MAENTWROG

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Chambers Conservation Ltd.

Issue

Issues: **- 4** Final version

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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 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

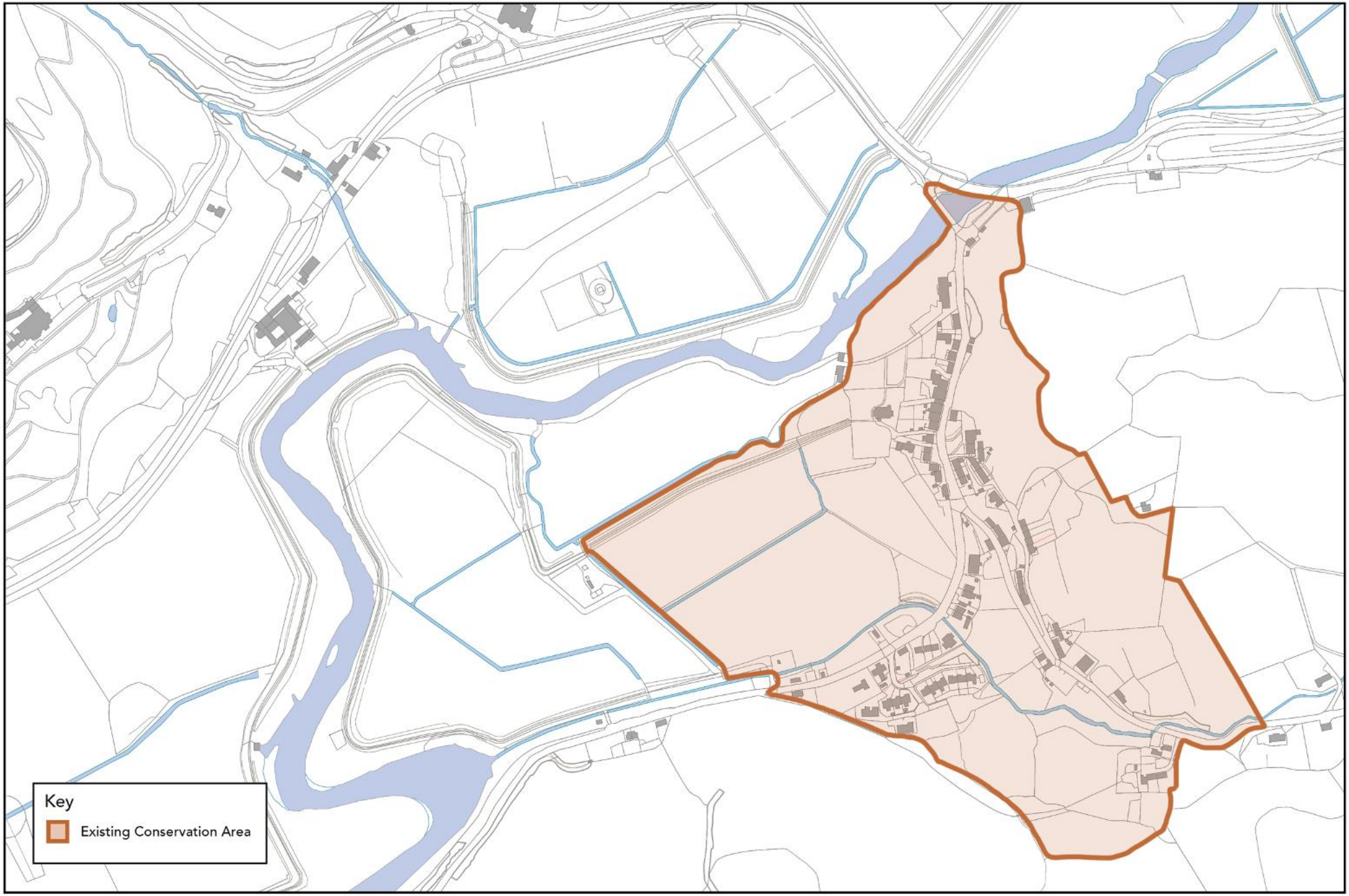
1.2.2 Maentwrog is a village in Gwynedd and the Snowdonia National Park. The village is some 10km south-west of Blaenau Ffestiniog and 15km east of Porthmadog.

1.2.3 The village sits in the vale of Ffestiniog on a west-facing ground, sloping down towards the Afon Dwyryd and towards the sea at Bae Tremadog. Beyond the village, the land steepens, becoming steep cliffs, and providing a highly picturesque backdrop when viewed from Plas Tan-y-Bwlch.

1.2.4 Plas Tan-y-Bwlch, is opposite the village on the other side of the valley. Plas is the former home of the Oakeley family to whom the village largely owes its current appearance as a picturesque estate village.

1.2.5 Designation date: 1975

01 Maentwrog viewed from the terrace at Plas Tan-y-Bwlch (2021).



Existing Conservation Area
1:5000 at 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 Maentwrog occupies an exceptional site overlooking the Vale of Ffestiniog. The village, its layout and architecture have been shaped over a long period by successive generations of the influential Oakeley quarrying dynasty. The Oakeleys were the occupants of 'the Plas', Plas Tan-y-Bwlch on the other side of the valley from the Village.

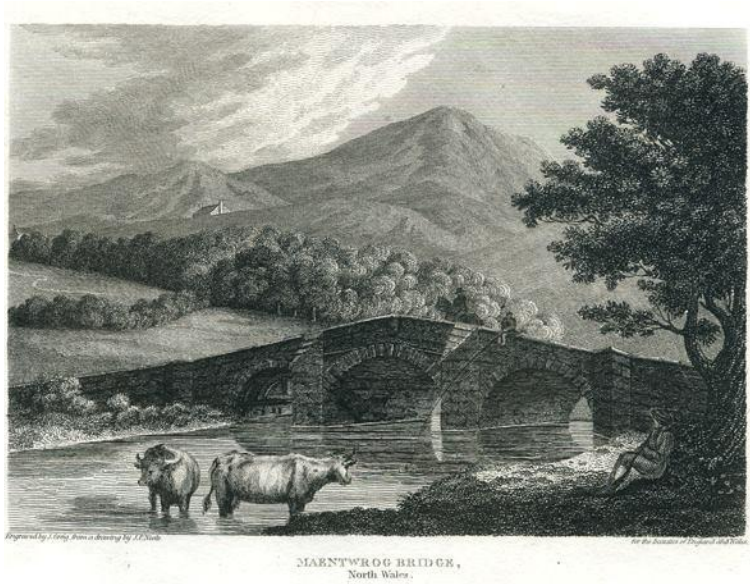
2.1.2 Maentwrog has consequently become a designed estate village, with views from the terrace and gardens of the Plas being particularly important to this historic value. Many views remain to this day. The village was also designed to maximise the use of the topography and architecture to picturesque effect which contribute to the significance through aesthetic value. This is particularly evident in key views to and from the settlement. These views are identified specifically later in this appraisal. Key elements include:

- The long views from Plas Tan-y-Bwlch showing the village in the context of the hillside behind.
- Views back to Plas Tan-y-Bwlch, from St. Twrog's church.
- Views back to Plas Tan-y-Bwlch, from the footpath between Coed Camlyn and Ty Nant.

2.1.3 The landscape setting and steep topography of Maentwrog is fundamental to the special interest. Views to and from from the surrounding hillside are essential to the sense of place and consequent communal value, as is the presence of exposed rock, woodland and farmland within the village. These views are identified specifically later in this appraisal. Key views showing this relationship are:

- Views of the settlement from the path between Coed Camlyn and Ty Nant.
- Views back from the churchyard of St. Twrog's churchyard showing the topography of the Grapes and Terrace, up to Penlan and Tan Lan.
- Views from the settlement with the Moelwyns in the background.
- Views to and from the steps to Penlan.

2.1.4 The standing built heritage of Maentwog provides a well preserved picture of its picturesque concept, reflected in the architecture, materials and



03 Pont Maentwrog, c.1811, Etching from a drawing by J.F.Neale, with Moelwyns behind. (Wikimedia Commons).

04 The Old Rectory, Moelwyn Mawr just visible behind (2021).

details, which underpin high significance through aesthetic and historic value. Key elements include:

- The Old Rectory (formerly Glan William) a particularly fine early 19th century composition in coursed schist blocks from Gelli-Grin.
- The terrace including the Grapes Hotel, which form a key element on the high-street, well preserved, with good windows and distinctive in material and detailing.
- The widening of Bull Street (the road to Harlech) in front of Llys Twrog. which also has thicker slate in diminishing courses.
- Changes in levels with the steps up to Penlan and Penlan flats, with the highly distinctive steps.
- Height and scale of Tan Lan, especially with the bedrock enclosure and railings to the war memorial.
- Later developments including the high-quality Lych gate and church of St. Twrog, referencing the developments undertaken under the influence of William Edward Oakeley in the late 19th century.
- Use of materials and contrast between limestones, igneous rock and schist in particular. Key details like contrasting lintels in schist and the schist columns of the hay-barn are important.

2.1.5 Additional cultural and historic significance is conveyed by the references to Maentwrog in the fourth branch of the Mabinogi, *Math fab Mathonwy.*

2.1.6 The name 'Maentwrog' is thought to be derived from the legend that the giant *Twrog* cast a huge boulder off the cliff above the village in order to crush a pagan altar. The boulder still exists as a standing stone next to the church tower, adding to the communal value.

3.0 Historic Timeline

Prehistory

3.1.1 The history of Maentwrog is covered in much detail elsewhere, the summary below is intended only to give context.

3.1.2 There is evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity in the vicinity of the village, albeit not within the bounds of the Conservation Area. The standing stone known as 'Twrog's Stone' in the churchyard may be a prehistoric

05 View of Plas Tan-y-Bwlch from footpath near Ty Nant (2021).

06 The Grapes Hotel and Terrace from the north (Peter Trimming, CC BY-SA 2.0 Wikimedia Commons).

standing stone and a carved Roman stone, built into the Grapes Hotel is believed to have originated from the Roman Fort at Tomen-y-Mur[1].

3.1.3 The Roman road from Tomen-y-Mur[2] to Segontium would have run north of the Afon Dwyryd and Roman finds have been made some 500m north of Pont Maentwrog.

Medieval

3.1.4 The settlement is mentioned in the fourth branch of the Mabinogi, Math fab Mathonwy: '*After crossing Traeth Mawr when fleeing south from the army of Math, Pryderi is killed in single combat by Gwydion at Felinrhyd (remembered in a place name about a mile to the west), and he is subsequently buried at Maentwrog'.*

3.1.5 In the medieval period, Maentwrog is mentioned in the lay subsidy rolls for Merioneth for 1293-4. This records the presence of a 'hosteler', suggesting that the village was already a stopping-off point for travellers, the term being associated with 'y gwestyr' rather than the more lowly form, 'yr tafarn'.

3.1.6 The church of St. Twrog was founded in the medieval period, but first replaced in 1814, then by the current building in 1896.[3]

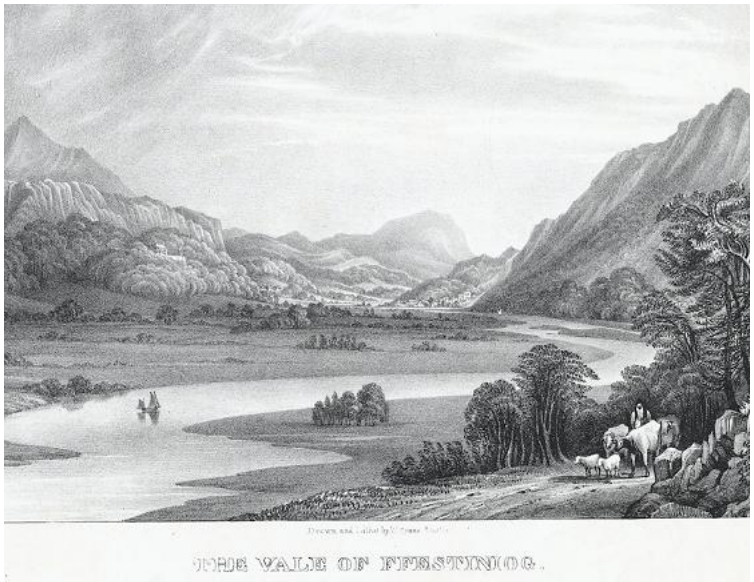
16 - 17th Century

3.1.7 The development of the village is intrinsically linked to the development of the estate at Plas Tan-y-Bwlch. The first reference to Tan-y-Bwlch is in 1429, when it is referred to as being in the *'Township of Ffestynyok'*[4]. It is thought that the estate probably started in the 16th century when Ieuan ap Iorwerth ap Adda (died c.1530) and his descendants acquired property and land in the Maentwrog and Ffestiniog area.

3.1.8 Tan y Bwlch was referred to in the will of Robert Evans in 1602. His son, Robert was married to Lowri Prys, granddaughter of Edmwnd Prys, Tyddyn Du, rector of Maentwrog and Archdeacon of Meirionnydd. Lowri's inheritance included Rhiwbryfdir (near Blaenau Ffestiniog), the land where the Oakeley Quarry would be developed.

3.1.9 Evan, son of Robert and Lowri, became Sheriff of Meirioneth in 1634 and it was probably he that built the first house in its present location. Catherine, heiress of the Evans family married Robert Griffith of Bach y Saint near Criccieth, extending the estate further. Their grandson, Robert Griffith,

07 View towards Plas from Pont Maentwrog before modifications to the river, late 18th century.



08 Vale of Ffestiniog looking towards Maentwrog, showing Plas and the village (c.1840).

[1] Evans, R & Robertson, A, *Maentwrog Draft Conservation Area Appraisal*, 2012. (unpublished)
[2] https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/95476/
[3] Voelcker, A. et.al. (2009) The Buildings of Wales: Gwynedd (Yale University Press, London) p.672
[4] Hughes, G, House on a Hill.

rebuilt and extended the house around 1748. When Robert Griffith died, his lands stretched from Pwllheli to Llanegryn.[5]\

18th and Early 19th Century

3.1.10 Maentwrog's location at the highest navigable point on the Dwyryd meant that Maentwrog served as the commercial entry point for the Vale of Ffestiniog. There is clear evidence that timber was being exported from the area from around 1739, but Maentwrog really began growing as the slate industry developed.

3.1.11 Margaret, granddaughter of Robert and heiress, married a wealthy Englishman, William Oakeley in 1789. This lead to improvements to the buildings and estate, including the draining and embankments to the tidal valley of the Dwyryd to create much improved agricultural land. Oakeley also rebuilt the stables, the church at Maentwrog and a new road from Maentwrog to Harlech.

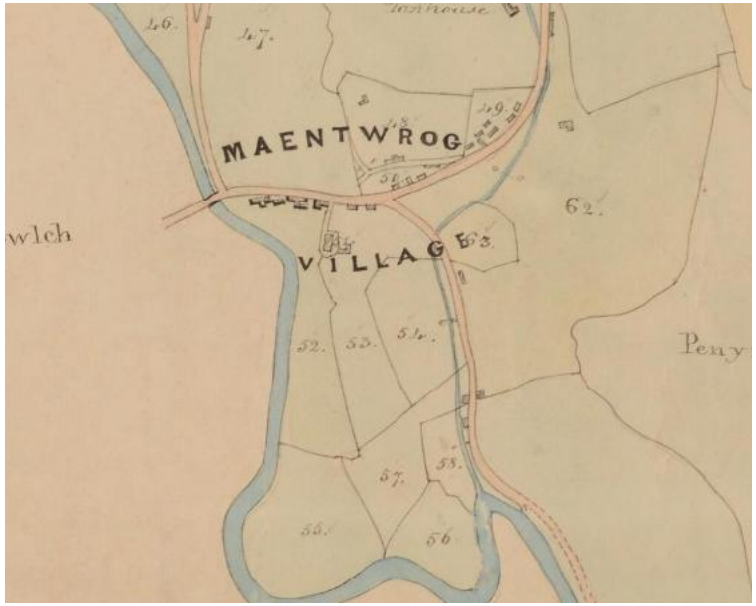
3.1.12 Their son, William Griffith (WG) Oakeley (1790-1835) continued to invest in the estate and many of the surviving buildings in Maentwrog date from this period, including a new church (later rebuilt), the Grapes Hotel and adjoining houses (1834).

Late 19th Century.

3.1.13 William Griffith Oakeley transformed the Oakeley Quarry into a lucrative slate empire. Much of this success was due to a landmark legal case when he famously sued Lord Rothschild for trespassing on Tan y Bwlch land in his search for minerals and slates. Winning the case meant that only the Oakeleys could profit from the slate on their land. He improved the transport of slate by building several slate quays on the river Dwyryd and was involved in the creation of the Ffestiniog Railway, which runs along the opposite side of the valley, above the Plas, allowing slate to be transported quickly.

3.1.14 In 1823, WG left for Berkshire, appointing his cousin, also William Oakeley, to run the estate. Initially he lived in Maentwrog, in the building now known as the old rectory (then Glan William). WG and his cousin died within a year of one another and the estate was left to Louisa Jane, wife of WG Oakeley. Eventually it passed to William Edward Oakeley (1879-1912), nephew of WG and son of William.

3.1.15 WE Oakeley spent significant sums both on Plas and also on the redevelopment of Maentwrog, including the rebuilding of the school (1871-



09 Tithe map of 1840 (note, north is to the left).

10 Llyn Twrog with diminishing slate roof and landscape context from the steps to Argraig (2021).

[5] http://www.llechicymru.info/IQPOakeley.english.htm

20th Century.

2) and the reconstruction of the church to designs by Douglas and Fordham in 1896.

3.1.16 Following the death of WE Oakeley the estate was divided between his son and daughter (Edward and Mary Caroline). Edward's lands were bought by Mary Caroline's daughter, Hilda Mary Inge. Mary Caroline continued to live at Plas Tan-y-Bwlch until 1961, when the estate was sold to pay death duties.

3.1.17 Meirionnydd County Council bought the house and the grounds in 1969 and these eventually came under the control of the Snowdonia National Park which opened the National Park Study Centre in 1975.

3.1.18 The village has changed relatively little since the late nineteenth century, ensuring that the picturesque concept of the village as seen from the Plas remains and can still be understood and appreciated.

4.0 Spatial Analysis

4.1 Settlement Form & Layout

4.1.1 The settlement form of Maentwrog is primarily a response to its topographical location, adapted for maximum picturesque effect when viewed from Plas Tan-y-Bwlch with the Afon Dwyryd in the foreground.

4.1.2 The village is arranged on the west facing slope, facing down the Vale of Ffestiniog towards the sea at Bae Tremadog. Building is primarily arranged around the road heading for Harlech, which follows the hillside westwards along the vale before turning south towards Talsarnau.

4.1.3 The village is arranged in stepped levels to respond both to the topography and the view from Plas, the upper levels making use of the lane which connects the village to Gellilydan on the eastern side of the hill.

4.1.4 The settlement form is still broadly similar to that shown on the estate plan of 1841, which reflects the road improvements undertaken by the first William Oakeley.

4.1.5 Later changes have generally responded to the original form of the village, with the only significant change being Coed Camlyn, to the south of the village centre below Pen-y-Foel.

11 View towards Maentwrog and the toll house from Pont Maentwrog (2021).

12 The Church from the Lych Gate. (2021).

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 16):

A Dynamic views showing the village in its setting as conceived in the views from Plas Tan-y-Bwlch, and the 'improvements' in the Afon Dwyryd.

B Dynamic views showing the village in its setting from the Oakeley Arms and adjacent.

C View towards Maentwrog from Pont Maentwrog.

D View from Maentwrog back towards Plas Tan-y-Bwlch from the Church.

E Views of Maentwrog from footpath below Coed-y-Fron.

F Views along Stryd Bwl past the Grapes towards Llys Twrog and the former square.

G Glimpsed views of Plas Tan-y-Bwlch from Stryd Bwl.

H View of village centre from southern end of Conservation area.

I View across the village towards Moelwyn Mawr

J View down Stryd Bwl, with Grapes and adjacent buildings with Moelwyns as a backdrop.

K Views up and down steps towards Argraig and Bryn.

L Dynamic views back from church towards village, showing rear elevations and different levels.

M View towards the church from the Lych gate.

N View towards Plas Tan-y-Bwlch and Vale of Ffestiniog from in front of Fron Fair.

13 Wooded hillside above the Grapes Hotel. (2021).

14 Farmland below Ty Nant, with Moelwyn Mawr in the background. (2021).

4.3 Green spaces & Trees

4.3.1 The green spaces of Maentwrog are diverse and essential to the special interest of the Conservation Area.

4.3.2 To the east of the village, the ground rises very steeply up towards Pen-y-Clipau. The hill is heavily wooded, with birch trees at lower level,scots pine above, with wider protected historic oak woodlands. This is important as a backdrop both to long views from Plas Tan-y-Bwlch and to more constrained views within the village.

4.3.3 Between Coed Camlyn and Ty Nant, to the south-east of the area, there is an area of open farmland, which provides important foreground to views from Coed-y-Fron and the footpath connecting to Ty Nant.

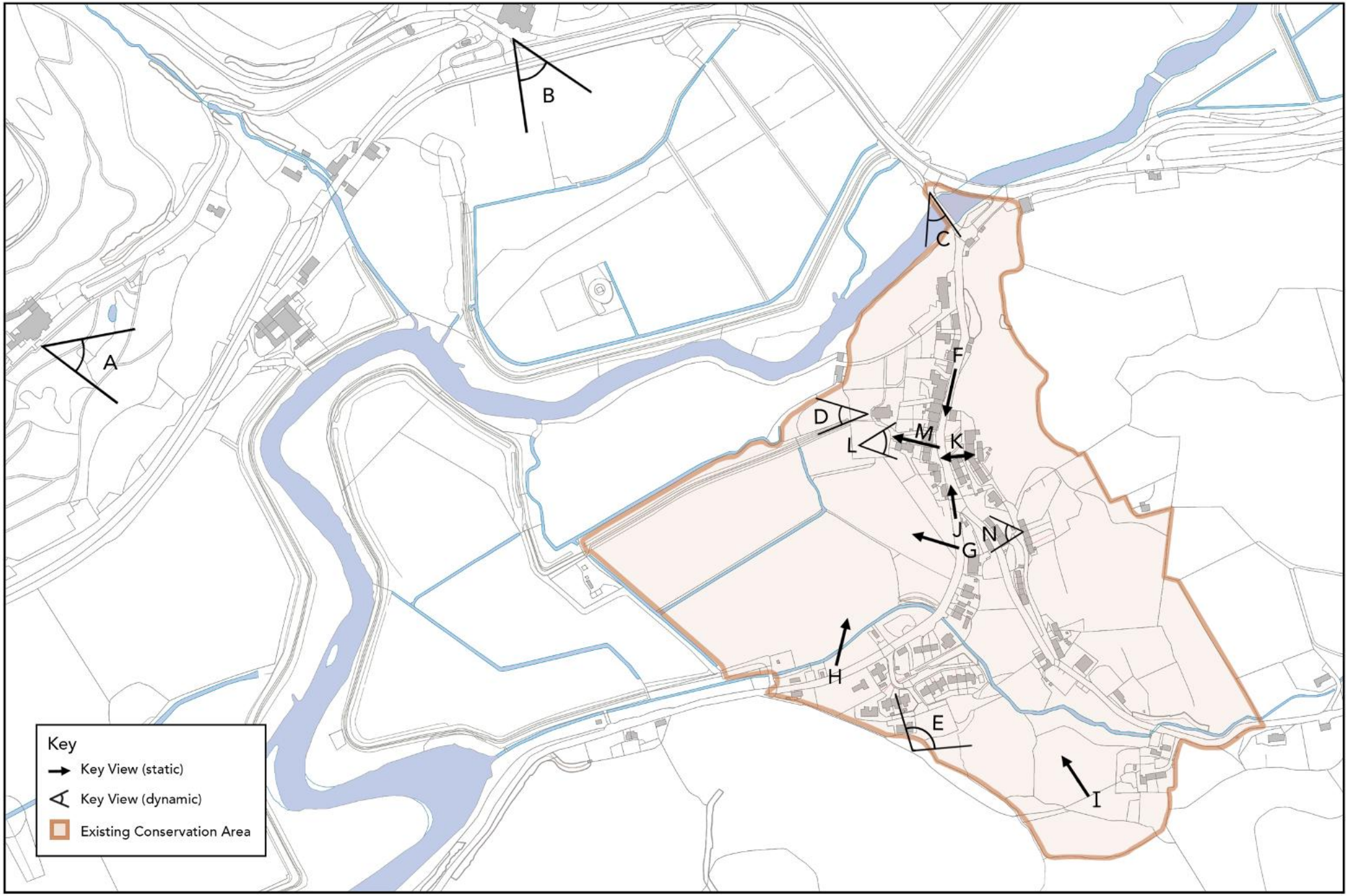
4.3.4 To the west, the Conservation Area incorporates part of the land 'improved' by the Oakeley family. It is very distinctive with the raised earthworks and drains to create better drained farmland, and is also highly significant in the context of key views from Plas Tan-y-Bwlch as well as the setting of the church, churchyard and Twrog's stone.

4.3.5 Woodland around Maentwrog is protected by several different designations, refer to section 9.0.

4.3.6 Other distinctive groups of trees are shown on plan at Fig 17, these include:

- Fine individual Yew in the churchyard and other trees to the periphery of original and extended churchyards.
- Grouping of trees between Afon Dwyryd and the church.
- Trees bounding farmland above Coed Camlyn.
- Trees lining stream adjacent to Ceunant Bach and Tan-y-Ffordd.

15 Trees beside Ceunant Bach. (2021).



Key Views
1:5000 at A4

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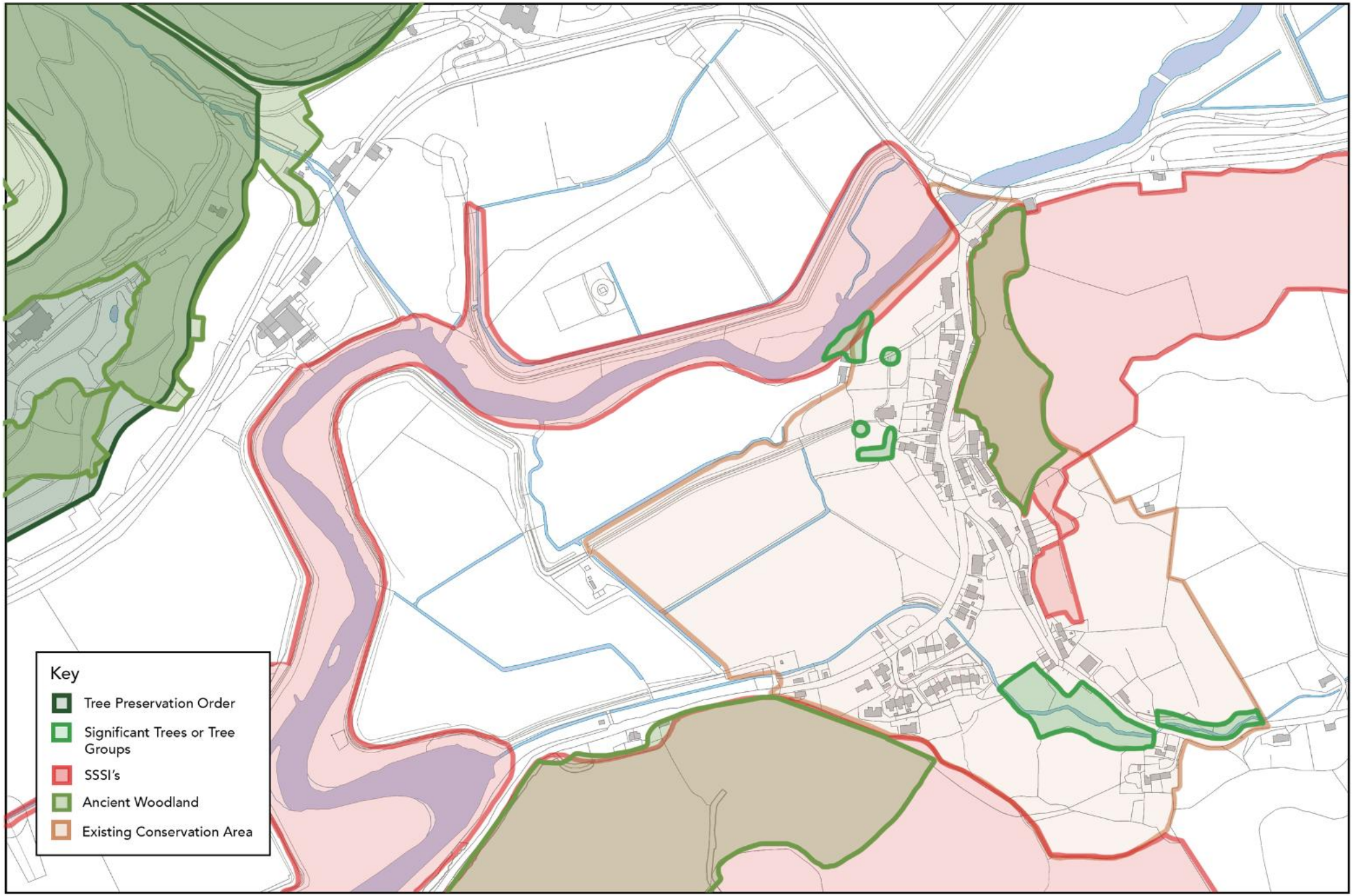


Trees
1:5000 at A4

17 Trees & Associated designations (© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100022403)

5.0 Character

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 Maentwrog is an estate village, essentially a picturesque concept, designed to sit in the view from Plas Tan-y-Bwlch and to maximise its unique position on a steep west-facing hillside, catching the evening sun. It has been well protected through listing and consequently retains a significant amount of this special character.

5.1.2 The levels are visually very important, the church sits at a lower level, just above the river plain, with rows of buildings arranged on terraces above, maximising the picturesque effect.

5.1.3 The development of the estate village is evident in the evolving style of building, reflecting the influence of different generations of the Oakeley family. Early buildings such as the Old Rectory (Glan William) are distinctly regency in character, with deep eaves and large sash windows.

5.1.4 Materiality and the consequent relationship with the exposed rock are intrinsic to the character, variation in the stone type, coursing and dressing are all important factors.

5.1.5 Tourism and the visitor economy has been key to Maentwrog since the 18th century and before, reinforced by the arrival of Picturesque tourists to the Vale of Ffestiniog.

5.1.6 The importance of the road to Harlech and the construction of the new bridge adjacent to Pont Maentwrog has brought additional visitor traffic to the village, but the alignment and arrangement of the roads in the village has changed little, retaining the character of the estate village.

5.2 Architectural Character

5.2.1 The present architectural character of the settlement, at least as far as Coed Camlyn, feels cohesive, the whole combining with its landscape setting to create a highly picturesque outcome.

5.2.2 The architectural character at the north of the conservation area is defined by the relationship with Afon Dwyryd and Pont Maentwrog[6]. The toll house

18 Grapes Hotel and adjacent terrace on Bull Street (2021).

19 The Old Rectory (formerly Glan William). (2021).

[6] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=4824

(as noted on the 1888 Ordnance Survey)[7] sits directly adjacent to the southern end of the bridge. It is a rubble-stone building with stone mullioned windows and hood mouldings in Ffestiniog slate. Combined with Pont Maentwrog it creates a clear picture of the 19th century approach to the village. The modern bridge carries the A487 to the east creates a new view of the earlier bridge.

5.2.3 The road (the A496/Bull Street) starts to rise slightly with the topography, with the Old Rectory on the western side of the road, with the steep hillside defining the east. The old rectory is a very fine building[8], which is constructed in the distinctive schist stone from the nearby Gelli Grin quarry, which was opened by William Gruffydd Oakeley (1790-1835), to support the development of Maentwrog and the Plas.

5.2.4 Built of coursed and dressed schist stone in long slabs, it is a interesting regency composition, with a hipped slate roof and very deep bracketed eaves. The chimneys are also particularly distinctive, in pairs with linking arches. To the south is a later extension, this has a rather unfortunate membrane roof, which is visually quite intrusive.

5.2.5 Between the Rectory and the Grapes hotel are the former stables and outbuildings of both buildings (both of mid-19th century date).[9] Beyond the Hotel's stables[10] is a building in a state of some disrepair which needs to find a sustainable new use. Opposite is a later garage (probably early 20th century) of some interest, presumably associated with the Grapes also. These buildings are important to the context of the Hotel and Bull Street, reflecting the village's role as a 'stopping point' for travellers.

5.2.6 The Grapes hotel (formerly the Maentwrog Inn) is a the start of a terrace on the western side of the road, a highly distinctive and characteristic group, first built in the 1830s. These are two storeys at street level, extending to three behind as the land drops away. The buildings are in coursed (igneous) stone of generally finer grain the schist which is used for lintels and this is especially distinctive where the lintels link together to form a continuous band on Neuadd Llewelyn[11] and Glan Dwyryd[12]

20 Former Stables to the Grapes Hotel (right) and dilapidated building adjacent (2021).

21 Llys Twrog and the former square. (2021).

[7] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=83966
[8] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=4776
[9] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=84019
[10] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=84018
[11] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=4821
[12] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=4820

5.2.7 The Grapes has a simple projecting portico, and the former co-op[13], dated 1834 retains openings associated with a shop front, although it may have had a timber surround. All the buildings retain sash-windows to the street frontage.

5.2.8 Pen-y-Bryn[14], Llys Twrog[15] and Bron-y-wern[16] stand beyond, with Llys Twrog set at right-angles to the road, originally forming a 'square'. The square has latterly been incorporated into drives and garden space.

5.2.9 Between Neuadd Llewellyn and Pen-y-Bryn is the lych gate[17] to St. Twrog's Church, presumably the work of John Douglas. A highly distinctive structure, timber framed with the Gelli Grin stone used as in-fill panels, it frames a fine view of the church beyond.

5.2.10 Opposite Neuadd Llewellyn, the four-storey Tan Lan[18] sits high above the road. It is distinct being of smaller rubble stone, rendered to the gables, whilst still of distinctly regency proportions. Steps with schist copings lead up to a modern first floor veranda. The height of Tan Lan is important, as it makes it visible above the terrace opposite, from Plas. Originally it housed the Oakeley Reading Room. Adjacent to Tan Lan is the war memorial, set in a recess flanked in the bedrock, with iron railings fronting the street.

5.2.11 Beyond Tan Lan are the distinctive steps[19] divided into two sections by a dressed stone wall with very large schist profiled copings. The left hand flight led up to the house at Penlan and the right hand flight up to the servant's quarters (now called Bryn or Penlan flats); the quality of the stonework and the width of the steps clearly reflects the apparent status of the users, the left hand flight being of higher quality.

5.2.12 Bryn creates a very distinctive feature at the head of steps, being angled to the south west, the building creates a strong splayed corner, distorting the visual perspective to picturesque effect.

5.2.13 Below Bryn, opposite Llys Twrog, is a terrace of cottages, again of mid-19th century date, well preserved externally with sashes. Walling combines shist lintels and random rubble.

22 Lych Gate to St. Twrog's Church (2021).

23 Tan Lan and the war memorial. (2021).

[13] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=4822
[14] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=4835
[15] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=4832
[16] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=4833
[17] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=84008
[18] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=4825
[19] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=84021

5.2.14 At this point the road splits, the Harlech road (Bull Street/A496) descends bearing slightly to the south-west, and the road to Gellilydan ascends to the south-east, with the bedrock exposed on the corner in a distinctive feature.

5.2.15 To the east of Ffordd Gellilydan, Ty r Ysgol[20] an early 19th century school house has a distinctive arched door and a very large schist lintel over the northern window opening. Adacent, Dolydd[21] or 'Old School Cottage' is a single storey Regency building. Together with the adjacent, non-listed, Derwen, which has modern windows, they make a pleasing group.

5.2.16 Further up the hill, the listed terraces of Fron Goch, and Fron Fair. Fron Goch has more detail with dormers, Fron Fair simpler and set at a higher level on the lane behind. Both have some replacement windows.

5.2.17 The terrace at Fron Oleu opposite Glasfryn are attractive, with dormers, rubble stone and retaining sashes. It seems odd that these are not listed, like their couterparts at Fron Goch and Fron Fair, see 6.0. Glasfryn opposite has been painted and has replacement windows to the north elevation, but is otherwise an intact early 19th century farmhouse with associated outbuildings.

5.2.18 Capel Gilgal, built in 1919, is well preserved and stands raised above the road, it also has good boundary walls and railings, but appears to be closed.

5.2.19 Beyond Capel Gilgal, the altered cottages of Ty Nant and Ty Capel mark the boundary of the conservation area, but slightly further up the hill (beyond the boundary) is the Old Tannery, which is a distinctive mill building at ceunant bach.

5.2.20 Back along to the Harlech Road, opposite the junction, is the former Capel Seion (1906), now converted to residential use but otherwise maintaining its original appearance externally.

5.2.21 Beyond the junction, on the eastern side of the road, is the late 19th Century Yr Hen Ysgol (the old school)[22], constructed at the behest of William Edward Oakeley c.1871-2. It has been somewhat altered with modern windows, but the flèche and other detail identify it's original purpose. It also has

24 Ty yr Ysgol, Dolydd and Derwen (2021).

25 Capel Gilgal (2021).

[20] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=4829
[21] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=4830
[22] https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=84004

distinctive, good quality slate ridge detailing and a combination of diagonal and regular slating in bands to the roof.

5.2.22 To the south are two pairs of cottages, all individually listed, 1-2 and 3-4 Glandwr Cottages, these have the same roofing pattern as the former school and timber arcades facing the street, together with good boundary walls and railings. Unfortunately 2, 3 and 4 all have modern uPVC windows. Beyond is a modern house (Gernant) and a row of former council houses (c.1950), set at an angle to the Harlech Road.

5.2.23 The cul-de-sac of Coed Camlyn and the two bungalows facing the Harlech Road are at odds with the layout and aesthetic of the village and some of the houses were incomplete at the time of survey.

5.2.24 Derlwyn and the fine hay-barn (both listed) mark the south-western boundary of the conservation area, and have had repairs in the recent past. The tall schist columns of the hay-barn are very distinctive. There would have been others in and around the area of similar type, and a similar one was relocated to St. Fagan's museum (from Maentwrog) in 1976.[23]

5.2.25 The church of St. Mary and St. Twrog is sited near to the river level below the Grapes Hotel, approached via the lych gate from Bull Street, the deliberately framed view is appreciated with Plas Tan-y-Bwlch behind.

5.2.26 The church has medieval origins, but was completely rebuilt in 1814, then again by the current building, by well-known practice of Douglas and Fordham in 1896. The Maen twrog (Twrog's Stone), after which the village is supposedly named, remains to the south wester corner. The current church is in the decorated style. The spire and bellcote are hung with slate and have an almost Scandinavian appearance.

5.3 Materials and Details

5.3.1 The primary building material of Maentwrog is stone. The majority from the local hillsides, quarried specifically for the purpose. The primary building materials are igneous rocks, which are iron-rich, giving a distinct brown orange colour.

26 Yr Hen Ysgol (2021).

27 Coursed shist stone, with shist copings and piers. The pier cappings are slate. Steps up to Penlan. (2021).

[23] https://museum.wales/stfagans/buildings/hayshed/

5.3.2 Schist, quarried at the Gelli Grin quarry owned by the Oakeleys, is used widely in substantial sized pieces for columns (especially to hay-barns), lintels and copings. The old rectory is made entirely of this material.

5.3.3 The horizontal lintels, forming an almost continuous band on buildings such as Glan Dwyryd and Neuadd Llewellyn are particularly distinctive.

5.3.4 The fronts of buildings are often in coursed stone, such as the 1830's terrace including the Grapes Hotel, and the associated stable block. Rear elevations using smaller, rubble stone. Some buildings, such as Tan Lan are built entirely of smaller stone and may well have been rendered or limewashed. This could have been used to create contrast between the buildings in the key views and is referred to in the late 18th century writings of John Evans as *'the village of Maentwrog with its white-washed houses'*[24]

5.3.5 Roofs are exclusively in slate, but they vary significantly. Only Llys Twrog shows the earlier pattern of smaller, thicker slates laid in diminishing courses.

5.3.6 Most roofing now is of thinner, machine cut, slates which would have come from the Oakeley's vast quarries at Blaenau Ffestiniog. Gelli Grin stone in copings to the roofs is used to terminate gables.

5.3.7 Deep overhanging eaves characterise some of the earlier buildings, particularly the Old Rectory and the terrace including the Grapes Hotel.

5.3.8 Chimneys are stone and significant in scale. Those to the old rectory are in pairs with linking arches, the stack to old toll house is set diagonally and a strong feature on the view across Pont Maentwrog.

5.3.9 Windows are particularly important. The majority of the buildings from the early-mid 19th century had and retain sash windows, at least to the primary elevations. On the bigger buildings these are generally of the 8/8 pattern.

5.3.10 The smaller terraces and some of the later buildings have smaller 2/2 sashes or casements.

5.4 Boundaries

5.4.1 The definition of space in Maentwrog is particularly important to its character. There are a wide range of different boundary treatments, but many of historic character and interest survive. These are outlined below.

28 Large schist lintel amongst roughly coursed stone. Note also Schist copings. Ty r Ysgol (2021).

29 Substantial bedrock bounding the Gellilydan Junction, with rubble walling atop to create a consistent height. (2021).

[24] Evans, R & Robertson, A, *Maentwrog Draft Conservation Area Appraisal*, 2012. P.10

5.4.2 Exposed bedrock is a feature in various locations, but prominently to the east of the Gellilydan Road junction.

5.4.3 Stone walls predominate elsewhere, these are characterised by a mix of various igneous rocks, generally not slate. Lichens and the rust colour caused by the iron content are important to the character of the walls.

5.4.4 Slate fencing is not a general treatment, but there is a short, important, section at the point where Gellilydan Road diverges from the Harlech road.

5.4.5 There are a number of low walls topped by railings which remain, some of good quality, these include Yr Hen Ysgol and the associated cottages, and the war memorial. The gates to the old rectory probably echo an earlier pattern but are welded, later, replacements.

5.5 Other Features, Details and Surfaces.

5.5.1 The village has other features and objects which contribute to the quality and interest of the Conservation Area. These include:

5.5.2 The listed cast-iron milepost near Pont Maentwrog.

5.5.3 Remaining slate-flag surfacing outside the Grapes Hotel (surfacing further along the terrace has been replaced).

5.5.4 Flagged surfacing within and around the Lych Gate.

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 36):

6.1.1 Scheduled Monuments

- *N/A*

6.1.2 Listed Buildings

- *83967 1 Dolwaen*
- *83968 1 Fron Fair Terrace*
- *83969 1 Fron Goch Terrace*
- *83974 2 Fron Fair Terrace*
- *83975 2 Fron Goch Terrace*

30 Railings and gates with schist copings and Piers, Glandwr Cottages. (2021).

31 Slate fencing on the road to Gellilydan. (2021).

- *83977 2 Glandwr Cottages including garden wall and gates*
- *83978 2 Pen-trwyn-garnedd*
- *83979 3 Fron Fair Terrace*
- *83980 3 Fron Goch Terrace*
- *83982 3 Glandwr Cottages including garden wall and gates*
- *83983 4 Fron Fair Terrace*
- *83984 4 Fron Goch Terrace*
- *83985 4 Glandwr Cottages including garden wall and gates*
- *83986 5 Fron Fair Terrace*
- *83987 5 Fron Goch Terrace*
- *4828 Argraig*
- *4833 Bron-y-wern*
- *83990 Bryn or Penlan flats*
- *4822 Bwlch y Maen - Former Co-operative shop*
- *4831 Cartref*
- *83993 Church of St. Twrog*
- *83994 Coach house range at the Oakeley Arms*
- *83996 Derlwyn*
- *4830 Dolydd*
- *4820 Glan Dwyryd*
- *83971 Glandwr Cottages including garden wall and gates*
- *84003 Haybarn opposite Derlwyn*
- *84004 Hen Ysgol*
- *4832 Llys Twrog*
- *84008 Lychgate to Church of St. Twrog*
- *84011 Milestone at Pont Maentwrog*
- *4821 Neuadd Llewelyn*
- *4829 Old School House*
- *4826 Penlan including attached cottage formerly known as Dwyfor.*
- *4835 Pen-y-Bryn*
- *4695 Plas Dol-y-moch*
- *4824 Pont Maentwrog*
- *84018 Stable block to N of The Grapes Hotel*
- *84019 Stable block to S of The Old Rectory*
- *84021 Steps up to Penlan, with flanking walls*
- *4825 Tan-lan*
- *4823 The Grapes Hotel*
- *4705 The Oakeley Arms Hotel*
- *4776 The Old Rectory*
- *83966 Tollgate Cottage aka Cerdwyd*

6.1.3 Potential Additional Designations.

32 The unlisted terrace at Fron Oleu. (2021).

33 Haybarn with tall schist columns opposite Derlwyn. (2021).

It is considered that Fron Oleu (adjacent to Capel Gilgal) and the terrace comprising Isfryn, Ty Canol and adjacent house, should be considered for designation on the national list as an important group to this end of the conservation area.

6.2 Undesignated Historic Assets of Special Local Interest

6.2.1 The following undesignated historic assets in the conservation area have been identified as being of special local interest (see Fig 37):

- *Service Range to the Grapes Hotel.*
- *Former Garage to the Grapes Hotel (on east side of the road).*
- *Service Buildings to the Old Rectory*
- *Hay barn north-west of St. Twrog's Church.*
- *War Memorial and Railings*
- *Former Capel Seion*
- *Derwen*
- *Fron Oleu (see note above)*
- *Glasfryn*
- *Capel Gilgal.*
- *Isallt*

6.3 Register of Traditional Buildings

6.3.1 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, no amendments are proposed to the conservation area boundary.

8.0 Hidden Histories (archaeological potential)

8.1.1 Maentwrog was on a major regional transport route from at least Roman times. Consequently there is a very significant potential for archaeological deposits

8.1.2 The extent and layout of the settlement prior to redevelopment by the Oakeley's is not well understood and consequently there is the potential to

34 The unlisted terrace below Penlan Flats. (2021).

35 Glasfryn (note modern paint and uPVC windows). (2021).

discover more about the early settlement from the Medieval Period until the 17th century.

9.0 Other Designated Assets

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

9.1.1 The woodland to the south and east of Maentwrog, *Coedydd de Dyffryn Maentwrog*, is designated as a site of special scientific interest.

9.1.2 Part of the woodland north and east of the conservation area is also designated as a special area of conservation (SAC). *Coedydd Derw a Safleoedd Ystlumod Meirion / Meirionnydd Oakwoods and Bat Sites.*

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.

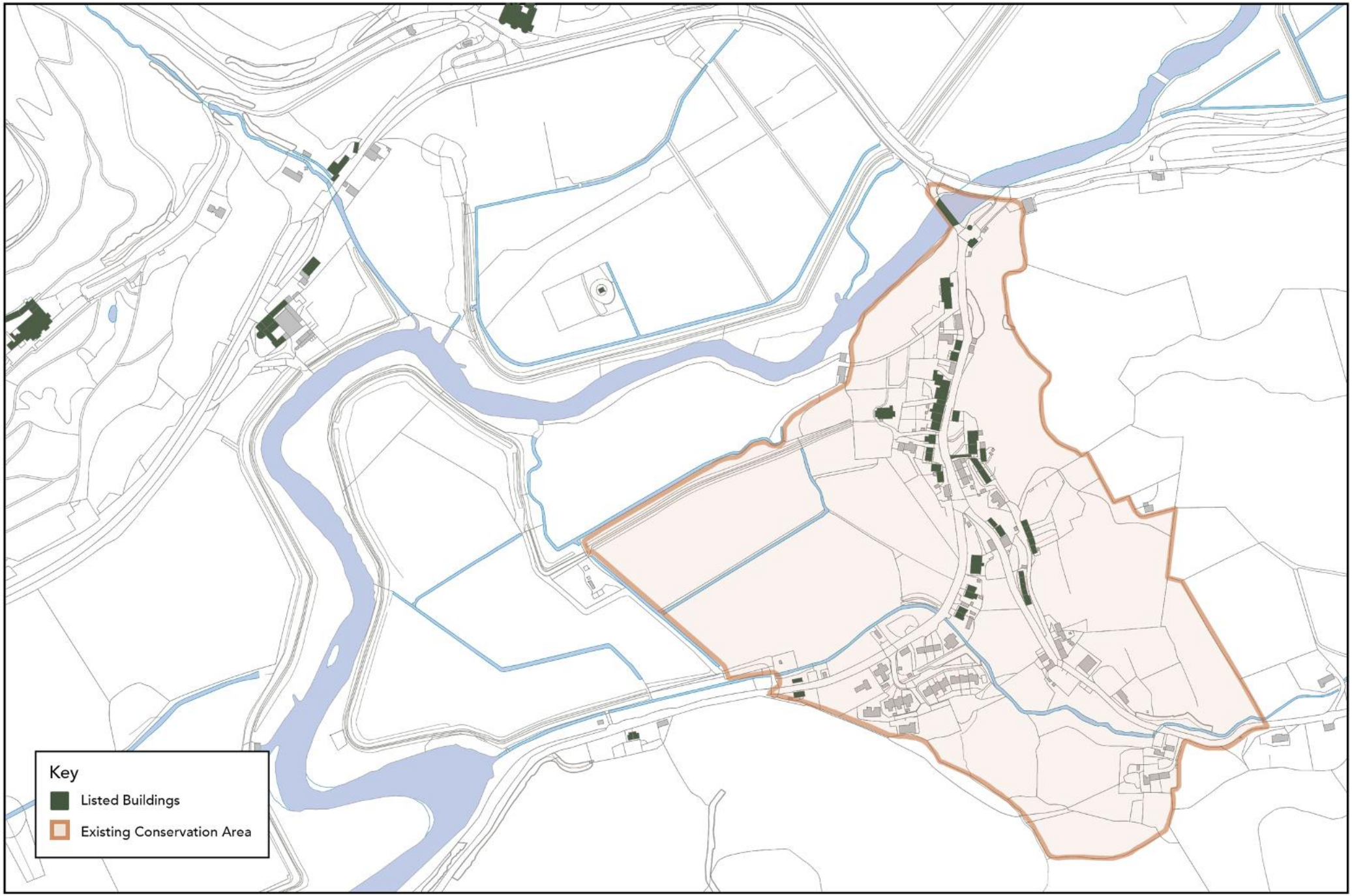
9.1.4 Coed Camlyn, to the south of the conservation area is also a National Nature Reserve (NNR), and also forms part of the SSSI.

9.2 Trees Preservation Orders

9.2.1 There are no tree preservation orders currently identified within the conservation area, however additional protection is conferred on the adjacent woodland, see above.

9.3 World Heritage Site

9.3.1 Maentwrog is situated on the opposite bank of the Afon Dwyryd to the *The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales - Ffestiniog: its Slate mines and Quarries, 'city of slates' and Railway to Porthmadog* area of the world of the Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site (WHS).



Listed Buildings

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

Locally Significant Buildings
1:5000 @ A4

37 Locally Significant Buildings (© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100022403)

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 Areas of restored ancient woodland are to be found to the north and east of the conservation area (these, in part, overlap the SSSI and NNR designated areas).

10.1.4 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.

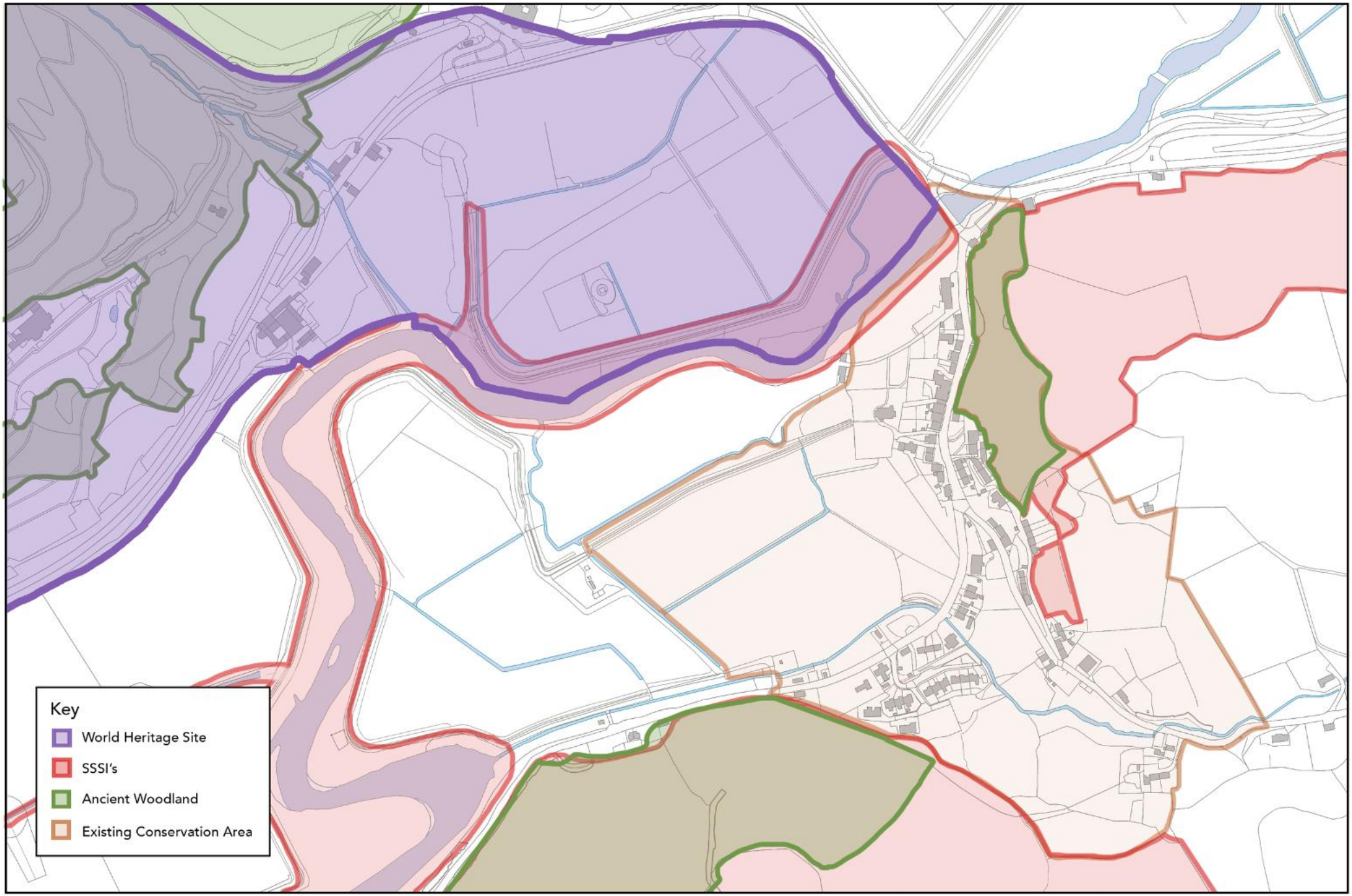
10.2 Protected Species.

10.2.1 A number of key protected species are known to be present in and around the conservation area, species include:

- Pied Flycatchers
- Nuthatches
- Wood Warblers
- Redstarts
- Pine Marten

10.2.2 Because of the high humidity the oak woodlands around Maentwrog provide the ideal habitat for ferns, lichens and mosses. More than 200 species of liverworts have been recorded in the woodlands, and among the nationally scarce lichens that have been found there are *Graphina*

ruiziana, which occurs on young birch bark, and *Parmeliella Horrescens, which grows* on the bark of older birch trees. Amongst the many mosses found on the boulder screes is Wilson's Filmy-fern *(Hymenophyllum wilsonii)*, and there are some plants of Oak Fern (*Gymnocarpium dryopteris*) as well as Narrow Buckler Fern *(Dryopteris carthusiana)*.



Other Designations

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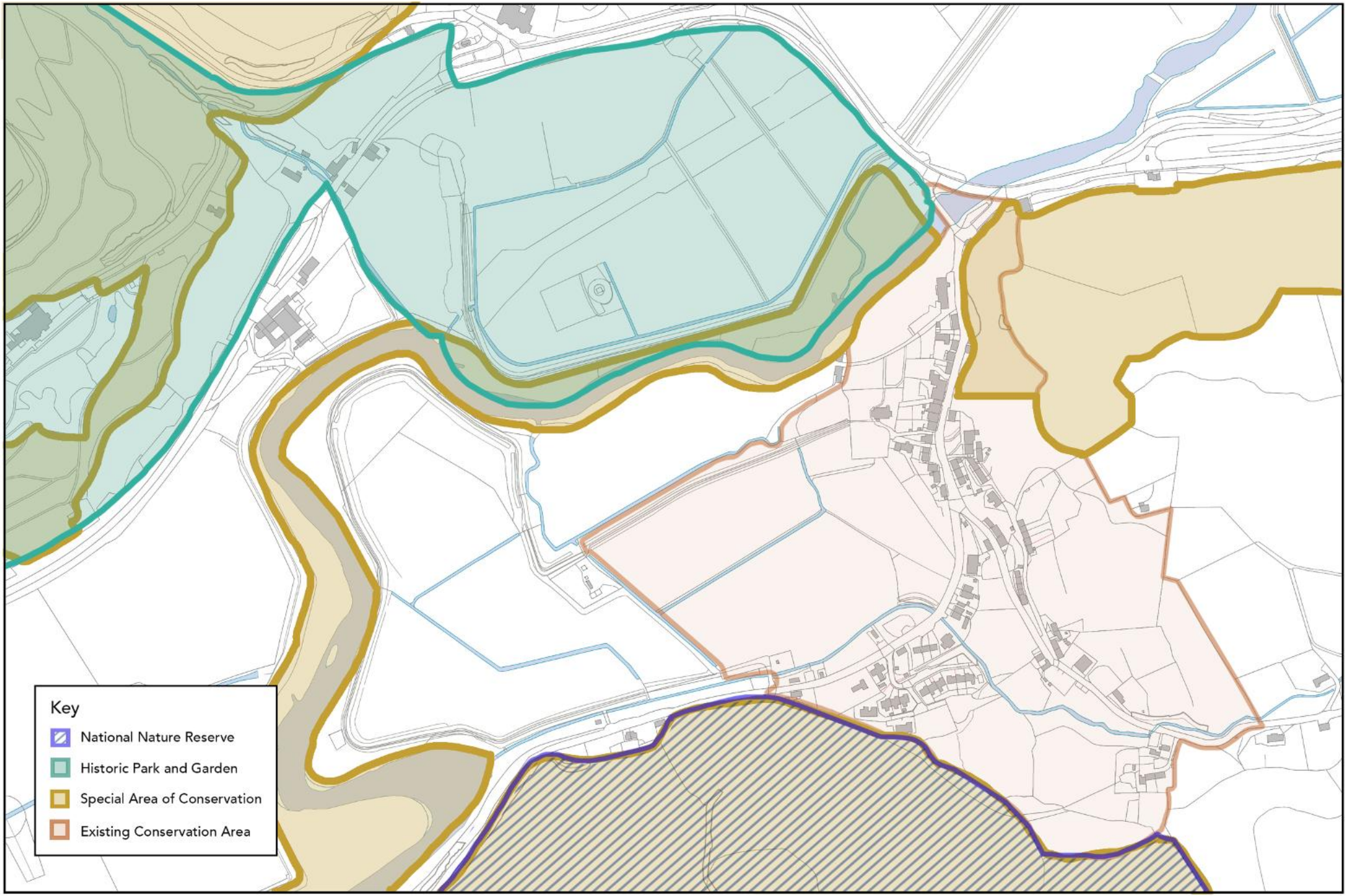


Other Designations

39 Other Designations (© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey 100022403)

10.2.3 The Afon Dwyryd is known to provide a habitat to an otter population and weasel, bank voles and wood mice are also recorded.

10.2.4 The bats in the woodlands are also highly significant. Species recorded include the Greater Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus ferrumequinum) - Britain's most endangered bat species - and Lesser Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros). Other bats known to frequent woodlands in the Vale of Ffestiniog are the Brown Long-eared Bat (Plecotus auritius), Natterer's Bat (Myotis nattereri), Whiskered Bat (Myotis mystacinus), Pipistrelle Bat (Pipistrellus pipistrellus) and the Noctule Bat (Nyctalus noctula).

PART TWO – CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN.

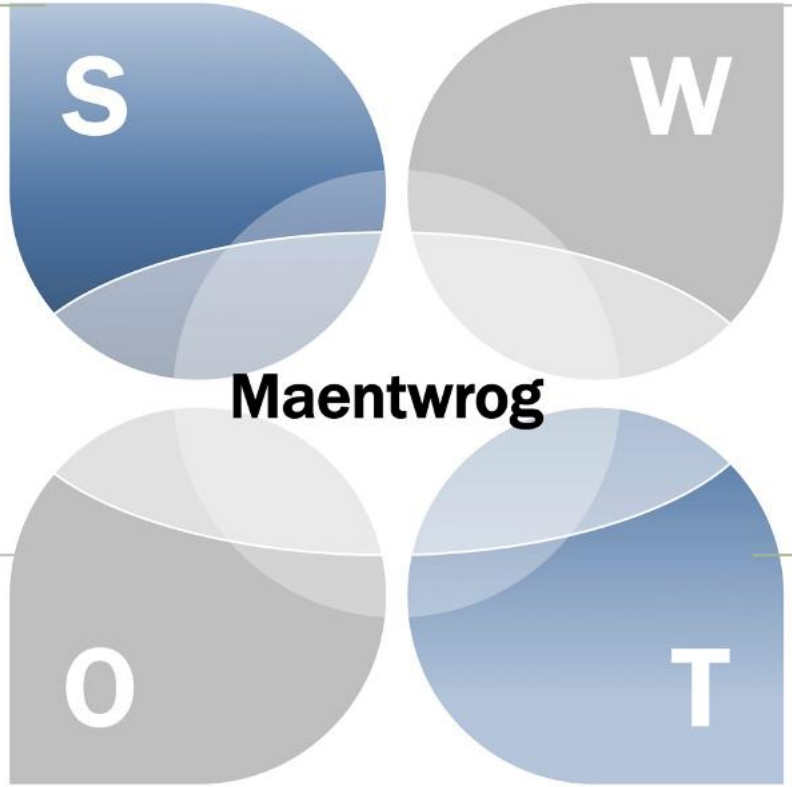
2.0 Understanding the Issues

STRENGTHS

- Fine landscape setting overlooking the Vale of Ffestiniog.
- Views and links to the Plas remain almost as designed in the 19th century.
- Views within the village are very distinctive, especially the steps to Penlan and views through to St. Twrogs through the Lych Gate
- Well preserved buildings, many protected by listing.
- Well patronized and used Grapes Hotel.
- Connections to Harlech, Porthmadog, Blaenau Ffestiniog.

WEAKNESSES

- Pressure of tourist traffic and parking in summer months.
- Lack of parking centrally in the village.
- Lack of shop and village facilities.
- Change to Conservation area around Coed Camlyn and unfinished works.
- Potential condition of Penlan Flats (refused permission for Holiday lets in recent past).
- Some buildings, such as Fron Oleu are not properly protected.



OPPORTUNITIES

- Site and building adjacent to the Grapes Hotel.
- Capel Gilgan if unused.
- Enhance profile and awareness of the Conservation Area.
- Enhancement of the biodiversity and within the village and in the surrounding area.
- Better control of developments in and around the conservation area.
- Improve pedestrian connections to the immediate hillsides.
- Potential links to Yr Wyddfa Partnership Sustainable transport strategy.
- Enhancement of surfaces in the village centre.
- World Heritage Site Context.

THREATS

- Pressure of tourist traffic and parking in summer months.
- Pressure of change and holiday accommodation.
- Risk of change to non-listed buildings and to listed buildings if not protected properly.
- Capel Gilgan now apparently unused.
- Derelict building adjacent to the stable block of the grapes.

2.1 The Condition of the Conservation Area

2.1.1 Maentwrog is a very well preserved estate village. Whilst it has earlier origins, what we see today is essentially associated with the redevelopment undertaken by the Oakeley family of Plas Tan-y-Bwlch who owned much of the village into the 1960s.

2.1.2 The fact that so many of the buildings are listed is both a reflection of the importance of the architectural heritage and has also ensured a high level of retention of original features and details.

2.1.3 Most buildings are occupied or in beneficial use but there are some significant buildings which are either unoccupied, or underutilised. These include:

- Site adjacent to Grapes Hotel, presumbably former service buildings.
- Capel Gilgal appears not to be in use.

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.
- Pointing of historic building in inappropriate mortars.
- Construction of extensions, boundaries and new work in the conservation area which doesn't reflect the important range of existing materials. Slate is not a common feature histoircally for walling, but a 'default' for new work. More appropriate materials should be encouraged.
- Inappropriate or poor quality new developments or extensions.
- Loss of traditional boundary treatments.
- Over dominance of vehicles, parking and traffic.

2.1.5 Specific examples include:

- Replacement of windows with uPVC to Glandwr Cottages.
- Development around Coed Camlyn end of the village of insufficient quality and incomplete in some cases.

40 Site adjacent to the Grapes Hotel.

41 Modern development and bungalow at Coed Camlyn.

- Poor quality bus stop and telephone box near the junction with the Ffordd Gellilydan.

2.2 Buildings at Risk

2.2.1 Capel Gilgal is not listed currently and no-longer a place of worship. It appears to be in reasonable condition externally but needs a sustainable and appropriate new use. This should include the walls and railings which are important to the streetscape.

2.2.2 The service range of buildings adjacent to the grapes are in poor condition and need to be repaired and a suitable new use found.

2.3 Overview of the SWOT Analysis.

2.3.1 A SWOT analysis has been undertaken for the Maentwrog 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:

- Support reinstatement of traditional building details and sustainable upgrading for improved environmental performance where appropriate.
- Find a suitable new uses for Capel Gilgal and the former service buildings at the Grapes Hotel. Ensure Penlan Flats is brought properly back into full use.
- Better control developments in and around the Conservation Area to ensure they better reflect the local materials and are of appropriate quality, layout and design.
- Consider enhanced pedestrian connections to the hillside to the east of the village.

2.3.3 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.

42 Capel Gilgal also has good boundary walls, railings and other features which should be retained. (2021).

43 More appropriate surfacing could enhance the village centre, and help manage traffic flows. (2021)

- Potential to bring improved community and visitor facilities to the village through finding beneficial uses for the underutilised buildings.
- Ensure that green spaces and key views are protected through local engagement and when considering applications for development.

3.0 Positive Management.

3.1 Boundary Changes.

3.1.1 No changes are proposed to the Conservation Area boundary.

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.

3.2.2 As noted in 6.1 of the CAA, It is considered that Fron Oleu (adjacent to Capel Gilgal) and the terrace comprising Isfryn, Ty Canol and adjacent house, should be considered for designation on the national list as an important group to this end of the conservation area.

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:

- Bring the buildings adjacent to the Grapes Hotel back into beneficial use and seek urgent action to halt deterioration.
- Consider options to better manage and control vehicle flows through the village and reduce problems of parking, whilst encouraging use of local services such as the Grapes Hotel.
- Seek to better control development of inappropriate quality on the periphery of the conservation area.

- Encouraging reinstatement of more appropriate joinery details to locally significant buildings, in place of modern uPVC replacements.
- Building upon and increasing awareness of the wide-range of species and special natural features in and around the village.

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 Maentwrog.
- 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 Maentwrog has natural opportunities for micro-power generation and historic precedent for making use of the natural environment to provide power, such as the 1928 Maentwrog Power station.[25]

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. A variety of trees are protected by preservation orders (see 8.3). Other trees are identified as having significance in the conservation area (see 4.3).

3.5.2 It is considered that the trees in and around the churchyard, especially the yew could be considered for preservation orders.

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

[25] https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/33605?term=maentwrog&pg=4

- 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.
- Protection of trees during construction work
- Non-intervention to allow trees to mature
- Retention of standing deadwood and creation of deadwood piles for insects and other wildlife.

3.5.4 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.

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

3.5.6 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.

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

3.5.8 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:

- Maentwrog Community Council (survey issued).
- Via the National Park's website.

Appendices:

Appendix A - Sources

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

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