



ABERAERON

Conservation Area Appraisal

June 2025

Prepared for

Ceredigion County Council

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Historic Environment in Ceredigion

1.1.1 The Ceredigion landscape is rich in evidence from the past. The term ‘historic environment’ describes the results of human interaction with the natural environment over many thousands of years, including the buildings, monuments, conservation areas, townscapes and landscapes that we value as a community and wish to preserve. This series of appraisals and management plans are to assist the Council and the local community / public with understanding the special value and interest of the conservation areas in Ceredigion, and how it can best be protected and enhanced.

1.1.2 Many historic features are protected through legislation and the planning system (see below). In addition to Ceredigion’s designated assets there are numerous undesignated features including archaeological sites and historic buildings. Undesignated assets can be more vulnerable to unsympathetic change or loss through development and other works. As well as analysing the contribution of designated assets to the towns of Ceredigion, the acknowledgement of undesignated assets, through tools such as this appraisal, can help to identify their significance and to protect them for the future. In Wales, over 200,000 undesignated heritage assets are recorded on the four regional Historic Environment Records that are now a consideration in the planning system under the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016.



Fig. 1 General View of Aberaeron harbour and Quay Parade

- 1.1.3 There are 1896 buildings and structures included on the national 'List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest' in Ceredigion. Many more pre 1948 structures are protected by being within the 'curtilage' of a listed building. A Listed building is one which has been identified, by Cadw, as being of national architectural or historic importance. As such, any works which would affect the character of the structure or any features of architectural or historic interest would require permission - known as Listed Building Consent. Contrary to popular belief, the listing covers the whole of a building - inside and out, and includes any fixtures or fittings.
- 1.1.4 Ceredigion has 262 Scheduled Monuments. Scheduling is the way that a monument or archaeological site of national importance is recognised by law. The term 'scheduled monument' is wide ranging and includes not only well-known castles, abbeys and prehistoric burial sites, but also sites such as limekilns, deserted medieval settlements and the remains of the iron, coal and slate industries. Some scheduled monuments contain standing buildings or ruins and others have no visible remains above ground, but their buried archaeology is of national importance. The aim of scheduling is to preserve the archaeological evidence that survives within sites and monuments. This includes the physical fabric of the monument, its setting and any associated artefacts and environmental evidence. This means that if you want to carry out work that would physically alter a scheduled monument you will probably need to apply to Cadw for permission - known as Scheduled Monument Consent.
- 1.1.5 There are 12 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens within Ceredigion. Registration identifies parks and gardens which are of special historic interest to Wales. They range in date from the medieval period to the mid-twentieth century. Registration is a material consideration in the planning process; local planning authorities must take into account the historic interest of the site when deciding whether or not to grant permission for any changes.
- 1.1.6 Four areas in Ceredigion have been designated through the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales. The largest of these is the Upland Ceredigion Historic Landscape which covers much of the eastern and northern part of the county. The Lower Teifi Valley Historic Landscape, is located in the south-west, and is partially shared with Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. The Drefach-Felindre and Towy Valley Historic Landscapes are located within Carmarthenshire, but part also falls within Ceredigion's southern boundary.
- 1.1.7 Ceredigion also has 13 designated conservation areas, which means there are additional controls over demolition (requiring Conservation Area Consent) and works to trees in these areas. The conservation areas are:

- Aberaeron
- Aberystwyth
- Adpar
- Cardigan
- Lampeter
- Llanbadarn Fawr
- Llandysul
- Cenarth
- Llanddewi Brefi
- Llanrhystud
- Llansantffraed
- New Quay
- Tregaron

Of these areas; Cardigan, Llanddewi Brefi and Tregaron have Article 4 Directions in place. These Directions remove the permitted development rights for a particular building, site or area meaning that there are more restrictions regarding what works can be carried out without the need for planning permission. Trees in Conservation Areas are also protected: the local authority must be given 6 weeks notice before carrying out works to trees in a conservation area.

1.2 Conservation Areas

- 1.2.1 Local Planning Authorities are required to **preserve or enhance** the character and appearance of designated conservation areas under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This Act also requires the Local Authority to identify and designate new conservation areas by determining which parts of their area are of special architectural or historic interest.
- 1.2.2 There are more than 500 conservation areas in Wales and they are valued as special places by those who visit and live or work in them.



Fig. 2 Typical Georgian style terraces in Aberaeron

- 1.2.3 Conservation areas are rich in the physical evidence of the past. Their special interest is expressed in the character of the area and not in isolated buildings. This could be the pattern of settlement, the organisation of space and building plots, and the networks of routes, as well as the style and type of building, their materials and detailing.
- 1.2.4 This means that it is essential to manage change carefully in conservation areas to make sure that their character and appearance are safeguarded and enhanced. To achieve this, there are special controls around demolishing buildings and cutting down, topping and lopping trees.

1.3 Appraisals and Management Plans

- 1.3.1 Section 71 of the 1990 Act sets out that it shall be the duty of the LPA, from time to time, to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas. Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment identifies conservation area appraisals as the foundation for such proposals as they provide a basis for more detailed management plans.
- 1.3.2 A conservation area appraisal is the foundation for positive management. It provides a detailed picture of what makes an area special and can be used to identify opportunities and priorities for action. The appraisal offers a shared understanding of character and importance, and highlights problems and potential, which can be used as the evidence base for a more detailed management plan supported by a robust local policy framework.
- 1.3.3 Ceredigion County Council has commissioned The Griffiths Heritage Consultancy to prepare appraisals and management plans, alongside undertaking a boundary review, for the conservation areas in 6 of the County's towns.
- 1.3.4 The appraisals and management plans have been subject to initial stakeholder and public consultation as set out in section 4.5. If agreed, following further public consultation, they will be adopted by Ceredigion County Council as supplementary planning guidance (SPG).

2. INTRODUCTION TO ABERAERON CONSERVATION AREA

2.1 The Conservation Area Boundary

- 2.1.1 Aberaeron Conservation Area was designated in 1969 with the boundary which currently exists and is shown over the page. There is no existing appraisal or management plan for the conservation area.

2.2 Location and Setting

- 2.2.1 Aberaeron is a harbour town located on the Ceredigion coast in West Wales, located 10 miles north of New Quay and 16 miles south of Aberystwyth.
- 2.2.2 Aberaeron was initially simply a landing place at the mouth of the river Aeron. The Rev. Alban Thomas Jones Gwynne set about improving the harbour between 1807 and 1811 and created a small fishing village. It further developed in a traditional planned town manner along gridline streets, accommodating earlier buildings within its confines.
- 2.2.3 It is set at the mouth of the river valley on the coastal edge with low hills to the north, east and south, progressively becoming higher in elevation to a band running southwest to north-east further inland.
- 2.2.4 To the west are Aberaeron's two beaches. South beach is shingle and rock with a series of groynes. North beach is also mostly rocky with groynes but with fine sand patches and rock pools at low tide.
- 2.2.5 Dousseau's sketch of early Aberaeron (below) shows its topographical location and the expanding village as the town was starting to develop.



Fig. 4 Early 19th century sketch of Aberaeron by Alphonse Dousseau (National Library of Wales)

2.3 Summary Description

2.3.1 The overall character of Aberaeron is of a Regency planned town, although much of it was not built until the Victorian period. This style of architecture was very much in vogue at the time, developing from the tastes of tourists from England and further afield, who were starting to discover Wales as a landscape tourism destination. There are earlier vernacular buildings and later more traditional Victorian style architecture within the town and of course later 20th century development but it is its Georgian style architecture, attractive and accessible harbour, beaches, and comfortable domestic scale which marks it out from other West Wales towns.

3. LEGISLATION, PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

3.1 Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

3.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, places a duty on public bodies to *‘improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales in accordance with the sustainable development principle that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’*.

3.1.2 It is widely recognised that the historic environment can have a positive impact on people and communities and contribute towards quality of life and well-being. If the historic environment is going to continue to deliver its rich benefits to communities there is a need to identify what is significant and manage change in a sensitive and sustainable way.

3.1.3 Essential to maintaining the special quality of a particular area (or any heritage asset) is the positive management of change based on a full understanding of the character and significance of the area. This is underpinned by raising awareness and understanding of the benefits that they can deliver and the skills necessary to do so.

3.2 Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023

3.2.1 The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 (‘the 2023 Act’) came into force on 4 November 2024, and provides the framework for the protection and management of the Welsh historic environment. It repealed the following legislation in Wales:

- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Act 1953
- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016

- 3.2.2 The 2023 Act requires the local planning authority have: special regard to the desirability of preserving: the listed building; the setting of the building; and any features of special architectural or historic interest the building possesses when considering whether to grant listed building consent or planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting.
- 3.2.3 The 2023 Act also requires that the local planning authority must, in exercising a planning function in relation to a building or other land in a conservation area have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.



Fig. 5 Aberaeron is located at the mouth of the river Aeron

3.3 National Policy and Guidance

- 3.3.1 *Planning Policy Wales (PPW)* (Edition 12, 2024) sets the context for sustainable land use policy within Wales and identifies the need for the promotion of good design.
- 3.3.2 Policy on the historic environment is contained within Chapter 6 of PPW, which sets out national policies requiring that Local Planning Authorities exercise a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of the character of a Conservation Area and/or its setting when considering development proposals.
- 3.3.3 *Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment* provides guidance on how to consider the historic environment in development plans and planning decisions.

3.3.4 Local planning authorities should take account of Cadw's (2011) *Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales* (Conservation Principles) to achieve high-quality sensitive change. The document sets out six guiding principles for the conservation of the historic environment:

- Historic assets will be managed to sustain their values
- Understanding the significance of historic assets is vital
- The historic environment is a shared resource
- Everyone will be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment
- Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent
- Documenting and learning from decisions is essential

3.3.5 Cadw has also produced a series of best-practice guidance publications that complement the legislative framework and associated planning policy and advice and support the sustainable management of the Welsh historic environment. These include: *Managing Conservation Areas in Wales; Managing Historic Character in Wales; Managing Change to Listed Buildings in Wales, Setting of Historic Assets in Wales, and Managing Lists of Historic Assets of Special Local Interest*, amongst others.

3.3.6 Cadw's (2017) *Managing Conservation Areas in Wales* supplements PPW and TAN 24 and sets out the policy context and duties for local planning authorities to designate and manage conservation areas. It also identifies key aspects of good practice for their designation and appraisal, including the participation of stakeholders and the development of local policies for positive management and enhancement so that their character and appearance are preserved and enhanced.

3.4 Local Planning Policy

3.4.1 Ceredigion Local Development Plan (LDP1): 2007 - 2022 (Adopted 2013) sets out policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land in Ceredigion for the 15 year period up to 31 March 2022. The replacement LDP (LDP2) is, however, currently on hold due to Phosphate issues and therefore LDP1 is the current Development Plan for the county.

3.4.2 In LDP1, Policy DM07 requires that development within conservation areas must demonstrate that regard has been had to Conservation Area Appraisals, where available, and national guidance.

3.4.3 Ceredigion County Council's SPG: Built Environment and Design provides supplementary guidance for development relating to or affecting the historic environment.

4. DEFINITION OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

4.1 Summary of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

EVIDENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE	HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE	AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE	COMMUNAL VALUES
HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH

4.1.1 This table, together with the explanations below, summarise the state of the conservation area at the current time and identifies the special interest, which should be preserved, and also where enhancements can be made. A 'High' value does not mean that improvements cannot be made. They are based on the physical and historic research and assessment undertaken for this appraisal and used in conjunction with Cadw's (2011) *Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales*, which identifies four heritage values by which significance can be identified:

- **Evidential value:** every historic asset has a unique story to tell. The surviving historic fabric and detail — whether above or below ground — helps us to understand when and how each historic asset was made, how it was used and how it has changed over time. Pictorial and documentary sources may also increase our understanding.
- **Historical value:** historic assets may illuminate particular aspects of the past. They can help us to understand how people lived and worked, and the beliefs and values they cherished. They may be associated with notable people or events. Through evocation and association, historic assets can connect past people, aspects of life and events with the present.
- **Aesthetic value:** we may value historic assets for their visual qualities, whether they result from conscious design and craftsmanship, or from the fortuitous effect of change over time. Tastes alter and so do historic assets: earlier records and careful analysis of what survives may help in appreciating aesthetic value.
- **Communal value:** historic assets may be cherished by the people and communities who relate to them, and they may play an important part in collective experience or memory.

Historic assets can have economic as well as social value with the capacity to provide a valuable source of income or employment.

4.1.2 The terms 'significance' and 'value' and are used interchangeably in this context and both contribute to identifying the 'special interest' of a place.

4.2 Evidential

4.2.1 Aberaeron provides extensive evidence of a planned Georgian style town, utilising the fashion on town planning and the local requirements relating to the maritime industry and Rev. Alban Thomas Jones Gwynne wishes.

4.2.2 Georgian style architectural detailing, building materials, styles and workmanship are abundant in Aberaeron and provide evidence of the tools, techniques and fashions of the time.

4.2.3 The historical documentation and archival holdings provide a valuable resource for future research and investigation.

4.3 Historical

4.3.1 Aberaeron is a typical Georgian style town and demonstrates the growth and increasing prosperity in West Wales during this period.

4.3.2 The evidence and documentation relating to the growth and decline of the maritime industry along the West coast of Wales is typical of the scenario of the region and adds depth to the significance of the town.

4.4 Aesthetic

4.4.1 Aberaeron is an extraordinarily visually attractive town, mostly due to the survival of its historic buildings and architectural features along with its coastal position.

4.4.2 Colour is an extremely important part of the character and appearance of the conservation area, enhanced by the judicious use of planting displays.

4.4.3 Historical open spaces within the town provide relief from the close density of build development and are regularly used and appreciated for events and by visitors and locals.

4.5 Communal values

4.5.1 The conservation area contains a number of public buildings and community resources such the library, the church, pubs, chapels, shops, restaurants and others.

4.5.2 The main commercial and economic activity happens within the boundary of the conservation area boundary meaning that the area has a high community value for income and employment.

4.5.3 During the process of producing this appraisal, an initial survey was sent to stakeholders asking them to identify what they thought was important about the conservation area and if there were any issues. Unfortunately, no responses were received to this survey.

4.5.4 In order to gather public comments about the first draft of the appraisal and management plan, a public consultation drop in event was held at Aberaeron during September 2023. The draft appraisal and management plan were also available to download via a web link. Twelve people attended the session and a good number of comments were received which have been used to revise the appraisal. Responses related to the following matters, amongst others:

- General support for the process and appraisal work
- Uncertainty regarding capacity and resources for implementation at County Council level and need for further project work
- Concern regarding wide ranging nature of recommendations and capacity of partners
- Concern regarding environmental considerations outside the scope of this work
- Request for small boundary extension
- Support for householder guidance and potential grant scheme/s
- Support for signage and shop improvements
- Support for Chalybeate well project
- Support for traffic rationalisation
- Support for training regarding historic buildings for non-heritage specialists
- Support for enforcement measures



Fig. 6 View of Aberaeron and its environs looking north

4.5.5 This rate of engagement is, from experience, considered to be reasonable for an area such as Aberaeron. It is clear from the written and verbal responses that the local community has pride in the town, its architecture and history and would like it to be preserved and enhanced.

5. PHYSICAL CONTEXT

5.1 Landscape Character

5.1.1 Natural Resources Wales' LANDMAP resource identifies Aberaeron as being within the National Landscape Character Area of 'Ceredigion Coast'. LANDMAP's historic landscape character statement reports: "This area comprises the built up area of Aberaeron including the historic town, modern housing and other development on the town fringes (which includes the County Council offices), caravan and other leisure facilities and the harbour. Included in this area are several fields to the NE of the town lying on the coastal plain. The distinctive appearance of the historic core of the town was originally a planned development". Landscape assessments are broad brush and cover a far wider area than the area considered within this appraisal, nevertheless, the key landscape characteristics noted for this area are:

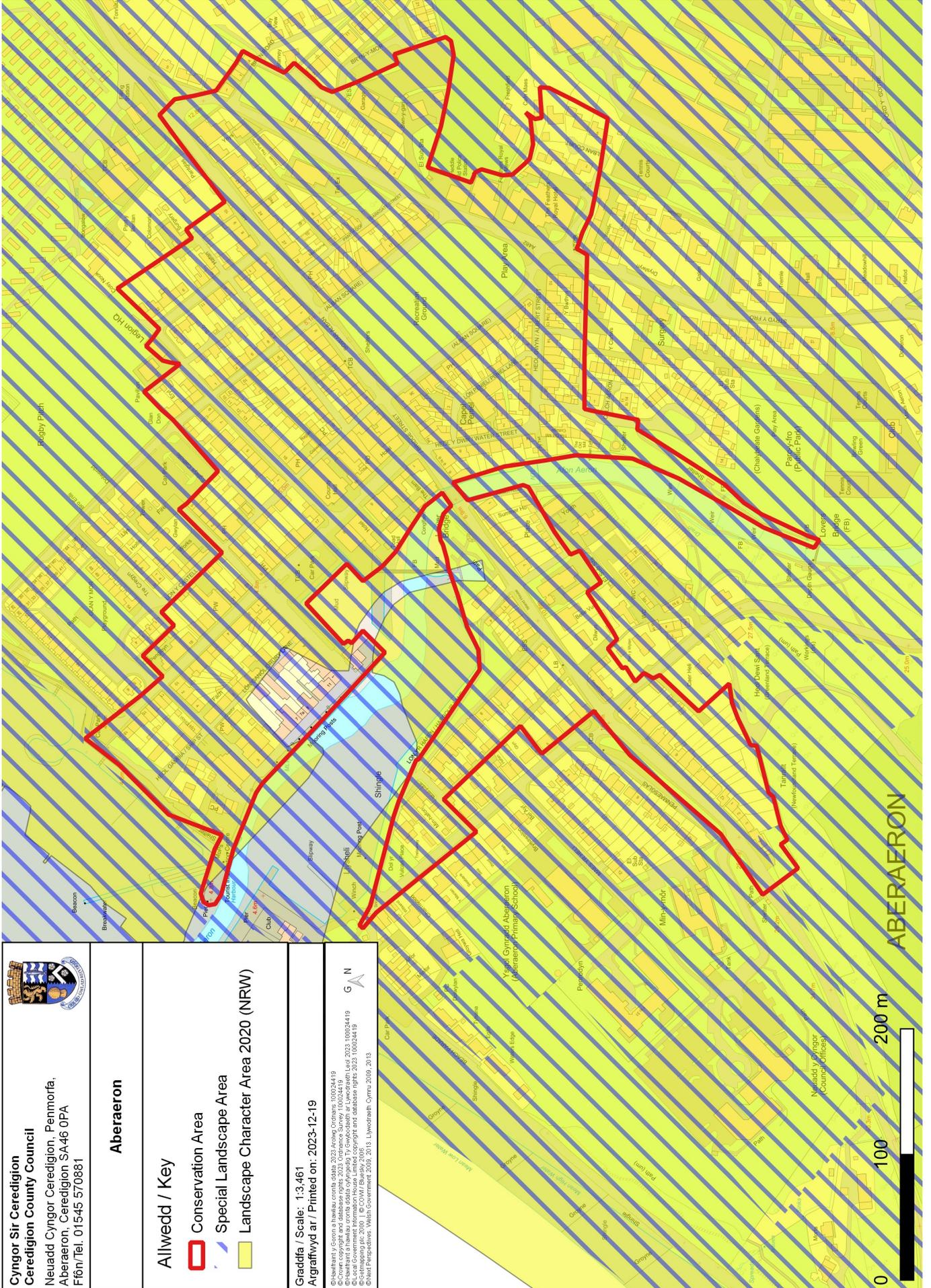
- Regular fieldscapes
- Nucleated and non-nucleated settlements
- Recreational use
- Processing/Manufacturing
- Designed Landscape
- Buildings & Structures
- Industrial Archaeology
- Post Medieval (1536+)

6. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The settlement at this location started as a landing place at the mouth of the river Aeron. The Rev. Alban Thomas Jones Gwynne set about improving the harbour between 1807 and 1811 and created a small fishing village. He encouraged people to take building leases near the harbour and the town gradually started to grow. Since the place we now know as Aberaeron is essentially a planned town from the early 19th century, it is not marked on any of the historic maps until this period and at this time it was simply a small settlement starting to develop. The Tithe Map gives us the best insight into its extent at this stage.

Fig. 7 Landscape Character Designations




Cyngor Sir Ceredigion
Ceredigion County Council
 Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa,
 Aberaeron, Ceredigion SA46 0PA
 Ffôn/Tel. 01545 570881

Aberaeron

Allwedd / Key

-  Conservation Area
-  Special Landscape Area
-  Landscape Character Area 2020 (NRW)

Graddfa / Scale: 1:3,461
Aigrifnydd ar / Printed on: 2023-12-19

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G N

ABERAERON

0 100 200 m

- 6.1.2 In 1810, Rees, in his “Description of Cardiganshire,” writes of ‘Aberayron’ as being “much frequented by small coasting vessels, which convey the corn, and other produce of the district to English markets. The harbour has lately been much improved by erecting of a pier, at the expense of the Rev. Alban Thomas Jones Gwynne, of Tyglyn, who at his own charge obtained an Act of Parliament for this purpose. It has been of great use to the shipping, and there is a prospect of this becoming a considerable harbour. There has also been a market established here, which promises to be a great convenience to this part of the country. Near the town are some remains of an ancient fortress called Castell Cadwgan, thought to have been erected by King Cadwgan, about 1148.”
- 6.1.3 The first bridge at Aberaeron was built in 1814, although there must have been a way over the river before this. During the subsequent development of the town, rock quarried from the river upstream for house-building and stone was taken from the riverbed downstream to be used as ballast for empty ships . The bridge’s foundations were undermined by these endeavours and it was demolished by a flood in 1881 and subsequently a new bridge was built. This bridge was also relatively short lived and was replaced during the inter-war period, which was in turn substantially demolished and rebuilt in the late 20th century.
- 6.1.4 Aberaeron developed as a strictly planned Georgian style Town, John Nash is said to have a hand in its outline planning but most of the houses were built after his death and Edward Haycock, architect from Shrewsbury, is said to have been the prime planner. The town was developed not only with the maritime industry in mind but also with a tourism potential as its Chalybeate well became a well known attraction and the ‘taking of the waters’ became a fashionable activity.
- 6.1.5 In 1835, the original Holy Trinity Church, Aberaeron, was built for Colonel Gwynne by Edward Haycock. The church was later rebuilt in 1872 in an early Gothic style by Middleton & Goodman of Cheltenham.
- 6.1.6 The railway arrived later to Aberaeron than most places in West Wales with the construction of the Lampeter, Aberayron & New Quay Light Railway opening in 1911. It effectively ended the marine industry in the town but it only survived for 40 years transporting passengers and it also closed to goods transport in 1965 as part of the Beeching cuts.

6.2 Historic Maps

- 6.2.1 The Tithe map shows the beginnings of the planned town centred around the harbour and a timber yard which was no doubt associated with the ship building industry. The grid system of



Fig. 8 The 1840s Tithe map shows the beginnings of the planned town at Aberaeron

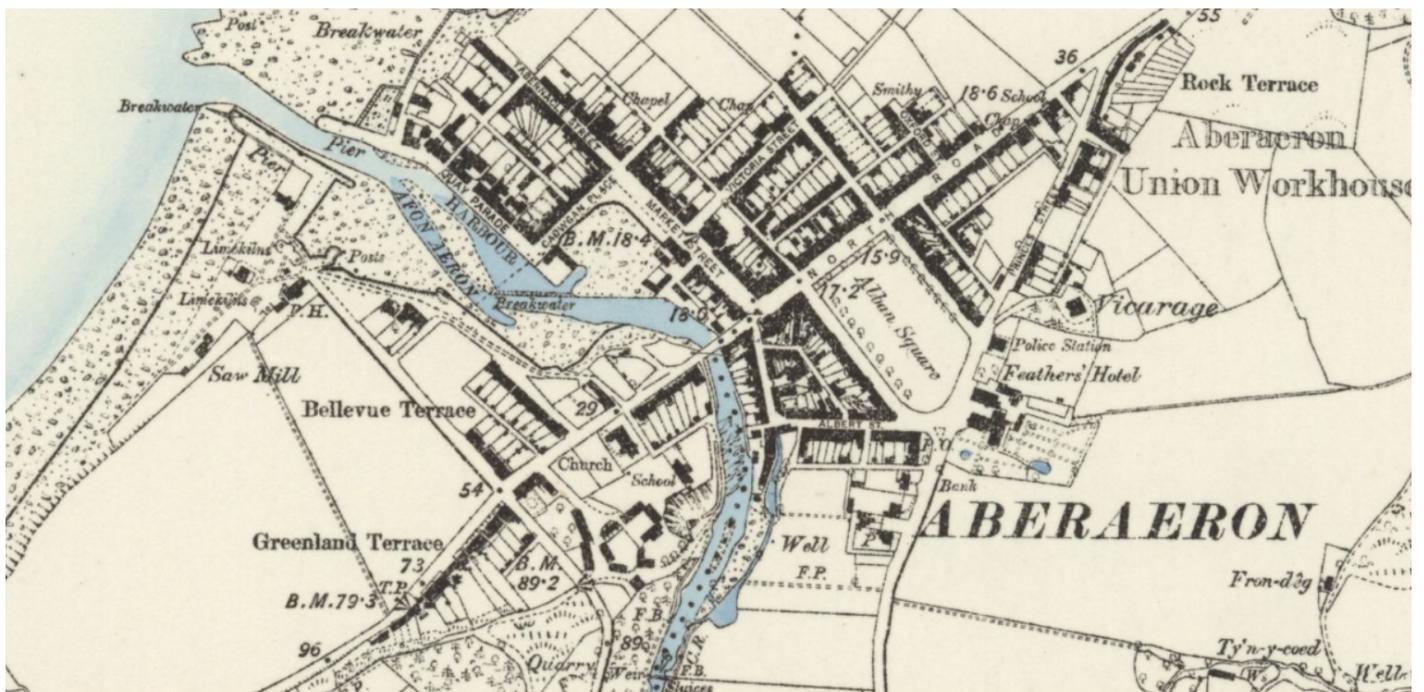


Fig. 9 The Ordnance Survey map from 1887

streets can already be seen to be developing through the outline of building plots available for lease.

- 6.2.2 The 1887 OS map shows the degree to which the town had grown by this date with most development to the south and east of the harbour and square. It is primarily the extent of development at this date which has been designated as the existing conservation area. The Mid 19th century was the height of the ship building industry at Aberaeron but it was a strong element of the town for the whole of the century.
- 6.2.3 The 1904, 1938 and 1948 OS maps show very little change from the late 19th century map.
- 6.2.4 Even today, the core of Aberaeron exists much as it did at the end of the 19th century. There has been the occasional 20th century development around its outskirts, such as the school and council offices, modern housing on Oxford Street, the council housing around Lower Regent Street and the seafront, the estate at Chalybeate Street, and the caravan park to the north. There are also just a few 20th century extensions and buildings within the historic centre and some newer bungalows and houses around the edges of town, such as in Wellington Road area, but in general Aberaeron has mostly escaped the encroachment of modern housing estates and infill development.

7 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

7.1 Form and Layout

- 7.1.1 The following set out the characteristics of layout of Aberaeron town and its chronological development:
- The town initially grew up in a grid formation to the north east of the River Aeron and the harbour.
 - The wide Market Street and the main North Road form a right angle junction against which all new streets were laid out to the north and north east.
 - To the south of the river a few more streets were laid out at right angles to North Road but centred around the church.
 - To the south east, the space between Alban Square and the river was infilled with more angular street development.
 - Housing development is mostly in the form of terraces, either long or short, hard up against the pavement. There is a high density of development.
 - There are two centres of development - around the harbour and around Alban Square.

- 7.1.2 The topography of the town is mostly flat but surrounded by low hills on its eastern and southern perimeters which provide a pleasing green backdrop. Building on these slopes has been restricted by the planning system which has meant that the setting of the conservation area has been protected.
- 7.1.3 Today, the town is virtually divided into two halves by the busy A487 trunk road, which is part of the long scenic coastal drive along Cardigan Bay and the west coast of Wales and extremely popular with both locals and tourists.

7.2 Boundaries

- 7.2.1 The boundary of the historic town can be clearly seen in its architecture where the transition from the formal Georgian style to traditional Victorian style or later is obvious to even the untrained eye.
- 7.2.2 Development has mostly occurred outside the boundary of the historic town along South Road towards Llyswen, although there are also a few older vernacular cottages and houses in this area. To the south west of Wellington Road there is a more typical 20th century housing estate.



Fig. 10 More traditional Victorian style features can be seen on areas of housing which developed around the edges of the earlier town

7.3 Views and Approaches

- 7.3.1 Because of the grid layout of Aberaeron, with mostly straight roads, there are internal medium range views along the lines of terraces on most streets within the town.
- 7.3.2 Many of the Georgian style houses built along what is now the A487 have views out towards the sea, with those at Bellevue Gardens (as the name suggests) having wonderful views out over the public gardens and the harbour. Intervening development has truncated these views for the houses south of this area.
- 7.3.3 Density of development and the flat topography restricts views out of the conservation area from most places within the town.
- 7.3.4 There are fine views from the inner harbour area to the hills to the south and similar views of the hills to the north and the town north of the harbour from Belle Vue Terrace.
- 7.3.5 There is a linear view along the line of the Aeron from the road bridge to the south east.
- 7.3.6 Views of the area from outside town are also restricted due the gentle slope of the surrounding hills which is so gradual that one can rarely get up high enough to see the town in its entirety. The A487 on the way to Aberystwyth curves away to the north east and views back from here are restricted by road side vegetation and the lie of the hills.
- 7.3.7 Views from the A487 to the south are equally restricted by roadside vegetation but there is a public footpath from a layby which presents probably the best view of Aberaeron as a whole.
- 7.3.8 Aberaeron is very much a seaside town with a maritime past and at the time of its construction most of its inhabitants were economically invested in the shipping industry in one form or another and, as such, most of its focus is outwards towards the west and the sea.

7.4 Open and Green Spaces

- 7.4.1 Aberaeron was designed around several prominent green and open spaces:
- Alban Square Field - is the centre piece of a very fine example of a planned Georgian style square with its hedges and surrounding terraces there is a sense of enclosure and intimacy. This large green open public space is still well used for leisure activities such as football and local shows and events and has a children's play area.
 - Public garden opposite Bellevue Gardens - a small but pleasant area providing a green space linking to the wooden footbridge over the Aeron. It is shown on the earlier maps as an open space with a small structure but it is not clear at what period the gardens were laid out.

- The inner harbour (Pwll Cam) is overlooked on two sides by houses and the harbour has wide paved areas on these sides with some standard trees and seating areas. There is also a small busy car park and events are sometimes held in this space.
- The promenade along the seafront (part of which is included in the current conservation area boundary) is a wide paved walk with concrete sea walls and is extremely popular with both locals and tourists. The walk extends south east along Quay Parade adjacent to the main harbour and joining up with Pwll Cam.



Fig. 11 Public gardens opposite Bellevue Gardens



Fig. 12 Alban Square Field surrounded by Georgian style terraces

- A pleasant green grassed area sits in front of Belle Vue Terrace with a gently curving path from the public gardens opposite Bellevue Gardens leading along beside the river and harbour with traditional style lamp posts.
- A further green open area is included within the conservation area boundary adjacent to the river to the south of the town, to the east of Chalybeate Street, and including the site of the former Chalybeate Spring.



Fig. 13 Typical Georgian style Classical domestic architecture

8 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

8.1 Building Traditions

8.1.1 Aberaeron is primarily a Georgian style town with striking simple Classical style architecture. It has been variously described as ‘one of the best examples of a planned township of small scale in Wales’, ‘dignified urbanity’ and ‘uniformity without losing individuality’. The key features of this type of architecture are:

- Use of orders (An architectural order describes a style of building. In classical architecture each order is identifiable by its proportions, profiles, and various aesthetic

details, matching those from original Greek architectural features e.g. Doric, Ionic and Corinthian.)

- Proportion
- Symmetry
- Repetition of elements such as windows
- References to Classical architecture

8.1.2 Aberaeron has evidence of all these features but in a refined simplified manner and does not really feature many of the more elaborate embellishments of the Georgian Classical style. Elisabeth Beazley, an architect and writer, said that the town developed in the mid-nineteenth century through an assiduous and intelligent interpretation by local craftsmen of the same type of building and layout depicted in magazines of that era, and the inspiration of the founder of the town, the Reverend Alban Thomas Jones Gwynne.

8.1.3 The town also has a number of suburban style Edwardian and Victorian properties added around the outskirts and in some places completing Georgian style developments, such as at South Road, opposite the church and along Belle Vue Terrace.



Fig. 14 Edwardian Terraces along the north side of Bellevue Gardens, opposite the church

- 8.1.4 The scale of building is relatively modest, with two or three storey properties. End terraces (and sometimes mid terraces) are often accentuated through a slightly larger scale, different architectural features or being brought forward from the usual building line.
- 8.1.5 A few remaining older buildings built in a local vernacular tradition from unrendered rubble stone survive within the town. Some of the 'back yard' buildings are also built in this fashion, for example along Castle Lane, which are likely to be contemporary with the building of the planned town and possibly relate to its maritime past - some are identified as being former stables and were part of the planned town (for example at the rear of 16 and 17 Alban Square).
- 8.1.6 A number of modern interventions in these back yard areas have occurred such as poorly designed and proportioned modern garages and rear extensions.
- 8.1.7 As is to be expected for a maritime port with an eye for tourism, there are a good number of historic public houses / hotels within the town and many which were public houses but have now been converted to residential.



Fig. 15 A few earlier vernacular buildings survive, mostly in the back lanes of the town

8.2 Materials and Detailing

- 8.2.1 The majority of properties within the conservation area are rendered (smooth, roughcast or scribed) and painted a range of different colours. It is likely that the Georgian style properties are stone built, while the later Victorian and Edwardian are more likely to be brick. Vernacular and earlier properties are less likely to be rendered. Architectural features such as windows, quoins and doors are mostly in a contrasting colour and the resulting effect greatly

contributes to the overall character of the area.

8.2.2 Roofs are generally low pitched and of natural (traditionally Welsh) slate with wide eaves and hipped at the end of terraces. They tend to be linear along terraces with higher roofs at the ends. Chimneys are often large and prominently placed. The more traditionally styled Victorian properties often have decorative bargeboards on the front gables and sometimes decorative finials and ridge tiles.

8.2.3 The predominant window type is the traditional Georgian style sash with varying configurations of window panes. These windows have rendered architraves of varying forms and often with key stones and some having hood moulding. Victorian properties tend to have bay windows again with traditional sashes. Some buildings, especially those which are not listed such as in Oxford and Regent Streets, have lost their traditional windows to the detriment of their overall character.

8.2.4 Doors are another key feature, generally six panels and often set back within the façade and a range of ornate doorcases and some with fanlights. There are regrettably some modern replacement doors of inappropriate designs.

8.2.5 The Georgian style properties are symmetrical on their front elevations with windows and doors in strict proportions in the traditional classical style.



Fig. 16 Traditional Georgian style classical features: equal proportions and regularly and symmetrically placed features, small pane sliding sash windows, architrave with key stones around windows and door, quoins, classical references in the doorcase, arched fanlight above the door, six panel solid door set above pavement level with steps, low deep ridge chimneys at the end of each terrace, low pitched natural slate roof.



Figs. 17, 18 and 19 Hood moulding with decorative key stone, original house name plaque, and six panel door with fanlight, original stone steps and classical doorcase

8.2.6 Original house name plaques and stone steps to front doors survive in some places.

8.2.7 A few good historic shopfronts remain within the town but modern shop windows and poor fascia advertising and hanging signs are one of the few detracting features of the conservation area. Shop awnings are a common feature but with varying degrees of success in their design.



Fig. 20 The traditional design of this shop awning is somewhat overshadowed by the exuberance of the advertising

8.2.8 Key civic and religious buildings within the conservation area such as the County (Town) Hall, Methodist Chapel and Welsh Congregational Chapel demonstrate an architectural hierarchy in the classical style by having characteristic details not seen on other buildings such as: being detached; set back from the building line; Romanesque windows; band courses; cross gables; large window proportions and so on. Interestingly, the parish church, Holy Trinity, although originally built during the late Georgian period (1835) was rebuilt in 1872 in the Early Gothic style and completely at odds with the rest of the architecture of the town.

8.3 Boundaries and Street Furniture

8.3.1 Most properties in the centre of the town open directly onto the pavement and therefore there is little need or space for front boundaries, although moving slightly out of town a few properties do have front gardens and iron railings. High stone boundary walls are common in the back lanes marking property boundaries with lower stone walls along some parts of the roads, particularly where buildings are set back or there is an open space. There has been some piecemeal replacement of traditional boundary treatments using inappropriate modern materials or designs.



Fig. 21 Traditional cobbled pavements



Fig. 22 Welsh Cob statue at Alban Square



Figs. 23 & 24 Flower displays add to the town's already colourful character

- 8.3.2 There is a wide range of traditionally styled street furniture in either black or blue, including benches and seating, rubbish bins, lighting, notice boards, bollards and so on. Only the lighting along the main road appears slightly out of context.
- 8.3.3 Traditional patterned cobbled areas survive in many places in the town and other pavements are traditionally paved although with concrete slabs but the recent pavement widening scheme in Market Street has added large areas of tarmac, which are unsightly.
- 8.3.4 There are regular displays of flowers around the town which creates yet more colour and a cheerful atmosphere.
- 8.3.5 At the south eastern corner of Alban Square field is a monument of a Welsh Cob, which is a reminder of the historic (and recent) use of the field for the annual Aberaeron Festival of Welsh Ponies and Cobs (although it has not been held since pre-Covid).

9 DESIGNATED ASSETS AND IMPORTANT LOCAL BUILDINGS

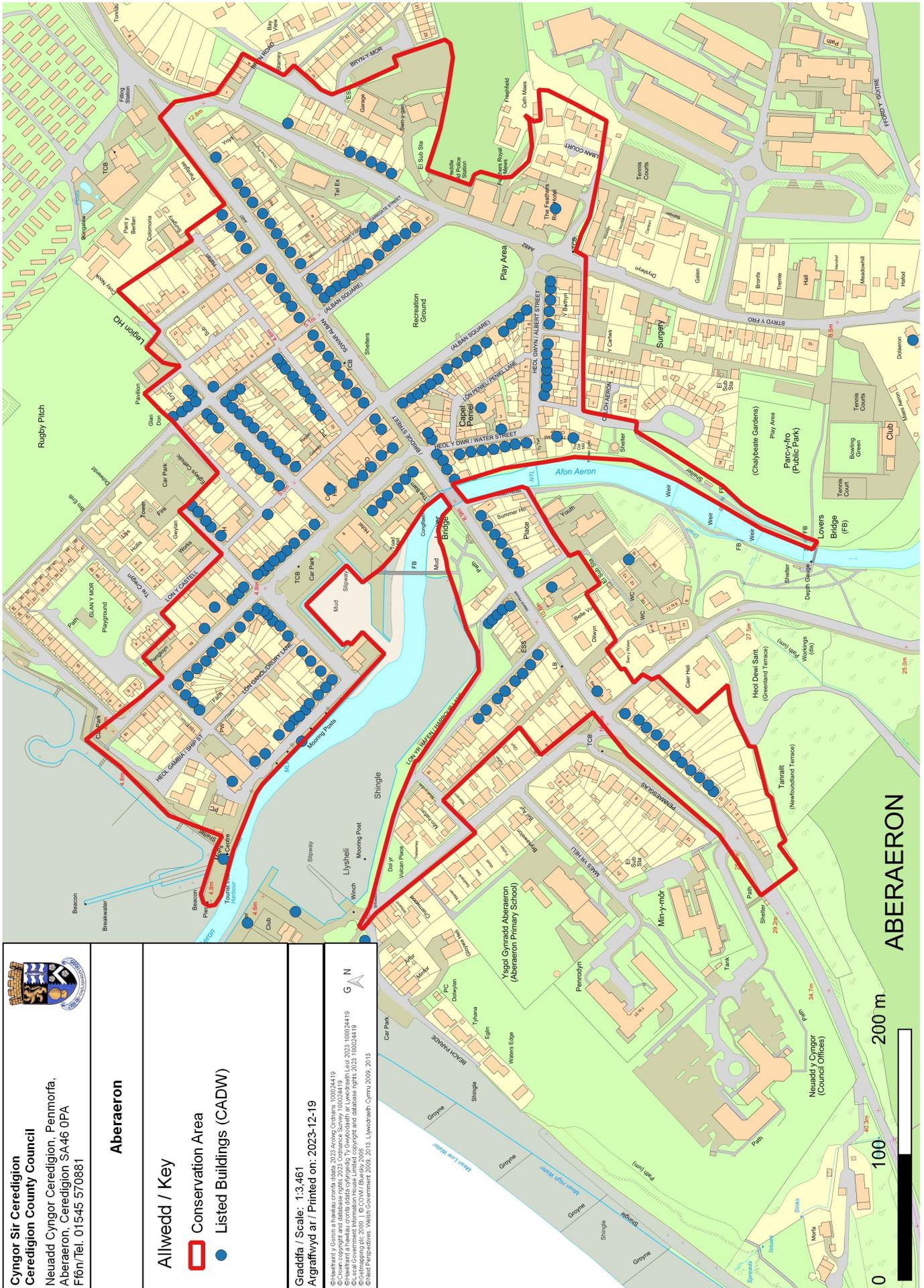
9.1 Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings

- 9.1.1 There are no scheduled monuments within the conservation area.
- 9.1.2 There are 234 Listed Buildings, 19 at Grade II* and 215 at Grade II. The majority of original Georgian style buildings are listed. Issues have occurred with those which are not listed such as loss of original architectural detailing.

9.2 Buildings of Local Interest

- 9.2.1 There are two levels of buildings of local interest - those which might meet the criteria for being included on a list of buildings of local special architectural or historic interest (see <https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/historic-assets/other-historic-assets/historic-assets-special-local-interest>) and those which positively contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 9.2.2 Local planning authorities may choose to identify historic assets of special local interest and keep a list of them. This is known as 'local listing'. The criteria for the selection of assets should be drawn up by the local authority but can be based on Cadw's guidance. Selection should also be based on community involvement. Planning authorities can then develop policies for their protection and enhancement through Local Plan policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- 9.2.3 Buildings which positively contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area are often traditional buildings with historic value, quality architecture or detailing. It does not

Fig. 25 Map of Listed Buildings within Aberaeron



Cyngor Sir Ceredigion
Ceredigion County Council
 Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa,
 Aberaeron, Ceredigion SA46 0PA
 Ffôn/Tel. 01545 570881

Aberaeron

- Allwedd / Key**
- ▭ Conservation Area
 - Listed Buildings (CADW)

Graddfa / Scale: 1:3,461
Argraffwyd ar / Printed on: 2023-12-19

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ABERAERON

0 100 200 m

mean that they have not been changed in some way nor that there is not room for enhancement, only that their loss would negatively impact on the overall character or appearance of the designated area. Buildings not included on the list should not be viewed negatively since there are often opportunities to enhance a building or structure or reinstate features. Their lack of inclusion may mean that several elements of a traditional building have been lost or its integrity severely compromised through later alteration. Lack of inclusion should not, by itself, be a reason for granting consent for demolition or for permitting poor quality development, design, materials or alterations.

9.2.4 Just outside the immediate centre of the town, such as in Oxford Street and along Water Street, there are a few unlisted buildings which are of the same typical Georgian style and have retained most of their original architectural detailing. These should be considered for inclusion on a 'local list'.

9.3 Other designated assets

9.3.1 Just outside the boundary of the conservation area and within its setting are several Listed structures which positively contribute to the setting and historical understanding of the area. These are shown on the previous map:

- Weigh House (Cadw Ref: 9978) - On an island site at the junction of Beach Parade, Harbour Lane and Wellington Street, close to the former limekilns and the harbour.
- Northwest Quay to Harbour Basin (Cadw Ref: 9980) - L-plan pier and attached quay at the harbour mouth of River Aeron.
- Southwest Pier to Harbour Basin (Cadw Ref: 9979) - L-plan pier and attached quay at the harbour mouth of River Aeron.

10 HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

10.1 People

10.1.1 The Reverend Alban Thomas Jones Gwynne was a country vicar who inherited two estates and a considerable fortune. He invested his new-found wealth in the development of Aberaeron.

10.1.2 A number of prominent historic architects have associations with Aberaeron: John Nash; Edward Haycock of Shrewsbury; and Middleton & Goodman of Cheltenham.

10.2 Traditions

10.2.1 The annual Aberaeron Festival of Welsh Ponies and Cobs is an historically based event and has been mentioned above.

10.2.2 The inner harbour and car park has hosted an annual fair on the 13th November since the early C19th.

10.2.3 The annual tug of war competition across the harbour is a memorable occasion and a tug of war competition has been held annually in the town since at least the late 19th century although it has not always been across the harbour.

10.3 Stamps, Gondola and Wells

10.3.1 Since 1970 Milford House has been known locally as the Stamp House when it appeared on a series of stamps of British Rural Architecture.

10.3.2 The Aberaeron gondola was built in 1881. This contraption was originally set up to allow Captain John Evans to connect his home to his timber sawmill on the opposite shore, after a severe flood had damaged the town's lower bridge. It consisted of a open car or carriage suspended over the river on a cable and powered by an attendant using a hand winch. This oddity quickly developed into a tourist attraction and by 1882, Capt Evans was opening his "tramcar" to the public on fair days. It became very popular and was known as the "carriage bach". By 1885 publican and coal merchant Evan Loyn had installed his own version of the ride. This gondola was called the "Aeron Express" and by the summer of 1901 the ride had carried around 12,500 fee paying passengers. The ride continued to operate until the early 1930s. A replica crossed the river for several years in the late 1980s when it was closed for health and safety reasons.

10.3.3 The Chalybeate Well is located off Chalybeate Street. It is reputed to have curative qualities due to the iron content in the water and is known as the 'fynnon goch' or 'red well'. The site is recorded on the historic (1890 and 1905) Ordnance Survey maps. It is now covered over with a circular stone building with a conical slate roof. Unfortunately, it has also become a site for anti-social behaviour including graffiti on the interior.



Fig. 26 Milford House stamp

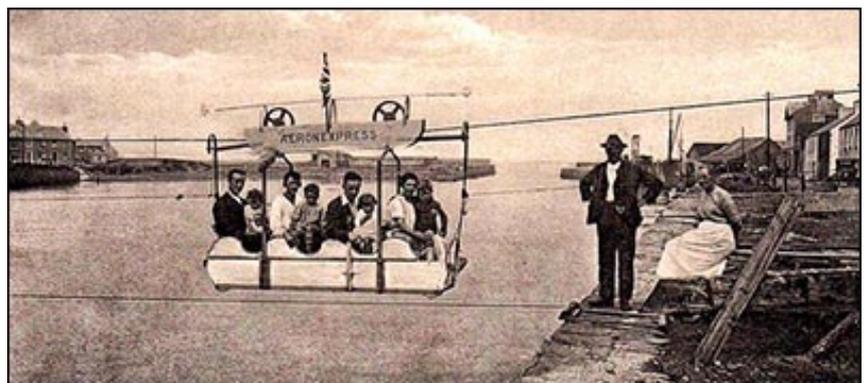


Fig. 27 The 'Aeron Express' gondola

11 HIDDEN HISTORIES

11.1 Archaeological Potential

11.1.1 There are two pre-medieval finds from Aberaeron, a Bronze Age axe and a Neolithic flint. Since there have been no other finds of this nature it seems unlikely that there was much prehistoric activity within this area although it does remain a possibility.

11.1.2 It is thought that the land on which Aberaeron was developed was at least partially Medieval common land. No Medieval buildings have been noted in the area and it is unlikely that there is much archaeological potential to find any remains from this period.

11.1.3 The industry associated with the development of the town and its maritime history may have left some below ground remains which have been covered by later development. Some of the early industrial buildings known to have existed south of Water Street have survived - the former woollen mill and forge are Listed Buildings. The forge was the place where the famous 'Aberaeron shovel' was first made. Also known to have existed in this area were a tannery, a wood turner's workshop, and a wheelwright.

12 BIODIVERSITY

12.1 Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

12.1.1 Cardigan Bay SAC covers the coast and an area extending out to sea from Ceibwr Bay in Pembrokeshire to Aberarth, just north of Aberaeron. It is designated because it has nationally and internationally important marine life. There are seven features for conservation for which it is designated:

- Bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*)
- Atlantic Grey Seal (*Halichoerus grypus*)
- Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*)
- River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*)
- Reefs
- Sandbanks (slightly covered by seawater at all times)
- Sea caves (submerged or partially submerged)

12.2 Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

12.2.1 The coast along this area is also designated as the Aberarth - Carreg Wylan SSSI for geological, geomorphological and biological reasons. Bottlenose dolphin and Atlantic grey seal are of special interest. Secluded beaches and sea caves provide pupping sites for grey seals. The shoreline, made up of reefs, rock pools, boulders, exposed cobble, shingle and sand, supports

a range of important intertidal communities including fine examples of honeycomb worm reefs. The nationally rare crustacean *Pectenogammarus planicrurus*, typical of clean shingle shores occurs here. The sea cliffs provide roosts and nest sites for nationally important populations of chough, kittiwake and lesser black-backed gull. Habitats of special interest associated with the cliffs and coastal slopes include cliff crevice and ledge vegetation, maritime grassland and coastal heathland supporting a large number of nationally scarce and regionally rare plant species including rock sea lavender, common gromwell and smooth cat's ear. The scarce pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly and the regionally rare small blue, are part of an important invertebrate community.

12.3 Trees

12.3.1 DataMapWales (2018 data) shows Natural Resources Wales' data on Urban Tree Cover. It shows that there are mainly individual trees within the conservation area and most within people's gardens. There are a few small groups of trees to the east of Princess Avenue although, again, these are mostly in people's gardens and a few small groups of trees in the area around Holy Trinity Church.

12.3.2 The wooded hillside to the southeast of Newfoundland Terrace at the southernmost point of the conservation area provides an important green backdrop to the architecture and positively contributes to its setting.



Fig. 29 Wooded hillslopes provide a green setting for Newfoundland Terrace

13 ISSUES — SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Excellent quality planned Georgian style town</p> <p>Mostly well thought through street furniture and paving</p> <p>Picturesque town - buildings, paving, colour and flowers</p> <p>Active community</p> <p>Historically designed, integrated and well used open spaces</p> <p>Popular tourism destination</p> <p>Few 'problem' or empty buildings</p> <p>Biodiversity of the Coast</p>	<p>Loss of architectural integrity on non-listed buildings</p> <p>Busy main road divides the area</p> <p>Poor design of some modern C20th structures - cumulative erosion of character</p> <p>Many poor quality shop fronts</p> <p>Modern shop fascia and signage</p> <p>Inappropriate shop awnings</p> <p>Recent tarmac paving</p> <p>Replacement of traditional boundary features with non-traditional materials</p> <p>Street parking / car parks</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Research into the post-medieval industrial areas</p> <p>Replacement of modern street lighting</p> <p>Improvement of tarmac pavements</p> <p>Replacement of lost architectural features</p> <p>Local listing to protect unlisted buildings</p> <p>Improvements of back lane areas</p> <p>Encouraging flower displays and historically inspired events</p>	<p>Inappropriate new development and extensions</p> <p>Further loss of architectural detailing and features</p> <p>Loss of individual trees</p> <p>Loss of local events</p> <p>Loss of traditional cobbled pavements</p>

FFYNIANT
— BRO —

LEVELLING
— UP —



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council



UK Government Wales
Llywodraeth y DU Cymru



ABERAERON

Conservation Area Management Plan

June 2025

Prepared for

Ceredigion County Council

This project is funded by the UK government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The GRIFFITHS HERITAGE CONSULTANCY Ltd

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This management plan addresses the issues raised in the appraisals and identifies appropriate responses commensurate with the significance of the area. The plan sets out realistic management objectives, taking into account resources and funding opportunities, and policies for enhancement.

2. ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

2.1 Introduction to Article 4 Directions

- 2.1.1 The special interest of conservation areas is expressed in the character and appearance of the area and not in isolated buildings. This means that it is essential to manage change carefully in conservation areas to make sure that their character and appearance are safeguarded and enhanced. To achieve this, there are special controls around demolishing buildings and cutting down, topping and lopping trees.
- 2.1.2 There are additional planning controls which can be applied to conservation areas to protect the historic and architectural elements that make the area special. These special controls are called Article 4 Directions. They are decided by each local planning authority depending on what particular element of the conservation area they wish to protect. They are most likely to affect owners who want to make changes to the outside of their building. These can include cladding, replacing doors or windows, and installing satellite dishes and solar panels.
- 2.1.3 These controls are not intended to prevent change; instead, they encourage developments in keeping with the area or that enhance its special character. Article 4 Directions could be used to help manage small-scale changes which would have little effect individually, but cumulatively could affect the appearance or character of a conservation area.
- 2.1.4 Articles 4(1) and 4(2) of the General Permitted Development Order 1995 enable local authorities to make directions that withdraw some permitted development rights, including from certain types of buildings or specified areas.
- 2.1.5 Article 4(1) Directions can be used to withdraw permitted development rights to most types of land and buildings but need to be approved by the Welsh Ministers.
- 2.1.6 Article 4(2) Directions apply to domestic buildings and structures, but only to those parts that front onto highways, waterways or open spaces. They can be confirmed by local authorities once the direction has been advertised locally and notice served on residents. Such directions

could also apply to the demolition of the whole or part of any gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure, which may or may not be associated with a domestic property.

2.1.7 Article 4 (2) Directions are the most commonly applied direction for control within conservation areas. They are often applied in a 'stick and carrot' scenario, where controls are applied through the planning system and the use of a Direction but incentives are applied through a grant system applicable to replacement or maintenance of traditional features.

2.1.8 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2022 contains a change to Article 4 Directions but as of the date of writing this has not yet come into force. This change removes Article 4(2) Directions and allows Local Authorities to make Directions without recourse to Welsh Government Ministers. In effect there will be two types of Directions, both served under Article 4(1) of the Order:

- An **Immediate Direction** is where permitted development rights are withdrawn with immediate effect and are then confirmed by the LPA following consultation;
- A **Non-Immediate Direction** is where permitted development rights are withdrawn following consultation and confirmation by the LPA.



Fig. 32 Stone walls have been identified as important boundary features within the conservation area

2.2 Aberaeron

- 2.2.1 There is currently no Article 4 Direction in place at Aberaeron.
- 2.2.2 The appraisal has identified that there has been a long term loss of traditional architectural features such as doors and windows and that this has cumulatively eroded the architectural character of the non-listed buildings within the conservation area.
- 2.2.3 The appraisal has also identified that there are important boundary treatments within the conservation area and that these are starting to be eroded through inappropriate replacement.
- 2.2.4 Chimneys have been identified as important features within the conservation area and many have lost their original chimney pots. There is currently no control over their loss or alteration.
- 2.2.5 There are examples of poor quality and inappropriately designed small residential extensions and back yard development. Further inappropriate development would cumulatively harm the character and appearance of the conservation area.

2.3 Recommendation **Depending on what legislation is in effect at the time of adoption**

- 2.3.1 That an Article 4 **(1 or 2)** Direction should be applied to Aberaeron Conservation Area. This cannot be applied retrospectively and only applies to dwelling houses and to elevations fronting a highway, open space or waterway. The Article 4 (2) should be applied to the following permitted development rights:
- Schedule 2 Part 1, Class A: The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house (to cover alterations to windows, alterations to doors, the rendering, or re-rendering, of properties)
 - Schedule 2 Part 1, Class B: Addition or alteration of a roof
 - Schedule 2 Part 1, Class C: Other alterations to roofs
 - Schedule 2 Part 1, Class D: The erection of porches
 - Schedule 2 Part 1, Class F: Provision or replacement of a hard surface
 - Schedule 2 Part 1, Class G: The alteration, erection, rendering, or removal, of chimneys
 - Schedule 2 Part 2, Class A: The erection, alteration, rendering, or removal, of boundary walls, fences, or railings
 - Schedule 2 Part 2, Class C: The external painting of buildings
 - Schedule 2 Part 11, Class C: Demolition of boundary walls, fences or railings

2.3.2 The article 4 should be applied as well as / in conjunction with the local listing recommendation and the development of a relevant Local Plan Policy.



Fig. 33 Inappropriate replacements of traditional features such as windows and doors can negatively impact on the individual building and the character and appearance of the wider conservation area

2.3.3 The Council should seek funding to develop a grant scheme which could be used to provide the incentive for owners to replace inappropriate traditional features.

3. BOUNDARY REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Local Planning Authorities have a duty to review their conservation areas and formulate and publish policies and proposals for their preservation and enhancement. Part of the review process is the consideration of whether the conservation area boundary is still considered to be appropriate and to see if any areas should be added or excluded.

3.1.2 Any further properties brought into the Conservation Area as a result of a review will be subject to minor additional controls. These are not onerous and designation can offer advantages to property owners, such as possible access to grant regimes.

3.2 Aberaeron

- 3.2.1 The current conservation area boundary includes the original extent of the planned Georgian style town and most buildings of special architectural or historic interest.
- 3.2.2 The boundary has not been changed since the area was designated in 1969.
- 3.2.3 As a result of the public consultation the four villas along South Road which appear on the 1880s Ordnance Survey map were identified as part of the historic town. These villas retain good late Victorian architectural features and positively contribute to the character of the area.

3.3 Recommendation

- 3.3.1 As a result of the public consultation a small extension to the boundary is proposed to include the four villas along South Road which appear on the 1880s Ordnance Survey map. These are:
- No 1 South Road
 - No 2 South Road / Awelfa
 - No 3 South Road
 - No 4 South Road / Hazledeen Guest house

4. NEED FOR DETAILED DESIGN GUIDANCE OR PUBLIC INFORMATION

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Local planning authorities are involved in the day-to-day management of conservation areas through their role in the planning process. Local planning authorities must aim to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas and need to scrutinise planning applications closely with these objectives in mind.
- 4.1.2 Detailed information about particular aspects of the historic built environment can help owners, occupiers, planning agents and the Local Planning Authority to decide the best ways of managing positive change and keep to a consistent approach.
- 4.1.3 Public information or interpretation can help ensure that everyone understands why an area is special. People who understand why something is special are more likely to care about it and want to look after it. It can also help with the tourism offer and encourage investment in a local area.

4.2 Aberaeron

- 4.2.1 There is no existing appraisal and management plan for Aberaeron to guide development management decisions and agents or owners looking to apply for planning permission.
- 4.2.2 There is currently no specific detailed advice regarding the management of architectural features of special interest and what actions might help to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 4.2.3 Many of the important buildings within the town are listed and therefore Cadw's suite of guidance on managing change relating to listed buildings are useful resources for dissemination.

4.3 Recommendations

- 4.3.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan should be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance and used to guide decision making.
- 4.3.2 Produce an Aberaeron Conservation Area leaflet for residents and businesses which explains what is important about the area, controls and what it means to be living and working within the area.
- 4.3.3 Update the existing shop front design guidance for Aberystwyth so that it can be used throughout all conservation areas in Ceredigion. Work with local business organisations to distribute and provide training.
- 4.3.4 Develop a colour design guide which would set out general guidelines and principles for appropriate colours and paint types to use within the conservation area, particularly for painting buildings, shop fronts and signage.
- 4.3.5 In partnership with other Local authorities, the South Wales and Mid-Wales Conservation Officers Groups, Cadw's Built Heritage Forum, IHBC, Tywi Centre and other organisations develop and adopt new guidance leaflets and information relevant to the area. Examples could include guidance on maintenance and repair, historic windows and doors, micro-generation and sustainability and energy efficiency for all conservation areas, historic, and listed buildings in Ceredigion. The sustainability and energy efficiency guidance should cover:
 - **Maintenance:** Building defects affect the long-term sustainability of historic buildings. Educating building custodians and contractors is essential to address these issues, to preserve the region's architectural heritage, and to meet sustainability goals. The use of

appropriate traditional materials and skills in a timely fashion is vitally important to the long term survival of historic buildings.

- ***Traditional construction and how old buildings work:*** Traditional buildings are generally defined as those that were built before 1919, with solid (as opposed to cavity) walls, using natural materials including stone, earth, brick, wood and lime. The term ‘traditional’ covers a huge range of types, styles and ages of building, from stone cottages to castles and town houses to chapels. The materials and techniques used in traditional construction have created the individual, contrasting and idiosyncratic buildings that help to define the distinctive character of our towns, villages and rural landscapes, and the identity of the communities that live in them. Older buildings use different building techniques to modern new builds. Understanding this and learning to use the appropriate techniques is vital to the longevity of our historic buildings.
- ***Energy saving and retrofit in historic buildings:*** The guidance should cover: Energy efficiency and why is it important - health, climate change and carbon emissions; What is retrofit and why do older buildings need a special approach?; Options for improving energy efficiency in traditional buildings - e.g. use, ensuring a whole house approach, alternatives to traditional window and door replacement, the importance of heating and venting, breathability and insulation, maintenance and repair etc.

5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL LISTING

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Local planning authorities may choose to identify historic assets of special local interest and keep a list of them. This is known as ‘local listing’. The list can include all types of historic asset — buildings, parks, gardens, monuments and archaeological sites — so long as they are not already formally designated.
- 5.1.2 The assets identified for inclusion on the list should make an important contribution to local distinctiveness and have the potential to contribute to public knowledge.
- 5.1.3 Their selection should be based on clear criteria, sound local evidence and public consultation. A conservation area appraisal is one way of identifying these assets.
- 5.1.4 An adopted list of historic assets of special local interest must be added to the local historic environment record for public accessibility. The Local planning authority must then develop relevant local plan policies that can be used for decision making.

5.1.5 Further information and advice can be found here: [Managing Lists of Historic Assets of Special Local Interest in Wales EN.pdf](#)

5.2 Aberaeron

- 5.2.1 Many of the buildings which positively contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area are statutory listed buildings.
- 5.2.2 The appraisal (see section 8.3) has identified that just outside the immediate centre of the town, such as in Oxford Street and along Water Street, there are a few unlisted buildings which are of the same typical Georgian style and have retained much of their original architectural detailing.
- 5.2.3 The few older vernacular style buildings, which are not listed provide evidence of the small earlier settlement in the area and are important for their evidential and historical significance.
- 5.2.4 The Chalybeate Well could be considered for inclusion on a 'local list' due to its historical importance.



Fig. 35 The Chalybeate Well Building

5.3 Recommendations

- 5.3.1 The Council should set up an 'Historic Assets of Special Local Interest Project' for the whole county that would identify the criteria for inclusion on such a list and develop the list.
- 5.3.2 Local communities should be involved with the selection process.
- 5.3.3 Ceredigion County Council should develop and adopt a relevant Local Development Plan policy.
- 5.3.4 The following sets out some suggested guidance on creating a list of buildings of special local interest (that are not already designated) that could be considered for inclusion:
- Any building which retains the majority of its historic architectural features and positively contribute to the street scene, mostly unlisted Georgian style buildings from the original planned town, as identified above
 - Any building or structure which has particular community value or landmark presence
 - Any building which is likely to retain archaeological evidence from a former historical period (consider older vernacular buildings)
 - Any structure which positively contributes to the public realm and has historical value

6. CONSIDERATION OF ENFORCEMENT

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Enforcement has a key role to play in the protection of conservation areas.
- 6.1.2 It is essential to ensure that all owners and occupiers of buildings understand where there are limitations for development, what their permitted development rights are, and that they can approach the LPA for advice.
- 6.1.3 Regular monitoring is a more proactive approach for LPAs which may help to reduce the number of contraventions.
- 6.1.4 Discussion and negotiation with the owner / occupier should be the first action taken in any case, which may lead to a suitable solution without the need for enforcement action.

6.2 Aberaeron

- 6.2.1 There is no current comprehensive baseline review information for Aberaeron.
- 6.2.2 Owners and occupiers may be unaware of their permitted development rights and where there may be restrictions on development.

6.3 Recommendations

- 6.3.1 The photographic survey produced as part of this conservation area appraisal should be used as baseline information for enforcement purposes.
- 6.3.2 The Council should make a commitment to follow best practice enforcement procedures within the conservation areas in Ceredigion.
- 6.3.3 The Council should take steps to ensure all owners and occupiers are aware of their permitted development rights and any restrictions.
- 6.3.4 A follow up photographic survey should be conducted during the next review of the conservation area appraisal, ideally every five years.

7. OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGENERATION

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 Historic areas can be an important focus for community regeneration. Their distinctive character is an asset that can deliver social, economic and environmental benefits for Welsh communities. Regeneration can help to create a sense of place and local distinctiveness, and support valuable skills and encourage investment.
- 7.1.2 Many historic areas have suffered from declining economic activity, which results in underused buildings and low investment. In these circumstances, targeted actions may be needed to unlock potential and realise wider benefits. Regeneration activities can give historic assets fresh meaning and relevance, breathing new life into underused and undervalued buildings and areas.

7.2 Aberaeron

- 7.2.1 Aberaeron is a thriving small town but relies heavily on the tourism industry.
- 7.2.2 Local events are well attended by both visitors and local communities.
- 7.2.3 Some historically based regular local events have failed to be held in recent years.
- 7.2.4 A Town Scheme enhancement project was run in Aberaeron from 1988 to 1998.

7.3. Recommendations

- 7.3.1 There are generally solid reasons for the cessation of regular events. However, the historically based events are / were important interpretative and economic events for the town. It is possible to re-imagine these events and re-invent them to help to increase public knowledge of the history and development of the town and the area. The County Council should support

and assist the Town Council and local groups in finding funding to support events within the town, especially those such as the November market and the Welsh Cob fair which are historical events.

- 7.3.2 Encourage the relevant organisations (town council?) to enter the RHS Wales in Bloom competition perhaps by assisting with the entry fee and other resources? Partners - Ceredigion Gardening Club, Ceredigion & District Growers Association, Aberaeron Allotment Association?
- 7.3.3 Encourage out of season events to reduce the reliance on the tourism economy.
- 7.3.4 Produce development design guides for any new sites which come up for development within or adjacent to the conservation area. New development schemes should take into account the requirements to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting. Consideration should be given to design, scale, layout, location, materials, architectural features, views and so on.
- 7.3.5 It has now been over twenty years since an enhancement scheme was run within the town. The Council should assess whether it would be possible to build on this previous work and continue to enhance the town, particularly in relation to shop fronts and signage and non-listed historic buildings.



Fig. 36 Design guidance is needed for potential development sites both within and in the setting of the conservation area

8. ADVERTISEMENT GUIDANCE AND CONTROL

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 One of the purposes of the advertisement control system is to encourage the display of outdoor advertisements which make a positive contribution to the appearance of the environment. Many conservation areas include commercial premises ranging from small corner shops to thriving commercial centres so outdoor advertising can be essential to commercial vitality. The kinds of advertisement which require planning consent include illuminated advertisements on business premises and advertisements on hoardings around development sites.
- 8.1.2 Authorities may also choose to adopt advertisement control policies as part of their proposals for the preservation or enhancement of conservation areas, for example, by the designation of areas of special advertisement control. Local planning authorities should use such controls flexibly in conservation areas to preserve those features of architectural or historic interest which led to designation.

8.2 Aberaeron

- 8.2.1 The conservation area has a large number of independent retail premises and some larger more regional or national premises, including shops, restaurants and public houses. Many of these positively contribute to the character of the area.
- 8.2.2 Unfortunately, there are few surviving historic shop fronts and some that have survived have been negatively impacted by modern signage and advertising.



Fig. 37 Historic shopfronts positively contribute to the character of the area but some modern signage negatively impacts on these positive features

8.3 Recommendations

- 8.3.1 Review the 2013 Aberystwyth shopfront guidance to cover good practice in all conservation areas and consider a re-release of the guidance with additional promotion throughout conservation areas in Ceredigion.
- 8.3.2 Seek funding for a shop front and signage grant programme.
- 8.3.3 Consider enforcement for unauthorised signage and combine with a grants programme.

9. BUILDINGS AT RISK

9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 Keeping buildings in use and repaired is the cornerstone of successful conservation area management. Neglected and underused buildings damage the vitality and attractiveness of conservation areas.

9.2 Aberaeron

- 9.2.1 There are very few empty or unused buildings within Aberaeron.
- 9.2.2 Empty commercial and retail buildings are quickly leased if they become empty.
- 9.2.3 Buildings for which there is no current use are often the most at risk. The structure covering the site of the former Chalybeate Spring is prone to graffiti and vandalism.
- 9.2.4 The Royal Oak, 30 North Road, is currently empty and appears to have been so for about five years. It is Grade II Listed (Cadw Ref: 10075) and has considerable group value with neighbouring late Georgian style buildings. It is in a prominent location on the main road through Aberaeron, at the junction with Darkgate Street. A lack of maintenance is starting to build up and the small pane sash windows mentioned in the listing description have been inappropriately replaced with Upvc. Please see Vacant Listed Building Audit.
- 9.2.5 Capel Peniel in Water Steet (Cadw Ref: 10156), is currently empty and up for sale. The building appears to be in relatively good condition but it has a remarkable interior and would need to be carefully conserved if sold for development.

9.3 Recommendations

- 9.3.1 The Council should set up a county wide Buildings at Risk Strategy which would work with both Listed Buildings and those considered to positively contribute to the character or appearance of conservation areas. This would identify a strategic approach to identifying and managing these buildings. (see: [Listed buildings at risk | Cadw](#))



Figs. 38 and 39 Empty Listed Buildings, such as The Royal Oak and Capel Peniel, should be a priority for the Council

9.3.2 Owners of listed buildings are obliged to keep them in a reasonable state of repair. Local planning authorities have powers to serve Repairs Notices and use other enforcement tools in extreme cases. If negotiation fails, then the Council should consider the use of its statutory powers.

9.3.3 The location of the structure at the Chalybeate Spring is perhaps a factor in the propensity for vandalism at this site. It is removed from the town centre and set aside from the more popularly used part of the park. A very localised community heritage project, perhaps involving the community on the nearby estate which would have the best opportunity for using the structure and for keeping an eye on it throughout the year. A group could be set up to further research and repair and look after this structure and provide additional interpretation. There may be community suggestions for a possible new use.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 In addition to the various enforcement tools available for local planning authorities there are additional opportunities for environmental enhancement. These include partnership working

with national agencies, other council departments and local organisations such as Town Councils and business forums.

10.1.2 Opportunities for environmental enhancement often relate to the physical infrastructure of the town, including highways, works by statutory undertakers, environmental health, housing and others.

10.1.3 Community engagement and mentoring can also achieve positive change within designated areas.

10.2 Aberaeron

10.2.1 The main road through the conservation area is a busy environment that experiences very high volumes of traffic and can at times become very congested. This is likely to be exacerbated with the forthcoming 20mph limits. This has a crucial influence on the physical environment and the area's character and appearance.

10.2.2 Across the conservation area street furniture including seating, refuse bins, bollards, road side railings, street lighting etc. is relatively coordinated, however, some items are out-dated, and others inappropriately positioned whilst others have been replaced with inappropriate new designs.

10.2.3 Within the conservation area a number of modern infill developments, particularly backyard developments and small extensions, have occurred over time, some of which negatively impact on the historic character and do not blend in with the overall quality and architectural features and style of the town.

10.2.4 Aberaeron has many instances of attractive historic flooring and paving. However, recent pavement widening schemes have been introduced using unsympathetic tarmac. These areas are often used as café and outdoor seating areas, the occurrence of which adds to the vibrancy of the area. However, their visual impact could be improved through the use of more appropriate materials.

10.3 Recommendations

10.3.1 The Council's development management team must encourage good design for extensions and new development within conservation areas, particularly by using the pre-application enquiry process and ensuring the current SPG is fit for purpose. The SPG may need revising and re-release with promotion especially within designated areas.

- 10.3.2 Ensure Enforcement Officers are trained in understanding the specific remit of conservation areas and designated buildings and sites and that resources are available for enforcement action if and when required.
- 10.3.3 If required, offer training for Highways Officers regarding good design in conservation areas. There are some excellent publications and guidelines available such as Historic England's 'Streets for All' (historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/streets-for-all/heag149-sfa-national/).
- 10.3.4 In conjunction with Highways colleagues draw up a design code for each conservation area in Ceredigion and seek funding for implementation. Cover surfacing, safety railings, street furniture, lighting and highways road and safety features.
- 10.3.5 Redevelopment of modern infill development - Use development management tools to ensure good quality imaginative new design. In considering proposals for redevelopment of such sites, amongst the primary concerns should be the principle of the overall scale of any new building, the architectural concept and detailing and its relationship with its context. A good new building should be in positive contrast with, or complementary to, its neighbours having regard to the pattern, rhythm, details and materials of the surrounding built form.



Fig. 40 Outdoor seating areas add to the vibrancy of the area

10.3.6 Consider creating a parking strategy for the town, bearing in mind the impact of on street parking and proliferation of cars within the town centre.

10.3.7 Consult with Highways colleagues, Welsh Government and others to consider what options are available to reduce the traffic congestion along the A487 through the town.

11. TREES, LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACES

11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 Trees are an important component of the character and amenity of many conservation areas and — along with green open spaces, including private gardens — have a valuable role to play in ecosystem services. To complement the controls over trees in conservation areas, it is a good idea for local planning authorities to develop specific local policies for the protection and management of trees and other elements of the natural environment, such as hedgerows and verges.

11.1.2 A strategy for trees could include an assessment of their amenity and biodiversity value, and their contribution to ecosystem services before there is pressure to remove them. The protection and management of trees and open spaces could be integrated in a green infrastructure strategy.

11.2 Aberaeron

11.2.1 The trees, open spaces and landscape which contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area have been identified within the appraisal.

11.2.2 The open spaces appear relatively well maintained and well used.

11.2.3 The importance of flower displays and planting schemes to the character and appearance of Aberaeron has been noted within the appraisal.

11.2.4 Aberaeron has a number of street trees which positively contribute to the character of the area, particularly around the harbour.

11.2.5 Ceredigion County council has an adopted Strategy for Greening Towns and a Green Infrastructure Assessment has been undertaken by consultants.

11.3 Recommendations

11.3.1 Continue to follow the recommendations in the relevant and adopted green infrastructure strategic documents.

11.3.2 Ensure the green infrastructure assessment and the strategy for trees in each conservation area is kept up to date and regularly reviewed.

11.3.3 Consider commissioning a separate tree report and / or involve the local community in identifying and mapping trees and tree groups suitable for Tree Preservation Orders.

11.3.4 Protect important trees, open spaces and views within the conservation area and those which contribute to its setting through the LDP.

11.3.5 Ensure existing street trees are retained, replaced as necessary and suitably managed.

12. MONITORING AND REVIEW

12.1 Introduction

12.1.1 The legislation requires local planning authorities to review existing conservation areas 'from time to time' - best practice is generally considered to be every five to ten years.

12.1.2 The review should establish progress achieved since the previous appraisal and should confirm or redefine both special interest and critical issues. The review should also revise the management plan and provide new recommendations where appropriate.

12.1.3 Monitoring change is essential to be able to evaluate the impact of designation and the success of management strategies in preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

12.1.4 Cadw considers that the baseline for periodic review is a full photographic survey recording buildings from the street, as well as other components of character, including trees, gardens, boundaries and views. There is scope for involving local community groups in carrying out this work.

12.2 Aberaeron

12.2.1 Apart from a brief description when it was designated Aberaeron does not have an adopted appraisal or management document.

12.2.2 This is the first review of the conservation area since it was designated.

12.2.3 The Council has recently appointed a new planning officer with responsibility for conservation.

12.3 Recommendations

12.3.1 The Council should adopt this appraisal and management plan as Supplementary Planning Guidance and should use it to inform decision making.

12.3.2 The Council should commit to review the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan at a suitable interval and at least within ten years.

12.3.3 The Council should involve the local community with the monitoring and management of the area and future appraisal reviews, where possible.

- 12.3.3 The Council should involve the local community with the monitoring and management of the area and future appraisal reviews, where possible.
- 12.3.4 The Council should ensure that, within budget constraints, Conservation and Heritage officers are politically supported and have sufficient resources.
- 12.3.5 The Council should facilitate partnership working between departments, local businesses and communities to ensure their statutory duty with regards to conservation areas is carried out.

APPENDIX A: PRIORITISED ACTION PLAN

ACTION / RECOMMENDATION (FOR FULL EXPLANATION SEE MANAGEMENT PLAN)	RESPONSIBILITY / PARTNERS	PRIORITY
The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan should be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance and used to guide decision making.	CCC - Heritage and Policy	High 0-1 years
Article 4 (1 or 2) Direction should be applied to Aberaeron Conservation Area	CCC - Heritage and Policy Local community / TCC	High 0-1 years
Implement the proposed boundary extension	CCC - Heritage and Policy Local community / TCC	High 0-1 years
The photographic survey produced as part of this conservation area appraisal should be used as baseline information for enforcement purposes	CCC - Heritage, Planning Enforcement, Legal	High 0-1 years
Draw up design briefs for potential development sites within and in the setting of the conservation area. Encourage good design for extensions and new development within conservation areas.	CCC - Development Management, Policy and Heritage	High - ongoing
Make a commitment to follow best practice enforcement procedures within the conservation areas in Ceredigion (Enforcement charter or similar). Negotiate with owners regarding infringements. Serve Repairs Notices and use other enforcement tools as necessary. Ensure Enforcement Officers are trained in understanding the specific remit of conservation areas and designated buildings and sites.	CCC - Heritage, Planning Enforcement, Legal	High - Ongoing
Protect important trees, open spaces and views within the conservation area and those which contribute to its setting through the LDP and development management. Identify trees suitable for Tree Preservation Orders.	CCC - Heritage, Policy, Ecology and Development Management Local community	High - ongoing
Continue to follow the recommendations in the relevant and adopted green infrastructure strategic documents. Ensure the green infrastructure assessment and the strategy for trees in each conservation area is kept up to date and regularly reviewed.	CCC - Ecology, Policy and Development Management Local community	High - ongoing
Ensure that, within budget constraints, Conservation and Heritage officers are politically supported and have sufficient resources	CCC	High - ongoing
Facilitate partnership working between departments, local businesses and communities to ensure their statutory duty with regards to conservation areas is carried out	CCC	High - ongoing

ACTION / RECOMMENDATION (FOR FULL EXPLANATION SEE MANAGEMENT PLAN)	RESPONSIBILITY / PARTNERS	PRIORITY
Produce an Aberaeron Conservation Area leaflet. Ensure all owners and occupiers are aware of their permitted development rights and any restrictions.	CCC - Heritage, Ecology and Policy Local community	Medium 2-3 years
Review the 2013 Aberystwyth shopfront guidance to cover good practice for shop fronts and signage in all conservation areas. Seek funding for a shop front and signage grant programme. Consider enforcement measures as necessary.	CCC - Policy and heritage Other local authorities, the South Wales and Mid-Wales Conservation Officer Groups	Medium 2-3 years
Set up an 'Historic Assets of Special Local Interest Project' for the whole county. Develop and adopt a relevant Local Development Plan policy.	CCC - Heritage and Policy Local community	Medium 2-3 years
Set up a county wide Buildings at Risk Strategy which would work with both Listed Buildings and those considered to positively contribute to the character or appearance of conservation areas.	CCC - Heritage, Policy, Regeneration, Housing Local community	Medium 2-3 years
Seek funding for a town improvement scheme or similar, particularly in relation to shop fronts and signage and non-listed historic buildings.	CCC - Heritage and Policy TCC	Medium 2-3 years
Training for Highways Officers regarding good design in conservation areas.	CCC - Heritage, Policy, highways Consultants	Medium 2-3 years
Set up a community heritage partnership project with relevant groups and the local community to seek improvements and protection for the Chalybeate well / spring. Consider sensitive sustainable potential new uses for the building.	CCC - Heritage, Regeneration, Schools, Environmental services TCC Community groups, local community	Low 3-5 years
Encourage and support the relevant organisations (Town Council?) to enter the RHS Wales in Bloom competition.	CCC - Regeneration TCC, local community, Ceredigion Gardening Club, Ceredigion & District Growers Association, Aberaeron Allotment Association	Low 3-5 years
Develop and adopt guidance leaflets and information for conservation areas e.g. historic windows, micro generation, external wall insulation, sustainability and energy efficiency etc.	CCC - Heritage Other Local authorities, the South Wales and Mid-Wales Conservation Officer Groups, Cadw's Built Heritage Forum, IHBC, Twyi Centre	Low 3-5 years

ACTION / RECOMMENDATION (FOR FULL EXPLANATION SEE MANAGEMENT PLAN)	RESPONSIBILITY / PARTNERS	PRIORITY
Develop a colour design guide which would set out general guidelines and principles for appropriate colours and paint types to use within the conservation area.	CCC - Heritage and Policy Local community	Low 3-5 years
Seek funding to support historically based events (e.g. Welsh Cob fair and November Market) and work in partnership to ensure they are held and sustainable. Encourage out of season events to reduce the reliance on the tourism economy.	CCC - Regeneration TCC Local community groups, schools	Low 3-5 years
Highways - draw up a design code for each conservation area in Ceredigion and seek funding for implementation. Consult with relevant partners to consider what options are available to reduce the traffic congestion along the A487.	CCC - Heritage, Policy, Regeneration and Highways Welsh Government	Low 3-5 years
Consider creating a parking strategy for the town.	CCC - Heritage, Policy, Highways Local community and businesses Consultants	Low 3-5 years
Commit to review the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan at a suitable interval and at least within ten years. Follow up photographic survey as part of next review. Involve the local community with the monitoring and management of the area and future appraisal reviews.	CCC - Policy and Heritage Consultants	Low 5 -10 years

APPENDIX B: REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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