



St Arvans

*Conservation Area
Appraisal &
Management Proposals*



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FORUM
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Part A: Purpose & Scope of the Appraisal

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 St Arvans is one of 31 designated conservation areas in the County of Monmouthshire. It was designated as a Conservation Area on 12 January 1976.

1.3 The St Arvans 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 St Arvans Conservation Area and to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future management.

1.4 Key study aims:

- Identify those elements of St Arvans 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 St Arvans

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and Circular 61/96: Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas and the latest draft guidance from Cadw; *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales*, adopted March 2011.

2 Consultation

2.1 A consultation event covering a number of conservation areas, including St Arvans, was undertaken on 9th November 2009.

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 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

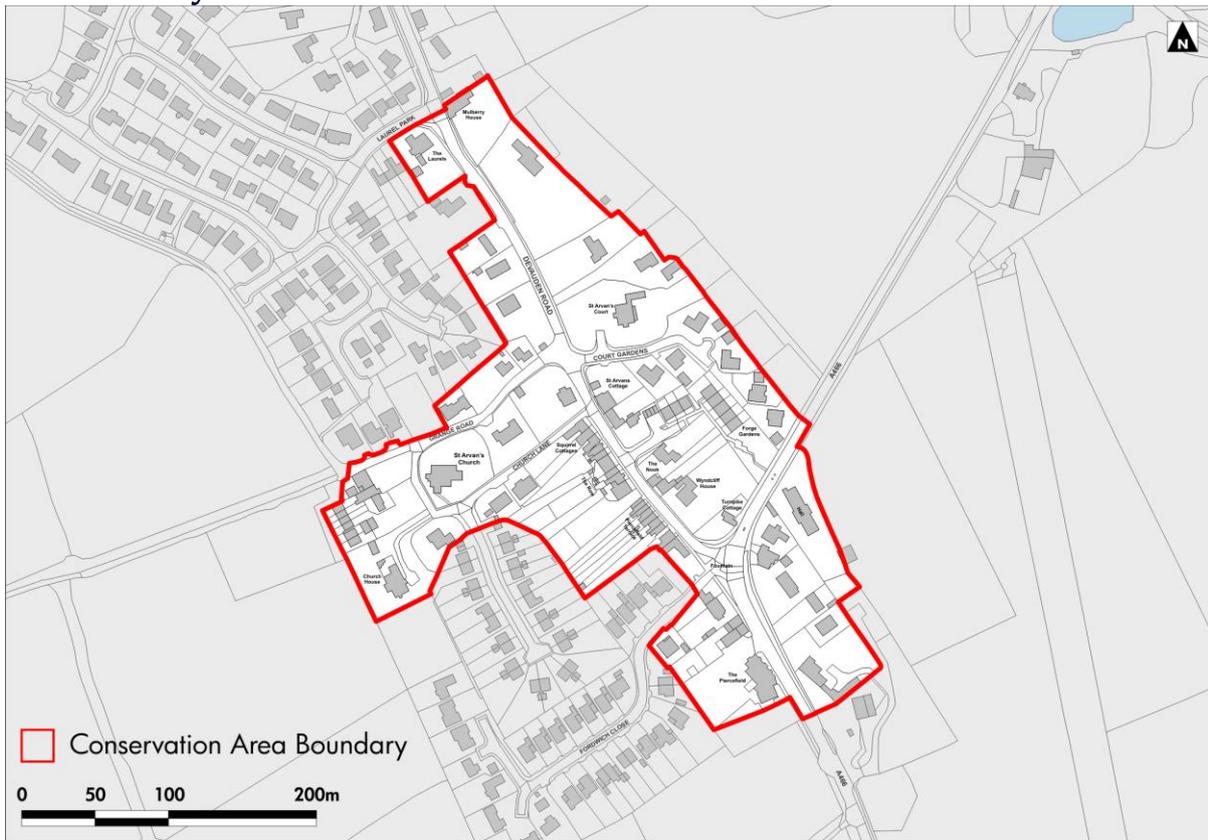


Fig.1 Study Area

Part B: Conservation Area Appraisal

5 Location & Setting

5.1 The compact settlement of St Arvans is situated above the River Wye, two miles north of the market town of Chepstow. To the southeast lies Chepstow Racecourse which occupies Piercefield Park, to the northeast Wyndcliffe and to the northwest Chepstow Park Wood. Located on the A466 Chepstow to Monmouth road, the main settlement is strung out, north – south, along the Devauden Road. (**Fig.1 & Fig.2**)

Refer to:

Part D - Plan 1 Conservation Area Plan



Fig.2 St Arvans Location Plan

6 Historical Development & Archaeology

6.1 Historic Background

6.1.1 Prehistoric finds have included Mesolithic implements, Bronze Age lithic scatters, a late Bronze Age axe hoard and Iron Age Dobunnic coins (Aldehouse-Green & Howell, 2004). To the north at Gaer Hill is an Iron Age hill-fort whilst occupation from the Roman period is indicated by finds made near Porthcasseg Farm to the north-east and a possible villa site 0.5km to the south of the village (Walters, 1992).

6.1.2 A settlement at St Arvans was established in the early medieval period; 6th to 7th century metal finds have been made in the village and a 9th to early 10th century 'Gwent style' cross remains in the church which stands within a circular churchyard, a characteristic feature of early church sites. In 955 a deacon called Eli took sanctuary in the church of SS Iarmen and Febric at St Arvans after killing a peasant. The record is so detailed and unusual as to be considered authentic (Aldehouse-Green & Howell, 2004). The late Norman church (enlarged and restored in the 19th century) belonged to the Monastery of St Kingsmark by 1254. Grange Road, running past the church to the west, leads to Rogerstone Grange, the site of one of Tintern Abbey's important arable granges.

6.1.3 The manor of St Arvans was held by William Lake in 1270. Medieval St Arvans, such as it was, may have existed as a small nucleated settlement around the church, although there is no archaeological evidence to help define the extent of the medieval settlement. The village was located on an important road linking Chepstow and Devauden (see **Fig.30**) with roads leading to Tintern Abbey's Rogerstone Grange and Itton Court.

6.1.4 Whilst the absence of houses pre-dating 1700 along the Devauden Road may suggest that this part of the settlement developed in the 18th century (Locock, 2002) the possibility that there were earlier properties along this road cannot be discounted. In the early to

mid-18th century the village had its own manor house with the construction of St Arvans Court set back on the east side of Devauden Road. The village was part of the Piercefield Estate which dates back to the early 14th century. Located south-east of the village, the Piercefield estate, bought in 1740 by Valentine Morris, was developed in the 1750s with a landscaped park with spectacular walks overlooking the River Wye. In 1785-1792 the house (built by Morris' son) was re-modelled as a neoclassical villa with the rectangular central block by John Soane (Newman, 2002). The estate was a major employer and landlord dominating St Arvans' village activities. The village's 19th century terraces, including The Row, were built for estate workers (Smyth, 1998).

6.1.5 In the late 18th to early 19th century, the estate and Wye Valley walks brought tourists to St Arvans, its inns acting as stopping off points for tourist coaches which went on to Tintern. The Chepstow to Monmouth Road opened in 1829 bringing more traffic and trade to the village. 19th century St Arvans was still a modest settlement with a school (c.1840), hotel, beer retailers, blacksmith, boot and shoe maker, wheelwright and carpenter, butcher, and farmers. The majority of the population worked on the estate.

6.1.6 The estate was sold to the Chepstow Racecourse Company in 1923 and the house and grounds abandoned. The link between estate and village was severed. The 20th century saw new council housing developments to provide better accommodation than the 19th century terraces which were in a very poor state of repair. The opening of the First Severn Bridge in the 1960s attracted potential commuters to settle in St Arvans which resulted in further new housing developments and the renovation of the 19th century terraced houses. It is now largely a dormitory settlement for commuters to Chepstow, Bristol and South Wales.

6.2 Settlement Plan

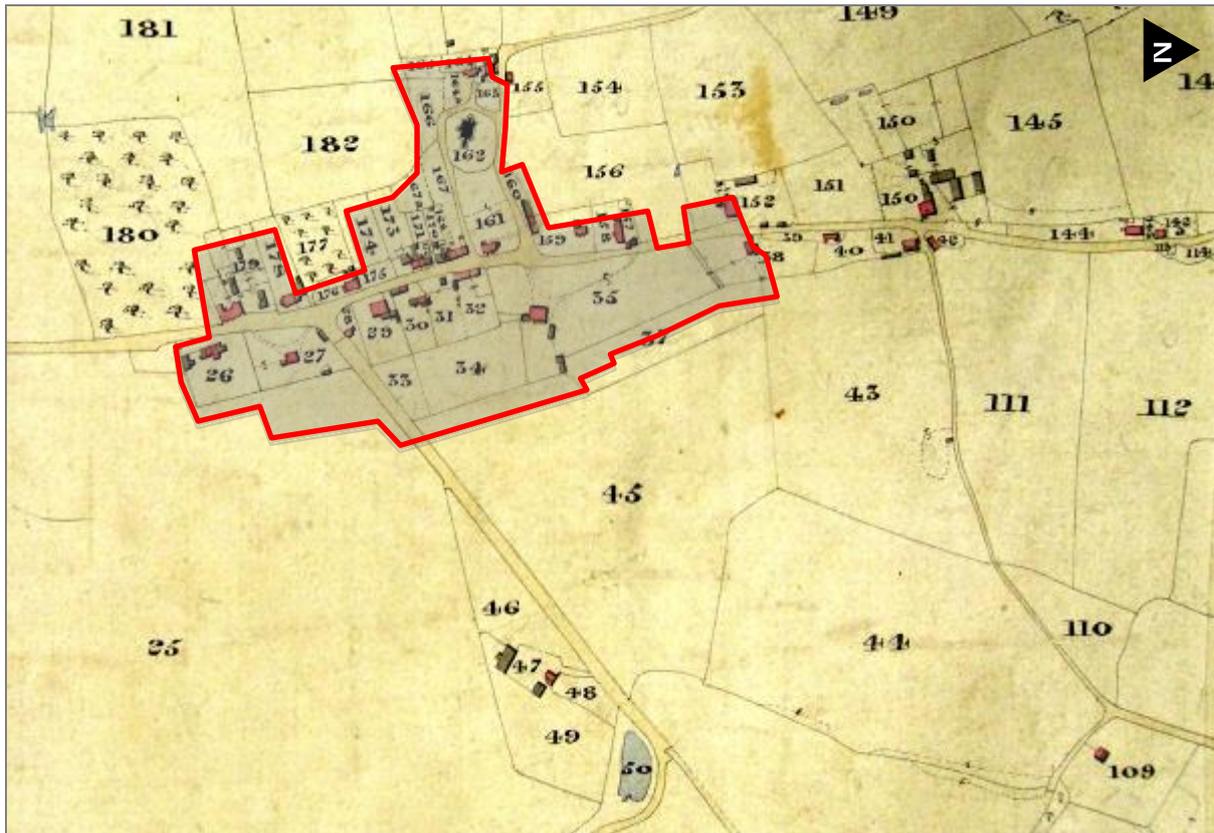


Fig.3 St Arvans 1847 Tithe Plan with existing conservation area boundary in red

© Gwent Record Office

6.2.1 There is no archaeological or historic map evidence to show how the village was laid out in the medieval period; it is possible that in the 9th to 10th century the settlement was clustered around the church. By the 19th century most of the properties in the village, including inns and ale houses such as The Squirrel, The Globe and, later, The Piercefield (**Fig.3**), were located alongside the Devauden Road. This linear arrangement is clear on the 1847 map (**Fig.4**) but there were two distinct parts; to the north-west was an irregular row with houses and farms intermittently set alongside the road whereas to the south-eastern section there were blocks of relatively regular plots to both sides of the road which represent the development of estate workers' cottages.

6.2.2 It was not until the second half of the 20th century that this simple settlement pattern was disrupted with the creation of new closes, to house a growing commuter population. The early housing schemes were all built on

the west side of the Devauden Road including Fordwich Close, Wyndcliffe View and Woodlands Close. Laurel Park came later and then, on the east side, Forge Gardens and Court Gardens (built in the grounds of St Arvans Court).

Refer to:

Plan 2 Historical Plan



Fig.3 The Piercefield Arms c1900

6.3 Key Historic Influences & Characteristics

- Early medieval settlement possibly concentrated around the Church of St Arvans and linked to the nearby Priory of St Kingsmark
- Linear development alongside the Devauden Road
- Two surviving farmhouses reflect the agricultural origins and history of the village
- The 18th century development of Piercefield Park estate employing villagers and resulting in the construction of estate housing
- The 1829 Chepstow to Monmouth turnpike road which encouraged 19th century development
- The opening of the First Severn Bridge in 1966 which led to new housing developments and the village's transition to a commuter settlement

6.4 Archaeological Potential

6.4.1 St Arvans has almost certainly been the focus for settlement since the 9th-10th century and therefore it is probable that evidence for the origins and development of the settlement will survive below ground except where modern development will have destroyed or compromised archaeological deposits. Evidence of post-medieval period will also be encountered within some of the standing buildings of the village.

6.4.2 There are no recorded archaeological excavations within the village to help inform the potential for archaeological deposits but an Area of Special Archaeological Sensitivity has been identified based on historic map evidence and settlement analysis. This area extends beyond the conservation area to the west to allow for the possibility that there was settlement alongside the road that led to Rogerstone Grange. Any future development proposals within this area may be subject to archaeological recording conditions due to the potential for the discovery of remains relating to the development of the village. 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 3 Area of Archaeological Potential

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 St Arvans 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 St Arvans conservation area is concentrated on what remains of the original village, strung along Devauden Road and the A466 Chepstow to Monmouth Road.

7.2.2 Much of the character of St Arvans is derived from the short stretch of Devauden Road from the junction with the A466 to the junction with Grange Road. This area is lined with modest 19th century stone terraced houses to the west and detached houses, some set in gardens, to the east. The village's modern development has significantly encroached on the historic core of the village and has had an impact on the entire settlement. Its present character therefore comprises good groups of historic buildings interspersed with modern infill of limited architectural or historic interest. New development has unfortunately not paid full regard to local building traditions, hierarchy and scale of the established historic settlement.

CHARACTER AREA 1
A466 Roadside Development



Refer to:
Part D - Plan 6A Character Area 1



Fig.6 Buildings at southern entrance to Conservation Area.



Fig.7 Distinctive gable to the Memorial Hall facing the roadside at the northern entrance of the conservation area

7.3.3 This character area follows the line of the 1829 Chepstow to Monmouth turnpike road, now the A466. The area forms a narrow strip of housing either side of the curving road.

7.3.4 The scale and building line varies within the character area. Buildings are a mixture of sizes and heights from the large, three-storey Piercefield Inn and the two and a half storey Parkfield House to the two-storey Prospect House and one and a half storey Turnpike Cottage. There is no strongly defined consistent building line with some properties offset to the roadside (for example Turnpike Cottage and St Arvans Lodge). Nevertheless the buildings on the west side of the A466, to the south of the junction with Devauden Road, in townscape terms, create a well-defined group providing some enclosure to this busy roadside (**Fig.6**). This is despite loss of original windows, chimneys and architectural features.

7.3.5 The group of buildings up to and beyond the junction with Devauden Road comprising; The Piercefield Inn, Ride and Stride Shop, Prospect House and Cottage, together with the Victorian village fountain and (after the junction) early 19th century Turnpike Cottage, all on the west side of the road, form an important and diverse group. They define the southern extent of the village and are, given the busy thoroughfare which the A466 has become, most travellers perception of St Arvans. In this respect collectively they act as a key marker for the village to the wider community.

7.3.6 The character area has a limited palette of materials. Houses are generally rendered and painted stone with modern rendered and painted brick infill employed on the east side of the A466. Roofs are predominantly natural slate, (the Ride and Stride Shop and Memorial Hall are exceptions with clay tiles). Surviving chimney stacks are often rendered.

7.3.7 Buildings of individual merit include the loosely Arts and Crafts influenced, Memorial Hall; coursed with slate detailing of 1923-4 by Eric Francis (a local architect from Chepstow also responsible for Wyndcliffe Court and Golden Hill – north and south of the village respectively). It has sadly lost most of its original windows but retains the bold multi-paned rectangular window to its roadside gable (**Fig.7**). The use of pink and grey Forest

stone for Parkfield House with yellow brick dressings singles this building out in material terms. The mock timber-framed gable of the Ride and Stride shop is another distinctive and eclectic use of materials in this diverse group.

7.3.8 There are good views out of the village to the south along the A466 as it descends towards Chepstow. The stone wall of Piercefield Park, on the east side, is a particularly strong feature. From the A466, opposite the junction with Devauden Road, there are leading views northwest to the stone terraced houses on the west side of Devauden Road (**Fig.8**). This local view, taking in the cottages, fountain, and Turnpike Cottage, is an attractive summary of one of the focal points (the fountain) of the village. From the Memorial Hall car park there are extensive views west over the playing fields to surrounding countryside and Piercefield Park. However the dramatic valley landscape beyond cannot be seen from the conservation area.

7.3.9 The grand, cast-iron public drinking fountain of 1893, moved to its present position in the 1930s, is an excellent local feature of historic significance (**Fig.9** next page). Other features of local interest include the stone boundary walls which extend from St Arvans

Lodge, on the east side of the A466, to Parkfield House. On the west side walls are to be found north of Turnpike Cottage, extending out of the village past the Memorial Hall. The stone wall in this section, (originally the boundary wall of St Arvans Court and much rebuilt) contains distinctive stone arched doorways which are prominent features in these long stretches of wall to the main road (**Fig.10**).



Fig.10 Stone boundary walls to west side of A466



Fig.8 View north looking into Devauden Road



Fig.9 Grade II listed cast iron drinking fountain (1893)

CHARACTER AREA 2 Devauden Road (South)



Refer to:

Part D - Plan 6B Character Area 2

7.3.10 This character area comprises the area either side of the Devauden Road from the junction with the A466 to the junction with Grange Road. It includes the modern housing developments of Forge Gardens and Court Gardens on the east side of the road.

7.3.11 The area contains a wide variety of building types from terraces and cottages to large houses, and modern 'executive' development. The scale and building line varies throughout the character area. At the south end of Devauden Road (west side) there are a series of three two-storey terraces, with a strong building line, set on the roadside behind low boundary walls (**Fig.12**). Next comes the larger, detached two-storey St Arvans House, set above the road behind a hedge topped wall. Opposite Court Gardens a cul-de-sac contains the statutory listed St Arvans Court, set within a modern development of large two-storey executive houses all arranged at angles to the road with driveways and double garages. Further south the building line is restored with St Arvans Cottage and The Forge. Forge Gardens then interrupts the streetscape. Its two regular blocks of two-storey brick houses are set back to the east. Further south are older detached houses of one to two-storeys, set on the roadside or in gardens.



Fig.12 Well defined building line – The Row, Devauden Road (west side)

7.3.12 The character area retains three attractively scaled groups of historic buildings. On the west side the three stone terraces, despite the loss of many original windows and addition of some alien porches, retain much of their historic character in terms of their materials, scale and design. On the east side, St Arvans Cottage and The Forge remain as fine older buildings (though much restored). The cottages still retain timber windows, boundary walls and railings. Three further houses comprising; The Knoll, Wisteria House and Wyndcliff House, form an attractive and varied historic group.

7.3.13 Construction materials in the character area are mainly stone, often rendered and painted. Exposed stone terraces and cottages sometimes exhibit red or yellow brick dressings. Piercefield Terrace contains an attractive mix of both red and yellow bricks to string-courses, chimney stacks, and arches. Modern developments are mainly brick, often

rendered and painted. Roofs are a mixture of natural (originally Welsh) slate and brown clay tiles with concrete tiles on some of the more modern buildings. Despite heavy losses in places, there remains a good mixture of timber sashes of various sizes and styles (for example Wisteria House and St Arvans House).

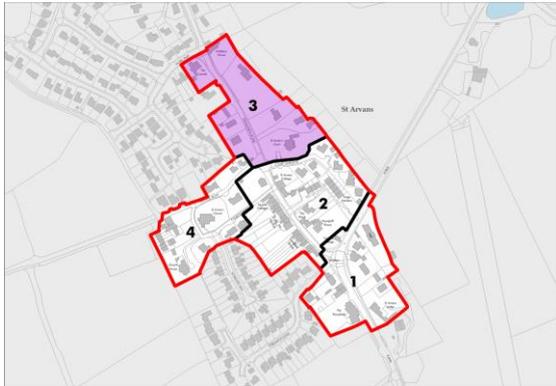
7.3.14 From Court Gardens there is a glimpsed view west to the church tower, backed by trees, set to the side of St Arvans House. General views north – south along the Devauden Road are enclosed by good streetscape on both sides.

7.3.15 The odd stone-topped walls and gate piers to some houses are a particular feature. Two surviving short, fluted, iron fountains, one near Wyndcliff House, the other at the junction with Church Lane are of special note (**Fig.13**).



Fig.13 Rare survival of cast iron drinking fountain with missing cap to corner of Devauden Road and Church Lane

CHARACTER AREA 3 Devauden Road (North)



Refer to:

Part D - Plan 6C Character Area 3

7.3.16 This area comprises the houses either side of the Devauden Road from the junction with Grange Road, north to the junction with Laurel Park. It includes a handful of 19th century buildings interspersed with much mid to late 20th century infill.

7.3.17 The area contains a mix of traditional cottages, modern bungalows and detached two-storey houses. The scale and building line varies throughout the character area. On the west side of the road there are a series of bungalows set on a bank back off the road (**Fig.14**). The Laurels, a two-storey stone house facing south into its garden, marks the extent of the conservation area to the north. Opposite, on the east side, is the roadside Mulberry House which is orientated in the same direction as The Laurels. Travelling south on the east side of the road, later infill houses and bungalows are set in generous gardens off the roadside.



Fig.14 Modern houses set back off the road (Devauden Road)

7.3.18 The character area contains one positive group of buildings comprising The Laurels and Mulberry House which are situated opposite one another at the northern entrance to the conservation area. These traditional stone built properties provide a much needed focal point at the entrance to the conservation area which is otherwise characterised by 20th century infill developments.

7.3.19 Construction materials in the character area are a mix of traditional stone, and modern brick, often rendered and painted. To The Laurels the red brick chimney stacks are taken down through the stonework (see **Fig.36**). Roofs are a mixture of natural slate and brown clay tiles with concrete tiles on some of the more modern buildings. Fortunately the two traditional buildings; The Laurels and Mulberry House both retain their timber sashes.

7.3.20 There are good views south along the Devauden Road from The Laurels, taking in the trees on the east side, which include a fine collection of horse chestnut, oak and cedar.

7.1.21 Features include stone boundary walls with some survival of good railings, gates (e.g. Mulberry House) and gate piers (e.g. The Laurels) (**Fig.15**). The odd stone-topped walls and gate piers to some houses are a particular feature.



Fig.15 Good quality stone boundary wall treatments (The Laurels)

CHARACTER AREA 4
Church & Environs



Refer to:

Part D - Plan 6D Character Area 4



Fig.17 Former vicarage now Church House, Church Lane

7.3.22 This character area, focused on St Arvans Church, is located on the west side of the village. It focuses on a circuitous route around the church comprising the buildings on Church Lane, Grange Road and Sycamore Court. The George V playing field, west of the church, is outside the Conservation Area.

7.3.23 The church, Norman in origin but much altered by J P Seddon in 1883-4 dominates its surroundings of relatively modest two-storey houses and modern bungalows (**Fig.16**). The area's small collection of buildings has no strongly defined building line, although houses are generally set back in small gardens with stone boundary walls defining the roadside.

7.3.24 There has been much infill in recent years to the north and south of the church. South west of the church, Church House (formerly the vicarage) (**Fig.17**) is set in its own grounds accessed by a gravel driveway with a very fine wrought iron gate and cast iron gate post. West of the church is the Grade II listed Sycamore Lodge (formerly the village school and school master's house) and Grove Cottage. Beyond these forming an informal court is a small late 20th century development known as Sycamore Court which faces into the courtyard and out to the open countryside to the west.



Fig.16 St Arvans Church (south elevation)

7.3.25 Church House and Sycamore Lodge stand out for their accomplished architectural detailing, and together with the church, form a historic village group, although the latter is somewhat detached visually due to the trees between these buildings. Given the extensive alteration and extension of the village in the 20th century, the retention of the setting of the church in relation to the former vicarage and school house buildings is of great significance. To the immediate west of the church there is a sense of the former community of St Arvans; church, school and vicarage forming a group, despite much 20th intervention to the south and east of the church.

7.3.26 The older buildings are constructed of local grey sandstone with natural slate roofs. The Church, Sycamore Lodge and Church House all feature Bath stone dressings particularly to windows. The stone 'lodge' in the grounds of Church House has yellow brick dressings. Both Sycamore Lodge and Church House have red brick chimney stacks. Bungalows are rendered and painted brick with low pitched concrete tile roofs. Sycamore Court features white painted render with slate roofs. Houses on Grange Road are rendered with clay tile roofs.

7.3.27 There are attractive views both west and east along the gently curving Grange Road. Views looking west at the end of Grange Road and from the George V playing field are extensive and uninterrupted looking out to open countryside (**Fig.18**). There are particularly fine views northwest from the rear of Grove Cottage to the gently rolling hills to the west and north-west.



Fig.19 Wrought iron gate to Church House

7.3.28 Features of note include the curving stone-walled churchyard with wrought iron gates on the west side, stone-capped gate piers to properties (for example Treetops) and a fine wrought iron gate and cast iron gate piers to Church House (**Fig.19**).



Fig.18 Panoramic view to open countryside from Grange Road

7.4 Architectural & Historic Qualities of Buildings

7.4.1 Other than the earliest parts of the Church of St Arvans, the architecture of the conservation area dates from the early 18th century onwards.

7.4.2 The Church of St Arvans has Norman origins, which now can be detected in the chancel and in particular, the round headed door on the south-east side of the chancel. The church was extensively rebuilt in two stages (a) in the 1820s, financed by the owner of nearby Piercefield Park and (b) in 1883. The unusual polygonal tower topped by its chamfered corners (**Fig.20**) topped by its low pyramidal roof dates from the earlier rebuilding. The almost domestic, decorative bargeboarded dormers and sweeping roofs date from the latter.

7.4.3 The conservation area is enhanced by six or seven large houses dating from the early to late 18th century, mainly distributed along the axis of Devauden Road.

7.4.4 At the northern edge of the conservation area stand two large houses at right angles to the road. The earlier of the pair is the Laurels (**Fig.21**), with rubble walls and timber sash windows with simple timber lintels. It may be that the building was originally double pile, but re-roofed. Across the road lies Mulberry House (**Fig.22**), a double pile plan (a house two rooms deep often with two parallel and equal roofs). Its front, including a classical doorcase and semicircular fanlight, faces south. The house is very private, due to the rubble stone walls, generally 3 metres high surrounding it. Both these houses contain a 'Gothic' arched doorway in the boundary walls, reflecting the picturesque style current at that time and in particular in the Wye Valley.

7.4.5 Moving further south, St Arvans Court is encountered on the eastern side of Devauden Road. This again is a double pile house, three bays wide and rendered. The house was somewhat restyled in the 1840s, with fashionable 'Tudor' drip mould window heads. Its sash windows are intact. St Arvans Court is

set well back from the road on a raised site, behind a majestic cedar tree.



Fig.20 Distinctive stone tower of St Arvans Church



Fig.21 The Laurels, Devauden Road (west side)



Fig.22 Mulberry House, Devauden Road (east side)

7.4.6 Three less grand houses, all three bays wide, probably from later in the 18th century, contrast with the terraces of artisan cottages which fringe Devauden Road. St Arvans House is rendered, with a low pitched roof; most sashes are intact. Inspection of the front indicates that the central door was bricked up and a door on the north side inserted. The rear elevation was considerably altered, including the insertion of a 1930s-type mock Tudor rear gable, a marked change of character. The rubble walled outhouse is also of interest, mainly due to its doorway on the back edge of the lane.

7.4.7 The small group on the eastern side of the road is again more modest. This includes the vernacular single storey cottage 'The Nook', standing on the back edge of the roadway; Wisteria House (**Fig.23**), a rendered three bay house with central doorway, a low pitched roof and timber sash windows; set back from the road is the largest of the three houses, 'Wyndcliffe', again rendered, with an unusually steep pitched roof and full height sash windows on the ground floor, although some windows have been replaced.

7.4.8 Further south lies another group of three houses, described below:

'**Trelawney**' on the west side of the main road, is a three bay house. Its low pitched roof and classical doorcase with a particularly delicate semi circular fanlight suggests a late 18th century origin. The original sash windows have been replaced.

'**The Piercefield**' Inn (**Fig.24**) is a substantial wide fronted building, double pile in part. In common with all the buildings in the conservation area, it has a slate roof and, as with most of the 18th century buildings, it is rendered. The Piercefield is set at a slight angle to the road, like the 18th century house on the opposite side of the road. This may suggest a later realignment of the road.

'**St Arvans Lodge**' (**Fig.25**), facing The Piercefield, is again of three bay proportion, with low extensions on either side. It has a low pitched roof, with double pile at its northern

end. The sashes are intact, and unusually for St Arvans, the building has Bathstone quoins. The simple but attractive outhouse is linked to the main house by a rubble wall, emphasising the original alignment with the road.



Fig.23 Wisteria House and The Knoll (background), Devauden Road (east side)



Fig.24 The Piercefield public house, A466 west side, forming part of the southern entrance to the conservation area



Fig.25 St Arvans Lodge. A well proportioned late 18th-early 19th century broad fronted house with attached wall and outbuilding, set at an angle to the main road at the southern entrance to the conservation area.

7.4.9 On the turnpike road, heading north east from St Arvans, the former toll house (Turnpike Cottage, **Fig.26**) built in the 1820s is designed in the Tudor Gothic style, characterised by casement windows, dripmoulds and scalloped bargeboards.

7.4.10 Buildings of the Victorian period include the former school linked with the schoolmaster's house on the south side and full height schoolroom on the north side. This is also in Tudor Gothic style constructed in semi ashlar stonework. The line of buildings is on the west side of the church, forming a loose grouping with it. Whilst it has been altered to wholly domestic use, its character has not been lost.

7.4.11 Church House, standing in its own grounds to the south west of the church is the most recent of the group of larger houses, being mid to late Victorian in style, with a complex roof massing, rubble walls with Bathstone dressings and tall chimneys.

7.4.12 The lower end of Devauden Road is characterised by terraces of artisan cottages, some considerably altered (including the removal of chimneys). Most of these terraces are Victorian, whilst some may be earlier. The short terrace including St Arvans Cottage and The Forge are probably the earliest and of the most interest. The forge was probably accommodated in the outhouses of the group.

7.4.13 One of the few 20th century buildings of architectural interest is the Memorial Hall, designed by the local architect Eric Francis, who also designed three houses just outside the village. It is in a late (1923-24) Arts and Crafts style, with a typically steep pitched roof, simple form, although extended to the rear, mullioned and transom window on the gable end wall. An eye-catching porch with balustrade 'blind windows' raises the interest of the building.



Fig.26 Turnpike Cottage (Grade II listed) at junction of A466 and Devauden Road

7.5 Activity: Prevailing & Former Uses

7.5.1 The historic legacy of estate workers' cottages (**Fig.27**) and subsequent popularity of St Arvans as a stopping point for travellers has left its imprint on the village. By 1862, the Piercefield was one of a number of beer retailers in St Arvans. Previously two public houses, The Squirrel and The Globe appear to have gone by this date with the emergence of The Piercefield as a popular stopping point for visitors.

7.5.2 Presently, the village is largely comprised of private residential houses and has been much extended in the late 20th century with a varied scale of housing from the single storey sheltered housing to Forge Gardens through to the 'bolted-on' standard housing estates of Fordwich Close, Wyndcliffe View and Laurel Park to the late 20th century large detached 'executive homes' phenomenon seen

exemplified in the infill development to Court Gardens. This development reflects the high demand for housing set within in a semi-rural, historic settlement within easy reach of major transport routes and regional towns and cities.

7.5.3 The village does not have a commercial core, however the closest to this is the grouping of the public house, car sales and garage (presently outside the conservation area) and shop to the southern gateway of the conservation area lining the A466 as it passes through the lower part of the village.

7.5.4 The car sales and garage use is particularly prominent when approaching from the south and dominates distant views into the conservation area along the A466 (**Fig.28**) The area occupied by car sales was historically (c1890s – see second edition OS map extract) part of the gardens and entrance to St Arvans Lodge.



Fig.27 Estate workers' cottages lining Devauden Road ('The Row')



Fig.28 View looking north into the conservation area in part defined by St Arvans Lodge

7.6 Contributions Made By Key Unlisted Buildings

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

- Around the junctions of Church Lane and Grange Road with Devauden Road; there is a particularly good group of houses including St Arvans Cottage and The Forge, a linked long low pair of stone houses to the east side of Devauden Road (**Fig.29**) and Court Cottage to the west standing high to the road above a strongly defined stone boundary wall with hedge. The wall continues around into both Grange Road where it is terminated with a stone outbuilding to the roadside and Church Lane where it forms a strongly enclosed lane with the two storey stone extension to the south side of Church Lane.
- To the southern gateway of the village the Piercefield public house and the offset St Arvans Lodge and outbuildings are imposing buildings giving some degree of enclosure to this wide and busy road and provide a sense of arrival into the built-up section of the village.
- To the northern gateway to the conservation area just to the south of the junction with Laurel Park, Mulberry House (to the east) and The Laurels (to the west) act as 'bookends' in the townscape and strongly signal the entrance to historic core of the village (**Fig.30** next page). This is especially emphasised by the high stone boundary walls to both. These houses and their boundary walls form a group of some considerable quality and special interest.
- The vicarage is a very well considered high Victorian building and along with its gates forms a good group with the listed church and former school room and school house (also listed) and converted to residential accommodation.

7.6.2 In addition, a number of boundary walls (most notably to the A466 and around the junction with Devauden Road) and outbuildings (Church Lane (**Fig.31**), the Vicarage, Mulberry House and St Arvans Lodge) make significant contributions to the character of the conservation area. Individual properties which make a positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the conservation area and important boundary walls and outbuildings are identified on **Plan 4**.



Fig.29 St Arvans Cottage and The Forge, Devauden Road (east side)



Fig.31 Traditional outbuildings make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area

Refer to:

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

Part D - Plan 4 Listed Buildings & Buildings Making a Positive Contribution

Fig.30 View looking south along Devauden Road strongly defined by boundary treatments



7.7 Prevalent Local & Traditional Materials

Walling

7.7.1 St Arvans is predominantly a stone village, this is the local grey Pennant type sandstone with a secondary material being painted render and some stucco plaster (also painted – St Arvans Court, **Fig.32**) and some painted roughcast render (Wisteria House, see **Fig.23**). There is very little brick used historically other than for dressings; windows, doors, string courses and chimneys. This is mostly yellow brick (Piercefield Terrace) (**Fig.33**), but red brick is seen, most notably to the tall chimneys of the Vicarage which form an important part of the character of this building.

7.7.2 Stone is always rubble stone but mostly squared and laid to courses. Notable exceptions to this are the church; with early random rubblestone walls to the oldest parts of the building and Piercefield Terrace; random rubble with brick dressings emphasised by the proud re-pointing to some of the stonework giving a somewhat 'modern' appearance.

7.7.3 The variation in colour through stonework is an attractive feature with the overall impression of a grey surface but much variation on closer inspection with salmon pinks, beige and orange tints to the stone adding variation, texture and interest (**Fig.34**).



Fig.32 Painted stucco of St Arvans Court



Fig.33 Stone with brick dressings



Fig.34 Variation of rubblestone walling

Roofing

7.7.4 Roofs are traditionally relatively steeply pitched (for example St Arvans Cottage and The Forge, which may have had an earlier roof covering; thatch possibly). Where original they are natural Welsh slates with grey ridge tiles (**Fig.35**) although there has been some replacement with non-Welsh slate and with modern concrete tiles to the detriment of the host building.



Fig.35 Natural slate to roofs (Mulberry House)

Boundary Walls & Retaining Walls

7.7.5 Boundary walls are a key feature of the St Arvans conservation area. They are predominantly stone, a mix of rubble stone laid to courses and random rubble with a flat stone (The Laurels, **Fig.36**) or rubble stone (churchyard walls) or artificial stone capping (those to Parkfield, A466). Some half round stone is seen to cappings, Mulberry House for example, and there are modern variations for example those seen to Court Gardens.



Fig.36 Well-defined stone boundary wall treatments (The Laurels)

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

8.1 The only public green space within the conservation area is the walled cemetery to St Arvans church. This well defined space provides an important if limited green setting for this historic building and visually the trees to the west of the church surrounding the former Vicarage and to the front of the former school and school house link with this green space and form an attractive treed backdrop to the unusual octagonal spire of the church (**Fig.37**).

8.2 There are attractive green spaces adjacent to the conservation area boundary; to the east are green fields adjacent to Chepstow Race Course with Piercefield Park set around its edges (**Fig.38**). The distant tree-line marks the path of the steep cliffs to the edge of the River Wye. To the west at the point where Grange Road turns north and skirts the edge of modern St Arvans, there is a gate leading to the George V playing fields (with a small childrens play park) adjacent to the western boundary. From this gate and the edge of the conservation area there are very attractive open views to rolling countryside. This greenspace strongly defines the edge of the Conservation Area and the settlement on this western border.

8.3 Trees and hedges form a very important part of the character and appearance of the St Arvans Conservation Area. The best place to appreciate their importance is in views from the edge of the conservation area looking south along Devauden Road (see **Fig.30**). Here the view is fully contained by prominent trees, mature mixed hedge boundaries and grass verges. Boundary walls and buildings are secondary in this road corridor. The area between the junctions with Devauden Road and Grange Road and Church Lane is particularly well-defined by a combination of buildings, trees and hedge lines. A good example of this is the view looking east along Church Lane, closed by St Arvans Cottage.

Refer to:

Plan 4 Spatial Analysis



Fig.37 Church seen against a backdrop of mature trees



Fig.38 Open green spaces to the north of the conservation area (with Piercefield Park beyond)

9 Key Views



Fig.39 The historic core of St Arvans is not readily apparent in distant views, as evident in this view from Penterry Lane

9.1 Landscape Setting

9.1.1 The wider setting of the historic core of St Arvans (Fig.39) is not readily apparent in distant views and The Church and its low tower are not distant landmarks other than in incidental views from the west (Chepstow Park Woods and Rogerstone Grange). These views are obscured by trees in the immediate vicinity of the church. To the east Chepstow Racecourse, Piercefield Park and the edge of the River Wye are important set piece landscapes and views to these from the conservation area are important but not immediately apparent other than from the south-eastern edges.

Refer to:
Plan 4 Spatial Analysis



Fig.40 View from the northern entrance to the conservation area looking south along Devauden Road

9.2 Types of View & Their Relative Significance

Strategic

9.2.1 There are no views of strategic importance in St Arvans and no planned or designed vistas or strongly defined landmarks which are ever present or dominant over the entire conservation area (there is not a spire to a church for example that can be seen throughout the village).

Incidental

9.2.2 There are good incidental views from the south-east corner across Chepstow Racecourse towards Piercefield Park and the River Wye. These are predominantly private views from gardens to the edge of the racecourse to houses on the eastern side of the A466. To the north of the Memorial Hall and from its car park there are good open views beyond the football ground to the north.

9.2.3 There is a strongly defined view from the northern entrance of the conservation area looking south into St Arvans (Fig.40). This view is defined by the mixed boundary treatments of stone walls, mixed hedges and mature trees. It has no fixed focus but

provides an attractive semi-rural introduction to the more built-up central core of the village.

9.2.4 The views from the east of the village travelling along the A466 are dominated by the high stone boundary wall to the gardens of the houses to Court Gardens.

9.2.5 Good incidental views are to be had of St Arvans Court with its distinctive double pile plan and prominent red brick chimneys.

Glimpsed

9.2.6 There are glimpsed views of the church tower and church in its walled setting. The most notable view is from Court Gardens across Devauden Road to the north of Court Cottage (on the west side) (**Fig.41**). This view is marred by the roof profile of the modern bungalow to the rear of Court Cottage.

Terminated

9.2.5 There are two key terminated views, both focused on buildings. The view east along Church Lane is attractively enclosed by a combination of stone buildings, stone boundary walls, hedges and trees and closed by St Arvans Cottage (**Fig.42**). The view as one travels south along the A466 is terminated successfully by the symmetrical façade of Prospect House (**Fig.43**).



Fig.41 Glimpsed view of the church tower from Court Gardens



Fig.42 Prospect House partially closes the view southwest along the A466



Fig.43 Terminated view looking along Church Lane

10 Degree of Loss of Architectural and/or Historic Elements

10.1 There is significant loss of historic windows, doors, roof coverings and chimneys throughout the conservation area. Some terraces have no original window configurations remaining (**Fig.44**). There is much variation in type, detailing and materials to individual houses which has compromised the homogeneity of these groups. Roof coverings are also prominent losses which have a much wider impact than the host building. This is also the case for the loss, alteration and rebuilding in inappropriate materials of chimneys. Whilst these changes are significant, they are reversible.

10.2 Some houses and other buildings of special interest have in part lost much of their historic setting due to late 20th century infill development.



Fig.44 Loss of original windows and doors (patterns and proportions) is a significant issue in parts of the conservation area

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:

Part D - Plan 7 Management Proposals

11.2 Areas for Inclusion

11.2.1 There are five small proposals for extension to the conservation area (**Fig.45**). Two of these are principally concerned with ensuring the gateways of the conservation area are protected from inappropriate development and three further adjustments regularise the boundary in terms of rear gardens.

The following are 'gateway extensions':

Extension south along A466, south of St Arvans Lodge

11.2.2 This area was formerly the forecourt and gardens to St Arvans Lodge. It is presently a garage and car sales premises. To the rear of the garage buildings gardens are truncated by the present boundary. The proposed boundary revision will include the domestic garden spaces of the houses to the east side of the A466.

11.2.3 The reason for this extension is to safeguard both the important relatively open setting (despite its use as a garage forecourt) of a key building set on the entrance to the conservation area from the south and secure the appropriate protection and future management of the southern gateway to the conservation area in terms of present and future uses of the garage site.

Extension north to include the garden of Mulberry House and the junction and roads adjacent to the Laurels

11.2.4 This proposed extension is intended to provide further protection to the important gateway spaces to the northern approach to the conservation area. This includes the garden and setting of Mulberry House and the junction, particularly the grass verge with Laurel Park.



Fig.45 Plan showing areas for inclusion within the conservation area

The following extensions are regularising property boundaries:

Extension to the eastern edge to include garden spaces to properties to Court Gardens and the east side of Devauden Road

11.2.5 Presently the conservation area boundary truncates rear domestic gardens along the length of the eastern boundary. The extension would regularise this and bring entire gardens into the conservation area.

Extension to the south of the former Vicarage, Church Lane

11.2.6 The proposed extension would bring the entire garden and tennis court within the conservation area boundary.

Extension to the south of The Piercefield Public House

11.2.7 The proposed extension would take in the full extent of the curtilage of the public house which forms its setting and functions as a garden for use with the present use.

11.3 Areas for Exclusion

11.3.1

There are no exclusions recommended

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 St Arvans Conservation Area, there are no proposals for Article 4 Directions.

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

13.2 Specific Enhancement Projects

New Road/Street Signage

13.2.1 The present road and street signage is of a poor quality and often out of scale with the surrounding townscape. Street signs on older buildings and buildings of a modest scale are particularly intrusive and poorly designed (**Fig.47** & see **Fig.12**). The Local Authority may consider the replacement of this signage with a more sympathetic design in appropriate traditional materials such as cast iron or ceramic and of a more modest scale.



Fig.46 Example of street signage