

AtkinsRéalis



## Heritage Impact Assessment

Neath Port Talbot Council

May 2026

NE05\_001-ATK-EHR-SWMWREC-RP-LH-000003

# GRANDISON BROOK FLOOD ALLEVIATION

# Notice

This document and its contents have been prepared and are intended solely as information for Neath & Port Talbot Council and use in relation to a Heritage Desk Based Assessment

AtkinsRéalis UK Limited assumes no responsibility to any other party in respect of or arising out of or in connection with this document and/or its contents.

This document has 64 pages including the cover.

## Document history

Document title: Heritage Impact Assessment

Document reference: 100104914

| Revision | Purpose description | Originated | Checked | Reviewed | Authorised | Date     |
|----------|---------------------|------------|---------|----------|------------|----------|
| 1.0      | For Information     | JF/SH      | GK      | GK       | RM         | 09/04/25 |
| 1.1      | Minor amendment     | JF/SH      | GK      | GK       | RM         | 21/05/25 |
|          |                     |            |         |          |            |          |
|          |                     |            |         |          |            |          |
|          |                     |            |         |          |            |          |
|          |                     |            |         |          |            |          |
|          |                     |            |         |          |            |          |
|          |                     |            |         |          |            |          |
|          |                     |            |         |          |            |          |
|          |                     |            |         |          |            |          |

## Client signoff

|                       |                                   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Client                | Neath Port Talbot Council         |
| Project               | GRANDISON BROOK FLOOD ALLEVIATION |
| Job number            | 100104914                         |
| Client signature/date |                                   |
|                       |                                   |



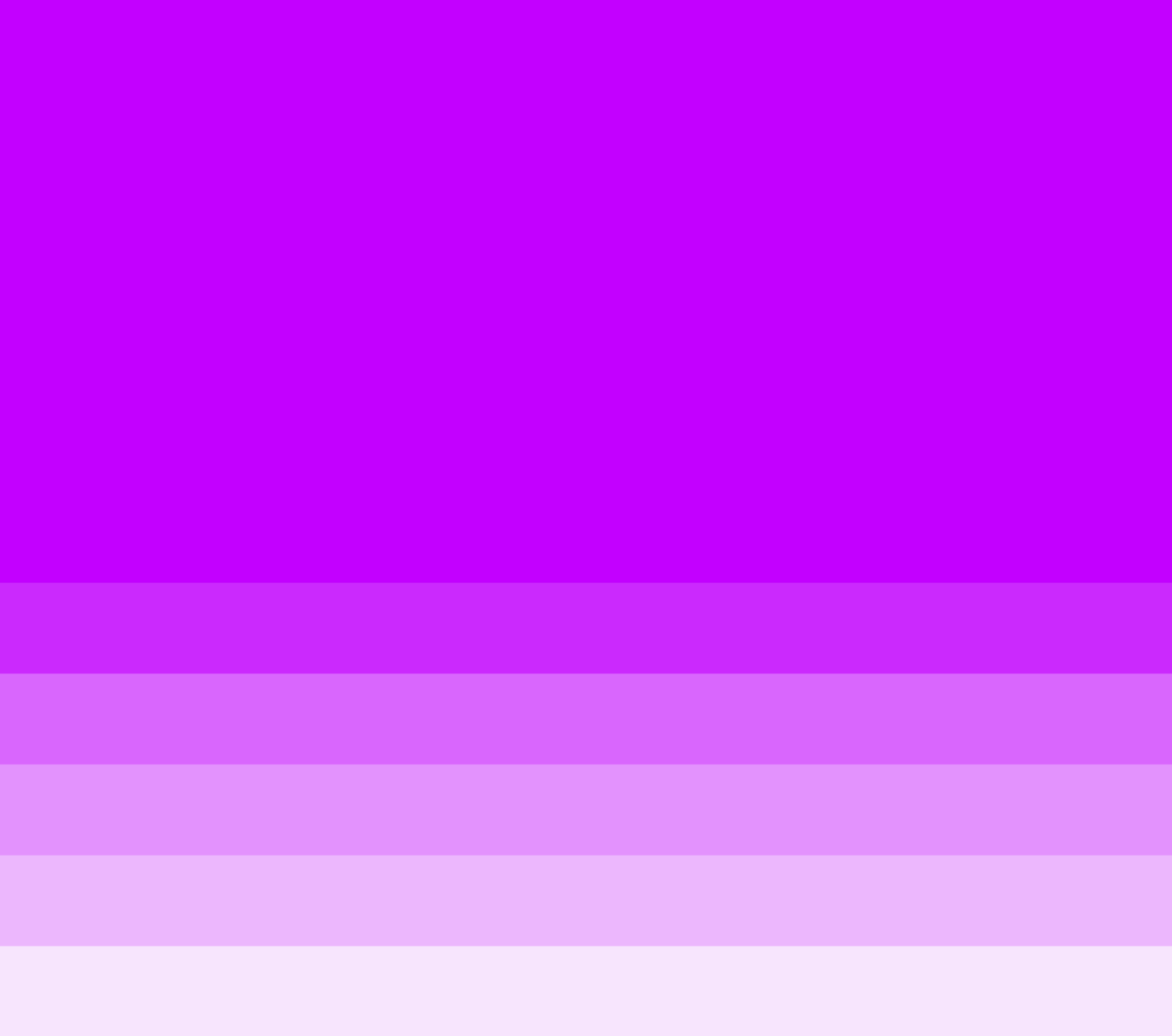
# Contents

|           |                                                                     |           |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Introduction.....</b>                                            | <b>6</b>  |
| 1.1       | Proposed Scheme.....                                                | 6         |
| 1.1.1     | Need for the scheme.....                                            | 6         |
| 1.1.2     | Localised causes of flooding in the location of the Incline.....    | 8         |
| 1.1.3     | Development of the proposed scheme.....                             | 9         |
| 1.1.4     | Description of Proposals.....                                       | 15        |
| 1.2       | Consultation.....                                                   | 16        |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Methodology.....</b>                                             | <b>17</b> |
| 2.1       | Overview.....                                                       | 17        |
| 2.2       | Study area.....                                                     | 17        |
| 2.3       | Baseline research.....                                              | 18        |
| 2.4       | Assessment criteria.....                                            | 19        |
| 2.5       | Assessment of Archaeological Potential.....                         | 21        |
| 2.6       | Setting.....                                                        | 22        |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Legislation, Policy and Guidance.....</b>                        | <b>23</b> |
| 3.1       | National Legislation.....                                           | 23        |
| 3.1.1     | Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023.....                          | 23        |
| 3.1.2     | Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.....              | 24        |
| 3.2       | Planning Policy.....                                                | 24        |
| 3.2.1     | Planning Policy Wales Edition 12, 2024.....                         | 24        |
| 3.2.3     | Local Planning Policy.....                                          | 27        |
| 3.2.4     | Guidance.....                                                       | 27        |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Baseline Conditions.....</b>                                     | <b>29</b> |
| 4.1       | Designated Assets.....                                              | 29        |
| 4.2       | Non-designated Assets.....                                          | 29        |
| 4.3       | Historic background.....                                            | 30        |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>Assessment of Significance and archaeological potential.....</b> | <b>32</b> |
| 5.1       | Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline.....                                     | 32        |
| 5.2       | Jersey Park.....                                                    | 39        |
| 5.3       | Archaeological potential.....                                       | 40        |
| <b>6.</b> | <b>Impact Assessment.....</b>                                       | <b>41</b> |
| 6.1       | Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline.....                                     | 41        |
| 6.2       | Jersey Park.....                                                    | 44        |
| 6.3       | Buried Archaeology.....                                             | 45        |
| <b>7.</b> | <b>Conclusion.....</b>                                              | <b>46</b> |
| 7.1       | Recommendations.....                                                | 46        |



|                                                      |           |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Appendix A. Scheme drawings .....</b>             | <b>50</b> |
| <b>Appendix C. Maps .....</b>                        | <b>52</b> |
| C.1 Location of designated historic assets .....     | 52        |
| C.2 Location of non-designated historic assets ..... | 53        |
| <b>Appendix D. Gazetteers .....</b>                  | <b>54</b> |
| D.1 Designated Assets .....                          | 54        |
| D.2 Non-designated assets .....                      | 54        |





# 1. Introduction

This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been prepared by AtkinsRéalis on behalf of Neath & Port Talbot Council (NPTC) to assess the impact of the proposed Grandison Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme on the significance of the scheduled monument of the Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline (GM489) and the Registered Park and Garden of Jersey Park (PGW(Gm)62(NEP)).

NPTC has statutory responsibility for managing flood risk in the county and are the risk management authority (RMA) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Under the act, NPTC has the power to undertake works to manage flood risk from surface runoff or groundwater, consistent with the local flood risk management strategy.

## 1.1 Proposed Scheme

### 1.1.1 Need for the scheme

The proposed scheme is situated in Briton Ferry, approximately 8km northeast of Swansea and 3km south of Neath. It is located entirely within the administrative boundary of Neath and Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC). The Grandison Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme is located primarily within the residential area of Briton Ferry, which suffers from frequent surface water flooding of residential properties. The area is ranked amongst the worst affected in Wales for residential flooding and NPTC has successfully received funding under the Welsh Government's Flooding and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) grant to develop a scheme to reduce flood risk.

The principal cause of flooding in Briton Ferry relates to surface water flooding as seen in Figure 1-1, with floodwaters following natural topography and along man-made routes such as the 'Incline' through Jersey Park which consists of a historical railway cutting.

The target for the grant funding is to achieve a level of protection against flooding of 1% (1 in 100) Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP). The proposed scheme removes over 250 buildings from receiving flood damage.

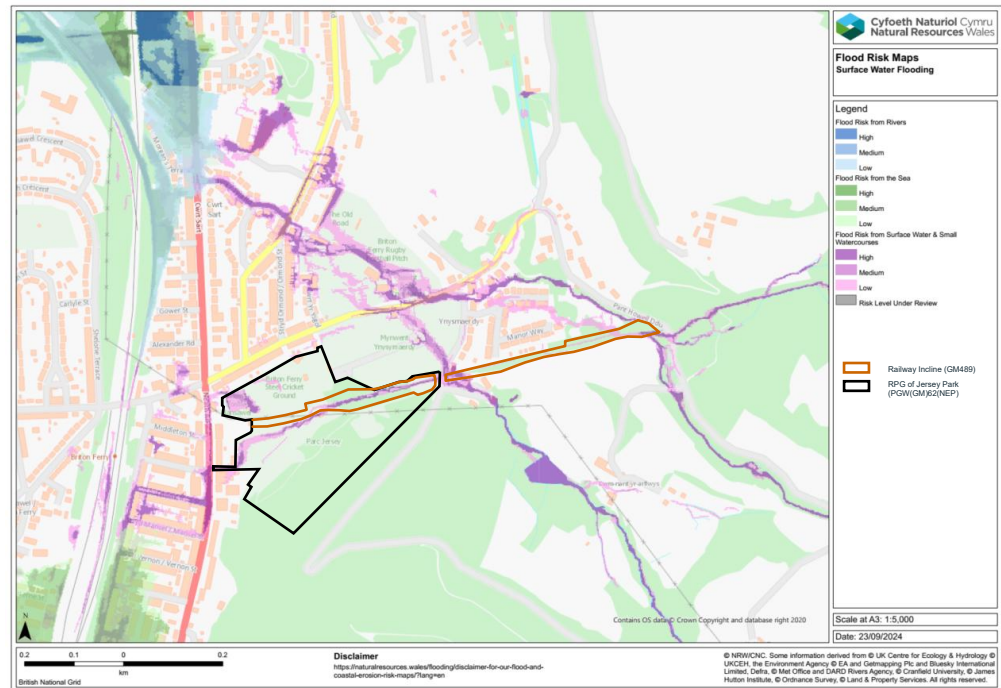


**Figure 1-1 – Historic assets and map of surface water flooding in Briton Ferry**

The Grandison Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme is required to mitigate flooding to properties around Pant Yr Heol Road within Briton Ferry. The specific aims of the Grandison Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme are to:

- Construct a new flood relief culvert together with stormwater attenuation through Briton Ferry from Grandison Brook, to extend the current hydraulic capacity of the surface water drainage system;
- Improve the existing drainage infrastructure, including new trash screens at the inlet structure at Ynysmaerdy Road and lining repairs to the existing surface water drainage system;
- Reduce incidences of flooding for local communities; and
- Improve watercourses that benefit local communities and improve local biodiversity, contributing to Water Framework Directive objectives and/or the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act goals.

The proposed works would involve the installation of a new culvert in the highway and through green spaces, and enclosing the current open channel within a culvert in some sections. The new culvert will re-join the existing watercourse further downstream before it discharges into the River Neath.

The majority of the works will involve the installation of a new relief culvert along a route parallel to the existing culvert system within the highway and through playing fields, which will be buried underground, but in order for the proposed culvert to operate within its design limits, there is also the necessity to attenuate/store water in at Jersey Park to reduce the overall burden to the new drainage system.

An overview of the scheme is shown in Figure 1-2 below.

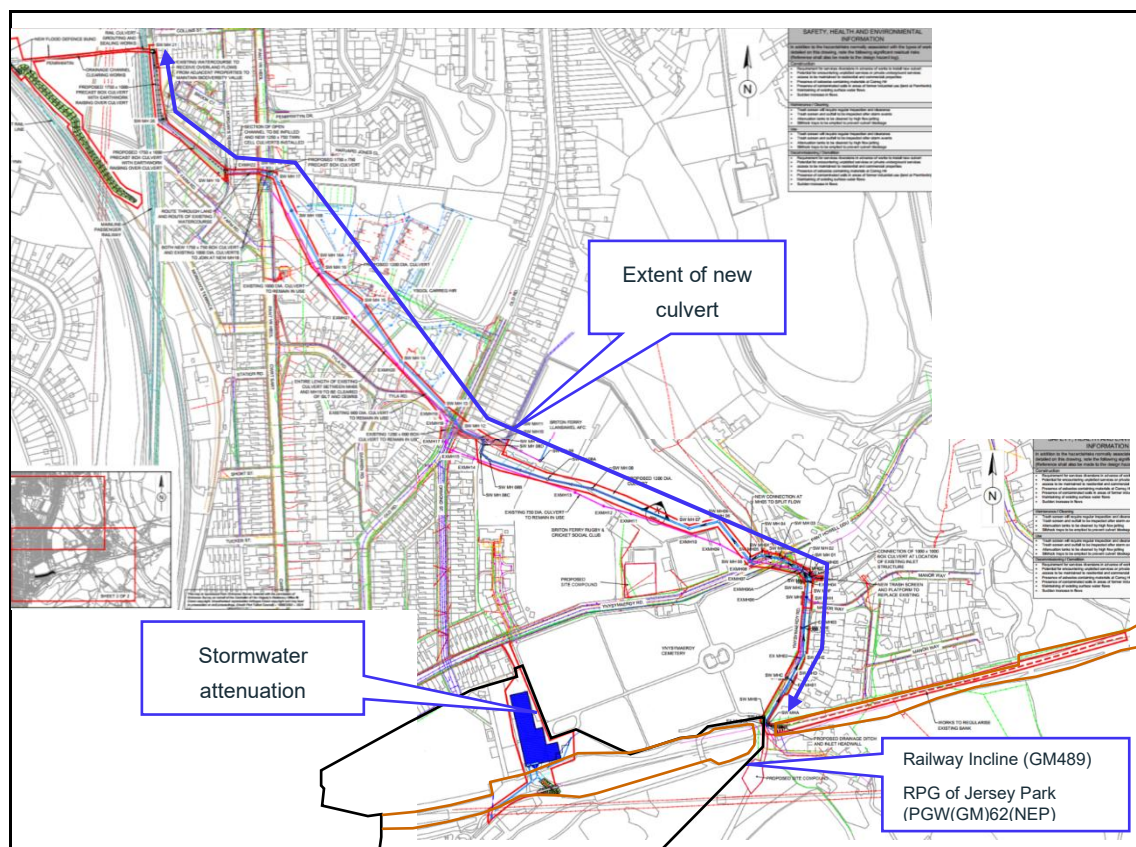


**Figure 1-2 – Overview of the Grandison Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme**

## 1.1.2 Localised causes of flooding in the location of the Incline

The root cause of the flooding is that there is insufficient capacity within the drainage system to cope with the forecasted flood flows in the present-day situation, which will be further exacerbated by climate change which will increase flows between 30% (central 50<sup>th</sup> percentile projection) or 75% (upper 90<sup>th</sup> percentile projection) over the longer term<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, the excess water flows run overland into residential areas following topography, watercourses and man-made overland routes such as railway cuttings.

As shown on Figure 1-3, at the Incline, when the Panthowell Ddu watercourse reaches capacity floodwater spills onto adjacent land at the Incline and is diverted from its usual direction along this man-made railway cutting. Water then travels along the Incline in a westerly direction, but a proportion is also diverted northward into Manor Way.

A proportion of flows also bypasses existing drainage systems (due to being at capacity) and continues to flow in a westward direction along the Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline (GM489) in Jersey Park, eventually causing flooding to a large number of properties in Briton Ferry to the west of the A474 Pant Yr Heol Road.

<sup>1</sup> [Adapting to Climate Change: Guidance for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Authorities in Wales \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/adapting-to-climate-change-guidance-for-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-authorities-in-wales) [accessed October 2024]

The proposed scheme in this area seeks to capture these overland flows using a sustainable drainage system<sup>2</sup> i.e. a buried attenuation system. The attenuation system is able to capture the peak of the storm floodwater flows and then release flow more gradually into the drainage system, once the storm has subsided.

Extensive hydraulic modelling has been carried out which confirms the measures proposed at the Incline and Jersey Park form an essential contribution to the rest of the flood alleviation scheme. Without these measures in place the standard of protection is significantly reduced to around a 1 in 50 standard of protection and the economic benefits are less, making it less likely that the scheme will be economically justifiable and the scheme as a whole less likely to proceed.



Figure 1-3 – Without scheme flooding extents near Jersey Park

### 1.1.3 Development of the proposed scheme

Sites to attenuate and store flood water rely on flat unused areas, ideally away from risk areas such as residential and commercial sites. Jersey Park has such an area which is suitable and coincides with one of the routes along which flooding is routed (see Figure 1-1 and Figure 1-3). Therefore, an initial solution was investigated to provide surface water attenuation storage using a pond or underground tanks.

#### 1.1.3.1 Jersey Park Storm Water Attenuation

##### Option 1

An option was developed to create 2m deep ponds within the western extents of the Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline (GM489), currently a little used amenity area within Jersey Park (Figure 1-4). This option would require the excavation of two attenuation ponds within the western extents of the scheduled Railway Incline, divided by a pedestrian path (Figure 1-5). Although, the proposals were seen as an enhancement of the area from a landscaping amenity perspective, it was recognised that the impact on the scheduled

<sup>2</sup> [Welsh Government, Sustainable Drainage \(SuDS\) Statutory Guidance](#) [accessed October 2024]

monument would be unacceptable, resulting the loss of physical remains of the monument, alteration of its form and degradation of its legibility, resulting in permanent harm to its significance. This option was therefore discounted from further consideration.

|                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p>Circa 1950</p> | <p><b>1D. INCLINE - EMBANKMENT Scheduled Monument</b></p> <p><b>Original:</b> Part of the mile-long Ynysmaerdy rope hauled railway incline designed by Brunel, opened 1863, closed 1910. This level section on a steep embankment was for disconnecting the trains. It may have been incorporated into the original park and was later used as a play ground prior to the existing play area being added to the park.</p> <p><b>Current:</b> Secluded little-used area, not greatly altered but now has poor quality high fence to boundaries and high wall across with tarmac for ball games making the area rather unsightly. Unattractive concrete steps link down the bank to the main lawns of the Park.</p> <p><b>Planting:</b> Grass on the flat and mainly evergreen shrubs and trees on the bank provide separation and backdrop to the main lawns.</p> <p><b>Heritage value: VERY HIGH</b></p> <p>Evidential: High Historical: Very high<br/>Aesthetic: Medium Communal: Medium<br/><b>Condition: Fair</b>, but fences and walls poor, little used and ugly.<br/><b>Risk: Medium</b> - any incline/railway-related remains may have been disturbed by the construction of play facilities.</p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Figure 1-4 – Amenity area from NPTCBC Jersey Park Conservation Plan

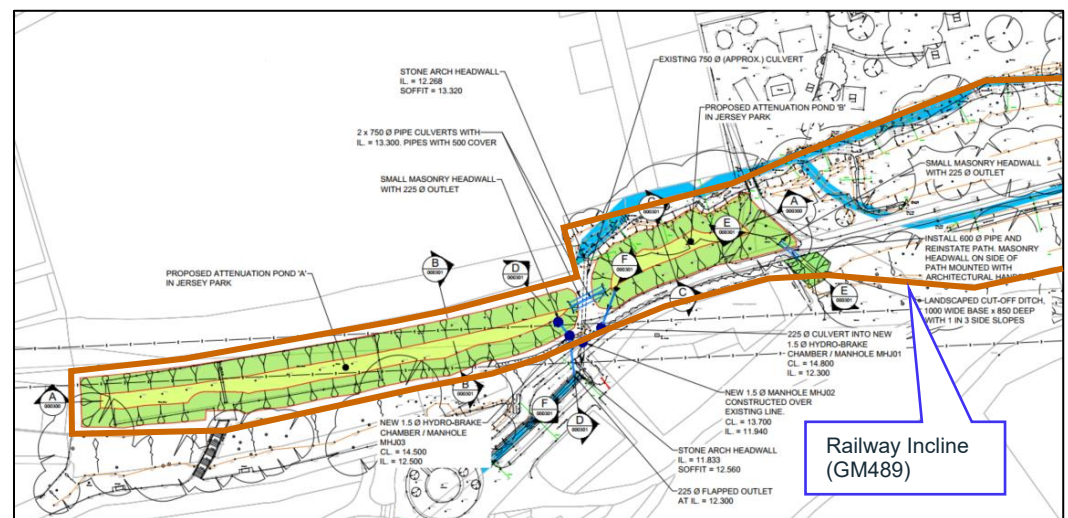


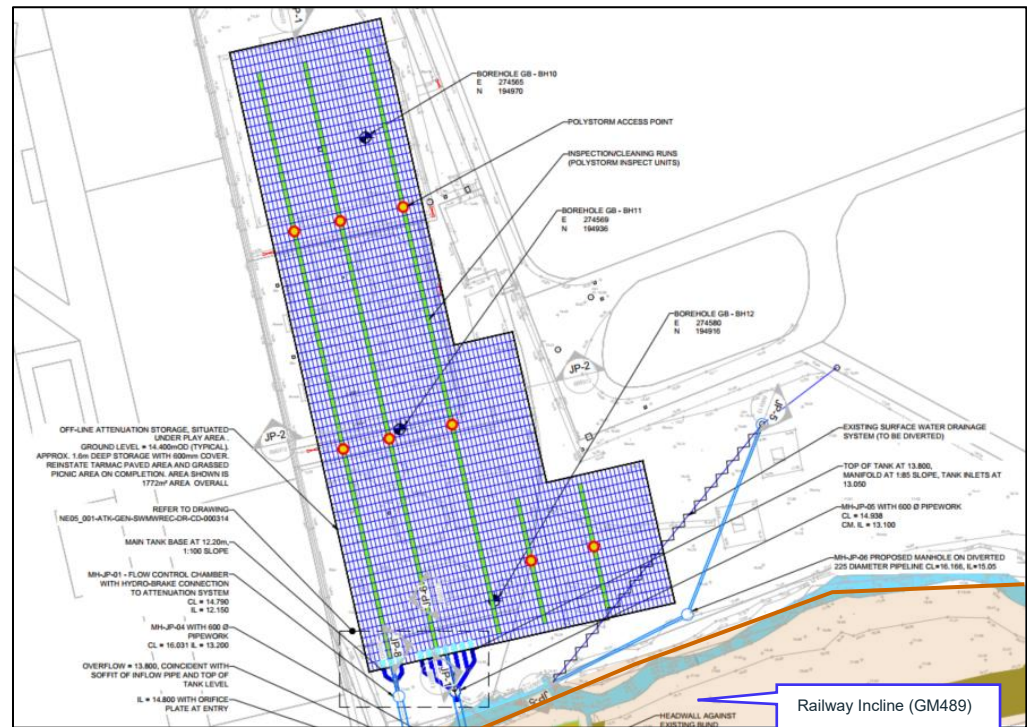
Figure 1-5 –Option 1.

## Option 2

Option 2 was developed to minimise physical impact to the scheduled Railway Incline as far as possible.

This option proposed the construction of below ground attenuation tanks beneath the modern playground, to the north of the scheduled monument, substantially reducing the physical impact on this asset.

The existing playground would provide the location of a buried attenuation tank. This type of system is formed from modular units consisting of plastic crates/cells.



Source: AtkinsRéalis drawing: NE05\_001-ATK-GEN-SWMREC-DR-CD-000310

**Figure 1-6 – Underground attenuation within playground**

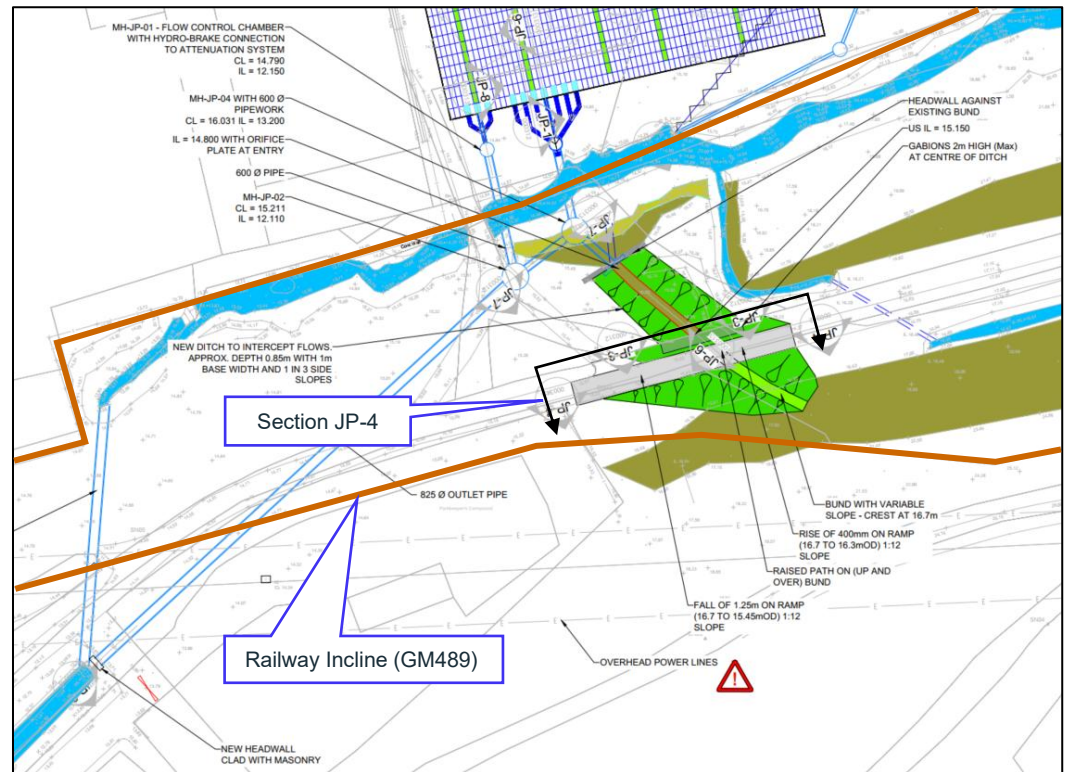
In order to catch the flows travelling down the Incline and divert these into the attenuation tanks, intervention would still be required within the scheduled area. This was proposed to comprise:

- A ditch to the north of the footpath around 1m deep and 8m wide, running north-south.
- Along the existing footpath, levels would be raised by up to 600mm.
- To the south of path, a small embankment would be formed to tie into the existing railway cutting.
- Gabions (or a retaining wall) would be used alongside the interface of the path and ditch.

This option is shown on Figure 1-7 and Figure 1-8.

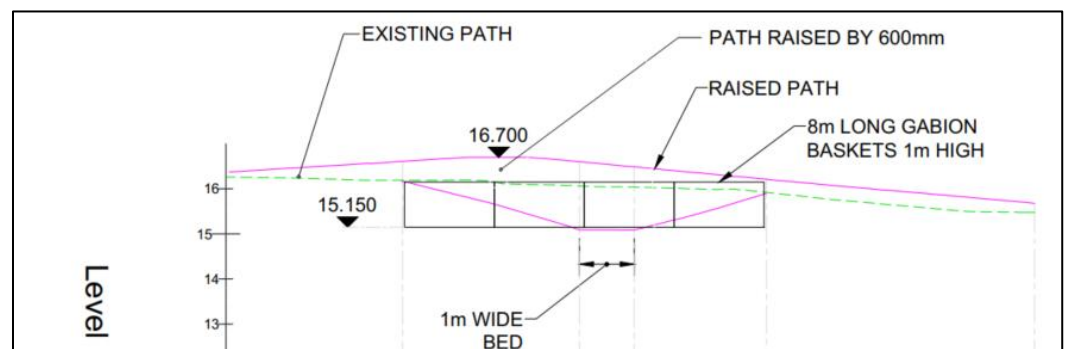
This option sought to mitigate the impacts upon the scheduled monument and registered park by:

- Removal of the majority of the works to be outside of the scheduled area.
- Using buried attenuation tanks to avoid taking up usable amenity space.
- Restricting excavations to the minimum possible and where this occurs to be offline to the historic railway track-bed.
- Building up levels, rather than excavating, to allow for the preservation of buried archaeological remains.



Source: AtkinsRéalis drawing: NE05\_001-ATK-GEN-SWMREC-DR-CD-000311

**Figure 1-7 – Option 2**



Source: AtkinsRéalis drawing: NE05\_001-ATK-GEN-SWMREC-DR-CD-000312

**Figure 1-8 – Option 2: Section JP-4 looking through raised path and ditch**

Whilst this option did significantly reduce the physical impact on the scheduled monument as compared with Option 1 and enabled preservation in situ of potential archaeological remains in the area of the footpath and embankment, the raising of these elements was recognised to interrupt the continuous gradient of the Incline, a key aspect of its historic function and significance. Further development of this option was therefore undertaken to better maintain the significance of the Railway Incline.

### Option 3: preferred option

This option further developed the design concept set out in Option 2, extending the proposed ditch to the south of the path to catch flows travelling down the Incline. The path would be carried on a footbridge across the ditch, maintaining the continuous gradient of the Incline. Whilst resulting in a slightly larger area of physical impact to the

scheduled monument, the benefits of maintaining the legibility and understanding of the Incline's form and function was considered to outweigh this.

This design was therefore identified as the preferred option and forms the basis of this application.

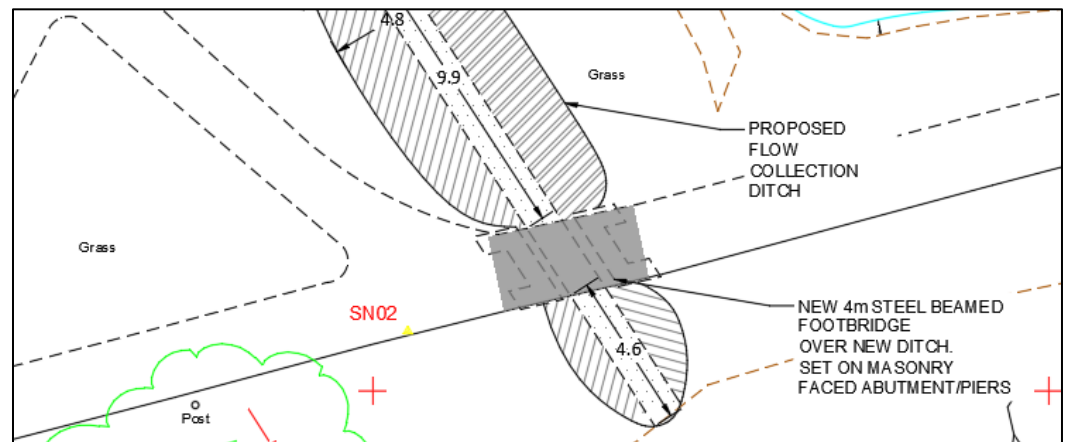


**Figure 1-9 - Option 3: preferred option**

### 1.1.3.2 Rhodfa Clarke

To the east of Jersey Park, at the junction of Ynysymaerdy Road with the Incline is a path known as Rhodfa Clarke.

It is proposed to intercept a proportion of the water flowing down the Incline during storm events into the drainage system. To catch these water flows a ditch is proposed alongside the footpath and at the end of this an inlet headwall will be constructed to connect the ditch to the underground pipe system. All of the work would be below the level of the existing ground. The headwall would be clad with masonry to match the appearance of the adjacent drystone wall on the boundary of the property (Figure 1-10 and Figure 1-11).

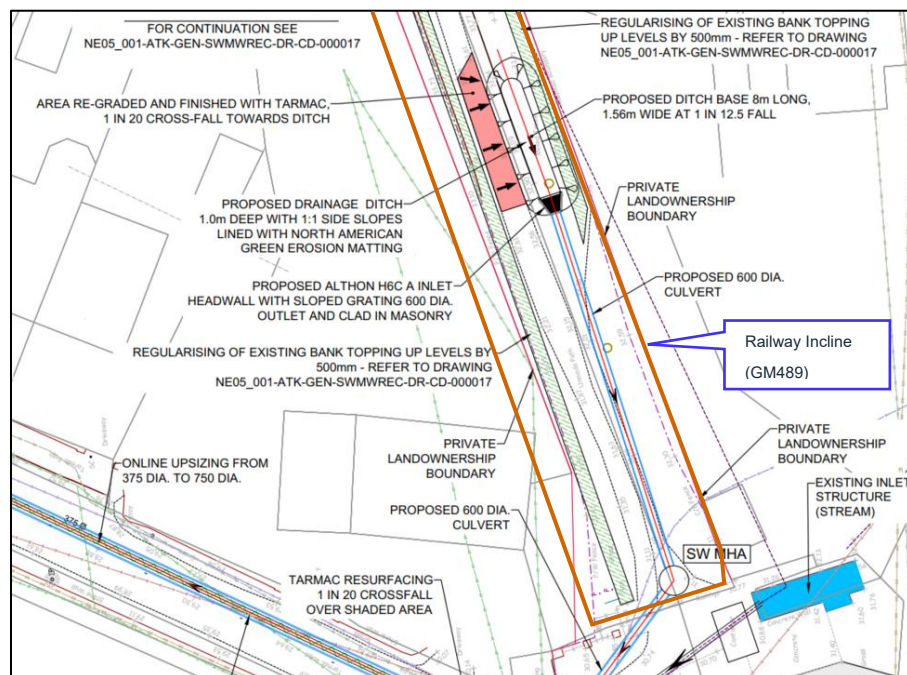
The existing footpath adjacent to the ditch would be regraded and finished in tarmac to provide a cross fall towards the ditch, enabling flows along the path to be captured.

In this area is a large concrete inlet structure adjacent to a large concrete paved area which collects water from the Grandison Brook into the underground culvert system.

Continuing uphill to the east, the bank to the north of the Incline would be subject to localised repairs to reinstate a consistent crest height and prevent flows spilling towards properties to the north.



**Figure 1-10 – Location of proposed inlet headwall and ditch at Rhodfa Clarke**



Source: AtkinsRéalis drawing: NE05\_001-ATK-GEN-SWMWREC-DR-CD-000016

**Figure 1-11 – Plan of proposed work at Rhodfa Clarke**

## 1.1.4 Description of Proposals

**Jersey Park Storm Water Attenuation** (refer to drawings: NE05\_001-ATK-GEN-SWMREC-DR-CD-0000310-312).

- Buried storm attenuation using Polypipe Polystorm cell units covering an area of 1772m<sup>2</sup> approx in playground and picnic area;
- Installation of connecting inlet and outlet manifold pipework;
- Hydrobrake flow control chamber (MH JP01) and outlet pipework and manholes to existing watercourse;
- Formation of a new ditch within Jersey Park to collect overland flows, along with gabion retaining walls and headwalls and connection to inlet manifold system;
- Formation of an earth retaining bank with raised footpath over crest;
- Removal of existing playground area and reinstatement of area with tarmac with the exception of the rubberised play surfacing;
- Temporary removal of fencing and replacement with new on completion; and
- Diversion of existing 225mm surface water drain and construction of new manhole.

**Interception of surface water flows from an inclined footpath known as Rhodfa Clarke, Ynysymaerdy Road into a new culvert system** (refer to drawing: NE05\_001-ATK-GEN-SWMREC-DR-CD-000016).

- Undertaking minor earthworks to top off low spots (typically 300mm added depth) to the existing bank along the north side of the Rhodfa Clarke footpath (the former Railway Incline);
- Placing a pre-cast concrete inlet headwall at the western end of Rhodfa Clarke and a new ditch to pick up overland flows;
- Construction of a new 600mm diameter culvert from the new inlet headwall through to new manhole SW MHA at Ynysymaerdy Road; and
- Forming a drainage ditch to collect run-off from the Rhodfa Clarke path as well as an area of regrading of the pathway and finishing with tarmac.

The basis for the development of these proposals are shown in section 1.1.3 and the draft proposals are shown on the following drawings:

- NE05\_001-ATK-GEN-SWMREC-DR-CD-000002
- NE05\_001-ATK-GEN-SWMREC-DR-CD-000016
- NE05\_001-ATK-GEN-SWMREC-DR-CD-000310
- NE05\_001-ATK-GEN-SWMREC-DR-CD-000311
- NE05\_001-ATK-GEN-SWMREC-DR-CD-000312

These drawings are provided in Appendix A.



## 1.2 Consultation

A site meeting was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October with Cadw and the Environmental Design and Heritage Officer for NPTCBC. Key points from discussions on site and subsequent written feedback from Cadw noted:

- The general approach to removing as much of the scheme as possible from the scheduled area was welcomed, although it is accepted that there will need to be some encroachment on the scheduled monument due to the confined topography of the site.
- The potential for significant archaeological remains of the Incline to survive within the park were noted to be likely to be lower due to past landscaping and service installation.
- The scheme was noted to have a minor impact on the scheduled monument overall, however a higher level of localised harm to the monument was noted in the area of the works.
- Installation of the buried attenuation tanks was identified to provide an opportunity for improvement of the existing playpark and picnic area.
- Opportunities to improve existing poor-quality areas to the west of the Incline and the modern bridge into the playground as part of the Scheme should be explored.
- The impact of the Scheme can be mitigated through careful design and finishes.
- The reinstatement of damaged sections of the Incline embankment outside Jersey Park will improve the legibility of the monument and protect in-situ archaeology in these areas. A walkover survey is recommended to be undertaken with Cadw to identify areas of the Incline embankment which require repair and agree a methodology for this.
- Proposals in relation to the proposed inlet headwall and ditch at Rhodfa Clarke should be built up from the existing surface. This can be established on site in collaboration with Cadw.
- Undertake an archaeological evaluation to understand the potential archaeological survival within the Scheme footprint and inform design of the Scheme in relation to the scheduled monument. This would be subject to a separate application for Scheduled Monument Consent.
- PTMBC to consider strimming of path along the Incline outside Jersey Park to widen the pathway and avoid potential for rutting and damage to the scheduled monument at pinch points.
- Provision of interpretation about the Incline welcomed.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Overview

This HIS has been produced in accordance with the requirements of Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 - 2024, Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), local planning policies and Cadw guidance on Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales (2017).

The information presented within this document is correct at the time of writing to the best knowledge of the author, within the limits imposed in dealing with historic materials and mapping. The archaeological resource is by its nature an unknown resource prior to confirmation through archaeological investigations.

### 2.2 Study area

For the purposes of this HIA, the study area has been defined as an area extending 500m around the Scheme within in the area of Jersey Park and Ynysmaerdy Incline. This was judged to be appropriate given the nature of the proposed Scheme and sufficient to inform the historic environment baseline for the purposes of defining impacts, by reference to relevant guidance and based on professional judgment.

In order to assess the impacts of the Scheme upon Ynysmaerdy Incline and Jersey Park, a desk-based review of the existing baseline data within the study area was undertaken to identify the historic character of the area and the heritage assets within it. Three separate areas within the proposed planning red-line boundary to the north and south of Ynysmaerdy Road, are as shown on Figure 2-1, together with the study area.



**Figure 2-1 - Site location and 500m study area considered in this assessment**

## 2.3 Baseline research

The following sources of data were consulted during preparation of this HIS:

- Data obtained from Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record;
- Data relating to designated assets held by Cadw;
- National Monuments Record for Wales (NMRW)<sup>3</sup>;
- British Geological Survey (BGS): Online digital, solid, and superficial geological data and historic borehole records, and GeoIndex;
- Documentary Sources: Published histories, historic mapping, site reports and monographs;
- Central Registry for Aerial Photography Wales (CRAPW); and
- Online Resources: Web-published material, including local planning authority planning policies, CADW guidance, aerial photography, online heritage registers (eg: Archwilio.org.uk).

The designated historic assets within the study area and Scheme are detailed in the Historic Asset Maps and accompanying gazetteers presented in Appendices B and C.

<sup>3</sup> [Coflein - The online catalogue of archaeological sites, historic buildings, industrial and maritime heritage in Wales](#)

Designated historic assets are referred to with their Cadw list entry numbers and non-designated historic assets referred to with their HER references as found on online databases.

Designated assets comprise:

- World Heritage Sites;
- Scheduled Monuments;
- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Registered Parks and Gardens and Landscapes; and
- Registered Battlefields.

Non-designated historic assets include but are not limited to:

- Archaeological sites;
- Buildings and structures; and
- Historic landscape features.

## 2.4 Assessment criteria

Guidance on the assessment for the significance of historic assets in Wales is provided by Cadw in the document *Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales* (Cadw 2011). Significance for heritage assessment is defined as: “The significance of an historic asset embraces all of the cultural heritage values that people associate with it, or which prompt them to respond to it. These values tend to grow in strength and complexity over time, as understanding deepens, and people’s perceptions evolve” (Cadw 2011, 10)<sup>4</sup>.

Cadw contains the following guidance on defining significance in the Historic Environment<sup>5</sup>. Significance is weighted by consideration of the potential for the historic asset to demonstrate value in the following criteria:

- **Evidential Value.** This derives from the elements of an historic asset that can provide evidence as to past human activity, including its physical remains or historic fabric. These may be visible and relatively easy to assess, or they may be buried below ground, submerged, or by hidden by later fabrics;

---

<sup>4</sup> Cadw. 2011. *Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly. Available at: [Conservation Principles | Cadw \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales).

<sup>5</sup> ibid

- **Historical Value.** Historic assets may illustrate a particular aspect of past life, or be associated with a notable family, individual, event or movement. These illustrative or associative values of an historic asset are potentially less tangible than its evidential value, but can often connect past people, events, and aspects of life with the present;
- **Aesthetic Value.** This is derived from the sensory and intellectual stimulation which people may draw from a historic asset. This can include tangible features such as the appearance or landscape setting of the asset, but it is also recognisably a subjective value, influenced by an individual's own experience with the asset; and
- **Communal Value.** This derives from the meanings that an historic asset has for those who relate to it, or for whom it features in their collective experience or memory. Whilst it is linked with historical and aesthetic values, it can have specific, and additional values, which may have shifted overtime. Communal value can be commemorative or symbolic.

The impacts of the proposed changes created by the Scheme are assessed on the harm to the significance of the historic assets, and their wider settings. Table 2-1 sets out how Significance is determined.

**Table 2-1: Criteria for assessment of Significance**

| Significance     | Determining Significance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Very high</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World heritage sites</li> <li>• Assets of recognised international importance</li> <li>• Assets that contribute to international research objectives</li> </ul>                                                                         |
| <b>High</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheduled monuments</li> <li>• Listed buildings</li> <li>• Registered parks and gardens</li> <li>• Non-designated assets of significance to merit designation</li> <li>• Assets that contribute to national research agendas</li> </ul> |
| <b>Medium</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-designated assets that contribute to regional research objectives</li> <li>• Non-designated assets of regional importance</li> </ul>                                                                                                |
| <b>Low</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locally listed buildings</li> <li>• Assets compromised by poor preservation and/or poor contextual associations</li> </ul>                                                                                                              |

| Significance      | Determining Significance                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assets with importance to local interest groups</li> <li>Assets that contribute to local research objectives</li> </ul> |
| <b>Negligible</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assets with little or no archaeological/historical interest</li> </ul>                                                  |
| <b>Unknown</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of the asset has not been ascertained from available evidence</li> </ul>                                 |

## 2.5 Assessment of Archaeological Potential

The presence of buried archaeological remains can be difficult to identify fully through a desk-based assessment. Whilst the use of the variety of available records can indicate the likelihood of unknown assets, or archaeology within the Scheme, these cannot be confirmed without further, detailed information. This information can typically be generated through non-intrusive (e.g. geophysical survey, aerial photography, LiDAR, and intrusive (archaeological, geoarchaeological survey) methodologies.

A site's archaeological potential is identified using professional judgement and knowledge. A site's baseline potential is compared to the level of existing impact upon it, from modern and historic developments. The potential for surviving archaeological evidence of past activity within the Scheme boundary is expressed in this DBA according to the criteria set out in Table 2-2.

**Table 2-2: Archaeological Potential**

| Potential | Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| High      | The available evidence suggests a high likelihood for past activity within the Scheme boundary and a strong potential for archaeological evidence to survive intact or reasonably intact |
| Medium    | The available evidence suggests a reasonable likelihood for past activity within the Scheme and consequently there is a potential that archaeological evidence could survive             |
| Low       | The available evidence suggests archaeological evidence of activity is unlikely to survive within the Scheme, although some minor land-use may have occurred                             |
| Uncertain | Insufficient information to assess                                                                                                                                                       |

## 2.6 Setting

The setting of Historic assets has been assessed in accordance with Cadw 'Setting of Historic Assets in Wales' (2017)<sup>6</sup>. The guidance explains what setting is, how it contributes to the significance of a historic asset and why it is important. Setting of Historic Assets in Wales also outlines the principles used to assess the potential impact of development or land management proposals within the settings of World Heritage Sites, ancient monuments (scheduled and unscheduled), listed buildings, registered historic parks and gardens, and conservation areas. These principles, however, are equally applicable to all individual historic assets, irrespective of their designation.

The stages of assessment for assessing change within the setting of historic assets are:

- 1: Identify the Historic Asset
- 2: Define and Analyse the Setting
- 3: Evaluate the Potential Impact of the Change or Development
- 4: Consider Options to Mitigate Impacts of Proposed Change or Development
- 5: Document the Assessment

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://cadw.gov.wales/sites/default/files/2019-05/Setting%20of%20Historic%20Assets%20in%20Wales%20EN.pdf>

## 3. Legislation, Policy and Guidance

This Desk-Based Assessment has been produced within the context of national legislation and policy, as well as local planning policy. Legislation, policy and guidance relevant to this assessment are summarised below.

### 3.1 National Legislation

#### 3.1.1 Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023

The Historic Wales Act came into effect in November 2024 and provides the legislation for the management and protection of the historic environment within Wales.

Part 2 of the Act requires the Welsh government to maintain a schedule of monuments of national importance. For the purposes of the Act, monuments and site of monuments are defined as:

*‘(a) any building, structure or work (whether above or below the surface of the land) and any cave or excavation;*

*(b) the site of the remains of any building, structure or work or of the remains of any cave or excavation;*

*(c) the site of any vehicle, vessel, aircraft or other moveable structure, or part of such an object, which neither constitutes nor forms part of any work which is a monument within paragraph (a);*

*(d) the site of the remains of any object or part of an object mentioned in paragraph (c);*

*(e) the site of any thing, or group of things, that evidences previous human activity (other than a site falling within paragraph (b), (c) or (d)).*

Proposals affecting a Scheduled Monument require Scheduled Monument Consent to be obtained in advance of the works. It is a criminal offence to damage a scheduled monument.

Part 3 of the Act sets out legal provisions in relation to listed buildings. It requires Welsh Ministers to maintain a list of buildings of special architectural and historic interest. Sections 88 and 89 of the Act require Listed Building Consent to be obtained for works affecting the special interest of a listed building. Under section 96 of the Act, Welsh Ministers shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. By virtue of Section 76(5) of the Act, a listed building includes any object or structure within its curtilage. It is an offence to undertake unauthorised works to a listed building.



Part 4 of the Act sets out the legal provisions in relation to conservation areas. Under S158, planning authorities are required designate ‘*areas of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance it is desirable to preserve or enhance*’ as conservation areas. S160 sets out the requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area in the determination of planning applications affecting conservation areas. Conservation Area Consent is required to be obtained for demolition within a conservation area.

S192 sets out the requirement for Welsh Minsters to maintain a register of parks and gardens of special historic interest. Designation does not confer any additional legal protections on parks and gardens included on the Register, however these may be managed through the planning system.

### 3.1.2 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This Act places duties on public bodies requiring them to act in accordance with the “Sustainable development principle”. The Act also establishes well-being goals which include achieving a “Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language”, described as “a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language”. The Act lays down the principle that a properly protected, conserved, and enhanced historic environment can improve the quality of life and well-being for all.

## 3.2 Planning Policy

### 3.2.1 Planning Policy Wales Edition 12, 2024

The Welsh Government published Planning Policy Wales (PPW), currently Version 12 published in July 2024 (PPW12)<sup>7</sup>.

Chapter 6, ‘Distinctive and Natural Places’, sets out national planning guidance in Wales relating to scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, archaeological remains and the wider historic environment. It is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs). Procedural advice is given in circulars and policy clarification letters.

Government objectives for the historic environment relevant to this assessment include:

- Conservation of archaeological remains, both for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and the economy; and
- Preserving the special interest of sites on the register of historic parks and gardens (para 6.1.6).

PPW12 sets out the requirement for the planning system to protect, conserve and enhance the significance of historic assets, including their settings, and the need to manage change in a sensitive and sustainable way (para 6.1.7).

---

<sup>7</sup> Welsh Government 2024 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) Chapter 6 The Historic Environment. [Planning Policy Wales - Edition 12 \(gov.wales\)](#)

In relation to historic parks and gardens, PPW12 states that planning authorities should value, protect, conserve and enhance their special interest and their settings, and should be taken into account in decision making (para 6.1.18).

**Para 6.1.9** identifies the effect of a proposed development on a registered park or garden, or its setting as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The following advice is given for archaeological remains.

**Para 6.1.23** The planning system recognises the need to conserve archaeological remains. The conservation of archaeological remains and their settings is a material consideration in determining planning applications, whether those remains are a scheduled monument or not.

**Para 6.1.24** Where nationally important archaeological remains and their settings are likely to be affected by proposed development, there should be a presumption in favour of their physical protection in situ. It will only be in exceptional circumstances that planning permission will be granted if development would result in an adverse impact on a scheduled monument (or an archaeological site shown to be of national importance) or has a demonstrably and unacceptably damaging effect upon its setting.

**Para 6.1.25** In cases involving less significant archaeological remains, planning authorities will need to weigh the relative importance of the archaeological remains and their settings against other factors, including the need for the proposed development.

**Para 6.1.26** Where archaeological remains are known to exist or there is a potential for them to survive, an application should be accompanied by sufficient information, through desk-based assessment and/or field evaluation, to allow a full understanding of the impact of the proposal on the significance of the remains. The needs of archaeology and development may be reconciled, and potential conflict very much reduced, through early discussion and assessment.

**Para 6.1.27** If the planning authority is minded to approve an application and where archaeological remains are affected by proposals that alter or destroy them, the planning authority must be satisfied that the developer has secured appropriate and satisfactory provision for their recording and investigation, followed by the analysis and publication of the results and the deposition of the resulting archive in an approved repository. On occasions, unforeseen archaeological remains may still be discovered during the course of a development. A written scheme of investigation should consider how to react to such circumstances, or it can be covered through an appropriate condition for a watching brief. Where remains discovered are deemed to be of national importance, the Welsh Ministers have the power to schedule the site and, in such circumstances, scheduled monument consent must be required before works can continue.

PPW12 is supplemented by Technical Advice Notes, including:

- Welsh Government 2017 Technical Advice Note 12: Design (Planning Advice)<sup>8</sup>. This sets out how heritage is considered in the planning process and how it is

---

<sup>8</sup> Welsh Government 2017. Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design (Planning Advice).

<https://www.gov.wales/technical-advice-note-tan-12-design>

important to consider heritage asset and sustain the character of conservation areas, World Heritage Sites, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and areas recognised for their landscape, townscape, architectural, archaeological and historic value.

- Welsh Government 2017 Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment<sup>9</sup>. This provides guidance on how the planning system considers the historic environment during development plan preparation and decision making on planning and Listed Building Consent (LBC) applications. It is used in conjunction with PPW and provides specific guidance on Designated Heritage Assets as well as gathering the criteria employed in the designation of Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings and the registration of historic parks and gardens and historic landscapes. TAN24 identifies the requirement for consultation with Cadw on applications affecting registered parks and gardens, and that the impact on such assets is a material decision in the determination of planning applications.

### 3.2.2 Future Wales – the National Plan 2040

‘Future Wales – the National Plan 2040’<sup>10</sup> is the Welsh Government’s national development framework which sets out the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities. Elements of relevance to this assessment include:

- Policy 8 – Flooding Flood risk management that enables and supports sustainable strategic growth and regeneration in National and Regional Growth Areas will be supported. The Welsh Government will work with Flood Risk Management Authorities and developers to plan and invest in new and improved infrastructure, promoting nature-based solutions as a priority. Opportunities for multiple social, economic and environmental benefits must be maximised when investing in flood risk management infrastructure. It must be ensured that projects do not have adverse impacts on international and national statutory designated sites for nature conservation and the features for which they have been designated.
- Policy 28 – National Growth Area – Swansea Bay and Llanelli, Swansea Bay and Llanelli will be the main focus for growth and investment in the South West region. Strategic and Local Development Plans should recognise the National Growth Area as the focus for strategic economic and housing growth; essential services and facilities; advanced manufacturing; transport and digital infrastructure. The Welsh Government will work with regional bodies and local authorities to promote and enhance Swansea Bay and Llanelli’s strategic role and ensure key investment decisions support places in the National Growth Area and the wider region.

---

<sup>9</sup> Welsh Government 2017. Planning Policy Wales. Technical advice note (TAN) 24: the historic environment. <https://www.gov.wales/technical-advice-note-tan-24-historic-environment>

<sup>10</sup> Welsh Government 2021 Future Wales – the National Plan 2040. <https://www.gov.wales/future-wales-national-plan-2040>

### 3.2.3 Local Planning Policy

The Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (2011-2026) was adopted in January 2016. The following policies are relevant to the historic environment.

- Strategic Policy SP21: **Built Environment and Historic Heritage:** The built environment and historic heritage will, where appropriate, be conserved and enhanced.
- Policy BE1: **Design:** All development proposals will be expected to demonstrate high quality design which fully takes into account the natural, historic and built environmental context and contributes to the creation of attractive, sustainable places
- Policy BE2: **Buildings of Local Importance Development:** proposals that would affect buildings that are of local historic, architectural or cultural importance will only be permitted where:
  1. They conserve and where appropriate enhance the building and its setting; or
  2. It is demonstrated that the development could not reasonably be accommodated without affecting or replacing the building and the reasons for the development outweigh the heritage importance of the site.
- Policy TR3: **Safeguarding of Disused Railway Infrastructure:** Disused or redundant railway infrastructure will be safeguarded and development which would inhibit the re-opening or the re-use for transport purposes will be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that such re-opening or re-use is not realistic or necessary.

### 3.2.4 Guidance

The Welsh Government guidance relevant to this assessment includes:

- Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales
- Setting of Historic Assets in Wales<sup>11</sup>;

---

<sup>11</sup> Welsh Government 2017. Setting of Historic Assets in Wales. Best-practice guidance.

<http://cadw.gov.wales/docs/cadw/publications/historicenvironment/20170531Setting%20of%20Historic%20Assets%20in%20Wales%2026918%20EN.pdf>

- Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales<sup>12</sup>;
- Guide To Good Practice on Using The Register Of Landscapes Of Historic Interest In Wales In The Planning And Development Process (2nd edition) (aka ASIDOHL2);
- Managing Historic Character in Wales;
- Managing Lists of Historical Assets of Special Local Interest<sup>13</sup>; and
- Managing Change to Registered Historic Parks and Gardens in Wales.

---

<sup>12</sup> Welsh Government 2017. Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales. Best-practice guidance.

<https://cadw.gov.wales/sites/default/files/2019-05/20170531Heritage%20Impact%20Assessment%20in%20Wales%2026917%20EN.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Welsh Government 2016. Site and context analysis guide: Capturing the value of a site.

<http://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/guidanceandleaflets/site-and-context-analysis-guide/?lang=en>

## 4. Baseline Conditions

### 4.1 Designated Assets

Within the Site boundary there are two designated historic assets. These comprise:

- Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline, (GM489); and
- Jersey Park (PGW(Gm)62(NEP)

All designated assets are shown in the map in Appendix 1A.

Outside the Site but within the study area, a further six designated historic assets have been identified. These comprise:

- Carreg Hir Standing Stone (GM170), c.325m to the west of the Site;
- Bridge over Ynysmaerdy Incline (23308), located within the incline and within the Scheduled Monument but approximately 60m outside the Site;
- Ynysmaerdy Incline bridge over Pant Howel Ddu (23303), 75m north of the Site;
- Church of St Clement (23306), 461m south-east of the Site;
- Salem Baptist Chapel (23305), 380m south-east of the Site; and
- War Memorial, including revetments and steps (23296), 458m south-east of the Site.

### 4.2 Non-designated Assets

There are no non-designated assets recorded by the HER within the Site.

Within the study area, a total of 31 non-designated historic assets are recorded by the HER. These are listed in the appendix provided at outlined in appendix B.2.

Within the study area is the line of a Roman Road which follows the same alignment north-south as the modern Neath Road and is sited 235m west of the Site (RR60c-06), and the Rail Line (01701.0), which is sited crossing north to south approximately 390m west from the Site.

The following non-designated assets are most relevant due to proximity to the Site:

- Ynys Y Maerdy Manor House and Watermill, Neath (GGAT00646w), approximately 17m south-east of the Site
- Ynys Y Maerdy Grist Mill (GGAT01967w), approximately 70m south-east of the Site
- Old Air Shafts (GGAT07386w), approximately 80m north of the Site
- Ynysmaerdy Cemetery Chapels, Briton Ferry (GGAT09096w), approximately 85m north-west of the Site

Of the 31 above non-designated assets within the study area, all but three, the Roman road, Prehistoric Standing Stone, and medieval Manor, date to the post medieval period and modern period, and are largely associated with mining or transport infrastructure.



None of the assets have specific historical relations to the Incline, though many of the non-designated assets are of a similar, post medieval date and were likely constructed around the same time. There is no visual relationship between the assets and the Proposed Scheme and no potential for impact as a result of its construction or operation. These assets are therefore excluded from further consideration in this report. +

Further discussion of these assets can be found the desk-based assessment submitted as part of the planning application for this Scheme (AtkinsRéalís 2025).

## 4.3 Historic background

Coal extraction and forges had been built in Briton Ferry as early as 1660, however the growth of the settlement was fuelled by its location on Swansea Bay and its role in the transport of goods from Swansea and the Neath Valleys. The Neath Canal opened in 1797, running from Abernant to Briton Ferry, and was used to transport iron ore and limestone. During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, factories and workers' housing were established. The arrival of the railways in 1850 and 1851, and the subsequent purchase and development of land in Briton Ferry by Rhondda & Swansea Bay Railway and the South Wales Mineral Railway further fuelled the settlement's growth.

The growth of trade in the Neath area and increasingly congested condition of the River Neath fuelled the need for establishment of a dock at Briton Ferry. In the 1850s Isambard Kingdom Brunel was instructed to design the docks for export of coal and other goods at Briton Ferry for the Vale of Neath Railway. It opened in 1861 and comprised a tidal basin and floating dock. The presence of the dock also supported the town's transition to steel-making at the end of the century.

Brunel also designed the Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline, which was a rope hauled railway incline opened in 1863. Extending for approximately 1 mile, the railway incline linked collieries in the upper Afan Valley with the docks at Briton Ferry. The Incline is depicted on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6" Ordnance Survey map of 1884 when it is visible as a straight linear route running east-west, linking into the Great Western Railway to the north of Briton Ferry (Figure 4-1). Beset by difficulties in its use, the Incline was closed in 1910.

In 1908 the Earl of Jersey gifted land to the town for the purpose of establishing a public park, leading to the opening of Jersey Park in 1925. Historic Ordnance Survey mapping shows the cricket ground to have been present by 1921, but the formal layout of the ornamental gardens to the south-west of Railway Incline is not depicted until 1936. The park is shown on the 5<sup>th</sup> edition 6" Ordnance Survey map, published from the late 1930s to early 1950s, when the sports ground, and formal gardens are depicted, and the Railway Incline is shown as a path running east-west through the park (Figure 4-2). This layout survives largely intact today.

The closure of the works and docks in Port Talbot in the 20<sup>th</sup> century led to the decline of much of the early iron and steel industry in the region, and industry within Briton Ferry went into decline during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The docks closed in 1959 and the inner basin was largely built over. The industrial expansion of Port Talbot had led to greater house building and associated industry development. With the closure of many of the big steel, iron and tin industries these also declined.

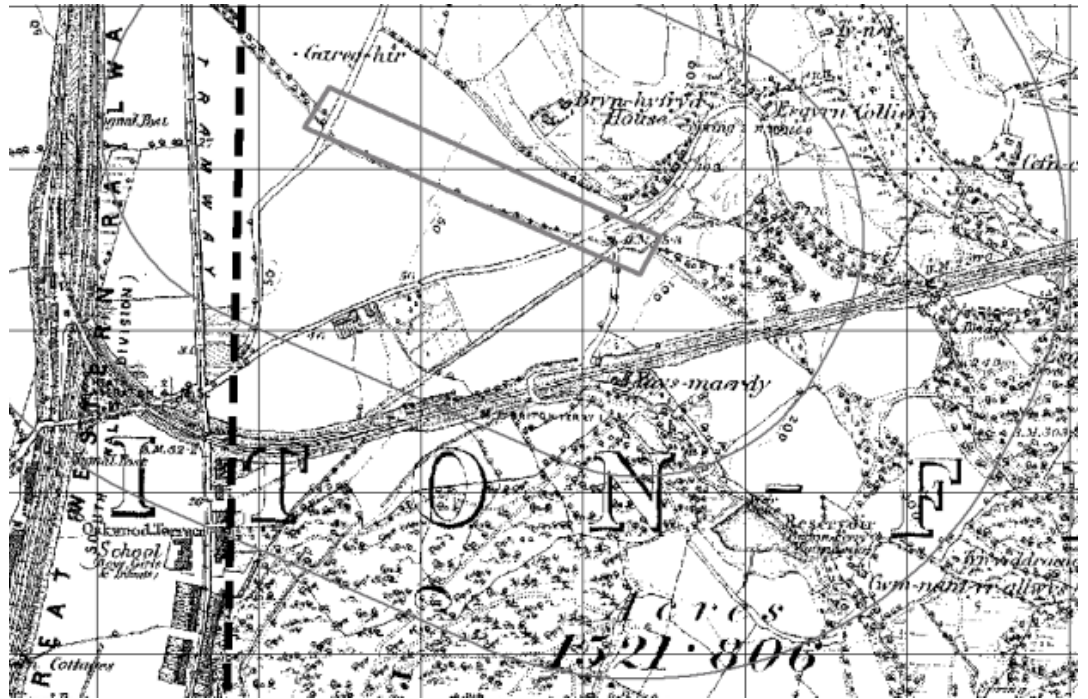


Figure 4-1 - Extract from the 1st Edition 6" Ordnance Survey map of 1884 showing the Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline.

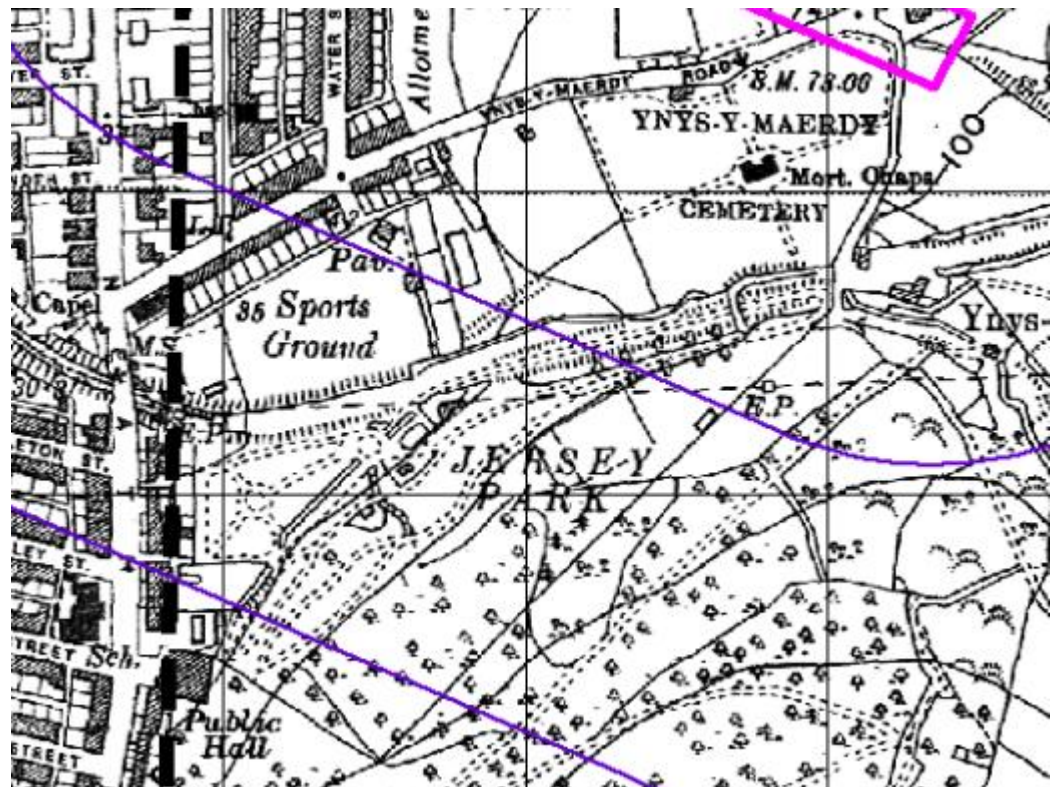


Figure 4-2 - Extract from the 5th edition 6" Ordnance Survey map, published between 1938 and 1951 showing Jersey Park.

## 5. Assessment of Significance and archaeological potential

### 5.1 Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline

The scheduled monument of Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline (GM489) consists of the remains of a 19<sup>th</sup> century rope-hauled railway incline, constructed during the 1850s and opened in 1863. Extending for a distance of one mile in length, the rope-hauled incline formed part of the 13 mile long South Wales Mineral Railway which linked the dock at Briton Ferry with the collieries of the Upper Afan Valley and Glynccorwg, opening in 1863.

The Railway Incline was designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel in the 1850s, contemporarily with his work at the Briton Ferry Docks, and was one of the last generations of rope-hauled railway inclines. The incline was constructed due to the steep topography present at the west end of the line and is formed by a series of cuttings and embankments, creating a straight plane along its entire length. The incline was operated by steam winding engines, bases and rope routes for which remain present at the eastern end of the monument. The incline was a double-tracked broad gauge railway and was converted to standard gauge in 1872. The rope-hauled incline was an outdated concept at the time of its construction and proved expensive to run. The South Wales Mineral Railway was not financially successful and was taken over by the Great Western Railway in 1908.

The incline was recognised by the SWMR to be anachronistic and problematic, with numerous accidents recorded on the line and the need for periodic replacement of the brake gear at the top of the incline (Simmonds 2012, 164). Although in generally good condition, it was decided to close the incline, replacing it with a three-mile long alternative route. The incline closed in 1910.

The incline remains visible as a long linear feature, extending eastwards from Briton Ferry. The lower parts of the incline are within Jersey Park, where it survives as a broad surfaced footpath through the park, running on embankment and cuttings (Figure 5-6). The line is crossed by a footpath overbridge which retains fixings for signalling wire underneath (grade II listed building, 23308; Figure 5-5). At its western end within Jersey Park, the incline traverse across an area of level ground, formerly the location of a sidings used for sorting empty and loaded waggons. The footpath in this area deviates from the route of the incline, turning to the south-west, whilst the area of the sidings at the base of the incline remains as an open grassed area, defined to the north by a tall modern fence. A culverted watercourse runs under the incline in this area, emerging in a stone-lined channel to the west of the incline. The watercourse is depicted on historic Ordnance Survey maps from 1870s onwards to either side of the incline and appears to have been incorporated as a feature in the formal layout of the park in the 1920s.

To the east of the footbridge into the playpark and west of the end of the rock cutting, a low earthwork of square plan is visible. A rectangular structure is shown to the west of this location on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6" map of 1884 (surveyed 1875-1877) (See Figure 5-1). This appears to accord with a structure visible on a historic photo of the Incline dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 5-3).

Figure 5-2 shows the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6" edition of 1900 which does not depict a structure in this location; however, a small square plan structure is shown to the west on the 25" map of 1918 (surveyed 1913) (Figure 5-4). The compact form of this structure appears to accord with the earthwork visible on site, however, is located further to the west. This structure is not depicted on the 1921 6" edition or subsequent editions, indicating its demolition by this time. Given its location on a small area of land between Grandison Brook and the Incline, it is likely that this structure formed a trackside shelter or accommodation for railway workers. However, its location, as depicted on the 1918 OS map, suggests it may have served as some form of manual switch gear shed due to its location by the difference in track configuration at this point. It is, however, unclear from currently available information if the surviving earthwork relates to the structure depicted on historic mapping or is a separate phase of development.



**Figure 5-1 - Extract from the 1st edition 6" Ordnance Survey map of 1884 showing the rectangular structure to the north of the Incline.**

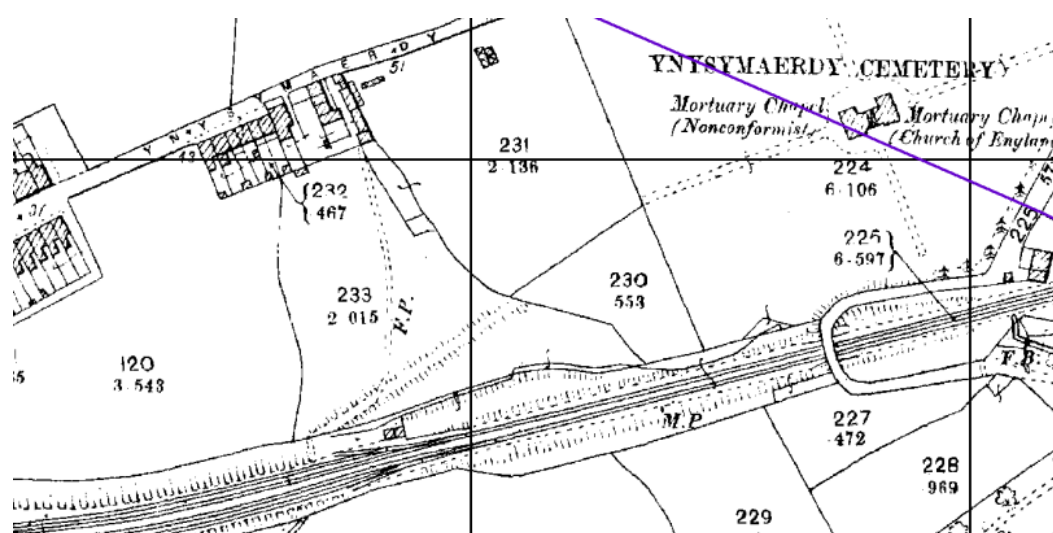


**Figure 5-2 - Extract from the 1st edition 25" Ordnance Survey map of 1899 showing the Incline and rectangular structure to the west of the railway cutting.**



**Figure 5-3 - Historic image dating from the early 20th century showing the base of the Incline looking east. The structure visible to the left of the line is likely to represent the structure visible on historic Ordnance Survey maps close to the modern entrance to the playpark. Reproduced from Simmonds 2012, A History of the Port Talbot Railway & Docks Company and the South Wales Mineral Railway Company. Volume 1: 1853 – 1907.**

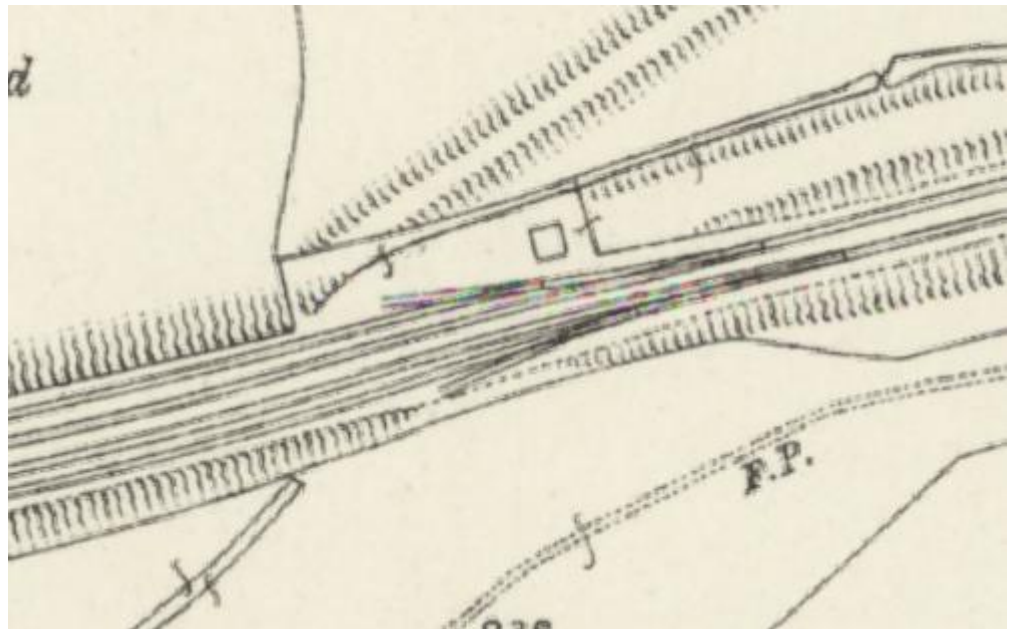


**Figure 5-4 - Extract from the 1918 25" Ordnance Survey map showing the small square structure to the north of the Incline.**

The incline within Jersey Park is in general good condition, albeit with some areas of localised erosion from the Grandison Brook (Figure 5-7).

The Railway Incline continues on an embankment to the east of Jersey Park, where it is cut by the minor road of Pant Howel Ddu, which passes under the incline through a fine stone skew bridge (23303). Outside Jersey Park, the scheduled monument is in a poorer condition, overgrown and much narrowed in width, with an encroachment of trees and vegetation along its route, which now forms a footpath (Figure 5-8). The graded stone bed is exposed in places within this section of the Incline.

The Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline (GM489) is designated for its potential to enhance the knowledge of the development of industrial transportation in the nineteenth century, and specifically, the industry of South Wales and Port Talbot. It is well preserved within the area of Jersey Park and is intrinsically linked to the development of Briton Ferry and Port Talbot. It is a highly legible asset, particularly within the boundary of Jersey Park, which adds to its value and significance.

The track bed, embankments and revetments may be expected to contain archaeological information in regard to construction techniques and functional detail. It is likely that the sleepers and rails were removed during decommissioning of the railway. This is supported by a historic photo of the Incline likely taken in the 1920s which shows the former railway as a broad surfaced path, extending from Jersey Park to the east. It is likely that landscaping and services within Jersey Park will have further degraded the preservation of insitu archaeological remains associated with the Incline within this area.

The scheduled monument includes two bridges, designated in their own right as listed buildings (23303 and 23308), both of which are located outside the Site. Constructed contemporarily with the Railway Incline, the bridges form an integral part of the scheduled monument and evidence the quality of its construction and design. In particular, the Bridge over Ynysmaerdy Incline (23308) is well preserved with obvious historical, physical and visual links to the incline. The other bridge over the Incline at Pant Howell Ddu (23303) is likewise linked, however the Railway Incline at this location is less well maintained, diminishing the appreciation of their historic relationship. This bridge is not visible from the Site.

The historic association of the scheduled monument with Isambard Kingdom Brunel contributes to its significance. Brunel was a renowned British civil and mechanical engineer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a significant figure in the Industrial Revolution who pioneered groundbreaking designs and constructions which revolutionized both the fields of engineering and transportation. Some of his most notable achievements include, the Thames Tunnel, the SS Great Britian and SS Great Eastern, Clifton Suspension Bridge, The Great Western Railway, and London Paddington Station, as well as other tunnels, railways, and bridges. The historic association between the Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline and Brunel further contributes to the asset's significance and provides a tangible link to the historic development of Briton Ferry docks.

The setting of the Railway Incline and particularly its association with and role within Jersey Park contributes to its significance. When operational, the Incline was located in an open landscape, characterised by the presence of colliery workings and fields. Today, the setting of the monument comprises mature woodland, with views from the monument largely contained within its boundaries. The direct connection between the Railway Incline and the extant railway line to the west is now lost due to intervening development. However, the linear form of the Incline has been adapted as a key design

element within the park and forms one of its defining features. The setting of the Incline within the park evidences the evolution of the monument following its closure as part of the SWMR.

In consideration of its historic and evidential value, and its designation as a scheduled monument, the Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline (GM489) is assessed to be of high significance.





**Figure 5-6 - Ynysmaerdy Incline looking west**



**Figure 5-5 - Bridge over Ynysmaerdy Incline (23308)**



**Figure 5-7 – Erosion damage to the Railway Incline resulting from the Grandison Brook, to the south of the playpark in Jersey Park.**



**Figure 5-8 - General view of the Railway Incline to the east of Ynysmaerdy Road.**

## 5.2 Jersey Park

The scheme is located within Jersey Park, a grade II registered park and garden (PGW(Gm)62(NEP)). It contains part of the Ynysmaerdy Incline (GM489), preserved as a surfaced footpath running east-west through the park.

Jersey Park was laid out on land given by the Earl of Jersey in 1908 for the purpose of establishment of a public park. The park was designed by the Borough Engineer H. Alexander Clark and opened in 1925. It was extended in 1939 on further land donated by the Earl and remains in use today as a public park.

Jersey Park is situated on the western edge of Briton Ferry in the Vale of Neath. The park is located within a small valley with steeply sloping wooded ground to the south and a cemetery and a modern housing estate to the north. The park comprises mature woodland to the south and west, a cricket ground and play area to the north and area of formal paths through a lawned area with decorative flower beds to the west (Figure 5-9). The Railway Incline runs directly through the park, forming the main footpath through its centre (Figure 5-10). Planting in the park is varied and there is a focus on promoting the ecology of the park evident through signage throughout it.

Jersey Park is designated for its historic interest as an exceptionally well preserved urban public park, opened in 1925. Its original layout of formal and informal areas remains substantially complete and includes sports facilities, a pavilion, and bowling green. Jersey Park is of historic, aesthetic and communal value and is assessed to be of medium significance. The Ynysmaerdy Incline and the listed railway bridge are also key features with the park and contribute to its historic interest.



**Figure 5-9 - Formal gardens within Jersey Park.**



**Figure 5-10 - General view of the Ynysmaerdy Incline within Jersey Park**

## **5.3 Archaeological potential**

Any buried archaeology within the footprint of the Incline has the potential to be of high significance as it will likely relate to construction techniques and functional detail of the Railway Incline. It has the potential to add to our understanding of construction methodologies and uses of the Incline. It is expected that any archaeology may well be close to the surface and so has the potential to be impacted by shallow excavation.

Any archaeology would be expected to be linked to the use, and the construction of the Incline, and be expected to include materials such as tracks and or track beds/sleepers. There is however also potential for archaeology that pre-dates, or post-dates the incline.

Some of the impact will be outside of the scheduled monument, however, these areas are intrinsically linked to the development of the Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline. There is high potential for buried archaeological remains related to its development and low potential for as archaeological remains that pre or postdate it.

An archaeological evaluation is planned to be undertaken in spring 2025 to provide a better understanding of the survival of archaeological remains within the Scheme footprint across the scheduled monument. The results of this evaluation will inform the final scheme design in this area and be incorporated into this document for the full planning submission.

## 6. Impact Assessment

### 6.1 Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline

The proposed scheme would result in physical impacts on the Ynysmaerdy Railway Incline in two locations.

To the south of the play area within Jersey Park, impacts to the Ynysmaerdy Incline would result from the following design proposals:

- Excavation for installation of pipework, hydrobrake flow control chambers and manholes;
- Formation of a new ditch with masonry-clad head wall at its northern end;
- Installation of a steel beamed footbridge set on masonry-faced abutments to carry the path along the Incline route; and
- Installation of a new stone-clad headwall within an existing ditch to the north of the Incline, outside the scheduled area.

At Rhodfa Clarke, impacts to the Ynysmaerdy Incline would result from:

- Excavation of a ditch 1.5m deep with a concrete headwall with sloped grating to the south of the existing footpath, adjacent to Ynysmaerdy Road
- Regrading of the existing footpath to provide a 1 in 20 cross fall towards the new ditch; and
- Minor earthworks to top off low spots along the existing embankment along the north side of the Incline.

Scheduled Monument Consent would be required for these proposals.

Please refer to Appendix A for the Scheme drawings.

These works would result in permanent physical impacts to the scheduled monument and the loss of fabric associated with the monument, where excavation of new ditches is proposed and for the installation of new pipework. This would detract from the evidential value of the asset and decrease legibility of the Incline at these two locations.

The proposed Scheme would introduce new elements into the scheduled monument both in the area of the Rhodfa Clarke footpath and within Jersey Park. The proposed interventions would introduce modern engineered elements into the Railway Incline, detracting from the integrity of the monument in two limited areas.

Within Jersey Park, the alignment of the proposed ditch located to the south of the playpark would intersect the Railway Incline at an angle, detracting from its east-west linear character. The footpath along the alignment of the Railway Incline would be carried over the ditch by the proposed footbridge, maintaining the continuous line and gradient of the Incline, a key aspect of its character and understanding. New structural elements including the footbridge abutments and headwalls are proposed to be stone clad, reducing their visual impact and aiding their integration into their surroundings.

The proposals have been designed to avoid the square earthwork structure visible to the south of the playpark, enabling its preservation in situ; however, would result in direct physical impacts upon any potential archaeological remains within its footprint. This may include remains of the structures shown on historic Ordnance Survey mapping to the north of the railway line.

Excavation within the scheduled monument would also be required for laying of an outlet pipe running diagonally from playpark entrance to the south-west, terminating in a new masonry-clad headwall and expelling into an existing water feature within the park. This would be reinstated to match existing following construction however this has the potential to result in the loss of archaeological remains associated within the Incline within its footprint.

Along Rhodfa Clarke, the repair and reinstatement of the bank along the north side of the Railway Incline would require localised removal of existing vegetation in advance of the works. Minor works would then be undertaken to reinstate the crest level of the bank, topping up low spots along its length with soil to match the height of the adjacent banks. The reinstatement of the earth bank would restore the historic form of the Incline and improve the legibility of the monument.

There would be no physical impacts to the listed railway bridge as a result of the scheme.

No change is anticipated to the setting of the Railway Incline. The flood attenuation tank proposed to be installed under the play park to the north of the scheduled monument would be located below ground level and the play park reinstated above, resulting in minimal change to the asset's setting and no impact on its significance.



**Figure 6-1 - Approximate location of the proposed ditch and embanked path to the south of the playpark within the scheduled Railway Incline.**

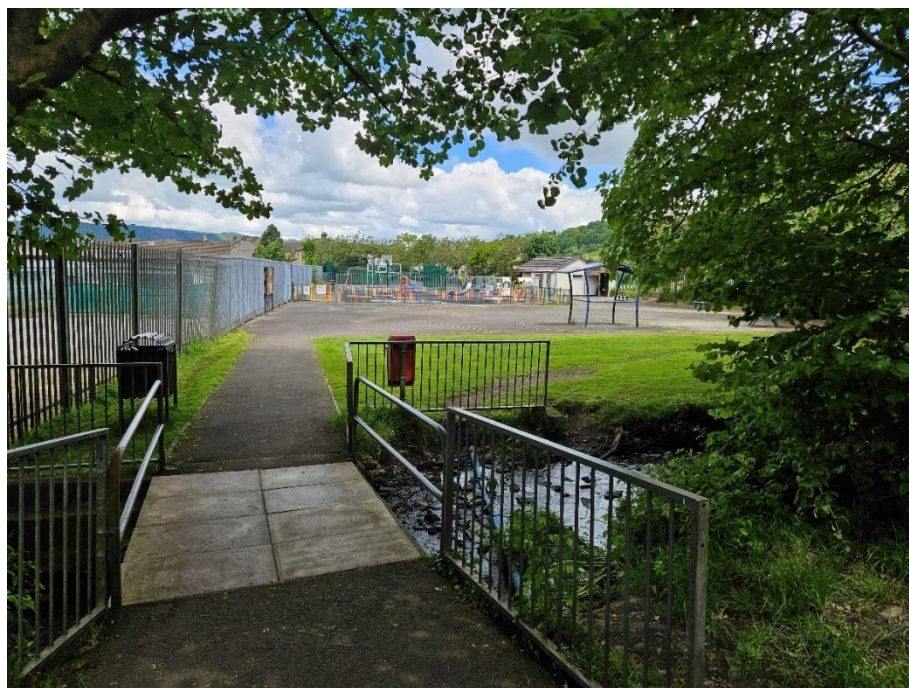


**Figure 6-2 - Bridge into the playground from the Railway Incline.**



**Figure 6-3 – Entrance to the Railway Incline at the base of Rhodfa Clarke. The proposed headwall and ditch would be located to the right of the path.**

## 6.2 Jersey Park

The proposed scheme would have a direct, physical impact on Jersey Park and result in works within its setting. Physical impacts to the park would occur in the area of the play park and on the Railway Incline adjacent to this. These would result from:

- Installation of buried storm attenuation using Polypipe Polystorm cell units covering an area of c.1772m<sup>2</sup> below the playground and picnic area. Following installation, the playpark and picnic area would be reinstated;
- Excavation for installation of pipework, hydrobrake flow control chambers and manholes between the Railway Incline and playpark;
- Formation of a new ditch with stone-clad head headwall to the south of the playpark;
- Installation of a steel beamed footbridge set on masonry-faced abutments to carry the path along the Incline route;
- Installation of a new stone-clad headwall within an existing ditch within the formal gardens to the south-east of the playpark; and
- Reinstatement of grass / topsoil areas on completion of the works.

Impacts on the setting of Jersey Park would result from

- Excavation of a ditch 1.5m deep with a concrete headwall with sloped grating to the south of the existing Rhodfa Clarke footpath, adjacent to Ynysmaerdy Road;
- Regrading of the existing footpath to provide a 1 in 20 cross fall towards the new ditch; and
- Upgrading of the existing surface water culvert along Ynysmaerdy Road and installation of a new connecting culvert from the new concrete headwall.

Whilst installation of the storm attenuation would result in temporary disruption and intrusion on the park during construction, following reinstatement of the picnic area and playpark, this would not result in any change to the plan form or use of the registered park, and would not impact upon its historic significance. The playpark and picnic area are not of historic origin and make limited contribution to the historic significance of the park. There is potential for improvement of these facilities when reinstated.

The construction of the ditch to the south of the playpark would introduce a permanent new feature into the park, which would be understood as a modern engineered intervention. The orientation of the ditch perpendicular to the Railway Incline would detract from the strong linear character the Incline at this location which forms a characteristic feature of the park. Installation of these works would result in the temporary removal of grass vegetation within the scheme footprint, however this would not affect any ornamental planting or mature trees. The visual impact of these works, has, however, been mitigated as far as possible through the proposed use of stone cladding to the abutments and headwalls, aiding their integration into the surrounding park.

The construction of the ditch and headwall to the Rhodfa Clarke footpath area would introduce a new element into the setting of the registered park. These would be seen in the context of the existing large concrete headwall located adjacent to Ynysmaerdy Road which is the inflow for Grandison Brook and being adjacent to modern housing.

This would not detract from significance of Jersey Park as an early 20<sup>th</sup> century public park.

The proposed scheme would reduce the risk of flooding within Jersey Park and the adjacent residential areas downhill of the park which suffer flooding. It would also enhance the communal value of the park through improvement of playpark and picnic facilities.

## 6.3 Buried Archaeology

Construction of the proposed scheme would impact upon potential archaeological remains associated with the Railway Incline. The areas of impact are limited in extent and would affect a small proportion of the scheduled monument. These impacts would result particularly from the excavations for the new pipework and ditch to the south of the playpark. It is anticipated that there is the potential for industrial archaeological remains associated with the Railway Incline to survive at this location, however it is likely that some level of truncation has occurred to any such remains due to landscaping associated with the establishment and maintenance of the park.

Construction of the attenuation tank will also impact upon the former route of an embankment that joined the Railway Incline in the area of the children's playground. Constructed to carry a railway line, the embankment is shown as a raised bank on the 1884 6" Ordnance Survey map, linking to the Esgyrn Colliery, and nearby quarries (SS 74027 94598), suggesting that it was out of use by this time. The embankment can also be seen on the 1918 Ordnance Survey map by which time the Ynysmaerdy Cemetery has been established across part of its route. No visible trace of this embankment was noted during the site inspection within the site boundary and the area has been levelled, reducing the potential for associated archaeological remains to survive within the scheme footprint.

## 7. Conclusion

The Grandison Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme is being developed to improve surface water drainage along Grandison Brook and reduce the risk of flooding to residential and commercial properties on and around Pany Yr Heol Road. The proposed scheme would result in impacts upon the scheduled monument of Ynysmaerdy Incline (GM489) and Jersey Park registered park and garden (PGW(Gm)62(NEP)). These impacts would result from construction of new flood attenuation tanks (within Jersey Park only), associated pipework, ditches and retaining / head walls.

The scheme would result in the removal of any archaeological remains associated with the Railway Incline within the scheme footprint, and impact on its legibility due to the introduction of a new drainage ditch crossing the line of the Incline. Measures to mitigate these impacts have been incorporated into the design, including use of stone cladding for structures and maintenance of the continuous gradient of the Incline. Minor earthwork repairs to top off low spots along the railway embankment to the north of Jersey Park would also be undertaken, improving the form and legibility of the monument in this area. Whilst these works affect a small proportion of the overall scheduled monument, these works have the potential to result in a high level of localised harm to archaeological remains of the monument in these areas and to result in minor adverse impacts to the appearance of the Incline, its legibility and understanding. Scheduled monument consent would be required for all works resulting in ground breaking within the scheduled monument boundary. On balance, given the small area of the scheduled monument affected, the proposals would result in minor harm to the scheduled monument.

The proposed scheme would introduce attenuation tanks on the playpark and picnic sites to the north of Jersey Park, however, following reinstatement of the playpark and picnic ground, these would not be visible. The proposed drainage ditch and bank within the park would be legible as a modern engineered element within the historic park and detract from the legibility of the Incline. This would affect a limited area of the park and would not impact any formal designed elements, resulting in limited harm to the significance of Jersey Park.

### 7.1 Recommendations

It is recommended that findings of the archaeological evaluation programmed to be undertaken in spring 2026 inform the development of final design proposals for the Scheme. Cadw should be engaged as part of this process to ensure the development of proposals which are sensitive to the significance of the Scheduled Monument and minimise impacts upon its form and fabric.

A site walkover is recommended to be undertaken with Cadw representatives to identify the location of and methodology for reinstatement of the Incline Banks and proposed headwall and footpath works along the Rhodfa Clarke.

It is recommended that the potential to reduce impacts on Ynysmaerdy Incline and Jersey Park registered park and garden is explored during detailed development of the proposals to include:

- An topographic survey of the earthwork structure to the north of the Incline to inform detailed design and provide aid interpretation and understanding of the structure;



- Detailed design of the proposals to avoid any potential for impacts on the square earthwork feature visible to the south of the playpark, enabling its preservation in situ;
- The use of sensitive materials within Jersey Park and the Railway Incline to aid the integration of the scheme into its surroundings and reduce its visual impact;
- Detailed design of the proposed footbridge to provide a high quality design which responds to its location on Ynysmaerdy Incline and within Jersey Park registered park and garden;
- Sensitive reinstatement of vegetation within the scheme boundaries;
- Improvement of the playpark and picnic area to upgrade the facilities and enhance the experience of park users;
- Explore opportunities for enhancement of the scheduled monument through repair of existing damage and erosion;
- Explore opportunities for interpretation of the Railway Incline and Jersey Park as part of the scheme. This could include collaboration with local community or heritage groups; and
- Opportunities for enhancement of Jersey park should be explored as part of the Scheme, particularly the appearance of the area to the west of the Incline including boundary treatments in this area and improvement of the footbridge to the south of the playpark.

Consultation with Cadw should be undertaken throughout the development of the proposals to ensure the preparation of proposals which are sensitive to the historic and archaeological significance of the Railway Incline and Jersey Park.