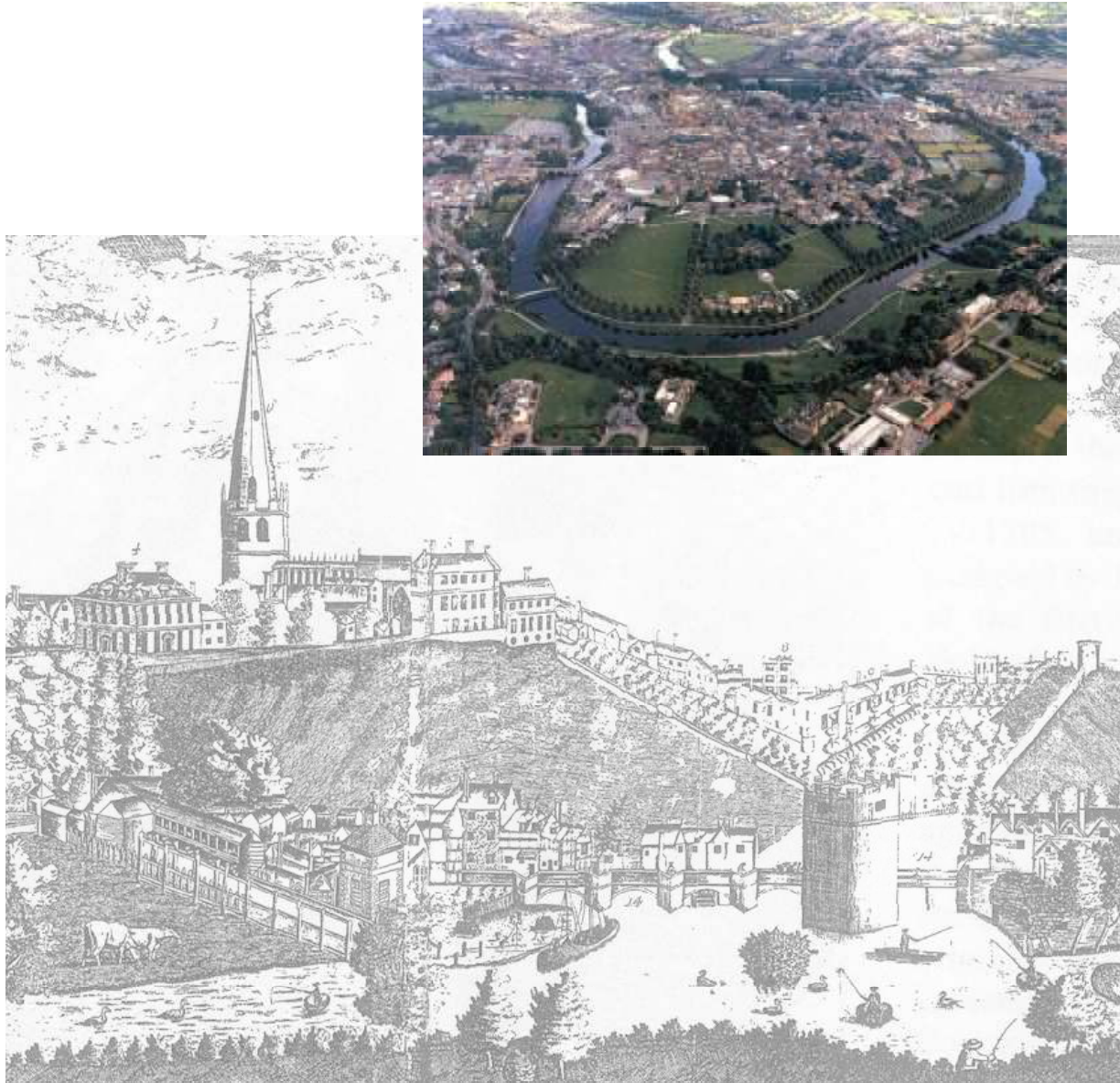

SHREWSBURY TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA SPECIAL CHARACTER AREA ASSESSMENT



September 2001

1. TOWN CENTRE,
3. RAVEN MEADOWS & COTON HILL
4. ST. JULIAN'S FRIARS

PREFACE

This Conservation Area Appraisal is prepared in response to the latest advice from Government on the management of Conservation Areas. It can also be seen as an audit of development within the Shrewsbury Town Centre Conservation Area since it was designated.

Shrewsbury is ranked as one of the most important historic towns in England, with a population of 91,000 and 1,875 listed buildings, more than any other district in Shropshire and major cities such as Liverpool or Canterbury. The English Tourism Council defines historic towns as towns with a population of a maximum of 150,000 and a minimum of 200 historic buildings.

Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council has always adopted a proactive policy towards the management of the Town Centre Conservation Area, since the majority of the important historic buildings are constructed in the timber frame tradition. Such buildings demand continuous investment by building owners in order to sustain the historic building stock for future generations to enjoy. The Borough Council has, since 1975, (in partnership with English Heritage and more recently the Heritage Lottery Fund,) provided grant aid to assist owners and tenants to keep their buildings in a good state of repair. This policy has been successful, particularly as the town attracts up to 60,000 visitors per year, which brings in over £53 million pounds of investment into the town centre.

The Conservation Area Assessment is intended to guide development within the river loop and to complement the separate assessments prepared for the other special character areas within the town centre.

This Conservation Area Assessment has been prepared by the Conservation Team within the Planning Policy Section of the Development Services Directorate of Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council. The team comprised Michael King, Lisa Turner and Joanne Barnes.

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*High the vanes of Shrewsbury gleam
Islanded in Severn Stream
The bridges from the steepled crest
Cross the water east and west"*

A Shropshire Lad, "The Welsh Marches"
A. E. Housman

1. INTRODUCTION

English Heritage, as advisors to the Secretary of State, have published a number of guidance notes with the purpose of assisting Local Authorities in their statutory duties in respect of conservation area management. “Development in the Historic Environment, An English Heritage Guide to Policy, Procedure and Good Practice” published in June 1995 was followed by “Conservation Area Practice, English Heritage Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas,” published in October 1995. The later document described the legislative framework and dealt with most aspects of conservation area control and enforcement.

In March 1997, English Heritage published a further guidance note, which followed consultation with historic town's throughout England, including the Borough Council as a member of the English Historic Towns Forum. This Guidance note was entitled, “Conservation area Appraisals, Defining the Special architectural or Historic Interest of Conservation Areas”.

Section 69 (1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation areas) Act 1990, Conservation Areas are defined as :-

“Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance”.

Section 69(2) of the above Act, further requires that the Borough Council, as the Local Planning Authority have a statutory duty from time to time to review the extent of designation in their area and, if appropriate, to designate further areas.

The Shrewsbury Town Centre Conservation Area was designated in May 1970, in response to the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and since then it has been extended twice, once in 1981, to include Cherry Orchard, Whitehall, Kingsland, Abbey Foregate and Mountfields and a second time in 1997, Castlefields and Spring Gardens.

As a result, the Town Centre Conservation Area now covers a number of different and diverse districts, which have been formalised into eleven special character areas for the purposes of accurately assessing the special architectural or historic interest (Figure 1).

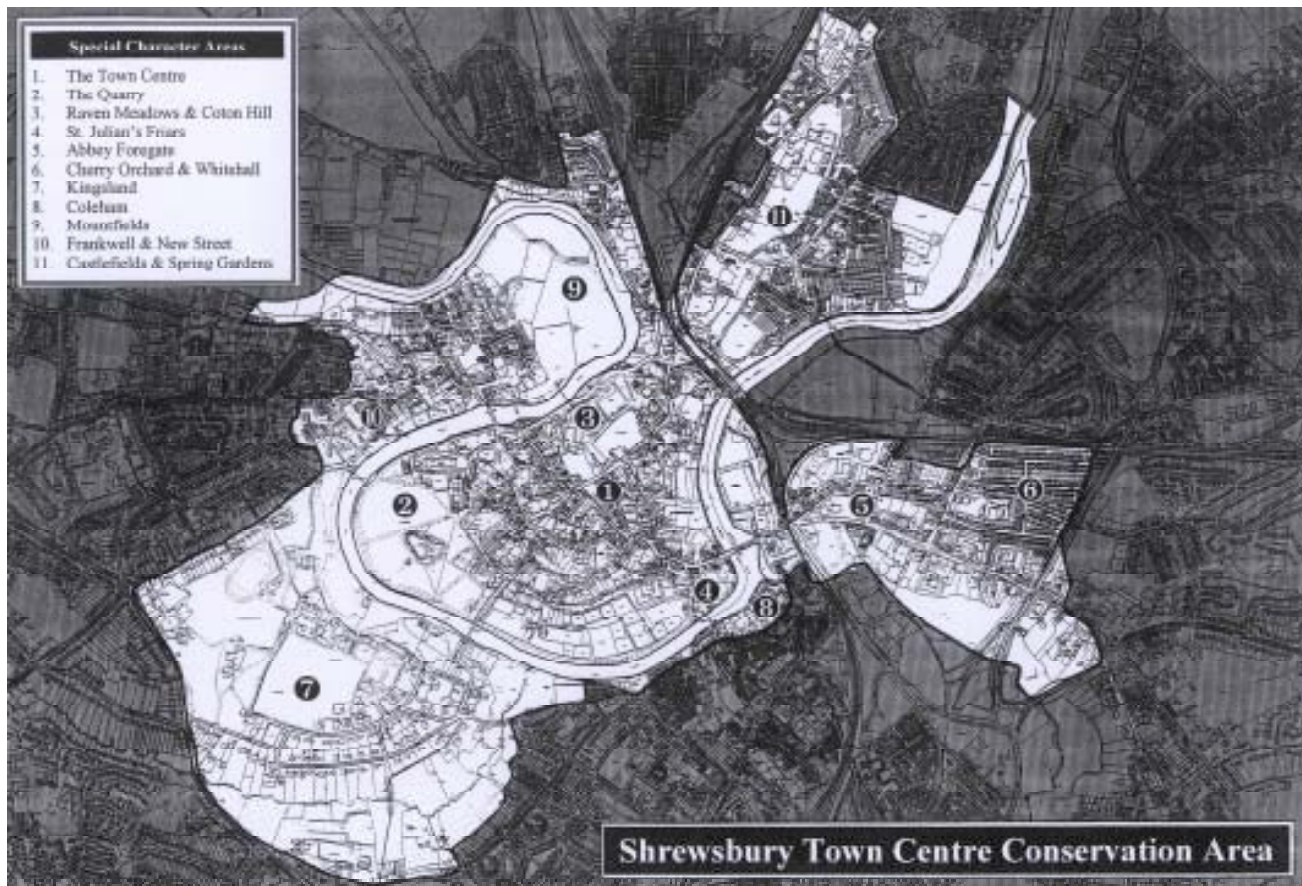


Figure 1: Areas of Special Character: Town Centre Conservation Area

Each of the areas reflect a different period of the town centre's development, yet combine to create the town's historic appeal and significance.

Since their designation, a rolling programme of appraisals has been underway which has thus far included Areas: 2: The Quarry, 5: Abbey Foregate, 10: Frankwell, 8: Coleham, 11: Spring Gardens and Castlefields and 9: Mountfields.

The areas within the river-loop are numbered 1 to 4 and are known as the Town Centre, The Quarry, Raven Meadows and Coton Hill and St Julian's Friars, respectively. This document covers areas, 1, 3 and 4, (as The Quarry has already been covered in a separate appraisal) and builds on information revealed as part of the Shrewsbury Archaeological Database, an initiative undertaken by the Borough Council in partnership with English Heritage.

The combined population within the River Loop, as recorded in 1996, is approximately 4,400.

2. THE ORIGINS & DEVELOPMENT OF SHREWSBURY

The creation and subsequent formation of the town was essentially due to its close proximity to the English - Welsh Border and the River Severn, where its situation within the meander has both protected and confined development over the centuries. Whilst much of the original fabric of the town may have been eroded, replaced or altered over time, there are still many elements which still survive and combine to provide a rich and diverse townscape.

2.1 Prehistoric and Roman Period

The analysis of a series of prehistoric finds discovered within the river loop, and more particularly along the length of the High Street, suggests there was an early east-west route across the peninsula. The line of the route would have been determined by the fordable sites on the River Severn, probably close to the present crossing points at the foot of Wyle Cop and Mardol.

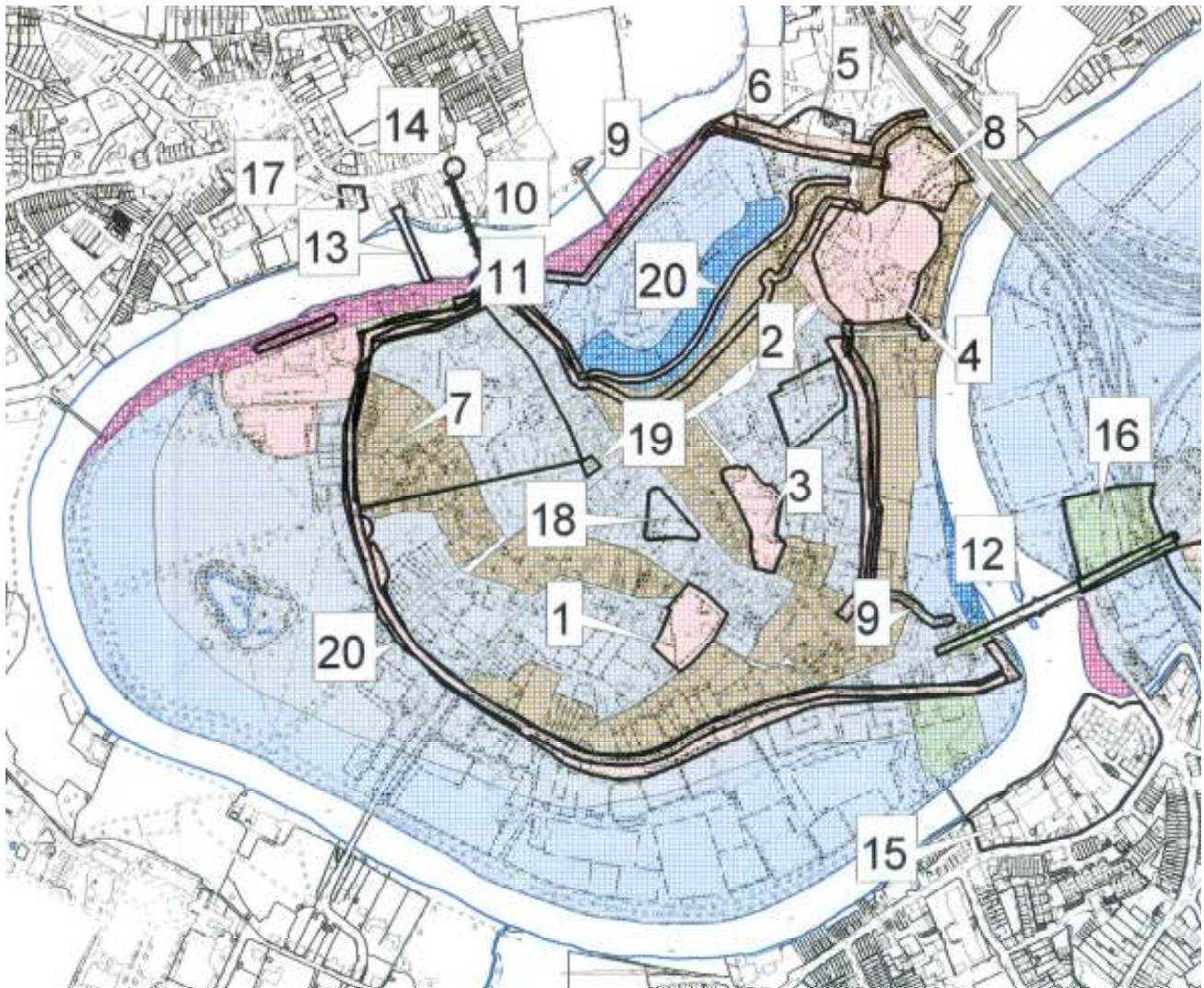
The establishment and subsequent use of this route is significant, since it essentially became a focus for activity and ultimately defined the main streets of the town. Whilst the directness of the route has become somewhat distorted over time, the link between the east and west is still evident today.

A further early route is likely to have entered the river-loop from the north, this appears to have been later formalised into a Roman road probably along the line of Corporation Lane, off Berwick Road. However, Roman activity was essentially focused to the east of Shrewsbury, at the major civilian settlement at Wroxeter.

2.2 Anglo Saxon Period

As with many other towns and cities, the arrival and establishment of the Church had a significant effect on the way Shrewsbury developed during this and subsequent periods. The churches became key areas of activity as well as local landmarks and reference points within the town.

On the basis of later documentary references, comparative work and archaeological excavations, the foundations of St Mary's and St Chad's Collegiates, have been dated to the 8th- 9th Centuries (Figure 2). The two Minster churches and their precincts were set on the crowns of the twin hills, with



Key

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Old St. Chad's | 11. Mardol Quay |
| 2. St. Mary's Church | 12. The Medieval & current English Bridge |
| 3. St Alkmund's Church | 13. The Welsh Bridge |
| 4. The Castle Gates & Other Bailey | 14. The Hospital of St. George |
| 5. Meadow Place and Defences | 15. Longden Coleham Suburbs |
| 6. Area of No. 6 Severn Terrace | 16. 7 – 14 Abbey Foregate |
| 7. The Barker Street, Hills Lane
Claremont Area | 17. 4 – 7 Frankwell |
| 8. The Castle Inner Bailey | 18. Shirehall Peat Deposit |
| 9. The Town Wall | 19. Mardol Head |
| 10. St. George's Bridge | 20. The Town Ditch |

Figure 2: Key Sites: Shrewsbury Town Centre

the dividing parish boundary falling along the approximate line of the current High Street, avoiding the Gumbestlesmores pool (peat bog) which approximately corresponds with the site of The Square and Princess House (Figure 2).



Figure 3: St Mary's Precinct

Traces of the early precincts can still be identified in the current townscape. In the area around St. Chad's, College Hill seems to be a continuation of the central axis of the Medieval church and the presence of perpendicular plots suggest that it could be a planned ecclesiastical street originally flanked by sixteen canon's houses. It is also likely that the original arrangement of St Mary's precinct was larger than it is today, extending as far east as the Medieval town wall, before becoming a more formalised square in the nineteenth century (Figure 3).

St Mary's precinct may also have affected the route of Dogpole. The unlikely location of Dogpole at the base of an escarpment and with a prominent kink suggests it has been diverted and that it may have originally continued west of St Mary's, providing a more logical connection between the northern access to the settlement and the eastern river crossing.

The development of Shrewsbury prior to the Norman Conquest has been confirmed through an analysis of existing plots and the discovery of some Saxon pottery around the town centre. Along the main routes of Mardol, Pride Hill and Dogpole, a number of large plots were laid out in multiples of statute-perches (an early measurement)*. These plots are characterised by long curving boundaries, which have access to a street, open land and either the river or a smaller watercourse.



Plate 1: St. Alkmund's &
St. Julian's Church
towers

2.3 Norman Period

Towards the end of the Anglo Saxon period, St Alkmund's and St Julian's, two secondary Minster churches were probably established at the expense of the two earlier parishes (Figure 2, Plate 1). St Alkmund's precinct, which contains St Julian's, appears oval in shape, was possibly the focus for the King's market place. During this period, Shrewsbury developed as a strategic stronghold, in order to control the rural hinterland and minimise the risk of attack from the Welsh Borders. Its location within the river

loop provided a naturally defensive position, which the Normans sought to consolidate their hold on the area through the construction of a castle and associated defences. Consequently, development was concentrated within the walls and the area between the town walls and the river was left relatively untouched, which essentially created a swathe of open space, which can still be seen today.

The Norman motte and bailey together with a defensive structure across the neck of the river-loop was probably the reinforcement of an established defensive system dating from the Mercian reign of Offa in the 8th century. Norman consolidation of the town also included the construction of stone bridges to the east and the west, with the foundation of a Benedictine Abbey sited near the eastern crossing.

Local archives dating from this period and archaeological excavations confirm that Norman shops and trades took place along major traffic routes of the town and around the old Market Place (St Alkmund's), Mardol Head, Pride Hill, and possibly Grope Lane. In contrast the major residential areas, were situated to the rear of the frontages, in quieter cul-de-sac streets. On the outskirts, a residential area had formed to the south-west of Mardol called Romaldsham, named after the church dedicated to St Romald, close to where Rowley's House now stands.

2.4 Medieval Period

Whilst Shrewsbury continued to be at the forefront of the ongoing battle between the English and the Welsh, the town became a centre of trade and subsequently the focus for an immense amount of activity and development. There is evidence of a programme of land reclamation and town planning and this is reflected in the formalisation of burgage plots, many of which have survived and give the town its characteristic "fine grain".

In 1215, Shrewsbury was attacked and easily taken by Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, thereby prompting the new English King, Henry III, to order the townsmen to better protect their town and granted them murage (the right to levy taxes for the construction of town walls) to do so. The Kings Order appears to have initiated and encouraged a corporate development, reorganisation and fortification of the town, which was to leave its mark clearly on the current townscape.

The primary works comprised the construction of a stone wall and ditch the full circumference of the town and the addition of timber fortifications to the castle until its collapse in 1299, and its reconstruction in stone (Figure 2). Although still a strategic town in the English offensive, the completion of the town walls appears to have been an encouraging factor in the expansion of the town's economy, together with a new measure of political autonomy granted by Henry III in 1189. It was during this period that a number of friaries were founded outside the town walls at St Julian's Friars, St Austin's Friars and St Mary's Water Lane, using the remaining stone from the construction of the walls

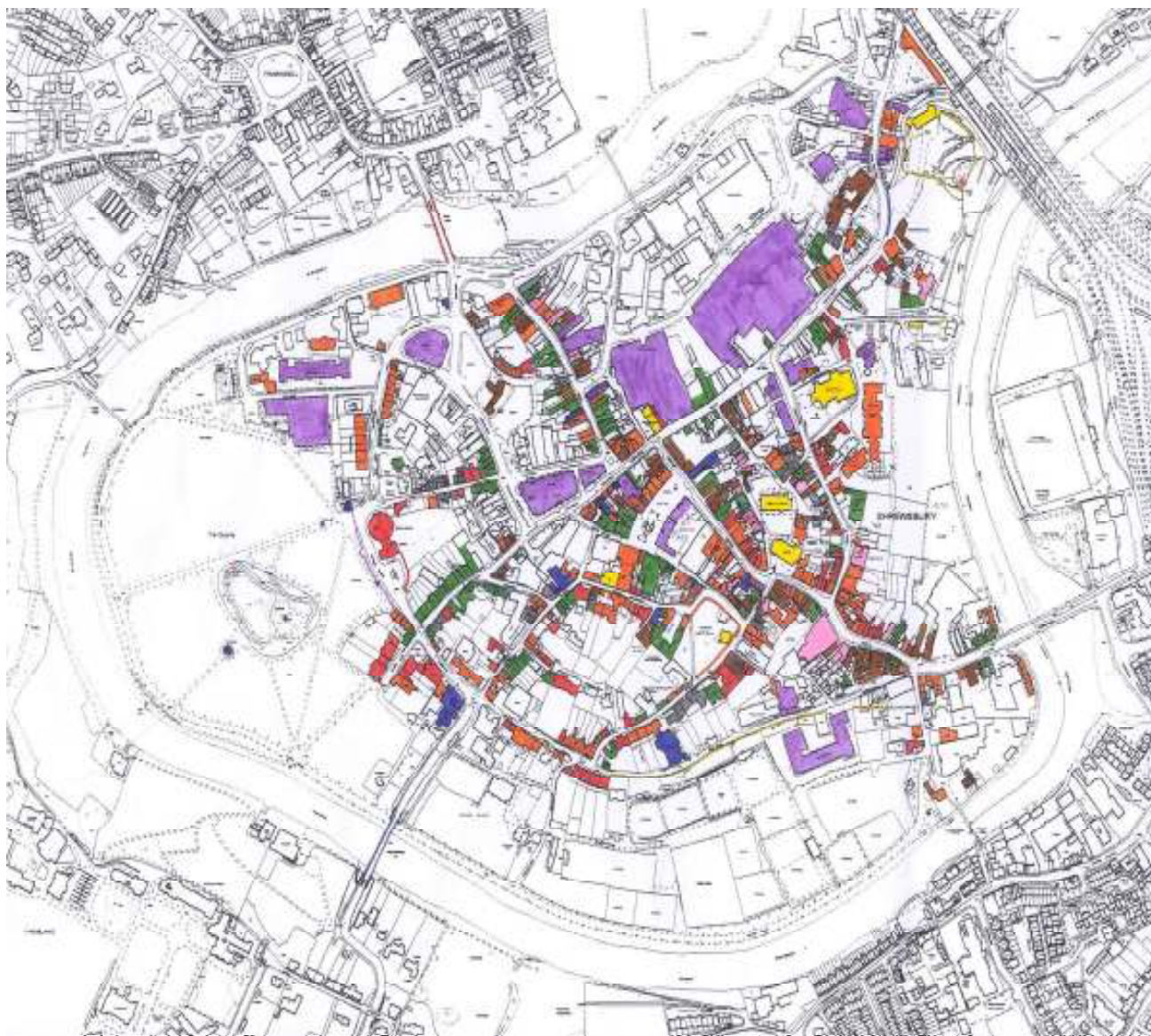
Within the walls, there was a wholesale redevelopment of the area previously known as Gumbestolestrete, relocating the King's market from St Alkmund's to the site now known as The Square. Although an area of public space was previously associated with the Gumbestlesmore, the western side of the Square was cleared of properties and plots, the boundaries of which are evident in the current staggered line of buildings on this side.

As well as the relocation of the market, a watercourse, linking the river and the pool at the centre of the town through Gullet Passage, was in-filled and built over together with the Gumbestlesmore which was to be the site of the new Guildhall. In addition, the undulating topography of the town resulted in the construction of terraces along the contours on which much of the town is built. During this period of reclamation, some of the terraces, especially those to the rear of the High Street, were formalised in stone, thereby ensuring that more land could be used for construction.



Plate 2: Hall, Vaughn's Mansion
Music Hall

The undertaking of these works appear to have been initiated by the top echelons of Shrewsbury society which probably represented 1% of the total population and comprised merchants primarily concerned with the wholesale trading of wool. These families appeared to have benefited the most from the works of this period as their large and sometime-enclosed properties surrounded The Square and lined the High Street. The properties were mainly situated to the rear of commercial frontages or around courtyards and were occasionally enclosed within perimeter walls (Vaughn's Mansion (Plate 2) and Charlton Manor). Some of the smaller properties were set side on to the street frontage with shops incorporated into the structure (Burgh's Hall).



Key

 20th Century	 Late 18th Century	 16th Century
 Late 19th Century	 Early 18th Century	 Medieval
 Early 19th Century	 17th Century	

Figure 4: Shrewsbury Town Centre

The end of Edward the First's reign (1300) signalled a reprieve from duty for the town, since the Welsh had been subdued and peace was restored. This coincided with a revival of high status timber-framed construction, examples of which still survive at Bears Steps and 12-12a Fish Street. However, by the mid-fourteenth century Shrewsbury's fortune started to falter, experiencing a number of economic set backs and the devastation wreaked by the Plague. The decline in trade continued well into the fifteenth century and was centred on a shift in Shrewsbury's base industry from the export of raw wool to the manufacture of cloth which was able to be brought to market in some of the smaller surrounding market towns(Figure 4).

Whilst the level of trade from Wales may have been in decline, the demand for residential properties continued to increase and when a number of residences along Wyle Cop were destroyed at the end of the fourteenth century by fire, construction of three storey structures started almost immediately. Within the current townscape, there are at least 32 buildings centred on the principal commercial streets that date from this period.

Although the construction of residential and town centre commercial properties appears to have continued apace, the alterations in the fortunes of Shrewsbury are vividly reflected in the demilitarisation of the town and the slow decline of the flanking friaries. Although there was a minor resurgence in the reparation of the town walls in 1400, following a revolt by Owain Glyndwr, by 1443 the castle collapsed having been undermined by the Severn and buildings in the town were being built against and over some sections of the town walls.

2.5 Early Modern Period

In the mid sixteenth century, a revival of the cloth trade with Wales, initiated by the influential Draper's Company, led to a population explosion, the intensification of development within the river loop, particularly in the south and the creation of a network of passageways across the town, known as shuts. The development of the shut is intricately linked with the rapid infilling of the medieval burgage plots as originally access to the jumble of properties was achieved through a series of private passages. However as many of



Figure 5: Map of Shrewsbury, Burghley, 1575

the passages provided access from one main street to another they were soon adopted as public rights of way. The first instance of a shut's public use is documented in 1459 and concerned the Golden Cross passage which provided access from Baker Row (the High Street) through to Kiln Lane (Princess Street) and is an area of the town still characterised today by shuts linking the two frontages (Plate 3).

From the 1560's, the construction of new timber-framed houses was undertaken in a style soon to become known as the "Shrewsbury School of Carpentry", characterised by close studding, S-braces, cable- mouldings, sunken quatrefoils, diagonal and herringbone struts and vine scrolling. The expansion and prosperity of the town during this period is illustrated by 117 remaining buildings, dating from the sixteenth and early seventeenth century (Figure 5).



Plate 3: Golden Cross Passage

In addition to the increase in domestic buildings, there was also the construction of large industrial structures set within the narrow tenement plots of the town. An illustration of this



Plate 6: 17th Century View of the Town Centre (private collection)

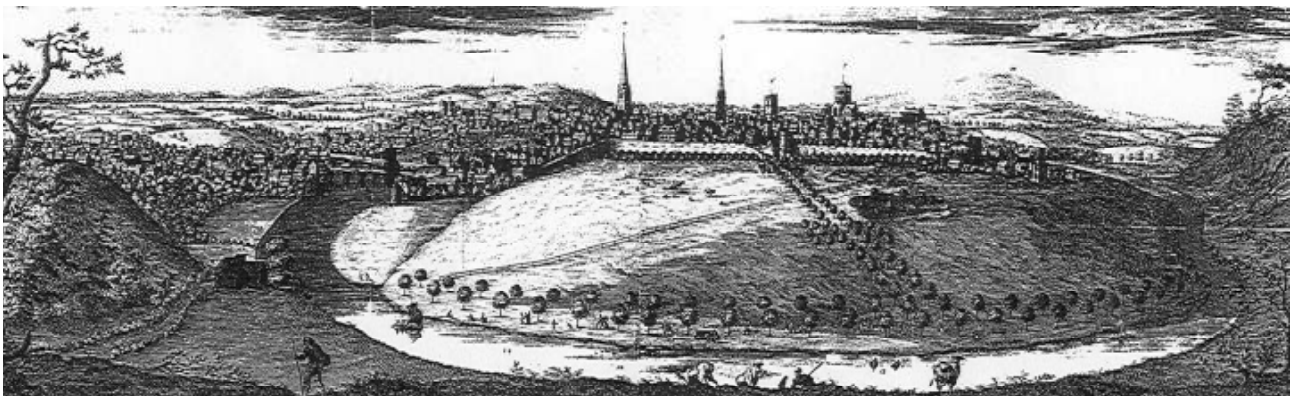


Plate 7: View of Quarry 1735



Plate 4: Rowley's House

was Rowley's House, built of brick in the early seventeenth century with a large timber-framed warehouse attached to the rear, extending the full length of the tenement plot (Plate 4). The pressure of population and the alterations in the demands of the seventeenth century household resulted in the alteration of many of the remaining medieval halls, principally characterised by the insertions of floors and the division of the open hall.

The mid-sixteenth century signalled the dissolution of the monasteries, which initially resulted in an iconoclastic fury affecting all of the religious structures in the town. However rapid dismantling quickly followed this period of unrest and demolition of all three of the friaries outside the town walls' perimeter, on a scale not seen in neighbouring towns.

2.6 Late Modern Town

The coming of the Civil War in the seventeenth century necessitated the construction of new defences to defend the town for the King against Parliament, which extended the area within the town walls. One of the areas included by the boundary change was the land

Smithfield Road is currently situated and later became the site for the town's livestock market.

In contrast, the eighteenth century saw peace restored and the town started to attract wealthy landowners and gentry c.1740. This was encouraged by the regular stage coaches travelling between London and Holyhead, stopping at the Lion Hotel, Wyle Cop (Plate 5). This influx had a major impact on both the development of the town, particularly around town walls and the local economy, which moved from a manufacturing to a leisure base, precipitating a trade in luxury items. However, throughout this period, the commercial heart of the town remained focused around Pride Hill and the High Street.



Plate 5: The Lion Hotel,
Wyle Cop

It is thought that a series of factors made the town more attractive to such landowners, which included :-

- a decline in trade from Wales and a subsequent fall in the price of land within the town centre,
- the regular occurrence of events such as fairs and assizes at which the gentry could congregate,
- the provision of walks and general assembly rooms,
- the proximity of a multitude of country houses,
- the ease with which access to the town was achieved along the Severn.

The establishment of a polite society in Shrewsbury and the large numbers of gentry attracted to the town encouraged a series of structures, genteel terraces and a variety of public works to be undertaken. In 1719, the lime walks in the Quarry were established together with a greenhouse and bowling green in 1734 (Plates 6 and 7). In 1724, the slaughter of animals was banned from the street and yards were created to the rear of Butcher Row and Fish Street. This was followed by the first appointment of a Town Scavenger who dealt with the towns waste disposal.

In 1774, the Foundling Hospital at Kingsland was completed and soon after the assembly rooms to the rear of the Lion Hotel were constructed. On the outskirts of the town centre terraces of polite architecture were built to house the visiting gentry and floor surfaces were paved to ease pedestrian access to Mardol and the Barker Street area. The expansion of the towns trade continued until the development of the first department store in 1857 in Lloyds mansion on the corner of The Square and Princess Street.



Plate 8: Remains of St. George's Bridge

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the importance of the east- west route across town and the two major river crossings was emphasised by the construction of English Bridge in 1769 (although it was later rebuilt in 1926) and the Welsh Bridge between 1792-5. However, the latter was located downstream of the original crossing point, St. George's Bridge, (parts are still evident today), severing the direct link into Mardol and effectively undermining its importance as one of the main streets in the town (Plate 8).



Plate 9: Ditherington Maltings

During the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution which originated in neighbouring Telford had a limited impact on the town with the linen trade and maltings emerging as the two most important industries. Although there are few surviving buildings from this period within the town centre, Ditherington Flaxmill (Plate 9) situated just to the north of the town centre is of national significance since it is the earliest multi-storeyed iron framed building in the world.

As with many other towns, the nineteenth century saw the growth of the railway, which was established on the north side of the town where the topography was flatter and only one river crossing was required. The location of the station, Pevsner remarks in the "Buildings of England: Shropshire", is most disagreeable since it is next to the Castle and the river and so ruins one of the chief views into the town.

2.7 20th Century

Despite the increasing influence of the global as well as the local economy, Shrewsbury has continued to evolve and adapt to the changing demands of modern society. In the introduction to his book on Shrewsbury Street names J.L. Hobbs stated;

"with the possible exception of York, no other old English town has retained its mediaeval street names to the same extent as Shrewsbury, and probably in no other town has the topography or configuration of the streets remained so faithful to the original layout of the town".

However during this century, a number of streets disappeared, particularly in the West End of the town, such as Bugle Lane and Bridge Place and with the increased use of

private transport, the directness of the east-west route has been weakened further. As congestion has become a problem, a one way system has evolved and traffic now travelling through the town is directed past Mardol, along Shoplatch, Barker Street and out along Welsh Bridge. In addition, traffic travelling from the west is now directed north along Smithfield Road, before turning back east to enable traffic to cross the river loop at English Bridge.

Despite such changes, Pride Hill has remained the principal retail street in the town, emphasised by the location of major companies for example in 1906-7, Boot's the Chemist, set up shop on Pride Hill followed by Morris and Co's department store and F. W. Woolworth's in 1927. The expansion of major commercial buildings created a number of significant "landmark" buildings such as the Co-operative Store in Castle Street and The Royal Insurance Building 1903 by J. Francis Doyle at Mardol Head.

During the 1960's, modern building and retailing practices have favoured larger premises and existing shop units have been amalgamated. Although this has generally been contained within the more traditional plot boundaries, the "fine grain" which is a particular characteristic of the medieval town has been disturbed and it is possible that it may never be restored. The impact of the Modernism is also reflected in the more "functional" style of building, the most significant being the market hall replacing the former Victorian building on Shoplatch and creating a new feature on the town's skyline. In addition, the old Shirehall on The Square was replaced by Princess House, during the 1970's and this function was transferred to a new purpose built building on Abbey Foregate (Plates 10 and 11).

In 1990's, the enhancement of the High Street was undertaken as part of the Historic Core Zone project piloted by the DETR and the English Historic Towns Forum in partnership with Shropshire County Council and Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council (Plate 12). This award-winning scheme, used a combination of York stone paving, sets and tarmacadam, to create attractive environment where the level of intrusive signage was reduced and some original street furniture was introduced. The whole scheme illustrated that it was possible to strike a balance between the demands of modern society, for example accommodating cars and deliveries, etc, without compromising the historic environment.



Plate 10: Former Shirehall
The Square



Plate 11: Princess House



Plate 12: Environmental
Enhancement,
High Street

3. SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Section 1 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), requires the Secretary of State to compile and maintain a Schedule of Ancient Monuments. Once included in the Schedule the monuments are protected under the terms of the agreement. Given the archaeological potential of Shrewsbury there are eight Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the river

These include the following sites:-



Plate 13: Mural Tower,
Town Walls

Site	SAM No.
The Castle	99
Old St Chad's	140
The Old Market Hall	139
The Mural Tower (Plate 13)	150A
The Town Wall, east of the Crescent	150B
Bennett's Hall, 2 Pride Hill	189
Former Mural Tower, Victoria Avenue	211
The Town Wall, rear of Macdonald's	317

Table 1: Sites & Monuments

These sites are also included in the Shrewsbury and Atcham Local plan under policy HE3 which is designed to protect the archaeology from potentially damaging new development. The boundaries of all of these sites are shown in red in Figure 6.

Over the past five years, Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council in partnership with English Heritage has been conducting a programme of investigation which is aimed at identifying all archaeological material within the town centre. This information has been compiled into a usable resource, the Shrewsbury Urban Archaeological Database, under which several initiatives, like an Archaeological Strategy for the town have been prepared, which aims to use such a resource in a positive way and thereby enhancing the historic environment and the local economy.

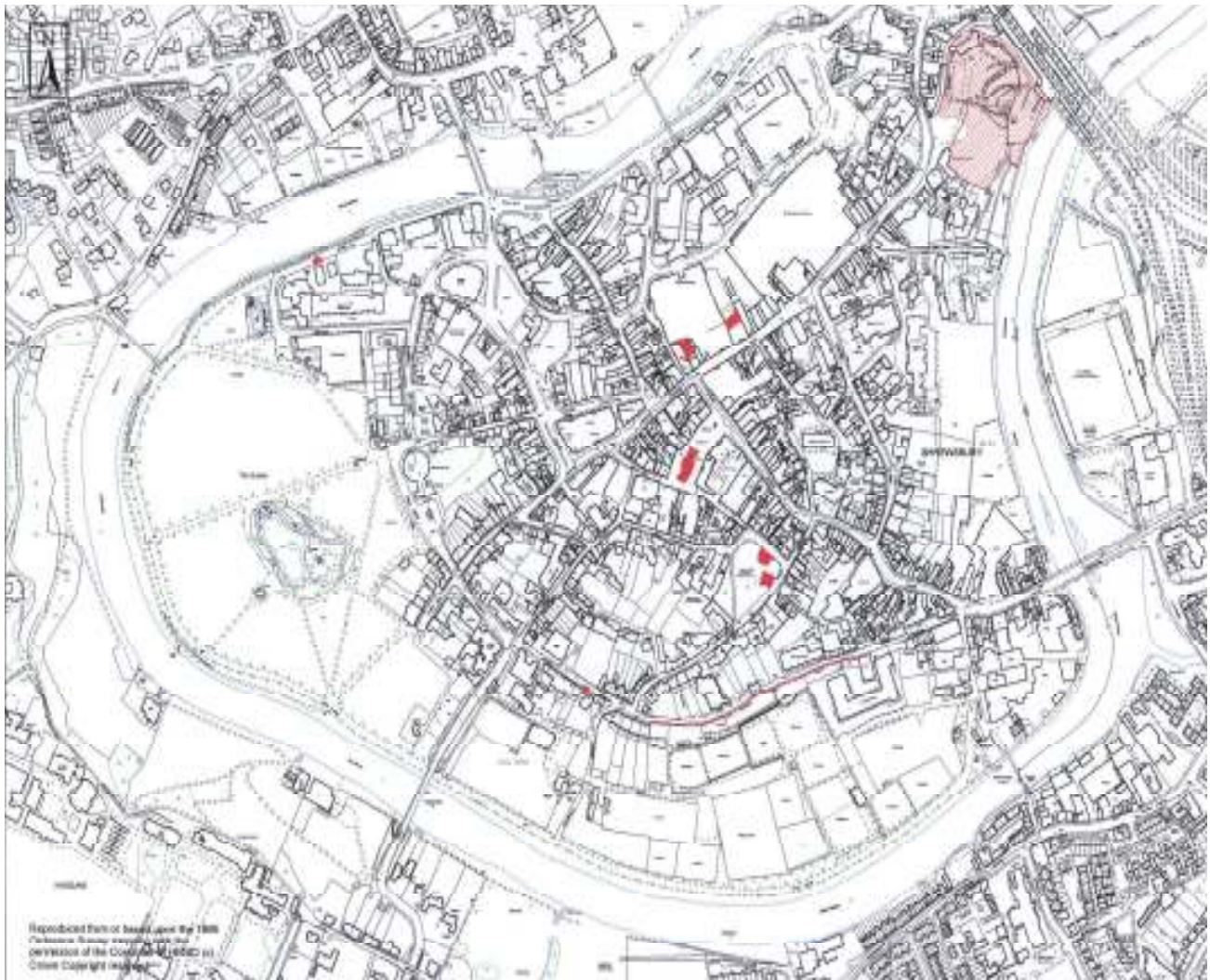


Figure 6: Scheduled Sites, Town Centre

4. THE ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC QUALITIES OF THE BUILDINGS AND THE CONTRIBUTION THEY MAKE TO THE SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE AREA

The architectural qualities of the town centre are complex and diverse due to its early foundation and subsequent development. Whilst many of the buildings within the river loop are listed individually for their architectural and historic interest, it is the juxtaposition of these buildings, their different styles, building types, materials, scale, massing and roofscapes which create Shrewsbury's unique character and skyline.

4.1 Architectural Styles and Building Materials



Plate 14: Houses, Swan Hill

The majority of architectural styles are represented in Shrewsbury's townscape, although two are perhaps more evident than some of the others. There is still a strong medieval feel to the town, not necessarily because many timber framed buildings have survived, but more because such buildings hold prominent positions along the main streets and their setting is accentuated by the medieval street pattern. The other predominant style which is perhaps more evident along Town Walls is on the polite brick facades of the Georgian period, which is reflected in the smart town houses, particularly along Swan Hill (Plate 14).



Plate 15: 4 Belmont

It is inevitable that some buildings were cleared for redevelopment, particularly as fashions changed and space was at a premium, but in some cases, they were extended, adapted and refaced to look more up to date. Whilst the majority of earlier buildings are hidden from view, 4 Belmont shows an original sixteenth century timber framed façade to a house which was re-fronted in brick during the mid eighteenth century (Plate 15).

The local materials used during these periods of building all contribute to the special interest of the area. In essence, there are three different types, timber, stone and brick and within each category, there are a number of subdivisions.

4.1.1 Timber

Medieval Shropshire was a densely wooded county providing Shrewsbury with its most plentiful building resource and so timber framed buildings were a common

sight in the town. There are two significant styles of timber framing that have been identified; the Timber Revival (fourteenth and fifteenth century) and the Shrewsbury School of Carpentry (sixteenth century).

The popularity of timber framing with wattle and daub infill panels was eventually halted in 1707 by the London Fire Prevention Act which outlawed the use of timber as a fire risk and initiated the use of brick as the main building material. The nature of the resource has meant that the majority of the less substantial buildings have been lost and probably only the best examples have survived.

The earliest timber-framed buildings in Shrewsbury date from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century and are concentrated along the older streets of town including Mardol, Fish Street, Wyle Cop, Dogpole and the High Street (Figure 4). The majority of them are three storey's high and are characterised by at least one jetty, close studding at lower levels or square panelled box-framed construction and cusped/ogee bracing (Plate 16). The height and location of these early buildings reflect the demand for residential accommodation in the town during this period and the commercial development of the main street frontage. Furthermore the retention of these older buildings within the main street scene appear to have set the tone and scale of the surrounding townscape.

The earlier style of timber framing was quickly followed by a more exuberant style in the late sixteenth and seventeenth century, which became known as the Shrewsbury School of Carpentry. The style is characterised by close studding, S-braces, cable-mouldings, sunken quatrefoils, diagonal and herringbone struts and vine scrolling. The excessive decoration of the buildings was as a direct result of the development of the cloth trade in Shrewsbury and the resultant population explosion and increase in wealth.

There are a number of particularly well preserved examples within the current townscape, again concentrated on the main thoroughfares and commercial streets, for example, Ireland's Mansion, at the heart of the town, and James the Second in Mardol (Plate 17).

As well as their dramatic facades, their rooflines are punctuated by end on gables or large pitched roof dormers, which break-up the regularised brick parapets and cornices of the surrounding, largely Georgian, roofscape.



Plate 16: Mardol



Plate 17: Ireland's Mansion

This style of construction continued into the seventeenth century but appears to have terminated once the fire regulations implemented in London had filtered down to the more rural districts. The 1707 Act also resulted in the 'fire proofing' of many of the seventeenth and some sixteenth century timber structures through the construction of brick facades and parapets to protect the roof eaves.

4.1.2 Stone



Plate 18: St Julian's Church Tower

The solid geology underlying Shropshire and outcropping at various distances from Shrewsbury is essentially red-pink sandstone. Recent archaeological and geological research has identified three principal types of sandstone used as a construction material in the town centre including, Keele Bed Sandstone, Grinshill Sandstone and Triassic Sandstone. The earliest stone, and probably the most easily accessible, was the Keele Bed Sandstone which was used in the construction of all of the early churches, but now only evident at St Julian's (Plate 18) and St Mary's, the Town Walls and the Castle (Plate 19).

The construction of the Town Walls from beginning of the thirteenth century influenced a trend in the construction of stone domestic buildings, in the same material, by 1260. Surviving examples are concentrated along the main, commercial streets such as the Square and Pride Hill and comprised first floor halls raised above undercrofts, some of which were vaulted. The properties were all high status and therefore invariably set back from the street frontage and as a consequence are largely absorbed into the later surrounding townscape. In addition, many of these early structures are only retained as undercrofts, the stone upper floors being replaced with later timber frames. However they are an important historical resource and add depth to the fabric of the current townscape.

Contemporary with the use of Keele Bed sandstone was the finer and more costly Grinshill sandstone. During the thirteenth century, it was principally used as a facing material and for high status building and detailing such as the mural tower on the Town Walls and the door at Bennet's Hall. Its use probably continued unchecked into the sixteenth century until the increase in the wealth of the town enabled the construction of a series of large public buildings in Grinshill, the most notable being the Market Hall (Plate 20) situated



Plate 19: The Castle

in The Square and the present Library off School Gardens.

The third major type of sandstone identified in the construction of later parts of the Abbey complex and one of the friaries, is known as triassic sandstone. Its prevalence in domestic construction did not occur until the sixteenth and seventeenth century when it was primarily used in the construction of undercrofts for properties such as Ireland's Mansion and Rowley's Mansion.

4.1.3 BRICK

There are essentially three types of brick which predominate in the town centre, Orange-red (Georgian), Ruabon-red (Victorian), and the machine-made (Modern). However, brick was first introduced in the town in the fifteenth century where it was quickly established as a suitable material for chimney construction. Two, particularly old, examples survive off Grope lane and at the King's Head. However by the turn of the century, brick had become readily accepted as a mass wall component and brick buildings became a feature of the town.



Plate 20: The Library

4 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC QUALITIES OF BUILDINGS

The earliest brick structure in the town centre is Rowley's mansion house, which is detailed in Grinshill stone and with its stone window mullions and rectangular bay window, typical of the architecture of the late sixteenth century. However the use of brick has become synonymous with the classically inspired and regulated architecture of the Georgian period (eighteenth century) of which plenty of examples survive in Shrewsbury.

The impetus behind the switch from timber to brick was principally fire prevention, although developments in aesthetic tastes in architecture also led to more regulated and uniform facades. Georgian buildings, and earlier properties with Georgian brick façades, are characterised by stone classical pediments and cornices with brick parapets; evenly spaced sash and blind windows; large centralised panelled doorways with fanlights above and decorative details such as string

Plate 22: The former Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital, Murivance



courses and quoins. Examples of this style exist on all of the streets in the town centre such as the Guildhall (Plate 21) and predominate in those streets furthest away from the Medieval town centre. The introduction of the tax on bricks in the eighteenth century resulted in the introduction of the characteristic “Great Brick” designed to overcome the effects of the tax.

Brick together with stone continues to predominate as the main construction material through the Victorian period and terracotta was also used as decoration. These later buildings are generally characterised by their darker Ruabon and diaper brickwork, their use of special decorative bricks for embellishments in Buildings of the Gothic Revival, and later Queen Anne Revival, and the Arts and Crafts Style. The former Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital in Murivance (Plate 22) is constructed in red hand pressed Ruabon brick with terracotta string courses and cornices.



Plate 21: The Guildhall, Dogpole

4.2 Listed Buildings

Whilst there are approximately 238 listed structures distributed within the river loop, there are concentrations along the main streets, Wyle Cop, High Street and Mardol, and many retain the old burgage plots. Figures 4 and 7 show the locations, dates and grades of all of the listed buildings in the area.

The most significant, both in terms of their architectural impact and historic links with the development of the town are churches of St Mary's, St Julian's and the remains of St Chad's (Plate 23). Substantial elements of the structures date to the early Medieval period, however all of the churches have been altered and continually extended since their construction and retain elements of architectural styles through the ages.

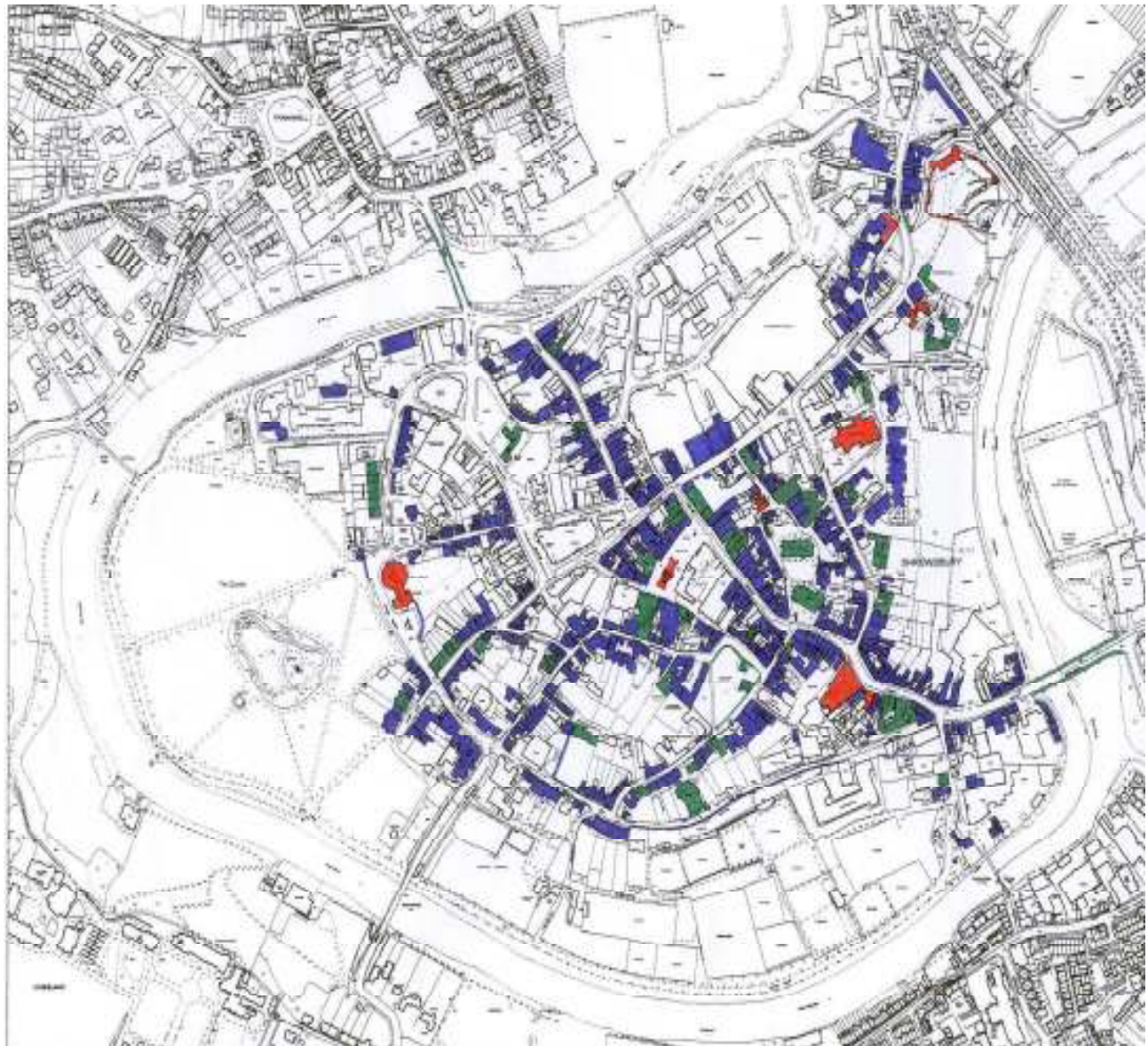


Plate 23: Old St. Chad's Church

4.2.1 Grade 1

In addition to St Mary's and St Chad's, there are a further eight Grade I listed buildings of outstanding local and national significance within the river loop. The majority of these structures are timber-framed and date to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and together form a group of buildings, which have played a vital role in the social and economic development of the town.

4 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC QUALITIES OF BUILDINGS



Key

-  Grade I Listed Buildings
-  Grade II* Listed Buildings
-  Grade II Listed Buildings

Figure 7: Location and Grading of Listed Buildings
Shrewsbury Town Centre

The Lion Hotel originally dates to the fifteenth century, but is most renowned for its pivotal role in the development of Shrewsbury's polite society during the eighteenth century. Thomas Farnolls Pritchard seriously remodelled the properties that now comprise the hotel in the 1750's for Roger Kynaston and John Ashby. On completion of the work the hotel had become the most popular venue for the Shrewsbury Hunt to assemble in the Adam Ballroom and was the centre of the increasing coach transport industry principally between London and Shrewsbury.

The Abbots House and 71-72 Wyle Cop (Plate 24) are two fine examples of fifteenth and sixteenth century timber-framed town houses, retaining much of their original fabric, fixtures and fittings. Roughly contemporary with these examples is the market hall completed by Walter Hancock in 1596. The market hall was built to serve as a grain storage facility and to provide cover for the regular market, which acted as an economic gauge to the towns success and a focal point for social activities.

4.2.2 Grade II*

The Church of St Chad's was built in 1790-92, by George Steuart of London (Plate 25) and is one of the few buildings built within the town attributed to a nationally renowned architect. The church was constructed following the collapse of Old St Chad's some two years earlier and is classical in style. The design is centred on a rotunda with smooth rustication below and elegant Ionic pilasters above. On the entrance side, there is a stately portico supported by four Tuscan columns.

There are 49 grade II* listed buildings most of which were designed and built by locally renowned architects, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Cathedral by Edward Welsby Pugin in 1856, to a design approved by his famous father, Augustus W. N. Pugin (Plate 26). At least half of these buildings are timber-framed, ranging in date from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century and situated along the ancient east-west route (the High Street and Mardol), the northern route (Castle Street and Pride Hill) and St Mary's and St Chad's precincts.

The remainder, which are largely of brick and date to the seventeenth century onwards, are situated towards the south and south-west of the town, up against the town walls.



Plate 24: 71-72 Wyle Cop



Plate 25: St Chad's



Plate 26: Roman Catholic Cathedral, Town Walls

4.2.3 Grade II

The remainder, which are largely of brick and date to the seventeenth century onwards, are situated towards the south and south-west of the town, up against the town walls (Figure 7). These streets were largely formalised during the rapid social developments in the eighteenth century. The contribution of the great architect builders to the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, can be seen in the works of the Haywards, the Carlines and the Haycocks. Howard Colvin in his *Dictionary of British Architects* sets out the way in which these powerful families were related by marriage, and lists the buildings they designed in the town.

The major routes through the town are lined with grade II listed buildings, the majority of which date to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The diversity and range of styles and plan types are extreme and essential to the character of the current townscape. Furthermore they provide historical detail to the later development of the town including the scheme of road widening affecting Barker Street and Wyle Cop and the schemes of sanitation which affected Fish Street and Butcher Row.

The Royal Insurance Building constructed in 1903 is one of the more notable buildings, which is situated at Mardol Head and designed by the Liverpool architect J. Francis Doyle. The Portland Stone façade was essentially the prototype of the company style and was planned two years before Doyle designed the head offices for the Royal Insurance in Dale Street, Liverpool.

4.3 Architecture and Public Art



Plate 27: Timber Carving,
Mardol

Public Art in Shrewsbury reflects the cultural heritage of the town offering some insight into the role of public art, over the years, in marking individual and civic pride, in celebrating past lives and achievements as well as signifying aspirations for the future of the town and its people. This work whilst enhancing the townscape also provides distinctive landmarks, by which people congregate, rest and negotiate the busy urban environment.

The variety of artworks around the town demonstrates clearly that the people of Shrewsbury have always placed a high value on the visual interest of their surroundings. The medieval wall painting in The King's Head Public House



Plate 28: Statue of Darwin, Library Castle Gates



Plate 29: Lion's Head, Water Conduit, Town Walls

Mardol and the half timbered properties carrying elaborate carvings (Plate 27), are a measure of the pride and investment made by Shrewsbury's earlier developers.

The eighteenth and twentieth century fashion for classical sculpture, monuments and memorials bears evidence not only to the great figures of the past (Clive, Lord Hill and Darwin (Plate 28, 29 and 30)), but also to the investment made at that time by local people. The statue of Charles Darwin in the grounds of the main library, Castle Street being commissioned by public subscription.

Recent public art activity has produced some good and interesting new work, the majority of which has been executed with considerable sensitivity to the historical environment, at times also accommodating contemporary themes, as in the case of Frank Trigg's 1990 work at 16 High Street. The work is based on a Renaissance vine motif that was popular in the region during the 16th century, but also incorporates a number of references to contemporary historical events and is an excellent example of the use of contemporary art to reinvigorate an historical idiom.



Plate 30: Lord Hill's Column, Abbey Foregate

5. THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY KEY UNLISTED BUILDINGS

Although the majority of buildings in the centre of town are listed, there are a few key unlisted buildings which positively contribute to the character of the area.



Plate 31: The Market Hall



Plate 32: Lloyd's Bank, Pride Hill

The most significant of these is the Market Hall, built during the 1960's, it dominates the west of the town and has become a key feature on the overall skyline (Plate 31). The hall proper is an unprepossessing pre-cast concrete structure, typical of the Modernist style, bearing no contextual relationship with the surrounding townscape. However the brick tower is a post-war evocation of the Dutch school of brick design and as such is a good example of its type, which is now an accepted feature on the town's skyline and should be preserved.

Lloyd's Bank also built in the 1960's, situated at the southern end of Pride Hill has received a national Civic Trust Commendation for its innovative contribution to the streetscape

(Plate 32). Made of in-situ, board marked concrete in the “Brutalist” Style, the building mimics the jetties of the timber-framed buildings, which characterise much of Shrewsbury’s townscape. The structure and its scale are considered as contributing rather than detracting from the historic streetscape.

At the western end of Claremont Street, is the Claremont Baptist church built in 1878, which is set back from the building line and introduces a point of relief from the surrounding modern buildings. Whilst the building itself has little outstanding architectural character, its situation acts as a link with the older, historic fabric of Claremont Hill and Rowley’s Mansion. The structure is enclosed behind iron railings and comprises a redbrick classically pedimented façade enriched with artificial stone Corinthian pilasters and a balustraded parapet (Plate 33).



Plate 33: Claremont Baptist Church, Claremont Street

Along Castle Street, there is an imposing range of buildings in a Gothic Arts and Crafts Edwardian style formerly the Shrewsbury Co-operative department store which make an important contribution to the street (Plate 34). The building’s turreted gables and variety of detail have made it an important local landmark along the main northern route into the town centre.

Of the more recent developments, Blackfriars just off St. Mary’s Water Lane is a new residential development built in the 1990’s in the Neo-Georgian style. The two blocks of development follow the contour of the land along the river bank and enrich the view of the town from the English Bridge.



Plate 34: Former Co-op Building Castle Street

The remaining unlisted buildings provide the basic fabric that defines the character of the conservation area and help to form the streetscape and groups within which the prominent buildings are set.

6. THE CHARACTER AND RELATIONSHIP OF SPACES WITHIN THE AREA

Whilst space is always going to be limited in walled market town, public open spaces and the routes between them are a significant part of the townscape and represent the more hidden part of Shrewsbury's character.

In his book, "Townscape" the late Gordon Cullen captures the spirit of Shrewsbury when he describes it as "two towns intricately mingled". The first is the one of "Shops and queues – in which most people spend most time". The second is the "secret town, the quiet collegiate system of quads and squares, accessible but aloof, grave and intricate". The first is based on traffic routes and the second on pedestrian ways and spaces, but the latter he maintained, has been cut up by the former into "isolated quads and churchyards- very pleasant in themselves, but lacking the authority of a single unified network". He concluded that in spite of his criticisms, this "inner pedestrian town" still possesses considerable charm and character; "functions vary, the scale fluctuates, architectural styles mingle and change of level produces drama and intricacy.

Generally there are four different types of open space within the town, and although the network of shuts and passageways, does not strictly speaking fit into this categorisation, it is an important feature of the public realm and is worthy of inclusion as a fifth element.

- Large enclosed urban precincts
- Small, privately owned courtyards
- Privately owned back gardens
- Large open pleasure grounds
- Network of shuts and passages

6.1 Large Urban Precincts

Within the town centre proper, there are five main public precincts, The Castle (Plate 35), St. Alkmund's, St Mary's, Old St Chad's and The Square, providing a measure of solitude in the context of a busy market town. Although all are located on the main streets of the town, each one of these spaces seems almost incidental to the route, as their presence may only be indicated by a gap in the townscape and a view only subsequently revealed on arrival. This is perhaps because



Plate 35: The Square

these spaces originate from medieval times when monastic, castle precincts and market places became enclosed by the historic core of the town, on all sides.

These precincts are essentially characterised by large, impressive public buildings which dominate their surroundings, focusing attention and drawing the visitor further into the space. Whilst the Castle differs to the others, since it is bounded by stone walls rather than by multi-period properties, all still retain a high degree of enclosure. Generally, these precincts are simply landscaped with a combination of manmade and natural surfaces, as well as providing an opportunity for trees to feature within the urban area. This not only softens the lines of the surrounding structures, but also provides an attractive and shaded area in which to relax.



Plate 36: Dogpole Court

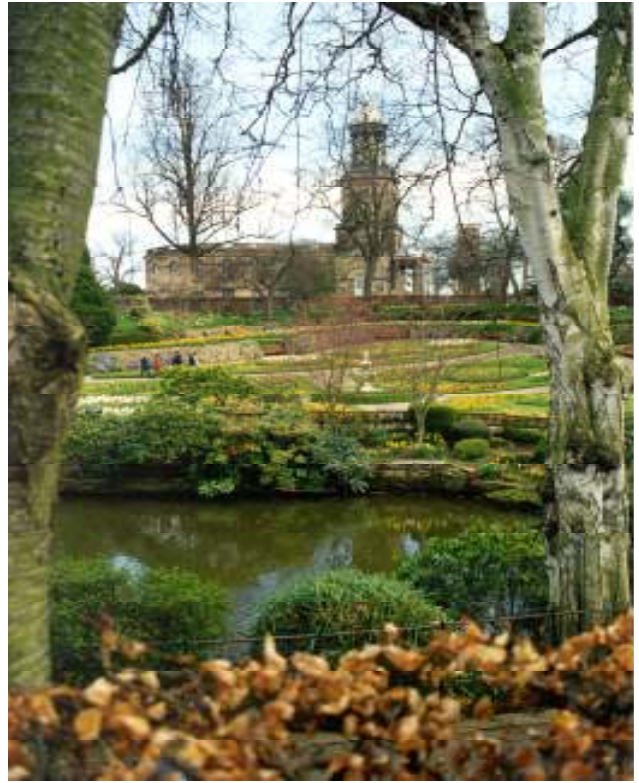


Plate 37: The Dingle, The Quarry

6.2 Small, Privately Owned Courtyards

These spaces are similar to the larger urban precincts, since they too appear almost incidental to the main routes, but in contrast their presence is almost imperceptible. These courtyards are generally accessed through a gateway and passageway under the building, giving a restricted view of the residential properties beyond.

Whilst such courtyards were constructed during different periods, they were generally to provide access to exclusive town residences, which were sheltered from the hustle and bustle of the street. Examples can be seen across the length of the town at Council House Court, Castle Court, Swan Hill Court, Draper's Court, St Julian's Churchyard, Kenneth Court and Dogpole Court (Plate 36).

6.3 Privately Owned Rear Gardens

To the south and east of the commercial core, there is a belt of green space, which was formalised into the back gardens of the large townhouses built during the eighteenth

century. Generally, the gardens to the rear of properties along College Hill, Swan Hill, Swan Hill Court, Belmont and Dogpole cannot be viewed directly, there are a number of instances where brief glimpses can be obtained, for example, along Town Walls, the rear of properties along Belmont can be seen.

6.4 Large Open Pleasure Grounds

Situated outside the town walls is the large formalised open space known as The Quarry, which is the subject of its own conservation appraisal document (Plate 37). However, its development is mentioned here primarily because it was pivotal to the expansion of the town during the eighteenth century and is included on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, as a Grade II listed garden.

Having originally been a quarry where stone and clay were extracted, The Quarry was formalised into a large park where polite society were able to indulge in their favourite pass-time of promenading. Originally the Quarry extended and enclosed almost a third of the town's southern perimeter, but has over the years it has been reduced to half its original size. The remaining land has subsequently been developed for recreation and leisure activities in the form of tennis courts, bowling greens and school playing fields.

6.5 Shuts and Passageways

The network of shuts and passageways originated during Medieval times allowing access to properties constructed behind the main street frontages. In contrast to the private courtyards, these developed into public walkways and many still survive, albeit in a disjointed fashion.

The shuts allow the pedestrian to pass under or alongside the commercial facades and experience the more historically intact and interesting sections of the town centre. In some instances, the route is quite narrow and often constricted, particularly where the upper floors of adjacent buildings jetty out into the space, for example along Grope Lane (Plate 38). The restricted view along the shuts emphasises the contrast between the various areas of the town centre, particularly when it accesses one of the main squares and a view of the space is finally revealed.



Plate 38: Grope Lane

7. THE CONTRIBUTION OF GREEN SPACES, HEDGES AND TREES AND OTHER NATURAL OR CULTIVATED ELEMENTS TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The trees which exist within the town centre can essentially be divided into two groups, according to whether they are publicly or privately owned.

7.1 Privately Owned Trees

Currently there are a total of 13 Tree Preservation Orders protecting groups and isolated trees of outstanding amenity value within Shrewsbury Town Centre Conservation Area. The majority of these are situated in gardens and enclosed private spaces and are listed in Table , below

Table 2: Trees covered by Preservation Order

Site	TPO No.
Swan Hill House	21
St Chad's Vicarage	41
The Crescent	53
St Chad's Churchyard	54
St Mary's Water Lane	60
Lane House, Quarry Place	65
21 Dogpole	68
1 Dogpole Court	74
Arlington Way	206
Judges Lodging, 6 Belmont	256
25 The Crescent	292
Land Off St Mary's Water Lane	299
Land off Crescent Fields	335

The majority of the private TPO's are mature and well-established trees (with a lifespan of over 100 years). However these are intermingled with a smaller, less enduring, flowering fruit trees and bushes. None of the privately owned trees are being regularly managed or are subject to a replanting scheme. This means that circumstances may arise in the near future whereby trees within the conservation area are coming to the ends of their lifespan and are not being replaced.



Plate 39: Trees, St Chad's Churchyard

7.2 Trees within the Public Realm

The Borough Council is generally responsible for the management of trees within the urban area that are not situated within private gardens. As outlined earlier, most of the public open spaces such as the Quarry, Old St Chad's and St Alkmund's cemetery feature some trees (Plate 39) and additional groups are located along the river and in the garden of the Guildhall. The Borough Council continually checks trees within the town to ensure that they retain their amenity value and anticipate where replanting may be required as mature trees reach the end of their natural life. Conservation Area Designation affords blanket protection to all trees with a girth over 150mm within the river loop.

7.3 Hedgerows

Within the town centre there are also a number of hedgerows surviving within the urban landscape which were originally used to delineate plot boundaries. Whilst many hedgerows were replaced with railings set on low stone walls, during the War the railings were also removed leaving only the low wall. In some instances, such as at St Alkmund's (Plate 40) and St Julian's, a beech hedge has been introduced, which softens the property boundary, and reinforces the change of function between the cemetery and the public footpath. In the Quarry, particularly around the Dingle, the hedgerows emphasise the different and varied functions of the site as well as enriching the landscape generally.



Plate 40: Beech Hedge, St Alkmund's

8.0 THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT TO THE LANDSCAPE OR OPEN COUNTRYSIDE, INCLUDING THE DEFINITION OF SIGNIFICANT LANDMARKS, VISTAS AND PANORAMAS

The juxtaposition of differing building types, materials and scales complemented by the variety of vegetation and natural topography of the land have combined to form a series of exciting and evocative views which are revealed at particular locations around the town. Both the Shropshire County Structure Plan and the Shrewsbury and Atcham emerging Local Plan contain policies designed to protect views in and out of the Town Centre and for ease of reference, these views have been categorised into three

- Views into the Town
- Views out of the Town
- Views within the Urban Fabric.

8.1 Views into the Town

On a clear day, the skyline of the town can generally be seen from many of the surrounding hills, the Wrekin, Haughmond Hill, etc. Moving closer to the town centre, there are few opportunities to see the skyline, due to the natural topography and landscaped bunds alongside roads and therefore it is important to retain those that still survive.



Plate 41: Skyline from A5

On the A5 bypass, the skyline of the town can be seen to the north-east across the floodplain of the river around Sundorne and also to the south, approaching Bayston Hill from Weeping Cross where there is a view across the fields and Meole Brace Retail Park (Plate 41). To the north, on approach to the town from Berwick Road, a view of the spires and roofscape of the town is visible between the crown spreads of the trees. Similarly, a view from Ellesmere Road and Coton Hill is revealed but in two halves., the eastern side visible from the railway bridge and the western side on turning into Coton Hill and travelling down the hill alongside the river. Just outside the river loop, the spires and roofscape can be clearly seen on approach along Old Potts Way to the east, and at various points to the south, for example along Longden Road.



Plate 42: The view of the Town Centre from Kingsland Bank

One of the most impressive and distinctive views from the south, however, can be seen from the top of the Kingsland escarpment where it is possible to see the whole of the Quarry, defined by the river meander and set against the town skyline . The panorama is an impressive combination of tree-lined walks , suffused in summer, with the colour and textures of an abundance of blooms and vegetation in leaf, which soften the myriad of building materials, textures and colours of the man-made structures beyond. To the north, the Quarry is abruptly curtailed by the unremitting line of the Medieval town wall and dominated by the elevation of New St Chad's (Plate 42).

Although this view is important for its obvious aesthetic properties, it is perhaps the earliest surviving historic landscape within the core of the town and as such is vital to our comprehension of Shrewsbury's historic setting as a walled Medieval hill town.

An equally significant view is that of the continuation of the greenbelt of floodplain to the east as viewed on approach to the town from the English bridge. To the right of the bridge, the scene is defined by the extent of the medieval town wall, where the built environment is characterised by a less varied series of large red brick residences and the rear of the former Infirmary building, an ashlar faced structure built in 1826-30. Like the Quarry, the greenbelt of the floodplain was formalised as terraced gardens in the eighteenth century to the rear of the Guildhall. The retention of the site as an open green space has meant that a vital part of the historic setting of the town has been retained (Plate 43)



Plate 43: The view from English Bridge

8.2 Views out of the Town Centre



Plate 44: Shrewsbury School

Whilst these views are perhaps less significant than the views into the town centre, there are a few which are worthy of note.

From the south, there is an impressive view across the Quarry back towards Kingsland, where Shrewsbury School dominates the top of the opposing river bank (Plate 44). To the west, there are views across the river to Frankwell, from the top of Claremont Bank, where St George's Church, built in 1832 can clearly be seen. Further north, along Smithfield Road, there is a pleasant view of the river which encircles the playing fields of Frankwell, with the buildings along Coton Hill behind. To the east, there is an interesting view from the rear of the Guildhall, across to Whitehall, the Abbey, the spire of the United Reformed Church and Lord Hill's Column.

8.3 Views within the Urban Area

The Combination of the natural topography and the tight medieval street pattern has created an environment where the scenery is not shown all at once. Gordon Cullen in the book "Townscape" calls this process "Serial Vision" where "the scenery of towns is often revealed in a series of jerks and revelations". The streets of the town centre illustrate this particularly well since many have slight bends or curves which obscure the end view, for example, travelling over the English bridge into town, the route up the hill is only revealed on approaching the junction between Wyle Cop, attention is then focused on the Lion Hotel which is situated at point where the street bends round to meet Dogpole and the High Street beyond (Plate 45).



Plate 45: Serial Views: Wyle Cop

Whilst the main streets of the town, like the High Street and Pride Hill are emphasised by the fact that they are straight,

they too reveal a series of interesting views. For example, at the start of the High Street, to the right, there is a view of St Alkmund's and St Julian's along Fish Street and to the left a glimpse of old St Chad's via Milk Street, further along The Square, the Old Market Hall and the Music hall beyond are also revealed.

Complementing these views are a number of focal points and key landmarks, which serve to channel or draw the visitor into the heart of the town (Figure 10). The majority are large imposing buildings which dominate the townscape, such as the Castle, Rowley's Mansion House, the Market Hall and the Churches. Although the remaining landmarks may not feature on the town skyline, they are no less significant, for example, the Old Market Hall and the County Library, formerly occupied by Shrewsbury School before its relocation to Kingsland Bank. The importance of these two buildings is emphasised by the statues which sit in front of them, the statue of Lord Clive in front of the Old Market Hall (Plate 46) and a statue of Charles Darwin in front of the library, both of which are listed Grade II.

In addition, a number of focal points are located at the head of major streets where market crosses once stood. These points occur in three areas of the town, at Mardol Head, the head of the High Street and at the junction between Castle Street and St Mary's Street.

Away from the commercial core, there is an attractive view of the roofscape of the town, which can really only be appreciated during the winter, from the highest point of the town in the grounds of the ruined church of Old St Chad's. The view is dominated by the steeples of St Mary's and St Alkmund's, which sit in a cascade of roofs, gables and chimney's softened by an occasional group of trees.

Another interesting view of the town which survives can be viewed from Smithfield Road, between the garage and the Proud Salopian public House (Plate 47). Here the development of the burgage plots to the rear of the properties along Mardol and the subsequent extensions, illustrate the density of the way in which sites were colonised.

As this study area is not on the periphery of the settlement, its relationship with the open countryside is limited to those sections of the original landscape preserved within the river loop.



Plate 46: Statue of Clive
The Square



Plate 47: View from Smithfield
Road

9. THE EXTENT OF LOSS, INTRUSION OR DAMAGE TO THE CONSERVATION AREA: THE NEGATIVE FACTORS

Within a walled town like Shrewsbury, the demand for space has inevitably meant that parts of the urban area have been redeveloped and buildings have been lost, but the level of character and quality have generally never been reproduced. Whilst the development process has been able to address this to a certain extent, the loss and unsympathetic replacement of traditional features or materials, is often more difficult to detect. On a daily basis, the replacement of individual items may not be damaging in themselves, but collectively and over a period of time, the character and appearance of the townscape could change quite dramatically. Therefore, the repair and use of traditional materials, needs to be maintained and encouraged, if the town is to retain its local distinctiveness.



Plate 48: Rowley's House
and St. Austin's
Street Car Park

9.1 Loss of Townscape

One of the key characteristics of the townscape is the high degree of enclosure which has been created by the medieval street pattern and where this has been compromised, the richness, diversity and legibility of the townscape is reduced, often leaving areas of "no man's land". An unfortunate illustration of this is the area around Rowleys House which was once hidden from view by

surrounding property, but was exposed during the twentieth century and left isolated from its surroundings. The setting of the building is severely compromised by the surface car parking which flanks it on two sides and the indiscriminate location of a number of trees immediate outside.

9.2 Loss of Features

As outlined above, the demolition or removal of features can strip an attractive building of its decoration, individuality and authenticity and where they have been replaced, it is often with inappropriate alternatives or unsympathetic materials. The contrast is most acute, where shop fronts have been replaced without regard to the style, proportion and detailing of the building and there are many examples within the commercial core. Supplementary guidance is now available from both the Borough Council, The English Historic Towns Forum and English Heritage on the design of shop fronts in the historic environment.

Around the town, various features that were once common place have gradually disappeared and not been replaced, for example, cobbles, boundary walls and railings which retain the line of the street as well as creating interest. There are a number of instances where the effect has been damaging, for example, around St Alkmund's, the railings that once delineated the perimeter of the churchyard were removed during the War and never replaced. Along Town Walls, a brick boundary wall has been removed and replaced with boarding (Plate 49).



Plate 49: Boundary wall, Town Walls

9.3 Inappropriate Buildings

During the twentieth century, there have been a number of instances where views into and out of the town have been compromised by poorly situated, large scale developments with big areas of blank façade and have little respect for their urban context. This has been most acutely illustrated by large modern buildings that are out of scale, dominate the surrounding area and draw all attention away from the more picturesque elements of the town.



Plate 50: Pride Hill & Charles Darwin Shopping Centre beyond



Plate 51: Service Yard, Pride Hill/ Riverside Centre

Unfortunately the western approach to the town centre has suffered most from this practice, due to the combination of the Darwin Centre, together with the service yards to rear of the Pride Hill Centre, two multi storey car parks at Raven Meadows and St. Austin's Street and Telephone House. Of these, the biggest disfigurement has been the Darwin Centre, one of two multi-levelled, shopping centres during the 1980's (Plate 50 and 51). Whilst the impact along Pride Hill is minimal, the large scale and mass of building development is clearly apparent from the Welsh Bridge. The nature of the plan form and construction has created a vast mock timber rear façade and an almost uniform skyline, which has wiped out any appreciation of the natural topography. This is in sharp contrast to the lively and diverse outline of the historic townscape of Shrewsbury with the spires and towers of its churches when viewed on approach to the town.

On the Eastern side of the town centre, the telephone exchange situated just off Beeches lane and adjacent to the town walls is an equally disturbing sight. This modern building towers above the area of open space which was outside the town walls, much of which has been retained to the west of the building.

There are many more minor "blemishes" which have been brought about by modern building design and practice, for example, the increased use of air conditioning, lifts, telecommunication links, etc. The roofscape of the town has subsequently been littered with extract ducts, flues, servicing plants, satellite dishes and telecommunication masts which are ugly and often poorly sited. Policies in the emerging Local Plan are designed to make developers and their architects take account of the appearance of such equipment at the design stage to prevent the current situation from becoming worse.

9.4 Intrusive Signage

This section essentially falls into two categories, road signs and commercial/ retail signs/ advertisements.

In the former instance, the Borough Council in consultation with the County Council as the Highway Authority has sought to lessen the impact of statutory highway signage on the character and appearance of the Town Centre Conservation Area and has achieved nationally acclaimed

success in the High Street Improvement Scheme. This has resulted in a reduction of traffic signs and removal of double yellow lines and signed traffic crossings.

In the latter case, the quality of the shop fronts and the character of the conservation area generally can be compromised by inappropriate signage. On Barker Street, Town Walls, Castle Gates and Smithfield Road there are numerous examples of overly large fascias, enlarged commercial logos with garish colours or signs made of inappropriate materials, all of which draw the eye away from the architecture and the historic context.

9.5 Painting External Facades

The use of coloured external render is not a particular problem within the town centre conservation area, since the majority of buildings are treated with neutral or naturally pigmented tones of lime wash, for example, 2 and 3 Milk Street and 42 High Street. However there are a few occasions where bright, intrusive paints have been applied to rendered facades, but these should generally be avoided as they detract from the character and appearance of the historic town centre.

9.6 Inappropriate Surfaces

A vital contribution to the historic character of an area is the nature of associated ground surfaces and their treatment.

Whilst the High Street Improvement Scheme shows that careful planning as well as care and attention to detail can significantly enhance the character of an area, there are many instances within the town which could benefit from a similar approach. St Mary's Court, which is particularly important in terms of its historic and aesthetic contribution to the town, has been severely neglected with regards to its roads, pavements and property entrances (Plate 52).

Unfortunately statutory undertakers installing or repairing services such as cable and water, tend to accentuate the problem of different road surface treatments, often leaving a patchwork of tarmacadam and asphalt repairs as well as numerous colours of paintspray identification marks (Plate 53).



Plate 52: Patchwork of tarmac cadam, St Mary's Place



Plate 53: Different surfaces, Butcher Row

10. DESIGN GUIDANCE AND ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

As well as preserving Conservation Areas, there is also a need to maintain them and provide short and long-term strategies for their enhancement. The implementation of such strategies and proposals is through the three main mechanisms of legislation, policy and grant aid.

A CONSERVATION AREA STRATEGY: Shrewsbury Town Centre

10.1 Development Control

The framework provided by legislation for the control of development and especially that part of it which deals with sites within Conservation Areas is a very useful tool to use in shaping the future of the Town Centre.

In considering the appropriateness of a proposal within the Shrewsbury Town Centre, it should be tested against a number of questions based on the following four words;

- Preserve
- Enhance
- Character
- Appearance

In terms of any development application, the questions to be asked are therefore:

- Does the development proposal preserve the character of the conservation area ?
- Does the development proposal enhance the character of the conservation area ?
- Does the development proposal preserve the appearance of the conservation area ?
- Does the development proposal enhance the appearance of the conservation area ?

There are three answers to these questions:-

- YES
- NO
- NEUTRAL

It is the overall picture provided by these questions which will guide the judgement on the effect of a development proposal on the conservation area.

If the answers are “Yes” or “Neutral” this and other “material considerations” are weighed against each other and a recommendation is subsequently made. If, however, the answer is “No” a development application would normally be recommended for refusal.

**The case law on which this test is based derives from the South Lakeland District Council v Secretary of State for the environment and Carlisle Diocesan parsonage Board 1991 (JPL 654 and 1992 All ER573)*

10.2 Design Matters

In controlling development within the Shrewsbury Town Centre Conservation Area, the Borough Council as the Local Planning authority has a statutory duty to pay “special attention” to the need to preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of the conservation area. Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 advises that special regard will be given to such matters as:-

- Height
- Scale
- Form
- Massing
- Respect for the traditional pattern of frontages
- Vertical and horizontal emphasis
- Detailed Design

In line with policies in the emerging Borough Local Plan and advice given in PPG 15, the Council will require that applicants for Planning Permission and Listed Building/Conservation Area Consent supply accurate scaled drawings, based on a survey of the site and any buildings affected by the proposed development. This may include buildings outside the development area, since any proposed design should be illustrated “in context” with the buildings on either side of say, a street frontage or perhaps a whole street, where it can be judged that the building may have an impact.

Drawings with disclaimer notes such as “do not scale” or “assumed or approximate” will not be accepted. Applicants should also consider the extent to which the supply of additional supplementary information to accompany their application may assist the Development Control Committee and Officers in judging proposals in context. These can take the form of models, perspectives or CAD presentations.

The height, scale and appearance of development proposals when viewed from outside the Town Centre may also be a consideration when judging the effect of a development proposal on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Equally the appearance of a development and its effect on the silhouette of the town when seen from outside the town centre, or from major approach routes, for example, will also be a consideration when judging the quality of a development proposal.

Major or contentious applications affecting sensitive sites may be referred by the Local Planning Authority for independent advice on design matters from The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, (C.A.B.E).

10.3 Use of Materials

Whilst consideration will always be given to the approval of good contemporary design solutions so long as they are judged to be in context and pass the tests set out in paragraph 9.3 above, development proposals should respect the range of traditional building materials which contribute to the local distinctiveness of buildings in Shrewsbury. Often materials are a finite and non renewable resource such as glazed mediaeval tiles. Advice should be sought from the Conservation Section on the supply and sources of local building materials at an early stage in the formulation of proposals. The Section operates a small conservation store able to supply a limited range of materials for the proper repair of listed buildings in the town

10.4 Urban Design

Urban Design essentially aims to encourage the development of a better quality environment without compromising the existing one and so compliments conservation and this document, but it goes further by

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vation and this document, but it goes further by emphasising the “human element”, making places not just spaces.

“Planning Policy Guidance Note 1: General Policy and Principles” (1997), was the first time that urban design had been mentioned under the more general heading of “Design” and described it as *“the complex relationships between all the elements of the built and unbuilt space”* (paragraph 14). But more significantly, it was the first time that urban design was, by implication, a material consideration, when determining planning applications, as the PPG states *“the appearance and treatment of the spaces between and around buildings is often comparable importance to the design of the buildings themselves”* (paragraph 14).

Since then, the Government has increasingly emphasised the importance of urban design, which culminated in the publication of “By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: towards better practice” (2000), by the DETR in conjunction with The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. The guide has been prepared to “promote higher standards in urban design” and emphasise “three simple, but compelling principles”:

- Good design is important everywhere, not least in bringing rundown, neglected places back to life
- The planning system has a key role to play in delivering better design, the creation of successful places depends on the skill of designers and the vision and commitment of those who employ them.
- No two places are identical and there is no such thing as a blueprint for good design. Good design always arises from a thorough and caring understanding of place and its context.

Like the Conservation Area Appraisal Documents, “By Design” essentially emphasises that the key to any successful design or development starts with existing environment. Consequently, it sets out a number of “objectives” which although not an exclusive list, can be used in order to gain a better appreciation of the urban (or rural) context. Whilst this Conservation Area Appraisal Document has identified and described important aspects of the Shrewsbury’s Town Centre Conservation Area,

(Figure 1), the list of objectives has been reproduced to summarise particular aspects of the appraisal.

10.41 Objectives of Urban Design

- **Character:** *A place with its own identity*
To promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture.
Shrewsbury: natural topography, formation of east west route and geographical setting, within the River Severn Meander created distinct landscape and skyline and so views in and out of the town are very important. Strong historical origin, formation of town walls containing development and encouraging formation of the tight urban grain and burgage plots, around the commercial core, which becomes less defined within the residential area to the south.
- **Continuity and Enclosure:** *A place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished*
To promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas.
Shrewsbury: Tight Medieval street network and dense development creates a high degree of enclosure and sense of public and private, created by relationship of streets to open spaces. Continuity breaks down around West End and along Smithfield Road.
- **Quality of the Public Realm:** *A place with attractive and successful outdoor areas*
To promote spaces and routes that are attractive, safe uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people.
Shrewsbury: has an important network of routes and a significant amount of open space within the centre, although the former is not as efficient as it could be and therefore does not serve the latter as successfully as it might. Generally with the exception of the High Street, the quality of the public realm is somewhat cluttered and could be much improved by a holistic approach to planning the town centre street furniture.

- **Ease of Movement:** *A place that is easy to get to and move through.*

To promote accessibility and local permeability by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport.

Shrewsbury: Natural topography and the tight urban grain means that accessibility is problematic, limited points of entry, gradient of the land, narrow streets, etc. Despite the compact nature of the town and pedestrian movement being easier along the High Street, traffic routes and manoeuvres hamper the ease of movement generally.

- **Legibility:** *A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand*

To promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks

Shrewsbury: urban fabric is complemented by its distinct landmarks and skyline still reflect its origin as a historic market town, but its image has gradually been eroded by the demands of modern society. The one way system, tends to make the town appear more complicated than it really is and the increase in street clutter, particularly, signage often confuses rather than simplifies matters.

- **Adaptability:** *A place that can change easily.*

To promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

Shrewsbury: urban fabric is very robust as much of it remains intact despite being subject to immense social and economic changes over the years. However, due to the limited area within the town centre, it cannot accommodate everything and consequently some activity has been located out of town.

- **Diversity:** *A place with variety and choice*

To promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.

Shrewsbury: remains diverse, offering a wide range of choice and opportunity, with a high level of small, often family run local businesses as well as the more commercial high street multiples. However, the former is more in keeping with the overall character of the town, whilst the latter can look incongruous.

Whilst the preceding points are essentially a checklist, their significance is only really emphasised when “translated into development” and so “By Design” sets out the “Aspects of Development Form” that are considered most critical in the preparation of individual schemes.

Although this section covers similar things to that outlined in PPG15, (see section 10.2), both are essentially aimed at trying to stimulate those who have an influence on the built environment and therefore it should not be regarded as a finite list. By prompting those involved to think about these issues, it is hoped that the urban design objectives can be achieved and produce “an intelligent response to local conditions”.

10.42 Aspects of Development Form

- **Layout: Urban Structure:** *The framework of routes that connect locally and more widely and the way developments, routes and open spaces relate to one another*
The layout provides the basic plan on which all other aspects of the form and uses of a development depend.
- **Layout: Urban Grain:** *The pattern of the arrangement of street blocks, plots and their buildings in a settlement*
The degree to which an area’s pattern of blocks and plot subdivisions is respectively small and frequent (fine grain) or large and infrequent (coarse grain).
- **Landscape:** *The character and appearance of land, including its shape form ecology, natural features, colours and elements and the way these components combine*
This includes all open space, including its planting, boundaries and treatment.
- **Density and Mix:** *The amount of development on a given piece of land and the range of uses. Density influences the intensity of development*
The density of a development can be expressed in a number of ways. This could be in terms of plot ratio (particularly for commercial developments), number of dwellings or the number of habitable rooms (for residential developments).

- **Scale: Height:** *Scale is the size of a building in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly in relation to the size of a person. Height determines the impact of development on views, vistas and skylines*

Height can be expressed in terms of the number of floors; height of parapet or ridge; overall height, any of these in combination; a ratio of building height to street width; height relative to particular landmarks or background buildings; or strategic views.

- **Scale: Massing:** *The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings in relation to other buildings and spaces.*

Massing is the three-dimensional expression of the amount of development on a given piece of land.

- **Appearance: Details:** *The craftsmanship, building techniques, decoration styles and lighting of a building or structure.*

This includes all building elements such as openings and bays, entrances and colonades; balconies and roofscape; and the rhythm of the façade.

- **Appearance: Materials:** *The texture, colour, pattern and durability of materials and how they are used.*

The richness of a building lies in its use of materials, which contribute to the attractiveness of its appearance and the character of an area.

10.5 Public Art

Today the understanding of what is public art is perhaps broader than it was. It no longer only includes permanent artwork, sculptures, mosaics, street furniture and the like, but also temporary installations and exhibitions, performance based activity, lighting schemes, interpretation and signage schemes, etc. Public art or art in public places works best when it is site specific, drawing on the locally distinctive qualities of both the built and cultural heritage of an area, whilst also engaging with contemporary practise and audiences.

The development of new public artworks presents an opportunity to involve local people, generating the crucial sense of ownership and civic pride. Involving local artists, investing in the local skills base, also supporting the longer term aspirations of the town.

A Public Art Policy is currently in development and is expected to be in place in 2002.

10.6 Disabled Access & the Historic Environment

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 came into force in October 1999 and has significant implications for the historic environment. Part III of the legislation makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in connection with the provision of goods, facilities and services. From 2004, it will be necessary for service providers to remove, alter or provide a means of avoiding physical features of premises where these make it impossible or unreasonably difficult to access services.

However, it is important to recognise that building conservation poses unique problems in each setting and the preparation of standard guidance to try to overcome such problems makes little sense. Whilst integrated and independent access may be the ideal objective, in practice, it may be difficult due to the nature and architecture of the building.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment states under Paragraph 3.28 that: *“It is important in principle that disabled people should have dignified easy access to and within historic buildings. If it is treated as part of an integrated review of access requirements for all visitors or users, and a flexible and pragmatic approach is taken, it should normally be possible to plan suitable access for disabled people without compromising a building’s special interest. Alternative routes or re-organising the use of spaces may achieve the desired result without the need for damaging alterations”.*

In October 1995, English Heritage prepared a guidance note entitled “Easy Access to Historic Properties” illustrating how better access to historic buildings may be realised and the steps which should be followed to determine whether this can actually be achieved.

10.7 Addressing the “Negative Impacts”

Section 9 of this document outlined a number of aspects that have been lost or detract from the character of the Town Centre Conservation Area. Although it is difficult to replace things that have been lost and reduce the impact of existing buildings, conservation can still have a very positive role to play in this process using the “carrot and stick” approach, for example, promoting guidance and grants, but in some cases, enforcement and prosecution.

10.71 Grants

Since 1981, in line with advice from Government in PPG 15 and also from English Heritage in “Conservation Area Practice”, the Borough Council has been involved in partnership funding of a pro-active programme of grant aid towards the proper repair of historic buildings within the town centre.

In consultation with English Heritage, the Borough Council has targeted buildings in poor condition and through a combination of specialist advice and grants has encouraged owners to not only invest private funds, but also use traditional materials and building techniques to bring them back into a good state of repair (Plate 54 and 55). This has contributed to maintaining the character and appearance of the town ensuring that the benefits of the town centre may be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

The grant schemes administered by the Borough Council have acted as a catalyst for investment and between 1981-2001 they levered in a total investment in the historic fabric of some £10,000,000. However, there are other benefits, such as ensuring the retention of a pool of skilled craftsmen within the town who are able to train and pass on these skills to future generations, thereby ensuring the sustainability of Shrewsbury’s historic buildings.

The fragile nature of the construction of historic buildings in the town especially those which are timber framed, means that they require regular maintenance and repair if they are to survive. This means that grant schemes are a necessary incentive to persuade owners and tenants to invest in the future of the listed building stock which makes such an important contribution to the economic survival of the town.



Plate 54: 27 Wyle Cop (before)



Plate 55: 27 Wyle Cop (after)

10.72 Guidance

It is the intention of the Borough Council, in response to Government legislation to review from time to time the extent and designation of the Shrewsbury Conservation Area. This Conservation Area Appraisal has defined the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area as it exists at present, updating the earlier document "Shrewsbury: The Challenge of Conservation" produced in 1970.

It is intended that this document will be adopted by Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance following consultation. Once adopted the document will be used to complement existing guidance notes produced by the Borough Council, like the Shop Fronts Design Guide and those prepared by English Heritage, the Victorian Society, the Georgian Group, and the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings (S.P.A.B.).

In preparing development proposals, developers are strongly advised to use this Town Centre appraisal as a starting point, since it is set within the context of the Development Plan process, i.e. Government legislation, Planning Policy Guidance Notes, 1,15 and 16, the County Structure Plan and the emerging Local Plan.

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