Abergavenny and District Civic Society
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A DESIGN STATEMENT FOR THE ABERGAVENNY URBAN AREA

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Abergavenny is characterised by an extensive variety of building styles, proportions and materials that reflects the successive periods of town growth. These are documented in our 'Exploring Abergavenny' urban characterisation study summarised in section 5.0. Thus, while there are some overall design 'rules' usually to be followed, an interpretation of the local context of each new development may lead to creative departures from conventional expectations that still respect or enhance their situation.

We recognise that personal taste is not a material consideration when deciding planning applications; refusals must be substantiated against policy.

This statement is intended to supplement the relevant policies of the Welsh Government (WG), the Local Development Plan (LDP) and its supplementary planning guidance (SPG*).* It aims to provide developers, large and small, with the Society's local perspective on how we would wish future developments to interpret creatively and sensitively the many qualities of what already exists. *Our key local policy positions are printed in italics. These will influence our response to planning applications and to any pre-application community consultations. The statement and its illustrations (many ©Google) will be improved and extended as the Society's design objectives evolve.*

The Society advises developers not to rely only on this paper but to check with the statutory planning authority for their requirements.

Monmouthshire has no detailed building design guide but an internet search will give access to useful guidance for many other parts of the UK. LDP policies DES1 (General Design Considerations) and HE1 (Development in Conservation Areas) set out the main expectations of the planning authority. *We broadly support those policies while noting that they allow considerable scope for interpretation and are intended to prevent bad design rather than ensure that every development is good. Good design is not always easily measurable; some aspects of good design may be matters of subjective choice but any refusal requires objective reasons. We encourage good sustainable design that will always be the outcome of a rigorous wide-ranging analysis and design process that considers many factors, functional, environmental, social, economic and cultural, leading to an aesthetic outcome.*

Planning Policy Wales and TAN 12 provide further guidance. Some planning applications must include a Design and Access Statement (DAS)

that should clearly explain the design process that has been undertaken, but unfortunately few do so and poor design quality is often the outcome. *The Society would wish the planning authority to strengthen its expectations of DASs*.

Appendix 2 lists other general sources of design guidance.

1. GENERAL LOCAL GUIDANCE

1.1 Context: Any development should consider its context, as every site will have its own characteristics and setting in the landscape or townscape to which the proposal should respond. Thus, new development should

normally demonstrate a sensitive interpretation of the density and grain of adjoining or nearby street and plot patterns, the uses, scale and rhythm of the building forms and elevations in those streets, and important views of nearby landmark buildings such as the churches and Town Hall or the views to key elements of the wider surrounding landscape.

1.2 The Site and its Buildings: An appraisal of the site itself - its orientation, changes of level, views (in and out), wildlife habitats, rights of way, the value and condition of existing trees and shrubs, levels of shelter from prevailing winds - will also influence the arrangement, shape, internal arrangement and fenestration of buildings, especially if true sustainability is the objective that it should be (see 1.14). Buildings change over time and not always in a good way. Having a firm understanding of their history will allow clear decisions about 'creative demolition', ridding buildings of additions/adaptations that have undermined what may once have been decent architecture that needs respect. Creative demolition can also mean demolishing something that exists because in doing so it opens up an opportunity to achieve a space and views that the previous architectural technology could never have achieved.

1.3 Larger Projects: While all development proposals should consider these matters, the contextual analysis for larger projects should also lead to them having their own identity or sense of place[1], led by a landscape

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[1] 'Sense of place' is a term increasingly seen in planning advice but rarely defined. It may be experienced anywhere within a hierarchy from the domestic to the national level, and it may be man-made, natural or simply cultural. As an urban design term, we understand it to mean that a part of the town has a distinct and memorable character or ambience which its users can readily identify. It might be a commercial

strategy (see 1.17) and which may be different from neighbouring development. Housing estates in the past have varied according to changes in design fashions and developments in building technologies but have often been grafted on to the built-up area without creating places that have their own distinctive character, perhaps with a focal point such as an open space or a particular building or feature.

1.4 Mixed Use Developments: Modern developments in Abergavenny have tended to be for a single use, usually commercial or housing. While any primary use allocation in the development plan is an important consideration and mixed uses must be compatible, *the Society encourages developments with more than one purpose*: for example, housing above shops (each separately accessed), business spaces with residential accommodation, or employment or leisure opportunities on housing estates. *We particularly wish to see more, and a greater range of, local employment opportunities, and we believe that the vitality of the town centre will need to rely on a mixture of uses, even in its retail core. Any substantial housing allocation should include provision for, or have easy access to, commensurate job provision and basic services.*

1.5 Planning Authority Requirements: Depending on the type and scale of development proposed, special assessments of environmental, wildlife, heritage or transport impact may be required by the planning authority. Both planning requirements and building regulations must be satisfied.

Gloucester

1.6 New Buildings should generally not dominate their surroundings but should sit comfortably within their setting, making a positive contribution. Scale, height, shape, materials and detailing will be key considerations, along with the privacy of occupiers of proposed and existing buildings. *New building in Abergavenny should not normally exceed three storeys, though we recognise that exceptions to the general rule may be acceptable in special circumstances if justified by a sound design process*. New buildings in areas lacking distinctive character or design quality should not reinforce that mediocrity; they should aim to create some sense of place.

1.7 Abergavenny has a history of varying architectural styles partly making use of developments in building technology and this should continue. Today's need for zero or low carbon performance (see 1.14), together with a sensitive response to context should be able to contribute

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redevelopment, a housing estate, or a group of homes. Parts of the town that lack this quality are sometimes called 'non-places' and developments that appear much the same throughout the country can come close to this 'placelessness'.

to local distinctiveness. The tendency to imitate past styles without understanding the required level of craftsmanship they assumed, and which probably does not now exist at an easily affordable price, can result in mediocre replicas. In the older parts of the town the character of the street derives from narrow plots and the varying height and style of buildings that emphasise their vertical features rather than horizontal. New building that is wider and/or emphasises horizontal elements is likely to be discordant:

1.8 Housing estates have long used standardised designs that tend to uniformity across the country; currently they are usually faux variations of Georgian, Victorian or Edwardian styles with some token nod to local materials. We hope that land owners and planning authorities aim for a choice of house builders, dwelling types, building densities, a variety of well-mannered styles, and forms of tenure meeting the needs of the area. At times the town has grown via large monotonous estates; we would regret any large new allocations in the hands of a single company.

1.9 The planning authority's policy is that the density of new housing should normally have a minimum net density of 30 dwellings per hectare (12 per acre). *While we understand the need to make efficient use of land, we do not find this policy particularly helpful and would rather each site be designed with full consideration of the above factors and local housing needs.*

1.10 *The internal space standards of market housing are not subject to local planning authority control, but the Society is concerned that considerations of affordability and profitability have prevailed over household needs in much modern private sector housing.*

1.11 Extensions to existing buildings should normally respect the scale and character of the parent building and neighbouring buildings. For example, there would usually be a clear design break, usually a set-back, between the parent building and the extension, the latter with a similar or lower roofline, and a similar roof pitch. Decorative features, such as string courses, should be repeated on the extension at the appropriate level. Regulations expect extensions to

domestic buildings that do not require planning permission to have an appearance that matches, as far as is practical, the existing house and that advice can be relevant for larger extensions of domestic and other buildings.

(https://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/guidanceandleaflets/householder-permitted-development-rights/?lang=en)

1.12 *However, as with new buildings, a carefully considered design process can lead to an entirely different solution that is still clearly subsidiary to the parent building and preferable to an imitative extension that undermines the clarity of the original design.*

1.13 *Dormers facing the street often do not need planning permission but require particular care to avoid a detrimental disproportionate impact; they are particularly unsuitable in areas of uniform dormer-free house styles. Some consistency with the style of other dormers in the area is preferred. Porches can also look out of place, breaking the building line or street rhythm, and potentially spoiling the character of the original front elevation of a terrace that had no porches; again, some consistency of design can help.*

Passive housing, Inverness

1.14 Sustainable Design: New building and renovation works are required to meet prescribed building control regulations for sustainable design and construction. The Welsh Government provides legislation and guidance on such matters, though higher-than-required standards seem to be achieved rarely. *We encourage developers to exceed minimum standards, especially in the provision of insulation and renewable energy generation. Passivhaus standards should be explored. Water conservation, the encouragement of biodiversity and the choice of low carbon materials are other considerations. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are now required for most new developments. Thoughtful orientation of fenestration is required to maximise passive solar design and ventilation strategies. We would like to see no more north-facing single aspect dwellings and electric vehicle charging points provided wherever feasible and appropriate.*

1.15 Abergavenny abuts the Brecon Beacons National Park which has been designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve because of the outstanding quality of its night sky and the park authority's pledge to reduce light pollution and thereby energy consumption. *We support this initiative and encourage less lighting and dark sky-friendly lighting in the town and its surroundings.*

1.16 Inclusive Design: This means that the design of a development should consider how all its users respond to it, particularly the less able, young and old. Abergavenny has a particularly high proportion of elderly and less mobile residents, and this sector of the population is generally increasing.   *New dwellings can be designed to ensure that occupiers can remain in their own homes as long as possible, without the need for costly additional interventions, by following Lifetime Homes standards of accessibility and adaptability*, and by incorporating more single storey dwellings, or dwellings with lifts and a generous stair width for the addition of stair lifts. Spaces outside the home and other buildings should be designed on an 'access for all' basis with gently sloping access routes, adequate seating, measures to reduce fear of crime, and an attractive appearance, so that people are encouraged to use them.

1.17 Green Infrastructure (GI) and Planting: To quote from the County Council's comprehensive supplementary planning guidance, 'GI is the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect (settlements).' Key words are 'network' and 'connect'. Developers are expected to identify any GI assets in and around their sites and to consider how their proposals can contribute to the protection and enhancement of the network. As we have said earlier, landscape design should often lead the design of a development. Reference may also be made to the Building with Nature standard at www.buildingwithnature.org.uk.

1.18 Section 4.2 of the SPG summarises the key GI assets and opportunities of the Abergavenny area, including green spaces, linear corridors and habitat connectivity opportunities. *The Society values the local wealth of GI highly and encourages its preservation and the taking of every opportunity to add to the network.*

1.19 At a less strategic level, generous appropriate planting can enhance most new developments. *We especially encourage small-scale measures that will please people and attract wildlife, such as native tree planting, pollinator-friendly flowers and shrubs, and 'bee hotels'. Community*

growing areas should be incorporated into larger developments. Public and private spaces should be clearly distinct and we wish to avoid public open spaces with no useful function yet requiring costly maintenance.

1.20 Movement: Not only does a development need adequate access to the wider transport network, if it is large enough to require the movement of vehicles, cyclists or pedestrians through the site it needs to be easy to find your way around. It needs to have a hierarchy of clearly legible routes and spaces that is safe and convenient. The term 'permeability' is often used in this sense, especially for the active travel modes of walking and cycling. *Lack of foresight has often meant that adjoining developments lack connecting routes for pedestrians and cyclists, forcing residents to use indirect routes to local facilities, often by car.*

1.21 As described in the Government's Manual for Streets, residential and shopping streets should be safe and pleasant places to use by pedestrians, cyclists and the disabled, with the speed of vehicular traffic adequately calmed. *We advocate a 20mph speed limit throughout the town and would support the introduction of 'Home Zones' where pedestrians and cyclists would have priority over motor vehicles. We also support the development of a network of active travel routes to and between the main destinations in the town.*

1.22 Parking: In 2013 Monmouthshire County Council adopted complex standards setting out their on-site parking requirements for new development. The aim is to avoid parking on-street that would cause congestion, danger and visual intrusion, but not in amounts that would discourage walking, cycling or the use of public transport. There is flexibility in their application according to local circumstances such as accessibility by these sustainable travel modes, nearby public parking, congestion on surrounding streets, and the environmental priorities of conservation areas.

1.19 *The Civic Society emphasises the following with regard to the local application of parking standards:*

• *While the Society fully supports the encouragement of sustainable travel, this is likely to reduce the number of car trips rather than the number of cars owned and needing parking space. We note that Welsh Government guidance now says that planning authorities 'must set **maximum** parking standards which ensure new developments provide appropriately **low** levels of parking.' We understand the need to reduce the impact of parked cars in urban spaces and to encourage active travel, but we fear that at Abergavenny low provision of parking spaces will not reduce car use or ownership and that there will be excessive parking on carriageways and footways.*

• The narrow streets of the pre-1914 housing areas of the town suffer from severe parking congestion, usually with cars partly on footways. No relaxation of 2013 standards should significantly aggravate this increasing problem.

• The conversion of garages (except when too small for modern vehicles) to living accommodation, sometimes together with the addition of extra bedrooms, is adding to the amount of on-street parking whereas on new developments the standards are aiming to reduce this.

• We acknowledge that residents prefer to be able to see their parked vehicles and that parking courts may not be welcomed. A tendency to meet parking standards by reliance on inconvenient end-to-end double or triple parking in driveways between houses results in more on-street parking as well as a street of 'teeth and gaps'. On-street parking should be designed into the street scene from the outset, not an unintended consequence. We regret that the pressure to increase housing densities while maintaining parking requirements appears to be deterring more imaginative arrangements to be found in some design guides.

1.21 The Design Commission for Wales: *We recommend that any proposal with a potentially substantial impact on the appearance of the town should be submitted to the Commission for their independent comments.* This consultation may be undertaken by the developer or the planning authority and should take place at an early stage in the design process, preferably before any pre-application community consultation. The Commission's comments will then be available to the public.

2. CONSERVATION AREAS

2.1 Abergavenny has two conservation areas: that covering the town centre and some older parts of the town, and that covering the former Pen y Fal Hospital. Development or advertisements that damage the character or appearance of a conservation area or its setting to an unacceptable level should be refused unless there are exceptional circumstances in the public interest.

2.2 *In our view most of our guidance is applicable throughout the Abergavenny area, but must be more strictly applied in the conservation areas. We have suggested to the County Council that pre-1914 streets in the Hereford Road area should be added to the conservation area and take this into account when commenting on planning applications here.*

2.3 The Conservation Area Appraisal has suggested the use of an Article 4 direction to extend planning control over endangered features in parts of the area. *We would in principle support such control over front*

elevations, roofs, chimneys, solar panels, and walls and railings, though the execution of such controls should balance any additional householder costs with the environmental gains and the socio-economic character of the area. Article 4 controls can offer the long-term benefit of enabling regrettable uncontrolled past changes to be remedied when replacement becomes necessary.
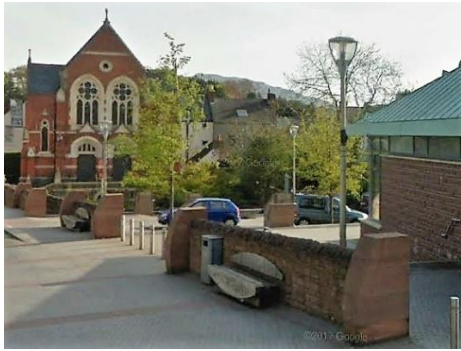

A development from the 1970s

Infilling?

3. THE URBAN LANDSCAPE - TOWNSCAPE AND STREETSCAPE

3.1 A satisfying visual cohesion of buildings and spaces can contribute greatly to the appeal of an area and its sense of place. The layout of developments often pays too little attention to the need to have suitably positioned focal or marker buildings or other features of interest, to enclose spaces or to leave open a view, to lead the eye from one element to the next, to take advantage of changes in level, and so on. The aim should be to create a sequence of spaces that invites the curious visitor to explore.

3.2 It can help to consider every view as a scene or picture – *the submission of computer-generated street scene images should be a requirement of most planning applications, and of 'verified views' combining photographic views with accurate computer aided design representation is recommended for significant proposals.* These can be particularly helpful when considering new building to be inserted among existing buildings.

3.3 Such attention to detail extends to the planting of trees and shrubs for maximum effect, providing well-positioned sitting areas, calming traffic, the choice of paving and street furniture.

Brewery Yard

4. MATERIALS AND COLOUR

4.1 Para 1.6 has referred to the similarity of housing styles being built in recent years. Estate developers have often mixed house types, materials and colours to break up the monotony of estates. This can be excessive and *the Society would prefer small groups of similar homes, each group rather different from the next, each with its own sense of place.*

Stone

4.2 Most Abergavenny stone is Old Red Sandstone which can vary considerably according to its source and age. It is rarely very red but usually rusty brown or grey with squaring and coursing increasingly evident from around 1860. Pennant sandstone, a feature of the coalfield towns, is rare in Abergavenny; it has a similar colour range but usually gives buildings a more mottled appearance. Bath stone dressings occur on some civic buildings. *The Society encourages the use of Old Red Sandstone (ORS) when its colour echoes the local stone.*

4.3 Parts of Abergavenny are characterised by ORS boundary walls, usually of random rubble construction. *We strongly encourage the use of such walls in new developments, providing a link between today's developments and those of the past.*

Brick

4.3 Until about 1860 the Old Red Sandstone was usually teamed with dull red brick detailing. Thereafter the detailing was increasingly a buff or yellow brick, though this was also often used with red brick as the main material. White and black bricks were occasionally used for decoration. Since the 1960s many other brick colours have been used. *The Society generally prefers a carefully chosen red or buff brick. We also wish to see more use of brick (or stone) walls to screen gardens, etc. on housing estates; the use of less resilient timber and poor maintenance can lead to a decline in the visual quality of the area.*

Rendering

4.4 Many older stone or brick buildings have been rendered, usually with a smooth finish, either from new or later to weatherproof. Sometimes rendering has been removed to expose the original walling. Rendering is usually colour-washed, usually in a narrow grey or cream range.
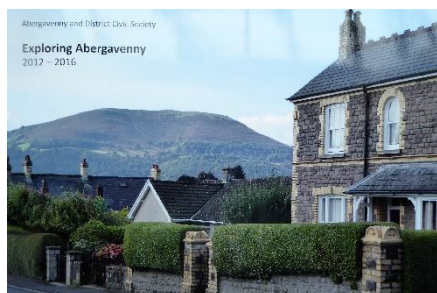
4.5 The colour of paints used on Abergavenny buildings is not subject to control, except where a change in the colour of a listed building alters its character. *The Society is keen for the condition of rendering to be improved and in principle welcomes a wider range of colours including brighter shades. We believe that the appearance of Abergavenny town centre's rendered buildings and the visitor appeal of the town would be enhanced if it was more colourful. We would be pleased to advise on individual proposals and our aim is to produce an advisory leaflet with a palette of preferred colours. Particular key buildings or groups of buildings might be selected for priority attention – see 6.1.*

Roofs

4.6 Pitched roofs in Welsh slate are characteristic of pre-1914 buildings and this is generally preferred for their new extensions or neighbours, though imaginative and substantiated alternatives can be acceptable. Inter-war council housing generally has hipped slate roofs with red ridge tiles. Slate is welcome elsewhere, especially if interspersed among concrete tiles or other materials to relieve a monotonous roofscape. *Modern houses often do not need chimney stacks, but the Society considers that where a period architectural style is adopted authenticity requires their provision.*

4.7 Flat roofs are not characteristic of the town and often provoke opposition when proposed. *The Society generally prefers pitched roofs in the street scene but recognises that each case must be considered in terms of its context and design quality; flat roofs and parapets concealing pitched roofs can appear similar from below. Extensive flat or low-pitched roofs are usually intrusive viewed from the higher ground surrounding the town.*

5. CHARACTER AREAS

 Like most country towns Abergavenny may have no special overall vernacular architectural style or building material, but many parts of the town have a character that deserves respect and protection. Not all are conservation areas. The following notes are intended to summarise key characteristics of parts of the town that each have some consistency in terms of their age, style, materials or other features. *We encourage developers to respect these characteristics. More detailed information is available from our characterisation survey, 'Exploring Abergavenny', which can be viewed at* https://abercivsoc.com/.

The Town Centre: Most buildings appear 19th century, though in many cases with internal evidence of greater age; original narrow plot widths have generally been respected (with some exceptions from the second half of the 20th century); most buildings front directly on to the footway or public realm; most are in a plain classical style with a vertical rather than a horizontal emphasis, but with some interesting diversity, almost all two or three storeys (a few dormers on two storeys); varying height of pitched slate roofs (parallel with the street) emphasised by stepping on slopes; a broad range of materials but extensively rendered plaster or stucco; the Society considers shades of cream and grey excessive; rock-faced sandstone on some key buildings; still many multi-paned timber sash windows and good shopfronts.

Grofield, between the town centre and Brecon Road/Merthyr Road: Housing is mostly simple early Victorian mixed but adjoining terraces of random rubble stone, often rendered; red brickwork around openings where not rendered; slate roofs with chimneys and ridges parallel with the street; classical windows originally six over six paned sashes; entirely two storeys; houses front directly on to footway or have a small forecourt with iron railings on a single course of bricks. Baker Street has civic buildings of varying ages and good late Victorian terraces.

Chapel Road (town end), Stanhope Street, Mount Street, North Street area: Mostly built between 1860 and 1900, but with a few houses from the 1840s, this area has an urban village feel, assisted by the bend in the grid of streets. It was originally centred on a shop and post office at the junction of Chapel Road and Stanhope Street, where there are some of the most interesting buildings – a few with Grofield-like doorway pediments. Stanhope Street terraces show considerable consistency but elsewhere there is much more variety of age, height, architecture and

materials than any other suburb of the town. However, most houses are closely spaced, front the footway or are set back only slightly.

Park Street, St Helen's Road, Union Road East, Cae Pen y Dre area:
Mostly mid/late Victorian terraces (St Helen's Road generally older than Park Street) in coursed stone, often rendered; white render or white-painted brick around openings and string courses, later buff brick, and some multi-coloured on Union Road; slate roofs with chimneys and ridges parallel with the street; few original windows, one over one timber sashes usually preferred; almost entirely two storeys; earlier terraces front on to the footpath, later ones have a small garden/forecourt behind a low stone wall, pillars and railings, and possibly bay windows. The buildings of the area have an overall consistency that should be maintained.

Hereford Road area: Hereford Road itself has little consistency but the side streets to the east from Priory Road to Clifton Road and some similar two-storey streets to the west show the evolution of style over the 1880-1914 period. Mostly short terraces (slate roofs with chimneys and ridges parallel with the street) fronted with coursed stone but a wide variety of detailing including much buff brick (a few red), some string courses, many bay windows (splayed and later squared), all with short front gardens behind low walls and railings. A few houses are rendered or red brick and there are more modern houses and bungalows infilled, especially on Alexandra Road. Red brick is much more evident post 1900 north of former railway. Recently built housing on the south side of Grosvenor Road illustrates an appropriate response to the character of the area.

Monmouth Road, Belmont Road (north side), Station Road area:
The landmark Italianate stone tower of Cae Kenfy lodge marks the 19th century southern entrance to the town. While there are 20th century infillings, this residential area draws considerable character from a number of substantial Victorian villas in stucco and stone, in styles including Italianate and timber-framed Tudor. Integrating modern houses among the villas can be challenging.

Brecon Road: While the Monmouth Road approach to the town centre has an unspoiled consistency of character, that via Brecon Road has a mixture of buildings and uses that would benefit from enhancement as opportunities arise. The town centre end is still partly commercial with an interesting mixture of Victorian properties, mostly stone, some rendered, some three-storeys. West of Chapel Road the density of building is less, the age range is greater, residential use predominates (though some conversions to business use, care homes, etc), and materials and styles vary greatly though mostly stone or red brick, including tall English Revival pairs.

Western Road, Albany Road, Windsor Road area: This small area has some of the most interesting, substantial and varied pre-1914 houses in the town including fine English Revival houses and some quite successful modern infillings. Stone predominates, but there is buff brickwork, half-timbering and tile-hanging. High stone walls and a generous amount of greenery are key features.

Pen y Pound (upper section), Avenue Road, Chapel Road (upper section), Linden Road area (also Lansdown Road): Mostly low-density housing with an age range from the 18th century to today; some fine pre-1914 houses but no overall architectural consistency – character depends greatly on garden trees, high random rubble stone boundary walls in some areas and the individuality of most houses. Modest modern houses do not always sit well beside large pre-1914 houses.

Fosterville: This small early 20th century development by one family has the most highly developed range of decoration and materials in the town. The difficulty of integrating smaller modern houses is illustrated by post-war infilling in very different styles.

Pen y Fal: A Victorian mental hospital has been sensitively converted and redeveloped as housing that makes references to the Gothic style of the old building. Partly within the Pen y Fal conservation area, changes that would detract from the sensitivity of the development would be unfortunate. The quality of the landscape setting is especially precious.

Maes y Llarwydd: A fine example of a design approach that aims to create a mixed housing area that evolved informally without planning in the 18th or early 19th centuries. Partly within the Pen y Fal conservation area, we would like to see action taken throughout to prevent changes that would detract from the integrity of the development.

Mardy: A Victorian village street is backed to the west by a grid of roads probably laid out in about 1860. The western side of the street has a wide variety of simple buildings, a majority rendered, largely complete by 1900 whereas most of the building to the west has taken place since 1945, starting with some council houses. Victorian and later individual buildings in both areas follow no consistent building line or orientation whereas the small post-1970 private housing estates generally do, contrary to the informality of a village, as will the planned 250 houses on Deri Farm to the north.

Of course, many other parts of the town have a distinct character of their own: council-built and private estates can have a more consistent appearance than that of older parts of the town, but these are usually less precious. Private owners personalise their properties with varying success, not always needing planning permission; unsuitable infilling or

redevelopment could detract from an area, where something new in the right place could add to the sense of place.

APPENDIX 1: Some Priorities for Town Enhancement

1 Many older buildings in the centre of the town would benefit from better maintenance and a refreshing coat of paint. *Attention to the following prominent key groups of buildings would be particularly welcome: Rear of High Street properties visible from Lion Street; Upper Cross Street/Market Street junction area; High Street/Frogmore Street junction area; and an appropriate selection of buildings in Lower Cross Street, Frogmore Street, Nevill Street and Lion Street (facing Morrisons).*

2 Looking beyond planned public realm improvement of Frogmore Street and Lion Street the Abergavenny Development Forum has identified a number of other public spaces needing attention. *We are particularly keen to improve Lower Castle Street, Upper Cross Street, Monk Street, Baker Street Square and Lewis Lane.*

3 An area of the town centred on the post office and possibly including the Castle Street car park may offer an opportunity for mixed-use redevelopment that strengthens the appeal of the town.

4 The Monmouth Road entry to the town centre between the Abergavenny Hotel and the former Swan Hotel, including the bus station and car parking, is less than appealing and offers development possibilities. Like the Development Forum *we seek a 'green gateway' avenue of tree planting here*.

5 The surroundings and facilities of the railway station, a listed building, need careful improvement to welcome visitors to the town.

6 The neglected condition of a number of prominent properties detracts from the quality of appearance of the town. *The Society encourages the planning authority to make greater use of its powers to require certain steps to be undertaken by the owner of the land to remedy its condition.*

7 *We would like to see an improvement in the design quality of many commercial signs and advertisements in the town centre. The proliferation of unauthorised commercial advertising banners attached to buildings, fences, street furniture, etc should be addressed.*

8 *We would like to see more planned colour in the town via appropriately sited flowers (pollinator-friendly), flags and banners and murals.*

9 *Directional signage for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists needs review and improvement.*

10 *Market Hall improvement*.

APPENDIX 2: Other Guidance

Developers should also examine:

1 WG guidance at http://gov.wales/topics/planning/?lang=en, especially Planning Policy Wales, which now centres on 'placemaking', and Technical Advice Notes 12 (Design) and 24 (The Historic Environment); Cadw, the Welsh Government's historic environment service, has further guidance at http://cadw.gov.wales/historicenvironment/publications/?lang=en;

2 Monmouthshire County Council policies at http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning, especially the LDP, the Abergavenny Conservation Area Appraisal and SPG on Green Infrastructure.

3 The Society has also conducted a characterisation survey, Exploring Abergavenny, which describes the suburban areas of the town in some detail. This can be viewed at https://abercivsoc.com/ and is briefly summarised in Appendix 1 of this guidance.

4 Building for Life 12 is a government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. Local communities, local authorities and developers are encouraged to use it to guide discussions about creating good places to live. It can be found at: https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/Building%20for%20Life%2012_0.pdf.

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