

Llantrisant Conservation Area

Appraisal and Management Plan
November 2011

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LLANTRISANT CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL & MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Summary of the special interest of the Conservation Area

The aim of this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is to assist in the management of the conservation area in order to preserve and enhance the character and special interest of the area.

The location, history and character of Llantrisant make it a unique town in South Wales. Its defensible location on the saddle of an escarpment overlooking the Vale of Glamorgan encouraged early settlement with the establishment of the castle and church on the highest land overlooking the cluster of houses perched around on the sloping land.

The existing Llantrisant Conservation Area boundary includes all of the urbanised area at the time of its designation, with the Common and immediate surrounding landscape added to protect the context of the settlement. The built-up area includes the historic core of the town and the twentieth century suburban extensions both to the north and the south. This Appraisal and Management Plan proposes a reduction in the size of the Conservation Area, with the boundary redrawn.

The built character of Llantrisant reflects both its topographical setting and the phases of its development. The locations of the church and castle remain from pre-Norman times, the historic town follows the mediaeval road and track layout, while the majority of its simple residential and commercial buildings, clustering around the higher land, were mainly in place by the early and mid 19th century. Some notable buildings were added in the late 19th century but the next significant expansion came after World War II with residential estates built outwards from the historic core. The advantages of the hill-top location that benefited the town in its early years now form a key part of the character of the area, and are recognised as attractive qualities for both residents and visitors.

1. Background

1.1 Current status of Llantrisant Conservation Area

The Llantrisant Conservation Area was designated by Glamorgan County Council in 1971 and covers an area of 258.2 hectares. The designated area includes the hill town of Llantrisant, Penygawsi – the suburban extension below the escarpment to the south, and the surrounding Special Landscape Area including Llantrisant Common with its historic linkages to the town.

The designation of the Conservation Area was prompted by the 1968 report *An Environmental Study of Llantrisant* by Gordon Cullen which, in turn, was prompted by the prospect of the designation of a ‘new town’ at Llantrisant. The new town designation never happened, but the Conservation Area designation remains essentially the same now as it was first conceived over 40 years ago.

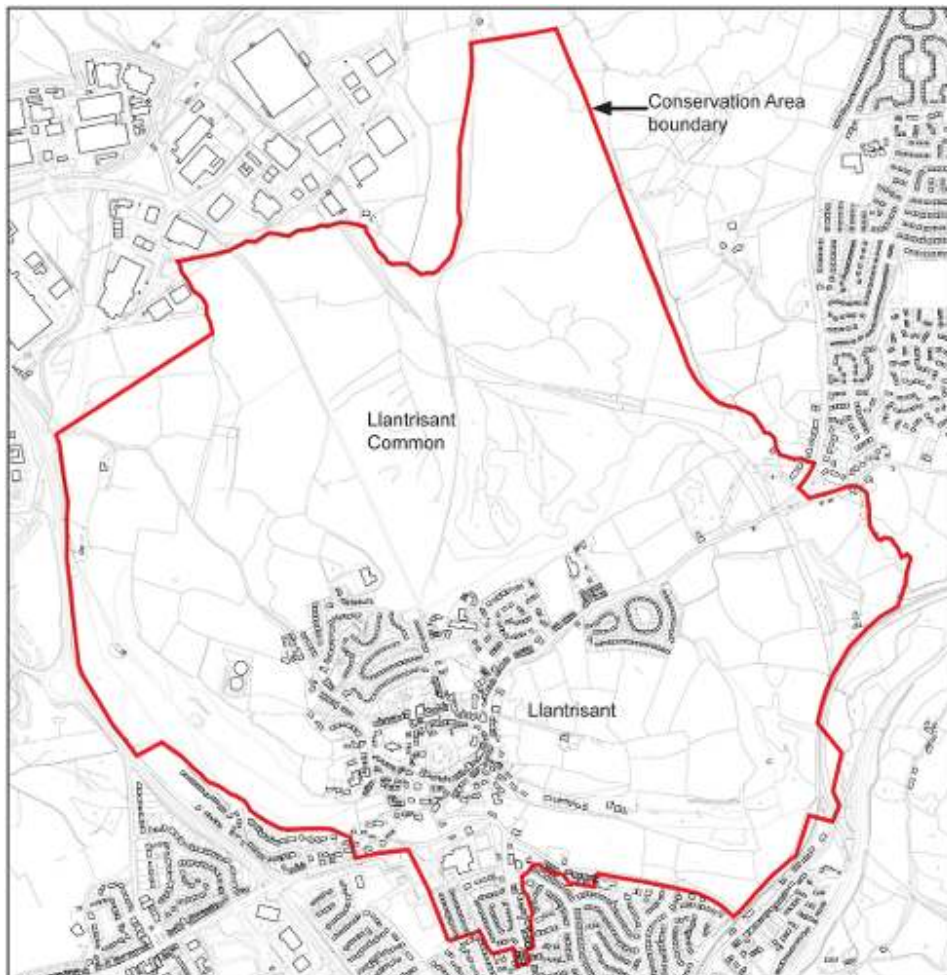


Figure 1.1 Conservation Area Boundary

1.2 Statutory background

Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and are defined as “*areas of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”. Conservation Area designation now falls under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This type of designation concerns more the overall quality and interest of an area, rather than individual buildings, although it is common for such areas to contain a number of Listed Buildings.

Designation as a Conservation Area has a number of implications. Most importantly, the Council is required to give special attention to preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in exercising its planning functions. In addition, planning consent must be obtained for certain types of development which are elsewhere classified as permitted development, such as cladding, dormer windows, satellite dishes and radio masts/antennae in certain circumstances. Consent is further required for the demolition of certain buildings within Conservation Areas, and designation also brings controls over works to trees.

Local Authorities are under a duty to “*formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas*” (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (LBCA)) Act 1990, s.71), and these should be reviewed from time to time.

1.3 Planning policy framework

The protection of an area does not end with Conservation Area designation. Planning Policy Wales 4th Edition (February 2011) paragraph 6.3.2 requires Local Authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation or enhancement of Conservation Areas. A character appraisal defines and analyses the special qualities and the architectural and historic interest that warranted the Conservation Area designation. Section 6.3.3 states that “Conservation Area character appraisals can assist planning authorities in the exercise of their planning and development control functions”.

The Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan (LDP) contains policies to guide development in the County Borough until 2021. Policy CS 2 is a core policy setting out how sustainable growth will be achieved in the south of the County Borough (including Llantrisant). One of the criteria in the policy for achieving such sustainable growth is “protecting the cultural identity of the Strategy Area by protecting the historic built heritage and the natural environment”.

Policy AW 7 relates to the protection and enhancement of the built environment, including Conservation Areas and their settings. It requires that development proposals are demonstrated to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of such areas.

The Local Development Plan is accompanied by a set of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), which provides further details on certain aspects of planning policy. In particular, the “Design in Town Centres” and “Historic Built Environment” SPGs are relevant to Llantrisant Conservation Area.

The above are important considerations in determining planning applications within the Conservation Area and its setting. This Appraisal is also an important consideration and supports the above documents as it provides details about the features and characteristics of the Conservation Area that make it special. It therefore sets out a context for considering the location and design of new developments within Llantrisant to ensure it “preserves or enhances” the area.

1.4 The Purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal

This Appraisal has been prepared in response to the guidance outlined above and, as such, discharges the County Borough Council's obligations and duties under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as complying with Cadw's recommendations. The Appraisal will form the basis for a Conservation Area Management Plan and the review of the Conservation Area boundary. The document will be a material consideration when considering applications for development within the Conservation Area.



Llantrisant town centre, the Bullring

2. Location and setting

2.1 Location and population

The current Llantrisant Conservation Area includes all of the settlement, both the historic core and the connected twentieth century development, with an area of open space surrounding the town including the historic Common.

Llantrisant is situated above the Ely Valley on an escarpment ridge overlooking the western end of the Vale of Glamorgan, with long distance views to the south over the Bristol Channel to the Exmoor Hills. The topography of its site and the importance of the Special Landscape Area surrounding most of the settlement have limited its growth, as has the competition from the extensive commercial and residential expansion of Talbot Green on the adjacent flatter land to the south.

Llantrisant is located 2 miles north of Junction 34 on the M4 motorway, 11 miles north-west of Cardiff and 6 miles from Pontypridd.

The ward of Llantrisant had a total population of approximately 4,200 in the 2001 Census with a comparatively affluent socio-economic profile with a higher proportion of people of working age and of these, a large proportion are economically active and employed.



Figure 2.1 Location of Llantrisant Conservation Area

2.2 Landscape setting

Llantrisant is a small, hilltop town on the eastern escarpment of the Ely valley, located on the saddle of two low hills, Y Graig and Caeau'r-Ilan, which form the northern limit of the Vale of Glamorgan. It has a distinctive silhouette, with the Church tower and ruined castle as dominant features in a landscape that can be viewed for miles both from the south and when approaching from the north on the Pontypridd Road. As such, Llantrisant marks one of the most important entrances to the Rhondda Cynon Taf area when approaching from the south, and also marks a distinct change in topography from the flatter Vale of Glamorgan to the dramatic hills of the Valleys.



View from the south of Llantrisant on the saddle between Graig and Caerlan hills. The castle outline is now hidden behind tree cover.



View from the north east – the Pontypridd Road

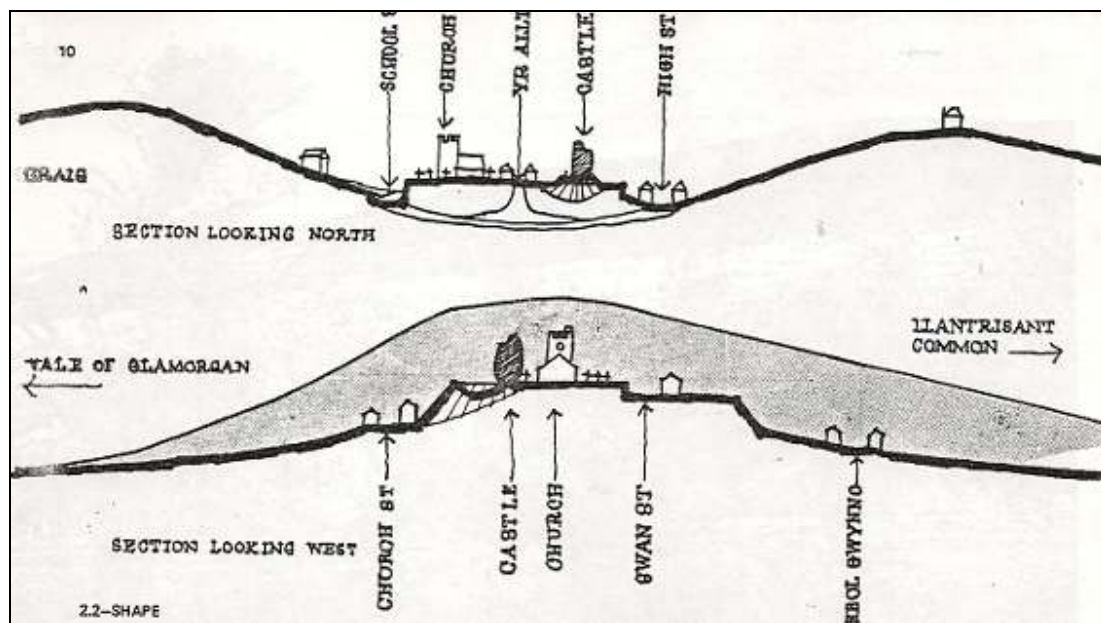
Llantrisant is surrounded on three sides by open space which benefits from a number of landscape designations, including due north of the settlement, the Registered Common of Llantrisant – a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Most of this open space falls gradually to the north from the range of hills that form the southern escarpment, and this green setting is a fundamental feature of the Llantrisant Conservation Area.

The north-eastern section of this area is a designated Green Wedge to protect the gap between Llantrisant and the settlement of Beddau. The Special Landscape Area and settlement boundary designations also prevent further physical or visual encroachment by the industrial and hospital land uses to the north-west.

The physical form of the setting and landscape of the town has had a significant impact on its historic growth, its urban layout and the resulting townscape variations creating differing Character Areas.

Within the town, its shape is strongly influenced by the higher land linking the church and the castle site, with Heol Yr Allt crossing between them. This raised elliptical hub is surrounded by the historic town that clusters around the High Street, Church Street and Swan Street. More recent domestic development surrounds this historic core on land falling to the north and south.

The study of Llantrisant prepared by Gordon Cullen in 1968 emphasised the significance of the setting and landscape on the urban form of the settlement. Two cross-sections from this study demonstrate the implications of the higher central hub on the layout of the town. At a lower level, the old town can be seen huddled around the surrounding elliptical ring of roads and the links up into the town.



Cross-sections prepared by Gordon Cullen in 1968

On arrival from the north and south, the topography of this location creates particular interest with the entrances or gateways to the town having a significant impact on the appreciation of the townscape and its development.

The primary vehicular route from the south up the High Street has a distinctive entrance with a steep double bend in the road suddenly introducing travellers to the relatively narrow historic townscape of the High Street, with the town centre ahead. From the north-east, via Newbridge Road, the introduction is more gradual, with the right hand side lined with late 19th century cottages and a farm building. Both entrances to the town

provide views of the raised town centre ahead along routes lined with traditional buildings.

The great value of the town lies in both its visual character and its historic interest. The visual character depends to a great extent on the interplay between the topography and the narrow winding lanes with the simple geometric form and scale of the buildings. Wherever you are in the town, you are not far from a long distance view of the landscape to the north or south, or a glimpse of a neighbouring hilltop, and it is these views that set the context for the town.



Looking east from the Bull Ring towards Caerlan Hill and west along Swan Street towards Y Graig. These hills provide important settings for many views from within the town and are rightly protected as a Special Landscape Area.



View from the south showing the church and the castle, hidden by trees, on the prominent ridge

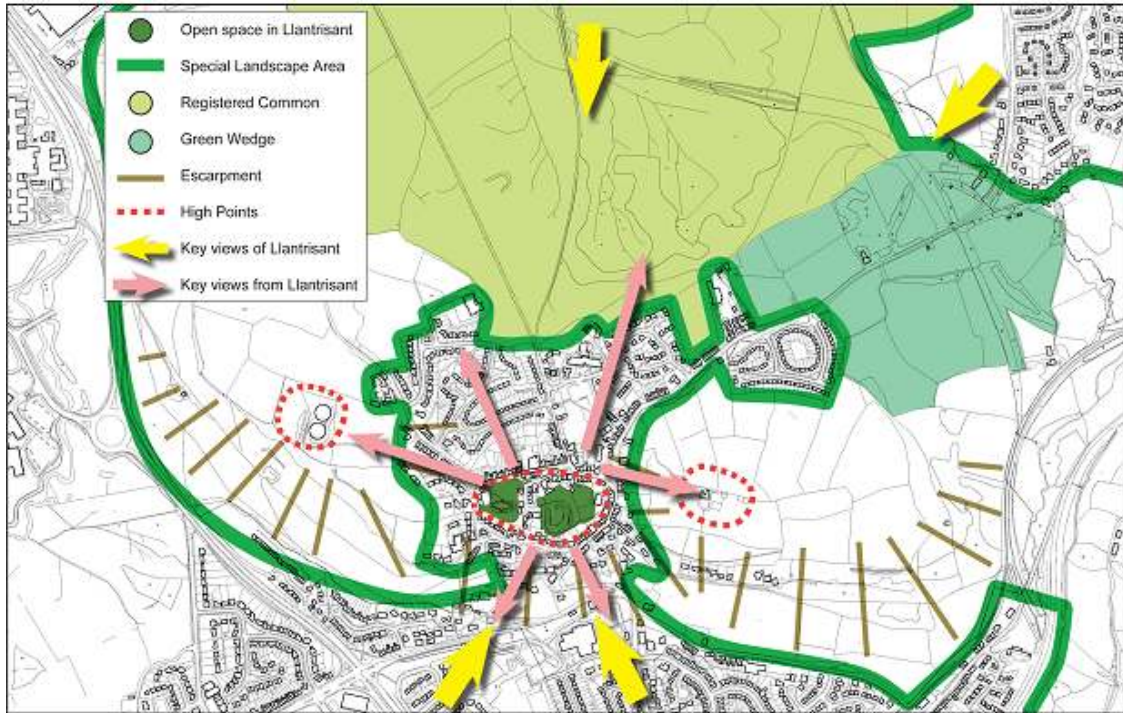


Figure 2 Landscape Setting and Key Views



The location and setting of Llantrisant can be appreciated from a distance from within the Vale of Glamorgan. The site on the top of the escarpment above the Ely Valley provides panoramic views to the south. The outline of the town on the horizon can best be recognised from the silhouette of the church now that the castle remains are hidden by trees.

3. Historic development

3.1 Origins and historic development of the settlement

Llantrisant is one of the oldest towns in Wales. Archaeological evidence suggests that it is probable that there has been settlement in this area since the Bronze and Iron Ages and it is considered that, from the 7th century, a Celtic community lived in a village of largely timber dwellings within a wooden fort-like enclosure, which was eventually overthrown by the Normans centuries later.

Llantrisant was ruled under Norman occupation by the early part of the 12th century, becoming established as a town and one of the most strategically important Norman strongholds in South Wales. The first Norman castle was completed between 1096 and 1100 on the same site as the earlier fortification. The early Normans faced fierce opposition from the Celtic tribesmen and were probably expelled from Llantrisant in one of many battles before 1127 and, following their return, a stone-built defence of several towers, two wards and a timber ringwork, with ditches, were built in 1246, making it second only to Cardiff in military importance.

With the advent of Christianity, the ecclesiastical centre, dedicated by missionaries to saints Illtyd, Gwynno and Tyfodwg, gave the town its present name of Church of the Three Saints. A church was probably built as early as 1096 by the first Norman lords who occupied the town and it was later rebuilt sometime around 1246 when the neighbouring castle was also fortified.

The settlement grew to about 190 houses by 1260 even though it was subject to a series of bloodthirsty rebellions. The castle, following a relatively short and chequered history as a defensive castle, was of little importance from 1404 and it remains uncertain whether it was demolished by Owain Glyndwr or became redundant as greater stability emerged.

The town was granted a charter in 1346, reissued in 1424, and the Burgesses gathered a range of privileges giving them a measure of self government, their own courts of law, and control on markets and fairs. The boundary of the ancient borough was also sanctified by the custom of a religious ceremony known as the Beating the Bounds. This includes a wide area covering all of the Conservation Area and further lands to the south.

After the Black Death came Owain Glyndwr's wars and by 1514 Llantrisant had declined to a village of no more than 30 whitewashed homes. Few immediate improvements were made during a period of comparative calm though the parish church underwent a process of rebuilding with the west end and tower by 1490.

Gradually the town recovered the high status enjoyed during the medieval period. In 1784, a workhouse was opened, the first in Glamorgan, in a series of adapted cottages along Swan Street and in the Black Cock Inn on Yr Allt, with the Union Workhouse opening a century later close to the Bull Ring. The Victorian era introduced a period of regeneration with the refurbishment of the church and the appearance of many landmark houses, shops and inns, which still exist today.

The town's reputation as a centre for trade flourished with four fairs held annually in the open square, adjoining the Town Hall and the Market House. The old town scales and weights were kept at the Angel Inn, or the Pwysty, where tolls were collected by the Constable of the Castle and imposed on goods entering the town for sale.

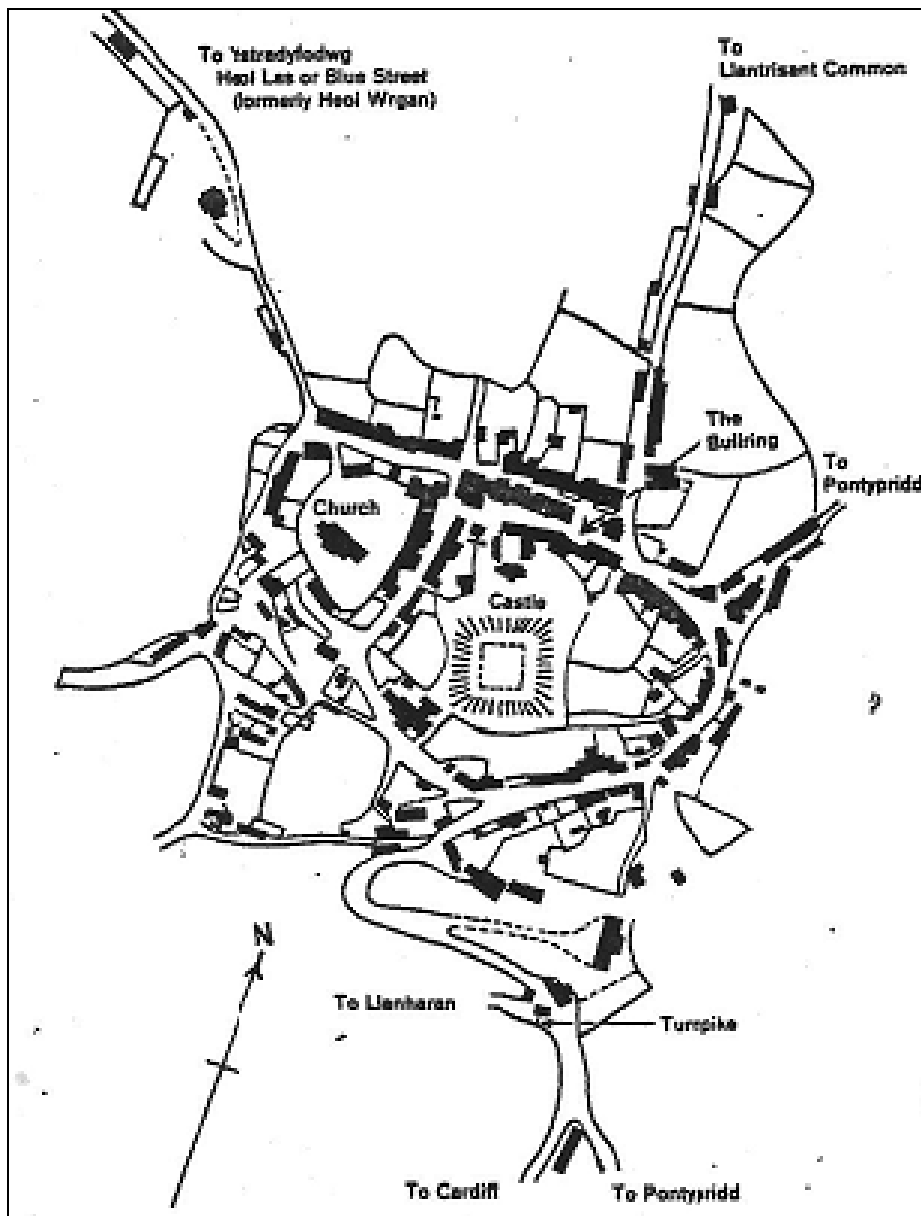


Figure 3.1 Llantrisant in 1843 – from *Glamorgan Historian Vol III. S Williams*

During the Victorian era more than 30 inns and 40 shops were open for business, in just a few streets. However, this commercial success was relatively short-lived and the town gradually declined in favour of neighbouring Pontypridd, which benefited from the Glamorganshire Canal and Taff Vale Railway. Although Llantrisant Railway Station opened in 1861 it was three miles away in Pontyclun, and Llantrisant's hilltop location, once its greatest attraction, was now a hindrance.

The population continued to increase with predominantly Cornish miners flocking to the mines at Mwyndy, and other immigrants working in the neighbouring railway industry and tinplate works. Non-conformism played an active role in the social development of the town, with an emphasis on sports, education, music and culture. A number of chapels were built with Welsh remaining the predominant language well into the early 20th century. The parish church, restored in 1874, played an active role in educating the people, with no-one more committed than the Reverend Powell Jones – as this pioneer of modern education methods led the building of the town's National School.

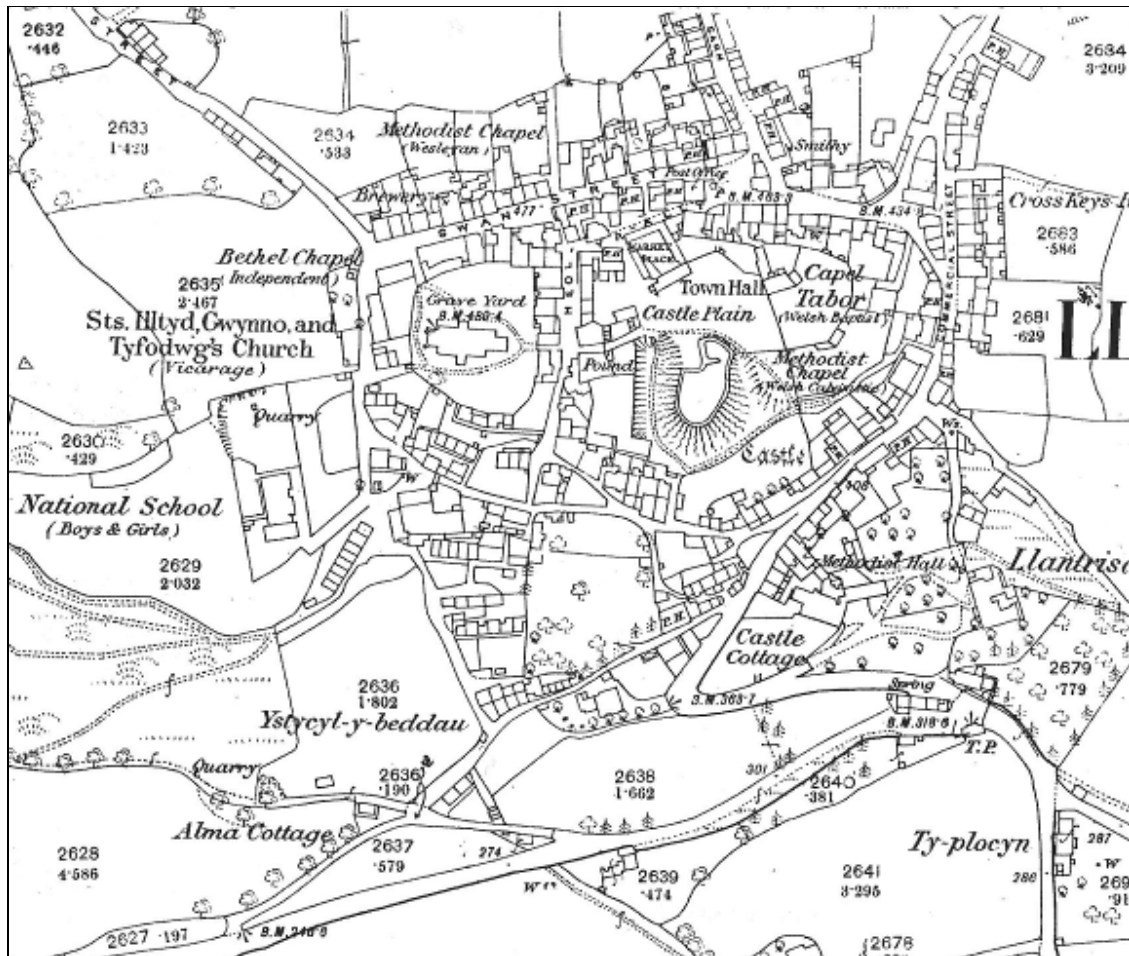


Figure 3.2 Ordnance Survey map 1875

The eventual dissolution of the borough as a corporate town brought into being the Town Trust in 1889, to manage the Common, or Cymdda and Cymdda Bach and Y Graig, Toll House and the Town Pumps, while admitting new hereditary Freemen on an annual basis.

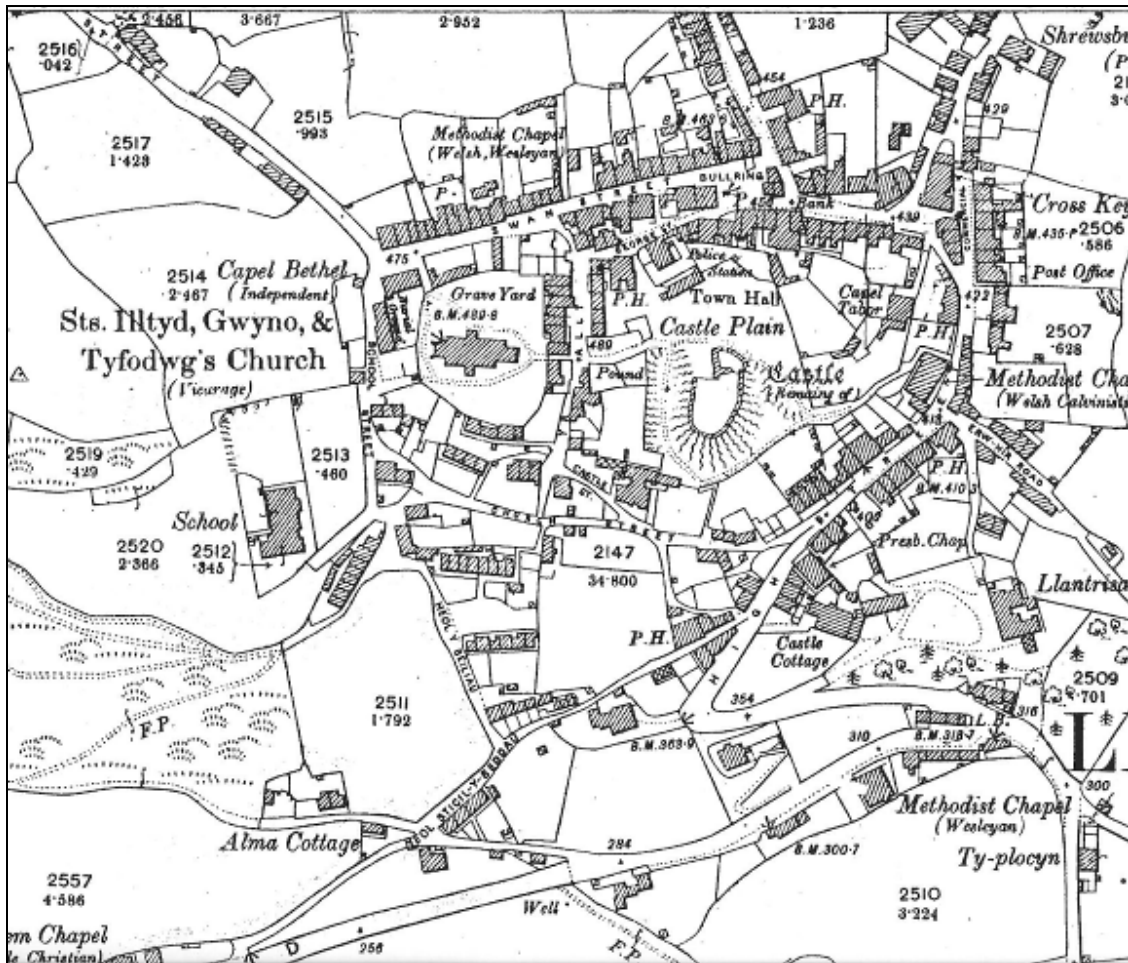
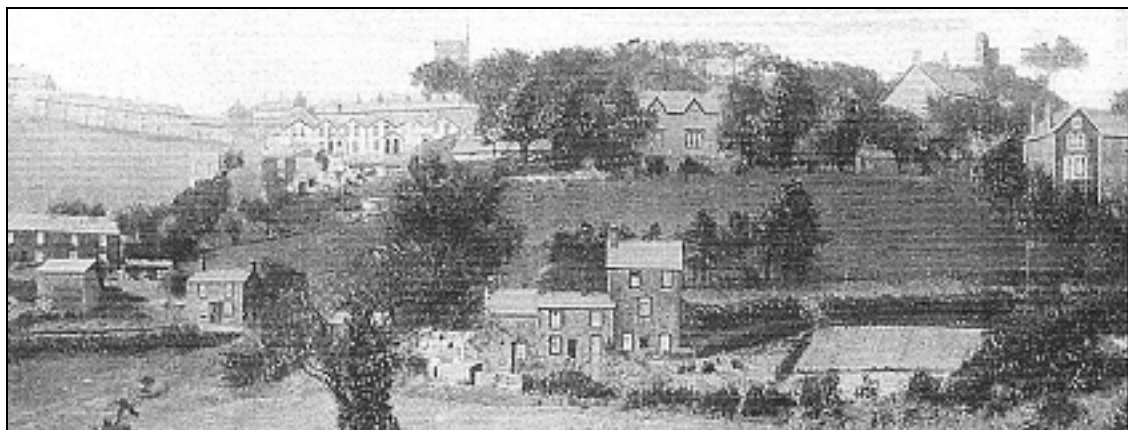


Figure 3.4 Ordnance Survey map 1900



Llantrisant c.1900

Llantrisant saw many changes during the twentieth century. Following a period of economic decline, development and industry coming to the region resulted in housing estates being built around the town – the Penygawsi estate to the south, before the Second World War, and the estates to the north between the 1940s and the 1990s.

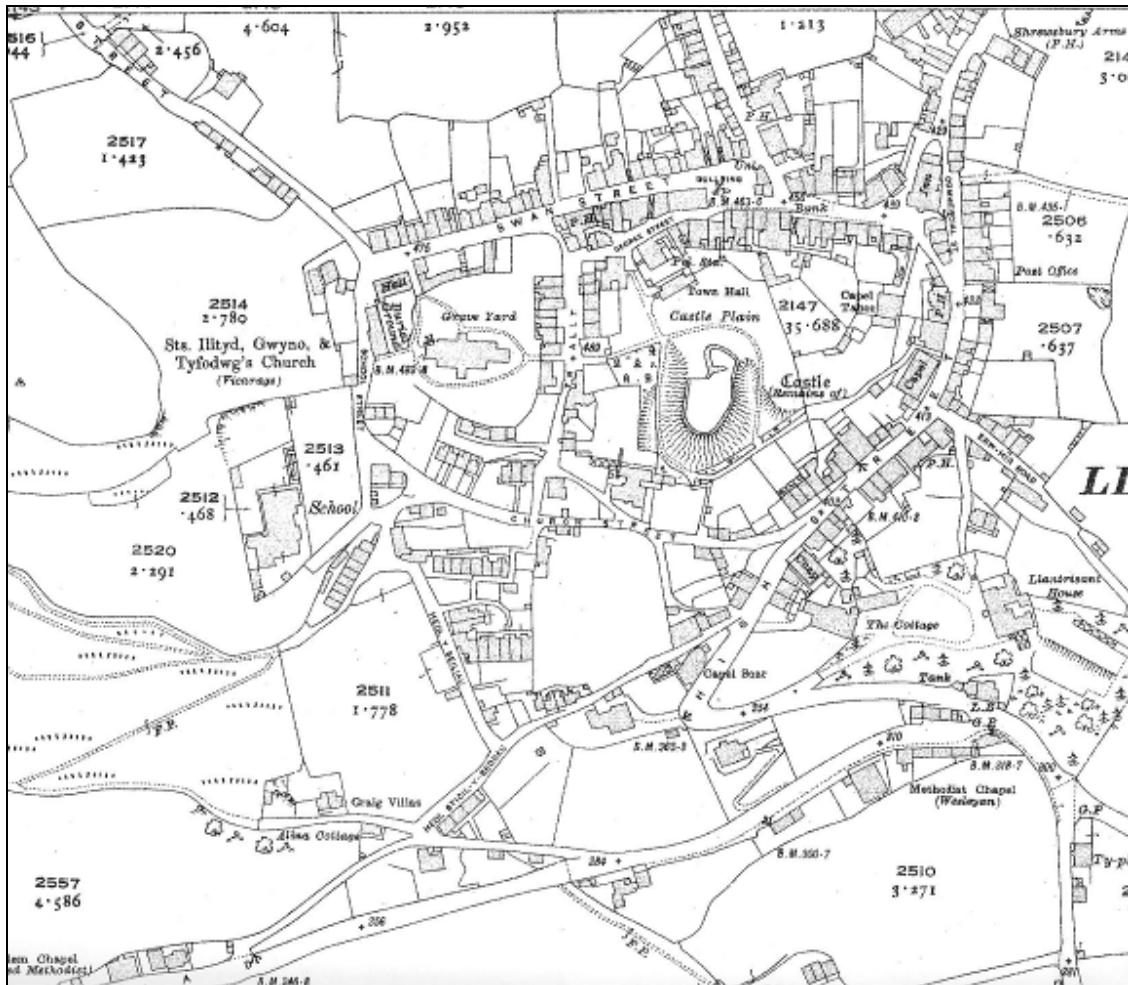


Figure 3.4 Ordnance Survey map 1920

The limitations of the location of Llantrisant caused its position as a trading centre to diminish and further amenities moved to Talbot Green where road access was more convenient. The completion of the M4 motorway resulted in further growth to the south of Llantrisant with the re-located Royal Mint and the construction of the Royal Glamorgan Hospital being followed by major retail and industrial developments supporting an ever increasing population below the escarpment.

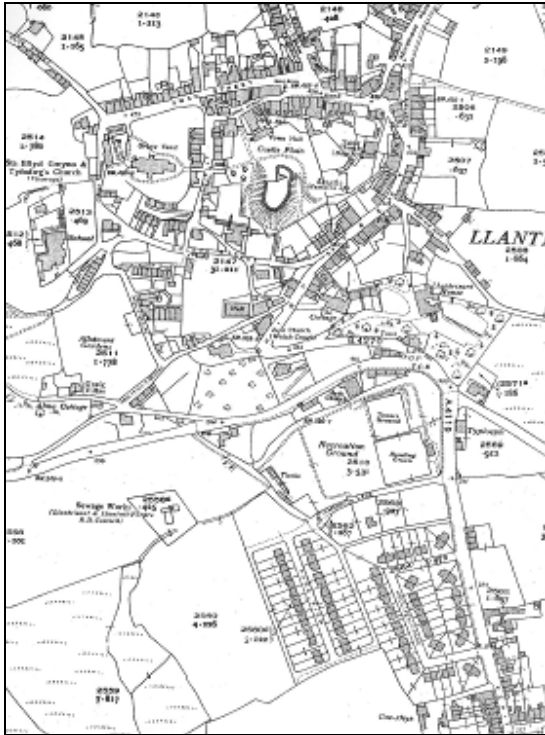
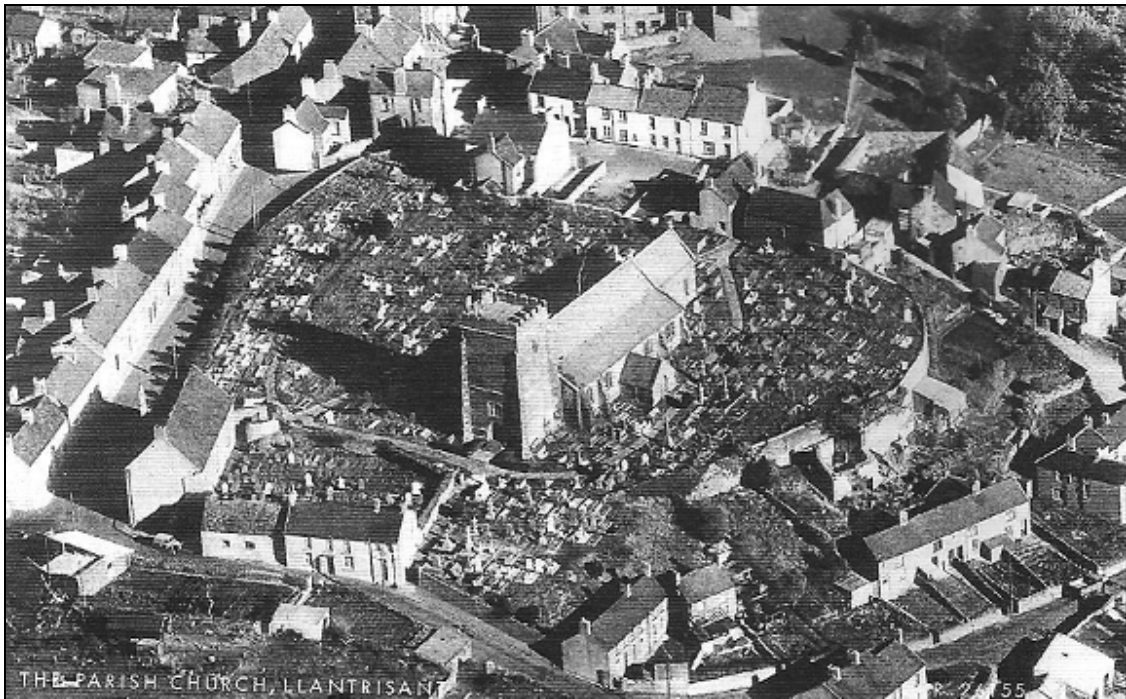


Figure 3.5 Ordnance Survey map 1940



Figure 3.5 Ordnance Survey map 1968



3.2 Archaeological Significance

There has been little archaeological investigation of Llantrisant. As noted previously there is evidence for Prehistoric settlement in the vicinity of the town, although so far no evidence for Roman activity has been found. It is probable that a pre-Norman settlement existed centred on the church. The present castle was constructed in stone in 1246 and this probably replaced an earth and timber ringwork structure of early 12th century date. Surprisingly, given its location close to the native Welsh lands, the town does not appear to have been provided with defences, presumably the inhabitants retreating to the castle in times of danger. The location of the church and castle on the top of the hill means that the medieval town was established below and around them with the modern roads of Castle Street, Church Street, High Street, Swan Street and Yr Allt following the line of the medieval streets with The Bullring and George Street forming a market place. The land beside the streets was divided into plots known as “burgages”, traditionally 24ft (7.3m) by 20ft (6m) with a garden plot to the rear, on which houses and commercial buildings were erected.

4. Character and appearance

4.1 Identification of Character Areas

Llantrisant Conservation Area incorporates the oldest areas of the town, the newer residential expansion and the surrounding open space including Llantrisant Common. The central and oldest area of the town, clustering around the higher land with the church and castle, has retained the great majority of its original 18th and 19th century stock of buildings, and other than a small number of modern redevelopments, there are few contemporary infill or replacement buildings. The consistency of the stone and rendered buildings with slate roofs creates much of its charm. Predominantly to the north, on the more gradual slopes, the twentieth century residential development sprawls outwards, separating the historic Llantrisant Common from the oldest part of the settlement.



This appraisal identifies several distinctive townscape and landscape areas, based on variations of use and age with their characteristic buildings and open spaces. Within the older parts of the town, these Character Areas have been drawn to cover smaller discrete areas, whereas the 20th century development is identified by larger homogeneous areas.

For each Character Area there is:

- A general summary of the local townscape and details;
- An identification of unlisted buildings and structures of merit
- An analysis of the key characteristics, with opportunities for enhancement.

Twelve of the Character Areas are identified on figure 4.1 below (N.B. The Common and Special Landscape Area is identified as Character Area 13 later in the document):

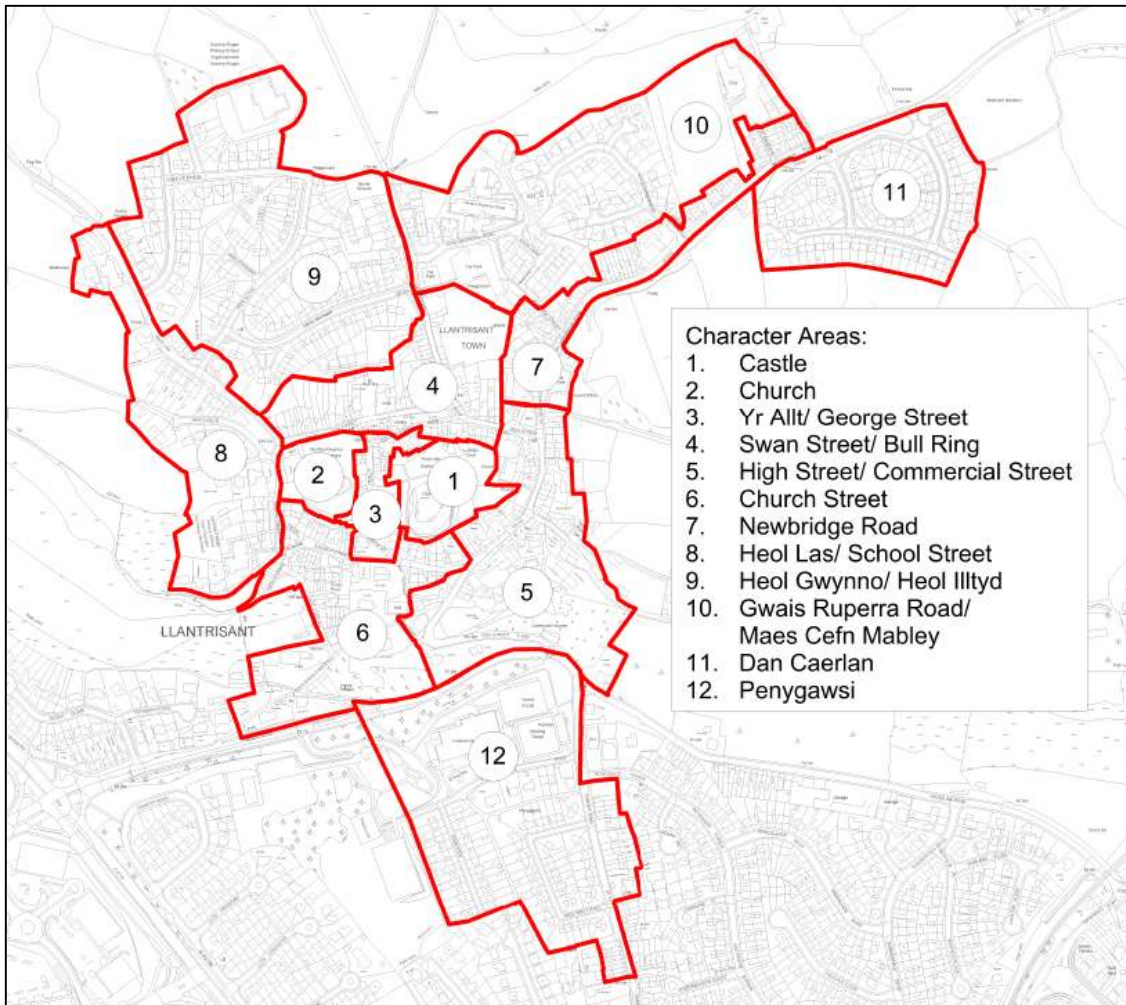


Figure 4.1 Llantrisant Conservation Area Character Areas

The purpose of identifying Character Areas is to assist in the description and analysis of the most important characteristics of the Conservation Area. These boundaries do not suggest a legal designation.

4.2 Character Areas

• Character Area 1: Castle

The Castle Character Area is a hidden gem of Llantrisant. It is hard to find, but on entry into the castle grounds from the surrounding streets, the peaceful open space comes as something of a surprise. The Castle Green is closely bordered by the rear elevations of historic buildings on adjacent streets and the dense foliage around the castle remains, which contrasts with the occasional long distance views out to surrounding countryside. As well as the remains of the castle tower, this Character Area includes the listed Guildhall, a simple but notable building.

The main route into the Castle Green is from George Street and the Bullring in the north. The path widens in front of the entrance to the Guildhall before opening onto the Green. The other connections from the town include the narrow footpath to the west, directly across Yr Allt and through to the churchyard, and the path that circles the castle site with steep steps down to Church Street and the High Street.

Notable local details include the blocked-up brick gothic arch in the boundary wall, the use of iron railings as a “kissing-gate” and the stocks on the Castle Green. The other surrounding buildings, though a particularly important component of this local environment, are included in the townscapes of the adjoining Character Areas.

Key buildings:

- Llantrisant Castle, Scheduled Ancient Monument ref. GM074;
- The Guildhall, off George Street, Listed Grade II



Llantrisant Castle



The Guildhall

Key characteristics:

- the immediate impact of the peaceful, traffic free environment;
- the historic importance of the castle remains and the Guildhall;
- the winding paths leading around the castle grounds;
- elevated position offering long distance views;



View east across Castle Green showing the dramatic impact of the long distance outlook and importance of managing tree growth to retain these views

- the sense of enclosure created by the surrounding backs of properties on Yr Allt, George Street and the mature trees surrounding the castle and Green;
- the relationship of the historic castle and Guildhall with surrounding buildings;
- the importance of the surrounding stone walls which unify the area and identify the entrances.



View north across the Castle Green showing the entrance into the Castle Green and the relationship between the Guildhall, the backs of buildings on George Street, and the Model House in the distance.

Opportunities for enhancement

- reinstatement of lost historic details and materials on the rear elevations of the surrounding properties which have an impact on the historic character of the area;



Loss of character through use of unsympathetic materials

- controlling the extent of the tree growth which is limiting the views out of the area and has now obstructed the long distance views of the castle on its hilltop;
- improving the quality of the George Street entrance



Entrance to Castle Green

- carrying out external maintenance of the Guildhall, a key attraction of this Character Area, particularly the main door.

- **Character Area 2: St Illyd, St Gwynno & St Dyfodwg Church**

The church of SS Illyd, Gwynno and Dyfodwg sits dramatically on its own plateau, dominating the town and surrounded by some of the oldest streets. Built in the same stone used for many of the historic houses, retaining walls and even the gravestones, it is viewed as part of the natural landscape of Llantrisant and an important focus for the town clustering around the churchyard walls.

The raised graveyard and approaches to the church provide wonderful views of the town and a long distance panorama across the Vale of Glamorgan. Only Yr Allt rises to this level and the link from the open exposed area of the churchyard is through a narrow opening between houses that continues into the castle grounds.



Church of St Illyd, St Gwynno and St Dyfodwg



Link from Yr Allt and the castle with setts and ornate iron gates



View east from the churchyard across the Rooftops of Yr Allt towards the castle area, now hidden by tree growth



View north from the church to Swan Street with the terrace appearing above the churchyard retaining wall

In the north west corner of the churchyard, a notable group of historic buildings back into the surrounding churchyard wall. These include the simple Church Hall on Swan Street and an attractive group of houses around the corner at the top of School Street.



Church Hall, Swan Street



School Street houses

Key buildings:

- Church of St Illytd, St Gwynno and St Dyfodwg, Listed Grade II*

Unlisted buildings of merit:

- Church Hall, Swan Street

Key characteristics:

- open setting on higher land between the castle and Y Graig hilltops;
- prominent plateau-like site with views over the town clustered below;
- dramatic views over surrounding countryside;



- uniformity of use of stone on the church, the walls, the gravestones and the church hall;



- the line of trees on the northern edge of the graveyard that identify the boundary to this area and are viewed as important elements in the Swan Street townscape.

Opportunities for enhancement:

- mitigation where unsympathetic new designs have had an impact on the historic townscape;
- improving maintenance in the graveyard, although any impacts on wildlife will need to be considered;
- provision of information signs for the church and better signage on gates;
- the previous floodlighting of the church is no longer used. Reusing it could have a dramatic impact on the local evening environment and enable the town to be viewed from long distances.

• Character Area 3: Yr Allt and George Street

Yr Allt is considered to be the oldest street in Llantrisant. Today, the jumble of dwellings along this route, including some of the oldest properties in Llantrisant, provide a visual and pedestrian link over the ridge between the two sides of the town. The particularly steep, narrow and cobbled incline at the southern end limits vehicular access, whereas at the northern end it connects to both George and Swan Streets. Vehicles can enter from both town centre links, but the limited space restricts parking and turning.

George Street connects Yr Allt to the Bullring. On the southern and higher side of the road are some fine examples of historic terraced cottages and houses that face the high side elevation of the Model House, the backs of properties on Swan Street and on the corner with Yr Allt, the listed Former Parish Office building.

Examples of distinctive architectural details in this area include hoodmoulds to the top of windows and doors, a medieval window on the end elevation of Pwysty, a deep revealed window with mouldings on no. 3 Yr Allt, and the inscription reading "Police Station 1876" in a bath stone stringcourse on the Old Police Station. The cobbled pavements and streets are notable features, particularly where laid with a diagonal pattern.



Yr Allt from the churchyard

Key buildings:

- Parish Offices, George Street, Listed Grade II
- No.2 Yr Allt, Listed Grade II
- Former Stable adjoining 2 Yr Allt, Listed Grade II



Parish Offices



No. 2 Yr Allt and Stable

Unlisted buildings of merit:

- Pwysty, on George Street;
- The Old Police Station, George Street;
- Castle House, Castle Street;



Pwysty, George Street



Old Police Station, George Street

Key characteristics:

- the design and siting of the two storey houses create an attractive streetscape on the slopes of Yr Allt with many painted frontages contrasting with the walls and road of rough sets;
- the gradients and bends create visual interest and the elevated position provides dramatic views to the south;



Yr Allt showing the visual relationship between the painted houses, the stone walls and the road setts.

- streetscape scale and interest along George Street with high sided Model House contrasting with attractive two storey houses and terraces;
- cobbled streets and pavements.



George Street showing the scale of the spaces between the Model House and the houses with attractive setts used for paving.

Opportunities for enhancement:

- reinstatement of lost historic details and materials on houses due to unsympathetic repairs and replacements - particularly where erosion of character has been caused by replacement roofing tiles, brick extensions, ribbon pointing, applied stone cladding, window frames and doors;



Yr Allt access from the south



Yr Allt access from the north

- repairs where modern materials have been used to infill missing areas of cobbles.

- **Character Area 4: Swan Street and Bull Ring**

The Bull Ring and its open space is considered the heart of Llantrisant. It includes many of the town's shops, a public house and the Model House with its tourist shops and exhibitions. The combination of the older buildings with the Model House creates an attractive enclosed space that reveals the Medieval townscape with the scale and design of the simple historic terraces.



The Bull Ring with George Street to the left of the Model House and Swan Street on the right, provides an important urban space that both reveals the historic urban structure of the town and provides a centre for the community

Swan Street was laid out at the same time as the Bull Ring and follows the medieval street pattern connecting to the north side of the churchyard. Although the long south facing terrace of houses is of a simple form, it is notable for its continuity of design and as an attractive backdrop to the church.



View north across churchyard towards Swan Street

The eastern end of Swan Street has a few shops, a listed public house and the entrance to the local library at the back of the Model House.

Notable historic details in this area include the traditional shop fronts that retain original detailing and form, the range of sash and dormer window styles, the hood moulds to windows and doors, the varying styles of canopies to front doors, the “carriage” arch

entrances adjacent to front doors with accommodation above and the high flag stone pavements with stone gutter systems.

Individual details include the use of grave stones in wall construction around the former site of a Wesleyan burial ground – now a car park; and both the stone capping with the carved name “Brynalaf”, and the hole, possibly for coal delivery, in the base of the wall to 26 Swan Street.

Key buildings:

- New Inn, Swan Street, Listed Grade II



New Inn, Swan Street

Unlisted buildings / structures of merit:

- Length of wall thought to be site of Medieval Fives game, Swan Street car park
- London House, The Bull Ring
- Traditional Toys, 6 The Bull Ring
- 54-56 High Street



54-56 High Street

Key characteristics:

- The historic terraces. Both the Bull Ring and Swan Street are notable for the terraces of simple properties that have such an influence in creating their townscapes. Though there is general consistency of form and scale of the properties along each terrace, there is significant variation in detail and colour that enlivens the somewhat plain designs.



Views of terraces in the Bull Ring and Swan Street that were built in the early C19 on the north side and below the castle and church.

- Medieval layout and urban enclosure. The open space of the Bull Ring, the links out towards the Common, the High Street, George Street and Swan Street with

-
- its linear form connecting to and creating a setting for the church, follow the Medieval road pattern and form which generate the attractive historic townscape.
- Pasture land adjacent to Heol Sarn, a surviving field linked to Heol Sarn Farm.
 - Views out of the Bull Ring and Swan Street are a particular attraction of this tight urban area. Wherever one stands, there are glimpses of the distant hills either to the east, north or west.



Views of the distant landscape – north & east from the Bull Ring, & west along Swan St

Opportunities for enhancement

- Reinstatement of lost historic details and materials on houses due to unsympathetic repairs - particularly the erosion of character caused by replacement roofing tiles, window frames, doors and roof lights;



Examples on Swan Street where changes to historic details are altering the character of the terraces.

- Removal of satellite dishes on front elevations and roller shutters on commercial premises.

- **Character Area 5: High Street and Commercial Street**

The High Street is the only vehicular road into Llantrisant from the south. As this historic route climbs the steep escarpment, the sharp bends and the close proximity of the two and three storey residential terraces and commercial buildings create a dramatic entry into the town. A notable row of tall, narrow, three-storey Flemish style properties provide additional interest.



Looking down the High Street

Many significant buildings and terraces line this route into the town centre. Starting with the now unoccupied Southgate Cottage at the bottom bend on the escarpment where it joins the Talbot Road, individual historic buildings, including chapels and inns, provide points of interest between the attractive early Victorian terraces. Detailing of interest includes ornate ridge tiles, attractive bargeboards, keystones to heads and quoin sides to windows, sash windows on the Wheatsheaf and the ornate ironwork entrance canopy to the Cross Keys.

On the eastern side of the High Street, avoiding the bustle along this busy route, are further historic features – Llantrisant House, a late Georgian/early Victorian House, in its large grounds, Llantrisant Cottage, and Roam Road cottages clustering around a farm using the slopes of Caerlan Hill.



View towards the High St from the east, Roam Rd terrace & Llantrisant Cottage

At the top of the hill, a short stretch of the through road to the north is named Commercial Street, and the High Street turns towards the Bull Ring. The junction is marked by the Cross Keys Inn with two nearby chapels and a few shops.



Top of High St with the Bull Ring beyond



The key High Street/Commercial Street junction with the Cross Keys on its island site provide an important visual focus in the town centre overlooked by Caerlan Hill.

Key buildings:

- Penuel Presbyterian Church of Wales, High Street, Listed Grade II
- Llantrisant House, High Street, Listed Grade II
- Southgate Cottage, High Street, Listed Grade II



Penuel (rebuilt 1826)



Llantrisant House (1830)



Southgate Cottage (1785)

Unlisted buildings/structures of merit:

- Tabor Baptist Chapel, High Street
- Cross Keys Inn, High Street
- Trinity Presbyterian Chapel, High Street
- Wheatsheaf Hotel, High Street
- The Laurels, High Street (in Character Area 6: Castle / access from High St)

Key characteristics:

- The Medieval layout creates an attractive townscape with the scale and form of buildings and spaces between them;
- attractive historic terraces;
- stone walls providing important visual links between the steep roads and changes of level.

Opportunities for enhancement:

- Reinstatement of lost historic details and materials on buildings to reverse the erosion of the historic townscape character;
- New Buildings, 31 and 33 High Street are in need of appropriate redevelopment.



- **Character Area 6: Church Street**

The Church Street Character Area is located on the southern escarpment with the historic roads below the castle and church completing the ring around the higher land, and the houses and terraces scattered below down the hillside. This Character Area includes both a mixture of 19th and late 20th century development stepping down the hill – all benefitting from the panoramic views and the south facing aspect.



Church Street properties follow the contours around the church and castle with views over the roofscapes on the escarpment



Church Street south of the church



Church Street south of the castle

The urban form is based on the Medieval layout of lanes and tracks, except where new housing has introduced short access roads. Other than Church Street, many are too steep or too narrow for vehicles and some of the most attractive retain their rough stone walls and cobbled setts.



Examples of the steep lanes

The mixture of old and new two-storey houses, both detached and in terraces and many with stone walled gardens, are scattered down the hillside so creating an attractive environment based on the historic form with surviving historic features.

Key buildings:

There are no nationally listed buildings in this Character Area.

Unlisted buildings/structures of interest:

- the terrace Heol Y Graig;



Heol Y Graig

- The Laurels, High Street;
- The stone walled and cobbled lanes are particularly attractive features worthy of protection.

Key characteristics:

- the Medieval network of steep lanes and paths;
- the traditional urban built form following the contours around the steep slopes;
- some small scale modern development which has integrated into the historic streetscene with careful choice of external materials;



Examples of new development following contours and materials bounded by stone walls and foliage.

- the setting for the traditional and modern properties among stone boundary and retaining walls, gardens and trees;
- panoramic views across the Vale of Glamorgan to Exmoor.

Opportunities for enhancement

- access difficulties for cars and service vehicles with the associated random parking;
- examples of new development that do not follow the contours or use traditional materials – particularly the omission of slate roofs detracting from the views from above.



Church St looking west

- **Character Area 7: Newbridge Road**

The Newbridge Road has traditionally been a gateway to the town providing access from the north east across the higher land towards Pontypridd. Only the western side of this route was developed with small scale terrace housing, a few commercial properties, back lane industries and a farm, as the eastern side rises steeply up the Caerlan Hill.



Newbridge Road looking south-west

The route along Newbridge Road is generally characterised by two storey Victorian residential terraces which mark the entrance to the town, with one listed building – Cefn Mabley Farmhouse. Many of these properties have been subject to modern alterations which have not always been sympathetic to the historic character of the area and present opportunities for future enhancement of this historic route.



Newbridge Road looking north-east

Key buildings:

- Cefn Mabley Farmhouse, Newbridge Road, Listed Grade II

**Unlisted buildings/structures of merit:**

No additional individual properties have been identified.

Key characteristics:

- Gateway location with line of historic terraces and buildings providing an introduction to the town centre;
- A ridge site with all properties having long distance views to the north and over the Common;
- Consistency of built scale and form which presents a typical early Victorian townscape – mainly two-storey with pitched roofs sloping towards road.

Opportunities for enhancement

- Reinstatement of lost historic details and materials on buildings due to unsympathetic repairs - particularly the erosion of character caused by replacement roofing tiles, window frames, doors and modern rooflights.

- **Character Area 8: Heol Las and School Street.**

Heol Las and School Street curve around Y Graig Hill and it is an important Character Area in Llantrisant. It is particularly visible from many parts of Llantrisant and provides a setting for the town. Presently, there are a number of modern residential developments in this character area, which the boundary changes propose to remove from the Conservation Area.

It includes historic properties – the listed Malt House built around 1750 in the north of this area with the nearby listed Water Pump and Walls, and the 19th century school on the south facing slopes of the hill. These provide the historic context, with most of the newer residential properties strung along the roads between them.



*Malt House Farm, Heol Las.
The Malt House, built around 1750 was converted for agricultural use when the farm was built in 1870.*



Old primary school, School Street, closed in 2005, an attractive Victorian building, offering opportunities for re-use.



Examples of the recent housing along Heol Las and School Street which hug the bottom fringes of Y Graig Hill. Many of the properties are built with white render, stone or similar coloured brick and slate roofs, which ensures a unity of design that would be beneficial to reinforce.

Key buildings:

- Water pump and walls, Heol Las, Listed Grade II
- The Malthouse, Heol Las, Listed Grade II



The malthouse (white) adjoining the farmhouse

Unlisted buildings/structures of merit:

- Primary School, School Street

Key characteristics:

- The setting with direct access to Y Graig Hill in quiet location close to town centre;
- Excellent views for many houses – over Vale of Glamorgan, Llantrisant Common and the town;
- Consistency of materials providing overall townscape benefits;
- Mature trees, some with Tree Preservation Orders.

Opportunities for enhancement:

- Further monitoring and control over development in the surrounding landscape which may impact on the Conservation Area;
- Examples of changing built character require management of range of materials and density of new development;
- Finding an appropriate long-term use for the old school, and removal/redevelopment of the modern front extension

-
- **Character Area 9: Heol Gwynno and Heol Illtyd**
 - **Character Area 10: Gwaun Ruperra Road & Maes Cefn Mabley**
 - **Character Area 11: Dan Caerlan**

The three Character Areas on the northern slopes of the town were built for residential expansion during three periods of the 20th century. Though these areas include no buildings or townscapes of particular historic value, they provide attractive housing environments and their consistent scale of development and use of materials provides a neutral backdrop to the town and Common.

There are instances of detail interest among these developments which include original metal casement windows, metal profiled cladding and the mixture of unified hip and gabled semi detached properties. Dan Caerlan, a 1949 development of 78 prefabricated houses, has now been reclad in brick. Numerous examples of unsympathetic repairs and replacement materials and the impact of aerials and satellite dishes are detrimental to the overall townscape qualities of the three estates.

It is proposed that these three areas, which are essentially modern in character, are removed from the Llantrisant Conservation Area in order that the boundary be focused on the historic core of the town, where the greatest concentration of historic buildings and assets lies.



View north of 20th century housing with the Common beyond, and west showing Y Graig hill



Main gateway to the town from the Common, with the walled cemetery on the right

- **Character Area 12: Penygawsi**

The Pengawsi Character Area is located to the south of Llantrisant, below the escarpment, and is now surrounded by the expanding settlement of Talbot Green. As it has no buildings or townscapes of particular historic merit, and is not within an important setting for the town, it is recommended that this part of the Conservation Area has its designation removed. See Section 7.2.2 for a full explanation.

- **Character Area 13: Llantrisant Common & the Special Landscape Area**

The landscape surrounding Llantrisant, which includes the Registered Common and other open space, is of fundamental importance to the setting of the town of Llantrisant itself and very much forms a part of the character of the wider Llantrisant area. The Common is characterised by its nature as an area of open land, and as such any development in this area could have a significant impact and be detrimental to both the Common and the setting of the town itself. Nevertheless, it is proposed that this Character Area is removed from the Conservation Area as it is considered the Local Development Plan designations and other existing designations are more appropriate to protect this area from development.



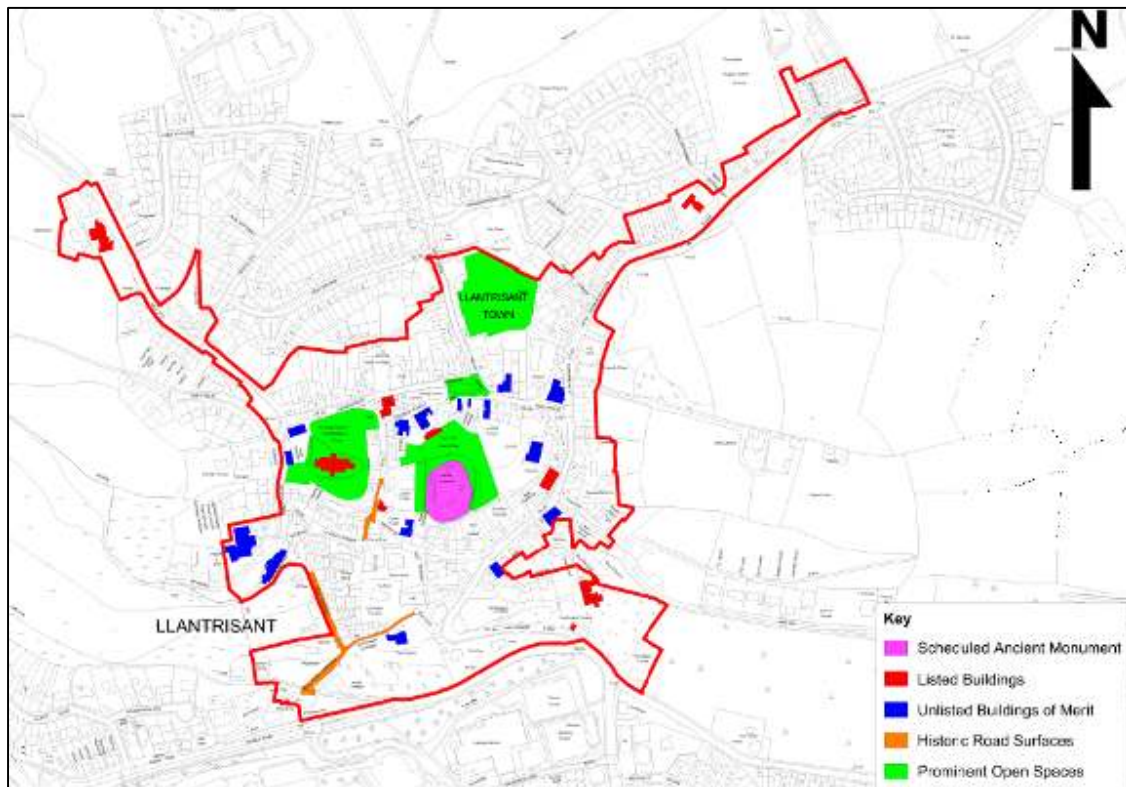
Llantrisant from the north with the Common in the foreground

4.3 Summary of townscape qualities

Within the Conservation Area there are a number of statutorily listed buildings and a scheduled monument, but it is the attractive groupings, terraces and mix of historic building styles throughout the town that create the significant importance of the historic character and townscape.

The key built townscape characteristics within each Character Area: 1 – 8 of the Conservation Area are identified above on Figures 4.2 – 4.9 Townscape Qualities.

The listed buildings and structures within the Llantrisant Conservation Area include one Scheduled Ancient Monument ref. GM074 – Llantrisant Castle; one Grade II* building – the Parish Church; and twelve Grade II buildings and structures. Their locations are identified on Figure 4.9 and listed with each Character Area. Further information is available from the Rhondda Cynon Taf Conservation Officer.



4.4 Summary of Key Characteristics

The special historic characteristics of interest in the Llantrisant Conservation Area that need to be protected and reinforced include:

1. **Attractive townscapes and urban spaces created by the changes of level and surviving Medieval road layout:**



Even where new development is incorporated into the town, the changes of level and the adherence to the traditional road layout result in pleasing spaces and an attractive townscape.

2. **Consistency and unity of materials** – the widespread use of the local stone on the church, on many historic buildings and the numerous retaining walls and paths, many built of random coursed rubble, which together provide the town with a design continuity.



3. **Geometry and conformity of slate roofs** – materials and forms of the sloping roofs make a significant impact on the urban environment where changes of level create views of rooftops.
4. **Boundary walls** – which combine to provide an important visual link between the urban and natural environment.

5. **Focal buildings** which include: buildings and groups of buildings of historic or townscape value that are not listed but add significantly to the character of their area – see Character Area descriptions in Section 4.2.

6. **Panoramic views of the surrounding countryside from within the town; and views of the town from the Vale of Glamorgan and the adjacent hills:**



7. **The setting for the Medieval town created by the surrounding open space – the hills and the Common.** See Section 2.2.

5.0 Management Plan

5.1 Format of the Management Proposals

The appraisal part of this document has identified the features of the Llantrisant Conservation Area that contribute to the special architectural and historic character of the area, those features which create its distinctiveness, and those which should be preserved and enhanced. It has also identified areas and issues where there are opportunities for such enhancement. These features and characteristics and the principal issues which arise from them form the basis for these management proposals and the recommendations outlined here.

The recommendations for the management of the Conservation Area are considered to support the implementation of Policy AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan, for the *Protection and Enhancement of the Built Environment*.

5.2 Key Issues

5.2.1 Loss of architectural details and unsympathetic alterations to historic buildings

Many buildings within the Llantrisant Conservation Area have lost original features such as doors and windows, and in many cases these have not been replaced in matching or sympathetic styles and materials. Small, incremental changes over a prolonged period of time have resulted in a negative effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. These changes also include works such as altering and replacing boundary walls, roofing materials and chimneys.

Where these changes take place at single dwellings, they can often be carried out without express planning permission from the Council as they fall under what is called 'Permitted Development' as outlined in the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995*. Where it is considered appropriate, the Council has powers to make Article 4(2) directions under the above Order in order to withdraw some of these permitted development rights in the interest of preserving and enhancing the character of the Conservation Area, and it is considered that a direction such as this would help to conserve the historic character of Llantrisant. An Article 4(1) Direction to restrict rights in respect of other properties is not considered necessary at this time, as such properties have more limited 'Permitted Development' rights. However, the Council will monitor the potential need for this in the future.

5.2.2 Design and layout of new developments

Although there is currently no significant pressure for new development within the historic core of Llantrisant, there are examples where modern development has taken place, but has perhaps not benefited from a full understanding of the character of the

Conservation Area. The purpose of Conservation Area designation is to conserve the special architectural or historic interest that gives the area its character and makes it unique, but that does not mean that modern development cannot occur. Where it does

occur, however, it should take account of the Conservation Area at all stages of the development, paying particular attention to the details of design, layout, materials etc., and ensure that good modern development can take place while respecting the context of the area.

5.2.3 Loss of key views and vistas

One of the defining characteristics of Llantrisant is long distance views both in to and out of the settlement. The castle remains and the church are particular foci for this when looking in both directions – the churchyard in particular offers sweeping views to the south, and the church itself is visible from miles around. Development has occurred in recent years which impacts upon the ability to appreciate these views and the setting of Llantrisant, and where future development takes place it should give due regard to the location of the Llantrisant Conservation Area, whether inside the Conservation Area itself or not.

5.2.4 Archaeological Impact

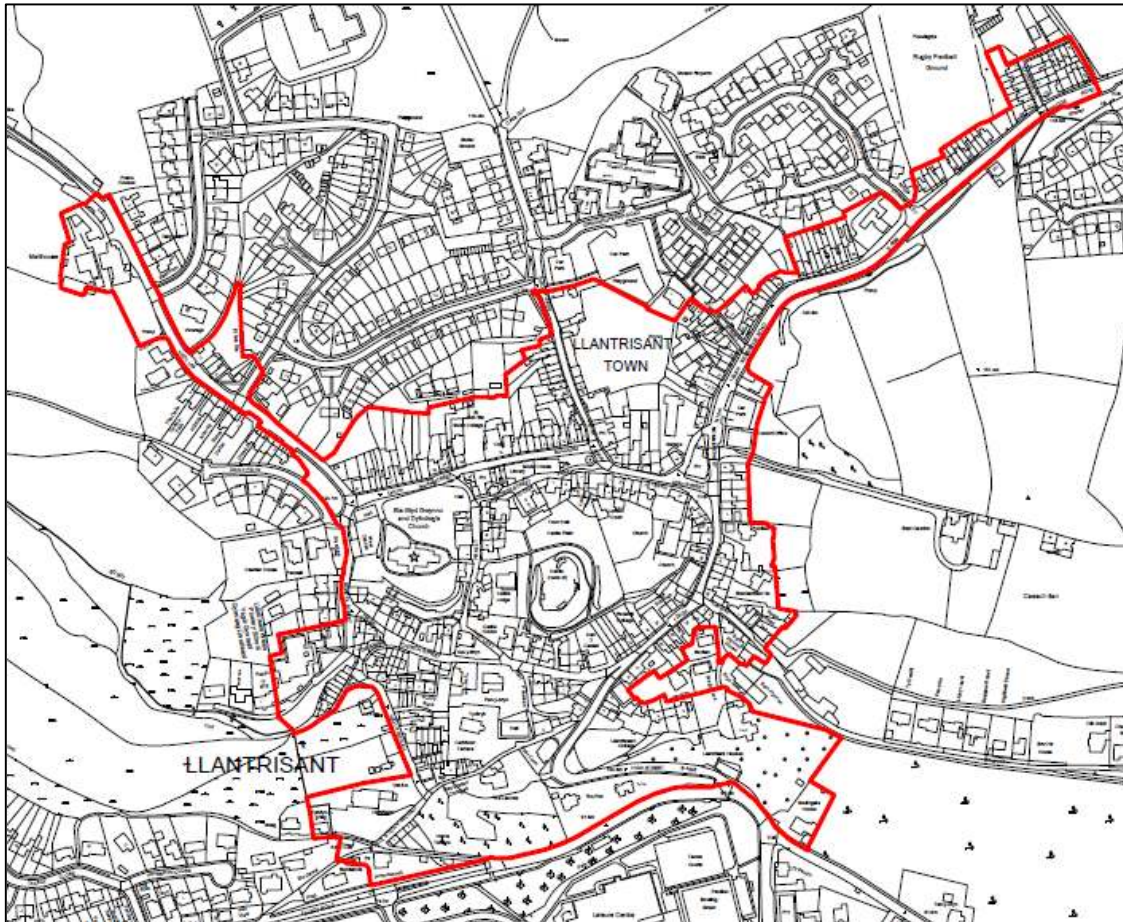
Within the medieval core of the town there is a strong potential for archaeological remains relating to the medieval settlement being located in this area. Additionally, it should be noted that the historic buildings of the town are an important archaeological resource in their own right. Any proposed development within the medieval core of the town will need to include appropriate measures to assess and, if necessary, protect or record the archaeological interest of the site or building. Advice from the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust, the council's archaeological advisors, should be sought at an early stage.

5.3 Boundary changes

The Llantrisant Conservation Area was designated in 1971. This Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has reconsidered the boundary and recommends that the boundary be redrawn and the size of the Conservation Area reduced so that only the historic town itself is included. This removes the Commons and open land, which have stronger protection from other existing designations, and the majority of the modern houses around the fringe of the old town area.

The existing Conservation Area is 258.2 hectares in size, and these proposals would reduce the size to 14.25 hectares.

This reduced boundary would include most of Character Areas 1 – 8 and omit areas 9 – 12 along with the Special Landscape Area and Common which surround the town.



Proposed boundary for Llantrisant Conservation Area.

The Commons and Special Landscape Area surrounding the historic town are recognised as being vital to the setting of Llantrisant, however it is proposed to remove them from the Conservation Area. The area to be removed is a natural landscape which enjoys several existing landscape designations, and is outside the designated settlement boundary. These provide strong controls over development. In addition, the landscape still forms the setting of the Llantrisant Conservation Area. As such, the setting of the Conservation Area would be a material consideration in the determination of any applications for development. In addition to this, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC will continue to monitor applications for development within the surrounding landscape setting of Llantrisant and highlight any potential issues where appropriate.

Character areas 9 – 12 consist of modern development which, on the whole, does not have enough architectural or historic interest to warrant retention in the Conservation Area, and it is considered that the retention of these character areas would bring no benefits.

Recommendation:

- **The recommendation from this review and public consultation is that the current Conservation Area boundary is altered to remove the Commons and the majority of modern development around the fringes of the old town.**

5.4 Article 4 Direction

Article 4(2) Directions can be imposed by local planning authorities to control certain alterations to dwellinghouses within Conservation Areas that would otherwise be considered 'permitted development' under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. This planning control is primarily used where the character of an area of acknowledged importance would be threatened.

For this reason, it is recommended that an Article 4(2) Direction, covering certain classes of development, be made on the revised Llantrisant Conservation Area. This will enable continued preservation and enhancement of the historic and architectural features of the Conservation Area.

It should be noted that an Article 4(2) Direction applies only to dwelling houses. An Article 4(1) Direction could apply to other properties, e.g. commercial properties, but as other properties in Llantrisant are relatively few in number and have much more limited permitted development rights, it is not considered necessary to impose an Article 4(1) Direction at this stage. The Council will, however, continue to monitor the situation and may consider an Article 4(1) Direction in future.

5.5 Monitoring

This appraisal and management plan has been produced as part of a process of review of all Conservation Areas within Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Council will, from time to time, continue to review the Conservation Areas and update appraisals and management plans where needed.

In addition to this, the situation in Llantrisant will be continually monitored through the assessment of applications for planning permission and conservation area consent, to assess whether any future actions are needed.

5.6 Enforcement

The Council's Conservation, Planning and Enforcement Officers can pursue Enforcement action where development has taken place without express consent where it is required. Through these measures, the Council can continue to ensure the long term conservation of the historic town of Llantrisant. These measures include the power to impose, in limited circumstances, Urgent Works Notices where the short term preservation of a building is under threat.

5.7 Funding

Should funding be made available in future, if appropriate it should be considered for carrying out the potential enhancements highlighted in this document.

5.8 Llantrisant Castle

The Council is considering options for future management of the Castle.

5.9 Trees outside the Conservation Area

The removal of the Commons and open land surrounding Llantrisant removes the layer of protection previously offered to trees on this land by virtue of being in a Conservation Area. As a result of this, the Council will carry out an assessment exercise to ascertain whether any individual trees or groups of trees are worthy of Tree Preservation Orders.