



Incline Fields, Bangor

Heritage Statement

For Williams Homes

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Introductory Information

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Alf is an Affiliate Member of the IHBC and is an RIBA registered Conservation Architect (RIBA CA). Alf has experience of all grades of listed buildings and has also worked on Scheduled Monuments including the restoration of Birkenhead Priory and a period house on Chester City Walls. The Birkenhead and Hawarden offices of Ainsley Gommon Architects have recently worked closely together on the Grade I listed Gladstone's Library and Grade II listed Stephen Gladstone Hall in Hawarden near Chester. The practice has also worked closely together with a developer and house builder on a large housing development on a very sensitive site in Colwyn Bay within the surroundings of a large Grade II listed building complex set in a mature landscape. This work includes careful evaluation and visual impact assessment and the restoration and conversion of a listed former Victorian hotel (and, later, school) into 32 apartments for market sale.

Summary

Ainsley Gommon were commissioned by Williams Homes to provide a Heritage Statement in support of a planning application for the erection of 48 no. one and two-storey dwellings and associated access, car parking and amenity space on land at Llandygai Road, Bangor, Gwynedd. Reference has been made to guidance found in CADW's "*Setting of Historic Assets in Wales*". The potential impacts of the proposed development on the setting of the historic assets have been assessed as being restricted to views to and from Incline Cottage and the parts of the Marchogion Incline Plane and Penrhyn Castle Historic Park stone wall and environs directly adjacent to and/or where those assets overlap the development site forming the planning application.

It is important to note that as the new site layout has been worked up to a much lower density than previously presented by Castle Green Homes, a substantial margin of open space has been incorporated between new development and the heritage assets. As such the likely impact of the proposed development on the setting of Incline Cottage, Marchogion Incline Plane and Penrhyn Castle Historic Park stone wall has been assessed to be significantly reduced and the magnitude of any impact limited with regard to the setting of the assets themselves.

Introduction

Project Background

Ainsley Gommon have been commissioned by Williams Homes to produce a Heritage Statement and preliminary assessment in support of a planning application for the erection of 48 no. one and two-storey affordable dwellings, associated access, car parking and amenity space on land at Llandegai Road, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 4HP.

The proposed development area measures 2.5 ha and is located within a field of improved pasture on the eastern side of the A5 Llandegai Road. The development site has been allocated for housing within the adopted Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011 – 2026 (reference T5).

The updated heritage statement has been requested by Williams Homes following feedback on a pre-planning consultation with Ashley Batten of CADW following a site visit with CADW and a Penrhyn Estate representative in March 2023. This dialogue and research have identified the following designated and undesignated historic assets in proximity to the proposed development:

- Immediately adjacent to the west, Incline Cottage Grade II Listed Building (LB 4085).
- Immediately adjacent to the west (and partially containing elements of), the route of The Penrhyn Slate Quarry Railroad.
- Grounds and boundaries of the Penrhyn Castle Estate, Grade II* Registered Historic Park and Garden (LB 3659)

Given the proximity of the proposed development to these designated historic assets, the proposed development may have an impact on their significance and the way that the assets are experienced, understood and appreciated. It is appreciated that any potential impact on the setting of designated (and undesignated) assets by new housing development will be a material consideration when determining the outcome of the planning application when submitted following pre-application consultation.

Initial assessments of the likely heritage impact were undertaken following the early site visit in March 2023 and subsequent meetings with CADW in November 2024. These discussions were guided by the principles outlined in The Setting of Historic Assets in Wales (CADW 2017). Ashley Batten of CADW provided valuable feedback during these meetings, which has been carefully integrated into the design development process.

This Heritage Statement should be read in conjunction with Aeon Archaeology's Heritage Impact Assessment. While Aeon's report provides a comprehensive assessment of the scheme's impact on designated and undesignated heritage assets, this statement explains the design process undertaken by the design team, detailing how the initial heritage assessments and the site's historical context have influenced the final design proposals.

Historic Context

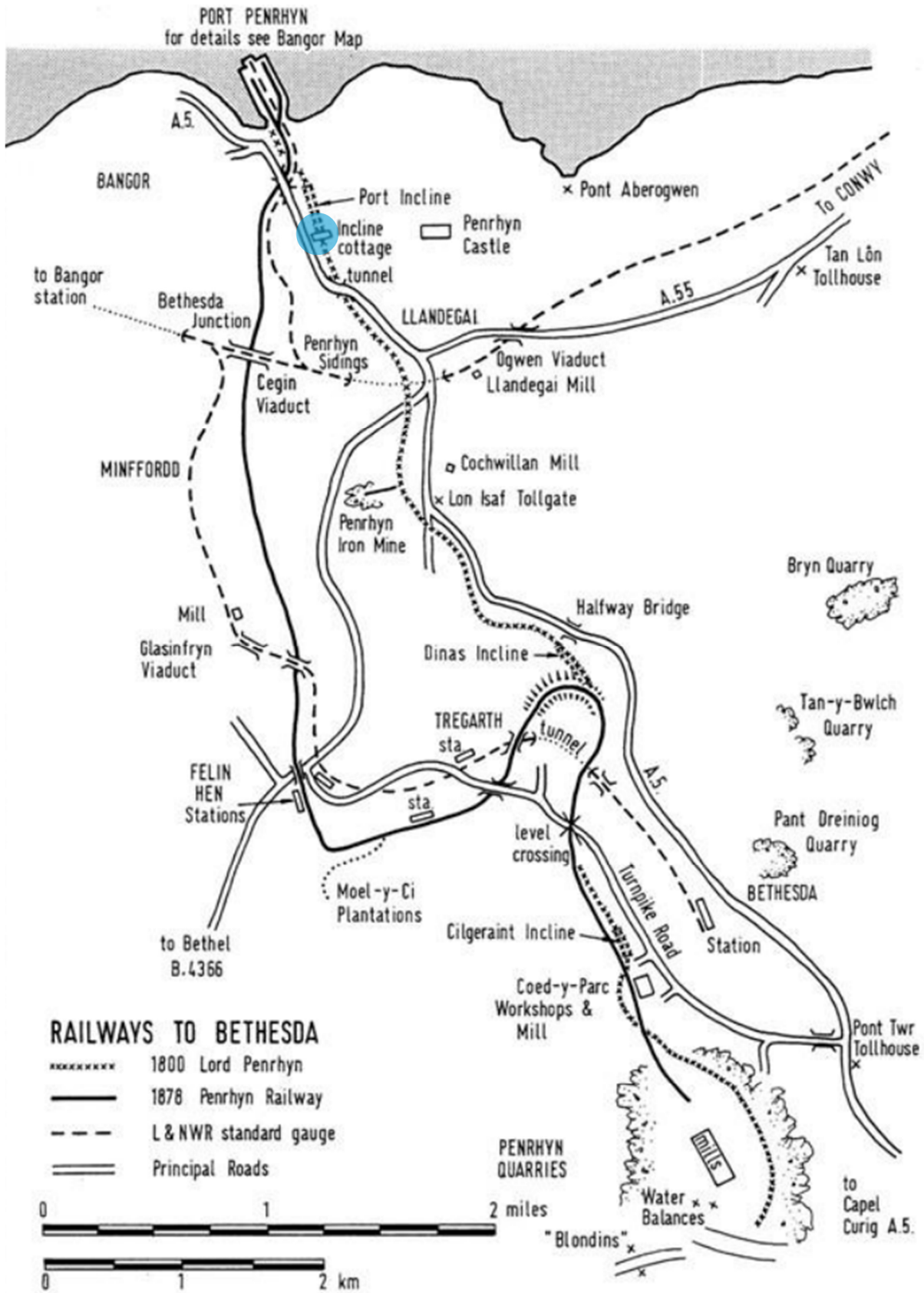
North Wales is globally renowned for its profound industrial legacy, particularly its prominence in slate production. The efficient transportation of this vital resource was fundamental to the industry's success and the region's development. As early as 1790-1801, the pioneering Penrhyn Slate Quarry Railroad was engineered to convey slate from the quarry to the purpose-built Port Penrhyn near Bangor. This strategically positioned harbour, situated at the confluence of the River Cegin and the Menai Strait, provided a sheltered and efficient loading point for ships destined for international markets.

A significant surviving element of this industrial past is the route of the Penrhyn Slate Quarry Railroad, a Scheduled Monument which includes the Marchogion Incline Plane. While some sections have naturally evolved over time, its course can still be distinctly traced through the landscape, serving as a powerful visual reminder of its historical importance. This early railway, though primitive in its design with flanged rails rather than flanged wheels, proved remarkably effective. For almost a century, it remained in continuous operation, facilitating the movement of immense quantities of slate and playing a crucial role in the region's prosperity, ultimately contributing to its recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The wider Ogwen Valley Registered Historic Landscape provides the broader setting for these industrial achievements. The Marchogion Incline Plane was integral to this system, and at its base, the railroad connects with the Grade II Listed Pont Marchogion, an arched stone bridge spanning the River Cegin.

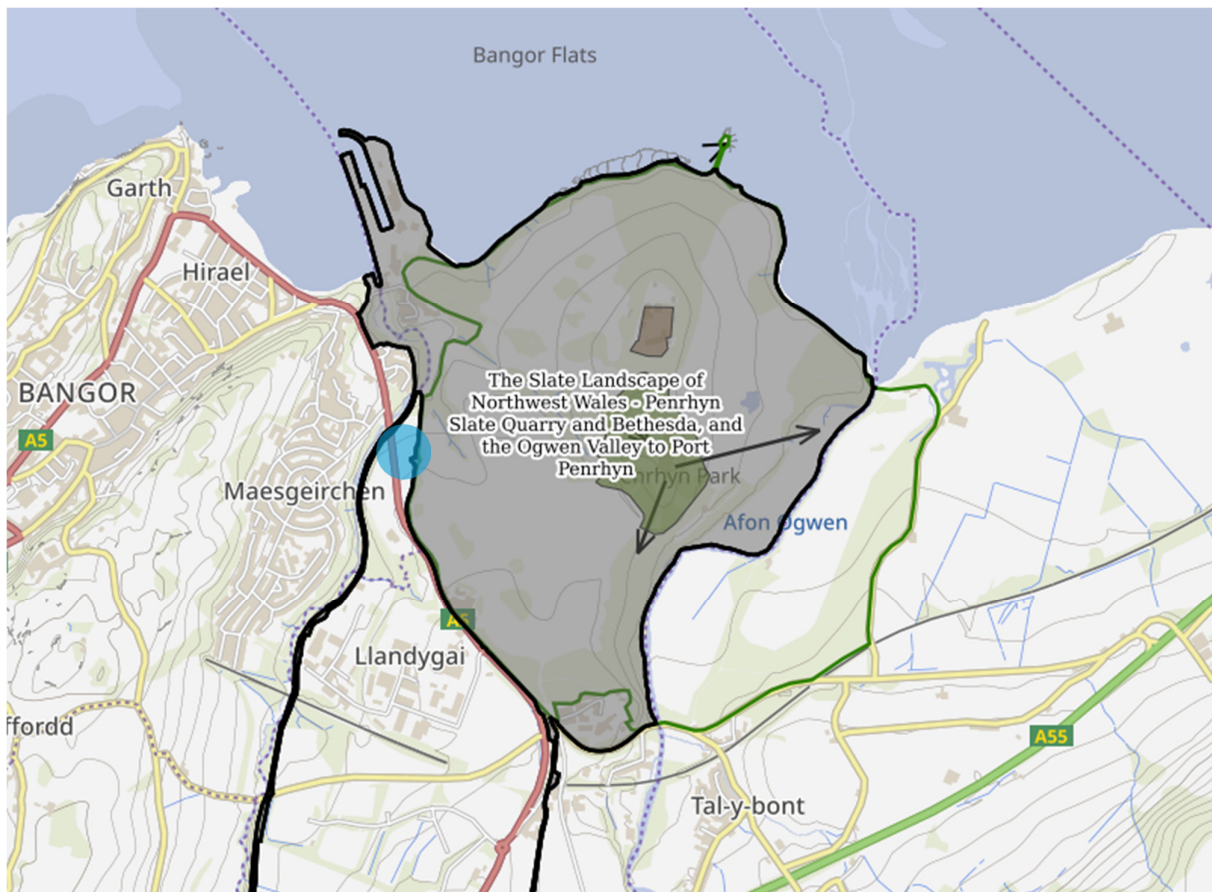
The original Penrhyn Slate Quarry Railroad system incorporated three interconnected inclines linked by level sections, with the Marchogion Incline Plane being the lowest and of particular relevance to this project. Immediately adjacent to the proposed development site stands Incline Cottage, a Grade II Listed Building that was historically connected to the railway's operations. Designed by Benjamin Wyatt around 1790, this cottage originally served as the winder house for the Marchogion Incline. It was crucial for operating the early horse-powered system that managed the ascent and descent of slate wagons, making it a key functional component of the pioneering railway.

Beyond the railway, the area's vivid historical tapestry is further enriched by the Grade I Listed Penrhyn Castle. This imposing neo-Norman edifice was constructed between 1820 and 1837 by Thomas Hopper, strategically sited to be a prominent feature in the landscape. The castle is set within the Registered Penrhyn Castle Historic Park & Garden. The estate also includes associated Grade II listed structures such the Terraced Flower Garden, and the extensive Penrhyn Park Boundary Wall which forms the boundary to the site.

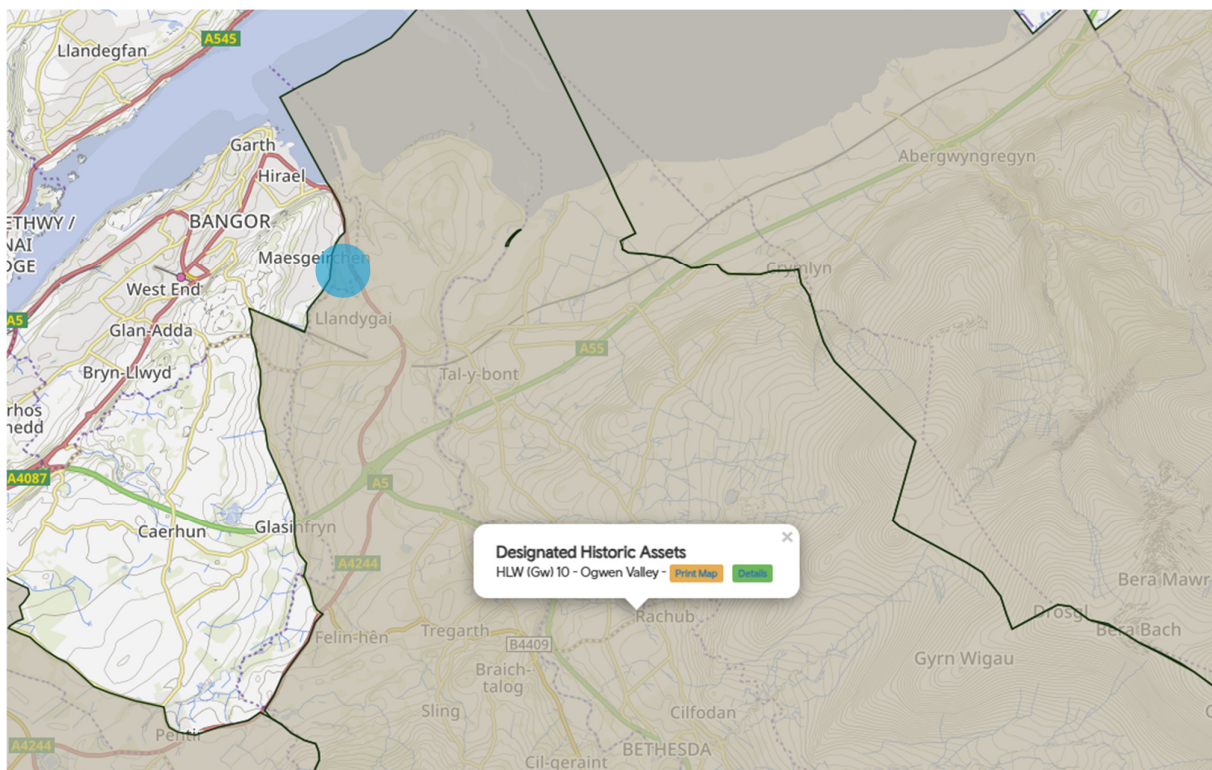
Collectively, these diverse and significant heritage assets establish a rich historical narrative and a profound sense of place that will fundamentally inform the design approach for the land at Incline Fields.



Map indicating Incline Cottage on the Penrhyn Quarry Railway route



World Heritage Site – Ref 1633 - Penrhyn Slate Quarry and Bethesda, and the Ogwen Valley to Port Penrhyn



Registered Historic Landscapes - HLW (Gw) 10 – Ogwen Valley

Site Description

The site, known as Incline Fields, is a 2.5-hectare irregular, grassed parcel of land, primarily oriented along a north-south axis. It lies on the eastern side of Llandegai Road (A5). Opposite the site to the west, beyond the Bangor Crematorium and Cemetery, lies the Maesgeirchen council estate, situated on the other side of the valley.



Indicative Existing Site Boundary

The site's topography is notable, characterised by a continuous slope; it falls steeply downwards from east to west and gradually rises towards the south across its length. The western boundary of the site is defined by a hedgerow. An existing gated track provides the sole access point from the road, leading towards Incline Cottage and Nursery Cottage. Cattle grids are present on this track at the entrances to the field. A bus stop, lacking shelter, is located near the southern end of the site, where the land tapers significantly to little more than the width of a tramway. No livestock were observed in the fields during recent visits, nor were there signs of active grazing.

The eastern boundary of the site is predominantly defined by the historic route of the Penrhyn Slate Quarry Railroad, a Scheduled Monument. The Marchogion Incline Plane, integral to this railway, runs specifically at the northern end of this eastern boundary. As noted in the Land Studio Landscape Condition Assessment and Restoration Strategy, the incline is currently largely overgrown with shrub and hedgerow, which obscures its original form in places.

Immediately adjacent to the site's eastern side stands Grade II Listed Incline Cottage. The cottage is situated on slightly raised ground relative to the site and is largely enveloped by mature trees, hedgerows, and shrubbery, rendering it mostly concealed during summer months when trees are in full leaf.



Stone wall to Penrhyn estate and grassy strip defining Marchogion Incline Plane

Further along the eastern boundary lies the Grade II listed slate wall that forms the boundary of the Penrhyn Castle Historic Park & Garden. Views of the Grade I listed Penrhyn Castle are primarily limited to glimpses from the top of the eastern slope, through existing breaks in this boundary wall.

To the north, the site is bounded by dense, ancient woodland, which slopes down towards the Grade II Listed Pont Marchogion and the Afon Cegin. Along the interface with this woodland, some vertical slate fencing is present. Within the site, near its centre, a slate water trough is also present.



Vertical slate fencing and ancient woodland to Northern boundary



Slate water trough



Looking Northwards with Incline Cottage in the far background and partly screened by surrounding mature trees as seen from Llandegai Road (A5)



Looking Eastwards with Incline Cottage in relief as viewed from Llandegai Road (A5)



Looking South-East with Incline Cottage concealed by mature trees, as viewed from Llandegai Road (A5)

Heritage Assets Assessment

Penrhyn Slate Quarry Railroad & Marchogion Inclined Plane

(Situated in Area E of the Penrhyn Quarry Railroad)

Scheduled Monument: Penrhyn Slate Quarry Railroad

Reference Number	Site Type	Designation Date
CN415	Railway	09/08/2021
Broad Class	Authority	Community
Transport	Gwynedd	Bangor
Location		

Area E: Home Farm to the Cegin Viaduct

The Penrhyn Slate Quarry Railroad, designated as a Scheduled Monument, represents a globally significant piece of industrial heritage, having been pivotal in the transportation of slate from the Penrhyn Quarry. A particularly important section, the Marchogion Incline Plane, is located at the northern end of the eastern boundary of the Incline Fields site. This incline is a unique and remarkably well-preserved example of early engineering, designed for both counterbalance operation and for up-haulage by an adjacent horse-whim, illustrating the ingenuity of 18th-century industrial practices that shaped the region's prosperity.

While its historical form remains largely intact, the Marchogion Incline is currently significantly overgrown with shrub and hedgerow, as detailed in Land Studio's "Landscape Condition Assessment and Restoration Strategy". This presents a unique opportunity, through careful management and clearance, to reveal the full extent of this important historic feature, making its original construction and engineering more comprehensible.



Marchogion Incline Plane

As a Scheduled Monument, the route of the inclined plane is fully protected from development. To ensure its long-term preservation and facilitate its improved appreciation, it is imperative that a clear buffer or margin is maintained along its entire length. This provides an important separation from any new development, safeguarding its integrity and allowing for its future interpretation.

By sensitively revealing its historical form and ensuring its protection, there is significant potential for the Marchogion Incline Plane to be better engaged with by the public, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of its unique historical significance as a key component of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The design approach for the Incline Fields development has been directly informed by the considerations outlined above. This approach proposes to respect and enhance the setting of the Penrhyn Slate Quarry Railroad and Marchogion Incline Plane by maintaining a substantial clear margin. This will facilitate its future management and potential for public engagement, while ensuring the new development is sensitively integrated into this historically rich landscape without compromising the integrity of this irreplaceable heritage asset.

The Winding House

Listed Building: Incline Cottage

Reference Number	Grade	Designation Date
4085	II	02/08/1988
Building Class	Authority	Community
Domestic	Gwynedd	Bangor
Location		

Reached up a short farm road, on the edge of Penrhyn Park.

Incline Cottage holds exceptional historical significance as the original winder house for the Marchogion Incline, a key component of the pioneering Penrhyn Slate Quarry Railroad. Its unique design incorporated the tramway running directly through its centre, enabling the horse-powered operation of the incline from within the structure. This ingenious arrangement highlights its crucial functional role in the early slate transportation system, serving as both a control point and living quarters, prior to its closure in 1879 and subsequent conversion into a private dwelling.

The preservation and enhancement of Incline Cottage's setting are paramount. Its historical integrity and the legibility of its former function as a winder house must be respected. The design approach for the Incline Fields development should be fundamentally informed by these considerations and should seek to ensure the cottage and its immediate surroundings are protected from inappropriate development by maintaining a clear buffer, thus preventing overdevelopment directly adjacent to the listed building.

Proposed new buildings on the site, along with associated landscaping features and infrastructure, should carefully consider Incline Cottage's position, scale, and character. Materials such as stone, slate, and render, or other complementary materials, should be used to ensure the new development harmonises with and

does not harm the historic character of the setting. Key views towards the cottage, particularly from the A5, must be retained and protected. The design should ensure that the historic alignment of the access track, a tangible link to its past, is preserved and integrated sensitively into the new layout.



The Winding House, now converted to 'Incline Cottage' residence



View to Penrhyn Castle through area of collapsed stonework in wall

Penrhyn Castle

Penrhyn Castle: Grade I Listed Building

Reference Number	Grade	Designation Date
3659	I	03/03/1966
Broad Class	Authority	Community
Domestic	Gwynedd	Llandygai
Location		

From the highest eastern point of Incline Fields, the upper levels of Penrhyn Castle's towers are visible over the stone boundary wall of the castle's historic park and garden. The attached 4-storey keep which sits on battered plinth with 4 tiers of deeply splayed Norman windows, 2 to each face, with chevron decoration and nook-shafts, topped by 4 square corner turrets, and the adjacent circular tower with its cantilevered bartizan, are discernible above the treeline within the castle grounds. The proposed development will not be visible from the castle, the boundary wall of the historic park and garden and dense treeline provide an effective screen. Additionally, the site's topography falls sharply away from the wall, further minimizing visibility from the castle.

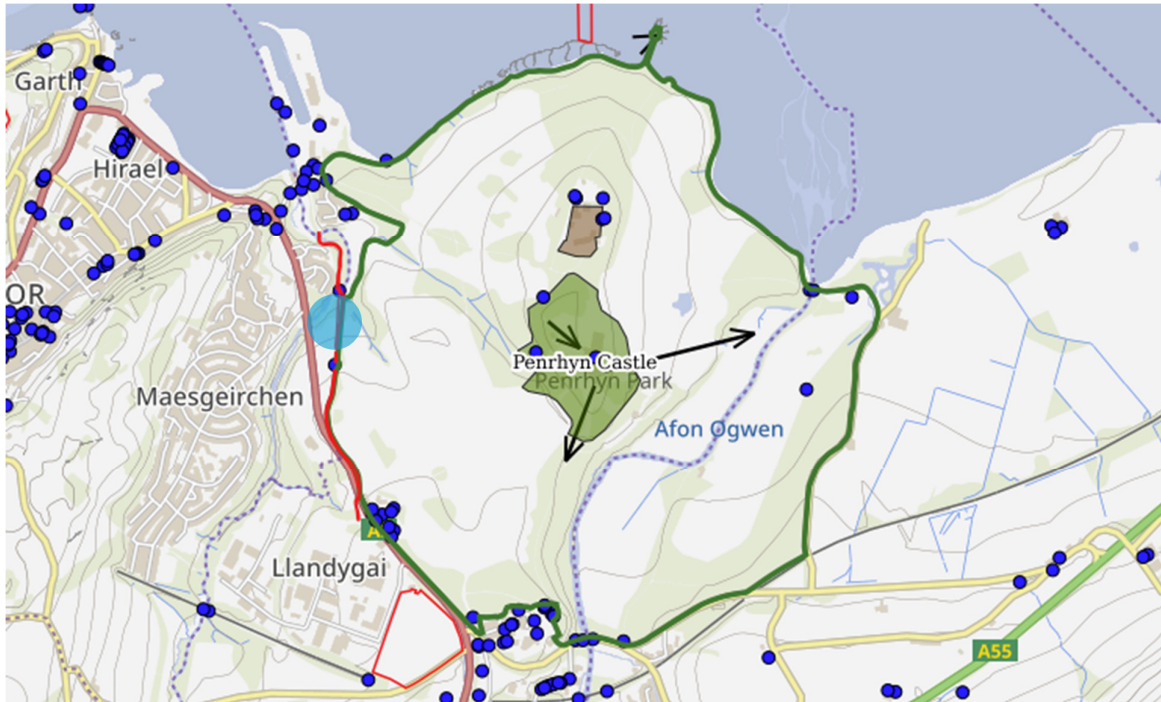
Given the considerable distance and the effective existing screening detailed above, the development is anticipated to have no adverse impact on the setting of Penrhyn Castle. The design approach is nevertheless influenced by the need to acknowledge the castle's significant presence. It ensures that the proposed scale, height, and materials of the new dwellings are compatible with the existing landscape, further reinforcing the visual separation and guaranteeing no new visual intrusions into the castle's historic setting or its established key views.

Penrhyn Castle Historic Park & Garden

Historic Park & Garden: Grade II* Registered Historic Park & Garden

Reference Number	Grade	Designation Date
PGW(Gd)40(GWY)	II*	01/02/2022
Broad Class	Authority	Community
Gardens, Parks & Urban Spaces	Gwynedd	Llandygai
Site Type		

Landscape park, woodland, terraced garden, walled kitchen gardens, lawns.



The Penrhyn Castle Historic Park & Garden, a Registered Historic Park and Garden, represents a well-preserved nineteenth-century designed landscape that contributes significantly to the regional heritage. The Incline Fields site shares a direct boundary with this historic park, which is primarily defined by the Grade II listed slate wall and an accompanying dense treeline. This combination forms an effective physical and visual barrier between the two areas. The site's topography further reinforces this separation, as it slopes sharply downwards and eastwards, away from the historic park and garden. Currently, there's no direct public access between the Incline Fields site and the historic park, helping to maintain their distinct and separate characters.

The design approach for the Incline Fields development is fundamentally influenced by the need to safeguard the integrity and setting of this Registered Historic Park & Garden. The proposed development should be strategically situated away from the boundary wall and the historic park. This deliberate setback, coupled with the existing robust screening provided by the wall and trees, will ensure that the new development will not impact the character or views from within the historic park and garden.

Proposed Design

Site Layout

The identification of Incline Fields as a site suitable for housing is not in question as the site is allocated for housing in the Local Development Plan. However, the form, character and integration of any new development is crucial and highly significant. As the site is virgin, we must look elsewhere for historical precedents that might help establish the principles by which the development may be set out. Sited just outside the walled park of Penrhyn Castle, a short distance south of the Grand Lodge and bounded, to the North, East and West by Castle grounds, to the south by a curve in the old toll road To Talybont and Conwy, is the estate village of Llandygai, sheltered by mature woodland and stone walls.



Image Source: Coflein

Built to house the workers of estate and quarry owner 1st Baron Penrhyn (Edward Gordon Douglas-Pennant), Llandygai was constructed in the 1840s after Pennant's acquisition of the estate following the death of George Hay Dawkins-Pennant in 1840 (for whom initial layouts had been drawn by agent and architect James Wyatt). The village, changed little in layout since construction, apart from a small amount of infill, is now a Conservation Area.

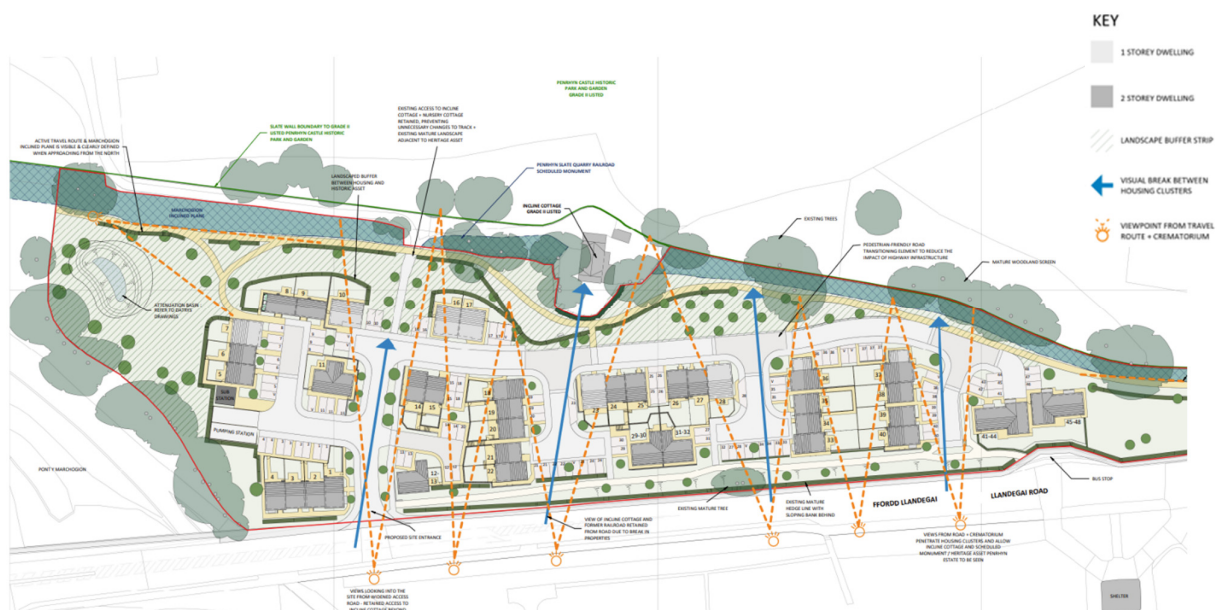
The houses are notable for their "vernacular revival", "Picturesque ideal" aesthetic, constructed in roughly coursed local rubble stone (many now either roughcast or pebble-dashed), ornate Tudor style chimneys of brick and stone, small open timber porches with mono-pitched slate roofs, and bay windows with stone or timber mullions. Subtle variation was the order of the day – though similar in style, none of the house groupings (the majority were planned as semi-detached) was to be identical. The village contains generous gardens but neither pub nor chapel,

unusual for North Wales, though, perhaps, not entirely unsurprising of a Victorian model village built at a time when the “drys” of an increasingly political temperance movement advocated for legal prohibition to save the working classes from intoxication and ruin (Port Sunlight, built by William Hesketh Lever for the workers of Sunlight Soap, famously lacked a pub until 1904 – the Bridge Inn, built in 1900, was originally a Temperance Hotel until a vote put to the workers determined that the majority were in favour of a place to enjoy alcohol).

Though relatively small, and predominately arranged in semi-detached pairings, Llandygai village offers planning variety in its layout with detached, semi-detached, and conjoined groupings of cottages in linear, L and T shaped plans and clusters. The relationship between individual plots, materiality and boundary detailing offer valuable points of reference and a clear steer in terms of vernacular and relationship with the Historic Park & Garden Estate.

The proposed layout for Incline Fields, revised following discussions with CADW, could be said to follow a similar pattern - houses are arranged in clusters or smaller groupings, tailored to the more linear site parameters and adjacent heritage assets.

The prominence of Incline cottage, elevated by the raised topography of the incline and straddling the historic tramway, is maintained through the careful planning and deferential massing of the proposals for Incline Field. The development's mix of one and two-storey dwellings has been carefully orchestrated to frame and preserve views towards both Incline Cottage and the Marchogion Incline Plane. These key views will be visible from the A5 at strategic intervals, as illustrated in the Visual Impact Analysis (AGA drawing C1124.006) below. The overall scale of the development has been carefully considered in relation to the location and size of these historic assets, ensuring a harmonious relationship between old and new.



AGA drawing C1124.006 – Visual Impact Analysis

The creation of neighbourhood clusters of homes and a reduced density, leaving generous open space for landscaping and amenity between the new development and historic assets on the NE side of the site, in accordance with discussions with Ashley Batten of CADW, allows for visual breaks between housing groupings, enabling views from Llandegai Road. Where wider gaps between clusters are not feasible, single-storey bungalows have been strategically positioned to further enhance visual permeability. The original access road into the site will be retained and repurposed as a driveway serving Incline Cottage, respecting the historic access.



C1124.009 – Proposed Wider Masterplan

Pedestrian routes within and through the site were also discussed with CADW and were referenced in the Planning Pre-Application Enquiry. A new footpath, set at a respectful distance, follows the edge of Penrhyn Castle stone boundary wall and Incline Cottage boundary, easing the transition between old and new while providing an opportunity to introduce an historic trail (active travel route) helping to amplify the historic importance of the Marchogian slate railway.

Informal play features and designated play areas will be integrated along the route of the former Penrhyn slate quarry railroad. This linear route will include interpretation boards and benches, providing opportunities for the public to engage with the site's industrial heritage and learn more about its history. This footpath also offers views towards Penrhyn Castle and surrounding landscape.

The existing slate water trough, a relic of the site's agricultural past, will be relocated along the interpretive path and repurposed, adding another layer of historical interest. (Refer to Drawing C1124.010 – Interpretation Route & Amenity Plan).



C1124.005 – Housing & Parking Impact Assessment

To reduce urban clutter and mitigate against a vehicle dominated appearance, often experienced where front gardens are given over to vehicles that sit under front windows, car parking and bin storage areas have been carefully positioned and softened visually, with the retained hedge along the site's boundary edge further minimizing their impact. A network of paths will facilitate movement throughout the development and create a more permeable layout, breaking down the traditional distinction between front and back gardens.

The existing bus stop will be integrated into the development to provide convenient access to public transportation for the residents, accessible via a small break in the boundary hedge along the Western boundary.

Plots 1-4 and 12-13 have been designed to create an active and welcoming frontage to the development at the site entrance with vehicle parking discretely set back to reduce vehicle clutter at the main entrance road.

Essential infrastructure elements, such as the proposed pumping station and electrical substation, have been carefully sited away from the heritage assets and largely screened from view. The bespoke landscape design shown below has been thoughtfully developed with Land Studio to further enhance the setting of the historic assets and to establish a cohesive whole.



Land Studio Drawing 423-LST-XX-XX-DR-L-0101-Landscape General Arrangement



Land Studio Drawing 423-LST-XX-XX-DR-L-0301-Planting Plan

KEY	
	G1-Proposed Lawn
	G2-Proposed Scrub/Woodland Planting
	P1-Proposed Pond Planting Mix
	O1-Proposed Ornamental Planting
	M1- Wildflower Meadow
	Proposed Tree
	Existing Tree
	H1-Proposed Hedge
	Existing Hedge
	Parking area
	Primary Pedestrian Path
	Secondary Pedestrian Path
	Asphalt
	Houses
	Timber Fence
	Basin Attenuation
	Softwood Chip-Playground
	Fallen Log
	Stepping Logs
	Boulders
	Seating
	Concrete Bat Box (4no.) 170x320x60mm
	Wooden Nest Box (3no.) 250mm



C1124.008C -Proposed 3D View

Materials & Design

The selection of materials for the new dwellings at Incline Fields has been carefully considered to respect the historic context and broader local vernacular. In discussions with CADW, Ashley Batten reiterated the importance of careful material consideration, considered key to the success of the design, and minimising impact on heritage assets through the development of a successful relationship between old and new in terms of appearance, materials, and awareness of context and setting.

A deliberate mix of render, natural stone, timber cladding, and slate roofs will be employed, drawing inspiration from traditional building practices and the character of existing structures like Incline Cottage. Incline Cottage itself, with its combination of stone and render walls beneath a slate roof, serves as a direct precedent for this material palette. This approach ensures that the new residential development integrates harmoniously with its surroundings, creating a sense of place and continuity with the past while showing respect for the heritage assets and acknowledging contemporary building techniques.

The use of natural stone, where appropriate, carefully selected to complement contextual examples, will echo the robust character of the historic walls bounding the Penrhyn Castle estate and found throughout the region, further reinforcing visual connections. Render, used in conjunction with the stone, will provide a contrast in texture while also reflecting a common material found in traditional Welsh buildings. Timber cladding, incorporated as accent features, will add a natural warmth and

further articulate the building forms, referencing the use of timber in traditional outbuildings and agricultural structures of the region.

Natural Slate, a defining feature of the region's built heritage, will be used for roofing the new dwellings. This choice not only ensures a durable and weather-resistant roof covering but also reinforces the visual connection to the slate quarrying heritage that shaped the landscape and the history of Incline Fields. The consistent use of slate roofs across the development will create a cohesive visual identity and contribute to a sense of place rooted in the region's industrial past.

The enlarged site access roadway, following the existing track alignment of Incline Cottage, will be flanked by grass verges to soften its edges and integrate it into the landscape. This approach minimizes the visual impact of the road and preserves the site's rural character. Vehicle parking areas, set in relief, screened off by hedges and arranged in small courtyards generally located behind dwellings lines and elevations, will be discreetly integrated into the site layout. Limiting the number of parked cars within each courtyard helps to avoid a car-dominated appearance and prioritizes the pedestrian experience.

Footways will be carefully designed to enhance accessibility and connect the new dwellings to the surrounding landscape and historic assets. The primary pathway alongside the incline, set at a reasonable distance from Incline Cottage, will be constructed of crushed compressed slate material. This choice of material not only provides a durable and visually appealing surface but also subtly references the site's slate quarrying heritage. The path's alignment will be carefully considered to offer views of Incline Cottage and the Marchogion Incline Plane, encouraging residents and visitors to engage with the site's history. Limiting footways to one side of the road nearest the incline plane and maintaining a green margin on the other side further softens the development's impact on the setting of the historic assets. The lighting design along the route of the former railroad has been carefully considered to sensitively illuminate the pathway while also creating a "dark corridor" to minimize light pollution and benefit local ecology.

By thoughtfully combining these materials and design elements, the proposed development at Incline Fields aims to create a harmonious balance between respecting the past and embracing the future. The design seeks to enhance the setting of the historic assets while providing high-quality, contemporary housing that reflects the unique character of the site and the region.

Interpretation & Access

The Incline Fields development will be designed to be accessible and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with the site's rich heritage, which was a key issue raised in meetings with CADW. While the existing field, though not formally gated, currently gives the impression of private property, the development will facilitate greater public access and encourage exploration of the site's historical features. Vehicular access will be provided into the site, extending to the boundary of the Scheduled Ancient Monument, the Marchogion Incline Plane. This change, while representing a departure from the site's current character, is intended to raise

awareness of the historic tramway route and the adjacent Penrhyn Castle grounds wall.

To further enhance the visitor experience and encourage a deeper appreciation of the site's history, a range of interpretive and amenity features will be integrated throughout the development. Informal play areas, designed to complement the natural setting, will provide opportunities for children to connect with the landscape and learn about the site's past in an engaging way. Benches strategically placed along pathways and within key viewing areas will offer resting points and encourage contemplation of the surrounding historic environment. This approach was considered desirable in discussions with CADW.

Crucially, interpretation boards will be installed along the route of the former Penrhyn slate quarry railroad. These boards will provide information about the history of the railroad, the incline plane, and the broader industrial heritage of the area, enriching the visitor's understanding of the site's significance. The content of the interpretation boards will be carefully researched and designed to be accessible and engaging for a wide audience, incorporating historical images, maps, and narrative to bring the past to life.

By combining improved access with a range of interpretive features and thoughtful design elements, the Incline Fields development will transform a previously underappreciated space into a valuable community asset, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the site's unique heritage.



AGA drawing C1124.010 – Interpretation Route & Amenity Plan



Section AA from C1124.007 – Site Sections

Conclusions

The Incline Fields development has been carefully designed to balance the need for new housing with the imperative to protect and enhance the significance of the site's heritage assets. The earlier, higher-density layout was deemed unsuitable due to its likely negative impact on the setting of the Marchogion Incline Plane and Incline Cottage. The revised scheme, comprising a lower site density of 48 dwellings, represents a more sensitive approach, minimizing harm to the historic environment while providing opportunities for generous amenity space, public interaction and future interpretation of the site's rich industrial heritage.

Key design decisions reflect this commitment to heritage preservation:

Density and Layout: The adjusted dwelling mix and refined layout significantly reduce site density, creating a more comfortable interface between the new housing and the existing historic assets. Increased open space and wider margins, particularly along the eastern boundary, enhance the setting of Incline Cottage and improve its visibility. The careful placement of dwellings ensures that key views towards the heritage assets are retained and framed from the A5.

Built Form and Materials: The careful selection of materials, including render, natural stone, timber cladding, and slate roofs, ensures that the new dwellings complement the character of Incline Cottage and the surrounding landscape. The scale, spacing and massing of the houses have been carefully considered in the setting to avoid overwhelming the historic assets.

Landscape and Screening: The retention of the majority of the mature hedge and mature trees along the Western boundary edge of the A5 provides valuable screening, minimizing the visual impact of the development. Further landscape enhancements will integrate the new housing into the site and enhance the setting of the heritage assets with ecological features to support wildlife and biodiversity.

Community and Housing Needs: The development's provision of a broad mix of affordable housing units responds to local needs while also creating a community of smaller housing clusters that can appreciate and benefit from the unique heritage of the Incline Fields site.

Access and Circulation: The retention of the existing access track to serve Incline Cottage, coupled with the improved site access along its original alignment, respects historical patterns of movement and minimizes disruption to the Scheduled Ancient Monument. Limitations on access within the site will further protect the incline plane from potential damage. The footpath and connected amenity features adjacent to the former route of the Marchogion Incline Plane allows for interaction and appreciation of the heritage assets along the entire length of the site.

In summary, the proposed development at Incline Fields represents a carefully considered and balanced approach, minimizing impact on the heritage assets

while providing much-needed housing and enhancing public access to and understanding of this important historical site.

References

- **The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site, Supplementary Planning Guidance** – Gwynedd Council, 2021
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