

# Pillowell Conservation Area and Character Appraisal



September 1999

## IN WAR TIME

The bluebells chime in Pillowell  
For lovers to be wed,  
They chime unheard save of the bird  
That carols overhead.

White May-bloom falls in Pillowell  
As showering on a bride,  
But in the trees there sighs a breeze  
For the seas that are so wide.

Oh, when agen in Pillowell  
Shall greet the lovers?  
That not breeze nor bell nor tree  
Nor bird discovers.

**F. W. Harvey**

*For Anne*

*from F.W.Harvey Collected Poems 1912 - 1957  
section entitled Poems For Three Sisters  
reproduced with the permission of the publisher  
Douglas McLean The Forest Bookshop, Coleford, Glos*

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## **Pillowell and The Forest Ring of Settlements**

There is a unique ring of nearly continuous settlement encircling the fringe of the Forest of Dean. Individual settlements are characterised by their mainly linear nature, often industrial feel, and the interweaving of housing and other development with forest waste, open agricultural land, and gardens. Pillowell remains the best example within this "forest ring" of these characteristic features.

Most of the settlements are on or near the boundary between the coal measures and limestone where the mining opportunities were greatest. These settlements often grew out of a process of squatting and encroachment into the Crown forest. As such the inner boundary of this circle of settlements is often drawn very closely into the forest edge, while the outer boundary merges into agricultural land, woodland lying outside the main core of the Forest of Dean, and areas of forest waste.

The evolution of these settlements has resulted in a unique character and complex form whereby different types of open space areas are often interspersed with built development. Many of these settlements command dominant positions within the landscape, often facing away from the adjacent forest.

However over the recent past a number of these settlements have had significant development take place which has resulted in the character and appearance of the villa "forest ring" villages undergoing significant change.

Pillowell is possibly the last remaining large village within the "forest ring" of settlements which clearly exhibit features that are essential to their character. It exhibits a sporadic and open pattern of growth with a matrix of important open areas inclusive of forest waste and woodland, paddocks, small agricultural enclosures, large gardens and amenity spaces.

It is for this reason that The Forest of Dean District Council recognised Pillowell's special historic and architectural importance and agreed that it should be considered for designation as a Conservation Area.

This means that in exercising their planning powers, the Local Planning Authority must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the areas special character or appearance. The Pillowell Character Appraisal is an assessment of the special interest, character and appearance of the Pillowell Conservation Area.

## **Introduction**

This Character Appraisal is an assessment of the special interest, character and appearance of the Pillowell Conservation Area. The Forest of Dean District Council has prepared and published this assessment of the character of the Conservation Area to help to identify the special features which it will be important to preserve and enhance.

The aim is to provide an objective and clear appraisal as a sound basis for development control and for initiatives to enhance and preserve the area, in order to safeguard the character and appearance of Pillowell in the future.

## **Pillowell**

Pillowell forms part of a group of adjoining villages that run down the slope from Yorkley Slad, through Yorkley, Pillowell, Whitecroft and beyond. These settlements are in the West Dean Parish of The Forest of Dean District Council in the West of Gloucestershire. Pillowell is possibly the last remaining large village within the "forest ring" of settlements which clearly exhibit the original sporadic and open pattern which was characteristic of their early growth and development.

This special historic and architectural importance was recognised by The Planning and Leisure Services Committee of The Forest of Dean District Council at their meeting on the 16th November 1995. It was agreed that Pillowell should be considered for designation as a Conservation Area. An earlier draft version of this Appraisal formed the basis of widespread public consultation during 1996. The amended version was the subject of further public consultation in June/July 1999. The Conservation Area was formally designated by a decision of the Planning and Leisure Services Committee on the 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1999.

## **The Conservation Area Boundary and the Forest of Dean Local Plan**

The boundary of the proposed Pillowell Conservation Area was originally identified in the Forest of Dean Local Plan based on a preliminary survey of the area. This preliminary boundary has been modified to take account of some of the responses received following the initial consultation process. Perhaps the most significant variation was the proposed inclusion of a group of properties known as Council Villas on The Main Road. Field 1391, also known locally as "Kear's Field" has been included following the consultations in June/July 1999.

The boundary does extend beyond the area locally recognised as Pillowell to encompass adjoining areas which retain the same special character as identified in Pillowell as a whole. This means that sections of Yorkley and Whitecroft are included within the boundary and are referred to in the Character Appraisal. This reflects the continuous settlement form of the "forest ring".

## **Local Plan Policies**

All proposals will be judged in the context of The Forest of Dean District Local Plan. Of particular relevance in this context are policies are the Local Plan Policies FBE1 and FCL8 which protect open areas within settlements and safeguard Forest Waste.

Within Conservation Areas, Policy FBE 5 is of importance in protecting the visual, historic and architectural character of such areas. FBE 6 refers to demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas.

The Plan also has specific policies for guiding development in Pillowell and Whitecroft and other general policies regarding all other aspects of development in the area. Reference should be made to the Local Plan in the event that development proposals are being considered. These policies will not be changed by the designation of the Pillowell Conservation Area.

The Principal Policies for consideration in this document are:

(F. PILLOWELL/ WHITECROFT 4)  
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING INFILLING WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WITHIN THE PILLOWELL POLICY AREA. EXCEPTIONS WILL ONLY BE MADE WHERE PROPOSALS WOULD RESULT IN A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT TO THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OR TO THE AMENITY OF THE AREA. ALL DEVELOPMENT WILL BE REQUIRED TO COMPLEMENT THE ESTABLISHED AND SETTLED CHARACTER OF THE POLICY AREA.

This policy area covers the majority of the built up area of Pillowell. It recognises the possible detrimental effects of infilling on the spacious and open character of the settlement.

(F. PILLOWELL / WHITECROFT 3) CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE POTENTIAL FOR LAND RECLAMATION AND INFORMAL RECREATION USE OF POLICY AREA 4

This is the area surrounding the Rudge Brook to the South of Crossing Cottage.

It should be noted that The Forest of Dean Local Plan is under review with a Deposit Draft plan proposed to be published in April 2000.

### **What is a Conservation Area?**

A Conservation Area is defined in statute as

*"an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"*

Comprehensive advice for the protection of historic buildings and conservation areas is contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15. It states:

"It is the quality and interest of areas, rather than that of individual buildings, which should be the prime consideration in identifying Conservation Areas. There has been increasing recognition in recent years that our experience of a historic area depends on much more than the quality of individual buildings - on the historic layout of properties and thoroughfares; on a particular 'mix' of uses; on characteristic materials; on

appropriate scaling and detailing of contemporary buildings; on the quality of .....street furniture and hard and soft surfaces; on vistas along streets and between buildings; and on the extent to which traffic intrudes and limits the pedestrian use of spaces between buildings. Conservation Area designation should be seen as the means of recognising the importance of all these factors and ensuring that conservation policy addresses the quality of town scape in its broadest sense as well as the protection of individual buildings."

### **The Implications of Designation** (see Appendix for details )

The designation of a Conservation Area imposes specific duties on the Local Planning Authority. The Authority must formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area, and submit them to public consultation.

In addition, in exercising their planning powers, the Local Planning Authority must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

### **The Implications for Owners and Residents**

In normal circumstances, householders have certain "Permitted Development" rights to carry out minor works to their properties, such as small extensions and the erection of garden buildings. However, in a Conservation Area, these rights are reduced. In addition the consent of the Local Planning Authority is required for the demolition of buildings. The lopping or felling of trees requires six weeks prior notification. The regulations make it an offence not to comply with this requirement. Planning Applications for proposals which would affect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area will be advertised in a local newspaper.

Any new development including extensions would be expected to be of good design, and should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. As with all development proposals it is advisable to seek advice from the planning department at an early stage. The recently published Forest of Dean Residential Design Guide offers detailed design guidance to try to ensure that buildings reflect the local characteristics which give each part of the District a sense of place and identity.

Conservation Area designation can also benefit property owners and occupiers. There may be added status to a property being located within a Conservation Area. Also the development controls aimed at maintaining and enhancing the appearance of the Conservation Area may sustain or enhance the appearance of properties within it.

### **The Implications for Local Authorities and Statutory Undertakers.**

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

## PILLOWELL CHARACTER APPRAISAL

### The setting of the area within the surrounding landscape

Pillowell forms part of a unique ring of nearly continuous settlement encircling the fringe of the Forest of Dean. Individual settlements are characterised by their mainly linear nature, often industrial feel, and the interweaving of housing and other development with forest waste, open agricultural land, and gardens. Pillowell exhibits many of these characteristics to a greater extent than most other settlements in the "forest ring".

Pillowell is surrounded on all of its northern edge and part of its southern edge mainly by dense mature woodland. This forms a backdrop to many views of and from the area. Pillowell forms part of a group of adjoining villages that run down the slope from Yorkley Slad, through Yorkley, Pillowell, Whitecroft and beyond. The surrounding landscape is hilly and Pillowell can be identified from distant views from the villages and roads on the surrounding ridges and hilltops. To the South East the open fields extend towards the River Severn and Lydney.

### The Origins and development of the Settlement.

As stated above Pillowell forms part of the ring of settlements which surround the Forest of Dean. This was once a Royal Forest from which most housing was excluded. Early development was often started by squatters building their homes at the edge of the Crown Land. Although there is evidence of industrial activity in the area for many hundreds of years, the main development took place in the 19th Century when mining rights were opened up to outside investment by Act of Parliament. Maps of 1789, 1882 and 1920 tend to confirm these stages of development. The village's major growth relates to development of deep mining for coal at The Pillowell Level (shown on the map of 1882), Norchard and The Princess Royal at Whitecroft.

The Victoria County History records that Pillowell, on the side of the valley below Yorkley, began before 1742 on land belonging to Newland Parish. The village included, in 1787, approximately 10 dwellings on Crown Land in the north west. Most dwellings were at the lower end near the well which gave the village its name and where a cottage was built in c 1784 on the North side of Kidnalls wood.

In 1835, when a chapel was built on the hillside the number of cottages had increased by around 30 and in 1851 the houses within Newland Parish numbered seven. In the mid 19th century new houses were built on the hillside and some older ones were rebuilt, two cottages just below Yorkley being dated 1842 and one at the bottom of the Yorkley Wood Road 1849. In 1877 a large school and a pair of schoolhouses were built on the Valley floor. It was one of the first board schools in the Forest and had places for 400 children in detached blocks for girls, boys and infants. The average attendance was 281 in 1889 and after enlargement 505 in 1901. Attendance fell to 150 in 1938 and the schools departments merged in 1938 and 1939. As Pillowell County Primary school it had 61 pupils in 1992.

A few houses were built on the Yorkley - Bream Road, constructed after 1859 and eight council houses were provided in the village in 1940. In a valley to the north west the hamlet of Phipps Bottom comprised five or six cottages in

1834 and a beer house called The Swan opened there by the Bream Road before 1891. On the East of Whitecroft a small square chapel, the first to be built by the Wesleyans in the Forest proper, was erected on the hillside opposite Pillowell in 1824. A temporary school was opened at the chapel in 1907 to relieve overcrowding at Pillowell school. By the 1870's the Co operative Society based at Cinderford had opened a number of shops outside the town. By the early 20th Century a society was trading at Pillowell.

Employment in coal mining declined in the Forest of Dean after the 1930's. Mining in the south part of the coalfield was rationalised by The Princess Royal Colliery Co., which from 1937 worked Norchard Colliery, adjoining its principal mine, from a new drift entered near Pillowell. The Princess Royal finally closed in 1962. The remains of the railway lines, the cutting, viaducts and bridge abutments associated with the coal mining can still be seen today to the extreme west of the village. The remains of the viaduct include a fine brick chute that curves around the southern pier of the abutment to the stream below.

In 1860 Richard Snaith a Baptist living at Whitecroft, began holding open air meetings and cottage services at Pillowell. Within the Forest the Primitive Methodists built a chapel between Pillowell and Yorkley in 1835. In 1851 the congregation at Pillowell averaged well over 100 and included many children attending their Sunday schools. The Pillowell Chapel was altered in 1856 and a new meeting house incorporating a schoolroom under the chapel was built on another site to the south west in 1885. The original building, known as Jubilee chapel was sold in 1892 to the Pillowell and Yorkley Co operative Society and was used in 1990 as dwellings.

The poet, F. W. Harvey (1888 - 1957) spent his last years at Yorkley and Pillowell and one of his poems is on the inside cover of this report.

**Unlike other parts of the "forest ring" of Settlements, Pillowell has avoided the modern infilling of the scattered housing set within large plots and Forest waste. It has remained essentially unaltered in character from the way it developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, with housing and other development interweaving with the forest waste, open agricultural land and gardens. Post War Planning Policies restricting development in Pillowell has therefore contributed significantly to the retention of the village's special character and appearance.**

**Some of the Forest cottages, although altered and extended, are recognisable as the original buildings that were built in the 19th Century at a relatively low density. Although parts of other villages in the "forest ring" may be unaltered in a similar way, it is very unusual for the character and appearance of the majority of a large village to be retained in the way as it is in most of Pillowell.**

## **Topography**

Pillowell has developed along the road running from Yorkley through to Whitecroft. It is on a fairly open steep slope at the Yorkley end down to its lowest point at The Swan Inn. The Main Road runs close to and almost parallels the stream until it swings in a reverse S across the line of the former railway into Whitecroft. Some housing and the school have been built between the road and the forest edge to the north of the Main Road. Most of the village has developed to the south of it up the sloping hillside. Many roads and access tracks to this housing and the Pillowell Methodist Church run along the slope to reduce the gradient. The scattered housing on the steeper slopes have views into the village as well as forming an important part of the backdrop to the village itself. The trees on the Forest edge make a very important backdrop to the village. The topography results in the village being open to a whole variety of views from the valley floor, up the slopes towards Yorkley, and both to and from the valley sides. The valley formed by the Rudge Brook has been enclosed in its southern section by the structures associated with the development of the Pillowell Level colliery and its transport links.

## **Morphology**

The buildings are in the main two storeys, and street widths vary but are often wider than the height of buildings on either side. Building frontages differ and often buildings are constructed at varying angles or stepped back from the metalled edge of the carriageway, where this exists. A significant contribution to the appearance is made by the buildings stepping down the valley sides in order to follow the topography. For this reason the type and finish of roof form is particularly important. There are frequent breaks in the frontages along the roads where footpaths, tracks, fields and paddocks are interspersed with the housing. A particularly important feature is the number of extensive open areas either crossed or surrounded by tracks or narrow roads. This gives the dominant impression of a scatter of houses and other buildings which has often been lost elsewhere in the area. Links between the scattered buildings are maintained by the boundary treatments of the open spaces particularly the stonewalling, hedges and trees of many of the properties, fields and gardens. Dormers are not a common feature but chimneys stacks are important to maintaining the character of many of the cottages.

## **Land Uses within and outside the Area.**

The predominant uses around the north and south edges of the conservation area are agricultural and forestry. The village merges into Yorkley and Whitecroft where housing predominates, with the exception of the Scotts of Mitcheldean site, (the Former Kears Bakery) at Yorkley. The Factory units at Whitecroft can be seen from within the Conservation Area. The remaining building at the former colliery at the end of Corner Road now provides employment being used as the base for a cleaning firm.

Within the Conservation Area, the principal use of land is residential with scattered housing, mainly detached, often set in large gardens and paddocks. These, in turn, are dispersed within areas of open land, which in

the main is unfenced. Much of this open land is forest waste which is land within the statutory forest but not part of any operational (planted) area.

These open areas are important in their own right, being an integral part of the character of the area. They provide access and informal recreation space and add greatly to the amenity of the adjoining development. They also reflect the heritage of the area. The importance of safeguarding Forest Waste is recognised in The Forest of Dean Local Plan ( Policy FCL.8)

The area is served by roads or tracks that are often very narrow and steep with poorly aligned junctions. Many of the roads and tracks are bounded by stone walls. These stone walls are important features in the landscape and add considerably to the character of the area. They often are complemented by the native hedgerows and trees bounding gardens, paddocks and on the edge of the settlement. The walls, hedgerows and trees contribute significantly to special character of the area.

Other significant land uses include the coach depot on the Main Road that is currently used by Willets; the Pillowell Methodist Church on Upper Road; the Whitecroft Wesley Chapel Methodist Church in Wesley Road and the magnificent Pillowell County Primary School buildings with its school master's house attached, built in the same style as the school.

#### **Pattern and density of building.**

The sporadic and low density of the settlement, with its open spaces, large garden and paddock areas is very important to the character of the village. Houses are often sited at angles to the road although most front directly onto it. The form and layout of the buildings can be seen to advantage from elevated views inside and outside the conservation area. The boundaries of the properties and associated land is an interesting mix of stone walling, native hedging and fencing. The inclusion of trees and hedging into the landscape provides a context and maturity to the visual appearance. This pattern and low density of development and the boundaries add to the area's special character.

#### **Type of buildings**

The buildings are predominantly small and residential. They are mainly simple cottages either detached or in small groups or terraces. In contrast, the community buildings like the school and the two churches are prominent features because of their size, massing and position. A further prominent feature is the coach garage on the main road.

#### **Style of buildings**

The majority of the cottages are simple two storey stone buildings, with slate roofs and stacks on the end elevations. They have a strong vertical emphasis mainly due to the formal positioning and size of the window and door openings. They often have lean to single storey extensions to one of the side elevations. Some have rendered walls often where the building stone is of poorer quality. Many of the vernacular cottages have been altered in a number of ways. Probably the most common alteration has been the

increasing in the size of window openings and changes to the fenestration which can alter and detract from the appearance of the property, particularly if it is one of an original pair or group of such cottages.

One group of existing and former council houses known as Council Villas on either side of Main Road provide a contrasting style of building. Although they are of a different form and density than much of the housing in the area they are an important part of the settlement's recent historic development and growth. Despite the fact that some are now privately owned their development and origin is still recognisable. The rear and side group to the south west of the road can be seen as a prominent feature from the open ground, roads and pathways surrounding them.

### **Building materials and construction**

In the main the original dwellings are built of the local forest sandstone. Most are rendered and some are colour washed. Random and coursed rubble walls are used widely. Where the stone is exposed the original pointing sometimes remains unaltered. This is mostly brushed back from the surface stone using local sand to compliment the colour of the stone. Unfortunately, there are some areas where raised 'snail creep' pointing has been used to the detriment of its character and appearance and probably to its long term detriment from a structural point of view.

The method of construction of the cottages is essentially simple. The original cottages were in the main two storey dwellings with single storey lean to outbuildings. They would have had either sash or side opening casement windows depending, to a degree, upon the period in which they were constructed. The chimney stacks are often constructed of brick whilst the main cottage construction would be of stone.

The school and the former railway bridge have high quality brick work whilst the Pillowell Chapel has good quality detailing above the pointed windows to the roadside. Roof covering is mainly slate although there are some examples of the use of clay tiles on the main roof slopes or the outbuildings. The original stone boundary walls to the gardens and fields in the settlement are often a mixture of random, coursed and in some cases dressed stone.

### **Survival of building features**

Where cottages remain largely unaltered, the strong vertical emphasis of the window openings and door way on the front elevation is evident. It is complimented by the simple fenestration of the wooden framed side opening or sash windows. They often have dressed stone lintels and cills. The walls are of stone and finished with a render to the side and/or front elevations. Chimney stacks are often brick with barge boards to the overhanging eaves of the slate roof. There are often lean to extensions to the side or rear of these properties.

Perhaps the most unusual building feature in the Conservation Area is the spiral brick built chute which forms part of the remains of the bridge at the former Pillowell Level. It is an interesting industrial survival that is sculptural in its form.

Other features of note are the extensive stone walls abutting roads and tracks throughout the area. The large wall from the roadside to the rear of Pleasant View/West View is particularly impressive. They are of differing heights and length and complement the native hedgerows where these occur on top of or instead of the stone walls. There are limited examples of original iron work railing some of which are ornate.

### **The tree cover in and around the area**

Trees dominate the backdrop to many views of the buildings in the area. They have an important effect on the character and appearance of the area. The broadleaf trees to the north of the school and running parallel to Main Road have a particularly strong influence on the landscape giving a mainly native woodland backdrop. The conifer plantation to the south of the village dominates the view of the rising ground. The trees surrounding the village as well as that occurring within provide a mature semi-rural environment. This contributes to the area's special character and appearance.

In the large gardens, the paddocks and the areas of unfenced open land some trees grow in the remaining original hedgerows interspersed amongst the more dominant stone walls. The encroachment of lines of evergreen trees is an alien feature to the settlement's character. These trees, often acting as screening, are changing the settlement open character and could over time alter it even more significantly than at present.

The cumulative effect of the traditional hedges, trees and green space to the setting of the buildings and their boundaries is of major importance to the special character and appearance of the area. The large garden areas, numerous paddocks, tracks and pathways, merge together with the open spaces in the overall views.

This is one of the most important ways that Pillowell maintains its special character with an open appearance and low density of development. The open spaces are particularly important to the character of the area when they form part of the views from inside or outside the village.

### **Patterns of movement**

The main pattern of vehicular movement is along the Main Road that links Yorkley and Whitecroft. It is a fairly narrow road. Other than through traffic the main destinations besides individual properties, will be the commercial sites like the former Kear's bakery and the Coach Depot. Pillowell School and the churches are also the focus of vehicular activity in the local community. However this is likely to be limited to specific parts of the day. Elsewhere the level of vehicle movements is low because of the sporadic nature of the development.

Patterns of pedestrian movement are likely to be more random given the complexity of footpaths in the area as well as any roadside footways. There are sporadic areas of vehicle parking on the open spaces.

## Views in and out of the area

These are very important given the topography of the area and the surrounding settlements. They are so extensive that it is not possible to identify all of them in a this document or on a map. There are distant views from Whitecroft and Bream Eaves into Pillowell. From within the area, there are important viewpoints along the eastern side of Upper Road, down the valley and out to the hillside and settlements forming an extension of the ring around the forest edge. Particularly important viewpoints are set out on the accompanying map but their identification should not undervalue others from less accessible areas or private properties.

## The contribution made by unlisted buildings

There are no statutory listed buildings within the conservation area but there are a number of local important buildings and structures of architectural and historic interest that make a very significant contribution to Pillowell's character and appearance.

These are:

Pillowell County Primary School

The Whitecroft Wesley Chapel Methodist Church

The Pillowell Primitive Methodist Church

The spiral brick chute and abutments to the former railway bridge east of Anna's Cottage.

The Pillowell school complex is an unspoilt example of its type and period. The use of decorative brickwork is particularly impressive as is the detail of the railings which surround it. It can be seen from many of the properties and roads in the village. Both the Whitecroft Church and The Pillowell Methodist Chapel are very prominent in the landscape in different parts of the settlement. These are important parts of the areas social history. The brick chute incorporated into the abutments of the former railway bridge is a special feature of the areas industrial past.

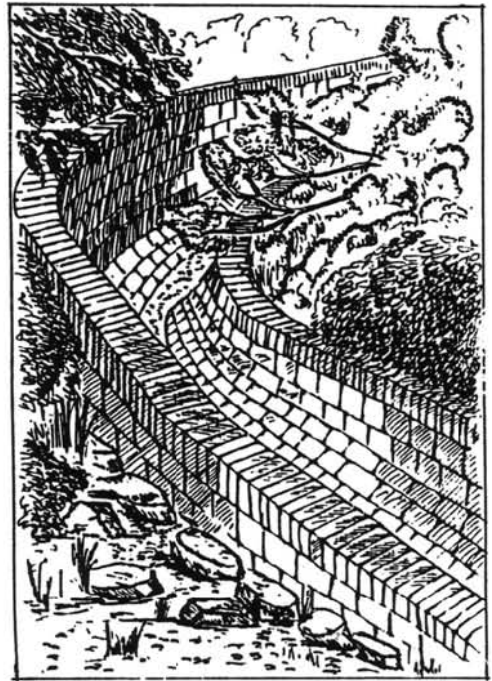
In recognition of this every effort should be made to retain them and their own intrinsic character. The formal identification of these important buildings should give additional weight to the arguments for their retention.



PILLOWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL



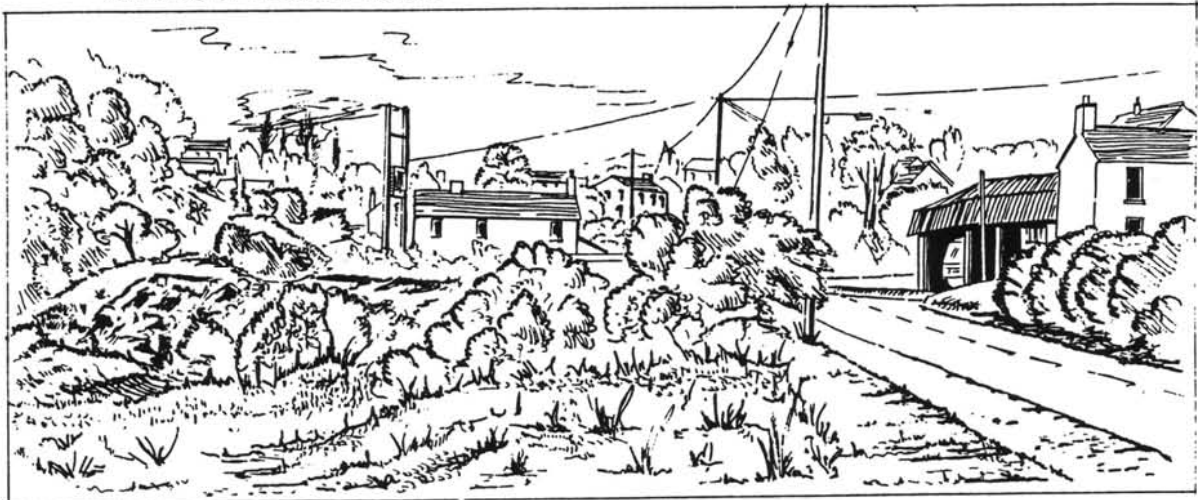
WHITECROFT WESLEY CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH



BRICK CHUTE A REMNANT OF THE AREAS INDUSTRIAL PAST

### Alien and undesirable features

The sporadic and open nature of some of the ad hoc car and vehicle parking areas, particularly the built up hardstanding opposite the coach depot detracts from the character of the area. Electricity pylons are discordant features where they are placed prominently on open land. They are particularly noticeable near the school and on the open land near to the remains of Pillowell Level.



TIPPING AND INFORMAL CAR PARKING SITE

Hedges of Cupressus and other species which, if not maintained, are vertically dominant detract from the character of the area. These hedges dominate where they occur often drawing attention to themselves because of their scale, form and colour. They do offer some privacy and there may be

some opportunity to offer advice on alternative species which could achieve a level of privacy while complimenting the character of the area. Adequate and appropriate management of these species, where they occur, will also reduce any detrimental visual impact.

The concrete posts and wire fence abutting Crown Lane is also an intrusive feature. The replacement of the traditional stone walls and native hedgerows detracts from the character of the area. It is noticeable that some stone walls are deteriorating. Often they are being left to decay or are replaced with modern stock proof alternatives.

Some alterations to windows and door openings in original cottages are taking place using inappropriate materials which detract from the character of the area. Cladding of buildings with artificial stone often detracts from the character of individual buildings and the character of the immediate street scene. In Conservation Areas cladding in this manner often requires planning permission.

Any enhancement of the areas or features must reflect the characteristics of the area identified in this appraisal. Enhancement should reflect the special characteristics set out in this document of the area and shouldn't attempt to introduce styles of landscaping more appropriate to urban areas.

The recently published Forest of Dean Residential Design Guide offers detailed guidance to try to ensure that buildings reflect the local characteristics which give each part of the District a sense of place and identity.

Progress on improving the features mentioned in this section will in the main depend to a large extent upon the co operation of owners with the District Council in dealing with these issues.

## Summary of Characteristics

- a) Pillowell is the last remaining large village of those which make up the "forest ring" of settlements which clearly exhibit the original sporadic and open pattern of its development which characterised its growth and development.
- b) The principal use of land is residential with scattered housing, often set in large gardens and paddocks. These, in turn, are dispersed within areas of open land, which in the main is unfenced. Much of this open land is forest waste. These open areas are important in their own right, being an integral part of the character of the area, providing access and informal recreation space and adding greatly to the amenity of the adjoining development as well as reflecting the heritage of the area.
- c) There are a whole variety of views, both from within and outside the settlement. Its special character is often recognisable even from a distance because of the sporadic nature of the buildings and the open nature of its development.
- d) The area is served by roads or tracks that are often very narrow and bounded by stone walls. These stone walls, together with the native hedgerows and trees contribute significantly to the special character of the area.
- e) The Forest cottages, although altered and extended, are recognisable as the original buildings that were built in the 19th Century at a relatively low density.
- f) The majority of buildings are predominantly small and residential. Cottages, either detached or in small groups or terraces predominate. In contrast, the community buildings like the school and the two churches are prominent features because of their size, massing and position.
- g) Some of the original cottages still have slate roofs and brick stacks on the end elevations. They have a strong vertical emphasis mainly due to the formal positioning and size of the window and door openings. They often have lean to single storey extensions to one of the side elevations. Some have rendered walls often where the building stone is of poorer quality. The form and finish of roofs is particularly important because many properties can be viewed from properties paths and roads higher up the hillside.
- h) Trees have an important effect on the character and appearance of the area. They dominate the backdrop to many views of the buildings in the area as well as occurring within it. They provide a mature semi-rural environment, which contributes to the area's special character and appearance.
- i) A number of locally important buildings and structures of architectural and historic interest make a very significant contribution to Pillowell's character and appearance. These are:  
Pillowell County Primary School, the Whitecroft Wesley Chapel Methodist Church, The Pillowell Primitive Methodist Church and the spiral brick chute and abutments to the former railway bridge east of Anna's Cottage.

## **PILLOWELL CONSERVATION AREA - IMPORTANT POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

The boundary of the conservation area is set out on Map 1 and is largely dictated by the extent that the present village's layout reflects its special historic character with scattered housing and other development set within forest waste, open agricultural land, and gardens.

Within the Conservation Area special regard shall be given to:

*Safeguarding and enhancing the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area with specific reference to the open spaces, the sporadic nature of the development and the mature woodland that forms the backdrop to many of the views to and from the area.*

*Giving due consideration to the views within and outside the Conservation Area when development is proposed that affects the setting of the conservation area and the Conservation Area itself.*

*Seeking the co operation of landowners in the restoration of stone walls to properties, paddocks and open spaces where they contribute to the special character of the area.*

*Encouraging a partnership approach with Forest Enterprise for the management of the open spaces and woodland owned by The Forestry Commission in a manner that safeguards and enhances the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.*

*Ensuring that any development proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the buildings and their settings within the Conservation Area. Due consideration will be given to the guidance offered in this appraisal and The Forest of Dean Residential Design Guide to ensure that buildings reflect the local characteristics which give each part of the District a sense of place and identity.*

*Offering advice on the planting, pruning and felling of trees and hedgerows within the conservation area. Particular emphasis will be given to encouraging landowners to plant native trees that will contribute to the areas special character and appearance.*

*Safeguarding the locally important buildings and structures identified in the report with the co operation of the owners and the support of the local community.*

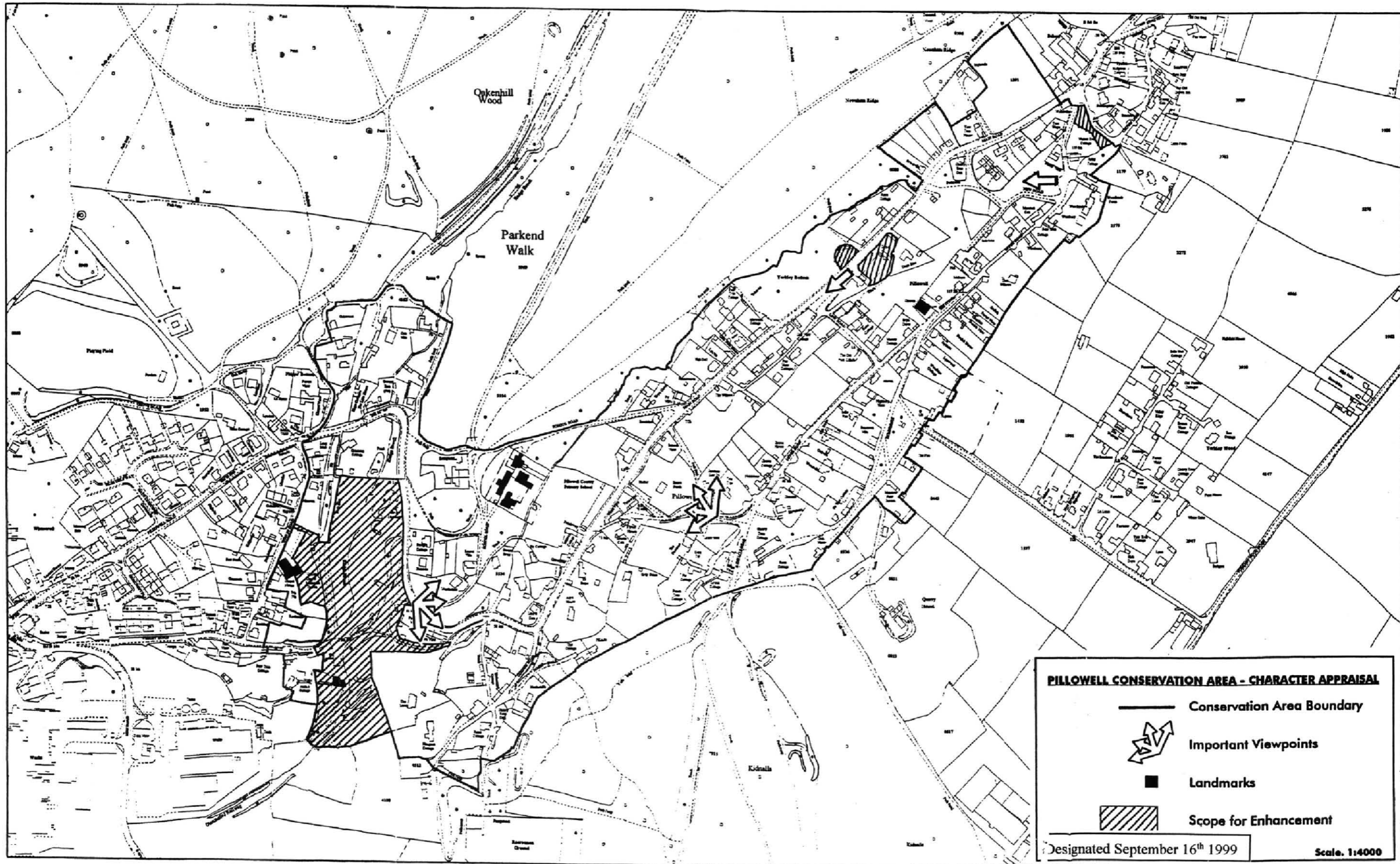
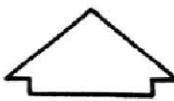
*Encouraging the owners of land to enhance the sites identified in this appraisal as alien and undesirable features. Seek their co operation to enhance open land consistent with the character of the area and its existing or potential nature conservation value.*

*Considering land reclamation and informal recreation on the land identified in The Forest of Dean Local Plan and referred to in this appraisal as the area surrounding the Rudge Brook to the South of Crossing Cottage.*





To assist in the implementation of these proposals it is proposed to take an external photographic record of the individual properties, important open spaces and views within the Conservation areas as soon as reasonably practical after the designation of the Pillowell Conservation Area.

# FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL PILLOWELL CONSERVATION AREA - CHARACTER APPRAISAL

MAP 1.



**PILLOWELL CONSERVATION AREA - CHARACTER APPRAISAL**

-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Important Viewpoints
-  Landmarks
-  Scope for Enhancement

Designated September 16<sup>th</sup> 1999 Scale: 1:4000

## THE EFFECT OF DESIGNATION OF PILLOWELL CONSERVATION AREA

### INTRODUCTION

Pillowell Conservation Area was designated on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 1999 by the Forest of Dean District Council. (It does not apply retrospectively). The designated area is identified in Map 1 of the September 1999 version of The Pillowell Conservation Area and Character Appraisal. Copies of this appraisal are available from the Directorate of Planning and Leisure Services, Forest of Dean District Council, Council Offices, High Street, Coleford Glos GL16 8HG.

For the purposes of clarification:

- 1) Where the boundary of the Conservation Area is aligned along a fence or boundary wall, that fence or boundary wall shall be regarded by the planning authority as being within the designated Conservation Area.
- 2) Where a hedge or line of trees forms the boundary of the Conservation Area that hedge or line of trees (as defined at ground level by trunk positions) shall be regarded by the planning authority as being within the designated Conservation Area.

### THE IMPLICATIONS OF DESIGNATION

The legislation relating to conservation areas is complex and changes from time to time. It is only possible to give an outline of the situation. The detailed advice relating to extensions to dwellings in Conservation Areas refers primarily to owners of single dwellings although other aspects are covered.

Anybody anticipating erecting or altering a building or structure or undertaking work to a tree in a Conservation Area is strongly advised to contact the District Council for advice before proceeding.

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

Designation of an area as a Conservation Area does affect residents of single dwellings in a number of ways in addition to the normal rules:-

You need planning permission if the size of extensions to dwellings exceeds a maximum of 10% of the volume of the original house or 50 cubic metres (whichever is the greater).

You need planning permission if you want to build any kind of addition or extension to the roof of your house.

If you want to erect or alter a building and other structures on the land around your house you may need planning permission if it exceeds more than 10 cubic metres in volume.

You need planning permission to install a satellite dish or antenna on a house if it is positioned on a chimney, or on a wall or roof slope facing a highway.

You need planning permission before cladding the outside of your house with stone, tiles, artificial stone, plastic or timber.

**NOTE:** There may be circumstances where the Local Planning Authority may seek to bring specific minor works under normal planning controls, so that those works are carried out in harmony with the area. These are called Article 4 Directions. (Note: The designation made on the 16<sup>th</sup> September did not include any proposals for Article 4 Directions.)

## **CONTROL OVER DEMOLITION**

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

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

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

## **CONTROL OVER WORK TO TREES**

Anyone proposing to fell or prune a tree in a conservation area is required to give six weeks notice in writing to the planning authority before carrying out that work. The letter giving notice should contain sufficient information to identify the location of the tree and ideally it should explain why the work is being carried out. **There is no fee attached to giving written notice.**

The purpose of this legislation is to allow time to consider whether a tree preservation order should be placed on the tree if the proposed work will damage the character of the area. It is not justified by arboricultural considerations such as safety or tree health.

**This control over the works to trees is subject to a number of exemptions.** These include the proper pruning of fruit trees (**the felling of fruit trees is also exempt, but only in commercial orchards**), works carried out by statutory undertakers such as electricity suppliers and necessary works to trees that are dead, dying or dangerous **where this can be proved**. It is not necessary to give notice if the tree has a stem diameter of less than 7.5cm measured at a point 1.5m above the ground.

The legislation is complex and only an outline of the main aspects is provided here. If you are unsure whether your proposed work falls within one of these exemptions, or you require informal advice on the management of your trees, please contact the Council's Countryside Officers on 01594 812327.

## **ADDITIONAL CONTROLS OVER OTHER TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT**

### **INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

If an industrial building or warehouse is extended or altered by more than 10 per cent over the cubic content of the original building, planning permission will be required.

### **STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS**

#### **Electricity**

Planning permission is required for the extension or alteration of buildings by electricity operators on operational land by more than 10 per cent or 500 square metres.

#### **Telecommunications**

The installation, alteration or replacement of terrestrial (or other type of) microwave antennas or of its support apparatus requires planning permission. In addition there is a requirement that an operator gives eight weeks prior notice of his intention to carry out any permitted development unless it is an emergency (when notice is given as soon as possible).

## **ILLUMINATED ADVERTISEMENTS**

Advertisement Consent is required from the planning authority to display certain types of illuminated advertisement which would otherwise not require express consent. These relate to illuminated advertisements displayed on premises in retail parks and business premises (including shops). This does not preclude the continuous display of an advertisement being displayed at the date of designation until the expiry of five years from that date.

## **ADVERTISEMENT OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

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

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

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

## **SCHEMES FOR ENHANCEMENT**

Local proposals for enhancing and safeguarding the character of the area will be brought forward as and when funding permits. The Pillowell Character Appraisal identifies areas or aspects of the area which require enhancement.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA**

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

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

The designation could have an effect upon the detailed design and layout of any new development so that it does not detract from the character and appearance of the area.

J. A. STEWART B. A. M. C.D. M.R.T.P.I., DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND LEISURE SERVICES FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL, COUNCIL OFFICES, COLEFORD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE. GL16 8HG

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PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 1999

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