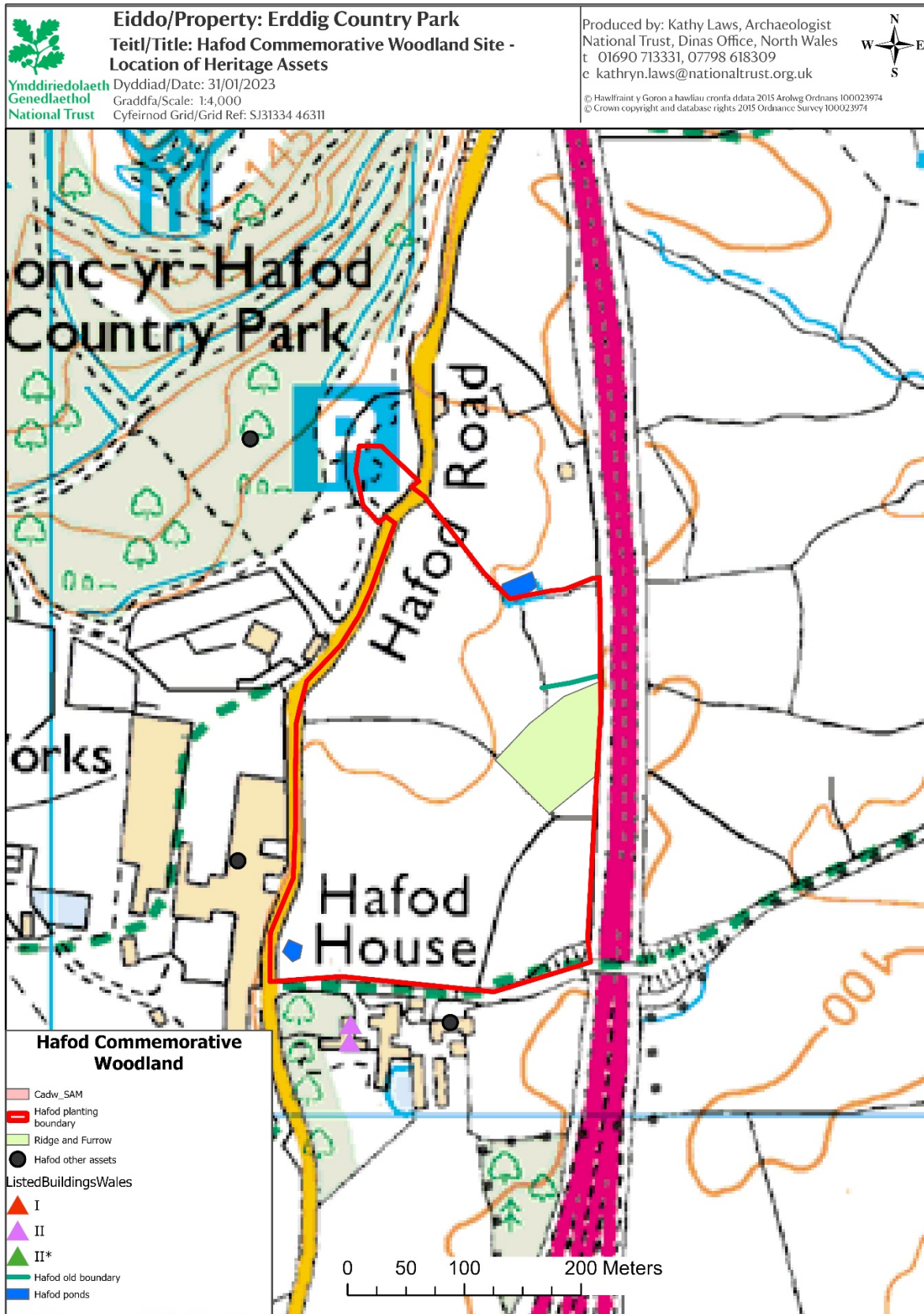


Figure 6: Location of heritage assets

5 Assessment of Impact

The assessment considers all previously known heritage assets, both designated and un-designated, located within the planting site and which lie within 500m of the planting site. In addition, heritage assets recorded as part of the field survey are considered.

Designated assets

Designation	Within the planting site	Within 500m	Impact - physical	Impact - on setting
World Heritage Sites	0	0	N/A	N/A
Scheduled Monuments	0	0	N/A	N/A
Listed Buildings	0	2	None	Slight positive
Registered Historic Parks and Gardens	0	0	N/A	N/A
Registered Battlefields	0	0	N/A	N/A
Conservation Areas	0	0	N/A	N/A

The listed buildings both lie just beyond the southern boundary of the planting site. Hafod House (LB1588 grade II) dates from 1690 and is listed as a fine late C17th gentry house. It has been divided into two with the rear wing forming a separate dwelling, Hafod Farmhouse (LB 1589 grade II). No negative impacts are anticipated because of the planting and once mature the trees will add a level of screening from the more recent intrusions of the A 483 road and the 19th century brickworks.

Undesignated assets within 500m of the planting site

PRN	Other ref	Name	Period	Type	NGR	Impact
CPAT 17054		Hafod Brick and Tile Works	Post medieval	Brickworks	SJ 312 462	None
CPAT 104347		Site of Hafod Colliery	Post medieval	Colliery	SJ 312 466	None
	NT MNA156033	Hafod House Villas	Post medieval	House	SJ 3132 4609	None

Undesignated assets include the site of the Hafod Colliery and the Hafod Brick and Tile Works dating from the late 19th Century. Also, Hafod House Villas, a pair of small houses dating from the early 20th Century.

While all are of local interest, none are likely to be impacted on by the scheme.

New assets within the planting site

NT ref	Name	Period	Type	NGR	Archaeological potential	Impact
MNA195618	Old field boundary, Hafod, Erddig	Post medieval	Field boundary	SJ 31439 46370	minimal	None
MNA195619	Ridge and furrow, Hafod, Erddig	Medieval/post medieval	Ridge and furrow	SJ31436 46318	minimal	Slight-negative
MNA195620	Pond, Hafod, Erddig	Post medieval	Pond	SJ 31402 46447	minimal	None
MNA195621	Site of pond, Hafod, Erddig	Post medieval	Pond	SJ 31205 46127	minimal	Slight positive

Features recorded during the field survey all relate to the farming landscape of local significance and minimal archaeological potential. An area of ridge and furrow earthworks is the only feature thought to be potentially impacted by the scheme but avoidance of this area with planting and a path along the very edge of the area minimises impact.