



Forest of Dean District Council

Alvington 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 Alvington 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 Alvington Character Appraisal was subject to a four-week public consultation, which involved public exhibitions and a public meeting. The residents of Alvington 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 29th June 2006.

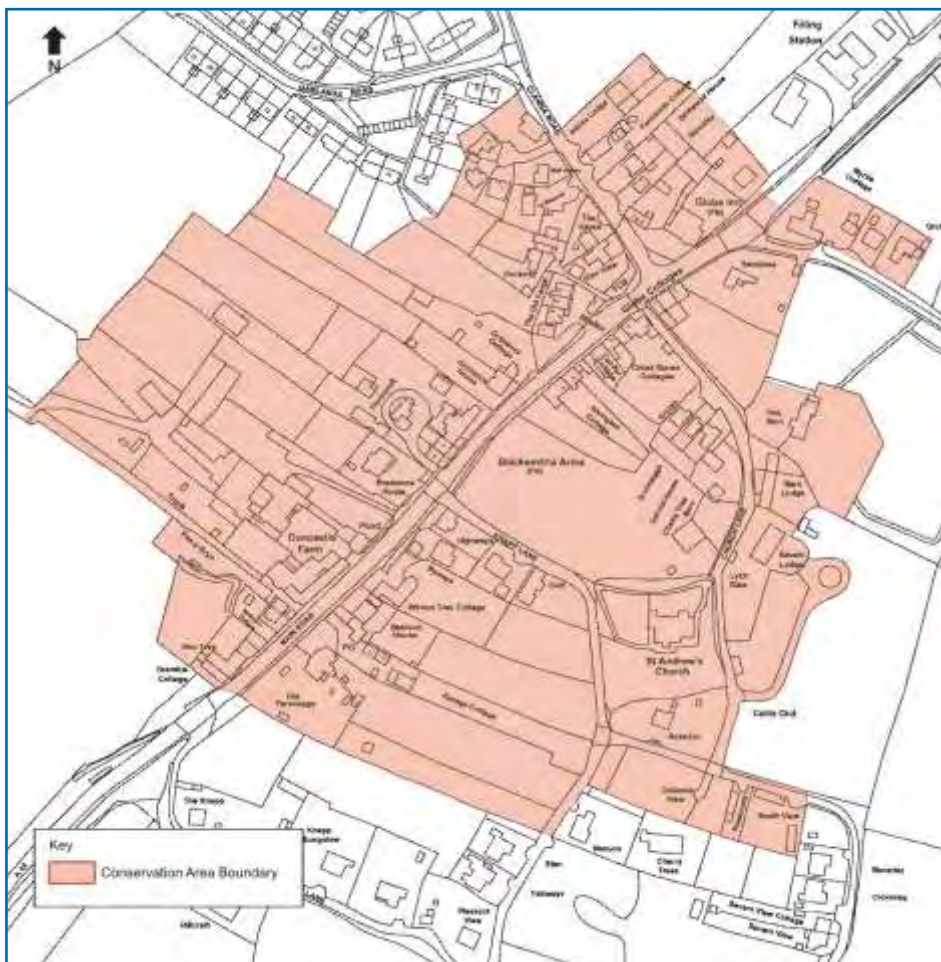
On the 29th June 2006 the members of the Forest of Dean District Council also agreed to amend the boundary line of Alvington Conservation Area. The alterations were only to allow the boundary to run along visible features, which meant the extent of the conservation area could easily be identified.

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.

Alvington Conservation Area

Alvington was designated a conservation area on 15th March 1990. The area covers 10.69 hectares, (26.42 acres) and centres on the historic settlement mainly built along the main road.

Where the boundary of the conservation area is shown on a wall, fence, hedge row, tree line or other means of enclosure, it shall be deemed to be included within the conservation area.



Evolution of area

Development

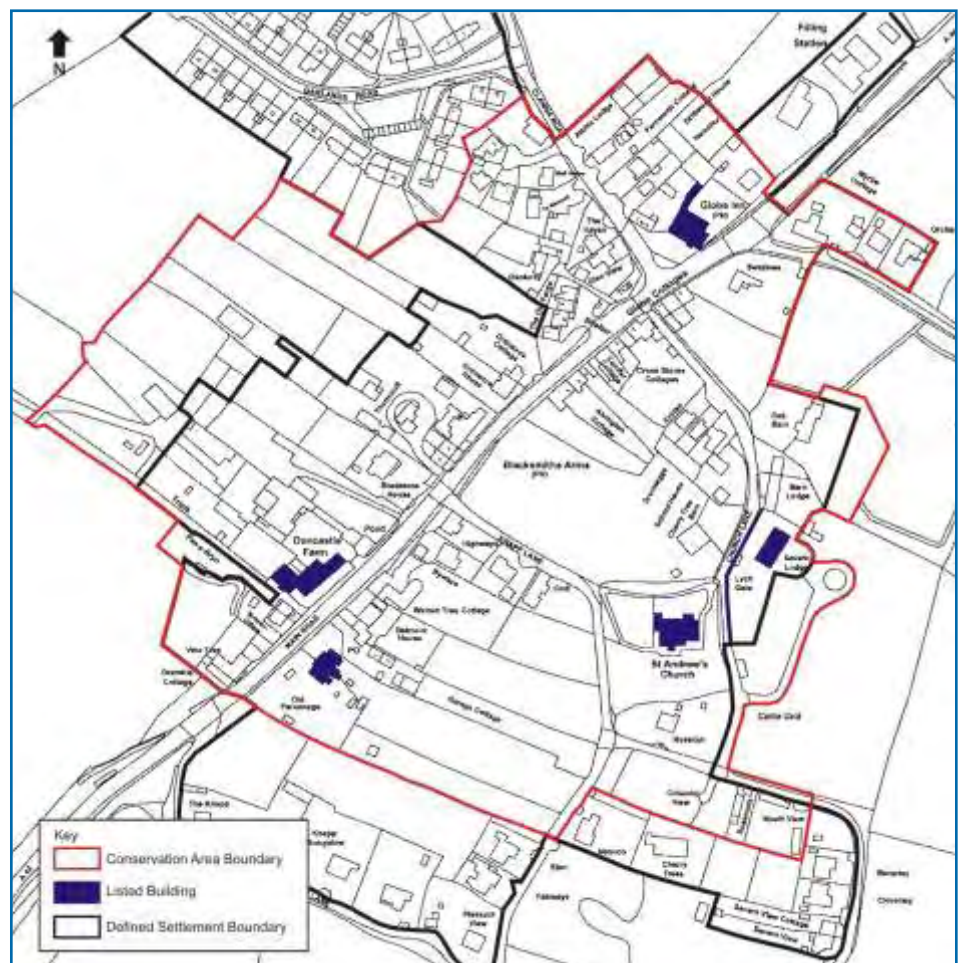
Alvington developed as a rural community in the medieval period and was administrated by Llanthony Priory which was located in Gloucester.

It is possible that the original settlement pattern dates from 1145 when the grant of Alvington Manor to Llanthony Priory was confirmed. The pattern took the form of a series of long home closes running northwest and southeast from the Gloucester-Chepstow road. Long home closes are long strips of land associated with a single dwelling.

Around 1145 the Priory built or rebuilt the Church, some of the original Church remains in the form of a Norman northwest chancel window, however J.W.Hugall drastically restored the Church in 1857-8, altering much of the medieval fabric.

During the 13th century there was an unsuccessful attempt to establish the settlement as a market town and the village remained an area focused on agricultural production.

The settlement developed primarily along the Gloucester-Chepstow road and it was not until the 20th century that significant development occurred away from the road.



Although the main employment in the village was in agriculture, there were also a number of important mills in the area situated along Cone Brook, producing corn or paper. A number of people from the local community would probably have been employed to work at the mills.

There was a school in Alvington from 1850 to 1958, some of the school buildings remain but considerable alterations have occurred changing their appearance.

Archaeological significance

A Roman road is thought to have run from Newent to Caerwent, and the line of the road is believed to be near to Alvington. A straight line of hedges and footpaths marks the possible line of the Roman road about $\frac{3}{4}$ miles from the A48. (Gloucester County Council's Site and Monuments Record (SMR))

Located near Colne Mill House, there are the remains of a medieval corn mill; the dry millrace is still evident as an earthwork as are the former millponds. (SMR)

Duncastle Farm incorporates one of the oldest structures in the village, as its back range was formally a C16 medieval hall house, now much altered. (SMR)

There are two quarries recorded in Alvington Parish, one being located near Colne Mill as shown on an 1813 map, and the other to the side of Duncastle Farm as shown on 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps, however the maps do not indicate what material was being quarried. (SMR)

Some post medieval field boundaries are visible as earthworks near Cone Brook. (SMR)

Townscape Analysis

Setting

Situated on the edge of the flood plain of the River Severn, Alvington is surrounded by arable and pasture fields. To the north of the parish the land rises to the surrounding wooded hills. See Fig 1.

To the south of the village there are panoramic views over the River Severn, as the land falls away down to the flood plains.

Skyline

The skyline of the settlement along the A48 is relatively low, as the lie of the land along the main street is flat so no part rises above it to draw the eye. The houses that front the road are mainly two storeys with the upper floor within the roof space, which reduces the overall height of the buildings.

Alvington's skyline is punctuated by trees, with a line of evergreens dominating the buildings. See Fig 2.

Approaches

From Aylburton the A48 road sweeps around the corner and the first thing to draw your attention is the petrol station outside of the conservation area and the back of the Globe Inn which is littered with signs. This is not an impressive entrance to a historic village.

When entering from Woolaston the road climbs steeply up hill along a road surrounded by high walls and hedges and curves into the village.



Fig 1.



Fig 2.



Fig 3.



Fig 4.



Fig 5.

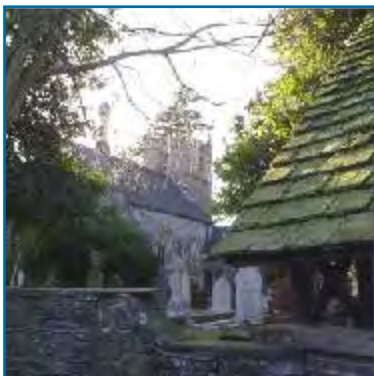


Fig 6.

Landmarks

From both directions along the A48 the Globe Inn is situated in a prominent position. When driving to Aylburton the road turns around a corner and the Inn provides a visual stop, as it is situated centrally to the road. See Fig 3.

The Church is located on raised ground and would be more evident if it were not for the trees that surround it and shield the building almost completely from view. See Fig 4.

Views

From the A48 it is possible to see the hills to the north of the village which are wooded and create an attractive backdrop to the village.

Within the village there are many open spaces which means that large sections of the village can be seen from most areas, this makes the village easy to interpret and gives the areas of more isolated development a sense of unity with the main built up area.

From Church Lane extensive views over the Severn are possible, in that part of the village the landscape becomes increasingly rural and views over the surrounding fields can be appreciated. See Fig 5.

Structure

The main section of historic development runs along the Main Road, and is described as linear, as the built mass is mainly confined to the edge of the road. Along Church Lane the development is more sporadic in nature, but is still focused on the edge of the road.

Hierarchy

Historically the Church would have been a key building in the village both socially and visually. It is situated in a prominent position away from the road, but the large trees that surround it have lessened its impact. When approaching the building however, the trees heighten the buildings sense importance as they create a separate space around the church. See Fig 6.

As Severn Lodge is not visible it is the high sandstone walls that surround the building which inform passers by that a high status property is situated within its grounds.

The Globe Inn is an impressive building, the scale of which is such that it towers over the surrounding buildings, and is visible throughout most of the village.

Most of the remaining buildings within Alvington are simple in design and not highly decorated which adds to the character of the village.

Quality of spaces

There is a large proportion of open space within the village mainly stretching back from the rear of the properties facing the road.

The sections of land are thought to have originally been long home closes, which are strips of land associated with individual properties. It is possible that this layout evolved in the 12th century when Alvington passed to the control of Llanthony Priory.

Originally the open areas would have been worked either as grazing areas or for crops; from the 1889 ordinance survey map it is evident that a large proportion of

the open land was used as orchards at that period. Some remnants of the orchards survive along Church Lane and to the rear of Duncastle Farm. See Fig 7.

These areas of open land are integral to Alvington's character as having a large proportion of open space creates a rural atmosphere to the village, and the amount of wildlife that is evident in the fields strengthens this link. They are also important, as Alvington is one of the few settlements in the district that has retained its open space in such entirety, and is the main reason for its original designation as an area of special architectural or historical interest. See Fig 8.

Originally there would have been a large open gap between the main built area by the road and the few larger buildings which were set back from the road such as Severn Lodge and the Church, however over the years new development has sprung up and fragmented the views the open spaces provided.

The churchyard is area of open space which differs greatly from the others in the village. It is an enclosed area surrounded by dense tree cover in the form of yew and holly.

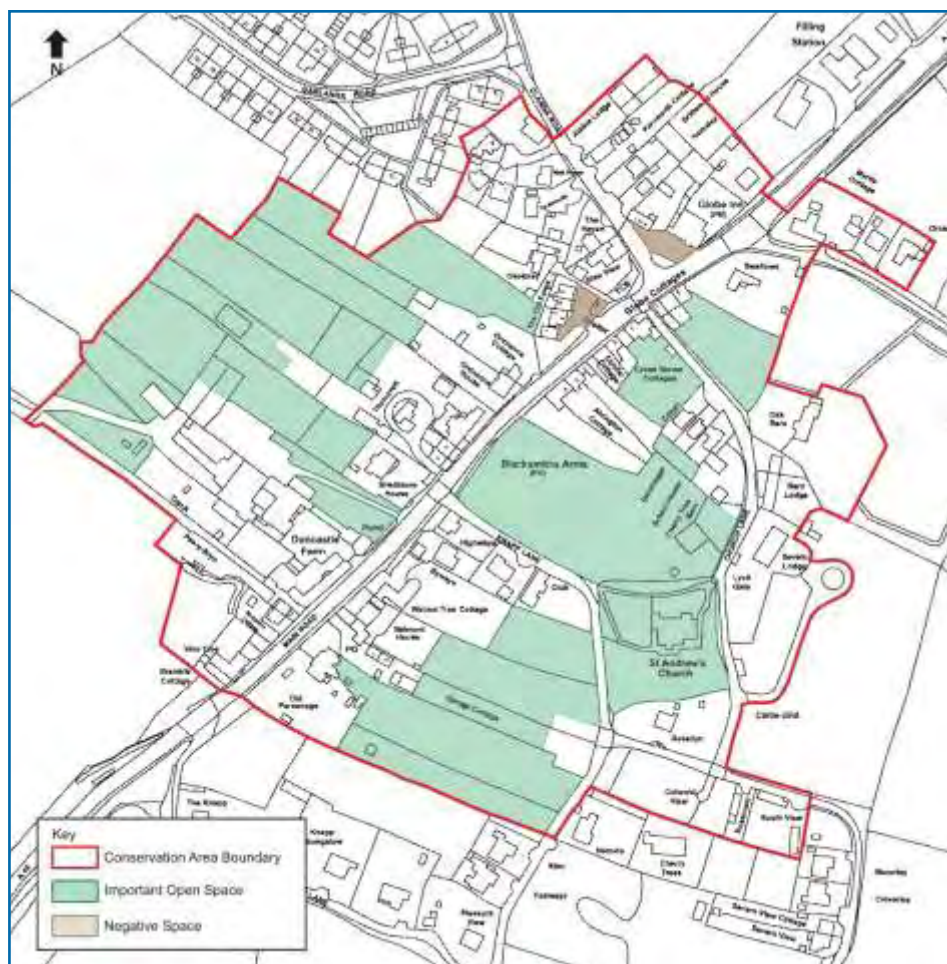


Fig 7.



Fig 8.

Landscape setting

Topography

Alvington is situated in an area classified as the Severn Vale. This is characterised by rolling landform, often with mature hedgerows lining the worked agricultural landscape.

The soil in the Severn Vale is ideal for the growth of fruit trees, and large areas of orchard were historically present in Alvington, remnants of which still survive.

The topography is identified in the Forest of Deans District Council's Landscape Character Assessment document, adopted in 2002.

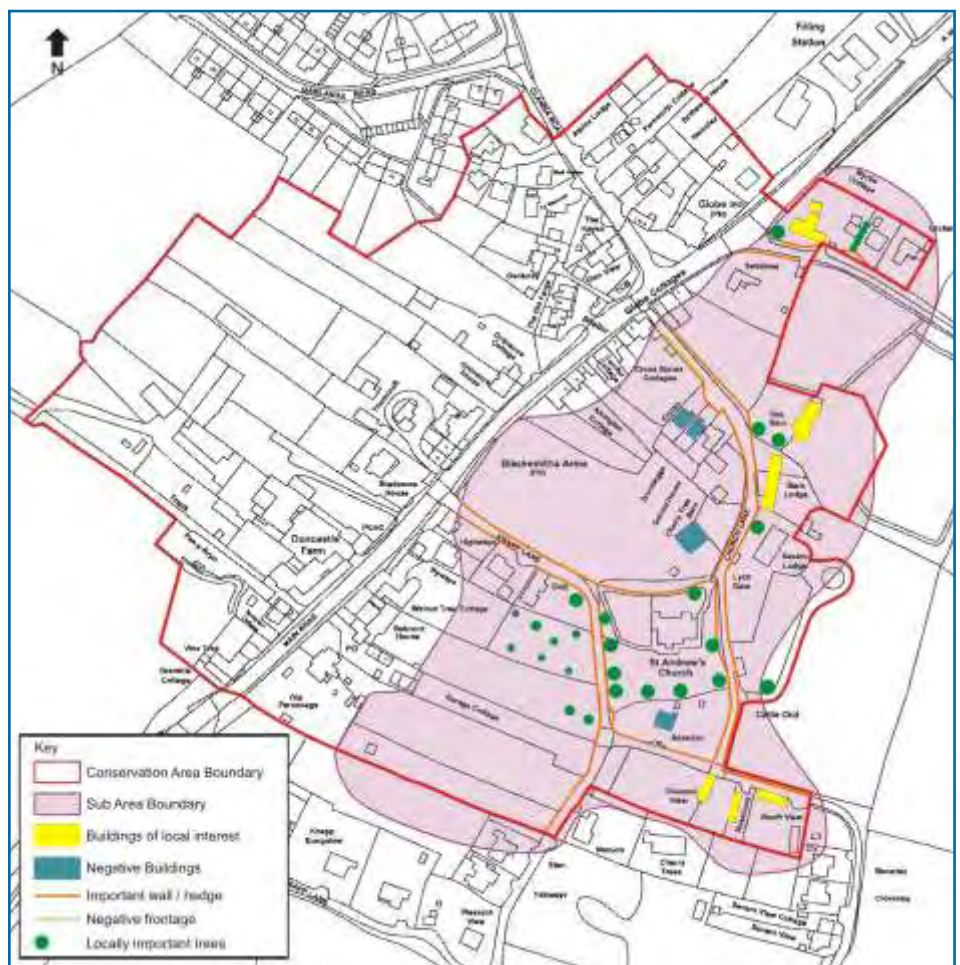
Identification of Sub Areas

Sub Area 1.

Knapp Lane, Church Lane and Court Lane



Fig 9.



The single-track roads Knapp Lane and Church Lane produce the main form of this area. Both are edged either by attractive untamed hedgerows, which contain a wide variety of plant forms, or by red sandstone walls which are equally attractive. The roads also have soft verges with no defined edge and bend so that it is not possible to see where the road takes you. These lanes add to the rural feeling of this part of Alvington, which is its biggest strength. The widening of the roads to accommodate more traffic would result in the loss of the boundaries and adversely affect the locality. See Fig 9.

This area can be described as having sporadic development, a few buildings dotted in the landscape and it is the large areas of open land that dominate this section of

the village. These plots of land are key both historically, and visually in maintaining the historic nature of the area.

There are a variety of styles of buildings within this area; the main link between them is the materials used in their construction, which is red sandstone. One of the chief reasons for the difference in style is the difference in the buildings use, as the Church, Severn Lodge and a number of barns are found in the vicinity. See Fig 10.

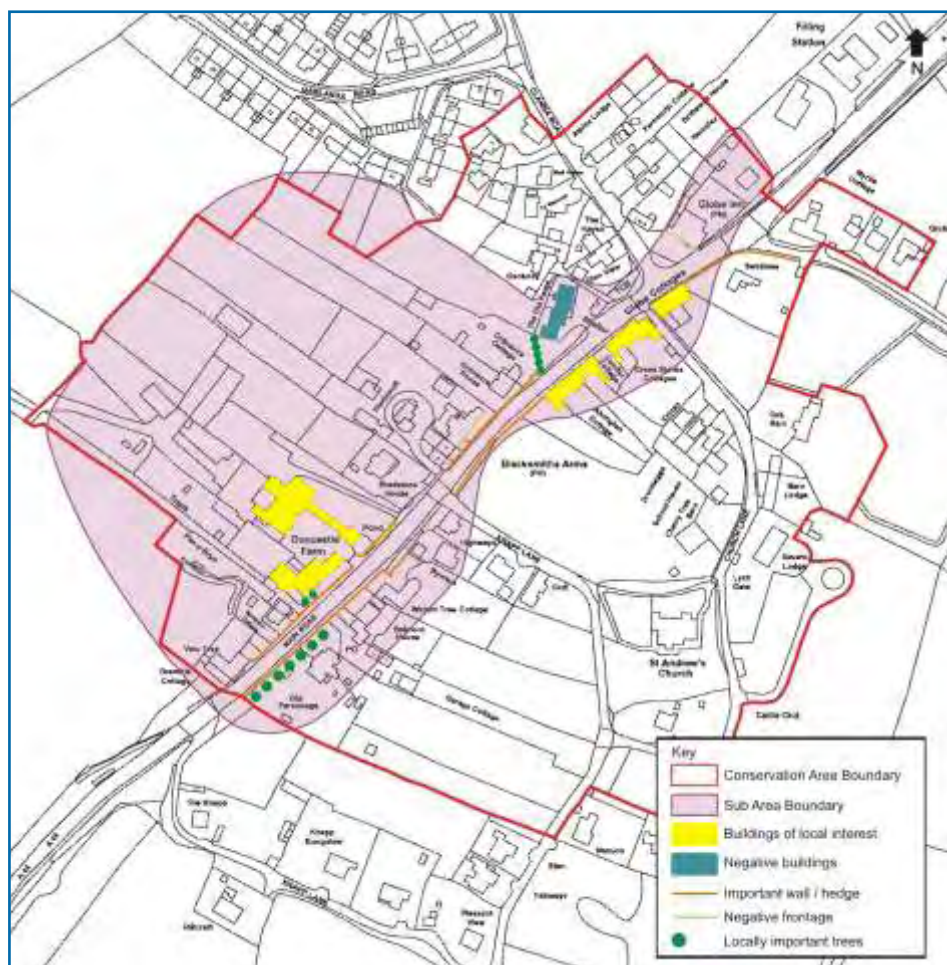
A number of buildings have been built along the roadside that are not appropriate. The materials used are alien to the area, as is the form of the buildings. They are much taller than the historic properties and the footprints of the buildings are generally square, as opposed to rectangular which would be more appropriate to the historic form of the village. See Fig 11.

The site of a number of these new or more recent properties is also unsuitable as they start to link the historically separate buildings of the Church and Severn Lodge to the main village, and they are built on the open land which is integral to the distinctive character of Alvington.

Along Court Lane there is a series of three properties all set within their own isolated grounds, separated by trees. Court Lane itself is similar to Church Lane in that the verges are soft and edged by greenery. The atmosphere in this area differs to that of Knapp Lane and Church Lane as it is more enclosed by the trees and hedges that line both the properties and Court Lane. See fig 12.

Sub Area 2.

Main Road, A48



Along the main road the A48 is the backbone to the village.

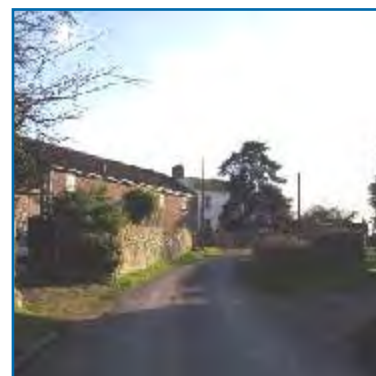


Fig 10.



Fig 11.



Fig 12.



Fig 13.

The majority of the buildings are long and narrow and follow the curve of the road. In most places along the road where development forms an evident built line, there is either no development on the opposite side or the development is located away from the road, this means that there is no sense of enclosure and the relationship between the A48 development and the surrounding open land can be appreciated. See Fig 13.

There are a number of sites along the Main Road which have a negative effect, the car parking space to the front of Globe Inn separates the building from the street scene, isolating it and making the building look ill at ease in its surroundings.

The 1960's brick building named the Old Forge bears no relationship to any built form or frontage found in Alvington and it sits in a very prominent position within the village. See Fig 14.



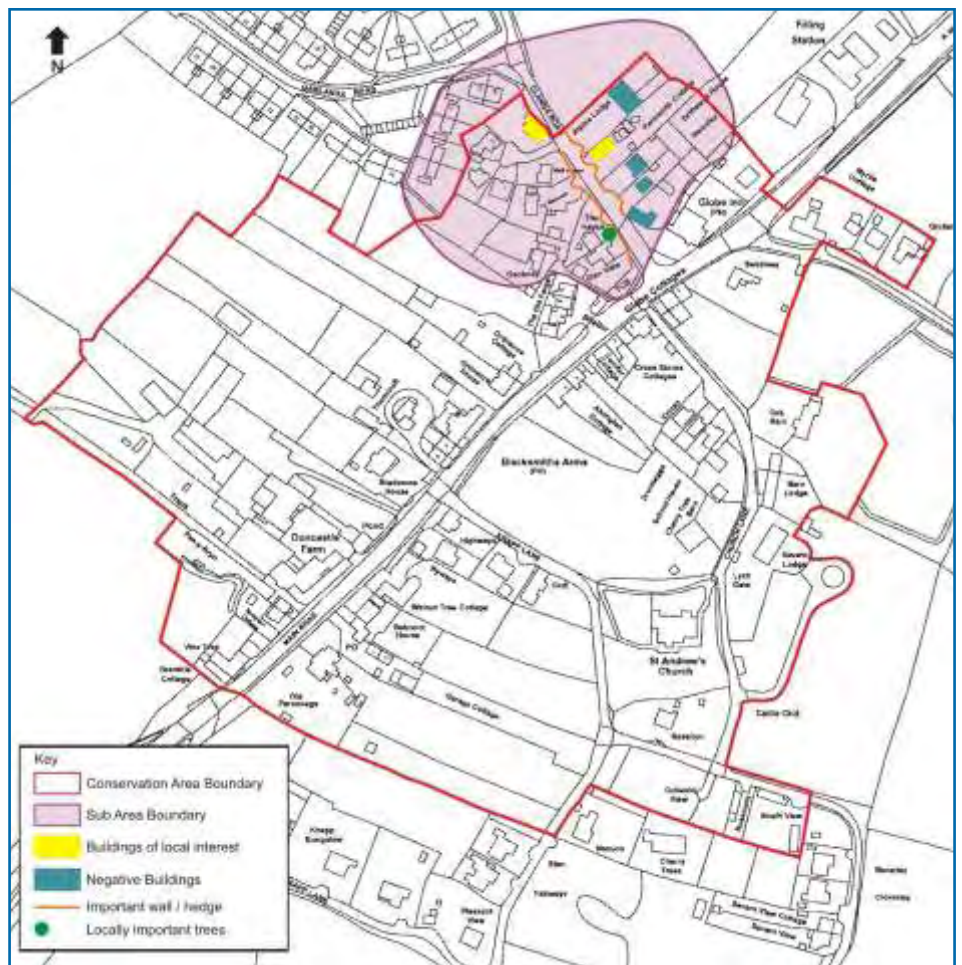
Fig 14.

There are a number of stonewalls fronting the properties along the Main Road, these follow the curve of the road, forming a boundary line and contain the gardens that separate the buildings from the road. They also provide an element of continuity with the walls found along Knapp Lane and surrounding the churchyard. See Fig 15.

Sub Area 3. Clanna Lane



Fig 15.



The most attractive feature of Clanna Lane are the stonewalls that surround each property. They create an element of continuity along the streetscape, which is not provided by the buildings, as the properties in this section of the village do not have a consistent built form or layout. See Fig 16.



Fig 16.

Most of the historic buildings along Clanna Lane have undergone significant alterations which has resulted in the loss of much of their original character this is detrimental to the appearance of this section of the conservation area.

See Fig 17.

Views from the lane over the surrounding countryside are extensive, and creates a pleasant aspect.

Clanna Lane is a relatively quiet road and it was not cluttered with parked cars when the area was surveyed during the day. This allows the form of the area to be appreciated fully. See Fig 18.

Condition of built fabric

Buildings

A lot of the buildings in Alvington have been altered, and a proportion of these alterations have had a negative affect.

Unfortunately a high percentage of the windows have been altered to UPVC double-glazing. This type of window is highly inappropriate in historic properties for a number of reasons. The material is obviously not traditionally found in the buildings. Also through the replacement of a timber windows to uPVC the original form of the window is likely to be lost, as well as possible loss of original glass, which has attractive features in its own right. UPVC is a more cumbersome material and lacks the intricacy and detail wood can provide.

Both the Globe Inn and the Blacksmiths Arms have shutters around the windows; in both cases the shutters are inappropriate for the style of the buildings and adds clutter to the otherwise simple form of the buildings, as does the signage, which is prominent and invasive. See Fig 19.

There is a derelict flat roofed extension to a property at the entrance to Church Lane. This building has large glazed windows unlike any other property in the locality, and it provides a weak entrance to Church Lane, one of the more attractive streets. See Fig 20.

Occupation levels

Virtually all the buildings in Alvington appear to be occupied, which is beneficial as it is likely they will be kept in a reasonable condition.

The afore mentioned flat roof extension to the property at the entrance to Church Lane is empty and looks untidy; reuse or removal of the building would enhance the area, subject to a suitable alternative development being agreed.

Negative spaces

The positive spaces are described in Quality of Spaces

Potential areas which could be enhanced

There is a stretch of land to the rear of a property facing Main Road and to the side of Church Road, this area contains a number of large dead trees and appears to be a one of the remaining areas of orchard.

The open space by the bus stop and red telephone box is deteriorating as the grass verges are not growing well, which degrades its appearance.



Fig 17.



Fig 18.



Fig 19.



Fig 20.



Fig 21.



Fig 22.



Fig 23.

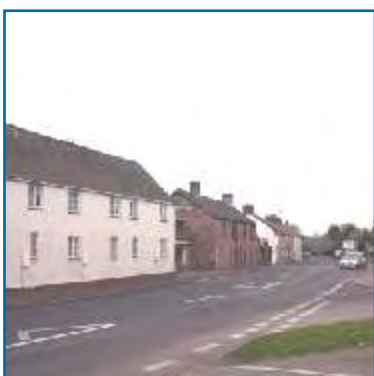


Fig 24.

To the front of the Globe Inn the car park isolates the building from its surroundings.

Street furniture

There is very little street furniture in Alvington. The road has very few street lamps and the one bench that was identified is well detailed and in good condition. The parish notice board is also a good quality stone structure that fits well into its environment. The village has retained its red phone box which has always been regarded as an attractive piece of street furniture.

See Fig 21.

The most obvious piece of street furniture is the speed camera, this is probably because it is painted yellow, although intrusive it does perform a useful function.

Wirescape

The wirescape in Alvington is tolerable, as there are not a large amount of wires disfiguring the appearance of village. However in the vicinity of the Blacksmiths Arms there are a series of four wires which run parallel to each other. These particular wires are evident and do cross an open space where they are very noticeable.

Although the wirescape is not as intrusive as it is in some other villages, it does still disrupt the historic streetscape in places.

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 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 sourced from afar that sometimes needed to be transported into the area. This form of architecture generally relates to country houses and other status buildings.

Most of the buildings in Alvington can be described as vernacular in style.

The original buildings in the conservation area have a linear aspect, that is to say the properties are long and not very deep in plan. See Fig 22.

Roof pitches are generally shallow at about 30 to 35 degrees as this is the optimum pitch to hang both slate and pantiles.

Typically dormer windows do not punctuate the roofs lines and where they are it is evident that most are later additions. These are not in keeping with the original form of the buildings. See Fig 23.

Chimneys are prevalent in Alvington and are generally low and wide, and often brick built. As the buildings are linear in form, chimneys appear along the length of the roof. The loss of its chimneys can leave a building looking oddly disjointed. See Fig 24.

Window openings tend to be small and in some cases with an arch detail above the opening. Unfortunately most of the original windows have been lost so it is not possible to say what the form they would have taken.

In a few buildings the original glass has been retained, the Blacksmiths Arms being one example. Historic glass is noticeable as it is not flat and reflections ripple on the surface because of it.

The Globe Inn, the Old Rectory and Severn Lodge can be described as being polite architecture and differ greatly in style to the majority of the buildings. Although as Severn Lodge is constructed from local materials it could be argued as being vernacular in nature.

Materials

Historically most of the buildings in Alvington appear to be built of red sandstone which is known to weather badly and has led to a number of buildings being rendered to protect the stone.

Red and brown pantile roofs are prevalent, as are welsh slate roofs. The pitches of the roofs are determined by the materials to be hung, so most roofs in Alvington have a pitch of between 30 and 35 degrees.

There are two listed 19th century brick properties in Alvington, The Old Parsonage and Jesmond House; this material is not generally used in the village, but the quality of the design has led to the buildings becoming an asset to the area.

Brick has been used in other more modern buildings in the village, but the design of these buildings is weak and they do not make a positive contribution to the character of the area, for example the buildings next to the old school buildings. See Fig 25.

The walls around Knapp Lane and Church Street are constructed of long sets of sandstone and are visually attractive. Sandstone walls are also found along the A48. See Fig 26.

The walls surrounding the properties along Clanna Road are formed from large pieces of stone than found along Knapp Lane. The stones are set in a manner known as snecked, which means that small random pieces of stone are laid with larger stones linking courses together to maintain a level line. See Fig 27.

Paving traditions

Around the properties in Church Lane and Court Lane evidence of former paving schemes can be seen. Attractive stone sets form the driveway to Barn Lodge and in front of the gate at Myrtle Cottage.

There is no remaining local paving to be found along the Main Road, the footpaths are all finished in standard tarmac, which is grey and uniform.

Along Knapp Lane and Church Lane the road surface is light in colour and when surveyed it was covered in a layer of dust. To re-tarmac the road in a dark colour would significantly alter the character of the area possibly for the worst. It would also result in the loss of the soft verges that edge the lane increasing the rural character of the area. See Fig 28.



Fig 25.

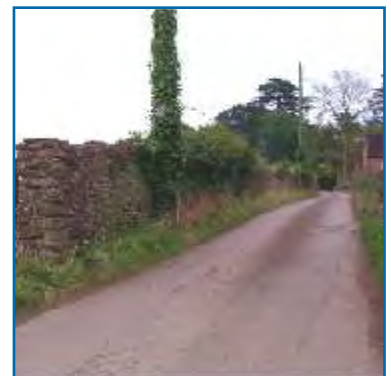


Fig 26.



Fig 27.

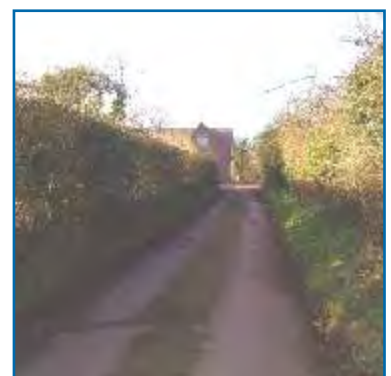


Fig 28.

Activities, uses and linkages

Uses

As Alvington has few local amenities other than the pubs, most people who drive through the village do not stop.

The settlement is used as a residential area by the occupants, most of which will travel out to surrounding areas for work and to use facilities such as shops.

Images and associations

Sounds

Down Knapp lane and Church Lane birds singing fill the air with sound, levels of bird song will vary with the seasons, but during February when the area was analysed many different species of birds could be heard singing.

The Church clock chimes on the hour with a pleasant subtle toll.

Even in the more isolated parts of the conservation area, for example Knapp Lane, the heavy traffic on the A48 can be heard rumbling almost constantly and detracts from the atmosphere of the area. *See Fig 29.*



Fig 29.

SWOT Analysis

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

Strengths

- The open space to the east of the A48, originally orchards
- The rural atmosphere of the area as produced by open land and associated wildlife
- The single track roads, Church Lane and Knapp Lane, edged by either hedgerows or red sandstone walls
- Views from village to surrounding hills and River Severn
- Original stone set paving around Knapp Lane

Weaknesses

- The infilling of open land with new buildings
- The large percentage of uPVC windows in the historic buildings
- Inappropriate signage on the Blacksmiths Arms and The Globe Inn
- New build which is inappropriate in form and material
- Dormer windows punching through the otherwise unbroken rooflines.
- Minor alterations to historic buildings which has led to the loss of original character

Opportunities

- Improvement to the appearance of both pubs by the removal of shutters around the windows and altered signage
- To return the original character to some buildings through reinstatement of original window layout and form
- A new paving scheme could be introduced to the village to improve the streetscape

Threats

- Development on the open areas of Alvington would result in the loss of the villages most attractive and unusual feature.
- The widening of Knapp Lane and Church Lane to accommodate greater volumes of traffic
- Further alterations occurring to historic buildings
- Loss of remaining original windows through replacement to uPVC

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.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 guidance

In the distinctive part of the village lying to the south of the A48(T) the settlement form is spacious, often with large areas of open land around and between properties. Important contributions to the character and attractiveness of this area are made by agricultural land, orchards, private gardens, the churchyard and the area's narrow access lanes. In applying plan policies which seek to preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area and its setting and which require development to complement the character of its surroundings, regard will be had to these and other characteristics of the area. Account will also be taken of the likely cumulative impact of incremental change on the area's character and appearance.

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 and paving.

There are extremely limited resources available from central or local government specifically to maintain Alvington conservation area; however the character appraisal maybe useful for Alvington 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 Alvington needs to be monitored over the coming years in order to control the small alterations which take place, but which could eventually further erode the character of Alvington. 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 which 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 carry out 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 where the 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 carry out 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 such as 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. This is an option available to the Forest of Dean District Council. However there are no proposals in this Character Appraisal to introduce article 4 directions.

Intended action for buildings at risk

Alvington has a small number of buildings that are in need of repair, but none are listed, which means that Alvington conservation area has no buildings formally identified on its Buildings at Risk register. If the condition of the flat roofed extension at the entrance to Church Lane were improved the conservation area would benefit.

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 Alvington.

Paving

A scheme could be devised to improve the quality of the paving in the conservation area. Tarmac is material that is uniform in appearance and has limited historic merit, stone sets could be introduced which would greatly improve the visual impact of the area.

Wirescape

Where the opportunity arises electricity and telecommunication wiring could be provided underground, to the benefit of the village. The removal on these overhead wires will reduce the clutter seen at the roof height of the buildings.

Street furniture

Alvington has relatively little street furniture, but if more were to be introduced it would be encouraged that bespoke or attractive schemes be produced rather than standard issue designs used.

Occupation levels

The occupation levels of Alvington as a whole are generally very good. However the building at the entrance to Church Lane is empty and in a poor condition, reuse or the replacement with a more appropriate building would improve the entrance to the attractive lane.

Areas for enhancement

The main area for enhancement in Alvington could be the removal of inappropriate windows, such as the uPVC which dominates the area. Also more careful alteration in the character of the building would prevent the loss of character and historic fabric as has been seen in the past.

The car park to The Globe Inn could be enhanced to prevent the building appearing isolated as it does currently.

Traffic management

Alvington 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.

Commercial Premises

The appearance of Main Road could be greatly improved if the signage on both the Blacksmiths Arms and The Globe Inn were replaced and the number of signs reduced.

Economic development and regeneration

New development

Conservation area status is not designed to stop all future development in that area. However it is also made clear in government guidance and the local authority's 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 provided that 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 that any perceived conflicts of legislation can be identified and resolved in a manner that satisfies the current requirements of the relevant 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 seriously considered before the work is carried out, as the impact on the conservation area could be harmful, both visually and ecologically.

Alvington Conclusion

Alvington is an historic settlement in the Forest of Dean. It is special because of the areas of open space that have in the majority survived, preserving the historic form of the village. The areas of open space along with narrow roads create a rural atmosphere to the village centre, which is unusual.

Alterations have occurred to many of the buildings, which have led to a loss of character, diminishing the village's special quality. It is hoped through greater understanding of the village and the buildings, alterations and development that may occur in the future can be more sensitively designed.

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 Alvington'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.

Conclusion

Alvington is an historic settlement in the Forest of Dean. It is special because of the areas of open space that have in the majority survived, preserving the historic form of the village. The areas of open space along with narrow roads create a rural atmosphere to the village centre, which is unusual. Only minor changes to the boundary, to rationalise it, are proposed.

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