

MORDIFORD CONSERVATION AREA

APPRAISAL

DRAFT

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MORDIFORD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Introduction

No appraisal can ever be completely comprehensive. Omission of any particular building, feature or site should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Mordiford Conservation Area was designated in 1976 by the former South Herefordshire District Council. The settlement of Mordiford, part of which falls within the conservation area, is located 5 miles east of Hereford City on the B4224, Hereford to Ross-on-Wye road, at an ancient bridging point on the River Lugg.

The designation of a conservation area is no longer considered appropriate as an end in itself. For the designation to be meaningful, the process requires the preparation of an appraisal to define what is special, thereby warranting the status of the conservation area. This should also form the basis for making decisions about the future of the conservation area, ensuring its character and appearance is taken properly into account.

An appraisal has now been carried out to review the special qualities of Mordiford Conservation Area. The scope of the appraisal has included a review of whether additional areas should be added to, or areas removed from, the designation. At this stage, any proposals for boundary change are put forward as the basis for further discussion and consultation. Any decision on changes to the boundary of Mordiford Conservation Area will be taken at a later stage in association with consideration of management proposals.

Planning Policy Context

Guidance and policy has been published by a number of authorities concerning the designation, appraisal, review and management of conservation areas. A short bibliography of relevant publications is given at the end of this document.

Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) sets out Herefordshire Council's planning policies. These policies will influence how development proceeds throughout the County, including the settlement of Mordiford.

The UDP contains policies setting out criteria for designating and reviewing conservation areas (Policy HBA5), and on how planning applications for development within such areas will be considered (Policy HBA6). The purpose of setting criteria against which the designation of a conservation area will be judged is to ensure consistency of approach and to help avoid the inclusion of areas that would not be in keeping with the special character of the conservation area. A conservation area is described as an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which should be conserved or enhanced. The criteria against which the importance of the area is judged are reflected in the analysis that follows in this document.

Mordiford is defined in the UDP (Policy H6) as a 'smaller settlement' where proposals for residential development on plots arising from the infilling of small gaps between existing dwellings within the settlement will be permitted, where:

1. the dwelling size is limited to a habitable living space of 90 sq m (3 bedroom house) or 100 sq m (4 bedroom house);
2. the plot size is limited to a maximum area of 350 sq m; and
3. the infill gap is no more than 30 metres frontage.

In considering such planning applications priority will be given to applications on previously developed land.

Developments on an appropriate infill plot larger than 30 metres frontage will be permitted for affordable housing where a proven local need has been successfully demonstrated.

Planning permission for the extension of dwellings approved under this policy will not be permitted. Planning permissions will be subject to a condition removing permitted development rights for the conversion of an ancillary garage into habitable accommodation, or for the erection of any extension or detached buildings within the curtilage.

Proposals should be compatible with the housing design and other policies of the plan in respect to the character and scale of the settlement.

Within the conservation area boundary, the following areas are also protected under the provisions of the UDP:

- the eastern part of the conservation area (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Policy LA1);
- part of the floodplain of the River Lugg (Landscapes Least Resilient to Change, LA2);
- Sufton Court landscape park (Protection of Historic Parks and Gardens, Policy LA4);
- the River Lugg (Special Area for Conservation, Policy NC2; Special Wildlife Site, Policy NC4), the river and its banks (Site of Special Scientific Interest, Policy NC3).

Summary of Special interest

Mordiford Conservation Area is located on the western edge of the wooded uplands of the Woolhope Dome overlooking the broad floodplain of the River Wye just to the north of its confluence with the Lugg. The conservation area includes the settlement of Mordiford, Sufton Court landscape park and gardens, and part of the Lugg Valley.

Mordiford has been an important crossing point of the River Lugg since Roman times. The present bridge dates to the 14th Century, and is the oldest bridge in Herefordshire. It is likely that a small settlement has existed on the site of the river

crossing since at least Saxon times, eventually extending east along the Pentoloe valley. By the time of the Domesday Book, Mordiford was part of the manor of Prior's Frome. From the 12th Century, the manor was held by the Hereford family, who are still major landowners in the area.

The parish church dates to the 12th Century, and a stone cross in the churchyard was built in the 14th or 15th Century. A high wall built of sandstone rubble with a gateway dressed in brick was constructed on the east side of the churchyard during the late 18th or early 19th Century.

The earliest secular building is Bridge House; it dates to the 16th or 17th Century, and occupies a prominent position near the east end of Mordiford Bridge. The large timber-framed building was rebuilt or refaced in the Georgian style during the 18th Century. A number of other timber-framed buildings were constructed during the 17th Century. Presently, the timber frames are exposed on only three of those buildings. An example is the Moon Inn, which shows evidence of having been enlarged and extended several times.

On the north side of the parish church, overlooking the floodplain of the River Lugg, is The Old Rectory. The three-storey house was built of brick in the Georgian style during the 18th Century.

The most prominent building in the conservation area is Sufton Court. Built by the Hereford family in the late 18th Century of Bath stone in the Classical style, the house occupies an elevated position in the northern part of the conservation area. A landscape park was set out shortly afterwards with specimen and mature trees. House and park can be seen from Mordiford Bridge, overlooking the floodplain against the background of a densely wooded hillside.

During the late 18th or early 19th Century, a number of buildings on the Hereford estate were built, or rebuilt, of sandstone rubble with brick dressings. These include a farmstead, a mill and a row of terraced cottages.

Limited evidence of industrial or commercial activities can be seen in the conservation area. This includes a disused corn mill, constructed (or rebuilt) of sandstone rubble and brick during the 18th Century. The iron mill wheel and internal mechanism is still in place. On the River Lugg south of Mordiford Bridge are the remains of a stone-built lock. This structure dates to 18th Century attempts to make the Lugg navigable to river traffic.

A characteristic building material of the conservation area is locally quarried, pale yellow and grey sandstone. It has been used in the construction of domestic, agricultural and industrial buildings, and boundary walls. An earlier building tradition was based on timber-frame construction. During the 18th Century, brick was introduced, and used both to infill or remodel timber-framed buildings, and to construct new buildings.

Heritage assets within the conservation area include two Scheduled Monuments and fourteen Listed Buildings, i.e., four Grade II* buildings and ten Grade II buildings or structures. Nine unlisted buildings are identified as buildings of local interest. Two Listed Buildings are deemed to be at risk.

Today, all of these buildings and structures, together with the area's mature trees and hedges, walls, gardens, open spaces and views, contribute to the special architectural and historic character of Mordiford Conservation Area.

Location and Setting

The settlement of Mordiford is located on the east side of the River Lugg at its confluence with the Pentaloe Brook. The brook flows westwards through the settlement, which also extends to the east along the small Pentaloe valley.

The western part only of the settlement lies within the conservation area, and is located at the southern end. The conservation area extends northwards to include Sufton Court and its landscape park, and eastwards to include part of the floodplain of the Lugg, a section of the river channel, and Mordiford Bridge including the flood arches and causeway walls. The floodplain was subject to regular flooding until a flood alleviation scheme was undertaken in the 1970s.

At its lowest point on the floodplain, the conservation area lies at an elevation of 45m above Ordnance Datum (OD). The land rises to the east, to its highest point of 80m OD on the north-eastern edge of the conservation area.

Mordiford Conservation Area is located on the western edge of the Woolhope Dome uplands. To the west is the broad floodplain of the River Lugg, which merges with that of the River Wye immediately south of this location. Here the landscape is flat with sparse hedgerows. To the east of the conservation area, there are the wooded slopes of The Grove, and to the south, the steep, heavily wooded slopes of West Wood. The Pentaloe Brook has cut a narrow valley through this upland area.

The geology of the Woolhope Dome is complex. The eastern edge of the lower Lugg Valley, including much of the conservation area, is covered by glacial head deposits dating to the end of the last glaciation. The valley floor is overlain by Recent alluvial deposits which extend into the Pentaloe valley. The eastern edge of the conservation area is underlain by a narrow band of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Rushall Formation. Further east, underlying The Grove, is the limestone of the Upper Ludlow Shales. On the south-east side of the conservation area, the lower slopes of West Wood are underlain by mudstone and siltstone of the Raglan Mudstone Formation. Local stone, particularly sandstone, has long been used in the construction of churches, bridges, houses, mills, agricultural buildings and walls.

The glacial deposits give rise to deep, well-drained coarse loamy soils (typical argillic brown earths) that support cereals and short-term grassland, and some fruit, potatoes and hops. The river alluvium forms deep, permeable silty soils (typical brown alluvial soils) that support cereals and potatoes in areas where the risk of flooding is low, and stock rearing on permanent pasture. Well-drained, fine loamy soils (stagnogleyic argillic brown earths) develop over limestone bedrock, and coarse silty soils (typical brown earths) develop over siltstone. These soils support stock rearing and dairying on permanent grassland, some cereals, and deciduous woodland on steep slopes.

Historical Development and Archaeology

Mordiford has long been an important crossing point of the River Lugg on the Hereford to Gloucester road, dating, possibly, from at least the Roman period. The present stone bridge at Mordiford dates to the 14th Century, but the name of the

settlement suggests that a ford existed at this location before the construction of a bridge.

At the time of the Domesday Book, Mordiford was part of the manor of Frome (now Prior's Frome) held by Henry de Ferrers. The settlement was not mentioned by name; however, Mordiford (with various spellings) was documented by the 12th Century. The population at Domesday included four villagers and ten smallholders, and their families. Before the Norman Conquest, the manor was held by Alfgeat from Bishop Aethelstan of Hereford. The taxable value of the manor remained the same (£3) during this period. From the 12th Century, the manor was held by the Hereford family, who continue to be the major landowner in the area.

It is likely that a small settlement has existed on the site of the river crossing at Mordiford since at least Saxon times. The original settlement was located on the east side of the River Lugg, north of the Pentaloe Brook. At that time, much of the area east of the Lugg was wooded. Sections of woodland were cleared for agriculture, and evidence of medieval open field systems was recorded on the 19th Century Tithe Map, particularly in the area to the south-east of Mordiford. The woodlands themselves were managed as an important economic resource, providing timber for house building, coppiced wood for charcoal, and bark used in the tanning process. The settlement later extended eastwards along the Fownhope (Gloucester) road and the valley of the Pentaloe Brook, probably as a series of tofts (a small plot with house, outbuildings and garden) and small, enclosed fields, or closes, occupied by smallholders and villagers dependant on the lord of the manor.

A church was established at Mordiford by the 12th Century. The present Parish Church of the Holy Rood dates to the 12th and 13th Century, but it was partially rebuilt and altered during the 19th Century. The church is located near the east end of Mordiford Bridge, just above the floodplain. A cross in the churchyard is dated to the 14th or 15th Century (base, plinth and shaft); the cross itself is of 19th Century date.

The oldest part of Mordiford Bridge dates to at least AD 1352. The bridge was repaired and extended, and the western causeway constructed, during the 16th Century. Further alterations were made during the 18th and 20th Century.

The earliest known surviving secular building in the conservation area is Bridge House, located immediately south of the church. The timber-framed house is of H-plan with two cross-wings. The building probably dates to the late 16th or early 17th Century, but was rebuilt or re-cased in the 18th Century.

A number of 17th Century timber-framed buildings are located along the Pentaloe valley, just above the flood plain. These include Brook House (now completely encased in pebble-dash render) at the west end, and the Moon Inn further east at the junction of the Fownhope road and the Woolhope road. These buildings probably indicate the extent of the linear medieval settlement.

There has been a mill on the Pentaloe Brook since at least medieval times. The extant building, a disused corn mill, is located on the south side of the brook and is dated to the 18th Century. (A mill recorded in the Domesday Book at Fownhope, then *Hope*, may have been located here.) The waterwheel and machinery are still in place, and are of later date. A leat carried water from the Pentaloe Brook to a millpond on the south side (uphill) of the mill to power the overshot waterwheel. The leat is now dry immediately east of the mill; water has been diverted back to the Pentaloe Brook. A timber-framed house adjacent to the disused mill, known as The

Mill, is likely to date to the 17th Century. This indicates that, by this period, the settlement of Mordiford extended to the south side of Pentaloë Brook.

During the early or mid-18th Century, the settlement was extended to the north of the church with the construction of a brick-built rectory house (The Old Rectory). A barn built of sandstone rubble and brick, located 35m to the north, is of the same period. These buildings were constructed on glebe (church) land.

Attempts to make the Lugg navigable to river traffic began in the late 17th Century, continuing into the 18th Century. The remains of a lock on the river just south of Mordiford Bridge may date to the latter period. There are the associated remains of a weir.

Sufton Court was built in the northern part of the conservation area by James Hereford in the late 18th Century. The house replaced an older building to the north of the conservation area, now known as Old Sufton. The new house was constructed of Bath stone ashlar. The surrounding landscape park was laid out shortly afterwards. A yellow brick lodge was constructed in the mid-19th Century at the north-west corner of the park. In establishing the park, hedges were grubbed out and new trees were planted. This implies that the area was previously used for agricultural purposes. It is not known if the medieval settlement of Mordiford extended northwards along the Prior's Frome road before the landscape park was laid out.

A number of other buildings on the Hereford estate, in or near the settlement of Mordiford, were built or rebuilt during the late 18th or early 19th Century. All are of sandstone rubble with brick dressings. They include Garlands Farm buildings (on the south side of Pentaloë Brook near its confluence with the Lugg), Wallfower Row (a terrace of cottages on the south side of the Fownhope road near the junction with the Prior's Frome road), the east gateway and wall of the churchyard and the disused mill.

A group of stone-built dwellings (not part of the Hereford estate) located on the south side of the brook, east of the mill, may also be of 18th Century date. A further group of 18th Century stone cottages is also located further east in the Pentaloë valley, just outside the conservation area.

There are several buildings of 19th Century date in Mordiford. The most prominent is the primary school on the Prior's Frome road. The single-storey building was constructed of brick with ashlar dressings in 1873 on the site of an earlier 19th Century school. Additional school buildings were constructed during the 20th Century. A bellcote, of brick and ashlar and complete with a bell, is located in the school grounds; it may have been part of the earlier school.

Several buildings were altered substantially during the 19th Century, including Forge House (on the Fownhope road). This stone building may conceal a much earlier structure, possibly of timber-framed construction. During the 20th Century, the construction of new houses was undertaken outside the boundaries of the conservation area, mainly to the east along the Pentaloë valley.

Spatial Analysis

Character and Interrelationship of Spaces

Mordiford Conservation Area is located on the edge of two very different ecological zones. To the east is the open agriculture landscape of the Lugg and Wye floodplains, and to the west, the enclosed wooded landscapes of the Woolhope Dome.

Open space accounts for approximately seventy-five percent of the conservation area; this includes Sufton Court landscape park, and part of the floodplain of the River Lugg. Within the settlement of Mordiford there are several open areas, including land on the small floodplain of the Pentaloe Brook. Most residential premises have fairly generous gardens, particularly at the rear, many with a mature growth of trees and bushes. Houses fronting onto the Fownhope road in the western part of the settlement generally have no front garden.

Prominent open spaces within the conservation area include:

- Sufton Court landscape park and gardens: located on rising land overlooking the floodplain to the west and the settlement to the south; comprises over fifty percent of the conservation area; much of the park is given over to permanent pasture with mature specimen and parkland trees;
- The floodplain: low lying land liable to flooding on the west side of the conservation area; mature trees line the river bank; in the south-west part of the conservation area, the river flows through several channels and tree growth is particularly heavy;
- On both sides of the Pentaloe Brook west of Mordiford Bridge no. 2 (near the junction of the Fownhope road with the Woolhope road): a narrow strip of land, mainly gardens on the north side and waste on the south side; trees line the banks and growth is heavier near the confluence with the Lugg;
- On the south side of the Pentaloe Brook east of Mordiford Bridge no.2: two small fields used as pasture;
- The churchyard of the parish church: surrounded on three sides by high walls; several mature trees including elms.

Mature trees are a prominent feature of the conservation area. In addition to areas noted above, they are abundant:

- South of the disused mill;
- In the south-east corner of the conservation area near a location known as The Rock;
- At the eastern boundary of the conservation area on the edge of The Grove.

There are no Tree Protection Orders within the conservation area.

Key Views and Vistas

There are a number of key views within the conservation area, including:

- On entering the settlement from the west across Mordiford Bridge (B4224): a sequential view along the curving road that includes Bridge House, Brook

House, Wallflower Row, Meadow Sweet and Rectory Cottage, Forge House, The Old Post Office, the Moon Inn and, ultimately, the mill;

- On entering the settlement from the south (B4224): a view of the only houses with exposed timbers, i.e., The Mill, the Moon Inn, and The Old Post Office;
- From the public footpath to the east of the mill: looking east along the Pentaloe valley to the stone-built houses on The Rock set against a background of wooded hills.

The following are panoramic vistas that offer a view of several prominent buildings within their landscape setting, and the roofscapes of Mordiford:

- From Mordiford Bridge: looking north-east to east towards Sufton Court (a landmark within the landscape park); The Old Rectory and the parish church overlooking the floodplain, partially screened by trees; Bridge House at the east end of the bridge, partially screened by trees; all against a background of mature trees at The Grove;
- From the public footpath to the east of the mill: looking north-west to west towards the gable ends and chimneys of the Moon Inn, The Old Post Office, The Forge and Meadow Sweet; the rear elevation, roof line and chimneys of Wallflower Row; and the tower of the parish church.

Character Analysis

The general character of Mordiford Conservation Area is defined to a great extent by its location on the western edge of the wooded uplands of the Woolhope Dome overlooking the broad floodplain of the River Lugg. The wooded hills to the east of the conservation area provide a dramatic backdrop in contrast to the extensive arable plain to the west. Between these two extremes, the landscape park and permanent grasslands of Sufton Court act as a transitional zone between 'wild nature' and agriculture.

The focus of the conservation area is the small settlement of Mordiford. Here, locally quarried, pale yellow and grey stone is a characteristic building material used in the construction of church and bridge; domestic, agricultural and industrial buildings; and boundary walls. However, the presence of timber frames, brick and render indicates a long history of architectural traditions. A number of timber-framed buildings have been rebuilt, or infilled and encased with brick and render.

Character Areas

Within the conservation area, three character areas will be described and assessed:

1. Mordiford settlement
2. Sufton Court landscape park
3. The Lugg Valley

Mordiford settlement

The settlement of Mordiford extends eastwards along the valley of the Pentaloe Brook from its confluence with the Lugg. The majority of dwellings are located on the

Fownhope road. The curving road follows the natural topography, just above the floodplain, on the north side of the brook.

At the east end of the Fownhope road, between Mordiford Bridge and the junction with the Prior's Frome road, buildings are clustered together in groups. Most are two storeys high. Three timber-framed buildings have been rebuilt or infilled and encased with brick and render. Sandstone rubble is also prominent in the construction of dwellings and boundary walls. Buildings or boundary walls generally front directly onto the road (north side), or sit at the rear of a narrow pavement (south side). This fact, together with the curving and narrowing of the road, results in a sense of enclosure.

Bridge House (unlisted) is located on the north side of the Fownhope road near the east end of Mordiford Bridge. The H-plan footprint of the timber-framed building is discernable in spite of major 18th century alterations that include rebuilding in brick, hipped roofs with slate tiles, four brick chimney stacks, a symmetrical front elevation with vertical sash windows and central entrance with porch. The fretted bargeboards (which are present elsewhere in Mordiford) are 19th Century additions. Bridge House has a small front garden, with a low brick wall topped by a hedge, and a large rear garden with a high brick wall on the north side. On the south side of the house there is a courtyard with a brick outbuilding and a high sandstone rubble boundary wall with vertical ('cock and hen') coping stones. The wall follows the curve of the Fownhope road, fronting directly onto the road. Trees and shrubs grow above the wall.

Bridge Cottage (unlisted) is located on the south side of the Fownhope road at the edge of the Lugg floodplain. This two-storey house is of 19th Century appearance. It is brick-built with sandstone rubble at the side and rear, a bay window at the north gable end, and fretted bargeboards that match those of Bridge House opposite. There is a large garden extending around the south, east and west sides of the house, with a hedge on the west side, fronting directly onto the road.

On the south side of Fownhope road, opposite the curving stone wall of Bridge House, is Brook House (Grade II), a former inn, now a post office and shop, and several dwellings. This T-plan timber-framed building has been refaced with brick and sandstone rubble, and encased in pebble-dash render under slate roofs. At the front elevation there are three doorways (two of which have wooden gabled canopies with curved iron brackets), casement windows, a shop window, and a Victorian post box. There is no garden at the front; the house sits at the rear of a (generally) narrow, tarmac footpath that extends eastwards to Mordiford Bridge no. 2 over the Pentoloe Brook. (There is no footpath on the north side of the Fownhope road.) Rear gardens extend southwards to the brook, heavily screened by trees and bushes.

A low, sandstone rubble wall extends east from Brook House at the rear of the pavement. Behind the wall is a garden or paddock. A small barn (unlisted) abuts the wall. The barn is weatherboarded with a timber frame on a sandstone rubble plinth under a corrugated iron roof.

To the east of the barn is Wallflower Row (unlisted), a terrace of cottages sitting at the rear of the narrow pavement. The cottages are built of coursed sandstone rubble under slate roofs; the easternmost cottage (no. 5) appears least altered. This cottage has brick dressings over door and windows, brick chimney stack and wooden casement windows and doorframe. The door is two steps down from the pavement. (The road surface has been raised to prevent flooding.) The cottages all have small

gardens at the rear. A high, modern brick wall extends eastwards from Wallflower Row for approximately 80m.

On the north side of the Fownhope road, to the east of Bridge House garden, is a group of three conjoined cottages. The central cottage, Meadow Sweet (unlisted), is timber-framed on a sandstone rubble plinth under a clay tile roof. The one storey building has been encased in pebble-dash render, dormer windows have been fitted, and doors and windows have been replaced. On the east side of the cottage are two large chimney stacks of sandstone rubble with brick upper sections. The south gable has fretted bargeboards, and fronts directly onto the road.

On the west side of Meadow Sweet is Yew Tree Cottage (unlisted). The single-storey cottage is faced in sandstone rubble under a slate roof with dormer windows and brick chimney stack. The dormer gables have fretted bargeboards. The cottage is set back behind a garden with a boundary wall of sandstone rubble, with brick coping, fronting directly onto the road. On the west side of Meadow Sweet is Rectory Cottage (unlisted). The one-and-a-half storey building is rendered in pebble-dash on a sandstone rubble plinth under a slate roof with dormer windows and brick chimney. At the front elevation, the off-centre door is two steps up with a wooden gabled canopy on straight iron brackets; at the east gable there is a bay window. There is a garden on the east side and at the rear of the house with a low, sandstone rubble boundary wall with vertical coping stones. The house and garden are located on the north-west side of the junction of the Fownhope road with the Prior's Frome road. At this location the Fownhope road is wider than elsewhere. This feature, together with the bay window that overlooks the road junction, may indicate that the cottage was earlier used as a tollhouse.

To the east of the Prior's Frome road junction the streetscape is more open. There are three buildings on the north side of the Fownhope road, and a brook-side meadow on the south side with a wire fence delineating the roadside boundary. Two of the buildings have exposed timber frames; all are set on fairly large plots.

Forge House (unlisted) is located on the north-east side of the junction. The one-and-a-half storey house is built of (or encased in) coursed sandstone rubble under a slate roof with two brick chimney stacks. At the front elevation there are gabled dormers with bargeboards and diamond latticed casement windows with label mould above. The central entry has a gabled canopy with finial and bargeboards that match those of the dormers. The house gables have fretted bargeboards. Attached to the west side of the house is a single-storey coursed stone rubble outbuilding with a slate roof. At the front of the house is a garden with a sandstone rubble retaining wall with vertical coping stones and ashlar gate piers. The wall fronts directly onto the Fownhope road.

Further east, and set behind a front garden, is The Old Post Office (Grade II). The timber-framed (box-framed) building has rendered roughcast infill on a sandstone plinth under a slate roof. The gable ends and chimney stack are of sandstone rubble. The front elevation is painted black and white and has casement windows, gabled dormers and a central entrance with gabled canopy. The dormers and canopy have matching bargeboards. The front retaining wall is of sandstone rubble with vertical coping stones and ashlar gate piers.

The Moon Inn (Grade II) stands on the north side of the Fownhope road at the junction with the Woolhope road. This large building is of irregular L-plan; it is of two storeys with a cellar. The house is timber-framed (box-framed) with brick and roughcast infill on a sandstone plinth under a slate roof. A chimney stack at the west

gable is built of sandstone rubble and brick. The building has wood- and iron-framed windows, and two doors at the front with gabled canopies. The south gable has fretted bargeboards. The inn has been extended several times and the roofs have been raised. The building is painted black and pale yellow. At the front is a sandstone retaining wall with brick piers and iron railings along the top.

The Parish Church of the Holy Rood (Grade II*) stands near the east end of Mordiford Bridge overlooking the floodplain of the River Lugg. The walls are built of local sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings under tiled roofs. The churchyard, which contains a number of mature trees including elms, extends to the east of the church to the Prior's Frome road. The churchyard cross (Grade II*) is constructed of sandstone ashlar. It has an octagonal stepped plinth, square base with a niche in the west face, and an octagonal shaft with a cross at the top.

The high eastern gateway of the churchyard is constructed of sandstone rubble with horizontal coping stones and with a brick arch. There is a smaller doorway immediately to the north, and a high rubble wall extends 50m further northwards (the complete structure is Grade II listed).

There are several buildings to the north of the churchyard; all overlook the floodplain and are screened to a certain extent by mature trees. The Old Rectory and The Mews (Grade II) were formerly one large house comprising the rectory and a service wing. They are now two dwellings. The Old Rectory is of three storeys with a cellar. It is brick-built under a concrete tiled roof, with four brick chimney stacks. The front elevation is symmetrical with wooden sash windows; the central bay breaks forward with a segmental head and central entrance with steps up. The door is set in a brick porch with a plain wooden gabled canopy. The Mews is two and three stories high; it is brick-built with pitched, concrete tile roofs. At the rear, large gardens extend eastwards to the Prior's Frome road. A high rubble wall (extending north from the churchyard gate, described above) delineates the eastern boundary. On the west side of the property there are several low sandstone rubble boundary walls with mature hedges, trees and shrubs.

To the north of The Mews is a barn (Grade II) built of sandstone rubble with a brick gable end to the east. The barn has been renovated and is now a dwelling known as Old Rectory Barn. It is screened by trees and hedges.

Settlement on the south side of the Pentaloe Brook is less concentrated than on the north side. Three groups of buildings can be identified; they are centred on (i) a disused watermill, (ii) Bell House, and (iii) Garland Farm.

The mill, now disused but formerly a corn mill, is the tallest secular building in the settlement area. It is of three storeys with an attic. Due to its location set back off the Fownhope road, and its screening by mature trees, the building can be seen only from the near vicinity. The mill is built of sandstone rubble with casement windows and brick dressings under a clay tile roof. The east gable end, in which an iron millwheel is set, and the chimney stack are brick-built. Architectural details match those of Wallflower Row. The wide leat that extends eastwards from the mill is now dry. A millpond was previously located on the south side of the mill. A wooden lean-to shed, with a corrugated iron roof, is located on the west side.

The Mill (a dwelling) is located west of the watermill on the east side of the Fownhope road. The two-storey building is timber-framed (box-framed) with painted brick infill on a sandstone rubble plinth under a slate roof, with a rubble chimney stack at the south gable. The house has casement windows and a central entrance

with a gabled canopy. The building has been extended at both gable ends in rubble and brick, with additional chimney stacks. In a field to the east of the mill is an agricultural building of sandstone rubble with a weatherboarded timber frame under a corrugated iron roof. The building has been altered and extended several times.

On the west side of the Fownhope road there is a further group of buildings of sandstone rubble and brick. Architectural details differ from those of the watermill.

Bell House (unlisted) is a two-storey dwelling with a cellar, set at an angle of 45 degrees to the road behind a small front garden, and occupying a prominent position when approached from the north. It is built of sandstone rubble under a shallow pitched roof with slate tiles. There is a large chimney stack at the east gable end and a second chimney in the west gable end. The building has been refronted in brick with a symmetrical appearance, including two first floor casement windows, two ground floor oriel windows, and a central entrance with steps up and a wooden gabled porch. There is a large cellar door to the left of the central entrance under an oriel window. Several aspects of this house indicate that it may have previously been an inn, i.e., its position, plan, design and name.

To the north of Bell House is a terrace of cottages, known as Bell Row (unlisted), extending west along the south side of a lane. They are of two storeys, built of sandstone rubble with some brick dressings, brick chimney stacks, and casement windows. A single cottage, built of brick, is located immediately to the west. Gardens and front elevations are to the south side of the cottages, i.e., not facing the lane.

The third group of buildings, Garland Farm, is located at the south-west corner of the conservation area, just south of the confluence of the Lugg and the Pentoloe. Here, the flat, low-lying landscape is part of the floodplain of the River Wye.

The two-storey farmhouse is built of sandstone rubble and brick under a steeply pitched slate roof. The house is screened by trees and farm buildings. Agricultural buildings are closely grouped on the east and south sides of the house, and clustered around the farmyard. Most of the buildings are of sandstone rubble with brick dressings; architectural details generally match those of the watermill and Wallflower Row. Roof coverings include clay plain tiles, pantiles and corrugated iron. The group also includes timber-framed weatherboarded structures and modern steel-framed structures. External boundary walls are built of sandstone rubble with vertical coping stones (in places); within the farmyard, walls are built of brick with half-round brick coping.

The entrance to the farmyard is off the lane (referred to above) that extends along the south side of the Pentoloe Brook. Near this location a retaining wall of coursed sandstone rubble reinforces the south bank of the brook to prevent erosion of the lane.

Sufton Court landscape park

Sufton Court landscape park and gardens comprises over fifty percent of the conservation area. The site is included in the English Heritage register of parks and gardens of special historic interest.

Much of the park (within the conservation area) is given over to permanent pasture with mature specimen and parkland trees, both deciduous and coniferous. A lawned garden, with specimen trees and shrubs, and gravel walks, is located in the northern

section of the park adjacent to Sufton Court. In the southern part, there is a school playing field (on the north side of the primary school) and a cemetery (overlooking the Woolhope road).

On the west side, the landscape park extends to the Prior's Frome road where the boundary is delineated by mature hedges. On the east side, the park extends beyond the boundary of the conservation area into The Grove, a more heavily wooded area.

The most prominent building in the landscape park is Sufton Court (Grade II*), located in an elevated position and visible from the west side of Mordiford Bridge. The three-storey building, with attics and cellars, is constructed of Bath stone ashlar under a hipped stone slate roof with grouped axial chimney stacks. The front elevation is symmetrical with plain sash windows and dentilled eaves cornice. The pedimented central bay breaks forward with a Venetian window to the first floor and a central entrance with a cast iron porch.

To the north of the house is a low stable range constructed of brick and stone around a central yard. At the north-west corner of the park (and of the conservation area), is a lodge. The small, two-storey house is of T-plan, constructed of pale yellow brick with ashlar dressings under a slate roof. The gables have decorative bargeboards and finials.

There are two main entrances to the park with curving 'tarmac' drives. One is located near the lodge at the north-west corner; the other is located on the west side. Both have rusticated stone gate piers with iron gates. Within the park, iron stock fences protect the house and gardens from livestock.

The Lugg Valley

That part of the Lugg Valley within the conservation area extends east from the west bank of the river to, approximately, the Prior's Frome road. Much of the area is low lying and is liable to flood. The area has been designated by Herefordshire Council as an unregistered park of local importance.

The major structure in this area is the Mordiford Bridge (Scheduled Monument, Grade II*), and the flood arches and causeway on the west side of the bridge (Grade II). The structure is built of coursed and dressed sandstone rubble. It includes two main spans over the Lugg, two flood arches and a causeway with a further five arches. There are three cut-waters on the north side and two on the south, and parapets that extend along both sides of the entire length of the bridge and causeway.

The remains of a lock (Grade II) are located to the south of the bridge on the west bank of the river. The structure consists of the walls of the lock chamber built of coursed sandstone rubble. It is in poor condition. Also located on the floodplain north of the bridge is the rusting metal frame of a wind-driven water pump.

Buildings of Local Interest

A number of unlisted buildings make a positive contribution to the special architectural and historical interest of the conservation area. It is proposed that the following be considered for designation as buildings of local interest:

- Bridge House, probably a late 16th or early 17th Century timber-framed house of H-plan with two cross-wings; rebuilt or re-cased in brick during the 18th Century with a symmetrical front elevation including sash windows and central entrance; porch and fretted bargeboards;
- Meadow Sweet, 17th Century timber-framed house on a sandstone rubble plinth under a clay tile roof, two chimney stacks of sandstone rubble; encased in pebble-dash render, dormer windows fitted, original doors and windows replaced, fretted barge boards at gable end;
- Forge House, late 18th/early 19th Century (or possibly earlier) house, built or re-cased in coursed sandstone under a slate roof with two brick chimney stacks, gabled dormers with bargeboards, diamond latticed casement windows with label mould above, central entry with gabled canopy with finial and barge boards, fretted bargeboards at the gable ends; an outbuilding of coursed sandstone rubble is attached to west side of the house;
- Wallflower Row, nos. 1 to 5, late 18th/early 19th Century (or possibly earlier) terraced cottages, built or re-cased in coursed sandstone rubble, slate roofs, door two steps down from pavement (road level raised to prevent flooding); no. 5 retains brick dressings over door and windows, brick chimney stack, wooden casement windows and doorframe (other cottages have been altered to a varying extent);
- Garland Farm, late 18th/early 19th Century (or possibly earlier) farmhouse and farm buildings, built or re-built in coursed sandstone rubble and brick, with brick dressings, in Hereford/Sufton Court estate pattern, external boundary walls in sandstone rubble with vertical ('cock and hen') coping, walls within farmyard of brick with half-round brick coping; some modern agricultural buildings and alterations;
- Bell House, possibly 18th Century of sandstone rubble under a pitched slate roof, re-fronted in brick with two first floor casement windows, two ground floor oriel windows, central entrance two steps up with wooden gabled porch, large cellar door to left of central entrance;
- Sufton Lodge, 19th Century, small two-storey house of T-plan, built of pale yellow brick with ashlar dressings under a slate roof, decorative bargeboards and finials on gables;
- Barn (east of Brook House), possibly 18th Century, weatherboarded with a timber frame on a sandstone rubble plinth under a corrugated iron roof;
- Barn (east of disused corn mill), possibly 18th Century, sandstone rubble with weatherboarded timber frame under a corrugated iron roof; altered and extended.

Prevalent Building Materials and Local Details

Local natural resources were available for construction purposes in the conservation area, including sandstone and woodland products. The prevalent building material within the conservation is sandstone. It was utilized for monumental structures, including the parish church and Mordiford Bridge; for commercial buildings and structures, including the mill and the lock; for domestic and agricultural buildings; for

chimney stacks; and for boundary and retaining walls. Several groups of buildings were constructed (or rebuilt) of sandstone with brick dressings above doors and windows during the late 18th or early 19th Century.

A number of houses in the conservation area date from at least the 17th Century. They are timber-framed buildings of box frame construction, several with one or two cross-wings. Early timber-framed houses were infilled with wattle (or lathes) and daub, later replaced with brick, painted brick or render. Original thatched roofs were replaced with clay or slate tiles. Several timber-framed houses were later re-fronted in brick or painted brick. Surviving timber-framed buildings generally show evidence of alteration, including enlarging, raising the roof, building extensions, or adding porches.

During the 18th and 19th Century, brick was used to construct new buildings and to rebuild or re-front older buildings. Examples include The Old Rectory, the primary school, and Bridge House. Exotic material (Bath stone) was used in the construction of Sufton Court.

Positive Areas and Features

The following areas contribute positively to the character of the conservation area:

- On the east side of Mordiford Bridge: a group of buildings that includes the parish church, Bridge House, and the bridge itself with mature trees, and set against the backdrop of a wooded hillside;
- In Mordiford settlement on the south side of the Fownhope road: Wallflower Row, a terrace of stone-built cottages that follow the curve of the road;
- On the north side of the Fownhope road and Woolhope road junction: The Old Post Office and the Moon Inn, two well-maintained timber-framed buildings that overlook the Pentaloe Brook, set against the backdrop of a wooded hillside;
- On the south side of the conservation area: Garland Farm, a group of farm buildings laid out in traditional courtyard plan, including stone, brick and steel-framed structures. This is a working farm with a long history that has adapted to changes in farming practices, architecture and technology.

The following features contribute positively to the character of the conservation area:

- Victorian cast iron post box set into the wall of Brook House (post office and shop);
- Walls of sandstone rubble with vertical ('cock and hen') coping stones located:
 - On the north side of the Fownhope road from Bridge House to Meadow Sweet, and from The Forge to The Old Post Office;
 - On the south side of The Old Rectory;
 - On the east side of Rectory Cottage along the Prior's Frome road;

- At the entrance to Garland Farm and along the east and south sides of the farmstead;
- Along the south bank of the Pentaloe Brook near Garland Farm.
- Fretted and decorative bargeboards fitted to gable ends, porches and dormers of buildings, e.g.,
 - Bridge House, fretted bargeboards;
 - Meadow Sweet, fretted bargeboards;
 - Forge House, fretted bargeboards;
 - The old Post Office, decorative and fretted bargeboards;
 - The Moon Inn, fretted bargeboards;
 - Sufton Lodge, decorative bargeboards.

Negative Elements

The following elements detract from the character of the conservation:

- That part of the Hereford to Ross-on-Wye road (B4224) within the settlement, particularly between Brook House and the Moon Inn: a modern metalled highway, raised above the level of the thresholds of doorways at Wallflower Row, with a footpath and kerbs on the south side. The hard, dark and shiny surface of the road is alien to the character of the conservation area with its light-coloured buildings, pale bedrock and gentle topography. The road is an intrusion from the world outside the conservation area that bisects the settlement and represents rapid movement through, rather than communication with, the conservation area. The curving road also limits pedestrians' view of on-coming traffic, and carries traffic that may sometimes travel at inappropriate speeds;
- East of Wallflower Row on the south side of the Fownhope road: a high, brick boundary wall that is not in character with the stone rubble walls of the area;
- East of Rectory Cottage, on the west side of the Priory Frome road at the junction with the Fownhope road: a clutter of road signs and posts, and utilities markers.

General Condition, Pressures and Capacity for Change

Many of the buildings within the conservation area (residential, agricultural, industrial and public) appear to be well kept and in good condition. Two, however, are deemed to be at risk and several others could be enhanced (discussed below).

Little new residential development has taken place within the conservation area since its designation; however, a number of existing buildings have been renovated. Significant development has taken place on the Woolhope road to the east of the conservation area, where a housing estate has been constructed, and two new

houses have been built immediately south of the conservation area boundary. Several agricultural buildings at Garland Farm have been extended or altered.

Future small-scale developments may be proposed within the conservation area involving redundant agricultural buildings and infill sites. It is likely that future development will be proposed outside the conservation area boundaries on the Woolhope road to the east, and further to the south at sites on the Fownhope road. Such development would result in an increase in vehicular traffic through Mordiford (discussed below).

Issues

Buildings at Risk

The following structures are deemed to be at risk:

- The lock on the River Lugg (Grade II): This is the best-preserved lock on the Lugg and is believed to date from the early 18th Century. It was built of stone as a half-lock and later converted to a pound lock with upper and lower wooden gates, neither of which have survived. The stonework holding the upper gate has been swept away by the river, and it is likely that further damage will be caused by river erosion and by the roots of trees and bushes;
- The disused mill (Grade II): There are possible structural problems, since, at the time of the conservation area survey, the building was supported by internal scaffolding.

Proposed Boundary Changes

At several locations the conservation area boundary is now unmarked or obscure, i.e.,

- On the north-west side where the boundary crosses the floodplain;
- On the north-east side in the landscape park where an earlier field boundary may have been removed;
- On the south side at Garland Farm where the boundary cuts through an agricultural building;
- On the south-west side where the boundary cuts through the causeway and the lock.

It is proposed that at these locations the boundary should be realigned to follow recognisable field boundaries, (i) and (ii); and to include the entire structure concerned, (iii) and (iv), without resulting in any significant loss to the conservation area.

Inclusion

It is proposed that the conservation area be extended at the south-east corner to incorporate a location called The Rock. This would include Woodshoot Cottage (Grade II, a 17th Century timber-framed house) and five cottages (unlisted), most built

of stone and of 18th Century appearance, located on a steep south-facing slope. The new boundary would follow the Pentaloe Brook eastwards, and return along the property line and access road of Woodshoot Cottage. The inclusion of the listed building and cottages, the landscape setting and the highly visible Pentaloe Brook would contribute to the character the conservation area.

Other Issues

- The Lock on the River Lugg: The fabric of the lock, a Grade II Listed Building, is believed to be at risk (see above). It is unlikely that an alternative use can be found for the lock. It is suggested that English Heritage be advised of the present situation, and that consideration be given to designating this structure as a Scheduled Monument. The site includes the remains of a weir associated with the lock.

Enhancement

- Measures should be considered that address negative elements associated with the B4224 road, including road safety. It may be possible to work towards this by the use of traffic calming paving at appropriate locations that functions as 'rumble strips' to reduce traffic speed and identify pedestrian crossing points; creates visual and physical linkages between the road and the settlement, and between those parts of the settlement bisected by the road; and improves the visual impact of the road. Re-paving the footpath and, perhaps, other limited adjacent areas should also be considered. The choice of paving material is crucial to the success of such a scheme. It should be sufficiently durable for the purpose, but visually compatible with local building materials and bedrock.
- Improvements to the external surface of several buildings would enhance the appearance of the conservation area, including:
 - Brook House (Grade II): pebble-dash render discoloured;
 - The Mill (Grade II): painted brick infill eroded;
 - A barn east of Bridge House on the north side of the Fownhope road (brick under slate roof): brickwork spalled, slates missing, ground floor window open to the weather;
 - A barn east of Brook House on the south side of the Fownhope road (weather-boarded timber frame under corrugated iron roof): cladding weathered, some boards split, roof rusty.

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Appendix I: List of Heritage Assets

Scheduled Monuments

- Mordiford Bridge
- Churchyard Cross in Holy Rood Churchyard

Listed Buildings

Grade II*: Particularly important buildings of more than special interest (4% of Listed Buildings).

- Sufton Court
- Church of the Holy Rood
- Churchyard Cross
- Mordiford Bridge

Grade II: Buildings of special interest.

- East gateway to Churchyard of Church of Holy Rood and approximately 50m of wall extending north forming boundary of garden to the Old Rectory and The Mews
- The Moon Inn
- The Old Post Office
- Old Rectory and The Mews
- Barn approximately 35m north-west of Old Rectory and The Mews
- The Post Office and Shop (Brook House)
- Flood arches and causeway walls to Mordiford Bridge
- The Mill (house)
- Mill (corn mill) approximately 20m north-east of The Mill
- Lock on River Lugg

Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record

- Mordiford Bridge
- Churchyard Cross
- Romano-British coins (find)
- Holy Rood Church
- Sufton Court
- Cemetary at The Garlands
- Mill
- Mordiford Lock
- Bridge House
- House south-east of church (i)
- Moon Inn
- House south-east of church (ii)
- Cottage (site) east of church
- Mordiford Mill loopholed wall
- Old Rectory
- Black Poplar (ancient tree)

Appendix II: Buildings of Local Interest

- Bridge House, probably a late 16th or early 17th Century timber-framed house of H-plan with two cross-wings; rebuilt or re-cased in brick during the 18th Century with a symmetrical front elevation including sash windows and central entrance; porch and fretted bargeboards;
- Meadow Sweet, 17th Century timber-framed house on a sandstone rubble plinth under a clay tile roof, two chimney stacks of sandstone rubble; encased in pebble-dash render, dormer windows fitted, original doors and windows replaced, fretted barge boards at gable end;
- Forge House, late 18th/early 19th Century (or possibly earlier) house, built or re-cased in coursed sandstone under a slate roof with two brick chimney stacks, gabled dormers with bargeboards, diamond latticed casement windows with label mould above, central entry with gabled canopy with finial and barge boards, fretted bargeboards at the gable ends; an outbuilding of coursed sandstone rubble is attached to west side of the house;
- Wallflower Row, nos. 1 to 5, late 18th/early 19th Century (or possibly earlier) terraced cottages, built or re-cased in coursed sandstone rubble, slate roofs, door two steps down from pavement (road level raised to prevent flooding); no. 5 retains brick dressings over door and windows, brick chimney stack, wooden casement windows and doorframe (other cottages have been altered to a varying extent);
- Garland Farm, late 18th/early 19th Century (or possibly earlier) farmhouse and farm buildings, built or re-built in coursed sandstone rubble and brick, with brick dressings, in Hereford/Sufton Court estate pattern, external boundary walls in sandstone rubble with vertical ('cock and hen') coping, walls within farmyard of brick with half-round brick coping; some modern agricultural buildings and alterations;
- Bell House, possibly 18th Century of sandstone rubble under a pitched slate roof, refronted in brick with two first floor casement windows, two ground floor oriel windows, central entrance two steps up with wooden gabled porch, large cellar door to left of central entrance;
- Sufton Lodge, 19th Century, small two-storey house of T-plan, built of pale yellow brick with ashlar dressings under a slate roof, decorative bargeboards and finials on gables;
- Barn (east of Brook House), possibly 18th Century, weatherboarded with a timber frame on a sandstone rubble plinth under a corrugated iron roof;
- Barn (east of disused corn mill), possibly 18th Century, sandstone rubble with weatherboarded timber frame under a corrugated iron roof; altered and extended.