

Report of Building Conservation Officer

Subject: Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Guidance and Monitoring

Purpose of Report

This report updates Members on the recently approved supplementary planning guidance (SPG) for the Conservation Areas within the National Park and the latest condition review of each one.

Background

There are a total of 14 Conservation Areas in the National Park - Angle, Caerfarchell, Caldey Island, Little Haven, Manorbier, Newport, Newport Parrog, Portclew, Porthgain, Saundersfoot, Solva St Davids, Tenby and Trefin. Just for context, there are about 500 Conservation Areas in Wales.

Legal Background

The focus of this report is on Conservation Areas, which include unlisted and listed buildings which make a major contribution to the historic environment. They represent the settlements of greatest architectural and historic importance with the National Park and are a key and finite resource. Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, their special character reliant on quality of place rather than individual buildings.

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on Local Planning Authorities to review these conservation areas from time to time. The boundaries were reviewed in 2017 and amended for Tenby and Porthgain.

Programme

Members will be aware that all Conservation Areas are regularly reviewed, with Article 4(2) Directions existing in St Davids, Little Haven, Solva, Tenby and Newport Conservation Areas. The Directions restrict certain householder permitted development rights (typically alterations to windows, doors and curtilages) where character is being eroded. The Authority has the remit to introduce Article 4(2) Directions which are subject to detailed public consultation and notification.

The review is carried out every three years on foot to assess the level of change through householder permitted development - typically with regard to windows, doors and boundary features. The Pandemic and its aftermath have inevitably caused delays to the rolling programme with most conservation areas not having been surveyed since 2018. This year, a concerted programme has seen all 14 areas

surveyed, except for the extended parts of Tenby Conservation Area, designated in 2019. The results – scored by the number of relevant properties - are summarised thus:-

Conservation Areas without Article 4 (2) Directions

No change – Parrog, Manorbier, Porthgain, Portclew, Saundersfoot, Trefin, Caldey Island

Modest decline – Caerfarchell (-1)

Notable decline – Angle (-6)

Conservation Areas with Article 4(2) Directions

No change – Tenby (core)

Modest decline – Newport (-1), Solva (-2), St Davids (-3)

Notable decline – Little Haven (-3)

In terms of the conservation areas with Article 4(2) Directions, enforcement files have been opened for each property. A number of cases – currently under investigation - may not be enforceable, due to them having been in place for over four years – this highlights the importance of undertaking surveys every three years. Typically, the loss of fabric relates to windows, where historic timber windows have been replaced in upvc.

In terms of the Conservation Area without Article 4(2) Directions, Angle showed a notable decline in character, again related to windows being replaced in upvc. Angle is a mixture of older and modern properties, many of which had replaced fenestration prior to designation. In Angle, the context of designation was largely the fine medieval landscape/buildings and the estate improvements on the later C19. It is therefore not considered expedient to introduce extra planning control here – or to the other Conservation Areas of less concern.

The surveys have incidentally picked up some potentially unauthorised works to listed buildings and commercial premises – these lie outside of Article 4(2) control but are also being investigated

The next part of the programme is to consider new areas for designation, which will be the focus of future reports.

Legal considerations

These are dealt with in the body of the report.

Financial considerations

The Conservation Areas Review is being undertaken in-house and is therefore contained within existing budgets.

Equality issues and Diversity

Conservation Area status is all encompassing and exclusive to the defined area. An area may be defined by the built environment and its character and not by the people within it, although they may have influenced it. As such, there are no issues of equality or diversity.

Conclusion

That the programme of surveying all 14 Conservation Areas on a triennial basis be continued. Should degradation of character occur in the interim and Article 4(2) Directions be considered necessary, a further report shall be made to Members.

Recommendation

1. Members note the contents of the report above.

(For further information please contact Mr Rob Scourfield, Building Conservation Officer)