

25 Park East

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.

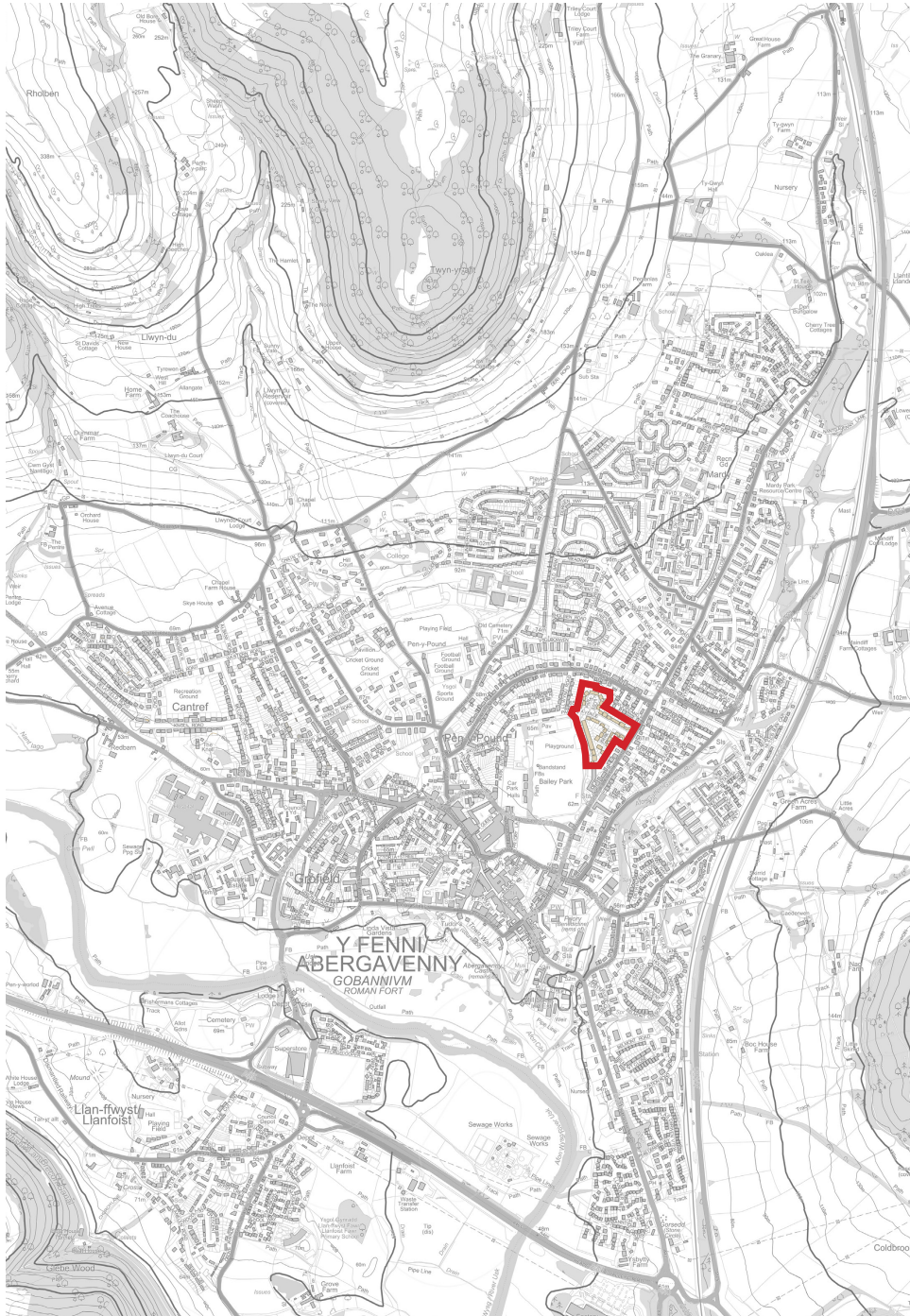
Acknowledgements and copyright information

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>



PARK EAST

THIS RESIDENTIAL AREA, lying to the north east of Bailey Park, was probably built as council housing, though this needs confirmation as some of the houses are similar to private housing of the period.

The area appears to be well-built and generally well-maintained. Park Avenue is a wide and moderately busy road; Park Court is constricted; Park Close





Figure 2: Park Close

enjoys its open space; and Park Lane enjoys its outlook over Bailey Park and, perhaps, the shading trees.

It is interesting to compare this estate with Park West, which dates from nearly thirty years earlier. The similarities of layout typify public and private housing estates of the inter-war period and the 1950s, but concrete tiles succeeded slates and the variety and quality of the homes was somewhat improved.

Historical Background

The area was Pitts Nursery Gardens and small fields until at least the late 1930s. Just before or, more probably, after the war the Borough Council extended Park Avenue to join Hereford Road and developed the area with housing, probably all for rent. Eighty-two homes were built by 1950 and most now appear to have become privately owned.

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



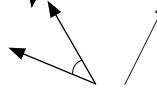
Terminated street view



Deflected street view



Vista, long view



Visual pinch point



Building rhythm



Important walling



Important trees or shrubs



Important hedges



Footpath



Improvement opportunity



Figure 3: character analysis





Figure 4: Park Court

Setting, Streets and Spaces

The area rises very gently towards the north east, with Park Avenue on about the 65m contour; the ground rises more steeply at Park Close. Ysgyrd Fach closes the eastward view along Park Avenue, and the Blorengie can often be glimpsed to the south west.

In a post-war version of the inter-war housing west and north of Bailey Park (Park West character area), pairs of houses and two terraces of four are arranged along the roads but set back a little further from the footway. Park Avenue is wide (though with parking confined to the north side), with about 22m between facing houses, but Park Court has a very narrow roadway with double yellow parking restrictions.

As in Park West, front gardens are often now used for parking cars, but there are generally opportunities to park or to access a garage between the pairs. Original low brick frontage walls have usually survived, now often supplemented by trimmed hedges. Steel gates have often been dispensed with, and few gardens have trees.



Figure 5: Park Lane

The layout of roads and houses has resulted in a variety of back garden sizes, though none are as long as some in the earlier development.

A group of mature trees around the junction of Park Lane with Park Avenue, some probably dating from before Bailey Park was created, is a strong feature. A line of mature trees follows the Park boundary along Park Lane, adding greatly to the character of the road.

Another distinctive feature is the sloping treeless green overlooked by Park Close properties, though this appears to be little used by children. The bungalows at the junction of Park Avenue with Hereford Road have a wide grassed area in front of them, each with a tree.

Building Character

There are four types of semi-detached house distributed through the area, all with hipped concrete tiled roofs and three with chimneys on the forward pitch:

- Orange/red brick at ground floor with a coggled stringcourse, with a ren-

dered first floor and simple flat canopies over the front door;

- Orange/red brick throughout with hipped tiling over squared ground floor bays and arched entrances;
- Orange/red brick at ground floor with a rendered first floor and a hipped tiled roof extending over angled ground floor bays and entrances for the width of the building;
- Orange/red brick with a central shared front-facing gable, higher than the remainder of the building, and doorways abutting this.

The two short terraces are a composite of the first and second types, and the third type is perhaps the most appealing, reminiscent of pre-1914 housing. The fourth type appears rather ungainly, and is repeated in the Llwynu area. Private ownership has led to considerable modification including rear extensions, porches, changes of roofing material, differing colour washes and, prominently at 10 Park Close, a single roof dormer.

Pleasant angled groups of four bungalows for the elderly or disabled at the Hereford Road junction have deep tiled roofs extending over shallow bays with rendering over a brick plinth.

Heritage Assets

None apart from the trees in and adjacent to Bailey Park.