

Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033

Background Paper

BP39: Historic Assets of Special Local Interest



Deposit Plan

May 2024



Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd.

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Contents

1.	Introduction & Scope of Background Paper	4
2.	Background.....	4
3.	Progress towards formulating a list of Historic Assets of Special Local Interest (HASLI).....	5
4.	Description of Current Listing Process in the SPG	5
5.	Problems	6
6.	Suggestions for Improvement.....	6

1. Introduction & Scope of Background Paper

- 1.1 This is one of a series of Background Papers accompanying the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). When the Council publishes its Preferred Strategy and Deposit Plan, it must also explain how the policy has been formulated based on the evidence base available to the Council at the time. This Background Paper looks at Historic Assets of Local Importance across the Conwy County Borough area (excluding Eryri National Park).
- 1.2 The main sections of the Background Paper address the national policy changes that have come in since the adoption of the LDP, steps that have been taken to formulate a local list, the current local policy approach and accompanying SPG and how this has operated since adoption, plus suggestions for how the policy / process might be improved for the RLDP.

2. Background

- 2.1 Conwy has a rich and diverse historic built environment. A number of buildings and structures (1488) benefit from the protection of listed status in Conwy, however there are a significant number of other buildings and structures, parks and gardens which, although of local importance, do not have any specific protection in planning terms.
- 2.2 Since the adoption of the LDP in October 2013, national planning policy (PPW 12) has been published and includes an approach on Historic Assets of Special Local Interest as follows at Para 6.1.29: *“Planning authorities may develop lists of historic assets of special local interest, that do not have statutory protection, but that make an important contribution to local distinctiveness and have the potential to contribute to public knowledge. Where a planning authority chooses to identify historic assets of special local interest policies for the conservation and enhancement of those assets must be included in the development plan.”*

- 2.3 The LDP currently has a policy which seeks to protect Buildings and Structures of Local Importance (CTH/3).

“Development proposals affecting buildings or structures which make an important contribution to the character and interest of the local area will only be permitted where the building’s distinctive appearance, architectural integrity and its setting would not be significantly adversely affected.”

There is also SPG in place which details how BSЛИs are selected and ‘listed’, however no list has been formulated to date. As work on the RLDP progresses, it is recognised that for the Historic Assets of Special Local

Interest policy in the RLDP to function effectively, a list should be drawn up prior to adoption of the RLDP. The next section of this Background Paper explores the process that is being undertaken at present to formulate such a list.

3. Progress towards formulating a list of Historic Assets of Special Local Interest (HASLI)

3.1 In February 2024, Conwy Council wrote to Town and Community Councils covering the Conwy Local Planning Authority area and conservation interest and amenity groups to request suggestions of historic assets that meet a set of criteria. (For criteria, see Appendix A). A deadline of 10th May 2024 was set for the submission, with the following process to be followed thereafter:

- Until 10th May 2024 – Conwy Council will be receiving HASLI suggestions to our JDI consultation system
- 10th May 2024 onwards –Acknowledgement letter out to the Town and Community Councils (and anyone who has submitted a site suggestion) directly outlining the next steps of the process
- Conwy Council officer assessment process commences of the site submissions
- Following the above assessment, an initial preferred list will be identified and owners will be contacted to explain their properties are on the draft list, but this will be subject to a public consultation exercise and formal approval by the Council
- Publish the initial preferred list, (plus those suggestions that have been received but didn't meet the criteria), and put out to public consultation for 6 weeks
- Consider all responses and formulate a final preferred list which will be approved by Council.

3.2 At the time of writing this Background Paper the above process is still ongoing, but it is envisaged that a HASLI list will be available for the RLDP Examination stage. As an interim measure, the existing SPG will be updated (and agreed through the Council's political process) to enable the HASLI list to be utilised in planning decisions under the current adopted LDP policy.

4. Description of Current Listing Process in the SPG

4.1 Next we examine the current listing process agreed as SPG to support the policy in the adopted LDP. This is split into three categories:

- i) Formulating a list of BSLIs via a survey approach.

BSLI Register. This is the approach that has been undertaken as per section 3 of this Background Paper.

- ii) Including a BSLI on the register in response to planning applications.
This involves identifying potential BSLIs when they come in as the subject of planning applications.
- iii) Including a BSLI on the register in response to pre-application enquiries.
This involves identifying potential BSLIs when they come in as the subject of pre-application planning enquiries.

Each category has a flowchart for progressing BSLIs through to adoption within the existing SPG, although so far BSLIs have only been identified using the first category of listing (the survey approach).

5. Problems

5.1 To date the following problems have been encountered with the current policy approach:

- i) The policy only covers buildings and structures and could be expanded to include other assets such as historic parks and gardens that haven't been formally identified in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.
- ii) The procedure to 'adopt' BSLIs on to a register is considered to be a fairly long process that could be made more efficient by reducing the steps involved/committee processes (if feasible).
- iii) The way the SPG is worded suggests that all planning applications are 'assessed' under policy CTH/3. This wording has brought some confusion as to how the policy is applied and therefore would benefit from clarification.
- iv) Resources – limited officer hours available to compile a list of BSLIs.

6. Suggestions for Improvement

6.1 Some suggestions are now made to tackle some of the problems highlighted in section 5 and improve the policy and SPG for the RLDP.

6.2 In terms of issue 5 i) it is clear that national guidance is broader than buildings and structures as PPW refers to 'historic assets'. Given this, it would seem prudent to broaden the scope of the policy to 'Historic Assets of Special Local

Interest' which would allow for the inclusion of locally listed historic parks and gardens.

- 6.3 When looking at the process of adopting BSLIs, there are three approaches listed in the adopted SPG and this has caused some confusion in how the policy is applied. To simplify matters, for the RLDP it has been agreed that there will only be one approach to listing, which will be the survey approach. The survey approach relies on the formulation of a local list which will be updated at agreed intervals. There will be no opportunity for 'spot listing', and therefore an asset will only be treated as a historic asset of special local interest in planning terms if it is on the agreed list. This adds transparency and removes uncertainty from planning decisions about what is, and what isn't a historic asset of special local interest.
- 6.4 Revised SPG will be compiled to accompany the Deposit RLDP which will outline this new process.

Appendix A

Conwy County Borough Council - Historic Assets of Special Local Interest - Assessment Criteria

There are four criteria why a building or structure would qualify to go on the register, architectural interest, historic interest, historical association and community value. Each nominated building/structure needs to fulfil criteria 1 – Architectural interest to some degree, but it may also, for example be of historic interest, or possess an historic association and these might be significant reasons to include the building/structure on the register.

1. CRITERION 1 - Does the Building / Structure have Architectural Interest?

As buildings on the HASLI register are to be included mainly because of their physical architectural characteristics, this will be the first and primary consideration when compiling the register.

Does the building/structure have architectural interest? (yes/no)

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

The architectural interest of a building, or group of buildings, shall be judged according to the following criteria.

(a) Quality

- i) use of quality materials and workmanship;
- ii) exceptional examples of the work of a notable local or regional architect, builder or developer.

(b) Authenticity or Distinctiveness of Architecture

- i) good examples of a locally derived architectural style, type or character that is distinctive;
- ii) early local use of new materials or building technique (for example, use of 19th Century concrete)
- iii) architectural merit as recognised by local or national awards.

(c) Contribution to the character of the area

- (i) Individual buildings which contribute positively to the character of the local area by virtue of their style, type, design, decoration, use of materials and craftsmanship, including landmark buildings that are the focal point of social and visual interest.

- (ii) Groups of buildings which as a whole have a unified architectural value to the local area for example, terraces, squares, farmyards, farmsteads or uniform rows.

2. CRITERION 2: Is the building / structure of historic interest?*

HISTORIC INTEREST

The historic interest of a building, or group of buildings, shall be judged according to the social, economic, cultural, industrial or military history of the area. The development of an area is sometimes influenced by an individual building, which may play an integral part in shaping the character of the area, or in the local social scene.

Such buildings may include Churches, Schools, Village and Town Halls, Chapels, Public Houses, Memorials, places of employment and Workhouses, which formed a focal point or key social role in the history of the area.

Is the building/structure of historic interest? (yes/no)

*Buildings that are considered on the basis of historic interest alone may not qualify for inclusion if they do not possess authenticity, quality or distinctiveness of architecture to merit inclusion as key local buildings.

3. CRITERION 3 - Does the building / structure have an historical association?**

The historical association of a building, or group of buildings, shall be judged according to the following:

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Does the building/structure have an historical association? (yes/no)

- i. well authenticated historical association with a notable person(s) or event;
- ii. figures or events of national interest with a direct association;
- iii. figures or events of local interest with a prolonged and direct association;
- iv. the contribution made by the individual or event to the local scene;
- v. the importance of the building in relation to the work / influence of the person or event in question;
- vi. a key association with a notable figure or event, particularly if this figure or event influenced local or national events during the association with the building in question.

**Buildings that are considered on the basis of historical association alone may not qualify for inclusion if they do not possess authenticity, quality or distinctiveness of architecture to merit inclusion as key local buildings.

4. CRITERION 4 - Does the building / structure have community value?***

The community value of a building, or group of buildings, shall be judged according to the following:

COMMUNITY VALUE

Does the building/structure have community value? (yes/no)

- i. commemorative or symbolic of social attitudes, or a particular period in Welsh history
- ii. social value as a source of social interaction. This can include buildings and structures used for employment purposes, or those that have a spiritual value emanating from religious beliefs or modern perceptions of the spirit of a place
- iii. A building or structure that fosters a sense of community identity –i.e. one where people might draw part of their identity or collective memory, or have emotional links to it.

***Buildings that are considered on the basis of community value alone may not qualify for inclusion if they do not possess authenticity, quality or distinctiveness of architecture to merit inclusion as key local buildings.