

Proposal for the De-designation of the St David's Street & Parcmaen Conservation Area



Location: Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire, Wales

Date: 12 May 2026

Prepared by: Nell Hellier, Senior Built Heritage Officer, Carmarthenshire County Council. Based on a Survey of Significance undertaken by Purcell

Commissioned by: Carmarthenshire County Council Built Heritage Team

1. Executive Summary

This report examines the case for the de-designation of the St David's Street & Parcmaen Conservation Area (hereafter "the Area") located in Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire.

It reviews the original reasons for designation, assesses current architectural, historic and townscape interest, evaluates changes since designation, and benchmarks the Area against the statutory criteria for conservation area status.

The evidence indicates that the Area no longer retains sufficient special architectural or historic interest, nor a coherent character or appearance, that justifies its continued designation under the statutory test. Based on this, a recommendation is made that de-designation is justified subject to stakeholder engagement and appropriate transitional management.

1. Crynodeb Gweithredol

Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn archwilio'r achos dros ddiddymu Dynodiad Ardal Gadwraeth Stryd Dewi Sant a Parcmaen (yma wedi'i gyfeirio at fel "yr Ardal") sydd wedi'i lleoli yng Nghaerfyrddin, Sir Gaerfyrddin.

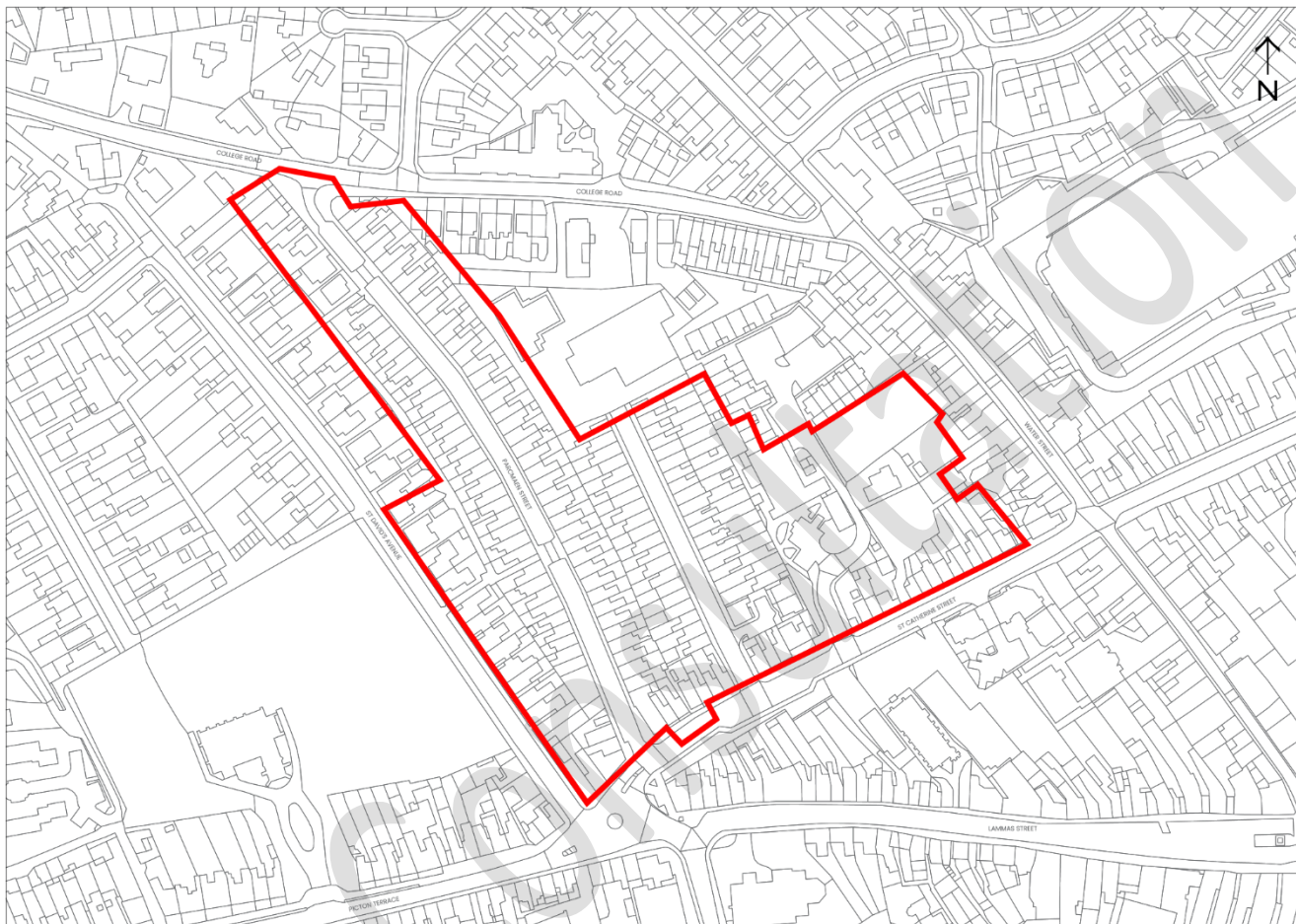
Mae'n adolygu'r rhesymau gwreiddiol dros y dynodiad, yn asesu'r diddordeb pensaernïol, hanesyddol a threfol presennol, yn gwerthuso'r newidiadau ers y dynodiad, ac yn cymharu'r Ardal â'r meini prawf statudol ar gyfer statws ardal gadwraeth.

Mae'r dystiolaeth yn dangos nad yw'r Ardal bellach yn cadw digon o ddiddordeb pensaernïol neu hanesyddol arbennig, nac yn meddu ar gymeriad neu olwg cydlynol, i gyfiawnhau ei pharhad fel ardal gadwraeth o dan y prawf statudol. Yn seiliedig ar hyn, gwneir argymhelliad bod diddymu'r dynodiad yn gyfiawn, yn amodol ar ymgysylltiad â rhanddeiliaid a rheolaeth dros dro briodol.

2. Introduction

2.1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a robust appraisal and justification for the proposed de-designation of the St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation Area. It draws together documentary research, site surveying, an evaluation of change and policy/legislative context.



St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation Area Boundary

2.2 Legislative and Policy Context

Under the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023, local planning authorities have the power and duty to designate and review conservation areas. In particular, they must take into account whether an area is of “special architectural or historic interest” and whether the character or appearance of the area is such that it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The designation places additional controls on changes to buildings, demolition, trees, and new development. The national policy context (in Wales) includes Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023, the Planning Policy Wales guidance and the technical advice in Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment.

The Council also applies the Cadw guidance of the publication Managing Conservation Areas in Wales which emphasises review of boundaries, monitoring of special interest and management of change.

2.3 Scope and Limitations

This report focuses on the defined boundary of the Area as originally designated. It reviews historic development, architectural and townscape interests, changes since designation, and surrounding context.

Limitations include a full stakeholder consultation, which will be undertaken as part of the next stage.

2.4 Significance Review

This report is based on an assessment of significance of the Area undertaken by Purcell Architecture Limited. Purcell Architecture Limited is a leading practice of conservation architects and heritage consultants; the heritage consultancy team specialises in providing heritage advice and managing change in the historic environment. The team have considerable experience reviewing conservation areas for local authorities, providing guidance on their management and the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (CAAMPs). Purcell is acknowledged as the author of the content on which this de-designation report was based. The full Purcell significance assessment is in the Appendices.

3. Background to the Conservation Area

3.1 Designation History

The Area (listed as “Parcmaen/ St David’s Street Conservation Area”) is recorded in the Council’s list of conservation areas for Carmarthenshire. The area was originally included in a Carmarthen Town-wide Conservation Area, but was designated as an area in its own right on 30 March 1995.

The area has been included under the county’s built-heritage regime, but there has been no comprehensive appraisal since 1995.

3.2 Original Reasons for Designation

At the time of designation, the key factors cited included:

- The special historic interest of the St David’s Street/Parcmaen area as part of Carmarthen’s urban expansion and suburban development.
- Architectural interest and character in late 19th/early 20th century buildings, the street pattern and setting of the area.
- Townscape qualities (boundary walls, cohesive built form) which were considered worthy of protection under conservation area policy.

3.3 Summary of Character (at designation)

The area comprised a mix of residential terraces, lesser commercial/ institutional buildings, with a coherent boundary and a sense of place derived from its period of development, materials (for example local stone, brick, slate roofing) and its relation to the broader urban fabric of Carmarthen.

4. Methodology

- Documentary research: historic maps, listing records, previous reports
- Site survey: including building condition, changes to fabric, demolition, new development, boundary alterations, townscape changes, tree/landscape review.
- Comparative analysis: benchmarking against other conservation areas within Carmarthenshire and Wales.
- Consultation: A stakeholder consultation exercise will be undertaken (residents, local heritage groups, property owners) as part of the next stage.
- Assessment against statutory criteria: Does the Area still meet the tests of special architectural or historic interest, and is its character or appearance such that it merits designation?

5. Legislative and Policy Framework

5.1 Legislation

The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 sets out the duties around designation, review and conservation. It provides the framework for heritage asset management and reporting.

5.2 Policy

- Planning Policy Wales: sets out the national planning framework for heritage assets and conservation areas.
- Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment – provides guidance on the protection, conservation and management of heritage assets.
- Managing Conservation Areas in Wales – Cadw guidance for local authorities on designation, character appraisal, management, review and de-designation.

5.3 Local Policy

- Our Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) – built heritage policies such as SP13 (Protection and Enhancement of the Built and Historic Environment).
- The Council's Built Heritage Service: provides advice and management of listed buildings, conservation areas and tree protection. (Carmarthenshire County Council)

5.4 Statutory Tests for De-designation

De-designation is permissible where the area no longer satisfies the criteria for designation (i.e., no longer of special architectural or historic interest; or its character or appearance no longer warrants protection).

Any de-designation decision must carefully consider:

- What has changed since designation?
- Whether any remaining special interest can be adequately managed through other mechanisms (e.g., listed building protection, planning policies).
- The implications (positive/negative) of removing the designation (e.g., loss of controls, impact on setting of listed buildings, impact on community).

6. Assessment of Special Architectural and Historic Interest

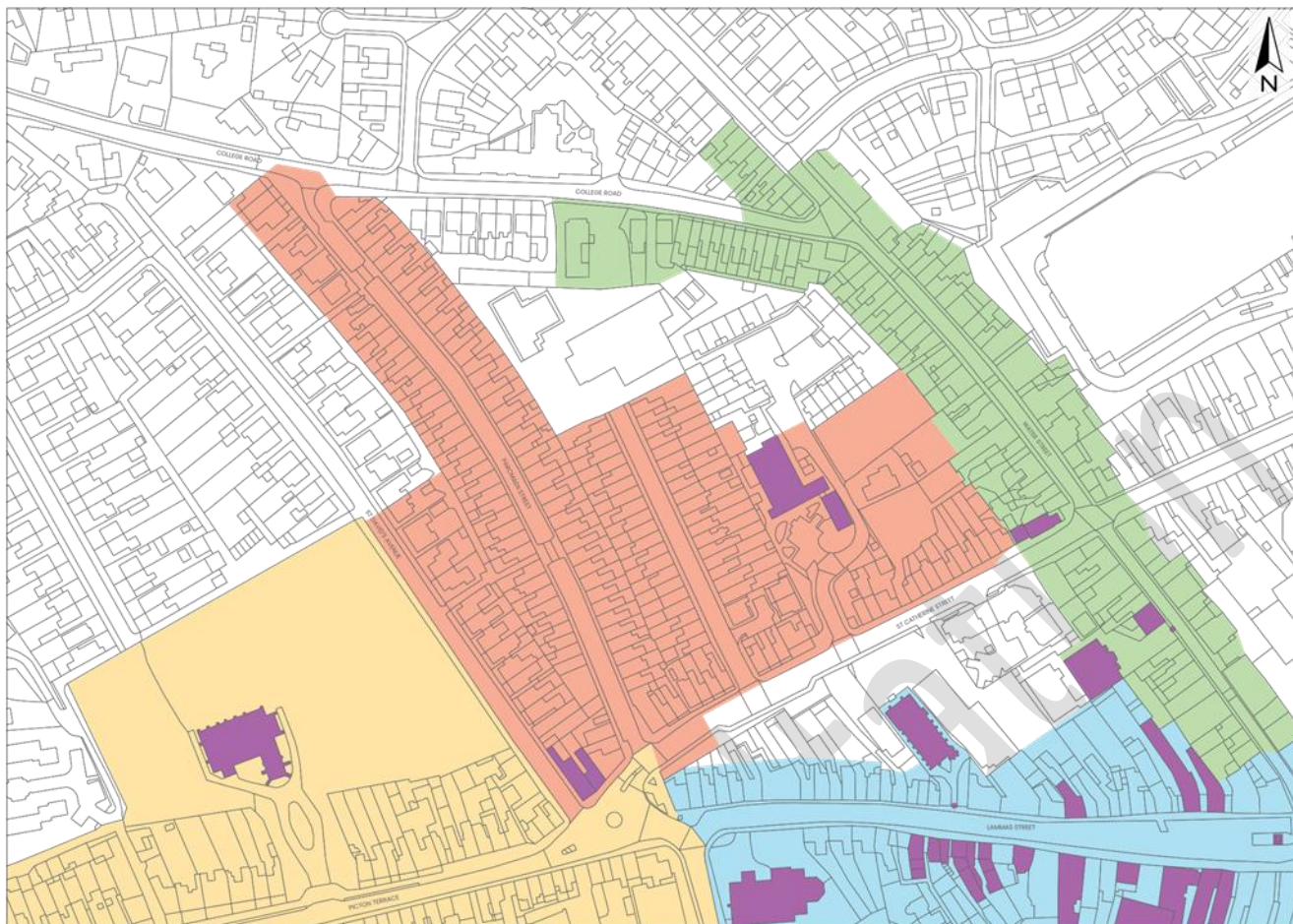
6.1 Existing Designations

In addition to the conservation area designation the other relevant designations within the area comprise four listed buildings:

- Llys Model (former Model School), Grade II listed
- Former Infants' Wing at Model School, Grade II listed
- 1 St David's Avenue, Grade II listed
- 50 St Catherine Street, Grade II listed

The conservation area is also neighboured by a number of other conservation areas including:

- Lammas Street Conservation Area to the south
- Water Street Conservation Area to the east
- Picton Terrace Conservation Area to the south-west



- Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings
- St David's and Parcmaen Conservation Area
 - Picton Terrace Conservation Area
 - Water Street Conservation Area
 - Lammas Street Conservation Area
 - Listed Buildings

This plan is not to scale

6.2 Description of the Conservation Area

The conservation area is in the northwest area of central Carmarthen and abounds the Water Street, Lammas Street and Picton Terrace conservation areas. It is an area with a high density of buildings and St Catherine Street is heavily trafficked as a principal route through Carmarthen.

The conservation area covers Model Court, St David's

Street, Parcmaen Street, the southeast side of St David's Avenue, and the northwest side of St Catherine Street and is predominantly residential terraced houses constructed. These range in age, with earlier terraces on the east side of St Catherine Street along the historic thoroughfare, late 19th and early 20th-century terraces on St David's Street and Parcmaen Street, and later semi-detached houses on St David's Avenue.

To the east of the conservation area is the former Model School, a mid-19th century collection of National School buildings constructed in a Gothic Revival style with local materials. The historic use of these buildings differs from the surrounding residential streets and the complex is set within a larger plot of land which separates it from the high density housing.



St Catherine Street, looking northeast



The former Model School

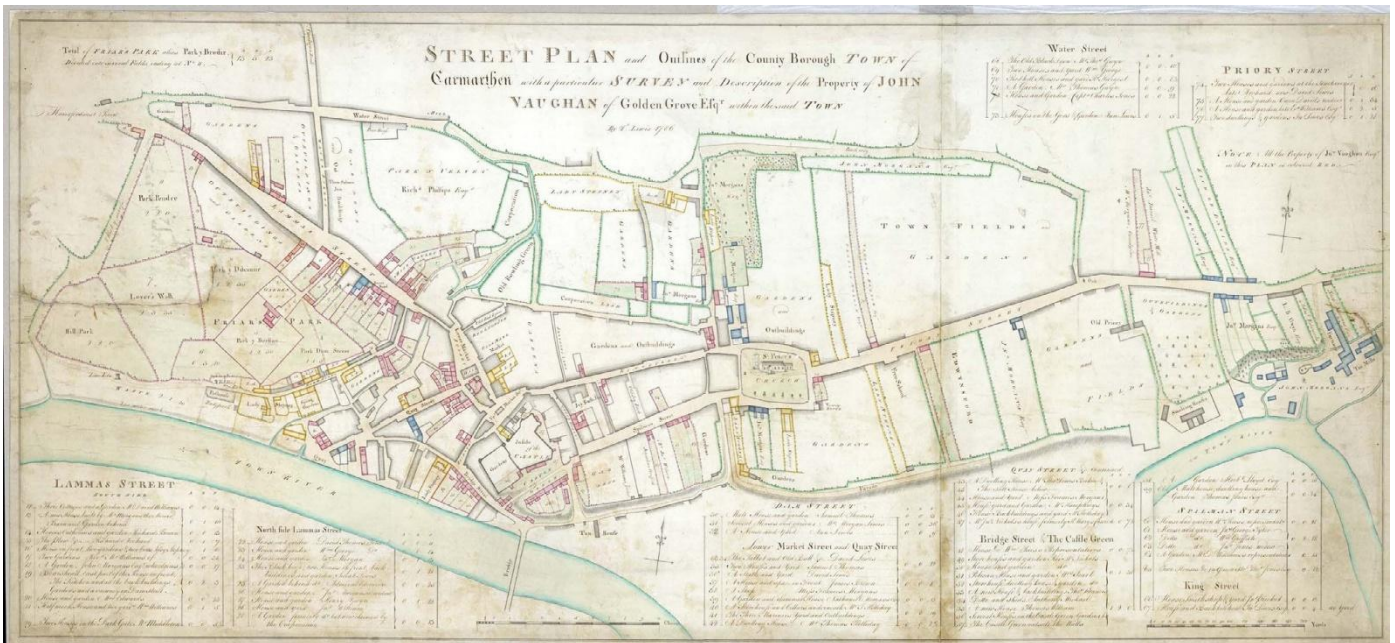


St David's Street, looking northwest

6.3 Historic Development of the Conservation Area

Carmarthen is considered to be the oldest continually occupied settlements in Wales, with a rich history dating back to the Roman period. The town can be split into two historic halves; Old Carmarthen which was centred around the Roman Fort and St John's Priory on the eastern side, and New Carmarthen which was Anglo-Norman in character and was focused on the Castle and the corresponding city walls.

The St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation Area is located to the northwest of the historic New Carmarthen above Lamma Street.



The 1786 street plan of Carmarthen. The area occupied by the St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation area is in the top left corner of the map and is shown as undeveloped in the 18th Century (Carmarthenshire Archives).

Historic mapping of Carmarthen shows that fields occupied this area up until the end of the 19th Century. A small lane, recorded as Park Main or Park Maen, connected the mill ponds of the wool factories on what would become Glannant Road with St Catherine Street, and is where the later Parcmaen Street got its name.

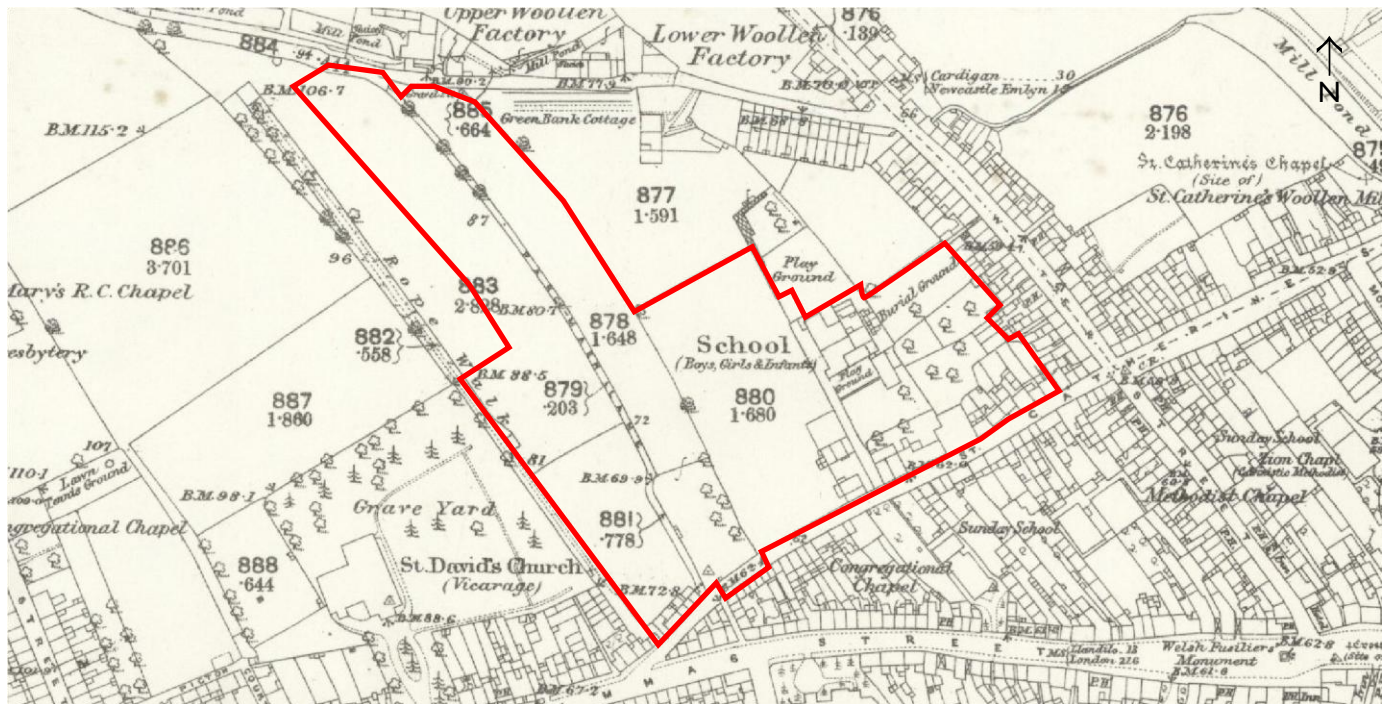
A collection of buildings is visible on the 1834 map of Carmarthen on Goose Street, which later became St Catherine Street, which sits within the conservation area boundary. These buildings appear to be earlier iterations of the terraced houses that are of a similar age to the terraces of St David's Street and Parcmaen Street. The buildings that sit in the same position as on the 1834 map at the junction of Water Street and St Catherine Street are both listed and sit within the neighbouring Water Street Conservation Area.



The 1834 map of Carmarthen, with the boundary of the St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation area marked. A lane labelled as 'Park Main' is shown linking the ponds to the north with Goose Street, which would later become St Catherine Street. (Carmarthenshire Archives).

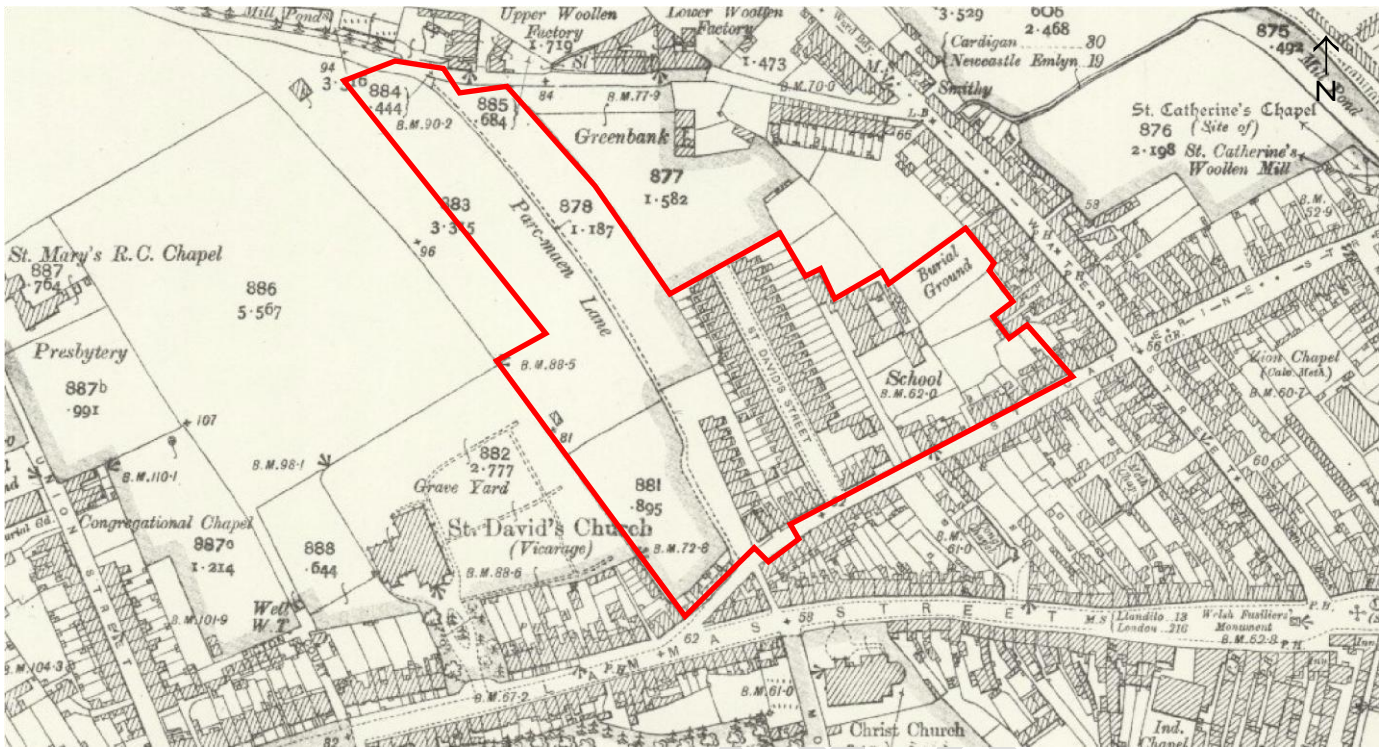
The listed Model School on Model Court was built as a practicing school for trainee teachers at Trinity College in Carmarthen. Built in the Gothic Revival style and designed by Henry Clutton, the boys' school was opened in 1849 and the girls' school opened in 1851, with an additional infants schoolroom opened in 1856. The Model School as a group of three National schools had the capacity to educate approximately 600 children.

The 1886 map shows that the terraces on St Catherine Street were beginning to be constructed by this time, illustrating the growth of development of Carmarthen in the late-19th century.



The 1886 Carmarthenshire County map, with the St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation Area boundary marked. The area is still principally open space but the adjacent St David's Church has been constructed to the southwest and the Model School buildings have been constructed to the east side of the conservation area (National Library of Scotland).

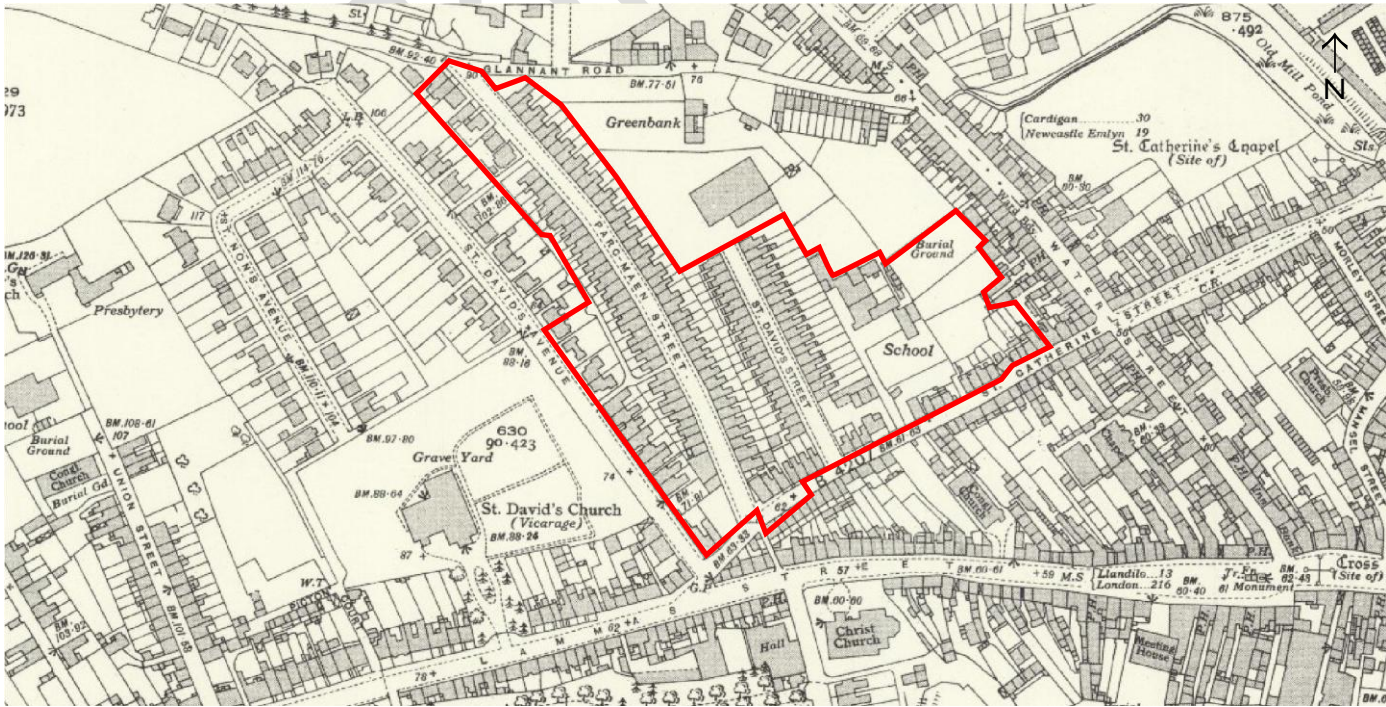
The development of St David's Street was undertaken in the late 19th or early 20th century. The 1905 Carmarthenshire County map shows St David's Street to have been constructed to the west of the Model School and the beginning of Parcmaen Street under construction on the southern end of the historic lane.



The 1905 Carmarthenshire County map showing the construction of the St David's Street as complete and the beginnings of Parcmaen Street under construction (National Library of Scotland).

Parcmaen Street and St David's Avenue were constructed in the early 20th century. The 1936 Carmarthenshire County map shows that these two streets were complete by this date, with the layout of the streets conforming to historic land boundaries as seen on previous mapping.

Carmarthen was a rapidly developing and expanding town in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as the regional centre for traders and businessmen, education and the law. These streets were not constructed on behalf of a particular trade or employer, such as the nearby wool factories in this area of the town, but rather was high-density infill housing to provide homes for the increased population in Carmarthen.



The 1936 Carmarthenshire County map, with the St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation Area Boundary marked. This map shows that St David's Street, Parcmaen and St David's Avenue were all completed by the mid-1930's (National Library of Scotland).

By the mid to late-20th century, this area of Carmarthen had been developed and appeared much as it does today. Further modern housing developments were added to the north of the St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation Area along Glannant Road and Fountain Hall Terrace, but there were no major changes within the boundary. The Model School ceased its function as a school in the 1980s and was converted into sheltered housing in 1986.



The 1968 OS map of Carmarthen, illustrating that the conservation area appeared in the form it does presently at that time (National Library of Scotland).

6.4 Character Analysis

6.4.1 Topography

The topography of this small area of Carmarthen includes a gentle incline travelling north on St David's Street, Parcmaen Street and St David's Avenue. As such, the terraces and semi-detached houses are stepped to accommodate this topography. The larger detached and semi-detached houses at the north end of Parcmaen Street sit on raised sections of land and are therefore elevated within the streetscape.

6.4.2 Use

All buildings within the St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation Area are in residential use. The former Model School was historically used for educational purposes but was converted into residential housing in the 1980's.

6.4.3 Settlement Pattern / Arrangement of Streets

The conservation area has a linear street arrangement, with St David's Street, Parcmaen Street and St David's Avenue all parallel to one another. These streets are offshoots of St Catherine Street to the south which leads to Picton Terrace to the west. St Catherine Street is shown on historic maps as a historic east-

to-west thoroughfare through Carmarthen and is recorded on the 1834 town map as Goose Street. Parcmaen Street is a historic lane which connected St Catherine Street to Glannant Road in the north. Glannant Street was the location of various wool factories and mills in the early 19th century and historically had associated mill ponds.

The three main streets within the conservation area appear to have been arranged in this formation in order to maintain the historic access along Parcmaen Street and create dense infill housing on the remaining available land.

6.4.4 Building Typology, Scale and Massing

The building typology of the St David's Street and Parcmaen conservation area can be subdivided into the following categories:

Late 19th / Early 20th Century Domestic Urban Terrace

St David's Street, Parcmaen Street and the houses to the north side of St Catherine Street are all composed of matching late-19th and early 20th century domestic urban terraces. These are continuous on both sides of St David's Street and Parcmaen Street with two small alleyways between Parcmaen Street and St David's Avenue to the west. The terraces are stepped and slightly curved to accommodate the topography of the area.

The terraces are made up of modest houses with each individual house composed of two bays, with a window and a door to the ground floor and two windows to the first floor. On Parcmaen Street, the houses have been designed in pairs which mirror each other's floor plan. There is a continuous traditional pitched roofscape covered with slate to the terraces of St David's Street, Parcmaen Street and St Catherine Street. The houses historically have had brick chimneys, some of which survive however many have been modified, sealed closed or removed.



The terraced houses of St David's Street

20th Century Detached and Semi-Detached Houses

St David's Avenue and the northwest side of Parcmaen are comprised of early to mid-20th century detached and semidetached houses. These are larger than the surrounding terraced houses and vary in regards to style, size and use of materials.

The portion of St David's Avenue included in the conservation area contains a row of pairs of early-20th century semi-detached houses similar in proportion and size to one another. Generally, they have large bay windows to the ground floor with a canopied front door. One late-20th century bungalow interrupts the pattern of the built form by breaking the established rhythm of the street.

The northwest corner of Parcmaen Street is a collection of detached and semi-detached buildings that all differ in 20th-century style, suggesting they were constructed independently on one another which is at

odds with the planned development of the nearby terraced houses. The northern most houses are set high above the road due to the topography of the area. Number 70 has a traditional timber shopfront to the ground floor.



The row of semi-detached houses on the southeast side of St David's Avenue, looking North.



The collection of detached and semi-detached buildings at the northwest corner of Parcmaen Street

The Former Model School

The former Model School is a collection of Victorian buildings dating from the mid-19th century. A boys' schoolroom was constructed in 1849, followed by a girls' schoolroom 1851 and an infants' wing 1856. All the buildings are in a cohesive Gothic Revival style with large pitched roofs with Welsh slate coverings. The window and door openings are modest and each in moulded stone surrounds. The complex is within a large plot of land that is comprised of small sections of grass, trees and planting, which sets it apart from the surrounding high density terraced housing.

The former school buildings were converted into residential housing in the 1980s.



The former Model School complex north of St Catherine Street.

St Catherine Street Listed Buildings

Two listed buildings are located on the corner of St David's Avenue and St Catherine Street. These buildings differ in age from the surrounding terraces and have a distinctive historic character.

50 St Catherine Street is a two storey mid-19th century house with a gabled roof. It has timber sash windows within painted stone surrounds and a circular attic window with four keystones to the gable facing St Catherine Street. The northeast elevation is exposed rubble stone.

1 St David's Avenue is a later building attached to 50 St Catherine Street from the early 20th century. It is a two-storey building with a large gabled attic and prominent dormer windows to the St David's Avenue elevation. The corner building is distinctive for its tripartite windows facing St Catherine Street and in the central bay of the southwest elevation. Some windows are the original horned timber sash windows however others have been replaced with top-hung uPVC casement windows.



No.1 St David's Avenue on the corner with the attached 50 St Catherine Street to the right

6.4.5 Boundary Treatments

There are no boundary treatments visible from public roads on St David's Street and Parcmaen Street as the terraced houses face directly onto the pavement. The rear boundary treatments are assumed to be timber fences and masonry walls.

The short row of semi-detached houses on the east side of St David's Avenue each have a low red brick masonry wall with stone copings and topped with wrought iron railings. They also have matching wrought iron gates. All ironwork matches along this row, apart from the railings of number 3 (GlasFryn) which has had its railings and gate replaced with a less ornate design.

A short terrace of houses on St Catherine Street have low boundary masonry walls enclosing small front yard areas. These walls constructed in brick, some of which have been rendered in cement. There are some examples of iron railings which appear to be historic in origin.



The wrought iron railings to the semi-detached houses on the St David's Avenue



The short terraces on St Catherine Street, looking northeast, with low boundary walls and some iron railings.



The terraces of St David's Street, which match those of Parcmaen Street in facing directly onto the street.

6.4.6 Materials and Architectural Features

All terraced houses have been externally rendered in cement, however the structures have been built in grey rubble stone masonry walls and with red brick detailing and chimneys. These terraces also have Welsh slate roofs and most properties have had their windows, doors and rainwater goods replaced with uPVC. There are some individual examples of modern clay tiled roofs to the later-20th century semi-detached houses to the north of Parcmaen Street.

The semi-detached houses on St David's Avenue are constructed in red brick and rendered on the first floor with stone detailing. These houses have a mixture of uPVC and timber windows, but all have wrought iron railings to the front boundary walls and decorative clay ridge tiles. One house distinctively has mock-Tudor timber framing to first floor.

The historic, listed buildings (the former Model School, 1 St David's Avenue and 50 St Catherine Street) are constructed in grey rubble stone and Welsh slate roofs. The buildings on St Catherine Street have timber windows and have been externally rendered, whereas the Model School has exposed masonry with stone dressings and has modern uPVC replacement windows.

The terraced houses on St David's Street and Parcmaen Street have little to no architectural details of note. Individual houses or pairs of houses have additional features, such as detailing to window and door openings, but these are not consistent across the street. All properties have had the red brick detailing within the structural masonry obscured by external cement render.

It is unclear when the terraced houses were first externally rendered and no evidence to suggest that it was intended for the structural masonry to be left exposed postconstruction. It is equally as common for terraced houses across south Wales to have exposed rubble masonry and to be externally rendered to protect the fabric of the building from the weather.



A terraced house on Parcmaen Street with its render partially removed, revealing the grey rubble stone and red brick window and door surrounds beneath.



The house with removed render within the context of Parcmaen Street.

6.4.7 Green / Open Space and Trees

There is no open public green space within the boundary of the St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation Area. All gardens to the terraces are to the rear of the buildings and not visible from public roads. The former Model School sits within a larger plot of land with some planting and areas of grass, but this has predominantly been converted into car parking. The semi-detached houses on St David's Avenue overlook the cemetery to St David's Church to the southwest which sits in the neighbouring Picton Terrace conservation area, however views of this open space are obscured from street level by a substantial boundary wall.



A terraced house on Parcmaen Street with additional plasterwork detailing to the window and door openings



A pair of terraced houses on Parcmaen Street with additional door surround and platband detailing



A pair of terraced houses at the north end of Parcmaen Street with additional porticos above the doorways with decorative corbels.

6.4.8 Setting and Views

The immediate setting surrounding the conservation area is historic urban in character to the south along St Catherine Street and Picton Terrace, and suburban to the north and west with 20th century developments of residential housing. An office building in a converted bus depot occupies the space behind Parcmaen Street and Glannant Road, accessed via St David's Street, and juxtaposes the residential character of this area of Carmarthen.

Key views within the St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation Area are in positions where groups of buildings can be seen together and their collective historic character can be best appreciated. This is particularly of note for Parcmaen Street which gently curves to the east and is stepped in pairs of houses to accommodate the topography. Glimpsed views of the former Model School in Model Court are also important from along St Catherine Street.



View of Parcmaen Street, looking northwest



View of Model Court, looking northwest.



View of St David's Street, looking south.



View of St Catherine Street, looking northeast

7. Evidence of Change Since Designation

7.1 Loss of Architectural/Historic Fabric

The St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation Area is currently in poor condition in terms of its heritage interest. There is a high prevalence of inappropriate materials such as the use of uPVC for windows, doors and rainwater goods in addition to cement render obscuring the local vernacular materials and style of grey rubble stone with red brick detailing.

Features such as chimneys that have either been removed, modified or are in poor condition with evidence of vegetation growth and failing mortar.

The installation of telephone wires and TV aerials clutters the streetscape and is not in keeping with the historic character of the conservation area.

However, it should be noted that the roofscapes are almost entirely intact.

The Model School buildings and 1 St David's Avenue, all listed buildings, have instances of uPVC replacement windows in place of historic units.

Any limited interest is, however, depreciated by the use of inappropriate materials, loss of historic features, and general condition of the houses in the conservation area.



Telephone wires and TV aerials visible on Parcmaen Street.



Replacement uPVC windows on the rear northeast elevation of the listed former Model School

7.2 Townscape Cohesiveness or Integrity

There is a degree of group value to the terraces of St David's Street and Parcmaen Street in particular. Views into the conservation area from St Catherine Street demonstrate this coherent character and appearance, especially regarding the topography of hill that Parcmaen Street has been constructed upon with a gentle incline and curve to the west.

7.3 Conservation Area Management Issues

Conservation areas require active management (trees, permitted development rights, boundary features). In Carmarthenshire many conservation areas have not been reviewed for decades, and without review, there is a tendency for 'designation drift' where an area no longer meets its original justification yet remains designated. It is suggested that the lack of active management of the St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation Area has led to the loss of historic character and architectural detail in this area. In 2022 the Carmarthenshire Built Heritage Team commenced a programme of review of the 29 areas of the County and this assessment of significance and consequential report is part of this process.

7.4 Summary of Change

In summary, the Area exhibits significant change: loss of historic fabric and alteration of original architectural character, and diminished townscape integrity.

8. Assessment Against De-designation Criteria

8.1 Does the Area still have special architectural or historic interest?

In their guidance *Managing Conservation Areas in Wales*, Cadw define architectural significance as: 'a good example of a particular type of settlement or town planning and urban design, or a coherent group of buildings of distinctive regional or local style, or of high architectural quality'.

The terraced housing of the St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation Area is a typical of late 19th-century industrial expansion across south Wales. This building typology allowed for a high density of residential housing and could cope with the steep topography of the Welsh hills. There are several examples of terracing across Carmarthen demonstrating the development of different classes within the town as it expanded at the turn of the 20th century. The terraced houses of St David's Street, Parcmaen St David's Street & Parcmaen Conservation Area

Street and St Catherine Street area are illustrative of the rapid expansion of Carmarthen in the late 19th and early-20th centuries and the style and design are reminiscent of a wider trend for terraced housing in south Wales as a response to the industrialisation of the area and the need to house large populations of workers. However, the plainness of the design and lack of detailing means that individually the houses are not of architectural interest and would not meet the threshold to be considered 'special' in conservation area terms.

There is a degree of group value to the terraces of St David's Street and Parcmaen Street in particular. Views into the conservation area from St Catherine Street demonstrate this coherent character and appearance, especially regarding the topography of hill that Parcmaen Street has been constructed upon with a gentle incline and curve to the west.

However, the architectural vernacular of St David's Street, Parcmaen Street and St Catherine Street has been obscured and its special interest eroded principally through the application of external cement render, the removal of timber windows and doors, and the removal of chimney stacks. The character of these streets historically would have been akin to that of the nearby listed buildings by visibly sharing a local material palette which is distinctive to Carmarthen: grey rubble stone with red brick to articulate window and door openings. The architectural detailing that is evident on Parcmaen Street all appear to be later additions applied after the houses were rendered in cement.

The character of the conservation area is primarily determined by the principal residential terraces however the listed buildings also indicate the historic development of this area of Carmarthen. The historic and architectural interest of these buildings is recognised in their own individual statuses as listed buildings and they are each protected under their own designations.

The historic records for the construction of this area suggests that the development was a response to the rapid expansion of Carmarthen from the late 19th century onwards as they have little relevance to the historic thoroughfare of St Catherine Street. There is no clear evidence to suggest that the area was developed for a particular employer or industry specific to Carmarthen which would have contributed to the historic interest of the area. Parcmaen Street is recorded as a lane which connected St Catherine Street to what is now Glannant Road and as a result the historic street plan is preserved, however St David's Street and St David's Avenue are infill housing around this.

As such, neither the historic interest nor the architectural value of the St David's Street and Parcmaen area is sufficient to be deemed worthy of conservation area designation.

The listed buildings, in particular the former Model School, contrast the established residential character of the conservation area with their differing styles and use of materials.

8.2 Does the Area's character or appearance warrant its continued designation?

The character of the St David's Street and Parcmaen Conservation Area has not been preserved through the existing designation. The rendering of the exterior of the buildings and the loss of features such as timber windows and chimneys have incrementally eroded the historic character of the conservation area and negatively impacted its architectural interest.

However, even without these alterations and despite the incremental changes made to the individual properties, the buildings within the conservation area are not unique and do not meet the threshold of special historic or architectural interest to warrant this type of designation.

It should be noted that the 1995 review of the Carmarthen conservation area which preceded the subdivision of the initial designation that covered the entire town, recommended that St David's Street, Parcmaen Street, St David's Avenue and St Catherine Street should be excluded from any conservation area. This was because of the erosion of the special architectural interest of the streets due to inappropriate development which included the loss of timber box sash windows, chimney and doors, and the application of external render. In the 30 years since this initial assessment, the architectural quality of these areas has only diminished as further unsympathetic works have been undertaken to these buildings which has negatively impacted the historic character of the area.

The character and setting of the listed buildings within the conservation area is maintained by their own individual designations and the addition of a conservation area designation would not afford them additional protection

8.3 Are alternative protections in place?

There are 3 key buildings within the Conservation Area which are already listed therefore individually protected. Planning policies for historic environment and built heritage continue to apply county-wide. As such, the protections afforded by the conservation area designation are considered to be disproportionately burdensome relative to the heritage benefit.

8.4 Are there disproportionate burdens or adverse implications of continued designation?

Maintaining the designation imposes additional planning controls, potentially discouraging investment or adaptive reuse; if the special interest is weak, the burden may outweigh the benefit. Also, the designation may give a sense of 'static' heritage which does not align with the evolving suburban context.

8.5 Summary and Conclusion of Assessment

On balance, the evidence suggests that the Area no longer meets the statutory tests for designation: its special architectural/historic interest has been eroded and its character and appearance have lost much of the distinctiveness that originally warranted conservation area status. Accordingly, de-designation is justified.

9. Consultation and Engagement

9.1 Stakeholder Engagement Plan

As part of the next stage, the following stakeholders will be engaged:

- Residents and property owners within the Area
- Local heritage and community groups including the Carmarthen Civic Society
- The Council's Built Heritage Team
- The Carmarthen Town Council and Local Councillors
- Statutory consultees including Cadw

9.2 Summary of Any Preliminary Feedback

At this draft stage, no detailed consultation has yet been completed. Feedback procedures will include an opportunity to comment online to the draft proposal, 2 public drop-in sessions, direct letters to property owners, and a summary of responses for the full decision-making process.

9.3 Issues Raised and How They Will Be Addressed

Expected issues may include concern about potential loss of protection, change in permitted development rights, impact on property values, and loss of identity for the area. The consultation will explain that other protections (listed building status, planning policies) remain, and a management plan will provide transitional safeguards.

10. Implications of De-designation

10.1 Planning Control Implications

Removal of the conservation area boundary means that the additional controls (e.g., on demolition, tree works, permitted development rights) would cease to apply in most cases.

10.2 Heritage Asset Management Implications

Without the conservation area designation, the monitoring framework and management regime will change. The Council will ensure that significant buildings continue to be listed.

10.3 Impact on Local Community and Streetscape

There is a risk that removal of designation could lead to further erosion of character if controls are relaxed. On the positive side, property owners may find more flexibility for development/adaptation.

11. Conclusion and Recommendation

In light of the detailed analysis of historic development, architectural and townscape character, evidence of change since designation, and assessment against statutory criteria, the conclusion is that the St David's Street & Parcmaen Conservation Area no longer possesses the level of special interest, nor sufficiently coherent character or appearance, to justify continuation of its status as a conservation area.

Recommendation:

That Carmarthenshire County Council proceeds to de-designate the Area, subject to the following:

- Completion of full stakeholder consultation and full Council decision.
- Review of any listed building status within the Area and listing of any additional buildings of merit.
- Communication of the decision to all affected property owners and the public, with guidance on how change will be managed going forward.

12. Appendices

Appendix A – Consultation Materials

To be included post consultation

Appendix B – Policy Framework - Extracts from relevant policy, legislation and guidance

The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 requires:

- Local planning authorities to determine areas where it is desirable to preserve and enhance, and designate them as conservation areas (section 158[1 a and b])
- 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 159 [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 160 [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, Edition 12, February 2024

- 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 Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 Wales 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.

For Consultation