

CHURCH ROAD WHITCHURCH



CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

CARDIFF



1. INTRODUCTION.....>

- 1.1 Background
- 1.2 Appraisals
- 1.3 The Proposed Boundary
- 1.4 The Policy Context

2. THE HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE>

-2.1 Background
-2.2 The Special historic interest of the Church Road Area
-2.3 The Area’s Special Architectural Interest

3. THE 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 A High Quality or unusual materials in the Townscape
-3.5 High Quality Architectural Detailing
-3.6 High Quality Hard and Soft Landscaping

4. A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION.....>

-4.1 The Background
-4.2 Conservation Area Enhancement

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.....>

-5.1 Consultation

APPENDIX 1.....>

Draft guidance for those planning development within the area

APPENDIX 2.....>

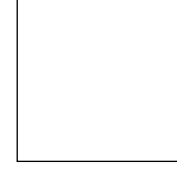
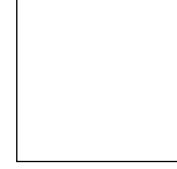
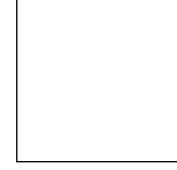
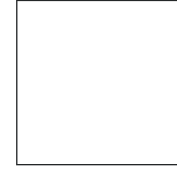
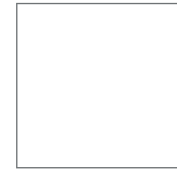
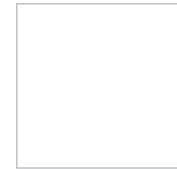
Draft Landscape & Trees Advice

APPENDIX 3.....>

Glossary

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....>

BACKGROUND SOURCES AND REFERENCES

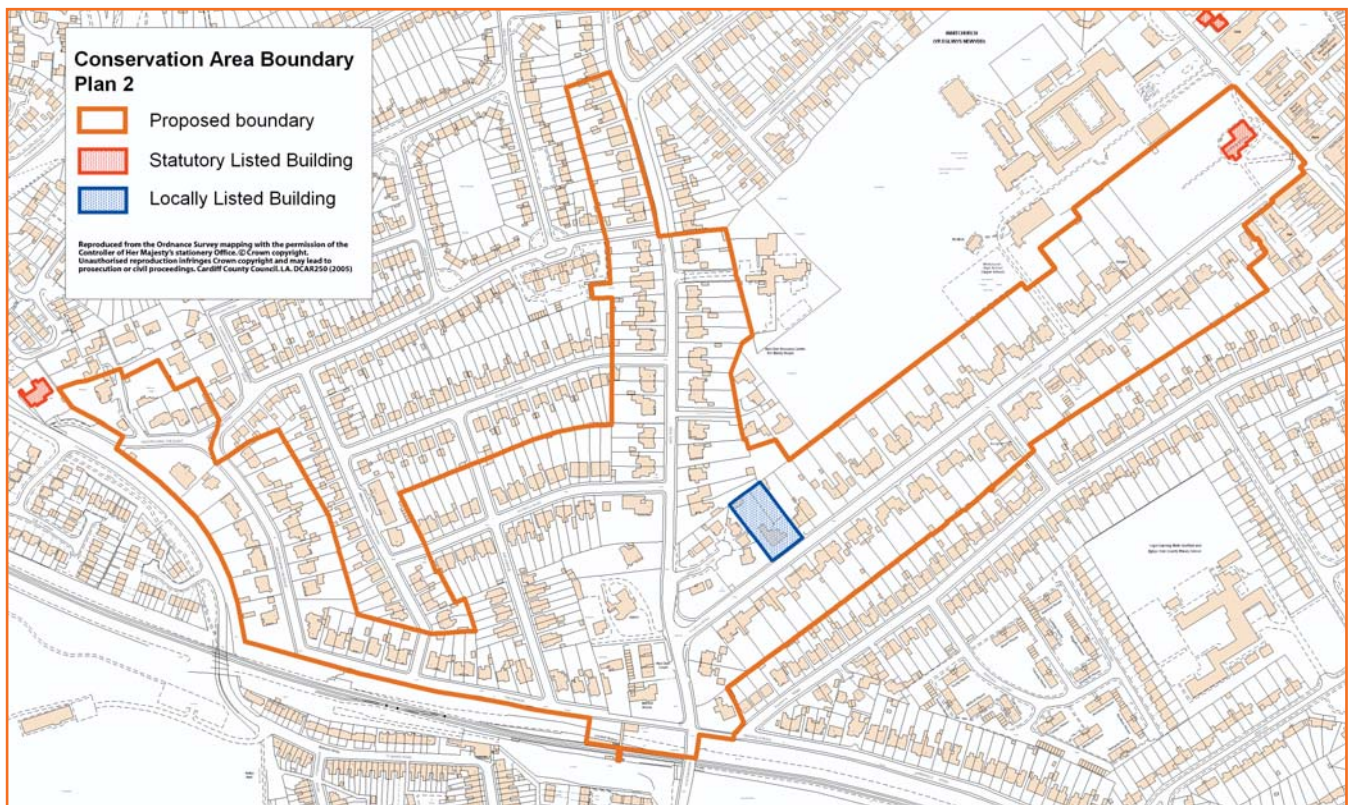


Map showing the Church Road Conservation Area Boundary

Map 1



Map 2



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 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 controls over demolition, minor developments and the protection of trees.

1.2 Appraisals

The Council has a duty to review conservation areas and to work with local people to develop policies and plans that will help to safeguard their character. To manage the process a Conservation Area Strategy has been prepared. The Strategy identifies priorities for the City of Cardiff and the criteria to be used in the assessment of existing and new conservation areas. In January 2006 Cardiff Council resolved that an appraisal of Church Road in Whitchurch be prepared. The findings of the appraisal have been the subject of local consultation and are presented here with recommendations for the areas enhancement.

1.3 The Boundaries

A number of key qualities have been identified to assist in the area's appraisal. They follow government advice and are identified in 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 or unusual materials in the landscape.
- High quality architectural detailing.
- High quality hard and soft landscaping

A brief analysis of the area has been undertaken by the Council. It has been informed by the work of the Whitchurch Heritage Action Group.

The appraisal extends to the historic core of Whitchurch and roads leading north to the historic buildings comprising Whitchurch Library and Hospital. Although remnants of Whitchurch's rural and industrial past are present throughout this area, there is no significant cluster or group where adopted criteria for conservation area designation can be achieved.

In contrast, Church Road and streets shown on Ordnance Survey plans for 1901 and 1920 display a special and distinctive character and represent some of the best examples of Cardiff's expansion during the early part of the twentieth century.

The appraisal therefore concentrates on the streets identified on plan which display an area of houses within generous plots and a wide variety of building styles and materials. Although plot size in Alfreda Road diminishes and semi detached houses are more common here, plots are still well defined by brick walls and gate piers. Houses on The Parade turn at number 18, where a graceful tower defines the corner and leads to a further attractive building group in Westbourne Crescent. Here a number of later and highly individualistic houses lie within generous gardens. A similar, though more isolated group lies to the north and includes Rushbrook House.

Beyond this area, to north and south, the extravagance in building style diminishes and a closer grouping of semi-detached properties and terraces emerge. There are also a greater number of later additions and infill developments.

The proposed conservation area has been drawn to include these early houses, and the two historic and symbolic focal points: St Mary's Church and its junction with Park Road in the east, and the Llandaff North Station in the west.

A full appraisal of the draft conservation area follows. It identifies the character of the area and opportunities for enhancement and guidance.

1.4 The Policy Context

This appraisal is supported by parallel policies within the adopted Local Plan and the deposited Unitary Development Plan. Its adoption following public consultation enhances its status and the weight it has as a material consideration in the assessment and determination of development proposals. The appraisal has three parts:

- An assessment of the character of the proposed conservation area.
- A framework for the protection and enhancement of the proposed conservation area.
- Guidelines to achieve this.

2 historic significance of Church Road

2.1 Background

For many centuries Whitchurch was a rural area consisting of scattered farms. This stretched from Llanishen in the north-east to the Birchgrove area in the south, and from the Great Heath in the south-east to the River Taff in the west. The medieval core of Whitchurch lay in the vicinity of the present day Church Road. The first ecclesiastical building on the site of Old St Mary's Church was built in the 12th Century, and in the 13th century Gilbert de Clare, Lord of Glamorgan developed the area as one of his demesne manors. Until the mid-18th century the population of the district was probably no more than 300 people, living in about 50 farms and cottages. Tenants were free to graze their animals on Whitchurch Common. There were several smithies based at public houses such as The Plough and The Three Elms.

By the early 19th Century Whitchurch's development had been largely determined by the building in 1767 of the turnpike road up the Taff Valley from Cardiff to Merthyr Tydfil, and by the construction of the Glamorganshire Canal, linking Cardiff and Merthyr, which was completed in 1798. The first half of the 19th Century saw considerable new building along the turnpike road through Whitchurch. In this way Whitchurch gained the village nucleus it has today, with rows of terraced houses, cottages, farmhouses, shops and chapels. This nucleus was linked to the medieval core of Whitchurch by Old Church Road turning east from The Plough public house.

2.2 The Special Historic Interest of the Church Road Area

Two factors led to the development of the Church Road and Heol Don area in the late 19th century. The Taff Vale Railway had opened a station at the end of Heol Don in the 1840's mainly to serve Llandaff and the growing working class suburb of Llandaff Yard (Llandaff North today). The second catalyst for the development of the road was the building of the new Parish Church of St Mary on Merthyr Road in 1885. The construction of Church Road through church lands enabled the new church to be sited at the centre of the village. Originally called New Road, Church Road provided a closer link between the heart of the village and the railway station than had hitherto existed. Similarly, the station provided access for the growing middle classes in Whitchurch to commute to Cardiff; and the new houses were of a size and style to suit their needs and aspirations. The houses in and around Church Road and Heol Don illustrate the growth in prosperity of Cardiff and its surrounding villages, which reached a peak just before the First World War.

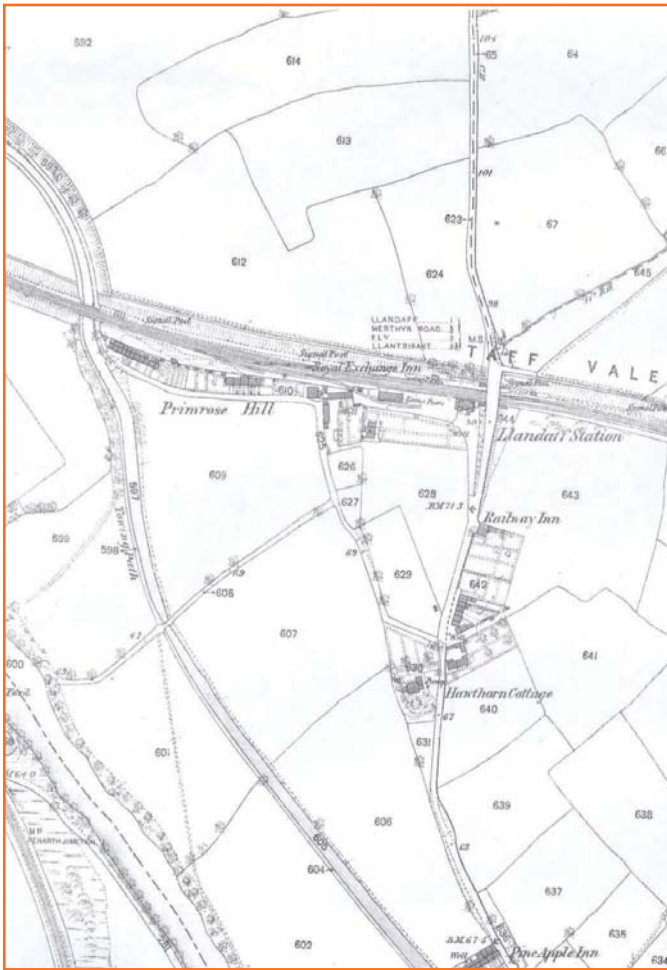
2.3 The Area's Special Architectural Interest

The Heol Don and Church Road area is dominated by individually designed Victorian and Edwardian houses, both detached and semi-detached. The substantial Victorian houses at the station end of Heol Don are set in large gardens, many of which have had a variety of more modern houses or flats built in the grounds. They are surrounded by stone and brick walls and large mature trees, which together, create a special and distinct quality to this part of Whitchurch. The charm of the streetscape is derived from variations in house design and ornamentation and the enclosure provided by luxuriant trees and shrubs in front and side gardens.

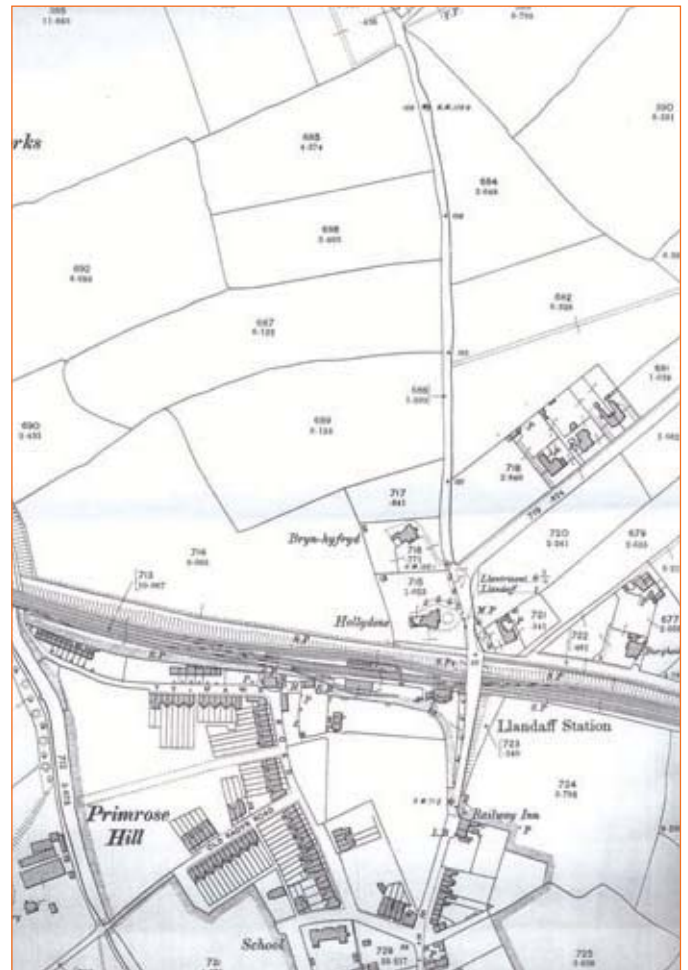


Maps showing the historic development of Whitchurch

OS map 1880



OS map 1901



OS map 1920



3.1 A Distinctive Quality of Place

The area lies at the edge of the ridge rising from the Taff valley and the railway which skirts it. The quality of the area becomes apparent from plot and house size and the exuberance of building style. Most of the houses in the area are detached or semi-detached, with detached houses being sited on the most prestigious roads. The variety in building decoration and the framing of buildings by gardens and mature landscaping marks this area out from its surroundings.

3.2 The Presence of Landmark Buildings & Landscape Features

- Despite the individuality of the houses, their scale and siting is consistent, resulting in few landmark buildings. The most significant landmark building is the Church of St. Mary and its graveyard at the junction of Church Road, Merthyr Road and Penlline Road. This Gothic style church was built in 1882-4 by the Llandaff diocesan architect, John Prichard.
- A notable landmark feature is the 2 metre high continuous stone wall on the north side of the southwest end of Church Road. It runs approximately 85 metres in length along Church Road and then curves around the corner into Heol Don. The wall is punctured by a gothic arched doorway.
- The Llandaff train station and railway line, which runs parallel with to The Parade, is notable. The station was once part of the Isambard Kingdom Brunel engineered Taff Vale Railway. It linked the Rhondda Valley to Bute West Dock in Cardiff, enabling export of the Valley's mineral wealth. The railway line is set down a steep railway embankment, forming a significant landscape feature. Because of this embankment, most of the buildings and structures associated with the railway do not have a significant visual presence on the proposed conservation area. The exception is the former ticket office, which is located along The Parade, 40 metres west of the junction of The Parade, Heol Don and Station Road. This is a single-storey red brick building, which overhangs the railway embankment.
- The slate roofs and chimneys of what would have originally been working-class terrace housing can be seen to the south, below the Parade to the south of the railway track. This roofscape forms a prominent view that has a significant impact on the setting of this part of the proposed conservation area.
- A significant landscape feature that provides the area with a verdant quality are the many trees and hedges located immediately behind the houses front boundary walls, many of which are subject to Tree Preservation Orders. There are few trees within the streets themselves. The exception is the row of trees along the pavement in the Parade, which frame the views of roofscape below.



3.3 Hierarchies of Public & Private Space

- The area is one of tree lined avenues, where boundary walls play a strong part in defining plot layout and building scale. Church Road and Heol Don are the widest roads, reflecting the size and status of the houses they serve.
- The relationship between St Mary's Church and properties to the west is an important one, since the Church was built to serve the growing population arising from the sale of the Church lands. It lies on the same plot line of properties and its southern boundary runs parallel with their distinctive brick walls too. Beyond the grounds of Whitchurch School and its avenue of beech trees provide an attractive backdrop to the road.
- The other 'shared' open space lies at the junction of Church Road and Heol Don. Here the wide grass verge marks the historic road junction and provides an attractive setting for the arts and crafts pair: 69 and 71 Church Road.

A hidden path to the Melingriffith area lies to the west of Rushbrook Close. It drops steeply to join the listed Ty Mawr and beyond, the historic line of the Glamorgan Canal.

3.4 High Quality Local or Unusual Materials in the Landscape

- There is a variety of building materials evident in the proposed conservation area. Fundamental to the character of the area are the pressed red bricks used in the walls of the dwellings, on chimneys and in the boundary walls and pillars, from the Edwardian period onwards. The materials used for copings on boundary walls and pillars are typically various types of moulded red brick. Some copings on Heol Don walls are stamped by the manufacturer in Llantarnam, Newport, Mon.
- Render also makes a significant contribution to the character of the area, particularly along the Parade, Kingsland Road and other adjoining roads where rough cast render features heavily.
- Pennant sandstone is evident, distinguishing the late Victorian development from red brick and rendered later developments. It appears around the southwest end of Church Road in a coursed, rock faced, hammer dressed form. Pennant sandstone in a random rubble form is also used in some boundary walls in this area.



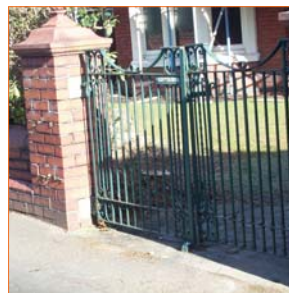
- Other major uses of stone in the area include Welsh slate used as a roofing material and Bath stone ashlar dressings, now generally painted over. There are also a number of other types of stone: Radyr stone became popular in the 1880's and 1890's, and can be seen in the boundary walls of the Church of St. Mary and the greenish-grey Forest of Dean stone, used as a coping on the boundary walls of some properties.



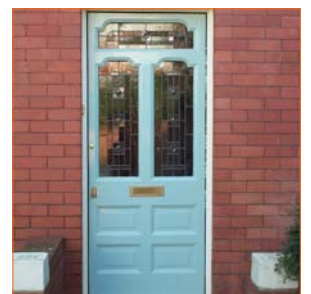
- Tiles, some of which incorporate a fish-scale pattern, feature prominently as decorative wall coverings, on gables and as a roofing material on towers and porches.



- Decorative cast iron features can be found on some properties for example it is used on porches and weathervanes. Iron railings would have once been a feature on many of the boundary walls, however, only a few of the originals survive, most having been removed during World War II.



- Timber is found in windows, doors and their frames, bargeboards and eaves. Some properties also have timber porches and applied half timber on gables and walls.



3.5 High Quality Architectural detailing

- Properties are dominated by large gables with heavy, undecorated bargeboards and wide eaves facing the street. The gables are decorated in a number of different ways including applied mock Tudor half timbering, Art Nouveau bath stone, rough cast and smooth render and pebble dash, although most typical are red hanging tiles, which often have a partial fish-scale pattern. Many properties have terracotta finials on top of the gables and decorative red tiles run along the ridge of the roof. Chimneys are typically of pressed red brick with red pots. Cast iron gutters and down pipes are still in evidence, although many have been replaced with uPVC.



- Properties in the area are set back from the road allowing front gardens, boundary walls and pillars to be visually prominent within the street scene. Some walls are constructed of stone laid to various heights, although most walls are low and constructed of pressed red brick. Notably there are bevelled courses within the brick walls that create a change in the depth. There are a number of different types of copings to walls and posts. Most are various types of moulded red brick, although stone is also used. Many of the brick walls would have once had cast iron railings and gates, although many of these have now been lost.



- Much space is given over to windows. Vertical sliding sash windows are one of the major elements of properties in the area and contribute to the small-scale detail on building facades. Many of these have horns or decorative brackets. Top lights sometimes have panes in the Queen Anne style or have heavy Gothic style transoms. Many of the windows are frequently found paired. Bath stone heads and dressing feature widely. There is some limited use of stained and decorative glass although on the whole glass is undecorated.



- Underneath the prominent gables are double bay windows typically with two sash windows in the centre and sash windows to either side, divided by heavy Gothic style bath stone mullions. There are also examples of bays being divided into an even greater number of segments, notable on the corners of properties. The bays are decorated with plain and fish-scale tiles, rubble stonework, or a rough cast render but can also be seen undecorated in pressed red brick.



- There are several polygonal corner towers, the roofs of which are decorated with plain and fish-scale tiles and cast iron weather vanes. The use of cast iron also gives added interest to many porches and verandas.



- While there are front entrances that face onto the street, there are many that are located on the side elevation of properties. Commonly front entrances have decorative enclosed porches or open canopies. These vary quite considerably in style. Front door details should also be noted. Typically there is glass in upper panels, which is occasionally decorated. Embellished details on doors include decorative knobs, knockers, bells and letterboxes, all of which enliven the entrances they serve.



3.6 High Quality Hard & Soft Landscaping

- The area is characterised by many large mature trees including Copper Beech, Cedar, Scots Pine, Yews, Silver Birch, Oak, Beech, Horse Chestnut, Willow, two Monkey Puzzles (one in the front of no.42 and the other in the garden of no. 10) and many ornamental varieties. Yews are prominent near the Church. The front garden of No 4 has a fine Silver Birch.
- There is a particular concentration of trees at the Heol Don end of Church Road, and around the Victorian houses near Llandaff Station. The north side of Church Road has many trees at each end. At the west end of Church Road a development of houses dates from the 1960s. Accessed from Heol Don, it is screened by the original old wall and also by a number of large mature trees including some magnificent Cedars. The original arched door to this former garden of number 44 Church Road is a special feature of this wall.
- Moving eastwards along Church Road all the houses are set in gardens that are planted with many flowering shrubs and trees. There are many fine Magnolia trees along Church Road. At the Merthyr Road end of Church Road trees surround the graveyard of the Church of Mary's, whilst grass and shrubs combine with the Victorian statuary decorating graves to create a green heart to Whitchurch Village.



4.1 The Background

The appraisal describes the features which make up the proposed Conservation Area's special character and scope for its enhancement. It may be used in the following ways:

- Defining a scheme of enhancement to guide development of the area.
- In the assessment of planning applications in accordance with policy 3 of the Local Plan and 2.53 of the UDP, 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 the area.

These are the opportunities presented by the appraisal:

- To maintain the special character of the Church Road area.
- To ensure that new developments are well integrated within the established plot layout and building grain.
- That where there is scope for the enhancement of the public realm, they are achieved with regard for the proposed Conservation Area's special character and the enhancements identified in the appraisal.
- To enhance links and connections to the Whitchurch shopping centre,
- To enhance the enjoyment of its special character, and to establish links to the historic paths and trails leading to Melingriffith and Forest Farm.
- To examine scope for the restoration of the railway station in association with an appropriate lighting scheme to enhance access and legibility
- To increase the understanding and appreciation of its special character.
- To encourage and explain to those who live there why accurate repair is important.

The issues to address:

- Large-scale projects to demolish houses in favour of the more substantial new developments.
- Continued pressure to alter and extend buildings and gardens.
- Continued pressure for on street parking, and disruption to traffic as a result.
- Competing pressure for change to buildings and houses to meet other objectives, for example improved energy efficiency, and security for houses.
- Continued traffic congestion and the heavy use of residential roads at peak traffic hours.
- A loss of character where service yards to properties on Merthyr Road gain access from the south side of Church Road.

This final section aims to address these findings in proposals to enhance the character of the proposed Conservation Area and positive features described in preceding sections.

4.2 Conservation Area Enhancement

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

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on the LPA to prepare a scheme of enhancement for a conservation area. This enhancement can best be achieved in cooperation with other service areas within the Council and in partnership with developers, the community or other public bodies.

The Council has identified the following opportunities for influencing and bringing forward enhancements.

- Through the guidance and enhancement opportunities identified within this appraisal and in Appendix 1 and 2.
- The promotion of an understanding of the cultural and historic significance of the area through links with the community, schools, libraries and community groups, including the Forest Farm Country Park.
- Through existing Council budgets and the management of the public realm:

Protection

The identified area contains many high quality, well-preserved Victorian and Edwardian houses set within mature gardens and boundary walls. Many of the original details such as wooden sash windows with shaped meeting rails, and ornate iron porches remain and contribute positively to the special character of the area.

If these features are lost, the area's character will diminish. The level of change is still minor, with upvc casement windows replacing original wooden sash windows and a few examples of unsympathetic boundary treatments. In order to protect the special qualities of the area, it is important to ensure that historic architectural detail is retained and that minor building alterations are sympathetic.

To help achieve this, an Article 4(2) Direction under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 will be served. This will require that planning permission be sought for minor specified works, where they face the highway and which under normal circumstances would be considered permitted development (development which does not require planning permission).

Works which may be included in an Article 4(2) Direction are:

- **Alterations to, and the removal and renewal of doors, windows and porches facing a highway**, to protect against the unsympathetic insertion of windows and doors, the removal of, or alterations to existing porches.
- **The erection or construction of a porch where it faces a highway**, to protect against inappropriate additions to the main elevations of houses, which would have a significant impact on the character of the individual property and the area as a whole.
- **The erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alterations of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure**, to ensure that boundary treatments within the area reflect its special character through scale, material and detail.
- **The demolition of a gate, fence or wall or other means of enclosure**, to protect the existing street scene, rhythm and character of the area.
- **The creation of hard standing within the curtilage where it is nearer to the highway than the dwelling house**, to protect against the erosion of the character of the area, through the loss of front gardens and landscaping, and the puncturing of existing, historic boundary walls for vehicular access.
- **The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of any roof or roof-covering or chimney**, to protect the scale, rhythm and special character of the area.

The proposed Article 4(2) Direction will apply to single dwelling houses only. Permitted Development Rights for other property types (including flats, whether purpose built flats or converted houses) are limited, and do not include the works identified. Planning consent would be required for the works listed above, regardless of an Article 4(2) Direction.

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

A summary of the appraisal and the Guidance in appendix 1, and 2 be published and circulated to those who live or have an interest in the proposed Conservation Area.

The appraisal and its recommendations and priorities for action be confirmed as the basis for corporate initiatives in the proposed Conservation Area,

The appraisal and character assessment in Part 3 serve as a framework for the assessment of planning applications in compliance with Section 72 of the Act,

That, on adoption of the extended area, steps be taken to serve an Article 4[2] Direction within the area shown on plan 2,

Improved communications with local groups and residents be established,

The Appraisal and information on the history of the area be made available for study in the Whitchurch Library 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 proposed Conservation Area,

The designation of the conservation area be advertised in accordance with the Act.

5.1 Consultation

This document has been adopted following local consultation. If you have any comments or other proposals you would like the council to consider, or would like to contribute and share information on the history of the area please contact the Conservation Team on 029 2087 3404.

Guidance for Those Planning Development in the Church Road 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.

Building Materials & Details

When considering building work or replacement the aim should be:

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

Windows & Doors

Door and windows 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 should be retained where possible;
- Frosted or stained glass door panels and porch details should be retained,
- New windows should accurately reflect the style and opening methods of those originally fitted to the property

In practice this means that you should first consider whether any replacement is necessary. It may be possible to repair windows; skilled joiners 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 and Neighbourhood Renewal.

Chimneys

Chimneys are often an important part of the symmetry of each building group or terrace, punctuating the skyline and defining street corners. Stone chimneys on early houses can often identify the age of a building and the source of building stone. The original stack and pots are often an integral part of the design of later Victorian and Edwardian houses. If a chimney which makes a contribution to the character of the house or conservation area becomes unsafe and requires repair, it should be rebuilt to the original height and design, even if no longer in use.

The demolition of a chimney may require Planning Permission. When chimneys become redundant it is important to ensure that steps are taken to maintain stone, brickwork, mortar or render. Original clay pots should be retained where they are still structurally sound. A proprietary weather-guard can retain ventilation and discourage damp through to the chimney breast.

Dormer Windows & Loft Conversions

Dormers with decorative fascias of ridges and stonework are a common feature of the Victorian and Edwardian period during which most of the conservation area was developed. New dormers will only be appropriate where they respect the scale of the house and protect the character of the existing roof form, as well as the appearance of the conservation area.

Small traditional roof lights may be acceptable in discrete locations, offering an alternative to a dormer. In the case of a semi-detached property, particularly if symmetrical, care will 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.

The use of roof lights on front roof slopes will not be supported.

Roof Materials

Generally original roofing materials should be maintained. Reclaimed or new natural slates or clay tiles are the best way to protect the character of the conservation area.

Decorative ridge tiles and ornamental barge boards should be retained.

Extensions & Alterations

In modernising their homes, residents want larger kitchens and family rooms and need additional accommodation. Often this can be done without spoiling the character of either the individual house or the wider conservation area. However, the kind of extension, dormer window or loft conversion suitable for one type of house might be completely inappropriate for another, and so it is impossible to lay down a uniform set of rules for the whole conservation area. However, the following notes set out some guidelines.

Because there is a clear building line to many roads in the conservation area, front extensions are unlikely to protect the character of the conservation area. Similarly, side extensions may close up the gaps between properties, creating continuous terracing which destroys the open character of the layout and the carefully designed views between buildings.

The following points should be considered in planning an extension:

1. Will the alterations or extensions affect or overlook neighbouring properties?

It is strongly recommended that you discuss your proposals with immediate neighbours at the earliest stage. Development will be resisted where new windows to habitable rooms would significantly increase overlooking or if the building would dominate neighbouring properties.

2. Will the extensions be visible from the road or another public viewpoint and, in particular, will they encroach upon spaces between buildings, closing out distant views?

In general, any extensions should be to the rear of the property. Extensions that would intrude upon well established views, for example, two-storey side extensions or extensions above existing garages are unlikely to protect the character of the conservation area.

3. Will the extension be in character?

For an extension to be acceptable in principle, it should be designed to harmonise with the original form and character of the house.

4. Have any insensitive alterations already taken place?

Some properties have been altered before the present controls were in place. Previous insensitive and possibly unauthorised alterations should not be a justification for further inappropriate works. Encouragement is given to the removal or improvement of previous inappropriate work as part of any new proposal.

The design of successful extensions requires knowledge of building type and a sensitive handling of scale and detail. Although officers can offer informal advice, it is advisable to employ an architect with knowledge and experience of this type of work. The architect's drawings with clear, concise and accurate information and attention to detail will usually form a sound basis for a decision on an application.

New Development

The following principles are designed to complement Local Plan policies and to ensure that the area's distinctive character is protected and enhanced in proposals for development. They should be read in conjunction with the criteria and character assessment in Section 3.

The footprint of new buildings should fit into the urban context of the area, and wherever possible, relate to the existing 'grain', the use of materials generally matching in appearance or complementary to those described in the appraisal is important, as is ensuring that materials, detailing and finishes are all of high quality. Within these criteria, new development should aim to achieve creative design solutions, whether contemporary or traditional in style. The character and context described in this appraisal can be expressed in:

- The use of a common building line, plot size and subdivision
- The strengthening and maintenance of existing vertical and horizontal building rhythms.
- Adjacent building heights, roofs and cornice lines.
- Respecting significant views in and out of the conservation area and along its principal roads
- The use of local building materials.
- The retention and strengthening of existing boundary walls.

Although it is important not to arrive at token or de-based gestures towards the local architectural style, local identity can also be protected and enhanced in new development by reflecting local craftsmanship in for example timberwork, masonry, ironwork or stained glass.

The policy framework for this guidance is supported by the Local Plan and deposited Unitary Development Plan, until such time as a Local Development Plan has been adopted. These policy documents make it clear that development proposals will be judged for their effect on the character of the conservation area. The guidance in the Appendix will complement policies within the Plan and will be supported by forthcoming Supplementary Planning Guidance on design.

Landscape & Trees 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. The Planning Authority has special powers over these issues that apply only within 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.

Parking in Front Gardens

The area was largely developed before car ownership became widespread. Constructing further off-street parking within the curtilage of individual houses can result in the loss of front gardens and hedges.

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.

Garden Areas

Grassed and planted front gardens and walls and hedging help give the conservation area its special charm. The need to preserve this character may preclude the granting of permission to form a hard-standing in the front garden. Each case will be considered on its merits. The location of a hard-standing should not result in cars being parked directly in front of the house. Many roadsides include a grass verge contributing to the green character of the area. These should be protected. The creation of paved forecourts with turning areas usually reduce grassed areas, flower beds and the line of hedging, and often result in the loss of a garden and path.

Gates & Boundary Enclosures

There are a variety of ways in which verges gardens and footpaths have been formed. In repairing and restoring boundaries or hedges, it is important to plant a species in character. Tree Preservation Officers may be able to advice 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.

Brick & Stone Walls, Boundaries & Railings

Boundary walls should be regarded as an extension of the building which it protects. They provide definition and character to the street scene. Any new walls should seek to fulfil the same objectives.

There are a number of different building materials in the conservation area and a variety of stone too. Where natural stone or brick walls are retained they should be repaired and maintained to ensure that stone or brick work, joints, mortars, and copings all respect the original structure.

Background Sources & References

- Old Whitchurch. Edgar Chappell
- Whitchurch: A Brief History. Hilary Thomas
- An Illustrated History of Cardiff Suburbs. Dennis Morgan
- Western Mail Cardiff Directories 1899 to 1910
- Cardiff: A History of the City. William Rees
- The Buildings of Wales: Glamorgan Newman J. Penguin 1995
- The Edwardian House. Helen Long. Manchester University Press 1993
- The Victorian House. Kit Wedd/The Victorian Society. Aurum 2002
- 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

- The Glamorgan Record Office.
- Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments.
- The Whitchurch Heritage Action Group.
- The Victorian Society.

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