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Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

Laugharne Conservation Area

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Executive Summary

Laugharne Conservation Area was designated in 1970. A review of this designation is now required to reassess the significance of the area and consider if the boundaries remain appropriate. The aim of the review, and this resulting document, is to provide a robust appraisal that will inform the future management, conservation, and enhancement of the area.

The area has a rich heritage resulting from its occupancy since prehistoric times, suggesting that it is one of the oldest inhabited settlements in Wales. Laugharne Castle continues to dominate the township, defensively overlooking a bend in the river Taf as it continues in a wide tidal estuary towards Carmarthen Bay; the township is tucked into a dramatic natural amphitheatre, surrounded by steeply rising ground to either side of the river Coran, a minor tributary that flows into the Taf. The location historically provided both defensive and maritime trading opportunities, but also became popular in the 18th century as a retirement town. This has left a legacy of architectural and historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The following are key significant characteristics of the area:

1. Strategic position on the Taf river.
2. Dramatic natural topography.
3. Scheduled monuments at Laugharne Castle and Glan-y-mor Fort.
4. Evident medieval street layout and defensive circuit pattern.
5. High quality 18th and 19th century properties on King Street and Market Street.

4. Association with notable people and events.

It is concluded that the area's conservation area status should remain, but that an alteration should be made to the boundary to consolidate and include previously overlooked yet significant areas.

The next step is to find out what people think of this analysis and the proposals to alter the conservation area boundary.



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Report

This report has been prepared by Donald Insall Associates (Insall) in response to a brief from Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) for the preparation of a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Laugharne Conservation Area, made possible by grant funding from the Community Renewal Fund. The aim of the project is to study and assess the existing Conservation Area to understand and articulate what makes it special, consider whether the existing boundaries are appropriate and to produce a robust appraisal document which will guide the future management, maintenance, and development of the area. This document is intended for use by building owners who wish to undertake work on their properties, by architects and developers when considering change to existing buildings and by Local Authority staff to aid them in making decisions.

The report is set out in 4 parts:

Understanding the area: This consists of a summary of the area, its historic development and significance.

Site appraisal: This sets out key elements of the Conservation Area (CA) and how they contribute to its character, appearance, and significance.

Issues, threats, and management: The report continues with observations around specific issues and threats and sets out a series of principles to help guide future development whilst ensuring that the special interest of the area is preserved and where possible enhanced.

Opportunities: This section elaborates on opportunities that have been identified to inform the concluding section.

1.2 Defining Conservation Areas

Conservation areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'

CAs are distinct parts of the historic environment designated by Local Planning Authorities because of their special architectural or historic interest. Architectural interest could include a good example of a particular type of settlement, town planning, or a group of buildings of distinctive regional or local style or of high architectural quality. Historic interest is associated with the historic evolution of a place, a particular period or with social, economic, or cultural movements such as early industrial housing and areas where archaeological, architectural, or topographical evidence of the origins and main periods of development have survived particularly well. Character is expressed through such things as building styles, materials, street layouts, land use and periods of development.

Within the planning system, applications for change within a CA are assessed to understand the effect that the development might have on significance. Significance is one of the guiding principles running through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF defines significance as 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest'. This may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic and it may derive not only from a physical presence but also from its setting.

Additional regulatory controls are placed upon certain works within CAs, including demolition, works to trees and advertisements. All planning decisions are required to be assessed against the significance of the area to ensure it is maintained and where possible enhanced.

This document sets out the significance and character of the area to aid those applying for change or making decisions can understand where proposals may impact upon this and determine whether this is a positive or negative change.

1.3 Summary of Related Legislation, Policy, and Guidance

The key provisions for conservation area designation and management are set out in legislation, government planning policy and guidance. This includes:

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11 February 2021

Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment, 2017

Managing Conservation Areas in Wales, Cadw, 2017

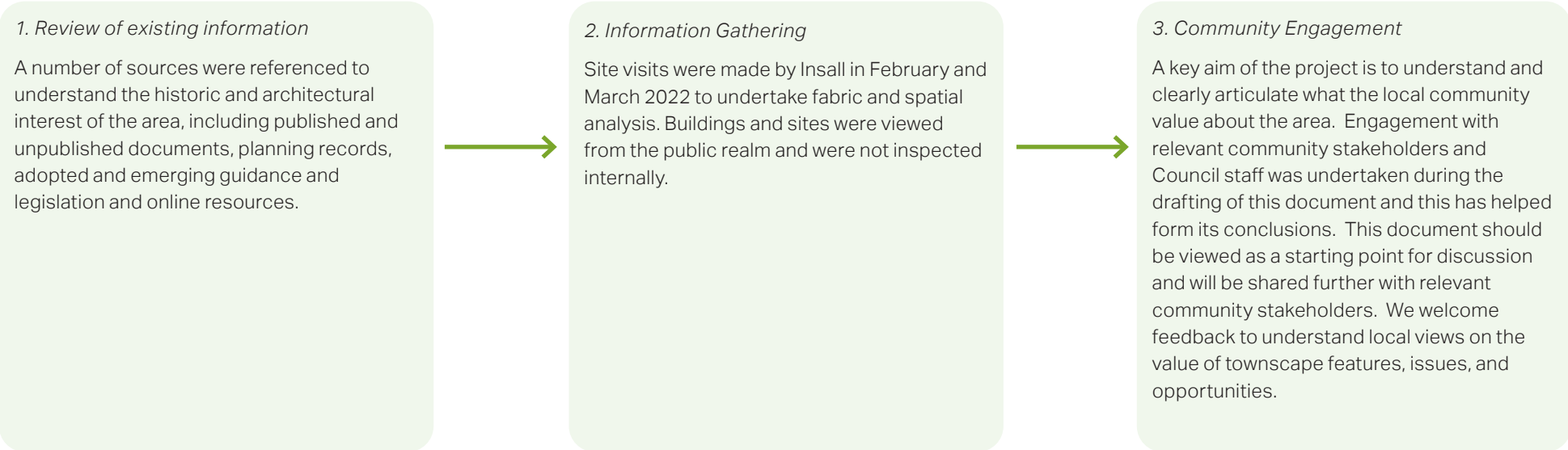
South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan, September 2021

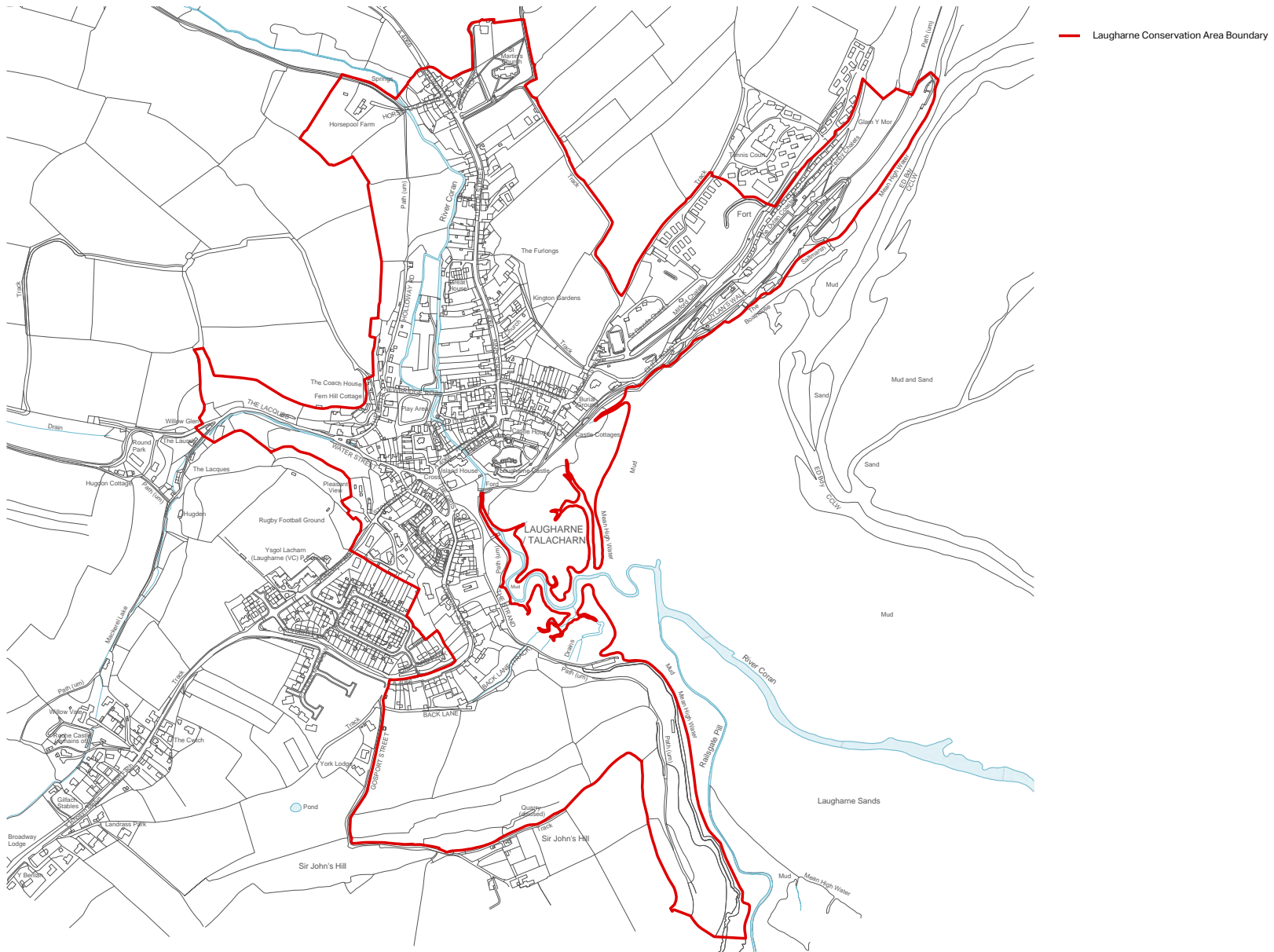
Carmarthenshire Economic Recovery and Delivery Plan, April 2021

A summary and links to these documents can be found in an appendix to this document.

1.4 Method Statement

The following has been undertaken through the preparation of this report:





2.0 Understanding the Site

2.1 Summary of Significance and Character

The key characteristics of the area and items of significance are summarised below (a more expansive list can be found in section 7).

- Strategic location with evidence of historic defensive layout
- Significant views to, from and through the area
- Buildings of local, regional, and national significance
- Scheduled monuments of Laugharne Castle and Glan-y-mor Fort
- Legible medieval street pattern, divisions, and enclosure
- Archaeological discoveries and high further potential
- Port history with evidence of river trading and past industry
- Medieval township with Corporation and Charter since 1290
- Concentration of high-quality 18th and 19th century properties on King Street and Market Street.
- A strong sense of enclosure along King Street and Market Street with occasional glimpsed, wider views
- Associations with notable literary people

2.2 Location

The township lies 4 miles south of St Clears and the A40 trunk road, on the west bank of a wide bend in the river Taf, at its confluence with the small river Coran. Laugharne Castle stands at the junction of these rivers, with the township tucked into low lying valleys, to the north and west. The location historically provided both defensive and maritime trading opportunities. Below Laugharne, the tidal Taf estuary merges with those of the Towy and Gwendraeth rivers before flowing into Carmarthen Bay. The CA includes the majority of the current township and much of the surrounding landscape which rises around it, together with tidal marshes below the castle and the adjoining banks of the Taf to the north and south.

2.3 Topography and setting

Laugharne Castle rises dramatically out of the tidal marshland of the Taf estuary, with extensive open views to the east afforded by the wide bend in the river. The township shelters behind the castle in a natural amphitheatre, surrounded by rising ground. The principal overland route into Laugharne is the road from St Clears which drops steeply into the Coran valley from the north, into Clifton Street, which has a semi-rural character with sloping landscape on both sides behind the buildings. The route continues southwards, gently climbing into King Street, with buildings increasing in density, scale and quality. The surviving medieval defensive layout is evident in the street pattern immediately north of the castle, around Market Street, at the end of which there is a sense of arrival marked by the Town Hall and Outer Gatehouse of the castle. Below the castle, to the southwest, levels drop down to cross the river Coran as it meets the Taf estuary. Simpler buildings are grouped around the low-lying Grist and the Strand, which leads south along the bank of the Taf and provides a suggestion of the former maritime trading links. The CA includes the wooded banks of the Taf and sloping fields to the south of the township. To the northeast of the castle, the banks of the Taf rise steeply and the CA extends around an earthwork fort on the hillside at Glan-y-mor which is rapidly being engulfed within an expanding holiday park.



3.0 Historic Development

Summary of the Historic Development of Laugharne

Pre-history

The area around Laugharne shows evidence of human activity and occupation throughout much of the prehistoric period. Natural caves at Coygan Bluff, to the southwest of the township, have yielded evidence of use by early hunter-gatherers, with excavated material in the form of flint tools indicating occupation from the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. Within the CA, to the northeast of the town, pottery found at the scheduled monument on the hillside earthwork at Glan-y-mor, suggests an iron age or possibly Roman settlement. Further Roman pottery has been uncovered during excavations at Laugharne castle indicating the likelihood of occupation of the site during the Romano-British era. Laugharne is probably one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in Wales.

The Middle Ages

After Glan-y-mor fort, Laugharne castle is the earliest structure remaining in the CA and lies at the heart of the township, positioned to secure the crossing of the Taf river as part of the Norman coastal defences. The main street, Market Street, leads directly north from the castle gatehouse. Wogan Street and Duncan Street lead off Market Street to the west and Market Lane to the east. These streets, together with the marketplace at the junction of Market Street and Market Lane now occupied by the Town Hall, form the core of the medieval township and have retained the layout to this day.

The earliest documented reference to the castle is 1116. A relatively simple building at first, it was protected from the south by the River Taf, from the west by the Coran stream flowing into The Taf, and from the landward side by a ditch and earth ramparts crowned with timber palisade. Inside, was the fortified circuit with a rampart preceded by a ringwork ditch, in place of the later upper ward.

Like other castles in the region, Laugharne alternated between Welsh and English control. The first castle of timber and earth was replaced in stone at the end of the twelfth century. In 1247, Guy de Brian took control of the castle and further expanded the stronghold, keeping it in the family until the late fourteenth century. A town charter was granted in 1247 by Guy de Brian with a weekly market and annual fair. The town was burnt down ten years later by Rhys Fychan, which may have prompted the granting of a new charter in 1278-82 to revive the fortunes of the township by rebuilding the castle and constructing town walls and gates.

At the northern extremity of the CA, the parish church of St. Martin, of C13 origins, was extensively rebuilt by Guy de Brian in C14. At this time, it would have been an isolated structure, physically separate from the compact mediaeval township around the castle to the south.

The foundation of the Anglo-Norman castle soon led to the development of an adjoining settlement outside, together with a large tidal port around the inlet of the river Coran, with the wide Taf estuary providing natural shelter from prevailing south-westerly winds in Carmarthen Bay.



Suspected plan of the town in the 12th century

15th – 16th Century

In 1465, a licence was granted to wall the town, probably for permission to rebuild earth and timber defences in stone.

With protracted inheritance disputes and a resulting period of inactivity, the castle had a succession of tenants, until Sir John Perrott was first granted Laugharne in 1575. Perrott modernised the redundant medieval fortress, creating a Tudor mansion and taking possession of three hundred acres of land from the local population. The accommodation at Laugharne Castle was left unfinished on his death in 1592.

Laugharne Corporation along with London is the last surviving medieval corporation in the UK, established in 1290 by Sir Guy de Brian, Laugharne holds unique records including a 1592 survey showing 25 burgages within the town defences. Between the 1592 survey and the 1840s tithe map, the townscape layout has remained largely the same although the township went into decline from the end of the 16th century, with the Corporation recording the ruinous condition of areas of the township.

17th – 18th Century

During the 17th century, the castle was left to fall into quiet decay, not helped by the siege of 1644 during the Civil War and subsequent partial demolition to prevent future use as a stronghold. At some point during the 18th century, the grounds of the ruined castle appear to have been landscaped.

In the late 18th century, Laugharne became a fashionable retirement destination for those who could not afford Bath and other English spa towns. This resulted in the construction of numerous fine two- and three-storey Georgian houses and associated establishments which remain very much in evidence along King Street.

Such buildings that were built during this period include the now grade II* listed Great House (early C18), Castle House (1730), The Three Mariner's pub (C18), Temperance House (late C18), Minerva (late C18), Osborne House (C18), The Pelican (late C18), Manse (late C18), Ship and Castle (Late C18) and 3 Market Street (late C18) now Castle Stores. The Limes, Moir House and the Big House were all built together in the late C18. The current Town Hall situated just north of the castle also dates from mid-18th century.

Laugharne was once a busy port. Until the growth of railways in the mid-19th century, most goods came and went by sea. Bristol was the main destination, and that opened trade with the rest of the world. The tidal nature of the Taf estuary around Laugharne did not allow a proper quay. Larger ships moored further out, discharging their cargoes into 'lighters', which carried the goods upriver to St Clears or Carmarthen. The port traded with Bristol, Ireland and Brittany whilst fishing and cockling were the main occupations.



Suspected plan of the town in the 14th century

19th Century

Coal from local coal fields was brought around the coast and landed in Laugharne. Granaries and warehouses lined the Strand, with some later converted to factories for processing cockles collected from the bay. By the mid-19th century, the township lost both its fashionable status and the remnants of its coastal trade and suffered stagnation and decline. Tithing maps of 1840s shows a similar layout to the survey of 1592.

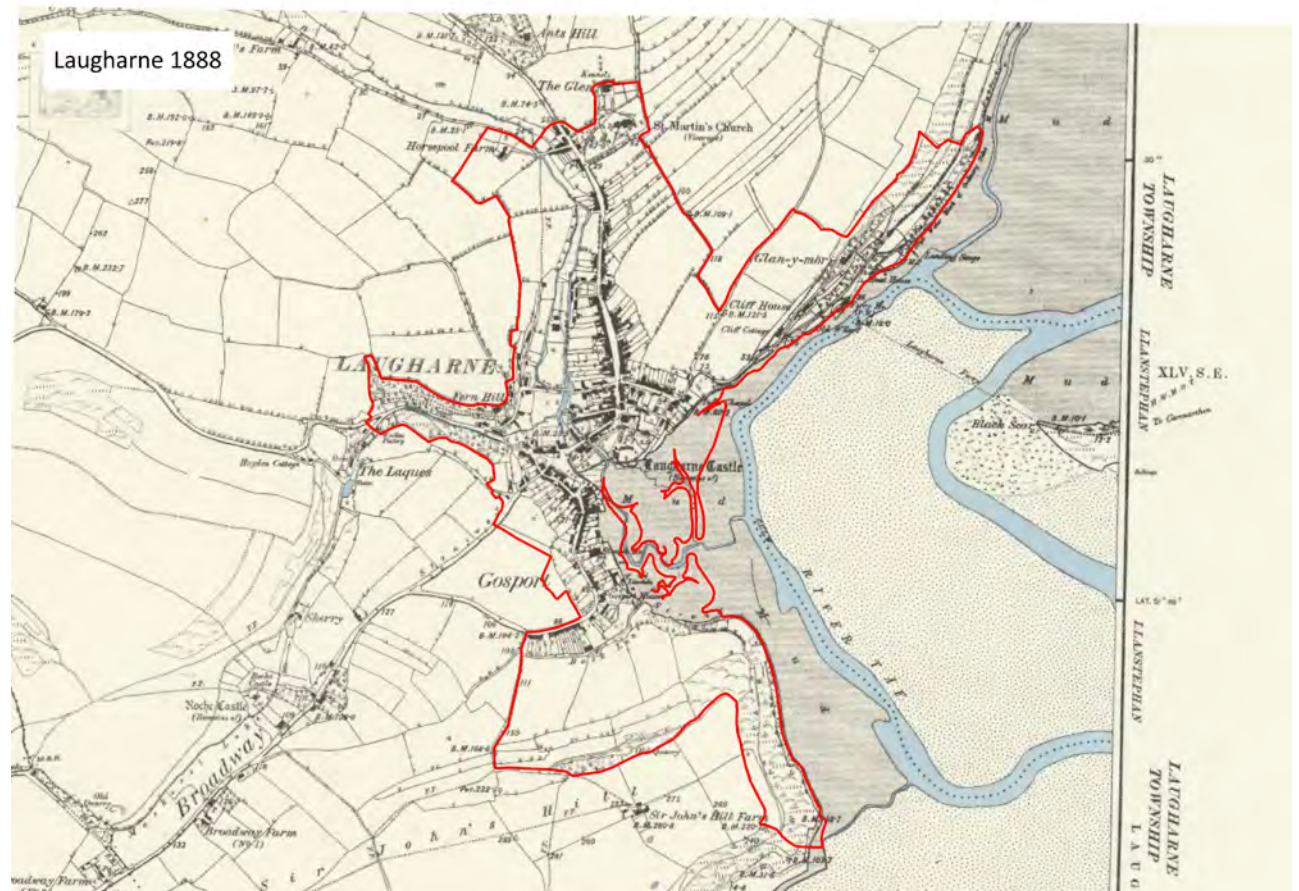
In 1855/6 Victorian restoration took place to St Martin's Church which was now better connected to the township by the 19th century ribbon development that had advanced northwards along Clifton Street.

The current gardens in the grounds of Laugharne castle evolved during the 19th century.

20th Century

The township continued in steady decline through the early 20th century. Later interventions post-war, the largest and most intrusive of which was the development of the housing estate at Orchard Park on high ground on the southern edge of the township, are at odds with the character and setting of the CA. There are numerous other incongruous additions which detract from the CA, such as the bungalow on the Grist adjacent grade II* Island House.

Growth in tourism in the latter half of the 20th century led to the development of holiday parks on the fringes of the township. The grounds of Ants Hill House, beyond the northern edge of the CA, are now a relatively large caravan park. At Glan-y-mor, on the banks of the Taf



Laugharne Historic Boundary Overlay 1888 (Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)

The township above, and to the north of, the castle has a consistency of character and detail that is somewhat lacking around the Grist, Frogmore Street and the bottom of Gosport Street, where many of the buildings have seen inappropriate and poor quality modernisation or infill development.

The southern edge of the township in being further developed along the south side of Gosport Street, outside the CA, and thankfully hidden from it.



Laugharne Historic Boundary Overlay 1953 (Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)

Notable People

The poet Dylan Thomas (1914-1953) is closely associated with the township and surrounding area, having moved to Laugharne with his family in 1938. They initially rented a simple cottage in Gosport Street and moved soon afterwards to 'Sea View' on Market Lane. Thomas went to London to work during the war, returning to Laugharne in 1949 to live at the Boathouse until his death in 1953. The early 19th century Boathouse is now open as a museum run by Carmarthenshire County Council. Thomas's Writing Shed, a converted former garage, slightly further along Cliff Walk is also preserved. Both sites have suitably inspirational views across the Taf estuary.

Thomas is buried in the graveyard of St. Martin's Church. A commemorative sculpture has been erected in the park on the foreshore at the Strand and there are various trails and plaques around the township, recording and interpreting his life and work.

The writer Richard Hughes (1900-1976) lived at Castle House from 1934-1946. Hughes was greatly admired by Dylan Thomas and was instrumental in Thomas relocating permanently to Laugharne.



4.0 Spatial Analysis

4.1 Views into, within and from the CA

The impact of proposed developments should include consideration of views into, within and from the CA. The following are noted without excluding other viewpoints and can be seen on the following map.

Laugharne Castle

The castle is the dominant landmark at the heart of the CA due to its scale and dramatic riverside location above the Taf estuary and, to a lesser extent, the much smaller river Coran. The sheer walls on the south side of the castle rise straight out the tidal foreshore below the confluence of these rivers. On the north side of the castle, the Outer Gatehouse closes the focal point of the principal street view at the southern end of Market Street. These visual and physical relationships reinforce the importance of the castle in the evolution of the township and its central significance to the character of the area. The low-lying position means that the castle is only occasionally, partially visible when passing through the narrow streets and lanes of the township. It is only when you reach the Grist and the Strand that the scale and drama of the defensive site becomes apparent and its strategic location. Views from the Strand back towards the castle, across the tidal marshes, are particularly of note, also taking in Dylan Thomas' Boathouse further upriver. From the foreshore at the bend in the Taf, there are spectacular panoramic views across the river, and up and down the estuary, with the castle in the foreground – captured by JMW Turner in his overly dramatic seascape of 1831.



Street views

Approaching Laugharne from the north, Church Street drops into Clifton Street and the Coran valley following its gentle curve, with sloping landscape visible above the intermittent buildings along the street frontage. This open, semi-rural character changes on moving up into King Street, where the properties become greater in scale and quality, with an almost continuous building line on both sides of the level street. The subtle curve of the main thoroughfare progresses into Market Street, past the eye-catching Town Hall, to arrive at the Outer Gatehouse of the castle. Along the route there are occasional junctions with side lanes, with those to the west allowing glimpses across the Coran valley. Turning southwest down Wogan Street, views open up across the river Coran and low-lying Grist. Laugharne Castle and the Taf estuary become the predominant features with more modest buildings arranged around a tight organic street pattern that closely follows topography and layout of the former port.

From the south, approaching from Pendine, there is very little to appreciate until past the Orchard Park housing estate. On entering the CA, the road bends sharply at the interesting Gosport House, before dropping down to the modest, terraced properties that line the lower part of narrow Gosport Street.

Street views of note, without excluding others are noted below:

Clifton Street to King Street

King Street to Market Street

Market Street southwards to Town Hall, Castle House and Laugharne Castle

Wogan Street to Market Street



Towers

Whilst very apparent from the foreshore and adjacent low lying areas of the CA, the picturesque ruins of Laugharne Castle also partially come into view when moving around other parts of the locality. The numerous remaining towers, of varied form, position, and completeness, reinforce this central landmark and emphasise its scale and importance.

Similarly, the distinctive top of the Town Hall clock/ bell tower frequently pops into view across the roof tops, between buildings or along the street, whilst moving around the CA.

These features provide important landmarks and a strong identity to the CA. Interventions which interrupt such views could have a negative impact on the area.

By comparison, the tower of St Martin's Church, despite being positioned on relatively high ground at the far northern edge of the CA, is discreetly screened by the mature trees of the churchyard and set back from the main road. The top of the church tower and stair turret can be seen to good advantage from Horsepool Road as it peeks over the roofs on Church Street.

Open space

Open areas of landscape provide not only an important place for rest and contemplation outside of the built-up centre of the CA, but also spaces which can provide panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. The following views are particularly noted:

Foreshore – extensive views of the Taf estuary from tidal 'Green Banks'

Graveyard of St Martin's Church – wide views across the Coran valley above Clifton Street

Laugharne Castle Outer Ward – 19th century garden landscape

The Butts – public park visually linked to the landscaped garden of 'The Cors' alongside the river Coran



Laugharne Castle Outer Ward



Foreshore



Cors Field Park 'The Butts'



St Martin's Church Graveyard



Castle Gatehouse

Surrounding landscape

The main thoroughfare, heading north from the castle, is contained within the landscape valley of the river Coran. Parallel footpaths on both sides of the valley follow the perimeter of the CA, allowing views across the valley and the fields into the rear of the ribbon development along the main street. The surround skylines are predominantly green, but unfortunately recent developments at the Dylan Coastal Resort (Glan-y-mor site) now encroach on the east horizon.

To the southwest of the CA, much of the rising ground is wooded and provides a sheltered green backdrop to the township. The exception is the area southwest of Frogmore Street where 20th century developments have broken the soft horizon with uncharacteristic mansard roofs.

Along the eastern edge of the CA, spectacular views open up across the Taf estuary with distant sloping farmland on the opposite bank. The western riverbank is predominantly wooded upstream and downstream from Laugharne; this helps to screen much of the expanding Dylan Coastal Resort development which rises above the riverside walks and listed Dylan Thomas' Boathouse and Writing Shed. Glan-y-mor earthwork is also looking very vulnerable as a schedule monument.

The dramatic topography of the area allows extensive views to and from the surrounding landscape and estuary. These are critical to the setting and context of the CA should be carefully maintained and where possible enhanced.



Fields above and behind Clifton Street



Mansard roofs of Orchard Park Estate



Taf Estuary



Wooded banks of the river Taf

Terminated and enclosed views

Although the streetscape within the CA is dominated by the major thoroughfare, smaller side streets, lanes, and footpaths, provide more intimate and varied views between buildings. These are also an integral and important part of the character of the area.

Within the central medieval layout of Laugharne, Victoria Street, Duncan Street and Market Street provide an idea of the smaller mixed-use developments that evolved behind the more formal main street frontage. Burgage plots remain a strong characteristic of the area.



King Street



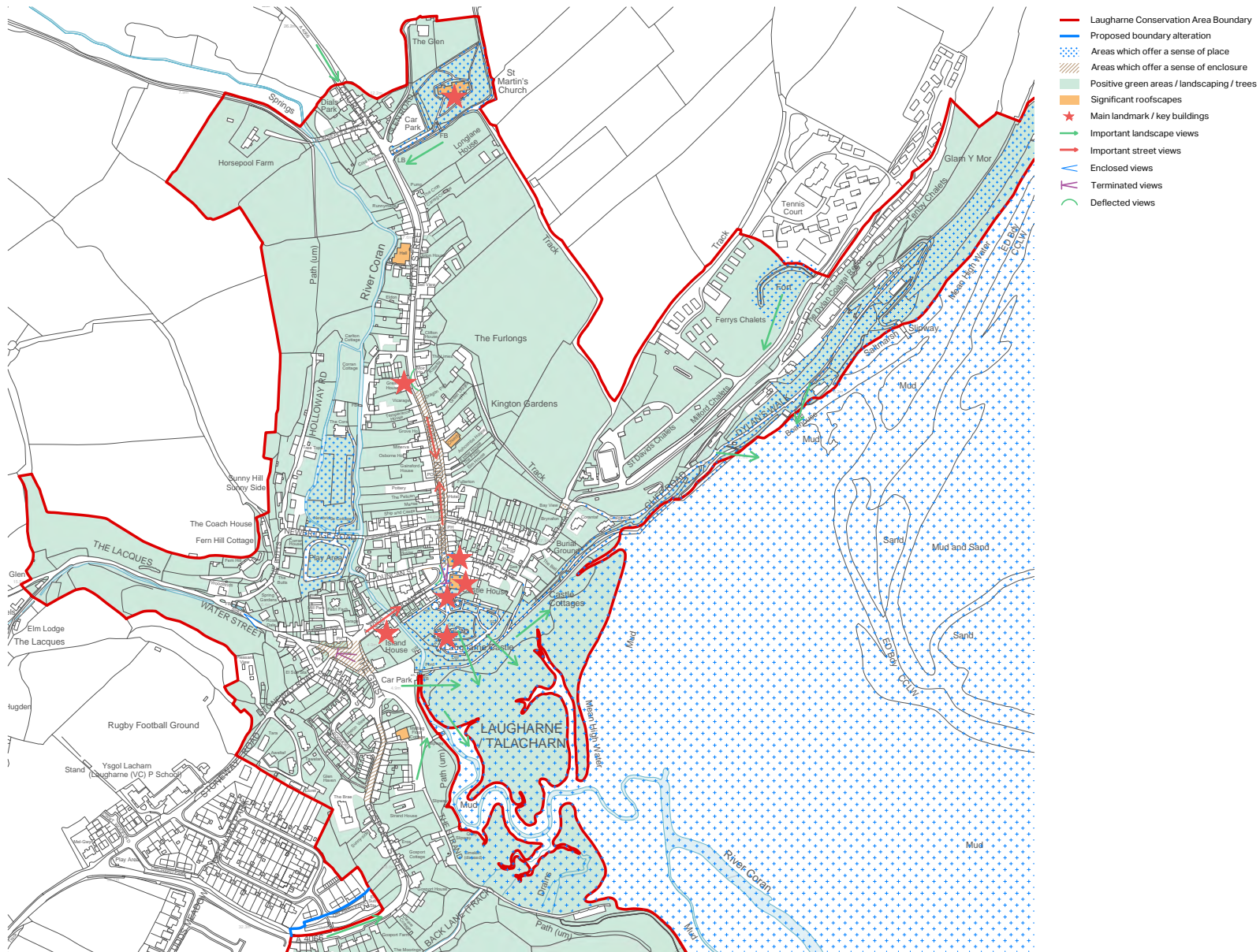
King Street to Market Street



Newbridge Street towards Market Street



Victoria Street from Market Street



4.2 Main Landmarks and key buildings

Laugharne has 51 listed buildings and structures which stands as a testament to its high quality of architecture and the historic associations and development which are an essential part of its character.

Listed Buildings and Structures

Laugharne Castle

The castle is Grade 1 listed, a scheduled monument and is the dominant landmark at the heart of the CA due to its scale and dramatic riverside location above the Taf estuary. To the north side of the castle, the Outer Gatehouse closes the focal point of the principal street view at the southern end of Market Street. The castle is a late 18th Century replacement with late 15th Century fabric from previous reconstructions, replacing a 12th Century earthwork.



Island House

Currently under restoration at the time of writing, grade II* listed Island House is a substantial rubblestone building of 16th century origin standing immediately west of the castle walls on Wogan Street. Although much remodelled, it is one of the oldest surviving houses and a significant survival in this rather abused part of the CA. It is to be hoped that the current work will be a catalyst for much needed heritage regeneration in the vicinity. Apart from the castle, neighbouring properties contribute nothing to the CA.



Castle House

Located immediately outside the castle Outer Gatehouse, this imposing early 18th century townhouse subtly leads the eye around the outside of the bend from Market Street into Wogan Street. Approaching from the opposite direction, the scale of the façade is gradually revealed and competes effectively with the neighbouring mass of the castle entrance and Town Hall to close the view up Wogan Street and reinforce the higher status of Market Street. The writer Richard Hughes lived at Castle House from 1934-1946 and commissioned modifications by architect Clough Williams-Ellis.



Town Hall

The mid-18th century Town Hall, which also served variously as a market hall, court, school, and library, provides a distinctive landmark of high townscape value with a highly modelled exterior and street-side bell and clock tower. Laugharne Corporation still meets fortnightly in the former courtroom. The tower is a focal point approaching from the north along King Street.



Great House

This large double pile early 18th century townhouse stands at the northern entry point to King Street, forming a book-end to a group of high quality virtually continuous buildings that progress in a gently meandering line southwards towards the Castle outer gatehouse. Great House marks a change in scale, grandeur and date between Clifton Street and King Street. The building has had a 21st century makeover and is now let as holiday accommodation.



St Martin's Church and churchyard

Set back from the road and amongst mature trees on rising ground, the church is relatively hidden from view as is the tower. The setting is almost rural and still provides an idea of its historic separation from the medieval township with view across the valley into surrounding landscape. The church, of C13 origin, was extensively rebuilt by Guy de Brian in C14 and then later 'restored' by the Victorians. Both the church and churchyard, separately listed, have good collections of monuments. Dylan Thomas is buried in the new churchyard, across the lane, to the south.



The Strand

On the foreshore, set back behind rubble walls, this large late 18th century 3-storey double-pile house still retains its industrial appearance. The rear range incorporates a former granary warehouse and malthouse associated with a brewery.



Strand House

Another early 19th century former warehouse of 3-storeys, Strand House has a roughcast front facing the foreshore with slate roof. Rubble gable ends and cross ranges show blocked openings and narrow windows relating to the period when this was a warehouse.



Ball Court

Beside the foreshore, below Gosport House, this large mid-19th century 4-storey former grain warehouse again dates from the period when Laugharne was a commercial port. Now converted to residential use, the prominent rubblestone structure still provides a suggestion of its origins.



Gosport House

On the outside of a bend in Gosport Road and enclosed behind a rubblestone boundary wall, Gosport House is largely an early 20th century reconstruction around 17th century origins. The ground levels fall away steeply to rear allowing wide views of the Taf estuary. Cromwell is believed to have stayed here in 1644 to watch the siege of Laugharne Castle.



The Boathouse and Writing Shed

The Boathouse dates from early 19th century but was adapted to serve as two fishermen's cottages in the mid 19th century. The external stair and veranda are modern additions. Dylan Thomas returned to Laugharne in 1949 to live at the Boathouse until his death in 1953. The building is now a museum and tea room operated by Carmarthenshire County Council. Thomas's Writing Shed, a converted former garage, slightly further along Cliff Walk is also preserved. Both sites have suitably inspirational views across the Taf estuary.



Glan-y-mor Earthwork

Located immediately above a steep slope overlooking the Taf estuary, this semi-circular, grassed earthwork enclosure probably dates from the Iron Age. The site has been disturbed in the past and was partially excavated in the early 20th century, but no datable finds were produced. The scheduled monument is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of prehistoric domestic and defensive practices, and an important relic of the prehistoric landscape with significant archaeological potential.



The Cross

In 1911 the current Celtic Crucifix was placed on an older rubble drum base in the Grist. There is thought to have been an earlier cross on this site from which John Wesley is said to have preached.



King Street and Market Street

Many of the 18th and 19th century buildings along this principal thoroughfare are of high quality and grade II listed for their group value in terms of townscape.



Unlisted Buildings and Structures of note

The following buildings are not statutorily listed but reinforce the character of the area or are a part of Laugharne's heritage due to architectural, historic, or archaeological significance, and are recognised as heritage assets that contribute to the CA. As such, we propose their inclusion on a local list of buildings of merit; this would not grant a building statutory protection nor would works to a locally listed building require listed building consent, but the special interest of the building would be a material consideration in the planning application process.

Upton House, Clifton Street

At the lowest point of Clifton Street and set among some very low-key neighbouring structures, the scale and grandeur of Upton House gives the visitor a foretaste of what lies further south along King Street. This large, late 18th century, double-pile 3 storey roughcast house is well-proportioned and detailed. The building, now converted into flats, is set back behind a shallow forecourt enclosed by railings.



New Congregational Chapel, King Street

The chapel was built in 1890 in the Romanesque style and presents a strong gable entrance frontage set back at an angle to the general building line on the east side of King Street. The snecked, rock-faced rubble walling, and robustly detailed dressings to window and door surrounds, contrast dramatically with the render finishes and joinery details of earlier neighbouring buildings. The overall effect is slightly oppressive but gives the Chapel a powerful identity. A raised, wedge-shaped forecourt is set behind decorative gates and railings over a rubblestone wall at back of pavement. Other chapels in the township have been lost or converted to residential use during the 20th century.



Shopfronts of note

Shopfronts can make an important contribution to the CA and affect street elevations both positively and negatively. There are a few surviving examples of simple shopfronts: the Ferryman Delicatessen at the Pines on King Street dating from 19th century and a late 18th century bow window with pilasters to a former shop at Redford House also on King Street. Where new shopfronts are proposed, these should respect the character of the buildings they are in and take inspiration from positive surviving examples.



Former shop, Redford House, King Street



Ferryman Delicatessen, King Street

4.3 Important Green and Natural Spaces

The CA benefits from many mature trees, green spaces, and natural habitats, which contribute to the setting and shelter the urban development around the medieval core and former port areas of the township. The northern and southern extremities of the CA encompass large landscape areas that form a sloping backdrop to the built environment and are an intrinsic part of the character of the CA. Key features and spaces include:

Tidal foreshore 'Green Banks' where the river Coran meets the Taf



Tidal foreshore 'Green Banks'

Laugharne Castle Grade II Registered Park and Garden



Laugharne Castle

Wooded west riverbank of Taf estuary



Cors Field Park 'The Butts'

Cors Field Park 'The Butts' and 'The Cors' landscape garden



St Martin's Church Graveyard

Graveyard of St Martin's Church with mature Yew trees



Fields above and behind Clifton Street

Fields above and behind Clifton Street on both sides



King Street trees

Trees within the pavement along Clifton Street, King Street & Market Street

Densely wooded valley leading west from Water Street and The Lacques



The Lacques

Park and Dylan Thomas sculpture on the Strand



Park and Dylan Thomas sculpture

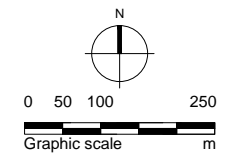
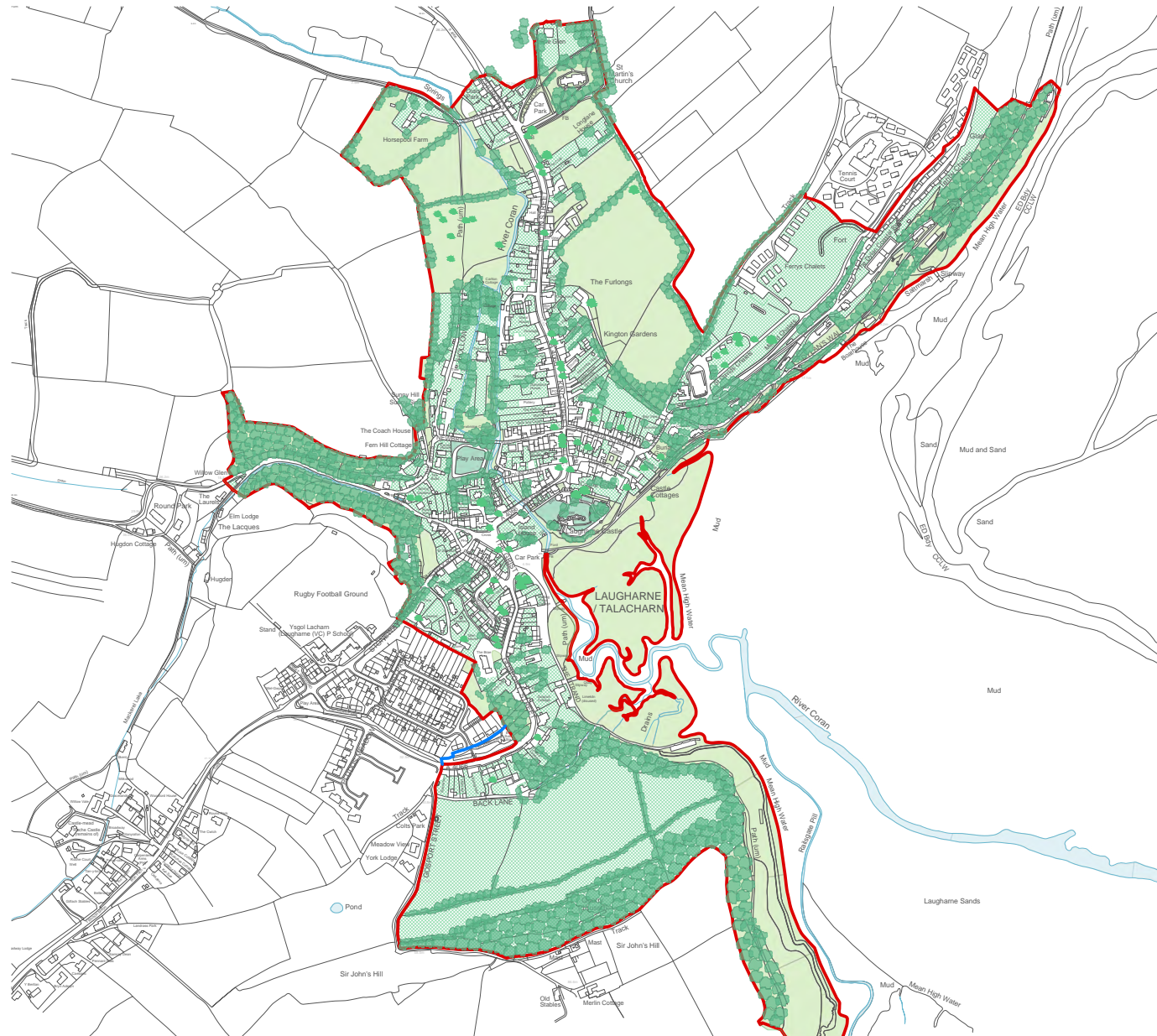
Trees opposite Gosport House



Gosport Street

Farmland south of Gosport St sloping up to Sir John's Hill

Green spaces and local features are shown on the following map.



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KEY:

- Laugharne Conservation Area Boundary
- Proposed boundary alteration
- Green spaces
- Parks
- Private / semi-private gardens
- Trees
- Group of trees

Laugharne Conservation Area

5.0 Character and Appearance

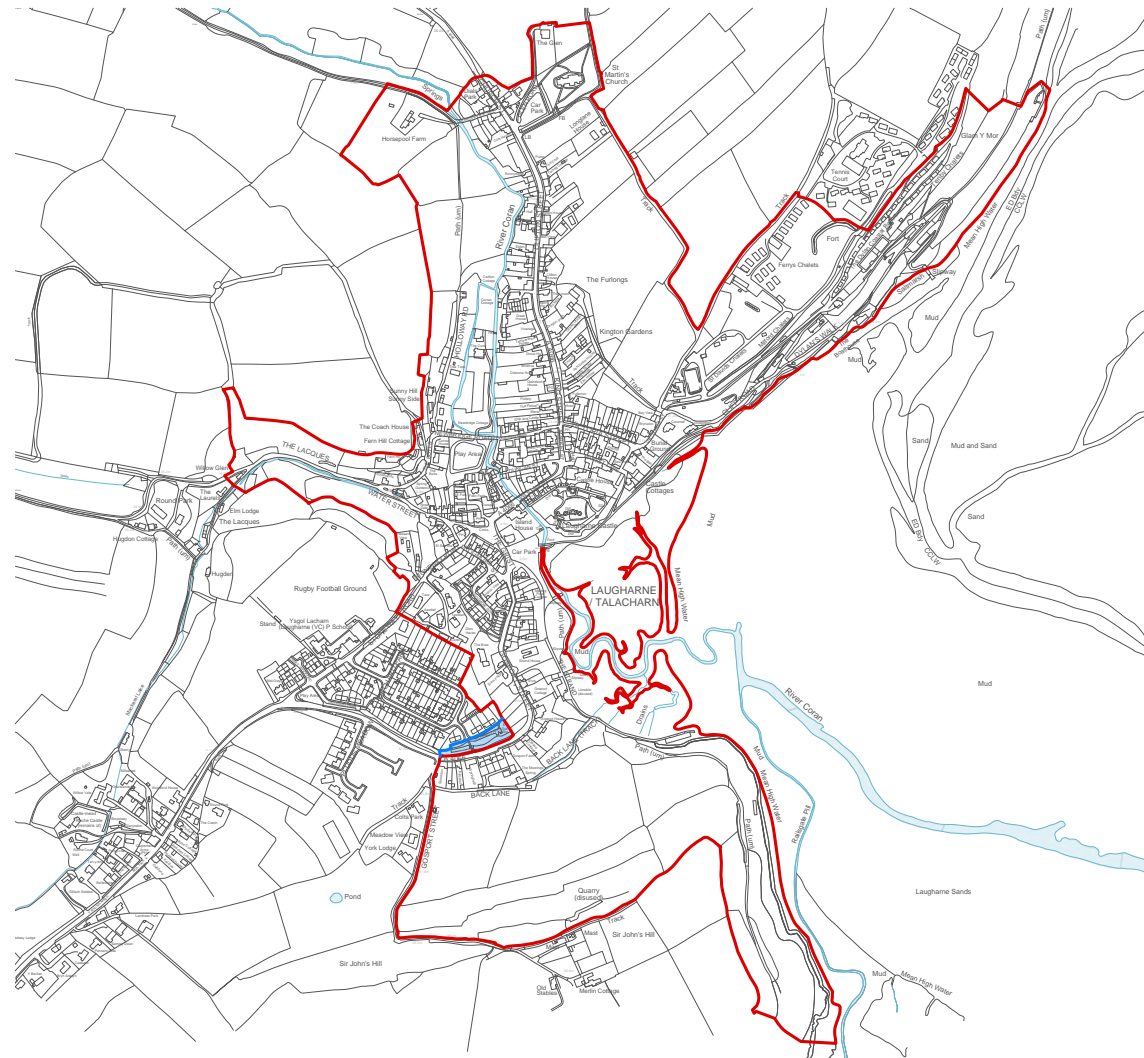
This section describes the character and appearance of the area as it exists at the time of this study.

5.1 Townscape Features

Laugharne has a diverse character which combines intimate, sheltered landscape with wide, open seascape to dramatic effect. Laugharne Castle remains of central importance to the townscape, dominating the site of the former port to the south, and generating the pattern of development with its landward defensive layout to the north, up the Coran valley.

The area below the Castle, to the southwest of the river Coran, around the Cross, the Grist, the Strand, Frogmore Street and Gosport Street, has seen numerous changes since the decline of the port. Demolition or redevelopment of commercial and residential buildings, and unsympathetic repurposing and alteration of many that remain, has led to the deterioration of the area's character and quality. However, the layout and scale of buildings in this natural hollow are largely unchanged.

The approach from the south down Gosport Street is uninspiring, with the council housing estate and current residential developments forming an unfortunate introduction to the township, ignoring the historic pattern of growth. The incongruous council housing is built on high ground and presents an intrusive break in the otherwise green skyline surrounding the CA. This now spills down into more uncharacteristic developments above Frogmore Street.



- Laugharne Conservation Area Boundary
- Proposed alteration

However, the final approach to the Grist steadily improves, with Gosport House and its outbuildings providing the foreground to views across the bay to the castle. Rubblestone walls contain the curving road, with properties intermittently stepping down the roadside on the right, and 'Fern Hill' visible against a leafy backdrop across the rooftops. The lower section of Gosport Street curves again, with a continuous row of simple cottages creating a tight urban character, somewhat compromised by the ill-considered late 20th century development opposite, backing onto Frogmore Gardens. There is a final twist in the road before the view of the castle and estuary is revealed. The sense of arrival is marred by the poor-quality buildings, materials and details in the foreground; ill-proportioned windows, rear extensions, back yards and hardstandings are partly screened by concrete walls; a large bungalow sits in the grounds of grade II* listed Island House. Shopfronts, awnings, advertising and signage are insensitive on the commercial properties grouped around the Grist.

Water Street has a semi-rural character with modest properties and wooded hills rising steeply on both sides of the road heading towards the Lacques. The Butts, too, is a pleasant narrow meandering lane with occasional cottages at various angles to the road, with views across Cors Field Park to the castle. Heading north, the narrow Holloway Road links to a footpath leading up through the wooded valley of the river Coran, slipping back into open countryside. Newbridge Street crosses the Coran to return to the urban pattern of the medieval settlement around the castle.



Gosport Street at Gosport House



Gosport Street with 'Fern Hill' in the background



Frogmore gardens backing onto Gosport St



Gosport Street approaching the Grist



6



The Grist

The layout of the CA immediately north of the castle is dominated by the underlying imprint of its defensive circuits and burgage plots. The medieval defensive line is thought to have followed the south sides of Victoria Street and Newbridge Street, before following the banks of the rivers to their confluence.

Medieval burgages were probably laid out along both sides of King Street and many of these divisions are still readily traceable. The existing 18th and 19th century buildings on Market Street and King Street represent a large concentration of particularly good quality properties which together have a high group value. They form a significant townscape element and reflect the past prosperity of the township in their various designs and high quality detailing. The loss of buildings opposite Castle House is unfortunate and the current carpark does little to re-establish the historical building line.

King Street has a subtle curve along its length, widening at the centre, and narrowing at both ends to give an ever-changing viewpoint. Occasional trees, within the wider east pavement, soften the urban character. On Market Street, the detail is repeated with further trees located on the west side of the street, in front of the former school.

Clifton Street appears more rural in character by comparison, generally with simpler buildings of a lower scale and quality. There is greater variety in the date, form and use of the buildings here. Numerous gaps in the street frontage allow views of the landscape behind. The much-adapted properties on Church Street and Horsepool Road seem even more removed from the



Newbridge Street crossing the Coran



King Street



King Street



Clifton Street

urban areas of the township and respond more to the position of St. Martin's Church, set well back from the main thoroughfare.

To the northeast of Laugharne Castle, above the Taf riverbank, little is left of the various Victorian residences that were dotted across the wooded slopes to enjoy views of the estuary, so it is fortuitous that the Boathouse and Writing Shed have survived. However, 'The Dylan Coastal Resort' continues to expand and encroach on the character of the CA and the current phase of development is now visible from Church Street on the distant horizon. The layout, buildings and materials bear little relation to the context of the CA and the cut and fill terraced landscape is regrettably close to the Iron Age Glan-y-mor earthwork, which is looking increasingly vulnerable.



Dylan Coastal Resort development



Dylan Coastal Resort development

5.2 Building materials

The following images and list provide examples of the materials used within the CA which either enhance or preserve the characteristics of the area.

Traditional Materials

Rubble stone

Roughcast render

Stucco

Brick dressings and chimneys

Stone dressings

Snecked stone

Slate roof coverings

Leadwork

Painted joinery

Cast iron rainwater goods

Boundary treatment

Rubble stone

Render

Cast or wrought ironwork gates and railings



5.3 Building heights and relationships to plots

Buildings are typically terraced and of 2 or 3 storeys, with duo-pitched slate roofs with the ridge-line running parallel to the street, punctuated by brick or render chimney stacks. The taller properties are concentrated in the centre of the township, predominantly along King Street and Market Street, although there are occasional larger, detached properties, dotted throughout the CA such as Upton House (Clifton Street) and Sea View (Market Lane). The 3-storey accommodation generally has a low attic level, of typically Georgian proportions. Some larger houses are double pile.

There are further substantial residential detached properties along the Strand, but these have been adapted from warehousing related to the former river port. The large convenience store opposite Island House, is a former mill. The majority of buildings around the Grist, Frogmore Street, and the bottom of Gosport Street, are simple terraced properties, squeezed into a tight and informal street pattern.

Further out from the centre of the CA, the terraces are 1½ to 2 storeys, with low storey heights, and occasional gaps in the street frontage allowing glimpses of the surrounding landscape, creating a semi-rural character.

Properties are mostly situated directly on the street edge or back-of-pavement, sometimes behind a shallow forecourt enclosed by low wall or railings. Gardens, and numerous rear extensions, stretch behind the terrace in regular strips which still relate closely to the medieval settlement pattern. Boundaries and building lines immediately north of Laugharne Castle coincide with the line of former castle defensive circuits.



2-3 storey properties on King Street



King Street - east side



Market Street



King Street - west side



Modest properties on Gosport Street



Terraced cottages on Victoria Street

5.4 Typical or significant details

Typical details throughout the CA

Timber sash windows

Timber entrance canopies

Timber bay windows

Sash glazing subdivisions with narrow side margins

Semi-circular headed feature windows and fanlights

Stucco quoins

Colourful painted renders and joinery

Pitched slate roofs with flush eaves

Brick or render chimneys

Rubble stone boundary walls

Decorative ironwork railings and gates



5.5 Public realm; surfacing, street furniture and signage

Surfacing materials for roads and intermittent pavements are inconsistent, other than in terms of their generally poor quality. Tarmac covers most carriageways and parking areas apart from Market Lane, where cobbles provide some welcome relief despite being in poor repair.

Most pavements alternate between tarmac and precast concrete flags of varying size, pattern, and orientation behind a concrete kerb. Where levels, geometry or crossovers are more challenging, the pavement is formed of in-situ concrete with a roughly tamped finish, such as found on sections of King Street. Here too, there are narrow margins, between back of pavement and the property frontage, which are made up in brick and fireclay paviours, or simply concreted over. On the wider east side of King Street, successive finishes appear to have been overlaid and there is now a stepped, two-tier concrete kerb to the roadside. Outside the New Congregational Chapel, trees have been planted in the pavement within a shattered, circular brick edging. There are signs of hope along Market Street, where Pennant flags have been introduced on both sides behind a textured concrete kerb to reasonable effect. Stone setts have also been laid to the driveway between Castle House and the Gatehouse. A similar scheme is adopted on the Grist and does well to alleviate the large expanse of tarmac.



patched mix of low quality surfaces, King Street



concrete and tarmac paving, King Street



precast concrete paving and a variety of bollards. King Street



cobbled lane adjacent St Martin's Church



poor brick edging detail on King Street



extensive tarmac at the Grist



mix of pavements and bollards at the Grist

Signage and wayfinding strike a happy balance with occasional traditional signposts placed strategically around the CA providing clear orientation for visitors. There is also a variety of unobtrusive interpretative information, mostly associated with Laugharne Heritage Trail and Dylan's Birthday Walk.

There several benches (some of which appear privately provided and maintained) dotted along the main thoroughfare. A variety of further seating and picnic tables are provided in the parks and along the Grist, and the foreshore giving plenty of opportunity to appreciate the panoramic views of the castle and estuary.

The CA is unfortunately festooned with a plethora of overhead power lines, associated poles, and numerous modern steel lamp posts, which frequently interrupt views through and beyond the richly modelled townscape, creating unwelcome visual clutter.



signage, wayfinding and interpretation on Market Street



Benches and picnic tables on the foreshore



Intrusive power lines, Gosport Street



overhead power lines Victoria Street

5.6 Boundary materials and treatments

Many of the building frontages form the boundary on the street edge. Where properties are set back, the forecourts are generally enclosed by a low rubblestone, or occasionally render, walls, often with metal railings above. At the rear, gardens and yards are mostly screened by tall rubblestone walls. However, in some areas of the CA, notably around the Grist where the back of properties facing Frogmore Street are unfortunately prominent, the line of enclosure has regrettably been replaced with cast concrete walling.

More recent developments within the CA, such as Frogmore Gardens, ignore historic precedents, placing properties well back from the street line, behind open grass verges. The scale and definition of the development is at odds with the character of the CA. Rear boundaries receive similarly inappropriate treatment with the introduction of brick and timber boarded fencing.

Away from the urban centre of the CA, the character quickly becomes more rural, as does the nature of boundary treatment and materials. Rubblestone walls are still commonplace, but generally lower in height and supplemented by hedgerows and planting. Around Cors Field Park and The Butts, timber railings have been introduced.



Render boundary wall, the Grist



Rubble stone boundary, Island House



Back of properties, the Grist



Frogmore Gardens



Rear boundaries



Cors Field Park



Newbridge Road

6.0 Building analysis

6.1 Buildings which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area

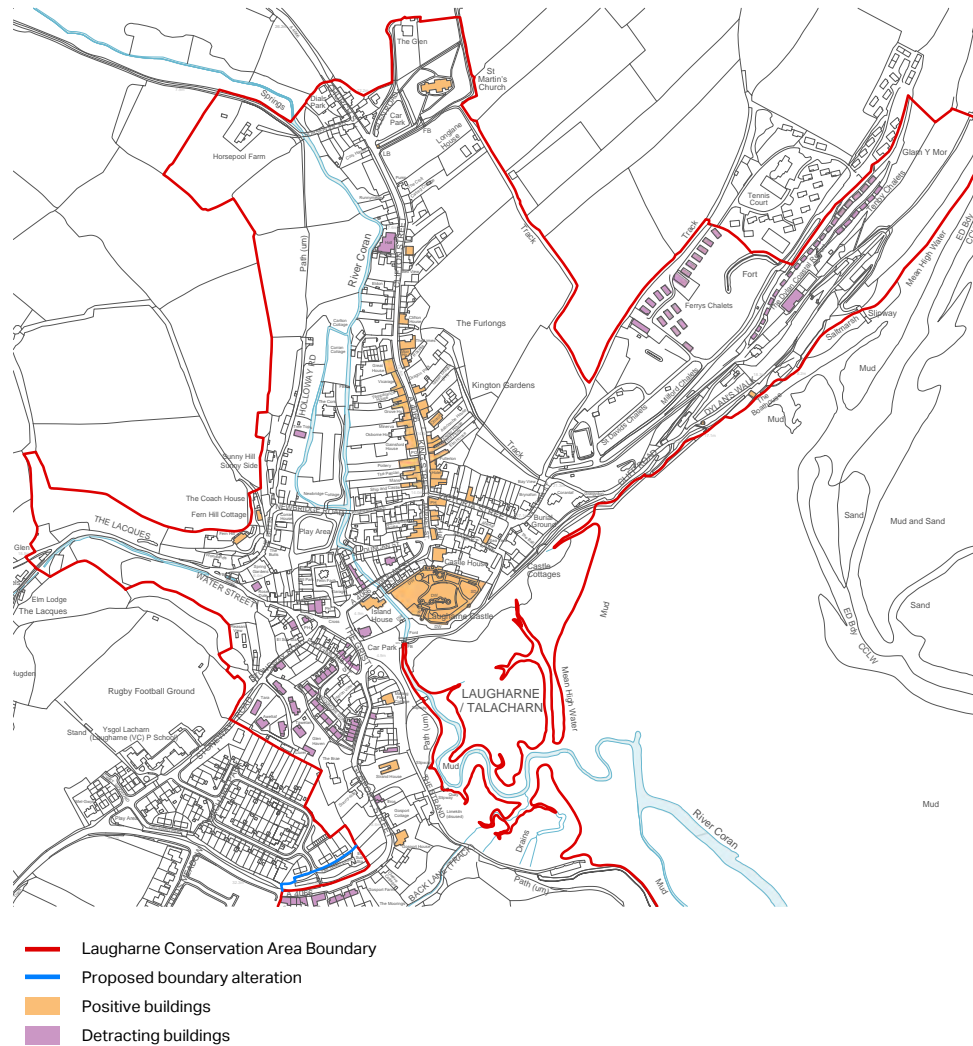
In addition to those buildings of note set out in section 4.1, many more modest buildings make a positive contribution to the character and quality of the conservation area; this may be for several different reasons. These include their townscape contribution in terms of scale and form, architectural quality, decorative features, or historic or cultural associations.

Whilst there are numerous buildings which make a positive contribution to the conservation area, in many instances their quality has been compromised by poor alterations. With respect to domestic properties, this tends to be through the loss of traditional historic features and materials such as timber sash windows and door casings. Despite this, such buildings still exhibit strong qualities and positive contributions that could be greatly enhanced by remedying the detracting alterations. Applications to undo unsympathetic alterations either as a standalone application or as part of a wider redevelopment would be supported.

6.2 Buildings which detract from the Conservation Area

Negative buildings are identified as those which, due to their scale, detailed design, or materials, are incongruous in relation to the predominant character of the conservation area. These may be considered as possible candidates for redevelopment, although in some cases they may be suitable for adaptation to mitigate wastage of embodied energy and impacts associated with redevelopment.

Positive and detracting buildings are set out on the following map.



7.0 Significance

One of the guiding principles to managing change within the historic environment is an understanding of the significance of that asset, be it a building, place, or something more intangible. Best practice suggests assessing significance against a series of values which are set out below:

Evidential Value: The physical remains and surviving fabric which still exists in the area

Historical Value: How the area can inform us of past people, events or aspects of life

Aesthetic Value: Whether the area is pleasing to walk around and experience

Communal Value: The value it has to the people who live, work and visit the area

Each of these values might exist in varying levels from low to high and this is also important to understand. It is also important to recognise those items which may fall outside of these categories or fall within multiple categories to differing levels. This can particularly be the case when considering those characteristics which create a sense of place.

The following summary sets out the key items of significance for the Conservation Area. This is followed by a more detailed examination of each item and is concluded by indicating how each relates to evidential, historical, aesthetic, and communal values and to what level.

- Strategic location with evidence of historic defensive layout
- Significant views to, from and through the area
- Buildings of local, regional, and national significance
- Scheduled monuments of Laugharne Castle and Glan-y-mor Fort
- Legible medieval street pattern, divisions, enclosure and land management
- Archaeological discoveries and high further potential
- Port history with evidence of river trading and past commerce
- Medieval township with Corporation and Charter since 1290
- Concentration of high-quality 18th and 19th century properties on King Street and Market Street.
- A strong sense of enclosure along King Street and Market Street with occasional glimpsed, wider views
- Associations with notable literary people

Strategic location

Laugharne Castle dominates the township, defensively overlooking a bend in the west bank of the wide, Taf estuary just above its junction with the river Coran. The township is tucked into a dramatic natural amphitheatre, surrounded and sheltered by steeply rising ground to east. The location historically provided both defensive and maritime trading opportunities, whilst guarding the river crossing point. All of these key aspects remain evident from the topography of the area and the surviving buildings and structures.

Significant views

The dramatic topography and strategic location of the township create a series of significant views to, from and through the CA. Sheltered inland valleys cocoon fine urban townscape with snatched glimpses of the surrounding countryside. Views open out below Laugharne Castle, with sweeping panoramas across the Taf estuary. These different perspectives influence movement through, and experience, of the area, giving insight into how it has evolved.

Local, regional and national buildings of significance

There are buildings and structures in the CA which are listed due to their architectural quality and historic interest. As such these not only present a high-quality aesthetic but also help explain past activities, traditions and events. Where there is surviving historic fabric, this can also guide the reinstatement of lost details and inspire future development, reinforcing the distinctive character of the area.

Scheduled monuments

Within the CA, Laugharne Castle, and the Glan-y-mor Earthwork on the hillside to the northeast, both provide rich evidence of the evolution of past defensive practices at this important strategic location. These scheduled monuments are of national importance and can enhance our understanding of the occupancy and use of the area since prehistoric times.

Medieval layout

The plan of the township immediately to the north of the castle is strongly influenced by the layout of the castle's defensive circuit which is evident in the alignment of the streets and boundaries. Between the 1592 survey and the 1840s tithe map, the townscape layout remained largely the same. This layout is still substantially intact and has continued to inform development and the way one moves through and experiences the area. The Corporation still owns local fields within and beyond the CA which are shared out among the senior burgesses and continue to operate an open-field medieval farming system.

Archaeological potential

The area has a rich heritage resulting from its occupancy since prehistoric times, suggesting that it is one of the oldest inhabited settlements in Wales. Deposits dating from the earliest phases of the settlement have been shown to survive within the area of the former medieval walled township. Pockets of undeveloped land remain, which could yield undisturbed medieval or later deposits. Medieval deposits also survive in and around The Grist and at Island House. Further early medieval archaeological deposits will be present in the area around St Martin's Church and churchyard.

Former trading port

Laugharne was once a thriving port, with one of the few natural harbours in the area that faces east, affording protection from prevailing south-westerly winds. The

tidal Taf estuary meant that boats would moor offshore to discharge their cargoes into smaller vessels called 'lighters', which could trade upriver in St Clears or Carmarthen. Alternatively, cargo would be unloaded into barrows or carts to be taken ashore across the tidal marsh to Laugharne.

Until the construction of the South Wales Railway to St Clears in the mid-19th century, most transport was by boat. Bristol was the principal destination and opened up trade with the rest of the world. Boats brought grain for use in the mills and granaries, and coal from Kidwelly, whilst exports included local linen, produce and stone. Laugharne remained a working fishing and cockling port into the early 20th century when the main road to St. Clears was rebuilt, and industrialised fishing from elsewhere exhausted local reserves.

Laugharne Corporation

Laugharne Corporation is one of the last surviving medieval corporations in the UK, having been established by charter in 1290 by Sir Guy de Brian. The Corporation still meeting fortnightly at the Town Hall and now acts as a registered charity, working for the good of the township's inhabitants. This rare survival is of national significance in terms of both communal and historical value.

High-quality 18th and 19th century development

Laugharne's 18th and 19th century popularity as a fashionable retirement destination resulted in the construction of numerous fine two and three-storey Georgian houses and related establishments. The rich

concentration of these buildings in the principal streets of the township has high evidential and aesthetic value as a group of regional significance.

Enclosure and views out

The gentle curves of King Street and Market Street are lined almost continuously with large, terraced properties behind an asymmetrical pavement, forming an enclosed, urban streetscape with few interruptions. Occasional gaps in the building line at lanes and entrances, allow framed glimpses of countryside and farmland behind. This creates variety and interest and encourages exploration and discovery.

Notable literary people

The historical and communal value of the Laugharne's close association with Dylan Thomas and other contemporary writers and artists is highly significant and readily accessible.

	Evidential Value	Historical Value	Aesthetic Value	Communal Value
Strategic location	High Value	High Value		
Significant views			High Value	Medium Value
Local, regional and national buildings of significance	High Value	High Value	Medium Value	Low Value
Scheduled monuments	High Value	High Value	Medium Value	
Medieval layout	Medium Value	Medium Value		
Archaeological potential	High Value	High Value		
Former trading port	Low Value	Medium Value		Low Value
Laugharne Corporation	High Value	High Value		High Value
High-quality 18 th & 19 th century development	High Value	Medium Value	Medium Value	
Enclosure and views out			Medium Value	
Notable literary people	Medium Value			High Value

Low Value	Low Value
Medium Value	Medium Value
High Value	High Value

8.0 Issues, Threats, and Management Proposals

Strategic overview

A conservation area is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. As such, Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) is required to ensure that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area' (Section 72). CCC has a duty 'from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas' (Section 71).

The following table summarises the key issues and threats which have been identified through the preparation of the Character Area Appraisal for Laugharne. Accompanying each item are recommendations for its management. This list is not comprehensive and does not exclude additional items which may present themselves either currently or within the future development of the CA.

Issues relate to those items which are currently causing harm to the appearance and or the character of the area. Threats are those items which do not currently cause harm but which through insensitive alteration may. Those items which are identified as issues should also be considered as those posing continual threat. Alongside each is a management recommendation intended to ensure the character, appearance of the conservation area, its significance and special architectural and historic interest, is preserved and enhanced. These historic environment

recommendations could inform the production of a wider and more detailed policy document for the management of the area, to be produced by Carmarthenshire County Council.

The issues have been identified through site visits, as well as consultation with stakeholders, County Council officers and members of the public. They relate primarily to the historic built environment, both in the conservation of existing historic fabric and the impact of new development on the character and appearance of the CA. This includes those identified as affecting the public realm.

Examples have also been provided to illustrate both good and bad examples of the management of these items to offer additional guidance when considering development within the area. It is important that the following is read in association with all relevant guidance and policy documents, including the CCC's Local Development Plan 2018 – 2033 and supplementary planning guidance.

Item	Issue	Management
1.0 Views and setting		

1.1 Due to the more informal nature of the buildings and roads around parts of the CA such as the Grist, Frogmore Street and the lower section of Gosport Street, rear extensions and additions which might otherwise be hidden from view are often very visible and therefore require consideration when understanding their impact upon views and character.


Development proposals should be carefully assessed to understand the impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of side streets and of rear buildings, as well as key views and main thoroughfares. The council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving the conservation area and there will be a presumption against development which is considered to cause harm. New development within the conservation area or its setting should not obscure or detract from important views within, towards or from the conservation area. Important views and landmarks have been highlighted within the appraisal, however more may be identified by others.



1.2 Views into and out of the CA can be difficult to protect, since those buildings and sites which have the potential to affect key views can be outside of protected areas such as a CA; their impact is sometimes apparent only after construction. Development may affect the foreground or background of important views. For example the introduction of housing at Orchard Park and around Frogmore Gardens has impacted the backdrop to the CA; the over-development of The Dylan Coastal Resort within the CA is similarly impacting distant views and horizon outlines.

Development within the conservation area's setting should be carefully assessed to understand the impact of the proposals on the significance of the conservation area. The council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the conservation area and there will be a presumption against development which is considered harmful. New development within the conservation area or its setting should not obscure or detract from important views within, towards or from the conservation area. Important views and landmarks have been highlighted within the appraisal, however more may be identified by others. Proposals which have the potential to affect and fall within important views which contribute to the significance of the conservation area, and the heritage assets within it, should be assessed carefully. Verified computer generated views showing the potential impacts of proposals may be required to demonstrate the effect on the character and appearance of the area or its setting.



Item	Issue	Management	
2.0 Redevelopment			
2.1	The use of modern materials which are not complementary or appropriate to the existing palette of materials can erode the historic character and significance of the CA. Whilst a building should be of its time, some deference to the CA's original palette of materials will ensure continuity. Similarly, buildings of poor design have caused harm to the CA; the original characteristics of 18 th and 19 th century buildings must be respected to prevent further harm.	Development proposals should respond to and respect the unique character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting, and should be of appropriate scale, density, height, form, massing, layout, plot position, materials, colours, composition and detailed design. Any new development in the conservation area should be of high quality, in terms of design and materials used. Generally, all work to historic buildings, alterations and extensions, should positively respond to the original architectural style of the building, its setting and should enhance its traditional appearance. In considering any proposals reference should be made to the Placemaking and Design Guidance 2016.	
2.2	Gap sites on Clifton Street, Wogan Street and Gosport Street, have been infilled with insensitive designs which do not respond to the character of the CA.	Development proposals should respond to and respect the unique character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting, and should be of appropriate scale, density, height, form, massing, layout, plot position, materials, colours, composition and detailed design. Any new development in the conservation area should be of high quality, in terms of design and materials used.	
2.3	Holiday parks within CA are being developed with layouts and designs which bear no relation to the character of the CA and do not consider the wider heritage impact.	Development proposals should respond to and respect the unique character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting, and should be of appropriate scale, density, height, form, massing, layout, plot position, materials, colours, composition and detailed design. Any new development in the conservation area should be of high quality, in terms of design and materials used.	

Item	Issue	Management
3.0 Inappropriate alterations and loss of original features		

3.1 The topography of the area means that roofs can impact significantly on views and the insertion of items such as inappropriately scaled dormers can erode character, particularly in buildings of a uniform style.

The wider use of Article 4 Directions could be considered so that planning permission is required for such alterations.



3.2 Seemingly minor alterations can have a cumulative effect on the building as a whole and the setting of the CA. This includes the following: Replacement PVC windows/doors, new external services prominently positioned, satellite dishes, loss of cast iron rainwater goods, replacement of slate with concrete tiles, loss of decorative ridge tiles, loss of historic boundaries such as railings and rubble stone walls

Detailed design guidance should be developed to include information on the typical architectural details such as windows, and materials found in the area to assist homeowners wishing to improve their property in ways which are beneficial to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Design guidance should also include advice on retrofitting existing buildings, to improve their thermal performance and the installation of renewable energy sources, without harming the character and appearance of the conservation area. The wider use of Article 4 Directions could be considered so that planning permission is required for alterations listed where appropriate.



Item	Issue
3.3	The replacement of traditional lime render with pebble dash or hard cement renders has had a considerable impact on buildings and views through the CA.
3.4	Unauthorised works to buildings appear to be commonplace, such as the replacement of historic windows and doors. This has led to a steady erosion of the character of some parts of the CA. Where unauthorised works have occurred, this can encourage other property owners to undertake similar works and result in a cumulative effect on a larger scale.
3.5	Repair and maintenance of buildings appears to have suffered in peripheral areas of the CA with a number of buildings in a poor condition. Due to the nature of the CA this has a significant impact on views and can lead to the partial or total loss of significant heritage assets.

Management

The use of traditional materials such as lime render should be encouraged and applications for the introduction of inappropriate plasters and renders should be refused.

Where appropriate the council should seek enforcement action to remediate unauthorised works. Detailed design guidance should be developed including information on the typical colours, architectural details such as windows, and materials found in the area to assist homeowners wishing to improve their property in ways which are beneficial to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Design guidance should also include advice on retrofitting existing buildings, to improve their thermal performance and the installation of renewable energy sources, without harming the character and appearance of the conservation area. The wider use of Article 4 Directions could be considered so that planning permission is required for alterations which at present do not require permission.

Publish guidance on appropriate maintenance and repair of buildings and structures within the Conservation Area.



Item	Issue	Management
4.0 Street furniture, signage, roads		

4.1 Increased traffic density and poorly managed parking can have a detrimental impact on the overall character of the area, causing a loss of pedestrian amenity. Absent or narrow pavements also create problems for pedestrian movement, while inhibiting appreciation of buildings due to the density of traffic obscuring lower storeys. This is particularly an issue in Clifton Street.

Produce and implement a strategy for opportunities for increased pedestrianisation and improved road layouts. The Council will encourage and support proposals for improved cycle and pedestrian connectivity and which incorporate public space.



4.2 Modern lamp posts and chaotic overhead power cables are a constant and unwelcome presence in the CA. The few street bollards, are inconsistent in design.

Publish design guidance on the design of streets and public spaces to encourage co-ordinated approach to lighting, materials, boundary treatments and furniture. Prioritise a series of renewals to enhance the appearance of streets including decluttering, maintenance of paintwork and introduction of appropriate surface materials and street furniture.



4.3 Roads and pavements are predominantly a chaotic mix of modern materials that often detract from the setting of buildings and public realm. Much of the public realm is dominated by on and off-street parking, especially around the Grist.

Publish design guidance on the design of streets and public spaces to encourage co-ordinated approach to lighting, materials, boundary treatments and furniture. Prioritise a series of renewals to enhance the appearance of streets including decluttering, maintenance of paintwork and introduction of appropriate surface materials and street furniture.



Item	Threat	Management
5.0 Boundary treatments and parking		
5.1	Control of on-street parking has resulted in lots of double yellow lines within the core CA. A few modern garage doors and driveways are beginning to appear which can dilute the hard street edge which is characteristic of the area.	Reinstatement of traditional boundary walls should be supported. The council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the conservation area and there will be a presumption against the loss of historic boundary walls which make a positive contribution to the area. The wider use of Article 4 Directions could be considered so that planning permission is required for alterations to historic boundary walls, irrespective of height.
5.2	The introduction of modern materials for boundaries enclosures and hard landscaping, which are neither in keeping with the CA nor of sufficient quality, can dilute character.	Development proposals should respond to and respect the unique character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting, and should be of appropriate scale, density, height, form, massing, layout, plot position, materials, colours, composition and detailed design. Any new development in the conservation area should be of high quality, in terms of design and materials used. Detailed design guidance should be developed to include information on the typical architectural details such as windows, and materials found in the area to assist homeowners wishing to improve their property in ways which are beneficial to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



Item	Threat	Management
6.0 Views and setting		
6.1	Existing green spaces, former quaysides, wooded riverbanks and riverside walkways require continued protection, to control views along the foreshore.	Significant green spaces should be actively maintained, and management processes should be adopted which ensure their special interest, and their ecological value, is preserved and enhanced. There is scope for more tree and other planting to enhance the appearance of the conservation area and its potential for biodiversity and this should be encouraged. The council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the conservation area and there will be a presumption against the loss of trees or green spaces which make a positive contribution to the area.
7.0 Demolition of buildings and structures		
7.1	Partial or total demolition of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the CA can erode the architectural quality of the area. This can include whole buildings for redevelopment or partial areas such as chimneys, boundary walls and extensions.	There are many listed buildings and unlisted buildings of merit which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and there is a strong presumption that these buildings and their features are retained. Applications for consent to demolish must be made to the local planning authority.



Item	Threat	Management
7.2	<p>The poor condition of buildings which have been out of use or have suffered from poor maintenance, can be used to put pressure on the Local Authority for demolition and redevelopment. This can lead to a misunderstanding that redevelopment is appropriate, when careful management of future alterations could reinstate the original character of these buildings, enhance the CA, and avoid the loss of embodied carbon already spent through its original construction.</p>	<p>Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision. There are many listed buildings and unlisted buildings of merit which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and there is a strong presumption that these are retained. If demolition is proposed, consideration should be given to the whole life carbon cycle, taking into account the embedded carbon of the existing building. It may be appropriate to retain and adapt the existing building rather than to replace it with a new building. The care and reuse of traditional and historic buildings in the area, in order to save energy and carbon dioxide, through better maintenance, management and energy efficiency measures, should be encouraged. Reinstatement of traditional features should be encouraged through the production of a design guide specific to the CA. Applications for consent to demolish must be made to the local planning authority.</p>

Item	Threat	Management
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8.0 Redevelopment

8.1 Consistent storey height, mass, material, architectural detailing, plot size and relationship to the street means that any deviation has dramatic impact. This can be positive or negative but requires careful consideration.

Development proposals should respond to and respect the unique character and appearance of the conservation area, its character areas and its setting, and should be of appropriate scale, density, height, form, massing, layout, plot position, materials, colours, composition and detailed design. Any new development in the conservation area should be of high quality, in terms of design and materials used. Generally, all work to historic buildings, alterations and extensions, should positively respond to the original architectural style of the building, its setting and should enhance its traditional appearance. In considering any proposals reference should be made to the Placemaking and Design Guidance 2016.



Item	Threat	Management
9.0 Inappropriate alterations and loss of original features		
9.1	The loss of features such as joinery, door casings, canopies, stucco details etc. and the alteration of window proportions or introduction of dormers or garage doors, can fundamentally change the character of properties and have a detrimental impact on the CA.	Detailed design guidance should be developed to include information on the architectural details such as windows, and materials found in the area to assist homeowners wishing to improve their property in ways which are beneficial to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The wider use of Article 4 Directions could be considered so that planning permission is required for alterations where appropriate. There will be a presumption against the loss of traditional features which contribute to the conservation area's character and appearance.
10.0 Trees and Landscaping		
10.1	Green areas and trees provide important breaks in the built environment and help inform understanding of the layout and evolution of the town and their loss can substantially harm the character of the area.	There is scope for more tree and other planting to enhance the appearance of the conservation area and its potential for biodiversity and this should be encouraged. The council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the conservation area and there will be a presumption against the loss of trees or green spaces which make a positive contribution to the area.
10.2	The landscape setting of the township has been affected by skyline development on the perimeter of the CA, at Orchard Park in the south, and Dylan Coastal Resort to the east.	The council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the conservation area and there will be a presumption against the loss of trees or green spaces which make a positive contribution to the area and its wider setting.



14.0 General

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|---|
| 14.1 | Archaeology | When considering any significant development proposal, the potential impact on archaeological remains should be professionally assessed and advice taken as to how they can be best preserved and protected. |
| 14.2 | Climate Emergency | <p>"Retrofit proposals to improve energy efficiency should be carefully considered to ensure compatibility with traditional building materials, functionality and significance.</p> <p>If demolition is proposed, consideration should be given to the whole life carbon cycle, taking into account the embedded carbon of the existing building. It may be appropriate to retain and adapt the existing building rather than to replace it with a new building. The care and reuse of traditional and historic buildings in the area, in order to save energy and carbon dioxide, through better maintenance, management and energy efficiency measures, should be encouraged. "</p> |
| 14.3 | Implementation and Review | All the statutory duties under the Planning Acts resulting from conservation area designation need to be adhered to. The Council should adopt the recommendations made here and formulate a formal management plan (it is intended that this report will form the basis of this) which is reviewed regularly to ensure the policies remain useful and relevant. The Council should seek to undertake other relevant studies and produce further guidance as identified here, where the resources for this are available. |
| 14.4 | Heritage Impact Assessments | A heritage impact assessment should be provided by applicants, where a proposal is considered to affect the conservation area (either within the boundary or its setting) or a heritage asset within it. |

9.0 Opportunities

The following opportunities refer to identified possibilities for undoing harm, enhancing the area and the appreciation of it, or managing development. These have been identified through the preparation of this document and the proceeding issues, threats, and management section.

1. The Grist is extremely disappointing and visually chaotic as a key public space adjacent the Castle's dramatic riverside setting. A strong sense of arrival and enclosure is severely marred by unmanaged parking, poor quality materials, insensitive alterations and interventions, and commercial signage. The space provides a fantastic opportunity for social interaction and appreciation of the CA. Careful control of future changes with the use of traditional boundaries, high quality landscaping, artworks, interpretation, and furniture could help to enhance this space to the benefit of the whole CA. Current work at Island House will hopefully provide a catalyst for heritage led regeneration of this central part of the CA.
2. Laugharne's historic landscape setting, sheltered below wooded slopes and surrounding landscape, is in danger of being completely compromised as insensitive developments have spread conspicuously over high ground overlooking the township. To the southwest, various 20th century infill housing schemes above Frogmore Street pay little heed to the historic pattern of development in terms of layout or materials; the alien, tiled mansard roofs of Orchard Park estate are particularly jarring on the skyline. Similarly, to the northeast of the township, 'The Dylan Coastal Resort' continues to

expand and encroach on the character of the CA, with the current phase of development now visible from Church Street on the distant horizon; the layout, buildings and materials are again completely out of context with the character of the CA. Much could be done to alleviate the visual impact with careful introduction of trees and other planting to help break up and screen these incongruous interventions from the CA.



The Grist



Mansard roofs of Orchard Park Estate

3. The high quality 18th and 19th century buildings along King Street and Market have significant group value in terms of townscape and this is complemented by the intermittent series of trees within the wider sections of pavement. However, the character of this important section of the CA could be readily enhanced by more widespread improvements in the public realm. As the opportunity arises, the introduction of high quality and consistent paving and planting details, lighting, and public realm furniture could increase the use and appreciation of this thoroughfare and in turn encourage better care and. This would also relieve the patchwork of in-situ and precast concrete paving and associated multi-layered concrete kerbs.

4. The gap site (former Butcher's Arms) at the south end of Market Street, opposite Castle House, could be redeveloped to restore the sense of enclosure and building line at this key junction which is currently occupied by an awkward and unsightly car park. There are similar issues nearby, on the northwest side of Wogan Street, where infill development has resulted in several off-street parking courts behind the pavement and the unfortunate loss of any boundary enclosure.

5. The public realm throughout the CA would be significantly improved by the removal of visually intrusive overhead power lines and associated posts.



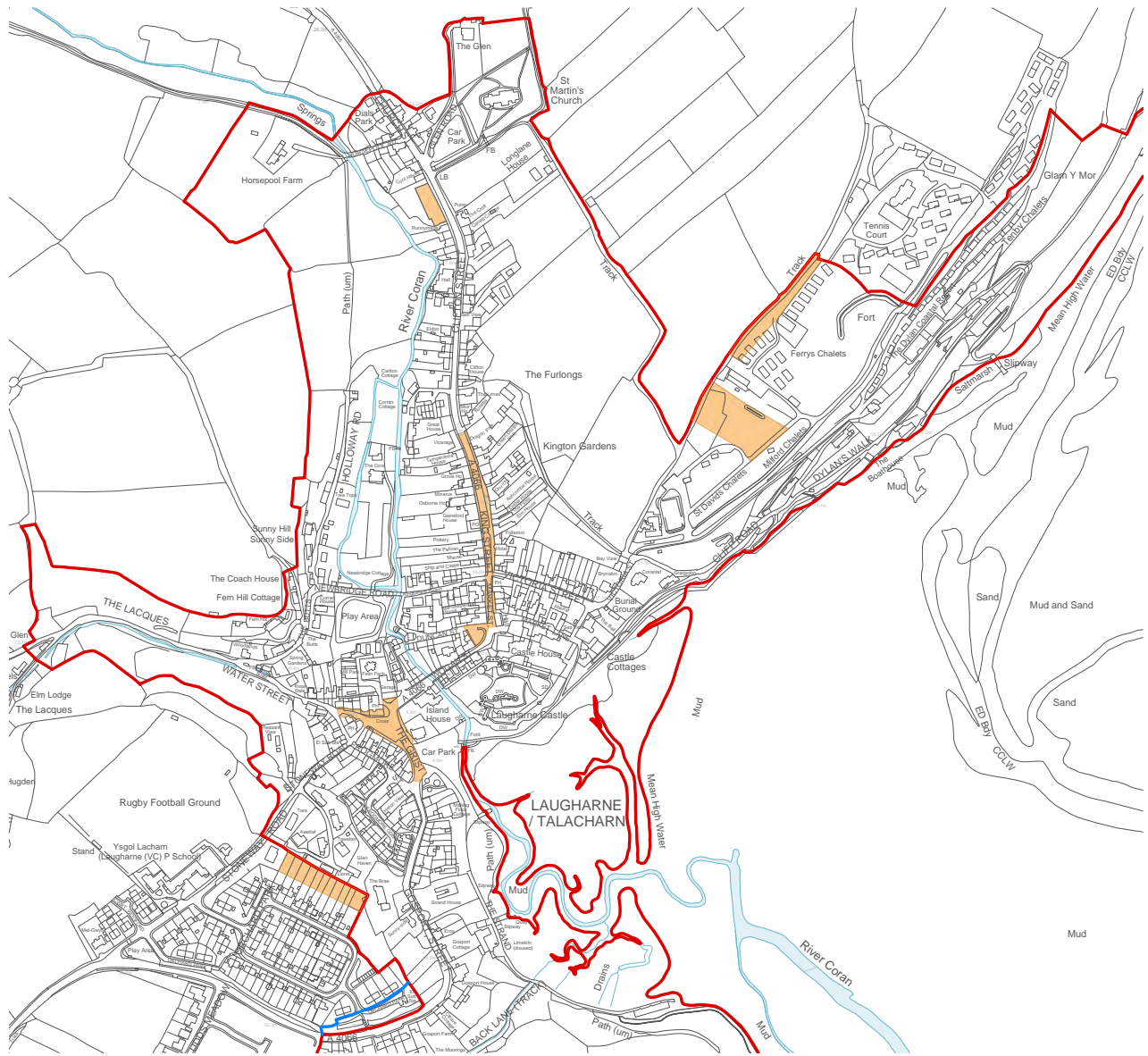
King Street public realm



Site of former Butcher's Arms



Intrusive power lines, Gosport Street



- Laugharne Conservation Area Boundary
- Proposed boundary alteration
- Area of opportunity



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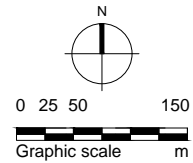
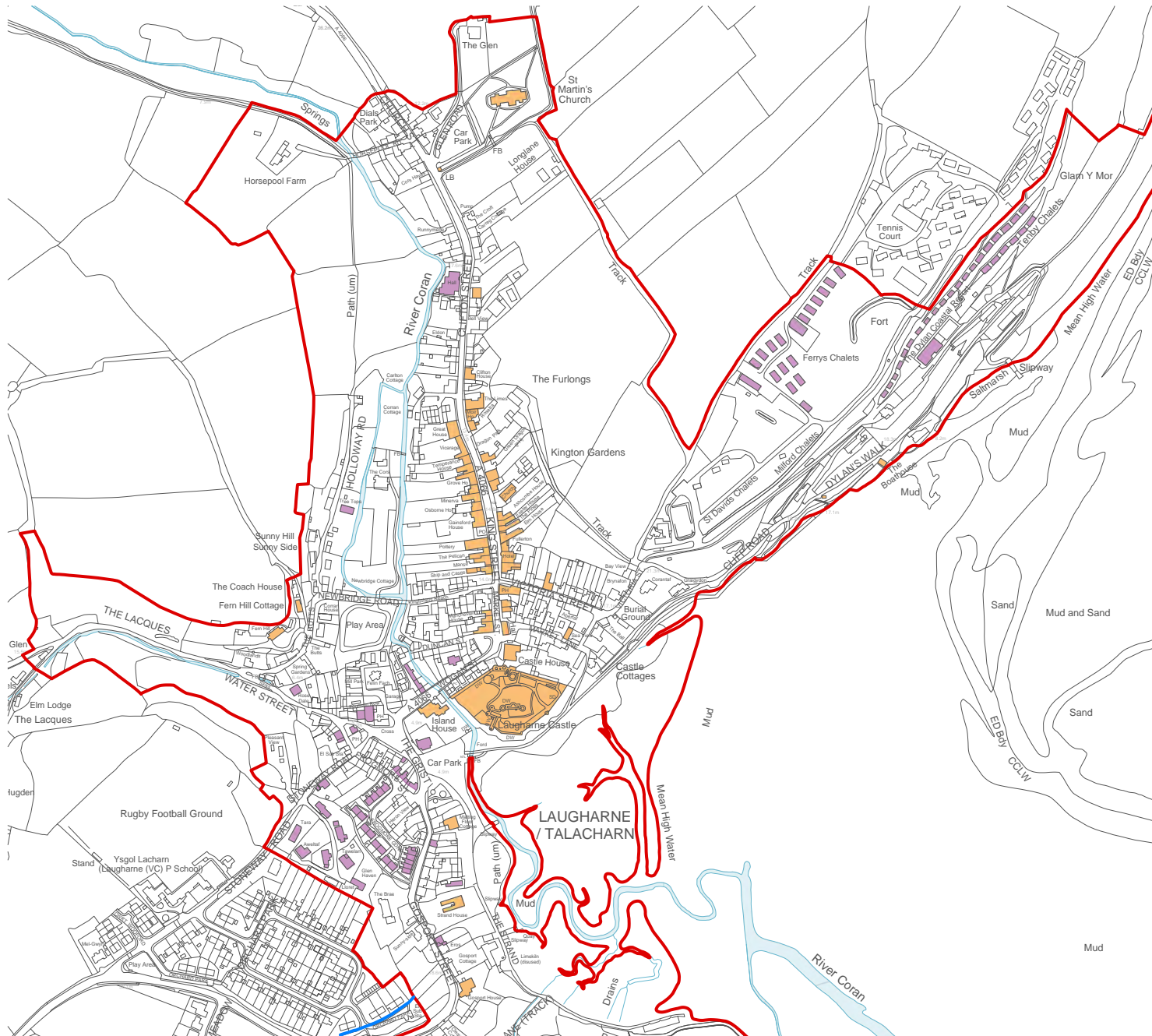
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Appendix II: Glossary

Abbreviation	Formal term	Definition	Abbreviation	Formal term	Definition
A4D	Article 4 Direction	A measure, instigated by a local authority, whereby issues of work which would normally be permitted under planning legislation General Development Orders are bought within the control of the planning department.	CCC	Carmarthenshire County Council	
			GDO	General Development Order	An order, under national planning legislation, which sets out the classes of development which are 'permitted development' and hence do not normally require the issue of formal planning consent
BAR	Building At Risk	A buildings register, maintained by local authorities (supported by Historic England) which includes buildings and structures which are at risk from decay, collapse or other loss. It usually sets out a degree of risk and indicates the type of action which is deemed necessary to remedy the problem.		Cadw	The organization responsible for the protection of historic buildings, structures, landscape and heritage sites in Wales
			LB	Listed Building	A building of architectural and/ or historic interest which is protected by inclusion on a list of such buildings maintained by Cadw. The building will be graded – grade 1 for the most important, Grade 2* for the next most important or grade 2 for the remainder which comprises about 95% of the total
CA	Conservation Area	An area, designated by the local authority, the character of which it is desirable to preserve of enhance			
CAA	Conservation Area Appraisal	A report which assesses the character and effectiveness of the CA at a particular time			
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order	A legal instrument for the compulsory purchase of land by a local authority of government agency for a defined purpose and at a fair rate		Burgage Plot	A burgage plot is usually characterised as a long walled plot, garden or yard, behind a building, the front of which faces one of the older streets in a town or city with medieval origins
	Fascia	The space in which a sign is displayed, typically above a shop			

Abbreviation	Formal term	Definition	Abbreviation	Formal term	Definition
LBC	Listed Building Consent	An approval for the carrying out of works to a listed building (which would otherwise constitute a criminal offence) issued by the local authority and following consultation with a set list of national and local amenity bodies and organisations	Sn215	Section 215 Notice	A notice under the planning acts which a local authority can issue to owners or occupiers for the tidying up of land or buildings which are deemed to be harmful to the amenity of an area
LP	Local Plan	A document prepared by or on behalf of the local authority setting out its planning policy for a forthcoming fixed period; it will include policy concerning the natural environment, conservation, highways, building development among a wide range of other topics.	SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance	A document which sets out a particular policy specific to a site or area which can be used as material evidence in determining any relevant planning application. The content of the document will have been prepared with this specific intent and will require to be formally adopted as one of its suite of planning documents by the authority concerned
PPW	Planning Policy Wales	National policy outlining guidance for making planning decisions	TPO	Tree Preservation Order	An order made by a local planning authority in Wales to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodland in the interest of amenity. An order prohibits the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting, wilful damage and wilful destruction of trees without local authority's written consent
P(LBCA) Act 1990	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	A consolidating act which brought together previous diverse pieces of legislation into one Act of Parliament			
	Repairs Notice	A notice issued under sections 47 and 48 of the P(LBCA) Act 1990 requiring owners or occupiers to carry out urgent repairs to listed buildings			

Appendix III: Maps

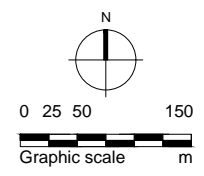
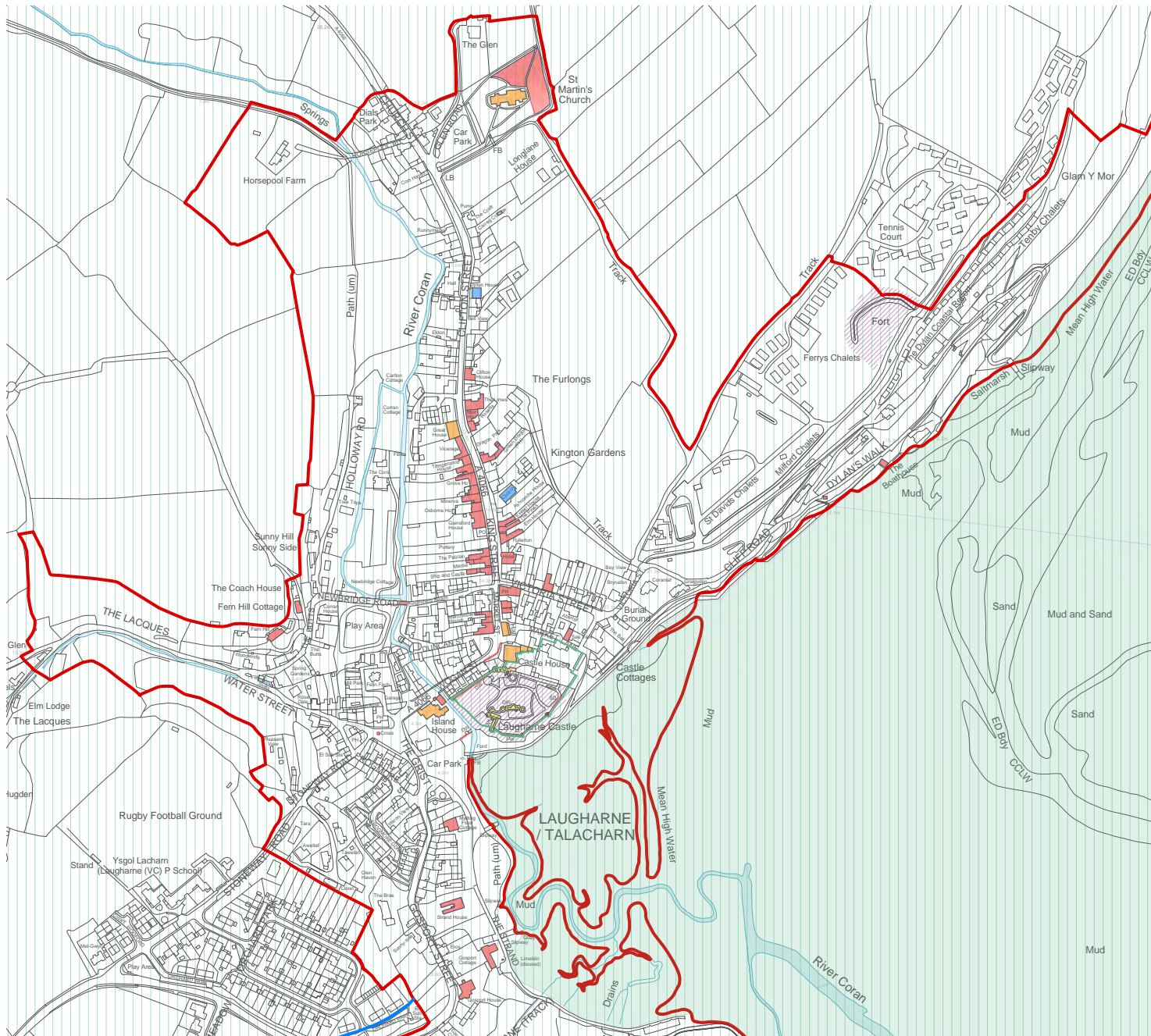


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KEY:

- Laugharne Conservation Area Boundary
- Proposed boundary alteration
- Positive buildings
- Detracting buildings

Laugharne Conservation Area

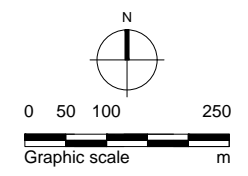
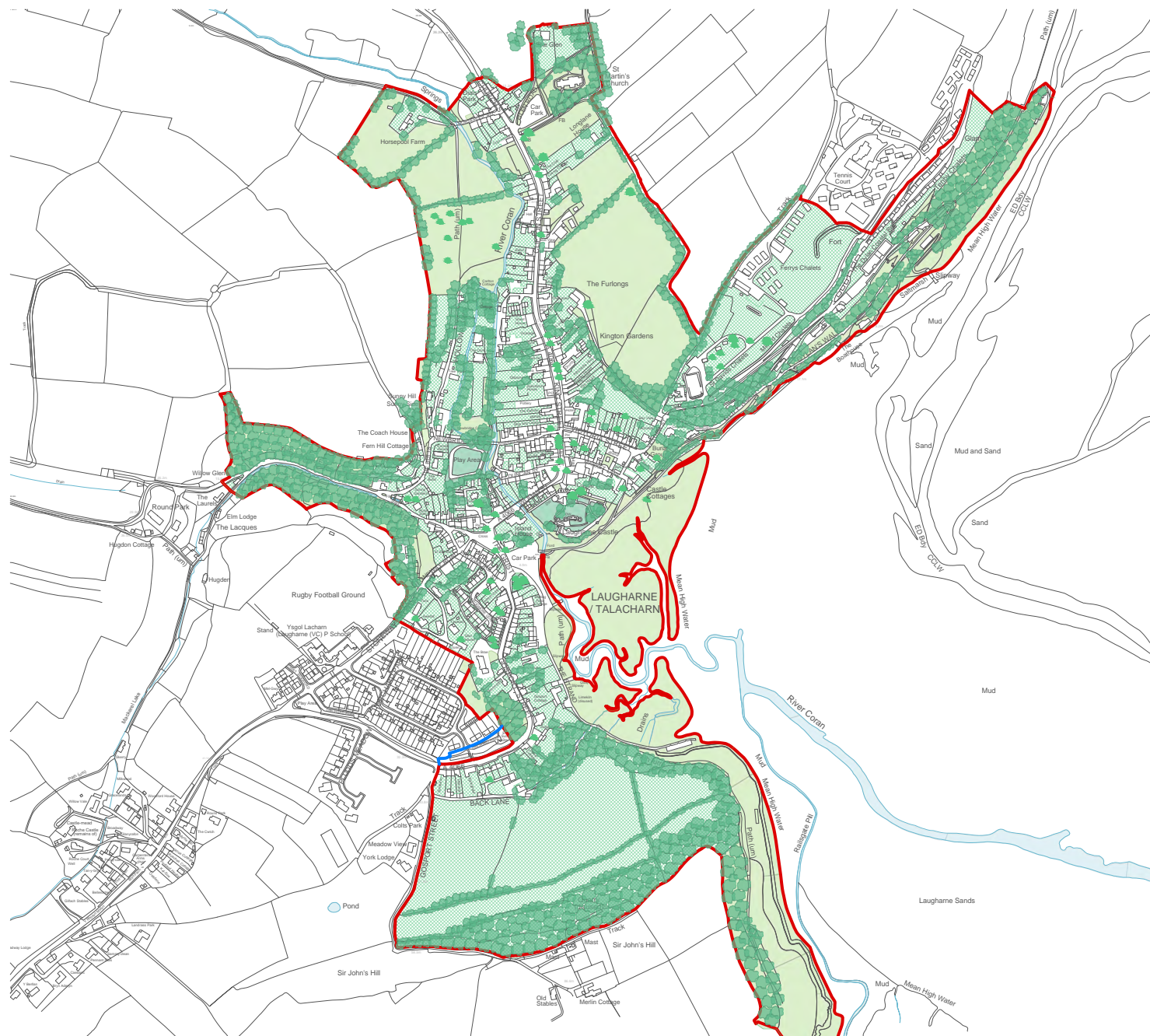


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KEY:

- Laugharne Conservation Area Boundary
- Proposed boundary alteration
- Listed buildings Grade I
- Listed buildings Grade II*
- Listed buildings Grade II
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Registered Landscapes of Outstanding and of Special Interest in Wales
- Registered Parks and Gardens (RHGP)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Unlisted buildings and structures of note

Laugharne Conservation Area

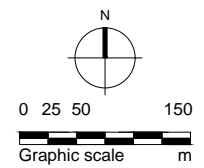
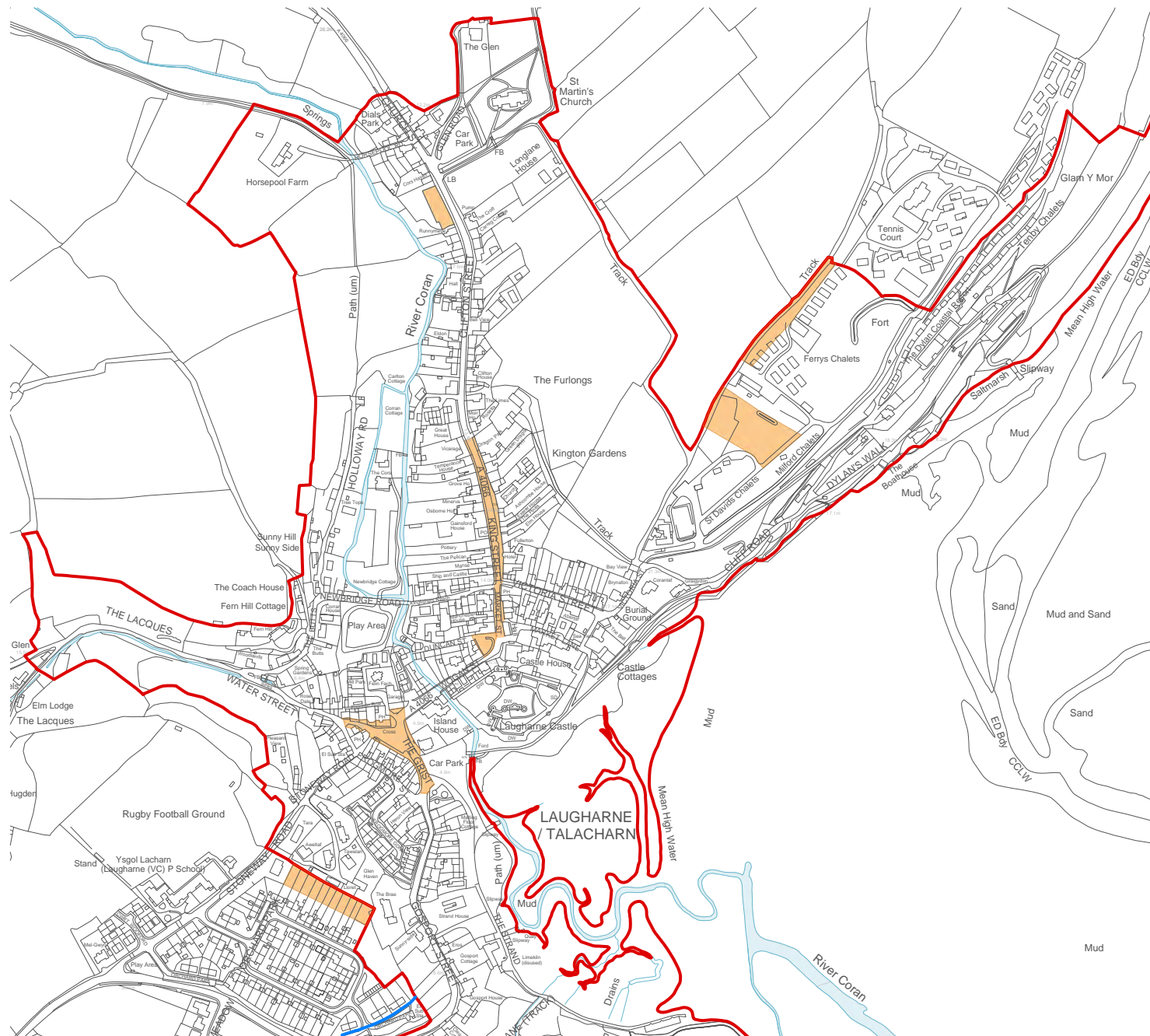


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KEY:

- Laugharne Conservation Area Boundary
- Proposed boundary alteration
- Green spaces
- Parks
- Private / semi-private gardens
- Trees
- Group of trees

Laugharne Conservation Area

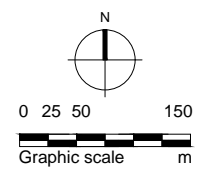
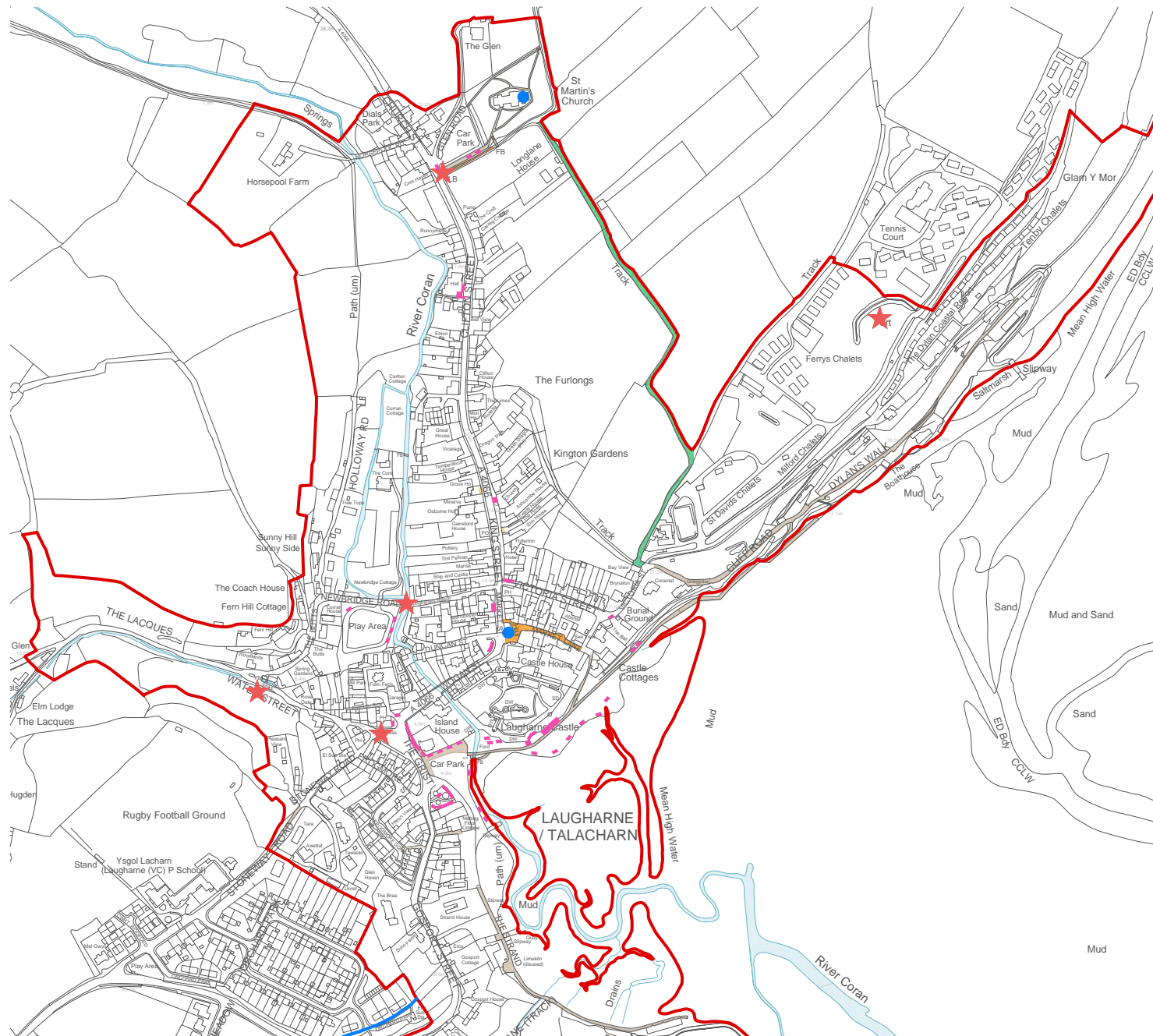


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KEY:

- Laugharne Conservation Area Boundary
- Proposed boundary alteration
- Area of opportunity

Laugharne Conservation Area

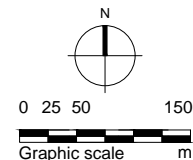
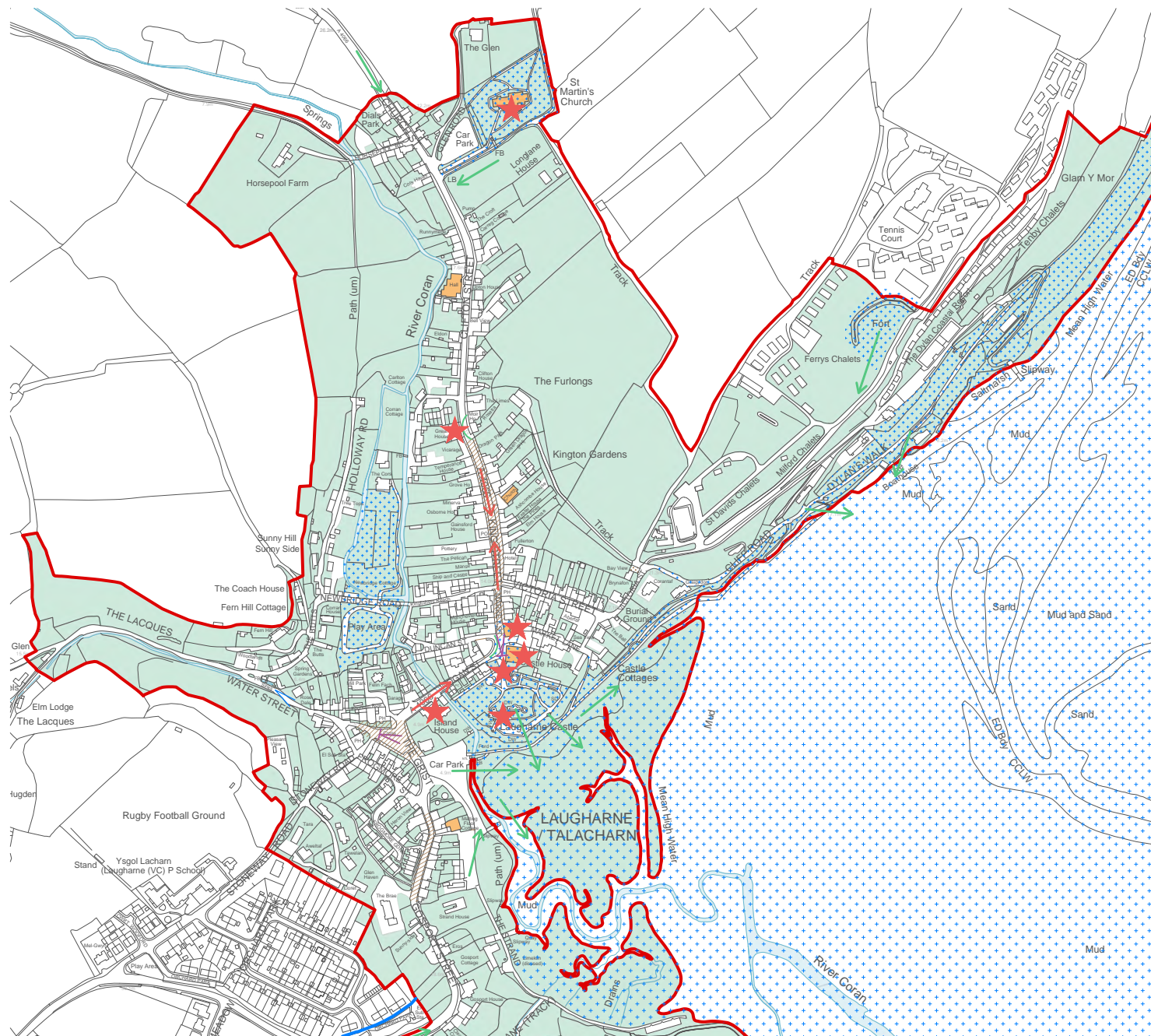


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KEY:

- Laugharne Conservation Area Boundary
- Proposed boundary alteration
- Historic paving
- Historic shopfront
- Pedestrian areas
- Bridleway
- ★ Townscape feature
- Tower
- Street furniture

Laugharne Conservation Area



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KEY:

- Laugharne Conservation Area Boundary
- Proposed boundary alteration
- Areas which offer a sense of place
- ▨▨▨▨ Areas which offer a sense of enclosure
- Positive green areas / landscaping / trees
- Significant roofscapes
- ★ Main landmark / key buildings
- Important landscape views
- Important street views
- ∠ Enclosed views
- ∠ Terminated views
- ↪ Deflected views

Laugharne Conservation Area

Appendix IV: Boundary Review

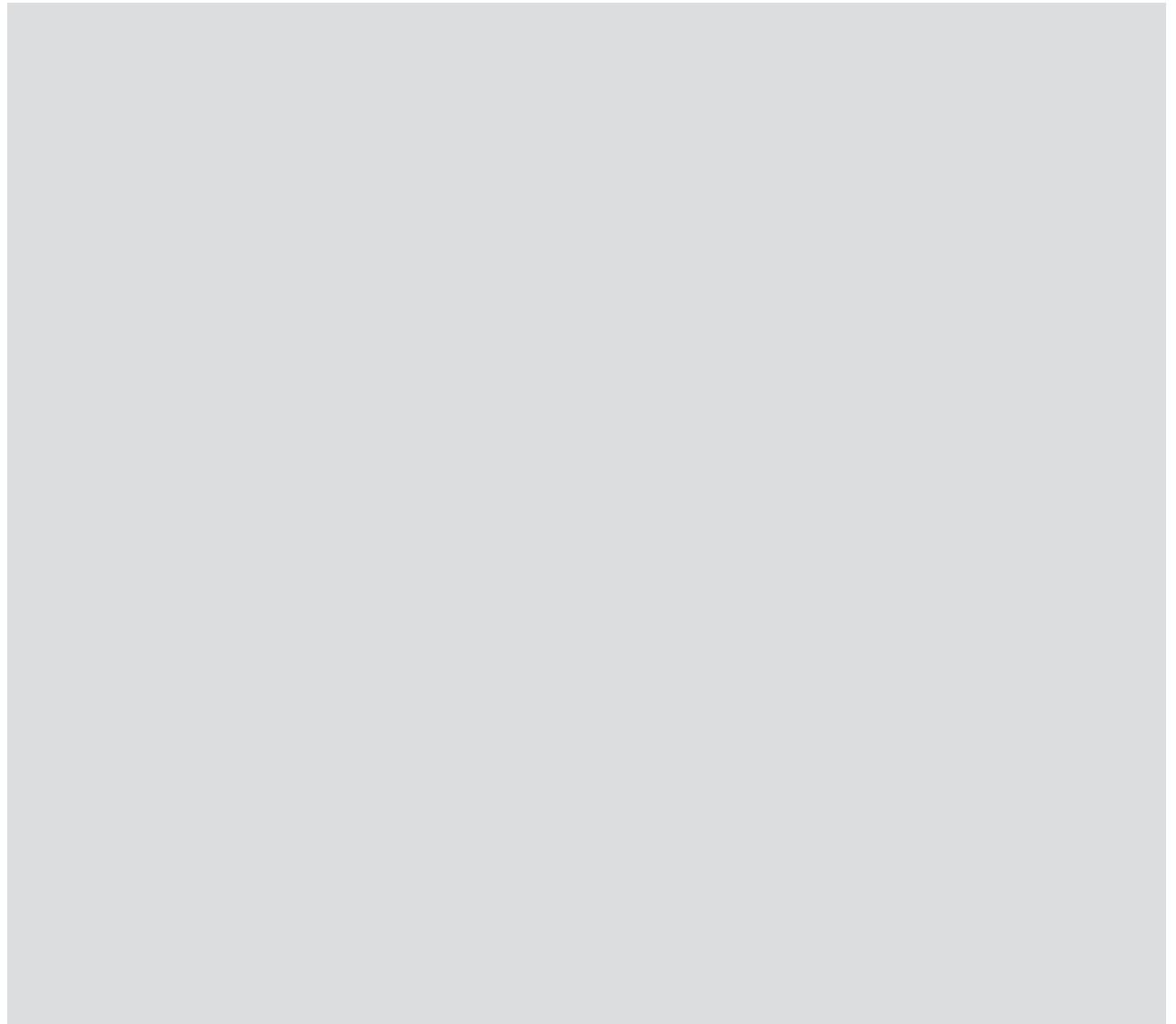
As part of the preparation of this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, a review of the Conservation Area boundary has been undertaken to understand the rationale for designating the area, and whether development since its initial designation means that this boundary should now be redrawn. This review has been undertaken through a series of site surveys, as well as desk-top research and consultation with the Local Authority, stakeholders, and the public.

There is one minor adjustment proposed to the Laugharne CA which can be identified on the following map. The location and reasons for this alteration is set out below:

Area 1 – Gosport Street

Addition of landscape verge to north side of Gosport Street below Orchard Park.

The southern approach to Laugharne along Gosport Street retains some connection with its rural origins despite recent and ongoing residential developments at this edge of the township. The open grassed slope below Orchard Park, approaching the bend opposite Gosport House, allows long views over the foreground trees to the hills on the opposite side of the Taf estuary. The view invites further exploration and additional planting could readily improve this inviting entry point to the CA. The inclusion of this area would protect these characteristics and the entrance into the CA, as well as ensure any potential development is of a quality and design which respects that of the CA.



Appendix V: Summary of Related Legislation, Policy, and Guidance

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires:

- Local planning authorities to determine areas where it is desirable to preserve and enhance, and designate them as conservation areas (section 69 [1])
- Local planning authorities to review their past activities in this area, including existing conservation areas, and to add more conservation areas (section 69 [2])
- Local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and consult the public in the area in question, taking account of views expressed (section 71 [1 and 2])
- In the exercise by local planning authorities of planning functions within the conservation area 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area' (section 72 [1])

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty of well-being on public bodies, which must set out and publish well-being objectives designed to maximise their contribution to achieving each of the seven well-being goals. One of these goals is a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, described as 'a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language'. There are clear synergies between the specific duty to preserve or enhance conservation areas, as required by the 1990 Act,⁷ and the general duty to promote and protect

heritage, as set out in the 2015 Act. Properly protected and enhanced conservation areas can improve the quality of life and well-being for everyone.

Planning Policy Wales February 2021

- The historic environment is made up of individual historic features which are collectively known as historic assets. Conservation areas are considered historic assets.
- Paragraph 6.1.6 states that the Welsh Government's specific objectives for the historic environment seek to: [...] preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas, whilst the same time helping them remain vibrant and prosperous.
- Paragraph 6.1.14 notes that there should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas or their settings. Positive management of conservation areas is necessary if their character or appearance are to be preserved or enhanced and their heritage value is to be fully realised. Planning authorities should establish their own criteria against which existing and/or new conservation areas and their boundaries should be reviewed. The preparation of conservation area appraisals and management plans can assist planning authorities in the exercise of their development management functions.
- Paragraph 6.1.15 notes that there is a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission for developments, including advertisements, which damage the character or appearance of a conservation area or its setting to an unacceptable level. In exceptional cases, the presumption may be overridden in favour of development considered desirable on public

interest grounds.

- Paragraph 6.1.16 notes that preservation or enhancement of a conservation area can be achieved by a development which either makes a positive contribution to an area's character or appearance or leaves them unharmed. Mitigation measures can also be considered which could result in an overall neutral or positive impact of a proposed development in a conservation area.
- Paragraph 6.1.17 notes that conservation area designation introduces control over the total or substantial demolition of unlisted buildings within these areas, but partial demolition does not require conservation area consent. Procedures are essentially the same as for listed building consent. When considering an application for conservation area consent, account should be taken of the wider effects of demolition on the building's surroundings and on the architectural, archaeological or historic interest of the conservation area as a whole. Consideration should also be given to replacement structures. Proposals should be tested against conservation area appraisals, where they are available.
- Paragraph 6.1.29 notes that development plans should consider the inclusion of locally specific policies relevant to the historic environment. These must be distinctive and only cover those elements deemed as important considerations from a local planning perspective. They might include locally specific policies relating to:
- Listed buildings and conservation areas – development plans may include locally specific policies for the conservation of the built historic environment, including the protection or enhancement of listed buildings and conservation areas and their settings. They may also include

policies relating to re-use or new development that affect particular historic areas and/or buildings, which may assist in achieving urban and rural regeneration. Development plans should not include policies for the designation of new conservation areas or extensions to existing conservation areas, nor should they include detailed statements or proposals for existing conservation areas. The process of assessment, detailed definition or revision of boundaries and formulation of proposals for individual conservation areas should be pursued separately from the development plan.

- Paragraph 1.36 notes that the Welsh Ministers have reserve powers to make their own Revocation/Modification or Discontinuance Orders, but only after consultation with the planning authority. Such intervention would overturn a planning authority's judgement on a matter which is, in the first place, its responsibility and may only be justified in exceptional circumstances. The general principle is that such action should be considered only where the original decision is judged to be grossly wrong, so that damage would be done to the wider public interest. This policy also applies to the use of the Welsh Ministers' default powers in respect of listed buildings and conservation area consent.

Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment, 2017

This document sets out that:

- Local planning authorities are responsible for designating conservation areas and they hold the definitive information on their boundaries.
- Supplementary Planning Guidance may be developed and adopted by a local planning authority to assist them in delivering policies in the local development plan. Specific guidance relating to the

historic environment might include topics such as: Conservation area management plans.

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and designate them as conservation areas. They should review their areas from time to time to consider whether further designations or revisions are called for. The Welsh Ministers also have powers to designate conservation areas after consultation with the local planning authority. This is a reserved power that is used in exceptional cases, for instance, where an area is of more than local interest.

6.2 Conservation area designation provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest: this might include the pattern of settlement and the organisation of space and routes as well as the style and type of building, and the use of materials and detail. Green infrastructure may also be important, but conservation area designation is not likely to be an appropriate means of protecting landscape features, except where they form an integral part of the historic built environment.

6.3 Local planning authorities must from time to time formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in a management plan. In accordance with best practice, this should be every five to ten years. It is good practice for local planning authorities to adopt the management plan as supplementary planning guidance. They must also give special

attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing conservation areas when taking planning decisions. In exceptional circumstances where part or the whole of a conservation area no longer possesses the special interest which led to its designation, the designation may be amended or cancelled.

6.4 A conservation area appraisal is the foundation for any proposals for preservation and enhancement. It provides a detailed picture of the special interest of an area and identifies opportunities and priorities for action which can provide the basis for a more detailed management plan. It should include an analysis of the policy and management needs of the area, including an assessment of the effectiveness of current planning controls, the need for supplementary protection and the identification of ways in which special character can be preserved or enhanced. Local development plan policies and development management decisions which relate to conservation areas will have a sounder basis and make more positive contributions to long-term aims if the character of each conservation area is defined and policies for its preservation and enhancement are set out in detail in a management plan. Consideration can also be given to whether to introduce Article 4 Directions in these areas.

6.5 By their very nature, conservation areas have multiple stakeholders and management arrangements should provide opportunities for participation and engagement in plan and decision making. Proposals for preservation and

enhancement will also be most effective when all council departments understand the significance of designation and work together. A development team approach that recognises the contribution of other departments, such as highways and housing, is therefore strongly recommended.

6.6 Local development plans may include locally specific policies for the protection or enhancement of conservation areas. In such circumstances, the local development plan should make clear that development proposals will be judged against their effect on the character or appearance of a conservation area as identified in the appraisal and management document. Certain development proposals within a conservation area, including the provision of one or more dwelling houses, the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space created by the development is 100 square metres or more, will require a design and access statement.

6.7 Many conservation areas include the commercial centres of towns and villages. Generally, there will be an emphasis on controlled and positive management of change that encourages economic vibrancy and social and cultural vitality and accords with the area's special architectural and historic qualities. Many conservation areas include sites or buildings that make no positive contribution to, or indeed detract from the character or appearance of the area; their replacement should be a stimulus to imaginative, high-quality design and an opportunity to enhance the area.

6.8 One of the purposes of the advertisement control system is to encourage the display of outdoor advertisements which make a positive contribution to the appearance of the environment. It is reasonable to expect that the local planning authority's duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area will result, in practice, in more exacting standards when the authority considers whether to grant consent for a proposed advertisement in such an area.

6.9 In conservation areas it is important for local planning authorities to be flexible in their use of their powers under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992, because many areas include retail and commercial premises ranging from small corner shops to thriving commercial centres. Outdoor advertising is essential to commercial activity and the success of local businesses will usually help owners and tenants of commercial premises to maintain buildings in good repair and attractive in appearance.

6.10 Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area, though there are some exceptions. In this context, the courts have ruled that demolition amounts to pulling down a building so that it is destroyed completely or at least to a very significant extent. Therefore, the removal of an entire building except its facade could also count as demolition.

6.11 The Welsh Ministers may direct that Conservation Area Consent is not required for certain descriptions of buildings and the Welsh Ministers have directed that Conservation Area consent is not required for certain works. These works include the demolition of a building with a total cubic content not exceeding 115 cubic metres and the demolition of a built boundary feature that is less than one metre high where abutting a highway, waterway or open space, or less than two metres high in any other case. This means that many works which involve the destruction of the fabric of part of a building will not be works of demolition and will not require conservation area consent.

6.12 Applications for consent to demolish must be made to the local planning authority. Applications for Conservation Area Consent will require a heritage impact statement, which should explain why demolition is desirable or necessary alongside a broader assessment of the impact of the proposals on the character or appearance of the area.

6.13 There should be a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings (see 5.15). In cases where it is considered a building makes little or no contribution, the local planning authority will normally need to have full information about what is proposed for the site after demolition. Consent for demolition should not

be given without acceptable and detailed plans for the reuse of the site unless redevelopment is itself undesirable. The local planning authority is entitled to consider the broad principles of a proposed development, such as its scale, size, and massing, when determining whether consent should be given for the demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area.

6.14 It may be appropriate to impose a condition on the granting of consent for demolition so that it does not take place until full planning permission has been granted and a contract for carrying out the development work has been made.

6.15 Local planning authorities have the power to protect trees and woodlands by making tree preservation orders. In addition, there is a special provision for trees in conservation areas which are not the subject of tree preservation orders. Anyone proposing to cut down, top or lop a tree in a conservation area is required to give the local planning authority six weeks' notice, during which time the local planning authority can decide whether to protect that tree with a tree preservation order.

6.16 When considering whether to extend protection to trees in conservation areas, local planning authorities should always consider the visual, historic and amenity contribution of trees. In some instances, new or re-plantings may be desirable where this would be consistent with the character or appearance of the area.

6.17 Enforcement has a key role to play in the protection of conservation areas and local planning authorities should consider a more proactive approach, including monitoring development activity and ensuring compliance with the terms of regulatory controls, rather than just investigating when a formal complaint is made. A positive and active approach to enforcement will help to reduce the number of contraventions and secure sustained improvements in environmental quality.

6.18 An applicant has a right to appeal against certain decisions or failure to take a decision by the local planning authority on a conservation area consent. An appeal may be made in circumstances including the following: Where a local planning authority: Refuses an application for conservation area consent; Grants an application for conservation area consent subject to conditions; Refuses an application for the variation or discharge of conditions attached to a conservation area consent; Refuses an application for approval required by a condition imposed on the granting of conservation area consent; or Fails to determine an application for consent within 8 weeks of its validation by the local planning authority.

6.19 An appeal is made to the Welsh Ministers on a form within six months of the applicant being notified of the local planning authority's decision.

Managing Conservation Areas in Wales, Cadw, 2017

Managing Conservation Areas in Wales supplements Planning Policy Wales¹ and Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment. Managing Conservation Areas in Wales sets out the policy context and duties for local planning authorities to designate and manage conservation areas. It also identifies key aspects of good practice for their designation and appraisal, including the participation of stakeholders and the development of local policies for positive management and enhancement so that their character and appearance are preserved and enhanced. It should also help local planning authorities to take account of Cadw's Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales (Conservation Principles) to achieve high-quality sensitive change.

