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## **Revision of the Newport Conservation Area**

Appraisal

Adopted 11 September 2007

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## Introduction

Local Planning Authorities have a duty under The Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate as conservation areas any areas considered to be of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to protect or enhance.

The Character Area boundaries are inevitably subjective in complex environments, and are based not only on architectural, land-use or historic attributes, but on the dynamic experience of walking or driving through an area. Map based boundaries are taken into consideration, but sensational qualities such as the awareness of enclosure or openness and degrees of noise and activity are also important in defining edges to Character Areas and the Conservation Area.

The legislation also makes provision for schemes to enhance the area, so the inclusion of areas of potential allows for schemes to be put forward which will improve the Area in keeping with its own individual character, and to the same high standard.

Designation does not mean that development cannot take place within the proposed Conservation Area or within its setting. Designation means that special consideration is required for applications in the Conservation Area to ensure that any demolition is justified and that schemes (which are acceptable on all other planning grounds) are of a suitable design and of a high enough standard. This additional level of consideration allows Members to insist upon the best possible standards of design within a Conservation Area, and allows them to refuse the poor and mediocre with confidence.

## Newport Conservation Area

Newport developed as a medieval market town, which began to take form as a town early in the 12<sup>th</sup> century under the shadow of Carisbrooke Castle. The town's character relates heavily to its medieval street pattern and history as a market town. Situated at the centre of the Island, and at the navigable limit of the River Medina, the town sits in a valley and is surrounded by higher ground. Newport developed to the east of Carisbrooke and its castle and to the south of Parkhurst Forest, with St George's Down and Mount Joy enclosing the town to the east and south.

Newport is now the county town and commercial centre of the Isle of Wight, home to local businesses and a growing number of chain stores. It is an area which we think has five distinct characters in terms of its built environment: the Historic Town Centre (Area 1), Town Centre Residential Terraces (Area 2), Carisbrooke Road (Area 3), St John's (Area 4) and Shide Cross (Area 5).

## NEWPORT CONSERVATION AREA REVISION – APPRAISAL

### AREA 1 - THE HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE



#### **Character**

*This is a very active and bustling town centre which forms the main focus for commercial activity on the Island. Newport's character relates heavily to its medieval street pattern and history as a market town. The tightly knit form of the streets, the two public squares and presence of the parish church of St Thomas support the area's identity as the Island's capital town.*

NB this expression of 'character' is derived from the study below.

### **History of development**

This area is the historic core of Newport and developed as a medieval market town, which began to take form as a town early in the 12<sup>th</sup> century under the shadow of Carisbrooke Castle: the road layout appearing in its present form on the 1611 Speed's Map. The national list descriptions reveal that several buildings in the town centre remain from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and many of the existing buildings in the town are 18<sup>th</sup> century developments. The town centre was consolidated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with many older buildings being given new frontages at this time.

The two public squares that remain in existence today are both original medieval open spaces. St James's Square was home to The Beast Market which took place there from 1532 to 1927. The space was also the Newport bus terminus before the bus station was built in South Street. St Thomas's Square is recognised historically for its 12<sup>th</sup> century church – the first to be built in Newport (organised by the then Lord of the Wight, Richard de Redvers). Rebuilt in 1854-5 the church remains an important landmark, which together with the surrounding late 17<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings forms a historically significant part of the town. Litten Park is a historic green open space within the town centre. Today it forms an important public park, but in medieval times the open space was used as archery butts, and was later converted to a cemetery for use as a plague burial ground.

### **Archaeology**

Excavations in the Historic Town Centre of Newport have shown that this area has been the focus of activity from the prehistoric periods to the present. This is probably due in part to Newport being at the head of the Island's largest navigable river. The area of highest archaeological potential is centred on the Quay, as this would have been both a crossing point and the centre of trade and commerce from the Roman period onwards. Recent excavations suggest that the easternmost limits of Pyle Street were an artisan area in the 13<sup>th</sup> century producing goods for sale or trade in the emergent market town.

### **Setting**

Situated at the centre of the Island, and at the navigable limit of the Medina River, Newport developed as a medieval market town. The town centre sits in a valley and is surrounded by higher ground: Newport grew up to the east of Carisbrooke and its castle and to the south of Parkhurst Forest, with St George's Down and Mount Joy enclosing the town to the east and south. The historic, commercial core is surrounded to the immediate west and south by rows of 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces and town houses. The north and east of the historic town centre is bordered loosely by the River Medina: modern, large scale stores have grown up over the last 15 years along the river, enclosing the historic core. Newport is now the capital town and commercial centre of the Isle of Wight – home to local businesses and a growing number of chain stores.

### **Materials**

Brick is used extensively throughout the town centre as a building material. Red brick is commonly found, with many buildings displaying glazed grey headers and quoining around doors and windows. Grey brick buildings are also evident, with red brick detail and window surrounds. Many buildings are finished in painted brick or render: generally in white or a shade of cream. Grey slate and clay tiles are both commonly used as roofing materials.



Throughout the town centre the windows in the upper floors are primarily of timber construction and are generally painted white or cream, although other colours including blue and brown are evident. The traditional shop fronts that remain are wooden framed as are many of the modern replacements. Several plastic fascia boards and surrounds are evident around the town however. Wooden panelled doors are commonly found on the ground floor of most office and residential buildings in the area.

### **Height, Mass and Form**

The roads form a loose north-south, east-west relationship and run downhill towards the River Medina and Lukely Brook. There are a variety of street widths across the town centre, with the narrow Scarrots Lane feeling very different from the High Street, which in turn contrasts the wide carriageway along Quay Street. Several historically important narrow lanes cut from north to south across the town, including Chain Lane, Castlehold Lane and Post Office Lane. These are characteristic of Newport and are historic secondary pedestrian access links across the town. Trafalgar Lane is an example of a secondary access lane, serving small scale workshops and ancillary buildings.

Plot widths are irregular but retain remnants of the original narrow plots. Rooflines are varied but buildings are generally of two or three storeys in height which gives an overall consistency of scale to the streets: roofs are of varying pitch, some are hipped, some are gabled, others have parapets etc. The buildings in this area are mostly linked together as terraces or small groups resulting in continuous built frontages. Buildings are generally three stories in height along the primary commercial streets. Two storey buildings are more evident along the quieter secondary streets where rows of residential terraces are found, including sections of Holyrood Street, Orchard Street, Sea Street, Pyle Street, Lugley Street and Crocker Street: these buildings are domestic in scale. All buildings are set directly on the back of pavements, creating a sense of enclosure, parts of Crocker Street being the exception.

### **Typical Details and the Quality of Buildings**

First floor bay windows (or oriels) are fairly typical, particularly along the High Street, found in a variety of bow and box forms. Sash windows are widespread, mostly painted white or cream and are evident in a mix of styles, commonly 12 and 16 panes. Door hoods are common and take on a number of styles – chiefly flat and pedimented hoods. Fan lights are also fairly typical. Although equally detailed examples exist along other streets within the conservation area, the doors along Quay Street are of particular significance, many of them having elaborately detailed door surrounds, columns and fan lights. Quay Street is distinct in that it displays a particularly high standard of architectural detailing.

A significant number of the buildings in the town centre have shop fronts on the ground floor. Although the majority of these are modern replacements, a significant number of shop fronts retain original details (some better preserved than others) and these enrich the character of the town centre. Traditional pilasters are an important surviving feature of certain shop fronts: many shops display modern replacements with some retaining the character of the originals quite sympathetically. Traditional fascias and high stall risers survive on certain shop fronts (particularly within St Thomas's Square) and examples of detailed console brackets and capitals are evident. Mullions, some quite ornamentally detailed, are an important feature of many display windows. The top sections of certain windows are subdivided into smaller panes of glass, to decorative effect. Several shops have distinct chequered or mosaic paved entrances. Fabric, retractable canopies are

characteristic of the shop fronts along Nodehill, with a few shops elsewhere in the town centre displaying these. Wall bracketed hanging shop signs are another typical feature with both forms of projection contributing greatly to the street scene, adding colour and interest. Boot scrapers exist on the external walls of several buildings within the town centre and contribute to the charm of the historic buildings.

Scarrots Lane is distinct in that it is characterised by small scale workshops and warehouse buildings (associated historically with the many slaughter houses that occupied the lane) – the ground floors of which are mainly shop fronts. The relationship between the water's edge and the red and yellow brick warehouse buildings around the Quay is historically very important and forms an attractive and unique area of the town. Other warehouse buildings are found further along the river and although they fall outside of the conservation area they contribute to the overall setting of the historic town (see Newport Harbour Regeneration Development Brief).

### **Public Realm**

There are two pedestrianised public squares within the town centre (St Thomas's and St James's) and a seating area beside the quay: these open spaces provide a welcome retreat from the hustle and bustle of the surrounding streets and relieve the sense of enclosure created by the tall buildings. Both squares form important seating areas and St Thomas's Square is home to Newport open market every Tuesday. Over the warmer months cafes and restaurants spill out onto the open space.

The Victoria Memorial is an important landmark (and seating post) that stands within St James's Square and to an extent defines this part of the town. Two black painted, cast iron, original street lamps remain in existence outside St Thomas's Church and should be retained as a significant historic feature.

The town centre is formed fundamentally of open streets, although three covered walkways exist (through Grays Walk and underneath the archways of the two John Nash buildings – The Guildhall and The County Club on the corner of St James's Square) and are significant to the town's character.

Some of the buildings within the town centre retain traditional stone entrance steps, particularly those along Quay Street and Sea Street. Traditional flag stones cover much of the northern part of St Thomas's Square, along the northern side of the church. Original stone curbing survives along various stretches of pavement within the town centre, although pre-cast concrete curbs are commonly found.

The visual appearance of the town centre is let down significantly by a disorganised and patchy variety of paving, in modern, unsympathetic materials. Many of the footways are concrete paved in several styles. Buff and sand coloured herringbone brick paving is also widely used throughout the town centre and tactile paving is common at road crossing points. Bollards, railings and excessive street signage have combined to form a cluttered, busy street scene.

### **Trees and green space**

Litten Park is the only green open space within the built up town centre, and is therefore very important: providing a parkland setting for Nodehill School and for the on looking houses along Medina Avenue. The large mature trees within and surrounding Litten Park

are important, and to an extent shield the park from passing traffic. A large cluster of trees with preservation orders exist between Lukely Brook and St Cross Court and provide the conservation area with a strongly defined edge. Within the town centre itself, there is little room for any trees of significance: a few small street trees are evident along Quay Street, Town Lane and St Thomas's Square, and these help to soften the urban street scene.

### **Views and Vistas**

The presence of landmark buildings, the layout of the streets and built form, create many important views and vistas into and out of the area. Northerly views, from the top of the High Street out towards the tree line and green and white railings along The Mall, highlight the change in character between the commercial town centre and the residential edges. From Nodehill views of gable roofed houses and softly landscaped front gardens up through the winding St John's Road are similarly important. St Thomas's Church is the key landmark within the town, and its tower can be viewed from numerous vantage points both within and outside of the conservation area. Distant easterly views of hills and trees seen from the High Street are important in defining the edge of the town centre and the proximity of open countryside. The view of the Guildhall and its clock tower from the High Street is important as is the view of Victoria Memorial within St James's Square, visible from along St James's Street: both landmarks reinforce the status of Newport as the county town.

### **Activity and Uses**

The conservation area is a very active and bustling commercial centre. The core of the town centre comprises primarily commercial streets, where shops, cafes, restaurants and pubs, banks and building societies are commonly found at ground floor level, and flats and offices occupy the upper floors. These shopping streets are surrounded by secondary streets where terraced housing is found interspersed with smaller shops and offices.

A continuous stream of traffic passes through the town during the day and the roads become quite congested at peak times. It is particularly busy on Tuesday morning when tourists visit the farmers market in St Thomas's Square. Although the commercial centre is busiest during the day, the town retains a degree of evening activity, most significant on a Friday and Saturday: by virtue of the many public houses, restaurants and night clubs found along and around the High Street.

### **Sound and smell**

The town centre is filled with the sound of people talking, passing traffic and running car engines: these sounds are exacerbated by the enclosed nature of the streets. There is a notable difference in noise and exhaust fume levels between the primary and secondary streets of Newport: the High Street and St James's Street are busy and noisy throughout the day, whereas Scarrots Lane for instance has limited vehicular access and is therefore much quieter. The ringing of church bells from St Thomas's Square on a Sunday morning is a very important and distinguishable sound, connected with the town centre and its history. Children playing in Litten Park and the rustling of trees (particularly significant on a breezy day) are other sounds characteristic of the area.



### **Positive elements**

- The plethora of listed buildings.
- The original medieval open spaces that remain as public squares today.
- The traditional flagstone paving found in St Thomas's Square, surrounding the northern side of the church.
- The original shop front details that remain.
- The detailed door surrounds and fan lights.
- The high standard of architectural detailing along Quay Street.

### **Negative elements**

- Extensive road markings, including the green cycle lanes and the 'red carpet'.
- The poor state of many pavement and road surfaces: patchy and crumbling in appearance.
- Some of the modern shop fronts and their plastic signage boards. The addition of inappropriate security shutters.
- The few buildings that have been brightly painted in an uncharacteristic colour.
- Satellite dishes on the front of a few buildings.
- The high level of signage clutter found throughout the town centre.
- The intrusive location of many maintenance boxes, particularly those in St James's Square.
- The inappropriate location of railings in some areas of the town – blocking pedestrian desire lines.
- The uncharacteristic, modern housing and apartments found along the northern side of Crocker Street and at the north end of Holyrood Street.
- The tired looking, grey brick seating area outside the entrance to some of the shops and the post office along the top end of the High Street.
- Several car parks exist within the town centre: these break up the tight built form of the historic core and create large empty spaces during the evening. They are generally of poor quality with little in the way of soft landscaping.

## AREA 2 – TOWN CENTRE RESIDENTIAL TERRACES



### Character

*The area is characterised by rows of 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses along tightly knit residential streets within the town centre. The area has a strong urban feel, associated with its proximity to the commercial centre and the lack of trees and vegetation.*

NB this expression of 'character' is derived from the study below.

### History of development

The area is composed almost entirely of 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing that has built up around the town's historic core. Approximately half of the housing was developed within the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and adjoined the western edge of the commercial centre. The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a second wave of house and road building: the later housing generally being built further out from the commercial centre. The 1841 Census identifies the existence of Field Place, although the surrounding roads were built later: Clifford Street, Cavendish Place, Field Place, Drill Hall Road and Caesars Road do not appear on the 1862 Ordnance Survey map but were firmly established by the 1908 edition.

### Archaeology

Although this area has been extensively developed some archaeological finds have been made within this area. To the south of the town a silver 3<sup>rd</sup> century coin minted in Alexandria was found in the garden of a residential terrace attesting to Newport's international trade links from the earliest periods of history.

### Setting

The residential area is located within the town centre of Newport and is bounded along the eastern side by the town's commercial centre. A mix of late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century housing borders much of the southern and western boundary. Late 20<sup>th</sup> century housing, much of which is cul-de-sac development, is found to the north of the area.

### Materials

Red brick is the dominant material used in the area: many of the houses are red brick with yellow quoining or red brick with grey headers. Several houses are composed of grey brick. Painted brick and rendered buildings are lightly scattered throughout the area, although Hearn Street and Trafalgar Road contain a high concentration of rendered buildings. A single weatherboarded cottage exists along Trafalgar Road: although atypical, the building contributes very positively to the conservation area, and relates to the few

similar examples found along Elm Grove. Grey slate is the common roofing material.

### **Height, Mass & Form**

The predominant form is of terraces and town houses, whereby plot widths are narrow and front gardens are small or non-existent, with many houses set directly on the back of pavements. The vast majority of buildings are 2-storeys, although a few 3-storey buildings scatter the area. Pitched roofs are prevalent throughout and ridges generally run parallel with the roads.

### **Typical Details and the Quality of Buildings**

Pitched roofs and chimneys are commonplace. Door hoods and fan lights are typical features of the area, whilst quoining and contrasting brickwork surrounds many doors and windows. A significant proportion of the area's traditional windows have been replaced unsympathetically with PVC frames, yet many sash windows remain evident and almost all windows have white frames. Although not widespread, bay windows are an important feature along West Street and Drill Hall Road.

### **Public Realm**

There are no formal open spaces within this tightly knit area of the conservation area. Terraced houses are either set directly on the back of pavements, or have very small front gardens with only minimal vegetation. On-street parking is common along all streets, found on either one or both sides of the carriageway. Roads and footways are of simple black top and the curbs of pre-cast concrete. The visual appearance of the streets is let down significantly by double yellow lines and other road markings.

### **Views and Vistas**

The tightly knit form of the streets restricts long distant views through the area: views are limited generally to those within a street. Caesars Road being long, straight and lined with terraced houses is a street scene which is unique to Newport. The view of Clifford Street is closed neatly at one end by a three-storey building with a bay window along Drill Hall Road: this is an important vista. Similarly, the southerly view along Field Place is punctuated at its close by a run of terraces along The Mall. North westerly views seen from Hearn Street reveal the tops of trees along Lukely Brook – a significant sight to be seen in a town centre with only minimal greenery.

### **Sound and smell**

Trafalgar Road is the main through-route in the area, and experiences heavy traffic – the sound and smell of which is particularly noticeable at peak times. Although there are several quiet back streets many of the other roads in the area are used as cut through routes, where the presence of passing cars and their effect is apparent.

### **Positive elements**

- The quoining and brickwork detail surrounding many doors and windows.
- The attractive chequered and patterned brickwork on many building facades.
- The integrity of street layout and intact built form of many streets due to the long, unbroken runs of terraced houses and the continuity of frontages.

**Negative elements**

- The unsympathetic PVC replacement windows and doors.
- Heavy road markings, including double yellow lines, green painted cycle lanes, white and yellow hashed lines and 'no entry' signs.
- Presence of satellite dishes on many properties.
- Some of the new infill developments and apartment blocks.
- The significant level of on-street parking and the congested effect this has on the street scene.
- The loss of forecourts along West Street.

## AREA 3 - CARISBROOKE ROAD



### Character

*The area is an edge of town centre residential quarter, comprising mainly terraced housing in a spacious setting. Development takes on a hierarchical structure. The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century 3-4 storey buildings along The Mall are of a high status and make for a strong street scene with a sense of formality. This scale and architectural grandness diminishes with distance from the town centre, as the buildings become artisan in nature.*

NB this expression of 'character' is derived from the study below.

### History of development

The current road network and many of the buildings in existence today were in place by 1862, although several of the buildings along Castle Road date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The vast majority of properties had been built by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (according to the 1862 and 1898 edition of the Ordnance Survey map).

### Archaeology

The Carisbrooke Road area was largely arable farmland until the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century and forms the main link from the Castle to the harbour. It was therefore strategically important in military terms and may have had its own small scale defences. This is mirrored by the presence of World War Two anti tank defences at the convergence of Castle Road and Carisbrooke Road.

### Setting

The area is bound nearly wholly by residential development: mainly in the form of semi-detached and terraced properties. Larger scale, detached and semi-detached housing occupies land further out to the north and south, where recreational space is also evident. The northern boundary of the area marks the edge of the historic residential quarter and the beginning of the town's retail core.

### Materials

The common roofing material is grey slate although clay tiles are evident on some of the earlier cottages. Although red and grey brick is used across the area, specific brickwork and wall treatments define particular stretches. Yellow brick is the dominant material for the villas and their associated front garden walls. Painted stucco is wholly used along the upper side of The Mall (in a variety of creams and pastel colours), whilst Castle Road makes use of painted brick and render for many of its buildings: colours varying from



cream to pastel green. The use of stone on boundary walls and the retaining wall along The Mall is a feature of the area.

### **Height, mass & form**

The predominant form is of terraces with small front gardens and thus narrow plot widths. Bay windows are common and are of vertical proportions. Towards the southern end of the conservation area this regular pattern is replaced by a row of large detached villas, set back from the footway behind long driveways and front gardens. Most buildings at the southerly end of the conservation area are 2-3 storeys high. At the northerly end of the road, where the housing nears the retail centre, this increases to between 3-4 storeys. Pitched roofs are prevalent across the area.

### **Typical Details and the Quality of Buildings**

Pitched roofs and chimneys are commonplace. The green and white painted iron railings along The Mall are an important feature of the area (as they are along St John's Road), contributing positively to the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century 3-storey buildings that they front.

Bay (both bow and square) and sliding sash windows are widespread, and are generally painted white. The majority of doors are panelled and fanlights are a common feature. Many of the late Regency/early Victorian terraces have ironwork balconies, typical of the period.

### **Public Realm**

The artisan terraces along the southern end of the character area are very tightly formed. Much of the built environment is complemented however by a spacious street scene: a wide, raised pavement lines The Mall. Although many houses in the area retain traditional stone entrance steps, all the footways are concrete paved. The roads are of simple black top and the curbs of pre-cast concrete. The trees along The Mall are bordered at their base by surround detail headed brickwork.

### **Trees and green space**

A small but important green, separating Castle Road from Carisbrooke Road, provides an open setting for the on looking houses in the south of the area. Small front gardens and a line of evenly spaced trees along the Mall soften the urban character.

### **Views and Vistas**

Long views of the artisan terraces along Castle Road can be seen from the Carisbrooke Road/Castle Road junction. Similarly, the wide pavement along the northern side of Carisbrooke Road allows for lengthy views of The Mall and its line of terraces. Several narrow roads offshoot The Mall: from Cavendish Place, Field Place and Portland Street significant glimpses of the late Regency/early Victorian terraces along The Mall are caught. Views from The Mall out towards the shops along the top of the High Street highlight the change in character between the residential quarter and the commercial town centre.

### **Sound and smell**

The sound of traffic and pedestrians chatting, and the smell of vehicular fumes is particularly noticeable at the beginning and end of the school and working day.

### **Activity and Uses**

At peak times (the beginning and end of the school and working day) Carisbrooke Road is heavily congested with buses and cars and the pavements are crowded with school children. With several nearby pubs and nightclubs the residential area experiences a rise in the volume of people walking home from the town centre on weekend nights.

### **Positive elements**

- The green and white railings along The Mall.
- The line of trees along The Mall.
- The raised pavement along the Mall.
- The continuity of bay windows and panelled doors.
- The decorative eaves (lion sculptures) on certain buildings.
- The plethora of listed buildings.
- The open green at the junction of Castle Road.

### **Negative elements**

- The large scale blocks of flats.
- Unsightly utility service boxes.
- Much of the tarmac surfacing along the Mall is in poor condition: it is very patchy in appearance and displays obvious crack lines.
- Concrete and fence panelled front boundary walls.
- Rows of garages around the backs of properties which are visible from the street.
- Loss of traditional doors and windows in artisan terraces.

## AREA 4 – ST JOHN’S



### **Character**

This hillside development is an edge of town centre, 19<sup>th</sup> century residential quarter, characterised by terraces and town houses, the urban character of which is softened by ‘green and leafy’ front gardens.

NB this expression of ‘character’ is derived from the study below.

### **History of development**

St John’s Road and Elm Grove had been firmly established by the time of the 1862 edition of the Ordnance Survey, with the majority of buildings having been developed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The residential area expanded eastwards in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Cypress Cottage is evident on the 1862 map, although Cypress Road was built later: the existing row of detached houses (along the upper northern side of the road) was in place by the time of the 1908 Ordnance Survey. Mount Pleasant Road does not appear on the 1862 Ordnance Survey but was firmly established by the 1908 edition.

### **Archaeology**

The St Johns area is dominated archaeologically by its proximity to the Roman Villa. The extent of the villa complex has not yet been found although unsubstantiated reports suggest that a Roman boundary wall was discovered under the road to the south of the villa site suggesting that the environs of the Villa extend well into the St Johns area.

### **Setting**

The area is bound on three sides by residential development. A mix of late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century housing surrounds the east and west of the area. The western edge also displays a substantial degree of recent infill development. The Shide Cross character area (comprising late 19<sup>th</sup> century yellow brick housing) is located directly south. To the north of the residential area lies the town’s retail centre.

### **Materials**

Grey slate is the common roofing material. Most of the area’s early 19<sup>th</sup> century housing is built of red brick or red brick with grey headers. Yellow brick is used for much of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century houses and their associated front garden walls. Along St John’s Place many of the buildings are rendered (painted in a variety of creams and pastel colours), with a few

other examples found along St John's Road and Terrace Road. Two pairs of weatherboarded semi-detached cottages exist along Elm Grove (painted in various pastel colours). Wooden panelled doors, painted in a variety of colours – greens, blues, reds etc – are commonplace. The use of stone and flint for boundary walls around the church and nearby housing, and the retaining wall along South Mall is a feature of the area.

### **Height, mass & form**

Much of the area comprises terraces and town houses, whereby plot widths are narrow and front gardens are small. Wider plots are evident along the upper end of Cypress Road where houses are larger and detached. Several 3-storey properties are apparent along the lower end of St John's Road, although the majority of buildings in the area are 2-storeys.

The change in character from a town centre to a residential quarter is marked significantly by a topographical shift – the residential area rises a hill. A raised footway lining the eastern side of St John's Road, coupled with raised front gardens, accentuate the contrast between this residential area and the low lying town centre.

### **Typical Details and the Quality of Buildings**

Pitched roofs and chimneys are typically found. White framed sash windows are commonplace and bay windows are widespread, taking on a variety of forms (both bow and box). Gable roofs are evident along various stretches of the conservation area. Painted wooden door hoods are a feature along St John's Road and Elm Grove. The majority of doors are panelled and fan lights are also readily used. Brick and stone boundary walls surround most front gardens.

The green and white painted iron railings along St John's Road contribute positively to the street scene and are a continuing feature of The Mall along Carisbrooke Road. They are an important reminder of the road's alternative name, 'South Mall'.

### **Public Realm**

Although there is no formal open space within this residential character area, the houses along Medina Avenue overlook Litten Park – which forms part of the town's historic core. The wide roads and set backs of houses behind front gardens make for a fairly spacious street scene. The raised walkway along St John's Road emphasises the feeling of openness. The roads and footways are of simple black top and the curbs of pre-cast concrete. Several of the houses in the area, particularly along St John's Road, have at their entrance natural stone steps.

### **Trees and green space**

Front gardens – lined with trees, shrubs, bushes and flowers – are evident throughout and help soften the area's urban character. This 'green and leafy' landscaping is a significant feature that distinguishes the residential quarter from the neighbouring retail centre. Many of the deciduous trees (particularly those with preservation orders surrounding St John's Church) are very mature and contribute significantly to the area's character.

### **Views and Vistas**

Southerly views of mature trees and hedges along St John's Road and the Shide Cross junction, seen from the top of Cypress Road, reveal a change in street scene and the beginning of another residential character area – Shide Cross. Nodehill School and the beginning of a run of shop fronts along St James's Street provide the northern end of St

John's Road with a closing vista: the view also highlights the change in character between the residential streets and the neighbouring commercial town centre. Medina Avenue is the only position within the conservation area from which views into Litten Park and its green open space can be seen, and is therefore distinctly important. Distant easterly views of open fields and Staplers seen from the top of Cypress Road contribute to a feeling of openness along this stretch.

### **Sound and smell**

St John's Road and St John's Place form a popular connecting route into the town centre, with the sound of traffic evident along this stretch. From the bottom of St John's Road and Mount Pleasant Road children can be heard playing in Node Hill School playground. Similarly along Elm Grove, the sound of children playing in Nine Acres field is noticeable. Bird song is apparent along this stretch, and the rustling of wind through the trees can be heard across much of the area.

### **Activity and Uses**

The main daytime activity within this residential area is the movement of traffic up and down St John's Road and that of people walking to and from the town centre and school. Weekend evening activity is focussed along St John's Place, where people are seen and heard spilling out of nearby pubs and restaurants.

### **Positive elements**

- The green and white railings along St John's Road that parallel those along The Mall.
- The raised pavement and retaining stone wall along St John's Road.
- The large number of listed buildings.
- Front boundary walls and landscaped front gardens.
- The presence of trees throughout the area (particularly those with preservation orders surrounding St John's Church).
- The continuity of bay windows and panelled doors.
- The distant views of open fields and Staplers, seen from the top of Cypress Road.

### **Negative elements**

- The footways and road surfaces are patchy and crumbling in places.
- The heavy road markings and red and green surface treatments along St John's Place.
- The bare fence panels that run along one side of Elm Grove.



## Area 5 – Shide Cross



### **Character**

The area is characterised by late 19<sup>th</sup> century, low density suburban housing, set within 'green and leafy' surrounds. The area exudes a sense of grandeur and spaciousness associated with large properties with decorative windows and eaves, long front gardens, prominent boundary walls and pillars.

NB this expression of 'character' is derived from the study below.

### **History of development**

The road layout was firmly established by the time of the 1793 Ordnance Survey map, although housing did not appear until after 1862. The latter part of the nineteenth century saw much house building and by 1898 all the houses within the conservation area had been developed.

### **Archaeology**

The Shide area of Newport has the most evidence of prehistoric activity in Newport with the discovery of numerous Neolithic stone tools (c. 4000 - 2000 B.C.) including a rare crescent shaped sickle. This indicates that this area was home to a farming community in that era.

### **Setting**

The Shide Cross character area is completely surrounded by residential development and sits on the side of a hill, approximately 350 metres south of the town centre. A mix of 20th century houses and bungalows, with some cul-de-sac development, borders the south, east and west of the conservation area. The St John's character area lies to the north.

### **Materials**

Grey slate is the common roofing material. Yellow brick is used throughout, both for the houses and their associated front garden walls. Wooden panelled doors, painted in a variety of traditional colours – blues, whites, reds etc – are commonplace. Many houses retain their original wooden framed, white painted, sash windows. Several properties have seen white plastic window frame replacements, although these are generally sympathetic.

### **Height, mass & form**

The area comprises large houses, whereby plots are wide and front gardens are long. Wider plots are found along Shide Road and Watergate Road, where 2-storey, detached villas are the sole building type. Yellow brick boundary walls enclosing front gardens border the pavements throughout the area and contribute significantly to the area's character.

### **Typical Details and the Quality of Buildings**

Hipped roofs and prominent chimneys are typically found. Projecting brick corbels under the eaves are a feature. White framed sash windows are commonplace and bay windows are widespread: these are either formed of yellow brick or of painted timber with panelled fascias, moulded frames and decorative cornice treatments. Wooden panelled doors and fan lights are found extensively. Yellow brick walls and piers are used across the area, enclosing front gardens and providing a strongly defined edge to the pavement.

### **Public Realm**

Although the area has no formal open spaces, the wide roads and set backs of houses make for a fairly spacious street scene. The roads and footways are generally of simple black top and the curbs are of pre-cast concrete. An unmade footway with a loose gravel surface runs alongside Shide Road. There is evidence of remaining traditional stone curbs and guttering along Watergate Road.

### **Trees and green space**

The area is characterised heavily by green and leafy landscaping – the large houses are set behind long front gardens that are partially screened by deciduous trees, hedges and bushes. Many of the trees along Shide Road are very mature and have tree preservation orders.

### **Views and Vistas**

A pair of semi-detached houses (and their landscaped front gardens) along the southern end of St John's Road is visible from the top of Cypress Road and forms an important vista. Watergate Road and St John's Road both run downhill and meet in a dip - the Shide Cross road junction. This topography allows long 'green and leafy' views of the tree lined front gardens in the area.

### **Sound and smell**

Shide Cross is a busy road junction, with Shide Road being a popular 'rat run' that bypasses Newport town centre. Along this stretch the dominance of the passing car is significant – in terms of both the sound and visual presence of the traffic. The raised walkway along Shide Road acts as an important barrier, shielding the houses to an extent from the passing vehicles. In contrast, Watergate Road is much quieter.

### **Positive elements**

- The uniformity in building design and material use.
- The continuous run of yellow brick front boundary walls and landscaped front gardens.
- The presence of trees throughout the area, many of which are very mature and have preservation orders attached.

**Negative elements**

- The loss of some original timber framed sash windows and their replacement with plastic frames.
- The loss of iron railings along several of the front boundary walls.
- The unsympathetic fence panelling along some front boundary walls.
- The hard surface treatments applied to several front gardens.