



10 Glan Gavenny

Exploring Abergavenny

EXPLORING ABERGAVENNY

For several years the Abergavenny and District Civic Society has been studying the streets, spaces and buildings of Abergavenny and Mardy outside the town centre. This process is known as 'characterisation', defined by the Welsh Government as 'capturing the local distinctiveness by identifying how places have been shaped over time.'

This record of what makes each part of the town distinctive, and often rather special, increases our awareness of the qualities that need to be considered and respected when new development is proposed. We hope that the planning authority will share our impressions and take account of our views. We also hope that our studies will increase residents' understanding and appreciation of their town, encouraging them to take an active interest in how change is managed in the future, or to conduct more research into aspects of the town's development.

The survey started in partnership with the Civic Trust for Wales as a pilot project to test whether community groups could carry out urban characterisation. The outcome was the Trust's *Exploring your town* manual and toolkit (2013). A County Council conservation area appraisal adopted in 2016 has also been taken into account, and this also covers the town's commercial centre¹.

We have divided the town into thirty-six character areas. This report presents the history and character of one of those areas.

Now we would like *your* contribution:

- *Have we made any mistakes?*
- *Can you add to the history of the area?*

- *Do you agree with our impressions of the area?*
- *What have we missed that should have been recorded?*

All the reports are available at <https://abercivsoc.com> and comments may be sent to abercivsoc@gmail.com or recorded when the reports are exhibited.

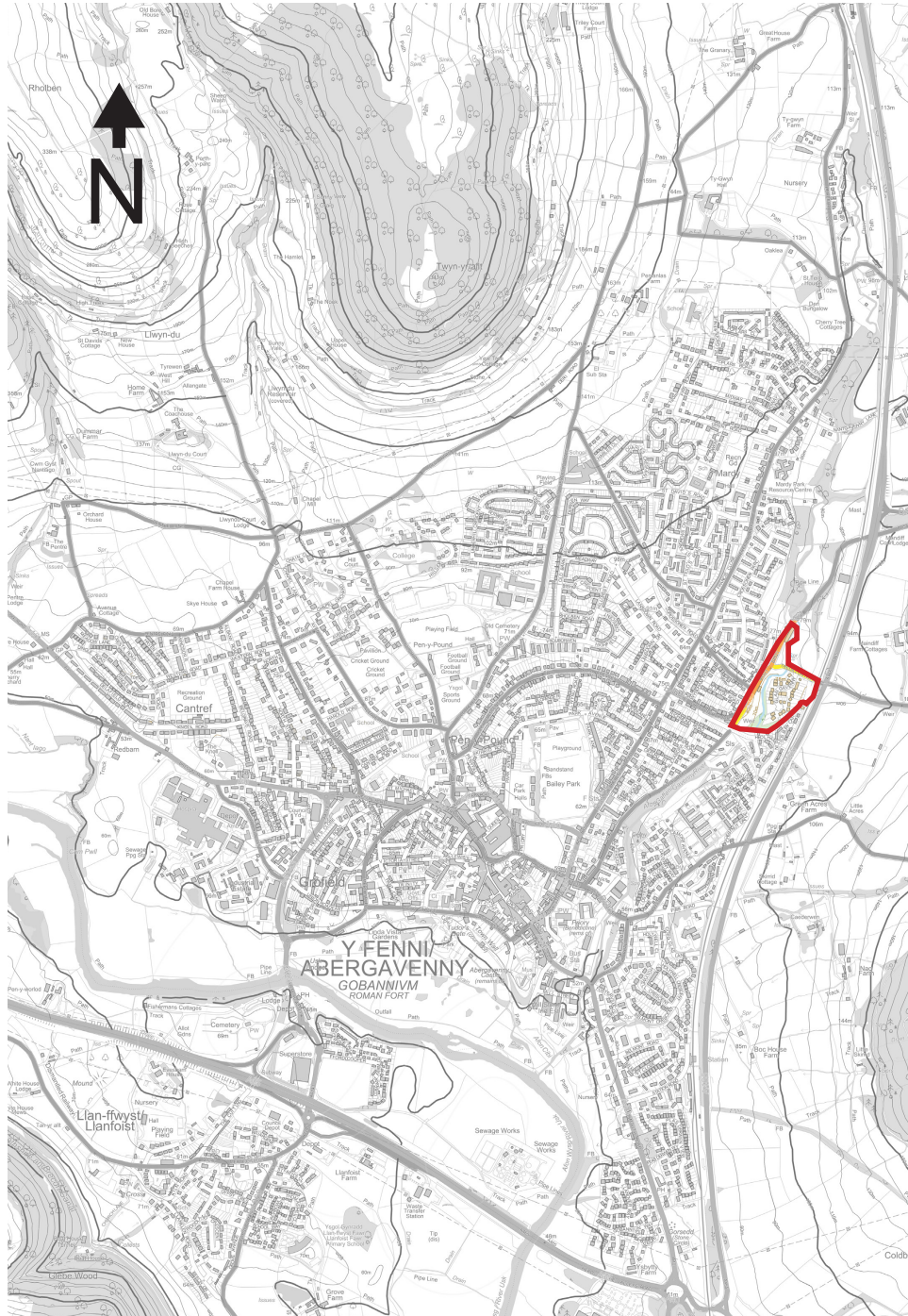
Acknowledgements and copyright information

The Society is especially grateful for the survey contributions of Clive Bransom, Dick Cole, Tony Konieczny, Nigel Patterson, Anna Petts, Duncan Rogers and Jay Shipley. Dick Cole has carried out much of the research and final report writing, and accepts responsibility for any errors. None of the team had prior experience of heritage studies; all have learned much from the project.

We also thank Anna Leron and Dr Matthew Griffiths of the Civic Trust for Wales for their early support. Matthew Griffiths, now of the Open University, has also helped to present the project for the education and participation of residents, including the design of these character area reports.

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¹ <http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/abergavenny-conservation-area-appraisal>



GLAN GAVENNY

THIS SMALL MODERN (1999) cul-de-sac of housing is on the eastern bank of the Gavenny on Ross Road. Together with two nearby terraces of older housing, it marks the present limit of development in this direction apart from isolated commercial developments at the former Junction railway station.



Glan Gavenny is distinctly different from Abergavenny housing of the earlier 1990s and the developments that followed it. It is an appealing development because of its detached rural situation, modest size, pleasant layout (for a single cul-de-sac) and unity of a style that makes some historical references. However, it makes much less authentic reference to local character than Pen y Fal or Maes y Llarwydd. The style thus marks a transition between the undecided of, say, Ostringen Close, and the mimicry adopted by more recent housing. Good brickwork conveys an impression of quality.

Springwells terraces have lost their uniformity and New Junction Cottages no longer have their original LNWR integrity.

Historical Background

The 1829 one-inch Ordnance Survey map shows the early 19th-century tramroad to Hereford on the line of the access lane to the Springwells terraces, thereafter continuing north to run east of the main road through Mardy. Superseded by the railway in the 1860s, the tramroad route survived on maps as a track to Mardy Park until the late 20th century. The 1829 map appears to show some development on the site of the terraces but the 1839 tithe map for Llantilio Pertholey records only a strip of garden owned by the tramroad company. The present terraces appear mid 19th century, perhaps tramroad-related.

New Junction Cottages, on the main road, are late Victorian and were probably built by the LNWR for their workers at Abergavenny Junction Station about 250m further north, where there was a sizeable goods yard and latterly a carriage shed. The station site is now allocated for industrial and employment uses and waste management.

The Glan Gavenny housing was built by the Persimmon company in the 1990s.

Setting, Streets and Spaces

The area straddles the bottom of the Gavenny valley at about 70m above sea level, rising to 80m at the railway and a little higher at Springwells. The river itself cuts deeply into the flood plain on which Glan Gavenny is built. The cul-de-sac nestles within woodland on all but its northern edge and is reached from Ross Road by an improved section of Tredilion Road, which continues under the railway and A465 to the countryside. Tredilion Road retains its old bridge

Key to map

Conservation area boundary



Listed Building



Building of special local interest



Building of local interest



Metal railings



Local landmark building



Good sense of place



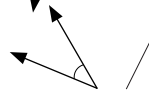
Terminated street view



Deflected street view



Vista, long view



Visual pinch point



Building rhythm



Important walling



Important trees or shrubs



Important hedges



Footpath



Improvement opportunity



Figure 2 character analysis



Figure 3: Springwells

(Maindiff Bridge) over the Gavenny, and a separate footbridge has been added.

Glan Gavenny is about 5m wide with footways on each side, all tarmac, curving markedly but with no other traffic calming. There is no consistent building line, and the sharply curving road descending to the south together with the irregular arrangement of buildings against a backcloth of trees, provide some townscape interest. Front gardens are open plan, lawned with only a few small trees, giving the estate a particularly spacious feeling. Most back gardens are about 10-12m long, but some on the eastern side are 40m long.

At the end of the cul-de-sac there is a sizeable play area bordering the river with equipment and railings, centred on a large mature oak in a dip that suggests that the ground level has been raised to reduce flood risk. There is an informal riverside footpath to Maindiff Bridge. The low-lying situation limits distant outward views, but the Blorenge can be glimpsed to the south. The area between Glan Gavenny and Ross Road is mostly steeply sloping scrub, woodland and meadow.

The Springwells terraces have a very narrow tarmac access road awkwardly



Figure 4: New Junction Cottages

joining the junction of Croesonen Road with Ross Road. The houses are 100m from the junction on a ledge below the Croesonen Park estate. Parking and turning arrangements are difficult. The houses have no rear space but 20-25m deep gardens fall steeply to the Ross Road on the other side of the access road. The gardens are a mixture of vegetable and flower gardens with several simply left as grass terracing on this difficult site. There are good views across the valley.

New Junction Cottages front the Ross Road with short neat front gardens behind a red brick wall with some surviving and unusual angled blackbrick coping. At the rear there are yards of a similar size, and rather disorderly sheds and garages on the bank of the Gavenny, all accessed from Tredilion Road. The end houses have more space. Most of the row faces a steep field awaiting long-delayed housing development and there is some parking on the moderately busy Ross Road. The back of the houses overlooks the trees and fields of the valley.

Building Character

Glan Gavenny consists of thirty-four houses, mostly detached, some linked by garages, and four pairs of semi-detached. All share a loosely late Victorian/Edwardian-style design that makes use of a decorative string course between the floors and distinctive white casement windows with four small panes above a single pane. Two similar dark red bricks have been used with a buff brick used in the string course, at plinth level and, vertically, above and below windows. Roofs are grey-profiled tiles, also used for porches, but there are no chimneys. Most houses have some form of front gable (some cream rendered projecting and two-storey, some only decorative above the gutters) and several have angled flat-roofed bays. No 1 has trussed gable woodwork. Garages are attached or integral.

There are two Springwells terraces, six houses in the northern terrace, eight houses in the other. Of the eight, two are slightly larger and the southernmost has been extended in that direction. All once had piggeries at the rear, some of which have survived, while others have rear extensions to the house. Both terraces were built in irregular squared red sandstone with red brick around the door and window openings. The first three houses of the first terrace are now rendered. Roofs are of slate with brick chimneys. The original sash windows have been replaced with a variety of uPVC designs and some have been widened. The first terrace has several tiled porches giving it a superior feel compared to the second one.

The twelve houses of New Junction Cottages are late-Victorian and probably built by the LNWR for its employees. The terrace has larger gabled units at each end, presumably for higher status workers. These and several others have had extensions, most noticeably and recently that on the southern end. The terrace has a pleasant mottled red-brick façade with a slate roof and tall chimney pots. Notable features are the dentillated brickwork beneath the eaves, and ventilation tiles near the eaves with a pretty floral pattern. This attention to detail continues in the stone sills below and stone dressing above the windows. Red brick arches with a keystone enhance front doors. Beneath the arch are fanlights. The northernmost house has been rendered in white, detracting from the integrity of the terrace composition. An original wooden sash window can perhaps be seen at no 5 but the others have represent a variety of white and brown uPVC frames. No 9 has a large brick porch extension with a slate roof, also detracting from the unity of the terrace.

A long, narrow house backing on to Ross Road near the Croesonen Road

junction dates from the early 20th century and is named Junction Shop on the 1965 OS map.

Heritage Assets

Both the old terraces have historical interest because of their connections with transport systems, one succeeding the other.

