

Heritage Impact Assessment

TREDEGAR HOUSE REPLACEMENT PLAY PARK



Tredegar House

Our Ref: AA035

Date: May 2025



18 Berriew Street
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 7SQ

SUMMARY

Proposal

Tredegar House Replacement Play Park

Location

Tredegar House

Date

June 2025

Project

AA035

Client

National Trust

Planning Authority

Newport City Council

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Summary

The proposed replacement play area is located adjacent to the pond on the west side of Tredegar Park. This area is not considered to have a high potential for sub-surface archaeological remains. The minimal ground disturbance required for installing the play equipment, likely using shallow foundations or driven supports, means that any archaeological impact is expected to be negligible. As such, no mitigation measures are considered necessary.

Visual impacts have been carefully considered, and the location adjacent to the pond, to the west of North Park, ensures that the proposed play area does not intrude upon the significant historic view north along Oak Avenue from Tredegar House — a key feature of the Registered Park and Garden.

There is an impact on the setting of three listed buildings, Tredegar House (grade I), The Stable Block (grade I) and the Gate Lodges to the NW (Grade II). In all cases the sculpture is at some distance from the buildings, more than 250 m. The impact is not considered negative, the sculpture having relevance to the estate and being constructed from natural materials. Therefore, this impact overall is considered to be low.

1 Introduction

As part of ongoing efforts to enhance the visitor experience in Tredegar Park, the National Trust is proposing the installation of a replacement play area adjacent to the pond on the west side of the park. The play area is designed to complement the historic landscape setting while providing inclusive recreational opportunities for families and children.

The proposed location is at an approximate grid reference **ST 28571 85338** positioned within open parkland near a natural water feature that contributes to the character of the Registered Park and Garden (Plate 2). The play equipment will be designed in natural materials, such as sustainably sourced timber, to reflect the historic and rural context of the site. Features will be securely fixed to the ground using shallow foundations or steel fixings to minimise ground disturbance. The tallest elements of the play area would not exceed **4.2 metres** in height, ensuring that the installation remains appropriate in scale and in keeping with its surroundings.

Tredegar House is a Grade 1 Listed Building (LB 2902) with its grounds being a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden (PGW(Gt)48(NPT)). Tredegar House and its grounds sit close to the edge of but not within the Eastern St. Brides character area of the Gwent Levels Registered Historic Landscape (HLW (Gt)2).

A Historic Impact Assessment has been undertaken to assess both the physical and visual (setting) impacts of the play park on both designated and undesignated assets within 500m of its location in the parkland.

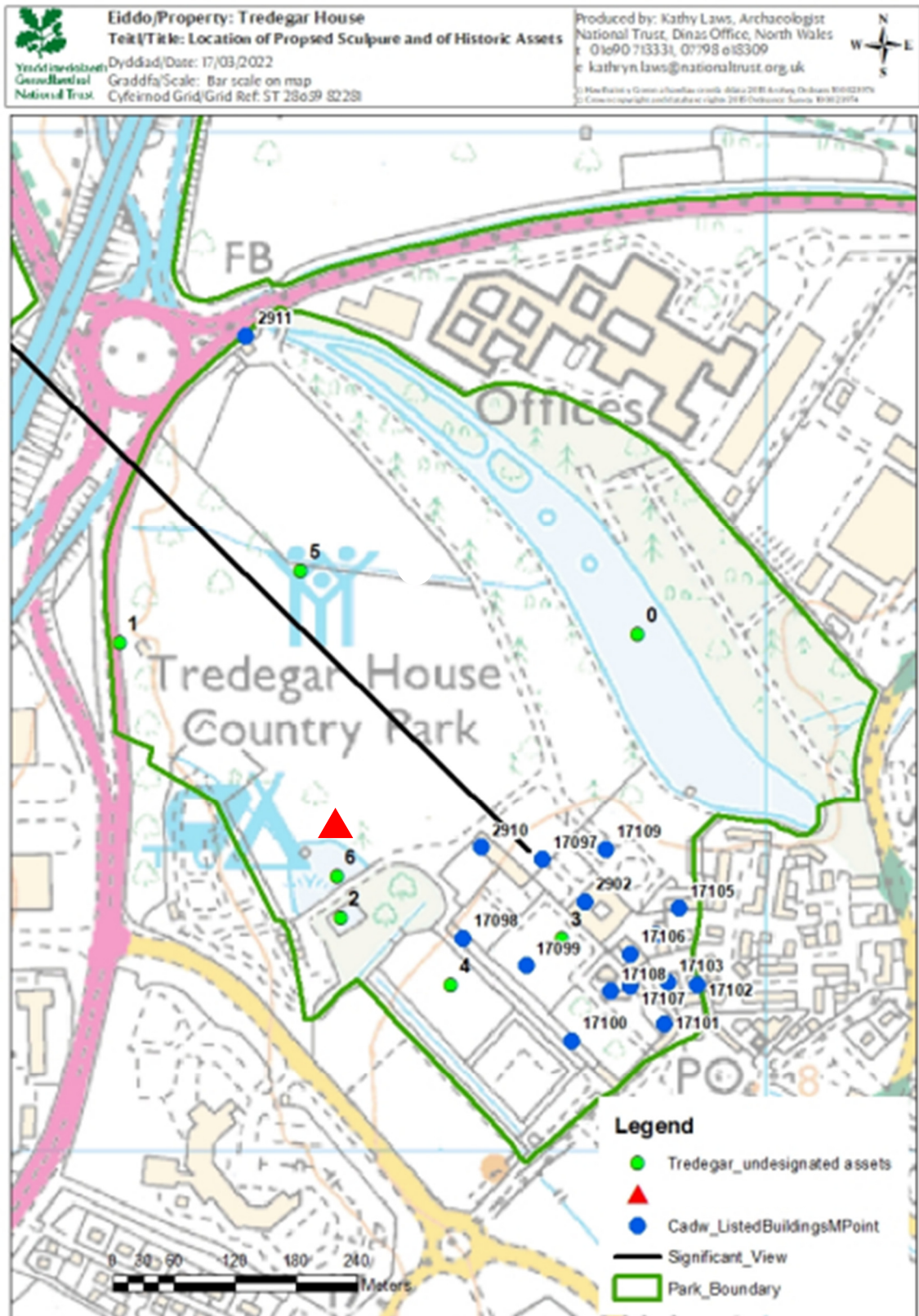


Figure 1: Location of proposed play park replacement, in red, with locations of historic assets within the Registered Park and Garden boundary, in green.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

A desk top review of available Historic Environment data relevant to the location of the sculpture and within 500m of its location was undertaken to inform the assessment. This included the following sources:

Cadw; ICOMOC UK; Countryside Council for Wales, 2001, Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales, Part 2 of the Register of Landscapes, Parks, and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales. Part 2.2 Landscapes of Special Historic Interest.

Cof Cymru the Cadw online resource for designated historic assets.

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

Early Ordnance Surveyor's Drawings in The Old Series Ordnance Survey Maps of England and Wales, Vol. VI Wales, Harry Margaery 1992, Headly Brothers Ltd.

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

Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Records (Archwilio on-line resource).

Historic Landscape Characterisation, The Gwent Levels: Area 15 Eastern St Brides, Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust online resource. 4

John Speeds Map of Monmouth, 1610, in The Counties of Britain, A Tudor Atlas by John Speed, Pavilion Books Ltd 1995.

National Trust Historic Buildings Sites and Monuments Record.

Tredegar House and Gardens Conservation Management Plan: Section 1: Understanding the Heritage. National Trust Internal Document 2015.

Tredegar House and Gardens Conservation Management Plan: Section 2: Significance. National Trust Internal Document 2015.

Tredegar House and Gardens Conservation Management Plan: Gazetteer: North Park and Lake Environs. National Trust Internal Document 2015.

Tredegar House and Park: Archaeological Assessment. Claudine Gerrard. National Trust Internal Document.

Welsh Tithe Maps, National Library of Wales online resource.

A field visit was made on the 25th of February 2025 by Doug Hughes when the site was visited, and an assessment of visual impacts made.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Archaeological evidence for early human activity in the general area is limited to a small number of Mesolithic sites and finds spots on the course of the river Usk and the coast of the Severn Estuary Levels. Neolithic occupation is indicated by numerous stone and flint tools as well as burial monuments, including the Gwern y Cleppa Burial Chamber 1km west of Tredegar House. Bronze Age cairns, burials and standing stones are also evident, but evidence for settlement is limited to seasonal occupation of the Gwent levels. Settlement is much more clearly represented in the Iron Age with occupation sites and trackways on the Levels and hillforts and defended enclosures in the dryer and more upland areas. Tredegar Fort is located 1.5km north of Tredegar house and Coed y Defaid Camp is located 1.7km to the northwest. The legionary fortress at Caerleon and the town at Caerwent dominate the Roman presence in the area, while systematic drainage of the Levels also dates from this period. During the medieval period, the settlement pattern was dominated by small, scattered settlements and a pastoral economy.

A number of medieval manor houses are thought to have existed prior to the current Tredegar House, built between 1664 and 1672 by Sir William Morgan. The exact locations of these are not known, but it is considered likely that they may have been located some distance north of the current house.

There is also evidence for at least one deserted medieval village, located to the north of Tredegar house, recovered during the construction of the M4.

The park at Tredegar dates back to at least the early 1600's, appearing on Speeds 1610 map of Monmouth (Figure 2). This likely corresponds to the parkland further to the north outside the National Trust holding but within the Registered Park and Garden, with areas to the north known as the Old Park and to the northwest as new Park. The park incorporated part 5 of an earlier medieval park, Cleppa Park. The house indicated on this map to the southeast of the imparked area is presumably one of the medieval manor houses.

The park is considered to have been formally laid out as a landscape park in about 1664 by Sir William Morgan when he was building the current house.



Figure 2: Extract from John Speeds map of Monmouth 1610

The parkland immediately adjacent to the north of Tredegar House, in which the new sculpture would be located, is known today as North Park. It is not clear whether this area was at one time part of the early park. But it has been separated from the old park by the public road to Newport for some time, once a Turnpike Road, now the A48 and Junction 28 of the M4. Surveys dating to the 1700's suggest the road, at one time, crossed the park closer to the house than it does today (Figure 3). Two ponds are seen to the north of the road and a third to the west of North Park.

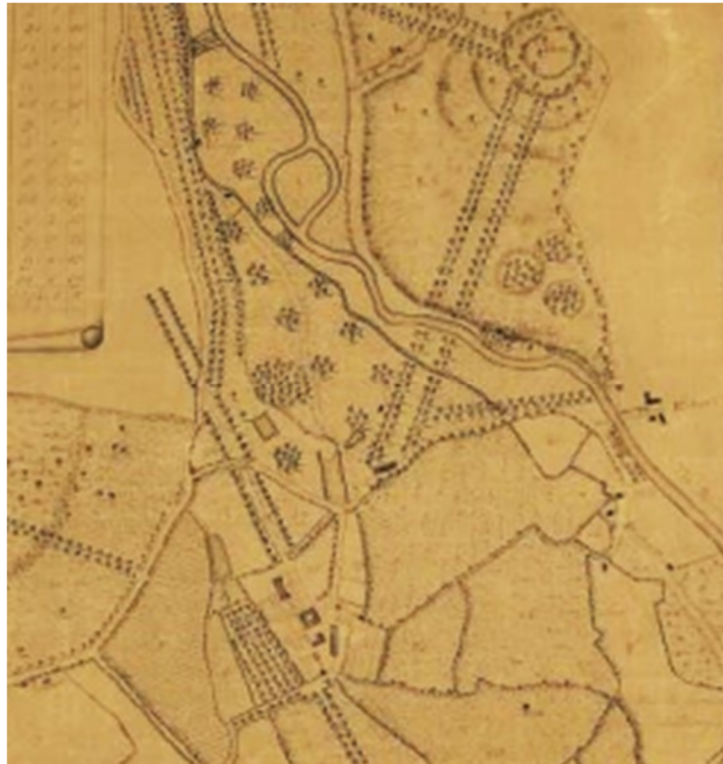


Figure 3: Extract from the Robert Snell survey of c1770 (National Library of Wales)

Formal avenues, seen on this map, extending into the wider parkland landscape including the oak avenue to the northwest of the house, which frames a significant view today, are thought to have been planted in the 1680's as part of the remodelling of the house and its setting (Figure 3).

The road had been moved further to the north by the time of the Early Ordnance Surveyors Drawing of 1833 (Figure 4) and a large sinuously shaped pond/lake appears along the north side of North Park, while the pond to the west remains largely the same. This reflects developments in the late 1700s by the designer Adam Mickel who also removed some of the avenues. The reen (drainage ditch) is also shown on this map and a new drive to the north gate is in place. A structure seen on the west side of North Park is probably the building named as Ysgubor-yr-hen-efail (old smith barn) on later maps.

This layout is largely mirrored by the Tithe map of 1841 (Figure 5) and the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (Figure 6) and is essentially the layout we see today



Figure 4: Extract of Ordnance Surveyors drawing 1833. Not to scale, approximate location of sculpture shown in red.



Figure 5: Extract from the Tithe map for the Parish of Bassaleg 1 (National Library of Wales). Not to scale, approximate location of sculpture shown in red.

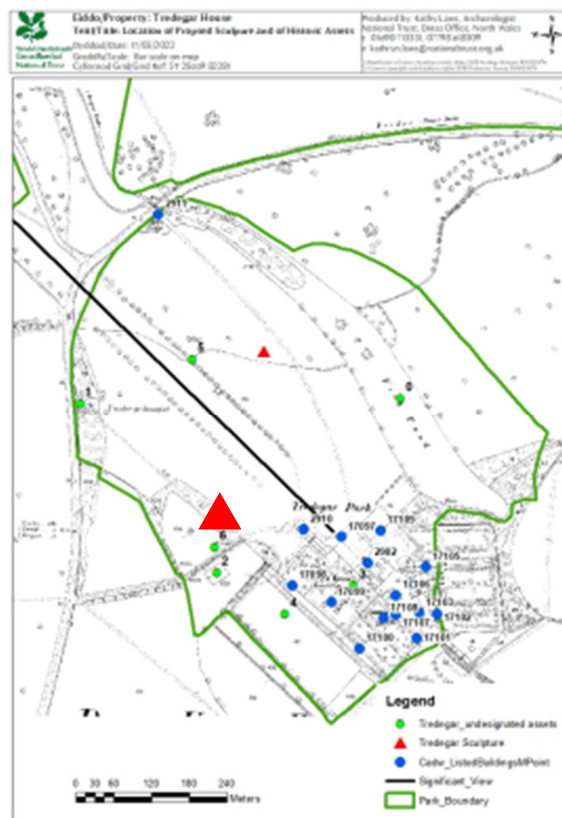


Figure 6: First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1890's) with designated and undesigned assets overlain.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Registered Park

The proposed play area is located within the Registered Park and Garden of Tredegar Park (PGW(Gt)48(NPT)), which is designated Grade II* due to the survival of elements of a grand late seventeenth-century layout. These include formal garden walls, a gate screen, ornamental parterres, and the prominent oak avenue. The park holds significant group value alongside the Grade I Listed Tredegar House and its associated Listed buildings and garden structures.

The placement of the play area, adjacent to the pond on the western side of the parkland, ensures it does not interfere with the key historic view from the northwest front of Tredegar House along the oak avenue (Plate 1). Existing tree planting helps integrate the proposed play space into the wider landscape, resulting in a low overall visual impact. This addition is not considered negative; its design, materials, and scale are sympathetic to the park's historic character, and its use as a family-friendly feature supports the estate's ongoing public engagement.

Although some physical impact on the registered parkland is possible due to the need to secure play equipment, an assessment of historic mapping and records indicates limited potential for sub-surface archaeological remains in this location. The use of minimal and low impact fixing methods, such as shallow foundations or driven steel piles, further reduces the likelihood of disturbance. The overall impact is therefore assessed as negligible.

Registered Historic Landscape

The Eastern St. Brides character area of the Gwent Levels Registered Historic Landscape (HLW (Gt)2) is located to the south of Tredegar House and Park, beyond the 500m core study area and separated by modern housing development. The Gwent Levels Historic Landscape is considered the most significant example in Wales of a man-made landscape. The land has been continuously inundated and reclaimed (by man) from the sea from Roman times onward. Distinctive patterns of settlement, enclosure and drainage systems belonging to different periods characterise the landscape with buried waterlogged, well preserved, remains from pre-Roman landscapes.

While the Registered Historic Landscape might be considered part of the setting for Tredegar House and Park, the proposed play park would not have any impact on this wider Landscape.

There are a small number of known undesignated historic assets for the most part relating to post medieval activity across the park and garden. These are considered to be of local significance, and none will be directly impacted on by the proposed play park.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The assessment throws up a relatively high number of designated assets within a 500-meter study area centred on the proposed location for the play park. There are 16 Listed Buildings. None are physically impacted by the replacement play park and the majority are visually screened from the play park by other features in the landscape. There are three Listed Buildings where there is a visual impact, Tredegar House (grade I), The Stable Block (grade I) and the Gate Lodges to the NW (Grade II). The distance between the play park and all three Listed Buildings is more than 100 m.

The play park will not be visible from Tredegar House but may impact slightly on views of the house from the park. Its positioning on the Western side of the park minimises this impact. The play park will be visible in the distance from The Stable Block and may impact on some views of the stable block from the parkland. The sculpture may impact slightly on views of the house from the Gate Lodges. Its positioning on the Western side of the park at some distance from the lodges minimises this impact. Overall, the visual impact on the setting of these Listed Buildings is considered to be neutral.

The impact on the Registered Park is an important consideration as part of this assessment. The positioning of trees in the landscape determines that the play park would not impact on the significant view down the oak avenue. There would be a neutral visual impact on the parkland more generally as the play park is replacing an existing facility and will be the same size and scale.

The Gwent Levels Registered Historic Landscape, a significant archaeological landscape, which lies to the south of Tredegar could also be considered part of the setting of the Registered Park. Modern housing, however, divides the Registered Landscape from the Park and the play park does not impact the Registered Landscape.

A consideration of designated and non-designated assets in the landscape along with known archaeological sites and historic mapping evidence does not point to a high potential for sub surface archaeological remains at the location of the sculpture. The means of securing the sculpture to the ground result in minimal ground disturbance and therefore the impact on sub surface archaeology is considered to be negligible.