

Settings Assessment:

Land East of Llanrwst Road, Gyffin, Conwy

July 2025



Report No. 2397



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July 2025

Prepared for Beech Developments (NW) Ltd
on behalf of Adra (Tai) Cyfyngedig

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Summary

Pre-planning consultation has been carried out for the proposed construction of 102 affordable homes and associated works on land off Llanrwst Road, Gyffin, Conwy, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SH 77787 76526.

In their response Cadw have asked for a Stage 1 assessment to be carried out on eleven Listed Buildings, two Scheduled Monuments, a single Registered Historic Park and Garden and the Essential Setting of the World Heritage Site, The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd - Conwy Castle and Town Walls, all of which are located within 1km of the proposed development site.

The Stage 1 assessment concluded that the proposed development may have an impact upon both Conwy Town Walls (CN014) and Bryn Corach (LB3362). As such both of these assets were taken forward through assessment Stages 2 to 4. The final assessment of these assets concluded that although there would be a minor impact on the visual aspects of the setting, this would not diminish the significance of either asset.

The assessment was carried out in accordance with the methodology outlined in the Welsh Government's best-practice guidance (Cadw 2017).

Crynodeb Annechnegol

Cynhaliwyd ymgynghoriad cyn-gynllunio ar gyfer y bwriad i adeiladu 102 o dai fforddiadwy a gwaith cysylltiedig ar dir oddi ar Ffordd Llanrwst, Gyffin, Conwy, wedi'i ganoli ar SH 77787 76526.

Yn eu hymateb, mae Cadw wedi gofyn am gynnal asesiad Cam 1 ar un ar ddeg o Adeiladau Rhestredig, dau Heneb Gofrestredig, un Parc a Gardd Hanesyddol Gofrestredig a Lleoliad Hanfodol Safle Treftadaeth y Byd Cestyll a Muriau Tref y Brenin Edward yng Ngwynedd - Castell a Muriau Tref Conwy, sydd i gyd wedi'u lleoli o fewn 1km i'r safle datblygu arfaethedig.

Daeth yr asesiad Cyfnod 1 i'r casgliad y gallai'r datblygiad arfaethedig gael effaith ar Furiau Tref Conwy (CN014) a Bryn Corach (LB3362). O'r herwydd, aethpwyd â'r ddau ased hyn ymlaen trwy Gamau asesu 2 i 4. Daeth yr asesiad terfynol o'r asedau hyn i'r casgliad, er y byddai effaith fach ar agweddau gweledol y Lleoliad, na fyddai hyn yn lleihau arwyddocâd y naill ased na'r llall.

Cynhaliwyd yr asesiad yn unol â'r fethodoleg a amlinellir yng nghanllawiau arfer gorau Llywodraeth Cymru (Cadw 2017).

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

- 1.1.1. Pre-planning consultation has been carried out for the proposed construction of a residential development on land off Llanrwst Road, Gyffin, Conwy, centred on NGR SH 77787 76526 (Figure 1).
- 1.1.2. In their response, Cadw initially requested a Stage 1 assessment to be carried out on the designated historic assets within a 1km search area surrounding the proposed development site. The Stage 1 assessment determined which of these historic assets would need to progress through assessment Stages 2 to 4.
- 1.1.3. A desk-based assessment, undertaken for the proposed site, identified a number of designated historic assets within the 1km search area that have the potential of being impacted by the proposed works (Garcia Rovira 2025, also Figure 2). These comprised eleven Listed Buildings (LB), two Scheduled Monuments (SM), a single Registered Historic Park and Garden (RHPG) and the Essential Setting of the World Heritage Site, 'The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd - Conwy Castle and Town Walls (WHS)'.

1.2. Site location

- 1.2.1. The proposed development lies on land at the southern edge of Gyffin, which is on the southern edge of Conwy, with the site being approximately 882m to the south-west of Conwy town centre. The site is bounded to the west by Llanrwst Road, to the north by Gyffin, to the east by a belt of woodland and to the south by existing fields.
- 1.2.2. The site is located on the eastern slopes of the valley of the Afon Gyffin, which flows northwards to the Afon Conwy. The slope along the western edge of the site rises gradually. From the central area of the site the topography alters, with the ground rising steeply to the south-east (Plates 1 to 3).

- 1.2.3. The site is under pasture, with rough pasture at the northern end and shorter grassland across the rest of the fields that make up the proposed development area. A belt of woodland runs along the eastern boundary of the site.

1.3. Consultation

- 1.3.1. A pre-application enquiry in relation to the proposed development was submitted by the Client to Conwy County Borough Council. Both Cadw and Heneb were then consulted based on the response of the enquiry. Cadw advised that a Stage 1 Settings Assessment should be undertaken for the proposed development.
- 1.3.2. The results of the Stage 1 assessment were submitted to Cadw who determined that two of the historic assets would need to progress to Stages 2 to 4. All stages of assessment are reported on in Sections 3 to 6 below.

2. Methodology

2.1. Assessment process

- 2.1.1. The assessment of asset setting follows the guidance set out in *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales* (Cadw 2017). This sets out a four-stage approach:
- 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.

2.2. Standards

2.2.1. Archaeology Wales Ltd (henceforth-AW) work to the Standards and Guidance published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). The Institute has not published a Standard and Guidance for Setting Assessment, and the overriding guidance for such work in Wales is set out in *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales* issued by Cadw (2017), but some of the underlying work would be covered by the *Standard and Guidance for Heritage Environment Desk-based Assessments* (CIfA 2020), and this has been followed where applicable in the context of this work.

2.3. Sources consulted

2.3.1. The assessment involved consultation of available archaeological and historical information based on a study area covering a 500m buffer around the proposal area, as well as a search of all designated assets within a 5km buffer around the proposals.

2.3.2. The principal sources of archaeological and historical information comprised:

- Cadw inventory of designated historic assets.
- Regional Historic Environment Record (HER), which holds information on known archaeological sites, monuments and finds, as well as previous archaeological investigations.
- The National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW).
- Available historic mapping (Ordnance Survey and Tithe).
- NRW LiDAR coverage of the site and its environs, at available 1m DSM resolution;
- Aerial photographs held by the Central Register of Aerial Photography for Wales, Cardiff (CRAPW).

2.4. Legislation

Historic Environment (Wales) Act

- 2.4.1. The *Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023* (November 2024) provides consolidated legislation for the effective protection and management of Wales' historic environment. The Acts that formerly provided the legislative framework for the management and protection of the Welsh historic environment — principally the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 — no longer apply in Wales.
- 2.4.2. The act does not specifically affect the planning process or the way in which archaeology and heritage matters are addressed within it.

2.5. National Planning Policy

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

- 2.5.1. The Welsh Government's Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 states in the foreword from the Minister for Housing and Local Government that it forms a *'framework for planning the change and development our country will need over the next two decades'*.
- 2.5.2. In terms of the Welsh Government's objectives, Number 6 of 'Future Wales Outcomes' on Page 55 states that:

'Development plans will have a forward thinking, positive attitude towards enabling economic development, investment and innovation. Increased prosperity and productivity will be pursued across all parts of Wales, building on current activity and promoting a culture of innovation, social partnership, entrepreneurialism and skills- development in sustainable industries and sectors. The culture, heritage and environment of Wales will play a positive, modern role in the economy by attracting the interest and expenditure of tourists and providing a distinctive and trusted brand for Welsh businesses'.

Planning Policy Wales

2.5.3. National planning guidance, concerning the treatment of the historic environment across Wales, is detailed in *Planning Policy Wales Edition 12* (February 2024), Section 6.1 of Chapter 6, Distinctive and Natural Places.

2.5.4. Paragraph 6.1.2 identifies the historic environment as comprising individual historic features, such as archaeological sites, historic buildings and historic parks, gardens, townscapes and landscapes, collectively known as 'historic assets'. Paragraph 6.1.6 outlines the Welsh Government's objectives for the historic environment. These seek to:

'... conserve archaeological remains, both for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and the economy' and 'safeguard the character of historic buildings and manage change so that their special architectural and historic interest is preserved.'

2.5.5. Paragraph 6.1.7 states that:

'It is important that the planning system looks to protect, conserve and enhance the significance of historic assets. This will include consideration of the setting of an historic asset which might extend beyond its curtilage. Any change that impacts on an historic asset or its setting should be managed in a sensitive and sustainable way.'

2.5.6. With regard to decision making, it is stated that:

'Any decisions made through the planning system must fully consider the impact on the historic environment and on the significance and heritage values of individual historic assets and their contribution to the character of place.'

2.5.7. In respect of listed buildings, para. 6.1.10 states that:

'... there should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation of a listed building and its setting, which might extend beyond its curtilage' ... 'For any development proposal affecting a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, or its setting, or any features of

special architectural or historic interest which it possesses ... The aim should be to find the best way to protect and enhance the special qualities of listed buildings, retaining them in sustainable use'.

Technical Advice Note 24 (TAN 24)

- 2.5.8. Additional heritage guidance in Wales is set out in *Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment*. TAN 24 provides guidance on how the planning system considers the historic environment during development plan preparation and decision making on planning applications.

- 2.5.9. TAN 24 defines an 'historic asset' as:

'An identifiable component of the historic environment. It may consist or be a combination of an archaeological site, a historic building or area, historic park and garden or a parcel of historic landscape. Nationally important historic assets will normally be designated.'

- 2.5.10. Effects through changes within the settings of historic assets are covered in TAN 24 at Paragraphs 1.23 to 1.29. Paragraph 1.25 defines the setting of an historic asset as comprising:

'... the surroundings in which it 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 or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral. Setting is not a historic asset in its own right but has value derived from how different elements may contribute to the significance of a historic asset.'

- 2.5.11. Paragraph 1.26 stipulates that:

'It is for the applicant to provide the local planning authority with sufficient information to allow the assessment of their proposals in respect of Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, registered historic parks and gardens, World Heritage Sites, or other sites of national importance and their settings.'

2.5.12. Paragraph 1.29 goes on to state that:

'The local planning authority will need to make its own assessment of the impact within the setting of a historic asset, having considered the responses received from consultees as part of this process. A judgement has to be made by the consenting authority, on a case-by-case basis, over whether a proposed development may be damaging to the setting of the historic asset or may enhance or have a neutral impact on the setting by the removal of existing inappropriate development or land use.'

2.6. Local Planning Policy

Conwy Local Development Plan 2007-2022 (adopted October 2013)

2.6.1. Local planning policy is contained in the LDP, adopted October 2013. A review of the plan is currently underway.

2.6.2. The LDP includes five policies that relate to cultural heritage, with Strategic Policy CTH/1 – Cultural Heritage stating that;

'The council is committed to protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing its cultural and heritage assets.'

2.6.3. Policy CTH/2 - Development Affecting Heritage Assets, states that;

'Development proposals which affect a heritage asset listed below (a-f), and/or its setting, shall preserve or, where appropriate, enhance that asset.'

a) Conservation Areas

b) Conwy World Heritage Site

c) Historic Landscapes, Parks and Gardens

d) Listed Buildings

e) Scheduled Ancient Monuments

f) Sites of archaeological importance'

2.6.4. The LDP designates several areas as Special Landscape Areas (SLA), with the proposal map showing that the proposed development site lies within the SLA of the Conwy Valley. Policy NTE/4 – The Landscape and Protecting Special

Landscape Areas states that;

'In order to conserve the attributes of the Special Landscape Areas development proposals will have to show particular regard to the character of each locality in order to minimise their impact. Development will only be permitted if it is shown to be capable of being satisfactorily integrated into the landscape...'

- 2.6.5. The proposed development site is located beyond the settlement limits within open countryside and does not form part of any area of allocated or contingency housing development sites. Policy HOU/1 – Meeting the Housing Need, states that housing developments outside settlement boundaries will not be permitted. However, Policy HOU/6 – Exception Sites For Affordable Housing For Local Need, does state that exceptions can be made in certain circumstances.

Current planning proposals

- 2.6.6. The current proposals are for the construction of 102 affordable homes and associated works including new vehicular access from Llanrwst Road, footpath and cycle connection to Isgoed, located to the north of the site, drainage and landscaping works and creation of public open spaces and wildflower meadows (Figure 3).

3. Stage 1 | Identify the historic assets that might be affected

- 3.1.1. The historic assets that will potentially be affected as a result of the development were identified through a desk-based assessment undertaken for the scheme and in consultation with Cadw (Garcia Rovira 2025). A total of two Scheduled Monuments (SM), eleven Listed Buildings (LB), one Registered Historic Park and Garden, along with the essential setting of World Heritage Site (WHS), 'The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd - Conwy Castle and Town Walls', were identified, see Table 1. The initial scoping to determine if these assets would be impacted by the development was conducted through a site visit.

World Heritage Site and Scheduled Monuments

- 3.1.2. The World Heritage Site, The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd - Conwy Castle and Town Walls, is located 688m to the north of the proposed development site (Figure 2). The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd is comprised of four sites, Beaumaris Castle, Caernarfon Castle and Town Walls, Conwy Castle and Town Walls and Harlech Castle. The Management Plan for the World Heritage Site states that;

'The four castles of Beaumaris, Caernarfon, Conwy, Harlech and the attendant fortified towns at Caernarfon and Conwy are the finest examples of late thirteenth-century and early fourteenth-century military architecture in Europe, as demonstrated through their completeness, pristine state, evidence for organised domestic space, and extraordinary repertory of their medieval form.... The castles as a stylistically coherent group are a supreme example of medieval military architecture designed and directed by James of St George, King Edward I of England's chief architect, and the greatest military architect of the age. The extensive and detailed contemporary technical, social and economic documentation of the castles, and the survival of adjacent fortified towns at Caernarfon and Conwy, make them one of the major references of medieval history.' (Cadw 2018).

- 3.1.3. Each of the four castles are surrounded by an area of Essential Setting which

is a;

'spatially defined area that can be mapped and used to inform the development management process. At each location, the essential setting is primarily restricted to areas immediately adjacent to the World Heritage Site boundary, within significant views or arcs of views, and considered to be most sensitive to development both visually and from the perspective of archaeological potential.' (Cadw 2018).

- 3.1.4. The proposed development site is located 210m to the south of the edge of the essential setting of Conwy Castle and Town Walls. There are six significant viewpoints across the WHS and its essential setting as well as three arcs of view (Figure 4). None of the significant viewpoints take in the proposed development site, with only one arc including the site (Figure 4).
- 3.1.5. Within the WHS are the Scheduled Monuments of Castell Conwy (CN004) and Conwy Town Walls (CN014) (Figure 2). The castle is located on the western bank of the Afon Conwy and was designed to be a prominent feature, controlling the movement of people along the river and likely foot traffic along the eastern edge of what is now Eryri National Park. The town is located on the western edge of the castle, with the walls totalling 1.3km in length.
- 3.1.6. Due to the topography, the vegetation and intervening buildings, most of the WHS, when approached from the west and south is not visible until you are in close proximity to the town walls or the castle, well within the essential setting zone.

Table 1: Assets identified during the Stage 1 assessment

ID	Name	Status
CN004	Castell Conwy	Scheduled Monument
CN014	Conwy Town Wall	Scheduled Monument
374	Conwy Castle and Town Walls	World Heritage Site
3291	Church of St Benedict	Grade I Listed Building
3292	Grave slab of John Holland and John Holland in Gyffin Churchyard	Grade II Listed Building
87446	Grave Slab of John Stodart in Gyffin Churchyard	Grade II Listed Building
3293	Grave Slab of Hugh Owen of Bodidda in Gyffin Churchyard	Grade II Listed Building
3294	Wall, including gate piers and gate, surrounding Gyffin churchyard	Grade II Listed Building
3296	Gyffin Community Centre	Grade II Listed Building
3297	Outbuilding at Gyffin Community Centre	Grade II Listed Building
3286	Tri Dyffryn	Grade II Listed Building
3362	Bryn Corach	Grade II Listed Building
87426	Garden terrace walls and turrets on N and E sides of Bryn Corach	Grade II Listed Building
3290	Gadlas farmhouse	Grade II Listed Building
PGW(Gd)10(CON)	Benarth Hall	Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden

- 3.1.7. From these approaches the WHS can only really be appreciated and experienced from either immediately outside the town walls or from within, where the medieval street layout and the almost continual view of the walls reinforces the sense of history and being within a fortification. The best experience of the WHS is from the river side, as the castle and town walls still dominate the view along the river and when approaching Conwy over the road bridges from Llandudno Junction.
- 3.1.8. The limited number of places in the wider landscape where the WHS can be experienced and fact that modern housing developments surround it, does not detract from the significance of the WHS nor the SMs within.
- 3.1.9. The site visit confirmed that there was no intervisibility for the Castle, which due to the curve of the valley was hidden from view. However, there is intervisibility between the western section of Conwy Town Walls, which is defined as an important arc of view outward from the walls (Cadw 2018).
- 3.1.10. The Stage 1 assessment has shown that there will be no impact on the essential setting of the World Heritage site nor on the setting of Castell Conwy (CN004) and so no further assessment will be required.
- 3.1.11. The proposed development site lies within an important view outwards from Conwy Town Wall (CN014). As such further assessment on the setting of this monument will be required.

Listed Buildings

- 3.1.12. There are eleven Listed Buildings within Gyffin that may be impacted by the proposed development (Figure 2; Plate 4). Of these five are associated with the Church of St Benedict, approximately 200m to the north-west of the proposed development site. The Church itself is a Grade I Listed Building (LB3291) which is enclosed by a Grade II Listed wall (LB3294). There are also three Grade II grave slabs within the churchyard precinct (LBs 87446, 3292, 2393).

- 3.1.13. The church is located on the valley bottom, with the Afon Gyffin located just beyond the northern edge of the churchyard precinct. The church is believed to have 12th century origins and likely formed a focal point of medieval and later post-medieval settlement at Gyffin. However, development in the post-medieval and modern periods has meant the church and churchyard are now surrounded by residential and commercial properties. There are also a number of mature trees surrounding the church and along the northern precinct boundary, with the church itself being largely screened from the view of vehicles or pedestrians on Henryd Road, which provides the only access to the Church. Currently the Church and its associated Listed Buildings can only be experienced from its gate and within its precinct. As there is no physical or visual connection to the proposed development site there will be no impact on these Listed Buildings or their settings.
- 3.1.14. Located on the southern side of Henryd Road are the Gyffin Community Centre (LB3296) and the Outbuilding of the Gyffin Community Centre (LB3297), which are both Grade II Listed Buildings. The Community Centre was originally built as a school in the Arts and Crafts style and was designed to be viewed from the road. The outbuilding was constructed at the same time as the school and is located at the rear of the building and can only be experienced from the school grounds.
- 3.1.15. At the time of their construction the buildings were semi-isolated, with only one other building being located in close proximity. Today the buildings are surrounded by housing that was built in the later 20th century, which has severed any connection to the wider landscape. As such there will be no impact on these Listed Buildings or their settings.
- 3.1.16. The four remaining structures are all located on the north-western slopes of the valley and are set within the urban streetscapes.
- 3.1.17. Tri Dyffryn (LB3286) is a small 17th to 18th century vernacular house, which is

shown on the historic mapping as an isolated structure recorded as 'Pant-graianog'. Today the house is surrounded by late 20th and 21st century housing, which, along with well-established hedges along its boundaries, completely screen the house, with its setting now confined to the garden at the rear of the property. Again, it is thought that will be no impact upon the Listed Building or its setting.

- 3.1.18. The final Listed Building is Gadlas farmhouse (LB3290), which is located to the west of St Benedict's Church. The farmhouse, which was constructed in the 18th century, sits along Hendre Road with the house frontage looking out over Conwy Valley, with partial views over the northernmost section of the proposed development site. The associated outbuildings of the farm lie to the south of the farmhouse, with all the buildings arranged around a central farmyard. The setting of the farmhouse and its associated buildings has changed substantially from its original construction, and as with the other buildings assessed it has changed from a largely isolated setting to being surrounded by modern housing. Being a farmhouse its setting is largely confined to the associated farmyard and field system, and it is thought that the proposed development being located on the opposite side of the valley would have no impact on the farmhouse.
- 3.1.19. Bryn Corach (LB3362) with its garden terrace walls and turrets (LB87426) is located at the top of the valley. The house is a striking 19th century villa with turrets and was designed to be seen, with its location also allowing the occupants a view along the Conwy Valley. Vegetation cover means that the house is screened from view from the south, with partial viewpoints only existing to the south-west of the house. The upper floor of the house is visible from the south end of the proposed development site. Due to the design of the house with views along the Conwy Valley, it is deemed that further assessment of the Listed Building and its associated Listed structures is required.

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

- 3.1.20. The only Registered Historic Park and Garden (RHPG) within 1km of the proposed development site of the site is Benarth Hall PGW(Gd)10(CON), which is located to the north-east (Figure 2). The park was registered as it is;

'an interesting example of an early twentieth century garden layout set within older woodlands and parkland with extensive late eighteenth or early nineteenth-century walled kitchen gardens. Benarth occupies a sloping site on the west bank of the Conwy estuary and from it there are lovely views over the estuary. The park and gardens have group value with the other estate buildings including the grade II listed Benarth Hall and balustrade terrace, summerhouse and icehouse...' (Cadw 2022).

- 3.1.21. The main value of the park is then tied to the structures within its bounds and its setting along the banks of the Afon Conwy. The essential view from within the park is from Benarth Hall, looking south-east down the Conwy Valley. The topography of valley means that there is no intervisibility between the proposed development site and the RHPG. The nature of the topography and the views mean that Benarth Hall will not be impacted by the development and so the RHPG will not require further assessment.

4. Stage 2 | Define and analyse the setting

4.1. Historic Background

Conwy Town Walls (CN014)

- 4.1.1. Conwy Town Walls were constructed along with Castell Conwy between 1283 and 1287, with the town being the first settlement constructed by Edward I after his defeat of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (Cadw 2018). The site of the town was occupied at this time by Aberconwy Abbey which was a monastic church of the Cistercian Order. The Abbey had been constructed in 1192 and was located in the central area of what became the walled town. The fabric of the Church of St Mary's, which is in the centre of Conwy, does incorporate some remains

of the Abbey (Evans 2011). The Abbey had grown in importance through the early 13th century, with Llywelyn ap Iorwerth being buried there in 1240 (Cadw 2018). The construction of the castle and town forced the monks to move to Maenan.

- 4.1.2. The castle and town were constructed on the western bank of the Afon Conwy, with the nature of the landscape making them visible landmarks from large sections of the surrounding landscape. The choice of location for the castle and town by Edward I was not only political but strategic and allowed Edward's forces to control traffic along the river, as well as movement across the river and down the Gyffin and Conwy valleys.
- 4.1.3. The castle and the town walls are visible from along the Afon Conwy and from along the northern bank. There are also views from the high ground to the south-east and north-west, with limited views from along the Gyffin valley, which are due to the sinuous nature of the valley.
- 4.1.4. Part of the construction works for the castle and town included the building of a quay, which is located along the eastern edge of the town. The quay would have allowed materials and goods to be brought into the town but would also have aided with the military defence of the site. Spur walls were constructed at either end of the quay, which were connected to the town walls in order to aid the defence of the quay (Davidson 1997). The quay would have attracted merchants to the town, however, there appears to have been a relatively small population living within town until the later medieval and post-medieval periods (Cadw 2018).
- 4.1.5. It is unclear how the wider landscape would have looked in the medieval period; however, based on the evidence held by Heneb HER it is unlikely to have been densely settled. Gyffin is recorded as a medieval township (PRN 7376), within which is the Church of St Benedict (LB3291; PRN 6934; NPRN 43691, 43692, 43693). A settlement of medieval date was located at Hendre

(PRN 2833), approximately 700m to the south-west of the church. Other medieval sites include a strip field to the west of Conwy and inscribed stones within the precinct of the Church of St Benedict (PRNs 31878, 31981, 31988, 31996).

- 4.1.6. The lack of occupation within the surrounding landscape would have ensured that the town wall and the castle were the dominant features, likely being visible from areas of landscape where they are no longer evident today.
- 4.1.7. The setting of the town walls has changed dramatically since in the 19th century. In 1829 Thomas Telford constructed a new suspension bridge across the river, which meant the removal of the water gate and ramp in order to construct the new road. The Chester to Holyhead railway was then constructed in 1849, with part of the route cutting along the southern edge of the Castle (Cadw 2018). The historic map sheets show that by the end of the century settlement had begun to expand beyond the walls of the town, with buildings shown immediately outside the western corner of the walls.
- 4.1.8. The map sheets show that settlement continued to expand within these areas, particularly during the later 20th and early 21st centuries.

Bryn Corach (LB3362)

- 4.1.9. Bryn Corach was constructed during the second half to the 19th century. The house does not appear on the Conwy Parish tithe map of 1846 but is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map sheet published in 1888. The tithe map shows the site of the house as a field, although there is no apportionment number assigned to the field.
- 4.1.10. The First Edition OS map sheet shows a larger structure than survives today, with the turreted garden wall to the north and east. Gardens are shown to the rear of the house, with a large open area in front to the north beyond the garden wall (LB 87426). There are three buildings shown on the map sheet within the rear garden of the property. A second large property named as Lark

Hill, is shown set in extensive grounds immediately to the west of Bryn Corach. Lark Hill is also set within large gardens with buildings to the rear. The map sheet depicts a quarry to the south-east of Bryn Corach and Mount Farm is directly to the south.

- 4.1.11. The map sheet shows a number of small farmsteads in the landscape surrounding Bryn Corach, with Gyffin to the south and Conwy to the north-east. Gyffin is shown as a hamlet with a small number of houses, and a flour mill to the east of St Benedict's Church.
- 4.1.12. By the end of the 19th century settlement within the landscape of Bryn Corach had begun to expand with housing shown along the road to Gyffin, and a small expansion of settlement to the west of Conwy. This development was relatively slow however, as discussed above for Conwy Town Walls, it was not until the late 20th and early 21st centuries that most of the current housing to the west and south of the town walls and the area surrounding Bryn Corach was constructed.
- 4.1.13. The OS map sheet published in 1953 indicates that the buildings within the rear gardens of Bryn Corach were still extant at this time. Only one of these buildings survive today, with a small rectangular structure still evident on the eastern edge of the garden. The building in the centre of the garden has been demolished, with the building at the south-eastern edge of the garden having been replaced by a private house.
- 4.1.14. A substantial three storey accommodation block with 26 bedrooms was constructed to the rear of the house in 1963.

4.2. Current Setting

Conwy Town Walls (CN014)

- 4.2.1. Conwy Town Walls (CN014) enclose the medieval town of Conwy, with the walled circuit being linked into the defences of Castell Conwy (CN004), which

is at the south-eastern edge of the town (Figures 2 and 3). The walls form an almost continuous circuit surrounding the historic core of the town, with only one gap in the walls. This gap is due to the removal of the Water Gate in the early 19th century in order to facilitate the construction of the suspension bridge that spans the Afon Conwy, connecting Conwy to Llandudno Junction. The Chester to Holyhead Railway also spans the river and skirts the southern edge of the town wall. There are three twin towered gates within the walls, along with twenty-one towers spaced along the wall circuit (Cadw 2018).

- 4.2.2. The Afon Conwy flows along the north-eastern edge of the town, with the Afon Gyffin to the south. The immediate area to the south of the town walls is largely open, with Castle Park, gardens, two car parks, the Conwy Bowling Club and areas of enclosed pasture and scrubland outside the walls. Beyond this is the post-medieval and modern settlement of Gyffin, with development abutting the south-western corner of the town walls. Bodlonddeb Park is located at the north-western edge of the town.
- 4.2.3. As mentioned in the Stage 1 assessment (Section 3.1), a section of the town walls are visible from within the proposed development site. The western section of the walls follow the rising topography making them a prominent feature in the current viewscape from the northern end of the site (Plate 3). Conversely the development area is also visible from the wall-walk along the western section of the town walls. From this section of the walls the northernmost field and an area of the central field are visible (Plate 5).

Bryn Corach (LB3362)

- 4.2.4. Bryn Corach (LB3362) is located on the upper section of the western slope of the Afon Gyffin valley. The house is surrounded by its grounds, within which is the Grade II listed garden terrace walls with turrets (LB87426).
- 4.2.5. To the immediate south, west and north of the house are areas of green space, which are largely enclosed private gardens, with some areas of woodland to

the south-west and north-east. Beyond this green space is the modern housing developments that form the western and northern area of Gyffin.

- 4.2.6. The surrounding modern residential housing and the growth of the vegetation surrounding the house have meant its current setting has condensed from its historical setting with the house only being fully experienced from within its own grounds. Partial experiences of the house are offered from points in the wider landscape, with the roof of the house being visible from the south end of the proposed development site. The 3-storey accommodation block added to the house in the 1960s is visible from across most of the site. Gaps in the vegetation along the north-eastern side of the house and its garden mean that it can be viewed from the wall walk on top of Conwy Town Walls (Plate 5).

4.3. Contribution to Significance

Conwy Town Walls (CN014)

- 4.3.1. Conwy Town Walls (CN014) are culturally significant as they have high evidential, historical and communal values.
- 4.3.2. The walls are of both national and international importance for their potential to '*enhance our knowledge of medieval defensive organisation and the growth of towns*' (Cadw Scheduled Monument Report). The Management Plan for the World Heritage Site of The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd - Conwy Castle and Town Walls, states that the walls represent '*one of the best-preserved and most impressive examples of medieval town walls in Europe*' (Cadw 2018).
- 4.3.3. As discussed in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 Castell Conwy and Conwy Town Walls were constructed on the orders of Edward I after his defeat of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, with the walls still forming an almost complete circuit around the medieval town. The town was the first settlement constructed by Edward within Gwynedd (Cadw 2018). The survival of the walls and their link to Edward

I and his conquest of Wales, a significant event within Welsh medieval history, make the walls both evidentially and historically important. The historical and evidential significance of the town walls are also inexorably linked to the castle, which is '*exceptional for its completeness and for the grandeur of its towers and curtain walls*' (Cadw 2018).

- 4.3.4. The town walls also have a high communal value, with sections of the wall walk still being accessible to visitors today. This allows visitors not only to appreciate the walls and castle from a different aspect but also provides views of the town within the walls and areas of the landscape beyond.
- 4.3.5. The setting of the walls does contribute towards their historic and aesthetic value. The visibility of the town walls from a distance and their imposing nature were an integral design feature. The positioning of the town and its walls along the Afon Conwy and the fact the walls follow the topography, rising up along the western section of the circuit meant that they would have formed a dominant feature on the skyline. Along with the castle these would have acted to intimidate any potential hostile forces. The topography of the surrounding landscape meant that the walls and the castle would have been visible within the wider landscape, particularly when approaching from along the Afon Conwy or from the opposing side of the river. There are more limited views from the south and south-west until in close proximity to Conwy, due to the sinuous nature of the Gyffin Valley.
- 4.3.6. The views outwards from Conwy Town Walls contribute to the significance of the asset forming part of its setting, with clear fields of views outwards across a large area of landscape would have been important from a defensive standpoint. There are six significant viewpoints across the WHS and its essential setting as well as three arcs of view. Two of these views and two arcs of view are views outwards from the town walls (Figure 4). The views outwards from the walls would have been as important to the garrison as the views

towards the town and the castle, allowing the garrison to identify potential threats.

- 4.3.7. The modern urban developments that have grown to the south and west of the town walls, along with the vegetation that exists in these areas means that the walls are no longer as dominant as they were originally intended to be. The area within which the walls are best experienced and are still dominant is from within the essential setting of the WHS (see paragraphs 3.1.6 and 3.1.7).
- 4.3.8. Although the setting of the town walls does contribute to the significance of the assets, aspects of the evidential, historical and communal values of the walls make a greater contribution towards their significance. In particular the remarkable survival of the fabric of the town walls, the group value they share with the survival of the castle, their links to Edward I and his conquest of Wales and their continued use by visitors to the town today.

Bryn Corach (LB3362)

- 4.3.9. Bryn Corach was listed due to its *'social historical interest as a hotel specifically designed to provide open-air holidays for workmen and their families, and for its special architectural interest as a late C19 villa of definite character'* (Cadw 2006). The description of the buildings states that it is a;
- '...large Gothic style villa. One and a half storeyed, complex plan giving picturesque overall character. Walls are rock-faced rubble stone, with grey freestone dressings... The house is in 3 main sections: the double-depth entrance range facing N, a W wing set forward on the R side of the front, and a gabled SW wing on the steep ground behind it. The entrance range is 4 bays and asymmetrical. The facade is anchored by a circular tower with conical roof...'* (Cadw 2006).
- 4.3.10. The listing description indicates that the significance of the asset is linked to its evidential, historic and communal values, with its evidential value is connected to the survival of the historic fabric. Although the building has undergone a number of alterations since its initial construction much of the

exterior historic fabric does survive, including the circular tower.

- 4.3.11. Its historic and communal values are tied to its use as a hotel in the early 20th century. Bryn Corach was originally designed as a private residence, however, in 1913 it was bought by Thomas Arthur Leonard, a notable historic figure. As a pastor in the 1880s and 1890s Leonard had begun to organise holidays, which led him to found the Co-operative Holidays Association (CHA). The CHA aimed to provide recreational and educational holidays. He stepped down from the CHA in 1912 and then founded the Holiday Fellowship, with Bryn Corach becoming the headquarters. Leonard lived at Bryn Corach between 1914 and 1935. Leonard is also noted for being a founding partner of the Youth Hostels Association and the Ramblers (The Guardian 2014).
- 4.3.12. The Holiday Fellowship aimed to encourage working class families to take recreational holidays in the British countryside (The Guardian 2014). However, it was not only working class families that stayed at Bryn Corach with playwright George Bernard Shaw and early members of the Labour Party having stayed with Leonard at the house (Daily Mail 2021).
- 4.3.13. The setting of Bryn Corach contributes towards its communal value as it was the location of the house that made it a good place for Leonard to base the Holiday Fellowship. The location allowed families to spend time in Conwy but also to take advantage of the extensive rural landscape beyond this. The historic map sheets show the landscape to the north and west was crossed by a number of public footpaths allowing visitors the freedom to roam.
- 4.3.14. The house offered its residents good views across Conwy, with the castle and river evident from the house and grounds (Daily Mail 2021). The demolition of the structure within the centre of the rear garden would likely have opened up views to the south as well.
- 4.3.15. The setting of the Listed Building does contribute to its significance, with it being an important part of the communal value of the building. However, its

historical value, in particular the links to Thomas Arthur Leonard, provides a greater contribution towards the significance.

5. Stage 3 | Evaluate the potential impact on the significance

5.1. Proposed Development

- 5.1.1. The impact of a proposed change or development within the setting of a historic asset can be a material consideration in determining a planning application or other consents.
- 5.1.2. The proposed development includes the construction of 102 affordable homes. These would be a mix of bungalows and houses located along the western half of the site. A new vehicular access point would be created off Llanrwst Road. The development plan also includes a new woodland walk footpath, which would run through the existing woodland along the western edge of the site. The footpath would connect to Isgoed located at the northern end of the development area.
- 5.1.3. Drainage works across the site would include a new detention basin and SUDS features, which will be located along the western boundary of the site.
- 5.1.4. The eastern section of the proposed development would be screened from the housing by a double hedge, with the upper sections of the slopes being used as wildflower meadows. The existing hedgerows and belts of woodland would remain along the boundary of the proposed development.

5.2. Impact on the setting on the historic assets

- 5.2.1. The proposed development is located approximately 700m to the south of Conwy Town Walls and 585m to the south-south-east Bryn Corach. The development is small in extent in comparison to other residential developments that have taken place within Gyffin and Conwy in the last century and would only increase the number of residential properties within

the landscape by a small percentage. As such it will likely have little impact upon the scale of the current built environment of the town.

- 5.2.2. There will be a minor visual impact on the views out from the town walls, when viewing from the western section. From here it would be possible to see the housing within the northern field of the proposed development site and a small section of housing within the central field. However, the remaining development area in the central field and all of the area within the southernmost field is screened from view by the well-established trees along the western boundary of the site and would not be visible (Figure 5; Plate 5).
- 5.2.3. Although this will have a minor impact on the setting of the walls, the ability to view parts of the development would not alter the significance of the town walls.
- 5.2.4. The views from Bryn Corach are southwards of the property, along the Gyffin valley. The eastern and southern property boundaries are lined with well established tree growth, however due to the topography this does not limit views, particularly to the south. It is likely that there would be views across at least part of the development site, although it is likely these will be minor based on the existing vegetation cover surrounding the proposed development site and the topography of the site.
- 5.2.5. This would again result in a minor alteration to the setting but would not diminish the significance of the building.

6. Stage 4 | Mitigation

- 6.1.1. The objective of mitigation is to limit and reduce any residual impact a development might have on the heritage resource to an acceptable level by a range of measures. The exact mitigation measures adopted are dependent on the nature and scale of the final detailed development plans.
- 6.1.2. The assessment has shown that there will be a minor visual impact to the setting of Conwy Town Walls (CN014) and Bryn Corach (LB3362).
- 6.1.3. The views outwards from both the walls and the house is the aspect of setting that will be impacted. It is suggested that sympathetic finishes to the dwellings proposed for the site would help lessen these impacts.
- 6.1.4. Although it is believed the proposed development will not have a negative impact on the significance of either asset, a sympathetic finish to the dwellings would benefit the integrity of the setting of the monument. This would ensure the new dwellings blend into the existing urban fabric and do not become a focal point within the views out from the either asset.
- 6.1.5. With this mitigation in place it is considered that the proposed development will have a negligible visual impact on the historic assets and their settings as far as it is possible to judge. The proposed development will not dominate the historic assets or detract from our ability to understand and appreciate them.

7. Sources

General

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Figures



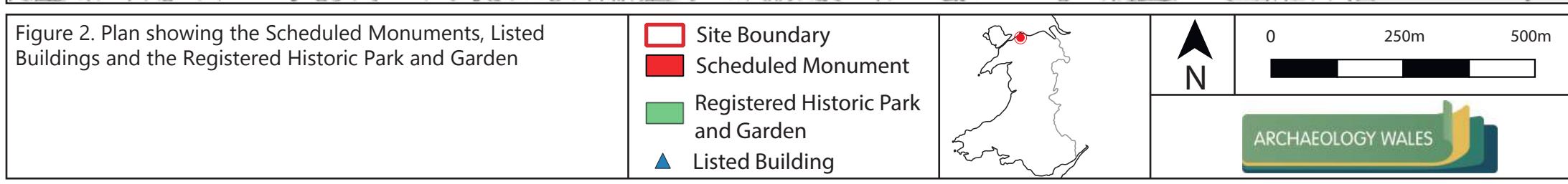
Figure 1. Location of the proposed development site





 Proposed site



0 500m 1km



 Site Boundary
 Scheduled Monument
 Registered Historic Park and Garden
 Listed Building








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Figure 3. Proposed development plan - as supplied by the Client



0 50m 100m



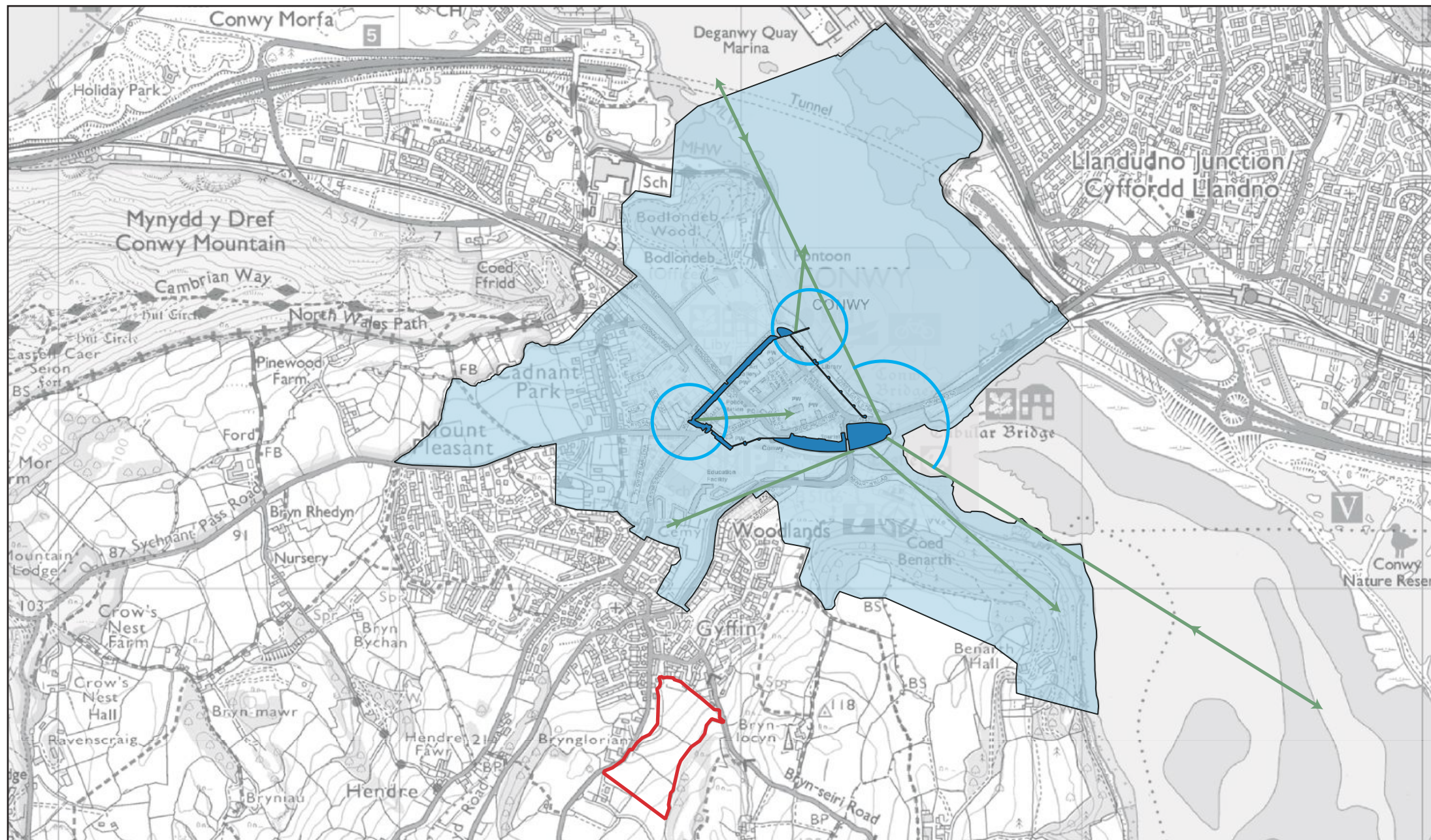


Figure 4. Plan showing the World Heritage Site and its essential setting

- Site Boundary
- World Heritage Site
- Essential Setting
- Arc of View
- Significant View





0 250m 500m





Figure 5. Image showing the site boundary and the development area within, as seen from the western section of Conwy Town Walls

 Site Boundary
 Development Area





Plates



Plate 1: View northwards from the southernmost field



Plate 2: View northwards from proposed development boundary within the central field



Plate 3: View northwards towards Conwy Town Walls from the northernmost field



Plate 4: View to the north-west from northern edge of the site towards the Listed Buildings, including Bryn Corach (LB3362)



Plate 5: View from the western section of the towns walls towards the site

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