



Lower Dock Street Conservation Area Appraisal



Newport
COUNTY BOROUGH

BWRDEISTREF SIROL
Casnewydd

Lower Dock Street, Pillgwenlly

“Dock Street, which is essentially the business quarter of the town, where are to be found the offices of merchant princes, brokers, colliery proprietors, shipping companies, and miscellaneous traders was the production of necessity.”

(Mathews 1910)

Introduction

The Lower Dock Street Conservation Area was designated in June 1995 and has since benefited from eligibility for grant assistance from both Cadw, under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and the Welsh Office Strategic Development Scheme, via Commercial Area Improvement and Partnership Grants. This document seeks to examine the boundaries of the Conservation Area and suggests areas where improvements can be secured to enhance the vitality of the Conservation Area and the quality of life of residents.

An Historical Overview

In 1790 Newport had neither a canal nor tramroad and the mule provided the only means of iron and coal transport. By 1811 the Monmouthshire canal had been constructed from Crumlin and Brecon to Pillgwenlly, and a tram road laid from the Sirhowy furnaces at Bedwellty through the Pillgwenlly marshes (on the line of the existing railway) to the terminal point of the canal. The opening of the canals and tramroads provided easy means of

transport and formed a vital artery linking the interior of the County with the port. Locomotive engines were later introduced in 1830 using the existing lines of the Monmouthshire Canal Company tram roads for the transport of coal.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Pillgwenlly was a trackless marsh. The inter tidal salt marshes between the Pill Gwenny and River Usk were infilled during the period 1797-1805, associated with construction of Canal and Tram Road. Further fill material was derived from ships ballast during period 1806-1866. Dock street thus forms part of the ‘New town’ extension created by the infilling of the Old Town Pill.

The Newport Dock Bill received Royal assent in December 1835 and the trackway formed by workmen employed at the Dock returning to the Town, served to formalise the route of the street. Excavated material was tipped along their path to the town centre, forming an embankment. Some 138,000 cubic yards of material was excavated and used for infill. The Dock opened on the 10th October 1842. Constructed to designs by the nationally important engineer John Rennie the younger (1794-1874), by Dike & Meyrick of Bristol for the Monmouthshire Canal Co. The Dock was finally infilled in 1932.

Great Dock Street was first delineated in 1837. In 1841 this was extended to include the former Dock Road. The Old Town Dock formed the *raison d’etre* for the development of the area. The development of the Lower Dock Street area adopted the classic 19th century peripheral block form with continuous street frontages enclosing rear yard areas. All buildings directly address the Street, without any form of forecourt enclosure or private space.

The construction of the new cattle market to the west of Dock Street, provided a further impetus for development. In 1843 the site of the new cattle market was nine feet below the level of the old Jack’s ‘Pill’ and Dock Roads. Consequently, some 65,340 cubic yards of ships ballast was imported before building could commence. An attractive fee was paid to shipmasters of 1 3/4d per ton of ballast, which was used to infill low lying areas within Pill.

The foundation stone was laid on the 25th March, 1844 by Sir Charles Morgan. *The Merlin* 19th October, 1844 noted that “Those who had seen the site of the Market, which was a barren marsh only eight months previously, could scarcely realise the transformation scene before them”. The opening of the “New Mart” on the 16th October 1844, gave new impetus to the improvement of local roads described in 1843 as being “in a deplorable condition”. However, the old Pillgwenly level remained prone to flooding especially during high tides. By 1851 houses were under construction in the Streets adjoining the market. The Cattle Market survives in part with important cast iron roof trusses, manufactured by Homfray at the Tredegar Ironworks.

Despite the hazards associated with flooding and the condition of the road itself, the period 1840-50 witnessed the rapid development of residential and commercial premises. By 1846 nineteen houses of a superior class had been constructed in Great Dock Street, comparable in scale and architectural style to Victoria Place and it has been assumed that Messrs Rennie, Logan & Co. were responsible for both. Great Dock Street was for a long period in the mid-C19 the most fashionable residential area of Newport, even after the commencement of development at Goldtops. The erection of lamp standards took place in October 1850 and development continued at a rapid pace. Dock street was widened by the Corporation later that year.

The proximity of the Street to the Town Dock attracted the first railway station to Newport. The site of the Western Valleys Railway Station in Dock Road was only partially infilled in 1831, formerly having

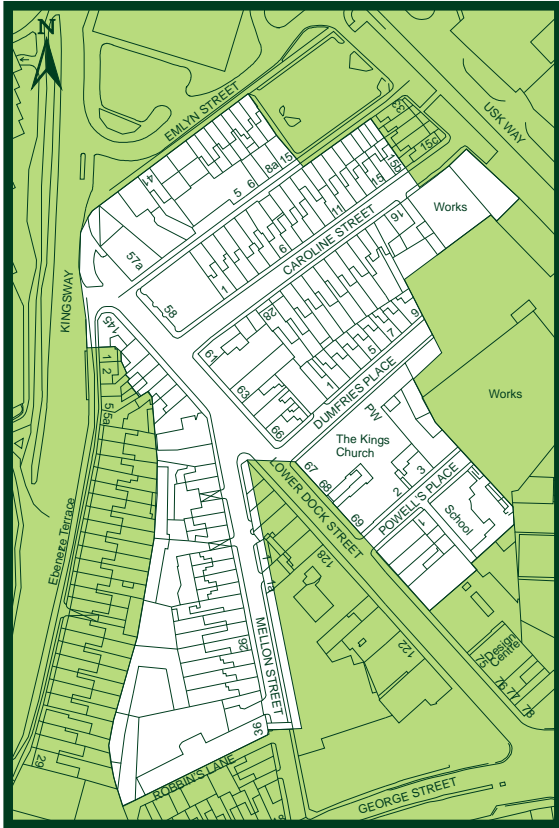
been used as a Ropery works. Construction of the station commenced in 1849 with a further 6-8 feet of ballast being carried to site by a tramway from the Town Dock. The Station opened 23rd December, 1850. However, the station had only a brief life, closing in 1880, as a result of the amalgamation of the Monmouthshire and Great Western Railways.

In 1882 the Street was extended northwards to High Street, with the creation of New Dock Street. This new road provided a direct route from the Docks towards Pontypool and helped relieve the congestion in High Street. This part of the Street was later re-developed to create the Kingsway Shopping Centre and John Frost Square. The formerly Great Dock Street terminating at the new junction with Kingsway.

Within fifty years of its inception Great Dock Street had become the main commercial and maritime heart of the thriving and rapidly expanding coal port. Within the Street were the offices of colliery proprietors and coal exporters, ship owners, ship brokers bonded warehouses, anchor and chain manufacturers, ships chandlers, marine surveyors, Consulates and vice consulates, sail makers, railway companies, hotels and public houses. Many properties still display exuberant original features. The declining fortunes of Lower Dock Street were reflect the post-war decline in the coal industry and other port related activities. The economic focus which shifted from the River Usk frontage throughout the later Victorian period to the main Alexandra Dock was reflected in the growth of Commercial Road at the expense of Great Dock Street.



The Drill Hall Quarter



Located at the northern end of Lower Dock Street is a distinctive residential community contained within a series of streets focussed on the former Drill Hall of the 4th Battalion of the South Wales Borderers. The present Drill Hall is a dramatic castellated structure, faced in coursed Pennant sandstone with Bathstone dressings. It opened in 1904 and stands on the site of an earlier mid-Victorian hall. Opposite the hall, the former Ragged School (1864) also serves as a landmark building at the centre of the community, illustrating the



important social history of the locality. The Streets illustrate the residential colonisation of the Lower Dock Street hinterland in the mid-late nineteenth century. Although many of the two storey terraces have

inevitably undergone extensive alteration, they retain their essential architectural form. The accurate reinstatement of architectural detailing and enhancement of the public realm should be afforded a high priority to propagate the sustainable regeneration of the wider Lower Dock Street Area.

Powells Place

Dominated by a well detailed substantial red brick, Queen Anne style school at the south-east corner,



Powells Place is a short street truncated at its eastern end, by the site of a former engineering works. The residential development on the north side of the street is contemporary with No.69 Lower Dock

Street, dating from the 1840's. The street elevation illustrates the postwar decline of the residential side streets with impoverished architectural detailing. Numbers 2 and 3 Powells place partially retain their original projecting rendered door and window surrounds, but have lost the majority of the original six-paned hornless sashes, three panelled doors and semi-circular fan-lights. On the south side of the street the return elevations of numbers 70 Lower Dock Street and 1 Powells Place are smooth rendered and denuded of all architectural detail. The loss of detail and introduction of



flush, fixed pane windows has served to further enhance the scale of this three storey block, which serves as an oppressive feature in the Street.

The Street has lost all historic floorscape finishes, with the replacement of Pennant paving and kerbs with tarmac and concrete substitutes. The existing street lighting is also of a low quality utilitarian 'hockey stick' type. The loss of historic surfacing treatments has significantly eroded the historic quality of the public realm.

Views out of Powells Place are enclosed by No.128 Lower Dock Street, a smooth rendered terrace of three stories dating from ca 1870 with shouldered architrave window surrounds and bracketed eaves. The terrace has a series of distinctive canted bays set beneath hipped slated roofs, cantilevered at first floor level. The terrace is marred by incongruous modern shop frontages which significantly detract from the quality of the terrace. Furthermore, all sash windows have been removed, with the introduction of fixed pane lights with top hung vents.

Dumfries Place

In common with Powells Place, Dumfries Place has been prematurely truncated by the site of a later engineering works to the east. The surviving terrace of residential properties on the north side of the street are similar in age to those in Powells Place, dating from the mid-nineteenth century. The terraces share similar detailing, with simple raised door surrounds with impostes and keystones. Simple semi-circular fanlights remain but most properties have lost all original joinery details. The smaller scale of these terraced properties suggests a lesser status in comparison with Powells Place and this is reflected in the apparent omission of window



surrounds. The replacement of render finishes with spar and pebble dashing detracts from the coherence of the street. Surviving areas of original render suggests that the properties were originally

smooth rendered and inscribed in imitation of ashlar. Whilst substantial Pennant Sandstone sills survive, the replacement of hornless sashes by a variety of fixed pane windows, usually incorporating top-hung vents, serves to further erode the character and integrity of the north side of the Street.

The south side of the Street is framed by the north return elevation of No.67 Lower Dock Street. The monumental scale of this substantially blind, flat roofed elevation of three stories in height is a powerful feature, which contrasts with the cottage



scale of the domestic properties opposite. The harsh white painted, smooth rendered frontage is broken by a single raised string course which further emphasises the oppressive character of the frontage. At the eastern end of the south side is a disused building of three bays, with blocked window/door openings suggestive of a former warehouse use. This building gives clues to the historic character of the remainder of this side of the street whose identity has been effectively erased. Views from Dumfries Place to the east and west are denied their original contextual enclosure by sites awaiting redevelopment. A high priority must be afforded to reinstating new urban fabric of an appropriate scale and grain to repair this damage.

Traditional floor spaces have been lost but stone kerbs and gutter details do survive. The quality of the public realm is further eroded by wirescape and efforts should be made to secure their removal.

Caroline Street

Caroline Street contrasts with Dumfries and Powells Place to the south by virtue of the surviving terraced residential properties on both sides of the Street. The residential development on the north side of the street appears to be of a single phase of construction, probably dating from the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Whilst these properties retain their original door and sash window openings, they have suffered from extensive alteration. The replacement of smooth render with roughcast and dashed finishes has effectively destroyed the cohesive architectural character of the terrace. It appears that these properties have always lacked the interesting decorative render details, found on earlier terraces in the immediate vicinity. The terraced housing on the south side of the Street is earlier than the north and of several phases of construction. This is manifested in the irregular, staggered form of the street frontage. The South side of the Street also lacks early Victorian decorative render details and has suffered extensive alteration.

In common with neighbouring residential streets, Caroline Street has received an insensitive treatment of



streetscape finishes with footways formed in a patchwork of concrete slabs and asphalt. Some Pennant kerbing survives but the public realm has been effectively stripped of historic details. The existing lamp standards are of an inappropriate design and the extensive overhead wirescape detracts further from the residual historic character.

Views along Caroline street to the west are enclosed by a three storey block of four terraced houses (Nos. 141-144) dating from the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The block has a rendered ground floor, with first and second stories faced in



coursed, Pennant sandstone. At first floor level, each retains a canted cantilevered timber bay with marginally glazed horned sashes. The eastern end of Caroline Street is open to Usk Way (A4042) and terminates at Canal Terrace, a short terrace of red brick Edwardian houses.

Mellon Street

Mellon Street forms a secondary thoroughfare, leading from Lower Dock Street to George Street. The street retains an interesting combination of late Victorian domestic terraced housing and warehousing. The Street illustrates the on-going development of the Lower Dock Street area in the later Victorian and Edwardian periods. The western side of Mellon Street is enclosed by late Victorian, red brick terraced houses, of two stories. Towards the upper end of the Street are the former warehouse premises of the Co-operative Society. The building survives in a largely unaltered form with a domestic scaled street frontage, enclosing a service yard to the rear. Constructed in a Queen Anne style, the building retains its original small paned upper sashes and is a good example of a goods depot with associated officing which forms part of a planned street frontage.

The adjacent terraced housing which flanks the former Co-op premises, appears to form part of the same development and probably provided accommodation for Co-op warehouse and shop workers from the store to the north, in Great Dock



Street (since demolished to create John Frost Square). These terraced properties have undergone extensive piecemeal alterations, which serve to mask the architectural integrity which formerly existed along the western street frontage. The east street frontage is formed by the much altered rear elevations of commercial properties in Lower Dock Street.



At the southern end of the street, substantial red brick warehouses provide significant landmarks by virtue of their bold scale and form. No.36 Mellon Street is an excellent example of a turn of the century warehouse, which has escaped significant alteration. It is distinguished by virtue of its unusually elongated plan form and restricted street frontage, providing access to an enclosed service yard. The northern courtyard elevation is punctuated by a typical cantilevered pentice which strongly evokes the dynamism of the mercantile economy formerly associated with dock related warehousing. The long southern elevation is flanked by Robbins Lane, a twitten which



retains an attractive floorscape of brick paving. This elevation is notable by virtue of the repeating squat brick furnace flues which crenellate this imposing flank elevation, which in turn rises above the terraced housing fronting George Street.

On the eastern side of the Street is a second warehouse with which it appears to have been functionally related. This second warehouse has been converted to a retail furnishings outlet. Whilst the ground floor

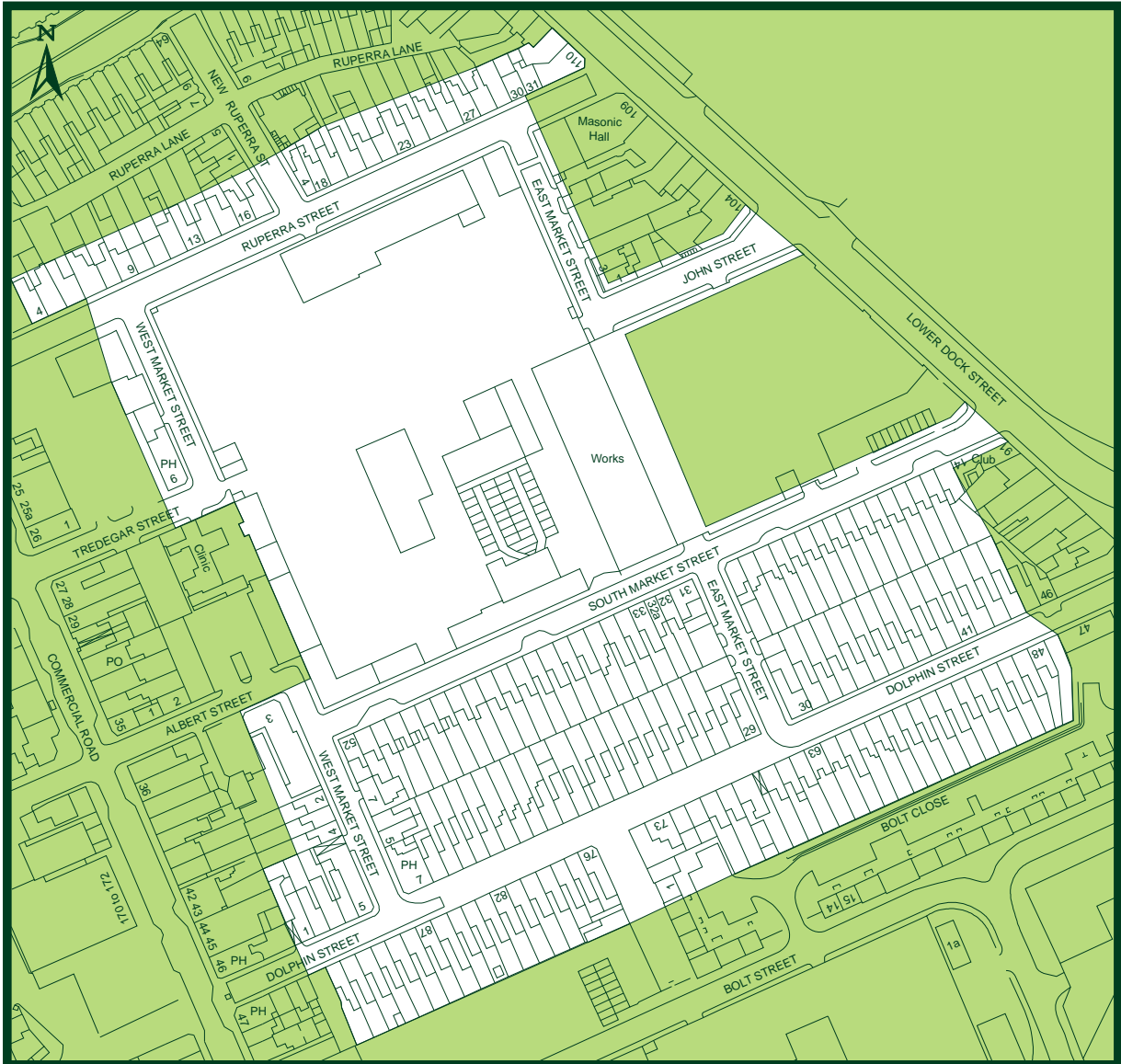


has suffered significant alterations, the building retains a distinctive character. The loss of urban fabric on the south-eastern corner of Mellon Street has destroyed the contextual relationship with George Street. The reinstatement of an appropriate built frontage to George Street should be afforded a high priority.

Recommendations

- i. That the reinstatement of traditional paving treatments and street furniture be sought;
- ii. That the accurate repair of residential properties be sought with particular attention paid to the reinstatement of lost architectural detailing;
- iii. That an Article 4(2) direction be imposed on residential properties No.s 1-3 Powells Place, Nos 1-9 Dumfries Place, Nos 1-26 Caroline Street, Nos 1, 1a - 34 Mellon Street and 5,6,8a,15,41 Emlyn Street in respect of the replacement of windows, doors, modification of openings, removal of chimney stack, replacement roof coverings and removal of render from the front elevations of properties;
- iv. That the removal of existing overhead wiring be sought.

The Tredegar Market Quarter



In common with most of Pillgwenlly, the Market was created by the infilling of marshland abutting the course of the Jack's Pill, under the patronage of Lord Tredegar. The "New Mart"

opened on the 16th October 1844 and formed the focus for new streets under construction in the locality. The Market was designed in the form of a quadrangle with single storey sheds, enclosing three sides of an open court. Each shed, faced in ashlar with pediments on the return elevation, formed part of a dignified composition. The northern boundary of the Market fronting

Ruperra Street was originally undeveloped and enclosed by an ashlar wall with cast-iron railings. These railings remain substantially intact and serve to illustrate the quality of the original development

The Market neighbourhood is unique within the town being an early



Victorian mercantile square enclosed by contemporary residential development. The Market remains bounded on three sides by West, East and South Market Streets. Whilst Ruperra Street, linking Lower Dock Street with Commercial Road, runs to the north. John Street now provides the principle access to the Market from Lower Dock Street. Whilst the original form of the Market remains clearly discernable, the remaining structures represent approximately only one-third of the original buildings. The southern range, although fragmentary, retains its original character and this is reflected in its grade II listed status. The northern half of the western range and the whole of the eastern ranges have been lost (except for a much



modified fragment at the north-east corner). The introduction of large sheds of industrial character into the Market site during the postwar period, has served to detract from the surviving architectural and historic character. In particular, the large sheet-clad industrial building at the south-eastern



corner dominates the adjacent Market buildings. The incursion of modern sheds into the formerly open yard area detracts significantly from the historic grain of the Market.

The central sections of both West Market Street and

East Market Street have been removed by later development and this has significantly damaged the setting of the Market and the historic morphology of the locality by divorcing the residential streets to the north and south, from one another. Whilst post-war development has taken place across the former route of West Market Street, there is no physical obstruction across the route of the missing section of East Market Street. Every effort should be given to reinstating the integrity of both sections of highway, if the opportunity arises.

Ruperra Street

Ruperra Street retains the earliest phase of residential development surrounding the Market dating from the mid-nineteenth century. Opposing the northern side of the Market, the northern side of the street comprises two-storey, in-line, terraced housing of more than one phase of construction. This straight Street is unrelieved by architectural detailing, having been denuded of virtually all



distinguishing features in the postwar period. The two storey houses are constructed variously of rendered local stone rubble and brickwork. The stripping of external renders to reveal the random rubble stonework beneath is further eroding the integrity of the terraces. A limited number of properties retain fragments of their original detailing; which illustrate that the Street once presented a more lively scene than today. In particular, a single early Victorian three panelled door remains, whilst a pair of houses retain raised semi-circular door surrounds as found extensively in neighbour-



ing streets. There are no surviving sash windows. These fragmentary details should be used as templates for the reinstatement of lost features.



These detrimental alterations to residential properties have been mirrored in works carried out to the historic floorscapes. In particular, the substitution of Pennant paving slabs and curbs, by tarmacadam has further weakened the historic character. The resulting streetscape is bleak and lacking in texture. The existing lamp standards, although of an appropriately domestic scale, are undistinguished and of utilitarian design.



The partial replacement of the original dwarf wall and cast iron railings on the southern street frontage (probably cast at the Tredegar Iron Works by Homfray) which formerly enclosed the northern side of the market, by galvanised trident topped palisading, detracts further from the residual historic character. The surviving railings, ashlar piers and gates are of great significance and should be reinstated along the whole of the Ruperra Street frontage.



East and West Market Street

Both streets are distinguished from the neighbouring streets to the north and south by virtue of their fragmentary character; both in terms of the limited surviving built frontages and the loss of actual sections of the roads themselves. Both streets having suffered from extensive redevelopment of



their central sections, flanking the Cattle Market itself. Whilst the reinstatement of the lost section of West Market Street appears impractical due to recent development, the former East Market Street forms part of a larger vacant opportunity site. Accordingly, a high priority should be afforded to securing the reinstatement of this important street frontage as part of any development proposal.

The northern section of West Market Street is dominated by a three storey late Victorian public house, with weakly Queen Anne derived elevations of red brickwork with freestone dressings. Immediately to the north, the exposed rubble flank elevations of a much modernised former warehouse add texture to the local scene. The northern street corner has been redeveloped to create a children's play area. This has created a weakly defined street junction. Consideration should be



given to additional hard and soft landscaping to enhance the poor sense of enclosure and provide a more attractive and secure context. The eastern side of the Street retains attractive natural stone high boundary walling, formerly the rear flank walls of the original Tredegar Market Buildings. This is offset against surviving Pennant paved footways and kerbing.

The southern end of West Market Street is characterised by late Victorian and Edwardian development of two stories. Some recent redevelopment has taken place and this has generally followed the scale and form of existing development with limited success. This part of the Street retains an interesting mix of commercial and residential uses, reflecting its close



proximity to both the Market and Commercial Road nearby. This part of the Street has traditionally functioned as a secondary frontage providing ancillary services to the adjacent commercial centres. The Dolphin Public House, located at the junction with Dolphin Street is a good example of an unaltered Edwardian pub in an eclectic freestyle, with an interesting combination of red brick and panels of coursed Pennant stone. These mixed uses should be encouraged to provide a cosmopolitan and lively local character.

The northern end of East Market Street is domi-

nated by the imposing three storey stuccoed elevation of the rear of the grade II listed Masonic Hall. Bollards across the street junction with Ruperra street have further strangled activity in the



surviving northern section of the street and this is evidenced by the abandoned semi-detached pair of Victorian houses at the junction with John Street. The remainder of the eastern street frontage is predominantly unused or underused with transitory car repair workshops and derelict yard areas to the rear of properties fronting Lower Dock Street. Inappropriate postwar piecemeal development within these rear yard areas has further encouraged the decline of this part of the street. The western street frontage was historically enclosed by the East range of the Cattle Market which has been lost. The street frontage is now enclosed by the former rear wall of the Market range. This wall has a lime rendered finish applied to a coursed rubble core and presents a dejected frontage which could be



revived by simply rewashing with a pigmented limewash. A high priority must be afforded to the reinstatement of a replacement built form across the whole of the east market street frontage of an appropriate scale and grain. The surviving areas of walling should be retained as an important historic linkage.

The southern end of the street is open into a semi-derelict warehouse compound which includes the course of the lost street frontage leading to South Market Street. This opportunity site which extends eastwards to Lower Dock Street is dominated by a large portal framed industrial shed which delineates the former street frontage. The replacement of this shed by development of a higher quality and complimentary scale and form should be afforded a high priority. In addition the reinstatement of the lost section of East Market Street would serve to both enhance the development potential of the vacant opportunity site and historic urban morphology.

South Market Street

Although this street is documented as being under construction in the 1840's, there is no surviving residential development from this period. The street is a mirror image of Ruperra Street to the north, bisected by East Market Street. Unlike the Ruperra Street Market frontage, the southern frontage was historically defined by the longitudinal form of the single storey cattle sheds. These survive in a fragmented form and strongly define the northern street frontage with their distinctive blank rear elevations and corrugated sheet roofs exaggerating the linear street form.



The reinstatement of missing sections of the once continuous built frontage would help to reinforce the historic character. The central section of the street is defined by the jagged asymmetric red-brick gables of a former warehouse, forming an interesting counterpoint with the strong horizontal form of the opposed terraces. The eastern continuation of the Street is marked by the harsh painted blockwork



boundary wall of the former Brewery, relieved by a single derelict residential property. This frontage forms part of the Brewery Opportunity Site, having an important frontage to Lower Dock Street. The re-development of this site will be encouraged within the parameters established by a separate development brief.



The southern residential frontage is characterised by in-line terraced residential properties of two-stories and three phases of development. The terrace at the eastern end of the street dates from 1880-1900, with original elevations of smooth rendered random rubble construction. Few properties retain original horned four-paned sashes, however the majority have exposed cambered brick arches and Pennant sills. A single contemporary four-panelled door set beneath a



rectangular fanlight remains at the eastern end of the street. The western end of the street is composed of Edwardian terraced housing similar to that found in Dolphin Street, with coupled sashes on the ground floor and brick elevations, now masked by inappropriate pebble dashing. These properties have lost all significant architectural detailing. The middle section of the street retains the earliest surviving properties, however these are now virtually indistinguishable from their neighbours due to extensive alterations. A limited number retain smooth render finishes inscribed to resemble ashlar.



The creation of oblique parking bays separated by cobbled, raised refuges has resulted in an incoherent and confused appearance. The insertion of planting across the southern market street frontage has blurred the previously legible frontage and introduced an alien and inappropriate element of suburban character. Consideration should be given to the removal of this planting and its replacement by a traditionally paved footway with appropriate street tree planting.

Dolphin Street



This Street is unique within the neighbourhood by virtue of the twin residential street frontages of a single phase of Edwardian development. The two-storey, in-line, terraced housing is approximately



contemporary with the opening of the Alexandra Dock extension in 1893, which provided the impetus for additional housing in Pillgwenly. The terraces are simply detailed with red brick elevations. The simply chamfered heavy Bathstone window and door lintels are carried along the terrace by the use of buff string courses at eaves and intermediate floor levels. The use of paired sashes at ground floor level differentiates this later phase of residential development from the earlier Victorian development in adjacent streets. The Street is also noteworthy by virtue of its length and straightness, which must originally have been further enhanced by the strong architectural rhythm of the terraces with their continuous buff string courses.



The extensive postwar alterations carried out within the street have served to destroy the street scape as a homogeneous composition. The pebble dashing of individual properties has been particularly damaging. A limited area of redevelopment has taken place between numbers 73-76 and whilst the scale of the new development is broadly similar to the original terraces, subtle differences in the proportions of the

elevations fail to respond to the existing, strong repetitive form. Furthermore, the development fails to define the street corner in a coherent and legible manner, resulting in a weak element within the streetscape.



Dolphin Street and South Market Street share similar problems associated with the accommodation of on- street parking demands, and traffic calming measures. The creation of a oblique parking bays, have served to detract from the linear street form, whilst the indiscriminate positioning of street trees in giant planters appear as incongruous and alien features within the streetscene. Whilst it is acknowledged that traffic calming measures are important to secure a safe environment for residents, the existing scheme should be reviewed, having regard to its detrimental visual impact. This review should extend to a consideration of broader streetscape issues, including: finishes, furniture and planting

Recommendations

- i. That the reinstatement of traditional paving treatments and street furniture be sought;
- ii. That the accurate repair of residential properties be sought with particular attention paid to the reinstatement of lost architectural detailing;
- iii. That an Article 4(2) direction be imposed on residential properties No.s 4-31 Ruperra Street, 1,3 East Market Street, Nos 14-52 South Market Street, Nos 1-46, 48-93 Dolphin Street, and Nos 2,3,4,5,5,7 West Market Street in respect of the replacement of windows, d o o r s , modification of openings, removal of chimney stack, replacement roof coverings and removal of render from the front elevations of properties;
- iv. That the removal of existing overhead wiring be sought;
- v. That the repair of surviving features and reinstatement of lost elements of the Cattle Market be sought.

Lower Dock Street
Conservation Area

Lower Dock Street: Key Frontage

Lower Dock Street forms the surviving southern portion of the key arterial route way which connected the Town Dock with the mercantile centre of the town. Formerly known as Great Dock Street, Lower Dock Street is a recent term resulting from the dislocation of the upper and lower stretches of the street by the development of John Frost Square in the post war period. Dock Street formed the commercial heart of Newport during the mid 19th century. The rise and fall of the street's fortunes parallels that of the Dock. The street owes its existence to the infilling of the Pillgwenly Levels by fill material excavated from the Town Dock. In particular, the raising of the original land levels in the Jacks Pill area served to release a substantial parcel of land linking the Town Centre with the docklands. The surviving street is strongly linear and forms an important route between Kingsway in the north and Uskway roundabout in the south (A4042).

The northern section of the street is divorced from the Town Centre by Kingsway which acts as a significant barrier to both pedestrians and vehicles from the Town Centre. The poor environmental quality



at the far northern end of the street, fronting Queensway is illustrated in the burnout shell of a good Neo-Baroque, three storey red brick facade with Bathstone dressings on the corner of Emlyn Street, which is further exacerbated by the adjacent advertisement hoarding. This presents a dismal gateway feature to the northern half of the Conservation Area

The existing circulation of traffic has divorced the northern half of the street from the Town Centre by preventing vehicular access from Kingsway with the George Street intersection, now serving as the main

access point to both halves of the street. Thus, although the street is in close geographic proximity to the Town Centre, the existing scheme of traffic management has served to divorce the street from its geographic context. This has undoubtedly exacerbated the post war decline of the once vibrant commercial activities within the street frontage properties, by disrupting the natural movements of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Therefore, it is important that careful consideration is given to a detailed study of the existing scheme of traffic management to assess whether this situation can be ameliorated without prejudicing safety. The northern and southern halves of the street are effectively now divorced from each other by the dual carriageway of George Street. This is manifested in the apparently greater relative decline of the southern area of the street..

The historic importance of the street is manifested in the architectural strength of the surviving frontages which illustrate development throughout the middle and later nineteenth century. The three and four storey elevations employ a



variety of architectural idioms and display robust detailing. The northern half of the street retains a number of buildings in the Greek Revival style, dating from the 1840's with stuccoed elevations and door cases employing the fluted Doric order. Nos 77-78, is a pair of three storey, stuccoed townhouses with margin-paned sashes, with string courses and parapet.

No. 69 illustrates the continued use of this style into the mid 19th century with the erection of a substantial two storey villa on the corner with Powells Place



with an unusually high parapet and tri-partite sash windows on the front elevation employing raised architraves and modillion brackets separating the ground floor sashes with robust Doric doorcase. No 74 Lower Dock Street, formerly the Customs House,



was built in 1857 and retains a dignified symmetrical facade with pedimented three bay central range with the Royal Arms of Queen Victoria set within a shallow pediment. The two storey frontage has channelled rustication to the ground floor, and quoining with reeded cornice and parapet and fine engaged, paired columns flanking the central doorway, each with superimposed rustication.

Dating from the late 19th century is No. 121, which



illustrates the only example of a red brick frontage in the northern Germanic, Hanseatic style with crow-stepped gables and eccentrically cusped brickwork to the ground floor openings. The pyramidally

roofed three storey tower, on the southern corner of the street has unfortunately been refaced in a blind, dull brown brickwork, which detracts significantly from this important corner site.

The southern half of Lower Dock Street is characterised by mid 19th century terraced properties of three storeys with early Victorian detailing which have generally suffered a greater degree of alteration and neglect when compared to the northern half of



the street. Furthermore, the character of this part of the street is considerably weakened by the presence of substantial areas awaiting redevelopment. In particular, the large site of the former Western Valleys Railway Station, (which closed in 1880) on the eastern street frontage, presently destroys the historic urban grain. The former brewery site which it faces, exacerbates this erosion of historic character. A high priority must be afforded to securing the reinstatement of street frontages of an appropriate scale and form. These sites represent an opportunity for high quality, contemporary development which will contribute to the character and vitality of the Conservation Area.

The dominant architectural form within this section of the street is the Masonic Hall (109) with its idiosyncratic, three storey elevations of Italianate stucco work and important corner site facing north-





wards towards the Town Centre. This building forms an important architectural group with No.106, 107 and 108. No. 108 is a three storey building in High Victorian style, with chateau roof, yellow brick and

stucco elevations, dating from the 1870's. Nos. 106-7 are a stuccoed, semi detached pair with arcaded ground floor and paired central doorways set within rusticated surrounds with central bay



projecting slightly forward, with rendered quoins and shallow, segmental pediment. At the extreme southern end of the street the surviving western street frontage,

Nos. 84-91, compose a fine group of early Victorian, three storey buildings, originally with stuccoed elevations, now substantially pebble dashed. These buildings retain significant original architectural character and detailing with hornless,

sashes with margin panes, set within architraves. Of particular note is No.90 which retains a substantially original shopfront with vine trail carved cornice and sashes with

margin glazing above, set within shouldered architraves with keystones with central Venetian window and arch-headed sashes to second floor level set beneath a deeply projecting parapet cornice. This group forms an important gateway feature when entering the Conservation Area from the south and warrants every effort to secure a viable reuse.



Lower Dock Street
 Conservation Area

Recommendations

1 The Lower Dock Street Conservation Area be extended to include those areas indicated on the attached plan.

2 An Article IV(a) Direction be imposed in respect of the residential street frontages, to withdraw Permitted Development relating to alterations to the front elevation; including the replacement of roof coverings, windows, doors, rendering and the removal of chimney stacks.

3 An inventory of existing street surface finishes and furniture be carried out and consideration be given to the implementation of a comprehensive repaving scheme and the replacement of lamp standards and other street furniture.

4 The removal of existing overhead wiring be investigated with the relevant telecommunication undertakers.

5 A schedule of properties be drawn up to identify appropriate remedial works of enhancement to reinstate lost features and

detailing and potential sources of grant aid be investigated including a Housing Grouped Repair Scheme to achieve the implementation of the schedule.

6 A detailed evaluation of the existing traffic and pedestrian management within and adjacent to the Conservation Area be carried out by the Head of Transportation to investigate whether improvements can be secured in the interests of the vitality of the Lower Dock Street area.

7 Detailed site briefs be prepared to guide future development on the opportunity sites identified within the revised Conservation Area.

Lower Dock Street

Conservation Area

Appendix 1

Great Dock Street 1882-1902

It is difficult to imagine the commercial dynamism and diversity that once characterised the Dock Street area. By 1837 Dock Street appears on maps as the business quarter of the town, comprising the 'offices of merchant princes, brokers, colliery proprietors, shipping companies and traders'

The earliest surviving street directories date from the early 1880's and serve to illustrate that the street had continued to thrive throughout the mid nineteenth century. In 1881 the extension of Dock Street northwards marked a new period of renewed growth. To illustrate the diverse flavour of the uses that existed, an analysis of the occupiers of the street between 1882-1902 has been carried out.

Date	New/Old No.	Occupier
	Cross Lane	
1882-02	58	Drill Hall 3 rd Monmouthshire Rifles
	Caroline Street	
1882-89	61(22)	Jason Blain Travelling Draper
1884-89	62(23)	T& C Monks Stone Merchant and Charles Price Cabinet Maker
1884-89	63(25)	T& F Smith Corn and Seed Merchant
1885-87	64(26)	Monmouthshire and Cwm Collieries
1882-02	65(27)	Professor Henry, Fitter
1882-02	66(28)	C W Richards - Coal and Pitwood Merchants, James and Emmaunuel Colliery Proprietors and FH Baldon agent
	Dumfries Place	
1882-89	67(29)	J S Stone - Agricultural Implement maker
1884-92	69(30)	Stephens, Mawsons, and Goss Ship Brokers, L&H Gueret coal merchants and ship brokers, Marine Trading Company Ltd merchants and ship brokers, Newport (Mon)W Powell -Colliery Proprietor
	Powells Place	
1882-84	70(31)	Griffiths James - sail and waterproof cover maker, the building was void for two years between 1887-89 before being taken over by a Tobacco manufacturer
1893-02	71(31)	Cwmbran-Abercarn Black Vein Steam Coal Offices
1882-02	72(32)	Stanley Rachel -Custom House Dining Rooms
1882-02	73(34/5)	Fraser and Co -Ship Chandlers
1882-02	74(36)	Custom House
1885-02	75/6(37/8)	O'Hare and Vaughen- Potato Merchants, Bonded Store
1882-87	77(39)	J Wilson- Ship Broker and I O'Brian Haulier, Murpheys Wagon Works
1882-92	78(40)	J G Watts - Coal and Pitwood Merchant, Stephenson, Clarke and Co Steam ship owners and Coal Merchants
1882-02	80(42)	Mrs M A Hobbs Railway Hotel
	Grenville Street and Lower George Street- (Note original spelling, now known as Granville Street)	

Dolphin Street

1882-02	84(46)	T Pugsley and Co Ship Chandlers and Bonded Store
1882-02	85(47)	R Gething Jnr and Co Ship brokers, Portuguese Consulate
1882-89	86(48)	Jones Brothers Shop Brokers and Exporters. Portuguese Vice Consulate, Swedish and Norwegian Vice Consulate
1882-89	87(49)	Norwegian Vice Consulate
1882-02	88(50)	Caledonian Hotel
1882-02	89(51)	T Beynon and Co Ltd Ship brokers and Ship owners. In 1889 Austrian, Russian and Chilean Consulate
1882-02	90(52)	Mrs M Challicom Potato Merchant and Fruiterer

South Market Street

The gap site now a car park for the Cattle Market in 1882 was once a thriving block of businesses including:

1882	54	The Eagle Hotel
	55	E Davies Chemist
	56	W&R Williams and Son Opticians and Chronometer makers
	57	Roger Twist Ship Chandlers
	58	Edward Morgan Butchers
	59	Chief Telegraph office and branch post office
	60	RW Stonehouse and Co ship brokers, Vice Consulate for Brazil
	61	E Jenkins Grocer and Baker
	62	Richard Cockbain Tobacconist
	63	Charles Brunt Butcher
	64	Brecon and Merthyr Railway Office
	65	Frederick Edwards Ship Broker, Cory Brothers Colliery Proprietors and coal shippers T Phillips & Son Wine and Spirit Merchant

John Street

1888-02	104(66)	Blaenavon Co Ltd
1882-93	105(67)	Budd and Co Ship Brokers
1885-02	106(68)	Hoskins and Llewellyn proprietors of the Abersychan Elled Collieries, Charles Hunter Williams Solicitor and Notary
1893-02	107(69)	G Jones and W Heard and Co merchants and shipbrokers vice counsel to the United States and Bolivia, Nixons Navigational Coal Ltd.
1884-02	108(70)	Board of Trade Offices
1882-02	109(72)	Masonic Hall, From 1894-02 The building was also occupied by Louis Hermessen Ship broker and General agent and the City of Cork Steam Packet Co.

Ruperra Street

1882-02	110(73)	Masonic Hotel
1882-94	111(74)	J W Nicholas Grocer
1884-94	112(75)	R W Jones and Co Merchants and Shipowners, Italian, Danish, Brazilian and German Counsel
1882-02	113(76)	John Vipond & Co Ltd Colliery proprietors and Bonded Store
1882-02	114(77)	O Goss and Co Ship Chandlers and bonded store merchants
1882-02	115(79)	The Vulcan Hotel
1182-02	116(79)	J F Thomas and Co Ship brokers

George Street

A number of properties have been lost from the street frontage to widen George Street and to create the car park for the furniture shop. The records illustrate that the following businesses existed.

1888	80	R Jacob Corn merchant, W Jost shipping agent
	81	A H Tapson and Co Ship brokers also at Cardiff
	82	India Rubber and Gutta Percha Co Ltd
	83	Sigogne Ceaser ships chandler
1882-02	121(84)	Drill Hall 1 st Monmouthshire Volunteer Rifles
1882-02	122(85)	Pyman Watson and Co Ship Brokers and Coal Merchants
1882-02	123(86)	Cory and Sons Trading Co Ltd Ship brokers and at Cardiff
1884-02	124(87)	Harbour Commissioners and Pilotage
1882-02	125(88)	Thomas Wilks and Co Insurance Brokers
1882-00	126(89)	Joseph Myers Pawn Brokers
1882-00	127(90)	Joseph Myers
1885-01	128(91)	Jessemans stores
1884-02	129(92)	L.N.&W Co
1885-02	130(93)	P Bernasconi Shipchandler
1897-02	131(95)	Societe Commerciale D'Affretements et de Commission, JP Hacquoil & Co ship owners and brokers agents for Powells Tiliery Street Coal Co ltd.
1884-02	132(96)	Orders and Handford ship brokers and iron ore merchants

Mellon Street

1885-02	139(99)	Watts Ward & Co, ship brokers, coal exporters and general merchants and agents for the United National Collieries Ltd.
1899-02	140(100)	Mrs M Bennett Greengrocer
1888	14 (100a)	Various residential occupiers, but in 1888 the house was occupied by Thomas Morgan Herbalist
1892-95	142(101)	Jones D Frost Bookmaker
1892-99	143(101a)	Grocery shop
1882-02	144(102)	John Gee coffee Tavern and Herbalist
1882-02	145(102a)	Arthur Allen Grocer and Baker

Great Dock Street

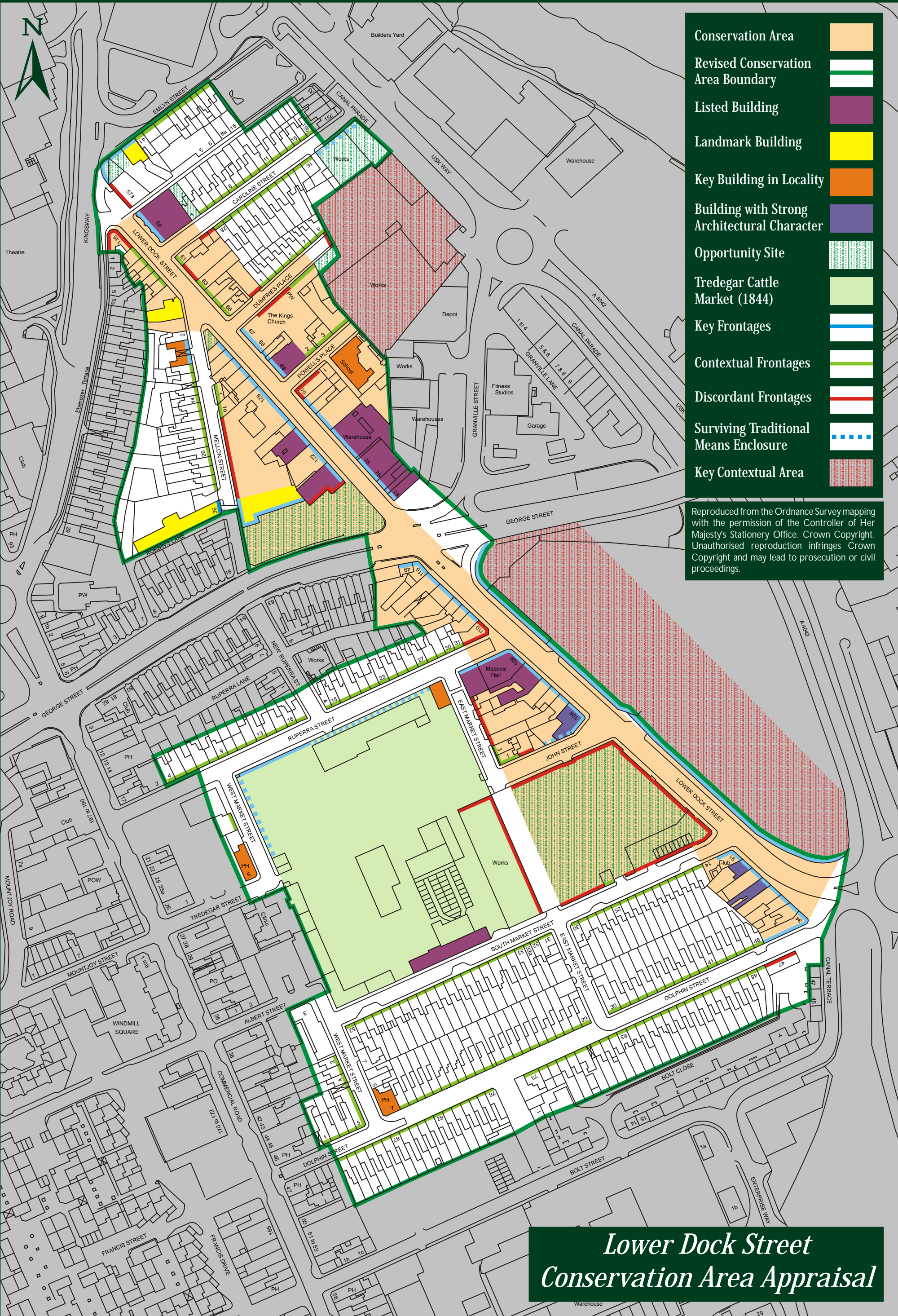
Historic Milestones

The fortunes of Great Dock Street and Dock Road reflect the development of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal and port related trade. The unparalleled growth of Newport in the period 1801-1891 is illustrated by an explosive growth in population from only 1,087 to 67,270. This following selected chronology charts the development of the Lower Dock Street area throughout the Nineteenth century.

- 1792 First Monmouthshire Canal Act
- 1796 Monmouthshire Canal opened for traffic
- 1791 Second canal Act enacted to construct a canal across the Pill. Work completed by 1804 thereby adding a substantial new area to the Borough of Newport.
- 1801 Population of Newport 1,087
- 1805/6 Monmouthshire Canal Co. resolved to extend the canal a considerable distance down the river, as a consequence of the great increases experienced in trade. John Hodgkinson of Cheltenham, engineer. Extensive pile driving through 'windlass and dropping onto the pile' (Steam piling not introduced until 1837)
- 1807 Sir Charles Morgan grants a 99 year lease of 200 acres to Samuel Homfray, Rowland Lascelles and Richard Fothergill for the establishment of the Tredegar Wharf Company, who lay out a road 1 mile long and 50 feet wide from the Westgate to Pillgwenlly (Commercial Road)
- 1809 First Newport Improvement Act
- 1811 Completion of 33 miles of Brecon Canal at a cost of £170,000. The canal had a fall of 420 feet, with a 12 feet fall from the Gwasted Bridge junction at Malpas to Pillgwenlly.
Population of Newport 2,246
- 1812 Pillgwenlly Canal Dock opened
- 1817 Union Inn constructed, the first building to be erected on the canal side at Jacks Pill
- 1821 Population of Newport 3,496
- 1831 Population of Newport 7,062
- 1832 Cholera epidemic strikes Town and the Wesleyan Chapel Pillgwenlly built
- 1835 Newport Docks Bill receives Royal Assent and work commences on the 1st December, the work takes 6 years at a cost of £200,000. The excavated earth from the Dock is tipped on the tramway to form an embankment which becomes Dock Road
- 1837 Dock Street first appears on maps and essentially the business quarter of the town 'where are found

-
- the offices of merchant princes, brokers, colliery proprietors , shipping companied and miscellaneous traders’.
- 1839 First entrance made into Dock Street, Newport’s streets and houses named and numbered for the first time. Chartist riots in the town
- 1840 Confirmation of the existence of Dock Street through an advert in the ‘Merlin’ for a milliner shop at 4 ‘Great Dock Street’
24th January ‘South Market Street’ submerged by an extraordinary high tide
Diocesan School opened in Dock Street
- 1842 10th October Newport Docks opens to ‘receive the freighted treasures of other lands’
- 1843 Newport Gas Company Act brings lighting to buildings and streets in the Town
- 1844 February announcement that the Tredegar Wharf Co. Contemplating the erection of a new cattle market between Commercial and Dock Roads, below ‘Ruperra Street’ which would form a complete square of 4 ½ acres . 65,360 cubic yards of ship ballast required before any construction could take place.
Pill Road improved as ships masters are encouraged to discharge their ballast and paid 13/4d per ton for fill material.
- 1845 31st July, Act obtained for making a railway from Newport to Pontypool
- 1846 19 houses of a superior class completed in Great Dock Street presumably by Messrs Rennie, Logan and Co. And Great Dock Street was considered to be the most fashionable place of residence in Newport.
Newport and Pillgwenlly Waterworks Act gives powers to supply the town, the Borough and shipping with ‘pure and wholesome water.’
- 1847 Dr R F Woollett is reported as taking up residence at 17 Great Dock Street
- 1849 Work started on the erection of a passenger station for the Western Valley Railway. The ground which was 6-8 feet to low was filled with ballast.
Another Cholera epidemic hits the town
First police station built in Pillgwenlly
- 1850 Entrance to Dock Street from Llanarth Street widened and more houses are erected.
Dock Street is reported as being in a poor condition from the traffic, dirt and mortar as a result of the increased building work
The station is opened on the 23rd December 1998
- 1851 12 December The new Hope Chapel opened for worshippers in Great Dock Street.
The year of the Great Exhibition, Census reveals that Newport (19,323) has a greater population than Cardiff (18,351). Newport has 2908 houses and Cardiff 2621.
- 1852 Wednesday 30th June Railway opened between Newport and Pontypool by Captain Simmonds
- 1854 Theatre Royal built at the corner of Caroline Street and facing Great Dock Street. The canal from Kings Parade to the foot of Bolt Street was abandoned and filled, as it was required for railway purposes.
Sleepers were laid across the discarded waterway and rails were laid.
- 1856 Masonic Hall Dock Street opened, extension to the Dock commenced in June

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- 1857 Theatre Royal Dock Street pulled down after it was destroyed by fire
- 1858 Newport's first drainage scheme, forming an extension to the Town Dock is completed adding nearly 8 acres at a cost of £79,000. Custom House built
- 1864 New Ragged School opened in Dock Street by Mr James Jones following charitable collection. The premises was built to the plans of Mr Hancorn, Architect of Dock Street, at a cost of £450 The school catered for up to 450 children at any one time.
- 1865 The Alexandra Dock Company was formed and the chairman was Lord Tredegar.
- 1867 First Drill Hall erected
- 1868 Sailors home opened
- 1871 Population of Newport 26,957, the first free Library opened in Dock Street
- 1873 Second Newport Improvement Act
- 1880 Dock Street Station closed
- 1881 Population of Newport 35,313, the Town Council decide to take immediate action to extend Great Dock Street to High Street- thus New Dock Street. The making of this new artery placed the Newport Docks in direct communication with Pontypool.
- 1882 The new Free Library opened November
- 1883 New railway bridge opened
- 1887 New Co-operative Stores opened
- 1889 Temperance Hall opened
- 1890 Model Lodging House opened
- 1891 Population of Newport 54,707 and Newport is constituted as a County Borough
- 1896 Fire Brigade Station opened
- 1891 Population of Newport 67,270
- 1902 National Telephone Company's exchange opened and the 4th Battalion South Wales Borderers Drill hall opened



- Conservation Area
- Revised Conservation Area Boundary
- Listed Building
- Landmark Building
- Key Building in Locality
- Building with Strong Architectural Character
- Opportunity Site
- Tredegar Cattle Market (1844)
- Key Frontages
- Contextual Frontages
- Discordant Frontages
- Surviving Traditional Means Enclosure
- Key Contextual Area

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*Lower Dock Street
Conservation Area Appraisal*