HARLECH

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Chambers Conservation Ltd.

Issue

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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 legislative context, including guidance on what development is controlled and where consents are required.

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 03), 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 Harlech is a small town overlooking the north end of Cardigan Bay, around six miles south of Porthmadog. It lies with Gwynedd and the Snowdonia National Park but was historically in the county of Meirionnydd.

1.2.3 The town's landscape has been determined by its geology. Stones are of the Harlech Grits group. There is a wide band of siltstone running at lower level, approximately from the railway westwards. Beyond, (outside of the

01 St. Tanwg's Church

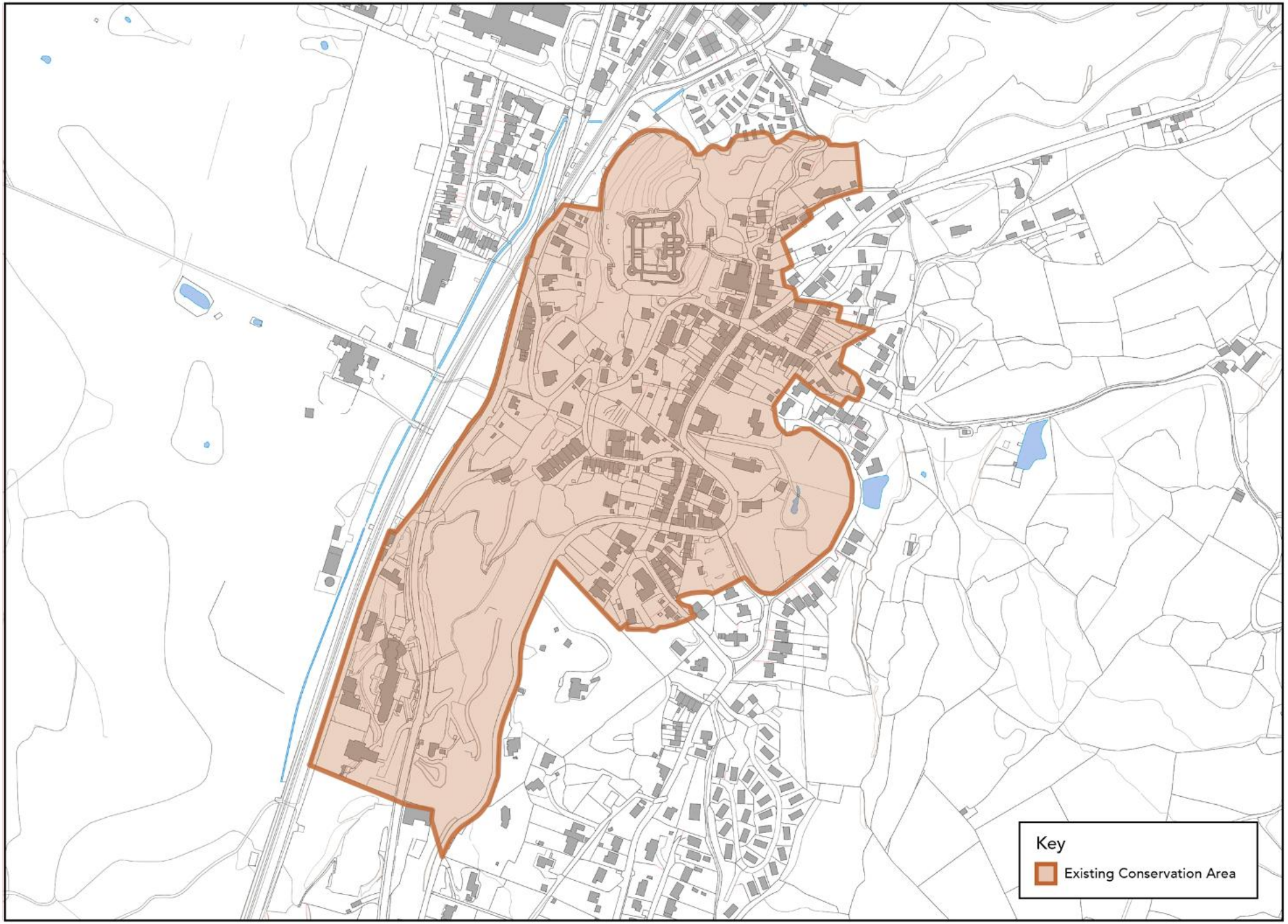
conservation area) lies the Mochdras fault and a surface of boulder clay with silt and sandy beds.[1]

1.2.4 The visual landscape is one of town nestled on an irregular hillside with the castle itself standing slightly forward on a dramatic and relatively steep rocky outcrop. At the bottom of the hill, the land suddenly becomes flat – having once been subject to tidal waters and the nature of the development of the land and buildings is distinctly different. This area is dominated initially by the late 19th century Royal St David's Golf Course and 20th century schools, leisure buildings and holiday parks, but beyond by a wide coastal nature reserve of sand dunes (the Morfa Harlech National Nature Reserve).

1.2.5 The Conservation Area was designated in 1979.

02 Pentre'r Efail

[1] Geological Survey of England and Wales 1:63,360/1:50,000 geological map series



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

2.0 Summary of Special Interest

2.1.1 The special interest of Harlech Conservation Area is defined by a combination of factors but perhaps most notably by its historical significance and position within a remarkable landscape.

2.1.2 The 13th century castle dominates the history and visual character of the town. Its extent of survival and connection with the other Gwynedd castles has resulted in the group's designation as a World Heritage Site.

2.1.3 Harlech's later medieval history is much less visually conspicuous from an initial impression as very few of the buildings have substantial parts dating to before the 19th century. However, the layout of most of the current streets probably dates from this period.

2.1.4 There are few buildings dating from the 17th and 18th centuries still present and the traditional construction techniques seen in them also clearly influenced the early 19th century building as well. These buildings are characterised by their simple forms and walls constructed by often using both very large blocks of the local Harlech Gritstone but also much smaller rubble.

2.1.5 Through the 19th and early 20th centuries, waves of development produced the majority of buildings seen today in the conservation area. Harlech is relatively unusual for having early tourist development (for example the 1830s buildings), but many of its most prominent buildings came after the arrival of the railways and wealthy businessmen. Some of the buildings, such as Coleg Harlech are significant partially for their philanthropic association.

2.1.6 The landscape setting of the town is essential to its special interest. Harlech sits on the edge of the Morfa SSSI, which has remarkable ecological interest as well as being of an unusually beautiful appearance. The flat landscape to the north-west of the town results in extraordinary views across the Dwyryd Estuary and Cardigan Bay to some of the most dramatic mountains of Snowdonia.

2.1.7 The landscape within the conservation area itself adds to views and vistas which are much of its artistic appeal. The steep rocky outcrop the castle sits on brings it slightly proud of the town and as a result it features in views from most of the hillsides surrounding it.

04 Stryd Fawr

05 Castle Square

2.1.8 The current settlement at Harlech is a relativity well preserved tourist resort with a strong traditional character. In addition, there are later buildings following more distinctive styles that are of architectural interest.

2.1.9 The town has had a long-standing appeal as a visitor destination and therefore its communal value is important to the special interest of the conservation area.

06 Morannedd on Ffordd Newydd

3.0 Historic Timeline

Early history

3.1.1 The history of Harlech is covered in detail elsewhere, the summary below is intended only to give context to the appraisal and the assessment of special interest.

3.1.2 There is relatively little written about early inhabitation of the area, but quite a few remnants of early structures. Near the town is Cefnfilltir, the remains of a concentric enclosed hut circle, dating to the Bronze Age or Iron Age.[2] A little further out to the east is the Carreg Round (Burial) Cairn, also probably from the bronze age and to the north-east, a hut circle that probably dates to the Iron Age or Romano-British period.

3.1.3 Further homesteads are found to the south-east at Muriau'r Gwyddelod Ancient Village and remains of prehistoric homesteads and field systems to the south at Groes Las.

Medieval

3.1.4 The extent of Roman occupation is unclear and disputed, although goldens torques and coins have reportedly been found.

3.1.5 The construction of the castle by Edward I was commenced in 1283, after the approach from the south had been made safe following the capture of Castell y Bere. The king built or refortified a number of castles at this time, including Caernarfon, Conwy and Beaumaris (which now are included in the World Heritage Site). The castle was mostly constructed of Harlech Grit, but metalwork was supplied from Chester. Most of the castle had been built by about 1295, with the exception of the refortification of the main approach and the addition of two further small towers in 1323-4.[3]

3.1.6 A pivotal point in the history of the castle was the Owain Glyndwr uprising when it was ceased in 1404 and held until 1409, when Prince Henry recaptured the structure. By then, however, a substantial amount of damage had occurred, most notably to the outer curtain wall.

Late 18th and early 19th century

3.1.7 In Thomas Roscoe's book 'Wanderings and Excursions in North Wales' which was published in 1836, he describes Harlech as being 'This mean little town, now only remarkable for its feudal castle, was formerly a place of considerable importance'. Etchings from around the late 18th and early 19th

07 Plan of Harlech as illustrated in Thomas Pennant's 'A Tour of Wales', 1781 edition

08 Extract from the 1841 tithe map

2 https://ancientmonuments.uk/128908-cefnfilltir-enclosed-homestead-harlech#.YhyXVy2ca8U
3 The Buildings of Wales – Gwynedd (Haslem, Orbach and Voelcker, 2009)

centuries show only a few clusters of small and often isolated buildings. There appears to only be a handful of buildings standing today substantially dating from the 18th century or earlier. Ty'r Felin is thought to have been built in the second half of the 17th century and gives an impression of the form of the earlier houses.

Early 19th Century

3.1.8 By around the end of the Georgian period in the 1830s, a greater flurry of development began to occur, and buildings became larger as tourism started. Y Plas was built as the Blue Lion Inn in around 1830 by Sir Robert Williams Vaughan as a speculative development. The tithe map of 1841 shows a fairly continuous strip of buildings along Stryd Fawr and up Pen Dref, together with increasing numbers of single buildings on the hillside. The Church of St Tanwg was also built in that year (smaller chapels had existed before that time).

The arrival of tourism

3.1.9 Development was boosted considerably when the railway was brought to the town – the station opened in 1865. During that decade, Samuel Holland, owner of the Blaenau Ffestiniog quarry further developed the town for tourism. The Castle Hotel was built in 1876.

3.1.10 The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw leisure facilities introduced. The Royal St. David's Golf Club held its first Open Meeting in November of 1894 and the large St David's Hotel was built in 1910 (but sadly demolished in 2019 after standing in disrepair for some time). Harlech Library and Institute was opened in 1908, providing a subscription service.

20th century

3.1.11 It was also in this early Edwardian period that a number of large houses were built on the periphery of the town. These included Crown Lodge in 1903 and Plas Wernfawr in 1908. This had been built for the director of Kodak but was later used as part of Coleg Harlech which opened in 1927 as a residential college for adults.

3.1.12 Coleg Harlech's great hall burnt down in a fire of 1968, to be replaced by Theatr Harlech in 1973.

3.1.13 More recent decades have seen a great number of Harlech's houses converted into holiday lets, which provides seasonal influxes of trade for shops, cafes, bars and restaurants. Public facilities have suffered from this change and other national factors – now most of the chapels have fallen out of use or have been converted. Harlech Library closed in May 2017 and Coleg Harlech in 2019.

09 Etching by W. Walker and W. Angus, after P. Sandby, 1779

10 Etching by Thomas Catherall 1855

4.0 Spatial Analysis

4.1 Settlement Form & Layout

4.1.1 The current form of the core of the town is clearly recognisable as it would have been prior to the widescale redevelopment that started in the early19th century. The town centre follows a largely linear form contouring along Stryd Fawr, which then becomes Ffordd Isaf before gentling descending to coastal level. Perpendicular and running up the hill further is Pen Dref. Twtil snakes down the hillside westward (met halfway by Tryfar). At the north end of the town centre, Ffordd Pen Llech dramatically descends past the castle (it was claimed until recently to be the steepest street in the world).

4.1.2 Stryd Fawr, Pen Dref, Tryfar and Pentre'r Efail mostly have terraced or closely grouped buildings of two or three storeys. Elsewhere buildings are mostly detached.

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 also Fig 17):

A Dynamic views from the golf course and coast.

B Views from the approach from the north along Ffordd Morfa.

C Views from the approach from the south near Coleg Harlech across the Morfa towards the mountains of Snowdonia

D Views from the approach from the south along Ffordd Newydd towards the castle.

11 View from Twtil (E)

12 View Ffordd Pen Llech – the new part of the castle visitor centre is on the left (P)

E Views from Twtil upwards towards the castle and downwards towards the coast

F Views from Tryfar towards the castle

G View from the end of Bronwen Terrace towards the castle

H Views from Bronwen Terrace across the Morfa

I Views from Tryfar across the Morfa with Snowdonia mountains in the distance

J Panoramic view from the rocky outcrop off Ffordd Isaf (Branwen's Rock)

K View from corner of Ffordd Isaf towards the castle

L Views from the War Memorial on Stryd Fawr down Tryfar towards the Morfa (1) and down Pentre'r Efail (2)

M View with the west elevation of St Tanwg's Church in the foreground, towards the houses on the hillside of Ffordd Uchaf

N Views along Stryd Fawr, both ways

O Views towards the mountains of Snowdonia and Dwyryd estuary with the castle in the foreground.

P View from the top of Ffordd Pen Llech

Q View from Ffordd Pen Llech towards the mountains of Snowdonia and the estuary

R Views from Ffordd Pen Llech pathway outside Glas Cerrig, towards castle and landscape to north

S View from Stryd Fawr to castle and towards and landscape to north

T View from Capel Rehoboth featuring town, castle and Morfa / coast beyond.

U View from lane leading off Pen Dref over the rooftop of Porkington Terrace featuring the castle and dramatic landscape beyond

V View down Pen Dref – the castle is framed at the end of the vista

W View from Pen y Graig across town

X Glimpsed view from Ffordd Isaf to Coleg Harlech

13 View of the conservation area from Capel Rehoboth (T)

14 Panoramic view from the rocky outcrop off Ffordd Isaf (J)

Y Views from castle across town and landscape

Z Views from hillside to east to town

4.3 Green Spaces & Trees

4.3.1 The main public green space within the conservation area is the Parc Bron y Graig. This is somewhat hidden from view but would provide a welcome space from some of the more densely packed buildings. This consists of lawned areas, mature trees and a pond.

4.3.2 A small public green space and a spectacular viewpoint is situated just off Ffordd Isaf. This focusses around a small rocky outcrop and there is a board giving information on the landscape features of the view. There is also a path from here leading down to Stryd Newydd, Coleg Harlech and the coast.

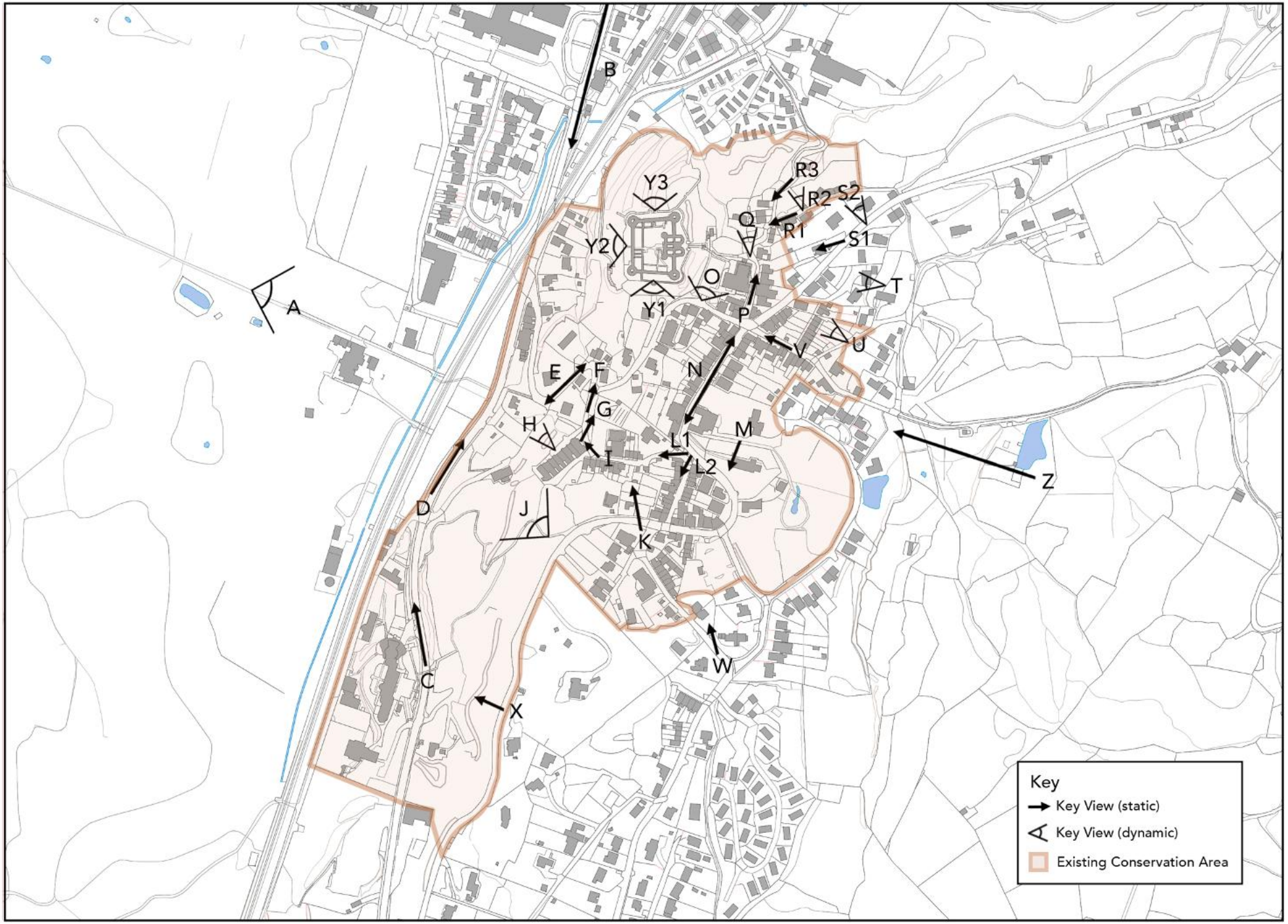
4.3.3 From this area and further to the south, there is a swathe of greenery on the hillside that gives a defining edge to the town and helps to frame it with views from the coast. This fairly dense mass of trees and shrubs continues on the other side of Ffordd Isaf around Crown Lodge and the other large detached dwellings.

4.3.4 These areas of greenery, together with those wrapping around the castle and bordering some of the hillside lanes, may not contain many individually remarkable trees (although this report was written in wintertime), but visually they contribute considerably to the visual character of the area and almost certainly provide a green link (both aesthetically and ecologically) between the Morfa and hillside behind.

4.3.5 There are relatively few trees protected by preservation orders in the conservation area – those included are a group and four individual trees to the north and east of St Tanwg's Church. These are identified on Fig 18 and in section 8. In addition, there are protected trees just outside the conservation area that will influence its character. These include within the woodlands Caravan Park (to the north of the castle) and to the east of Parc Bron Y Graig.

15 Glimpses of Coleg Harlech from Ffordd Isaf (X)

16 Parc Bron Y Graig



Key Views
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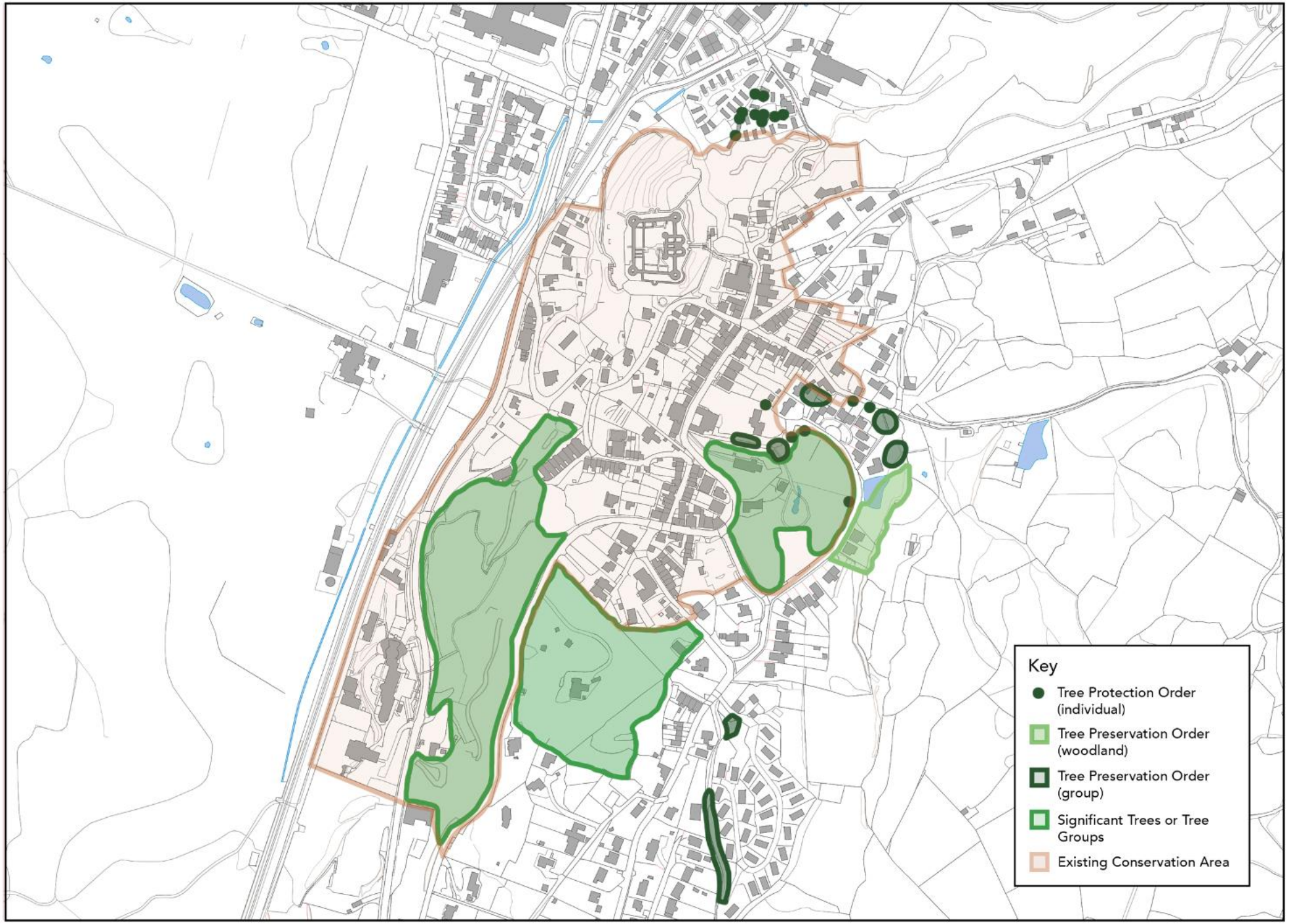
17 Key Views in the Conservation Area and Adjacent (© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100022403)



Trees
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18 Preserved or Significant Trees in the Conservation Area (© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100022403)

5.0 Character

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 The overall character of Harlech is defined by a combination of the prominent castle, its traditional buildings, hillside streets and dramatic landscape position.

5.1.2 The character of the town will always be continually shifting even when the majority of its buildings are traditional and intrinsically remain the same – this is largely due to the changes in the ways people use the town. The popularity as a tourist destination supports smaller individual shops and cafes / restaurants and these now set the character of Stryd Fawr. Within the tourist season, there is a good animation to the town centre, with shops displays and signboards for cafes. Other streets are characterised by their dwellings, apparently more often than not now used as holiday homes. In more recent years there have been increasing numbers of patio terraces constructed outside these houses, giving an appreciation of the dramatic views.

5.1.3 The setting very much defines the character of Harlech and affects the way it is used today. The castle, coast and nearby mountains of Snowdonia are all magnets for tourists but are also compelling features in the views from numerous areas. The desire to continue with traditional building materials and techniques has clearly been important in the development of the town, even though many buildings are perhaps more recent than seen in other Welsh towns with such a strong heritage association. The use of local stone in the majority of buildings is critical to the Harlech's unique character as is the medieval street pattern – it is likely that the picturesque qualities of the winding hillside lanes was appreciated as the town developed itself as a tourist destination when otherwise easier to use, wider roads of a more gradual descent could have been used.

5.1.4 The larger, more commercially developed buildings of the late 19th century also help set the character of the conservation area, particularly on the approaches from the north and south - these as the larger buildings in the town, other than the castle.

19, 20 & 21 Views within the conservation area

5.2 Character Areas, Overview.

5.3 Character Areas.

5.3.1 Harlech is a larger conservation area and has a number of fairly distinct character areas. Defining the special interest of these areas is useful in helping to articulate the types of changes or development that might be appropriate or damaging in the future.

5.3.2 The locations of these character areas are shown on the map on figure 22 and more detailed plans of each character area included subsequently (these also include numbered undesignated buildings / assets of interest).

Character Area 1, Harlech Castle.

5.3.3 This area follows the World Heritage Site designation boundary and covers the castle itself and the mound / crag it sits on. The area is clearly characterised by the castle itself but also the defensive walls at its base, the sheer, rocky faces and the path that winds its way up around the castle (it was sadly in a dangerous condition at the time of writing and public access was prohibited).

23 Harlech Castle

Character Area 2, Ffordd Pen Llech

5.3.4 This area is strongly characterised by the steepness of the gradient and the views that are opened up to the north, in particular towards the mountains. The buildings here are varied in character but often have indications of greater age historical significance.

5.3.5 Castle Lodge (map ref 24) was once probably a small row of separate low status cottages. Windows are very small and irregularly positioned. The Old Mill (map ref 25) (Hen Felin) is unassuming externally from the road with a large rendered extension and a modern roof, but mapping and documentary evidence suggest that if might, at least partially, one of the town's older buildings.

5.3.6 Further down 1-2 Ivy Cottages (Ty'r Eiddew) (map ref 27) are not quite what they at first seem. Externally, they are pebbledashed and windows have been replaced in UPVC. A wide dormer visually dominates the left-hand unit. However, the buildings were assessed by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust in 2009 and it was found that Ty'r Eiddew was initially a single

24 Castle Lodge within the Ffordd Pen Llech area

structure with a four-bay roof of five collar-beam trusses with cusped windbraces. GAT reported that the standard of joinery is high, and the timbers carefully selected.

5.3.7 Just below is a further cottage (map ref 28), from the 19th century which has been extended and its windows altered. The castle is within the backdrop to this building, looking up the hill.

5.3.8 Off the middle of Ffordd Pen Llech to the east, is a pathway. There is a simple two storey joined pair here (map ref 29), again from the 19th century. There are fine views from the terrace outside. Further down the path, buildings are more modern.

5.3.9 On the east side of Ffordd Pen Llech, going back up the hill are two pairs of cottages (map ref 30, 31), although Yr Odyn is now combined as one dwelling. Both have rough, uncoursed stonework. Just beyond is the grade II listed Ty'r Felin, which is protected as being one of the few pre-19th century houses in Harlech and due it retaining its early character and features such as the slate weathering at the base of the chimney and sparse fenestration. Adjacent is the larger Caereinon (map ref 32), which is probably from the early 19th century (with the more formal proportions of a late Georgian / early Victorian) building but respects the more traditional details of its neighbour.

5.3.10 Castle Cottage (map ref 33), next door, may be from a similar period, but it is greatly altered, having been pebbledashed and painted. It has modern UPVC windows, dormers and extensions to the front.

5.3.11 Gweithdy Saer is a grade II listed late 17th or early 18th century former inn. It has uncoursed, undressed stonework and small irregular opening.

Character Area 3, Twtil / Tryfar

5.3.12 This area is characterised by a wide range of mostly fairly small houses on lanes snaking up the hillside.

5.3.13 At the base of the hill are a small cluster of houses to the immediate west of the castle (map ref 3-5). These vary in date from the early 19th to early 20th centuries, but all are two storeyed with stone walls of varying textures. Roofs are slated and fairly steeply pitched. Bay windows make the most of

25 Looking towards Ivy Cottages (Ty'r Eiddew) in the Ffordd Pen Llech area

26 Looking towards Yr Odyn in the Ffordd Pen Llech area

the open aspect. The base of the castle is exposed here and the rockface of its mound is at its steepest, meaning it looms over the buildings below.

5.3.14 Slightly further along Stryd Newydd is a further small group (map ref 6 & 7), this time mostly of three storeys with their upper floors being half within the roof and dormer windows adding interest to the roof lines.

5.3.15 Twtil meets Stryd Newydd at an oblique angle and then starts its ascent up the hill. The first house is Plas Owain (map ref 8), which is a well-presented detached villa built in 1907 of semi-coursed square-cut stone, characterised by pairs of sash windows and its canopy spanning between ground floor projecting bays. Being set back from the road above a stone boundary wall, there is space for a planted garden.

5.3.16 On the first tight bend there is a glimpse of Bronwen Terrace on the hill above. Bron Castell (9) is a slightly earlier building (mid 19th century) and stands back only slightly from the roads behind a small wall. It is two storeyed with four bays of multi-paned sash windows with slate lintels.

5.3.17 Around the next corner is Tyn y Groes (map ref 10), which despite the initial impression given by the modern UPVC windows, is an older building (it appears on the 1841 tithe). This is also suggested by the low floor to ceiling heights and large, irregular stones forming the walls.

5.3.18 Twt Hill Cottage (map ref 11), around the third and final sharp bend, also has the character of an older building – again with larger stones at the corners. Being of single storey, it may have been a workshop of some kind, for example a smithy. Running through its yard is an attractive small stream.

5.3.19 Beyond, on the right-hand side are a few 20th century pebbledash buildings, the third of which is the Memorial Hall (map ref 13). Opposite, is Fair View (12), a Victorian villa with a steeply pitched gabled roof. As the lane levels off and gently curves to meet Castle Square there is a late 19th century purpose-built public toilet building (14) with arch-headed openings and a central (redundant) water fountain and on the other side a statue (15) depicting Mabinogion story of Branwen. It was sculpted by Ivor Roberts-Jones and unveiled in 1984. Although there are many glimpses of the castle from the ascent up Twtil, it only comes into full view at this point.

5.3.20 Tryfar links at its top end in the 'dell' of Pentre'r Efail. Either side of its top section is two storey terraced housing (map ref 65-68). These step

27 Tyn y Groes in the Twtil / Tryfar area

28 Houses on Tryfar and the Moreia Chapel in the distance

attractively down the hill. However, some have render covering their stonework and others have modern UPVC replacement windows. On the north side is the Moreia Calvanistic Methodist Chapel (69) which was built in 1794, rebuilt in 1837 and once again in 1864. Its front façade has large arch headed windows and walls of very small, square cut, semi-coursed stonework (larger, random rubble is used for the sides). There is a rendered hall building to the rear (71).

5.3.21 As Tryfar bends around to face the castle, Bronwen Terrace (map ref 72) is positioned to make the most of the remarkable views. The Victorian 2 ½ storey building's massing is broken up with bay windows, gables and the end houses stepping forward.

Character Area 4, Stryd Fawr

5.3.22 This area is largely level and buildings are tightly grouped together, often terraced.

5.3.23 Castle Square (Maesgwyn) provides a transition from the hillside buildings of Twtil before the more densely built area of Stryd Fawr. The Old Cheese Market building (map ref 17) served until recently as the church hall for St Tanwg's. It is single storey, with characterful arch-headed doors and windows. Behind is a small terrace of stone cottages (18).

5.3.24 The former Castle Hotel (19) is now used as the castle visitor centre. It directly faces the castle and is one of the largest buildings in the town, both in footprint and height. Its stonework features more joints than that of more traditional buildings, with regular quoins to the corners, string courses and arched heads to the windows being prominent features.

5.3.25 The building that sits on the corner of Stryd Fawr and Ffordd Pen Llech (34), was built in the early 20th century. Until recent decades, it had a Dutch gable parapet and decorative details around both its circular second floor window and first floor oriel windows. Whereas it would once have been painted in a pastel colour, its modern pebbledashing and meagre bargeboard and window details simply make it look drab. Looking up from Ffordd Pen Llech, its rear façade is another storey higher, but almost entirely lacking in architectural detail, giving it an unpleasantly austere appearance. However, its cast iron canopy with slender columns and art nouveau brackets remain in place.

29 Bronwen Terrace in the Twtil / Tryfar area

30 Castle Hotel – Now the Castle Visitor Centre

5.3.26 The small number of buildings on Stryd Fawr to the north of Pen Dref (map ref 37-39) are of two or three storeys, built from coursed stone in the mid-late 19th century.

5.3.27 The Lion Hotel (40) on Pen Dref is probably one of Harlech's earlier tourist buildings. It is of 2 ½ storeys and rendered with five gabled bays and a ground floor porch which continues as a canopy over two further bay windows. The following buildings (42, 43, 45) step dramatically up the hill. They are of two storeys with a mix of coursed and uncoursed stone, but of a generally plain appearance. Of a similar character (built later in the 19th century) is Porkington Terrace (44), a row of 7 stone cottages, built of coursed stone but with carefully proportioned windows and positioned to give fine views over the town, castle and wider landscape.

5.3.28 The grade II listed Bryn Tirion is dated 1841 is currently (2022) about half obscured with ivy, therefore it is assumed that it is not in use and therefore there may be issues with its condition. It remains a characterful cottage however, as it is built directly of the bedrock and incorporates large stones in a similar manner to the older buildings.

5.3.29 Back on Stryd Fawr, the courtyard group of Plas y Goits (map ref 49) – this group predates the 1841 tithe – it may originally have been a house with attached workshops or stabling, but now it has been turned into an attractive group of small shop units. The stonework to this groups is of large units, which is currently painted.

5.3.30 On the other side of a grassy bank giving an unusual break in the street frontage is the former Seion Methodist Chapel (map ref 50), which was built in 1814 and rebuilt in 1873, to the design of architect Owen Morris Roberts of Porthmadog. It has a relatively simple appearance with varied stonework and round-headed windows. At the end of the 20th century, it started to be used by the Catholic church.

5.3.31 At the junction with Pen Dref there is a picturesque cluster of three, two-storeyed buildings (51-53). The middle one was formerly a bank and unusually for the town has some buff ashlar stonework.

5.3.32 The west side of Stryd Fawr is distinctively of a greater scale with most buildings being of either 2/1/2 or 3 storeys. There is a central section of late 19th century buildings (55-59) that are either of coursed stone or have a rendered / pebbledashed finish. They have a varied roofline with a

31 Buildings on Pen Dref, within the Stryd Fawr area

32 Plas y Goits on Stryd Fawr

combination of different shapes of dormers and front-facing gables. Many have retained their attractive shopfronts.

5.3.33 Y Plas is a grade II listed three-storey late Georgian former inn. It is of semi-coursed painted rubble construction with a hipped roof. It has unusual round almost fully glazed bays at ground floor level. The adjacent building is also grade II listed, although is of a similar character to a few of the other 19th century two storeyed buildings.

5.3.34 Stryd Fawr sweeps around a natural topographical dell in an arc shape. Crossing this at lower level is Pentre'r Efail. On the corner of these two roads is an interesting split level building (64), probably from around 1900 with large glazed shopfronts and timber framed details in the gables.

5.3.35 Next door is the former Tabernacl Welsh Baptist Chapel (map ref 82), which was undergoing construction work (and conversion?) at the time of writing in 2022. It was built in 1897 to designs by architect J.E. Evans of Barmouth. Unusually for the town, it is of a classical style and has some ashlar buff stone features. The Coflein record states the ground floor had been in use as a garage in 2010, whilst services were held in a basement.

5.3.36 Further around the sweeping bend is the former library and institute (map ref 83). In contrast to the formality of the design of its neighbour, the building is of an arts and crafts style with simple parapets to gables and casement windows with multipaned upper panels of glazing.

5.3.37 Opposite is Byrdir House (map ref 84), which is a three-storeyed rendered house built in the later 19th century. It has first floor hoodmoulds and ground floor bays.

5.3.38 On the southern side of the bend are late 19th century two storey groups (86-88) with shops at ground floor. These have a mix of stone and rendered frontages. On the south side is a short stone terrace (89) – other adjacent buildings have been altered and their character lost.

5.3.39 The buildings on Pentre'r Efail are terraced and of a modest height and character. All would have been of stone construction although a few are now rendered. The small scale of these houses (visually exaggerated by the large units of stone), repeating dormers and sash windows (although many are now replaced) give this street its own character. The grade II listed Harlech Pottery building is probably the oldest and has a charming appeal,

33 Stryd Fawr – Y Plas is in the foreground

34 Stryd Fawr

from its textured stonework, multipaned bay window, small sash windows and cobbled paving.

5.3.40 As Stryd Fawr becomes Ffordd Isaf, there are four large houses. The first (map ref 91) was for a while a doctor's surgery. It was constructed in around 1900 of semi-coursed, square-edged stone. It has a relatively complicated roof form with gables and bays. The second, Maelgwyn (92), is from the early 20th century and features very large glazed bays and a projecting central bay which reaches up to its full 3 storeys. The third is modern but the fourth (actually a pair – Dros y Mor / Llys Branwen (93)), has fairly large casement windows but set within relatively traditional stonework. It is decorated with gables with timber framing and an ironwork balustrade on top of a (partially infilled canopy).

Character Area 5, St Tanwg's Church

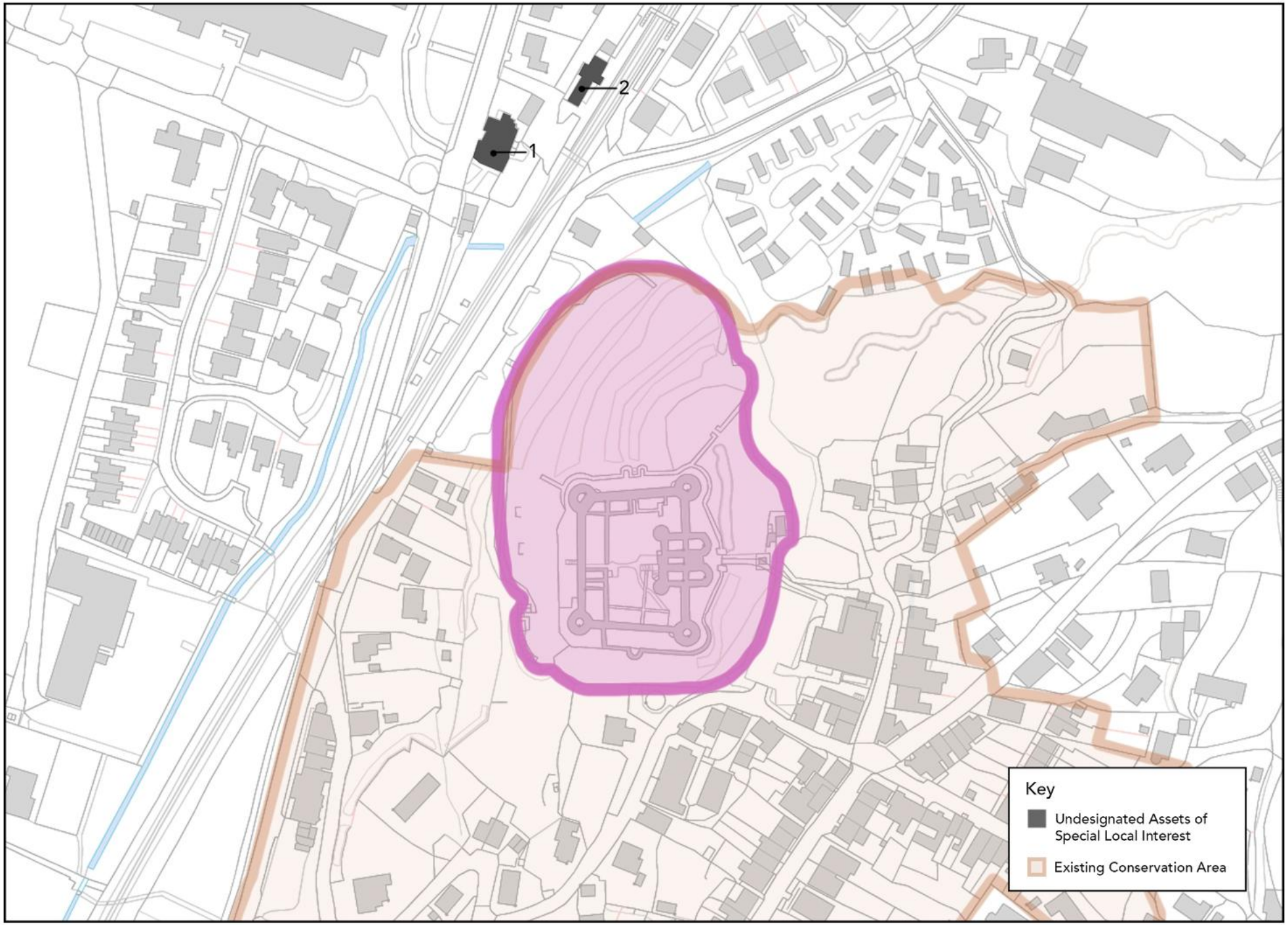
5.3.41 The St Tanwg's Church area is characterised by the church itself but also the green landscape it sits within. St Tanwg's itself is perched on a grassy slope with a number of trees and shrubs around it – in more recent years it has become partially obscured by large conifers. To the north of the church is a public footpath – from here there are views across the church grounds to the buildings of Pen Y Graig beyond. This also provides access to the Parc Bron Y Graig, which is a natural bowl-shaped landscape.

Character Area 6, Coleg Harlech

5.3.42 The Coleg Harlech building complex is situated near the foot of the hillside – it consists of an architecturally wide-ranging group from the original semi-classical Wernfawr to the brutalist theatre building. On the other side of the road is the grade II listed Y Wern which was built around 1935 for the first Warden of Coleg Harlech, Sir Ben Bowen Thomas – it is of an arts and crafts style. The densely wooded area to the east of the complex has historically been part of the college grounds and impacts on its backdrop when viewed from the coast.

35 Pentre'r Efail in the Stryd Fawr area

36 Coleg Harlech



Character Area 1 - Harlech Castle
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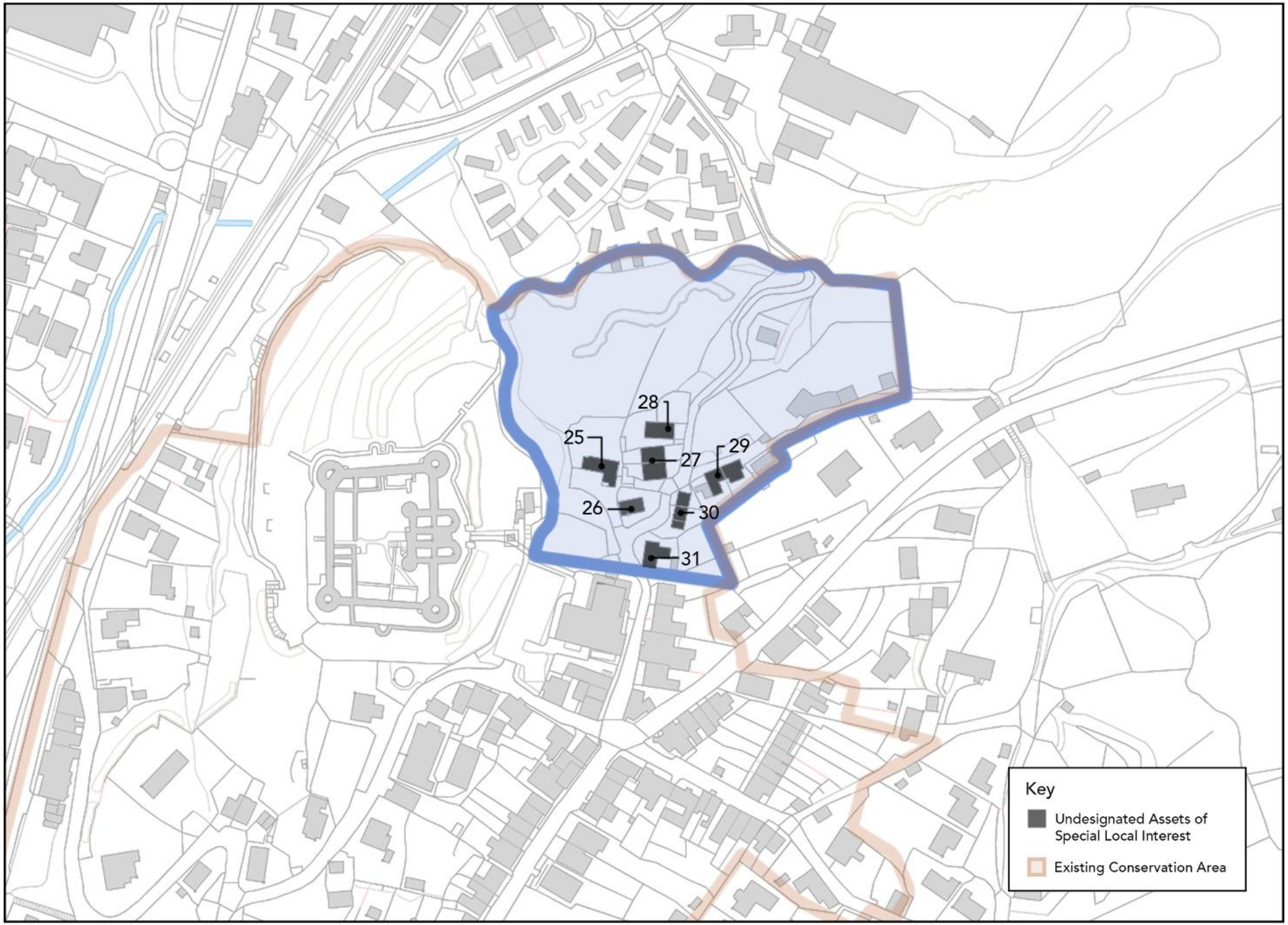

Character Area 2 - Ffordd Pen Llech
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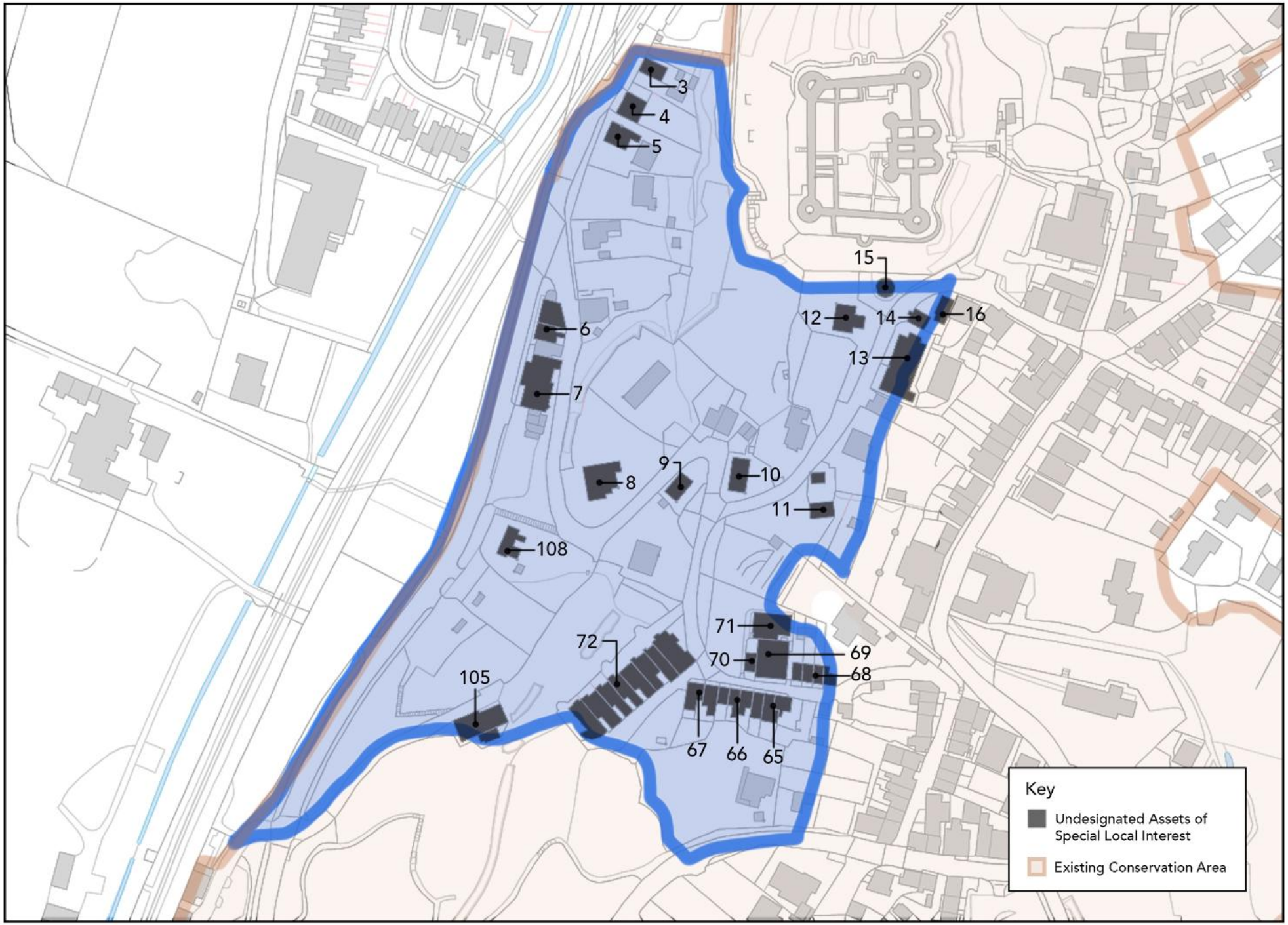

Character Area 3 - Twtil / Tryfar
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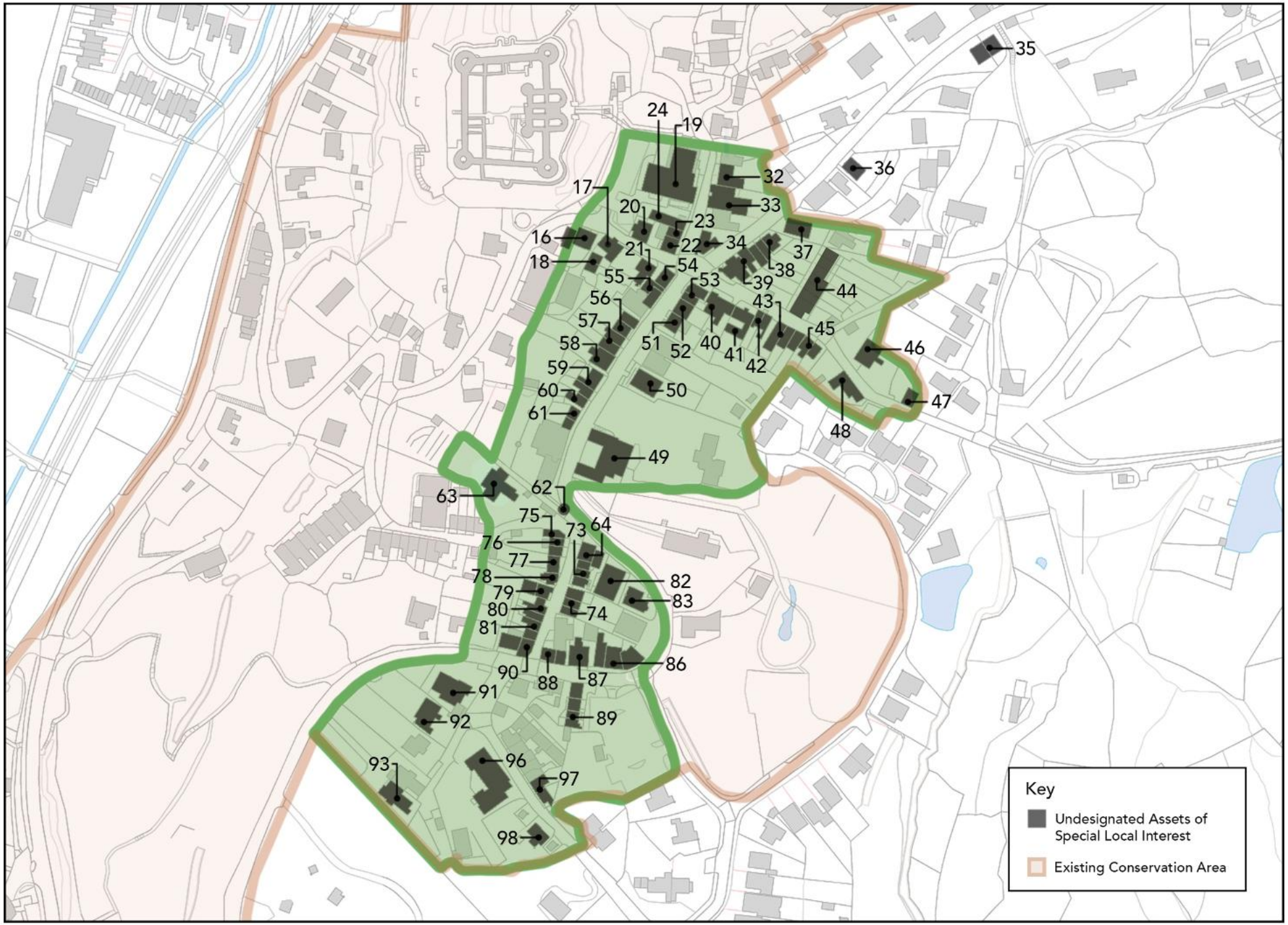

Character Area 4 - Stryd Fawr
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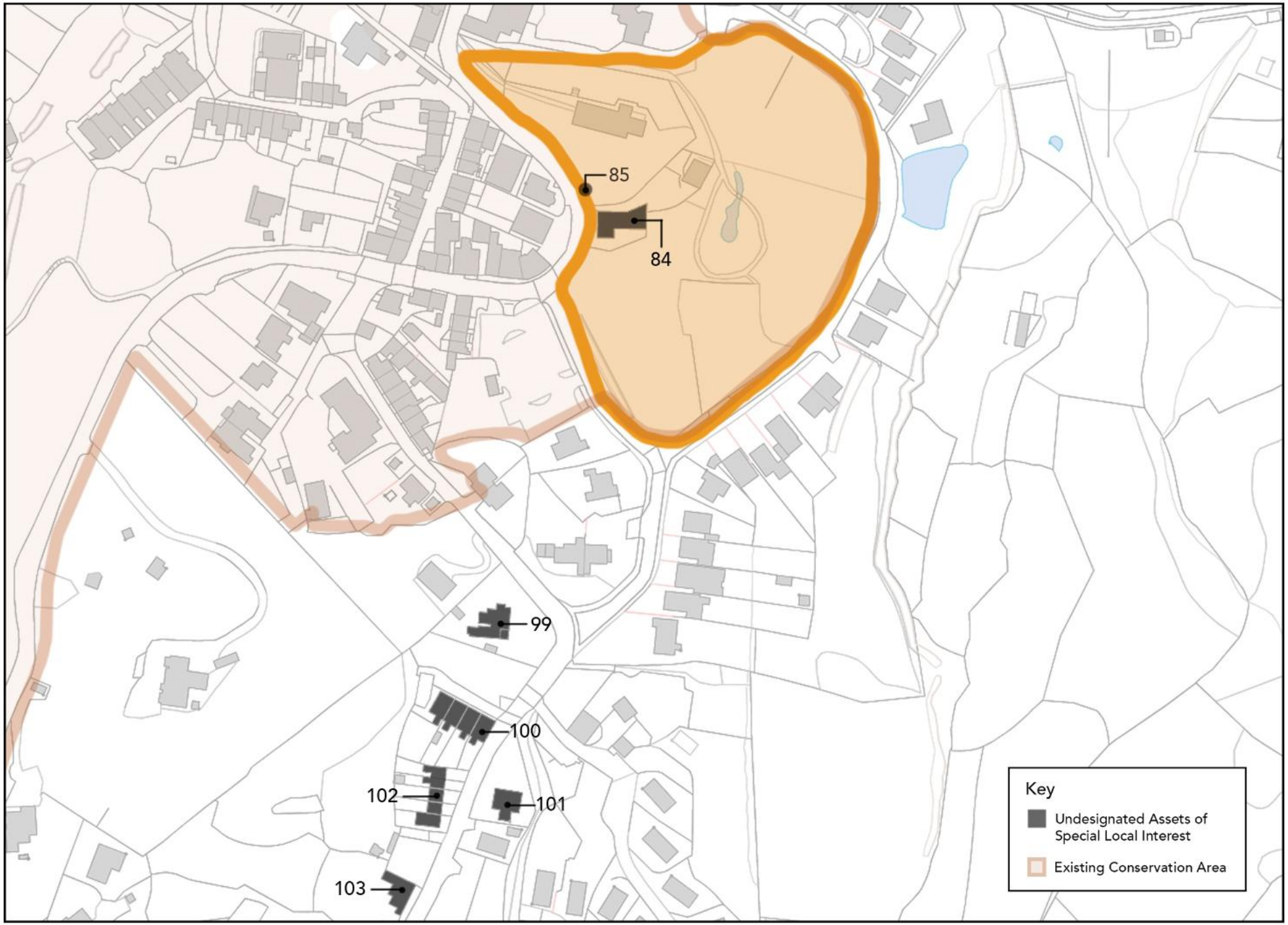

Character Area 5 - St Tanwg's Church
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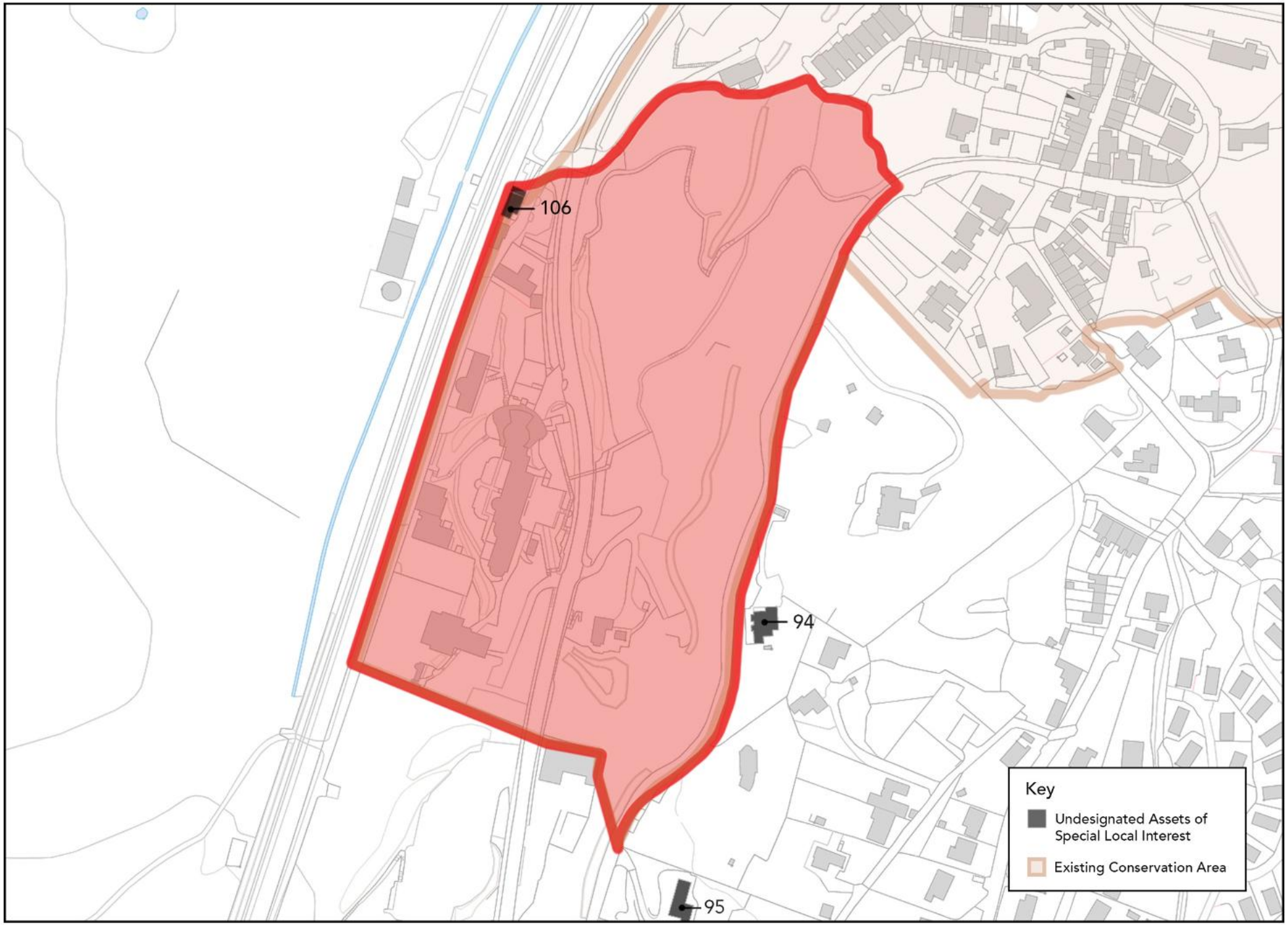

Character Area 6 - Coleg Harlech
1:2500 @ A4

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5.4 Materials & Details

5.4.1 The primary traditional building material is Harlech gritstone, but with slate for roofing, weatherings and often lintels. The natural variation in the colour and texture of the stone is an important characteristic and gives a picturesque quality to the town.

5.4.2 The laying and dressing of the stone varies quite significantly and changes the character and status of the buildings. Earlier, smaller buildings such as Ty'r Felin have hugely varied stonework. Monumental stones of up to around a metre in length are used in the corners, particularly near the base but the rest of the façade is formed using random rubble of any size with little or no dressing.

5.4.3 To buildings along Stryd Fawr, the stonework generally has a higher extent of dressing and is mostly at least semi-coursed. The stonework to the Georgian Y Plas consists of large units of a similar size and therefore approximately falling into courses, but there is little deliberate squaring. In contrast, towards the other end of the street, the main façades of main of the later buildings have square-cut stone blocks with tight mortar joints. The fronts of the stones remain roughly hewn, however, and there is variation to the coursing by doubling of halving the height of stones. Random rubble is used for the side walls of most buildings.

5.4.4 Smooth ashlar is a rarity and is not a general characteristic of the town. Notable exceptions are to some dressings, e.g. to the windows and bellcote of St Tanwg's Church and to the shopfront and first floor windows of Cae Du Designs.

5.4.5 A number of the older stone buildings are painted – it is probable that this would have been originally a limewash, that has been more recently overcoated with increasingly thick and often imperious paint.

5.4.6 Render is relatively commonly seen but is not a traditional feature. Pebbledash appears to have been used from the early 20th century on newer buildings, presumably in an attempt to emulate the overall colouring of the traditional stone. Smoother renders, or painting over the pebbledash, has been a more recent trend.

5.4.7 Brick is very rare – the example that stands out, arguably uncomfortably, is the house on Stryd Fawr, where rich red smooth pressed bricks are used,

43 Ty'r Felin

44 Varied material on Stryd Fawr

which could almost hardly be more of a contrast to the natural local materials.

5.4.8 Most of the roofing is slate and of the 19th and 20th centuries, thin split slates in equal courses or slightly diminishing courses. Roofs predating the end of the 19th century are simple and of a functional form. Mortar fillets and slate projections on abutments (e.g. adjacent walls or chimneys) were used instead of lead. Decorative roof forms features started to be introduced from the end of the 19th century onwards but are not a primary feature of the historic core of the town. There is considerable variation in the pitch of historic buildings according to their original form or function. Eaves and verge projections are minimal.

5.4.9 Setting aside later changes, the predominant window style is the sash, generally in larger paned 2 over 2 format for smaller buildings but up with correspondingly more panes for larger buildings.

5.4.10 Window openings vary in style, the majority are simple rectilinear openings, with a stone lintel. Windows are recessed back from the façade. Oriel and bay windows occur occasionally to some of the later buildings.

5.4.11 Traditional shopfronts are very important to the character of the conservation – most are quite simple with painted timber joinery with relatively little ornament but some of the buildings (particularly those built in around 1900) have surviving, more decorative surrounds around display openings.

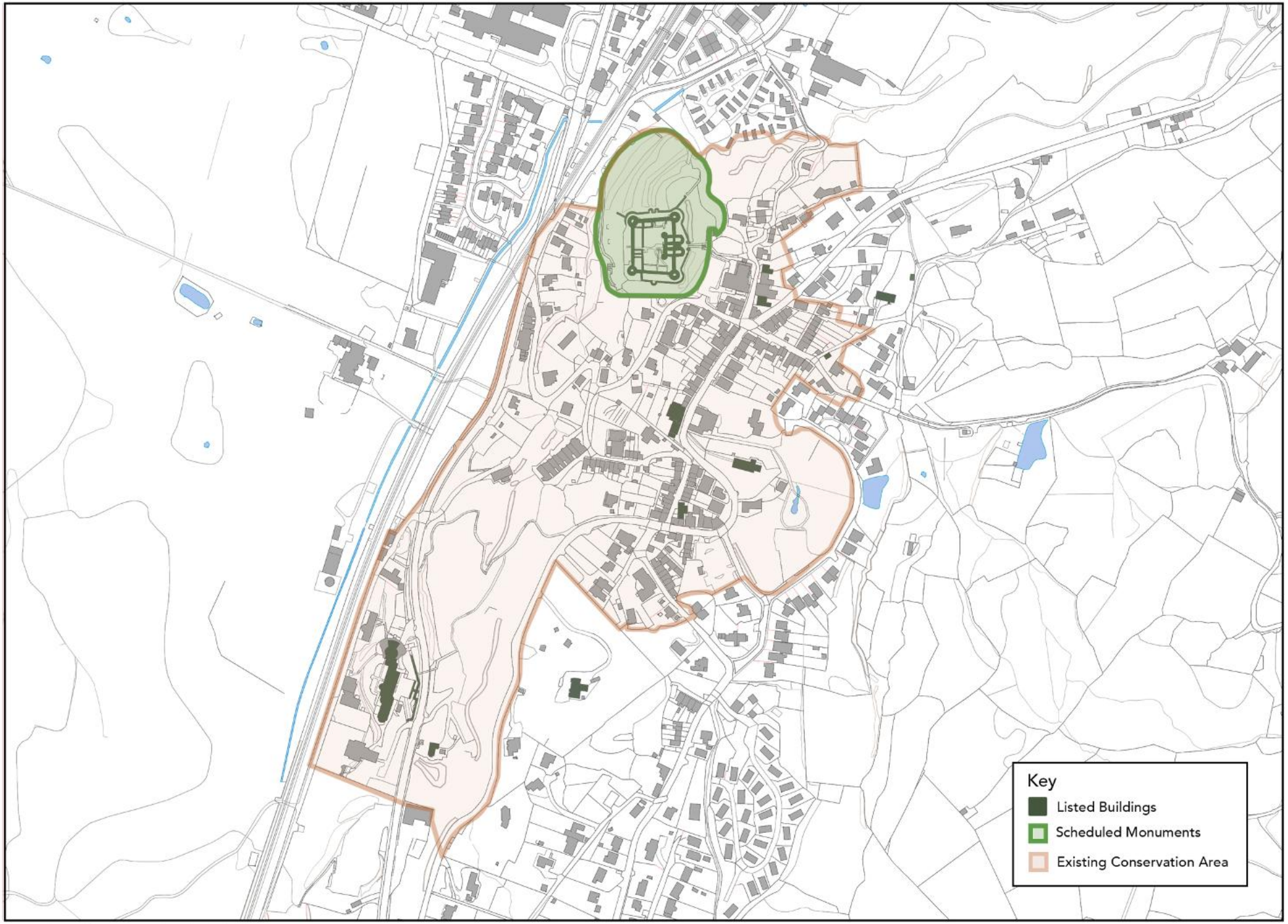
5.5 Boundaries

5.5.1 Within the central area most buildings front directly onto the road, therefore boundary walls are not particular seen. However, where the buildings become more spaced out and particularly on the winding or hillside roads, walls of varying heights are seen (typically up to around 1m if for a front boundary) – these consist of relatively rounded stones, stacked with little or no mortar.

5.5.2 Gateposts become more prominently used to the larger houses on the periphery. There are a few examples of historic cast iron railings which sit on top of lower stone walls – Bronwen Terrace is one the most noteworthy – due to the quality of the metalwork.

45 Stonework and window detailing at Harlech Pottery

46 Wall on Twtil



Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments
1:5000 @ A4

47 Listed Buildings in, and adjacent to, the Conservation Area (© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100022403)

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:

6.1.1 World Heritage Site - The area is within the Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd World Heritage Site, designated by UNESCO together with other castles at Beaumaris, Caernarfon and Conwy. The designated area in Harlech is small, covering the castle and its mound only, but its 'essential setting' and key views are mapped and protected.

6.1.2 Scheduled Monuments

- *2464 Harlech Castle*

6.1.3 Listed Buildings

- *25509 Bier House at Capel Rehoboth (grade II) – outside current area*
- *25507 Bryn Tirion (grade II)*
- *25508 Capel Rehoboth (grade II) – outside current area*
- *25511 Coleg Harlech including Terrace Revetment Walls to the West (grade II*)*
- *25512 Gateway, Forecourt and Screen Walls at Coleg Harlech (grade II)*
- *25505 Gweithdy Saer (grade II)*
- *25500 Harlech Castle (grade I)*
- *25504 Harlech Pottery including Forecourt Walls and Railings*
- *25501 Parish Church of St Tanwg*
- *25503 Spar (no longer in use)*
- *25502 Y Plas*
- *25506 Ty'r Felin*
- *25513 Y Wern*

6.1.4 Potential Additional Designations.

It is considered that the following buildings and structures should be considered for listing on the national list:

- 1-2 Ivy Cottages (Ty 'r), Ffordd Pen Llech

48 Harlech Castle

49 Gweithdy Saer

Given that there is a number of further buildings that predate the late Georgian / early Victorian expansion of the town, this list may be added to if further research can discover, for instance intact internal features.

6.1.5 There are a series of significant designated historic assets (scheduled monuments and listed buildings) within a short distance of the conservation area:

- *3198 - Muriau'r Gwyddelod Ancient Village - A large scheduled area covering some 15 ha. It contains 3 enclosed homesteads and one enclosure, at least three rectangular huts, and many traces of early fields. (Scheduled Monument – on the hillside to the immediate east of the town)*
- *2482 - Cefnfilltir Enclosed Homestead - the remains of a concentric enclosed hut circle, dating to the Bronze Age or Iron Age (Scheduled Monument – on the hillside to the immediate east of the town)*
- *2480 - Groes Las Prehistoric Settlement & Field System - a well-preserved hut circle, partly covered with modern field-clearance stone, set within an irregular, curvilinear enclosure which runs around the top of a natural hollow. (Scheduled Monument –to the immediate south side of the town)*
- *25517 - Barn South of Ael-y-Glyn (listed grade II – on the north side of the town)*
- *25514 - Cae Besi (listed grade II – on the south side of the town)*
- *25518 - Cow House South of Ael-y-Glyn (listed grade II – on the north side of the town)*
- *25510 – Crown Lodge (listed grade II – on the south side of the town)*
- *25515 - Pencerrig Pellaf (listed grade II – on the south side of the town)*

6.2 Undesignated Assets of Special Local Interest

The following undesignated historic assets in the conservation area have been identified as part of this appraisal as being of special local interest (see the character area plans):

- 01 – The Queen's Hotel, Castell Morfa*
- 02 – Harlech Station*
- 03 – Isallt, Hwylfar Nant
- 04 – Castle Villa, Hwylfar Nant
- 05 – Godre'r Graig, Hwylfar Nant
- 06 – London House / Llys Helyg, Ffordd Newydd
- 07 – Y Branwen Brasserie and Bar, Ffordd Newydd

50 Y Plas

51 Plas Owain, Twtil

- 08 – Plas Owain, Twtil
- 09 – Bron Castell, Twtil
- 10 - Tyn y Groes, Twtil
- 11 – Twt Hill Cottage, Twtil
- 12 – Fair View, Twtil
- 13 – Harlech Memorial Hall, Twtil
- 14 – Public Toilets and Water Fountain, Twtil
- 15 - The Two Kings statue, Twtil
- 16 – Bryn Celyn / Castle Gift Shop, Castle Square, Twtil
- 17 – The Old Cheese Market, Castle Square, Twtil
- 18 – 1-2 Maes Cemlyn, off Castle Square, Twtil
- 19 – Harlech Castle Visitor Centre
- 20 – Maesgwyn, Castle Square
- 21 – The Castle Creamery, Capel Dwr, Castle Square
- 22/23 – Seasons and Reasons, High Street / Ffordd Pen Llech
- 24 – Castle Lodge, Ffordd Pen Llech
- 25 – Hen Felin / The Old Mill, Ffordd Pen Llech
- 26 – The Old Band Hut, Ffordd Pen Llech
- 27 – 1-2 Ivy Cottages, Ffordd Pen Llech
- 28 – Eryri, Ffordd Pen Llech
- 29 –Glas Cerrig / Llys Mair, Ffordd Pen Llech
- 30 – Hedd / Castell Criws, Ffordd Pen Llech
- 31 – Yr Odyn, Ffordd Pen Llech
- 32 – Caereinon, Ffordd Pen Llech
- 33 – Castle Cottage, Ffordd Pen Llech
- 34 – Castle Court – Corner of Ffordd Pen Llech / High Street (Stryd Fawr)
- 35 – Greigmor / Caerau, Stryd Fawr*
- 36 – Capel Jerusalem, Stryd Fawr*
- 37 – Awelfryn, Stryd Fawr
- 38 – Anwylfa / Bodlondeb / Gwynfryn, Stryd Fawr
- 39 – Harlech Tandoori, Stryd Fawr
- 40 – Lion Hotel, Pen Dref
- 41 – Bronallt, Pen Dref
- 42 – Rhondda / Morlais, Pen Dref
- 43 – Ty Bryn / Foelas / Annedd Bach, Pen Dref
- 44 – 1-7 Porkington Terrace, Pen Dref
- 45 – Fronhyfryd / Min y Ffordd, Pen Dref
- 46 – Penbryn Mawr, Pen Dref
- 47 - Pen-y-Bryn Bach, Pen Dref
- 48 – Siambrwen, Pen Dref
- 49 – Plas y Goits, Stryd Fawr
- 50 - Capel Seion, Stryd Fawr
- 51 – (Unknown), Stryd Fawr
- 52 – Cae Du Designs, Stryd Fawr

52 The Old Cheese Market, Castle Square

53 Capel Seion, Stryd Fawr

- 53 – Cambrian House, Stryd Fawr
- 54 – (Unknown), Stryd Fawr
- 55 – Rowlands Pharmacy, Stryd Fawr
- 56 - Cemlyn, Stryd Fawr
- 57 – Unknown / Seaview / Preswylfa / Angorfa, Stryd Fawr
- 58 - Eisteddfa, Stryd Fawr
- 59 – Gorffwysfa , Stryd Fawr
- 60 – Dwylan / Swn-y-Mor, Stryd Fawr
- 61 – Awel y Mor, Stryd Fawr
- 62 – War Memorial
- 63 – Bronheulog
- 64 – Gwyddfor House, Stryd Fawr
- 65 – Tryfar House, 1 Tryfar
- 66 – 2-4 Tryfar
- 67 – 5-8 Tryfar
- 68 – Derlwyn / Islwyn / Lluest, Tryfar
- 69 - Moreia Chapel, Tryfar
- 70 – Ty Capel, Tryfar
- 71 – Moriah, Tryfar
- 72 – Bronwen Terrace
- 73 – Y Gorlan / (Unknown) / Henllys / Bennar, Pentre'R Efail
- 74 – Glasnant / Dwyfor / Heulwen, Pentre'R Efail
- 75 – Cilan, Pentre'r Efail
- 76 – Gerlan, Pentre'r Efail
- 77 – Garden Cottage, Pentre'r Efail
- 78 – Dolwar, Pentre'r Efail
- 79 – Yr Efail, Pentre'r Efail
- 80 – 2-4 Pentre'r Efail
- 81 – 1 Pentre'r Efail
- 82 – Tabernacle Chapel, Stryd Fawr
- 83 – Old Library and Institute
- 84 – Byrdir House, Stryd Fawr
- 85 – Horse Trough, Stryd Fawr
- 86 – (Formerly) Soul Food / (Formerly) A&B Murphy / Golden Inn Restaurant, Stryd Fawr
- 87 – Merionfa, Stryd Fawr
- 88 – Berwyn / Arfonia, Stryd Fawr
- 89- Waterloo / Isgraig / Cefn-coed, Stryd Fawr
- 90 – (Unknown) Stryd Fawr / Ffordd Isaf
- 91 – Former surgery, Ffordd Isaf
- 92 – Maelgwyn, Ffordd Isaf
- 93 – Dros y Mor / Llys Branwen, Ffordd Isaf
- 94 – Perthi, Ffordd Isaf*
- 95 – The Old Vicarage, Ffordd Isaf*

54 Tabernacle Chapel, Stryd Fawr

55 The Old Library and Institute Stryd Fawr

- 96 – Harlech Youth and Community Centre / Library, Ffordd Uchaf
- 97 – 7 Rock Terrace, Ffordd Uchaf
- 98 – Pencraig, Ffordd Uchaf
- 99 – Pen-y-Garth, Ffordd Uchaf *
- 100 – Terrace including Bronwylfa /& Hafod, Ffordd Uchaf *
- 101 - Arfryn, Ffordd Uchaf *
- 102 – 1-5 Pen y Graig, Ffordd Uchaf *
- 103 – Pencerrig, Ffordd Uchaf *

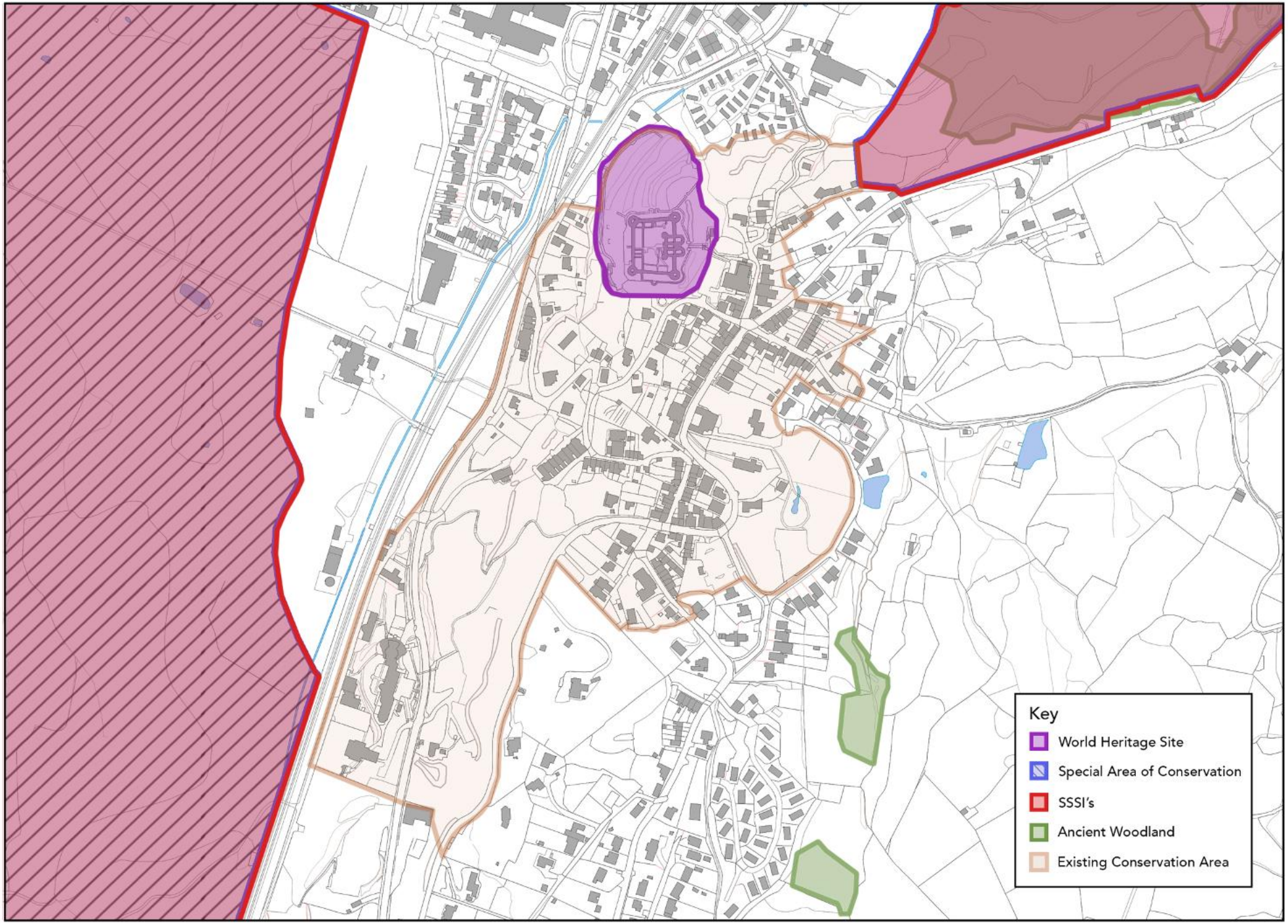
Where buildings are marked with an asterisk (*), they are outside the current boundary but recommended for future inclusion and contribute in a positive way to the setting of the existing area.

Given the very high number of buildings that are at least one hundred years old and are of traditional construction most can be described as contributing in a positive way to the character of the conservation area, therefore this list is not exhaustive and is not guaranteed to cover every building (as some could not be seen). This therefore makes part of the case for other protection measures across the conservation area. See section 2.0 of this report.

56 Maelgwyn, Ffordd Isaf

6.3 The Register of Traditional Buildings

6.3.1 Consideration should be given to the Authority's 'Register of Traditional Buildings'. As this list is always under review it would not be practical to include in the Conservation Area Appraisal. Please contact the authority if you have any queries regarding the register.



Other Designations
1:5000 @ A4

 Listed Buildings in, and adjacent to, the Conservation Area (© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100022403)

7.0 Hidden Histories (archaeological potential)

7.1.1 The archaeological potential of sites within the conservation area specifically is not known. Whilst there is strong evidence for pre-historic activity in the surrounding wider area the conservation area has been substantially altered and there is a lower chance of below-ground archaeology due to most buildings being built on rock, or just above it.

7.1.2 There remain many unanswered questions about the town's medieval history and it is possible that hidden evidence survives that would provide some of this information. The area of Ffordd Pen Llech is the most likely area to find further archaeological potential. Some investigation has already occurred at 1-2 Ivy Cottages (Ty'r Eiddew) revealing the roof structure, but verbal evidence within the town suggests there may be other unusual features still present. There are also reports that a nearby area was used as a burial ground, possibly associated with Ty'r Eiddew's use as a chapel.

7.1.3 The Old Mill, at the rear of Ty'r Eiddew, also has the potential to be of historical interest as it appears to be the same building (albeit greatly altered) as depicted on a painting by Paul Sandby of around 1779.

7.1.4 Large and irregular stones used towards the base of buildings may indicate they are earlier in origin but equally there are a number of rendered buildings (now of a modern appearance) that may have historical elements that, if revealed, would contribute to the understanding of the history of the town.

58 Illustration from around 1795 by John Ingleby

59 Illustration from around 1845 by Walter Crane

8.0 Other Designated Assets

8.1 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

8.1.1 The conservation area is adjacent to the Morfa Harlech SSSI. The area is also part of the Morfa Harlech a Morfa Dyffryn Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - a site designated under the European Union's Habitats Directive as part of the Natura 2000 network.

8.2 Trees Preservation Orders

8.2.1 The only Tree Preservation Orders included in the conservation area are a group and four individual trees to the north and east of St Tanwg's Church. These are identified on Fig 18.

8.3 Designated Historic Landscape

8.3.1 The town is within the Ardudwy Registered Historic Landscape. The Reason for Designation includes reference to the iron age hillforts and medieval buildings and field system near to the town

8.4 Other Designations

8.4.1 There are areas of designated ancient woodland nearby.

60 Noddfa

9.0 Biodiversity

9.1 Trees

9.1.1 See 8.3 for Tree Preservation Orders.

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

9.1.3 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.

9.2 Protected Species.

9.2.1 A number of key protected species are known to be present in and around Harlech, particularly within the Morfa SSSI area. These include plants, insects and birds.

PART TWO – CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

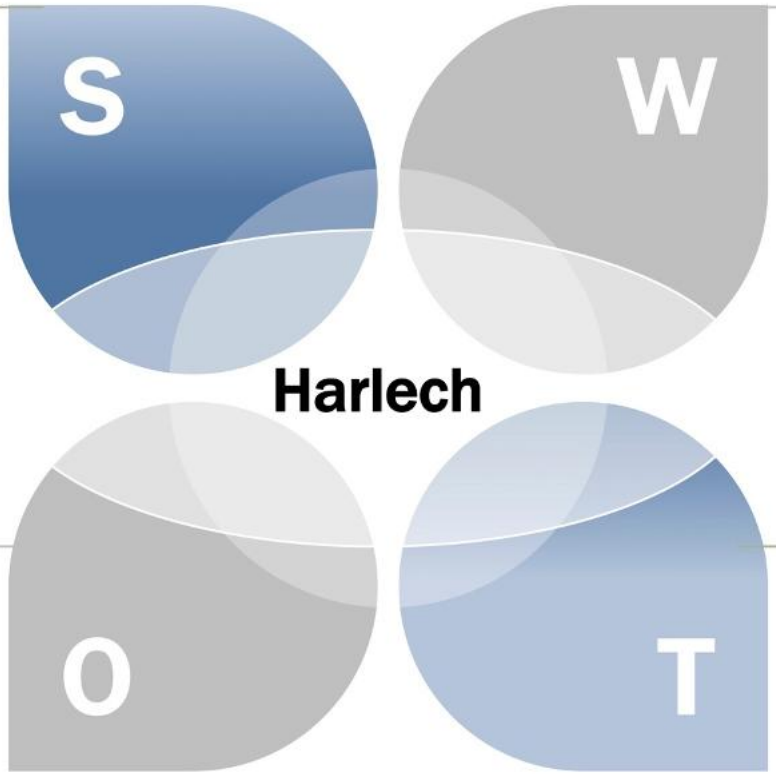
1.0 Summary SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Castle of international significance
- Position within the World Heritage Site
- Footfall and popularity
- Fine landscape setting
- High percentage of traditional buildings
- Cohesive character
- Railway station and connection
- Ecology and biodiversity

WEAKNESSES

- Difficulty in getting vehicle access around the centre of the town due to the steep, narrow and / or winding streets
- Poor approach from the station
- Reliance on seasonal tourism
- Focussing 'heritage' interest of the town almost solely on the castle
- Basic quality and poor appearance of many buildings on the main approach to the town on Ffordd Newydd from the north



OPPORTUNITIES

- Using the World Heritage Site to encourage investment and funding
- Listing key buildings and better protecting others
- Sensitive application of sustainable technologies where appropriate
- Widening the heritage interest to more historic sites
- Enhancement of the biodiversity and within the village and in the surrounding area.
- Better control of developments in and around the conservation area.
- Enhancing the setting of the castle to the north and west sides and connections from the station

THREATS

- Increasing level of inappropriate change (e.g. plastic windows, roofing materials, insensitive additions), threatens the intrinsic character of the village.
- Condition and lack of use of the Coleg Harlech Site.
- Increasing value and desirability of buildings may lead to a greater pressure for change
- Level of traffic and tourist pressure.
- Lack of control of detailing of change to existing buildings and new developments

CHAMBERS
ARCHITECTURE · CONSERVATION

2.0 Understanding the Issues

2.1 The Condition of the Conservation Area

2.1.1 Harlech retains much of its special character – with its mix of medieval, Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings mostly built in traditional and local materials.

2.1.2 There will always be pressure for development and change to the existing buildings. At the current time, a significant amount of original detail remains.

2.1.3 Most buildings are occupied or in beneficial use, although there is a transition in retail / commercial occupation which may have been fuelled by the uncertainties of the covid-19 pandemic.

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

- The replacement of historic joinery, windows and doors with modern, generally uPVC, replacements.
- Inappropriate or poor quality developments or extensions.
- Rendering or pebbledashing of stonework
- Over dominance of vehicles, parking and traffic.

2.1.5 Specific examples include:

- Castle Cottage has been changed to such an extent it is difficult to see its original form due to large ground floor extensions and replacement of windows.
- The building on the corner of Ffordd Pen Llech and Stryd Fawr has lost its previous status as a good end-of-vista focus point due the loss of architectural detail and unattractive pebbledashing.

61 Castle Cottage

62 Highly altered building on the corner of Ffordd Pen Lech and Stryd Fawr

2.2 Buildings at Risk

2.2.1 Due to the popularity of the town as a tourist destination, buildings have a good level of desirability which reduces the chance of them being unoccupied for long periods and falling into disrepair. The greatest risk, however, is due to modernisations and ill-advised repairs where the building's significance is not obvious or fully known. Most vulnerable are unlisted buildings of greatest significance due to their age, historic associations or unusual features.

2.2.2 1-2 Ivy Cottages (Ty'r Eiddew) is known to be one of the earlier buildings in the town and has medieval roof timbers as well as potential internal features associated with previous uses. However, it is an unassuming building externally and there are clear conditions issues with the roof and therefore there is a risk that some of its special interest may be inadvertently lost.

2.2.3 At the time of writing, the future of the Coleg Harlech site remains unclear – it has been unoccupied for around five years and its condition is deteriorating. This listed building and local landmark greatly affects the visual setting of the town but is a complex site in terms of the restraints of the need to preserve its most significant features (thus limiting potential uses) and the amount of investment needed due to its size.

63 1-2 Ivy Cottages (Ty'r Eiddew)

64 Theatr Harlech, part of the Coleg Harlech site

3.0 Overview of the SWOT Analysis.

3.1.1 A SWOT analysis has been undertaken for the Harlech 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.

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

- Using the World Heritage Site to encourage investment and funding
- Listing key buildings and better protecting others
- Sensitive application of sustainable technologies where appropriate

- Widening the heritage interest to more historic sites
- Better control of developments in and around the conservation area.
- Enhancing the setting of the castle to the north and west sides and connections from the station
- Support reinstatement of traditional building details and sustainable upgrading for improved environmental performance.
- Find a suitable new uses for redundant chapels and enabling the protection and enhancement of their significance.
- Ensure that the significant remaining original details of the Conservation Area are protected through the implementation of enhanced development controls (article 4 directions).

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

- Seek positive engagement to reverse damaging alterations to key buildings and features.
- Ensure that green spaces and key views are protected through local engagement and when considering applications for development.
- Improve the poor approach from the station and appearance of buildings on the main approach on Ffordd Newydd, including the Queen's Hotel
- Decrease the reliance on seasonal tourism by encouraging year-round attractions and interest for local people
- Strongly encourage the appropriate and prompt reuse of the Coleg Harlech Site.

65 View from across Ffordd Newydd

66 The Queen's Hotel

4.0 Positive Management.

4.1 Boundary Changes.

4.1.1 It is proposed to extend the conservation area to encompass a small area to the north of the castle which would help preserve views into the town on the primary approaches by road and rail as well as the setting of the castle and World Heritage Site. Included would be the Queen's Hotel and Harlech Station. Whilst both of these buildings have undergone somewhat insensitive (but relatively superficial) changes in the past few decades, their form remains intact and they are important reminders of a period of growth and expansion of the town.

4.1.2 Also advised is an area to the north-east which would include Capel Rehoboth – although this is now grade II listed, it is both an important feature of views of the town and provides arguably some of the best views of the castle. Also within this area would be Ty Crwn and Ty Clyd, which are excellent and relatively intact examples of detached houses with a high level of architectural interest.

4.1.3 A further area of extension to the south is implemented to protect both the large detached houses along Ffordd Isaf but also historic houses on Pen y Graig.

67 Historic house on Ffordd Isaf.

68 Capel Rehoboth

4.2 Local & National Policy Protection

4.2.1 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.

4.2.2 It is recommended that an article 4 direction is introduced to the Harlech conservation area. The town is still largely well preserved and there is an opportunity to check further inappropriate change, removal of historic windows / joinery and rendering over stonework.

4.2.3 As noted in 6.1 of the CAA, it is strongly recommended that the 1-2 Ivy Cottages are considered for listing on the national list, together with any further buildings containing a substantial amount of fabric predating around 1800 (ie subject to further research / investigation).

4.3 Enhancing the Special Interest of the Conservation Area

4.3.1 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.

4.3.2 Specific issues to be addressed in the Harlech Conservation Area include:

- Potential implementation of development control measures (article 4 direction) to control loss of historic joinery details and features
- Consideration of further design briefs or guidance to ensure that the redundant Coleg Harlech site is sensitively adapted to a new use.
- Targetting key buildings for improvements where they greatly impact on the character of the conservation area, such as the one on the corner of Ffordd Pen Llech and Stryd Fawr.
- Encouraging reinstatement of more appropriate joinery details to locally significant buildings, in place of modern uPVC replacements.

4.3.3 It is proposed that a **design-guide** is provided to understand and encourage appropriate change in the conservation area, this should include:

- Appropriate detailing to windows, doors and new joinery.
- A guide to appropriate repair and maintenance of stonework
- Scale, massing and materiality of new buildings and extensions.
- Parking, surfaces, planting and ecological considerations.

4.3.4 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 Harlech.
- Raising awareness and (with support in the future) skills for local contractors and crafts people.

69 Ty Clyd

70 Modern entrance to the Castle Visitor Centre

4.4 Sustainability & Environmental Upgrading

4.4.1 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).***

4.4.2 Harlech would have some natural opportunities for micro-power generation although this would be complicated by the essential need to preserve the setting of the Castle and the World Heritage Site – any change that affected key views or the essential setting of the World Heritage Site would be unlikely to be approved.

4.4.3 Sustainable energy generation schemes should be supported and encouraged where they do not adversely affect the special character or biodiversity of the conservation area, its listed buildings or the World Heritage Site.

4.5 Biodiversity

4.5.1 Trees are critically important to biodiversity and aesthetic significance within the conservation area. A few trees are protected by preservation orders (see 8.3). Other trees are identified as having significance in the conservation area (see 4.3).

4.5.2 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.
- Protection of trees during construction work
- Non-intervention to allow trees to mature

71 View from Capel Rehoboth

72 View from the approach from the south

- Retention of standing deadwood and creation of deadwood piles for insects and other wildlife.

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

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

4.5.5 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.

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

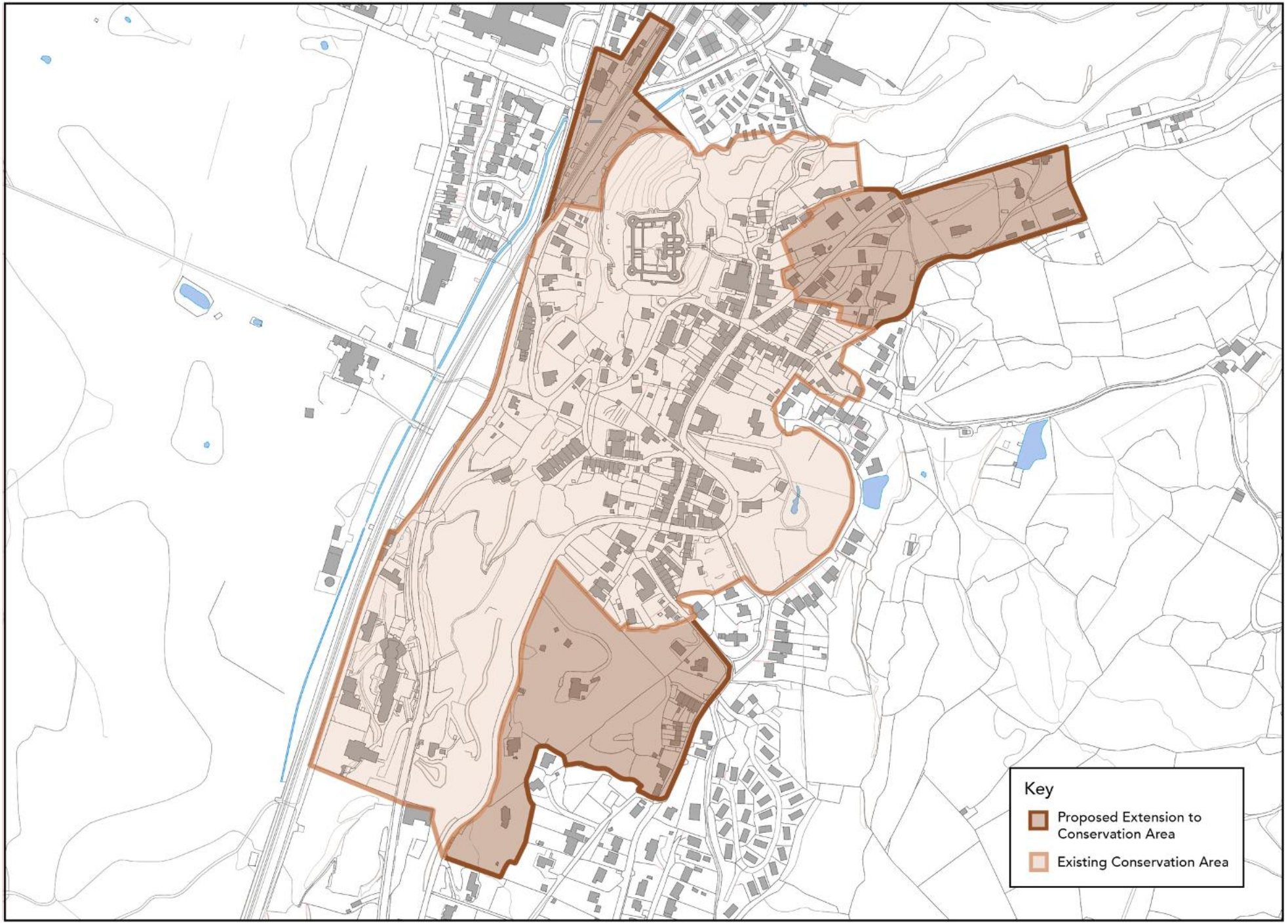
4.5.7 Enhancing green infrastructure in a way which provides for the energy needs of the area without adverse impact no biodiversity or the character of the conservation area.

73 Illustration by WH Bartlett / R Wallis 1841-2

5.0 Consultation

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

- Harlech Community Council 4/4/22.
- Through the National Park's website



Proposed Extension to Conservation Area
1:5000 @ A4

74 Proposed Amendment to Conservation Area Boundary (© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100022403)

Appendices:

Appendix A - Sources

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

Fenton, R. (1810), *Tours in Wales (1804–1813)* (republished by the Cambrian Archaeological Association in 1917)

Haslam, R., Orbach, J. and Voelcker, A. (2009) *The Buildings of Wales: Gwynedd* (Yale University Press, London)

Lewis, S. (1849), *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales* (London)

Roscoe, T. (1853), *Wanderings and Excursions in North Wales* (London)

Smith, B. & Neville George, T. *British Regional Geology – North Wales (HMSO) 1961.*

Harlech Strategic Priorities – Draft Baseline Report, Gwynedd Council (July 2017)

Harlech Conservation Area Statement (Draft)

Urban Characterisation: Harlech, Report No. 787 March, 2009 (Gwynedd Archaeological Trust)

Harlech Strategic Guide, (July 2017)

World Heritage Site Management Plan (2017)

World Heritage Site Action Plan (2017)