

**FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**NEWENT  
CONSERVATION AREA**

**CHARACTER APPRAISAL**



**CONSULTATION DRAFT**

**MAY 2001**

# NEWENT



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Published by Forest of Dean District Council 2000  
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**Version II Amended January – May 2001  
to correct minor factual errors**

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# NEWENT CHARACTER APPRAISAL

## 1 HISTORIC & TOPOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

1.1 Newent, with a population of around 4,500 is the major centre in the north of the Forest of Dean District situated between Gloucester and Ross-on-Wye. The town is almost completely enclosed by the shallow valley of Peacocks Brook between 30 to 50 metres above sea level. This small stream flows into the Ell Brook just to the northeast of the town and in turn forms a tributary of the Leadon, which joins the Severn close to Gloucester.

1.2 Newent has an ancient history, although little before the Norman Conquest is well documented. The town is thought to have Roman origins, being a staging post on an ancient route between Wales and Gloucester. In Domesday Book (1086) it is known as *Noent*, probably a Celtic name meaning "new place". The present plan and the town's inherent urban quality derive from its early development and considerable importance as a medieval borough. Although the town has expanded greatly in the latter half of the 20th century, the basic plan form of the historic core has changed remarkably little over several centuries.

1.3 The Manor was given by the Conqueror to the Abbey of St Mary de Corneilles in Normandy. A Priory was established here, said to be on the site of Old Court, adjoining the church with the Lake derived from monastic fishponds. Edward III severed the French link in 1411 and Henry III conferred the Priory to the newly founded College of Fotheringay in Northamptonshire.

1.4 For some time Newent had a glass industry. Around 1567 a Huguenot glass-manufacturing base was set up in the Weald on the Surrey/Sussex borders using the Venetian soda process. This former French

colony moved first into Hampshire, then Newent and Woodchester. In each case there needed to be access to plentiful supplies of timber, water, siliceous whitish sand and suitable clay for firebricks.

1.5 Coalmining may now seem a somewhat unlikely industry, but between about 1795 and the late 19th century three colliery sites are recorded as operating about 2km west of the town. Newent Colliery was still working in 1870 and Perkins Hill House Colliery was opened in 1796, struggled until the 1840's, with attempts to reopen it again in 1873.

1.6 There is an important Iron Furnace (c.1639 – 1751) the remains of which survive as a listed building at the end of the aptly named Furnace Lane. Other industries in the locality included sandstone and limestone extraction as well as lime and charcoal burning. Gorsley, three miles to the west, was a centre of these activities, the last-mentioned not ceasing until 1965. There were also several local brickworks, for example at White House, to the west of Newent. Each of these extractive industries was to some extent interdependent, and some products needed to be transported further afield which was made possible, first by canal from 1795, and railway from 1885.

1.7 The route of the former Hereford & Gloucester Canal crosses the northeastern corner of the conservation area beyond Newent Lake. The canal initially opened from Gloucester to Newent in response to anticipated substantial yields from the newly discovered coalfield, together with the other local industries. Traffic never really justified the enormous cost of construction, in part due to Oxenhall Tunnel, well over one mile in length. By the time the railway between Gloucester and Ledbury opened, the fate of the

canal, which was already under railway ceased to carry commercial traffic by 1883 and was finally used to carry railway construction materials. (See the Map 1 The Town and Surrounding Area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century).

1.8 The railway itself was not a great commercial success either, although it undoubtedly brought considerable benefits to the local community. By 1918, it had already become deprived of through working between Gloucester and Worcester, with only a branch line service between Ledbury and Gloucester. The railway finally closed to passengers on 11th July 1959 with freight traffic following in May 1964. The most obviously visible remains are the stone overbridge abutments where the line crossed the B4215 and the considerable embankments built to accommodate station sidings that are still visible near the northern part of the conservation area.

1.9 Newent is associated with several names of some importance. It was the birthplace of John Lightfoot who became a well-known 18th century naturalist, associated with a published work on Scottish wild flowers. The town also had long associations with the Onslow family. Archdeacon Onslow was vicar of Newent for 47 years before his death in 1849, and his son, R.F. Onslow, lived at Stardens (see 4.12), which he greatly enlarged between 1872-73. He remained Lord of the Manor until his death in 1879. It is recorded that there was limited output of iron-ore from his mines in the locality. In more recent times Joe Meek described as a "pioneer of sound recording technology" was born in 1929 at 1 Market Place.

1.10 Historic documents and local history publications<sup>1</sup> show that Newent lost a considerable number of historic buildings

<sup>1</sup> e.g. "Around Newent" compiled by Tim Ward published Alan Sutton

control by 1863, was sealed. It had virtually during the early to middle part of the 20th century, largely due to pressures for road improvements and new development. (See Map 2 The Town Centre in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century).

Among these were a row of cottages, some thatched, in Station Street and the former Union Workhouse replaced by the Grammar School, itself now closed although the buildings remain. Newent Court, a large if undistinguished 19th century mansion and its associated Tudor style gatehouse, fronting High Street were also demolished. All were to the north of the present conservation area.

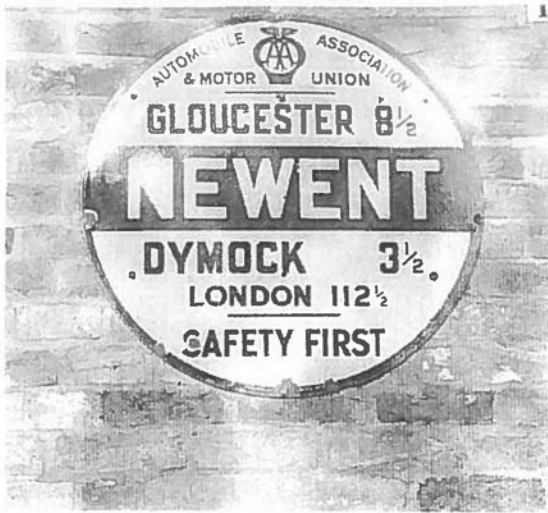
1.11 Within the conservation area itself the most serious loss was a large section of the east side of High Street which included a group of apparently 17th century box frame cottages, incorporating a bakery, and a range of almshouses with first floor dormers, probably of late 17th to early 18th century date. A further significant loss was The Holt at the corner of High Street and Watery Lane. Although in a heavy Regency style, and somewhat out of scale with its surroundings, the spacious gardens enclosed by mature trees were formerly a significant feature close to the centre of the town.

## 2 THE CONSERVATION AREA

### (i) Background & Setting Map 3 Existing Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

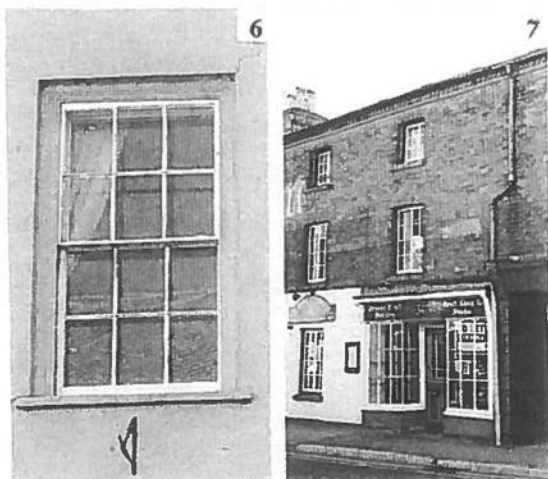
2.1 The present Newent Conservation Area was designated in 1979 and comprises the historic core of the town largely based on a medieval street pattern defined by burgage plots. The majority of buildings are of 17th to 19th century construction, but some have considerably older fabric embedded within the existing structure whilst others will have replaced earlier buildings on the same site. Also included is a long finger of informal and





### ASPECTS OF CHARACTER

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 points out that as well as considering historic buildings "our experience of a conservation area depends.. on the historic layout of properties and thoroughfares; on a particular "mix" of uses"; on characteristic materials; on appropriate scaling and detailing..on the quality of..street furniture and hard and soft surfaces; on vistas along streets and between buildings; and on the extent to which traffic intrudes and limits the pedestrian use of spaces between buildings". This also includes historic artefacts, surfaces, boundaries, trees and water features, land uses and landscapes including areas of communal activity, and of public and private seclusion. (1) Enamel historic sign in Market Square; (2) Market Square and Market House; (3) by Newent Lake; (4) listed chamber tombs in the churchyard; (5), (7) shops in Broad Street; (6), (8) window and door detail in Broad Street.







ornamentally landscaped public open space extending well to the northeast of the town

2.2 Within the conservation area are some 56 Grade II listed buildings. The Parish Church is listed Grade I, and No 1 Broad Street is Grade II\*. Within the churchyard there are an unusually large number of Grade II listed chest and pedestal tombs of mainly 18th and early 19th century date.

### (ii) Purpose of the Character Appraisal

2.3 The statutory definition of a conservation area is "an area of special architectural or historic 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 upon in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 section 4.

2.4 An English Heritage Conservation Area Practice Note published in June 1993 also states "Local Authorities should..define that special architectural or historic character which warrants designation by means of a published detail character analysis". Part of the purpose of such a document is to "incorporate policies in the statutory local plan... the most important (of which) will be a presumption against the loss of elements which have been identified as making a positive contribution to that special interest which warranted designation."

2.5 A process of change within a conservation area is inevitable and the purpose of a character statement such as this is to define as clearly as possible the historic (and by implication archaeological), architectural, and natural components of the conservation area that are considered especially important and contribute most to its character. It is also intended to advise on the scope for repair or restoration where needed and to encourage improvement or removal of unsightly features. There is an emphasis upon the use of local

centre.

traditional materials and methods of construction, which it is hoped, will lead to a reversal of more recent unfortunate trends.

2.4 To summarise, the principal aims of this document are intended to define:

- what influences have given Newent its particular character
- what chiefly reflects this character and is most worth conserving
- what has suffered damage or loss and may need reinstating
- what should be considered in guiding future changes
- what visual features particularly need safeguarding
- what existing or potential resources may be available to maintain character and assist in enhancement.

## 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Planning Policy Guidance Notes 15 and 16 and other Government circulars have advised that archaeology has become a "material consideration" in the planning process. Planning authorities must now consider the balance between the need for development and the effects it has on the historic environment.

The County Sites and Monuments Record shows a considerable number of entries for the parish of Newent as a whole, some of which have a particular bearing upon the history and development of the town. These include old

enclosures indicated by crop marks and sites where historic objects have been found.

3.3 Of particular archaeological significance is that the town still displays clear evidence of medieval burgage plots which are most clearly defined to the west of High Street (including sections of Broad Street) and south of Church Street. They are characteristically long and narrow to maximize the number of property units with direct access to the commercially viable street frontage. Since these tenement plots date back to at least medieval times, it is fairly certain that the site of many dwellings fronting the main streets are of equally early date and it is possible that medieval fragments survive behind much later frontages. Only painstaking research would reveal to what extent this is the case. The earliest documentary references to specific streets date from the 14th century and include Church Street and New Street (*le Newstrete, 1397; le Churchstrete, 1393*).

## 4 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

### (i) Architectural Character

Map 4 and 5 Newent Conservation Area

- Age of Buildings
- Character and Condition.

4.1 As has been demonstrated, Newent is an ancient settlement clustering round the Church and former Priory. Many buildings are superficially plain and reflect in abundance the local vernacular style of walls of brick or timber-frame. Roofs are of quite steeply pitched plain tile with mainly brick chimneys close or rear eaves. Nevertheless there are several subtle variations reflecting both period style and detailing which can be broadly grouped into the following categories:

4.2 Firstly, there are the larger buildings, often prominently placed in the street scene, or

enclosed within a well-defined curtilage. These include the Parish Church and United Reformed Church, the former Magistrates Courts, the former Rural District Council Offices and Library. There are also a number of sizeable detached private houses, mainly of the 17th to 19th centuries, which reflect the town's prosperity at that time.

4.3 Secondly are the principal town centre street-frontage domestic and commercial buildings. These tend to display most ornament. Most 15th to 17th century buildings have complex timber-frame detailing whilst in the 18th and 19th centuries there is much Georgian frontage detail of classical doorway pediments and pilasters, carved brackets to eaves, tri-partite sash windows and distinctively patterned fanlights. (Many of these 18th and 19th century properties conceal older timber frame buildings behind their more modern facades). In such largely continuous frontages are also to be found carriage archways, some of which retain feature arched doors and paved surfaces. A considerable proportion of town centre buildings extend to three storeys and have elegant proportions with excellent corner detail. The three substantial inns have maintained their character with almost timeless ease.

4.4 In the third category are the many plainer domestic dwellings, often with rear outbuildings found in each of the streets, which converge on or form part of the town centre. A few such buildings to the rear of the main street frontage are accessed by alleyways off the main street. The best examples, most of which are unlisted, are on the east side of Culver Street, and west side of High Street and Market Square. In their varied use of local materials and basic features they are the essence of the historic built environment. Although there has been some loss of traditional timber windows and doors,





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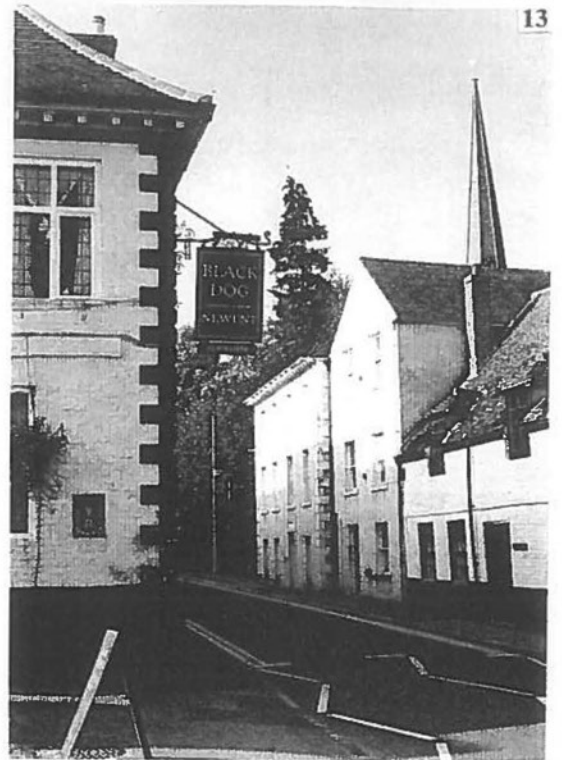
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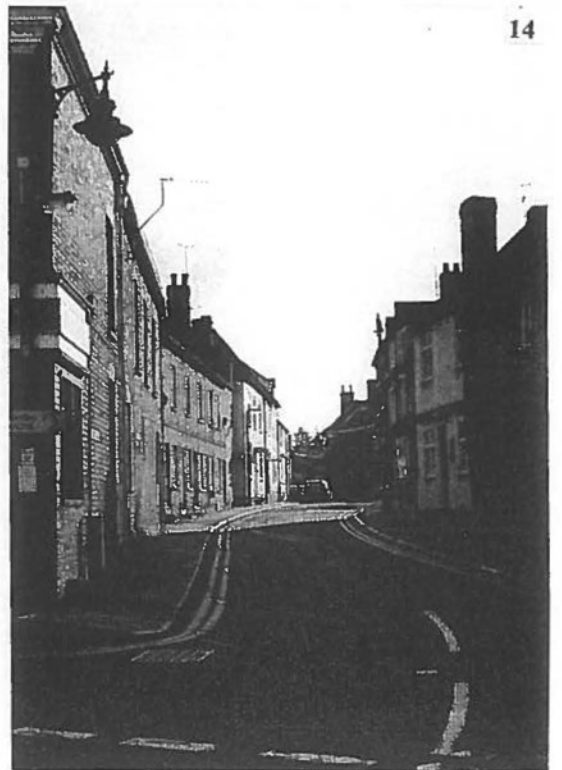
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### STREETSCAPES

One of the characteristic elements of the conservation area is the historic street pattern. The most unifying feature is that most older buildings have continuous frontages directly on to the pavement. In (9) and (11), the west side of High Street and south side of Church Street respectively, rear access through archways can be seen. Gaps between buildings are important, and are there for a variety of reasons. In Church Street (10) is an entrance into a walled forecourt with ornamental gate-piers. In Broad Street (12) on the west side (to the right of the photograph), a now disused petrol filling station possibly provides an opportunity for suitable infilling along an earlier building line. The churchyard forms an important break in Church Street (13). In Culver Street (14) the gently curving alignment adds visual interest.





the majority still remain. High Street and Broad Street in particular have many gabled dormer windows, which add further visual interest.

## (ii) Townscape Character

4.5 The local topography, and complex street pattern have combined to give the town a very close-knit and enclosed street pattern. Nevertheless, the ornamental landscape to the east, the churchyard, and the long rear former burgage plots, now mainly private rear gardens, have enabled mature trees to flourish, and these form an impressive backdrop throughout much of the town. Although there are no distant views beyond the town from the conservation area, neither is there much evidence of the extensive residential development that has virtually encircled the town in the latter half of the 20th century. There are some areas where this sense of enclosure has been or is in danger of being lost, which is mentioned later.

4.6 The conservation area can be subdivided into separate areas, which have special characteristics or a broadly coherent visual entity. These are outlined below and indicated on Map 3; [Existing Conservation Area & Listed Buildings].

### 1 High Street/former Lewall Street

4.7 One of the finest approaches to the town centre down a gentle slope with mainly plain domestic buildings and few commercial uses.

### 2 Church Street/Old Court/St Mary's Church

4.8 Another fine approach with grander buildings, mostly listed, and with the Parish Church and churchyard dominant features.

There is a mix of commercial and residential uses, including two large inns. The eastern end is "poorly defined"<sup>2</sup> and would benefit from appropriate enhancement, which could include some new development (section 11.8).

### 3 Broad Street/Market Square/Burybar

4.9 The heart of the town, with mainly commercial frontages and three-storey buildings. This part of the conservation area suffers some unresolved land use issues (sections 10.1 and 11.8).

### 4 Culver Street/Puffs Alley

4.10 A quiet corner of the conservation area consisting almost entirely of two-storey domestic buildings with some good 17th century examples of brick and timber frame.

### 5 Newent Lake and surrounding area

4.11 An extensive area of public open space, encircling Newent Lake formerly part of the ornamental grounds of Newent Court, and an associated gatehouse fronting High Street, both of which were demolished in the mid 20th century to make way for road improvements and new housing at Lakeside.

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<sup>2</sup> see "Environmental Audits & Urban Design Appraisal" by Roger Evans Associates for Forest of Dean District Council

## 5 USE OF MATERIALS

Map 6 Building Materials -Walls

Map 7 Building Materials - Roofs

Map 8 Significant Features

### (i) Buildings

5.1 Although brick and tile are used predominantly in Newent, many of the earlier buildings are of timber frame construction, with several fine surviving examples of the ornamented box-frame type, commonly associated with the English Midlands and Welsh Marches. Much timber framing remains concealed by later coverings including brick skins.

5.2 Use of stone is also quite widespread. There appear to be three main types. The soft-textured and reddish-purple New Red Sandstone is seen in quite large blocks mainly in boundary and retaining walls. This has often become heavily eroded, especially where exposed to salts or the use of hard cement mortars, both of which have a heavily detrimental affect. The fine quality ashlar sandstone seen in the Parish Church (largely rebuilt 1675-79) is derived from the Gorsley sandstone quarried locally. The frontage of the Congregational Church (1846) is a Cotswold limestone. Old Red Sandstones, which form much of the rim of the Forest, also yield good building stones of similar texture, normally red-brown in colour, but are not much in evidence in Newent.

5.3 Scattered throughout the town and forming at best only part of buildings are some rather inferior looking stratified sandstone types, of varying durability and normally in thin courses of whitish-grey to brown in colour. They are seen in several footings, in one or two stacks, and in some cases form the lower courses of buildings

otherwise built of brick. They are most abundant of all in boundary walls. These stone types, normally set in thin courses are not easily identifiable but derive from several former local sources of Silurian Sandstones. One such local source was from the former quarries at Gorsley.

5.4 For the most part, brick and tile predominate. Some 18th and 19th century brick buildings in Newent exhibit an especially high quality of workmanship. There are several good examples of the use of hand-made bricks, presumably originating from local brickworks, the site of some of which can be traced from early Ordnance Survey maps. Tuck-pointing and rubbed brick voussoirs (e.g. Ivy House in High Street) are also evidence of a largely lost craft. A further feature of Newent is the cream coloured clay chimney pots, some exhibiting considerable ornament.

### (ii) Boundaries

5.5 There are considerable stretches of boundary or retaining wall in Newent of brick and sandstone in almost equal measure, some of which exceeds 2 metres in height. In places such walling poses a potential conservation problem since, as the illustrated examples show, it is often more prone to deterioration, and in some cases to structural defects. There can also be problems of ownership responsibility.

Nevertheless, such walling makes a valuable contribution to the character of the conservation area, as well as providing a strong sense of enclosure or privacy in several cases. It also provides an opportunity for some fine classical detailing at entry points.

5.6 Another feature of Newent is the considerable extent of metal railings, for example along Old Maid's Walk, which





## FRONTAGES

The way in which frontages present themselves to the observer is one of the most complex elements of the historic townscape. In (15) showing 1 Broad Street and 1-3 Church Street, all the buildings are timber-framed, although only one is obviously so. That on the left is probably brick rendered, but conceals the most important medieval domestic building in Newent dating back to the 15th century and listed Grade II\*. At ground floor level, each one is also a commercial frontage, some modestly handled, others less so.



In Church Street some very good shopfronts remain (16) although the overall picture is less impressive (19) with several having lost most if not all their traditional features. At the junction of Broad Street, Church Street and Bury Bar Lane (17,18) ground floor commercial frontages are suitably restrained.

One of the town's best preserved shopfronts (late 19th/early 20th century) is away from the main centre at the junction of High Street and Watery Lane (20). Originally it was no doubt the archetypal corner shop.





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### TIMBER FRAME BUILDINGS

Newent has a broad representation of timber framed buildings. They are scattered throughout the conservation area and several are concealed under later frontages which tends to lessen their overall impact. Those illustrated on this page are some of the more prominent examples in Culver Street (21), Market Square (22), High Street (23,25), Church Street (24,27) and at the junction of Broad Street and Culver Street(26).



undoubtedly dates from the time that the landscape bordering Newent Lake was in private hands. There is a similar section bordering the eastern extremity of the conservation area. Its original deterrent purpose probably renders it unsuitable for re-use or relocation in its current form, which is somewhat unsatisfactory, if not dangerous. A specific project at some future date may enable it to be restored and used elsewhere as well as being adapted for reasons of safety.

5.7 Although not within the conservation area, the considerable extent of railings providing a barrier between the carriageway and raised pavement in Gloucester Street are a strong feature in this part of the town. Likewise, within the conservation area, the ornamental railings enclosing the churchyard in Church Street and the unusual ironwork fronting of Lloyds TSB Bank in Broad Street add greatly to the visual quality of the street scene.

### (iii) Ground Surfaces

5.8 What remains of natural stone surface materials is somewhat localised with concrete, asphalt or brick paviers predominating. There is an area of use of natural stone in the paving and kerbstones around the south and west side of Market Square extending underneath the Market House. Elsewhere, apart from some small areas of brick or stone paved areas on private forecourts and a few sections of kerbs or lowered pavement thresholds using natural stone, little else remains.

## 6 BUILDING FORM & ORNAMENT

6.1 Much of the character of Newent derives from the largely continuous frontages along at least one side of all of the town's main streets. The many different alignments, the slightly advanced or recessed variations in the building line form narrower "pinch points" which can provide a pleasant sense of enclosure. Occasional small gaps between buildings, especially in High Street and Church Street, provide constantly changing glimpses. Further visual interest is provided by archway accesses to rear courtyards. The several streets that converge at irregular intervals on the centre have provided many opportunities for corner treatment to buildings, which consciously or otherwise are largely successful. The gently curving alignment of Culver Street and equally gentle slope of High Street add a particularly subtle quality to the street scene.

6.2 Many town centre buildings from the earliest (15th century) to late 19th century exhibit some excellent period detail and ornament. The good quality of 15th -17th century timber frame construction with square panels, some interspersed with braces, and some jettied and almost all in traditional "black and white" has already been mentioned. They range from the plain box-frame cottages at 62-70 Culver Street, to the highly ornamented detail evident at Market Hall, 4 Market Square and 2-4 Church Street.

6.3 Other striking buildings are mostly brick or stucco of late 17th to late 19th century date, many reflecting a measure of urban prosperity at the time they were built. (Sometimes these are facades disguising older buildings behind.) Typical features are overhanging eaves with carved brackets, rusticated quoins, pediment doorways, moulded or panelled door and window surrounds, decorative fanlights and stepped entrances.

Many are well-mannered, rather than excessively ornate. This is even true of most mid to late 19th century houses, for example Ivy House and Cleeve House in High Street.

6.4 The mixture of timber-frame, render, brick and painted brick in no particular pattern and with no material being characteristic of a particular street, gives each a remarkable diversity which is itself a special characteristic of the town.

## 7 CONDITION OF BUILDINGS

### Map 4 Character and Condition of Buildings

7.1 Buildings in the conservation area are generally moderately to well maintained. There are exceptions where properties have become vacant. This has become a problem with several commercial premises in the town centre, most notably a former Bennions garage in Broad Street, and a former shop with vacant dwelling alongside at the junction of Broad Street and High Street. Both sites provide a good opportunity for sensitive restoration and enhancement. The extensive area to the southwest of Market Square of now semi-derelict structures is being redeveloped. The grade II listed timber-framed rear wing of Albion House is dilapidated and it is anticipated that the redevelopment of the site will lead to its restoration.

7.2 Some localised deterioration in the condition of brickwork and stonework is noted throughout the conservation area. This is especially the case where sandstone footings are subject to splashing from road salt. Some excessively hard mortars, and raised pointing have been used. Both tend to accelerate the erosion of some of the softer varieties of sandstone and should be avoided.

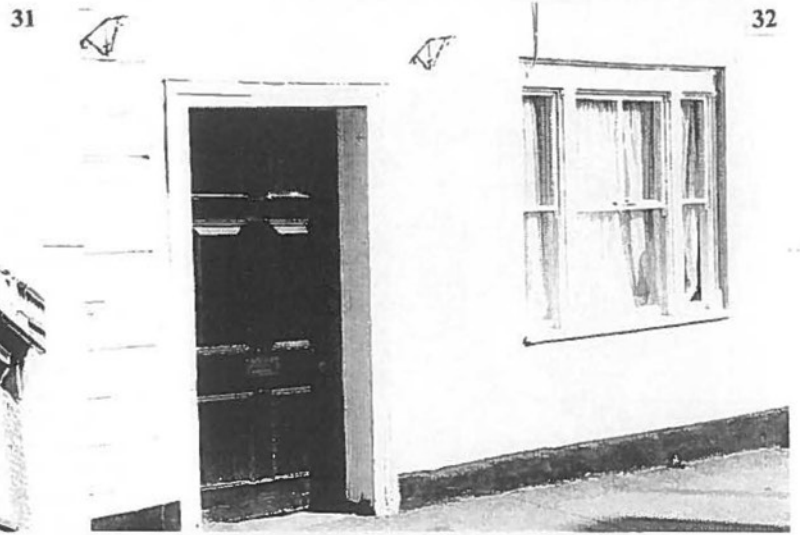
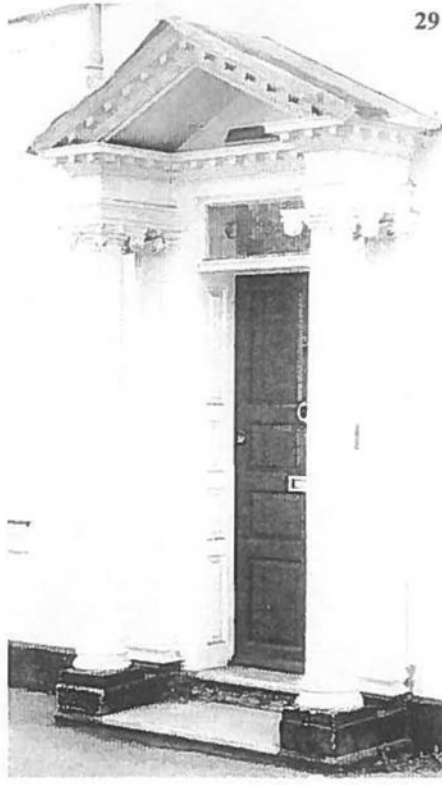
Several boundary walls both of brick and stone are in somewhat poor condition and would benefit from specialist advice before any repairs are undertaken. Although a number of the smaller local quarries closed many years ago, sandstones is still available from quarries in the district and its use would be beneficial to maintaining the character of the area when carrying out repairs.

7.3 There is a good survival rate of timber windows, mainly sash or casement on main frontages and normally casement in dormers. Panelled doors and original ornamented fanlights also feature strongly in Newent. Some of the wider entrances retain traditional ledged and braced double doors. Whilst the standard of upkeep throughout is generally good, retention of original frontage detail inevitably brings problems of maintenance. Repair or restoration of period joinery and other forms of detail can be costly and time consuming but normally repays the effort involved. Several window frames and sills in particular were noted as being in somewhat poor condition, but much original joinery is distinctive and well crafted. There is an understandable wish to use convenient and maintenance free materials in place of traditional joinery, but these are invariably visually inferior, even in the case of unlisted buildings where group value is often of great importance in the street scene.

7.4 There appear to be some problems with maintenance of gutters, drainpipes and eaves, especially in the case of three-storey buildings in the town centre. In the case of listed buildings, cast iron gutters and down pipes should normally be fitted in any restoration work. Historic Building Repair Grants may be available from the District Council to assist with this type of small scale repair work.

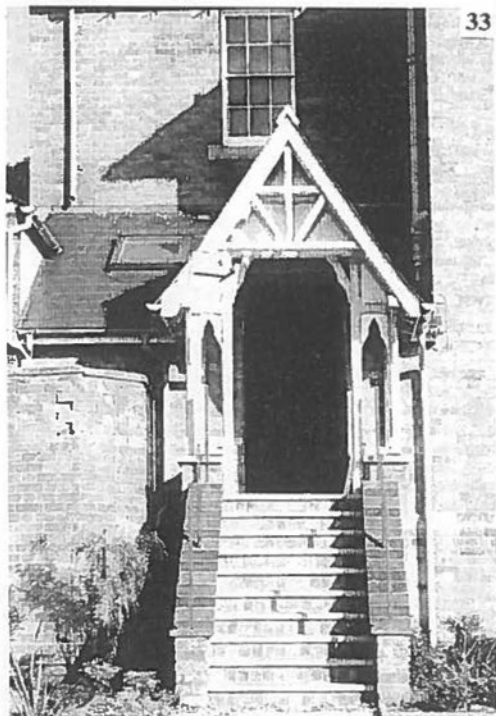
7.5 Almost all timber frame buildings have been well restored recently and none give any immediate cause for concern, apart from that at



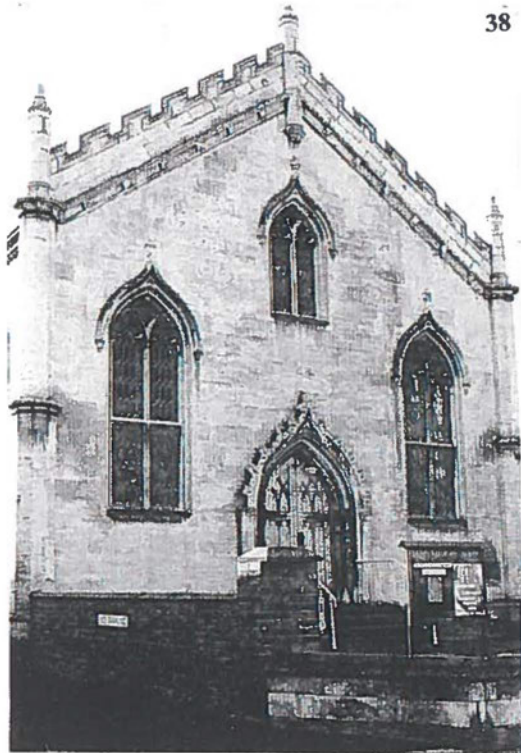
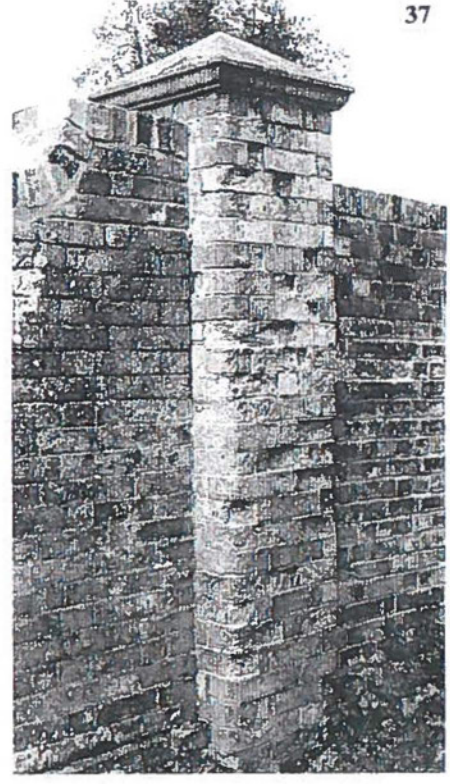
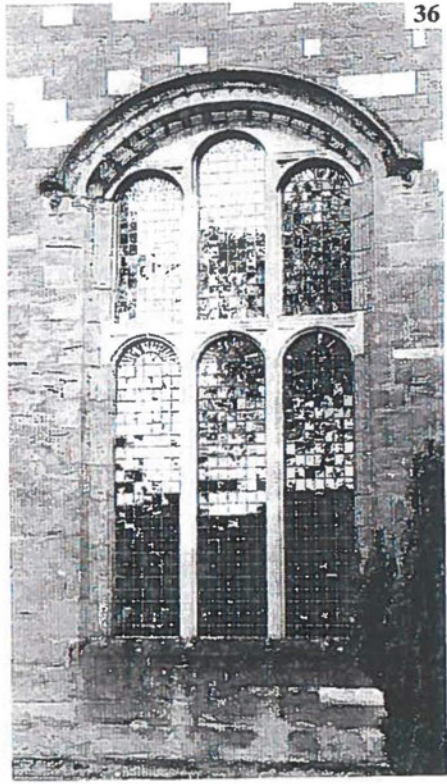
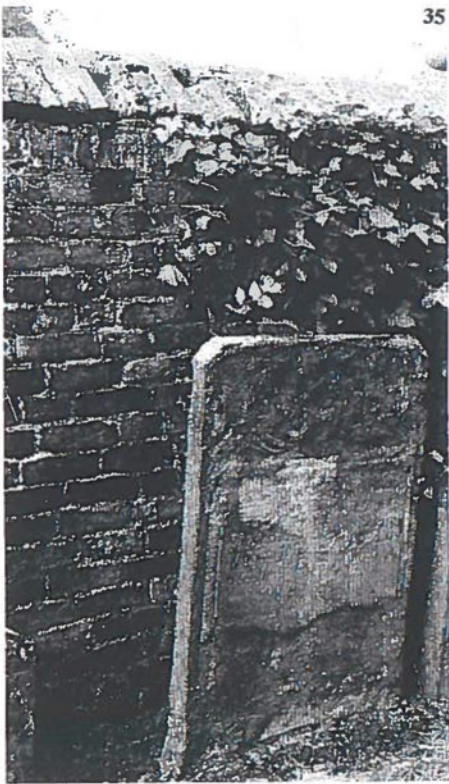


**ASPECTS OF DETAIL I**

*One of the most pleasing characteristics of historic buildings is the wealth of period detail mainly associated with the late 18th to early 20th century. Maintenance and repair often poses specific conservation problems. Surprisingly not all are listed, for example, No.1 Market Square (30), the former RDC Offices High Street (33) and No.24 Church Street (34). All other examples shown; The Red House (28), Porch House (29), Devonian (32), and No.8 Church Street (31) are listed, but with some features in timber and stone in particular showing signs of decay and likely to require specialist help when undergoing restoration.*







**38 ASPECTS OF DETAIL II**

*Attention to the more detailed components that make up the character of a conservation area can reveal much that requires consideration. Early brickwork (35,37) and ashlar stonework (36,38), poses such questions as cleaning methods, finding suitable replacement material, and using correct mortars and width of jointing between courses. This is not always done very successfully (37,top left and 42 lower centre of picture). A new section of sandstone wall has been laid competently (40), but in such cases care should be taken to ensure they have regard to their surroundings. Another conservation matter concerns the several remaining sections of railings in Newent some of which are damaged or have sections missing (39,41).*





the rear of Albion House. Ironically it is the later buildings where the main problems of poor condition and inappropriate repair or replacement are occurring. In the case of all matters relating to building maintenance or restoration in conservation areas, there is a need for information to be made available concerning what is acceptable; including guidance about suitable repair methods, and a list of firms, preferably local, with the ability and skills to ensure that the integrity of historic buildings is maintained, even the plainer ones.

## 8 KEY BUILDINGS

8.1 Newent has several individual buildings and groups of buildings that contribute strongly to the distinctive local character of the town. The most immediately obvious landmark is **St Mary's Church** (grade 1) with 14th century tower and spire (rebuilt in 1968) and late 17th century nave rebuilt by Edward Taylor, a local carpenter who had earlier worked under Sir Christopher Wren. This forms a strong visible link both with the town and surrounding countryside. Adjoining the church is **Old Court**, (grade II) late 17th century, and one of the few major historic buildings in the town without a street frontage. Extensive restoration is currently taking place.

8.2 Within the town centre the late 16th century **Market House**, (grade II) is especially well-positioned and distinctive. It is ornately timber-framed and raised some 3 metres on 12 posts with an external staircase. In Broad Street, the **United Reformed Church**, (grade II) built in 1846 is a striking building having ashlar frontage detail with delicately proportioned pinnacles and buttresses. Nearby are **18-20 Broad Street** (grade II)

a pair of 18th century houses altered in the mid 19th century and in a dominant position in the town centre. The rendered frontage has been lined to resemble ashlar. Feature detailing consists of rusticated stone quoins, rubbed brick arches with projecting stone keystones, and paired brackets under wide eaves. Both houses have surviving sash windows on the first and second floors. and were until recently occupied by a Garage business. The site, with adjoining vacant petrol filling station presents an excellent opportunity for sensitive refurbishment.

8.3 The historic importance of Newent and its gradual evolution is reflected in the variation in the age, style and status of its buildings. Early timber-frame buildings, some exposed and jettied such as **2-4 Church Street** (grade II); the former **Verger's House** (grade II), now the Good News Centre in High Street, and **14 Broad Street** are typical examples. However, the town's most important secular building is **1 Broad Street** (grade II\*), less remarkable than many from the outside, but with a wealth of interior timber-frame features, including a fine four bay 15th century roof and described in the listing details as "a very important medieval survival". Finally, in Church Street is **Oakdene** (grade II) with a 17th century timber-frame gable and **Black Dog Inn** (grade II) also partly timber-framed and of early to late 17th century. Its double frontage with mullioned and transomed windows and massive star plan brick chimney is an impressive feature at the eastern end of the conservation area. Immediately opposite, **32 Church Street** (grade II) is currently undergoing major restoration that has revealed substantial timber-framing, probably of the early 15th century.

8.4 Evidence of the next phase in the town's development is in the fine classical detailing and largely surviving features of the late 17th to mid 19th century. Some of these are based around older building that survive to varying degrees behind these later facades. There are two good inns. **George Hotel** (grade II) which gives the appearance of late 18th to early 19th century authenticity and includes an **Assembly Room** (early 19th century) at the rear with distinctive reeded door cases and fireplaces. The **Red Lion Inn** (grade II) occupies a typically prominent position at the corner of Broad Street and Market Place and displays the external characteristics of an early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century building. In Culver Street **Tan House** (grade II) has a typical symmetrical plan of the period with wings projecting towards the street and a central ornate doorcase behind ball-finial topped gateposts. This and the adjoining **Barn** (grade II) are good examples of late 17th century Flemish bond brickwork. In Church Street and High Street are the best examples of 18th and early 19th century town houses. In Church Street, **17-19, 29-31 (The Post Office)** and **Porch House** (all grade II) give the appearance of typical 18th century town houses, and with **28** (grade II) opposite (a mid 19th century exterior, and much earlier interior) form a precinct around the churchyard.

8.5 Among the best examples in High Street are **Devonia** (grade II) of rendered brick with original openings and on the opposite side is an impressive 18th century group, **The Malthouse, The Poplars, The Mulberry Tree and Shirley House** (all grade II) with pedimented and cantilevered doorways, carriage archways, and with both sash and casement windows, including a sequence of dormers.

8.6 Where commercial frontages predominate there are several cohesive groups. One forms the south side of Broad Street between Culver Street eastwards to include the south side of Market Square. Another forms much of the north side of Broad Street, then extends along both sides of the western end of Church Street. Along the north side of Church Street a proportion of traditional shop fronts remain, but very few now remain in Broad Street where internally illuminated and plastic box signage or oversized lettering, now predominate, often having little regard for the proportions of the building as a whole. It is hardly surprising therefore that individual buildings in these groups tend not to stand out, although there are a few exceptions that have not so far been referred to. **8 Broad Street** (grade II), now Lloyds TSB bank, has an impressive and unspoilt early 18th century town house frontage with a central Venetian window and Doric style entrance above steps. At the corner of Church Street and Market Place **1-3 Church Street** (grade II) with mid 19th century Flemish bond brickwork and triple sash windows wrapped around the corner has a particularly unspoilt frontage. It is also a good example of a 17th century three-storey jettied timber frame building concealed behind the later brick frontage.

8.7 Finally, there are domestic and commercial buildings of the latter half of the 19th century and beyond. Many of this date are the most vulnerable since they are mostly unlisted. Frontages are relatively plain, although even here there are exceptions, for example **Ivy House** (unlisted), in High Street with distinctive cast iron porch. A particularly good group is further down High Street, one house having decorative cast-iron windows, and at the junction with Watery Lane is a fine late 19th century shop front. **46-48 Culver Street** (unlisted) are a three storey mid 19th century pair set back imposingly behind the main street frontages retaining most of their





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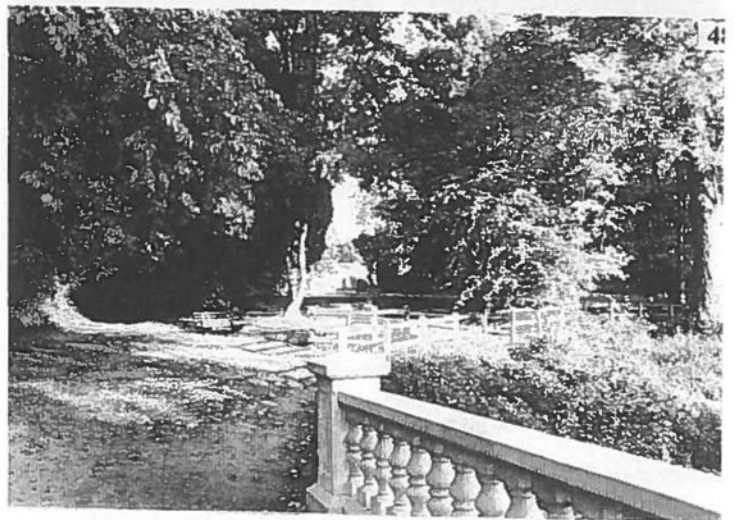
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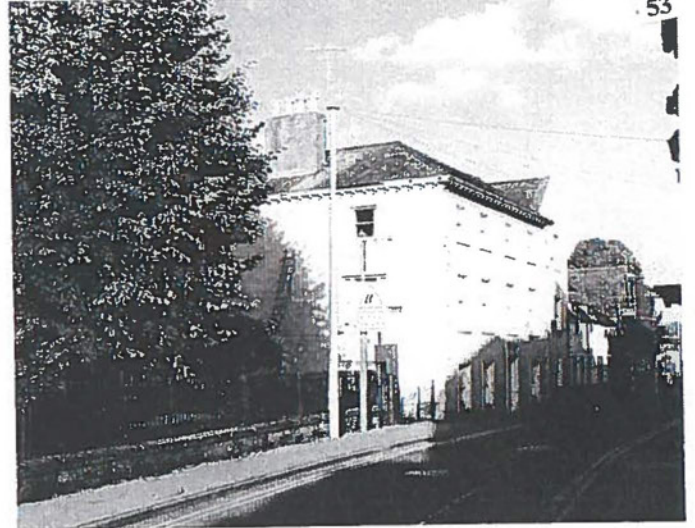
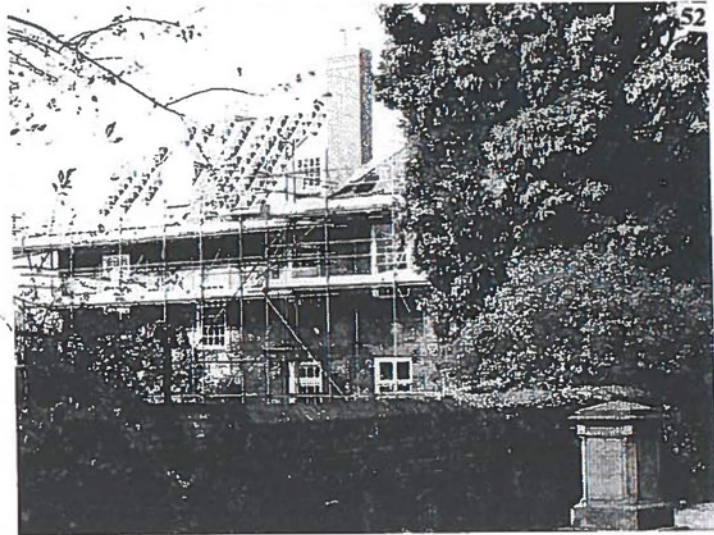
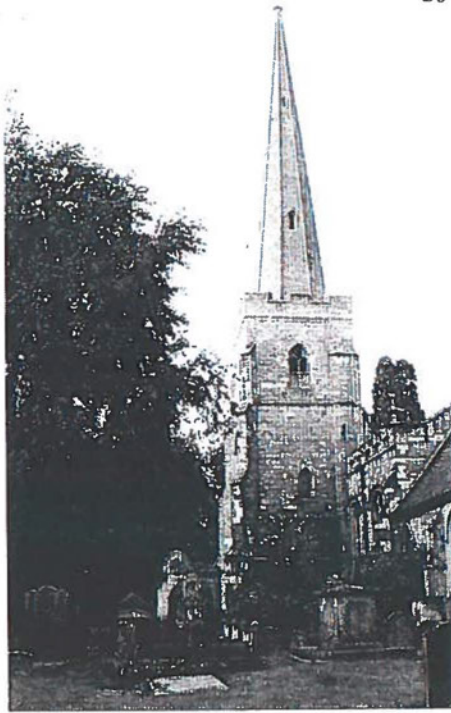
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### ASPECTS OF LANDSCAPE I

*Almost half of the conservation area consists of associated landscape and a network of footpaths centred on Newent Lake (43). In this parkland setting, which has recently been the subject of an enhancement scheme with additional car parking and an ornamental balustrade at the head of the lake, the Parish Church is an attractive feature (44,48).*

*The relationship between trees, buildings and boundary features adds greatly to the overall character. This can be seen to good effect where Old Maid's Walk leads towards High Street (45), where the formality of railings and topiary in the churchyard fronts Church Street (46), and where historic relics - the bed of the Hereford & Gloucester Canal and former private land associated with the demolished Newent Court, marked by railings - are now inseparable from their landscape setting (47).*





## ASPECTS OF LANDSCAPE II

Both individual and groups of trees are important elements of the character of the conservation area, and in Newent there is not only a wide variety of both deciduous and evergreen species but some particularly fine specimen trees.

Close to the head of Newent Lake there is a fine London Plane (*Platanus x hispanica*) (49). Adjoining the church (50) is a Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* "purpurea") with another good specimen in the grounds of Old Court.

A *Wellingtonia* (*Sequoia gigantea*) dwarfs new housing at the northern edge of the conservation area (51). Where it is appropriate it may be worth considering whether such mature specimens, planted in the 19th century as part of a planned landscape associated with former Lords of the Manor of Newent, could be shadowed by young trees that would eventually replace them.

Some mature trees tend to complement buildings, such as a cypress at Old Court (52) and churchyard lime adjoining No.28 Church Street (53). Such trees need particular care, partly because of their contribution to the townscape and their proximity to buildings. Many trees are already protected by Tree Preservation Orders that predate the designation of the Conservation Area. With certain exceptions most of the rest are protected by conservation area legislation and ideally should be subject to periodic health checks. The more informal landscape setting of Newent Lake (54) is managed by Newent Town Council with assistance from the Forestry Commission.





six-pane sash windows, although insertion of a horizontal casement window, (probably in the 1960's) is a good example of how the fashion of the time can alter the overall integrity of a building in the longer term.

8.8 In addition to the foregoing are several former public buildings that indicate that Newent was once of some importance as an administrative centre. In High Street is the **former Vicarage**, that more recently was used as the former District Council Offices and Library (unlisted), This building is late 17th century in red brick, and an attractive example of its kind with period features (e.g. ornate gabled timber porch, curving steps to the front entrance and colour-patterned glass). Of later date are the **former Police Station and Local Magistrates Courts** (unlisted), now a museum. Its polychromatic brickwork and lancet openings are typical late Victorian features.

## 9 LANDSCAPE & TREES

### MAP 8 Significant features

9.1 Much of the character of the conservation area is derived from the range of species of mature trees and their distribution, mainly in a lakeside setting. Also of importance to the character of Newent is the backdrop of trees to most streets on the approach to the town centre, being located either in the churchyard and close to the site of the Priory or in the long rear gardens of the former burgage plots. This establishes a fine visual relationship, both with adjoining buildings and boundary features, especially the many stone and brick walls. It also provides a particularly attractive environment for pedestrians using the many footpaths set apart from the main streets, such as Old Maid's Walk and Puffs Alley.

9.2 Within their sheltered surroundings enhanced by the shallow valley setting, some trees have grown to a height of around 30 metres or more. A considerable variety of deciduous species are represented, for example, alder alongside Newent Lake. Newent Town Council manages these trees along with many others. The current policy is to control the alder to allow light and air into the lake and lakeside.

Elsewhere, the main individual specimens are; beech and copper beech, lime, horse chestnut, sycamore, willow and walnut. Amongst evergreens represented are yews, and several varieties of cypress, with an exceptionally fine Wellingtonia close to Old Maids Walk.

9.3 There is something of a lack of major landscape elements of significance as part of the overall street scene itself apart from where the churchyard fronts Church Street. This undoubtedly results from the largely continuous building line of historic frontages. There has been some organised recent planting of young trees within the recently extended public car park and between Old Maids Walk and Church Street.

## 10 DETRACTIONS & VULNERABILITY

10.1 There are several factors that are tending to cause a loss of character within the conservation area and need to be addressed.

- ◆ traffic flows through the town and especially along High Street and Church Street, which combined with on-street parking leads to daytime congestion. The wide asphalt pavement on the east side of the northern part of High Street, unrelieved by few, if any, attractive features is detrimental to an otherwise noteworthy street scene.

- ◆ the threat to some buildings in the town centre through vacancy, redundancy or dilapidation is of concern. This appears to be a recent trend that may be linked to changing patterns of commercial activity, associated with settlement hierarchies and changing shopping habits.
- ◆ the deteriorating condition of some boundary walls which require a properly coordinated repair programme.
- ◆ visual intrusion as a result of:
  - (i) poor quality surface treatment and street furniture in some pedestrian spaces.
  - (ii) commercial frontages that are unsympathetic to the building as a whole
  - (iii) unnecessarily large or poorly positioned road signs
  - (iv) unsuitably proportioned doors and windows in non-traditional materials
  - (v) utilitarian street lighting that bears no relationship to the historic built environment
  - (vi) buildings to the rear of main frontages that have become largely redundant and for which suitable alternative uses have not been found.
  - (vii) significant gaps in otherwise built up frontages to the main built up street scene.

- (viii) marginal sites to the rear of or detached from the main historic frontages where development (including minor works) needs to be coordinated.

10.2 Having regard to these issues, an enhancement scheme that covers aspects of the whole conservation area, as well as the specific areas highlighted on the proposals map should be considered as and when funds permit.

## 11 KEY LOCAL FACTORS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### Map 9 Proposals

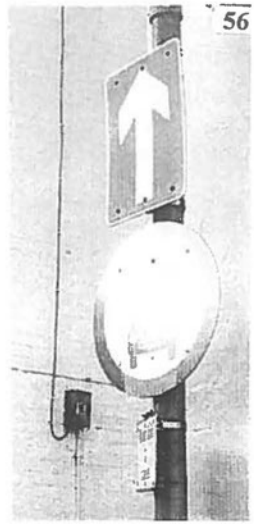
11.1 Proposals for new development, restoration of existing buildings or features, and enhancement projects, should include consideration of the following principles.

#### 11.2 Buildings in the Conservation Area

Many buildings in the conservation area have already lost their original features. Others still retain them but as yet have little if any statutory protection. There are often few incentives to use or reintroduce traditional methods because of a lack of local availability both of suitable materials and skills. The following are guidelines that should be followed when considering alterations, repair or restoration to historic buildings within the conservation area.

- ◆ Encourage repointing of stonework using suitable soft mortar mixes, ideally with a lime base. This is particularly the case for local sandstones where hard cement mortars rapidly accelerate weathering.
- ◆ When repairing or renewing roof coverings use plain tiles that match





### DETRACTING FEATURES

Most conservation areas contain elements that detract from their overall character. In Newent, traffic congestion and on-street parking intrude considerably in some locations (eg High Street), and standardised traffic signs sometimes appear over-dominant or poorly positioned (55-57). A majority of shopfronts have lost most if not all of their traditional features and at ground floor level the design emphasis has often become horizontal, which clashes with upper floors where the emphasis is vertical (58). Recent window replacements, if not UPVC, are often of less robust construction than previously, and are casement in place of double-hung sash. Small top opening vents can be particularly inappropriate in the historic built environment (60). Opportunities undoubtedly exist for refurbishment that retains or restores historic features (59) and enhancement that provides for better signage, street furniture and ground surface treatment (61).



existing wherever possible. Handmade tiles or natural slate should be used in the case of listed buildings, for which grant aid may be available to offset additional costs. The use of concrete tiles and undisguised artificial slate substitutes should be avoided in the conservation area.

- ◆ Where existing boundary walling needs restoring, the use of lime mortar for repointing, and the use of salvaged or newly produced hand made bricks or natural stone should be encouraged.
- ◆ Where existing features are concerned, (such as original doors, windows, porches, shop fronts, boundary walls, gateways etc.), all forms of repair or replacement should attempt to match like-for-like. This particularly applies to traditional timber casement or double-hung sash windows, including glazing bars. Similarly, timber doors especially when being replaced, should maintain and respect the local vernacular or "polite" tradition of panelled doors, moulded doorcases, fanlights etc. The same principles should apply to existing period porches, several good examples of which survive in the town.

### 11.3 Townscape

- ◆ Have regard to the existing form, arrangement and grouping of buildings in all proposals for new development, including extensions to existing buildings. This includes roof height, pitch and insertion of dormers.
- ◆ In considering proposals for new development or redevelopment involving existing buildings or structures, it should be borne in mind that stricter safeguards against any form of demolition in conservation areas have recently been introduced.

- ◆ Existing features of quality that typify the historic built environment should be retained. Any new development should echo existing in terms of scale, height, building lines and in relation to street frontages.
- ◆ Brick and stone boundary and retaining walls, and existing banks should be safeguarded wherever possible, especially those that identify the historic street and burgage plot layout.
- ◆ Ensure retention of historic street furniture. As part of any overall enhancement scheme consideration should be given to the reintroduction of cast iron street name plates, and replacement street lighting that is more sympathetic to the character of the conservation area.

### 11.4 Features

- ◆ Encourage the conservation of existing railings and associated ironwork. Where appropriate consider removal, adaptation and relocation (see paragraph 5.6).
- ◆ Ensure retention of historic street furniture, for example the wrought iron circular seat in Market Square, and enamel early AA sign etc.
- ◆ Encourage retention of the character of existing entrances, including gate piers, carriage archways and associated period timber or metal gates.
- ◆ Ensure necessary protection of all natural stone kerbs and gulleys, including paved or cobbled areas, in both public and private ownership.
- ◆ Seek to retain or reinstate all existing period windows, doors, and cast iron rainwater goods.



- ◆ Consider introduction of an Article 4(2) Direction to effect control over changes to the elevations to key buildings currently not statutorily listed fronting the highway. This could include the installation of PVCu windows and doors, inappropriate roof materials, external cladding, and use of exposed block work. The buildings that could be considered for such additional protection are identified in yellow on Map 3

11.5 Because of their vulnerability to change it may be advisable, if time and resources allow, to prepare an inventory of boundary walls and important street furniture features not already on the historic buildings record.

#### 11.6 Historic Setting and Landscape

- ◆ Protect the integrity of the historic town plan which has survived largely unaltered since medieval times
- ◆ Before any demolition or redevelopment takes place ensure that consideration is given to the survival of ancient boundaries, especially those forming the remains of burgage plots. Consideration should also be given to the previous history and present significance of the many unlisted outbuildings located to the rear of the main street frontages in the former burgage plots.
- ◆ Existing mature trees are a very important feature of the town's setting and should be especially safeguarded. Although many are of considerable age, most appear to be healthy, although some may be becoming over-mature and their condition need to be monitored by their owners. For the long term enhancement of the town consideration could be given, where appropriate, to the planting of young trees of a similar or suitable alternative species which

would gradually replace older specimens. There has been recent planting of introduced conifers, such as Lawson's Cypress that can strike a discordant note in a historic setting. There are several mature specimens of an unidentified cypress, for example in the churchyard, at Old Court and at the eastern end of Newent Lake, which have now become a distinctive part of the landscape setting.

#### 11.7 Reintroduction of Traditional Materials and Features

- ◆ There is a growing awareness of the need to revive sources of traditional building materials, for example, the recent English Heritage initiative to encourage the revival of sources of natural roofing material. Where appropriate, steps could be taken to rediscover supplies of natural materials, preferably from their historic source or equivalent, and to encourage builders to develop skills in their use. The following guidelines are intended to encourage best conservation practice whenever possible.
- ◆ Encouragement should be given to the reinstatement of historic features that have been lost, where later adaptations, by virtue of a now redundant use or ephemeral fashion, have caused harm to the overall appearance of the building and where future building work provides an opportunity for such faults to be partially or fully rectified. This is particularly the case with some doors, windows, and ground floor commercial frontages, including shop fronts, as well as some instances where unsuitable repointing, rendering or cladding has been used.
- ◆ Owners and occupiers of historic buildings within the conservation area could approach the District Council for advice on all such matters even if formal permission is not required.



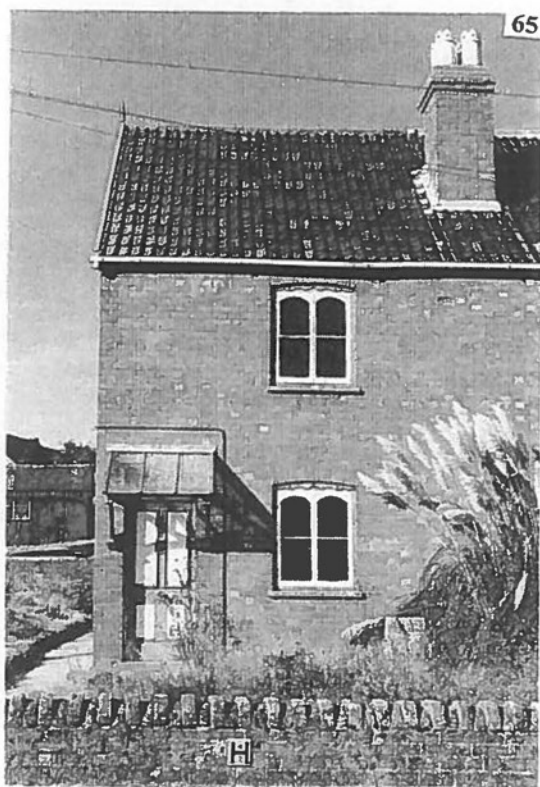
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## BUILDING FEATURES

Sometimes it is necessary to look at individual buildings to appreciate conservation problems. Apart from (64), all buildings shown are unlisted. Ivy House (62) in High Street has tuck pointing with rubbed brick lintels and a delicate cast iron canopied porch. Its UPVC windows are better than many, but nevertheless tend to detract from otherwise completely unspoilt traditional character.

Many fine examples of sash windows survive such as in Church Street (64). Whilst plain clay roof tiles predominate in Newent, some late 19th century cottages in Watery Lane (63,65) have black double Roman pantiles. The former cottage is almost the only example in the town entirely built in the thinly coursed local sandstone, whilst the latter, which is just outside the conservation area, is a rare example of complete survival of original detail, even including door canopy and chimney pots. Sadly, this is not the case in Culver Street, where the left of an otherwise imposing pair of three-storey 19th century houses has lost the upper half of a gate pier and an original ground floor sash window has been replaced by an unsuitable casement.



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## 11.8 Site-specific Considerations

There are several locations identified on Map 9 (Proposals) within the conservation area where particular attention should be given to development or enhancement proposals in the context of the historic built environment.

### 1 **34-36 Broad Street**

This site is indicated as "Mixed Use" on the Draft Local Plan Review (ref: (R) F. Newent 3)

At present there are unoccupied buildings including a former shop premises with original frontage detail, which are dilapidated and partially boarded up. Sensitive refurbishment of the existing buildings is suggested as the preferred option. Land to the rear still displays burgage plot boundaries that should be incorporated into any proposed scheme in a manner that provides protection from any development that would cause them to lose their identity.

### 2 **18-20 Broad Street**

This site is indicated as "Mixed Use" on the Draft Local Plan Review (ref: F.(R) Newent 2)

The site that is prominent in the town centre currently consists of vacant buildings, including a former petrol filling station. There are ground floor former offices and showrooms. It is suggested that any redevelopment of this site should involve a refurbishment of the listed buildings that reinstates the historic ground floor frontage with as much authenticity as possible.

### 3 **The former Co-op Store site in Church Street**

The present range of buildings were apparently purpose built as No 17 branch, Newent of the Gloucestershire Co operative and Industrial Society in 1914. Old photographs show a building with a more ornate appearance than the present complex. Even so the buildings are of local historic interest and should proposals come forward for the development of this site then the retention or incorporation of these buildings into any scheme should be seriously considered.

### 4 **Black Dog Car Park Church Street**

This part of the conservation area, includes land that provides the important setting for The Black Dog Inn. It offers the opportunity to strengthen existing building lines and provide a greater sense of enclosure possibly using the form, height and scale of any additional buildings on the site. Alternatively it could be enhanced through a landscaping scheme to reflect the historic setting of the existing buildings.

### 5 **Memorial Hall and Car Park Site.**

Although there is strong local attachment to the present Memorial Hall, the building together with its car park, boundary walling/fencing to the rear could be significantly improved to complement the high quality of townscape immediately surrounding the Market House. This space could benefit from further enclosure, possibly by means of a two-storey building replacing or largely obscuring the existing buildings visible from Market Square.



### **11.9 Suggested Alteration to the Conservation Area Boundary**

A minor addition is suggested on Map 9 [Proposals]. This consists of part of Gloucester Street where there are several 19th century or earlier 20th century buildings that are competent architecturally and also quite visually important. A major feature is the long, gently curving and sloping carriageway in a hollow with retaining walls and raised pavement with extensive railings on the north side. This adds considerable character to this approach to the town. It is also an area where some repair and enhancement is likely to become necessary, particularly too much of the stonewalling and associated raised pavement, which is showing some signs of structural instability.

## **12 SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS**

12.1 Newent has preserved the overall character of its historic heart to a large extent whilst absorbing a large population increase. From medieval origins to the beginning of the 20th century the town largely maintained its visual integrity, with many examples of competent craftsmanship in traditional materials.

12.2 During the latter half of the 20th century the pressures of mass transport and industry together with dramatic changes in the pattern of commerce and administration have led to alternative land uses and caused a considerable number of historic building demolitions and earlier building lines to be breached by new development or services.

12.3 Some new buildings and alterations to existing buildings have not always respected the town's inherent architectural character and have sometimes compromised the intimate relationship

between building frontage and the overall street scene.

12.4 Some quite contemporary uses have come and gone leaving several sites in or near the town centre vulnerable to redevelopment pressure, such as the former garage in Broad Street, and a former processing plant off Market Square. A considerable number of historic elevations, especially at ground floor level, have been largely disregarded by commercial occupiers, with some frontages having scant regard for the building as a whole. There is also the creeping intrusion of double-glazing and UPVC windows and doors, much of which fails to reflect the generally better proportioned and integrated use of timber that preceded them.

12.5 Several historic buildings in the town can be considered to be currently at risk. Some outbuildings to the rear of the main street frontages also appear to be falling into disuse or dilapidation.

12.6 There are therefore many ongoing challenges to the historic and architectural character of the conservation area. Some of the most vulnerable buildings are not listed but do need some additional protection in order to maintain the character of the conservation area.

12.7 Encouraging signs are emerging that more appropriate measures are being taken to conserve what remains and restore and enhance using best conservation practice.

12.8 An appreciation of the historic and architectural quality of the conservation area together with extensive consideration of the historic built environment generally, which is now enshrined in central government guidance<sup>3</sup>, should ensure that no further demolition of significant historic buildings can ever occur again.

<sup>3</sup> see Planning Policy Guidance Notes 15 & 16 published HMSO 1994

### **13 IMPORTANT POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

13.1 Consideration needs to be given to the extension of the existing Conservation boundary as indicated on Map 7

13.2 Unlisted buildings identified as other key buildings or groups of buildings that contribute to the townscape on Map 3 should be considered for inclusion within an Article 4(2) direction to control inappropriate changes to the principal elevations.

13.3 The special character and significant features that need to be safeguarded or enhanced should be recognised generally throughout the Newent Conservation Area. Particularly in the sites or areas identified on Maps 6 and 7 and within the text of this appraisal.

13.4 Subject to Local Plan Policies and guidance and the advice given in the Forest of Dean Residential Design Guide due consideration should be taken of the key local factors and guiding principles (section 11) when considering development proposals within Newent Conservation Area.

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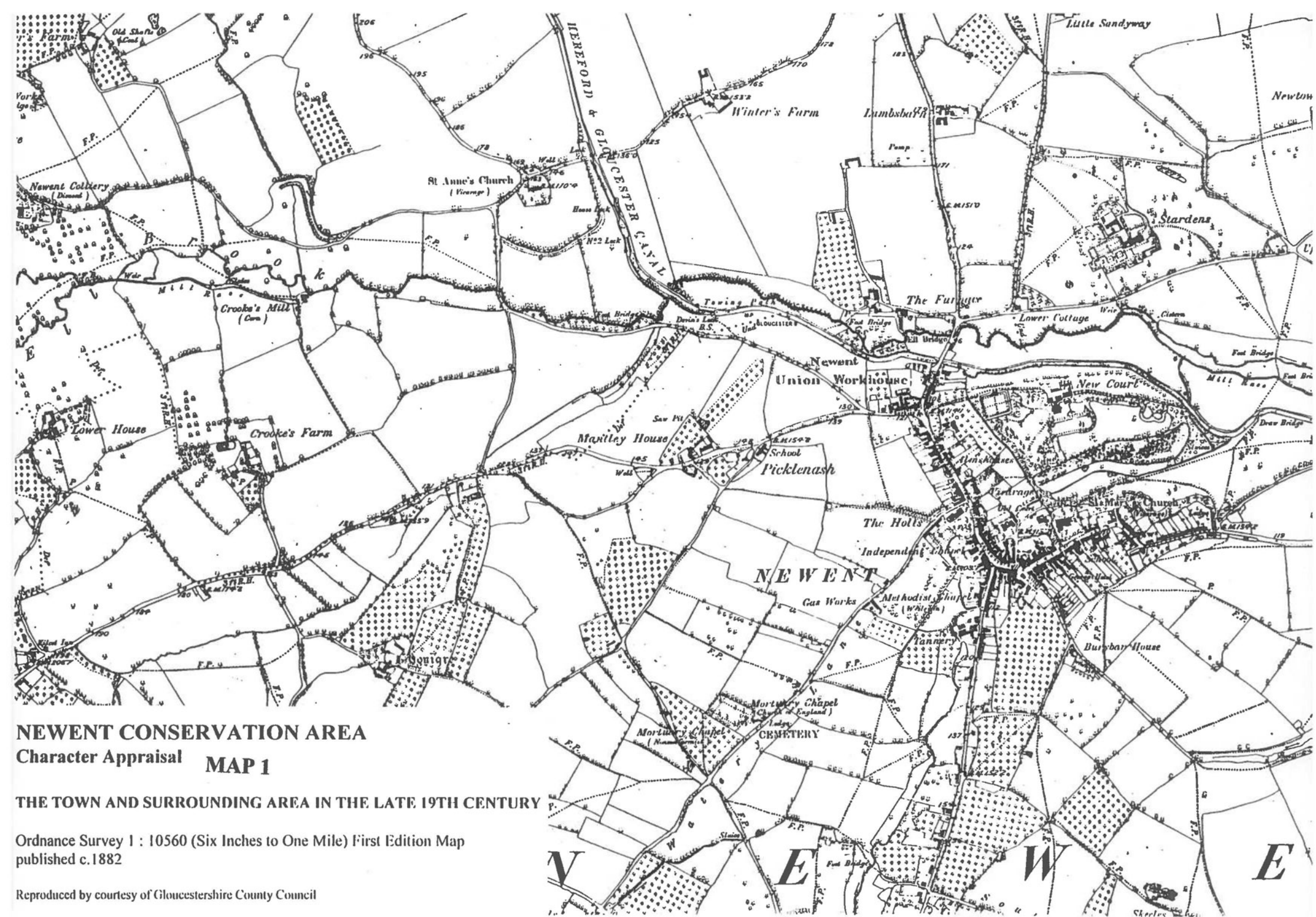
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**NEWENT CONSERVATION AREA**  
**Character Appraisal MAP 1**

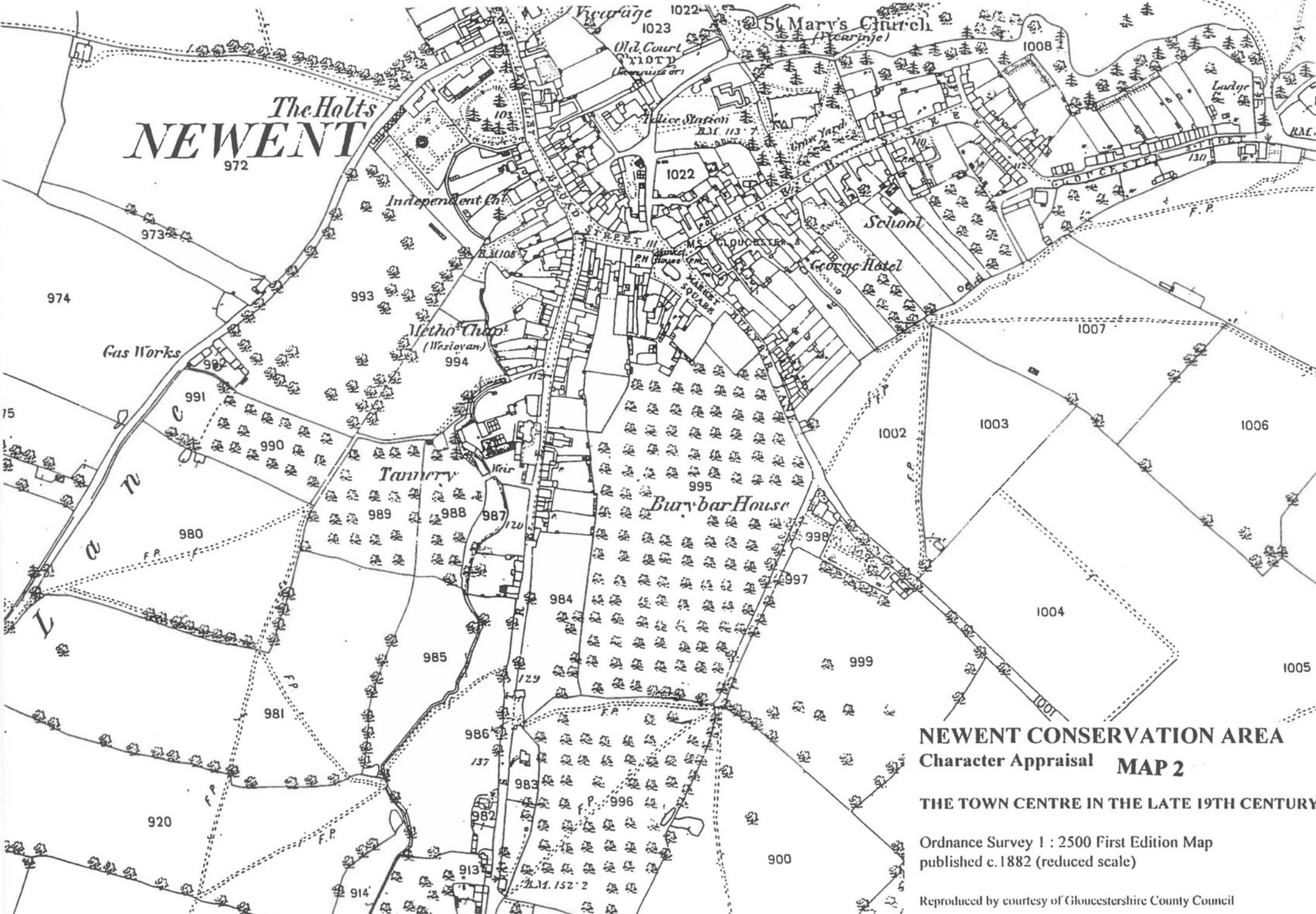
**THE TOWN AND SURROUNDING AREA IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY**

Ordnance Survey 1 : 10560 (Six Inches to One Mile) First Edition Map  
 published c.1882

Reproduced by courtesy of Gloucestershire County Council







*The Holts*  
**NEWENT**

**NEWENT CONSERVATION AREA**  
**Character Appraisal MAP 2**

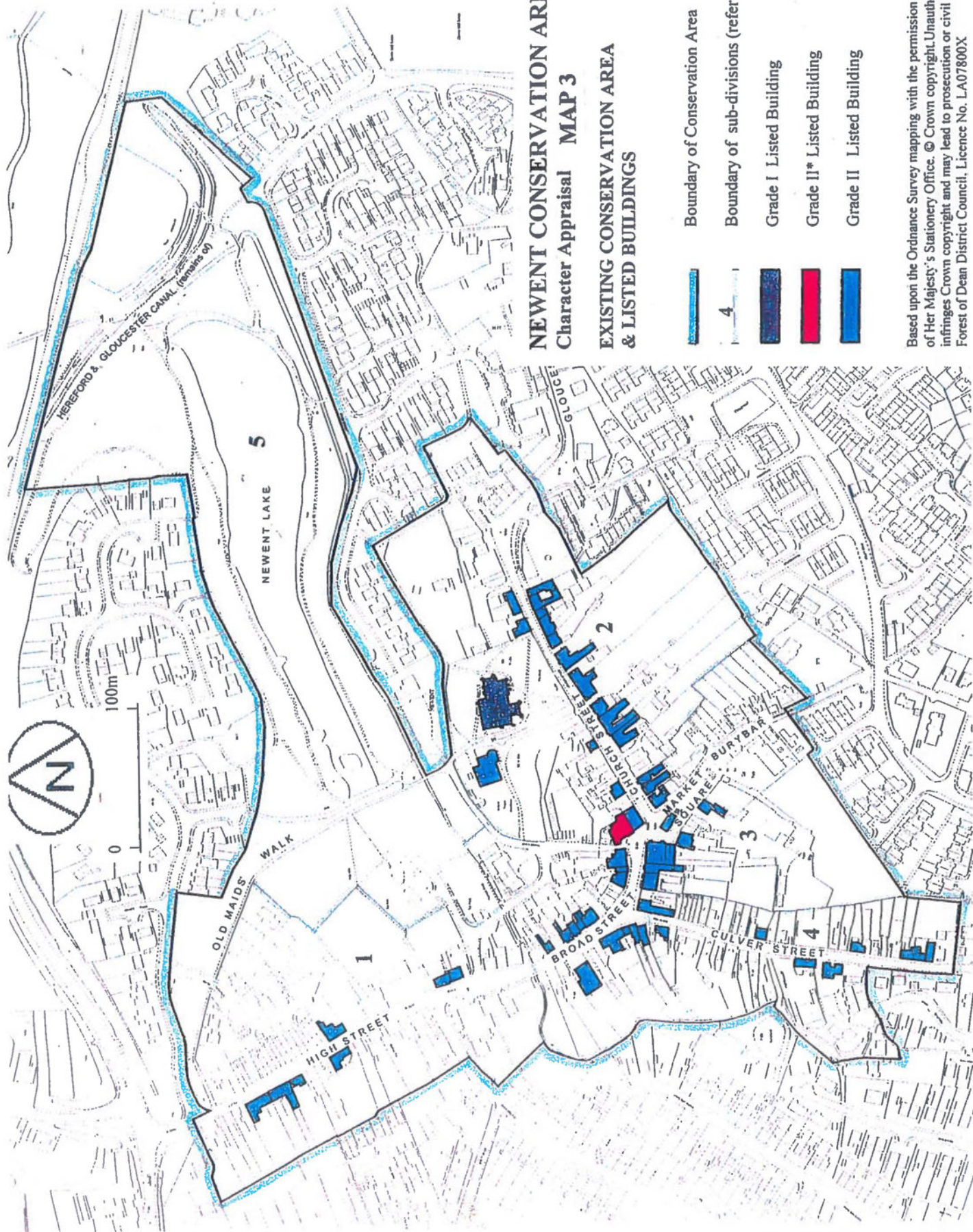
**THE TOWN CENTRE IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY**

Ordnance Survey 1 : 2500 First Edition Map  
published c.1882 (reduced scale)

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**NEWENT CONSERVATION AREA**  
**Character Appraisal MAP 3**

**EXISTING CONSERVATION AREA**  
**& LISTED BUILDINGS**

-  Boundary of Conservation Area
-  Boundary of sub-divisions (refer to text)
-  Grade I Listed Building
-  Grade II\* Listed Building
-  Grade II Listed Building

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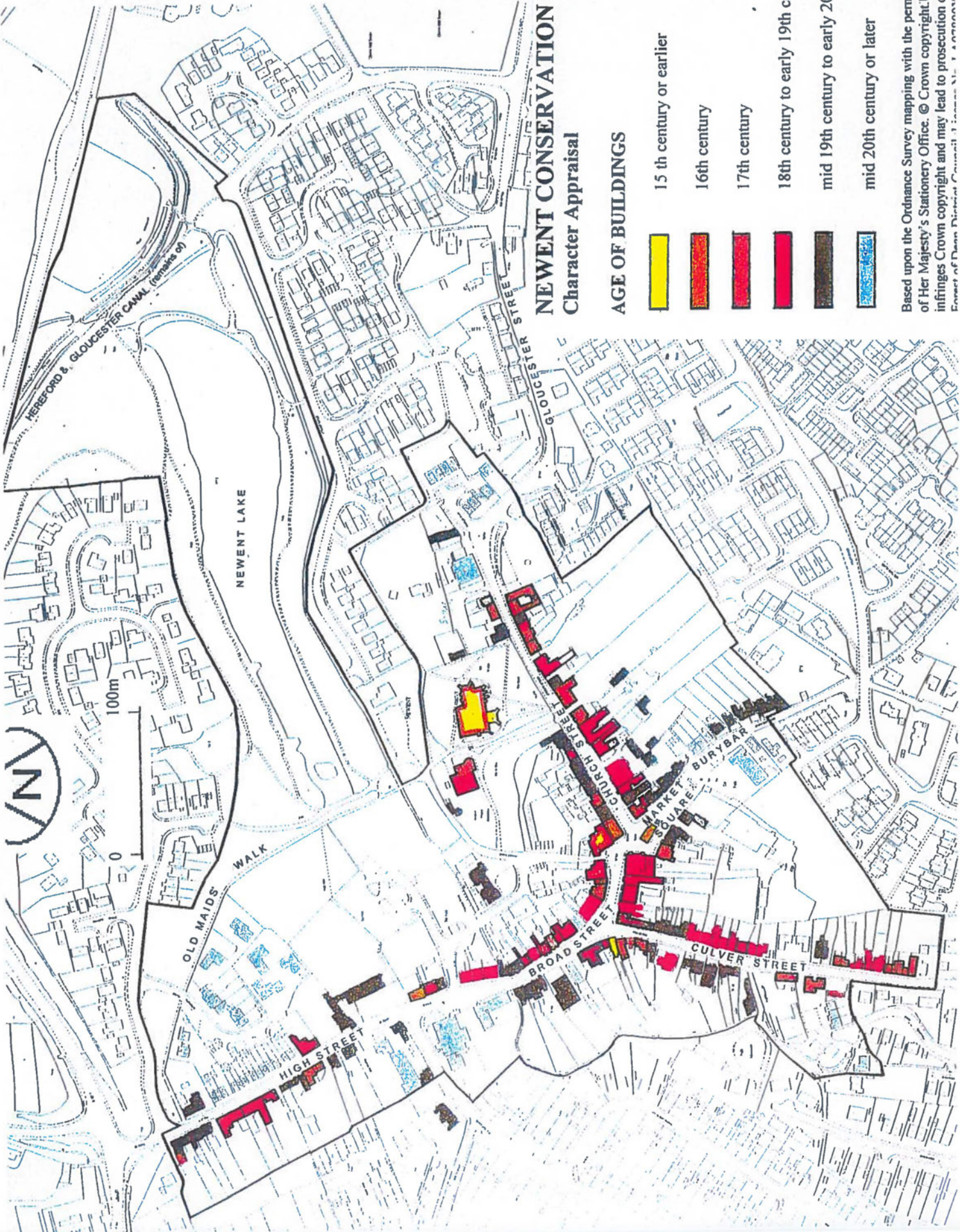


# NEWENT CONSERVATION AREA

## Character Appraisal

### AGE OF BUILDINGS

-  15th century or earlier
-  16th century
-  17th century
-  18th century to early 19th century
-  mid 19th century to early 20th century
-  mid 20th century or later

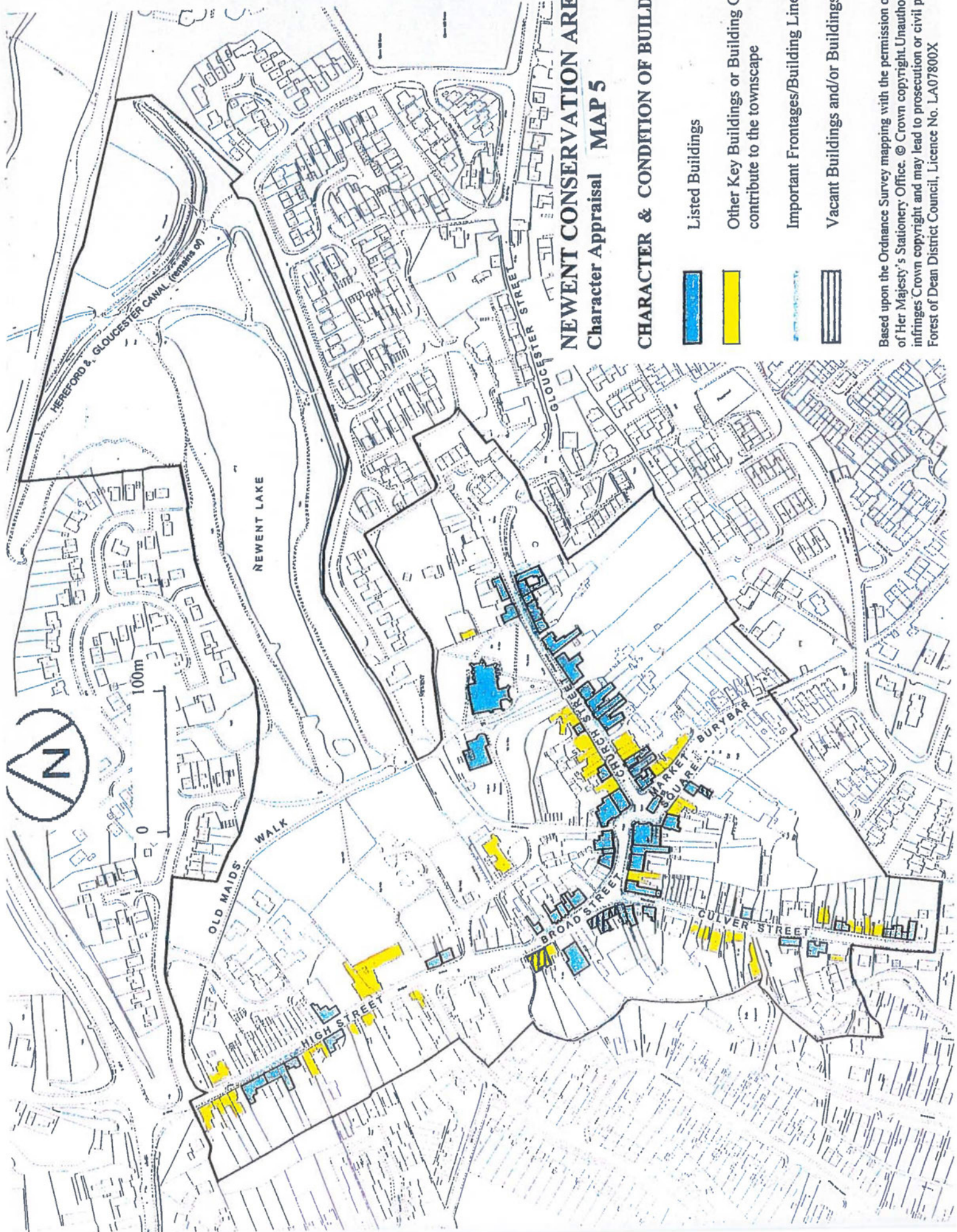


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**NEWENT CONSERVATION AREA**  
**Character Appraisal MAP 5**

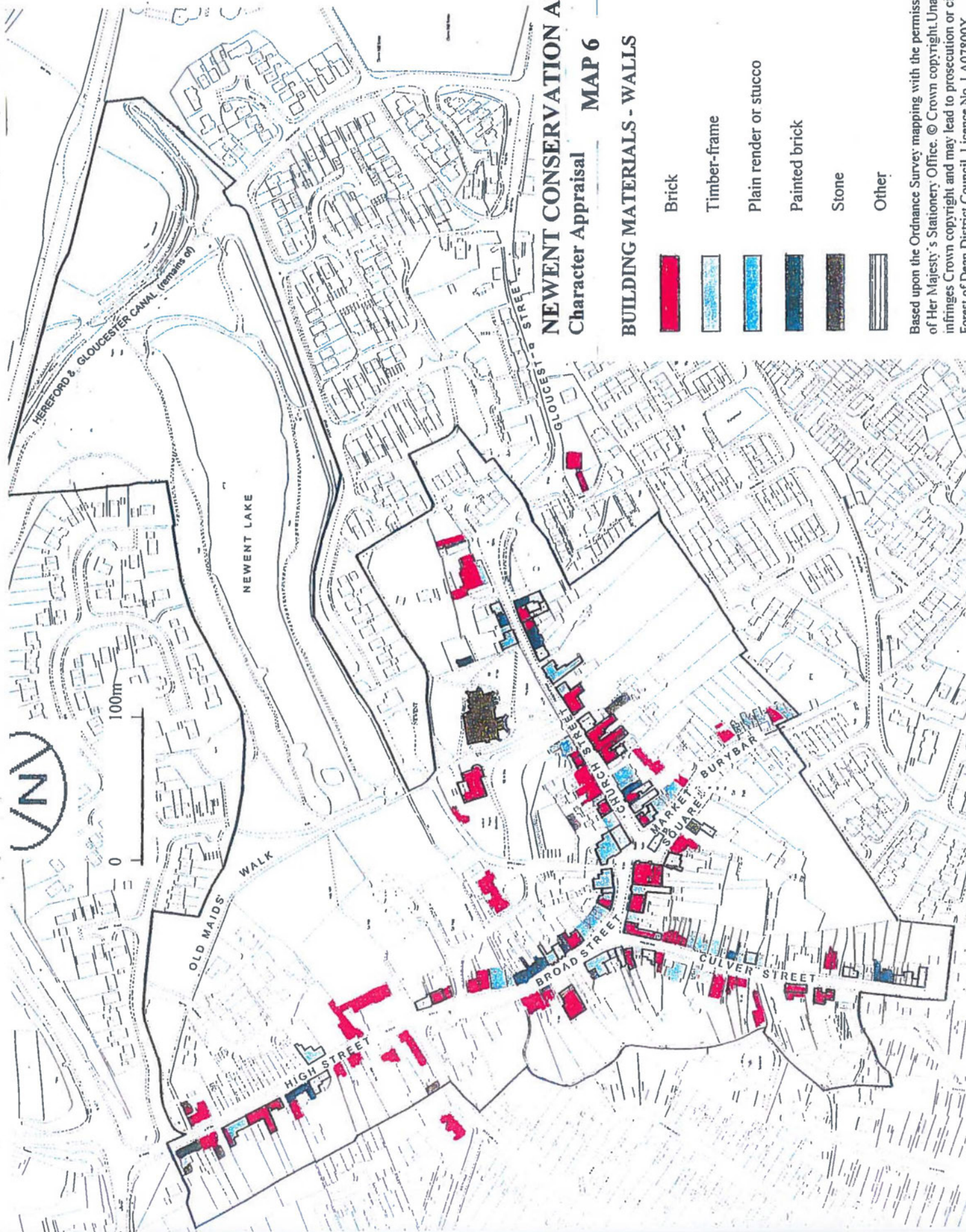
**CHARACTER & CONDITION OF BUILDINGS**

- Listed Buildings
- Other Key Buildings or Building Groups which contribute to the townscape
- Important Frontages/Building Lines
- Vacant Buildings and/or Buildings at Risk

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**NEWENT CONSERVATION AREA**  
 Character Appraisal **MAP 6**

**BUILDING MATERIALS - WALLS**

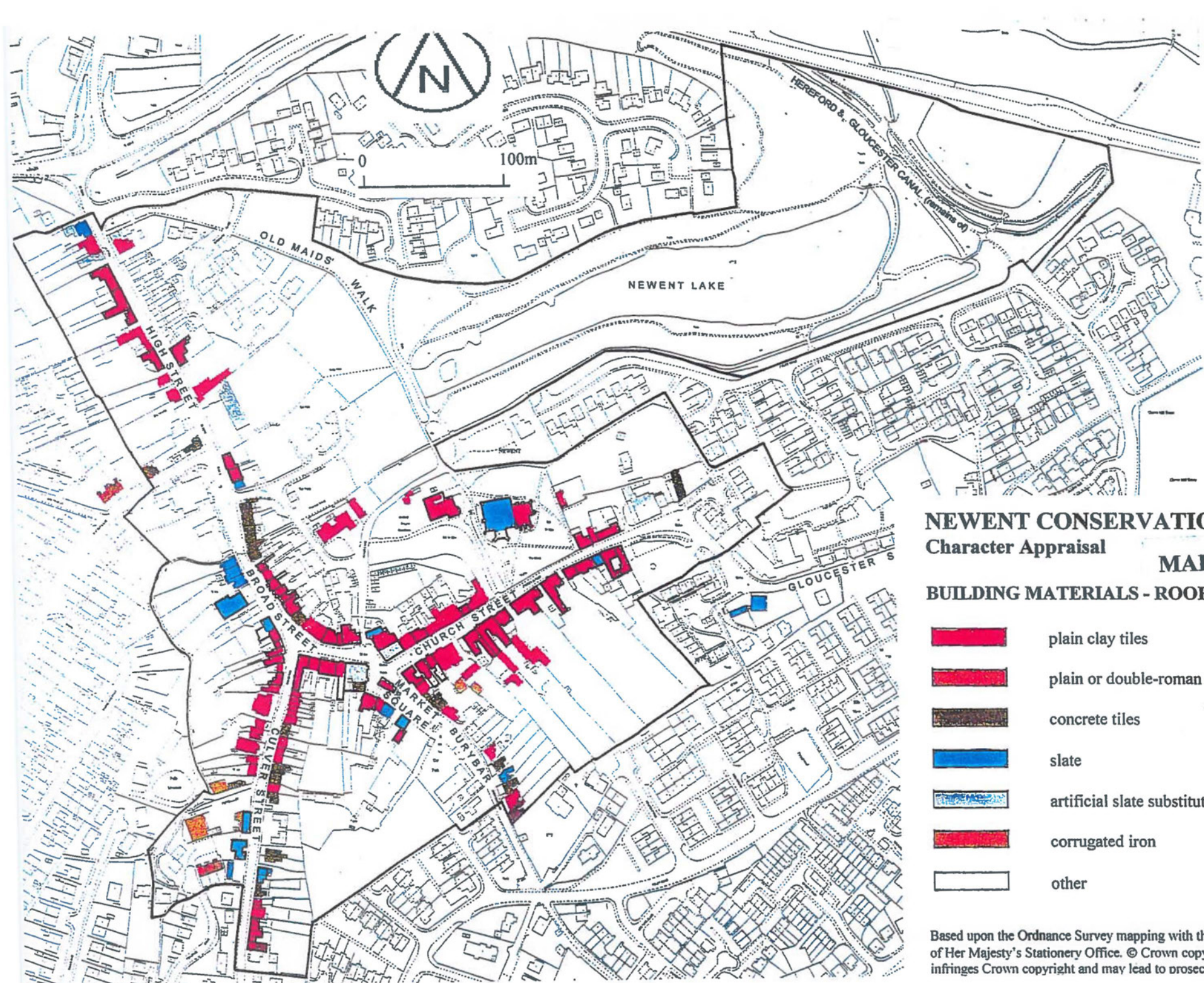
- Brick
- Timber-frame
- Plain render or stucco
- Painted brick
- Stone
- Other

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**NEWENT CONSERVATION AREA**  
**Character Appraisal** **MAP 7**

**BUILDING MATERIALS - ROOFS**

- plain clay tiles
- plain or double-roman pantiles
- concrete tiles
- slate
- artificial slate substitutes
- corrugated iron
- other

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# NEWENT CONSERVATION AREA

## Character Appraisal MAP 8

### SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

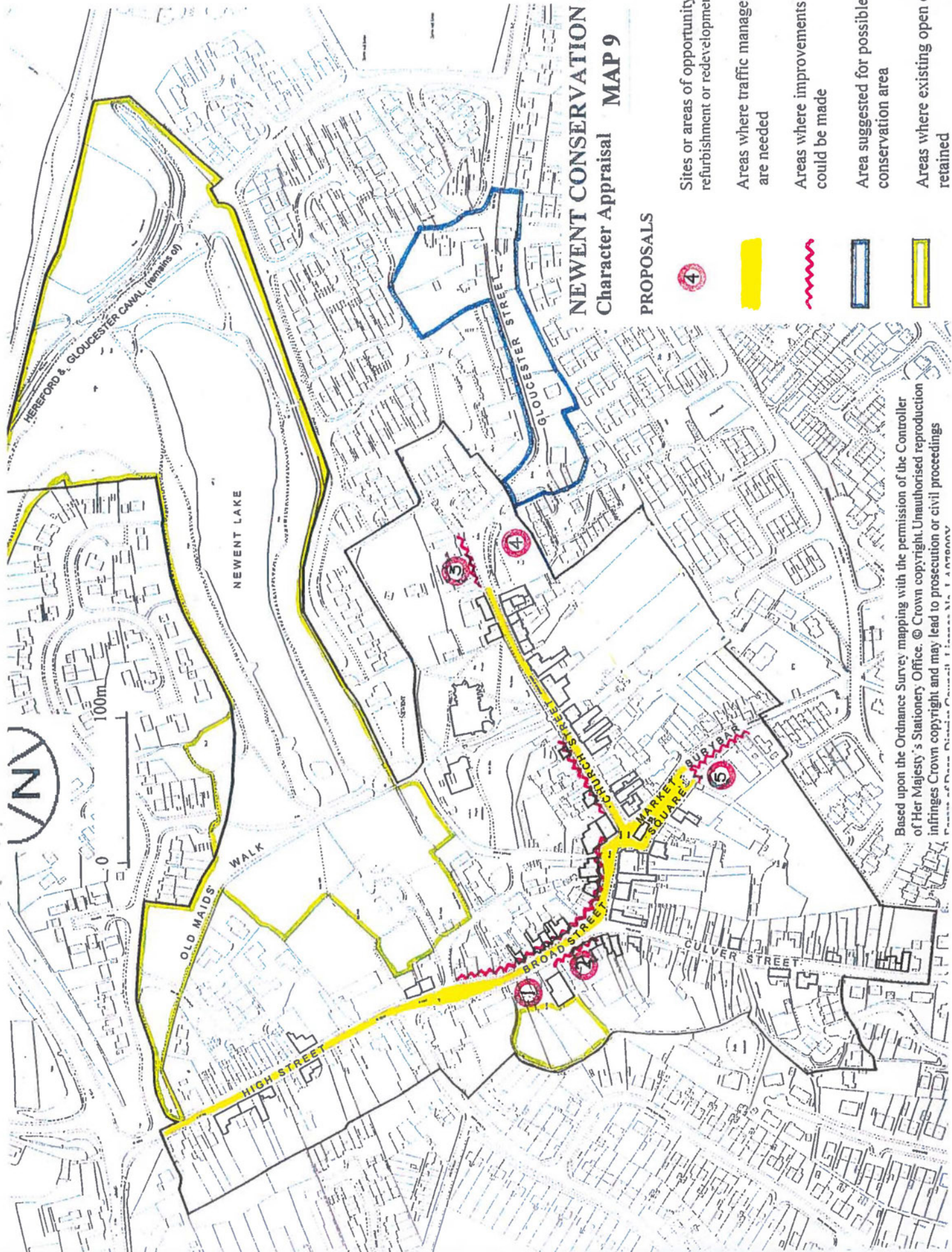
-  Natural stone surfaces
-  Prominent boundary walls
-  Iron railings
-  Main tree groups/woodland
-  Important trees
-  Important hedgerows
-  Main footpath links
-  Noteworthy street furniture
-  Views and glimpses - good
-  Views and glimpses - poor
-  Water Features
-  Areas of archaeological significance



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# NEWENT CONSERVATION AREA

## Character Appraisal MAP 9

### PROPOSALS

- ④ Sites or areas of opportunity for enhancement, refurbishment or redevelopment (see section 11.8)
- █ Areas where traffic management measures are needed
- █ Areas where improvements to existing frontages could be made
- █ Area suggested for possible inclusion within the conservation area
- █ Areas where existing open character should be retained

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## APPENDIX ONE

### IMPLICATIONS OF CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION

A Conservation Area is defined in statute as:

*“an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.*

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 published by the Government offers comprehensive advice for the protection of historic buildings and conservation areas. It states:

“It is the quality and interest of areas rather than that of individual buildings, which should be the prime consideration in identifying Conservation Areas. There has been increasing recognition in recent years that our experience of a historic area depends on much more than the quality of individual buildings - on the historic layout of properties and thoroughfares; on a particular “mix” of uses; on characteristic materials; on appropriate scaling and detailing of contemporary buildings; on the quality of ....street furniture and hard and soft surfaces; on vistas along streets and between buildings; and on the extent to which traffic intrudes and limits the pedestrian use of spaces between buildings. Conservation Area designation should be seen as a means of recognising the importance of all these factors and ensuring that conservation area policy addresses the quality of townscape in its broadest sense as well as the protection of individual buildings”

Designation of a Conservation Area imposes specific duties on the Local Planning Authority which must formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area, and submit them to public consultation. This is in addition to paying special attention to such matters when exercising statutory planning powers which are briefly set out below. The intention is to provide a means of making everyone involved aware of their obligations and seeking their co-operation as part the wider process of achieving best practice in conserving the historic environment.

#### (1) OWNERS AND RESIDENTS

In normal circumstances householders have certain “permitted development” rights to carry out minor works to their properties, such as small extensions and the erection of garden buildings. However in a conservation area these rights are reduced.



- The consent of the Local Planning Authority is required for the demolition of buildings.
- The lopping or felling of trees requires six weeks prior notification. The regulations make it an offence not to comply with this requirement.
- Planning Applications for proposals which affect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area are advertised in at least one local newspaper
- Any new development including extensions would be expected to be of good design, and should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.

As with all development proposals it is advisable to seek advice from the Council's Planning Department at an early stage. The recently published Forest of Dean Residential Design Guide offers detailed design guidance to try and ensure that buildings reflect the local characteristics which give each part of the District a sense of place and identity.

(2) BUSINESSES

Whilst it is understood that business uses need to clearly indicate their location and display their function, it is essential that in a Conservation Area frontage presentation, lettering, lighting, use of colour, relationship of ground floors to upper floors are all given due consideration. Again, it is strongly recommended that advice is sought at an early stage for all commercial proposals relating to historic buildings within the Conservation Area. In the case of all Listed Buildings and their settings, areas subject to Article 4 or 4(2) Directions and Areas of Special Control of Advertisements formal consent will almost always be required.

(3) LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS

It is essential that all departments of both the District and County Councils understand the significance of the Conservation Area, and act in coordination, in order that public works, such as street works, do not damage the historic fabric or appearance of the area. Other agencies such as water supplier or telecommunications companies must also be aware and give respect to the architectural and historic character of the area.

## **APPENDIX TWO**

### **A BRIEF SUMMARY OF CONSERVATION AREA LEGISLATION (INCLUDING SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE TO OWNERS OF DWELLING HOUSES)**

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

**The legislation relating to conservation areas is complex and changes from time to time and this appendix gives an outline of the situation at the time it was prepared (late 1999). Detailed advice relating extensions to dwellings in conservation areas refers primarily to owners of single dwellings.**

**Anyone anticipating erecting or altering a building or structure, or intending to undertake work to a tree in a conservation area is strongly advised to contact the District Council for advice before proceeding.**

**It should be noted that owners or lessees of non-residential properties, shops and flats (or any combination of these in one building) may require planning permission for any external alteration or extension to the buildings irrespective of whether the building is in or outside a conservation area.**

**Designation of an area as a Conservation Area does affect residents of single dwellings in a number of ways.**

- You need planning permission if the size of the extension to dwellings exceeds a maximum of the volume of the original house or 50 cubic metres (whichever is the greater).
- You need planning permission if you want to build any kind of addition or extension to the roof of your house
- If you want to erect a building and other structures on the land around your house, you may need planning permission if it is more than 10 cubic metres in volume
- You need planning permission to install a satellite dish or antenna on your house if it is positioned on a chimney, or on a wall or slope facing a highway.
- You need planning permission before cladding the outside of your house with, stone, tiles, artificial stone, plastic or timber.



- You may need permission to undertake certain works in addition to the above. These are particularly specified in an Article 4 Direction (see section 5 below)
- You may also need permission to alter existing windows, doors, boundary walls and entrances etc. This will only be the case where an Article 4(2) Direction applies (see section 5 below)

## **2 CONTROL OVER DEMOLITION**

In conservation areas consent may be required to demolish any building with a volume of more than 115 cubic metres or a significant part of such a building. There are exceptions to this and details can be obtained from the District Council.

Consent may also be required for the demolition of gates, walls, fences or railings over 1 metre in height abutting a highway or public open space and 2 metres elsewhere. If you are in any doubt how this will affect you, consult the District Council.

This added control over demolition is to seek to ensure that before work starts on a proposal which is irreversible and could have adverse effects on the character and appearance of the area, it is given due consideration.

## **3 CONTROL OVER WORKS TO TREES**

Anyone proposing to cut down, or to top or lop, any tree in a conservation area, is required to give six weeks' notice to the planning authority before carrying out the work. This can be in the form of a letter giving sufficient information to identify the location of the site and the tree or trees in question.

The control over the works to trees is subject to a number of exceptions (including trees that are dead, dying or dangerous for example). However, if you are considering any work to a tree in a conservation area, it is always advisable to contact the District Council before proceeding. The purpose of this legislation is to allow time for the authority to make a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) if it is particularly important to the character of the area.

## **4 CONTROL OF ADVERTISEMENTS**

In conservation areas, as in other areas where quality of environment has a high priority, there are likely to be measures in force to place additional control on the display of advertisements, their size, means of illumination, and materials used. Again, it is advisable to contact the District Council for further advice or

information before submitting a formal application or proceeding with any alterations.

## **5 ADDITIONAL CONTROL RESULTING FROM ARTICLE 4 or 4(2) DIRECTION (if applicable)**

There may be circumstances where the Local Planning Authority may decide to bring specific minor works not normally subject to legislation under normal planning controls, so that these works are carried out in harmony with the area. These are called Article 4 or 4(2) Directions. The latter can authorise stricter controls over minor alterations to frontages or boundary features normally allowed as permitted development.

When such Directions are made the Local Planning Authority will endeavour to ensure that they are well publicised, so that those likely to be affected will be made aware of the measures they may need to take.

## **6 ADVERTISEMENT OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Planning applications for proposals which would affect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area will be advertised in a local newspaper. This allows for a wider level of public consultation on an issue which could have significant implications for the area.

## **7 IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC BODIES AND OTHER AGENCIES**

With the designation of the Conservation Area, public and other agencies responsible for work which has an affect on the character of areas will be made aware of the special nature of the area. They will be requested to take account of it when they are working in or around the area.

## **8 SCHEMES FOR ENHANCEMENT**

Local proposals for enhancing and safeguarding the character of the area will be brought forward as and when funding permits via the Local Authority or other funding sources which are available through already established schemes, or local initiatives. Character Appraisals exist or are proposed for all the designated Conservation Areas. These are intended to identify areas or aspects of the area as a whole which require restoration or enhancement.



## **9 IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT**

Policies in The Forest of Dean Local Plan that relate specifically to conservation areas will operate in all the designated conservation areas. The designation of a Conservation Area will not prevent development taking place of itself. The Local Plan will guide the scale and location of development through its policies and proposals for the area.

When a decision is being made on new development or demolition requiring the approval of the District Council, one of the aspects that is considered in coming to the decision is the affect of the proposal on the special character and appearance of the area. Inspectors dealing with planning appeals will also take note of the designation and the appraisal in reaching their decisions.

Designation of the Conservation Area initially and this Appraisal, which may be reviewed from time to time, is intended to have an affect upon the detailed design and layout of any new development so that it does not detract from the character and appearance of the area.