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Part 1: Introduction

Background to the appraisal

There are sixty-nine conservation areas in Salisbury district covering historic settlements and small villages. A conservation area is described in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

Conservation areas are designated by the local authority and designation is the recognition of an area’s special qualities, which the council intends to safeguard as an important part of the district’s heritage. It is the accumulation of an area’s positive architectural or historic attributes, rather than the quality of its individual buildings, which makes it worthy of conservation area status. The attributes might include: the landscape setting of the area; the grouping of traditional buildings and the resultant spaces and sense of enclosure; the scale, design, type and materials of the buildings; historic boundaries; public realm; landmarks, views and vistas; and the present and former pattern of activities or land uses.

Conservation area designation allows for strengthened planning controls, gives protection to trees, and provides control over the demolition of unlisted buildings.

Planning policy context

The local planning authority is required by the legislation to periodically review their existing conservation areas. An appraisal of each area is therefore required in order to identify the particular attributes that make each conservation area special. Guidance is provided to the local authority in carrying out this task in the English Heritage publication Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals and its companion document Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, both published in August 2005.

There is also guidance from central government in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994), which advises that the local authority should formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas. This is achieved by producing management plans for each conservation area.

Salisbury District Council has encapsulated the broad principles of the government guidance in its existing local plan policies (policies CN8-CN17). This will shortly be reviewed as the council starts to produce new policies through the local development framework. Planning applications that affect the character of the conservation area should be considered on their individual merits, in the light of the Local Plan policies, and taking into account all other material considerations. The appraisals and management plans are used to guide and inform the decision-making process.

Purpose and scope of the document

Conservation area appraisals and management plans are seen as the first steps in a dynamic process, the aim of which is to seek the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of conservation areas and to provide a basis for making decisions about their future management.
Each appraisal and management plan aims to:

- identify those elements of the conservation area that contribute to its character;
- identify elements that detract from the character; and
- propose measures to maintain or improve the positive character, local distinctiveness and sense of place of the conservation area.

The importance of conservation area appraisals and their associated management plans is expressed in central government Best Value Performance Indicators BVPI 219a, b and c. The indicators emphasise the need to follow the English Heritage guidance and the importance of involving the local community.

All reasonable steps have been taken to carry out a thorough appraisal of the conservation area, and with the exception of some areas of private land that it has not been possible to access for the survey, the appraisal is as comprehensive as it can be.

Executive summary

Amesbury Conservation Area was designated on 27 February 1980. The boundary of the conservation area as designated is shown on the Boundary Revisions Map.

The key characteristics of the Amesbury Conservation Area are:

- Evidence of complex layers of evolution of the town plan since the Saxon period.
- A dramatic landscape backdrop and setting formed by planned formal and informal parkland and the natural river valley.
- A diversity of uses, that contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of the settlement as well as contributing to the character of the conservation area.
- Very attractive townscape, in parts comprising a mix of listed and unlisted buildings.
- Survival of materials of significant local importance such as Chalk Block.
- High quality boundary walls, the materials used in which reflect the local vernacular.

The summary of recommendations for the Amesbury Conservation Area arising out of this document are:

- Four listed buildings or structures at risk in need of urgent action.
- Need for a comprehensive urban design strategy to knit sites and town back together; summary guidance provided for specific sites.
- Article 4(2) directions to control unsympathetic alterations to buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- Amendments to the boundary to include the buildings in School Lane and Flower Lane and include Avon Buildings.
- Potential for a number of small street improvement schemes which would ultimately slow traffic, remove unwanted clutter and structures and pull disjointed sites together.
Part 2: Appraisal

Location and setting

The small market town of Amesbury lies 12km north of Salisbury on the southern edge of Salisbury Plain. The historic core of the town is located within a meander in the River Avon that contains the town to the north, west and south. To the east of the core of the town the ground rises from the valley gravels of the valley floor to chalk downs where there has been considerable post-war development.

The settlement probably developed at a crossing point of the River Avon. By the medieval period an important route between London and the South West (now represented by the A303, which bypasses the town to the north) passed through the town, crossing the river at or near Queensberry Bridge.

Historic development and archaeology

Amesbury lies partly within the Stonehenge World Heritage Site, with Stonehenge itself standing in the western part of the parish. The landscape to the west and north of the town contains numerous prehistoric monuments including several other Neolithic henge monuments, the Cursus and Bronze Age burial mounds. To the east and south of the town there are also numerous Bronze Age burial mounds, while excavations within the town have encountered prehistoric archaeology. Immediately across the river from the town is an Iron Age hill fort, locally known as Vespasian’s Camp. This site has been tentatively linked with Ambrosius Aurelianius, a fifth century British leader on the basis of a medieval document that referred to Amesbury as Ambrosii Burgi; but the association is considered by some scholars as being a legend only.

One of the earliest references to Amesbury comes from the will of King Alfred (late 9th century) in which he bequested land at Amesbury, indicating that Amesbury was probably a royal estate centre. In the 10th century the witan or King’s Council met there on at least two occasions. Being a royal estate centre would suggest that there was a minster church in the settlement, possibly founded as early as the 8th century. In around 979 an abbey was founded for nuns and by the 10th century it had become a place of pilgrimage as it housed the remains of St Melor.

At the time of the Domesday Survey (1086) Amesbury was still a royal manor with a recorded population of 198, including 55 slaves, which would suggest a total population of around 800 people based on an average of four people to a household. In addition to the royal estate there were two smaller estates, one also called Amesbury, and Ratfyn, to the north-east of the historic core of the town, both held by Edward, Sheriff of Salisbury. Although Amesbury was not one of the Domesday boroughs, its status as a royal manor probably meant that it was a market centre for the surrounding area. The town did not receive a formal market grant until 1217 and it may be that the clearly planned parts of the town date from around this period.

During the medieval period the combination of its market, the cult of St Melor and the position of the town on a main route to the South West meant that the town prospered. The abbey was refounded in 1177 by Henry II as a priory belonging to Fontrevault. The priory was a ‘double house’ in that it consisted of both nuns and monks. It is thought that the priory, including a new church, was built on a new site north of the old abbey church and that the male members of the house continued to use the old abbey church and buildings. After the Dissolution of the priory in 1539 it was ordered that most of the priory buildings including the church, which was deemed superfluous, should be demolished. The mansion house, Amesbury Abbey, was subsequently built on the site and probably incorporated some elements of the priory.
Amesbury appears to have been in decline from the 17th century at least – its market then being described as ‘inconsiderable’. During the 18th century there were several fires that destroyed many properties, particularly in High Street, further depressing the town. Antiquarian interest in Stonehenge during the 18th and 19th centuries brought some visitors to the town but it was not until the late 19th and early 20th century development of large military camps on the nearby downs that the town could grow and prosper once more.

**Settlement plan**

The town is arranged around two important routes – the High Street representing the line of the main historic thoroughfare through Amesbury (although in a possibly narrower form) and Salisbury Street which formed a wide market place lying at right angles to the High Street. This arrangement is found in many towns that developed a clear urban form in the late 12th or 13th century, either from an earlier settlement or as new town foundations. Abbey Lane, a small lane aligned with Salisbury Street, seemingly gave access to the priory from the town centre and may represent the line of a north–south route that was diverted by the creation of the priory precinct in the 12th century.

Although Amesbury has Saxon origins it is difficult to identify any part of the plan, other than probably the church site, that can be securely identified as dating from that period. If the church stands on the site of the Saxon abbey, Church Street would probably represent the earliest core of the settlement. As a royal estate centre it is likely that a royal enclosure would have formed part of the settlement – and evidence from some other Wiltshire towns indicates that it would have been closely associated with the church and market area. Archaeological excavations to the rear of the Antrobus Arms located a large ditch containing Saxon and medieval pottery and this feature may have marked the boundary of the royal enclosure.

The market place may have been created in the early 13th century and was possibly once considerably wider, forming a large triangular area with its southern boundary following the line of Salisbury Road. Certainly the part of the market closest to its junction with High Street was wider and it is notable that the south-west side of Salisbury Street facing the market was largely undeveloped in 1726 (Historic map 1) in contrast to the burgage plots on the north-east side. This area began to be developed in the 19th century and in the process the building line encroached onto the market place (Historic maps 3-6). The south side of the market was split into two areas by Frog Lane, which led to a bridge over the river. The area west of Frog Lane was largely occupied by properties aligned to Church Street while to the east was a sub-circular area with Tanners Lane on its south-west side. This area may, in part, represent encroachment into the market area, narrowing it considerably and diverting the course of the road from the south along Salisbury Road. Both Frog Lane and Tanners Lane are of medieval origin. At the south-east end of the large triangular market area was an area that contained several farmsteads including Earl’s Court, the demesne farm of the manor.

Manorial documents record that there were considerable numbers of cottages built on the ‘waste’ – areas that provided little economic benefit other than, rough grazing. The 1726 map (Historic map 1) shows that many of the cottages along Frog Lane, Tanners Lane and along the south-east of the former market area were set in narrow, roadside plots. Similar roadside cottages existed along Back Lane.

It is believed that the area to the north-west of High Street represents unplanned development encroaching onto a once wider High Street - the mis-alignment of High Street with London Road at the east end and the dog-leg at the west end of Church Street to cross the river as shown on the map of 1726 is taken as evidence for the narrowing of this road. It may be that this development occurred after the foundation of the priory in the late 12th century. Although the 1726 map shows the properties along the north-west side of High Street as having plots that are characteristic of
planned burgage plots it appears that in the late 16th or early 17th century the south-east edge of the former priory precinct was moved giving more land to these High Street properties.

**Archaeological potential (see map)**

There are two Scheduled Monuments in or adjacent to the conservation area: the Iron Age hillfort of Vespasian’s Camp to the east of the river and Queensberry Bridge. These sites are of national importance.

On the basis of the known archaeology, documentary evidence and analysis of the settlement plan, an Area of Archaeological Potential has been identified. Any proposed development within this area may be subject to conditions requiring archaeological recording in accordance with PPG16.

As a town of Saxon origins with a known pagan Saxon cemetery site at the London Road/Countess Road junction, the probable sites of two monastic complexes, a possible royal enclosure and the medieval development of the town, the historic core of Amesbury is generally considered to have high archaeological potential. If the extent of the Saxon abbey or the later priory were to be defined they may be considered to be sites of national importance. The area of archaeological potential around Amesbury Abbey cannot be defined – it may be that geophysical survey of the grounds around the Amesbury Abbey house may be able to clarify the location of the demolished monastic buildings and the extent of the precinct.

A similar situation exists around the parish church. The area of archaeological potential extends to the river, as historic maps show that there was a mill and other buildings west of the church in the early 18th century. This mill may have been of medieval or Saxon origins.

Although there have been several archaeological interventions in the town centre there are many unanswered questions regarding the origins and development of the town. In particular there is potential for archaeological excavation to examine:

- the location of the royal enclosure;
- the relationship between town and precinct on the north-west side of the High Street, including the possible 13th century development of properties along the precinct wall that encroached into High Street;
- the development of the market place including its extent and apparent lack of medieval properties on the south side;
- the development of the burgage plots on the north-east side of the market place;
- the origin of development along Frog Lane.

**Key historic influences**

- Strategic location, the presence of an abbey and large market have ensured the continued survival of the core of the town.
- Significant fires in the town in the eighteenth century destroyed many houses and outbuildings.
- The presence of a substantial and influential abbey.
- The dissolution of the monastery leading to the reuse of materials (mainly stonework) in the town.
**SPATIAL ANALYSIS**

**Character areas**

Conservation Areas often vary in character across the designated area. It is important to define these ‘sub-areas’ and provide a clear understanding of the defining elements that make up the character of a particular part of the conservation area. This can lead to a much more useful and comprehensive document and contribute to the successful management of the conservation area as a whole.

It should be noted that whilst six sub-areas have been identified, the transition between areas is also important and there is a cohesion to the whole conservation area, which should always be considered when addressing the character of the Amesbury Conservation Area.

Each character area makes reference to the following factors in a series of bullet pointed paragraphs:

- form (cohesiveness – why it is a character area),
- scale and building line,
- significant groups,
- materials,
- views,
- local features.

**Brief overview**

The conservation area can be divided into two distinct parts. Amesbury Park, an eighteenth century planned parkland for the house known as Amesbury Abbey, lies to the north and west of the town centre and also contains the remains of an Iron Age hillfort of some considerable scale. The park forms a strong landscape setting for the town and its trees are very important to the character of the town. The park also buffers and masks the town from the A303 which runs along the northern boundary of the park.

The second area is the urban historic core of the town centre. This can be further sub-divided into a number of areas that have a distinct character. However, most of this part of the conservation area is defined by buildings of modest scale which provide an overall consistency within the character area and the sense of being within a traditional small historic market town.

An important feature is the varied use of materials throughout the conservation area including examples of reused stone, both ashlar and decoratively carved pieces, from the former Abbey. This stonework is evident in many houses and boundary walls. Also of note is the use of chalk block, often used in side and rear elevations but also combined with brick to form attractive banding. Earlier building phases have often been encased with brick or render or simply painted but historic materials are often revealed on viewing the side or rear of properties.

Twentieth century decision-making (particularly in relation to road systems) has had a significant impact on parts of the historic plan form of Amesbury and created pockets of consistent character rather than large areas of high quality townscape.

Amesbury retains an intimacy in parts (for example, the High Street/Salisbury Street junction) and it has some high quality townscape, particularly around the church. Its landscape setting is particularly important with views characterised by tree belts (to the park) or out to the open water meadows. This form a key part of the character of the town.
1. Amesbury Park

- The Park is a very complex area with a long history of settlement and use. Part of the park is designated as a Scheduled Monument and the whole is a Grade II* eighteenth century landscaped parkland included on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The house, Amesbury Abbey, is a Grade I listed country house of some considerable quality and special interest on the site of the medieval abbey. Most of the other buildings (excluding modern houses) are listed Grade II and II*.

- Amesbury Abbey, the main house is orientated on the axis of the church although this relationship can no longer be appreciated due to the mature trees. The house was built on a grand scale and should not be seen as the defining scale of the area but rather as a bold statement in a planned landscape setting. Recent development within the grounds is set out as two storey ranges in a series of courtyards, presumably to imply a converted group of outbuildings to the principal house. This is, in broad terms, successful as a sequence of planned spaces within the mature grounds.

- The main house can no longer be seen from the town, physically the park manifests itself as a series of boundary walls of varying scale and materials and perhaps most noticeably in the gate piers to the south west of the church and in the two fine gate houses which sit on the Countess Road approach to the town. Kent House in particular is considered as having an important visual relationship with the town. The parkland contains a number of follies and ornamental bridges, all of which are listed. These could be said to form an historic group of some considerable interest for the period. It should be noted that these follies are not in the public domain and that the park is private with no public right of way. The park wraps around the north-west section of the historic town and forms a very important backdrop to the High Street and Church Street. The brick wall that defines the southern boundary to the park is visible behind many of the shops, hotels and houses on the north side of High Street.

- Chilmark limestone ashlar is used for the main house and the gate piers to Church Street. The remaining boundary walls are a mix of flint and brick and flint and stone, much of the latter dating from enclosure of the earlier house (c1600). The visually rewarding gatehouses to the eastern section of the park are flint with dressed stone and very distinctive fissile stone slate roofs.

- Mature trees to the park prevent significant views of the main house from the town and the house is only brought into view when inside the park. The views, once revealed, are very picturesque and the parkland, and trees act as a fine backdrop to the house. The parkland is a very effective setting for this very grand classical building. In addition, the parkland has some fine open views of the river and towards the treelined hillfort to the west. Both gatehouses are also seen in extended views along Countess Road. They are seen as integral elements of the landscaped setting of the house but also form distinct punctuations on the routes into and out of town from the north.

- The use of the local stone with flint is particularly noticeable in this sub-area and makes a very positive contribution towards the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.
2. High Street

- One of the principal service-providing streets of the conservation area. There is a real sense of the ‘old’ Amesbury in the survival of both modest and grand buildings along this street.
- Scale varies from the very modest two storey dwellings with windows tucked up under eaves to the grand three-storey scale of The George Hotel which dominates the street (figure 1). There is a strong sense of enclosure due to the narrowness of the street.

![Figure 1](image)

- The linear character of the street links all the buildings into a group. There is a particularly strong sense of the historic ‘town’ at the junction of Salisbury Street and Church Street.
- Most facades have been rendered and/or painted but hide earlier vernacular materials such as salvaged pieces of stone, flint and chalk block (figure 2).
- There are funnelled views west focused on the corner bank building to the junction of Salisbury Street and Church Street. The chimney stack of The George Hotel is particularly prominent and a landmark in local views.
- The use of chalk blocks is particularly evident in the side and rear elevations of properties. Mathematical tiles were used to the rear of The George Hotel.

![Figure 2](image)
3. ‘The Centre’

- The relatively recent thoroughfare ‘the Centre’ – has defined a piece of open space, a ‘green’, and changed the emphasis and significance of School Lane (formerly Back Lane).
- The scale of building varies, with some large Edwardian civic buildings helping define the green space and contributing to relatively consistent building lines, and boundary treatments providing a strong edge to the conservation area (as revised) (figure 3).
- The north-east side of School Lane is strongly defined by a group of buildings which are linked by strong traditional boundary treatments – brick retaining walls with Edwardian cast iron railings.
- The dominant material for the turn of the century grouping to School Lane is a vibrant orange-red brick combined with natural slate tile roofs. The thatch of The Brambles is prominent and an unusual survival to this part of the conservation area.
- The fleche (small spire on the ridge) of the school is a local landmark and punctuates the skyline in views particularly looking south. The Brambles, with its distinctive thatch roof, terminates the enclosed view south along School Lane (figure 4). Similarly, deflected and closed views are gained of the octagonal shape of the modern Library on approaching along Earls Court Road. Mature trees form a defining part of local views in this character area.
- Boundary treatments are particularly distinctive and formal in this part of the conservation area.

4. Church Street

- This is the most cohesive and consistent historic area of the town. It has a high degree of quality in the building materials, finishes and townscape merit.
- The buildings are consistently of two storeys, but there is variation between the scale of the grander Late Georgian Antrobus Arms and the domestic cottage scale of the terraced housing facing and enclosing the churchyard. There are consistent building lines with houses on the back of pavements which help enclose spaces and define a real sense of place.
- The terraced group (Nos. 29-39 [odd]) facing the churchyard and the church and churchyard monuments form a very attractive historic group of buildings, which positively define the entrance to the town from the south-west (figure 5). The solidity of the church against the backdrop of the tree belt of the park is particularly striking.
- There is a diverse use of traditional materials which includes painted brick and render, red brick and flint and limestone rubble mix. The stone and flint walls of the church with the strong orange-red of the clay roof tiles is especially attractive. On domestic buildings, roofs are a mix of tile and slate.
• Glimpses of the church tower over houses characterise the modest scale of this area. From the abrupt edge of the town, the open views from Queensberry Bridge across the river floodplain are an important part of the setting of the settlement and help explain the importance of the river.

• The very attractive use of brick, flint and limestone, particularly to the church and boundary walls, is locally distinctive and characteristic of the area (figure 6).
5. Salisbury Street

- This is part of the primary shopping core (Policy S1) but is a more fractured and disjointed section of the conservation area.
- There is a consistent scale of two storey buildings and almost consistent eaves lines throughout. Buildings are located on the back edge of the pavement and help strongly define the street. This is despite their relatively recent origin in some cases (south-west side) (figure 7).
- The cohesiveness and quality is largely confined to the north-east side of the road centred on the Grade II listed No.15 (The Bell Hotel) and the important junction with Church Street and High Street.
- Historic buildings are almost entirely rendered and painted and have natural slate roofs. Notable historic exceptions to this are the distinctive Bell Hotel (No.15), which is constructed in ashlar stone.
- There are no strongly defined views in this character area, other than along the enclosed urban corridor of the street partially terminated by Nos. 2-4 (the bank) and with the important green back-drop of trees in Amesbury Park (figure 8).
- Large twinned, diagonally set chimneystacks are a prominent and consistent feature seen on Nos. 7-11 (odd) and No. 15 (The Bell Hotel).

6. Avon Buildings (to be included in revised boundary)

- Small section of Victorian extension to the town.
- Two storey terraced houses set to the back of the pavement. The direct relationship of the buildings to the low-key shared car and pavement surface and the slight change in direction of the plan are features which give this artisan terrace some individuality.
- All houses in this character area form a distinctive group; repetition of features in the terrace and pleasing rhythm of windows, doors and chimneys contribute to their group quality (figure 9).
- Red brick and natural Welsh slate.
- No significant views.
Architectural and historic qualities of buildings

Amesbury is a small country market town that has experienced large-scale twentieth century development and expansion. The town’s relatively minor status, particularly from the late medieval period to the nineteenth century, means that it does not have the large civic buildings typical of many market towns, nor has it experienced the widespread ‘polite’ re-fronting or re-building of houses in the eighteenth century that often produced three-storey buildings topped by parapets to increase the apparent height of buildings. Thus the town, even in its commercial core, has buildings mainly of two and two-and-a-half storeys and at the corner of High Street and Salisbury Street there is a single-storey shop. There are only a small number of three storey buildings.

Being a town on one of the main routes from London to the west and south-west, it is not surprising that Amesbury has several old established inns including The New Inn, The Bell and Kings Arms. These inns can be traced back to the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at least. This is evidenced by their steeply pitched roofs and development along narrow plots. They have been ‘Georgianised’ in that they have had sash windows inserted, but as pointed out above, the true re-fronting enthusiasm did not get a full foothold. Two large hotels, The Antrobus Arms (formerly Wyndersham House) and The George Hotel (formerly The George Inn, which developed around a large rectangular courtyard) are the most dominant secular historic buildings in the town. Both have grown organically along wide street frontages and have busy rooflines of hipped and gabled roofs with a number of chimneys, which have been added incrementally.

The parish church standing at the extreme west of the town, in its secluded setting framed by the tree-belt of the Park, is a very solid cruciform structure displaying its Norman origins (figure 10).

There is a pattern of small, narrow deep plots (burgage plots) along the High Street and the north side of Salisbury Street. The wider frontages suggest a lack of pressure for direct access to a busy market place. Roof ridges generally are constructed parallel with the street, their prominent eaves lowering the scale along the three main streets.

Apart from the Palladian style Amesbury House, there are few examples of Georgian architecture in Amesbury. Similarly there are no examples of finer Victorian building although some domestic infill from that period can be seen, for example in single buildings along the High Street and the short terrace of artisan cottages, Avon Buildings. The pair of regularly designed early Victorian cottages at the western end of Flower Lane (figure 11) have a Regency elegance in their symmetry, tall windows low pitched roofs and regular chequerboard panels of flints and chalk blocks. There is a characteristic late nineteenth century cottage built in a vibrant red brick, standing on the corner of Kitchener Road and School Lane.

Amesbury seems to have had a flurry of building activity very late in the nineteenth century and in the first decade of the twentieth century. The
school and the police station fronting School Lane are confident, red brick, almost free-style buildings on rising ground. The Bell Inn is a notable example of the Vernacular Revival, with its gables, mullioned-windows and oriel in a mellow stone, and sits easily between some wide-fronted vernacular buildings.

The interwar period is modestly represented in a rather indifferent way as garages superseded smithys and stables to provide a service for travellers. The rebuilding of the south side of Salisbury Street has made a limited contribution to the architectural or historic interest of the town's building stock, although the bank on the corner of Church Street and Salisbury Street conveys some elegance in its neo-Georgian style sweeping hipped roofs.

The post-war era brought few buildings of note to the town, although the pavilion-like octagonal Library of the late 1960s within the triangle of roads, School Lane, The Centre and Coldharbour, does complement its virtual parkland setting. It also terminates the views west along Earls Court Road and north from the Bus Station.

Two or three contemporary buildings appear to be quite successful and should act as a benchmark from which to encourage higher standards of new design in the town. The infill housing opposite The George Hotel is modest but well-considered in its massing and its appropriate development along the burgage plot. The mixed-use of residential units above shops on the corner of High Street and Countess Road is perhaps cruder in execution but is appropriate in footprint. Although outside the conservation area, an exemplar of good contemporary architecture is the extension to the County Infants' School (figure 12). This building, the hall and ancillary accommodation is well massed and detailed using an appropriate red brick, vertical glazing and exposed steel structure, providing an alternative to pastiche design.

Activity: prevailing and former uses

Amesbury’s historic importance as a market centre has been in fluctuation since the eighteenth century. However, its current importance as a local centre for an expanding population should not be under-estimated. The continued expansion of the town in the twentieth century has had the most profound effect on the historic fabric of the town. However, it has also produced a lively and bustling centre which appears popular and convenient.
There are primary (Policy S1) and secondary (Policy S2) shopping cores at the heart of the town character area of the conservation area. These are Salisbury Street and High Street respectively. These streets are characterised by active frontages with a variety of outlets, predominantly A1 uses, and some residential accommodation above. For a town of its scale it is well served by four public houses and hotels, all of which are listed buildings.

The bus station sits just outside the conservation area. This particular site has a negative and disruptive effect on the clarity of townscape to other parts of the conservation area (figure 13) in that its extensive forecourt lacks any sense of enclosure of the street or any sense of a gateway to the historic core.

The conservation area contains a number of areas characterised by different uses and activities. The Church Street area of the conservation area is of a very different character to the neighbouring High Street and Salisbury Street. The predominantly residential character and the openness of the churchyard gives more of a village feel to this part of the character area.

The largest part of the conservation area is Amesbury Park surrounding the Grade I listed Amesbury Abbey, which is, now a nursing home. The park was formerly the location of the medieval priory complex and is listed Grade II* in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. It contains a number of important eighteenth century follies and bridges, which are individually listed. It also incorporates an Iron Age hillfort known locally as Vespasian’s Camp, which is also a Scheduled Monument. Unfortunately, this is not a public amenity for the town. There is further discussion on this particular area in the Management Plan.

**Contribution made by key unlisted buildings**

There are a number of unlisted buildings, which make important positive contributions to the character of the conservation area, both individually and in groups, with and without listed buildings. Key groups are:

- church environs,
- Salisbury Street/Church Street/High Street junction,
- School Lane,
- Avon Buildings.

In addition, a number of boundary walls to the front and sides of properties make a significant contribution towards the character of the conservation area. Both houses and walls are identified on the townscape map and properties are listed in Appendix 1.
Prevalent local and traditional materials

In the more modest domestic-scale buildings of the town there appears to be a common use of the local vernacular in the form of chalk block and flint (both knapped and unknapped). This is often interspersed with early handmade bricks and salvaged dressed stone and rubble stone. The use of chalk block in particular, given its relatively poor performance as a building material, could explain the common application of renders and paint systems in the town which are often masking earlier materials. The earlier core, and in some cases the date of many of the houses, is hinted at by the use of chalk block and flint on the side or rear elevations, although some care is needed here as often the more inexpensive materials were applied to these elevations. Nonetheless, these elevations form part of the strong surviving character of the historic buildings in the town (figure 14).

In summary, the following materials are seen interspersed throughout the town and are particularly evident in the distinctive boundary walls which criss-cross the sometimes complicated plot patterns, but form a particularly strong characteristic of the Church Street/High Street plots. Given the complex configurations of materials and the fact that there is no underlying defining material, these have been listed as follows:

- chalk blocks – seen to the side and rear of properties, but with one valuable survival of the material used in banding with brick (No. 16 Flower Lane) (figure 15);
- flints (knapped/unknapped) and often used with other materials; chalk block, stone and brick (Kent House, Countess Road) (figure 16);
- stone; dressed and undressed rubble stone mostly Chilmark (salvaged/reused) but some other stone including Bath stone (High Street) (figure 17);
- thatch (combed wheat reed): only one example with a plain, slightly raised ridge (Brambles, School Lane) (figure 18);
- brick – red brick is seen to dominate two of the five character areas (Avon Buildings and ‘The Centre’). It is also seen individually in some buildings of quality (figure 19);
- painted brick - along with render, this could be said to be a predominant albeit non-traditional finish within the town;
- render – some early stucco rendered properties (possibly concealing timber frames) but often has been used to deal with what could have been considered inferior materials, for example, chalk block, flints, and rubble stone;
- natural Welsh slates – commonly paired up with the red brick in the character areas previously mentioned, natural Welsh slate is seen in large quantities and characterises a number of key groups in the town;
- handmade clay tiles - some good survivals of hand made clay tile roofs, where seen they are particularly attractive. Good examples include the Church of St Mary and St Melor, No. 6 Salisbury Street and The New Inn, High Street (figure 20);
- mathematical tiles – an interesting survival of the use of mathematical tiles can be seen to the rear of the George Hotel carriageway arch (figure 21). This is a small area which probably conceals timber framing. There may be more examples in the town hidden behind later materials (such as render or paint).

**Local details**

Chalk, which is the underlying geology of the area, manifests itself (in common with a number of other areas within district) in the use of both this material in block form and the characteristic flints closely associated with its formation.

In Amesbury there are a number of excellent examples of the regionally distinctive chequer-work and banding in combinations of stone or brick with flint and/or chalk. This is seen to great effect in Nos. 59-63 High Street (figure 22) and replicated in the recent development on the corner of High Street and Countess Road.

It is evident that some stonework seen in the walls of buildings, outbuildings and boundary walls is of a very high quality and often dressed and finished to squared blocks. It is suspected, given the high quality of the stone and examples of carved stonework seen in the buildings of Amesbury that much of this material comes from the priory site that existed at Amesbury Abbey. It adds a unique and antiquarian quality to these structures particularly when seen in boundary walls. Good examples can be seen in the boundaries to the church and the rear boundary walls to the George Hotel (figure 23).

Boundary walls generally are locally distinctive, making use of the local materials of cob, flint and chalk, with the addition of salvaged limestone, often Chilmark, but with other types of stone also being used. These walls make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area and often define early historic boundaries and burgage plots.

**Contribution made by green spaces, trees, hedges and natural boundaries**

Amesbury Park at present occupies a large proportion of the conservation area and is significant for the green backdrop it
provides to the north. Its high quality status as a planned park is reflected in its Grade II* designation in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Its combination of formal and informal spaces designed around the grade I listed country house, Amesbury Abbey, is very much a set-piece of eighteenth century landscape design. The trees within the grounds, and particularly to the edges of the park, are very important to the character of the area (figure 24). In particular this is evidenced at the rear of the High Street, on the western edge of the park running along Stonehenge Road and in the north-eastern approach to the town on travelling up Countess Road, where the trees frame and enclose views up to Kent House at the ‘entrance’ to the town edge and the corner of the park.

Two other relatively modest but important areas of open green space are to the west of School Lane and the churchyard. School Lane experienced development in the very late part of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century which transformed the lane (then ‘Back Lane’) into what is seen today. The imposition of ‘The Centre’ has created a somewhat difficult area in terms of legibility but is saved by the presence of some magnificent cedars of Lebanon which dominate the skyline, partially enclose the views, and break up the space between the library and health centre and School Lane (figure 25). This provides a valuable amenity space for the town, dominated unfortunately by the busy road which passes along the south west side of the ‘green’.

The churchyard provides both a very attractive foreground setting to the church and a natural enclosure to the road bounded by the stone, brick and flint wall. The yew trees play a particularly important role in providing enclosure at this point and creating an informal ‘square’ effect, with the other sides formed by the houses and church (figure 26). The success of the townscape in this part of the conservation area is a combination of the high quality historic buildings and the presence of the trees. The trees not only create positive enclosure to the road but also convey a sense of village tranquillity to the church and churchyard. The significance of this group of trees is reflected in the Tree Preservation Order designation covering all trees to the churchyard.

**Key views, vistas and panoramas**
(see Townscape Map, Appendix 1)

Most of the views within and out of the conservation area tend to focus on the landscape and river valley (flood plain) setting. Of particular note are the excellent views from Queensberry Bridge looking north up the river into...
Amesbury Park, and views to the south across the water meadows on the floodplain (figure 27).

Within the town there are glimpses to the church tower in close proximity and mainly from the south. This is possible due to the modest domestic scale of building in this immediate setting to the church. Similarly there are a number of other notable local landmarks; the chimneys of the George Hotel are very distinctive and prominent on the street skyline. The fleche (small spire on the ridge) of the school on School Lane is an attractive centrepiece to this building and the distinctive shape juxtaposed by the use of traditional materials. Stone and flint give the library and health centre special prominence in local views of the street scene.

Amesbury Abbey is framed by excellent sequential views on travelling towards the house from the Church Street entrance. The house is orientated to maximise what would originally have been picturesque views of the church tower. Trees have now grown to obscure the view and this relationship is hard to appreciate other than by viewing it on a map. The house is nonetheless stunning in its landscape setting. It is regrettable that the house cannot be appreciated by the rest of the town given the private nature of the grounds.

**Degree of loss of architectural and/or historic elements**

There has been a significant loss of historic windows, doors and roof coverings from within the conservation area. The rendering and/or painting of brickwork is predominant in some parts of the conservation area but often masks earlier materials, knapped flints, coursed chalk blocks or handmade red bricks. This has led to an homogeneity of materials which has diminished the local distinctiveness of Amesbury.

**Negative elements**

- Window and door replacements.
- Poor shopfront and signage design.
- An apparent lack of coordination of significant sites and potential sites within the town centre.
- Large returns of blank brick facades (for example those of the Pioneer store in the High Street).
- Modern interventions in a traditionally scaled High Street (Salisbury Street).
- The new bridge adjacent to scheduled Queensberry Bridge.
- No access to the Park.
- Car-dominated sections of conservation area.
- Outdated surface treatments (large expanses of concrete pigmented paving stones).
- Some wirescape but not particularly prominent
**Conclusion**

Amesbury is under immense pressure for development as a satellite town to Salisbury. The historic core of the settlement makes up a very small element of the modern town but it contains the primary and secondary shopping areas. Its local distinctiveness and use of traditional, vernacular materials has been eroded by extensive indifferent infill and the painting and rendering of traditional materials on important buildings in the conservation area.

The town has suffered from extensive Highways-led proposals which have truncated, and in some places even divided the town and conservation area. The challenge facing urban designers is to ‘knit’ Amesbury back together. The quality of future development on key sites within and on the edge of the historic core will have a fundamental effect on the special character of the conservation area.

Many buildings are in need of investment and general repair and have suffered from the use of inappropriate materials and replacement windows and doors. Despite these factors, there is a very strong sense of place to certain parts of the conservation area, namely Church Street and the western end of the High Street. There seems to be limited linkage with Amesbury Park, although the Park provides a very important landscape backdrop to the town, particularly in terms of tree cover. These themes are further explored in Part 3: The Management Plan.
**Part 3: Management Plan**

**Vulnerable buildings and buildings at risk**

It should be noted that due to Amesbury Park being a private estate with no public access or public rights of way, the listed follies within the grounds have not been surveyed. It is recommended that these buildings should be the subject of regular inspection by the local authority and/or English Heritage in order to ensure their continued survival as an important group of eighteenth century garden features.

**Listed Buildings (or curtilage)**

- **Boundary walls, Amesbury Park (Grade II)**  
  *(figure 28)*

  Almost completely encased in ivy in places. Where observed, capping was dislodged and removed. In need of extensive repair and repointing once vegetation has been removed.

  **Action:** Contact owner and agree phased plan of repair and identification of potential funds.

- **Follies within Amesbury Park**

  There are a number of important folly buildings forming an integral part of this Historic Park and Garden. Many are listed individually and include for example; Gay’s Cave and Baluster Bridge.

  **Action:** The park follies should be inspected on a rolling six month basis and each folly should be fully recorded and any structural issues noted. Agreement should be sought with the owner as to an agreed plan of action prioritising any repairs that are required helping source possible grant funding.

  It is recommended that a conservation management plan be commissioned for the historic park in order that the follies may be managed in an appropriate way. Decisions need to be taken as to their future role and relative importance to the park, the setting of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

**Article 4(2) Directions**

Within the Amesbury Conservation Area there are some important groups of unlisted buildings which would benefit from the protection afforded by additional planning controls in order to retain elements of particular historic or architectural interest. Appendix 3 contains a list of buildings of local importance, that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Amesbury Conservation Area. The list identifies which types of alteration should be controlled through Article 4(2) Directions for each building. This will be subject to further consultation.

**Boundary revisions**

As a result of analysis undertaken, the following are suggested boundary revisions to reflect ownership changes, recent development and local and national policy designations and changes.
It is suggested that the following be included within the conservation area:

**Include:**

**Buildings to north-east side of School Lane**

This area as seen today was a relatively recent development in the town’s history. It was known as Back Lane until the 1920’s and early maps show a series of small buildings built along the wastes of the lane side and open to fields to the north east. The arrival of the Police station and original school building transformed the hierarchy of the road into something more than a back lane. This was further developed by the introduction of the ‘relief road’ to the town centre known as ‘The Centre’. This further revealed the lane to more open views and the buildings suddenly became important enclosure to what was and still is in effect a large informal green.

The surviving buildings make a very positive statement in terms of their civic scale, robust detailing and good use of materials (despite the loss of original windows). The boundary treatments are particularly interesting and help further define the edge of historic Amesbury. However, the buildings in most cases individually and more importantly in townscape terms deserve to be included within the conservation area boundary (figure 29).

The grain of this former lane is still readable and the subsequent turn of the century infrastructure; school and police station is an important stage in the development of the town and deserves this recognition.

**Avon Buildings and Flower Lane (part)**

Avon Buildings is an interesting small development of Edwardian housing (figure 9), which is in good condition and retains much of its original features in terms of windows, doors, roof and chimneys. They make a positive contribution to the character of the existing conservation area (located on the edge) and are part of the story of Edwardian intervention in the town, which saw not only these terraces built but a School and Police Station. Including these terraces (with the appropriate controls) would protect them from potentially damaging alterations, which would affect their traditional character and appearance.

Flower Lane, formerly known as Frog Lane, is an early route possibly forming part of a path which provided an access to the Abbey without having to go through the town. The present lane has remnants of its established historic presence with the two fine pairs of formal early nineteenth century flint and stone ‘villa’ type cottages (grade II listed) (figure 30). The conservation area should be extended to include these properties.
Bibliography and references


Crowley, D.A. (1995) Victoria History of the County of Wiltshire 15, Amesbury Hundred and Branch and Dole Hundred Institute of Historical Research/OUP


Maps

A Survey of the Town of Amesbury with the mansion house, gardens, park and meads adjacent 1726  WSRO 944/1 MS

Amesbury Tithe Map 1846

Ordnance Survey:
1st Edition 1870
2nd Edition 1901
1924
1937

Other references:

Conservation Areas: Guidance Notes, Salisbury District Council
Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, English Heritage 2005
Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, English Heritage 2005
Salisbury District Local Plan Adopted June 2003, Salisbury District Council
GLOSSARY

Article 4(2) Direction:
An Article 4 Direction may be issued by the Council in circumstances where the danger of the erosion of the character of the areas is such that specific control over development is required. The effect of such a Direction is to remove the usual permitted development rights, thereby necessitating a planning application to be made. It can include for example any proposals to replace windows, doors or the roof and can restrict the construction of a porch or extension, the painting of the external surfaces or the removal of chimney stacks.

Building line:
The common alignment of building frontages in relation to the back edge of the carriageway, footpath or waterfront. The building line might also refer to a common alignment of the backs of buildings.

Building at risk:
A phrase used to describe a building which is in poor repair (for example leaking/blocked gutters, broken slates, structural problems) and often vacant with no use. The combination of these two factors and the severity of the repair issues determines the degree of risk and the need for action.

Buildings of local importance:
A building which is considered to make a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area, but does not meet the criteria for it to be added to the statutory list of buildings of special architectural and historic interest. It may, for instance, be part of a group which by its scale, alignment, materials or style contribute to the quality of the townscape.

Chapelry:
Part of a large parish, usually with a separate settlement distinct from the main parochial centre, that was provided with a chapel sub-ordinate to the parish church.

Demense:
Land retained by the lord of the manor for his own use or land that was part of the main farm of the manor.

Enclosure:
The arrangement of buildings, walls, trees etc. to provide different levels of containment of space.

Public realm:
The spaces between buildings accessible to the public, including the highway, green areas, squares etc.
Scale: This can have two meanings: it can be used to define the mass or bulk of a building often in comparison to other buildings or spaces or (the more strictly correct) meaning appertaining to the subdivision of a building to create different effects for example the architectural expression of structural bays, intervals of windows, proportions etc.

Setting / context: The physical (built and landscape), community and economic setting in which the development takes place.

Streetscape: The character of the street environment, existing or proposed.

Townscape: The urban equivalent of landscape: the overall effect of the combination of buildings, changes of level, green spaces, boundary walls, colours and textures, street surfaces, street furniture, uses, scale, enclosure, views etc.

Vernacular/ polite: Vernacular

Traditional buildings of a region, frequently developed by local builders in response to the regional requirements, climate, site conditions and available locally sourced materials.

Polite

Designs developed by architects and architectural pattern books usually incorporating classical concepts of symmetry, proportion and scale in both plan and elevation.
Appendix 1

Schematic Maps

Archaeological Potential

Character Areas

Townscape

Conservation Area Boundary review

Management Issues
Appendix 2

Historic maps

Map 1  A Survey of the Town of Amesbury with the mansion house, gardens, park and meads adjacent’
1726 WSRO 944/1 MS

Map 2  Amesbury Tithe Map 1846

Map 3  1st Edition Ordnance Survey c1870

Map 4  2nd Edition Ordnance Survey c1901

Map 5  Ordnance Survey c1924

Map 6  Ordnance Survey c1937
## Appendix 3
### Suggested Article 4 Directions

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Appendix 4

List of buildings of local impotance

Please note that this does not include statutory listed buildings (eg. Grade I, II* or II) – these are shown on the Townscape map as dark blue.

Avon Buildings: 1-12 consecutively
Church Street: 24, 30, 23-39
Cold Harbour: Link Cottage, Fem Cottage and The Cottage
Earls Court Road: 2, 9 and 11*
Flower Lane: Vine Cottage, Northcott and Southcott
High Street: 2, 4, 16-18, 24, 26, 28, 44 and former Methodist (Wesleyan) Chapel (northwest side)
Salisbury Street: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 19, 21, 53, 57 1-3 (Conseq) Fariways Court.
School Lane: Electric sub-station, Hamble House, House to NW of Amesbury Junior School, Amesbury Junior School, 6-9 (conseq) former Police station.
Smithfield Street: Library and Health Centre

* on the edge but outside the conservation area.
Appendix 5

Proposals for enhancement

These are indicative examples of the types of enhancement/development that might occur in Amesbury, rather than firm proposals

Shopfronts and signage

Primary and secondary shopping cores (policies S1 and S2 of the Salisbury District Local Plan) - need for improved signage and shopfront design

A review of signage in the town centre should be undertaken in the light of the recently published Shopfronts and Advertisements Design Guide.

Shopfronts are generally very poorly designed and do not relate well to their host buildings (figure 31). In most cases they could benefit from complete redesign.

Boundary wall repair

Common with other settlements in the district, boundary walls form a crucial element of the character of the conservation area. Their repair and maintenance should be sought in any negotiated scheme and it is suggested that commuted sums could be payable to a general fund for grant-aiding repairs to historic walls or to repair a particular boundary wall relevant to the site or the immediate environs.

Comprehensive redevelopment

While the historic core of Amesbury has a substantial heritage of buildings dating from the medieval to the Arts and Crafts period, it has suffered from a considerable amount of infilling, indifferent-to-harmful extensions, and highway interventions from the interwar period to the present.

As Amesbury evolves, a number of twentieth century buildings will reach the end of their economic lives. Questions need to be addressed as to whether they could be converted and improved or redeveloped to a higher standard of design.

This process is happening already; the ‘gateway’ corner of Countess Road and High Street has been redeveloped with guidance from the local authority, where a mixed use development sited on the back edge of the pavement has replaced a garage. Moreover the site that includes the bus station and Redworth House was the subject of a Design and Planning Brief in 1999 and a new supermarket now occupies the site. This may have an impact on the fortunes of the shops along Salisbury Street.

It is important, therefore, not only to conserve the historic built environment qualities of Amesbury Town Centre, but also to ensure that new building within and adjacent to the Conservation Area is carefully designed to respect the character of the area. The potential development opportunities on a number of highly visible sites in the compact town centre of Amesbury requires the local planning authority to take a proactive stance, and adopt an urban design framework for the town and briefs for the significant sites. The strategy must be based on conservation, design and regeneration principles and must cover the public realm as much as the built form.

The selection of potential sites below outlines the design issues and possible approaches to strengthening the character of the town.
Potential redevelopment / development of sites

Abbey ‘Square’

The intersection of Salisbury Street and High Street/Church Street is in many ways the core of the historic town and was historically the head of the Market Place (now Salisbury Street). From inspection of the 1726 map (historic map 1), it appears that a square building stood at the intersection, perhaps a market building with an open ground floor.

Now that traffic is less dominant at this key nodal point in the town, it should be possible to consider a less highway-dominated, more pedestrian-friendly space, with shared surfaces, minimal traffic signage and perhaps a modest building with an open ground floor as a focus for a market, possibly extending down Salisbury Street on one side, with a street closure on perhaps one day of the week.

Abbey ‘Square’ Shopping Precinct and associated car park

The car park frontage to Church Street could be enhanced by the rebuilding of the wall and further tree planting and management. If the site were redeveloped, it would have to make the transition between the densely-developed frontages on its eastern side and the detached vicarage in its grounds on its western side.

The shopping precinct itself may suffer from the changing scale of shopping in Amesbury especially as it is at the periphery of the shopping area. If this is the case, the precinct and surrounding shops, with the possible exception of the building addressing the Church Street/Salisbury Street junction, could be redeveloped to a more appropriate frontage development, with private courtyard behind. A building of two-and-a-half storey height would be appropriate.

Salisbury Street frontage development

With the exception of The Bell public house, a Vernacular Revival building, and some much earlier buildings, the built form along Salisbury Street is disappointing and indifferent and is only eligible for its inclusion in the Conservation Area because of the significance of this former market place. Short-term development control decisions regarding shopfronts, alterations, pavement surfaces and infill replacements, must have regard to the need to improve this area which at present has a negative impact on the Conservation Area. Large scale redevelopment must be combined with the preparation of a design brief.

Land between the central car park and ‘The Centre’ highway.

This space is the result of the decision to create the new road, ‘The Centre’, to run diagonally across a former block of large garden and orchard plots. This has had the effect of cutting across the grain of this green space and sterilising the land between the new road and the car park, not least to allow for long sight lines at the entrance to the car park. This linear site contains two or three important trees which contribute to the quality of a ‘green’, defined by the public buildings on School Lane to the north east, the health centre to the south and less satisfactorily, by the car park to the west.

The intention of design guidance for this location would be to create backdrop buildings to the ‘green’ on its west side, backing onto the car park and terminating the view south down Kitchener Road. The important and mature trees should be retained. Buildings should have an uninterrupted frontage, not unlike the Edwardian public buildings fronting onto School Lane. Some kind of traffic calming could be implemented along ‘The Centre’, reducing the need for such long sight lines. The overall effect of the proposed built form would be to enclose the green and to contain the intrusive effect of the car park.

Building heights should not exceed three storeys, and the predominant use, due to the linear and narrow nature of the built form, would probably need to be apartments.
Garage site on the corner of London Road and Countess Road

If the existing garage use becomes redundant, this site, which is part of a critical gateway location to the town centre, should be developed with appropriate built form (should be traditional scale - no greater than two-and-a-half storey) close to the back edge of the pavement.

This solution has a precedent as seen in the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition map (1887) (Historic map 3). Development in such a form would balance that recently created on the opposite side of the road and would complement the more established development on the corner diagonal to this site. Furthermore development on this corner would contribute to the continuity of the street frontage leading into the town centre. Building heights should be a traditional two-and-a-half storeys being careful not to create a funnelling effect with the development to the south side of Countess Road.

While traditional built form, materials and detailing might be envisaged, these would have be informed by close attention to the detailing found in the town. Subtle re-working of traditional forms, details and styles with a contemporary interpretation could be a positive contribution in the hands of a sensitive architect.

A commercial and/or residential use would be appropriate, but the cramped nature of the site at the corner would preclude uses that would require significant car parking. An active frontage (shops or other uses encouraging movement and activity) would be required on the Countess Road frontage and at the corner.

Junction of Salisbury Street and the Centre

There are gaps and visually weak areas of townscape particularly at this point. This area should be addressed holistically and include the bus station. This needs to form part of the overall Urban Design Strategy.

Policies/recommendations for new buildings (generally smaller infill sites)

This guidance provides generic advice for smaller developments up to approximately 5 - 8 housing units. Salisbury Local Plan (adopted June 2003) contains in Policy H16 criteria relating to small-scale development sites and should, in the case of development in/adjacent to or within the setting of a conservation area, be considered in conjunction with this advice (particularly bullet point (ii) relating to the character of an area). Sites of a larger number will require considerable pre application negotiation and may be the subject of design briefs. Some small developments may be in such sensitive locations that they may require a concise brief from the local authority. In all cases a Design Statement will be required to accompany the application drawings. Where a Character Appraisal exists for a Conservation Area, this must be consulted by the applicant’s agent, the developer and the planning officer, as it will assist in setting the context of the development.

It is strongly advised that all parties visit the site and its setting. The setting will vary in virtually every case, but as a guide it should be taken as the area from which the site can be seen and the surroundings seen from the site. The setting can also be defined as the general pattern of uses in the vicinity. These may vary on each side of the site.

It is important to consider specifically: surrounding skylines, rooflines and landmarks (such as church towers), or if the development will have an impact on cherished views of the landscape or “signature” skylines.

On considering new developments, the issue of bin provision, storage and collection is a significant area of concern within the historic environment and needs careful thought throughout the design
process. Wherever the existing situation can be improved with new development, applicants should be encouraged to produce schemes which provide areas for bin storage for existing as well as proposed buildings. This will reduce the potential impact of bins on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The surrounding built form should be appraised:

- What are the typical sizes and shapes of building plots? Are these uniform or varied? If varied, consider largest and smallest types.
- How do buildings relate to the back edge of the footpath or carriageway? This factor alone can help to assimilate new buildings into the streetscene.
- Are the buildings in the street free-standing, or are they in small informal groups or more regular terraces?
- Are buildings linked in a particular way, for example with boundary walls?
- Do the buildings generally have their main ridgeline parallel to the street or at right angles?
- Are the buildings generally “grand” or modestly proportioned and styled?
- Is the character of the front boundary walls or fences an integral part of the character of the area?
- What are the predominant materials and colours in the area, and are any unique to the conservation area?

- The character of the site should be considered. The boundaries should be noted, especially if they comprise hedgerows, mature trees, vernacular walls, fences or railings.
- The access point to the site will have to be agreed. Generally, care should be taken to minimise any damage to front boundaries through the uncritical imposition of sight lines which may have the effect of removing most of a boundary.
- Consider potential assets on-site, such as the lie of the land, areas of shelter and sunny aspect, existing structures such as buildings or walls, trees or hedgerows which might be incorporated into the scheme.
- Develop a Design Concept. This should ask:- What is the role of this development within the setting?
  - Is this a gateway or other edge development on the approach or periphery of the site?
  - Is it a focal point development terminating a view or providing a skyline?
  - Is the site at a pivotal point in the townscape, turning a corner from one type of development to another?
- The frontage part of the development should in virtually every case face outward to the streetscape, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so.
- The character of the development should be determined by layout and providing an appropriate sense of identity and enclosure. A sequence of spaces and places should be considered – from major to minor space, from formal/symmetrical to informal?
- The design should avoid any inappropriate suburbanising of the proposals through deep or irregular house plan, fussy elevations, spacious set backs from the building line, dwarf wall boundaries and inappropriate spacing between buildings.
• Design considerations such as window proportions, subservience of elements such as garages, roof type (gable end or hipped), roof pitch, projection or recession and choice of materials, should derive from the character of surrounding buildings forming the setting.
• Contemporary solutions may be appropriate if it can be demonstrated that they derive from a comprehensive appraisal of the setting and site.

Traffic management/street improvements

Removal of modern pedestrian bridge adjacent to Queensberry Bridge (figure 32)

There is the potential for removal of the pedestrian bridge, incorporating a footpath onto the bridge. The carriageway could be reduced to a single lane with traffic needing to voluntarily stop at either end. This would create some traffic calming in this area. Care must be taken not to back traffic up significantly into Church Street as this would have a negative impact on the quiet ambience and relative tranquility enjoyed by this part of the conservation area presently.

Junction of High Street/ Church Street/ Salisbury Street

There is an opportunity to remove all signage and resurface this area. Relocating the War Memorial to a built out section of the highway outside the bank would create natural traffic-calming and a breathing space for pedestrians; it could possibly be restored to its former height at the same time.
This appraisal and management plan was compiled by Forum Heritage Services and Context 4D during 2006/7 on behalf of Salisbury District Council.