



Forest of Dean District Council

Newnham Character Appraisal

January 2007

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The purpose of the Character Appraisal

The statutory definition of a conservation area is 'an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.' Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for designated conservation areas. This requirement is expanded on in government guidance.

This document is also written to support the wider policies for the historic environment stated in the recently adopted Forest of Dean District Council Local Plan 2005. Character appraisals will ultimately fit with the new Supplementary Planning Guidance for the historic environment.

As Newnham is an existing Conservation Area the additional planning controls over whether certain development needs planning permission already exist. These controls do not alter because a Character Appraisal is produced. However the Character Appraisal will clearly identify the features or aspects of special architectural or historical interest that should be preserved or enhanced when development is proposed.

Best Value Performance Indicators

In recent months the percentage of up to date and completed character appraisals has become a Best Value Performance Indicator; the indicators are used to determine the effectiveness of a local authority. It is therefore important that the Forest of Dean has an increasing number of up to date adopted character appraisals.

Target Audience

This document has been written as an aid to determining planning applications and for residents, agencies and people with a general interest in the area. It is hoped that through the analysis of the area the elements that produce its special character will be clearly identified. Once the special character has been established any new development that is permitted can be designed to fit harmoniously in the village.

Process

The draft character appraisal for Newnham Character Appraisal was subject to a nine-week public consultation, which involved public exhibitions and a public meeting. The residents of Newnham were invited to make comments on the draft appraisal, all of which were considered by members of the Development Control Committee and Executive Committee, before agreeing to adopt the appraisal on the 16th November 2006.

On the 16th November the members of the Forest of Dean District Council also agreed to amend the boundary line of Newnham Conservation Area. An area of modern estate was removed and the boundary was extended to follow the same

line as the statutory district boundary line.

The character appraisal is also the subject of a Sustainability Appraisal, in order to allow the document to be a Supplementary Planning Document. This gives the document sufficient weight to be used as evidence at planning appeals and therefore be of as much use to the Forest of Dean District Council as possible.

Newnham Conservation Area

Newnham was designated a conservation area on 7th February 1980. The area covers 25.68 hectares, (63.46 acres) and covers the historic areas, with High Street running through its core.

Few settlements have roads which have remained as historically intact as the High Street in Newnham, it is not only significant in the Forest of Dean, but is of such quality to be valued on a national level.



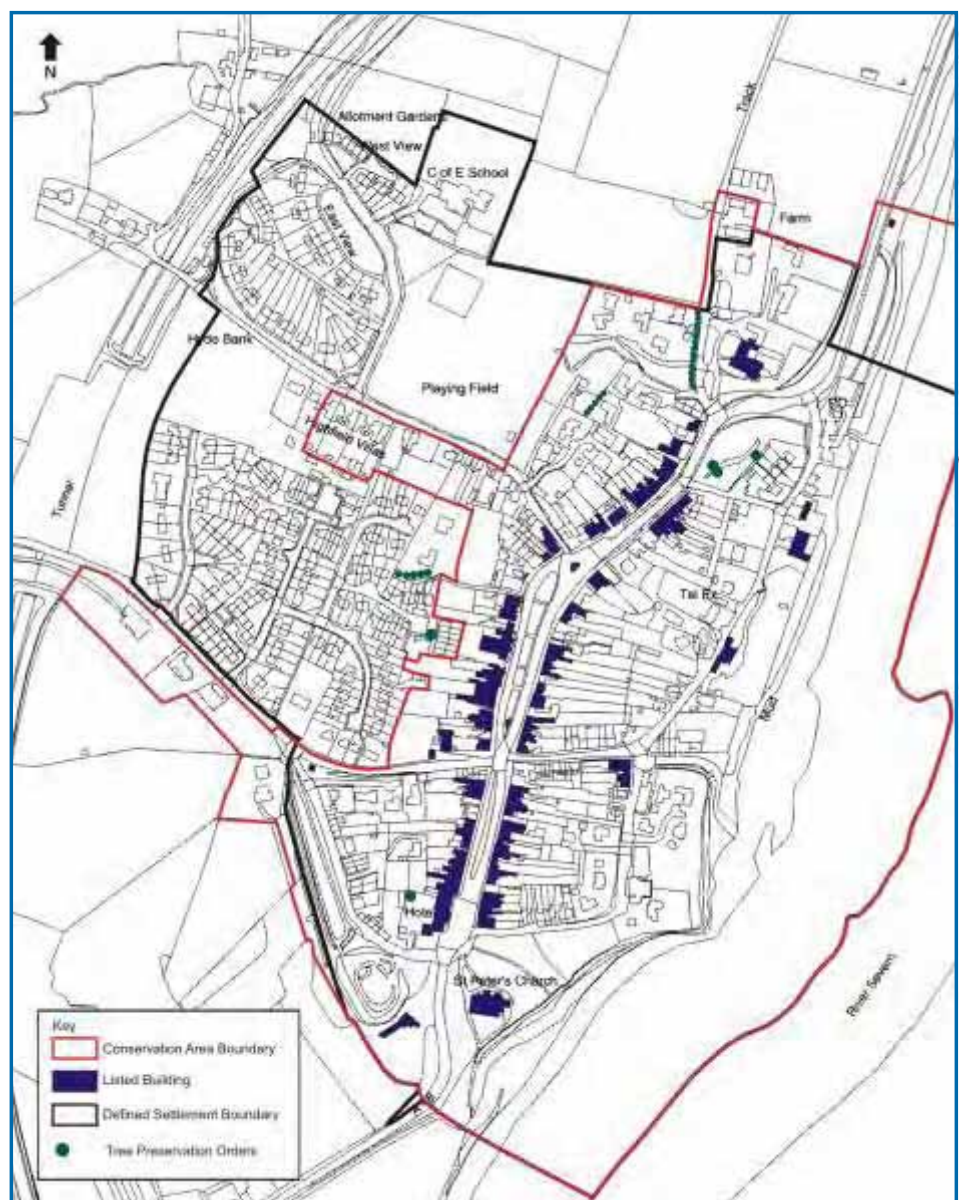
Evolution of area

Development

It is thought that the river was being crossed at Newnham from the first century AD. It is likely that the river crossing at Newnham was in use prehistorically

There is no entry for a settlement at Newnham recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086; it is likely that it was included as part of Westbury-on-Severn. However evidence suggests the Castle at Newnham had been constructed by that date.

It is highly likely that Newnham was originally settled due to its close proximity to the River Severn, at its lowest crossing point, this would have been a significant factor in the establishment of the settlement, with the advantage of being above the flood plain. By 1187 Newnham had become a borough, which meant that the settlement was represented in parliament. For a time Newnham was the only Gloucestershire borough west of the River Severn.



The first reference to a ferry crossing the Severn from Newnham to Arlingham is in 1238 and it carried on functioning until after the Second World War.

By utilizing the River Severn as a strategic asset Newnham became a successful town, supporting many trades and became a hub of commercial activity.

A market is recorded during the 12th century and was situated down the centre of High Street. The market is documented as being held until the mid 19th century.

By 1703 Newnham was described as being one long street, a form that is still followed.

During a period of economic prosperity in the 18th century many of the timber framed houses were re-fronted in the form that has survived to the present day.

The coming of the railway in 1850 into Newnham created a flourish of expansion in the area, and a number of new properties were constructed on the aptly named Station Road.

Over time the prosperity and importance of Newnham has diminished as the trade that sustained the area waned. Newnham has declined from a borough, to a town and now is classified as a village, although it is a rather striking village.

Archaeological significance

The early origins of Newnham as a settlement and planned town mean that there is a potential for rich archaeological deposits, over the years development has revealed numerous finds from a variety of periods. As is evident from the development of Newnham, the area has been settled for many centuries and because of this is rich in potential archaeology, and over the years development work has uncovered numerous finds from a variety of periods.

A Roman Road is thought to have run from Newnham to Caerwent, and was part of the Gloucester/Caerleon route. The road is believed to follow the same line as the A48 does today. Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)

To the south of Newnham village at the highest point in an area now known as The Green there is a castle ring, probably dating to the 11th century. It is believed that Newnham Castle was the first castle to be built beyond the Severn to defend against the Welsh. (SMR) See Fig 1.

The earthwork known as Round Green is thought to be part of the Royalist defensive works built during the civil war, as described in 1644. By the 19th century the green had been laid out as a promenade, and the area is still used for public amenity. (SMR) See Fig 2.

A 15th century medieval high cross stood at the junction of High Street with Dean Road, where the road from the Forest of Dean leads down to the river. This was historically an important trading route from the Forest to the quayside. (SMR)

A market was held at the northern end of Newnham High Street during the 14th century. The possible site of the market can still be seen as the island of land dividing High Street known as 'the Chains'. (SMR)

Newnham was an ancient river port and ferry terminal; ships of up to 600 tons were constructed in the village until the Gloucester-Sharpness canal was built, when the area's importance declined. Remains of the former quay, warehouses and associated buildings can still be seen at the northeast end of town. (SMR) See Fig 3.



Fig 1.



Fig 2.



Fig 3.



Fig 4.



Fig 5.



Fig 6.



Fig 7.

Another important industry was glass production. A glass furnace is thought to have been built in 1620; by 1696 two bottle factories were recorded in the village, however production appears to cease around 1715. (SMR)

There was also a tannery to the southwest of the village, which was in production from 1645 to 1918. Remains of the buildings can still be found in the field opposite Underhill Farm. (SMR)

In Church Road there is an 18th century tollhouse for the Gloucester - Chepstow toll road which was turnpiked in 1758. The building is currently a dwelling. (SMR)

Throughout Newnham parish there are remains of historic railway lines and tram roads that ran throughout the district, most of which have since been lost. (SMR)

Townscape Analysis

Setting

Newnham is located on a hilltop to the side of the River Severn. The surrounding countryside, which Newnham dominates, is predominantly open in nature, crossed by ancient hedgerows.

Skyline

Given the position of Newnham on the top of a hill, the skyline along the High Street is staggered due to both the sloping landform, and the varying building heights. Heights vary from two storeys, to three storeys. Chimneys also punctuate the skyline. *See Fig 4.*

The pollarded lime trees that run through the centre of the High Street are a key feature of the skyline, but as their growth is controlled through pruning they do not overwhelm the street scene. *See Fig 5.*

Along the back streets of the village, the buildings on the skyline are also staggered, again due to the change in landform.

Approaches

From Lydney the approach up into Newnham is impressive, as the road sweeps both steeply up hill and around a tight corner, edged by high walls retaining the surrounding high ground. The church perches on the hilltop to your right, towering over the road. *See Fig 6.*

When approaching along Dean Road from the Forest, the road is also cut deeply into the hill when nearing the main village street, creating an impressive sense of enclosure. Glimpses along Severn Street down to the River can be appreciated from the elevated walkway by the road.

Further up the road back towards the Forest the road is more open in aspect and the large buildings along the roadside can be appreciated.

Approaching from Westbury on Severn the road curves around the retaining wall of Unlawater House and climbs up hill into the main area of the village. This approach allows the built form of Newnham to be appreciated. *See Fig 7.*

Landmarks

The Clock Tower is one of Newnham's most locally recognised features, although it is situated in the lower part of the village and therefore cannot be seen from a distance.

The Church of St Peter is a prominent feature in the surrounding landscape, due to its elevated position on the hilltop. The associated graveyard also continues to the edge of the cliff that borders the Severn, making the Church visible from the river and the opposite bank. See Fig 8.

The lime trees that run through the centre of High Street are landmarks of the area, although their height is maintained through pollarding to restrict the upward growth of the trees.

Views and glimpses

There are extensive views from Newnham, due to its hilltop position.

From the Churchyard panoramic views of the River Severn can be appreciated, as the river meander past the town and flows on towards Bristol.

When standing on The Green there are far-reaching views of the surrounding landscape, from the hedge-lined fields to the surviving copses of trees.

Within the village it is possible to catch glimpses of distant landforms on the horizon, giving the town a sense of authority over the surrounding areas, it is easy to appreciate why the area was chosen as a site for a defensive castle.

Glimpses of the Severn around the village strengthen and remind of its close historical association with the area.

Small side roads along High Street draw the eye downhill, into another different area of the village, where development is less structured and was historically centred on the river. See Fig 9.

Structure

The main structure of village is in the form of linear development along the A48, (High Street/Lower High Street) which runs through the village.

The plots of land on which the buildings along High Street and Lower High Street are described as burgage plots, these are long narrow strips of land, usually 5 to 6 metres wide, but extending to around 30 metres to the rear.

The form of the burgage plots is most evident on the east side of High Street and Lower High Street. The width of the burgage plots is often mimicked in the dimensions of the building frontages. This type of structure is characteristic of formalised medieval settlements and was used to increase the number of buildings edging the commercial street front. See Fig 10.

Another line of development was established in association with the quays at Newnham, along Church Road. This development is far less structured and probably has its roots in quay workings or as warehouses. There is evidence of 20th century infilling occurring to the rear of the burgage plots associated with the High Street buildings.

Smaller lines of development have occurred down shorter side streets. See fig 11.

Hierarchy

Newnham has an air of importance; its position is significant. With far reaching views and its location at a crossing point of the River Severn, giving it strategic control over the surrounding countryside.



Fig 8.



Fig 9.



Fig 10.



Fig 11.

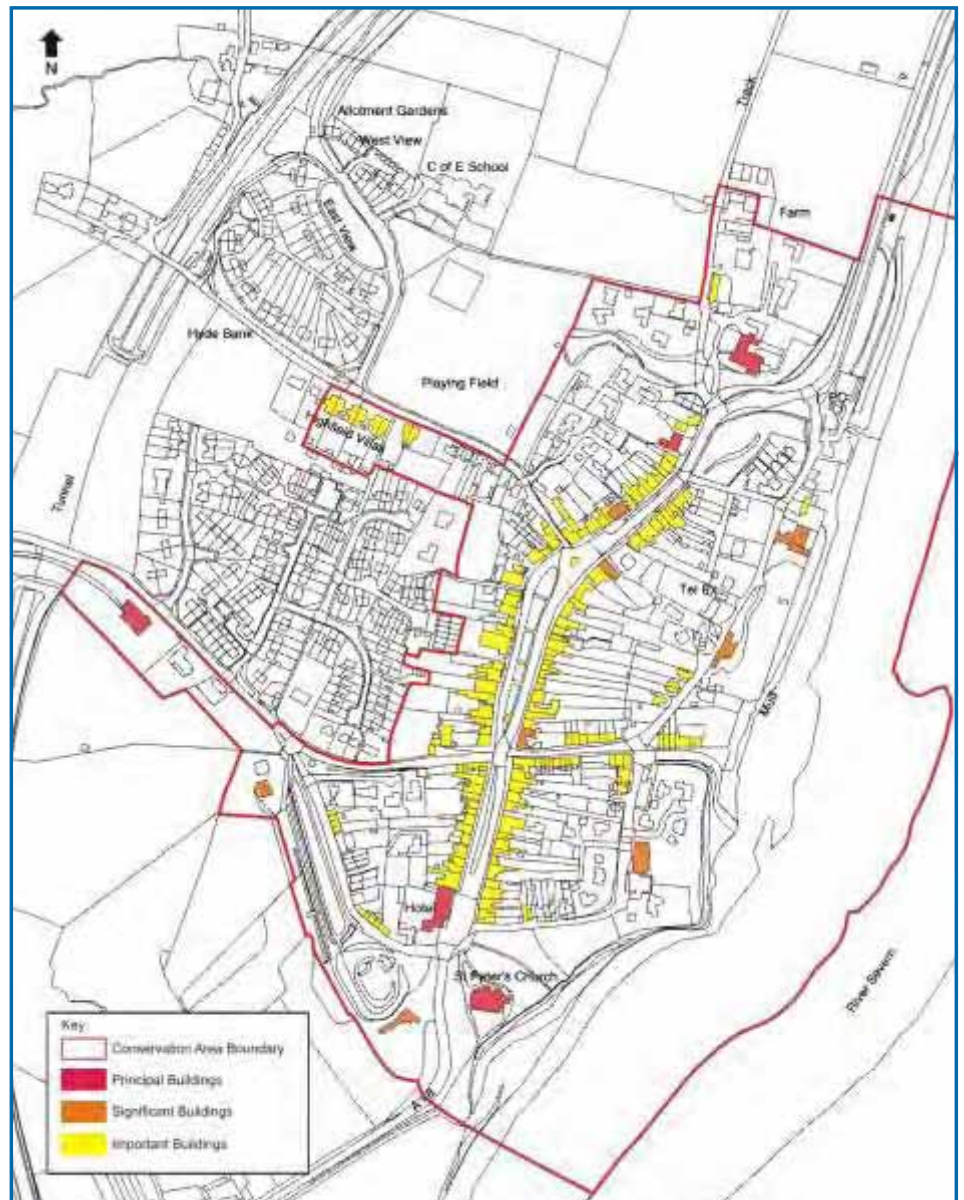
The high number of listed buildings within the conservation area demonstrates the quality of buildings in the village and to highlight the character of individual buildings of quality in Newnham would be a lengthy process.



Fig 12.



Fig 13.



Quality of Spaces

There is a good balance of built up areas and open space within Newnham.

The Green is the most notable area of open space, as it is the site of two earthworks. One probably associated with defences built by the Royalists during the Civil War and the other a castle ring dating to the 11th century. Now used as a public space the area also has a number of attractive mature trees and panoramic views over the surrounding countryside. See Fig 12.

An embankment runs through the centre of High Street, this feature is distinctive to Newnham. On the embankment grow the lime trees, along with a number of other species, and during the spring clusters of daffodils and bluebells flower. Within the space there are a number of benches from which the street scene of Newnham can be fully appreciated. See Fig 13.

When entering the main street from Westbury-on-Severn direction there is area of open space, original the site of a large detached property, since demolished. This

open space allows clear views of both sides of the village, which produces a definite gateway to the main street. See Fig 14.



Fig 14.



Fig 15.

St Peters graveyard is a sizable area of open space, where the elevated position allows far reaching views over the Severn.

The modern section of the graveyard is a peaceful place, with benches provided for contemplation. The historic section of the churchyard edging the A48 contains a number of listed tombstones and is enclosed by evergreen trees. The tombs are not over maintained and are varied in style; the atmosphere produced could be described as gothic. See Fig 15.

To the north of the settlement a strip of riverbank is included in the conservation area, when surveyed the wind howled over the river as the area is very exposed, but it is a strong link back to the historical association of Newnham with the river.

At the bottom of Severn Terrace there is an area of land by the river, which is where the ferry docked, this area is currently slightly overgrown, evidence of its past use is no longer visible.

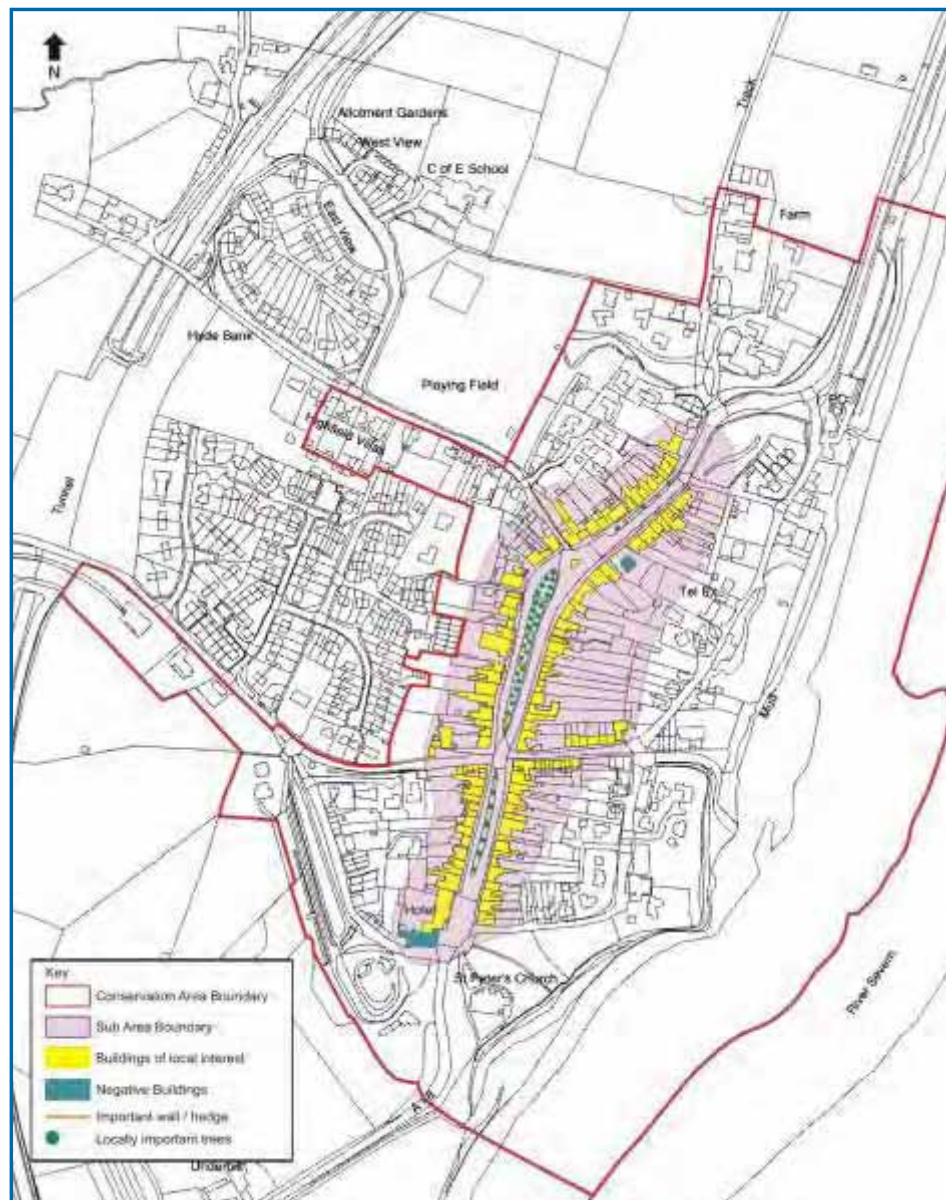
Landscape setting

Topography

Newnham is within an area described as the Severn Vale. The Severn Vale is a rural area, with a mix of arable and pastoral farming; historically there were also large areas of orchards.

Identification of sub areas

Sub area 1. High Street, Lower High Street and Severn Street



The main street in Newnham is High Street which becomes Lower High Street, past the Clock Tower to the north of the village.

The most striking feature of this area is the continuous frontage along the street edge. Continuous frontage means the buildings are all linked in some form, generally side-by-side, with few breaks in the built line.

The buildings on High Street cannot be described as terraced, as the building styles are not uniform.

The buildings, in the majority, abut the pavement; this leads to a strong sense of enclosure to the street and produces a strong built line. However this line is not straight, as the buildings project on to the pavement in varying degrees creating a staggered frontage. See Fig 16.

The line of buildings edging High Street accentuates the curve of the road. It is not only the buildings, which define the edge of the road, as there are always a large number of cars parked on the roadside. The cars also follow the line of the road and the buildings creating a second line of continuous frontage, however it is one that detracts from the character of the village. See Fig 17.

The style and scale of buildings along High Street is mixed, but most are well proportioned with a formality to the layout of the windows.

The skyline along High Street is punctured with chimneys, which are a defining characteristic of the sub area. See Fig 18.

High Street widens in the middle of Newnham and is divided by a cigar shaped area of open space (The Chains). The shape of the land suggests this was the site of Newnham's market. The area now divides the wide section of the A48 and enhances the area as it is planted with lime trees and blossoming ornamental trees, as well as daffodils and crocuses during the spring.

Severn Street is a continuation of Dean Road down to the Quayside. The road has similar characteristics of High Street with its continuous frontage and staggered skyline. The buildings, however, are smaller and simpler dwellings, brightly painted and attractive. See Fig 19.



Fig 16.



Fig 17.



Fig 18.



Fig 19.

Sub area 2. St Peters Church, The Green and associated streets



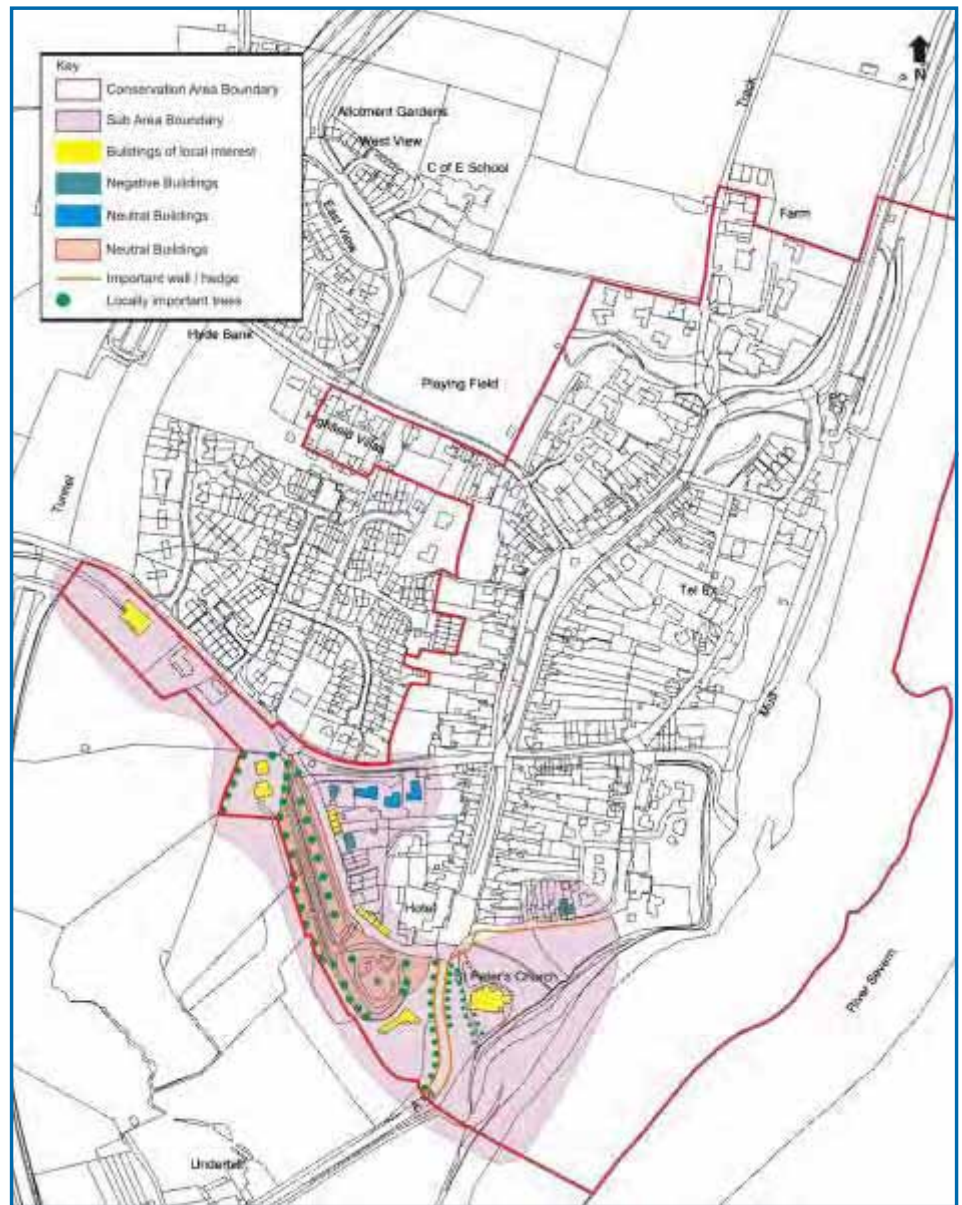
Fig 20.



Fig 21.



Fig 22.



This sub area is characterised by large areas of open space, which have strong historical associations, and an elevated position on a hill looking out over the surrounding countryside. See Fig 20.

Where St Peters Church stands there is believed to have been a church since the 12th century and The Green was the site of the early Newnham Castle and a defensive structure from the civil war. Both areas have strong links to Newnham's past and therefore are important.

Opposite the Church are a collection of dwellings on Church Street, these buildings differ in age and therefore style. They are all set back from the road, separated by a stone wall and small front gardens. See Fig 21.

Two new buildings have been constructed next to the above historic properties and although they are rendered and have attempted to mimic natural slate roofs by using reproduction slates, their form is not in keeping with the neighbouring properties and they do not sit well in the street scene.

A line of properties also face The Green, the historic buildings are in the form of short terraces and are simple in design, contrasting with the more formal architecture of High Street. See Fig 22.

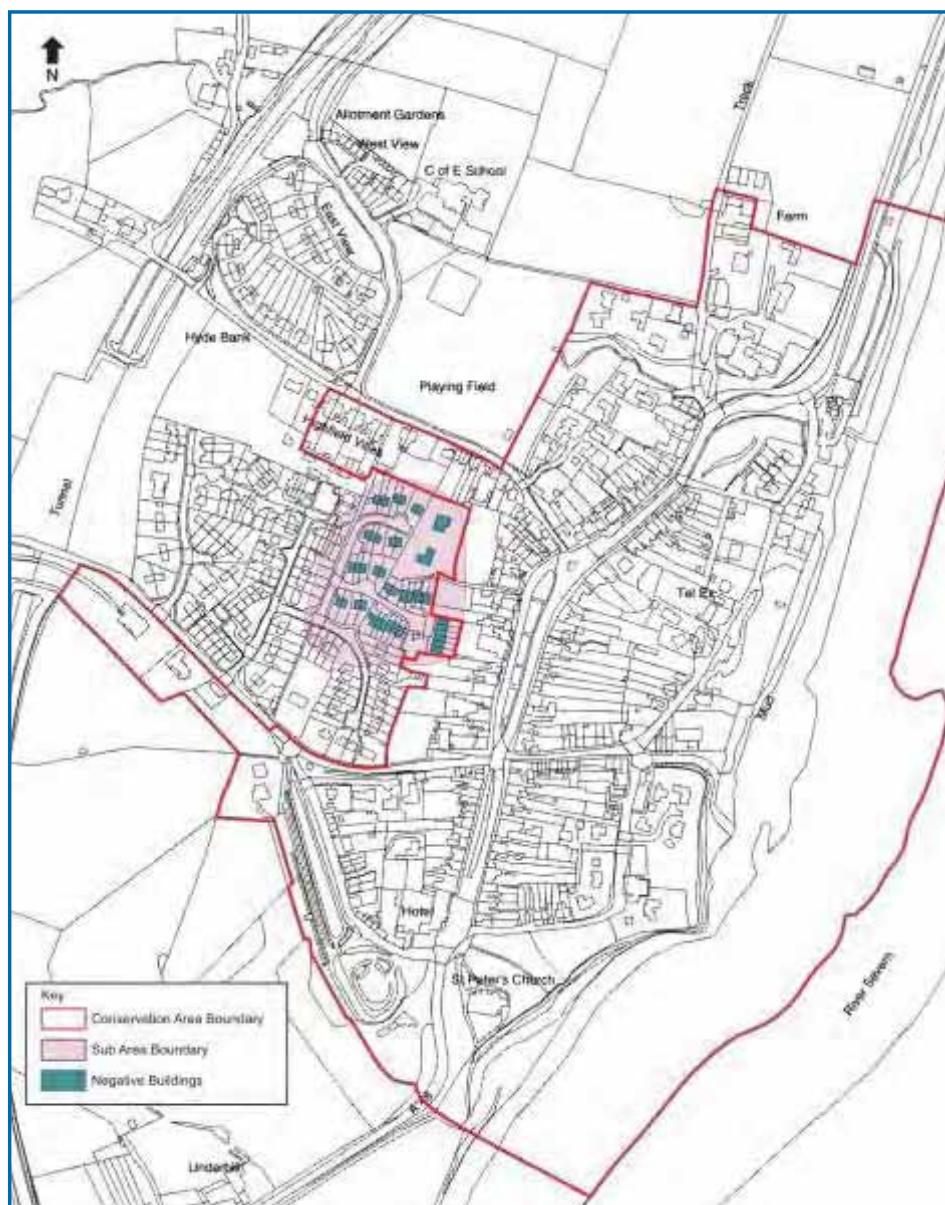
New buildings have been constructed in-between the two rows of terraced houses; these buildings also do not follow the scale and form of the historic buildings, as they are semi detached and much larger in scale. See Fig 23.

The Green is also edged by some impressive detached properties, namely Castle House and Apple Orchard. Dean Rise towards the west end of the sub area is highly visible from the lower ground travelling into Newnham from the south. These properties are impressive and large dwellings set within their own grounds. See Fig 24.

Both The Green and the graveyard, offer far-reaching and extensive views.

This sub area also includes the main historic route from the Forest down to the river. The road is in parts a 'hollow way' evidence of its age as a trade route from the centre of Forest to the quayside, where the goods such as timber would have been exported. It enters the village between high embankments. See Fig 25.

Sub area 3. Harrison Close, Manor Gardens and Allsopp Close



These roads are part of a modern development built on the fringes of the historic core of Newnham. When the previous conservation area was designated the area on which the properties had been constructed was open land.



Fig 23.



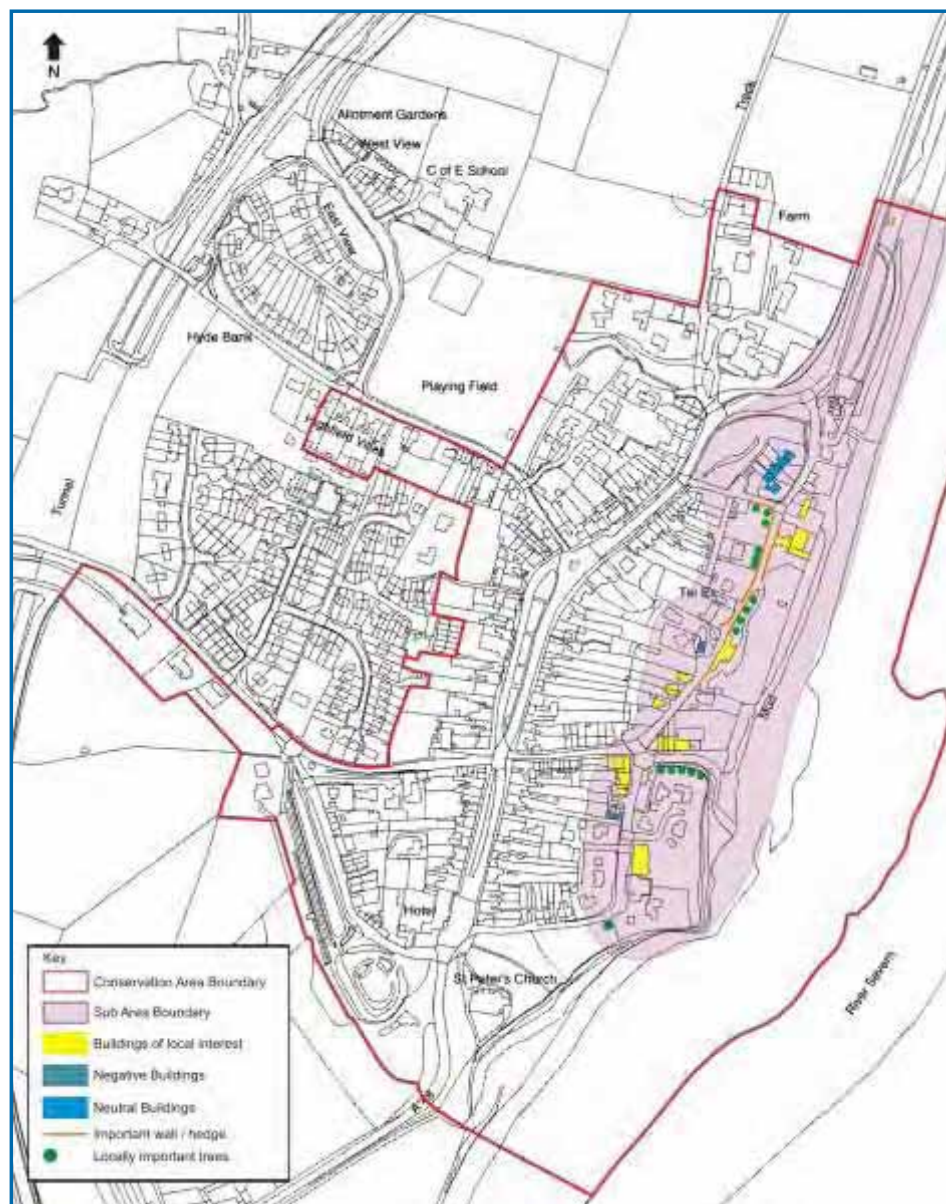
Fig 24.



Fig 25.

The buildings do not relate to any built form found in historic Newnham, built as clusters of semi detached or detached properties their architecture or historic interest is limited. See Fig 26.

Sub area 4. Church Road



The properties along this road are a mixture of buildings associated with the former quay, smaller residences and 20th century infill which have no formal layout.

A sense of enclosure is created along back street, but it is through a mixture of hedges, walls and properties, rather than a continuous line of buildings. Most of the buildings on the east side of Church Road face towards the river or are separated from the road by a wall. See Fig 27.

The architecture on Church Road is less formal than that seen on High Street, as it is more functional and vernacular in manner. However there are some higher status buildings along Church Road such as Newnham House, which is a large Regency detached property.

At the corner of Severn Street and Church Road there is a large building, which was originally the Old Bear Inn, but substantial alterations have occurred which have altered the building's character. See Fig 28.



Fig 26.



Fig 27.



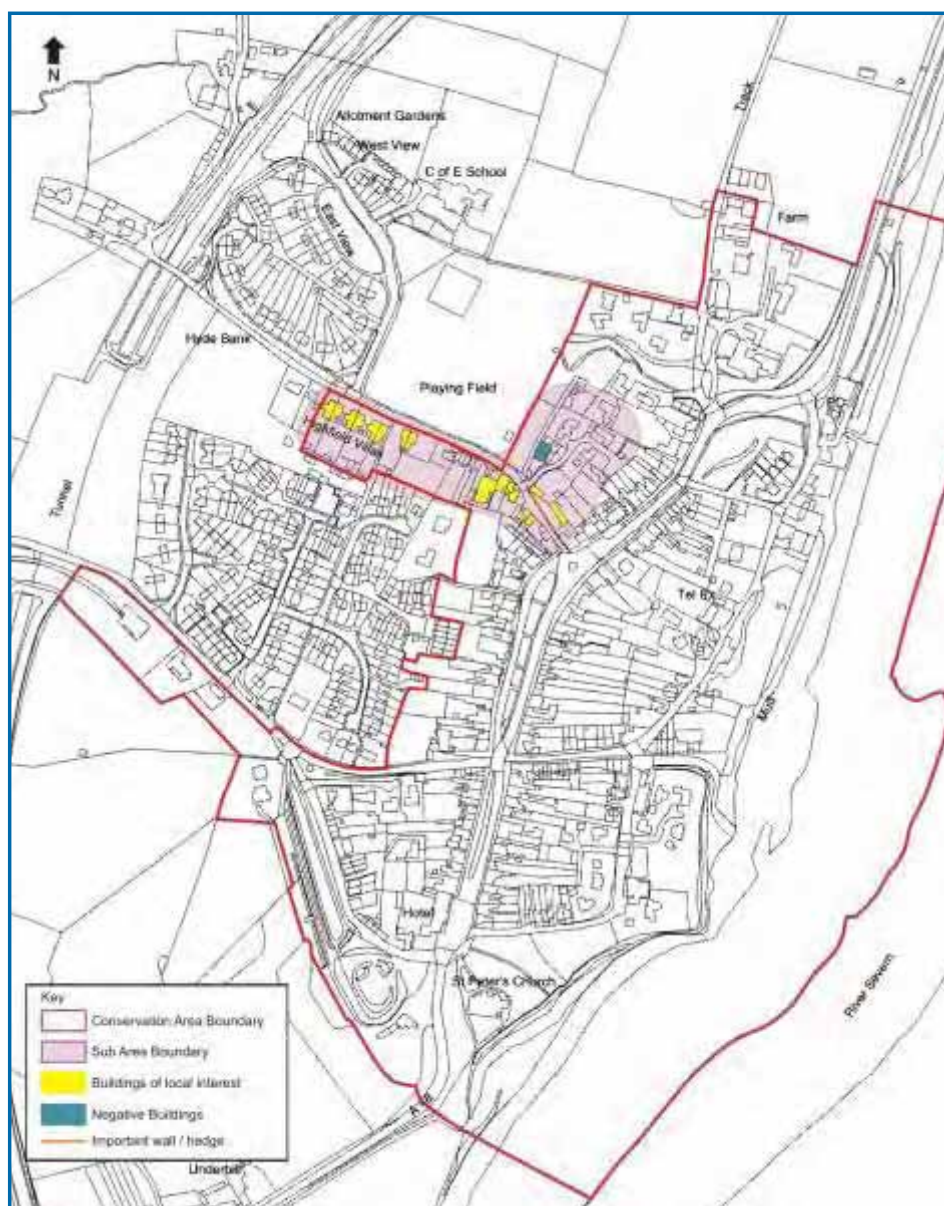
Fig 28.

Some of the 20th century developments however are built on the end of historic burgage plots, which erodes the original historic form of the village. Not only do they disrupt the historic layout, the scale and form of the buildings do not relate to the surrounding buildings. See Fig 29.

There are a number of 20th century developments along Church Road which add to the diversity in the area. Not all are appropriate, but some have matured into being examples of the period they were built in and create a neutral effect on the character of the area. See Fig 30.

The former public and state school complexes are now areas of new residential development which have attempted to mimic the polychromatic main public school building, however there are fundamental differences in the design between the buildings which means that they do not sit as comfortably into the streetscape as they might. See Fig 31.

Sub area 5. Station Road



Along Station Road itself there are three distinct building types.

Near the junction with Lower High Street/High Street the buildings are more closely linked to these streets as they are of a similar era. The boundary walls that



Fig 29.



Fig 30.



Fig 31.

edge the street and the front of the properties create an impression of enclosure. See Fig 32.



Fig 32.

Along side The Railway Inn there is a group of terrace houses. These are 19th century in date and simple in design. See Fig 33.



Fig 33.

Further along Station Road there are a series of semi detached Victorian houses, these are different in form from the majority of the properties in Newnham and are attractive and well detailed buildings. Set on a higher ground to the road they are approached up a flight of stone steps. See Fig 34.



Fig 34.

The sense of enclosure created at the beginning of Station Road diminishes further along the road, as one side of the road opens out to firstly a car park for the Masonic Hall, and then a large open area used as a playing field, which is outside of the conservation area. See Fig 35.

Sheltered behind the Masonic Hall, in an area of lower ground there is a group of new houses, the design of these buildings has not taken into consideration any of the built forms found in Newnham, however they are sufficiently screened not to impact on the conservation area.

Sub area 6. Unlawater Lane

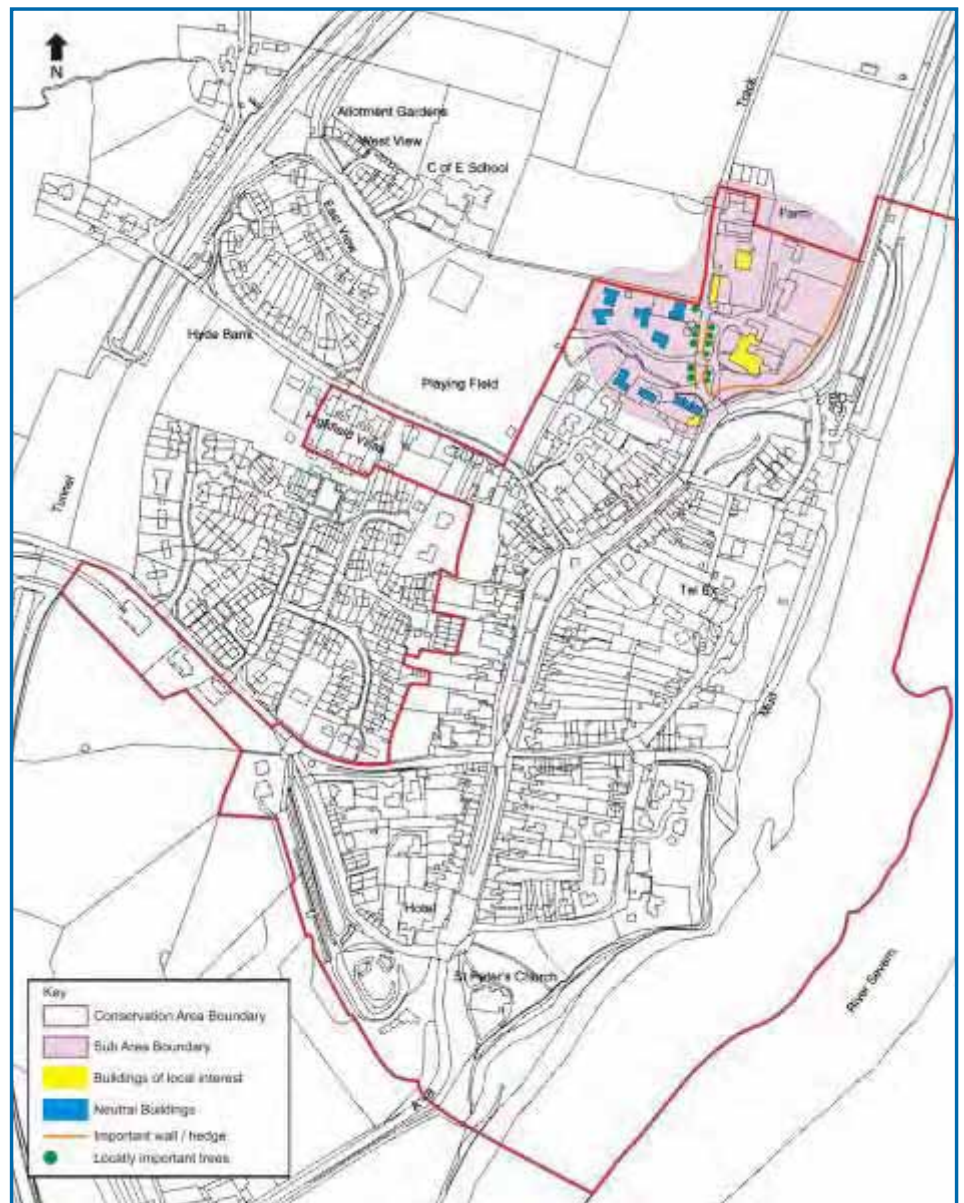


Fig 35.

At the end of Lower High Street a road spurs to the left into Unlawater Lane. The entrance to the road is defined by a series of small white rendered dwellings; the first facing the road is a cottage of some age, the dwellings that follow the curve of the road from Lower High Street on to Unlawater Lane, are modern design in a similar scale to the cottage, which provide an attractive entrance to the lane. See Fig 36.

The architecture of these small cottage style buildings is vastly different to the neighbouring buildings with their formal layout, and this exaggerates the simplicity of the two storey dwellings.

Along the same line as the small rendered dwellings are two modern houses. These houses may not reflect the scale of the older cottage as the other new buildings do, but the use of sympathetic materials does provide a strong link and the houses do not appear out of place.

Moving along Unlawater Lane the road becomes defined by stonewalls, trees and shrubbery, which is different from all other areas of Newnham. Further along the road on the left a series of modern houses have been constructed on land which were previously orchards. These buildings have not taken into consideration any of the built forms or styles found in Newnham.

Towards the end of Unlawater Lane there is a pleasant three-storey property, which appears from the 1840 tithe map of Newnham to be associated with Unlawater House. The majority of the properties at the end of the lane were originally linked to agricultural use, which is reflected in their design. See Fig 37.

The development structure in this section of the village is fragmented and has stronger links to the surrounding countryside than to any other area identified in the conservation area.

Facing south on to the A48, but still related to Unlawater Lane, is Unlawater House. The house sits in a prominent position overlooking the River Severn and creates an impressive stop to the village as you head north to Westbury on Severn.

During the 20th century, land which was historically the gardens to Unlawater House has been sold and two properties have been constructed. Both are in prominent positions but their lack of architectural statement means that their impact is reduced. See Fig 38.

Condition of built fabric

Buildings

A high percentage of the buildings in Newnham have maintained their original windows. The retention of original windows has meant that the street scene has not been adversely affected by the introduction of inappropriate uPVC and the loss of the original window forms.

In the few places where uPVC has been inserted or the original window form has been lost, the character of the building is significantly diminished.

The Ship Inn on High Street has recently been painted a vibrant blue, including the window frames and lintels; this has caused the loss of the detail of the building, as they cannot be distinguished from the main elevation. The building is also highly visible in the street scene and is not entirely in keeping with the more muted colours found throughout the village. See Fig 39.



Fig 36.



Fig 37.



Fig 38.



Fig 39.



Fig 40.



Fig 41.



Fig 42.



Fig 43.

Occupation levels

The residential occupation levels in Newnham are generally very good; with some of the shops having been converted into dwellings, so the problem of empty upper floors is not one that affects Newnham.

There are some empty shop spaces in Newnham; these properties have flaking paint and broken windows and detract from the overall street scene. Schemes to enhance these buildings, ideally converting them back to shops would be welcomed. *See Fig 40.*

Negative Spaces

The positive spaces are described in Quality of Spaces

The main area of negative space that has been identified is the A48 running through the centre of the village. As a busy main road the traffic that drives through is considerable, and this has a negative effect of the character of the area.

The road also creates a problem through the large number of cars that park along the roadside and on the pavement, as very few of the houses have any other parking provision. The number of cars does detract from the street scene, however the cars do also slow the flow of traffic, which is beneficial. *See Fig 41.*

The car park in front of the Masonic Hall is also a negative space partly due to the treatment of the boundary, using concrete posts and wire fencing. The car park does provide valuable space that removes some cars from the street front. *See Fig 42.*

The garage situated in a prominent position at the top of High Street, creates a negative space due to the number of cars parked on the forecourt and the condition of the sales room. It detracts from the entrance to the village. *See Fig 43.*

Next to the garage is The Victoria Hotel; the Hotel is an attractive and significant building, it often has a number of cars parked outside which hides the front of the building and adds to the cluttered nature of the entrance to Newnham, visible when approaching from the South.

Potential areas which could be enhanced

There is no realistic way that the amount of traffic on the road through the centre of Newnham could be reduced, without vast remodelling of the road system around the area.

Better fencing materials being introduced could enhance the car park in front of the Masonic Hall. If the car park were to be enclosed from view with, for example, a suitable hedge or low wall the area would be greatly enhanced, but would also allow the retention of valuable car parking facilities.

Removal of the garage to a more suitable area outside the conservation area would be the ideal solution to enhance the site. As this may not be possible, improvements to the sales rooms to make it more sympathetic to its surroundings would improve the aesthetics of that area.

If visitors to the Victoria Hotel could be encouraged to use the car parking facilities provide to the rear of the building, the appearance of the Hotel and High Street could be significantly improved.

Street furniture

The streetlights along High Street are unusual in design; they appear to be of a modernist design made from concrete. Although the design of the lights might not be the most appropriate for a historic street, the impact is minimal and in fact is less intrusive than many lighting schemes found elsewhere in the district. If a new lighting scheme were to be introduced into the village it would need to be sensitively designed and sited. See Fig 44.

Around the village there are numerous sets of bollards, these are mainly placed to prevent parking on the pavements. Some of the bollards are of a design originally only found in Newnham, and are termed 'Newnham' or 'Forest' Bollards.

Due to areas of raised pavement level in Newnham, there are various sets of railings; these railings are mainly nicely detailed and made of cast metal painted black. There are some railings that are more utilitarian in design, they do not have a negative effect on the area, but the use of a better choice of railing would enhance the area.

The Cattle pound is a historic feature in the street scene.

The clock tower stands at the junction of the three roads and is a grade II listed building and is an attractive feature, key to the area's character.

Also listed is the nineteenth century fountain. This attractive feature sits in a prominent position on High Street and is flanked by two metal benches. See Fig 45.

The war memorial in Newnham is located on the strip of land dividing High Street. The structure is a delicate stone feature. From its position comprehensive views of the main street can be appreciated.

There are numerous benches placed around Newnham, situated to allow appreciation of the fantastic views or attractive street scenes. The benches vary in style and material, but are on the whole traditional in design. See Fig 46.

The bus shelter on Lower High Street is built of brick it is not attractive, but it is not invasive and doesn't have a negative effect on the village.

Throughout the village there are red dog waste bins, whilst these do benefit the locals and encourage care of an attractive area, they are very evident in the street scene.

Wirescape

There is very limited wiring on Newnham's High Street which is a positive feature, as it means that the skyline of the village can be appreciated without distracting overhead wiring.

However on the smaller roads such as Back Street and Station Road there are overhead wires, which cross the road and detract from the pleasant aspect of the area. See Fig 47.

Local building patterns

Local building patterns

- Vernacular is a term used to describe buildings that are built to suit the needs of the owner, with materials that are to hand, rather than following a set form



Fig 44.



Fig 45.



Fig 46.



Fig 47.



Fig 48.



Fig 49.



Fig 50.



Fig 51.

of architectural style such as neoclassical or gothic. Vernacular buildings are generally simple in form and primarily functional.

- Polite architecture is the reverse of vernacular, it relates to buildings, which are architecturally designed in a well-defined style, using materials that sometimes needed to be transported into the area. This form of architecture generally relates to country houses and higher status buildings.

The majority of the buildings in Newnham could be described as being Georgian or Regency in style. Although the buildings are designed in a nationally recognisable style, they cannot be described as truly polite architecture, as local materials have been used and in some cases vernacular buildings are contained with the façade visible today. This style of building has been termed Urban Vernacular.

Although there is no particular local building style to be found in Newnham, there is uniformity in the buildings fronting along High Street and there are a number of common features which have been applied to buildings in a variety of different combinations.

Buildings are mainly two or three storeys high, with a few two-storey buildings utilizing the roof space to create a third floor. Where this has occurred dormer windows have been punched through the roofline. See Fig 48.

A large percentage of the buildings have sash windows, the most common form is twelve pane, counterbalanced sliding sashes. In some later buildings, improvement in the glass making processes has allowed for larger panes of glass, and the window form alters to four-pane sashes; some two pane sashes can also be found in the area.

Some of the smaller buildings, with less formal architectural characteristics have casement windows; again these vary in composition from building to building.

Roofs are generally gabled but there are examples of hipped roofs in the village, these are generally found on the detached larger premises such as The Club. Roof pitches vary considerable due to the variety of roof forms, but also because of the different materials used as a covering.

Some buildings on High Street have parapets. Parapets are the extension of the front wall above the level of the roof eaves, thus hiding the roof and guttering from view.

Chimneys are found on virtually all the properties in Newnham, styles of chimneys vary from tall and thin to short and wide. The position of the chimney on the building also varies. Chimneys are crucial to the areas character as they create variety at the roof level. See Fig 49.

The designs of many of the properties have a linear quality, with the windows and doors all aligned and being of a similar width. This is a design feature of the Georgian style.

Bay windows are also a feature of buildings in Newnham, and they come in various shapes, including circular, rectangular and segmental. See Fig 50.

A number of the buildings along High Street have imposing porches, which is another trait of Georgian and Regency design, as is the use of metal work to adorn the front elevation of the property. See Fig 51.

Materials

Many different building materials are found in Newnham, and it cannot be said that a particular type prevails.

A large proportion of the buildings are brick built, but the colour of the bricks used varies which suggests that the bricks did not all come from one place. The source of the brick may also alter depending on the age of the building. One building has used a variety of different coloured bricks to produce an effect termed structural polychromy; this is the Former Brightlands Preparatory School.

Stone is also a common material, and it is likely that there are more stone buildings than are visible as it is common to render the stone buildings, as the stone is soft and often weathers badly.

Render is therefore one of the most prevalent finishes as a large proportion of the buildings have been rendered to protect the perishable stone. These renders are painted a variety of colours, but in general they are muted tones such as cream and eggshell blue. See Fig 52.

Within the conservation area there are examples of timber framed buildings. It is quite likely that a number of the buildings conceal a timber frame behind the Georgian Façade; as it was common practise to reface buildings rather than rebuild them. See Fig 53.

A number of buildings within Newnham have had the protective layer of lime rendering removed to expose the timber framing underneath. In some cases the timber frame was not meant to be exposed and the removal of the render has a negative effect on the character of the listed building and also the loss of historic fabric.

A more unusual building material found in Newnham, are dross blocks. These are large blocks produced from the waste of the copper industry. The blocks are dark blue in colour and are believed to have arrived in Newnham as ballast in the ships that sailed to the port. See Fig 54.

The roofing material is generally Welsh slate, but many examples of pan tile and plain tile roofing are also evident throughout the settlement.

Lead flashing is also found on the buildings linking and waterproofing surfaces. Lead work can also be found on the cheeks (sides) of dormer windows.

Clay and terracotta pots on the chimneys are found throughout the conservation area, although clay is the most common.

Fortunately Newnham has retained a high proportion of its original or historic windows, which are, on the whole wooden. Some buildings do have replacement uPVC windows but these are inappropriate in historic buildings and detract from the buildings and general character of the area.

Intricate metal work is a feature of late Georgian architecture and examples of wrought iron railings and porches are evident in the village. Many of the buildings have also retained their cast iron guttering. See Fig 55.

Paving traditions

In recent years there has been a scheme implemented to repave High Street with appropriate stone flags. This has improved the appearance of the street scene immensely and is a highly attractive feature in Newnham.



Fig 52.



Fig 53.



Fig 54.



Fig 55.



Fig 56.



Fig 57.



Fig 58.

In some areas historic paving can still be found. Along the edge of the graveyard boundary wall on Church Road there is a stone set paved gutter which has escaped being tarmaced over.

On Station Road there are areas of cobbles remaining in front of a historic property.

Shop Fronts

There are a number of nineteenth century shop fronts that have been retained from Newnham's past as a busy town, unfortunately many have ceased trading as shops and have reverted to residential.

The design of most of the shop fronts is traditional with attractive and sometimes intricate detailing. Some have retained the original shop advertisements, giving an insight to the former business. See Fig 56.

Although many of the shops have become residential premises the shop fronts have not been removed, which is fortunate as their loss could have adversely affected the street scene, and could lead to substandard alterations occurring to the buildings themselves.

Due to its role as a centre of trade within the area there were a large number of pubs in Newnham. Only The Ship Inn and The Railway are still run as pubs, with The Victoria Hotel still in business, however many have been shut and converted into houses, The Bear Inn for example was divided into a number of dwellings after its closure in the late nineteenth century, but has recently undergone changes to revert to one residence.

Along High Street it is possible to identify those buildings that used to function as an inn, for example in the houses know as The Gables and Brittania House, due to the decorative stained glass windows. See Fig 57.

Activities, uses and linkages

Activities

Newnham has become a mainly residential area following decades of being a centre of trade in the district. The majority of residents now commute out of the area for work.

However when driving down the A48 Newnham is one of the most likely places for people to stop, as it is such an attractive area. It benefits from a Café, Gallery, Post Office, Antique Shop, several shops selling foods and gifts. These rely on local and passing trade and maintain an active day time atmosphere.

During the spring and Autumn the Severn Bore brings in significant numbers of visitors. The Bore is an impressive wave of water that occurs as a result of the strength tide as it travels up the narrowing estuary, it is a recognised challenge to surfers and canoeists. See Fig 58.

Uses

Historically Newnham would have a busy and bustling town due to the diversity of trades occurring in the area; the market, the quay, the ferry across the Severn, the tannery, glass works and numerous other uses. The number of nineteenth century shop fronts in the village is evidence that the village used to be a popular commercial area.

Newnham appears to have lost some of its vibrancy and all that is left is the vestige of its importance represented by its buildings. The commercial life of the village appears to have dwindled as slowly the shops have been converted into residences.

Images and associations

Sounds

The church clock marks every quarter of an hour with a pleasant chime.

The clock tower at the junction of Station Road with High Street marks the passing of the hour with a musical bell toll.

The traffic that runs through the centre of the village creates a background rumbling throughout the conservation area.

There is a constant reminder of the villages proximity to the River Severn with the call of seagulls above.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis, identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the area.

Strengths

- Continuous frontage along High Street and Lower High Street
- Staggered skyline and projection onto the pavement along High Street and Lower High Street
- The villages elevated position over the River Severn and the surrounding landscape
- Historical links to the quay and related trades
- The varied building styles and materials
- Georgian/Regency detailing of properties
- Retained nineteenth century shop fronts
- Attractive and pollarded lime trees
- Appealing open areas
- Views out over the countryside and the River Severn
- Streets paved with natural forest stone
- A large percent of original windows retained

Weaknesses

- The large amount of parked cars along the road
- The conversion of the shops into dwellings
- Loss of a few original windows with the insertion of replacement uPVC windows
- Infill of areas with inappropriate development
- Painting of the properties in vibrant and unsuitable colours

Opportunities

- To maintain a village with the majority of the original form of the buildings intact
- To maintain and continue to install a high quality design of street furniture
- To increase awareness of the villages significant history
- Removal of any remaining overhead wires
- Attempt to reduce the numbers of cars parking along High Street
- To carry on the established tradition of architectural eminence in the village
- Reinstate further areas of natural paving

Threats

- Increased loss of original windows through inappropriate replacement to uPVC
- Loss of original features through unsympathetic conversions or repairs
- Increased levels of traffic
- Increasing numbers of cars parking on the road side
- Further infill occurring in inappropriate areas e.g. on the burgage plots of High Street
- The few remaining shops being converted to residential use

Management proposals

Application of policy guidance

The Forest of Dean Local District Local Plan 2005 sets out a number of policies that this authority will follow when dealing with conservation areas. The policies are as follows:

(R)FHE.1 Preservation and Enhancement of Conservation Areas

The Council will seek to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas and will review from time to time the need for further designations. Development which would detract from the visual, historic or architectural character of such areas or their settings, will not be permitted. Consideration will be given to the use of Article 4 directions where permitted development would be likely to have an adverse effect, particularly upon a programme or scheme of conservation works, or on buildings which have been grant aided.

(R)FHE.2 Demolition in Conservation Areas

Where the buildings or walls make little or no positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, their demolition will be permitted, but only if the demolition proposal is accompanied by fully detailed and acceptable plans for the redevelopment proposed after demolition which demonstrate that the redevelopment scheme will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Where buildings or walls in any Conservation Area make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of that Conservation Area, their total or substantial demolition will not be permitted unless:

1. All reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or to find viable new uses
2. Preservation in some form of charitable or community ownership is not possible
3. Redevelopment would produce substantial benefits for the community that would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition.

(R)FHE.5 Change of Use of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Importance

Where an alternative use is proposed for a Listed Building or a building of local historic or architectural importance planning permission will be granted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will preserve the historic and architectural character of the building in its setting and that no other reasonable alternative use exists which would better safeguard the architectural or historic importance of the building.

(R)FHE.6 Development Affecting Archaeological Sites

Nationally important archaeological remains whether scheduled or not will be required to be preserved in-situ. Planning Permission will not be granted for development which would involve significant alteration or damage to such remains or which would have a significant impact on the setting of visible remains.

Where proposals affect remains of lesser importance, planning permission will only be granted where the need for the development outweighs all other material considerations, and where appropriate and satisfactory arrangements have been made and can be implemented for the excavation and recording of any remains.

Where permitted, development affecting remains of archaeological importance must be implemented in such a manner as to minimise any adverse effect on the remains concerned.

In all matters relating to this policy the Council and the developer will be expected to take appropriate specialist advice.

(R)FHE.7 Requirement to Provide Archaeological Information

Development proposals likely to affect sites of archaeological interest and their settings or within areas of known or likely archaeological potential must be accompanied by an archaeological assessment and where appropriate the results of a field evaluation appraising the likely extent or nature of the archaeology, together with an indication of how the impact of the proposals on the archaeological remains will be mitigated. This information will be a material consideration when determining an application.

There are wider issues relating to conservation areas and these are set out in government guidance, these together with the local plan policies will be used to guide the consideration of proposals in the designated conservation area.

Area specific policies

Protection for the historic core

(R)FNewnham1

Development that would be likely to impair or lead to the loss of important townscape features within the historic core of Newnham, as identified on the inset map will not be permitted. In particular, the form and layout of the High Street area will be protected, including the historical pattern of plot layout.

Consideration of the resources needed to maintain area

There are no major financial resource implications arising out of this character analysis for local authorities, other than the suggestion of the need to deal with wirescape, street furniture and paving.

There are extremely limited resources available from central or local government specifically to maintain Newnham conservation area; however the character appraisal maybe useful for Newnham Parish Council in identifying proposals for the future. For other agencies or authorities such as the District Council and Gloucester County Council this character appraisal can identify issues that maybe able to be dealt with when considering on going maintenance or planned programs affecting the village. It offers an opportunity for private developers investing resources in the area to recognise the needs of the village when undertaking major or minor development.

Monitoring Change

Change in Newnham needs to be monitored over the coming years in order to control the small alterations which take place, but which could eventually erode significantly the character of Newnham. Monitoring will take place subject to officer time and as funds allow; the photographic recording of the conservation

area every two years would produce a comparison exercise and a record for use in the future.

Procedures for consistent decision-making

There is considerable detailed government guidance for dealing with development in conservation areas, which is used by all local authorities in England and Wales. However the nature of historic buildings and conservation areas means that it is virtually impossible to produce a standardised strategy, as every building or area needs to be dealt with individually. The production of character appraisals, a Local Development Framework and Supplementary Planning Guidance will help provide a consistent base for decision-making within this local authority.

Enforcement strategy

It is occasionally necessary for local authorities to use their statutory powers to initiate the repair of buildings that are having a detrimental affect on the conservation area, these powers included urgent works notices and section 215 notices.

Local authorities also have the statutory powers to instigate the repair of listed buildings, and non-listed buildings within a conservation area, through the use of urgent works notices. If an urgent works notice were to be issued on a non-listed building in a conservation area, it would require permission from the Secretary of State. An urgent works notice is used to secure emergency repairs to a building to alleviate the deterioration of a building, the notice is issued to the owner, but if the owner refuses to carryout the necessary works the local authority can and then claim the costs back from the owner.

Section 215 notices are part of the local authorities planning powers; the notice can be served on the owner of any land or building whose condition affects the quality of the area. If the notice were served, the owner would be expected to redeem the situation through cleaning up the site or building. If the owner does not comply with the notice the authority can carryout the works then reclaim the cost from the owner.

Enforcement action will be taken where there are breaches of regulations and where it is necessary to do so. Aspects like the introduction of satellite dishes to walls and roofs fronting a highway without permission are issues that need to be seriously considered.

Proposals for article 4 directions

A local authority has power to withdraw further permitted development rights by issuing Article 4(1) and 4(2) directions, however a conservation area has to be deemed of considerable importance before Article 4 directions can be justified.

The District Council believe that an Article 4(2) direction would be justified in order to safeguard the special character of Newnham conservation area. It is proposed only to place the order on those properties on the High Street and Lower High Street, that are not listed or aren't flats or commercial premises, the reason for these properties being excluded is that the direction would duplicate the controls already placed on them.

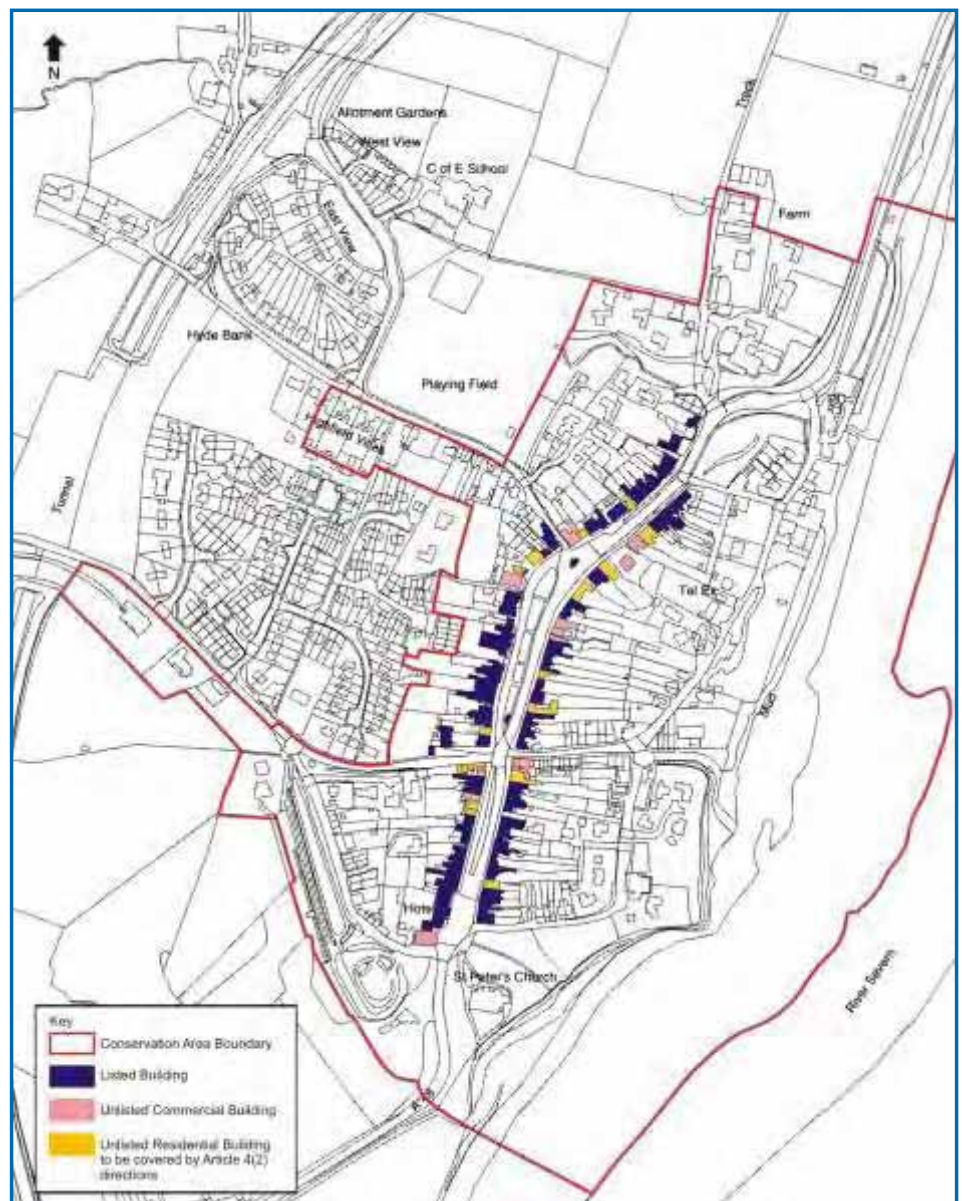
Currently unlisted residential properties on High Street and Lower High Street can alter windows, external doors, render and paint a property and replace guttering without the need for planning permission. Because of this there is a concern that these currently sympathetic and important buildings could be adversely altered in

the future and to prevent inappropriate works being carried out, it is proposed to use Article 4(2) directions to restrict certain permitted development rights.

The direction would cover:

- Alterations or replacement windows
- Alterations or replacement of external doors
- Rendering a property
- Painting a property
- Removal and replacement of guttering

Planning permission will be required for any of the above works if they are to be carried out to an elevation of a property that faces a highway. Requiring planning permission for these works will allow the same control over the few unlisted residential properties as are placed on the listed buildings, flats or commercial premises in Newnham.



Intended action for buildings at risk

Newnham has a minimal number of buildings that are in need of repair, but none are listed, which means that Newnham conservation area has no buildings formally identified on its Buildings at Risk register.

Proposed enhancement schemes

Planning Act 1990 (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) states that Local authorities have a duty to prepare schemes for the enhancement of conservation areas. Many of the suggested areas of enhancement are included in this character appraisal, these suggestions relate back to the policies for the historic environment as set out in the Forest of Dean Local Plan 2005. At the present time there is no specific budget or strategy for the completion of such schemes, which means that they can only be achieved through close partnership with other public bodies, agencies or sections within Local Authorities.

There are a number of ways in which the Local Authority could guide the enhancement of Newnham.

Paving

Over the last few years, Newnham has been subject to an extensive paving scheme, laying attractive stone paving along High Street. If this could be extended to pave those areas not already tackled, the quality of Newnham's street scene would increase further.

Wirescape

The wirescape in Newnham has been surprisingly sympathetically dealt with; High Street is completely free from wiring. On the smaller streets of the village such as Church Road some wiring can be found, removal of this wiring and redirecting it underground would further enhance the area.

Street furniture

The quality of Newnham's current street furniture is high. Measures should be taken to maintain the quality if new schemes were to be introduced.

Occupation levels

The occupation levels of Newnham as a whole are generally very good. There are however a few lower floor levels previously shops, which are unoccupied. The reinstatement of the spaces as shops would be the idea solution, however simple repair would benefit the village.

Areas for enhancement

Reinstatement of timber windows to those buildings that have had replacement uPVC windows installed.

Were the garage to be relocated and replaced by more appropriate development, or at least the sales area renovated and improved, the entrance to Newnham would become more striking.

By creating an enclosure around the car park on Station Road, perhaps with planting, the car park would be shielded from view and the space would not affect the pleasant aspect of the area.

Traffic management

Newnham would be greatly improved if the amount of traffic travelling through the centre of the settlement could be reduced, however as the A48 is one of the main roads in the district this is unlikely to be achieved. Improvements will have to be restricted to improved traffic management and the use of appropriate surfacing materials.

Measures to reduce the number of cars parking on the pavement and street side along High Street, would drastically improve the visual aspect of Newnham's principle street.

Economic development and regeneration

New development

Conservation area status is not designed to stop all future development in that area. However it is made clear in government guidance and the local authorities own local plan that new development in conservation areas should be of a high standard.

New development should relate to its surroundings, in scale and form, and the grain of the settlement, e.g. street patterns. However in order to relate to its surroundings new development does not automatically have to be an imitation of the buildings already present in an area. Conservation philosophy advises against the reproduction of old styles in new buildings, and encourages new development to be in the style of the time. It is the quality of a design that is fundamental in producing a high quality of building, linked with the level of detailing and finish.

The special architectural character of an area does not need to stand still at the date of designation providing any development enhances or at least has a neutral effect on the character of the area. New developments could be a way to further improve the quality of an area if sensitive yet innovative designs are produced. In 1998 the Forest of Dean District Council adopted the 'Residential Design Guide', the document was produced by the University of the West of England, and provides information and guidelines suitable for new development in the Forest of Dean, the document is a highly useful resource for those intending to develop areas of the District.

Building regulation relaxation

The Building Regulations through Government policy requires new buildings, building works or services installed in them to be continually achieving better energy efficiency and lower CO2 emissions, as well as requiring in certain circumstances better access in and around the building.

Special considerations apply if the building on which the work is to be carried has special historic or architectural value and where compliance with the current requirements of the regulations would unacceptably alter the character or appearance of the building.

When undertaking work on or in connection with buildings with special historic or architectural value, the aim should be to improve energy efficiency and access where and to the extent that is practically possible. This is provided that the work does not prejudice the character of the listed building or increase the risk of long term deterioration to the building fabric or fittings.

Therefore when carrying works to such buildings which require Building Regulations Consent, it is important to speak to the Building Control section at an early stage so any perceived conflicts of legislation can be identified and resolved in a manner that satisfies the current requirements of the affected Regulations and Legislation.

Strategy for the management of trees and other greenery

Most trees within the conservation area boundary are automatically safeguarded, as written notice is required to be submitted to the local authority six weeks before the work is carried out. This allows the local authority time to place a tree preservation order on the tree in question if it is felt worthy of the designation. It is the Forest of Dean District Council's countryside section that deals with such queries. However the protection granted by the designation of conservation areas does not normally extend to hedges or small scale planting. The loss of such features should be deeply considered before the work is carried out, as the impact on the conservation area could be harmful, both visually and ecologically.

Conclusion

Newnham is often described as being one of the most attractive villages in the Forest of Dean, with its pleasant streets and impressive buildings. One of the main reasons for the attractiveness of the village is the quality of many aspects of the street scene. The completeness and standard of architecture along High Street creates a lasting impression and pleasant open areas such as The Green mean that leisure time can be spent in the village. Details such as original windows, porches and decorative ironwork also enhance the appearance of Newnham.

On the whole Newnham has, escaped from extensive alterations and new development has generally been restricted to the edges of the historic core, causing little damage to it

On its own the designation will not fully safeguard the area's special character. It is the responsibility of all those with an interest in the area including developers, planners, agencies and organisations responsible for services in the public domain and not least local residents to respond sensitively to change in the village and its surroundings. This document will aid in this decision making process by clearly identifying the issues of primary importance to maintaining Newnham's special character.

The Forest of Dean District Council has limited funds to enhance the area but intends to work with developers; agencies and other organisations with an interest in undertaking work in the village. When initiatives are proposed, sound conservation advice will be offered to try to ensure that the special character is safeguarded and enhanced wherever possible for the benefit of the existing and future generations of the area.