

13 Hillside

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

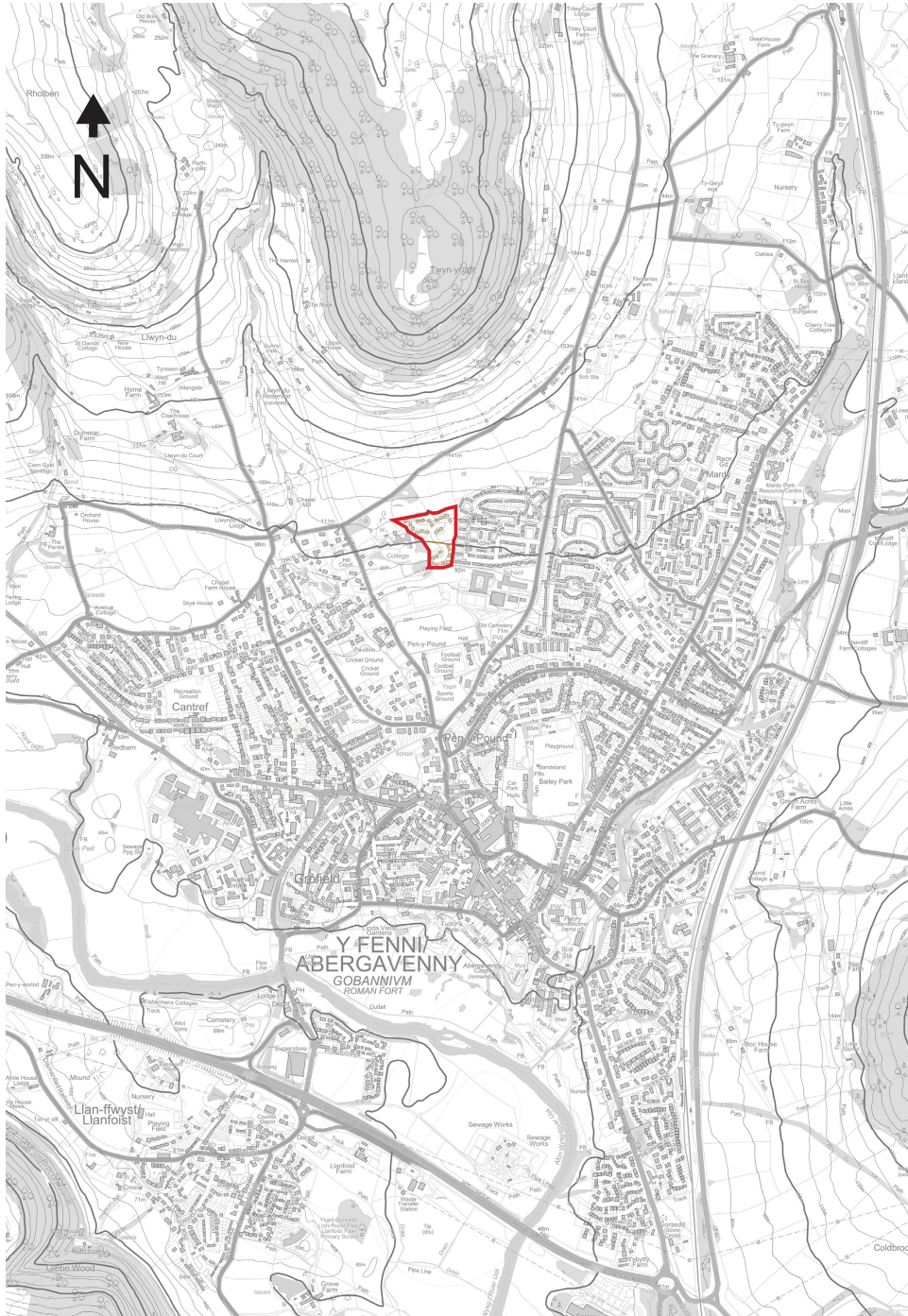
The Society is especially grateful for the survey contributions of Clive Bransom, Dick Cole, Tony Konieczny, Nigel Patterson, Anna Petts, Duncan Rogers and Jay Shipley. Dick Cole has carried out much of the research and final report writing, and accepts responsibility for any errors. None of the team 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>

Figure 1: location plan and aerial



HILLSIDE

THIS HOUSING ESTATE adjoins the Major's Barn area in the north of the town but is reached by road from Pen y Pound/Hill Road.

The well-spaced arrangement of solid-looking similar houses around a twisting road, together with the extent of open space and tree growth and the quite steeply sloping site make for an attractive development with its own sense



of place. The architectural unity, with a little variety and details such as finials, enhances the development.

The arrangement of houses in relation to the twisting road is similar to the private housing at Glan Gavenny on the east of the town. The estate also has some similarities to the Heol Hamlin estate on the eastern side of the town, built at about the same time.

Historical Background

At the time of the 1844 Tithe Map this area was part of the parkland surrounding The Hill (then Great Hill). By the 1880s the parkland had been divided into fields and by 1920 part of the area that is now housing was an orchard. The estate of 50 dwellings, mostly in semi-detached pairs, was built as social housing in about 1990.

Setting, Streets and Spaces

The estate is reached via a 220m road separating the grounds of The Hill from the all-weather pitches of the leisure centre. The gently curving road has a footway on the south side, follows the 80m contour and is attractively placed with mature and more recently planted trees on each side, respecting the original parkland.

The housing estate itself also benefits from many mature trees on its boundaries and within its green spaces, all relics of the parkland of The Hill. Further trees have been added.

Within the estate the road twists and climbs to the 110m contour, an average gradient of about 1 in 8. There is one short cul-de-sac to the right towards the end of the road. A substantial grassed area separates two built-up areas and provides a footpath link to the Major's Barn estate.

The roads have regular traffic calming ramps. Adequate car parking space within the driveways minimises parking on the road.

The estate has other noteworthy landscaping details: several curved 2m brick walls, galvanised bow-topped steel railings demarcating front gardens, and shrub planting. Front gardens are usually little more than grass and concrete car spaces; back gardens vary in size but many are 15-20m long.

Trees reduce the outlook from this elevated estate but there are glimpses of the Bloreng and Ysgyryd Fach, especially in winter.

Key to map

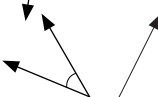
Conservation area boundary	
Listed Building	
Building of special local interest	
Building of local interest	
Metal railings	
Local landmark building	
Good sense of place	
Terminated street view	
Deflected street view	
Vista, long view	
Visual pinch point	
Building rhythm	
Important walling	
Important trees or shrubs	
Important hedges	
Footpath	
Improvement opportunity	

Figure 2: character analysis

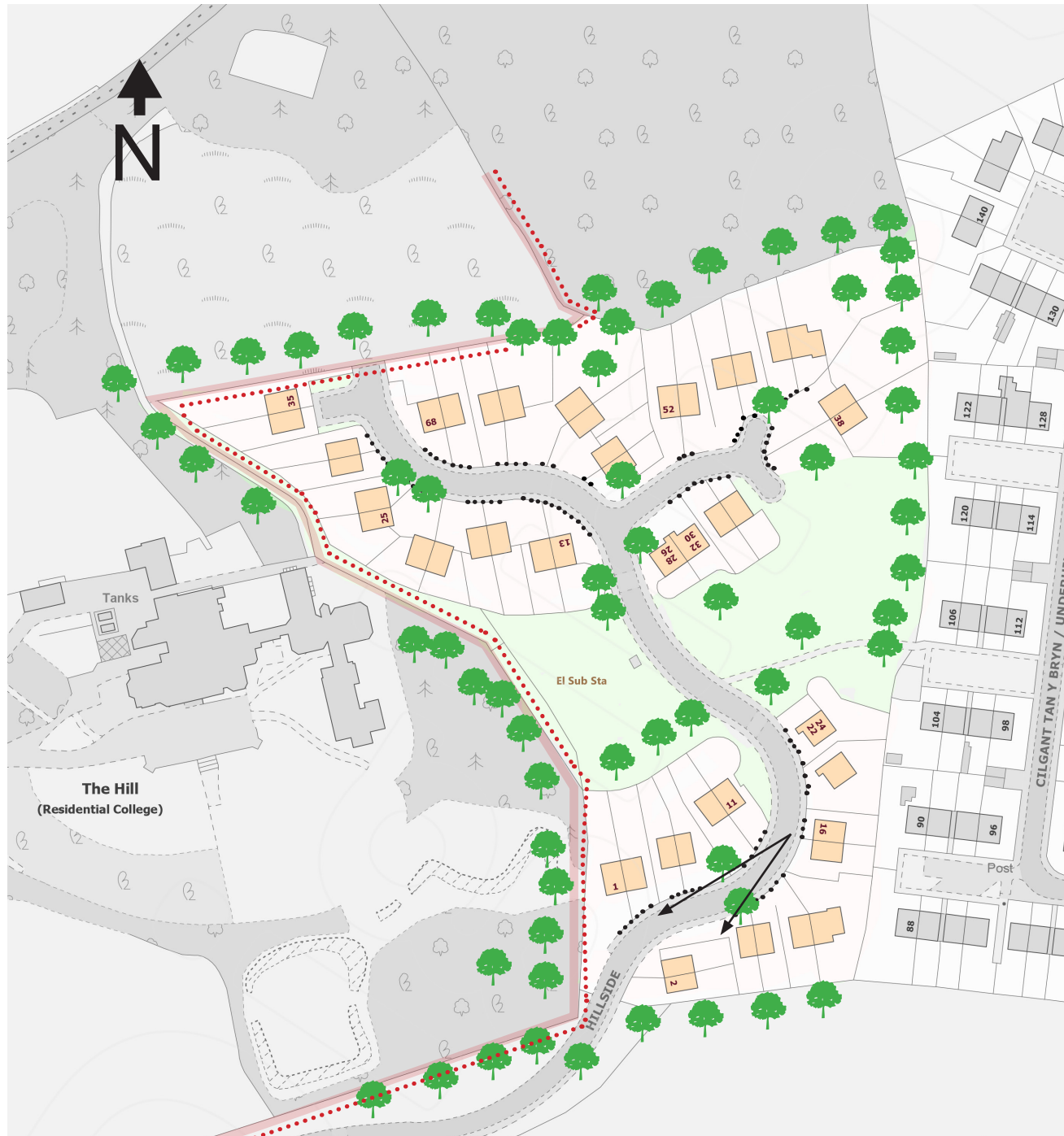




Figure 3

Building Character

All the housing is constructed in a dull red brick that often has a darker centre to the face, giving the brickwork a mottled effect. Window sills and a string course are in a vertical red brick. Roof tiles are also a dark grey throughout with small terracotta finials topping the side gables (and porch gables). Occasional first floor window gables, also with finials, tiled lean-to or gabled porches and doorways, and a few hipped roofs, introduce variety. Windows are brown uPVC, characteristic of the period. One pair is four flats, another house has a ground floor side extension. It is unclear whether houses are now in private ownership or are social housing.

Heritage Assets

None, apart from the trees.