

ABATY CYMER

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Chambers Conservation Ltd.

Issue

Issues:5 - Final Version

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Contents

Part One, Conservation Area Appraisal.

1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 How to Use this Document
- 1.2 Overview of the Conservation Area

2.0 Summary of Special Interest

3.0 Historic Timeline

4.0 Spatial Analysis
- 4.1 Form & Layout
- 4.2 Key Views
- 4.3 Green Spaces & Trees

5.0 Character
- 5.1 Overview
- 5.2 Architectural Character
- 5.3 Materials and Details
- 5.4 Boundaries
- 5.5 Other Features, Details and Surfaces

6.0 Historic Assets
- 6.1 Designated

7.0 The Conservation Area Boundary.

8.0 Hidden Histories (Archaeological Potential)

9.0 Other Designated Assets

10.0 Biodiversity

Part Two, Conservation Area Management Plan.

1.0 Summary SWOT Analysis
2.0 Understanding the Issues
    2.1 Condition
    2.2 Buildings at Risk
    2.3 Overview of the SWOT analysis.
3.0 Positive Management
    3.1 Boundary Assessment
    3.2 Legislative Protection
    3.3 Enhancing the Special Interest of the Conservation Area
    3.4 Sustainability
    3.5 Biodiversity
4.0 Consultation

Appendices

A. Sources



PART ONE – CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 How to use this document

1.1.1 This Conservation Area Appraisal should be read in conjunction with the document ***Introduction to Conservation Areas for the 21st Century***, which can be downloaded from the National Park's website. This document contains an explanation of the purpose and methodology of this Appraisal, together with a general introduction to the history, landscape, buildings and settlement forms and planning and legistlative context.

1.1.2 In addition to the Management Plan which accompanies this area appraisal, a further document ***Advice on Energy Efficiency Measures in Conservation Areas (Planning & Practical Guide)*** has been prepared in order to respond to the current climate change emergency, give practical advice on how to improve energy performance of traditional and locally significant buildings without harming their special character or technical performance.

1.2 Overview of the conservation area

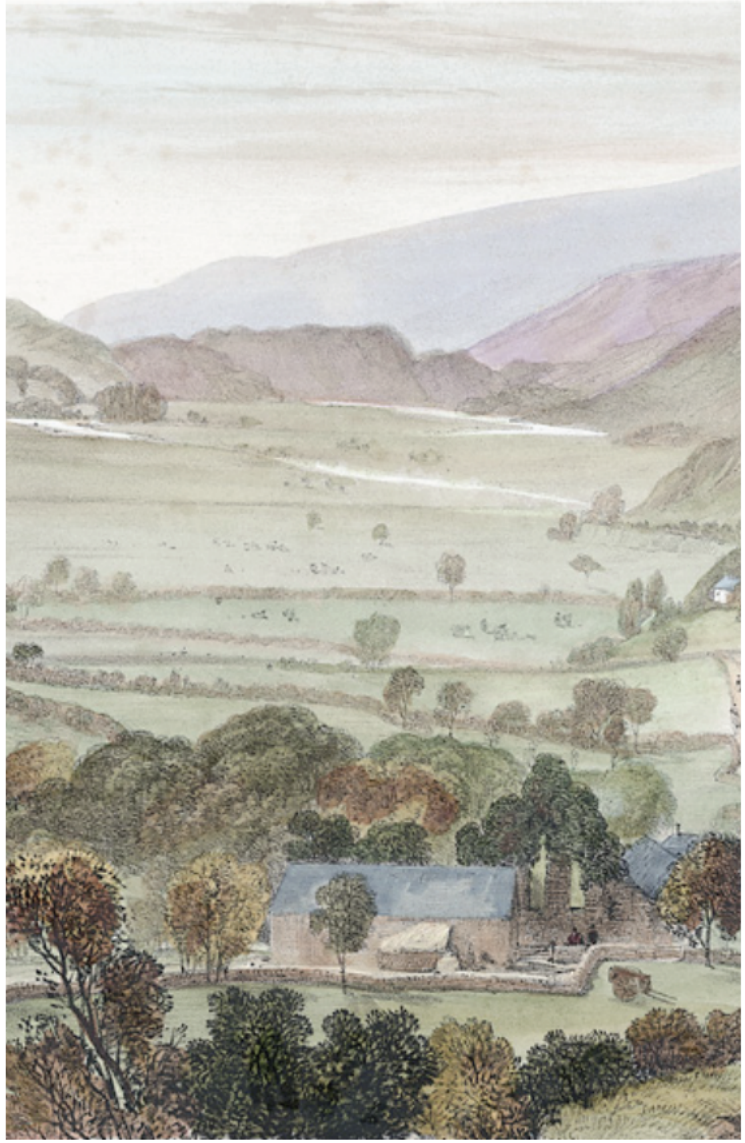
1.2.1 The extent of the study area is part defined by the Conservation Area boundary (see Fig 02), however the immediate surroundings (including the adjacent landscape areas) were included in order to both understand the wider context and determine whether any amendments to the boundary would be appropriate.

Location & Setting

1.2.2 Abaty Cymer is some 1.5km north-west of Dolgellau. It is situated on the eastern bank of the Afon Mawddach, opposite the village of Llanelltyd. The village and parish church are linked to the abbey by the 18th century Pont Llanelltyd, now only open to foot traffic following the construction of a modern bypass to the west.

1.2.3 The abbey lies near the confluence of the Afon Wnion and The Afon Mawddach at the end of the Aber Mawddach. The Aber Mawddach forms a wide basin between the Rhinogydd to the north and the slopes leading to the ridge of Cadair Idris to the south.

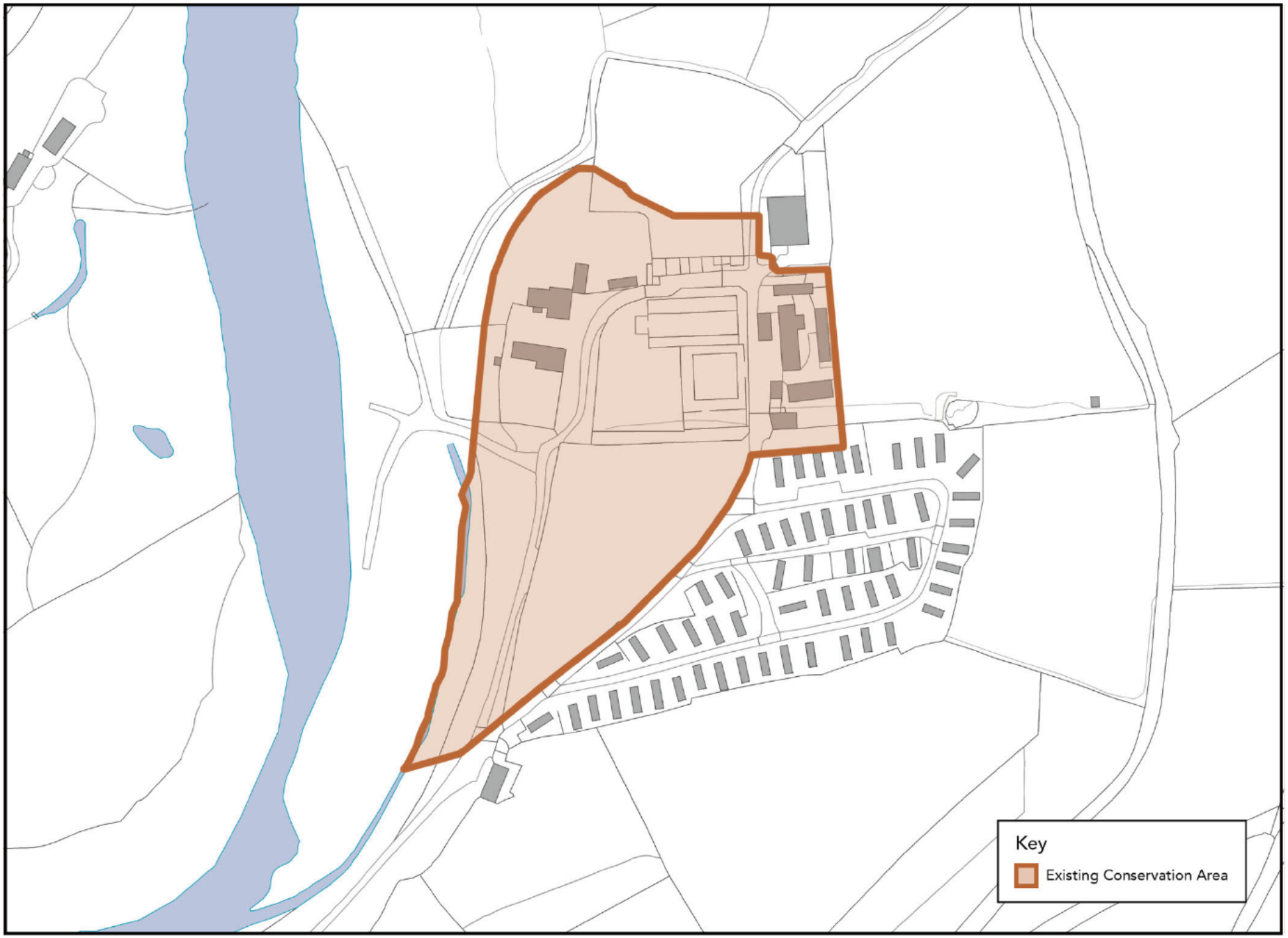
1.2.4 The low plateau, on which the Abbey sits, is only some 10m above the river but the rugged Rhinogydd to the west extend to a height of 786m AOD at Y Llethr. Nearer the abbey, Y Garn sits immediately above Llanelltyd at a



01 View of the 'Vale of Llanelltyd and Fanner (Cymer) Abbey' c.1845 Richard Roberts (1789–1864). (Wikimedia Commons).

height of 629m AOD. North and east are gentler peaks, of Cynwch (326m) and Foel Offrwm (405m). In the valley between is the Nannau Estate.

1.2.5 Designation date: 1992.



Existing Conservation Area
1:2000 @ A4

02 Plan of the Conservation Area (© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100022403)

2.0 Summary of Special Interest

2.1.1 Abaty Cymer is a highly significant group of Cistercian monastic buildings, reflecting the patronage of the indigenous rulers as well as a period of significant change in Welsh theology and practice.

2.1.2 Cymer maintains a very high aesthetic and historic value, through the extant standing ruins, associated structures and setting. This significance is evident in a number of ways:

- Role of the site in the tempestuous period of Welsh Christianity in the early medieval period, with the arrival of new monastic orders.
- The transition of the site post reformation into tenanted farm, reflects the substantial changes in land ownership thorough the emergence of large estates such as Nannau and consequent cultural impacts in the post-medieval period.
- Links between the abbey church and the later agricultural structures, which visually describe the role of the site since the reformation as principally one of agriculture.
- Links to the community of Abaty Cwmhir and the early Cistercians in Wales.
- As a visible group with the adjacent Pont Llanelltyd and St Illtyd's Church provides a clear picture of the area in the medieval period (albeit the bridge is now a later replacement).
- Relationship with wider scheduled sites including Pentre Farm Barrow, Castell Cymer, Coed Pen-y-Bryn Defended Settlement and others.

2.1.3 The landscape setting of Abaty Cymer is important to the special interest of the conservation area and there are some views where this relationship is particularly important. These are specifically identified later in the appraisal, but key examples are:

- Views towards the abbey ruins with agricultural land in the foreground.
- Views within the main precinct with landscape setting behind.
- Association of the site with early picturesque travellers and artists, and their depictions in descriptions, prose and art.
- Connected views with Pont Llanelltyd.



03 North Arcade and landscape setting (2022).



04 Doorway, Abaty Cymer. (2022).

2.1.4 Abaty Cymer has a strong and distinctive architectural character, retaining the integrity of the abbey and with contemporary buildings surviving through subsequent re-use. Primary elements include:

- The standing ruins of the church, including key features such as the arcade, the windows to the east gable, sedilia, tomb niches.
- Remaining Abbots lodgings (with intact 15th century fabric) and adjacent range, potentially the guest lodgings of the abbey (16th century).

2.1.5 The communal value of the site is also very strong through its links to the indigenous Welsh princes and later as interest increased in the landscape and its relationship with early structures. Key elements include:

- The relationship of the Cistercian order to the Royal House of Gwynedd and the changes in the church in the 12th &* 13th Centuries.
- The role of the farm and the site as a place of work and part of the estate of Nannau in the ownership of the Vaughan family.
- The evolution of the site as a place for visitors both local and attracting picturesque tourists from the 18th century onwards.

2.1.6 Abaty Cymer also has very high evidential value, with significant potential for the existence of below ground archaeology which could enhance the understanding of the site. Elements include:

- Potential to understand how much of the eastern end of the church was completed prior to the curtailment.
- The field to the east may have been the location of a monastic cemetery.[1]



05 General view of abbey ruins with hillsides behind. (2022)



06 Abbey church and Abbots Lodging (Ty Fanner) (2022).

[1] Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) report no.923 (Evans, R & Davidson A), Cymer, Gwynedd Draft Conservation Area Appraisal, 2011, p.9.

3.0 Historic Timeline

Prehistoric

3.1.1 The history of Abaty Cymer (Cymer Abbey) is covered in much detail elsewhere, the summary below is intended only to give context.

3.1.2 There is evidence of prehistoric activity along the Mawddach, with finds of Neolithic stone axes, including north of the Wnion near Pandy'r Odyn.[2]

3.1.3 Ritual and Funerary sites, such as Pentre Farm Barrow[3] only some 350m south of Abaty Cymer, are much in evidence in the Dolgellau area evidencing significant activity in the Early Bronze Age. It is, however, understood that the first evidence of human activity can be traced back to around the fourth millennium BC.[4]

3.1.4 On the upland around Dolgellau there are clusters of domestic settlement from the later prehistoric period as well as defensive structures, such as Coed Pen-y-Bryn[5] and Moel Offrwm[6], a short distance to the east of Abaty Cymer.

3.1.5 It is probable that there was settlement in the lower parts of the valley, which has been obscured by later farming or development as it would have been valuable agricultural land and there is widespread evidence for settlement in pre-medieval times.

3.1.6 Whilst there are roads and military sites (including a fort at Brithdir), there is limited evidence of Roman settlement at the lower levels. Above the Abbey is Moel Offrwm Camp, where there is evidence of activity into the Roman period.

Medieval

3.1.7 Between the Norman invasion and the arrival of Edward I there was a period of native Welsh rule. The period saw significant ecclesiastical reorganisation and the establishment of links with existing orders.[7]

3.1.8 The Cistercians had arrived in Wales in 1131, founding Abaty Tyndryn (Tintern) and the early Cistercians in Wales had strong links with the reformers on the continent. Their lack of Norman links, austerity and self-sufficiency seem to have found favour with indigenous Welsh rulers, and



07 Cox, D. from *Hanes y Brutaniaid a'r Cymry,* Gweirydd ap Rhys, 1886. Original illustration probably c.1850 from Roscoe's Wanderings in North Wales (Wikimedia Commons).



08 Etching of Cymer (Cumner), 1784. Courtesy Photography.Wales.

[2] https://www.archwilio.org.uk/arch/query/page.php?watprn=GAT4122&dbname=gat&tbname=core&sessid=CHI2t5x7pp5&queryid=Q684001001646141440
[3] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/sam/FullReport?lang=&id=1149
[4] Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) report no. 1030 (Evans, R & Davidson A), Pandy'r Odyn Draft Conservation Area Appraisal, 2012.
[5] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/sam/FullReport?lang=&id=926
[6] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/sam/FullReport?lang=&id=2457
[7] https://www.monasticwales.org/showarticle.php?func=showarticle&articleID=2

gained traction following the patronage of Abaty Ystrad Fflur (Strata Florida) by Rhys ap Gruffudd, King of Deheubarth in 1165.

3.1.9 In the second half of the 12th century, Gruffudd ap Cynan and his brother Mareddud were lords of Meirionnydd and Ardudwy. It was under the patronage of Gruffudd that monks from Abaty Cwmhir arrived in Cymer in 1198. Cwmhir was a 'daughter' house of Whitland, Carmarthenshire (Dyfed).[8]

3.1.10 Gruffudd was able to grant some limited lands to the Cistercians in 1198. This was later confirmed in a charter of 1209 by Llywelyn ap Iowerth, Prince of Gwynedd. Whilst the primary lands lay close to the Abbey, the community had land holdings on higher ground as well as more valuable holdings on the Llyn Peninsula at Llanegryn and Neigwl, bestowed by Maredudd whilst briefly Lord of Llyn in 1200-01.[9] They were also reportedly involved in mining and metallurgy as well as providing horses to Llywelyn.

3.1.11 Strong, ongoing, associations with the Welsh princes are evidenced by the burning of the Abbey during thei incursions of Henry III in 1241, and that possessions of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd were recovered from the Abbey in 1282.[10]

3.1.12 The abbey was never wealthy, and it fortunes declined further after the wars of 13th century. In 1291 the abbey's annual income was only £28 8s 3d and by the end of the fourteenth century there were only five monks at Cymer and by the dissolution in c1537 there may only have been an Abbot and a single monk.[11]

16th Century The Dissolution

3.1.13 On 20th May 1538 the demesne and tithes of Cymer were granted to John Powes, servant of the Royal Household. It seems that Y Fanner became the focus of the estate and was converted into a house and the barn to the east may also originate from this period, albeit later altered and extended.

3.1.14 By the mid 17th century, Ty Fanner was part of the Nannau Estate in the ownership the Vaughans of Nannau and Hengwrt. By this time the farm was quite large and extended southwards towards the bridge and eastwards towards Hengwrt.



09 Baker, Samuel 'Cymmer Abbey' c.1880. Note the use of the north aisle for agricultural purposes. (Wikimedia Commonts).



10 Stereoscope image of the interior late c.1880. Courtesy Photography.Wales.

[8] http://whitlandabbey.wales/history/
[9] Williams, David, H. (1981) The Cistercians in West Wales: 1 Cymer Abbey 1198-1536/7, Archaeologia Cambrensis, 130 p 38.
[10] Haslam, R., Orbach, J. and Voelcker, A. (2009) *The Buildings of Wales: Gwynedd,* p.633.
[11] Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) report no.923 (Evans, R & Davidson A), Cymer, Gwynedd Draft Conservation Area Appraisal, 2011, p.6.

18th & 19th Century Picturesque Tourism

3.1.15 The emergence of picturesque travel in the late 18th and early 19th century brought visitors and a renewed interest in the abbey ruins and a large number of different paintings and consequent lithographs and etchings were created as well as the valuable descriptions of picturesque travellers. During this period it is thought that the current Pont Llanelltyd was constructed (presumably a reconstruction of an earlier bridge).

3.1.16 Thomas Pennant wrote in the 1770s, *'Part of the church is still to be seen and shows its ancient grandeur. At the east end are three lofty but very narrow windows and over them three lesser, mantled in a great and gloomy thicket of ivy. The great hall and part of the abbot's lodgings now form a farm house'*.[12]

20th Century State Care

3.1.17 Roscoe, writing in 1853 noted *'the east side is in the best state of preservation….I observed, also, some rather minute gothic pillars and arches against the south wall and an aperture, in which probably was preserved the holy water'*.[13]

3.1.18 The abbey was taken on by the office of works in 1930 and now in the care of its successor, Cadw. Having remained a part of the Nannau estate, until it started to be broken up and sold. Y Fanner remains a working farm and a small caravan site has operated since the 1960's to the north-east of the site.

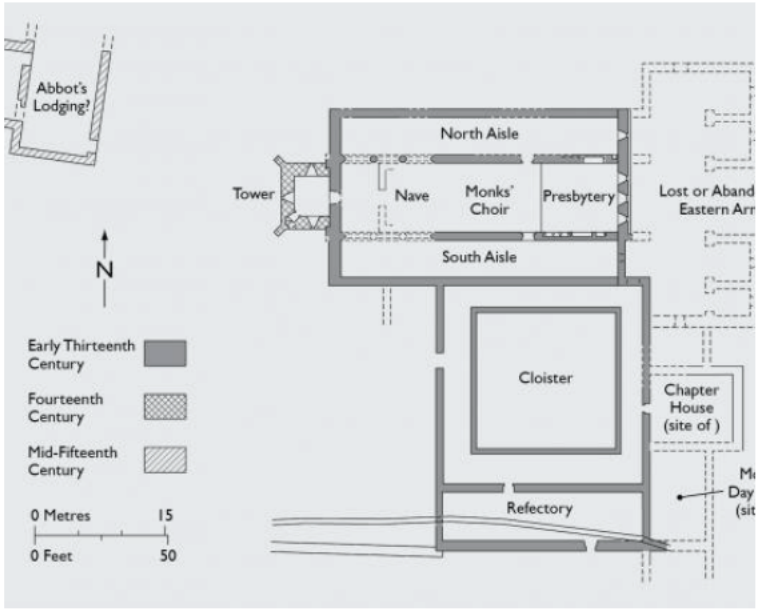
4.0 Spatial Analysis

4.1 Form & Layout

4.1.1 The Abaty Cymer conservation area can be divided into four distinct elements.

4.1.2 The first comprises the elements taken into state guardianship in 1930, and includes the main abbey ruins, the area is clearly marked by boundary hedges and fences and laid to grass around the ruins.

4.1.3 To the west, Ty Fanner, the former abbots lodging and farmhouse with a further range to the south partly immediately pre-reformation and recently converted into holiday accommodation.[14]



11 Dating Plan, Abaty Cymer (Cadw).



12 View by S & N Buck (1742). (NLW via Wikimedia Commons).

[12] Pennant, T. (1781), A *Tour in Wales, p.98*
[13] Roscoe, T. (1853), Wanderings and Excursions in North Wales, p.226
[14] http://www.vannercottages.co.uk

4.1.4 A further range of farm buildings are sited east of the abbey, these include a stone corn-barn and granary, thought to be of 18th century origin, with a range of later metal farm structures. South is an open field and adjacent the caravan site.

4.1.5 The core of the historic abbey site comprises the church, dating from the first half of the 13th century, with a more rudimentary tower of c.1350 to the west. The remains of the church reveal an aisled nave, which was curtailed to the east by the current gable as the intended crossing, transepts and choir beyond were never completed.

4.1.6 Beyond the conservation area, it is thought that the field to the east known as Cae Fonwent on the 18th century Nannau estate maps, may have been the monastic cemetery, with an orchard in the field to the north.[15]

4.2 Key views

4.2.1 Within the conservation area there are a number of key views which illustrate either the historic development of the village, allow appreciation of particular features or key structures or give a proper understanding of its development within the wider landscape. Other views are important glimpsed views, between buildings or to key features which contribute to the understanding or character of the area.

4.2.2 Views are either static (a specific directional view) or dynamic, encompassing a field of view from a particular point.

4.2.3 These are as follows (see Fig 15):

A Dynamic view towards the abbey from the gated entrance to the caravan park.

B Glimpsed views from the lane above the abbey across the field.

C Dynamic views towards the Abbots Lodgings/Farm House and adjacent range.

D Dynamic view of the abbey from the south-west corner of the scheduled area.

E View west along the watercourse from the refectory.

[15] Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) report no.923 (Evans, R & Davidson A), Cymer, Gwynedd Draft Conservation Area Appraisal, 2011, p.9.



13 The Refectory, built over a watercourse, looking west (2022).



14 13th century arches with the north aisle beyond. (2022).

F View east along the watercourse from the refectory towards the byre.

G Dynamic view from within cloister towards the abbey.

H Dynamic view from within cloister towards the tower, Ty Fanner, and associated buildings with hills behind.

J View towards sedilia in south wall.

K Long view down nave towards eastern gable.

L Dynamic view towards the north aisle through standing arches.

M View from the north aisle and through into the nave.

4.3 Green spaces & Trees

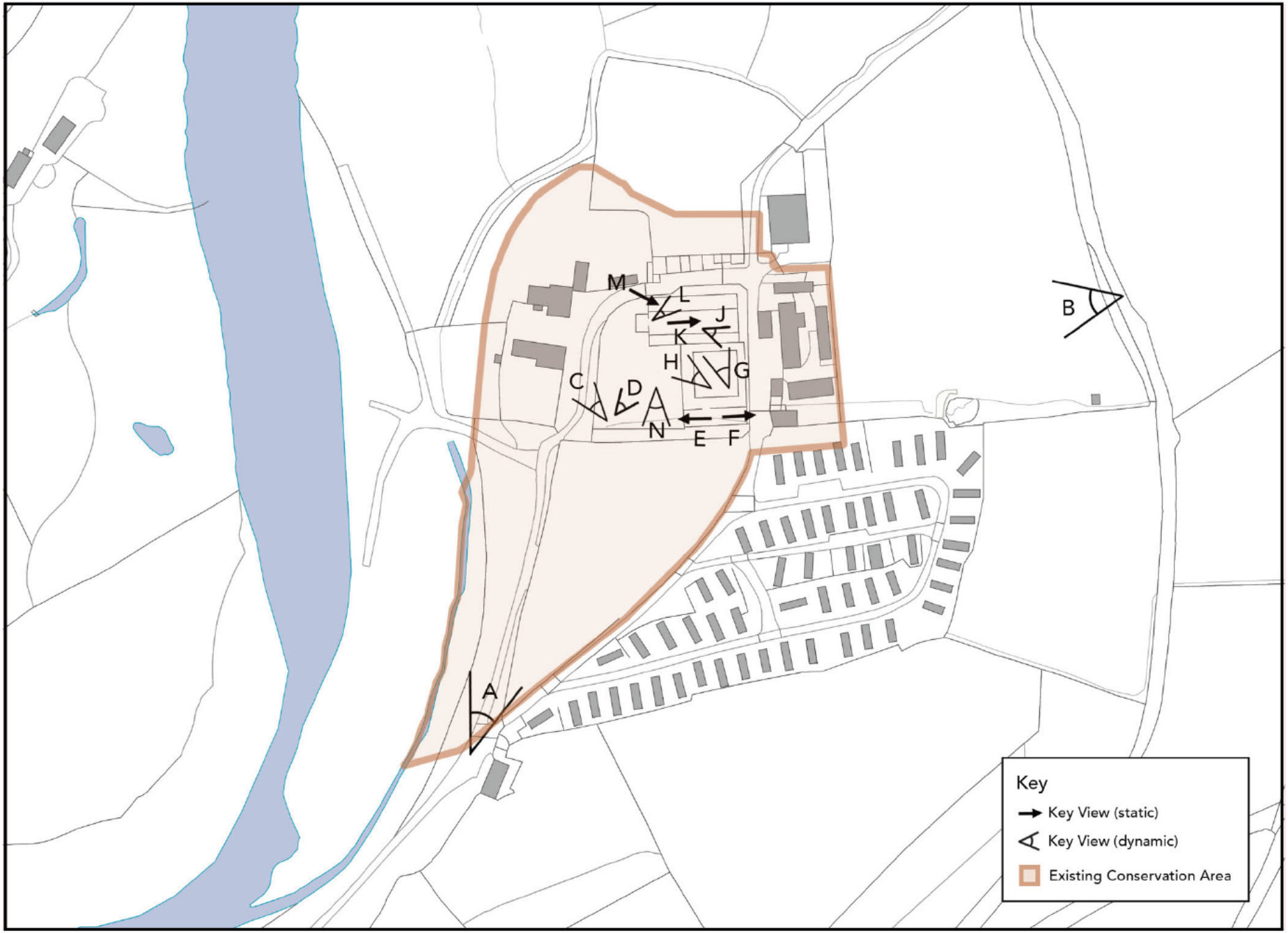
4.3.1 The context of Abaty Cymer is a rural one, and the approach from all sides is defined by informal green space with trees now separating the site (visually) from the banks of the Afon Mawddach.

4.3.2 On the approach the site the field to the south is particularly important providing immediate context and separation from the caravan park and associated spaces.

4.3.3 The fields and wooded hillside beyond provide important backdrop to views to the east, against which the ruins are seen in context. Those to the east and north probably served as a monastic graveyard and orchard.

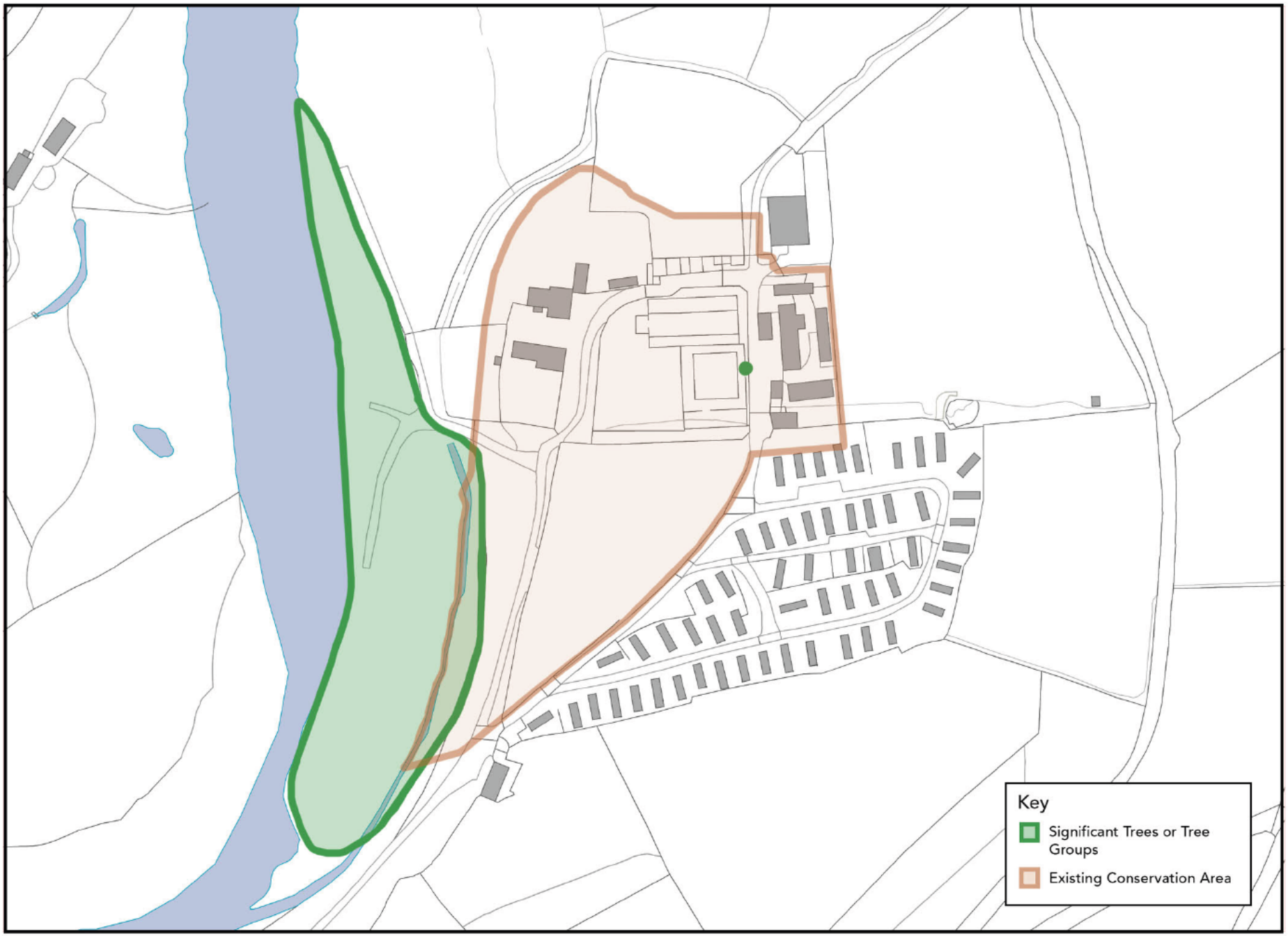
4.3.4 Distinctive trees or groups of trees (in addition to those designated elsewhere) are shown on plan at Fig 16, these include:

- Trees lining the Afon Mawddach to the west.
- Distinctive (yew) tree between the abbey and the farm buildings to the east..



Key Views
1:2000 @ A4

15 Key views (© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100022403)



Trees
1:2000 @ A4

16 Significant Trees & Tree Groups (© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100022403)

5.0 Character

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 The character of the site is, firstly, a rural one. The approach from Pont Llanelltyd is important and reflects the experience of approach toward the abbey from the village since early times.

5.1.2 This approach has been affected by the caravan site to the south-east of the site which has existed since the 1950s and elements such as the fencing and support buildings have all affected the context of the abbey, as has the transition from a touring to a 'static' site primarily.

5.1.3 The precinct with its standing ruins maintain the picturesque quality which attracted tourists in the 18th century, which can still be seen in a fine landscape setting.

5.1.4 The surrounds of the abbey have been farmed for centuries and the agricultural context is very important to the character of the setting, even with later buildings visible to the east.

5.1.5 Within the ruins, the moments of detail are intrinsic to the character, these include the sedilia, views through the windows of the east gable, the piscina, and the arcade to the north aisle.

5.1.6 The tall hedge has resulted in a disconnection between the abbots lodging and the abbey, but this has been present since the 1930s (present in aerial views c.1948).

5.1.7 Around the Ty Fanner the context is now open and laid to gravel, having been gardens or agricultural previously.

5.2 Architectural Character

5.2.1 The architectural character is described in three parts, the abbey ruins, the associated buildings to the west (Ty Fanner and the holiday cottages, Ty Bwtri and Hen Dy), and the farm buildings to the east.

5.2.2 The abbey ruins comprise the standing remains of the church and the footings of the cloister and refectory to the south.

5.2.3 The church has a nave some 30m in length, of which the side walls partially survive. To the north is a three-bay arcade. This may have been mirrored to



17 Towards the Abbey ruins and Ty Fanner from the drive (2022).



18 The sedilia and door way to the south (2022).

the south, but nothing survives above ground. The eastern gable has three lancet windows of a style consistent with construction between 1200-40.[16] The gable is vertically jointed further suggesting a crossing, transepts and choir were intended originally.

5.2.4 Early views (See Figures 07, 08 & 12) show windows above those existing in the east gable, also referred to by Thomas Pennant (see section 3) which has been reduced in height since the 19th century.

5.2.5 To the south-wall there is a sedilia with three bays, retaining sandstone arches, pedestals and single column. The sandstone is now quite heavily weathered. Adjacent is a potential tomb recess and piscina. Adjacent is a arched doorway, which has undergone significant indent repairs to the head. To the north-wall there is a further recess, again perhaps for a tomb.

5.2.6 There are important views out from the abbey, through the south door to the farmland beyond and in context through the missing sections of wall.

5.2.7 The north aisle is standing to a height of some two metres in places, the south aisle is now just footings. Linking the north aisle and the nave is an arcade of three arches, with tall double-chamfered arches on octagonal piers.

5.2.8 The mid 14th century tower was probably added after the construction to the east was abandoned. It is of crude construction with very limited detail, simple lancet windows and a corner staircase (to the south-west) the outer wall and buttress of which have collapsed.

5.2.9 To the south, the aisle, cloister and refectory are only visibly present through ground-level walls or footings.

5.2.10 West are Ty Fanner and the holiday cottages. Ty Fanner is a late medieval hall house (probably late 15th century) and presumably the abbots lodgings. It is now much altered, but reputedly retains arched-braced collar trusses and gable trusses internally.[17] A later (16th century range extends to the west).

5.2.11 The first floor has much later dormers (c1900), but the windows to the ground floor are of some age, as is the wide planked door under a modern



19 East gable (2022).



20 General view from the south-west, a rural context. (2022).

[16] Haslam, R., Orbach, J. and Voelcker, A. (2009) *The Buildings of Wales: Gwynedd,* p.633.
[17] The roof has been dated to c.1441. *The Buildings of Wales: Gwynedd,* p.635.

porch. North is a large modern shed which is damaging to the general setting.

5.2.12 The holiday cottages comprise a square block (now Ty Bwtri), which may be of 16th century origin (perhaps immediately pre-reformation as a guest lodging or gate house), the northern range (now Hen Dy) is 17th century in character (and the roof trusses would appear to be of this period). It is an attractive range with external stair to the north. Ty Bwtri is generally in its current form in Buck's illustration of 1742.

5.2.13 The farm buildings east of the abbey ruins include a mid to late sixteenth century barn, later extended and a late seventeenth century byre. The latter is now in poor condition with failure in the roof evident to the north.

5.2.14 To the east are a range of relatively modern farm buildings, including a characteristic Dutch barn.

5.3 Materials and Details.

5.3.1 The abbey and associated buildings are constructed of the local dolerite and slate, dressings are in the Egryn freestone (sandstone), quarried near Tal-y-Bont.[18] The buildings south of Ty Fanner seem to contain a proportion of siltstone and mudstone in the rubble, reflecting the diversity of the local geology.

5.3.2 The roofing to Ty Fanner, the range adjacent and the barn are all of later even coursed, thin-split slate. The byre retains earlier, smaller, slate in diminishing courses, but the roof is now in poor condition.

5.3.3 The abbey retains important elements of original detail (see 5.2), including worked sandstone dressings to the windows, north arcade, sedilia, tomb recesses and south door.

5.3.4 The windows on the ground floor, east front of Ty Fanner are mullioned timber and could be of 17th century origin. The door adjacent is probably of similar date, wide boarded with raised and profiled frame.

5.3.5 There are a range of relatively modern farm buildings to the east including the arched roof of the Dutch barn, all in corrugated iron.



21 Ty Bwtri and Hen Dy (2022).



22 Ty Fanner (2022).

[18] https://museum.wales/media/136/october_2003.pdf

5.4 Boundaries

5.4.1 The boundary definition in the conservation area is generally modern, albeit the arrangement of boundaries is recognisably that from the Nannau mapping of 1794.[19]

5.4.2 The guardianship area is surrounded by hedging, which is evident on the aerial photographs of 1948.

5.4.3 Walling south of Ty Bwtri would appear to be modern but contributes to the setting.

5.5 Other Features, Details and Surfaces.

5.5.1 There is no significant early surfacing in the conservation area (unless some remains in the farmyard to the east, which was not able to be accessed).

6.0 Historic Assets

6.1 Designated Historic Assets

The following designated historic assets (listed buildings and scheduled monuments are found in the conservation area (see Fig 29):

6.1.1 Scheduled Monuments

- *ME001 Cymer Abbey*

6.1.2 Listed Buildings

- *4738 Cymer Abbey*
- *4739 Ty Fanner*
- *4740 Former Domestic Range to the S of Ty Fanner*
- *16164 Barn at Cymer Abbey*
- *16165 Byre at Cymer Abbey*

6.1.3 Adjacent to the Conservation Area.

The following are within the immediate context of the conservation area:

- *ME248 Pentre Farm Barrow*
- *ME266 Coed Pen-y-Bryn Defended Settlement*
- *ME006 Llanelltyd Bridge (4741 Pont Llanelltyd)*

[19] Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) report no.923 (Evans, R & Davidson A), Cymer, Gwynedd Draft Conservation Area Appraisal, 2011, p.9.



23 The byre from the precinct (2022).



24 General view looking west. (2022).

- *ME150 Cymmer Castle (4742 Cymmer Castle)*
- *16146 Tan Llan*
- *16147 Coach House and Stable Block at Tan Llan*
- *16145 Tynllan*
- *4737 Parish Church of St Illtyd*
- *16144 Bryn*
- *16148 The Toll House*
- *16149 Awelon*
- *16150 The Old Post Office*
- *16151 Pont Wnin*
- *5239 Tyn-y-Celyn*
- *21619 Hen Efail*

6.2 Register of Traditional Buildings

6.2.1 Consideration should also be given to the Authority's 'Register of Traditional Buildings'. As this list is always under review, it would not be practical to include within this Conservation Area Appraisal. Please contact the Authority should you have enquiries regarding the register.

7.0 The Conservation Area Boundary.

7.1.1 Following the appraisal, it is recommended that the boundary be extended to protect the potential monastic cemetery and orchard (to the north and east).

7.1.2 Refer to the Management Plan & Fig 35.

8.0 Hidden Histories (archaeological potential)

8.1.1 There is the significant potential for the survival of associated archaeology, predominantly associated with the medieval abbey. There is good potential for buried remains in the main precinct, around the farm to the east, Ty Fanner to the west and in the immediate areas around the periphery, as well as between the site and Pont Llanelltyd

8.1.2 Some archaeological works (watching brief) were undertaken during the construction of a new wash block at the drive end in 2009.[20]

[20] Jones, M, Vanner Caravan Park, Archaeological Watching Brief, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, (2009) ref. 836.



25 Pont Llanelltyd (2022).



26 Abaty Cymer & Caravan Park viewed from the south, c.1950 (Dolgellau.uk).

9.0 Other Designated Assets

9.1 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) & Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

9.1.1 Aber Mawddach/Mawddach Estuary SSSI overlaps the western edge of the conservation area. It is designated primarily for its biological features.[21]

9.1.2 Following the boundary of the SSSI, overlapping the west of the conservation area, is also designated as a special area of conservation (SAC). *Afon Eden - Cors Goch Trawsfynydd SAC*

9.1.3 A Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is a site designated under the European Union's Habitats Directive as part of the Natura 2000 network. Natura sites are internationally important for protecting a range of vulnerable habitats and species of wild fauna and flora. SACs include both terrestrial and marine habitats and species (other than birds which are protected separately) which are listed in the Habitats Directive.

9.2 Trees Preservation Orders

9.2.1 There are currently no tree preservation orders in the conservation area (over and above the protection conferred by the conservation area status).

9.3 Designated Historic Landscape

9.3.1 Abaty Cymer lies within the Vale of Dolgellau Registered Historic Landscape, HLW (Gw) 13.[22]

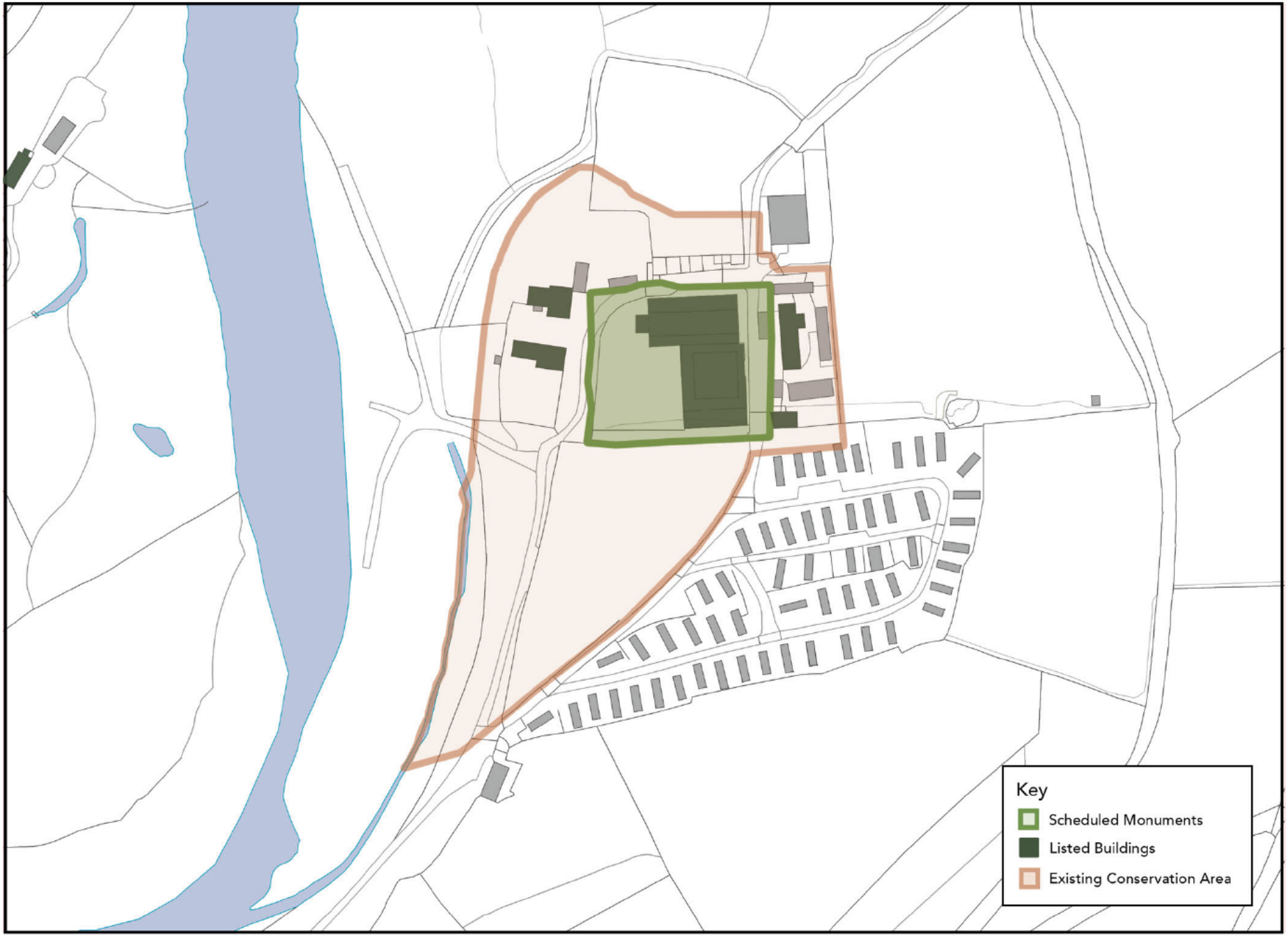


27 From Pont Llanelltyd towards Abaty Cymer. (2022).



28 Signage and interpretation to the tower (2022).

[21] https://naturalresources.wales/media/665591/SSSI_1628_Citation_EN0010014.pdf
[22] http://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/historiclandscape/FullReport?lang=en&id=HLW%20(Gw)%2013



Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments
1:2000 @ A4

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10.0 Biodiversity

10.1 Trees

10.1.1 See 9.2 for Tree Preservation Orders.

10.1.2 See 4.3 for description of key trees/tree areas within the conservation area that contribute to its special character.

10.1.3 The **Celtic Rainforests Wales Project** is active within several Conservation Area locations, including areas associated with Special Areas of Conservation, and seeks to protect and restore rare Atlantic woodland habitats by managing Rhododendron ponticum and other invasive alien species. When works, planting schemes, landscaping, maintenance or development are proposed within these Conservation Areas, consideration should be given to biosecurity, the prevention of new invasive species introductions, and the potential impact on nearby Celtic rainforest habitats. Early advice should be sought from Eryri National Park Authority where proposals may affect areas linked to the project or involve species replacement, vegetation clearance or habitat management.

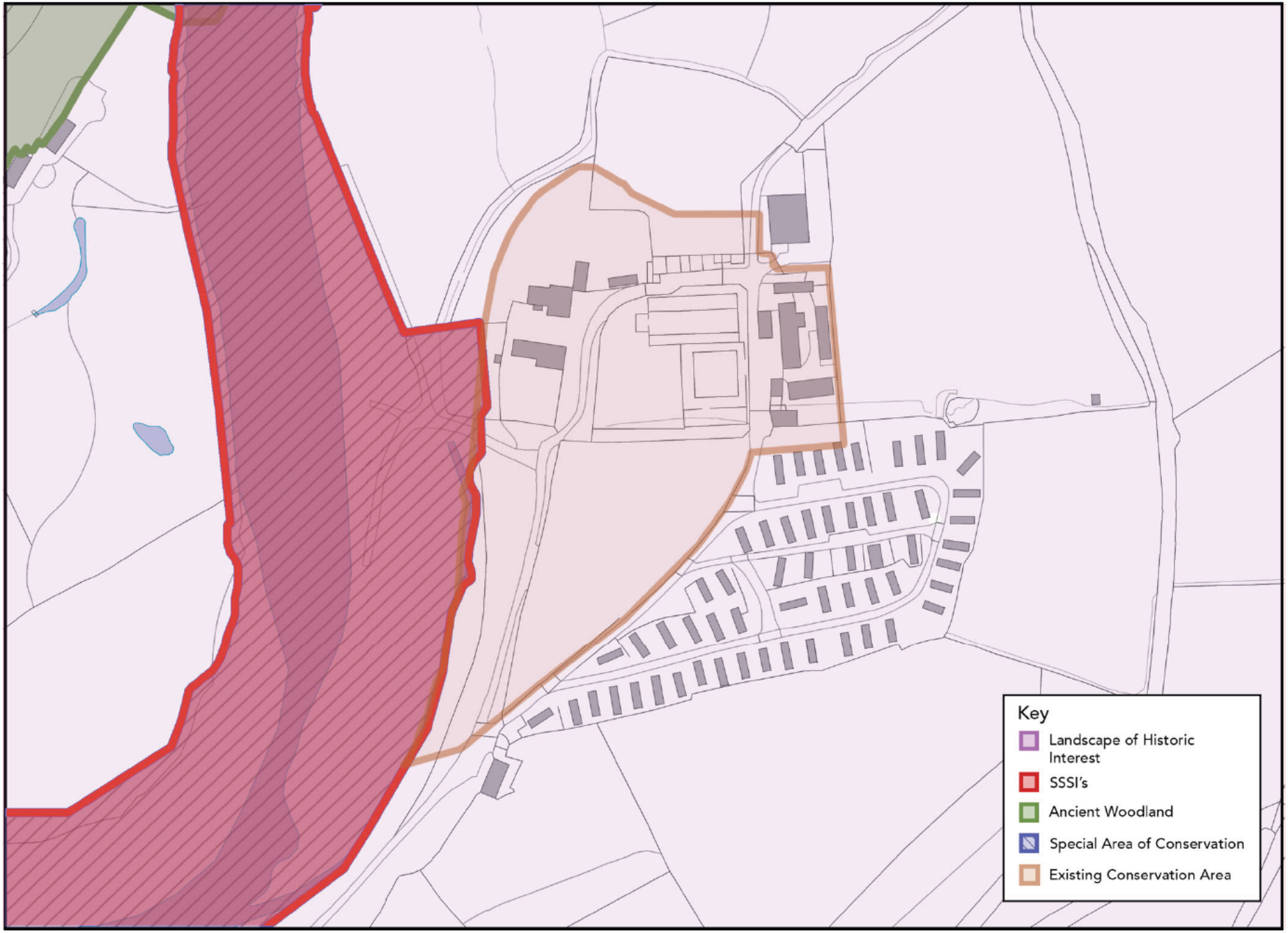
10.2 Protected Species.

10.2.1 Aber Mawddach/Mawddach Estuary SSSI and Afon Eden - Cors Goch Trawsfynydd SAC overlap the western edge of the conservation area. The SAC is designated with specific reference to the Otter, Freshwater Pearl Mussel and Atlantic Salmon.

10.2.2 There are a wide range of protected species known to be present along the Afon Mawddach into the Aber Mawddach, which include rare lichens, liverworts and mosses and a wide range of butterflies. Other species of note include;

- Pied Flycatchers
- Wood Warblers
- Redstarts
- Redshank
- Snipe

- Woodcock
- Dipper
- Otter
- Freshwater pearl mussel
- Atlantic salmon



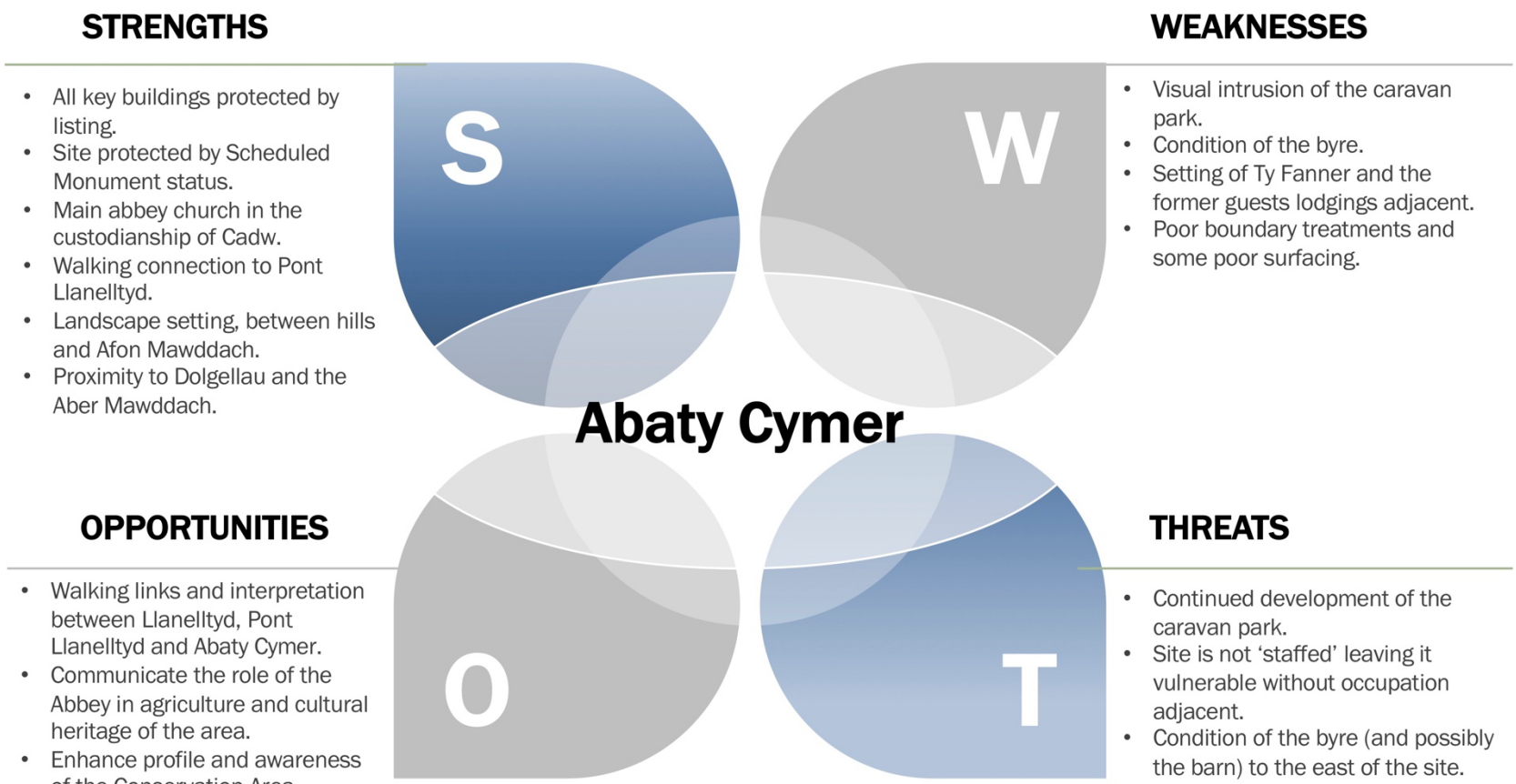
Other Designations
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PART TWO – CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN.

1.0 Summary SWOT Analysis



2.0 Understanding the Issues

2.1 The Condition of the Conservation Area

2.1.1 Abaty Cymer itself is well maintained through Cadw as guardians of the site.

2.1.2 Whilst the guardianship of Cadw only extends as far as the abbey church and former cloisters, adjacent buildings are protected by listing. The abbey church, including the area to the east assumed to cover the incomplete crossing and choir, comprise the scheduled monument.

2.1.3 The caravan site is well maintained but still has a negative impact upon the setting of the abbey.

2.1.4 Most of the buildings would appear to be in beneficial use, however the byre (listed grade II) is starting to deteriorate and is in need of conservation and repair.

2.1.5 There are some issues which adversely affect the special interest of the conservation area. These include:

- Erosion of the setting of the Abbey ruins.
- Condition of some of the buildings.

2.1.6 Specific examples include:

- Change of caravan park from a touring park in the 1950s (see fig 26) to a park with significant numbers of static caravans (see fig 32) and associated developments.
- Consequent impact on views to and from the abbey.
- Some of the surfacing in the immediate context of the scheduled area.
- Condition of the byre which appears to be deteriorating.

2.2 Buildings at Risk

2.2.1 The byre (grade II) is currently deteriorating, the roof to the north in particular.

2.3 Overview of the SWOT Analysis.



32 The caravan park affects the setting of the Abbey ruins. (2022)



33 The condition of the listed byre, east of the precinct is of concern. (2022)

2.3.1 A SWOT analysis has been undertaken for the Abaty Cymer Conservation Area. This is used to identify the issues, but also some of the opportunities and inherent strengths of the conservation area. It then informs the creation of the positive management proposals which follow.

2.3.2 The SWOT analysis shows a number of key points for action, to build on the strengths and opportunities of the Conservation Area. These include:

- Seek to protect the adjacent landscape setting.
- Encourage walking and create interpretive links between Abaty Cymer, Pont Llanelltyd and the village, in particular the St. Illtyd's church.
- Make more of the links to the Llwybr Mawddach along the Afon Ceunant.

2.3.3 The SWOT identifies a number of weaknesses and threats, which are identified as action points, these include:

- Seek positive engagement to secure the future of the byre.
- Ensure that green spaces and key views are protected through local engagement, when considering applications for development and by extending the boundary of the conservation area.
- Better control peripheral and infill developments, promoting better quality design and preventing development where inappropriate.



34 Interpretation on the site is limited and could be significantly enhanced (2022).

3.0 Positive Management.

3.1 Boundary Changes.

3.1.1 Following the appraisal, it is recommended that the boundary be extended to protect the setting and potential monastic cemetery and orchard (to the north and east). See *Fig 35.*

3.2 Local & National Policy Protection

3.2.1 The legislative framework context for Conservation Areas is provided in the introductory document ***Introduction to Conservation Areas for the 21st Century.*** This document also gives general guidance and policies.

3.3 Enhancing the Special Interest of the Conservation Area

3.3.1 Addressing some of the issues (see 2.0) and weaknesses and threats to the Conservation Area have the potential to significantly enhance its special interest. This can be through extended planning powers or guidance.

3.3.2 Specific issues and opportunities include:

- Consider interpretation and better connectivity with links to the village, Pont Llanelltyd and the St. Illtyd's church. Interpretation could be sensitively provided along the route.
- Seek to control development of inappropriate quality on the periphery of the conservation area (the caravan park and change at the farm in particular).
- Extend the boundary to protect the wider monastic and landscape setting.
- Encourage more appropriate surface and boundary treatments.

3.3.3 Using the above tools and through the consultation (see below), raise awareness and the profile of the Conservation Area and encourage appropriate development and change. To include:

- Awareness with owners and the community of Cymer and Llanelltyd.
- Raising awareness and (with support in the future) skills for local contractors and crafts people.

3.4 Sustainability & Environmental Upgrading

3.4.1 Guidance on the right approach for the introduction of energy efficiency improvements, and the necessary consents in Snowdonia's Conservation Areas is given in the document: ***Advice on Energy Efficiency Measures in Conservation Areas (Planning & Practical Guide).***

3.4.2 Even as a scheduled monument of significant sensitivity Cymer has some opportunities for micro-power generation. These might include discreetly sited solar panels on more modern farm buildings or siting panels remotely (being mindful of key views and views from high-level).

3.4.3 Sustainable energy generation schemes should be supported and encouraged where they don't adversely affect the special character or biodiversity of the conservation area.

3.5 Biodiversity

3.5.1 Trees are critically important to the biodiversity and aesthetic significance. There are no trees with tree preservation orders, but there is woodland listed on the ancient woodland inventory. Other trees are identified as having significance in the conservation area (see 4.3).

3.5.2 The potential to enhance biodiversity in the conservation area is significant, example actions could include:

- Installation of bird and bat boxes and development of a box management plan.
- Appropriate use of grass roofs and other built features in extensions or new buildings, where appropriate to the built heritage, can enhance wildlife habitats.
- Hedgerow management and enhancement and the extension of hedgerows in particular at Cymer.
- Retention of standing deadwood and creation of deadwood piles for insects and other wildlife (where it doesn't affect the setting of the Abbey in a negative manner).

3.5.3 Ensuring that development is informed by, and is sympathetic to, the distinctive character of the Conservation Area and takes account of other evidence of historic characterisation and landscape sensitivity of the surrounding area.

3.5.4 Ensuring that development proposals will enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests.

3.5.5 Working with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to develop and secure the implementation of projects to enhance the landscape and create and improve habitats of nature conservation value.

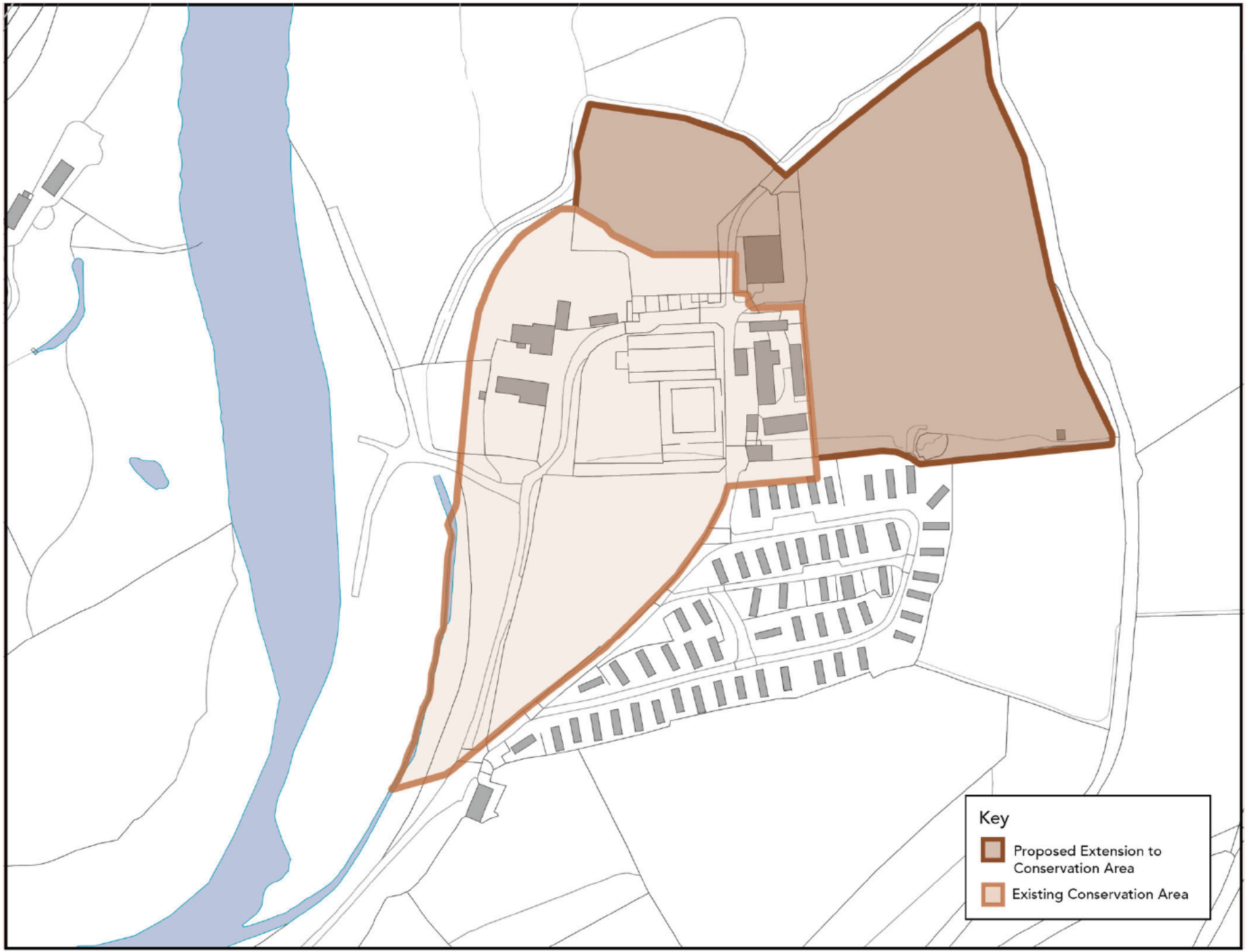
3.5.6 Encouraging development to include measures to contribute positively to the overall biodiversity of the area.

3.5.7 Enhancing green infrastructure in a way which provides for the energy needs of the area without adverse impact no biodiversity or the character of the conservation area.

4.0 Consultation

4.1.1 The draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management plan have been subject to the following consultation:

- With Llanelltyd Community Council in November 2021.
- Via the National Park's website.



Proposed Extension to Conservation Area

35 Proposed extension to the Conservation Area Boundary (© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100022403)

Appendices:

Appendix A - Sources

The main published (and unpublished) sources of information used in the production of this Appraisal were as follows:

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