

BLAENAVON



WORLD HERITAGE SITE



**BLAENAVON TOWN CENTRE
CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL
& MANAGEMENT PLAN
2017 – 2022**

SAFLE TREFTA DAETH BYD



BLAENAFON





Appraisal & Management Plan

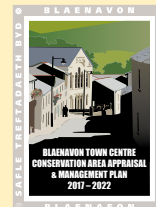


BLAENAVON TOWN CENTRE TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE PROGRAMME

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2017-2022



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Executive Summary

The Blaenavon Town Centre Conservation Area was designated in 1984 and covers 19 hectares around the historic core of the town. The Conservation Area was extended to include Old Queen and Phillips Street in 2011. The Conservation Area includes 26 listed buildings and one Scheduled Ancient Monument – Blaenavon Ironworks which is the *raison d’etre* for the development of the town and for the areas wider World Heritage Site status.

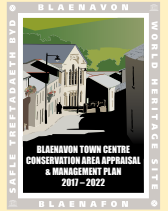
This Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is an update to the original Plan approved in 2011. Its aim is to assist Torfaen County Borough Council in protecting and enhancing the built heritage of Blaenavon – a key area of the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site - whilst enabling the public to recognise both the benefits of living in a Conservation Area and their own responsibilities for its future management and protection.

The purpose of this document is also to identify those characteristics which make the Conservation Area an area of Special Architectural or Historic interest. The Plan defines and analyses the special character, qualities; and the architectural and historic interest that warrants the Blaenavon Conservation Area designation. The Plan identifies the key assets and issues and outlines recommendations for the management and enhancement of the areas special character in the future.

Management and enhancement proposals are identified including: the identification of properties suitable for local listing; a review of the Conservation Area boundary with recommendations for extensions on the south eastern and south western boundary. Policies for maintenance, repair and new development are also presented.

This document has been prepared in accordance with Welsh Governments guidance as contained in Planning Policy Guidance Wales, Chapter 6 (November 2016), Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (May 2017), and Managing Conservation Areas in Wales (May 2017).

The Conservation Area was surveyed between March 2017 and April 2017 and this Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan will be subject to public consultation during the summer of 2017. Following consultation, Full Council considered and approved the Plan on 17th October 2017. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that it remains relevant and that it is contributing towards the sustainable management of the historic built environment for future generations.



Crynodeb Gweithredol

Dynodwyd Ardal Gadwraeth Canol Tref Blaenavon ym 1984 ac mae'n cynnwys 19 hectar o gwmpas craidd hanesyddol y dref. Cafodd yr Ardal Gadwraeth ei hymestyn i gynnwys Hen Heol y Frenhines a Phillips Street yn 2011. Mae'r Ardal Gadwraeth yn cynnwys 26 o adeiladau rhestredig ac un Heneb Restredig – Gwaith Haearn Blaenavon, sef y prif reswm dros ddatblygiad y dref a statws Safle Treftadaeth y Byd ehangach yr ardal.

Mae Cynllun Arfarnu a Rheoli'r Ardal Gadwraeth yn ddiweddiariad i'r Cynllun gwreiddiol a gymeradwywyd yn 2011 ac fe'i paratowyd i gyflawni'r cyfrifoldebau am warchod neu wella'r Ardal Gadwraeth. Ei nod yw cynorthwyo Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Torfaen o ran gwarchod a gwella treftadaeth adeiledig Blaenavon - ardal allweddol Safle Treftadaeth y Byd Tirwedd Ddiwydiannol Blaenavon - wrth alluogi i'r cyhoedd weld manteision byw mewn Ardal Gadwraeth a'u cyfrifoldebau nhw ar gyfer ei rheoli a'i hamddiffyn yn y dyfodol.

Pwrpas y ddogfen hon hefyd yw adnabod y nodweddion hynny sy'n gwneud yr Ardal Gadwraeth yn ardal o ddiddordeb Pensaernïol neu Hanesyddol Arbennig. Mae'r Cynllun yn diffinio ac yn dadansoddi'r cymeriad arbennig a'r nodweddion, a'r diddordeb pensaernïol a hanesyddol sy'n sail i ddynodiad Ardal Gadwraeth Blaenavon. Mae'r Cynllun yn adnabod yr asedau a'r materion allweddol ac yn amlinellu argymhellion ar gyfer gwarchod neu wella cymeriad arbennig yr ardal yn y dyfodol.

Nodir cynigion gwarchod a gwella gan gynnwys: adnabod eiddo sy'n addas i'w rhestru'n lleol; arolwg o ffin yr Ardal Gadwraeth gydag argymhellion ar gyfer estyniadau ar y ffiniau gogledd-ddwyreiniol a de-ddwyreiniol. Cyflwynir polisiau ar gyfer cynnal a chadw, trwsio a datblygiadau newydd ynghyd â chyfleoedd i wella a'r potensial o weithredu Cyfarwyddyd Erthygl 4(2) ar ran o Heol Lydan sy'n effeithio nifer fechan o adeiladau i gynorthwyo gyda rheoli cymeriad arbennig yr ardal yn y dyfodol.

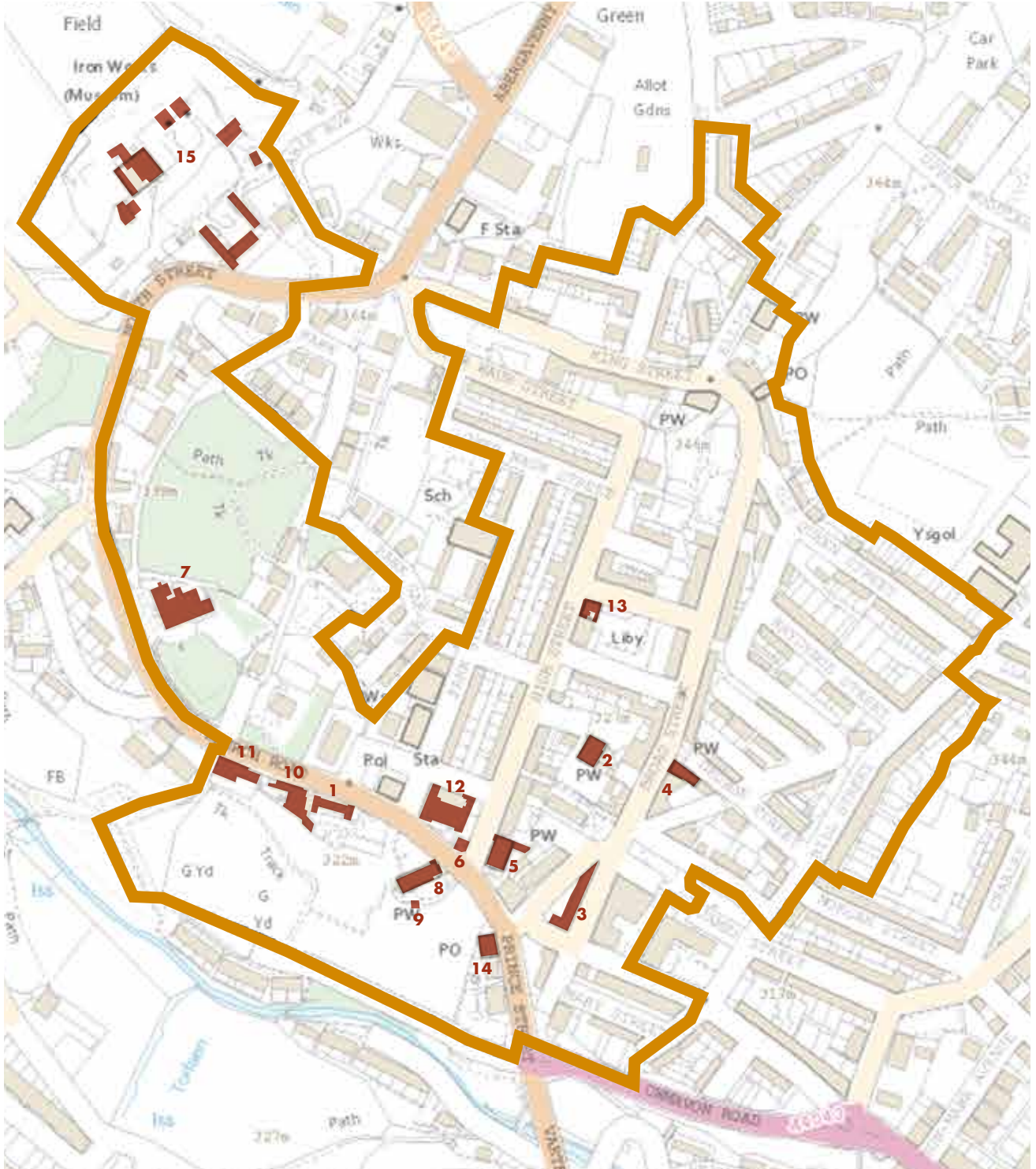
Paratowyd y ddogfen hon yn unol â Pholisi Cenedlaethol Llywodraeth Cymru yn y ddogfen 'Polisi Cynllun Cymru', (Rhifyn 9), Pennod 6 (Tachwedd 2016 a 'Nodyn Cyngor Technegol 24: Yr Amgylchedd Hanesyddol' (Mai 2017), ac arweiniad CADW 'Rheoli Ardaloedd Cadwraeth yng Nghymru' (Mai 2017).

Arolygwyd yr Ardal Gadwraeth rhwng mis Mawrth ac Ebrill 2017 ac roedd Cynllun Arfarnu a Rheoli'r Ardal Gadwraeth yma yn destun ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus yn ystod yr haf 2017. Ar ôl yr ymgynghori, bu i'r Cyngor Llawn ystyried a chymeradwyo'r Cynllun ar 17eg Hydref 2017. Bydd Cynllun Arfarnu a Rheoli'r Ardal Gadwraeth yn cael ei fonitro'n rheolaidd a'i arolygu i sicrhau ei fod yn parhau i fod yn berthnasol ac yn cyfrannu tuag at reolaeth gynaliadwy'r amgylchedd adeiledig hanesyddol ar gyfer cenedlaethau'r dyfodol.

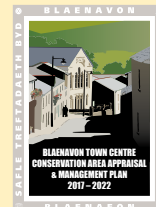


Conservation Area Appraisal

1.0 Blaenavon Town Centre Conservation Area



Listed Buildings Highlighted



The Blaenavon Town Centre Conservation Area (BTCCA) was designated in 1984 and covers 19 hectares around the historic core of the town. The Conservation Area was extended to include Old Queen and Phillips Street in 2011. The BTCCA includes 26 listed buildings and one Scheduled Ancient Monument – Blaenavon Ironworks which is the main reason for the development of the town and for the areas wider World Heritage Site status.

Prior to the construction of the Ironworks in 1789, Blaenavon consisted of little more than a few isolated farmsteads, and the town was developed entirely to service the needs of the ironworkers. Consequently the earliest parts of the town are found adjacent to the actual Ironworks with the commercial core existing further to the east. This commercial core based on Broad Street began to be developed at the turn of the 1840's with the opening of a covered market in 1840.

The BTCCA includes the Blaenavon Ironworks and the historic core of the town. Almost all of the BTCCA was developed before around 1870.

The Ironworks formed the nucleus of an intensively developed wider landscape which included quarries for extracting iron, coal mines and an extensive tramroad system. The historic value of the town and surrounding area was recognised by UNESCO in 2000 when it was included as a key component of the wider Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site (BILWHS). The wider landscape is also recognised by Cadw and Natural Resources Wales as a Landscape of Historic Interest.

The location, history and character of Blaenavon make it a unique town in South Wales. Whilst the town was further developed through the late 19th century and 20th century, much of this later development is of a poor quality and consequently has been excluded from the Conservation Area, although it remains within the BILWHS.

The purpose of this document is to describe those characteristics which make the BTCCA an area of Special Architectural or Historic Interest while enabling the public to recognise both the benefits of living in a Conservation Area and their own responsibilities for its future sustainable management and protection. A secondary aim is to inform the wider Planning Policy regime including the production of specific Supplementary Planning Guidance.

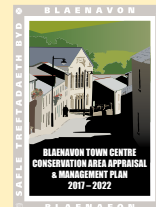
Management and enhancement proposals are identified including: the identification of properties suitable for local listing; a review of the Conservation Area boundary with recommendations for changes; policies for maintenance and repair; policies for new development; the opportunities for enhancement; advice using design guidance, the potential for an Article 4 (2) Direction removing permitted development rights from the Conservation Area; and the involvement of the community.

This document has been prepared in accordance with Welsh Government Policy as contained in Planning Policy Guidance Wales, Chapter 6 (November 2016), Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (May 2017), and Managing Conservation Areas in Wales (May 2017).

The BTCCA was surveyed between March 2017 and April 2017 and will be subject to public consultation during the summer of 2017. Following consultation, an agreed final document will be taken before Full Council for approval in the autumn of 2017.

1.1 Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

It is widely recognised that a well-protected and accessible historic environment can have a positive impact on people and communities and contribute towards quality of life and well-being. If the historic environment is going to continue to deliver its rich benefits to communities there is a need to identify what is significant and manage change in a sensitive and sustainable way.



Sustainable management of the historic environment is central to Wales' culture and character and contributes to our shared sense of place and cultural identity. It is vital that the historic environment is valued, protected, actively managed and made accessible for the general well-being of present and future generations.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, places a duty on public bodies to 'improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales in accordance with the sustainable development principle that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

Central to the sustainable protection and enhancement of historic assets including Conservation Areas, is the positive management of change based on a full understanding of the character and significance of the area as well as recognition of the benefits that they can deliver and the role that they play in a vibrant local community, culture and economy.

This draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan seeks to ensure that going forward; the Blaenavon Conservation Area is managed in a sustainable way to ensure that the historic environment is valued by its present communities and managed for future generations.

1.2 Planning Policy - Background

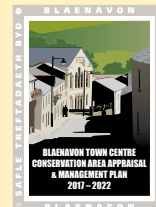
Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and are defined as "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Conservation Area designation is more dependent on the overall quality and interest of an area, rather than individual buildings, although it is common for such areas to contain a number of Listed Buildings.

Designation as a Conservation Area has a number of implications. Most importantly, Torfaen County Borough Council is required to give special attention to preserving or enhancing the Conservation Area while exercising their planning functions. In addition, planning consent must be gained for certain types of development which are elsewhere classified as permitted development, such as various types of cladding, dormer windows, satellite dishes and radio masts/antennae. Consent is further required for the demolition of buildings within Conservation Areas. Designation also brings controls over works to trees.

The protection of an area does not end with Conservation Area designation. Planning Policy Wales 2016 (Chapter 6) The Historic Environment (November 2016) recognises that it is important that the historic environment is protected, managed and conserved. Welsh Government Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (May 2017) further requires that Local Authorities prepare detailed assessments of the special interest, character and appearance of their Conservation Areas and proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas in a Management Plan.

Within this context, this Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan defines and analyses the special character, qualities; and the architectural and historic interest that warrants the Blaenavon Conservation Area designation. Allied to the Appraisal is a Management Plan which sets out clear guidance to address issues emerging from the Appraisal.

Welsh Government's Guidance on Managing Conservation Areas in Wales (May 2017) recognises Conservation Area Appraisals & Management Plans as the foundation for positive management. To this end, this Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan seeks to assist Torfaen County Borough Council in protecting or enhancing the built environment of Blaenavon whilst also enabling the public to recognise both the benefits of living in a Conservation Area and their own responsibilities for its sustainable management and future protection.



1.3 National and Local Policies

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (November 2016) sets the context for sustainable land use policy within Wales and identifies the need for the promotion of good design.

Policy on the historic environment is contained within Chapter 6 of PPW (November 2016). This was re-written in 2016 to reflect the introduction of the new Technical Advice Note 24, and now contains national policies requiring that Local Planning Authorities exercise a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of the character of a Conservation Area and/or its setting when considering development proposals as well as including policies for the protection of World Heritage Sites and locally Significant Buildings within their adopted Plans, and makes provision for these to be material considerations within the Planning Process.

PPW 2016 is supplemented by Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (May 2017) which replaces the previous Welsh Office Circular 61/96. This provides further policies on the management of all aspects of the historic environment and alters the principle of control from one of preservation to one of being able to justify alterations within the historic environment.

Local policies for the protection of the historic environment and local distinctiveness are contained within the Adopted Torfaen LDP (December 2013). The main ones relating to the historic environment are:

S2 Sustainable Development

Development proposals will need to demonstrate they have taken account of the following principles and where relevant that they: -

- c) Conserve and enhance the natural and built environment;

S4 Place Making / Good Design

Proposals for all new development must have full regard to the context of the local natural and built environment and its special features through:

- a) Promotion of local distinctiveness by sympathetic design, material selection and layout including public art;

S7 Conservation of the Natural and Historic Environment

Development proposals should seek to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the Natural, Built & Historic Environment of Torfaen, in particular:

- d) Landscape setting;
- e) Character of the built environment; and
- f) Historic assets

BW1 General Policy - Development Proposals All development proposals will be considered favorably providing they comply with the following criteria where they are applicable: -



A. Amenity and Design

- i) The proposal does not constitute over development of the site in terms of the scale, density, massing and form of the development;
- ii) The design and visual appearance of the proposal takes account of the local context in terms of siting, appearance, elevation treatment, materials and detailing;
- iii) The proposal respects the urban fabric of the area in terms of pattern of development, the space around and between buildings and the setting of the site;
- iv) The proposal includes a landscaping and planting scheme, which enhances the site and the wider context including green infrastructure and biodiversity networks and allows it to adapt to climate change;
- v) For extensions to buildings, the proposals complement and enhance the form, siting, materials, details and character of the original building, its curtilage and the wider area;
- vi) The proposal does not have an unacceptable impact upon the amenities of the occupiers of adjoining or neighbouring properties;
- vii) The proposal designs out the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour; and
- viii) The proposal promotes inclusive design, both for built development and access within and around the development.

C. Built Environment

- i) The proposal contributes to the preservation and enhancement of the historic built environment wherever possible (including heritage assets and their settings);
- ii) The proposal does not detrimentally affect the character of the immediate and surrounding built environment; and
- iii) Where practicable, existing construction materials on the site are re-used or recycled.

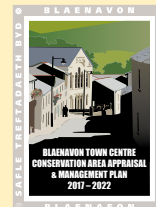
HE2 is the principal LDP policy which applies specifically to the World Heritage Site.

This states:

HE2 Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site (BILWHS)

Development proposals within, and adjacent to the BILWHS will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that: -

- a) The proposal promotes a standard of design in terms of siting, scale, massing and materials, which is sympathetic to and preserves or enhances the character of the local area and settlement form; and
- b) Important views into and within the BILWHS are not adversely affected by the proposals; and
- c) The proposal contributes to ensuring the preservation of the 'Outstanding Universal Value' of the BILWHS designation; and
- d) The proposal would not adversely affect the overall integrity of the BILWHS and its landscape or historic



setting. All development proposals within and adjacent to the World Heritage Site should be informed by the BILWHS Design Guidance and should identify how the proposals are consistent with the principles in this document.

All development proposals within and adjacent to the World Heritage Site should also be informed by the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site Design Guidance and should identify how the proposals are consistent with the principles in this document.

A World Heritage Site is considered a 'sensitive area' under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations. Schedule 3 (2) (viii) of these Regulations identifies 'landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance' as one of the criteria for screening Schedule 2 developments. World Heritage Sites are such landscapes. Local planning authorities will take this into consideration when asked to give a screening opinion on whether a proposed development falls within Schedule 2 and therefore requires an Environmental Impact Assessment. When an Environmental Impact Assessment is required, a heritage impact assessment could form part of this wider study.

In all cases that are likely to have a significant impact on the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of a World Heritage Site and its setting, it is best practice to carry out pre-application discussions with the local planning authority to ensure that the implications of the proposal are fully understood and reflected in supporting documents. Certain developments within a World Heritage Site, including the provision of one or more dwelling houses or the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space created by the development is 100 square metres or more, will require a design and access statement. The Welsh Ministers must be consulted, through Cadw, on planning applications that are likely to have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage Site.

Cadw have also produced a number of additional guidance document, including guidance on World Heritage Sites and Conservation areas.

The above documents can be found at

Chapter 6 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, November 2016): Welsh Government; 2016;

<http://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/ppw/?lang=en>

Technical Advice Note 24 (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment (2017); Welsh Government; 2017;

<http://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/tans/tan-24/?lang=en>

Managing Change in World Heritage Sites: Cadw: 2017 and

Setting of Historic assets in Wales; Cadw 2017

<http://cadw.gov.wales/historicenvironment/publications/worldheritagesites/?lang=en>

Heritage Impact Assessments in Wales: Cadw :2017 and

Managing Conservation area in Wales: Cadw :2017

<http://cadw.gov.wales/historicenvironment/publications/conservationareas/?lang=en>

Adopted Torfaen Local Development Plan 2015 , TCBC: 2015

<http://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/PlanningAndDevelopment/Planningpolicy/LocalDevelopmentPlan/LocalDevelopment-Plan.aspx>



1.4 The Definition of Special Interest

The BTCCA's significance results from the industries that led to the establishment and growth of the town in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries. The town itself is a key Component of the wider Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site inscribed by UNESCO in 2000. UNESCO recognised that -

"The area around Blaenavon bears eloquent and exceptional testimony to the pre-eminence of South Wales as the World's major producer of iron and coal in the nineteenth century. It is a remarkably complete example of a 19th Century landscape"

(Extract from ICOMOS report to the World Heritage Committee November 2000)

The rapid decline of the iron and coal industries early in the Twentieth century coupled with the lack of replacement industry resulted in a fall in population and limited redevelopment. This has resulted in large areas of the historic C19 town remaining, though the low level of economic activity has also contributed to the extensive erosion of built heritage detail.

The town retains the vital links between its residential, commercial and religious elements and the associated industrial sites and man-made landscapes. Blaenavon is mainly built to the east of the Ironworks on sloping land. It is unusual in the Valleys as being a self-contained and definable settlement not linked by urban valley sprawl and for having key commercial streets running up the hill slope and not parallel to the valley bottom.

The Conservation Area includes both the Ironworks and most of the C19 town. Within this boundary, Character Areas have been identified which provide examples of differing periods of development, their built form and their functions. Throughout the town, the predominant built forms are the terraced properties climbing the hills. This formal pattern is punctuated by some notable Listed Buildings which provide variety and quality to the predominantly two storey Conservation Area.

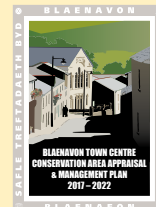
An analysis of current conservation concerns identifies the positive assets and the negative issues. The assets include the heritage townscapes, the unity of design and materials throughout the historic town and its locational advantages. Several negative factors are identified, particularly the impacts of economic decline which has left unused buildings and a general sense of neglect with examples of poor maintenance and repair which has led to deterioration and loss of some architectural and heritage details so resulting in a detrimental impact on the wider streetscape.

The **Evidential Value** of the BTCCA is that it preserves the remains of a late 18th /early 19th century Ironworks together with the associated social infrastructure such as the residential, communal and commercial buildings which formed the core of the 19th century town in a remarkably intact condition.

The **Historic Value** of the BTCCA is that Blaenavon formed one of the earliest centres in Wales and indeed the World where iron was made on an industrial scale.

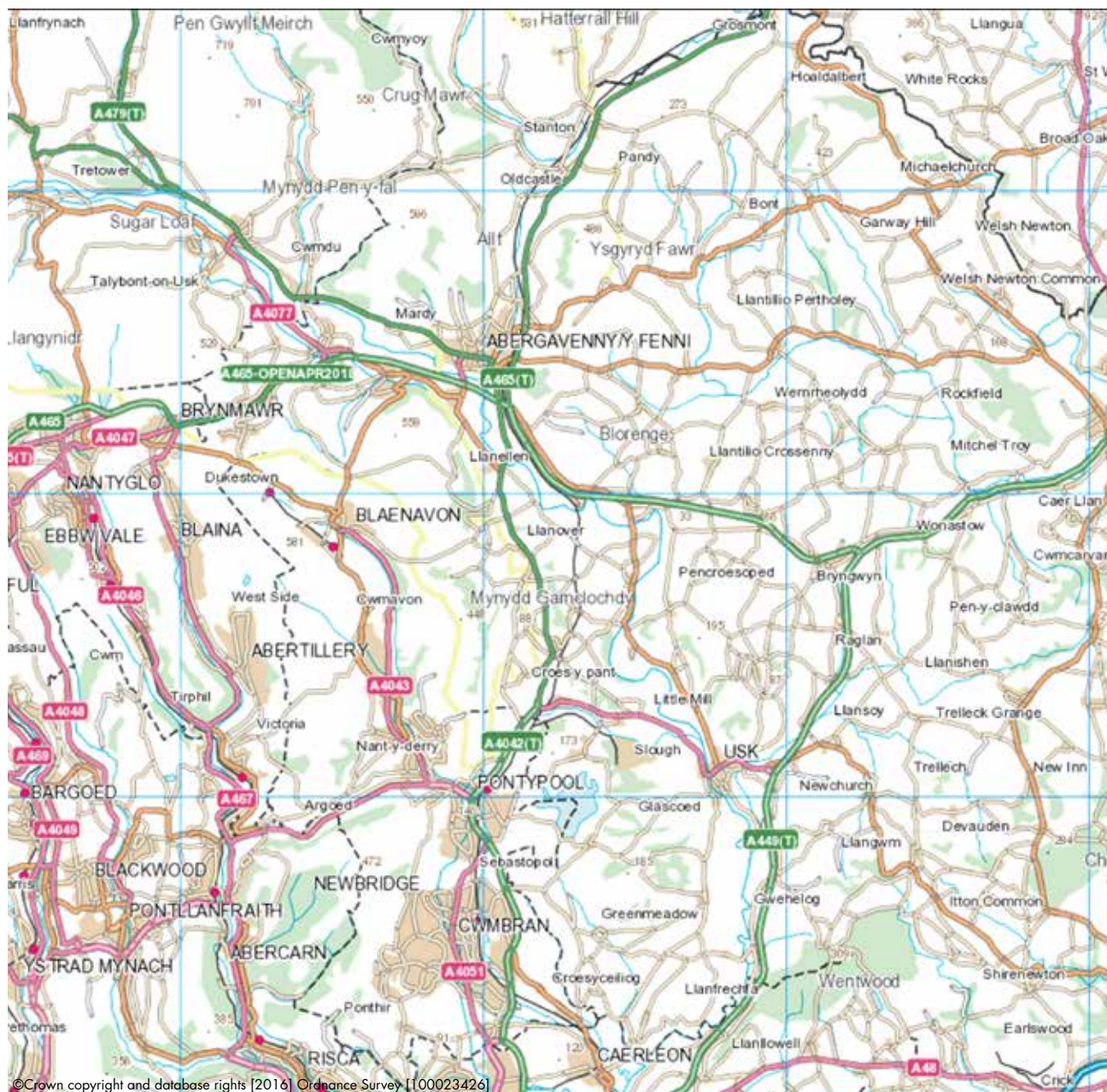
The **Architectural/Aesthetic Value** of the BTCCA is that it displays a wide range of styles from the late 18th century vernacular of the Ironworks and associated housing to the extravagance of late 19th century community buildings such as the Workman's hall. The BTCCA contains an especially good collection of 19th century domestic vernacular styles, which shows how domestic house design developed throughout the 19th century. The inter-relationship between the urban form of the BTCCA and the wider landscape adds additional aesthetic value.

The **Communal Value** of the BTCCA is that it is a self-contained settlement with a distinct cultural identity that contains all the elements such as employment, housing, education and social facilities needed to support a single community.



2.0 Location and Physical Context

2.1 Location and Population



Blaenavon is situated on the south-west slope of the Bloreng Mountain at the head of the Afon Lwyd - the most eastern of the South Wales valleys. The eastern ridge of the South Wales coalfield outcrops on this hillside and coal, iron ore, fire clay and limestone are all easily accessible. Most of the town lies between 310m and 370m above sea level. Blaenavon is unusual in the Valleys as being a single definable settlement, not linked by urban valley sprawl, and for having key commercial streets running up the hill slope and not parallel to the valley bottom.



The Blaenavon Conservation Area covers an area of 19 hectares and was designated in 1984 and extended in 2011. It includes the historic streets within the town centre, the Blaenavon Ironworks and most of the main public buildings.

The traditional rail links into the town are no longer useable and road connections provide the main transport linkages to the town. This includes the A4043 road to Pontypool which is (seven miles to the south) and the 'B' roads over the hill tops to Abergavenny which is (seven miles to the north) and Brynmawr which is (five miles to the west).

The town of Blaenavon had a total population of 5,763 in the 2001 Census. Following decades of declining population figures linked to the demise of heavy industry in the area, the 2011 census population figure demonstrated a slight increase in population to 6055. For the first time in a century, the population decline has been halted and the population trend is increasing, albeit modestly.

The relative remoteness and the decline in the local economy is reflected in weak demand for local goods, services and property. The economy is increasingly becoming dependent on tourism though some industrial related activities are still important. Industrial related activities continue to play a vital role but tourism is becoming a significant part of the local economy, with some businesses being dependent on its success. The seasonality of tourism, the head of valley location, and the competing nearby centres of Abergavenny, Pontypool, Cwmbran and even Newport, are limiting the viability of town centre businesses and the local economy.

2.2 Landscape Setting

The Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales includes the following description:

Blaenavon is located at the head of the Afon Lwyd valley and contains a landscape covered with the remains of early coal and iron exploitation and processing, crisscrossed by shallow trench mines, tramways, inclines and tips. These elements, with the town of Blaenavon, Coity Mountain, the Blorenge and Pwll Du form the essence of the unique historic character of the landscape of Blaenavon.

Blaenavon town grew because of its proximity to the natural resources which provided for industrial operations in the C19, though the landscape setting of the town and its Conservation Area, provides an important context and attraction. The head of valley location and physical form of the setting of the town has had an impact on the historic growth and urban layout.

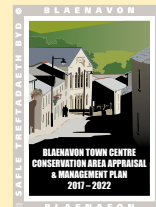
The town is bounded to the north and east by the moorland range of the Blorenge which rises to almost 600 meters, and to the south west by the wooded course of the deep valley of the Afon Lwyd. The views of Coity Mountain, across the Afon Lwyd, provide a notable backdrop from many of the streets within the Conservation Area. This view is a fundamental part of the historic attraction of these streets and needs to be protected from inappropriate development. The location on the sloping south-west facing valley side of the Blorenge ensures dramatic views from most parts of the town and maximum exposure to both prevailing winds and sunlight.

The historic dismantled transport links – the two rail lines and the canal - followed the valley from Newport and Pontypool to the south. Now the main routes into the town are the roads. The two from the south include the A4043 following the narrow and well treed Afon Lwyd valley bottom and the B4246 from Varteg higher up the slopes of the Coity Mountain, above the routes of the dismantled rail lines. The two to the north include the B4248 skirting the north side of the valley to Brynmawr, and the continuation of the B4246 over the Pwll Du watershed to the Clydach Gorge and Abergavenny.

Each provides a different arrival experience at the entrances or gateways into the town and appreciation of the impact of the landscape setting on the townscape of the Conservation Area and its heritage.

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The most dramatic arrival is over Pwll Du from Abergavenny where one views the town from above with the Afon Lwyd valley beyond leading to the south.



The arrival over Pwll Du and the Blorenge on the Abergavenny Road with views across the Afon Lwyd valley of the Coity mountain to the south-west of Blaenavon. The first glimpses of the urban area are of the Big Pit and industrial estate area. The main part of the town is still hidden on the slopes down to the river.



The first sight of the rooftops on the northern edge of Blaenavon from the Abergavenny Road shows the depth of the Afon Lwyd valley, the important attraction of Coity Mountain and the remains of the historic mining landscape in the foreground. The relict landscape is internationally recognised as an important cultural landscape evidencing the combined works of nature and man.

The preferred arrival route to appreciate the siting of Blaenavon is from across the valley on the Varteg Road. The town can be seen spread out on the south west facing slopes of the Bloreng Mountain above the valley bottom. The relationship of the Conservation Area and town centre – the earliest areas of urban growth near the western edge of the town, to the main industrial locations can be understood as can the impact of the local topography on its form and layout.



View of Blaenavon Conservation Area from Forgeside across the wooded Afon Lwyd, showing how the town climbs the slopes of the Bloreng Mountain.

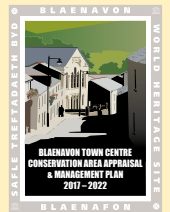
Within the urban area, the only significant landscaped open spaces are along the course of the Afon Lwyd, and the Park beech-tree wood in the Conservation Area. Nevertheless, one is constantly aware of the impact of the surrounding hills, mountains and the open countryside.

The great value of the town lies both in its visual character and in its historic interest. The visual character depends to a great extent on the interplay between the topography, the consistent use of building materials and the terrace forms of the buildings. Wherever you are in the town, you are not far from a long distance view of the dramatic surrounding landscape with sight of the neighbouring mountains and hilltops

3.0 Historical Development

3.1 Origins of the Settlement

The abundance of coal, ironstone, limestone, fireclay, sandstone, timber and a reliable supply of water – the ingredients of iron production - resulted in workings from possibly pre-Roman times. The rights to the iron ore were leased between 1570 to 1784 by the Hanburys of Pontypool from the Lord of Abergavenny. Although these activities only led to a small number of scattered cottages around the area, by 1748 there were enough inhabitants to send 48 children to the local school. Early roads in the C17 are known to have followed the line of King Street and Hill Street, which was crossed by another ancient track on the line of Ivor St and James St.



The development of Blaenavon as a significant settlement followed the leasing of the land to the founders of the Blaenavon Company in 1787 and the construction of the Ironworks. When opened in 1789, the ironworks was the most modern in the world and incorporated workers housing, which is still a feature of the site. The prosperity and growth of the town was linked to the fortunes of the various forms of the Company until the 1920s.

Within a few years of starting, the expansion of the Ironworks resulted in Blaenavon being one of the top producers in Wales. The advantages of the location, the introduction of new industrial methods and the improved transport links that came later with the opening of the Monmouthshire and Brecknock Canal and the railway in the mid C19: saw new forges built near the tracks at Forgeside. The Blaenavon Coal and Iron Company went from strength to strength. This led to a major influx of people from nearby areas of Wales and England.

Much of the town was built between the 1840s and the 1870s and it was the continuity of ownership and tenure that has resulted in the retention of much of the original shape and structure of the settlement. Though Blaenavon appears to be a planned town, most of the layout was defined by field boundaries, mountain streams and ancient tracks. In fact the scattered forms of the early days resulted from a lack of planning and the subservience of settlement and commerce to the interests of the iron company.

The result was a low quality of building, with meagre structures using sandstone from the mineral workings, a few philanthropically provided public buildings and a townscape linked to the local industry and industrial landscape.

In addition to the impact of the Iron Company, the origins of the town owe much to John Griffith Williams who came to Blaenavon in 1830 and proved to be Blaenavon's first business entrepreneur. When he first arrived he remarked that there were only "five chapels, four shops, five public houses and very few cottages". He soon became an influential man in Blaenavon and supplied the town with its first brewery, first hotel (The Lion), a pottery, gas works, water works, town hall, street lighting, market, and influenced the establishment of Broad Street and a road connecting Blaenavon to Brynmawr.

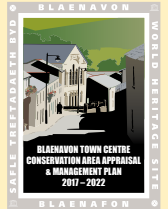
3.2 Development of the Settlement

As in most ironworking towns, the first housing was provided by the employers in the form of scattered terraces at the locations where workers were needed. The preserved cottages next to the Blaenavon Ironworks at Stack Square, which date from Circa 1788, are an exceptional example of the survival of housing from this date. Urban functions gradually evolved around the community shop, chapels and church and it was the iron company's tramroad to the Monmouthshire Canal which became an axis upon which the school, church and manager's house were built. The earliest known map of Blaenavon is Dadford's 1792 map which shows the Ironworks, Stack Square, Bunkers Row and two other rows of industrial workers housing.

A map of industrial holdings in 1806 shows the land owned and leased by the Blaenavon Company eastwards to the Nant Lechan – which now runs under the length of Broad Street. The area between the Ironworks and the Nant Lechan stream is shown as wooded, with St Peter's Church built in 1805 next to the tramway following the line of Church Road.

Charles Smith's 1812 map shows the railroad entering the works between Shepherd's Square and a long row of tenements in North Street - which include what may be the first public house in Blaenavon. The turnpike road to Abergavenny runs past the works and Stack Square is described as houses and shops.

Deakin's 1819 map of the Companies holdings shows the developments adjacent to the works, the beginnings of building along King Street, the ironmaster's house on the Ty Mawr site and St Peter's Church; very little of the town is identified.

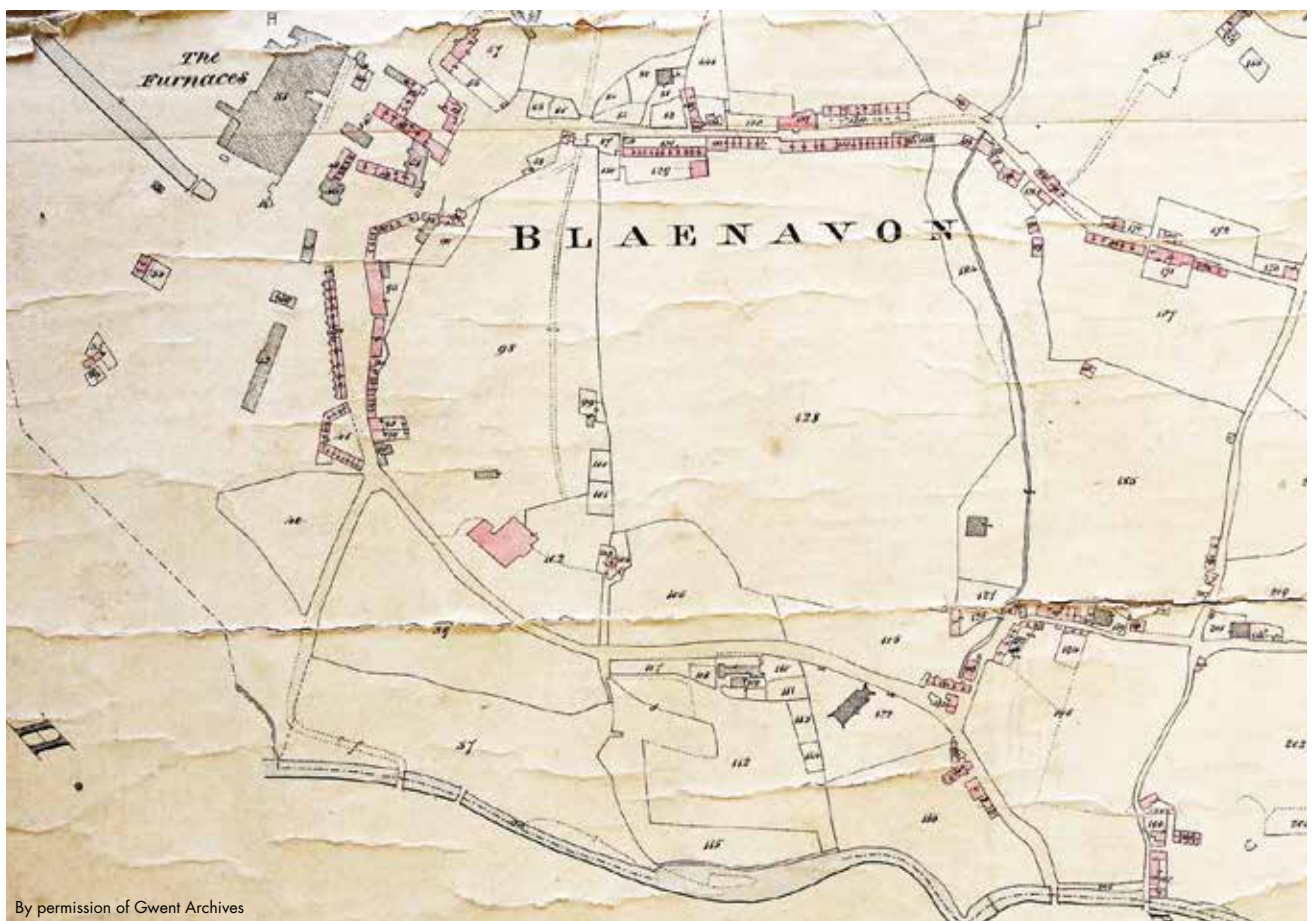


By 1840, there were three principal clusters of buildings – one around the Ironworks, another along King Street, and a third around St Peter’s Church. The spaces between these three areas gradually filled to form a recognisable town by the 1850s.

The 1844 tithe map shows many more houses on King Street and into Queen Street, in the north of the town, houses and shops along Ivor Street and a public house and shop on Prince Street, at the bottom of the town. Censuses show that there were 179 houses in Upper Llanover Parish (approximately the boundary of the present day Blaenavon urban area) with a population of 2801. Though there may be inaccuracies, this points to severe multiple occupancy and overcrowding.

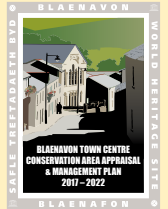
In addition to the church there were three chapels by 1843. It is considered that their positioning and size influenced the focus and layout of further development – Penuel Chapel at the junction of King Street and the turnpike to Abergavenny; Horeb Chapel on James Street (later moved to the foot of High Street); and Bethlehem Independent Chapel on the banks of Nant Lechan in 1840. The building of the English Baptist Chapel in 1847, opposite the Bethlehem Chapel, indicates that there was an established track following the stream.

Though in 1830, Blaenavon was described as having no roads fit for any vehicle, from the 1840s onwards urban development independent of the company expanded. The line of the main new linking street, Broad Street, followed the chapels which had been built along the Nant Lechan so joining King Street in the north with the earlier axis along Church Street and Prince Street at the bottom of the town. The development of a Market Place in 1840 gave its name to Market Street. By the time the first Roman Catholic Mission located on Broad Street in the early 1860s, the street had become the focus for most subsequent commercial development.



By permission of Gwent Archives

1844 Plan

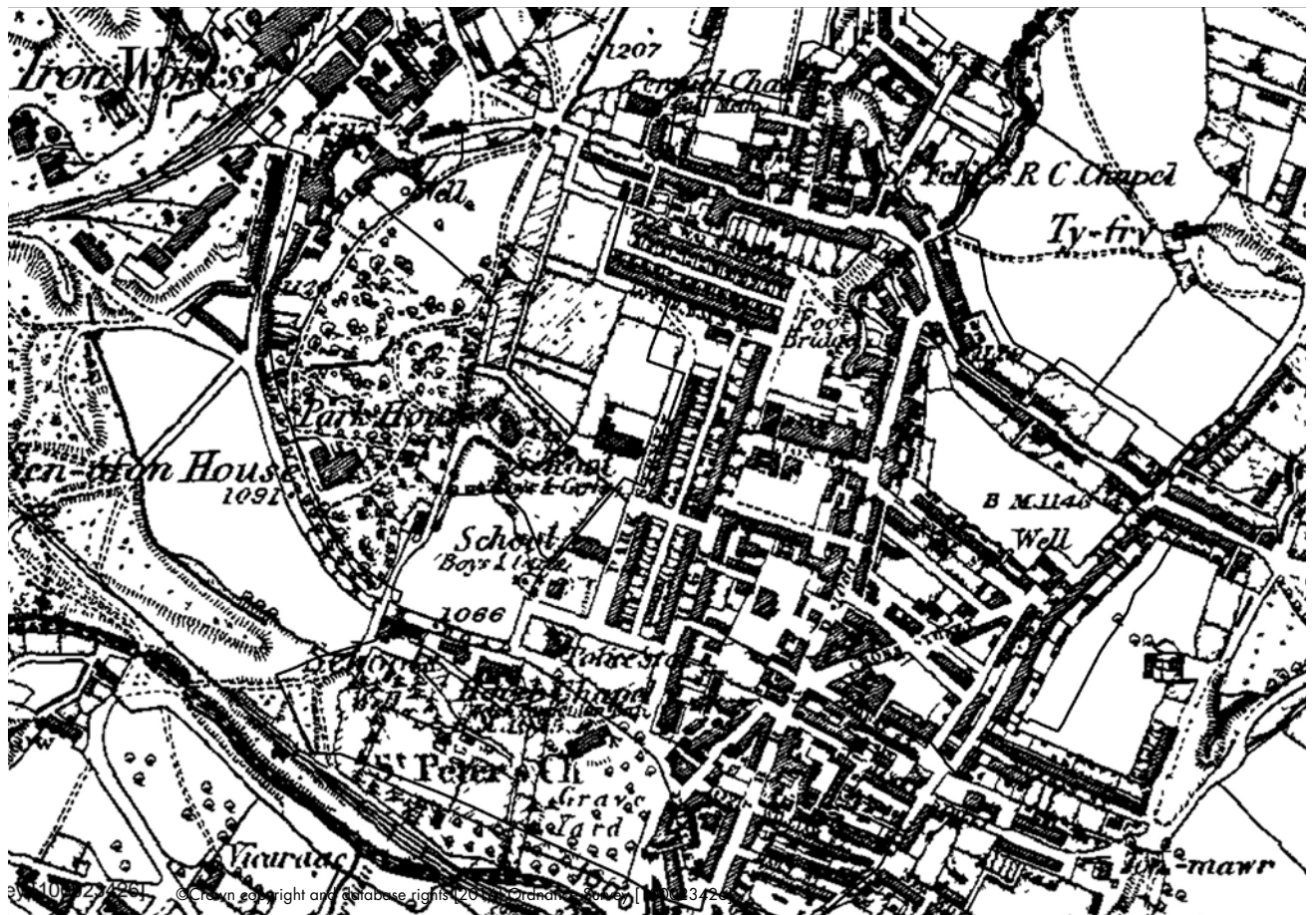


Speculatively built houses, pubs and independent shops and service providers filled this area as a new urban focus by crowding into the limited freehold land where the Iron Company had no control. The Cooperative movement was established in 1861 with a shop opening in Broad Street in 1864 as competition with the Company's shop in North Street. Many other shops were established by this date with jewellers, china and glass dealers, photographers supporting grocers, butchers, fruities, tailors and bootmakers plus Peglers, an early chain store, established in 1862.

Other new developments included a brewery that required a supply of water from a reservoir above the town which was also used to supply areas of Blaenavon; and a gas works at the bottom of the hill to supply the brewery which also supplied many of the shops in the town. By 1867, much of Broad Street, Lion Street and Market Street were lined with shops and King Street also had shops and public houses. All but five shops were illuminated by gas.

Between 1859 and 1863, the Blaenavon Company built a new forge at Forgeside alongside the rail line which rendered other forges obsolete. This attracted increased numbers of people and Blaenavon grew quickly into a town with its own Local Board, which named the streets. During 1864 houses were built on Llanover Road, Mary Street, High Street, James Street and Albert Street. In 1866 Upper and Lower Waun Street was started with more housing built in Hill Street and King Street, to be followed in 1867 by the start of Queen Street.

The 1880 Ordnance Survey map shows that most of the town centre and Conservation Area had been developed. Additional building had occurred in Lion Street, Castle Street, Alma Street, High Street, Park Street and Upper and Lower Woodland.



1880 O.S. Map

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By the 1901 OS map, Vincent Street was built and houses added to Park Street, Rifle Street and Maxworthy Row. Other than the opening of the massive Workmen's Hall and Institute in 1894, there was very little change in the centre of the town with most new development occurring on the eastern slopes.



OS map 1901

Following increased competition and self sufficiency in foreign markets, the last furnace closed in 1904. However as Blaenavon was a well established community with a thriving coal mining industry, the town continued to expand. Of note were the larger Edwardian houses, built to house the managers of the industries that grew around the town.

The population reached a peak of 12,500 in 1921, but the economic downturn and the fall in overseas demand for coal resulted in a population decrease of a third by the Second World War. In spite of these changes, the urban area of Blaenavon expanded to the east as the traditional terrace houses had been grossly overcrowded when the large labour force was required, and the demand for family homes led to continued building.

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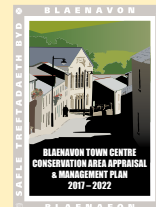
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Broad Street around the turn of the 20th century

After the war many Blaenavon residents were travelling out of the town to work in the new industrial areas being developed nearby, including the Ebbw Vale and Llanwern Steelworks, and therefore Blaenavon became the dormitory town it has largely remained.

Twentieth and twenty-first century development has resulted in a significant expansion of the built area, some infill within the existing urban area, and clearance (including some sites within the Conservation Area). In the twentieth century, a programme of both council-house and private house building contributed to the expansion of the town, predominately to the north and east.



4.0 Spatial Analysis

4.1 Identification of Character Areas

Blaenavon is a compact self-contained settlement, mainly built to the east of the Ironworks on the eastern slopes of the valley. The Conservation Area includes much of the C19 town. The definition of the Character Areas is based on their history, the form and type of development and the current townscape. The typical built form of each Character Area provides examples of the differing ages of development and their functions. However most areas include terraced properties, which are the predominant built form throughout the town.

- Character Area 1: The Ironworks, with its associated properties includes both the remains of the industrial origins established in 1789 and some of the oldest buildings in the town.
- Character Area 2: King Street, which leads to the Ironworks entrance, is shown on the earliest maps and developed with the growth of the industry in the late C18.
- Character Area 3: Church Road is centred around the church (built 1804) and along the route of the early tramway.
- Character Area 4: Broad Street, the commercial focus of the town was built-up between the 1840s and 1850s by linking King Street and Church Street and following the line of the Nant Lechan and the adjacent early chapels.
- Character Area 5: High Street was mainly built-up after Broad Street and is notable for its linear streets of terrace housing.
- Character Area 6: Park includes the development surrounding the Park to the east of Church Street and North Street. The earliest development is adjacent to the Ironworks and the largest closer to the town centre.

The six Character Areas are identified on figure 4.1 below.

The description of each Character Area provides:

- An introduction to the area and a summary diagram of the heritage townscape;
- A review of the historic development of the area and character of the buildings;
- And identifies positive issues and assets that contribute to the heritage townscape with the negative concerns for action. The definition of Character Areas is to assist the description and analysis of the priority characteristics of the Conservation Area.

These boundaries do not suggest a legal designation.

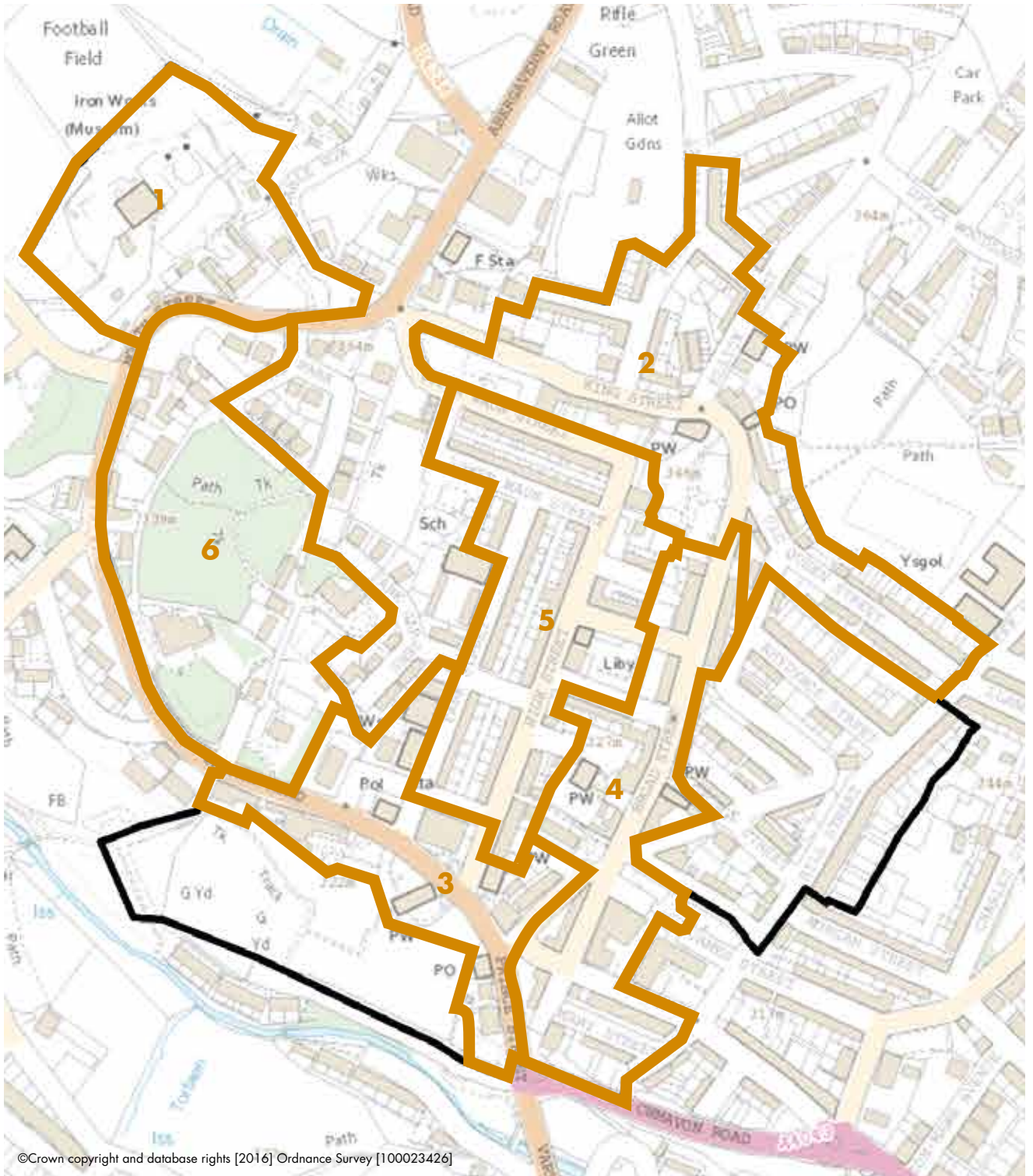
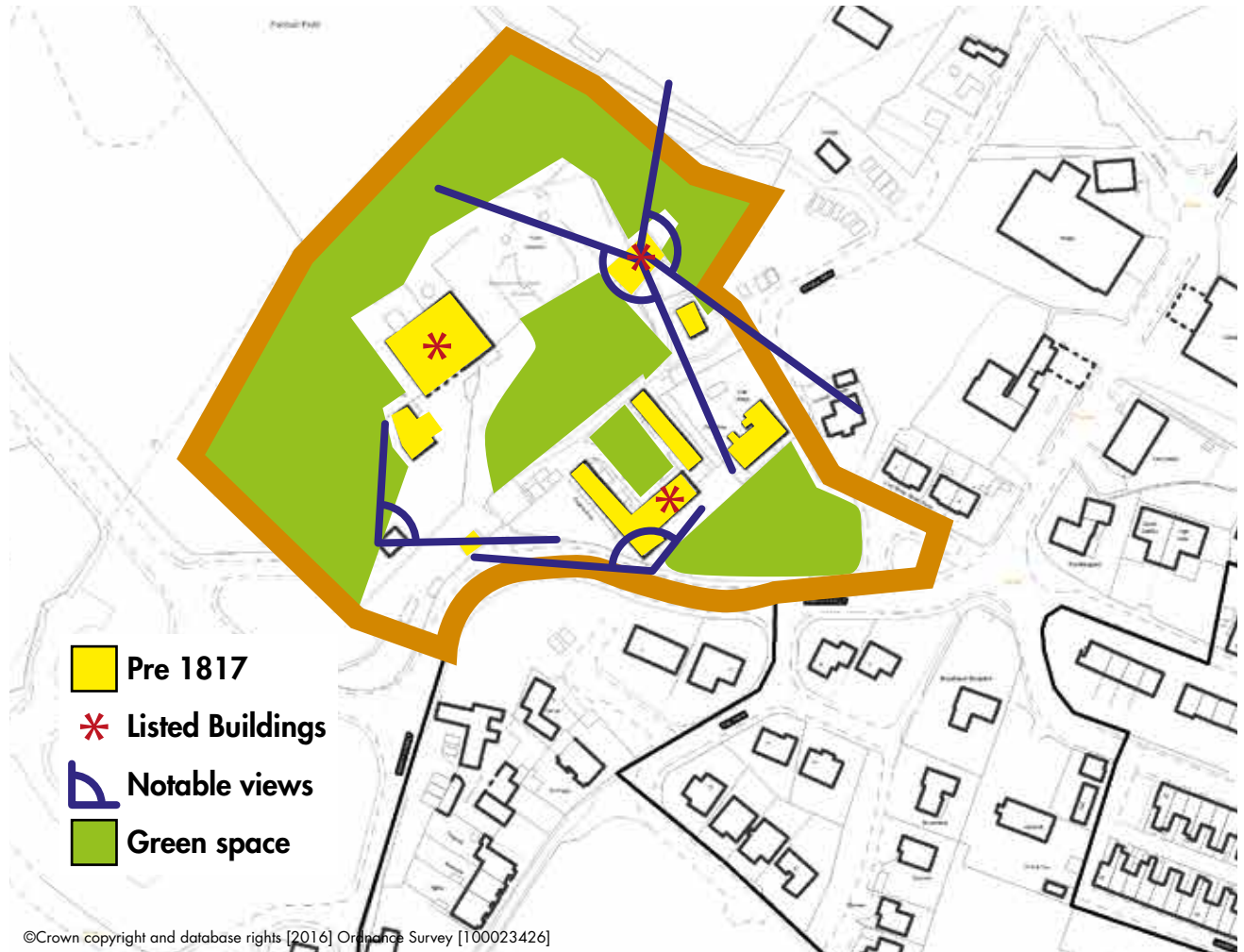


Figure 4.1 Conservation Area Character Areas



4.1.1 Character Area 1: Ironworks



Summary diagram of Character Area 1 Heritage Townscape Qualities.



Blaenavon Ironworks

The Ironworks Character Area is defined by the extent of the surviving remains of the eighteenth century Blaenavon Ironworks and its associated housing: the site is protected under Scheduled Ancient Monument legislation and some of the structures are also listed. The dominant features are the characteristic ironwork remains including furnaces, balance tower, casting houses, engine house and kilns along with the surviving housing examples of Stack Square and Engine Row.

The Ironworks and associated buildings are considered unique and the most complete surviving works of their period and type. Established in 1789, they provided the original focus and *raison d'être* for the growth of the town.

The view from the Ironworks towards Forgeside is spectacular and serves as a link between the emergence of the early works and later expansion. At present the setting is compromised by the impingement of surrounding modern development, inappropriate landscaping and its fragmented relationship with King Street and the rest of the town.

Character of Buildings:

Land for the Ironworks was leased from 1787. The initial works comprised two blast furnaces (a third added in 1789), casting sheds and a blowing engine built by Boulton and Watt. Steam power was employed to operate the furnace bellows. By 1796 the Ironworks was one of the largest in the world and was expanded to five furnaces in 1812. Though a sixth furnace was built in 1860, much of the work was taken to the new works at Forgeside. Blaenavon Ironworks closed in 1900.

The structures surviving at the site include cast houses,



Buildings within Blaenavon Ironworks

with the characteristic arched form of furnace 2 remaining intact; the foundations of a blowing engine house with the chimney base and cast iron pillars and brackets which carried blast pipes to the furnaces; a post-1860 foundry with remains of a cupola furnace; two core drying kilns and calcinating kilns; pay office; storage shed and the base of the firebrick structure of a hot blast stove.

Positive issues and assets:

- the importance and quality of the industrial relicts as having 'Outstanding Universal Values';
- the designation of most of the buildings and structures as Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- the conservation, repair and heritage management of the Ironworks and associated buildings;
- the proximity of the Ironworks to, and the historic associations with, the town centre

Negative issues and problems:

- the impairment to the setting with compromising modern development and damaged heritage buildings surrounding the Ironworks site;
- the poor built environmental quality of the arrival from the north and south;
- the unimpressive mix of materials along the boundary walls and fences;
- and the severance of the Ironworks from Blaenavon with the lack of visitor pedestrian linkages into the historic town and town centre;

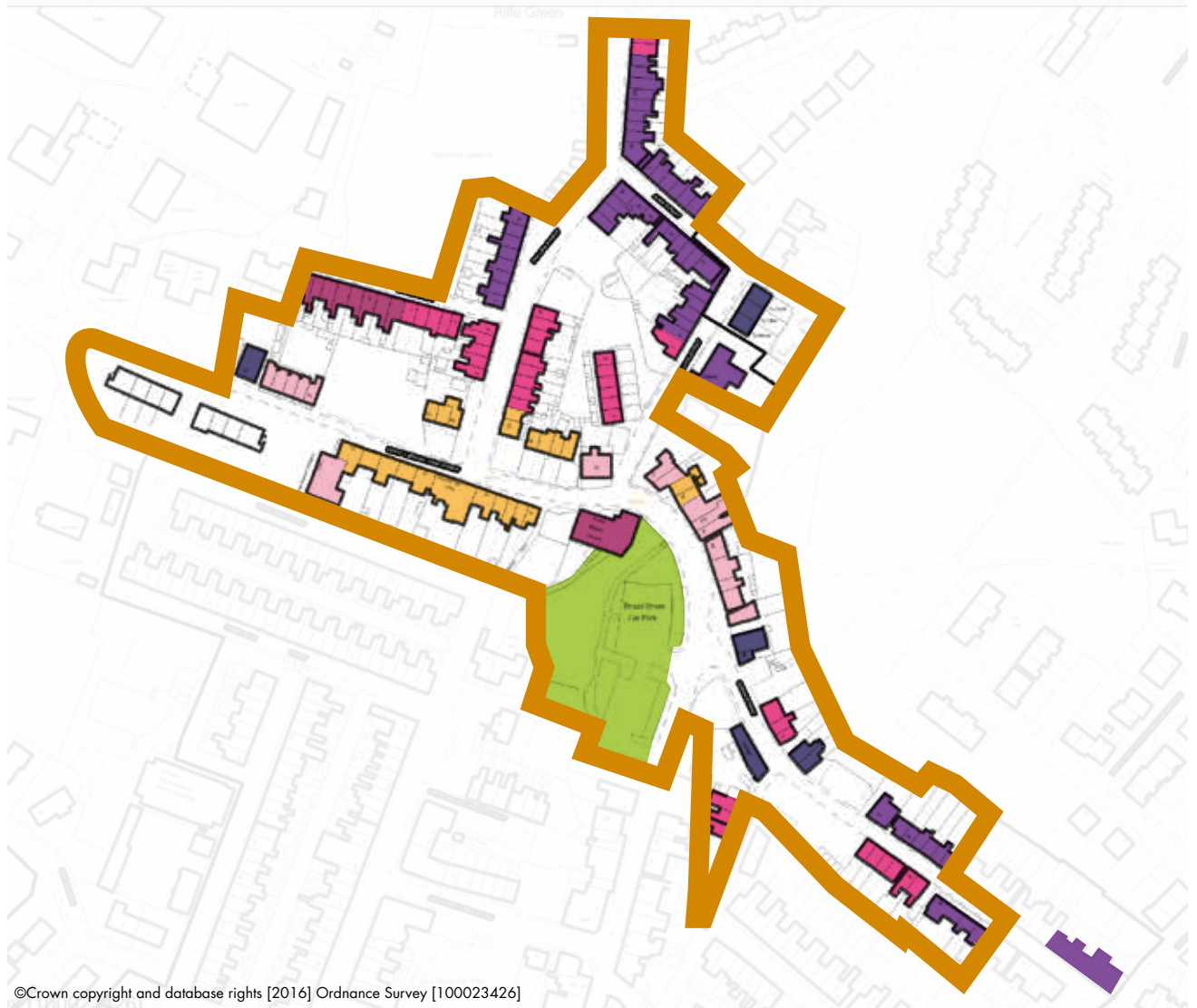


The understated entrance for visitors to the Ironworks



Casting Houses at Blaenavon Ironworks

4.1.2 Character Area 2: King Street



Summary diagram of Character Area 2 Heritage Townscape Qualities

The King Street Character Area, located to the north of the Conservation Area, encompasses the full length of King Street from the Ironworks entrance on North Street to around half way along Old Queen Street in the east. In addition to the development on both sides, the boundary includes Phillips Street, the south part of Ellick Street, Alma Street and Castle Street. There are no Listed Buildings within this Character Area.

Character of Buildings:

Development on King Street is shown on the earliest maps, (for example 1819) and the street pattern remains, however, even the earliest dwellings have been significantly altered. At the height of the ironworks activity, King Street had eight public houses, several shops, two chapels as well as rows of workers houses. Today only one public house remains and the rows of houses no longer have many of their traditional details with the townscape losing much of its historic architectural integrity.

Most of the residential dwellings in this area are typical of the town, with some older, smaller terraced housing. Examples of the changes to their historic detailing includes 11-16 King Street, where a row of single fronted dwellings with slate roofs display many 'improvements' resulting in the loss of original features such as window and door detailing.



King Street

As part of the original settlement core, both King Street and Queen Street retain a disparate variety of building styles and dates, including single and double fronted cottages and terraces. This variety suggests piecemeal development over a period of time resulting from the diversity of property ownership in this area during the early C19. Notable buildings include 13 King Street (the home of Sir Isaac Hayward), and the Fountain Inn – a rough rendered building originally two properties.

The historic stone terraces were linked by stone boundary walls as a typical means of enclosure. This created a homogenous and pleasing townscape. Unfortunately many of these walls have been removed, the stones used elsewhere, and replaced by a cheaper mix of inappropriate materials with little consideration for their visual impact. Cleared sites have broken the continuity of the historic townscape.

Positive issues and assets:

- the repeated terrace built form and materials;



- the variations of terrace housing types and scale with the changes of level creating an interest in the streetscapes throughout the area; View up Castle Street from Phillips Street View down King Street.



- The quality of hard and soft landscaping on the parking area at the Broad Street junction;



- Attractive heritage incident buildings providing focal interest;



Negative issues and problems:

- the loss of heritage details and materials on some buildings due to low quality and inappropriate repairs, replacements and maintenance causing the erosion of the heritage townscape character;



Loss of chimney stacks and pots, windows and doors with inappropriate wall finishes change the character and design of this traditional terrace.

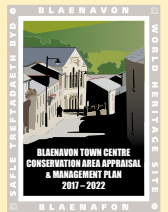
- the narrow & constricted pavements, unsightly dustbins & lack of parking spaces;



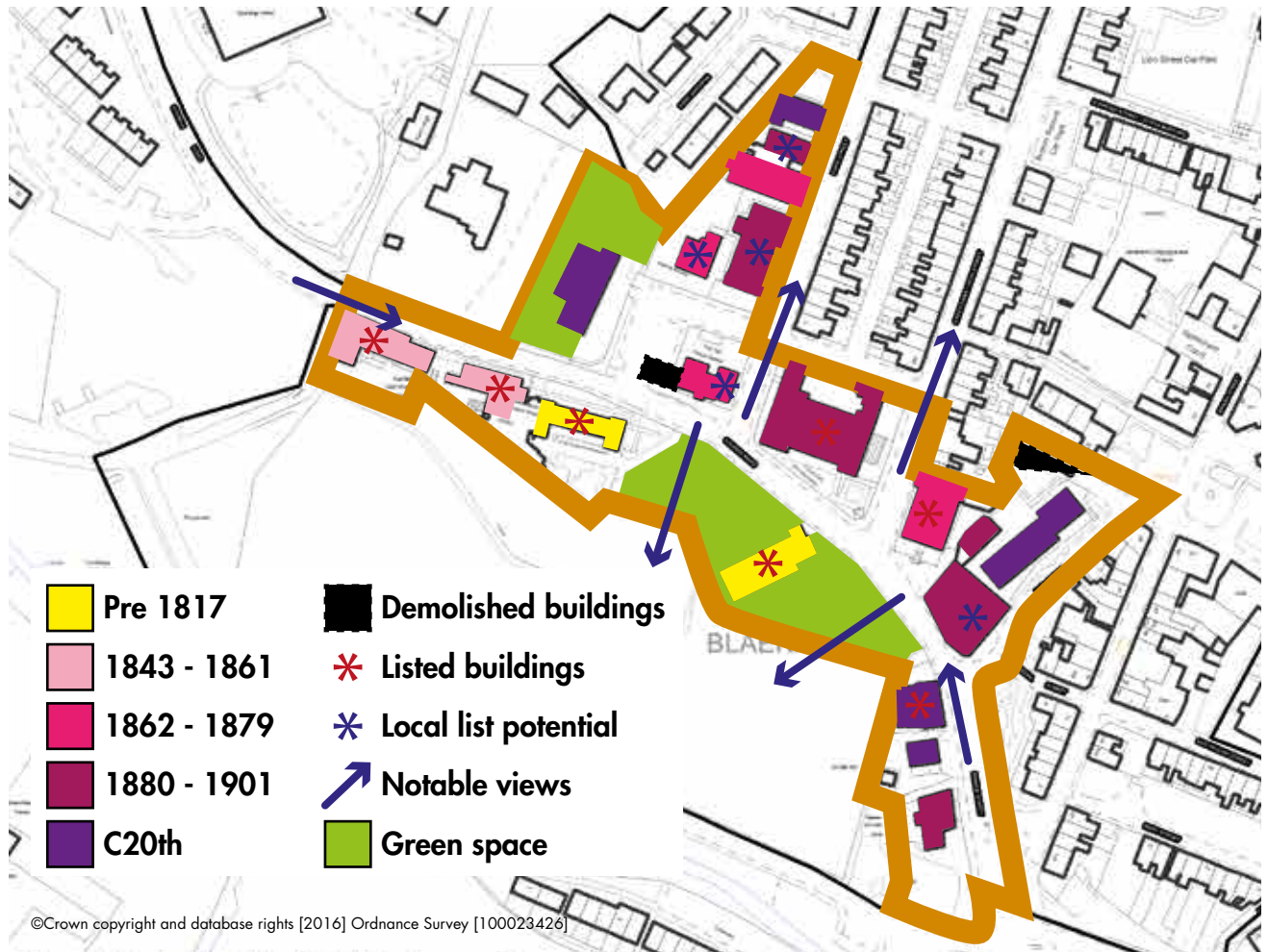
- and examples of other poor quality public realm works contrasting with new improvements.

4.1.3





Character Area 3: Church Road



Summary diagram of Character Area 3 Heritage Townscape Qualities.

The Church Road Character Area includes many of the larger and more formal community buildings that provide a dignified and historic boundary area to Blaenavon Conservation Area.

Church Road and Prince Street follow the line of the old tramway route into the Ironworks and are now used as a 'bypass' to the town centre for roads to Abergavenny and Brynmawr to the north and Pontypool to the south.

The road climbs the hill with views to the south over the Llywd valley to Forgeside and the Coity



Mountain, and bounded on both the north and south sides by notable buildings. Nine buildings and structures in this area are Listed, and it also includes a number of other distinguished buildings of heritage value and worthy of local listing (see Section 7.2.1). This Character Area includes many of the important civic buildings - religious, educational and community in Blaenavon

Character of Buildings:

The first significant building built in this Character Area was St Peter's Church, built 1804, in a neo-gothic style – Listed grade II*. It exhibits various details which reflect its close association with the Ironworks, including a cast iron font and cast iron columns supporting the galleries.

This was built after the ironmaster's house Ty Mawr, further up the hill, and became a focus for following community buildings. On the same side of the road, and overlooking the steep drop to the river, are the three Listed St Peter's schools. The first was built in 1815 and is Listed Grade II* as it is thought to be the oldest remaining ironworks school in Wales. The adjacent Infant's School, built in 1849, and the Ramfield Centre, built in 1860 are both grade II Listed. The two oldest buildings have now been successfully reused as the World Heritage Centre by linking them with an attractive modern connecting building. The Ramfield Centre is regularly used at weekends as an outdoor pursuits centre but still has a slightly derelict appearance, despite having had replacement windows in the past few years and being well maintained internally.



The three Listed St Peter's schools



Other religious buildings include: the Horeb Chapel – Listed grade II; on the opposite side of Church Road and facing St Peter's, which was built in 1862 in a classical style; the unlisted Wesleyan, now called Park Street Methodist Church, which was constructed in 1885 and has a fine stone frontage. This is located next to a fine unlisted Georgian house – Vipond House. Behind the church, on Park Street, is the adjoining stone built Wesleyan day school (1871) which is now used as a nursery.

To the south of St Peter's are three buildings which form a gateway to the Conservation Area and town centre - the Listed Grade II Neo-Georgian style Old Post Office built in 1937, the Victoria Inn and the small C20 garage squeezed between.



The Old Post Office facing the Cooperative building (hiding the Horeb chapel) with the Workmen's Hall and Institute and Memorial in the background.

Across the road, the imposing corner site of the Old Cooperative building faces a small public open space – the site of demolished buildings. Further up Church Road is the Workman’s Hall and Institute on the High Street junction, and the stone Police Station built 1871. The Workman’s Hall and Institute, Listed grade II, is the largest and most imposing stone building in Blaenavon. It was built in 1894 for social gatherings, self education and betterment, with a magnificent auditorium. In its grounds, the War Memorial which was built in Art Deco style in 1931 is also Listed.



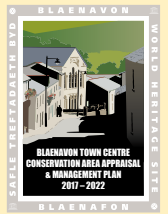
Vipond House

Positive issues and assets:

- The number of Listed buildings of architectural and heritage merit;
- The significant number of focal and incident buildings creating an attractive townscape along the route around the town centre;
- the importance of the range of civic and community facilities for Blaenavon;
- the open space around St Peter’s Church
- And the views out to Forgeside and Coity Mountain across the trees marking the Afon Llwyd valley.

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Clockwise from top left: The old police station, Park Street Methodist Church, St Peter's Church, Horeb Baptist Chapel



View across to Forgeside

Negative issues and problems:

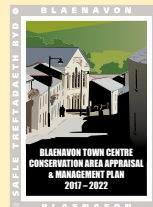
- Poor Quality C20 buildings on Church Road (telephone exchange and garage) which detract from the consistent heritage qualities of the notable buildings and townscape;
- demolished buildings at the entrance to the Conservation Area, now a cleared open space revealing the unattractive rear of buildings on Broad Street;
- inappropriate design and materials of new housing on Ivor Street which conflicts with and erodes the historic character of the area.



Telephone Exchange work shop

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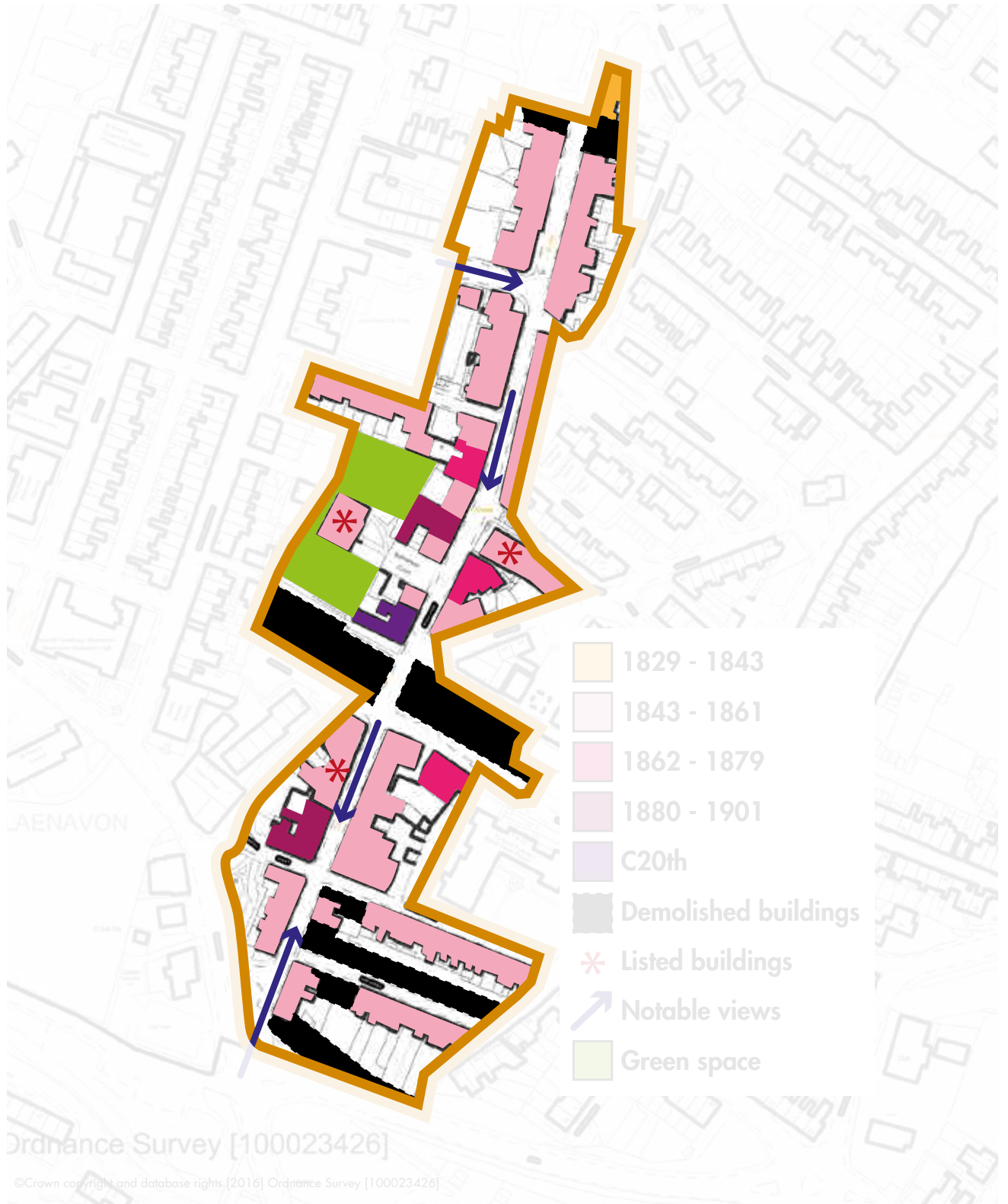
Example of Public Open Space showing rear of buildings



Ivor Street Housing



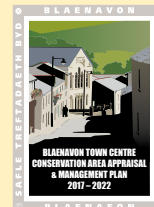
4.1.4 Character Area 4: Broad Street



Summary diagram of Character Area 4 Heritage Townscape Qualities

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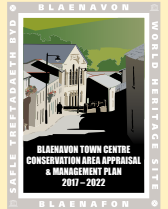
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The Broad Street Character Area incorporates the commercial centre of Blaenavon. The piecemeal ribbon development includes a variety of building forms, sizes and styles – the varied treatments to the building frontages are particularly characteristic. The shops at numbers 15 – 19 Broad Street are Listed Grade II and contain elements of the traditional shop front design and architectural detail that represent the best heritage examples in the street scene.

Other than the historic and townscape interest of the terraces of shops, the most notable buildings are the Listed Grade II Bethlehem Independent Chapel and the English Baptist Chapel. A most interesting feature of this Character Area is that the main commercial street runs directly uphill, rather than parallel to the valley bottom which represents the pattern found in most valley towns.





Character of Buildings:

Broad Street was developed between the 1840s and 1860s as a retail and service centre, following the line of the Nant Llechan. This secondary valley is most noticeable especially around the Broad Street and Lion Street junction. Broad Street, where there are significant changes of level.

Broad Street joined the two early developments of King Street, and Prince Street and Church Road lower down the hill.



Independent developers used freehold land not controlled by the Blaenavon Company and the pattern of building reflects the piecemeal approach though it shows a more ordered pattern and higher standards of construction than the earlier development.





Broad Street was fully developed within a short period of the mid nineteenth century. Some shops were still being built in 1865, but by 1867 the area was predominantly lined with shops.

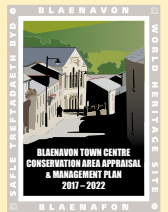
The Bethlehem Independent Chapel is the earliest surviving building to be built on the banks of the Nant Llechan in 1840 and once the track along the stream was formalised, further development quickly followed. The stream was soon culverted with only a short open stretch remaining around the bank of the current parking area at the Broad Street/King Street junction by the end of the 19th century.

The English Baptist Chapel was initially built in 1847 on the opposite side of Broad Street to Bethlehem Chapel, and was then rebuilt in the Italian Classical style in 1888 which explains the date on the building.

Although the majority of the buildings along Broad Street are typically low two storey structures, there are a number of more imposing three storey buildings at the street corners which provide focal points.

The street itself is predominantly straight with a significant difference in height between its upper and lower





ends, which enables significant views of the opposite valley to be seen over the roofs of the lower buildings to be seen from much of the street.

Buildings are generally simple, although the piecemeal development and individualism of the local traders has resulted in a range of roof heights and designs of shop fronts. Whilst there are a small number of gap sites, the impact of these has generally been well mitigated through landscaping. One result of the town's lack of prosperity in the late 20th century is the complete lack of late 20th century shops.

The majority of the buildings remain creating the early Victorian townscape. Numbers 15-19 Broad Street – Listed Grade II, are the finest examples, in good condition and retaining original features.

The economic changes of the C20 led to a dramatic reduction in demand for local shopping and the loss of income led to many examples of poor maintenance, loss of heritage shopfront details, cheap inappropriate replacement elements and vacant shops – particularly at the top and bottom of the hill.

Early attempts to update and restore traditional wooden shop fronts with 'mahoganyised' wood did not reflect the character of the original, but more recent initiatives with grant aid have renovated a significant number of shops with accurate copies of the original designs. Although this initiative has revived the core of Broad Street, the underlying problem of limited demand constrains the sustainability of this attractive area.

There are also a small number of residential buildings along Broad Street. Most of these have been subject to poor quality modern interventions such as concrete roof tiles, plastic





guttering, Upvc windows and doors which do not reflect the high quality of the Heritage led reinstatements on many of the surrounding commercial properties and have a cumulative negative impact upon the character of the area.

This area has been subject to significant investment over recent years which have set a high standard for the refurbished built environment especially within the central core of the area.

Positive issues and assets:

- The tight-knit historic urban character of Broad Street gently bending up the hill to King Street;
- The townscape impact of the Listed buildings and other focal buildings and spaces;

- The variety of building forms, sizes and detailing within an overall consistency of scale and building materials which unify the area;
- The significant number of remaining traditional shopfronts and the impact of the large number of shops that have been recently renovated and reused;
- Improvements to hard surfaces and landscaping within the public realm; and
- The views looking downhill over the historic town and rooftops. Wherever one stands, there is a view of the distant Coity Mountain.



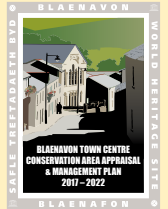
Steps from Broad Street



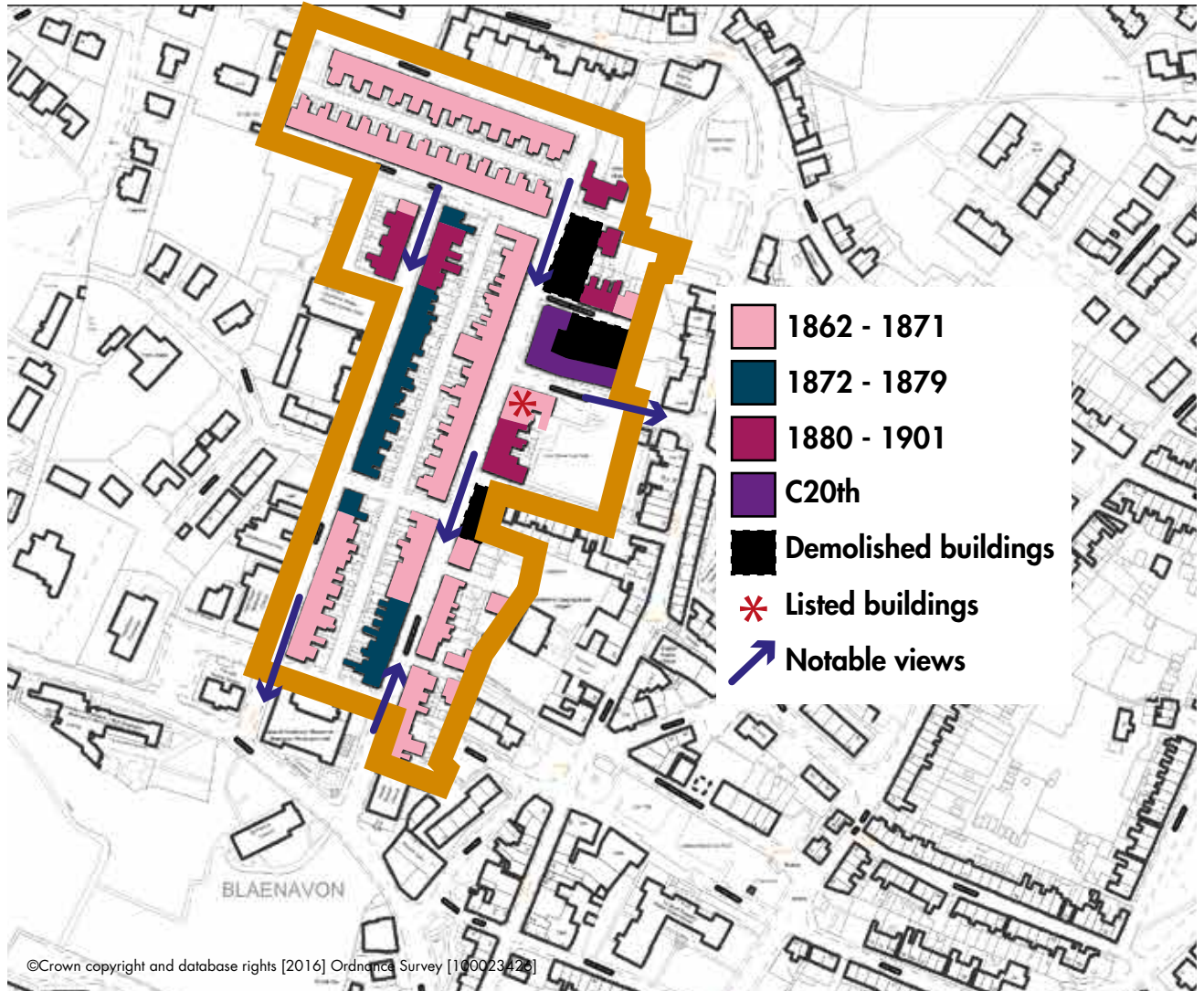
Plastic signs which have a detrimental impact upon the streetscape

Negative issues and problems:

- The loss of heritage details and materials on many shops due to inappropriate repairs - particularly the erosion of character caused by rendering, replacement shop fronts and signage, window frames, doors, roof materials;
- The replacement of details such as historic doors and windows on the residential properties.
- Replacement of historic slate roofs with poor quality concrete tiles
- Lack of maintenance resulting in deterioration & loss of heritage architectural detail;
- vacant buildings and upper floors above shops with little economic use; and
- Replacement shopfronts with inappropriate changes of design and signage which have a significant impact on the historic character.

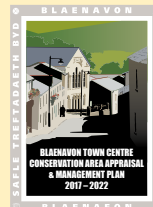


4.1.5 Character Area 5: High Street



Summary diagram of Character Area 5 Heritage Townscape Qualities

The High Street Character Area reflects a typical homogenous mid nineteenth century residential area adjacent to and parallel to the main commercial focus. The area was built between the 1860s and 1880s and includes uniform terraced properties that are substantially intact along High Street, Park Street, Lower Waun Street and Upper Waun Street.



Other than the historic quality of the terraces, the only building of heritage note in this Character Area is the Municipal Offices – now private offices (Listed Grade II) at the Lion Street/High Street junction.

Character of Buildings:

This Character Area is identified by the regularised rows of company housing, centred on and alongside High Street with a homogenous architectural form. The repeated designs covering large blocks of land reflects the patterns of land ownership and show that this was a single development. Though this Character Area was developed within a short period of time, different streets and blocks display subtle differences that create their own identity and character. The earlier development was along High Street and the later on Upper and Lower Waun Streets where locally manufactured brick was more widely used.

The planned street layout of this Character Area was mainly based on a standard urban industrial deep plan housing layout which in some locations also introduced improved public health initiatives to Blaenavon including service back lanes.



Waun Tavern



Converted shop

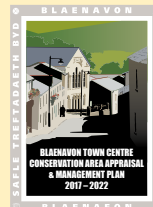


Back lanes

Positive issues and assets:

- the uniform planned area characterised by rows of single fronted substantially intact terraced houses with most stepped in pairs up the steep hills;
- the townscape impact formed by the regularity of the elevational treatments and roofscape, which together with the use of stone and slate on the stepping terraces create an important heritage asset;
- the fine Listed building - the old Council offices, now private offices , which forms the most notable building and provides a focal point for the Character Area;





- the views from looking south west along the terraces and over the historic town and rooftops to Coity Mountain;



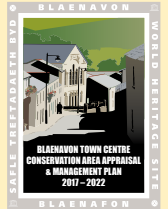
Negative issues and problems:

- the loss of heritage details and materials on some buildings due to low quality and inappropriate repairs, replacements and maintenance causing the erosion of the heritage townscape character;
- satellite dishes and other clutter on the front elevation
- the increasing number of stone buildings that are rendered so changing the character of the historic streetscape,
- the introduction of inappropriate designs and materials on rear extensions and antennae;
- inappropriate designs and materials of new buildings on cleared sites changing streetscape;
- replacement of stone boundary walls with less appropriate materials. This is a particular problem on the north side of Upper Waun Street which is one of the main routes into the town centre and detracts from the heritage townscape;

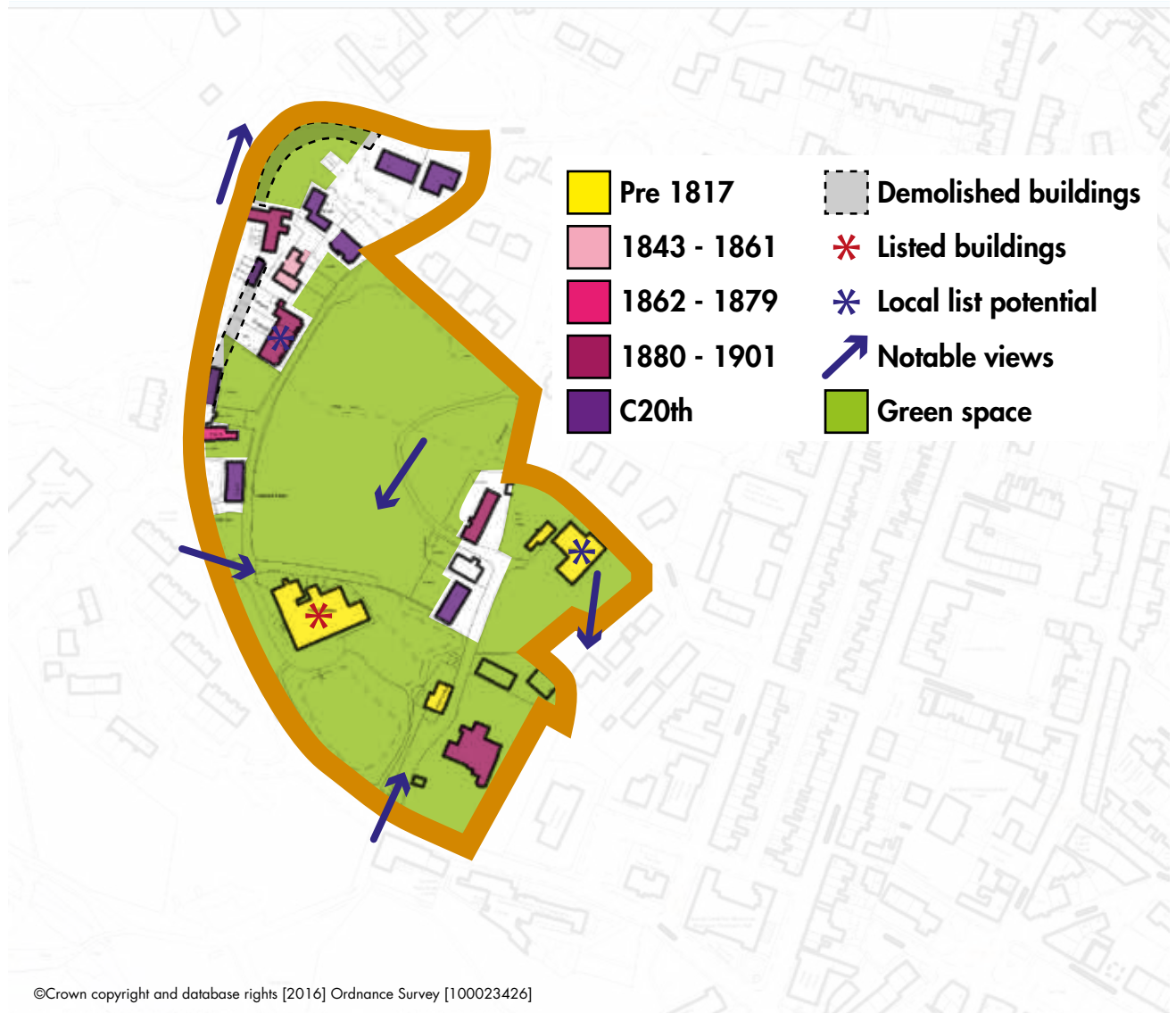


4.1.6 Character Area 6: Park





Summary diagram of Character Area 6 Heritage Townscape Qualities.



The Park Character Area lies to the west of the town centre and is bounded on three sides by Church Road and North Street. In the centre of this area is the Grade II Listed Ty Mawr, the only listed building in this area.

This was the original Ironmaster’s house and is situated adjacent to a historic beech wood. The properties to the south and east of the wood are primarily detached buildings, including other ironmasters houses, whereas properties to the North West and closer to the Ironworks, are grouped in short terraces.

The northern and eastern boundaries are framed by Late C20 housing developments which are outside the Conservation Area.

Historical Development and Character of Buildings:

Ty Mawr is a substantial three storey stone house which was built in c1799 and is now a listed building. It was the Ironmaster’s house and later used by the Company as a hunting lodge until 1924, when it became a



hospital supported by the subscriptions of local people. This was later sold and became a private nursing home. It is now empty and derelict with its large garden at the rear predominantly overgrown as a wood

Park House, which served as residence to the General Managers of the Blaenavon Company, also survives adjacent to this wood, as does Park Lodge which is the only one of three lodges remaining.

Positive issues and assets:

- the trees and open space in this Character Area provide the only significant landscaped area in the Conservation Area;
- the sloping land adjacent to the town centre provides a change to the dense urban form with open space and trees creating the settings for historic detached houses;
- the residences of the early ironmasters – Ty Mawr – Listed grade II and Park House remain with Park Lodge in their woodland setting;
- the stone walls which provide important boundaries and visual links between the properties, the changes of level and the borders of the park area;
- and the views from the higher land looking over the Afon Llwyd to Coity mountain.

Negative issues and problems:

- The loss of heritage details and materials on some buildings due to low quality and inappropriate repairs, replacements and maintenance causing the erosion of the heritage townscape character. This is a particularly severe problem on those properties facing North Street and close to the entrance to the Ironworks;
- the replacement of heritage features with inappropriate designs and materials which change the historic character;
- The lack of woodland management and public access to the Ty Mawr beech wood;
- The derelict condition of Ty Mawr. This was originally the Ironmasters House, and in addition to its listed status it is also a key attribute of the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site. This building is privately owned which makes direct intervention difficult. However, a local Community Group has been formed, who are actively seeking solutions with the support of Torfaen Council.
- inappropriate, render, doors, porches inappropriate porch, ground floor windows and garden and fenestration with loss of chimneys; wall with loss of chimneys

5.0 Architectural Character

The built form and materials of the buildings throughout the Conservation Area reflects both their age and their function in the development of the town. Section 4 describes the various Character Areas that are identified by these characteristics.

The original buildings have a very simple form with simple shallow two story buildings having relatively low pitched roofed. Features such as dormers and front gables do not form part of the local vernacular, although they are to be found on the high status late 19th century public buildings.



Many of the earlier buildings lack the vertical emphasis of their later cousins and have small, square windows which probably originally housed opening casement windows. Many of these earlier properties were double fronted and reflect a wider vernacular. These become less common in the later terraces which adopt the standard, uniform terrace pattern of an offset door and two vertically proportioned sliding sash windows. Where double fronted properties are found in the later terraces, they sometimes identify previous commercial uses.

The layouts have varied from an informal vernacular linear form made up of short terraces, immediately adjacent to detached and semi detached houses, all having slightly different detailing and massing – such as King Street - to an urban industrial deep plan such as Upper and Lower Waun Streets.

The orientation of development lends a strong character to the town. There is a contrast between the uphill rows with their distinctive stepped rooflines and sloping roofs; and those laid along the slope. Some streets represent coherent planned blocks whereas others have been assembled in a more piecemeal fashion from smaller units, reflecting land ownership.

As much of the Conservation Area was built within a fifty year period, many of the details have consistent features.

5.1 Wall Materials and Finishes

Most of the earlier buildings and the traditional terraced properties are built of coursed stonework. Though local materials predominate, different sources and individual styles of handling add variety and identity.

Where early mortar survives, it has often been mixed with coal dust to give a characteristic dark appearance. Locally manufactured brick was also used, often for decoration with combinations of brick and stone.

Render was originally used to add architectural detail and in combination with brick to articulate facades on buildings in the late C19 and early C20. Later and more widespread use of a painted smooth render covering all elevations is gradually changing the historic character of some townscapes. While this has some heritage relevance, more recent use of spar render and pebble dashing significantly damages the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

5.2 Roofs, Chimneys and Rainwater Goods

Roof pitches are generally shallow. Eaves to ground distances are relatively high in most later terraces but much lower on the earlier stone built terraced cottages. These earlier and lower terraces have a more horizontal emphasis and their original roof tiling was likely to have been stone. Some stone roofs still survive on King Street and the earlier shops on Broad Street. Clay pantiles were also used locally during the early and mid 19th century. During the later 19th century the north Welsh slate roof became almost universal.

Chimney stacks and pots added to the rhythm of the terraces, though many have now been removed. Traditional stacks, depending on the terrace, were built of stone with later examples in a smooth yellow brick. Terracotta and pale yellow pots in a variety of styles, heights and diameters can be seen.

Traditionally rainwater goods would have been cast iron and painted a dark colour. The ogee or half rounded profile were used on most terraces, with a deeper or more elaborate profile used on larger properties. Bargeboards, fascias and soffits are plain, constructed of softwood and painted to reflect the qualities of the elevation.



5.3 Windows and Doors

Window and door openings of the earliest properties reflect the local vernacular by being relatively square, and probably had either opening casement windows or possibly horizontal sliding sash windows. The later buildings had more common windows with a vertical emphasis and were generally asymmetrical.

However many now have inappropriate replacement windows, some with altered openings, which has changed the character of the property and the streetscape. These replacements frequently omit the reveals that are important for the architectural rhythm of the terraces.

It is probable that the earliest buildings would have had simple solid ledge and brace doors, with moulded panel, painted softwood doors becoming more common throughout the 19th century.

Most original doors have been replaced with varying designs; some of those remaining are now in a bad state of repair and should be repaired and retained.

5.4 Boundaries

Few properties within the Conservation Area have private front gardens and these tend only to exist on the larger buildings to signify status. These usually include stone walls or wrought iron railings and gates.

The traditional stone boundary walls were widely used on back garden and back yards but they have been steadily replaced by brickwork, blockwork and timber fencing; a range of other even less appropriate materials can now be seen. Locally salvaged stone from the mining operations was most widely used though there are some examples of slag walls. Although this was more frequently used as a decorative and practical capping to the wall.

At the rear of terraced properties, gates are generally wood panelled.

5.5 Shopfronts

Shopfront design should reflect the period, style and character of the building. As most shops on Broad Street and adjacent streets were built within a short mid C19 period, variations in style and design reflect the desire of shopkeepers to stand-out from neighbours.

Many traditional shopfronts were surrounded by a classical architectural framework consisting of pilasters, consoles, fascia, cornice and architrave. Vertical glazing bars, or mullions were used to reflect the vertical aspect of the shopfronts. Examples can be seen of both side and centrally located doors, which may be recessed. They were traditionally constructed in wood and painted.

The best examples of the original shopfronts are to be seen on 15 - 19 Broad Street (Listed Grade II). Although there has been a successful programme of coordinated renewal in this vicinity, there are still many that conflict with the local heritage by using stained hardwood and aluminium, etc.

The design of the shopfront should be considered in conjunction with the design of the façade and the streetscape as a whole. This includes the signage which were traditionally painted on the fascia, with any projecting signs painted and fixed at fascia level or hung from a bracket.

6.0 Designated Historic Assets

The Blaenavon Town Centre Conservation Area is situated within the wider Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site inscribed by UNESCO in 2000. UNESCO recognised that –

“The area around Blaenavon bears eloquent and exceptional testimony to the pre-eminence of South Wales as the World’s major producer of iron and coal in the nineteenth century. It is a remarkably complete example of a nineteenth Century landscape”.

Extract from ICOMOS report to the World Heritage Committee November 2000

The Blaenavon Industrial Landscape is a cultural landscape in which exceptional evidence of past activities survives, demonstrating extensive coal mining and ironmaking during what became known as the Industrial Revolution. The World Heritage Site is considered to be of Outstanding Universal Value and one of the prime areas in the World where the early formative years of the Industrial Revolution can be studied and understood.

The World Heritage Site extends to approximately 33 square kilometres and the wider landscape is also registered as a Historic Landscape.

In addition to the above there are 28 Listed Buildings within the BTCCA and one Scheduled Monument (Blaenavon Ironworks).

6.1 Listed Buildings



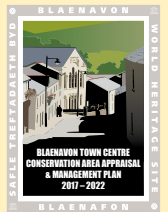
COUNCIL OFFICES (MUNICIPAL OFFICES),
LION STREET



BETHLEHEM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH (ALSO KNOWN AS
BETHLEHEM INDEPENDENT CHAPEL), BROAD STREET (W SIDE)

BLAENAVON TOWN CENTRE TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE PROGRAMME

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2017-2022



**BLAENAVON
EVANGELICAL CHURCH
(MORIAH CHAPEL),
BROAD STREET (E SIDE)**



**FORMER SCHOOL-ROOM TO REAR,
BROAD STREET (E SIDE)**



**NO 15, BROAD STREET
(W SIDE)**



**NO 16, BROAD STREET
(W SIDE)**



**NO 17, BROAD STREET
(W SIDE)**



**NO 18, BROAD STREET
(W SIDE)**



**NO 19, BROAD STREET
(W SIDE)**



**GROUP OF FIVE TOMBS IN THE CHURCHYARD TO SOUTH OF
ST PETER'S CHURCH, CHURCH ROAD (SW SIDE)**



ST PETER'S CHURCH

BLAENAVON TOWN CENTRE TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE PROGRAMME

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2017-2022



FORMER ST PETER'S SCHOOL (ORIGINAL SCHOOL)



FORMER ST PETER'S BOYS' SCHOOL (NOW RAMFIELD STUDY CENTRE), CHURCH ROAD (SW SIDE)



THE BEECHES NURSING HOME
FORMERLY KNOWN AS TY MAWR)



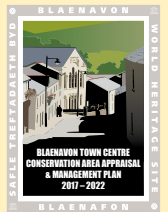
STORAGE SHED AND ATTACHED CHIMNEY,
BLAENAVON IRONWORKS



PAY OFFICE,
BLAENAVON IRONWORKS

BLAENAVON TOWN CENTRE TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE PROGRAMME

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2017-2022



**CAST HOUSE AND FOUNDRY,
BLAENAVON IRONWORKS**



**STACK SQUARE,
BLAENAVON IRONWORKS**



**BLAST FURNACES,
BLAENAVON IRONWORKS**



**CALCINING KILNS,
BLAENAVON IRONWORKS**



**CHAIN STORE,
BLAENAVON IRONWORKS**



**BALANCE TOWER,
BLAENAVON IRONWORKS**



**POST OFFICE,
PRINCE STREET (W SIDE)**

BLAENAVON TOWN CENTRE TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE PROGRAMME

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2017-2022



**WORKMEN'S HALL AND INSTITUTE,
HIGH STREET (W SIDE)**



**HOREB BAPTIST CHURCH,
CHURCH ROAD (NE SIDE)**



**WAR MEMORIAL,
CHURCH ROAD (NE SIDE)**



**GILCHRIST MEMORIAL,
BLAENAVON IRONWORKS**

7.0 Undesignated Assets (Locally Listed buildings)



THE OLD CO-OP



THE OLD POLICE STATION



THE CASTLE HOTEL



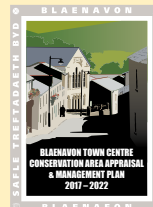
THE LION HOTEL



VIPOND HOUSE

BLAENAVON TOWN CENTRE TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE PROGRAMME

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2017-2022



COTTAGES TO THE NORTH OF KING STREET



FORMER BLAENAVON SUBSCRIPTION HOSPITAL



ST. FELIX, ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPEL, ELICK STREET



BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH, KING STREET



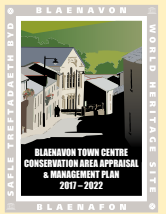
TERRACED HOUSING ON HIGH STREET



MARKET TAVERN. BROAD STREET

BLAENAVON TOWN CENTRE TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE PROGRAMME

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2017-2022



OLD WESLEYAN SCHOOL, PARK STREET



J. CADDICKS, NORTH STREET, BLAENAVON



GATES TO THE PARK, AND ADJACENT WALLS TO TY MAWR



THE LODGE, THE PARK



OLD WESLEYAN (PARK STREET) METHODIST CHURCH



8.0 Hidden Histories - The Archaeology of the area

Given the location and nature of the BTCCA, and the known history of the town it is considered unlikely that there is a significant potential for unknown archaeology to exist within the boundaries of the actual BTCCA.

There is no known evidence of any activities during the Roman and early medieval periods, although there is a small possibility that iron and coal deposits near to the surface were worked during this period. Should this be the case then any evidence for this will have been covered by later workings.

Capel Newydd, on the hill to the east of Blaenavon provides evidence of the occupation during the later medieval period. There are likely to have been a number of scattered farmsteads throughout the area during this period, and these would have continued until the post medieval period. It is possible that The Lodge, just east of The Beeches, dates from this period, and it is reputed that a similar farmhouse survives to the south east of the BTCCA. Consequently, although the possibility that further similar farmsteads or similar sites remain within the PTCCA exists, the probability of this is small, and it is unlikely that any remains of such a nature would be discovered within the BTCCA.

The ironworks and associated industries grew extremely rapidly during the last decade of the 18th century, and the first decade of the 19th century, with a corresponding growth in the actual town. Whilst the majority of the domestic and commercial buildings which would have serviced the needs of the Ironworks employees have survived, a significant number have not. It is known that many of the current gap sites were occupied during the 19th century, and it is considered that these will have a significant archaeological potential.

9.0 Biodiversity

The natural environment can often be complimentary to the setting, local distinctiveness and sense of place of a Conservation Area. Whilst it may not be immediately apparent, the built environment is a potential significant resource for biodiversity, providing habitats for protected species such as bats and nesting birds that may choose to use suitable access points in and around buildings. In addition, the stonework and other architectural features of historic assets frequently provide niches for rare lichens, mosses and other flora. Associated green infrastructure will also support ancient or veteran trees, both within the public realm and on private land.

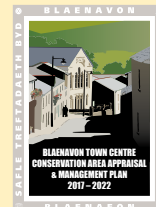
Public bodies have specific duties to ensure biodiversity is protected and enhanced. These obligations are embedded within a series of legislation including the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. So as a material consideration in the decision making process of a Conservation Area, the impact of a proposal upon biodiversity will need to be carefully considered and assessed. This may require a relevant survey to be prepared and submitted to accompany a planning application. All proposals that may impact on biodiversity will be expected to demonstrate 'no net loss of biodiversity' and in some cases enhancements maybe required.

10.0 Other designated assets

10.1 Tree Preservation Orders

Due to the intensely urban character of the BTCCA, there are few significant areas of woodland within the boundaries of the conservation area, although a small number of isolated trees have TPO's on them.

The principle green area within the BTCCA is the parkland setting surrounding Ty Mawr/The Beeches. To the north of the house lies an area of woodland which may be ancient woodland and a group TPO covers the entire area.



A further TPO covers the trees to the south and also the North West of the house, which originally screened the formal gardens of the house during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

This area of woodland also extends to the gardens of the adjacent properties and the gardens of Park Cottage and The Vicarage also house groups of protected trees.

A number of small groups or individual protected trees are also located at the following locations



On the boundary of the Broad Street Car Park and Waun Villa



The grounds of St Peter's Church



The grounds of Ty Mawr



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Protected Trees



Conservation Area Management Plan

Blaenavon Conservation Area includes both the historic streets around the town centre and the Blaenavon Ironworks. The protection and improvement of its heritage qualities is fundamental for the future of the local economy and the means to ensure its conservation.

Although a significant extent of the historic townscape has been retained, there are a number of concerns for its future that need to be addressed. A Management Plan needs to build on the local strengths of the characteristics of the settlement to make certain the opportunities for its future are appreciated. The current concerns and problems require action to ensure the potential benefits for the residents and visitors to Blaenavon are achieved.

11.0 SWOT Analysis

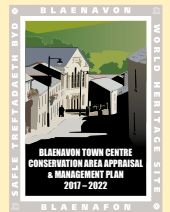
The key issues affecting the management of the Conservation Area are:

Strengths:

- the importance of the historic buildings & townscapes within a World Heritage Site;
- best preserved example of a South Wales historic ironworking town;
- set in a relict industrial landscape of acknowledged world importance;
- unique form of the Valley settlement with key roads leading uphill;
- the consistent integrated quality of the heritage environment;
- the notable Listed buildings providing focal points of interest;
- examples of high quality regeneration in Broad Street, and repairs/reuse of heritage buildings including St Peter's School as the WHS Visitor Centre;
- Recent high quality housing developments;
- the setting, with the surrounding hills visible from most parts of the town;
- the locational advantages for tourism - within the World Heritage Site and adjacent to the Brecon National Park;

Weaknesses:

- decline in local economy has led to socio-economic deprivation, and an aging population reflected in weak demand for local goods, services & property;
- low profitability of some businesses discouraging appropriate maintenance;
- perceived lack of awareness amongst local residents concerning the heritage significance of their properties and a lack of appreciation or resources to carry out sensitive improvements to their properties;
- poor quality of materials and detailing of many buildings;



- lack of appropriate maintenance and care for heritage details;
- inappropriate layouts, design and materials of some new development;
- poor environments at 'gateways' to town and Conservation Area;
- through traffic & most visitors take Church Road 'bypass' and miss town centre;
- inappropriate signage and links between attractions, town centre and parking for visitor pedestrians and vehicles;
- a small number of derelict buildings

Opportunities:

- improved heritage building maintenance and management;
- sensitive regeneration of key sites, especially properties along Broad Street ;
- further development of high value tourism sector to increase town centre economic viability;
- additional interpretation and marketing of town centre attractions;
- improved interpretation and understanding of residential areas as well as commercial properties;
- traffic and parking management to reduce adverse impact;
- reuse of underused and vacant floor space;
- increase in planning and design controls and guidance;
- improve CA linkages with major tourism attractions.
- potential educational opportunity to allow the residents of the Conservation area to research and understand the development of the area through historical research and archaeological investigations.
- encourage the provision of niche retailing to cater for tourists and visitors to Blaenavon, to improve the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Threats:

- continuing economic difficulties for shops and businesses
- unused buildings lead to sense of neglect and decline;
- lack of appropriate controls on historic building maintenance and alterations;
- inappropriate designs of new infill buildings, extensions, shop fronts & alterations;
- increasing traffic movement and parking impact;
- and important visual link between town and Coity mountain could be damaged

12.0 Positive Issues and Assets

The special heritage characteristics of interest in the Blaenavon Conservation Area that need to be protected and reinforced include:

12.1 The interest of the variety of townscapes and urban spaces created by the changing patterns of development and the variations of level



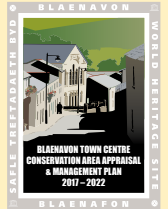
Views across the rooftops of Broad Street from east & west showing the change of level

12.2 Consistency of Building Materials

The changes of level create views over the rooftops and the consistent use of materials and the simple forms of construction with sloping roofs make a significant impact on the urban environment. The common palette of stone and rendered walls, vertical windows and slate roofs on much of the housing built in the mid C19, creates a pleasing urban character that should be retained throughout the Conservation Area.



The widespread use of the local stone, render and slate roofs on the heritage buildings together provide the town with a design continuity



12.3 The Repeated Terrace Built Form

The high density terrace form is prevalent throughout the Conservation Area and provides a consistency of urban character. It has been used for both residential and commercial uses, and can be found both climbing the hills or following the contours, in a grid-iron pattern (such as Park Street/High Street) or a more undulating form (Broad Street, which probably followed the line of the stream)



Examples of different styles of terrace

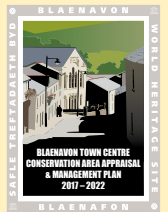
12.4 Focal Point Incident Buildings and Spaces

Throughout the Conservation Area there are selected buildings, groups of buildings and urban spaces of historic or townscape note that significantly add to the character of their local townscape and should be protected – see Character Area descriptions in Section 4.1. The photographs identify some key incident buildings that contribute to the character and importance of place.



BLAENAVON TOWN CENTRE TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE PROGRAMME

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2017-2022



Examples of key focal buildings



Examples of areas where missing buildings have been landscaped.



Examples of footpaths and steps



The Conservation Area has few significant public open spaces, except where occasional terraces have been demolished (car parks on Lion Street and Broad Street). The photo above shows an important 'gateway' location where Ivor Street and Broad Street meet Prince Street at an entrance to the town centre and Conservation Area. At present, this large focal space is bounded by a mixture of historic buildings and a public realm covered by road surfaces, a small garden and areas of paving that detract from its use or visual cohesion. This provides an important urban design opportunity.

Throughout the town centre there have been significant successful efforts on key sites and routes with pedestrian signage and public realm works using heritage materials – walls, railings and paving. Continued use of these designs will link the historic spaces.

12.5 The Network of Footpaths and Alleys Providing Pedestrian Routes

Numerous traditional pedestrian routes cross the grid of roads and provide the necessary shortcuts from the residential areas to the shops and community facilities.

Where possible these footpaths and alleys follow the contours but a number require flights of steps. Many have been used since the mid C19 and they are an important part of the historic network of movement around the town. Some have been established with recent public realm works, while others linking the visitor attractions with the town centre need to be formalised.

12.6 The Unique Historic Interest of the Ironworks & its Associated Buildings

Blaenavon Ironworks opened in 1799. When it opened it was the largest in the World. Its success and prosperity reached a peak in the first half of the 19th century before going into a slow decline. As a consequence many of the early 19th century buildings and industrial structures have survived in a remarkable state of preservation

12.7 The High Quality of Heritage Shop Reinstatement on Broad Street



12.8 Views from Within the Town of the Surrounding Countryside & Nearby Hills

The surrounding hills and landscapes provide a dramatic end view from many streets and so provide important elements of the historic townscape which need to be protected - particularly the views of the Coity mountain and Forgeside.



12.9 The Setting of the Town

Blaenavon is located within the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site inscribed by UNESCO in 2000 and recognised as being of Outstanding Universal Value.

The town is a key component of the World Heritage Site and sits within the wider cultural landscape which extends to 33 square km and includes part of the Brecon National Park and a Registered Landscape of Outstanding Historical Interest. The town lies above the valley bottom on the south-west facing slopes of the Bloreng Mountain and is best viewed from the Coity Mountain but its setting can also be appreciated from the south on the Pontypool Road. See Section 2.2



13.0 Negative Issues and Problems

The key negative issues and problems within the Conservation Area are:

13.1 Examples of Poor Building Alterations and Repairs

A number of buildings within the Conservation Area display a loss of some of their traditional heritage qualities that are gradually changing the overall historic townscapes.

The main examples are:

- loss of heritage details and materials including low quality repairs;
- use of render and other non-heritage wall finishes to heritage stone buildings;
- use of inappropriate roof materials;
- replacement of front doors with inappropriate designs and finishes;
- replacement of painted wooden sash windows with aluminium / UPVC frames;
- removal of heritage mouldings and other details;
- removal of chimney stacks and pots;
- addition of aerials and satellite dishes.

13.2 Inappropriate Extensions to Heritage Buildings

Extensions & outbuildings of inappropriate design, scale and materials change the traditional character of the buildings and the local streetscape.

13.3 Replacement Shop Frontages and Signage

Historic shop fronts and high quality signage add significant depth and visual interest to the general streetscape and create a high quality ambience as well as enhancing the general historic townscape.

A number of historic shop fronts were successfully reinstated along the central part of Broad Street during the early 2000's. These heritage led regeneration schemes have successfully regenerated the core area of Broad Street which now benefits from acceptable occupancy rates. Whilst these works have significantly enhanced this part of the Conservation Area, it wasn't possible to extend the works to the full extent of Broad Street.

Consequently the upper and lower ends of Broad Street still have a large number of very poor quality late 20th century shop fronts which range from aluminium and to poor quality late 20th century "contemporary pastiche" timber fronts with inappropriate and poor quality signage with a large number of back lit signs in evidence. It is considered that these have a significant detrimental impact upon the appearance of the Conservation Area overall and the commercial centre in particular. There is therefore a need to create a continuous heritage façade along Broad Street to continue the momentum of conservation based investment in the town.

13.4 The Impact of Inappropriate Designs of New Development on Sites within the Heritage Townscape

The erosion of the heritage townscape will continue if insensitive designs that do not respect the traditional forms and materials are permitted. The examples below show examples of inappropriate development designs within the Conservation Area where changes of materials, fenestration and forms conflict with the traditional streetscapes.



The Old Town Hall on Lion Street was built with different types and colours of materials, and introduced new forms and fenestration which conflict with the mid C19 terraces along the High Street.

13.5 Removal of Historic Buildings

A number of historic terrace buildings have been demolished. In some cases, such as Lion Street and the top of Broad Street, the gap sites have been used for car parks. However others, such as the site of the former Belle Vue Garage and Hotel on Queen Street and 55/56 Broad Street and have remained as unkempt or poorly landscaped open spaces which break the continuity of the street scene and have a detrimental impact on the character of the Conservation Area. Duke Street, George Street, Cross Street and John Street also have significant gaps in the streetscape.



King Street/Upper Waun Street King Street/Queen Street

13.6 The Removal and Replacement of Boundary Walls

A particular concern throughout the Conservation Area is the removal of the traditional stone walls from gardens and their replacement with inappropriate designs and materials. The overall impact of these changes has a significant influence on the local streetscapes and detracts from the appearance of the setting of the historic buildings.

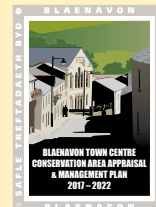
13.7 The Impact of the Context of the Conservation Area

The arrival routes into the Conservation Area and to the key tourism attractions – the Ironworks and Big Pit; set the scene and expectations for the quality of the experience.

Most entrances to Blaenavon would require environmental improvements. The route from the north – the Abergavenny Road; provides dramatic views of the landscape around Blaenavon until nearing the Conservation Area boundary where poor quality industrial and commercial structures create a very poor visual arrival point.

The arrival point from Pontypool and the south is marked by the open space on Prince Street that, in spite of some notable heritage buildings, lacks a quality environment and creates an unimpressive entrance.

The route from the Conservation Area boundary to Big Pit is mainly through an industrial estate where buildings with a wide range of designs, forms and materials and surrounded by predominantly uncontrolled open space uses, results in an unattractive environment and unfortunate arrival at one of Wales most important visitor destinations.



13.8 Economic Difficulties and Resulting Poor Maintenance

Blaenavon's industrial activity resulted in the establishment and growth of the town. Its subsequent rapid decline during the 20th Century however coupled with a lack of replacement investment, had a devastating effect the economic legacy of which continues to challenge the town today. The 2011 Census, identifies 16% of Blaenavon's population is economically inactive compared to 12.9% for Torfaen and 12.2% for Wales. Blaenavon 2 (WIMD LSOA) is a Communities First area and is ranked as the 196th most deprived in Wales which puts it in the top 10% of most-deprived LSOAs in Wales and the 4th most deprived in Torfaen out of 60 LSOAs. This challenging economic environment presents difficulties for property owners in prioritising and implementing necessary building repairs. The subsequent lack of maintenance, the low quality repairs and commercial vacancies have had a detrimental effect on the Conservation Area's qualities.

In the early 2000s, 75% of the town centre was boarded up and characterised by widespread dereliction and disrepair. World Heritage Site status provided an impetus to reverse this decline and since inscription, the regeneration of the town and Broad Street has formed a key part of a wider strategy which seeks to create a cultural tourism destination focused on the sensitive promotion of the areas industrial heritage.

Regeneration efforts aligned to this strategy have sought to tackle economic and social decline and progress has been made in this regard. Key projects have removed dereliction and delivered significant improvements to commercial and residential properties within the Conservation Area. However, there remains "work to be done". A generation of unsympathetic repairs and low cost interventions has contributed to the extensive erosion of built heritage detail, typically characterised by a general sense of neglect with examples of poor maintenance and repair; inappropriate shop fronts, signage, window frames, doors and roof materials.

13.9 Vacant and Dilapidated Buildings

Within the Conservation Area the condition of a number of key buildings continue to deteriorate. Of key concern is the deteriorating condition of the Grade II listed Ty Mawr, the former Iron Masters House on Church Road. In recent times, the building was operated as a private nursing home until it was forced to close in 2006. Since its closure, the building has remained empty and has gradually fallen into disrepair, being subject also to extensive vandalism, including theft of original internal and external features. The building is now in an extremely poor condition and is classed 'at risk' in the Council's Listed Buildings at Risk Register.

Due to its close association with the Ironworks, Ty Mawr is of major significance to the World Heritage Site. It is considered one of the most significant buildings outside of the Ironworks site and the cultural value of the building makes it not only of local but also national significance. The sustainable restoration and preservation of Ty Mawr is seen as a high priority.

Key buildings located at gateway entrances to the core area of the Conservation Area including the Market Tavern and 46 Broad Street are also in a derelict and dilapidated condition and contribute little to the enhancement of the character of the Conservation Area in their current condition. Their restoration and the identification of viable and sustainable end uses is a priority.

14.0 Conservation Area Policy, Design Guidance and Management

Heritage Assets are an irreplaceable resource. The key aim for the protection of the Blaenavon Conservation Area must be the preservation and enhancement of its character, appearance and special architectural and historic interest.

The purpose of this Management Plan is to complement and re-enforce local and national government policies regarding the preservation of historic fabric and character. The guidance set out in the Management Plan is intended to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and to assist with managing change in and around the boundary.



14.1 Repair and Alterations to Existing Buildings

14.1.1 Approach to repairs and alterations

Design guidance to encourage residents to repair original elements in preference to replacement, and to advise on how repairs and alterations should be carried out, is available from Torfaen County Borough Council's Conservation and Development Control sections.

Currently some minor alterations to unlisted buildings do not require planning permission and the results often compromise their historic interest and architectural integrity with an adverse impact on the historic townscape. The proliferation of relatively minor building alterations is incrementally eroding the character and appearance of the Blaenavon Conservation Area. Many modern alterations adversely affect the subtlety, balance and proportions of building elevations and can also be physically damaging to the fabric of historic buildings. Important original features threatened by such alterations include shop fronts, timber sash windows, projecting bays, doors and door cases, cast iron handrails, railings, balconies, rainwater goods, chimney pots and stacks and boundary enclosures.

It is important, therefore, that property owners and occupiers adopt the right approach to repairs and the replacement of features. In the first instance regular maintenance should be carried out to prevent, or at least delay, the need for more significant repairs. Repairs should only be undertaken where considered necessary to slow down the process of decay without damaging the character of the building. In the vast majority of cases, a traditional approach to repair should be adopted, replacing decayed material on a like for like basis.

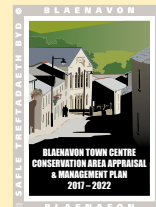
In certain circumstances, decay may be so advanced that the fabric is beyond repair and the replacement of the features may be necessary. Care should, however, be taken to avoid the unnecessary loss of historic fabric. For example, the discrete insertion of modern draft seals can greatly enhance the performance of casement and sash windows in respect of heat retention and ease of use.

The following guidelines are intended to advise residents and owners within the Blaenavon Conservation Area of the general approach to be taken when contemplating external repairs or alterations. A Design Guide for Development within the World Heritage Site has been prepared as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Owners and occupiers should, however, always seek the advice of the Council Conservation Officers before carrying out works to their buildings.

14.1.2 Guidelines for external repair and alteration work

The following examples provide some guidance but further advice is available from the Council:

- **Building materials**
A key attraction of the Blaenavon townscape is the homogeneity of the building materials. As a result it is particularly important to respect and repeat the use of local stone and smooth render and colours, the type and layout of natural and reconstituted slate roofs, and the design of the painted doors and windows with appropriate reveals.
- **Chimney stacks and pots**
Chimneys requiring repair should be reinstated or rebuilt accurately to the original height and profile, in materials to match the existing, which traditionally in Blaenavon is stone. Occasionally pale yellow brick or rendering is acceptable. Original clay chimney pots should be replaced appropriately or reinstated where necessary – usually terracotta or pale yellow.
- **Roofs**
Pitched roofs are essential to maintain the traditional building forms. Original tiling in earlier buildings



may have been stone but as most buildings are mid C19, slate is the predominant material. Welsh slate is essential for Listed buildings while reconstituted slate is acceptable on unlisted buildings. Concrete tiles are unacceptable as are roof lights on the front of buildings.

- **Windows and doors**
Original windows and external doors should be retained and carefully repaired wherever possible; it is important to retain and repair early surviving casements. In the older parts of the CA, most original windows had timber sliding-sash, though other designs can be seen, and many now have more modern replacement windows. If replacement is unavoidable, new windows should be accurate replicas of the original design, in both pattern and detail. PVC frames will fail to achieve these aims. Windows and doors should be painted and not stained. The openings should not be altered or replaced and reveals should be retained.
- **Walls**
Traditionally most terraced properties are of coursed stonework. Where this cannot be retained, a fine textured and appropriately painted render is an alternative. Spar render and pebble dashing is unacceptable on any elevation.
Bargeboards, fascias and soffits should be plain and constructed of softwood. Painted finishes should complement the nature of the elevation.
- **Ironwork**
Decorative ironwork, such as railings should be retained and carefully repaired. If replacement is necessary, it should be reinstated accurately to the original pattern and detail, in a similar material, usually wrought or cast iron. Replacements in mild steel often corrode very quickly. Private front gardens are not widespread but should use traditional wrought iron railings and gates to complement stone walls.
- **Shop frontages**
Shop fronts should display good proportions, well thought out detailing and quality materials. They should respect the period of the building but simplicity of design often produces more convincing results than excessive Victoriana. Detailed drawings, particularly of joinery construction, should accompany proposed new shop fronts.
- **Boundary treatment**
Original stone walls and wooden gates should be repaired to match the existing, or reinstated to the original design wherever possible. This is a particular concern with properties where side or rear walls face the street. The predominant materials are stone which is also widely used for retaining walls around the steep pattern of roads. Locally salvaged stone is preferable but other sources should be of similar colour and texture. Any replacement of this material, which is fundamental to the character of the town, could have a significantly detrimental impact.

14.1.3 Principles for new development within heritage areas

Inappropriate new development - such as the telephone exchange opposite St Peter's School on Church Road and new housing, commercial or community developments using inappropriate forms, materials and detailing are detrimental to the streetscape, the heritage setting and the environmental qualities of the Conservation Area.

Individual infill developments reflect the taste and design approach of their eras. However, where they have respected the principles of the historic building line and the scale, massing and form of their neighbours, they are generally absorbed into the streetscape with success.

Where new development is proposed it is important that it is guided by sound principles of urban design, as well as sympathetic detailing in relation to its historic context.



All forms of new development within the Conservation Area should:

- Preserve and reinforce the distinctive pattern of historic development, including street patterns, open spaces and trees, plot boundaries & boundary treatments.
- Have regard for existing building lines & the orientation of existing development.
- Reinforce the distinctive architectural character of each particular Character Area and wider Conservation Area, through an informed understanding of its building forms and styles, features and materials.
- Respect the scale and massing of surrounding buildings. It is essential that new development is not out of scale with existing buildings by way of its height, floor levels, size of windows and doors, overall massing and the roofscape.
- Maintain key views and vistas within, into and out of the Conservation Area.
- Where possible, minimise the visual impact of parked vehicles and the provision of parking areas on the streetscape and landscape setting of historic buildings.

Equal care will be required where new development is proposed for areas around the town that are either adjacent to the Conservation Area, or considered to be areas which positively contribute to the wider World Heritage Site.

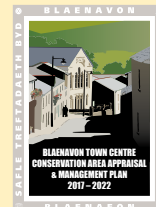
Where appropriate, all forms of new development should respect the issues listed above, with particular concern to:

- Ensure new development continues the local scale, form and materials in order to reinforce the distinctive architectural character of the Character Area. This is particularly important with roof lines, their height and materials because of their visibility from the sloping land;
- Consider the impact of new development on key views and vistas. One of the attractions of Blaenavon is that most potential development sites in the Conservation Area are exposed to views from above, below and from a distance, and therefore will have a significant impact on the setting of the historic town;
- Ensure that new road layouts and parking arrangements have a limited impact on the streetscape qualities of the locality. Sensitive designs and landscaping are required to reduce the areas of tarmac and lines of parked cars;
- Limit rooftop aerials and satellite dishes and ensure that electricity and telephone service links are underground so as to avoid unsightly new wirescapes. New, high quality designs are not inappropriate in a Conservation Area, but the concern must be to avoid incongruous and low grade development.

14.2 Guidance for Buildings, Key Sites and Public Realm

The following indicative list identifies a number of key projects for implementation within Blaenavon Conservation Area. Additional opportunities will be considered.

The selected site specific projects, whose improvement will require public consultation, would have a significant impact on achieving the Conservation Area objectives include:



14.2.1 Tackling Prominent or Unused Buildings

- that detract from the heritage townscapes in focal locations: those that are derelict, under-used, suffering from neglect or having unsuitable repairs.

Potential buildings include:

- Ty-Mawr, Church Road;
- Market Tavern, Broad Street;
- 46 Broad Street.
- Cost Cutters, Market Street
- Bethlehem Chapel, Broad Street.
- Group including 68-72 Broad Street

Where unsightly development detracts from the Conservation Area, it will be important to encourage owners to seek assistance to repair the townscape damage and respect traditional forms and materials.

14.2.2 Reusing Prominent Vacant Sites where Clearance and Dereliction Detract from the Heritage Townscapes

- the site of 54 Broad Street and adjacent garage at the top of Broad Street.
- Gap site on north side of King Street

14.2.3 Opening the Ty Mawr Park Beech Wood for Community Use

An important and unused historic asset adjacent to the town centre and within the Conservation Area.

14.2.4 Continuing Shop Front Improvements

The visual impact of inappropriate replacement shop frontages detracts from the heritage environment. This concern has led to a significant programme of improvements on Broad Street which has had a considerable impact on the Conservation Area. Reinstatements of Victorian designs were achieved in the early 2000s with funding from the Housing Renewal Area and Heads of the Valleys Strategic Regeneration funding. However, there remains a need to tackle the condition of remaining commercial properties on Broad Street and Market Street.

Blaenavon's past industrial activity resulted in the establishment and growth of the town. Its subsequent rapid decline during the 20th Century however coupled with a lack of replacement investment, had a devastating effect the economic legacy of which continues to challenge the town today. The heritage led regeneration of the town and Broad Street has formed a key part of a wider strategy which seeks to create a cultural tourism destination focused on the sensitive promotion of the areas World Heritage Site status.

This strategy is embedded in the Blaenavon World Heritage Site Management Plan (2011-16) which seeks to "... protect the cultural landscape so that future generations may understand the outstanding contribution South Wales made to the Industrial revolution. By the presentation and promotion of the Blaenavon Industrial



Landscape, it is intended to increase cultural tourism, provide educational opportunities and change perceptions of the area to assist economic regeneration”.

Key projects aligned to this strategy have removed dereliction and delivered significant improvements to commercial and residential properties. The World Heritage Sites enhanced role as a cultural tourism destination has the potential to raise the town’s profile and maximise opportunities for changing residents’ and visitors perceptions of the town’s offer. Since inscription, progress has been made in this regard, however there still remains “work to be done” to fully engage the community in the global significance of their own heritage and to achieve a critical mass of physical improvement within Broad Street that assists in fully realising the towns economic potential.

Blaenavon has recently gained Stage 1 approval for a Townscape Heritage Programme supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Torfaen Council and Blaenavon Town Council which will enable further heritage led regeneration to continue along Broad Street building on the success of the Housing Renewal scheme by reinstating further historic shop fronts and bringing some of the most dilapidated building back into use.

The challenge is therefore to tackle the poor condition of remaining properties on Broad Street and focus on moving further forward in achieving the strategic vision of creating a cultural tourism destination with a thriving town as a key visitor destination. THP support to local businesses and residents will assist them in creating a more attractive, vibrant and viable town encouraging new business development and employment as well as encouraging local people and visitors to learn about, use and support the town.

All future changes to shop fronts and signage within the Conservation Area should follow historic precedents whenever possible.

14.2.5 Improving Arrival Points and Routes

The Torfaen Destination Management Plan and Action Plan serves as a key investment plan setting out the principal objectives of the tourism sector in Torfaen for the period 2016-2020. The Plan shares the Visit Wales vision, as set out in “The Welsh Government Strategy for Tourism 2013-2020 - Partnership for Growth”, to provide the warmest of welcomes, outstanding quality, excellent value for money and memorable, authentic experiences to every visitor. With the goal to grow tourism in a sustainable way and to make an increasing contribution to the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wales, growing tourism earnings in Wales by 10% or more by 2020.

Amongst the Plan’s key objectives are actions to improve the visitor experience and establish Torfaen as a high quality visitor destination; and to prioritise investment to deliver projects which will improve the overall quality of the visitor experience. More specifically, the Plan recognises the importance of gateway arrival points and seeks to enhance these at key visitor arrival points.

It is important to consider the visual impact of arrival at ‘gateways’ to the Conservation Area. The key areas of concern where the townscape lacks the necessary qualities as an introduction to the Conservation Area are:

- Southern ‘gateway’ public realm (opposite the Queen Victoria Pub): The combined impact of some poor quality extensions and infill buildings, and the inappropriate landscaping of the community garden, result in a poor setting for the key heritage buildings and create a particularly weak open space and introduction to the Conservation Area;
- Northern arrival along the road from Abergavenny: From the junction of King Street and North Street and bounded by the Ironworks site, the commercial development lining this route is of poor design and a most inappropriate introduction for the attractions of the town and CA;
- Route from the Conservation Area to the Big Pit: Though outside the Conservation Area, the industrial buildings lining this route detract from the importance of the heritage experience.



Southern 'gateway'

14.2.6 Improving Traffic and Pedestrian Signage and Circulation Routes

The Torfaen Destination Management Plan 2016 – 2020 also identifies a need to assist visitors to explore and link together the various visitor facilities and attractions throughout the town. Currently it is difficult for visitors to identify and to understand how to reach areas of interest. The Action Plan recognises this need and seeks to develop infrastructure to circulate visitors around the town and wider World Heritage Site. It also seeks to develop and enhance interpretation, signage and visitor orientation around the town and World heritage Site.

This represents both an opportunity and a threat to the BTCCA, as poorly conceived and designed signage could have a significant detrimental impact upon the appearance of the BTCCA through increased visual clutter.



15.0 Management Recommendations

15.1 Resources

The successful long term management of the Blaenavon Conservation Area depends on management that respects its conservation value and helps address known threats to this value. The continued care of heritage buildings is particularly important as it enables conservation to play an active part in regeneration recognising that heritage has economic value. This can be achieved by ensuring that change is managed in a way that sustains and enhances the historic character of the built environment, without overly constraining or inhibiting development and by preventing inappropriate designs and promoting sympathetic change and development.

The Council is committed to making full use of its planning policies and its strategic planning framework to support this and recognises the importance of ensuring that regeneration initiatives, including publicly funded schemes such as the Townscape Heritage Programme, are not undermined by subsequent actions. The measures which are in place, or will be put into practice, in order to ensure that the special character and quality of this Conservation Area are retained and enhanced are outlined below.

Torfaen County Borough Council will identify the necessary resources to manage the Conservation Area and will, where appropriate and funds are available, coordinate such works.

A framework of need will be identified from this Management Plan, including the implementation of policies both to achieve the heritage aims and to ensure the impact of a conservation led approach to economic development and regeneration issues.

Priority management time and skills will be required to implement the decision making procedures and policy changes, to ensure effective monitoring and enforcement, to prepare technical guidance and to inform the community. Obligations resulting from the location within a World Heritage Site are listed in the Blaenavon World Heritage Site Management Plan.

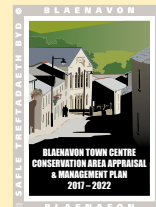
15.1.1 Townscape Heritage Programme

Torfaen County Borough Council has secured a Stage 1 approval for a Townscape Heritage Programme for the Blaenavon Conservation Area. This Heritage Lottery Funded project supports partnerships of local interests that aim to regenerate economically disadvantaged historic areas for the benefit of local residents, workers and visitors. The Townscape Heritage Programme provides the opportunity to contribute funding towards schemes that make a lasting difference for heritage; people and communities and helps communities improve the built historic environment of conservation areas that require investment.

The Townscape Heritage scheme for the Blaenavon Conservation Area is made up of a portfolio of projects that together have the potential to regenerate and transform the townscape of the Conservation Area that is in need of most investment. The Appraisal has clearly identified a number of key issues that currently do little to preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

The aim of the Townscape Heritage Programme is to halt and reverse the decline of the historic townscape by creating an attractive, vibrant and interesting locality where people will want to live, work, visit and invest. This will be achieved by funding physical works to repair and enhance selected buildings in the core area of Broad Street in order to encourage business confidence, to provide local people with the opportunity to learn new skills, and to inspire the local community to take an interest in and get involved with their townscape heritage. This will further support the economic and social regeneration of the wider Conservation Area in accordance with broader regeneration strategies.

Furthermore, the Scheme provides a significant opportunity to build upon and continue the standard achieved



by previous property refurbishment schemes within the Conservation Area continuing the momentum of conservation based investment in the townscape.

Torfaen County Borough Council will manage the scheme which is also supported by Blaenavon Town Council.

15.2 Decision Making Procedures

All Torfaen County Borough Council departments involved in decisions affecting change within the Conservation Area should understand the significance of both the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site designation and work corporately in a team approach to ensure that development decisions are appropriate for the historic context and will not damage the heritage fabric or appearance of the Conservation Area.

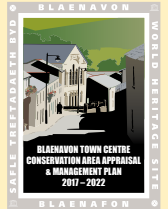
Further procedures to ensure consistent decision making will be identified and supported by the following recommended policy concerns to maintain the character of the area through extra controls:

15.2.1 Local Listing in the Conservation Area

The purpose of Conservation Area designation is to provide added protection for the many buildings which do not possess the individual characteristics suitable for Statutory Listing. This Plan provides the opportunity to provide additional recognition for a Local List of heritage structures and buildings that have local historic or architectural value, group value, or visual interest as part of the setting of Listed buildings.

The following potential properties are worthy of additional protection by being included on a Local List. This selection will be reviewed during public consultation:

- Co-operative building, Church Road
- Bethel Chapel, King Street
- Park House
- Vipond House
- Old Wesleyan (Park Street) Methodist church
- Old Wesleyan School
- St Felix Roman Catholic church, Ellick Street
- Market Tavern
- Terraced cottages to the north of King Street
- The Old Police Station
- Castle Hotel
- Lion Hotel
- 32 Broad Street
- Builder's Yard
- Terraced Housing on High Street
- Caddicks, North Street

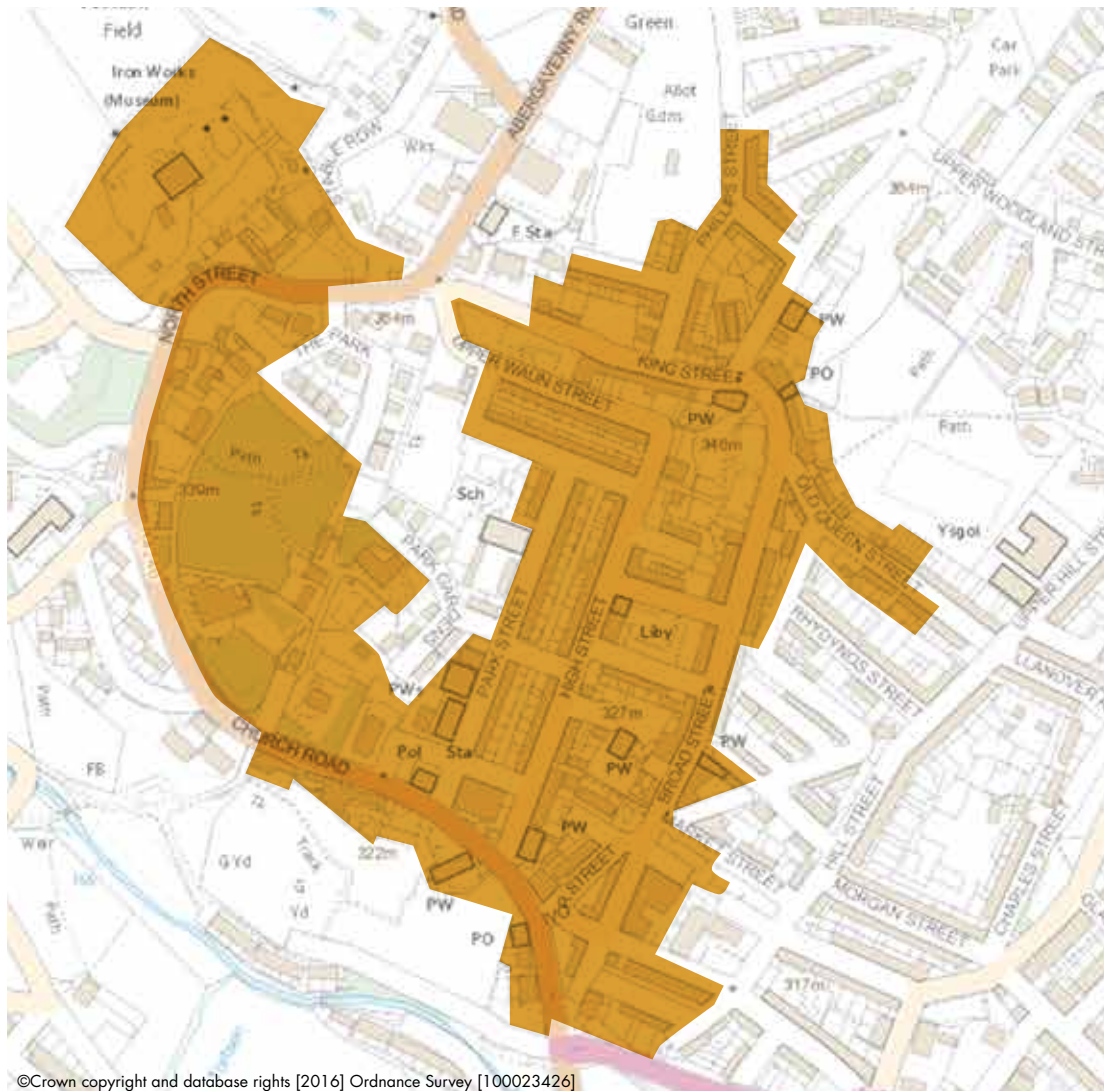


15.2.2 Boundary Changes

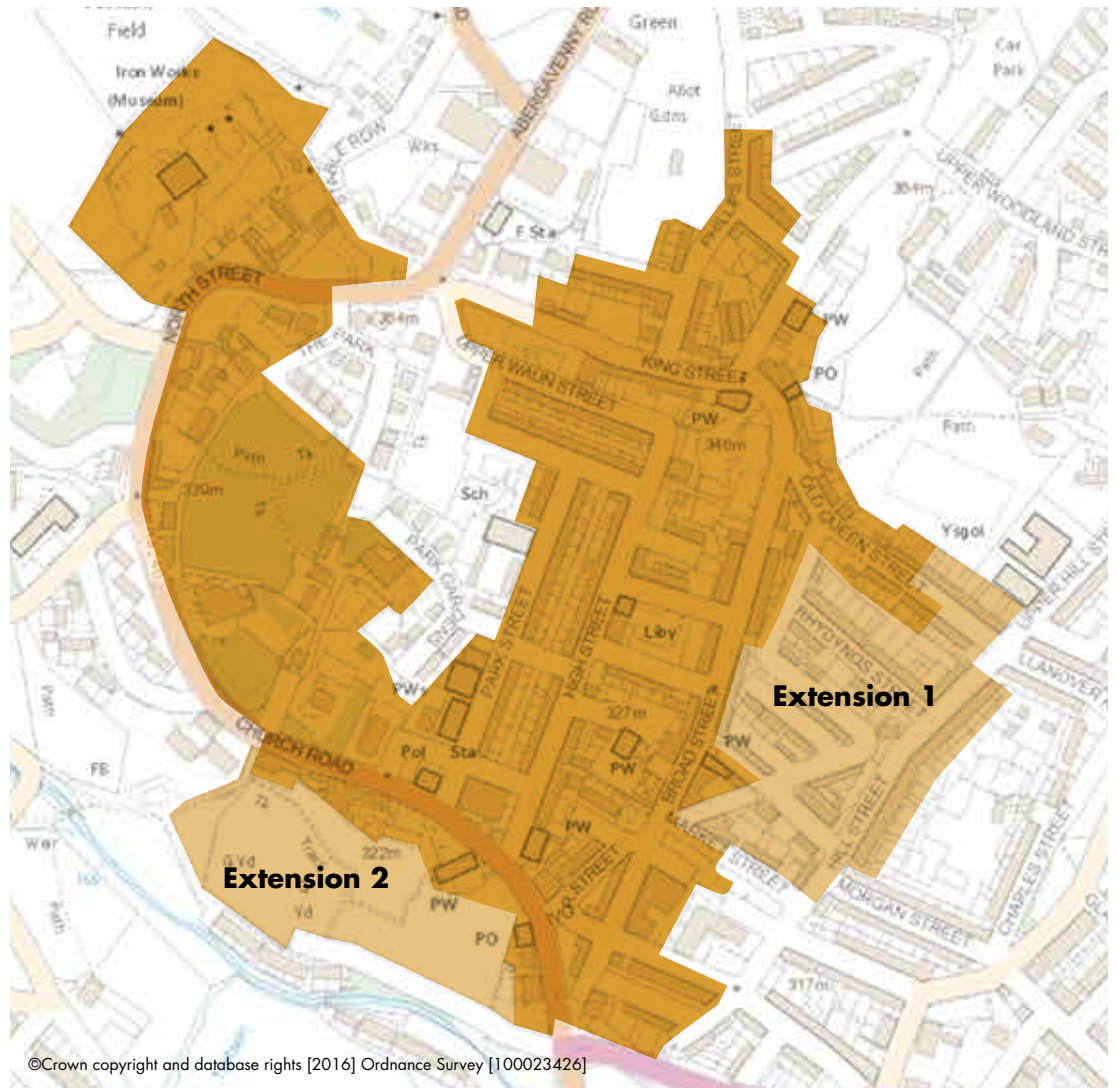
The Blaenavon Conservation Area was designated in 1984 and extended in 2011 to include Old Queen and Phillips Street. This Conservation Area Appraisal has further considered the existing boundaries and recommends that the Conservation Area be expanded on the south eastern and south western boundary.

The area between the existing eastern boundary of the Conservation Area and Hill Street was developed during a similar period to the rest of the Conservation Area and was therefore investigated to determine whether this area retained sufficient "special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"

An assessment similar to that carried out for the other character areas has been undertaken, and it is proposed that as this area has a similar character to the existing Conservation Area, that the boundary should be extended eastward to Hill Street, and that a new "Hill Street Character Area" be included within the Conservation Area as presented below.



Existing Conservation Area



Proposed Extensions to the Conservation Area

The Hill Street Character Area

The Hill Street Character area is situated east of Broad Street and extends from Old Queen Street in the North to Market Street in the south and includes Rhydyndos Street, George Street, Anne Street and Cross Street

There are no Listed Buildings within this Character Area.

Character of Buildings:

Although probably later than the King Street development, Old Queen Street, Hill Street and Market Street are all shown on the 1st series Ordnance Survey maps, and many of the small terraces probably date from the mid-19th century, making them very contemporary with the other residential areas within the BTCCA. There are no public buildings marked within this area on the first three series Ordnance Survey maps, although there are a number of chapels in close proximity to the area. The area does however contain open spaces for the local market and an animal pound.



The majority of the buildings are therefore small stone terraced properties. Most have had some poor quality "modernisations" which range from replacement double glazed windows to loss of some detailing and rendering. Few have had their window proportions altered.

The area also contains a number of later 19th century terraces, which are principally built from stone, but with elaborate brick detailing, especially around the openings. There are some particularly good rows along Duke Street and Rhydyndos Street.

The area has been developed piecemeal, and even where adjacent small terraces have a generally similar form and massing, they tend to differ in detailing. Most cottages tend to be single fronted within this character area although the proportions differ significantly with the earlier cottages have far less of a vertical emphasis than the later 19th century cottages do.

There are also a number of more modern properties, mainly along Cross Street which have a detrimental impact upon the overall character of this area.

The piecemeal development of the area has resulted in a number of small areas of either undeveloped plots or plots where small historic dwellings have been demolished, for example along Duke Street. These provide small areas of natural relief from an otherwise intensively developed area.

Positive issues and assets:

- the repeated terrace built form and materials;
- the variations of terrace housing types and scale with the changes of level creating an interest in the streetscapes throughout the area, especially across the valley along which Broad Street has been built.
- The areas of soft landscaping
- The attractive rows of late 19th century housing

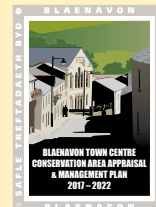
Negative issues and problems:

- the loss of heritage details and materials on some buildings due to low quality and inappropriate repairs, replacements and maintenance causing the erosion of the heritage townscape character;
- Poorly designed large footprint modern replacements for historic buildings
- Lack of parking leading to cluttered and car dominated streetscape

Additionally it is proposed to extend the southern boundary of the Conservation Area to include St Peter's entire churchyard. The current boundary of the Conservation Area passes in an artificial straight line through the St Peter's Churchyard almost immediately south of the Church. This results in the majority of the Churchyard being outside of the Conservation Area.

The Churchyard represents an essential part of the setting of both the church and St Peter's school, as well as the Conservation Area. It also contains a number of significant monuments which are both outstanding structures in their own right and a significant part of the cultural and intangible heritage of the town.

It therefore makes a significant positive contribution to the architectural and historic character of the Conservation Area, which justifies the extension of the boundary of to include the Churchyard in its entirety.



15.2.3 Article 4 Directions

Since inscription as a World Heritage Site in 2000, the regeneration of the town and Broad Street has formed part of a wider strategy which seeks to create a cultural tourism destination with a thriving town as a key visitor destination at the heart of the Site.

A key challenge has been tackling the derelict and poor condition of properties within the Broad Street Character area. Key regeneration projects have successfully removed dereliction and delivered significant improvements to commercial and residential properties within this area, enhancing the area's character. However, there remain residential properties that continue to display a generation of unsympathetic repairs and low cost interventions which has contributed to the extensive erosion of built heritage detail, typically characterised by a general sense of neglect with examples of poor maintenance and repair; window frames, doors and roof materials.

Article 4 Directions can be imposed by local planning authorities to control certain alterations to dwellings that would otherwise be automatically 'permitted development'. The Council is able to implement an Article 4 (2) Direction which enables it to limit permitted development rights on residential properties in circumstances where specific management of development is required, mainly where the character of a Conservation Area would be threatened. Thus, for example, the replacement of windows, doors, roof coverings etc. can come under planning control, the object being to prevent works that are considered to be damaging or inappropriate to the historic fabric or features of the buildings and historic townscapes. An Article 4 (2) Direction does not prevent development but enables the Local Planning Authority to manage it so that potentially harmful proposals can be considered on a case by case basis through the planning process.

Buildings in commercial use do not have the same permitted development rights as residential properties and are therefore less at risk from inappropriate changes and loss of heritage character.

In order to prevent the deterioration of heritage details and the degradation of historic character of the Conservation Area, it is proposed that an Article 4 (2) is considered by the Council particularly on residential properties along Broad Street. The implementation of an Article 4(2) provides increased protection especially where there is the threat from small scale unsympathetic works. An Article 4(2) Direction also offers the potential to continue the emphasis on heritage led regeneration of Broad Street strengthening the quality and position of the town centre as a visitor destination whilst also offering the opportunity to engage the local community and property owners/occupiers in the significance of their own heritage.

This proposal will require further consideration and statutory consultation should it be taken forward.

15.3 Compliance Strategy

Torfaen County Borough Council's Development Control Officers with Conservation Officers and legal advisors can pursue a programme of appropriate legal action using powers available under Sections 48 and 54 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 where this may be deemed necessary.

The powers available to Local Authorities, that the Council is prepared to use,

include:

- Taking enforcement action against unauthorised development – planning contravention notices / breach of condition notices / enforcement notices / stop notices / and injunctions;
- Serving Repairs, Urgent Works and Section 215 notice on properties which may be considered to have an adverse impact upon the visual amenity of the area;



- Compulsory Acquisition orders; and
- Building Preservation Notices which extend Listed Building control over unlisted buildings for an interim period.

Buildings and sites, which though outside the Conservation Area are adjacent to the boundary, must be considered as part of its setting and therefore similar planning considerations need to be applied.

15.4 Mechanisms for Monitoring Change

In addition to a regular review of the Conservation Area to encompass changes and new priorities, key tools to monitor changes could include a new dated photographic survey.

Though few detailed historic drawings, paintings or engravings have survived of the earlier town, there are an impressive number of detailed photographs which are available to inform the accurate restoration of properties constructed after 1850.

Torfaen County Borough Council with assistance from members of the Blaenavon Partnership will be responsible for the collection of information on the changing circumstances within the Conservation Area.

15.5 Blaenavon World Heritage Site Design Guide Supplementary Planning Guidance

The Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site Design Guide (April 2011) provides design guidance against which development may be evaluated. The aims of this Design Guide are to both protect the historic character of the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site within Torfaen (an area recognised for its 'Outstanding Universal Value'), and to ensure that all development whether alterations, repairs or new development, respects the significance and values for which the site was inscribed. The Blaenavon Conservation Area is a significant area within this adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance Note and a key document used to assess the impact of development on the character of the Conservation Area.

The Guide aims to provide those considering works that involve alterations, repairs or development of buildings or sites within the World Heritage Site with some advice on maintenance, repair and the design of alterations and / or new buildings. It offers advice on the reinstatement and repair of original features using traditional materials and methods, and the importance for all existing and proposed development to respect their settings and location within the World Heritage Site. It also identifies broader guidance on the principles of good townscape and urban design.

The Guide is currently the subject of a review.

15.6 Community Involvement

Engaging the local community in the significance and importance of managing the Conservation Area is a key part of the ongoing management of the historic environment for future generations. It is widely recognised that a well-protected and accessible historic environment can have a positive impact on people and communities and contribute towards quality of life and well-being.

A Round 1 approval has been secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Townscape Heritage Programme. A Round 2 application is currently being developed. If successful, the programme will provide an opportunity to engage the community in a range of activities relating to the town's tangible and intangible social history. It will also assist the community in understanding and recognising the importance of preserving and enhancing the



character of the Conservation Area by properly managing and maintaining its key features.

Community engagement and activity is an essential part of the effective and sustainable management of the Conservation Area in the long term. As part of developing a Round 2 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, a Community Activity Plan is being prepared. The Plan will engage the community in activities focused on raising awareness of the importance of managing the Conservation Area and will include –

- The establishment of a building owners club providing training in managing and maintaining heritage properties helping to ensure that the built heritage is understood and sustained in future.
- Opportunities for Construction Apprentices to gain specific skills relating to heritage construction techniques.
- A series of walks, talks and lectures focussed on the significance of the townscapes tangible and intangible heritage.
- A series of co-curated exhibitions, based on community historical research, on the commercial land social stories of Broad Street enabling the community to learn about the townscapes heritage.
- An innovative learning package centred on the townscape delivered by the local school. Young people will learn about the importance of the historic built environment thereby contributing to the sustainable management of the Conservation Area for future generations.
- Photographic hoardings enabling the community and visitors to learn about the heritage of the town.

Through greater interpretation of the townscape, residents and visitors will have a more enjoyable experience and be able to understand and appreciate the significance of the town.

A Partnership Board comprising representatives from the Council, business, the community and key stakeholders including Blaenavon Town Council will be established and continuing community review and involvement will be managed by Torfaen County Borough Council. It is anticipated that as a result of the Townscape Heritage Programme, community perceptions will be changed for the better and a greater sense of community pride and cohesion engendered.

This Conservation Area Assessment & Management Plan is currently the subject of public consultation and the communities view are sought to achieve support to the ongoing management of the Conservation Area.

