



# Whitebrook

*Conservation Area  
Appraisal &  
Management Proposals*



monmouthshire  
*sir fynyry*

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**Fig 1** A characteristic lane in the conservation area showing strong enclosure with natural boundaries.



# 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** Whitebrook is one of 31 designated Conservation Areas in the county of Monmouthshire. It was designated as a conservation area on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1978.

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

### 1.4 Key study aims:

- Identify those elements of Whitebrook 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 Whitebrook

**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and *Circular 61/96: Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas* and the latest draft guidance from Cadw; *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales*, adopted March 2011.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 Whitebrook, was undertaken on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2010 in Chepstow.

**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

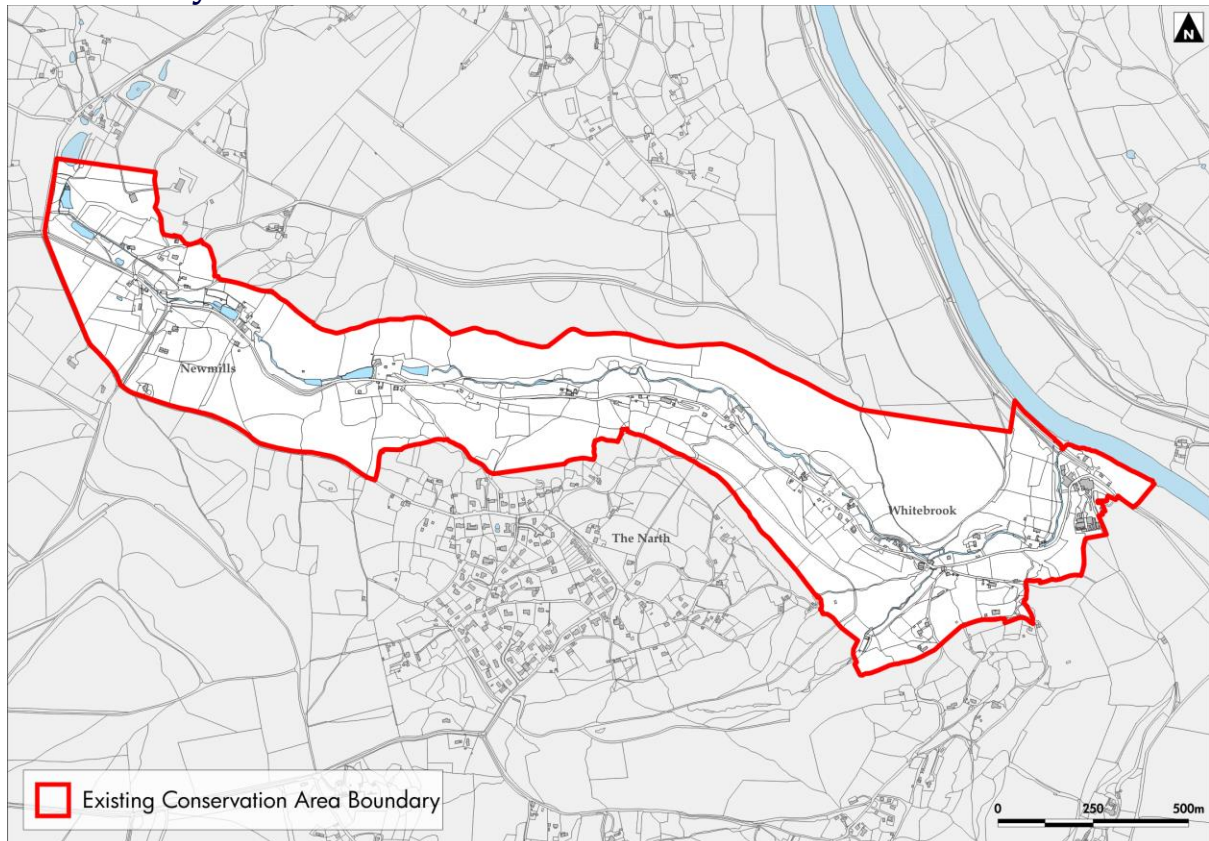
also been produced. This provides practical design and planning checklists along with good practice case studies. This SPG should be read in conjunction with the Conservation Area Appraisal.

#### For Additional Information:

Monmouthshire Local Development Plan

<http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning>

## 4 The Study Area



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Fig.1 Study Area



## Part B: Conservation Area Appraisal

### 5 Location & Setting

**5.1** Whitebrook is positioned in the east of the county in the parish of Trellech United approximately 11 miles north of Chepstow and 8 miles south-east of Monmouth. The settlement is located in a narrow and densely wooded steep sided valley. Located near the Welsh-English border the valley descends eastwards to the River Wye.

**5.2** The steep sided valley is bounded to the north by Pwllplythin Wood and to the south-east by Manor Wood. Manor Brook flows from Manor Wood in the south down the valley to join White Brook near Manor Brook Cottage. The wooded valley restricts long distance views to and from the Whitebrook Conservation Area. The conservation area follows the valley from the west eastwards to

the River Wye with plantations, small orchards and paddocks with dispersed cottages, smallholdings and former mill buildings along its route.

(Fig.1 & Fig.2).

Refer to:

Part D - Plan 1 Conservation Area Plan



Fig.2 Whitebrook Location Plan



## 6 Historical Development & Archaeology

### 6.1 Historic Background

Refer to:

Part D - Plan 2 Historical Plan



Fig.3 1846 Whitebrook tithe map

© Gwent Record Office

**6.1.1** The origins and development of the settlement of Whitebrook are inextricably linked to the harnessing of the energy of the White Brook to power corn mills, wire works and, later, paper mills. The earliest recorded activity in the valley dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> century with a corn or grist mill mentioned in 1314 (GGAT).

**6.1.2** The wireworks at Whitebrook were established as adjuncts to the Tintern Works a few miles down the River Wye in c.1567. In 1607 the Governors Assistants and Society of the City of London for the Mineral and Battery Works obtained a 99 year lease on a tract of land along the White Brook to erect mills for making brass wire<sup>1</sup>. A leat (a trench or ditch that conveys water to a mill wheel) was created extending from the Manney Brook (Manor

Brook) to new workhouses used for the 'drawing' of iron wire by water wheels. In 1607 the hamlet, in addition to the workhouses, comprised many cottages and small dwelling houses and the foundations of others had been erected. At the height of the industry the valley contained at least two, but perhaps up to six, wireworks, all water powered (Bevan & Rees, 2005).

**6.1.3** Following a decline in the wire industry the wireworks ceased to operate in c.1720 (Newman, 2002). Some 40 years after the demise of the wireworks the first paper mills were erected (c.1761). The White Brook powered the mills' engines, which were used to pulverise rags used in the process of papermaking. A complex series of mill ponds with leats and sluices were erected to serve the series of mills dispersed along the valley. The rags were brought in by boat to Chepstow and brought overland to Whitebrook. Later the mills used esparto grass from Spain, which came into Bristol Docks and was transported up river from Chepstow. The White Brook produced such pure water that the paper mills were used to make white banknotes.

<sup>1</sup> Historically the production of wire involved reduction to the desired diameter and properties by repeated drawing through progressively smaller dies, or traditionally holes in draw plates. After a number of passes the wire may be annealed (a heating process which increases ductility) to facilitate more drawing to maximize ductility and conductivity.



Fig.4 Fernside Paper Mill manager's house



Fig.5 Sunnyside Paper Mill manager's house



Fig.6 View across the Wye from Gloucestershire to Whitebrook. The young trees allowed more extensive views into the valley from the east.

**6.1.4** There were two warehouses (probably for the storage of materials and finished products) and a quay at the point where the White Brook joins the River Wye. Manufactured products from the Whitebrook mills included banknotes, brown wrapping, cartridge and printing paper. At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the paper was made by hand in single sheets. With an expanding market for the high quality paper products the number of mills increased so that by 1793 there were five or six mills (Bevan & Rees, 2005). During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the paper industry in Whitebrook employed over 600 people from a wide area (Bevan & Rees, 2005), with 50 people in the settlement directly employed by the mills in 1841 (GGAT). Many locals were employed as lowly rag-pickers. Alongside the industry there were farmers, agricultural labourers, farriers, foresters, millers, masons and fishermen. Elver fishing was a particular pastime using specially constructed nets designed to a local tradition.

**6.1.5** From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards the village saw the gradual decline of the paper industry in the valley. The Wye Valley Railway opened in 1875 but the unsettled paper industry meant that Whitebrook did not warrant a railway siding. By c.1880 the industry had gone, replaced by other sites in Britain that did not rely on water power and water transport. Production was being concentrated into fewer, larger units. The change was to larger mills in, or near, urban areas closer to suppliers of the raw materials. Some flour mills continued to operate but employment opportunities were few. In a reversal of fortunes the community returned to an agricultural existence with many smallholdings with cider apple orchards and livestock that remained well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The early 1920s saw the establishment of the Wye Valley Fishery in Whitebrook with tanks for farmed trout. In 1927 Whitebrook Halt was opened on the Wye Valley Railway. The mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the installation of mains water supply in c.1952 replacing the wells, development of old cottages, the demolition of the riverside warehouses and the continued ruination of the industrial mill buildings.



## 6.2 Settlement Plan

**6.2.1** The steep-sided valley and the importance of the White Brook to the industrial activities undertaken meant that settlement developed along the bottom and lower slopes of the valley creating a long, irregular linear settlement. In some parts of the valley small clusters of industrial buildings, farms and cottages have formed, separated from nearby houses by small fields and orchards.

### Refer to:

**Part D - Plan 2** Historical Plan



Fig.7 Examples of vernacular worker's cottages.  
From top: Brook Cottage, Fern Bank, Dawn Cottage

## 6.3 Key Historic Influences & Characteristics

**6.3.1** The key historic influences and characteristics of Whitebrook are:

- Wireworks established as an offshoot of the Tintern Works in c.1607
- Series of cottages and works buildings develop to support the industry
- C.1720 wireworks cease operation to be followed by the setting up of paper mills in c.1761.
- Quality of paper manufacture results in development of the industry so that by the 1790s up to six mills were in operation
- Early 19<sup>th</sup> century continued growth, the industry employs over 600 people
- Mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century decline of industry so that by c.1880 the paper mills had closed and the settlement reverted back to an agricultural community of smallholders
- 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the re-development of some cottages, continued subsistence level agriculture gradually being superseded by commuter living and the continued ruination of the old mill buildings.

## 6.4 Archaeological Potential

**6.4.1** There are no records of sites or finds of prehistoric, Roman or medieval date within the conservation area or its immediate setting. The archaeological interest of Whitebrook lies in the remains of its industrial heritage, represented by mill ponds, leats and mills, both surviving structures and the sites of mills, as well as evidence for the people who worked in the industries of Whitebrook. An area of archaeological sensitivity, based on historic map evidence and settlement analysis, runs along the bottom of the valley where there is greatest potential to encounter archaeological sites relating to the development of Whitebrook. There has been limited archaeological work carried out within the village and a historic core area has been identified based on historic map evidence and



settlement analysis. It is strongly recommended that advice from the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust, the council's archaeological advisors, should be sought at an early stage in any proposed development in the historic core area.

**6.4.2** There are three Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the conservation area. All three are related to the valley's former industry and comprise: The site of a 17<sup>th</sup> century wireworks which survives as low ruins, a leat to a wireworks built for over a mile from the White Brook to supply water power to Whitebrook Wireworks, established c.1600 and the site of Clearwater Paper Mill. Within these

areas there will be a presumption in favour of preservation of archaeological remains in-situ. Advice from Cadw should be sought at an early stage in the formulation of development proposals within or adjacent to the scheduled areas.

#### Refer to:

**Part D - Plan 3** Area of Archaeological Potential



Fig.8 View west (dating from around the turn of the last century) along the valley with the Bell in the foreground and Holy Trinity Church and Fern Bank in the centre distance

## 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 Whitebrook 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 - Plans 4A & 54B** Spatial Analysis

**Part D - Plans 5A & 5B** Listed Buildings & Buildings Making a Particular or Special Positive Contribution

**Part D - Plan 6** Character Areas

### 7.2 Overview

**7.2.1** The Wye Valley was an important site in the industrial revolution and Whitebrook survives as a key example of an industrial settlement. Few industrial monuments are protected in Gwent and the conservation area designation of Whitebrook has identified it as an area of important industrial archaeology.

**7.2.2** Whitebrook Conservation Area comprises an historic wooded valley settlement with a strong sense of identity. The area covers the long river valley of the White Brook from New Mills in the west to the River Wye in the east. Although separated into four character areas for the purpose of description the settlement flows from west to east with continuing characteristics. The high density of industrial archaeology in the form of ruined and converted mills, water channels, holding ponds and associated structures sits alongside high-status mill manager's houses, vernacular stone cottages and small-scale agricultural outbuildings. Buildings are dotted along the lower valley slopes, with their orientation often determined by the water courses which ran the mills. All are set against a wooded backdrop varying from coniferous plantations to old beech woodland. The single lane road, narrow in places, is little more than a rural lane free from the clutter of road signage.

**7.2.3** For motorists traveling through the settlement the roadside with its grass verges full of wildflowers, drystone walls covered with ferns and at points topped with trees and the lengths of mixed hedging define much of the picturesque character of the area. This attractive landscape is punctuated with vernacular cottages, some extended in the 20th century, small farm buildings and lofty industrial ruins with former miller's houses with attractive semi-natural brook-side gardens and mill ponds now more decorative features accommodated in the landscaped gardens of these houses.

## 7.3 Character Areas

**7.3.1** Four distinct character areas have been identified in Whitebrook, the boundaries of which have been identified in **Fig.9** below and **Plan 6**. This section will identify the key attributes of each character area.

**Refer to:**

**Part D - Plan 6** Character Areas

**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
- Surfaces
- Trees, hedges and boundaries

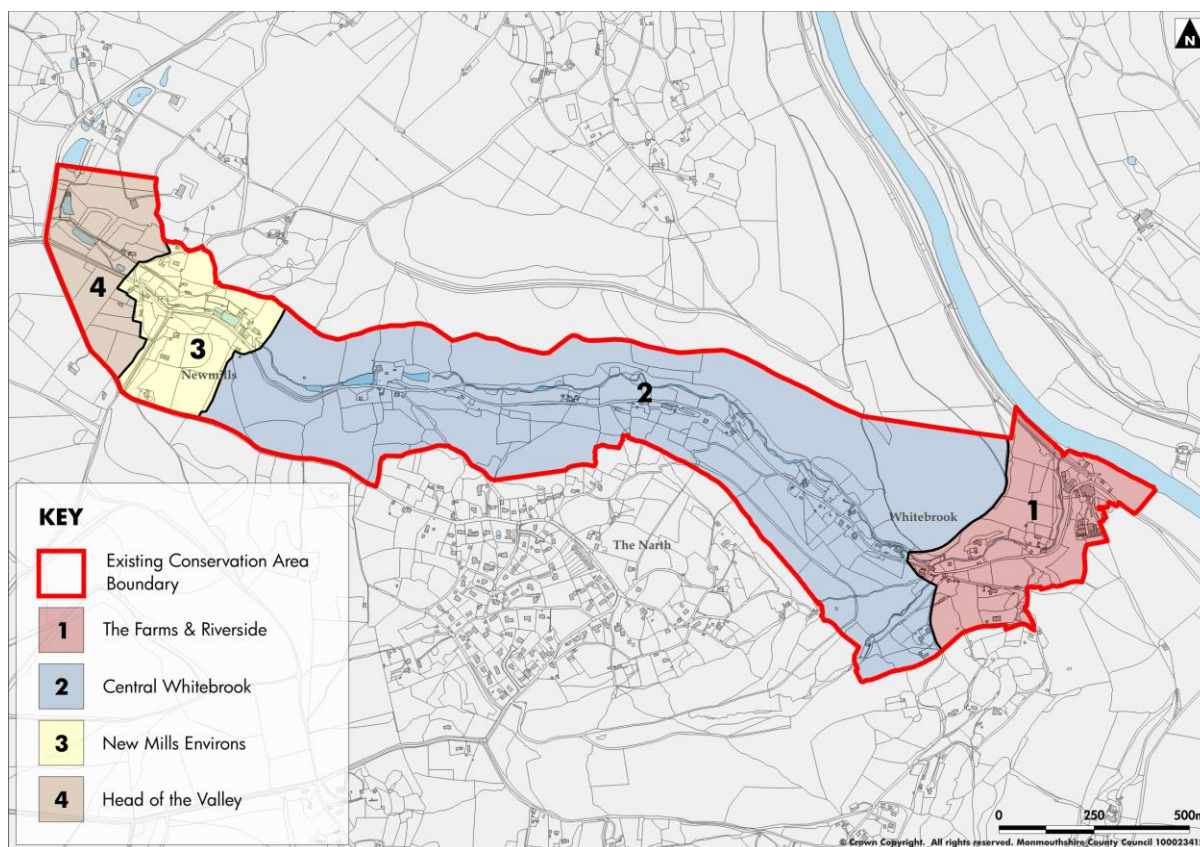
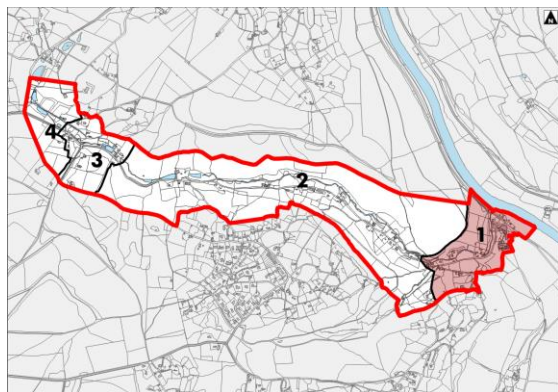


Fig.9 Whitebrook Character Areas



## CHARACTER AREA 1

### The Farms & Riverside



**Refer to:**  
**Part D - Plan 6A**

**7.3.3** This character area covers the east end of the Whitebrook Valley and its emergence at the River Wye. There is tree cover, especially to the north, but the area has a more open character than the central valley with small fields associated with Whitebrook Farm to the north and larger fields facing the river associated with Tump Farm (**Fig.10**). Buildings are dispersed with most having associated paddocks or large gardens. Converted and ruined industrial buildings can be seen at Wye Valley House and Whitebrook Farm. Agricultural outbuildings associated with cottages and often forming part of smallholdings are characteristic of the conservation area.

**7.3.4** Vernacular workers' cottages are generally a consistent domestic scale with two-storey rubblestone cottages. This is contrasted with larger higher status houses such as the extensive two-storey 'L' plan Tump Farmhouse, the large two-storey Whitebrook Farm (formerly the mill manager's house of Glynn Mill), the substantial three-storey plus cellar Wye Valley House (formerly the mill manager's house of Wye Valley Mill) (**Fig.11**) and the double depth three-storey Bell (formerly the village Public House). Being a dispersed valley settlement there is no strongly defined building line. Most houses face into the valley on both sides while both the Bell and Wye Valley House are gable end on to the line of the brook facing down the valley to the east.

Where properties such as the Bell are positioned directly on the roadside views are funneled and together with earth banks and drystone walls the narrow roads are characterised by their enclosure (**Fig.12**). Tree cover means that many houses can only be glimpsed from the roadside.



**Fig.10 This character area is more open than the central valley with views across fields**



**Fig.11 Three-storey plus cellar. Wye Valley House, a former mill manager's house**



**Fig.12 Where buildings are positioned on the roadside there is enclosure to views**





Fig.13 A grouping of buildings including the Old Trinity Church, Manor Brook Cottage, the Bell and outbuildings seen here



Fig.14 Tump Farm retains its historic farm buildings



Fig.15 Glimpsed view of the ruins of the Wye Valley Paper Mill in front of Wye Valley House

**7.3.5** Most buildings, listed and unlisted, combine to create an historic group characterised by their similar use of materials and scale. To the west buildings are grouped closely to create the nearest equivalent of a village centre with the converted Old Trinity Church, former Bell PH, red K6 telephone box, Unicorn Cottage, the former Baptist Chapel, Waterfalls and Manor Brook Cottage, all forming a group of some considerable historic and architectural importance (**Fig.13**). These buildings, set at different orientations to the roadside, display simple vernacular characteristics with the use of rubblestone, natural slate and timber windows (sashes and casements). At Whitebrook Farm and Tump Farm agricultural outbuildings comprising combination barns, stores, cattle shelters, pigsties and cider mills are important survivals of the valley's agricultural history (**Fig.14**). Outbuildings are found throughout the conservation area with examples immediately west of the Bell where two rubblestone buildings face the roadside, one of which is positioned above the Manor Brook which flows underneath it. Both Wye Valley House and Whitebrook Farm form key industrial groups with the ruins of paper mills standing within their gardens (**Fig.15** & **Fig.16**).

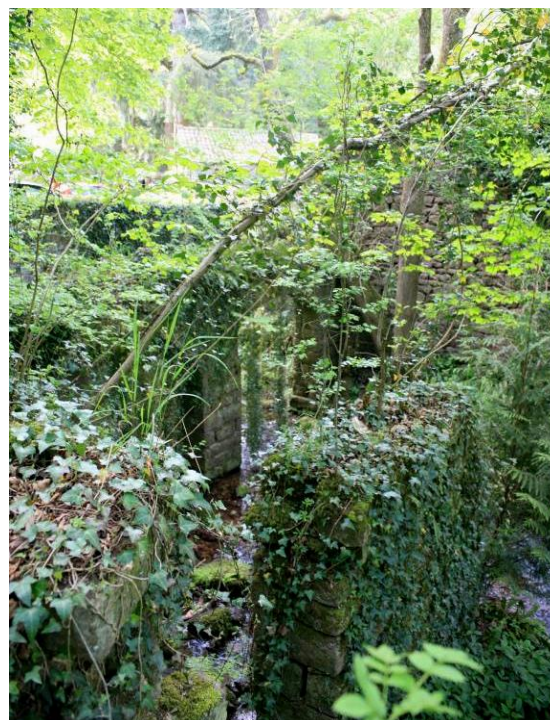


Fig.16 The overgrown ruins of a mill building in the grounds of Whitebrook Farm



**7.3.6** The character area, in line with the entire conservation area, has a strong palette of building materials which create a well-defined and recognisable coordinated ensemble (**Fig.17**). Cottages and outbuildings are coursed quartz conglomerate rubblestone, sometimes white-washed. Of particular local interest is the use of slag blocks (a by-product of manufacture upstream at Redbrook) for quoins and door openings to barns at Tump Farm. Higher-status buildings are frequently smooth rendered and painted white or cream. Roofs are natural slate or replacement cement-fibre slate to most houses. Concrete tiles to Folly Cottage are an exception. Outbuildings utilise a combination of clay pantiles (of various designs) and terra-cotta and blue clay double Roman tiles with corrugated iron to some sheds. Chimney stacks are red brick or stone. Windows are multi-pane timber vertical sliding sashes with simple casements to some cottages. Rubblestone boundary walls are a feature often seen with historic iron entrance gates.

**7.3.7** Views within the conservation area develop from narrow roadside views restricted by banks, walls and tree cover to large open views across grass paddocks. At a footpath above The Folly there are open views north-west and north-east along the valley taking in the landmark buildings of Wye Valley House and Whitebrook Farm on the north side of White Brook (**Fig.18**) Views upstream along the valley north-west are defined by the wooded valley. On the riverside, between Salmons Leap and Railway Cottage, there are views north-west and south-east along the river Wye. Wyeseal Farm, opposite on the Gloucestershire side, is a prominent landmark in views east. The Bell terminates views west along the main road successfully foreshortening the view. On approaching the Bell views open out around the bend of the road and are concentrated on the east end of Old Trinity Church set high up off the road. Views to the former Baptist Chapel can only be glimpsed from traveling on the lane south of the Bell. The network of small paddocks, accessed via footpaths and separated by lanes is an important feature retaining the small-scale agricultural landscape.



**Fig.17 Materials found in the character area.**  
**From top: Slag blocks used in conjunction with quartz conglomerate rubblestone, smooth render and natural slate roofs, white-washed rubblestone, Bridgewater tiles, pantiles**





**Fig.18 Views top to bottom: View west along the valley from The Folly, view north-east to Whitebrook Farm from Folly Cottage, View west on the road terminated by the Bell**



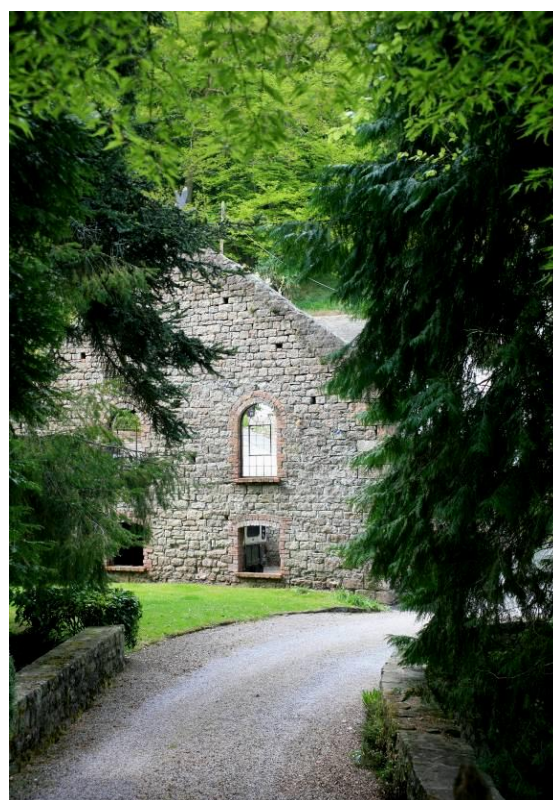
**7.3.8** Features of note include stone gate piers to Wye Valley House, the former Baptist Chapel, Old Trinity Church and garden (**Fig.19**). This garden, dedicated to Edward Conner Lysaght 1902-1997, is an interesting drystone walled pound (in need of repair and maintenance) (**Fig.20**). Drystone walls topped with historic iron railings to Old Trinity Church continue on a footpath south. The Baptist chapel graveyard contains an interesting survival of 19<sup>th</sup> century headstones of Whitebrook paper makers and the Pick family who ran the Post Office. Other significant features comprise industrial archaeology including a sluice at Manor Brook Cottage, the outbuilding west of the Bell over the Manor Brook, possibly a former smithy and the substantial ruins of the Wye Valley paper mill (**Fig.21**). In addition where the White Brook joins the Wye are traces of a quay and the ruins and footings of the riverside paper warehouses demolished in the 1960s.



**Fig.19 Stone gate piers and iron gate to Old Trinity Church**



**Fig.20 The Edward Lysaght garden, in need of renovation**

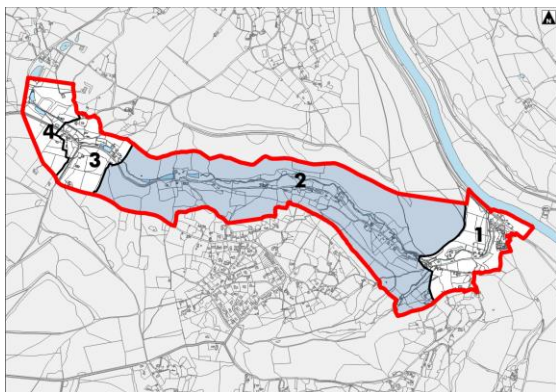


**Fig.21 The substantial remains of Wye Valley Mill glimpsed from the driveway**



## CHARACTER AREA 2

### Central Whitebrook



#### Refer to:

#### Part D - Plan 6B & Plan 6C

**7.3.9** This large character area comprises roughly two-thirds of the settlement from Old Trinity Church in the east to New Mills in the west. The area is characterised by its tree-cover (**Fig.22**), dense in places, with numerous cottages on the south side of the road and smallholdings and former mills on the north side overlooking the White Brook. Mill ponds and sluices sit alongside surviving mill buildings and ruins, three of which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. In an area to the south-east, among the trees, are a grouping of the Grist and The Cider Press and Springwater cottage.

**7.3.10** Mill workers' cottages are characteristically small, two-storey (many of which have been extended in the later 20th

century) with associated single storey car garages and small outbuildings. The double-pile Fern Bank still retains its small domestic scale as a two-storey, three-bay cottage (**Fig.23**). The three-storey Grist Mill is an exception to the rule. The large 'L' plan, two-storey Traligael tells of its origins as the former mill manager's house of Sunnyside Mill. As with the rest of the conservation area the dispersed buildings are orientated in different directions with no formal building line. Some cottages are gable end on to the road (Dawn Cottage and Maes Llymsten), face the roadside (The Crown), or are positioned away from the road facing into the valley (Fern Bank) or back to the roadside over mill ponds (Traligael). Some outbuildings and cottages are built into the valley sides which, in the case of some outbuildings, provides first floor roadside access (see **Fig.22**).



**Fig.22 Dense tree cover continues along the valley to the west**



**Fig.23 The double-pile Kingfisher Cottage displays the domestic scale of buildings in the character area**

**7.3.11** Most buildings make a particularly positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. These are frequently dispersed along the roadside (Rosebank, Dawn Cottage) but are sometimes more closely grouped. Clear groups are defined by house and outbuildings including Fern Bank with its listed cider mill and channelled water course (**Fig.24**) and Kinson's Farm with house and various small-scale outbuildings terraced along the valley side (**Fig.25**). Other buildings are grouped around industrial mill remains such as Clearwater House with the ruins of Clearwater Mill and its listed tall stone steam chimney and Traligael with the ruins of Sunnyside Mill, mill ponds, well and numerous sluices.

**7.3.12** There is a similar palette of building materials throughout the conservation area, but with subtle variation within character areas (**Fig.26**). Cottages are quartz conglomerate rubblestone laid to courses with natural slate roofs and either red brick or stone end stacks. Many cottages in this character area are white-washed including Dawn Cottage, Brook Cottage and Maes Llynston. Other cottages and houses are smooth rendered, often with 20th century extensions simply rendered and painted white with slate or cement-fibre roofs, for example Wyedene House and Kingfisher Cottage. The higher status of the mill manager's house at Traligael is seen in the use of squared sandstone and stone stacks. Concrete tiles have crept in as seen to Rosebank but most buildings retain natural slate roofs. Historic outbuildings characteristically have tile roofs such as the clay pantiles to Kinson's Farm and double roll clay tiles to The Cider Press. Cottages contain timber casements, some replaced with uPVC with larger buildings having multi-pane timber vertical sliding sashes. Mill structures are local rubblestone, the Clearwater Mill chimney displaying rock-faced stone, with red brick dressings.



**Fig.24 Fern Bank grouped with its listed cider mill and channelled watercourse**



**Fig.25 Buildings at Kinson's Farm are united by their use of coursed rubblestone and clay tile roofs**



**Fig.26 (right) Materials found in the character area. From top: Clay pantiles, white-washed rubblestone with natural slate and stone stacks, quartz conglomerate rubblestone with Bridgewater tiles.**



**7.3.13** Views are restricted by tree cover, roadside buildings, earth banks and stone walls. Buildings are often glimpsed from the roadside between trees with the roofs often being the dominant feature in these views (**Figs.27 & Fig.28**). There are a series of paddocks between and behind cottages often bounded by drystone walls, mixed hedges or post and rail fencing. Trees at the edge of the valley woodlands are often beech. From the north valley side, within the woods, there are frequent glimpsed views to cottages, mill ruins and mill ponds especially at Traligael.



Fig.27 Glimpsed view of Traligael from the road



Fig.28 Glimpsed view of Clearwater House from the road

**7.3.14** The key feature in this character area are the drystone boundary walls. These historic boundaries are often topped by earth and covered with moss, ivy and ferns (**Fig.29**). Along stretches even trees have rooted on the tops of walls and have been cut and coppiced, growing and entangling into distinctive shapes. On the valley floor the mill ponds have taken on a natural appearance with marginal plants covering stone walled structures which appear between vegetation in places (**Fig.30**). On the south side of the main road an historic iron pipe can be seen positioned within the stone wall which supplied Clearwater Mill with an additional power source from Manor Brook (**Fig.31**).



Fig.29 Earth banks and drystone walls covered in moss and ferns and topped with coppiced trees



Fig.30 Mill ponds have taken on a natural appearance softened with marginal plants

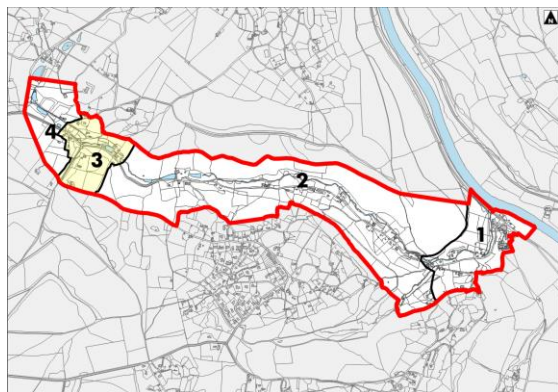


Fig.31 Historic iron pipe taking water from Manor Brook under the road to Clearwater Mill



## CHARACTER AREA 3

### New Mills Environs



**Refer to:**  
**Part D - Plan 6D**

**7.3.15** This small character area is concentrated on the area of New Mills, developed, as its name suggests, as a secondary base of mills on the White Brook. In the east is Fernside Mill complete with manager's house and coach house and to the west is New Mills Farm. A former road (now un-adopted) runs south connecting to the high south road leading to The North. To the north, houses extended and refurbished in the 20th century, (Boxbush Cottage and Hythe) are located on the valley side heading out of the settlement. Tree cover and paddocks surround the area.

**7.3.16** Cottages are generally of a similar small two storey domestic scale, the 20th century Mill Cottage being the exception as a single-storey house set high above the road. Higher status houses, as elsewhere, are generally larger including Mill House (former manager's house of Fernside Mill) with its two and a half storey gabled range (**Fig.32**) and the double-pile two storey plus attic New Mills Farm (**Fig.33**). The large rectangular three-storey Fernside Mill stands out as the largest building in the area. Buildings are positioned in various orientations often dictated by their use. Fernside Mill is positioned gable end onto the roadside. Built into the valley below, its west wall forms a dam backing water up to drive the machinery while its third floor is accessed via the road for the import and export of materials. Mount Pleasant is also

positioned gable end on to the road side positioned high above within its garden setting raised above the roadside (**Fig.34**). Other buildings face the brook such as New Mills. New Mills Barn (converted) is staggered down the hillside with three different levels (see **Fig.33**)



**Fig.32 Mill House's large size displays its high status as a former mill manager's house**



**Fig.33 The double-pile New Mills Farm with dormers in the attic**



**Fig.34 Mount Pleasant positioned above the roadside gable-end on**

**7.3.17** There are two major groups of note. The best ensemble is at Fernside Mill where the Mill (**Fig.35**), Mill House, former stables (Coach House) (**Fig.36**), mill pond and sluices for the paper mill and tanks for the 1920s fish farm survive. This historic group is all the more important due to the fact that the Grade II listed Fernside Mill survives almost complete and is quite possibly a unique survival of an early paper mill. The second group is at New Mills Farm with the farmhouse, gardens with old apple and pear trees and the former cider mill (New Mills Barn). There are additional outbuildings in the vicinity of Mount Pleasant. This group recalls the area's smallholding history.

**7.3.18** Buildings continue the conservation area's distinctive palette of materials with quartz conglomerate rubblestone (**Fig.37**) laid to courses to cottages and outbuildings. Stone is occasionally squared as on the gable of Mount Pleasant and to good effect on the New Mills Farmhouse showing its higher-status complete with fine rubbed stone arch window heads with slightly raised keystones. Weatherboarding is found to Fernside Mill and the first floor of New Mills. Stacks are often stone, sometimes red brick and roofs are usually natural slate with some replacement in cement-fibre. However some houses have clay pantile such as New Mills and Mill House.



Fig.35 Fernside Mill from the east side



Fig.36 Fernside Mill former stables, now a private dwelling house, the Coach House

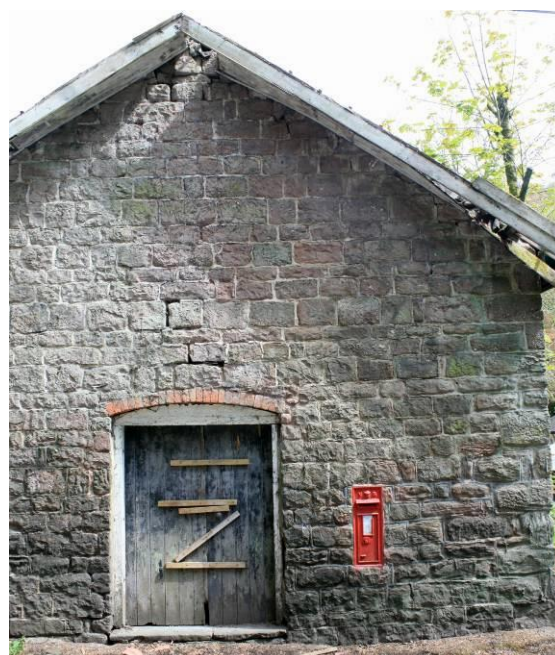


Fig.37 Use of local quartz conglomerate rubblestone on Fernside Mill

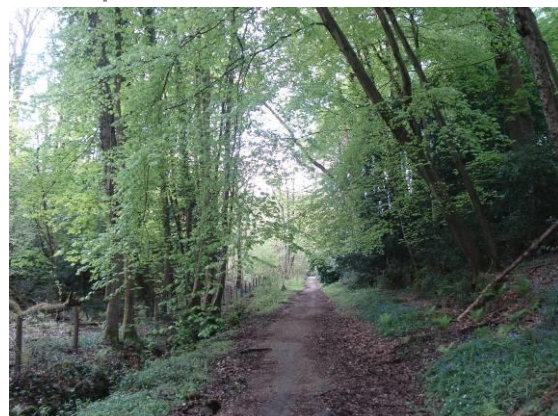


**7.3.19** The tree cover, stone walls, earth banks and hedges restrict all major views to the east and west alongside the road. Occasionally paddocks and old orchards can be glimpsed from the roadside. Views open out at Fernside Mill overlooking Mill House and the Coach House and also between Mount Pleasant and New Mills Barn where buildings can be seen more clearly. The ruined New Mill and properties such as New Mills and New Mills House are seen between and/or have a backdrop of trees (**Fig.38**). Private gardens are often extensive such as the semi-natural brook side gardens to Mill House set off by the reflective mill pond. To the south the woodland gardens of Five Springs with nissen hut style structures can be seen traveling north-south along the former road, now a wooded track (**Fig.39**).

**7.3.20** Features include the mill ruins of New Mill, a roofless building, formerly a corn mill. Set back from the roadside behind a 'green' is a red telephone box and channeled watercourse of the White Brook with stone bridge and various small pools and stone structures (**Fig.40**). The drystone boundary walls with earthen banks, and ferns, moss and trees growing on the walls are characteristic features continued from character area 2 (**Fig.41**).



**Fig.38 The ruined New Mill between and with a backdrop of mature trees**



**Fig.39 The former road, now an attractive wooded path**



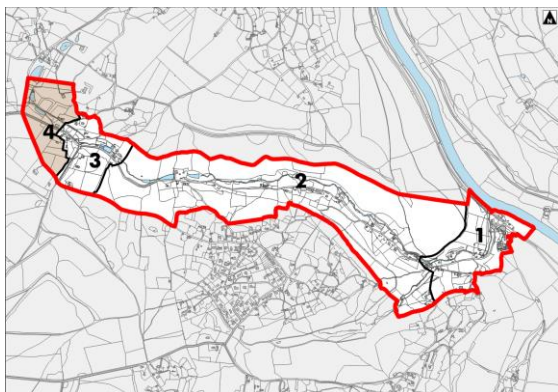
**Fig.40 Small pools are amongst the features found along this stretch of the brook**



**Fig.41 Moss covered drystone walls with trees growing on top**

## CHARACTER AREA 4

### Head of the Valley



**Refer to:**  
**Part D - Plan 6E**

**7.3.21** This character area forms the westernmost side of the conservation area. This area is a transitional zone from the enclosed Whitebrook Valley out to the more open fields leading towards Penalt in the west and the higher ridges of The North in the south and Tre-gagle in the north.

**7.3.22** There are only two properties in this character area New Mills House and outbuildings accessed via a road leading north-east to Park Farm (outside the conservation area) and a 20<sup>th</sup> century barn to Springfield Farm (the farm is outside the conservation area). New Mills House is positioned on the north side of the White Brook orientated facing south. This two-storey building is of a similar small-scale to surrounding houses.



Fig.42 View from the north across the valley to the south with the barn belonging to Springfield Farm partially hidden behind a line of trees

**7.3.23** New Mills House is a smooth rendered building with slate roof and clay ridge tiles, end stacks and timber vertical sliding sashes. There are many drystone boundary walls in the character area constructed from the local quartz conglomerate rubblestone (**Fig.43**).





Fig.43 Low tumbledown drystone walls

**7.3.24** More expansive open views can be had in this character area than any other. From the south road leading to The North there are views between The Cabin and Pinelands (both outside the conservation area) north across paddocks to New Mills House, Boxbush Cottage and others rising north out of the valley with New Mills Barn in the foreground (**Fig.44**). On the road leading north to Tregagle there are open views across Duke's Pond and the later ponds excavated around Springfield Farm. Footpaths cutting across the fields east of Springfield Farm enable views south back across the valley taking in the broadleaf woodland on the lower slopes and conifer plantations above.

**7.3.25** Features of note include the series of three mill ponds on the White Brook with sluices and tanks. At the junction of lanes leading to Penalt, Whitebrook, Tre-gagle and The North is an early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century road sign (**Fig.45**). Stone boundary walls are still a feature, often low in this character area and topped by earthen banks (see **Fig.43**). The historic iron gate to New Mills House is a well-made survival.

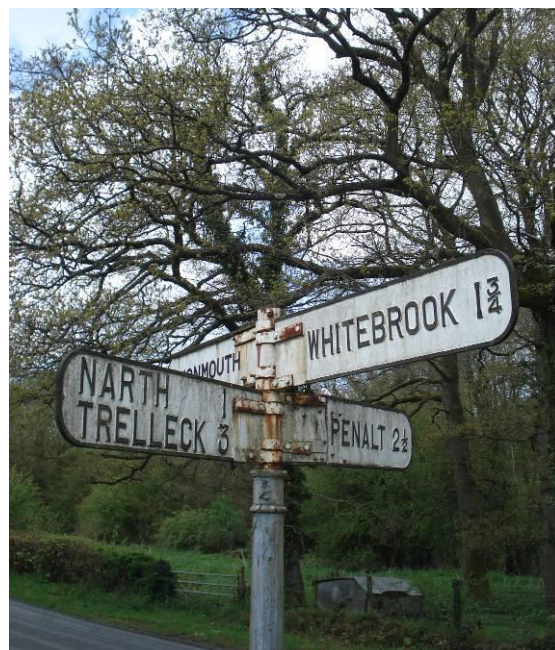


Fig.45 An historic road sign positioned at the crossroads on the western boundary of the conservation area



Fig.44 Views across the field to New Mills Barn and houses rising up the valley in the distance



## 7.4 Architectural & Historic Qualities of Buildings

**7.4.1** The conservation area comprises a dispersed settlement of cottages, farmhouses, mill managers' houses and paper and corn mill ruins. Most of these are in the 18th century/19th century vernacular tradition and few are Statutory Listed. There are three Scheduled Ancient Monuments and many unlisted buildings which are of local architectural interest and make a particularly positive contribution to the character of the village.

**7.4.2** This section has been compiled following survey visits by the consultants and reference to the Historic Building Condition Database for Whitebrook (Cadw) and the section on Whitebrook in the Gwent/Monmouthshire volume of the Buildings of Wales series by John Newman (Yale U.P 2002).

### Mill Sites

**7.4.3** Whitebrook is distinguished from other conservation areas in Monmouthshire by its industrial history and survival of many industrial ruins. These ruins remain alongside today's cottages and houses helping to define the special architectural and historic character of this conservation area. For this reason the key industrial sites are described below from east to west from the River Wye to the area of New Mills.

**7.4.4** Mill ruins positioned north of Tump Farm show the site of a mill powered by White Brook shown on the 1840 tithe map. The remaining structure is too incomplete to indicate the type of mill. It is possible that this is one of the earlier wireworks sites.

**7.4.5** The Glynn Paper Mill (Whitebrook Farm Mill) remains as ruins. It was in use from c.1800-1850. This small-scale mill was water-powered with a head of water contained by a dam wall behind the mill where there is now a large derelict pond. The roofless ruins remain as prominent industrial landmarks in front of Whitebrook Farmhouse, the former manager's

house. Included in the group are sheds and a rag tank.

**7.4.6** Wye Valley Mills was established in 1772 and was originally called Bridgets Mill. This may occupy an early wireworks site. The remains tell of a large complex, possibly signifying two hand paper mills (no evidence of mechanisation has been found) (**Fig.45**). The dry pond and surviving leat now form part of Wye Valley House gardens (the former manager's house). The sandstone construction with red brick dressings suggests a 19th century date to some sections (**Fig.46**).



Fig.45 Wye Valley Mill ruins

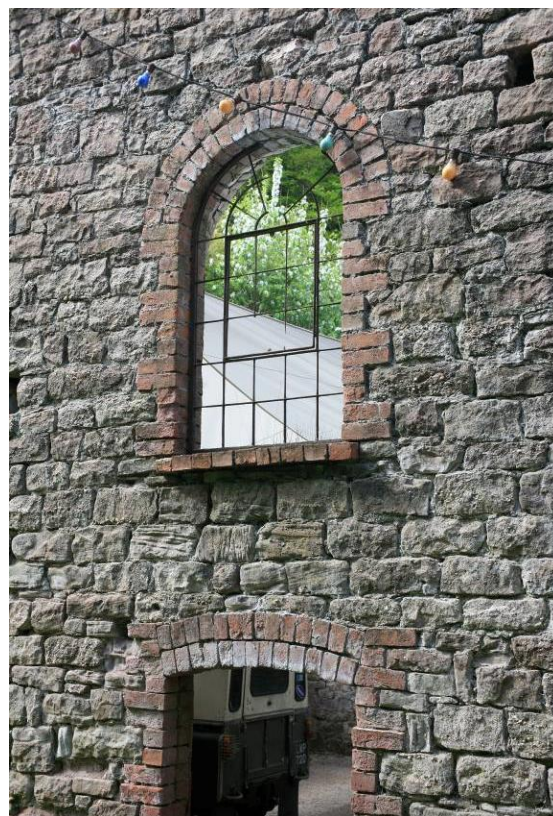


Fig.46 Wye Valley Mill, 19<sup>th</sup> century section



**7.4.7** The Grist Mill (**Fig.47**) is positioned to the south on the Manor Brook set into the bank with a large, two-storey height, stone retaining wall on the west side. A large stone-lined pond behind the mill remains rising to first floor height. The three-storey building has been converted into a private dwelling house. Constructed of coursed local quartz conglomerate rubblestone with arch-headed window openings, access is provided at first floor level via external stone steps.

**7.4.8** To the west of the Grist Mill are the remains of low stone walls indicating a probable early 17th century wireworks site (Scheduled Ancient Monument) supplied via a leat from a pond on the Manor Brook. The site was identified by Professor Gordon Tucker in 1973 based on field evidence and a map of 1772. Visible remains include ruined buildings (possibly later dwellings) and a series of terraces on the steep hillside. A walled set of steps exits the site up hill to the west.

**7.4.9** Clearwater Mill was built in c.1760, possibly on the site of an earlier 17th century wireworks. Clearwater was the first paper mill in Whitebrook. The ruins indicate a large mill run from a pond 100 metres upstream on White Brook supplemented by water power from Manor Brook running across the road from the west. This mill was mechanised in 1863 with a steam engine and paper machine. In addition the mill was run by an overshot water wheel and 70HP water turbine. Further ruins to the south-east, part of the main mill, are of a 19th century mill building with round-headed windows and an 1860s tall octagonal stone chimney indicating the mechanisation of the mill (**Fig.48**). The squared and coursed rock-faced sandstone conglomerate rubble chimney is Listed Grade II. The mill closed in 1875.

**7.4.10** South-west of Clearwater is a length of leat (Scheduled Ancient Monument) built for over a mile from the White Brook to supply water power to Whitebrook Wireworks, established in c.1600. The leat has gone in the immediate vicinity of the wireworks itself and at its head near the White Brook, but this intermediate section is very well preserved.

This appears as a trough, roughly 2m across, with a cutting on the uphill side and a wall of large boulders on the downhill side.



**Fig.47 The Grist Mill with The Cider Press to the right**



**Fig.48 The 1860s chimney at Clearwater Mill**



**7.4.11** Sunnyside Mill only remains as fragments of stone walls in the garden of Traligael (former manager's house). This once large mechanised paper mill was served by three engines. On the south side of the valley was a stone chimney dated 1870 (**Fig.49**). Its stone-lined flue leads under the road to the mill site. Its two supply ponds remain.



Fig.49 An historic photograph of the **1870 chimney which served Sunnyside Mill (now believed to have been demolished)**

**7.4.12** The early 19th century Fernside Mill (Grade II Listed, **Fig.50**) is very probably the only paper mill of this date in Wales to survive more or less intact. Its mill pond forms the garden of the adjacent former mill owner's house (The Mill House). The mill building is built backing onto the mill dam so that the top floor is level with and has direct access to the road through the gable end and the other two floors are below the water level in the mill pond giving a 5m head. The mill is gable end onto the road and has an elliptically headed boarded door and Victorian wall post box beside it. The mill is a three-storey, seven-bay building of coursed Old Red Sandstone rubble with segment-headed windows. The upper storey is weatherboarded, and once had two tiers of vertical, open-slatted louvres indicating their use as drying lofts. The elevation onto the millpond (west) is single storey and is timber framed with vertical louvres, these were to ventilate the paper drying floor. The stables

for 10 horses remains (**Fig.51**) (converted into a private dwelling house, Coach House) as do the stone and concrete rectangular shaped tanks immediately downstream of the mill which was the site of a 1920s trout farm of the Wye Valley Fishery (**Fig.52**).



Fig.50 **The east facing elevation of Fernside Mill**



Fig.51 **The Coach House, a former stable block**



Fig.52 **The tanks used for the fishery**



**7.4.13** New Mills was a corn mill and now survives as a roofless ruin (**Fig.53**). It was still operational in the 1920s and retains some of its milling machinery. The wheel pit still exists. Its feeder ponds survive in part with the best preserved Duke's Pond to the north-west. The mill used French millstones rather than the local quartz conglomerate stones apparently to produce a finer flour.

### 18<sup>th</sup> Century

**7.4.14** Tump Farmhouse (unlisted, **Fig.54**) is an 'L' plan two-storey stone rendered building. Extended in the 19th century, the early range faces the roadside with a large central stack. This range has two gable-end windows with Tudor-style hood-molds and eight-over-eight timber vertical sliding sashes. Other windows are timber casements.

**7.4.15** Clearwater House (Grade II Listed) probably dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and was built as the manager's house of the adjacent c.1760 Clearwater Mill. The rendered local rubblestone house has a natural slate roof. It is a central entry double depth plan house with a service wing at the rear. There are two storeys and garret to the front range but only two storeys to the service wing. The main elevation is of three bays with a central six-panel door with a guilloche mould architrave, and a Regency timber porch with tented lead roof. There is a late 20<sup>th</sup> century conservatory projecting on the original ground floor of the house.

**7.4.16** The Bell (Grade II Listed, **Fig.55**) is a late 18th century/early 19th century house, later a local beer house and remaining as a public house until 1962. The building is a small double fronted, double depth, rendered and natural slate house. The main elevation has a central panelled door with a bracketed hood. This is flanked by six-over-six pane sashes in elliptical heads, the same on the first floor with six-pane windows on the second floor hard under the eaves. The rear elevation has two six-over-six pane sashes, the gable walls being blind.



Fig.53 The roofless ruins of New Mills



Fig.54 Tump Farmhouse, the earlier range



Fig.55 The Bell, a prominent building at a key location

### 19<sup>th</sup> century

**7.4.17** Old Trinity Church (formerly Holy Trinity) is a pre-ecclesiastical lancet style mission church (Grade II Listed, **Fig.56** next page). It is a small gable-entry, single cell, building of c1840 with alterations and the addition of a schoolroom on the south side, possibly in 1892 when the church was refitted and decorated by the Vicar, Joshua Stansfield.

The church is built of coursed squared red sandstone rubble with a natural slate roof, the schoolroom is rendered and painted. The gabled west end has two single light windows, and a central gabled porch with a four-centred head with small pointed windows in the return walls. The original plank double doors remain insitu. The main roof gable has a square bell-cote. The schoolroom has a large six-over-six pane double sash at the east end and a small window and a four-centred arch door at the west end, the south wall is blind. The windows date to approximately the 1840s and are coloured glass arranged in diamond quarries.

**7.4.18** Whitebrook Baptist Chapel was built in 1829, enlarged in 1831, in the vernacular style gable-entry type (**Fig.57**). It had a day and Sunday school in 1853 and a new school room in 1855. The building became redundant in the 1980s and was converted into a private dwelling house in c.2005.

**7.4.19** Whitebrook Farmhouse (Grade II Listed, **Fig.58**) (formerly Glyncote Farmhouse) is early/mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was built as the mill-house of The Glynn paper mill which was active in c1800-1850 and became a farmhouse on the closure of the mill. The house is rendered over local rubble stone and has a natural slate roof. It is a rectangular three bay block with a rear outshut. The original building comprised a two bay central entry house, the bay to the left was added later and may originally have had a non-domestic use. Windows are eight-over-eight pane sashes in elliptical heads.

**7.4.20** Wye Valley House (Grade II Listed, **Fig.59**) is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century mill manager's house. The tall three storey rendered house has a concrete tile roof and gable end stacks. The main building comprises a three storey block with a two storey service wing projecting at the back. The entrance elevation has three bays with a central plain door flanked on the left by a six-over-six pane sash in an elliptical head and on the right by a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century steel-framed casement. The first floor has three six-over-six pane sashes and the second floor has three three-over-six pane sashes.



**Fig.56** Old Trinity Church set high above the roadside



**Fig.57** The west end of the Baptist Chapel



**Fig.58** Whitebrook Farmhouse



**Fig.59** Wye Valley House

**7.4.21** Traligael House is a 19<sup>th</sup> century former mill manager's house for Sunnyside Mill (**Fig.60**). Glimpsed from the roadside this large, two-storey, 'L' plan house is built of



squared sandstone with stone stacks and a natural slate roof. Windows are six-over-six pane sashes. A full-length single storey timber verandah with natural slate roof covers the south-facing ground floor. The south-west facing gable looking over the mill pond has a ground floor multi-pane bow window with multi-paned French windows above with semi-circular fanlight.

**7.4.22** Mill House is a 19th century former mill manager's house and much refurbished retains its picturesque style (**Fig.61**). It served the early 19th century Fernside Mill. The building is a complex of three coursed rubblestone ranges, one a two and a half storey gabled range facing the mill pond with decorative bargeboards. The building has a clay pantile roof with red brick stacks and multi-paned timber vertical sliding sashes.



Fig.60 Traligael House glimpsed from the roadside between trees



Fig.61 Mill House, the former mill manager's house of Fernside Mill



## Vernacular

**7.4.23** Many of Whitebrook's buildings are simple vernacular stone cottages (many extended in the 20th century) and associated agricultural outbuildings. These cottages were for mill workers who supplemented their income by keeping pigs and chickens and by cider-making. Most of these buildings appear to be 19th century in date. Farmhouses of note include New Mills Farmhouse (**Fig.62**) and Kinson's Farmhouse. Key cottages include Dawn Cottage, Brook Cottage (former Post Office) (**Fig.63**), Maes Llymsten, Kingfisher Cottage (**Fig.64**) and Mount Pleasant. Small-scale agricultural buildings associated with smallholdings and cottages include calf sheds and milking sheds, hay stores and a Blacksmith's forge at Whitebrook Farm. Cider mills are a particular feature and are found at Fern Bank (Grade II Listed, **Fig.65**), New Mills Farm, and Tump Farm (**Fig.67**). Small-scale presses were found at Manor Brook Cottage, Springwater, The Cider Press (**Fig.68**) and Dawn Cottage. Kingfisher Cottage (formerly Lion's Oak) was a local cider house.



Fig.64 Fernbank Cottage



Fig.65 Fern Bank cider mill, converted into a Youth Hostel in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and used to house evacuees during the Second World War



Fig.62 New Mills Farmhouse



Fig.67 Farm buildings to Tump Farm



Fig.63 Brook Cottage, the former Post Office



Fig.68 The Cider Press, converted into a house



## 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries

**7.4.24** The c.1926 Village Hall (**Fig.69**) is a small corrugated iron single-storey building with casement windows. A small lean-to extension is positioned on the south-west side.

**7.4.25** There are few 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings within the conservation area and none of any special note. There have been many alterations and extensions to small cottages in the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century, continuing into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with new inhabitants looking to create larger homes. These additions are usually modest and of little architectural quality on their own (**Fig.70**, **Fig.71** & **Fig.72**). An interesting example can be seen at The Folly where the house has been extended with a glass lantern link and a first floor level balcony has been constructed on steel supports extending out into the valley (**Fig.73**). More recently (1998) a timber-framed and glass extension has been attached to the Coach House (**Fig.74**).



Fig.69 The Village Hall



Fig.70 Manor Brook Cottage new extension



Fig.71 Wyedene House with rendered extensions



Fig.72 The heavily altered Fern Bank



Fig.73 The Folly



Fig.74 The Coach House with extension to rear

## 7.5 Activity: Prevailing & Former Uses

**7.5.1** Whitebrook's development is based on its water power and the construction of mills. The valley contained corn and grist mills in the medieval period. The area became important in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with the establishment of up to six wireworks and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century paper works. By c.1880 the industry had gone and the community returned to subsistence level agriculture with orchards and smallholdings. Today the village supports a small but active community with smallholdings, private houses and cottages. Tump Farm still survives in agricultural use. The population is a mixture of long term residents and a new influx of commuters. The village supports artists and crafts people, a village hall and bed and breakfast accommodation.

## 7.6 Contributions Made By Key Unlisted Buildings

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

- Tump Farmhouse and farm buildings
- Buildings at New Mills including The Mill House, Coach House, Five Springs, Mount Pleasant, New Mills House and New Mills Barn and New Mills Farm
- Traligael, Traligael Cottage, Woodside
- Grist Mill and Cider Mill
- The series of houses and cottages from Old Trinity Church in the east to Dawn Cottage in the west
- Agricultural buildings and outbuildings to cottages, smallholdings and farms

**7.6.2** 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**.

### Refer to:

**Part D - Plans 5A & 5B** Listed Buildings & Buildings Making a Particular or Special Positive Contribution



## 7.7 Prevalent Local & Traditional Materials

**7.7.1** The rural valley settlement predominantly comprises rubblestone and natural slate, intermixed with occasional rendered or squared stone Georgian mill owners houses. The local sandstone and limestone in shades of pink, brown and grey are the dominant materials for cottages, outbuildings and mill ruins. It is sometimes squared to higher status buildings and very occasionally rock-faced. Stone is often complemented by red brick dressings. 20<sup>th</sup> century infill usually comprises rendered detached houses with natural slate or cement fibre slate roofs. There has been some detrimental alteration to historic houses with the introduction of UPVC windows, concrete tiled and cement fibre slate roofs.

### Walling

**7.7.2** Stone is a mix of local limestone and sandstone with distinctive sandstone quartz conglomerate which is found locally in rocky outcrops and used extensively for millstones. Walling is predominantly rubblestone but laid to courses (**Fig.75** & **Fig.76**). Occasionally it is white-washed (**Fig.77**). High status mill managers' houses and the c.18<sup>th</sup> century Tump Farmhouse are rendered and painted in shades of white and cream. Very occasionally cottages are rendered, but this is usually a later remodeling of exposed stone buildings (**Fig.78**). Stone-work to houses, mill buildings and outbuildings often has red or yellow brick dressings. Slag blocks, a by-product of the furnaces upstream at Redbrook and often used as ballast in river vessels, are found at Tump Farm where they are used on farm buildings as quoins and around windows and door openings. Occasional outbuildings and mill buildings feature weatherboarding. The village hall is corrugated iron. Many 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages have small window openings with timber casement windows. Higher status houses have larger openings with Georgian timber sliding sashes. Window surrounds are sometimes painted black forming a strong colour contrast with white rendered walls.

Decorative timber bargeboards are a feature to some houses.



**Fig.75 Local rubblestone laid to courses at Mount Pleasant**



**Fig.76 Rubblestone is even used in modern additions such as this garage**



**Fig.77 White-washed rubblestone**



**Fig.78 Smooth render painted cream at Woodside (probably a remodelling of an exposed stone cottage)**

## Roofing

**7.7.3** Most traditional houses still retain natural slate or clay pantile roofs (**Fig.79**) although some have seen these materials replaced with cement fibre slates. This is generally seen at medium to low pitches to simple gabled roofs with brick or stone ridge stacks. Outbuildings largely feature clay pantiles or double roll clay tiles. Some historic properties and 20<sup>th</sup> century housing have concrete interlocking tiles. Late 20th century housing and 21st century housing have natural slate or cement fibre slate roofs.



Fig.79 Characteristic roofing materials: Natural slate and clay pantiles

## Boundary walls and retaining walls

**7.7.4** Historic dry rubblestone walls are a feature of the conservation area, often found in long stretches alongside the through road or forest tracks (**Fig.80**). There are frequent low stone walls with cams and rustic stone gate piers to houses. Low stone walls are sometimes topped by earth banks, covered in ferns and moss with trees growing through the walls.



Fig.80 Typical stretches of boundary walls



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



Fig.81 An opening between trees reveals a former mill pond

**8.1** The natural environment provides the village's rural setting with mixed native hedging, grass roadside verges with wildflowers, old orchards, paddocks and holding ponds (**Fig.81**) dotted with houses set against a backdrop of mixed woodland. The abundance of vegetation and variety of green colours, particularly prominent in spring with the vibrant green of the beech, is a very significant characteristic of the area (**Fig.82** & **Fig.83**).

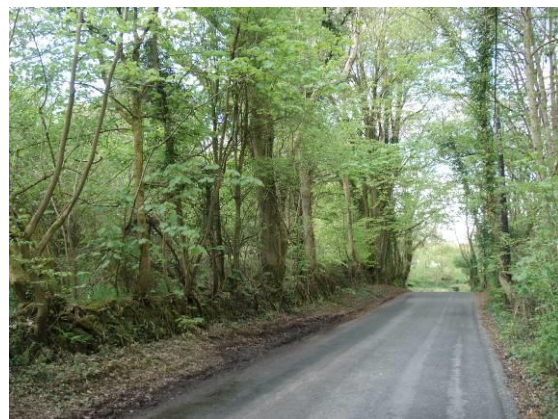


Fig.82 Roadside trees, a characteristic of the area





Fig.83 Much of the valley sides are covered by trees. Informal tree-lined paths often run through the woods.



## 9 Key Views

### 9.1 Landscape Setting

**9.1.1** Whitebrook is located in a wooded valley following the White Brook from New Mills in the west 2 miles east to the River Wye. The steep-sided beech woodland constricts the village to a ribbon settlement on the lower slopes of the valley. The sprawling community of The Narth is located to the west with Pilstone to the south and Tregagle to the north. The A466 Chepstow to Monmouth road follows the River Wye upstream on the Gloucestershire side to the east. There are extensive views west from the A466 across Wyeseal Farm to Whitebrook.

#### Refer to:

**Plans 4A & 4B** Spatial Analysis

### 9.2 Types of View & Their Relative Significance

#### **Strategic** (see **Fig.19** & **Fig.84**)

**9.2.1** The steep sided wooded valley restricts extensive views in many places. Strategic views include open views south across the valley from public footpaths east of Springfield Farm. From the roadside opposite Pinelands in the west there are views over the fields north to New Mills with its scatter of cottages and mills rising up the hillside between paddocks and trees. From the track above The Folly in the south-east there are significant views north-west along the wooded valley, dominated by the trees, as it snakes its way west, the spur of The Narth closing distant views. From outside the conservation area on the A466 there are open views across Wyeseal Farm to the east end of Whitebrook and Tump Farm. There are open views to the landmark Wyeseal Farm from the riverside in the east. The large white painted rendered houses of Whitebrook Farm and Wye Valley House are distinctive landmarks on the north side of the valley from the roadside and tracks and lanes to the south.

#### **Glimpsed** (see **Fig.28** & **Fig.29**)

**9.2.2** A significant number of the cottages and mills within the village are set back from the roadside glimpsed between trees and walls. From the junction of roads at the Bell there are glimpsed views south-east to the former Baptist Chapel.

#### **Terminated** (see **Fig.43** & **Fig.45**)

**9.2.3** Due to the largely linear layout of the settlement there are few terminated views. The most prominent is the view west along the main road terminated effectively by the Bell on its prominent corner position.





Fig.84 Strategic view from the A466 across Wyeseal Farm to Whitebrook



## 10 Degree of Loss of Architectural and/or Historic Elements

**10.1** There is limited loss of historic windows, doors, roof coverings and chimneys. Windows and roof coverings are the most significant and consistent change to historic buildings. These are however in most cases a reversible change to houses.

## 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 either ownership changes or new buildings and plot division, or a review and re-appraisal of the character of particular sections of the valley.

**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

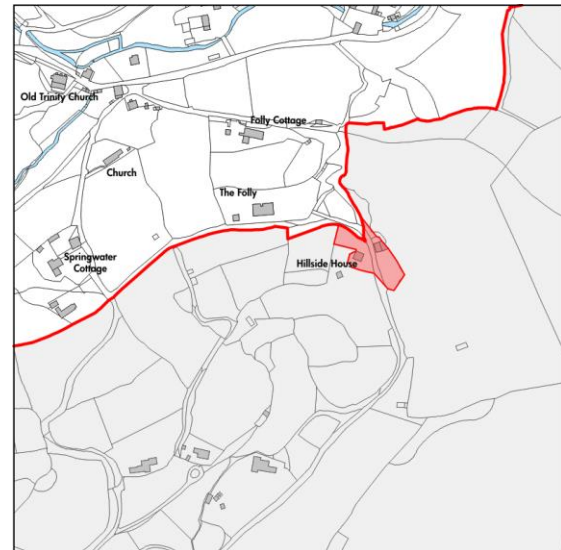


Fig.85 Plan showing area for inclusion in the conservation area

#### 11.2 Areas for Inclusion (Fig.85)

##### Hillside (Fig.86)

**11.2.1** On the lane that winds south above the former Baptist Chapel to Forest Walks is Hillside, a Victorian, symmetrical, two-storey, three-bay rock-faced stone cottage with sash windows, brick dressings and end stacks facing east across the Wye Valley. This unassuming cottage relates well to the conservation area and should be included as a building making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.



Fig.86 Hillside

#### 11.3 Areas for Exclusion (Fig.87)

##### Springfield Farm

**11.3.1** The conservation area boundary should be amended to exclude the section of land at Springfield Farm realigning the boundary north of Duke's Pond to follow the field line.

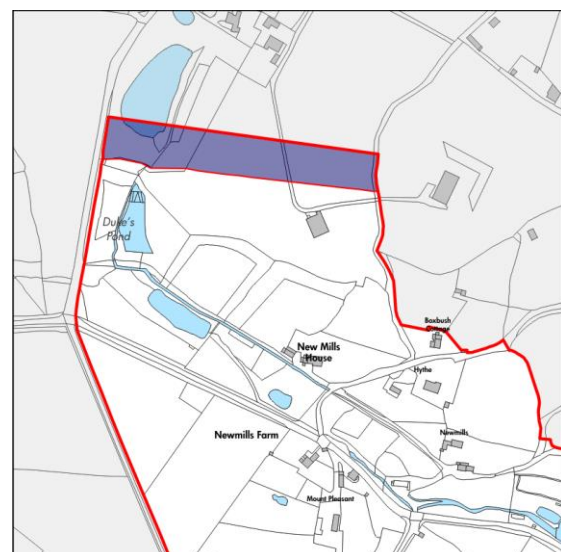


Fig.87 Plan showing areas for exclusion from the conservation area



## 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."

**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 Whitebrook Conservation Area Article 4 Directions should be considered for windows and doors and roof coverings where the original natural slate, clay pantile and Bridgewater tile survives. This is particularly the case for:

- Brook Cottage
- Fern Bank
- The Cider Press
- Mill House
- Traligael
- New Mills Farm

**12.6** Front stone boundary walls, where they exist, form a positive part of the character and appearance of the conservation area. Where these are fronting domestic properties consideration should be given to the removal of Permitted Development rights in relation to the partial removal of boundary walls.

**Refer to:**

**Part D - Plan 7** Management Proposals

## 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

**13.2.1** The mill ruins and their associated structures could be better interpreted with the addition of a series of interpretation boards linked by a heritage trail through the valley. This would help raise awareness of their existence and their inter-relationship thus helping to ensure their continued survival as valuable industrial complexes which tell the story of the historic development of the Whitebrook valley.



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