

# CONSERVATION AREA ST. NICHOLAS



## APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

DIRECTORATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND  
ECONOMIC REGENERATION



# St. Nicholas Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

July 2009

This document is the adopted St. Nicholas Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, and is a publicly agreed statement on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and a publicly agreed set of policies and actions intended to preserve and enhance special qualities of the Conservation Area.

Following a period of public consultation from 16<sup>th</sup> March 2009 to 24<sup>th</sup> April 2009 this document was submitted on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2009 to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Cabinet with a recommendation that the document is adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Vale of Glamorgan Unitary Development Plan. The Appraisal/Management Plan will also inform the preparation of the emergent Local Development Plan

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## Introduction

### **Introduction**

The St. Nicholas Conservation Area was designated in 1971 by the former Glamorgan County Council in recognition of the special architectural and historic interest of the village.

Having designated the Conservation Area, the local authority has a statutory duty to ensure that the character of the area is preserved or enhanced. It is therefore necessary to define and analyse those qualities that contribute to, or detract from, the special interest of the area, and to assess how they combine to justify the area's special designation as a Conservation Area.

A St. Nicholas Conservation Area Appraisal was prepared by the Vale of Glamorgan Council in June 2001, and has been used as a basis for the production of this updated Appraisal and Management Plan. In addition, the Conservation Area has been surveyed and a detailed photographic record made of the spaces and buildings.

The St. Nicholas Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan builds upon policy set out by the Welsh Assembly in Planning Policy Wales and Circular 61/96, and local policy including the Vale of Glamorgan Supplementary Planning Guidance '*Conservation Areas in the Rural Vale*' (1999). This document provides a further, firm basis on which applications for development within, and close to the St. Nicholas Conservation Area can be assessed.

The document is divided into two parts, Part 1 (The Conservation Area Appraisal) and Part 2 (The Conservation Area Management Plan).

The Conservation Area Appraisal records and analyses the various features that give the St. Nicholas Conservation Area its special architectural and historic interest. These features are noted, described, and marked on the Conservation Area Appraisal Map along with written commentary on how they contribute to the special interest of the Conservation Area. There is a presumption that all of these features should be "preserved or enhanced", as required by the legislation.

The Conservation Area Management Plan is based upon the negative factors and summary of issues identified in Part 1 and sets out proposals and policies which can enhance the character and appearance of the St. Nicholas Conservation Area. The recommendations include proposals for enhancement and policies for the avoidance of harmful change.

The Management Plan is written in the awareness that in managing the Vale's Conservation Areas the Council's resources are limited and therefore need to be prioritised. Financial constraints on the Council mean that proposals for which it is responsible may take longer than is desirable to implement. However, the Council will continue to encourage improvements to the Conservation Area in co-operation with property owners, groups and local businesses.

The document is intended for use by planning officers, developers and landowners to ensure that the special character is not eroded, but rather preserved and enhanced through development activity. The survey work for this appraisal was undertaken during November 2008. To be concise and readable, the appraisal does not record all features of interest. The reader should not assume that the omission of any building, feature or space from this appraisal means that it is not significant; if in doubt, please contact the Vale of Glamorgan Council - contact details can be found at the end of this document.

## The Effects of Designation

This Appraisal/Management Plan has been prepared in compliance with Section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation) Areas Act, 1990. The consequences of designation are summarised as follows:

- the Council has a general duty to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the St. Nicholas Conservation Area in the determination of planning applications;
- six weeks notice needs to be given to the Council before works are carried out to certain trees not subject to tree preservation orders (those over 7.5cm in diameter measured 1.5 metres above the ground);
- conservation area consent is needed for the demolition of any unlisted building in the conservation area (subject to certain exemptions in terms of size some very minor buildings may be excluded from this provision);
- the details as to the limits regarding the works (such as extensions) which may be carried out without the benefit of planning permission are stricter;
- extra publicity is given to planning applications.

In practice, the Council's principal involvement in the management of the conservation area is through its duty to advise on, consider and respond to planning applications for new development. These are normally subject to closer scrutiny from a design perspective and may as a result often require a greater level of explanatory information and presentation. Dependent upon size of a proposal, an application may also be referred to the Council's Conservation Area Advisory Group, an independent forum which makes recommendations to the Council's Planning Committee regarding a number of issues regarding the management of conservation areas in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Council also makes an important contribution to the appearance of the conservation area in the management of the public estate (e.g. parks, open spaces and its own buildings) and in fulfilling its statutory obligations as highway authority (e.g. in the maintenance of highways, verges, ditches, drains, hedges and in the provision of street furniture, signs and lighting).

## Process of the Appraisal

Involving the community (and thereby raising public awareness) has been an integral part of the Appraisal process. This has been beneficial in two respects. Firstly, it has allowed the local community to provide important commentary on both the existing situation and its aspirations for the Conservation Area. In addition, it has raised awareness of the Conservation Area status of the village, and the implications for those living within its boundaries.

The Conservation and Design Team met initially with local Councillors on 4 November 2008 to outline the objectives of the review and to outline the main issues that are affecting the Conservation Area. Following this meeting a leaflet summarising the purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was prepared and a short questionnaire was distributed to all properties. The consultation period lasted 3 weeks. The results of the questionnaire were considered in the preparation of this draft Appraisal. A summary of issues and concerns raised through the consultation process is listed below:

- Positive contribution of trees and hedges;
- Amount and quality of new development;
- Inappropriate development and alterations to some buildings;
- Amount and speed of traffic using the A48.

Following a consultation period of six weeks from 16 March to 24 April 2009, which included a surgery held at Bonvilston Reading Rooms on 1 April 2009 any further comments were considered and amendments, where necessary, made to the document which was then presented to, and approved by, the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Cabinet of \*\*\*.

## Planning Policy Framework

### National Advice

Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A Conservation Area is defined as “*an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”. It is the quality and interest of an *area*, rather than that of individual buildings, which is the prime consideration in identifying a Conservation Area.

Section 72 of the same Act specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

This document should be read in conjunction with national planning policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Wales, which is augmented by Circular 61/96 – ‘Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas’ and Circular 1/98 – ‘Planning and the Historic Environment: Directions by the Secretary of State for Wales’. These documents provide advice on the designation of Conservation Areas, and the importance of assessing the special interest of each one in an appropriate manner.

### Development Plan

The Vale of Glamorgan’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in April 2005. The Plan sets out the Council’s aspirations for protecting and enhancing the historic environment and states how applications affecting Conservation Areas will be assessed. The policies relating directly to the management of Conservation Areas are:

- ENV 17 (Protection of Built and Historic Environment)
- ENV 20 (Development in Conservation Areas)
- ENV 21 (Demolition in Conservation Areas)
- ENV 22 (Advertisements in Conservation Areas)
- ENV 23 (Shopfront Design in Conservation Areas)

Additionally, Policy ENV 24 (Conservation and Enhancement of Open Space) and Policy ENV 27 (Design of New Developments) are important in the assessment of planning applications relating to Conservation Areas.

These policies will be strengthened by this Appraisal, which will offer greater detail regarding those elements that give the area its distinctiveness.

It should be noted that the designation of a Conservation Area is not intended to prevent change. It is, however, important that new development in or adjacent to the Conservation Area either preserves or enhances the quality of the area. For this reason, strict controls exist over applications for new development.

### **Local Development Plan**

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has started work on producing its Local Development Plan (LDP), which will set out how land within the Vale is used between 2011 and 2026. This includes the historic built environment and Conservation Areas. Up-to-date information on the progress of the Council's LDP can be found at [www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk).



*St. Nicholas' Church glimpsed through the surrounding trees.*



*View across War Memorial green*

## Summary of Special Interest

Although not exhaustive, the defining characteristics of the Conservation Area that reinforce the designation can be summarised as follows:

- Linear rural village with scattered development along the A48;
- Location on an east-west ridge provides views southwards towards the Severn Estuary;
- St. Nicholas Church, its churchyard, and the village green, lie to the north of the main road and provide a central focus to the village away from the busy traffic;
- Mainly historic buildings in the central part of the village including the Village Hall and a number of cottages and houses;
- Because of the widening of the A48 in the 1930s, the historic buildings on the north side of the road now tend to be close to the pavement;
- Mixture of larger houses, worker's cottages and a few agricultural buildings, these mostly now converted into residential use;
- The listed buildings are St. Nicholas Church, nos. 3, 4 and 5 Smiths Cottages, the St. Nicholas Church Hall, Hall House and the Three Tuns;
- A number of unlisted 'positive' buildings, most of them dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as the former Police Station of 1858 and Presbyterian Church of 1870;
- Well detailed former Council houses in Dyffryn Close and Button Ride dating to the late 1940s;
- Modern buildings around the edge of the Conservation Area of a variety of sizes, but still in fairly spacious plots;
- St. Nicholas Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Church Hall and the school are the only non-residential buildings in the village;
- Use of the local lias limestone, often faced with painted lime render or occasionally dressed with red brick;
- Roofs are either natural slate or thatch, which reinforces the rural character of the conservation area.

## Location and Setting

### Location and Context

St. Nicholas is a low density, linear village located on the A48, an old Roman road and the principal route between Cardiff and Cowbridge, beyond which it connects to Bridgend. Cardiff is approximately eight kilometres distant. The village sits within undulating countryside on an east-west ridge which provides dramatic views southwards towards the Severn Estuary. Electricity pylons, and tall television masts, are a feature of the landscape. A large out-of-town shopping centre (Culverhouse Cross) is located four kilometres to the east, at the junction of the A48 and the A4232, which connects northwards to the M4.

The St. Nicholas Conservation Area covers the core of the historic settlement along the A48 which forms the principal street with scattered buildings to both north and south. St. Nicholas Church, its churchyard and the adjoining village green all provide some focus to the settlement on the north side of the main road. Modern housing has been added in several locations, most notably in Ger-y-Llan. Duffryn Lane leads southwards down the hill to a small estate of former Rural District Council housing, built in the late 1940s, which stands on the southern extremity of the conservation area, facing, and surrounded by, open countryside. Further farming land with open fields and low hedges, with clumps of woodland, are typical of the surrounding landscape.

### General Character and Plan Form

Historically, St. Nicholas was a small village, centred on St. Nicholas Church and its churchyard which lies up a slight incline the north of the main road and is connected to it by two short, narrow lanes. Historic maps confirm the scattered nature of the other buildings and the linear nature of the settlement, following the line of the through road which runs in an east-west direction along the ridge. Another narrow lane runs from Pwll-Sarn around the northern boundary of the church and then out into the countryside to the north. To the south, Duffryn Lane leads towards Quarry House and ultimately to Dyffryn House and Gardens, and the village of Dyffryn. The buildings shown on the First Edition OS Map of 1878 include the Rectory (now called The Court) and Manor House on the south side of the road, both occupying sizeable plots with large south facing gardens, and, to the north, the Methodist Chapel, St. Nicholas' Church, various groups of farm buildings and the Three Tuns Inn.



*View southwards from the western end of the conservation area.*



*View southwards from Duffryn Lane.*



*The landscape setting of the Conservation Area.*



*Views to the south.*

Today, this layout remains essentially the same, although a large number of detached houses and bungalows have been built, infilling between the historic buildings detailed above. However, they are largely set back from the lanes or main road behind stone walls or planting so their impact is reduced. Of note is the development of former Council houses in Dyffryn Close and Button Ride, dating to the 1940s, which must have been built in open countryside at the time although new development – Broadway Green, and more modern houses, either side of Duffryn Lane, have been added in the last 50 years. However, the defining spatial feature of the Conservation Area is the wide main road, which bends gently as it passes through the village. The widening of this road in the 1930s has resulted in the reduction in size of the front gardens of the properties facing the main road on its north side. This is particularly noticeable at Smith Row, a terrace of 17<sup>th</sup> century vernacular cottages which was once set back slightly from the road but now fronts onto the pavement. This busy road contrasts with the relative peace and tranquillity of the churchyard and the adjoining village green.

To the eastern edge of the village, the density of building has been maintained by modern infilling then the built-up area stops abruptly. To the west, linear development along the northern side of the road continues beyond the Conservation Area boundary.

### **Landscape Setting**

The location of the village along the A48, which follows the alignment of a natural ridge of land, provides the most characteristic feature of the landscape. The ground rises slightly to the north and falls noticeably to the south along Duffryn Lane and Brook Lane. In all directions, the village is surrounded by cultivated farming land, large fields which are mainly used for grazing sheep and cattle, with low hedges dividing them. Stands of tall trees such as horse chestnut, beech and sycamore, are a feature of the village and of the landscape which surrounds it. Of particular note are the trees along Duffryn Lane and Brook Lane, which link the more built-up area along the main road with the countryside to the south.

## Historic Development and Archaeology

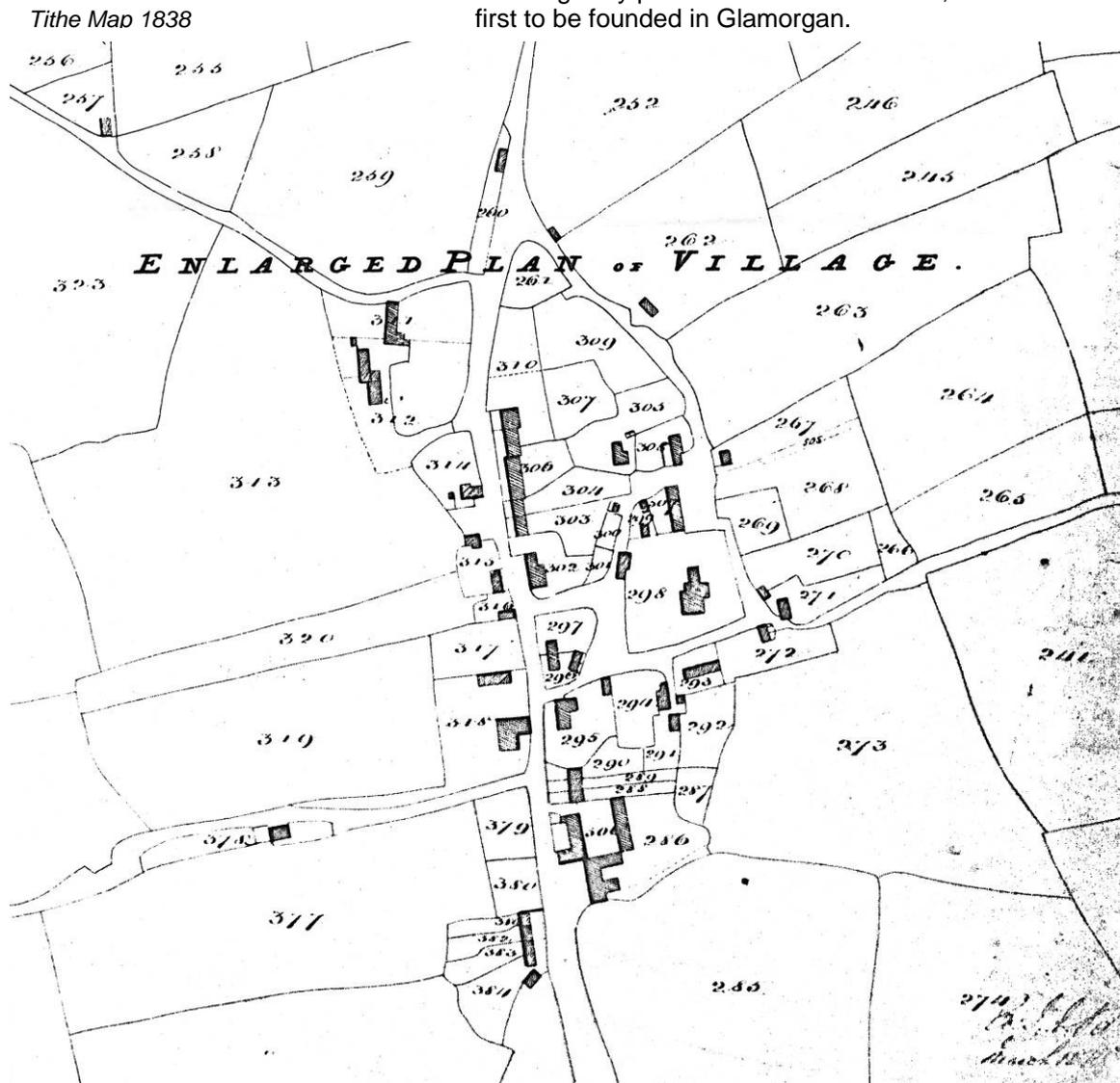
The history of a settlement in the vicinity of St. Nicholas can be traced back to Neolithic times with the survival of a chambered tomb at Tinkinswood, one kilometre south of the present village. Excavations have also revealed finds dating from the Early Bronze Age and the Roman era, the latter taking the form of pottery and iron tools. A more substantial legacy left by the Romans was the road constructed between Gloucester and Neath, establishing a route which would, centuries later, form the basis for the turnpike road and the modern A48.

Further archaeological sites surrounding the village include a group of earthworks occupied during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, namely Cottrell's Castle, Coed-y-Cwm, and the well-preserved circular camp of Y Gaer. By this time, however, a settlement had been founded beside the old Roman road on the site of St. Nicholas proper. Known initially as Llaneinydd, it appears to have acquired its present title in the aftermath of the Norman conquest of Glamorgan, when it was renamed in honour of a saint favoured by the Normans. The church, probably established prior to the invasion, seems likewise to have gained its dedication to St. Nicholas during this period. Perhaps affected by the burning of the village carried out by the Welsh in 1226 and 1229, a fate likewise suffered by St. Hilary and Bonvilston, nothing remains of the early Saxon or Norman building. Instead, the oldest sections of the church - and consequently the oldest sections of masonry extant within the village - can be dated to a rebuilding of around the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

During the redistribution of land that followed the Conquest, in 1092 the settlement had been amongst those parts of Glamorgan which were given to Sir John Fleming. The Norman manor was later divided during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and by 1578 the land was principally owned by three separate estates belonging to the Earl of Pembroke, Miles Button of Dyffryn, and Rice Meyrick of Cottrell.

St. Nicholas continued to prosper as a small rural community, with farm buildings such as Village Farmhouse, situated to the east of the church, operating from the centre of the settlement. Trehill Cottage was originally occupied by labourers attached to Trehill Farm. The village also benefitted from passing trade, and a number of public houses - The Crown Inn, The Prince's Arms (today Trehill House), The Travellers' Rest, and the thatched Three Tuns Inn (formerly a magistrates' meeting house) - were established to serve those travelling along the turnpike road.

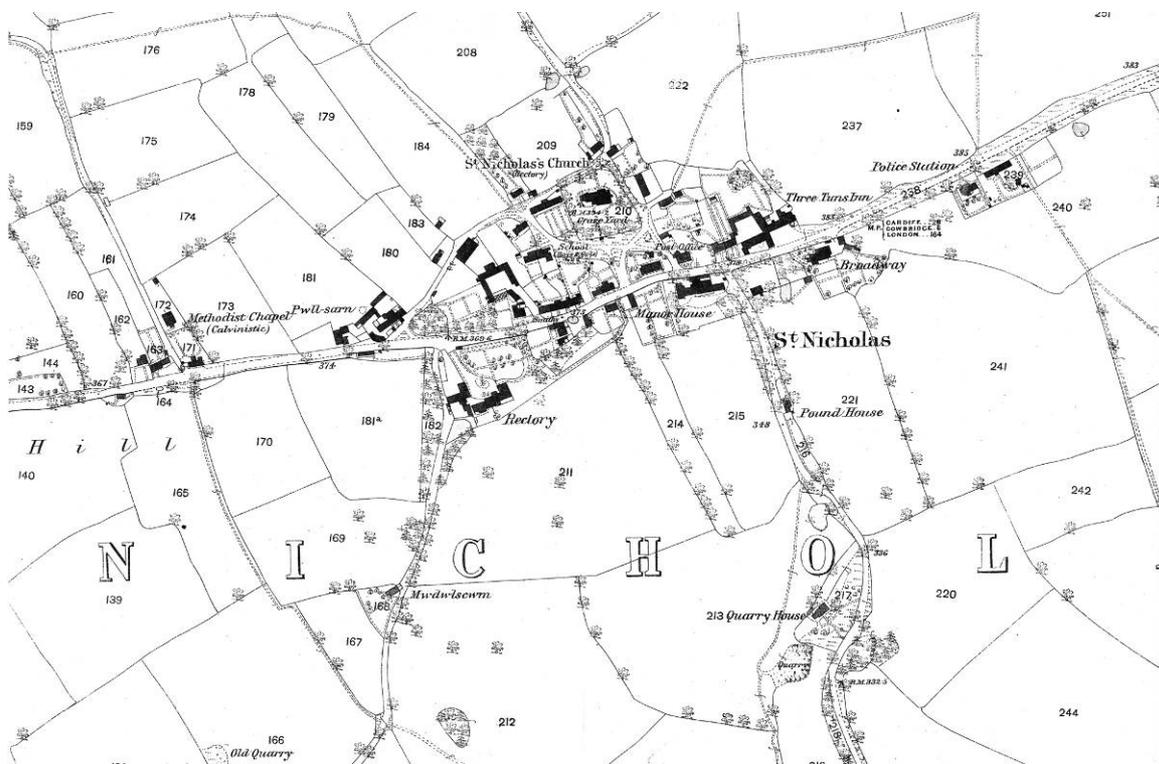
By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the village had come to sustain a number of small industries, offering carpenters, millers, saddlers, wheelwrights and masons. A smithy operated from the centre of the settlement and an agricultural implement factory, owned by W. T. Wright, was established on the site today occupied by the Laurels. By the 1870s a purpose-built boys' and girls' school had been founded; lessons seem formerly to have been conducted in the adjacent cottage. Further public buildings erected during the 19<sup>th</sup> century include the police station at the eastern end of the village. This was originally provided with a court room, one of the first to be founded in Glamorgan.



Change had come also to the religious foundations serving the community, beginning with the erection of a Calvinistic Methodist Chapel in 1739-40 on the western outskirts of the village. This was rebuilt in 1870 and is now the Presbyterian Church. The parish church of St. Nicholas was restored (including new windows) between 1859 and 1860, the work being supervised by the Cardiff architects Prichard & Seddon.

Between 1891 and 1893 a prestigious new home based on an earlier building, Dyffryn House, was built near to the village for John Cory, a well known local industrialist and philanthropist – the architect was E. A. Lansdowne of Newport. There had been an Elizabethan house on the site, which lies to the south of St. Nicholas along Duffryn Lane, and this had been successively owned by the Button and Pryce families. Dyffryn is now principally known for its gardens, laid out for Reginald Cory (John Cory's son) by Thomas Mawson, the internationally known and prolific garden designer. Work began in 1904 and was completed a year later. After Reginald Cory's death in 1937 the house was sold to Sir Cenydd Traherne who leased the property to the County Council. It is currently vacant and the gardens are designated grade I on the ICOMOS/Cadw Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Interest in Wales. Reminders of the links between the Cory family and St. Nicholas are still provided by their family tomb in the churchyard, by West House, built as a coffee house on the site of the Travellers' Rest Inn, and by the church hall and accompanying church hall house on the main road, all of which were promoted by the Cory family.

First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, c.1878



On the whole, however, the changes brought to the village by the 19<sup>th</sup> century were relatively few: a comparison between the Tithe Map of 1838 and 1878 Ordnance Survey reveals that the basic footprint of the settlement underwent little alteration. The infilling and expansion carried out from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century was to

be more extensive, beginning with the construction of 24 new homes at the newly created Dyffryn Close and Button Ride. Situated opposite the old quarry and reached via Duffryn Lane, the houses were erected by Cardiff Rural District Council during the late 1940s to provide the community with further rented accommodation. Most recently, the growth of the village has been stimulated by its increasing role as a commuter base. Detached residences have been constructed along the line of the A48, and, beyond the church, the village boundary has been pushed north by the development of open land formerly occupied by fields.

## Spatial Analysis

### Character of Spaces

The defining spatial feature of the St. Nicholas Conservation Area is the wide main road which gently curves and undulates through the village. However, of almost equal significance is the attractive churchyard and adjoining village green, an informal grassed area which surrounds a War Memorial. This space, with St. Nicholas Church at its centre, gives the village a valuable central core which provides a pleasant respite from the noise and busy traffic along the main road. Narrow lanes lead from this space in every direction, but most markedly to the west where the lane curves southwards and rejoins the A48. To the south of the main road, both Brook Lane and Duffryn Lane are ancient routes which drop down the hill and are enclosed by mature trees or, nearer the village and in Duffryn Lane only, by high stone walls.

Private gardens provide the other open spaces, some of which on the south side of the main road, are of a substantial size and feature large stands of tall trees. Views from both Brook Lane and Duffryn Lane across the fields which back up to these properties, are of note. Overall the conservation area is very spacious and maintains a strongly rural character, with footpaths leading out into the surrounding countryside, although the post-war developments in many locations including Ger-y-Llan and Mawsons Mead add a more suburban element.



*The A48 is the defining spatial feature of the village.*



*An informal green provides the backdrop to the War Memorial.*



*Trees and walls play an important part in creating enclosure, particularly in the lanes.*



*Broadway House, an unlisted but 'positive' building.*



*Modern housing makes up a significant proportion of the village.*

## Character Analysis

### Activity and Prevailing Uses

St. Nicholas originated as an agricultural community under the patronage of several different landowners, most notably the Cory family of Dyffryn, who owned much of the land in the area in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. By then the village contained several inns, built to serve the travellers along the former turnpike road, as well as agricultural barns and farmsteads. A smithy, police station and post office are all marked on the 1878 map. Today, all of these facilities have gone and the village is mainly in residential use apart from the two churches (Trehill and St. Nicholas), the Church hall, and a small primary school, of Victorian foundation, off School Lane. All of the former agricultural buildings are either in use as storage or have been converted into houses. New houses, of the last 50 years or so, account for a high proportion of the buildings in the Conservation Area, indicating that the village has become popular with commuters. There is no public house or shop in the village.

### Buildings in the Conservation Area

The Conservation Area's principal historic buildings are St. Nicholas' Church, 14<sup>th</sup> century in origins but virtually rebuilt in the 1860s; the Manor House, a locally listed 19<sup>th</sup> century building shown on the 1838 map and perhaps incorporating an earlier building; the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century former rectory, now called The Court; the listed Church Hall of 1890, a substantial Arts and Crafts building which was paid for by the Cory family; a group comprising the former Three Tuns Inn (listed) and the adjoining unlisted house, dated 1921; and finally, Smith Row, a picturesque group of thatched cottages. Otherwise there are a number of locally listed 19<sup>th</sup> century detached or terraced houses or cottages, and a few late 19<sup>th</sup> century Arts and Crafts houses, such as Westways and the Village Farmhouse. The Police Station of 1858 is of interest, and has been converted into a private house.

### Scheduled Monuments

There are no Scheduled Monuments within or on the edges of the Conservation Area.



*St. Nicholas' Church.*



*Cory Monument.*



*Nos. 3, 4 and 5 Smith Row.*



*St. Nicholas Church Hall.*

## Listed Buildings

There are ten listed buildings or structures in the Conservation Area:

### St. Nicholas' Church – Grade II

The church is thought to date to the 14<sup>th</sup> century (with possibly 11<sup>th</sup> century origins) although it was heavily restored in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The rebuilding was supervised by the well known architectural practice, Prichard and Seddon, of Cardiff.

### Cory Monument – Grade II

A chest tomb built from grey Quarella stone in the High Gothic Revival style contains the remains of John and Anna Cory and other members of the Cory family.

### Nos. 3, 4 and 5 Smith Row – Grade II

This row of cottages appears to date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and with their thatched roofs provide a good example of the local Welsh vernacular.

### St. Nicholas Church Hall – Grade II

Church Hall to St. Nicholas Church. In the Arts and Crafts style (possibly in the style of G. Halliday - also said to be of the office of William Frame).



*St. Nicholas Church Hall House.*

### **St. Nicholas Church Hall House – Grade II**

In the Arts and Crafts style (possibly in the style of G. Halliday - also said to be of the office of William Frame). Contains two storey tower. Church Hall attached and lies to the East.



*The Three Tuns.*

### **The Three Tuns – Grade II**

Formerly an inn, this eight bay house dates to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is built using limestone rubble for the walls and thatch for the roof. It was closed as an inn by Mr Cory who thought that alcohol was a corrupting influence.

### **The Post Box and Telephone Call Box – both Grade II**

These are located next to the building which used to be the Post Office and both are built using cast iron. The post box dates to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and has the monogram 'GR' (for George V) on the front. The telephone kiosk is a K6 type, designed by Giles Gilbert Scott in the 1920s.



*The Post Box and Telephone Call Box.*

### **Locally Listed County Treasures**

The County Treasures survey contains a unified list of historic built assets found within the Vale of Glamorgan. It contains listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, as well as entries identified as being of 'local importance'. In addition to the listed buildings identified above, there are sixteen locally listed 'County Treasures' as follows:

### **The Former Police Station**

One of the earliest Police Stations built in the Vale of Glamorgan, originally with a court room attached. The court room was demolished in the 1970s.



*The Former Police Station.*



*Westways.*



*Dyffryn Close.*



*Llaineinydd.*



*The Old School House.*

### **Westways**

Design influenced by Arts and Crafts movement. Other buildings in this style are visible in Village Farm, Church Hall and Church Hall House. This building was erected on the site of the Traveller's Rest by Florence, daughter of John Cory, as a coffee tavern to meet the needs of travellers and those wishing to stay overnight.

### **Dyffryn Close and Button Ride**

Post-war council houses built by Cardiff Rural District Council, in order to provide additional rented accommodation. The houses are white painted with traditional small tiled roofs. Button Ride was constructed as an expansion of Dyffryn Close.

### **Llaineinydd**

A white painted house which was designed by the renowned South Wales architect, Sir Percy Thomas, for J Trefil Morgan, chairman of a Cardiff department store in the 1930s.

### **The Manor House**

A seemingly 19<sup>th</sup> century building, possibly with earlier fabric.

### **The Old School House**

Stone built cottage thought to have been a school until the adjacent school was built. Used as accommodation for headmaster until 1978. Originally a single-storey one-roomed building with thatch, possibly late C17 or early C18. Little indication of early origins as it has been considerably altered. The building is now in private ownership, but was owned until 1980 by the Church in Wales.



*Trehill Cottage.*



*Trehill Presbyterian Chapel.*



*Ty-to Gwellt.*



*Village Farmhouse.*

### **Trehill Cottage**

Originally a cottage for farm labourers attached to Trehill Farm, it has been substantially renovated and extended.

### **Trehill Presbyterian Chapel**

Originally built as a Calvinistic Methodist church, founded in 1739 to 1740 by Howell Harris.

### **Ty-to-Gwellt**

19th century two storey stone built cottage. Of interest as part of a group of buildings around the church. It housed the Post Office during 1950 to 1960. The building was thatched until the mid C20. Its name derives from the Welsh "house with straw roof".

### **Village Farm House**

C17 farmhouse of at least two, possibly three, phases. Alterations in C19 and modern renovation. Influenced by Arts and Crafts movement, central village location reflecting local vernacular as in Westways and Church Hall House.

### **War Memorial**

War Memorial erected following WW1, this columnar memorial surmounted by a Celtic-style cross is a focal point on the village green.

### **Stone Style in Dyffryn Lane**

Stone stile, constructed from a single stone with additional steps to the sides.



*War Memorial.*



*Mounting Block outside Pwllsarn.*



*Mounting Block outside Trehill.*



*Village Pump.*

### **Mounting Block Outside Pwllsarn**

Stone-built mounting block which has been "updated" by the addition of a wooden surface, when the structure was used as a stand for milk churns.

### **Mounting Blocks Outside Trehill**

Stone mounting block built outside the house at Trehill. This property was once an Inn named "Price's Arms". Rough, random stone built, topped with hard, slate-like capstones. Front stones have been previously limewashed.

### **Village Pump**

Cast iron pump at site of well, just outside the north east corner of the churchyard. Was used by villagers to obtain water in the time before there was piped water.

### **Positive Buildings - The Contribution of Key Unlisted Buildings**

A number of key unlisted buildings have been identified as 'positive buildings' and these are marked on the Appraisal Map. Positive buildings are those which make a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area. The criteria for selection is provided in Appendix 1.

### **Local Details**

The use of local materials such as limestone, slate and thatch for the buildings is important although many of the buildings have been built from rough rubble limestone and have been rendered and painted white. Some of the 20<sup>th</sup> century houses in the Conservation Area follow this example and are also rendered and painted white which does provide some cohesiveness despite their modern details. The 1948 houses in Dyffryn Close and Button Ride are notable for their white rendered elevations and 'Tudorbethan' details including timber framing and decorative quoins to the openings. Some of them retain their original Crittall steel windows, but most have been replaced using modern materials. The Church Hall and adjoining house are notable for their clay tiled roofs, attractive original joinery, limestone walls, and the white painted turret which provides an important focal point in views along the main road.

Pitched roofs, which suit the Welsh slate covering, are usually seen on the older buildings although where they are thatched they are much steeper to provide the fall needed to prevent water ingress. The only thatched properties are Trehill Cottage, nos. 3, 4 and 5 Smith Row and the Three Tuns. A substantial barn facing School Lane is the only visible unaltered reminder of the many agricultural buildings which could once be found in the village.

Roadside walls built from the same grey limestone rubble blocks of varying sizes are a prominent feature of the Conservation Area and help to maintain a historic character to the village centre. The walls can be from one metre to nearly three metres high. Notable walls are shown on the Appraisal map. Some modern 'ribbon' pointing is a detrimental feature in places. Other boundaries are defined by trees or hedging, occasionally neatly clipped, but more usually left untrained. The occasional use of modern railings or timber fencing is a regrettable addition to the historic character of the Conservation Area.

Pavements are simply covered in black tarmac, with narrow concrete or stone kerbs, which suits the rural character of the village. This is also reinforced by the many mature trees, both singly and in groups, which can be seen throughout and on the edges of the Conservation Area.

### **Green Spaces and Biodiversity**

St. Nicholas lies within rolling countryside with large fields and patches of woodland surrounding the settlement. Spacious private gardens, many also featuring large trees, can be found throughout the village. All of these provide habitats suitable for wildlife although no specific areas have been set aside for nature conservation. The ridge top location means that there are no streams or ponds.



*Inappropriate boundary treatments can have a negative effect on the Conservation Area.*



*Modern housing that does not add to the special architectural or historic interest of the area.*



*Inappropriate detailing such as the use of uPVC windows can detract from the quality of a building.*

## Negative Factors

There are a number of elements which detract from the special character of the area, and which offer potential for beneficial change. They are:

- The A48 dominates the village and provides busy traffic which often appears to ignore the 30 mph speed limit through the village;
- Wide road and narrow pavements, providing little protection to pedestrians;
- The use of uPVC windows and doors on 'positive' unlisted historic buildings;
- The loss of traditional slate roofing and its replacement with modern materials, such as concrete, on 'positive' unlisted historic buildings;
- The use of long straw rather than combed wheat reed in thatching;
- Some poor quality front boundaries, including stained close boarded timber fencing and over elaborate modern metal railings and gates;
- Some visible satellite dishes;
- Pergola in garden of Pikel House;
- Untidy car parking and modern garages to south west of churchyard;
- Some new development has not enhanced the conservation area, including 1960s bungalows and later, more substantial, houses.

## Summary of Issues

The following issues have been identified with regard to the 'negative factors' identified above and include the views of the local community as part of the preliminary public consultation exercise. They provide the basis for the Management Plan. These issues will be subject to regular review by the Council and new ones may be added in the future:

- Conservation Area boundary review required to omit modern development and fields which do not contribute to the special character of the conservation area;
- Additional controls needed to reduce traffic speed and improve pedestrian safety;
- The protection of unlisted 'positive' buildings from demolition;
- The need for additional controls to prevent the loss of traditional features on unlisted 'positive' buildings, including the use of long straw thatch;
- Future control of applications for new front boundaries, and the overall protection of existing front boundary walls and front gardens;
- Identification of additional buildings for listing;
- Site specific improvements needed to Smith Row and to the south west of the church;
- The care and protection of the many mature trees in the Conservation Area;
- The removal of unauthorised satellite dishes;
- The future control of new development;
- The possible loss of unlisted 'positive' buildings;
- Need to protect and enhance the rural qualities of the conservation area, including the protection of trees.
- Monitoring and review of these documents.

## Management Plan

### Introduction

The Management Plan sets out proposals and policies which can enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in the light of the issues identified in the preceding Appraisal.

For further details about the purpose and status of the Management Plan, please see the introduction to this document.

### Boundary Review

As part of the character appraisal process, a thorough survey and review of the existing boundaries of the Conservation Area was undertaken. It was found that in a number of places the boundary includes fields or green spaces which make no positive contribution to the special character of the conservation area, as well as modern development of no particular merit, with little architectural or historic interest. These are:

- Modern detached houses on edges of the conservation in various locations;
- Ger-y-Llan;
- Broadway Green.

#### **Recommendation:**

*It is recommended that, in order to follow best practice in Conservation Area boundary definition, the boundary of the Conservation Area is amended to omit modern development and some open spaces as shown on the Appraisal Map.*

### Positive Buildings

'Positive' buildings have been identified as part of the appraisal process and these are marked on the Appraisal Map. Generally, these are individual or groups of buildings that retain all or a high proportion of their original architectural detailing and which add interest and vitality to the appearance of the Conservation Area. The criteria for selection of positive buildings are identified in Appendix 1 of this document.

#### **Recommendation:**

*In accordance with Government guidance contained within Circular 61/96, the Council will adopt a general presumption against the demolition of 'positive' buildings with proposals to demolish such buildings assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings. Any application for the demolition of a positive building will therefore need to be justified as to why the building should not be retained.*

### Loss of Architectural Detail and Minor Alterations to Historic Buildings

Many of the unlisted buildings in the St. Nicholas Conservation Area have been adversely affected by the replacement of original timber sash windows with uPVC or aluminium, the loss of original timber front doors, removal of render and painting of formerly exposed stonework. Most of these minor alterations are not currently subject of planning control. The incremental loss of original building materials and architectural detail is cumulatively eroding characteristic features of the Conservation Area.

**Recommendations:**

*The Council will encourage restoration of architectural detail/reversal of unsympathetic alterations especially timber windows, chimney stacks and original roof covering.*

*The Council will consider the future introduction of an 'Article 4' Direction in respect of buildings identified as 'County Treasures' and 'positive' buildings in the Appraisal.*

### Protection and Repair of Stone Walls

Traditionally, most boundaries in the Conservation Area are defined by limestone rubble walls. There is a small loss of these walls where routine maintenance and rebuilding of fallen sections has been neglected. Stone boundary walls, hedges and railings which enhance the character of the Conservation Area should be retained.

**Recommendation:**

*The Council will seek to resist proposals to remove or significantly alter traditional boundary walls or for new boundary treatments which fail to respect the form and materials of traditional boundary treatments in the area. The Council will seek to secure the maintenance and repair of traditional stone walls.*

## The Identification of Buildings for Statutory Listing

The following could be considered:

Statutory listing:

- Nos. 1 and 2 Smith Row.

**Recommendation:**

*Following more detailed survey work, the Council could consider asking Cadw to add the above buildings to the statutory list.*

## Buildings and Land in Poor Condition

**Recommendation:**

*Where sites or buildings are in a poor condition and the appearance of the property or land are detrimental to the surrounding area or neighbourhood, consideration will be given to the serving of a Section 215 Notice, sometimes called an Amenity Notice. This notice requires proper maintenance of the property or land in question, and specifies what steps are required to remedy the problem within a specific time period.*

## The Management of Trees

Trees make a vital contribution to the rural ambience of the Conservation Area and the setting of many of its historic buildings. The appraisal identifies a number of significant trees and groups of trees on verges or within areas of public open space and within private gardens. Because of the very large number of trees, and the difficulty of obtaining access onto private land, a full tree survey was not carried out at the time of the appraisal survey and the Appraisal Map therefore only includes an indication of the most significant groups of trees.

**Recommendation:**

*The Council will seek to consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders in appropriate circumstances where a tree has significant amenity value and is considered to be potentially under threat. The felling of trees that contributes to the character of the Conservation Area will be opposed.*

### The Control of New Development

Some modern developments do not harmonise with the historic character and appearance of the St. Nicholas Conservation Area. This applies to completely new buildings as well as the occasional extension.

**Recommendation:**

*Development proposals will be judged for their effect on the area's character and appearance as identified in the St. Nicholas Conservation Area Appraisal together with relevant Development Plan policies and any other material considerations.*

*The Council will continue to ensure that all new development accords with policies in the Unitary Development Plan and any other policies which supersede this in the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP).*

### The Control of Antennas and Satellite Dishes

Planning permission is required within the Conservation Area for all antenna and satellite dishes which are visible from the public highway, and in other cases subject to certain limits on size and capacity

**Recommendation:**

*The Council will consider taking enforcement action where an unauthorised antenna and satellite dishes have been erected and negotiations with the building's owners have failed to reach an agreeable solution.*

### Conservation Area Guidance

Consultation with the local community suggests that there is a need for additional design guidance and leaflets about conservation areas that build upon existing supplementary planning guidance and advisory leaflets.

**Recommendation:**

*The Council will consider preparing advisory guidance and 'best practice' notes that would assist in retaining the area's prevalent historic character and appearance and promote awareness of the value and importance of the Conservation Area, e.g. written advice regarding (a) alterations to historic buildings, (b) development within conservation areas, (c) the use of traditional building materials, (d) appropriate boundary treatment in rural villages and (e) care and maintenance of trees and woodland.*

## Monitoring and Review

**Recommendation:**

*This document should be reviewed every five years from the date of its formal adoption. A review should include the following:*

- *A survey of the Conservation Area including a full dated photographic survey to aid possible enforcement action;*
- *An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, and how successful this has been;*
- *The identification of any new issues which need to be addressed, requiring further actions or enhancements;*
- *The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action;*
- *Publicity and advertising.*

## References and Useful Information

### Local Generic Guidance

Advice for owners of properties in Conservation Areas can be found in the leaflet *A Guide to Living and Working in Conservation Areas*, which is available on line on the Council website at [www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

Additional information, including design guidance and guidance on repairs and alteration is contained within the adopted supplementary planning guidance document – Conservation Areas in the Rural Vale.

### Bibliography

1. J Newman, Glamorgan (Pevsner 'The Buildings of Wales'), Yale University, 1995
2. Statutory List of Buildings of Special Historic or Architectural Interest
3. Vale of Glamorgan Council, Conservation Areas in the Rural Vale, 1999
4. Vale of Glamorgan Council, County Treasures, 2007
5. Vale of Glamorgan Council, St. Nicholas Appraisal, 2001

### Contact Details

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## Appendix 1

### Criteria for the Selection of 'Positive Buildings'.

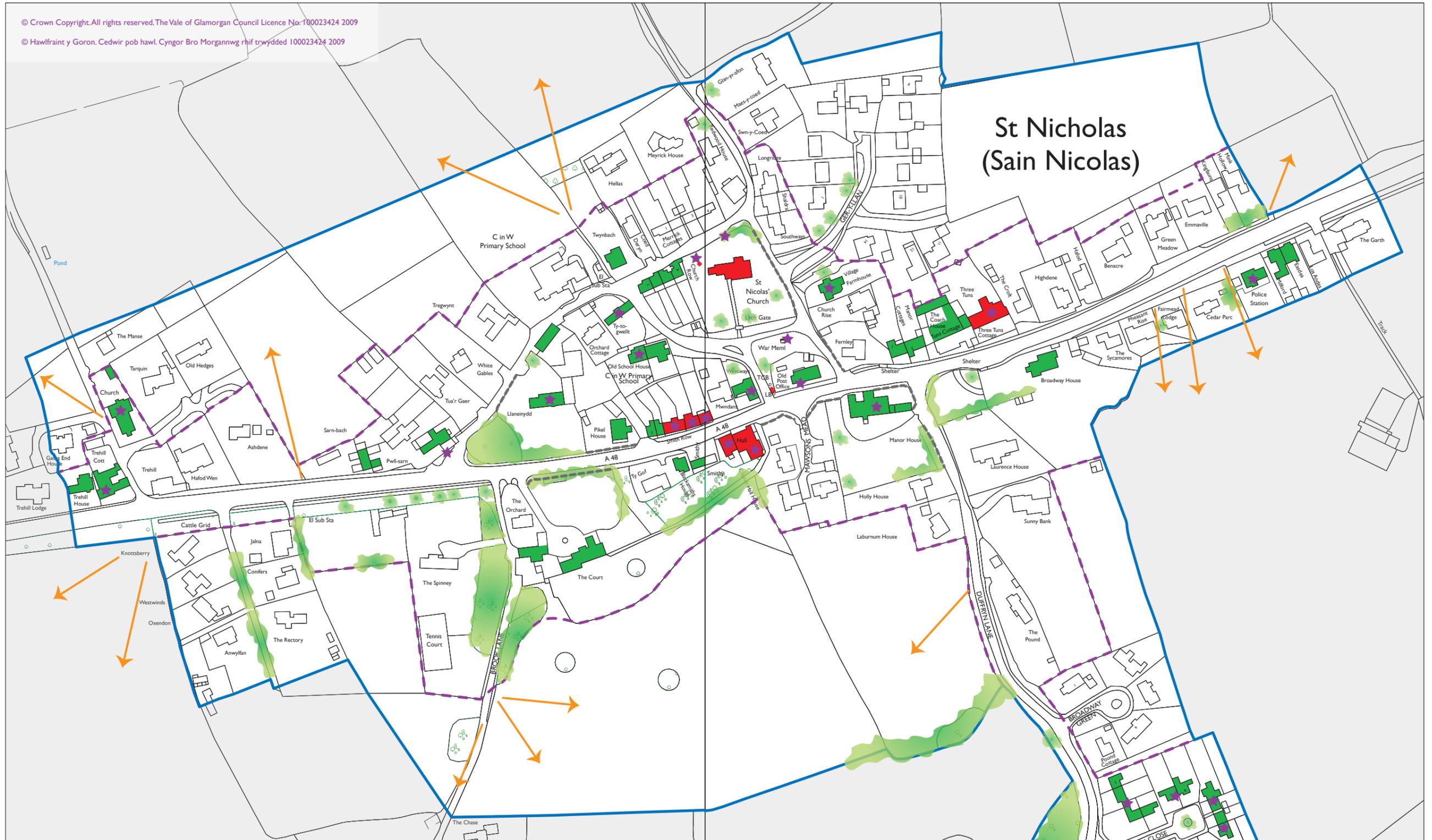
For the purposes of this conservation area appraisal, a positive building is an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area.

The criteria for assessing the contribution made by unlisted buildings to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area are given below.

Any one of these characteristics could provide the basis for considering that a building makes a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area and is therefore identified as a 'positive building':

- Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local note?
- Has it qualities of age, style, materials or any other characteristics which reflect those of at least a substantial number of the buildings in the conservation area?
- Does it relate by age, materials or in any other historically significant way to adjacent listed buildings, and contribute positively to their setting?
- Does it individually, or as part of a group, serve as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement in which it stands, or of an earlier phase of growth?
- Does it have significant historic association with established features such as the road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
- Does the building have landmark quality, or contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces, including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?
- Does it reflect the traditional functional character of, or former uses within, the area?
- Has it significant historic associations with local people or past events?
- Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area?
- If a structure associated with a designed landscape within the conservation area, such as a significant wall, terracing or a minor garden building, is it of identifiable importance to the historic design?

# St Nicholas (Sain Nicolas)



Vale of Glamorgan Council

## St Nicholas Conservation Area

Townscape Appraisal Map

Not to scale



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Conservation Area Boundary          |  County Treasures        |
|  Proposed Conservation Area Boundary |  Significant Tree group  |
|  Listed Buildings                    |  Significant Views       |
|  Positive Buildings                  |  Significant Stone Walls |

