



Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033

Background Paper

January 2019

BP 39: Historic Assets of Local Importance

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Contents

1.	Introduction & Scope of Background Paper	4
2.	Background.....	4
3.	Progress towards formulating a list of Buildings and Structures of Local Importance.....	5
4.	Description of Current Listing Process.....	5
5.	Problems.....	5
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 Snowdonia 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, 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 (1755) 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 10) 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.”*
- 2.2 The LDP 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 BSLIs are selected and ‘listed’.

3. Progress towards formulating a list of Buildings and Structures of Local Importance

- 3.1 Since adoption of the LDP progress has been made in terms of identifying BSLIs via a survey approach. A short-list of 122 BSLIs has been compiled and will be progressed for adoption once ready.

4. Description of Current Listing Process

- 4.1 The current listing process 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

- 4.1 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 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 Local Importance’ which would allow for the inclusion of locally listed historic parks and gardens. However there would need to be additional suitability criteria drawn up to ensure that only land with historical/local interest is included. This could be developed in conjunction with the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust and addressed in the SPG.
- 6.3 When looking at the process of adopting BSLIs, although there are three approaches listed in the SPG, in reality there are only two – the survey approach to listing BSLIs, and BSLIs identified at any other time whether this be during the planning process or otherwise. A suggestion to simplify could be to outline two approaches to listing and streamline both processes by removing the need to take the list to the Conservation Advisory Panel (CAP) and certain other committees where possible.
- 6.4 Revised SPG will be compiled to accompany the Deposit RLDP which will outline the new process.