

# RHOOSE

Conservation Area • Appraisal



# Rhose

## Introduction

This report is one of a series compiled by the County Planning Department, intended to increase awareness and awaken interest in the historic heritage and character of the designated Conservation Areas in Glamorgan. It is intended to be read in conjunction with the general policy document, 'Conservation Areas', which outlines the principles adopted by the County Council in respect of development within the Conservation Areas. This document is also a forerunner to a more detailed statement of policies to be adopted by the Local Planning Authority concerning the future of Rhose's Conservation Area.



*Lower Farmhouse*



*The Barn, Rhose Farm*

## The Historic and Architectural Character of Rhose

Rhose is a coastal village lying some three miles west of Barry and eleven miles from Cardiff. It has a linear form extending for a mile on both sides of the classified road, the B.4265 from Barry to Bridgend. It is within the parishes of Penmark and Porthkerry the eastern portion of the B.4265 and Station Road forming the parish boundary between Penmark to the north and Porthkerry to the south.

The village lies on agricultural land sloping from a 200 ft. plateau to the north of the settlement (upon which Rhose Airport is built), to the 100 ft. cliffs on the southern coast of Glamorgan, half-a-mile away. The settlement thus overlooks Rhose Point, Dams Bay and Fontygary Bay and on a fine day the coast of Somerset can be seen beyond.

Information gleaned from maps still in existence indicate that the name of this village has gradually evolved over the years. On maps of 1578 and 1610 it is called Rowse, in 1622 Roose, in 1839 it appears as Roos, but by 1878 it was again called Roose. It seems to have derived the present spelling of its name, Rhose, by 1898. In Welsh it is called Y Rhws.

The original settlement was centred around three large farms located at the eastern end of the present village. Until the twentieth century these farmhouses and their associated farm buildings formed the core of the hamlet. The Conservation Area is centred around this group of three farms. Due to the small size of the original hamlet, little information concerning its past history is recorded.

Although this area of South Wales was colonised by the Romans and evidence of settlements have come to light at Nurston, Penmark, Fonmon and East Aberthaw, there are no records of Roman remains in Rhose. The nearest community was probably at Nurston on the northern edge of (Rhose) Glamorgan Airport.

The original hamlet of Rhoose appears to have functioned as an agricultural centre with lime kilns scattered in the vicinity. There were also lime quarries to the south and north of the village. The hamlet grew up around the convergence point of several routes. The dominant road leading from the west of the village linked it to the old port of East Aberthaw. This port was thriving from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, trans-shipping agricultural produce and limestone from the Vale of Glamorgan, to other ports of South Wales and the South West of England. It is probable that lime from the vicinity of Rhoose was used in local farms and also exported either in its treated or untreated form. The junction at the south eastern corner of Lower Farm is formed where the B.4265 meets a route that originally went north to Nurston, Penmark and Llancarfan. This route was truncated to form Brendon View Close when the airport was constructed. Llancarfan during the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries was an important service centre providing mills for the processing of agricultural produce. This northern route also joined the old Port Road east of Nurston, a trading and smuggling route from East Aberthaw to Barry. The eastern junction of Rhoose Road and the B.4265 involves routes south-east to Porthkerry and north-east to Barry. There is also a short route (now called Station Road) south from the village, which was originally a narrow path leading to the coast.



*The Village Pump*

There is no conclusive evidence concerning the date of the arrival of the first settlers in the area. The earliest reference to the settlement was during the sixteenth century, when it was recorded that the Mathews had established a family house in 'Roose'. The hamlet was probably established between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, when much rural development was initiated in the Vale of Glamorgan, which is often referred to as the 'Garden of Wales'. It is also likely that a small haven existed in one of the nearby coastal bays but it was overshadowed by the nearby East Aberthaw harbour, the largest port between Swansea and Cardiff during the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries.

During the sixteenth century the Mathews, a family of old Welsh connections, settled in the area and built a house in Rhoose. On the 1876 map the site of this building is called the 'Old Castle' but it is unlikely that it was anything more important than the family house of the Mathew family. The ruins of this house were swept away by the excavations for Station Road.

James Mathew, fifth son of Morgan Mathew of St-y-Nill and descended from the Mathew family of Llandaff, married the daughter of Sir Thomas Bawdrip and settled in Rhoose. The Bawdrips were the original holders of Penmark Place (the anciently recorded Odyn's Fee). This residence was sold to Sir Edward Lewis of Llantrithyd in 1615 from where it passed to the Kemys-Tynte family. It was probably a descendant, Charles Kemys, who is shown on the tithe map of approximately 1840, as owner of much of Rhoose. In fact, the name Kemeys or Kemys appears again in Kemeys Road, a more recent addition to Rhoose. The Mathews family appear to have continued to live in Rhoose for at least ten generations and played a prominent part in the affairs of the county. The family supplied the county with a sheriff in 1618, 1667 and 1693. Their family house was no more than ruins in the nineteenth century and was possibly derelict many years before, although there is no definite information about the house or family after the late seventeenth century.



*Malt House*

# Rhoose

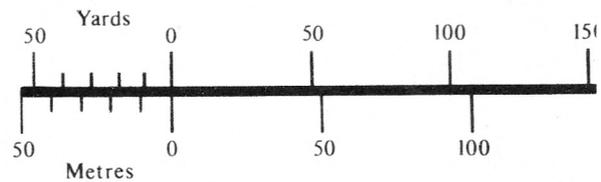
## Legend

 Boundary of Conservation Area

 Buildings listed as of Special Historic or Architectural Interest under Section 54 of the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act

 Lower Farm House • • Grade I

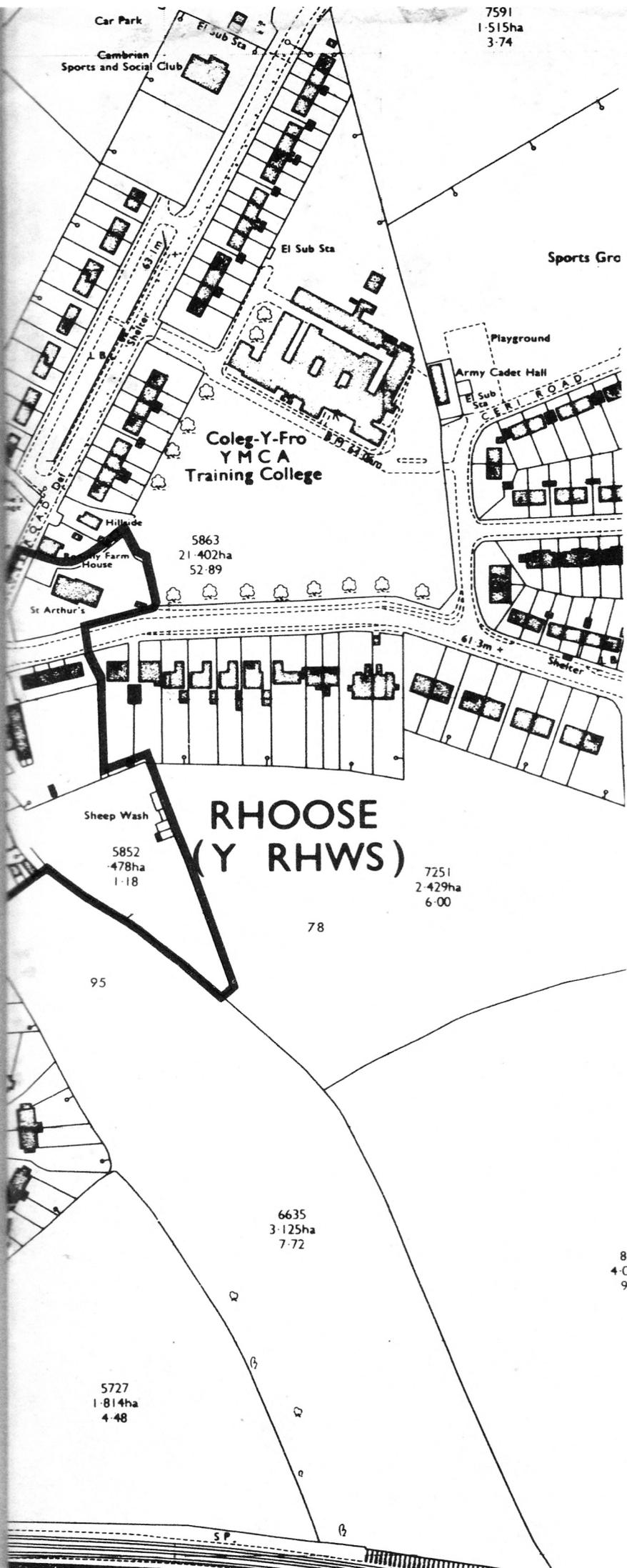
Grade I, II and II\* buildings are included in statutory list as buildings of national or regional importance and therefore any alteration or demolition cannot be undertaken without informing Local Planning Authority. Grade III buildings not included in the statutory list but form provisional list of buildings of local interest.

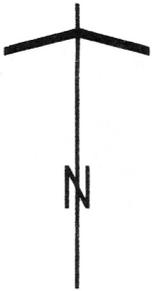


### Boundary of the Conservation Area

8  
4C  
9

The Conservation Area boundary extends from north-west corner of the Nursery in a south direction along the western boundary of the Nursery and crosses the B.4265 road, then in an east direction between the B.4265 and Church Road along the northern boundary of O.S. Field Parcel No. 95 and then north along the western boundary of O.S. Field Parcel No. 78, crossing the B.4265 skirting to include 'St. Arthurs' and along the east boundary of O.S. Field Parcel No. 536. Then turn in a westerly direction along the northern boundary of O.S. Field Parcel Nos. 535 and 565 back to commencement.





2288  
12.648ha  
31.25

4882  
2.089ha  
5.16

1571  
0.097ha  
0.24

1968  
1.899ha  
4.69

2968  
1.113ha  
2.8

2371  
3.219ha  
7.95

4376  
0.785ha  
1.94

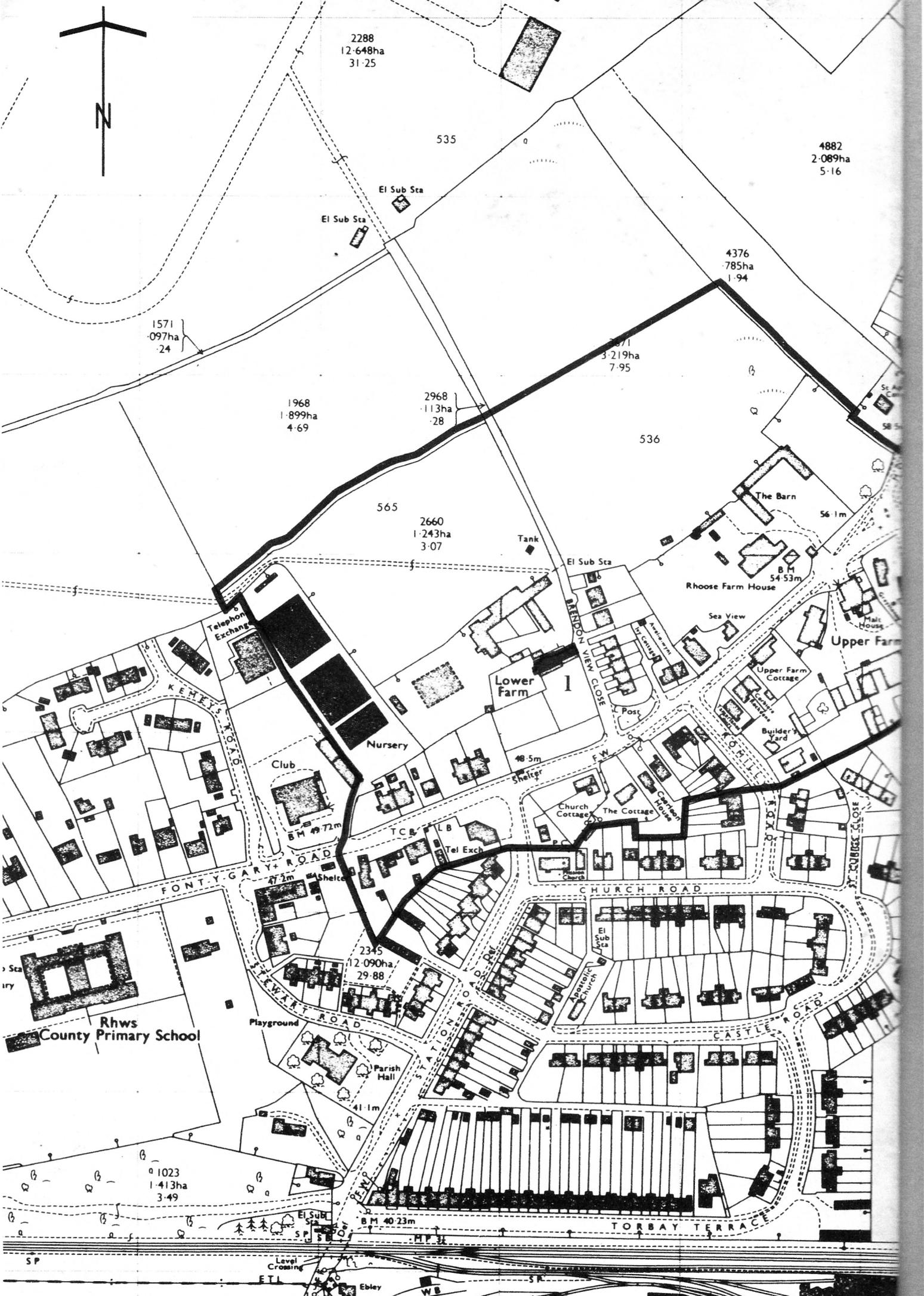
565

2660  
1.243ha  
3.07

536

2345  
12.090ha  
29.88

1023  
1.413ha  
3.49



SP  
Level Crossing  
FTL  
Ebley  
WB  
HP

The physical appearance of the older buildings of the village originates from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By 1840-42, when the tithe map was produced, the three farms within the Conservation Area were fully established in their present form. At this time the landowners were 'Charles Kemys' and 'Lady Mary' (no further details of her family name are given). 'Charles Kemys' owned Lower Farm and its surrounding land whilst 'Lady Mary' was in possession of Rhoose Farm and other parcels of land in the vicinity. The list of ownership and possession of land accompanying the tithe map offers some insight into life at the time. It includes names of plots, such as Clover Field, Irish Quarter, Browns Acre, House Close and Roos Pedair erw, whilst the farms were called Homesteads.

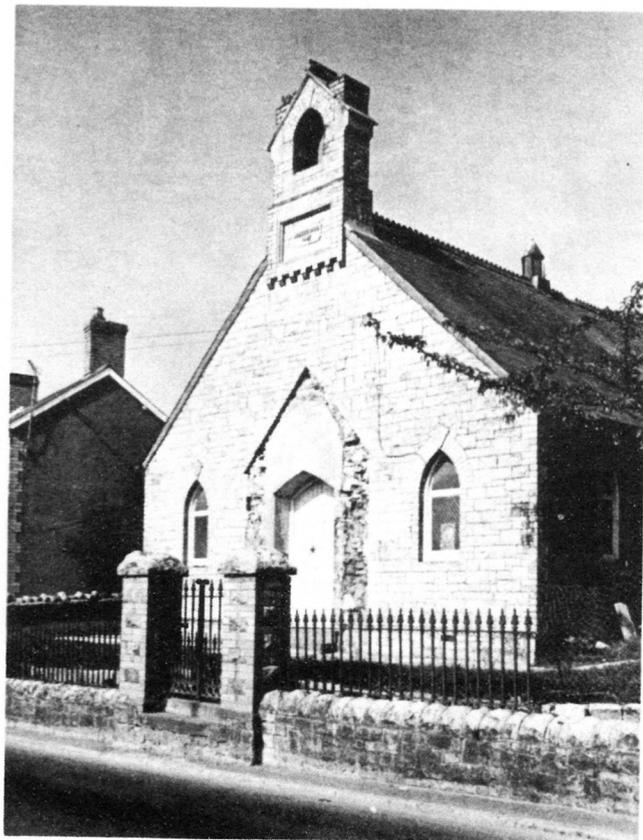
The first Ordnance Survey Maps of 1876 are more accurate and detailed than the tithe maps and give a more complete picture of the form of the hamlet in the nineteenth century. From this it can be seen that a smithy existed and that a number of orchards were associated with the farms. Also of interest are the number of lime kilns and quarries in the neighbourhood, as well as, by that time, an 'Old Quarry'. Also shown on the map is an 'Old Castle', which is, in fact, the location of the Mathew's family house. The outline of these remains does, however, give us an indication of the size of this structure and its associated earth works.

Until the start of the twentieth century, the hamlet appears to have undergone little change and functioned purely as an agricultural settlement with certain supporting services such as a smithy.

At the end of the nineteenth century, there emerged one of the factors influential in the location of industrial development on the periphery of the hamlet. In 1897 the Vale of Glamorgan Railway was built to link Bridgend to Barry, for the purpose of carrying coal from the Llynfi and Garw valleys to Barry. The railway line was built parallel to the main road and a station was constructed to the west of Station Road, 200 yards to the south of the village centre. This railway attracted both industry and tourists to the coastal areas of Glamorgan.

This improvement in communications initiated the mushrooming of Rhoose from a small rural hamlet in the nineteenth century to an extensive village with industrial associations in the twentieth century.

In 1912 the local limestone, that had previously been exploited only in small lime kilns, became the basic raw material for the Aberthaw and Bristol Channel Cement Works. The first kiln was built and the associated quarries were opened by 1919. These works were served by the Vale of Glamorgan Railway. This industrial growth brought with it an influx of workers and a subsequent increase in



*Late Nineteenth Century development*

residential development. The attraction of the coast, not only to the retired, but also to the tourist, led to a further increase in the number of houses within the Conservation Area.

In 1935 the Turners Asbestos Cement Company was built to the south of the village. These two works adjacent to the railway form a substantial manufacturing development.

In 1941 the Royal Air Force built an airbase at Rhoose which became Glamorgan's civil airport in 1954. Also, in 1950 the Coleg-y-fro was established in the village, offering educational courses under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A.

During this period of expansion several churches have been built in the village. A Methodist Church in 1887 (sold to the Wesleyan Methodists in 1938), an Apostolic Church in 1904 and a Presbyterian Church in 1931. A County Council School was also built in 1931 (Rhws County Primary School).

Together with these various developments, private and Local Authority housing was built to accommodate employees and their families. During and subsequent to the inter-war period, commuters from Barry and Cardiff have also settled in the community. Holiday and retirement bungalows and 'villas' have also been built in the neighbourhood during this century.

## Description of the Conservation Area

Rhose Conservation Area includes the original settlement centred around three farms located on the eastern extremity of the village, as it is here that the unique qualities of the area are firmly established. These farms are Lower Farm, Rhose Farm and Upper Farm. Adjacent fields and buildings have also been included in the Conservation Area as they provide the setting for the older core. The farmhouses and their barns and outbuildings are constructed of the local lias limestone (some being also rendered), with slate roofs. These groups are excellent examples of the vernacular rural architecture of the period. The use of the five pointed arched openings is a strong element associated with buildings in the Vale of Glamorgan and not found to any great extent elsewhere in the county. The disposition and extent of these buildings is essential to the quality of the area which is further enhanced by a few small cottages that were built during the same period of the eighteenth century or nineteenth century, e.g. Malt House.



*The Farmbuildings of Rhose Farm*

Lower Farmhouse is on the provisional list of buildings of Special Historic or Architectural Interest under the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act (i.e. it is listed as Grade III which has no statutory backing). This house is of late eighteenth or early nineteenth century character, having later alterations. It is cement rendered, has a gabled slate roof, stone end stacks with moulded caps and three gabled sash dormers. It has two storeys and three windows per



*Lower Farmhouse*

storey with glazing bars, rusticated architraves and chamfered quoins. It also has a central door under a later gabled porch. It has an eastern, single storey wing with a thatched roof.



*Upper Farm Cottage*

Rhose farmhouse and its associated buildings have both individual charm and group interest. They are constructed of lias limestone which has been left in its natural form and not rendered. This group has been well maintained and recent alterations have not detracted from the original character of this group. Upper Farm Cottage is less impressive in scale than the other farmhouses but is nonetheless of historic interest. It has retained its enclosure by means of a long and high stone wall which conceals much of the building from the road. It is of two storeys with rendered walls. The adjacent Malt House is an impressive building, its thatched roof and white rendered walls being clearly visible on the eastern approach to the Conservation Area.



*Malt House*

The quality of the design and craftsmanship, together with the use of local materials are the essential elements that create the environmental quality of the area. Although more modern development has occurred within the vicinity of the original settlement, the area still retains a great deal of its original charm and character.

## References

Thomas, K. D. and Hugh Thomas, J.D., *A brief history of Rhose and District*, 1970.