

OLD ST MELLONS



CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

CARDIFF

Map 1
Old St Mellons Conservation Area Amended Boundary Adopted July 2007

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Background
- 1.2 Appraisals
- 1.3 Policy Context

2 HISTORIC CONTEXT.....

- 2.1 Historic Origins and Development of the Area

3 CHARACTER ASSESSMENT.....

- 3.1 A Distinctive Quality of Place
 - 3.2 The presence of Landmark Buildings and Landscape Features
 - 3.3 Hierarchies of Public and Private Space
 - 3.4 High Quality Local or Unusual Materials in the Townscape
 - 3.5 High Quality Architectural Detailing
 - 3.6 High Quality Hard and Soft Landscaping
- Townscape Plan of Old St Mellons Conservation Area

4 AREAS OF CHARACTER.....

- 4.1 Area 1: Central Core
- 4.2 Area 2: Southern Section
- 4.3 Issues and Enhancement Opportunities

5 A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

- 5.1 Background
- 5.2 Ways to Enhance the Conservation Area

6 RECOMMENDATIONS.....

7 CONSULTATION.....

Appendix 1 - Guidance for Those Planning Development
in the Old St Mellons Conservation Area

Appendix 2 - Trees and Landscape Advice

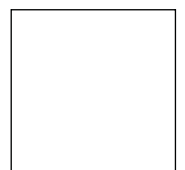
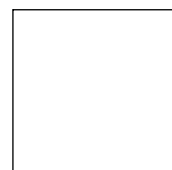
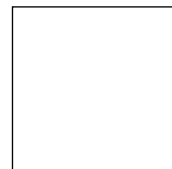
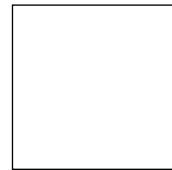
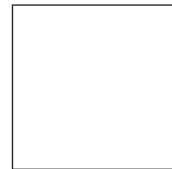
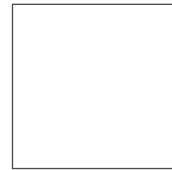
Appendix 3 - Boundary Review

Appendix 4 - Glossary

Background Sources & References

Acknowledgements

Contacts and Information



Map 1

Old St Mellons Conservation Area Amended Boundary Adopted July 2007



1.1 Background

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest. A decision to designate a Conservation Area is made by the Local Planning Authority after an assessment of the character of the identified area. This often extends beyond the buildings alone. The road layout, street scene, trees and green spaces can all contribute to the quality of the area. Designation gives special protection to this character and to achieve this, the Council has extra control over demolition, minor development and the protection of trees.

1.2 Appraisals

The Council has a duty to review Conservation Areas to establish whether their boundaries need amendment and to identify potential measures for enhancing and protecting the Conservation Area. To manage the process, a Conservation Area Strategy has been prepared. The strategy identifies priorities for the City, and the criteria to be used in the assessment of existing and new areas. These criteria are set out in Section 4 'Character Assessment'.

This appraisal provides an opportunity to establish whether the Conservation Area boundary needs adjustment; to identify the character of the Conservation Area; to identify the issues in the area and opportunities for enhancement; and, following consultation, to adopt the appraisal and guidance to protect the Conservation Area's special character.

The findings of an appraisal of the Old St Mellons Conservation Area are presented here with recommendations for its future care and enhancement.

1.3 Policy Context

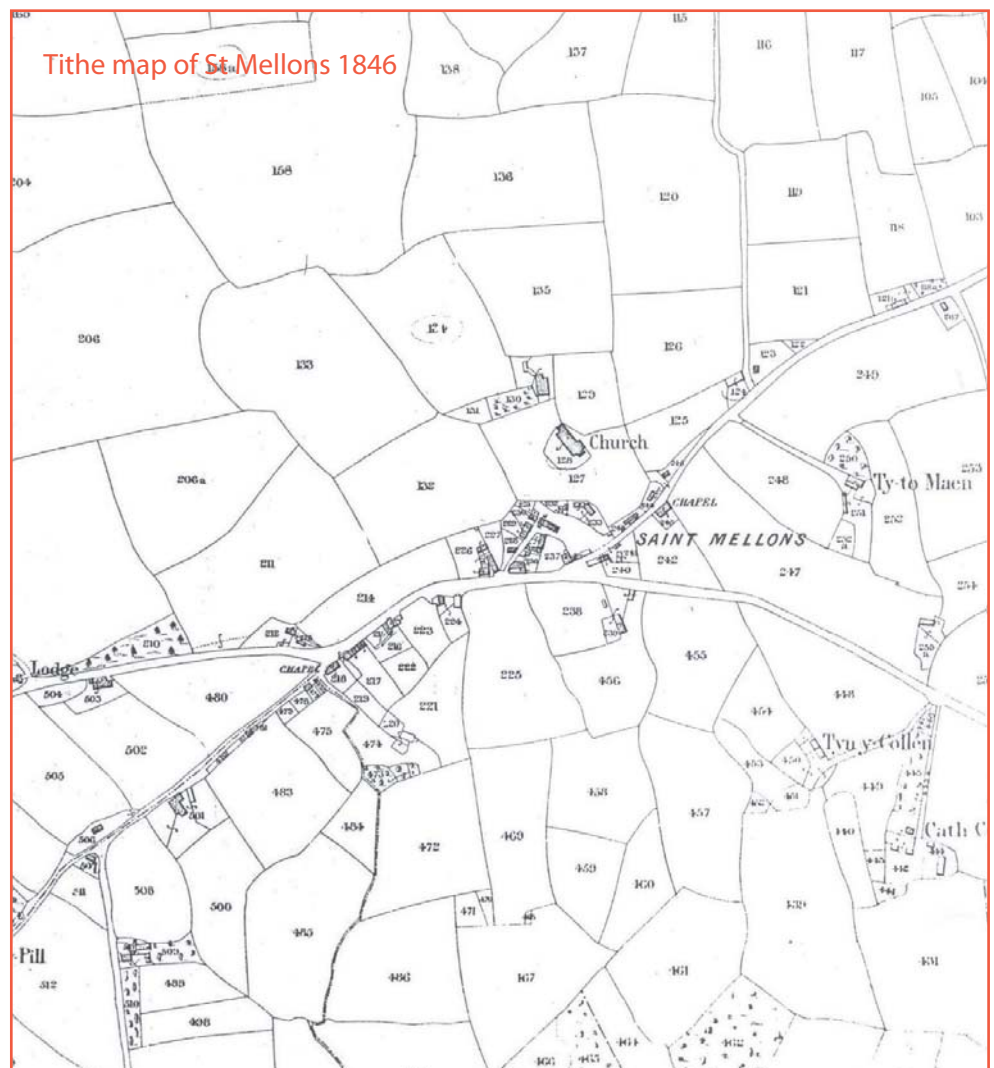
A key part of undertaking the appraisal is to define the character of the Conservation Area, for which appropriate guidance may be prepared. This can be supported by parallel policies within the statutory planning framework. This is provided by the adopted City of Cardiff Local Plan and the adopted South Glamorgan (Cardiff Area) Structure Plan, until such time as a Local Development Plan has been adopted.

2 historic context

2.1 Historic Origins and Development of the Area

St Mellons village evolved as a focal point for an agricultural area and as a small commercial centre catering for travellers on Newport Road, the main London – Cardiff route that has existed since Roman times.

For most of its history St Mellons village was known as Llaneurwg and until 1974 formed part of Monmouthshire County. A tithe map of 1846 reflects the dominant roles of agriculture and travel in the village's development. The area is surrounded by fields with the large farmstead of Ty-to-Maen (the site of St John's College) identified. The road layout is shown largely as it is today (though an important realignment occurred around 1900) as are the location and plots of many buildings including The Bluebell Inn and White Hart, both notable coaching houses.



Records of the nineteenth century reflect the growth and roles of the village; it contained two forges, a wheelwright, tearooms, a bake house, a Doctors Surgery, a resident nurse as well as public houses. Public houses in St Mellons benefited from the Welsh Sunday Closing Act (preventing public houses in certain areas from opening on Sundays) as it did not apply to Monmouthshire prior to 1921.

Subsequent plans of the area show that St Mellons village evolved slowly and incrementally; a plan from the 1940's shows the village still bearing much resemblance to the tithe map dated nearly 100 years earlier. However, in the latter half of the twentieth century the fields around the village were lost to large scale development so that the village is now enveloped by housing estates and its rural context and spatial detachment from other parts of Cardiff lost. Yet whilst the village has become a residential area closely linked to Cardiff, much of the fabric and several facilities of a distinctive village remain, though features such as the village school (previously the Poor House) no longer exist.

The age, history and original roles of the village are clearly visible today through features such as:

- Religious structures, reflecting cultural aspects in the development of the village: St Mellons Church (14th – 16th century, though it stands on the site of an earlier Norman building); Bethany Presbyterian Church (19th century); Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses (Formerly Soar Welsh Independent Chapel, 19th century); and the base of a medieval carved Celtic cross in the grounds of St Mellons Church which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- Nineteenth century cottage dwellings, presumably replacing earlier housing, reflecting cultural aspects in the village's development.
- Four public houses, the White Hart, Star Inn, Fox and Hounds and The Bluebell Inn, the latter of which used to offer stable facilities and a pump. These date from the nineteenth century or earlier and reflect the importance of travel and commerce in the development of the village.



- The history of the village is clearly visible today through features such as this stone on Bethany Presbyterian Church and
- Nineteenth century cottage dwellings

3 character assessment



3.0 A number of key qualities have been identified to assist the appraisal of the area. They follow government advice and are identified within the 1997 Cardiff Conservation Area Strategy. They are:

- A distinctive quality of place.
- The presence of landmark buildings and landscape features.
- Hierarchies of public and private space.
- High quality local or unusual materials in the townscape.
- High quality architectural detailing.
- High quality hard and soft landscaping.

A brief analysis of each is set out below

3.1 A Distinctive Quality of Place



The boundary of the Conservation Area broadly corresponds with the historic village of St Mellons. The village's history and development is reflected in its buildings, ranging from a medieval Church and 19th century cottages and public houses to late 20th century housing.

The area has a distinctive character created through a combination of factors including individual and groups of buildings, scale, landscaping and land use. In particular, the form of St Mellons village is influenced by the roads leading into it which convey a sense of approach, partly resulting from views of the church and the cluster of buildings in the core. Mature trees and hedgerows at these entrances reinforce this sense of place.



The Conservation Area is divided in two by the heavily trafficked Newport Road, a constant reminder of the importance of the Cardiff – London route in shaping the development of the village.

Buildings and their Grouping

A key characteristic of St Mellons village is its 'organic' or unplanned nature, typified by buildings of individual design that follow the contours of the land. This creates staggered skylines, meandering lanes, varying ground levels, ever changing views, irregular plots and a unique village layout.

Each building is of visual interest, but combines to create groups of buildings of greater visual impact.

This can be seen in the southern section of the village where several buildings are positioned around a cross roads. This grouping makes them visually prominent and emphasises their different scale, design and status. The domestic scale of the cottages is also emphasised by the scale and elevated location of the Church opposite.

- View of the historic village of St Mellons
- Mature trees and hedges along an approach road to the village
- St Mellons Village is organic/unplanned

3.2 The Presence of Landmark Buildings and Landscape Features



Landmark Buildings

For the purpose of this appraisal, a landmark building is one which has significant social and historic links with the development of the area, is unique within its setting, and contributes positively to the character of the area. Within the Conservation Area twelve buildings/structures have been identified as landmark buildings including nine Listed and one Locally Listed Buildings. These are identified on the Townscape Plan on page 13.



Locally Listed Buildings, whilst not afforded statutory protection like Listed Buildings, are considered to be of particular local significance. All ten Listed and Locally Listed buildings provide landmark features within the Conservation Area and significantly contribute to its form, historic and architectural wealth and individual character, as do the Star Inn and the house 'Brynhyfryd'.

These twelve structures, their architectural details and the way they relate to and interact with other buildings and spaces within the Conservation Area are important in creating a sense of place, history and character.



St Mellons Church is a key building. Built on a knoll overlooking the Severn, it occupies a prominent location, reflecting the importance of the Church in the days of its construction and its use as a beacon for shipping (though it no longer has an illuminated cross for this purpose). It is the highest building in the Conservation Area, traditionally dominant over the rest of St Mellons with its large scale (in relation to the size of the community at the time of construction) reflecting the Church's cultural significance.

Its architecture is unique within the Conservation Area due to its medieval (fourteenth century) components. Together with the graveyard, Lych gate and memorials, this rubble stone church helps reflect the age and cultural origins of the village.



The two Listed and one Locally Listed public houses (The Bluebell Inn, White Hart and Fox and Hounds), together with the Star Inn, are a key reminder of the importance of commerce in the development of St Mellons and create an essential part its character. Located in close proximity to each other and near/ abutting the main thoroughfare, reinforcing the role of travel in the history of the village, they are visually prominent and create both a commercial hub and core to the village.

Bethany Presbyterian Church was designed by an exceptional local architect, H C Harris. Prior to road realignment it was located on the main thoroughfare and was therefore visually prominent. Whilst it is no longer located on the main route, it is sited towards the base of a rising slope and as a result dominates the southern part of the Conservation Area. As with St Mellons Church its dominance and scale reflects the cultural significance of the Church at the time of its construction.

The Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, a former chapel, like other religious buildings is located in a prominent location within the village and architecturally is more imposing than most other buildings. Together with the War Memorial (an important local monument) and the public houses, it has group value within the centre of St Mellons village, helping maintain the village core.

- Lych Gate to St Mellons Church
- St Mellons Church and graveyard
- The White Hart and The Bluebell Inn
- Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses

Brynhyfyd is a substantial house and garden containing numerous mature trees. With its large proportions and features such as bay windows, ornate barge boards and stone boundary walls, this well maintained building is unlike that of other properties in the Conservation Area. Located along Newport Road it is visually striking and reflects the village's development in the nineteenth century.

Landscape Features

A key part of the character of the Conservation Area is the high level of soft landscaping provided by trees, hedges, field, areas of open grass, burial sites and gardens. Together with the organic form and domestic scale of the area (e.g. narrow roads and cottage style housing) this soft landscaping is an important village feature. (The Townscape Plan on page 13 identifies trees and hedges of significant townscape value.)

There is one Tree Preservation Order (TPO) within the Conservation Area, the City of Cardiff (St Mellons Church) TPO 1978. This protects two individual trees and one group of six trees in what is now the garden of The Timbers, Church Lane. However, under Conservation Area legislation all larger trees within the Conservation Area boundary are afforded protection (see Appendix 2).

The identity of the village is also enhanced by the continued existence of hedgerows on one or both sides of all the approach roads. Not all the hedgerows are old, and some are now discontinuous.

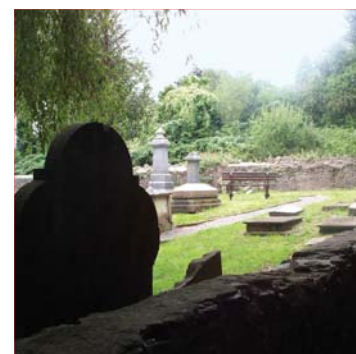
It is of historic interest that the hedgerow to the rear of the Village Hall denotes a former field boundary and that both it and the field opposite the Church is shown on the tithe map of 1846. As such this hedge is retained in its entirety within the boundary of the Conservation Area. The field is retained as an integral part of the village.

3.3 Hierarchies of Public and Private Space

There are a number of spaces that are important to the setting and character of the Conservation Area and which can be accessed by the public. These include the churchyards of Bethany and St Mellons Churches, the burial ground adjacent to Y Bwythyn, the overgrown field opposite St Mellons Church, public open space adjacent to the Village Hall and roads and pavements and their verges. These spaces are proportional to the domestic scale of the village.

The burial areas provide a link to the historic development of the village. The overgrown field largely affords visual open space whilst the public land adjacent to the Village Hall provides informal open space. All these spaces contain trees and hedges and are largely defined by physical boundaries. The road/pavement verges provide both a visual and functional feature.

Gardens to residential properties and public house car parks are distinct private spaces, defined as such by physical boundaries. Gardens provide valuable soft landscaping within the Conservation Area but are clearly recognisable as private spaces. Likewise, the car parks, which are relatively big (though aesthetically poor), are largely enclosed and readily identifiable as belonging to a particular building. The exception to this is the parking area to the rear of the Star Inn which does not relate to any particular building, is in poor condition and has an open frontage along Church Lane.



- Brynhyfyd
- Soft landscaping is a key characteristic of St Mellons
- Burial ground adjacent to Y Bwythyn
- Overgrown field opposite St Mellons Church

Paths (formal and informal) exist throughout the Conservation Area, including two public rights of way (PROW), one north of Brynhyfryd and the other adjacent to Summerwood House and The Timbers. These paths make the area highly permeable to pedestrians and provide links to surrounding development.



Overall there is a positive perception of personal safety in the daytime. Three areas where this may not be so are:

- the area of open space adjacent to the Village Hall which is screened by mature hedge and trees. The formal access to this off Newport Road is via a footpath, the entrance of which is largely hidden, and for its initial part is lined by trees and overgrowth.
- the PROW north of Brynhyfryd which is relatively narrow, lined by high boundary treatments and, due to its alignment, affords limited views of other users.
- the area adjacent to (west of) St Mellons Church and the lane/PROW adjacent to the properties Summerwood House and The Timbers which can feel isolated and dark.



3.4 High Quality Local or Unusual Materials in the Townscape

A key factor in preserving or enhancing the Conservation Area is the use of traditional materials and construction methods. In St Mellons materials and the way they are used are not necessarily elaborate but they do play a large part in creating the village's character. An important part of the village is the public realm; as such its treatment needs thorough consideration, both in terms of aesthetics and in being fit for modern purpose.



Buildings

Generally traditional building materials and detail in the village are:

- slate roofs at 45 degree pitch with brick chimneys (occasionally rendered and painted). More important or later buildings may also have ornamental ridge tiles, finial detailing and/or ornamental barge boards.
- external walls of stone or painted render or a mix of the two, sometimes including brickwork.
- wooden windows and doors, of a style reflecting the age and status of the building, and stone cills.
- boundary treatments of stone wall, railing, hedge or a mix of these.



- Footpath adjacent to Brynhyfryd
- Slate roof with ornamental ridge tiles
- Rendered painted walls and traditional windows
- Stone boundary wall

Throughout the Conservation Area these materials and features can still be found. However, many materials and features are not in keeping with the age and style of the buildings within the Conservation Area and detract from its character. The visual impact of these discordant features is heightened when introduced to terraces and can affect the group appearance of buildings. The cumulative effect of these alterations is to significantly erode the character of the Conservation Area.

Public Realm

Most materials within the public realm are modern. Pavements and roads have tarmac surfaces with concrete kerbs, except for a short length of kerbing opposite the Fox and Hounds which is of traditional stone. Of note are the expanses of coloured tarmac on Newport Road which are visually distracting and detract from the Conservation Area's appearance. Street furniture such as lighting columns, barriers and bins are also of modern materials and design and are not generally sympathetic to the character of the village.

3.5 High Quality Architectural Detailing

The charm of terraced cottages often lies within their relative architectural simplicity and uniformity. In St Mellons typical features are: slate roofs with red brick chimneys; rendered painted walls; wooden door and window frames; three small recessed front windows (longer than they are wide) and stone window cills. When features are altered or added, e.g. introducing different styles, dormer windows, porches, etc. then the visual balance of the terrace is distorted and its impact diminished.

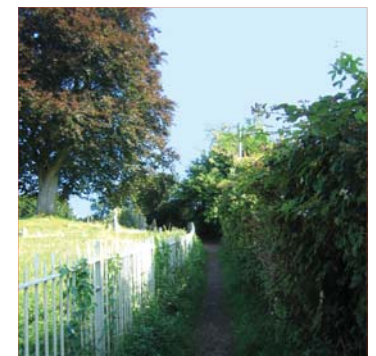
Semi-detached and detached houses in the Conservation Area are individual in architectural detail reflecting the organic growth of the village. As with the cottages, alterations to these properties have been undertaken. Frequently alterations include use of details and/or materials not akin to that of the original dwelling, though perhaps are less obvious on detached dwellings. The condition of properties also varies, the old school house, for example, appears run down, however, the majority of buildings are well maintained.

A number of late twentieth and early twenty first century properties are located within the Conservation Area. Generally their scale, design and materials respect those of the traditional buildings within the Conservation Area. These newer buildings help define and enclose spaces within the village and form an integral part of it.

The architectural detail of commercial and community buildings varies. Generally these are the most elaborate buildings within the village and are well maintained. The Churches have exemplary detailing (stonework, windows, decorative finishings) that contribute to their justification for listing. The public houses, whilst having many characteristics of dwellings in terms of materials and design, also feature additional architectural detail. The White Hart, for example, has decorative ridge tiles, large chimneys, many windows of original style and bay windows.

The Seaview Stores, however, has a prominent, modern shopfront and upper storey bay window, neither of which reflects the character of the village in terms of materials or design. Again, the Village Hall is modern in design with non traditional roof shape and window design. However, set back from Newport Road and finished with characteristic painted rendered walls and dark roof it is not an obtrusive building.

A variety of traditional boundary treatments exist within the Conservation Area. These include stone walling, railings and hedging. Where traditional boundaries have been repaired or replaced it is observed that modern materials are often used, such as concrete block and closed fencing. This results in the loss of traditional details of the Conservation Area. In addition, the standard of repairs/replacements varies; some are poor in standard and detract from the appearance of the area.



- Modern materials and street furniture used in the public realm
- A well designed modern property in the Conservation Area
- The White Hart
- Boundary treatments of railings and hedging

3.6 High Quality Hard and Soft Landscaping

Hard Landscaping

Generally, materials within the public realm are modern. The pavements and roads have tarmac surfaces with concrete kerbs except for a short length of stone kerbing opposite the Fox and Hounds. The tarmac in areas such as The Ton and Church Lane is heavily patched and the expanses of coloured tarmac along Newport Road are visually distracting; both detract from the appearance of the village.

Street furniture such as lighting columns, barriers and bins are also of modern materials and design and are not generally sympathetic to the area's character. As such opportunities exist to raise the quality of the public realm through more appropriate choice of materials and design. This is particularly important given that the public realm is one of the most visible and accessible parts of the Conservation Area.

Soft Landscaping

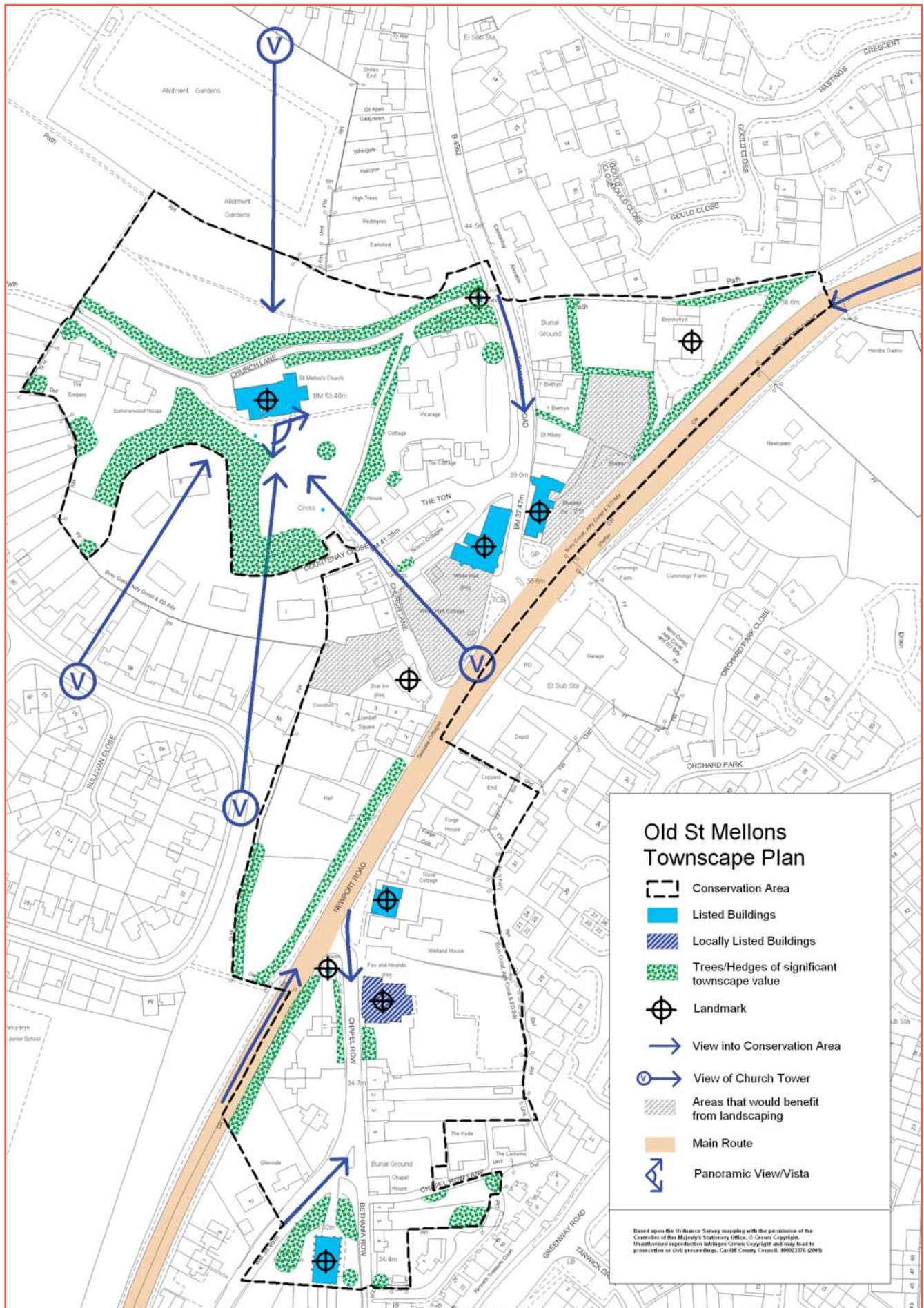
A distinct characteristic of the Conservation Area is its high level of soft landscaping, both publicly and privately owned. This includes mature trees (individual and groups) and hedgerows throughout the Conservation Area (as illustrated by the Townscape Plan on page 13), church grounds, field, informal open space, small islands of grass and private gardens with lawns and plants (though there has been some erosion of the latter through the increased use of hard landscaping).

Soft landscaping is important in helping define and enclose spaces and is also a visual feature and land use. Together with the modest scale of buildings and streets in St Mellons it significantly contributes to a village atmosphere. In particular, the mature hedgerows and trees are an important feature along the approach roads to St Mellons, helping convey a sense of physical detachment from the surrounding development and contributing to the village's setting.



- Heavily patched tarmac in The Ton
- Street furniture of modern design and materials
- One of several grass islands
- Hedging helps define and enclose spaces and is a visual feature

Townscape Plan of Old St Mellons Conservation Area



4 areas of character



St Mellons village has evolved around a main transport route and can be seen as having two parts, a central core and a southern section. Both sections of the Conservation Area retain their village character but can be viewed separately because of the road divide and the individual characteristics of each section.

4.1 Area 1: Central Core

The Central Core can be sub-divided into distinct areas:

St Mellons Church – a distinctive, open area traversed by a number of paths and closely related to the cluster of buildings to its south.

Llandaff Square – a self contained group of cottages around a small central courtyard the main value of which is its own charm and interest, as opposed to any major contribution to the wider scene.

Church Lane – linking the Church to Newport Road this lane is bordered by cottages and a public house, though the sense of enclosure is imperfect due to the car park on its south eastern side.

Tyr Winch Road – this road narrows to form an interesting entry between two old public houses before emerging onto Newport Road.

Newport Road Frontage – dominated by three public houses and two large car parks. Green areas frame the junction with Tyr Winch Road but are not landscaped and large scale parking overwhelms the relatively domestic scale of the buildings. Signs and advertisements proliferate and are a strong and visually confusing feature.

Residential Core – the grouping and scale of buildings reflects that of 'the traditional village', though building features do not generally do so.



- Llandaff Square
- Church Lane
- Frontage with Newport Road

4.2 Area 2: Southern Section

The Southern Section can be sub-divided into distinct areas:

Residential Core – a mix of cottage, semi-detached and detached properties of traditional and modern design, these buildings are largely situated in a triangular form and give the impression of a central core.

Frontage and Junction with Newport Road – provides a distinct entry point to the southern section. Kingdom Hall, the War Memorial and an area of green frame the junction allowing clear views of the public house. The Forge buildings and Droke House together with the Village Hall and Seaview Cottages provide a link between the two sections of the village and Conservation Area.

4.3 Issues and Enhancement Opportunities

Despite the physical separation presented by Newport Road, the issues and opportunities for enhancement in both sections of the Conservation Area are largely the same and are therefore dealt with as a whole.

Issues

Alteration to Buildings

Architectural style and detail is an essential part of the character of St Mellons. Many buildings throughout the Conservation Area have undergone some form of alteration ranging from window and door replacement to reroofing and extensions, at times using materials and styles not akin to those of the original building. Where this occurs the appearance of individual buildings is altered, the degree of which depends on the nature of the works. The cumulative effect of these alterations is to erode the area's traditional character.

Maintenance

Buildings/structures that receive inadequate maintenance and fall in to disrepair can make the area appear run down (though this is not itself a reason for demolition) and can result in the loss of features that contribute to local identity.

Boundary treatments

Old St Mellons Conservation Area is fortunate in that boundary enclosures have largely been retained. Boundary treatments are a highly visible element of the street scene and important in providing a sense of enclosure within the Conservation Area, as such their condition and appearance influences the character of the Area.

However, the condition and materials of these boundary treatments varies. A number of boundaries are incomplete or in a poor state of repair, others have been repaired unsympathetically and others are constructed from modern materials detracting from the appearance of the Conservation Area.

Advertisements

Advertisements are frequently attached to boundary treatments fronting Newport Road which due to their size, appearance and location detract from the character of the Conservation Area.

Trees

Currently a generation of mature beeches is being progressively lost within the Conservation Area and the many mature black pines potentially under threat, as a disease they are susceptible to is becoming more prevalent in the locality. In the past tree damage has also occurred through construction works.

As trees are a main feature of soft landscaping, a key characteristic of the village, replacement trees of suitable species should be planted as the old ones are removed/opportunities occur. Non replacement of trees is an area of concern as this will affect the nature of the village's and Conservation Area's soft landscaping in the future and their overall character.

Car Parks, Roads and Pavements

Four car parks exist in the Conservation Area. They are highly visible from different points within the area but are generally featureless expanses of tarmac that detract from the area's appearance. Three of these are highlighted on the Townscape Plan on page 13 as areas that would benefit from landscaping. Road and pavement surfaces are also of tarmac, including coloured tarmac for traffic management purposes. The repair of these surfaces varies and there are areas where it is substandard or patched.

Soft Landscaping

A key characteristic of the Conservation Area is its high level of soft landscaping including trees, hedges, verges, burial grounds, gardens and informal green space. These are generally well managed, though it is noted that: a number of mature trees restrict the view of Bethany Church; hedgerows adjacent to paths can become overgrown; and green spaces adjacent to pavements/roads are bland for much of the year. Some areas are overgrown, though this does not necessarily detract from the area's appearance.

Road Signs and Street Furniture

Design of street furniture (in particular lights, barriers, bins and signs) throughout the Conservation Area reflects the age in which it was installed. At certain locations, primarily the junctions of Newport Road with Tyr Winch Road and Chapel Row, there is a conglomeration of such items which because of design, location and cumulative effect detract visually from the area.

Enhancement Opportunities

- To encourage property owners to reinstate/retain traditional architectural features/style, materials and boundary treatments and to retain and manage soft landscaping features.
- To encourage retention and enhancement of key frontages and features of the village to maintain a sense of 'village'.
- To encourage landscaping enhancements to car parks.
- To encourage maintenance of car park, road and footpath surfaces, retaining original stone kerbing and having regard to Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to Public Rights of Way.
- To improve the appearance of advertisements.
- To reduce the number of and improve the appearance of highway signs and street furniture, such as bollards, lighting, barriers and bins.
- To review traffic management measures along Newport Road to try to enhance their design in relation to the Conservation Area.
- To minimise the effect of Newport Road splitting the village in two.
- To improve the appearance and use of road and pavement verges.
- To encourage, where appropriate, enhancement of footpath links throughout the Conservation Area.

- To encourage, where mature trees have been lost and as new opportunities occur, the planting of suitable tree species, to ensure that the village's and Conservation Area's key characteristic of soft landscaping/trees is preserved.
- To introduce physical features to emphasise the entrance points to the village.
- To encourage physical interpretation of the area's heritage throughout the Conservation Area.

5 a framework for action

5.1 Background

The Appraisal identifies potential for enhancement and together with guidance may be used in the following ways:

- Defining a scheme of enhancement to guide the development of the area.
- To inform the assessment of planning applications in accordance with policy 3 of the Local Plan, until such time as a Local Development Plan has been adopted.
- In setting out priorities for the management of the public realm in the future.
- In providing guidance for those who live in Old St Mellons Conservation Area.

These are the opportunities presented by the Appraisal:

- To maintain the special character of Old St Mellons.
- To ensure that new developments are well integrated within the area.
- That where there is scope for the enhancement of the public realm, they are achieved with regard for the Conservation Area's special character and the enhancements identified in the appraisal.
- To enhance key frontages and features.
- To introduce features to emphasise the entrance points to the village.
- To enhance the enjoyment of the area's special character.
- To increase the understanding and appreciation of the area's special character.
- To encourage and explain to those who live there why accurate repair is important.
- To support local groups / initiatives to keep St Mellons village an attractive place in which to live.

The issues to address are:

- Continued pressure to alter, demolish and/or extend buildings and boundary treatments.
- Retaining soft landscaping including gardens and hedges.
- Decline of older/mature trees.

- Maintaining and enhancing buildings and soft and hard landscaping including car parks, footpaths and roads.
- Lack of maintenance through inadequate funding in Council budgets.
- Competing pressure for change to buildings and houses to meet other objectives, for example, improved energy efficiency, and security for houses.
- The amount and design of street furniture.
- The dissection of the village by Newport Road and traffic issues associated with Newport Road.
- The appearance and location of advertisements.
- Vandalism which detracts from the appearance of the area and personal safety.

The following section aims to address these findings through proposals to enhance the character of the Conservation Area described in preceding sections.

5.2 Ways to Enhance the Conservation Area

Guidance

The most effective way to enhance the Conservation Area is to ensure that those planning work or development understand its character. Guidance set out in the final section provides advice on how buildings may be protected in proposals for development. It also provides advice to those who are considering repair and maintenance.

Enhancement

Although the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to prepare a scheme of enhancement for a Conservation Area, there is no identified budget or mechanism for its achievement. This means that enhancement can only be achieved in cooperation with other Service Areas within the Council or in partnership with developers, the community or other public bodies.

The following opportunities are those where the Council could have a significant role in influencing and bringing forward enhancements.

1. Adopting the guidance and enhancement opportunities identified within Appendix 1 and 2.
2. Managing existing Council budgets that influence the appearance of the area, for example budgets relating to:
 - housing repair
 - highway improvement and repair, including enhancement of footpath links

- parks maintenance and enhancement
 - neighbourhood renewal schemes
3. Identifying enhancement opportunities for the area with the community which could be implemented as and when funding arises/is secured and which could provide the basis for developer contributions should development occur in the future. This would mean that developers as stakeholders could play a key part in working with the Council and the community in the achievement of a common goal: To enhance the Conservation Area and the buildings within it.
 4. Encouraging and supporting local initiatives to enhance and strengthen local facilities/community services.

6 Recommendations

The following recommendations summarise the findings of the appraisal and the action that may be taken on adoption.

It is recommended that:

- The Guidance in Appendix 1 and 2 be published and circulated to those who live or have an interest in the Old St Mellons Conservation Area.
- The Appraisal and its recommendations and priorities for action are confirmed as the basis for corporate initiatives in the Conservation Area.
- The Appraisal serves as a framework for the assessment of planning applications in compliance with Section 72 of the Act.
- Improved communications with the Community Council, local groups and residents are established in partnership with the East Cardiff Conservation Area Advisory Group.
- The Appraisal is made available for study in local libraries and at local schools.
- An appropriate scheme of repair and maintenance be agreed to ensure that work in the public realm is sensitive to the character of the Conservation Area.
- The boundary change recommended in the first stage of the review be adopted and advertised in accordance with the Act.

7 Consultation

This document has been adopted following local consultation.

appendix 1

Guidance for Those Planning Development in the Old St Mellons Conservation Area

This guidance has been prepared to enable those planning work to repair or alter their house or property. The guidance has been prepared to respect and enhance the character identified in the appraisal.

Consents

Numerous buildings in the Conservation Area have been listed as buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Owners of these properties must obtain Listed Building Consent, via the Local Planning Authority, before they alter, extend or demolish any part of a building, whether internally or externally, in a manner that would materially affect its special architectural or historic interest.

For non-listed buildings, planning consent may be required to undertake certain works. A planning officer can advise on whether consent is required for any of your proposals.

You may also need to comply with Building Regulations. A building control officer will be able to advise you on the regulations.

Building Materials & Details

When considering undertaking maintenance/replacement or building works the aim should be:

- Repair rather than replace original windows and doors
- Use details to match the main building on small extensions
- Build walls in matching materials
- Roof in matching slates or tiles

Doors & Windows

Door and window replacement is one of the most difficult design problems. The following advice applies both to doors and windows for extensions and their replacement in existing buildings.

- Original windows and doors should be retained where possible;
- New windows should accurately reflect the style, materials and opening methods of those originally fitted to the property and the original window pattern;
- New doors should reflect the style and materials of those originally fitted to the property, generally simple timber doors with limited glazing area.

In practice this means that you should first consider whether any replacement is necessary.

It may be possible to repair windows; skilled joiners (woodworker) can make repairs without difficulty. The Conservation Team in Strategic Planning can supply the names of specialist manufacturers of timber windows. It can also provide advice on joinery detail.

More advice on window repair and replacement can be found in the separate publication 'Window Repair and Replacement in Conservation Areas,' available from the Conservation Team within Strategic Planning.

Chimneys

Most buildings in the village have red brick stacks with varying degrees of detailing. Some, however, have a painted render finish. The original chimney materials should be retained and maintained.

Chimneys are an important visual feature of a building and contribute to the visual impact of building groups and skyline. If a chimney which makes a contribution to the character of the property or Conservation Area becomes unsafe and requires repair, it should be rebuilt to the original height and design, even if no longer in use.

Where a building is listed, the demolition of a chimney will require Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission. When chimneys become redundant it is important to ensure that steps are taken to maintain brickwork and mortar and, if appropriate, render. Original clay pots should be retained where they are still structurally sound. A proprietary weather-guard can retain ventilation and discourage damp through the chimney breast.

Dormer Windows & Loft Conversions

Dormers are not a traditional feature in St Mellons. New dormers are unlikely to be considered appropriate to the traditional cottages/ buildings within the Conservation Area.

Dormers will only be considered in locations where they do not have a detrimental impact on the character of the individual house or the Conservation Area, and where they respect the scale of the house and protect the character of the existing roof form and the appearance of the Conservation Area.

Small traditional roof lights offer an alternative to a dormer but should be installed in discrete locations. In the case of a semi-detached property, particularly if symmetrical, care should be taken to ensure that a roof light will not unbalance the pair. Modern roof lights in deep frames, which break up the line of the roof surface, are not appropriate.

Roof Materials

Original roofing materials should be maintained. Reclaimed or new natural slates are the best way to protect the character of the Conservation Area. In re-roofing, it is important to match the size and quality of the original and to follow the gauge and layout of coursing.

Traditional features such as decorative ridge tiles and ornamental barge boards should be retained and rainwater goods should be of traditional design and materials.

Porches and Canopies

Where porches occur, they are a dominant feature of an elevation and their detailing should always be respected. Proposals for new porches and canopies should take account of any established building line and the design of the original property or terrace of which it may be a part.

Wall Finishes/Stonework

Smooth, painted render is the primary external wall finish within the Conservation Area, although random rubble stone is also occasionally used. Some buildings also include red brick features such as decorative surrounds and quoins.

It is important that stonework is correctly repaired and replaced. It is essential that existing stone is repointed in a manner which is appropriate to the original building method. The use of lime based mortars is recommended as the introduction of dense, cement based mixes will cause problems of moisture retention in traditional stone walling. Attention should be paid to external finishes on extensions. This should match that of the original building. If smooth or stucco render is the finish of the original building then the extension should also be of smooth or stucco finish, rather than a coarse render finish. If the original building is of stone then this should be the finish of the extension with the stonework pattern matching that of the original building. Where appropriate, brick surrounds around doors and windows and quoins should be incorporated.

Renewable Energy Devices, Communications Equipment & Security Equipment

The attaching of additional equipment, for whatever uses, to buildings can have a significant impact on the character of the Conservation Area. If inappropriately located they can have a cumulative impact that is detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area. Equipment is unlikely to be acceptable on prominent front and side elevations. Rear elevations or outbuildings are often a more appropriate location, provided they are discrete and do not harm the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Where this type of equipment is currently inappropriately located and when opportunities arise this visual clutter should be reduced.

Extensions & New Development

Whether a traditional or contemporary design approach is adopted, the success of new developments and extensions to existing buildings in the Conservation Area will require an understanding of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Extensions to existing buildings and new development in the Old St Mellons Conservation Area will be required to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area by:

- Respecting the distinctive quality of place, which will involve the continuity of the existing urban grain.
- Retaining important views and vistas in and out of the Conservation Area.
- Respecting the existing land uses.
- Reinforcing the existing hierarchies of public and private space.
- Using materials and architectural details which are as high in quality as those used in the original buildings.

There are also wider planning issues to consider. For example, attention also needs to be paid to any new development's impact on neighbouring amenity, particularly its impact with regard to overlooking, loss of light and overbearing.

Forthcoming Supplementary Planning Guidance will provide more detailed advice on the wider planning issues.

Where a building is listed, further controls and requirements apply which override this advice.

As the design of successful extensions requires knowledge of building type and a sensitive handling of scale and detail, it is advisable to employ an architect with knowledge and experience of this type of work.

Extensions and new development may have implications in terms of soft landscaping. Advice on this is provided in Appendix 2.

Guidance on trees, landscaping, parking, gardens, hedges, gates and boundary enclosures is provided in Appendix 2 'Trees and Landscape Advice'.

Trees and Landscape Advice

This guidance relates to landscaping issues including trees, parking, gardens, hedges, fences and gates. Open spaces, verges and private gardens all contribute to the special character of the Conservation Area. Outlined below are the considerations that apply if you are planning work that involves these features.

Trees

Trees in Conservation Areas have special protection. You must apply in writing for consent for work to trees that are greater than 7.5 centimetres (about 3 inches) in diameter, measured at 1.5 metres (about 5 feet) above the ground. Specifically you must give 6 weeks notice to the Local Planning Authority of your intention to do the work. The Authority will agree to work which it considers will benefit the trees, and may agree other work where the benefits outweigh the damage to the trees. If it does not agree, the Authority may make a Tree Preservation Order to prevent the work. If the Authority does not respond within six weeks the work may be carried out anyway. The penalties the court may impose for not giving this notice are serious – the same as what would apply if the trees were protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

Work means not just the removal or killing of a tree, but also pruning or damaging roots or branches, whether directly or indirectly. Application should therefore be made if, for example, you plan to alter soil levels near trees, or install impervious surfaces, such as a new driveway. It would also be an offence to damage trees by polluting their environment, such as by applying a broad leaved herbicide to an adjacent lawn. There are various exemptions from the need for consent, particularly for trees that are dead, dying or dangerous. You are advised, except in the case of immediate danger, to telephone a Tree Preservation Officer before exercising one of these exemptions. Trees that are illegally removed, or removed under an exemption, will normally have to be replaced. If the work you wish to do relates to a development for which you need planning consent, you should include it within the planning application. You will not then have to make a separate application under the regulations protecting trees – the whole issue will be considered at one time.

If you have a large or prominent tree you are strongly advised to take, from time to time, the advice of a tree surgeon as to its long term management. The Authority will give due weight to a qualified tree surgeon's opinion when considering applications. Trees on the highway, or in parks, are managed by the Council's Parks Services, and are subject to a long term management regime, supervised by a qualified arborist.

Replacement of declining trees

As trees are a main feature of the Conservation Area it is important that as they decline and opportunities arise, replacement and new planting is undertaken. Replacement trees should be planted as the old ones are removed. All trees should be of a suitable species. Tree Preservation Officers should be able to advise on species suitable for your particular situation.

Garden Areas

Grassed and planted front gardens and hedging help give the Conservation Area its special charm. The creation of paved forecourts reduce grassed areas, flower beds and hedging, and often result in the loss of an entire garden and path detracting from the area's character.

Parking in Front Gardens

The area was largely developed before car ownership became widespread. Constructing off-street parking within the curtilage of individual houses can result in the loss of front gardens and boundary treatments such as hedges and stone walls, which are important features of St Mellons.

Where there is room for a garage, it should be designed in sympathy with the house to which it relates and without detriment to the overall area.

Boundary Enclosures & Gates

Boundary treatments should be regarded as an extension of the building which they protect. They provide definition and character to the street scene. Any new boundary structure should seek to fulfil the same objectives.

Hedges are an important form of boundary in St Mellons contributing greatly to its soft landscaping. In maintaining and restoring hedges, it is important to plant a species in character with the area. Tree Preservation Officers may be able to advise on species suitable for your particular situation. Whilst hedges become established a temporary post and wire or mesh fence may be an acceptable method for providing security to a garden.

Boundary walls should reflect the character of the area. Throughout the area are a number of traditional stone walls of random rubble. Such walls should be retained and repaired and maintained to ensure that stone work and mortar respect the original structure. It is essential that existing stone is repointed in a manner which is appropriate to the original building method. The use of lime based mortars is recommended as the introduction of dense, cement based mixes will cause problems of moisture retention in traditional stone walling.

Where railings traditionally form part of or the entire boundary these should be retained and maintained. If replacement of original railings is required the design should be traditional.

Modern material such as concrete and timber fencing should be avoided.

Garden gates and doors should reflect the proportions and simple architectural details used on the main building.

Landscaping

Extensions to properties and new development have implications for soft landscaping. To retain the area's character, where any development occurs, key soft landscaping elements need to be retained and appropriate protection measures implemented to ensure their survival during and after works.

Some development affords opportunities for soft landscaping and should be encouraged. New soft landscaping schemes should be sensitively designed to fit in with the character of the area.

Boundary Review

Background

St Mellons Conservation Area was designated in 1976 and extended in 1977. As shown on Map 2 it focused on the historic village of St Mellons and extended north to include St Johns College and the former grounds of this building and south to include Bethany Presbyterian Church.

Since designation, however, there has been significant change within this area, both in terms of alterations to individual buildings as well as new development. These changes have been considered in terms of their effects on the Conservation Area.



Boundary Amendments

The Conservation Area as a whole was reviewed and the following conclusions drawn:

Exclusions from the Conservation Area

- **The Conservation Area boundary be amended to exclude the northern section of the Conservation Area. This comprises of all properties and land accessed off William Nicholls Drive and the property 'The Gatehouse' (see Map 2).**

Reason:

This area was formerly Ty-to-Maen country house and grounds (later to become the William Nicholls Convalescent Home). The buildings are of significant architectural merit with the house, former stables and garden terrace (now St John's College) being statutorily protected under Listed Building designations. At the time of Conservation Area designation in 1976 the grounds contributed to the area's character and appearance and with the buildings reflected part of its history.

However, since Conservation Area designation a housing estate has been built within the grounds. This estate has been designed as a single entity, separate to all other development surrounding it. Enclosed by high boundary treatments the estate backs on to the historic village and as such does not physically relate well to it.

The estate is suburban in nature with neither the layout nor the buildings reflecting the scale or design (both style and materials) of the village. Many of the mature trees located within the grounds of the former estate have been retained and are protected by Tree Preservation Orders; these trees still provide significant landscaping benefits. It is therefore appropriate to exclude this northern section from the Conservation Area.



- Bethany Presbyterian Church
- St John's College main building
- Housing estate in former grounds of Ty-to-Maen

- **The Conservation Area boundary be amended to exclude Courtenay Close, except for the landscaping opposite 1 and 2 Courtenay Close (see Map2).**



Reason:

Courtenay Close is a modern development of five large, detached houses located on the western edge of the Conservation Area. These properties are suburban in nature with neither the cul-de-sac layout nor the buildings reflecting the scale or design (both style and materials) of St Mellons village. Its layout also has the effect of separating Courtenay Close from the rest of the village.

However, the landscaping opposite 1 and 2 Courtenay Close is retained within the Conservation Area boundary as the trees form an integral part of the setting of the Church.



- **The Conservation Area boundary be amended to exclude the properties 'The Hyde' and 'The Lanterns' situated to the north and north-east of Chapel Row Lane (see Map 2).**

Reason:

These properties are located on the edge of the village, and are of a design (including style and materials) that is out of character with the remainder of the Conservation Area. These properties are not visible from within the Conservation Area and do not form an integral part of the village.

However, the parking area to the rear of 1 and 3 Bethania Row is retained within the Conservation Area boundary due to the contribution made by the trees located within it. Unlike 'The Hyde' and 'The Lanterns', these trees are visible from within the Conservation Area and are important to the setting of both it and the village.



Whilst most traditional buildings within the Conservation Area have some form of alteration not reflecting their original architectural style, further exclusions from the Conservation Area through boundary alteration was not deemed necessary, as the remaining buildings and land included within the boundary are integral components of the village and Conservation Area.



Extensions to the Conservation Area

The survey area extended to all land immediately adjacent to the boundary of the Conservation Area. The majority of land is of residential use, typified by late twentieth century housing estates. These estates, which have been planned rather than evolved (reflected in their design and layout), are wholly different in character and appearance to that of St Mellons village. Also their layouts do not physically relate well to the village; generally these estates back on to the village and are physically separate from it. For these reasons these estates are not included within the Conservation Area.

Other development adjoining the Conservation Area boundary includes the stone and red brick semi-detached and detached buildings along Tyr Winch Road. These properties, whilst having their own merit, are not historically or architecturally well related to the village (the character and appearance of which is the subject of the Conservation Area designation). Given the different characteristics of these properties and their outlying location, which is heightened by the exclusion of the northern section of the Conservation

- Courtenay Close
- 'The Hyde' and 'The Lanterns'
- Trees located to the rear of 1 & 3 Bethania Row
- Example of late 20th Century housing estate

Area, they are not included within the Conservation Area boundary. Other properties adjoining the Conservation Area boundary are late twentieth century detached and semi-detached properties which due to their location and design do not form an integral part of the village, its character or setting. As such these properties, located along Tyr Winch Road, Oldhill and Newport Road, are not included within the Conservation Area boundary.

Three properties, however, were identified for inclusion within the Conservation Area boundary. These are Forge Cottage, Forge House and Droke House on Newport Road.

Reason for Extending the Conservation Area Boundary:

Forge Cottage, Forge House and Droke House help define the village to the east. At the time of review the village lacked a well defined edge on the eastern side of Newport Road due to the late twentieth century commercial garages with large forecourts that convey a sense of openness not in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area. The entrance to Cummings Farm, set below road level, also has a sense of openness. However, Forge Cottage, Forge House and Droke House form a part of the strong physical edge that does exist to the east of Newport Road and are key buildings in terms of connecting the central and southern sections of the village and Conservation Area.

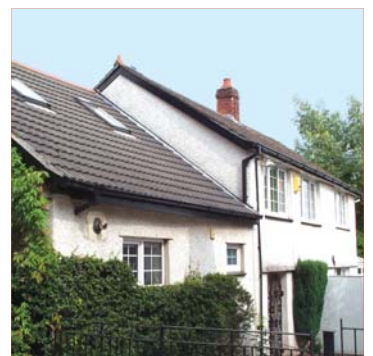
Forge Cottage and Droke House, though altered, also exhibit features of nineteenth century/early twentieth century buildings within the village, for example in terms of scale and design, as described in the character assessment. They also reflect the historical development of the village: Forge Cottage is the location of a former Smithy (relating to the agricultural and travel roles of the centre) and Droke House (previously called Coppers End) associated with the former village Police service.

Conclusion

The assessment of the Conservation Area and its immediate surroundings confirmed that:

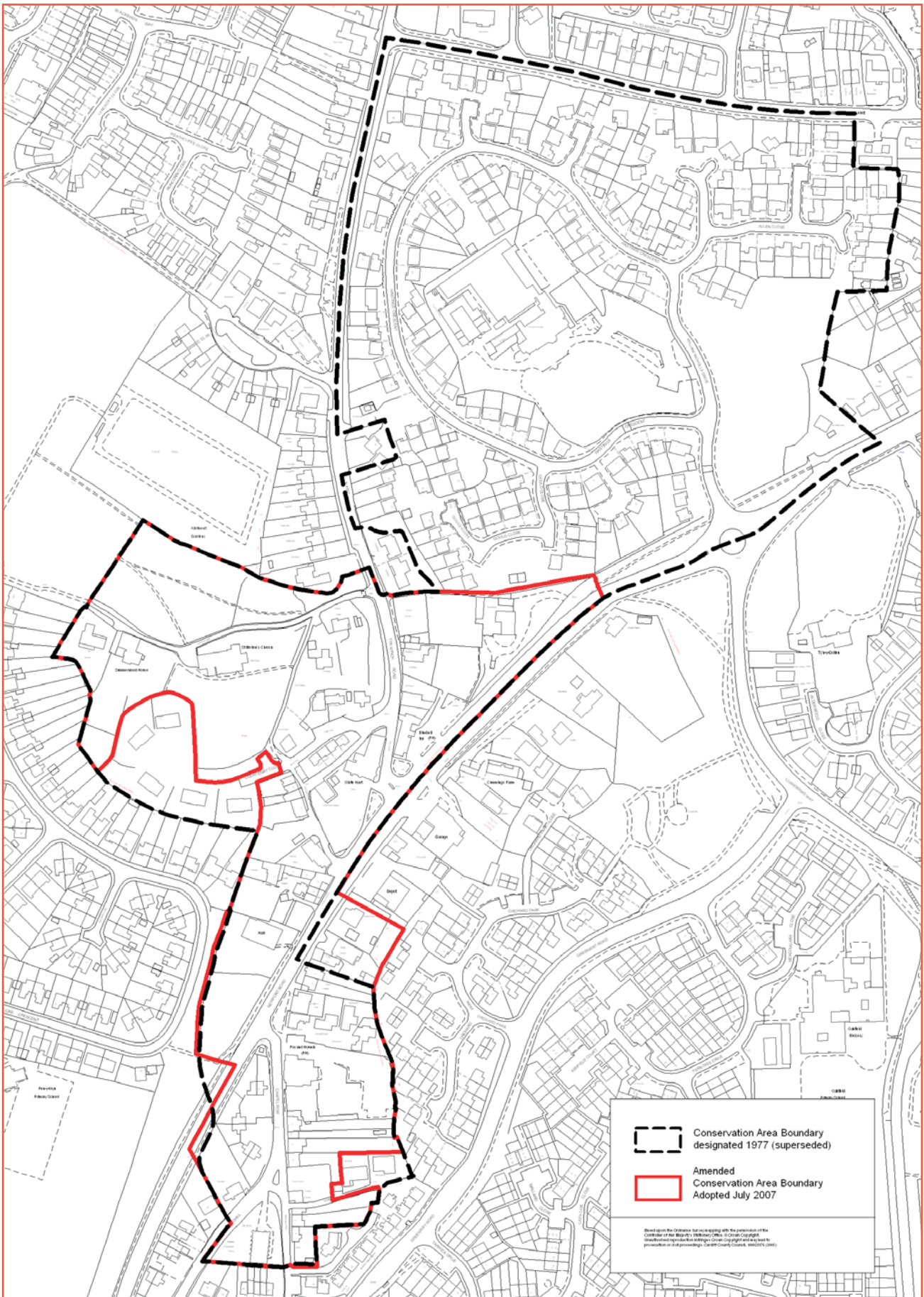
- much of the Conservation Area still has special character.
- three properties outside of the Conservation Area warranted inclusion within its boundary
- parts of the Conservation Area no longer warranted Conservation Area designation.

These amendments are shown on Map 2.



- Red brick detached house along Tyr Winch Road
- Late 20th Century semi-detached property
- Droke House
- Forge Cottage

Map 2 1977 and 2007 Conservation Area Boundaries



Glossary

Barge Board	timber boards fixed to the gable end of a roof, can be ornamental in detail.
Building Regulations	rules of a legal or statutory nature by which local councils control the manner and quality of buildings. They are designed to ensure public safety, health and minimum acceptable standards of construction.
Cadw	is the Welsh Assembly Government's historic environment division. Its aim is to promote the conservation and appreciation of Wales's historic environment. This includes historic buildings, ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, landscapes and underwater archaeology.
Coursing	rows.
Conservation Area	is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
Context	the setting into which a building or space is placed, its site, its natural environment, or its neighbourhood.
Curtilage	the area of land surrounding a dwelling within the property boundaries.
Dormer Windows	a window with roof over set into a sloping roof.
Finial	an ornamental feature situated at the end of a roof.
Form	the general shape of an area including its scale and proportion.
Gable	the upper triangular-shaped portion of the end wall of a building.
Gauge	depth / thickness.
Listed Building	a building or other structure that is of specific architectural or historic importance and which is afforded statutory protection by Cadw. It cannot be demolished nor have its external, and in some cases internal, appearance altered without formal permission.
Locally Listed Building	a building, structure or feature considered by the Council as having significant local historic or architectural value, but which is not Statutory Listed (recognised by Cadw as being of national importance).
Lych Gate	a gateway covered with a roof, the traditional entrance to a church yard.
Mortar	a material used in construction to fill the gaps between stones or bricks and to bind them together.
Quoins	stones or bricks used as a decorative feature to accentuate the corners of a building. They are usually laid so that their faces are alternately large and small.
Rainwater Goods	items such as drainpipes, guttering and hoppers (receptacles) involved with the disposal of rainwater from a building.

Render	a plaster, lime or cement coating.
Rendered	covered with plaster.
Repoint	repair the joints between.
Ridge Tiles	tiles that cover the highest point of a roof.
Roof light	a glazed opening set in a roof.
Rubble Stone	stones of irregular shape and size set in mortar.
Scale	the relative size of an object.
Skyline	the outline of objects seen against the sky.
Stucco	a fine plaster or cement used as a coating for walls.

The East Cardiff Conservation Area Advisory Group

a group made up of local ward members and local residents who have expertise in conservation matters. This group has no decision making powers but acts a consultee, commenting on local planning applications.

Tree Preservation Order

provides protection for trees specified in the order. It makes it an offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot or wilfully damage or destroy a tree specified in the order, or permit these actions, without first seeking formal consent from the Local Authority.

Urban Grain

the pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement.

Background Sources & References

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- Rumney and St Mellons A History of Two Villages – Marjorie Neal et al (2005)
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- City of Cardiff Local Plan – Cardiff City Council (1996)
- Cardiff Unitary Development Plan (Deposited) - Cardiff County Council (2003)
- Conservation Area Strategy – Cardiff County Council (1997)
- South Glamorgan (Cardiff Area) Replacement Structure Plan 1991-2011 – Cardiff County Council (1997)
- Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Welsh Office Circular 61/96 – Planning and the Historic Environment

Details of Listed Buildings, trees currently protected by Tree Preservation Orders, and the planning policy documents referred to in this document may be obtained from the Conservation Team.

Acknowledgements

- Gwent Record Office
- Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments
- Old St Mellons Community Council
- The East Cardiff Conservation Area Advisory Group

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