

## Proposed Guardings at Conwy Castle, Conwy

Heritage Impact Assessment  
Submitted on behalf of Cadw  
March 2025







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## 1.0 Non-technical Summary

### 1.1 Introduction

Donald Insall Associates was commissioned by Cadw in 2019 to develop proposals for improving visitor access at Conwy Castle, Conwy. It has been a complex project with much consultation. This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared to accompany an application for Scheduled Monument Consent for a series of proposed guardings at the Castle.

The design process has been informed by an assessment of the site's significance, detailed site inspections and a considered methodology. The methodology is described in Section 3 and is followed by a brief summary of the site history and description in Section 4. The significance of the asset is set out in Section 5. This is followed by a summary of the Client Brief, Proposals and Design Development in Sections 6 and 7. A Setting Assessment, Heritage Impact Assessment and Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) Impact Assessment are set out in Sections 8,9 & 10.

### 1.2 The Building, its Legal Status and Policy Context

Conwy Castle is a Grade I-listed building and scheduled monument located within the Conwy Conservation Area and Essential Setting of the Conwy Castle & Town Walls section of the World Heritage Site (part of the Castle and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd). Alterations to a listed building generally require listed building consent and development within a conservation area requires the local authorities to assess the implications of proposals on built heritage.

The statutory list descriptions are included in Appendix I and the World Heritage Site Management Plan is included in Appendix II.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision-making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Act impose statutory duties upon local planning authorities which, with regard to listed buildings, require the planning authority to have '*special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*' and, in respect of conservation areas, that '*special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*'.

If a building is both Scheduled and Listed, ancient monuments legislation takes precedence by virtue of Section 61 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and Scheduled Monument Consent rather than Listed Building Consent is required for works.

In considering applications for planning permission, local authorities are also required to consider the policies on the historic environment set out in the National Planning Policy for Wales (PPW) 2021. The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The policy notes that historic assets include listed buildings, conservation areas, historic assets of special local interest, historic parks and gardens, townscapes historic landscapes World Heritage Sites and archaeological remains (including scheduled monuments).



### **1.3 Summary of Project Brief**

Conwy Castle is under the care of and management of Cadw, on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales, and is visited by large numbers of tourists of various ages and mobility every year. Cadw wishes to improve visitor access to the monument through targeted guarding improvements along visitor routes where the historic fabric does not comply with modern requirements for protection from falls. Across a number of locations the parapet walls are incomplete or reach lower heights than what are considered to be safe (minimum 900mm). In some locations, there are existing, modern guardings but these do not meet Cadw's safety requirements, for example some guardings have large gaps between horizontal bars and could therefore be 'climbable'.

A more detailed description is included in Section 6.0.

### **1.4 Summary of Significance**

Conwy Castle is recognised as an outstanding example of medieval military architecture - the castle and its associated town walls are considered among the finest examples of 13th and 14th-century military architecture in Europe. The castle is a scheduled monument and listed at Grade I, which makes it of 'exceptional interest' and within a category that makes up less than 2% of the total number of listed buildings in Wales (Cadw, 2018).

Conwy, its castle and town walls forms part of the Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd World Heritage Site (WHS). UNESCO World Heritage Site Status is the highest possible significance which can be afforded to any heritage asset, being of global significance. The significance of Conwy's contribution to the WHS's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is expressed by a series of attributes and key views across its Essential Setting. The town, its walls and castle are of a high level of integrity and authenticity and are therefore regarded as being of Very High value to the WHS.

The castle also makes a fundamental contribution to the Conwy Conservation Area, the character of the town and its sense of place.

A more detailed description is included in Section 5.0.

### **1.5 Summary of Proposals and Design Development**

New or altered guardings are being proposed to a number of different locations along the visitor routes at Conwy Castle. Proposed locations and additional guardings were chosen and prioritised based on their perceived risk to visitor safety. The proposals were developed as a series of 'Approaches' to specific locations based on the 'conditions' they met. The approaches range from the introduction of new flat metal bars within embrasures to new, stand-alone sections of metal balustrading with mesh panels and timber handrails.

Through design development with Cadw, the proposed locations and 'Approaches' have been assessed against their potential impact on the setting and Outstanding Universal

Value of the castle and wider Conwy Conservation Area. The scope and form of the proposals have been reduced as a result.

## **1.6 Summary of Impact Assessments**

Due to the exceptionally high level of significance of the site, the proposals have undergone a Setting Assessment, a Heritage Impact Assessment and an OUV Impact Assessment. These assessments have found the impact of this suite of proposals is, on balance, of neutral impact on the site's heritage values. Furthermore, by enabling safe access for a wide range of visitor ages and abilities the proposals will ensure the castle continues to enrich and be a source of inspiration for generations to come.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

The suite of proposals have been carefully designed by conservation accredited architects with a deep appreciation of the significance of the existing fabric.

The proposals are considered justified due to the clear need to balance continued physical access to the site's heritage values against impact on its significance and attributes. The proposals have been kept modest in size and designed with a 'conservation approach' to ensure maximum retention of historic fabric whilst meeting the needs of the Client's brief. The designs have undergone extensive design development in order to reduce their impact on the castle and its heritage values as far as possible.

Conservation is the process of managing change in a way that protects and enhances what makes an asset significant and special. Unfortunately, there continue to be concerns in relation to the perceived safety of the wall walks, which are a hugely popular visitor attraction and opportunity for public access to, and appreciation of, the heritage. Without careful interventions to improve visitor safety, key areas will remain closed-off for visitors or compromised through the use of 'temporary' protections which are detracting and cause visual clutter.

This report concludes by finding that the heritage values and attributes which make the castle and its setting so special and significant will not be harmed as a result of the proposals.

## 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Donald Insall Associates was commissioned by Cadw in 2023 to develop proposals for protecting visitors from falls at Conwy Castle, Conwy. This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared to accompany an application for **Scheduled Monument Consent** for a series of proposed guarding interventions at the Castle.
- 2.2 New or altered guardings are being proposed to a number of different locations along the visitor routes at Conwy Castle. Proposed locations for guardings were chosen and prioritised based on their perceived risk to visitor safety.
- 2.3 Conwy Castle is recognised as an outstanding example of medieval military architecture - the Castle and its walls are considered among the finest examples of 13th and 14th-century military architecture in Europe. This Heritage Impact Assessment has been written to assess the impact of the proposed guardings on the significance and Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) on the site which is a World Heritage Site, scheduled monument and Grade I listed building.



*Figure 1 - View of section of the visitor route closed due to safety concerns*

## 3.0 Methodology

- 3.1 Both the design process and HIA have been informed by an understanding of the site's significance, comprising historical research and site inspections. The proposals have been developed using the latest 3D laser scanning technology to build accurate models of Conwy Castle, with a very fine degree of detail. The use of this technology has enabled individual interventions to be precisely planned and developed to have the minimum impact on the fabric as possible.
- 3.2 The analysis includes a proportionate Setting Assessment that follows the guidelines set out in Cadw's *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales*.
- 3.3 The Heritage Impact Assessment is set out in tabature format and analysis has been undertaken by comparing 3D images of the design approaches with existing photographs of detailed and distance views.
- 3.4 UNESCO World Heritage Site Status is the highest possible significance which can be afforded to any heritage asset. Therefore the attributes which contribute to OUV are here assessed separately, according to ICOMOS' guidelines for Heritage Impact Assessments for proposals in World Heritage Sites.



## 4.0 Site History and Description

### 4.1 Site and Context

A full and detailed description of the site history is covered in the WHS Management Plan which is included in Appendix II.

Following King Edward I's conquest of Wales in 1283 he began construction of a castle, strategically placed on the Menai Straits. Conwy Castle was a strategic component of Edward I's "iron ring" of castles, constructed to assert dominance over the rebellious Welsh princes, particularly Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, the last sovereign Prince of Wales. The construction was supervised by James of St. George, a master mason and military architect from Savoy, who played a crucial role in the design of many of Edward's castles.

The town of Conwy sprang up around it, colonised by the craftsmen who had been brought from all over England to help build the Castle. Following completion of the town walls more English settlers were invited and enticed with financial incentives to colonise the new town. Conwy became a prosperous trading town, thanks to its location and the success of the port to the north. Within the walled town a grid street pattern was laid out with a market place at the heart. This medieval street pattern remains largely intact today.

The Castle successfully withstood a siege during the Welsh uprising of 1294-1295, led by Madog ap Llewelyn and played a role in the Welsh rebellion led by Owain Glyndŵr 1400-1415 but was never captured.

In 1399 Richard II sought refuge in Conwy Castle during a rebellion, but he was eventually captured after negotiations. Later, during the English Civil War, Conwy Castle was held by Royalists but was eventually taken by Parliamentary forces in 1646. Following the Civil War, the castle was partially dismantled (slighted) to prevent it from being used militarily in the future.

The ruined castle was particularly attractive to tourists and artists in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century and was famously painted by J.M.W. Turner. It has continued to be hugely popular tourist destination to this day.

Conwy Castle was given to the Borough of Conway in 1865 and is now in the care of Cadw, on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales.



*Figure 2 - Impression of Conwy as it may have appeared in the early 14th-century.  
Source: Ivan Lapper (1990)*

## 4.2 The Building

At Conwy the masonry of the castle as seen today was built between 1283 and 1287. The castle is exceptional for its completeness and for the grandeur of its towers and curtain walls. Although the buildings within the castle enclosure have been lost, sufficient remains of their foundations to give a reasonably clear idea of the layout of the castle accommodation. The great hall, chambers and kitchen can be seen in the outer ward. The royal chambers and a royal chapel survive in the inner ward. These are regarded as the most intact set of royal apartments left by a medieval monarch in either Wales or England and create a clear picture of how the castle would have functioned when the royal entourage was in residence.

Fragmentary evidence of external lime plaster also shows that the castle would have looked very different in medieval times, rendered and whitened.

The town is enclosed by 1.3km of walls, with three twin-towered gates and 21 towers, enclosing an area of nearly 9 hectares. They represent one of the best-preserved and most impressive examples of medieval town walls in Europe.

The most significant change to the castle and town walls since their construction resulted from the coming of the roads and railways. This included Thomas Telford's suspension bridge in 1826, the Chester to Holyhead railway and Robert Stephenson's railway bridge in 1849. A third bridge was also added to ease road traffic in 1958.

The Conwy road tunnel was built after the inscription of the World Heritage Site, in an effort to alleviate traffic congestion. The Conwy Suspension Bridge is now in the care of the National Trust.



Figure 3 - Artist's impression of the Inner Ward of Conwy Castle. Source: P. Visscher.

## 5.0 Statement of Significance

5.1 A full and detailed Statement of Significance is covered in the WHS Management Plan which is included in Appendix II.

### 5.2 Summary

Conwy Castle is recognised as an outstanding example of medieval military architecture - the castle and its walls are considered among the finest examples of 13th and 14th-century military architecture in Europe. The castle is listed at Grade I, which makes it of 'exceptional interest' and within a category that makes up less than 2% of the total number of listed buildings in Wales (Cadw, 2018).

Conwy, its castle and town walls forms part of the Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd World Heritage Site. UNESCO World Heritage Site Status is the highest possible significance which can be afforded to any heritage asset, being of global significance. The significance of Conwy's contribution to the World Heritage Site's OUV is expressed by a series of attributes and key views across its Essential Setting. The town, its walls and castle are of a high level of integrity and authenticity and are therefore regarded as being of Very High value to the WHS.

### 5.3 Highest Significance

The fabric of the castle and associated town walls of the highest significance.

Conwy Castle provides exceptional evidential value in its completeness, pristine state, evidence for organised domestic space and extraordinary repertory of medieval architecture.

It holds the very high levels of historical value for its role in medieval history and associations with James of St George, the King's chief architect.

It forms part of a stylistically coherent group with Edward I's 'iron ring' of castles.

It's setting overlooking Conwy town and the estuary is important both historically and aesthetically.



*Figure 4 - View of Conwy Castle overlooking the Conwy estuary*



#### 5.4 Moderate Significance

The castle features some good examples of the late twentieth century vernacular architecture in the attached Visitor Centre, designed by the Bowen Dann Davies (Knox) Partnership.

#### 5.5 Neutral Significance

The modern surfaces to the wall walks, wall tops, modern stairs and metal guardings are all of neutral significance.

#### 5.6 Factors that detract

The 'temporary', non-bespoke barriers which are currently used to close off routes which present a safety concern are a source of visual clutter. They also obscure views of interpretation and detract from one's appreciation of the monument.

#### 5.7 Reason for listing

*"The monument is of national and international importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of medieval social, domestic and political life and warfare. This is reflected by its designation as a World Heritage Site. Significantly, Conwy Castle is exceptional not only for the grandeur of its high towers and curtain walls, but also for its excellent state of preservation. Inside the imposing outer shell, the castle contains the most intact set of residential buildings left by the medieval English monarchy in Wales or England. The scheduled area comprises the remains described and an area around them within which related evidence may be expected to survive."* Scheduled Monuments – Full Report



Figure 5 - Existing modern guardings



Figure 6 - Temporary, non-bespoke barriers forming visual clutter and obscuring interpretation



## 6.0 Client Brief and Proposals

### 6.1 Understanding the Brief

Conwy Castle is visited by large numbers of tourists of various ages and levels of mobility every year. The castle is in the care of and managed by Cadw, on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales. Cadw wish to address some existing safety concerns with guardings along visitor routes.

The Castle's wall walks and towers are a key attraction and are important in facilitating public access to and appreciation of the history, functions and layout of the building. The wall walks are in a good condition generally, as the wall tops have been consolidated and maintained throughout the 20th and 21<sup>st</sup>-centuries. However, in a number of locations the building's ruinous qualities have a potential impact on the safety of visitors. Across a number of locations the parapet walls are incomplete, or reach lower heights than what is considered to be safe (minimum 750-950mm). In some locations, there are existing, modern guardings but these do not meet Cadw's safety requirements. Some of these existing guardings have large gaps between horizontal bars which could be considered to be 'climbable'.

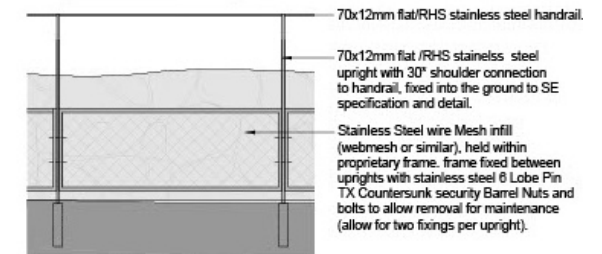
### 6.2 Proposals

The proposals were developed as a series of 'Strategic Approaches' to specific conditions occurring in various locations around the site. Some approaches are applicable to more than one location. Locations were chosen and prioritised based on their perceived risk to visitor safety including assessments on walkway width, surface finish, height of guarding and height of any potential fall. Following design development with Cadw, these locations were assessed against their potential impact on the setting and Outstanding Universal Value of the Castle and wider WHS.

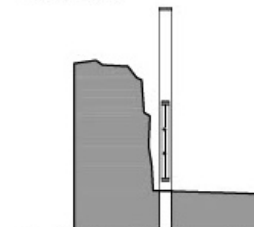
The approaches range from the introduction of new flat metal bars within embrasures to new stand-alone sections of metal balustrade with mesh infill and timber handrails.



Perspective View of the Proposal



Elevation of the Guarding as Proposed  
Scale 1:20@A3



Section of the Guarding as Proposed  
Scale 1:20@A3

The 'Strategic Approaches' and locations are summarised as follows:

#### **Approach A – New Balustrade**

Description: Install new guarding offset from the masonry. Timber handrail with wire mesh infill within frame.

Locations:

1. Lower West Barbican
2. Outer Ward East Walkway

#### **Approach D – Infill Mesh**

Description: The void between the middle rail and coping stones shall be infilled using a framed, wire mesh system.

Locations:

1. North West Tower
2. Outer Ward West Walkway
3. West Barbican
4. Well/Drawbridge

#### **Approach E – Flat Bar**

Description: Installation of new flat bar guarding in core work at 900mm height with second bar below if gap exceeds 350mm.

Locations:

1. Outer Ward North Walkway
2. Outer Ward South East and West Walkway

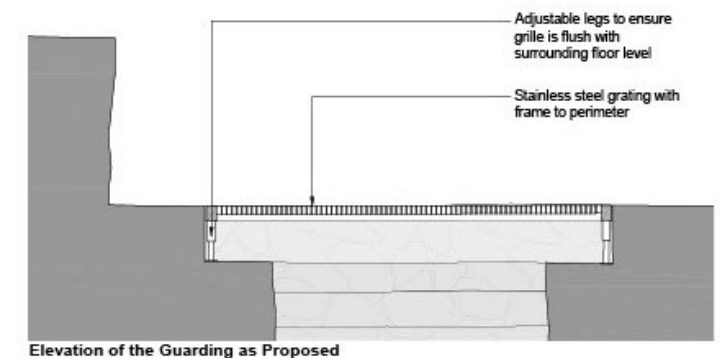
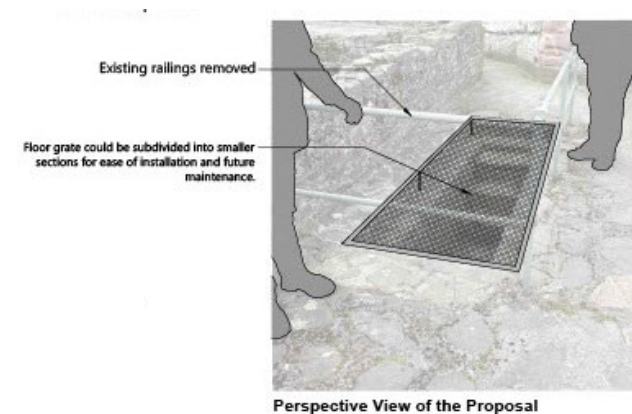
#### **Approach H – Floor Grille**

Description: Existing railing removed and new floor grille on adjustable legs level with surrounding floor level to cover floor aperture.

Locations:

1. Outer Ward West Walkway

*Figure 7 - Extract from proposed drawing showing 3D visualisation, elevation and section of 'Approach A'*



*Figure 8 - Extract from proposed drawing showing 3D visualisation and section of 'Approach H'*

## Conwy Castle Reference Plan

This plan identifies the location of the various approaches to improving safety at Conwy Castle. The drawing should be read alongside Donald Insall Drawings CCWR.01-2500-2504.

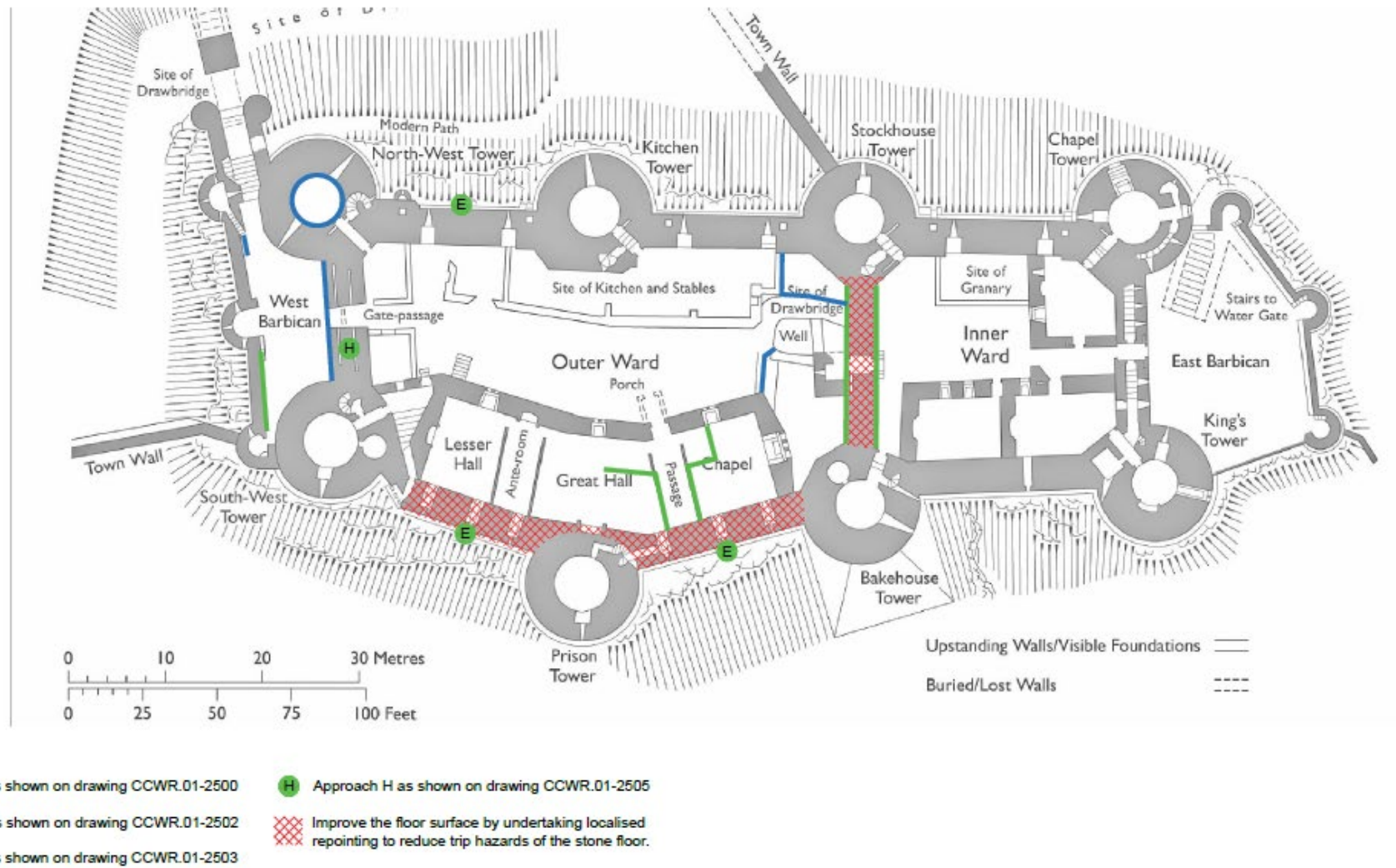


Figure 9 – Reference plan showing locations of proposed guardings

## 7.0 Design Development

As part of the design phase Cadw were consulted on the proposed locations for safety interventions and the suite of 'Approaches'.

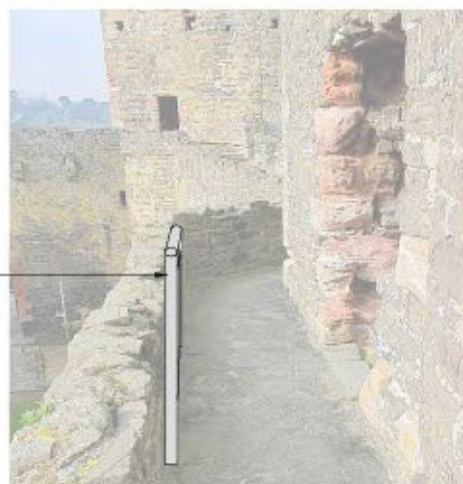
A total of fourteen potential locations were originally identified for the incorporation of interventions to improve public safety. Following consultation with Cadw and desire to reduce the number of interventions down to essential locations, to reduce the overall impact on the heritage asset, the proposed locations were reduced down to nine. These nine are considered to be the most critical in terms of visitor safety.

A total of eight 'Approaches' were originally explored for dealing with different conditions occurring in various locations around the site. Following consultation with Cadw and desire to reduce the overall impact on the heritage asset and achieve coherence, the adopted 'Approaches' were reduced down to four. These four are considered to be the most appropriate for each specific condition.

### Approach B

To install a short length of guarding directly opposite the entrance to and from the tower.

New guarding centered on the tower entrance opposite.



Perspective View of the Proposal

### Approach C

To install a section of guarding within the openings of the crenellated tower.



Perspective View of the Proposal

Figure 10 - Extract from design development drawings showing 'Approaches B & C' which were omitted as part of the design process



## 8.0 Setting Assessment

### 8.1 Methodology

The Setting Assessment follows a proportionate approach to assessing the impact on the settings of potentially affected assets in line with Cadw's guidance in *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales*. This takes the form of three distinct stages; identification; definition; analysis.

The first stage involved identifying heritage assets with setting that could potentially be impacted by the proposals. Given the relatively small scope of the interventions and their discrete nature, identification was undertaken through reference to the local HER records and visual assessment from the site. The setting assessment of these identified assets is described below.

### 8.2 Stage 1 - Identification

**Heritage Asset no.1: Conwy Castle and Town Walls section of 'The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd' World Heritage Site** (incorporating Castell Conwy Scheduled Monument, Conwy Castle Listed Building and Conwy Town Walls Scheduled Monument)

**Heritage Asset no.2: Site of Medieval King's Hall and Wardrobe Scheduled Monument**

**Heritage Asset no.3: Plas Mawr Scheduled Monument** (incorporating Plas Mawr Listed Building)



Figure 11 - Aerial view of Conwy showing nearby Scheduled Monuments highlighted in red

### 8.3 Stage 2 – Definition of Settings

#### **Conwy Castle and Town Walls section of 'The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd' World Heritage Site**

The Essential Setting, significant views and the sense of arrival is well documented in the World Heritage Site inscription information.

The setting has transformed over time but the castle still dominates the area. The Essential Setting includes the entire walled town. The towns character reflects its origins and continued importance even after military importance of the castle diminished. The historic relationship with the birth and growth of the early town is still clearly legible in the setting today.

The towns position - sited on the most vulnerable sides of the castle – displays the supporting role it played historically. The wall walks, defended gateways and arrow loops on the towns walls display this supporting role clearly today. The walled town provides an exceptional sense of enclosure with a sharp distinction between density of development inside walls and more sparse development outside. Whilst the majority of the inner development is 19<sup>th</sup>-century in character it retains the main elements of a medieval street pattern. The relationship between the castle and the medieval church of St Mary's, which is in the centre of the walled town, is also a key element of the setting both historically and today.

The functional relationship of waterfronts and historic routes remains as it would have been in the historic setting of the castle but are now also appreciated for their aesthetic contribution. The castle's supplies would all have historically arrived by sea, which developed into sophisticated trading relationships which contributed to the town's success. This is illustrated through the growth of the mercantile trade in Conwy and wealthy merchants houses (one of which still remains). The castle and town's relationship with sea continues to evolve as it meets the present day challenges of regeneration, leisure and tourism.

The castle's relationship with natural environments is another core element of its setting. Built on Silurian grits or sandstones, it overlooks the Conwy estuary which is a SSSI and lies within Creuddyn and Conwy registered landscape. The view of the castle looking south sees it with a lush backdrop of parkland which is also of registered historic interest.

A significant impact on setting of the castle in recent history was from transport engineering, namely Telford's suspension bridge in 1822-1826, the railway in 1849 and the road bridge in 1958.

As it did historically the Castle still dominates views and today is a fundamental feature of the conservation area.

There are protected significant views from the castle and town walls towards the River Conwy, its bridges and Deganwy castle. These views are impacted by the height of towers and extent of town walls. Some locations afford 360 degree vistas of the surrounding areas.

There are also protected significant views towards the castle and town walls from the River Conwy, Deganwy (castle and mountains) and a variety of locations within the walled town.

### **Site of Medieval King's Hall and Wardrobe Scheduled Monument**

This site borders the southern section of Conwy town walls. It is likely to have been occupied by a 13<sup>th</sup>-century King's Hall and the main works headquarters at time of the castle's construction. The site was excavated in 1963 and 1964 with remains found. It was then back-filled and is now a car park. The site is of national importance for its significant archaeological potential but this all lies below ground.

The setting of this asset has changed significantly over time. The setting still includes the castle and town walls but these now also feature modern balustrades. The main road and 19<sup>th</sup>-century buildings alongside also make a significant contribution to the setting today. The ground level of the setting is dominated by tarmac and modern surfaces.

### **Plas Mawr Scheduled Monument**

Plas Mawr is an excellent example of an Elizabethan town house from the last quarter of 16<sup>th</sup>-century. It is of national importance and holds significant archaeological potential. Its historic setting within the walled town surrounded by dense development on a medieval burgage pattern remains unchanged. However, the surrounding architecture is now 19<sup>th</sup>-century in style. The distinctive crow-stepped gables of Plas Mawr are a dominating feature in its surroundings. The main house faced Crown Lane and a newer gatehouse now faces the High Street. The high street features busy shops, some with modern facades, cars and pedestrians. It's aesthetic of slate roofs and colourful facades is typical within the town. Crown Lane is quieter, with fewer cars and pedestrians and characterised by small terraced houses.

Plas Mawr's setting maintains a close relationship with the market square (now Lancaster Square).

There are significant views looking up and down High Street with Plas Mawr's distinctive tall crow-stepped gables drawing one's attention. The view looking downhill from Crown Lane is also significant for displaying the various phases of Plas Mawr.

There are important views from upper floor windows looking towards the quayside and partial views of the castle.

## **8.4 Stage 3 – Evaluation of Potential Impact**

### **Conwy Castle and Town Walls section of 'The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd' World Heritage Site**

Photographs from the viewpoints identified in Stage 2 were used to help assess and understand the likely impact of the relatively small and discrete interventions.

The likely visual impact of the interventions relative to the scale of the castle and its setting is considered to be almost negligible. In most views it was determined that the existing modern balustrades were not discernible.

The proposed suite of interventions are not likely to detract from our ability to understand or appreciate the castle or its relationship with the surrounding town, landscape or waterfront. Similarly, the proposed changes will not affect or change the character of the surrounding built environment, landscape, tree cover or seascape which is visible from the castle.

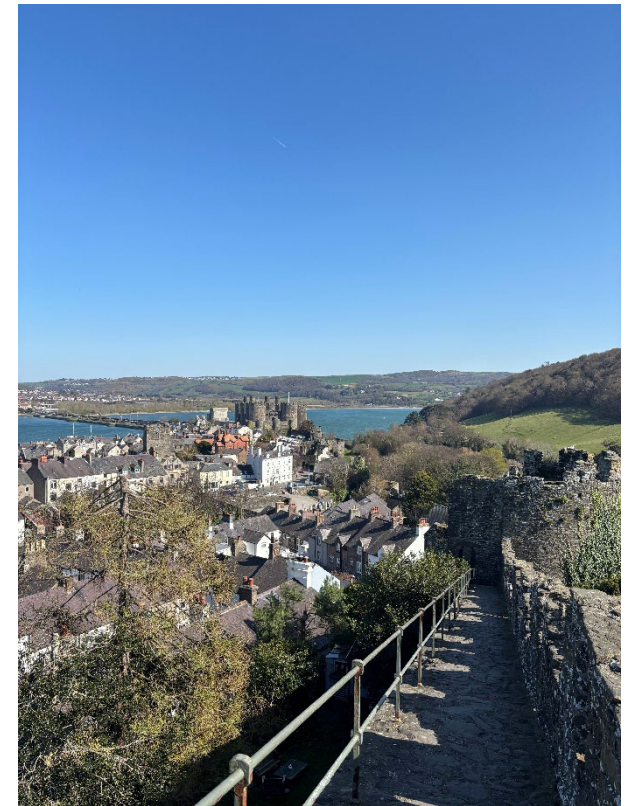


The small scale interventions are not likely to impact on the existing sense of place or communal values inherent in the castle. Through careful design the interventions are also not likely to impact on evocation of past functions within the castle.

It is noted that there is the potential for a cumulative effect on the setting. The proposals represent a series of relatively small changes but these could have a major impact on one's ability to understand, appreciate or experience the castle. This impact has been successfully mitigated through extended design development and by careful choice of proposed locations and 'Approaches'.

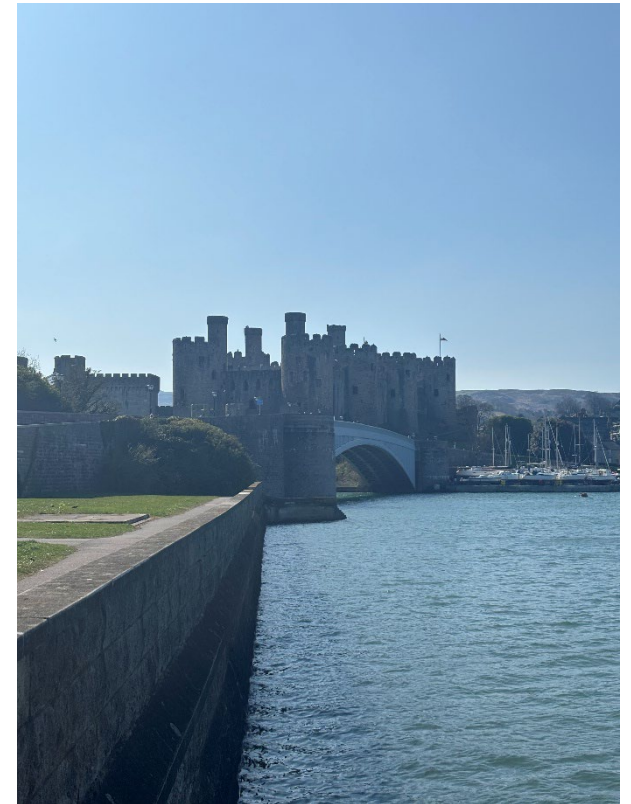
Photographs have been used to analyse key viewpoints and views on the approach to the castle as per WHS Essential Setting. These photographs demonstrate that due to the distances involved and the small scale of interventions are likely to have a negligible impact.

It was concluded that the overall impact would be neutral.



*Figures 12-14 – Significant distant views of the castle*





*Figures 15-17 – Significant views of the castle*

### **Site of Medieval King's Hall and Wardrobe Scheduled Monument**

The significance of the setting lies primarily in its position within the walled town and the site's relationship with the castle. The proposed suite of interventions are not likely to detract from our ability to understand or appreciate the recorded archaeology of the site or its relationship with the surrounding town walls and castle.

The likely visual impact of the interventions relative to the scale of the castle and the setting of this site is considered to be almost negligible.

It was concluded that the overall impact would be neutral.

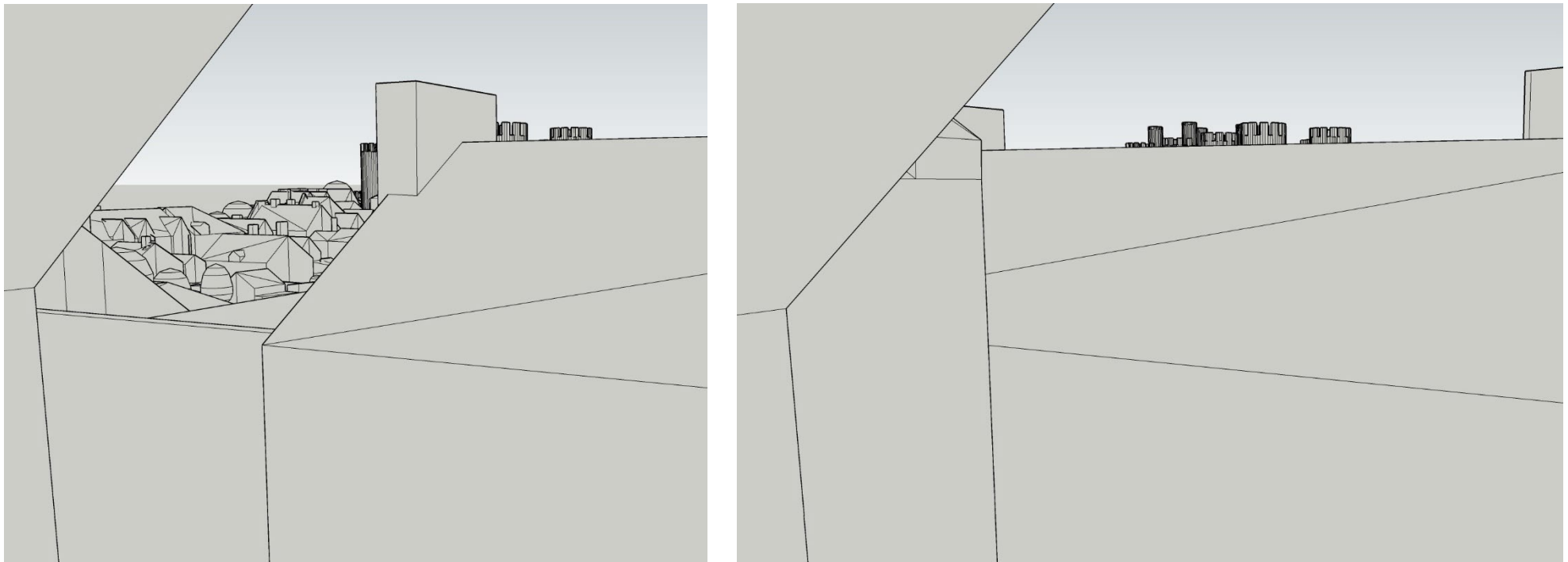
### Plas Mawr Scheduled Monument

The potential impact of the interventions on the significance of the setting primarily concerns how they will affect views of the castle from the site.

A 3D modelling tool of Conwy town was used to model views from dormer windows on the upper floor of the High Street-facing gatehouse. This helped to assess and understand the likely impact of the relatively small and discrete interventions. The exercise concluded that the views of the castle from Plas Mawr are interrupted by other structures and are therefore only partial views.

The likely visual impact of the interventions relative to the scale of the castle and the setting of Plas Mawr is considered to be almost negligible.

It was concluded that the overall impact would be neutral.



*Figures 18-19 – 3D model views of Conwy Castle from upper rooms of Plas Mawr*

## 9.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

Item	Proposed Work	Objective	Significance of Affected Fabric	Assessing Beneficial Impact	Assessing Adverse Impact	Proposed Mitigation
1	<p>Approach A – New Contemporary Designed Balustrade supported off the floor</p> <p>Install new guarding offset from the masonry. Steel flat handrail and uprights with wire mesh infill within frame.</p> <p>Locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lower West Barbican</li> <li>- Lower East Barbican</li> </ul>	Mitigate potential visitor falls from height	The fabric of Castle is of highest significance.	<p>Will facilitate the removal of 'temporary', non-bespoke guardings which are currently of detrimental impact.</p> <p>Enabling safe continued access for visitors to experience the heritage asset for generations to come.</p>	<p>Risk of harm to heritage values through loss of original fabric in installation.</p> <p>Risk of negative impact on aesthetic qualities of castle its setting if design is inappropriate in terms of size, massing or materials.</p>	<p>Ensure new balustrade is carefully designed to remain respectful and appropriate in terms of scale and architectural language.</p> <p>Ensure complementary colour of interventions is used to ensure attention is not unnecessarily drawn to the modern interventions.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate specification is provided and experienced contractors are commissioned to install the interventions to minimise loss of fabric as far as possible.</p> <p>Ensure intervention is reversible without detrimental impact on heritage values.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate materials are used which will not cause accelerated decay of surrounding fabric of highest significance (eg. lime mortar)</p>
	Approach A – New Complimentary Designed Balustrade supported off the floor	Mitigate potential visitor falls from height	The fabric of Castle is of highest significance.	Will facilitate the removal of 'temporary', non-bespoke guardings which are currently of detrimental impact.	Risk of harm to heritage values through loss of original fabric in installation.	Ensure new balustrade is carefully designed to remain respectful and appropriate in

	<p>Install new guarding offset from the masonry. Designed to match existing balustrade design (mesh infill in places).</p> <p>Locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outer Ward South Walkway</li> <li>- Inner Ward West Walkway</li> </ul>			<p>Enabling safe continued access for visitors to experience the heritage asset for generations to come.</p>	<p>Risk of negative impact on aesthetic qualities of castle its setting if design is inappropriate in terms of size, massing or materials.</p>	<p>terms of scale and architectural language.</p> <p>Ensure complementary colour of interventions is used to ensure attention is not unnecessarily drawn to the modern interventions.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate specification is provided and experienced contractors are commissioned to install the interventions to minimise loss of fabric as far as possible.</p> <p>Ensure intervention is reversible without detrimental impact on heritage values.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate materials are used which will not cause accelerated decay of surrounding fabric of highest significance (eg. lime mortar)</p>
	<p>Approach A – New Contemporary Designed Balustrade supported off the walls</p> <p>Install new guarding offset from the masonry. Steel flat handrail and uprights bracketed into masonry joints of the existing masonry guardings.</p> <p>Locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inner Ward West Wall Walk</li> <li>- Outer Ward adjacent to Kitchen Tower</li> </ul>	<p>Mitigate potential visitor falls from height</p>	<p>The fabric of Castle is of highest significance.</p>	<p>Will facilitate the removal of 'temporary', non-bespoke guardings which are currently of detrimental impact.</p> <p>Enabling safe continued access for visitors to experience the heritage asset for generations to come.</p>	<p>Risk of harm to heritage values through loss of original fabric in installation.</p> <p>Risk of negative impact on aesthetic qualities of castle its setting if design is inappropriate in terms of size, massing or materials.</p>	<p>Ensure new balustrade is carefully designed to remain respectful and appropriate in terms of scale and architectural language.</p> <p>Ensure complementary colour of interventions is used to ensure attention is not unnecessarily drawn to the modern interventions.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate specification is provided and experienced contractors are com-</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outer Ward adjacent to Stockhouse</li> <li>- Bakehouse Tower (watch towers)</li> <li>- King's Tower (watch towers)</li> <li>- Chapel Tower (watch towers)</li> </ul>					<p>missioned to install the interventions to minimise loss of fabric as far as possible.</p> <p>Ensure intervention is reversible without detrimental impact on heritage values.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate materials are used which will not cause accelerated decay of surrounding fabric of highest significance (eg. lime mortar)</p>
2	<p>Approach D – Infill Mesh</p> <p>The void between the middle rail of existing modern guardings and coping stones shall be infilled using a framed wire mesh system.</p> <p>Locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- North West Tower</li> <li>- King's Tower (mid-level)</li> <li>- Bakehouse Tower (mid-level)</li> <li>- Prison Tower (inner balustrade)</li> <li>- Outer Ward West Walkway</li> <li>- Well/Drawbridge</li> <li>- Inner Ward East Wall Walk</li> <li>- Inner Ward South Wall Walk</li> </ul>	Mitigate potential visitor falls from height	The existing modern guardings are of neutral significance.	<p>Will facilitate the removal of 'temporary', non-bespoke guardings which are currently of detrimental impact.</p> <p>Enabling safe continued access for visitors to experience the heritage asset for generations to come.</p>	Risk of negative impact on aesthetic qualities of castle its setting if design is inappropriate in terms of size, massing or materials.	<p>Ensure mesh is carefully designed to remain respectful and appropriate in terms of scale and architectural language.</p> <p>Use of conservation accredited architect to undertake design.</p>

3	<p>Approach E – Flat Bar</p> <p>Install new flat bar guarding in core work at 900mm height with second bar below if gap exceeds 350mm.</p> <p>Locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outer Ward North Walkway</li> <li>- Outer Ward South, East and West Walkway</li> <li>- Inner Ward South Walk way (outer wall crenelations)</li> <li>- Prison Tower (outer wall crenelations)</li> <li>- Bakehouse Tower (outer wall crenelations)</li> <li>- King's Tower (outer wall crenelations)</li> </ul>	Mitigate potential visitor falls from height	The fabric of Castle is of highest significance.	<p>Will facilitate the removal of 'temporary', non-bespoke guardings which are currently of detrimental impact.</p> <p>Enabling safe continued access for visitors to experience the heritage asset for generations to come.</p>	<p>Risk of harm to heritage values through loss of original fabric in installation.</p> <p>Risk of negative impact on aesthetic qualities of castle its setting if design is inappropriate in terms of size, massing or materials.</p>	<p>Ensure new balustrade is carefully designed to remain respectful and appropriate in terms of scale and architectural language.</p> <p>Ensure complementary colour of interventions is used to ensure attention is not unnecessarily drawn to the modern interventions.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate specification is provided and experienced contractors are commissioned to install the interventions to minimise loss of fabric as far as possible.</p> <p>Ensure intervention is reversible without detrimental impact on heritage values.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate materials are used which will not cause accelerated decay of surrounding fabric of highest significance (eg. lime mortar)</p>
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## 9.0 OUV Impact Assessment

Element of Proposed Action	Attribute	Relevant Components	Description of Potential Impact	Frequency of action	Duration of action	Reversibility of action	Reversibility of change to the attribute	Longevity of change to the attribute	Degree of change to the attribute	Quality of change to the attribute	Evaluation of Impact
Proposed new guarding interventions	The four castles of Beaumaris, Caernarfon, Conwy, Harlech and the attendant fortified towns at Caernarfon Conwy are the finest examples of late thirteenth-century and early fourteenth-century military architecture in Europe.	Castles display administrative and domestic features such as royal apartments and domestic facilities.	Potential detracting visual element	Once	Long-term	Reversible	Reversible	Permanent	Negligible	Negative	Neutral
	The castles as a stylistically coherent group are a supreme example of medieval military architecture designed and directed by James of St George, King Edward I of England's chief architect, and the greatest military architect of the age.	Military features including barbicans and strongly defended towers and curtain walls.	Potential detracting visual element  Potential impact on external views of features	Once	Long-term	Reversible	Reversible	Permanent	Negligible	Negative	Neutral
	The extensive and detailed contemporary technical, social and economic	Constructional features linked to surviving records such as wall	Potential detracting	Once	Long-term	Reversible	Reversible	Permanent	Negligible	Negative	Neutral



	documentation of the castles, and the survival of the adjacent fortified towns at Caernarfon and Conwy, make them one of the major references of medieval history.	strengthening/raising, concentric layout with multiple lines of defence.	visual element								
	Relationship with the coast.	Built in coastal location and castle visible from sea.	Potential impact on views from sea.	Once	Long-term	Reversible	Reversible	Permanent	Negligible	Negative	Neutral
	Relationship between castles and planned walled towns.	Surviving defensive features including wallwalks, D-shaped towers and low parapets towards town.  Wall connections and use of castle to complete town wall circuit.	Potential detracting visual element  Potential impact on views from town walls	Once	Long-term	Reversible	Reversible	Permanent	Negligible	Negative	Neutral

## 10.0 Justification and Conclusions

### 10.01 Justification

The proposals are considered justified by the clear need to provide appropriate safety measures to protect the many visitors to Conwy Castle from falls.

The proposals have been through an extended design process which has taken place alongside an assessment of the significance. As a result, interventions have been restricted to essential areas or designed in a way that minimises impact on significant fabric as far as possible.

The interventions have been designed to be respectful of the highly significant fabric and architectural style of the castle. The format, scale and materials of the guardings have been carefully chosen to suit the scale and proportions of their context whilst emphasising their modern origins.

Finally, the proposals are considered justified by their reversible nature which will result in negligible loss of original form or fabric, thereby protecting the buildings significance and its contribution to the WHS' Outstanding Universal Value.

### 10.02 Conclusion

Conwy Castle is a Grade I listed building and scheduled monument of international significance which is also part of a World Heritage Site of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The castle and its adjoining town walls are representative of the most important phase of the town's history and make a significant contribution to the town's Conservation Area. Unfortunately, there are ongoing safety concerns in relation to the wall walks, which are a hugely popular visitor attraction and opportunity for public access to, and appreciation of, the heritage. Without careful interventions to safeguard visitor access, key areas will remain closed-off for visitors or compromised by 'temporary' protections which are detracting and cause visual clutter.

The proposals have been kept modest in size and designed with a 'conservation approach' to ensure maximum retention of historic fabric whilst meeting the needs of the Client's brief. The designs have undergone extensive design development in order to reduce their impact on the castle and its heritage values as far as possible. The choice of fixing methods and materials is appropriate to the status of the guardings as a modern, reversible intervention. Care has been taken in the design to ensure the guardings will not cause accelerated decay of any of the surrounding historic fabric which is of the highest significance.

The proposals are considered justified due to the clear need to balance safe public access to the site's heritage values against impact on its significance and attributes. Conservation is the process of managing change in a way that protects and enhances what makes an asset significant and special. This suite of proposals has been carefully designed by conservation accredited architects with a deep appreciation of the significance of the existing fabric.

Due to the exceptionally high level of significance of the site the proposals have undergone a Setting Assessment, a Heritage Impact Assessment and an OUV Impact Assessment. These assessments have found the impact of the proposals to be, on balance, of neutral impact on the site's heritage values. Furthermore, continued safe visitor access for a wide range of ages and abilities will ensure the wall walks continue to enrich the experience of and be a source of inspiration for generations to come. This report concludes that the heritage values and attributes which make the castle and its setting so special and significant will not be harmed as a result of the proposals.

Appendix I - Statutory List Descriptions



Appendix II – World Heritage Site Management Plan