



Caerwent

*Conservation Area
Appraisal &
Management Proposals*



monmouthshire
sir fynywy

Document Prepared By:



FORUM
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Services

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The Roman town walls are a key characteristic of Caerwent Conservation Area

Part A: Purpose & Scope of the Appraisal

1 Introduction

1.1 The AA Guide to Britain Villages (1980) states "vivid links with the past make Caerwent one of the most remarkable villages in Britain". Cadw describes the Roman town walls as the "best preserved in Britain".

1.2 A village Enhancement and Visitor Management Scheme was agreed by Cadw and the National Museum of Wales, the Wales Tourist Board, Community Council and County Council in 1994. The study commented that:

"The village of Caerwent represents one of the finest examples of a civilian Roman town in Britain. In Roman times, Caerwent was a thriving town known as Venta Silurum, the administrative centre and capital of the Silures tribe.

Venta had a planned system of streets dividing the town into rectangular plots (insulae) which contained the public buildings including a forum – basilica, baths, temple and amphitheatre, shops, private houses and farms. A settlement existed at Venta from the late first century A.D., but the regular layout in its fully developed form probably dates to the early third century. Caerwent has the best preserved defences of any Roman town in Britain...

The first archaeological excavations were initiated in 1855. Large scale excavations were undertaken between 1899 and 1913, funded to a large extent by Lord Tredegar. A new series of excavations were initiated in 1981 by the National Museum of Wales, a programme conducted jointly with Cadw since 1984. Three main sites have been investigated since 1981:

- *A fine courtyard house in the northwest corner of the town.*
- *The Forum Basilica or market place, assembly hall and law courts.*
- *A Romano Celtic Temple situated on Main Street*

The Roman town has been designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas

Act (1979). As a result, any development within the town will require Scheduled Monument Consent from the Secretary of State for Wales. A number of buildings in Caerwent are also listed buildings. The village and its environs are also a Conservation Area.

Much of the land within the Roman walls at Caerwent is in State Guardianship. The north eastern area of the town, containing the Forum Basilica and Roman Temple is under Cadw ownership. The Roman walls are in Cadw guardianship. Gwent County Council [Monmouthshire County Council] land extends over the western and southern sectors of the village being in the main farm land.

The roman remains at Caerwent are acknowledged to be of European significance and constitute one of the most important archaeological sites in Wales. Other examples of tribal capitals such as Cirencester, Bath and Winchester are all lost within built-up environments whereas Caerwent could be considered a Greenfield site. As such Caerwent offers a rare opportunity to display a civilian Roman town and as a complementary attraction to the legionary fortress at Caerleon."

1.3 The Cadw visitor's centre and highway entrance features were implemented in accordance with this scheme.

1.4 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.

1.5 Caerwent is one of 31 designated Conservation Areas in the county of

Monmouthshire. It was designated as a Conservation Area on 12th January 1976.

1.6 The *Caerwent Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals* is seen as the first steps in a dynamic process. The overarching aim is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Caerwent Conservation Area and to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future management.

1.7 Key study aims:

- Identify those elements of Caerwent 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 Caerwent

1.8 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.



Fig.1 Caerwent and its landscape setting as viewed from the south

2 Consultation

2.1 A consultation event covering a number of Conservation Areas, including Caerwent, was undertaken on 1st March 2010 at County Hall in Cwmbran.

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.

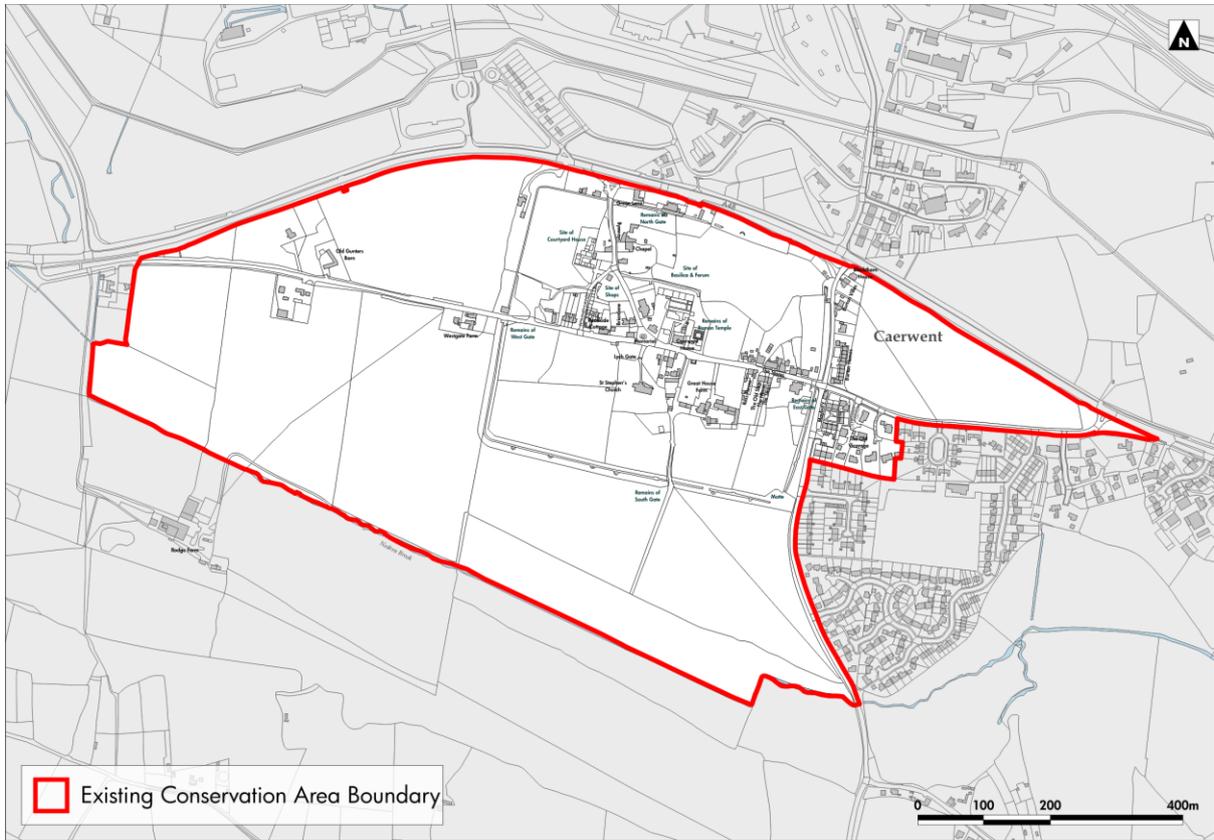
3.9 Draft Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has also been produced. This provides practical design and planning checklists along with good practice case studies. This SPG should be read in conjunction with the Conservation Area Appraisal.

3.10 The LDP contains a specific policy relating to the remains of the Roman Town of Caerwent, which is acknowledged to be of European Significance and constitutes one of the most important archaeological sites in Wales. Policy HE4 seeks to prevent new development within or adjoining the walls and ditches of the Roman Town of Caerwent, in order to ensure that the remains of the Town are left undisturbed and that its special character and openness is preserved. There has been a presumption against development within the Roman Town walls or in their vicinity since the 1954 Monmouthshire County Development Plan. The LDP continues this aim to ensure that the remains are left undisturbed.

For Additional Information:

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

4 The Study Area



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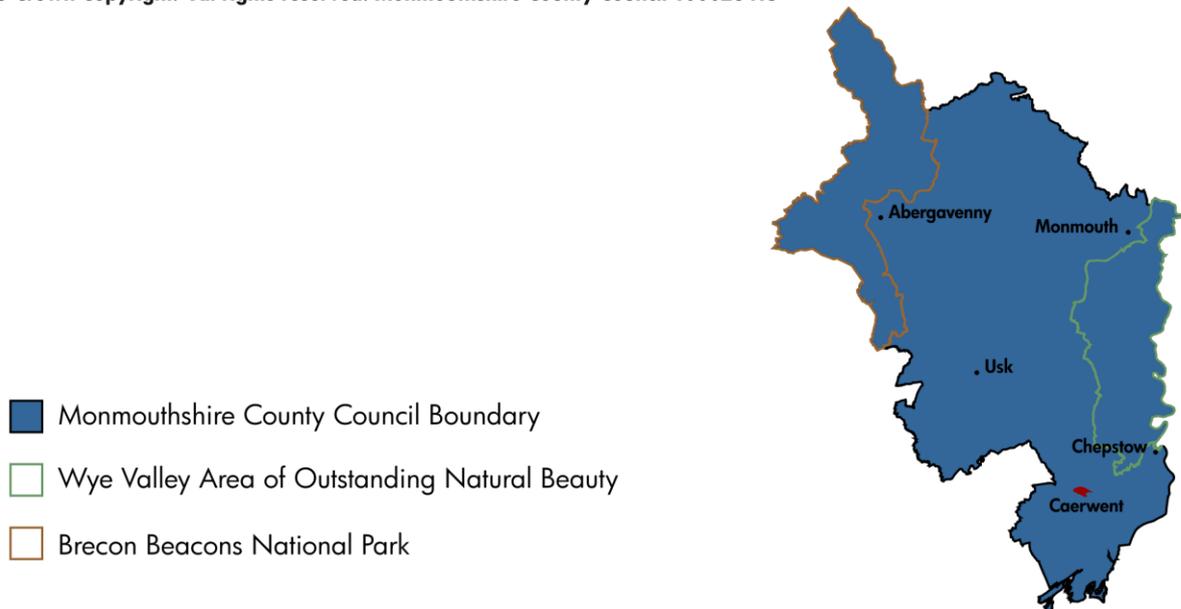


Fig.2 Study Area

Part B: Conservation Area Appraisal

5 Location & Setting

5.1 Caerwent, situated north-west of Caldicot, is located on the A48 old trunk road linking Newport and Chepstow. The village, on the edge of the flat lands bordering the Severn Estuary, is sited in the middle of the broad, open Nedern valley, on a slight rise in an area of good agricultural land (**Fig.2 & Fig.3**).

5.2 From the village there are views south to the ridge of Upper Rodge Wood and general views north-west to a series of hills and the ancient Wentwood. A series of earthworks, forts and castles are scattered amongst the hills overlooking the Gwent Levels.

5.3 The Conservation Area is centred on the Roman town (Venta Silurum), bordered by the Nedern brook to the south and the A48 and

vast Royal Naval Propellant site (until 1993 a U.S. munitions depot) to the north.

Refer to:

Part D - Plan 1 Conservation Area Plan

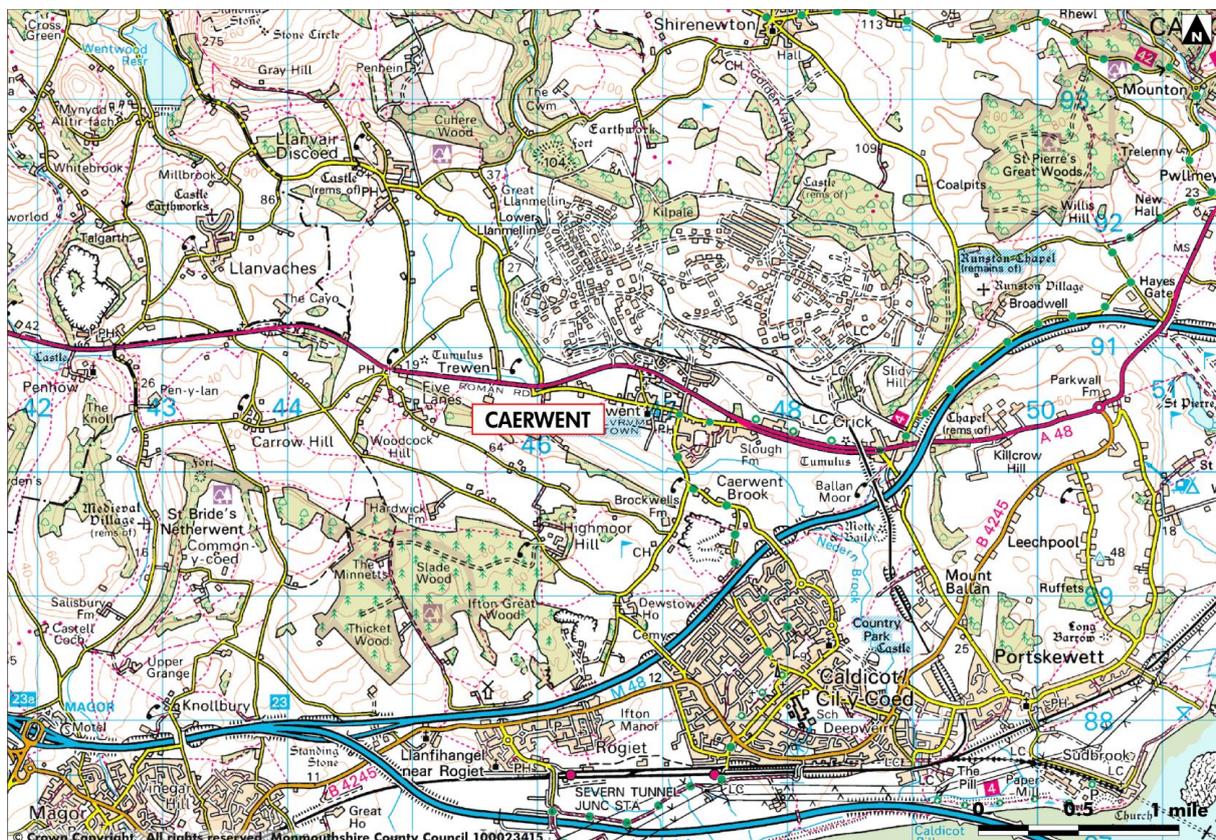


Fig.3 Caerwent Location Plan

6 Historical Development & Archaeology

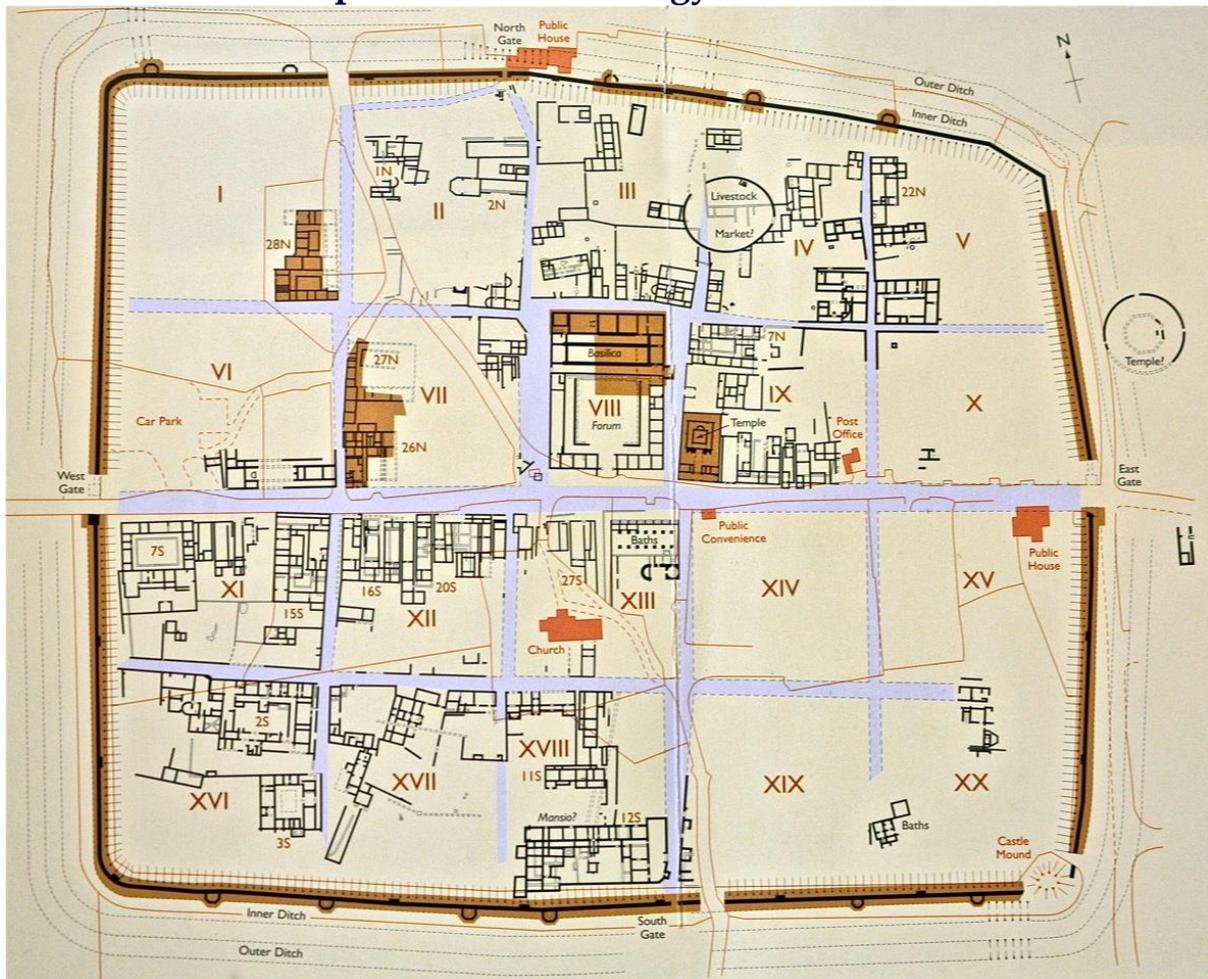


Fig.4 Roman Town Plan (Cadw) showing the 20 rectangular blocks (insulae) that made up the extent of the Roman Town and the known extent of the below ground archaeology. Note the exposed elements are highlighted in brown.

© Gwent Record Office

6.1.1 Caerwent, 'the stronghold of Gwent', derives its name from the Welsh words 'Gaer' and 'Gwent'. The town was founded as Venta Silurum, 'market of the Silures', and was once the largest centre of civilian population in Roman Wales. For more than 300 years following the Roman conquest of South Wales, Caerwent was the administrative centre and capital of the Silures, whose territories extended to the old counties of Brecknock, Glamorgan and Monmouthshire (Brewer, 2006).

6.1.2 After the initial Roman invasion in A.D. 43 Roman forces quickly occupied southern Britain, but their advance into Wales was initially halted by tribal opposition. For some thirty years there was fighting between the invading Romans and the Silures. By the mid-

50s the Romans had established a fortress at Usk bringing the southern coastal belt and area east of Usk under their control. By A.D. 60 the Romans were close to victory but Boudicca's revolt in Norfolk halted their advance. It was not until A.D. 74 that attention was turned back to Wales and a new legionary fortress built at Caerleon. From here the Silures were subdued and a network of forts established to control the surrounding area. The Silures of the coastal belt gradually adopted Roman ways and were eventually granted a form of local government with its capital at Caerwent.

6.1.3 Positioned strategically on the Roman road running from Gloucester (Glevum) to Caerleon (Isca), Caerwent developed into an important centre. Exactly when the Silures

were granted self-government is not known but the presence of a forum-basilica complex (marketplace and civic hall) indicates a date in the first part of the 2nd century A.D. (Brewer, 2006).

6.1.4 The early settlement was not fortified; the town acquired its earth and timber defences during the later years of the 2nd century. The town walls form a quadrilateral covering 44 acres (**Fig.3** previous page), making Venta Silurum one of the smallest tribal capitals of Roman Britain. As the town developed it was ordered around a planned system of streets dividing the settlement into twenty rectangular plots (insulae) which contained public buildings, shops, houses and farms on the fringes. Excavations suggest that the early town was no more than a collection of buildings strung out along the main Roman road to Caerleon. The regular layout of streets was probably established not much before the beginning of the 3rd century. The forum-basilica stood in the central plot of the completed town, dominating the townscape. The town also contained several temples, public baths and excavations suggest a mansio, a form of inn or stopping place. There is no sign of a purpose-built church within the walls, but there may have been a 'house-church'. A circular temple lay outside the eastern line of the defences and a cemetery is known in the area south of the road emerging from the East Gate; it is possible that there was also a cemetery outside the West Gate. The stone walls (originally up to 25 feet high) (**Fig.5**) were probably built in the late 3rd century, in front of the original earthen bank (Brewer, 2006). Gates, flanked by square towers, were constructed on all four sides of the town. Later (c.349-50) additional external semi-circular towers were built, six on the south wall, and at least five on the north wall. The north and south gates were blocked in the late Roman period.

6.1.5 In the first half of the 4th century the town prospered, possibly as a result of the departure of the Roman Legion from Caerleon and a subsequent shift in settlement to the civitas capital of the Silures, but by 350 A.D. the basilica ceased to function as the seat of

local government. By the end of the 4th century the town may have started to contract and by 400 A.D. the Romano-Celtic temple had fallen into disrepair (Brewer, 2006). The town survived into the 5th century but much of it in a ruinous state. By the early 6th century, the kingdom of Gwent came into existence which is thought to have had its capital at Caerwent or neighbouring Caerleon.

6.1.6 Little is known about early medieval Caerwent and no structural evidence of buildings has been found from this period, although there are burials surviving from this time in the area of the church suggesting that Caerwent was a major ecclesiastical centre in Gwent Iscoed in the 6th and 7th centuries. The post-Roman cemeteries (with 118 known burials) are far larger than the likely residual population and burials were likely brought here from the surrounding area (Aldhouse-Green & Howell, 2004). By the 10th century there was a monastery at Caerwent. The presence of a religious site was confirmed by the discovery of a pre-Norman disc cross head south-east of the present church. Metal work and coins found in the town also suggest some level of continued occupation or activity from the 7th century to the Norman Conquest.



Fig.5 View of the town walls to the south side of the town

6.1.7 The Normans focused their attention on occupying and developing the strategically positioned town of Chepstow to the east. At Caerwent they built a simple castle motte with timber defences utilising the south-east corner of the town walls in the late 11th century. In 1081 the Lordship of Caldicot and Caerwent was established and granted to Durand, Sheriff of Gloucester, later passing to the earls of Hereford (Aldhouse-Green & Howell, 2004). The present Church of St Stephen and St Tathan has its origins in the 13th century, with enlargements and tower added in the 15th century (Imrie, 2004). Even by the 16th century there were only sixteen or seventeen small houses within and around the walls.

6.1.8 There is very little documentary evidence of 18th century Caerwent. A town map (Fig.6) shows the limited development in the town at this time. Census records record mostly agricultural labourers, the occasional farmer, inn keeper and grocer.

6.1.9 In the early 19th century tourists and antiquaries began to visit Caerwent and limited investigations into the Roman town

were carried out. Many antiquarians flocked to record the castles and ruins of the area with drawings and etchings showing the surviving structures as romantic ivy clad ruins (Fig.7). It was not until the 'Caerwent Exploration Fund' systematically explored two-thirds of the site between 1899 and 1913 that the extent of the former Roman town was realised. Further investigations were carried out in 1925 and in 1946-7 when the site was taken into state care (Brewer, 2006).

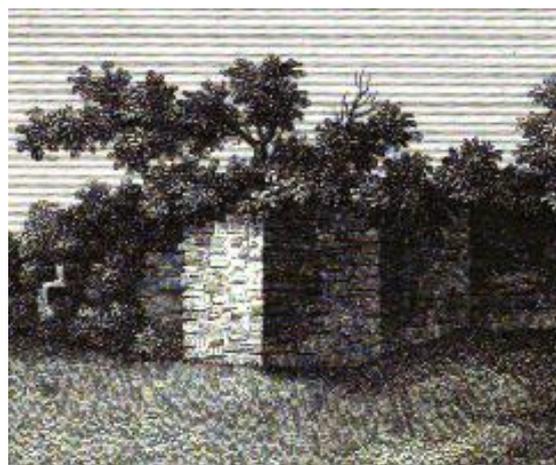


Fig.7 An early 19th century engraving of one of the bastions on the south wall

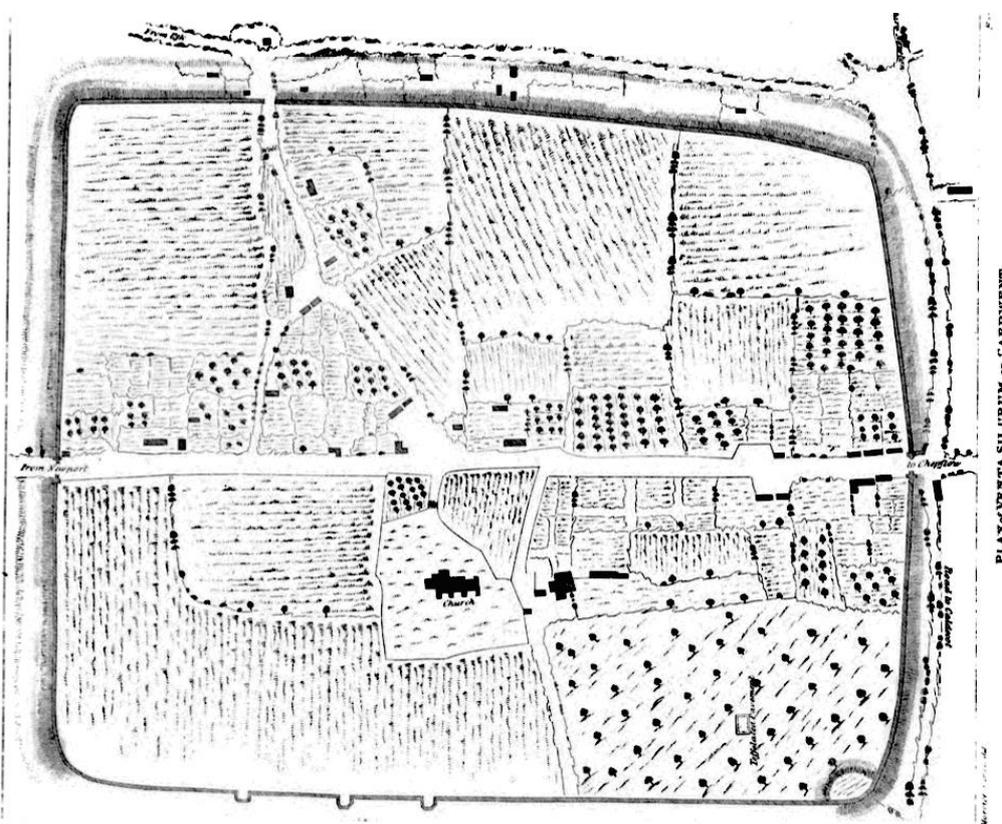


Fig.6 1801 town map of Venta Silurum

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6.2 Settlement Plan

6.2.1 The present form of the village owes its orientation to the main east–west Roman road running through the walled area whilst lanes outside the walls skirt the defences to the east and partly to the north reinforcing the outline of the Roman town.

6.2.2 The village has an irregular form, predominantly lying around and within a triangle of routeways to the north of the main street which contrast with the former regularity of the Roman grid of streets. Short rows of properties stand alongside both sides of the road just inside the East Gate but the property plots are also irregular in form and suggest gradual development rather than a planned phase of development. To the south of the east-west road the two main features are the church and Great House Farm divided by a path leading to the old South Gate. Around these core buildings within the Roman walls a particular characteristic is the amount of undeveloped open space that provides a unique legibility to the Roman settlement.

6.3 Key Historic Influences & Characteristics

6.3.1 The key historic influences and characteristics of Caerwent are:

- Venta Silurum ‘market of the Silures’ established by the 2nd century A.D. An important local government centre with market, shops, temple and houses
- The stone boundary walls erected in circa. 3rd century A.D.
- 350 A.D. the basilica ceases to function as a seat of local government
- 5th century the town falls into disrepair
- 6th–10th centuries little is known of the town, but it is likely that it was established as a monastic centre and an ecclesiastical base for burials of the surrounding area.
- 11th century Norman occupation and construction of castle motte
- 13th century construction of the Parish Church. Remodelled and extended in the 15th century

- 16th–19th century a period of stagnation with a few houses and farms scattered between Roman remains
- 19th century ‘re-discovery’ with tourism and a series of excavations. Development of today’s village with clusters of cottages and chapel
- 20th century piecemeal building within the walls and immediately outside the walls with later housing developments in the mid-late 20th century to the east

6.4 Archaeological Potential

6.4.1 The walled area of the Roman town, apart from the churchyard, roads and areas of present day housing, is a Scheduled Ancient Monument reflecting its national importance. Within this area there will be a presumption in favour of preservation of archaeological remains. Subject to the policy presumption against new development (para 3.7) Cadw/GGAT should nevertheless be sought at an early stage in the formulation of any development proposals within the walled area.

6.4.2 Beyond the scheduled area is a larger Area of Special Archaeological Sensitivity (ASAS), a non-statutory designation supported by national planning policy reflecting the potential for the survival of archaeological remains. The ASAS extends south to the Nedern Brook which may have been navigable in the Roman and early post-Roman periods, and to the north, east and west of the walled area to allow for the potential for discovery of Roman suburban development and cemeteries. Any development within the ASAS or relating to any of the buildings standing within the scheduled area (having regard to paras. 3.7 and 6.4.1) 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 in any proposed development scheme.

Refer to:

Part D - Plan 2 Historical Plan

Part D - Plan 3 Area of Special Archaeological Sensitivity

7 Spatial Analysis

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 four 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 Caerwent 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**.

Refer to:

Part D - Plan 4 Spatial Analysis

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

7.2 Overview

7.2.1 Caerwent's Conservation Area is focused on the Roman town of Venta Silurum set within a fortified perimeter wall. The Conservation Area extends out beyond the confines of the old town, as defined by the survival of the town wall to varying degrees. To the west it includes fields either side of the Roman road taking in Gunters Farm to the north, up to the boundary with the A48 and Westgate Farm, and to the south to the Nedern Brook. The boundary runs alongside the Nedern Brook below and within the setting of the Roman walls to the north and extends alongside Dewstow Road to the east taking in Vicarage Gardens, which along with the former Vicarage includes mid- to late 20th century housing development. Some of this housing fronts onto the triangular field between the Roman road and the A48, the eastern and northern boundary of which forms the eastern extent of the Conservation Area (see **Plan 1**).

7.2.2 The Conservation Area's special character is largely due to the remarkable survival of the Roman town and the relationship between the Roman remains and the later, medieval and post-medieval development, and the surrounding landscape. The south wall is an unexpected (as this is not seen from the main routes through or around the settlement) and remarkable survival from the Roman period. The land within the walls is raised so that the effect within the village is that the walls appear to be low ruins, but in external views, particularly from the south, the full height of the walls accentuated by an outer ditch in places, can be fully appreciated. The evolution of the village from Roman town to today's quiet settlement can be charted through key buildings such as the 13th century Church of St Stephen and St Tathan and the late 16th/early 17th century Caerwent House right up to the 1913 Burton Homes Almshouses.

7.2.3 The town walls, the best preserved defences of any Roman town in Britain, should be regarded and considered as a whole,

despite sections being dealt with separately within the appraisal. The total circuit of the wall slightly exceeds a mile (1.6km). The description of the wall, for the purposes of describing the character areas, is divided amongst the sections below (Fig.8).

7.3 Character Areas

7.3.1 Six distinct character areas have been identified in Caerwent, the boundaries of which have been identified in Fig.8 below and Plan 6. This section will identify the key attributes of each character area.

7.3.2 Each character area makes reference to the following key 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 6 Character Areas

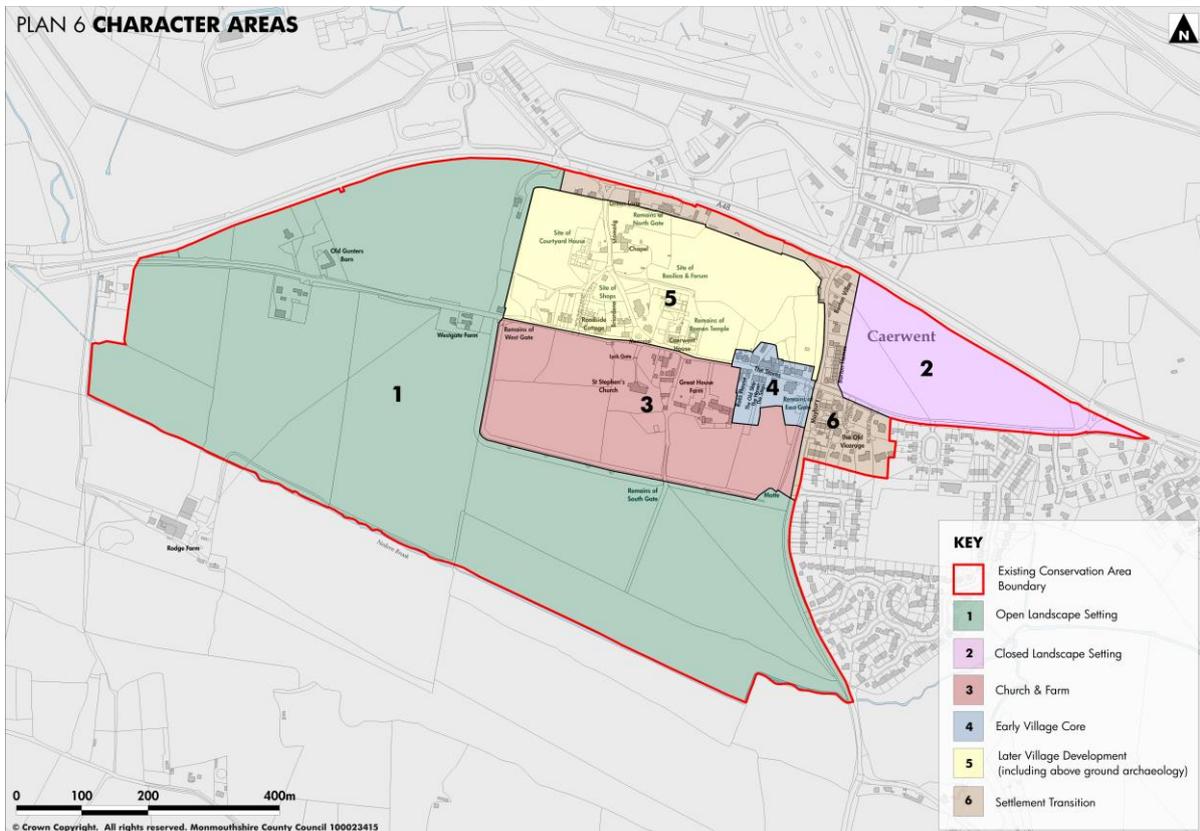
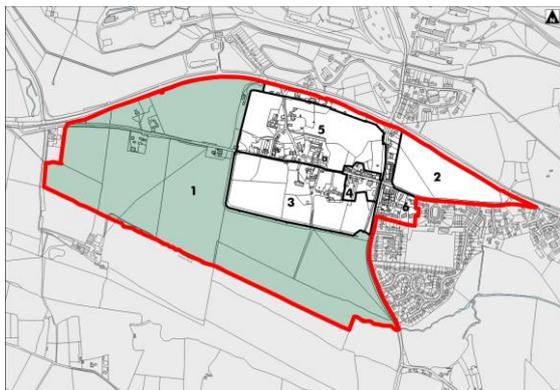


Fig.8 Caerwent Character Areas

CHARACTER AREA 1 Open Landscape Setting



Refer to:
Part D - Plan 6A



Fig.9 The open character of this part of the Conservation Area is an important part of its special interest



Fig.10 The eclectic use of materials and unique architectural treatment of Ashleigh Grove

7.3.3 This character area forms the landscape setting to the walls of the Roman town to the west and south. It comprises the wide valley side of the Nedern Brook to the south of the town containing pastureland of regular field boundaries with arable land to the north and three major building groups including the former farmsteads of Gunter's Farm and

Westgate Farm. The area is characterised by its predominantly flat topography, wide open views, hedgerows and modest groups of mostly vernacular buildings. The Nedern Brook, presently a small stream to the south of the town was once thought to have been a navigable waterway in the Roman period. Its character is markedly different from the walled town and from the enclosed strip of land to the east. (Fig.9)

7.3.4 The buildings within this character area are generally set back from the roadside with outbuildings. To the south side of the road is Westgate Farm (near the West Gate) with a modern two-storey house set off the roadside with two ranges of older outbuildings to its east. Further west is Ten Elms; a two-storey house set back from the roadside with outbuildings to its east. To the rear of the house is a modern agricultural shed which has a negative impact on some of the wider landscape views. Opposite Ten Elms is the single storey 'L' plan building, the converted Old Gunter's Barn, which is placed at an angle to the roadside. North-west of the barn is the small two-storey Meadow View with detached garage. Two buildings have been constructed up against the west town wall. At the entrance to the village is the modest one-and-a-half storey Westgate Cottage with its rear garden extending along the foot of the wall. Further north is Ashleigh Grove, a distinctive mid- to late 20th century two-storey house set at the same angle as the wall with a long and narrow mature garden extending south.

7.3.5 Houses tend to form small groups with outbuildings or garages. These small clusters of buildings have clear and open uninterrupted spaces between.

7.3.6 Building materials comprise a mix of coursed rubble stone and brick with white painted render with red brick chimney stacks. Old Gunter's Barn has stone walling. Ashleigh Grove (Fig.10) has a mix of rendered brick, weatherboarding and timber and glazing panels with a fully glazed north elevation. Roof coverings are generally natural slate, with the exception of Westgate Cottage with clay pantiles and corrugated iron to agricultural

outbuildings at Ten Elms and Westgate Farm as well as a corrugated iron shed at Ashleigh Grove.

7.3.7 Given the character area comprises of large open fields, excellent views to the surrounding countryside and back to Caerwent can be had throughout this part of the Conservation Area. Upon entering the area from the junction with the A48 from the west there are long distance views to the tower of St Stephen and St Tathan's Church. There are closer views to the church from the roadside just west of Westgate Farm where there are also good views south-west to the notable and prominent collection of buildings at the foot of the ridge on Rodge Farm (**Fig.11**). There are correspondingly good views from the area of Rodge Farm back into the Conservation Area with a foreground of fields taking in the full extent of the south wall, the Church of St Stephen and St Tathan flanked by trees, Great House Farm to the east, and New Cottages and Westgate Cottage to the west. The A48 is screened from view to the north by a belt of trees. Distant panoramic views north and west pick up the mostly wooded hillscape beyond. From Dewstow Road in the south-east, views north are terminated by the Norman motte rising from the corner of the town wall. There are excellent views north-west from this position taking in the full extent of the southern section of the town wall with its

exposed herringbone stonework and towers rising above the ditch to the front (**Fig.12**).

7.3.8 Local features in this part of the Conservation Area include an early 20th century black and white painted road sign along the road to the west. South of the town walls, in line with the farm track to Great House Farm, is a former double hedge line still visible but now overgrown. The town walls themselves are described in other character areas.

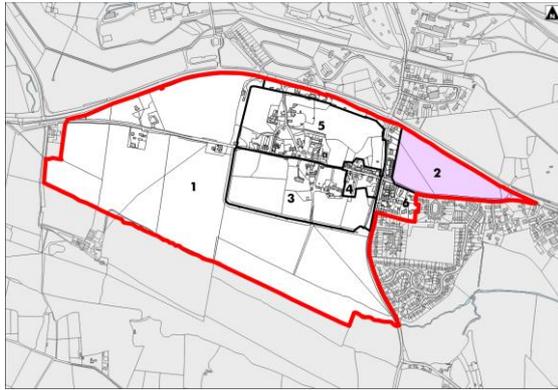


Fig.12 Bastion on the south wall projecting over the town ditch



Fig.11 Rodge Farmhouse a notable landscape seen against the green backdrop of the ridge

CHARACTER AREA 2
 Closed Landscape Setting



Refer to:
 Part D - Plan 6B



Fig.13 View across the open green fields towards the rear of the Burton Homes Almshouses



Fig.14 Views from the character area into the village core

7.3.9 This character area comprises a triangular piece of open space to the north-east side of the walled town on the approach road from the east. The area of gently undulating grassland is bounded by hedgerows and confined by the A48 to the north and the Roman road to the south with Caerwent's 20th century expansion beyond. Views are more confined in this area and focused on built form rather than landscape features.

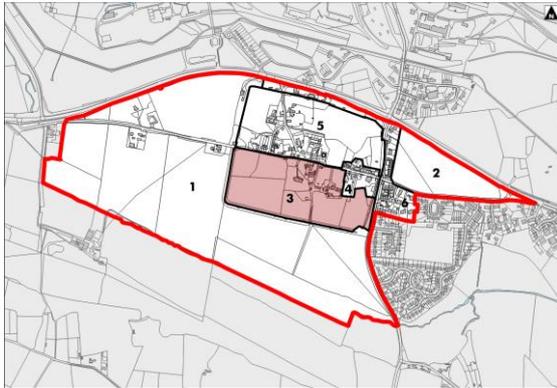
7.3.10 There are no buildings within this small character area but the Burton Homes Almshouses form an important feature beyond the western edge of the character area.

7.3.11 From the junction with the A48 there are good views west across the field to the rear of the Burton Homes Almshouses with its treed backdrop (Fig.13). There are also views north-west to the rear of Burton Villas. The established belt of trees alongside the A48 north restricts views but comfortably encloses the space and provides some screening from the busy road. Views south take in the late 20th century growth of Caerwent with its modern highways infrastructure of cul-de-sacs and closes. On approach (along the Roman road) to the settlement core (formerly the walled town) there are views west towards the remnants of the Roman East Gate and glimpsed views into the 19th century village core (Fig.14).

7.3.12 The open field acts as an important positive transitional space between countryside and settlement. This enhances the sense of arrival at the walled town where development encloses the road on both sides and the walls form an informal pinch point demarked by stone setts in the carriageway.

7.3.13 Local features include the mixed hedgerows and trees. Near the site of the almshouses, extending into the field is the site of a possible Roman temple.

CHARACTER AREA 3
Church & Farm



Refer to:
Part D - Plan 6C



Fig.15 Stone walls are a strong feature of this part of the Conservation Area and in this case form a group with the lych gate of the church

7.3.14 This character area covers the area within the walled town on the south side of the east-west Roman road, but excludes the village core at the east end (character area 4). This area is dominated by three significant historic buildings; the Church of St Stephen and St Tathan, Great House Farm and its outbuildings and the significant sections of town wall to the southern edge of the Conservation Area. These buildings are set within the landscape of rough pastureland to the south of the Roman Road (**Fig.15**). The extent of survival of the Roman town wall to the south is an outstanding feature that still stands to a height of 5 metres in places.

7.3.15 To the roadside section of the character area, there are three houses; Berwyn (detached, two-storey), The Laurels and Waun Fawr (semi-detached, two-storey). These houses are set back from the roadside, to a consistent building line between the church and the track leading to Great House Farm and behind a continuous stone wall. To the east of Waun Fawr is the corrugated iron roof of the laundry with rendered façade set on the roadside, alongside which, on the opposite side of the track leading to Great House Farm, is a mid-20th century public toilet block facing Caerwent House. Stone walls, in part, on both sides of the road, provide good enclosure to the road leading from the West Gate towards the church. The wall, rebuilt in places, then sweeps around to the entrance to the church leading to the lych gate (**Fig.16**).



Fig.16 The group of church and farm are well-placed in the open landscape and dominate open views from the town walls on the south side

7.3.16 The Church of St Stephen and St Tathan and the farm complex of Great House Farm to the east form a key group of significant listed and unlisted buildings. The church, with its fine two-stage west tower, sits in an attractive well-treed churchyard surrounded by a low stone wall with stone slab stile to the south-east and contains many excellent gravestones and a collection of chest tombs. The 1902 Walker Memorial lych gate to the north has an inventive double revolving timber gate that revolves about a central axis with a weighted closing mechanism. The churchyard has some fine examples of mature trees, including specimen trees and a series of Yew tree screens, particularly to the north boundary. The farm to the east contains the stone 'L' plan farmhouse with extensions and a series of traditional farm buildings constructed of stone with clay pantile or corrugated iron roofs, including storage sheds, stables, former threshing barn and cow shelter sheds. The complex of unconverted farm buildings is arranged around a courtyard to the east of the farmhouse (**Fig.17**). The track leading south towards the farm has stone walls to both sides and a former entrance with stone steps leading towards the farmhouse, but now

overgrown. This track continues to the now blocked south gate. As such it is one of the few public paths which remain as part of the former Roman street plan. There is a series of single-storey outbuildings located parallel to one another on the west side of the farmhouse and forming the east side of the churchyard. They are orientated gable end facing the track (**Fig.18**). The track swings around in front of a further outbuilding, probably formerly stables and cart-shed, towards the farmhouse which is orientated north-south.



Fig.18 Series of stock yards with low stone buildings and walls enclosing them (Great House Farm)



Fig.17 Great House farmhouse and its farm buildings form a group of some considerable local architectural and historic interest

7.3.17 Principal buildings are a mix of exposed local stone and stone from further afield, such as the church with its combination of grey and red limestone with Bath stone ashlar and sandstone dressings (**Fig.19**). Houses generally have red brick chimneystacks, some are rendered. Houses to the roadside are a mix of white painted render and pebbledash (for example, the house known as Berwyn) with slate roofs. A mix of stone and brick is used for the outbuildings to Great House Farm with a mixture of slate, clay pantile and corrugated iron roofs. Unfortunately, (given its prominence in local views) the farmhouse has modern concrete interlocking roof tiles (**Fig.20**), probably replacing stone slates (some of which survive in the garden). The public toilets and bus shelter are constructed of concrete, brick and stone facing, with concrete tile roofs. Post-Roman boundary walls are mortared local limestone rubble, the wall to the lych gate having red sandstone ashlar ends and capping. The Roman walls are predominantly limestone with large sandstone blocks to some towers (**Fig.21**).



Fig.19 The Church of St Stephen and St Tathan: a mix of ashlar and coursed rubble stone with natural slate roof



Fig.20 The prominent roof slopes of Great House farmhouse with modern concrete interlocking tiles



Fig.21 Sandstone block facings to the southern sections of the Town Wall within this part of the Conservation Area.

7.3.18 Within the town walls the ground level is raised to a significant degree from the surrounding landscape, being approximately at the level of the top of the Roman wall, and as such wide, open views and vistas across to the surrounding countryside can be gained. From the south-west corner there are views towards the south-west to Rodge Farm. The farmhouse, given its white render set against the green fields and woodland, is a landmark building in this open landscape. There are further far reaching views south to the ridge of Upper Rodge Wood and views east and north towards the distant wooded hillscape. Progressive and changing views can be had along the length of the wall with views east on the east side towards Vicarage Gardens and the Burton Homes Almshouses (**Fig.22**). From the blocked South Gate there are key views to the Church of St Stephen and St Tathan amongst the trees (**Fig.23**) and north-east to Great House Farm. The farm complex is best viewed along the east wall looking north-west. Within the village there are glimpsed, restricted views south along the track leading to Great House Farm which opens out to the south walls. The undeveloped rough pasture

fields, in places clearly containing earthworks relating to the Roman town and, possibly, later occupation provide key open spaces that enable the visitor to place today's village within the context of the Roman walled town (**Fig.24** overleaf). There are two paddocks north of the farmhouse that continue the open character of the area. These are set behind a roadside stone wall. Views into the paddocks over the wall are dominated by the farm buildings although the paddocks themselves are not readily visible.



Fig.22 Local views from the Town Walls on the east side looking down towards the Burton Homes Almshouses



Fig.23 The Church of St Stephen and St Tathan viewed from the South Gate framed and partially obscured by mature trees to the churchyard



Fig.24 The Roman walls can be seen within the context of later heritage assets such as the landmark tower of the Church of St Stephen & St Tathan

7.3.19 The area has a wealth of local features from the well designed unusual church lych gate to the post-Roman stone boundary walls. The Roman wall to the south is the best preserved section containing towers, the blocked South Gate with springing stones for the arch (**Fig.25**) and the Norman intervention of the earth castle motte breaking out of the south-east corner. Known below ground archaeology comprises a series of regular streets lined with buildings to the south and west of the church and baths to the north and south-east of the church. The church contains a number of Roman artefacts including two of Caerwent's finest survivals; the Paulinus Inscription statue base, and an altar dedicated to Mars-Ocelus (**Fig.26**).



Fig.26 The inscription reads: "[To Tiberius Claudius] Paulinus, (once) commander of the Second Augustan Legion, (next) proconsul of the province of Gallia Narbonensis, (now) imperial governor of the province of Lugdunensis; by decree of the council of the community of the state of the Silures."

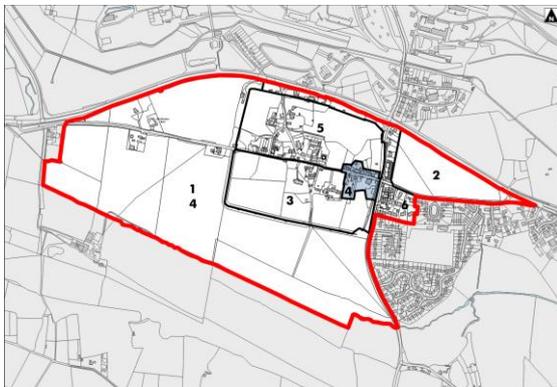


Fig.25 Ruinous South Gate with later Roman stone infill

CHARACTER AREA 4 Early Village Core



Fig.27 A series of stone setts in the road demarks the line of the Town Wall – the village core can be seen beyond



Refer to:
Part D - Plan 6D



Fig.28 Strongly defined townscape in the village core section of the Conservation Area

7.3.20 This small character area comprises the houses either side of the east-west Roman road, running through the village from the East Gate up to the fields of Great House Farm. The area is drawn tight to the rear of the properties on the north side of the road, but extends down to encompass the long rear

gardens of properties on the south side of the road. Apart from the approach to the East Gate (with cobbled road surface marking the entrance into the former town) this area has the character of a small linear village settlement with no real sense of the Roman town walls which encompass it (Fig.27).

7.3.21 Built form comprises a mixture of houses, shops, garage and public house and is positioned either directly on the roadside or set slightly back behind small stone walled front gardens. The area has a strong sense of enclosure provided by the built form. Houses rise up along the road from east to west with a stepped roofline. There is a good mix of detached houses, semi-detached and short terrace rows (Fig.28). Buildings can be substantial, often two-storey, for example the three-bay Coach and Horses Inn, Hamara Gher and Box House. The Old Ship is a large three-storey, three-bay house, the upper storey possibly representing an addition to the house. There are smaller scale buildings such as the compact Post Office the short two-storey, two-bay semi-detached house known as The Steps and the garage on the north side of the road and small brick outbuilding west of the public house.

7.3.22 Important groups of buildings include the row comprising The Old Ship, The Haven and The Steps, with the distinctive stone Ross House and Weston House with brick dressings to the west and the Post Office, with excellent

survival of sash windows and a shop front with consoles, transom lights and recessed door on the opposite side of the road to the north (Fig.29). Other buildings along the roadside such as the Coach and Horses Inn and the stone building known as The Stores have retained some special character, but they have undergone significant alterations. Modernisation to this part of the Conservation Area has led to the recent introduction of uPVC windows, concrete roof coverings and pebble-dashing to the detriment of the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area (Fig.30).

7.3.23 The character area contains a mix of walling materials to houses. This includes exposed stone, white painted render and pebble-dashed buildings. Stone, laid roughly to courses, is the common building material to older properties. Roof coverings range from the traditional natural slate and clay double Roman pantiles, to modern concrete interlocking tiles. Chimney stacks are red brick or rendered with a striking blue brick stack to the Post Office. Brick is occasionally used as a dressing to window openings, for example The Stores, and red and yellow brick to Weston House and Ross House. Few original windows survive; notable exceptions are the timber vertical sliding sashes to the Post Office and small pane casements to The Steps. Stone walls are located to the front of many properties, some with large stones to lower courses and stone copings to gate piers. Hamara Gher retains its iron railings to the front boundary and there is a good iron gate to Weston House (Fig.31).

7.3.24 There are views west and east along the road. From outside the Coach and Horses Inn there are views north-east to the Burton Homes Almshouses. There are also views south from the Coach and Horses Inn car park out over the fields towards the southern section of the town wall and open countryside beyond.

Local features include the Post Office shopfront, stone boundary walls extending up from the East Gate and in front of houses, and the survival of some iron railings (Fig.32).



Fig.29 Caerwent Post Office - a good early 20th century timber shopfront



Fig.30 uPVC windows, modern roof coverings and removal of chimneys have eroded the character of the buildings in this part of the Conservation Area – compare this image with the historic photograph at Fig.57 in section 7.5

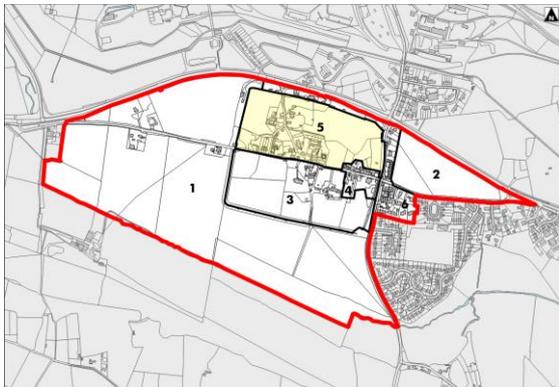


Fig.31 Roughly coursed stone with brick dressings and wrought iron gate to Weston House



Fig.32 Some survival of iron railings to front boundaries

CHARACTER AREA 5
Later Village Development
(including visible archaeology)



Refer to:
Part D - Plan 6E

7.3.25 This area comprises the northern half of the walled town and contains the best of Caerwent’s visible Roman archaeology including shops, Basilica, temple and the remains of the Roman walls to the northern boundary of the town. In common with the southern character area (Character Area 3) the post-Roman stone walls lining roads form an important part of the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area. To the western section a road passes diagonally across the character area from

opposite the church northwards, emerging through a later break in the north wall onto the A48. Along this road there are a number of small cottage scale houses, a former school (now used as a nursery) and a chapel.

7.3.26 The character area contains a variety of buildings from the distinctive stone terrace, Nos. 1-4 New Cottages, to the Evangelical chapel and modest Briardene, tucked to the side of Myrtle Cottage.

7.3.27 The houses in this character area are predominantly two-storey with buildings set on or slightly back from the roadside. Those to the east – west Roman road face south, for example, New Cottages, Roadside Cottage and Cross Cottage. To the west the area becomes more open with a gravel drive leading to the Cadw car park with two agricultural buildings, set perpendicular to each other, forming an informal courtyard and converted to a visitor information centre. Visitors embark on their tour of Caerwent from here and an audio system directs you through the excavated remains of part of the Roman town (see Fig.55 in Section 7.4). Information boards and way marked signs are positioned throughout to offer a route and provide information on the history and archaeology of Roman Caerwent.



Fig.33 Excavated remains of Roman shops to the east side of Pound Lane

7.3.28 Pound Lane cuts through to the north and on its east side are the remains of a series of Roman shops (**Fig.33** previous page). Houses are two-storey or one-and-a-half-storey and generally long ranges, set on the side of roads with generous open gardens bounded by low stone walls. Gables set to the side of the road are also a notable feature of this sub area. The open spaces between built form is an important characteristic of this part of the Conservation Area. To the north, New House is set at an angle between Pound Lane and the northern access road. To the west the road opens out to fields and the exposed remains of a large 4th century courtyard house. At the junction of Pound Lane and the access road Widows Cottage is set on the west side of the road, gable end on. Opposite is Vine Tree, set at a similar angle, and then the chapel set back off the roadside behind a stone wall and graveyard, facing west. Attached to the chapel at an angle to the north are Byeways and Museum House. Travelling south the stone school building is positioned behind railings to the east with the semi-detached Myrtle Cottage and Briardene facing south, gable end on to the road (**Fig.34**).

7.3.29 Opposite the church the junction of roads forms a key focal point with the central 1948 Portland stone obelisk War Memorial. This area has a good sense of place (see **Fig.38**). Two and one-and-a-half-storey detached houses are positioned at angles to the roadside behind low stone walls facing the large central expanse of tarmac around the War Memorial. Immediately to the west is a rendered two-storey house facing east and to the north is the mid-20th century Laurel Dene set at an angle to the road. Eastwards along the east-west Roman road is the large three-storey, four-bay Caerwent House (a Building at Risk) facing south. The scale of Caerwent House marks it out as a building of importance and provides some hierarchy to the buildings within this character area (**Fig.35**).

7.3.30 In addition to the remains of the Roman shops on Pound Lane and the courtyard house to the west of Pound Lane there are further remains to the east. A track to the north of the school leads to the site of

the Forum-Basilica. Part of the remains of what was the principal public building of the Roman town and its market place are exposed with the remainder hidden in the garden of Laurel Dene and continuing under Caerwent House. East of Caerwent House is a Romano-Celtic temple, the entrance fronting the Roman road. The central position of these important Roman buildings within its grid of streets is no longer readable within the present-day townscape (**Fig.36**).



Fig.34 Myrtle Cottage, gable end on to the roadside



Fig.35 Caerwent House: a significant building in the Conservation Area is in a very poor condition



Fig.36 The excavated remains of a Romano-Celtic temple to the east of Caerwent House

7.3.31 The remarkable exposed remains of buildings of the Roman town combine with

later buildings of the village to provide a strange sense of the historic Roman town juxtaposed with the relatively more recently developed sections of the character area. There are a few high quality individual buildings within this character area in small groups. To the west, the former farm buildings (now visitor centre) are well-considered conversions that retain the character of the buildings. On the roadside, Roadside Cottage is an attractive rendered property with a huge buttress on its south elevation and simple stone porch set behind good iron railings. The War Memorial is a positive focus to the road junction acting as a local landmark and providing a sense of place. To its east is the Grade II listed Caerwent House, of late 16th century/early 17th century origin, presently (November 2010) at grave risk of potentially major loss of historic fabric. To the north is the former school, with north extension. Presently boarded up (November 2010) it makes a positive contribution to the street scene. Further north is the simple Evangelical chapel with three arched windows, set behind a low stone wall (unfortunately newly pointed with raised ribbon pointing). Attached to the north

is the stone Byeways with sash windows and large timber lintel across the ground floor (see **Fig.58** in section 7.7).

7.3.32 There is more consistency in terms of materials to this part of the Conservation Area, with the buildings predominantly comprising rendered stone painted white or cream. There are some whitewashed stone buildings such as the Cadw visitor barn and other exposed stone buildings such as the former school, Byeways and New Cottages. There is a mixture of stone and red brick outbuildings as well as modern but modest timber garden sheds. Stone façades (walls) often have red brick dressings around window and door openings. Chimney stacks are usually red brick, exposed or rendered. Roofs are generally natural slate with a small number of examples of clay pantiles and plain clay tile roofs. Many roofs to 20th century buildings and to older buildings are now concrete tiles. There are few original windows surviving. Caerwent House has good timber, six over six vertical sliding sashes, as does Byeways; others such as New Cottages have had wholesale replacement (**Fig.37**).



Fig.37 Modern windows and roof covering to New Cottage

7.3.33 There are many key views across the character area to the Church of St Stephen and St Tathan with its landmark west tower. There are views south from the northern approach as the road narrows opposite the Evangelical chapel. More open views of the church are to be had from the fields in the north-west corner of the town wall. In addition to the church, the War Memorial is a focal point at the junction of roads, acting as a nodal point in the village and is seen in extended views along the roads crossing through the character area. From the fields to the north-western corner there are general views west towards the distant hills. The fields, east and west, act as important green spaces, many with public rights of way. The rough pasture fields to the east are dotted with groups of trees and piles of masonry, possibly remains of unexcavated Roman buildings adding to a sense that there is more to discover about the Roman town and later settlement. Views from these fields are restricted by the trees but there are glimpsed views south to the north side of the village core character area and more open views to the remains of the Forum Basilica (**Fig.38**).

7.3.34 Local features in the character area include the excellent survival of four key Roman sites; the shops, the courtyard house, the Forum Basilica and the temple, as well as

the Roman town walls. The Portland stone War Memorial is a key local landmark. (**Fig.39**)

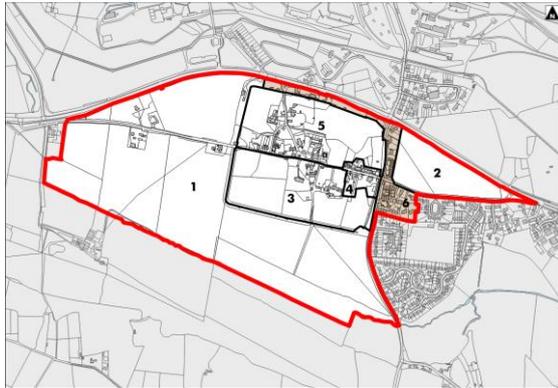


Fig.39 War Memorial at the junction of the east-west Roman road and Pound Lane is a key village landmark



Fig.38 One of a series of views looking south-east towards the church with the Forum Basilica in the foreground taken from the open fields to the west

CHARACTER AREA 6
Settlement Transition



Refer to:
Part D - Plan 6F



Fig.41 St Stephen's Close: modern development upon former gardens and orchards of the Vicarage

7.3.35 This area is defined by the strip of land immediately north of the town walls between the walls and the A48, and it runs east to the lane running between the eastern sections of the town wall and Burton Homes Almshouses and south-east to St Stephens Close, Caerwent

Gardens and Vicarage Gardens. The character area is a mix of 19th century villas/semi-detached houses and 20th century infill and housing development.

7.3.36 The character area contains a variety of indifferent buildings, but there are some distinctive buildings such as the Old Vicarage and the twelve houses which make up the 1913 Burton Homes Almshouse complex (**Fig.40**).

7.3.37 The houses in this character area are predominantly modest two-storey detached and semi-detached houses with occasional large, more dominant buildings (for example, Northgate Inn, Green Lane). Buildings to the north are set backing onto the Roman town wall. Those on the lane to the east are set facing the roadside, positioned behind small front gardens, some with driveways. The almshouses are set in a 'U' plan with front parking spaces and greens to the courtyard space facing the roadside. Caerwent Gardens and Vicarage Gardens have modest detached two-storey houses set at angles to the access roads with the Old Vicarage set back facing north. The closes occupy the original gardens of the vicarage and now significantly impact upon the setting of the original building and its coach house. St Stephen's Close contains two parallel rows of modern single storey blocks of houses facing inwards with car parking and garage blocks surrounded by close-boarded timber fences (**Fig.41**).



Fig.40 The Grade II listed Burton Homes Almshouses

7.3.38 Buildings which make a positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are generally found singularly rather than in groups. The Old Vicarage is a good building of rock-faced stone with ornate bargeboards. To the west Maybury, a rendered cottage, stands on the corner of the road junction facing the East Gate. To the north are the twelve Burton Homes Almshouses. These buildings are a curious mix of rock-faced stone, Tudor style stone windows in half dormers, open porches, huge brick chimney stacks and a formal central block with shaped gable and Venetian-style window. The almshouses for 'old and decrepit' women were built in 1913 as a memorial to Colonel H Burton MD, a local landowner who died in 1908 (see paragraph 7.4.13). The house known as Green Lane, at right angles against the north wall, is a large detached house constructed of stone with red and yellow brick stacks and large multi-pane casement windows. Built on the roadside, it is a dominant building on the north side of the town wall. To the east of Green Lane is the Northgate Inn, where the important remains of the Roman North Gate, blocked by the Romans, is visible in the garden but it is not well presented (**Fig.42**).

7.3.39 The buildings within the character area are predominantly stone, exposed or rendered, and painted white or cream. The Old Vicarage

is constructed of dressed rock-faced stone with Tudor style stone windows. 20th century housing developments are generally brick, modern red or brown facing bricks, with concrete roof tiles and dark stained windows and doors. There are stone walls lining stretches of the lane running along the east wall, topped with coped bricks to the east side. Stone cobbles on the road mark the East Gate entrance and form the boundary to the Village Core character area to the west. Natural slate, once the dominant roof covering, has often been replaced with concrete tiles. There are occasional plain clay tiles (Northgate Inn) or pantiles (Maybury). Most traditional windows have been replaced with modern uPVC designs, especially evident on the lane along the east wall. Timber casements can be seen to Green Lane, Burton Homes Almshouses and the Old Vicarage (**Fig.43**).



Fig.42 Remains of the Roman North Gate visible in the garden of the North Gate Inn



Fig.43 Green Lane with its large multi-pane casement windows, an unusual feature in the Conservation Area

7.3.40 Views are restricted within the small character area due to tree cover and the raised height of the village above the surroundings. Views north are to trees and the busy A48. Along the lane by the east wall there is a sense of enclosure; with houses to the east, and the wall rising above to the west, the road semi-sunken. The curve in the lane and built form restricts local views both north and south. There are glimpsed views between buildings to

the field to the east. There are good views east from the vantage point of the elevated land within the town wall on the east side, south of the East Gate to the Old Vicarage (**Fig.44**), surrounded by 20th century development. There are no open spaces of note.

7.3.41 The post-Roman stone walls lining the lane along the east wall are important features within this character area (**Fig.45**).



Fig.44 The Old Vicarage seen from the east walls of the Roman Town



Fig.45 Low stone walls strongly define some sections of narrow lanes within this character area

7.4 Architectural & Historic Qualities of Buildings

7.4.1 This section will discuss buildings in chronological sequence from Roman to 20th century. The archaeology of the Roman town is beyond the remit of this section; mention will only be made of the Roman walls.

Roman

"The outstanding monument of Venta Silurium (Caerwent) is the wall of the civitas – easily the most impressive town defence to survive from Roman Britain, and in its freedom from later rebuilding one of the most perfectly preserved in Northern Europe." (John Newman et al in *Gwent/Monmouthshire: The Buildings of Wales Series: 2000 Yale UP*)

7.4.2 The walls and bastions are seen at their most striking chiefly along the southern boundary, rising to about 5 metres in height as the land falls away to the watercourse of the Nedern Brook (Fig.46). The eastern walls are also impressive but with fewer bastions, except at the East Gate. They are less visible from a distance as recent development extends to the road skirting the walls along this boundary. On the northern side some buildings back onto the walls, such as the Northgate Inn and the Kitchen Shop. The construction of the

walls can be seen in places where the facing stonework is missing revealing the core of herringbone masonry (Fig.47). However, the impressive Roman town wall remains a key feature, best appreciated from outside the walls. These walls are a mix of limestone with dressed sandstone blocks. The north and south gateways are still visible, blocked with stone during the Roman period. The herringbone pattern construction of the central core of the walls is most visible on the south wall. To the north wall areas are lost under grass and obscured in gardens. The north wall and particularly the North Gate has a particularly poor setting and some sections have become 'domesticated', and in some cases rebuilt or built over, forming parts of ornamental gardens.



Fig.47 A detail of the Roman wall showing the herringbone stonework of the core structure and the facing stonework



Fig.46 Roman walls and bastions overlooking the shallow valley on the south side of Caerwent

Medieval

7.4.3 The church of St Stephen and St Tathan (Grade II* listed, **Fig.48** next page) is relatively large for a smaller community. It stands in an almost central location within the walls, just south of the main east-west road, a church is recorded in Caerwent from pre Norman times, but the existing church was begun in the 13th century, conventionally at the east end, in the Early English style. Most of the body of the church is from the Perpendicular period some 200 years later. The handsome west tower also dates from this time. It is given a visual strength and attraction through the 'entasis' (slightly tapering) of the walls. The tower is crenellated, with an external stair tower to the south. The nave and chancel do not have clerestory windows, as the roofs of the aisles extend almost to the eaves of the nave and chancel. The chancel is lit by narrow Early English lancets and the aisles by Perpendicular style square hood moulded triple windows. The church was extensively restored in the mid-19th century.

7.4.4 Great House farmhouse directly to the east of the church, on the same axis and alignment, and its associated barn may have medieval origins, although this would have to be verified through detailed analysis of the buildings. The farmhouse appears to have some mullioned windows, two massive chimneys and simple wide gables.

Seventeenth Century

7.4.5 Caerwent House (Grade II listed, **Fig.49**) probably originated in the late 16th or early 17th century, as evidenced by the large central chimney stack and wide and uneven spacing of the windows. The rear outshut with a catslide roof could also suggest an early vernacular building rather than a classical design. The curious relationship of the eaves to the slate roof may also indicate some refronting or a rebuilding of the roof. This was originally a substantial and important building, having a wide frontage and being of three storeys. Horizontal sliding sashes were on the first floor, vertical sliding sashes elsewhere,

although there are some later metal windows. The statutory list description indicates that the building was rebuilt in the early 19th century. At present the building is in a critical state of disrepair, although parts of it are still inhabited. (November 2010)

Eighteenth Century

7.4.6 At the eastern end of the settlement within the Roman walls, on the south side of the main road, the three storey Old Ship former inn is dated 1760 (**Fig.50**). This is a simple building of coursed rubble with a shallow pitched roof, and former shop-type fascias either side of a glazed conservatory porch. The fenestration is interesting; those on the first floor being casements below a fixed full width light. The window openings are formed from rough stone voussoirs. On the back edge of the pavement next to the Old Ship is Ross House also dated c1760, a double pile two-storey stone house with end stacks.



Fig.49 Caerwent House: a significant historic building in a critical state of disrepair



Fig.50 "The Old Ship": an attractive three storey former inn, with interesting windows and re-used shopfront



Fig. 48 The church of St Stephan & St Tathain from the southeast showing a minimal break between the roof and the nave and that of the aisles

Nineteenth Century

7.4.7 The Evangelical chapel (**Fig.51**) standing back from its frontage behind a small graveyard dates from the early 19th century. It has a simple rectangular plan with a side porch entrance and three tall arched windows on its main façade. The chapel has a half hipped slate roof and is rendered. The house on its northern boundary is probably of a similar date, certainly not later. It is a three bay, stone building which forms an attractive group with the chapel.



Fig.51 The simple Evangelical Chapel stands behind its graveyard and is framed by a well maintained cottage on its northern side

7.4.8 The former school, now a nursery, is a low, single storey cruciform plan building, probably from the mid-19th century (**Fig.52**). It is constructed from coursed rubble with red brick soldier arches and dressings to the windows. The window heads have square hooded drip moulds of a neo-Tudor type. The slate roofs have projecting gable eaves.



Fig.52 The former Village School: this robustly detailed late Victorian building is now used as a nursery

7.4.9 The former vicarage (**Fig.53**) to the east of the Roman town was built in 1845-6 by the architect J. H. Langdon. It is a tall neo-Tudor building having a symmetrical main façade with a central gable in the steep pitched roofs; the gables having decorative bargeboards. The windows are triple mullioned and transomed and the projecting porch has a Tudor arched doorway. It is a somewhat severe building in coursed grey sandstone blocks, its setting compromised to a significant degree by later development.



Fig.53 The former Vicarage, outside the walls, is a severe but well designed neo-Tudor building of 1845-6. It appears that its chimneys were removed at a later date.

7.4.10 Two late 19th century semi-detached cottages to the east side of the lane running parallel to the north-east section of the town walls have hipped roofs and are interesting in that their single storey service wings are on the front elevation terminating along the line of the property line (see **Fig.45**). These brick wings contrast with the main stone building with buff brick dressings.

7.4.11 The farm buildings to the west of the Conservation Area, outside the Roman walls are also significant, including the L-shaped Old Gunters Barn now converted to residential use.

Twentieth Century

7.4.12 The Lych Gate to the Church (Grade II listed) is a pleasing Arts and Crafts structure of 1902-3, with timber framing above low stone walls. Its central swivel gate worked by pulleys is a notable feature of this well executed structure.

7.4.13 The Burton Homes Almshouses (Grade II listed, **Fig.54**) facing the eastern walls were built in 1913 as 12 small, single storey house units traditionally arranged in a rectangular U-shaped plan, either side of a central entrance building. The design has Arts and Crafts and vernacular Revival elements, but it is also a rather free eclectic mix of styles and reinterpretations, with a Tudor styled door and 'squashed' tripartite windows above. Timber porches supported by slender red painted posts front and back, are an eye-catching feature. It is constructed in red sandstone, with Bath stone mullions, cills and copings.

7.4.14 The visitor facility building (**Fig.55**) adjacent to the car park and run by Cadw comprises two single storey converted farm buildings. One has rough stone columns with toilet cubicles recessed behind, in simple boarding, the other building is in white painted stonework. Both have pantiled roofs. These two buildings form a sensitive group of some considerable quality at the western edge of the built form within the walled town.



Fig.54 The Burton Almshouses (1913) are a good example of the rather eclectic mix of Arts and Crafts and Arts Nouveau styles prevalent at the time



Fig.55 The recently, sensitively converted buildings providing a visitor facility and information point

7.5 Activity: Prevailing & Former Uses

7.5.1 Today's village does not easily relay to the passing visitor the significance and importance of Caerwent as the best preserved Roman town in Britain. Driving through Caerwent it appears similar to a good number of villages throughout Monmouthshire and Wales, but walking through the above ground archaeology its significance becomes apparent.

7.5.2 Sometimes there is a striking juxtaposition of above ground archaeology, showing the complexity of the town that once stood on a rigid grid of streets, with buildings of mostly 19th and 20th century date. This provides the visitor with a valuable insight into the layering of the town. The former uses within the Roman town are now lost but preserved by visible archaeology and modern interpretation (**Fig.56**).

7.5.3 By following the churchyard path down to the south, which opens out at the remains of the south wall, the visitor can appreciate the true significance of the place. This mix of archaeology and mostly relatively modest traditional buildings, with the exception of the Grade II* listed church and Great House Farm group, provides a fascinating insight into the

evolution and historic layering of the place. It also demonstrates how through the survival and exposure of below ground archaeology and its interpretation the former uses within the Roman town can be traced and followed and reflected upon in the light of the present layout and function of the settlement.

7.5.4 Today Caerwent is a small village of mostly private residential houses. The church and chapel remain, as does the Post Office, repair garage (**Fig.57**) and two public houses. The pasture land is grazed by sheep and there is arable land outside the walls. Tourism is important to the village with most visitors making the trip in the summer months.



Fig.57 A garage has been present on this site from the date of the earliest motor cars



Fig.56 The above ground archaeology of Roman life sits adjacent to most 19th and 20th century development

7.6 Contributions Made By Key Unlisted Buildings

7.6.1 There are a number of unlisted buildings that make important particularly positive contributions to the character of the Conservation Area, both individually and in groups, with statutory listed and unlisted buildings. Key groups are:

- The unlisted Great House Farm with farmhouse and outbuildings forms an important group with the Grade II* listed Church of St Stephen and St Tathan with its churchyard wall and lych gate.
- Caerwent Evangelical chapel and attached Byeways.
- The Steps, The Haven, The Old Ship, Weston House and Ross House, together with the Post Office opposite (with a particularly fine survival of original windows and shopfront).

Boundary walls

7.6.2 A number of post-Roman boundary walls make significant contributions to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Individual properties which make a particularly positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and important boundary walls and outbuildings are identified on **Plan 5** to be found at the back of the document.

Refer to:

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



Fig.58 Stone laid to courses with red brick dressings and brick chimneys (Byeways, Pound Lane)

7.7 Prevalent Local & Traditional Materials

7.7.1 The village is a predominantly rendered stone and natural slate settlement, with some brick infill, exposed stone cottages and clay pantile roofs. There has been some detrimental alteration to houses in the form of uPVC windows, concrete tiled roofs and the loss of brick and rendered chimneys.

Walling

7.7.2 Stone is a mix of local limestone and sandstone, predominantly grey but with some brown tinges to its colouration and is usually seen as rubblestone but laid to courses. Stonework to houses occasionally has red or yellow brick dressings to openings (**Fig.58**) and invariably with brick chimneys, sometimes rendered. Traditional openings in stone walls are small and timber casements were used. Later Victorian cottages have larger openings with timber vertical sliding sashes. Caerwent House, modified in the 19th century, has a good range of small pane timber sashes.

7.7.3 There is much use of render to older houses and modern infill. This is generally painted (white, cream and other pastel shades) (**Fig.59**).



Fig.59 White painted render and natural slate roof, seen throughout the Conservation Area

Roofing

7.7.4 Most of the traditional houses still retain natural slate. This is generally seen at low pitches to simple gabled roofs with brick ridge stacks. Some buildings have clay pantiles, for example the outbuildings to Great House Farm and the visitor centre to the western car park. There has been much replacement with late 20th century concrete interlocking tiles.

Boundary walls and retaining walls

7.7.5 A key characteristic building type of the Conservation Area is the post-Roman rubblestone boundary wall (particularly prominent alongside the east – west Roman road). These local limestone rubble stone walls vary in height but are usually low level, topped with cants or coping stones. Boundary walls create positive enclosure to areas and provide structure to views, particularly along roads and lanes.

8 Contributions Made by Green Spaces (including Biodiversity Value), Trees, Hedges & Natural Boundaries

8.1 Green spaces make a very important contribution towards the special character of this Conservation Area. The surrounding landscape of green fields allows good views to the walls and an appreciation of the change in levels between the walled town and surroundings.

8.2 The field in Character Area 2 provides an important positive transitional zone between countryside and settlement. The lack of development to the south and west provides the visitor with an understanding in the changes of topography and the relationship between the Roman walled town and its surroundings.

8.3 Within the walls, the nationally significant archaeology reflected in its Scheduled Ancient Monument status has protected much of the area from development. This has also retained key views and vistas throughout the village to key landmarks, such as the Church of St Stephen and St Tathan and Great House Farm.

8.4 Tree belts to the north screen the area from the busy A48. Mature tree groups around the churchyard frame the parish church and provide height to an otherwise flat landscape.

9 Key Views

9.1 Landscape Setting

9.1.1 The open fields to the south, the tree lined ridge of Upper Rodge Wood, and distant views to the hills to the north-west, are all integral to the landscape setting of the town and the appreciation of the special character of the Conservation Area (**Fig.60**). The position of the plateau, raised above the Nedern (once navigable) and its surrounding landscape of hills are important features that led to the choice of the site as a key Roman town.

Refer to:

Part D - Plan 4 Spatial Analysis/Townscape

9.2 Types of View & Their Relative Significance

Strategic

9.2.1 There are a series of strategic views south of the village looking north towards the impressive line of the south Roman town wall and Norman motte (**Fig.61**). From the south town wall there are expansive and open views of the surrounding open countryside. These views help to put the historic settlement in its landscape context. There are strategic views to the landmark church tower from the west and views out of the Conservation Area south-west to Rodge Farm.



Fig.60 View of the surrounding landscape setting from the Church tower, looking north-west



Fig.61 View of Roman town wall and Norman motte from the south

Glimpsed

9.2.2 There are glimpsed views of the church and its tower (**Fig.62**) in its walled setting with mature churchyard trees. The most notable view is from the south Roman wall looking north. There are also glimpsed views of the church from the north access road looking south.



Fig.62 Glimpsed view of the church from the lane to Great House Farm

Terminated

9.2.3 There are two key terminated views, both focused on buildings. The view south from the War Memorial at the road junction is terminated by the lych gate and church. On Dewstow Road to the south-east, views north are terminated by the Norman castle motte jutting out at the corner of the town wall (**Fig.63**).



Fig.63 Photo from the War Memorial looking south

10 Degree of Loss of Architectural and/or Historic Elements

10.1 There is some loss of historic windows, doors, roof coverings and chimneys. This is seen throughout the Conservation Area. Windows and roof coverings are the most significant and consistent change to historic buildings; with relatively few original or historic windows surviving. These alterations are reversible and sympathetic modern traditionally styled windows in particular can be reinstated.

12 Article 4 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."

Refer to:

Part D - Plan 7 Management Proposals

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 Caerwent Conservation Area, Article 4 Directions should be considered for windows and doors and roof coverings where the original natural slate, clay tile or pantile survives. This is particularly the case for the houses known as The Steps and Byeways. Windows and doors to The Old Ship and Weston House should be protected, where the removal of all Permitted Development rights should be considered.

12.6 In some cases, where there are known archaeological remains the complete removal of all permitted development rights may be considered in order to safeguard the future of these heritage assets.

12.7 Front stone boundary walls form an important part of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Consideration should be given to the removal of permitted development rights in relation to the removal or partial removal of boundary walls and the creation of hardstandings in gardens.

13 Proposals for Enhancement

13.1 General Enhancement Opportunities

13.1.1 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

13.2 Specific Enhancement Projects

East Gate Area

13.2.1 Existing setted surface should be extended to enhance the experience of entering the Roman town and to contribute to reducing traffic speed, where pedestrian movement is significant at times. Vegetation growth should be managed in order for the Walls to be further appreciated on entry to the village.

War memorial Area

13.2.2 The existing area of paved surface could be increased and designed appropriately in order to enhance the setting of the Memorial and to reduce the perception of a car dominated street scene.

WC/Bus Stop Area

13.2.3 When resources permit, the existing structure could be replaced by one designed more appropriately in form and materials to the character of the Conservation Area.

Remains of North Gate

13.2.4 The remains of the North Gate of the Roman walls are currently obscured. This area could be enhanced to ensure the old gates into the village can be appreciated by residents and visitors to the village.