Gileston Conservation Area Appraisal
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Conservation Area
Appraisal

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Gileston Conservation Area Draft Appraisal - i
Introduction

1.1 Gileston lies one mile south of St. Athan overlooking the low lying land behind Limpert Bay and the Bristol Channel. It lies within the Community of St. Athan.

1.2 The village was designated as a Conservation Area in 1970 in recognition of its character as an unspoilt hamlet in the rural Vale. Since that time there have been many changes in the village. Since that time there have been many changes in the village. This document assesses the effect of that change as part of a continuing programme of appraisal and review which will cover all the Conservation Areas in the Vale. The work supports requirements set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and following local consultation, sets out an agreed statement on the character of the Conservation Area, and policies for its enhancement and protection. The policies were adopted on 27 May 1999.

In summary, the appraisal seeks:

- **To assess the elements of the village's character from which policies for conservation and enhancement may be produced**
- **To provide direction and advice on the form and character of building and development in the future.**
- **Review the boundaries of the Conservation Area.**

1.2 The appraisal is divided into three parts. The first is an assessment of the character of the Conservation Area, the second sets out policies for the enhancement and protection of the Conservation Area, and the third summarises policies and provides the framework for linking it to the Unitary Development Plan and other advice published by the Local Authority.
Plan 1: Boundary
Not to scale
The Character of the Conservation Area

2.1 THE ORIGINS OF THE VILLAGE

2.1.1 The settlement lies in the coastal region of the rural Vale of Glamorgan which was first farmed and managed by English and Norman settlers. The small cluster of farm buildings and cottages which make up the core of the village is centred around Gileston Manor, a fortified Manor House first occupied by the Giles Family in 1350, and from which the name of the village is likely to have come. The adjoining Church is dedicated to St. Giles and remained within the Manor until the end of the 17th Century. The nucleus of the village has changed little since that time, though contemporary extensions to north and south have occurred.

2.2 LANDSCAPE AND TREES

2.2.1 Gileston is set on a shallow ridge lying above flat open countryside which runs southwards to the coast at Limpert Bay. Approaching views from the north show a settlement contained by trees growing within Gileston Manor, adjoining graveyard and farmhouse grounds. Thorn hedgerows grow along the approach roads and blend well with the stone boundary walls running into the village. All give the Conservation Area its special character.

2.2.2 There are substantial groups of trees at the main entrances to the village, notably at Gileston Manor, where mature indigenous species are supplemented by ornamental varieties planted within the Manor grounds.

2.2.3 The importance trees play in forming the landscape setting to the village is recognised by the large number of trees covered by the County of Glamorgan Tree Preservation Order (No. 1) 1962. Major tree groups are shown on Plan 2.

2.2.4 Hedgelines and field boundaries are still in good condition and mark the outer boundaries of the Conservation Area.

2.2.4 The village retains informal grass verges, save in its north-eastern section where suburban tarmac pavements with concrete edges bound contemporary development on Orchard Close and detached houses to the east.

2.3 ARCHITECTURE AND BUILT FORM

2.3.1 There are currently three listed buildings in the Conservation Area: The Church of St. Giles, The Manor, and The Telephone Kiosk in the village centre.

2.3.2 The growth of the village in response to the needs of the farming community has determined its present form. The major village grouping comprises substantial barns and agricultural buildings which lie to the south of the junction of the three lanes. These have all had an association with Gileston Farm in the past. The conversion of three barns to residential use has led to some loss of the busy farmyard activity that once characterised the village. The buildings which remain form an informal arrangement of stone buildings set within two farmyards to the east and west of the village centre. Each remain bound by stone walls of local limestone whose gentle curves define the principal village building groups. Gileston Farm is closely associated with Gileston Manor, and is linked by a stone boundary wall that runs north from the village. The Manor lies within heavily wooded grounds and comprises an outstanding group of listed buildings. The Manor incorporates part of a late
medieval building whose occupants in the late fourteenth century were named Jules or Giles, giving their name to the Manor and Parish around which the village has developed. The imposing house is now predominantly 18th century. It is a fine square residence with hipped roof to the main south elevation. Although rendered, walls are likely to have been constructed in the same limestone as that used on the outbuildings and stable block to the north of the house.

2.3.3 The stable block is an important group which marks the northern limits of the village. The well cut local Lias limestone is enhanced by the simple form of the buildings, which were formerly used as stable and coachhouses. The coachhouse in particular displays fine stone dressings around doors and windows. This group is set within the curtilage of the listed Manor House.

2.3.4 St. Giles Church lies adjacent to the Manor. The church itself is of 12th century origin, though it was substantially rebuilt in the 15th century. Its close association with the Manor gives the northwestern limits of the village its special character. This extends to the walled and gated graveyard which lies to the west of Gileston Farm and around which an avenue of ageing yews are set.

2.3.5 The setting formed by hedges and boundary walls plays an important part in the character of the Conservation Area. These follow the line of roads and field and garden boundaries and are in the main constructed in the local Blue Lias limestone.

2.4 CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

2.4.1 The early form of the hamlet has changed little. However, a number of changes to the Conservation Area have occurred, all of which require assessment: Detached houses have been constructed within cottage gardens. The houses, using a wide variety of building styles and materials do not rest easily with the local building vernacular, and farm groups at the centre of the village which once defined the life and form of the village have now been converted to residential use.

2.4.2 Rose Cottage and Gileston Cottage remain as two early buildings of local limestone construction. Their roofs, simple windows and enclosed cottage gardens represent the last vestiges of the village’s early character. At the southern end of the Conservation Area is the site of an early quarry by which three detached houses of contemporary design are set.

2.5 THE PLANNING CONTEXT

2.5.1 The village is not identified as one in which housing development can take place within the Deposit Draft of the Vale of Glamorgan Unitary Development Plan. It is within this context that proposals for development will be assessed.

2.6 THE BOUNDARY OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

2.6.1 The present boundary of the Conservation Area embraces the hamlet together with enfolding fields and hedges which run north along the Gileston Road to the Llantwit Major Road. The boundary is a clear expression of the character of the hamlet and enhances the opportunity for the protection of the rural landscape and manmade features within. These are all evident in the well established footpaths, bridleways and field boundaries of the original parish. This is in contrast to the southern landscape where field amalgamations have taken place on land comprising the coastal plain.
3.1 The previous section sets out the contemporary character of the Conservation Area. The following sets out the proposals and policies for the enhancement and management of the Conservation Area. Policies which will be taken into account in the determination of planning policies are in bold. They reflect and complement policies within Supplementary Planning Guidance for the emerging Vale of Glamorgan Unitary Development Plan. All seek to respect the historic development of the village.

3.2 LANDSCAPE AND TREES

- Proposals will provide for the care, maintenance and enhancement of trees and woodland areas within conservation areas.

Development will give high priority to landscape design, to protect and enhance the external view of the village.

Where a village conservation area includes landscapes and gardens of historic or archaeological significance, they will be protected and where appropriate should be enhanced.

3.2.1 Mature trees play an important part in the character of the village, and the landscaped backdrop provided by the grounds to the Manor House. There have been changes in the nature of tree cover in the village and new woodland areas have grown to the east of the church and by the Old Quarry. It is recommended that a resurvey of trees within the Conservation Area, including those identified in the Tree Preservation Order (No. 6) 1962, be carried out when resources permit.

- Stone boundary walls, hedges and railings which enhance the character of the conservation area should be retained, maintained and repaired. Where necessary, new development should seek to follow these traditional boundary features.

3.2.2 Fields and their boundaries which mark the entrance to the village are important because they provide vistas into and out of the settlement. Mature hedges and boundaries which surround the village should be protected.

- To enhance the view of the village from without, new development will give a high priority to the treatment of boundaries and settlement edges.

3.2.3 The means of enclosing properties within the village has been highlighted as a key feature of the Conservation Area. Stone walls in particular provide privacy and define the historic routes through the village.

- The Informal network of footpaths running through fields adjoining the village should be protected and enhanced.

3.2.4 The village is set within a network of footpaths which enhance local community links and provide recreational opportunities for the eastern approach to the Heritage Coast.

- Grass verges in the village should be maintained and consolidated as opportunities arise.

3.2.5 The "village green" forms a central focus to the village and should be protected and enhanced with in a programme of ongoing highway maintenance.
3.3 HIGHWAYS GUIDELINES.

- Where highway improvements are required, they should respect the character of the conservation area.

Parking and access required by new development should be accommodated within developments, and respect existing road layouts and the character of open space and garden enclosures.

In replacement and repair, original local detail in the highway should be retained and repaired. Where due to cost and practicality, detail cannot be reinstated replacement should be undertaken using sympathetic materials and fittings.

3.3.1 The way the traditional road pattern is now used by contemporary traffic has lead to changes in the character of the village. The policies set out above seek to encourage a flexible approach towards the balance of safe and efficient roads and the maintenance of the village’s character.

3.4 IMPORTANT OPEN AREAS:

- The development of open or woodland areas that contribute to the character of the conservation area will be opposed.

The following open spaces should be protected and enhanced, as funding opportunities arise:

- the open verge at the village cross-roads;
- the wooded verge to the north-east of Orchard Close.

3.4.1 Both areas enfold the centre of the village and make an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

The following open areas are identified for protection:

- the approach roads leading south from the B4265.
- the road frontage bounding the churchyard, Manor House and Gileston Farm;
- the road frontage bounding Rose Cottage;
- the Manor grounds and grazing land adjoining the cemetery.
- the wooded verge to the north-east of Orchard Close.

3.4.2 The character of the Conservation Area is dependant upon the informal relationship between buildings, spaces and tree groups. In some areas, this relationship is marked by a semi formal estate layout, for which boundary walls and garden layouts play an important part. The appraisal recognises these areas and identifies them for protection.

3.5 ARCHITECTURE AND BUILT FORM

- Listed Buildings:

It is recommended that Rose Cottage formally protected by their inclusion as Grade III buildings on the statutory list of buildings of architectural and historic interest, be included within the current list, and that CADW be advised of this recommendation.

- Built Form:

Significant views into and out of the village conservation area should be protected and enhanced where opportunities arise.

Distinctive roof patterns, ridgelines, and landmark buildings or features will be protected and enhanced where opportunities arise.

Materials must be appropriate to the locality and sympathetic to the existing buildings in the conservation area.

The layout and design of new development should acknowledge the context provided by the village. To demonstrate how this has been achieved, developers should also provide three dimensional plans or drawings to show how new development will respect its setting.
Where a proposal for the demolition of a building within a conservation area is to be followed by the redevelopment of a site, conservation area consent will only be granted where full planning permission has been previously or concurrently given for the replacement building.

The informal arrangement of former agricultural buildings should be acknowledged in new development.

3.5.1 Guidance set out here identifies the importance of a clear appraisal of the village, the characteristics of the particular site, and the direction that local building forms and proportion can provide. Further advice for developers planning to build within rural conservation areas is provided within Supplementary Planning Guidance, prepared in support of the Draft Deposit of the Vale of Glamorgan Unitary Development Plan. These relate to "Conservation Areas in the Rural Vale" and "The Conversion of Rural Buildings".

3.6 DESIGN IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Proposals for new development in the conservation area should take account of the design principles set out within supplementary planning guidance prepared for "Conservation Areas in the Rural Vale":

- **Context of the site**: Take account of the wider setting of the site

- **Recycle old buildings**: When considering a site, the sensitive conversion of buildings should be a priority

- **Preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area**: Reflect the character of the surrounding buildings and open spaces but avoid mimicking architectural styles and creating pastiche buildings that undermine the character of the Conservation Area.

- **Materials and details**: Use high quality durable materials. These should complement surrounding buildings and landscape, and pay attention to detailing as an integral part of the design.

**Sustainability**: Create buildings and open spaces which are adaptable, minimising the need for change in the village.

**Scale**: Design and orientate new development so that it reflects the scale and layout of the village.

3.6.1 A "sensitive development test" set out at the end of this document identifies the importance of a clear appraisal of the village, the characteristics of the particular site, and the direction local building forms and proportion can provide in the development of design proposals. The compact arrangement of buildings in the village makes their sympathetic alteration and extension especially important. Development proposals will therefore be assessed against this set of design principles which has been prepared for Conservation Areas in the rural Vale. The policy will not discourage contemporary design, but seeks to promote an approach to building which is sensitive to its historic context and setting.

3.6.2 The guidance stresses that the careful selection of sympathetic materials for renovation and repair can also maintain buildings and enhance the character of the Conservation Area. Where-ever feasible a conservative repair technique is encouraged and promoted. An Appendix to this document provides further advice on how the choice of materials and building technique for the repair of buildings can enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

3.7 THE BOUNDARY OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

3.7.1 No alterations are proposed to the boundary of the Conservation Area at present.
Plan 2: Townscape Appraisal
Conclusions

4.1 The policies within this document have been adopted following public consultation on the findings of the appraisal and the inclusion of local contributions to its consent and the proposals put forward for the management of the Conservation Area.
Appendix

1.1 A SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT TEST

1.1.1 To see whether these principles have been met, consider the following:

i) Are there original, traditional buildings that should be used or restored within the site?

To minimize disruption to the character of the Conservation Area, priority should be placed on re-using existing buildings.

ii) Does the development fit into the fabric of the locality: the plots, building groups, roads and open spaces?

These components form the basis of the Conservation Area and reveal the historical development of the site and its setting.

iii) Does the development reflect the scale of building in the Conservation Area?

The development and its various parts should sit easily within the Conservation Area.

iv) Do the materials used in the development reflect those which are prevalent in the Conservation Area?

The range of traditional or natural building materials in the Vale of Glamorgan rural Conservation Areas is diverse. New development should use natural materials, or those which can complement their simple and organic qualities. The use of foreign stone should be avoided.

1.2 GUIDANCE ON REPAIR AND ALTERATION

1.2.1 This section provides advice on how to protect the Conservation Area by the repair and enhancement of some of the original and historic features which form an area’s special character.

Alterations and Extensions to Buildings in a Conservation Area

1.2.2 The character which justifies the designation of a conservation area can easily be damaged by the cumulative impact of minor alterations to buildings forming the historic core of many of the Vale’s village conservation areas. This can include the replacement of windows, doors and roofing materials or the addition of domestic extensions.
1.2.3 The following notes set out some simple advice on how to approach the repair of old buildings in the village. A planning officer can advise on the need for planning permission. Where consent is required, it is advisable to discuss proposals with a planning officer before the submission of an application. Work which alters a Listed Building will usually require Listed Building Consent. Again it is advisable to seek advice before preparing plans or undertaking work.

1.2.4 In all work, the key to a successful repair is to understand and respond to the local building tradition.

### Windows

1.2.5 It is often the simple arrangement of door and window openings in the building face which account for their quality. The replacement of an original set of windows in a house or cottage can often damage the look of a house, or the overall effect of a terrace or group of houses. Where repairs are undertaken, original window patterns should be followed and modern materials avoided.

1.2.6 In replacement, multi divided and asymmetrical frames should be avoided, so should modern materials such as UPVC, or stained hardwoods, if they cannot reflect the simple qualities described above.

1.2.7 It is often possible to have original windows overhauled, rather than replaced. If a window does need to be replaced, there are local joiners who can make a replica. Grant aid may be available through the Vale's Historic Building Grant Programme. A planning officer can advise you on how to approach repair and the feasibility of grant aid.

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*Victorian windows continue the vertical emphasis of the Georgian window openings*

*This is a traditional design often used in cottages*

*Fine glazing bars can reflect daylight*
Doors

1.2.8 Simple timber panelled doors with a limited area of glazing remain appropriate for most houses in villages within the Vale of Glamorgan. Doors which mimic materials from different periods should be avoided as should modern materials such as UPVC.

1.2.9 The same principles apply to garage or garden gates or doors. Each should reflect the proportions and simple architectural details used on the main building. Horizontal boarding and panelling should be avoided.

1.2.12 On unlisted buildings in conservation areas, natural slate can often be a viable alternative to imitation slate. The latter can alter the appearance of an historic building in subtle but damaging ways. However, some artificial slates are manufactured with rougher edges and minor surface texturing. These may act as an acceptable visual alternative.

1.2.13 Pennant stone slates are exhibited on the more important larger domestic buildings as well as on farm buildings. It is an increasingly rare local detail which should be retained and repaired whenever possible. Stone slate is always laid in diminishing courses from eaves to ridge.

1.2.14 When roofs are replaced, traditional details should be recorded and replaced in the same way. Roof edges (at eaves or verges) should follow the local tradition. Often roof slates will overhang the gable end of the wall, with vertical slates set under to protect the end rafter. Timber bargeboards and fascias should follow the original size and profile as should the materials and design of replacement rain water goods.

Roofs

1.2.10 Thatch was once a common roof covering in the Vale, but is now largely replaced with slate. Where thatch does remain, it should be protected and maintained by craftsmen with skills in handling the appropriate material. Within the Vale this could be either reed or long wheat straw. It is important that historic thatching, original details and supporting roof structure are retained in the repair and renewal of roofs.

1.2.11 Natural Welsh slate is now the most common roofing finish and in many cases was used to replace thatching to older buildings in the late 19th century. On listed buildings, it is required that natural slate laid to the same detail is used as a replacement finish in any repair. It is recommended that contractors with experience in laying natural slate are employed.
Chimneys

1.2.15 Stone chimneys in old houses are an important part of the architecture and often provide clues to the age of a house. In the Vale of Glamorgan, there are many open hearths in houses constructed from the 16th Century onwards, whose large chimneys are often fine examples of local stonework. In repair, such stonework often simply requires repointing. The method and mortar mix should always match the original finish. When a chimney does need to be rebuilt, it should be recorded by drawings and photographs and rebuilt in replica, reusing any sound old materials for the external face. Even when a flue is redundant, clay pots should be retained.

Stonework/ Wall Finishes

1.2.16 Local limestone is the traditional building material in the rural Vale. Its mellow cream and grey tones are found on boundary walls, farms and domestic buildings in most villages and give each a close affinity with their landscaped setting.

1.2.17 The stone is often roughly squared, laid in random rubble courses and was normally finished with a protective limewash. The size, colour and shape of stone varies according to local source, and the age and importance of the building it forms.

1.2.18 The local stone is rarely used for dressings in and around windows/doors. In the best architecture of the 16th and 17th century, local Sutton and Quarella sandstones are used in dressings. From the 19th century, bathstone and local brickwork was used for this purpose. It is important that historic stonework is correctly repaired and replaced. It is essential that existing stone is repointed in a manner which is appropriate to the original building method. The use of lime putty based mortars is recommended, as the introduction of dense, cement based mixes will cause problems of moisture retention in traditional stone walling.

1.2.19 The actual repointing technique is also important. On original stone work, repointing may be recessed, or lie flush with the stone, and this pattern should be followed for new work. “Snailtrail” repointing, or repointing that stands proud of the stone should be avoided.
1.2.20 A white limewash applied regularly to stone walling is a traditional method of maintaining and protecting local stone.

1.2.21 Attention should be paid to stone work patterns used on extensions. Random rubble limestone walling is frequently used on original buildings in the village. New stone work should be laid in similar patterns, with free stone or brick dressings set around doors and windows where appropriate. A painted smooth lime based render is an alternative.

Walls and Enclosures

1.2.22 Boundary walls should be regarded as an extension of the building they protect. They define ownership, provide privacy and protection from wind and rain. Most importantly, walls define space. New walls should seek to fulfil the same objectives. Natural stone walls define the character of each village and should be repaired and retained where possible. Grant aid may be available for repair which can show traditional repair techniques following the local vernacular. Black painted iron railings on a stone base are common in the Vale and can be replaced using profiles and designs easily manufactured by local smithies.

1.2.23 Artificial stone or concrete screen walling is alien to the area and should be avoided, as should chain link, timber or brick panelled fencing sections.

Internal Details

1.2.24 Older buildings often possess interesting details within. These should be left in place wherever possible. An original fireplace, a panelled door, an attractive ceiling or stair can all add to the character of a building. In the case of listed buildings, internal features (e.g. timberwork, historic plasterwork, doors, fireplaces etc.) are protected by law and consent is necessary for their alteration or removal.

Extensions To Existing Buildings

1.2.25 The key to good design is to understand and respond to the characteristics of the local building tradition. The older the house, the more important it is to retain its character and long standing relationship with adjoining buildings.

1.2.26 The main elements of roof, wall and windows should combine in such a way that the architectural balance of the original building is protected. In the rural Vale, many farm houses and village groups use a simple composition where doors and window openings are closely related. This should be protected by acknowledging the symmetry.
already in place, for example by setting back the building line of an extension, or by dropping its ridge line to below that of the original house. The height and shape of this roof line is important and is often determined by the original roof characteristics.

1.2.27 In acknowledging this simple building hierarchy, new development can add to and enhance the complex building form and skylines created by traditional village groupings.

1.3 WHERE TO GET MORE ADVICE OR INFORMATION

1.3.1 If you are considering extending or altering your building it is advisable to contact the planning department at an early stage. A Development Control Officer will be available to give advice and information on the need for planning permission. More detailed advice is also available on the repair of buildings.