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# Urban Characterisation: **Bala**

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GAT Project No. 1913  
Report No. 727  
March, 2008



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Report No. 727

Prepared for CADW  
and The Snowdonia National Park

March 2008

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## **Contents**

1. Introduction
  2. Methodology
  3. The Planning Process
  4. The Physical Setting
  5. historical Development
  6. Archaeological Resource
  7. Present Settlement Character: A summary
  8. General Management
  9. Area Descriptions
  10. References
- 
- Appendix I: Extracts from Welsh Office Circular 60/96
- Appendix II: Bala Conservation Area Statement
- Appendix III: Listed Building Descriptions



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# Urban Characterisation: **Bala**

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## **Figures**

Fig 1. Location map of Bangor

Fig 2. Tithe Map

Fig 3. Ordnance Survey 1900

Fig 4. Map of Character Areas

Fig 5. Character Area 1

Fig 6. Character Area 2

Fig 7. Character Area 3

Fig 8. Character Area 4

Fig 9. Character Area 5

Fig 10. Character Area 6

Fig 11. Character Area 7

Fig 12. Character Area 8

Fig 13. Character Area 9

Fig 14. Character Area 10

Fig 15. Character Area 11



## BALA: URBAN CHARACTERISATION

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Context to the study

The following document constitutes an urban character assessment of the town of Bala grant-aided by Cadw and Snowdonia National Park and carried out by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust and Govannon Consultancy. This is one of a series of urban characterisation studies being carried out within Wales funded by Cadw and the relevant local authority.

#### 1.2 Statement of Aims

The aim of the characterisation survey is to describe and explain the historic character of towns in order to inform and support positive conservation and regeneration programmes. They should improve the quality of planning advice, and contribute to local interpretation strategies. The survey will define the distinctive historical character of Bala, and identify the variety of character within it. The aims of the survey are based upon the understanding that the variety of character identified during the survey is fundamental to local distinctiveness and pride of place, and these are to be seen as assets within the process of regeneration.

#### 1.3 Acknowledgments

The assistance of Judith Alfrey of Cadw, John Roberts, Snowdonia National Park archaeologist, Gwilym Jones of the Snowdonia National Park, Nina Steele of the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Einion Thomas, Bangor University Archives Department, and the staff of the Ruthin and Dolgellau archives, the National Monuments Record and the National Library of Wales is gratefully acknowledged. Dr Iwan Bryn Williams of Bala was consulted in connection with historical material. Julian Orbach kindly made his text for the forthcoming Pevsner volume available for study.

#### 1.4 Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are standard in this document:

DWB: Dictionary of Welsh Biography (London: Hon. Society of Cymmrodorion, 1951)

JMHS: Journal of the Merionethshire Historical and Record Society

RCAHMW: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Introduction

The methodology employed to undertake the project is based upon that developed by Cadw following initial projects undertaken by Cambria Archaeology of Carmarthen (Cambria 2005) and Gwynedd Archaeological Trust of Bangor (GAT 2007). These in turn were based upon a methodology developed in England for urban characterization and assessment, and in particular the studies undertaken by the Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey (see details at <http://www.historic-cornwall.org.uk/>).

The following methods were used to achieve the stated aims.

#### *Data collection*

This phase included the collection of data from regional and national historic environment records, including those kept at Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, RCAHMW, Cadw and National Museums and Galleries of Wales. Archive records were obtained from Gwynedd Archives, University of Wales, Bangor and National Library of Wales. The records were entered onto a database that was compatible with the regional Historic Environment Record, and their location identified through a geographical information system (MapInfo). Additional records and information sources were identified from historic maps, prints and photographs, and literature sources, including early antiquarian works.

#### *Interpretation*

This phase involved the compilation of a report that described the archaeological and historical development of the town, as indicated by the data gathered during the first phase.

#### *Characterisation*

The characterisation process combined the understanding gained from the historic and archaeological survey with a visual assessment of the surviving historic fabric. The development of the topography of the town was noted, and phases of historic settlement identified. Distinctive architectural forms, materials and significant elements of town and streetscapes were recorded.

Site visits were conducted on five separate occasions in February and March 2008 by representatives of the contracted organisations, accompanied on one occasion by staff of Cadw and of the Snowdonia National Park. The weather on each occasion was good for the time of year and conditions were conducive to field work.

#### *Strategy*

The final phase of the project used the information gained from the earlier phases to provide a series of strategic policies that can feed into local authority plans and documentation. The archaeological and character zones were used to identify planning aims and recommendations.

Wherever possible the work has been undertaken in conjunction with Local Authority planning offic-

ers, and has taken into account relevant documentation such as local conservation plans and policy documents concerning urban and brown-field regeneration.

The information gathered as part of this project will be held by the regional Historic Environment Record to allow future advice on developments within historic urban areas to be relevant and up to date, and ensure that policies involving the built environment are based on accurate knowledge.

## 2.2 Consultation

Consultation was carried out with Dr Iwan Bryn Williams, a local historian, who was invited to comment on the draft report.

## 2.3 Principal sources

A list of sources consulted is given at the end of this report. No comprehensive history has been written concerning Bala. The medieval town is discussed by Soulsby (1983) and Smith (2001). The resources of the county record office at Dolgellau, the Ruthin Record Office (as holding some of the papers of the Wynnstay estate) and the National Library of Wales were assessed. Only one of the estates represented in the town were identified as having a detailed archive; this was Plas yn Dre, whose papers are preserved at Dolgellau. However, the papers of two Bala-based solicitors' practices, in particular the Guthrie Jones collection, shed light on the town's development. The comprehensive listing survey carried out by Cadw also proved enlightening. Connectional histories, local historical studies and early topographical descriptions were also examined.

## 3. THE PLANNING PROCESS

### 3.1 Current legislation

The local Planning authorities are recognised and identified as having the key role in protecting our archaeological heritage. Government advice and planning case law clearly establish archaeology as a 'material consideration' in the planning authorities' assessment and determination of a planning application. This is seen both in national and regional policy documents and guidelines.

The protection of the vulnerable historic environment falls into two broad categories: Statutory protection and non-statutory protection.

Statutory protection is provided by the following Acts and Orders:

- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, as amended by the National Heritage Act 1983.
- The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- The Planning and Compensation Act 1991
- Statutory Instrument 1199, the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988.
- Statutory Instrument 1995 No. 419, The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995.

Designations arising from these Acts and Orders are Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

Non-statutory protection is provided by national policies and guidelines contained within:

- Planning Policy Wales, March 2002.
- Welsh Office Circular 60/96, Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology, December 1996.
- Welsh Office Circular 61/96, Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas, December 1996.

The key document in Wales which expands on the legislative background and provides detailed guidance on the handling of archaeology within the planning process is Welsh Office Circular 60/96 - Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology (1996). This Welsh Assembly guidance expands on Planning Policy Wales (March 2002), Chapter 6 'Conserving the Historic Environment', particularly paragraphs 6.5.1 to 6.5.6. Relevant extracts from Welsh Office Circular 60/96 are given in Appendix I.

### 3.2 Local Plan Policies

The town lies entirely within the Snowdonia National Park. Current regional and local plan policies are defined in Gwynedd Structure Plan (adopted 1993) and Eryri Lo-

cal Plan (adopted 1999). The plan can be consulted in the offices of the National Park, or online at [http://www.eryri-npa.co.uk/images/eryri\\_local\\_plan/elp\\_english.pdf](http://www.eryri-npa.co.uk/images/eryri_local_plan/elp_english.pdf). Policies concerning archaeology, including historic towns, are given in section 5, policies AR 1-4. Policies concerning the built heritage, including listed buildings and conservation areas, are given section 6, policies TA 1-12.

### 3.3 Conservation Areas in Bala

The 1990 Town and Country Planning Act defines a conservation area as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. The centre of the town was designated a Conservation Area in 1978, and the area is shown on fig.. A copy of the draft Conservation Area Statement is given in Appendix I.

### 3.4 Heritage and Local Planning Context

Advice on the management of the archaeological heritage is provided by the National Park Archaeologist, who, together with the Park's planning officers contribute to the decision making processes to inform on the likely impact of development on the historic environment and how best to mitigate the impact. Advice on Conservation Areas and the Built Heritage is given by the National Park Planning Department through their Conservation Officer.

Archaeology is the process by which we can understand past societies through their material remains. These archaeological remains are a finite and non-renewable resource. They are vulnerable to modern development and can, in a short space of time, be entirely destroyed by modern machinery and building methods.

The level of archaeological response is guided by the nature of the archaeological remains and the significance of the impact. Archaeological mitigation is usually imposed through planning conditions, and a relevant programme of archaeological works is advised by the National Park archaeologist. On occasion a programme of assessment and evaluation may be required prior to the determination of a planning application, so that the appropriate mitigation can be advised.

### 3.5 Regional Historic Environment Record

The regional Historic Environment Record (HER) is a database of archaeological sites and finds with details of interventions (surveys, excavations, previous work etc) and references. It consists of both a computerised record and a paper record, and is held at the offices of the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust in Bangor. This record, combined with records held at the National Park, forms the key component of the planning and archaeology decision making process. The experience and knowledge of the archaeologist is used to interpret the record, and provide relevant advice to the planning officers.

## 3.6 Other relevant strategic documents

### 3.6.1 Historic Landscape Characterisation

The town of Bala lies entirely within the Cadw/Countryside Council for Wales/UNESCO-designated Bala and Bala Lakesides Landscape of Special Historic Interest, of which the following is the summary citation:

#### BALA AND BALALAKESIDES

Contents and significance The upper Dee valley provides a natural and historically strategic and important route corridor across North Wales, the area identified here being centred on Bala Lake and its immediate catchment, where there is a succession and concentration of defensive sites and settlements from the Roman and medieval periods. The area includes: a large crop-mark complex of hidden prehistoric funerary and ritual sites, Roman military enclosures and medieval settlement and fields; a Roman auxiliary fort; evidence of Early Christian activity; medieval defensive structures and settlements, including a planned borough at Bala which became one of the foremost centres of Nonconformist religion in Wales during the 19th century; several important historic cultural, religious and political associations.

### 3.6.2 Sites of special scientific interest (SSSI)

The lake itself, the Dee and the Tryweryn form two Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Llyn Tegid and The River Dee.

## 4 THE PHYSICAL SETTING



*Bala is located at the north east end of the Tegid*

### 4.1 Extent of area

The area chosen for study is shown in fig 1, and consists of the built-up areas that make up the town of Bala, and other appropriate areas immediately adjacent. Both the Historic Landscape study 'LANDMAP' and the conservation area within the town were taken into account when identifying areas within the overall study area. The whole study area encompasses 0.9520km<sup>2</sup>.

### 4.2 Landscape and Setting

The town of Bala is situated at the north-eastern end of Bala Lake/Llyn Tegid, Wales' largest natural lake, within the Bala Cleft, a geological feature which cuts south-west to north-east across north Wales, and which forms a

scenically distinct valley. The Berwyn range to its south effectively forms the boundary between North-west and Mid-Wales, running from Cader Berwyn (outside the study area to the east) through Penllyn and terminating above Aberdyfi. The lake is drained by the Dee (Afon Dyfrdwy) which flows north-east from the lake, and is joined by the Tryweryn, which forms the eastern boundary of the town. Bala also lies between two mountain passes, one over the Berwyns to Llangynog and the Tanat Valley to the south, and the other to Trawsfynydd and the Dwyryd to the north. The town therefore forms a point on what are effectively two major routes between the coast of Cardigan bay and the English midlands.



*Aerial view of Bala (Copyright RCHMW)*

## 5 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1 Bala's early origins

The origins of Bala are obscure. The topographical location is undoubtedly strategic as attested by the succession of Roman marching camps and a large, nine acre, campaign fortress and stores compound on a gravel terrace above the north bank of the Dee and its small tributary, the Merddwr. The camps are almost certainly a feature of the earliest Roman campaigns in north-west-Wales in the AD60s and 70s. The turf and timber fortress, with its regular disposition of wooden barracks and administrative buildings implies a significantly more lasting forward base for the control of operations and the consolidation of military gains. Within a relatively short space of time, however, the fortress was abandoned in favour of a smaller and permanent auxiliary fort at the southern end of Llyn Tegid, one of a network of inter-communicating forts designed to police and control the region.

Notwithstanding the abandonment of the Roman fortress, several route-ways and the valleys of waterways converge at the northern end of the lake. This was so, before Bala came into existence as a nucleated community. The name, Bala, refers to a topographical feature, the outflow of water from a lake. Bala Tegid describes the outflow of the Dee at the northern end of Llyn Tegid, accumulating tributary water on a long journey to its estuary on the north Wales coast defining the border with England near Chester. The Treweryn joins the Dee at Bala itself, flowing from the north-west. The Afon Hirnant enters the Dee, from the south, at 2km from the lake and the Meloch, from the north, a short distance to the east.

Roman routes run south-west from the Dee Valley near Corwen to the vicinity of Bala, utilising, in part, the course of the Meloch, continuing along the north-western shore of the lake to Caer Gai. A south-easterly to north-westerly road is thought to have joined the Caer Gai route at 1km north of Bala at the site of the early campaign bases near Llanfor.

It may be thought that the Roman presence would have generated a focus of community, on or near the Merddwr terrace, but there is very little evidence of this whereas a vicus did develop at Caer Gai, at the southern end of the lake seven miles distant.

However, geophysical survey undertaken in the 1990s contributed significant new information to the Llanfor Roman complex, and also identified what has been interpreted as a post-built timber hall of the early middle ages. More certain evidence of early settlement is to be sought at Llanfor, some 300 metres to the north of the Roman military works and 1km to the north-east of Bala. By the tenth century, the church was in place and could be described as 'Llanfawr' – Great Church. It may have been served by a quasi-monastic 'clas' community, on the slight evidence of it later being a portionary church. Its significance is reflected in a verse of the Llywarch Hen cycle in which the aged Llywarch is directed to find Llan-

fawr, where the Meloch and Tryweryn run into the Dee, a clear description of the location of Llanfor. A possible indication of the association of secular lordship at Llanfor persists in the earthen ringwork, Pen ucha'r Llan, 150m above the church.

Earthwork castle mounds are recorded in a particular concentration in the vicinity of Bala. In addition to the ringwork at Penucha's Llan, there is a motte, Castell Gronw, at the outflow of Llyn Tegid, a possible motte 'Tomen Gastell' at Hen Hafod, 1km to the north-east of Llanfor, and a large motte adjacent to the putative Roman road, presumably a continuing route-way, at what is now the northern limit of the town of Bala.

The construction of these earthwork castles is not documented. Their disposition, along the major corridor of the Dee from Glyndfrdwy to Bala itself, suggests a pattern of Norman penetration (rather than local Welsh build), targeting the major foci of Welsh settlement and emphasising the strategic location at the north end of the lake. When Henry I contrived a show of strength on the southern borders of Grufudd ap Cynan's Gwynedd, in 1114, the central of three forces almost certainly passed through Edeirnion and Penllyn to Llyn Tegid en route to Tomen y Mur.

In 1116 Uchdryd ap Edwin controlled Meirionnydd and Cyfeiliog and, perhaps, Penllyn too. Uchdryd was responsible for the construction of one of the very few documented early Welsh castles at Cymer. There is no evidence that Uchdryd had a hand in the earthwork at Bala, however. During the central decades of the twelfth century Penllyn, with Edeirnion, became a tug of war between the ambitions of Gwynedd and Powys. By the end of the twelfth century Penllyn was held by Elise ap Madog ap Maredudd. Elise's reluctance to join Llywelyn ap Iorwerth of Gwynedd in a war against Gwenwynwyn of Powys provoked Llywelyn to remove Elise from his patrimony and he took the castle of Bala. Elise was partially re-instated on the eastern boundary of Penllyn at Crogen, with the possession of seven adjacent townships.

From this time until the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd in 1283, Gwynedd held Penllyn. During the reign of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth (d.1240) the Prince was accustomed to hunt in Penllyn. When he did so, he was entitled to food maintenance for 300 of his retinue, once a year, from the Cistercian grange of Mochrhaeadr at the head of Llyn Celyn/Treweryn. By the end of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd's reign the exaction had increased to the maintenance value of 500 men and two colts. Two years after the Conquest, in 1285, an enquiry was made before John Havering, regarding the perceived and potentially continuing, injustice. The inquisition was taken at Llanfor, which may be a further indication of Llanfor's continuing significance at this date.

Bala may have begun to develop around the defensible nucleus of the large motte close to the lake, at least by the late twelfth century. During the later years of Gwynedd's independence there are indications of a continuing

regal association with the site. An English Crown Survey of rents and dues formerly owed to the Prince, taken in 1284, identifies a maintenance obligation from the entire commote in respect of the 'houses of Bala'. In 1306-7 Bala is described as a manor.

There is an indication, in the 1284 crown survey, of a division of the ancient cantref of Penllyn in two halves - Is meloch and Uwch Meloch. Later, in a survey of 1419, the northern-eastern component of this same division is referred to as Uwch Tryweryn and the townships recorded under this designation can be seen to lie beyond the boundary of the Tryweryn river and the Hirnant. The significance of this observation is, if the distinction is ancient, that the hamlets of the bond tenants of the Prince all lie within Is Tryweryn and, equally significantly, cluster close to Bala at Llanycil, Cyffty and Bedwarian. There is also an enclave of the Prince's bondmen south of the lake in the free township of Penaran. This may very well be explained by the proximity of the very extensive royal hafodydd which range round the south-western border of Penllyn from Amnodd and Nanfach to Wenallt, Cwm dadi and Cwm Fynnon. The prince's interests in Penllyn were concentrated in Is Tryweryn; Uwch Tryweryn was the preserve of the freeholders. The disposition of the prince's bond tenants, before the conquest, clearly point to Bala as the commotal centre with the prince's ffridd or cattle-lands on the high ground to the south-west of the lake. This was the location chosen by Roger Mortimer to establish his English town in the early 14th century.

## 5.2 Medieval Bala

By 1310 Roger Mortimer had laid out 53 burgages 'for the king's benefit for the security of those parts and to restrain the malice of evil-doers and robbers in the locality'. Thirty-four of the burgages occupied part of the former Prince's demesne land in the commote (part of the bond tenancies referred to above). The remainder was annexed from the land of free tenants. The demesne land would have transferred into the Prince's hand at the time that Elise ap Madog was expelled. It is probable that Llanfor had been the more important community, in a number of respects, for some long time. However, in 1310, the hamlet or town of Bala was enlarged and the fair and market of Llanfor was transferred to Bala from Llanfor. The town's charter was conferred in 1324, exclusively to burgenses anglici, 'English burgesses'. The nearest market towns are Corwen, 18km miles away to the east, and Dolgellau, 29km to the west. Both of these are, like Bala, medieval foundations.

A deed of 1350 (BU: Penrhyn ms 480) indicates something of the arrangements of the new town. It records that in consideration of a sum of money and subject to the usual conditions and guarantees, one William de Preston, baker, of that town, sells in perpetuity to John de la Hyde, 'forester of North Wales' all his half-burgage in Bala with its buildings and appurtenances. This half-burgage lay between the burgage of Thomas de Pieuledon and the half-burgage of 'Johannes fil Jonckyn', which fronted the via capitalis with their rears on the road which led to

the chapel, ad viam qui ducit ad capellum. This suggests both that a chapel had been constructed within the town (the parish church was that of Llanycil, 1.5Km to the south-west) and that the settlement had been laid out to the street pattern which exists to this day. In conjunction with other contemporary documentation, this deed is significant in that it reveals that although the borough charter was granted exclusively to burgenses anglici, there were by 1350 Welshmen in the borough, and that a Welshman, Howel Goch, was then mayor and representative of the burgesses. He represented the English burgesses of Bala at the quo warranto proceedings of 1348 (Record of Caernarfon, 176, 210); John de la Hyde appears therein (ibid. p 152) as attorney general of one Thomas Cary, and a Thomas de Pieuledon figures in the Extent of 1352 in Anglesey (Record of Caernarfon p 106 and c.f. 226).

By the time of Henry V, the town had a barracks or garrison (garnestura), a mill and a court-house. There may have been a ditch around the motte, but there is no evidence that a wall was ever built. A late fifteenth century rental, of one John Holland, suggests an active economy of sub-leasing and refers to land 'above the chapel cemetery', and 'near the bridge of Bala' (Smith).

## 5.3 Early Modern Bala

However, by the sixteenth century, visitors and chorographers were apt to dismiss the town. Leland viewed it as a 'poor little market' and Camden as a 'small privileged town having but few inhabitants and its houses rudely built' (Jones), though the growing cattle trade and the cloth industry were to bring it some prosperity in the following century. Certainly, the 1662 hearth tax does not suggest a particularly impoverished settlement:



*Plas-y-n-Dre*

*Llanycil psh.*

*Bala Towne*

Nine hearths – Jane verch Ellisse

Eight hearths – Lewis Gwynne

Four hearths – Cadwaladr Pierce; John Thomas;

Edward Evance; ffrancis Ellis; Ellis Jones; Robert Oliver; Thomas Johnson; Margaret verch William; Thomas Evance; Rowland Thomas

Two hearths – John Ellis dd; John Jones; ffoulke Cadwaladr; Robert John; Robert Ellis; Ellis Lloyd; Robert John Smyth; John Bromley; Cadwaladr Hugh; John Morgan; Richard Morris; Robert Cadwaladr; Chamberlain Thomas; Griffith ap Ellisse; Hugh Parry; Thomas Myddleton; Robert Elissa ap Hugh

Patrician sponsorship of the town is implied by a deed of 1711 which mentions Plas yn Dre, the home of one of the major landowning families in the town, the Lloyds of Rhiwaedog. This dwelling, which is believed to contain seventeenth-century work (Listing description), seems to have been the focus of the Lloyd's presence, which later at least was centred on the area defined by the High Street, Church Street, and Arenig Street, though they owned scattered properties elsewhere in Bala (DRO: Z/DS/7/46). Other patrician families with an interest in Bala were the Williams-Wynn family of Wynnstay, whose own town house, 'Plass issa yn Dre Bala' is attested by 1744, and the Annwyls also owned property there. Jesus College Oxford had interests (tithe schedule), though oddly, by the time of the tithe survey, the Price family of Rhiwlas seem to have had no interest in Bala at all, even though their park and principal dwelling lay immediately adjacent to the town east of the Afon Tryweryn. Some of the surviving hotels on the High Street may preserve work of this period. The Bull's Head contains a date-plaque of 1692 and the initials 'THE'; It was sufficient of a focus within the town for Howel Harris to attempt to preach outside it in 1739, on the occasion when he was attacked by a gang led by the vicar of Llanycil (DWB). The White Lion Royal Hotel may contain work of c. 1700. An applied stone cartouche bears the date 1759 and the initials 'WRM'.

#### 5.4 Modern Bala

By the middle of the eighteenth century Bala had become a recognised market for the sale of locally-knitted stockings, though gloves, socks and wigs were also produced. Lewis Morris reckoned that the weekly sale was £200 in 1747, and Fenton describes Gabriel Davies as 'the great stocking merchant of Bala ... who died worth half a million.' Bob Owen identified thirteen hosiery merchants from the church records for the years 1786 to 1860, though proposals for a large-scale factory came to nothing and the trade was in severe decline by 1830. It is said, however, that there were woollen mills at Ffrydan, Efail Isaf, Trem yr Aran and Ty'n y Bont as well as at two other locations (Jenkins 203, 210-215). Ffrydan was situated on the Afon Tryweryn to the north of the town but the others may have been built within the urban area itself. Given the lack of water available within the town, it is likely that these were at most loom-houses. Even so, Bala had evidently barely outgrown its Medieval limits before the beginning of the nineteenth century.

It consists principally of one long and wide street ... it is

principally noted for its manufacture of woollen stockings, and as the autumnal resort of grouse (sic) shooters. (Bingley 445)

This is confirmed by a map of 1803, which, although not detailed, shows buildings erected along the High Street from the junction with Aran Street to the junction with the Trawsfynydd road, along Mount Street and to some extent along Heol Plasey. There is no evidence of building along Arenig Street (RRO: QSD/DC/7). The quarter sessions papers for 1815 record the construction of a new market hall (by Owen Owen of Llawrcillian – DRO: QS/0/1, 476-520) which may be the present structure (SH 9261 3597), and in 1827 the old county hall, shire hall and house of correction were offered for sale.

Lewis is more detailed but tells the same story; he notes it as consisting of:

.. one wide street and a smaller one, but well supplied with water although in an unfertile district, and destitute of all the advantages derived from water carriage, in appearance it is excelled by few towns in the principality. The surrounding country side consists chiefly of wild moors and healthy mountains, from which circumstances it has become the general rendezvous of gentlemen resorting to this part of Wales for grouse-shooting. A book society was established here in 1828. Bala and its neighbourhood have for a long series of years been noted for the knitting of woollen stockings, socks and gloves, but this manufacture has of late been on the decline ... The market, which is on Saturday, is well attended; and fairs are held on the Saturday before Shrovetide, chiefly for the hiring of servants, and on May 14th, July 10th, October 24th, and on November 8th, chiefly for the sale of lambs ... The town hall is a plain substantial building, standing in the principal street: attached to it is one of the county bridewells... (Lewis 1833 'Bala')

The tithe map of c. 1838 still shows only one street of any size but does show the two laneways on both sides, of which Mount Street was partly built up. The map also shows a considerable number of hotels and taverns on the High Street, confirming that it was becoming a centre for recreation already, and that the pattern which exists today, of cafés, pubs and eateries on the High Street dates back at least to the early nineteenth century.

Some buildings from this period are dated – Henblas, towards the eastern end of High Street bears a plaque dated 1658 with the letters E and V on either side of the goat device which is traditionally associated with the Wynnstay estate, and towards the bottom the letters and the

date D WV 180(1?). It is possible that this was the site of the Wynnstay town house, and that this is to be identified with the Plas Isa yn y Dre mentioned in 1744. It later became a public house. However, in 1855 Wynnstay sold its properties in the town to the Rhiwlas estate (NLW: Rhiwlas Estate Papers 7).



*Goat device found on Henblas*

Another, even more potent, influence on the town's development than tourism was religious dissent. Bala had become acknowledged as a centre of Calvinism by the end of the nineteenth century, a state of affairs which stems from the fact that at a crucial time of its development one of the major landowners, Simon Lloyd (1756-1836) of Plas yn Dre, though ordained as an Anglican clergyman, became a zealous supporter of the Methodist movement. He explicitly favoured co-religionists in granting leases, as grants of property to Howel Harris of Trefecca in 1760 witness (Plas yn Dre 50); in 1778 he leased land for the erection of a chapel in the town to a group which reads as a roll-call of the Methodist fathers – Daniel Rowlands of Llangeitho, Peter Williams of Carmarthen, David Jones of Llan-gann, Thomas Foulkes of Bala and John Evans of Bala (Plas yn Dre 55). Lloyd was a member of a family long established at Plas Rhiwaedog, in Rhos y Gwaliau, barely 2km to the south-east of Bala, in the parish of Llanfor. He was a close friend of Thomas Charles (1755-1814), who was similarly ordained into the Anglican communion but whose evangelical tendencies made him unacceptable to the bishop of St Asaph, and who settled in Bala on his marriage in 1784. It was to Bala, to buy a bible from Thomas Charles, that Mary Jones set off for her walk, a pilgrimage which resonated for many later generations of Welsh children, and which led to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society. With the establishment of the 'school of the saints' – the Presbyterian



*Christchurch designed by E B Ferrey 1858*

Church of Wales's seminary – Bala evolved into the 'Geneva of Wales' (an analogy strengthened by having a lake on its doorstep), one of the great centres, along with Llangefni in Anglesey, of Calvinistic Methodism. The bulk of the standing buildings in Bala date from the nineteenth century. They include important religious structures such as the English chapel of 1811, originally a chapel of ease attached to Llanycil church, and an interesting exercise in low-church Anglican architecture of the period, as well as Ferrey's imposing Christ Church for the Anglican communion of 1858. Ferrey was, at the time, working for Sir Watkin Williams Wynn to rebuild the house at Wynnstay following a fire, and it is likely that he was instrumental in promoting Ferrey as architect. It is hard to resist the sense that some sort of war of public worship went on in Bala in the mid-nineteenth century, in that the sheer scale of Christ Church is a statement in its own right, and its spire dominates the eastern end of the town, but it in turn is dominated by the Presbyterian college on the hill to the north. This was completed in 1867, and superseded earlier premises in a store-room behind Plas yn Dre and later at Tegid Place. It is designed to look like the façade to a quadrangle, but in fact no more than the front range and the stubs of the side ranges were ever constructed. Coleg y Bala became a theological college in 1891. Since 1969 it has been run as a youth centre by the Presbyterian Church of Wales, offering Christian education courses.



*Capel Tegid G W M Spuell, 1867*

Capel Tegid, the main Methodist chapel in the town, is an exactly contemporary structure, designed by W.H. Spaul of Oswestry. It is unusual in that it includes a spire, an indication of the growing self-confidence of the connection, which dominates the eastern approach to the town. It is believed that it caused resentment amongst the congregation who saw it as aping the style of the establishment, and the lean identified in the tower was taken as proof of divine disapproval. The spire was removed in 2000 and replaced in 2004.



*Thomas Charles, H W Davies, 1875*



*Coleg y Bala, G W H Spuell, 1867*



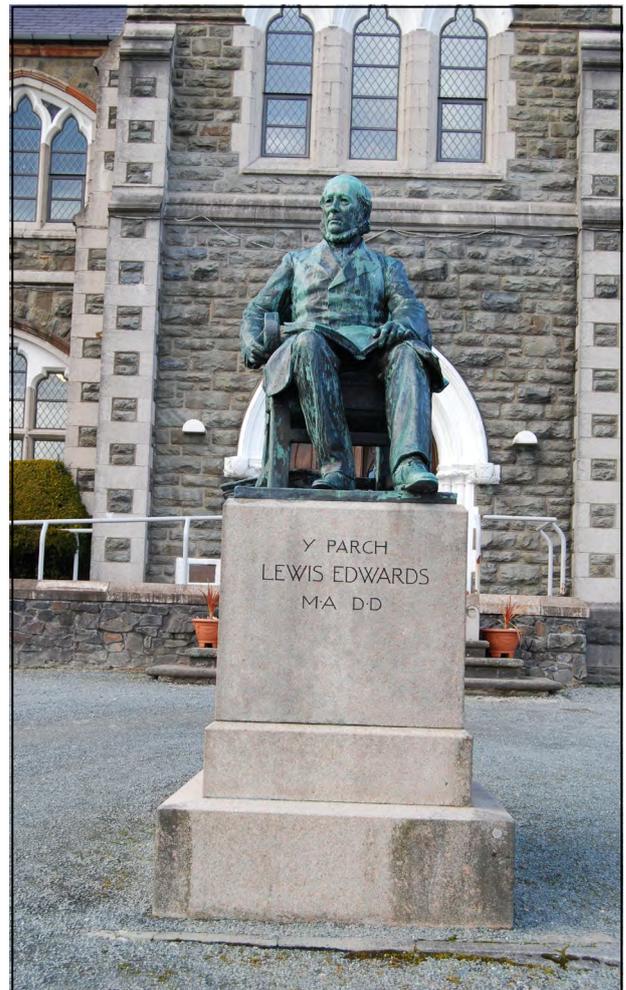
*T E Ellis by Goscombe John 1903*

Bala's centrality to Wales' Victorian self-image, as a Radical and Calvinist nation, is reflected in the town's public statuary. Outside Capel Tegid, the statue of Thomas Charles in cassock and bands by William Davies 'Mynorydd' of Merthyr Tydfil includes a carved scene on the plinth showing a bible class, an exercise in protestant realism in that it even depicts hats and coats hanging up on the back of the room. The most prominent commemorative sculpture is by Goscombe John and shows Tom Ellis, MP for Merioneth and Liberal Chief Whip under Gladstone and Rosebery, in his characteristic frock-coat and bow-tie but robed in the gown of the President of the Guild of Graduates of the University of Wales. The plinth shows Ellis' birthplace, Cynlas, a farm-house to the east of Bala, the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, where he took his first degree, the cloisters of New College Oxford, and the palace of Westminster. The whole statue represents a very carefully-considered public statement by the regional Liberal elite, at a time when though in opposition, they were once again thinking of themselves as a government-in-waiting. The decision to ask John Morley MP, Gladstone's biographer, to unveil it, clearly indicates the desire to establish continuity between the Liberalism of the 'Grand Old Man' and the 'New Liberalism' of Lloyd George, and by implication a rejection of 'Cymru Fydd'.

The last of these statues is also by Goscombe John, and depicts Dr Lewis Edwards (1809-87), who oversaw the growth of the Methodist academy, seated, but with an open bible in his lap (Lord, 348-352). Edwards was crucial to the growth of the town and its role within Victorian

Welsh society, and built up the college's library into a cultural institution of significance. In 1845, he began to publish *Y Traethodydd*, a quarterly of genuine intellectual distinction (Williams, 1985, 203).

Whereas most of the Edwardian borough towns of Wales, and indeed most Welsh market towns, continued to be controlled by the landed and Anglican elite throughout the crucial early nineteenth century period of growth, only gradually yielding this role to the chapel-going middle classes, Bala's sponsors and patrons were religious radicals from very early on – and, crucially, they were resident in the town, rather than rentiers who spent their time in London or Cheltenham or Bath. It has been observed of Caernarfon in this period 'the nobility and gentry patronised the town but the professional and commercial middle classes ran it' (Lloyd 144), and in the case of Bangor patronage slowly and painfully passed from on the one hand the Penrhyn family and the cathedral interest, to the middle classes and to the university. In Bala, the continuities were stronger, and this has contributed to the cultural and architectural character of the present-day town.



*Lewis Edwards by Goscombe John*

It is noted above that Simon Lloyd explicitly favoured co-religionists in granting leases; so probably did his descendants, as Richard Roberts, Sgolor Mawr, remarks:

Long before I went to Bala (in 1847), the Methodist movement had become nearly co-extensive with the population. It had brought other sects in its wake, but the 'Dissenters' (Independents) and Baptists were few. Nearly all the people of the town were members of the Big Chapel. Even the squire attended occasionally (Roberts 160).

Other denominations established themselves in the town. The Independents also established an academy in Bala, whose building still stands, though the teaching function was transferred to a new college in Bangor in 1892 (Williams 93). This is associated with Michael Jones, a minister near Bala, who following a quarrel with part of the congregation, founded a nonconformist academy at Weirglodd Wen, at the southern end of Llyn Tegid. He then established it in the town as an Independent College and served as its Principal. His son, Michael D. Jones (1822-98) succeeded his father as Principal and was instrumental in the establishment of the Welsh colony in Patagonia. His home, built 1898/9, lies across the Tryweryn road from the college. Of the Baptists, Bassett merely refers to the rating of a house in Bala by the Denbighshire, Flint and Merioneth Cymanfa in 1858 and the later purchase of a chapel from the Wesleyans (Bassett 223).

It was one of six towns in North Wales invited to send a representative to press its claims to be the site of the new university college in 1883 but did not in the event do so (Williams 35).

Whereas there is a suggestion that the Lloyds, as major landowners, may explicitly have set out to create a Methodist town, there is no evidence otherwise that they exercised particularly strong control over the town's leasing system. Bala is characterised above all by small, piecemeal development over different chronological periods and using very different building materials. The only significant qualification is the extraordinary row of nine dwellings with polychromatic brick fronts (though with rubble rear walls) extending along Ffrydan Road. Nearby is the range of red-brick shops on Station Road/Heol yr Orsaf, with its distinctive pattern of pointed dormers. Even more distinctive is the terrace of 1909 on Arenig Street, with its fine brickwork and art-nouveau wrought iron railings.

These and other brick-built structures were made possible by the arrival of the railway just south of Bala in 1864, and the building of a station on the immediate outskirts of the town in 1881-2, on the site of the green, which had previously been used for fairs, markets, preaching and militia drilling. The station was comprehensively demolished on the closure of the line in 1965. Its most remarkable monument was the neo-Medieval goods shed, complete with arrow-slits, built at the insistence of Price of Rhiwlas.

The late twentieth century and the early years of the twenty-first have seen significant changes in the cultural character of Bala, reflecting a move away from a culture of work and religious observance to one of leisure. The 'school of the saints' no longer turns out ordinands, and Wa! Bala, the Welsh-language youth festival, attracts far more devotees than a cyfarfod pregethu has for many years. Some attractions appeal to visitors, others to local residents, some to both, and the fact that the town is situated on a major tourist road means that it is likely to suffer some pressure in the summer. A sailing club is based at the north-western extremity of Llyn Tegid, the largest natural body of water in Wales. A council-maintained sport centre and swimming pool has been established at Bala in the form of the Penllyn Leisure Centre. Other visitor attractions are located outside the town such as the Bala Lake Railway, opened in stages from Llanuwchllyn to Pont Mwnwgl y Llyn immediately adjacent to Castell Gronw between 1972 and 1976, and the white-water rafting on the Tryweryn.

## 6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

### 6.1 Place-name evidence

Little evidence emerged in the course of the present study for early place-names which might shed light on the town's development. It is noted here that the name 'Plassey Street', is considered to commemorate the battle of Plashey in India in 1757, and that this reflects the site of the barracks (Einion Thomas, pers. comm.). It is not a corruption of 'Plasau' and does not therefore offer a clue as to the situation of early town-houses or of the native llys.

### 6.2 Archaeological sites

The motte and the later medieval borough are the principal archaeological sites within the town. The motte survives as a substantial mound: the top is some 15m in diameter, and lies approximately 8m above the level of the street. It has been suggested that the large size of the motte is confirmation of Norman origins (King 2001, 410). Pre-borough archaeology, dating from the 11th to 13th centuries, is likely to lie close to the mound. The later borough was laid out c. 1310 with 53 burgage plots, and this would imply (see section 7.1 below) that the entire town was occupied. The cross-roads formed by Tegid Street/Castle Street with the High Street was the centre of the borough, and the location of the market cross. The



*St. Beuno's well*

medieval chapel was close to there, and the town hall adjacent is the probable site of the medieval courthouse. Beuno) lies on the western edge of the town, in the middle of a small housing estate. It is now dry, and consists of a rectangular sunken walled chamber measuring 4.8m by 3.5m. Steps lead down into the chamber. There is no record of any archaeological monitoring during the construction of the houses.



*The medieval motte*

## 7. PRESENT SETTLEMENT CHARACTER: A SUMMARY



*Aerial photography showing the layout of the town*

### 7.1 Historical topography

The town of Bala consists of a long principal High Street, with parallel back streets running the full length – Arenig Street on the north-west and Plasey Street/Mount Street to the south-east. The High Street is orientated south-west to north-east, and is crossed in the middle of the town by Castle Street and Tegid Street. The three parallel streets form a simple rectangle, the north-east corner of which is occupied by the motte. The motte is sited close to the Afon Tryweryn, and perhaps alongside an early ford. The High Street was the main road from Corwen to Dogellau, and the line of the Roman Road past the forts of Llanfor and Caer Gai.

The town appears to have been carefully laid out. The distance between the High Street and each back street is 60m, or 12 perches (a perch measures approximately 5m, and was the standard unit of measurement for burgage plots). The distance from the central cross-roads to the south-west end of the town is 200m (40 perches) and from the cross-roads to the north-east end of the town 250m (50 perches). A small road (Stryd yr Eglwys) lies 100m north-east of the cross-roads. The rectangle occupied by the original town therefore measures 450m by 120m. The location of the motte in the north-west corner would suggest this was deliberately incorporated. The axis might have been set by the line of the Roman road. The junction of the central cross-roads with the High Street is slightly staggered, and it is possible that Castle Street and Tegid Street pre-date the layout of the medieval borough. The measurements would suggest the town was laid out using the cross-roads and the motte as primary fixed points.

The width of each burgage plot is not known with any certainty, and it is quite possible they were not a fixed width. Nonetheless, we know that 53 burgess plots were initially created, and if we take out the corner occupied by the motte, the length available for these was some 800m, which allows some 15m, or 3 perches, per plot width. We know that many plots were held as half-burgages, and indeed several plots do still measure between 7.5 and 8m wide. It might be concluded, therefore, that many of the plot boundaries running from the high street lie on the same alignment as the original burgage plots.

Subsequent expansion of the town was slow, and by 1900 few built-up areas lay outside the original rectangle. To the north-west, limited growth had occurred along Castle Street, whilst Bodiwan, home of Michael Daniel Jones, and Coleg Bala (built 1867) had been built uphill of, and overlooking the town, in a location typical of so many educational establishments. The college was linked to the town by the new Ffrydan Road, which now replaced Castle Street for through traffic. The new Christchurch, built 1855, was located in the corner between Arenig Street and Ffrydan Road, and schools were established in the area between Castle Street and Ffrydan Road, first Ysgol Beuno Sant, the National School, in 1872-3, and then Ysgol y Berwyn, the Intermediate School, in 1899.

Expansion to the south-east was similar, except that the outer side of Mount Street had houses along it. This is in contrast to Arenig Street, but is explained by the way in which Mount Street crosses diagonally and inside (west) of the motte, leaving an area for development east of Mount Street, but within the assumed borough boundary. Expansion had occurred along Tegid Street, and this was emphasised by the construction of Capel Tegid in 1865. Interestingly the development south of the town along Tegid Street contains buildings of a higher architectural status than development north of the town along Castle Street. Ysgol Bro Tegid was built here in 1904.

The construction of the railway in 1864 to the north of the town did not, initially, have much impact upon the layout, though the brick built terrace on Station Road is a direct result of expansion in this direction. Later the B4391 was built close to the railway to relieve Tegid Street of through traffic. An industrial estate was built alongside and on the site of the railway following its closure.

Housing has now spread both south and west of the town, and several new estates have been built in recent years. The college and Bodiwan have also provided a focus for new housing.

## 7.2 Standing fabric: buildings and architecture

### 7.2.1 Building materials

There is little archival evidence for pre-Modern building materials in the town, though one would expect timber buildings to have been prevalent. A reference in a document of 1619 to a 'ty kerrig' suggests that a stone house was at that stage considered a rarity –or that it had been at some earlier period, since ty cerrig retained its name for many years. Some Plas yn Dre documents included covenants about size of walls and slating but not in any way that allows any judgement to be made about the standard of or type of construction (DRO: Plas yn Dre 3, 30, 63). However, surviving buildings in Bala exhibit a variety of building materials. Structures from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century tend to make use of a rough local stone, with increased use of squared, higher quality stone, becoming more evident. Local tradition identifies a series of workings known as the 'caverns' north of the town as the major source of supply, though it is possible that some of the squared stone may have come from the Arenig quarries at SH 830 391. There is extensive use of brick, though the only certain pre-railway example is the White Lion. The later brick includes some fine polychromatic patterns, and ceramic features, doubtless reflecting the arrival of the railway through the Dee valley in 1864 and the development of the brick industry of Trevor, Cefn Mawr and Ruabon. Some use also seems to be made of Cefn Mawr sandstone. Elsewhere (eg., the HSBC building), a redder sandstone, possibly from Cheshire, is used.

What is striking is that many buildings in the town make use of different building material for different parts of the structure. The shop complex which occupies the site of

the childhood home of Puleston Jones has a fine red-brick façade with ceramic detailing, but uses yellow brick for the side walls. The late Victorian terrace on the Trawsfynydd road uses polychromatic brick work for the front but rubble for the rear walls. The block on the High Street which includes RG Jones' estate agents, the toy-shop Tegennau Tegid and 'Antiques and Bric-a-Brac' is built with a façade of grey Ruabon brick, and lintels of a light-grey stone, probably slate slab. The side walls are stuccoed but in a way that suggests a different material, probably rubble, was used for the remainder of the building. Elsewhere on the High Street, an eclectic habit of selecting building materials is apparent in the shop 'Discount Booze' and its neighbours. 'Discount Booze' is built of coursed stone with grey Ruabon brick window detailing and sills of slate slab. The adjoining range (47a, 45 and 43) is built to the same proportions but with granite window detailing.



*Brick and stone are intermingled along the High Street*

Some slate roofs make use of a poor quality vein of indeterminate origin – possibly from Arthog, near Barmouth, possibly from the little quarry at Aran Benllyn (SH 875 259), possibly Bwlch yr Oernant in Denbighshire. It is clear from the Calendar of Merioneth Quarter Sessions that Oernant slate was specified for building in the town in 1758. Grey Ffestiniog slate predominates from the mid-nineteenth century, though the façade of Capel Tegid uses a green-brown rustic that does not appear to be local.

Another characteristic is the comparatively late survival of both stone and Ruabon brick as building materials, exemplified in the garage building at SH 9244 3587. Evidently purpose-built, in that it shows all the characteristic features of a twentieth-century motor repair shop, it is nevertheless built of local rubble stone edged with grey brick.

The tendency to use building material from locations further east in the Dee valley which is a feature of the town in the Industrial and Modern period of archaeology serves as a reminder that the influences on Bala are as likely to come from near the English border as from within the strongholds of Gwynedd. It is possible that this was even more explicitly the case when it was an English burgess town and comparisons with Shropshire in terms of building pattern and settlement morphology may be as rewarding as comparisons within Wales for study of the Medieval period.

### 7.2.2 Building styles



*Typical stone built houses in Tegid Street with long sash windows*

The dominant building style within Bala is the late 18th century/early 19th century vernacular Georgian town house of 3 storeys, usually built in pairs or small terraces. Within Bala the use of cement render or stucco is slight, and the majority of buildings are stone faced, usually rubble stone, though with some examples of more regularly coursed squared blocks. The roofs are of slate, and several feature overhanging eaves. The windows are small pane sash windows, the standard 12 pane being used on the first floor, but with larger 16 or 20 pane windows on ground floor shop windows, and smaller 9 pane windows on the second floor. In Tegid Street (no's 39-43) are unusual ground floor 15 pane sash windows. A feature of several houses is a long narrow stair window in the rear wall of the house. Many of these houses date from the high peak of the knitting industry. The period 1780 to 1830 was a wealthy one for Bala, and the



*An example of the rear stair window*

impression is that much of the housing was replaced at this stage, and has been retained since. Good examples are visible along the High Street and along Tegid Street. Public buildings, including the town hall of c. 1800 and the workhouse of 1838-41, emphasise the same style of classical simplicity and regularity.



*The workhouse of 1838-41*

The two principal inns are of a substantial size. The White Lion Royal Hotel is whitewashed brick, dated 1759 but with later modifications, and one of the earliest dated brick buildings in the county (Orbach forthcoming). Sitting diagonally opposite the town hall on the central cross-roads, it is, with the hall, one of the key buildings which defines the character of the High Street. The Olde Bulls Head further down the High Street is 17th century in origin, though the present 9-bay façade is later. It has gabled dormers, a device used on many of the later Victorian buildings.



*White Lion*



*Capel Tegid*

The mid-19th century architecture is characterised by the construction of new religious buildings, including Christ Church by Benjamin Ferrey (1855), designed in Early English style which contrasts favourably with the clean classical lines of the Georgian houses, in a better way, perhaps, than his more usual flamboyant Decorated style. Ferrey was also responsible for the National School on Castle Street, built 1872-3. Capel Tegid by Spaul (1865) is also gothic, and forms an interesting contrast with the Independent chapel which is built in more usual classical style by Thomas Thomas (1866-7). Also by Spaul is the college on the hill, where its dominant site perhaps contributes more through shape and texture when viewed from the road, than it does in architectural detail, where the gothic windows sit slightly uneasily in a stone building of classical proportions.

Smaller stone built houses of the early- to mid-19th century can be found along the High Street, Tegid Street and in particular Mount Street, where no's 48-52 have gothic detail in the form of triangular window heads.



*Mid-19th Century terrace in Mount Street*



*Bulls Head*



*Brick Victorian terrace behind Station Road*

Brick terraces become important in the Victorian period, and whilst many buildings utilise a buff or dark grey brick, use is also made of red brick on Station Road, and also in the later elaborate baroque terrace on Arenig Street, and on the High Street the HSBC bank.



*Baroque brick terrace in Arenig Street*

## 8. GENERAL MANAGEMENT

### 8.1 General recommendations

*Note: character area recommendations are given after each of the area descriptions below.*

An appropriate instrument of management is in place for the historic core of Bala in the form of a Conservation Area. However, the present study has informed understanding of the character of this area as well as of the areas on the periphery of the town.

The historic core constitutes a remarkable street-scale and townscape, significantly different from the neighbouring market towns of Dolgellau and Corwen, distinguished by an attractive mix of buildings of different periods, although the nineteenth century inevitably dominates. Even within this time-frame, there are significant differences, as noted above, between those of the early nineteenth century and those built after cheaper transport brought in non-local building material. Appropriate management of this area will therefore involve encouragement to the preservation of the fine detailing of the building stock within it, in matters such as chimneys, door-frames, window frames, barge-boards and finials, and appropriate shop-fronts. Historic building materials add to the visual appeal of this area, and there should be a presumption towards the removal of pebbledash wherever appropriate.

The streetscape of Plassey Street/Mount Street and Arenig Street is equally as important as the High Street. The various small existing dwellings, ateliers, sheds and garages all represent continuity with the medieval period as well as important development in their own right. Many of the existing small houses, such as those in Arenig Terrace, are rare survivors and their external character should be retained. The opportunity to convert unused buildings into offices or flats or to ameliorate existing dwellings is likely to offer a sustainable future for them but it is essential that historical character and historic scale be retained.

The visual relationship of different areas is an important factor. The creation of the housing estates below the Methodist college has to some extent diminished the college's impact on the town, but it remains an important presence. Similarly, the views from the roads that enter the town are important – anyone arriving from Trawsfynydd down the hill from the brow of the hill on the A4212 is greeted by the strong horizontal alignment of the medieval streetscape and the strong vertical alignment of Christ Church. Extension of the school onto the playing fields or sale of the playing fields for housing would diminish this impact. Similarly, the motte is a significant feature for travellers arriving from the east on the A494, and the spire of Capel Tegid dominates the approach to the town from the west.

It is strongly recommended that the open areas identified in the present study – the fields, the sporting grounds – be retained as such, and that proposals for new housing be resisted. Much of the character of this very distinctive town derives from the fact that its medieval limits are

still very apparent, and any development which blurs this would diminish its historical character. This should not preclude the appropriate development of facilities around the Leisure Centre, as an important element of the town's economy in a competitive tourist market, nor the capacity to install new units in the industrial estate, but any development on either area should be visually unobtrusive.

Management will benefit from community involvement and the creation of a sense of common ownership of, and responsibility for, the built heritage. For this reason, it is suggested that a community archaeological excavation might not only contribute to understanding of the town's historic dynamic but also inform and assist management by encouraging social inclusion and awareness.

## 8.2 Future research

### 8.2.1 *Documentary research*

Documentary research has the capacity, both as a purely paper exercise and in conjunction with archaeological investigation, to shed light on the development of Bala perhaps particularly in the later medieval period. This is a period which, if studied in greater detail, will shed light on the little-understood phase of Welsh urban history between the 'English' burgess town and their re-emergence as vital regional and sub-regional centres in the Industrial and Modern period, and possibly challenge the assumption that these settlements suffered a long decline.

The comparative paucity of estate records available in public archives other than the Plas yn Dre papers suggests that further documentary research into the development of Bala will need to be based on less obvious archival sources such as the quarter sessions papers, ecclesiastical records and possibly papers preserved in the National Archives in Kew. However, the Plas yn Dre papers if studied in detail may have the capacity to shed light on the development of the town in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in particular, the more so because they are comparatively detailed and on present evidence refer to a tightly-defined part of the town – one, moreover, in which there is archaeological potential (see below).

### 8.2.2 *Identifying archaeological potential*

The town of Bala poses the question of the relationship between the site of native Welsh administration and the burgess town which succeeded it. The present study cannot offer an opinion on this matter, though it has felt able to make some suggestions as to the form that the development of the medieval town took. Any archaeological investigation within the Conservation Area of the town needs to be undertaken with this question in mind.

It is clear that Bala contains a wealth of buildings from before the Industrial and Modern period as well as a rich heritage of nineteenth century structures. Evidence from other burgess towns in North Wales such as Denbigh has confirmed that much earlier structures sometimes underlie buildings that otherwise appear to be commonplace examples of nineteenth century work, and there is therefore

considerable opportunity within Bala to carry out historic building recording with a view to establishing the age of structural elements within dwellings and public buildings within the town and thereby to identify a regional dynamic of economic and social change or stasis.

Bala, as a trading town, offers the possibility that study of artefactual evidence might shed light on the scale of local resources. These might take the form of chance finds from open areas as items recovered from deposits in built-up areas.

An opportunity exists to carry out below-ground investigation on the vacant land immediately to the east of Plas yn Dre. This plot seems to have been unoccupied since the eighteenth century but to have been previously the site of shops and shambles. It is suggested here that this would make an excellent site for a community excavation.

## 8.3 Interpretative strategy

The town is already interpreted to the extent that a town trail and panels have been erected, and a small interpretation centre had been opened in the former Calvinist chapel on Plassey Street. There is little case for further signage, which would in any case detract from the historic ambience of the town, and it is recommended that consideration be given to a Townscape Heritage Initiative and to an open day, perhaps on an annual basis, at which arrangements might be made for selected buildings to be opened to the public, and information packs made available.

An approach so far little considered in Wales is a community archaeological excavation. The evidence of the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit's experience at Newtown Heath, where a hall-house was excavated, has demonstrated that such exercises can provide a remarkably successful means of helping to overcome social exclusion and of interesting the community and its councillors in their heritage.

## 9. AREA DESCRIPTIONS

### Area 1: Medieval core

#### *Historical development*



*High Street*

In essence this area corresponds to, and retains the street-plan of, the medieval borough, with the motte overlooking the site of the river-crossing and the green as its eastern focus. This area is synonymous with the history of the town as a whole until it began to expand beyond its medieval boundaries in the mid-nineteenth century, and it corresponds with the present-day conservation area.



*Mount Street*

This area is defined by the High Street (the A494, the main Corwen to Dolgellau road, known as Station Road at its eastern extremity) and by the two parallel axes of the town, Mount Street/Plassey Street and Arenig Street, as well as the north-south axis of Castle Street/Tegid Street which is nowhere near as apparent in the present

townscape, but which shows very clearly in aerial photographs. Mount Street curves around the foot of the motte to make a junction with the High Street; otherwise the pattern is closed by Aran Lane at the west and by Ffrydan Road on the east. Ffrydan Road, when it was built, represented the first stage of the turnpike from Bala to Ffestiniog, the present A4212. It seems likely that it replaced Castle Street as the main north road out of the town before 1803 (RRO: QSD/DC/7), though it is not on John Evans map of 1797. Of these, High Street is broad, and once accommodated the town market. The others are narrow. Intermediate cross-streets are Church Street, which connects Arenig Street with the High Street, and what is not quite a continuation of this, Berwyn Street, which continues on to Mount Street. A characteristic of Bala is that all these cross-roads are slightly staggered, possibly representing changes in street-front building at the intersections.



*Tegid Street*

The scale of the White Lion Royal Hotel and the Bull, and the presence of early fabric in their structures, is no surprise given that they looked out onto the site of the market, and are situated near the intersection of the High Street and of the Castle Street/Tegid Street axis. The present-day town hall stands nearby and it is likely that its predecessors were also situated in close proximity. This area was evidently a focus of the town by the seventeenth century and doubtless much earlier, in all probability from the first markets held here. However, as noted above, another focus was the part of the High Street further east, towards the motte, where Plas yn Dre was situated, and, almost opposite it but not quite, Henblas, the town houses respectively of the evangelical Lloyd family and of the high-church Williams Wynns. The Lloyd's presence in the town was defined largely by the High Street, Church Street, Arenig Street and Ffrydan Road, and it retained open spaces and gardens next to Plas yn Dre into the nineteenth century, though from the early seventeenth century their records also speak of shops and shambles here, which had gone by 1755. The Lloyds appear to have

owned the site of the Medieval chapel – in any event, a document in their archive dated 1711 speaks of ‘Ty yn Mynwent y Capel, Mynwent y Capel ...’ and when in 1778 the Lloyds erected a chapel it was ‘erected to the west of Monwent y cappel’, suggesting that the back street which led to the chapel mentioned in the Medieval period may have been the later Arenig Street.

Chapel- and church-building within this area suggests a war of the denominations. When the town’s first Anglican church is erected in 1810-1813 it is on yr ardd newydd, sponsored by the Wynnstey estate and on the estate’s land but almost opposite the evangelical and Methodist stronghold of Plas yn Dre. Christ Church’s spire dominates the background to Plas yn Dre, and it is only with the building of the Methodist college on the hills to the north of the town that church and chapel appear to have reached an uneasy peace.

Some later secular buildings can be dated. Siop Newydd was built in 1865 (Y Cyfnod 19 November 2004), the Victoria Hall in 1890-91 (DRO: Z/DP/9/81) and Pensarn Terrace at the western limit of the area, in 1901 (DRO: Z/DP/10/34-5). The great majority are of nineteenth century external appearance by it is quite possible that earlier work remains obscured by later facades.

*Current Urban Area Description*

The dominant characteristic of the buildings within this area is the presence of relatively large structures, the facades of which face the High Street, and which are variously hotels, shops, banks, private houses and some places of worship, and a varied pattern of structures on to the rear, variously fronting onto, or at a near right-angle to, the back streets.



*Text*

The White Lion Royal Hotel and the Bull Hotel both contain early fabric, though this is largely obscured by later accretion. Behind the Plas Coch Hotel is a free-standing structure of early (pre-nineteenth century) appearance which may represent an earlier street-line.



*English Church, 1811*

Several of the larger structures on the High Streetsuggest an early nineteenth century date and also the availability of capital locally to build on a significant scale. Examples are the range which includes the Spar shop and the substantial ‘Henblas’ building towards the eastern end of the High Street, part of which is now the Town Council office and a filling station. This is the structure which bears a plaque on its street side dated 1658 and (possibly) 1801, the former probably to be interpreted as the date of an earlier plas and the latter the date of construction of the present building. Otherwise, large scale construction is presented by the several magnificent examples of speculative post-railway construction, the red-brick three-storey dwellings on Station Road (the easternmost extension of the High Street), and the polychromatic brickwork of the terrace along Ffrydan Road. The smaller early nineteenth century dwellings immediately to the south of this range readily illustrate not only the change in building material within Bala once bricks became cheaply available but also the abrupt change in the scale of building. However, even these small dwellings appear to have been conceived as an architectural unit with the building now covered in pebble-dash on the corner of the High Street and the Trawsfynydd Road which may have been a turn-pike gate-house.

There are several other notable buildings along the High Street. The Grade II\* former workhouse, now the ‘Pyjama Tops’ factory and outlet, was originally built between 1838 and 1841 by the Bala Union, and served from 1869 as a County Militia barracks before becoming a bottled water plant and a biscuit factory. The complex is constructed in a late Regency style and consists of a two-storey, T-plan street-facing section and a large three-and-a-half storey range to the rear; the two sections are joined centrally by a single-storey link block which divides the open middle space into two yards with high outer enclosing walls. allowed to deteriorate but remains apparently intact. Another structure of note is the English Presbyterian church, known locally as the ‘English Chapel’ but which was in fact originally built in

1810 as an Anglican chapel of ease, licensed for divine service in 1813. Until the construction of Christ Church in 1855, the chapel served as the town's only Anglican church and is the oldest place of worship in the town. It is one of very few churches constructed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in North Wales, and with its short nave and square-headed choir, and its stone pyramidal roof, it may be more reminiscent of some of the smaller and simpler Scottish Presbyterian and Church of Ireland places of worship of the same period than with the thin tradition of church-building in the dioceses of St Asaph and Bangor.



*Victoria Hall, 1891*



*The Smithy. West end of High Street*

At the western end of this area, the smithy and the former turnpike house define the limits of pre-nineteenth century construction. To the west is the Red Lion farm, with its extensive nineteenth century outbuildings, and the Victoria Hall, constructed in 1891 and later converted into a cinema. An early-to-mid twentieth century row along the south side of Pensarn Road completes the main urban cluster of the town.

The architectural variety is as marked in the buildings which line the two back streets, Plassey Street/Mount Street and Arenig Street. Many of the buildings here function as service structures for the shops and hotels along the High Street, much as is implied by the deed of 1350. These take various forms including stables, atelier-type workshops, small warehouses and garages. Particularly notable is the curving row of small workshops and sheds along Mount Street in the vicinity of SH 9277 3609, each one occupying the rear of a plot which may represent bur-ge divisions

However, these two thoroughfares are also lined with houses, on both sides, which also exhibit a remarkable variety of building styles and materials. As well as rubble-built nineteenth century terraces, a terrace of three second-quarter nineteenth century cottages on Mount Street at SH 9270 3597 appears to be an exercise in self-conscious vernacular Gothic, which together with its small size suggest that they might have been almshouses. A complete contrast is the exceptionally refined red-brick row of 1909 on Arenig Street, with its sandstone detailing. A notable feature of Arenig Street is also the survival of inhabited court-dwellings, at right-angles to the street, with alleyway connections to the High Street. Very few such developments are known to survive in North and Mid-Wales. One such development on Arenig Street was constructed, on the evidence of a date-stone, in 1874, and is of interest in that it forms part of development built in an L-plan, partly a court, partly along Arenig Street itself, with a shop at the corner.



*Workshops in Mount Street*

The Tegid Street axis is distinguished by a number of early dwellings including the double-fronted two storey dormer-windowed present health food shop at SH 9264 3591 of probable seventeenth-century date, and the row of three-storey late Georgian shop premises which includes E.J. Theodore, Ironmonger, at SH 9260 3595, with its exceptionally fine window detailing, and exhibition of historic local items. Also of note here is the fine domestic range with its unusual longitudinal chimneys at SH 9265 3585 (Listed building: 26011). Capel Tegid and the houses which effectively form a small square in its forecourt, is another important focus. It effectively represents the creation of a nonconformist public space, and it is of interest that even in Methodist Bala there was not the opportunity to construct this on the High Street or on a grander scale than in, for instance, the late nineteenth century developments at Blaenau Ffestiniog. Capel Tegid was from its construction in 1865-7 until the late twentieth century on the very edge of the urban development of Bala, and meetings were held on the open space to its south-east. The range of houses on the west (Listed building: 26017) represents an eclectic mixture of local styles and idioms, mingling prominent dormers with exaggerated drip mouldings.



*E J Theodore Shop*

#### *Archaeological resource*

This is an area with considerable potential for buried archaeology. The location of the pre-Edwardian llys and other native systems of administration, perhaps the nucleated structures of a dependent bond township is likely to lie within this area, probably in close proximity to the motte.

Archaeology relating to the later borough could be found anywhere within this area, though the intersection of the present High Street and the north-south axis represented by Castle Street/Tegid Street was a particularly important focus, since the market cross is known to have been sited in its vicinity, and it is here in the eighteenth century if not earlier that the important taverns are situated – the

Bull's Head and the White Lion.. Buried urban deposits from all periods from the thirteenth century onwards have the potential to shed light on the evolution of the borough at all stages of its history. The location of the Medieval chapel at Bala remains unconfirmed.

The vacant plot to the east of Plas yn Dre offers an unusual opportunity in a Welsh urban context in that there is reason to believe it has remained undeveloped since medieval buildings were demolished here in the eighteenth century.



*Victorian Houses next to Capel Tegid*

#### *Management recommendations*

This area preserves the original street plan of a medieval planted borough, though overlain with a strong nineteenth century character in terms of building stock. The solid stone buildings on the High Street are contrasted with an important streetscape of smaller dwellings, workshops and other structures on the back streets. Bala's strong religious, cultural and political traditions are evident in its built heritage. Structures exemplify both the availability of local building materials and the increased use of regional products such as bricks and ceramic work.

Particular management issues that would affect the above include the following.

- Preservation of spatial character of town, specifically:
  - Avoidance of changes in the street-scale
  - Monitoring for effect of road traffic problems
- Preservation of built character of town, specifically:
  - Continued encouragement of best practice in building conservation for all structures within the conservation area
  - Appropriate and considered intervention in structures on Plassey

Street/Mount Street and Arenig Street in advance of conversion into dwellings or office space

- Encourage removal of pebble-dash where appropriate
- Safeguarding of perimeter features such as wrought-iron railings, boundary walls, etc.
- Continued amelioration of buildings at risk
- Encouragement to restoration of appropriate shop-fronts, window frames, doorways, bargeboards and finials
- Preservation of roof-lines and chimneys

- Archaeological recommendations include:

- The need to develop knowledge through desktop analysis of documentary sources
- Archaeological evaluation in advance of development
- Building recording analysis
- Dendrochronological analysis of potentially earlier structures

- Engagement of community and visitors through:

- Townscape Heritage Initiative and Open Days
- Community archaeological excavations

## **Area 2: Modern development to south of conservation area**

### *Historical development*

An area which includes some nineteenth century dwellings, some of substantial size, and the late nineteenth century red-brick primary school buildings ('Ysgol Coch') but which otherwise first appears on maps as a pattern of small enclosures, probably allotments and garden plots associated with the dwellings and hotels along the High Street and immediately adjacent.

### *Current Urban Area Description*

Other than the nineteenth century structures referred to above, the area is dominated by modern housing, some of which is to an undistinguished design that does not respect local idioms.

### *Archaeological resource*

The standing buildings form an archaeological resource in their own right. There is the possibility of below-ground evidence for nineteenth century and earlier allotments and garden plots. The north end of this area reaches close to the motte, and there is good potential there for medieval and pre-borough archaeology.

### *Management recommendations*

The area is characterised by mixed nineteenth and twentieth century housing, on land previously exploited as allotments and garden plots for the town of Bala. Much of the present housing is not particularly sympathetic towards the character of the main town, and future development should be more sympathetic towards the existing townscape.

### Area 3: Social housing

#### *Historical development*

An area that is shown as developed on an aerial photograph of 1957 and which may represent pre-war construction. It was built in two stages. The western part was previously undeveloped for housing and is shown as open fields, the eastern part is shown as allotments gardens on the 1901 25" ordnance survey. The present boundaries of this area correspond to the field and allotment boundaries shown here.

#### *Current Urban Area Description*

An area of former social housing that illustrates the care taken to provide attractive and well-designed council accommodation. The buildings vary in design though a four-unit hipped-roof type predominates. Some have attractive porches. Chain-link garden fencing survives in many places but a local habit of growing luxuriant hedges has added to the character of this area.



*20th Century Council Housing*

#### *Archaeological resource*

The standing buildings form an archaeological resource in their own right. There is little identified probability of below-ground archaeology.

#### *Management recommendations*

This area contains an attractive example of mid-twentieth century social housing on land previously undeveloped to any significant scale but which formed the periphery of the Medieval town of Bala. It is recommended that future development preserves the character and spatial plan of the area, ensuring that green areas are not developed.

### Area 4: Housing estates

#### *Historical development*

Modern housing estates, of which one contains the Medieval Ffynnon Beuno, now transformed into a suburban 'feature'.

#### *Current Urban Area Description*

These modern developments contain a variety of housing, most of which makes an effort to respect local and regional idioms with the use of stone elements in the construction, slate roofs and grey-brick chimneys.

#### *Archaeological resource*

The presence of Ffynnon Beuno suggests pre-Modern religious observance in the area. However, the fountain itself is now dry and the walls have been unsympathetically rendered.

#### *Management recommendations*

This area consists of modern housing estates on the periphery of the Medieval town. Care needs to be taken that future development does not dominate the old town, particularly along the road from the west, where this has started to happen.



*Modern housing by Ffynnon Beuno*

## Area 5: Leisure Centre and open fields

### *Historical development*

Essentially a modern leisure development, though the Loch Café is long established.

### *Current Urban Area Description*

The leisure centre contains a gym, swimming pool and a tourist information centre in an area that remained undeveloped until the late twentieth century.

### *Archaeological resource*

None known.

### *Management recommendations*

This is a modern lakeside leisure amenity on land that had seen little previous development.

Recommendations include:

- Preservation of open spaces
- Developments to be kept visually unobtrusive
- Monitoring for below-ground archaeology

## Area 6: Villa housing

### *Historical development*

An area developed in the late nineteenth century and in the twentieth century for villa housing. The 1901 25" ordnance survey shows a developed garden around Eryl Aran with a fountain, sun-dial and possible greenhouses. Bryn y Groes is also developed. This latter house was sympathetically extended in Arts and Crafts style in 1902 and at the end of the twentieth century. It has functioned as an Evangelical conference centre since 1960.



*Bryn y Groes*

### *Current Urban Area Description*

Eryl Aran was not visited as part of the study, and the survival of original features is not known. Bryn y Groes house and gardens preserve their late Victorian/Edwardian character.

### *Archaeological resource*

The dwellings and the gardens constitute the only known archaeological resource within this area.

### *Management recommendations*

This area is characterised by the presence of larger out of town villas. If possible that character difference should be preserved, in particular by the preservation of wooded grounds around the properties.

## Area 7: Methodist College

### *Historical development*

An area that remains undeveloped until the erection, in 1865-7, of the Bala Theological College by Spaul. The building is designed to resemble the façade of a collegiate courtyard (and would doubtless have been extended to form such an arrangement had circumstances required) but is in fact no more than a symmetrical 11-bay facade consisting of a tall central tower flanked by a two-storey, two-bay main sections with advanced two-and-a-half storey gabled wings beyond. It is constructed in a simple Gothic style and is in many ways typical of the theological college architecture of the period. The statue of Dr Lewis Edwards by Goscombe John acts as a tutelary presence both for the college and the town, and the college forecourt is enclosed by a stone wall entered through imposing gate-piers.



*Bala Theological College*

### *Current Urban Area Description*

The area itself has seen little change since the erection of the statue in 1911, though its urban context has been significantly changed by the erection of the 'Cysgod y Coleg' housing scheme immediately below and to the south. However, the scale of late twentieth-century building has not entirely diminished the urban impact of the college, nor the implied rivalry between Christ Church (low-lying but with a spire) and the college (a city builded on a hill but not lofty in its own right).

### *Archaeological resource*

None known.

### *Management recommendations*

- The view of the college from the town forms one of the defining views of Bala, and this should be preserved.

## Area 8: Industrial estate

### *Historical development*

This was the town green for many years and as such it was the site of the fair and of Methodist preaching, militia drilling and other public acts. Much of it formed part of the parish of Llanfor, which here looped west of the Afon Tryweryn, rather than of Llanycil in the nineteenth century. An engraving of the Bala sassiwn of 1820 reproduced in Soulsby (Soulsby 75) conveys the urgency and appeal of the great preaching meetings of the time, with pulpit giants such as John Elias addressing the multitude from wooden booths. The construction of the Bala Junction to Blaenau Ffestiniog railway in 1878-1882 may be symptomatic both of the decline of the fairs (and the growing importance of the rail-movement of livestock) and the move to more institutionally-based forms of religious observance away from open-air meetings which Bala also exemplifies. The most remarkable building here, the castellated goods shed erected at the insistence of Price of Rhiwlas, was demolished following the line's closure and dismantling in 1965 and 1968, and the only evidence of the area's former function is the semaphore signal.

### *Current Urban Area Description*

An area of modern industrial buildings, of no particular merit or distinctiveness. Elements of the former railway are preserved in the layout of the buildings. A green space lies on the town side, with the gorsedd circle. This space is significant in preserving the former use of the site as a focal point for communal meetings and fairs.

### *Archaeological resource*

There is the potential here for the recovery of artefacts associated with the fairs, the drilling and the preaching meetings. Below-ground archaeology from the railway period is likely to survive in the form of ballast deposits, signal-rod channels and inspection pits but the archaeology of the late nineteenth-century branch line railway is reasonably well understood.

### *Management recommendations*

The area is characterised by modern industrial estate development, with some elements of the railway remaining, and green space with the gorsedd circle on the town side.

- Ensure the scale of future development is kept within acceptable limits
- Retain the green space on the town side
- Retain where possible the former railway elements
- Avoid impact upon the main A494 entrance

## Area 9: Ysgol y Berwyn and playing fields

### *Historical development*

In 1900 much of this area was described as 'allotments'. In 1874 the National School was built by Ferrey, and the Intermediate School on Ffrydan Road was later constructed in 1899. The area subsequently witnessed the construction of the comprehensive Ysgol y Berwyn in 1962 with its associated school playing fields over the former allotments.

### *Current Urban Area Description*

The area contains Victorian and twentieth century school architecture. The National School of 1874, with its pointed gables and prominent chimneys is an attractive example of late nineteenth century school architecture. The brick-built Intermediate School of 1899 now forms part of Ysgol y Berwyn, and lies within the Conservation Area. The cattle and sheep market lies on the periphery of this area, accessed from Arenig Street.

### *Archaeological resource*

None known.

### *Management recommendations*

The area is principally characterised by the schools and playing fields.

- Avoid development which would be out of scale with the old town
- Preserve open spaces

## Area 10: Blaenddol and Cysgod y Coleg

### *Historical development*

An area on the periphery of the town on which there was very limited development in the nineteenth century and which was only built over in the late twentieth with the construction of the housing estates.

### *Current Urban Area Description*

The area contains some Victorian dwellings but is mostly dominated by the housing estates. The embankment of the former GWR branch line railway to Blaenau Ffestiniog is apparent.

### *Archaeological resource*

None known.

### *Management recommendations*

The area is characterised by modern housing estates.

- Retain any future development within appropriate scale.
- Ensure designs for future development enhances the setting between the town and college.

## Area 11: Penrhiw

### *Historical development*

An area at the top of the rise on both the medieval north-south route (Heol y Castell) and the later Bala-Ffestiniog road. The area seems to have formed Penrhiw farm in the early nineteenth century, and was the birthplace of Elizabeth Davies, Betsi Cadwaladr, the Crimean nurse. In the later nineteenth century it developed as a residential area associated with the Methodist college, including Bodiwan, Michael D. Jones' house, and as the site of the rectory. The space between these large houses was infilled by other houses of a suburban type in the later twentieth century. A 'ribbon development' row of suburban houses was also constructed at some stage along the Bala-Ffestiniog road.

### *Current Urban Area Description*

A mixed development containing a nineteenth century farmhouse, Victorian and Edwardian dwellings, some of considerable size and some later houses. Bodiwan is a detached mid-Victorian house of two storeys with an attic, in simple Tudor-Gothic style. Cerist, nearby, has its back to the road but seems to preserve some Edwardian detailing. The houses on Craig y Fron, the road which runs along the contour between Heol y Castell and the Bala-Ffestiniog road, are impressive and were clearly built to dominate, and to look down on, the town.

### *Archaeological resource*

The standing buildings constitute the principal known archaeological resource of this area.

### *Management recommendations*

The area is characterised by mixed-period development but dominated by late nineteenth-early twentieth century housing for the local elite.

- Preservation of character and of spatial pattern

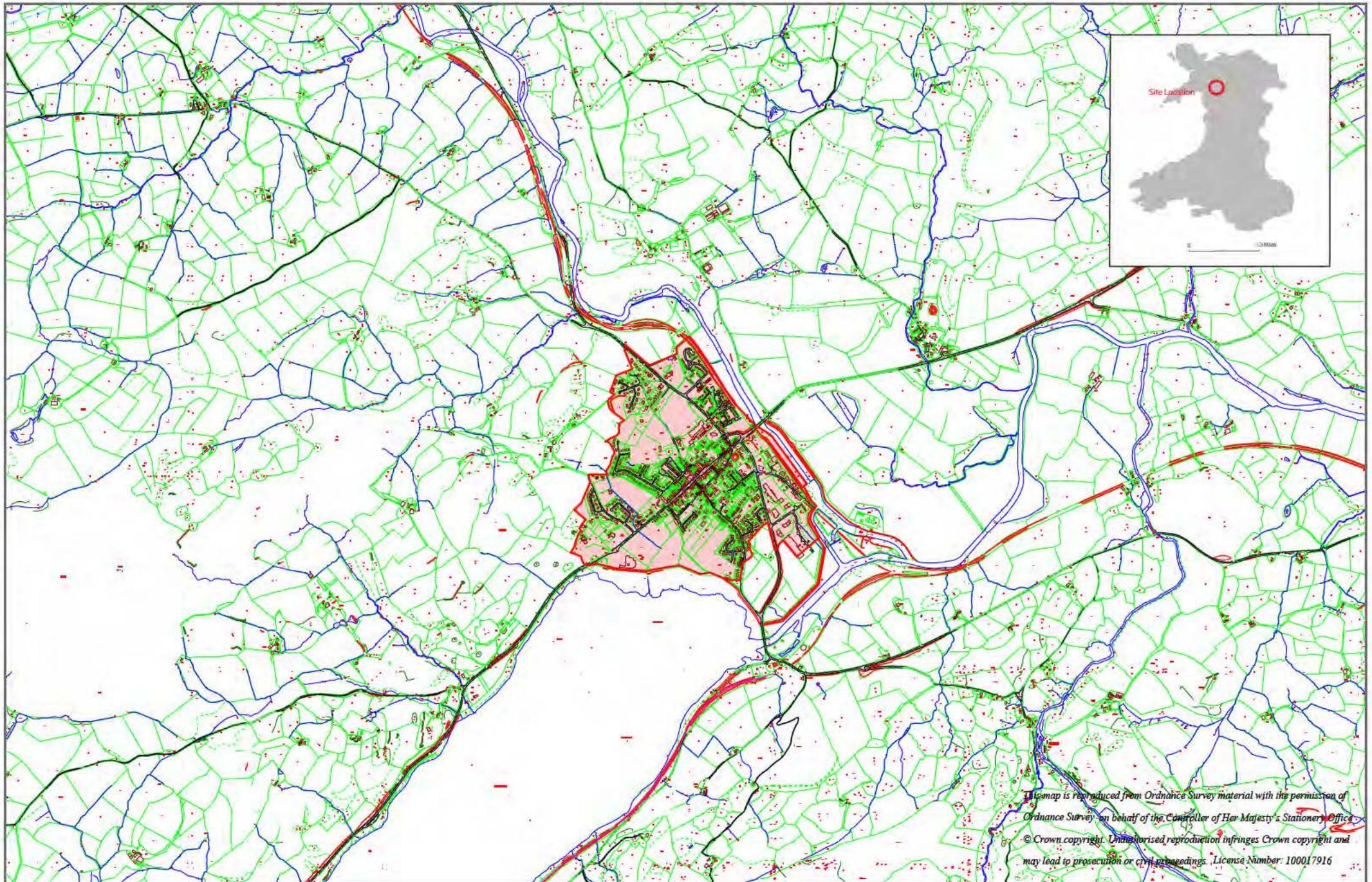


Figure 1. Location map of Bala



Figure 2. Tithe map of Bala

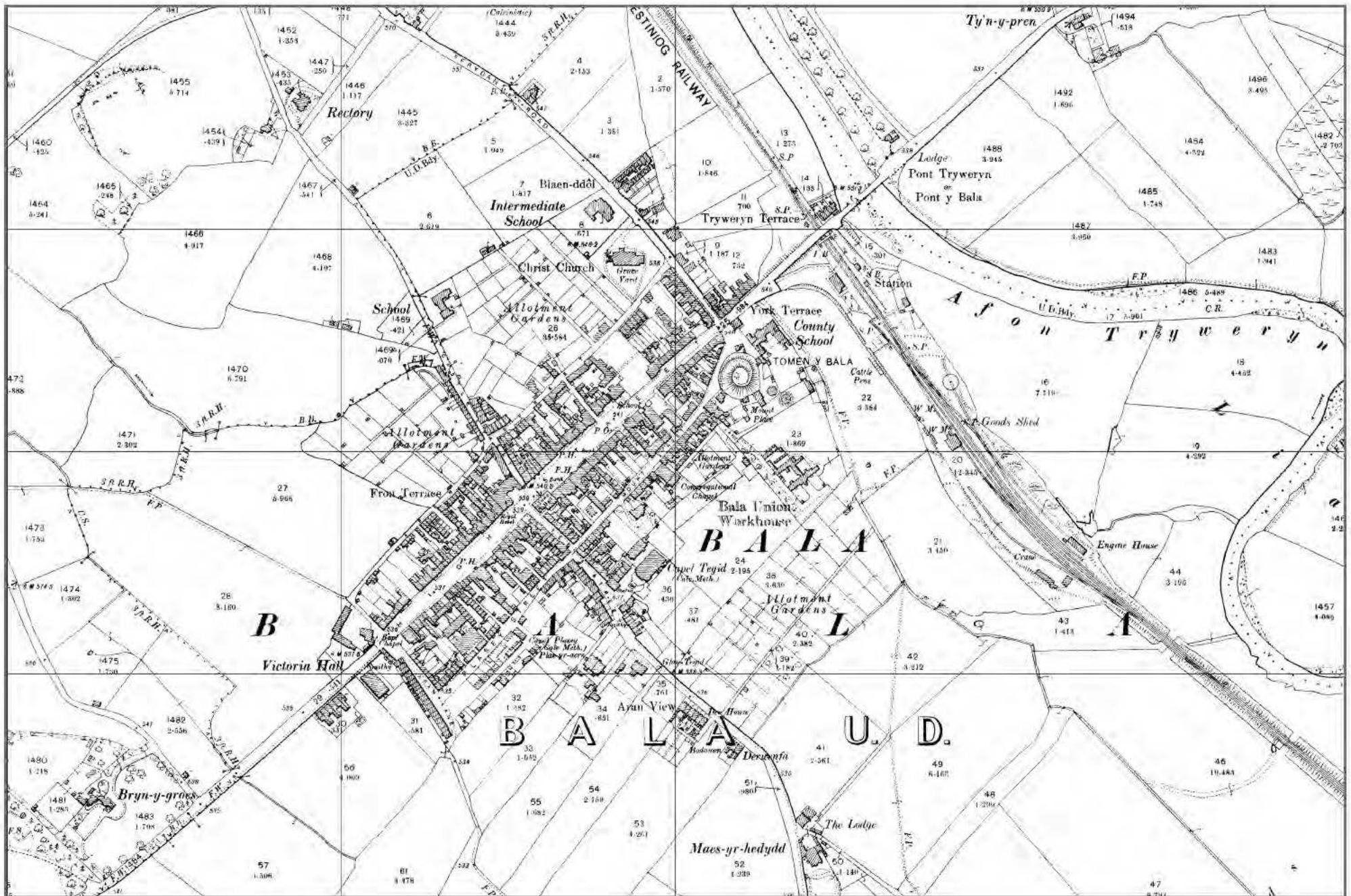
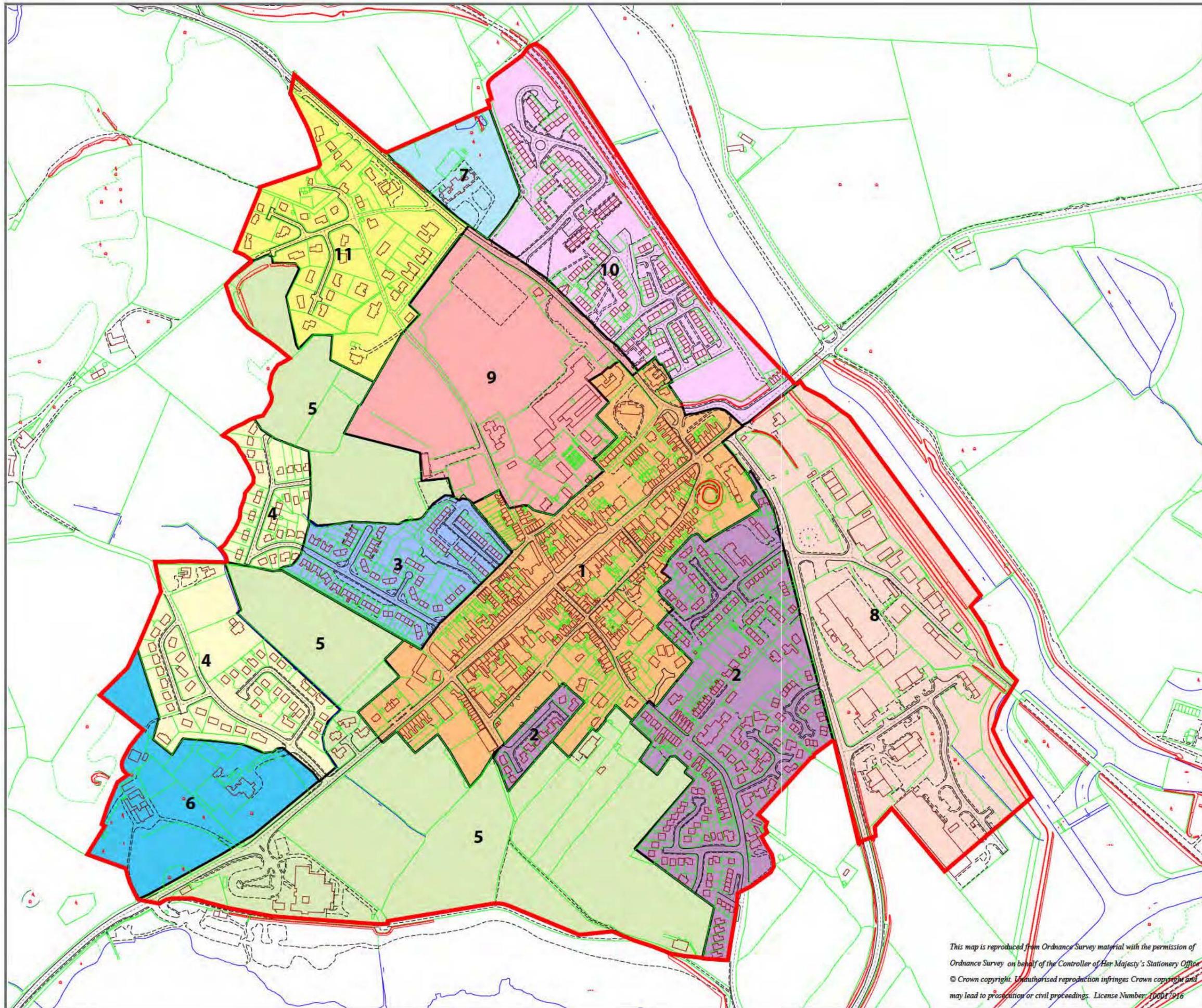


Figure 3. Bala 1900. Ordnance Survey 25", 2nd Edition, County Series, Merioneth, XX.2-4,6&8, XV.4-6

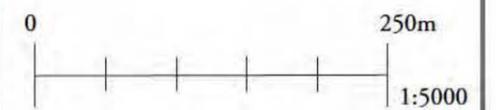
Urban Characterisation: **Bala**

**Figure 4**  
Characterisation Areas



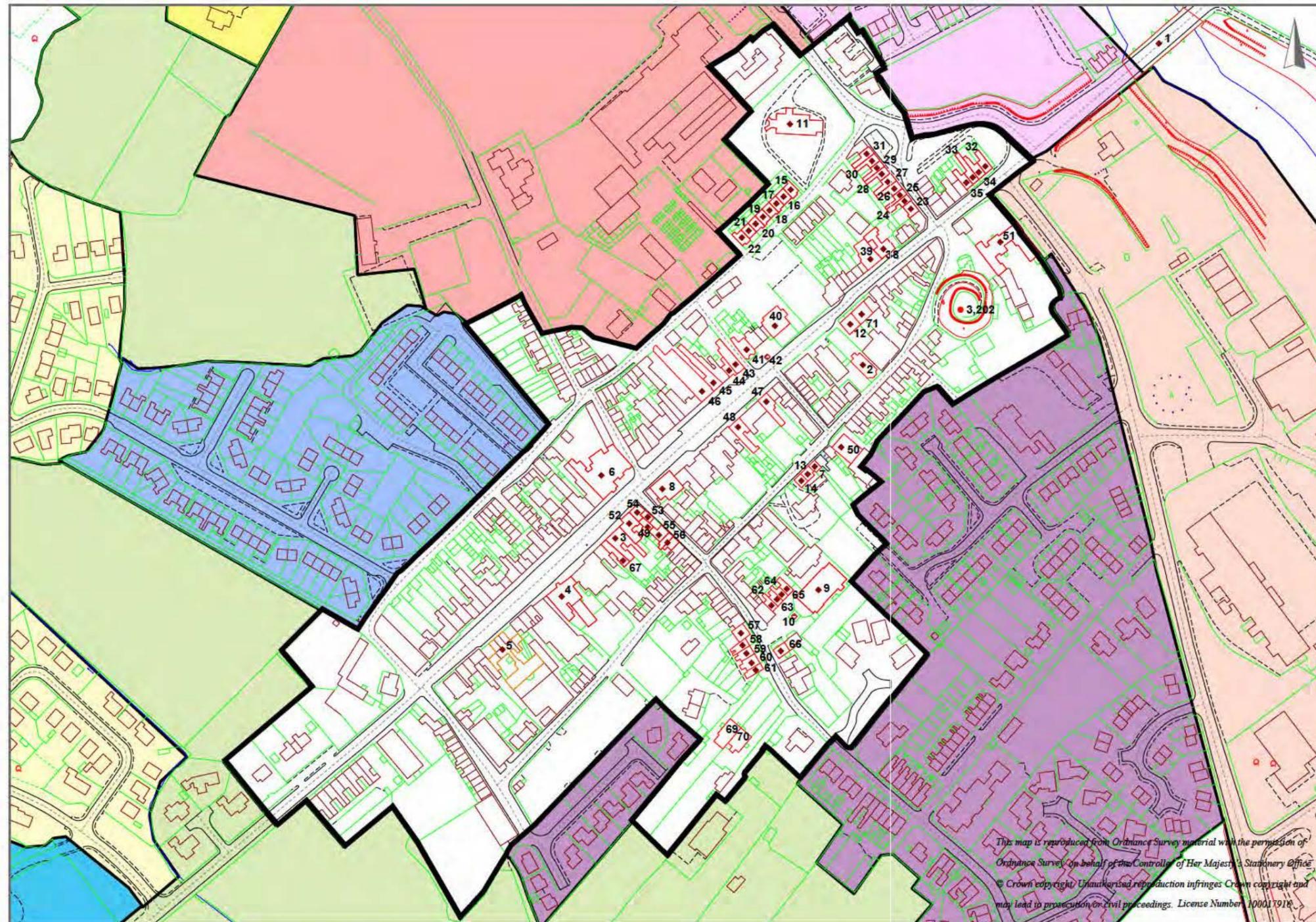
Key

-  Character Area Boundary
-  1 Medieval Area
-  2 Modern Development
-  3 Social Housing
-  4 Housing Estate
-  5 Leisure Centre and Open Fields
-  6 Villa Housing
-  7 Methodist College
-  8 Industrial Estate
-  9 Ysgol y Berwyn and Playing Fields
-  10 Blaenddol and Cysgod y Coleg
-  11 Penrhiw



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**Figure 5**  
Characterisation Area 1  
Medieval Area



**Key**

-  Medieval Area
-  PRN
-  Listed Buildings
-  Grade I Listed Buildings
-  Grade II\* Listed Buildings
-  Grade II Listed Buildings

-  1 Medieval Area
-  2 Modern Development
-  3 Social Housing
-  4 Housing Estate
-  5 Leisure Centre and Open Fields
-  6 Villa Housing
-  7 Methodist College
-  8 Industrial Estate
-  9 Ysgol y Berwyn and Playing Fields
-  10 Blaenddol and Cysgod y Coleg
-  11 Penrhiw

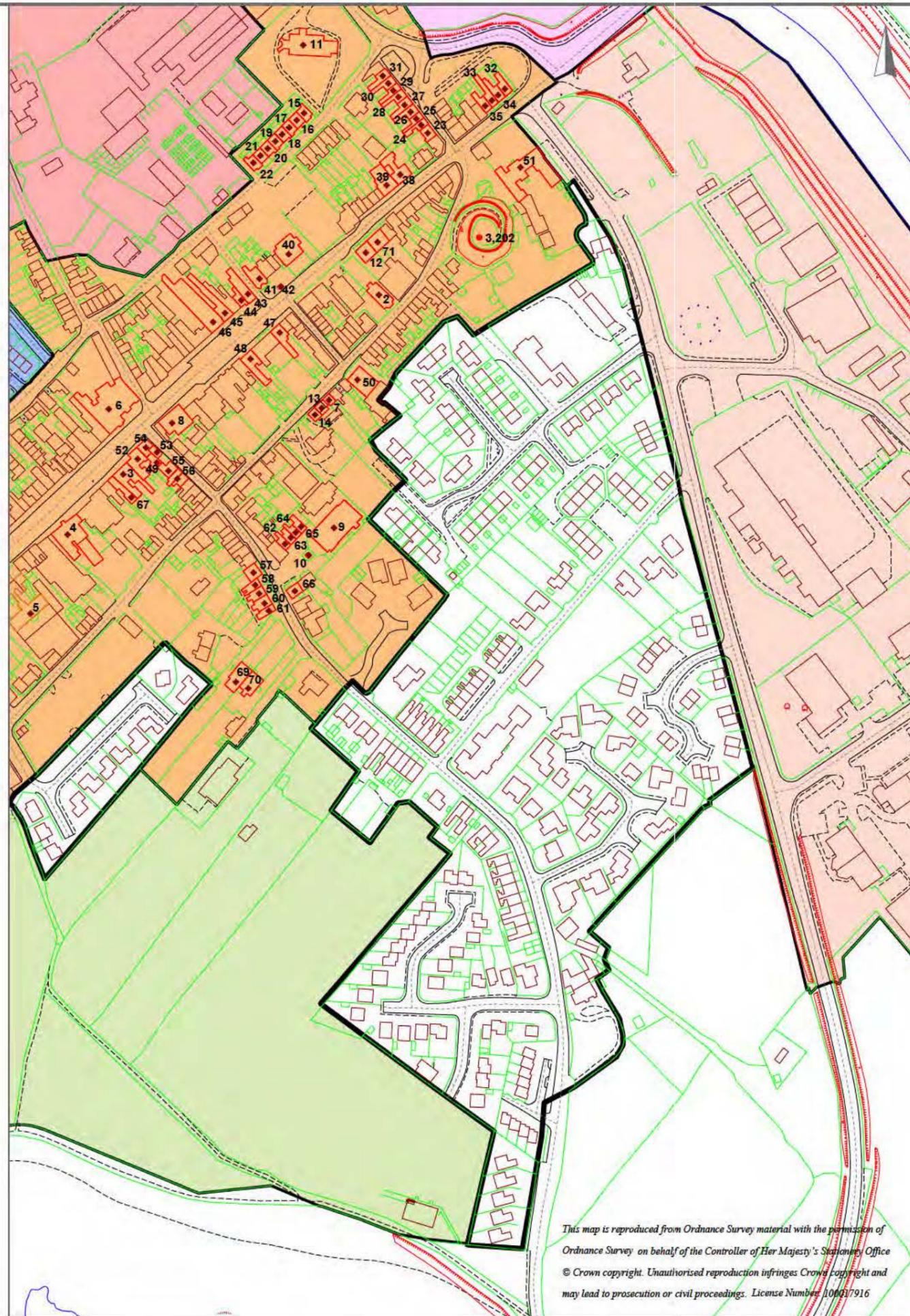
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**Listed Buildings**

1. Pont-y-Bala	13. 50 Mount S	27. 12	40. Plas-yn-Dre	53. China Treasure Takeaway	66. Y Gelli
2. Presbyterian Chapel	14. 52 Mount S	28. 14	41. Heulfryn	54. Siop Bapur Newydd	67. 72 High Street
3. Barclays Bank	15. Rosedale	29. 16	42. Statue of T.E.Ellis	55. Y Siop Fach	68. Bodiwan
4. Ye Olde Bulls Head PH	16. Delwyn	30. 18	43. Siop DE	56. H.Rowlands	69. Plas Teg
5. Aykroyd & Sons, Clothing Factory	17. Iswyn	31. 20	44. Yr Eryr	57. Plas Deon	70. Plas-yn-Acre
6. White Lion Royal Hotel	18. Ronville	32. Trem-y-fron	45. Tenovus	58. 37 Tegid Street	71. Town Council Offices
7. 48 Mount Street	19. Dolydd	33. 2 High Street	46. Spa	59. 39 Tegid Street	
8. Town Hall	20. Fedw Arian	34. Ariunfa	47. Ken Davies Newsagent	60. 41 Tegid Street	
9. Capel Tegid	21. Isfryn	35. Bronallt	48. Caffi'r Cynod	61. 43 Tegid Street	
10. Statue of Rev Thomas Charles	22. Awelfryn	36. Coleg Bala	49. E.J.Theodore, Ironmonger	62. 34 Tegid Street	
11. Christ Church	23. Glanrhyd	37. Statue of Lewis Edwards	50. Congregational Chapel	63. 36 Tegid Street	
12. 26 Mount Street	24. 6	38. Ty GM	51. Neuadd-y-Cyfnod	64. 38 Tegid Street	
	25. 8	39. R H Roberts	52. Cwpwrdd Cornel Cafe	65. 40 Tegid Street	
	26. 10				



**Figure 6**  
**Characterisation Area 2**  
**Modern Development**



**Key**

Modern Development

- PRN
- Listed Buildings
- Grade I Listed Buildings
- Grade II\* Listed Buildings
- Grade II Listed Buildings

- 1 Medieval Area
- 2 Modern Development
- 3 Social Housing
- 4 Housing Estate
- 5 Leisure Centre and Open Fields
- 6 Villa Housing
- 7 Methodist College
- 8 Industrial Estate
- 9 Ysgol y Berwyn and Playing Fields
- 10 Blaenddol and Cysgod y Coleg
- 11 Penrhiw



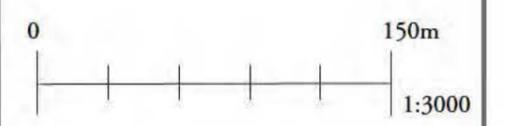
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**Figure 7**  
**Characterisation Area 2**  
**Social Housing**



**Key**

-  **Social Housing**
  
-  **PRN**
-  **Listed Buildings**
-  **Grade I Listed Buildings**
-  **Grade II\* Listed Buildings**
-  **Grade II Listed Buildings**
  
-  **1** Medieval Area
-  **2** Modern Development
-  **3** Social Housing
-  **4** Housing Estate
-  **5** Leisure Centre and Open Fields
-  **6** Villa Housing
-  **7** Methodist College
-  **8** Industrial Estate
-  **9** Ysgol y Berwyn and Playing Fields
-  **10** Blaenddol and Cysgod y Coleg
-  **11** Penrhiw



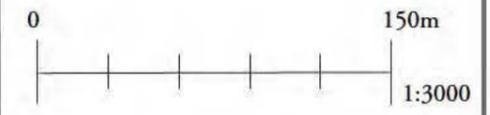
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**Figure 8**  
**Characterisation Area 4**  
**Housing Estate**



**Key**

-  Housing Estate
  
-  PRN
-  Listed Buildings
-  Grade I Listed Buildings
-  Grade II\* Listed Buildings
-  Grade II Listed Buildings
  
-  1 Medieval Area
-  2 Modern Development
-  3 Social Housing
-  4 Housing Estate
-  5 Leisure Centre and Open Fields
-  6 Villa Housing
-  7 Methodist College
-  8 Industrial Estate
-  9 Ysgol y Berwyn and Playing Fields
-  10 Blaenddol and Cysgod y Coleg
-  11 Penrhwi



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# Urban Characterisation: Bala

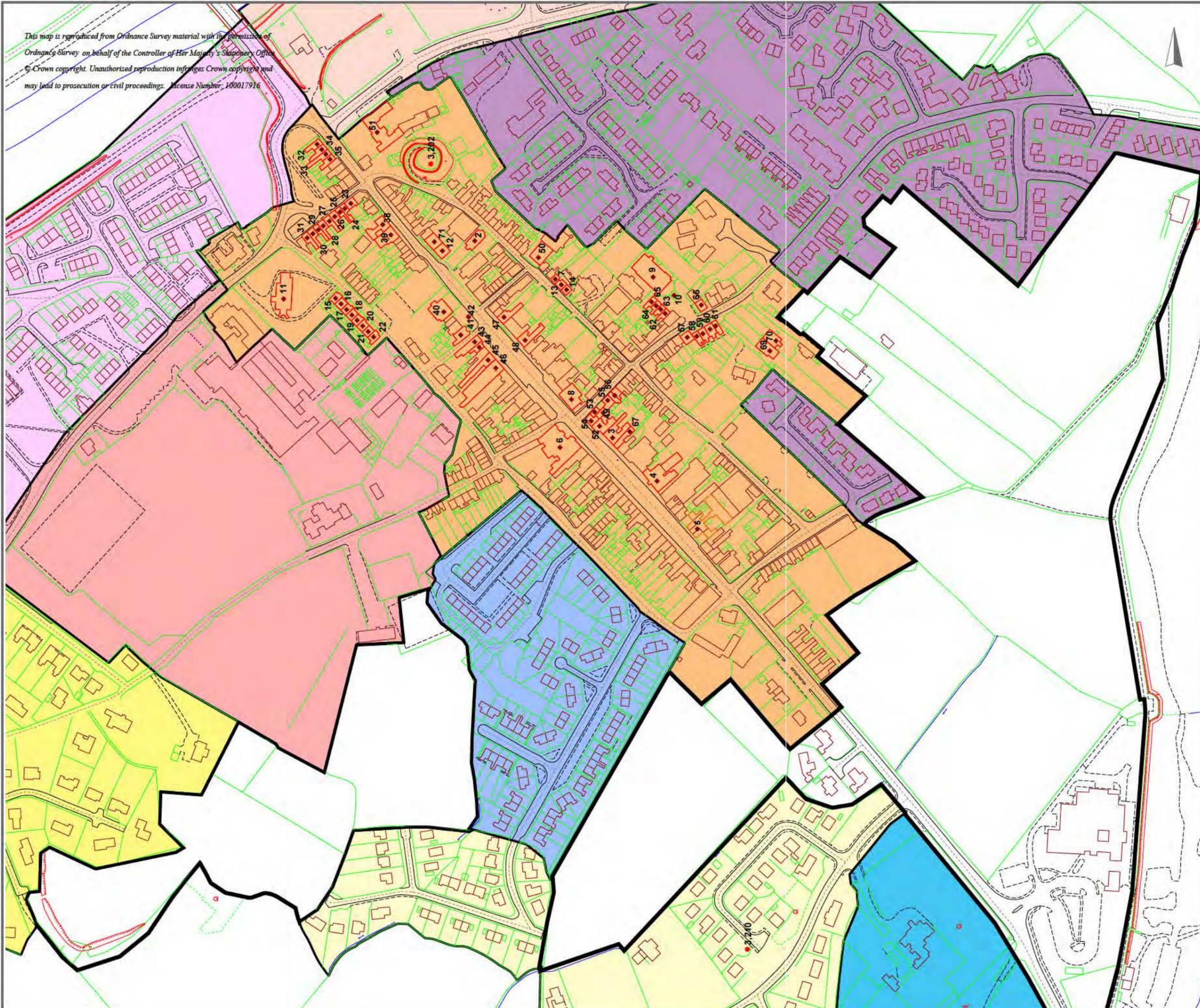
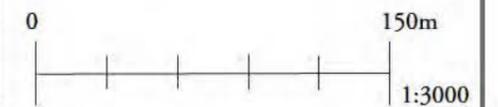
## Figure 9 Characterisation Area 5 Leisure Centre and Open Fields

### Key

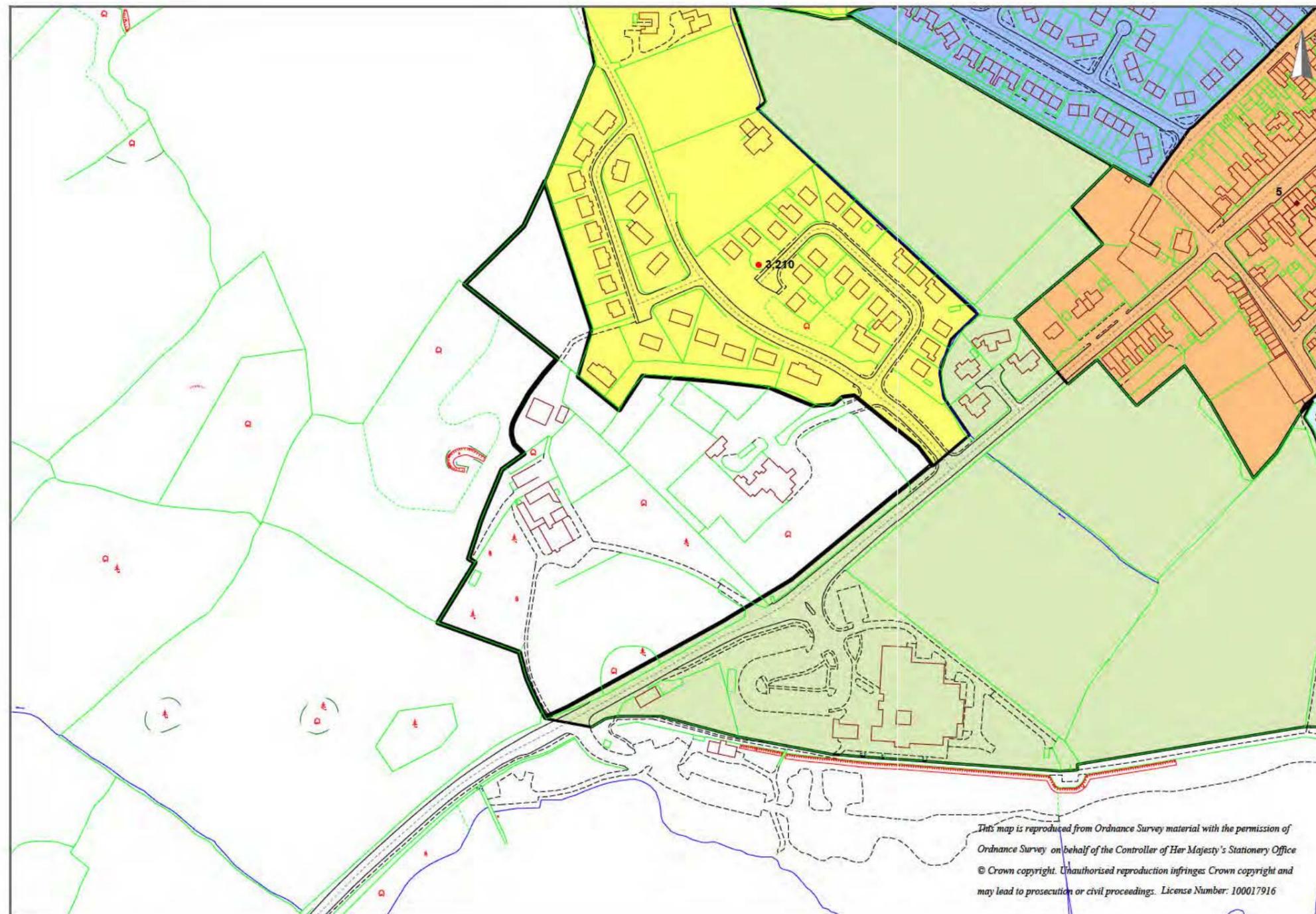
 Leisure Centre and Open Fields

-  PRN
-  Listed Buildings
-  Grade I Listed Buildings
-  Grade II\* Listed Buildings
-  Grade II Listed Buildings

-  1 Medieval Area
-  2 Modern Development
-  3 Social Housing
-  4 Housing Estate
-  5 Leisure Centre and Open Fields
-  6 Villa Housing
-  7 Methodist College
-  8 Industrial Estate
-  9 Ysgol y Berwyn and Playing Fields
-  10 Blaenddol and Cysgod y Coleg
-  11 Penrhiw



**Figure 10**  
**Characterisation Area 6**  
**Villa Housing**

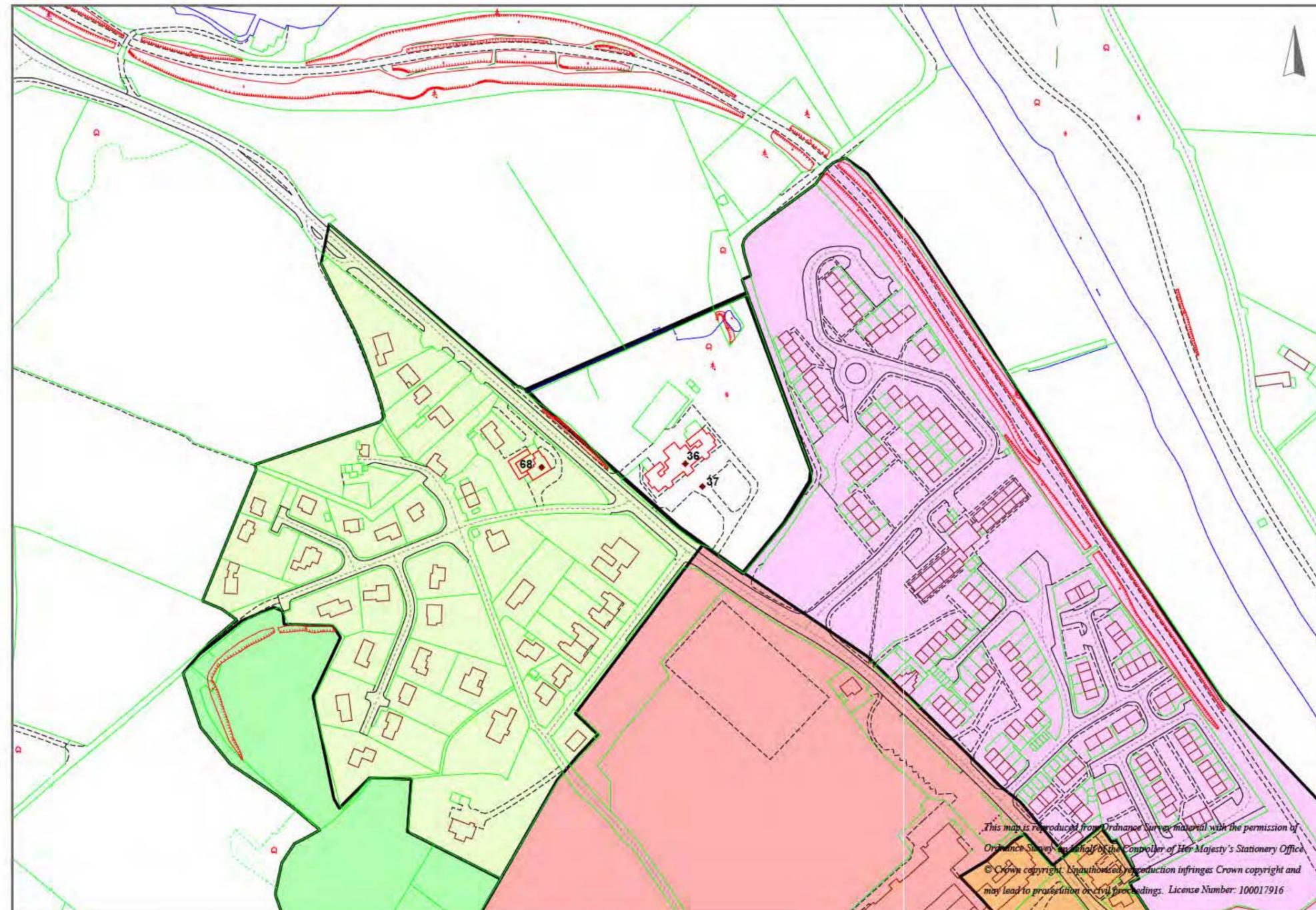


**Key**

-  Villa Housing
-  PRN
-  Listed Buildings
-  Grade I Listed Buildings
-  Grade II\* Listed Buildings
-  Grade II Listed Buildings
-  1 Medieval Area
-  2 Modern Development
-  3 Social Housing
-  4 Housing Estate
-  5 Leisure Centre and Open Fields
-  6 Villa Housing
-  7 Methodist College
-  8 Industrial Estate
-  9 Ysgol y Berwyn and Playing Fields
-  10 Blaenddol and Cysgod y Coleg
-  11 Penrhiw



**Figure 11**  
**Characterisation Area 7**  
**Methodist College**



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**Key**

 Methodist College

-  PRN
-  Listed Buildings
-  Grade I Listed Buildings
-  Grade II\* Listed Buildings
-  Grade II Listed Buildings

-  1 Medieval Area
-  2 Modern Development
-  3 Social Housing
-  4 Housing Estate
-  5 Leisure Centre and Open Fields
-  6 Villa Housing
-  7 Methodist College
-  8 Industrial Estate
-  9 Ysgol y Berwyn and Playing Fields
-  10 Blaenddol and Cysgod y Coleg
-  11 Penrhiw

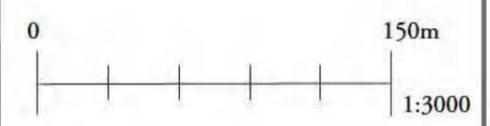


**Figure 12**  
**Characterisation Area 8**  
**Industrial Estate**



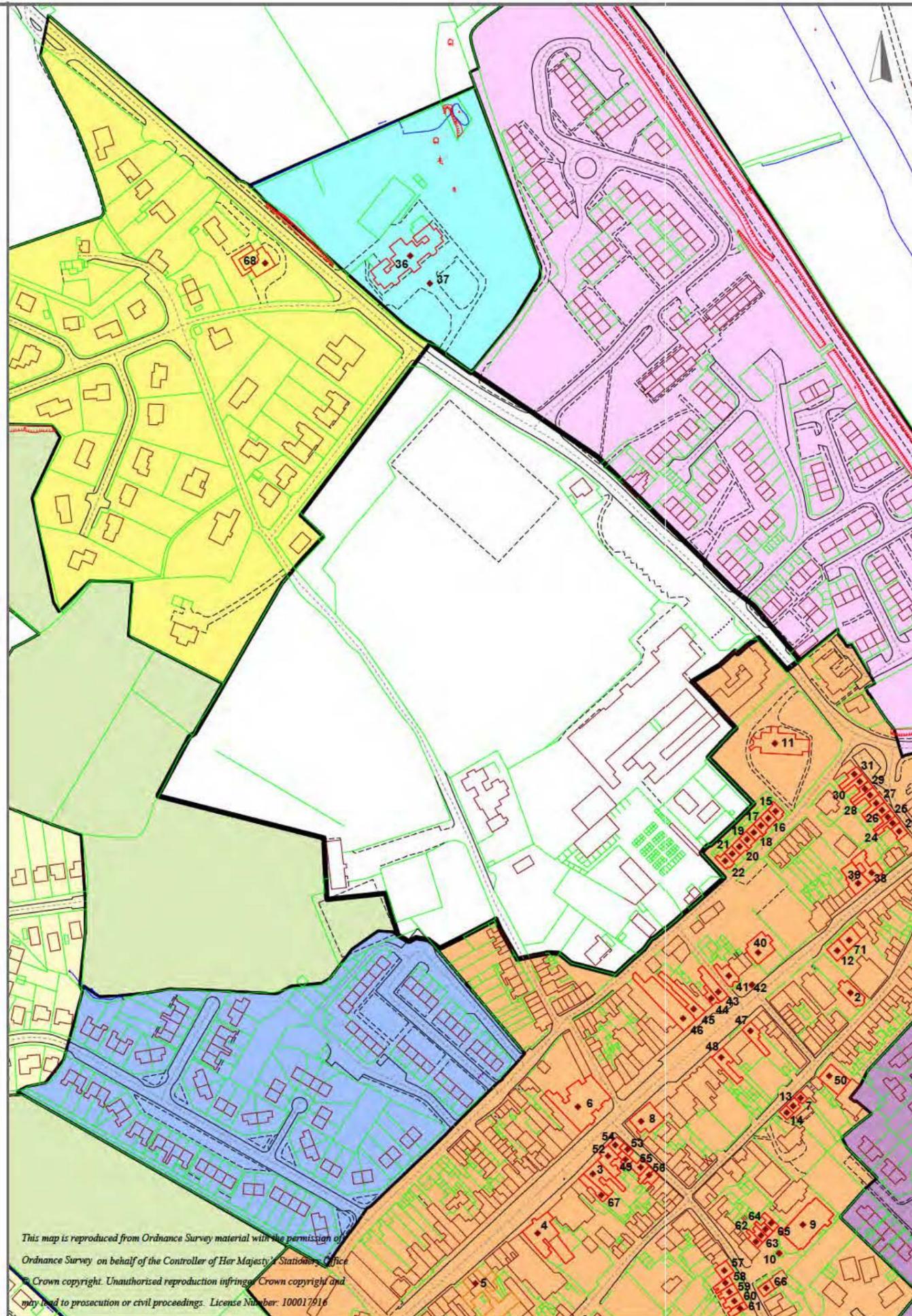
**Key**

-  Industrial Estate
  
-  PRN
-  Listed Buildings
-  Grade I Listed Buildings
-  Grade II\* Listed Buildings
-  Grade II Listed Buildings
  
-  1 Medieval Area
-  2 Modern Development
-  3 Social Housing
-  4 Housing Estate
-  5 Leisure Centre and Open Fields
-  6 Villa Housing
-  7 Methodist College
-  8 Industrial Estate
-  9 Ysgol y Berwyn and Playing Fields
-  10 Blaenddol and Cysgod y Coleg
-  11 Penrhiw



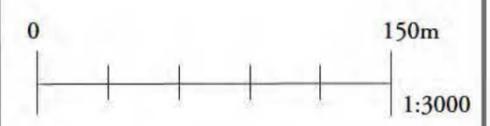
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**Figure 13**  
**Characterisation Area 9**  
**Ysgol y Berwyn and Playing Fields**



**Key**

-  Industrial Estate
  
-  PRN
-  Listed Buildings
-  Grade I Listed Buildings
-  Grade II\* Listed Buildings
-  Grade II Listed Buildings
  
-  1 Medieval Area
-  2 Modern Development
-  3 Social Housing
-  4 Housing Estate
-  5 Leisure Centre and Open Fields
-  6 Villa Housing
-  7 Methodist College
-  8 Industrial Estate
-  9 Ysgol y Berwyn and Playing Fields
-  10 Blaenddol and Cysgod y Coleg
-  11 Penrhif



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Urban Characterisation: **Bala**

**Figure 14**  
**Characterisation Area 10**  
**Blaenddol and Cysgod**  
**y Coleg**

**Key**

 Blaenddol and Cysgod y Coleg

-  PRN
-  Listed Buildings
-  Grade I Listed Buildings
-  Grade II\* Listed Buildings
-  Grade II Listed Buildings

-  1 Medieval Area
-  2 Modern Development
-  3 Social Housing
-  4 Housing Estate
-  5 Leisure Centre and Open Fields
-  6 Villa Housing
-  7 Methodist College
-  8 Industrial Estate
-  9 Ysgol y Berwyn and Playing Fields
-  10 Blaenddol and Cysgod y Coleg
-  11 Penrhiw

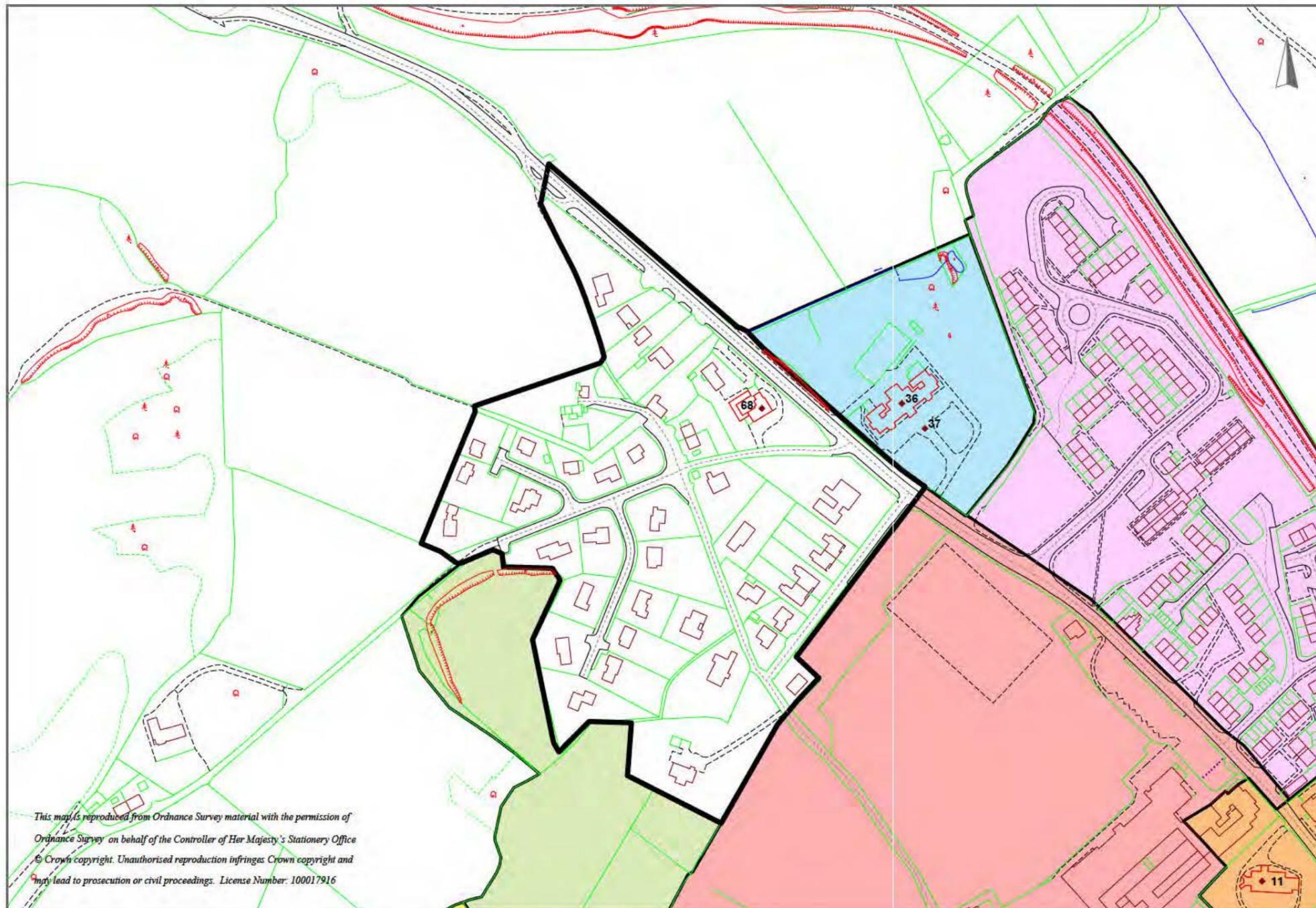


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**Figure 15**  
**Characterisation Area 11**  
**Penrhiw**

**Key**

- Penrhiw
  
- PRN
- ◆ Listed Buildings
- Grade I Listed Buildings
- Grade II\* Listed Buildings
- Grade II Listed Buildings
  
- 1 Medieval Area
- 2 Modern Development
- 3 Social Housing
- 4 Housing Estate
- 5 Leisure Centre and Open Fields
- 6 Villa Housing
- 7 Methodist College
- 8 Industrial Estate
- 9 Ysgol y Berwyn and Playing Fields
- 10 Blaenddol and Cysgod y Coleg
- 11 Penrhiw



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