

BRIDGNORTH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

This appraisal was approved by Bridgnorth District Council's Planning Committee on 26 April 1999.

NOTE: The appraisal is an analysis of the special architectural and historic interest, character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is not a definitive list of every element or feature which contributes to or is detrimental to the Conservation Area: in an area as complex as Bridgnorth it would be impossible to include them all.

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1. BRIDGNORTH CONSERVATION AREA

- 1.1 Bridgnorth is a historic market town on the River Severn approximately 15 miles south of Telford and 16 miles west of Wolverhampton. The Bridgnorth Conservation Area was designated by Shropshire County Council on 28 May 1971. Extensions to the Conservation Area were designated by Bridgnorth District Council on 5 January 1981 and 23 July 1984, and on 16 June 1999.
- 1.2 The Conservation Area comprises virtually the whole of the historic area of the town extending from the Endowed School and the former railway line north-east of Severn Cliff to Panpudding Hill and the Old Stourbridge Road in the south, and from Mill Street and Bernard's Hill on the east to Salop Street and Oldbury Wells on the west. It includes Castle Hill; the sites of the mediaeval town gates; the parish churches; the historic commercial and residential streets of High and Low Town on either side of the Severn; part of the Severn Valley Railway including the station; and the earthworks of Panpudding Hill.

2. Topography

- 2.1 Bridgnorth is spectacularly sited in the narrow Severn Valley. The high, steep valley sides are of soft red Bunter sandstone which outcrops at many points. High Town stands on the west side of the valley above the river, with a promontory forming Castle Hill to the south. As Nikolaus Pevsner commented in his description of Bridgnorth [*The Buildings of England: Shropshire*], "The hill-town is something of a rarity in England. It presents to the eye a town as a whole as few other situations do." Perhaps the most spectacular views

of Bridgnorth are from the A454 Wolverhampton road, descending the east side of the valley: a picturesque jumble of buildings climbs the valley side up from the river to Castle Walk and the two churches silhouetted against the skyline.

- 2.2 The dramatic difference in levels is a major element of the town's character. It divides Bridgnorth into very different parts, High Town on the top and Low Town dominated by the river below, each with its own distinct identity. It produces very steep streets such as Railway Street and Cartway and a whole series of flights of steps linking High and Low Town. It also prompted the construction in 1892 of the Castle Hill Railway, known locally as the Cliff Railway, which is the only remaining inland funicular railway of its type in England.
- 2.3 To the east the valley side has some dramatic outcrops of rock, especially High Rock and The Hermitage, and a dense coverage of mature trees. This forms an impressive backdrop to views out from High Town, restricting distant views and giving a sense of enclosure. There are more distant views out into the countryside to the north and south along the river. The Severn is a major feature of the town, largely responsible for its existence and past prosperity. It bisects Low Town, and just south of the bridge it widens out as it passes around The Bylet, a long narrow islet. Views of the river from many points – looking down on it from above, glimpsed between buildings or from the paths and roads alongside – are particularly attractive elements of the Conservation area's character and appearance.
- 2.4 Trees are an important feature. There is extensive tree cover in the gardens and undeveloped land rising up to High Town, making an attractive contrast with the buildings on Castle Hill and elsewhere. Individual trees and groups are widespread throughout the town, in some street, along the river, and glimpsed between and above buildings.

3. History

- 3.1 Bridgnorth's foundation dates from the hurried construction of the first castle in 1101-2 by Robert de Bellesme, Earl of Shrewsbury, as the base for rebellion against Henry I. The castle became the focus for urban development. The Earl transferred the status of borough and royal free chapel from Quatford to Bridgnorth. The castle was besieged and taken by Henry I in 1102. In 1155 it was besieged and recaptured from Hugh de Mortimer by Henry II. The surviving ruins are of the buildings probably constructed between 1166 and 1174. The castle had an inner bailey in the vicinity of the present Castle Grounds, containing the church of St. Mary which was the castle chapel, and an outer bailey in the area now covered by East and West Castle Streets.
- 3.2 Bridgnorth, like Ludlow, was one of many planned new towns established in England at this period. The first known market charter is of 1157, but it is likely that a market had developed considerably earlier. By the late 12th century Bridgnorth was the second town of Shropshire after Shrewsbury. It was the commercial and administrative centre for a wide area, with thriving trade by both river and road. Cloth manufacture was the principal industry, and others included tanning and brewing. There was a Franciscan Friary, two hospitals and almshouses. Burgage (development) plots were laid out along the market street and within the outer bailey.

- 3.3 The town probably had earth ramparts initially, but construction of stone walls seems to have begun about 1220. Fragments of these walls survive, notably Half Moon Battery. By the late 13th century the castle was in disrepair, and buildings and plots were established within its walls. The town was extended by laying out a grid pattern of streets (as in Ludlow) and burgage plots west of High Street comprising Listley Street, St. Mary's Street and probably Whitburn Street. There were five town gates, and development grew up along the roads to them. Outside Northgate, Moat Street was formed by encroachment on the town ditch or moat. The area outside Listley Street and what is now Railway Street was known in the mediaeval period as Novus Burgus (New Town). Outside Cowgate, along what are now Cartway and Underhill Street, settlement concentrated around the bridging point of the river. At the east end of the bridge a triangular market place and burgage plots were laid out along Mill Street and St. John's Street. The Hospital of St. John developed in the angle between the two streets.
- 3.4 In the 1540s the antiquarian Leland visited Bridgnorth, and described the town as being in decline. During the Civil War 1642-46 the castle and town were an important Royalist stronghold. When the Parliamentarians attacked in 1646 the Royalist garrison retreated to the castle. St. Leonard's church and parts of the town were burnt, and the castle was eventually taken and destroyed.
- 3.5 In the 17th and 18th centuries prosperity revived, based largely on the river trade which grew after 1660. Coal and local farm and industrial products travelled down the river to Bristol, while wines and brandy came up river. In the mid 18th century the busiest stretch of the whole River Severn was from Buildwas via Bridgnorth to Bewdley. Cloth manufacture and tanning continued, but other industries included boat building, malting, stocking and lace manufacture, and gun making. Prosperity was reflected in the construction of good quality red brick houses and the addition of fashionable Georgian fronts to earlier buildings. In 1782-6 New Road was built to provide an easier route between Low and High Town.
- 3.6 Two new industries developed in Bridgnorth in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. By 1798 John Hazeldine was established as an iron founder on a site between Mill Street and the river, where he collaborated with John Rastrick on pioneering engineering developments. Carpet manufacture became the most important industry in the 19th and 20th centuries: the most successful factory, Southwell's, was established in the early 1800s on the Riverside site of the Friary. It finally closed in 1985.
- 3.7 River trade decreased after the Severn was linked to the Staffordshire and Worcester Canal at Stourport, effectively bypassing Bridgnorth. The decline was worsened by the arrival of the railways, and by the mid 19th century the river trade was of little importance. Trades associated with it disappeared, and iron making moved away to other locations. The Great Western Railway Severn Valley line running in a tunnel beneath the centre of Bridgnorth opened in 1862 but did not reverse the decline in the town's fortunes, and development in the Victorian period was limited. In the late 19th and 20th centuries Bridgnorth served as the commercial centre for the surrounding rural area, with an agricultural market (the Smithfield) off Whitburn Street. The town also became a popular destination for visitors from the nearby industrial towns of the West Midlands. In 1892 the cliff railway between Low and High Town was opened.

- 3.8 The town continued to expand slowly before and after the First World War. Expansion quickened after the Second World War, as Bridgnorth became increasingly popular as a place to live for those commuting to the West Midlands. The proportion of residents working in the town decreased correspondingly, and commercial development has been much more limited. As a result the town has been spared most of the destructive redevelopment which badly damaged the historic character of other towns in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. The railway line closed in 1963, but reopened with the first steam passenger trains run by the Severn Valley Railway in 1967. The bridge remained the only river crossing until the opening of the bypass in 1984. In 1991 the livestock market moved from the centre to the edge of the town, and the site was subsequently redeveloped.

4. Archaeology

- 4.1 Bridgnorth's long history of continuous occupation make it a town of major archaeological importance, with mediaeval and post-mediaeval deposits likely to be very extensive. The Central Marches Historic Town Survey concluded in 1995 that where deposits survive their archaeological potential is very great. Areas of greatest potential are the river banks and quayside, where deposits may be waterlogged and therefore well preserved. The Conservation Area almost entirely coincides with the urban archaeological area identified by the Survey.
- 4.2 Archaeological investigations has so far been very limited: the only full-scale excavation of a site was that of the mediaeval Friary remains in 1989. Some trial trenches on the site of St. John's Hospital found traces of buildings and a cemetery and remains of the Town Walls and ramparts were found in Meredith's Yard in trial excavations in 1998. Mediaeval deposits are likely to survive in the area around the standing remains of the Castle, but elsewhere the destruction of the defences in 1646 and the subsequent development of the inner bailey to form East Castle Street etc. will have caused significant disturbance. Survival may be better in the outer bailey, north of Bank Street: a considerable depth of mediaeval and later deposits are likely to be preserved beneath smaller buildings in the area. Although very little is currently known about the extent of post-mediaeval deposits the existence of very large numbers of 16th to 18th century buildings within unaltered property boundaries suggests that there is potential for significant survival.
- 4.3 One of the most unusual features of Bridgnorth is the existence of a large number of caves in the soft red sandstone ridge on which High Town sits. A survey in 1990 recorded 36 caves. These appear to be largely artificial in whole or part, excavated out of the rock. They are generally above ground level, in the cliff face behind buildings rather than beneath them. The dates of construction are uncertain, but the caves were important in the social and commercial life of the town from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Some were used as dwellings, most commonly as rooms forming part of an otherwise conventionally constructed house built against the rock. Many more were for commercial use, particularly store rooms such as those behind 6 Underhill Street probably used for storing and maturing beer. A few remain in use for garaging, workshops etc. There is considerable potential for archaeological work to learn more about the caves' history and functions. Industrial archaeological sites and remains are also of great potential interest: they may provide information about the development of the river trade, foundries and

other industries such as malthouses and breweries, carpet factories, the ropewalk (factory), etc.

- 4.4 Archaeology is not confined to buried remains: the mediaeval and later pattern of settlement, property boundaries, streets, paths and steps, and standing structures are of great archaeological significance and have a major effect on the town's character and appearance. Moat Street is built on the line of the mediaeval ditch around the town. The street names Postern Gate and Westgate are reminders of the lost mediaeval town gates. The flights of steps were routes between High Town and the river trade. Many of the properties on High Street and elsewhere retain boundaries unaltered from their mediaeval origins, though the buildings on them have been altered and rebuilt. The remains of the Castle keep, fragments of the town walls – notably Half Moon Battery – and the rebuilt Northgate are visible traces of Bridgnorth's mediaeval origins. The frontages of many buildings conceal structures with a complex history of development.

5. Pattern of Development

- 5.1 The historic core of Bridgnorth is still shaped to a considerable degree by the mediaeval planned urban form, overlaid but not obscured by later development. High Town was laid out adjacent to the Castle, but probably incorporating the earlier church (St. Leonard's) and an existing rural settlement to the north. Whitburn Street, Church Street and Love Lane may already have existed as routes to the church. All the main streets were in existence by the 13th century.
- 5.2 The broad, straight High Street, still the market street, was probably laid out about 1155-57, running northwards from the outer gates of the castle to the North Gate of the town. St. Mary's Street and Listley Street, laid out between the mid 12th and early 13th century, are parallel streets characteristic of the rectilinear pattern of mediaeval planned towns. The curved western end of Listley Street is the surviving section of the road running inside the town walls.
- 5.3 Burgage (development) plots were laid out along these streets, and some of these survive in building frontages and property boundaries. The plots to High Street were both wider and deeper than those of the other streets. On the western side of High Street the original continuous line of the rear boundary appears largely to survive, although broken in places by redevelopment. On the eastern side the rear boundary was dictated by the line of the sandstone ridge, and is substantially unaltered. Rear boundaries also largely survive to the plots of Listley Street, St. Mary's Street and the southern side of Whitburn Street, although some have been destroyed by redevelopment and the formation of the Listley Street car park. The survival of these boundaries is of significant historic interest as part of the mediaeval town form.
- 5.4 Competition for access to the market resulted in subdivision of frontages and encroachment of buildings forward onto the streets. This is reflected in the variety of frontage widths and irregular building line in parts of the High Street and the narrowing of the eastern end of Listley, St. Mary's and Whitburn Streets. Buildings extend a long way back into the plots, especially on High Street where commercial pressures have always been strongest, with long rear wings and attached and detached commercial and domestic outbuildings. Frontages are almost continuously built up, with no gaps other than entrances through buildings on High Street. On Whitburn Street the 1930s cinema

and 1960s Smithfield centre have obliterated the burgage plots and pulled back the building line, and widening of the former access to the Old Smithfield removed another plot and opened up the street. On Listley Street the car parks have obliterated plots and opened up large gaps in frontages.

- 5.5 High Street is closed at its northern end by the Northgate, the only survivor of the town gates. To the east, St. Leonard's Close is an irregularly-shaped space around the church which was created by encroachment of development onto the churchyard. The pattern here is much more varied, with some continuous built-up frontages but also large individual buildings. The church dominates, with the old Grammar School forming a much smaller subsidiary 'island'. Part of the northern side comprises the terraces of small houses at a lower level on Moat Street.
- 5.6 North of Northgate built-up frontages reflect the development from the mediaeval period onwards of suburbs outside the town gates. A narrow lane opposite Moat Street leads to an irregular group of dwellings converted from the former prison. Properties are of varying sizes and types, with the larger ones on the west side. Nos. 2-7 on the east side are exceptional in having walled front gardens rather than fronting directly onto the street. Moat Street was formed by filling in the town's defensive ditch outside the walls. The general pattern of small terraces of houses fronting the road here and on the southern side of Cliff Road is disrupted by some 20th century redevelopment. North of Cliff Road both the pattern and scale of development change markedly as built-up frontage of small properties give way to much larger individual buildings – the Roman Catholic church, Infirmary and Endowed School – erected on the edge of the town in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. East of Cliff Road/Love Lane the undeveloped open space running down to the former railway line retains something of the formerly rural setting of Severn Cliff, a large 19th century house.
- 5.7 Pound Street, Salop Street and Railway Street also gradually developed outside the town gates. Salop Street is a mix of terraces, blocks and pairs of houses of varying sizes with long rear gardens, and larger individual properties. The older buildings generally front onto the street, but The Vinery stands back in its own grounds and Albion Terrace and Westgate Villas are Victorian speculative housing with enclosed front gardens. The pattern is severely disrupted on the south side by two large gardens, a gap on the east side left by demolitions, and some late 20th century sheltered housing development on the site of the former Squirrel Public House.
- 5.8 Railway Street was the area outside Listley Gate known in the mediaeval period as Novus Burgus (the New Town). The very steep gradient and severely restricted width between the sandstone cliffs on either side has limited development to blocks and terraces of small houses with little space behind them, stepping down the street. The pattern is continued by Ebenezer Row climbing Ebenezer Steps. Hollybush Road was a principal route from the mediaeval period onwards. It descends past steeply sloping undeveloped land. Along its eastern side are irregularly dispersed blocks and terraces of small houses in very restricted plots. The western side is dominated by the railway embankment and 20th century commercial development between the road and the railway station complex.
- 5.9 In the mediaeval period the town ended at the castle gates, with Cartway forming the road down from High Street to Low Town. The streets south of High Street were

developed from the 17th century onwards, after demolition of the town and castle walls and infilling of the defensive ditch provided space for new development. Although there is now little visible evidence of the Castle, the redevelopment of its site was influenced by its form. The narrowness of Postern Gate and its name are relics of the castle gateway. Bank Street and Castle Terrace are straight, narrow streets on the lines of the castle defences. The plots between these streets and Waterloo Terrace are very densely built-up, with little land left undeveloped between buildings. Castle Terrace has unbroken built-up frontages, but the northern side of Bank Street is disrupted by some 20th century single-storey development set back from the building line.

- 5.10 Castle Hill Walk and the rear boundaries of properties on the east side of East Castle Street and the west side of West Castle Street are probably on the line of the castle outer walls. East and West Castle Streets occupy the area of the outer bailey. The Governor's House in East Castle Street, built about 1630, is the only surviving building pre-dating the outer bailey's redevelopment in the 17th and 19th centuries. East Castle Street became a prestigious residential area in the 18th century, and has remained so. Development is less concentrated: the street is broad and spacious with a number of large individual houses, breaks in frontages and changes in the building line, with gardens to the rear of properties. As in other streets the majority of buildings front directly onto the street, but a few are set back slightly behind forecourts or front gardens. The major exception to the pattern is St. Mary's church which dominates the southern end of the street. At the northern end it narrows abruptly as it curves round to meet Postern Gate, and properties are generally smaller. Between here and Bank Street there is a narrow, irregularly-shaped area of tightly-packed mixed residential and commercial development.
- 5.11 West Castle Street is more varied, with smaller properties and a mix of residential, commercial and public use. Frontages are almost continuously built up, but on the west side the large Baptist Chapel set back in its own grounds breaks the pattern. The street ends at the Castle Grounds but is opened out on the western side by New Road. At the entrances to the Castle Grounds and the churchyard the pattern changes abruptly from urban development to open space and gardens. Together with Castle Hill House they occupy the site of the castle's inner bailey. After the destruction of the defences much of this became an area for recreation.
- 5.12 The steep hillside between High and Low Town has an intricate pattern of development with buildings set at every angle and level, reflecting the topographical constraints. In many places this has limited development to small shallow plots, some so restricted that buildings are constructed. Settlement was concentrated along it, outside the site of Cowgate. This is reflected in dense development with almost continuous built-up frontages of mostly small houses, both individual and in small terraces, stepping down the slope. The only breaks are the wide front and forecourt of the Methodist Church, and a few gaps where buildings have been demolished. At the bottom of Cartway properties on the east side have rear gardens extending to the footpath alongside the river.
- 5.13 Friar Street has a more varied pattern. The southern end has been opened out by demolition of houses. Small plots and houses form built-up frontages to parts of the street, but there are also high retaining walls and cliffs along the road. Some properties on the west side are set high above the road. Of these Nos 59-67, a long and uniform terrace, are exceptional in being set at right angles to the street. Terraces of late 20th

century housing have replaced the 19th century carpet factory buildings which formerly dominated the northern part.

- 5.14 The flights of steps between High and Low Town are probably of mediaeval origin. Development along them is much more scattered, with irregular groupings of houses and cottages, and also a few larger buildings. There is considerable variation: while St. Mary's Steps has numerous buildings on very small plots, Stoneway Steps has only two larger buildings. Amongst all the buildings on the hillside are some large undeveloped areas, some still used as gardens – Granary Steps and St. Leonard's Steps descend between large gardens to St. Leonard's Close properties – while others are overgrown and apparently abandoned after demolition of buildings.
- 5.15 The steps lead ultimately to Underhill Street and Riverside along the Severn. Development here was largely driven by the river trade. Wharves survive at Quayside as public open space. Some former warehouses and other commercial buildings of varying sizes survive as part of the built-up frontage at the north-west end of Underhill Street. However, much of the original pattern has been destroyed by demolition and redevelopment which has opened up the street. On the west side Lavington Gardens have been created on the site of numerous demolished buildings. The east side is largely dominated by haphazard groupings of 20th century commercial premises. At the southern end Kings Loade is a late 20th century housing development. On Riverside there are remains of other wharves. Blocks of cottages and small houses are scattered along the west side, but there are large gaps forming car parks and open spaces where buildings have obviously been demolished, and at the northern end are the tall terraces of houses recently built on the carpet factory site, with part of the Friary remains now exposed among them.
- 5.16 The development of Low Town's historic core has a similar pattern to that of parts of High Town. It may have originated as a Saxon settlement. Mill Street, St. John's Street and Hospital Street were in existence by the 13th century. The triangular area formed by the widening out of the southern end of Mill Street was a market place – a market cross still existed in the 17th century. Burgage plots were laid out fronting all three street; some of the existing property boundaries may be survivals of these. As in High Town there is a mix of residential and commercial properties of varying sizes, generally fronting onto the street, with building extending a long way back into many of the plots.
- 5.17 The west side of Mill Street has an almost unbroken frontage of historic buildings. Between these and the river is an extensive area of backland which remains partly open and undeveloped. The east side of the street is fragmented. The Parlours Hall Hotel is a large detached building standing back from the street. Immediately south of it the car park makes a very large gap in the frontage. The late 20th century retail premises east and south of it are unrelated to the general pattern, but are only the latest redevelopment of the site of the mediaeval Hospital of St. John which was replaced by a large house and that in turn by other buildings. Further north the east side of the street has been opened out by the 1960s road layout which replaced Cann Hall, a large detached house which itself had destroyed the earlier burgage plots. Late 20th century housing development on the site of The Croft has blurred the abrupt change from urban development to open land at the north end of the street.

- 5.18 St. John's Street retains continuous built-up frontages, but these now end abruptly where the construction of Cann Hall Road and realignment of Hospital Street opened up a wide gap. The north eastern part of Hospital Street has late 18th and 19th century terraces of small houses along an irregular building line, but the west side and south eastern part comprise almost wholly late 20th century development outside the Conservation Area. The western part of Severn Street is made up of late 19th century terraced housing. Bernard's Hill has an irregular pattern of small houses on the east side against the slope, reflecting its piecemeal colonisation in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 5.19 Oldbury Wells developed on the rural fringes of Bridgnorth in the 19th century. The much more scattered and irregular layout of its older houses can still be seen amongst more recent development. They are of varying sizes and types, large and small, mostly detached with the major exception of Oldbury Terrace. Some are set high above the road and at various angles to it, some have long front gardens, and others are set in their own grounds.

6. Buildings

- 6.1 Bridgnorth has a very large number of buildings of special architectural and historic interest. Many are listed buildings: the list (published in 1974) contains nearly 240 entries, representing approximately 385 structures or properties. Some are of national importance: Bishop Percy's House in Cartway is a fine timber framed house of about 1580 listed Grade I. The churches of St. Leonard and St. Mary Magdalene, one Gothic and the other classical, are respectively listed Grade B and II*. They form the focal points in many views and are especially prominent on the skyline of High Town.
- 6.2 Other Grade II* listed buildings include the Town Hall of 1650, an unusual timber-framed building on stone and brick arches straddling the High Street. 34-36 High Street and the Swan Inn are excellent examples of the Bridgnorth timber tradition. The Governor's House in East Castle Street and 3-5 St. Leonard's Close are early 17th century brick houses in the simple Jacobean manner, but the late 17th century 48 Mill Street is a classical building. 48 High Street (The Court), and The Rectory and 20 East Castle Street are fine 18th century houses.
- 6.3 These buildings are outstanding, but it is the very high concentration of old buildings of lesser individual importance, listed and unlisted, which together make the greatest contribution to Bridgnorth's special character and appearance. They include public buildings, chapels, commercial buildings, houses and outbuildings. The great variety of buildings of many different dates, types, sizes, styles, materials and details is one of Bridgnorth's most striking characteristics. Very little systematic survey, recording and analysis has yet been done, making it extremely difficult to accurately assess the age and importance of many buildings. Traces may still survive of the High Street shops with covered walkways and upper galleries (like those of Chester) described by the antiquarian John Leland in the mid 16th century.
- 6.4 Although the mediaeval town plan has survived to some extent, few standing buildings are known to be earlier than the 16th century. Visible mediaeval structures are fragmentary: all that is left of the castle is part of the keep of c.1200 leaning at an alarming angle. Small sections of the 13th century town walls are visible in Cartway, at Half Moon Battery off Pound Street, on Hollybush Road, and off Railway Street.

Northgate is the sole survivor of the mediaeval town gates but was extensively rebuilt in 1740 and again in 1912. Part of the Friary remains on Riverside, formerly buried beneath the carpet factory, are now exposed. St. Leonard's Church retains some mediaeval elements but was almost wholly rebuilt in 1862.

- 6.5 The devastating fire in High Town in 1646 destroyed a great deal, but numerous 16th or early 17th century timber framed buildings have survived. Bailey's Wine bar and 3-4, 51, 53, 54 and 57 High Street, and The King's Head, Whitburn Street have the tall 3-storey frontages characteristic of the principal commercial streets. 25 Northgate is a 2-storey and attic twin-gabled building, while 30 St. Leonard's Close, 50-54 St. Mary's Street, 21-22 Northgate and 45-46 St. Mary's Street are small one-storey and attic or 2-storey houses. Low Town has modest houses such as 15 St. John's Street and the British Legion building in Bridge Street, both of one storey and attic. The 2-storey terrace 41-43 Mill Street may originally have been one substantial building. Among the many later 17th century timber-framed buildings, The Crown (formerly The Raven Hotel) in Whitburn Street is a large and prominent example.
- 6.6 Diamond Hall in St. John's Street and 48 Mill Street, probably of around 1675, are very different. These large 3-storey houses with hipped rather than gabled roofs, vertical proportions and symmetrical facades are the earliest examples of the classically-influenced architecture in brick or render which dominated Bridgnorth's gradual development in the 18th and early 19th centuries. 1-2 and 3-4 Mill Street and 50 High Street are good early 18th century examples, while Nos. 5-6 Waterloo Terrace has an early 18th century Baroque façade unique in the town. Some of the town's public buildings are 18th century. College House (Town Council Offices and Mayor's Parlour) in St. Leonard's Close is an early 18th century building with a façade of about 1800. The Old Grammar School close by is a simple but imposing late 18th century building, while the Almshouses of 1792 in Church Street has a handsome symmetrical classical façade but with Gothick-arched windows.
- 6.7 East Castle Street has a particularly fine range of Georgian and early Victorian houses reflecting its development as the most fashionable residential street, but there are many other examples of well-proportioned 2-storey and attic or 3-storey brick houses with symmetrical or formal elevations, sash windows and a variety of doors and doorcases. Some are large individual houses of 3 or more bays, such as 3 Church Street, 30 St. Mary's Street or the Severn Arms Hotel, Underhill Street. Others are more modest, among them pairs of 2-bay houses such as 26-27 St. Leonard's Close and 28-29 East Castle Street. Simpler still but in the same vein is 36-45 Hospital Street, a 3-storey terrace of one-bay houses. Many existing building were remodelled rather than rebuilt; 42, 44-45 and 55-56 High Street, for example, give little hint of the earlier structure visible to the rear or inside.
- 6.8 19th century development was gradual rather than dramatic, but has left its mark in a variety of interesting buildings. A number of Nonconformist chapels were built in the first half of the century. Those of St. Mary's Steps and Stoneway Steps (now the Theatre on the Steps) follow the typical pattern: a simple rectangular brick building with pediment gables and long round-arched windows. Cartway Methodist Church of 1843 elaborates on this with brick pilasters and contrasting brickwork, while the Baptist Church in West Castle Street of 1842 hides the simple brick box behind a striking stuccoed Grecian façade. 2 Waterloo Terrace has a handsome stone classical front of about 1840. Of a

similar date, 7-12 Underhill Street is a major Italianate composition of two 3-storey former warehouses with giant round arches and a 2-storey centre with pediments and round-arched windows.

- 6.9 The greatest impact is made by the Italianate New Market Building of 1856, due to its size, prominent position and strident polychrome brickwork. The former school in Listley Street in blue brick and stone Victorian Gothic is a dramatic contrast to the surrounding small cottages. The Severn Valley Railway Station of 1862 is a rather more sedate stone building in the Jacobean style. Palmer's Hospital was rebuilt in 1889 in a Victorian version of the Bridgnorth timber framing tradition. The Cliff Railway Station of 1892 on Castle Walk is a small building in the deliberately picturesque 'Old English' style, but its chief interest is as an integral part of the cliff railway linking High and Low Town. The Infirmary (1895) is an interesting example of the 'Old English'/Queen Anne Revival styles. The National Westminster Bank in High Street and the Post Office in Postern Gate (dated 1904) are attractive Edwardian buildings combining sandstone with timber framing and Jacobean details.
- 6.10 The survival of a large number of historic outbuildings and buildings associated with the town's trades and industries is a vital part of Bridgnorth's historic character. Most have been converted to other uses, or simply abandoned. A number of warehouses near Quayside are evidence of the importance of the river trade, notably the former Ridley's warehouse beside the bridge and 6 Underhill Street; both now combine residential and commercial use. The former mill behind 48 Mill Street has been converted to a dwelling on Severnside. On St. Mary's Street is an early 19th century warehouse with two giant blank arches to the street. Many properties fronting the principal streets have long rear ranges of attached or separate outbuildings which provided workshops, stabling etc. The varied forms, heights, roofs etc. of these buildings contribute greatly to the variety and interest of the townscape.
- 6.11 Equally important to Bridgnorth's character and appearance is the large number and varied mix of modest houses and cottages ranging from the 16th to 19th centuries on most streets apart from the commercial centres. They include very small 16th and 17th century cottages such as the 'one-up, one-down' 32 Friars Loade, 30 St. Leonard's Close, and 51-4 St. Mary's Street. West Castle Street, Cartway, Friar Street, Mill Street, Bernard's Hill and other streets have 17th and 18th century cottages and houses with a variety of materials and simple traditional details. There are many groups and terraces of small 19th century houses such as those climbing the steep slope of Railway Street and lining Moat Street. Perhaps the most distinctive is Ebenezer Row of 1840 with its spiral chimneys. Albion Terrace in Salop Street is a good example of larger late Victorian terraced housing.
- 6.12 The mix of types and uses of buildings is an important part of Bridgnorth's character. High Street and those part of the principal streets – St. Mary's, Listley, Whitburn, Bridge, St. John's and Mill Street – which form the commercial centres are comprised almost entirely of substantial 2-storey and attic or 3-storey buildings. Many of them combined commercial and residential use from the outset, with dwellings to the rear and on the upper floors. Even on High Street some remain in residential use, and the number has increased slightly in recent years. The streets which historically formed high class residential areas, notably East Castle Street and St. Leonard's Close, have retained their

status but with some limited office use. In others such as Cartway commercial use has declined and they have become almost exclusively residential.

- 6.13 20th century redevelopment has had far less destructive impact on Bridgnorth than on many other historic towns. The 1930s Art Deco Regal cinema makes a dramatic contrast with the earlier buildings of Whitburn Street, and the western end of the street has some uninspired mid 20th century commercial buildings. On High Street the flat-roofed premises between 45 and 46 and 62-63 strike the only jarring notes. Some recent redevelopment has positively enhanced the Conservation Area. The demolition of the huge and rather overbearing carpet factory on Riverside has resulted in part of the Friary being made visible, while the large 3-storey houses built on the site have created an attractive riverside frontage with some interesting massing and composition. The redevelopment of the garage site between East and West Castle Street has removed a blight and re-established the grain and scale of two of the town's best streets using traditional materials and details. The construction of a new footbridge from the Station in 1994 in an unmistakably late 20th century form rather than replicating its predecessor has shown that high quality modern design can enhance a historic area.

7. Materials

- 7.1 The considerable variety of building materials used in the town – timber, stone, brick, plaster, tile and slate – makes a major contribution to Bridgnorth's appearance. The earliest surviving structures, from the mediaeval period, are stone: some it is the local red sandstone, some imported. The Friary remains are constructed of coursed squared red sandstone, and some limestone (possibly from Much Wenlock) was also used. The fragmentary remains of the Castle and town walls including Half Moon Battery are of coursed stone.
- 7.2 Other stone buildings of mediaeval origin are the Northgate, partly rebuilt in brick in the 18th century but remodelled in rock-faced red sandstone ashlar in 1910, and the Severn Bridge of sandstone ashlar substantially rebuilt in 1795 and 1823. The tow parish churches are an interesting contrast of material as well as style: St. Leonard's is of red sandstone, while St. Mary Magdalene is of a fine limestone ashlar which perfectly complements its Neoclassical elegance. Local stone was used in many houses and cottages, such as 37-38 Mill Street. As these show it is prone to severe erosion: the front had to be largely refaced in 1997 in Grinshill sandstone, the nearest match, as local stone is no longer quarried.
- 7.3 The Town Hall stands on sandstone arches (now concealed beneath a later refacing of painted brick), but like the majority of surviving 17th century and earlier buildings it is timber framed. The local tradition of framing with wattle and daub, lath and plaster or brick infill was dominant until the latter part of the 17th century. The higher status buildings have jettied fronts, with close studding as at The Swan and 33-35 High Street, or decorative framing with lozenges, herringbone, curves and other patterns as in Bishop Percy's House in Cartway, 57 High Street or the King's Head in Whitburn Street. These were expensive in both timber and labour. 25-26 Northgate has a simpler version with slightly more widely spaced studs and mid-rails.
- 7.4 Other buildings of lesser status have a the simpler treatment known variously as square framing or small framing, forming roughly square or rectangular panels. This can be

seen in a wide range of buildings of varying sizes: substantial 3-storey or 2-storey and attic houses such as 51 and 53 High Street and 5-6 St. Mary's Street; 2-storey houses including 21-22 Northgate; and small one-storey and attic cottages such as 15 St. John's Street and 32 Friars Street. A few buildings have framing construction which suggests the possibility of quite early origin: the British Legion building in Bridge Street has crucks, while The Carpenters Arms in Whitburn Street has the large panels and arched braces often found in mediaeval timber framing.

- 7.5 The Carpenters Arms retains only part of its framing visible: like many buildings in Bridgnorth, it has been partly rebuilt in brick. There are in fact many more timber framed buildings than at first meet the eye: behind many formal 18th and 19th century brick or rendered facades and sash windows there are much earlier timber framed structures. Some have obvious clues to their earlier origins, such as the overhangs to 7-8 Waterloo Terrace or the timber framed gable end wall around the corner from the early 18th century brick façade of 46 Mill Street, but in others such as 42 High Street the evidence is hidden to the rear or inside.
- 7.6 Brick appears to have been first used in Bridgnorth in the early 17th century. It was initially confined to important buildings such as the Old Grammar School Houses (5-7 St. Leonard's Close) of c.1625 and the Governor's House of c.1633, both with stone dressings to gables, openings, string courses etc. By the late 17th century houses such as Diamond Hall had established brick as a fashionable material for buildings of high status. These early examples have the distinctive thin red bricks, irregular bonding and wide lime mortar joints characteristic of 17th century brickwork.
- 7.7 In the 18th century brick took over from timber framing as the dominant material for all types of building. Fine quality 18th and 19th century brickwork, often in Flemish bond, makes an important contribution to Bridgnorth's appearance. Red brick – in a variety of shades – predominates, in buildings as diverse as the Rectory in East Castle Street, the National Westminster Bank in High Street and terraced houses in Severn Street. In some buildings it is combined with stone dressings, left exposed as on the Church Street almshouses, but more often painted as on 20 and 25 East Castle Street. The tight joints and original lime mortar pointing are essential elements of this historic brickwork, but there are numerous examples of repointing in hard cement mortar with widened joints which harm both the bricks and their appearance.
- 7.8 There are though numerous other types and colours of brick to be seen, often with considerable variation between adjacent buildings. The variegated mix including buff, russet and purple often referred to locally as Broseley bricks can be seen in buildings such as 1 Northgate and Ebenezer Row. Ebenezer Row has very distinctive moulded bricks forming twisted round chimney shafts. A small number of 19th century houses, such as 11-14 East Castle Street and 5 Castle Terrace, are built in Flemish bond of buff or brown stretchers and contrasting blue headers producing a very distinctive chequerboard effect. The former school in Listley Street is built of dark blue engineering type bricks with contrasting stone dressings. But by far the most dramatic use of coloured bricks is New Market Buildings, blue with yellow, red and black dressings picking out features such as pilasters, arches, rustication, cornices, string courses and bands.

- 7.9 A considerable number of brick buildings have been painted, at least on the front elevation. While 19th and early 20th century photographs show some buildings painted, such as 78 High Street, in many more cases this has been done relatively recently in modern synthetic paints and non-traditional colours such as brilliant white. While painting may add to the variety of townscape, in many cases it has regrettably obscured good quality brickwork. Moreover, in many instances the painting of isolated individual frontages has disrupted the intended uniformity of rows and terraces such as Orchard Cottages or 26-30 Whitburn Street, or a single composition such as 7-10 Underhill Street marred by the painting of No. 7.
- 7.10 Render of various types is also fairly widespread. Traditional smooth stucco used both as a wall facing and for architectural details such as cornices, pilasters, window surrounds, string courses etc., can be seen on a variety of high status buildings such as the Falcon Hotel, 22 East Castle Street, the Baptist Church, the Midland Bank and 25 High Street. Some, such as 23 East Castle Street, the Trustee Savings Bank and 4 Underhill Street, have the stucco scored to imitate the fine joints or rustication of ashlar stonework. Some buildings, such as 4 St. John's Street or 6 Cartway, have simple traditional lime plaster render with little or no enrichment, but now painted with modern synthetic paint rather than the traditional limewash. A few have 19th or 20th century pebbledash, left exposed on Tower House in West Castle Street or painted as at 12 Northgate. Some buildings have been damaged by the application of inappropriate non-traditional "tyrolean" cement render obscuring original brickwork or detail, as at 3-5 Mill Street or The Court, 48 High Street.
- 7.11 The dominant roof material of Bridgnorth is locally-manufactured clay tiles, used on all types of buildings from St. Leonard's church to tiny cottages such as 32 Friar Street. Many buildings retain old hand-made tiles, mostly weathered reds; their irregular appearance is a major element of the town's picturesque roofscape. Unfortunately some buildings have had these replaced with machine-made tiles of clay or occasionally concrete, either complete or in patches, resulting in a flat and rather lifeless appearance. The traditional treatment of verges is a mortared tile undercloak, but recent re-roofing has tended to substitute asbestos or board undercloaks resulting in sharper lines and contrasting colour which damages the traditional character. A few buildings have some decorative tile work, such as the bands of fish-scale tiles and ridge cresting of the Railway Station.
- 7.12 Some late 18th and 19th century buildings have roofs of Welsh blue slate, which have a significantly lower pitch than tile roofs. Those of St. Mary's church are partly hidden, but on New Market Buildings they are rather more prominent. Slate is also used on individual houses such as The Vinery in Salop Street and a number in East Castle Street, and on terraces of houses such as 18-20 Salop Street and of small cottages 1-20 Severn Street. 46 High Street (Beamans) has obviously artificial slates which are at odds with the building's early 19th century character. A few buildings have flat roofs. In some cases felt has been substituted for the original leadwork, as on the flat roof surmounting the clay tiles of Diamond Hall. A more extreme example is 4 Underhill Street where the original hipped tile roof has been removed and replaced with a flat felt roof. Some 20th century buildings, including rear extensions to High Street shops such as Woolworths or W.H. Smith, have large visible expanses of flat roof which are unsympathetic to the town's traditional character.

- 7.13 Traditional materials are also an important element of the streetscape. Some original materials survive, notably some of the clay paviers to footways which old photographs suggest were characteristic of Bridgnorth. In East Castle Street the footways are a mixture of 19th century and more recent paviers. Here and in Church Street there are also blue clay kerbs. High Street, St. John's Street, and parts of other streets have in recent years had footways repaved in clay paviers, but unfortunately laid in a herringbone pattern rather than the stretcher bond traditional to the town.
- 7.14 Surviving small areas of blue paviers adjacent to New Market Buildings inspired the repaving of Postern Gate and part of Listley Street in 1997. The flights of steps between High and Low Town are very largely constructed of large blue clay bull-nosed paviers which have recently been copied for repairs and restoration. More unusually, Stoneway Steps have iron frames made at the local foundry. Both plain and diamond chequer blue paviers, old and modern, are also used on the steps, and were used to repave the footways in Cartway in 1995.
- 7.15 Road surfaces were originally of setts; these have generally been replaced or covered over with tarmac, but an area outside the Cliff Railway Station on Castle Walk has been uncovered and relaid. Drainage channels in traditional materials survive in some streets. Some are of setts laid parallel to the kerb, as in Moat Street. Others are of blue clay as in Cartway and Church Street which has both old, large unit channels and recent small units. Setts or clay paviers survive inside many traditionally vehicle entries from the streets, such as those to 48 and 49 High Street, the White Lion in West Castle Street and 10 Listley Street. On Cartway and Bank Street artificial setts have been used quite successfully to repave the road surface. The local red sandstone is unsuitable for paving, but York stone flags have been used to repave the Quayside in Low Town, and for limited areas of footway in High Street.

8. Architectural Forms and Details

- 8.1 Much of the special architectural and visual interest of Bridgnorth's historic buildings is due to their variety of traditional forms and details. Plan forms vary. In the historic commercial cores of High and Low Town development pressure is reflected in long rear wings, often of several different builds. These tend to reduce in height and width as they recede from the street. Many such buildings in High Street and elsewhere have pedestrian access to the rear via a passage from the street, as at 55-56 High Street and numerous others, or more rarely vehicle access as at The Swan. In some buildings these accesses have now been incorporated into commercial floorspace, as at 42 High Street. Purely residential properties, of all sizes, generally have more compact plans, but where there are rear ranges or additions these follow the same general pattern of reducing in height and width.
- 8.2 The majority of buildings in the historic core of the town front directly onto the pavement and extend across the full width of the plot. As a result front elevations are generally flat, with few projections other than shopfronts or shallow doorcases. The 2-storey bay windows of 4 St. John's Street are quite unusual. A small number of buildings have projecting features to upper floors, such as the upper-floor bay windows of 14 East Castle Street, 25, 38 and 39 High Street and 39 West Castle Street. Where buildings are set back more varied forms are possible, such as the 2- or 3-storey porches which break up the frontages of 5-7 St. Leonard's Close and the Governor's House. A few buildings

stand in their own grounds, giving more scope for variety such as the completely irregular elevation of the Old Rectory in St. Leonard's Close, or the large bay windows of St. Leonard's House and Castle Hill House.

- 8.3 A wide variety of details enliven elevations. The grandest and most formal is the classical architectural treatment of St. Mary Magdalene with columns, pilasters, pediment etc. Simpler versions with pilasters and piers in stone or plaster can be seen in a variety of buildings such as 5 Waterloo Terrace, the Rectory and 33 East Castle Street, 26-27 St. Leonard's Close, and the Baptist Church. Other buildings have quoins, such as 20 and 26 East Castle Street, 1-2 Mill Street. String courses between floors, as at 55-56 High Street and 28-29 East Castle Street are also not uncommon. Giant arches are used in a variety of buildings, some combined with elaborate brick detail as at New Market Buildings and 7 and 10 Underhill Street; others are much simpler, such as the building between 68 and 69 St. Mary's Street, 40 Bernards Hill or 3 Salop Street.
- 8.4 There is considerable variety in the treatment of openings. Some buildings have moulded surrounds to windows, such as 60 High Street or the arched window of Beaumaris on Castle Terrace. One of the most widespread details is the stone or plastered lintel and sill, left exposed or painted, used in a very wide range of 18th and 19th century buildings from the grandest individual houses to simple terraced cottages, most frequently combined with sash windows. They are detailed in many different way: flat with elaborate keystones and moulded sills as at 5 Waterloo Terrace, curved as at 82 High Street, simply channelled as at 43-45 West Castle Street, with a simple cornice and brackets as at Ebenezer Row, or just plain as at 40 Bernards Hill. Also widespread are brick flat arches made of shaped or rubbed special bricks, such as can be seen at 37 High Street and 21 East Castle Street, and variations with a segmental-curved brick arch with keystone, such as 23 High Street. Simpler still is the brick segmental arch used in many small houses and cottages including 26-30 Whitburn Street and 69-71 Cartway.
- 8.5 There are many different doorway treatments, with at the simplest just a segmental arch or lintel as at 18-19 St. Mary's Street or the extremely simple timber door hood of 24 Whitburn Street. Many buildings have painted timber doorcases such as 36-44 Hospital Street, or grander examples in painted timber, plaster or stone with pilasters or columns and sometimes pediments like those of 7 High Street or the Rectory in East Castle Street. Distinctively 19 century types are the central door and sidelights with a cornice on carved brackets of 46 Mill Street and 25 West Castle Street, and the turned wood porches of Westgate Villas.
- 8.6 Historic doors and windows give buildings much of their special character and interest. Traditional doors are of three major types: panelled, ledged and braced plank, or glazed, with variations of all three. Many buildings have panelled front doors. Six-panelled doors, with fielded panels such as those of 20 East Castle Street and the part-glazed 7 High Street, with sunk panels in moulded surrounds as at 44 Hospital Street, or flush with bead mouldings as at 19 East Castle Street are particularly characteristic of 18th and early to mid 19th century buildings. Four-panelled doors with sunk panels in moulded surrounds such as those of 4 and 5 Church Street, or a mixture of moulded sunk and flush with bead surrounds as at 10-14 East Castle Street, or half-glazed like those of 40-41 West Castle Street tend to be mid to late 19th century. Ledged doors are generally found in the simpler houses and cottages such as 15 Friar Street, sometimes with a small glazed panel as at 45 St. Mary's Street.

- 8.7 Painted timber casements with side-hung opening lights are largely but by no means exclusively found in the more modest buildings and in the less conspicuous part of the grander ones. A distinctive local type is the timber-framed window, with or without a transom, with opening lights of iron hung on hooks on the outside of the frame. There are many examples, some with horizontal glazing bars as at 66-67 Cartway or 28 High Street, or leaded as at 7-8 Church Street, which have arched tops. Once widespread, these are being destroyed by replacement of the iron lights with timber casements which have much thicker sections, or by replacement rather than repair of the entire window. Other types of traditional casement are made entirely of timber with various glazing patterns such as horizontal bars only as at 37 High Street, or multi-paned such as 50-54 St. Mary's Street. Fixed and opening lights generally exactly match in appearance: the modern standard version with storm-sealed opening lights and the fixed lights glazed without a sub-frame look very different and quite unbalanced as those to the formers of 38-40 Cartway show.
- 8.8 Painted timber vertically-sliding sash windows are equally characteristic of the town. There are many types. The most widespread is the 12-pane "6 over 6" type found in many 18th and early 19th century buildings such as 20 East Castle Street, 7 High Street or 29 Friars Street. Second floors usually have smaller versions such as the '3 over 3' of 26 East Castle Street. Another type common from the early 19th century onwards is the 16-pane '8 over 8' of buildings such as the Falcon Hotel. A widespread later 19th century type is the 4-pane '2 over 2' version as at 36-37 St. Mary's Street. There are numerous other, less widespread variations such as the Venetian windows with a central arched light of 16 High Street and the Rectory, East Castle Street and the tri-partite sashes of The Vine, Mill Street or 3 East Castle Street.
- 8.9 These traditional doors and windows are particularly vulnerable to unsympathetic alteration, less and inappropriate replacement. The character of many buildings is being badly damaged by the removal of historic joinery which is capable of repair and replacement with new doors and windows of different types such as top-opening lights in place of sliding sashes, UPVC or stained tropical hardwood instead of painted timber and either with completely different glazing pattern or with crude patterns that barely approximate to the original, losing the subtlety of mouldings etc. The effect of this is even more marked in a terrace of identical proportions designed as a single composition: treating each property in isolation with piecemeal replacement with a variety of types and materials, as at 42-44 Hospital Street destroys the character of the whole terrace. As a result the strong historic character and appearance which makes Bridgnorth such a special place is being steadily but inexorably eroded.
- 8.10 Many buildings have some type of cornice or eaves detail, ranging from the very grand to extremely simple according to the status and style of the building. Among the grandest examples are the big modillion cornice of 48 Mill Street and the elaborate cornice of 5 Waterloo Terrace with another storey above. Many others have simpler versions in stone or plaster, such as 1-2 and 46-47 Mill Street. The most widespread detail is the brick dentil cornice, used in a wide range of buildings from large properties such as the Ball Hotel in East Castle Street to large numbers of small houses and cottages such as Ebenezer Row; 1-2 East Castle Street and 4-5 Church Street are slightly more elaborate Victorian variations. A simpler version still is the brick corbel cornice of 3 Castle Hill Walk.

- 8.11 A variety of roof forms contribute to the appearance of both individual buildings and the townscape as a whole. Pitched roofs dominate. Roof spans are generally high or dominant. Deeper plans are achieved by additional roofs running at right angles or parallel, often requiring valley gutters. The majority of buildings of all types in all parts of the town have the principal roof running parallel to the street, but there are many variations. A significant number of earlier, particularly timber-framed, buildings have gables to the street, with ridges running back to a principal roof parallel to the front. Bishop Percy's House and 53 High Street have structures like enlarged dormers rising from the eaves level as at 50-54 Cartway, or set high up the roof as at 28-31 Salop Street. The majority are simply constructed with a slender timber frame around the window which sits almost directly on the wall plate at the eaves or on the tiles higher up, with brick or rendered gable and cheeks. Hipped dormers such as those of the Black Boy on Cartway are rather less common.
- 8.12 In other cases two or more gables rise direct from eaves level, extending the whole width of the elevation, as at 57 High Street, 56 St. Mary's Street, and 25 Northgate, or the King's Head in Whitburn Street which has 3. The terrace Nos. 26-27 Bernards Hill have a gable each, while 5-7 St. Leonard's Close has a frontage of no less than both forms, with a gabled 3-storey porch rising up between two wide gables over the first floor. The National Westminster Bank and the Post Office in Postern Gate are examples of the late Victorian and Edwardian revival of these traditional details, each with a single large 'timber-framed' gable. A few buildings have the ridge running at right angles to the street, with the gable end to the front. 34 Cartway, the British Legion building and 15 St. John's Street are all small timber-framed examples, but a similar treatment can also be seen on more ambitious 18th and 19th century brick buildings. 29 St. Mary's Street and 25 High Street are respectively 18th and 19th century 3-storey buildings with gables treated as classical pediments. Several chapels, notably the Methodist Church in Cartway and the Theatre on the Steps, have large pediment gables.
- 8.13 Gables have a variety of treatments. Gables to the street generally have a plain verge resting on exposed rafters and purlin ends as at 5-7 St. Leonard's Close and 53 High Street, or on bargeboards covering the rafters and purlin ends as at Bishop Percy's House and the King's Head. Some buildings have gable parapets rising above the roof. The Governor's House has them on the gables to the front, and the Bandon Arms has a particularly large one, but they are more commonly found on roofs parallel to the street, as at 3 Church Street. However, the most widespread detail for less prominent gables to the sides or rear, particularly of more modest practice of substituting a light-coloured board undercloak results in a mechanical straight line and harsh contrast of colour which is at odds with this traditional detail.
- 8.14 A limited number of buildings have hipped tile roofs. The late 17th century Diamond Hall and 48 Mill Street are probably the earliest and are certainly among the most prominent examples, with deep eaves and steeply pitched roof slopes. 55-56 High Street, 46 Cartway and 6 Church Street are 18th century examples, while 14 East Castle Street and 44 Cartway are 19th century. Some properties on a corner site have a hip on the corner, such as 66 Cartway or 78 High Street. Slate hipped roofs, of a shallower pitch than tiles, are even fewer. The earliest examples are late 18th century, when the material first became widely available, notably St. Mary Magdalene's church. Most are early to mid

19th century, and have deep plain eaves, such as 9 Mill Street and 31 Salop Street; the much more extravagant New Market Buildings has elaborate cornices.

- 8.15 Some buildings have their roofs partly or wholly hidden behind parapets. St. Mary Magdalene's roofs are only visible in more distant views. One of the grandest examples is the Baptist Church in West Castle Street which conceals its plain tile roof behind an elaborate Grecian façade with piers, panels and acroteria to the parapet. 48 High Street has a curved parapet concealing a gable. 33 East Castle Street (TSB) has a high pierced parapet on top of an elaborate moulded cornice; others have a moulded cornice forming a parapet, as at 26 East Castle Street and 60 High Street. A simpler version can be seen in a number of 18th and early 19th century buildings which have plain parapets with simple moulded cappings, such as 44-45 and 73 High Street, 1 Bridge Street and 54 Mill Street. The most unusual timber-framed building has given it a very high parapet to the front with an odd half-gable on the return side.
- 8.16 Chimneys contribute considerably to the interest of both elevations and roofscapes, and are very often dominant features. By far the most common type are plain chimneys containing several flues, some with simple string courses or oversailing tops, sited in the centre of the ridge as at 25-25 St. Mary's Street, or at the end of the roof as at 18-19 St. Mary's Street or 30 St. Leonard's Close, but there are many variations. Early buildings tend to have particularly large and dominant chimney stacks made up of numerous separate shaft. There are some good 17th century examples such as the partly-surviving square shafts with triangular ribs of the Governor's House, the diagonally-set square shafts of 3-5 St. Leonard's Close, and the massive stacks of square breaking through the hipped roof of Diamond Hall. 18th century chimneys are mostly less elaborate, but there are many decorative Victorian examples such as the ribbed stacks of Palmer's Hospital and perhaps most striking of all the spiral round chimneys of Ebenezer Row. Some houses and cottages have curiously positioned chimneys such as that on the corner of 3 East Castle Street or built against the front wall as at 52 St. Mary's Street.

9. The Character of the Conservation Area

- 9.1 Bridgnorth is an exceptionally well preserved historic market town. Its remarkably high concentration of historic buildings of many different types, sizes and styles in a range of traditional materials, randomly mixed together, gives the streets of Bridgnorth an enormously diverse appearance. The buildings are the clearest visible evidence of the town's history, but the history has shaped the character and appearance of the town in other, less immediately obvious ways. The street pattern and the survival of mediaeval burgrave plots show Bridgnorth's origins as a planned mediaeval town, and the densely built up plots in the centres of High and Low Town reflect the pressure of commercial development over a long period. The mix of residential and commercial use in many parts of the town has continued since the middle ages and is vital to Bridgnorth's character as a lively working town rather than a picturesque historic survival.
- 9.2 The combination of all this with particularly distinctive topography makes Bridgnorth unique. The location of High Town, silhouetted against the sky on the steep tree-clad sandstone valley side above the Severn, the outcrops of rock, the many different levels, resulting in haphazard scattering of buildings and an intricate network of steps, paths and narrow roads, and the river dividing Low Town all give Bridgnorth interest from innumerable viewpoints. There are ever-changing views within the town from one part to

another, from the town out into the surrounding countryside, and from the countryside back to the town.

- 9.3 The result is a town of immensely strong and varied character and appearance. Different parts of the Conservation Area have their own very distinctive qualities.

10. High Street and Waterloo Terrace

- 10.1 **High Street**, still the market place as it was in the middle ages, is the busy historic and commercial centre of High Town. There is a wide range of shops, pubs, eating places etc., many of them still independent rather than national chains. While the upper floors of some buildings are vacant, many are in varied use including storage and staff use, a small degree of retail/restaurant, and offices. There is still a significant degree of residential occupation, particularly of upper floors but also including houses such as Nos. 48 and 49 behind the ranges fronting the street. This has increased slightly recently and has potential to increase further. This mix of uses is an essential element of the street's lively character. It is also a principal traffic route: the impact of traffic has been reduced to some extent by the one-way system but extensive parking encroaching over pavements detracts from the attractiveness of the street.
- 10.2 The street, broad but not absolutely straight, has continuous built-up frontages with irregular building lines, interrupted only by the narrow streets opening off it which provide interesting and attractive views such as the vista up Church Street to the tower of St. Leonard's Church. Its most distinctive features are the Northgate and the Town Hall. The Northgate with its low, narrow arch and adjacent buildings completely enclose the northern end and create a small hidden area in the north east corner. It is the only survivor of the town gates, but was largely rebuilt in the 18th century; its present appearance was created in 1910. The Town Hall on arches straddling half of the road dominates the street, separating it into two unequal parts and providing intriguing vistas alongside and beneath it. It adds greatly to the varied interest of the street, creating two very narrow enclosed areas around it contrasting with the general spaciousness. The southern end of the street is almost wholly enclosed by the buildings of Waterloo Terrace. On the corner New Market Buildings, with its tower forming a focal point, is a striking contrast to surrounding buildings in its scale and polychromatic brickwork.
- 10.3 The street is made up almost entirely of historic buildings ranging from the 16th to the early 20th centuries: the flat-roofed building between Nos. 45 and 46 and Nos. 62-3 are the only obviously incongruous 20th century intrusions. Contrasting sizes, scales, styles, materials and details provide a very varied appearance, full of interest, especially to upper floors above the shopfronts. Buildings are mostly of 2 storeys and attic or 3 storeys, many with prominent roofs, but varying considerably in height, presenting a very varied skyline with a mixture of gables, cornices, parapets and chimneys. Frontages also vary in width but many are relatively narrow, of two or three bays, with a few one-bay frontages such as Nos. 3 and 4 and No. 46. The high, wide 2-storey façade of Lloyds Bank is exceptional. To the rear most properties retain the long, irregular ranges of varying heights with pitched roofs which contribute so much to the town's picturesque roofscape, but some have been replaced or obscured by large and intrusive, blank-walled, flat-roofed ranges such as that to the Woolworth's building and Nos. 40-41.

- 10.4 Only Nos. 3 and 7 and the Golden Lion retain original ground floor elevations with unaltered domestic-type windows and doors. The vast majority have shopfronts varying widely in period, type and quality. They include good early 19th century bow-fronted examples at Nos. 44 and 55 (recently copied at No. 56), and late Victorian or Edwardian designs such as Nos. 46, 51 and 77. Numerous 20th century shopfronts are in non-traditional materials and details which look completely incongruous set in historic buildings, but recent examples such as Nos. 30 and 40-41 have reintroduced traditional materials and details. A few buildings have other types of commercial frontage, some historic such as the stone mullioned windows of the National Westminster Bank and the bay window of the Harp pub, others altered as at the Midland Bank and the Crown.
- 10.5 Commercial signage has a considerable impact. Some premises have applied lettering in shiny plastic or other non-traditional material on equally unsympathetic fascias, as at Nos. 6, 13, 32 and 33 and numerous others, which detract from the historic and architectural interest of the individual buildings. Applied lettering in more sympathetic matt finishes has been successfully used in some cases, as at No. 79. The most widespread treatment is also the most sympathetic and traditional: sign-written (real or imitation) lettering either directly onto fascias or onto framed boards as at The Crown. No. 42 has a very unusual large, shaped and moulded signboard (recently replicated) on top of the shopfront which had applied timber lettering. There are no internally-lit fascias; external lighting is limited and generally fairly discreet.
- 10.6 Projecting signs at first-floor level are widespread. Most are of painted timber and flush lettering, predominantly of "portrait" format, hung from brackets of various, generally simple designs; the large and prominent brackets at The Swan and No. 35 are not typical. Some have external lighting; the internally-illuminated sign at Lloyds Bank is an intrusive exception. A few premises, such as nos. 46, 47, 77 and 79, retain traditional retractable canvas awnings, but Nos. 80-81 have intrusive plastic "Dutch" awnings.

11. Church Street and St. Leonard's Close

- 11.1 **Church Street** is a single carriageway, primarily residential street with narrow pavements rising towards the enormous bulk of the church tower which closes the view eastwards. The continuous frontages of historic buildings which tightly enclose it are interrupted only by a small garden on the site of a house destroyed by a World War Two bomb. Buildings vary considerably in size, but all except the irregular No. 2 have formal elevations. The principal building is the long, symmetrical 2-storey façade of the Almshouses dated 1792, classical in form but with Gothick details. However, the street is so narrow that it is difficult to see the elevation as a whole, and the tall 3-storey, 3-bay mass of No. 3 looming above the longer but much lower frontage of No. 2 appears more dominant. Looking westwards the dramatic differences in eaves and roof levels are accentuated. The view, unfortunately marred by intrusive overhead cables, continues down Whitburn Street until it bends out of sight, with numerous trees and modern development rising in the distance.
- 11.2 **St. Leonard's Close** is completely dominated by the great red sandstone Gothic mass of the church. Surrounded by old houses it has the air of a scaled-down cathedral in a miniature close. The lawns around the church, numerous trees including an enormous Norway Maple, and the narrow carriageways without footpaths are important elements of its intimate character. However, the concrete kerbs, unconvincing pastiche "period"

street lights, decaying railings alongside Moat Street and web of overhead cables mar the effect to some extent. Although there is a mix of uses – residential, office and public – it has a quiet, calm atmosphere which makes a striking contrast to the activity of High Street close by.

- 11.3 The pattern of development is more varied than that of surrounding street. Some buildings front directly onto the highway, others stand slightly back behind shallow forecourts or gardens; No.s 26 and 27 have good quality original railings. On either side of the entrance to Church Street are continuous frontages of old buildings. The group to the north are very varied in date, size, scale, materials and details, presenting striking contrasts such as that between the low, narrow half-timbered frontage of Baxter's House and the tall classical facades of St. Leonard's Gate adjacent. No.25A built in 1996 uses traditional materials and details in an inventive way which makes a positive contribution to the character of the Close, unlike No. 25's poor detail and mechanical brickwork of a few years earlier. Between Nos.25A and 26 there is an intriguing view of the roofscape around Northgate.
- 11.4 However, much of the Close is made up of large free-standing buildings of very diverse character. The 18th century Old Grammar School stands alone on an island site. The late Victorian "black and white" frontage of Palmer's Hospital enclosing a courtyard garden is marked contrast to the plain late Georgian frontage of College House with its shallow forecourt unfortunately marred by car parking and unsightly yellow bollards. The nine gables and tall, wide frontage of Nos. 5-7 dominate the south-eastern side. The high garden wall to the side of No.5 following the incline down to Granary Steps is also a significant feature. From this point there is a particularly fine distant view across to the grass, outcrops of rock and dense tree cover on the eastern side of the Severn Valley. To the north The Old Granary is set at a lower level approached from the Steps. There is a good view from its railings over the extensive tree cover on the slopes below and across the roofscape of Low Town.

12. Moat Street, Cliff Road and Northgate

- 12.1 The northern side of St. Leonard's Close is enclosed by a line of pollarded limes and railings and by buildings at a lower level on **Moat Street**, a narrow road which follows the line of the mediaeval town moat. The retaining wall below the railings is partly of brick, but the western part is of unattractive concrete blocks. Part of the street has old blue clay kerbs, paviers and gutter. No. 10 is a large late 19th century 2-storey or 2 storey and attic houses. Unfortunately few of them are intact: unsympathetic piecemeal alterations including rendering, poor repointing, inappropriate replacement windows and doors in timber, metal or UPVC have destroyed the original unity of design and character. No. 14 is a little different, a one-storey-and-attic cottage at 90 degrees to the street. No. 15 has an unsympathetic flat-roofed addition and plastic-sheeted carport.
- 12.2 This pattern is interrupted by some late 20th century development. Most prominent by far is St. Leonard's View, which is quite different in size, scale and detail, of 2 and a half and 3 storeys with much more irregular massing, gables and 2-storey oriel windows, stained timber casements, and without any entrances. Its impact softened from the Close by the difference in level and planting, but at street level the building looms very large. No. 12 (the restaurant), a mid 20th century flat-roofed single-storey brick box with an unsightly

concrete forecourt is a completely alien intrusion which disrupts the general pattern; No. 2 on the corner of Northgate is little better.

- 12.3 The southern end of the footpath from Moat Street to Cliff Road is protected by five cast iron cannon-shaped bollards; the concrete bollard at the Cliff Road end is a painful contrast. From this point there is a dramatic view southwards of the church. The car parking area with high walls and fencing is an unattractive feature. East of the path, beyond the newly-erected flats, the dense belt of mature trees down the steep slope towards the former railway line and the river is an important landscape feature. Severn Cliff is a large mid 19th century house with simple Gothic details set against the belt of trees, but its immediate setting has been harmed by a large tarmac parking area, concrete slabs and concrete street light. The development of bungalows attached to it are reasonably sympathetic, giving interest by stepping down the slope behind the original brick boundary wall. To the north and east is a large area of attractive open space with fine trees and good views across Severn Park towards the Hermitage. The Scout Hut is functional but crudely detailed with concrete pantile roof, 'rustic brick' and UPVC windows.
- 12.4 The southern side of **Cliff Road** has high timber gates and intrusive corrugated sheet fencing to the rear of some of the Moat Street properties, and their irregular rear elevations can be seen above. Stable Cottages has largely late 20th century details. Nos. 5-8 are a late 19th century terrace similar to houses in Moat Street, but much less altered, while No. 1-3 are partly timber-framed and brick cottages; all have a very narrow pavement of old clay paviors and kerbs. Between them the entrance front of St. Leonard's View and a recently complete pair of houses, set far back behind tarmac car parks, disrupt the pattern. From the western end there are interesting glimpses of the rear wings of cottages on Northgate.
- 12.5 **Northgate** originated as a mediaeval suburb outside the gate. It has a varied mix of historic buildings and uses, with commercial use largely concentrated on the west side, adjacent to the Northgate itself. Tudor Room café, butting up against the Northgate and partly obscuring it, is particularly prominent in views southwards. It appears to be an Edwardian 'black and white' building but is actually 18th century; it was drastically altered to provide access to the western pedestrian arch opened up in 1909, leaving the upper floors built out over the pavement on timber posts – a unique feature in Bridgnorth. The side elevation is marred by intrusive plumbing and UPVC windows. There is an intriguing vista down the narrow lane of small gabled cottages, outbuildings and walls, and the tall side elevation of 3 High Street. It ends with the high rendered 19th century front of the former Gaol building, now converted to the dwellings known as Northgate Mews. Behind it is the former gaoler's house, a small mid 19th century double-fronted house with two of the original cells surviving to the rear.
- 12.6 Nos. 25-26 Northgate is a tall twin-gabled timber-framed building with poor 20th century shopfronts. It contrasts markedly with the even taller 3-storey painted brick 19 century façade of the adjacent Bear Inn; the northern part of the Bear is very different, older, much lower and irregular. Nos. 20 and 21 are a good pair of small low timber-framed houses. No. 20 has a formal front with 19th century doorcase and windows, but is probably of earlier origin.

- 12.7 The east side mainly comprises much smaller buildings. No. 1, an attractive 19th century brick building which provides an important visual accent in Northgate and frames the narrow entrance to Moat Street, is in commercial use but most are residential. Nos. 2-7 are a terrace of small cottages, originally timber-framed but now mostly painted brick, similar to others in the town but most unusually they are set back behind walled front gardens. Their setting is marred by the intrusive pole and web of telephone cables. The view up the steeply-rising Cliff Road is closed by trees. Nos. 8-9 and 11 are larger but simple 18th or early 19th century brick houses largely retaining original features. The pavement raised like a terrace above the road is a potentially attractive feature, but the concrete slabs, kerbs and posts with chains are unsympathetic.
- 12.8 The brick garden wall with trees showing above adjacent to No. 11 marks the end of continuous built-up frontages. This as the historic northern edge of the town which remained very largely undeveloped until the 19th century. St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church, rebuilt in 1896 in Wenlock stone with contrasting dressings, has the quirky Gothic details often found in late Victorian and Edwardian church designs. With its stone retaining wall, gatepiers, iron railings and gates it makes an important contribution to the street scene. Behind it the hall and attached Presbytery are good examples of mid 19th century simple Gothic style. The trees around North Lodge, a modest but well-proportioned house set high above the road, make an important contribution to the more diffuse and less urban character of this part of the conservation area. Its high brick retaining wall and the Georgian-style stone gatepiers, iron gates and stone retaining wall to the Endowed School are prominent features. The original blocks of the Endowed School, built in 1908, and the Infirmary of 1895 are attractive examples of the late Victorian/Edwardian manner frequently used for modest public buildings which was derived from contemporary house design, with a mixture of materials and details including 'timber-framing', tile-hanging and small-paned windows.
- 13. Whitburn Street, Salop Street, Pound Street, St. Mary's Street and Listley Street**
- 13.1 Whitburn, St. Mary's and Listley Streets represent the mediaeval planning expansion of Bridgnorth, laid out on the classic 'gridiron' pattern.
- 13.2 **Whitburn Street** is a major route for both local and through traffic. The pressure of this on the narrow street with particularly narrow pavements at some points has a serious adverse effect on its character, making it noisy and hazardous for pedestrians. Properties along the southern side are in almost exclusively commercial uses, with residential use concentrated in the western half of the northern side. Although it originated as a planned street the building lines are very irregular in the eastern part of the north side, with buildings breaking forward and back. It rises, initially quite steeply from Pound Street and then gradually eastwards, with views along it closed by St. Leonard's church tower.
- 13.3 Historic buildings dominate, especially on the north side where they are interrupted only by the mid 20th century No. 14. Larger properties, of 2 storeys and attic or 3 storeys, and generally 2- or 3-bay frontages, and long rear ranges and outbuildings are chiefly but not exclusively concentrated at the east end close to the commercial centre of High Street.
- 13.4 Frontages largely comprise individual buildings or small blocks, but the north side has several much longer terraces. Nos. 16-23 is a tall mid 19th century 3-storey range of one-

bay shops with sash windows above. In contrast Nos. 26-30 is a low 2-storey terrace of cottages, probably of 17th century origin with an early 19th century brick frontage, a simple 19th century shopfront to No. 30 and a variety of mostly 20th century windows and doors. Nos. 42-45 are a good 19th century formal terrace of 3-storey houses. The majority of buildings retain many historic details, but damage to the street's character is being caused by unsympathetic alterations such as the UPVC windows installed in Nos. 33, 45 and 50. The majority of shops have 20th century frontages, but chiefly of traditionally materials and unobtrusive forms.

- 13.5 On the north side occasional passages and narrow breaks between buildings give glimpses into the areas behind, notably between No. 8 and 9 through Meredith's Yard. From Meredith's Yard itself the backs and very varied roofscape of buildings on Whitburn Street, Northgate and High Street present a generally attractive picture, although marred by unsympathetic alterations and additions to some buildings. On the south side a wide covered access provides an interesting view of the rear range of the Crown and recently improved yard, and also of the rather less attractive flat-roofed rear extension of Woolworth's. Beyond them Nos. 63, 64 and 65 are an attractive group of taller 18th century buildings. Nos. 62 and 63 have original vehicle accesses with rusticated arches and panelled doors; both have simple late Victorian or Edwardian shopfronts.
- 13.6 Nos. 62 to 58 are small-scale 19th and early 20th century buildings which follow the general pattern, but the Majestic cinema of 1937 dramatically and completely disrupts it. It breaks the building line, set far back from the pavement, with a high and very wide, largely blank frontage with a few Art Deco details, concealing the roof. The tarmac frontage paving and concrete 'sugarloaf' bollards and street light, mesh gates, the parking area and concrete yard east and west of the building are unsympathetic and intrusive. The timber-framed Carpenter's Arms and No. 52, a good early 18th century 3-bay house, appear curiously isolated amongst the 20th century development which dominates this part of the street. The enormous sign on the east gable end, the intrusive vent box and felt roof below, and the dilapidated fence to the right and the large, equally dilapidated corrugated sheet and timber structure behind it mar the setting and appearance of the Carpenter's Arms. Vehicle entrances provide views of a large 18th century brick building linked to the rear of No. 52, the roofscape of St. Mary's Street including the very prominent rear gable of No. 22 and a former malt house, and two fine copper beech trees.
- 13.7 The 1960s Smithfield Centre is an unfortunate contrast, with little respect for traditional local materials, forms and details and disrupting what remains of the historic building line with a concrete forecourt redeemed only by a traditional red telephone box. The former police station of c.1900 briefly re-establishes the frontage, but at the corner of Pound Street is a poor quality brick and sheeting building with an unsightly façade of hard red brick, aluminium and black perspex, set back behind a forecourt of badly-patched old pavements. The north side of the street has in comparison survived largely unscathed by 20th century development except for the large visual gap created by the widened entrance to the Old Smithfield. This is flanked to the east by the tall, narrow gable end of Nos. 34-35, and to the west by No. 39, a 19th century 3-storey house unique in the street in being set back behind a small front garden; the clipped yew tree is a significant feature in the street scene. Nos. 40-41 have an arched rear access with good timber gates and old brick paving.

- 13.8 Whitburn Street merges almost imperceptibly on the north side into **Salop Street**, a busy principal route into the town centre. With the major exception of the two garages it remains chiefly residential, especially on the north side where commercial use ends with the Bell and Talbot Public House close to the junction. This has a very distinctive large sign with a relief panel of a bell and hounds (emblem of the Talbot family). The slope, the bends in the street, and somewhat fragmented development results in unexpected sudden vistas such as a glimpse of St. Mary's tower across the garage forecourts.
- 13.9 Nothing now remains of the 17th century timber-framed farmhouse and farm buildings built outside the town walls, now the site of a garage. Piecemeal development for housing in the late 18th and 19th centuries is reflected in the surviving buildings. There are a few substantial, formal late Georgian buildings, including the Whitburn Grange Hotel and Nos. 17 and 18, detached 3-storey houses fronting the street but originally with large gardens; No. 17 is now sub-divided and has lost much of its garden. No. 24 (The Vinery) is a detached early 19th century villa with simple Gothick details standing in its own grounds, now partly occupied by unobtrusive late 20th century houses. Its high brick garden wall and trees are significant features in the street scene. No. 31 is an early/mid 19th century brick house with hipped roof and deep eaves, set back from the road with its coach house in front; the concrete block walls are unsympathetic to its setting.
- 13.10 Modest 2-and 3-storey brick houses and cottages in blocks and terraces, some painted or rendered, predominate. After a slight break with the narrow, recessed 19th century frontage of No. 1 the building line continues at the back of the pavement in an unbroken curve as far as No. 10, with buildings of varying dates, sizes and details. On the south side the old stone and brick steps to the raised ground floor of No. 33 are a prominent feature. Nos. 28-30A are a row of simple 18th century houses, now rendered, set back very slightly behind a shallow raised terrace of old blue pavements, with a conduit tap. Nos. 19-23 are a rather more formal late 18th century terrace with sash windows and door hoods.
- 13.11 Albion Terrace, prominently dated 1879, and Westgate Villas are very Victorian breaks with these patterns. The tall 3-storey houses of Albion Terrace are set well back and above the road behind walled front gardens, making the blank side wall of No. 10 very prominent. They have a varied mix of materials and details including brick, stone, 'timber-framing' and slate, Gothic motifs and plate-glass sash windows. Westgate Villas are late Victorian semi-detached houses with varied details including turned wood porches and 'timber-framed' gables. They are little altered, but almost all have lost the walls and gates of their front gardens to create parking areas. Elsewhere inappropriate replacement door and windows have damaged the character of individual buildings and destroyed the unity of terraces.
- 13.12 **Pound Street**, short and sloping steeply upwards to the north, is part of a main through route with heavy traffic: the unsightly mass of traffic signs against 49 Whitburn Street is an unattractive termination to views up the street. It has the most important standing remains of Bridgnorth's mediaeval town walls. Half Moon Battery is part of a 13 century bastion to the rear of No. 17, visible from the street across its garden; it merges into the brick retaining wall to the garden of 30 St. Mary's Street. The boundary walls to the Old Blacksmith's Shop and adjacent yard are prominent in the street, continuing the building line round into St. Mary's Street, but a large area has been damaged by intrusive rendering.

- 13.13 The street mainly comprises small, simply detailed 18th and 19th century brick cottages with roofs stepping up the slope, but much of their character has been destroyed by inappropriate replacement windows and doors in varnished hardwood or UPVC. The vehicle access to the Whitburn Grange Hotel gives a glimpse into an attractive traditionally-paved courtyard. On the north-east side the enclosure of the street is opened out by an area of grass and trees only partly screening the unsightly corrugated sheet building on Whitburn Street. The concrete slab steps and tubular handrail are particularly unsympathetic. At the bottom of the street Squirrel Court, a 1970s development, follows the general scale and forms of surrounding buildings in a rather more interesting and varied design than the dull neo-Georgian of Half Moon Court.
- 13.14 **St. Mary's Street** is one of the finest streets in the town, composed very largely of little-altered historic buildings; most are listed. It is predominantly residential and relatively quiet, with commercial activity concentrated chiefly at the High Street end. The vista along the street from the western end is of the Town Hall's cupola and trees behind High Street rising above the roofs. At the eastern end it is closed by the 18th century façade of 55-56 High Street. The street narrows at this end due to historic encroachment of buildings onto the road, with a break forward from No. 5 onwards on the north side but tapering gradually on the south. Surfacing the road as well as the narrow footways with clay pavements from this point has blurred the distinction between them. The street emerges into High Street hard against the Town Hall, emphasising its narrow, enclosed character.
- 13.15 The building line on both sides is almost continuous, with few breaks. The north side, with the notable exception of the timber-framed Nos. 5 and 6, is very largely composed of 18th and 19th century brick facades, some painted, although as elsewhere in Bridgnorth some conceal earlier timber-framed buildings. The general impression is fairly regular, with most buildings of 2 storeys and attic or 3 storeys. Houses vary in width from one to 3 or 4 bays, reflecting subdivision of the original burgage plots. They are generally fairly modest in design, with little attempt at formal architectural effect. Most are individual buildings, with a few pairs of houses such as the 18th century Nos. 19-20 and the later and smaller Nos. 25-26. Several archways give glimpses through of the long rear wings characteristic of many of the buildings, including Nos. 12-13 which has been extensively but sympathetically remodelled as a number of dwellings. Another provides an interesting pedestrian route to High Street through the Central Court development of small shops created from rear wings and outbuildings. Nos. 1 and 2 have suffered particularly from unsympathetic 20 century alterations, especially No. 2's deeply-recessed shopfront and deep fascia.
- 13.16 At the western end this general pattern changes with two adjacent 18th century houses of rather more architectural formality, with symmetrical facades and good quality details. No. 29 is tall and narrow, and crowned with the unusual (for Bridgnorth) feature of a painted stone pediment containing a blind round window, and to the side elevation a full-height staircase window above the entrance. A sudden break in the frontage opens up an unexpected view to an enormous copper beech tree, the partly timber-framed Old Coach House and the rear of Whitburn Street. No. 30 is an equally tall and much wider 3-storey 3-bay house. It is the largest house in the street and the only detached building, made more prominent by the steep downward slope at this point and the elegant iron-balustraded flight of steps up to the front door. Also unique in the street is its large

garden to the side, with a very high brick retaining wall and mature trees overhanging high above the street. The view westwards is terminated by the irregular massing of Squirrel Court and other buildings and a varied backdrop of trees rising behind and above.

- 13.17 The south side is more irregular. There is a greater mix of materials with more exposed timber framing in both substantial houses such as No. 56 and small cottages such as Nos. 45-46, with their twisted and concave front. The range of building sizes and heights is greater. Most are individual buildings no more than one or two bays wide. A few 3-storey houses, such as No. 64, and many more of 2 storeys and attic are concentrated particularly in the eastern part. Some are tall and particularly narrow such as No. 69. Both this and No. 57 have good early 19th century shopfronts with small-paned bay windows. No. 64 is unusual in having its roof hidden by a parapet and a more elaborate entrance than most, with a fanlight, panelled reveals, pilasters and pediment. Nos. 65 and 68 are a pair designed as a single 18th century frontage punctuated with blank panels to the first floor, and with simple but well proportioned late Victorian shopfronts. Most buildings have a domestic appearance, but the building between Nos. 68 and 69 is quite different, with two giant blank arches containing a carriage entrance and a recent, sympathetically designed shopfront.
- 13.18 In the western part the houses and cottages are generally smaller and much lower than on the north side, of 2 storeys or one storey and attic such as Nos. 50-54. Nos. 38-40 is rather more elaborate and unusual: the mid 19th century single-storey front range has decorative detail in brick and painted stone and a central pointed arch to a through passage, although its symmetry is disrupted by an incongruous 20th century box dormer. Above it can be seen the plastered gable end of No. 39, a much taller timber-framed range to the rear.
- 13.19 There are rather more breaks in frontages than on the north side. Between Nos. 69 and 70 is a wide gap formed by a rather unsightly service yard with rough tarmac paving and inappropriate wire mesh gates. A rather more attractive pedestrian passage to the Listley Street car park opens up interesting views of the irregular side elevation of No. 64 and across to the backs of buildings on Listley Street. A vehicle access forming part of the St. Mary's Court complex opens up a rather bigger gap. This is the only major 20th century development in the street, built in the early 1980s. Careful design in keeping with the scale, forms and materials of surrounding buildings has integrated the scheme into the grain of the street without resorting to pastiche.
- 13.20 **Listley Street** is very much mixed use. Commercial and public premises dominate the eastern part, particularly small independent local shops and businesses. Residential use is chiefly although not exclusively concentrated in the western part and particularly on the north side, but some shops have dwellings above, such as No. 13. One-way traffic and the narrow carriageway from High Street restricts vehicle traffic to a lower level than the through routes of Whitburn Street and High Street. The eastern end of the street retains much of its historic character intact, and the recent repaving of footways in blue clay paviours to match originals and provision of street lights inspired by historic Bridgnorth examples have enhanced this further.
- 13.21 Like St. Mary's Street, Listley Street narrows at the eastern end close to the junction with High Street and Poster Gate; the view eastwards is blocked by the blank side wall of 8

Waterloo Terrace. It is dominated by the exceptionally grand scale and elaborate brick Italianate detail of New Market Buildings extending a long way down the street, and to a lesser extent by the classical side elevation of the Midland Bank of 1828; beyond these the size and scale of buildings is drastically reduced and rooflines drop sharply. The slightly irregular building lines are unbroken up to Nos 13 on the north and 61 on the south, except for a wide access between Nos. 5 and 7 created by partial demolition, leaving No. 5 as the surviving part of an 18th century building and the truncated remains of a partly timber-framed building. The poor resurfacing, rusty gate, and unattractive view of 20th century rear extensions to High Street premises are very detrimental. Simply-detailed 18th and 19th century brick facades dominate the north side, with buildings of 2 or 3 storeys and 2 or 3 bays. Nos. 9-10 is a more ambitious late 18th century building of 2 high storeys and 5 bays with a central carriage arch, and inventive use of blind arcading, unfortunately damaged by the 20th century shopfront. Nos. 1 and 2 of c.1900 have attractive original shopfronts.

- 13.22 On the southern side the New Market Buildings frontage is broken up, with much of the upper floor set far back, and the building line stepping back again to a single-storey range. No. 64 is a dramatic contrast, a tall and very narrow early 19th century gabled building marred by an insensitive plastic fascia and projecting sign. Frontages are splayed back at a slight angle from this point onwards. The scale changes again with the remainder of nos. 63-64, a late 20th century irregular one-storey and attic range of traditional materials and details, and Nos. 61-62 a pair of small 18th century one-storey and attic cottages. Few buildings in the street are listed and some such as Nos. 11 and 12 and 61 and 62, have been badly damaged by unsympathetic 20th century alterations such as intrusive repointing, painting, and inappropriate replacement windows and doors.
- 13.23 20th century redevelopment of car parks and buildings has had a very destructive impact on the central part of the street. It has obliterated burgage plot boundaries and destroyed part of the intricate pattern of rear ranges and outbuildings, especially on the north side where a sizeable chink of the historic urban grain has been lost. The car parks are large visual 'holes' in the built-up frontages, destroying any sense of enclosure. Recent works have mitigated some of the worst effects, notably the construction of the simple but carefully designed public lavatories in good traditional materials which has successfully re-established a small part of the frontage on the north side. Sympathetic buildings along the rest of the frontage would be a great improvement. Across and within the north car park can be seen boundary walls, glimpses of gardens, and the irregular rear elevations and roofscape of properties on St. Mary's Street, High Street and Listley Street. New Market Buildings and the tall gabled rear wings of properties such as 36 High Street and 9-10 Listley Street are particularly prominent, but unfortunately so are intrusive and unsympathetic 20th century additions such as the enormous blank-walled, flat-roofed block to 40-41 High Street.
- 13.24 The damage has been compounded by unsympathetic and intrusive development on Listley Street itself: by far the worst is the Old Comrades Club, a concrete and brick flat-roofed box completely out of scale and character with its surroundings, and with an unkempt and unattractive alley along one side. It replaced an 18th century building. The blank gable end of No. 21, part of a housing development created from old buildings, is set back from the general building line behind a small garden: it leaves another visual gap and exposes poor quality brickwork to the side of No. 20. The Library is dull and out of scale: the combination of single-storey, long frontage and wide span resulting in an

over-dominant roof, unimaginative detail and poor quality concrete surfacing does little to complement the street's historic character.

- 13.25 Railway Street opens up a particularly attractive view of picturesque roofs and chimneys stepping down the very steep street and an abundance of greenery on the eastern side with gardens and extensive tree cover on the cliff behind West Castle Street. However, the installation in 1990 of railings across the original road junction extending around a ramp and the adjacent area has unfortunately destroyed its historic character. Further west there is a good view across the car park to St. Mary's tower rising above the plain brick Baptist Church, trees behind West Castle Street, the Castle ruins, and the rather less attractive telephone exchange.
- 13.26 With the curve to the north-west following the line of the town walls the historic character of Listley Street is re-established, but it is very different to the eastern end. It is much more open: beyond No. 46 a long section of the street's southern side is at the very edge of the steep slope down to Hollybush Road. The brick boundary wall running all the way to No. 45 almost at the end of the street was constructed in 1821 on the foundations of the town wall; it was known as the 'tainter' wall because it bounded the area earlier used as a tenteryard for drying woollen cloth. There are changing views over it across the roofscape of Hollybush Road to the distinctive spiral chimneys of Ebenezer Row stepping up the hillside, the extensive tree cover on Castle Hill, Panpudding Hill and Oldbury Wells. The wall resumes immediately adjacent to No. 43, continuing round as a retaining wall into Hollybush Road with an adjacent flight of 19th century steps marred by a crude tubular handrail.
- 13.27 In contrast the north side has an almost continuous frontage of buildings, mostly small one-storey and attic or 2-storey cottages and houses largely spoilt by unsympathetic alterations. They are dwarfed by the former school building of 1855 and 1900, Gothic in blue brick and stone with big gables and a bellcote, and Gothic iron railings. The end of the street slopes steeply, with Nos. 45-43 stepping down. The high brick boundary and retaining wall to No. 43's garden continues the enclosure of the street. Concrete street lights and a telegraph pole are intrusive. There is an unexpected view across roofs to Albion Terrace and the rather less attractive garage sign in Salop Street.

14. Postern Gate, Bank Street, East Castle Street, West Castle Street and New Road

- 14.1 These streets occupy the area of the castle outer bailey. **Postern Gate** takes its name from the gateway between the castle and the town. Like the Northgate it forms a 'pinch point' at the end of High Street, both narrow and short. In 1997 wider pavements in traditional blue clay paviours were laid, reducing the carriageway to a single width which further restricts traffic flows. Except for Postern Gate House it is wholly commercial.
- 14.2 The large scale and polychrome brickwork of New Market Buildings dominate, with the tower forming an important focal point. The supermarket shopfronts installed in 1994 successfully echo the design of the building. Its southern façade is thrown into even greater prominence by the street angling sharply to the west and opening out with a paved area and vehicle entrance; Postern Gate House forms part of it but is much simpler and on an altogether more domestic scale. The west side is unattractively enclosed by brick telephone kiosks and the 20th century building behind. The Post Office building (dated 1901) runs parallel to New Market Buildings but because of the street's

change in direction it steps back in a series of stages starting with the porch. It is an attractive example of Edwardian 'Free Style', mixing sandstone, bright red brick, a 'timber-framed' gable and classical details.

- 14.3 On the east side the side elevation of 8 Waterloo Terrace steps down with an odd half-gable to the much lower irregular frontage of Moorgate House. The ground-floor has insensitive plate glass and brick shopfronts with excessively deep fascias. Beyond Bank Street No. 33 (TSB) is given prominence by its position on the corner of the wide entrance to East Castle Street. It is a much more formal building, an early Victorian stucco Italianate design of two high storeys and sophisticated detailing including giant pilasters supporting a deep entablature and parapet hiding the roof. The elevations to Postern Gate and East Castle Street are treated as a single façade wrapped round the curved corner entrance, now blocked with inappropriate mahogany panelling and a cash machine. Mounted on the wall is a particularly attractive 19th century cast iron sign with a finger pointing to the parish church. In the right-hand corner is a niche containing one of the distinctive Bridgnorth cast iron conduit heads, fluted with a domed top and lion's head.
- 14.4 **Bank Street** is a mix of small-scale commercial and residential properties. The street narrows with the break forward of No. 8, a tall, thin gabled building with a 3-storey bay window. Much of the street consists of simply-detailed two-storey, one-bay 19th century houses, but a 20th century single-storey flat-roofed range disrupts the pattern on the north side.
- 14.5 **East Castle Street** is architecturally the finest street of the town. It remains very largely residential, with a limited amount of commercial and office use almost entirely confined to the northern end. Although close to High Street it is surprisingly quiet and secluded, cut off from through traffic by the church which blocks one end and from the activity of the commercial centre by the sharp bend at the other end. The street starts modestly, with most of it hidden from the wide junction with Postern Gate and West Castle Street. The tall 2-storey Victorian façade of Nos. 1 and 2 breaks forward in a curve to narrow the street considerably, but part is curiously built into and under the gable of the Shakespeare. It has a good late 19th century shopfront, prominent decorative chimneys, and two 19th century cast iron street name/direction plates. No. 3, late 18th or early 19th century and a little simpler, continues the curve sharply round as the street turns almost 90 degrees to run southwards. Nos. 4 and 5 are still more modest, low one-storey and attic cottages which contrast strikingly with the formality and sophistication of most of the street.
- 14.6 On the northern side the Ball Hotel is a much larger but rather plain 18th century building, of 2 storeys and attic and 6 bays with a 19th century porch and ground-floor windows. The right corner of the ground floor is cut away to form part of an arch linking it to No. 29, giving a glimpse into a narrow vehicle access to the rear yard and over the wall beyond to the front of 5 Castle Terrace. Beyond this arch the street turns, with Nos. 25-29 set at an angle contrasting with the curve opposite. As a result an oblique glimpse of the rendered 18th century facades of Nos. 28 and 29 terminates the view from the junction and gives a hint of what lies beyond.
- 14.7 Rounding the bend Nos. 3 and 27 the street widens out and its full extent comes into sudden and dramatic view, powerfully terminated by the tower and entrance façade of St.

Mary Magdalene. It is wide and spacious, with broad pavements of a variety of clay paviours and kerbs, old and recent; the 'period' style street lights are inappropriate. A few street trees remain of the many visible in 19th century photographs. The eastern side and southern half of the western side are almost entirely composed of intact listed buildings, giving the street a predominantly Georgian and early Victorian character and appearance. On the eastern side the frontages follow a continuous regular building line as far as No. 19. Houses are of brick, some painted or rendered, varying considerably in height and width, chiefly of 2 storeys and attic or 3 storeys and ranging from 2 or 3 bays to the 6 bays of the Grade II* listed No. 20, and all of vertical proportions. Only No. 20 retains its original railings, but a number of coal chute gratings, grilles etc. survive.

- 14.8 Beyond No. 19 the pattern is broken. The Grade II* listed Governor's House of c.1630 is the only earlier building: its coped gables, 3-storey porch with Tudor arch and mullioned and transomed windows contrast strikingly with the moulded cornices, elegant doorcases and sash windows which predominate, and it has a walled front garden – as does No. 17. The front of No. 18A is more irregular and rather less attractive, of mid 20th century brick and metal casements. The hipped roof garage of No. 17 breaks forward, disrupting the general line. No. 17 was originally a large detached 18th century house set back from the rest of the street in a large garden; the Victorian wing extending out to the pavement (now 17A), following its general design but on a slightly larger scale, impinges a little on views of the church. The high garden wall beyond and that to the Rectory opposite maintain the enclosure of the street but provide a slightly less confined immediate setting to the church.
- 14.9 The Grade II* listed church of St. Mary Magdalene is one of the most important and prominent buildings in Bridgnorth; the tower is a major element of many views of the town. It was designed in 1792 by Thomas Telford to replace the mediaeval church on a different site which originated as the castle chapel. It is a very fine, highly sophisticated Neoclassical building on a grand scale: the entrance, giant portico and tower build up to form a particularly powerful composition which dominates the street. The smooth ashlar stonework is a striking contrast to the predominant brick. It is deliberately sited as the focal point of the street, closing the vista southwards. Beside it paths to left and right opening up views of the hitherto-invisible churchyard suddenly become apparent. From the eastern churchyard there are excellent distant views out over Low Town, the Severn and the countryside beyond. Recent paving of the forecourt and installation of bollards preventing parking has given the building a more dignified setting but slightly diminished the impact of the design by raising levels and obscuring the plinth.
- 14.10 The pattern is less consistent and more fragmented on the west side. The high Rectory garden wall of 18th century brickwork echoes that No. 17A but extends much further, almost up to the corner of the church; the mature trees visible over it are an attractive feature. The Grade II* listed Rectory is one of the largest and most architecturally ambitious houses in the street, with giant corner pilasters, Venetian windows and a good Tuscan doorcase. No. 15 is more austere, incorporating a coach house and having a projecting pedimented centre but a curiously insignificant entrance, but with an attractive stone-paved forecourt. The adjacent mid 20th century double garage with concrete lintel and up-and-over door is an unsympathetic intrusion. Beyond it the large garden of No. 14, with a low wall and line of cypresses to the street is the only substantial break in the built-up frontages on either side of the street.

- 14.11 No. 14, a large mid 19th century building, is the only detached house on this side. Like the much smaller Nos. 12 and 13 it is built of buff brick laid in Flemish bond with contrasting blue headers, producing a very striking and unusual chequer effect. Nos. 11-13 are modest 19th century 2-storey, 2-bay houses, rather dwarfed by Nos. 10 and 14 and set back between them; No. 13 has a small front garden with a low boundary wall. Both No. 11 and No. 14 have a late 19th century bay window to the first floor. No. 10 returns to the building line of No. 14 and re-establishes the pattern of large 3-storey houses. The attached 20th century flat-roofed garages are an unsympathetic intrusion which disrupts the street frontage. Nos. 6-9, a block of houses built in 1996, have very successfully re-established the frontage and grain of the street destroyed by the commercial garage previously on the site. The view northwards is closed by the frontage of the Ball Hotel as the street narrows and bends to the left, with the towers of St. Leonard's church and New Market Buildings rising above the roofs.
- 14.12 **West Castle Street** is much more irregular and informal, with a varied mix of commercial, public and residential use throughout its length. Like East Castle Street, its development in the 18th and 19th centuries is reflected in its buildings, but the houses and cottages are generally much smaller and simpler. It originally ended at the entrance to the Castle Grounds but the construction of New Road in 1786 made it a through route between High and Low Town. New Road drops steeply out of sight and the view is closed by the fine oak tree at the end of the street, and the trees of the Castle Grounds and on the west side. With the notable exception of the Baptist Church, buildings are generally on a modest scale, varying in height, width and depth but chiefly of two storeys and one or two bays, individual, or in pairs or short terraces, following largely unbroken building lines on both side of the street. They vary in period and style, but unlike East Cast Street where vertical proportions, sash windows, panelled doors and classically-inspired detailing predominates, West Castle Street has a greater mix of less ambitious Georgian and Victorian formality and cottage vernacular which provides its own distinct character.
- 14.13 On the west side No. 2 is set back from the Post Office building and at a different angle, reflecting the change in direction of the street. Its small domestic scale and very simple character is dwarfed by the stonework and massive bright red brick gable of the Post Office looming above. Inside the coach arch the original paving survives. The 18th century White Lion is altogether larger, of 2 storeys and attic and 3 bays, with rather more architectural detail. There is a narrow break between this and Nos. 4 and 5, a 19th century building with pleasant Edwardian shopfronts. The frontage and the enclosure of the street are suddenly interrupted by the large conifer and the wide and deep paved forecourt to the Baptist Church of c.1840, enclosed by brick boundary walls and contemporary cast iron gates with panelled gatepiers. The unexpectedly spacious setting heightens the impact of the stucco Greek Revival façade, by far the most architecturally ambitious frontage in the street – although behind its paired pilasters and high parapet is a plain brick structure with arched windows. Its impact is regrettably marred by the insensitive siting of a street light close to the gate.
- 14.14 No. 7, one of few detached buildings, re-establishes the building line; it has the distinctive deep eaves and shallow hipped roof typical of many early 19th century buildings; the 20th century bow windows are much more sympathetic than the 1960s plate glass shopfronts with excessively deep fascias and plastic lettering which completely overwhelm the simple cottage detailing on No. 8 and 9. Nos. 12 and 12A comprises one of the longest frontages in the street, with formal early 19th century 3-bay range and a lower and much

more irregular wing to one side. No. 20 has what appear to be a pair of 19th century shopfronts, but curiously the doorways were evidently bricked up many years ago – the doorsteps remain. An unattractive alley separates it from the Eurasia restaurant. Looking northwards the slight curve of the street makes buildings on the east side more prominent, and a picturesque roofscape builds up to the towers of St. Leonard's and New Market Buildings.

- 14.15 The east side has fewer shopfronts, more pairs and terraces of houses and an almost continuous built-up frontage. The Shakespeare's low, irregular entrance front set back on the corner with East Castle Street terminates views down Postern Gate. The cut-away corner has another of the cast iron street plates. The frontage to West Castle Street, one of the longest, is of various periods and is taller and more regular, terminated by the plum-coloured brick gable of the former stable range. Nos. 48-55 are a terrace of small houses built in 1996 as part of the same development as Nos. 5-9 East Castle Street. These have equally successfully re-established the frontage and grain of West Castle Street; the small scale, careful massing and appropriately simple details make a positive contribution to the character of the street.
- 14.16 The early 19th century Nos. 46 and 47, tall and narrow with a good pair of 19th century shopfronts with rectangular bays and panelled pilasters, are the start of a change in character to more obviously vertical proportions and greater formality. A long run of two-storey houses includes Nos. 43-45, a simple late 19th century terrace made more striking by chequered brickwork similar to that of houses in East Castle Street. Nos. 38 and 39 although of different builds are both one-bay houses with sash windows, doorcases and other details similar to Nos. 40 and 41, but they are of three taller storeys so that they stand head-and-shoulders above their neighbours. No. 39 is made even more prominent by the Edwardian first-floor bay window hanging over the pavement. Beyond No. 38 there is a change of character to still simpler, lower houses and cottages with yet more limited architectural detailing, with sash windows giving way to casements, and plainer doorcases or none at all, as in Nos. 29-32.
- 14.17 Some buildings have suffered badly from unsympathetic alterations. The Castle Hall is probably the most drastic example: this was originally the Catholic Apostolic Church built in 1850 in the Gothic style, but in 1970 the original window was blocked and the façade was replaced with a flat-roofed block of machine-made brick which is completely out of sympathy with the whole street. No. 24 has lost its central door, bricked up and replaced with a 20th century window, while No. 26 has entirely late 20th century windows, door and doorcase. The Eurasia appears to be an old building largely swamped by 20th century flat-roofed additions, and the plastic canopies to windows are particularly inappropriate. The replacement of No. 16's ground-floor sash window and leaded attic casement in UPVC has damaged a particularly attractive pair of cottages, which most unusually for Bridgnorth have a mansard roof. Nos. 4 and 5 and 19 have been similarly damaged by the replacement of the original first-floor sash windows with plastic top-opening lights, and No. 19 also has a modern panelled door in a crudely altered opening.
- 14.18 At the southern end the street divides, with the road bending westwards to continue as New Road. West Castle Street climbs slightly to the Castle Grounds, rising above New Road on a retaining wall of plum-coloured brick with a stone coping and excellent Victorian railings ending in fine decorative lamp-posts which sadly have lost their fittings. The railings enclose a triangular area with its own distinctive character, dominated by the

large oak tree and having an attractive air of seclusion from the rest of the street, but this is marred by the intrusive car parking which usually obscures the railings and stone kerbs. It is enclosed on the south side by the walls and gates of Castle Grounds, with the castle keep very visible beyond; the concrete lamp-post is intrusive. The building frontage continues unbroken on the east side. No. 27's plate glass shopfront and iron gate is rather alien to the general cottage character. No. 25 reverts to the more formal type of 19th century house, 3 storeys with sash windows and painted moulded stone lintels. The continuous built-up frontage ends with No. 24, another formal two-storey 19th century building.

- 14.19 In the south-east corner a concealed narrow lane runs off past the canted corner of No. 24 towards St. Mary's, terminated by an impressive view of the tower. This lane leads to one of the most attractive and secluded parts of Bridgnorth. It is initially tightly enclosed between Tower House, a large detached Georgian property, and the boundary wall of No. 24, unfortunately interrupted by a very wide gateway. Immediately beyond Tower House views open out of St. Mary's across its churchyard; a very large ash tree in the corner is a particularly important feature. The churchyard, mostly lawn with a few tombstones, is separated from the path to East Castle Street by the stone coping which is all that survives from the original railings. Enclosed by high brick walls, the church and surrounding trees, it feels peaceful and quite isolated from the town. Along the western edge the lane turns to run southwards beneath the high brick boundary wall of Tower House, with the view terminated by the castle keep leaning at a precarious angle.
- 14.20 **New Road** drops steeply downwards skirting Castle Hill. This unfortunately makes the 1960s Telephone Exchange and its retaining wall even more prominent and intrusive: the building is completely insensitive to its surroundings in size, massing, materials and details. The old retaining walls, of brick and of stone with a pronounced incline and with the railing of Castle Hill Walk on top, loom massively over the inside edge of the road, emphasising the rapid descent. They give it a strong historic character, but this is regrettably weakened by poor quality boundary treatment on the outer edge. The opening to the narrow path to Ebenezer Steps forms a small and potentially attractive open area around a good oak tree, but it is marred by cars parked on the pavement and high, decrepit corrugated iron fencing. This gives way to hoop-topped railings and these in turn to unattractive concrete post and steel tube railings. Folly Hole, an ancient path, drops steeply down the bank. Changing views open up over the tree-clad slope below and across the valley to Oldbury Wells, the belt of mature trees below the Severn Valley Railway Station, the varied railway buildings, the fields behind, and Panpudding Hill. The footbridge, opened in 1994, provides an unusual frame to a view of the Station entrance.
- 14.21 Approaching the very sharp bend below the southern tip of Castle Hill there is something of a change in character. 19th century brick piers mark the entrance to the lower flight of Cannon Steps and the start of an old brick wall instead of railings, making the road feel more enclosed. The rockface is exposed above the retaining wall, with increasingly dense tree and scrub cover. Cannon Steps climb steeply up, bounded by elaborate iron railings, above a modern brick section of retaining wall. At the bend there is a view across meadows to the river. Rounding it suddenly opens up a view down onto Underhill Street. The rockface is exposed on the site of a row of cottages, with several blocked entrances to the excavated caves characteristic of Bridgnorth. Beyond the tree and shrub cover of the hill comes down almost to road level. The junction with Hollybush Road is marred by a short run of unattractive modern railings.

15. Castle Terrace, Castle Hill Walk and the Castle Grounds

- 15.1 Castle Terrace and Castle Hill Walk approximately follow the line of the castle walls. **Castle Terrace** is a narrow passage with modern flagstone paving. Commercial and residential use is intermingled, particularly at the Cartway end. Buildings are very varied in period, size, materials, and detail, ranging from the irregular 17th century timber-framing, painted stone and brick, prominent roof and casements of Nos. 7A and 8 to the unusually ambitious (for such a small house) stucco classical detailing, sash windows and parapet of Beaumaris. No. 8 has a particularly attractive set of 19th century iron direction plates "TO THE CASTLE WALK AND VIEW OF SEVERN VALLEY".
- 15.2 The west side has a continuous regular building line down to Bank Street, continued by the brick boundary wall to the Ball Hotel, but the east side is more fragmented. By far the most dominant building is the tall, narrow 3-storey gable end of Waterloo House with an unusual Victorian two-storey, full-width shopfront almost wholly of glass, and with an attractive wrought iron sign on the gable above. Beyond its arched porch an unexpected glimpse over a good 19th century iron gate to Low Town and trees in the distance contrasts with the very tight enclosure of the street. It narrows still further with the encroachment of the Edwardian shop built across the front of No. 2, which like that to Waterloo House has a brass sill.
- 15.3 The frontage is interrupted briefly by the narrow entrance to Stoneway Steps running down between walls at an angle to the right. As a result No. 3 is a curious wedge-shaped early 19th century building with a tiny railed triangular quarry-tiled forecourt at the top of the Steps, and an unusual semi-circular gable parapet across the corner. No. 5, the only detached house, is a substantial 3-bay early 19th century house of chequer brickwork with a good Doric porch but has particularly unsympathetic aluminium windows, and the flat-roofed garage between it and Beaumaris looks almost as incongruous. Several buildings are marred by intrusive pipework and meter boxes, and looking back towards Cartway the web of overhead cables and intrusive street light at the top of the steps are an unattractive termination to the view. At the junction with Bank Street 3 different types of paving – flagstones, imitation setts and badly-laid natural setts – meet rather unsatisfactorily.
- 15.4 The deliberately irregular and 'picturesque' Cliff Railway Station of 1892, masking an 18th century cottage, marks the start of **Castle Hill Walk**. The Cliff Railway itself is a distinctive part of Bridgnorth's unique hill town character: linking High and Low Town, it is the only working inland cliff railway in England. Immediately adjacent to the Station is the best place to see the cars and the steep incline of the track cut into the rock. The broad walkway, running right round the edge of Castle Hill approximately on the line of the castle walls, is one of Bridgnorth's finest features. It has been a popular promenade for centuries, providing spectacular and every-changing views down onto the extensive tree cover on the Hill itself, Stoneway Steps set amongst trees, the backs of houses on Cartway stepping down the hill, over the varied roofscape of Low Town, up and down the river and across to the dense woodland of the ridge around High Rock. The restored cast iron balustrade first installed in the 19th century is an important part of its distinctive historic appearance, which the seats to 19th century pattern complement, but the 'period' details of the lamps are unfortunately weak and unconvincing.

- 15.5 The inner edge is the high stone rubble and brick retaining/boundary walls to the gardens of East Castle Street, interspersed with doorways and garden buildings, mature trees in the gardens and glimpses of the houses adding interest. From the bend about halfway along there is a good view northwards to St. Leonard's tower and the trees around and below it. At St. Mary's churchyard it opens out a little towards the imposing mass of the church, but immediately beyond the enclosure is re-established by the tall frontage with dominant gable, sash windows and railings of No. 3 and Castle Hill House. As the only houses on Castle Hill Walk they are an important element of the town's skyline. The high garden wall and the particularly fine cedar tree in the garden also make a significant contribution to this part of the conservation area. Up to this point the Walk has a hard inner edge of walling, but this is then softened by the hedge and trees surrounding the Castle Grounds which the remainder of the Walk skirts. At the southern tip of Castle Hill there are superb panoramic views from Hollybush Road round to the Hermitage. Continuing northwards above New Road views are a little more restricted but still extensive, over Hollybush Road and across the Severn Valley Station to the fields rising up behind.
- 15.6 the Walk ends at the entrance to the **Castle Grounds**, the public garden which was once the inner bailey of the castle. One of its focal points is the surviving chunk of the castle keep. It has been used for recreation since the destruction of the castle, but the present appearance and character is largely Victorian with bandstand, serpentine paths, tree planting etc. largely dating from 1897 when it was presented to the town by Major Foster of Apley Park and landscaped to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Other features include the Whitmore fountain and the War Memorial, a fine bronze statue particularly well sited at a viewpoint looking towards the railway.

16. Hollybush Road and Oldbury Wells

- 16.1 **Hollybush Road** is still, as in mediaeval times, a major route between High and Low Town. There is a mix of residential and commercial use, but development is fragmented and scattered. The steep slope and winding course make the south elevation of Squirrel Court and houses on Rose Lane prominent above the northern-most section, which has no buildings, only walls. The high retaining wall to 43 Listley Street, with a mixture of brick and possibly mediaeval stonework, and above it the gable end, rear elevations and gardens on 41-43 Listley Street are all very prominent. A large section is open and undeveloped, with trees, scrub, vegetation and exposed bedrock sloping up to Listley Street high above; this emphasises the hill town character. The 19th century brick wall on the west side masks the edge of a sharp drop – the first-floor rear elevation of 4 Oldbury Wells rising above it is an odd effect – and provides views across Oldbury Wells. Buildings resume with No. 25, a tall 3-storey 19th century house set high up the slope below Listley Street, but it is only with Nos. 21-26, a recently sympathetically extended 19th century terrace of small houses, that the more obviously urban pattern around the Railway Street junction begins. The high, unattractive retaining wall of the library car park looms above them.
- 16.2 The haphazard development of **Oldbury Wells** in the 19th century on the rural fringe of Bridgnorth is reflected in the scattering of older houses amongst the late 20th century housing which has since obliterated much of that rural character. There is no single pattern of development or building. The road follows the bottom of a winding narrow valley between ridges, and the older houses are quite randomly located, some on the

road, some high above, but particularly concentrated in the section closest to Hollybush Road. The road almost doubles back along and below Hollybush Road, with its retaining wall visible adjacent to No. 5, a 19th century house recently enlarged and remodelled. To the north of the road an area of recent housing is set back, but No. 7, an unaltered small late Victorian house, is almost directly onto the road. Most houses are detached, but Celtic House, 1 and 2 Oldbury Terrace, Homeleigh and Bendor comprise an irregular block of early Victorian houses set high up the ridge. The blue brick of Oldbury Terrace particularly stands out, and all the houses except the altered Bendor retain all their original features. However, intrusive garages and fencing mar their setting.

- 16.3 A narrow lane runs steeply up beside Bendor. This retains vestiges of its rural origins, but much of the rural character has been lost due to large 1970s/80s houses, garages and boundary walls of standard designs unrelated to their context. The original character remains largely unspoilt only at the top, where Rosemount and Kirk House are similar unaltered mid 19th century houses in large gardens with some good trees. Kirk House has a doorcase salvaged from Cann Hall, and retains its hedge and iron gate. Looking westwards from the foot of the lane a retaining wall of old stone and modern brick bounds gardens along the north side of the road. The gable end of No. 8, trees beyond No.9 and the front of No. 7A (Melbourne) form an interesting and varied group on different levels. Melbourne has an elaborate full-width, 2-storey cast iron verandah characteristic of Melbourne in Australia but unique in the district. At the bend the road is tightly constrained between Oldbury Vale on the south and Nos. 8 and 9 set on top of retaining walls high above the road. No. 8, a low, modest 2-storey 3-bay house, contrasts strongly with the tall 3-storey, 4-bay formal front of the early 19th century No. 9.
- 16.4 Beyond the bend which completely hides the rest of the road from view the character changes. A high vegetation covered bank looms above the road, and historic built development is left behind. West of Oldbury Vale there is an unsightly timber garage and a rough parking area which gives way to scrub. At the junction of Wells Close, a modern house and retaining walls have largely destroyed the semi-rural character, but southwards extensive tree cover on both sides re-establishes it. To the east a steep tree-clad bank rises to Rosemount and Kirk House. On the west side trees rise above the stone retaining wall of The Cottage, a large 19th century house of some distinction in extensive grounds, but the close-boarded fencing and excavation to create Deighton Close have damaged its setting and the character of this part of the conservation area.
- 16.5 **The Yards**, a narrow path reached by steps which drops down to a brook, is a particularly secluded and quiet area with extensive tree cover which retains some feeling of rural origin. However, unsympathetic developments including concrete block boundary and retaining walls, poor quality fences, and dull pre-war houses of standard designs detract from its character. It continues as the equally secluded **Rose Lane**, tightly enclosed between brick and stone walls interrupted by concrete post and tube railings running between a few small Victorian houses, finally emerging onto Hollybush Road.

17. **Railway Street, Severn Valley Railway and Panpudding Hill**

- 17.1 **Railway Street** was renamed after the opening of the railway in 1862; it was previously known as New Town, a reference to its origins as a mediaeval suburb outside the town walls at Listley Gate at the top of the street. It is narrow and very steep, dropping down along the western edge of Castle Hill. Although the road surface is tarmac, old clay

gutters survive. Parts of the town walls can still be glimpsed behind the houses, high up the slope. The original precipitous junction with Listley Street which was an important element of its historic character has been adversely affected by substituting an intrusive brick retaining wall and railings which now terminate the view up the street. The car parking area with high retaining walls and fencing unattractively disrupts the general pattern of the street.

- 17.2 The street is made up of small brick houses, generally 2-storey and one or two bays, mostly in pairs and small terraces, simply detailed but well-proportioned. The majority are 19th century, although the Woodman is probably of earlier origin. Most are set on a fairly constant building line direct onto the street, but Nos. 43-49 are set high above the street and at right angles to it, with gardens on top of a high stone retaining wall forming a particularly attractive feature of the street scene. The early 19th century No. 41, almost detached and set back behind a walled forecourt, and the long frontage of the Woodman set back behind a high wall are also exceptions to this pattern. The grouping of small buildings stepping down the curving street with steep slopes and trees rising immediately behind produces a picturesque effect. However, the street's character has been damaged by unsympathetic replacement of original windows and doors, and in a few cases, such as No. 31, alteration of the openings and rendering of the front have virtually destroyed any semblance of original appearance. On the other hand, the recent construction of a sympathetically designed new house on a vacant site between Nos. 7 and 12 has successfully reinstated part of the frontage and sense of enclosure.
- 17.3 At the bottom of the street the east side is a little more varied, with Nos. 18 and 19 set back behind shallow front gardens. It opens out at the junction, with 20th century brick walls and gates and numerous trees and shrubs in the garden climbing up to the tall 3-storey front and retaining wall of Vine Cottages set behind and high above the Woodman, close to the railway tunnel portal. The gable ends of the Woodman and the Baptist church high up on West Castle Street are particularly prominent looking up the street. On the west side the continuous built-up frontage is maintained, sweeping round into Hollybush Road with the curve of the fine original shopfront of No. 20. This forms an integral part of Ebenezer Place, dated 1840, a terrace of attractively detailed houses which starts on level ground but then climbs steeply up Ebenezer Steps above the road, with each house stepping up from its neighbour. It is a particularly successful piece of historic urban design, made even more striking by the distinctive twisted chimneys set against the backdrop of the steep hillside covered in trees. The old brick retaining wall of the steps is also a very important feature of the street scene.
- 17.4 **Severn Valley Railway** The Railway line between Shrewsbury and Kidderminster, running in a tunnel beneath High Town, was built by the Great Western Railway Company and opened on 1st February 1862. It closed in 1963, but in 1970 reopened as the Severn Valley Railway; its steam trains to Kidderminster are one of the area's greatest visitor attractions. The survival and careful restoration of the Station and many other associated structures and features make it a remarkably complete working complex with a very strong historic character. It is built on a platform partly cut out of the hillside behind and partly built up as high embankment. Opposite Railway Street is a large triangular car park at the Station approach, backed by the high stone retaining wall and section of line on a brick and iron viaduct with SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY in large letters below. The Station drive curves round and up from the car park on Hollybush Road beneath an impressive rock-faced stone retaining wall, but the grandeur of this is

somewhat marred by the unsightly concrete sectional building on top. On the east side a belt of mature trees extends the length of the embankment, largely screening the Station from view from Hollybush Road below.

- 17.5 The listed Station of c.1862 is a Jacobean-style stone building, and there is a large stone engine shed; other historic structures include the iron footbridge over the line dated 1887, the small and simple brick and slate waiting room on the other side, the signal box and traditional cast iron gates and railings. The views back across the valley to Castle Hill are particularly attractive. In front of the Station entrance is the footbridge across to New Road. The original bridge constructed in 1895 to provide more convenient pedestrian access to the town was removed in 1976, but it was replaced with a new bridge in 1994. This is not a copy of the original but a simple, elegant piece of contemporary engineering which makes its own particular contribution to Bridgnorth's special character and appearance, unlike the unsightly portacabin refreshment rooms, timber panel fences, caravan and large areas of tarmac which detract from the site's historic appearance.
- 17.6 West of the lines is a large 19th century brick-retaining wall, with steps and railings up to Hanbury's Cottage, a small mid 19th century brick and slate building with simple 'Tudor' details. The road blackened by coal running through the embankment beneath a bridge partly of iron and stone, partly stone and brick-vaulted, is particularly atmospheric. There is another iron and stone bridge over Oldbury Road, and just to the south of it is a set of mechanical signals.
- 17.7 The railway line cuts into the base of **Panpudding Hill**, exposing an area of sandstone. The Hill is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, comprising a motte and bailey earthwork fortification possibly constructed in 1102 as a stronghold for Henry I during his siege of Bridgnorth Castle. It provides a panoramic viewpoint over Castle Hill, Low Town, the railway and the Severn valley.

18. Hollybush Road (beyond Railway Street) and Underhill Street

- 18.1 The southern part of **Hollybush Road** is set hard against Castle Hill, below New Road, and has a strong feeling of being overshadowed by it. Buildings are chiefly confined to the northern end, with blocks and terraces of small 18th/19th century houses and cottages, many unsympathetically altered. Nos. 14-16 are set tight against the retaining wall of Ebenezer Steps; two yews in the narrow strip of garden below the wall are particularly prominent features. Most of the houses are set high above the road, with shallow front gardens and retaining walls. Particularly striking are Nos. 12 with two first-floor bay windows and 12A with Georgian and Victorian details, which together have a high 19th century wall with original gatepiers, steps and railings. The Hollyhead Inn, breaking forward, is on a much larger scale than its neighbours and much altered, and the forecourt makes a considerable break in the street frontage.
- 18.2 Beyond No. 3 buildings cease and the sense coverage of trees and scrub extends down to the road. Nos. 1 and 2, an intact pair of mid 19th century houses recently carefully restored, are curiously isolated, set at right angles to the road and very high above it on top of a blank-arched wall which is a particularly strong feature. South of them trees and grass run down to the pavement edge, with some of the sandstone bedrock exposed. The footbridge high above makes a striking contrast with the strong 19th century character of this side of the road.

- 18.3 Low 19th century brick retaining walls in strong curves dominate the junctions of Hollybush Road, New Road and **Underhill Street**, which is marred by a clutter of signs. Potentially attractive views southwards towards open pasture and the railway embankment are disrupted by intrusive railings, an electricity sub-station and depot immediately adjacent to the conservation area boundary. The historic character and appearance of Underhill Street have been adversely affected by 20th century demolitions and development. It was once dominated by the river trade which flourished from the middle ages to the early 19th century, with many warehouses and other buildings around the quay, but many of these have been lost, particularly along the river itself, and replaced with poorly designed development in non-traditional materials. It is a principal traffic route, heavily used. Although there is some housing, the street's character is largely commercial.
- 18.4 There is no particular pattern to development along much of the street, especially on the east side. At the south-eastern end Kings Loade is an early 1990s development beside the river which successfully reflects the scale and variety of traditional smaller housing in the town, using a range of materials, heights and groupings. Lasyard House to the north is less sympathetic: its size and dominant roof are on too big a scale for its context. Severn Reeds, set back behind it, is a 1970s house of a standard design which does not reflect the character of nearby traditional buildings and its sensitive location by the river. Nos. 37 to 39 are a small but varied group of substantial 19th century houses, with an intriguing glimpse of the river between them.
- 18.5 North of these both the street and the river frontages are affected by functional but particularly intrusive 20th century development with the brick, corrugated iron and asbestos sheet buildings, walls and gates of the garden centre and the large flat-roofed 2-storey block of shops which completely hide a good 19th century house, Nos. 45 and 46. Recent development of the former garage has removed some of the intrusive elements, but the shop units make little positive contribution. On the other hand the restoration of the Quayside in 1994 has made a major improvement to one of the most important historic areas of the town.
- 18.6 The south-west side is dominated by an unattractive concrete block retaining wall with unsympathetic concrete post and tube railings and street lights on Library Steps above. North of this the long linear public open space of Lavington Gardens, with a rather more sympathetic stone wall, slopes northwards down to road level. Largely on the site of demolished buildings, this opens out the base of the sandstone cliff to view. This is the best place in the town to see the numerous caves excavated out of the sandstone which are one of Bridgnorth's most distinctive historic features. One of the caves is Lavington's Hole, excavated by Colonel Lavington beneath the site of the castle during the siege in 1646. Many others formed part of buildings constructed against the cliff: the doorways, arches, outlines of roofs etc. remain, and there are others behind surviving buildings on the street. The exposed sandstone, vegetation and trees above are very prominent from the street, and there are striking views from unexpected angles of the varied buildings on St. Mary's steps above, Castle Hill Walk railings and the tower of St. Mary's high above silhouetted against the sky.
- 18.7 North of Lavington's Gardens, houses on the lower part of St. Mary's Steps are visible behind. The historic street frontage survives largely intact, extending unbroken to the

junction with Bridge Street and Cartway. Some of the buildings still reflect the importance of the river trade, such as Nos. 5 and 6 which are obviously former warehouses with upper floor loading doors, now used as shops. Equally notable are Nos. 7-10, a mid 19th century group of buildings obviously designed as a single quite grand Italianate composition. Nos. 7 and 10, again probably former warehouses, are on a large scale with giant arches and strong detail, while Nos. 8 and 9 are more domestic in appearance. Some buildings have suffered from alteration, notably the removal of the original hipped roof to No. 4 and the rendering and intrusive shopfront of No. 2. At the junction the elegant early 19th century façade of the Severn Arms makes a particularly attractive focal point at the end of the bridge.

19. Cartway, Friar Street and Riverside

- 19.1 Before the construction of New Road **Cartway** was, as its name suggests, the principal route for vehicles from the quays on the river to High Street. Many of the houses' occupants were involved in the river trade in various ways. It is now almost wholly residential: although in the past it was a poor area with a dubious reputation Cartway has become one of the most sought-after parts of the historic town. Some buildings retain 19th century shop windows, reflecting the wider mix of uses in the past. The street is narrow, winding and very steep. This combined with the fact that it is almost entirely composed of old buildings gives it a particularly strong historic character and picturesque appearance.
- 19.2 Built-up frontages are largely continuous on both sides, with buildings stepping down the slope. Houses and cottages vary in date, materials and details, ranging from the 16th to the 19th centuries, in timber framing, brick, or render. The majority are small in scale, mostly of one or two bays, individual, in pairs or small blocks and informal terraces, varying in height from one storey and attic to 3 storeys. Many are listed and retain a lot of their original details, but others have been harmed by inappropriate replacement windows and doors, modern render etc. Plots are generally very small due to the topography, and numerous properties are built directly against the rock with caves cut out of it. The sandstone outcrops alongside 71 Cartway, next to a blocked-up cave dwelling.
- 19.3 Cartway descends very rapidly from High Street between the retaining wall of Waterloo Terrace and the side elevation of 45 High Street. The upper part from this point to Friar Street has had the tarmac surface replaced with artificial setts and the footway widened and repaved in traditional blue clay pavements with some original pavements reused on the northern side, enhancing its appearance in sympathy with its historic character, but this has not yet been extended to the lower part down to Bridge Street. Frontages are more fragmented at the High Street end than elsewhere, with a few larger buildings, notably the very high, long elevation of No. 1 Castle Terrace. The adjacent access is a gap site with the remains of a demolished building. The break in frontage, decaying render, 20th century brickwork, car park and lap fencing beyond detract from the tightly enclosed historic character and attractiveness of the street. Cartway Church of 1855 is a considerable contrast to anything else in the street with its blue brick classical façade, high arched windows and railed forecourt.
- 19.4 On the north side No. 96 is a tall and wide 18th century building on a rather larger scale than its neighbours. Between No. 97 and 85 is the most damaged and least attractive section of the street. The frontage has been destroyed by demolition – traces of a

building can be seen alongside No. 97 – exposing a high brick retaining wall with No. 48 High Street visible above and caves in the base. Board fencing, concrete posts and street light are unsympathetic to the street scene. Beyond this a collection of brick, rendered and concrete block retaining walls, concrete drive and fencing around No. 86, a much altered cottage set high above the street, seriously harms Cartway's special character and appearance.

- 19.5 the strong sense of enclosure is weakened at the junction with Friar Street where the demolition of several houses adjacent to No. 68 has opened out dramatic views across Low Town to High Rock. It resumes almost immediately with the very sharp turn in the street as Cartway continues its rapid descent. This part of the street has no public footway, but some properties have narrow paved frontages of old clay pavements or cobbles which contribute to the historic character. On the east side there is more variation in the building line, as No. 67 steps back, and then a more major change with Nos. 65 and 66, a pair of 18th century houses set at right angles to the light at the corner are intrusive. Nos. 59-64 together form one of the longest elevations under a single roof, and as a result ranges from 2 storeys and attic to No. 59 to one storey and attic to No. 64. They face towards the street but at an angle so that it gradually narrows alongside a triangular forecourt partly paved in old cobbles. From No. 59 onwards buildings on the east side area all of two storeys and attic, notably the early 18th century 3-bay Black Boy. The west side remain much more varied, from the small one-storey and attic No. 24 to the high and wide 3-bay front of 3 storeys and basement of No. 29.
- 19.6 At another sharp change of direction the 17th century No. 34, tucked into an angle, is the only detached building in Cartway. This is a small one-storey and attic cottage, but beyond this there is something of an increase in size and importance with the formal, regular 19th century front of Nos. 35 and 36. Rounding the corner the tightly-enclosed street suddenly opens up with the wide gap between 48 Cartway and 41 Riverside creating a completely unexpected view of both sides of the river, with the clock tower and No. 1 Bridge Street particularly prominent on the far side. The wide triangular space created by the formation of the junction between Cartway and Riverside is dominated by the elaborate timber-framed façade of Bishop Percy's House, one of the most important historic buildings of the town. Regrettably its setting is marred by the poor condition of the cobbled forecourt and the insensitively site concrete streetlight. The retaining wall between the cobbles and garden at lower level is a relic of the original layout before Riverside was opened up. The dramatic difference in level and scale between Bishop Percy's House and 41 Riverside was once hidden by other buildings.
- 19.7 With No. 48 the enclosure is re-established. Both sides of the street are lined with a variety of 2-storey and attic or 3-storey houses, such as the late 18th century No.s 38-40, raised above cellars and with arched windows. Close to the junction with Bridge Street some properties remain in long-established commercial use, with old shopfronts such as those of Nos. 42, 47 and 48 and a particularly attractive early 19th century example to No. 42. To the rear of No. 47 is a long range which appears to be a former river warehouse, now converted to dwellings. On the west side there is a break in the frontage beyond No. 43 with an unsightly corrugated iron fence to the street enclosing the yard of No. 44 and opening up a view of the high sandstone cliff covered in vegetation. This is a mid 19th century works building with a formal 3-storey front and a long rear wing extending back to the cliff. Unused for a long period, repair and reuse could greatly enhance the street.

20. Friar Street and Friar's Loade

- 20.1 **Friar Street** takes its name from the mediaeval Friary located between it and the river. Although it is now almost entirely residential, a large part of the street was dominated by the massive 19th century carpet factory until its demolition in 1989. Most of its historic character is concentrated in the southern half of the narrow street, which comprises small 17th, 18th and 19th century houses and cottages, in blocks and terraces. Very few are listed, and many have been unsympathetically altered. Unspoilt examples, such as Nos. 16 with original timber mullioned and transomed windows and the intact late Victorian terrace Nos. 64-76, stand out. Around the junction with Cartway, houses have been demolished. Orchard Cottages on St. Leonard's Steps are prominent at the top of a high grass bank and on the east side open space and a viewpoint over Low Town to High Rock and the Hermitage has been created. However, opening the street out has destroyed the original continuity, sense of enclosure and historic urban character, and the parking bays with concrete kerbs, grass and concrete seats do nothing to enhance it.
- 20.2 Further north the road slopes downwards and properties on the east side are set up above the road on brick retaining walls to the street. Nos. 59-67 break with the general pattern, comprising a terrace of early 19th century 3-storey houses running at right angles to the street and stepping up rising ground away from it. Altered windows and painting of some properties has destroyed the intended formality and unity. The area approached via a flight of steps in a high retaining wall which maintains the enclosure of the street. In the far corner of it, adjacent to No. 58, a recess date 1871 houses one of the conduit taps which are a distinctive historic feature of the Bridgnorth street scene. Nos. 29-31 form an attractive L-shaped groups set back from and below the street above a retaining wall to Friars Loade, but marred by intrusive fencing and leylandii. Friars Loade makes a significant break in the built frontage, opening up a view across the river. The broad flight of steps was the only access at this point from the river to a road until the construction of Riverside. The 20th century brick wall and concrete kerb along it detract from the street's appearance, and the crude tube handrails and tarmac surfacing of the steps could be much improved. Granary Steps rise between No. 55 and the gable end of Granary Cottage, which forms a visual stop to the southern half of the street, but rather marred by the adjacent telegraph pole; the aluminium double garage door is incongruous.
- 20.3 The northern part of Friar Street was on the rural fringe of Bridgnorth until the later 19th century; it has a scattering of older, chiefly 19th century, houses which are rather larger than those elsewhere in the street. Its character has been dramatically altered by recent housing development on the site of the carpet factory and gas works. The carpet factory filled the site between the street and Riverside; its demolition has opened out the street. Part of its wall survives, incorporated into a well-designed boundary wall to the gardens of new houses on Riverside. Further north a group of new houses reflect the traditional scale and detail of the area but with more varied grouping and set back from the street rather than directly onto it.
- 20.4 The sandstone cliff opposite, partly under-built with unattractive 20th century brick retaining walls, looms high above the road and is a very dominant feature. It dwarfs The Friars immediately below; this long but narrow 5-bay house retaining all its 19th century details makes a major contribution to the historic character of this part of the street. Broken concrete paving around it contrasts badly with a surviving area of traditional paving. On the edge of the conservation area Nos. 48-49 and Coney Villa are imposing

houses in chequer brickwork, but their character has been eroded by the insertion of UPVC windows. Coney Villa is set above the road in spacious grounds with part of an original 19th century wall, but elsewhere has unsympathetically detailed retaining walls and railings. Behind them the bed of the former railway line and the brick portal of the tunnel are hidden amongst the extensive tree cover rising up to Cliff Road which is a dominant element of the northern part of the conservation area.

- 20.5 **Riverside** north of the bridge once comprised wharves and warehouses for the river trade and houses for those who worked in it: the much patched retaining walls to the river are relics of the wharves. Until the construction of the road in 1887 there was on a towpath along the river. Once a bustling commercial centre, it is now a quiet residential area. The river frontage lined with trees is now one of the great assets of the town, but is not enhanced by the concrete post and tube railings; extensive car parking along the river is also intrusive. The open triangular garden area adjacent to No. 42 forms quite an attractive feature, but the concrete block wall, railings and car park area to No. 46 Cartway, telegraph pole and unconvincing 'period' street light seriously mar the entrance to Riverside.
- 20.6 The surviving modest houses are mainly 18th and 19th century, of one bay and 2 or 3 storeys in small blocks, most of them considerably altered; Nos. 41 and 42, with the more unusual detail of blank arches, are the best preserved. Many buildings have been demolished, leaving large gaps in the built frontages on the west side of the road. Sympathetically designed new buildings on these sites could greatly improve the appearance and character of Riverside. The large gap site adjacent to Nos. 41 and 42 forms a car park with a high, badly patched retaining wall. On top is the 20th century Boys Club hall: its corrugated asbestos and felt flat roofs and intrusive ducting seriously harm the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area as does the fire escape to the rear of Bishop Percy's House. Beyond this is a deeper gap continuing the car park, but this is quite well screened by the wall to the surviving section of raised towpath which retains part of the iron rubbing strip for towropes. At the back of the car park the sandstone bedrock is exposed, and on top the backs of buildings on Cartway are very visible, some marred by insensitive additions and alterations.
- 20.7 The raised path continues beyond the small group of houses around the high ramped wall of Bank Steps, among them the tall, gabled No.5 which is obviously built right against the cliff. A long section of the cliff face between Bank Steps and Nos. 4-8 is exposed, with cave entrances, markings etc, clearly showing that buildings once stood against it. Vegetation spilling dramatically down it and almost obscuring part has an important softening effect. The great variety of alterations and different paved forecourts to Nos. 4-8 gives a rather chaotic appearance to what was originally a uniform terrace. No. 3 is a considerably larger 18th century house. 32 Friars Loade, part way up the steps, is a tiny one-up, one-down 17th century timber-framed cottage which makes a great contrast to its much larger neighbours on either side and behind. Beyond, the carpet factory has been replaced with terraces of tall new houses imaginatively designed with broken massing and varied detail which have created a completely new street frontage which fits well into its context. Among them part of the remains of the Friary are now exposed to view, providing a visible reminder of the site's long history. On the other side of the river is the 19th century former maltings, now the Rowing Club.

21. The Steps

- 21.1 The many flights of steps between different part of the town are a vital element of Bridgnorth's unique historic character. Many of them are of early origin, evolving as pedestrian routes from High and Low Town and winding down between the intricate pattern of property boundaries. Some are the only means of access to a variety of buildings constructed on the hillside. Each flight has its own distinctive qualities, and they provide very different views of the town to those from the streets; Granary Steps and Stoneway Steps are particularly secluded. Many of them are constructed of special blue clay pavements with a distinctive D-shaped nosing.
- 21.2 **Granary Steps** are almost entirely hidden from view, screened by a ramp and retaining wall of St. Leonard's Close and by houses and fencing from Friar Street. They run down in a series of straight flights tightly enclosed between old and more recent boundary walls and fences and overhanging trees to the large gardens of Nos. 7, 8 and 9 St. Leonard's close; that to No. 8 is marred by inappropriate concrete balustrading on top. Lower down, overgrown vacant plots add to the general air of neglect: repairs to the steps have begun, but much of the other cobbled paving, handrails, streetlights etc., remain in poor condition. Nos. 1 and 2 are 128th century cottages fronting onto the Steps, but No. 3 has been demolished, leaving the outline of its gable, and a vacant plot with abandoned foundations at a lower level. There are views of 59-68 Friar Street stepping down the hillside, varied roofscape and the river. From the bottom the steps present a powerful picture, climbing up towards the Close with the gables of Nos. 5-7 and St. Leonard's tower silhouetted against the sky.
- 21.3 Concrete posts and tube handrails mar the entrance from St. Leonard's Close to **St. Leonard's Steps**. They descend between the garden walls and trees of No. 5 and College House, but are less tightly enclosed than Granary Steps: the walls are lower, and there are much more extensive views out across the roofscape of Friar Street and across the valley to High Rock and the Hermitage. The historic character largely survives but is threatened by neglect: a section of boundary wall has been lost and replaced with barbed wire, and other areas of brickwork are decaying or overgrown. Large areas of undeveloped or abandoned land overgrown with scrub and vegetation are visible, particularly looking westwards up the slope to the extensive undeveloped areas behind High Street. From the lower levels looking upwards St. Leonard's tower is framed in the narrow gap between College House and Nos. 5-7, but the large areas of 20th century retaining wall behind the path suddenly opens out at the top of the bank down to Friar Street. Orchard Cottages, a long, much altered 19th century terrace, are prominently set higher up the slope above a rebuilt retaining wall. The last flight of steps runs to an arch beneath 69 Cartway.
- 21.4 **Stoneway Steps** have a particularly strong 19th century character, partly due to their unusual construction of shallow-pitched iron-framed treads and risers made in Hazeldine's Foundry, infilled with blue clay pavements, and the decorative iron braces installed in 1852 known as Pope's Spectacles after their maker John Pope. From Castle Terrace they dive down between two buildings and beneath another, giving the effect almost of entering a tunnel. They wind down tightly hemmed in between high walls and the exposed bedrock, but the path widens slightly beside the Theatre on the Steps. Formerly the Congregational Chapel built in 1829, this is an important building which is prominent, but from the Steps only the side elevation is fully visible. It has a good doorcase with incised decoration and cast iron entrance railings and gatepiers; the poorly

constructed fire escape to the end is intrusive. The exposed rock opposite and above is almost covered in dense vegetation. The lower flights twist and turn sharply to run across the front of Stoneway House with a stone balustrade over the Cliff Railway Station, to emerge outside the Jacobean-style station entrance; the whole complex has a very strong Victorian character, and the narrow passage between buildings to Underhill Street is very urban in feeling.

21.5 Several flights run from Castle Hill Walk. They are more open in character than those further north. **St. Mary's Steps** are fairly gentle, with short flights of wide steps alternating with shallow gradient paths. Much of the historic character of the old steps and retaining walls survives, though some sections, including the top one, have been rebuilt in new materials, and near the bottom there is a particularly intrusive section of reconstituted stone wall. Numerous 18th and 19th century houses are built on both sides. Some of them, notably Hillside House and No. 24 close to the top, are substantial detached buildings with good quality architectural details and walled gardens, but most are more modest 2-storey properties in groups and blocks, some built against the hillside; outlines of demolished houses are visible against the cliff. There is also a former chapel, now a house, with a conduit tap against its wall. There are interesting views out across the roofscape of the town, and the strong form of St. Mary's church dominates the upper part. The lower part, at the base of the cliff and close to the narrow passage to Underhill Street, is the most enclosed and urban in feeling.

21.6 **Library Steps** have suffered much more from unsympathetic alteration and reconstruction. The Old Library, built c.1836 is truncated, having lost its upper storey. Some of the steps have been rebuilt in modern engineering brick, and there are unsympathetic iron and concrete post and tube railings. Much of the remaining character is due to the trees and vegetation across the hillside around the steps.

22. Low Town

22.1 The Bridge and Bridge Street

22.2 The bridge which gives Bridgnorth its name is of vital importance to the town both functionally and visually, linking High and Low Town. It is of mediaeval origin but was largely rebuilt in 1795; it was widened in 1823 and again 1960 by inserting concrete decking between the cutwaters and replacing the 19th century iron latticework with plain railings. The south side is open with a view down onto Quayside but the north-west side is enclosed by buildings. Immediately adjacent to the bridge No. 14 is still recognisable as an early 19th century riverside warehouse; its gable end is very prominent from the bridge and made more so by the traditional painted advertisement for Riddleys who once occupied it.

22.3 The centre of the bridge provides an excellent viewpoint for seeing the town as a whole. To the west the jumble of old buildings and roofs set at every possible angle climbing the hillside along Cartway and the Steps up to High Town, the dense tree coverage on the undeveloped areas, the contrasting towers of St. Leonard's and St. Mary's on the skyline and the Cliff Railway cars ascending and descending is unforgettably picturesque. The river frontages of Underhill Street and Riverside stretch away to north and south beneath the hillside; the backs of properties at the bottom of Cartway are particularly visible.

Northwards the river bends away out of sight, while southwards the view stretches past the dense tree coverage of the Bylet to meadows, trees and open countryside.

- 22.4 On the east side the clock tower, rebuilt in 1960, and the tall side elevation of No. 1 are important focal points at the end of the bridge, with the buildings of Low Town beyond. The concrete brick and flat-roofed rear extension of No. 1 is intrusive. The river frontage is quite different to the west side, with very few buildings: Low Town effectively turns it back on the river. The south-east side is dominated by the Bylet, but there are glimpses of the varied roofscape behind Bridge Street. The north-east side is largely open behind the long rear plots of buildings on Mill Street. The views very clearly show that any alteration or development can have an impact far beyond its immediate surroundings.
- 22.5 At the eastern end of the bridge iron-framed steps descend to Severnside. Bridge Street is a major traffic route of the town, and primarily commercial and strongly urban in feeling, with some residential use of upper floors. The built-up frontage, entirely composed of listed buildings, starts immediately on the south side with No. 1. It is largely continuous, but the vehicle access to the Black Horse public house (with an unattractive mesh gate) opens up a view of the long irregular side elevation and yard, and the alley beside No. 3 is another narrow break in the frontage. Most of the properties are on long narrow plots of mediaeval origin, now somewhat fragmented and irregular. Tall 2 and 3-storey 18th and 19th century buildings of 2 or 3 bays and formal design predominate. The much lower, irregular No. 3, 17th century timber-framed with a later brick front, and even smaller 16th century cruck-framed and gabled No. 6 (British Legion) are all the more striking as a contrast. There are a number of good historic shopfronts, such as the early 19th century bow windows to No. 1 and the pilastered frontage of No. 8 built out against the projecting side of the Falcon Hotel; the box window to No. 7 is a rare survivor of a much simpler type. The 1970s brick and aluminium frontage of No. 4 is in contrast particularly unsympathetic. The Black Horse public house has a particularly good and unusual early 20th century iron hanging sign. A traditional red telephone box (a listed building) is an important feature of the street scene.
- 22.6 The north side of the street is very different in character, with a much more irregular frontage of undistinguished one and 2-storey 19th and 20th century buildings and walls. The clock tower adds a quirky touch. The open courtyard of the Rugby Club is potentially attractive and retains some good historic paving of large clay blocks, but large areas of concrete detract greatly from it. The 19th century buildings have been unsympathetically altered and extended. Beyond No. 9 the street frontage is continued only by a wall and high gates linked to No. 58 Mill Street. The view eastwards is partly terminated by the front of No. 1 Mill Street, with St. John's Street glimpsed beyond.
- 22.7 As the name suggests, **Mill Street** led to the town mills. The long burgage plots laid out in mediaeval times still substantially survive in property boundaries on the west side, but have been very largely destroyed by later development on the east side. The broad area at the southern end was probably the site of a second market. Like many of Bridgnorth's principal streets it remains in mixed commercial and residential use; commercial activity is still largely concentrated at the southern end, although with residential use of upper floors. Until the construction of the Cann Hall Road bypass in 1960, Mill Street was the only route for through traffic. It remains an important route for town centre traffic; the introduction of a northward one-way system has reduced its impact, but it is nevertheless heavily used.

- 22.8 The southern part is dominated by formal 18th and 19th century 3-storey facades, ranging from one to 6 bays, of vertical proportions with sash windows. As in High Street and elsewhere some conceal building of 17th century or even earlier origin. Among the finest are the grade II* listed No. 48 of c.1675 with quoins, string courses, some original leaded windows, modillion cornice and a prominent hipped roof, and the early 18th century 6-bay front of Nos. 1 and 2 with quoins, segmental-arched windows and a moulded stone cornice. There are a few historic commercial frontages including a good 19th century architectural shopfront with Tuscan pilasters and entablature to No. 1 and No. 53A's late Victorian arched windows, and the early 19th century bow windows of the Fosters Arms and canted bay and tripartite sash window to the Vine public house. No. 54 has good quality 19th century railings. A few have vehicle entrances with boarded gates. Some buildings have been damaged by unsympathetic alteration, such as the cement rendering of Nos. 3-5 and inappropriate replacement windows of No. 50, but fortunately none as seriously as No. 58 which has been cut down from 3 storeys to 2, has lost its pitched roof, had the ground floor clad in yellow tiles and its sash windows replaced in UPVC. The prominent corner site makes it even more damaging to the conservation area's character and appearance.
- 22.9 The historic built-up frontage remains largely intact and substantially unbroken on the west side. There is a narrow break at the entrance to Doctor's Lane, giving a glimpse across to High Town. The first real change in the pattern comes with No. 49, a 2-storey house of c.1870 in plum-coloured brick and stone dressings which contrasts strongly with its neighbours. The wide adjacent gateway gives a view of the 19th century former maltings and rebuilt mill running far back behind No. 48, trees beyond and High Town in the distance. Beyond the large façade of No. 48 buildings begin to reduce in size. Nos. 46-47 are lower, of 2 storeys and attic; the one-bay NO. 46 has an 19th century brick front but exposed timber framing to the return side. Nos. 45-45D are a complete change, an intact terrace of well-detailed early 20th century cottages set back behind walled front gardens. The demolition of No. 44 has created the only major gap in the frontage, opening up a view across gardens and open land beyond to St. Leonard's tower and the houses around it on the skyline. The road signs and 20th century metal gates are intrusive.
- 22.10 The frontage resumes with a long irregular row of 17th and 18th century one-storey and attic and 2-storey cottages very different in character to the grander buildings of the southern part of the street; Nos. 42-43 have the only exposed timber-framed fronts in the street, and vertical proportions and sash windows give way to dormers and casements. The altered and raised road alignment and intrusive pedestrian railings in front of Nos. 40-42 detract from the buildings' setting. At the far end No. 35 has been drastically altered, with a particularly inappropriate roller door to the vehicle access. The Bandon Arms at the end of the row is a dramatic change of scale back to a high, wide 3-storey building which dwarfs its neighbours, and provides a very emphatic end to the street frontage. The cottages and late 19th century terrace of houses opposite have been damaged by unsympathetic alteration.
- 22.11 The east side is much more fragmented. Nos. 1-5 form a large block which angles inwards, gradually narrowing the street northwards. The adjacent flat-roofed public lavatories do nothing to enhance its appearance. The large car park, formerly part of the grounds of Parlours Hall, creates a long break in the built-up frontage, opening the street

out considerably, but the badly-patched tarmac, parked cars and view across to the long, intrusive flat-roofed frontage of the supermarket detract (on the site of St. John's and Holy Trinity Hospital) substantially from the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. This is mitigated to some extent by some surviving mature trees, notably the cedar close to Parlours Hall. Parlours Hall itself is a large detached house set back from the road, of c.1800 and later but with earlier origins; the unsympathetic flat-roofed additions, fencing and clutter of signage detract significantly from the quality of the building and its setting.

- 22.12 The built-up frontage at the back of the narrow pavement and the enclosure of the street are re-established with Nos. 7-11, a very varied group of buildings comprising a tall 2-storey early Victorian house with a narrow carriage arch, a row of small 18th century cottages, and the late 18th and early 19th century No. 11, a large and elegant house with a good classical doorcase now converted to a number of dwellings. The construction of Cann Hall Road destroyed the north-eastern part of the street with the realignment of the road and demolition of Cann Hall, the large early 17th century house which occupied the site of the roundabout. The car showroom on the remaining part of its site is unsympathetic to the setting of the conservation area.

23. Doctor's Lane, Severnside North and Bandon Lane

- 23.1 **Doctor's Lane** is a very narrow road lined with trees running between the long rear plots of the Vine public house and the Foster's Arms out to Severnside, giving glimpses of the long rear ranges of properties on Mill Street. Beneath the bridge is a pleasant area of open space adjacent to No. 13, a 19th century property, now a restaurant. Although this was once the site of Hazeldine's foundry, there are few buildings along the river, and the narrow land and extensive tree cover creates a surprisingly rural character; recent pollarding of the limes has had a somewhat detrimental effect. The concrete post and tube railings and unconvincing 'period' streetlights do not enhance it. There are glimpses of the picturesque rear ranges of Mill Street, but also of some unsightly 20th century industrial buildings. Closer to the river, the Malthouse has been imaginatively and sympathetically converted to a dwelling; the iron railings are unfortunately marred by an intrusive galvanised gate. The panoramic view across the river of High Town is among the best of Bridgnorth.
- 23.2 Beyond Whitbrook Bungalow, a cedar building which looks oddly out of place, Nos. 1-9 Severn Terrace of c.1900 introduce a more obviously urban note but seem strangely isolated. They are surrounded by a large area of open land bounded to the north by Bandon Lane. This leads to the large mid 19th century former maltings on the riverbank. This was an industrial-scale complex served by the river, which remained a maltings until the 1920s. The buildings are of both historic and architectural interest and survive largely intact. The restoration and conversion of the riverside range to house Bridgnorth Rowing Club has provided an ideal solution for the preservation of this very prominent building. Severn Cottage is contemporary with the maltings but altered almost beyond recognition, while Riverside House appears to be entirely 20th century: the 'timber framing' and concrete balustrading look incongruous next to the austere bulk of the maltings.

24. St. John's Street

- 24.1 The street takes its name from the Hospital of St. John or Holy Trinity, founded in the late 12th century to the north of it. After the Dissolution in 1539 a large house was built on part of the site; the street frontage was developed in the 17th century. Traces of the burgage plots laid out on the south side remain in property boundaries. St. John's Street is a main route for town centre traffic, and although the one-way system and recent narrowing of the carriageway has eased the impact, the heavy traffic flow detracts from the character of the narrow street. Residential and commercial use are completely intermingled, and buildings vary greatly in date, construction, type and size.
- 24.2 The south side retains its historic built-up frontage very largely intact. The building line is irregular but without major breaks. The long early 19th century 3-storey frontage of the Falcon Hotel forms the third side of the broad space at the southern end of Mill Street and together with the early 18th century No. 3 reflects the general large scale, vertical proportions and formality of surrounding buildings. But beyond No. 3 there is a change to altogether smaller and more modest 18th and early 19th century buildings, generally of no more than 2 storeys (some with attics) and two bays, and simpler details including casement windows. The 2-storey canted bays of No. 4 are an unusual feature. Adjacent to No. 6 the building line splays back and a break in the frontage gives a glimpse of the People's Hall, an undistinguished 20th century building to the rear; the inappropriate 'wrought iron' gates and concrete paving are unsympathetic to the general historic character. The 3-storey No. 10 and Nos. 10A-11 step the building line back still further. No. 15, a detached 16th century timber-framed, one-storey and attic gabled cottage, is a complete contrast to anything else in the street, while No. 16 reverts to the tall 3-storey Georgian pattern, but set back behind a shallow forecourt.
- 24.3 The eastern end of the street was effectively destroyed by the construction of Cann Hall Road: the demolition of houses between Diamond Hall and the Charles Fox (Fox Inn), has physically separated St. John's Street from Hospital Street. The hostel building on the south side and Diamond Hall now effectively form a 'gateway' to the historic core of Bridgnorth. The hostel, built in 1995, successfully reflects the scale, traditional materials and details of its context and at the same time enhances the conservation area by responding to the altered setting with principal elevations to both St. John's Street and Hospital Street. Diamond Hall is a fine late 17th century brick house on a large scale which dominates not just the corner but most of the street, but its altered side elevation is rather less attractive.
- 24.4 The north side of the street beyond has been drastically affected by 1970s demolition and redevelopment. A large section of the frontage is dominated by No. 43: a single building set back from the building line, with the ground-floor shopfront recessed still further behind piers, in an alien dark brick, it is much too tall and massive for its historic urban context. The concrete-slabbed alley alongside with an unattractive view to the blank end of the supermarket and the common brick screen wall at the entrance to Monks Court also detract from the appearance and character of the conservation area. The former Nos. 45-47 have unusual early 19th century blind arcading, but the side and rear have been rebuilt as part of a dull housing development.

25. Hospital Street

- 25.1 Probably taking its name from the mediaeval Leper Hospital on site at the southern end, the street is the major traffic route along the east side of the river. The construction of

Cann Hall Road severed it from St. John's Street, realigned the road to the west and raised it slightly with an unattractive brick retaining wall and unsightly tubular railings in front of Nos. 36-44. The sections in the conservation area are primarily residential, but with some public buildings. Surviving buildings reflect the gradual expansion of Bridgnorth in the 18th and 19th centuries. The east side very largely retains its historic frontage. The Charles Fox (Fox Inn) and Nos. 36-44 are a good, largely unaltered early 19th century formal terrace of 3-storey houses which form an impressive group at the end of the street. Lower, more irregular cottages to the rear of No. 36 front onto Grove Steps rising from the street.

- 25.2 At the bottom of Bernards Hill there is a long break in the frontage and a change of scale: small houses on Bernards Hill face onto Hospital Street but are set back from and above it. The attractive 19th century brick retaining wall to the Hill rises above an open space unfortunately marred by the unsympathetic concrete seat, litter bin etc. Nos. 29-35 comprise a pair and short terraces of small 19th century houses fronting the road. No. 35 retains a simple old shop window, but behind the high yard wall to the side is an unsympathetic flat-roofed extension and various unsightly outbuildings. Houses on Bernards Hill are prominent high up above the retaining wall. The original unified design of Nos. 31-34 has been completely destroyed by alterations. A good flight of 19th century steps rises between walls to Bernards Hill. No. 26 is quite different, a small 17th/18th century cottage set back, but again unsympathetically altered. The west side is very much altered: late 20th century public buildings contribute little to the character of the conservation area, and the car park creates a large visual 'hole'.

26. Bernards Hill, Grove Terrace and Old Stourbridge Road

- 26.1 Rising up the side of the valley, **Bernards Hill** developed as an area of small houses in the late 18th and 19th centuries, although Nos. 38-9 are of 17th century timber-framed origin. Haphazard development is reflected in the irregular pattern, with varied building lines and breaks in the frontage, and a network of paths and steps leading off. There are superb views across the valley to the whole of High Town. Perhaps the most distinctive feature is the long section of raised footpath in front of the houses, partly paved in blue diamond chequer paviers, with an unobtrusive brick retaining wall but much less sympathetic concrete post and tubular railings. At the southern end the road divides between upper and lower levels, again with concrete and tube railings. Near the bottom at the northern end some houses, such as Nos. 42-44, have small private forecourts with old paving; a few others have small front gardens, notably those of Nos. 9-11 with a high 19th century brick retaining wall and iron railings. The large front garden of the Old Maltings is an exception. Some houses, particularly those of Grove Terrace, are accessible only by steps and narrow alleys which retain a strong 19th century character. Horse Grove Hill, with overgrown hedges and small trees on either side, still retains something of a secluded semi-rural character.
- 26.2 Houses and cottages are mostly of one bay and 2 storeys, in pairs, small terraces and blocks; but there are also one-storey and attic cottages such as Nos. 38-39 and 2-storey and attic houses including Nos. 46-47 and Nos. 36A-37. Individual buildings such as the more ambitious 2-bay No. 40 with giant arches and a moulded cornice, the gabled No. 41 and the Old Maltings are the exception rather than the rule. Most buildings are simply detailed; the 5 gables to Nos. 26-27 and 3 to Nos. 9-11 are distinctive. Nos. 52-57 Grove Terrace are rare examples of back-to-back houses, while Nos. 16-18 The Mall are a late

19th century group designed like a single house which are particularly prominent above Horse Grove Hill. The historic character and appearance of the majority have been damaged by inappropriate replacement windows and doors, altered openings etc: there does not appear to be a single house surviving intact. Nos. 42-44 show how the design and unity of a terrace is destroyed by the installation of mahogany windows to one, UPVC windows to another, replacement of all the original doors etc.

- 26.3 The southern end of Bernards Hill drops back down to the **Old Stourbridge Road** in a sweeping curve bounded by an attractive 19th century wall, but the effect is marred by an intrusive sectional garage adjacent to No. 5. On Stourbridge Road itself No. 7 has the remains of a sandstone garden wall, and the brick wall to Bernards Hill is very prominent. The south side of the road is lined by a large sandstone ashlar former barn of 18th century origin, now part of a factory. A sandstone boundary wall to the road beyond it is a significant feature, bounding the site of the mediaeval Leper Hospital of St. James which is now a garden. No. 3 is an altered 17th century timber-framed cottage, but the much taller No. 1 attached to it and fronting Hospital Street is a rendered symmetrical early 19th century range forming a complete contrast.

27. **Severn Street**

- 27.1 This is a street of terraced small houses running down to the river. Nos. 1-20 are early/mid 19th century, laid out on an L-plan surrounding their gardens on the inner side away from the street. Nos. 21-50 of c.1900 form a very long range opposite. The vast majority of houses have been unsympathetically altered, some quite drastically, destroyed much of the street's Victorian character. The eastern part is open to the car park, a bleak and unattractive space enlivened only by views of the varied backs of buildings on St. John's Street.

28. **Sevenside South**

- 28.1 Sevenside fronts onto the river channel cut for boats to bypass the fishtrap weir on the river, thus creating the island known as the Bylet. The dense fringe of trees around it largely conceals the bowling greens and buildings and partly blocks views across to High Town, giving the area an enclosed, secluded character. The concrete post and tube railings along the water's edge are unsightly. Nos. 1 and 2 are pleasant unaltered cottages of c. 1900 set back in large gardens, giving them a rural rather than urban appearance. A largely rebuilt wall screens the extensive car parks behind Bridge Street and St. John's Street. The entrance opens up views of unsightly corrugated sheet outbuildings, fencing etc. which detracts from the appearance of the conservation area. A narrow alley winds away out of sight between 19th century brick walls. The area opens out as the channel bends towards the river beyond the Bylet. The road narrows to a path beside the stone wall and railings of Barn Cottage, recently repaved in traditional blue diamond chequer paviers with traditional iron railings. There are good views across to Quayside and High Town. Northwards the view is terminated by the bridge, with iron-framed steps climbing up to it, and the high back of No. 1 Bridge Street, with smaller buildings including a timber-framed gable below. However, the enhanced appearance of this path is marred by a high concrete brick and pierced block wall attached to No. 1's unsympathetic rear extension.