

CONSERVATION AREA COWBRIDGE WITH LLANBLETHIAN



APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

DIRECTORATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND
ECONOMIC REGENERATION



Cowbridge with Llanblethian

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

July 2010

This document is the adopted Cowbridge with Llanblethian Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, and is a publicly agreed statement on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and of a publicly agreed set of policies and actions intended to preserve and enhance special qualities of the Conservation Area.

Following a period of public consultation from 26th April 2010 to 4th June 2010 this document was submitted on 7th July 2010 to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Cabinet meeting with a recommendation that the document is adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Vale of Glamorgan Unitary Development Plan. The Appraisal/Management Plan will also inform the preparation of the emergent Local Development Plan

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Plan 1:
Cowbridge with Llanblethian Conservation Area
Plan of existing Boundary (not to scale)



Preface

Cowbridge is widely recognised as one of the most significant small historic towns of Wales. It contains examples of buildings extending back to the mediaeval period as well as a significant archaeological resource which confirms its foundation as a Roman settlement. Its architectural and historic importance were formally recognised in the planning system in 1970 by its designation (by the former Glamorgan County Council) as a conservation area.

The once independently located village of Llanblethian is now attached to Cowbridge by modern development, and, therefore, was included in the original designation of 1970. The village is recognised as containing an important range of historic buildings including the Church of Saint John and St. Quentin's Castle, both of which dominate the settlement from higher ground.

In 1995, the former Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council prepared an Appraisal for the conservation area which was adopted on an interim basis for development control purposes. The boundary recommendations contained in the document were, however, never adopted.

The Appraisal was followed by a Study of 1996 ('Cowbridge Walled Town: An Enhancement Study') which provided an 'audit' of the buildings and environment of the walled town core of the conservation area. The audit served as a source of additional information to assist in the introduction of the Cowbridge Town Scheme, a partnership between the Council and Cadw, Welsh Historic Monuments designed to provide grant aid to support the repair of historic buildings. The Town Scheme enabled repairs to take place to a number of major buildings in the town, including the Bear Hotel, Woodstock House and other important buildings in the historic frontages of Eastgate, High Street and Westgate.

In the intervening years since the production of the Appraisal and Walled Town Study, a favourable economy in development terms has encouraged the reuse and repair of fine buildings such as the Old Grammar School in Church Street and the development of major sites such as the former Bridge Garage in High Street.

Cowbridge remains a prosperous and highly attractive historic town. To a degree this is due to the avoidance of pressure for major new development which has caused damage in many similar places elsewhere. Its success is also a product of the ongoing commitment to the retention of its character and historic environment.

The production of this Appraisal and Management Plan is timely in the focus it provides on the historic environment of the town, at a time when pressures for change may be apparent. In this sense, the document can serve to provide dialogue and a background on issues relating to:

- the quality of new development on 'opportunity sites' (such as the Cattle Market and the Garden Centre site off High Street) in respect of which development briefs have been prepared and adopted by the Council
- the need for enhancement (e.g. to car parking and the 'arrival points' within the Town)
- the retention and enhancement of historic buildings

The village of Llanblethian provides a quite different character to that of the historic town and the issues relating to the management of this part of the conservation area are distinct in comparison. For this reason, there may be good grounds for creating two separate conservation areas to the mutual benefit in the management of the historic environment of each place.

Introduction and Background

Introduction

The Effects of Designation

Process and Preparation of the Appraisal

Planning Policy Framework

Summary of Special Interest

Location and Setting

Historic Development and Archaeology



Introduction

The Cowbridge with Llanblethian Conservation Area was designated in October 1970 by the former Glamorgan County Council in recognition of the special architectural and historic interest of the town.

Having designated the Conservation Area, the local authority has a statutory duty to ensure that the character of the area be preserved or enhanced. It is therefore necessary to define and analyse those qualities that contribute to, or detract from, the special interest of the area, and to assess how they combine to justify its special designation.

The Cowbridge with Llanblethian Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan builds upon policy set out by the Welsh Assembly in Planning Policy Wales¹ and Circular 61/96², and local policy included in the Vale of Glamorgan Adopted Unitary Development Plan (1996 – 2011). This document provides a further basis on which applications for development within, and close to the Conservation Area can be assessed.

The document is divided into two parts, Part 1 (The Appraisal) and Part 2 (The Management Plan).

The Appraisal records and analyses the various features that give the Conservation Area its special architectural and historic interest. These features are noted, described, and marked on the Appraisal Maps along with written commentary on how they contribute to the special interest of the Conservation Area. There is a presumption that all of these features should be “preserved or enhanced”, as required by the legislation.

The Management Plan is based upon the summary of issues identified in Part 1 and sets out proposals and policies which can enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The recommendations include proposals for enhancement and policies for the avoidance of harmful change.

The Management Plan is written in the awareness that in managing conservation areas within the Vale of Glamorgan the Council's resources are limited and therefore need to be prioritised. Financial constraints on the Council mean that proposals for which it is responsible may take longer than is desirable to implement. However, the Council will continue to encourage improvements to the Conservation Area in co-operation with property owners, groups and local businesses.

The document is intended for use by planning officers, developers and landowners to ensure that the special character is not eroded, but rather preserved and enhanced through development activity. While the descriptions go into some detail, a reader should not assume that the omission of any building, feature or space from this Appraisal means that it is not of interest; if in doubt, please contact the Vale of Glamorgan Council - contact details can be found at the end of this document.

The survey work for was undertaken between May and June 2009. To be concise and readable, it does not record all features of interest.

1 Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 12: Design

2 Welsh Office Circular 61/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas

The Effects of Designation

This Appraisal/Management Plan has been prepared in compliance with Section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation) Areas Act, 1990. The consequences of designation are summarised as follows:

- the Council has a general duty to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the Cowbridge with Llanblethian Conservation Area in the determination of planning applications;
- six weeks notice needs to be given to the Council before works are carried out to certain trees not subject to tree preservation orders (those over 7.5cm in diameter measured 1.5 metres above the ground);
- conservation area consent is needed for the demolition of any unlisted building in the conservation area (subject to certain exemptions in terms of size some very minor buildings may be excluded from this provision);
- the details as to the limits regarding the works (such as extensions) which may be carried out without the benefit of planning permission are stricter;
- extra publicity is given to planning applications.

In practice, a principal involvement of the Council in the management of the conservation area is through its duty to advise on, consider and respond to planning applications for new development. These are normally subject to closer scrutiny from a design perspective and may as a result often require a greater level of explanatory information and presentation. Dependent upon size of a proposal, an application may also be referred to the Council's Conservation Area Advisory Group, an independent forum which makes recommendations to the Council's Planning Committee regarding a number of issues regarding the management of conservation areas in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Council also makes an important contribution to the appearance of the conservation area in:

- the management of the public estate (e.g. parks, open spaces and its own buildings);
- fulfilling its statutory obligations as highway authority (e.g. in the maintenance of highways, traffic management, verges, ditches, drains, hedges and in the provision of street furniture, signs and lighting);
- as a service provider (e.g. education).

How the Appraisal was Prepared

Involving the community (and thereby raising public awareness) has been an integral part of the Appraisal process. This has been beneficial in two respects. Firstly, it has allowed the local community to provide important commentary on both the existing situation and its aspirations for the conservation area. In addition, it has raised awareness of the conservation area status of Cowbridge and Llanblethian, and the implications for those living within its boundaries.

The Conservation and Design Team met initially with the Town Council in April, 2009 to outline the objectives of the review and to outline the main issues that are affecting the Conservation Area. In addition, the Council has undertaken consultation with the Charter Trust, the Cowbridge and District Local History Society and the Residents Association.

Following these meetings a leaflet summarising the purpose of the Appraisal and Management Plan was prepared and a short questionnaire was distributed to all properties. On behalf of the Council, the Town Council delivered more than a thousand of the questionnaires as part of an initial consultation period which lasted 3 weeks. The results of the questionnaire were considered in the preparation of this draft Appraisal.

A summary of issues raised through the consultation process is described below:

- The importance of open space in the area, particularly between Cowbridge and Llanblethian, Old Hall Gardens and Physic Garden;
- The general high quality of buildings in the area and the arrangement of different architectural styles;
- The significance of the history of the town which remains apparent in the form of the Roman road, historic burgage plots and the remains of the Town Walls and South Gate;
- The value of the landscape setting of the area;
- The important contribution made by trees;
- The poor quality of some modern development;
- Inappropriate alteration and repair to unlisted historic buildings (e.g. terraces);
- The potential for exclusion of modern housing from the Conservation Area;
- The impact of traffic and car parking on the centre of Cowbridge.

Planning Policy Framework

National Advice

Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. A Conservation Area is defined as “*an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”. It is the quality and interest of an area, rather than that of individual buildings, which is the prime consideration in identification.

Section 72 of the same Act specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

This document should be read in conjunction with national planning policy guidance. This provides advice on the designation of Conservation Areas, and the importance of assessing the special interest of each one in an appropriate manner.

Development Plan

The Vale of Glamorgan’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in April, 2005. The Plan sets out the Council’s aspirations for protecting and enhancing the historic environment and states how applications affecting Conservation Areas will be assessed.

The policies relating directly to the management of Conservation Areas are:

- ENV 17 (Protection of Built and Historic Environment)
- ENV 20 (Development in Conservation Areas)
- ENV 21 (Demolition in Conservation Areas)
- ENV 22 (Advertisements in Conservation Areas)
- ENV 23 (Shopfront Design in Conservation Areas)

Additionally, Policy ENV 24 (Conservation and Enhancement of Open Space) and Policy ENV 27 (Design of New Developments) are important in the assessment of planning applications relating to them.

Another important policy relating to the area is Policy ENV 4 which relates to Special Landscape Areas (‘SLA’). Much of the landscape surrounding the town is defined in the Upper and Lower Thaw Valley Special Landscape Areas. Of particular importance is the Upper Thaw Valley SLA which traverses the conservation area boundary and protects the important setting of Caer Dynnaf and Llanblethian Hill Down. It also serves to protect the important open space that lies between Cowbridge and Llanblethian, and land to the south of Llanblethian.

These policies will be strengthened by this Appraisal, which will offer greater detail regarding those elements that give the area its distinctiveness.

It should be noted that the designation of a Conservation Area is not intended to prevent change. It is, however, important that new development in or adjacent to the Conservation Area either preserves or enhances the quality of the area. For this reason, strict controls exist over applications for new development.

Local Development Plan

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has started work on producing its Local Development Plan (LDP), which will set out how land within the Vale is used between 2011 and 2026. This includes the historic built environment and conservation areas. Up-to-date information on the progress of the Council’s LDP can be found at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk.

Summary of Special Interest

Although not exhaustive, the defining characteristics of the conservation area that reinforce the designation can be summarised as follows:

Cowbridge

- Small historic town of outstanding archaeological and historic merit. Many sites exhibit historic 'layering' of multiple periods;
- Historic core of settlement reflects the plan of the walled town planned in the 13th century with vestiges of the walls remaining and extant South Gate;
- Strong east-west alignment of plan from Eastgate – High Street – Westgate with enclosing historic frontages;
- Bridging point across the River Thaw and river setting;
- Important terraces of historic buildings along the prime historic frontage of diverse architectural character, with many identified listed buildings;
- Key listed buildings including the Town Hall, Holy Cross Church and Churchyard, South Gate, former Cowbridge Grammar School and the Great House;
- Important sequences of open space to the south of the east-west principal road alignment including Old Hall Gardens, the Physic Garden, Holy Cross Churchyard, the Twt and gardens along the River Thaw;
- Enclosed historic courtyards to the north and south of the principal historic frontage in High Street, such as Verity's Court;
- Important 18th century period detailing of historic frontages reflecting the prosperity of the town in the period as a coaching town and regional centre;
- Important 16th and 17th century detailing, in particular to interiors.

Llanblethian

- Former rural village now attached to Cowbridge by modern development but nevertheless retaining a notable, independent landscape setting within the valley of the River Thaw;
- Intimate historic layout of village streets with some good frontages provided by historic buildings;
- Key, iconic listed buildings in St. John's Church and St. Quentin's Castle, each of which dominate the village from higher ground;
- An excellent ensemble of historic buildings, including Great House, Llanblethian House and Kingscombe House;
- Local intimate detailing including enclosing stone walls;
- Water frontages along the River Thaw and Factory Brook;
- Steeply sloping levels which ascend from the Thaw and Factory Brook with contained views between buildings to the countryside beyond;
- Significant context of open countryside in the open meadows of the River Thaw to the north and fields to the south of Bridge Road.

Location and Setting

Location and Context

Cowbridge is located 8km from the coast of the Bristol Channel, where the broad valley of the River Thaw creates a break through the undulating liassic limestone plateaux of the Vale of Glamorgan. The town is situated approximately 9km southeast of the town of Bridgend and 15km west of Cardiff. Llanblethian is located to the south west of Cowbridge although development since the 1960s has narrowed the gap between the two settlements. The northern boundary of the Conservation Area is delineated by the Cowbridge bypass which links Bridgend and Cardiff.

View over Llanblethian looking north from the Llanmihangel Road



General Character and Plan Form

Cowbridge

The historic core includes the walled town, Eastgate and Westgate. Its building form follows the early Tythe Plan and is drawn closely around the initial mass of the listed buildings in the centre and those developed around the former East Village (now Eastgate). It is linear in form with burgage plots defining the formal building frontage on a strong east/west axis with lesser buildings lying behind.

Whilst the principal frontage affords a clear appraisal of building, scale, detail and use of materials, the views from behind are more complex and are derived from a rich mix of boundary walls, coach houses and outbuildings. The palette of graded roof pitches and stone and slate buildings define skyline, building frontages and the layout of buildings within the gentle hollow provided by the valley. It is from these backyard areas that the principal buildings are serviced, and where parking and domestic activities now dominate.

Llanblethian

Historically the village had a dispersed settlement pattern consisting of prestigious houses, farms and farm buildings scattered around the church, castle and beside the brook. This pattern has been altered by small housing developments and infill introduced in the second half of the 20th century which has been laid out with a much greater sense of formality and uniform relationship to the road.



Landscape Setting

Approaching Cowbridge along the A48 from either direction, the setting of Cowbridge becomes immediately apparent. The hills of Stalling Down (in the east) and above Llanblethian (Llanblethian Hill and Llanblethian Hill Down) clearly define the edges of the valley of the River Thaw.

Within the more immediate setting of the town to the south, open fields along the flood plain of the river extend almost into the built up area and are complimented by playing fields that lie to the immediate south of the Cattle Market. To the north, open land between the by-pass and North Road includes playing fields and a rugby pitch associated with the Leisure Centre.

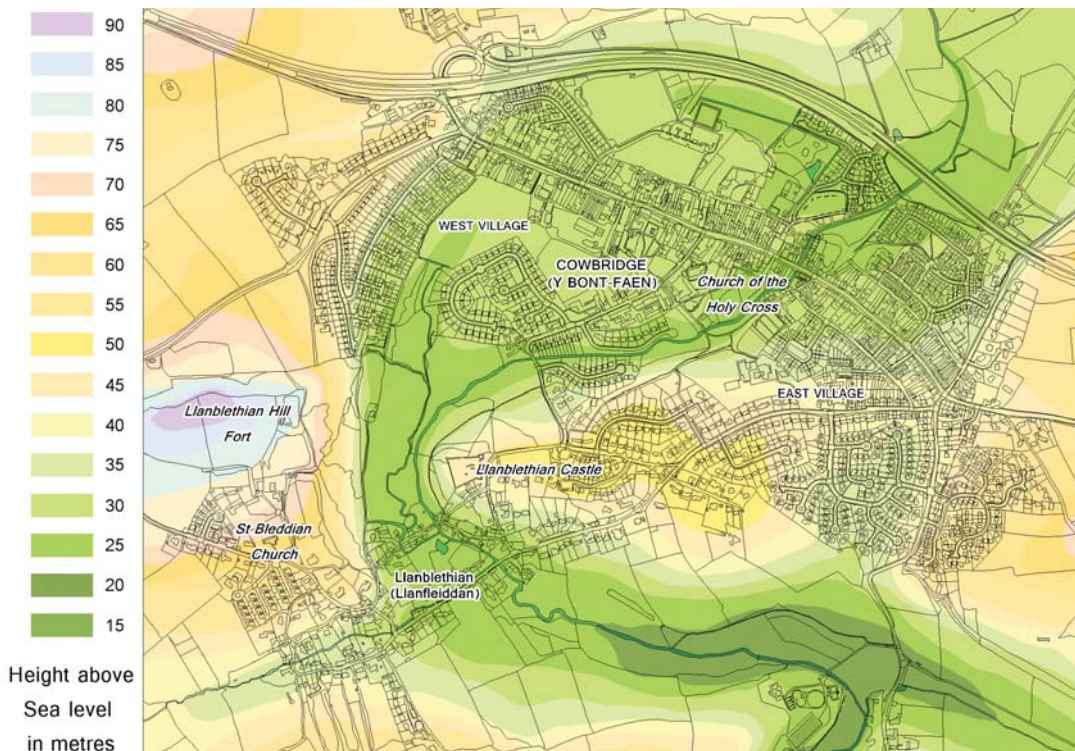
The landscape setting in Llanblethian is more dramatic and an important feature of the character of the conservation area, contributing to a strong sense of enclosure within parts of the village. The setting is formed by five distinctive elements:

- to the north-west Llanblethian Hill and Llanblethian Hill Down rise to 80 metres in height. The hill is punctuated by the important landmark of the Church of Saint John the Baptist (Saint Bleddian's), situated at 55 metres on the southern aspect.
- To the north-east, a promontory of the River Thaw rises to 45 metres. Located on this hill at approximately 35 metres, the remains of Saint Quentin's Castle act as a further landmark above the village.
- To the north and west of the confluence of the Thaw and Factory Brook, low lying flat land, including open meadows to the north of Piccadilly.
- To the south, the valley formed by Factory Brook towards which land falls steeply in level from the North (Church Road) and South (Llanmihangel Road).

The importance of the landscape setting is recognised in planning policy (as summarised on page 7).

Plan 2: Landscape Setting

The map illustrates the location of Cowbridge to the north of a gorge where the River Thaw breaks through a limestone escarpment, providing the locally dramatic setting of Llanblethian. To the south of the town, new housing has been constructed within the floodplain of the river and on the ground to the west affecting the landscape setting of the historic town.



Historic Development and Archaeology

The Origins and Historic Development of the Area

Cowbridge

The link between built form and history is always complex since most buildings have been altered by the addition of new facades or chimneys, bays and casements. In Cowbridge a distinct building form endures created by the early town defence and the planned layout of burgage plots in the 12th century. The diverse assortment of building styles, scale and detail which remain are all contained within this historic framework.

Cowbridge is one of the oldest towns in Wales, and its origins are found in the first century AD and before. The development of the town as a planned Borough dates from 1254, when it is recorded that planned units were developed by Richard de Clare within an envelope of 96 acres set aside from his manor at Llanblethian. Initially, some 80-90 plots may have been constructed within the town walls. By 1425 an account suggests that 320 plots may have been laid out to the edges of the Borough, with most development taking place within the walled centre of the town. It is these plots which have determined the layout of both medieval and later buildings.

Early plans show a relatively uniform pattern between 7.5 and 9 metres in width, with a varying depth of 55 – 65 metres set predominantly on the north side of Westgate and High Street. Three phases of development can be detected, and each has determined the three distinct areas which remain:-

- The eastern residential terraces which run down the hillside approach to the town centre.
- The old town or historic core, embracing the Church, Old Hall, Town Hall and principal buildings of architectural and historic interest.
- The western residential area where houses are set behind verges and stone boundary walls to the north.

A decline in population in the late middle ages allowed for an amalgamation of some plots - notably the Great House, Old Hall and The Bear. The former market area at the junction of High Street and Church Street was the focus of life in the mediæval and early modern community. Buildings of note which remain are the Duke of Wellington, The Bear Inn, the Masons Arms, the Ancient Druid, 71-73, Eastgate and 38, High Street.

Population growth was slow during the 16th and 17th centuries, but by the middle of the 18th century, the town had increased in size, with small businesses, shops and other establishments expanding. With improved communications, the town's importance as a coaching town grew, town houses such as Woodstock and Caercady House were built and new inns and hotels developed. Further infilling of plots along Eastgate and Westgate took place and many of the houses within the old core of the Borough were either erected, rebuilt or renovated. It is this period that still marks Cowbridge out as a coaching town with outstanding architecture.

The homogenous appearance of the Borough and the continuation of the linear development is demonstrated in the 1841 Tythe Plan, which followed the burgage plots of the earlier mediæval period.

The town was largely unaffected by the industrial development of the 19th century. The Llantrisant rail link, which opened in 1865, failed to bring a significant expansion of industrial trade, and the passenger service was finally withdrawn in 1951. Despite this, there is rich evidence of the attention to detail and ornamentation invested in buildings of the period; notably in civic buildings such as the Institute, the refurbished Cowbridge Grammar School and domestic properties in Eastgate and Westgate, such as Stafford House, or 43, Eastgate.

Local development accommodating railway worker's terraces at Croft Street and Croft Terrace, represent the only significant expansion of the town during this period.

More recently the role of Cowbridge as a commuter town has marked its change from linear coaching town to a loose-knit settlement lying between the two centres of Cowbridge and Llanblethian.

Historic and Modern Cowbridge



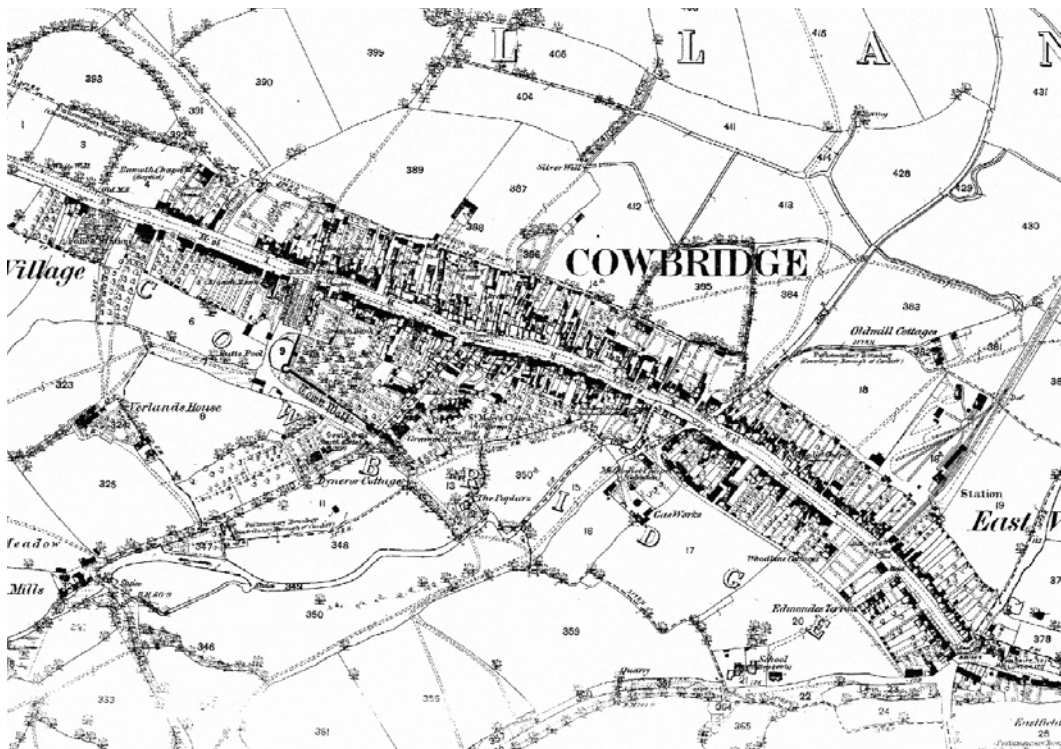
Above: Two views of Cowbridge High Street circa 1900.



Above: Similar views of Cowbridge High Street today. The loss of historic details such as railings, and the dominance of the car are apparent.

Plan 3: Cowbridge. Extract from OS Map 1899

Extract from 1899 OS map indicates how the burgage plots have remained a significant part in the plan of the town.



Llanblethian

The community of Llanblethian dates back to the dark ages, and possibly as far back as the Second Century B.C. The church is 13th century, although historians believe the village had a church as far back as the 6th century. Historical evidence suggests the village was the heart of a manor during the Norman rule of Glamorgan, comprising castle, mills, the Lord's demesne and open fields farmed by his tenants. During the middle ages, the village probably comprised open arable fields which became divided between a number of dispersed farms. Until the middle of this century this was the dominant land use and source of employment.

The development of the village focuses around three areas: the Church and Cross on Llanblethian Hill Down, the confluence of the River Thaw and Factory Brook, where Llanblethian Farm and Great House are located; and Factory Road, a group centred around the former woollen factory at the Ford. The factory was built in the 19th century, producing cloth and flannel.



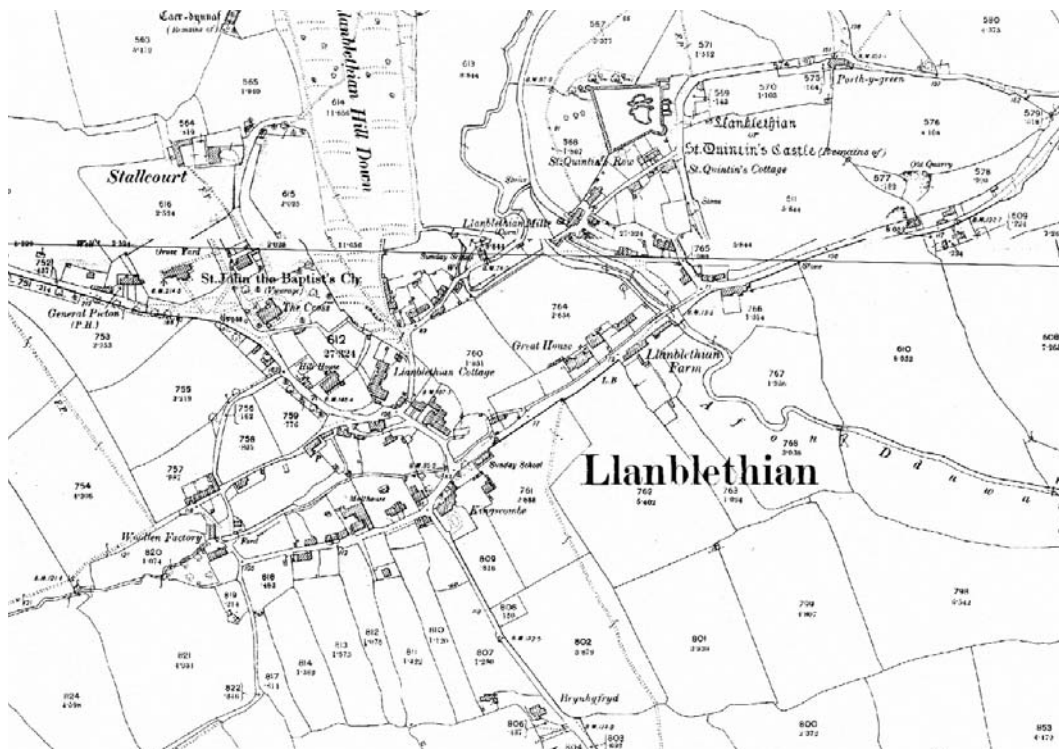
The Grade I listed Church of Saint John lies above the village on its Western side and features a fine, 15th Century tower in the 'Somerset style'.



The former woollen mill and footbridge/ford at Factory Road.

Plan 4: Llanblethian. Extract from 1899 OS Map

Extract from 1899 OS map illustrates the rurality of Llanblethian, and its separation from Cowbridge.



Analysis

Spatial Analysis

Character Analysis

High Street

Problems, Pressures and
Capacity for Change

Summary of Issues



AND
TO THE MEMORY OF
THOSE OF THIS BOROUGH
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR
1939 - 1945

ROYAL NAVY
PETTY OFFICER DAVID MORGAN JOHN.

HIS MAJESTY'S ARMY
LIEUT. JOHN DAVID GWYN, WELSH REG.
LIEUT. GEORGE THOMAS J. PRATT, ROYAL FUS.
PTE. PERCYVAL MERVYN SEVIOUR, WELSH REG.
PTE. EMLYN WILLIAMS, R.A.O.C.

ROYAL AIR FORCE
PILOT OFFICER DAVID ROY WATTS.
SERGT. MAYNARD H. BURSTON.
SERGT. GERALD V. PAYNE.

MERCHANT NAVY
CHIEF ENGINEER THOMAS J. RICHARDS.

Spatial Analysis

Spatial analysis is concerned with how buildings relate to each other and the space created between and around those buildings. It also examines how views are created and how they may change as a space is passed through.

Character of Spaces

Cowbridge and Llanblethian are effectively two settlements and are considered separately below. Between the two settlements is a large area of open space which lies on low lying land within the valley of the Thaw. This, together with the surrounding landscape is considered separately.¹

Cowbridge

The primary spatial feature in Cowbridge is the historic linear settlement following the road. It is from this spine that the rest of the town is formed. The secondary defining spatial feature is the layout of the historic burgage plots which is still evident today.

Local topography has also played a part in developing the form of the town. When entering the town from the east, the road curves around to the left following the land which slopes to the southwest. The road continues to slope gently down to the River Thaw, and then rises again in the west.

Within the dense, built-up form of the town, a sequence of intimate spaces and courtyards are of special significance. There are accessible pedestrian courts on the north side of High Street at Coopers Lane and Verity's Court. On the south side, private alleyways between buildings lead to a sequence of private spaces and secluded gardens at the rear.

Graveyards associated with Holy Cross Church (in Church Street) and the Georgian Ramoth Chapel on the north side of Westgate are of note, although in the case of the latter the gravestones have been moved back to create a pleasant grassed, enclosed forecourt which lies behind frontage buildings.



Eastgate falls in level from its junction with the Aberthin Road and curves toward the river



In Llanblethian the local topography creates winding roads bounded by limestone walls and trees.

Llanblethian

The character of space in Llanblethian is altogether different to that in Cowbridge and the settlement is more akin to a typical Vale of Glamorgan village. It is determined by three factors:

- Local topography and the network of small streams and the River Thaw;
- The intricate, winding road pattern which traverses the hillsides;
- Sequences of limestone boundary walls which are of great significance in enclosing the village's lanes and informal open spaces.

In contrast with the informality of buildings and space within much of Llanblethian, Bridge Road runs in a straight line adjacent to the Factory Brook. The character of this area is more

(1) See pages 11 and 17

spacious, with undeveloped frontages to the south (adjacent to Cwrt Llanfeiddan) and to the north (adjacent to 'Great House'). Beyond this immediate context open fields rise towards the south.

Key Views and Vistas

Within Cowbridge, key views are contained within the densely built up historic townscape, with occasional glimpses of rolling hills beyond. Particularly important sequential views lie along the east-west axis of Eastgate/High Street/ Westgate and along Church Street.

The landscape setting of Llanblethian allows dramatic vistas over Cowbridge and the Thaw Valley to the north from higher ground around Saint John's Church and the Castle on either side of the valley. Views between buildings of the surrounding countryside are also important. There are noteworthy views also available to the south over the village from the Llanmihangel Road on the extreme southern edge of the conservation area.

The key views and vistas are identified and illustrated on the appraisal maps.



Vistas within the historic town are sometimes terminated by buildings: a. looking south east from Town Hall Square and b. along Church Street.



In Cowbridge, intimate views between buildings towards spaces form a key part of the character of the historic town: a. pedestrian route leading from High Street into Old Hall Gardens b. Verity's Court.



Views towards the countryside are possible, even from the centre of the town, in either direction along the east-west alignment (High Street looking east)

In a number of locations in Llanblethian outstanding views of the wider landscape are available: view to the east from Stallcourt Close with St Quentin's Castle in foreground.

Green Spaces, the River and Treescape

Behind the historic, enclosed frontage in Cowbridge, incidental green open spaces are of great value in defining the special character and setting of the conservation area.

To the south, a sequence of open space includes Old Hall Gardens, a former formal garden attached to the Old Hall. It is enclosed by the Town Wall which includes wall walks associated with its western edge. To the east lies the very fine, recently developed Physic Garden. The 'Twt' lies further to the east again of the Grammar School from which an important, small footbridge leads over the Thaw into open space at Y Bont Faen. The open space runs along the line of the river from the Limes in the north-east as far as modern housing in Mill Park.

Playing fields which lie between the south of the Cattle Market and properties on Westgate are of great importance in maintaining the setting of Westgate and providing separation from modern suburban development in The Verlands.

On the north side of the historic axis, open space provided by a sports ground and the playing field associated with the Leisure Centre act as a green buffer between the western end of the town and the elevated by-pass. To the west and south of Middlegate Walk, further low lying land within the river flood plain contains ditches and ponds which drain toward the river.



Cowbridge Physic Garden: a recent, fine addition to the Conservation Area. Important in the setting of the Church and the former Grammar School.



The remains of a once fine 18th Century facade is retained as a screen wall on the northern frontage of Old Hall Gardens



Open fields which are in the flood plain of the River Thaw are of particular significance, although interrupted by modern housing.

Although interrupted by modern development in Town Mill Road, the Verlands and Mill Park, the low lying fields and flood plain of the River Thaw are of particular importance in the setting of both Cowbridge and Llanblethian and are highly visible from higher ground.

A strong contribution is made to the ambience of Llanblethian by small open spaces. The role of spacious, formally landscaped gardens relating to large houses, which contain large specimen trees, shrubs and hedgerow, is particularly of note. These lie in Stallcourt Close and on the northern side of Church Road to the west of the village and, on the opposite side of the valley to the east, between Saint Quentin's Hill and Castle Hill.

Other significant areas of open space which lie within the village include:

- To the north of 'Great House' and the 'Old Barn'/'Ashley Cottage'/'Mardy Cottage' (on Bridge Road) garden land occurs which relates to the flood plain of the river. In association with the adjacent playing fields immediately to the west, this forms a continuous area of enclosed green space of some importance.

- Similar garden land is recognised at 'Causeway House' overlooking The Causeway, 'Lyndale' (also on The Causeway) and 'Greystones' on Factory Road. Here, garden land falls steeply towards Factory Brook.

Several sites are identified as making a contribution to the setting of important historic buildings and in the immediate landscape context of the village:

- Land on the opposite side of Bridge Road to 'Great House' (between 'Cwrt Llanfeiddan' and 'Nantlais'). This space, which forms a part of agricultural land to the south, is of value as setting to the southern frontage of the house; it is also important in providing views from Bridge Road toward rising hills and the open countryside beyond.
- Land between 'Castle Cottage' and 'Porth-y-Green/'The Quintain'. This unused area is partially fronted by stone walling on its northern side and is of great value in the setting of the Castle to the west. As it is sited on a ridge overlooking Cowbridge, there are views over Cowbridge to the north.



Low lying playing fields and garden land to the north of Bridge Road are important internal spaces.



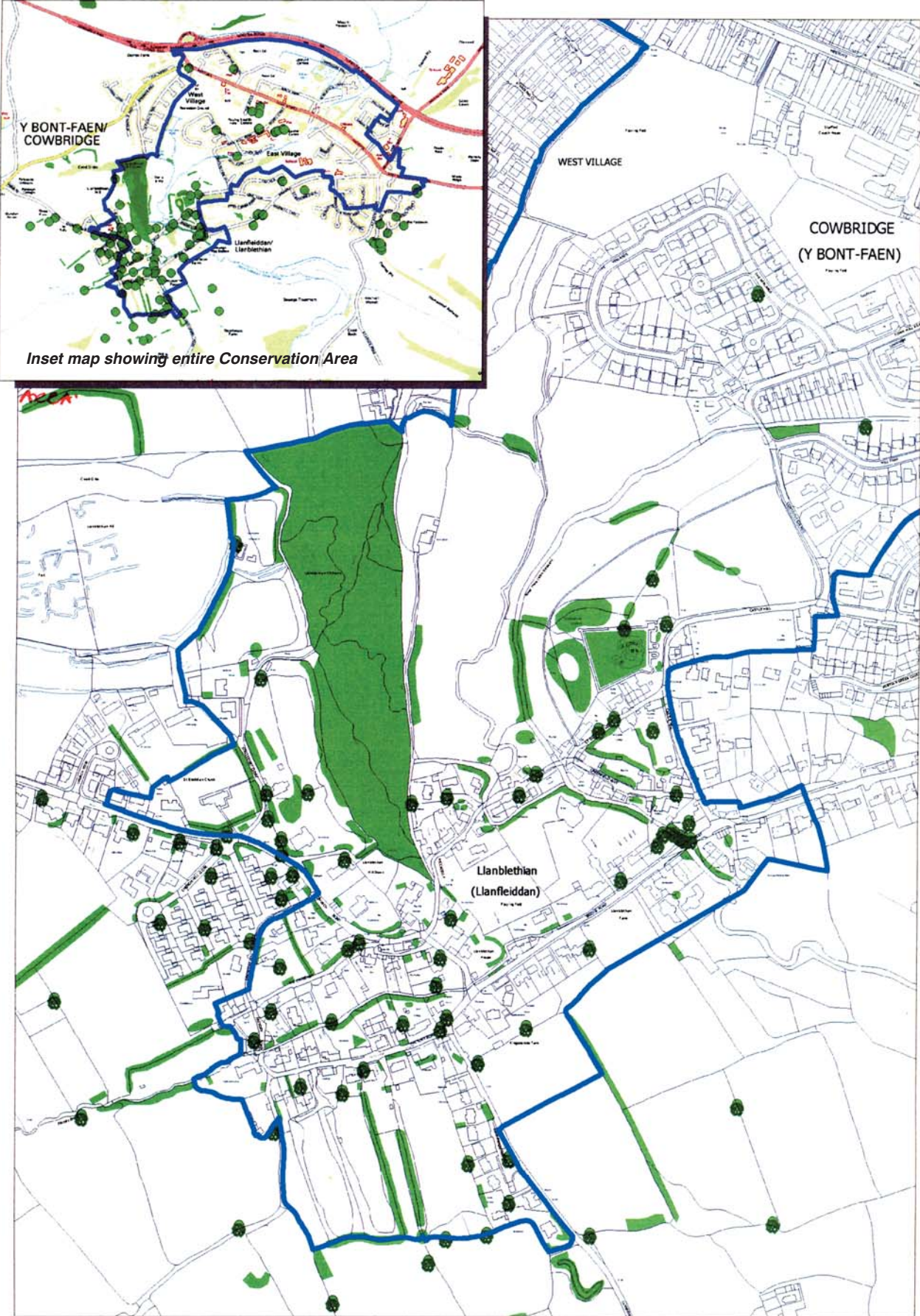
An open field in the frontage opposite to Great House on Bridge Road contributes greatly to the setting of the listed building.

Other than along open space to the south west of The Limes, the river has little presence in the character of Cowbridge, even at the principal bridging point on High Street where it runs discretely between buildings in Penny Lane and at the rear of properties in the Limes. In Llanblethian, the river also only becomes apparent at the two bridging points but with discrete views occasionally elsewhere. Factory Brook, which runs alongside Bridge Road and is forded in Factory Road, makes a strong contribution to the environment of Llanblethian.

Within the enclosed, built up space of the historic town, trees are of limited significance. However, in Llanblethian, treescape makes a major contribution to the character of the conservation area and its setting, with some fine, mature trees located within property boundaries. This enhances the impression of rurality within the village and provides links with the landscape to the countryside beyond. In addition, there are significant groups of mature, deciduous trees located around the Castle and the woodland on Llanblethian Hill Down.

Plan 5: Tree Preservation Orders

The map illustrates the high incidence of important treescape in Llanblethian in comparison to the lesser incidence of trees within the more dense layout of Cowbridge.



Character Analysis

Activity and Prevailing Uses

Historically, the economy of the town has been based upon its rural hinterland. It has always benefited from a mix of residential, commercial and retail uses in the centre, with commercial activities being dependent on the market, the town's agricultural hinterland and its strategic location on a principal east-west route. This traditional mix of uses was often characterised by residential and small scale office/business uses above shop premises.

In recent years, the uncertainty in the operation of the livestock market and changes in the agricultural economy have loosened the town's connections with its rural hinterland. This has been accompanied and counterbalanced by its growth and attraction as a commuter settlement. A number of large residential developments have taken place within the conservation area which have helped to reinforce the historic town as a local centre and maintain the viability and use of the historic buildings in the prime commercial frontage.

Cowbridge remains an attractive town with an important historic townscape. It presents a vibrant, varied retail and service function with an established 'speciality' and visitor base attracting high income shoppers from a wide region. This has possibly reduced its reliance on convenience shopping. The effect is a relatively low vacancy rate in terms of historic buildings and a pattern of ongoing investment in the maintenance and repair of the historic fabric. However, the growth of service uses in some parts of the commercial frontage may also have led to an accompanying vacancy of upper floors.

Llanblethian is almost exclusively residential in character and use and there are no further connections in the village with agriculture. The Church of Saint John The Baptist and the Village Hall are the only community buildings in the village.

Architectural and Historic Character: Cowbridge

Background

There are several unifying factors in terms of architecture, form and layout:

- the distinctive layout created by the burgages of the mediæval town. This produces an almost continuous enclosing 'wall' of frontages, generally located at the back of or close to the pavement, on both sides of Eastgate, High Street and, to a lesser degree, Westgate. Within this broad discipline, buildings variously range from between two and four storeys in height; they exhibit an eclectic mix of detail.
- A general perception that the facades of buildings are composed with 18th and 19th century detailing reflecting the town's historic success during this period as a regional centre located on a principal coaching route.

Many buildings have been altered or extended in successive phases of development and exhibit the remains of earlier structure and fabric. This makes for a particularly rich architectural and archaeological resource to both the exteriors and interiors of historic buildings.



The Ancient Druid, Eastgate: a house of mediæval origins but now of 18th C external appearance, characteristic of the 'layering' of historic periods to buildings in Cowbridge.

Mediæval Cowbridge:

The finest building of the period is the grade 1 listed Church of the Holy Cross which is coeval with the establishment of the mediæval town and lay within its walls. Whilst the nave and chancel are late 13th Century or early 14th in date, the building exhibits a late 15th Century extension to form the south aisle and other extensions. The tower to the church is unusual in its offset hexagonal parapet, possibly intended as a precursor to the provision of a spire. The 14th Century tower is ungainly in form and appearance when seen from Church Street as a result of the combination on the façade of a buttress and a semi conical stair tower. The line of the walls which once encompassed the mediæval town include the South Gate and extend the length of the Butts, Town Mill Road and around the Old Grammar School. Following recent archaeological investigation into the walls, the upstanding lengths around Old Hall Gardens are now known to be largely 18th Century in date whilst the length around the Old Grammar School site is contemporary with the construction of the school in the mid 19th Century.



Holy Cross Church: coeval with the establishment of the mediæval walled town

The South Gate remains as the only of the four original entries into the walled town. Located between the 19th Century fabric of Rose Cottage to the west and the Boot House of the School on the east (an earlier, 18th Century remnant of the original school), the Gate forms one of the most important elements of remaining mediæval fabric in the Conservation Area.

Fragments of the period remain in other buildings, including (proceeding eastward from the junction of The Butts with Westgate), the Market Place Restaurant, Bear Hotel, Duke of Wellington, 38, 40 and 42, High Street and 44, Eastgate (The Ancient Druid), although the list is not exhaustive. Corbelled stone stacks on gable ends at 50 High Street and to Franklen House (to the rear of the Great House) also indicate this earliest phase of foundation which, in the case of the latter, provides external evidence for the remnants of a substantial roof structure which lay over a hall below.

The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

There appears to be much evidence for new building activity during the period between 1570 and 1640 in Cowbridge, although it is now perhaps better appreciated that some is based around earlier fabric. Throughout the High Street and in Eastgate, intermediate floor structures from this period are found such as those recently uncovered and retained in building works at 27, High Street and 73, Eastgate, although it is also common for such floor structure to be hidden by the later fashion for plastered ceilings.

Roof structure of the period is evident in many buildings, although this appears sometimes to have been damaged and altered in the move from thatch to Welsh slate in the late 19th Century. Interiors also exhibit a wealth of dressed stone to door and fireplace surrounds. However, later re-facing along the main frontage has meant that



Great House: a fine surviving 16th century gentry house with mediæval range to the rear, now refronted and of 18th century appearance.

there are few remains of the fine dressed stone window surrounds characteristic of historic buildings of the period in the wider region.

The principal buildings include the Great House and Old Hall (in the High Street).

'Georgian' Architecture of the Town

Much of the architectural character of Cowbridge is expressed by detailing created during the re-fronting of many properties during the 18th to early 19th Century. This includes the common use of twelve and sixteen paned double hung box-framed sash windows which lie in colour washed stuccoed or rendered elevations of a formal composition and proportion. There are examples of elegant door surrounds with traceried over lights and canopies. Narrow forecourts to residential units of the period are often enclosed with railings.

A notable example of a good ensemble of smaller houses of the late 18th and early 19th Century exists in Eastgate between numbers 44 (Ancient Druid) and 58. There are also some good buildings of the period in Westgate, reflecting the later expansion of the town into this area. Such buildings contrast with the larger and more imposing properties contained in the core of the town in High Street, where town houses of the period such as 58, High Street (Caecady House) and Woodstock House exhibit three storeys and more elaborate detailing, including porches.

Of the many commercial buildings, there are no verifiable examples of early shop fronts in the town, although the bow fronted example at No. 30 High Street (Ogmore Vale Bakery) is of an early pattern and probably altered and repaired at a later date.

The Town Hall, a grade 2* listed building, presents the best of public architecture and is located in a prominent position at the eastern end of the High Street. Constructed in 1806 as the Glamorganshire House of Correction, it was subsequently converted into the Town Hall in 1830. It is noteworthy for its imposing façade in ashlar stone with square tower, bellcote and cupola. Of the remaining non conformist chapels, Ramoth lies behind Westgate in its own precinct and forms a remarkably well-preserved early 19th Century chapel of characteristic appearance with a stuccoed double storey gable frontage and circular headed sash windows.



Cowbridge Town Hall: a fine late Georgian public building with landmark tower, bellcote and cupola.



Nos. 56 and 58, Eastgate: a pair of late Georgian houses with much original detailing and forecourt enclosed by railings.

Victorian, Edwardian and Modern:

Whilst there was limited expansion of the town during the Victorian period, there is nevertheless good evidence for the confidence in detail and ornament invested in larger buildings of the time. Notable examples include the highly listed former Grammar School in Church Street, The Institute at the rear of the Town Hall and the larger Gothic styled town houses at 53, Eastgate and Stafford House in Westgate. At this time, Old Hall on High Street was also provided with a new Tudor styled frontage.

Terraced housing, some constructed for railway workers, is found in Croft Street, Croft Terrace and Aubrey Terrace. These form typical terraces of the period, stuccoed with deep windows, pitched slated roofs and brick stacks. Further development of the period along the south side of Eastgate exemplifies single height bay windows.

Early twentieth Century buildings of note include The Pavilion on Eastgate (a former cinema now converted to offices) which features a central, circular turret at upper level with steel windows, leaded lights and modern steel canopy. The grade II listed 61, High Street (HSBC Bank) comprises an early 20th Century single storey bank building with a buff ashlar frontage expansively detailed and dressed with bathstone, including ionic pilasters.

44-46, High Street (Tesco Express/Bar 44) is an imposing Edwardian commercial building featuring a massive pitched roof covered in clay tiles, with fish scale clay tiles on the façade. With a heavy eaves overhang supported off large brackets, oriel windows, casements and timber framing, this building is quite idiosyncratic in comparison to other buildings in the wider frontage.



The Pavilion: a former inter-war cinema now converted to offices.

To the rear of the 1894 range of the former Grammar School in Church Street, a well executed contemporary extension with rendered facade contrasts with the gothic styled architecture of the main building. An associated development in Church Street, formerly a Council depot, now contains residential properties constructed in an 'Arts and Crafts' idiom. Other than these buildings (and with the exception of some small conversions/extensions), Cowbridge has not fared particularly well in terms of contemporary architectural contribution in recent years.

Building Materials and Local Details

Cowbridge and Llanblethian lie in an area where locally sourced lias limestone predominates in terms of local geology and topography. It is a generally used material in the construction of walls relating to buildings and boundaries of all historic buildings and sites up to the 19th Century. In facades and freestanding walls it is generally laid as random rubble, was generally lime washed and may have been lime rendered as well.

During the 18th and 19th Centuries, the fashion for finishing larger buildings in smooth lime stucco, occasionally lined to produce coursing, became evident in the town on the more prestigious houses such as the Great House on High Street in Cowbridge and that in Llanblethian on Bridge Road, Caecady and Woodstock House, as well as on smaller terraces. Rendering is also apparent on later, Victorian buildings and as a wall covering to almost all modern buildings in the conservation area. Rough casting and pebble dash are also in evidence to some facades.

Some Victorian and later buildings exemplify the use of bathstone in dressings around window and door openings, in string courses and copings. Local stone in Victorian gothic detailing is often brought to course and laid in panels on the façade. At the same time brickwork appeared in the town and is found notably as a main facing material to the facades of 38-42, and 41, Eastgate, the latter a large building (once the offices of the former local council). It is also found in Eastgate and Cardiff Road as well as in Llanblethian as an occasional dressing and façade material.

Prior to the late 19th Century a majority of smaller buildings were thatched and only the most prestigious buildings would have featured slated or stone tiled roofs. However, with the

increased availability of natural slate, with few exceptions this material now predominates. It is a common unifying element amongst the varying roof slopes and pitches in the principal frontage.

In terms of external joinery, there is a wealth of fine detail including a variety of forms of the sash window. This exhibits a wealth of form and style reflecting all stages in its historical and constructional development, including multi paned examples on Georgian frontages to later examples with few or no glazing bars. Sash windows are common in combination, in bay and oriel windows, and are found in dormers.

Traditional timber casement windows occur on some facades, with an emphasis on lesser domestic buildings and outbuildings.

Painted panelled doors of a variety of proportions are found on historic buildings. To Georgian and Regency buildings, there are some excellent examples of door hoods and porches of varying extravagance and style. Frontages to domestic properties are normally enclosed, although few front forecourts retain their original cast iron railings and gates: an excellent example survives at 'Aberthaw', 1 High Street. Elsewhere, enclosures are formed with walls of local stone in combination with iron railings and gates set within piers.

Architectural and Historic Character: Llanblethian



Great House: a highly listed early Georgian house.



Bridge House: one of several buildings clearly of 16th Century foundation.

Llanblethian is of particular interest in the overall context of the Vale of Glamorgan village conservation areas; a factor relating to its special landscape setting and the siting of many buildings within dramatic changes of level. Although the village has been changed greatly by the introduction of new 'infill' housing in the late 20th Century, this never entirely overwhelms the historic architecture of the settlement.

The village also presents an unusually diverse and interesting range of historic houses, including cottages, a small terrace, later 18th and 19th Century Georgian housing and larger houses of the Victorian period. It contains the 'Great House' present in many villages in the area, here of early 17th Century foundation but as it now stands, a fine, formal early Georgian house with stucco, quoins and sash windows.

In the hierarchy of buildings, the church and castle are of outstanding architectural and historic importance as reflected in their listed status (grade 1 and II* respectively). The church is constructed in the local stone (but with a freestone ashlar south porch) with a prominent tower of a style akin to churches in Somerset and Devon. On the opposite side of the valley, Saint Quintin's Castle is of 13th Century foundation with ruinous keep and curtain wall. The stone gatehouse with quoins is located on the eastern side of the plan and dominates Castle Hill and the immediate street environment. It has recently been subject of major repair, and is under guardianship of Cadw, Welsh Historic Monuments.

Traditional rural buildings are rectangular in plan form, with low lying, rendered elevations, casement or sash windows and steeply pitched roofs (once formerly thatched, but now covered in slate), with stone stacks. There are few buildings which contain evidence of

construction of a period earlier than the 18th Century, although Glebe House (on the Causeway) has been recorded by the Royal Commission as being of 16th/17th Century foundation with surviving details. Similarly, Bridge House (on Bridge Road, and also surveyed by the Commission) is a former end entry house of late 16th Century age. Nevertheless, it is also clear that some buildings in the village are of earlier foundation and have subsequently been altered.

There are many smaller cottages of 18th Century origin in the village. There is a concentration of these buildings, for example, along Piccadilly (Ar-y-Mynydd, Hillside, Hill Drop, Half Moon Cottage, Brooklyn and Brook House) on Bridge Road (Brook Cottage and Ger-y-Nant) and the area of Factory Road and The Causeway (Bute Cottage, Tadwick, Duffryn, Greystones, The Leys and Kingscombe Cottages). It is unfortunate that many exhibit inappropriate alteration in terms of replacement windows, doors and in the use of inappropriate repair technology.



Causeway Cottages: a small, Victorian terrace now much altered by changes in small detail such as windows.



The Firs: a well preserved house of late 18th/early 19th century appearance, slate roof, sash windows and rendered rubblestone walls.

Causeway Cottages comprises a small terrace of worker's housing located at the western end of the Causeway. Rendered, with slate roofs and originally with sash windows, the terrace has also unfortunately been changed by the introduction of small, uncoordinated alterations to windows and doors.

There are some fine, larger houses of 18th Century appearance, including Llanblethian House and Kingscombe (both grade II listed). Other houses of note include The Firs and Saint Quentin's House on Saint Quentin's Hill and Hill House on Church Road. These buildings can exemplify traditional detailing, including sash windows of varying patterns of glazing.

In the 19th Century, large houses of Regency character appear, including Cross House off Church Road and Brynhyfyd on the Llanmihangel Road, sited to exploit fine views. The former house includes slated hipped roofs with leaded hip rolls, deep single storey bay windows on the ground floor with concave lead covered roofs and fretted fascias.

At Stallcourt House to the north-east of the church, the late Victorian Gothic style emerges in the exposed use of irregular coursed stone, steeply pitched slated roofing with finials, gables and ornate, fretted bargeboards.

As in Cowbridge, there are few recently constructed buildings which are of particular architectural note. However, Castle Mews (off Broadway, adjacent to the eastern bank of the River Thaw) is a discrete terrace of three houses in an 'Arts and Crafts' idiom. On the opposite bank of the Thaw at Cwrt Llanfeiddan, substantial houses lie behind converted farm buildings on the Bridge Road frontage and are noteworthy for their contemporary detail and strong, coloured render.

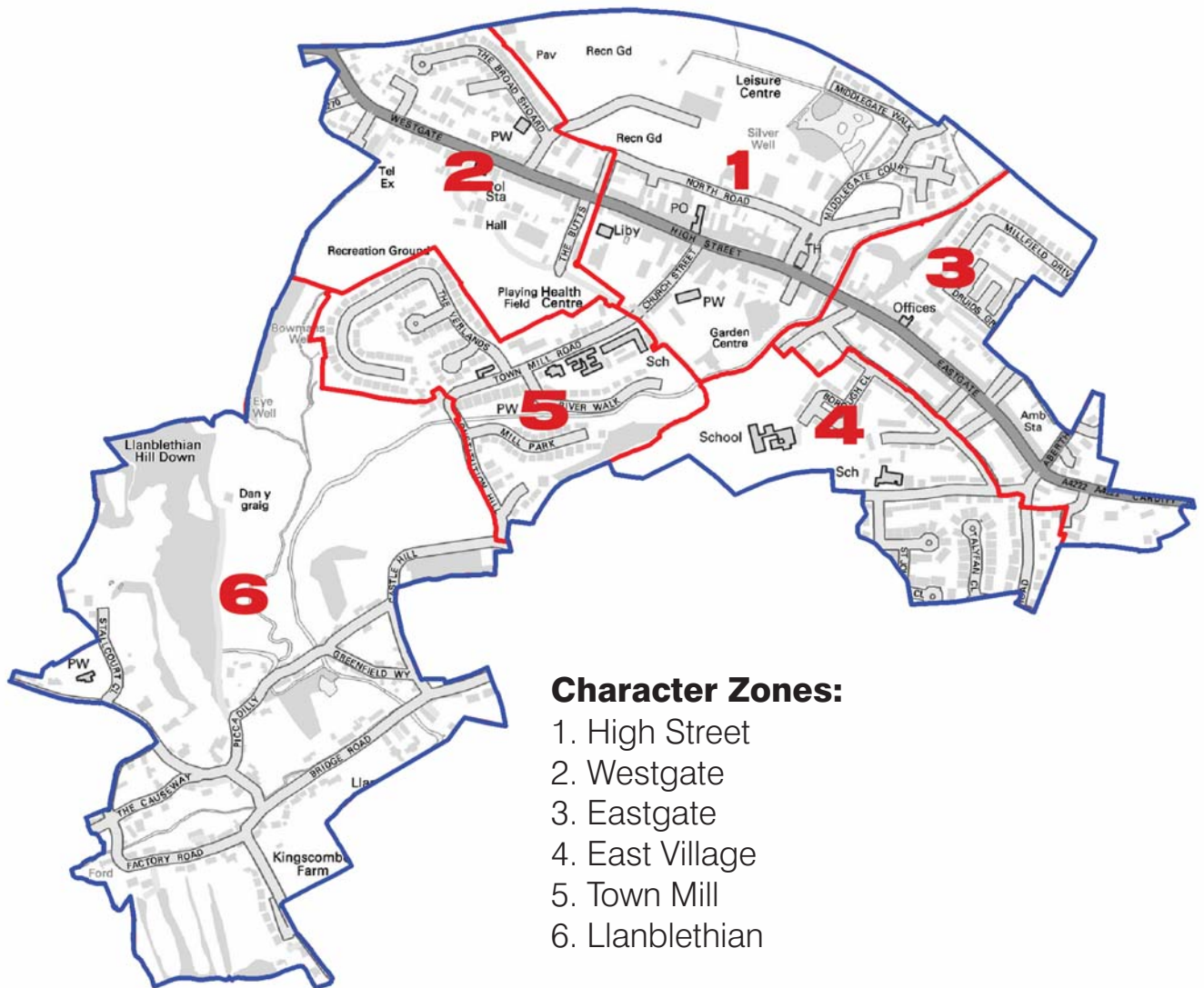
Positive Buildings The Contribution of Key Unlisted Buildings

A number of key unlisted buildings have been identified as 'positive buildings' and these are marked on the Appraisal Map. Positive buildings are those which make a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area. Criteria for selection are given in Appendix 1.

Identification of 'Character Zones'

Within the Conservation Area it is possible to discern a number of different 'character zones'. These are sub areas that have distinctive historic character reflecting periods of development, original functions/activities, specific design and current usage.

Five areas have been identified and appraisal maps prepared for each zone.



Appraisal Maps relating to each character zone are to be found at the end of the document.

1. HIGH STREET

This is the core of the conservation area and displays the historic town in its earliest layout. The southern section of the Town Walls is still in place, with the South Gate (a Scheduled Monument) still standing adjacent to the former Cowbridge Grammar School. The Wall continues east around the Parish Church protecting a calm backwater behind its walls at the former school. Its line then traces the old path of the River Thaw, following the town ditch along North Road to return via Woodstock House. It is here that burgage plots are likely to have developed over the first period of the town's growth, making the High Street around the Market Place the major trading area of the mediaeval town. The linear pattern of the town, with alleyways leading off the main street is derived from this period, and displays many of the qualities which give Cowbridge its later character as a leading town in the 17th and 18th Century.

High Street

The burgage plots are typically long and narrow stretching from High Street towards the Town Walls. Each plot has been developed with various arrangements in hall and kitchen, workshop and sales area. The front of the plots are generally higher with a succession of transverse buildings separated by courts and lightwells developing along the remainder of each backland plot. Some of these are still evident.

Church Street

Church Street follows the line of the historic route from the High Street to the South Gate. Two of the most important buildings in the town are situated here, the Church and the former Grammar School, listed Grade 1 and 2* respectively. It overlooks the Physic Garden, an intimate garden enclosed by high stone surrounding walls.

The Physic Garden is gated to provide pedestrian access to the Old Hall Gardens and is also enclosed by high walls at its southern, eastern and western frontages. The Old Hall, a Grade 2 listed building, dominates the space on its northern side and forms a former house of the Edmondes family, of 16th Century origin, but much altered in the 18th Century. Now a community college created in 1975, the rear ground floor of the building is retained as a single storey screen wall.

An important footpath link passes across the Gardens from Town Mill Road to provide access to the High Street. The western side of the Gardens is taken up by the health centre and library which dominate the setting and form modern, geometric buildings in white render with steeply pitched, angular slated roofs.

North Road

North Road forms a rear service lane to the buildings fronting the northern side of High Street. It runs from Eagle Lane in the west to Town Hall Square. It is likely to follow the line of the town walls and provides the historic rear boundary to the burgage plots.

Further north there is a large expanse of open space, the Bear Field, which provides an important recreation space. The site also houses the leisure centre and is the location of a new medical centre.

The eastern end of North Road is terminated by Town Hall Square, to the rear of the Town Hall. This area is dominated by a large car park and small bus station.

Middlegate

Middlegate Court and Middlegate Walk are two areas of modern housing that relate poorly, in terms of form to the historic core of Cowbridge.

Listed Buildings

Within the High Street character area there are 52 Listed Buildings which are identified on the Appraisal Map. Further information relating to listed buildings is contained in Appendix 2.

Locally Listed County Treasures

The County Treasures survey contains a unified list of historic built assets found within the Vale of Glamorgan. It contains listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, as well as entries identified as being of 'local importance'. The listed buildings noted above have been identified as County Treasures. In addition, Verity's Court has been identified as a locally listed County Treasure.

2. WESTGATE

Westgate also follows the east-west alignment and planned layout of the town, representing a further phase of burgage plots developing beyond the town walls. Comprising flat land set away from flood plain, and bound by common fields to the south it has provided for the development of a number of different building types, of various form and age. However, the most significant buildings can be found towards the town centre with a particularly good ensemble at the site of the historic West Gate, adjacent to the modern day Market Place Restaurant. Here, the dominant building form is one of terraces.

Gibbets Hill

Gibbets Hill forms the entrance to the Conservation Area from the northwest. There is an attractive group of buildings here, most notably Thorn Villa.

Woodlands Close

Woodlands Close consists of a small cul-de-sac accessed directly from Westgate. It is made up of two pairs of semi-detached houses.

The Broadshoard

The Broadshoard is an area of modern housing dating from the 1960s that, although pleasant in their own right, possess little architectural merit.

The Butts

The Butts runs parallel to, and outside of, the former town walls with its entrance marked by a small terrace of Grade 2 listed houses. Much of this part of the Conservation Area is taken up by the town's cattle market, which doubles up as a car park on non-market days. Part of the market site immediately adjoins the historic town walls.

Whilst the market serves as a reminder of the historic importance of the town in its rural hinterland, the site is in a generally poor condition and presents an opportunity to enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

Listed Buildings

Within the Westgate area there are eleven Listed Buildings which are identified on the appraisal map. Further information relating to listed buildings is contained in Appendix 2.

Locally Listed County Treasures

The County Treasures survey contains a unified list of historic built assets found within the Vale of Glamorgan. It contains listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, as well as entries identified as being of 'local importance'. Whilst the listed buildings noted above have been identified as County Treasures, there are no locally listed County Treasures.

3. EASTGATE

Eastgate continues the development of burgage plots : following the early road line and gentle curved gradient towards Stalling Down. The area retains a number of mediaeval buildings but is characterised by development prompted by the construction of the railway and station in the late 19th Century.

The gentle and graded rise of roof pitch is marked, particularly on the northern frontage where houses adjoin the road. To the south, raised gardens and boundary walls define the slope and present a more gentle aspect to the town.

The sub area terminates at a cluster of houses lying adjacent to Eastfield House at the eastern limits to the town. Beyond lie open fields rising to Stalling Down which frame views from the centre of the town and show the close proximity of the open countryside.

Cardiff Road

Cardiff Road forms the eastern entrance to the Conservation Area. The most important building on Cardiff Road is Eastfield, a Grade 2 listed 19th Century house. Also of note here is the site of former railway bridge next to Old School House and at the entrance to Geoffrey Ashe Court which still retains a metal plate showing an Ordnance Survey bench mark dating from the reign of King George V.

Eastgate

Buildings here are almost exclusively terraced in form, and residential in use.

Due to the local topography an interesting feature is formed on the southern side of the street where a number of pavements are raised above the street level. Behind lie small, enclosed front gardens on the frontage of properties.

A particularly interesting feature of Eastgate is the gap in the otherwise continuous frontage caused by the former railway station. This now provides access to areas of modern housing, in Druids Green.

The Limes

The Limes is an intimate space formed by the juxtaposition of a number of small cottages and terraced houses. It provides a link between the town centre and a small riverside park.

Croft Street and Croft Terrace

Croft Street and Croft Terrace were constructed as railway worker's houses and are situated opposite the site of the former railway station.

Aubrey Terrace

Aubrey Terrace is situated at the rear of Eastgate and at the junction of Croft Street. In common with Croft Street and Croft Terrace it was built at the same time as the railway.

Druids Green and Millfield Drive

Druids Green and Millfield Drive are part of a 1960's estate of no particular architectural or historic interest.

Listed Buildings

Within the Eastgate area there are ten listed buildings which are identified on the appraisal map. Further information relating to listed buildings is contained in Appendix 2.

Locally Listed County Treasures

The County Treasures survey contains a unified list of historic built assets found within the Vale of Glamorgan. It contains listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, as well as entries identified as being of 'local importance'. The listed buildings noted above have been identified as County Treasures. In addition, the former bridge at Glanthaw, No 69 Eastgate and the milestone at Aberthin Road are locally listed County Treasures.

4. EAST VILLAGE

Buildings in the Character Zone

The principal buildings in this character zone are Y Bont Faen primary school and Ysgol Iolo Morgannwg. These two school buildings are contrasting in their form. Y Bont Faen is a modern, system built school building whereas Ysgol Iolo Morgannwg is a late Victorian gothic style structure with steeply pitched sloped roofs, in stone with brick and bathstone dressings.

St. Athan Road

St. Athan Road is made up of detached and semi-detached houses and have a distinct suburban character which contrasts with the core of the historic town.

Broadway

Broadway is the principle road leading from the east of Cowbridge to the village of Llanblethian. The western entrance to this part of the Conservation Area is marked by Ysgol Iolo Morgannwg.

Borough Close and Cae Stumpie

Borough Close and Cae Stumpie are cul-de-sac developments of 36 and 34 houses respectively. Both developments were built as part of the later 20th Century expansion of Cowbridge.

Tal-y-Fan Close and St. John's Close

Both of these developments were built after the designation of the Conservation Area and this has meant that some properties lie partially inside, and partially outside the Conservation Area boundary.

Houses that form this development are of modern design and do not possess any particular special architectural or historic interest.

Listed Buildings

There are no listed buildings in this area.

Locally Listed County Treasures

There are no locally listed County Treasures in this area.

5. TOWN MILL

Buildings in the Character Zone

The principal buildings in this part of the Conservation Area are the Cowbridge Comprehensive School and a small group of buildings associated with the former Town Mill. With the exception of this small group of buildings this area does not possess buildings of any particular special architectural or historic interest.

Town Mill Road

Town Mill Road follows the historic route from the South Gate to the local mill. In recent times it has become dominated by Cowbridge Comprehensive School and modern developments, mostly residential but with some other non-residential uses including a church and old persons home.

At the western end of Town Mill Road is the former town mill, now converted to residential use. Although much altered it, together with Little Mill and Town Mill Cottage, forms a reminder of the historic importance of agriculture in the area.

The Verlands, River Walk and Mill Park

These areas form modern housing estates developed in the late 20th Century. The largest, The Verlands, is made up of 75 detached dwellings of a similar form and appearance.

Listed Buildings

There are no listed buildings in this area.

Locally Listed County Treasures

There are no locally listed County Treasures in this area.

6. LLANBLETHIAN

Buildings in the Character Zone

Llanblethian's built form is characterised by an informal arrangement of buildings and open space. This informality is greatly influenced by the intricate and winding road patterns which traverse the hillsides. Their serpentine quality provide surprise views across the valley, with informality only disrupted by the more exposed, linear Bridge Road to the south east, and by the formal layout of the post war Church Hill Close to the north west of the Conservation Area.

The traditional form of construction is lime washed stone, with only the more prestigious buildings using dressed stone or stucco. The popularity of stone exposure, and its partial use as cladding on some contemporary building has disrupted the coherence of many of the village's traditional building groups.

The traditional built vernacular of the village's pre-war buildings contrasts with the various post-war modern building forms used in new housing.

Bridge Road

An important element of the character of this part of the Conservation Area is the small brook that runs parallel to the road. The principal building in this part of the Conservation Area is Great House.

An interesting and attractive group of buildings can be found at the western end of Bridge Road. Here Ger-y-nant and Brook Cottage, which are typical of the local vernacular architecture, form an attractive backdrop to the setting of the Grade II listed telephone box and its neighbouring water pump.

Factory Road

Factory Road runs parallel to the river and leads from Bridge Road to the Causeway. The entrance to Factory Road is marked by an attractive group of buildings which includes the Grade 2 listed Kingscombe. The form and layout of these houses create an interesting and intimate space.

At the location of the factory building that gave the road its name, the river is forded.

To the south of Factory Road it is still possible to discern the historic field pattern

Church Road

Church Road leads from the centre of the village to St. Bleddian's Church. The road rises steeply from its junction with The Causeway and opens up in a small green, upon which stands a mediæval cross base. The track that leads from this green towards the fort at Caer Dynnaf affords wonderful views over the Llanblethian Hill Down towards the town of Cowbridge.

The Causeway

The Causeway, together with Causeway Hill forms a loop off Church Road. The extremely narrow lanes reinforce the rural character of this part of the Conservation Area. Of note is Causeway House which is built on a terrace formed from the steep topography of the area.

Piccadilly and Greenfield Way

Piccadilly leads from Church Road to St. Quentin's Hill following the contours of the valley. Both Piccadilly and Greenfield Way are made up of a mix of historic buildings and later, modern infill development. Overall these streets retain their rural ambience but this is somewhat marred by some suburban features such as large modern garages and timber fence panels.

At the junction of Piccadilly, Greenfield Way and St. Quentin's Hill is a remarkable ensemble of buildings which together create a particularly intimate space.

St. Quentins Hill

From the core of the village, St Quentins Hill rises steeply to Llanblethian Castle. The stone walls, buildings fronting the street and trees create a distinct intimacy here.

Castle Hill

One of the most significant structures in the village are the remains of St. Quentin's Castle which stands at the brow of Castle Hill. From here it commands views across the Thaw valley towards Cowbridge and beyond. The gatehouse dates from the early 14th Century although the ruinous keep dating from the 12th Century is also noticeable.

Listed Buildings

Within the Llanblethian area there are six listed buildings which are identified on the appraisal map. Further information relating to listed buildings is contained in Appendix 2.

Locally Listed County Treasures

The County Treasures survey contains a unified list of historic built assets found within the Vale of Glamorgan. It contains listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, as well as entries identified as being of 'local importance'. The listed buildings noted above have been identified as County Treasures. In addition, Porth-y-green, St Quentins House, The Old Factory, 1 – 4 The Causeway, Hill House and Cross House are locally listed County Treasures.

Problems, Pressures and Capacity for Change

Introduction

Cowbridge remains one of the most important small historic towns in Wales. Since preparation of the last Appraisal (in 1995), it has retained its role as a centre in the sub-region and has also benefited from its ongoing function as a popular destination for visitors. In terms of its success, its attractive historic environment remains a significant, contributory factor. Since 1995, the repair and reuse of the former Grammar School in Church Street, the construction of the Physic Garden and, most recently, the ongoing repair of the Town Walls have all been significant local developments which have enhanced the character of the conservation area and point to the importance of carefully considered and controlled interventions in the town's historic environment.

Looking back to its original designation in 1971, the conservation area has experienced significant overall change. This has mainly been a result of residential development, a factor relating to the status of Cowbridge as an attractive and popular place to live. This has led to new development both within the centre of the conservation area and on its periphery.

New Development

It is not the role of the Appraisal and Management Plan to guide the location of future development as this is a matter for planning policy as defined by the Local Development Plan. However, it seems inevitable that new development may occur during the period of this Appraisal and Management Plan prior to its next review (five years). This may take place within the centre of the Conservation Area as 'opportunity sites' have already been recognised on the Garden Centre land in the centre of the town and at the Cattle Market, both of which are subject of extant planning briefs. The form and design of these new schemes will be important in terms of their impact on the town's extremely sensitive historic environment, setting, patterns of movement and traffic. There will be significant issues relating to the potential impact and management of traffic generated on the principal frontage.

Design of New Development

Some new development in Cowbridge has been relatively undistinguished in terms of architectural form, scale and detail. Therefore, it is of note that the design and sustainability of new proposals is now subject to much greater scrutiny in the planning system than in the past through the requirements of improved guidance and policy¹. The design and sustainability of new buildings, and their local impact, will therefore be a prime matter in the consideration of future applications for development.

Minor Alterations and Repair

The Appraisal recognises the interesting and diverse historic architecture, contained within the Conservation Area. Within the prime frontage in High Street (where a majority of buildings are listed as being of architectural and historic significance) evidence suggests that attention to the maintenance and repair of detail has remained good even though the incentives made available for grant aided repair through the Town Scheme have been removed since the period of last review. There has also been a marked improvement in the design and appearance of new shop fronts through careful planning control.

However, beyond the prime historic frontage in Eastgate and Westgate, significant damage has been done to the facades of terraced buildings by small, uncoordinated alterations which are not currently subject of planning control. These include unsympathetic changes to windows, doors and the stripping of the original historic render to expose the random stonework beneath. To the continuous terraced frontages in these parts of the conservation area, the impact of cumulative changes such as these have been particularly damaging to the character of the eastern and western approaches to the town.

1. See Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 12: Design

Traffic and Car Parking

The unremitting flow and impact of cars and heavy vehicles which pass during the day along the Eastgate/ High Street/ Westgate corridor is of particular concern, from which congestion and conflict between pedestrians and vehicles can result. The historic environment and setting of the frontage requires to be monitored in terms of the flow of vehicles and the impact in the environment of signage and street markings.

It is also of note that the 'arrival points' for visitors in the town via the car parks to the rear of the Town Hall, in the Butts and the Cattle Market are extremely poor in terms of their function and appearance.

Local Problems of Note

Whilst generic matters such as the design of new buildings and traffic have been identified, survey of the 'character zones' (pages 26-34) has also revealed specific local problems:

- behind the main street frontages, particularly in High Street, and elsewhere in parts of Eastgate, the condition of the built environment deteriorates. There has been indiscriminate clearance of buildings to provide car parking in the narrow burgage plots. Extensions and alterations to buildings at the rear are often poorly designed and detailed. Coupled with the poor maintenance of boundary walls these changes have been seriously detrimental to the historic townscape.
- There are particular problems of a poor pedestrian environment in the narrow side streets in Town Mill Road, the Butts, Church Street, North Road, The Limes and in the area of the Town Hall, where vehicles can take precedence over pedestrian movement.
- The setting of the historic town walls and environment in the area of the Cattle Market, Town Mill Road and the Butts is poor.
- The approach to the main car park forms a poor introduction to the town including unsightly bus stopping and parking area, public toilets and recycling facilities. There is a strong need for improved pedestrian circulation along the eastern edge of the car park leading from Middlegate Court, the provision of interpretation, lighting and landscaping of the car park itself, which is congested and bleak.

Boundary Changes

The recommended boundary changes contained in the 1995 Appraisal were not adopted and a boundary review is now well overdue. Given the large amount of new development that has occurred since the original designation in 1971, the conservation area boundary now needs redefinition so that it truly embraces groups of buildings of special architectural and historic interest.

The inclusion of Llanblethian within the larger conservation area boundary has not always been helpful in providing the village the independent focus in terms of conservation area management which it merits.

Summary

Problems include:

- Inappropriate alteration of historic buildings by a combination of small alterations such as windows, doors and the stripping of render;
- The poor quality of design of some past development;
- Impact of traffic on the prime historic frontage in Eastgate/High Street/Westgate, and to a lesser degree in congested side streets (North Road, Church Street, The Butts and Town Mill Road) which also compromises the quality of the pedestrian environment;
- Low standard of car parking in terms of function, appearance and capacity;

- Need for boundary changes to reflect to update content of the conservation area and separation of Cowbridge from Llanblethian designed to introduce separate management of each settlement.

Pressures include:

- Potential for significant new development within the Garden Centre site and on the Cattle Market, with attendant issues such as design, scale, impact and traffic generation;
- Ongoing high traffic levels leading to impact in terms of traffic management measures, signage and conflict with pedestrians.

The Capacity for Change:

- Within the heart of the Conservation Area and historic town development is limited by the capacity to accommodate increased traffic levels and the attendant impact on the historic environment although several 'opportunity sites' have been identified and are subject of extant planning briefs;
- In the area of the Cattle Market, in conjunction with new development, there is a need to enhance the poor quality of the environment, including car parking and the setting of the town walls;
- Similarly, there is an urgent need to attend to the very poor environmental quality of the Town Hall car park and its environs;
- Through enhanced planning control, greater attention should be provided to design control, consistency in the use of small detailing and to minor changes to facades of domestic properties;
- The approach to traffic management should have due regard to balancing the needs of traffic and safety in the historic environment.

Summary of Issues

The following issues have been identified with regard to the findings of the Appraisal and include the views of the local community as part of the preliminary public consultation exercise. They provide the basis for the Management Plan. These issues will be subject to regular review by the Council and new ones may be added in the future:

- Need for review of the Conservation Area boundary and the designation of two new conservation areas to reflect the individual issues in management of each;
- Preservation of the important landscape setting;
- Retention of internal open spaces (most noticeably in Llanblethian);
- Maintenance of treescape, particularly in Llanblethian;
- Retention and repair of historic boundary walling and railings, gates, gate piers and hedging as means of enclosure which contribute to the street scene in Cowbridge and Llanblethian;
- Preservation of key views from the countryside into the town, and from within the settlement to countryside beyond;
- Improved control over small alterations to historic buildings which, by accumulation, have had a damaging effect on the character of Cowbridge in particular, and in the proliferation of antennas and satellite dishes;
- Further recognition of protected buildings by additions to the County Treasures 'local list' and by the designation in the Appraisal of 'positive buildings';
- Enhanced support for the repair of historic buildings by improved advice on traditional repair and use of materials with an assessment of the potential for incentive led repair through the provision of grant aid;
- Recognition of 'opportunity sites' relating to new development in Cowbridge and the need to minimise the impact on the character of the historic town, coupled with high expectations in the quality of design of all new development;
- Issues relating to the impact of heavy traffic, car parking and the management of vehicular movement within Cowbridge;
- Improved guidance and advice supporting development in the Conservation Area;
- The collation and publication of recent archaeological investigation;
- Introduction of a process of regular monitoring and review.

Management Plan

Boundary review

Landscape and Open Space

Expectation in Design

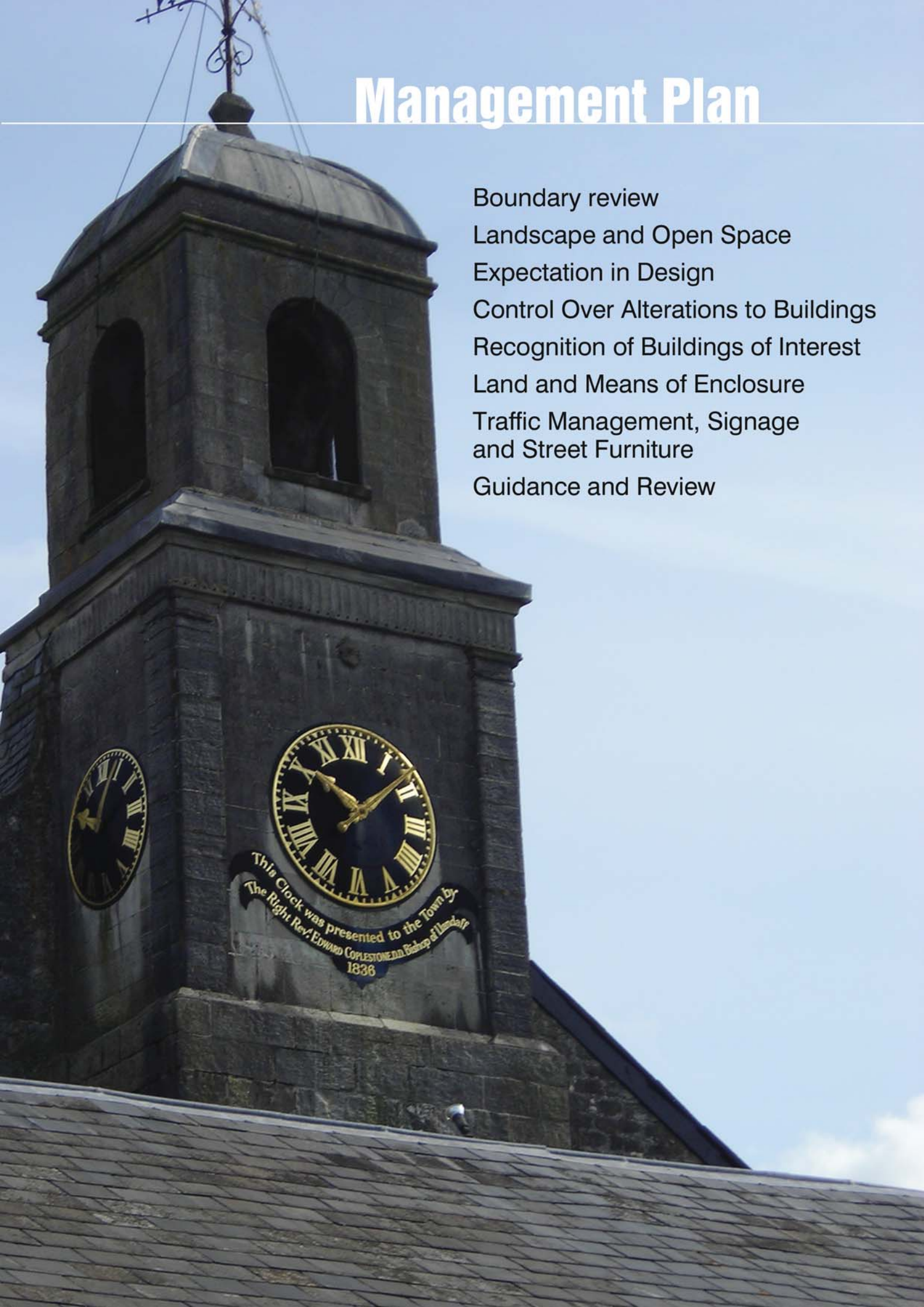
Control Over Alterations to Buildings

Recognition of Buildings of Interest

Land and Means of Enclosure

Traffic Management, Signage
and Street Furniture

Guidance and Review



Management Plan

Introduction and Purpose of the Management Plan

The designation of a conservation area is a means to safeguard and enhance the sense of place, character and appearance of our most valued historic places. Conservation areas are, nevertheless, living environments which, despite their history, will continue to adapt and develop. This reality is made clear in government policy regarding their management.

Part One of this document provides a character appraisal of the area. It is designed to provide a record of the best attributes within the historic town and identifies positive and negative features. It provides an outline of the main issues affecting its character.

Part Two, the Management Plan, is designed to progress the issues identified in the Appraisal and provide a focus on the future management of the town's historic environment. In this it builds upon existing national and local policies as contained in Planning Policy Wales, TAN 12 (Design) and the adopted Unitary Development Plan for the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Management Plan contains the following:

- 1. Boundary Review**
- 2. Landscape and Open Space**
 - 2.1 Landscape Setting
 - 2.2 Open Space Within the Built-up Area
 - 2.3 Treescape
 - 2.4 Protection and Repair of Historic Stone Boundary Walls, Gate Piers, Railings and Hedging
 - 2.5 Views
- 3. Planning Control Over Alterations to Buildings**
 - 3.1 Cumulative Impact of Small Alterations
 - 3.2 Upper Floor Alterations to Commercial Buildings, Buildings in Mixed Use and Flats
 - 3.3 Satellite Dishes and Antennae
- 4. Recognition of Buildings of Interest**
 - 4.1 County Treasures: Buildings Listed of Architectural or Historic Interest
 - 4.2 County Treasures: Locally Listed Buildings
 - 4.3 'Positive Buildings'
 - 4.4 Repairs to Historic Buildings
- 5. Land, Development and Design**
 - 5.1 Opportunity Sites
 - 5.2 Expectation in Design
 - 5.3 Buildings and Land in Poor Condition
- 6. Traffic Management, Signage and Street Furniture**
- 7. Guidance and Review**
 - 7.1 Provision of Guidance Within the Conservation Area
 - 7.2 Cowbridge Archaeological Study
 - 7.3 Monitoring and Review

1. Boundary Review

As part of the Appraisal a thorough survey and review of the existing boundaries of the conservation area was undertaken. This concluded that a number of boundary revisions would improve the extent to which the designation accurately reflects the special character of the area.

The recommendation to remove some parts from the Conservation Area is based on conclusions of the survey. It is considered that these parts do not have any specific architectural or historic special interest.

It is also proposed that the existing Conservation Area is split to form two conservation areas to be known as the Cowbridge Conservation Area and the Llanblethian Conservation Area.

Recommendations:

The following amendments to the boundary of the Cowbridge with Llanblethian Conservation Area are proposed:

(a) In Cowbridge, the following areas of modern development are excluded:

- **Gibbets Hill, Roman Road and The Broadshoard (West Village)**
- **Sport's Ground to the north-west and north-east of the Broadshoard, the Cowbridge Leisure Centre, the Medical Centre (currently under construction) and land to the north and north-east of the Medical Centre**
- **Middlegate Walk, Middlegate Court, Druids Green, Millfield Drive, Grays Walk and Slade Close**
- **The southern frontage of Aubrey Terrace, Cae Stumpie, Borough Close and Saint Athan Road, including Ysgol Iolo Morgannwg, Y Bont Faen Primary School and associated land**

(b) In Llanblethian, the following areas be included:

- **Agricultural fields to the south of Bridge Road and the east of Llanmihangel Road**
- **'Westcliff, Causeway Hill**

A schedule of properties that recommended for exclusion from the Conservation Area is contained in Appendix 3.

The existing Conservation Area be dedesignated and two new conservation areas be designated as follows:

1. **Cowbridge Conservation Area**
2. **Llanblethian Conservation Area**

If these recommendations are accepted, the effect will be to create two new conservation areas which embrace the best environmental attributes of the historic town of Cowbridge and the village of Llanblethian.

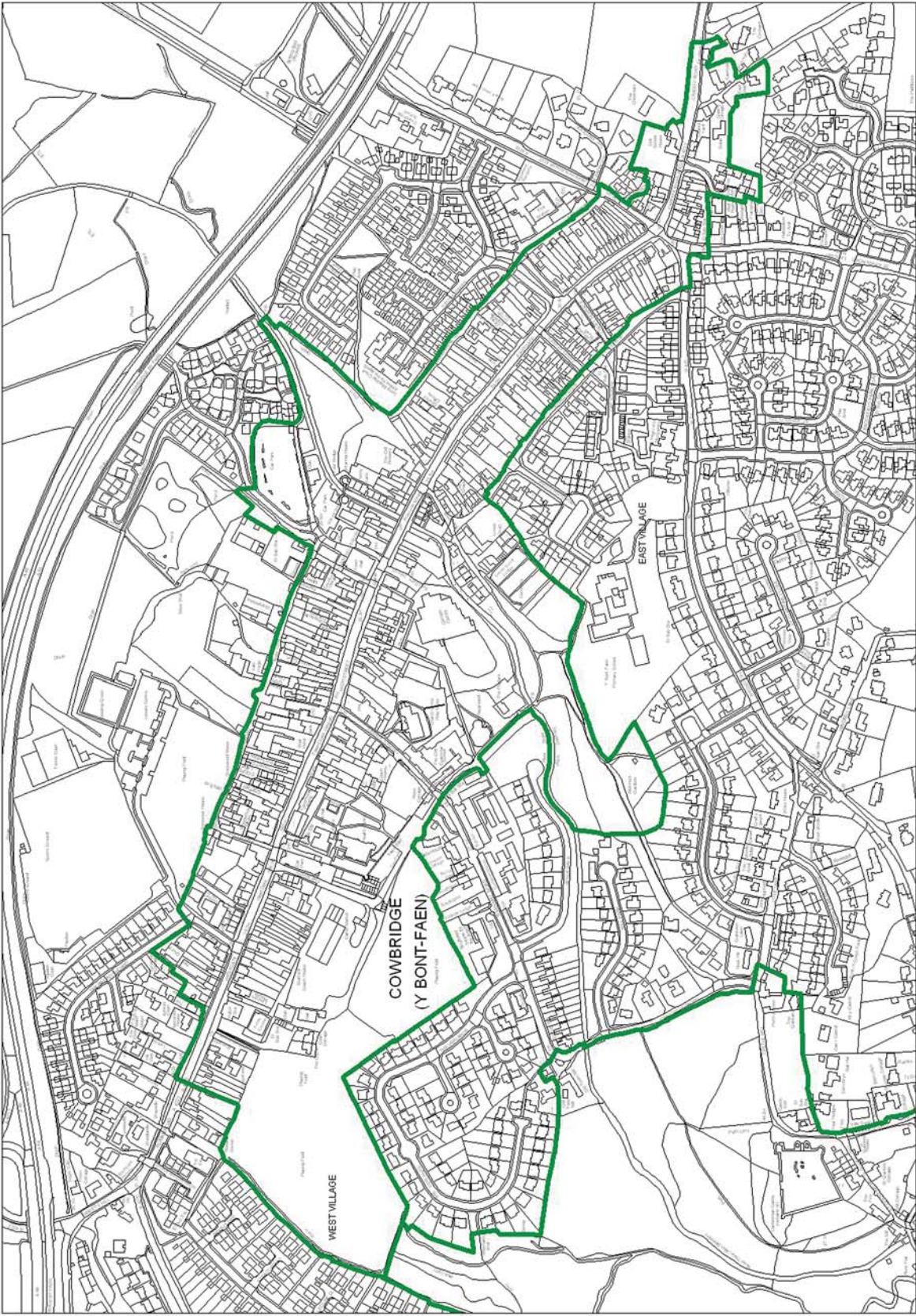
The proposed Conservation Area boundaries are illustrated on pages 41 and 42. A schedule of properties proposed for exclusion is included as Appendix 3 (page 54).

2. Landscape and Open Space

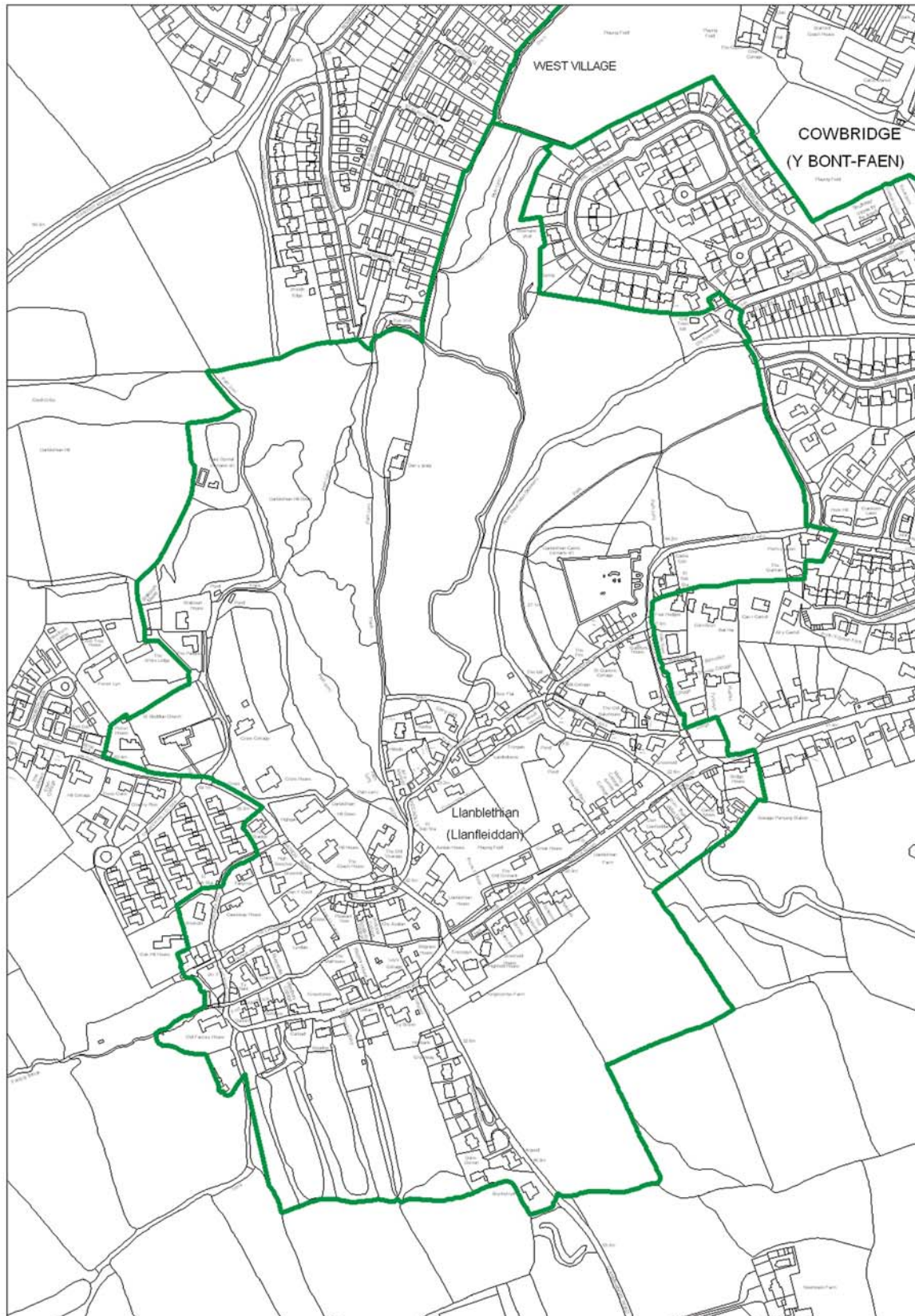
2.1 Landscape Setting

The Appraisal identifies the significance of the landscape setting around the historic town of Cowbridge and the village of Llanblethian. To the north and west this is reflected in the designation of the Upper and Lower Thaw Valley Special Landscape Areas.

Proposed Cowbridge Conservation Area Boundary



Proposed Llanblethian Conservation Area Boundary



Of particular importance is the Upper Thaw Valley SLA which traverses the Conservation Area boundary and protects the important setting of Caer Dynnaf and Llanblethian Hill Down. It also serves to protect the important open space that lies between Cowbridge and Llanblethian, and land to the south of Llanblethian.

Recognition is given to this in the adopted Unitary Development Plan (1992-2011), within which the settlement boundary defining the settlement and open countryside is tightly drawn around the limits of a built-up development (see Policy HOUS 2). New development in such areas is strongly controlled.

2.2 Open Space Within the Built-up Area

The Appraisal recognises certain key internal open spaces.

Within the denser, historic plan of Cowbridge these are almost exclusively areas dedicated for public access in small parks and gardens, or courtyards with public (e.g. Verity's Court), or private use.

In Llanblethian, indigenous open space contained within the 'envelope' of the village is recognised as being of particular value in the contribution made to the overall layout, form and character of the Conservation Area. Such land is in a variety of uses, including gardens to large houses, park and agricultural land. The following land is identified as being of significance:

North-west Llanblethian: land at 'Cross Cottage', 'Cross House' and 'Hill House'; land to the north-east of 'Highgate', 'Hill House' and to the north-west of the 'Old Vicarage'.

Factory Road and The Causeway: land associated with 'Causeway House', 'Old Factory House', 'Greystones' and 'Lyndale'.

Land Between Piccadilly and Bridge Road: land to the north of 'Great House'; land to the north of 'Old Barn', 'Ashley Cottage' and 'Maerdy Cottage'; agricultural land between 'Cwrt Llanfeiddan' and 'Nantlais'.

North-east Llanblethian: land between 'Porth-y-Green'/'The Quintain' and 'Castle Cottage'; garden land associated with 'Saint Quentin's Cottage', 'Saint Quentin's House' and 'The Firs'.

Recommendation:

Within Llanblethian, recognition is given to the contribution made to the character of the conservation area by indigenous open space in private gardens, park, agricultural and other land. The Council will resist proposals for new development in these areas unless it can be demonstrated that there is no adverse impact on the character of the conservation area

2.3 Treescape

The law protects all trees in the conservation area over a certain size. Additionally, there is already protection of major trees and tree groups through tree preservation orders. Treescape and hedging make a more significant contribution to the character and setting of the conservation area beyond the historic core of the town, most notably in Llanblethian. Here specimen trees in gardens and hedging make a major contribution to the setting of buildings and enclosure.

The Council will not support proposals which result in the cutting down, topping or lopping of a tree (except in special circumstances) within or which affects the setting of the Conservation Area. Where the loss of a tree is unavoidable, the Council will seek the replanting of a new tree with a species which is native or traditional to the area.

2.4 Protection And Repair Of Historic Stone Boundary Walls, Gate Piers, Railings and Hedging:

Many boundaries in the Conservation Area are defined by local limestone rubble walls; they are particularly important in the setting of Llanblethian.

There has been a loss of these walls where routine maintenance and rebuilding of fallen sections have been neglected, or where access for parking and servicing have been insensitively provided (e.g. off North Road, and in the narrow lanes of Llanblethian). Stone boundary walls, which enhance the character of the conservation area should be correctly repaired, and wherever possible, retained.

In addition, many properties exhibit combinations of stone walling, gate piers, railings and hedging which contribute to the historic character of frontages and to the street scene. It is also essential that these details are repaired and retained in proposals.

New development should seek to reflect, where appropriate, the traditional form of forecourt enclosure, using local materials and detailing.

Recommendation:

In development proposals the Council will seek to resist proposals to remove or significantly alter traditional boundary walls, railings and hedging, or for new boundary treatments which fail to respect the form and materials of traditional boundary treatments in the area. The Council will seek to encourage the maintenance and repair of traditional stone walls.

2.5 Views

There are many short and long views into, out of and through the conservation area which make a positive contribution to its special character. The most important views are identified on the Appraisal Maps.

Recommendations:

The Council will seek to ensure that all development respects the important views within, into and from the Conservation Area as identified in the Appraisal. The Council will seek to ensure that these views remain protected from inappropriate forms of development

3. Planning Control Over Alterations to Buildings

3.1 Cumulative Impact of Small Alterations:

The cumulative impact of minor alterations to unlisted residential buildings has had a significant and negative impact on the character of the conservation area. These include the inappropriate detailing of windows, external doors, changes in the elevations of buildings (e.g. through the exposure of stonework and poor use of render) and alterations to roofs/chimneys.

Many of these minor alterations can currently be undertaken under 'permitted development rights' without the need to apply to the Council for planning permission. Whilst it is recognised that the erosion of traditional detail has been cumulative over many years, it is also considered that new controls need to be introduced. This will be designed to arrest this process of decline and to foster the retrospective reinstatement of traditional detail.

Recommendation:

The Council will promote:

- the introduction of an 'Article 4 Direction' in respect of single residential properties identified as locally listed County Treasures and positive buildings in the Appraisal;**

- **the restoration of traditional architectural detailing to historic facades subject of the Direction;**
- **new information and advice to support the introduction of the Direction.**

3.2 Upper Floor Alterations to Commercial Buildings and Residential Properties in Flats

The historic core of Cowbridge contains diverse uses which include pubs, shops and cafes. These commercial uses are valuable in terms of the contribution they make to its character. The appearance and setting of such uses within the historic town is subject to careful consideration and control in the form and design of replacement shop fronts and signage. In addition, changes to details above such units and to flats (such as windows) remain a material alteration which may require planning permission.

The Council has existing guidance relating to the design of traditional shopfronts and signage within its historic towns and this is widely used in support of advice relating to alterations to these elements.

Recommendations:

The Council will:

- **Apply controls over shopfronts and signage in accordance with its adopted Shopfront Design Guide;**
- **Through planning control, monitor and encourage the appropriate replacement of external details in respect of the upper floors of commercial buildings and residential properties in flats.**

3.3 Satellite Dishes and Antennae

The rules governing satellite dishes/antennae within the Conservation Area are significantly more restrictive than elsewhere. Such installations are not permitted development if they lie on a chimney wall or roof slope which both faces onto and is visible from a highway.

Recommendation:

The Council will not support planning applications relating to the provision of satellite dishes and antennae which are proposed to chimneys, walls and roof slopes which are visible within the Conservation Area from a highway where they will cause visual harm.

4. Recognition of Buildings of Interest

4.1 County Treasures: Buildings Listed of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

Cowbridge and Llanblethian are noted for their diversity of historic architecture. This is recognised in the large numbers of listed buildings contained within the conservation area, with a high concentration within the terraced frontages of the town centre.

Alterations to these buildings are subject to the closest scrutiny. In recognition of the great interest of individual buildings within Cowbridge and Llanblethian, an audit of historic assets is included in the Management Plan as Appendix 2.

4.2 County Treasures: Locally Listed Buildings

Some buildings and structures, although not contained within the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest are, nevertheless, of local interest. Whilst the existing County Treasures Survey (adopted in 2008) contains nineteen existing entries, the Appraisal has identified a number of additional candidates for inclusion on the Inventory.

Supplementary Planning Guidance to the adopted Unitary Development Plan (1992-2011) discusses the implications in policy terms for locally listed buildings on the County Treasures list and identifies criteria for inclusion.

Recommendation:

The Council will, as part of a future review of the list of County Treasures, support the inclusion of:

Eastgate

- OS survey point adjacent to Old School House, Cardiff Road
- Stone walls (former railway bridge) at Old School House, Cardiff Road
- 38, Eastgate
- 53, Eastgate
- Thorn Villa, Gibbets Hill
- Old Post Office
- The Pavilion
- 9/10, The Limes

Westgate

- Broadshoard House
- 25, Westgate
- Stafford House

Llanblethian

- The Firs
- Leys Cottage
- Bridge House

4.3 'Positive Buildings'

These have been identified as part of the Appraisal process and are marked on the Appraisal Map. They are individual or groups of buildings which retain all or a high proportion of their original architectural detailing and make a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area. The criteria for their selection are identified in Appendix 1.

In the recognised contribution that these make to the character of the conservation area, alterations made to them will be subject to more careful evaluation. There will also be a general presumption against their demolition and loss.

Recommendation:

In accordance with Welsh Assembly guidance contained within Circular 61/96 the Council will adopt a general presumption against the demolition of positive buildings with proposals to demolish such buildings assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings. Any application for the demolition of a positive building will therefore need to be justified as to why the building should not be retained.

4.4 Repairs To Historic Buildings

The Conservation Area contains a diverse range of building types of varying periods of development up to the first world war. After this, development in the historic town appears to have slowed until a further period of growth after the second world war. Historic buildings are characterised by their construction in local stone, with slate roofing, rendering and traditional window and door patterns. Boundary walling in stone and the use of iron railings and gates are also important in framing the setting of buildings.

There has been significant damage done by the progressive loss of traditional details in Cowbridge. In addition, there is evidence that using inappropriate technology is a further factor in the general decline of the appearance of some historic buildings. This may be due

to a number of factors, including lack of awareness on the part of owners, a lack of appropriate contracting skills and cost.

These were issues intended to be addressed by the introduction of the Cowbridge Town Scheme in 1992. Through this, grant aid was made available through the Council and Cadw, Welsh Historic Monuments for the accurate renovation and repair of buildings.

In the intervening years, the need for a similar scheme has not diminished although the provision of funding and means of support for such a proposal would need to be established.

Recommendations:

An evaluation will be made of the demand for grant aided repairs to historic buildings in the Conservation Area, together with the available sources of the funding required to support such a scheme.

The Council will provide and make available supporting information designed to improve awareness of issues relating to elemental detail and small repair.

5. Land, Development and Design

5.1 Opportunity Sites

The Appraisal recognises several places within the centre of Cowbridge which may be developed during the five year term of this document before it is next reviewed:

- The Cattle Market
- The Garden Centre Site (to the south of 2-30 High Street)

Planning Briefs have been prepared in respect of both sites, and in the case of the latter forms adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Unitary Development Plan

New development on these sites will have implications in terms of impact on the historic centre of the town in respect of matters such as the design, form and scale of new buildings, traffic generation, traffic management and car parking.

Recommendation:

In accordance with adopted Planning Briefs which apply to each site, the Council will have special regard to the impact of new development on the special interest of the historic town and conservation area.

5.2 Expectation in Design

Consideration of, and response to planning applications is a key means by which the character of the Conservation Area can be influenced. Whilst there is evidence of some insensitivity in the design of new buildings since the original designation, the opportunity for better consideration and debate of planning applications is now available through stronger policies contained in the Unitary Development Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance to the adopted Unitary Development Plan, TAN 12¹ and by the introduction of mandatory 'Design and Access Statements'. As a result, fundamental considerations such as the approach taken by the designer to contextual design, the density, form and scale of new buildings, the composition of facades and the use of detailing and materials require to be clearly illustrated and assessed in planning applications.

Recommendation:

Applications for planning permission will be required to illustrate full details of a proposal and promote high standards of design. Applications should demonstrate the evaluation of the design of new proposals in their setting, where appropriate by clearly illustrating adjacent buildings in context.

5.3 Buildings And Land In Poor Condition

The Appraisal suggests that, in general, the conservation area appears quite well cared for. An exception is the tendency for commercial property in the historic core to fall into disuse due to low demand and the accompanying effects, for example, relating to vacant shop premises.

In addition, the Limes chapel site appears unkempt. The condition of this piece of land requires to be monitored to avoid further deterioration.

Within Llanblethian, the vacancy and deterioration of 'Greenfields' on Bridge Road has been arrested by the successful prosecution of the previous owner.

Recommendation:

Where sites or buildings are in a poor condition and the appearance of the property or land are detrimental to the surrounding area or neighbourhood, consideration will be given to the service of a Section 215 Notice. This notice requires proper maintenance of the property or land in question, and specifies what steps are required to remedy the problem within a specific time period.

6. Traffic Management, Signage and Street Furniture

Traffic which flows from east-west along Eastgate/High Street/Westgate remains heavy. During peak periods, traffic and parking can overwhelm the setting of the historic frontage. Associated with the need to manage and control traffic and the parking of vehicles, a large amount of street signage and road marking has been provided. In some more sensitive places (e.g. on the frontage of the Town Hall), this can have a negative impact.

The Appraisal also identifies pedestrian/traffic conflict in narrow side streets of the historic town (e.g. in Church Street) which could be improved by the introduction of control over the flow of vehicles in one direction.

Recommendation:

The Council will undertake a comprehensive study and audit relating to the provision of traffic management measures and street furniture. It will agree a palette of designs, materials and components as a basis for future repair and replacement in highways, based upon good practice guidelines for the management of traffic and public spaces in historic towns.

7. Guidance and Review

7.1 Provision of Planning Guidance Within the Conservation Area

Consultation with the local community suggests that there is a need for additional design guidance and leaflets about the Conservation Area that builds upon existing Supplementary Planning Guidance and advisory leaflets.

Recommendation:

The Council will consider preparing Supplementary Planning Guidance notes that would assist in retaining the area's prevalent historic character and appearance and promote awareness of the value and importance of the Conservation Area, e.g. written advice regarding:

- **Good Practice in the Repair of Historic Buildings;**
- **Development Affecting Conservation Areas;**
- **Management of Trees.**

7.2 Cowbridge Archaeological Study

Work published by the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust¹ and the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales² (in 1980 and 1989 respectively) provides a good record of the rich resource of above and below ground archaeology in the historic town.

Since then, further evidence has been revealed of the archaeological resource through the opening up of built fabric in development and in below ground excavation, sometimes in response to conditions on planning applications. This has been most notable in the area of the Town Walls, in Old Hall Gardens and Church Street, the latter in connection with the renewal of the Old Grammar School and former Council Depot site which commenced in 2005.

Although the latest research has been intermittent, it provides further important evidence of the history of the development of the town. Such information requires collation into a accessible archive and made available for public use and an educational resource.

Recommendation:

The Council will approach the Glamorgan and Gwent Archaeological Trust and local organizations with a view to providing a collation of recently made available archaeological information on Cowbridge.

7.3 Monitoring and Review

Recommendation:

This document should be reviewed every five years from the date of its formal adoption. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the Conservation Area including a full dated photographic survey to aid possible enforcement action;**
- An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, and how successful this has been;**
- The identification of any new issues which need to be addressed, requiring further actions or enhancements;**
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action;**
- Publicity and advertising.**

¹ Cowbridge Archaeology and Topography by D.M. Robinson

² Llantwit Major and Cowbridge: A Study of the Historic Domestic Architecture

Appendix 1

Criteria for the Selection of Positive Buildings

For the purposes of this conservation area appraisal, a positive building is an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area.

The criteria for assessing the contribution made by unlisted buildings to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area are given below.

Any one of these characteristics could provide the basis for considering that a building makes a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area and is therefore identified as a 'positive building':

- Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local note?
- Has it qualities of age, style, materials or any other characteristics which reflect those of at least a substantial number of the buildings in the conservation area?
- Does it relate by age, materials or in any other historically significant way to adjacent listed buildings, and contribute positively to their setting?
- Does it individually, or as part of a group, serve as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement in which it stands, or of an earlier phase of growth?
- Does it have significant historic association with established features such as the road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
- Does the building have landmark quality, or contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces, including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?
- Does it reflect the traditional functional character of, or former uses within, the area?
- Has it significant historic associations with local people or past events?
- Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area?
- If a structure associated with a designed landscape within the conservation area, such as a significant wall, terracing or a minor garden building, is it of identifiable importance to the historic design?

Appendix 2

Audit of Historic Assets

The following consists of an audit of historic assets in the Cowbridge with Llanblethian Conservation Area.

Scheduled Monuments

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 defines a monument as, "any building, structure or work, whether above or below the surface of the land, and any cave or excavation" or any site comprising the remains of such things or comprising any "vehicle, vessel, aircraft or other movable structure or part thereof." A scheduled monument is any monument included in the schedule to the Act. Once scheduled, consent for any works is required from Cadw. Most scheduled monuments are archaeological sites or ruined buildings. Ecclesiastical buildings in use or inhabited buildings cannot be scheduled. Not all ancient monuments are scheduled, the term "ancient monument" actually has a wider meaning which includes both scheduled monuments and any other monument which is considered to be of national importance.

The following pages provide an inventory of the scheduled monuments in the Cowbridge with Llanblethian Conservation Area.

South Gate

A gate of stone rubble six metres high, roughly six metres deep and six metres wide. The north side has pointed double archways, roughly 3.3 metres wide, with segmental arch on south face, flanked by buttresses which probably date from C19 restorations.

St. Quentin's Castle

A ruinous rectilinear stone walled castle enclosure, set on a spur above steep slopes to the River Thaw; the enceinte, with a twin-towered gatehouse and two other towers on the E, entrance facade, is thought to be early 14th Century whilst a rectangular tower within is believed to be earlier. The castle, first mentioned in 1234, was believed to have been established circa 1100, and was ruinous by 1741.

Caer Dynnaf

The ruins of a rectangular building constructed on a platform levelled into the outer bank of the hillfort which also occupies this site. A much ruined mortared stone building, thought to be the remains of a first-floor hall. It is suggested that the building is set within a contemporary, sub-rectangular enclosure, defined by scarps and banks, below the main enclosure of Caer Dynnaf hillfort.

Listed Buildings

A 'listed' building is a building or structure deemed of architectural or historic interest and included on a list compiled by Cadw, a part of the Welsh Assembly Government. Thereafter it is protected in law.

All listed buildings are of national significance and have been identified because of their importance in terms of architectural design, building type, and form, and/or because of the techniques or craftsmanship used in their construction and decoration. Some buildings have been included for reasons of historic interest. These include buildings which illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural or military history or which have historical associations with people or events important to Wales. Each building or structure is graded in terms of importance; either Grade I, II* or II. Grade I and Grade II* designations indicate that such buildings or structures are considered of an exceptional quality/importance in terms of their national significance.

Grade 1

Church of St John the Baptist (St Blethian's)
Church of the Holy Cross

Grade 2*

Cowbridge Grammar School
Great House with Forecourt Walls & Gatepiers
South Gate (Porth y Felin)
St Quentin's Castle (Llanblethian Castle)
The Great House (32 & 34 High Street)
The Town Hall
Town Walls

Grade 2

Kingscombe
Llanblethian House and No 2, including Forecourt Walls and Railings
Telephone Call-box near Brook Cottage
1-3 The Butts
Eastfield
6 & 7 Church Street
Gate Piers & End Piers, Walls, Railings & Gates at W Entrance to Churchyard
S,SE & NW Churchyard Walls
The Boot House at Grammar School
SE Wall to former Grammar School Garden
East House (18 Eastgate)
Telephone Call-Box beside Eastgate Mews
Ancient Druid (44 Eastgate)
The Armoury (46 Eastgate)
East Villa (48 Eastgate)
49 Eastgate
Heath House (54 Eastgate)
Nos 56 & 58 Eastgate
Telephone Call-box Outside Royal Mail Delivery Office
Colours (66 Eastgate)
Eastgate Gallery (68 Eastgate)
70 Eastgate
71 & 73 Eastgate
77 Eastgate
Citizens' Advice Bureau (79 Eastgate)
Glanthaw, including forecourt wall and railings
16 High Street
18 High Street
20 High Street
22 High Street
23 High Street
Water Pump against SE Elevation of No 23 High Street
Telephone Call-Box Outside No 23 High Street
26 High Street
27 High Street
Mounting Block attached to Nos 25 & 27 High Street
Principality Building Society (28 High Street)
29 High Street
Ogmore Vale Bakery (30 High Street)
31 High Street
Lloyds Bank (33 High Street)
Former Coach House to rear of Nos 34 & 36

Nos 35, 35a & 35b High Street
Woodcocks and WG Davies (Nos 36 & 38 High Street)
Xantippe (39 High Street)
Lloyds Chemist (41 High Street)
43 High Street
Duke of Wellington PH including Rear Wing to Church Street
50 High Street
Vale of Glamorgan Public House (51 & 53 High Street)
52 High Street
Farthings Old Wine House (54 High Street)
Roddam Travel & Watts Morgan (55 High Street)
56 High Street
58 High Street
High Street Garage (60 High Street)
HSBC (Midland Bank) (61 High Street)
Barclays Bank (62 High Street)
The Old Hall
The Bear Hotel (63 High Street)
Ye Old Mason's Arms (66 High Street)
Llwyn Celyn (77 High Street)
81 High Street
83 High Street
NW Boundary Wall to No 83 High street
War Memorial in front of Town Hall
The Old Brewery Building
Building to rear of Town Hall
NW Garden Wall to Rose Cottage and SW Garden Walls to Old Hall & Grammar School
Garden at SE
Rose Cottage, including Forecourt Garden Walls
The Poplars, including Garden Walls and Gate
Telephone Call-Box Outside Hill View & The Haven
1 & 3 Westgate
National Westminster Bank (4 Westgate)
21 Westgate
United Free Church (Ramoith Chapel)
34 Westgate
Water Pump near Police Station Pump
Police Station
40 - 42 High Street
Roadside Cross, Church Road

Locally Listed 'County Treasures'

County Treasures are those buildings and structures that are considered to be of insufficient value to warrant inclusion in the statutory list, but nonetheless are deemed worthy of local recognition.

- Verity's Court
- Former Bridge at Glanthaw
- No 69 Eastgate
- Milestone at Aberthin Road
- Porth-y-green
- St Quentins House
- The Old Factory
- 1 – 4 The Causeway
- Hill House
- Cross House

Appendix 3

Schedule of Properties for Exclusion

The following consists of a schedule of properties that are recommended for removal from the Conservation Area.

1 – 36 and Y Bont Faen Primary School, Borough Close
6 – 38 (evens), 1, 3a, 3b, 5a, 5b, 7a, 7b, 9a, 9b, 11a, 11b 15 – 27 (odds), 89, 91 and Ysgol Iolo Morganwg, Broadway
1 Brookfield and Millbrow, Brookfield Park Road
1 – 34 and The Stables, Cae Stumpie
April Cottage and Rose Cottage, Church Road, Llanblethian
1 – 11, 1a Constitution Hill, Llanblethian
11 – 49 (odds) and 16 – 44 (evens) Druids Green
Flat 1 - 25, Longmeadow Court, Druids Green
1 – 6 Greenside
1 – 23 Hopyard Meadow
Westgate Lodge, 1 Llantwit Major Road
2 – 9, 12 – 44 and Avalon (15a) Middlegate Court
1 – 7 Middlegate Walk
1 – 16, River View, 13a and 18 – 28 (evens) Mill Park
11 – 37 (odds), 27a, 29a, 38 – 100 (evens) and
Flat 1 – 4, Celtic Court, Millfield Drive
1 – 4, Foxlea (5), Heritage, Heron House, Menolowan and Stepside, River Walk
2 – 20 (evens), Dan-Y-Deri, Dormers, Frampton, Hallowdene, Llanquian House, Moorlands, Red Roofs, The Crest, The Hermitage and Ty Araf, St Athan Road
1, 12-31 St John's Close
1 – 19 Talyfan Close
1 – 2 Sycamore Cottage, The Broadshoard
1 – 34 (inclusive), 36 – 60 (evens) The Broadshoard
The Elms, and Ffyrllings, The Broadshoard
Cowbridge Leisure Centre
1 – 2 The Paddock
1 – 71 (inclusive), 73 and 75 The Verlands
1 – 25 (odds) Town Mill Road
Bovian View, College Lodge, Dynevor, Millstones, Southgate, Southlands, Southview, Town Mill Road
St Cadoc's, Church, Town Mill Road
Cowbridge Comprehensive Lower School, Town Mill Road
Southway Residential Home, Town Mill Road
Archway House, Ashton Court, Bryn Crogwyr, Glenville (50), Hafenwen, Hillview, Larkhill, Maes Dewi Sant (33), Maes Melyn, Millville (48), Rock House, Rowan Corner (52a), Ruscombe House, St Lythans, The Butterleys (29), The Cottage, The Old Manse (46), Thorn Cottage, Tynewydd, Wayside, West Ways (52) Westgate House (37), Westleigh (54) and 1 - 4 Woodlands, Westgate
Arthur John And Co and Vale Forge, North Road

Appendix 4

References and Useful Information

Local Generic Guidance

Advice for owners of properties in Conservation Areas can be found in the leaflet A Guide to Living and Working in Conservation Areas, which is available on line on the Council website at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Additional information, including design guidance and guidance on repairs and alteration is contained within the adopted supplementary planning guidance document – Conservation Areas in the Rural Vale.

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8. Cowbridge Record Society (2001) Llanblethian: Buildings and People
9. Vale of Glamorgan Council (2007) County Treasures

Contact Details

For further advice and information please contact the Conservation and Design Team at:

Planning and Transportation Policy,
Vale of Glamorgan Council,
Dock Office,
Barry Docks,
CF63 4RT

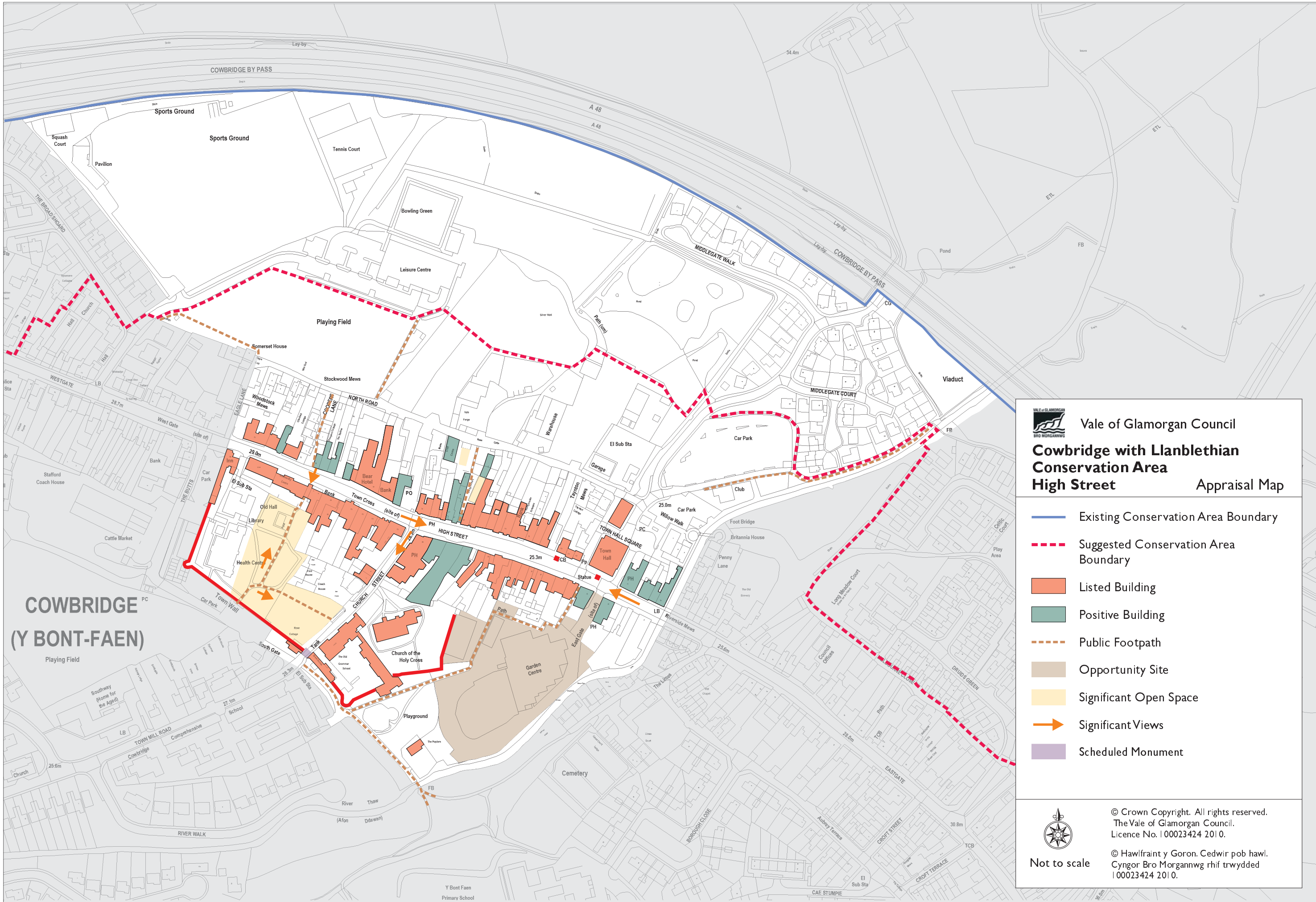
Tel: 01446 704 626/8


Email: planning&transport@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk










Appendix 5


Townscape Appraisal Maps

High Street
Westgate
Eastgate
East Village
Town Mill
Llanblethian

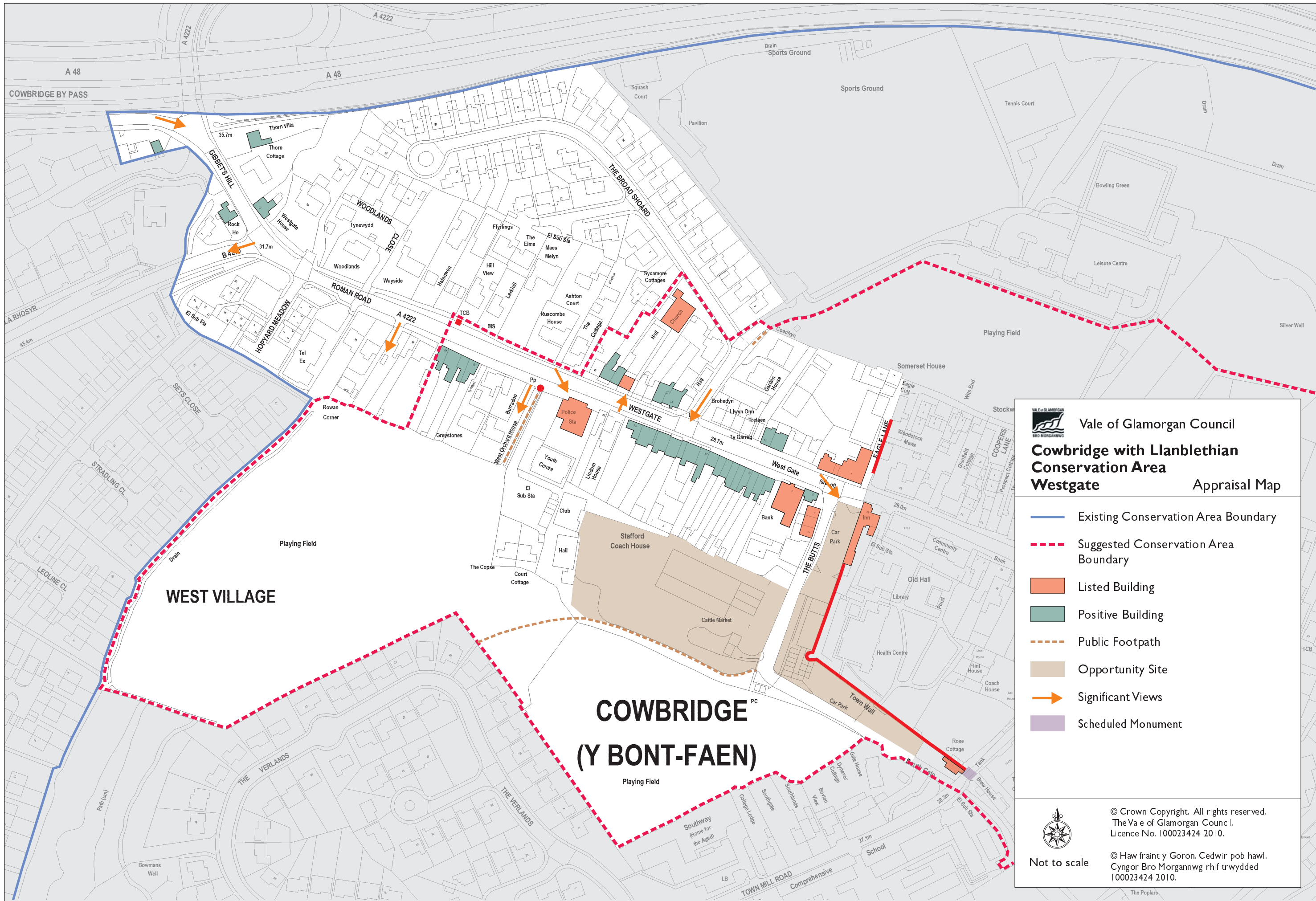




Vale of Glamorgan Council
Cowbridge with Llanblethian Conservation Area High Street
Appraisal Map









-  Existing Conservation Area Boundary
-  Suggested Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Building
-  Positive Building
-  Public Footpath
-  Opportunity Site
-  Significant Open Space
-  Significant Views
-  Scheduled Monument



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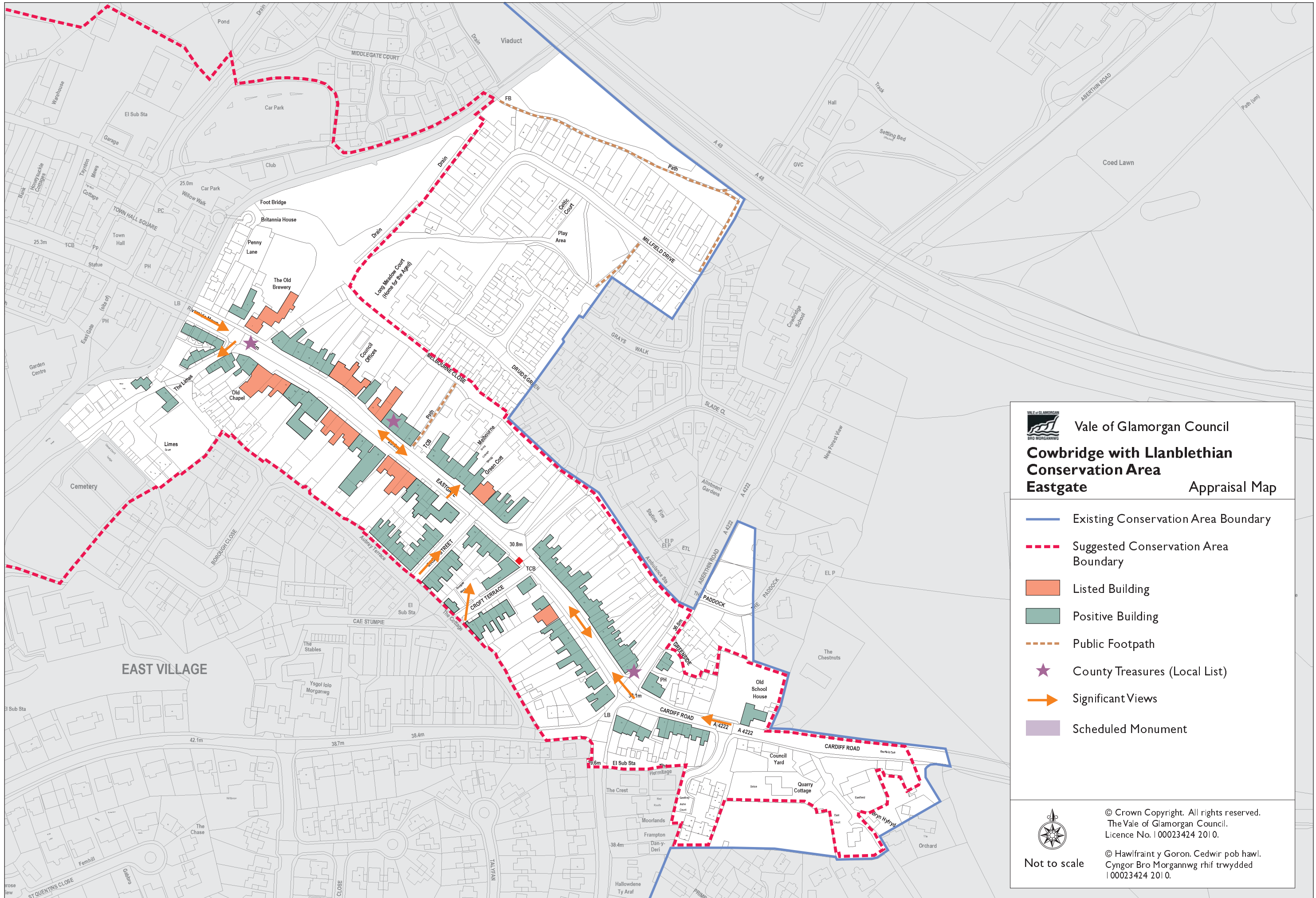
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Vale of Glamorgan Council
Cowbridge with Llanblethian Conservation Area
Westgate Appraisal Map


-  Existing Conservation Area Boundary
-  Suggested Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Building
-  Positive Building
-  Public Footpath
-  Opportunity Site
-  Significant Views
-  Scheduled Monument


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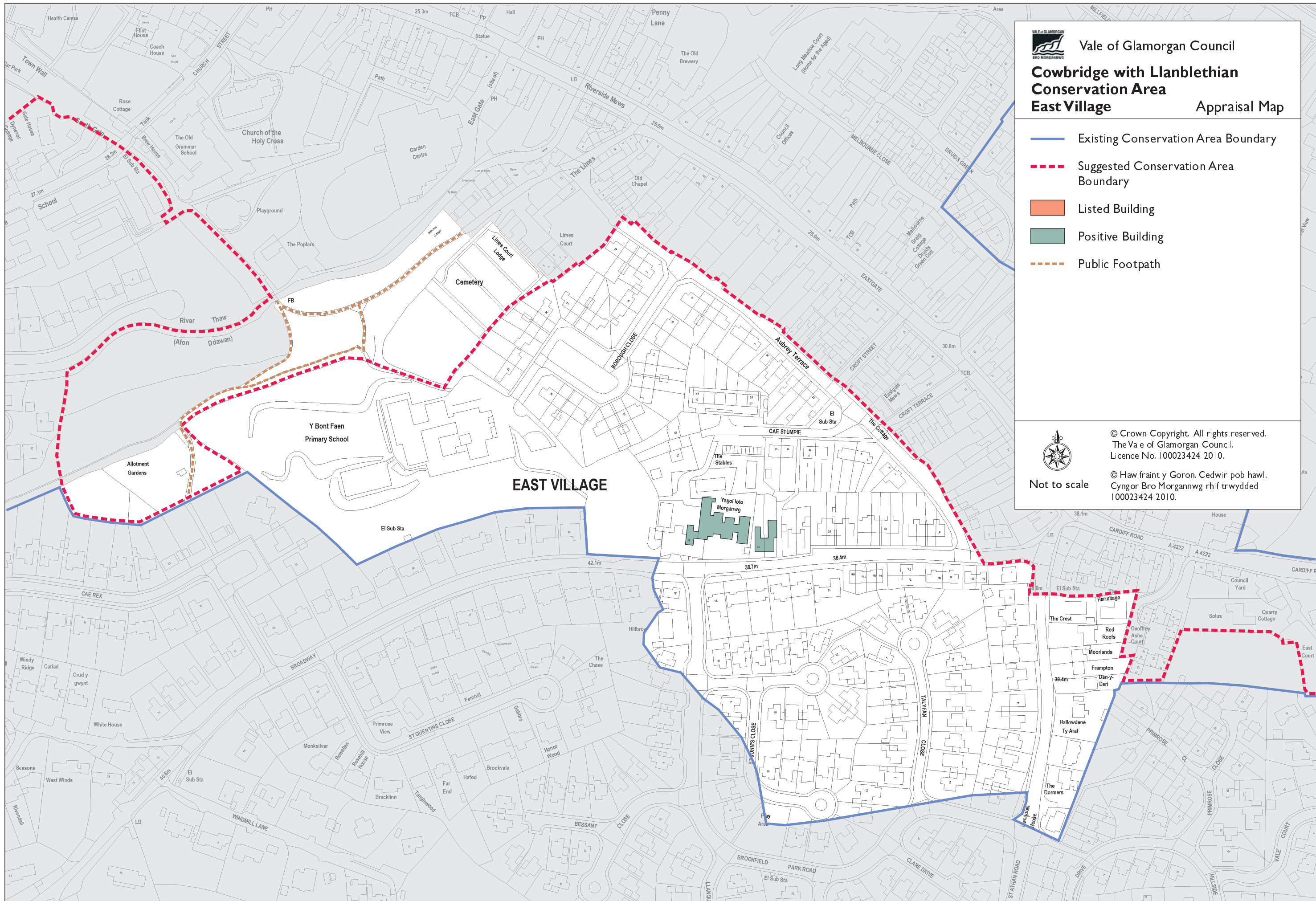




Vale of Glamorgan Council
Cowbridge with Llanblethian Conservation Area
Eastgate Appraisal Map






-  Existing Conservation Area Boundary
-  Suggested Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Building
-  Positive Building
-  Public Footpath
-  County Treasures (Local List)
-  Significant Views
-  Scheduled Monument



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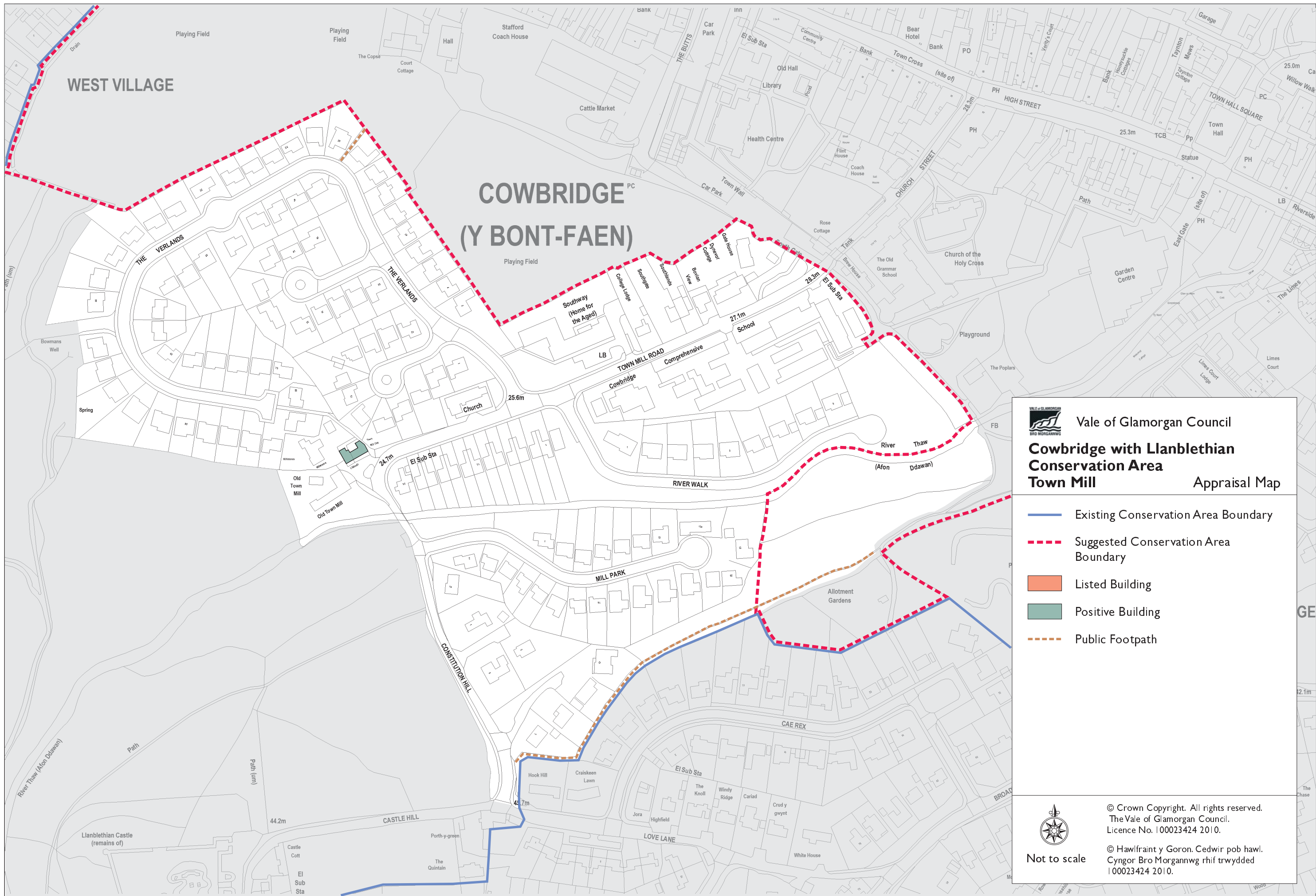




Vale of Glamorgan Council
Cowbridge with Llanblethian Conservation Area
East Village Appraisal Map






-  Existing Conservation Area Boundary
-  Suggested Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Building
-  Positive Building
-  Public Footpath


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Vale of Glamorgan Council
Cowbridge with Llanblethian Conservation Area
Town Mill Appraisal Map

-  Existing Conservation Area Boundary
-  Suggested Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Building
-  Positive Building
-  Public Footpath


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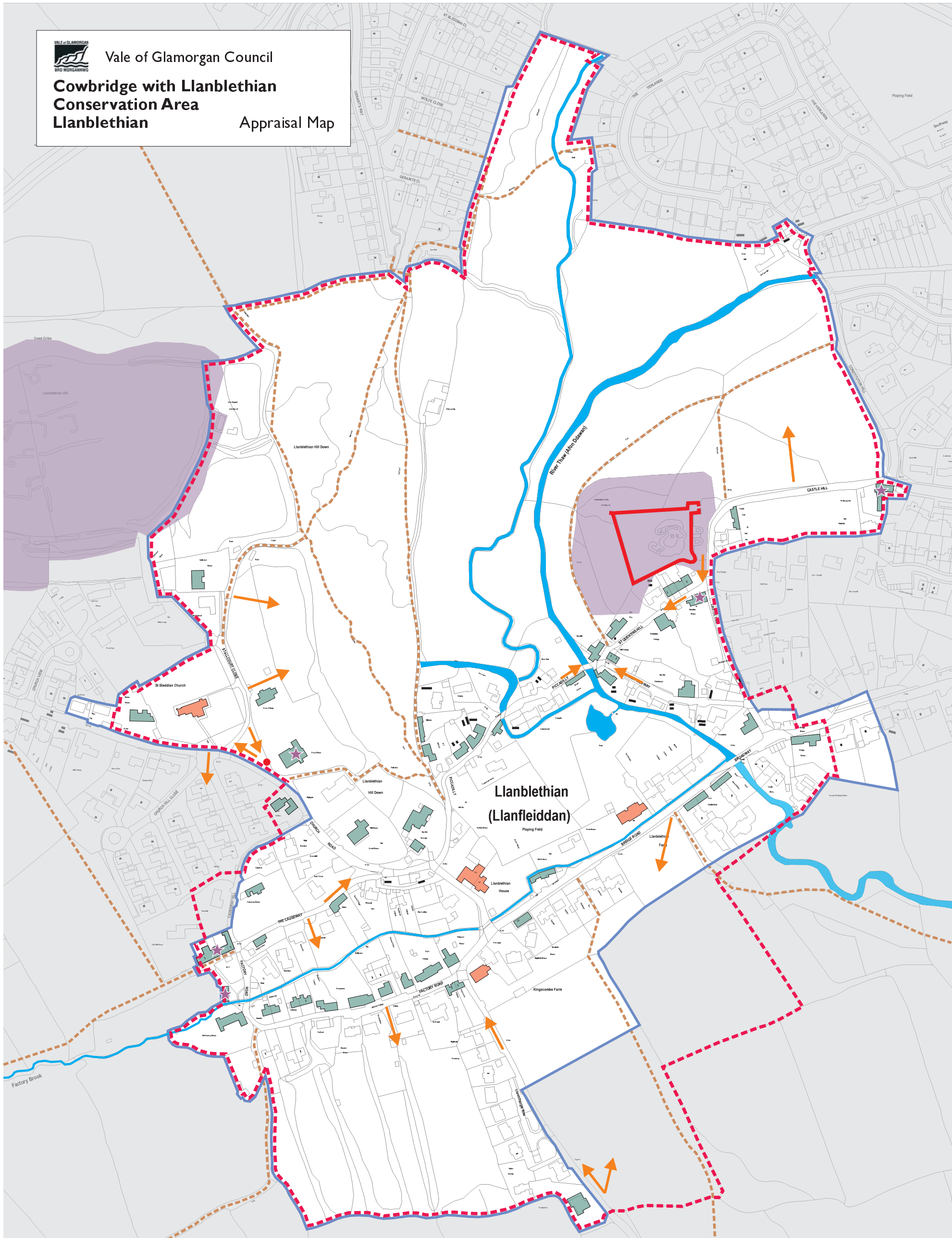
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Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Conservation Area

Llanblethian Appraisal Map



— Existing Conservation Area Boundary
 - - - Suggested Conservation Area Boundary

■ Listed Building
 ■ Positive Building
 - - - Public Footpath
 ■ Water Courses

→ Significant Views
 ■ Scheduled Monument
 ☆ County Treasures (Local List)



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