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C - Heritage Impact Assessment

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Land at Goat Mill Road, Merthyr Tydfil

Heritage Impact Assessment



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Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Land at Goat Mill Road, Merthyr Tydfil

Heritage Impact Assessment

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Executive summary

WSP has been commissioned by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council to produce a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) in support of a planning application for the Proposed Development at Land at Goat Mill Road, Merthyr Tydfil (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').

The Proposed Development comprises the first phase of a proposed Enterprise Park, which includes the provision of site infrastructure, such as new access points, a spine road linking the existing Goat Mill Road roundabouts through the Site, service roads serving future development plots, and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) distributed throughout the Site. The first phase of development also includes an electric vehicle (EV) charging hub located within the southern part of the Site adjacent to the existing access roundabout. The charging hub would comprise 16 EV charging bays and 10 layover spaces arranged around a new building containing a café, retail unit and customer welfare facilities, together with a canopy providing partial cover to the charging bays.

This HIA identifies the relevant historic assets within and around the Site, considers the contribution of setting to their significance, and assesses the likely effects of the Proposed Development on those assets.

The Site is located approximately 1.5 kilometres to the northeast of Merthyr Tydfil town centre. The majority of the Site comprises flat grassland, bounded to the west by Goat Mill Road and to the east by a steep vegetated bank which rises to meet the A4060. The Site's historic use is closely linked to the Dowlais Ironworks to the north and the wider industry of Merthyr Tydfil during the 19th and 20th centuries, and until the mid-20th century the Site comprised associated industrial buildings, transport infrastructure, and part of the Dowlias Great Tip. Despite falling out of use during the Second World War, the landscape was characterised by its industrial past until the late 20th century. Reclamation works to clear remaining disused industrial workings at the Site were completed in 1996. Since then, the Site has remained undeveloped and has become increasingly vegetated.

The Site does not contain any built historic assets, although it lies within the Merthyr Tydfil Historic Landscape in Wales (Cadw Ref: HLW (MGL) 2). A number of designated and non-designated historic assets were identified in the vicinity of the Site, including the Dowlais Conservation Area, the Church of St John (Grade II listed building, Cadw Ref: 17931) and the Merthyr Tydfil Historic Landscape in Wales.

The assessment concludes that the Proposed Development would not result in any direct physical impacts on designated or non-designated historic assets. Potential effects are limited to indirect effects arising from changes to setting. The Proposed Development would result in a negligible impact on the significance and setting of the Dowlais Conservation Area, the Church of St John, resulting in **no harm** to their significance. The Proposed Development would also have a slight impact resulting in a **low level of harm** on the significance of the Merthyr Tydfil Historic Landscape in Wales through the introduction of

new built form within the Dowlais Great Tip, Trecatti, Trehir and Twyn-y-Waun Character Area. However, the development would not result in the loss of historic landscape features or materially affect the ability to understand and appreciate the wider industrial history, character or significance of the historic landscape as a whole.

No specific mitigation measures are considered necessary in relation to the historic environment. Nevertheless, the retention and enhancement of vegetation and landscape buffers should be incorporated into the detailed design of the Proposed Development to help maintain visual separation between the Site and surrounding historic assets and support the continued preservation of their settings.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1. WSP has been commissioned by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council to produce a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) to support a planning application for the Proposed Development at Land at Goat Mill Road, Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil, hereafter referred to as 'the Site' (National Grid Reference/NGR SO 306197 206946: **Figure 1**).

1.1.2. The Site is located approximately 1.5 kilometres to the northeast of Merthyr Tydfil town centre. It does not contain any built historic assets, although it lies within the Merthyr Tydfil Historic Landscape in Wales (HLW), which is a landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest as designated in the *Register of the Historic Landscapes in Wales* in 2001 (Cadw Ref: HLW (MGL) 2). Moreover, a number of designated and non-designated historic assets are located within the vicinity of the Site, including Dowlais Conservation Area, the Council and Urban Street Conservation Area, the Church of St John (Grade II listed building, Cadw Ref: 17931) and the Merthyr Tydfil HLW.

1.1.3. The Proposed Development comprises an Enterprise Park with the provision of site infrastructure, including an electric vehicle (EV) charging hub as the first phase of development. The proposed infrastructure includes the access points and spine road to serve the whole development linking the Goat Mill Road roundabouts through the Site, along with service roads for future development plots and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) facilities provided across the Site. The EV charging facility would be located towards the southern part of the Site, adjacent to the existing access roundabout, and would comprise 16 charging points and 10 lay over spaces around a broken delta wing shaped building which provides a café, retail facility and toilet facilities. The Proposed Development will establish the foundation of the Enterprise Park, aiming to cater to the varied needs of business activities and contribute positively to the local community and the broader economic landscape of Merthyr Tydfil.

1.1.4. In accordance with Paragraph 6.1.9 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW), which sets out the requirement for applicants to fully consider the impact of proposals on the significance and heritage values of historic assets including their contribution to setting, this report draws together available information on the historic assets potentially impacted by the Proposed Development. The historic development of the Site and its immediate environs are discussed to inform this process (see **Section 4**).

1.1.5. The report enables relevant parties to assess the significance of the historic assets, thus enabling potential impacts to be identified along with the need for mitigative strategies.

1.2 Location and Description

1.2.1. Merthyr Tydfil is situated at the northern end of the Taff Valley, South Wales, approximately 30 kilometres to the northwest of Cardiff. The town stands on the banks of the River Taff,

surrounded by a mountainous landscape setting. Historic road and rail links run through and into the town centre, including the Taff Valley Branch Railway Line, terminating at Merthyr Tydfil. The town developed as the commercial, religious and administrative centre of the wider historic industrial district.

1.2.2. The Site is located approximately 1.5 kilometres to the northeast of the town centre, west of the A4060 East of Abercynon to East of Dowlais Trunk Road. Goat Mill Road adjoins the western boundary of the Site. The Site occupies an area of 21.67 hectares and is for the most part flat with the eastern boundary area rising steeply to meet the A4060.

1.2.3. The Site comprises predominantly flat grassland, bounded to the west by Goat Mill Road and to the east by a steep vegetated bank which rises to meet the A4060 (**Plates 1−4**). The Site's historic use is closely linked to the Dowlais Ironworks to the north and the wider industry of Merthyr Tydfil during the 19th and 20th centuries. Until the mid-20th century, the Site comprised associated industrial buildings, transport infrastructure, and part of the Dowlais Great Tip. Following the decline of industrial activity, the Site became disused, although the landscape retained a strong industrial character until the late 20th century. Reclamation works to remove remaining disused industrial workings at the Site were completed in 1996 to prepare the Site for employment use. Since then, the Site has remained undeveloped and has become increasingly vegetated. To the east of the Site lies Ffos-y-Fran, a now closed open-cast mine and a notable heavy industrial feature.



Plate 1: View north across the Site from a location adjacent to the Goat Mill Road roundabout, opposite the A4102.



Plate 2: View across the Site from the Goat Mill Road roundabout opposite the A4102, looking southeast.



Plate 3: View looking across the Site from the bank of the A4060, looking southwest.



Plate 4: View north from the northern part of the Site, showing the enclosed landform and surrounding topography.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

1.3.1. The aim of this report is to understand the heritage significance of the Site and those historic assets in the vicinity, and to assess the impact of the Proposed Development on that significance, to support a planning application. Professional judgement has been used to assess heritage significance, based on evidential, historical, aesthetic, or communal value, as set out in Cadw's *Conservation Principles* (2011).

1.3.2. The aim is achieved through the following objectives:

- Provide a summary historical background of the Site and its context.
- Describe the current condition of the Site as determined from a site visit.
- Interpret the significance of the Site and historic assets within and in the vicinity of the Site, including the contribution made by their settings to that significance, based on values set out in Cadw's *Conservation Principles* (2011).[1]

[1] Cadw (2011). *Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Heritage Environment in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

- Assess the likely impacts on the significance and setting of those historic assets within and in the vicinity of the Site arising from the Proposed Development.
- Provide recommendations on appropriate mitigation (where required).

2 Planning Legislation, Policy and Development Plan Framework

2.1 National Planning Legislation

2.1.1. The *Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023* (hereafter referred to as 'the Act') brings together the principal legislation for the conservation of the historic environment in Wales.[2] This means that a single Act now contains all the legislation for the protection and management of historic monuments and buildings, conservations areas and other elements of the Welsh historic environment.

2.1.2. Part 3 of the Act deals with listed buildings and includes the control of works that affect them. Part 4 deals with conservation areas.

2.2 National Planning Policy and Guidance

Planning Policy Wales (2024)

2.2.1. *Planning Policy Wales 2024* (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government.[3] It is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs), Welsh Government Circulars, and policy clarification letters, which together with PPW provide the national planning policy framework for Wales. It outlines policies for the historic environment and requirements for planning applications in relation to historic assets such as listed buildings, CAs, scheduled monuments, and locally listed assets.

2.2.2. Section 6.1 of the PPW deals with the historic environment. Paragraph 6.1.5 notes that:

> *'The historic environment can only be maintained as a resource for future generations if the individual historic assets are protected and conserved. Cadw's published Conservation Principles highlights the need to base decisions on an understanding of the impact a proposal may have on the significance of an historic asset'.*

2.2.3. Paragraph 6.1.10 relates to listed buildings and states that:

> *'For any development proposal affecting a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.*

2.2.4. Paragraph 6.1.15 relates to conservation areas and states that:

[2] Welsh Government (2023). *Historic Environment (Wales) Act*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.
[3] Welsh Government (2024). *Planning Policy Wales 12th Edition*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

'There is a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission for developments, including advertisements, which damage the character or appearance of a conservation area or its setting to an unacceptable level. In exceptional cases, the presumption may be overridden in favour of development considered desirable on public interest grounds'.

PPW Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (2026)

2.2.5. The *PPW Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment* (HE TAN) *2026* provides guidance on how the planning system considers the historic environment during development plan preparation and decision making on planning and Listed Building Consent applications.[4] The HE TAN provides specific guidance on how the following aspects of the historic environment should be considered:

- World Heritage Sites
- Scheduled monuments
- Archaeological remains
- Listed buildings
- Conservation areas
- Historic parks and gardens
- Historic landscapes
- Historic assets of special local interest

Setting of Historic Assets in Wales (Cadw, 2025)

2.2.6. The *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales* (Setting Guidance 2025) has been prepared by Cadw to provide guidance on the implications of development on the setting of historic assets.[5] It was first published in 2017 and revised in 2025.

2.2.7. The definition of setting as described in the Setting Guidance 2025 is as follows:

'The surroundings in which it [historic asset] is understood, experienced and appreciated, embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of an asset.'

[4] Welsh Government (2026). *Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment.* Cardiff: Welsh Government.

[5] Cadw (2025). *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales*. Merthyr Tydfil: Welsh Government.

2.2.8. Cadw's guidance considers that the importance of setting lies in what it contributes to the significance of the historic asset. This depends on a wide range of physical elements within, as well as perceptual and associational attributes pertaining to, the historic asset's surroundings.

Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales (Cadw, 2025)

2.2.9. The *Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales* (HIA Guidance 2025) has been prepared by Cadw to provide guidance on the general principles to consider when planning changes to historic assets.[6] It was first published in 2017 and revised in 2025.

Guide to Good Practice on Using the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales in the Planning and Development Process (Cadw 2007)

2.2.10. The *Guide to Good Practice on Using the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales in the Planning and Development Process* (HLW Guidance 2007) contains guidance relating to HLWs and their place in the planning process. It sets out a staged approach for assessing the impact of development on historic landscape areas on the Register.

2.3 Local Planning Policy

Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan 2016–2031

2.3.1. The *Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016–2031* was adopted by Merthyr Tydfil County Council in 2020 and sets out planning policies and allocates sites for different types of development.[7] Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council is preparing a Second Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP), covering the period 2026−2041. The Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Plan 2016−2031 will remain in force and continue to form the basis for land-use planning decisions until the *Second Replacement Local Development Plan 2026-2041* is adopted. The policy relevant to this HIA is cited below.

Policy CW1: The Historic Environment

2.3.2. Policy CW1 relates to the historic environment and states:

> *'The integrity of our historic environment assets will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated they would preserve or enhance the architectural quality, character or the historic or cultural importance of our designated historic environment assets. Development affecting undesignated historic environment assets including, Locally Listed Buildings or*

[6] Cadw (2025). *Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales*. Merthyr Tydfil: Welsh Government.
[7] Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (2016). *Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031.* Merthyr Tydfil: Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

structures, Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, Urban Character Areas and Archaeologically Sensitive Areas should have regard to their special character and archaeological importance'.

3 Methodology and Sources

3.1 Desk-based Assessment

3.1.1. A range of data sources were used in the research for this report, all of which are referenced in the text and detailed in full in the bibliography in **Appendix A**. The table below provides a summary of the key data sources.

Table 1: Data sources consulted

Source	Data	Comment
Cadw & Archwilio	Information on statutorily designated historic assets	Statutory designations (i.e. listed buildings) can provide a significant constraint to development.
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	Conservation areas	Information relating to conservation areas including its respective Conservation Area Appraisals.
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	Locally listed building	Building of local importance designated by the local planning authority due to architectural and/or historic significance and a positive contributor to the character of an area. Whilst not statutorily protected, a building's inclusion on the local heritage list means that it is a material consideration in the planning process.
Groundsure	Ordnance Survey (OS) maps from the 1st edition (1860–70s) to present day.	Provides a good indication of past land use. Provides an indication of the possible date of any buildings or structures on the Site.
National Library of Scotland	Historic maps (e.g. Tithe, OS maps)	Provides historical cartographic evidence to inform the evolution of the Site and surrounding historic environment.
Google	Satellite imagery and Streetview	General mapping and visual information of the site and surrounds.
Internet	Web-published local history	Many key documentary sources, such as local and specialist studies are now published on the web and can be used to inform the historical background.

3.1.2. This report sets out the history of the Site and its immediate environs (**Section 4**). It then considers the significance of designated and non-designated historic assets potentially affected by the Proposed Development (**Section 5**) and evaluates the impacts of the Proposed Development on these assets, having regard to relevant policy (**Section 6**).

3.1.3. To provide historic background context for the Site, and to inform the assessment of setting, a 650m radius study area around the Site was considered for this assessment. The extent of the study area was defined using professional judgement.

3.1.4. **Figure 2** shows the location of historic assets within the study area, as identified by the sources above, the site visit, or during the course of research for this assessment.

3.2 Site Visit

3.2.1. A site visit was carried out on 28 September 2026 to assess the setting of the Site and relevant historic assets within the study area. The visit was undertaken to inform the identification of designated and non-designated assets with the potential to experience changes to their setting as a result of the Proposed Development and to assess the degree of intervisibility between those assets and the Site. The inspection included a walkover survey of the Site and surrounding area, together with the collection of photographic records and observational notes, with particular attention given to historic assets within the Dowlais Conservation Area.

3.3 Historic Asset Selection and Scoping

3.3.1. A review of the historic assets identified within the study area was undertaken through a desk-based assessment and the site visit to determine whether they have the potential to experience effects arising from the Proposed Development. In addition to distance from the Site, consideration was given to intervisibility, topography, existing vegetation, intervening development, and any visual, historical, functional or associative relationships between the assets and the Site.

Table 2: Designated and non-designated historic assets identified within the study area and scoping rationale

Asset name, type and reference	Location in relation to the Site	Included in detailed assessment?	Scoping rationale
Dowlais Conservation Area (CA)	Approximately 400m northeast to the Site.	Yes	Intervisibility exists between parts of the CA and the Site. Consequently, the Proposed Development has the potential to affect its setting and its significance.

Asset name, type and reference	Location in relation to the Site	Included in detailed assessment?	Scoping rationale
Dowlais Public Library (Grade II listed building, Cadw Ref: 27083)	Approximately 500m northeast of the Site, within the Dowlais CA.	No	Not carried forward for detailed assessment due to distance from the Site, intervening topography, vegetation and built development, which preclude any material effect on significance.
Church of St John (Grade II listed building, Cadw Ref: 17931)	Approximately 550m northeast of the Site, within the Dowlais CA.	Yes	Intervisibility exists between the asset and the Site, giving the Proposed Development potential to affect its setting and significance.
Dowlais Works Stables (Grade II listed building, Cadw Ref: 11478)	Approximately 600m northeast of the Site, within the Dowlais CA.	No	Considered as a contributor to the Dowlais CA. Not carried forward for detailed assessment due to distance from the Site, intervening topography, built development and vegetation, which preclude any material effect of the Proposed Development on its significance.
Ivor English Congregational Church (Grade II listed building, Cadw Ref: 11489)	Approximately 650m northeast of the Site, within the Dowlais CA.	No	Considered as a contributor to the Dowlais CA. Not carried forward for detailed assessment due to distance from the Site, intervening topography, built development and vegetation, which preclude any material effect of the Proposed Development on its significance.
Stables House (Grade II listed building, Cadw Ref: 11477)	Approximately 650m northeast of the Site, within the Dowlais CA.	No	Considered as a contributor to the Dowlais CA. Not carried forward for detailed assessment due to distance from the Site, intervening topography, built development and vegetation,

Asset name, type and reference	Location in relation to the Site	Included in detailed assessment?	Scoping rationale
			which preclude any material effect of the Proposed Development on its significance.
Dowlais Works Blast Engine House (Cadw Ref. 11491, Grade II* listed building)	Approximately 650m northeast of the Site, within the Dowlais CA.	No	Considered as a contributor to the Dowlais CA Not carried forward for detailed assessment due to distance from the Site, intervening topography, built development and vegetation, which preclude any material effect of the Proposed Development on its significance.
Bethania Independent Chapel (Grade II listed building, Cadw Ref. 21314)	Approximately 450m northeast of the Site.	No	Not carried forward for detailed assessment due to distance from the Site, intervening topography, vegetation and built development, which preclude any material effect on significance.
Catholic Church of St Illtyd (Grade II listed building, Cadw Ref. 11517)	Approximately 600m north of the Site.	No	Not carried forward for detailed assessment due to distance from the Site, intervening topography, vegetation and built development, which preclude any material effect on significance.
Council Street and Urban Street Conservation Area (CA)	Approximately 450m northwest of the Site.	No	Not carried forward for detailed assessment due to distance from the Site, intervening topography, vegetation and built development, which preclude any material effect on significance.
Merthyr Tydfil Historic	The Site lies within the	Yes	The Proposed Development is located within the registered

Asset name, type and reference	Location in relation to the Site	Included in detailed assessment?	Scoping rationale
Landscape in Wales (HLW (MGL) 2)	Dowlais Great Tip, Trecatti, Trehir and Twyn-y-Waun Character Area of the Merthyr Tydfil HLW.		historic landscape and therefore has the potential to affect its significance.
The Norton Inn (locally listed building, Ref: MT/LLB/047)	Approximately 300m northwest of the Site.	No	Not carried forward for detailed assessment due to distance from the Site, intervening topography, vegetation and built development, which preclude any material effect on significance.
Dowlais Constitutional Club (locally listed building, Ref: MT/LLB/032)	Approximately 500m northeast of the Site, within the Dowlais CA.	No	Not carried forward for detailed assessment due to distance from the Site, intervening topography, vegetation and built development, which preclude any material effect on significance.

3.3.22. In addition, St John's Church, Penydarren, a locally listed building (Ref. MT/LLB/068) located approximately 450m west of the Site, was identified within the study area during the desk-based assessment. However, the site visit undertaken on 28 September 2026 confirmed that the building has been demolished. As the asset no longer survives, it has not been considered further within this assessment.

3.4 Assessing Heritage Significance

3.4.1. Significance is the value of a historic asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. As outlined in Cadw's *Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales* (HIA Guidance 2025), that interest may be aesthetic, communal, evidential or historic. The determination of the significance of a historic asset is based on statutory designation and/or professional judgement against these values. The HIA Guidance 2025 defines the values as follows:

- *Aesthetic:* the design, construction and craftsmanship of an historic asset. This can also include setting and views to and from the historic asset, which may have changed through time.

- *Communal:* the historic asset may have particular significance to people for its commemorative, symbolic or spiritual value, or for the part it has played in local cultural or public life. This will be particularly important in the case of buildings in public use or sites where public access must be maintained or improved.
- *Evidential:* the extent to which the physical fabric tells how and when an historic asset was made, how it was used and how it has changed over time. There may be buried or obscured elements associated with an historic asset, which may also be an important potential source of evidence.
- *Historic:* an historic asset may illustrate a particular past way of life or be associated with a specific person or event; there may be physical evidence for these connections which it could be important to retain.

3.4.2. The table below gives examples of the significance of designated and non-designated historic assets.

Table 3: Significance of historic assets

Historic asset description	Significance
World heritage sites	Very High
Scheduled monuments Grade I and II* listed buildings Grade I and II* registered parks and gardens Grade II listed buildings with exceptional qualities in fabric, historical association, and/or association/group value with historic assets of high significance Designated historic battlefields Conservation Areas containing very important (Grade I / II*) listed buildings Protected heritage landscapes (e.g. ancient woodland or historic hedgerows, heritage Sites of Special Scientific Interest) Non-designated historic assets (above ground structures, landscape, townscape) of national importance	High
Grade II listed buildings which can be shown to have qualities in their fabric or historical association of regional importance only Conservation areas containing primarily Grade II listed or locally listed buildings Grade II registered parks and gardens Non-designated historic assets (above ground structures, landscape, townscape) of regional importance	Medium

Historic asset description	Significance
Locally listed buildings Non-designated historic assets with a local (i.e., parish) value or interest for education or cultural appreciation	Low
Item with no significant value or interest	Negligible
Historic assets that have a clear potential, but for which current knowledge is insufficient to allow significance to be determined	Uncertain

3.5 Assessing Harm

3.5.1. Professional judgement is used to consider the impact (the magnitude of change) of future development on the significance a known or potential historic asset.

3.5.2. For the purposes of assessing the likely impact on significance resulting from the Proposed Development and any impacts on the settings of the identified historic assets (**Section 6**), the following criteria have been employed:

- **None or Negligible** - impacts considered to cause no material change.
- **Low** - impacts considered to make a small difference to the ability to understand and appreciate the heritage value of an historic asset. A low impact may also be defined as involving receptors of low sensitivity exposed to intrusion, obstruction or change of low to moderate magnitudes for short periods of time. In listed building, conservation area or HLW terms, this may involve a small change in setting terms.
- **Moderate** - impacts considered to make an appreciable difference to the ability to understand or appreciate the heritage value of an historic asset. In listed building, conservation area or HLW terms, this may include a notable change in setting terms.
- **High** - impacts considered to cause a fundamental change in the appreciation of the historic asset. In listed building, conservation area or HLW terms, this may include a substantial change in setting terms.

3.6 Assessing the Contribution of Setting

3.6.1. In relation to designated historic assets, the assessment considers the contribution that setting makes to the overall significance of the asset.

3.6.2. Setting is the way in which an asset is understood and experienced. It is not an asset in itself. It differs from curtilage (historic/present property boundary); context (association with other assets irrespective of distance) and historic character (sum of all historic attributes, including setting, associations, and visual aspects).

3.6.3. Cadw's Setting Guidance 2025 has been used to adopt a stepped approach for settings assessment. It sets out four stages as follows:

- *Stage 1*: Identify the historic assets that might be affected by a proposed change or development.
- *Stage 2*: Define and analyse the settings to understand how they contribute to the significance of the historic assets and, in particular, the ways in which the assets are understood, appreciated and experienced.
- *Stage 3*: Evaluate the potential impact of a proposed change or development on that significance.
- *Stage 4*: If necessary, consider options to mitigate or improve the potential impact of a proposed change or development on that significance.

4 Historical Development of the Site and Immediate Environs

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1. This section presents an historical development of the Site and its immediate environs through the results of a map regression exercise and review of relevant background documentation.

4.1.2. The Site forms part of the wider industrial landscape associated with the development of the Dowlais Ironworks and the subsequent growth of Merthyr Tydfil as a major centre of iron and steel production. An understanding of the historical development of Merthyr Tydfil, the Dowlais industrial complex and its associated infrastructure is therefore important in establishing the historical context of the Site and informing the assessment of the significance of nearby historic assets and their settings.

4.2 Historical Background

Merthyr Tydfil Settlement

4.2.1. The development of Merthyr Tydfil is closely associated with the growth of the iron and coal industries in the town and adjacent settlements, particularly during the 18th and 19th centuries. While the mineral resources of the area have been exploited since at least the 16th century, and early iron-working sites have been recorded at Pontygwaith, Troedyrhiw, Dyffryn and Blaencanaid, this early industrial activity was small in scale and could be accommodated within predominantly rural landscape. Industrial development accelerated in the second half of the 18th century following the establishment of major ironworks at the head of the Taff Valley. By the early 19th century, Merthyr Tydfil had become one of Britain's leading industrial centres and played a significant role in the Industrial Revolution.[8]

4.2.2. The expansive industrial changes in the late 18th century had a lasting impact on the surrounding landscape. The abundant coal deposits and high-quality iron ore led to the establishment of ironworks, collieries, and other industrial facilities, turning Merthyr Tydfil into an industrial hub that attracted thousands of workers from across Wales and beyond.[9] The town's very location was determined by its central position between the Plymouth, Cyfarthfa and Penydarren ironworks, for which it provided town centre functions. The

[8] Cadw (2015). *Merthyr Tydfil: Understanding Urban Character*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.
[9] WSP (2024). *Merthyr Interchange Link Design & Access Statement.*

landscape became a blend of stark industrial structures, mining operations, and growing urban settlements.[10]

4.2.3. Scattered prehistoric finds from the hinterland of the town suggest a long history of occupation. The area had strategic significance in the Roman period, with a fort established here on the route between Cardiff and Brecon. The medieval village was focused on the Church of St Tydfil in the centre of Merthyr Tydfil. However, the main urban development of the town as it exists today followed the foundation of the first ironworks at the head of the Taff Valley between 1759 and 1765. Prior to this, the area was predominantly rural, with scattered farmsteads associated with enclosed fields on the lower slopes and open grazing beyond them. Eventually, landholdings were primarily exploited for the value of their mineral resources and mineral leases granted rights to below-ground resources in support of the development of the iron industry. Dowlais was the first major ironworks to be established in Merthyr Tydfil in 1759, and was closely followed by the establishment of the Plymouth, Cyfarthfa and Penydarren Ironworks in 1763, 1765 and 1784 respectively; these four ironworks were the basis for the development of an industrial urban society in Merthyr Tydfil over the next century.[11]

4.2.4. Activities pertaining to ironworking included mining for coal, ironstone, and limestone, the processing of raw materials (such as calcining or coking), the dumping of waste, and the production of cast and wrought iron. These industrial activities were the primary shapers of the landscape in Merthyr Tydfil, with ironworks shaping the expansion of settlements and tip sites and mines changing the topography of the valley itself.

4.2.5. Historical transport also had a strong influence on settlement, and all aspects of transport were quickly adapted to the needs of industry, whether by the improvement of inherited routes or the creation of new ones. A complicated network of tramroads and tracks threaded the landscape wherever there were significant workings. Tramways built in the north of the town centre linked the Penydarren and Dowlais Ironworks to the Glamorganshire Canal, which was completed in 1794. The 1830s to 1860s saw expansion in railway building both in Britain and around the world, which resulted in phases of major growth in Merthyr Tydfil. Railways became the principal link to markets and ports, and, in time, the Glamorganshire Canal was superseded by railways.[12]

4.2.6. The ironworks dominated the landscape and the economy and society of Merthyr Tydfil for a long period, but, in the second half of the 19th century, many of the local raw materials necessary to the iron industry became harder to access. Instead, the exploitation of coal

[10] Lewis, T. (2009). *Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal*. Merthyr Tydfil: Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.
[11] Cadw (2015). *Merthyr Tydfil: Understanding Urban Character*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.
[12] Cadw (2015). Ibid.

that came to the fore and dominated the local industrial economy into the 20th century. This new coal-based economy supported the expansion and renewal work that took place around Merthyr Tydfil at the end of the 19th century.

4.2.7. At the beginning of the 20th century, the town was still expanding and some ambitious new buildings were under construction, with the council at the forefront of house building – Council Street and Urban Street in Penydarren, built by 1903, are the earliest examples of Council housing built in Merthyr Tydfil. Although the industrial importance of Merthyr Tydfil declined in the 1920s and 1930s, the historical connections between components of the industrial landscape remain clear.

Dowlais Industrial Works

4.2.8. The settlement of Dowlais, located approximately 1.5 miles from the historic centre of Merthyr Tydfil, originally developed independently from Merthyr Tydfil in connection with the Dowlais and Ivor Ironworks. The Dowlais Ironworks was founded on 19 September 1759 by the Guest family, exploiting the availability of coal and ironstone from the slopes to the south and limestone to the north. By the mid-19th century, Dowlais had become the biggest ironworks in the world, employing 6,000 people in 1840 and contributing substantially to the economic growth of the area.[13] The Dowlais Railway opened in 1851 following an Act obtained by the Dowlais Company to establish a railway between Dowlais and Merthyr Tydfl, providing transport links with the Taff Vale Railway and, later, the Vale of Neath Railway. The Ivor works was established as an offshoot of Dowlais in the 1830s.

4.2.9. The use of raw materials on a scale sufficient to maintain high levels of output generated large quantities of waste, and land was needed to serve the incidental task of tipping. Although many tips in the Dowlais area have been reclaimed or built over, others remain prominent features of the landscape. Dowlais Great Tip, detailed in the section below, holds historical importance, particularly due to its association with the industrial activities linked to Dowlais Ironworks.

4.2.10. Maintaining sufficient supplies of water and channelling its distribution also required investment and ingenuity, as the elaborate Dowlais Free Drainage System demonstrated. The system, dating in its earliest sections to approximately 1818, was crucial to the expansion of the ironworks at both Dowlais and Penydarren. Fed by gravity, the drainage system supplied water to the coal mines and ironworks of Dowlais via an extensive above-ground network of leats and reservoirs and underground U-shaped channels. The drainage system covers large areas of Merthyr Common above and below the Heads of the Valleys Road.[14]

[13] National Resources Wales (2017). *Survey Details for MRTHRHL008*.
[14] Heneb Historic Environment Record (2020). *Dowlais Free Drainage System, Merthyr Tydfil*.

4.2.11. Dowlais shifted to steel production in 1865 after demand for iron production suffered difficulties in the 1860s. In 1930, iron and steelmaking ended at Dowlais due to economic circumstances, and in 1937 Dowlais Works closed with the exception of the general castings foundry and fitting shop, which only employed approximately 200 men at the time.[15]

4.3 Historical Development of the Site

4.3.1. Goat Mill Road derives its name from Goat Mill, a rolling mill established in 1859 as part of the wider Dowlais Ironworks complex. Located immediately north of the Site, Goat Mill specialised in the production of long railway rails and contributed to the expansion of the ironworks during the 19th century. The Site formed part of the wider industrial landscape associated with the ironworks and its supporting infrastructure.

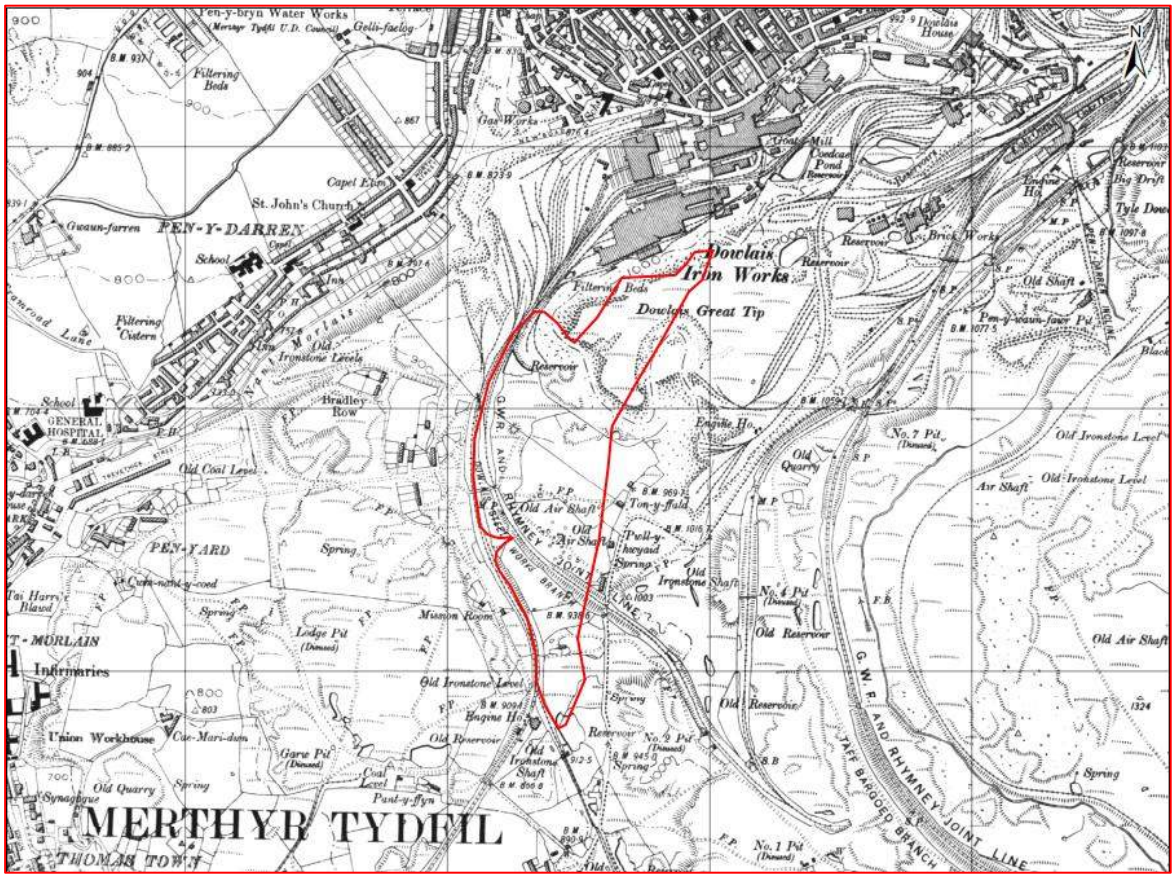


Plate 5: Extract from the 1901 Ordnance Survey County Series map showing the Site (outlined by the red line boundary) within the industrial landscape associated with the Dowlais Ironworks and the Dowlais Great Tip.

[15] Owen, J. A. (1976). *The Merthyr Historian, Vol 1. Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society*.

4.3.2. Historic mapping demonstrates the industrial character of the Site and its surroundings during the late 19th century. The Site formed part of the wider industrial landscape associated with the Dowlais Ironworks and the Dowlais Great Tip, a substantial spoil tip that extended across parts of the Site and surrounding area. The 1901 Ordnance Survey County Series map (**Plate 5**) shows industrial buildings within the northern part of the Site and extensive railway infrastructure associated with the Dowlais industrial complex. This included sections of the Great Western Railway (GWR) and Rhymney Joint Railway, which crossed the southern part of the Site and provided freight and passenger connections to the wider rail network. The branch line opened in 1876 and remained in use until its closure on 15 June 1964. The map also records reservoirs, air shafts and other features associated with the ironworks, mining activity and the Dowlais Great Tip, illustrating the heavily industrialised character of the area during this period.

4.3.3. By 1948 (**Plate 6**), the Site continued to form part of the wider industrial landscape associated with Dowlais. Railway infrastructure remained a prominent feature and the extent of industrial tipping within and adjacent to the Site had increased, reflecting the continuing industrial use of the area during the first half of the 20th century.

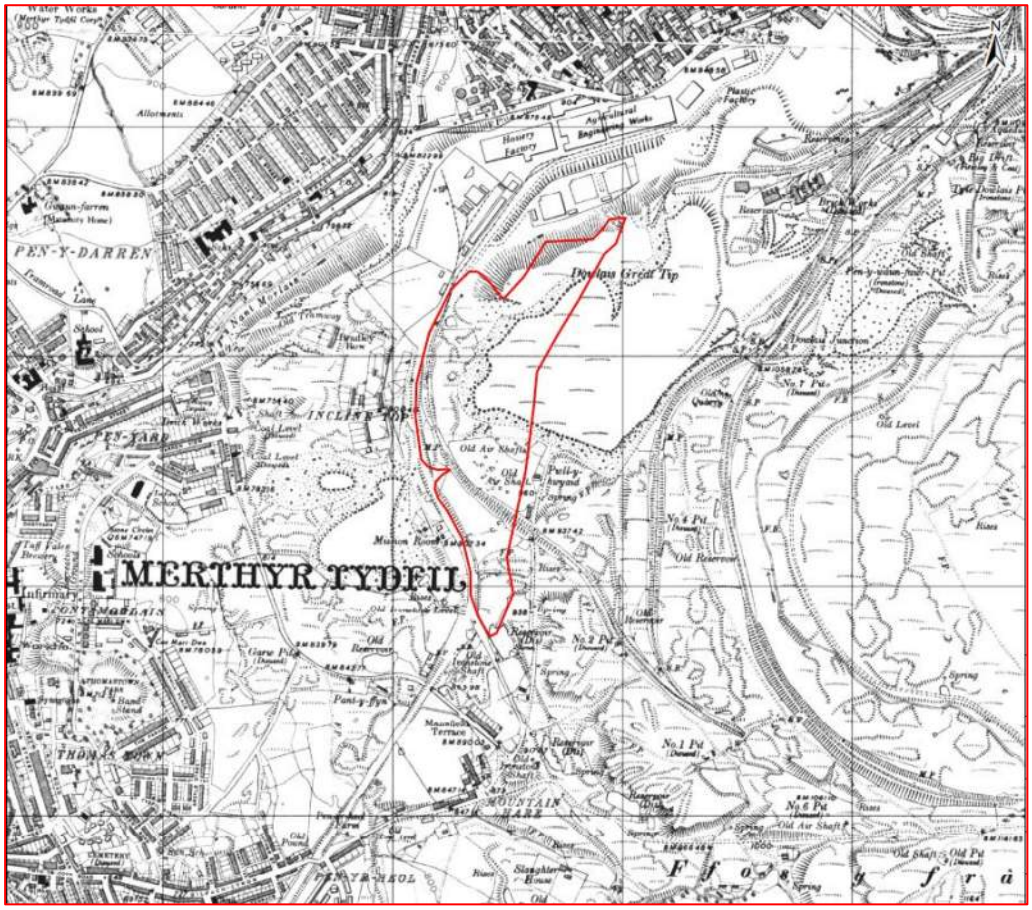


Plate 6: Extract from the 1948 Ordnance Survey map showing the Site (outlined by the red line boundary) and the continued presence of the Dowlais Great Tip, associated mineral workings and transport infrastructure.

4.3.4. The 1992 Ordnance Survey map (**Plate 7**) illustrates the substantial decline of industrial activity within the area. Much of the former railway infrastructure had been removed, although remnants of the railway remained visible within the Site, while the northern part of the Site was occupied by the disused Dowlais Great Tip. The map demonstrates the transition of the Site from an active industrial area to a largely derelict post-industrial landscape immediately prior to the reclamation works completed in 1996.

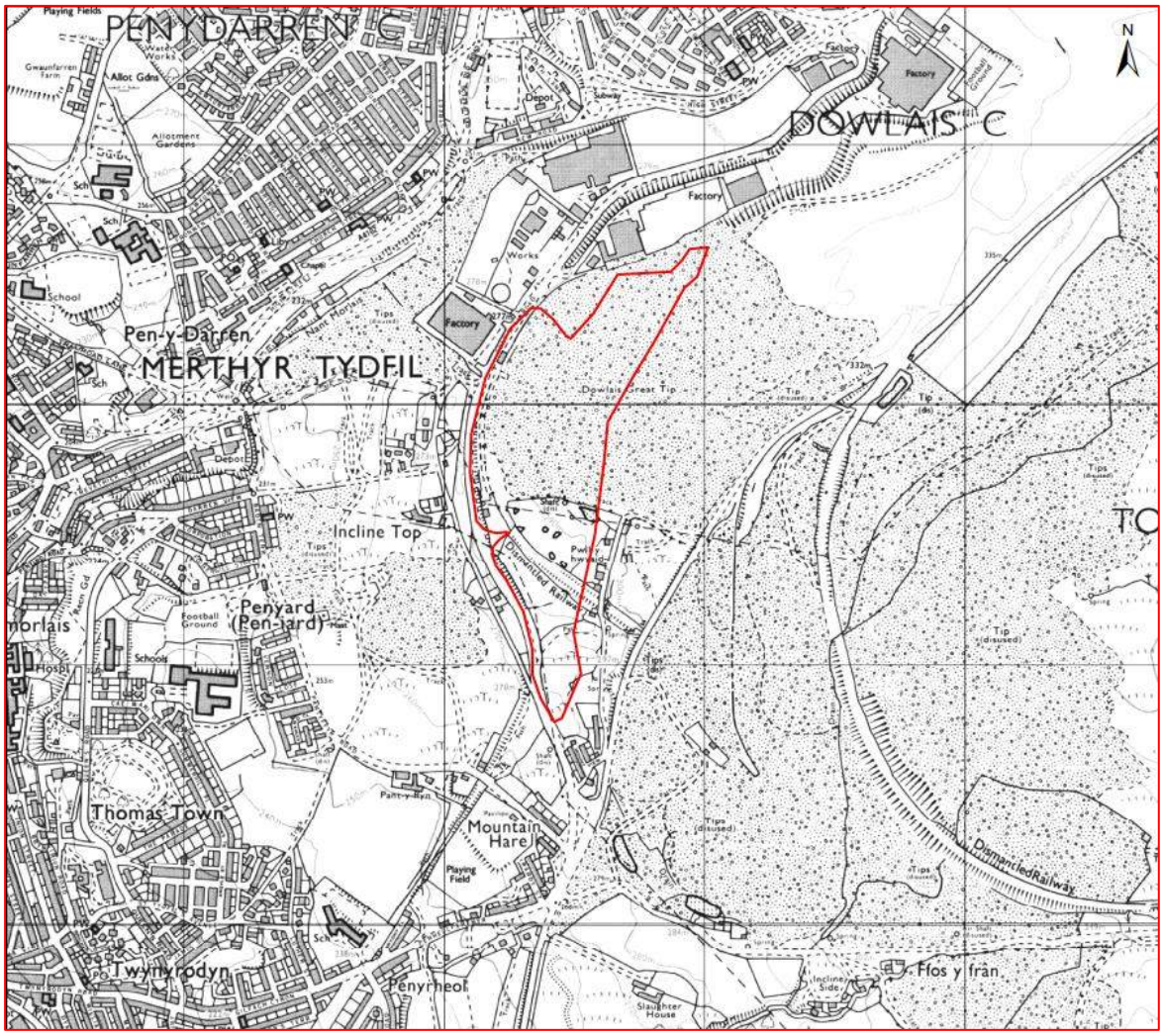


Plate 7: Extract from the 1992 Ordnance Survey map showing the Site (outlined by the red line boundary) within the former Dowlais industrial landscape, illustrating the extent of the disused Dowlais Great Tip prior to reclamation works.

4.3.5. The Site subsequently formed part of the East Merthyr Phase II (EMII) reclamation scheme, undertaken by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council in partnership with British Coal Opencast and was completed in 1996. The works involved extensive earthmoving and landscape remodelling to facilitate future employment uses, creating level development plateaus covering approximately 13.15 ha (32.5 acres) together with landscaped embankments extending towards the A4060 and fronting Goat Mill Road. Access to the Site

was established via roundabout junctions at its northern and southern boundaries.[16] Since completion of the reclamation works, the Site has remained undeveloped and has become increasingly vegetated, with no significant subsequent development taking place.

[16] WSP (2026). *Goat Mill Road Design & Access Statement*.

5 Identification and Significance of Historic Assets

5.1 Background

5.1.1. This section considers the significance of the historic assets taken forward for detailed assessment following the scoping exercise described in **Section 3**. These comprise the Dowlais Conservation Area (CA), the Church of St John (Grade II listed building, CadwR Ef: 17931) and the Merthyr Tydfil Historic Landscape in Wales (CadwR Ef: HLW (MGL) 2). The assessment has regard to relevant legislation, policy and guidance and considers the contribution of setting to the significance of each asset.

5.2 Historic Assets

Dowlais Conservation Area

5.2.1. The Dowlais CA is located approximately 400m northeast of the Site and was designated in 1998. Situated within the settlement of Dowlais, the CA occupies an elevated position to the northeast of Merthyr Tydfil and encompasses the historic core of the former industrial settlement. The Dowlais CA is divided in two distinct areas; one centred around Union Street, Market Street and Commercial Street, and a second linear section straddling High Street. These areas are separated by a modern residential development dating from the 1970s.

5.2.2. Dowlais developed independently from Merthyr Tydfil, and prior to the industrial development of the area, the land was used primarily for grazing and hunting. The rich natural resources present within the area gave rise to the establishment of the Dowlais Ironworks in the mid-18th century, which expanded rapidly and reached its peak during the 19th century. By this time, the ironworks had become one of the largest iron-producing complexes in the world and attracted a substantial workforce to the area. Over the century, the ironworks became the largest in the world. The Dowlais CA comprises the parts of Dowlais that retain the most significant surviving evidence of its industrial, social and religious development.[17]

5.2.3. The character of the CA is defined by a concentration of Georgian and Victorian civic, religious and industrial buildings, together with surviving historic streets, public spaces and residential terraces. These buildings reflect the area's former role as the industrial, commercial and social centre of Dowlais. Prominent historic assets within the CA designation include the Dowlais Works Blast Engine House (Grade II* listed building, Cadw

[17] Jones, J. (2013). *Dowlais Conservation Area: Character Appraisal and Management Plan.* Merthyr Tydfil: Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

Ref: 11491), Dowlais Works Stables (Grade II listed building, Cadw Ref: 11478) and Stables House (Grade II listed building, Cadw Ref: 11477), Dowlais Public Library (Grade II listed building, Cadw Ref: 27083), Church of St John (Grade II listed building, Cadw Ref: 17931), Ivor English Congregational Church including forecourt walls (Grade II listed building, Cadw Ref: 11489), the Former Guest Memorial Library (Grade II* listed building, Cadw Ref: 11490) and the Constitutional Club (locally listed building, Ref: MT/LLB/032).[18] These buildings, together with surviving historic street patterns, public spaces and residential terraces, reflect the area's former role as the industrial, commercial and social centre of Dowlais. With the decline of the steel industry in the 20th century, many buildings within the CA fell into disuse and disrepair.

Statement of Significance

5.2.4. The Dowlais CA includes a number of listed buildings ranging from Grade II* and II making it an area of **high significance**. Moreover, its significance derives from its ability to illustrate the development of Dowlais as one of the principal industrial settlements associated with the Dowlais Ironworks during the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. The CA contains a concentration of civic, religious, residential and industrial buildings that collectively demonstrate the social, economic and physical development of the settlement during a period of exceptional industrial growth. The survival of its historic street pattern, public spaces, landmark buildings and industrial structures provides a strong sense of place and contributes to an understanding of the area's industrial heritage and community development.

Aesthetic Value

5.2.5. The CA derives architectural and aesthetic value through its concentration of Georgian and Victorian civic, religious and industrial buildings, many of which are listed, together with the survival of its historic urban form and townscape character. The varied architectural styles, landmark public buildings and surviving industrial structures illustrate the prosperity and development of Dowlais during the 19th and early 20th centuries and contribute to a distinctive and recognisable historic townscape character.

Communal Value

5.2.6. The Dowlais CA derives communal value from its continued role as the historic civic and community centre of Dowlais. The area contains a range of buildings that continue to serve public, residential and community functions, reflecting the evolution of the settlement over time. Even where individual buildings have been adapted to new uses or are no longer in

[18] Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (2009). *Locally Listed Buildings*. Merthyr Tydfil: Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

active use, they continue to contribute to local identity and collective memory through their association with the industrial and social development of Dowlais.

Evidential Value

5.2.7. The CA derives evidential value from the survival of its historic street pattern, public spaces, residential terraces and civic, religious and industrial buildings. Collectively, these elements provide physical evidence of the development of Dowlais from a small settlement into a major industrial community during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The surviving built fabric illustrates the relationship between industry, community infrastructure and housing, and contributes to an understanding of the evolution of the settlement and its association with the Dowlais Ironworks.

Historic Value

5.2.8. The CA derives historic value from its association with the development of Dowlais as one of the principal industrial settlements within Merthyr Tyfil, and with the expansion of industry and the Guest family association benefiting the development of the northern side of the valley. Its buildings illustrate the growth of the community during the 19th and early 20th centuries and reflect the influence of the iron industry on the social and physical development of the area. The presence of civic, religious and public buildings, including the Guest Memorial Hall, Dowlais Library and the Church of St John, demonstrates the investment made in community infrastructure during the industrial period and provides evidence of the area’s social and economic importance.

Contribution of Setting

5.2.9. The significance of the CA's setting derives from its elevated position within the wider industrial landscape of Merthyr Tydfil and its visual relationship with the surrounding valley landscape and surviving industrial features. Views across the valley and towards areas associated with former industrial activity contribute to an understanding of the historical development of Dowlais and its relationship with the wider industrial landscape shaped by ironmaking, mining and associated industries.

Church of St John (Grade II Listed Building, Cadw Ref: 17931)

5.2.10. The Church of St John is a Grade II listed building located within the Dowlais CA, approximately 550m northeast of the Site. Situated on the corner of Upper Union Street and Station Road, the church occupies a prominent position within the historic core of Dowlais. Originally constructed in 1827 for Sir Josiah John Guest of the Dowlais Iron Company, the church was rebuilt and extended on several occasions during the 19th century and now survives as a substantial Victorian Gothic church. Its development reflects the growth of Dowlais during the period of industrial expansion associated with the Dowlais Ironworks.

5.2.11. The church is built of rubble stone with slate roofs and ashlar dressings and comprises a series of construction phases, including a chancel added in 1873, a transept dating from 1881 by William Lintern, and a nave, aisle and porches constructed in 1893–94 to designs

by E. A. Johnson of Abergavenny. The building displays characteristic Gothic architectural detailing, including lancet windows, buttresses, porches and an octagonal turret. Although the interior was inaccessible at the time of the site visit, the listing description records the survival of significant historic features, including hammerbeam roof trusses, stained-glass windows, memorial plaques and furnishings.[19]



Plate 8: View towards the Church of St John, looking northwest, illustrating its prominent architectural form and elevated position above the surrounding streetscape.

[19] Cadw (1996). *Church of St John listing entry* (Cadw Ref: 17931).

5.2.12. The church forms an important landmark within the Dowlais CA and contributes positively to its historic character and appearance. Its association with the Dowlais Ironworks and the Guest family further reinforces its importance within the industrial and social history of the settlement.

Statement of Significance

5.2.13. The Church of St John is considered to be of **medium significance** as a Grade II listed building.

Aesthetic Value

5.2.14. The church derives architectural and aesthetic value as a substantial Victorian Gothic ecclesiastical building incorporating several phases of development. Its Gothic detailing, stone construction, lancet windows, buttresses and octagonal turret contribute strongly to its architectural character. The building also demonstrates the work of notable 19th century architects, including William Lintern and E. A. Johnson, and remains an important landmark within the Dowlais townscape.

Communal Value

5.2.15. The church possesses communal value through its longstanding role as the historic parish church of Dowlais. As a prominent place of worship and community gathering, it played an important role in the social and religious life of the settlement. Although no longer functioning as an active parish church, it continues to contribute to local identity and collective memory through its association with the history of Dowlais.

Evidential Value

5.2.16. The church derives evidential value from the survival of historic fabric representing several phases of development between the early and late 19th century. The building provides physical evidence of the evolution of Anglican worship within an expanding industrial settlement and retains features that illustrate changes in ecclesiastical architecture, construction techniques and church planning. Surviving internal elements, including roof structures, memorials and stained glass, further contribute to its evidential value.

Historic Value

5.2.17. The church derives historic value from its direct association with the development of Dowlais during the Industrial Revolution. Constructed for Sir Josiah John Guest and closely connected with the Dowlais Ironworks, it provides evidence of the social, religious and philanthropic institutions that developed alongside industrial expansion. The burial of Sir Josiah John Guest within the church further enhances its historic significance and its association with one of the most influential industrial families in South Wales.

Contribution of Setting

5.2.18. The significance of the church's setting derives from its prominent position within the historic core of Dowlais and its visual relationship with the surrounding civic, religious and industrial

buildings that characterise the CA. Its elevated position and landmark quality contribute to its visibility within the townscape, while its relationship with the wider industrial landscape helps illustrate the historic development of Dowlais as an industrial settlement associated with the Dowlais Ironworks.

Merthyr Tydfil Historic Landscape in Wales (Cadw Ref: HLW (MGL) 2)

5.2.19. The Merthyr Tydfil HLW is a registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest included in the Register of the Historic Landscapes in Wales in 2001.[20] The Register recognises landscapes of national historic importance. The landscape is predominantly characterised by the extensive remains of the iron and coal industries that developed during the late 18th and 19th centuries, including large-scale ironworks, mining operations, transport infrastructure and associated industrial features.

5.2.20. The town of Merthyr Tydfil, and its associated landscape, was rapidly transformed from a modest village with its immediate surroundings dedicated to agricultural use in the 1750s to the largest town in Wales by 1801 thanks to the mineral resources contained within its hinterland. Merthyr Tydfil still retains its industrial landscape character, with individual elements consisting of the remains of large ironworks, remnants of the associated coal mining industry, water power leats, an early iron bridge, communication systems, including early tramroads, tips, terraced industrial housing, and the Ironmasters' house, Cyfarthfa Castle. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Merthyr Tydfil developed as an iron town with urban clusters based around the major ironworks of the area.

5.2.21. Locally, early communication and transport systems survive in varying degrees, such as the Pontycafnau bridge and aqueduct built in 1793, the Gyrnos and Penydarren tramroads, and sections of the Glamorganshire Canal, built in the 1790s. The first quarter of the 19th century saw the majority of Merthyr Tydfil's industrial transport network established, and the 1840s saw a complex network of railways developed to transport coal and iron ore and later serve wider markets. These networks of transport facilitated and influenced the urban expansion of Merthyr Tydfil.

5.2.22. From the mid-20th century, opencast mining operations and land reclamation schemes altered large areas of the industrial landscape.

5.2.23. The Site is located within the Character Area of Dowlais Great Tip, Trecatti, Trehir and Twyn-y-Waun, a reclaimed industrial landscape comprising an extensive area of reclaimed industrial land, part of which has been subjected to opencast operations.[21] The area formed part of the coal and ironstone workings associated with Dowlais Ironworks and was utilised for industry from the latter half of the 18th century. Iron production and later steel production

[20] Cadw (2001). *Merthyr Tydfil Historic Landscape in Wales (HLW (MGL) 2) register entry*.
[21] Heneb (2026). *Dowlais Great Tip, Trecatti, Trehir and Twyn-y-Waun.*

continued into the 1860s, but increased importation of coal and iron ore led to most pits and levels within the area being abandoned by 1879. Today, the character area continues to reflect the industrial origins and evolution of the wider Merthyr Tydfil HLW.

Statement of Significance

5.2.24. The Merthyr Tydfil HLW is considered to be of **high significance** as a national important historic landscape recognised within the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest of Wales. Its significance derives from its ability to demonstrate the transformation of the Taff Valley from a predominantly rural landscape into one of the most important centres of iron and coal production during the Industrial Revolution.

Aesthetic Value

5.2.25. The landscape derives aesthetic value from the relationship between the dramatic topography of the Taff Valley basin and the surviving industrial features that characterise the area. The juxtaposition of industrial structures, transport networks, reclaimed landforms and historic settlements contributes to a distinctive landscape character that remains strongly associated with the Industrial Revolution.

Communal Value

5.2.26. The historic landscape has strong communal value through its contribution to the identity and cultural heritage of Merthyr Tydfil. Surviving industrial features, settlements and associated historic assets continue to provide a tangible link with the area's industrial past and are important components of local collective memory and sense of place.

Evidential Value

5.2.27. The historic landscape possesses evidential value through the survival of industrial remains, mining features, transport infrastructure, workers' housing, spoil tips and reclaimed industrial landforms. Collectively, these elements provide physical evidence for understanding the evolution of ironmaking, mining and industrial settlement within the Merthyr Tydfil area.

Historic Value

5.2.28. The historic landscape derives historic value from its association with the industrial development of Merthyr Tydfil during the late 18th and 19th centuries. The area illustrates the technological, economic and social changes that accompanied the rapid growth of one of the most important iron-producing centres in the world and retains strong associations with the ironmasters, industrial infrastructure and communities that shaped its development.

Contribution of Setting

5.2.29. The significance of the historic landscape's setting derives from the visual, historical and spatial relationships between its industrial settlements, transport corridors, mining areas and surviving industrial features. The Site lies within the Dowlais Great Tip, Trecatti, Trehir and Twyn-y-Waun Character Area and forms part of this wider industrial landscape. The setting

contributes to an understanding of the scale, extent and legacy of industrial activity that shaped the development of Merthyr Tydfil and enables the relationships between the surviving industrial features and settlements to be appreciated.

6 Proposed Development and Potential Impacts on Historic Assets

6.1 Background

6.1.1. This section identifies and assesses the impacts of the Proposed Development on the significance and setting of historic assets located in the vicinity of the Site. In assessing the heritage impacts of the proposal, the relevant policies cited in **Section 2** have been referenced.

6.2 Proposed Development

6.2.1. The Proposed Development comprises the first phase of an Enterprise Park and includes the provision of site infrastructure and an EV charging hub.[22] The infrastructure works comprise new access points, a spine road linking the Goat Mill Road roundabouts through to the Site, service roads serving future development plots, and SuDS distributed throughout the Site.

6.2.2. The EV charging hub is proposed within the southern part of the Site adjacent to the existing access roundabout. The development would occupy Plot D, which extends to approximately 0.406 ha, and would comprise 16 EV charging bays and 10 layover spaces arranged around a new building containing a café, retail unit and customer welfare facilities, including toilets. A canopy would extend from the building to provide partial cover to the charging bays.

6.2.3. Together, these works would establish the primary infrastructure required to facilitate the future development of the wider Enterprise Park, aiming to cater to the varied needs of business activities and contribute positively to the local community and the broader economic landscape of Merthyr Tydfil. They will also introduce the first permanent built form within the Site following the completion of reclamation works in 1996.

6.3 Potential Impacts on Historic Assets

6.3.1. The significance of the historic assets taken forward for this assessment has been assessed in **Section 5**. The Site lies outside the boundaries of all built historic assets considered within this assessment. The Proposed Development would not result in any direct physical impacts upon built historic assets. The Site is, however, located within the Merthyr Tydfil

[22] WSP (2026). *Goat Mill Road Design & Access Statement.*

HLW, and the potential for effects on the significance of this asset through changes to landscape character and setting is considered below.

6.3.2. Moreover, potential impacts may arise through indirect effects on significance resulting from changes to the setting of historic assets located in the vicinity of the Site.

6.3.3. Following the scoping exercise set out in **Section 3**, the assessment focuses on the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the Dowlais Conservation Area, the Church of St John (Grade II listed building; Cadw Ref. 17931), and the Merthyr Tydfil Historic Landscape HLW.

6.3.4. The assessment considers whether the Proposed Development would alter the contribution made by setting to the significance of these assets, having particular regard to intervisibility, views, topography, existing development and the wider historic and spatial relationships between the Site and the surrounding historic environment.

Dowlais Conservation Area

6.3.5. The Dowlais CA is located approximately 400m northeast of the Site. Limited intervisibility exists between parts of the CA designation and the Site, including views associated with the Church of St John (**Plate 9**).



Plate 9: View southwest from the churchyard of the Church of St John towards the Site (indicated by the red arrow).

6.3.6. The Site does not contribute directly to the historic character, street pattern or architectural quality of the CA. Although the Proposed Development would introduce new built form and infrastructure, these changes would occur within a site allocated for employment development and within a landscape that has been substantially modified by previous

industrial activity, reclamation works and modern development. Furthermore, the Site is physically separated from the CA designation by modern development, roads, topography, vegetation and areas of reclaimed industrial land, which provide a degree of screening.

6.3.7. Although limited intervisibility exists between parts of the Dowlais CA and the Site, the Proposed Development would not affect the characteristics that contribute to the significance of the CA. The Site does not form an important component of the CA's setting and the ability to understand and appreciate its industrial, civic and social heritage would remain unchanged. Consequently, the Proposed Development is considered to result in negligible impacts to the significance of the Dowlais CA and would result in **no harm**.

Church of St John (Grade II Listed Building, Cadw Ref: 17931)

6.3.8. The Church of St John is located approximately 550m northeast of the Site within the Dowlais CA. Intervisibility exists between the church and the Site, including views from the churchyard towards the Site (**Plate 9**) and reciprocal views from the Site towards the church (**Plate 10**).



Plate 10: View northeast from the Site towards the Church of St John (marked by red arrow).

6.3.9. The significance of the setting derives from its prominent position within the historic core of Dowlais, its relationship with surrounding civic, religious and industrial buildings, and its wider visual connection with the industrial landscape associated with the development of Dowlais and the Dowlais Ironworks.

6.3.10. The Proposed Development would introduce new built form and associated infrastructure within part of the church's wider setting. However, the Site does not form part of the

church's immediate historic context and is physically separated from the asset by modern development, roads, topography, vegetation and areas of reclaimed industrial land. Although limited intervisibility exists between the church and the Site, any views of the Proposed Development would be filtered and intermittent, becoming more noticeable only during winter months when vegetation is not in leaf. As such, the Proposed Development would not materially affect the church's relationship with the surrounding historic townscape.

6.3.11. The Proposed Development would also not affect the ability to understand the historical relationship between the church, the Dowlais Ironworks and the wider industrial landscape. Although some change would occur within the wider setting of the asset, the key characteristics that contribute to its significance would remain legible and appreciable.

6.3.12. Consequently, the Proposed Development is considered to result in negligible impact on the significance of the Church of St John and would cause **no harm** to its significance.

Merthyr Tydfil Historic Landscape in Wales (Cadw Ref: HLW (MGL) 2)

6.3.13. The Site lies within the Dowlais Great Tip, Trecatti, Trehir and Twyn-y-Waun Character Area of the Merthyr Tydfil HLW. As such, the Proposed Development has the potential to affect the character of a component of the registered historic landscape.

6.3.14. The significance of the historic landscape derives from the survival of industrial settlements, transport networks, mining remains, ironworks and associated landscape features that collectively illustrate the transformation of the Taff Valley during the Industrial Revolution. However, the Site is located within a character area that has been extensively altered through historic industrial activity, opencast mining operations and subsequent land reclamation works. As a result, much of the original industrial fabric and landform within the Site has already been removed or modified.

6.3.15. The Proposed Development would introduce new infrastructure, an EV charging hub and associated built form within the Site. Whilst this would result in a localised change to the appearance of part of the character area, it would not result in the loss of historic landscape features that contribute materially to the significance of the wider registered historic landscape. Nor would it affect the ability to understand and appreciate the historic development of Merthyr Tydfil or its association with the iron and coal industries.

6.3.16. The Proposed Development would therefore have a slight impact on the significance of the Merthyr Tydfil HLW and result in a **low level of harm**. Whilst the development would alter a small part of the registered landscape, it would not materially affect the ability to understand and appreciate the wider industrial history, character or significance of the historic landscape as a whole.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Summary

7.1.1. This HIA has been undertaken following the principles set out in the PPW and in line with relevant local and national guidance and best practice. The assessment has considered the significance of the identified historic assets and the contribution made by their settings to that significance. It has assessed the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the Dowlais CA, the Church of St John (Grade II listed building; Cadw Ref. 17931) and the Merthyr Tydfil HLW.

7.1.2. The assessment concludes that the Proposed Development would not result in any direct physical impacts upon designated or non-designated historic assets. Potential effects are limited to indirect effects arising from changes to setting.

7.2 Dowlais Conservation Area

7.2.1. Although limited intervisibility exists between parts of the Dowlais CA and the Site, the Proposed Development would not affect the characteristics that contribute to the significance of the CA designation. The Site does not form an important component of the CA's setting and the ability to understand and appreciate its industrial, civic and social heritage would remain unchanged.

7.2.2. Overall, the Proposed Development is considered to result in a negligible impact on the significance and setting of the Dowlais CA and would cause **no harm** to its significance.

7.3 Church of St John (Grade II Listed Building, Cadw Ref: 17931)

7.3.1. The Proposed Development would introduce new built form and associated infrastructure within part of the church's wider setting. However, the Site does not form part of the church's immediate historic context and is physically separated from the asset by modern development, roads, topography, vegetation and areas of reclaimed industrial land.

7.3.2. Although limited intervisibility exists between the church and the Site, views of the Proposed Development would be filtered and intermittent, becoming more noticeable only during winter months when vegetation is not in leaf. The Proposed Development would not affect the church's role as a landmark building within Dowlais, nor would it alter the ability to understand the historic relationship between the church, the Dowlais Ironworks and the wider industrial landscape.

7.3.3. Overall, the Proposed Development is considered to result in a negligible impact on the significance and setting of the Church of St John and would cause **no harm** to its significance.

7.4 Merthyr Tydfil Historic Landscape in Wales (Cadw Ref: HLW (MGL) 2)

7.4.1. The Site lies within the Dowlais Great Tip, Trecatti, Trehir and Twyn-y-Waun Character Area of the Merthyr Tydfil HLW. The Proposed Development would introduce new infrastructure, an EV charging hub and associated built form within part of the registered historic landscape.

7.4.2. The Site has been substantially modified by historic industrial activity, opencast mining operations and land reclamation works, and much of the original historic fabric and landform has already been altered or removed. The Proposed Development would not result in the loss of historic landscape features that contribute materially to the significance of the wider historic landscape.

7.4.3. Whilst the Proposed Development would result in a localised change to the character and appearance of part of the historic landscape, it would not materially affect the ability to understand and appreciate the wider industrial history, character or significance of the Merthyr Tydfil HLW.

7.4.4. Overall, the Proposed Development is considered to have slight impact on the significance of the Merthyr Tydfil HLW and will result in a **low level of harm**.

7.5 Recommendations

7.5.1. No mitigation measures are considered necessary in relation to the historic environment.

7.5.2. Although no mitigation measures are considered necessary, the retention and enhancement of vegetation and landscape buffers should be incorporated into the detailed design of the Proposed Development. These measures would help maintain visual separation between the Site and surrounding historic assets and support the continued preservation of their settings.

Appendix A

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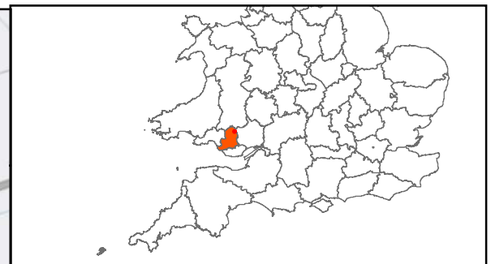
Appendix B

Figures

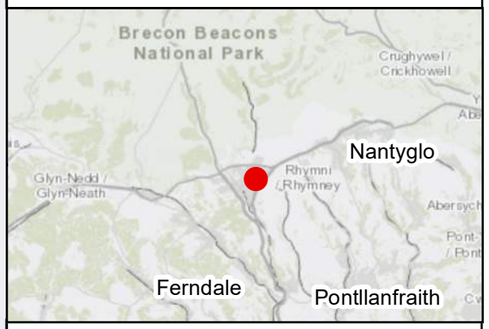
Public

13/10/2026





Mid Glamorgan



Key

Site Location Plan

0 100 200 300

Metres

wsp

Client:

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Project:

Land at Goat Mill Road, Merthyr Tydfil

Title

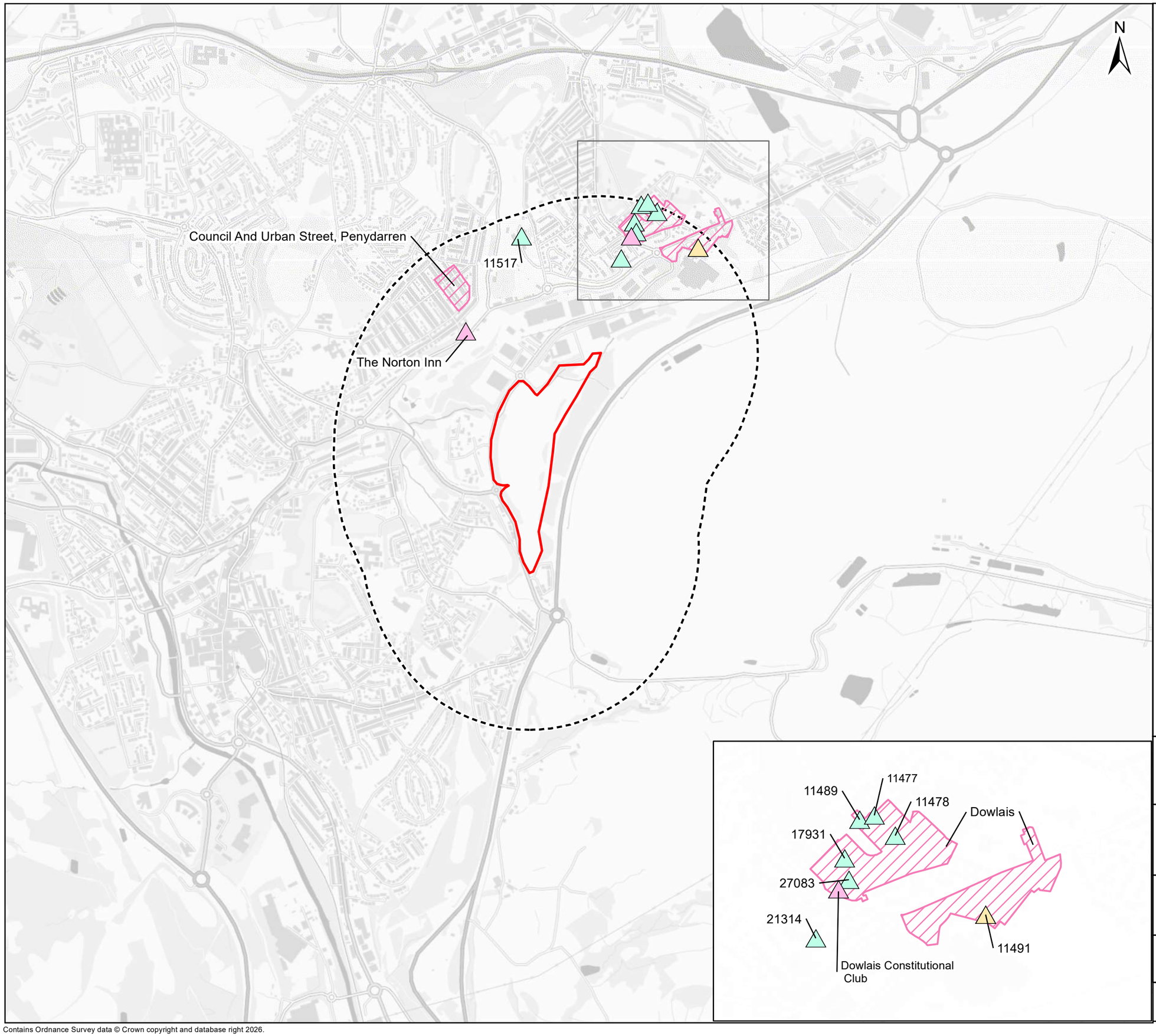
Figure 1 - Site Location Plan

Date: 13/10/2026 Scale: 6,000 @ A3

Drawn: SM Checked: JS Approved: CC

Document Path: \\uk.wspgroup.com\UKcentral\Environmental\ARCHAEOLOGY\WALE\Goat Mill Road, Merthyr Tydfil\Graphics\MXDs\Figure1.mxd

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Key

- Site Boundary
- Study Area (650m)
- Grade II* Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Buildings
- Conservation Area
- Locally Listed Buildings

0 250 500 750

Metres

wsp

Client: Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Project: Land at Goat Mill Road, Merthyr Tydfil

Title: Figure 2 - Built Historic Assets in Vicinity of the Site

Date: 06/11/2026 Scale: 6,700 @ A3

Drawn: SM Checked: JS Approved: CC

06/11/2026

Document Path: \\uk.wspgroup.com\UKcentral\Environmental\ARCHAEOLOGY\WALE\Goat Mill Road, Merthyr Tydfil\Graphics\MXDs\Figure 2.mxd

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