Ymddiriedolaeth
Genedlaethol
National Trust

Hafod Road Solar PV, Hafod Road, Wrexham

Heritage Impact Statement

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Ordnance survey 6"/mile c1888

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Summary

A solar PV scheme is being considered at a 2.89 ha site known as Hafod Farm, on the southern edge of the Erddig Estate

A desk top review identified two listed buildings and four non designated historic assets within 500m of the proposed solar array site. There are no physical impacts of the proposal on the listed buildings and no impact on the setting of these buildings. There are not considered to be any impacts on non-designated assets.

There are unlikely to be subsurface archaeological remains at the site that would be impacted by ground disturbance associated with the proposal.

1 Introduction

A Solar PV Scheme is being considered for 2.89 ha of land known as Hafod Farm.

The site is located at SJ 31295 45901, on the southern edge of the Erddig Estate, Wrexham, adjacent to a group of private residences, Hafod House Farmhouse, Hafod House and Hafod Cottages, and the disused Hafod Farm buildings. It is to the south of the newly established Hafod Commemorative Woodland site. The A483 road lies immediately to the east of the site. The site consists today of two fields to the east and south of Hafod House (Figure 1).

The scheme includes a new access track which runs from a farm track to the north of the site to the location of the solar arrays. The solar arrays will be sited in the more southerly of the two fields and will cover an area of approximately 1.3 ha enclosed by a 3 m high perimeter fence. There will be t hirteen arrays, maximum height 3 m. The scheme will also require an electrical substation which will be housed in a metal container approximately 12m x 2.5m x 3m high which will be located on the west side of the arrays.

A temporary compound will be located at the north end of the most northern field. A habitat creation scheme has been incorporated into the development. This includes new hedgerows at two locations, an extension to the existing woodland between the two fields and the creation of a new wetland/pond in the northern field.

Ground disturbance will be associated with the mounting system for the solar arrays, trenching for cables, the creation of the new track, the temporary compound, and the creation of a new pond.

The impacts of the scheme, both physical and visual upon heritage assets in the area, and the potential for surviving sub surface archaeological deposit at the site, are assessed.

2 Legislative Framework

Planning policy for the historic environment in Wales is guided by a comprehensive framework designed to protect and manage the nation's rich heritage. The **Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016** plays a central role, providing robust legal protection for historic sites and structures.

This is supplemented by **Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24**, which offers detailed guidance on the conservation of historic assets during development planning and decision-making. Additionally, the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** and the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979** are key legislative instruments that ensure the preservation of Wales's historic environment.

Together, these policies and regulations aim to balance development needs with the imperative to safeguard Wales's cultural and historical legacy for future generations

In Wales, a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is required for listed building consent, conservation area consent, and scheduled monument consent. It is recommended for changes to registered historic parks and gardens, World Heritage Sites, and locally significant historic assets. The setting of a historic environment asset must be considered in development proposals to ensure the asset's significance is preserved and enhanced. This includes applications for planning permission and other relevant consents. Conducting an HIA helps identify potential impacts early and supports sensitive, high-quality changes.

3 Methodology

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

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.

Tithe map and schedule of the township of Eclusham Below in the Parish of Wrexham 1844. Welsh Tithe Maps, National Library of Wales online resource.

Tithe map and schedule of the township of Moreton Below in the Parish of Ruabon 1844. Welsh Tithe Maps, National Library of Wales online resource.

Lidar data available via Data Map 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, N W, 2019. Wat's Dyke, Erddig, Wrexham: Community Excavation. CPAT Unpublished Report No. 1600.

Hankinson, R, Britnell, W, J, and Silvester, R, J, 2012. Medieval and Early Post Medieval Industry in East and Northeast Wales. CPAT Report Number 1144.

Hughes, W, R, 1994. National Trust Vernacular Buildings Survey Report for Hafod House Farm.

Laws, K, 2023. Hafod Commemorative Woodland, Hafod Road, Wrexham LL14 6ET. NT Heritage Impact Statement.

Lidar data was reviewed in advance of a brief field visit made on the 16th of September 2024. The site was mostly under a tall crop at the time, and it was not possible to walk the entire site. It was possible however to note some abandoned buildings present on the site and make a judgement on visual implications of the scheme on historic assets.

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.

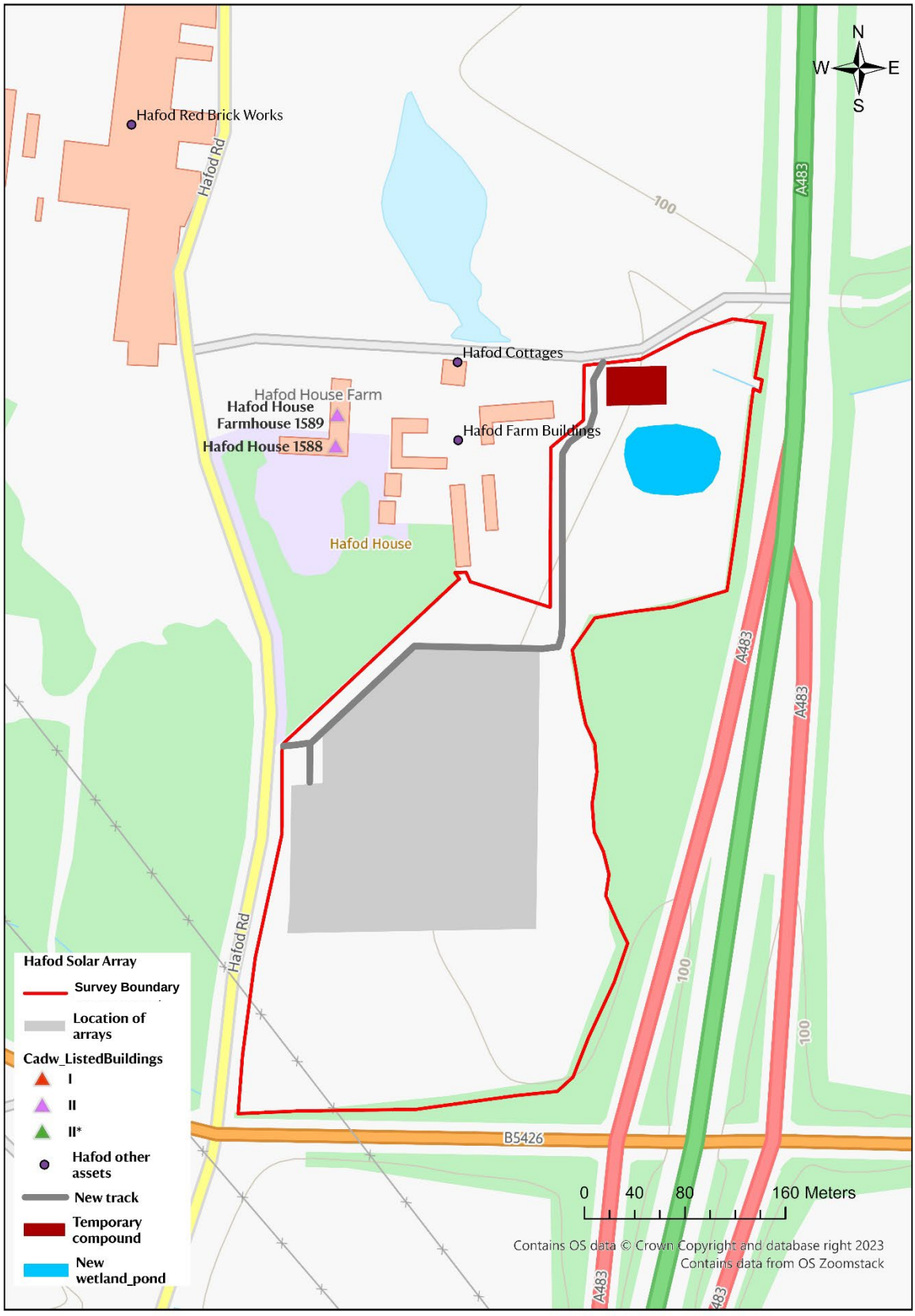


Figure 1: Hafod Solar Farm Location

4 Archaeological and Historic Background

Hafod y Bwlch Round Barrow (Scheduled Monument DE047) just over a kilometre to the north of the solar farm 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 solar farm 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. A small amount of ridge and furrow was recorded to the north of the solar farm site as part of an assessment in advance of tree planting (Laws, 2023).

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 Road Solar PV site is now part of the Erddig Estate it would seem that it is a relatively recent addition. The 1844 Tithe maps and schedules for the Township of Eclusham in the Parish of Wrexham and the Township of Moreton Below in the Parish of Ruabon indicate the land to be divided between a number of different owners and occupiers (tenants). It seems to have been largely under arable at this time. The buildings immediately to the northwest of the site are named as Hafod y Bwch on the Tithe map. A small building in the southwest corner of the site, apportionment 96a, is a Toll House owned by the Turnpike Trust at that time (Figure 2).

Of note is the name, in 1844, of the more northerly part of the site (apportionment 218) as "Brick Kiln Field". This may possibly indicate the presence of a clay pit in this field or nearby. The Hafod Red Brick works nearby was not founded until later (1878), but a brick making industry emerged from about the 1760's in this area (Hankinson *et al*, 2012). Prior to this, brickmaking appears to have been temporary and for specific building projects, so perhaps this relates to the bricks required for the construction of Hafod House. The clay pit for the Hafod Red Brick works, now a landfill site, was to the southwest of the solar farm site. A pond showing on the Tithe map and the early ordnance maps in the eastern extent of this field now under the A483 road may represent the location of an old clay pit.

The first edition Ordnance Survey mapping of the late 1800's shows little change in the field layout from the Tithe Maps (Figure 3). The buildings to the northwest have been re-named Hafod House and there are additions to the range of buildings (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 (north) wing, adjacent to the planting site, forming a separate dwelling, Hafod Farm Farmhouse (Listed Building 1589, grade II).



Figure 2: Combined extract from Tithe Map of the township of Eclusham Below in the Parish of Wrexham 1844, and the township of Moreton Below in the Parish of Ruabon 1844 (not to scale). Welsh Tithe Maps, National Library of Wales online resource.

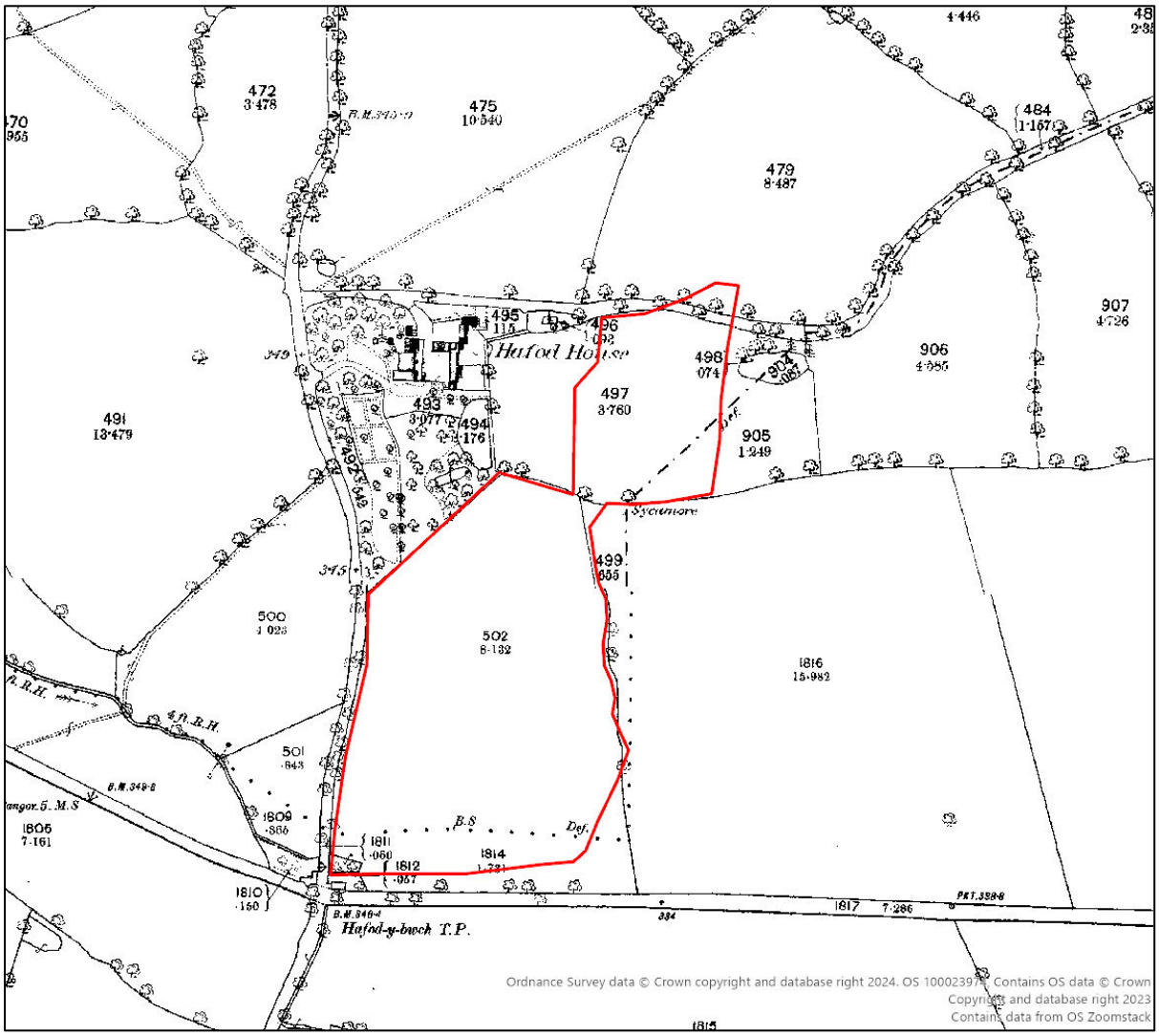


Figure 3: Extract of First Edition Ordnance Survey 25" map (not to scale)

Second Edition Ordnance Survey mapping (see image on title page) shows further additions to the Hafod House buildings and the industrialisation of this area. The Hafod y Bwch Colliery (Heneb CPA PRN 104347) to the northwest opened in 1863 and closed in 1968. The site of the colliery is now the Bonc yr Hafod Country Park.

Hafod Red Brick Works appears immediately to the northwest of Hafod House. The brick works, also known as the Hafod Brick and Tile Works (Heneb CPA PRN 17054) and more recently as the Dennis Ruabon Brickworks (RCAHMW 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.

5 Field Visit

Prior to the field visit lidar data was checked for any upstanding features within the site (Figure 4).

The southerly field where the solar arrays will sit is completely free of any upstanding features. The more northerly field has modern drainage features and a mound which is unlikely to represent an archaeological or historic feature but more likely a pile of soil or manure at the time the data was captured.

There is no indication of any remains relating to the toll house seen on the 1844 Tithe map, this was likely removed during road widening during the 20th century.



Figure 4: Lidar Data

The site was visited on 16th September 2024. A large part of the site was under a crop of maize at the time so it was not possible to walk the entire site, but the following observations could be made.

1. The mound visible in the lidar data is not evident today.
2. Confirmation that there are no surviving remains relating to the toll house noted from the review of historic maps.
3. Several ranges of farm buildings once associated with Hafod House survive in an abandoned, ruinous, and overgrown state just beyond the northwestern limit of the solar farm site.
4. The fields have clearly been cultivated for many years.
5. There is a stand of mature trees between the location of the solar array and the listed buildings Hafod House and Hafod Farmhouse.



Figure 5: View across northern field (Brick Kiln Field) looking south, Hafod House farm buildings to the right of the view.

6 Assessment of Impact

There are no previously known heritage assets within the solar farm site. The assessment considers all previously known heritage assets, both designated and un-designated, located within 500m of the solar farm site.

Designated assets

Designation	Within the solar farm 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	None
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 at a distance of approximately 200m to the northwest of the solar farm 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). There are no physical impacts on the listed buildings. A belt of densely planted trees between the location of the solar arrays and the listed buildings and their grounds means that no negative visual impacts are anticipated.

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
	NT MNA203043	Hafod House Farm Buildings	Post medieval	Farm stead	SJ 3133 4605	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 and Hafod House Farm, a group of derelict agricultural buildings dating from the late 18th to the 20th Century.
While all are of local interest, non are likely to be impacted on by the scheme.

Sub-surface archaeological remains
Desk top research, examination of Lidar data, and a site visit concludes that there are unlikely to be significant sub surface archaeological remains which would be impacted on by the scheme.