



Abergavenny

Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Proposals



monmouthshire
sir fynywy

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FORUM
Heritage
Services

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Contents

Part A: Introduction	5
1 Purpose & Scope of Study	5
2 Consultation	6
3 Planning Policy Context	6
4 The Study Area	8
Part B: Conservation Area Appraisal	9
5 Location & Setting	9
6 Historic Development & Archaeology	11
6.1 Historic Background	11
6.2 Settlement Plan	14
6.3 Key Historic Influences & Characteristics	15
6.4 Archaeological Potential	15
7 Spatial Analysis	16
7.1 Background	16
7.2 Overview	16
7.3 Character Areas	17
1. Monmouth Road	18
2. The Historic Core	20
3. 19 th Century Suburbs / Grofield	24
4. Pen-y-Pound	26
5. Brecon Road	28
6. Avenue Road & Chapel Road	30
7. The Hill, Chapel Lane & Chapel Road Environs	32
8. Riverside, Usk Bridge & Linda Vista Gardens	34
7.4 Architectural & Historic Qualities of Buildings	36
7.5 Activity: Prevailing & Former Uses	42
7.6 Contribution Made By Key Unlisted Buildings	44
7.7 Prevalent Local & Traditional Materials	46
8 Contribution Made By Green Spaces, Trees, Hedges & Natural Boundaries	48
9 Key Views	50
9.1 Landscape Setting	50
9.2 Types of Views & Their Relative Significance	51
10 Degree of Loss of Architectural and/or Historic Elements	53
Part C: Management Proposals	54
11 Boundary Revisions	54
11.1 Overview	54

11.2	Areas for Inclusion	54
11.3	Areas for Exclusion	58
12	Article 4 (2) Directions	59
13	Proposals for Enhancement	61
13.1	General Enhancement Opportunities	61
13.2	Specific Enhancement Projects	61
13.3	Shopfronts	63
Appendix 1: Criteria for Buildings Making a Particular or Special Positive Contribution		65
Appendix 2: Policies & Recommendations for New Development		67
Appendix 3: General Criteria for Boundary Revision		69
Appendix 4: Glossary		71
Appendix 5: Bibliography & References		73
Appendix 6: Contacts		74
Part D: Conservation Area Appraisal Plans		75
Plan 1	Abergavenny Conservation Area	76
Plan 2	Historical Plan	77
Plan 3	Area of Special Archaeological Sensitivity	78
Plan 4	Spatial Analysis	79
Plan 5	Listed Buildings & Buildings Making a Particular or Special Positive Contribution	80
Plan 6	Character Areas	81
	Plan 6A Character Area 1 – Monmouth Road	82
	Plan 6B Character Area 2 – The Historic Core	83
	Plan 6C Character Area 3 – 19 th Century Suburbs / Grofield	84
	Plan 6D Character Area 4 – Pen-y-Pound	85
	Plan 6E Character Area 5 – Brecon Road	86
	Plan 6F Character Area 6 – Avenue Road & Chapel Road	87
	Plan 6G Character Area 7 – The Hill, Chapel Lane & Chapel Road Environs	88
	Plan 6H Character Area 8 – Riverside, Usk Bridge & Linda Vista Gardens	89
Plan 7	Management Proposals	90



Skyline view of the conservation area and hillside from Abergavenny Castle

Part A: Introduction

1 Introduction

1.1 Conservation areas comprise the accumulation of an area's positive architectural or historic attributes, rather than the quality of its individual buildings, which makes it worthy of conservation area status. The attributes might include: the landscape setting of the area; the grouping of traditional buildings and the resultant spaces and sense of enclosure; the scale, design, type and materials of the buildings; historic boundaries; public realm; landmarks, views and vistas; and the present and former pattern of activities or land uses.

1.2 Abergavenny is one of 31 designated conservation areas in the County of Monmouthshire. It was originally designated as a conservation area in the 1970's and has had one revision of the boundary since this date. This extension was made by the council in the 1990s and approved by Council in 2003.

1.3 The *Abergavenny Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals* are seen as the first steps in a dynamic process, the aim of which is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Abergavenny Conservation Area and to provide a basis for

making sustainable decisions about its future management.

1.4 Key study aims:

- Identify those elements of Abergavenny which contribute to its character
- Identify elements which detract from the character
- Propose measures to maintain or improve the positive character, local distinctiveness and sense of place of Abergavenny

1.5 The framework for the study follows guidance set out in Circular 60/96: Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology and Circular 61/96: Planning and the historic environment: historic buildings and conservation areas and the latest draft guidance from Cadw; *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales*, adopted March 2011.

1.6 Please note that the Pen-Y-Fal conservation area comprising the former Joint Counties Lunatic Asylum and located to the north-east of the town centre does not form part of this appraisal



Fig.1
**Abergavenny
from Blorenge**

2 Consultation

2.1 A consultation event was undertaken in Abergavenny on 3rd November 2010.

2.2 The purpose of this event was to obtain initial views from the local community on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the conservation area.

2.3 Participants were broadly asked to consider the following:

- Positive characteristics (i.e. strengths) of the conservation area that makes it special
- Negative aspects (i.e. weaknesses) of the conservation area that threaten its special character
- Areas or features within the conservation area that need to be improved or enhanced (i.e. opportunities within the conservation area)
- Areas or features within the conservation area under threat or at risk
- Whether the boundary of the conservation area is correctly drawn
- The use of additional powers available to the Council's Planning Department to control alterations to original features on housing in the conservation area, such as windows and doors (where this is not already controlled)

2.4 Feedback from this initial consultation has been used by the study team in preparing the draft Conservation Area Appraisal.

3 Planning Policy Context

3.1 Section 69 1(a) and 2 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') defines conservation areas as:

"Areas of special architectural and historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"

3.2 In addition, the Act puts particular emphasis on specific duties:

"It shall be the duty of the local authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas..."

3.3 This is reinforced by the guidance set out in *Circular 60/96: Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology* and *Circular 61/96: Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas*. In particular, the local authority should from time to time, formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas (management proposals).

3.4 In order to undertake works of enhancement, the character of the conservation area needs to be clearly defined and understood (character appraisal).

3.5 National planning policy is set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW). PPW provides the overarching national strategic guidance with regard to land use planning matters in Wales. Conservation of the historic environment is set out in Chapter 6 of PPW. Policies relating to Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Remains and Historic Parks and Gardens are contained in PPW unless locally distinct elements require further Local Development Plan policies. PPW also sets out clear statements for development management in Conservation Areas.

3.6 This Conservation Area Appraisal should be read in the context of the Monmouthshire County Council Local

Development Plan (LDP) which was adopted on 27 February 2014, covering the period 2011-2021. Strategic Policy S17 helps to meet LDP objectives to protect and enhance the historic and built environment by ensuring good design that enhances the character and identity of Monmouthshire's settlements and respects the County's distinctiveness. Conservation Area Appraisals can play a significant part in helping to meet such aspirations. The historic environment chapter is contained in pages 167-172 of the LDP. Policies HE1, HE2 and HE3 directly relate to conservation areas.

3.7 The detailed criteria for assessing development proposals in Conservation Areas is set out in Policy HE1 and where appropriate aims to ensure the findings of the Conservation Area Appraisals are fully taken into account when considering development proposals. The Council will seek to preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of Conservation Areas in the assessment of Planning Applications. Policy HE2 relates specifically to the alterations of unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas to ensure that the conversion, alteration and extension of such buildings make a positive contribution to Conservation Areas. A number of detailed criteria relating specifically to the design of shop fronts in Conservation Areas are provided in Policy HE3. Policy HE3 seeks to maintain high standards of shop front design in Conservation Areas.

3.8 A number of additional studies carried out to support the LDP should be read in conjunction with the Conservation Area Appraisal. These include Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity Studies of the surroundings of Monmouthshire's towns and villages, including those with conservation areas. Similarly, published studies on Accessible Natural Greenspace and Habitat Connectivity may also include information that needs to be taken into account in preparing development proposals in conservation areas. Relevant information is also contained in the Monmouthshire LANDMAP landscape character assessment.

3.9 Draft Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has also been produced. This provides practical design and planning checklists along with good practice case studies. This SPG should be read in conjunction with the Conservation Area Appraisal.

For Additional Information:

Monmouthshire Local Development Plan
<http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning>

4 The Study Area

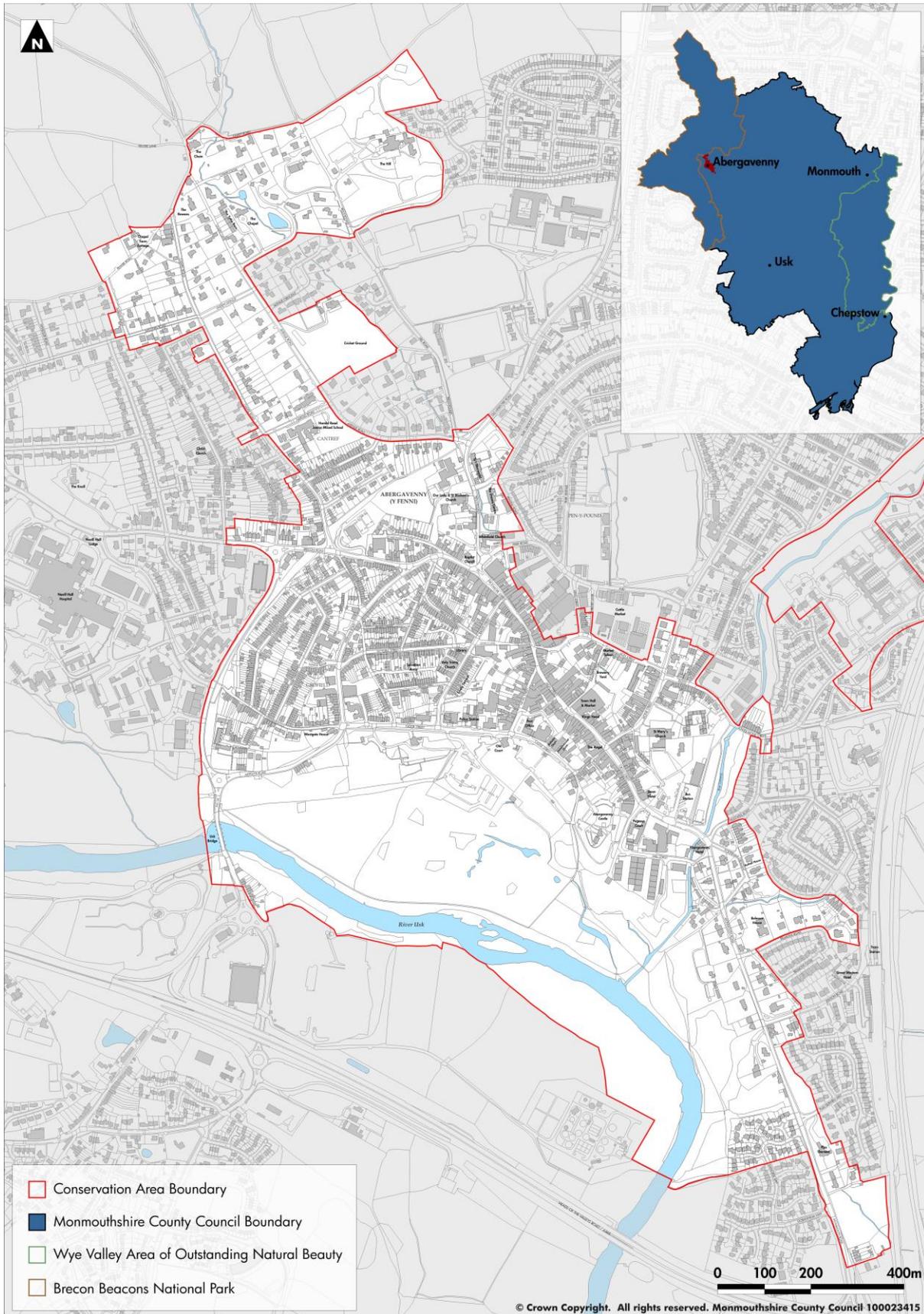


Fig.2 Study Area

Part B: Conservation Area Appraisal

5 Location & Setting

5.1 Located in the north of the county, east of the border with Powys, Abergavenny has been known as the gateway to South Wales from Norman times and is still regarded as the gateway to the Brecon Beacons (Fig.2 & Fig.3). The town enjoys a magnificent setting nestling on a slight prominence on the north bank of the River Usk where it exits from between the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons National Park. The town is surrounded by seven hills: the Blorenge; the conical Sugar

Loaf; the craggy Skirrid Fawr; the smaller Skirrid Fach; the rounded Deri; the Rholben and the Mynydd Llanwenarth. The three major hills can be seen in views throughout the town; the Skirrid to the north-east, the Blorenge to the south-west and the Sugar Loaf to the north-west (Fig.4 & Fig.5).

Refer to:

Part D - Plan 1 Conservation Area Plan

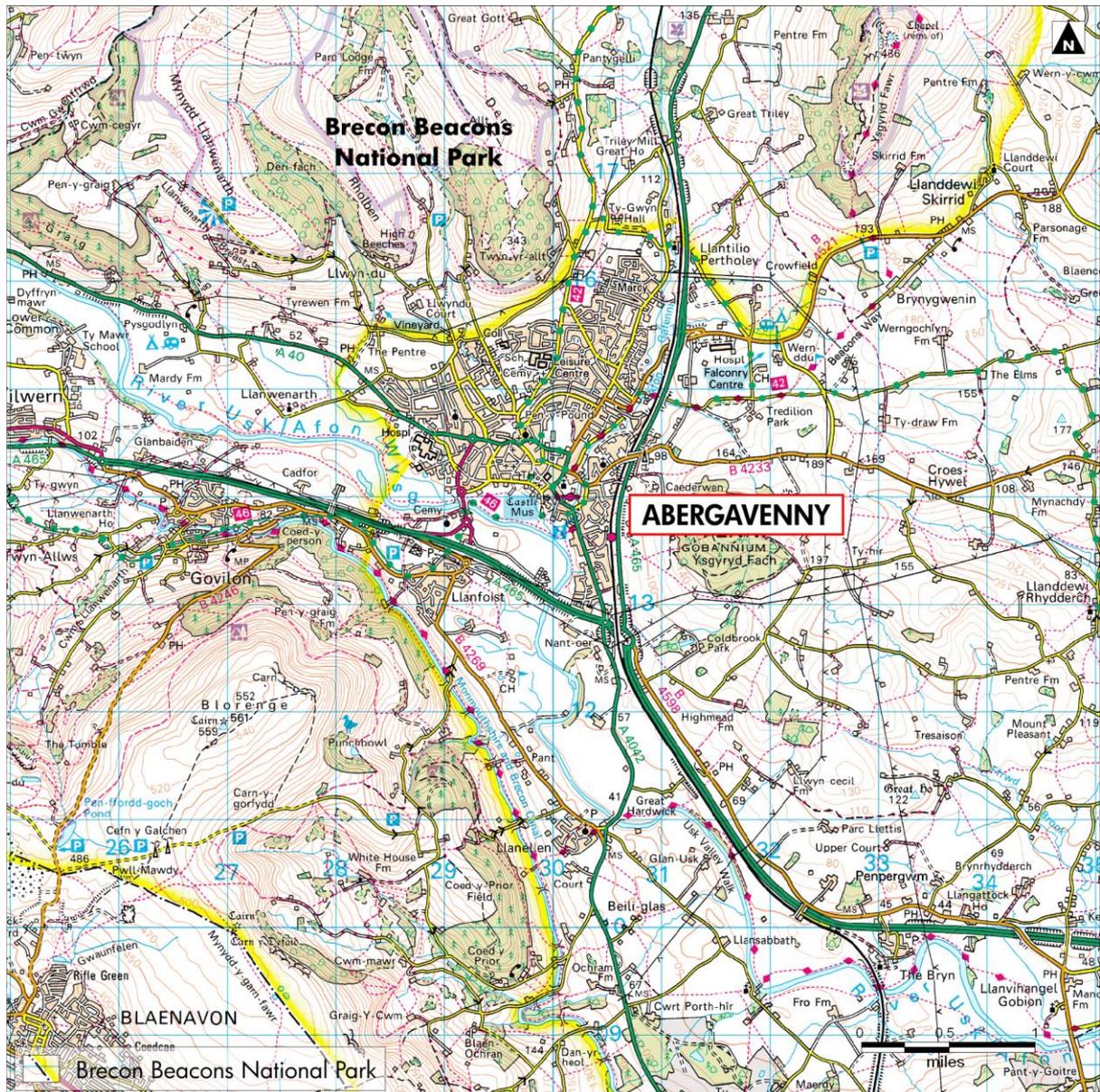


Fig.3 Abergavenny Location Plan

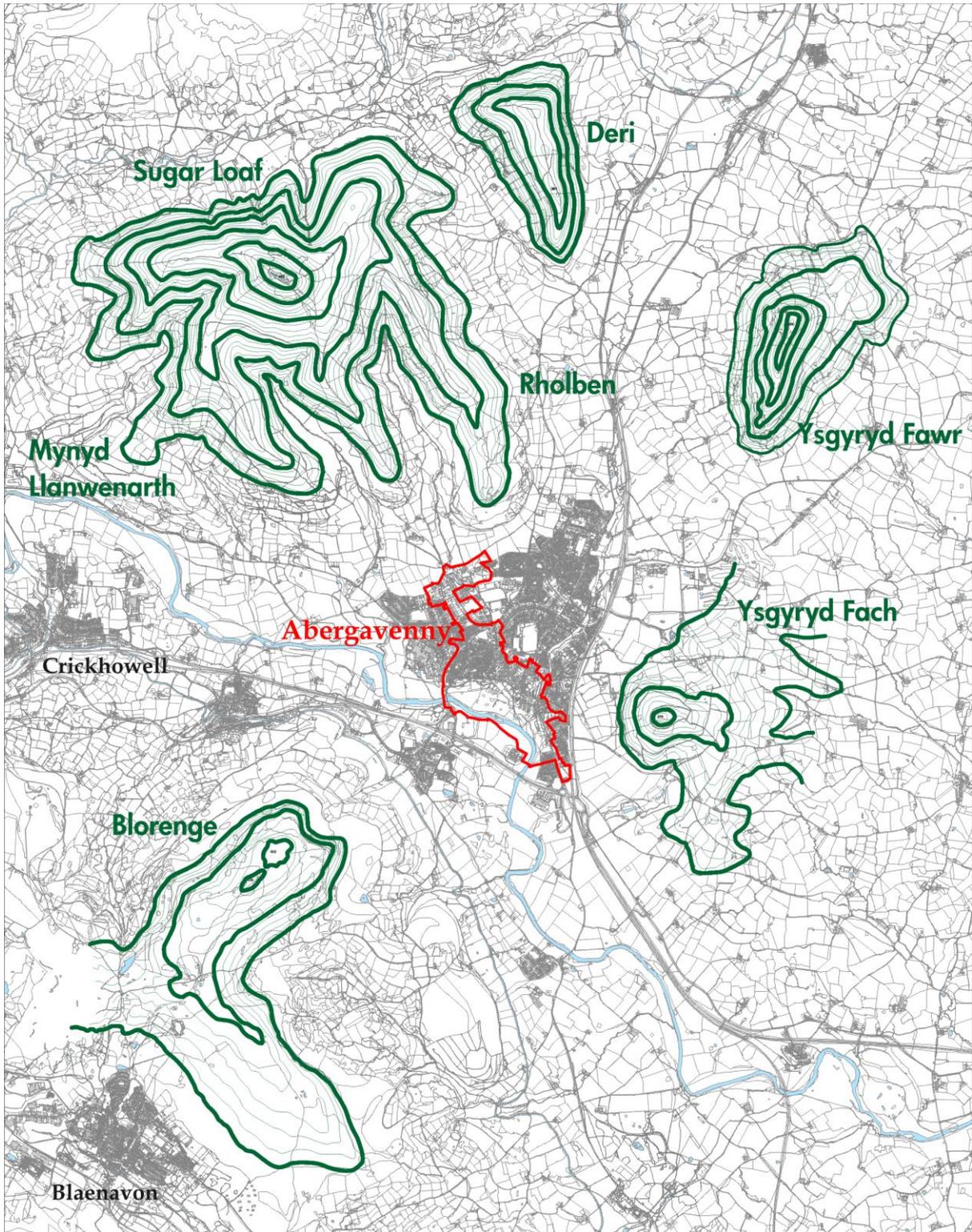


Fig.4 Plan showing the hills to Abergavenny identified in green contour lines

6 Historical Development & Archaeology

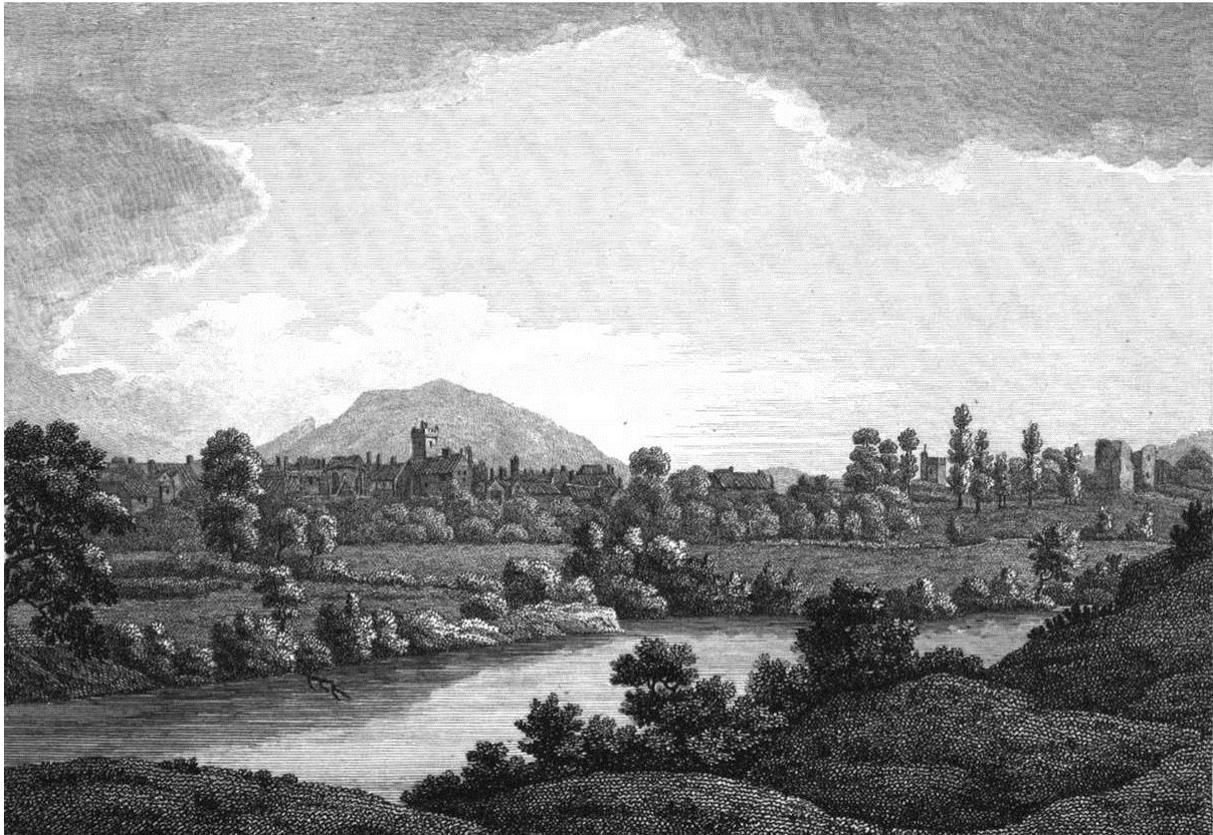


Fig.5 Abergavenny, with a distant view of Ysgyryd Fawr (sometimes known as The Skirrid) (Hoare, 1801)

6.1 Historic Background

6.1.1 Early occupation of the area around Abergavenny is recorded in later Mesolithic finds in Flannel Street and Neolithic pottery finds amongst Roman archaeology (Aldhouse-Green & Howell, 2004). Positioned strategically on the confluence of the Usk and Gavenny rivers, Abergavenny was founded by the Romans. The first Roman settlement of c. A.D. 55-60 was centred on the fort of Gobannium (the place of the ironsmiths) built to safeguard the road to Usk. The Roman fort lay on the ridge in the area of the Castle Street car park. Outside the fort was a civilian settlement which stretched northwards along what is now Monk Street as far as its junction with Lion Street. A cemetery is known to have existed around Bailey Park and Hereford Road. Roman occupation ended c.400 A.D.

6.1.2 The Normans developed the town when Hameline de Balun built a motte-and-bailey castle stronghold soon after 1087. He later

founded the Benedictine priory, the remains of which, remodelled in the early 14th century, now form St Mary's Priory church. Around 1190 the castle was rebuilt in stone. The Norman town grew alongside the castle; both being subject to attacks that badly damaged the town in 1172, 1176 and 1276. In response to the continued threat of attack, construction of defences enclosing a larger 'D' shaped area entered by four main gateways commenced in 1241 and murage grants (taxes to pay for the construction or repair of town walls) were made in 1251, 1295-1301 and 1314-19, some of which went to pay for work on the castle. These grants suggest that the earlier defences were replaced in stone around the turn of the 14th century. The strategic importance of the town and its English ownership resulted in the town being sacked by Owain Glyndwr in 1404. The town was attacked again in 1646 by Fairfax's Parliamentary forces during the Civil War, the defences being refurbished to protect the town but it fell to the Parliamentary troops and the castle became a base for operations against Raglan castle. After the

Civil War the defences of the castle and town were slighted to make them undefendable.

6.1.3 After the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536-1540 St Mary's Priory was converted into the parish church and in 1543 Henry VIII gave the town its royal charter and established the town's grammar school in the disused medieval parish church of St John. A further charter was granted by Charles I in 1638. The powers included control of markets, fairs and the woollen trade. A third charter, under which the office of mayor was created, was granted in 1657 by Oliver Cromwell. The charters were subsequently lost when the burgesses of the town refused to swear allegiance to William and Mary in 1689.

6.1.4 Abergavenny continued to prosper as a local market centre serving the agricultural populations surrounding the town and, through its position on important droving routes, benefitted from the increasing development of regional specialisation in agriculture and increasing demand for meat as living standards generally rose from the 17th century. The original market place south of Nevill Street was replaced by a purpose built market hall in Cross Street in 1620. Following demands for improved facilities, John Nash designed a new market hall which opened in 1796. This too was replaced in 1870 by the present building which incorporated the covered market and town hall. The building's clock was donated by local ironmaster Crawshay Bailey. Livestock markets were held in the main streets until the cricket ground was developed into a purpose built cattle market in 1863.

6.1.5 From the 18th century onwards, the coal and iron industries replaced the town's small scale manufacturing and agrarian economy. The Brecon and Monmouthshire canal started in 1792 and the link to Brecon was opened in 1812. The canal served the town from a wharf at Llanfoist. Tramroads across the hills linked the local ironworks to the canal network. The central position of Abergavenny, conveniently

located near the major works, attracted many wealthy coal and iron masters to the town. The industrial revolution brought the railways and their construction provided employment for Abergavenny's growing population. In 1854 the Newport, Abergavenny and Hereford railway opened. In 1862 Abergavenny became the crossing point for this railway and the Merthyr, Tredegar and Abergavenny railway. The town's three stations made it a busy railway junction. In 1899 a Charter of Incorporation was granted, making the town a municipal borough, which was divided into four wards.

6.1.6 Today most of the town's traditional industries have gone. One railway station remains, but the rail industry has gone. Still regarded as a busy market town, Abergavenny boasts weekly produce markets, flea markets, antique fairs, auctions and, each September, the award-winning Abergavenny Food Festival. Now regarded as the 'food capital' of Wales, its farming roots are still evident.



Fig. 6 High Street, circa 1910

6.2 Settlement Plan

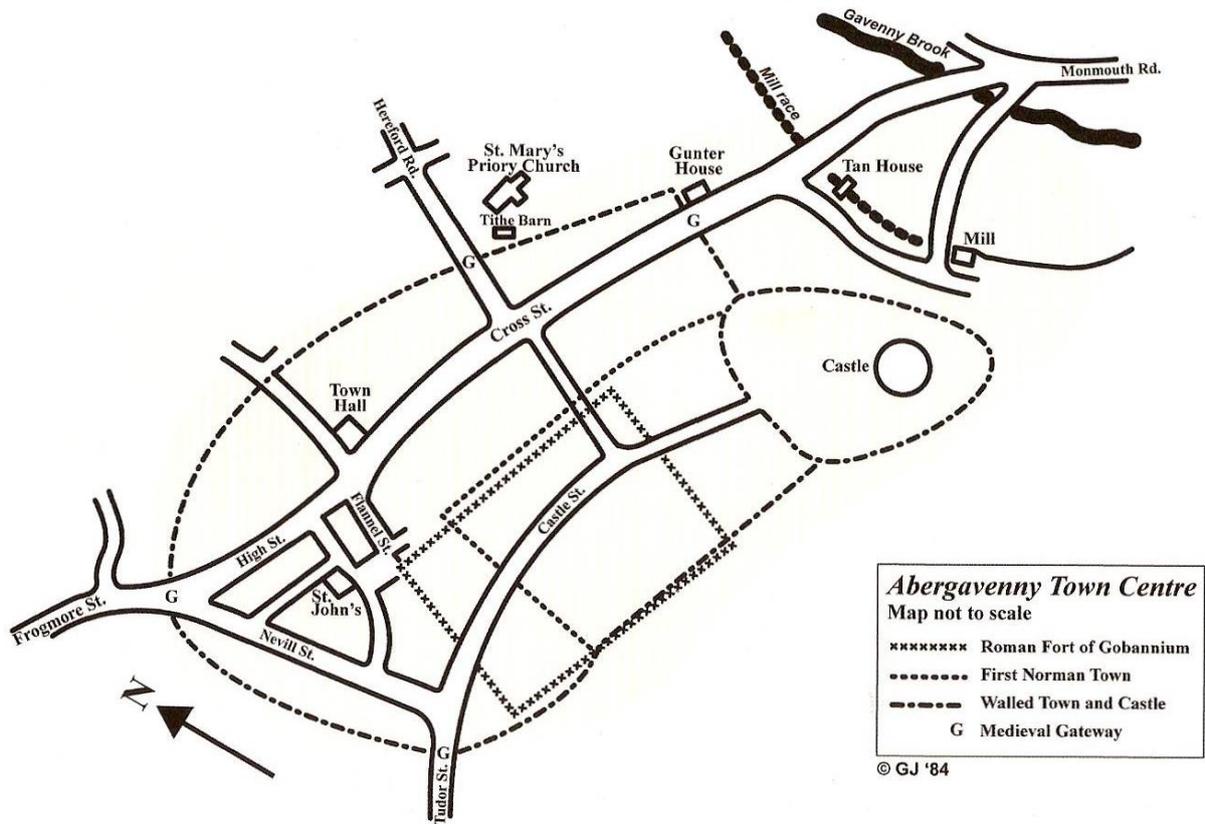


Fig.7 Simplified map of the historic town (Abergavenny Local History Society)

6.2.1 The plan of the town has its origins in a Norman settlement which grew up outside the gates of the castle along Castle Street although demolition of many historic properties in this part of the town in the 1970s, to be replaced by car parks and modern buildings, has obscured the origins of this part of the town. The position of the priory, set on lower ground away from the castle and early core of the town is notable.

6.2.2 Abergavenny underwent a period of expansion, possibly in the early 13th century (a period of new town foundation and enlargement of boroughs), with the development of High Street and Cross Street along which were regular property plots. The area west of High Street and south of Nevill Street appears to have developed as later infill of the medieval market place, originally overlooked by St John's church. This development may represent a shift in the economic centre of the towns from its early core rather than just growth of the town. The attacks on the town in the 13th century resulted in the construction

of a stone town wall. The line of this still survives in the alignment of property boundaries and elements of the wall itself survive in places marking the extent of the medieval town. In addition to the walled area it is possible that a medieval suburb developed along Frogmore Street to the north-west of the town. This area was certainly developed by the 17th century.

6.2.3 The town's 16th and 17th century industries were largely contained within its centre, with the exception of the tanning site at Mill Street to the south of the town. With the industrial revolution the town expanded rapidly. Many of the houses within the town were rebuilt or re-fronted (their original facades altered and hidden behind a new frontage) between 1800 and 1830 due to new found prosperity and the efforts of the Improvement Commission. Victorian Abergavenny grew with new suburbs including the Grofield development to the west, a high-class suburb off the Monmouth Road (including Fosterville Crescent) to the south-

east and a new development in Pen-Y-Pound on the hillside north of the town which included churches, schools and villas.

6.2.4 Bailey Park was laid out in 1884, funded by ironmaster Crawshay Bailey, to host public events and provide amenity space for the town's growing population. The Linda Vista Gardens, developed as the private garden of Linda Vista Villa in 1875, was not opened as a public park until 1957. The grounds of The Hills retain elements of all the components of an early 19th-century miniature country estate and its rare walled garden with semi-circular projection dates to at least 1789. All three gardens are on the Cadw Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens.

6.2.5 In the later twentieth century the town grew with various piecemeal housing developments including Pegasus Court, Mill Street, Bailey Court, adjacent to Bailey Park and Plantagenet Court, below the castle.

6.3 Key Historic Influences & Characteristics

- Strategic military significance of the site resulting in the construction of a Roman fort and Norman castle to control access along the Usk Valley, the gateway between the mountains into South Wales
- Development of a Norman town to the west of the castle
- Expansion of the medieval town with regular, planned property plots bounded by cross and back lanes, serving as a local market centre
- Manufacturing of cloth, leather-working and wig-making
- Local coal and iron industries which brought prosperity to the town
- Importance as a railway junction, the town being served by three stations, resulting in population growth and development of Victorian suburbs beyond the medieval core.

6.4 Archaeological Potential

6.4.1 Abergavenny's history as a Roman fort and settlement with later medieval castle and market town, together with the relatively low levels of modern development within the historic core, make the town an area of high archaeological importance. The importance of the sites of the Roman fort, Norman castle and the monastic ranges to the south of the priory church is recognised by their designation as Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The medieval bridge over the River Usk is also scheduled. Scheduled sites are regarded as being of national importance and as such there is a presumption against development that would cause physical damage to a monument or negatively impact on its setting.

6.4.2 Additionally, the historic core of the town and the area along Frogmore Street beyond the line of the town wall is identified as an Area of Special Archaeological Sensitivity (ASAS), a non-statutory designation supported by national planning policy guidance, due to the potential for encountering archaeological remains relating to the Roman settlement, the medieval town and its defences. Additionally, the historic buildings of the town are an important archaeological resource in their own right. Any proposed development within the ASAS will need to include appropriate measures to assess and, if necessary, protect or record the archaeological interest of the site or building. Advice from the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust, the council's archaeological advisors, should be sought at an early stage.

Refer to:

Part D - Plan 2 Historical Plan

Part D - Plan 3 Area of Special Archaeological Sensitivity

7 Spatial Analysis



Fig.8 Cross St (looking north) leading to High St at the heart of the medieval core of the town

7.1 Background

7.1.1 Conservation areas are designated for their special character, but within the area there will be zones which are varied but contribute to the whole. It is important to define these 'character areas' and provide a clear understanding of the defining elements making up the character of a particular part of the conservation area. This leads to a more useful and comprehensive document in development control terms.

7.1.2 Whilst individual character areas have been defined with a line (see **Plan 6**), adjacent areas will, in almost all cases, have a direct effect on the character of any defined sub-area. Character areas do not sit in isolation and when considering the impact of proposals on the character and/or appearance of a conservation area the character area and adjacent character areas and their wider setting (which may in some cases extend beyond the conservation area boundary) should be very carefully considered. There are often cases where character areas will overlap giving these spaces added complexity and importance in terms of proposed changes.

7.1.3 It should be noted that whilst eight character areas have been identified, it is also

important to appreciate the cohesion to the whole conservation area, which should always be considered when addressing the character of the Abergavenny Conservation Area.

7.1.4 For general guidance on the criteria used for assessing buildings making a particularly positive contribution to the conservation area, please refer to **Appendix 1**.

7.2 Overview

7.2.1 Abergavenny Conservation Area comprises the historic core town centre, Victorian/Edwardian Monmouth Road entrance, the 19th century high density development of Grofield, Pen-y-Pound to the immediate north of the town centre, Castle Meadows, and the 19th and early 20th century development to the northern suburbs. Its medieval core, characterised by the main thoroughfare of roads and regular plot subdivision, is at its heart with the Castle and St Mary's Church accessed off Cross Street (**Fig.8**).

7.2.2 The historic character of the central core of the town is derived from the strong morphology of the distinctive medieval layout of roads and burgage plots. Over time, with the extensive 18th century remodelling and the

19th century expansion of the town (most of which is designated as the Abergavenny Conservation Area) has created a high quality historic environment, diverse and rich in architectural features and use of materials.

7.2.3 The topography of the town and its dynamic and ever-changing landscape setting plays an essential role in defining the character of the conservation area (**Fig.9**). Planned and un-planned views are to be had throughout the conservation area to the seven major hills, which surround the town and vice-versa from the hills back to and across the town. The uninterrupted ridgeline of the surrounding hills, with their natural landscape and varied hues of green and brown, shelter the town and provide a setting free from development, a very significant and special characteristic of the town's location. The town hall clock tower is an ever present landmark in the conservation area and surrounding countryside. Conversely, modern developments such as Cibi Walk, which can be seen in some extended views towards the town centre have had an adverse impact on the established historic grain of the town centre.

7.2.4 There is an interesting and diverse mix of building types and materials reflecting the high status of the town, both during the medieval period and the industrial revolution. The town's historic importance is well

illustrated by two major Norman buildings; the church to the east and castle to the west.

7.3 Character Areas

7.3.1 Eight distinct character areas have been identified in Abergavenny, the boundaries of which have been identified in **Plan 6**. This section will identify the key attributes of each character area.

7.3.2 Each character area makes reference to the following considerations:

- Form (cohesiveness – why is it a character area)
- Scale & Building Line
- Significant buildings or groups of buildings making a positive or special contribution
- Materials
- Views
- Local Features
- Significant Spaces & Gaps
- Trees, hedges and boundaries
- Surfaces

Refer to:

Part D - Plan 4 Spatial Analysis

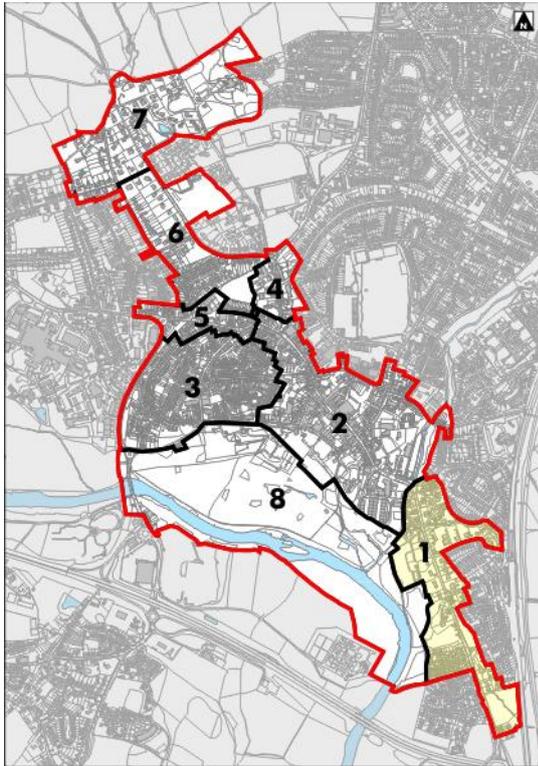
Part D - Plan 5 Listed Buildings & Buildings Making a Particular or Special Positive Contribution

Part D - Plan 6 Character Areas



Fig.9 View from the castle looking north across the town to the hills beyond

CHARACTER AREA 1
Monmouth Road



Refer to:

Part D - Plan 6A Character Area 1

7.3.3 This character area follows the Monmouth Road as it enters Abergavenny, north of the Ysbytty Fields Estate, down to the point at which the River Gavenny crosses. The river's tree-lined banks create a visual separation from this area to the north. The area includes largely detached houses either side of the road set in large gardens and those on Belmont Road and Fosterville Crescent. The approach to town is strongly defined by the grand scale of built form and sense of arrival on journeying down towards the town centre.

7.3.4 The area's buildings are predominantly two-storey villas and terraces. The three-storey 'tower' of Cae Kenfy Lodge is an important visual marker and with adjacent walls acts as a gateway to the town. The detached villas are set in gardens back off the roadside (**Fig.10**). Those on Fosterville Crescent have a strong building line, following the gentle curve of the road. Mill Street to the west side of Monmouth Road is a small but distinct

remnant of the earlier approaches to the town (**Fig.11**). The grouping of houses, some at a modest cottage scale forms very attractive and continuous historic townscape strongly defining the now quiet lane of Mill Street.

7.3.5 The houses on Fosterville Crescent, a late 19th and early 20th century high class development, designed and built by the Fosters, form a particularly cohesive group. Both the terraces and detached villas share the rock-faced stone boundary walls with yellow brick gate piers. Other groups include two 1850s Italianate style villas in Station Road. A number of 19th century villas form an attractive set piece set in large landscaped plots to the west of Belmont Road. These large gardens are a distinctive and important feature of these and the northern suburbs of the town (character area 7).



Fig.10 Grand villas to Fosterville Crescent a distinctive building type to this part of the conservation area



Fig.11 Modest development to Mill Street formerly the main approach to the town from the south

7.3.6 The various building styles along the Monmouth Road utilise a wide range of materials. Roof coverings are predominantly Welsh slate interspersed with the occasional use of red clay tiles. The villas are rendered/stuccoed and painted or rock-faced stone, some with striking yellow brick or terracotta dressings (**Fig.12**). Chimney stacks are either rendered or exposed red or yellow brick. There are some examples of tile hanging and faux timber framing with brick nogging (for example Brookfield and the half-timbered, yellow brick, Fairlea). Fairlea, designed and built by W. White, was an advertisement for his patent 'Hygeian Rock' composition, used in the cavity walls.

7.3.7 Entering Abergavenny on the Monmouth Road there are key strategic views north over the brow of the hill, past Cae Kenfy Lodge, to the large square tower of St Mary's Priory Church. There are glimpsed views of the Town Hall from Mill Street. On Holywell Road there are attractive views to the houses on Fosterville Crescent to the south and glimpsed views of the distant Blorenge to the west. On

Mill Street, there are glimpses between houses to the gardens and tree lined boundary of the riverside beyond.

7.3.8 The survival of stone boundary walls is a particularly strong local feature of this part of the conservation area (**Fig.13**). There are a number of mature trees positioned near the roadside, some of which form 'landmarks' along Monmouth Road and soften the built form. Buildings are often framed and partially or even fully obscured by these natural features.



Fig.12 An eclectic mix of building materials to the villas in this part of the conservation area

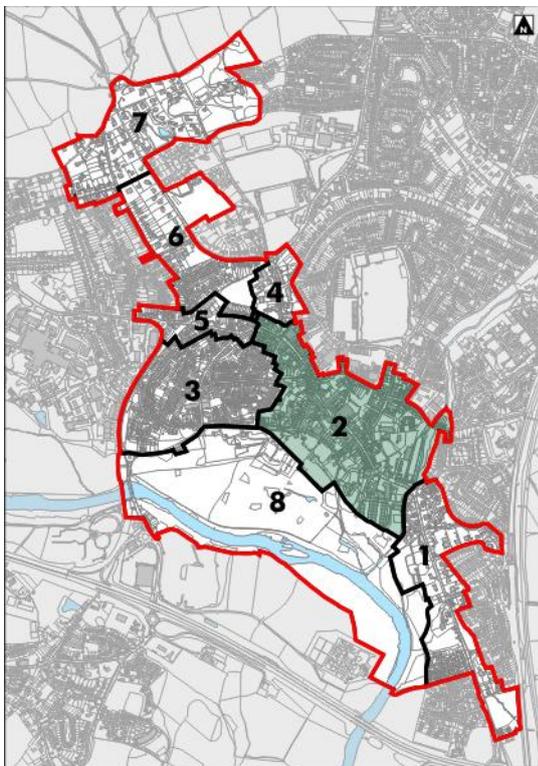


Fig.13 Stone boundary walls with buff brick copings are key features of this part of the conservation area

CHARACTER AREA 2
The Historic Core



Fig.14 Cross St with its regular plot division reflecting the planned character of the medieval town



7.3.9 This character area, north of the River Gavenny, encompasses the extent of the once walled medieval town. To the south west lies the Castle; to the south east, the Priory Church; to the north, Frogmore Street and to the east, the former cattle market site. At its core is the regular pattern of streets. Cross Street (**Fig.14**) extends north up to the High Street, gently curving into Frogmore Street. The main arterial route is crossed by Nevill Street, Lion Street, Lower Castle Street and Monk Street, with a number of smaller lanes contributing to this informal grid pattern. The remnant survival of sections of the town wall and its historic influence on the morphology and evolution of this part of the conservation area are important aspects of its character which are not always apparent or obvious.

Refer to:
Part D - Plan 6B Character Area 2

7.3.10 The character area, bustling with shops, banks, market hall, cafes, restaurants, and public houses, has a very active street frontage. Scale varies within the character area with some buildings of two-storeys, but most of three-storeys. The distinctive town hall, the largest, tallest, and most dominant building in Abergavenny, is visible in extended views from the countryside for some distance, its bright green copper covered pyramidal roof acting as a landmark of considerable significance (Fig.15).



Fig.15 The ever present views to the town hall make for a dynamic townscape throughout the historic core

7.3.11 The varied storey height and stepped roofline, reflecting the gradient of the roads, combines to create a truly dynamic townscape (Fig.16). There are timber-framed jettied medieval buildings, Regency town houses (many of which are re-frontings of earlier buildings), a 15th century inn with carriageway, grand 19th century hotels and a Jacobean style bank. This variation makes for a dynamic and interesting historic townscape, with the quality of individual and groups of buildings making a particularly positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the conservation area. There are some well-designed corner buildings, including the Liner-like Burton store, projecting out of its triangular site with bronze and polished granite shopfronts (Fig.17).



Fig.16 Varied rooflines, the level change and the curve of Frogmore St are some of the key drivers of character to this part of the historic core

7.3.12 The historic building line is consistent throughout, with some projecting upper floors (16th century Market Street with raised footway and jettied first floor). In places, modern development has unfortunately been less successfully integrated. The Post Office, set back off the street frontage, severely disrupts the rhythm of St John's Street and Nevill Street. In other areas modern interventions have paid little attention to the varied, interactive, street frontage, best illustrated with the large Tesco building on Frogmore Street.



Fig.17 The Grade II listed Burton store shopfront – high quality materials, projected 'bow' plan and high quality lettering.

7.3.13 All but a very small number of buildings make a particularly positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the conservation area. The buildings on Cross Street, most of which are listed, form a good group of contrasting and complimentary styles. The strong historic grain momentarily falters as Cross Street leads into the pedestrianised High Street. The dark brick No. 25, now partially softened with a lively mural depicting the historic town, and the stark brick of Nos. 7 and 8 are unfortunate modern interventions due to their use of incongruous materials and lack of consideration for the traditional scale, use of proportion, plot sizes and the historic rhythm of the street formed by the facades of the older buildings of the town. However the character of the street is much improved with the high architectural quality of Nos. 11-13 leading into the equally diverse but consistently well-defined Frogmore Street.

7.3.14 The intimate nature of the character area opens out to reveal a number of important groups of buildings. To the south-west of the centre is the castle and grounds, which includes castle ruins, gate lodge, and the museum. To the north, on the west side of Castle Street, is an important group of chapels, historic and modern, including the 1829 Methodist Chapel, remodelled United Reformed Church and large Sunday School (**Fig.18**). A further significant non-secular group is to be found to the east, comprising St Mary's Priory Church and Tithe Barn, set apart by a modest, but well-conceived public space with clipped beech trees (**Fig.19**).

7.3.15 There is a broad palette of materials in this part of the conservation area. There is some consistency in roof coverings, most are natural slate, with only a small number of roofs of clay tiles (for example No. 54 Lloyds TSB, Cross Street). Elevations are either rendered/painted stone or brick, stucco or plaster or occasionally unpainted red or yellow brick. Exposed stone is to be found at the Town Hall, Kings Head Hotel, castle and church. There are one-off buildings including No. 54, Lloyds TSB which exhibits pink Alveley sandstone ashlar, and the Portland stone faced Burtons store. It should also be noted that there are a number

of timber-framed buildings in Nevill Street, Market Street and possibly, Cross Street, most of which have been re-fronted in the Georgian period. Chimneys, where seen, are mostly brick with red or yellow clay pots. The character area includes a good survival of small pane, timber sashes. Good shop frontages, both 19th and 20th century, also survive (**Fig.20**).



Fig.18 Important group of church, chapel and Sunday school, Castle St



Fig.19 The Tithe Barn with recently refurbished public shared space adjacent to Monk St



Fig.20 Good quality 19th century shopfront, with side-entrance and 12-pane vertical sliding timber sashes (a common feature of the historic core)

7.3.16 There are numerous complex local and strategic views within, to and from the character area. The town hall clock tower acts as a constant landmark throughout the character area and the wider conservation area. Particularly fine views of the tower are to be had looking north along Cross Street, looking south west from Lion Street alongside the former Cattle Market site (**Fig.21**), and looking north from the Castle walls. Important views to the surrounding hills include views west along Lower Castle Street, the varied mottled colours of the hills framing a terrace of small houses. On Frogmore Street views north-west are terminated by the large and imposing Romanesque style Baptist Church. From the Bus Station car park there are well-defined views of St Mary's Priory Church, backed by a domed hill (Ysgyryd Fawr – sometimes referred to as The Skirrid). From this location there are also good views south to the surrounding hills and on the junction of Cross Street and Monmouth Road there are glimpsed views west to Abergavenny Castle and museum. Other than this, the castle ruins are somewhat hidden away from the busy thoroughfare of the town, but viewed from the Blorengre or Castle Meadows to the west they are a powerful iconic symbol of the historic town. From the prominent Castle museum there are impressive views west across the green meadows to the River Usk and the distant hills which surround and enclose the town. Views are also available from the southern approach, around the bus station area seen on the lip of the bank above lower level buildings on Cross Street/Mill Street.



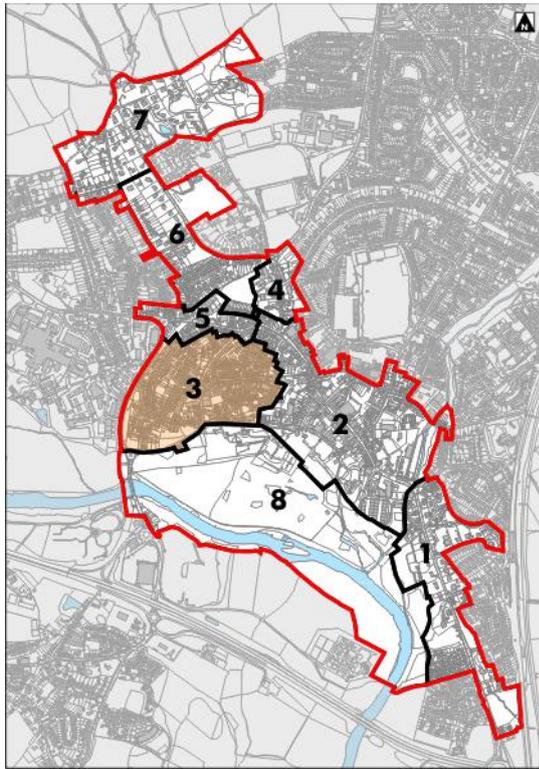
Fig.22 Fragments of the town wall, off Castle Street, survive although it is not well presented or interpreted.

7.3.17 There are a number of important features which add to the distinctiveness of this part of the Abergavenny Conservation Area. There is the raised pavement of Market Street, alleyways and carriage ways through to yards and some fine shop fronts. Architectural features include decorative keystones above doorways (e.g. Nos. 30-31 Cross Street) and varied window surrounds (e.g. Nos. 26-32 and The Swan Hotel, Cross Street). The town wall, which once enclosed medieval Abergavenny, remains in fragmentary form (**Fig.22**), especially in Nevill Street and near the church of St Mary, but little original fabric remains, although its influence on the morphology of the town is still very clearly legible. Gilbert Ledward's 1921 war memorial, for the Monmouthshire Regiment, crowned by a figure of a soldier resting on his rifle, is a particularly poignant and locally significant landmark in Frogmore Street.



Fig.21 View up to the Town Hall along Market St

CHARACTER AREA 3
19th Century Suburbs / Grofield



Refer to:
Part D - Plan 6C Character Area 3

7.3.18 This character area, west of Frogmore Street and Nevill Street, comprises part of the 19th century development of Abergavenny. Its characteristic terraced streets are interspersed

with lines of higher status villas, churches, chapels and public buildings. The area between Merthyr Road and the A4143 is less well-defined and has suffered from the serious erosion of its historic features, most noticeably windows, doors and the painting or rendering/cladding of facades.

7.3.19 The terraced streets of Victoria Street, Regent Street, Princes Street and Trinity Street comprise modest two-storey terraces, all with a strong building line and many with surviving boundary walls and railings. Two terraces on Commercial Street and Baker Street (also referred to as 'Trinity Terrace') have particularly well-defined building lines (**Fig.23**). Merthyr Road (formerly the main route from the town to the Usk Bridge and out to Llanfoist and Blaenavon) contains more affluent detached villas and town houses. Modern infill, for example Princes Court, Princes Street and the development on the site of Grofield Secondary Modern School, Victoria Street, are architecturally uninspiring but they do follow the building line and scale of the streets. Larger buildings, such as the rock-faced Public Library, on the junction of Victoria Street and Baker Street, stand out in terms of quality and architectural composition from the surrounding terraces.



Fig.23 Relatively intact terrace of houses to Baker St – the consistent building line strongly defines and encloses the road

7.3.20 T. H. Wyatt's Holy Trinity Church, Baker Street, the Gothic single-storey almshouses which flank it and the gabled Parsonage in the south-east corner, form an excellent group of significant architectural quality and character. The almshouses, for poor and aged women, were a gift of Miss Rachel Herbert. They recall a significant period in the history of Abergavenny.

7.3.21 Trinity Terrace, opposite, is a good group of stone terraced houses with yellow brick dressings, large chimney stacks and original front walls and railings. Despite the loss of original windows the terrace retains much of its historic integrity. On the east side of Merthyr Road are a pleasant group of detached stone houses, set back above the road.

7.3.22 The character area contains a varied palette of building materials. Terraces are either brick or local stone, many painted or rendered, others exposed stone with red or yellow brick dressings. Welsh slate roofs predominate and form part of the area's distinctive character (**Fig.24**). Architectural features include a wide array of door cases, and, despite significant losses on some streets, a good representative sample of original timber vertical sliding sashes of varying styles, but mostly with a single central glazing bar.

7.3.23 There are views of the landmark town hall clock tower throughout the character area but they are particularly strongly defined along Princes Street. Glimpsed views of the Blorengge are seen at the west end of Holy Trinity Church, looking south-west to the side of the almshouses. There are also views, north-east from Merthyr Road, to the landmark spire of the Presbyterian Church on Pen-y-Pound Road. Facing south on Merthyr Road there are some fine open views of The Blorengge.

7.3.24 There is a very limited survival of boundary railings and where these are found they form an important part of the character of the character area. Of note is the survival of an historic painted sign to an outbuilding on Union Road East (**Fig.25**) and cast iron nameplates to roads generally.

7.3.25 The survival of original brickwork patterns, stone, natural slate, brick chimneys, windows and doors are important local features in this considerably altered part of the conservation area. The loss of original windows, doors and roof coverings has had a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. However, these changes are reversible.



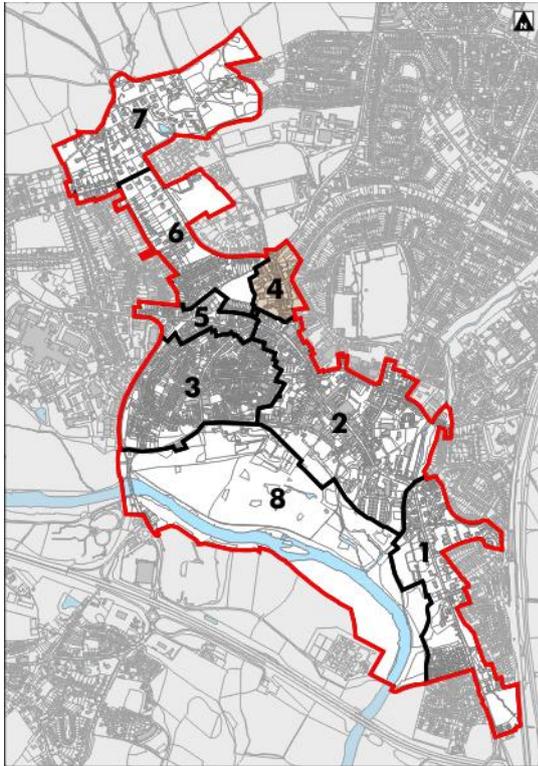
Fig.24 Victoria St – a common and consistent use of materials; painted render and natural slate roofs with red brick chimneys



Fig.25 Traditional painted signage to walls surviving on an outbuilding off Union Road East

CHARACTER AREA 4

Pen-y-Pound



Refer to:

Part D - Plan 6D Character Area 4

7.3.26 This character area is focused on the suburb of Pen-y-Pound, on the hillside north of the town centre, following Pen-y-Pound Road. This 19th century development is characterised by its churches and educational establishments. The Presbyterian Church and former King Henry VIII Grammar School lie opposite a group of 19th and early 20th century houses. As the hill rises, the Roman Catholic Church and school are situated on the west side of the road.

7.3.27 The buildings, many of high status, are noticeably large. Domestic buildings are predominantly two-storey (for example, the imposing five-bay Ty Clwyd). At the junction of Avenue Road, Pen-y-Pound Road and Old Hereford Road, is the striking three-storey, 1950s Mulberry House, juxtaposed with the single-storey Gothick toll cottage of 1831.

7.3.28 The buildings line the roadside but the building line is inconsistent and varies between

houses, churches and schools. Mid-way along Pen-y-Pound Road, the enclosed street to the south, opens out where it meets the Roman Catholic Church to the west and King Henry VIII Grammar School (now the Drama Centre) to the east, both set back from the roadside. The lawns, churchyard and Roman Catholic Primary School playground, combine to create a more open, greener aspect to this section of the road.

7.3.29 The entire road, with most buildings listed, forms a group of some considerable architectural and historical quality providing a strong identity to this part of the conservation area. Sub-groups include the Roman Catholic Church and Presbytery to the west, the Presbyterian Church and former manse, Alandale, to the east and the group of 18th to early 19th century houses to the south-west.

7.3.30 Natural slate roofs predominate, the tiled roof of Ty'r Morwydd (YHA) an exception. Non domestic buildings are brick or more commonly stone. The Roman Catholic Church and Presbyterian Church, purple/grey sandstone with Bath stone dressings, the former Henry VIII Grammar School, rock-faced red sandstone with yellow ashlar dressings. Houses are roughcast rendered or stuccoed and painted. Chimney stacks are usually red brick and there is a good survival of single glazed timber framed vertical sliding sash windows. There are many sets of iron railings and gates, often listed in their own right.

7.3.31 There are a collection of attractive views both north and south along Pen-y-Pound Road (**Fig.26**) and more distant views north west to the Sugar Loaf and north east to the Skirrid.



Fig.26 View looking north along Pen-Y-Pound to the green ridge line beyond

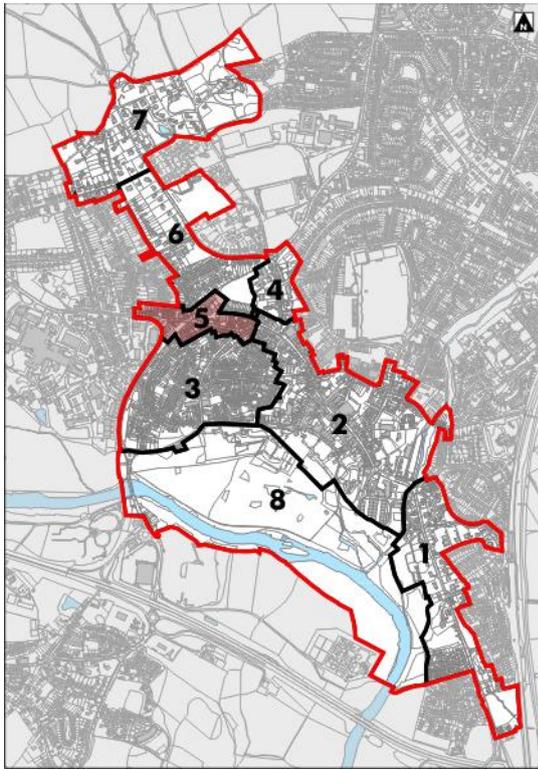
7.3.32 Local features include hipped roofs to houses (for example, the hipped, bell-cast roof to Ty-Llwyd) and an excellent variety of 18th to 20th century railings and gates (for example, Art Nouveau railings to the Presbyterian Church (Fig.27), and railings to No. 4 with gates featuring decorative dog bars.



Fig.27 Art Nouveau style cast iron railings to the Presbyterian Church are a notable local feature

CHARACTER AREA 5

Brecon Road



Refer to:

Part D - Plan 6E Character Area 5

7.3.33 As one of the principal routes from and to the town this road has the general character of a processional route with a scale that is reflective of a grander Abergavenny.

7.3.34 Houses are generally two and a half to three storeys and set at the back of the

pavement or slightly back from the roadside in small gardens. The line of the street is well defined by boundary treatments, walls and railings or built form. This provides good enclosure for most of the street and adds to the sense of arrival to the town from the north-west on the busy A40. This increases as one travels from west to east along Brecon Road.

7.3.35 There are a series of very well-defined groups along the roadside, ranging from short terraces with distinctive half dormer details to larger rock-faced villas set back in gardens behind high quality boundary walls and railings. The latter group tend to have more articulation to the roof with a variation of gables, projecting gables and gabled dormers. The grouping of houses and shops and former shops around the junction with Brecon Street are particularly attractive in townscape terms and strongly define this junction (**Fig.28**). The survival of former shopfronts, the curving of the building line and the surprisingly modest scale of this section of the street are all positive characteristics of this group.

7.3.36 There is a diverse mix of painted render and stucco, stonework, mainly seen as coursed 'rock-faced' rubble stone with brick dressings and some painted stone and brickwork although this is limited in this part of the conservation area. Roofs are mostly low pitched and natural slate.



Fig.28 High quality townscape comprising listed and unlisted buildings define the junction of Brecon Rd & Commercial St

7.3.37 The dramatic hillscape dominates the skyline in most local views. The view south along Merthyr Road from the character area is particularly notable. Views east along Brecon Road are attractively funnelled by the strongly defined townscape with the Grade II listed houses on the south side of Brecon Road partially closing the views east.

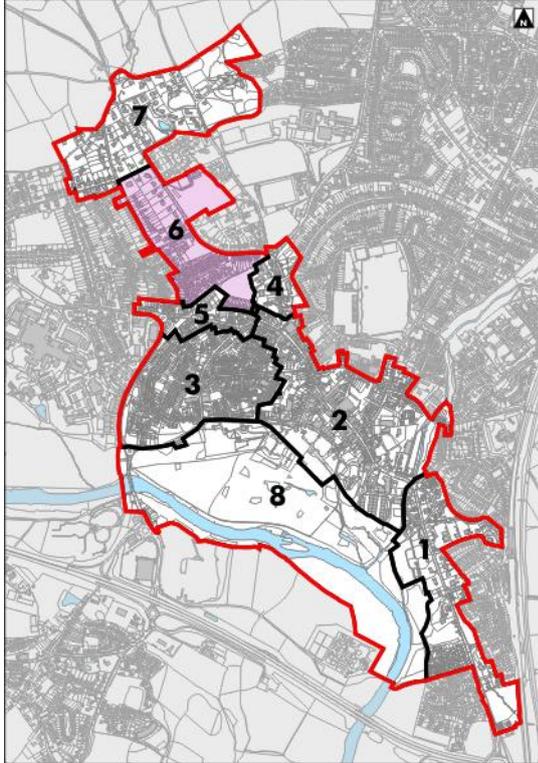
7.3.38 This part of the conservation area is perhaps most notable for its diverse use and survival of traditional materials. Much survives of original architectural features (**Fig.29**) such as stone architraves, bracketed eaves, decorative barge-boards, cast iron railings and terracotta finials. Original doors and windows have been lost throughout to the detriment of individual buildings but the general quality and diversity of the townscape distinguishes this part of the town.



Fig.29 A rich palette of traditional materials is seen in this part of the conservation area (shops with accommodation above, Brecon Rd)

CHARACTER AREA 6

Avenue Road & Chapel Road



Refer to:

Part D - Plan 6F Character Area 6



Fig.30 Avenue Rd characterised by large detached and semi-detached villas set in large plots with brick boundary walls and railings to the street frontage

7.3.39 This character area, north of the A40 Brecon Road, is focused on the principal roads leading north; Chapel Road and Avenue Road, with linking roads Harold Road and Stanhope Street.

7.3.40 The area contains a good mix of terraces, detached and semi-detached villas, larger houses and a school. Buildings are principally two-storey with the occasional three-storey house interspersed forming an attractive and varied streetscene. The building line is strong along the south half of Chapel Road with short terraces and semi-detached houses set near the roadside, behind low walls and railings. Further north this formality is lost with modern infill set further back but the building line is maintained by rubble stone boundary walls. Houses on Avenue Road are generally larger and of a higher status, and set further back from the roadside in small front gardens and generally enjoying larger plots. High density terraces on Stanhope Street are markedly different. The short street is much more enclosed and retains its strong building line along its length. As it emerges into Avenue Road the streets widen. Avenue Road generally comprises high-status semi-detached houses from the Victorian and Edwardian period and some early 20th century houses of note, all of two or two and a half storeys. Properties are set back off the road in substantial plots with strongly defined boundary treatments of brick with cast iron railings, stone walls or mature landscaping (Fig.30).

7.3.41 Of particular note, towards the south of Avenue Road (as it travels towards the junction with Pen-y-Pound Road) there is a good group of sizeable late 19th century semi-detached red and yellow brick and rock-faced stone houses on both sides of the road. This group is of particularly high quality given their scale and retention of almost all of their original material features, including boundary walls and railings that reflect the materials of the house in which they front.

7.3.42 The terraces along Stanhope Street form a particularly positive, cohesive group, as do a number of houses along the north side (presently outside the conservation area) and south side of Avenue Road. These are characterised by their fine architectural detailing, including decorative barge-boards, rich door cases and traditional fenestration.

The Knoll, a Grade II listed mid-19th century classical villa, set in its own grounds, is accessed from a winding 'country lane' off Brecon Road, and is an unusual survival of a relatively modest villa set in a large landscaped garden. This house and its spacious setting make an important positive contribution towards the setting of this part of the conservation area and forms an important transitional role as the town moves from an urban to more rural character along Brecon Road.

7.3.43 The character area contains a broad palette of materials with a number of brick buildings, some utilising polychrome design, others simply red or yellow brick with ashlar or terracotta dressings. Others are rock-faced sandstone and many are rendered or stuccoed. There are a range of mock timber-framed gables and decorative bargeboards (**Fig.31**). Most roofs are natural slate.

7.3.44 There are positive views north and south along Chapel Road and the curving

Avenue Road. On Brecon Road, just east of the junction with Belgrave Road, there are glimpsed views north to the spire of Christ Church on North Street and south to the hills. There are particularly good views to the surrounding hills between houses on the north side of Avenue Road as it curves to meet Penny-Pound Road.

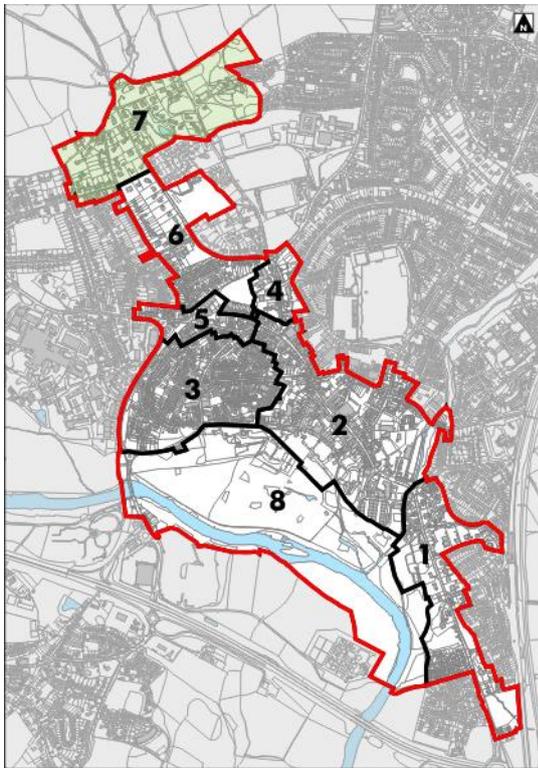
7.3.45 Features in the character area include well-preserved boundary walls with ornate railings and gates, and a mixture of original timber sashes of various sizes and styles.



Fig.31 Yellow brick houses with decorative terracotta dressings and timber bargeboards.

CHARACTER AREA 7

The Hill, Chapel Lane & Chapel Road Environs



Refer to:

Part D - Plan 6G Character Area 7

7.3.46 This part of the conservation area is predominantly defined by its low density rather than any consistent design or material characteristics and its distinctly rural qualities to the northern edges. These give this part of the conservation area a high sensitivity in terms of development within or adjacent to the conservation area.

7.3.47 Houses are generally two storey and set within generous grounds often partially or completely obscured by trees and vegetation or stone boundary walls or a combination of these elements (**Fig.32**).

7.3.48 Given this strong landscape-led area, groups of buildings are less well-defined. This changes on moving west where the houses lining Western Road (although still set in generous plots often with space all around the house) are more consistent and brought forward to the roadside.

7.3.49 The older houses within the character area are large with very large villas set back from the roadside and surrounded by later infill houses of mostly indifferent quality (with some exceptions). There is a strong group to Western Road which stands out for its particular quality and consistency in materials and grand scale. The Hill, a small country house set within extensive grounds (substantially rebuilt in the early part of the 20th century and extensively extended in the late part of the 20th century) still retains its dominance in its parkland setting which was formerly used as a college (but presently redundant – August 2015). The grounds have been included in the Cadw register of parks and gardens of special historic interest at grade II reflecting their important historic associations with horticulturalist John Wedgwood and the historic significance of the garden layout with, for example, its rare walled kitchen garden with semi-circular projection. The Rowans at the north end of Chapel Road is a particularly accomplished yellow brick house with striking and prominent terracotta griffin roof finials.



Fig.32 Northern suburbs – houses are often set behind stone walls and partially or completely obscured by mature trees and landscaped gardens

7.3.50 From Pentre Road, a rural country lane to the northern edge of the town and the present conservation area boundary, there are attractive expansive views north over field gates to the surrounding open hills and open countryside. There are also excellent long views south along the gently curving Chapel Road and from the higher ground particularly the recently developed Chapel Orchard, there are views to the town hall and church of St Mary.

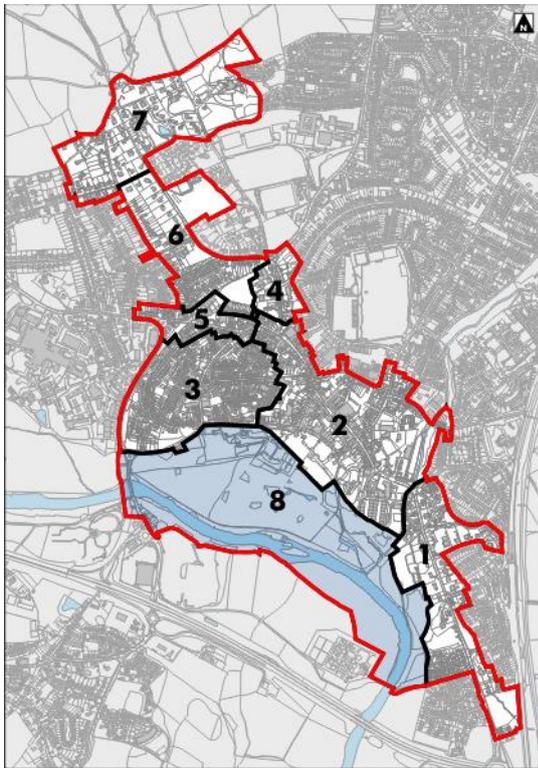
7.3.51 Given the strongly defined landscaped boundary treatments, a strong visual characteristic of the character area is the long stretches of high stone boundary walls (Fig.33). These maintain the enclosure to the

street, sometimes strongly defining the streetscape (for example along the upper areas of Chapel Road and Chapel Lane and to a lesser extent Pen-y-Pound) and are valuable historic assets reinforcing the use of local vernacular materials.



Fig.33 Almost continuous high stone boundary walls and a welcome absence of street markings or signage are key characteristic of the northern suburbs.

CHARACTER AREA 8
Riverside, Usk Bridge & Linda Vista Gardens



Refer to:
Part D - Plan 6H Character Area 8



Fig.34 Grade II listed 'Linda Vista' set within the Linda Vista Gardens

7.3.52 This part of the conservation area comprises the landscaped slopes to the south-west of the town and the floodplain of the River Usk. To the western edge of the character area the Usk Bridge in visual terms strongly defines the edge of the conservation area (although the boundary sits slightly west of the bridge) with the conservation area then taking in the river and its immediate setting to the south, excluding the sewage works to the south-east corner. The character area includes the Grade II listed Cadw registered Historic Park and Garden; Linda Vista Gardens, a well-preserved urban public park with its origins as a private garden.

7.3.53 There is very little development to this part of the conservation area which is largely given over to open grassed fields, historic hedgerow boundaries, tracks and the planned and enclosed grounds of the Linda Vista Gardens. The house within the gardens is a Grade II listed three storey Victorian Villa of stone with painted dressings, sash windows and fine cast iron veranda (**Fig.34**). The house sits at the heart of the garden and from the terraces there are some fine views south and west across the Usk valley to the hills beyond. The grounds to the house are largely informally laid out and large lawns are seen to the south of the house with a more developed and well screened boundary to the north (bordering Tudor Street) and east (screening the public car park from the gardens). The rose garden to the south-west of the house laid out in a radiating pattern of box-edged beds is a distinctively more formal part of the gardens but can only be accessed as part of the gated gardens of the house.

7.3.54 Linda Vista House sits elevated but largely obscured by mature trees so that it is happened upon within its garden setting rather than being part of a formal planned vista. Further, more exposed development is seen to the south side of the river with a group of buildings comprising a two storey row of houses to the south side of the Usk Bridge (**Fig.35** next page), somewhat compromised by the large roundabout to the south of the group. However, they provide a good sense of enclosure to this part of the road and retain

some features mainly their form and scale, roofs and chimneys which are considered to be of architectural and historic importance. Wharf House to the west side forms part of this group and is an interesting survival with much historic fabric retained (Fig.36). This building with its heavily treed backdrop and stone boundary wall and gate piers also forms a group and strong visual link with the stone parapets to the Grade II listed bridge to the north. Correspondingly this building forms an important part of the setting to the stone bridge.

Apart from the house to Linda Vista Gardens which is stone with painted dressings, most development is painted render (various non-traditional colours, white and cream) with natural slate roofs and red brick chimneys. Roofs are generally shallow pitched with eaves to the roadside.

7.3.55 There are important views across the character area and from the character area. The view from Usk Bridge towards the town taking in glimpses of the castle between mature trees (Fig.37) lining the slopes and with the landmark Town Hall emerging from this green cloak is particularly pleasing and of strategic importance in terms of the setting of the town. Views from Linda Vista Gardens and the castle out across the Usk valley are somewhat compromised by modern development (highway infrastructure and out of town retail units) but are also of great significance to the historic character of the town and its riverside setting. Views to the stone bridge from the flood plain footpaths are also important locally and provide a real sense of the historic character of this important structure. Wharf House is a prominent building in these views from the riverside. Views into and out of the conservation area to the southern end of the character area are especially important given that the castle meadows is well used and publicly accessible amenity space for the town.

7.3.56 The stone gate piers to Linda Vista Gardens depicting the name of the house 'Linda Vista' and the date '1875' are important local features (Fig.38) within this part of the conservation area as are the sequence of

informal garden spaces linked by gravel paths with sculptures interspersed.



Fig.35 Row of houses to the south side of the Usk Bridge maintain some enclosure to the roadside



Fig.36 Wharf House to the south side of the Usk Bridge - retains much of its original fabric and is a prominent building in views from the riverside towards the bridge



Fig.37 The castle glimpsed between trees from the bridge



Fig.38 The stone gate piers to Linda Vista Gardens - important local features & recording the name and date of the house '1875'

7.4 Architectural & Historic Qualities of Buildings

7.4.1 Abergavenny has an architectural inheritance extending from the early 11th century to the present day. Whilst not every architectural period or style in those thousand years is represented, or at least easily detected, the range of styles and building types contribute to the essential character of this market town. Moreover the relatively restrained palette of local building materials contributes to its distinctiveness.

7.4.2 The List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest covering Abergavenny has 248 entries, of which about 90% are in the conservation area. This testifies to the general quality of much of the architecture, especially in the town centre.

7.4.3 The earliest visible buildings and structures date from the time of the building of the castle, its walls and those of the town. Whilst the castle was rendered ineffective due to the dismantling of its walls and the town walls were almost totally demolished, remnants exist which define the castle precinct and explain the layout of the rear of properties facing Nevill Street. There are significant

areas adjacent to and within the town core where the former wall, although demolished has had a significant and important influence on the way these parts of the town has developed. The wall can best be seen at the site of the West Gate, behind the Kings Arms. The castle structures are mainly of 13th century stonework.

7.4.4 The two medieval churches of Abergavenny represent the major visible buildings of the medieval period; the church of St Mary, former Benedictine Priory founded in about 1090, St Johns Church – the original parish church of the town, appropriated in 1543 for a succession of secular uses. The two simple church towers date from the 14th century and are constructed of sandstone. Most of St Mary's was restored and altered in the 19th century. (**Fig.39**)

7.4.5 The most complete secular building of medieval origin is perhaps the Tithe Barn, within the precincts of St Mary's. This interesting building is characterised by its slightly sinuously curving stone wall on its long axis and the lines of pigeon holes and ledges high in the east facing wall. The building was sensitively converted recently to café and gallery uses. (**Fig.40**)



Fig.39 The church of St Mary within its recently refurbished public realm setting



Fig.40 The Tithe Barn, sympathetically converted to a learning and exhibition centre (including café and bookshop) for the Priory

7.4.6 The Kings Head Hotel adjacent to the Town Hall is medieval in origin, as the 15th century stone archway indicates. Medieval structures exist within much of the area inside the lines of the town walls, although in common with most market towns they have been substantially rebuilt or refronted in subsequent periods. An indication of a medieval building is found in number 29 Nevill Street, where the jettied construction oversailing an upper floor can be seen. (Fig.41)

7.4.7 The List of Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest makes reference to a number of remnant 17th century buildings within the ancient core of the town, surviving only behind later refronting. These include numbers 11 and 13 Frogmore Street. The former Great George Hotel (Fig.42) on the corner of Cross Street and Monk Street has been difficult to date as it has been remodelled at various times. However its steep pitched hipped roof and its use of giant orders would suggest its 17th century origin. It is a major contribution to the townscape.



Fig.42 The Great George Hotel (corner Cross St & Monk St) an important high quality historic building in the townscape but much in need of repair and reuse.



Fig.41 No 29 Nevill Street (in the foreground with the green frontage) – note the projecting upper floor indicating a timber frame behind the plastered façade



Fig.43 The end of the building in stucco plaster (with projecting quoins) is projecting forward of the adjacent painted brick building (with carriageway arch). This is a possible indication of refronting of an earlier stone building. The older stone flanks of this building can be seen through the archway.

7.4.8 The 18th century is relatively under represented, due to the comparative economic decline at that time. However the late 18th century Tan House at the foot of Cross Street on the corner of Mill Street is a well proportioned red brick example of the Georgian period. Numbers 7A and 7B Nevill Street are other examples from the mid 18th century, whilst the group of houses on the west side of Pen-y-Pound date from the early 18th century. Earlier buildings were refronted in this period to reflect the fashionable Georgian style. These include a number of properties on Nevill Street. (Fig.43)

7.4.9 It was the 19th century that witnessed the greatest flourishing of architectural styles and building types in Abergavenny, following the prosperity from nearby industries and in the middle of the century, the coming of the railway.

7.4.10 The Regency period is manifested in the characteristically delicate balconies such as that running across the frontage of the building facing (Halifax Bank) the Town Hall in

the High Street, or on the gable end of a building at the junction of Nevill Street and St John Street. A number of buildings on Nevill Street date from this time, characterised by projecting bracketed eaves and windows whose glazing bars are arranged to the sides of the sash (Fig.44).

7.4.11 The overlapping Neo Classical style is perhaps best exemplified in the broad elegantly proportioned front elevation of the Angel Hotel. Its centrepiece is the Doric/Tuscan columns and pilasters at the entrance. The double pedimented front of some shops on the eastern side of Frogmore Street also reflect this style.

7.4.12 The NatWest Bank on the north side of High Street is another wide fronted strongly symmetrical simple classical building, unusually with parapets (Fig.45).



Fig.44 An early 19th century wrought iron balcony is a prominent feature in the streetscene (corner Nevill St & St John's St)



Fig.45 NatWest Bank, High St with its simple symmetrical, classically inspired design

7.4.13 The early 19th century interest in the ‘cottage ornée’ and the fanciful ‘Gothick’ architecture is evident in the diminutive Toll House of 1831 at the northern end of Pen-y-Pound and the museum building within the castle grounds, built in 1819, by the Marquis of Abergavenny as a hunting and shooting box atop the Castle Motte.

7.4.14 The mid 19th century ‘battle of styles’ is played out in Abergavenny as much as elsewhere in Britain as classical architecture in its many manifestations slowly gives way to the Gothic, Vernacular and Domestic Revivals.

7.4.15 The Italianate tower (**Fig.46**) on the southern approach to the Town Centre acts as a perfect gateway to the town. Belmont House in the same area, situated above Monmouth Road, behind a characteristic Cedar of Lebanon is also of the Italianate style, with its low pitched roof.

7.4.16 The Gothic revivals of this time tend to have Tudor and Jacobean elements, as in the Trinity Almshouses and Church of 1842. The Gothic Revival is also characterised by the use of local sandstones either red/pink or more widely, grey, snecked cut or rubble.

7.4.17 The Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady and St Michael on Pen-y-Pound is a full blown example of Gothic Revival. This church

with traceried pointed arch windows and of grand interior proportions was built in 1858-60 by J.B. Bucknall “one of the most notable architects in Wales”. Revivals took many forms and the Baptist Church terminating the view at the northern end of Frogmore Street, is a severe neo-Romanesque building, with square twin towers topped by steep pyramidal roofs. The Town Hall with its iconic copper clad steep pyramidal roofs and its Gothic arched arcading is a major landmark in the town.

7.4.18 The prolific local architect E.A. Johnson produced a wide range of buildings in the town, in a number of revivalist styles in the last quarter of the 19th century.

7.4.19 The former school (1898) on the east side of Pen-y-Pound (now a Drama Centre) is in a Tudor-Gothic style in coursed rock faced sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings. Harold Road Junior School (1897-1910) is in Tudor-Jacobean style with Johnson’s characteristic yellow brick.

7.4.20 The Domestic Revival Style of the last two decades of the 19th century and the related Arts and Crafts style extending to World War I were popular in Abergavenny, especially for the middle class houses being built on the northern and southern fringes of the town.



Fig.46 The perfectly placed Italianate tower of No. 91, on the south side of Monmouth Rd partially framing the approach to the town

7.4.21 E.A. Johnson designed a number of houses on the northern fringe, a version of the Domestic Revival, with jettied and gabled wings on attic storeys, usually half timbered, with grey sandstone and brick dressings. These can be seen in Brecon Road, Avenue Road and Albany Road areas. In many cases well designed boundary walls in the style, using terracotta copings and cast iron railings are intact and add to the character of the houses.

7.4.22 Both the houses of Johnson and Thomas Foster, another local architect, in their use of stone, slate and half timbering, incorporate references to a romanticised view of Welsh vernacular architecture (**Fig.47**). Foster designed the cluster of detached and semi-detached well-to-do villas, e.g. numbers 10 and 16 in the Fosterville Crescent area, reflecting this style and palette of materials. Commercial buildings, such as the shop on the east side of Frogmore Street, and the Lloyds TSB Bank on Commercial Street demonstrate how the Domestic Revival could be adapted to other uses (**Fig.48**).

7.4.23 The most architecturally significant non-domestic Arts and Crafts building in Abergavenny is Johnson's Presbyterian Church in Pen-y-Pound. The massing of the façade rising to a characteristic tower, the use of low arches and typical window design, together with the almost Art Nouveau motifs in the railings on the double curves of the boundary contribute to its character.

7.4.24 The period from the First World War to the present has not contributed greatly to the architectural interest of the conservation area.

7.4.25 The faience façade of the Coliseum Cinema draws attention to an otherwise inconspicuous corner building. The well considered façade confidently integrates the components of this white cladding.

7.4.26 Whilst there are no notable buildings of the interwar modern movement or the neo Georgian Style, perhaps reflecting the economic depression, the Burtons store at the acute angle of Nevill Street and High Street is a remarkably intact version of the 'Moderne'

style, with some Art Deco stylistic flourishes (**Fig.49**). The building dates from 1937 and has a typical flat roof, Crittall metal windows, in white Portland stone and polished black marble elevations. The shopfront and a large format nameplate are remarkable survivals.



Fig.47 Houses designed by local architect Thomas Foster, Fosterville Crescent



Fig.48 Commercial premises in an elaborate Domestic Revival style, Frogmore St



Fig.49 Burton Store shopfront (Grade II listed) c1927 – a remarkable survival

7.4.7 The prominent building dating from 1956, an extension of the St Michaels Convent, is an interesting modern building of its time, both in massing and elevation, perhaps

demonstrating central European influences. The Police Station and Magistrates Courts, whilst not necessarily 'urban' or 'street' buildings, are typical examples of inter-war modern architecture in their layout.

7.4.28 Recent infill and extension schemes within the conservation area demonstrate architectural interest, integrity and sensitivity to context. These include the small scheme on the east side of Lower Castle Street, almost hidden by existing high walls, the extension of the Harold Road School and the housing on the south side of Lion Street, creating good streetscape and linking with the public realm scheme to the east of the Town Hall and Market Building. (Fig.50)



Fig.50 New houses and flats to the south of Lion St, taking design cues from local buildings and materials

7.5 Activity: Prevailing & Former Uses

7.5.1 The large conservation area has within it many of the uses one would expect to find in a traditional market town. Uses clearly define and distinguish a number of the character areas within the designation (see character areas for more detailed descriptions). There are four broad areas of use or former use which strongly define the character of the conservation area, these are:

- The commercial core of the market town – primary and secondary
- The high density residential suburbs
- The Arcadian low density higher status suburbs to the south and north
- The concentration of institutions (mostly ecclesiastical) around Pen-y-Pound

Commercial core

7.5.2 Market Street, High Street, Frogmore Street and Nevill Street make up the winding commercial frontage of the historic core. The key characteristics of this use driven area are the activity and interest generated by the variety of uses, including shops, cafes, restaurants, public houses, a hotel, as well as office and residential use at upper floor level. The part pedestrianisation of these historic streets has led to a pedestrian dominated space but one which is sporadically occupied

and/or devoid of activity depending upon the time of day. Abergavenny does not have a large covered shopping area other than the very popular covered market area to the rear of the Town Hall (**Fig.51**) and the modern development of Cibi Walk. This means a vibrant and diverse principal shopping street has been retained, the character of which is accentuated by the gentle curve and steady rise and fall of the street particularly at the staggered junction with Nevill Street and Lion Street. Shopfronts are an important part of the character and appearance of the commercial core and there is a good survival of 19th century and early 20th century shopfronts, particularly to Frogmore Street (**Fig.52**).



Fig.51 The covered market space behind the Town Hall – a very popular and successful shopping space



Fig.52 Traditional shopfronts to the commercial core are an important part of the town's special character

High Density residential suburbs

7.5.3 The Grofield area of the conservation area comprises a tight informal grid of streets of terraced houses often back to back or backing onto lanes. These areas are dominated by on-street parking and much variation in the personalisation of individual houses which has led to painting, rendering of stone and brickwork in various colours (**Fig.53**) and the changing of traditional windows for modern windows of different configurations including casements or top lit windows. Most houses are single family dwelling houses but due to their scale there is little opportunity for extension. Where roof spaces have been used the resulting dormer windows to the front slopes of houses generally detract from the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area and break the visual unity of the terrace.

Low density residential suburbs

7.5.4 To the north and south of the town the grand scale of the mid Victorian and early



Fig.53 A mix of painted render and stone facades with slate roofs and brick chimneys characterises much of the high density Victorian housing in Abergavenny

Edwardian suburbs vary in their degrees of intactness. There has been much infill of formerly large and very large gardens to detached and semi-detached villas. However, there is a good retention of large houses as single family dwelling houses although some have been converted to flats which has often necessitated the use of front garden areas for parking. There is only limited institutional use of large houses and guesthouses and bed and breakfast accommodation has largely focused on the Brecon Road, Park Road area.

The institutional quarter (Pen-Y-Pound)

7.5.5 The focus of predominantly ecclesiastical buildings around the southern section of Pen-Y-Pound is striking, and notable for its eclectic mix of architectural periods and styles. The Presbyterian Church (1907-10 by E.A Johnson) is a prominent landmark in this area of the town. The two-phased Ty'r Morwydd (1952), both phases by the County Architects, is an imposing building of some high material quality and adds to the civic character of this part of the conservation area (**Fig.54**).



Fig.54 Ty'r Morwydd (1952), a post-war institutional building adjoining the 18th century Mulberry House.

7.6 Contributions Made By Key Unlisted Buildings

7.6.1 There are a number of unlisted buildings which make important particularly positive contributions to the character of the conservation area, both individually and in groups. Key groups are:

- **Fosterville Crescent** (see **Fig.13**)
There is a group with the statutory Grade II listed properties (Nos. 10, 11 and 16) along Fosterville Crescent. The Crescent comprises a series of highly decorative houses, with terracotta panels and yellow brick dressings to rock-faced Pennant Stone facades. There is some loss of windows and the introduction of modern roof-lights has in part eroded the unbroken roofscape but generally these form a very high quality group.
- **East side of Baker Street**
This terrace of houses forms a group with the Grade II listed Public Library (see **Fig.23**). Despite much loss of original windows, the terrace is in remarkably good condition with all original boundary treatments; gatepiers with carved capitals and cast iron railings to yellow brick walls and many original cast iron gates surviving. Most roofs retain their Welsh slates for most and prominent yellow brick chimneys make for strong skyline features emphasising the rhythm of the terrace.
- **North side of Brecon Road (Fig.55)** (towards the junction with Frogmore Street)
There is an attractive group of modestly scale houses and former shops, including a group forming an open courtyard to Brecon Road. Some of these houses are remnants of early development on the road and the courtyard group (presently vacant) is a particularly attractive group of modest houses (possibly former stables?)
- **South side of Brecon Road** at the junction with Commercial Street (see **Fig.28**)

The houses and former shops (including the Grade II listed No.34 Brecon Road) to this junction form a distinctive high quality group of considerable townscape quality and link with a group of modest two storey terraced houses along Commercial Street. The latter are seen in relation to the junction group in views from Brecon Road.

- **Stanhope Street and the junction with Chapel Road (Fig.56)** (next page)
Strongly defined townscape with houses to back of the pavement. Unpainted Pennant Stone and despite much loss of windows and doors still retaining cohesion as a terrace
- **Western Road and Albany Road**
Distinctive townscape for its generous plots and houses set back behind boundary walls. Good consistent use of Pennant Stone with yellow brick dressings and natural slate roofs and high survival of original windows and doors. This continues down Western Road and into Windsor Road (presently not within the conservation area)



Fig.55 North side of Brecon Rd nr junction with Frogmore St – an attractive group of unlisted buildings; shops, offices, houses and flats



Fig.56 Terraced housing to Stanhope St remarkably intact throughout

7.6.2 Generally boundary walls and front boundary treatments such as railings or railings with low boundary walls and gate-piers and outbuildings (stables, privies, coal-sheds and small barns) make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Throughout the conservation area boundary walls which usually utilize materials from the host building can be seen strongly defining the streetscape (**Fig.57**). These vary from brick or stone (usually Pennant Stone) or a combination of these materials to low brick or stone walls with usually cast iron railings though some earlier wrought iron railings survive. There is a vast array of cast iron railing patterns some often consistent to streets and/or areas but often with variation between two or three individual houses in a road adding to the richness and quality of the townscape. The houses to the lower section of Avenue Road are good examples of this variation and quality but this is seen in pockets throughout the conservation area. The majority of these examples are not statutory listed.

7.6.3 The survival of early outbuildings is evident in some of the higher status residential suburbs and some of the rear yards to the commercial core within the conservation area. Where these survive their simple form, functional openings and modest scale and relationship to the host building make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and are valuable survivals in their own right (**Fig.58**).

7.6.4 Significant boundary walls and outbuildings and individual properties and

groups which make a particularly positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the conservation area are identified in **Plan 5**.

Refer to:

Part C - Management Proposals provides details relating to proposed extensions to the conservation area

Part D - Plan 5 Listed Buildings & Buildings Making a Particular or Special Positive Contribution



Fig.57 Boundary walls, usually stone or a mix of stone and brick, are positive features throughout the conservation area



Fig.58 Coach houses and stables are valuable survivals – this image shows a sensitive intervention to link the house with its outbuildings without compromising the integrity of either building

7.7 Prevalent Local & Traditional Materials

7.7.1 In general terms, the Abergavenny Conservation Area is dominated by the use of stone with brick and alternative stone dressings. Invariably roofs are natural slate where original, usually at relative low pitches, but this does vary for older buildings (where earlier frost split stone slates have been replaced¹). There has been much replacement in some areas with modern concrete interlocking tiles (particularly to the Grofield area) to the detriment of the individual buildings and the terraces within which they sit. Detailed variation which defines particular character areas is identified in the character area sections but the following provides an overview of materials used within the conservation area.



Fig.59 A typical combination of materials seen throughout the conservation area – Pennant Sandstone laid to courses with brick dressings to windows, doors and string course

Walling

7.7.2 Stone is used for walling throughout the conservation area and is also seen to flank walls where the facades have been roughcast, rendered or painted. Early buildings use Old Red Sandstone in a rubblestone form (such as the remains of Abergavenny Castle). Whilst some types of this stone can be used for ashlar work, most examples of Old Red Sandstone in Abergavenny are seen as course rubble but sometimes random (generally for lower status buildings for example former farm buildings,

boundary walls) and coursed for higher status buildings: churches and larger houses. Older houses are not generally seen with alternate brick or stone dressings but rather use larger components for lintels and quoins (these are not usually raised or prominent in earlier buildings). Buildings dating from the mid to late 19th century are distinctive for their use of stone which is generally termed as rock-faced, that is to say that it is presented as a rough surface but is often tooled at the edges to provide blocks which can be easily laid to courses. This is generally Pennant Sandstone and is usually accompanied by ashlar stone (mostly Bath Stone, as seen on the church of the Holy Trinity and Abergavenny Public Library) or brick dressings (orange/red and yellow – from the Ebbw Vale clay beds) to window & door surrounds, quoins or string courses (**Fig.59**). Brick is also dominant and almost exclusively used for chimneys throughout. The colour of chimneys invariably matches that used for dressings to the house where seen.

7.7.3 Most early stone buildings would have been limewashed historically. This can be seen to great effect on the recently restored Grade II* listed Tithe Barn, Monk Street. More recently limewash has been replaced with paint (mostly white and creams) and in more extreme changes roughcast and renders have been applied to originally stone faced buildings. This is seen in Cross Street and High Street. Some buildings have been built with render and roughcast facades but most are later alterations to earlier buildings. There is some use of stucco, usually painted mostly white or cream but occasionally other colours.

7.7.4 The traditional single glazed timber framed vertical sliding sash window is a dominant feature in most of the conservation area and where original (or traditional in style and materials) they greatly contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area. They are seen in many sizes and are particularly successful when used in bays. Many are unbarred or have a single central glazing bar. The multi-pane Georgian style (invariably six panes over six) is a less common

¹ p4 Newman J 2002 Buildings of Wales, Gwent/Monmouthshire

occurrence and only seen in numbers in the historic core (Fig.60).

Roofing

7.7.5 The use of natural slate is almost ubiquitous and it is usually seen at a relatively low pitch (up to approximately 35 degrees but more often 30 degrees or less). There is much variation to the treatment of eaves, ridges, hips and bargeboards. To the grander villas, eaves are seen with carved timber brackets to varying degrees of elaboration. Many more modest buildings have dentil brick courses to eaves and there is a surprising survival of cast iron gutters with ogee mouldings. All these features add to the quality of the houses and strongly define the eaves line of terraces and individual houses. Ridges are traditionally decorated clay ridge tiles with carved finials. Many have been replaced with modern grey clay tiles. Traditionally hips were leaded but most have been replaced with grey coloured clay tiles. Bargeboards to gables are occasionally decorative carved timber and painted. Where these are seen they are a very striking feature further emphasising the quality and status of the building.

Boundary Walls & Retaining Walls

7.7.6 There are many variations on the boundary wall and boundary wall gate-piers and railings. Notable features of the boundary wall are the variation of brick and stone to match the host building. This can reinforce the sense of a group of houses and in the terrace it can unify the street and create a very attractive townscape. The east side of Baker Street and the south side of Union Street East are both good examples.

7.7.7 Names of houses carved into the stone gate-piers is a common and very attractive feature of the small and large houses of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods (Fig.61).

7.7.8 The variation and survival of cast iron railings in Abergavenny is a key characteristic of the entire conservation area (although it is focused on the residential suburbs rather than

the commercial core). There are many different types of pattern book designs from the late 19th century and some notable Art Nouveau designs from the Edwardian period and beyond. In addition, railings are often accompanied by matching cast iron gates. Gates can vary from railing design but are often of a consistent design to streets or groups of houses. Features such as this further unify the terrace and help to raise the quality of these common building types.



Fig.60 The vertical timber framed sliding sash, seen throughout the conservation area with various configurations of glazing bars – the example shown is a multi-paned sash window most commonly found in the historic core



Fig.61 Stone gate-piers of The Rowans

8 Contributions Made by Green Spaces, Trees, Hedges & Natural Boundaries

8.1 With the exception of the south-western approach to the town formed by the river and its terracing (Castle Meadows) leading up to the Castle and Linda Vista Gardens, large green spaces and trees do not form a significant part of the character of the conservation area. Trees do not strongly define much of the commercial core and there is a notable absence of street trees in much of this area and in many of the residential suburbs, with the exception of the far northern suburbs around Chapel Road, Chapel Lane and Pen-y-Pound (character area seven). In this respect, given their general absence, where trees are found they make an important contribution to the quality of the townscape. There are notable exceptions in terms of green spaces but these are found mostly to the west of the town centre; the riverside, the castle grounds and Linda Vista Gardens and to the north of the town; the school grounds to the west of Pen-y-Pound, the cricket ground to the east of Avenue Road and The Hill to the east of Pen-y-Pound to the northern edge of the urban extent of Abergavenny. The gardens to The Hill have recently been included on the Cadw/ICOMOS (International Council or Monuments & Sites) Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales at Grade II.

8.2 The tree lined escarpment of the valley of the River Usk and its tributary, the Gavenny River as it passes through the conservation area at the northern end of Monmouth Road are the most publically accessible tree groupings. Mature trees form a significant part of the setting of the town from the west and south-west (particularly in views from the Usk Bridge and the A465 as it passes along the southern edge of the town (**Fig.62** next page)). These areas, particularly Castle Meadows, adjacent to the river are linked to more planned green spaces such as Linda Vista Gardens and the Castle grounds (now mostly grassed areas forming an important setting to the surviving castle ruins) and form a significant green buffer to the town rich in wildlife and natural habitats. Much of the tree cover to the northern suburbs is contained within large private gardens. To the larger houses, the trees lining the roadside provide extensive landscaping creating a sylvan quality to these residential suburbs where the houses are secondary or equally as important as their landscape setting.

8.3 The private gardens lining Monmouth Road on the approach from the south form an important linked green corridor much of which is adjacent to the roadside and comprises a series of mature hedges and trees. These partially obscure buildings behind and form an important green and mature landscaped setting to grander buildings within this part of the conservation area. Once beyond front boundaries settings are often open green spaces. Some of these green garden spaces are extensive but are private spaces and are only publically appreciated as softened boundaries to front gardens or in extended views from the west and south-west towards the town.

Refer to:

Part D - Plan 4 Spatial Analysis



Fig.62 Views towards the town from the river are dominated by individual mature trees and tree groups. Trees form an important part of the landscape setting of the town.

9 Key Views

9.1 Landscape Setting

9.1.1 Historically Abergavenny has been known as the gateway to South Wales when the area now known as Monmouthshire was in Norman control. This is still promoted by the town's own tourism guides. It may be more appropriate, and geographically less misleading, to declare the town as the gateway to the Brecon Beacons. Nevertheless, the conservation area is defined by the dramatic landscape setting. This comprises seven hills including the distinctive Sugar Loaf to the north-west and Blorengel to the south-west with Skirrid Fawr and the smaller Skirrid Fach to the north-east and east, the rounded Deri, the Rholben and the Mynnydd Llanwenarth to the south. This group of often steeply sided hillsides forms the wider setting of the town and defines much of the skyline and glimpsed views along streets, lanes and alleys, and between buildings (**Fig.63**).

9.1.2 The natural colouring of the vegetation (purples, browns, greens and greys) to these hillsides, as well as groups of trees and occasional outcrops of rock, greatly contribute to the richness of this backdrop. This changes in relation to the weather and the time of day, with the sunlight and shadow on these steep faces producing a constantly changing backdrop accentuating the landmarks on the town skyline, particularly the copper roofed tower of the town hall.

9.1.3 Given the omni-present nature of these views to the hillsides, it is difficult to isolate and identify individual views but rather to highlight the general perception of the wider setting of the town throughout the conservation area. Of great significance is the unbroken ridgeline of the surrounding hills which greatly contributes to the views out of the conservation area and provide a key sense of a wider natural landscape setting to the town unimpeded by development. A key characteristic of the views into and across the town is that no buildings jar or impact on these wider views other than the historic

towers of the churches and the town hall. In this respect, changes to roof form and roofscape and morphology generally, when seen in the context of long views of landmarks set against the hillside backdrop as well as the height of buildings, are highly sensitive issues which could have significant impacts on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Refer to:

Part D - Plan 4 Spatial Analysis



Fig.63 Views out of the conservation area to the hills surrounding the town are an integral part of the character and appearance of the conservation area

9.2 Types of View & Their Relative Significance

Strategic

9.2.1 Strategic views are those that essentially define the character, scale and structure of the historic town. They are strongly characterised by landmark features such as the Town Hall, the tower of St Mary's church and the Castle ruins. An integral part of the character of these views is the ever present setting and backdrop formed from the seven hills surrounding the town with the most dominant being to the north (Sugar Loaf and the Skirrid's) and south-west (Blorenge).

9.2.2 Strategic views include (these are marked on the townscape map):

- The view from Monmouth Road north focused on the tower of the church of St Mary (**Fig.64**)
- The view to the Town Hall from the lower sections of Monmouth Road
- The view to the castle from the lower sections of Monmouth Road
- The view from the Usk bridge centred on the Town Hall but taking in the western landscape setting of the river and including glimpses of the Castle but also including indifferent development to Cae Pen-Y-Dre and Merthyr Road
- The open landscape view from the castle grounds across the Usk river valley, somewhat marred by twentieth century development but still maintaining a sense of the original topography

9.2.3 Vistas and open views

Views out of the conservation area are as important as views towards. This is especially relevant where the landscape setting (particularly to the edges) is an important part of the character of the conservation area. The extensive and open views to the countryside are an important part of the character of the northern suburbs, particularly but not exclusively when glimpsed through the tree and hedge lined Pentre Road.

Incidental

9.2.4 Due to the positive enclosure experienced throughout the central historic core (character area two) of the conservation area in particular there are a series of incidental views throughout which are a combination of townscape, rooflines, and distant landscape. Examples include views along Nevill Street (strongly defined by the buildings to the back of the pavement), deflected views (views which lead the eye around corners) along Monk Street and Frogmore Street and views along streets into other character areas such as those along Brecon Road. Their value is defined by the combination of local features such as materials, enclosure (formed by the building line), rooflines (eaves or gables) and chimneys and the backdrop – often the varied colours and textures of the steep hills beyond. These views are important in terms of orientation within the conservation area and are sensitive to change particularly at skyline level.



Fig.64 Strategically important and one of the town-defining views is looking north down into the town towards the tower of the church of St Mary

9.2.5 In the residential suburbs, particularly to the north, consistent features such as stone boundary walls create attractive, developing incidental views along the streets and lanes. These are often the most cohesive element of areas where, for example, houses may be varied in period or architectural quality but are unified by the survival of stone boundary walls (for example Chapel Road).

Glimpsed

9.2.6 These types of views are similar to incidental views but are generally based on the key landmarks of the town (the Town Hall, St Mary and to a lesser extent, the larger houses of the northern suburbs) which are glimpsed between trees and through openings in walls. Their local importance and significance is high as they are part of the familiar and cherished local make-up and mind-map of the town (**Fig.65**).

Terminated

9.2.7 Views which are closed by a building or other feature (for example a group of trees) are considered to be terminated by this feature. In this respect the subject of the view is very sensitive to change as well as the way in which the view is framed. A particularly good example of this is the Baptist church which terminates the view north along the gently widening Frogmore Street (**Fig.66**). To a lesser extent but still very effective is the termination of the view west along Brecon Street with the Grade II listed Gothicised house (No. 2A) set deliberately facing the length of the street on the junction of Brecon Road and Merthyr Road. Sometimes views can be terminated in part by buildings as they turn a corner (deflected view). A good example of this is looking east along Brecon Road where the buildings to the corner and running south along Commercial Street partially close the view along this road.



Fig.65 A view looking south along Frogmore St – Glimpsed views of the Town Hall can be found throughout the conservation area



Fig.66 The Baptist church terminates the view looking north along Frogmore St

10 Degree of Loss of Architectural and/or Historic Elements

10.1 Like many historic market towns, Abergavenny in recent years has struggled to balance the often conflicting desires to maintain its built heritage whilst ensuring its economic and commercial viability. The pressures on the transport infrastructure in particular of an historic market town are immense and will always be a challenge for highway engineer and planner alike. Abergavenny has suffered on a macro level with some loss of historic buildings, and in some cases almost entire streets, particularly to the lower end of town in the last fifty years.

10.2 On a micro level, the character of traditional buildings is being eroded by the use of modern materials and finishes. The use of uPVC windows and doors is prevalent in some of the terraces to the Grofield area and to a lesser extent the northern suburbs. The Grofield suburb has undergone extensive 'refurbishments' of terraces of houses with few original windows or doors remaining, and much replacement with concrete tile roofs. There is also the rendering, rough-cast and cladding to original stone facades which, in a terrace, is disruptive and detrimental to both the individual building and the group. This comprehensive loss of historic fabric, although in many cases potentially reversible, has been damaging to the character and appearance of some parts of the conservation area.

10.3 The quality of some shopfronts and signage to the central core is poor with the use of modern materials such as uPVC and plastic signage having a detrimental effect on what is generally a high quality commercial environment.

Part C: Management Proposals

11 Boundary Revisions

11.1 Overview

11.1.1 As a result of analysis undertaken, the following are suggested boundary revisions to reflect ownership changes, recent development or a re-appraisal of the special character of a particular part of the village.

11.1.2 For general guidance on why suggested boundary changes are being made, please refer to **Appendix 3**.

Refer to:

Plan 7 Management Proposals



Fig.67 Railway Barracks, one of a series of buildings surviving which relate to the former railway depot to the south of Brecon Rd

11.2 Areas for Inclusion

The Railway Depot (Fig.67)

11.2.1 This area comprises the former Railway Barracks situated alongside the railway embankment on the west side of the Merthyr Road by-pass, just north of Union Road West. The group also includes an associated long red brick and slate-roofed shed further south (fig 68). The buildings retain strong character.

11.2.2 The imposing three-storey, symmetrical-fronted, rock-faced stone Railway Barracks is an impressive building which contributes to the varied character of Brecon Road (see below). Other railway buildings are more domestic in scale and include the single-storey range orientated north – south.



Fig.68 The Goods Building – a long brick range equivalent to two storeys in places (here seen from Hatherleigh Rd)

Brecon Road

11.2.3 Brecon Road (east and west of the junction with Belgrave and Hatherleigh Road) (**Fig.69**) (next page) is an important route to and from the historic core. Although the area is somewhat marred by development to the junction with Merthyr Road, it still retains much of its grand processional qualities.

11.2.4 Houses are predominantly two storey but with many on a grand scale and some having accommodation in the roofspace with projecting gables to light these spaces. Houses are generally set back from the roadside in gardens with boundary walls and/or railings and some mature landscaping.

11.2.5 The houses, particularly to the north side, form a series of small groups punctuated by roads leading north. Despite their variation

in materials, there is a much higher degree of red brick seen compared with other areas. The grand scale and retention of architectural features (such as original windows, doors, decorative joinery and material finishes) gives a real sense of architectural quality to both individual and groups of houses. Collectively, they form part of the important gateway to the historic core.

11.2.6 The quality of the individual houses and their contribution to the sense of arrival to historic Abergavenny warrants protection against the further loss of the late 19th century developments of the town.



Fig.69 View looking west along Brecon Rd, houses are set back in mature gardens

North Street, Orchard Street & Mount Street (Fig.70)

11.2.7 These roads form part of the higher density northern suburbs built up as a direct result of the railway connections and rapid rise in the local coal and iron industries.

11.2.8 These are modest groups of houses, with some early survivals dating from the late 18th and early 19th century. Their boundary treatments, a combination of cast iron railings and low, usually brick boundary walls are, a unifying feature of the streetscape. Christ Church, North Street, is worth individual mention due to its unusual construction – a 19th century corrugated iron aisled chapel-of-ease, its exterior clad in timber in 1958.

11.2.9 Houses are predominantly rock-faced sandstone with only limited use of brick for dressings. This distinguishes these houses from later Victorian mass produced speculative developments of Grofield. These houses generally use stone for lintels matching that of the main façade. This is occasionally tooled to give the impression of a finer stone having been used above the windows, notable local features of special interest. Roofs are natural slate with a better survival of this material than some of the areas designated presently as conservation area.

11.2.10 The kink in the street plan to both North Street and Mount Street means that built form encloses and defines local views along these streets and creates interesting townscape and views out from the presently designated conservation area.

11.2.11 To the northern end of North Street the relatively modern houses of no special architectural or historic interest are set behind remnant sections of stone boundary walls. These strongly define the streetscape and are a valuable survival from former enclosure by large gardens to large detached houses, some of which survive.



Fig.70 North Street – some high quality townscape comprising traditional buildings marred by some modern window and doors replacing traditional examples

North side of Avenue Road (Fig.71)



Fig.71 North side of Avenue Rd, presently outside the conservation area

11.2.12 This area forms part of the low density late 19th and early 20th century suburban extensions to the town using high quality materials and architecturally distinctive housing reflecting the wealth and prosperity in the town in this period.

11.2.13 The south side of Avenue Road comprises a series of very well considered pairs of villas using brick and terracotta with Bath Stone dressings. They are remarkably intact with some in an 'as-built' condition. To the north side of the road there are larger and more individual pairs of houses which are also in good condition and retain much of their original features. Later development reduces the cohesiveness of this side of the road but as one travels closer to the junction with Pen-y-Pound there is a heightened quality and scale to residential development with all houses set behind complementary boundary walls with railings and gate piers.

11.2.14 The houses to the north are a mix of yellow and buff brick, with decorative terracotta dressings and string courses, faux timber framing, decorative barge boards and natural slate roofs some retaining decorative ridge tiles.

11.2.15 Whilst some houses to the north side are not of architectural merit, the importance of the scale of the existing buildings in relation to their plots and the high quality of the houses to the south side of the road and parts of the north side would merit consideration of extension to include the entire road up to the

cricket ground and east across to link with Hill Road.

Western Road & Windsor Road (Fig.72)



Fig.72 Windsor Road – high quality traditional semi-detached and detached villas set in large grounds with a remarkable retention of original features such as windows, doors, roofs, chimneys and boundary walls

11.2.16 This proposed extension to the conservation area is distinct from the terraced suburbs and comprises the spaciouly laid-out roads of Stanhope Park on the north western edge of the town. The area includes Western Road, Albany Road, and Windsor Road. It is bounded by the country lane of Pentre Road which marks the transition between town and open countryside.

11.2.17 Most houses are large, from detached villas to semi-detached groups and terraces forming symmetrical compositions. The houses are set in sizable plots. Those on Windsor Road form a strong roadside building line, as do properties on Western Road.

11.2.18 The houses vary between a grand two-storey to larger buildings using the roofspace for accommodation. The Windsor Road terrace with half-timbered projecting gables is of two and a half storeys and strongly defines the quality and general architectural themes seen throughout this sub-area; good quality material mixes, faux timbering, use of projecting elements such as gables and bays and generally retaining some if not all of their original boundary treatments.

11.2.19 The superb terraces on the west side of Windsor Road face equally fine semi-detached villas, forming an excellent road of quality buildings of true character, which should be included in the conservation area. Another varied, but particularly attractive group, are to be found on the northern side of Western Road. The contrasting building styles making for a dynamic, active streetscape.

11.2.20 The buildings, often rock-faced stone with yellow brick / ashlar dressings, are combined with Welsh slate roofs. The Hall, at the top of Windsor Road, is a particularly well-conceived house using the combination of yellow brick and grey stone to wonderful effect. Painted render and stucco are notably absent, further distancing the area from the rest of the town. Timber-framed dormers and double height bay windows are a particular feature of Windsor Road. Ravenscroft and Hawkhurst, Western Road, make effective use of a combination of render, tile hanging and red brick, enlivened by superb timber sashes.

11.2.21 Please note, should this area be considered worthy of extension, this should include the removal of permitted development rights in relation to windows, doors, roofs, painting of stone/brickwork, removal of front boundary walls and removal of chimneys.

11.3 Areas for Exclusion

Northern section of Llanover Way & adjacent riverbank

11.3.1 Llanover Way forms part of a 1980s housing extension to Abergavenny accessed from Monmouth Road. This development of private residential houses now partially falls within the conservation area designation (which pre-dates the development). This housing development is not considered to be of sufficient special architectural or historic interest to be included within the conservation area. Therefore, it is recommended that this section of the urban extension presently falling within the conservation area is removed.

11.3.2 The conservation area boundary would be redrawn to fall immediately north of the housing development, to the south of No. 93 on Monmouth Road and continue west crossing the river to meet the present line of the conservation area to the east of the sewage works. This would entail a section of the river and riverbank also being removed from the designation. The section of the riverbank would still be considered to form an important part of the setting and views into and out of the conservation area.

12 Article 4 (2) Directions

12.1 Under Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2013, planning permission is granted as 'permitted development' for a range of minor developments subject to limits and conditions designed to protect the amenity of the environment. Due to the sensitive nature of conservation areas and the fact that such 'permitted development' in this environment could be harmful to the character of the area, it is recommended that these 'permitted development rights' are restricted in order to preserve the character of the conservation area.

12.2 Article 4(2) of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) enables local planning authorities to make directions withdrawing the permitted development rights given under the order. These rights should only be withdrawn where there is firm evidence to suggest that permitted development is likely to take place which could damage the character or appearance of a conservation area, and which therefore should be brought within full planning control in the public interest. There are different areas where permitted development rights may be taken away; generally affecting the external appearance of dwelling houses in the conservation area.

12.3 Article 4 Directions may be applied to the whole Conservation Area, to parts of it such as Character Areas, or to individual buildings or groups of buildings, or features. This will be subject to further detailed consideration and recommendation. Their introduction does not mean that development specified within them is automatically precluded, but does seek to ensure that through the exercise of full planning control that such development does not harm the character or appearance of the conservation area and that all alternatives that can avoid this have been fully explored."

12.4 Examples would include:

- The erection, alteration or removal of a chimney
- Various kinds of development fronting a highway – to include gates, fences or walls or any other means of enclosure
- The construction of an external porch
- The painting of the dwelling house
- The construction of a building or enclosure within the curtilage of a building
- Alteration including partial demolition of a gate fence or any other means of enclosure and the construction of a means of access to a property
- Microgeneration – possible restrictions on changes which fall within permitted development rights relating to the retrofitting of renewable energy equipment; for example, wind turbines and photovoltaic cells, where they would have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

12.5 Within the Abergavenny Conservation Area there are six key groups of important unlisted buildings which would benefit from the protection afforded by additional planning controls in order to retain elements of particular historic or architectural interest and avoid the potential danger of erosion of the special character of these parts of the conservation area. These areas are as follows:

- East side of Baker Street
- North side of Brecon Road
- South side of Brecon Road
- Stanhope Street and the junction with Chapel Road
- Western Road, Albany Road and Pentre Road
- South side of Avenue Road (part)
- West side of Hill Road (part)
- Fosterville Crescent (part)

12.6 Plan 7 identifies these areas for potential Article 4(2) designations. In each case the removal of permitted development rights in relation to windows, doors, roofs and the painting of stone or brick facades and the control of the removal of chimneys and front boundary walls and railings should be considered across the group.

12.7 In the case of proposed extensions to the conservation area boundary, if these were confirmed, the following areas are suggested as having the potential to benefit from Article 4(2) designations:

- Brecon Road (east and west of the junction with Belgrave and Hatherleigh Road) (in part)
- North Street, Orchard Street and Mount Street (in part)
- North side of Avenue Road (in part)
- Western Road, Windsor Road and Albany Road

12.8 Consideration should be given to the removal of permitted development rights in relation to windows, doors, roofs and the painting of stone or brick facades and the control of the removal of chimneys and front boundary walls should be considered for buildings which are considered to make a particularly positive contribution to the character and appearance of the proposed extensions.

13 Proposals for Enhancement

13.1 General Enhancement Opportunities

A number of opportunities exist that would help to enhance the overall appearance of the conservation area. These include:

- Boundary walls: maintenance and upkeep
- Footpaths and routes
- Maintenance of the public realm
- Traffic, parking and street improvement
- Signage strategy
- The retention and or provision of separate access to facilitate beneficial use of upper floors
- Shopfronts and lighting

13.2 Specific Enhancement Projects

Enhanced linkage from main car park area at south end of Cross Street

13.2.1 As the main entrance area into the town from the east this is a high priority due to its gateway status to the town centre. At present the area lacks a sense of place and enclosure. The space is ill defined and poorly structured. There is considerable scope to enhance the 'arrival' space for the town and better integrate parking, pedestrian routes, related facilities (toilets/café/TIC) with the public transport facility. A comprehensive improvement scheme is recommended to ensure the following:

- Restructure car parking and establish a coherent and attractive route towards the Church and the Tythe Barn. Utilise tree planting to emphasise the route.
- Consolidate public toilets and café into an attractive facilities building with appropriate external soft and hard landscaping.
- Introduce a wide frontage building close to back edge of footpath to replace kiosk.
- Street planting, avenue trees & paving to Church Square.

Cross Street, between Monk Street to & including Market Street

13.2.2 This is an important street within the town edged by some fine buildings. Proposals would need to be carefully and sensitively considered, but would aim to "celebrate" the route to the market building and the core retail area. The area is an important part of the heritage of the town as well as being an important place to meet. A comprehensive improvement scheme is recommended to deliver the following:

- Enhanced hard surfacing for roadways and pavements (shared surface) referring to the palette of materials that have been used at the Brewery Yard.
- Undertake an audit of street furniture and signage. Rationalisation of street signage, lighting, bins and seating as part of a comprehensive enhancement strategy.
- Investigate a scheme to enhance shop front and building elevations.

West end of Lion Street

13.2.3 This area provides a link route into the town centre from the northern ring of parking areas. The street pattern has been eroded as a consequence of the loss of buildings and the visual dominance of parking abutting the road. The area is an important part of the heritage of the town due to the location of the "Coliseum" as well as being an important place to meet. A comprehensive improvement scheme is recommended to ensure the following:

- Improve the linkage from Lion Street to Market Street through enhanced surface materials.
- Consider the development of some key frontage sites for uses to be identified.
- Rationalise and improve surface and boundary landscaping at the parking areas.

Post Office Area & Tudor Street

13.2.4 This area is at the heart of the town and plays an important role in the activities within the town. The quality of the existing development on the site and the space fronting the building generally detracts from the overall quality of the conservation area. The site and other land abutting the post office building also fails to positively contribute to the character of the conservation area. The area is an important part of the historic town and a comprehensive improvement of the area would significantly enhance the conservation area. There is a role for the Council in encouraging and controlling future developments in this area in order to deliver:

- Comprehensive enhancement through new buildings and the re-establishment of a more coherent streetscape.
- Design Brief for possible improvement/redevelopment of the Post Office site, including a more enclosed square and appropriate frontage development onto St Johns Lane.

Brecon Road

13.2.5 As the main entrance route (A40) into the town from the west Brecon Road is an area where some modest but focused improvements would materially improve the perception and attractiveness of this route into the town. This could extend to include the Tesco site at the end of Frogmore Street and the Park Road frontage around Cybi Walk. A comprehensive “corridor” improvement scheme to ensure enhanced hard and soft landscaping could include the following:

- Avenue planting with robust street trees.
- Good paving & conservation kerbs.

Lewis’s Lane at Library & Cinema

13.2.6 This area is closely related to the suggested improvements at the western end of Lion Street. The scope exists in conjunction with other enhancements nearby (Lion Street)

to significantly enhance the sense of place and to reinforce this “nodal” point within the town which has the potential to become an important place to meet. A comprehensive improvement scheme is recommended to ensure the following:

- Improve the linkage with Lion Street and Market Street through enhanced surface materials.
- Introduction of appropriately designed seating at key positions.

Sunny Bank

13.2.7 This space, at present having the appearance of a road dominated, over-wide ‘T’ junction, could be enhanced to become a ‘place’, more in keeping with its attractive name. This would also reflect ‘homezone’ highway design principles. It would also provide some amenity space in an area where this is lacking. Recommended enhancements include:

- Plant a large semi-mature tree at the junction.
- Provide seating & other associated street furniture integrated with pavement widening
- Design surfacing to incorporate tree and parking
- Incorporate appropriate street lighting

Bus Station Environs

13.2.8 The area around Cross Street, Mill Street and Monmouth Road...

This part of the conservation area is often the principal entry point for visitors to the town. Whilst there is much which can be done with potential development adjacent to the bus station, the bus station area and associated car park has very poor townscape qualities with much open and undefined space particularly to the entrance to the car park and bus drop-off area. Recommended enhancements could include the following:

- A narrowing of the entrance and removal of the central traffic island

- Creation of a stone sett cambered (raised) cross over defining the entrance and helping to slow traffic and act as a natural crossing point.
- Re-organisation of landscaping to provide more integrated trees in open green (grassed) space rather than 'retained' within stone walls. This would form a better setting for the information centre
- Consideration should be given to the separation of the bus and car park functions, for example by creating separate access and egress and more strongly defining the car park edge by the planting of trees along the south-east boundary. This would create better defined and distinct spaces that were broken up by landscaping, helping to relieve what are at present, poorly defined spaces.

13.3 Shopfronts

13.3.1 The scale and often intimate character of the historic buildings and the townscape of Abergavenny presents challenges for larger scale retail developments and for the corporate logos & standard shopfronts of the retail chain stores. The following design considerations should help to ensure an appropriate and sympathetic relationship between the design of a shopfront and the character of the 'host' building in which the retail development is located.

13.3.2 *Design considerations*

- Do the architectural proportions of the proposed shopfront relate to the building or group of buildings on which it is proposed?
- Does the frame of the shopfront give visual support to the upper floors?
- Are separate shop units visually expressed within the streetscene, creating a strong vertical rhythm and respecting the proportions of adjacent units and upper floors?
- Do the proposals entail the wholesale removal of an historic shopfront or elements of an historic shopfront, such as original blind boxes or fascia signage?
- Does the design of the new shopfront or alterations to an existing shopfront incorporate as far as reasonably possible easy and convenient access to the premises for everyone, including disabled customers?
- Have the materials been selected with the character of the rest of the building and the street in mind?
- Has the type and number of materials been kept to a minimum and are they durable and easily maintained?
- Is the proposed display of fascia signs on frontages easily readable with lettering in a single style and adjusted in size and content to suit the proportions and detailing of the existing/proposed fascia?
- Is the proposed projecting hanging sign the right size for the host building and in the correct position on the façade and does it share the design of colour and lettering with the principal fascia?
- Is the proposed canopy or blind designed as an integral part of the shopfront?
- Does the proposed security shutter deaden the streetscene by obscuring the shopfront completely and in this respect harm the historic fabric of a traditional shopfront surround and have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the shopping street?
- Is there sufficient information provided to give a clear picture of what the proposed shopfront or alterations to the shopfront and any proposed signage will look like on the host building and in the street scene?
- Does the proposed shopfront fully consider security.