

Gresford Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan

This document is available in Welsh



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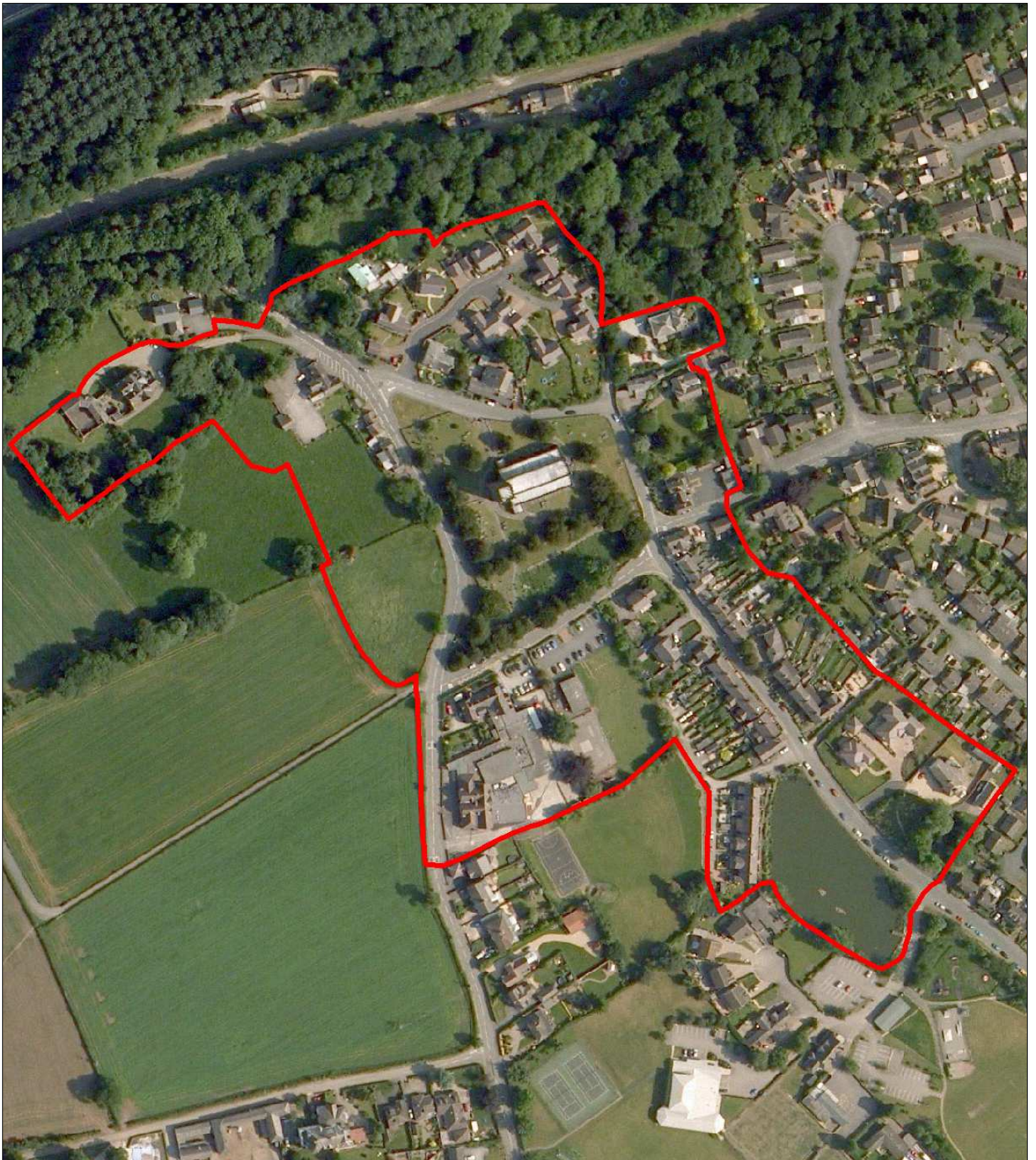
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Ariel View of
Gresford Conservation Area 2006





Part I Character Assessment

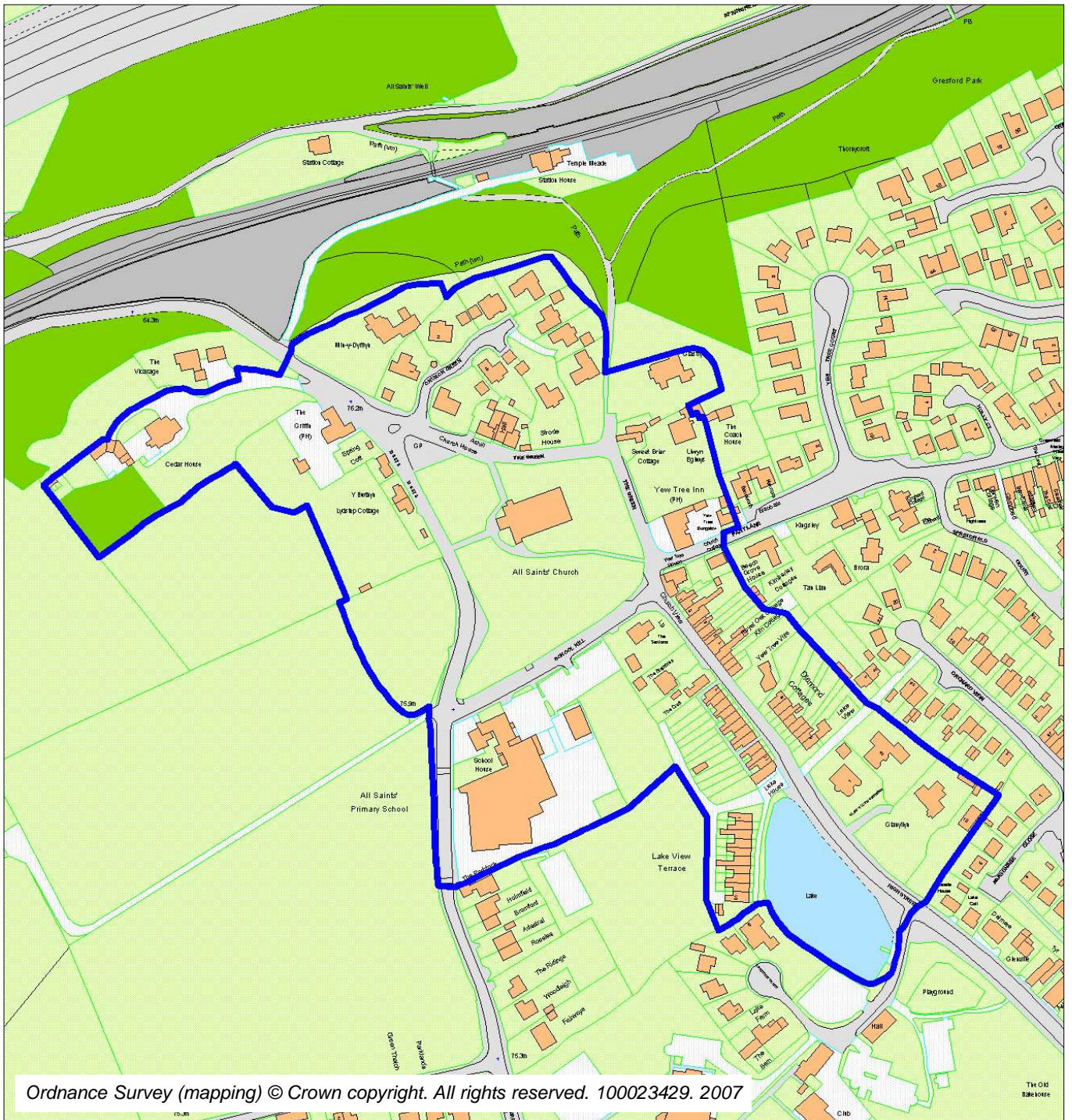


Figure 1 - Gresford Conservation Area



1 Introduction

Conservation Area Designation

1.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Authorities to identify "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" for designation as conservation areas.

Purpose

1.2 The purpose of the Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan is:

- To provide a clear definition of the area's special architectural or historic interest
- To identify ways in which their unique characteristics can be preserved and enhanced through the Management Plan
- To strengthen the justification for designation
- To create a clear context for future development in accordance with conservation area policies in the development plan
- To provide a vehicle for engagement and awareness raising

Gresford Conservation Area

1.3 This Assessment and Management Plan aims to promote and support developments that are in keeping with, or enhance, the character of the Gresford Conservation Area. It is not an attempt to stifle change. The aim is to strike a balance so that the interests of conservation are given their full weight against the needs for change and development. The Gresford Conservation Area was first designated in August 1975 and its boundary amended in November 1999. This document is concerned with the reasons for designation, defining the qualities that make up its special architectural and historic interest, character and appearance. The

omission of any reference to a particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Planning Context

1.4 This document should be read in conjunction with the adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 2005, and national planning policy guidance, in particular Welsh Office Circular 61/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas.

Location

1.5 Gresford Conservation Area encompasses the heart of the historic village, which is approximately four miles to the north east of Wrexham on the B5445 old Wrexham to Chester Road, and approximately five miles south of Chester. The Village has developed on a flat-lying headland area above a steep sided section of the River Alyn valley as it flows in a north easterly direction to join the Dee. The Conservation Area centres on the magnificent Grade I Parish Church of All Saints, and the development, which represents the different periods of the villages' history.

Geology

1.6 The geology of the area is a mix of Carboniferous coal deposits, sandstone and sand and gravel deposits, all of which have been extensively mined leaving their mark on the built and social environment.

Consultation

1.7 Community Councils, Council members and a range of organisations and groups with an interest in the historic environment and the local area were consulted on this document. Statutory bodies such as Cadw were also consulted. Public consultation was undertaken during June and July 2009 and included public displays in both the Gresford Trust Memorial Hall and the Wrexham Library and Arts Centre.





2 History and Development

2.1 There is evidence of Bronze Age settlers in the Wrexham area from as early as 2800 B.C. and Iron Age people from about 800 B.C. The Romans also had a presence, indicated by the discovery of a Roman altar in the masonry of All Saints' church during alterations in 1908. Gresford High Street may form part of a Roman Road leading from Chester to the Ffridd, providing an important early link between villages.



2.2 The early history of Gresford and its surrounding area is closely linked to its occupation by historic alternate Welsh and English communities, witnessed by the differing interpretations of its place name. The English derive the name Gresford from 'grassy ford', the Welsh from a corruption of 'Y Groes Ffordd' meaning the crossroads, or, 'Croesfordd', the 'road to the cross'. This may refer to the medieval cross, the remains of which lie at the junction of the Wrexham to Chester and Gresford to Rhosnessni roads. Although this may not be its original location, the size of the plinth suggests it must have been an impressive structure.



2.3 The original stimulus for settlement may have been the fertile soil of the Alyn Valley. As the area was

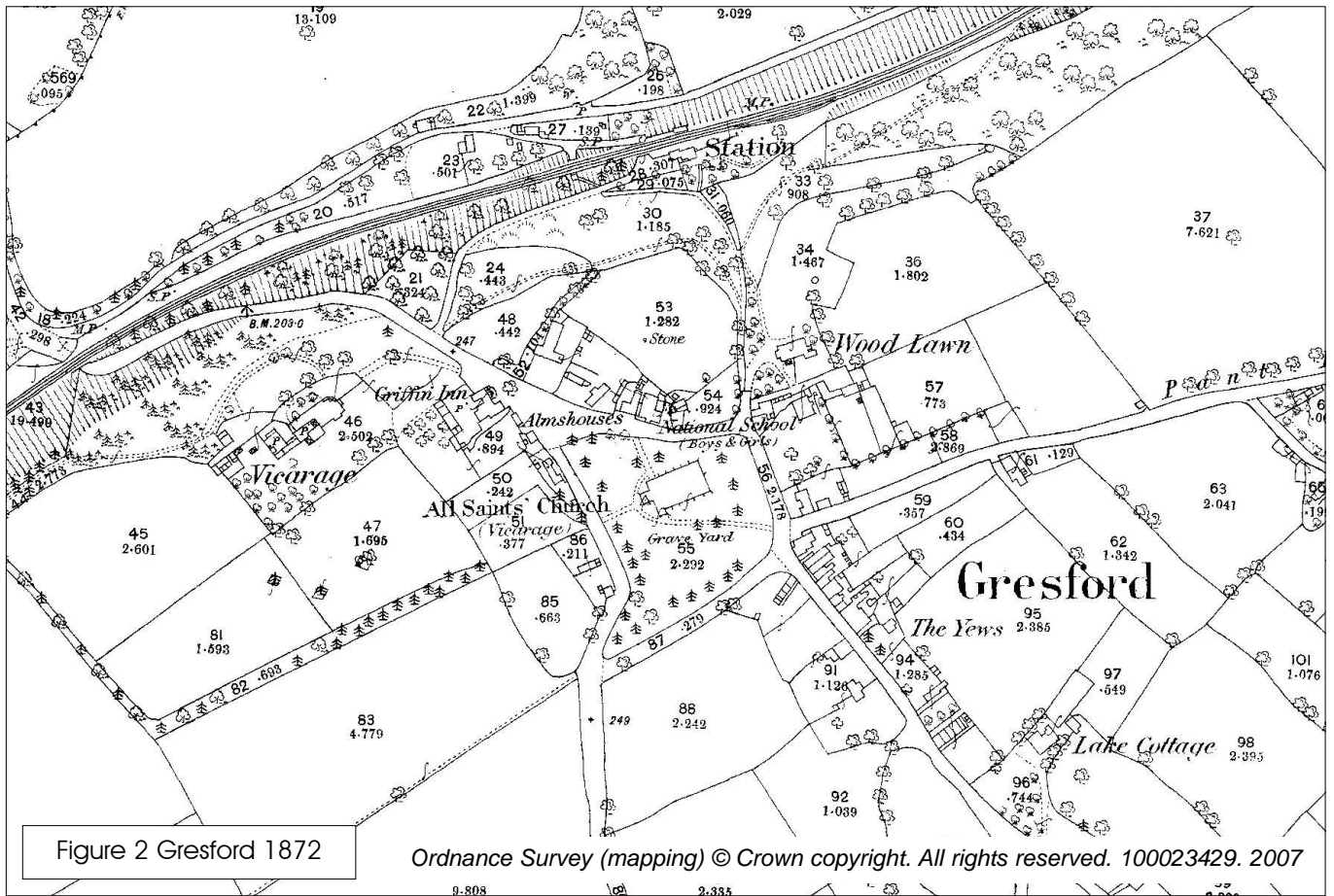
originally heavily wooded, settlers would have felled trees, ploughed fields and planted crops, building a camp on higher ground for safety.

2.4 The village is listed in the Domesday book as 'Gretford', in the Hundred of Extan or Estyn, forming part of Cheshire. Already a thriving and successful village it had land and population to support 12 ploughs, a mill, a priest and a church. The village was valued at 65 silver shillings.

2.5 The growth of the church was the second stimulus for Gresford's development. The church mentioned at Gresford in the Domesday survey is thought to be the Chapel of St Leonard de Glyn on Pont y Capel lane, built as a private chapel for English forces stationed at the Rofft Castle in Marford. The chapel fell into disrepair around 1452 and is last mentioned in 1459. The survival of the name of the lane as Pont y Capel, is the only reminder of this church.

2.6 The present church has its origins probably in the 13th century by which time the site may already have been established as an important religious location. The presence of a 1,500 year old yew tree in the grave yard suggests use of the site in ancient times, yew trees being considered sacred by the Iron Age people. The Roman altar stone discovered in 1908 is thought to be part of a Romano - British Shrine dating back to between 100 and 350AD.





2.7 A stone church was built in the 13th century, parts of which can still be seen in the west tower and the north aisle. The church is believed to have housed an ancient relic or miracle-working image, which attracted vast numbers of pilgrims. This may explain its size and impressive

appearance, which are unusual for a country church and reflect the importance of the site within the religious community. The relic was lost during the Reformation but is thought to have been housed in a canopied niche in the Lady Chapel.





2.8 The church came to dominate the surrounding area, being rebuilt in the 15th century funded by the donations of the many pilgrims and the patronage of Thomas Stanley, Earl of Derby. It was rebuilt in the perpendicular style to become one of the finest parish church in Wales. The Church displays Welsh character in the absence of the structural division between the nave and the chancel, with English influences in the tall clerestory screens and the panelled camberbeam roof. This has led it to being described as 'the perfect Cheshire Church in Wales'.

2.9 The impressive tower was built in the 16th century, although its lower stages originate from the 14th century. It dominates the Alyn valley, making the church into a landmark, viewed from many miles around. The church bells are the heaviest ring of eight in North Wales, the heaviest bell being 24cwt (1,222kg). They are noted for their clarity and purity of tone and are commemorated in an anonymously written rhyme as one of the seven wonders of Wales. Four bells were added in 2006, accommodated below the original eight allowing a choice of a heavy or lightweight ring of eight to be rung. There is also a chiming mechanism. The sound of church bells, whether rung or chimed, is part of the traditional character of the village, a result of being close to the English border.



2.10 The setting of the church is particularly attractive. It is framed by a grove of yew trees and is surrounded by a substantial sandstone wall with iron railings,



erected to stop wandering animals eating the poisonous yews, an indication of the rural character of the area at the time.

2.11 Gresford village developed around the church, with many buildings catering for the requirements of the clergy and possibly pilgrims and tourists. The street plan has changed little over the centuries.



2.12 From the early 16th century, after the dissolution of the monasteries, large landed estates such as those at Horsley Hall, Trevalyn Hall and Llay Hall, were created in the area around the village. Their families gave patronage to the parish church and employment to the local peasant population. The Trevalyn estate had a particular effect on Gresford, building large villas on land within the village and adjoining the church in an effort to control local affairs.

2.13 The development of social values and moral responsibility during the 18th century saw the construction of an almshouse and schoolroom, in adjoining buildings opposite the parish church in 1725. The school quickly outgrew the building, leading to the addition of a school master's house, now called Strode House, in 1786, two new schoolrooms in 1838, and an infants schoolroom, now Church Houses 'Chapel Room', in 1854. The buildings are now three separate properties, the ranges at each end are private dwellings and the central section is used as church meeting rooms. The buildings exhibit inscriptions above their doorways signifying their original use.



2.14 The school continued to grow and in 1874 a new school for boys was built on School Hill, in memory of Thomas Vowler Short, the late Bishop of St Asaph. The school was again enlarged in 1910, when the red brick school was built.



2.15 The 19th century saw the arrival of the railway in Gresford. An improved water supply was also provided during this time by way of a hydraulic ram to pump water to four public taps, one of which still exists at the road junction by the Plough public house. Up to this time the main water supply came from St Catherine's Well on Springfield Lane and was taken to the village using water carts or barrels and donkeys.



2.16 Further development occurred in the early 20th century with the opening of the Wrexham and Westminster Colliery Company established in 1908, the first production of coal in 1911. The colliery employed up to 2200 men, however Gresford never developed the numerous lines of terraces associated with other mining areas, the workers being drawn from the many villages scattered around the Wrexham area. Gresford pit is remembered for the 1934 disaster when 266 men lost their lives. It was a tragedy that

affected families in every street in Gresford. The colliery closed in 1973 and a memorial using the remains of the winding gear was erected to their memory in 1982. The parish church also contains a painting commemorating the disaster.

2.17 The parish church stands at the heart of the historic core of Gresford, in dignified splendour, dominating views from within and outside the Conservation Area. This area of the village has retained its rural charm, maintaining an air of peaceful tranquillity despite the dominance of the motor car in the street scene. Modern development has been concentrated around Chester Road and the area to the east of the village, the attractive environment and good transport links turning Gresford into a popular and wealthy commuter village.



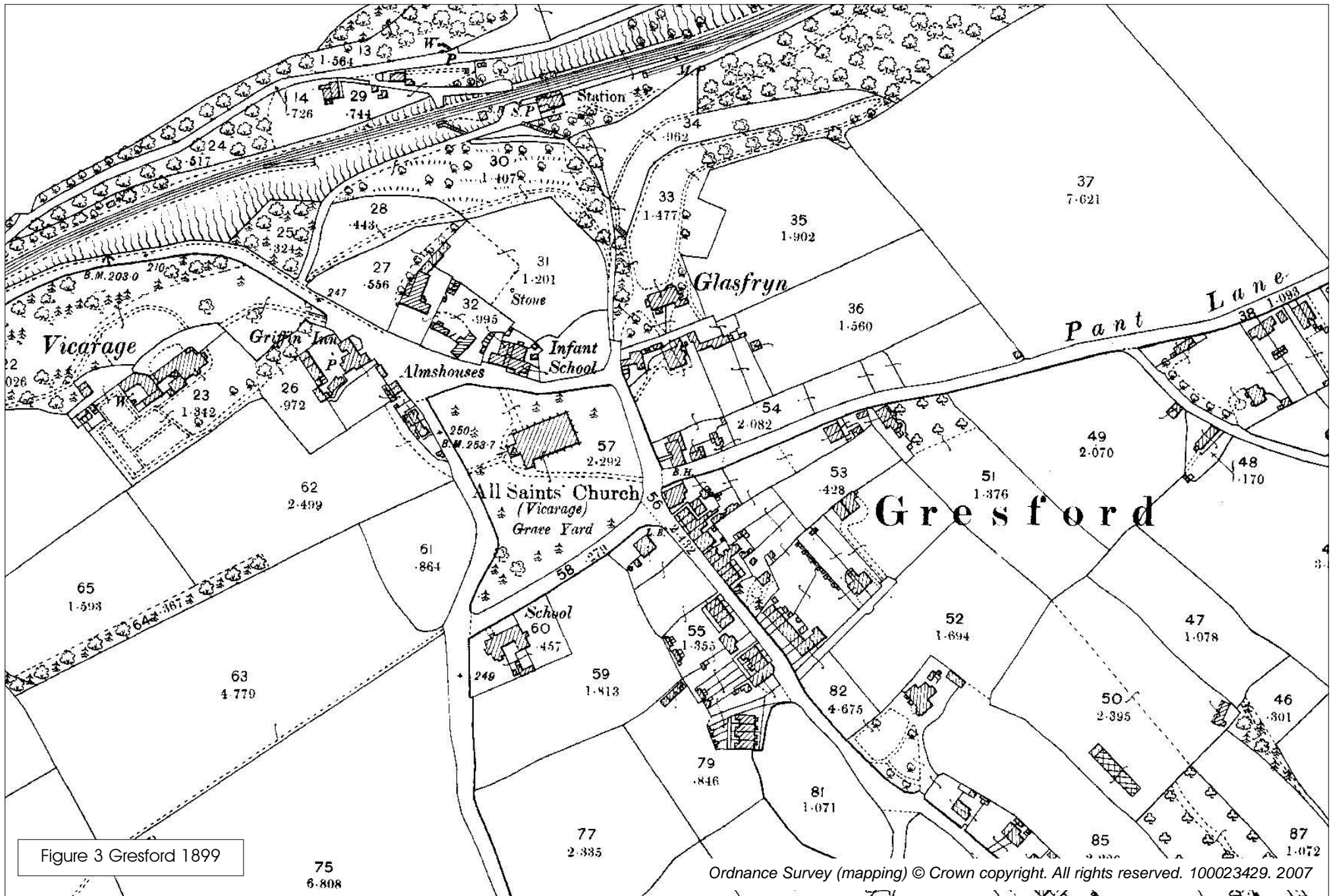


Figure 3 Gresford 1899

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3 Summary of Special Character

3.1 The Special Character of Gresford Conservation Area is derived from the setting of the Church and the Lake together with the long rows of 19th century terraces and cottages, which contrast with the detached Villas in their extensive grounds. The recreation ground to the south east of the Lake and the fields to the west of the Church are important open spaces which allow impressive views into and out of the conservation area. Gresford displays a curious mix of semi-rural 18th /early 19th century and late 19th century urban characteristics.



All Saints Church

3.2 The Church is Listed Grade I and is an important landmark that provides a strong sense of place and identity. It is remarkable for its size and beauty, containing



exceptional monuments both internally and externally (the churchyard wall and grave memorials are separately listed) and displays interesting and attractive architectural details. The topography of the land is important, influencing the siting of the Church on high ground, above the Alyn Valley which can be appreciated

when entering the Conservation Area from the north west up Singret Hill. From the north east and south east quadrants, overlooking the broad flat Dee valley and floodplain the church would have been visible for miles around.

The Lake

3.3 The lake is a focal point upon entering the Conservation Area when approaching from Chester Road. The Parish Church provides



an impressive landmark in views of the village from this location. The large number of mature trees is also important to this view, softening the hardness of the built environment and contributing significantly to the rural feeling of the area as well as to the setting of individual buildings and the village as a whole.

Historic Road Layout

3.4 The road pattern radiates from the Church emphasising its importance in the growth of the village. The street and settlement pattern within the Conservation Area has remained largely unchanged to the present day. The historic street pattern along the High



Street is linear with the buildings all facing onto the road with their ridge lines parallel to it and having little or no private frontage. Many of the cottages and the terrace numbers 1 to 11 are built directly onto the roadside. The building line and variety of building style and materials along the High Street make an interesting and attractive street scene that is significant to the character of the village.

Boundary Details

3.5 Within the historic core these make a particularly important contribution to the special architectural and historic character of the village. The massive early 19th century sandstone wall with railings and prominent gate pillars at the Church



are especially prominent. The c1870's boundary wall to All Saints Primary School is similar to that of the Church. There is also a very prominent sandstone boundary wall to Llwyn Eglwys. Elsewhere, 19th century low red brick walls with sandstone cock and

hen coping or later Victorian half round terracotta copings are evident. In other areas there is an absence of boundary details, with houses fronting directly on to the street, effectively merging the public and private realms creating a sense of intimacy in the street scene and enhancing the rural character of the village.

Architectural Diversity

3.6 A variety of distinctive architectural styles enhance the area; Georgian, Victorian and Arts and Crafts styles are all represented. The prominent Victorian terraces are decorated with ornate terracotta brick stringcourses and cornices - 18th and 19th century villas display early symmetrical form with later remodelling.

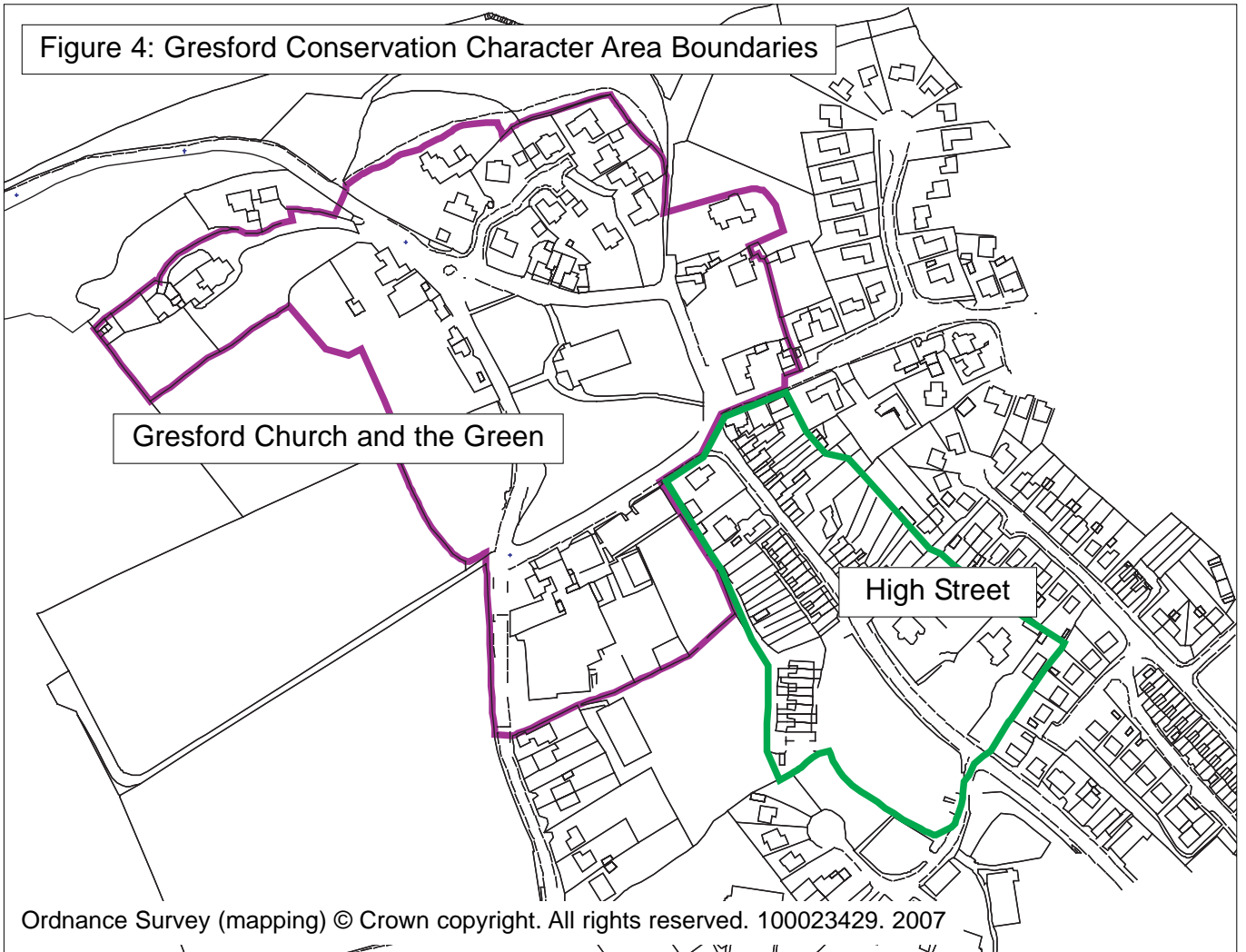


Contribution Made by Trees

3.7 The yew trees in the churchyard are fundamental to the setting of the church, as is the triangular patch of grass known as 'The Green'. Cedar House, originally The Vicarage has particularly impressive cedar trees and important willow trees surround the lake. The woodland that forms a backdrop the Conservation Area at Singret Hill is an important broad-leaved wood, predominantly of beech trees with oak and sycamore also present.



Figure 4: Gresford Conservation Character Area Boundaries





4 Character Areas

High Street: 19th Century Gresford

4.1 The Conservation Area can be subdivided into 2 distinct areas of character as identified on fig. 4 and now described below:



4.2 When entering the Conservation Area from Chester Road, a fine view is afforded of the village with the lake in the foreground and the Parish Church in the background. The lake is a very important feature and focal point for the village, which



supports abundant wildlife. The backdrop of the view of the lake is compromised on its western side by the development of modern dwellings, prominent due to their elevated position and being

screened only in part by trees.

4.3 Lake View Terrace has a strong linear form that creates a dramatic backdrop to the lake. The unobtrusive boundary fronting the terrace allows a continuum of space serving to combine the public and private realm.

4.4 The terrace is ornamented by large box bay windows to the ground storey with a dentilled terracotta brick detail above that is mirrored in the eaves line. A terracotta stringcourse, crested ridge tiles, corbelled chimneys, fanlights above doors and sandstone lintels add further

detail. All window and door joinery has been changed but the openings have not, so future reinstatement of correct architectural detail is possible. The terrace has a low red brick boundary wall to the front with half round terracotta copings. Originally all had yellow sandstone gate pillars and cast iron gates.

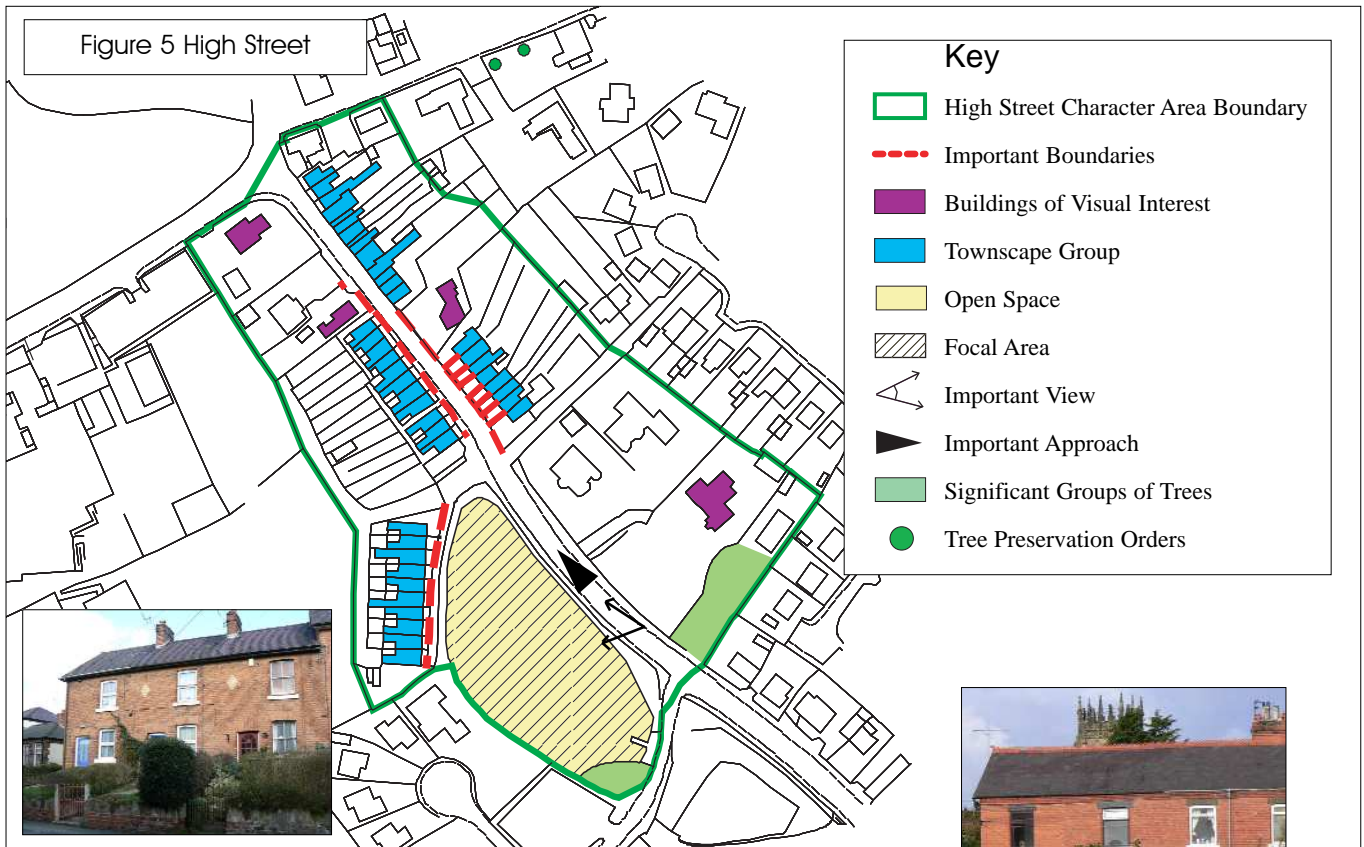
4.5 In contrast to the rest of the buildings in the High Street, Glanyllyn - a villa originating from the 1830s as Lake Cottage - was deliberately set back from the road

within its own grounds in a prominent position overlooking the lake. Adjoining land was assimilated into the grounds and the whole effect was to use hierarchy of space as a status symbol.



Originally symmetrical in form, there is now a bay window to the left and a later projecting extension with a hipped roof to the right. The finer Georgian architectural detail which the building possesses, includes stone quoins, sash windows and a classical pedimented sandstone porch and semi-circular fanlight.





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4.6 The special setting of Glanllyn and the approach to the Conservation Area has been compromised recently by the erection of two large modern houses in the grounds of the property. The orientation, layout, siting, scale and design of these new properties do not respect their context and they are alien to the conservation area. The materials - slate roofs, facing brickwork and cast stone lintels and subcills - other than PVCu rainwater goods, are entirely appropriate but the hipped roof design is an exaggerated reflection of that of the small extension to Glanllyn. The only other example of a hipped roof is that of Yew Tree Villa. The overall form of the designs does not reflect the vernacular or the historic layout of this part of the conservation area, which is terraces with gabled roofs having ridges parallel to the street. Re-siting of the



original sandstone boundary wall to improve visibility at the access for the new houses and the modern wide pavement along the High Street have made the situation worse. The wall has been rebuilt using

inappropriately coloured, hard cement mortar that is detrimental to its appearance and which will lead to premature erosion of the soft sandstone.



4.7 Lake House marks the beginning of the terraces along High Street. It is built of Ruabon red brick with corbelled chimneys, a terracotta rose cornice and sandstone lintels and cills. The entrance is on a splayed corner with a terracotta hood mould and foliated stops, replicated on the doorway to the side entrance. The pilasters, fascia and cornice of the original shopfront remain but inappropriate replacement of all other joinery with timber and PVCu has taken place.

4.8 Numbers 1 to 11 High Street are two terraces of properties separated by a narrow passage. Lake House and Numbers 9-11 and 1-4 were the first to be built (see figure 3), with the rest of the terrace being completed later after demolition of an earlier building. The front elevations of both terraces are of Ruabon brick with sandstone cills and lintels; a decorative terracotta stringcourse and eaves cornice provide enriched architectural detail. Both terraces have slate roofs with red clay ridge tiles and prominent



brick chimneys with over-sailing courses and terracotta pots. Almost all original sash windows and panelled doors have been replaced - some recently - with ones of inappropriate modern



type. The fanlight to the doorway to 11 is an original leaded light of stained glass with a central quatrefoil design. The terrace stands behind a low red brick wall with half round terracotta copings, sandstone gate pillars with original cast iron gates and pathways of red and grey quarry tiles laid in a diamond pattern or Victorian blue brick paviers.

4.9 The Croft stands in an elevated position on High Street. It is constructed from Ruabon red brick but has been compromised by modern windows. It has an old sandstone wall and hedge to the front that is in keeping with the semi-rural character of the area.



4.11 The Sextons dates to around the 1880s; it stands detached within its own grounds on the corner of High Street and School Hill and marks the transition between the densely built up High Street and the semi-rural 18th/19th century area around the Church. It was extended early in its life - the original part has a symmetrical frontage with a semicircular fanlight above the door. Windows are original horned sashes with sandstone cills and brick arches above. The low boundary wall to School Hill is of mid 20th century wirecut bricks; that on the splayed corner with High Street is of much older bricks - it may have been realigned many years ago but it incorporates the Victorian letter box identified on the early OS sheet (see figure3).



4.10 The Brambles is a 1999 house set back too far from the road, which unfortunately interrupts the rhythm of the tight building line and pattern in this part of High Street. It also has an unsightly array of foul drainage pipes and a flue pipe on one gable.



4.12 Numbers 1 to 8 Diamond Cottages date to around 1880. They are built of a soft-fired local red/orange brick in English garden wall bond; openings have flat brick arches - with a cambered intrados - of "rubbed" bricks with thin lime putty joints. Differences suggest phased construction. Only No 6 retains its original 4 paned painted sash windows without horns, set back half a brick from the face of the wall with the weight boxes hidden in

rebated reveals. The cottages apparently derive their name from the diamond pattern of brickwork on the front of Nos 6 and 7. The properties have small gardens to the front and some back gardens retain the original outside toilets. The low brick wall to the front has the distinctive yellow sandstone cock and hen copings seen elsewhere in the conservation area. The front gardens are mostly separated by established low cut hedges, which are distinctive and a strong contrast to the very urban appearance of the terrace opposite.



property was used as a public house in the mid to late 19th century, the last landlord being Tom Martin in 1932.

4.16 Kimberley Cottages have little detail to their frontages apart from sandstone lintels and cills. Numbers 1 and 3 are constructed from red brick, whilst numbers 4 and 5 have been whitewashed. They have slate roofs with red ridge tiles, the differing heights adding to the variety of the street scene.



4.17 The height and architecture of The Old Shop, also known as Swallowdale, suggests it may originally have been



4.13 Yew Tree Villa, formerly The Yews, is small late Georgian villa of circa 1830 - with 20th century extensions - set back behind mature yew trees and a sandstone wall with massive irregular sandstone copings, a

wrought iron gate and stone gate pillars. It has a symmetrical painted render frontage and a central doorway with semicircular fanlight, the windows are traditional multi-paned sashes with stone cills.

4.14 The row of cottages extending along the High Street from Avondale to Yew Tree House on the corner are of late 18th to early 19th Century date. Avondale, Lyndale and Kiln Cottage form a group of three cottages, uniform in design and appearance. Their entrances open directly onto the street, an important characteristic of older cottages and communities where there was no barrier between the public and private realm for the working classes. There is little original detail visible apart from the slate roofs and brick chimneys and sandstone cills. The pebble-dashing and cement string course and window architrave detail is not original.

4.15 Royal Oak Cottage is lower in height to the surrounding buildings. It has a white washed render and an attractive Victorian open porch with finial and bracket detail that make it a distinctive building in the street. The



the Pinfold Wesleyan Chapel erected in 1843. It is the only three storied building in the street and may have been converted to commercial premises in the late 19th or early 20th century having a large multi-paned shop window to the ground floor. The front elevation has distinctive sandstone dressings which consist of a pediment,

stringcourse, window heads and plinth. There are two windows to the second floor and a small window to the third storey.

4.18 Numbers 1, 2 and 3 Church View are set back slightly behind a whitewashed low brick wall and display little detail to the frontage but have large chimney stacks with distinctive yellow square spiked pots. Numbers 1 and 2 have a modern shared mono-pitch slate roofed porch with modern doors.



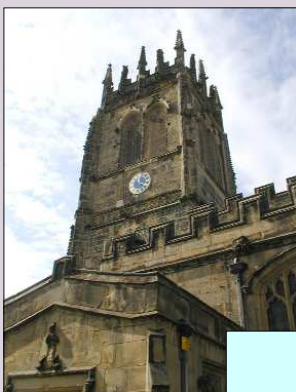
4.19 Part of Yew Tree House is in commercial use as a hot food takeaway - a use resulting in three large bright metal extract ducts being located in a prominent position close to the Grade I Listed church.





The Church and The Green 18th and 19th Century Gresford

4.20 This area is characterised by the lower density of buildings. Central to the area is The Parish Church of All Saints and its extensive grave-yard and dotted around are related detached properties such as The Vicarage (now Cedar House), the Almshouses and School, Green Farm and The Griffin Inn.



4.21 All Saints Parish Church stands at the heart of the historic core of Gresford village. It dominates the Conservation Area, and is the central focus around which the other buildings are grouped. The walled graveyard with its impressive railings and gatepiers are integral to its



setting creating a strong sense of enclosure and are listed in their own right. The Church was almost wholly rebuilt in the 15th century in perpendicular style of Cefn Sandstone although evidence of 13th and 14th century work which survives.

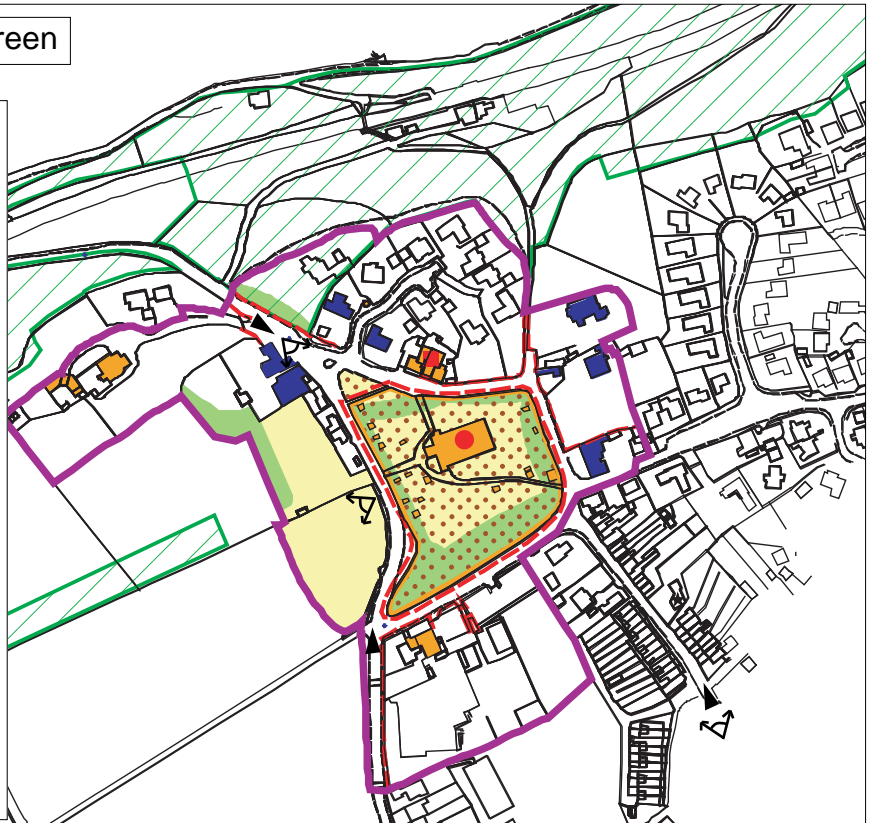
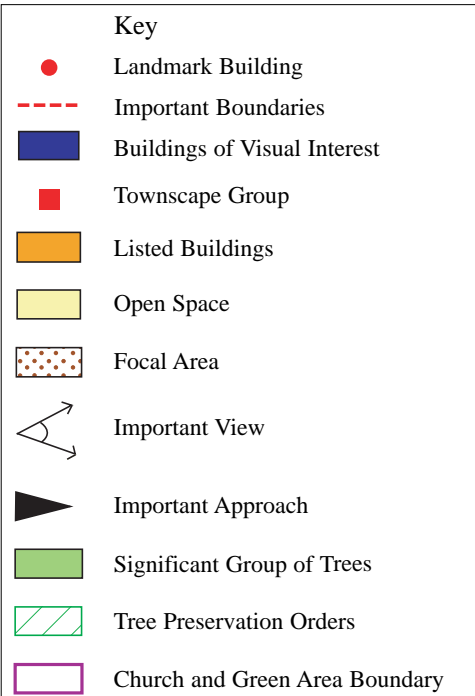
4.22 The Church takes the classic form of an aisled nave, a chancel and a west tower. The embattled parapets have a stringcourse with carvings of flowers, human faces and animals. Windows have hood-moulds ending in carved heads or animals and grotesque creatures or monkeys hold downspouts. The base of the tower is 14th century and separated from the later work by a band of quatrefoils. There are paired traceried bell-openings and a panelled parapet with crocketed pinnacles alternating with statues. The eight figures around the top may be images of the Knights Templar or the Twelve Apostles. There is a panelled camberbeam roof of fine quality with carved fluttering angels. It is truly a glorious building, enhanced by outstanding monuments both internally and externally.

4.23 In the graveyard stands a grove of very mature yew trees, the one at the south east gate, said to be over 1600 years old. The graveyard includes 16 Listed 18th and 19th century graves, enclosed by iron railings.

4.24 The Yew Tree Inn was originally a large house built between 1844 and 1851 for T. F. Bennett, a merchant from Liverpool. It was split into cottages in the 1850's, one of which became known as Jackson's Beerhouse. The building has a slate roof with red ridge tiles, large gables with decorative finials, and rendered and painted walls with expressed quoins. There are 2 sets of distinctive tall brick chimneys with diagonally set stacks grouped in sets of four and square spiked yellow pots. The front



Figure 6 The Church and The Green



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hedges add character and soften the street scene. To the rear is a large macadam-surfaced car park and flat roofed extensions.

4.25 Llwyn Eglwys is a mid 19th century villa which stands in its own grounds with mature specimen trees to the east of the Parish Church behind a high sandstone boundary wall. It was once called 'The Great



House' and belonged to the Trevalyn Estate, its location important in keeping the Trevor family informed of the goings on in the village and the church. The name 'Llwyn Eglwys' translates to 'Church Grove' suggesting that the house was built on an area of small wood or an orchard



possibly belonging to the church. The house has been remodelled and extended. It has an attractive porch with pillars and brackets and small windows either side of the door with decorative

tracery of the pattern found in Marford. Set in the boundary wall is a studded wooden plank door with a Gothic arch again of the Marford style - incorporating what is probably a re-used apex stone - and parapet above, making a distinctive entrance.

4.26 Sweet Briar Cottage situated behind the high sandstone wall at right angles to the street was originally the coach house to Llwyn Eglwys. The gable end facing the street has a large Victorian sash window with red tiled subcill and brick detail above.



4.27 Glasfryn is an early 19th century large detached house, well hidden from view behind a high sandstone boundary wall with numerous mature trees in its extensive grounds. Its driveway entrance has grand gate pillars. It was built for Ann Hayman, teacher to Queen Caroline's daughter Princess Charlotte and a witness in the Queen's notorious divorce 'trial' in Parliament in 1820. She was an important person in the village, and died in 1847 aged 95.



4.28 Alongside the entrance to Glasfryn, a public footpath leads through the woods to the former railway Station, now converted to residential use. An adjoining footpath branches left - running behind Green Farm Estate - and leading to a flat field where village fairs were once held. The historic and rural character of the footpath

alongside Glasfryn has been compromised in part by the inappropriate re-pointing of the sandstone wall, upon which a red brick wall with stepped levels and brick pillars and fencing in-between has been constructed as part of



Church Green residential development. This is the only location in the Conservation Area where the noise from the A483 by-pass can be heard, interrupting the otherwise peaceful ambience.

4.29 To the north of the church, Achill, Church House and Strode House were built in 1725 with a bequest from



Margaret Strode as almshouses and a charity school for three poor boys and three poor girls. Now three separately listed Grade II properties, those at each end are private houses while the central section -

incorporating a schoolroom extension of 1838 following the founding of the National Society in 1811 - is used as church meeting rooms. Achill and Church house are rendered but Strode House exhibits local soft-fired orange/red brickwork in Flemish bond with painted single brick arches over ground storey window openings, a projecting dog-tooth eaves cornice and flush leaded-light iron casements in timber frames. It has a classical styled gabled brick porch with stone dressings and an arched brick opening. Between the porch roof and the upper window is a stone plaque inscribed in Latin, now only partially legible. Achill shows signs of partial



rebuilding; it has been extended to the left, has modern painted rendering but retains a second stone plaque inscribed in Latin. Church House is also rendered but that is older and is ruled to mimic ashlar.

4.30 Green Farm takes its name from the adjoining village green. It is a very attractive rendered building built in 1911 in the Arts and Crafts



style. It won an award for the best farmhouse in Wales in 1921. The building replaced an earlier 18th century farmhouse built for Thomas Newns, a financier from London who became a gentleman farmer for the Trevalyn Estate. The farm was an important site as it controlled over a third of the land in and around the village. The 1920's house has a steep slate roof with two gabled dormers and a cat-slide to the rear, belcast render stringcourses defining storeys of the building, and original leaded light timber casement windows. The front sandstone boundary wall with iron railings



above is particularly attractive, enhancing the setting of the building.



4.31 The farmyard and outbuildings to Green Farm is now the site of Church Green a modern cul-de-sac development comprised of 9 large detached houses. That on the entrance is on the footprint of an original barn and constructed as though the barn has been converted. The original was proposed for conversion but it proved to be so unstable that demolition was inevitable. Within the development is a Listed early 19th century circular privy, which belonged to





the original farmhouse. Its picturesque gothic style relates to the earlier historic links with the Trevalyn Estate in Marford. The privy is of brick construction with a conical slate roof, opposed doors and a small opening with a pointed head and Gothick cast iron intersecting glazing bars. Unfortunately the structure has been re-pointed in a hard cement mortar and the inevitable erosion of the soft brick is already evident. A brick wall inside divides the house side of the privy from the farmyard side - designed to provide separate accommodation for the farmer and his workers. The privy was originally set into the wall, which divided the Farmhouse garden from the farmyard. This context and relationship has been obliterated by the construction of the wide cul de sac through the space. At Church Green, the dominance of the houses, the absence of soft landscaping and the sea of macadam, urban pavement and kerb gives a stark urban harshness to the development which is inappropriate for the semi-rural character of this part of the Conservation Area.



4.32 The site of Min-y-Dyffryn, meaning 'Edge of the Valley', relates to its location at the very edge of the Alyn valley. The site is hidden from view behind a sandstone wall and a mature holly hedge that runs along the roadside and by many mature trees in its grounds.



4.33 When entering the Conservation Area from Griffin Hill, the Parish Church can be viewed from its best aspect. The grass verge known as 'The Green' in front of the church is integral to its setting. It is the remaining part of a much larger area of land used by the gentry in the 1700's to walk and exercise their horses. Part of 'The Green' was incorporated into an extended graveyard in 1831. Tooled sandstone kerbing is prominent in this area.

4.34 The remains of a sandstone wall with prominent gate pillars leads to Cedar House and stables, originally The Vicarage until the 1990's when a new one was built within the grounds. Cedar House is Listed Grade II. The plan is a modified cross, designed in the picturesque style with Tudor Gothic influences. It is of 2 storeys brick with stone dressings, a slate roof and tall paired brick chimneys also with stone dressings,



throughout the windows are paired multi-paned sashes with stone quoins and lintels.

4.35 The stables, also Listed Grade II, were built as part of the Vicarage in 1850. They have been altered and restored in the late 20th century. Their design is stylistically related to the principal building, although treated in a simpler manner. The symmetrical

character areas

front elevation, has a central bay with a Tudor arched carriage opening.

4.36 The late 20th century vicarage is no doubt of intrinsically good design but it tends to be out of character with this part of the conservation area. It does not rival the quality and design of the former vicarage - nor should it - but its scale is perhaps excessive in a location where a much smaller dwelling such as a lodge would be expected.

4.37 The Griffin Inn is historically related to the Church, standing on land owned by it until 1924. A carving of a griffin, dated from 1350 can be seen underneath the vicar's seat in the church. The image may have been inspired by stories from the crusades where magical creatures were said to exist. The position of the inn, close to the church is distinctive of a medieval village, when it would have been used to provide accommodation and refreshment for pilgrims and visiting clergy.



4.38 The small single storied, pebble dashed building fronting directly onto the road was once The Bier House, used to store the funeral bier for the parish church and now used as a storage shed. It has a slate roof with red ridge tiles, a projecting dog tooth eaves and an opening with double wooden doors and arch detail above.



4.39 Spring Cottage, Y Bwthyn and Lydstep cottages on Clappers Lane form a group of three buildings to the north west of the church. They are of early 19th century construction with later remodelling and have been rendered in a modern style. Lydstep and Y Bwthyn have inappropriate windows and rendering. The cottages have limited frontages, situated close to the road to continuing the character that exists throughout the Conservation Area.

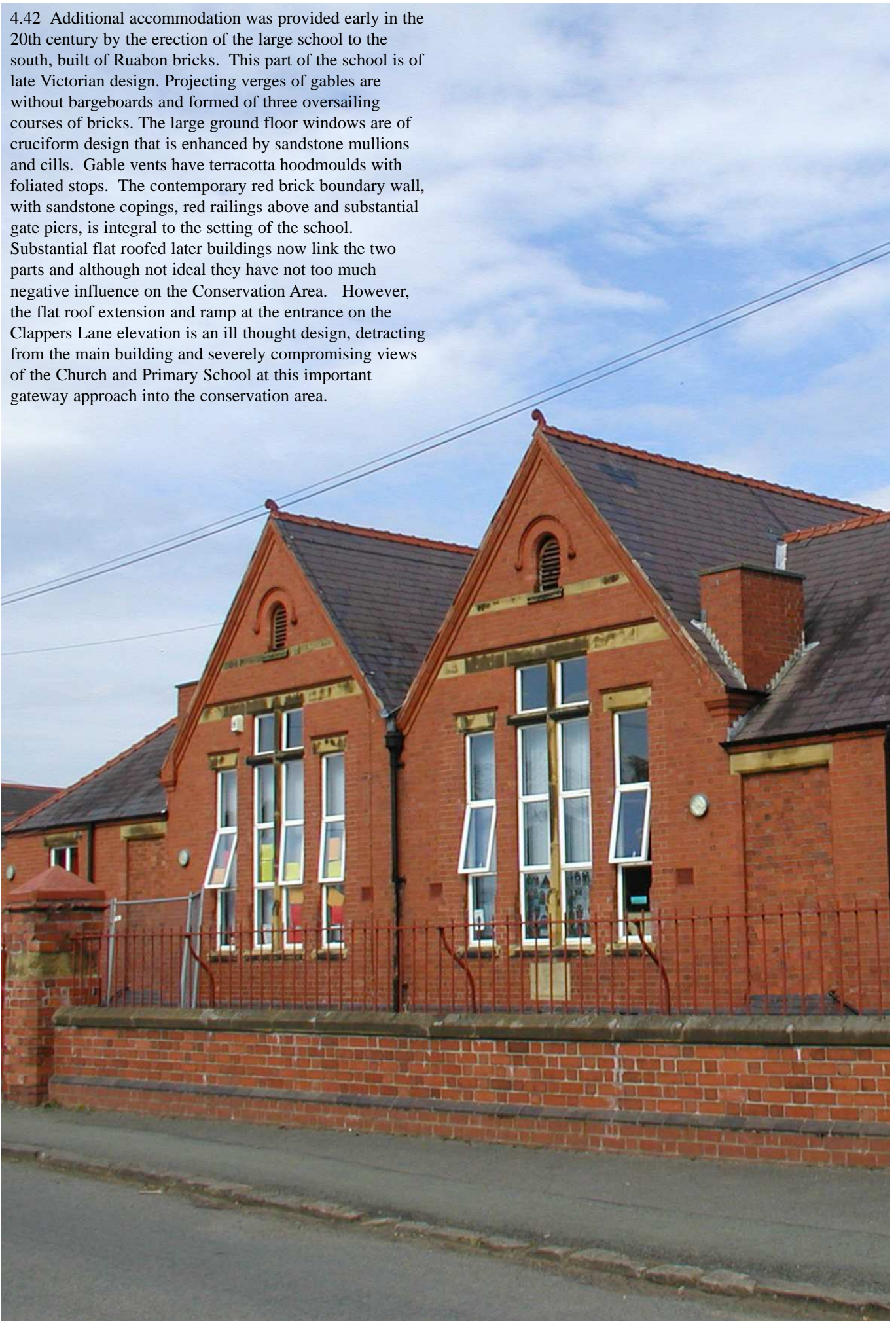
4.40 The road along this side of the church is distinctly rural, with open fields to the west, and grass verges with sandstone kerbs. The open fields allow magnificent views westward to Escluscham mountain.



4.41 At the junction of School Hill with Clappers Lane are the original Listed buildings of All Saints' Voluntary Aided Church in Wales Primary School. It is a typical Victorian village school composition of Schoolroom with attached teacher's house with boundary walls and gatepiers, erected between 1873 and 1874, no doubt as a National School by the Church of England. It is built in the Gothic Revival style with coursed and squared sandstone rubble walling, ashlar dressings, and a slate roof with red ridge tiles and stone chimneys. The elevation facing Clappers Lane is the schoolhouse, now a private dwelling. It has a symmetrical front with a central gable porch with arched entrance, flanked by paired lancet windows with cusped heads. The upper floor has a miniature triangular dormer window with trefoil light that is flanked by tall gabled dormers, breaking through the eaves and containing plate tracery windows.



4.42 Additional accommodation was provided early in the 20th century by the erection of the large school to the south, built of Ruabon bricks. This part of the school is of late Victorian design. Projecting verges of gables are without bargeboards and formed of three oversailing courses of bricks. The large ground floor windows are of cruciform design that is enhanced by sandstone mullions and cills. Gable vents have terracotta hoodmoulds with foliated stops. The contemporary red brick boundary wall, with sandstone copings, red railings above and substantial gate piers, is integral to the setting of the school. Substantial flat roofed later buildings now link the two parts and although not ideal they have not too much negative influence on the Conservation Area. However, the flat roof extension and ramp at the entrance on the Clappers Lane elevation is an ill thought design, detracting from the main building and severely compromising views of the Church and Primary School at this important gateway approach into the conservation area.





5 Summary of Negative Factors

5.1 Several factors have been identified as causing detriment to the visual quality of the area. These include:

New Development

5.2 Modern cul-de-sac housing developments, which are very suburban in character and appearance; they do not reflect the linear layout of the village, which relates to the street frontage. It is possible to successfully incorporate new development into an historic settlement but it is essential that it respects and reflects the existing village layout pattern, hierarchy, scale, style, gable widths, roof pitches, ground to eaves and ridge heights, building materials, boundary and surface treatments. Often a lot of attention is paid to the detail of the buildings themselves to great effect as in the case of Church Green but the lack of landscaping together with the highway requirements of wide streets and pavements with high kerbs diminishes the result.

5.3 The erection of large modern executive style houses within the gardens of detached historic Villas and houses, not only devalues the setting of such properties but it affects the hierarchy of space and architectural status within the conservation area. The spaces between buildings are as important as the buildings themselves.



Loss of Original Features

5.4 The removal and replacement of original or traditionally detailed timber windows and doors with poorly detailed new joinery or PVCu alternatives is rapidly eroding the character of the area.

Inappropriate Repair and Replacement of Boundary Features

5.5 The removal or rebuilding of original or traditional boundary walling and hedges and their replacement with modern brick or modern style fencing has had a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area. Often original stone walls have been rebuilt without an understanding of the proper coursing and bedding and using hard pink cement mortar. For example, the boundary wall to Llwyn Eglwys has been repaired using a strong cement mortar, which detracts from its character and damages the stone work.







Part 2 Management Plan

6.1

High Street (19th Century Gresford)

PROPOSALS FOR PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

Protect and enhance immediate lake setting	The sympathetic treatment and design of pavement surfaces and edges and street furniture around the lake is crucial to retaining a high quality historic environment, careful consideration of which, must be undertaken in any proposals affecting this area.
Reinstatement of lost features - Lake Terrace, High Street	Traditional architectural details and local materials are important to the architectural interest and value and should be retained, repaired or reinstated where lost.
Views of Lake - Western Side	Appropriate indigenous species of trees could be planted at the lake margin to soften and screen the view.
Boundary Details	As specific character features of the Conservation Area total demolition of traditional boundary details will be resisted. The use of traditional methods of construction and materials including the use of lime mortar (no cement) is encouraged in all schemes of repair and reinstatement.
Street Clutter	An Audit of road signage, markings and street furniture will be undertaken during late 2009/ early 2010 to assess the number of unnecessary elements as well as those that are detrimental to the setting of important buildings and the street-scene in general.
Archaeology	Varying levels of archaeological mitigation may be required in response to development proposals within the historic core. Early consultation with the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in relation to any proposed new dwelling or extension is encouraged to prevent delay at the application submission stage.
New Development	Development must respect the scale, design, proportions and materials of surrounding architecture to strengthen the cohesion of the street. It is crucial that the scale and diversity of the surrounding architecture is respected and that an imaginative and high - quality design is employed to reinforce the cohesion of the street and give continuity to the scale, rhythm and rich detailing of the architecture of the existing streetscape.
Traffic and Signage	Highway works should be designed in accordance with guidelines as set out in Section 7.0 of this document.
Overhead Wires	The potential to relocate the overhead wires along High Street underground will be explored with the relevant utility companies.

6.2

The Church and The Green
(18th and 19th Century Gresford)

PROPOSALS FOR PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

Important Views	Views into, out of and within the Conservation Area, in particular those of the Church are essential to the special quality of place. Their protection and enhancement will be an important consideration in the determination of any proposed development.
Enhancement of 'The Green'	Highway improvement works present the opportunity to enhance the public realm in particular the replacement of illuminated traffic bollards with ones more sympathetic to the quality rural environment. Consideration could also be given to the enlargement of the village green thereby reducing road width and acting as a traffic calming measure.
Grass verges	Both verges and sandstone kerbs should be preserved where they exist.
Enhance the car parks to the rear of the Griffin and Yew Tree Inns	The use of appropriate landscaping and boundary treatments and surfacing materials would be encouraged.
Street Clutter	An Audit of road signage, markings and street furniture will be undertaken during late 2009/ early 2010 to assess the number of unnecessary elements as well as those that are detrimental to the setting of important buildings and the street-scene in general.
Boundary Details	As specific character features of the Conservation Area total demolition of traditional boundary details will be resisted. The use of traditional methods of construction and materials including the use of lime mortar (no cement) is encouraged in all schemes of repair and reinstatement.
Suggested Boundary Extension	The potential for extending the existing Conservation Area Boundary to include the area of land known as the Old Village Green will be investigated.
Archaeology	Varying levels of archaeological mitigation may be required in response to development proposals within the historic core. Early consultation with the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in relation to any proposed new dwelling or extension is encouraged to prevent delay at the application submission stage.
New Development	Development must respect the scale, design, proportions and materials of surrounding architecture to strengthen the cohesion of the street. It is crucial that the scale and diversity of the surrounding architecture is respected and that an imaginative and high- quality design is employed to reinforce the cohesion of the street and give continuity to the scale, rhythm and rich detailing of the architecture of the existing streetscape.
Traffic and Signage	Highway works should be designed in accordance with guidelines as set out in Section 7.0 of this document.





7 Design Guidance

7.1 The character of the individual buildings and street elevations, which together form the Conservation Area, derives from a number of factors, to which the following design guidance relates. Within these parameters there is scope for high quality architectural invention, provided that this is sympathetic to the existing character in terms of the following:

Scale

7.2 Restoration and re-development must respect traditional plot widths and avoid massive repetitive and unrelieved facades, which typify so many modern designs.

Proportion

7.3 Older building styles followed traditional systems of proportion. In most of the buildings within the Conservation



Area, the relationship between windows, doors, floor heights and the relationship of solid to void (the extent of wall area in relation to the number and size of window or door openings) in the design of elevations is crucial. Traditional proportions should be emulated in new development.

Building Line

7.4 Frontage development must conform to the historic street pattern.

Roofs

7.5 The roof line is nearly always a dominant feature of a building and retention of the original shape, pitch, verge and

eaves detail and ornamentation is essential. Heights and shapes of roofs are important; flat roofs are alien to local tradition and generally unacceptable. Chimney-stacks are important features of the roof-scape and should be retained even if no longer required. Where roofing materials are to be replaced they should match the colour, size and texture of the original. Roofs should be roofed or re-roofed in traditional materials on a like for like basis where historically appropriate. If ventilation is required, this should be achieved by inconspicuous means. Under eaves ventilation would be acceptable, but visible roof vents would not.



External Walls

7.6 Any alteration or repair to external walls must respect the existing building materials and match them in texture, quality and colour. Every effort should be made to retain or re-use facing brickwork or stonework, which must not be



rendered, pebble-dashed or painted. Re-pointing must be carried out with a mortar to match the existing in colour, type and texture and

historically would have consisted of lime and sand. Hard, modern cement mortars prevent the evaporation of moisture through the joints, which is instead drawn through the next softest material, the masonry itself thus damaging both the appearance and the structure of the building. Original render must not be stripped off to expose rubble stone, brick or timber-framed walls, which were not intended to be exposed. Traditionally, render finishes were lime-based. More modern, hard cement renders prevent the evaporation of moisture, which can accumulate between the wall and the render causing damp internally. When appropriate, hard cement renders should be replaced with a lime alternative.

Rainwater Goods

7.7 Rainwater goods should be repaired if original or reinstated in original materials. Plastic guttering is not appropriate to Listed Buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas. It is not historically correct, and it does not enhance a building's character. Cast iron guttering can last for a lifetime, if properly maintained, repaired and installed.

Windows

7.8 These are important features and must be correctly proportioned, well related to each other and adjoining buildings and should respect the existing openings. Any repair or replacement must always match the original, however, retention must always be the first consideration. This includes not only structural elements of the window but also historic glass and original window furniture. Particularly important is the method of opening, the set back within the reveal and the sections of glazing bars. The thickness and moulding of glazing bars, the size and arrangement of panes are vital elements in determining appropriate replacement windows, which respect the age of a building. Replacement of timber or iron windows in a uPVC alternative, no matter what the pattern is unacceptable. All windows must have a traditional painted finish rather than a modern stained alternative.



Doors

7.9 Original door-cases, doors and door furniture should be retained wherever possible. Replacements must match the original in proportion, style and materials and must have a painted finish. Details such as panelling and fanlights are vital elements in determining appropriate replacement door types, which respect the age of a building. Porches should be designed within the overall context and architectural style of the building and in reference to any appropriate nearby styles. They should not dominate the front elevation.



Ornamental Features

7.10 Features such as terracotta mouldings, figures, inscriptions, railings, entablature features and decorative ironwork etc. must be retained wherever possible as character features of the building and the Conservation Area in general.



Boundary Treatment

7.11 As a character feature of the area, the removal or alteration of boundary walls will not be viewed favourably. Repair should be carried out using identical materials and in the same style or bond and missing copings replaced to match the existing. The use of a hard cement mortar to re-point joints is unacceptable, as it increases the rate of deterioration of sandstone in particular.

Surfaces

7.12 The overuse of insensitive macadam finishes should be avoided and the opportunity taken to lay traditional, natural materials preferably local in origin, their colour, texture and pattern in sympathy with the character of the area and sensitive to adjacent buildings.

Highway Works

7.13 Redundant or unnecessary street furniture such as signs, bins or poles should be removed to reduce the effects of street clutter. Any historic features such as street signs must be retained and any new items such as bollards, street-lighting and sign - posts etc must be carefully integrated within the streetscape relating well to adjacent buildings and the area as a whole. The number and size of road signs must be kept to a minimum and only illuminated where essential. Backing plates should be grey or black, luminous yellow must be avoided. Where road lines are essential they must be of a restricted width within the Conservation Area.



Micro Energy Generation

7.14 Whilst the use of micro energy generation systems is to be encouraged, they will not be accepted where equipment is fixed to building frontages or main or visible elevations where they would have a negative visual impact upon the Conservation Area or where the fabric or setting of a Listed Building is detrimentally affected.



8 Conservation Area Controls

Special Controls

8.1 In order to protect the special environment, stricter controls exist within the Conservation Area. These are not intended as a hindrance to change, but as positive management to safeguard the character of the area as a whole. These include:

- Additional powers of control to dwelling houses for extensions, roof extensions and alterations, cladding, garages and satellite dish location.
- Most works involving total demolition require Conservation Area Consent. Consent for demolition will not normally be granted until it is known what form redevelopment will take.
- Work to trees requires six weeks notice to be given to the Council.

With all proposals for development and the display of advertisements in a Conservation Area, greater care is necessary to ensure that schemes enhance and preserve the area's special character. Design and choice of materials are of particular importance in this respect.

Listed Buildings

8.2 A Listed Building is a building that is considered to be of 'special architectural or historic interest' and as such requires special protection. Once listed, a building is protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Listing protects the entire building both externally and internally irrespective of the reason for listing as well as any object or structure fixed to the building or any object or structure within the 'curtilage' of the building, which has existed since before 1st July 1948. This is to ensure that the special character of both the building and its setting are protected.

8.3 Where works are proposed to a Listed Building, it is always advisable to check with the Council's Planning Authority whether Listed Building Consent is required. In any works proposed, special regard must be given to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting and special features of interest.

8.4 In considering any works to a Listed Building the principle objective must be to retain all original features and fabric of the building wherever possible. Listed Building Consent is required for the demolition of a listed building or for alteration, which would affect the building's character, integrity or special interest. This could include changing windows and doors, changing roofing materials, painting brickwork, moving or removing internal walls or plasterwork, fireplaces, floorboards or staircases. Like for like repairs may not need consent but it is always advisable to check prior to undertaking any works as the carrying out of works without the necessary consent is a criminal offence with significant penalties for those involved following a successful prosecution.

Commercial Buildings

8.5 Properties in commercial use do not have Permitted Development Rights under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. Therefore the only works that may be carried out without Planning Permission are works of repair and maintenance and internal alterations, provided the building is not a Listed Building.





9 Sources of Funding

9.1 A fundamental principle of all grant schemes is that grant cannot be offered after the work has been started. All grants are discretionary and rates may vary. Early consultation with possible providers is essential.

Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments

9.2 Cadw is the principal public agency offering grant aid for historic buildings in Wales. The key grant schemes summarise as:

● Historic Buildings Grant

For the repair and restoration of historic fabric of building's of 'outstanding' architectural or historic interest. Grants are normally paid in instalments or on completion of the work. The percentage of the total eligible cost of repair payable through grant aid is dependent on the building type, for example:

Religious	50%
Trusts and Charities	40%
Domestic/Private	30%
Commercial/Industrial	30%
Public	30%

Conditions of the grant may require a specialist to design, specify and oversee the works and to allow a degree of public access to the property once works are completed. The owner must also ensure that the property is kept in good condition and take out and maintain adequate insurance cover for the property.

● Conservation Areas Grant

For works to the external structure or appearance of historic buildings, which significantly enhance a Conservation Area. Grants are again paid by instalments or on completion of the work based on the following rates:

Religious	40%
Trusts and Charities	30%
Domestic/Private	25%
Commercial/Industrial	25%
Public	25%

Similar to the Historic Building Grant, conditions may require a specialist to design, specify and oversee the works. The owner must also ensure that the property is kept in good condition and take out and maintain adequate insurance cover for the property.

Appendix 1

Listed Buildings

Building	Grade
All Saints Parish Church	I
Graveyard wall and gate piers to All Saints' Church	II
Group of 5 graves NW of All Saints' Church	II
Group of 6 graves W of All Saints' Church	II
Group of 3 graves SE of All Saints' Church	II
Pair of graves E of All Saints' Church	II
Grave of Ann Williams to S of All Saints' Church	II
Strode House, The Green	II
Church House, The Green	II
Achill, The Green	II
Cedar House	II
Cedar House Stables	II
Circular Privy, Green Farm, The Green	II
All Saints Primary School, School Hill	II
Schoolhouse, Clappers Lane	II
Walls and gatepiers to All Saints' Primary School, School Hill and Clappers Lane	II

Appendix 2

Conservation Policy Guidance

Main Legislation	National Policy Guidance	Local Policy
Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Planning Policy Wales	Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (LDP in preparation 2008/09)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	Welsh Office Circular 61/96: Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas	Local Planning Guidance Note 4: Conservation Areas
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979	Welsh Office Circular 1/98: Planning and the Historic Environment: Directions by the Secretary of State for Wales	Local Planning Guidance Note 30: Design: A Guide for Developers and Architects when designing Residential Developments
	Technical Advice Note 12: Design	
	Welsh Office Circular 60/96: Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology	

Appendix 3

Glossary of Architectural Terms

Almshouse	A house appropriated for the use of the poor; a poorhouse
Arts and Craft	The arts of decorative design and handicraft
Ashlar	Cut stone worked to even faced, used on the front of a building
Bier	A stand to support a corpse or a coffin prior to burial
Camber	Slight rise or upward curve in place of a horizontal line or beam
Casement	A window where the opening lights are hung on hinges
Cat-slide	A roof which joins a single storey extension to the lower edge of the original pitched roof creating a dual angled roof.
Cill	Structural member consisting of a continuous horizontal timber forming the lowest member of a framework or supporting structure
Clerestory	Part of an interior wall rising above the adjacent roof with windows admitting light
Conical	Cone shaped
Corbel	Projecting piece of timber, stone or brick supporting an overhanging structure, such as an arch or balcony
Cornice	Moulded ledge, projecting along the top of a building. Also a decorative moulding in the angle between a wall and ceiling
Cruciform	Shaped like a cross
Cusped Lancets	Slender single-light pointed-arched window with decorative edging
Dentil	Small cubic projections under the roof line
Dormer	A window projecting from a roof
Eaves	The lower, overhanging section of a pitched roof
Façade	The front of a building
Fanlights	A glazed opening over a door
Finial	A decorative piece to finish off a building element, commonly used on railings and roofs
Flemish Bond	Method of brick laying consisting of alternating headers and stretchers along each course with the headers centred on the stretchers above and below
Foliated	Decorated, especially carved with leaves
Gable	Area of wall, often triangular, at the end of a pitched roof
Gothic	Period of medieval architecture characterised by the use of the pointed arch
Header	The square end face of a brick
Hoodmould	Projecting moulding shown above an arch or lintel to throw off water
Lancet	An acutely pointed Gothic arch, like a lance
Lintel	Horizontal beam used as a finishing piece over a door or window
Monopitch	Roof with a single pitch
Ostler	Someone employed in a stable to take care of the horses
Parapet	Feature used to conceal a roof
Pediment	A triangular gable between a horizontal entablature and a sloping roof
Pinnacle	A slender upright spire at the top of a buttress or tower
Plate Glass	Glass formed into large thin sheets
Privy	A room equipped with toilet facilities
Quoin	Dressed stone which are bonded to the corners of buildings
Render	The plastering of a surface with plaster, stucco or another finish
Sash	A window which moves on vertical grooves, either with one frame fixed (single hung) or both moving (double hung)
Spalling	Damage caused to brickwork by the weather, in particular, frost where the face of the brick flakes
Strap Pointing	Pointing which stands proud of the brickwork

Struck Pointing	Pointing which leaves a small part of the top of the lower brick exposed
Stringcourse	Horizontal stone course or moulding projecting from the surface of the wall
Tracery	Delicately carved stonework usually seen gothic style windows
Trefoil	Three leaves, relating to any decorative element with the appearance of a clover leaf
Tudor	Period in English history from 1485 to 1603

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Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, English Heritage, 2005

Wrexham Maelor Historic Settlements, 1992. The Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust.

www.allsaintsgresford.org.uk

www.gresford.org.uk

Useful Contacts

Institute of Historic Building Conservation -

www.ihbc.org.uk

Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments -

www.cadw.wales.gov.uk

Royal Institute of British Architects -

www.riba.org

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings -

www.spab.org.uk

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors -

www.rics.org.uk

The Georgian Group -

www.georgiangroup.org.uk

The Victorian Society -

www.victorian-society.org.uk

Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust -

www.cpat.org.uk

The Royal Town Planning Institute

www.rtpi.org.uk