

Site Development Brief



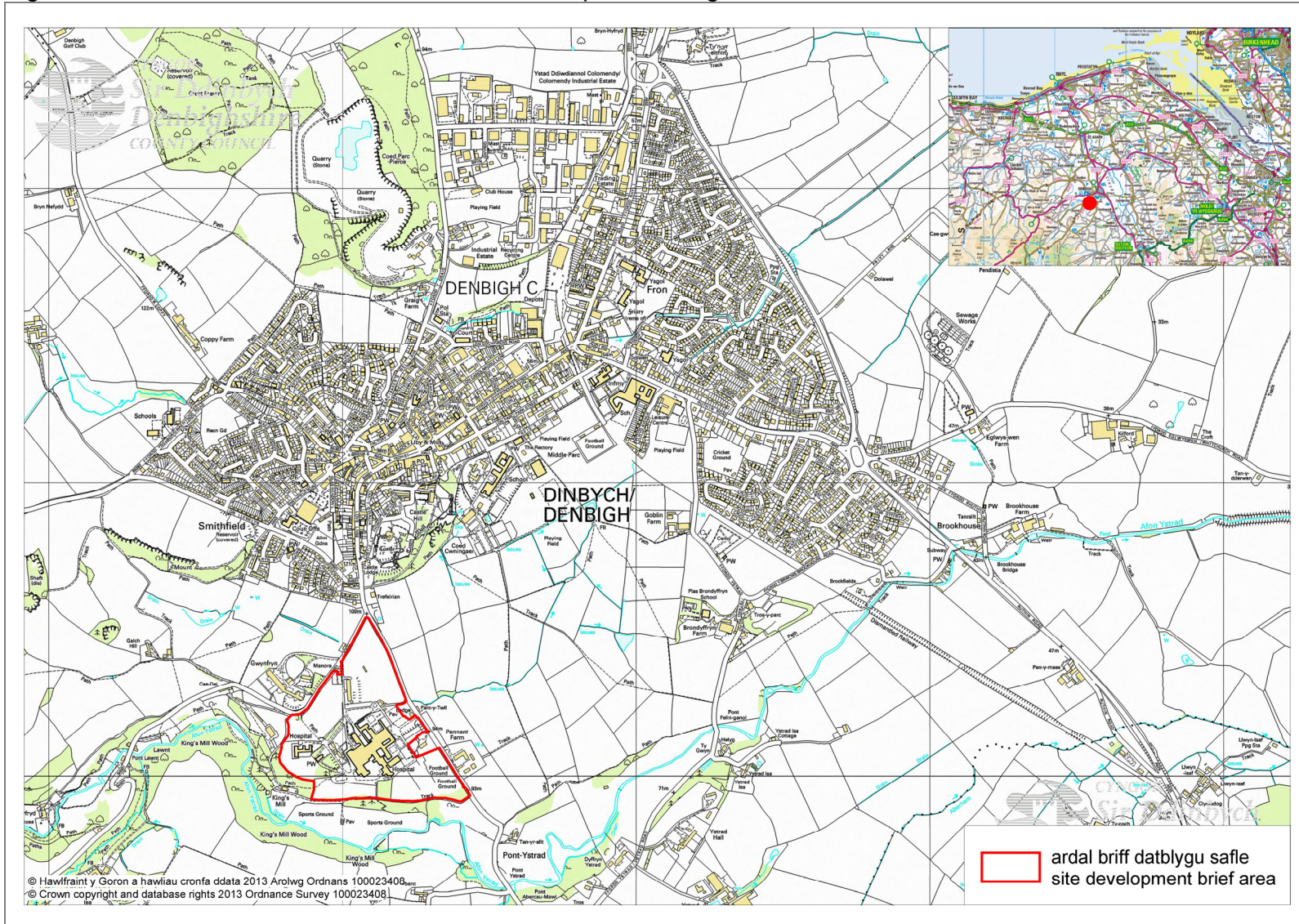
Former North Wales Hospital Denbigh

May 2014

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Figure 1: Location of the Former North Wales Hospital Denbigh



1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 This site development brief is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance notes (SPGs) amplifying Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 (LDP) policies or principles of development for individual site allocations in a format which aims to guide the process, design and quality of new development. These notes are intended to offer detailed guidance to assist members of the public, Members of the Council, potential developers and Officers in discussions prior to the submission of and, consequently, in determination of future planning applications.

2. **Status and Stages in Preparation**

- 2.1 This site development brief was formally adopted by Denbighshire County Council's Planning Committee on 14th May 2014.
- 2.2 The Council's SPG notes are not part of the adopted development plan. The Welsh Government (WG) has confirmed that following public consultation and subsequent Local Planning Authority (LPA) approval, SPGs can be treated as a material planning consideration when LPAs, Planning Inspectors and the Welsh Government determine planning applications and appeals.
- 2.3 This site development brief for the former North Wales Hospital has been prepared in accordance with planning policy contained in Planning Policy Wales (Edition 6), guidance on 'enabling development' and conserving the historic environment provided by Cadw and English Heritage, as well as comprehensive consultation with conservation bodies and the public.

3. **Historic Background**

- 3.1 The former North Wales Hospital in Denbigh was built between 1844 and 1848 to provide care for Welsh-speaking people suffering from mental health problems. Gloucester-based architects Fulljames and Waller designed the original building, which has Grade II* listed building status and is recognised as an extraordinary example of early Victorian asylum architecture in Wales.
- 3.2 Several phases of expansion had been taken place up to the 1950s, creating a hospital complex that includes buildings listed at Grade II* and Grade II, which are of special architectural and historic interest. Providing care for up to 1,500 people and employing some 700 individuals, the hospital became a significant source of employment and economic activity in the Denbigh area.
- 3.3 Figures 2 – 5 illustrate four historic stages of development of the complex and forms of land use at the site in the years 1875, 1899, 1912, and 1967.

Figure 2: Land at the Former North Wales Hospital in 1875

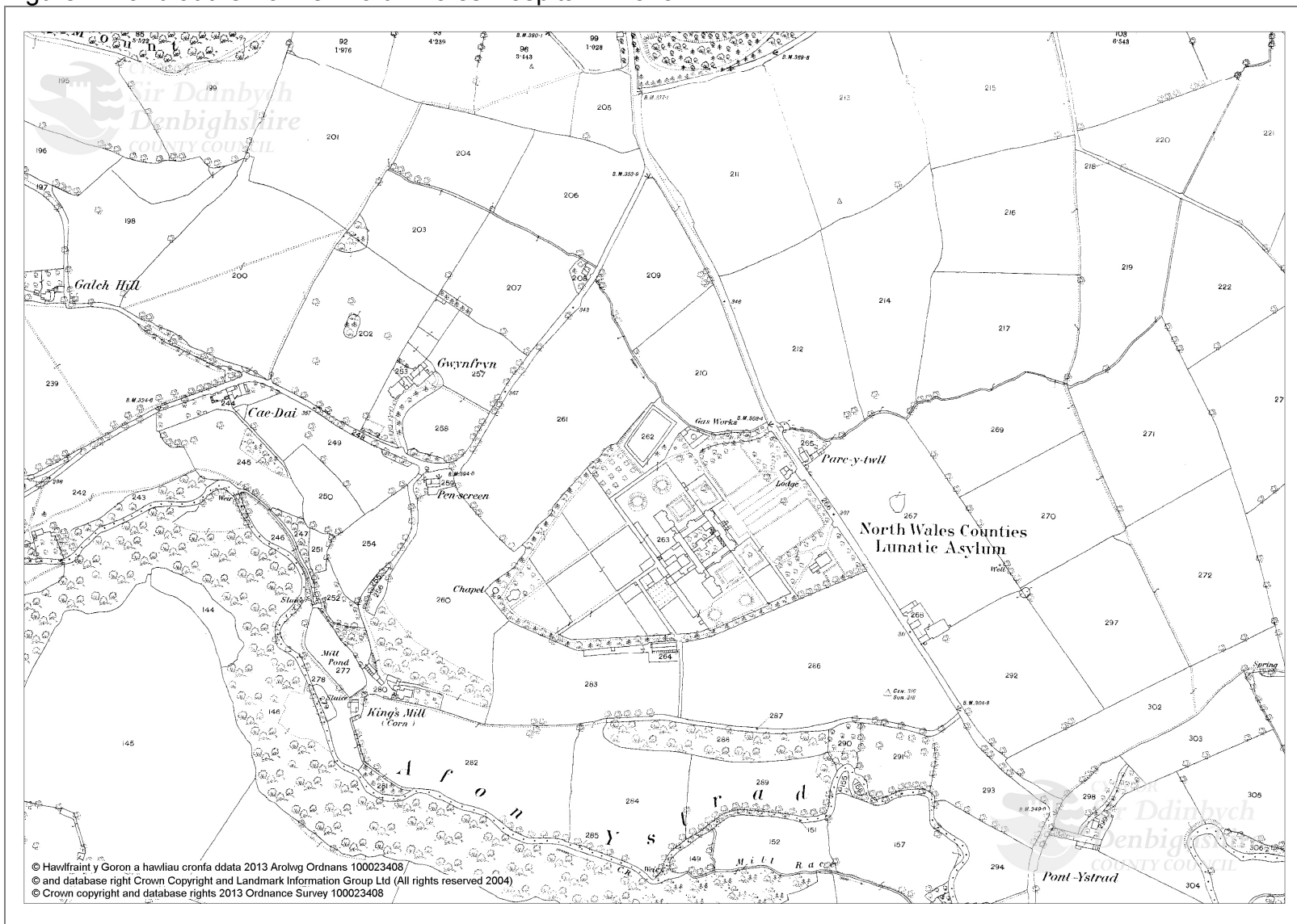


Figure 3: Land at the Former North Wales Hospital in 1899

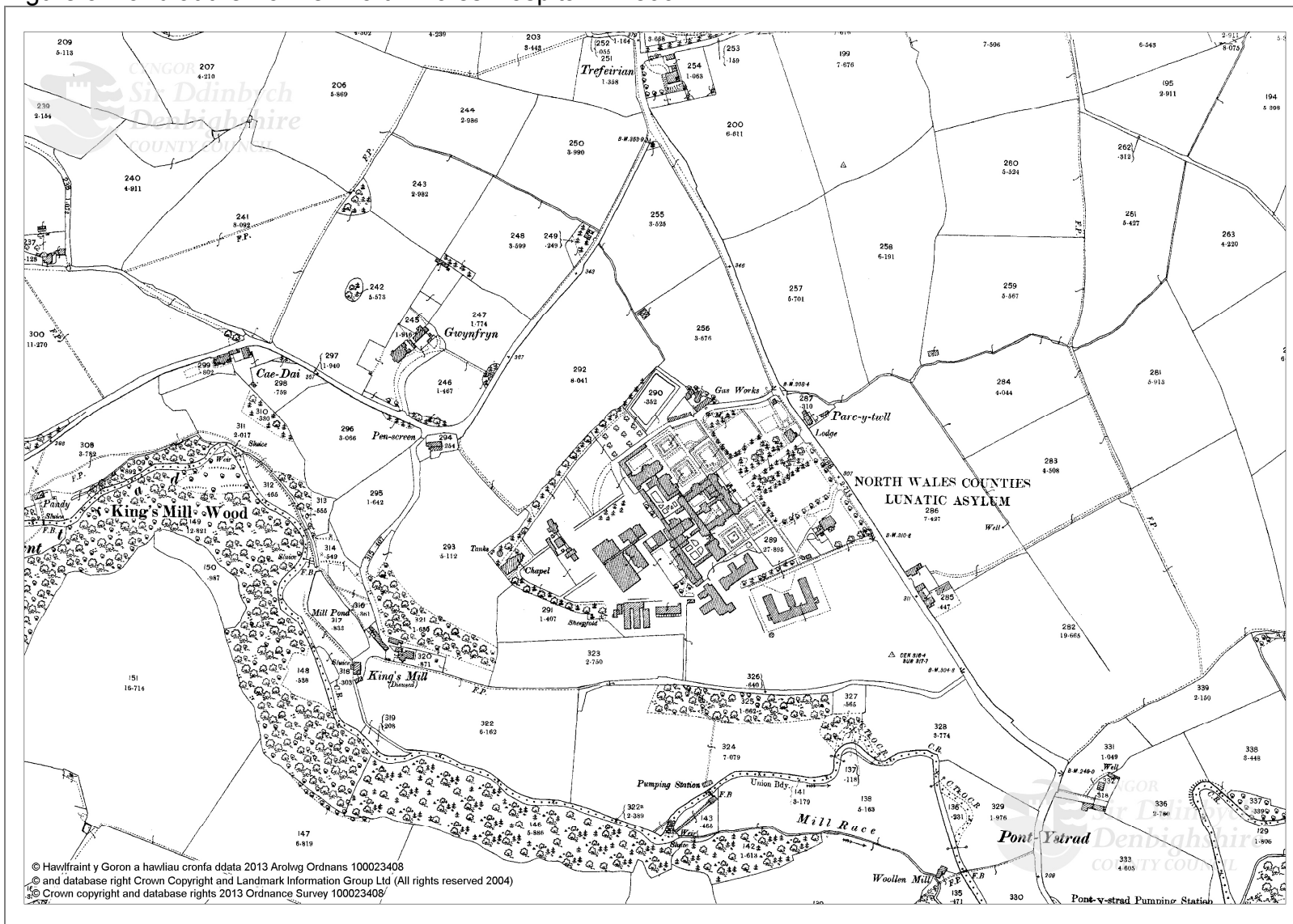


Figure 4: Land at the Former North Wales Hospital in 1912

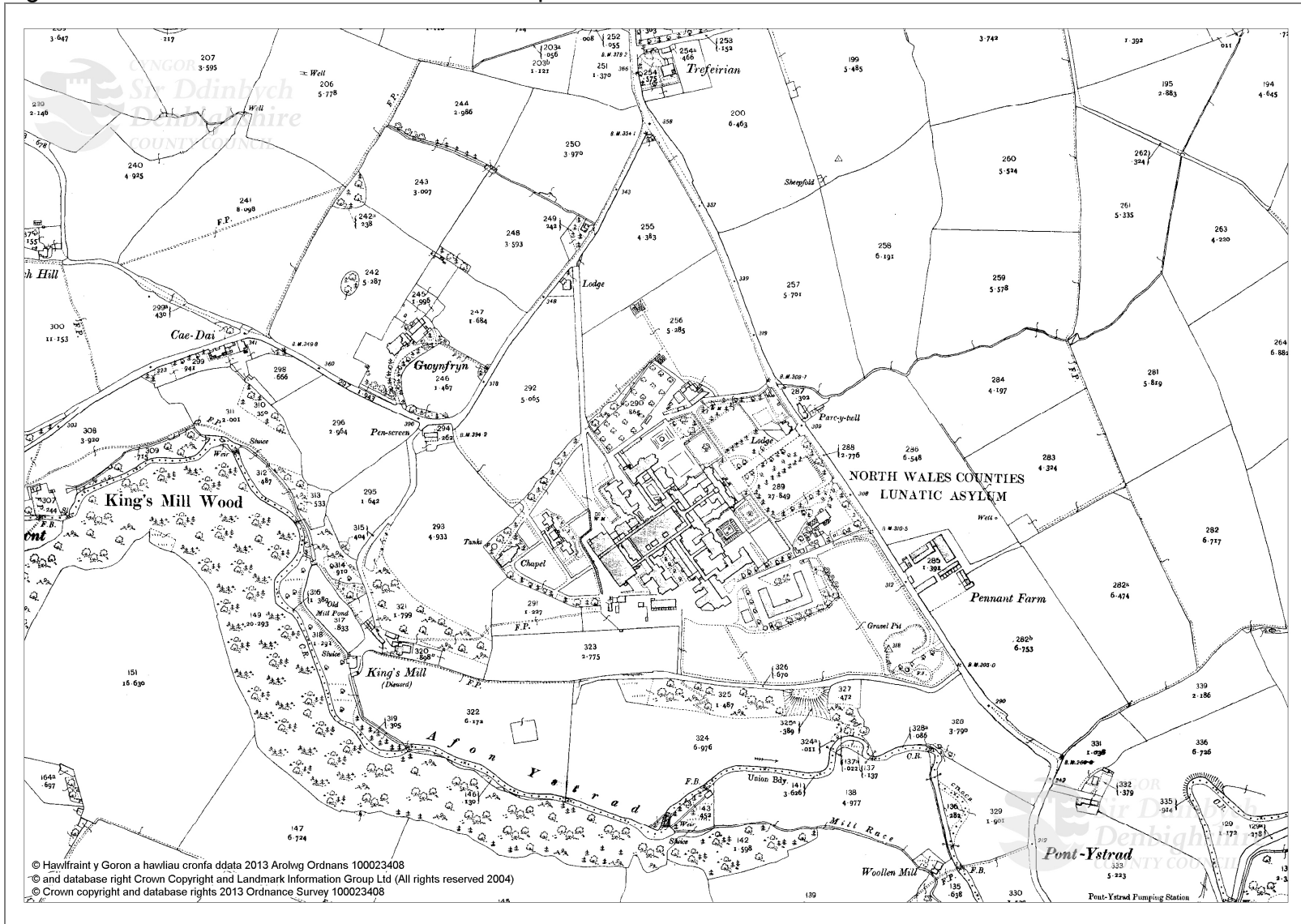
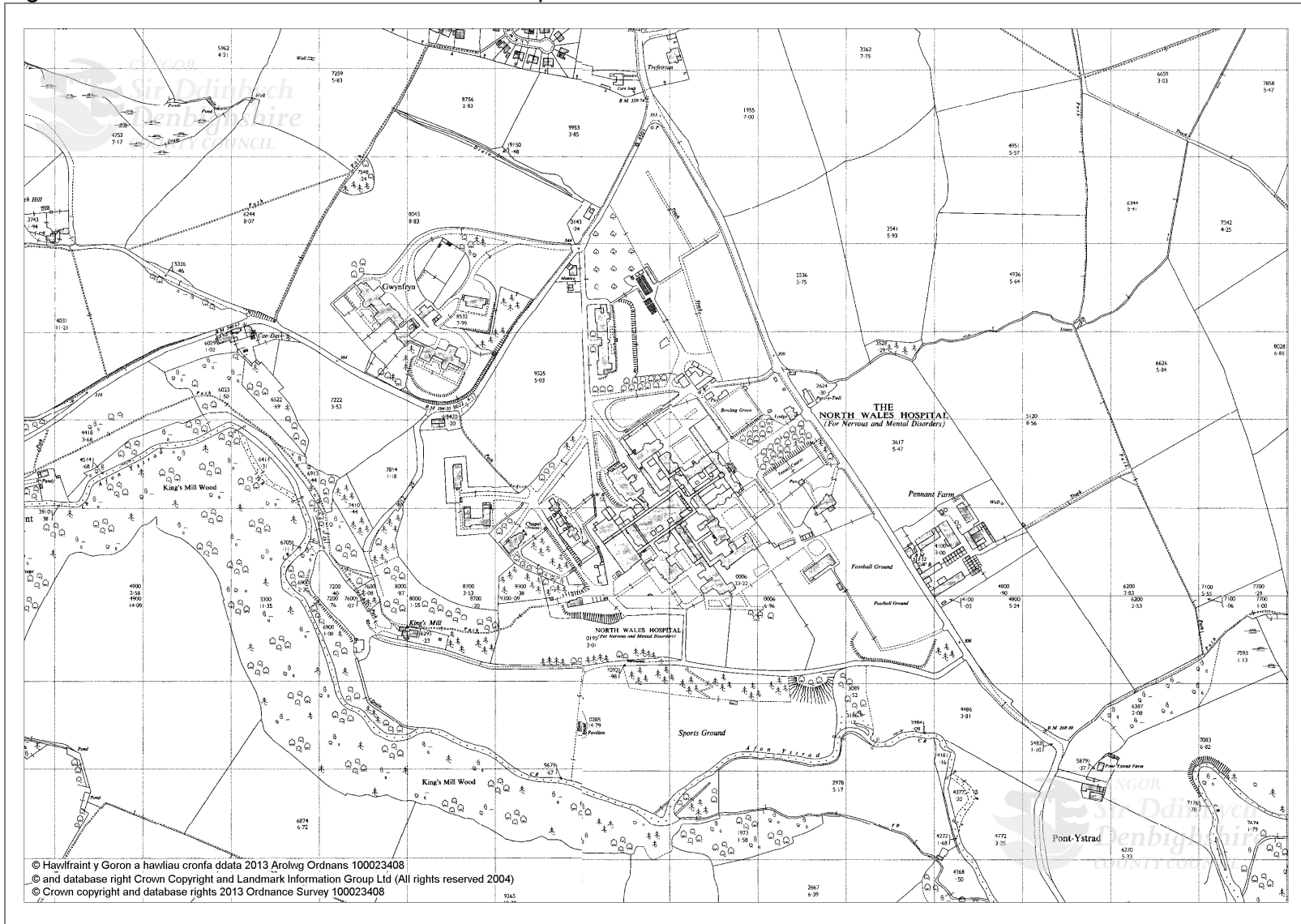


Figure 5: Land at the Former North Wales Hospital in 1967



- 3.4 The placement of former hospital residents in the local community, as part of the then government's policy on 'Care in the Community', led to a phased closure from 1987 up to 1995. Special problems associated with the process emerged, including the loss of a significant local source of employment. The particularly large size of the site and its setting away from the built up area of the town has contributed to the adverse environmental impact of dereliction as alternative uses have not been found quickly for the buildings or the site.
- 3.5 Since the closure of the hospital in 1995, the health authority and subsequent owners considered alternative uses for the site including a category C prison, army personnel centre, Welsh Government offices and education facilities. Although the Denbighshire Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011 (UDP) primarily focussed on employment as the preferred use, planning applications were submitted containing a large element of residential development. At the time of preparing this brief, neither a new form of use for the remaining buildings nor a valid planning permission for any kind of re-development exists.
- 3.6 In June 2011, Denbighshire County Council served an urgent works notice to ensure that urgently required works are carried out to preserve the original Grade II* listed hospital building. Since the site owner didn't comply with the requirements of the urgent work notice, the Council contracted a specialist firm and executed the necessary works to the value of £939,000.

4. Planning Policy and Conserving the Historic Environment

- 4.1 The King Sturge Feasibility Study [2003] concluded that enabling development may be a way forward to finance urgently required preservation work to key listed buildings at the site. In endorsing English Heritage guidance [2008], Cadw has accepted in 2011 that enabling development can exceptionally be a useful tool for securing the long-term future of the associated historic buildings.
- 4.2 English Heritage suggested: "‘Enabling development’ is development that would be unacceptable in planning terms but for the fact that it would bring public benefits sufficient to justify it being carried out, and which could not otherwise be achieved. (...) The public benefits are paid for by the value added to land as a result of the granting of planning permission for its development.'
- 4.3 Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 (LDP) policy VOE 4 sets out policy tests to establish whether enabling development would be an appropriate way forward to deliver a project, given that this kind of development is contrary to established planning policy. The policy aims to ensure that such approach will only be considered in relation to heritage assets designated 'at risk', and that the minimum enabling development should be required to secure the long-term future of those assets.
- 4.4 The Council will consistently seek developers to deliver any development in line with established planning policies before considering enabling

development. Despite the potential non-conformity with planning principles, all proposals must comply with additional legal requirements such as, natural environment protection and built heritage conservation.

- 4.5 Planning Policy Wales [2014] outlines Welsh Government's main policy objectives and principles with regard to 'Conserving the Historic Environment', including development affecting listed buildings. Welsh Government policy aims to preserve listed buildings for future generations. Should the reinstatement of the original use not be feasible because of legal requirements or financial viability, alternative uses may be explored having regard to the character and setting of the listed buildings.
- 4.6 Developers should be aware that any works affecting the character and appearance of a listed building require 'listed building consent', in addition to planning permission for changes of use and related development.
- 4.7 The demolition of any Grade I or Grade II* listed building, or parts thereof, requires the strongest justification, including information regarding condition of the building, cost of any maintenance work in relation to gained community benefits, and the adequacy of efforts to retain the buildings. The Council is unlikely to grant planning permission or listed building consent for the demolition of listed buildings to make way for new development, unless it is satisfied that the new development will actually proceed.

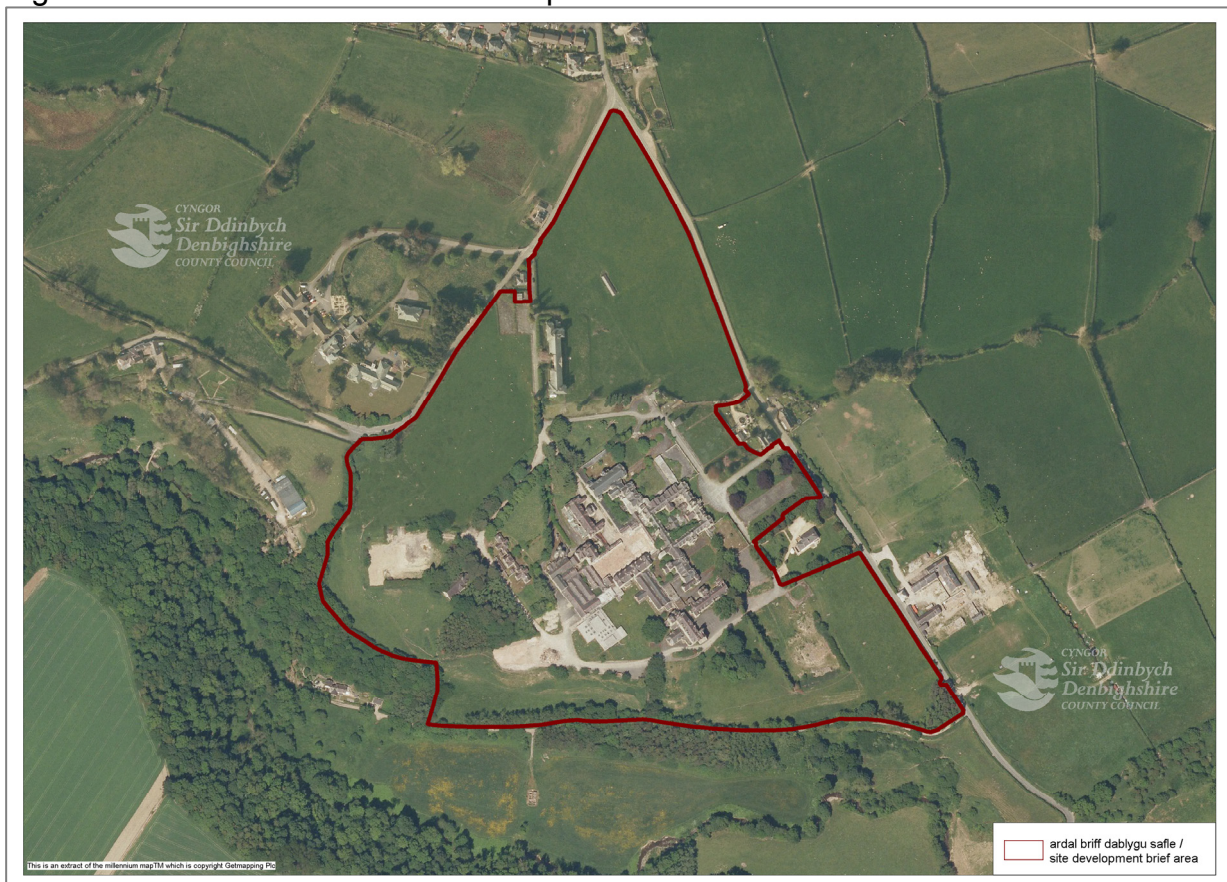
Picture 1: Rear view of original Hospital Building (Listed Building: Grade II*)



5. Site Description

- 5.1 Placed in an outstanding landscape, the site is easily accessible from the A55, a 15min drive. Rhyl train station can be reached within 25min and offers regular services into central London within 2.5 hours.
- 5.2 The former North Wales Hospital complex is located to the south-west of Denbigh, a vibrant market town in the Vale of Clwyd. The buildings are situated in a parkland setting outside the development boundary of the town, approximately 1km from the historic centre.
- 5.3 The site boundaries are defined by two roads and a public footpath, forming a triangle area of about 20.5ha. A separate small group of listed buildings, Grade II, which were part of the original hospital complex, lie immediately to the north-west of the site, split by the B4501 road, and are used as a regional centre for children with autism.
- 5.4 Separated from the former hospital site by Ystrad road to the north-east, Pennant Farm contains some converted outbuildings and is surrounded by land in agricultural use. The southern boundary is defined by a public footpath running through extensive woodland on land steeply sloping down towards the River Ystrad.

Figure 6: Aerial view of the site development brief area in 2009



- 5.5 Since the town was largely built on the north and east sides of Castle Hill and

Mount, views towards the site can be gained from Denbigh Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and 'Ael Y Bryn' estate. The junction of the B4501 and Ystrad road offers extensive views of the remaining buildings as they are not screened off by trees or hidden in what is a gently undulating landscape. Views out from the site include surrounding pasture, Denbigh Castle, and several hill tops located in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

- 5.6 There are two access points to the site: (1) from Ystrad road passing through the main gates towards an open area in front of the main building with clock-tower, and (2) a small road off the B4501 passing the former Nurses Home, a Grade II listed building. There is a spine network of routes lined with mature trees and hedges, defining the principal directions of movement.
- 5.7 Despite the fact that the buildings are of historic and architectural interest, the site is not designated as a Conservation Area, is not included in the list of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, or is covered by an Article 4 Direction. However, it is located within the 'Vale of Clwyd' historic landscape with the exception of the former Erddig Ward in the west.

Picture 2: View towards the site from crossroad of B4501 and Ystrad Road



- 5.8 Ecologists have established that roosting bats are on site. Where bats are present in buildings that could be subject to alteration work or demolition in the future, any work carried out must be in line with nature conservation

principals and comply with the pertinent legislation.

- 5.9 The site is not subject to flood risk due to its elevated position above the River Ystrad. There are no wells present and no known watercourses crossing the site. Natural Resources Wales' (NRW) flood maps show that woodland and fields outside the site boundary but adjacent to the river's water stream are located in a designated C2 flood zone.

6. **Site Vision**

- 6.1 The Council has been jointly working with the Prince's Regeneration Trust since 2002 with the principal aim to preserve the original Grade II* U-shaped hospital building and to find an alternative use for the site. The Trust produced a vision statement in October 2011 to assist the conservation efforts. The following is an excerpt:

The key listed buildings and their parkland setting will be retained, repaired and brought back into appropriate new uses. The protection of the views into and out of the site (...) is of equal importance in this vision. (...) could be a number of areas of new build on this brownfield site and it is anticipated these will offer a range of new uses including residential, employment and healthcare together with any other use deemed appropriate.

- 6.2 The site lends itself to a prestigious single development but the Council is fully aware of previous endeavours and associated challenges to find an occupier for the entire site since closure in 1995. It is accepted that enabling development and a mix of uses is likely to be the most realistic way of preserving the long-term future of these key listed buildings.
- 6.3 This site development brief contains a masterplan that seeks to address the site vision and indicates a spatial direction for development of the site. It identifies opportunities for a range of residential, economic, environmental and transport enhancements to secure the area's future success.

7. **Masterplan Framework**

- 7.1 The masterplan, see figure 7 page 15, sets out an indicative land use development and road pattern to guide future development of the site. It identifies:
- Key historic listed buildings, Grade II and Grade II*, to be restored and developed;
 - Buildings with extant listed building consent (lbc) for demolition and other listed buildings for which demolition is supported but lbc required,
 - Buildings which may be considered for demolition but could be retained if a viable / suitable end use is found;
 - Areas for residential development (marked 02 to 05) taking advantage of outstanding locations and views, without compromising the setting of the key listed buildings;

- An area for residential and mixed use development (marked 06), for example employment live / work units, including areas retaining certain existing buildings if a suitable end use is found and is supported by viability arguments;
- Land to remain undeveloped but potentially transformed into open recreation space at a later stage;
- Despite not being specifically marked on the master plan, the former Nurses Home may be used for residential purposes or community facilities;
- Main routes for vehicular movement; and
- Possible vehicular access points.

Phasing of Development

7.2 The following sections lay out a preferred approach to securing the long-term future of the key listed buildings by means of enabling development. Phasing may be defined by prevailing market conditions and demand for local housing, the amount of money secured to fund restoration works, and the amount of work necessary to complete the works.

Phase 1 In serving the urgent works note, the Council ensured that urgently required works are carried out to preserve the original Grade II* listed hospital building in area 01.

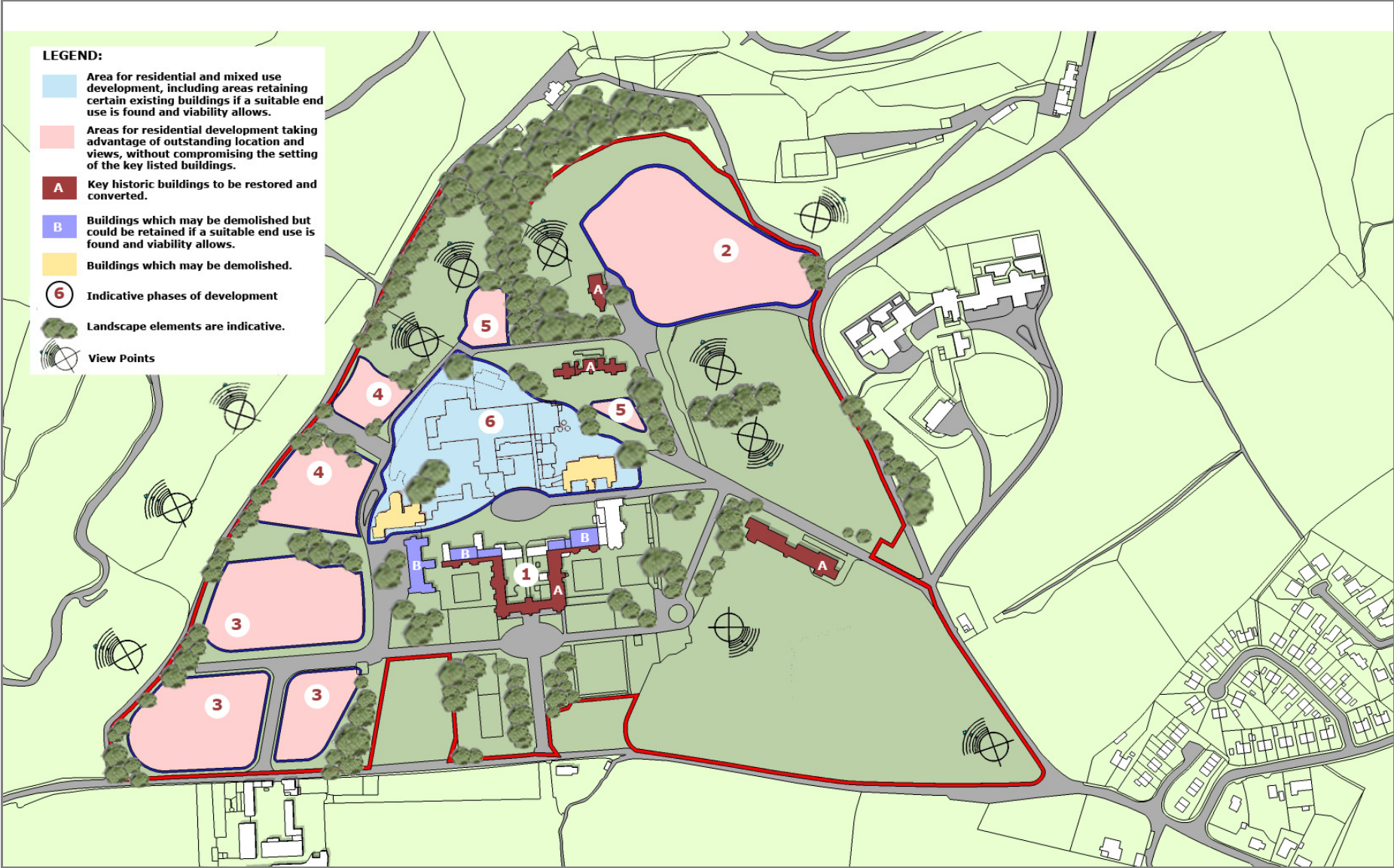
Phase 2 Area 02 would be sold for enabling residential development. Sale proceedings would be used to fund up-front costs for infrastructure and landscape measures. For example, creating new vehicular access points, clearing debris or carrying out urgent repairs to those listed buildings. Initial works would be limited by the amount of sale proceedings. Area 03 would be marketed for enabling residential development in the same period of time.

Phase 3 Area 03 would be sold and sale proceeds would be used for the first phase of the key listed buildings work, in particular the U-shaped original hospital building (Grade II*) – area 01. All required works will need to be conducted by a professional team experienced in listed building restoration work.

Phase 4 Area 04 would be sold for enabling residential development, with the sale proceeds used to continue the restoration work to the key listed buildings. Depending on the structural soundness of other important buildings in Area 06, small business or office units could be developed to raise additional funds for the ongoing works.

Phase 5 The remaining Areas 05 and 06 would be sold for enabling development to permit a mix of uses – residential, health, community or education facilities. All sale proceeds would be used for the final phase of restoration of the key listed buildings.

Figure 7: Masterplan



- 7.3 The extent of enabling development permitted will be limited to what is reasonably required to ensure the restoration of the identified key listed buildings. Restoration of other buildings would be supported as part of the master plan but would need to be funded by other sources.
- 7.4 The Council would not deny developers a reasonable profit in return for their investment in line with guidance provided by English Heritage [2008] paragraph 5.12 onwards.

8. Access and Movement

- 8.1 Whilst the existing local highway network may accommodate the current and a modest increase in levels of traffic flows, the full proposed development and a satisfactory marketing of the whole site is unlikely to be achieved without additional road improvements. Individual measures, amount and extent of work should be informed by an assessment of the likely impact on the existing network, and public transport requirements of any detailed proposals.
- 8.2 The existing access off Ystrad road towards the main former hospital buildings may be transformed into a walking and cycling access point only. Besides improvement works to the minor route off the B4501 which passes the former Nurses Home, it is suggested two additional access points for vehicular traffic could be created from the highway network to serve the new residential areas. Consultation with the Local Authority should be undertaken in respect of the detailing.
- 8.3 There are public footpaths circulating and crossing the site providing vital links with the local Public Right Of Way (PROW) network but they have partly been fenced off to restrict access by trespassers. Public access must be restored and retained within any development on the site, and should be improved and extended for the use of cycles where practical as an integral part of the scheme.
- 8.4 It is accepted that the location outside the town centre is likely to generate additional car-based trips to essential facilities, e.g. retail and education. However, potential developers are expected to negotiate with public transport service providers the extension of the local bus network to serve the site to provide an alternative means of transport.
- 8.5 Any development must ensure that the location and detailing of parking spaces for residents and other occupants does not adversely affect the setting of the listed buildings on site. Design solutions should be discussed as part of the planning application having regard to guidance provided by 'Manual for Streets'.

9. Design Principles

- 9.1 The Denbigh Hospital redevelopment Project is of national importance. The site offers a unique opportunity to develop a remarkably attractive site set in

beautiful countryside and to save a fine group of listed buildings the most important of which has been described by Cadw as the most important purpose built hospital in Wales.

- 9.2 The masterplan has been drafted following very careful consideration of the key features of the site. It outlines how the site could be developed, in principle; in such a way that would be acceptable to Denbighshire County Council (DCC) Planning Authority any variation from the plan would need a very strong justification.
- 9.3 The masterplan identifies various categories of proposed land use and outlines the preferred approach to development - 'enabling development', which is intended to release capital to repair the remaining listed building on the site. Whilst it is preferred that listed buildings are retained, repaired and adapted to new uses without enabling development, realistically DCC recognises that this is not likely to be financially viable hence the acceptance of the principle of enabling development. However enabling development should not harm the heritage asset, the listed buildings, which we are trying to save or their setting. Therefore the essential setting has also been identified on the masterplan so this area is protected from significant development.

Picture 3: Key historic building: former Chapel (Listed Building: Grade II)



- 9.4 It is expected that the following will be taken into account in drafting proposals for the site:
- 9.5
- The site lies close to the historic town of Denbigh, a town which has a

unique character that has emerged out of centuries of development and change. The hospital, while not physically within the town became part of the town socially culturally and economically. The Hospital was hugely important to the town so its closure was a major blow from which the town has yet to fully recover. Reuse of the hospital is important to the people of Denbigh. Any new development should recognise this historic connection and attempt to re-establish it. Therefore DCC would welcome proposals which would offer opportunities for the public to visit the site for recreational, cultural and social purposes.

- 9.6 ▪ The listed buildings on the site vary in style and form. The main building includes the first phase of development which is the most important building on the site architecturally and historically. However, due to neglect, vandalism and theft it is in poor condition. Recently, the Council stepped in to carry out urgent works on phase 1 which included the removal of all the rotted timber and the erection of a temporary roof. As a direct consequence of the long term neglect and the need to take emergency measures the building has lost much of its architectural significance internally. While this is disappointing it does offer more flexibility in adapting the building to alternative uses.
- 9.7 ▪ The listed buildings on the site need to be given prominence in any proposals for this site. In the design of new development density scale and massing should be given careful thought. It may be, for example, that density varies from one area to another allowing the scale and massing to be more relevant to the listed buildings without challenging their prominence.
- 9.8 ▪ There has already been some demolition of listed buildings. This work had listed buildings consent but some buildings with listed building consent have not been demolished. Further demolition over and above that already consented may be necessary. Building materials including locally sourced building stone remain stored on site for possible reuse.
- 9.9 ▪ It is important that development on the site is relevant to the locality and helps reinforce local distinctiveness and gives a sense of place. The reuse of local building materials will help with this objective. Any new materials should be carefully chosen taking into account colour and texture. Design should take account of but not necessarily copy local vernacular.
- 9.10 ▪ The masterplan identifies important views to and from the site. These can be reinforced by careful layout planning, landscaping, screening and framing.
- 9.11 ▪ Landscaping and topography will be key factors in developing a scheme for the site. A full landscape assessment and tree survey will be an essential part of the process. Some areas will be difficult to develop due to topography. Careful consideration should be given as to how these areas are to be used and maintained. Dedicated areas for improving

biodiversity would be welcome.

- 9.12 ▪ DCC would welcome innovation in any new development such as live/work units, maximising renewable energy sources, passive energy capture, cycle routes, play streets, sustainable urban drainage systems etc.
- 9.13 ▪ Promotion of the Welsh language should be integral to the scheme.

10. **Planning Obligations and Contributions towards Infrastructure provision**

- 10.1 LDP policy BSC3 generally sets out infrastructure contributions to be secured from development. However, the Council will consider the case for limited or no affordable housing and open space provision depending on the financial appraisal and economic viability of detailed proposals for this site. The Council's principle aim is to ensure development on the site generates sufficient income to restore key listed buildings. Open and recreation space should be integrated into the site design.
- 10.2 Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water (DCWW) have confirmed at the Deposit - LDP public consultation stage that any larger residential development in Denbigh may not be accommodated at the Company's Waste Water Treatment Works unless essential improvement works take place. The Company have pointed out that should any development occur in advance of DCWW's Capital Investment, developers may be required to fund these essential capacity improvements.
- 10.3 DCWW does not envisage any problems with the provision of water supply or with the piped public sewerage system for domestic foul discharge required for residential development. The site is crossed by a water main and a public sewer which both may restrict the detailed location of new build development. Applicants should contact the service provider to clarify these details and technical requirements for development close to utilities.
- 10.4 Wales & West Utilities (former National Grid Transco), the infrastructure provider for gas distribution pipelines, does not have any pipelines crossing the former hospital site but gas mains run along the B4501 road from the town towards the site entrance of a building called 'Manora'. Developers should contact individual gas service provider to enquire whether demand potentially arising from additional development can be satisfied.

11. **Further Considerations**

- 11.1 Investigations need to be made to establish whether there are any archaeological interests on site, which require further consideration. Developers are advised to contact the County Archaeologist regarding potential measures to safeguard or enhance them if necessary.
- 11.2 The site has been used as a regional hospital for over 140 years, handling

chemicals and treating large amounts of waste. A site survey will be required at the appropriate stage in the planning process to determine the extent of any contamination and what remediation work may be necessary.

- 11.3 Protected bat species are understood to be present in some buildings on site but the exact roosting places need to be established. Developers are advised to contact Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the County Biodiversity Officer to discuss the approach to survey and mitigation proposals, including whether a licence to disturb a protected species is required. Thought should be given to incorporating roosts within buildings and protecting flight paths and foraging areas.
- 11.4 In view of the topography of the land, development should incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to limit land drainage or surface water runoff discharging to the public sewer or causing surface water flooding due to soil sealing.
- 11.5 Site maintenance matters need to be addressed from the start of any development, including open and recreation space on site, drainage pipes and culverts, and route improvements.

12. **Contacts / Sources**

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Tel.: 01824 706916
Email: ldp@denbighshire.gov.uk

Cadw, Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales, published 2011

Denbighshire County Council, Denbighshire Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011, adopted July 2002

Denbighshire County Council, various documents submitted in support of planning applications (see Appendix 1)

Denbighshire County Council, Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021, adopted June 2013

English Heritage, Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places, published 2008

King Sturge, Report and feasibility advice in support of the proposed planning application on Former North Wales Hospital, November 2004, (planning application ref: 01/2004/1445/PO)

Welsh Government, Planning Policy Wales (Edition 6), November 2014

A1. **Appendix 1: Planning History**

- A1.1 This section summarises major planning applications that have been submitted after 1995 with the aim of establishing alternative uses for the site. Prior to hospital closure, applications were for a range of minor extensions and alterations to parts of the complex in relation to its use as a hospital.
- A1.2 Planning Application (PA) ref.: 01/595/96/PO – The first application contained proposals for the conversion of the main building to residential use (100 units), and the development of the surrounding 12 hectares for 220 to 270 dwellings. In January 1997, permission was refused on the grounds of prematurity with regard to the emerging UDP, excessive number of dwellings, highway impact, and adverse impact on Denbigh town with respect to its character and community services.
- A1.3 PA ref.: 01/55/97/PO – The second application was for the residential development of 3.4 hectares of land and a 100 unit conversion of the main block for residential purposes, in effect an amended version of the previous application. In April 1997, the application was refused on grounds of prematurity with regard to the UDP and adverse impact on the setting of the listed buildings and local landscape.
- A1.4 PA ref.: 01/926/97/PO – This application sought consent for a mixed development containing elements of industrial, residential, educational, and leisure use. The applicant lodged an appeal against non-determination (which was later withdrawn), which prevented the Council from making a formal decision. If it had been in the position to determine this application, the Council would have refused planning permission on the following grounds: (1) safeguards for securing the restoration and setting of the listed building were not sufficient and (2) the release of the housing land outside of the development boundary in the Glyndwr District Local Plan could not be justified based on prematurity in relation to the preparation and adoption of the Denbighshire UDP.
- A1.5 After the Health Authority sold the site in 1998, the new site owner submitted applications in early 2000 comprising the change of use of 4 detached buildings, (not the main block), and the development of 2.7 hectares of land for residential purposes. The applications were never progressed to determination as the agents failed to supply additional information requested by the Council.
- A1.6 In 2002, the site was sold again and the new owner pursued matters by setting up a steering group with the Prince of Wales Phoenix Trust (which became part of the Prince's Regeneration Trust in 2006), Denbighshire County Council, Cadw and Welsh Development Agency (integrated within WG in 2006). The group appointed King Sturge (Property Consultants) and Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams (Architects) to undertake a further feasibility study to assess the potential re-use options for the site in order to restore and preserve the principal listed buildings and parkland. The studies' results and recommendations informed the principles of the following application in 2004.

- A1.7 PA ref.: 01/2004/1445/PO – The most recent planning application for this site sought planning consent for the restoration, partial demolition, and change of use of individual buildings for residential, business and community use. In addition, it was proposed to develop adjacent land and buildings for residential, commercial and recreation use. The later part of the proposal contained elements of project feasibility and viability in the form of enabling development. In September 2006, the Council granted permission. The planning permission lapsed in 2009 as no development had commenced.
- A1.8 Listed building consent ref: 01/2007/0750/LB – Listed building consent for the partial demolition of former hospital buildings was granted in April 2008. Some buildings have already been demolished as a result of the approval, for example in the Erddig ward. Developers may want to ascertain whether parts of their proposal can be carried out within the framework of the listed building consent.