

**Conservation  
Areas:  
An essential  
guide to their  
enhancement**

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## The Headlines

This guidance document sets out considerations which should inform any proposals for change within Carmarthenshire's Conservation Areas. The following is a list of the key elements which are fundamental to this guide:

1. Conservation Areas are distinct areas in our rural and urban communities, selected for their special architectural or historic interest.

**Architectural interest** could include a good example of a particular type of settlement or a group of buildings of distinctive regional or local style or of high architectural quality.

**Historic interest** is associated with the historic evolution of a place, a particular period or with a social, economic or cultural movement. Examples could include early industrial housing and areas where archaeological, architectural or topographical evidence of the origins and main periods of development have survived particularly well.

2. In the planning system applications for change within a Conservation Area are assessed to understand the **effect that a development might have on the architectural or historic importance of an area**.
3. Carmarthenshire's protected buildings and Conservation Areas not only form part of the story and identity of our county and the people that live in it, but they also are **important for economic and social revival**. Development which promotes the conservation values of an area are more likely to be economically sustainable.

4. Every alteration, addition to a building or new building in a conservation area must make a significant improvement to the visual quality of that area. It must at least **preserve but preferably enhance the historic or architectural values** for which that Conservation Area has been selected.

5. The requirement that development in a Conservation Area preserves or enhances that area is enshrined in Primary Legislation in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It is this legislation which guides the Local Authority Built Heritage Officers in making their professional decisions about whether or not a proposed change **preserves or enhances a Conservation Area**.

6. Proposals for any changes in a Conservation Area must at least consider: **views** within and from an area; the **setting** of a building in relation to other buildings in the area; building **materials**, building **heights**; relationship to **plots**; architectural **details**; **public realm**; **boundary materials**. Further detail is provided in this document.

7. **Conservation Area Appraisals** can provide more detail on the special values and considerations of individual Conservation Areas.

## Introduction

This guide provides information to support the management of change within Carmarthenshire's historic environment. It sets out the County Council's expectations for development and aims to assist in the implementation of positive and enduring schemes for the sustainable development of the county's towns and rural communities.

It is primarily for those who are engaged in commissioning and carrying out development, be this from within or external to the Council, but it is also intended to be of use to local community groups, amenity bodies, other interested parties and the wider public. Council members and officers will use these design principles when assessing development proposals.

## Using this guidance

The document is set out in 3 parts:

[Part 1](#): The first part sets out the background and policy context which underpins a series of development principles.

[Part 2](#): The second part provides practical guidance in support of these principles, with a step-by-step guide to assessing proposals, alongside examples and detailed explanations of key terms.

[Part 3](#): The final part sets out common issues and management proposals to help identify where and how harm is occurring and prevent further deterioration.

The Appendix to the plan provides links to further guidance and policies which may be of help.

## PART 1 - Carmarthenshire's Built Heritage

The recognized importance of Carmarthenshire's historic built environment and the value attached to it by the County Council and the people who live and work here can be gauged by the fact that there are **27 designated Conservation Areas** in the County. It also contains a very special architectural and historic legacy, with over **1800 buildings and structures listed** for their architectural or historic interest and **370 Scheduled Monuments** of national archaeological significance. When the requirement for development occurs, this should be regarded as an exciting opportunity to support and enhance this interest whilst reinforcing distinctive local characteristics and creating distinct places of quality.

Alongside its built heritage, Carmarthenshire has **81 sites of Special Scientific Interest**, **2 Special Protection Areas** and **7 Special Areas of Conservation**, which form the backdrop to the urban environments which sit between. As such, advice within this document should also be used to guide proposals for areas which lie alongside designated places, buildings, and structures.

Although this document refers in the main to designated Conservation Areas, it is recognized that there will be other areas of historic or architectural interest which may be deemed worthy of designation but have not yet been adopted as such. Therefore, the guidance contained in this document should be referred to when looking at proposals within any existing historic context. Further guidance on areas which may be under consideration for designation can be sought from the County Council's Built Heritage officers.



*Kidwelly Castle*

## 1.1 What is a Conservation Area

*Conservation areas (CAs) are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.*

CAs are distinct parts of the historic environment designated by Local Planning Authorities for their special architectural or historic interest. **Architectural interest** could include a good example of a particular type of settlement, town planning, or a group of buildings of distinctive regional or local style or of high architectural quality. **Historic interest** is associated the historic evolution of a place, a particular period or with social, economic, or cultural movements such as early industrial housing and areas where archaeological, architectural, or topographical evidence of the origins and main periods of development have survived particularly well.





*Former Medieval marketplace in Carmarthen still recognisable in its historic form*



*Grade 1 listed Llanelly House*



*Penllwyn Park in the Picton Terrace Conservation Area in Carmarthen. A high quality development and example of the development of social classes*



*Primary and secondary streets within their original position, form and use within Llandeilo*





*Industrial housing within Picton Terrace Conservation Area*



*River Gwendraeth in Kidwelly which divides the 'Castle' and 'Town' settlements*



*Section of historic boundary wall to the site of a former chapel in Llandeilo*



*The Bulwark Monumnet civil war site in Lammas Street Conservation Area in Carmarthen*

## 1.2 Undertaking development in a Conservation Area

Within the planning system, applications for change within a CA are assessed to understand the effect that the development might have on architectural or historic importance. There are also additional regulatory controls placed upon certain works within CAs. This includes the removal of certain Permitted Development Rights and additional consent required for demolition, works to trees and advertisements in Conservation Areas. In a Conservation Area the Built Heritage Officer will be consulted upon applications for development and change. These terms are expanded upon in Part 3 of this plan.



*Late 20th Century development adjoining the Guildhall Square in Carmarthen*

### 1.3 Investing in our built heritage

*‘Every settlement across the United Kingdom, whether a medieval market town or a post-war city centre, has a unique and distinctive history that can be harnessed to help achieve a prosperous future. Those with the power to shape the places where we live, work and visit are increasingly recognising that heritage is the key that unlocks success. It creates value and sustains economic vitality, supporting jobs and attracting investment. Heritage provides a canvas for flourishing cultural activity and it helps build connected and healthy communities. It is the vital factor underpinning vibrant and successful places’.*

#### *Historic England, Placemaking and Regeneration*

Our built heritage is a huge resource which helps to shape how our towns and villages look and feel. Giving new life to these assets has been one of the cornerstones of the **economic and social revival of our towns**. The integration of heritage into regeneration projects has played an increasingly important and successful role in regeneration schemes, providing opportunities for conservation and development to work together to transform the built environment.

Even when in a poor or vacant condition, our **historic buildings remains an ‘asset’** with the ability to enrich our experience of our surroundings through their fabric or their historic or community associations. Heritage assets are also a key component of **sustainable development**.

Heritage is valued by people and communities, and it forms part, or sometimes all, of the **identity of a place**. However, they can sometimes be perceived as an obstacle to regeneration, being considered too costly, unviable, lacking efficiency and unable to meet occupiers or developers wishes.



*Former vicarage bordering Carmarthen Park now in commercial use*



*Former Grade II listed provisions market currently under development in Llandeilo to provide new employment space*

The key is to find **optimum viable** use for an asset which can be accommodated without impacting its conservation value and which is economically sustainable. It is also important to recognise that there is a cost to not endeavouring to successfully integrate heritage buildings into regeneration schemes. A heritage asset which does not receive sufficient care and maintenance can quickly fall into disrepair, lower the overall environmental quality, and counteract other initiatives that are taking place.

Positive gains that investing in our built heritage can bring include **economic, social, environmental, cultural, and personal benefits**. There are numerous advantages and crossovers that investment, reuse, adaptation, and thoughtful contextual design can bring including: creating a sense of pride of place; making places feel safer leading to a reduction in crime; increasing visitor numbers; encouraging forward investment.

Design proposals can include change of use, new development, public realm and highways repair and alteration, hard and soft landscaping schemes, the reuse of vacant floorspace and the alteration of existing buildings. For each of these there is the exciting opportunity to support and enhance the economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits **whilst reinforcing distinctive local characteristics and creating distinct places of quality**. However, for these benefits to be taken advantage of, it is vital that the design principles set out within this document are followed.

## 1.4 Design Principles

**‘Any proposals within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area should preserve or enhance its significance’**

Conservation Areas are designated due to their historic importance, and the preservation or enhancement of this significance is a fundamental requirement of any proposals brought to the Council. **Significance may reside in both tangible and intangible elements** (see page 15 for examples). A recognition of **where significance lies and the corresponding impact** proposals have upon this needs to be understood to ensure this core objective is achieved.



*Contemporary development in Newcastle Emlyn which disrupts the views through the Conservation Area*

**‘All proposals should respect the local character and distinctiveness of the area under consideration’**

It is important to ensure that every alteration or addition makes a significantly **greater contribution to the visual quality of the area than that which they replace**. In this way, every site will be regarded as having the potential to intensify the local character. Each town within Carmarthenshire has an **underlying and local distinctiveness** which distinguish them from other parts of the county. This character needs to be thoroughly understood and addressed by those responsible for the development of proposals if their work is to form a natural part of existing townscapes.



*An example of insensitive late 20th Century development next to the Grade II listed Llanelli central library*

**'Where possible, proposals should actively contribute to making places more accessible and environmentally sustainable'**

The development of proposals which have a shorter-term economic life than those they are replacing is not compatible with sustainability objectives. Therefore, it follows that if **proposals are to be expected to have permanence, their inherent design quality, weathering and specification of high quality, energy efficient construction and durable materials** will become an increasingly important requirement. The **reuse** of existing historic buildings needs to be considered **before demolition** is considered as an acceptable alternative. The County Council also recognises the importance of achieving buildings and places that are welcoming and beneficial to all groups of users. This includes people with disabilities, and it will seek **inclusive designs**.



*Good quality paving materials can have a much longer life span than alternatives and create an attractive and high quality public realm*

**'Proposals should consider their impact on the wider setting of a place'**

The character and **significance of a place can reside as much in its setting as within the designated area** itself. Continued protection will be secured by the rigorous assessment of any potential negative impact of new development proposals, including larger buildings some distance away. This will be an important material consideration when the County Council determines such applications.



*Due to the topography of much of the county, longer panoramic views are common and can be disrupted by poorly sited and designed development*

**'New development should be considered of a design which is more than just acceptable'**

The County Council is determined to raise the general quality of Conservation Areas, as well as those areas which may warrant designation. As such, well-designed, new development will play a vital role. **Good design is not only about the design itself but is also about harmony with its surroundings.** The first is whether the design is bad in itself, the second is whether, even if the design is not poor in itself, it would be harmful on a particular site. Proposals must seek to understand the location into which they are designing, **visibly responding to their immediate context.**



*Contemporary development in Picton Terrace Conservation Area which may be considered of good design but which does not sit comfortably in the streetscape*



*Intangible elements - Former road layouts, even if altered in regard to materials and the density of development, can retain a link to past inhabitation*



*Intangible elements - The uses of buildings such as churches and churchyards retain links to the people and events which have come before*



*Tangible elements - Ruins, monuments and archaeological remains act as physical connections to the past*



*Tangible elements - The retention of original materials and designs such as joinery, roof coverings and historic boundaries are recognisable historic elements*



## Part 2 - A Step-by-Step guide

Local planning authorities must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas, and therefore will scrutinise planning applications closely with these objectives in mind.

The step-by-step guide below sets out the processes you should follow when developing a proposal within a Conservation Area. Section 2.1 provides a more detailed analysis of some of the terms set out below, as well as providing examples.

STEP 1: Review the Conservation Area Appraisal



STEP 2: Understand contribution to the conservation area



STEP 3: Understand impact of the proposal on that significance



STEP 4: Consider how to avoid, minimise, and mitigate harmful impacts



STEP 5: Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance



STEP 6: Consider the justification for any harmful impacts

#### STEP 1: Review the Conservation Area Appraisal

Development proposals that affect the historic environment are much more likely to gain the necessary permissions and create successful places if they are designed with the knowledge and understanding of the special interest (significance) of the conservation area they may affect. The first step is to **understand the significance of the conservation area and, if relevant, the contribution of its setting to its significance**. A conservation area appraisal is the foundation for positive management and the starting point for anyone considering change within a conservation area. It provides a detailed picture of what makes an area special and can be used to identify opportunities and priorities for action. The appraisal offers a shared understanding of character and importance, and highlights problems and potential. It also helps to ensure consistent decision making and may support funding bids for enhancements. Decision makers should use this document to understand what makes the conservation area special along with its character and appearance. Where these documents do not exist, the Built Heritage team can provide assistance and guidance to understand the significance of a particular area.

STEP 2: Understand what contribution the site/building in question makes to the conservation area's character and appearance and special architectural and historic interest (overall significance).

Consider whether the nature of the significance of the affected assets requires an expert assessment to gain the necessary level of understanding; where there is archaeological interest. Consider whether it requires a desk-based assessment to understand the significance. If so, and this has not been provided by the applicant, it is good practice to use experts to supply this specialist information.

#### STEP 3: Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance

Impact can be a **physical impact** upon heritage fabric, or a **visual impact** upon its setting. **This can be positive, negative, or neutral**. Examples of each of these can be found in the following section.

#### STEP 4: Consider how to avoid, minimise, and mitigate harmful impacts

Where negative impacts have been identified you will be required to show how you have tried to **minimise this damage through design** to arrive at the least harmful option.

#### STEP 5: Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance, character, and appearance of the area

**All proposals should seek to enhance the area around it**. This could be through reversing damage which has already been caused, or through the design of new proposals which reflect the local character of the area or help people better understand why it is special, for example, through interpretation material.

#### STEP 6: Consider the justification for any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change.

If negative impacts remain after mitigation and all opportunities for enhancement have been exhausted, wider considerations which potentially balance this harm should be explored, for example, **economic or public benefits**.

## 2.1 Detailed Instructions and examples

### 2.1.1 Significance

#### *What is it?*

Significance is the collective term for **all cultural and natural heritage values** attached to a place, be this a building, structure, archaeological site, or a larger historic area such as a whole town or landscape.

**The setting of a place or building** within a place, can form part of that significance and relates to the surroundings in which a place is experienced both in the past and in the present. Setting is not measured by a set radius but is guided by the extent to which a change within it could impact the place's significance.

#### *How is it measured?*

CADW measures 4 values which can contribute to this significance:

Physical remains and any surviving fabric, or **evidential value**, including pictorial and documentary records that help to understand it

The capacity to illuminate aspects of the past and how they connect us to it, or **historical value**

The aesthetic qualities, or **aesthetic value**

The value they have to the people who relate to them, or **communal value**

Each of the above will have a different level to which it contributes to the overall significance of the place, **measured as either high, medium, or low**. A value which is measured as low can illustrate where the greatest opportunities lie for change or enhancement. Where a value is measured as high, the impact of any proposals upon it would tend to be considered more harmful.



*Aesthetic Value - This can be a subjective value to assess, but generally buildings of high aesthetic value will share aspects such as high quality materials and architectural details*



*Communal Value - Buildings such as churches and community buildings often have significant heritage value, both historically and today as places of assembly*



*Evidential Value - This can rest in both large and small scale details, such as in the image above which is a surviving 19th Century horse t... which is now within an outbuilding*



*Historical Value - Notts Square in Carmarthen retains its form as a town square which helps visitors to understand how the Medieval town may have appeared*

## 2.1.2 Impact

### *What is it?*

Impact relates to how proposals affect each of the values which collectively make up the overall significance of a place. For example;

**Evidential value** – Does the proposal result in the loss of building fabric (structural or non-structural) which makes it harder to understand how the building or site has evolved? This relates to **any proposed work which would have a physical impact on the building**, including removing existing material or impacting upon it with any new additions. For example, removing partitions or adding new structures. This would also relate to fixtures and fittings such as joinery and finishes which are of historic significance.

**Historical value** – Does the proposal result in the changes which make it harder to understand how the building or site was used in the past and how it has changed over time? This relates to **any work whether or not it impacts the physical remains of a place**. For example, a change in use, new additions which do not have a physical impact but which would alter the way a building functions or is seen, covering evidence of previous alterations.

**Aesthetic value** – Does the proposal compromise the **historic design principles** such as layout, scale, proportion?

**Communal value** – Do the proposals make it easier or **harder for people to access and appreciate** the building, site or area?

### *How is it measured?*

Most proposals will have a range of impacts to include:

**Positive** – Those aspects which **enhance an aspect of its significance**, for example through removing detracting elements to allow a building in a Conservation Area to be seen in its original form.

**Neutral** – Those aspects **which do not enhance significance but neither do they detract** from it. This typically relates to proposals which are sympathetically designed to harmonise with the existing place.

**Negative** – Aspects which **reduce the significance of a place** through alteration or change. Proposals which result in negative impacts without being able to justify any wider benefits will be refused.

Different values may be affected in different ways, and sometimes the positive enhancement of one value may result in a negative impact upon another. If the positive impact relates to an area of high significance and the negative impact relates to an area of low significance it could be justified that the overall assessment of impact is positive.



*Aesthetic Value - The replacement of original details and changes to proportions can cause the original design principles of a building to be lost*



*Communal Value - The closure of publicly accessible buildings can have a negative impact on communal value*



*Evidential Value - Changes to buildings, particular to the principal elevation of a building can make it hard to read its original form*



*Historical Value - Alterations due to the change in use from residential to commercial use have altered the form, use and fabric of the building*

### 2.1.3 Impact assessment

#### *What is it?*

Impact assessments are required for any application which relates to a designated historic building or place. They are **written statements which describe how significance has been assessed and how and to what level proposals impact this**. It needs to demonstrate how significance has been maintained or enhanced to be considered acceptable, including any wider public benefits. A demonstration of the process you have gone through to reduce impact should also form part of this document.

### 2.1.4 Mitigation

#### *What it is?*

Also referred to as offsetting, if a negative impact is unavoidable, mitigation is **the process one goes through to try and minimize this harm**. For example, archaeological deposits could be removed or recording undertaken if structures are to be laid over a known archaeological site. Alterations could be designed to be reversible so that harm can be undone at a later stage. Interpretation or access could be improved to increase awareness of a place which may be diminished through the proposals. **High quality design is not considered to be mitigation, but a matter of course** when designing proposals within historical environments.

### 2.1.5 Enhancement

#### *What is it?*

This relates to **anything which will increase the level of significance** currently residing within its values. For example, a building could be enhanced aesthetically and evidentially by removing unsympathetic alterations or enhanced communally by opening areas which have previously not been accessible. The setting of an area can also be enhanced through removing detracting elements which disrupt views.

### 2.1.6 Balancing harm

#### *What is it?*

Proposals which are assessed to have an overall negative impact upon significance would usually be considered unacceptable, unless it can be justified that there are **wider social, environmental, and economic benefits** which outweigh this harm. This could include:

- There are no reasonable alternative means of achieving a requirement without some level of harm
- The harm has been reduced to a minimum
- An overriding public policy need is achieved, such as measures which make places more accessible and/or sustainable and/or economically viable

#### *How is it measured?*

There is no set formula for balancing harm but in general terms, the level of significance assessed against the impact and the wider public benefits should be at minimum neutral. For example;

*High Aesthetic Value + Negative Impact + Positive social benefits = Impact is overall neutral*

### 2.1.7 Precedent

#### *What is it?*

A precedent is an earlier event or action that is regarded as an example or guide to be considered in future similar circumstances. Whilst consistency in planning decisions is important, where the character of an area has been eroded due to previous planning decisions or unlawful works, precedent is not a valid planning consideration. Furthermore, if the character of an area has been eroded to a very great extent, the surviving historic details in a Conservation Area become even more rare and therefore are even less likely to be given approval to be removed or degraded.

In designing extension or replacement dwellings, the over-arching historic or architectural character of the Conservation Area should be followed, rather than any inappropriate, poorly designed infill or back-land development.





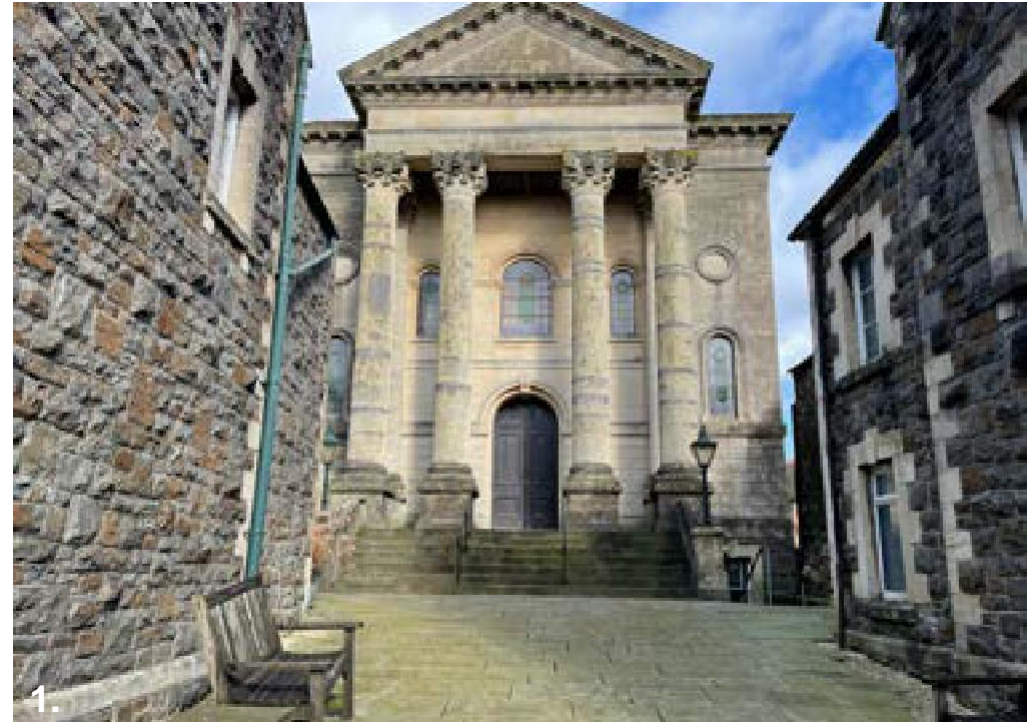
## 2.2 Local context and design

When considering schemes, designers should go through a series of iterations to ensure that proposals adhere with the principles set out in section 1.4 and minimize harm by following the steps in section 2.1. To help guide this process this section will set out, with examples, key aspects that contribute to the existing character of a place, building or structure and should, where applicable, be considered a minimum set of criteria to demonstrate consideration through the design process.

### 2.2.1 Views within, to and from

Views into or towards an area or building, outwards to the surrounding landscape or townscape, and from one street or area to another are fundamental parts of a place's character, forming the backdrop to the experience one has as they move through a place. There are many different types of view, including:

1. **Key landmarks:** The buildings, structures or spaces which dominate views, provide clear destinations or mark key junctions and gateways e.g., a castle, memorial, or church spire.
2. **Street views:** Views along streets can vary between those which are long and straight to those that are more serpentine, and each will offer a different type of view; a long straight road will allow you to see uninterrupted rows of buildings; curved or serpentine roads encourage you keep moving to discover what is around the next corner; squares create enclosed views dominated by the buildings around them; and the shorter alleyways and streets which link main roads, provide alternative views, such as to the rear of buildings.



**3. Surrounding landscape and open spaces:** Often because of an area's topography, there may be places from which you can view the surrounding landscape or natural and man-made features. Sometimes these are wide panoramic views and sometimes glimpsed between buildings.



**4. Terminated and enclosed views:** The glimpsed views along side streets, between buildings and along back streets are as much a part of a town's character as its main thoroughfares and can illustrate a different part of a town's history and character, such as service yards, smaller residential developments, or rear gardens.

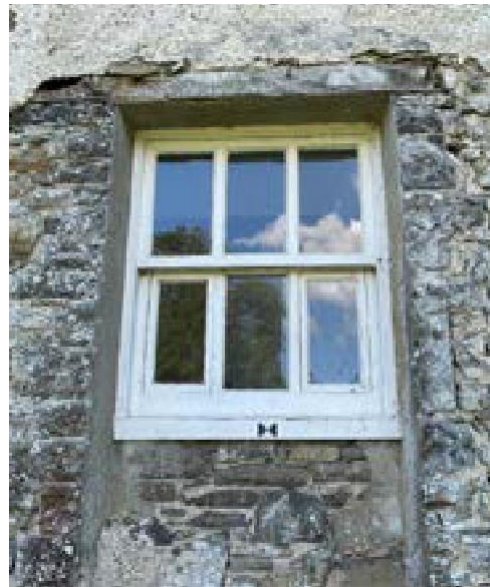


When considering proposals, particularly those for new buildings, or the extension of existing buildings, **it is essential that views which are part of the character of a place are not compromised.** This could be through blocking a view completely, removing buildings or structures which act as landmarks, or by altering street views. Some views may be particularly susceptible even to minor change, whilst others may be capable of a degree of change without altering the existing character. Conservation Area Appraisal documents will have maps which set out significant views. Where these documents do not exist, consult the Built Heritage Team for advice on which views should be preserved and how.

### 2.2.2 Setting

**Design and context must be considered together** for proposals to harmonise with their surroundings. Even if in isolation proposals could be considered 'high quality', this does not automatically equate to them being of 'high quality' when viewed within their setting. The setting of a place can be limited to its immediate context, or as wide as a whole street elevation. It is essential that a proposals setting is understood, designed to, and illustrated at its widest possible limit so that a thorough understanding of impact is considered. The relationship between a proposal and its context will be an important consideration by the Council and will often be a crucial part in the deliberation of whether consent should be granted. Every site will have its own role in how this is achieved, determined by its location, size, and surroundings. The first step should be to analyse this under the headings within this chapter and determine **where and how the proposals can reinforce the sense of place it creates rather than diluting or diminishing it**. Looking outside of the immediate setting of a place may be required if the immediate context lacks good examples of contextual design which relate to the wider setting of a site.





### 2.2.3 Building materials

The materials used to create buildings, structures or places can be one of its most visual components and perhaps one of the easiest to recognise regarding contribution to character. Although there is typically a common palette within an area, it is important to recognise where and how this varies and the effect this may have on impact, for example:

- Larger and religious buildings can often use materials which others might not
- There may be areas, streets or individual buildings which are unique in the use of a material not seen elsewhere, creating a distinct characteristic within those spaces
- The use of materials might be closely linked to the historic evolution of a place, for example, locally sourced materials may have been replaced over time for more fashionable imported materials as trade routes opened and architectural tastes developed
- The colour and texture of materials can affect the overall impression of a place, for example a dark stone can feel heavy and dominant in contrast to a brightly painted render

When considering the most appropriate materials for a certain site it will be important to **acknowledge the local palette**, however, other factors should also be considered. This could include price, sustainability, longevity, maintenance, and use. Each of these will need to be considered and balanced against the overall visual appearance. Where the local palette of materials is not used, justification of the wider benefits of a material must be made, including how it is proposed the design will harmonise with its context.

### 2.2.4 Building heights

The overall height of a building or structure **can greatly impact views and the character of a place**. In some locations, variation from building to building may allow greater freedom to add height, but where there is consistency, an overly tall or short building will tend to have a detrimental impact. The location of a proposal should also be a determining factor. Proposals which are too high may cause overshadowing or domineering forms for neighbouring properties. Corner plots are often of a greater height to bookend terraces and create characterful entrances into streets. It is essential that proposals **consider the wider and immediate context of a site** to adhere to local characteristics whilst **avoiding negatively impacting on neighbouring buildings or far-reaching views**. This can particularly be an issue where tall buildings are proposed outside of Conservation Areas. See section 3.





*Former burgage plots recognized through the narrow frontages. The terrace provides consistency in building width, height and relationship to the street edge*



*In contrast to the above, the existing character of the street scene is through variation in building height, width and how the buildings sit on the street edge*

### 2.2.5 Relationship to plots

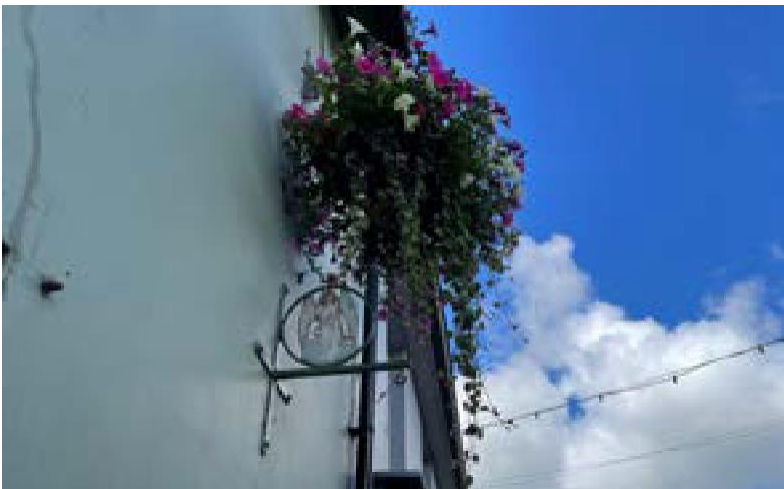
As noted above, there will be areas where building forms are consistent, forming terraces, and those where details vary from one building to the next. **Sometimes variations can be a positive element of character**, resulting in interest as you explore a street, **but can also be negative if it interrupts a common characteristic**. It may also become apparent that the historic evolution of a street or place, and the use of a building are closely related to these characteristics. For example, churches and chapels are usually taller than their neighbours and set back from the street edge to emphasise their presence, whereas workers cottages from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries were typically built as longer terraces directly on the pavement edge.

Medieval town planning was typically set out as a series of burgage plots which were long, narrow pieces of land rented out to tenants. This can sometimes still be recognised through narrow street frontages with long rear gardens. However, as towns developed, plots often became subdivided to infill gardens and create additional buildings. This can have an impact on the density of an area and how well past forms of a place can be recognised. As such, **overdeveloping plots of land, without due regard to historic town planning or common characteristics can have a detrimental impact**.

Proposals must show in what way new buildings or structures relate to their overall plot to illustrate how these aspects have been considered. Where plots are being infilled, it is vital that the relationship with neighbouring buildings is considered both from an amenity standpoint, but also regarding architectural design.

### 2.2.6 Architectural details

A building may stand out from its surroundings because of its distinct role within the townscape, often borne from the richness of its architectural detail. More significant uses tend to be expressed through its architecture, for example guildhalls, banks and churches demonstrate more richness in architectural material and detail than a domestic residence. It is therefore encouraged that **architectural details reflect the status of the building** or structure being designed and its overall importance to the townscape. The **existing details exhibited by other buildings of a similar status and location should be considered** as a starting point to attain the enduring quality, robustness, and stability that Carmarthenshire buildings are typically characterised by. The **consideration of rear and side elevations** must also not be overlooked, as these can play a vital role in the character of more intimate rear alleyways, back gardens, and public spaces.





*Interpretation boards and wayfinding*



*Public realm furniture*



*Hard and soft landscaping*



*Traffic infrastructure*

### 2.2.7 Public realm

The spaces in between buildings create the setting for the town as a whole and are a vital component when considering the preservation of character. Within Conservation Areas, **consistency in approach will unify spaces and maintain an impression of quality**, indicating that you are entering a place which is significant. **The design and quality** of public realm furniture, signage, lighting, and soft and hard landscaping **must reflect this significance**. Where investment is made in the public realm, the **ongoing maintenance** of this, including the repair of existing elements, **must be considered during the design stage** to avoid this investment being lost.



### 2.2.8 Boundary materials and treatments

Historic boundaries to plots of land were typically formed of stone or metal railings and you may find that the style and material of these is comparable throughout an area, although with larger or religious buildings often utilising a more refined design. **The replacement of historic boundaries** with those of an alternate design or material, or their wholesale removal, often to create driveways, **impacts not just the setting of individual buildings, but views, the division of building plots and how easily one might read the historic form of a town.**



## Part 3 - Issues

The following table summarises the common issues which have been identified through the preparation of ten Character Area Appraisals for the county. These relate to those items which are currently causing harm to the appearance and or the character of these areas. Alongside each is a management recommendation intended to ensure the character, appearance of conservation areas, their significance and special architectural and historic interest, is preserved and enhanced.

**Through the identification of these common issues and threats it is the hope that deterioration can be halted, and that harm avoided.**

When preparing proposals, we recommend these are consulted upon to avoid common mistakes being remade. The County Council need to consider these management proposals as part of their duty to pay 'special attention...to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance' of these areas when proposals are developed or assessed.

	Issue	Management
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Views and Setting</b>	
1.1	<p><b>Views into and out</b> of areas can be difficult to protect, since those buildings which have the potential to affect key views can be outside of protected areas such as a CA; their impact can sometimes become fully apparent only after construction. This relates to the introduction of tall buildings outside of the CA, or those on higher ground which affect long distance views of the landscape beyond.</p>	<p>Development within the setting of a conservation area setting should be carefully assessed to understand the impact of the proposals on the significance of the conservation area. New development should not obscure or detract from important views within, towards or from the area. Important views and landmarks should be identified and proposals which have the potential to affect and fall within these should be assessed carefully. Verified computer generated views showing the potential impacts of proposals may be required to demonstrate the effect on the character and appearance of the area or its setting.</p>
1.2	<p><b>Side streets</b> and the <b>rear of buildings</b> are characterful parts of CAs, offering glimpsed views away from the main thoroughfares. Due to a perceived lack of visibility these areas can encourage anti-social behaviour such as littering, damage to buildings, the public realm, and graffiti. These areas also suffer from a lack of general maintenance in both the public realm and boundary treatments, which can erode the character of these areas.</p>	<p>Development proposals should be carefully assessed to understand the impact the character and appearance of side streets and of rear buildings, as well as key views and main thoroughfares.</p>
1.3	<p>Existing <b>green spaces</b> provide important break points to the buildings and require effective, continued protection, particularly during new development and alteration works. The loss of trees can significantly alter key views.</p>	<p>Significant green spaces should be actively maintained, and management processes should be adopted which ensure their special interest, and their ecological value, is preserved and enhanced. The scope for more tree and other planting to enhance the appearance of the conservation area and its potential for biodiversity is encouraged.</p>
1.4	<p>Any development to the <b>fringes of monuments</b> or buildings of high significance, or which have a visible connection across or from them, needs to be carefully considered and managed.</p>	<p>Proposals which have the potential to affect heritage assets should be assessed carefully. Verified computer generated views showing the potential impacts of proposals may be required to demonstrate the effect on their setting.</p>

	Issue	Management
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Demolition of buildings and structures</b>	
2.1	<b>Partial or total demolition of buildings</b> that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of CAs can erode the architectural quality of the area. This can include whole buildings for redevelopment or partial areas such as chimneys, boundary walls and extensions.	There are many listed buildings and unlisted buildings of merit which contribute positively to the character and appearance of conservation areas, and there is a strong presumption that these buildings and their features are retained.
2.2	The <b>poor condition of buildings</b> which have been out of use or have suffered from poor maintenance, can be used to put pressure on the Local Authority for demolition and redevelopment. This can lead to a misunderstanding that large scale redevelopment is appropriate, when <b>careful management of future alterations</b> could reinstate the original character of these buildings, enhance the CA, and avoid the loss of embodied carbon already spent through its original construction.	Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision. If demolition is proposed, consideration should be given to the whole life carbon cycle, taking into account the embedded carbon of the existing building. It may be appropriate to retain and adapt the existing building rather than to replace it with a new building. The care and reuse of traditional and historic buildings in in order to save energy and carbon dioxide, through better maintenance, management and energy efficiency measures is encouraged.
2.3	The <b>loss of buildings to the street line</b> can cause break points which disrupt the long elevational views which are characteristic of many areas and can lead to blank gable end elevations.	There will be a presumption against the creation of modern gaps which would disrupt long elevational views of established street lines.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Redevelopment</b>	
3.1	The use of <b>modern materials</b> which are not complementary or appropriate to the existing palette of materials can erode the historic character and significance of a CA. Whilst a building should be of its time, some deference to a CA's original palette of materials will ensure continuity. Similarly, <b>buildings of poor design</b> can cause harm; the original characteristics of 18th 19th and early 20th Century design must be respected to prevent harm.	Development proposals should respond to and respect the unique character and appearance of an area and its setting, and should be of appropriate scale, density, height, form, massing, layout, plot position, materials, colours, composition and detailed design. Any new development should be of high quality, in terms of design and materials used. Generally, all work to historic buildings, alterations and extensions, should positively respond to the original architectural style of the building, its setting and should enhance its traditional appearance.

	Issue	Management
3.2	<b>Corner plots</b> can be important gateways, offer natural breaks between buildings and mark junctions to branch roads.	Where corner buildings are redeveloped or replaced, an understanding of their impact and how they may help to strengthen key points is required.
3.3	The pressure for development can lead to the <b>infilling of historic plots</b> , often with buildings of uncharacteristic design which do not respond to the character of the CA.	Development proposals should respond to and respect the unique character and appearance of the area and its setting, and should be of appropriate scale, density, height, form, massing, layout, plot position, materials, colours, composition, and detailed design. Any new development in the conservation area should be of high quality, in terms of design and materials used.
3.4	The visibility of <b>rear elevations</b> can cause overlooked areas of alteration to have a significant impact on the public realm, including the loss of boundary walls to the street edge, the insertion of rear escape stairs, extensions, and hard standings.	Development proposals should be carefully assessed to understand the impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of side streets and the rear of buildings, as well as key views and main thoroughfares.
3.5	<b>Consistency regarding storey height, mass and plot size</b> causes any deviations from this to have an immediate impact, particularly where there are long ranging views. For example, where contemporary buildings have been designed with an increased width but without due regard to breaking down the mass of the buildings, these have not successfully integrated into their surroundings.	Generally, all work to existing buildings, alterations and extensions, should positively respond to the original architectural style of the building, its setting and should enhance its traditional appearance.
3.6	The demands which can be put on CAs by the volume of <b>commercial activity</b> can result in a high volume of refuse collection and deliveries which can add to traffic congestion, eroding the character of the area. Where streets are predominantly residential, the introduction of new uses, such as commercial activity could put pressure on these streets in regard to refuse collection and storage, deliveries and the loss of historic fabric to introduce shopfronts.	An understanding of the impact of developments which bring in new uses or intensify existing uses should include not just an architectural assessment, but that of noise, public realm, deliveries and refuse collection and storage.
3.7	Where towns are of a high density and there are limited-service areas, <b>bins</b> can be placed on public highways and within the public realm. This has a negative visual impact and can lead to further deterioration due to encouraging anti-social behaviour.	Proposals should include an understand of how rubbish is stored and collected.

Issue		Management
3.8	Where there are <b>town squares</b> or larger public areas, these can be a significant part of the character of an area and can be of historic significance. The buildings within these spaces should be considered together and of group value. New developments which do not acknowledge this can detract and significantly impact their setting.	Development proposals should respond to and respect the unique character and appearance of the conservation area and unique spaces within it, and should be of appropriate scale, density, height, form, massing, layout, plot position, materials, colours, composition, and detailed design. Any new development which is situated within an area of group value must acknowledge the wider impact of a proposal.
3.9	Terraces often form a significant feature of Carmarthen's towns. <b>Split ownership</b> , or the insertion of <b>ground floor retail units</b> could lead to a disjointed approach to maintenance and alterations between otherwise unified buildings if not properly considered.	The impact of the change of use of buildings needs to be fully understood to ensure there is no associated harm which could impact the Conservation Area.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Alterations and loss of original features</b>	
4.1	The introduction of seemingly minor works can have a cumulative effect on buildings as a whole, on a group of buildings or on the setting of a CA. This includes the following widely seen examples:	Check with the planning authority to determine if Planning Permission is required for any of the changes itemised below before undertaking the works. The wider use of Article 4 Directions could be considered.
4.1.1	External Wall Insulation	Can result in change of character of a building/streetscape. Can result in material damage and condensation issues.
4.1.2	<b>Changing windows to PVC</b> replacements	Results in loss of fabric and change in character of a building/streetscape.
4.1.3	The introduction of <b>new services</b> which are prominently positioned including satellite dishes	Can cause external clutter and the appearance of roofscapes as well as loss of fabric through fixings and cable routes.
4.1.4	The installation of <b>solar panels</b>	Development proposals which affect the roofscape of a building should respond to and respect the unique character and appearance of its setting, and should be of appropriate siting and scale.
4.1.5	<b>Loss of cast iron rainwater goods</b>	Results in loss of fabric and change of character to a streetscape and/or building.

Issue		Management
4.1.6	<b>Replacement of slate</b> with red tile and concrete tiles	Can result in material damage through adding additional loadings onto an existing roof structure.
4.1.7	Loss of chimneys	Can result in change of character of a building/streetscape. Can cause damp and condensation through the loss of passive ventilation.
4.1.8	<b>Loss to timber panelled front doors</b> with canopies and doorsets	Results in loss of fabric and change in character of a building/streetscape.
4.1.9	<b>Loss of historic boundaries</b> such as railings and rubble stone walls	Results in loss of fabric and clear definition of plots and public/private space.
4.1.10	<b>Dormers</b> of various scales and designs have been integrated into buildings throughout the county. Where there is variety within roofscapes and the designs are of a high quality using sympathetic materials, these have been integrated successfully. Particularly in areas of more consistency, the impact of these needs to be understood.	Development proposals which affect the roofscape of a building should respond to and respect the unique character and appearance of its setting, and should be of appropriate scale, material, composition, and detailed design.
4.1.11	The topography of an area means that the insertion of items such as <b>aerials and satellite dishes</b> can erode character, particularly in areas of a more uniform style, or where there are longer street views.	The wider use of Article 4 Directions could be considered so that planning permission is required for such alterations. Where proposals are for buildings on slopes which provide views of roofscapes, the impact of proposals on these views should be assessed as part of the application process.
4.1.12	<b>The replacement of traditional lime render</b> with pebble dash has had a considerable impact on buildings and views through CAs.	The use of traditional materials such as lime render is encouraged and applications for the introduction of inappropriate plasters and renders will be refused. Inappropriate renders can result in material damage, condensation, and damp issues.
4.1.13	The <b>bright colours</b> of buildings can be an appealing and vibrant part of CAs. The introduction of inappropriate colours could disrupt this rhythm and have an impact on the views through an area.	The colour palette of an existing place must be acknowledged within proposals.

	Issue	Management
5.0	<b>Street furniture, signage, and roads</b>	
5.1	<p><b>Increased traffic density and poorly managed road layouts</b> can have a detrimental impact on the overall character of an area, causing a loss of stopping points, and areas to congregate which would otherwise allow for moments of reflection and appreciation.</p> <p><b>Limited crossing points and narrow pavements</b> also cause streets to be divorced from each other and a limited appreciation of buildings due to the density of traffic obscuring lower storeys.</p>	<p>Opportunities for increased pedestrianisation and improved road layouts should be sought where possible. Major new developments should improve cycle and pedestrian connectivity and incorporate public space.</p>
5.2	<p>The lack of coordination in the treatment of pavements, roads, and pedestrian footpaths, including <b>a lack of cohesion in the use of materials, signage, road marking and barrier treatments</b>, can lead to a deterioration of character within the public realm and significant changes between areas which would otherwise share a strong connection to each other. The use of <b>patch repairs and inappropriate repair methods</b> has also led to a general deterioration of the streetscape in many towns.</p>	<p>The design of streets and public spaces should be co-ordinated in their approach to lighting, materials, boundary treatments and furniture. Opportunities for enhancement to the appearance of streets including decluttering, maintenance of paintwork and introduction of appropriate surface materials and street furniture should be sought when possible.</p>
5.3	<p>There is a <b>lack of high quality and consistent design to street furniture</b>, including modern street lighting and benches in many towns. A coordinated approach to street furniture of a high-quality design would help to unify the character of an area and substantially uplift the quality of the public realm.</p>	<p>Signage and furniture and should be sensitively designed and integrated into the street scene. A coordinated approach would help to unify the character of the area and uplift the quality of the public realm. The scope for introducing more traditional streetlights, traditional paving materials, and greater street planting throughout conservation areas should be understood when proposals are prepared.</p>
5.4	<p><b>Street ‘clutter’</b> created by large amounts of public signage, bollards, and barriers, particularly on roadsides, can cause confusion, obscure views, and detract from the wider environment.</p>	<p>Opportunities for enhancement to the appearance of streets including decluttering, should be sought when possible.</p>
5.5	<p><b>Welsh place names</b> are an important part of the history of towns and where these survive, these should be maintained.</p>	<p>The renaming of existing streets and buildings should be avoided if this results in a loss of a significant part of the towns development.</p>



Issue		Management
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Boundary treatments and parking</b>	
6.1	The <b>increase in demand for onsite and on street parking</b> has led to the collective loss of historic boundary treatments to incorporate hard standings and parking spaces. This can interrupt views through, in and out of an area.	Reinstatement of traditional boundary walls will be supported and there will be a presumption against the loss of historic boundary walls and front gardens which make a positive contribution to the area.
6.2	The introduction of <b>modern materials to create new boundaries and hard landscaping</b> which are not in keeping with the CA or of sufficient quality can dilute character and interrupt views.	The design of streets and public spaces should be co-ordinated in their approach to boundary treatments and hard landscaping. Opportunities for enhancement to the appearance of streets including the introduction of appropriate surface materials and boundaries should be sought when possible.
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Shopfront Design</b>	
7.1	The contribution of shopfronts to an area can be significant, and <b>the insertion of inappropriate shopfront designs</b> can have a negative impact on the character of an area. There exist a number of examples of historic shopfronts throughout the county and where these exist, they can provide an important contribution to the streetscape and inspiration for future heritage-led design. Features which have been seen to result in a negative impact include:	Where an existing shopfront represents a good example of an earlier style appropriate to the character of the area and the host building it should be retained and refurbished rather than replaced. The replacement of unsympathetic modern shopfronts with more appropriate designs has the potential to greatly enhance historic buildings and conservation areas and will be supported.
7.1.1	The <b>lack of consideration between the ground floor and the building above</b> , for example the replication of bay widths, and an acknowledgment of architectural detailing and style of the existing building.	Refer to Carmarthenshire Shopfront Design Guide for advice and guidance.

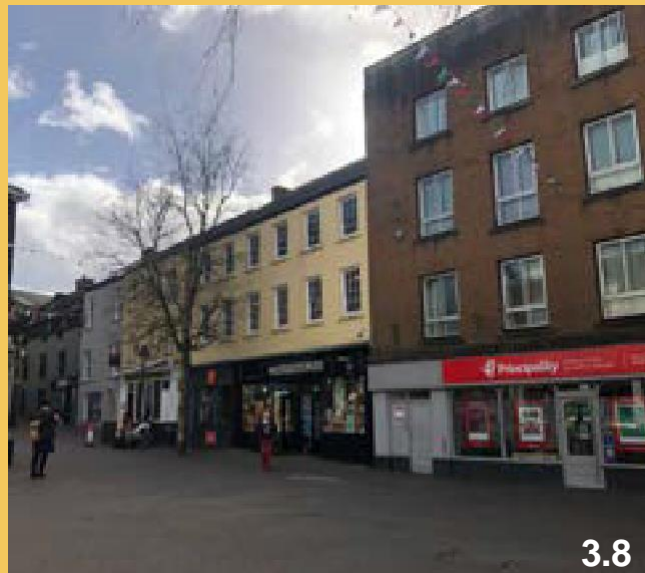
Issue		Management
7.1.2	<b>Large fasciae</b> which are not in proportion with neighbouring buildings, or which overwhelm the building frontage and cover surviving historic details.	Refer to Carmarthenshire Shopfront Design Guide for advice and guidance.
7.1.3	The use of <b>inappropriate signage</b> , including illuminated signs.	
7.1.4	The use of inappropriate <b>contemporary materials, or colours</b> , such as Perspex, PVC or aluminum, whose reflective nature typically does not respect a traditional palette of materials.	
7.1.5	<b>Two-dimensional elevations</b> , including large areas of plate glass, which dominate the façade and bear little relationship to the treatment of the elevations above.	
7.1.6	The <b>loss of stallrisers</b> which provide a base to the shopfront above and ground it within the streetscape.	
7.1.7	The installation of <b>external security shutters</b> which can materially affect the external appearance of a building and add to a perceived lack of security.	
7.1.8	The introduction of inappropriately scaled <b>awnings or canopies</b> , often in non-traditional materials, which break the rhythm of terracing and the building line.	
7.1.9	The pressure of <b>branding</b> associated with the introduction of chain stores which often follows a one-size-fits-all approach without consideration of the individual characteristics of a building.	
7.1.10	The loss of traditional <b>hanging signs</b> .	
7.1.11	The <b>unifying of buildings</b> through an extended shopfront which does not respect the separation of the buildings above or adjacent.	
7.1.12	The introduction of <b>commercial activities within former residential buildings</b> can cause harm through the introduction of signage which does not respond to the proportions or layout of the building, and shopwindows which overwhelm the domestic scale of the building and lead to the loss of original fabric.	

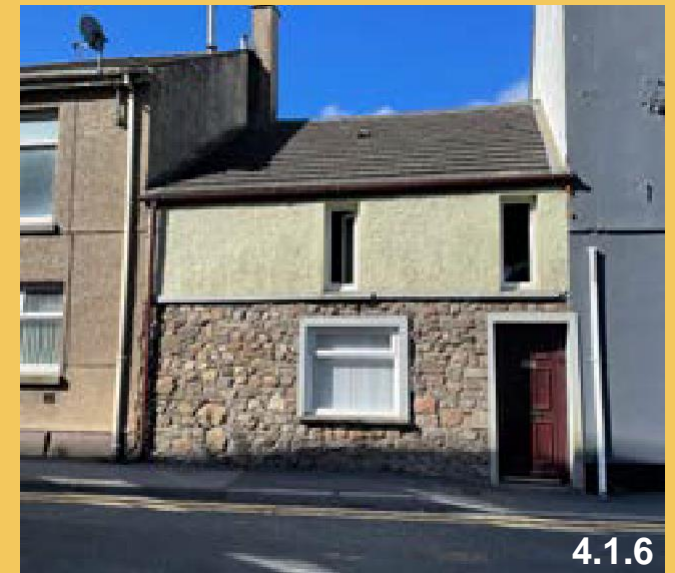
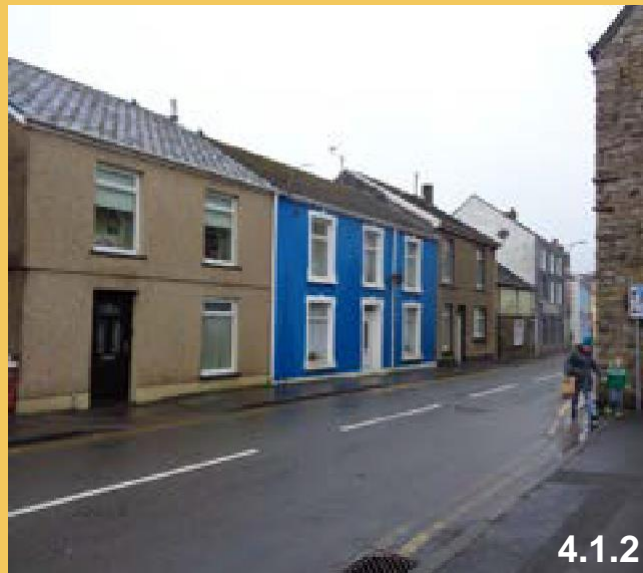
Issue	Management
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Trees and Landscape</b>
8.1	<p>The <b>loss of street trees, green fringes</b> and space which provide important breaks in an otherwise hard urban area can substantially harm the character of the area.</p> <p>There is scope for more tree and other planting to enhance the appearance of conservation areas. There will be a presumption against the loss of trees or green spaces which make a positive contribution to an area.</p>
8.2	<p>The <b>use of non-native trees, flora and fauna</b> can be incongruous with their surroundings if chosen without due regard to their context.</p> <p>The use of native trees, flora and fauna is encouraged when soft landscaping schemes are developed.</p>
<b>9.0</b>	<b>General</b>
9.1	<p>Archaeology</p> <p>When considering any significant development proposal, the <b>potential impact on archaeological remains</b> should be professionally assessed and advice taken as to how they can be best preserved and protected. Consideration should also be given for <b>how the past</b> uses, structure and buildings which inhabited the site <b>could influence the design of new elements</b>.</p>
9.2	<p>Climate Emergency</p> <p><b>Retrofit proposals</b> to improve energy efficiency should be carefully considered to ensure compatibility with traditional building materials, functionality, and significance. If demolition is proposed, consideration should be given to the <b>whole life carbon cycle</b>, taking into account the embedded carbon of the existing building. It may be appropriate to retain and adapt the existing building rather than to replace it with a new building. The care and reuse of traditional and historic buildings in order to save energy and carbon dioxide, through better maintenance, management and energy efficiency measures is encouraged.</p>
9.3	<p>Heritage Impact Assessments</p> <p>A heritage impact assessment should be provided by applicants, where a proposal is considered to affect the conservation area (either within the boundary or its setting) or a heritage asset within it.</p>



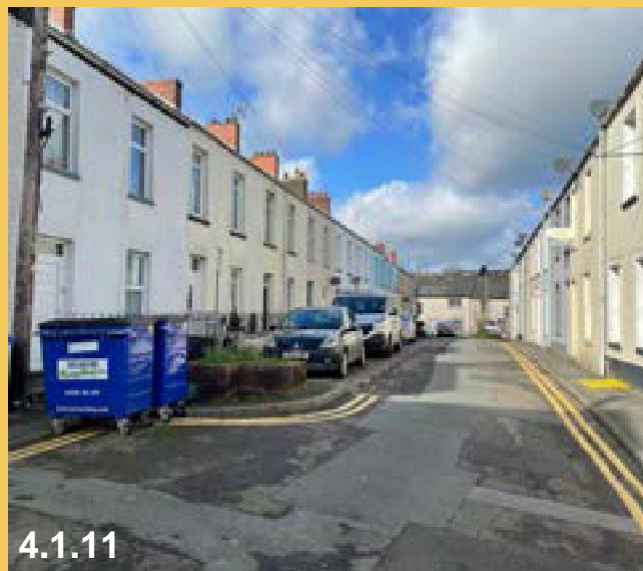
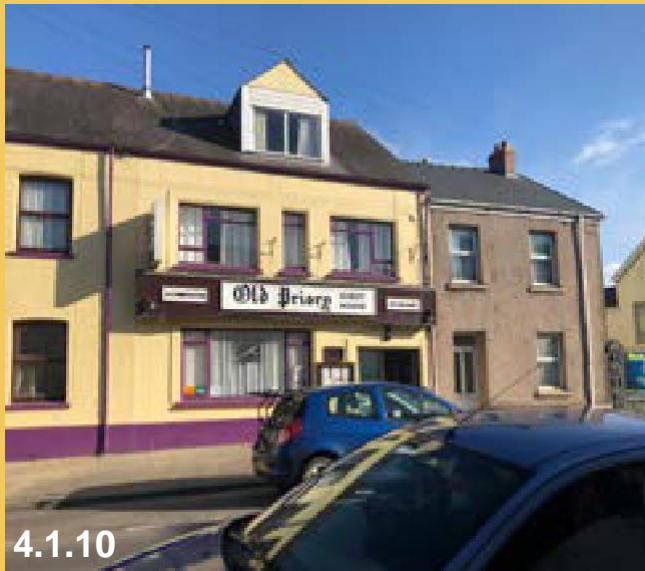




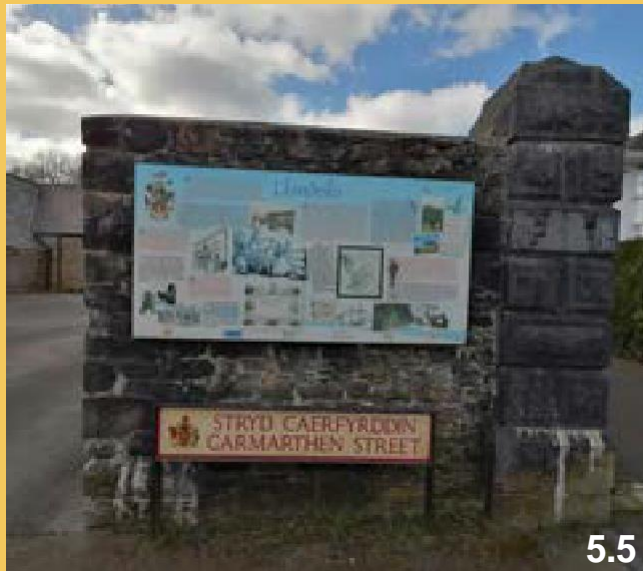
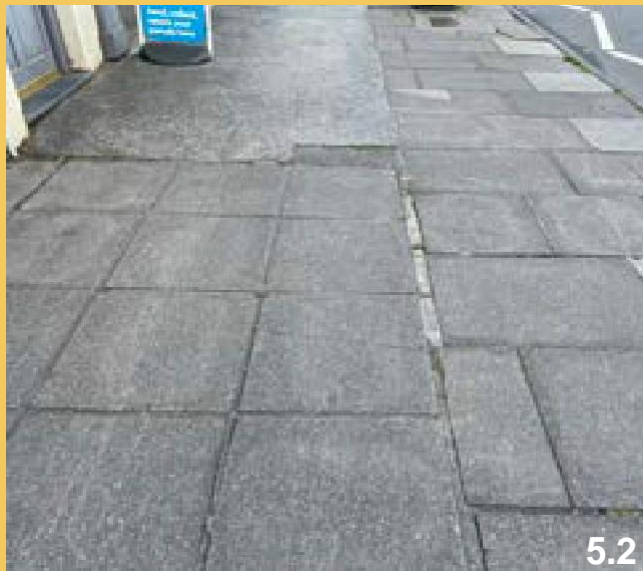




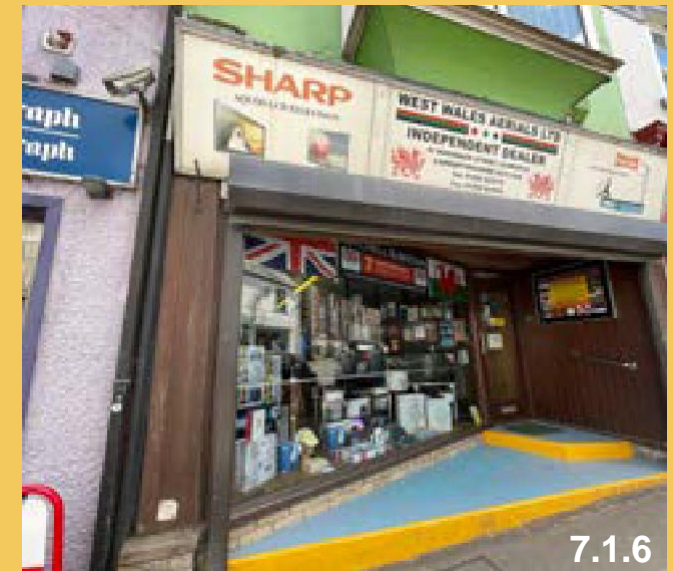


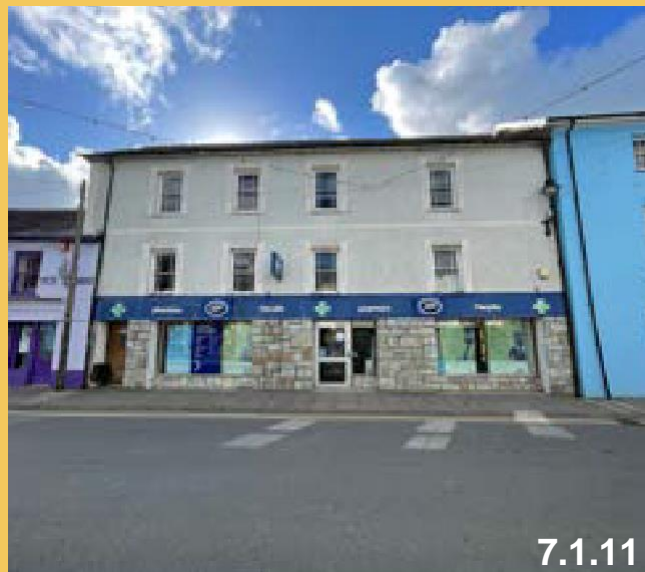














## Appendices

### Useful links

#### Policy documents

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11, February 2021 [Planning Policy Wales - Edition 11 \(gov.wales\)](#)

Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment, 2017 [Planning Policy Wales Note 24 May 2017 \(gov.wales\)](#)

Managing Conservation Areas in Wales, Cadw, 2017 [Managing Change in World heritage Sites in Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

Cadw's Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales [Conservation Principles Doc ENG \(gov.wales\)](#)

#### Historic research

British Listed Buildings, [British Listed Buildings - History in Structure](#)

The National Library of Wales, Welsh Tithe Maps [Welsh Tithe Maps - Home \(library.wales\)](#)

The National Library of Scotland, OS Maps of various dates, [Map Finder - with Marker Pin - Map Images - National Library of Scotland \(nls.uk\)](#)

Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Carmarthenshire Projects, [Projects – Dyfed Archaeological Trust](#)

#### Other resources

Cadw, General resources, [Advice & Support | Cadw \(gov.wales\)](#)

Tywi Centre, [Home | Tywi Centre](#)

Planning Portal, Wales, Planning Portal, Planning: A guide for homeowners, Version 3, May 2020 [planning-a-guide-for-householders.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)



## Glossary

Abbreviation	Formal term	Definition	Abbreviation	Formal term	Definition
A4D	Article 4 Direction	A measure, instigated by a local authority, whereby issues of work which would normally be permitted under planning legislation	CCC	Carmarthenshire County Council	
		General Development Orders are bought within the control of the planning department.	GDO	General Development Order	An order, under national planning legislation, which sets out the classes of development which are 'permitted development' and hence do not normally require the issue of formal planning consent
BAR	Building At Risk	A buildings register, maintained by local authorities (supported by Historic England) which includes buildings and structures which are at risk from decay, collapse or other loss. It usually sets out a degree of risk and indicates the type of action which is deemed necessary to remedy the problem.		Cadw	The organization responsible for the protection of historic buildings, structures, landscape and heritage sites in Wales
CA	Conservation Area	An area, designated by the local authority, the character of which it is desirable to preserve of enhance	LB	Listed Building	A building of architectural and/ or historic interest which is protected by inclusion on a list of such buildings maintained by Cadw. The building will be graded – grade I for the most important, Grade II* for the next most important or grade II for the remainder which comprises about 95% of the total
CAA	Conservation Area Appraisal	A report which assesses the character and effectiveness of the CA at a particular time		Burgage Plot	A burgage plot is usually characterised as a long walled plot, garden or yard, behind a building, the front of which faces one of the older streets in a town or city with medieval origins
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order	A legal instrument for the compulsory purchase of land by a local authority of government agency for a defined purpose and at a fair rate			
	Fascia	The space in which a sign is displayed, typically above a shop			

Abbreviation	Formal term	Definition	Abbreviation	Formal term	Definition
LBC	Listed Building Consent	An approval for the carrying out of works to a listed building (which would otherwise constitute a criminal offence) issued by the local authority and following consultation with a set list of national and local amenity bodies and organisations	Sn215	Section 215 Notice	A notice under the planning acts which a local authority can issue to owners or occupiers for the tidying up of land or buildings which are deemed to be harmful to the amenity of an area
LP	Local Plan	A document prepared by or on behalf of the local authority setting out its planning policy for a forthcoming fixed period; it will include policy concerning the natural environment, conservation, highways, building development among a wide range of other topics.	SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance	A document which sets out a particular policy specific to a site or area which can be used as material evidence in determining any relevant planning application. The content of the document will have been prepared with this specific intent and will require to be formally adopted as one of its suite of planning documents by the authority concerned
PPW	Planning Policy Wales	National policy outlining guidance for making planning decisions	TPO	Tree Preservation Order	An order made by a local planning authority in Wales to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodland in the interest of amenity. An order prohibits the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting, wilful damage and wilful destruction of trees without local authority's written consent
P(LBCA) Act 1990	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	A consolidating act which brought together previous diverse pieces of legislation into one Act of Parliament			
	Repairs Notice	A notice issued under sections 47 and 48 of the P(LBCA) Act 1990 requiring owners or occupiers to carry out urgent repairs to listed buildings			

**The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** requires:

- Local planning authorities to determine areas where it is desirable to preserve and enhance, and designate them as conservation areas (section 69 [1])
- Local planning authorities to review their past activities in this area, including existing conservation areas, and to add more conservation areas (section 69 [2])
- Local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and consult the public in the area in question, taking account of views expressed (section 71 [1 and 2])
- In the exercise by local planning authorities of planning functions within the conservation area ‘special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’ (section 72 [1])

**Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty of well-being on public bodies, which must set out and publish well-being objectives designed to maximise their contribution to achieving each of the seven well-being goals. One of these goals is a Wales of vi-

brant culture and thriving Welsh language, described as ‘a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language’. There are clear synergies between the specific duty to preserve or enhance conservation areas, as required by the 1990 Act,<sup>7</sup> and the general duty to promote and protect heritage, as set out in the 2015 Act. Properly protected and enhanced conservation areas can improve the quality of life and well-being for everyone.

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- The historic environment is made up of individual historic features which are collectively known as historic assets. Conservation areas are considered historic assets.
- Paragraph 6.1.6 states that the Welsh Government’s specific objectives for the historic environment seek to: [...] preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas, whilst the same time helping them remain vibrant and prosperous.
- Paragraph 6.1.14 notes that there should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas or their settings. Positive management of conservation areas is necessary if their character or appearance are to be preserved or

enhanced and their heritage value is to be fully realised. Planning authorities should establish their own criteria against which existing and/or new conservation areas and their boundaries should be reviewed. The preparation of conservation area appraisals and management plans can assist planning authorities in the exercise of their development management functions.

- Paragraph 6.1.15 notes that there is a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission for developments, including advertisements, which damage the character or appearance of a conservation area or its setting to an unacceptable level. In exceptional cases, the presumption may be overridden in favour of development considered desirable on public interest grounds.
- Paragraph 6.1.16 notes that preservation or enhancement of a conservation area can be achieved by a development which either makes a positive contribution to an area’s character or appearance or leaves them unharmed. Mitigation measures can also be considered which could result in an overall neutral or positive impact of a proposed development in a conservation area.

- Paragraph 6.1.17 notes that conservation area designation introduces control over the total or substantial demolition of unlisted buildings within these areas, but partial demolition does not require conservation area consent. Procedures are essentially the same as for listed building consent. When considering an application for conservation area consent, account should be taken of the wider effects of demolition on the building's surroundings and on the architectural, archaeological or historic interest of the conservation area as a whole. Consideration should also be given to replacement structures. Proposals should be tested against conservation area appraisals, where they are available.
- Paragraph 6.1.29 notes that development plans should consider the inclusion of locally specific policies relevant to the historic environment. These must be distinctive and only cover those elements deemed as important considerations from a local planning perspective. They might include locally specific policies relating to:
- Listed buildings and conservation areas – development plans may include locally specific policies for the conservation of the built historic environment, including the protection or enhancement of listed buildings and conservation areas and their settings. They may also include policies relating to re-use or new development that affect particular historic areas and/or buildings, which may assist in achieving urban and rural regeneration. Development plans should

not include policies for the designation of new conservation areas or extensions to existing conservation areas, nor should they include detailed statements or proposals for existing conservation areas. The process of assessment, detailed definition or revision of boundaries and formulation of proposals for individual conservation areas should be pursued separately from the development plan.

- Paragraph 1.36 notes that the Welsh Ministers have reserve powers to make their own Revocation/Modification or Discontinuance Orders, but only after consultation with the planning authority. Such intervention would overturn a planning authority's judgement on a matter which is, in the first place, its responsibility and may only be justified in exceptional circumstances. The general principle is that such action should be considered only where the original decision is judged to be grossly wrong, so that damage would be done to the wider public interest. This policy also applies to the use of the Welsh Ministers' default powers in respect of listed buildings and conservation area consent.

#### **Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment, 2017**

This document sets out that:

- Local planning authorities are responsible for designating conservation areas and they hold the definitive information on their boundaries.
- Supplementary Planning Guidance may be devel-

oped and adopted by a local planning authority to assist them in delivering policies in the local development plan. Specific guidance relating to the historic environment might include topics such as: Conservation area management plans.

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and designate them as conservation areas. They should review their areas from time to time to consider whether further designations or revisions are called for. The Welsh Ministers also have powers to designate conservation areas after consultation with the local planning authority. This is a reserved power that is used in exceptional cases, for instance, where an area is of more than local interest.

6.2 Conservation area designation provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest: this might include the pattern of settlement and the organisation of space and routes as well as the style and type of building, and the use of materials and detail. Green infrastructure may also be important, but conservation area designation is not likely to be an appropriate means of protecting landscape features, except where they form an integral part of the historic built environment.

6.3 Local planning authorities must from time to time formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in a management plan. In accordance with best practice, this should be every five to ten years. It is good practice for local planning authorities to adopt the management plan as supplementary planning guidance. They must also give special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing conservation areas when taking planning decisions. In exceptional circumstances where part or the whole of a conservation area no longer possesses the special interest which led to its designation, the designation may be amended or cancelled.

6.4 A conservation area appraisal is the foundation for any proposals for preservation and enhancement. It provides a detailed picture of the special interest of an area and identifies opportunities and priorities for action which can provide the basis for a more detailed management plan. It should include an analysis of the policy and management needs of the area, including an assessment of the effectiveness of current planning controls, the need for supplementary protection and the identification of ways in which special character can be preserved or enhanced. Local development plan policies and development management decisions which relate to conservation areas will have a sounder basis and make more positive contributions to long-term aims if the character of each conservation area is defined and policies

for its preservation and enhancement are set out in detail in a management plan. Consideration can also be given to whether to introduce Article 4 Directions in these areas.

6.5 By their very nature, conservation areas have multiple stakeholders and management arrangements should provide opportunities for participation and engagement in plan and decision making. Proposals for preservation and enhancement will also be most effective when all council departments understand the significance of designation and work together. A development team approach that recognises the contribution of other departments, such as highways and housing, is therefore strongly recommended.

6.6 Local development plans may include locally specific policies for the protection or enhancement of conservation areas. In such circumstances, the local development plan should make clear that development proposals will be judged against their effect on the character or appearance of a conservation area as identified in the appraisal and management document. Certain development proposals within a conservation area, including the provision of one or more dwelling houses, the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space created by the development is 100 square metres or more, will require a design and access statement.

6.7 Many conservation areas include the commercial centres of towns and villages. Generally, there will be

an emphasis on controlled and positive management of change that encourages economic vibrancy and social and cultural vitality and accords with the area's special architectural and historic qualities. Many conservation areas include sites or buildings that make no positive contribution to, or indeed detract from the character or appearance of the area; their replacement should be a stimulus to imaginative, high-quality design and an opportunity to enhance the area.

6.8 One of the purposes of the advertisement control system is to encourage the display of outdoor advertisements which make a positive contribution to the appearance of the environment. It is reasonable to expect that the local planning authority's duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area will result, in practice, in more exacting standards when the authority considers whether to grant consent for a proposed advertisement in such an area.

6.9 In conservation areas it is important for local planning authorities to be flexible in their use of their powers under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992, because many areas include retail and commercial premises ranging from small corner shops to thriving commercial centres. Outdoor advertising is essential to commercial activity and the success of local businesses will usually help owners and tenants of commercial premises to maintain buildings in good repair and attractive in appearance.

6.10 Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area, though there are some exceptions. In this context, the courts have ruled that demolition amounts to pulling down a building so that it is destroyed completely or at least to a very significant extent. Therefore, the removal of an entire building except its facade could also count as demolition.

6.11 The Welsh Ministers may direct that Conservation Area Consent is not required for certain descriptions of buildings and the Welsh Ministers have directed that Conservation Area consent is not required for certain works. These works include the demolition of a building with a total cubic content not exceeding 115 cubic metres and the demolition of a built boundary feature that is less than one metre high where abutting a highway, waterway or open space, or less than two metres high in any other case. This means that many works which involve the destruction of the fabric of part of a building will not be works of demolition and will not require conservation area consent.

6.12 Applications for consent to demolish must be made to the local planning authority. Applications for Conservation Area Consent will require a heritage impact statement, which should explain why demolition is desirable or necessary alongside a broader assessment of the impact of the proposals on the character or appearance of the area.

6.13 There should be a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings (see 5.15). In cases where it is considered a building makes little or no contribution, the local planning authority will normally need to have full information about what is proposed for the site after demolition. Consent for demolition should not be given without acceptable and detailed plans for the reuse of the site unless redevelopment is itself undesirable. The local planning authority is entitled to consider the broad principles of a proposed development, such as its scale, size, and massing, when determining whether consent should be given for the demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area.

6.14 It may be appropriate to impose a condition on the granting of consent for demolition so that it does not take place until full planning permission has been granted and a contract for carrying out the development work has been made.

6.15 Local planning authorities have the power to protect trees and woodlands by making tree preservation orders. In addition, there is a special provision for trees in conservation areas which are not the subject of tree preservation orders. Anyone proposing to cut down, top or lop a tree in a conservation area is required to give the local planning authority six weeks' notice, during which time the local planning authority can decide whether to protect that tree with a tree preservation order.

6.16 When considering whether to extend protection to trees in conservation areas, local planning authorities should always consider the visual, historic and amenity contribution of trees. In some instances, new or re-plantings may be desirable where this would be consistent with the character or appearance of the area.

6.17 Enforcement has a key role to play in the protection of conservation areas and local planning authorities should consider a more proactive approach, including monitoring development activity and ensuring compliance with the terms of regulatory controls, rather than just investigating when a formal complaint is made. A positive and active approach to enforcement will help to reduce the number of contraventions and secure sustained improvements in environmental quality.

6.18 An applicant has a right to appeal against certain decisions or failure to take a decision by the local planning authority on a conservation area consent. An appeal may be made in circumstances including the following: Where a local planning authority: Refuses an application for conservation area consent; Grants an application for conservation area consent subject to conditions; Refuses an application for the variation or discharge of conditions attached to a conservation area consent; Refuses an application for approval required by a condition imposed on the granting of conservation area consent; or Fails to determine an application for consent within 8 weeks of its validation by the local planning authority.

6.19 An appeal is made to the Welsh Ministers on a form within six months of the applicant being notified of the local planning authority's decision.

### **Managing Conservation Areas in Wales, Cadw, 2017**

Managing Conservation Areas in Wales supplements Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment. Managing Conservation Areas in Wales sets out the policy context and duties for local planning authorities to designate and manage conservation areas. It also identifies key aspects of good practice for their designation and appraisal, including the participation of stakeholders and the development of local policies for positive management and enhancement so that their character and appearance are preserved and enhanced. It should also help local planning authorities to take account of Cadw's Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales (Conservation Principles) to achieve high-quality sensitive change.

