Chippenham
Conservation Area Appraisal
November 2007
CONTENTS

Acknowledgements
Purpose of the Appraisal
How to use the Appraisal

PART 1: CONTEXT

Conservation Areas
The Conservation Area Boundary
The Local Plan

PART 2: DETAILED CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Character Area Boundaries
Area 1: Marshfield Road
Area 2: Park Lane
Area 3: Upper New Road
Area 4: Railway Station
Area 5: Malmesbury Road & Langley Road
Area 6: Bath Road & Ivy Lane
Area 7: The Bridge & Lower New Road
Area 8: Station Hill & Monkton Hill
Area 9: Ivy Road & Lowden Hill
Area 10: Avenue La Fleche
Area 11: Monkton Park
Area 12: High Street & Emery Gate
Area 13: Gladstone Road, Borough Parade & Wood Lane
Area 14: Market Place
Area 15: St Mary Street & The Butts
Area 16: Flowers Yard
Area 17: TheCauseway
Area 18: London Road
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Appraisal has been prepared in close collaboration with a local working group set up for the purpose. The group was first set up in 2000 to progress research and analysis. The members of the working group were:

• Tony White
• Dave Purton
• Ross Henning
• Phillip Allnatt
• Bill Wood
• Mary Mullens
• Nic Curram

The following organisations were represented on the working group:

• Wiltshire County Council
• North Wiltshire District Council
• Chippenham Town Council
• Chippenham Civic Society
• Chippenham Chamber of Commerce

The project was organised and managed by Ricki Burrows, Paul Garrett, Julian Kashdan-Brown and Tim Davis at North Wiltshire District Council.

Maps are based on 1:2500 scale Ordnance Survey originals with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty’s Stationary Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. North Wiltshire District Council license No. 100017933 - 2004.
PURPOSE OF THE APPRAISAL

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes certain duties on Local Planning Authorities with respect to the designation, preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. These duties are as follows:

- Section 69 of the Act imposes a duty to designate as Conservation Areas ‘any areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’.

- Section 69 of the Act imposes a duty to ‘review their areas from time to time to consider whether further designation of Conservation Areas is called for’.

- Section 71 of the Act imposes a duty to ‘formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas’. This should be based on a clear assessment and definition of an area’s special interest and the action needed to protect it. The Act also requires that proposals for the preservation and enhancement of a Conservation Area are submitted for consideration to a ‘public meeting’ in the area.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15) and recent heritage Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI 219) stress the need for local planning authorities to define and record the special interest, character and appearance of all Conservation Areas in their districts.

English Heritage guidance published in February 2006 notes that defining the ‘special interest’ of an area is the main purpose of an appraisal. The guidance states that it is vital “….for the special interest justifying designation to be clearly defined and analysed in a written appraisal of the area’s character and appearance. This will not only provide a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for policies in the relevant supplementary planning documents and area action plans and for development control decisions, but will also form the framework for developing a management strategy for the area.”

It also notes that Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) “….can supplement higher level policy in controlling erosion of the special interest that warrants designation and where appropriate, guiding the form of new development. Whilst a proliferation of policy documents should be avoided, it is envisaged that separate supplementary planning documents will be used to detail conservation area policies for major or complex conservation areas, or to produce a conservation area policy SPD covering part or all of a local authority’s district, if this is appropriate. Such SPD should be supported by adopted and published character appraisals which define the specific character that is to be preserved and enhanced and proposed management strategies for the individual conservation areas concerned. A conservation area character appraisal, with or without a related management strategy, cannot itself be a SPD and therefore does not require sustainability appraisal.”

In taking account of this recent guidance, North Wiltshire District Council have programmed to produce a suite of complementary documents to supplement Local Plan historic environment policies HE1 and HE2. These documents include a district-wide North Wiltshire Conservation Area Character and Criteria Supplementary Planning Document, Conservation Area Appraisals for each Conservation Area, with accompanying Conservation Area Management Plans for each of the District’s six towns to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents.

The Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal is therefore published to support proposed management strategies within the forthcoming Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan, which will be the subject of public consultation prior to adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.

HOW TO USE THE APPRAISAL

This document is made up of two parts. The document as a whole provides a comprehensive explanation, description and analysis of Chippenham Conservation Area.

**Part One** provides a general introduction to the Conservation Area, Conservation Areas in general and Local Plan policies. This includes details of policies affecting Chippenham and an explanation of Conservation Area designation. This section is intended to particularly inform residents, prospective purchasers and developers of the relevant planning and conservation policies, the background from which this is derived and the protection and statutory duties which result.

**Part Two** divides the Conservation Area into a number of ‘Character Areas’ which are analysed in detail in terms of their contribution to the Conservation Area character. This includes the historical and economic background of the town, perceived current pressures and the relevance to its development.

Part Two also includes a townscape analysis of the features which combine to create the general character of Chippenham and whereby key features which contribute to the Conservation Area are identified. This analysis gives a guide to parts and features of the Conservation Area which are considered to exhibit the greatest concentration of character.

Individual area analyses from this section may be used for distribution to those interested in specific sites, and for detailed reference by Development Control officers.
PART ONE: CONTEXT

CONSERVATION AREAS

The Character of North Wiltshire
North Wiltshire is fortunate in having a rich variety of small market towns and rural villages as well as having large areas of open countryside. The district also has the mixed blessing of good road and rail communications which helps to attract business and growth that are vital to avoid stagnation, but also increases the pressure for development on existing towns and villages.

Why Conservation Areas are Designated
Conservation Area designation seeks to address the problem of the loss of local and regional identity and the loss of valued historic environments. This, along with the need to halt the growing similarity of developments resulting in “everywhere looking like anywhere else” was the impetus for the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, when the concept of Conservation Areas was first introduced into planning law.

Historic buildings and Conservation Areas are vitally important to the environmental quality of life of our towns and villages and buildings of architectural and historic merit should receive very special attention. If we do not take steps to protect and preserve buildings and features of value, either in their own right or in the contribution they make to a pleasant townscape or village scene, they may well be lost, and once lost, they cannot be replaced. It should however, be remembered that our heritage is the product of many centuries of evolution which will continue. Few buildings exist now in the form in which they were originally conceived and conservation allows for change as well as preservation.

There are many cases where it is right to conserve as found, but there are circumstances too where our architectural heritage has to be able to accommodate not only changes of use but also new buildings nearby. It is better that old buildings are not set apart, but are woven into the fabric of the living and working community. This can be done provided that new buildings are well designed and follow fundamental architectural principles of scale and the proper arrangement and use of materials and spaces, and show respect for their neighbours.

Designation of Conservation Areas
A Conservation Area may be designated by the District Council, County Council, English Heritage or Secretary of State. These powers were first created under the 1967 Civic Amenities Act and have been updated by Acts of Parliament since.

A Conservation Area is often centred on listed buildings or other historical focal points. Some areas are entire settlements, others are only a part of a town or village. Some include wide tracts of the surrounding area whilst others are drawn tightly around the buildings that give the place its special character and form. Groups of buildings and the spaces between them are considered along with traditional walls, hedges, verges, paving, street furniture and mature foliage. The topography and contours of the land can affect the form of the settlement as well as influencing views and vistas within, from, and of the settlement. Trees and hedges can also be important to the character of a place. There are no fixed criteria for the designation of Conservation Areas, and this reflects the fact that places need to be considered on their merits and in relation to their surroundings and the qualities of other designated areas.
The Effects of Designation

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that in the exercise of their planning functions, local planning authorities should pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. This requirement also extends to the handling of development proposals which are outside the conservation area but would affect its setting, or views into or out of the area.

The designation of a Conservation Area should not simply be seen as the imposition of further controls. Rather it is intended to give an assurance that any proposals for new development and demolition will be subject to careful and critical examination by the Local Planning Authority. The most important points that need to be highlighted regarding the effect of designation of a Conservation Area are:

a) Demolition of all or a substantial part of a building will normally need Conservation Area Consent in addition to the normal planning regulations.

b) Proposals for new buildings on whatever scale will be given close attention. Outline permission will not normally be granted and detailed plans will be required so that the full impact of the proposals can be assessed including the retention and planting of trees.

c) Six weeks notice needs to be given for significant works to most trees within a Conservation Area unless they are an immediate danger.

d) Within a conservation area certain types of development require planning permission which, if outside a conservation area, would not require planning permission. The local planning authority is, in addition, able to make directions withdrawing permitted development rights for a prescribed range of developments affecting aspects of the external appearance of residential properties.

e) The District Council has a duty to publicise all proposals that may affect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

f) The District Council is able to allocate certain grants for the improvement or repair of historic buildings where the townscape is especially valuable and an area is in need of enhancement.

g) Applications for advertisement consent will be carefully examined to ensure they do not destroy or detract from the character of the area.
THE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

Chippenham Conservation Area was first designated on 10th January 1973. The first review of the Conservation Area boundary was undertaken in January 1989 and a later review in May 1996. The boundary was again reviewed on the 2nd December 2004 as a result of research carried out in the preparation of this Appraisal.

Fig 1 Chippenham Conservation Area: Designated 2nd December 2004
THE LOCAL PLAN

The current North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 was adopted on 27th June 2006. The function of the Local Plan is to set out the policies of the Local Planning Authority for the control of development, to make proposals for the development and use of land and to allocate land for specific purposes. The Local Plan is not intended to be prescriptive but rather provide a framework for sound and effective development control. The preparation of Local Plans and Local Plan Reviews must involve a Public Inquiry.

Local Plan Policies Affecting Chippenham

Chippenham is one of the six main towns in the district and as a result many policies in the Local Plan are relevant to development in the town. There is no specific policy in the Local Plan which states the District Council’s intention to produce Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, however, the explanatory text to Policy HE1: Development in Conservation Areas, states that:

‘Statements and planning briefs for individual areas and sites will be prepared by the District Council, as appropriate, which will describe the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas and provide advice and guidance on the enhancement of areas and the design of new development. These are available as Supplementary Planning Documents.’

PART TWO: DETAILED CHARACTER ANALYSIS

CHARACTER AREAS

Defining the Character Areas
Most Conservation Areas are large enough to exhibit areas of differing character within them, and it is therefore logical and more manageable to identify a number of sub-areas to analyse separately. To this end this Statement splits Chippenham Conservation Area into eighteen geographical areas, generally based on key streets, spaces or landscape features. Boundaries are notional, as the spaces and buildings will almost certainly have an impact on those in adjacent areas. The sub-areas have been defined as follows:

Area 1: Marshfield Road
Area 2: Park Lane
Area 3: Upper New Road
Area 4: Railway Station
Area 5: Malmesbury Road & Langley Road
Area 6: Bath Road & Ivy Lane
Area 7: The Bridge & Lower New Road
Area 8: Station Hill & Monkton Hill
Area 9: Ivy Road & Lowden Hill
Area 10: Avenue La Fleche
Area 11: Monkton Park
Area 12: High Street & Emery Gate
Area 13: Gladstone Rd, Borough Parade & Wood Lane
Area 14: Market Place
Area 15: St Mary Street & The Butts
Area 16: Flowers Yard
Area 17: The Causeway
Area 18: London Road

The sub-area analyses aim to describe how the features identified combine to give the Conservation Area its special character.

Significant Features
This element of the detailed analysis identifies particular qualities and characteristics of the sub-areas which are important in identifying the component parts of their character. These are drawn out from both the detailed and general character analysis of each area and are identified under separate headings. The headings range from large scale characteristics such as topography to the finer details such as building details and are as follows:

1. History, Archaeology & Morphology
2. Topography & Views
3. General Character
4. Buildings, Spaces & Townscape
5. Vegetation
6. Materials
7. Highway Infrastructure

Topography has a significant effect on the siting and plan form of a settlement. This also affects its accessibility, which in turn has an impact on its growth and development. The settlement pattern is also influenced by topography and access in addition to economic and social factors. The morphology and landscape characteristics describe how the buildings and spaces have evolved over time and relative relationship. Activities relate the social factors of a settlement to its built form. Space, buildings, construction and details all related to the more detailed elements of the settlement’s buildings and spaces.
Character Area 1: Marshfield Road

History, Archaeology & Morphology

Marshfield Road is named after the village of Marshfield on the Gloucestershire border, through which the road passes on its way to Bristol. Beyond the junction with Park Terrace the road is known as Bristol Road. Prior to the construction of the M4, Marshfield Road was part of the A420 trunk road from Oxford to Bristol. Despite its reduced status, the road is still a busy route from Chippenham to Bristol positioned between the A4 and M4.

The road has always been an important direct route to Bristol, avoiding the need to travel via Bath. The route into Chippenham was originally via Foghamshire, leaving the current alignment at Springfield Terrace, passing across the land now occupied by Bewley House and joining Foghamshire where it now meets Ivy Lane. The Chippenham Turnpike Trustees altered this route to its current alignment in 1792, with the turnpiking of the route into Chippenham. Joining Marshfield Road at around its midpoint are Park Lane and Audley Road (formerly Lowden Lane then Gastons Lane). This area was once known as Lands End and these roads are historic routes, part of a network of rural tracks which skirted around the town, stretching from Cocklebury Farm to Lowden and the A4.

The road remained largely undeveloped beyond the current junction with New Road until the coming of the railway in the 1840s. Prior to this the only buildings lining the road were the occasional cottage or inn. No. 8 (Vine Cottage), Nos. 68, 69 & 70 (former Horse & Jockey Inn) and Oak Lodge & Cottage are buildings which pre-date the railway. Following the opening of the railway, New Road began to be lined with villas loosely emulating the classical style used by Brunel for many railway buildings. Marshfield Road was developed slightly later and at a slower rate, the earlier buildings, such as the terrace at Nos. 52-67 retaining the classical simplicity and use of ashlar of the New Road buildings. Later buildings, however, show a greater variety of forms, being a mix of detached and semi-detached villas and short terraces. There is also a greater use of rubble stone and a stronger Victorian interpretation of the classical form.

Topography & Views

Topography
The road roughly follows the alignment of Hardenhuish Brook to its south and thus is generally on a gentle downward slope towards the town centre. The section from Oak Lodge to the one-way system is almost level, though the slight slope is acknowledged by the stepping down of the rooflines of the listed terrace at Nos. 52-67. Beyond Park Lane, on the outbound part of the one-way system, the gradient steepens noticeably towards the railway viaduct.

Views
The enclosed nature of the street confines most views to within the space defined by the tightly spaced buildings close to the street edge. Views beyond the confines of the buildings reveal themselves at the junctions with other roads – Park Lane, Audley Road, St. Paul Street, Dallas Road, and at the railway viaduct.

The terrace at Nos. 52-67 and the villas opposite define a very urban and formal townscape. The view of the terrace is framed at each end by the contrasting rubble stone buildings of Oak Lodge.
and No. 68, both of which sit slightly forward from it. The terrace draws the eye to the end of the street and focuses attention on the impressive façade of West End House and, to a lesser extent, the former inn at Nos. 68, 69 & 70. These buildings date, respectively, from later and earlier than the majority of the buildings in the street. Their differing form and materials, and their location at the road junction serves to pick them out as landmark buildings. This is particularly so with West End House, which is also prominent in the view from Audley Road.

At the junction with Park Lane and Audley Road the one-way system starts and there is a break in the building frontage. Traffic is directed along Park Lane which immediately reveals a long view to the steeple of St. Paul's Church on Malmesbury Road rising above the distinctive roofline of the terraces on the north side of Park Lane. On the south side of the junction, and just in Audley Road, is the pleasant and well-proportioned façade of the original West End Club. Unfortunately, the adjacent functional, low-rise extension to the club is to the rear of the site with the car park in front. Similarly, on the other side of the original building, are two small single storey shop units and a car park. This reveals the blank side wall of a recently built terrace of flats. Thus the setting of the original club building is rather poor; the gaps in the street frontage leaving it rather isolated in the streetscape.

Moving into the lower part of the street, against the flow of the traffic, the buildings on the north side are more prominent, due to the curve in the street. This is most noticeable when facing west (Fig 1.1).

As the road straightens it reveals a view of the sidewall of No. 72, standing isolated and prominent in front of the West End Club car park. Looking east from the south side of the street, the building line on the north side continues almost straight, revealing the sidewalls and roofline of Nos. 8 and 8a. Although not the front of the building, this is a generally pleasing aspect. Unfortunately this changes as one progresses eastwards along the street. Gradually the pleasant pitched roofs, in stone and slate, are overpowered as St. Paul's House, with its monolithic lines and blank side elevation, comes into view, rising above the mature trees in the garden of No. 8, a stark and dominating contrast to all around it. From the north side of the street next to West End House and from the position of traffic arriving at the one-way system, the discordant view of the side elevation of St. Paul's House is immediately apparent and dominant.

Fig 1.1: The attractive houses lining the lower part of the street. A variety of forms using a common palette of materials.
As the curve continues, the vegetation begins to block the view of St. Paul’s House and the railway viaduct gradually reveals itself until it completely fills the now wide vista. This impressive and graceful structure is probably the single most important landmark in the town. It identifies the town, and can only be fully appreciated in its entirety when viewed from this direction. Unfortunately none of the many motorists using the busy one-way system get to see this view as the direction of the traffic is away from the viaduct. Thus the positive impact and image of this important landmark goes unnoticed by many, and unexploited by the town, due to the current way the traffic is managed.

At the widening of the vista, St. Paul’s Church is again visible, this time framed more impressively by the buildings lining St. Paul Street. A large Yew tree half way up the street dilutes the full impact of the church. Looking in the opposite direction along Dallas Road reveals a somewhat nondescript suburban residential landscape with industrial buildings visible in the distance. The view westward from the viaduct reveals the unfortunate dominance of the two office blocks of Bewley House and St. Paul’s House. Whilst demolition of Nos. 94-96 has undoubtedly improved the setting of Bewley House, it has also further revealed the large, blank and monotonous flank wall of the cinema and made the out-of-place suburban house on the corner of Dallas Road more prominent. The house sits uncomfortably and in stark contrast of style and scale with the cinema building. The house also blocks views of the front of the cinemas.

General Character

The character of the area is primarily residential, with commercial expansion of the town centre evident in the vicinity of the viaduct. There is only one shop in the character area and only half a dozen houses have been converted either to offices, hotels or surgeries. There is a general uniformity of character that is derived primarily from the fact that the street was initially developed over a relatively short period with residential buildings using a similar palette of materials, and has seen little change since. There is also a general uniformity in scale of the buildings and their close proximity to each other, though individual detailing and roof forms vary within a limited range. The street is a distinctly urban space and the transition to suburban character is apparent at the edge of the Conservation Area. Here building density, architectural style and building materials change directly, and vegetation becomes more of a dominant feature.

The road has altered little since it was first developed as an urban street and there are few buildings from the 20th Century, these being primarily situated around the railway viaduct and the junction with Park Lane and Audley Road. The most profound impact on the area has come from the effects of motor traffic and the attempts to accommodate it into what is essentially a 19th Century urban landscape. The area is suffering from incremental erosion of its special character due to inappropriate alterations to curtilage treatments and fenestration.

Buildings, Spaces & Townscape

The dense vegetation of the gardens of Oak Lodge and Nos. 1-3 Bristol Road mark the entry into the Conservation Area and the transition from suburban to urban townscrape. Oak Lodge, Little Oak and the outbuildings are best seen from the entrance to the rear courtyard, where there is a generally pleasing and informal aspect to the group. The garden area is somewhat suburban in character, a single domestic conifer being the dominant feature.

The informal nature of these buildings is in contrast to the formal character of the adjacent terrace at Nos. 52-67 (Fig 1.2). One of the earliest post-railway developments in the street, its simple elegance, use of sawn stone and lower pitched roofs of slate bear testament to this and relate
more closely in style to buildings on New Road. The terrace was built by Rowland Brotherhood in 1858 for his workers. The gently stepping down of the eaves, regular window openings, enclosed small front gardens and regular line of chimney stacks are key elements of the character of the terrace which give it a visual coherence and integrity in the street scene. Due to this, loss of such features are all the more noticeable, and the gap left by the one missing chimney stack is highly visible. Also noticeable is the lack of boundary treatment and imitation slate roof tiles to No. 52.

Fig 1.2: This fine listed terrace was built by Rowland Brotherhood for workers at his factory on Foundry Lane. Note the loss of a chimney stack, painting of stone window surrounds and the loss of railings for walls, all features detrimental to the character and overall unity of the terrace.

Despite the terrace being listed, numerous styles of inappropriate replacement windows exist, along with the painting of many window surrounds. The original railings to the front gardens have been lost. Whereas modern replacement railings have been inserted at Nos. 63-66, other replacements are generally solid walls. These walls of large unsawn stone blocks are generally out of character with the style and scale of the terrace and disrupt the balance of proportion of the elements of the buildings, giving them a rather cumbersome appearance.

The opposite side of the street at this point consists of detached and semi-detached villas dating from between 1886 and 1900. They are larger in scale and far more imposing than the terrace opposite, though do not overpower them. They are primarily of coursed rubble stone with sawn stone dressings. In proportion with the larger scale of the buildings, the front gardens are slightly deeper and the boundary treatments more substantial. Large stone gate-piers with low stone walls between and railings above are the form of the original boundary treatment, with stone balustrades evident at Nos. 44-45. All original railings have now been lost and most have either been left, have had hedges planted or had modern railings or stone walls inserted to replace them. Whilst there is variety in the individual elements and detailing of the buildings, they have a collective uniformity of character which gives the frontage a cohesive appearance. Materials, height, roof pitch and the regularity of chimneys and gate-piers are all elements that contribute to this. This is undermined to a degree by the variety of boundary treatments and the one painted house, which is highly noticeable (Fig 1.3). Most of the buildings are either listed or subject to Article 4 Directions and any planning applications made due to this should take the opportunity where possible to ensure that any proposed replacements are of a suitable design.
Fig 1.3: A fine group of houses on the upper part of the street. The painted house stands out as a prominent and jarring feature. This was painted before the making of an Article 4 Direction and it is inappropriate alterations such as this that the Direction protects neighbouring properties from. Note too the amount of visual clutter and sheep pens to herd pedestrians into locations they do not wish to go, exacerbating the dominance of the motor vehicle and discouraging walking due to the speed at which vehicles travel unimpeded without having to think about pedestrians and cyclists.

Two distinctive buildings flank the entrance to Park Terrace. On the left at Nos.1-3 Bristol Road is a veterinarian surgery. This is a later building dating from between 1900 and 1923. It is an impressive and imposing building at the entry into the more urban townscape. Its warm brick construction, steep pitched roof and Edwardian windows mark it out as different from those around it. On the right at Nos. 46-47 is a doctors surgery. It has an impressive stone portico running the full width of the façade. It is a mixture of materials with darker rubble stone subservient to a large amount of sawn stone dressings on the façade and warm orange brickwork on the sidewalls. The most distinctive feature, however, are the elongated first floor tile-hung jetties. The one facing Park Terrace is particularly prominent.

The tight enclosure of the street ends, briefly, for the junction with Park Lane and Audley Road. Here the space created by the junction provides punctuation in the street and allows the imposing and distinctive West End House, on its eastern side to be appreciated from a number of directions. This building is a dominant local landmark by virtue of its siting, scale, form design and distinctive façade and makes a particularly positive contribution to the character of the space around the junction. The ground floor is of brick with stone dressings and the slightly projecting facades of the first and second (dormer) storeys are of timber framing with rendered panels. The large roof has the main gable end facing the junction. The bright orange clay tiles, varied dormers and elaborate brick chimney stacks make the roofscape of the building a particularly important element of its character, unfortunately inappropriate window replacements, untidy front garden and general lack of repair detract from its overall character.

On the west side of the junction are the side elevations of Nos. 68-70, the former Horse & Jockey Inn. The most attractive aspect is currently from the rear, where the varied roof form of uniform materials is an attractive element. This group has suffered particularly due to the busy traffic around it and until recently repainted, the Marshfield Road frontage was filthy with grime from passing traffic. Thus the main entrance is via the small courtyard facing Audley Road – the back
of the building. A recently constructed rubble stone wall to No. 70 provides a suitable enclosure to this space and is in stark contrast to the lower modern blockwork wall to the remainder of the courtyard. The recently painted side elevation facing the junction is partly obscured by a rather unkempt semi-mature tree, that only serves to create a dingy space around the listed telephone box next to it and obscures a road sign. What could be an attractive view is currently rather formless, and the space unattractive (Fig 1.4).

![Fig 1.4: K6 Listed telephone box obscured and subsumed by unattractive greenery.](image)

The frontages to the wider north and south sides of the junction are poorly defined, allowing the passing traffic to dominate the space and reinforce the impression of it as a highway junction rather than a focal point in the townscape. On the north side the trees in the car park of the Social Services offices at No. 34 give a degree of enclosure, help reduce the impact of the cars and bring a welcome softening to the urban townscape. Unfortunately the trees do not prevent views through to the rather mundane buildings to the rear.

The south side is particularly ill defined. Prior to the construction of the post-war extension of the West End Club, the corner of the junction with Audley Road was defined by a building at No. 71. Demolition of this for access to the extension and its car park has left the adjacent No. 72 a solitary building standing uncomfortably and rather awkwardly, close to the street and surrounded by clutter and car parking. The single storey rendered extension, fenced side garden, plain replacement windows, door and rather superfluous shiny awnings, force an inappropriate suburban character on an otherwise attractive rubble stone town house, which is particularly jarring at such a prominent location.

Beyond the junction the topography steepens, both along the road down to the viaduct and across it to Hardenhuish Brook behind the buildings on the south side. On this section of the street the north side was developed first, with the buildings dating from the mid 19th Century, the buildings
being almost exclusively faced in ashlar or sawn stone. The buildings are grouped either in short terraces or semi-detached pairs and follow a generally straight building line, taking it away from the road as it curves further to the south and revealing the side elevation of No. 8b abutting the pavement. The outbuildings at No. 29a also extend to the pavement edge. They are well screened to the west by mature vegetation.

The buildings on the south side of the street date from the late 19th Century and are almost exclusively faced in coursed rubble stone with sawn stone dressings. The buildings are detached and semi-detached large town houses. All remain in residential use except Nos. 81-82, which is now a hotel. The buildings curve gently with the road along a uniform building line. A uniformity of character is maintained by similar materials, building height and roof pitches whilst allowing a variety of detailing. The more imposing of the buildings are Nos. 81-82 and Nos. 73-74 (both listed).

Fig 1.5: No. 85, its character already compromised by the insensitive insertion of a garage, still retains its boundary walls and (modern) railings in 1995.

Fig 1.6: The same property in 2002. Despite an Article 4 Direction designed to prevent loss of features such as walls and railings, these unauthorised works have not been enforced upon.
The houses along the lower end of the street have lost much of their original boundary walls and railings (Figs 1.5 & 1.6). Originally the majority of the boundary treatments consisted of stone gate-piers and low stone walls with railings above. Many of these still remain in various states of completeness and repair, though much has been lost through removal of railings and subsequent neglect, and their removal for car parking. The loss of such details undermines the cohesiveness of the street by diluting the formal definition, hierarchy and proportion of spaces in the transition from street to front door. All the dwellings in the street are either listed or subject to Article 4 Directions. However, a number of unauthorised alterations are evident to boundary walls and railings and some cases inappropriate alterations have also been granted planning permission (Fig 1.7).

![Fig 1.7: Reinstatement of original features as railings is to be welcomed. However correct guidance is needed to ensure their design and appearance is historically accurate. These railings set behind the wall look odd and defeat the object of having the wall – the wall is for the railings to be set in or on.](image)

At the eastern end of the street the residential use gives way to the cinema and office blocks of Bewley House and St. Paul’s House. The cinema has a simple but attractive stone frontage with a central element to its façade containing three large metal framed windows and a single storey section in front with retail units either side of the entrance (Fig 1.8). Unfortunately this part of the building is rather dirty and the shop-fronts are of poor quality, containing solid metal shutters and oversized signage. The film listing board is awkwardly positioned at the top of the parapet and off centre to the entrance. The entrance, awning and associated advertising poorly reflect the quality of the frontage to an otherwise elegant building.

![Fig 1.8: The attractive cinema entrance. An unattractive forecourt and poor quality shop-fronts and signs let it down.](image)
The cinema is set back slightly from the street and has its own in-out ‘driveway’. This tends to be used for parking and is also a waiting area for the adjacent bus stop. The surfacing is a bland expanse of tarmac, a rather uninspiring space with poor definition between pedestrian and vehicular space.

With the demolition of Nos. 94-96 and the prominent position of No. 93 on the corner of Dallas Road, the most dominant element of the building, as seen from the east, is the long blank side elevation, No. 93 blocking views of the frontage. No. 93 is a detached house of suburban character (no longer in residential use) and looks particularly out of place in its prominent site. It is painted a drab grey, the space between the house and railings is untidy and most of the windows are screened with internal blinds. The character, appearance and use are totally unsuited to its location. The long rear plot (partly unused) ensures there is no building to screen the side elevation of the cinema. However at the time of writing proposals are being out forward to redevelop this site.

Building now boarded up – Planning position?

The cinema and adjacent bus stop attract a fair amount of pedestrian traffic, yet facilities to cross the busy two lane one-way street of fast traffic do not exist at this point. The pedestrian and pelican crossings nearer the viaduct are only convenient for those coming from the town centre. On the opposite side of the street is No. 8, a listed house set at an angle to the street and facing the oncoming traffic. It is an attractive and imposing three-storey building set on rising ground. Unfortunately, the positive aspect of the building goes largely unnoticed, as the large tree in the front garden obscures it. Instead the dominant feature is the large modern double door to the garage and its block work surround.

Fig 1.9: The whole of the viaduct – what the motorist doesn’t get to see entering the town.
At the end of the street the space widens out to reveal the impressive Grade II* listed railway viaduct (Fig 1.9). Probably the most definitive building in the town, it is unfortunately flanked and dominated by two unattractive office buildings, St Paul’s House and Bewley House. These severely compromise its setting, though the development of Bewley House did open up views of the whole structure for the first time and create a space of suitable proportion in which to fully appreciate the structure. Many fine buildings were lost for construction of these offices including the original Bewley House, three pairs of elegant villas on the site of St Pauls House reputedly built by Brunel for his staff (Figs 1.10 & 1.11) and an attractive house terminating the view from through the main arch of the viaduct.

Fig 1.10: The fine group of villas reputed to have been built by Brunel for his staff. Taken in the 1960s shortly before their demolition.

Fig 1.11: The monolithic building that replaced the villas is completely out of scale with surrounding buildings and competes with the viaduct for prominence.
From a distance the viaduct is an elegant structure. However, closer inspection reveals it is in a parlous state of external repair, with a patchwork of piecemeal repairs in various materials (Fig 1.12). The infill of the subways and minor enhancement works have improved the area, however the area still feels run down and slightly like an island in the midst of Chippenham. Recent refurbishment of Bewley House has improved the appearance of the building and its setting, though an area of unused land adjacent to St. Pauls House is an unattractive space terminating the view from through the viaduct. This area would benefit from enhancement.

Vegetation
Marshfield Road is an urban street and vegetation is generally not a dominant element in its character. However, in a number of places individual trees and groups make a positive contribution to the overall character of the street, providing screening, punctuating the space and bringing relief and colour to the urban townscape. Groups of trees and other vegetation mark the entry into the more urban environment covered by the Conservation Area at Oak Lodge and Nos. 1-3 Bristol Road. Views outward to the trees lining Hardenhuish Brook as it crosses the Bristol Road help to reinforce the more suburban character of this area in contrast to the Conservation Area. An attractive group of trees at the car park to the Social Services offices at No. 34 provide definition to the street edge and help soften the visual impact of the cars. Notable individual trees are to be found at Nos. 8, 12, 26, 30 an 80-81. Trees lining Hardenhuish Brook provide pleasant background vegetation, particularly noticeable from the junction with Park Lane and Audley Road. Poor specimens are to be found in front of No. 69 and the side wall to the flats on Audley Road.

Materials
Stone is the dominant material. Almost all buildings are faced in either rubble or sawn stone, although side walls are usually of brick. The buildings predating the railway tend to use either graded stone tiles or Roman clay tiles with steeper pitched roofs. Buildings post-dating the railway
use slate roof tiles and have lower pitched roofs. Brick, whether used for side elevations, dressings or main elevations, tends to be a warm orange engineering brick.

Painting and rendering is not characteristic of the area, the only exceptions being at West End House and Nos. 68-70, where limewash is the most appropriate finish. Where white painting or rendering exists it is particularly noticeable. Painting of the stonework at No. 36, rendered and white painted extensions to No. 72 and the white painted side elevation of No. 29a are examples of inappropriate finishes.

Highway Infrastructure
Generally there is not a great quantity of road signs in the street. Lighting units are particularly visually intrusive elements. Warning signs tend to be individually lit but direction signs do not. It would appear that such individual lighting of signs is rather excessive, as street lighting and vehicle headlights are likely to adequately illuminate the signs. Use of reflective non illuminated signs would reduce the negative impact of signs.

Guard railings and lighting columns also have a basic galvanised finish, which draws attention to them (see enhancement proposals. Lighting columns are of a basic highway design which have no relevance to the surrounding townscape yet, simply due to their number, have a noticeable impact on it. There is also a mixture of column designs and duplication of columns at the Park Lane junction.

The repair of the road surface at this junction is also poor and line markings are almost totally worn away in places. Installation of the new mini roundabout at this junction would have been a good opportunity to replace the poor quality road surface. The quality and repair of road surfaces has a particular visual impact on the street and lack of regular maintenance can give a shabby appearance to the whole street. The visual impact of the large extent of double yellow lines could be reduced by applying the less stringent regulations possible in Conservation Areas. A number of crossovers to give vehicular access to properties have, in the past, been made in concrete. This is particularly noticeable against the otherwise tarmac surface and tends to crack over time and leads to a generally shabby appearance.

The negative impact of the highway infrastructure tends to pale when compared to that of the numerous overhead cables and their associated poles. They are a particularly unattractive and visually intrusive feature along the whole length of the street and appear rather anachronistic in the 21st Century. One pole near Oak Lodge has 30 cables attached to it (Fig 1.13). The attractiveness of the streets would improve markedly if these services were relocated underground.
Character Area 2 Park Lane

Character Analysis

History, Archaeology & Morphology

Park Lane is a historic route, part of a network of rural tracks, which skirted around the town, stretching from Cocklebury Farm to Lowden and the A4. The John Powell map of 1784 shows the road named as Land’s End Lane, after the name given to the area where the lane met what is now Marshfield Road. The street map of 1822 shows the lane named as Stewards Lane, probably after a local landowner. The First Edition Ordnance survey map of 1886 shows the lane named as Little George Lane, after the pub at the eastern end of the lane. The Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1900 was the first map to refer to the lane as Park Lane.

St. Paul Street first appears on the 1886 map. Both streets owe their development to the coming of the railway and the subsequent industrial development in the north of the town. St. Paul Street and the south side of Park Lane were the first to be developed, along with Springfield Terrace, in the mid 19th Century. The north side of Park Lane was developed towards the end of the Century, the whole area not becoming fully developed until well into the 20th Century. Park Fields and John Coles Park were developed after the First World War. The area is primarily residential, consisting of terraces facing the street, behind small front gardens.

Topography & Views

The landform is generally sloping in a south-westerly direction down to Hardenhuish Brook. Both Park Lane and St. Paul Street are generally straight. These features, combined with the gently sloping land and terraces lining the streets, give long vistas along both streets. Unfortunately for motorists, these are limited to up Park Lane and down St. Paul Street as they are both one-way streets.

Park Lane

A key element in the long views both up and down Park Lane is the long terrace on the north side of the street, from Nos. 40 to 67 (Figs 2.1 & 2.2). From the west, the kink on the road accentuates this, focussing attention on the terrace and the impressive Monkey Puzzle tree at the end, at the entrance to John Coles Park. From the straight section the imposing bulk of the Little George is a prominent feature in the distance, its roof form and dormers providing a positive silhouette on the skyline. Unfortunately, at closer quarters the view is less impressive. As it is the rear of the pub, fire escape stairs and toilets are unduly prominent due to the gap in the frontage created by the presence of the slip road passing to the rear of the building. Moving towards the end of the terrace, the monkey-puzzle becomes a particularly dominant and dramatic element in the street scene. On the opposite side of the street, Nos. 19 & 20 St. Paul Street face Park Lane at an angle and are a prominent, well composed semi-detached pair with a positive presence in the street scene. Unfortunately the original windows and door in one of the houses have been replaced with modern designs. This is a clear example of how such ‘improvements’ can seriously damage the architectural integrity and appearance of buildings.
Fig 2.1: This attractive terrace of houses is an important part of the character of the street. Note the prominent overhead wires and lighting columns.

Fig 2.2: The view in the opposite direction with the impressive Monkey Puzzle tree a key landmark at the entrance to John Coles Park.

From the east the trees in the grounds of the WCC Social Services offices at No. 34 Marshfield Road and the monkey-puzzle are notable in the longer view. The kink in the street encloses the view and brings into prominence the houses at Nos. 68-75, particularly when viewed from the middle distance and closer. Of these, Nos. 70 & 71 stand out as a particularly fine feature. The huge projecting bargeboards on the gable, bay windows, porch and original doors and windows and gate-piers combine to give it a strong and positive presence in the street. The mature trees in the background enhance the setting.

The attractive stone gabled bookshop at No. 2 pleasantly terminates the view into Park Fields. The view out onto Park Lane is less coherent, being an undefined array of vegetation, garages and boundary treatments. From the junction with Park Fields, the low-rise nature of the retail units at Club Buildings affords a prominent view of the rear of West End House. This has recently been converted to housing, having been the original West End Club. Unlike the Little George, the view is attractive at close range with a steep roof profile, dormers, ornate chimneys and timber framed facades combining to create a prominent local feature. Unfortunately the shop units in the foreground have a somewhat temporary feel and offer a stark contrast in scale with West End House.
St Paul Street
This quiet and secluded street is entirely straight and has a steeper gradient than Park Lane. The terraces lining the street provide a well-defined direction and focus for views. The view to the north contrasts strongly with that to the south. Northwards the view is of the large and imposing form of the tower and steeple of the Grade II* listed St. Paul’s Church on Malmesbury Road (Fig 2.3). The rising gradient ensures that it is well defined against the skyline. The arrangement of roof forms in the immediate foreground to the steeple is both attractive in itself and also serves to emphasise the scale of the Church. A gap in the frontage of Park Lane ensures part of the nave is also visible which further adds to the effect. A single large Yew in the garden of No. 18 dominates the view up the street and partially obscures views to the church tower.

The view to the south is terminated by the monolithic bland bulk of Bewley House, which tends to give the impression of blocking the view beyond rather than it terminating at a single focus. As one moves further down the street the bulk of the St. Paul’s House Social Security office building also begins to make its presence felt in the street. These two large monolithic buildings, together with the nondescript extension to Brookfield House, significantly dilute the otherwise positive contribution made to the townscape by the terraces in the street and the nearby railway viaduct. The terraces stop short of the top end of the street and reveal the rear elevations of properties on New Road and Park Lane (Fig 2.4). These gaps offer unattractive views of car parking, storage areas, poorly defined boundaries and functional rear extensions and elevations. On the opposite side of the street the rear parking access to flats fronting Park Lane allows views of the stark rear elevation of the building. Such gaps and views undermine the visual coherence and attractiveness of the street.

Fig 2.3: Most of St. Paul Street is lined by fine terraces and has a dramatic view of St. Paul’s Church. However, overhead cables are particularly intrusive features and the extension to Brookfield House is dominant on entry to the street. This would make an ideal home zone.
Fig 2.4: The top end of St. Paul Street is less attractive, consisting of unattractive rear entrances to properties on New Road and Park Lane. The frontages are poorly defined and the sense of enclosure and human scale breaks down.

General Character

Whilst primarily a residential area, there are groupings of small-scale retail units at either end of Park Lane. There are also a number of other small businesses along Park Lane and St. Paul Street, which only become apparent to the pedestrian. The character of the area to the pedestrian is far richer than it is to the motorist. To the motorist it is part of the one way system to be negotiated as quickly as possible lest one gets ‘lost’ in it. To the pedestrian it is a place in its own right, a Victorian suburb, with its own shops, park and pub. The volume and speed of the traffic suppresses the perception of this, particularly to motorists. The high volume and often continuous flow of traffic ensure that it dominates the character of Park Lane for long periods of each day and has a significantly detrimental effect on the environmental quality of the street for other users. This marginalises the positive character of the buildings whereby they can become perceived as incidental to its current role as a conduit for vehicular traffic. However, as with many edge-of-centre locations, vehicular access is still important, the street has a number of on-street parking spaces and the shops at the western end of the street benefit from the adjacent parking. The traffic also has the effect of impeding and even deterring movement across Park Lane. There are two formal pedestrian crossing points on the road. John Coles Park provides a traffic free alternative for those walking or cycling into town (Fig 2.5).

Fig 2.5: Outside the entrance to John Coles Park. Note the semi-detached house on St. Paul Street and the effect modern replacement windows have on its appearance.
Buildings, Spaces & Townscape

The long terrace of houses on the north side of Park Lane creates a strong linear statement. The steep pitched roofs, chimneys and full height bays emphasise their vertical scale comparative to the buildings on the south side of the street. The slightly lower lying ground and smaller scale of the earlier dwellings on the south side ensures that the sense of enclosure created by the terraces allows a slightly more open aspect to the south. Other elements of the townscape also contribute to this. The terraces on the south side are somewhat shorter and are occasionally either set back more from the street or built at a slight angle to the street. At the western end of the street in particular, this has the effect of creating a series of small open spaces which form the front gardens of the houses. The openness of the aspect to the south is at its greatest half way along the street where there is a gap in the buildings created by a small area of poorly utilised allotments. This gives access to Springfield Terrace and allows longer views to a tree-lined horizon that is unfortunately intruded upon by the bulk of Bewley House. The shop units at Nos. 27b, 27c & 28a have generally attractive shopfronts. However their single storey nature serves to emphasise the poorly defined street frontage on the south side of the street between St. Paul Street and the Little George. This is exacerbated by the presence of the slip road and adjacent surface car park.

Springfield Terrace is a continuous terrace of 17 properties accessed from a narrow pedestrian path. It has no vehicular access and from Park Street becomes increasingly secluded as the gardens gradually widen, the path finally emerging unobtrusively onto Marshfield Road. The buildings themselves are modest and generally attractive. Their modest scale and the variety of vegetation in the gardens and fronting the path provide a constantly changing experience and add to the cosy, cottage feel of the terrace.

The core of St. Paul Street consists of terraces of attractive mid-Victorian houses in Bath stone with slate roof tiles. The roof lines step down the street with the slope and variations in design through restrained decoration and attention to detail adds interest to the facades. The small front gardens have lost their original railings though many gate-piers still remain. The one-way nature of the street serves to dissuade rat-running and the resultant absence of traffic and general quietness has encouraged a number of residents to reinstate traditional windows and railings. At the northern end of the street large gaps in the frontage disrupt the coherence and definition of the space given by the terraces. This also allows unattractive views to the backs of buildings on New Road. The large Yew tree marks the transition between the terraced and open parts of the street on the east side and is a welcome addition to the street. The coherence of the street also breaks down at the southern end as the terraces give way to the office buildings on Marshfield Road. Much personalisation of the properties in the character area has taken place in the past 30 years. The basic elements of most of the properties remain, including many original gate-piers, though replacement doors, windows and boundary treatments of varying designs serve to disrupt the coherence and undermine the collective attractiveness of the dwellings at closer inspection. In an attempt to protect original features on some dwellings, additional controls were introduced in 1995 by means of an Article 4 Direction. However, a number of unauthorised alterations are currently evident, primarily replacement windows with double glazed units – clearly related in no small part to the noise created by the busy traffic. The majority of the properties on the street retain enough of their original character to ensure they make a positive contribution to the character of the area (Fig 2.6). Additional Article 4 directions may be appropriate to ensure this character is not eroded by further inappropriate alterations.

Car Park now social housing of Poor design and impact
Fig 2.6: Nos. 70-71 are a fine unaltered pair of houses in the street. Replacement of the original windows would destroy much of the character of the house yet it is neither listed nor protected by an Article 4 Direction.

**Highway Infrastructure**

The character of Park Street is also affected by highway infrastructure and utility equipment. Tall highway style lighting columns line the street, out of scale with the surrounding buildings and more suitable to a motorway environment than an urban street in a market town. The layout of the road space serves to emphasise the dominance of vehicles. The provision of a cycle lane, segregated from the traffic lane between Nos. 55-67, forces cars to be parked near the middle of the street. This makes them more prominent and necessitates a number of build-outs on which planters sit – all adding to the cluttered appearance of this part of the street (Fig 2.7). In addition the appearance of the road is poor – the poor quality road surface (increasing the noise of traffic), worn out road markings and weeds growing in the kerbside all go to create a somewhat shabby appearance in many areas.

Fig 2.7: Positioning a cycle lane by the kerb has pushed parked cars to a prominent position in the middle of the street and necessitated chicanes and road markings. The whole effect is to add an unnecessary degree of clutter into an otherwise attractive street.

Throughout the character area telephone poles and wires are evident. They are most dominant at the western end of Park Street and throughout St. Paul Street and are a particularly unsightly visual intrusion into the townscape and on the skyline in these areas. The attractiveness of the streets would improve markedly if these services were relocated underground.
Vegetation
Vegetation is generally limited to the domestic and small scale to be found in front gardens and a minimal amount of vegetation is part of the distinctly urban character of the area. The mature vegetation of John Coles Park is evident as background to views to the north, particularly into the park entrance and into Park Fields. The remaining impact of vegetation is largely limited to longer distance views, generally southward, of trees on the horizon or lining the railway embankment. The single most important specimen is by far the impressive Monkey Puzzle at the entrance to John Coles Park, which is a significant feature in most views along Park Lane (Fig 2.8).

Materials
The predominant, almost exclusive, building material is Bath stone. On the earlier properties in St. Paul Street, Springfield Terrace and the south side of Park Lane buildings are generally roofed in slate, the buildings on the north side of Park Lane being clay tiles.

Fig 2.8: The fine pair of non listed houses at the entrance to John Coles Park and the impressive Monkey Puzzle tree in the garden. These are the only good quality 20th Century houses in the character area.

Earlier properties tend to use sawn stone and later ones coursed rubble stone with sawn dressings. The semi-detached pair of houses at the entrance to John Coles Park are in roughcast render with plain clay tiles. Flank walls are often in brick and chimneys either of stone or brick, brick ones also occasionally replacing former stone ones. Personalisation of properties in recent years has seen some variations on this theme but not to such an extent to undermine the general character. Boundary treatments to front gardens offer the greatest variety of materials and are clear elements undermining the general uniformity of the built form.
Character Area 3: Upper New Road

Character Analysis

History, Archaeology & Morphology

New Road dates from 1792, when it was constructed by the Chippenham Turnpike Trustees to provide a new route into the town for the roads from Swindon (A420) and Malmesbury (A350) which converged at the Little George public house. Prior to this, the original route into the town was via Old Road and Monkton Hill. A road existed along the route of New Road prior to its construction in 1792, but is shown on the John Powell map of 1784 as a narrow path, and is marked ‘old road now unpassable’. Development along either route into the town was limited, being primarily in the vicinity of the long established Little George public house and the West Side of Old Road.

The construction of the railway in the 1840s provided the impetus for major development. New Road was one of the first areas to be developed following the opening of the railway and the architectural style of the villas lining the west side of the street closely resembles the style adopted by Brunel for his railway buildings. The east side of the street was less completely developed with new houses due to existing uses such as the gardens of properties on Old Road, the junction with Union Road and the former Light’s timber yard.

To the north, on Malmesbury Road, the imposing St. Paul’s Church, by Giles Gilbert Scott, dominates much of the northern part of the town. It was built from 1853-1861 and consecrated in 1855. Development along the road followed this, the first houses being built opposite the rectory, reaching the Little George by around 1900 and Greenway Avenue by the outbreak of the First World War.

The land between Old Road, Foundry Lane and the railway was originally developed by Rowland Brotherhood. Brotherhood, originally from Middlesex, was employed in parts of the construction of the original London to Bristol Railway. Following the progress of the railway along its route, he arrived at Chippenham in 1842 and moved into Orwell House on New Road. He lived here until his death in 1869. Following completion of the railway Brotherhood became primarily involved in maintenance contracts for a number of sections of railway and established in Chippenham a shop to repair maintenance tools. This was the beginning of the Chippenham railway works. In the mid 1840s he took over a local ironfounders in New Road. Soon after, he expanded into the production of railway fittings and erected workshops for this purpose on land known as ‘The Wall Ground’ purchased for this purpose. This is land now currently occupied by the Hathaway Retail Park on the east side of Old Road.

Wagons began to be made in 1849 and in the early 1850s the factory was extended. Lattice and girder bridges were also manufactured and more land was purchased in the mid 1850s as their size increased. The 1860s were a busy period that also saw further expansion. Unfortunately, the period was also one of financial instability, and Brotherhood was eventually made bankrupt in 1869. The works remained empty well into the 1880s and were eventually acquired by the signal manufacturers Saxby & Farmer in 1903 who, in turn, merged with Westinghouse Brake & Signal Company in 1920. Westinghouse continued to expand, with around 2500 employees in 1939, when it also acquired Pew Hill House as its head office. The earlier works, on land between Old Road and Foundry Lane, were gradually occupied by a variety of industrial uses until the site was completely redeveloped as the Hathaway Retail Park in the 1980s. The land to the north of Foundry Lane is still in use by Westinghouse today, its future currently under discussion.
**Topography & Views**

The land is generally flat, except for New Road itself, which descends on an even gradient from the Little George to meet Marshfield Road and pass under the railway viaduct. On entering the road through the viaduct, one is presented with the bland side elevation of the monolithic St. Paul’s House and an unused ‘left over’ area of land from the construction of the underpasses, that reveals the rear parking area of Nos. 49-50.

The view up the street from the east side is characterised by the imposing Little George public house at the top, the large steeple of St. Paul’s church rising behind the buildings on the west side, and by the way roof line of the buildings, particularly the eaves, gradually step up the hill in accordance with the gradient (**Fig 3.1**). Mature vegetation in the grounds of flats on Langley Road terminate the view at the top of the street and some inappropriate domestic planting in front gardens dilutes the effect of the urban vista created by the buildings.

On the eastern side of the street the buildings are also generally of a pavilion form and respect the gradient. At the junction with Union Road, this is disrupted by No. 18, which is taller than, sits forward from the other buildings and is made more dominant by having a high parapet rather than a shallow pitched roof with large eaves.

![Fig 3.1: The fine buildings lining New Road, dominated by traffic.](image)

It is an uncharacteristic dominant form in the street that is characterised by a general uniformity of building form in the majority of its buildings. This building also blocks views of No. 19 and is just as intrusive when viewed in the opposite direction.

The view down the street is dominated by the imposing and solid structure of the viaduct, which terminates the view. The full visual impact of the structure cannot be fully appreciated on entering the town along this route, as it is only partly visible until very close. However, the scale of the structure can be appreciated by comparison to the surrounding buildings. The mature vegetation behind puts it into a different context whereby the structure is a feature of the wider landscape. Towards the top end of the street the uniformity of the buildings and street character is diluted by breaks in the frontage. Between the Little George and No. 30 a slip road exists as part of the one-way traffic system. This has revealed the rear and side elevations of buildings not designed for public view, and has created an awkward shaped site, currently used as a surface car park. The effect is to break down the grain of the urban form, reveal unattractive views and prevent the efficient use of land to an appropriate urban density.

**Now refilled underpasses**

**Car park now social housing**

Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal November 2007
Between Nos. 20 and 23d is a site recently developed upon in an inappropriate manner for a conservation area (Fig 3.2). This site was previously occupied by a now demolished detached building and the gardens of Nos. 22-23, but is now occupied by a single storey structure of no architectural merit that is set back too far from the other buildings in the street. The open aspect reveals views of some attractive buildings to the rear, also visible from Old Road. However, it is the openess and formless character of the space, which combine to undermine the character of the street as a whole, being uncharacteristic of the prevailing urban form.

Fig 3.2: This is clearly out of character, this structure does not blend in well, or take its cues from existing buildings in the area. Its impact is detrimental to the conservation area.

The view from the Little George along Park Lane presents an attractive vista of buildings gradually giving way to vegetation and a tree-lined horizon. The view from Langley Road is dominated by the impressive front of the Little George pub, though the large vehicles crammed onto the former petrol station forecourt are an inappropriately dominant feature in the street scene. Two key features dominate the views from and along, Malmesbury Road, Old Road and Foundry Lane. First is St. Paul's Church (Fig 3.3). This is most notable building in the area and is one of the most dominant and positive landmarks in the whole town and visible from many parts of the town and beyond. The church is a particular feature of views from Foundry Lane and the footbridge across

Fig 3.3: The impressive spire of St. Paul's Church dominates the area and is a landmark from numerous points across the town and within the character area. The quality of its setting is compromised by the standardised and over engineered highway infrastructure of the road junction.
the railway. The focus of the view from the junction along Old Road is indistinct and undefined, yet is directed at the important site at the corner of Monkton Hill and Station Hill, the plain form of the tyre depot currently occupying the site poorly terminating the view across the railway line. An opportunity exists here to provide a positive landmark to visually link both sides of the railway line. Whereas the church is a positive element in the townscape, and suitable as a landmark building due to its use, the Hathaway Retail Park is a dominant and negative feature in the townscape. The building makes little attempt to create a positive image, or be more than simply a functional structure, yet it visually dominates the whole area around the Little George junction. The open parking area in front of the building serves to enable the whole building to be seen in a single view, thus further emphasising its scale and size.

On entering the town along Malmesbury Road, the bland, long and tall frontage blocks almost all views beyond to the town centre, the parish church steeple and the countryside and woodland beyond at Bowood. This undermines the visitors' perception of where the town centre is as well as providing a poor quality and ill-defined entrance into the town (Fig 3.4). The building also undermines views of St. Paul's Church from the railway footbridge. One service yard for the Retail Park occupies most of the length of one side of Old Road, presenting a view of unattractive rear elevations and bin-stores and severely eroding the perception of Old Road as a street. Foundry Lane has also lost its street-like characteristics and form due to the construction of the retail centre.

![Image](image.jpg)

Fig 3.4: ‘Welcome to Chippenham!’ The view presented to those arriving in the town from Malmesbury Road presents a particularly poor and uninspiring image of the town.

The slewing of its historic alignment to accommodate the shape of the car park and the mini roundabout junction with Old Road, a further car park on the opposite side of the lane and the loss of all buildings fronting the lane except the Westinghouse offices, has resulted in the lane being ‘lost’ in an amorphous, ill-defined area of cars, tarmac and twists and turns. Beyond the retail sheds the open aspect allows attractive views of the Westinghouse offices and the former Technical School building across the railway line. These are two important and visually prominent buildings in the area, which help give a positive image to those arriving by train and are visible from either side of the railway.

**General Character**

The character area is a dynamic part of the town with a wide variety and range of uses. The area acts both as a local centre and also attracts people from further afield. This variety gives the area a vitality that is a key element of its character. The use of New Road as a one way traffic artery for
through traffic is often at odds with this character, as it is a place and destination within its own right, rather than a mere conduit for vehicles. The ‘highway’ approach is clearly evident in the predominance of highway infrastructure and its standardised designs.

The more ‘local’ facilities are found around the top end of New Road, centred on a short terrace of shops including a post office, sandwich shop, café and chemist. There are also three pubs close by and opticians, doctors and dentists across the road. The remainder of the western side of New Road consists primarily of offices and a number of properties still in residential use. The remainder of the eastern side of the street consists of high street shops and a number of takeaways. Union Road still contains some industrial use and the workshop of the car garage. Other shops also exist around the busy Little George junction, including a convenience store in the Retail Park. Westinghouse has an entrance on Foundry Lane and shift changes often provide the majority of the pedestrian traffic in this vehicle dominated area.

There is a distinct contrast in character between New Road and the Retail Park. New Road contains a high number and wide variety of uses in close proximity with only a limited amount of on-street parking. This produces a range of activities throughout the day and into the evening. The Retail Park occupies a similar area but only about 20% of the outlets to be found on New Road. With the exception of the convenience and video store, all units are closed by early evening. The Retail Park has only one main access each for vehicles and pedestrians. Thus the area becomes sterile in the evening, separated physically from the surrounding town by its perimeter walls and railings and in terms of the lack of passing vehicles and pedestrians.

The retail park’s sterile character comes from it being designed primarily with vehicle access in mind and the quality of the environment of New Road suffers from the effects of high volumes of passing traffic. These affects are particularly apparent at the Little George junction, a place where many roads meet and the majority of the pedestrian activity is to be found, yet there are only two designated crossing facilities. These are located where there is minimum inconvenience to vehicles, rather than having been designed to achieve a balance of priority for all users.

Buildings, Spaces & Townscape
The straight and relatively wide nature of New Road, with its even gradient, general uniformity of building heights, shallow pitched roofs and front ‘garden’ areas, gives the street a formal character with a pleasant open aspect. This is interrupted by the projecting three-storey form of No. 18, and to a lesser extent by Nos. 48-50.

On the west side of the street, Nos. 48-50 are former cottages, now shops. A bracketed canopy, door recess and window are all that remain at ground floor of the original residential frontage. The remainder of the ground floor is occupied by shop-fronts that at No. 50 is particularly out of character with the modest scale of the building. The inappropriate size and poor positioning of the sign and the recessed nature of the shop-front at No. 48 have a detrimental effect on the character of the terrace, as does the painted frontage of No. 48 and the replacement UPVC windows at the first floor of No. 50.

Nos. 44-47 are two semi-detached pairs of villas still in residential use. The loss of the front boundary walls and railings of these properties and their replacement by concrete for vehicle parking gives these otherwise attractive buildings a stark appearance (Fig 3.3).
Fig 3.3: Loss of front gardens and boundary walls for parking is detrimental to the character of these listed buildings. Opportunities to provide rear vehicular access should be taken where possible.

No. 46 has also lost its original sash windows. No. 41-42 is a larger semi-detached pair of villas now used as offices. It has retained its boundary wall almost unaltered. No. 40a is the old police station and is in a less refined and more imposing style than the surrounding villas. It retains its low boundary walls almost unaltered, and gate-piers, but has lost its railings. Nos. 38-40 is a similar terrace to No. 41-42. Though slightly larger in scale it has lost more of its original features. A modern plate-glass shop-front in an earlier surround and the loss of the boundary wall for a hardstanding disrupts the uniformity of the frontage. Nos. 38-39 remain in residential use, though No. 39 has lost its original windows, door and railings. No. 38 is the most attractive, having lost only its railings for a hedge. Restoration of original fenestration, boundary treatments, and a return to residential use for No. 40 would enhance the appearance of this group considerably.

No. 37 retains its original features intact except for some inconsistency in fenestration. The attractiveness of the building is somewhat undermined by the numerous characters applied to the windows, advertising its use as a nursery. Nos. 35-36 remain in residential use. The elegant simplicity of the façade is almost totally compromised by the loss of original windows and doors for modern replacements. Gate-piers remain and the low boundary walls are in poor repair, and railings have also been lost – replaced by a modern wall at No. 36. Nos. 33-34 are both used as surgeries and retain matching, if not original, sash windows. The consistency is lost with the boundary treatment as No. 33 has a wall and No. 34 has railings. Original doors have been lost and an excessively large sign in the garden of No. 33 in addition to the wall plate dominates the frontage from the pavement.

No. 32 is the first of three detached villas at the top of the street and has an attractive and neat symmetrical frontage. The huge overbearing Lleylandii, insignificant railings, bare garden area and hanging cabling on the frontage combine to give this otherwise attractive building a rather stark and clinical appearance. As with No. 33, a large sign designed to be seen by passing traffic also adds to this effect. No. 31 also presents a generally attractive frontage, but would benefit greatly from removal of the modern canopy over the front door and the replacement of the bland boundary walls with railings. Likewise, No. 30 would benefit from replacement of its modern boundary wall with railings on a low stone wall.

The east side of the street has a less uniform character. It most closely reflects the west side at the bottom end, between the viaduct and Union Road. The newer buildings at No. 11a-d and No. 12 reflect the pavilion villa form of the surrounding ones at Nos. 11, 13-14, 16-17 and 19-20. No.
11a-d is an infill site nestling below the railway embankment on a constrained triangular site and does well to extend the form of the townscape as close as possible to the viaduct. No. 12 is an infill building on the site of the former Light’s timber yard. Here, the service bay on the street takes up the whole width of the pavement, passing pedestrians having to use private land of the former garden area. The detail of these modern buildings is poor and bland, and their contribution to the character of the street comes from their form and scale, although No. 12 is poorly sited – not being equidistant from adjacent buildings, and No. 11a-d would benefit from a pitched roof. Of the original buildings, Nos. 11 and 14 contain inappropriate replacement UPVC windows at first floor level, and No. 11 an inappropriate projecting shopfront (Fig 3.4). The majority of shop-fronts are of a poor quality and bear little relationship to their context, the only exception being the relatively unaltered, listed Nos. 16-17. This even retains some boundary treatment, if not original, though has unfortunately had the stone frontage painted. The formal coherence of the street is undermined by the loss of boundary treatments. The resultant variety of levels and differing surface materials create an untidy appearance and attract vehicle parking.

Fig 3.4: Replacement UPVC windows are out of character with most historic buildings, particularly in their obtrusive means of opening compared to sash windows. Compare with the central original window.

The high parapet frontage of No. 18 is highly noticeable. (Fig 3.5). This consists of a collection of buildings turning the corner into Union Road and the New Road frontage is a later, modern addition which projects uncharacteristically beyond the otherwise uniform building line. The shop-fronts are of poor quality and the small, wide windows at first floor serve to emphasise the large extent of stonework and its linear form. With the exception of No. 18a, UPVC units have replaced all windows at first and second floor level. Their chunky frames and top-hung projecting openings give them a physical presence out of proportion with the rest of the building that they do not warrant, and severely compromised the character of the otherwise attractive building.
Fig3.5: The projecting addition to No.18 is a particularly disruptive element in the building frontage and obscures buildings beyond, when viewed from either direction.

The white painted side elevation to No. 18c and the huge extractor shaft on the side of the building further add to the detrimental effect this building has on both New Road and Union Road. Nos. 19-20 mark the last of the pavilion villa form of buildings. Whilst this building has shop-fronts projecting onto the former garden area, they do so only to half its depth and their scale is subservient to the main building. Unfortunately their basic design, extensive bright paint and exterior security grilles detract from the appearance of this otherwise attractive listed building. The huge gap in the street frontage created by the previous Peugeot garage, when viewed in conjunction with the projecting form of No. 18 gives a distinct sense of imbalance in an otherwise well ordered and formally laid out street. Infill buildings on this frontage, of a similar form to those at the bottom end of the street, could dramatically improve the appearance of this part of the street. An opportunity to enhance this character area has been missed by recent replacement development on New Road in the form of the Majestic wine wholesalers.

At the top end of the street the building form is completely different. A short terrace of 2-3 storey buildings turns the acute angle into Old Road. The fronts of these buildings face New Road with the exception of the Old Road Tavern, which has a rear garden entrance into New Road. The buildings present a wide variety of frontages and roof heights, which are a key element of its character. Nos. 25 and 26 have attractive frontages, and No. 27 has a shop-front extending almost the full height of the building. It gives the impression of having been taken from a larger building. The effect is rather poorly resolved, though has the potential to be made a far more successful feature. The more recent group at Nos. 23b-d and No. 24 are the least successful. The bland concrete roof of No. 24, the flat roof of No. 23b and the single storey flat roofs of Nos. 23c and 23d contrast poorly with each other and exhibit too great a range of scale and style compared to the other buildings. Generally the terrace contains a number of poor quality shop-fronts which serve to have a detrimental effect on a varied and potentially attractive group of buildings that are the heart of the local facilities serving the area.

Prior to the development of the Hathaway Retail Park, Foundry Lane and Old Road continued separately to the Little George road junction. Buildings between these two streets continued the built frontage of the street across into Langley Road. The short terrace at Nos. 1-5 (odd) now sits rather forlornly at one corner of the junction. No. 1 is a pleasant building, though bright paint detailing, painted stone frontage, lost railings and air conditioning units on the side of No. 3 do an
effective job of hiding this. Poor quality shop-fronts and modern windows contribute to giving Nos. 3 and 5 a rather nondescript appearance.

The Little George dominates the road junction in front of it and is a major local landmark (Fig 3.6). It is seen to its best effect from Langley Road and Foundry Lane. Unfortunately, the existence of the slip-road and car park to its rear ensure no other buildings can come close to it, giving it a somewhat isolated feel. The building is a fine example of Edwardian pub architecture and is listed Grade II. The pub is itself dominated by the imposing presence of St. Paul’s Church. The terrace of houses fronting Malmesbury Road date from 1900 and use a darker stone as opposed to the more common Bath stone. This becomes more varied further along the street, with a greater variety of frontages. Most front garden boundaries remain in some form, with a variety of original features remaining. However, these and original windows are gradually being lost and parts of the street could benefit from the introduction of Article 4 Directions. The removal of overhead wires would also improve the character of the street as a whole.

![Fig 3.6: The Little George is a local landmark at the road junction, particularly when approaching from Langley Road, though its unattractive rear elevation is prominent approaching from Park Lane on the one way system. Highway infrastructure also compromises the setting of this listed building.](image)

Hathaway Retail Park faces away from the station and away from the road junction at the Little George public house. It is an insular and inward looking development with no contribution to any street frontage and all entrances facing inwards to the car park. The buildings form an ‘L’ shape enclosing the car park serving them and define it as the most important space. The Retail Park is a prime example of urban form built for vehicular access, with the car park being the focus of activity and little provision for pedestrians. The buildings are large, bulky and inward looking, and totally out of scale with surrounding buildings. The buildings also exhibit the large-scale ‘building block’ architectural details, which lack visual interest, and detail at the human scale. From an architectural and townscape perspective, the retail park offers nothing positive to the character of this part of the town. The bulky form of the building hides the presence of the railway station, a focal point and major pedestrian and vehicular destination. On arrival at the railway station, the high blank rear wall of the building presents an unattractive impression of the town to visitors and blocks views of St. Paul’s Church.

Old Road is on the verge of becoming an extended service yard for the Retail Park (Fig 3.7). The service area and DIY store yard occupy the whole of the eastern side of the street, the only frontage being a blank wall and the only activity being the delivery of goods.
On the western side of the street, although it is well defined by buildings, only the Old Road Tavern and the currently vacant Railway pub front onto the road. The rear of Nos. 24-27a New Road provides Old Road with a frontage of often untidy rear elevations of painted brick and render facades and large refuse bins kept in the street. The footpath here is also used for occasional parking and this part of the street is in need of investigation into how these issues can be addressed to improve the appearance of the street whilst dealing with the functional needs of the buildings. Nos. 22 and 23 New Road now also have sole access to their properties from Old Road, although originally the rear of these properties. This part of the street is now a particularly untidy collection of concrete boundary walls and poorly defined space and would benefit from enhancement of the space in front of the buildings.

Fig 3.7: The Hathaway Retail Park has reduced the east side of Old Road to a service area, with lorries often parking half on the street to unload. This is a major pedestrian route into the town centre and presents a poor image of the town.

Union Road has a distinctly industrial character to it. The narrow street and high buildings at either end help contribute to this, as do the activities of the workshop to the garage and the remaining industrial uses at Nos. 2-6. The two warehouse buildings at Nos. 2-6 and the former brewery building to the rear of the Railway pub are also part of the distinctive industrial character of the street, as is the listed former weighbridge at the top of the street. The brewery building is seen to best effect from Old Road. Half way along either side of the street, gaps in the frontage weaken the definition of the street and allow views of untidy rear servicing and parking areas. Opportunity exists for sensitive infill development in the street to reinforce its industrial character and intimate scale.

Traffic & Highway Infrastructure
The Little George roundabout is a busy junction and almost all of the traffic entering the town from Marshfield Road, Malmesbury Road and Langley Road passes through the junction and along the one-way system down New Road. This concentration of traffic on New Road has a major impact on the character of the area. The continuous flow of large volumes of traffic for considerable parts of the day makes crossing the road difficult for pedestrians and creates an element of severance between the two sides of the street. There are only two formal crossing points – a zebra crossing by the post office at the top of the street, and the unattractive underpass by the viaduct at the bottom end of the street. Otherwise there are no crossing points along the length of the street itself.

Railway pub now replaced by social housing
Underpass replaced by crossing lights
There is only one formal pedestrian crossing point on the Park Lane arm of the Little George junction, pedestrians walking to the town via Old Road being expected to detour around the back of the Little George to safely cross New Road. There are no other formal pedestrian crossing points at this busy junction, a place where there is also much pedestrian activity. Out of peak hours the one-way system encourages faster traffic speeds and inconveniences cyclists, encouraging contra-flow cycling and cycling on the pavement. The lack of rear servicing facilities leads to large delivery vehicles parking half on the road and half on the pavement, often in peak periods, inconveniencing other vehicles and pedestrians alike and further undermining the quality of the environment and the ability to appreciate the quality of the townscape.

In addition to the intrusive physical presence of vehicles and their attendant noise and pollution, the street contains an extensive collection of damaged, twisted, rusty and inconsistent traffic signs which collectively has a detrimental affect on the character of the street. The use of standard galvanised finishes only serves to make the numerous poles more noticeable. Signs are often bolted together as new ones have been added and are particularly unsightly from the rear. Warning signs are individually illuminated in an area where street lighting and vehicle headlights would adequately illuminate reflective signs, thus avoiding the need for many of the functional and unattractive fixings and lighting units.

Lighting columns are of a variety of designs and finishes. Many have large projecting light units necessitating high poles to ensure adequate clearance from high vehicles. Such designs are more suited to motorway use rather than an urban street environment. Alternative designs could avoid this and provide more suitably scaled units more in keeping with the character of the street. New works currently under way at the top of New Road are merely adding to the excessive and often unnecessary clutter of highway infrastructure. Bright standard galvanised finishes, excessive numbers of poles, lighting and railings merely reinforcing the dominance of vehicles in the street and the controlling of pedestrian movement for vehicular convenience. Little attempt appears to be made to integrate harmoniously into the streetscape the necessary highway infrastructure, which currently has an over-engineered and dominant character. In contrast, the condition of the carriageway is poor and road markings worn away in places, evidence of lack of basic maintenance of the highway that has a shabby appearance and simply adds to the somewhat ‘under stress’ feel of the area.

**Vegetation**

Vegetation is not a dominant feature within the area, and where it does exist can be inappropriate in scale and species, such as in front of buildings on New Road. Small scale planting between the roundabouts at the Little George and around the Retail Park does little to soften the harsh landscape of tarmac and scale of the buildings. However, the traditional domestic planting in front of the properties on the western side of New Road is predominantly of an appropriate scale and species. Unfortunately this has been lost on the eastern side where the former front garden areas have been replaced by tarmac.

The main positive impact of vegetation comes from views from the Little George junction along the roads leading out from it. The view along Park Lane consists of vegetation at the end of the street, trees lining Hardenhuish Brook and trees on the horizon. The view down New Road reveals mature vegetation providing a landscape setting for the viaduct. Vegetation on the embankment in front though, partially obscures the view of the viaduct. The view north along Malmesbury Road is terminated by the mature vegetation in the grounds of detached houses and by trees fronting John Coles Park. The graveyard of St. Paul’s Church provides a pleasant open green space allowing good close-by views of the whole church. The space is enclosed on one
side by buildings, and on the other by mature trees in the grounds of the adjacent flats, which are also terminate the view up New Road.

The view along Foundry Lane is terminated by mature trees on the far side of the railway, along Cocklebury Road. The view south along Malmesbury Road is dominated by the bulk of the retail shed. This allows only very constrained views of the trees in Monkton Park, the parish church steeple and the mature landscape of Bowood in the far distance. From the railway footbridge, the Little George and St. Paul’s Church, together with the adjacent mature trees and those of John Coles Park, combine to create a fine skyline to the north, marred only by the bulk of the retail sheds in the foreground.

**Materials**
New Road is the most formal, planned street in the area and this is reflected in the materials used. Bath stone ashlar is the predominant facing material with either warm orange coloured engineering brick or rubble stone for side and rear elevations. Chimneys are of sawn Bath stone. Slate on shallow pitched roofs is the predominant and traditional roofing material. Windows are traditionally timber painted sashes, either 6-pane or with margin lights. Painted, artificial or reconstituted stone, large windows and ribbed or roman tiles are generally out of character with most buildings on New Road. At the top end of the street there is a more eclectic mix of materials, not all suitable to the buildings they adorn. Timber framing and painted and rendered facades may be considered not out of character here. The stone on many buildings is dirty under the eaves and would benefit from cleaning.

On Union Road and Old Road there is more variety, with greater use of brick as well as both sawn and coursed rubble Bath stone, and roman and clay tiles on the larger buildings. There is also a greater range of window sizes, but painted timber sashes or casements are still predominant. The houses fronting Malmesbury Road are generally of a darker facing stone with sawn Bath stone dressings. Roofs were originally of slate, but modern concrete tiles have now replaced many.
Character Area 4 Railway Station

Character Analysis

History, Archaeology & Morphology
Prior to the coming of the railway in 1841, development of the town had largely confined itself to the south of the River Avon. The railway precipitated major development on the north side of the River, bringing new industry and associated housing. Construction of the railway forced the closure of the Malmesbury Road as a through route from its alignment along Old Road and Monkton Hill. Traffic was diverted along the newer turnpike route, constructed prior to the coming of the railway and consisting of what is now New Road. The railway also saw the construction of the viaduct, one of the town's major landmarks.

Station Hill was constructed to give access to the railway station. Beyond the station, Cockerlebury Road was constructed to maintain access to Cockerlebury Farm, the original access via Foundry Lane also having been severed by the railway line. The only physical evidence of the pre-railway alignment of Malmesbury Road is now a kink in the road as Station Hill becomes Cockerlebury Road. This is where the road skirted around a terrace of houses once fronting Old Road and was demolished in the 1970s.

Development of land around the station since the opening of the railway has been slow, sporadic and unplanned. Industrial and commercial uses predominated until after the Second World War. Westinghouse, E J May on Union Road and the small warehouses between Monkton Hill and the telephone exchange are all that remain of these initial uses. These are mainly low-rise buildings, reflecting the then edge-of-town location of the station. More recently the telephone exchange has replaced the Wiltshire Creamery, Hathaway Retail Park has replaced the bacon factory and the railway goods yard has become the station car park.

Buildings, Spaces & Townscape
The area contains relatively few buildings, and only a few of these are of any architectural note. The main buildings of note are the railway station and drawing office (station completed 1848, current buildings 1856-8). These are probably the finest buildings in the character (Fig 4.1). Other buildings of note, and not listed, are the telephone exchange (1935) opposite, the former Technical School building (1898) now part of Chippenham College and the Westinghouse office across the railway line. The telephone exchange office provides an important counterpoint to the station buildings, however the visual connection is weakened by the indiscriminate layout of the station forecourt in between (Fig 4.1). The architectural impact of the Technical School building is reduced by the loss of the railings fronting the building (Fig 4.2). Other buildings of note are the disused former coal yard weighbridge office (listed Grade II) at the top of Union Road, the former Railway pub and adjacent buildings and the cottages at the top of Monkton Hill (listed Grade II), their setting being somewhat marred by a large tarmac forecourt. The main centre of activity is the station itself. The types of activity it generates define the character of the space in front of the station. The forecourt is a vibrant and dynamic space, particularly at the beginning and end of the working day.
Fig 4.1: The listed station building, missing some chimneys and sitting in a stark, unwelcoming and poorly defined forecourt.

Fig 4.2: The original technical school building is a positive building in the townscape, also visible from arriving trains. It would benefit from the reinstatement of boundary wall railings.

Much of the space between the railway line and Cocklebury Road was originally part of the railway goods yard. As goods traffic declined and car travel increased, and the remaining buildings at the top of Station Hill were demolished, the area was gradually given over to car parking, and developed into its current state in a rather unplanned fashion.

The spatial quality of the area is poorly defined. The station buildings, which are attractive buildings of good architectural quality, should, with the space immediately in front of them, be the focus of the area, but are lost in a sea of cars (Fig 4.3). This impression is particularly notable when arriving at the station from Station Hill – having arrived at the top of the hill, one is presented with high walls of poor visual quality surrounding the post office and short stay car park which obscure views of the station buildings (Fig 4.4). Recent enhancements have improved the area to the immediate front of the station however with small scale planting the area has a something of a ‘desert’ feel to it and would benefit from some suitable planting. The buildings fronting Cocklebury
Road contain few buildings of a scale or architectural presence to provide a sense of enclosure or positive setting to the station, and thus fail to reinforce the station and its forecourt as a positive focal space. Some of the buildings fronting Cocklebury Road are single storey and date from the initial development of the area in the early 20th Century when the station was still on the periphery of the town. Other frontage space is taken up with car parking for the telephone exchange.

Fig 4.3: The listed drawing office, drowning in a sea of cars. The original rear of the building is now prominent and should be treated as a frontage in any enhancements to this area. Car parking should be reordered to give the building some ‘breathing space’ and improve its setting.

Fig 4.4: The view at the top of Station Hill – a poor and unwelcoming introduction to the area with the post office compound wall obscuring views of the station buildings.

Views
Views can form an important impression and defining characteristic of an area. The station is sited on high ground in relation to the town centre. This affords impressive views of the town to the south, but the large rear elevation of the Retail Park creates a stark and bland visual barrier to the north, blocking views of all but the spire of St. Paul’s Church (Fig 4.5).
The two key viewpoints in the area are the station entrance and the footbridge across the railway. Being higher up, the footbridge offers a wider range of views, but the station entrance is also important for the number of people using it. In general, the longer views are more positive and dramatic than the shorter ones – these being dominated by the incoherent agglomeration of buildings surrounding the station. The footbridge itself is not a particularly attractive structure, consisting of two sections of widely differing designs. It is painted in a dull grey and in a poor, rather drab state of decorative repair, with a great deal of rust evident, an uneven surface in places and steps that quickly become slippery in the wet and is unwelcoming to those with disabilities, wheelchairs or pushchairs etc.

From the station entrance the main views giving a positive impression are the original telephone exchange building and the technical school building. A longer view down Station Hill affords a pleasant view of Rowden Hill and its dense mature tree cover. The attractive façade of the Westinghouse office building is also visible from the station forecourt, a typical industrial building of its time (Fig 4.6).

Negative views from the station entrance include the sea of cars parked around the station, the rather brutal telephone exchange extension, the plethora of small industrial buildings on the opposite side of Cocklebury Road (Fig 4.7), the post office extension and the garage at the corner of Station Hill and Monkton Hill. From the footbridge long views to Rowden Hill, along the river
valley towards Rowden Manor, over the town centre to Bowood Hill and across the river valley to Bremhall all give positive impressions of the town and help reinforce its identity as a market town in a rural setting. Views of the large spires of both St. Paul’s and St. Andrew’s churches are visible from the footbridge. However the tall conifers growing on the embankment adjacent to the District Council offices weaken the visual connection between these two significant landmarks on the north and south sides of the town. The large slab cladding of the rear wall of Hathaway Retail Park deflects attention away from and partly obscures the view of St. Paul’s Church. The footbridge also allows a number of less pleasant views. Those from the station entrance are made more obvious by the higher vantage point and others also become apparent, notably the blank rear of the retail park, the rear of the industrial buildings fronting Union Road and the monolithic structures of Bewley House and DHSS building on the skyline.

Fig 4.7: This unattractive accumulation of small scale buildings is prominent directly opposite the station frontage. Of poor townscape quality, they do not positively address the road and do not give a good impression of the town to visitors.

Materials
The industrial and commercial character of the area, which has developed slowly over a long period, has led to a wide range of prevalent building materials and styles. Building materials include concrete cladding, metal sheeting, brick in a range of colours and finishes, glass, smooth and rough painted render and sawn and rubble stone. Roofing materials include stone, slate, concrete and clay tiles and other modern cladding materials. This plethora of materials gives the area no distinctive character, the quality of many of the materials, or the buildings many of them are used in is average or poor; and the overall effect is a strong contributor to the temporary feel of many of the buildings in the area.

Vegetation
The majority of the area is devoid of vegetation, which emphasises the rather harsh contrast between the immediate environs of the station and the greener long distance views. However, a certain amount of vegetation exists on the periphery of the area, which contributes positively to its character. The densely treed embankment adjacent to the District Council offices helps define the space more effectively than the low-rise collection of buildings fronting Cocklebury Road. Similarly, Cocklebury Road is lined with mature trees on both sides beyond Sadlers Mead and this adds a degree of definition and enclosure to the area. Whilst these partly obscure views of the technical school, they also screen the more modern low-rise college buildings from all but close-up views.
Character Area 5 : Malmesbury Rd & Langley Rd

Character Analysis

History, Archaeology & Morphology
Until the coming of the railway and associated industry, Malmesbury Road, Langley Road and Greenway Lane remained rural roads in the countryside. Change came gradually, and during the latter half of the 19th Century and beginning of the 20th Century the area remained as the north-eastern edge of the town. Tugela Road, Ashfield Road and Hawthorn Road are a direct result of the industrial development following the opening of the railway, and date from the turn of the 20th Century. Langley Road is the start of Maud Heath’s Causeway, laid out in the 15th Century, over 4 miles in length, to enable a dry route across the Avon valley to Tytherton and Calne. Malmesbury Road remained undeveloped until the construction of St. Paul’s Church, consecrated in 1855. Following the building of the church and Rectory, most of the road became lined with terraces of relatively modest but attractive houses by the end of the 19th Century. Construction of the church caused Greenway Lane to be diverted from its original straight course to Langley Road to its current alignment to Malmesbury Road.

Langley Road saw only sporadic development of a small number of houses during the 19th Century, the only planned development being The Hamlet. Almost all buildings from this era remain and are all listed. The main exception being Clift House, an aesthetically poor block formerly occupying large grounds adjacent to the church. The grounds extended from The Hamlet and Greenway Lane to Langley Road. The northern part of the gardens were developed by The Priory at the beginning of the 20th Century, the house and remainder of the gardens were more recently redeveloped for sheltered housing, this non listed building is a positive contribution to the area. Many of the trees from the original gardens have been retained and help to screen and soften the bulk of the blocks of flats. The trees also define the open space of the graveyard and screen the flats from key views of the church.

Topography & Views
The land is generally flat and views confined to the spaces define by buildings lining the streets. This occasionally breaks down, with both positive and negative effects. The most dominant feature of the whole area is the steeple of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott’s St. Paul’s Church. From Malmesbury Road, Langley Road and Greenway Lane, there are impressive long views in to the steeple of the church, and from Greenway Lane, of the whole of the church itself. From the rear entrance to the atrocious Clift House is a pleasant view of the parapetted frontage of No. 34 Malmesbury Road. In the opposite direction along Langley Road there is a pleasant view of the curving frontage of the gabled inter-war houses with a backdrop of mature trees near the main entrance to the Westinghouse works. The view out along Malmesbury Road is also pleasant, being dominated by the mature vegetation of John Coles Park and surrounding private gardens. Thus the approach to the town is also generally attractive, though the overhead wirescape and retail park in the distance undermine this to a degree.

From Hawthorn Road there is a pleasant view towards the Oxford Hotel and adjacent listed buildings at Nos. 26-30 Langley Road. The buildings and surrounding vegetation combine to form an attractive general landscape, the most distinctive feature being the impressive evergreen oak projecting out into the street adjacent to Hawthorn House. In the opposite direction is the rather unattractive view of the industrial buildings of the
Westinghouse site, providing an abrupt end to the street. The differing scale of the buildings and the gated entry gives both a sense of isolation and domination of the view. The view south along Tugela Road is directly aligned with the steeple of St Andrews church on St Mary Street and provides an impressive focal point to the vista, best viewed from the north end of the street. Unfortunately the huge bulk of the Hathaway Retail Park intrudes into the vista, significantly diluting the visual impact of the steeple with its blank side elevation and being totally out of scale with the surrounding buildings (Fig 5.1).

Fig 5.1: Tugela Road is a typically urban street of solid terraced houses with a fine view to St. Andrew’s Church in the town centre. The intruding bulk of the retail park building and the overhead wirescape are notably intrusive features.

The Hamlet retains its completeness and distinctive character and views along the narrow lane are particularly attractive in both directions. However, overhead wires and extensive double yellow lines detract from the view and undermine the otherwise strong rural character (Fig 5.2). On Greenway Lane, The Priory has a pleasant aspect from both north and south. Between The Priory and the church the definition of the street breaks down with unattractive views of the rear access to Clift House, The Priory, parish hall car park and the stark side elevation of the adjacent house.
Fig 5.2: The Hamlet is an exceptionally picturesque lane with a rural ambience to it. Overhead cables and yellow lines are particularly dominant and intrusive features. Their removal would improve the character and setting of the street and listed buildings immeasurably.

**General Character**

The area is primarily residential in character. There is a comparatively high proportion of sheltered accommodation and nursing homes, located at the old Rectory on Malmesbury Road, The Priory on Greenway Lane and Clift House on Langley Road. Other uses are limited, including offices, Veterinary surgery and hotel on Langley Road and Parish Hall, dentist and catering trade shop on Malmesbury Road. Langley Road and Malmesbury Road are both busy traffic routes and in peak hours queuing traffic can stretch beyond the boundary of the character area.

**Buildings, Spaces & Townscape**

**Langley Road**

Langley Road weaves a gentle curve through the character area. On entering the area from the Wootton Bassett direction, the uniform building line and density of the inter-war housing gives way to the older buildings and the uniformity of the street frontage breaks down, boundary walls, hedges and trees defining a less rigid and relatively open street space. This openness gives way to a greater degree of enclosure at Clift House where the narrowing and curving street (with the loss of one pavement) combined with the mature trees provides a sense of enclosure before the space opens out again at the Little George junction. The flats at Nos. 1-9 Langley Court, and the vegetation in front of them, help provide this enclosure. However, the enclosing effect of Langley Court is more than outweighed by the detrimental dwarfing effect it has on the setting of the adjacent Clift Cottage, an attractive listed cottage. Its bland roof and side elevation sits at an awkward angle very close to the cottage.

Rising behind the trees, the church steeple provides a significant and imposing landmark. With the listed buildings at Nos. 26-36 in the foreground, this is a scene of particularly high townscape quality, the unattractive wirescape being the only jarring element (Fig 5.3).
Fig 5.3: The fine entry into the town from Langley Road would benefit from the removal of overhead wires.

The townscape is at its most attractive and established between Clift House and The Hamlet. No. 29 and the terrace at Nos. 26-30 have lost their railings and their appearance and setting would benefit greatly from their reinstatement. Adjacent to Langley Court is a nondescript garage forecourt until recently a working garage and filling station. The forecourt is currently filled with large vehicles, giving the site a cramped and incongruous appearance in relation to the modest scale of the surrounding buildings. Between the garage and Langley Court the driveway reveals the attractive stone side elevations of industrial buildings, including a tall square brick chimney. These are the remaining buildings of a former Iron Foundry and possibly date from the original Brotherhood railway works (see Area 3 for more on this).

The flats of Clift House are of no particular architectural merit, but their scale is generally appropriate to the surrounding mature trees. Opposite Clift House, and between the veterinary surgery and Clift Cottage is a recently completed courtyard of houses. They generally reflect the style and scale of the surgery, which is an attractive Edwardian semi-detached pair of former houses (inappropriate UPVC windows being the only jarring element). However, their appearance is somewhat stark due to the closeness of the blocks to each other and their arrangement around a central courtyard, making the blocks something of a focal point. A large amount of mature vegetation was lost with the development of the houses. What was once a pleasant view to trees between two attractive buildings, and entirely in character with the rest of the street, has now been replaced with a solid mass of buildings and a sea of unattractive hard landscape given over to car parking. Tree planting at the street entrance, with species which will grow to match the stature of those in the grounds of Clift House, would help to reduce the stark visual impact of this development.

At the entrance to Tugela Road, No. 31 has an attractive timber oriel window. At the entrance to Hawthorn Road, Hawthorn House, now used as offices, is a simple but attractive building of Bath stone. Whilst its modern extension is relatively unobtrusive, a flimsy modern porch and painted ground floor stonework detracts from the otherwise attractive facade. Outside the walled boundary to Hawthorn House is a junction box on a pole, a litter bin, bench and letterbox. The whole collection has a rather tired feel to it.
The junction box would benefit from relocation to the end of the wall, the bin replacing
with a traditional cast design, the plastic wood effect bench with a more traditional
design and the base of the letterbox a coat of paint. Opposite is a semidetached pair of
cottages in the style of those in The Hamlet. Though acceptable, they are not part of the
original estate and have failed to pick up on the vernacular details found in the hamlet.

The Hamlet
The Hamlet consists of a short straight lane lined predominantly with pairs of two and
three storey cottages in coursed limestone rubble. All the cottages are listed Grade II.
The buildings are set well back from the lane and generously spaced apart, giving a feel
of openness. A line of mature trees provides an attractive backdrop for the houses on
the north side of the lane. Boundary treatments vary, though stone walls and hedges are
most common and remain low, adding to the uniformity of the streetscape and feel of
openness. A number of pairs have individual distinguishing characteristics, most notably
the rustic timber columns at the entrance to Nos. 16 &17.

Whilst the lane is clearly a space of high townscape quality, distinctly different from all
surrounding development, a number of elements combine to erode this character. A
number of the houses have inappropriate replacement window designs and some of the
open porches have been enclosed with inappropriate modern doors and windows. Some
boundary treatments are of inappropriate materials. As there is no on-street parking
allowed, many properties have had driveways constructed. The generous grounds
around the houses have allowed these to be integrated into the street scene relatively
unobtrusively. The most successful ones are those of loose gravel with no gates
retaining as much low stone wall as possible. Use of tarmac and gates and railings is an
inappropriate and suburban intrusion into the generally rural character of the lane.

However, the most significant intrusion comes from the plethora of overhead wires and,
at street level, the double-yellow lines. One positive effect of the ban on parking is to
ensure no vehicles are parked in the street. It is hard to underestimate the positive effect
this has on the general appearance of the street as a whole. The concrete lighting
columns, whilst generally of an appropriate scale, would benefit from replacement with a
more appropriate design. In an attempt to stop rat running, a crude build-out has been
applied directly to the road surface at the eastern end of the street. Rusty metal kerbs
and plain concrete bollards also help make this an unattractive entrance to a pleasant
lane.

Greenway Lane
Each end of the lane is characterised by attractive buildings, making a positive
contribution to the townscape. At the north end is a short terrace of four listed cottages
of humble scale forming a neat and attractive composition. Inappropriate replacement
windows in No. 11 are the most noticeably discordant feature.

Opposite is The Priory. It is an attractive house in the arts and crafts style, dating from
the early 20th Century (Fig 5.4). It is now extended and used as a nursing home. The
extension is subservient to the main dwelling and does not use inappropriate materials.
Vegetation softens the impact of the car park from the north.
Fig 5.4: The picturesque, non listed, Priory, a rare example of an Arts and Crafts style house in Chippenham, now a home for the elderly.

At the south end of the street the church is the dominant building. As on its south side, mature trees screen the adjacent Clift House flats from the church, though the parish hall car park makes for a poor foreground setting. The north and west side of the church is surrounded by a low wall with the remains of removed railings evident. Reinstatement of the railings would be a significant improvement to the boundary treatment of the church. The parish hall itself is a simple attractive, unlisted building in unpainted roughcast render. Its relatively unaltered state, inscribed frieze on the frontage, foundation stone (laid by Sir Audley Neeld in 1917) and the original timber framed fenestration are key elements that make the building a positive feature of the street scene. The principal elevation is the Malmesbury Road entrance and the side elevation to Greenway Lane is dominated by the rather bland and large expanse of roof. This elevation could benefit from tree planting to soften the impact of the roof. At the street corner a large Cypress dwarfs the building and partly blocks views of the attractive frontage.

By contrast, buildings in the central section are generally of no particular architectural quality and distinctly suburban in character. The variety of angles to, and distances from the street of buildings, creates an ill-defined and amorphous space in this area. The houses on the west side of the street have been developed individually on the rear gardens of the older terraces fronting Malmesbury Road. This has been done with little reference to or acknowledgement of the street frontage or architectural reference to adjacent buildings (Fig 5.5). South of this is the large open area of the St. Paul’s Parish Hall car park. Surrounded by a low modern blockwork wall, it is an expanse of tarmac devoid of any vegetation, with a stark and desolate feel. On the east side is the rear access to Clift House flats, the parking area to The Priory and two detached houses at right angles to the street sandwiched in between. The corner in the lane serves to accentuate the amorphousness and lack of strong street frontage.
Fig 5.5: Across the road from the Priory are some modern houses built on backland that relate poorly to the street frontage and provide an incoherent mix of styles, materials and forms, blank side elevations being particularly prominent.

Malmesbury Road
Malmesbury Road is more densely developed than Langley Road or Greenway Lane. The earliest houses were developed in the late 19th Century following the building of the church and Rectory. These are a short terrace of simple cottages opposite the Rectory. These have been much altered over time by rendering, painting, roof-raising, porches and replacement windows, often to the detriment of their overall appearance. However, their relative informality and smaller scale marks them out as distinctive from the other more formal and elaborately decorated buildings in the street. Original features such as stone frontages, stone porch canopies and enclosed front gardens remain in places. Restoration of original appearance and features would be appropriate to some of the dwellings.

The Rectory is now known as Parklands and is a residential care home for the elderly. It is of squared limestone rubble in the Gothic Revival style and is attributed to Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. Although listed, it has been extensively extended with north and south wings and a separate annex. Little has been done to sympathetically integrate these with the original house and their bland and functional style is particularly dominant when viewed from John Coles Park. The Malmesbury Road frontage fares better, the original house still being the dominant building and a positive element in the townscape. Unfortunately, the original driveway layout has been lost and all remnants of the original boundary treatment have been removed, giving the space in front of the house a rather informal, desolate and ill-defined feel, which is a poor setting for the imposing building (Fig 5.6). Additional tree planting could significantly improve the setting of this building.
Fig 5.6: The care home at Parklands, the listed former church rectory appears somewhat forlorn in its bland grass forecourt devoid of boundary treatment

Between Parklands and the Little George, the street is lined with short terraces and semi-detached pairs of houses and villas dating from around the turn of the 20th Century. The houses consist of a variety of different frontages in late Victorian or Edwardian style. This gives the street a richness and diversity, which is given a sense of order by the common building line, closeness of the buildings and the continuity of the enclosed small front gardens. The terraces provide an attractive and fitting setting for the listed St. Paul’s church opposite. The character of the frontage is beginning to be eroded by the use of a variety of modern boundary treatments and the loss of original sash windows with inappropriate UPVC replacements.

To the north of Parklands are a group of three detached and two semi-detached houses dating from the early 20th Century. All are of a differing appearance, though the overall effect is of a high quality townscape of attractive houses. Wych Elm is a detached painted rendered house with clay tile roof and metal casement windows. It is set behind a high stone wall and dense vegetation. The view through the driveway gives the impression of a sleepy and secluded country cottage.

No. 56 is stone fronted with full height bay enclosed by an open timber framed gable. Tall chimneys, decorative roof and ridge tiles and an attractive oriel window to the side are distinguishing features. Unfortunately the boundary wall has lost its railings and a wide opening has been cut in it to provide vehicle access, both disrupting the proportion and appearance of the building’s setting.

No. 58 (Panolbion) is a somewhat grander house in warm orange brick with stone dressings. The roofscape is impressive, with timber framed and roughcast rendered gabled front, large barge boards and eaves overhang, decorative ridge tiles and two tall and slender chimney stacks. The boundary wall remains intact and gates and gate-piers have been retained in the access to the adjacent garage. The entrance consists of an open recessed porch with stone pediment arch and inscribed name. Unfortunately railings have been lost from the boundary walls and the original windows have been lost to UPVC replacements with chunky frames and inward opening lights.
Nos. 60-62 are a semi-detached pair with a central second storey gabled front. The roof form is the dominant feature and the second and first storeys are in rough cast render and the ground floor in warm orange brick with stone dressings to the wide single storey bays and door surrounds. Though an attractive and imposing building, its setting is compromised by the complete removal of the boundary walls and front gardens for vehicle parking. In addition No. 60 has replacement UPVC windows, their large chunky frames looking particularly incongruous in the narrow lights of the ground floor bays and disrupting the symmetry, proportion and balance of the pair.

On the opposite side of the street are two terraces of houses from the late 19th/early 20th Century. Unlike the houses opposite the church, these are all built to a similar design. Whilst the houses have suffered somewhat from modern boundary treatments and loss of original windows, details such as stone dressings, solid chimney stacks, brick boundary walls give a sense of coherence to the group (Fig 5.7).

![Fig 5.7: The attractive terraces along Malmesbury Road contain a number of distinctive features, including recessed porches with tiled dado panels.](image)

Particularly notable are the castellated tops to the bays and open recessed porches with ogee arches and glazed tile dado panels. Such details are common to all the houses, raise them above the ordinary and ensure they are an attractive composition in the street scene.

**Tugela, Hawthorn Roads & Ashfield Road**

Ashfield Road preceeds Hawthorn Road in its construction date and runs from east to west connecting Greenway Lane with Malmesbury Road. The street is fronted on either side by terraced houses in warm orange engineering brick. The terraces have yellow brick quoins and window and door surrounds, also as a chequerboard pattern to indicate the change in internal floors. A stone on the facade between the last two dwellings of the terrace at the junction with Greenway Lane states 1904 (Fig 5.8). The street has seen a lot of incremental changes to its character over the years. A wide variety of PVC windows and doors vie with similar features made from alternative materials. Roof tiles have been replaced by different types and styles of material such as double roman clay tiles. The street appears to have retained it chimneys but has however lost some of its party wall parapets. The addition of porches to some properties has also been done in
Towards the west end of the road where the terraces end and the rear gardens to Malmesbury road begin a pleasant view of St Paul’s church is afforded.

Fig 5.8: Ashfield Road, this end of the terrace has already lost many features such as the party wall parapet that separates the properties along the roof line, original roof tiles, replacement by PVC of windows and doors.

The entrance to Hawthorn Road is dominated by the simple elegant façade of Hawthorn House. Currently an office with modern rear extension, it has permission for conversion into flats. Vegetation in the front garden frames the view of the house and, in addition to the boundary wall, helps soften the impact of the parked cars. The houses across the street from Hawthorn House are the more distinctive in the street, reflecting their proximity to Hawthorn House and the main road, being of sawn Bath stone and coursed limestone or Bath stone. The remainder of the houses are of a similar design, being of orange engineering brick with Bath stone and glazed buff coloured brick dressings and open arched porch recesses. Although much personalisation has taken place to windows, roof materials and painting of surrounds, the street retains its coherence through its regularity of form, roof line, building line, chimneys, front gardens, simple decorative features and the lack of any major physical alterations to the dwellings.

Tugela Road has junctions with Langley Road and Foundry Lane, although the latter is no longer a through route for vehicles. The visual connection is important, however, as it allows easy pedestrian and cycle access to local shops and the town centre, also maintaining a strong visual connection to the town centre with an important and distinctive view of the Parish church. The street is rigidly defined by the terraced houses lining the street, but this distinctive enclosure breaks down at Foundry Lane. Here the side effects of the construction of the Hathaway Retail Park and slewing of the road have created an amorphous and formless area of windy road and car parking, dominated by tarmac. The houses are of a dark coursed rubble ironstone with Bath stone dressings.

Recessed open porches, Bath stone eaves course and decorative carved lintels to windows and porches provide distinctive common elements as do the regular line of brick chimney stacks. Such features help make this an attractive street despite the variety of replacement windows, roof materials and garden boundary treatments.
At the turn in the road, and terminating the view northward, is a rather bland house with a concrete forecourt and double garage. Adjacent is a modern bungalow. Both these buildings are out of character with the street, the house being set back from the road and the bungalow being out of scale and density with the surrounding terraces. Along the shorter section of the street, No. 31 Langley Road has a particularly attractive timber oriel window. The main negative element in the townscape is the plethora of overhead wires, as with Hawthorn Road, made particularly prominent due to the enclosed nature of the street.

Vegetation
Generally vegetation is an important element of the character of this part of the Conservation Area. Vegetation associated with large houses such as Clift House and Parklands is particularly important, as is that often to be found in the gardens of larger houses on Malmesbury Road both in and outside the Conservation Area. Background vegetation such as that in John Coles Park, to the north of The Hamlet and by the entrance to Westinghouse is also important in providing enclosure and the setting for the wider landscape.

Materials
Over the whole character area a diversity of building materials are evident. However, individual developments such as The Hamlet, Hawthorn Road, Tugela Road or the terraced houses on Malmesbury Road at the junction of Ashfield Road and Greenway Avenue share a common palette of natural materials that are generally still predominant. Concrete roof tiles have frequently been used to replace slate on terraced housing and are considered an inappropriate material, often making the roof an unduly dominant element in the street.

Highway Infrastructure
Generally, highway infrastructure is not particularly intrusive in the area, the most intrusive elements in the streetscape being overhead wires and poles that proliferate throughout the character area. They are most intrusive in Hawthorn Road and Tugela Road and also particularly intrusive on Langley Road and Malmesbury Road. Whilst highway infrastructure is not particularly prolific there are at least three different designs of lighting column to be found and some potential for reduction in signage on Malmesbury Road.
Character Area 6: Bath Road and Ivy Lane

Character Analysis

History, Archaeology & Morphology
The fortunes and character of this part of the town have changed from busy to quiet to busy over the past 200 years. Foghamshire once formed part of the main route into the town from what is now the A420 Marshfield Road. Its route originally passed from its present end, across Ivy Lane, past the western end of the viaduct and the forecourt of Bewley House to return to the existing alignment of Marshfield Road by the cinema. In 1792 the Chippenham Turnpike trustees constructed New Road and diverted Marshfield Road to a junction with it where it currently passes under the viaduct. Diversion of the traffic and the severing of the route with the construction of the railway saw the area become a quiet backwater to the town. Thus the area remained until the late 1960s. With the construction of the new town bridge came a new road system which saw the construction of Ivy Lane as a through route as part of a one-way system with New Road and Bath Road. Ivy Lane is now a two-way road and, since the pedestrianisation of the High Street, is the main route through the town. The busy Ivy Lane and the major junction with Bath Road and Avenue La Fleche mean that traffic and its effects dominate the character area. Thus the morphology of the area has changed greatly over the years according to the importance of the routes which pass through it.

A few properties in the terrace on the south side of Foghamshire date from before the construction of New Road, as do a few in the terrace beyond Ivy Lane Primary School. This is an area once known as Barley Close and the school now occupies land which was once a road leading to these cottages, once known as Barley Close Lane. All other buildings post date the coming of the railway, although the former Nestle factory on Bath Road is a conversion of an earlier former cloth mill.

Topography & Views
The landform is that of a shallow basin which, in the south, levels out onto the River Avon flood plain. This topography is due largely to the passage of Hardenhuish Brook through the area to where it joins the Avon at the weir just to the south of the character area, though the majority of it is now culverted. Other factors add to this to give a sense of enclosure. To the north the high embankment and viaduct carrying the railway terminate the view (Fig 6.1).

Fig 6.1: Mature trees on the railway embankment. Vegetation is an important part of the character of the area. Providing an attractive enclosure to much of the area.
To the west the land rises gently to a skyline of mature vegetation and to the east the backs of the buildings fronting Lower New Road and the Bridge provide a less pleasant and coherent view. Despite the construction of Avenue La Fleche, the mature vegetation in the remaining and former grounds of The Ivy provides a sense of enclosure to the south. As a result of this enclosure there are few opportunities for longer distance views which, for motor traffic, places a greater dependence on the numerous traffic signs. In the opposite direction, when viewed from in front of the Bridge Centre, is the round chimney of the former laundry on Ivy Road.

In general the longer distance views are the more pleasant. In addition to the views of the chimney, are views from Bath Road and Ivy Lane of an impressive Cedar tree in the grounds of The Ivy (Fig 6.2).

*Fig 6.2: A fine Cedar tree is the focus along Bath Road, among the vegetation in the grounds of The Ivy. The north side of the street is a blank elevation of the former market sheds, an unattractive, unutilised and wasted street frontage.*

*Fig 6.3: The western end of Foghamshire consists of an attractive curving terrace of cottages. These are humble in scale and at odds with the close proximity of fast moving through traffic.*
The view from Bath Road is the most striking as the straight and enclosed nature of the street, particularly the imposing Avonbridge House, draws the eye to it. The view from Ivy Lane offers a less impressive profile and vehicular traffic only gets a brief view as it is taken round the Bridge Centre gyratory. From Bath Road the former laundry chimney is also visible over the top of the Bridge Centre. The view east along Bath Road is rather nondescript. Nothing distinctive terminates the view, it consists of the end of the rather bland low-rise parade of shops on The Bridge with tall lighting columns prominent in the foreground and the vegetation of Monkton Park in the background. Both the building and the scrub adjacent to it prevent more pleasant views into Monkton Park.

On entering the area from the north through the viaduct a pleasant vista gradually opens out of a skyline of mature vegetation with the Cedar tree, laundry chimney, Providence Terrace and the curved frontage of the terrace on Foghamshire all positive features in the scene. Looking up Ivy Lane offers a view of the rear of the retail units fronting Lower New Road (Fig. ??) and a glimpse of the rear of Nos. 54-55 Lower New Road (formerly the Brotherhood home and possibly stayed in by Brunel) with the viaduct behind it. Half way along the straight section of Ivy Lane the space opens out to reveal pleasant views of the curved terrace of houses on Foghamshire on one side and, on the other side, Providence terrace set back behind large front gardens (Figs 6.3 & 6.4). Looking further down Foghamshire reveals pleasant views of the listed Constitutional Club and adjacent domed building at No. 19 The Bridge.

Fig 6.4: Providence Terrace is an attractive row of houses set back from the traffic. Replacement windows and doors have undermined the visual coherence of the terrace

The remaining views relate to the Bridge Centre. This is a community centre set in an isolated position in the middle of the large roundabout known as the Bridge Centre Gyratory. As a consequence this is an especially prominent location and, particularly in traffic terms, is the focal point of the whole character area, and thus important in portraying the image of the town for those passing through. The appearance of the building can at best be described as functional, and at worst as an eyesore. All views of the Bridge Centre present a negative image of the area and thus the town in general. This is particularly the case when approaching the gyratory from Ivy Lane as the predominant view is of the rear of the site, which consists of scrub partly concealing corrugated sheds (Fig 6.5). One is almost given the feeling of having arrived at a dead end, as there are no views through to Avenue La Fleche and the route beyond.
Fig 6.5: The unattractive rear of the Bridge Centre consists of outbuildings and scrub and is a prominent feature for traffic approaching along Ivy Lane. The land to the right, which is in a prominent location, has now been developed but not in a manner that enhances the area.

**General Character**

The major traffic route of Ivy Lane and the gyratory dominate the majority of the character area. The size of the gyratory and the adjacent Bath Road surface car-park take up a large amount of land and consequently the number of buildings in the area is very low compared to other parts of the town. The prevailing land use is primarily residential to the north and offices to the south. In addition there are community uses at the Bridge Centre on the gyratory and the Constitutional Club and Salvation Army Hall on Foghamshire. Despite these uses the general impression is of an area which is something of a backwater in terms of activities and interest. The presence of the road and the negative effects of the heavy traffic are the primary reason for this situation, giving a mundane image to the physical environment.

The surrounding vegetation and the form of the terraced housing bring a picturesque quality to the northern part of the area though this is rather overwhelmed by the effects of traffic. The construction of the road has left a number of pockets of unused land and has seen the culverting of much of Hardenhuish Brook. The large Bath Road car park is hidden from view by walls, scrub and the blank side of the former market sheds. For an area so close to the town centre, the area is much underused in terms of activities and density of development and these elements mean the area has much potential for enhancement. Opportunities exist particularly to better integrate the busy road into, and interact with the townscape, rather than it just passing through the town. There is also the potential to better connect the southern part of the character area with the town centre by bringing in more town centre activities.

**Buildings, Spaces & Townscape**

Bath Road is a linear space. Bank House and the former Nestle factory (Avonbridge House) are positive elements in the townscape, the bulk and length of the factory helping define the space and Bank House a distinctive free-standing building in the street (Fig 6.6). These buildings, and the corner building at No. 5 The Bridge, help define an appropriate urban scale for this town centre street. The long and comparatively low-rise former market sheds and the single storey pub are negative elements in the townscape and serve to undermine the urban nature of the street. Although the height of
the sheds helps maintain the linear character of the street, it does not do this to an appropriate degree, its relatively small scale compared to Avonside House giving the street a somewhat lop-sided feel.

Fig 6.6: Formerly part of the Nestle factory, Bank House once stood on the banks of the now culverted Hardenhuish Brook. A fine Victorian building, it now has a rather forlorn setting surrounded by a car park and the former market sheds.

The pub is suburban in style and wholly inappropriate to its setting. The market sheds present a dead frontage to the street of some considerable length, and whilst the vegetation in front of them goes some way to softening their impact, their character is also distinctly suburban in scale and nature. The market sheds serve no functional purpose. They hide the car park from the town centre and provide a dingy and unattractive impression of the town to visitors, which also gives poor surveillance of the car-park from the busy Bath Road. Such a large amount of unused street frontage in the town centre clearly presents an opportunity for enhancement of the street and town centre in general.

At the end of Avonbridge House Bath Road becomes part of the gyratory. The junction is huge, occupying nearly a hectare of land, and large enough to accommodate the Bridge Centre in the middle. This makes this unattractive building extremely prominent, having a severely detrimental effect on the character of the Conservation Area. The junction creates a space of its own, which the Bridge Centre does little to fill and the slow moving, heavy traffic ensures the environment is unpleasant for pedestrians and cyclists. Crossings are designed for vehicular convenience rather than pedestrian needs. The size of the junction, and the limited pedestrian routes ensure that it presents an obstacle to pedestrian movement. The tall lighting columns, short queuing distances, numerous lanes and signal controlled elements of the junction ensure the space is dominated by vehicles and highway infrastructure.

Mature vegetation is the dominant form on the south side of the gyratory, particularly to the south and west, with the attractive villas on Bath Road merging into the trees on the skyline. Churchdown is visually prominent on the corner and a positive element in the townscape. On the north side of the gyratory the space is ill defined and lacking in form or definition of space. Much suburban scale vegetation, with buildings only visible behind in the middle distance, give a disjointed and amorphous feel to the area.
Fig 6.7: Ivy Lane is devoid of buildings lining it and consists of a number of ‘left over’ spaces, uninspiringly grassed over, giving a suburban and underdeveloped feel to a town centre location. It also gives motorists few visual cues as to where they are, or a positive impression of the town.

North of the gyratory, Ivy Lane briefly takes on a more ‘street like’ character as Providence Terrace and the terrace on Foghamshire extend close to the street edge. However, rather than providing a sense of enclosure and giving the street some form, this simply marks the transition into another poorly defined space. Providence Terrace and Foghamshire provide a positive and attractive sense of enclosure to the south, the curved terrace of Foghamshire being a particularly positive element in the townscape. The northern part of the space consists of ‘left-over’ land apparently deemed unuseable when the road was constructed (Fig 6.7). On the west side of the road the space merges into the railway embankment and forms part of this attractive backdrop to the area. On the east side of the road, the bland grassed area is only relieved by a tree and a small flowerbed. Uncontrolled scrub to the rear is unattractive and fails to hide the backs of the buildings on Lower New Road.

At its eastern end Foghamshire is commercial in character. The two corner buildings, former Temperance Hall (amusement arcade), Salvation Army Hall and Constitutional Club combine to form a group of particularly attractive and distinctive buildings (Fig 6.8). The curve in the street emphasises those on the south side when viewed from the west. Cleaning of stonework would further enhance their positive contribution to the townscape. Immediately beyond these buildings are two relatively recently built terraces. The one on the south side forms part of the longer terrace on this side of the street and its form, scale and level of detailing are all generally appropriate to its setting, making it a positive element in the street. The terrace on the north side is less successful, being more suburban in character with little depth to its façade, lack of detailing, fenestration and unenclosed front gardens all out of character with the street scene.

Beyond, the south side consists of a long curving terrace which is an important and positive element of the character of the street, particularly prominent when viewed from Ivy Lane. Loss of original details and boundary treatment and some unsympathetic alterations over time mean the terrace would benefit from some enhancement. Walking west along the street gradually brings into view the attractive Providence Terrace. This terrace of 10 dwellings terminates the westward view and its boundary walls and long front gardens give it an attractive urban setting and serve to protect it somewhat from the effects of the heavy traffic on Ivy Lane. The houses would benefit from restoration of some original details and, as with the curved Foghamshire terrace, the removal of the
unattractive wirescape. When viewed together from Ivy Lane Providence Terrace and the curved terrace of Foghamshire is a particularly attractive townscape.

Also contributing to the character of the area are Ivy Lane Primary School and Ivy Lane Industrial Estate. Both occupy rising ground, looking down into the character area. The school is a modest but attractive Victorian building although views of it are obscured by a poorly sited tree. An ad-hoc car park and particularly bland and poorly sited ancillary building also combine to dilute what would otherwise be a pleasant view and positive contribution to the townscape. The industrial estate consists of the former laundry buildings that are rather utilitarian in character. They are painted white which gives them an unwarranted prominence in the street scene. Car parking in front of the buildings and mature trees on a walled embankment reduces their impact to a degree but also contributes to the ill-defined nature of the street. A recent addition to the Ivy Lane Industrial Estate has not added to the character of this area.

Fig 6.8: The eastern end of Foghamshire contains a number of fine buildings, being just off New Road. These are both listed and would benefit from stone cleaning.

Vegetation
Vegetation is a key element in the character of an area that is dominated by a busy road and lacking in density of built form. The most positive and attractive vegetation is the skyline vegetation, consisting primarily of mature trees and giving a somewhat luxuriant setting to the area. Such vegetation is to be found to the north in the railway embankment, to the west on Lowden Hill and to the south in the grounds of The Ivy and in the river valley. This is the primary means by which the visual limits of the character area are defined in these directions. A few individual trees contribute to the character of the area. Notably the Cedar in the grounds of The Ivy. Three Sycamores and a Lime in front of the Ivy Lane Industrial Estate, a Sycamore by the open section of Hardenhuish Brook, an Ash to the rear of Bank House and a Copper Beech and Sycamore in front of the railway embankment. Some semi-mature trees and vegetation also provide a good screen between the Bath Road car park and the housing on the south side of Foghamshire. The remaining vegetation is either suburban in scale or species or consists of unchecked scrub, both of which have a negative impact on the townscape. Some formal flowerbeds exist along Ivy Lane but are of such a scale that they do not have a significant positive impact. Such planting is itself suburban in character and is more suited to less urban areas of the town.
Character Area 7 The Bridge and Lower New Road

Character Analysis

History, Archaeology & Morphology

The buildings in this part of the town date from the early 19th Century onwards. However, current archaeological assessment is revealing enough evidence to suggest that this area formed part of a northern suburb to the original Saxon town. The area has seen major physical change at three times in the past. Firstly, in 1792 the Chippenham Turnpike trustees undertook the construction of what is now New Road and part of Marshfield Road as alternatives to entering the town from Old Road / Monkton Hill and Foghamshire respectively. The original route into the town from Bristol was along Ivy Lane and Foghamshire, forming a T-junction with The Bridge and Monkton Hill, the original route into the town from Malmesbury, with the land currently occupied by Lower New Road being open pasture and a timber yard. Secondly, the coming of the railway in the 1840s saw the construction of Station Hill. Thirdly, the 1950s and 1960s saw the replacement of the old Town Bridge, mill and weir with the current utilitarian structure and parade of plain, low rise shops at Nos. 2-22.

Topography & Views

The bridge itself and the street of the same name, extending to the junction with Foghamshire, Monkton Hill and Lower New Road, are relatively flat. Lower New Road then rises gently to pass under the railway viaduct at the top of the street. The topography is important in allowing a number of views of the street and beyond, giving a particular impression of the town.

Fig 7.1: The junction of Bath Road and The Bridge. The lack of a strong frontage gives a poor definition and focus on the space. The café is an unremarkable suburban form and the poor quality shop-front of Oxfam stands out uncomfortably on the prominent corner site. Gaps between the buildings weaken the structure of the urban form.

Positive Views

From the bridge there is an important view to the end of the street where the imposing structure of the viaduct terminates the view. The higher ground serves to emphasise its
presence. Unfortunately, the view through the viaduct reveals a bland, monolithic office block, diluting the definition and visual impact of the arches. This building itself is particularly evident at closer quarters, as is the poor repair of the Grade II* listed viaduct.

Also from the bridge are pleasant views of the bay windows of No. 1 Lower New Road and closer by, No. 5 The Bridge and the tourist information centre. Unfortunately the unsightly gap between the latter two buildings and poor quality shop-front at No.5 detract from the quality of the view (Fig 7.1). Looking towards the town centre from the junction with Station Hill shows an impressive vista of good quality buildings over a distance of some 120 metres on the west side of the street from the Black Horse public house to the end of the street. It is only on closer inspection that the gaps created by single storey buildings and a number of poor quality shop-fronts become apparent and the positive image becomes diluted (Fig 7.2). In the centre of this vista is the distinctive domed roof of No. 19 The Bridge, a local landmark of high townscape quality. This building is best appreciated when viewed from Monkton Hill. The Black Horse public house is also best viewed when emerging from St. Mary’s Place.

Fig 7.2: This part of The Bridge contains these three fine buildings. Unfortunately the character and quality of the street frontage is diluted by the diminutively scaled buildings between them, allowing views of blank side walls, and the poor quality of most of the shop fronts.

Negative Views

At the junction with Station Hill, the higher vantage point allows an important view down the street, across the bridge and into the town centre. This is important as a first impression of the town (Fig 7.3). Unfortunately, dominating the view is the low, bland frontage and flank wall of Nos. 1-2 High Street (Superdrug). Not only is the building devoid of any visual interest, its low height reveals the unattractive roofscape of the Borough Parade Shopping Centre and the former cinema in the distance. The low-rise nature of Nos. 2-22 The Bridge also contribute to this effect. None of the buildings positively address the bridge as a space in its own right and consequently many rear and side elevations are visible, particularly Nos. 2-4 The Bridge (The Pine Shop), Nos. 31-33 High Street (Wilkinson) (Fig 7.4) and Nos. 1-2 High Street (Superdrug). Looking from on the bridge towards Bath Road reveals a river embankment strewn with litter in front of the oddly proportioned, plain, hut-like low-rise café building. This is totally out of character and scale with its surroundings and does not make the most of its riverside location – its outdoor seating area addressing the road more than the river. A larger building previously stood here and the current one now allows views to the blank flank wall of the former Nestle building.
Fig 7.3: The view down New Road to the town centre lacks a positive focal point. The Superdrug building is an unattractive and under scaled building allowing the bulky roof form of the former Gaumont cinema to dominate the skyline. The two-storey row of shops simply adds to the amorphous feel of this important view.

Fig 7.4: Similarly, the side elevation of Wilkinsons is an unattractive service area on full display at one of the most important focal points in the town. The structure poorly defines the space and allows views to the plain roof forms and plant of the shopping centre.

General Character
This character area is primarily retail in character. Its location in relation to the town centre and the type of the shops it contains, identify it as a secondary shopping area. There are over 40 premises containing a range of A1, A2 and A3 uses. Most premises are relatively small and are all contained in a section of street about 200 metres in length. Generally, the area is one of variety and diversity. There is a relatively high pedestrian flow and a degree of trade would appear to come from vehicular traffic parking in the street. The street is a vibrant mixed-use area with little restrictions on movement imposed by traffic management measures.

These are all positive elements to the character of the area. However, these characteristics of the street are suffering in a number of ways. The area gives a somewhat tired and shabby impression in places, which is beginning to undermine its positive characteristics. The high number of charity shops (5) and bar/cafés/restaurants...
(5) that would seem not to rely on a high throughput of customers would suggest that rents are not high and thus its commercial image is not so either. The physical fabric of the street and its buildings is also poor in many places. There are also now four bed shops, a trend, which could reduce the variety and vitality of the street if allowed to increase.

Whilst the passing traffic and availability of on-street parking adds to the vibrancy of the street it has also come to dominate it. This is particularly so in peak hours where the intensity, noise and fumes of vehicles make the street an unpleasant place to be in, and a place to be passed through as quickly as possible, paying little attention to the quality of the buildings and interest of the shops. The street and pavement surfaces themselves are in a very poor state of repair or are a patchwork of past repairs. The pavements are plain tarmac and road markings are badly worn away in places. These are very noticeable characteristics that are a key contributor to the shabby and uncared-for feel, which is evident in many parts of the street.

A closer inspection shows an area of repressed and hidden character containing many buildings of good quality (Fig 7.5). In a large number of cases attractive buildings have gradually accumulated unsympathetic alterations and additions over time. This is particularly evident in the poor quality of the shop-fronts that often obliterate the buildings that they are attached to in an increasingly vulgar and misguided attempt to attract more custom by having larger brighter signs. Large signs are an indication that the advertising is probably aimed at attracting the attention of people in passing vehicles – reducing traffic speed may help to reduce the perceived need for such signs that often deface attractive buildings. The result is simply to exacerbate the negative image of an area under commercial and townscape stress.

Fig 7.5: Despite a number of poor quality shop-fronts the street contains many fine buildings. Improved quality shop-fronts, stone cleaning and higher quality surface materials would transform the currently tired appearance of this street.
Buildings, Spaces & Townscape

The Bridge
The aspect from the bridge itself is very open. It is a wide structure and almost all the buildings surrounding it are only two storeys in height and set well back from it. This gives the bridge a rather stark and exposed feel – a no-mans-land between two parts of the town – where the buildings have been ‘pushed away’ from the vicinity of the bridge to make way for the high volumes of traffic which now no longer use it. This impression is reinforced by the fact that none of the nearby buildings positively address the bridge as a space in its own right. The wideness of the bridge helps define it as a space and recent installation of purpose designed railings and piers, in addition to high quality paving materials, have helped to raise its appearance above the mundane, although it cannot yet be described as a physical landmark.

However, despite some seating provision, it is not a place to which many people are attracted to linger. This lack of uses taking advantage of the riverside setting means that the bridge has little meaning beyond its functionality for those using it. Litter mess and dirty paving around the seating; continually passing traffic to the Emery Gate car park; manoeuvring cars, taxis and service vehicles; badly damaged paving caused by traffic; the sterile nature of the river banks; lack of attractive vegetation: and the visual dominance of backs, sides and service areas of nearby buildings all conspire to ensure the bridge still remains an unattractive place to be. The river crossing is one of the key reasons that Chippenham exists at all. The old bridge was one of the major landmarks of the town, the bridge and river being well integrated into the townscape. The current bridge and its environs still have the potential to be a positive focal point in the town - providing an active and attractive space which is an integral part of the town and makes the shops and businesses on the north side of the river feel more strongly part of the town centre.

Before the construction of the new bridge, the structure of the old bridge extended as far as the junction with Foghamshire, Monkton Hill and Lower New Road. Although now simply a street, it is still known as The Bridge. On the eastern side of the street is the site of the town mill, the sole building on this side of the street before its demolition in the 1950s. This was an imposing four-storey structure and was replaced by today’s parade of shops – half as many storeys and twice the length. The building shows a degree of architectural restraint, almost elegance, which goes some way to neutralising its presence as a negative element in the townscape. Unfortunately the all too familiar alterations to fenestration and lack of consistency in the size and form of shop-fronts and signs, hide any subtleties of design the building may have had. The building’s low-rise form and repetitive detailing make it more suited to a purpose-built shopping centre precinct, than a traditional urban shopping street, and it is this which makes the building out of character with its surroundings – more ‘Milton Keynes’ than ‘Market Town’ (Fig 7.6).

The position of the mill building was set well back from the street. This layout widened the aspect to the river when approaching the town centre and brought the river right up the centre of the street between the mill and the road, giving a wide range of views of the riverscape and making it an obvious feature in the town centre. In the opposite direction it allowed clear views from the bridge to most of the attractive side elevation of No.1 Lower New Road (Gough’s). Whilst The Bridge is still wider than Lower New Road, the
new building encloses the approach rather than opens it out, and the river has been greatly constricted in its extent, making the townscape more sterile. Access to the riverbank on this side is by a footpath down the side of Nos. 2-4 The Bridge (The Pine Shop). Decking and a planter in poor repair define the entry. Overgrown vegetation hides the river from the path and makes a potentially attractive seating area unattractive to all but skateboarders.

Fig 7.6: The two storey form of the shops on the right is out of scale with the rest of the street and the strong uniform horizontal emphasis is out of character with the prevailing urban form.

The buildings on the west side of The Bridge remained relatively untouched by the construction of the new bridge and demolition of the town mill. Three imposing buildings (Nos. 5, 11 & 19) dominate the street frontage. Although attractive buildings, their dominance is heightened by the small scale one and two-storey buildings sitting between them and exposing their flank walls. As with Station Hill, this part of the street gives the impression of an area that has had a brief spell of prosperity, but not one of sufficient time to see all of the original smaller buildings redeveloped to a grander scale. No. 5 (Oxfam) occupies an important corner site at the junction with Bath Road and close to the bridge. Although not as grand and imposing as the listed No. 19 (Shoestrings), it marks the corner in a positive and restrained manner. The only negative aspects to the building are the poor quality bland shop-front bearing no relation to the building either in design or materials, and the loss of the distinctive oriel window which once adorned the south elevation. No. 11 (Rush) has an imposing and solid pedimented frontage, but at street level is again compromised by a mundane shop-front (currently a ‘club’) adorned with numerous projecting light fittings and banner advertising. No. 19 is more robust and elaborate in its façade and has an imposing corner entrance and domed roof. Unfortunately the corner entrance appears little used and the frontage again suffers from an inappropriate modern shop-front bearing little relation to the building itself. Two shop units occupy the Foghamshire side of the building. The take-away has a poor quality shop-front, but the charity shop has an attractive curved glass window. The building would benefit from stone cleaning.

Whilst the taller buildings on the west side of the street are of an appropriate scale to both the town centre location and the width of the street, the smaller buildings in-between and the low-rise parade on the eastern side, combine to give the area a disjointed and indistinct character – a petering out of the sense of approach one begins to feel when travelling down the hill from the viaduct.
Lower New Road
The junction of The Bridge, Lower New Road, Foghamshire and Monkton Hill is a focal point within the context of the character area, offering views up Monkton Hill and along the curve of Foghamshire. The pedestrian crossing and junction concentrates the pedestrian flow and slows down traffic and, in addition to the relative openness of the space, gives the opportunity to notice the fine buildings on three of the four corners of the junction. Looking up the street and away from the town centre building heights generally reduce gradually, giving way to the presence of the viaduct at the end of the street. This is particularly evident on the west side of the street, with the exception of Nos. 57-58 (Shamrock Linen Warehouse), which is suitably taller, as it terminates the view down Station Hill.

No. 66 (Revolution) is an interesting Edwardian building with good quality shop-front and distinctive central fenestration above. Nos. 63-65 are a group of three smaller units within one purpose designed building and sharing the lozenge detailing seen on No. 66 (Fig 7.7). The central unit has a pedimented gable which helps define the building as a whole, as does the lozenge detailing, and the whole building steps down the slope in a well executed and subtle manner. Unfortunately the impact of these positive features of the building has been eroded to a degree by unauthorised changes to fenestration, shop-fronts of inappropriate materials and design, and excessive signage bearing no relation to the architecture or proportions of the building to which they are attached. No. 65 has also been re-roofed in inappropriate materials.

No. 62 is the Black Horse pub, the only pub in the character area. The large impressive ground floor bay windows define the character of this building, though old maps and the upper storey fenestration would suggest that these are later additions to an original building. The appearance of the building is generally positive, the traditional hanging sign contributing to this, though it would benefit from exterior decoration and the removal of the large signs and lighting between the first floor windows.

Adjacent to the pub is a short terrace of three shops within a more humble but pleasant building. Its restrained character and lack of architectural detailing make it particularly susceptible to the excesses of modern advertising, shop-fronts and building alterations. However, it is at No. 61 that the most impressive shop-front in the character area is to be found. It is at the top end of the street that most of the specialist shops are to be found, and these display both the best and worst examples of shop-front and advertising quality.

The shop-front at No. 61 is of a traditional design. It projects from the building line, but not excessively, so as to dominate the building. It has an angled signboard, facing down to maximise readability from the pavement, but not excessive in size as to be overbearing. The signboard is of painted timber (possibly hiding an original one), and has no illumination. It has a rendered stall riser of appropriate height to deal both with the change in levels and provide suitable proportion to the whole shop-front. The fascia has an elegant, curved glass central recessed entrance with slender, decorative glazing bars and attractive ventilation grilles at the top of the windows. The grilles and cill reflect the proportions of the signboard and stall riser. The overall effect is of a shop-front that fulfils its primary objective of maximising display space, yet is also an attractive and well-proportioned design.

The upper storey also retains its original window, although the elevation suffers from a degree of accumulated clutter, notably what appears to be an unused flagpole.
Fig 7.7: This fine group of buildings share a common design theme and are a well executed group dating from the early 20th Century. The most impressive building occupies the important corner site and the other buildings step up with the gradient. Inappropriately designed shop-fronts and signage dilute the quality and overall effect.

The whole terrace would benefit greatly from restoration of original fenestration, removal of paint finish on the first floor elevation and replacement of the shop-fronts at Nos. 59 and 60 with better proportioned examples, taking the one at No. 61 as an example. Adjacent to the humble terrace at Nos. 59-61 is the imposing three storey Georgian frontage of Nos. 5758 (Shamrock Linen Warehouse). This is an attractive building and provides a positive focal point to the view down Station Hill. Unfortunately the subtle and restrained details which give Georgian buildings their attractiveness have been severely eroded over time. The façade has been uniformly painted over, dulling the definition of the cills, window surrounds, parapet and string courses, and windows have lost their glazing bars. Old photographs show the building to have been of bare stonework and having no shopfront at all. The current shop-front is a bland, functional design that makes no reference to the building’s architecture and detailing and greatly diminishes its attractiveness as what would otherwise be one of the finer buildings in the street. A large CCTV column and unsightly agglomeration of accumulated traffic signs further serve to disrupt the visual integrity of the building’s appearance.

A mini-roundabout controls the junction with Station Hill. In addition to the presence of No. 66, the slowing traffic, concentration of pedestrians crossing the road and view up Station Hill serve to make the junction a focal point and punctuation in the street frontage. This junction is probably the most congested part of the character area and the negative effects of the congested traffic, very poor pedestrian crossing facilities and appalling state of the road and footpath surfaces, convey a distinctly shabby feel. This is an area clearly under stress and suffering from under investment in its infrastructure and buildings.
Fig. 7.8 This attractive free standing building has been disfigured by garish shop fronts and painting of the stonework. Stronger advertisement controls could prevent such excessive, unsympathetic and unnecessary alterations to buildings.

Fig 7.9: The adjacent building at Orwell House has been similarly disfigured. However, its historical associations and a number of surviving architectural features have led to this building being recently listed Grade II.

This lack of attention and care of buildings is most apparent of all at Nos. 54, 55 and 56 (four shop units, three of which are bed shops) (Figs 7.8 & 7.9). These units consist of two distinctive detached buildings, set slightly back from the street. These were both originally houses and Brunel is reputed to have lodged in No. 54 whilst supervising construction of the railway. Both buildings have had their ground floor frontages built out to accommodate shop-fronts, hiding much of the original building frontage. Pedestrian flow on this part of the street is comparatively low as it only leads to the subway – an unattractive route for pedestrians. The shop-fronts reflect this lack of passing trade in their bright colours and huge lettering which dominate this part of the street, to the detriment of all else. These shop-fronts and their advertising bear no relevance in any way to the buildings in which they sit, severely compromising their character and appearance and that of the general vicinity.
The east side of the street begins with the solid and stately Grade II listed building at Nos. 1-2 (Gough’s & Atwell Martin), which remain largely unaltered (Fig 7.10). The adjacent Nos. 3-4 (Pearl Assurance House) is a more plain modern building of similar scale and materials. However, its form is somewhat bulky and slightly awkward in appearance. It fails to fully acknowledge the slight increase in the steepness of the gradient of the street and, whereas at ground level the shop-fronts acknowledge this in their differing fascias and floor levels, this is not reflected in the upper storeys, leading to a poorly resolved composition. The bulkiness is particularly apparent when the side elevation is also viewed.

Fig 7.10: Nos. 1-2 is one of the most notable and elegant buildings lining the street. Note how the adjacent Nos. 3-4, although similarly scaled, appears bland and monolithic in appearance. Greater attention to siting, proportion and detail could have produced a far more satisfactory and appealing building.

Across from St. Mary’s Place, the three-storey part of No. 5 (Gemini) is a well-proportioned, simple and attractive Georgian façade with an unobtrusive shopfront that generally respects the proportions of the building. Unfortunately the upper storeys have seen unauthorised replacement of the original sash windows with inappropriate UPVC double-glazed units.

Adjacent is a single storey section of No. 5 (Gemini) and the single storey Nos. 5a and 2 Station Hill (Sewing Centre). This site, much like others on The Bridge and Station Hill has never been fully developed. The site is in desperate need of a larger building of suitable presence and quality of design for this important corner site on one of the main routes into the town centre. The lack of building presence merely serves to accentuate the presence and negative effects of the heavy traffic. Conversely the shop-front at this corner site is one of high quality, both in its design, materials and the way it steps gradually round the corner and down the gradient of the street. The shop itself is one of a number of specialist shops in the area and adds to the variety and vitality of the street. On the opposite side of the junction is Nos. 6-8 (Shoe Care/ Estate Agent/ Italian restaurant), a building once a single shop unit (Fig 7.11). A two-storey building with pitched roof, this has more presence in the street than the single storey building opposite, and also turns the corner in a positive manner. The site would benefit from a three-storey building or dormers in the roof to give it the presence the site deserves. However, the existing building is of good quality and makes a positive contribution the
townscape - improvements to its appearance would maximise its positive impact. The building once had an attractive and uniform shop-front and has suffered as a result of its division into three separate units. The simplicity of the building’s features are the key to its attractiveness and, as a result, these have easily suffered as a result of modern commercial trends. Whilst the proportions of the shop-front at No. 6 are suited to the scale of the building, the entrance relates poorly to the shop-front and the large lettering under the signboard dominates the whole frontage. The restaurant at No.8 has a more restrained frontage though it has an inappropriate angled recess and rather drab, introverted feel. The first floor façade has been covered fully in a single paint colour where once it was bare stone. As a result the effect of the details, particularly the window surrounds has been considerably diminished.

Nos. 9 and 10 offer a rather discordant relationship between shop-fronts and buildings above (Fig 7.11). The first part of the building has an attractive gable rising to a third storey window at the centre. It has a solid bargeboard, cast rainwater hoppers and the elevation remains in unpainted stone. Unfortunately, though it is three windows wide, one third of the width is occupied by the adjacent shop-front, leaving only two thirds of the building occupied by the first shopfront. The second shop-front at No. 10 also occupies a single window width extension to the original building. Thus the whole frontage, especially when the poor quality shop-fronts and unauthorised replacement windows are taken into account, presents an incongruous and unattractive appearance to an essentially attractive building.

The two-storey extension steps down again to a small single storey shop unit before a vacant plot adjacent to the viaduct. This reduction in height, giving visual deference to the viaduct is reflected on the opposite side of the street and is a positive characteristic of its setting, allowing one to gain a sense of its size and imposing nature.

Fig 7.11: This parade of shops has recently seen some improvements although the quality of the shop-fronts remains poor. Stricter advertisement controls could help secure improvements to the appearance of these shops. Replacement windows and painting of stonework at upper floors have diluted the character of these otherwise simple but attractive buildings.

The single-storey shop-front at No. 10a is another one of the few particularly attractive shop-fronts in the area, despite its modern applied signboard. The now vacant space, between this unit and the viaduct, was previously occupied by a conservatory business.
This remains an ill defined patch of un-built on land which allows views to the backs of buildings on Station Hill and would benefit from better enclosure at the rear and a permanent landscaping of the space.

**Vegetation**
There is no significant vegetation in the character area of particular amenity value. Much of the vegetation around the bridge consists of unattractive scrub that hides views of the river and collects litter. From the bridge there are fine views of mature trees in either direction into Monkton Park and towards The Ivy and Rowden Hill. Similarly the view up Monkton Hill is notable for the garden of the Methodist Church and the mature trees at the entrance to the District Council offices. The railway embankment on the east side of the viaduct contains some quite dense vegetation. Though it has little amenity value in its own right, it undoubtedly aids the stability of the embankment and affords a degree of screening to the rear of properties in Station Hill.

The character area is a distinctly urban space and gains its positive characteristics from its buildings and the ability to see them and their relationship with each other and the topography from a number of perspectives. Thus it would be inappropriate for the introduction of major tree planting other than in the immediate vicinity of the bridge. Longer distance views down to the river in which vegetation was more prominent could advertise the presence of the river and enhance the attractiveness of views towards the town centre.

**Materials**
The great majority of buildings are constructed from (or faced with) Bath stone, with other materials extremely rare. Render and painted finished are also evident, but in many cases these simply hide a Bath stone frontage. The effects of time mean that many buildings would benefit from stone cleaning and others would benefit from removal of inappropriate applied finishes. Roof finishes are primarily slate, although more modern materials exist and many low-pitched roofs are hidden behind parapets. Windows are predominantly painted timber sashes, though there are a few inappropriate unauthorised modern UPVC replacements evident.

**Highway Infrastructure**
There a relatively few highway signs and paraphernalia in the character area. However, that which there is, is occasionally an intrusive or negative element in the townscape due either to its location, design or poor state of repair. The streets are currently lit by tall standard highway lighting columns. These are an inappropriate and inefficient design for such an urban area. Traffic speeds are generally low and the columns are higher than many buildings, silhouetting them against the skyline and leaking light out above and beyond the physical confines of the street. For some reason there are two sets of traffic lights within a few paces of each other controlling traffic through the viaduct. It is unclear as to why both are necessary. The agglomeration of traffic signs at the bottom of Station Hill is particularly unsightly. The poor repair of road surfaces and line markings is evidence of a lack of investment in maintenance of the highway.
Character Area 8: Station Hill and Monkton Hill

Character Analysis

History archaeology & Morphology

Monkton Hill is probably the oldest street in the area. Formerly known as Black Horse Hill, it is the remains of the original route of Malmesbury Road into Chippenham. The street took its name from the Black Horse Inn, which stood on the site of the Methodist chapel and was replaced by a new Black Horse on New Road in 1842. It also gave access to the entrance to the long approach drive to Monkton Park House, the site of a Medieval Manor. The 18th Century house is now converted to flats and the gate piers remain as the entrance to the District Council offices. A substation now occupies the site of the lodge. St. Mary’s Place is a narrow, single aspect street, with a terrace of houses fronting the majority of the south side, and the rear of buildings facing Station Hill along the north side. The date of the houses suggest they were built very soon after the coming of the railway and would therefore have had clear views across to Station Hill for a number of years before it became lined with buildings of its own.

Station Hill was laid out as the formal approach to the railway station and thus probably dates from the middle of the 19th Century. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 shows only the Baptist church, a sorting office and a collection of buildings on the site of the current tyre depot on Station Hill, with the site marked for the Roman Catholic church. The land on the south side of Monkton Hill is land reclaimed from the River Avon with the building of the new bridge in 1966 and relocation of the weir. The site is the location of the original weir and is now occupied by modern offices.

Topography

The land rises steeply in a north-easterly direction away from the Avon and Hardenhuish Brook further to the west. The topography is a key component of the character of the area, contributing differently to the character of each street. The straight course of Station Hill clearly emphasises the steepness of the hill and, in addition to its uniformity of incline, gives a distinctive planned and formal feel to the street. St. Mary’s Street has a more organic feel, with it following a more undulating level. Although it is generally straight, a slight narrowing at the top and kink at the bottom in conjunction with its relative narrowness, help emphasise the informal impression. Monkton Hill starts with a gentle, gradually steepening incline up to the gate piers, then sweeps sharply left and at a greatly increased incline, gradually levelling out at the junction with St. Mary’s Place. High walls on either side of the steepest part, its narrowness and sharp curve combine to give a strong sense of enclosure and transition from one area to another. This is in contrast to the more formal and open feel of the straighter section.

Buildings, Space & Townscape

Monkton Hill

The most prominent and distinctive building on Monkton Hill is the Methodist Church (Fig 8.1). It is the only building built directly onto the pavement on the north side of the street and is an imposing, solidly built 3-storey structure. Its main entrance is actually on
one side and a path curves up to this on its western side. The space in front of the path is laid out as garden and the space to the rear is the garden of No. 12, a restrained but pleasantly proportioned detached house, whose original windows are an important element in raising it above the mundane. Adjacent to No. 12 is No. 14, The Manse, a bland modern house occupying an unduly prominent elevated position. Similar in many respects to No. 12, it clearly shows how apparently small differences can have a significant impact on overall character. On the south side of the road are the Avon Reach and Brunel / Knightstone office developments. These are constructed of modern block work and at close inspection contain little of visual interest, being devoid of human scale detail. Their contribution to the character of the area comes from their form and scale. The smaller individual units are clearly apparent and the layout helps to visually break up the size of the development.

At its junction with Station Hill and Cocklebury Road, Monkton Hill has an open aspect. This soon changes at the junction with St. Mary’s Place, as the former warehouse on the right and the listed terrace on the left enclose the street. The narrow, steeply dropping and curving nature of the street adds to this feeling, as does the dense vegetation that prevents any long views. All these elements are key characteristics of the street at this point, which is akin to that of a narrow lane. The terrace of cottages at Nos. 2-8 are of rubble stone and render and their slightly elevated position gives them a prominent feel. Although there is only one entrance onto the street, the high walls are of good quality and a small, well-tended garden area in front softens their impact and adds visual interest. This garden area would benefit from reinstatement of railings.

Monkton Hill is a major pedestrian route to the town centre from the railway station and residential areas to the north of the town (Fig 8.2). As the street turns away from the council offices and rises to meet Cocklebury Road it becomes a one-way street with a pedestrian footway inappropriately marked on one side with white lining and coloured...
surfacing. The lack of kerb combined with the reduced visibility reduces the pedestrians’ enjoyment of this area. Monkton Hill is a street punctuated by space and enclosure, with both positive and negative results.

Fig 8.2: This attractive part of Monkton Hill is a busy pedestrian route to the town centre. However it is also a two way street often used as a rat-run by fast moving vehicles making this an unattractive and potentially dangerous environment for pedestrians.

The elevated position of Monkton Cottage and the side entrance to the Methodist church have precluded the development of buildings close to the street edge for much of the north side, however the result has a positive effect on the character of the area, introducing the softening effect of vegetation and stone boundary walls. Moving southwards, the narrowness of the steep section gives way to the more open space in front of the listed gate piers. Mature vegetation from Monkton Park and Monkton Cottage garden help enclose the space and glimpses are possible over the wall to the park and river valley beyond. The gate piers, walls, Methodist Church and Brunel / Knightstone office building also help define this space.

Beyond the Church the street again gives way to a more open area, this time with a negative effect on the character of the conservation area. The set back nature of Nos. 12 and 14 and Avon Reach gives this part of the street an open feel but the buildings have given way to parking areas to the detriment of the appearance of the street (Fig 8.3). Avon Reach parking is generally well ordered and enclosed in a small courtyard with low wall and railings. However, the space in front of and adjacent to No. 14 is given over to informal parking straight onto the street and to unenclosed rear courtyards to buildings fronting New Road. The open aspect of the street allows unattractive views to the backs of buildings fronting The Bridge and New Road. Utilitarian street lighting and road and pavement surfaces with a number of repairs evident are also a negative intrusion into the street scene.
Fig 8.3: The office development at Avon Reach is of bland blockwork and its form relates poorly to the street, making the car park a prominent feature. The adjacent office block further to the left relates better to the street and resolves the parking arrangement far more satisfactorily.

Fig 8.4: The view down Monkton Hill reveals the listed former cigarette factory as a fine landmark building.

Despite the negative elements mentioned above, Monkton Hill has a generally pleasant aspect. This is due in large part to the views in either direction along the street to the Methodist Church and to No. 19 The Bridge, an impressive Bath stone building which turns the corner into Foghamshire with an impressive curved entrance, pillars and domed roof (Fig 8.4). The elevations of Nos. 1 and 66 New Road also contribute to this view, giving a suggestion of grandeur, which is only partly realised on arrival at the junction. Vegetation is an important and prevalent element in the character of the top end of the straight part of the street, providing a link with the adjacent River Park.

Building materials are predominantly Bath stone on the older buildings, with the buildings at the top of Monkton Hill being of rubble rather than sawn stone with brick and limewash evident to a lesser degree. The office units use modern block work which, although rather crude, reflect the similar pale shades of the Bath stone, the Brunel / Knightstone office being more successful than the more drab Avon Reach.
Fig 8.5: The narrow St. Mary’s Place contains these humble but pleasant cottages stepping down the street. The painted and pebbledashed facades are prominent and out of character alterations disrupting the unity and coherence of the terrace. The overhead wires and bulky form of the office building are other unattractive features, though the laundry chimney is a notable landmark.

St Mary’s Place
There are no particularly dominant buildings in St Mary’s Place, the dominant form being the long terrace of houses on the south side (Fig 8.5). This is, however, punctuated at a few points by slightly more distinctive buildings. On entering the street from New Road one encounters the four-storey west frontage of Ruskin House (Fig 8.6), its larger scale and balcony giving a pleasant aspect and contrast to the less formal character of the rest of the street. About half way up the street is a small hall nestling within the terrace and not readily apparent until one is quite close to it. At the top of the street the residential character gives way to a small group of brick and rubble stone warehouses. The open area in front of the building is untidy and would benefit from improvement, as would the painted brick façade. The stone built part of these buildings fronts Monkton Hill and is an element which contributes to the enclosure which is characteristic of this part of the street. The gable end facing St. Mary’s Place right at the top of the street contains a first storey loft door, a prominent historical remnant of the building’s original use, though in need of repair.

Fig 8.6: The view up the narrow entrance to St. Mary’s Place reveals the fine frontage of the listed Ruskin House, though its effect is dulled by the monolithic presence of the office building to the right. Note the chunky replacement UPVC windows in the building to the left.
The north side is dominated by the rear elevations and randomly parked cars of buildings fronting Station Hill (Fig 8.7). Boundary treatments are minimal or non-existent to enable parking in most available space. It is these elements, rather than the buildings themselves, which give this side of the street a rather tawdry feel.

Fig 8.7: No buildings face the north side of St. Mary’s Place and this side of the street is a generally unattractive collection of poorly defined rear entrances to buildings on the south side of the hill.

The stepped rooflines of the terrace help emphasise the slope and give the buildings a more organic form and human scale. This is in clear contrast to the Pearl Assurance office at the bottom of the street, which works against the topography, resulting in a bulky and monolithic building unable to accommodate ground floor windows and thus lacking visual interest. The spaces behind the buildings fronting Station Hill gives the street a wider aspect and, in conjunction with the enclosure at either end gives a degree of emphasis to the terrace as the central element to the street. A key feature of the view down the street is the brick chimney of the Ivy Lane Industrial Estate with the mature vegetation on Rowden Hill in the background. Turning the slight corner at the bottom of the hill brings into view the large bay-fronted façade of the Black Horse public house. Moving up the hill gradually brings into view the well-maintained and attractive terrace of rubble stone cottages at the top of Monkton Hill. This however, is marred by the intrusiveness of the overhead wirescape against the skyline. The narrowness of the street emphasises the intrusiveness of the double yellow lines on either side of the street.

The cottages are constructed of coursed sawn-faced rangework with slate roofs, although some have succumbed to inappropriate modern render and pebbledash. Much original fenestration has been lost, though the overall effect of this is minimised by the oblique-viewing angle. Brick and random rubble are also evident to a lesser degree.

Station Hill
Station Hill is a street of mixed character (Fig 8.8) and contains a number of impressive buildings. Whilst being straight and formal in its layout, this is not reflected strongly in the buildings lining the street. The buildings on the south side present a different image to those on the north side.
Fig 8.8: The view down Station Hill. A number of attractive buildings line this street but unsympathetic alterations and a lack of continuous street frontage of buildings ensure the street lacks coherence and sense of stature suitable for the approach to the station. The bland painted frontage and poor quality shop-front of No. 57-8 New Road is prominent in the view.

The buildings on the south side are mainly free standing buildings of differing styles and forms, not conforming to any one building line. Many are non-retail uses and these buildings generally make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. The Baptist Church (Fig 8.9) and the Roman Catholic Church are buildings of particular note, as is the presbytery at No.20. The buildings at Nos. 6-8 and 10-14, although smaller in scale, also make a positive contribution to the area’s character. Unfortunately, the shop-fronts, replacement windows and large communications mast at Nos. 10-14 severely compromise both the character of the building and its contribution to the street scene. The small Rotary Hall and adjacent shop units at No.18 are single storey and smaller scale in the street scene. Whilst the Rotary Hall has a neutral impact, the shop-fronts are of poor quality and occupy a building with a temporary feel which has a negative impact on the character of the street.

Fig 8.9: The Baptist Church was the first building built on the street and is probably its finest, though would benefit from reinstatement of more appropriately designed railings. The adjacent building is of inappropriate scale for its important corner site though it has an acceptable shop-front.
At the top of the street is a large modern building housing a tyre and exhaust depot (Fig 8.10). This is a prominent corner site at the junction of Monkton Hill and Station Hill, and forming part of the setting for the railway station. The use is not unsuitable for the area and the building is purpose designed. Unfortunately, from the station the building stands out as a prominent and functional form, responding poorly to the prominent site, eschewing the prominent corner as an opportunity for a striking building and using it for car parking instead. The large expanse of tile visible on the featureless roof and uninspiring brickwork emphasise the bulkiness of the building. The Station Hill frontage, whilst having a glazed ground floor, has no entrance and views in to the rear of a service counter. The upper storey, though containing a number of sash windows, is rendered in a dreary beige colour, continuing round to a prominent large blank flank wall on St Mary’s Place. Overall, the site represents a lost opportunity to provide a striking and positive contribution to the townscape at a key gateway into the town.

The buildings on the north side of the street conform to a regular building line but are of a varying degree of heights, form and detailing, giving the frontage a rather disjointed feel (Fig 8.11). The impression is of a street that has had a brief spell of prosperity, but not one of sufficient time to see all the original, more humble buildings, replaced by a more imposing frontage along its entire length. The result is a rather haphazard appearing group of buildings despite their shared building line.

Nos. 1-5 are two-storey with pitched roof and their heights step upwards with the road, helping draw the eye forward and emphasising the gradient. No.9 is the ‘Carpet Barn’ a single storey intervention that should be replaced with something more suitable should the occasion arise. No. 11 is a tall, imposing Edwardian building with double bays at 1st and 2nd floors above a mediocre shop-front. Next door is a squat single storey garage that should be replaced with something more appropriate. At no.13-15 the former printing works has now been redeveloped with a building of more appropriate scale. Nos. 17-25 is the former Palace Cinema and skating rink. The Palace façade remains largely intact, though to its detriment the brickwork has been painted over, reducing its visual interest and positive presence in the street scene. Blocked up upper windows and modern canopies and signage serve to further obscure the original façade.
The skating rink part has fared less well. Whilst it retains much of its brick façade, it again is painted and some of it has been lost in conversion to retail uses - old photographs showing it as having two large pedimented gables above the shallow arches on the façade with a different roof form from that existing today. The changes over time have diluted the building’s positive impact on, and presence in the street such that it appears to sink into the rising hill, exposing the blank flank wall of the post office building against the skyline. The most prominent element of the building today is the bland expanse of the large plain roof and the crudely applied modern signage. The building is well suited to its current use as a motorcycle showroom and restoration of the building could benefit the image of the business as well as that of the whole street.

Adjacent to the former skating rink is the post office sorting office building (Fig 8.12). The warm red brick frontage is only a small part of the building, the rear being mainly a lower shed-like structure with a later 1960s concrete extension to the side. The brick frontage is a solid a well-proportioned example of Victorian architecture and shows a degree of architectural integrity that is singularly lacking in the 1960s extension. The original building makes a positive contribution to the street scene despite being somewhat compromised by the extension and temporary looking porch which passes for the main entrance.

The street’s comparatively wide aspect, particularly in relation to the height of buildings lining it, gives a feeling of spaciousness. This however, is somewhat to the detriment of its formal character, as it’s definition as a linear space, is weakened by small scale and temporary looking buildings in places. On the south side this is evident with the single storey buildings on the Rotary Hall and the adjacent shops at No. 18. It is evident on the north side though, with the garage and No. 9 sitting in uncomfortable juxtaposition to the adjacent two and three storey buildings. This makes the impressive frontage of No. 11 unduly prominent against the skyline, particularly the flank walls. No. 9 however, is notable for it’s good quality shop-front. The character of the street would benefit from sensitive redevelopment at these points with taller buildings to better define the street and strengthen its formal character as an approach to the railway station. Whilst the street leads to the railway station, the view up the hill gives no indication of where it leads. The view is of open sky and, to a degree, draws the traveller onwards to see what
is to be found at the top. However, this view is interrupted by a number of functional lighting columns. On reaching close to the top, there is only disappointment as the street is deflected to the right by high blank brick & stonework walls, hiding from view the attractive station buildings.

Fig 8.12: The pleasant post office building was one of the first to be built along the street. An extension and the vehicle compound are unattractive additions to this building.

The walls enclose the post office vehicle compound. For many years a terrace of buildings terminated the view up the hill and the entrance to the station was to the left. The street would benefit from a focal point at its summit and a clear view to the station buildings from the summit and top of Monkton Hill. The view down the hill reveals a more pleasing aspect. The three-storey Georgian frontage of Nos. 57-58 New Road terminates the view. Above this are the rooftops of houses on Ivy Road and Bath Road and mature trees on the skyline of Rowden Hill. This reinforces the market town feel of Chippenham and distinction between urban town and leafy suburb. Nos. 57-58 and the adjacent terrace at Nos. 59-61, whilst both buildings of positive character, have suffered much as a result of unsympathetic alterations. Poor quality shop-fronts bearing no relation to the buildings they sit within, rendered facades and loss of an impressive chimney have diluted the impact of these buildings.

Old photographs from c1905 show Station Hill was once lined with Horse Chestnut trees, emphasising the formal nature, and importance of the street as an approach to the station and bringing a softening element of greenery into an otherwise severely urban scene. Removal of functional lighting columns and replanting of street trees would undoubtedly enhance the character of the street.

Heavy traffic volume is a distinctly noticeable and unpleasant feature of the character of Station Hill. The road is the only vehicular access for the railway station, college, Olympiad, district council offices, cattle market, a number of industrial and commercial premises and the whole of the Monkton Park housing estate (nearly 1000 units). The visual intrusion of the often continuous traffic, noise, vibration, pollution and safety implications (traffic speed is often excessive outside peak times), combine to make the traffic a real and significant intrusion on the character of the conservation area and compromise the ability to enjoy Station Hill as an urban street for all users, rather than merely being a conduit for traffic. The heavy traffic also takes its toll on the road surface. In many places this is a patchwork of uneven and rutted surfaces showing a history of past minor repairs. The poor quality of the road surface is both a visual eyesore and exacerbates vehicle noise.
Character Area 9: Ivy Road and Lowden Hill

Character Analysis

History, Archaeology & Morphology

The oldest building in the character area is Lowden Manor (Grade II), dating from the 16th or 17th Century with later additions and associated barns. The manor itself is recorded as early as 1258, when Henry III gave the property to William de Valeree, Earl of Pembroke.

Other than the Manor, the earliest buildings in the character area date from the 18th Century. These are three cottages (Grade II) remaining from a short lane leading off Ivy Lane, once known as Barley Close Lane. The land around the lane, covering most of the character area, consisted of two fields known as Upper Barley Close and Lower Barley Close. Other field names included Bushel Leaze, New Orchard and Home Ground.

During the 19th Century, and since the construction of Ivy Lane Primary School, a path on the south side has replaced the original lane running to the north side of the cottages. The land formerly occupied by the lane now forms part of the school grounds.

Ivy Lane is shown as Winnick’s Lane on John Powell’s map of 1784 and as Frank’s Lane on the Ordnance Survey first edition map of 1886. Lowden Hill is shown as Lowden Lane on Powell’s map. Powell’s map also shows the short lane rising off Lowden Hill and turning sharply back on itself, with a few cottages. Nos. 3 & 4 probably date from this time, though much altered and extended, and No. 5, shown on the 1886 map still remains, though again, much extended. Lowden Hill was the original road westwards from Chippenham until the construction of the Bath Road turnpike. Land to the south of the character area forms the grounds to The Ivy, a large listed country house. Its grounds once extended across Bath Road by means of a footbridge, occupying the land to the south of Lowden Hill between Bath Road and Lowden Manor. A number of the many impressive mature trees in this area probably date back to this period.

The railway line forms the northern boundary of the character area and dates from the 1840s, though its construction seems to have done little to prompt immediate development in the area. Turnpike cottage is shown on the 1886 map and still exists as part of later and much larger additions. The villas Trade Winds and Lowden Lodge probably date from the mid 19th Century. The great majority of the development of the area took place around the turn of the 20th Century. Development around this time included the primary school and laundry fronting Ivy Lane, the villas fronting Bath Road and the construction of Ivy Road and the houses along it, houses on the lane off Lowden Hill and houses adjacent to the former Barley Close Lane cottages. The remaining land along the north side of Lowden Hill and Bath Road has gradually been developed with large detached houses during the 20th Century. Most of the land on the south side of Lowden Hill has been developed for housing more recently, in the grounds of Green Gables, an attractive early 20th Century building which still remains. A large area of land in the centre of the character area has remained undeveloped. Used as allotments until the 1960s, the area is partly unused and partly forms the playing field for the school.
Topography & Views
The land rises away from Ivy Lane in a westerly direction and is the northern extremity of Rowden Hill, a ridge running approximately on a north-south alignment as far south as Pudding Brook on the edge of Chippenham. A shallow cutting exists where Lowden Hill passes over the ridge. The fall in the land to the north-west is enclosed by the presence of the railway embankment.

Positive Views
The laundry chimney is one of the most important landmarks in the area and is particularly prominent and impressive when descending Rowden Hill (Fig 9.1), when arriving at the Bridge Centre gyratory from Avenue La Fleche and on approaching the gyratory from Ivy Lane. From Ivy Road, in the vicinity of the chimney there are also clear views out to Bank House, the parish church steeple and the Cedar tree by the entrance to The Ivy. The gently curving and rising terrace of houses on the north side of Ivy Road provides attractive views in either direction. From the entrance to the school there is an attractive view of the rooftops of houses in Foghamshire and properties on New Road interspersed with vegetation, the most notable feature being the roof and pediment on the front of the Methodist Church on Monkton Hill.

Fig 9.1: The approach from Bath Road is distinctive due to the landmarks of the fine Cedar tree and the laundry chimney. The new houses at Cedar Grove to the right are a stark and cramped intrusion into the open aspect of the street.

The view east down Lowden Hill is dominated by mature vegetation, though gradually an impressive Cedar in the grounds of The Ivy becomes particularly prominent, its twisting ‘twin trunks’ being a distinctive feature. This tree is also a distinctive element of the view from Rowden Hill. Continuing into Bath Road the other large Cedar by the entrance also comes into view and, when the gates are open, the view to the front of The Ivy is particularly imposing.

The lane leading off the north side of Lowden Hill turns back on itself and its informal nature and arrangement of buildings makes for pleasant views that draw the eye forward along its length. On reaching the end of the lane the view opens out to give an attractive wide vista of the town, of buildings and rooftops interspersed with vegetation, mature trees in the foreground and on the skyline. Attractive views also exist from the end of the drive to Lowden Manor across the western part of the town.
Negative views
The entrance into the primary school and access to Ivy Cottages is one of an ill-defined space dominated by cars, telephone poles, a variety of boundary treatments and an unmade and muddy space in front of the blank side elevation of No. 5 Ivy Cottages. From Ivy Road the attractive view of Bank House is diluted by the garages to the rear of the Bridge Centre in the foreground. On approaching the town from Bath Road, the view towards the town centre (before being taken round the gyratory) is of a plethora of highway infrastructure in the foreground and the blank, bland rear elevations of the Borough Parade Shopping Centre in the distance. The trees do little to soften this unattractive view and the steeple of the parish church is lost in the clutter

General Character
The character area is primarily a quiet residential backwater bounded by the railway line and the busy roads of Bath Road, Ivy Lane and Lowden Hill. Lowden Hill is the only route through the area, though the narrow Railway Bridge limits this to eastbound traffic only. Otherwise the area consists of mainly informal cul-de-sac accesses to the primarily residential properties. A turning off Ivy Lane gives access to Ivy Lane Primary School and Ivy Cottages. On Lowden Hill two unnamed accesses lead off in the vicinity of Turnpike Cottage – one to Nos. 3-9 Lowden Hill and the other to Lowden Manor. Ivy Road is the only formally made road in the area and only has houses fronting the road on the north side, the south side giving rear access to properties fronting Bath Road and Lowden Hill. The only non-residential uses are the primary school and the former laundry, now an industrial estate, both fronting Ivy Lane. The busy roads on the periphery and lack of through routes are important elements in ensuring the relative peace and tranquillity of the area. The topography helps minimise the impact of the traffic from much of the area, the lack of vehicular through routes being a key element in maintaining its character. However, redevelopment and new development opportunities exist that would not necessarily undermine this character.

Buildings, Spaces & Townscape

Bath Road
The enduring character of the short length of Bath Road in the character area is that of a road enclosed by mature vegetation on one side and attractive Victorian villas on the other (Fig 9.2). The high stone wall and lack of pavement heighten the sense of enclosure created by the trees on the south side. On the north side the villas are set back from the pavement behind brick boundary walls and in front gardens with mature, domestic scale vegetation. The gardens are of a depth which is both appropriate to the character and scale of the houses and which offers a degree of separation from the busy traffic. The sense of enclosure is heightened by the curve in the road, as views to the end of it present a dense array of trees and shrubs.

The curve in the road is a transition from the distinctly enclosed and urban space described above and the more open and suburban character it takes on as it rises to become Rowden Hill. At the eastern end of the street the character becomes amorphous and unfocussed as one is presented with a sea of highway infrastructure, the
nondescript Bridge Centre and the end elevation of Avonside House. This unattractive end to what is a generally attractive route into the town does nothing to give it a positive image.

Fig 9.2: The fine villas on Bath Road are a distinctive feature when travelling west.

**Lowden Hill**

This is a long established lane that cuts through the ridge of high ground to the west of the town. The rising ground either side is lined with attractive dry-stone walls that are a distinctive characteristic of the lane, particularly on the north side where there is only one vehicular access. The lane is also characterised by a large amount of mature vegetation, including many impressive trees (Fig 9.3). The height of the trees and sunken nature of the lane, in addition to its narrow width and single pavement, combine to create an intimate scale and sense of enclosure which is particularly attractive. This is undermined to a degree by the lower walls and wider vehicular accesses to properties on the south side of the lane.

Most properties are set well back from the lane and only glimpses are to be had of them. The most visible properties are generally the most attractive. Sitting nearest to the road and on the highest ground is the impressive front of the Victorian villas Lowden Lodge and Trade Winds. Almost opposite, and on a more open site is Green Gables. Dating from the inter-war period this is a generally attractive large stone built detached house. However, prominent modern replacement windows and door undermine the simple elegance of the building. A large grass bank in front gives it a somewhat bland setting that is only relieved by an impressive tree. Opposite is a more recently built large detached house in a mildly 'mock Tudor' style. Although of no particular architectural merit it is of appropriate scale to its setting. The lane reaches its highest point at Turnpike Cottage. Private access roads lead off either side on continually rising ground whilst the lane drops back down to pass under the diminutive railway bridge. Untidy scrub and concrete retaining walls line much of the approach to the bridge, which itself is caked in white salt stains from poor drainage.
Although the road is only a single one-way lane under the bridge, the narrow footpath does not pass under it and pedestrians are forced to walk in the road according to ambiguous markings on the carriageway. Overhead cables and ‘make-do-and-mend’ traffic signs add to the unattractiveness of the bridge and its environs, particularly for pedestrians. Unattractive overhead wires dominate much of the lane.

The access road leading off on the south side is the original driveway to Lowden Manor and the listed gate-piers remain. The most prominent building here is Turnpike Cottage. The original building has been significantly extended to several times its original size. The small section on the left-hand side with the attractive canoped front is the original building and is shown on the 1886 map. The larger part on the right-hand side is also attractive and generally complementary to the original. Dating from around 1900, it uses engineering brick and large Bath stone quoins and window surrounds. To the rear is a late 20\textsuperscript{th} Century extension though also generally in character with the rest of the building.

Adjacent to the gate-piers a new and distinctive property has recently been completed (\textbf{Fig 9.4}). The principal element is a two storey octagonal building of coursed rubble stone with stone quoins and slate roof. The octagonal shape and arched windows give it a unique aspect.
a gothic appearance. Unfortunately the windows would appear to consist of more frame than glass, adding a mass-produced suburban element to an otherwise distinctive and attractive building. Lowden Manor Gardens, a large modern detached house sits between the Manor and Turnpike Cottage on the site of the kitchen garden, but is almost totally hidden by vegetation. At the end of the road is Lowden Manor (Fig 9.5). This is a secluded and distinctive listed building, with later additions to the right-hand side, which appear to include inappropriate modern replacement windows.

An access road also leads off the north side of Lowden Hill at Turnpike Cottage and turns sharply back on itself before reaching the railway. At this point the land has risen to a height such that the railway is in a shallow cutting, which is briefly interrupted to allow Lowden Hill to pass beneath it, returning to its cutting until just past Lowden Manor. The embankments between the access road and Lowden Hill are untidy and covered in scrub and the road consists of patchwork tarmac and unmade gravel. The variety in levels is a distinctive and interesting characteristic of this area.

Fig 9.5: The fine frontage of the listed Lowden Manor in its secluded cul-de-sac. Modern top-hung replacement windows are an intrusive and inappropriate feature.

On turning the corner one is presented with two properties of contrasting styles on either side of the road (Fig 9.6). On the left is Nos. 3 & 4, a pair of cottages dating from the mid 19th Century. It is a two-storey building with large slate mansard roof. The side elevation facing the road is of coursed rubble stone with flush brick chimney stack running through the centre. The attractiveness of the building is barely noticeable at first, due to the number of inappropriate and out of character alterations that have been made to the building. The west elevation has been rendered and painted, has an awkward arrangement of downpipes, a small out of scale window in the roof, modern replacement windows and the whole building has no less than four single storey extensions attached at various points around it.
The turning area to the west side of the house was, until the mid 20th Century, occupied by the now demolished Nos. 1 & 2. The house and surroundings would greatly benefit from restoration. On the opposite side of the road is Sunnyside, a single storey building with corrugated sheet pitched roof and rough rendered walls. This probably dates from after the First World War and has a faintly temporary feel to it. It is, however, a generally simple and pleasant building, due particularly to the fact that it has not had any attempts made to modernise it.

Lean-to porches to both of these buildings facing the road create a pinch-point and entry into the next part of the road, which has a more open aspect. Clear views are possible into the gardens of Nos. 3-4 & 5 and on the opposite side of the road accesses into the properties facing Lowden Hill give the road a wider feel. No. 5 also probably dates from the mid 19th Century, is an attractive rubble free stone building with triple roman clay tiles, and has been subsequently extended, though in a far more sympathetic manner than at Nos. 3-4. The east elevation has a first floor timber projection, which would appear to be an oriel window, though only its side is visible due to the garden hedge.

On the opposite side of the road The Knoll is a plain rendered white painted house with modern casement windows. The wide driveway and weakly defined frontage give it undue prominence in the street, which is only relieved by the two small trees in front. The adjacent Barley Mow is a generally attractive modern house in subtle grey imitation stone. Unfortunately the frontage is partly obscured by a large double garage surrounded by a high stone wall. This and the wide, weakly defined entrance give a somewhat stark overall impression. In contrast the accesses to Lowden Lodge and Trade Winds are from the side and combine a more successful sense of enclosure with pleasant boundary treatments in the form of an attractive brick wall and a hedgerow. Although generally straight, the positioning of houses, outbuildings and property boundaries gives the road a slightly winding feel and, with the slope of the land giving longer distance views, draws the eye forward. At the end of the road are two pairs of houses dating from around 1900. Nos. 6-7 are faced with Bath stone and have ground floor bays and Nos. 8-9 are faced with engineering brick with Bath stone quoins and window surrounds. The small front gardens retain most of their railings. Although the buildings make up a generally pleasant composition, unsympathetic alterations such as replacement UPVC windows, painted stone and brick, and blocked up porch recesses
combine to significantly compromise their character. The distinctly urban terrace contrasts strongly with the large open space of the school playing fields and the dominance of vegetation in the view, particularly on the skyline, railway embankment and to the south of the playing field.

**Ivy Road**

Ivy Road is the only formerly laid out street in the area. It is of uniform width and generally straight with a slight turn at the top of the rising slope up from Ivy Lane. The south side of the road has no built frontage and serves only to give rear access to the villas and detached houses fronting Bath Road. Much of the boundary consists of generally attractive high brick walls along the back edge of the pavement, with breaks to give access to garages. This works best at the eastern end and where garages are not built into the wall, the uniformity breaking down somewhat at the western end. The walls are important in maintaining a strong frontage and sense of enclosure on this ‘unbuilt’ side of the road.

The north side of the street consists of the Ivy Lane Industrial Estate and a row of five pairs of houses dating from around 1900. The industrial estate is the former laundry, consisting of a collection of modest and undistinguished brick buildings of various sizes and scales, the only notable feature being the impressive brick chimney. The brick buildings have all been painted white which gives them an unduly prominent and slightly shoddy appearance, particularly where the paint is beginning to wear away. The frontage onto Ivy Road is particularly unattractive, consisting of an ill-defined boundary, a mix of bare and painted brick, concrete service area and mesh fencing. The estate buildings also poorly address the busy Ivy Lane, and the impression is of an underused site in a prominent location that would benefit from redevelopment to provide attractive and appropriately scaled frontages to Ivy Road and Ivy Lane and the primary school. The adjacent row of houses are of coursed rubble stone with ground floor bays and gables with decorative bargeboards (Fig 9.7).

![Fig 9.7: The distinctive terrace of houses on Ivy Road, the gables, bays and chimneys, and stepping down with the gradient give a sense of continuity and rhythm.](image)

The houses curve gently and step up the hill gradually forming an attractive composition from either direction that is in harmony with the gradient. Unfortunately all railings have been lost from the small front gardens, most original windows and doors have been replaced with unsympathetic modern designs and some bargeboards have been
removed. Despite this the essential elements of form, scale and stone detailing remain relatively unaltered, the terrace retaining much of its attractive character. Between Nos. 6 & 7 a narrow path leads through to Ivy Road Cottages. This is a short terrace of three houses accessed from Ivy Road only by this path, but located adjacent to Ivy Cottages. The top of the road is terminated by an impressive Plane tree, and further mature trees beyond in the grounds of houses fronting Bath Road and Lowden Hill. More recent residential development in this area is at odds with the low-density character of the properties beyond the end of the street, and their attendant mature vegetation. The three properties Bowden View, Punjabi Bhawan and Cefn Parc are crammed close together, are of a distinctly suburban character, plain in appearance and the view is dominated by the garage block to Bowden View. More recently The Ridge has been developed between The Garth and Lea Mount House. This development is out of scale and character with its surroundings, uses inappropriate materials, has a porch that is alien and a double garage that is not in keeping with the area. The general attractiveness of the street is undermined by the unattractive wirescape, variety of street lighting designs and the poor state of some of the pavements and kerbs.

**Former Barley Close Lane**

There is now no trace of the former lane, other than the access off Ivy Lane. The access remains only for the primary school (Fig 9.8) and the terrace at Nos. 5-7 Ivy Cottages. Turning off Ivy Lane one enters a poorly surfaced and ill-defined car park, beyond which is a stark suburban timber board fence. An unmade driveway leads past this to an amorphous and ill-defined space, the site of the long since demolished Nos. 1-4 Ivy Cottages, now unmade ground serving as parking space for the remaining Ivy Cottages. The painted side elevation of No. 5 presents a stark and unattractive appearance. Adjacent to this space, in the grounds of the school are a collection of temporary classroom buildings. Boundaries are marked by a variety of means and often attended by grass, weeds and scrub. The whole area is unattractive and amorphous and is sorely in need of enhancement and rejuvenation.

*Fig 9.8: The simple but pleasant frontage of Ivy Lane School. The space in front of the school is poorly defined and unattractive and would benefit from tidying up.*

The buildings of the industrial estate are also prominent, however, a new small scale office development recently constructed on the corner of the site has failed to improve the aspect from Ivy Lane and the school in this prominent position. The original school building is a modest but attractive building dating from around 1900 and is best viewed
from the car park. The most recent addition to the collection of buildings on the site is a plain brick building to the east of the original building. This is sited well forward of it and disrupts views of, and generally has a negative impact on the character and appearance of the original building. It would appear that the school is clearly in need of a purpose built permanent extension to replace all the annexes. Providing such a building in conjunction with general enhancements to the area could allow scope for new development which would also help enhance the character of the area as well as help fund general amenity improvements.

**Vegetation**
The area contains a significant number of mature trees and vegetation and this is a defining element of the character of the area. The majority of this is to be found along Lowden Hill and Bath Road, much of which is probably attributable to the remains of the gardens and park of The Ivy. The vegetation also extends into the centre of the area and along the railway embankment. Mature vegetation is evident in most views within and to beyond the area and it is this characteristic which reinforces the identity of the area as part of a market town rather than part of a larger city.

**Materials**
There is a mix of materials to be found in the area, generally relating to the range of ages and styles of buildings. The older buildings tend to be coursed or free rubble stone with stone, slate or clay tile roofs. Later buildings tend to be of engineering brick with Bath stone dressings or faced in Bath stone. Newer properties such as Highwood and the new octagonal house adjacent to Turnpike Cottage use appropriate shades of brick or natural stone. Imitation stone is seen in a generally subtle tone at Barley Mow and in an out of character shade and style at Bowden View, Punjabi Bhawan and Cefn Parc. Inappropriate standard bright suburban brick is evident in The Ridge in the former grounds of Lea Mount House.

**Highway Infrastructure**
Highway infrastructure is particularly evident and intrusive in the vicinity of Bath Road and the gyratory, where large road signs and a plethora of lighting columns, sign poles and traffic lights are particularly intrusive in the townscape. Recent works to renew the traffic lights unfortunately did not take the opportunity to rationalise infrastructure in the area. The large direction sign at the junction of Lowden Hill and Bath Road is particularly visually intrusive and has the potential to be reduced in size. A variety of styles, sizes and finishes of lighting columns exist throughout the area, the most recent ones being of a stark and unattractive galvanised finish. A particularly unsightly traffic sign exists to the south of the railway bridge on Lowden Hill where replacement signs have been attached onto the remains of a previous sign without any thought to their appearance. The carriageway and footpath surfaces on Lowden Hill are in particular need of repair and resurfacing. In addition to the variety of lighting columns, overhead wires and poles, often with attached streetlights, add to the generally cluttered view which persists in many views of the streets in the area.
Character Area 10: Avenue La Fleche

Character Analysis

History, Archaeology & Morphology

The area forms part of the Avon river valley to the south-west of the town. The area remained relatively unaltered until the 1960s. This saw the major flood mitigation measures to the river and the installation of the current weir. In 1985 Avenue La Fleche, the town centre by-pass, was constructed through the river valley with a significant impact on the character of the area. During the 1980s the Charter Road housing estate was built in the flood plain on land to the south of The Ivy. These late 20th Century changes have had a profoundly detrimental impact on the character of this part of the river valley but, despite this, opportunity exists for much enhancement of the character of the area.

Prior to these interventions the river environment was informal and more rural in character and, with no weir, the water was freer flowing. Downstream from the Town Bridge the river diverged to form the Isle of Rea, land most recently used as allotments. These channels converged with Hardenhuish Brook into a pool crossed by Back Avon Bridge, a flimsy footbridge that gave access from River Street via Cradle Bridge to an area known as The Ham. This was a long island created by a second tributary of Hardenhuish Brook. The whole area was a picturesque backwater to the town in a landscape of mature trees that had remained unchanged for centuries.

The Ivy is Chippenham’s only Grade I listed house. The adjacent Longhouse and Stables are listed Grade II*. The house was built for John Norris, lawyer and MP for the borough in 1713. The current house dates from 1728 though is a remodelling of an early 18th Century house, fragments of which survive. The house retains its immediate landscape setting, though the visual connection to the river valley has been lost with the development of the Charter Road housing estate. Unlike Monkton House the river valley was not transformed into formal parkland setting and the land to the south remained as pasture. The house did have an associated park on the west side of Rowden Hill (A4). This was accessed by a bridge across the road which is shown on the Powell map of 1784. The bridge is no longer shown on the 1” Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 and some of the land likely to have been occupied by the park has been developed.

Topography & Views

Topography

The river valley slopes within the area are relatively gentle, the steeper gradients being beyond the area at Rowden Hill, Lowden Hill and towards the town centre along Gladstone Road and Wood Lane. The intervention of the by-pass has driven a high embankment throughout the area in close proximity to the river that severely limits the perception of the area as a river valley. The riverbanks are quite steep in places as a result of the flood mitigation measures.

Views

Generally views are confined by vegetation, apart from in the south where the playing fields afford longer and wider views towards the south-east. In the northern, more urban part of the river, the west side footpath affords an attractive view across the town bridge into Monkton Park, the new bridge railings standing out particularly well and the new council offices are pleasantly softened by trees. The high water level in relation to the bridge, and its simple design, gives it the appearance of a jetty rather than a bridge. The
footpath itself is generally attractive with suitably scaled vegetation and attractive railings and this provides a pleasant foreground to the renovated Avonbridge House building. The car park is not too obtrusive an element, but the rear elevation and refuse bins of the public house further serve to make this diminutive and out of scale building an unattractive element in the townscape.

Moving along the footpath the rear elevations, parking and servicing areas of the Borough Parade Shopping Centre become apparent, creating an obtrusive and unattractive riverfront environment. This view becomes even more apparent from Gladstone Road bridge. The view south from the bridge is not unattractive, but has a somewhat forlorn feel. The rear elevations of the industrial buildings on Westmead Lane, the scrub vegetation and untidy and debris strewn riverbanks give it an uncared-for feel (Fig 10.1).

![Fig 10.1: South of Gladstone Road bridge the river takes on a more informal, less urban feel.](image)

To the south crossing the footbridge over the river to the playing fields one is afforded a wide vista of the slopes of the river valley ridge to the east. Unfortunately the view is completely dominated by a mass of housing on The Paddocks estate and Englands estate (Fig 10.2). The view is stark and unattractive. Despite having been developed in the 1960s, the Paddocks has gained nothing in the way of vegetation to soften the impact of the houses or provide an attractive boundary to the playing fields.
Fig 10.2: The recently constructed Englands Estate is also a dominant and stark feature on the skyline. Tree planting along and in front of Pewsham Way would help soften their impact.

The original Paddocks House is almost lost within the estate and the police station is a jarring and unattractive feature of the skyline. The Magistrates Court, though not a building of particular architectural note, is the most noticeable positive element in the scene.

Continuing along the footpath to the Avenue La Fleche bridge and looking back towards the town centre, the view immediately beyond the playing fields is of an untidy and unattractive hotch-potch of buildings, the development at Flowers Yard, fencing, scrub and the contents of the water works yard. A number of mature trees soften the view in the distance, though the steeple of St. Paul's Church is notable, though not a dominant feature in the view. The break in the screening scrub as Avenue La Fleche crosses the river means that this is one of the first views many visitors will have of the town.

On the west side of Avenue La Fleche is the Charter Road housing estate. From the town centre this is accessed by footpaths across an area of open ground between the road and estate. This tapers to the south and affords clear views of the stark and monolithic blocks of flats enclosing the estate (Fig 10.3).

Fig 10.3: The flats and space in front are bland, featureless and sterile, a particularly uninspiring part of the river valley.
Remnants of former hedgerows and some mature trees help break up the space. Other than this the space is a bland grassed area, of little attractiveness and no definition between it and the flats. The screening vegetation along the road ensures that the flats are not particularly noticeable from passing traffic. However, they are visible from Gladstone Road bridge and particularly when descending into the river valley along Avenue La Fleche from the junction with Pewsham Way (Fig 10.4). Looking north from the junction with Gladstone Road, there is an impressive view beyond the unattractive Bridge Centre to the mature trees on the railway embankment.

![Fig 10.4: The stark and prominent blocks on the Charter Road estate viewed from Pewsham Way. The scrub does little to screen these and tree planting may be more appropriate.]

**General Character**

The character of the area is dominated by the road, as a main gateway to, and route through the town. Views from the road are important in conveying the image of the town to visitors and through traffic. The road has no footpaths and those that exist beyond the screening vegetation of the road are isolated from it and primarily support local pedestrian traffic. The path along the river is part of the North Wiltshire Rivers cycle route. This has been extended towards Lacock and is likely to see greater tourist and leisure use. The area suffers from the intrusion of the road but has failed to attempt to integrate it into the environment. The river is a recreational and landscape resource with great potential. Unfortunately it is suffering from unattractive interventions such as the weir and unsympathetic development alongside parts of it, such as the shopping centre that turns its back on it and established industrial uses that prevent public access and give the river environment and the gateway to the town an unattractive image.

**Townscape and Landscape Character**

The area can be divided into three further sub areas for the purposes of analysis:

- The Ivy
- The Urban River
- The River Valley

---

 Chippenham Conservation Area Appraisal November 2007 110
The Ivy

The Ivy and its gardens are isolated from the surrounding area by the dense vegetation and mature trees in the grounds and by the boundary wall. Views of the house can be had in winter from Bath Road if the gates are open (Fig 10.5).

![The Ivy](image)

Fig 10.5: The fine frontage of the Grade I listed Ivy, only visible when the gates are open and the diminutive trees in the foreground are not in leaf. It is quite isolated from its surroundings.

Although the land rises gently across the site towards Rowden Hill, the stature of the vegetation gives an impression of higher ground and this, and the mature trees near the weir, has the effect of narrowing the space that the road passes through. This, and the curve in the road, helps reduce the negative visual impact of the Bridge Centre.

The narrowing also acts as a transition point between the urban and active space of the gyratory and the more open aspect of the river valley. Travelling south from the gyratory, the aspect opens, though the scrub vegetation prevents views to the open countryside.

To the west of The Ivy, Cedar Grove, a new development of houses has recently been completed at the entrance to Charter Road. The close proximity to the garden wall of The Ivy and the cramped nature of the development is unfortunate. It compromises the historic setting of the listed building and is an example of an undesirable form of ‘town cramming’. Tree planting between the development and the road would help soften their impact.
The Urban River
The river environment between the Town Bridge and Gladstone Road bridge is very urban in character. The west and east banks are quite different in character. The west side is generally attractive with little to detract from this (Fig 10.6).

Avonbridge House and the mature trees give enclosure to the triangle of land used as the car park. This is generally unobtrusive and the vegetation and planting along the footpath help screen the vehicles whilst not hiding the presence of the building. The walls and railings are solid and of good quality, adding to the character of the path. The path provides a vertical solid embankment to the river that is a key element in defining the urban character. Some vegetation is growing out from the bottom of the wall where the water is shallowest. This is unattractive and collects litter and is most prevalent towards the busy Town Bridge and weir. Similarly, the short riverbank adjacent to the town bridge is unattractive and poorly managed. The suburban style Fizz Bar looks out of character next to Avonbridge house and the urban town centre environment and its servicing is poorly resolved and unattractively prominent from the footpath.

In contrast, the east side bank is generally sloping land from the town bridge to the weir. The character of the river environment is dominated and defined by the Borough Parade Shopping Centre, which it partly encircles. The shopping centre simply ignores the river. Service yards and unlandscaped parking face the river. The riverbanks are untidy, accumulate litter, are poorly managed and covered in unattractive scrub and weeds to varying degrees. The Porter Black’s pub occupies a prime riverside site of some considerable length, yet it makes minimal use of the river bank environment and does not allow public access to it (Fig 10.7).
Fig 10.7: The Porter Blacks pub fails to take advantage of its riverside location. A small terrace and benches added to undulating ground takes little advantage of the presence of the river.

The small terrace and few seats are provided are for patrons only, the river path itself is diverted through the service yard route. This route contains cycle unfriendly rumble strips yet it is a national cycle route as well as a footpath, car park, service vehicle route and service yard. It is a singularly unattractive, uninspiring and poorly planned environment that contains a potentially dangerous mix of users (Fig 10.8). Re-routing the footpath and cycle route along the river front would dramatically improve the environment for all users and allow the river environment to be experienced and appreciated by all, better integrating it into the townscape.

Fig 10.8: The rear service area of the shopping centre, facing the river and also serving as a car park, pedestrian route and national cycle route (despite the humps). This is an exceptionally poorly designed part of the town centre completely, almost contumaciously, failing to take advantage of the riverside location.

Adjacent to the Town Bridge is No. 1 High Street (Superdrug). This is a bland and unattractive building of insufficient stature for its important setting. Its side elevation facing the river is particularly unattractive and its setting of a ‘left over’ triangle of ill-defined space is equally unattractive. Adjacent to this is probably the most positive and appropriately scaled building on this side of the river. A short terrace of housing
association flats addresses the river in a positive manner, encloses the service yard to the rear and has a simple but pleasant frontage (Fig 10.9). A raised ground floor accessed by steps affords a degree of privacy from the adjacent footpath. Unfortunately the site is cramped and the units very shallow, allowing views to the service yard behind and giving the block a somewhat isolated feel from the development around it. Any redevelopment of the

Fig 10.9: In the town centre, these housing association flats are the only building that positively address the river and make the most of their setting. Their scale, form and layout is also appropriate to the location.

Superdrug site should seek the continuation of a similar terrace or include shops facing, and accessed from, the river path. To the north of Gladstone Road bridge is the sluice and weir installed as part of the 1960s flood mitigation works. This can only be described as one of the most ugly and intrusive features of the river in the town, its extending concrete counter balance being its most dominant feature (Fig 10.10).

Fig 10.10: The monolithic and functional structure of the weir and sluice is an ugly intrusion into the river environment. The proximity of the busy road bridge and unattractive rear of the shopping centre make this a particularly unpleasant space, yet it is one of the main routes into the town centre.
The built infrastructure is unsightly and utilitarian and combines with the bland scrub of the shallows downstream and the utilitarian structure of the road bridge, offers a singularly unattractive environment to this major through route and gateway to the town and one of its busiest car parks.

The unattractive shallows continue under the road bridge and this is a particularly unwelcome space on the foot/cycle route that compounds the feeling of pedestrians being subservient to the vehicles above (Fig 10.11).

Fig 10.11: The quality of the space under the bridge, a footpath and national cycle route, leaves a lot to be desired.

Whilst the bridge is utilitarian in character it offers a vantage point for the river environment and town centre skyline and is wide enough to support a more informal and natural riparian environment than currently exists. The unattractive rear elevations of the shopping centre are particularly evident from the bridge and footpath across the weir and this built form and the proximity of Avenue La Fleche give this part of the river environment a rather cramped feel. The open green space between the river and Avenue La Fleche is generally attractive but inaccessible and hides the unnecessarily culverted Hardenhuish Brook. Opening up the brook and making the area accessible could reduce this cramped feel.

The River Valley
Looking south from the road bridge, the aspect is more rural and open, and not unattractive. On the east bank the bland rear elevation of Avonside flats and the unattractive Hygrade factory buildings and signage intrude into the view. On the west bank vegetation screens the traffic from view, though beyond the unattractive and stark blocks of flats of the Charter Road estate are unattractive elements on the skyline. The river is more free flowing along this stretch and more attractive for it. Unfortunately the riverbanks are poorly accessible and steep in places and the transition between water and land is characterised by unattractive scrub that collects litter and flotsam.

The open space between the river and road is somewhat isolated, the road screened by vegetation and the river banks poorly accessible. The space itself is an uninspiring mix of bland scrub and unappealing grass (Fig 10.12).
Fig 10.12: The open land between the river and Avenue La Fleche is all that remains of the river valley at this point. It is a bland, featureless space, devoid of interest and riparian ecology and hemmed in by unattractive and uninspiring scrub vegetation.

Views beyond the river and road into the wider river valley are severely limited. A large sculpture brings some interest to the space, but its setting is rather forlorn. There is a notable lack of mature trees in this space and what vegetation there is appears to be there for reasons of low maintenance or functional effect such as screening. The vegetation has little aesthetic value, nor wildlife value, particularly in relation to the river environment.

At the end of this narrow strip of land the path crosses the river into the playing fields, the openness of the space making a distinct contrast and offering views of the skyline of the town centre. However, the high embankment of Avenue La Fleche blocks views into the open countryside beyond, instead focusing attention on the river valley slopes covered in densely developed housing. This is one of the most open aspects of the river valley to be had by the pedestrian yet it is one of the least attractive.

Instead of turning left to cross the river, one can turn right and cross Avenue La Fleche and footpaths to Charter Road and open countryside to the south. Unfortunately this is an unattractive and rather dangerous crossing for pedestrians. The road is on a sharp bend and the screening vegetation severely limits views of the fast moving traffic making it difficult to cross safely. The stile is also missing over one of the crash barriers (Fig 10.13). As the road is on an embankment it would be feasible to provide an underpass for the footpath.
Fig 10.13 Avenue La Fleche is a barrier that severs pedestrian access in many places. This is a particularly dangerous place to attempt to cross.

The footpath emerges on the edge of the open countryside, though mature hedgerows limit the views to be had. The large waterworks building is well screened from view. Looking northwards the blocks of flats are apparent as a particularly alien feature, looking as if they have been randomly placed in the middle of a field. There is no transitional space between the buildings and the soulless grassed areas and it is unclear as to what the space is for as it would appear little used or usefully utilised. At the northern end of the space some tree planting and remaining hedgerows help break up the monotony of the space. The roadside screening hides most of the traffic and also views of the wider valley, though the traffic noise is barely reduced by the vegetation.

The road has divorced this land from its river setting as the road passes along the former alignment of Hardenhuish Brook. The only remaining section of the brook is isolated from the road by bunding and from the open space by vegetation and fencing. The character of the open space would benefit from tree planting to soften the visual presence of the flats and from a better definition between public and private space around the flats. Opportunity may also exist to reintroduce a watercourse into this space to provide a more dynamic and relevant environment for its location.

Vegetation
Vegetation plays an important role in defining the character of the area. A number of mature trees exist in the vicinity of the weir, remnants of the former riparian landscape. These are a significant element on defining the character of the space and complement the otherwise urban character of the river upstream of the weir. These trees are a pleasant termination of the view from the Town Bridge and help screen the traffic on Avenue La Fleche. From the Bridge Centre gyratory they also help screen the unattractive rear elevations of the Borough Parade Shopping Centre. The majority of mature trees are to be found within and bordering the grounds of The Ivy. These include many fine specimens including a number of ornamental species and provide an attractive setting for the open space to the south, from where they are best appreciated. Screening scrub and bunding across Avenue La Fleche from Gladstone Road obscures much of this landscape.
Whilst there are a number of other individual trees in the area which add to its character, most of the remainder of the vegetation has a less attractive impact. Self-seeded trees along the riverbanks appear to suffer from a lack of management and accumulate litter and flotsam. The remainder is generally characterless scrub, much of it planted along the road to screen traffic from view. This blocks views across the valley and out to the open countryside, especially for pedestrians, reduces the level of surveillance of the footpaths from the road, divorces the road from its environment and generally provides an uninspiring and soulless landscape.

Traffic & highway infrastructure

Avenue La Fleche itself is a major intrusion into the river valley. Conversely, its embankment and screening vegetation isolate it from its immediate environment. This has little effect on the noise of the traffic, which is visible in the wider setting and from vehicles using the road. Vegetation of a greater stature, such as trees, could help counter the scale of the infrastructure and traffic, reduce the visual dominance of vehicles from beyond the character area. Removal of the screening vegetation could strengthen the relationship between the road and its immediate environment, allowing better views across the road better perception of the river valley as a whole.

Apart from the road itself, the most intrusive feature is the large number of lighting columns along its length. The road itself is a barrier to movement, with only three crossing points along its whole length. At the northern end, where there is most demand to cross, there is only one crossing. The only pedestrian link between the Bridge Centre and Gladstone Road is the secluded and poorly surveyed path along the side of Avonbridge House.
Character Area 11: Monkton Park

Character Analysis

History, Archaeology & Morphology

The character area consists primarily of the remains of the parkland associated with Monkton House. This forms a section of the River Avon valley that creates a green corridor through the centre of the town. This extends from the Town Bridge in the town centre to the open countryside in the south east.

Monkton was one of a number of manors in the area now part of the urban area of Chippenham. It was originally given by Empress Maud (mother of Henry II) to the Priory of Monkton Farley and although there is no evidence of a religious house on the land, it explains the origin of the name (i.e. ‘Monk’s Town’). Following the Dissolution of the monasteries in 1536 the Manor passed to the Seymour family who held it until 1686. In 1686 the Manor was sold, the lands being split from the Manor in 1690. From then until 1919 various members of the Esmeade family held the Manor. In 1919 it was sold to a Mr H R B Coventry, being purchased by the Borough Council in 1957.

The current house sits on the approximate site of the original Manor House. During the 20 years prior to the sale in 1686, the then tenant, William Bayliffe, converted the old timber house into an elegant stone mansion with a small formal garden down to the river. In 1757 Esmead Edridge converted the mansion into the Georgian house that remains today. Originally this also retained the small garden. The creation of the park came later and transformed the setting of the house and the surrounding landscape. The building is listed Grade II and is now subdivided into flats. The stable buildings have been converted for housing and Sadlers Mead now separates the main house from the site of the kitchen garden, now also redeveloped for housing. The single access to the house and park was from Monkton Hill. The gate-piers remain (although altered) as part of the entrance to the District Council offices, though a sub-station now occupies the site of the lodge. The drive passed through a belt of woodland before reaching the open parkland where it curved gently along the contours to the front of the house, facing south west towards the town. About half way into the open park a second drive left the main drive to pass behind the house to the stables and kitchen garden.

The 1st edition 1886 Ordnance Survey Map shows the house surrounded by parkland, bounded by the river to the south and west and Cocklebury Farm to the north and east. In the 1950s all the land to the north-east of the drive was developed for housing and now forms the Monkton Park housing estate of over 1000 houses. The main drive through the park remains as a pedestrian path and the route of the rear drive remains as an informal path along the boundary of the housing estate.

In 1960 the open-air swimming pool was opened and in 1967 the original District Council offices were opened on part of the wooded entrance to the park. Although the integrity of the approach drive was compromised, both these developments were of a suitable form and scale and architectural style to fit in with the parkland character and did not dominate it. In 1988 the large Olympiad leisure centre in a more functional architectural style replaced the pool, and more recently the council offices were replaced by a larger building in 2001. Both these buildings now dominate this part of the park and only a few individual trees remain of the wooded entrance. The old town mill was demolished in
1958 and during the 1960s the old town bridge was replaced by a utilitarian structure and major flood attenuation works were undertaken to the river environment, solving the perpetual flooding problems, though in a very brutal and sterilising manner for the river environment. Despite all these changes, the park remains a generally pleasant space in the town, though with great potential for enhancement.

Ordnance Survey maps until 1936 show part of a moat, connecting with the River Avon, south west of Monkton House. The moat is thought to have been introduced as part of the 18th Century parkland and is now filled in. Within the pitch & putt golf course is a Second World War pill box, in reasonable exterior condition. There is evidence of medieval ridge and furrow in the open parkland to the west of Monkton House. The Extensive Urban Survey report for Chippenham produced by the County Archaeological Service describes finds in the area that date from the Mesolithic, Romano British through early and the late middle ages.

**Topography and Views**

**Topography**
The River Avon runs through the park, entering the character area from the south east with the parkland on the north west side. The open parkland here is predominantly level adjacent to the river, only rising up to a ridge along the line of the former approach drive. On the opposite bank the land rises up more immediately within the gardens of properties on St. Mary Street. The open level land narrows as the river bends round towards the town bridge, with the banks becoming steeper and the level areas of land now on the opposite (south) side of the river. This land then rises gently over the extent of the Emery Gate Shopping Centre.

The topography, combined with the framework of mature trees, creates a large degree of visual containment. As a result significant views beyond the park are generally limited to those along the course of the river to the Olympiad and to the open countryside. A key exception to this is the Parish Church of St. Andrew on St. Mary Street. This enjoys exceptional views of great quality from a number of locations in the park. Other views beyond the park are limited to skyline views, though these also have a significant effect on the character of its setting.

**Views**
The principal public view into the park from the town centre is to be had from the Town Bridge (Fig 11.1). This view into the park is generally positive, being of a landscape of mature trees, with some impressive specimens. However the view is heavily compromised by its setting on either side of the bridge. The ad-hoc form of access to the Emery Gate car park and associated parked cars, the exposed rear wall of Wilkinson’s, and the general condition of the south river bank, with worn grass and bramble, and poor quality street furniture and fencing is to be found on one side. On the other is to be found the blank bland side wall of Nos. 2-4 The Bridge, a cluttered and untidy planter and boardwalk area and overgrown scrub on a steep and sterile river bank.
Fig 11.1: The view into the island park from the town bridge is generally an attractive vista. However, the sterile nature of the river environment is evident, as is the worn grass, ivy growth in trees and brightly painted light columns.

The entrance from Monkton Hill is from a higher vantage point under a magnificent plane tree and the path affords fine views along the sweep of the river in each direction (Fig 11.2). Unfortunately ivy-clad self-seeded trees and the blank rear of Emery Gate Shopping Centre straight ahead, and the dreary Superdrug building and dominant roofscape of the Borough Parade Shopping Centre beyond the Town Bridge intrude into the otherwise pleasant views.

Fig 11.2: The attractive river valley landscape is particularly evident from the Monkton Hill entrance, though ivy growth is a dominant and intrusive feature.

The footbridge linking the Olympiad and council offices with the town centre affords pleasant views along the river to the open parkland in one direction and the varied roofscape of Avon Reach in the other. Unfortunately the views north and south from the bridge are less pleasant. To the north the bulk of the council offices and Olympiad dominate the park with the service area to the offices directly ahead. To the south is the
dead frontage of the shopping centre, a much used but unattractive, uninviting and unsigned hole in the wall to one of the town’s prime shopping areas.

As one passes across the remains of the former weir bypass stream, a gap in the trees allows a generally pleasant view of the open parkland. However a number of features ensure this view is less than appealing. The ridge of the slope is dominated by the skyline of houses on Sadlers Mead, their dominance and variety of boundary treatments being particularly intrusive in the view. The college buildings also intrude into this view. In the foreground are the multi-use games compound, fenced off play areas and patches of disused concrete that together give a discordant feel to the view. The feel is of incremental additions and removal of individual features over time with no sense of a co-ordinated or planned use of the space or common or comprehensive approach to design and materials. The view from the opposite side of the river towards the town centre is particularly unattractive, the gap in the trees allowing the car park, blank wall and service area of the shopping centre to intrude into the parkland vista.

Fig 11.3: Sadlers Mead car park is a well used entrance to the park. However the entrance is of very poor visual quality.

St. Andrew’s Church steeple is a dominant landmark from a number of locations, notably from Sadlers Mead car park, the former approach drive, from Sadlers Mead near Monkton House and from the new cycle/pedestrian route near Baydons Lane. From Sadlers Mead car park the view of the steeple is severely compromised by the clutter of signs, barriers and other accumulated utilitarian features which together present nothing but a disgraceful gateway to one of the most heavily used entrances to the park (Fig 11.3). From the former approach drive views also exist towards Monkton House.

Unfortunately a row of tall out of character conifers completely blocks this view and divorces the house from its parkland setting, ensuring the house is almost completely invisible from the north west. The view of the house from the entrance off Sadlers Mead is equally as poor.

Moving from this entrance near the house and into the park, the impressive view of the church steeple gradually opens out into a wide picturesque vista of exceptional quality, consisting of the rear gardens, elevations and rooftops of the many listed buildings on St. Mary Street. This is probably the most attractive view to be had of the town and is
visible from much of the open central area of the park. Unfortunatley the location of seating in the park does not take full advantage of the potential to exploit the magnificent views offered from the park.

The park can also be accessed from St. Mary Street via a footpath through River House, a small courtyard of flats that is out of character with the setting it is in. It is this kind of development that should be avoided. Part of the development is built over the path and passing through the narrow space one emerges onto the footbridge across the river. The bridge affords fine, tranquil views along the tree-lined river, the vegetation enclosing the views. The view directly ahead is less appealing, being of grotesquely ivy-clad trees and scrub, totally obscuring what would otherwise be a fine view of the front of Monkton House. Following the path to the left the house becomes visible and presents a fine view. The view into the parkland to the south, occupied by the pitch & putt course is also attractive. The unnecessary wire fencing enclosing this part of the otherwise open golf course, and the dense ornamental conifer planting of the crazy golf course compromises the attractiveness of both these views.

From Baydons Lane a cycle/footpath and bridge has recently been constructed across the river valley as part of the North Wiltshire Rivers Route cycleway. This affords a number of views into and out of the parkland. From the top of the path there is a pleasant view down to the bridge and wetland area. However this is almost lost in the overbearing expanse of brick of the new houses on the Monkton Park estate that intrudes into the landscape. A crude attempt at bunding and sporadic planting of inappropriate species has little effect on screening the houses. Enough land exists between the cycle/footpath and the housing to provide a substantial screen of trees of appropriate stature and species.

From the bridge there are pleasant views to both to Monkton House in its parkland setting and out to the open countryside to the south east. The quality and attractiveness of the view to the open countryside is diluted by a number of features. Pylons cross the landscape in the middle distance and tree planting could partly obscure them in time. The skyline of the ridge of the river valley to the south west is lined with housing of little architectural note and little screening and is a dominant and intrusive element in the view. This is a particularly notable view from the entrance off Sunningdale Close. The land between this and the river is open and unused and woodland planting here, particularly on the slopes, could dramatically improve the view into the countryside. Finally the most significant intrusion into the rural view is the large shed structure of Abbeyfield School. Sitting away from all other development it is a particularly prominent, large building. Tree planting around this building would dramatically improve views out from the park to the open countryside.

Before reaching Sunningdale Close a path leads off to the left to pass Seymour House to Sadlers Mead. From this path there are pleasant views into the park and Monkton House, though the high chain-link fence marking the edge of the golf course dilutes the openness of its character. The path running alongside the river past the golf course also affords fine views of Monkton House.

**General Character**
The area is a formal and informal recreational resource for the town of a generally attractive character and is a pleasant contrast to the dense urban form of the nearby
town centre. It consists primarily of the openness of the river valley and the significant mature vegetation. The space consists of the remnants of the parkland of Monkton House and the remains of the landscape associated with the former mill and its by-pass stream.

Herein lies the problem, as the area simply lacks an image and definition as anything in particular, it is a remnant of things past and has yet to make the transition into a formally acknowledged resource for the town, whatever that should be. This is evidenced by the fact that, of the dozen or so means of entering the area, there is no signage either naming the space one is entering, what it is, what facilities there are, who is responsible for managing it or any general or historical information about the area. It is not even given a name and there are no formal or physical features marking its entrances. It is not formally acknowledged as a park or anything else, it has simply evolved from the remnants of past man made landscapes, with the incremental incursion of recreational facilities to no discernible plan. There is no sense, or expression of civic pride.

The quality of the space suffers considerably from this lack of direction, as it is simply 'managed' and maintained in limbo, as it is – it is almost a dormant space in this respect, waiting to come to life, for the opportunity to be taken to realise its potential. There is much scope to develop the area into a far more attractive, meaningful and relevant recreational resource for the town. Thought needs to be given to the future of the area and the needs and wishes of the town and to use this as a basis for a management plan for the development and enhancement of the area as a specific, high quality town centre recreational asset.

**Townscape and Landscape Character**

The character of the area is varied, and can be broadly sub-divided into five separate parts:

- The ‘Island Park’ and adjoining areas to the north incorporating the Olympiad Leisure Centre and Council offices
- Historic parkland between the Olympiad and Monkton House
- Monkton House, and the crazy golf and pitch and putt golf course to the south
- An area of rough ground and recent millennium plantation south of the river
- The open river valley of unmanaged grassland beyond the Conservation Area boundary

**Island Park**

This area is so named as the former mill by-pass stream once formed a large island at this point in the river valley. As a result of the remodelling of the river in the 1960s the appearance of this area has changed almost beyond recognition. The riparian infrastructure of the mill included an impressive stone weir, associated pond and with silt islands and the long meandering by-pass stream forming a large island. The whole scene was exceptionally picturesque and is in stark contrast to the comparatively sterile character of the area today, which consists of a single deep channel forming the river and a short and neglected remnant of the by-pass stream. The former weir to the stream has been replaced with an unattractive concrete wall.

This is probably the busiest part of the park, and accommodates a wide range of uses within a complex landscape pattern. There is a steady throughput of pedestrian movement between the central shopping area to the south and offices, college, and
homes to the north, as well as some east to west movement. The north-south movement consists mainly of people passing through the space between other destinations whereas the east-west movement is more recreational based with people coming specifically to enjoy the open space and access the countryside beyond.

The Council and Olympiad buildings within the park, together with occasional outward views of adjacent shops and the rear of Emery Gate Shopping Centre, give rise to a semi-urban, though generally attractive character, derived from the presence of the river and numerous mature trees (Fig 11.4).

![Fig 11.4: The fine conifers in the island park create a pleasant pedestrian environment. Again, bright lighting columns and ivy growth are evident.](image)

The feel is of a mature green space in an urban setting. The scale of the buildings generally reflects that of the mature landscape though the bulk and massing of the Olympiad is particularly unsympathetic to the space, particularly when viewed from the open parkland.

The southern corner of the Olympiad, containing the café and hall below, and pleasant clock tower, echo riverside pavilion architecture, and do not look out of place within this part of the park. However, the large swimming pool hall roof, bulk of the sports hall with its high blank wall facing the river and the generally bland architecture and form of the building are a few of a number of features that ensure the building is a significantly detracting element to the character of the area, particularly from the riverside and the parkland as seen in views from the east. This view in particular, in conjunction with the council offices, telephone exchange and college buildings, creates a particularly unattractive and jarring view, engulfing the distant views of St. Paul’s Church.

The new council offices by contrast, are much more muted. Existing mature trees give a degree of screening to the large south elevation, which helps to soften and break up its bulk. However, from some angles and positions the building can appear unduly dominant and would benefit from some further tree planting. On crossing the footbridge to the north side, the proximity of council offices and Olympiad is particularly evident. Whilst the office parking is attractively screened the space between the two buildings is particularly unattractive. This is a well-used pedestrian route and is dominated by the high, blank walls of the large buildings either side and the servicing area of the office. It
is not an attractive space and could benefit from a reconsideration of its layout. The new shrub planting is only cosmetic and somewhat ineffective and this area. The area would benefit from some tree planting to soften the space, reduce the impact of the scale of the buildings and provide a green relief to break up the bulk of the buildings as seen from the open park to the south.

The majority of the car parking for the council offices is to the north of the building where it cannot be seen from the main body of the park. However, the steep embankment adjacent to the car park is mostly bare and unattractive and experiencing some slippage problems. There is a line of existing trees at the top of the slope though they are self seeded, suffering from ivy growth and include some inappropriate conifers. They provide a degree of relief to the mass of large buildings in the vicinity and the unattractive rear views of the small scale buildings fronting Cocklebury Road, though are not as effective or as attractive as they could be. The embankment would benefit from improving the appearance of the existing trees and augmenting these with further tree planting on the upper reaches of the embankment and shrub planting on the lower reaches. This would also address the slippage problems.

The well used steps up the west side of the Olympiad end in an unattractive concrete wall and scruffy and inconvenient dog-leg to the steps up to the car park. This is the main pedestrian route to the college and railway station. The steps are of a poor design, the treads being of varying and awkward lengths for comfortable use. The variety of boundary treatments and surfacing adds to the general unattractiveness of this well used entrance into the park. A redesign of the layout of this space, in conjunction with that of the descent into the park, could dramatically enhance the quality of the space and entrance to the park.

The public footpath passing the council offices passes under the main, car park level entrance to the Olympiad, with a densely shrub planted embankment up to the car park. This, and the side walls of the Olympiad give this section of the footpath, once the approach drive to Monkton House, a dingy, unattractive and poorly surveyed feel. This is particularly so on the east side where the path needlessly twists and rises. Out of flower, the shrubs are not particularly attractive, as their purpose is as much for screening and minimal maintenance as visual appeal, although it does collect litter. The north side of the steps to the car park consists of dense scrub and whilst providing some screening, is not particularly attractive. Replacement of the shrub planting with trees would improve surveillance and light levels at eye level and would provide a significant belt of vegetation to break up the bulk of the Olympiad and telephone exchange, dramatically improving northward views from the open park.

The entrance to the park from Sadlers Mead car park, as mentioned under Views, is defined by an unattractive plethora of signage, barriers and other clutter and the entry is made no more attractive by the presence of parked coaches. This is an important entrance to the park for those arriving by car. The car park itself, although reasonably landscaped would benefit from some enhancement, such as upgrading the existing street furniture and more regular pruning of vegetation. The surfacing and white lining would also benefit from attention in places. The car park often experiences congestion where many cars often wait in the circulation space to collect users of the leisure centre, often small children. This is particularly so in the confined corner near the building entrance. The footpath steps also enter the car park here and the situation is both chaotic and potentially dangerous. There is scope for redesigning this area and
investigating the feasibility of providing a proper drop-off and waiting area and more attractive entrance to this important building.

Having passed around the barriers, one is presented with a steep slope down into the park, enclosed on one side by the Olympiad and on the other by an attractive belt of maturing trees. These are the remnants of an avenue once forming the approach to the former open-air swimming pool. The access road is a particular intrusion into the space, as is the random accumulation of other facilities and clutter. This includes the multi-use games area and play areas that feel temporary and isolated in the grassed space. Pedestrians have to share the access road with traffic, as there is no path.

Moving down the slope other features that detract from the quality and attractiveness of the space become apparent, and indicate their random and co-ordinated accumulation (Fig 11.5). These include the following:

- A number of concreted-in drain covers in the grass.
- A variety of designs of litter bin.
- Unauthorised car parking on formerly grassed areas, now covered in loose gravel.
- Utilitarian seating of varying designs set on large concrete bases.
- Damaged kerbs to the narrow access road.
- Worn and muddy areas of grass due to poor reinstatement and verge parking.
- A variety of styles of signage, lighting and bollards, often in large numbers.
- Areas of scruffy and intrusive concrete and a confused mix of recent and older paths and hard surfaces.
- A large rusting steel container.

Fig 11.5: The environs of the Olympiad leave a lot to be desired.

Moving round to the south side of the Olympiad many of these unattractive features persist. However, the car park is a particularly intrusive element in the open space between the building and the river, as is the access road to the council offices, cutting across the middle of the space with its attendant plethora of bollards and lighting poles. The building itself has terraces outside the café and pool yet there is no access to these from outside and they appear under utilised spaces with excellent views into the park. Some external plant and service entrances are unattractive elements of the elevation. The south elevation has a bland entrance at odds with the roof form and the large blank wall of the sports hall is a particularly bland and unattractive feature. This is a dead area
of wall and unattractive parking very close to the river and the potential to provide some active uses in the ground floor of the Olympiad should be explored.

The path from the corner of the Olympiad to the riverside path is made of three separate paths and the remnants of the stakes from the former building site compound are evident in the grass. This is an example of particularly poor reinstatement in urgent need of attention. Given the need to retain riverside vehicle access for both buildings, there is still scope for considerable improvements to the appearance of this area.

There is access to both sides of the riverbank from the Town Bridge. Both of these suffer from unattractive side elevations of adjacent buildings. The steep bank, untended scrub vegetation, poorly maintained boardwalk and seating area, balustrade remnant and blank side elevation of the adjacent shop combine to make this an unattractive entrance to the footpath on the north bank. A modest enhancement scheme could vastly improve the appearance of this area. The dense vegetation and steep banks continue as far as the Monkton Hill entrance, being augmented by utilitarian railings in places (Fig 11.6).

These features isolate the river from the adjacent footpath, prevent pedestrians from enjoying the riverside environment and are an example of the sterilising effect of the river environment as a result of the flood mitigation measures in the 1960s. Whilst the adjacent Avon Reach office buildings appear suitably scaled from a distance, from the footpath they are uninspiring and lack visual interest or detail. The car park appears as an intrusion into the riverside walk and allows unattractive views of the rear of shops on The Bridge. Whilst the scrub does little to screen the office buildings, the semi-mature trees in front of the buildings and the self seeded trees on the river bank achieve this in a relatively successful manner.

Fig 11.6: Fencing and scrub is unattractive and unnecessary and divorces the footpath from the river and its banks.

The entrance on the south side gives access to the main open space and former ‘island’ part of the park. This is the nearest public open space to the town centre and is a heavily used space, particularly in good weather. Unfortunately the grassed area has become undulating in places and the dips retain rainfall and become muddy, unusable and unattractive. Dense ivy growth on many trees creates shady areas where grass has difficulty in growing.
There are numerous water birds inhabiting the river that add to its attractiveness. The former silt islands and shallow riverbanks once provided ideal and secluded nesting places for these birds. Now they often congregate in large numbers near the south side entrance to the park, wearing away grass, leaving their own mess and forcing people to detour widely around them onto other grassed areas. This can often present an unattractive and unwelcoming entrance to the park. The river itself is a particularly benign, almost inert feature in the landscape, its movement barely perceptible and its interest to the senses limited due to this. Faster flowing water would be audible as well as cooling the air and creating a breeze. This could be achieved by the re-introduction of a weir, which would also provide a visual focus and provide the opportunity for the reintroduction of small islands for waterfowl.

The side elevation to Wilkinson’s is also its service access and this is a particularly unattractive and prominent intrusion into the park. The poor quality boundary treatment and the line of parked cars adjacent to it compound this. The single storey rear section allows views of the unattractive roofscape of the shopping centre and its lack of height means that it provides a poorly defined edge to the park. This area is in particular need of improvement. The use of this area as an access to the shopping centre car park creates pedestrian/vehicular conflict at the entrance to the High Street. Vehicles have also eroded the grass at the park entrance adjacent to create an unwelcoming entry point. An additional storey to the Wilkinsons building could better define the park as well as provide a more attractive frontage and additional lettable floorspace. This could also help provide additional activity in the area, particularly in the evening if it was for residential or leisure use.

The open space is a generally attractive and self-contained space, enclosed by the mature vegetation along the riverbank and alignment of the former bypass stream. At the eastern end of the space there are some particularly impressive Pine trees. The trees along the former by-pass stream give some degree of screening to the unattractive rear edifice of the Emery Gate shopping centre (Fig 11.7). However, it is still an intrusive feature in the landscape of the park, particularly so in the location of the pedestrian exit into the park. This is a well-used route, though there is no signage to welcome either entrance into the shopping centre or the park. Consideration needs to be given to either improving the appearance of the elevations by improving their interaction with the park by giving the shop units entrances into the park or facing them with new development; or by intensifying the screening, particularly at eye level.

Crossing the north-south path in an easterly direction, one reaches the remnants of the by-pass stream. This area is more heavily wooded, informal and secluded in character, the grass being left to grow in many places. The space is generally peaceful and pleasant, a footbridge takes the footpath across the stream. This path also forms part of the National Cycle Route 4 and as part of this a sculptural direction sign has been installed near the bridge. The path continues round the rear of the shopping centre car park and service yard to connect with Emery Lane.
Unfortunately, the remnants of the stream are neglected, it is dank, unattractive, collects rubbish and its banks are overgrown with nettles. The areas of longer grass are dominated by weak species.

In addition, the lack of natural surveillance from adjoining areas, no apparent ‘way out’, the overgrown character, and an absence of lighting make the area appear less safe to walk through than other parts of the park. One can see the open parkland on the other bank of the river but there is no place to cross and the route up to Emery Lane is almost completely devoid of surveillance. A bridge here would open up more walking opportunities and increase the use of the area. Selective thinning of vegetation, cleaning up of the stream and installation of lighting would help to release the potential of this area as a pleasant and well-used part of the park.

**Historic Parkland**

The central section of the park, bounded to the north by mainly single storey post-war housing and to the south by the river, still retains an attractive historic parkland character. The landscape is generally open in character and specimen tree groups punctuate views across the broad sweeps of open grassland sloping towards the river (Fig 11.8). These frame views of the river and historic parts of Chippenham to the south. The vegetation along the river and the slopes beyond are particularly important in defining the character of this part of the park.

The historic parkland is arguably the most visually coherent and attractive part of the park, retaining much of the original parkland character. The openness and views give a sense of space and scale commensurate with the river, topography and the character of Monkton House.

---

*Fig 11.7: The unattractive blank elevation of the shopping centre is an intrusive feature along much of the south side of the island park. Note the more inspired signage introduced as part of the national cycle route.*
Fig 11.8: The full expanse of the open parkland as seen from the District Council offices.

Unfortunately this has been truncated by the insertion of the domestic scale and species of planting around the crazy golf which blocks views to the remainder of the park, and the line of conifers that block views of Monkton House, thus divorcing it from its parkland in views from the north. Within this part of the park some inappropriate recent tree planting of small-scale ornamental species and birch has taken place. Limited views of adjacent bungalows and rear gardens, although mainly only at close quarters, also detract from the landscape. The variety of garden boundary treatments is discordant and could be easily remedied by strengthening the tree planting and by the planting of a new continuous hedge directly in front to provide a consistent and well screening boundary.

Fig 11.9: The view north from the open parkland. A mass of bulky building forms provides an unattractive and poorly defined focus to the view, undermining the imposing steeple of St Paul’s Church. Tree planting between and in front of the buildings would do much to soften their impact.

To the north the large buildings of the council offices, Olympiad, telephone exchange and college combine to form a mass of ugly and discordant building forms that are a significant intrusion into the park and drown the impact of the impressive steeple of St.
Paul’s Church (Fig 11.9). Whilst the council offices and the college extension are not unattractive, they are significant buildings towards the periphery of the view, the Olympiad and the telephone exchange being most dominant. This unattractive view could be dramatically improved by additional tree planting of appropriate species in key locations between and in front of these buildings.

**Monkton House, Crazy Golf and Pitch & Putt**

Originally the 1757 house was the central focus of the parkland landscape that surrounded it and was constructed to provide its setting. The integrity of the parkland has been considerably eroded by subsequent development and inappropriate tree planting (Fig 11.10), though a large area surrounding the house still remains largely intact and identifiable as parkland to the house.

![Monkton House is hidden from its parkland by inappropriate domestic conifer planting.](image)

Some of the older trees in Monkton Park may well date back to the laying out of the park. Most importantly, the house still remains its exterior hardly altered, although the stables have been converted and the kitchen gardens lost.

The poorly sited crazy golf course and conifers mean that the house can only be appreciated in its setting from the south across the pitch & putt course from the adjacent footpath and from the new Baydon’s Lane bridge. The infrastructure and planting significantly compromises the setting of the important listed House (Fig 11.11). Relocation of the crazy golf course and its landscape planting, and removal of fencing and other inappropriate planting is all that is needed to reunite the two sections of parkland and the house into a much larger and more attractive and meaningful space and open up longer views to the open countryside beyond.

Fencing around the north and south boundaries of the pitch & putt course and self seeded trees covered in ivy blocking views from St. Mary Street bridge further isolate the house from its setting. The boundary fence and large expanse of scrub between the southern boundary of the pitch & putt and the new path linking Baydon's Lane and Sunningdale Close also impede clear views to the house and give an impression that the
The pitch & putt course has generally not compromised the character of the parkland, which retains a number of freestanding mature trees. Whilst a few bunkers exist and some of the trees are of an inappropriate species, the course allows for a number of areas of longer grass, that are not inappropriate, encourage wildlife and help to effect a more gradual transition to open countryside. The adjacent scrub between the course and new path could benefit from removal of the fence and planting as rough grassland to effect a more gradual transition to countryside and improve views to the house. Seymour House and the new housing on the Monkton Park estate intrude into the visual envelope of the park and would benefit from tree planting to screen them.

**Open Countryside**

Although outside the Conservation Area, this land forms part of the setting of the parkland, with views into and out of the Conservation Area. It is also an integral part of the river valley and forms part of the transition from urban parkland to open countryside. The flat unmanaged scrub forming part of the flood plain is a key element of the character of this area, as are the skyline views of the sides of the river valley. In the distance is the higher ground towards Bremhill.

The housing estates on both sides of the river valley are unattractive intrusions into the space and would benefit from screening. The flood plain scrub is unused, inaccessible, unmanaged and generally unattractive as a recreational space, its general openness being its main positive feature. It is also no longer active as a wetland due to the flood mitigation measures of the 1960s. This has a negative effect on the quality, usefulness and appearance of the landscape character, both from a visual perspective and for wildlife. A new wetland area created as an integral part of the new footbridge has reinstated part of the natural wetland habitat of the riverbanks. A scheme to reinstate the wetlands should be encouraged.
Baydon's Wood Area
Baydon's Wood is a small area of new woodland planted as part of the Woodland Trust’s Millennium Project (Fig 11.12). As it has only recently been planted, its current appearance resembles, at first glance, an area of scrubland. The area is accessible by an informal path looping through the site and there is an information panel at the entrance to the woodland. The maturing woodland will help screen the housing to the south and enclose the valley with attractive woodland. Overgrown gardens and scrubland adjacent to the wood would benefit from incorporation into an extended wood and this possibility should be explored.

To the south west of the new path as far as the sailing club the land is open and either rough grass slopes or flat scrub floodplain. The sailing club is the main point of interest though the backdrop of suburban housing on the upper valley slopes compromises its setting. These slopes to the east and west side of the sailing club would benefit from tree planting to screen the houses. The District Council owns some of this land. These areas could be suitable for new woodland planting by the Woodland Trust to provide a new and extended environment for the Monkton Park part of the river valley.

Fig 11.12: Baydon's Wood has recently been planted by the Woodland Trust. There is great scope for further extensive woodland planting beyond the Conservation Area boundary to screen unattractive and stark developments adjoining the river valley, and to provide a further recreational resource for the town.

Vegetation
The park contains a large number of mature trees of a wide range of different species, including some very fine specimens. Some of the trees may date back to the construction of Monkton Park, and the laying out of its associated parkland. In addition to the intrinsic qualities of the specimen trees, tree groups and avenues, existing trees play a valuable role in enclosing the park, screening less attractive views of adjacent built development, framing attractive views, and unifying the disparate elements with the park in conjunction with the river, which also provides a key common element. The vegetation in the form of the trees is the single most defining element of the character of the park and it is essential that this is maintained, managed and developed with a clear purpose if the character of the landscape is not to be further eroded or undermined.
However, not all recent tree planting has been appropriate, and the selection of species for future tree planting programmes should be based on indigenous species, or ornamental species consistent with parkland planting at the time Monkton Park was laid out. Opportunities should also be sought to improve existing attractive views, and possibly to form attractive new vistas, through selective pruning or thinning, and in some cases by new screen planting. Tree planting along parts of the river is very dense, and consideration should be given to carrying out some thinning in order to reduce shading, and improve views of the river where this would not compromise the role of trees in providing screening and structure.

Many of the trees in the park are covered in dense ivy growth. This is a significant threat to the quality and appearance of the landscape and potentially to the health of the trees themselves. Generally the ivy gives an air of neglect to certain areas of the park. The evergreen growth blocks views, reduces surveillance and creates shady areas where grasses fail to grow. It blights trees, distorting their form and shape, reducing their attractiveness and character. Any management plan for trees in the park should include the removal of all ivy from the trees.

A potential threat to the quality and integrity of the park exists, as existing trees mature and eventually reach over maturity, which should be addressed by the formulation of a long-term management plan. Some recent tree works have been excessive and this should be avoided in future. Marginal aquatic vegetation along the riverbanks is generally limited by overhanging trees, or by what appear to be the generally steeply sloping sides. Some bank-side vegetation exists, but there is an opportunity to improve the diversity and interest of riverside planting.

**Street Furniture and Lighting**
Existing street furniture and lighting is of a variety of designs, the majority of a basic and unattractive type and much of it is in need of maintenance. This is particularly so in the island park area. There is no common or coherent design style and the great majority of what exists is out of keeping with the character of the park. Signage is sporadic and not at all comprehensive. The park would benefit from a review of existing furniture and lighting and the formulation of a plan to provide comprehensive, attractive facilities in keeping with the character of the park.

Benches and bins are inappropriately located, in a variety of styles, types, materials and in various states of disrepair.
Character Area 12: High Street and Emery Gate

Character Analysis

History, Archaeology & Morphology
Although some Roman archaeological finds are recorded, Chippenham became established as a town in the Saxon period, although the plan form of the town is generally medieval. As the Saxon town was centred around the current Market Place, the High Street would have been an important link to the bridge across the Avon from this period onwards, and a natural route along which the town would have expanded. Emery Lane is also a medieval route, and formerly known as Chapel Row. Archaeological finds in the town are concentrated in the town centre, all of which has high archaeological potential for future finds and recording.

The street is relatively short and lined continuously with buildings fronting directly onto the pavement and the form and layout of the High Street has remained relatively unchanged throughout its history. The only significant changes have come through the replacement, alteration and renewal of the buildings fronting the street. The area to the north east of the High Street was largely undeveloped until the construction of the Emery Gate Shopping Centre in the 1980s. Prior to this it contained a number of uses. Behind the buildings fronting the street, there existed a number of small industrial uses as well as a chapel, two schools and a number of small cottages. Gardens and orchards occupied the land abutting the mill bypass stream. Immediately prior to the development of the shopping centre the majority of the land had been given over to a surface car park and market area.

Most recently the High Street has been pedestrianised (daytime only) and its appearance enhanced with the use of high quality surface materials and street furniture, though opportunities exist for further enhancements. Whilst the majority of buildings are of good quality and high townscape value, many of them being listed, a few stand out as discordant modern intrusions. The quality of the buildings are also compromised by the many unsympathetic and out of character modern shop-fronts which bear little relation to the scale or appearance of the buildings of which they form a part.

Topography & Views
The High Street is on a gentle winding curve and rises noticeably, though gently, from its low point just south of the bridge, up to the Market Place. The land rises similarly across the site of the shopping centre though is less perceptible as there is no street of any significant length. It is most noticeable from Emery Lane and the level change allows the shopping centre to accommodate an enclosed low level car park.

Views on the High Street are mainly limited to those up and down its length, due to its enclosed nature. Looking up the street the view is terminated by the simple but elegant frontage of Nos. 54 & 71 Market Place, part of The Shambles buildings. Above this, roof forms, chimney stacks and the steeple of St. Andrew’s Church combine to form an attractive urban roofscape. Moving further up the street, the restored and re-sited Buttercross comes into view and the wide space of the current market location and the fine buildings that surround it.
Looking down the street there is no distinct focus, the gap between Oxfam and the former tourist information centre buildings being particularly apparent, as are parked cars and street furniture. Above the buildings rise the impressive mature trees on the distant railway embankment. In the absence of any distinct building or frontage to terminate the view, the trees do this in an impressive and large-scale manner. This end of the street has a more open feel due to the lack of definition of the space around the bridge by suitably scaled buildings.

A number of side views exist off the High Street alignment. Views into the Borough Parade Shopping Centre and down Chapel Lane are of generally attractive pedestrian friendly spaces. The view into the covered Emery Gate Shopping Centre is subdued and somewhat cavernous and gives the impression of a semi-private space and is generally not as inviting as the uncovered precinct of Borough Parade. The view down the remains of River Street is rather bland and it soon opens out onto and is subsumed within the sea of cars of the Borough Parade car park.

The main view into the Emery Gate area is to be had from the top of Emery Lane. Moving down the street, one is presented with a wide panorama of parked cars, servicing areas and backs of buildings and the shopping centre. The whole area is a discordant, uncoordinated and unattractive space. Emery Lane is reduced to an access road, with no building frontage. This is the entrance to one of the main town centre car parks and presents a particularly poor image of the town.

**General Character**

High Street is the primary shopping street of the town centre and retail uses dominate the street, with a number of national chain stores evident. The town's two shopping centres have their main pedestrian access from the High Street and their relative attractiveness is in stark contrast to the poor quality of the townscape experienced by those arriving by car. The Emery Lane area has a particularly poor townscape quality and is in urgent need of enhancement. The short length of the High Street, combined with its relatively generous width, gives it the feel of a space as much as a linear street. Both of these elements are important to the character of the street and a balance between the two needs to be maintained.

The feeling of space encourages people to linger, use the full width of the street and is conducive to activities such as outdoor café seating. Unfortunately, it also encourages the use of unauthorised ‘A’ boards that quickly clutter up the space. The linear feel of the space is an important part of its historic character and the buildings that line the street define it in a clear and positive manner. The pedestrianisation scheme has maintained the definition between pavement and carriageway. This maintains the feel of a ‘street’, whilst the absence of raised pavements encourages pedestrians to use the full width of the street and warns drivers that they are not necessarily the dominant mode of transport.

Since pedestrianisation the street has become a far more pleasant environment for pedestrians and shoppers and there is generally a good deal of pedestrian activity during the day. However, there is a lack of other activities and uses that would continue this activity into the evening hours. Thus the street is a less attractive and active place during evening hours. Through vehicular traffic is permitted during the evening and is an important factor in maintaining a degree of activity and surveillance during these hours. Any future plans for full 24-hour pedestrianisation should bear this in mind and
preferably be progressed in conjunction with plans to increase residential and leisure uses in the High Street. A number of shop units have unused or under used upper floors and this is occasionally evident in the unattractive appearance of the elevations, particularly the windows. Better utilisation of this space could bring more uses and evening activity and surveillance to the High Street.

**Townscape and Landscape Character**

**High Street North Side**

Nos. 31-33 is the former Co-op building that retains its fine first storey with pediment windows and arched cornice with carved title. The current user has generally respected the vertical rhythm of the façade though the shop-front is rather plain and the applied signs and internal advertising somewhat garish. The frontage of this building used to have a recessed colonnade, evidenced by its slightly forward position from other buildings. Re-introduction of such a feature would add interest and stature to the building, provide a shelter from the elements and help to reduce the negative effect of advertising.

Nos. 29 and 30 are two fine bank buildings (Lloyds and NatWest respectively), both listed. No. 30, though smaller, is given stature by being separated from adjacent buildings by short flanking walls (Fig 12.1). Though larger, No. 29 is in a more restrained classical style. Both buildings make particularly fine contributions to the character of the street, though alterations to No. 29, such as some modern windows, door and gate detract slightly from its appearance. The cash machine in the window space is a particularly unfortunate feature.

Adjacent is the entrance façade to the Emery Gate Shopping Centre of 1986. Its form is a clear attempt to draw on that of the town hall opposite and it does this with a degree of success and without competing for prominence. Although the frontage is somewhat plain, the recessed shop-fronts reduce their intrusion into the high street and the open nature of the three arches gives the façade a degree of depth that the town hall has lost through recent changes. The entrance signage is rather bland. Proposals for enclosing the entrance should be resisted, as this would reduce the depth and interest of the relatively simple frontage.

is probably the most banal frontage to any building in the town centre, and is particularly notable for the fact that it replaced one of the finest buildings that once fronted the High Street.

---

*Block of text Missing?? Woolworths is described?*
This edifice was considered of such value that the facade was transported stone by stone to Bath and reconstructed, and was a significant feature of the High Street that led the town to be labelled ‘Little Bath’. The frosted glazing and window detail is a particularly unattractive element and indicates a poor utilisation of the upper floors. Both the shopping centre frontage and Nos. 24-25 fail to respect the topography and their parapets and fenestration do not step up with the rising land. Thus the Lloyds Bank, shopping centre and Nos. 24-25 all share the same parapet height and consequently give this part of the street a somewhat monolithic appearance, undermining the vertical emphasis of the buildings. This also serves to expose the less than attractive flank wall of No. 23 and its lack of depth. An additional storey and redesigned frontage to the Nos. 24-25 building could bring about a considerable improvement to the townscape character of this part of the street.

Nos. 21-23 are two fine listed commercial buildings and are a dominant feature in this part of the street (Fig 12.2).

Fig 12.2: These fine commercial buildings are a stark contrast with the plain Woolworths building adjacent. The shop-front in the foreground however, is particularly poor and out of character with the building.
This is due not just to the quality of their frontage, as smaller buildings of considerably lesser quality also flank them. The shop-fronts to Nos. 22-23 retain attractive fascias and traditional pull out blinds, though No. 22 has installed modern blinds directly beneath to discordant effect. Unfortunately the shop-fronts below are plain and unattractive, though No. 22 retains two granite columns. The fascia extends the whole width of Nos. 22-23 and it is likely that a further column existed in the centre of the shopfront to No. 23. The coherence and unity of the building frontage suffers from the ground floor being split into two shop units and would benefit significantly from conversion to a single occupier and appropriately designed new shop-front and replacement of lost column. No. 21 is a smaller building with a poor quality modern plate glass shop-front that bears no relation to the character of the building. The oversize signboard and excessive and garish window advertising are particularly obtrusive features.

The narrow Chapel Lane provides a small gap in the frontage to the remaining two High Street buildings at Nos. 19 and 20. The lane leads to the attractive Grade II* listed Old Baptist Chapel and through a new residential development to Emery Lane and the shopping centre car park. The new development, including restoration of listed buildings has seen a dramatic improvement in the quality of the townscape of this side street and will help bring some evening activity and surveillance back to this part of the town centre. Surfacing of the lane has been improved as part of the development though there is potential for further enhancement to better relate this to the high quality surfacing in the High Street.

No. 20 is a diminutive listed house sitting behind an unattractive single storey shop-front, currently vacant and an eyesore in the street frontage. The steep pitched roof juts awkwardly above the shop-front and the whole presents a jarring and unattractive composition. This is a poor frontage, detrimental to the character of the listed building. A new 2-3 storey shop-frontage of high quality is required to provide a suitably scaled frontage to the High Street, screen the side elevation of No. 21 and provide a frontage of suitable quality for the listed building behind. No. 19 is a pleasant, though modest two-storey building. It has three bays with pedimented parapet above sash windows with margin lights at first floor. A remnant of a pediment exists projecting above the shop-front entrance.

High Street South Side

No. 1 sits on the corner of the High Street and the riverfront (Fig 12.3). Formerly occupied by an attractive three-storey hotel, the site is now occupied by a bland, uninspiring and poorly weathered modern building. This competes with the Woolworths building for the distinction of least attractive building in the High Street replacing the most attractive one. It responds abysmally to its prominent location, lacking stature, presence and quality and totally ignoring the river. The river front elevation is predominantly blank wall or screened plate glass with a purposeless tarmac space in front of a graffiti covered wall. The High Street frontage is plain and utilitarian in appearance. A mean blank narrow brown-brick wall connects the building to No. 2 and houses a small florist. Nos. 2-3 are a listed former hotel, now two shops.
Fig 12.3: The poor architectural and townscape quality of this building is an eyesore in its prominent location and surely warrants its replacement with more suitable high quality replacement.

The former carriage arch has been sensitively utilised as the entrance to the shop at No. 2 and much of the ground floor ashlar has been retained, thus ensuring the shop-front integrates well with the building. The only jarring element is the plate glass insertion into the top of the former carriage arch, which gives a disjointed appearance, and feel to the entrance. This would be better recessed in line with the doors, thus giving the entrance a more unified and imposing appearance. The shop-front at No. 3 is a bland modern plate glass design that, though unobtrusive, bears no relation to the character of the building.

Nos. 4 and 5 are listed as a former carriage entrance and lodge, now shops. No. 4 is the lodge and remains in-situ. As part of the development of the Borough Parade Shopping Centre, the adjacent carriage entrance was moved to sit adjacent to the town hall and now forms the entrance to the shopping centre. The pilaster abutting No. 4 was retained and a new one constructed to sit between the re-sited carriage entrance and new shop unit. The carriage entrance is an impressive edifice with free standing coat of arms sitting on an simple plinth. It now forms an attractive entrance to the shopping centre.

No. 4 has a small two-storey frontage with shallow pitched roof behind a parapet. The range of three windows is modern and partially blocked and would benefit from reinstatement with a more appropriate design. The parapet is painted and stained and would benefit from removal of the paint. Loose wiring and bright burglar alarm box contribute to a somewhat cluttered appearance and would benefit from tidying up. The painted ashlar elevation would benefit from removal of the paint. The shop-front is a bland modern plate glass design with oversize signboard that is out of scale and character with the building.

No. 5, now units 10 & 11 of the shopping centre, is also two storey, but of greater height. The arched upper storey windows reflect those of the town hall and Nos. 2-3, though the stonework has weathered badly. The retained original pilaster has not been cleaned and looks odd in relation to the clean stonework of the new pilaster and shop unit. Similarly, the remainder of the re-sited carriage entrance is also in need of cleaning. The shop-front is a particularly unsuccessful element of the façade. Although it is of a plain an inoffensive design, it is too small for the building, with unnecessary stone panels both
sides and an obtrusive blue fascia above the shop sign. The blocking course has not been continued across this new unit and this gives the three elements of the whole frontage an incoherent feel. Removal of the side panels, continuation of the blocking course, cleaning of original stonework, removal of paint and replacement windows to No. 4 and replacement shop-fronts to both shop units are all enhancements that would considerably improve the appearance of this part of the High Street frontage.

On the other side of the shopping centre entrance is the impressive façade of the listed town hall (Fig 12.4).

![Image of the town hall](image-url)

Fig 12.4: The solid town hall is one of a number of fine buildings remaining in the lower part of the High Street. The external steps are an unfortunate but necessary addition that disrupts the symmetry of the building and the solidity of form provided by the arched loggias.

The corner bay is of a slightly differing design to the remaining symmetrical three bays and, on passing, reads as a separate building. This, with the repositioned arch, provides an attractive entrance into the shopping centre. The central bay of the symmetrical section is surmounted by an elaborate carved coat of arms. The imposing ground floor arches once formed an open loggia, giving the building a sense of depth and solidity appropriate to its use. This had been undermined to a degree by their enclosure for shop units and the building reception, though the most disrupting visual element is the entrance steps, described in detail under Traffic & Highway Infrastructure.

No. 6 is a listed former house with fine upper storey sash windows and first floor railings. The solid chamfered stone ground floor elevation cleanly defines the extent of the shop-front. Unfortunately this is an unattractive modern frontage of plain design, with plate glass windows almost fully covered in garish advertising. No. 7 is also a listed former house, though far more humble in appearance, with two small dormers almost hidden by a substantial first floor parapet. The shop-front is modern in a traditional design and is a good example of how large display windows and side entrances to upper floors can be incorporated into attractive shopfronts. The shop-front suffers slightly from the large amount of timber being painted in a single dark colour. The window surrounds and other stonework would benefit from the removal of paint and the appearance of the building would benefit from removal of cluttered wiring and junction boxes and a more discreet flashing.
No. 8/9 is a simple 20th Century building of two storeys faced in ashlar. Whilst plain in comparison to other buildings, it is not unattractive and exerts a generally positive contribution to the townscape at first floor level. This cannot be said of the ground floor. The shop-front is of a bland aluminium frame and plate glass and the arrangement of doors and windows lacks coherence. The fascia is excessively deep for the scale of the building and a chunky corporate signage and logo exists where simplicity would more appropriately prevail.

No. 10/11 is another listed former house, now two shops. The building is an attractive whole as the shop-fronts sit well in the frontage and are of an appropriate scale and design. The stone stall-risers add a degree of solidity to the building’s appearance. The frontage would benefit from general cleaning and decorating and the removal of the clutter of wiring, junction boxes, pipes etc. The removal of paint from stone cills, plinths and eaves and replacement of applied fascias with directly fixed or painted designs would also improve the appearance of the building.

No. 12 is a listed former house, though of more imposing stature than No. 10/11. The parapet, cornice and full height rusticated pilasters give the building a solid appearance that is given unity and coherence by the range of five attractive sash windows. Unfortunately the stature of the building is significantly compromised by the modern shop-front. The recessed entrance, full height plate glass windows and over-size fascia all serve to undermine the character of this otherwise attractive listed building. The remainder of the frontage is painted and would benefit from the removal of paint from the pilasters, window surrounds, cornice and parapet coping, as well as the replacement of the shop-front with one of a more suitable design.

No. 13/14 is similar in style to No. 12, though smaller and without a parapet (Fig 12.5). The stone frontage is not painted but is in need of cleaning. As with No. 12 a modern plate glass shop-front with oversize fascia and recessed entrance dominates the building façade, though the more humble character of the building emphasises the dominance of the unattractive shop-front.

Fig 12.5: This is one example of a number of shop-fronts that fail to respect the character of the building of which it forms a part. This is completely out of scale with the building.
Nos. 15 and 16 (Abbey National) are two listed former houses, No. 16 being of three storeys and grander in appearance, with heavy cornice (Fig 12.6). The recent shop-front is traditional, though restrained in appearance and admirably complements the character of the building. Extensive window display space exists and the occupier has used this judiciously and not filled all the windows with advertising. This is one of the most successful modern shop-fronts in the street.

**Fig 12.6:** This is a rare example of a modern shop-front that is sympathetic to the character, form and proportions of the building façade.

Nos. 17 and 18 return to a more humble two storey form. The simple and not unpleasant first floor has applied lettering on the elevation naming the building ‘Bristol and West House’, reflecting its former use. It would benefit from stone cleaning and re-siting of electrical equipment. Both shop-fronts are modern, though the column on the corner of No. 18, and possibly parts of the shopfront may be original. No. 17 is in a corporate style with recessed doorway and is of a basic and poorly co-ordinated design that does not reflect the character of the building. The adjacent River Street has bland side elevations although its footway surfacing relates well to the High Street.

**Emery Lane and Emery Gate Shopping Centre**

Emery Lane has never been a major street, but primarily a means of accessing properties to the rear of those facing the High Street. It retains this function today, though it has lost most of the buildings that formerly lined it and car parks are the main destination for traffic. The new residential development on Chapel Lane is a recent new development with vehicle access via Emery Lane, though parking provision is limited. In addition to providing access to the parking and servicing for Iceland and the shopping centre, and access to the new housing, the lane gives access to the Masonic Hall and Emery House Clinic.

The entrance to the street is from St Mary Street, arguably the finest street in the town, and the contrast between this and the bleak and open prospect of service yards, car parking and the undefined and uncoordinated townscape of Emery Lane could not be more startling.
The junction with St. Mary Street is particularly poorly defined. The space in front of the listed Tabernacle United Reform Church is an open parking area where there were once buildings fronting the street. On the other side of the street, undeveloped land on the site of former buildings is used as the car park for the occupier of the adjacent Grade II* listed building. To the rear of this building is a plain single storey extension of temporary and flimsy appearance. Beyond the car park is the attractive building housing the Emery House Clinic, though the lack of adjacent buildings gives it an isolated feel, uncertain of which way it should now be facing. To the rear of the Iceland car park is the attractive listed former school building, though never intended to be viewed from this direction.

Sited at the end of the lane, as it divides into accesses to service areas and car parks, is the Masonic Hall. The stark brutality of this building almost defies description. It resembles an oversized substation, is in a prominent position yet its character is one of isolation and secrecy. The building sums up the desolate and unwelcoming character of the area in general (Fig 12.7). The area represents an inefficient and under utilised use of land in a prime town centre location and is in desperate need of enhancement.

Opportunity exists for rationalisation of uses, redevelopment and the potential for retail expansion. A co-ordinated approach could see considerable enhancement of this part of the Conservation Area that could transform it from backlands to an active and attractive part of the town centre.

Vegetation

The High Street has no vegetation in it save for some rather mundane planters outside the town hall and hanging baskets along parts of the street. Thus the street retains a strong urban feel. The most evident vegetation from the High Street is that on the distant railway embankment and the landscape of the river valley as viewed from the Town Bridge. From Emery Lane, the mature trees of Monkton Park are a significant and positive element of the landscape and help to soften the presence of the shopping centre and council offices beyond.

Fig 12.7: At the rear of the shopping centre Emery Lane becomes an unattractive, amorphous collection of service yards and car parking. This is one of the main car parks in the town centre and presents a particularly poor impression for visitors.
Traffic & Highway Infrastructure

Despite much effort to minimise highway infrastructure and street furniture as part of the pedestrianisation scheme, parts of the street have a cluttered appearance. This is particularly evident at the gated entrance by the Town Bridge and by the town hall. The gates themselves are functional and unattractive and the standard, large highway signs attached to them are dominant and obtrusive, as is the large grey ‘pedestrian zone’ sign. The barrel planters appear as temporary, cheap, domestic afterthoughts and are not co-ordinated with any other street furniture. In addition to the infrastructure, the presence of the disabled parking bays ensures there are usually parked and manoeuvring cars at the entrance to the High Street. Together, the vehicles, bollards, planters, gates, highway signs, information board and pillar box create a cluttered and unwelcoming entrance to the High Street. In addition, the close proximity of manoeuvring vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists in a relatively confined area without clear definition of priority creates safety problems that make the area an unpleasant space to traverse.

Outside the town hall is a construction of ramps and steps, necessary for disabled access, giving a rather clumsy and cluttered entrance to the simple but elegant building. The three plain arches are an important part of the character of the building and the appearance of these and their relationship to the pavement and the rest of the building façade is disrupted and undermined by the presence of this construction. The huge and unnecessary square stone plinths are a significant intrusion into the space of the street. The purpose of the low walls is redundant as the stainless steel railings sit behind them and act as barriers as well as handrails. The plinths, walls, railings, domestic barrel planters, and black basket poles sit awkwardly together in an uncoordinated and cluttered manner and serve to undermine the perception and definition of this part of the street as a linear space.

Pedestrianisation has attracted greater use of the High Street. One negative side effect of this is the large and unsightly amount of chewing gum stuck to the large areas of stone paving (Fig 12.8). It shows up distinctly on the pale colour of the paving and is often concentrated around litter bins, where it presents a particularly unpleasant sight. Regular cleaning with purpose designed equipment has begun to reduce this problem. However, methods of coating pavers to repel adhesion of gum are also being explored.

Fig 12.8: Chewing gum is an unsightly feature of the High Street and particularly noticeable on the high quality surfacing.
Character Area 13: Gladstone Road, Borough Parade and Wood Lane

Character Analysis

History, Archaeology & Morphology
This part of the town dates from its medieval expansion. It is identified as an archaeologically important area in the Chippenham Archaeological Urban Survey and this, in conjunction with the generally high opportunities for future redevelopment in the area, ensures it is a prime candidate for future archaeological investigation. Ordnance Survey maps describe the area to the rear of the former cinema and former magistrates court as being the site of ‘King Arthur’s Palace’.

The character area occupies land to the rear of the High Street, Market Place and Causeway and during the medieval period was the focus for many local industries such as silk mills, saw mills, orchards, market gardening and other cottage industries. River Street, now just an access from High Street to Borough Parade car park once extended down to the river at the point of the current weir. River Street, Gladstone Road and Westmead Lane all met in the vicinity and the only means of crossing the river was by a long and rickety footbridge called Back Avon Bridge. Thus the area was never a thoroughfare until the construction of the bridge link to Avenue La Fleche as recently as August 1996. Gladstone Road was formerly known as Blind Lane and Westmead Lane formerly known as Factory Lane – both giving some indication of the former character of the area. Wood Lane existed as a semi-rural lane extending parallel with London Road as far as Crickett’s Lane.

The area remained largely unaltered until after the Second World War. During the past 50 years the area has changed beyond recognition. Key physical changes have taken place, such as the construction of the weir, the clearing of back land for car parking, the destruction of River Street, the development of Borough Parade Shopping Centre, the construction of the Gladstone Road bridge link and Avenue la Fleche, the demolition of the tannery and its chimney and the demolition of Flower & Son at 21 Gladstone Road to make way for the Flower’s Yard development. These have transformed what was once a tranquil, picturesque and industrious backwater into a busy access to the town centre. However, the character of the area is neither one thing or the other, it is a transition zone between the town centre and the rest of the town and its physical appearance has suffered enormously as a result of incremental and uncoordinated development. With the pedestrianisation of the High Street and the area becoming a through route for local traffic and vehicular access to the town centre, the area now presents a poor image of the town for visitors. Buildings relate poorly to both the street and river frontages and the feel is of entering the town by the back door.

Topography & Views
The land rises gradually from the river towards the Market Place and along Gladstone Road, and continues rising into Wood Street where it remains relatively level. After rising to cross the river, Gladstone Road drops to its lowest point at the junction with Westmead Lane and the entrance to Borough Parade car park. This physical characteristic combined with the sharp curve in the road make this a visual focal point. Timber Street is generally level, its short length and wide carriageway give it a relatively open feel – somewhat akin to that of a linear square. The focal buildings at either end...
add to this, and a stronger definition of the space between the library and former cinema would strengthen this feeling and the overall character of the street.

**Positive views**
On entering the character area across Gladstone Road bridge the intimate, small-scale character of the view down Westmead Lane is in stark contrast with the amorphous openness of Gladstone Road. On Timber Street there are fine views in both directions to the landmark buildings of the Borough Arms pub (Fig 13.1) and St. Andrew’s Church tower and steeple (Fig 13.2)

![Fig 13.1](image1.png)

**Fig 13.1:** The view in the opposite direction focuses on the Gladstone pub, a generally attractive building, though with a drab forecourt used for parking. The building on the right is an incongruous grey colour with a roof line that steps up from the pub with the slope steeping down.

![Fig 13.2](image2.png)

**Fig 13.2:** The view along Timber Street to the impressive church steeple. Whilst the foreground buildings offer a varied roofscape, this is somewhat cluttered and a stronger and more positive street frontage would benefit the view and potentially bring more activity to the street.

These are positive focal points in the streetscape. They are however; slightly compromised by the somewhat bland and poorly defined space in front of the pub and the foreground view of the rear out buildings of the Bear Hotel in front of the Church. A
sensitively designed extension or new development of good quality to the rear of the hotel could significantly improve the setting of the tower and steeple in the view and the frontage at the end of Timber Street. The views into Borough Parade shopping centre from the High Street and car park are generally attractive and inviting to the pedestrian. From the junction of Timber Street and Gladstone Road there is a view of the imposing frontage of the former cinema (Fig 13.3).

Cinema has been demolished and replaced by retirement flats and empty shops

Fig 13.3: The former Gaumont cinema has now be redeveloped into a mixed use building.

The building has retained architectural elements of the original building whilst increasing the mass of the building out of proportion to its surroundings. In the opposite direction, in contrast, is a view of the picturesque listed Bagatelle Cottage. Its small scale and orientation make its gothic revival style a distinctive feature of the view along Wood Lane. The rising and gently curving nature of the lane and its narrowness afford pleasant views along it in both directions. From the south end on the higher ground there are glimpses of St. Andrew’s Church steeple across the car park and gardens.

**Negative views**

As the area is poorly defined, it offers many unattractive views and vistas. Entering the area from the bridge, the visitor is presented on one side with the bland and blank expanse of the monolithic rear elevations of the Borough Parade shopping centre and its service yards (Fig 13.4), and on the other side with the suburban scaled bland rear elevation of Avonside House flats. Moving on from the bridge, the rising ground and the sweep of the bend in Gladstone Road is a positive element of the townscape character, but is something that the built form totally fails to respond to or capitalise on (Fig 13.5).
Fig 13.4: Visitors to the town crossing Gladstone Road bridge to the car park are welcomed with the view of a service yard area.

No buildings stand out clearly and the view is of a sea of cars, highway infrastructure, road markings and attendant suburban planting. The whole effect is unwelcoming and unattractive – the experience akin to entering an attractive house by the service entrance.

Fig 13.5: The view up Gladstone Road shows clearly the lack of street frontage, with surface car parks on either side of the street. A recent extension of the Angel Hotel has failed to provide a building facing the street, instead setting it behind its car park – again facing the road.

The view down the hill along Gladstone Road is equally unattractive, the focal point being a service yard (Fig 13.6). The densely vegetated skyline of Rowden Hill is the only attractive element, visible from many parts of the town.
Fig 13.6: The view down Gladstone Road shows the lack of building frontage, blank side elevation to the former cinema and the service yards to the shopping centre in the distance. The under developed street frontage is unattractive and an opportunity for future enhancement of this part of the town.

From the river walk there are unattractive views into service areas and to the bland and shabby side elevation of No. 1 High Street. The adjacent car park is a poorly resolved sea of cars surrounded by backs of buildings, service areas and suburban planting. This is particularly noticeable from River Street, Gladstone Road and the entrance into the shopping centre. On Timber Street the gap in the frontage between the Library and former cinema allows unattractive views of parked cars and rear and side elevations of buildings. The attractive view to the church tower and steeple is somewhat diluted by the prominence of the rear of the Bear Hotel and buildings fronting Market Place. The open are of the bus station terminus is a cluttered area of street signs and small patches of grass with complicated movements of buses, other road traffic and pedestrians crossing. In the opposite direction the small bungalow at No. 34 Gladstone Road looks utterly incongruous and totally out of place in such a town centre setting, sitting between appropriately scaled three storey buildings. From the top of Wood Lane there are unattractive views to the ugly police station building, car park and the rear of the Vauxhall garage.

**General Character**

The area is particularly ill defined. Gladstone Road serves mainly as an access to the town centre and car parks and few buildings actually address it. As a consequence its identity and perception as a street or a particular place is very weak. The character is notably amorphous and suburban – a lack of enclosure to the street and suburban scale planting around the car parks, combined with the blank rear elevations of the shopping centre and former cinema give it a transitory ‘nowhere in particular’ feel.

Timber Street fares better. Close proximity to the Market Place, the library and bus station ensure a degree of activity – pedestrian and vehicular, that one would expect of a town centre. The street is better defined by buildings, although the carriageway is unnecessarily wide and poorly defined, with strong focal points at either end in St. Andrew’s church steeple and the Gladstone Arms pub. The pub and nearby listed
properties ensure that this is the most visually interesting and distinctive part of the character area.

The streets in the area contain a diverse range of uses, but these alone are unable to create the activity and vitality that make this place a pleasurable experience. Uses include car parking, residential, hotel, cafe, public house, shops and nearby library and bus station. However these uses are somewhat disparate and unfocussed and lack any cohesive element to make them feel part of the town centre. The whole north side of Gladstone Road has no building fronting it and much of the south side is similarly poorly defined. This unfortunate situation presents a significant opportunity for a fresh look at enhancing the character of the whole of the street frontage in conjunction with the wider future needs of the town.

Much of the north western part of the site is occupied by the Borough Parade shopping centre. This provides much of the retail floorspace in the town and is a modern, attractive and publicly accessible pedestrianised area. Most of the buildings are suitably scaled for the character of the town though some parts are only single storey, giving a somewhat suburban scale to the buildings. Whilst the shopping environment is generally attractive the development relates exceptionally poorly with both the river and Gladstone Road, offering its rear to these areas and giving it an isolated, insular character from outside.

**Buildings, Spaces & Townscape**

**Gladstone Road**

From the bridge, Avonside House presents a rather stark and bland entry into the street. To the left, the former alignment of River Street is no longer discernible across the shopping centre car park. To the right, the orientation of Avonside House and the terrace opposite, on Westmead Lane, draw the eye along the narrowing lane. Vegetation on one side and the pleasant listed No. 26 on the other, create a pinch point in the street which allows limited glimpses of the industrial buildings beyond. Unfortunately the terrace opposite Avonside House has seen much unsympathetic personalisation and presents a rather incoherent appearance.

The junction with Westmead Lane, the car park entrance and small car park on Westmead Lane are a focal point of activity both for vehicles, pedestrians and bus users. Unfortunately the quality of the environment here, where many visitors arrive and leave the town from, is poor. Heavy traffic, street clutter and the lack of any defining urban form give the area an inhuman and unwelcoming feel.

Beyond the car parks the road rises. On the right, buildings fronting the road begin to appear and it begins to take on the character of an urban street. No. 19 (Sweet Briar Cottage) is an attractive detached red brick house with sash windows, stone dressings and small attractive front garden. Its urban character and scale is entirely appropriate for the area. Beyond this is a walled concrete courtyard and then No. 20. Formerly a house, it is now part of the Gladstone Liberal Club which includes a large array of single storey buildings to the side and rear. The house is of Bath stone with hood moulding over the door and a band course with faded painted lettering advertising the club. Unfortunately modern replacement UPVC windows and the loss of the front garden for a concrete hardstanding detract considerably from the character of the frontage. Immediately to the
rear is an impressive two-storey building with pitched roof and brick gable end containing a large arched window.

Side extensions to this building, the remainder of the club buildings and the variety of concrete and tarmac surfaces in front of the club and adjacent scrapyard entrance present a cluttered, untidy and stark environment and create a poor quality street frontage. Sensitive infill development at an appropriate urban scale could significantly enhance the character of this part of the street. The new entrance to Flowers Yard residential estate

On the opposite side of the street to No. 19 is the rear entrance and car park to the Angel Hotel – the main entrance being on Market Place. Until recently the rear part of the site fronting Gladstone Road was occupied by a series of chalet buildings. A more substantial building has now replaced these and created a pleasant internal courtyard for the hotel. The frontage facing Gladstone Road is of an appropriate scale and height for the area. Unfortunately it is set well back from the road, with the car park in front. Whilst this provides the opportunity for clear views to the building, the car park and trees flanking it give the whole frontage a distinctly low density, edge of town, motel appearance, wholly at odds with its town centre location. The site is under developed for its location and the building set so far back from the street that there may be potential for future development on the site which addresses the street in a more appropriate and urban manner.

Adjacent to the hotel is the side elevation of the former cinema and night club in Timber Street. This bare brick elevation is a long, tall blank and over bearing presence in the street scene. At ground level, single storey ancillary buildings also present a dead frontage of stark white painted walls and, combined with the narrow pavement make this part of the street an unattractive and unused environment.

Beyond the scrapyard entrance is the pleasant stone fronted Borough Arms pub. This encloses the view from Timber Street. Although it is a positive element in the townscape, the poorly defined space in front of the pub used as a car park, and the large ‘sports bar’ sign detract from the overall appearance. The listed No. 35 is a generally attractive building with a particularly varied and interesting roofscape when viewed from the side. The painted elevation and window surrounds present a somewhat drab appearance and the difference in height between the left and right hand sides presents a somewhat lopsided appearance which exacerbates the gap in the frontage created by No. 36. No. 36 is a small bungalow set back from the pavement and is wholly suburban in character and totally out of scale with the urban setting and out of place between two three storey listed buildings (Fig 13.7).
Fig 13.7: This bungalow is completely inappropriate in form and scale for this town centre location. Any opportunity in the future should be taken to replace this dwelling with one of an appropriate size, scale and material for the area.

The junction with Timber Street is a visual focal point, and the wide space occupied by the road junction is a result of since demolished buildings that once stood in place of the current flowerbeds. These walled flowerbeds are isolated, small scale, and rather ineffective, with no seating or pavement around them from which they can be appreciated.

**Wood Lane**

From the wide junction with Timber Street, Wood Lane rapidly narrows until it becomes almost single lane width. The narrowing width, curving and rising street and raised pavement close off views into the distance. Beyond this point the street becomes primarily residential and suburban in character and the narrowness separates it from the more urban character at its northern end in this character area.

No. 1 is an attractive listed two-storey house with large gambrel roof, giving it the presence of a three-storey building. The varnished appearance of the carriage entrance doors is the only discordant element, contrasting with the painted joinery on the rest of the house. Adjacent to this are two modern houses in concrete and reconstituted stone blockwork. No.2 is particularly stark in appearance and No. 3 is set back behind a poorly defined patch of grass and tarmac driveway to integral garage. Whilst their scale is not particularly inappropriate to the location, their positioning and style is wholly suburban and out of character with their setting in the town centre.

On the opposite side of the street is a modern development of terraced houses and flats (Fig 13.8).
Fig 13.8: These new houses and flats do little to enhance the conservation area. The high gable is an overbearing and inappropriate feature and details such as the diminutive railing design and window units with cills that duplicate the stone cills below are examples of poor attention to detail. The roof tiles are out of place too.

The scale and massing of the development is appropriate to the urban, town centre location and in marked contrast to the suburban houses opposite. The mix of stone and render generally works, the units step down, respecting the topography whilst giving the terrace a human scale and the hoods and simple doors are in character with surrounding older buildings. However, the central gabled section containing the flats is somewhat overbearing in scale, particularly in relation to the lower houses to the left, and the access through to the rear units is rather poorly resolved. From the south the gabled section competes for attention with the frontage of the former cinema. The railings fronting the lower houses are rather flimsy and ineffective, and the projecting porch on the prominent corner of the building is suburban in character and at odds with the other more appropriate door hoods. Windows with timber cills in addition to stone cills look incongruous and are unnecessary and should be avoided where there are stone cills or window surrounds as part of the elevation. The roof materials and detailing are out of character and overall the scheme misses an opportunity to enhance the character of the conservation area.

The south end of the street is in stark contrast with the north end. The enclosed, narrow street gives way to a distinctly open character. This is primarily due to the lower building density and the open space created by the car park. Moving south up the narrow part of the lane, on the left is the attractive stone built former Westmead County Primary School. The use of brick walling for the ramps and chunky framed dominant UPVC windows are the only discordant elements. On the opposite side of the street is the attractive high stone wall enclosing part of the former scrapyard and the listed Bagatelle Cottage. This is a significant element in providing enclosure to this part of the street. Adjacent is the currently disused former Westmead County Infants School (Fig 13.9). This is an attractive brick building with bell tower and ramped entrance with railings. A similar sensitive reuse of this building as with the former primary school would bring a significant enhancement to this part of the street.
Fig 13.9: The former Westmead County Infants School. The former primary school opposite has been converted to housing. Potential may exist to also convert this school. Its railings and wall are a distinctive feature and a positive element in the townscape, augmenting the form of the raised pavement. The railings are poor quality and in need of replacement with a more attractive design.

On the opposite side of the street is the former nonconformist burial ground, now a small public garden, though the former mortuary chapel has long since been demolished. The garden is generally an attractive space with four large Yew trees, though suffers from being under used due to the lack of range of activities in the area, its somewhat isolated location and the fact that the path leads nowhere. There is no pavement on this side of the street and the one on the other side is on a raised stone wall with railings. The raised nature of this path is a key element of the character of this part of the lane and helps emphasise the transition from urban to suburban space. Unfortunately the railings are modern, unattractive and in need of repair and would benefit from replacement with a more traditional design.

At the junction with The Paddocks is No. 23, the listed lodge to The Paddocks house (Fig 13.10). To the south is a pleasant former hall, now a storage unit. Its appearance is compromised by its corrugated roof and the shutters over its windows. It also has an attractive timber door hood. The building would benefit from restoration and re-use as a community facility. These buildings appear somewhat isolated as the built form of the street breaks down and becomes ill defined in this transition area from urban to suburban.
Fig 13.10: This cottage is the only listed building in the area and was once the lodge to The Paddocks, now hidden behind the bungalows to the rear.

It is at the junction with The Paddocks that the character of the street is at its weakest. The houses at Nos. 4 & 6 are suburban in character and set well back from the pavement in generous grounds. The police station, now surplus to requirements, is a distinctly unattractive building and an unwelcoming intrusion into the street scene, with unattractive boundary treatment (Fig 13.11).

Fig 13.11: Opposite the car park is the extended former NAAFI building, soon to be vacated by the police. The buildings are plain and the functional boundary treatment combine with this to produce, with the car park opposite, a particularly uninspiring part of the town.

The surface car park, a well used local facility poorly defines the street edge, has no landscaping and allows unattractive views to the rear of properties on Burlands Road, the Vauxhall garage and the backland area between Wood Lane and The Causeway (Fig 13.12). This whole area is a negative element in the conservation area character and clearly has potential for significant enhancement to provide a more suitably urban scale and density of built form. A co-ordinated assessment of the potential of this area, including the police station, car park, backland area, Vauxhall garage and the remaining east side of the lane could identify this potential for enhancement and avoid future piecemeal and incremental development.
Fig 13.12: This car park appears well used but is unattractive and allows views to the rear of the Vauxhall garage and nearby properties. The environment is stark and unpleasant and is in need of enhancement.

**Timber Street**

Timber Street is a short, wide space. This, and the focal points of St. Andrew’s Church tower and steeple and the Gladstone pub, together with the key activities of the library and bus station, give it the characteristics of an urban square, or ‘place’, as much as a street. There are opportunities to reinforce this positive character by improving the enclosure of the space and softening the large expanse of tarmac. The rear outbuildings to the Bear Hotel, the gap between the library and former cinema all present opportunities for better enclosing the space and providing high quality buildings fronting the street.

Nos. 19-21 are a listed terrace of three houses, No. 20 now being a shop and No. 21 now offices. The central shop-front, although of traditional design and proportion, is out of scale with the building, extending almost to eaves height. Its location in the centre of the terrace, however, gives it an element of symmetry and coherence. The variety of signs in the window and the tiled stall-riser also detract from its appearance. The white painted stone frontage and painted window surrounds hide much of the visual interest of this simple but pleasant building and give it a stark and clinical appearance. The adjacent Nos. 11-13 is a modern painted blockwork building devoid of visual interest. Excessive lighting, large garish signs and plate glass windows compound this with the overall result being a particularly unattractive building in the street scene.

On the opposite side of the street is the imposing frontage of the former Gaumont Cinema. The building is now vacant, having previously been used as a nightclub. The façade displays the simple, well-composed elegance typical of cinemas of its period. The frontage has a number of features of interest including upper balconies, graceful curved corners, large central windows surmounted by bas-relief stone sculptures, steep pitched roof with swept sides, entrance canopy and brick and stonework detailing. The sculptures represent the ‘Spirit of Cinema’ in the centre with her attendants ‘Light’ and ‘Sound’ on either side. The large neon sign obscuring the windows considerably compromises the appearance of the facade, and the garish yellow paint applied over the whole of the ground floor frontage. Sensitive restoration of the frontage would require minimal work and would transform its appearance and that of this end of Timber Street.
The adjacent library is in a brutalist monolithic style which is inappropriately uninviting for such an important public building. The blank side wall is particularly apparent and sits awkwardly with the adjacent rear extension. Filling this gap would render this unattractive sight invisible. Despite its appearance the building is of an appropriate scale for the street and ground floor windows allow the building to relate positively to the street. Opposite is the single storey block housing the public toilets and former bus station waiting room. The rear elevation of the toilets faces the street presenting an uninviting array of small frosted glass windows to passers by. This is a particularly ugly functional building of inappropriate scale, partly defunct and under utilising a prime town centre site between the bus station and Market Place.

**Vegetation**

There is little vegetation of note in the character area. The majority is of an inappropriate suburban nature in the vicinity of the car parks. Trees either side of the Angel Hotel extension have a degree of amenity value and views from Gladstone Road to the mature landscape of Rowden Hill are important in maintaining the market town character of the Conservation Area.

**Materials**

Historically the area is a transition between town centre and local industry. Traditional town centre materials are generally Bath stone or limestone, either sawn or rubble with either graded stone, clay Roman or slate roof tiles. Stone mullions and window surrounds are common. Windows are generally metal or timber casement or sliding sash. Brick is also evident as a building material; mainly accurately shaped or engineering brick in soft warm hues. Render is generally roughcast and either bare or limewashed, as is general stonework. Modern concrete blockwork is particularly out of character, as is smooth render and painted facades.

**Highway Infrastructure**

Highway infrastructure is generally not particularly obtrusive, though this may generally be due to the low-key nature of much of the area. Where there is most activity is where the infrastructure becomes an intrusive element. This is particularly evident in the vicinity of the entrance to the Borough Parade car park and around the entrance and exit to the bus station. Lighting columns are frequently of the tall, galvanised highway style and not sympathetic to the character of the Conservation Area. Road surfaces are poor in areas and road markings often worn out, particularly on Gladstone Road, where this adds to the run down feel of the central part of the street. A particular example is the double set of double-yellow lines apparently deemed necessary to prevent illegal parking in one of the bus bays on Gladstone Road.

Traffic congestion is particularly acute in the vicinity of the car parks and yet an additional element which adds to the hostile nature of the area. The congestion is exacerbated by the poorly designed layout of the Borough Parade car park. Correct circulation for vehicles is unclear and the environment for pedestrians crossing the car park and arriving from River Street involves crossing several lanes of traffic. These routes converge at the focal point for pedestrians, at the entrance to the shopping centre, which is also the manoeuvring and parking area for disabled drivers – a particularly ambiguous and unsatisfactory arrangement.
Area 14: Market Place

Character Analysis
History, Archaeology & Morphology
The Market Place is the historic core of Chippenham, adjacent to the parish church of St. Andrew and the site of the Saxon town. Thus the whole area is of high archaeological value. The Extensive Urban Survey of Chippenham produced by the County Archaeological Service identifies the area to the rear of Nos. 35-43 as of particularly high potential and to the rear of the Heritage Centre is the reputed site of King Alfred's Palace.

The area once formed one single large open space and there has been a market here since 1320 when Edward II granted rights for four fairs and two markets. The construction of the Yelde Hall, the original town hall, in the mid 15th Century, began the process of the encroachment of buildings into the Market Place. There are now two groups of buildings sitting within the original open market area. Firstly is The Shambles, a group of buildings at Nos. 54-71 that grew up around the Yelde Hall, secondly a smaller group of buildings at Nos. 12-20 grouped around the Bear Hotel.

This encroachment has effectively divided up the Market Place into two distinct spaces, around the restored Buttercross and around the war memorial. There are also three secondary spaces defined by the buildings, the top of the High Street, the junction with St. Mary Street and, less well defined, the entrance to the bus station. The Buttercross was originally sited in The Shambles, but was dismantled in 1889 and re-erected in the grounds of Castle Combe manor. It remained there until 1996 when it was re-sited to its current position as part of the recent enhancement works. The war memorial stands on the site of the old town pump. This was removed in 1867 and replaced by a fountain. Part of the fountain remains incorporated into the current war memorial.

The Buttercross space has benefited from the recent town centre enhancements and the contrast between this and the war memorial space, which has not been enhanced, is most notable. Both hotels fronting the Buttercross space have been refurbished since the enhancement and a new restaurant has opened, yet parts of the war memorial space remain distinctly shabby in appearance. The quality of the buildings are also compromised by the many unsympathetic and out of character modern shop-fronts which bear little relation to the scale or appearance of the buildings of which the form a part. Upper storeys also often display a clutter of wiring, junction boxes, alarm boxes and Christmas tree holders.

Topography & Views
Topography
The rising ground continues from the High Street, south easterly through the Market Place to its highest point where it meets The Causeway, the gradient becoming more gentle towards this south-eastern edge of the area. Thus the gradient is more noticeable in the Buttercross space than the war memorial space, which is almost level. The Causeway continues at a slight gradient out of the town centre.
Views
The majority of the views within and out of the area are positive, due to the generally high quality of the buildings within and defining the edge of the Market Place, and the openness of the space allowing a number of attractive wide vistas.

There are attractive views from the High Street to the right of The Shambles into the Buttercross space, with glimpses either side and through the Buttercross itself. Once beyond the Buttercross the widening space becomes apparent and, at the end, the fine landmark building of the Bear Hotel terminates the space. Unfortunately, the view beyond the hotel towards the bus station is generally ill defined, unattractive and lacks focus. From the bus station there is an attractive view through to the Buttercross and to St. Paul's Church in the distance. Waiting taxis are an intrusive element in the foreground of this view and this becomes more apparent as one moves into the space. Taxis are parked on the newly paved area and it is ambiguous as to whether this is a vehicle or pedestrian area.

The view from the High Street to the left side of The Shambles is less attractive. The post office is the dominant building and focal point of the view. This is a plain and unattractive building that occupies a considerable length of street frontage, formerly occupied by a number of smaller buildings. Its siting on the corner of the Market Place and St. Mary Street emphasises its presence and, despite it only being two storeys, it manages to have an overbearing presence in this part of the Market Place. This is partly due to the fact that its form poorly reflects the change in level. The three routes converging at the mini roundabout outside the post office give three views of the building frontages ahead. In addition to the post office, the view from the south is of the fine frontage of Nos. 44-45, and is in stark contrast to that of the post office. The truncated bay windows, plate glass shop-front and railings in front of the building are all jarring and unattractive elements in the view of this otherwise attractive frontage.

The views from and into St. Mary Street are equally attractive, though the poor quality of surfacing is evident, as is the wide break in the frontage at Emery Lane. From St. Mary Street the view is of the three fine listed buildings at Nos. 56-59. Unfortunately the generally poor quality and out of character shop-fronts and their fascias are a noticeably unattractive and jarring feature of the view. A lay-by on the roundabout is well used by service vehicles throughout the day, disrupting the view and occasionally causing congestion.

The war memorial space is the largest space in the Market Place and this can be appreciated from a number of positions where the space and the generally fine buildings that define it can be appreciated. The entrance to the church (Fig 14.1), the post office entrance and at the corners of Nos. 23 and 63 are probably the most notable view points though the space can be appreciated continuously as one moves through it. Nos. 44-45 is still a notable building from this space. Views along the Causeway are generally attractive, showing an eclectic and varied collection of mostly attractive buildings.

Generally buildings are on narrow plots and respect the slightly rising topography. The gables of the former Methodist chapel stand out as notable features on the east side and ahead the listed No. 1 London Road rises above the unattractive Kwik Fit garage.
The church tower and steeple are a prominent landmark from many locations in the Market Place. The most dramatic views are from Timber Street over the top of a number of Market Place buildings; from the Angel Hotel through the two pinch points created by Nos. 14 & 63 and Nos. 34 & 35 and with the war memorial in between; and as one moves up High Street and to the left of The Shambles the church combines with the rooftops and facades of Market Place buildings to create a continually changing and attractive roofscape.

**General Character**

The area reads as a series of connected spaces with the ground floor uses primarily retail in character. The majority of the buildings in the area are of high architectural and historic interest with two thirds of the retail uses occupying listed buildings. Whilst many of the listed buildings are formal in character, a number are also more vernacular and the spaces themselves are irregular in shape. The prevailing character of the urban form is that of a space that has an organic feel and has developed over time, rather than having been planned and developed as a whole. This is also shown in the variety of roof forms, building heights, floor heights, number of storeys, use of dormers as well as the variety of architectural detailing. There is, however, a prevailing use of stone and stone slates and the majority of buildings are of two or three storeys.

The retail character of the Market Place is different to that of the High Street. The great majority of the retail uses in the High Street are shops (A1), including many national chain stores. In the Market Place only one third of the 60 commercial uses are shops, with three-quarters of these being local shops and located at the southern end of the area. The Market Place sees the largest concentration of estate agents and building societies in the town centre, these, and other similar (A2) uses accounting for over 40% of the retail uses. These are generally concentrated in the northern part of the Market Place. Pubs, restaurants and cafes account for less than a fifth of the retail uses, there being four pubs and only two restaurants.

The distribution of these retail uses affects the character of the Market Place and the activity within it. Traffic and parking also affects the pedestrian accessibility of the southern part of the Market Place. There are a limited number and range of evening leisure uses and residential accommodation and many upper floors of buildings are
inefficiently and uneconomically used. As a result, the Market Place is not a particularly vibrant place in the evening, with little variety of activities and people, with pubs providing the majority of activity. Increasing the range of leisure uses and better utilisation of upper floors of buildings for residential accommodation could enhance the character of the Market Place and make it a more attractive place to use, bringing more and a greater variety of people and better natural surveillance.

**Townscape and Landscape Character**

**Top of High Street Area**

At the top of the High Street the street widens out to accommodate The Shambles and the routes either side. Nos. 54 & 71 enclose, and help define this small space at the top of the High Street. The Shambles buildings at Nos. 54 & 71 and the HSBC Bank (Fig 14.2) are the most prominent and attractive buildings. An information board is located in the space, but the gates to the Buttercross and current market site are something of an obstacle to pedestrian movement. Market stalls also occupy much of the small pedestrianised area even though the main market area is often under utilised.

*Fig 14.2: The fine classical frontage of the HSBC bank is a later addition to an earlier building. The clarity of the frontage is cluttered by the insertion of the safe and cash machine.*

No. 1 (Burton) is a purpose built store for the current occupier, dating from 1937 in Art Deco style with classical motifs and retaining a number of original features. These include foundation stones either side of the side entrance, granite stallrisers with ventilation grilles cast in the store name and original logo, original metal frame shop-front with capitals, stone frieze of the store name at parapet level entitled ‘Montague Burton – The Tailor of Taste, and first floor range of three windows with frieze above, separated by plain extended mullions. Despite the retention of these features the shop-front entrance has been replaced with modern doors, the first floor windows are modern UPVC replacements and the fascia is a modern, chunky and overbearing feature that is out of character with the building and dominates the whole frontage to its detriment. The fascia logo is at variance with the original logo. The shop-front would benefit immeasurably by the replacement of the current fascia with one that better reflected the original design.

No. 2 (HSBC), although a narrow building, has an imposing ionic classical ground floor frontage befitting a bank and is a key positive feature of the space. The upper floors are
faced in a different stone and share design details with No. 56/57 and thus it would appear that the bank frontage is a later addition to an earlier building. Despite its positive presence, a number of features detract from this, such as peeling paint on the side elevation, mirror glass in two first floor windows and the applied fascia. At street level the night safe and cash machine are obtrusive features that significantly disrupt the proportion of the frontage. This could be resolved by relocating these facilities to an internal lobby.

Nos. 54 & 71 read as a single building and the shop-fronts are separated by an archway through to the alleys to the rear of The Shambles. The shopfront to No. 71 is of a modern traditional design in character with the building. Although the display windows are full, the contents are not particularly prominent. No. 54 is an older traditional shop-front retaining almost all its original features. It has a square bay window with ventilation grille and stone stallriser with the recessed lettering ‘Purveyors’. The modern door has a bracketed stone hood above. The side elevation also has a similar bay window, though without a stallriser. No. 55 is part of the same building. The first floor windows have lost their glazing bars and the ground floor shop-front is particularly bland and out of character with the building.

Nos. 49 & 50 (Fig 14.3) are similar in appearance though No. 49 is a 20th Century building and No. 50 is listed. The frontage to No. 49 is simple, in harmony and correct proportion to the listed buildings either side. The shop-front is modern floor to ceiling plate glass, recess, with chunky plain pilasters either side and generally out of character with the building. No. 50 is similar in appearance, though a more detailed band course and original windows reveal it to be older. The same can be said for the shop-front, though the fascia is deeper and recess shallower, making it slightly more prominent. Though not appearing as a discordant negative element in the street, both shop fronts show a bland, corporate indifference to the quality of the townscape and buildings in which they sit.

Nos. 51-2 & 53 are of a more diminutive vernacular character. No. 51-2 has only one upper storey. This is painted, diluting the interest brought to the elevation by the band course, pilasters and window surrounds. A return to one side of the parapet is a discordant feature of the façade. The shop-front is modern, bears no relation to the form

Fig 14.3: Two of many attractive buildings in the Market Place with bland modern shop-fronts that bear no relationship to the character of the facades within which they sit.

Nos. 51-2 & 53 are of a more diminutive vernacular character. No. 51-2 has only one upper storey. This is painted, diluting the interest brought to the elevation by the band course, pilasters and window surrounds. A return to one side of the parapet is a discordant feature of the façade. The shop-front is modern, bears no relation to the form
or character of the upper storey and is a particularly dominant and negative intrusion into the townscape. Its projection forward of the upper storey heightens this, its deep fascia with poorly positioned applied sign, partly recessed form and large expanse of brightly varnished timber. The modern first floor windows are generally unobtrusive. The building would clearly benefit from reconstruction of the shopfront. The shop-front is almost as high as two storeys of the adjacent No. 53, which is narrower, with three storeys and of altogether a more human scale. The plain rendered upper floors would benefit from the removal of the clutter of wiring and other attachments. Chunky green UPVC windows are a particularly jarring element in the elevation. The shopfront is generally attractive with stone pilasters, console brackets and fascia cornice and with a marble stallriser. However, the bright chunky applied fascia and chequered internal patterning and lettering significantly dilute the effect of these features.

Post Office Area
A mini roundabout occupies this triangular space and the gated entrance to the High Street pedestrianised area. The post office, Yelde Hall, shambles buildings and Nos. 44-47 defines the space. All are listed and are positive elements in the townscape except the post office. A roundabout was built at this junction as part of the original pedestrianisation in 1995. As the vehicle restrictions have increased, the traffic using the High Street has reduced, and now the roundabout junction design with wide carriageway entrance to the High Street and central island would appear to represent a somewhat excessive use of the space for current vehicle requirements. The vehicle restrictions may increase in the future and the main traffic flow is now towards the Emery Lane car park. Construction of the roundabout also saw an alteration in carriageway levels that now present a barrier to pedestrian movement. As the junction design was only envisaged as a short-medium term measure, dependant on the success of the pedestrianisation, only basic materials were used for surfacing. As there is now minimal traffic entering the High Street, there is considerable scope here for re-assessing the junction design, improving the quality of surfacing and the provision of wider pavements outside the shops, which would improve the immediate environment and emphasise the area as an urban space rather than simply a vehicular route.

Nos. 44-48 (all listed) is formerly the White Hart Hotel, at which Cromwell is reputed to have lodged. No. 48 (Dreweat Neate) is an attractive building with modern traditional shop-front in keeping with the building. A rainwater pipe disappearing into the top of the shop front and modern top floor windows are the only incongruous elements. Nos. 46-47 (Jeary & Lewis and Silburys respectively) have bay windows at upper floors and chamfered rusticated pilasters that give the building a more imposing character in the street than No. 48. Both shop-fronts are modern and poorly relate to the character of the building. The complete painting of the façade has a detrimental effect on the appearance of the detailing, diluting its visual effect and interest of the frontage. A cornice to the shop fronts provides an architectural feature for the bays to rise from, although it is likely they originally also existed at ground floor level.

Nos. 44-45 (Iceland) is an imposing stone façade with central pediment (Fig 14.4). Whilst remaining an imposing and attractive building, its character has been severely compromised by its conversion into a supermarket. The central section includes a former carriage entrance, yet neither the supermarket nor the offices above utilise this as an entrance. The windows to the supermarket are floor to ceiling plate glass and two of these are solid with advertising. The entrances to the supermarket and offices are recessed, dingy, utilitarian and unattractive. The four imposing bays of the upper floors truncated brutally and unceremoniously, give the appearance of floating in space and
are a particularly incongruous architectural disfigurement to the building. The roof has lost its chimneys and original tiles and appears somewhat bland.

Fig 14.4: The imposing frontage of this former coaching inn is a local landmark. Converted into a supermarket in the 1970s, the character of the frontage has been severely compromised by the brutal truncation of the bays, insertion of plate glass and recessed entrances, and shows a complete lack of respect or understanding for the form and layout of the façade.

Nos. 41-43 (Post Office) dates from 1959 when it was constructed as the new post office, replacing three smaller buildings on the site (Fig 14.5). The building is monolithic in appearance and this is exacerbated by the large expanse of featureless stone tile roof. The building fails to respond positively to this prominent site and poorly respects the topography, the single entrance and high windows, divorcing it from the pavement and the otherwise human scale of the street. The service entrance is a dingy and unattractive area. The siting of new telephone boxes seems an inefficient use of pavement space.

Fig 14.5: The post office on a prominent corner site presents a plain, overbearing and monolithic façade that relates poorly to the street and sloping ground. The side access is particularly dingy.

Opposite the post office is the Yelde Hall, one of the oldest buildings in the town and one of only two Grade I listed buildings in the town. A major restoration of the building has just been completed which has seen repairs and restoration to the panelling, timber and
roof, and a new set of oak doors to the entrance. The building has seen many uses since its original purpose as the first town hall including an armory, fire station and town museum. Its new use is for the town’s tourist information centre. The restoration has transformed the appearance of the building and it now resembles, as close as is possible, its original appearance. Its setting is compromised to a degree by the untidy rear elevations of some of The Shambles buildings and the bland expanse of concrete paving in front of the building. The contrast with the post office building is particularly jarring and the large expanse of street given over to the roundabout junction and service lay-by does nothing for the setting of this ancient building.

Nos. 55-59 of The Shambles face onto the space. And are a group of fine listed buildings of similar appearance and detailing. No. 59 (Connells) has chamfered rusticated pilasters to the ground floor and a simple though not out of character shop-front, retaining a cornice above the fascia. The shop-front however has a detrimental effect on the character of the building due simply to the oversized and bright-applied fascia and painted pilasters. No. 58 (Westaff) retains an ashlar frontage to the ground floor either side of the shop-front and upper floor entrance. This includes relief console details below a traditional and attractive fascia currently advertising the upper floor business. The shop-front is plain plate glass with bright modern applied fascia out of character with the building. Nos. 57 and 56 are essentially the same building, though the shop-fronts step down to accommodate the slope of the street. This is a more imposing building with a distinctive row of dormers to the roof and window surround detailing matching the upper floors of No. 2 (HSBC). The shop-fronts are modern and of poor quality. This and the clutter of highway infrastructure at the entrance to the pedestrianised area (Fig 14.6) considerably dilute the positive contribution this building makes to the street scene at close quarters. From St. Mary Street all these buildings together present an impressive and fine frontage to this secondary space in the Market Place.

Fig 14.6: The entrance to the High Street pedestrianised area is marked by a plethora of unattractive and uninviting clutter. Narrowing the entrance and regularising the levels could allow for this to be drastically reduced.

War Memorial Area
This is the largest open space in the Market Place and is of a rather irregular shape. The war memorial sits in the centre of the widest part of the space though fails to provide a focus for the space as it is lost amongst the nearby parked cars and the passing traffic. It has little ‘breathing space’, its setting is cramped and no attempt has been made to
provide it with a setting that would both give it a degree of dignity and focus in the Market Place. It is almost as if it were regarded as an obstacle to traffic rather than a focus of civic pride. The stonework is also in need of cleaning. Due to the road passing through the space, the perception of it as a single space is weakened and the strongest definition of the overall character comes from the building frontages and spaces in front of them. In this sense the space can be identified as three separate smaller spaces defined by particular groups of buildings. These are as follows.

Nos. 34-40 and the triangular space in front. All buildings facing this space are listed except two, and present a particularly formal facade. The space provides some loading and parking provision and access to the church. The space is a bland expanse of inefficiently used and ill-defined tarmac that provides a poor setting for the fine buildings that face it and the entrance to the Grade II* listed church (Fig 14.7). The space regularly experiences illegal parking and loading and would benefit greatly from enhancement of surface materials and the layout of the space.

Nos. 14-24, the car park in front and square space in front of the Rose & Crown pub. These buildings are all listed though present a less formal and more varied range of styles, forms and heights. The car parking is inefficiently laid out and the parked cars and large expanse of tarmac bays and manoeuvring space provides a stark and unattractive setting for the buildings facing it, all of which are listed (Fig 14.8). The pub is Grade II* listed yet the space in front of it is particularly unattractive, a random arrangement of wooden tables on tarmac often used for parking. The surfacing is of a poor quality, raised kerbs unnecessarily define Lord’s Lane as a vehicular route despite it not being a through route. A line of stone flags defines the line of the pavement but are in poor condition and refuse bins are also kept in the space. This area has great potential to provide an attractive and well used setting for the pub and dedicated pedestrian route to Timber Street and the bus station.
Fig 14.8: The parked cars and additional highway signs in the middle of the open space are a dominant and unattractive feature, necessitating a separate access road that takes land away from pedestrians. A redesign of the parking layout in this area could bring significant improvements to the townscape and shopping environment.

Nos. 25-33, a wide pavement between the buildings and a row of parking spaces at 90° to the street. The buildings in the centre of this row are not listed, though only the plain No. 28-29 has significant negative impact on the townscape. The buildings to the south are painted white and lend a generally tatty appearance to this part of the space. The close proximity of a convenience store and two take-aways in this location simply adds to this through garish and unattractive shop-fronts and dirty pavements. No. 40 (formerly Prontaprint) is one of only two buildings in its frontage not listed and has been much altered in the last 50 years. The painted exterior, lack of glazing bars and modern shop-front with unattractive fascia make what is essentially a simple but well proportioned building a negative feature in the frontage. Restoration of the façade to reinstate the glazing bars, remove paint and install an appropriately designed shop-front would transform the appearance of this building.

Nos. 38-39 (Monahans & Goodwin Shaw respectively) is a fine building with distinctive balustraded parapet, bay windows and classical entrance. Originally a house and formerly an inn, the left-hand ground floor bay has an early 20\textsuperscript{th} century shop-front. The inserted door adjacent to the main entrance disrupts the symmetry of the building and it would benefit from its removal. The ground floor frontage would also benefit from attention to the stonework and paint removal and the right hand bay windows would benefit from reinstatement of glazing bars.

No. 37 (Allen & Harris) dates from as recently as the 1960s, replacing the former Duke of Cumberland Inn. For a building of this time it fits well into the façade, though it is clearly a modern building. The high parapet and flimsy shop-front give the building an unfortunate top-heavy feel. The shop-front is of little note and a more substantial and robust design would be appropriate.

No. 36 (Thresher) is a generally pleasant building with an altered 19\textsuperscript{th} Century bowed shop-front. Unfortunately the building is given a somewhat tatty appearance by a number of features. A large alarm box and remains of a hanging sign at first floor, untidy and crude flashing to the shop-front, applied leading below this, side door in poor repair,
flimsy applied fascia and detritus of blackboard advertising outside the shop all contribute to this. The upper storey windows are also in poor repair and one is boarded up, giving a feel of neglect to the building. No. 35 (Humberts) is similar in appearance but greater stature than No. 36. An attractive shop-front recessed doorway and appropriately designed and subtle signage contributes to the attractiveness of this building.

Nos. 33-34 (Straker & The China Bowl respectively) is known as London Buildings. The north facing elevation is two storeys with heavy cornice. The entrance to No. 34 has an attractive door hood. The shop-fronts are generally in keeping with the character of the building though the corner shop-front poorly reflects the solidity of the rusticated pilaster above and the large painted sign above the centre shop front is a discordant feature disrupting the appearance of the upper storey. The façade would benefit from removal of the sign, a more robust design for the corner of the building and the removal of paint from stonework. The west facing elevation is three storey and has a particularly fine classical 19th Century shop-front that reads well as part of the building and with the adjacent Jubilee Buildings. The upper floor facade would benefit from the removal of paint.

No. 32 is the offices and meeting room of the Chippenham Borough Lands Charity (or Trustees) and was built to commemorate Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee in 1887. This is a particularly fine and unaltered building and is the most prominent and attractive building to this frontage of the Market Place.

Nos. 30-31 (Funeral director & Newspaper office respectively) is essentially a single building, though the first floor windows are not evenly spaced. This is a far more humble building than the Jubilee buildings but nonetheless a generally attractive one. This is due primarily to the quality of the shop-fronts and garage doors and the unpainted stone first floor elevation. The building does however, exhibit a number of discordant features. The roof to the newspaper office contains an unattractive protruding roof light and has a truncated chimney stack and the plane of the roof is slightly raised from that of the funeral directors, giving an odd appearance. The first floor windows to the funeral directors are modern replacements.

No. 28-29 (One Stop) is a bland modern building with poor quality modern plate glass shop-front and large bright fascia, and is one of the most unattractive buildings in the Market Place. The adjacent No. 27 (Star Fish & Burger Bar) is an older building that has seen a number of alterations that have almost removed all of its positive characteristics (Fig 14.9). It once boasted a fine shop-front and balustraded parapet. Now the parapet has been replaced with blockwork and the shop-front is modern, brightly coloured and out of character with the building. In addition the frontage has been painted white and kept in poor repair and the original windows have been lost. The building presents a rather depressing sight.
Fig 14.9: These once fine buildings (the one on the right is listed) have acquired a number of unsympathetic alterations over time, notably painting, advertising, modern shop-fronts and replacement windows, that have severely compromised their character and contribute to the generally unattractive appearance of this part of the Market Place.

No. 26 is listed and retains both its arched doorway and alley and original first floor windows. The bow fronted shop window is not original but neither out of character with the building. The façade is of brick, which has been painted for a number of years, though it appears rather garish and unkempt in its current bright white. The original windows on the second floor have been replaced, as have the moulded surrounds to all the windows. As with No. 27, this building presents a rather depressing sight.

No. 25 is the former premises of the chemist John Coles, three times Mayor, who gave a legacy to the town that was used to create John Coles Park. The building is also of white painted brick and black painted window surrounds and band course are a poor attempt to give it a Tudor ‘timber framed’ look. This simply fails and is particularly apparent when viewed with the adjacent No. 53 the Causeway – a real Tudor timber framed building. The first floor windows have been lost for modern, out of character replacements, that are painted on one elevation and stained on the other. The bay windows of the original shop-front would appear to remain but the fascia and pediment have been lost for large modern box signs that are dominant and out of character features. An unattractive blank parapet wall has been inserted at first floor to the side of the shop, hiding more replacement and altered windows. Together with Nos. 26, 27 and 28-29 these buildings make this the most unattractive and unwelcoming part of the Market Place, that is in great need of enhancement.

No. 25 and No. 24 opposite are important in defining the entrance into Market Place from the Causeway, being corner buildings that open out the street into a wider space. No. 24 is a simple elegant building with chamfered corner. It gains its attractiveness from its proportion and simplicity. It was once a drapers with traditional Victorian shop-front and was the job centre prior to its recent conversion into the current restaurant use. The new shop-front is a significant improvement to the frontage and reflects the style of the former Victorian shop-front. Unfortunately the proportion is not quite right for the building. The flashing is over dominant and crudely applied, the fascia too deep and poorly integrated into the shopfront, the lack of frame to the glazing and the low stallriser devoid of cill gives the frontage a lack of stature and draws attention to the large fascia. The red
painted internal columns are a discordant element. Comparison with a photograph of the drapers shop-front shows how essentially similar designs can have a significantly different effect on the appearance of a building if enough consideration is not given to the proportions and character of a building. The side of the building is painted and its removal would be an improvement to its appearance and enable it to be better read as a single building.

No. 22 is the Rose & Crown, listed Grade II*. It is one of the remaining inns of the Market Place. It was formerly rendered though looks far better in bare stone and brick. Its appearance is compromised by a degree of accumulated clutter including a number of prominent signs, ‘A’ boards, lights, CCTV cameras, alarm box and wiring. The façade would also benefit from sensitive cleaning, repair and re-pointing in places. However, the main negative impact of the building is its setting, and the untidy, ill-defined and unattractive space in front of it bounded by ‘stalls’ attempting to delineate the space. Nos. 18-21 is a single building. Although three storeys to the side, it has a long sloping roof to the front with dormers, partly concealed by the parapet of a later frontage. The building has an attractive colonnade to one side and the shop-fronts are plain and modern with a generally neutral effect on the character of the building. The former central doorway to the upper floors has an attractive door hood though this has now been incorporated into a shop-front. This and the continuation of the fascia over the hood dilute its attractiveness. The upper floors of the front and part of the side elevation are painted, including the stonework and the building would benefit from its removal.

No. 17 is an older timber framed building with an attractive fascia incorporating curved bays. A flimsy suburban glass door to the side gives access to upper floors, though the poorly maintained upper floor windows suggest they are currently unused. No. 16 has a plain though not unattractive shop-front with solid stallriser. The shop-front is in need of maintenance and the upper storeys, though attractive, would benefit from the removal of paint. No. 14-15 is an attractive and solid building turning the corner into the Buttercross area. It has fine upper floor windows, though the inserted bay windows in the ground floor with deeply recessed upper sections look somewhat incongruous. The plain facades suffer from a degree of accumulated clutter and the signage, though generally subtle and respecting the character of the building would benefit from rationalisation.

**Buttercross Area**

The facades of the Bear Hotel, Angel Hotel (Fig 14.10) and former Magistrates Court, together with the restored Buttercross and new public space, make this probably the finest part of the Market Place.
The quality and character of the space is diluted noticeably on the east (Shambles) side, where the two buildings constituting Nos. 65, 66 and 67 present a long frontage of plain and unattractive modern building and shop-fronts. The bright fenestration and signage of No. 67, the discordant forms of the frontage at No. 66 and the bland plate glass and bright fascia of No. 65 combine with the plain buildings to provide a particularly uninspiring frontage to this important space. Both buildings fail to reflect the slope of the land, further drawing attention to themselves.

The southern frontage to the space is particularly fine though the shop-front to No. 13 is distinctly out of character with the building and the fascia is a particularly oversized, bold and vulgar intrusion into the façade. The western frontage consists of buildings that are generally attractive and provide a positive setting for the space and the restored Buttercross. The frontages to Nos. 7 and 6 (Nationwide and Four Seasons pub) are generally attractive. No. 5 (Britannia) has a large modern applied fascia and modern recessed shop-front that are out of character and scale with the building and provide a poor setting for the restored Buttercross. Nos. 3-4 is an attractive building with half dormers in the elevation with projecting eaves and bargeboard, and projecting roof eaves above a modillion cornice. Below is a moulded band course above windows with moulded stone surrounds. Unfortunately, the full effect of this detailing is diluted by the white paint covering the whole façade. The ground floor has an interesting stone tiled canopy along the width of the frontage. Unfortunately the application of fascias and extension of the plain shop-fronts into the space below all but hides this attractive feature.

On the east side No. 69-70 (British Red Cross Shop) has an imposing stone gable with large semi-circular window at second floor. Unfortunately the shop-front is a plain modern design with oversize applied fascia. No. 68 (Sheila Ferris) has a simple but attractive shopfront in keeping with the building façade. An applied projecting eaves box is the only incongruous element to the building. No. 64 (Taylors) on the original site of the Buttercross. The façade includes ornate pilasters and cornice with pediment at second floor and arched moulded window surrounds with projecting stringcourse at first floor. Unfortunately the shop-front below does not reflect the quality of the façade above. A plain modern design with bright red oversize fascia with prominent projecting
illumination, it has a particularly detrimental effect on the character of the building. No. 63 (Hardys) is a fine listed building on a prominent site between the Buttercross area and war memorial area. Recent works to the ground floor as part of its conversion to a restaurant have made a significant improvement to its appearance, though the large expanse of etched glazing divorces it somewhat from its surroundings. The market now occupies the Buttercross area on Fridays. Whilst the recent enhancements made provision for the erection of stalls primarily in the larger space to the south of the Buttercross, stalls concentrate themselves in the small space between the High street and the Buttercross, leading to a cramped feel to this space. The general market, especially during the winter months consists of only a handful of stalls and the area is never full. The range and quality of goods available is usually poor, offering primarily non food products and only at farmers markets in the summer are there stalls selling food produce. This generally gives the market a forlorn and run down feel that has a negative effect on the character of the space itself.

The rear of The Shambles buildings is a small network of pedestrian alleys providing short cuts across the Market Place although the quality of surfacing is poor. These are generally rear elevations, but also provide the backdrop to the restored Yelde Hall. They are generally unappealing elevations with pipes, drain gulleys and other clutter. These features bear testimony to the unmodernised combined drainage systems below. These converge in this area and flow down the High Street to the river and sewerage system. Recent problems of flooding and smells in this area suggest the system may have reached capacity and that the drainage authorities need to review their equipment.

**Bus Station Area**

The layout of the area is ambiguous and ill defined, exiting buses crossing pedestrian routes and in close proximity to a zebra crossing and the junction with Lords Lane. Lords Lane itself is also poorly defined and barely recognisable as a street as it is usually full of parked cars, making pedestrian use unattractive. Whilst the rear of The Bear Hotel presents a variety of roof forms, the back elevations face into the space and the bus station, giving poor definition to the space and adding to the amorphous feel of the area. The Bear Hotel and former magistrates court building are a fine frame for a poor view into the bus station. The library generally addresses the street but its appearance is brutal and uninviting and its strong vertical lines give it something of a fortress feel. Surfaces in the area are also of a poor quality. The area would benefit from a number of key enhancements to surfacing, the bus station layout, Lords Lane and the rear of the Bear Hotel.

**Materials**

Traditional town centre materials are predominantly Bath stone or limestone, either sawn or rubble with quoins to principal elevations with the occasional occurrence of warm orange / brown brick in either Flemish, English or common bonds to side and rear elevations. Walls are generally natural stone and often constructed of similar brick and faced in natural stone with plain ‘flat tops’ using through stones as coping. Particular attention to detail should be given where walls change level. Roofs are historically graded stone or slate and more recently clay Roman or pan tiles. Stone mullions and window surrounds are common. Windows are generally timber or metal casement or sliding sash. Render is generally roughcast and either bare or limewashed, as is general stonework. Modern concrete blockwork is particularly out of character, as is smooth render.

Ashoka
Indian
Restaurant
Vegetation
Market Place is very much an urban townscape and vegetation plays little part in its character. However, this as much due to the use of much of the space for traffic and parking, as it is part of its historical character and past use. A single tree sits in the Buttercross space, disrupting longer views of the two finest buildings facing this otherwise clearly defined single space. The war memorial space is split into a number of smaller spaces by the necessity of the road passing through it. There is scope to reduce the negative impact of vehicles by better ordering the space and tree planting here may be an appropriate means of helping achieve this and improving the quality of the space for pedestrians.

Traffic & Highway Infrastructure
As a result of the recent enhancements, the Buttercross area is generally free from extraneous highway infrastructure and this is in contrast with the war memorial area where standardised signage is an intrusive feature. The gates at either end of the Buttercross area are unduly prominent due to their chunky, engineered design, that the applied crest looks simply attached to rather than part of an overall design. The gates and associated signage at the entrance to the pedestrianised High Street, as at the south end, present an unattractive and cluttered gateway to the town’s main shopping street. The minor level difference between the pavement and carriageway at this point necessitates a long line of railings that simply adds to the clutter and presents a barrier to movement. Any future enhancements to the street in this area should include the removal of the level change and railings.

The war memorial sits in a rather isolated position in the centre of the space, surrounded by the road and car parking. It has a somewhat detached and forlorn feel and undignified setting, which is only exacerbated by the domestic barrel planters placed, somewhat pointlessly next to the planting beds that form an integral part of the memorial. The prominence of the memorial is lost in the mass of cars in the adjacent car park. The car park uses space particularly inefficiently and has a detrimental effect on the setting of the adjacent buildings. Any enhancement scheme for the area should seek to improve the setting of these buildings, the war memorial and use a more efficient arrangement for car parking.

Service vehicles are a constant feature of the Market Place, often parking illegally, and are a visually obtrusive element in the townscape. This is particularly evident by the Yelde Hall, entrance to the church and the car park adjacent to the war memorial. Introduction and/or enforcement of waiting restrictions could better address this problem. In addition to the car park adjacent to the war memorial, the space outside the entrance to the church is also a particularly inefficient use of space. Both of these areas would benefit from enhancements to improve the setting of the church and adjacent buildings and improve the quality of surface materials. The whole of the Market Place except the Buttercross space suffers from a variety and poor quality of surface materials and this lends a somewhat shabby feel to some areas in particular. Completing enhancements to the remainder of the Market Place would address this and strengthen its character as a distinct area and as part of the town centre.
Area 15: St. Mary and The Butts

Character Analysis
History, Archaeology & Morphology
St. Mary Street is one of the oldest streets in the town, probably dating back to the Saxon period, the northern section being formerly known as Cook Street. Other streets such as The Butts, Ladd’s Lane and Common Slip are all medieval streets. Baydon’s Lane is a continuance of St. Mary Street and gradually becomes a footpath as it runs parallel with London Road, similar to Wood Lane to the south, though leading eventually to the sailing club and former bathing place in the River Avon. The lane now forms the northern edge of the built up area.

At one time St Mary Street was the main thoroughfare into the town, due to the poor state of The Causeway. However, The Causeway eventually became established as the main road into the town and St. Mary Street gradually became a quiet backwater. This was not before many fine houses were built along the street, and its relative seclusion has ensured that it has experienced less pressure for modern development than other parts of the town centre. As a result, St. Mary Street is the finest unspoilt street in the town and boasts its highest concentration of Grade II* listed buildings. More recently the street has been closed as a through route and this has minimised traffic and helped retain its character and ambience. The street has been described by Nikolaus Pevsner as ‘the best at Chippenham’ and by Sir John Betjeman as ‘one of the prettiest streets in England’.

The whole of St Mary Street is within the area considered as part of the original planned Saxon settlement and the area to the north of St Andrew’s Church is considered the possible site of the royal seat. This area bounded by the church. Market Place and St. Mary Street is considered the most archeologically significant in the town. Chippenham was also briefly a spa town between 1694 and 1801 and the remains of the spa are located in the grounds of No. 55 (The Grove).

Later Victorian expansion has seen the development of terraced of cottages around The Butts and to the west of Baydon’s Lane. 20° Century development has seen detached suburban houses developed to the east of The Butts and Baydon’s Lane and the loss of the historic alignment of The Butts for a bland and poorly conceived housing development.

Topography & Views
Topography
The main thoroughfare lies on the north east slope of the escarpment on which the town is built, and generally runs with the contours. From the north, the street gradually slopes down to a low point at the junction with Ladd’s Lane and Common Slip. And rises gradually before levelling out along the alignment of Baydon’s Lane. The historic route of The Butts is still discernible through the modern housing development and is at a steeper gradient as it rises up to London Road. Ladd’s Lane and Common Slip represent the steepest slope as they take the shortest route from The Causeway down to the river. Generally, the escarpment allows more open views across the river valley into Monkton.
Park and in the opposite direction restricts views to the rooftops of buildings lining The Causeway. Thus the aspect of the street is notably towards the north east.

**Views**

In the north section of St. Mary Street there is a pleasant view towards the attractive Shambles buildings that help to enclose the space. In the opposite direction the sense of enclosure is weaker due to the lack of corner buildings at the junction with Emery Lane and the view down this short street into the car park and servicing area is particularly unattractive. An impressive glimpse of the church steeple is to be had between Nos. 3 and 4, the buildings framing the view.

Moving south into the main section of the street, the steps up to the churchyard opposite the vicarage provide one of the finest viewpoints in the whole street ([Fig 15.1](#)). To the south is the exceptional vista of the gently curving street lined by its fine buildings. To the east is the mature landscape of Monkton Park and a view of the front of Monkton House in its parkland setting.

![Fig 15.1: This view from the church steps is one of the finest to be had in the street.](#)

Ivy on the trees is a detracting element and the suburban ornamental conifers of the crazy golf course are notable even from here. Whilst the churchyard is generally defined by attractive buildings, the high, bland rear elevation of No. 28-9 Market Place (One Stop) is a particularly jarring and unattractive feature and the appearance of the flats to the rear of the funeral director could be improved.

Riverhouse with the pedestrian route through the building is inappropriate and detrimental to the character of the conservation area. However a number of attractive views are to be had from the lane that runs down to the footbridge into Monkton Park especially if one looks north over the wall and along the roofs to the rear of St Mary Street. However, this is spoiled by the utilitarian galvanised railings, unsightly overhead wires, suburban wooden boundary fence, tatty direction sign, and poor quality and poorly repaired paving at its entrance.

From the entrance to No. 18 there is an attractive view across the river into the landscape of Monkton Park, with a number of impressive conifers prominent. Unfortunately, the bland form and bulk of Riverhouse, a large tarmac yard and bin store
close to the road are detracting features in the foreground. Along the street to the north the roof forms and elevations of a number of buildings and the churchyard vegetation combine to provide an impressive vista, terminated by the former girls school, above which rises the steeple of St. Paul's Church on the other side of the town. From the opposite side of the street, outside No. 45, a similarly fine view is to be had in the direction of the church, with its steeple a prominent feature. Unfortunately, a telephone pole with its unsightly attendant wirescape is a prominent feature in the foreground.

Fig 15.2: Common Slip has the appearance of a pleasant country lane and is lined with a number of attractive cottages.

From this point the road curves to the right and emphasises the poorly defined street edge, array of suburban roof forms and unattractive wirescape, a telephone pole again being a prominent feature.

As the street becomes The Butts there are attractive views down Common Slip (Fig 15.2) into Monkton Park and up Ladd’s Lane to the frontage of No. 13 The Causeway. Unfortunately the view down Ladd’s Lane is particularly unattractive, being dominated by telephone poles, an unsightly wirescape and double yellow road markings. Half way along the lane however, a rear access road gives a surprise clear view of the steeple of St. Andrews Church.

Entering The Butts from the south one is presented with a distinctly unattractive vista of the rear of a number of buildings fronting The Causeway (Fig 15.3). Particularly notable are the dirty, bland rendered elevation of the flats at No. 21 The Causeway and the side elevation of the Three Crowns pub, both having untidy spaces in front used for informal car parking. To the rear of the former Methodist chapel are two outbuildings prominent in the view. Their setting is poor and their positioning is incongruous with the modern development surrounding them, that ignores them and makes them look out of place, whilst they are more attractive than the surrounding development. The road turns away from its historical alignment at this point and creates a view that focuses on this unattractive area of the street. In the other direction the trees of Monkton Park are again visible on the horizon. The focal point at the end of the street itself is however, a diminutive, though not unpleasant suburban bungalow, though even the character of this is compromised by the large bland double garage prominent in the front garden.
Fig 15.3: The unattractive entrance to The Butts from London Road is characterised by random parking and the rear elevations of many buildings.

Staying on the historic alignment of The Butts, the impressive classical side bay of No. 45 St Mary Street comes into view, and stays in view, gradually becoming more prominent as one passes through the new housing development. This is one of the most impressive views in the whole area and is considerably compromised by the unsympathetic form of this development, particularly the prominent elevation of No. 36 in the view. On exiting this area, the attractive side elevation of No. 19 St. Mary Street also comes into view, though only due to the poorly defined corner with Ladd’s Lane, itself revealing the blank side elevation of No. 20. The new housing development actually splits The Butts into two separate streets. From the northern section the tall bland rear elevations of Nos. 35 and 36 of the new development are a prominent and unattractive intrusion into the street scene. The view along Baydon's Lane however, is generally attractive, with the narrowness of the lane and brick elevations of Nos. 1 and 2 and St. Clear and St. Ives being notable components of the view.

**General Character**

The majority of the area is residential, with only the northern section of St. Mary Street containing commercial and retail premises as well. The 90° bend in the street separates this section from the rest of the street and gives no indication of the continuing street beyond with its fine buildings. The commercial part of the street is busy with traffic as it gives access to the main Emery Gate Shopping Centre car park and this has a significant impact on the character of the space. The southern part of St. Mary Street curves gracefully and allows excellent views of the fine buildings that line this part of the street. This part of the street has an almost timeless quality.

The southern part of the character area is less well defined, with a rather disjointed array of buildings. This is largely due to a modern residential development that realigned The Butts away from its historic winding route up to The Causeway. This in itself has been immensely detrimental to the character of the area and the development is a poorly resolved arrangement of buildings and spaces that creates an ambiguous urban form and poor sense of place.

**Townscape and Landscape Character**
North St. Mary Street

The Shambles buildings and the corner at the opposite end enclose this short part of the street and help make it seem like a place rather than a thoroughfare. However, the continuous traffic and wide entrance to Emery Lane undermine this. Nearly all the buildings in the street are listed and all generally make a positive contribution to the quality of the townscape. The exception is the post office with its dingy undercroft, lack of interest at street level and plain frontage at variance with the quality of the rest of the street. This is the most densely developed and vibrant part of the St. Mary Street and it is continuously lined with buildings with a variety of uses.

The most notable buildings are No. 3 and No. 61. No. 3 is unlisted but its rubble stone frontage is well executed with tall slender stone stacks, central stone pediment and fine arched window above. The low stone boundary wall has lost its original railings and would benefit from their reinstatement. No. 61 is older and listed Grade II* and is a fine town house now used as offices (Fig 15.4). The setting of this building is poor due to the blank side elevation and vacant plot on the corner with Emery Lane, currently used as a car park. A utilitarian single storey rear extension visible across the car park also has a detrimental effect on the setting of the building. The opposite side of the junction is also poorly defined. Although all the buildings in the vicinity of this corner are listed, the past demolition of the corner building has exposed two plain blank walls and a parking area. Opposite is an attractive group of stone fronted buildings at Nos. 11-12, though the white painted ground floor elevation of No. 12a and door surround of No. 11 are jarring elements.

Fig 15.4: The north end of St. Mary Street is commercial in character and contains a number of fine buildings, notably this Grade II* listed solicitors.

The windows to No. 11 and the ground floor window to No. 12a would benefit from reinstatement of glazing bars. Adjacent at Nos. 5-10 is a pleasant terrace of houses, some now offices. These have seen a number of unsympathetic alterations over time and only No. 6 retains any original windows. Metal-framed windows are prominent in the elevation, as is the addition of a white rendered gable to Nos. 7-10. Much of the stone tile roof has been replaced with concrete tiles. This group would benefit from restoration of original features, especially windows and doors and the painting of the gable in a more muted colour. A further detracting element is the telephone pole and array of unsightly cables directly in front of the building.
South St. Mary Street

Turning south round the sharp bend reveals a long vista along the street and group of fine buildings in the distance. The aspect is relatively open to the east and this reveals the rather stark wall and tarmac frontage to the otherwise well secluded though plain vicarage. Passing the impressive gable end of the former girls’ school the imposing form of St. Andrews Church comes into view, sitting high above street level. The side face of the steps up to the churchyard have been poorly re-pointed and are nothing but an eyesore and the small space in front of the auction room entrance is an unsightly array of numerous patches of concrete.

The character of the space is different on either side of the church. The east side is open and offers fine views of Monkton Park. The north side is lined by a continuous row of listed buildings, the most notable being the former school buildings with their seven gable ends. The south side is the largest part of the graveyard and contains a number of fine mature trees. A secondary, more secluded space to the south contains a short avenue of pollarded Lime trees. Though attractive, this space appears isolated and would benefit from measures to encourage greater use. To the west, the bland, blank blockwork rear elevation of No. 28-9 Market Place is a particular eyesore, especially where it rises to three storeys (Fig 15.5).

Fig 15.5: The parish church of St. Andrew is generally surrounded by fine buildings and views. The exception is the west side where bland frontages undermine the quality of the setting.

Adjacent is an uninviting alley leading to the Market Place. The facade of the building to the rear of the funeral director is also not particularly attractive. This corner of the churchyard is in particular need of enhancement.

Onwards from the church, for about 150m is the finest part of the street, where seven of the houses are listed Grade II* and the townscape is of exceptional quality. The majority of the buildings are contained in two terraces, one opposite the church and the other following on from this on the same side as the church. Within this part of the street the detached No. 45 is a notable landmark with its side bays being a distinctive feature, especially from the south. Almost opposite, the ‘L’ shape of No. 16 and the prominent side elevation of No. 15 create a punctuation space in the street. The space between No. 45 and 46 with the path leading up from the river emphasises this area as a local focal point. Whilst the fine elevations of the buildings are attractive elements of this space, other features serve to undermine its attractiveness. Half of the small garden
space in front of No. 16 has been given over to a parking space. The wall surrounding
the side yard to No. 15 has been lowered for visibility reasons, exposing a large rubbish
bin, the unmade yard area and drawing undue attention to the outbuilding between the
two houses. In addition, a parking restriction sign and telephone pole with its attendant
unsightly wiring stand prominently between the two houses, and the other side of the
street displays a tatty direction/parking restriction sign and poor quality and poorly
repaired paving. This is the finest part of the finest street in the town, yet it has clearly
not escaped the invasive effect and consequences of motor vehicles.

At the southern end of the street the urban form begins to dissipate. Adjacent to the
imposing No. 45 are the diminutive cottages at Nos. 41-43 bringing a distinct contrast in
style and scale. This allows the fine views of the end bay from the south. Adjacent and
on the corner of Common Slip is a modern detached suburban house, its form and
character being alien to the street and unsure whether it should be facing St. Mary Street
or Common Slip. This replaced a terrace of attractive cottages, demolished in 1965.
Opposite is a row of outbuildings converted into houses. The insertion of unnecessary
recesses in the elevation and a variety of window sizes and shapes appear random and
ill conceived. The result is jarring and sterile and has managed to render it devoid of
almost any historic character.

Common Slip and Ladd’s Lane
Common Slip is an attractive narrow lane, enclosed at the top by stone walls and
vegetation. It has no pavements and is informal in character. Vegetation is an important
element in the tranquil nature of the lane. Prominent in this is the landscape of Monkton
Park and the large gardens to the south, though these are beginning to look untended.
On the north side are four listed cottages set slightly back from the lane. The street is
very picturesque and secluded. However, a number of discordant features undermine
the otherwise ‘untouched’ feel of the lane. The white painted elevation of No. 24 is
particularly jarring and out of character, especially next to its semi-detached neighbour
and inappropriate replacement windows are common. No. 21 is probably the most
attractive, with a well-positioned garage but a prominent conservatory. Boundary
treatments, out buildings, garages and parking areas are also features that are
combining to gradually undermine the character of the lane.

Ladd’s Lane is a dead end for vehicles and acts primarily as a pedestrian link to the
Causeway. The south side is an unattractive collection of disused garages. The site
currently has planning permission for housing and its redevelopment should transform
the appearance of the lane. No.9 Ladd’s Lane is an example of poor infill development
using inappropriate materials and detailing. Overhead wires (Fig 15.6) and prominent
yellow lines add to the generally unattractive character of this lane.

Fig 15.6: Despite being the most celebrated street in the town, St Mary Street suffers in places
from the unsightly intrusion of overhead cables.
The Butts
This street has been almost totally destroyed by the insensitive modern housing development that has been inserted on top of the historic alignment of the street. The development does however, retain views along the original route and the ability to walk through the small garden area. This is a particularly poorly resolved space where fronts of buildings face backs of buildings, fronts face the open space on one side and backs face it on the other, with an array of unattractive suburban timber fencing and low maintenance shrub planting. It is also uncertain as to whether it is a private or public space, as a result not many people walk through it and residents do not sit out in it. This is reflected in its design and layout – it does not appear to be there for any purpose, an uninspiring space of grass, shrubs and a few ornamental trees. The buildings are of no particular note and the variety of modern window designs is undermining any unity the group at Nos. 31-36 originally had.

The development has created a new section of street to join Baydon’s Lane opposite No. 4. This stretch has to be one of the dreariest places in the town (Fig 15.7). Here again, fronts and backs face each other as if the street need not exist. Nos. 3-6 face the street yet Mace Yard turns the stark form of its back to the street. At the corner of the street is an older property at No. 10. The realigned street has created a useless piece of land to the side and modern replacement windows of varying designs and the infilling of a former shop-front have severely undermined the character of the building. Opposite the Three Crowns pub is a former industrial building now converted to offices and known as The Works. Although not an unattractive building, the recessed brick bays appear incongruous next to the original painted brickwork and the bright green window frames are an unduly dominant feature.

Behind No. 45 The Butts is No. 10-11, a semidetached building with mansard roof that has seen a number of inappropriate alterations. Different roof materials that clash and dormers that have been altered give it a discordant appearance. This is an historic building and is not listed, however it is worthy of preserving and enhancing and retains some of the former character of this area.

![Image of The Butts](image-url)

*Fig 15.7: The realignment of The Butts has created an unattractive and sterile street devoid of character.*
At the north end of the street No. 12 is a large suburban house in a prominent position. Adjacent is No. 45, a listed rubble stone cottage. The suburban house, garages adjacent to the cottage, entrance to rear accesses to properties on The Causeway and the dominant rear elevation of Nos. 35-6 provide a poor setting for this pleasant cottage. The rear elevation of No. 35-6 is a particularly dominant and intrusive feature. The suburban housing on the east side of the road is of no particular note and generally has a neutral effect on the character of the area, though more substantial vegetation would better soften the roofscape.

**Baydon’s Lane**
The lane begins as an urban lane, Nos. 1 and 2 and St. Clear and St Ives being the key elements in defining this urban form. These are older, more humble buildings, using brick as well as stone. The narrowness of the lane and enclosure of the wall to the east adds to the urban feel (Fig 15.8). Beyond St. Ives the lane opens out, the wall giving way to a hedge. On the west side the urban form breaks down and consists of two suburban houses and two unattractive makeshift parking areas on the sites of demolished houses. Between the two suburban houses is a patch of waste ground covered in scrub and some trees. The increase in vegetation is an indication of the proximity of the river valley and softens the view of the houses from within the valley. The houses are set partially into the slope and above them to the rear are three terraces of older cottages. No. 11 is an older property much altered and resembles a modern suburban house.

![Fig 15.8: The narrow entrance to Baydon’s Lane is defined by these humble but pleasant buildings. The concrete bollards are an uninspired addition and the highway standard turning circle is imposed on the space with no reference to the built form.](image)

To the rear the terrace (Nos. 24-29) is an attractive stone fronted group, given some prominence by their elevated position. However this also brings to attention their array of modern replacement windows that disrupt the cohesiveness of the terrace and are detrimental to its overall appearance. A path leads up the side of this terrace to reveal a second terrace at 90° to it. These cottages are listed and retain much of their original features and charm. The path is a pleasant and intimate pedestrian space in contrast to the busy main road nearby. However, some modern replacement windows and porches are jarring elements. This is generally an attractive and secluded residential area though
unsympathetic alterations to buildings and the poorly defined edges to the lane undermine this to an extent.

**Materials**
The materials used are predominantly Bath stone or limestone with stone tiles. Slate roof tiles are also to be found and more recently clay Roman tiles have started to dilute the character of the area. These should be discouraged, especially brightly coloured ones. Coursed and free rubble stone, both bare and limewashed is also evident so too is limited occurrences of rough cast render. Brick is generally evident in outbuildings, or more humble dwellings or side and rear elevations and where found is historically constructed in Flemish bond using warm colours. Exceptions are the inappropriate Riverhouse development this is to be compared with the attractive listed nos.46 and 52 both good examples of appropriate brick-work. Modern buildings are often rendered, with varying degrees of attractiveness and this is preferable to imitation stone blocks.

**Vegetation**
The area is primarily urban in character, though it is the urban, rather than the suburban parts that benefit most from the most prominent areas of vegetation – in the churchyard and in Monkton Park. Vegetation in the suburban areas to the south is generally more diminutive in scale, sporadic and has less of a positive impact in the townscape. Monkton Park provides a fine parkland landscape of mature trees that are visible from a number of points. The churchyard, notably on the south side, contains a number of fine mature ornamental conifers giving this side of the space a more enclosed and intimate setting. Also to the south is a pleasant avenue of Lime trees.

The attractive front to No. 15 is partially obscured by vegetation, notably by two large Yews that would benefit from extensive pruning. At the corner of St. Mary Street are a fine group of mature Lime trees that add a degree of seclusion and enclosure to the entry into the main part of the street. The open space in the new development on The Butts is suburban and somewhat sterile, the vegetation appearing almost as an afterthought. The front gardens of Nos. 45-48 The Butts and Nos. 2-6 Baydon’s Lane contain a range of vegetation. However, none of it is of sufficient scale to provide an attractive edge to the street, or view from St. Mary Street, the effect being a collection of nondescript vegetation and roof forms. Beyond this the east side of Baydon’s Lane is defined by an old hedgerow, screening views of the new housing across the river valley, though it is in poor condition and would benefit from the filling of gaps.

**Traffic & Highway Infrastructure**
As the area is not heavily trafficked, highway infrastructure is generally not a prominent feature. However, the quality of surfacing on the pavements does not match the quality of the buildings and is generally of a poor quality. A patchwork of concrete slabs of varying finished, inappropriate block paving crossovers and poor quality tarmac repairs are an all too evident and unattractive feature of the street. Standard gauge and colour double yellow lines are also a prominent feature. Signs relating to the parking restrictions are also often unattractive and in poor repair and in places accumulate other tacked on signs. Changes in traffic regulations now render these unnecessary and their removal would be a notable improvement. At least six telephone poles are evident in the area, each with an attendant and unsightly plethora of overhead wires that are notable and unattractive elements in many otherwise fine views. Ladd’s Lane and its junction with St. Mary Street are particularly blighted in this respect.
Character Area 16: Flowers Yard

THIS CHARACTER AREA IS SUBJECT TO CURRENT REDEVELOPMENT

Character Analysis

History, Archaeology & Morphology

This part of the town, being both on the edge of the town centre and the built up area, and adjacent to the river, has always been primarily in industrial use. Initial development took place on the south side of Gladstone Road (itself the rear access to High Street and Market Place properties) and between the river and Westmead Lane. The 1784 Powell map shows the land between these two areas as two enclosures: The Rack Close and Bulls Hill, although the footpath of the same name is only marked as an informal track. The police station site is part of an extensive garden to The Paddocks. The 1886 1st edition Ordnance Survey map shows Bulls Hill footpath and expansion of industry onto the east side of Westmead Lane. Houses are intermixed with industrial uses, including a sawmill, silk factory, tannery, cloth factory, and gas works (now water works). The Flowers scrapyard site is the last remaining undeveloped area, appearing on maps as fields until the 1960s.

The area and its uses have remained relatively unaltered over time. Although still primarily industrial, the actual uses have changed and declined in number, the more unsavoury uses having been lost. The flats at Avonside House, the police station and the houses in the grounds of The Paddocks are the most recent developments in the area. The current industrial uses are the water works, Hygrade meat factory and, until its recent closure, the Flowers scrapyard. Remnants of the former tannery buildings exist in a derelict state.

The area is essentially a cul-de-sac, leading only to playing fields and footpaths into the open countryside beyond Avenue La Fleche. It has developed in an unplanned form, accesses off Westmead Lane and Gladstone Road, Westmead Lane being the only public road into the area. Much of the area is now either under used or disused. The scrapyard is vacant (Figs 1 & 2), the former infants’ school is vacant, the police station is due to be relocated and the modest water works occupies a large area of land for its purpose. The current main industrial user, Hygrade, has also attempted (unsuccessfully) to relocate to an edge of town site.

As a result of the decline of the area and the redevelopment opportunities that are now presenting themselves in this important edge of centre site, a development brief was produced for the area: The Flowers Yard and Riverside Development Brief 2000.
Fig 1: The scrapyard site during clearance. New development will have to address issues of contamination. was adopted as supplementary planning guidance to the Local Plan in January 2001. This should be referred to as the primary guidance document for the area, containing guidance and proposals for its future redevelopment and enhancement.

Topography & Views

The site slopes gently down to the river from Gladstone Road, being steeper towards the south. This is most apparent along Bulls Hill. Views within the area are limited due to the lack of publicly accessible vantage points. Limited views into the site and to the open countryside beyond exist from the top of Bulls Hill and there is scope for future redevelopment to enhance these views (Fig 3). From Gladstone Road there are also unattractive views into the cleared scrapyard site, through the gated entrances.

Fig 2: Bagatelle Cottage is a picturesque listed building within the scrapyard site. New development should respect and, where possible improve the setting of this building.
Fig 3: The view of open countryside from the top of Bull’s Hill. New development should aim to enhance such views where possible.

Views along Westmead Lane are generally very enclosed, particularly at No. 26, where the house and vegetation opposite narrows the view along the straight section of the lane. This is further enhanced by the industrial buildings either side, although the view has no particular focus. The view north along Westmead Lane is of the unattractive blank walls and rear servicing area to the Borough Parade Chopping Centre.

The most significant and important views are into the site from Gladstone Road bridge and Avenue La Fleche. The former tannery chimney was the only positive landmark and a key feature of the locality, but was recently demolished. The view is now of the rear of the Hygrade factory and a large sign advertising this. This is a particularly unattractive view and portrays a poor image of the town from this important gateway route.

General Character

The area has a generally run down feel, despite the activities of the Hygrade factory. It has an isolated, cut-off atmosphere, especially along Bulls Hill and when having passed half way along Westmead Lane. This is heightened by the narrowness of the routes and the vegetation that lines them. Whilst the vegetation along the river and within the site softens the effect of the industrial buildings and screens the derelict scrapyard, it also contributes to a general amorphous and weakly defined feel to the area, particularly when viewed from Avenue La Fleche and Gladstone Road bridge. The area has poor links to the town centre and does not feel like an active part of the town.

Buildings, Spaces & Townscape

The entry into the area from Westmead Lane is quite pleasant, being marked by the attractive listed house at No. 26 and the mature vegetation opposite (Fig 4). It is at this point that the lane is at its narrowest and this marks the beginning of the long straight linear space defined by the stone industrial buildings either side. Despite their industrial nature and the derelict state of some of the buildings, their character is generally positive, adding to the quality of the space, and the activity generated by the factory adds vitality to the street (Fig 5). As the factory is located on either side of the street and there are a number of physical connections over it, the feeling is one of walking through a factory complex rather than along a public street, as staff and materials move between buildings.
Fig 4: This pleasant listed house is found on the narrowest part of Westmead Lane in close proximity to the Hygrade factory. Any new development proposals should respect and, where possible improve the setting of this building.

Fig 5: The Hygrade factory occupies sites either side of Westmead Lane, which at times can resemble a private circulation area. Full redevelopment of the area will depend on the future of the factory.

The remaining buildings surrounding the chimney, although partially derelict, are of good quality and still remain a positive element in the street scene (Fig 6).

Directly ahead, at the end of the straight section of street, is the entrance to the water works compound. The site is enclosed by walls, fencing and outbuildings and is not publicly accessible. The site is relatively sparsely built upon and is in contrast to the dense agglomeration of the Hygrade factory buildings. The majority of the buildings are undistinguished. However, the pumping station, which is the most substantial building, is solid and impressive, with five arched windows, shallow pitched roof and bulls-eye window (Fig 7). It is of a warm orange engineering brick with stone dressings and dates from when the site was used as a gas works.
Fig 6: The chimney of the former tannery (now demolished) was a historic landmark visible from a number of vantage points in the town, particularly Avenue La Fleche.

The lane kinks around the water works site and opens out into a large triangular space that tapers towards the playing fields. The space is enclosed to the north by the Hygrade factory, to the west by the water works boundary and outbuildings and to the east by pavilion buildings associated with the playing fields. Despite this the area is amorphous and ill defined, and no longer resembles a street. The space is used as an informal car park and the whole area presents a particularly unattractive prospect, none of the buildings are of any particular quality. Bulls Hill continues as a public footpath through this area and to the nearby pedestrian bridge across the river. This links, across Avenue La Fleche, to the large Charter Road estate and Rowden Hill. Improving the link across Avenue La Fleche and attractiveness of the route through the area to Bulls Hill would encourage more people to pass through the area.

Fig 7: The water works site is a large compound containing few buildings, the most notable being this brick building. Any development proposals should seek to retain this building and rationalise the space requirements of the site.

Bulls Hill itself is a historic route and is marked on the Powell map of 1784 (Fig 8). It is the only publicly accessible route through the heart of the area and important in both respects. It also has a distinctive character, being isolated from any road and vehicular...
traffic. It has an enclosed feel and human scale due to the high vegetation and boundary walls and fences. This enclosure and scale is an important characteristic of the route, though some of the boundary treatments are unattractive and the enclosure and poor lighting raises safety concerns. These issues, sensitively addressed, can be achieved without compromising the route’s distinctive character. Subsuming the route into a new road as part of redevelopment of the area would totally destroy its character and should be avoided, keeping it a separate, pedestrian only route and green finger though the area.

Vegetation
There is a variety of vegetation across the whole area of varying quality and amenity value. It is concentrated along the riverbanks, Bulls Hill and to the rear of the police station. Vegetation is shown in the development brief for the area and the best of this should be retained where possible in any future redevelopment

Materials
The majority of industrial buildings are of coursed limestone rubble, although some hand made brick is used, notably for the tannery chimney. Engineering brick with stone dressings is used for a number of the water works buildings. A number of more modern buildings exist, both industrial and related to the playing fields and are in a variety of materials of no particular note.

Highway Infrastructure
Westmead Lane is the only adopted road in the area and has little attendant infrastructure. It is narrow and unassuming in character, devoid of footways for much of its length. Bulls Hill is a narrow enclosed path with a variety of wire fencing, vegetation, stone walls and old garage doors defining its boundary as it passes through the scrapyard site. It is poorly lit, overgrown and generally unwelcoming. It does, however, have an intimate and human scale and is segregated from road traffic. These characteristics should be maintained in any future redevelopment.
Character Area 17: The Causeway

Character Analysis

History, Archaeology & Morphology
The Causeway is part of an ancient causeway from Chippenham to Derry Hill and raised sections of footway further along London Road are remnants of this. It is also a medieval road and forms part of the medieval town. The road was on the turnpike route from the south and, although within the turnpike gate it was outside the borough and came to be known as Rotten Row due to the poor condition of the road and buildings. Stagecoaches passed along St. Mary Street to avoid The Causeway.

The Causeway in the past has traditionally been lined with burgage plots, including a number of inns due to the importance of the route and in the 20th Century it became part of the main A4 trunk route between London and Bristol. Many old buildings still line the street and most of these are listed. Pedestrianisation of the High Street and construction of Avenue La Fleche has reduced much of the through traffic, though the street is still a through route and gives access to the main Emery Gate car park.

Topography & Views
The Causeway is generally flat, though rising gently towards the south. Views are limited due to the straight and enclosed nature of the street (Fig 17.1). These open out at either end of the street into Market Place to the north and the roundabout junction with Avenue La Fleche to the south. The entrance into Market Place provides an attractive vista in contrast to the enclosed street.

Fig 17.1: View south along The Causeway showing the eclectic mix of buildings, the dominant form of the former Methodist church and the unattractive edifice of the Kwik Fit garage obscuring the listed No. 1 London Road in the distance.

The southern end is less well defined, with the entrance to Burlands road and the roundabout junction being particularly poorly defined.

Views are limited primarily to those along the street. The most prominent feature of the street is the former Methodist Church, with its impressive gabled towers rising above the roofline. A number of attractive buildings in the Market Place are visible at various points.
though Nos. 44-45 (Iceland) is the most prominent. To the south, the large and imposing frontage of No. 1 London Road is dominant, though its setting is compromised by the Kwik Fit store to one side and the roundabout to the other.

Glimpse views are to be had down Ladd’s Lane and Burlands Road, though neither are of any particular note. Ladd’s Lane is poorly defined and a residential scheme for a visible vacant site on the lane has yet to be started and when built should improve the view and bring a degree of enclosure to the lane. Burlands road is lined with undistinctive buildings and rises and dips to offer no focal point.

From the south, and particularly approaching from Avenue La Fleche, the terrace of weavers cottages at Nos. 2-12 London Road and the Three Crowns pub are notable landmark buildings. Continuing northwards, the set back nature of Nos. 9-13 allows a view of the fine frontage of No. 8 that faces south.

**General Character**

Overall the Causeway is a street with a significant proportion of listed buildings forming large terraces that give a sense of enclosure. Generally most of the remaining non-listed buildings add to the character of the area. The Causeway is very urban in character and contains a mix of residential and retail uses. It is clearly an edge of centre area and evidence of the contraction of the retail area is visible with a number of old shop windows. The retail uses are concentrated near the northern end of the street closest to the town centre. A number of retail units have residential accommodation above though, from the street it would appear that some is either under used, vacant or in poor condition. Most frontages remain narrow and reflect the former medieval burgage plots. This is particularly notable on the east side of the street. This is less pronounced on the west side and may in part be due to the construction of the canal in 1798. The majority of this side of the street is occupied either by attractive villas or by the unattractive Vauxhall garage and Kwik Fit tyre depot.

The buildings are generally 2-3 storeys and, on the east side, share a common building line and front directly onto the pavement. The street is a mix of grand and more humble buildings and this is evident by the varying roofline that is a characteristic of the street. However, the street has a slightly run down feel and a number of the buildings are in need of enhancement and removal of inappropriate alterations.

**Townscape and Landscape Character**

The road is relatively narrow and this, combined with the closeness of the buildings to the street edge, gives it a human scale, enclosure and a sense of place. This is particularly so of the northern end of the street and is only really eroded towards the south, in the vicinity of the garages and roundabout. The linear nature of the space as a historic route into the town is a key element of its character. The strong building line and absence of invasive traffic management features in the carriageway maintain this perception. Opportunity should be taken to strengthen the building line where it has been diluted in the past and any traffic management measures should not undermine the perception of the street as a linear space.

**East Side**

The most distinctive building at the north end of the street is No. 53 (Amelia Classics), Tudor House, a listed black and white timber framed building. Although not the only timber framed building in the street, it is the only one not to have been re-fronted in a different style. Its setting is unfortunately compromised by the buildings either side. To
the left is No. 25 Market Place, another listed building that has been painted to ape the style of No. 53. To the right is No. 52 (Edward & Alan), a diminutive single storey shop building with an unattractive tiled frontage (Fig 17.2).

Fig 17.2: The poor quality of the shop-front and diminutive scale of the building ensure it is detrimental to the setting of the adjacent timber framed listed building and out of character with the street in general.

The building is also out of scale with other buildings in the street, which tend to be 2-3 storeys in height. Nos. 51 (Taj-Mahal) and 50 (Cut n Curl) are also of humble scale though they are of two storeys. No. 51 retains an attractive bracketed door hood and shop-front fascia. Unfortunately the buildings suffer from a number of unsympathetic features, including truncated chimney stack, concrete tiled roof, replacement windows, modern shop-fronts and inappropriate pointing to the rubble stone.

Nos. 49-43 are either rendered or ashlar faced and generally increase in stature towards the former Methodist Church. Nos. 49 & 48 (house & John Davis & Co. respectively) are rendered and, from the upper storeys appear to have possibly once been a single house. Although the former shop-front is not unattractive, the building is rather plain in appearance. A variety of window designs fail to bring unity to the façade and imitation slates and lack of chimney add to this effect. No. 47 (Beauty) is an attractive ashlar faced building in good condition with an impressive chimney stack in the middle of the roof slope. Chamfered window reveals house modern replacement double glazed sash windows that do not appear too incongruous in relation to the proportion of the remainder of the façade.

Nos. 46-44 (Cellar Gallery/Causeway Framing & two houses respectively) are a terrace of three, three storey houses with slate roof. The terrace once had four chimney stacks on the rear roof slope although only one remains. This and the position of the doors and windows would suggest that Nos. 45 & 44 might have originally been a single dwelling. Unfortunately the ground floor of No. 46 has been replaced with a recessed shop-front and 10 of the 12 windows have been replaced with a variety of inappropriate modern designs (Fig 17.3). These features are discordant elements in this otherwise simple but pleasant façade, though Nos. 44 & 45 retain attractive door hoods.
No. 43 is a three storey listed house now forming part of the adjacent former Methodist Church and together with the listed house at No. 41 frames the setting of the impressive frontage of the church. The church is set back from the road behind a low stonewall and gate piers. Unfortunately the railings and gate have been lost and a utilitarian lighting column stands on the pavement outside. The facades of the church and No. 43 would benefit from some general maintenance work.

In comparison to the formal frontages of Nos. 47-43, the terrace consisting of four houses at Nos. 41-37 is vernacular in appearance, No. 39 being the only non-listed building. The facades are either rubble stone or render, with door hoods a distinctive feature. No. 41 would benefit from removal of paint from the stone quoins and door and window surrounds. No. 39 is a modern building and is successful in fitting in with the character of the terrace, though the suburban door, stained windows and party wall copings are out of character features. No. 38 is an attractive house with distinctive 8/8 pane sashes and former shop window at ground floor that does not detract from the appearance of the house. No. 37, restored in 1990, is probably the finest building in the terrace and marks the corner with Ladd’s Lane (Figs 17.4 & 17.5). This is a more imposing building in roughcast render with large stone tiled roof containing two small-hipped dormers. The painted frontage keeps the paint to the render only and retains the stonework bare and is a good example of the appropriate means of exterior decoration for such a building.

Fig 17.3: The effect of the loss of traditional fenestration can transform simple elegance into plain ugliness.
On the opposite corner of Ladd's Lane is No. 36 (Collectors Corner), a listed shop with rendered rubble stone frontage and stone tiled roof. The frontage is a later addition when the building was converted to a shop, the largely unaltered side elevation (No. 1 Ladd's Lane) giving an indication of the original appearance. The shop-front is simple though generally a positive element in the frontage. The modern beige brick chimney protruding from the roof is a particularly prominent, discordant and out of character feature. The frontage would benefit from general maintenance, repair of the dormer window and removal of alarm and junction boxes. Nos. 34-35 are former shops now converted to houses, retaining their shop windows and fascias. The fascia extends across the whole frontage though the door openings, shop windows and first floor windows step up slightly with the rising street. The eaves to No. 34 are distinctly higher than those of No. 35 and the roof contains a large hipped dormer. Nos. 34-36 are set at an angle to the street and this creates an alcove in front of Nos. 34-35 as No. 33 returns closer to the street edge. The general appearance of the building is not unattractive but the poor quality fenestration, dark paint colour, plain shop windows and dreary painted flank wall to No. 33 are all discordant elements to its appearance.
Nos. 33-26 are an eclectic mix of houses and shops, varying between 2, 2.5 and 3 storeys in height, varying heights of each storeys lending to a distinctive variety in roof heights and forms within a limited range. This, the three distinctive gambrel roofs and the presence of door hoods are a distinctive feature of this part of the street. All buildings in this terrace are listed except Nos. 31a and 26. The brick side elevation to No. 33 suffers from being partially painted and is a rather drab and prominent elevation visible along the street. The lower window is notable as a former doorway. The upper storey windows suffer from the loss of their mullions, although the most discordant element to this otherwise attractive building is the painted stonework. The house would benefit from removal of paint to the window surrounds and side elevation, repointing and a more appropriate design of ground floor windows.

No. 32 (John Iles & Son) has a drab untreated render over a limestone rubble front and, though this is generally an attractive building retaining many original features, it would benefit from general maintenance and decoration. The shop window, awning and hanging sign appear notably flimsy in comparison to the remainder of the building, particularly the doors. The shop entrance has a fine panelled door though the architrave is in need of repair and the plain and flimsy pediment above is a later and rather discordant addition.

No. 31 is an attractive stone fronted house with large hipped dormer in gambrel roof. The ground floor sash window is a later replacement, the original being the same as the first floor window, its outline being visible in the stonework. The house was originally two bays wide, the left hand bay being demolished to allow access to the rear and later being filled by the current No. 31a. This is a humble building with small upper floor window, currently occupied by a barber and generally in good condition. No. 30 has recently been sensitively converted to an office with 3 residential units and is now much improved with reinstatement of traditional windows at first floor and removal of paint to reveal the natural stone facade (Fig 17.6). No. 29 is a former shop with pleasant well-proportioned upper floors.

Fig 17.6: The sensitively converted No.30 continues to make a positive contribution to the character of the area. To the right is a former shop converted to housing, like a number of such buildings in the street it retains its shop window, to unfortunate effect.
The retained plate glass shop window at ground floor is, however, a discordant element. As with No. 33, No. 28 projects slightly forward from No. 29, and the pleasant side elevation contains two small windows and is in contrast to that of No. 33. No. 27-28 is one of the finer buildings on this side of the street. It is a symmetrical pair of cottages with large gambrel roof. The houses were restored in 1975 (Figs 17.7 & 17.8).

Fig 17.7: Nos. 27-28 before restoration, boarded up, unattractive and adding to the run down feel of the area.

Fig 17.8: Nos. 27-28 after grant aided restoration, now one of the most attractive buildings in the street. A number of other historic properties in the street could benefit from grant aid.

Nos. 26-23 is a terrace of more formally proportioned houses with plain frontages. Nos. 23 and 24 are both listed and have seen improvements in recent years, though No. 23 has an inappropriate suburban front door, no.24 has suffered from its flank wall being painted white up to the middle of the 2nd floor. No. 25 is set back from the pavement and doesn’t sit well with its surroundings. Unfortunately the space in front is cluttered and poorly defined with poor quality surfacing and there being no boundary treatment with the pavement. The windows and doors are all replacement UPVC and this combined with the trellises and white painted frontage gives the whole building a distinctly suburban appearance out of character with the street. The plain frontages rely
heavily on traditional fenestration for their visual interest and this has unfortunately been lost with replacement UPVC windows and door at No. 26.

Between Nos. 23 and 22a (both listed) is a wide pathway to the listed former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (No. 22). When no longer required as a chapel it was converted to Spinkes printing works and still bears this name over the arched doorway, though it is no longer used as a printing works. The building has now been converted to 3 dwellings and is a pleasant surprise in the gap in the frontage and is the focus of the view from Burlands Road. Both Nos. 32 and 22 have side entrances off the pathway and at the pavement edge are two gate-piers. Unfortunately the railings and gates have gone and part of the opening has been filled in with ugly modern crenelated blockwork.

Similarly to No. 25, the space here is cluttered, poorly defined and an unattractive setting and approach to this fine building. A bright yellow plastic awning to No. 23 is completely out of character with the building and a suburban garden shed sits almost in front of the entrance to the works. The space would greatly benefit from sensitive enhancement. No. 22a is an attractive narrow building, the remains of a larger house partly demolished when the former Wesleyan Chapel was built. No. 21 was originally an inn in the 18th Century but has long since been a house. The most interesting feature being the stone tiled roof and dormers. The whole frontage has been covered in roughcast render, including the stone window surrounds and cills. Although the first floor retains plate glass sash windows the dormers and ground floor windows have been replaced with out of character UPVC replacements. There is also no front door onto the street and this, along with the render, gives a sense of remoteness. The building would greatly benefit from enhancement to re-instate original windows, remove the render and re-introduce a front entrance to the street. The adjacent No. 21a, although not listed, suffers in a similar manner to No. 21, its side elevation being painted rubble stone with two truncated brick stacks.

The space between No. 21a and No. 20 is a rather cluttered jumble of boundary treatments and ancillary buildings. This continues in front of No. 20, which is set back behind a somewhat scrappy hedge and unsymmetrical gate piers and wooden fence. No. 20 is an attractive 17th Century cottage. Formerly two houses, it retains the stone door hood of a former entrance. The appearance of the cottage suffers considerably from unauthorised UPVC replacement double glazed windows in some openings. Attached to, and wrapping round this house, is the Three Crowns pub (No. 18). This is a fine landmark building at the tapering junction with The Butts. As late as the 1970s this building retained its stone tiled roof. Whilst a landmark building, the difference in level between the pavement and higher carriageway gives its a slightly diminutive feel. The building has a somewhat tired appearance and a number of features detract from its appearance. The small bay window has lost the glazing bars on the upper sash and looks distinctly odd, the name boards are large and obtrusive, the one on the end spanning across the two bay windows. The building has been repainted but would benefit from sensitive enhancement.

The angled junction of The Butts creates a triangular open space that is fronted by an impressive 3-storey terrace of former weavers cottages (Figs 17.9 & 17.10).
Fig 17.9: No. 12 London Road at the end of the terrace of listed weavers cottages was originally an unattractive shop unit with bare forecourt.

Fig 17.10 Grant aided restoration has transformed No.12 into the most attractive building in the terrace, a landmark building when approaching the town from Avenue La Fleche.

These are another fine landmark building in the vicinity of the roundabout junction with Avenue La Fleche and are in marked contrast to the clumsy imitation of their form at Queen Square. Unfortunately the dominance of the road and traffic has a detrimental effect on the setting of the building. A number of roads converge in this area, including The Butts, The Causeway, London Road, Queen Square and Avenue La Fleche and the large expanse of open space is almost completely covered with tarmac and crazy paving.

The space directly in front of the terrace is a parking area and parked vehicles disrupt the view of the building, providing it with a cluttered and bleak setting. The unity of the façade is severely compromised by a number of features. Most houses do not retain their original fenestration, there being a variety of styles, both of sashes and unauthorised inappropriate modern replacements, though No. 12 appears to have been restored to a high standard. Nos. 2 & 10 have lost their railings, those at No. 10 having been replaced by inappropriate timber fencing. No. 6 has single plate glass windows and a variety of different slate types disrupt the unity of the roofline. The terrace would
benefit from a grant scheme for the restoration of original features and a landscaping scheme for the parking area

**West Side**

Entering the town centre from the south, the Kwik Fit and Vauxhall garages present an unattractive and unwelcoming gateway to the town, the slight curve in the street emphasising their presence, particularly their inappropriate low rise form and dominant signage. The road junction and garages marginalise the large listed house at No. 1 London Road, giving it a particularly poor setting. The character and appearance of the street could be significantly enhanced with the redevelopment of these sites. The lack of definition to the corner sites at the junction with Burlands Road weakens the enclosure of the space and allows views of the side elevations of buildings and the collection of unattractive domestic garages on Burlands Road.

The Vauxhall building frontage consists of a long cavernous undercroft that gives a dingy and overbearing feel to the street. The adjacent office building is dated 1969 in the railings. Adjacent are two houses at Nos. 15 and 14. Both are stone faced though no 15 has been painted and has replacement UPVC windows. No. 14 is an attractive and interesting building, retaining three 6/6 pane sash windows, the ground floor one having margin lights. To the right is an unattractive plate glass shop-front with suburban UPVC door. To the left the door and window are surmounted by an arch in the stonework and between the two is a recessed boot scrape.

Nos. 9-13 mark a change in the prevailing form of the street, though are positive contributions to its overall character. These are three detached villas and a pair of semi detached villas, all dating from the mid 19th Century. They are set back from the pavement, above street level with raised front gardens behind boundary walls (except No. 12). This gives the street a wider feel in comparison to the narrow section immediately after the Market Place, and emphasises the presence and stature of the buildings.

*Fig 17.11 These former Town Council offices suffer from the loss of the original garden and an out of character frontage to the building. Sitting within a particularly fine group of buildings, these features are quite prominent.*
No. 13 is a three bay detached villa with impressive Tuscan portico. No. 12 was formerly
the Town Council offices and has lost its raised front garden area (Fig 17.11).

It is now used as offices. The setting and frontage to this building is a significantly
discordant element in the group. The garden area has been hard landscaped at street
level in a distinctly suburban style with concrete bollards, brick pavers and diminutive
birch trees. Steps with suburban style railings lead up to a paved area behind a concrete
block retaining wall. The ground floor façade of the building has a large, dominant
applied fascia above large stained entrance doors and windows. The building and street
frontage would benefit immeasurably from the reinstatement of the original garden form
and ground floor frontage. No. 11, similarly to no 13, has and impressive, though heavily
decorated porch and bay to one side. Nos. 9 & 10 have a more restrained frontage, the
6/6 pane sash windows being a distinctive feature as are the ornamental trees in the
front garden. The only discordant element is a large evergreen bush in the garden of No.
9. The vegetation continues with the attractive pathway with arbour leading to the
modern Causeway Close development. The gap in the frontage allows a clear view of
the fine side (front) elevation of No. 8 and its cast iron trellised veranda and entwined
creeper. The elevation of Nos. 1-3 Causeway Close successfully encloses this attractive
space. Nos. 6 & 7 are also attractive listed buildings in similar style to No. 8, though
finished in stucco. The window surrounds would benefit from removal of paint.

Nos. 1-5 marks a return to a more eclectic mix of building forms and varied rooftops
(Fig 17.12). No. 5 (Nail Tips) has an interesting early 20th Century glazed brick shop-
front, reminiscent of a butchers. Modern replacement windows and suburban door are
detracting elements, as are the painted mullions. No. 4 (Causeway Health Foods) is an
impressive roughcast rendered timber framed building with two gables facing the street.
The shop-fronts are of no particular note though are not out of character with the building
that to the left consists of two doorways, possibly forming an access to a rear courtyard.
The dark green paint applied to the entire woodwork and ground floor frontage is a
detracting element.

No. 3 (Fabrics Galore) is a pleasant, humble building similar in form to No. 4 but only two
storeys. It has two shop windows and doors though is now a single shop. The plate
glass windows and suburban doors are detracting elements. No. 2 (This and That) has a
rendered two storey frontage with arched side door to alley behind. Again, bland and
indistinctive shop windows and fenestration are notable detracting elements in a simple
but not unattractive frontage. No. 1 (Good Food Cottage) is a distinctive timber framed
building, with one side of the elevation jettied out over a small bay window. It is in
marked contrast to the more formal buildings either side and a notable local landmark
building at the transition from Market Place to The Causeway. It is generally sensitively
used as a restaurant, the only detracting elements being the large lights to the hanging
sign and ‘A’ boards on the pavement.
Fig. 17.12: Towards the north of the street is a concentration of more vernacular building forms that are an important part of the character of the street

**Materials**

Larger and grander buildings tend to be of ashlar faced limestone or coursed rubble stone, others more usually free rubble stone, limewashed or, more recently painted. Ashlar is generally not painted. Flank walls are often in brick or random rubble stone. Roofs are generally graded limestone or slate. More recently clay Roman tiles have started to dilute the character of the area, these should be discouraged especially brightly coloured ones. Windows are generally sashes or casements in mullions

**Vegetation**

Although vegetation is not a significant feature of the street, the gardens of the villas at Nos. 9-13 bring a notable and pleasant element of greenery to the street. The side elevation to No. 8 has an attractive veranda with climbing vegetation and the arbour along the pedestrian entrance to Causeway Close is a pleasant reflection of this and addition to the street.

**Traffic & Highway Infrastructure**

Generally, highway infrastructure is not an intrusive element in the street. Tall highway-style galvanised lighting columns are, however, a notable feature and are out of character and scale with the street. Towards the roundabout with Avenue La Fleche lighting columns become a cluttered and intrusive feature. Road centre line markings are faded and the highway surface is a patchwork of repairs that contribute to the slightly run down feel of the area. Newly painted double yellow lines are an unduly dominant feature of the surfacing.

Pavements are narrow in many places and the surfacing drab and unattractive for a town centre location. There are also no formal pedestrian crossing places along the whole length of the street. The reduced volume of traffic since pedestrianisation of the High Street provides the opportunity for widening the pavements and providing pedestrian crossing points. Two remaining telephone poles outside No. 1 London Road and No. 13 the Causeway and associated wiring are unsightly and particularly out of character with such an urban street scene.
Character Area 18: London Road

Character Analysis

History, Archaeology & Morphology

The character area consists of part of the historic A4 trunk road from Bristol to London, becoming London Road at the point where The Causeway and The Butts meet. The route was a turnpike road and became part of the A4 trunk road in the 1920s. The road has been incrementally developed with buildings along its length. As the town has expanded the buildings and plots have been through a process of renewal, enlargement and expansion. The listing programme has seen the retention of the best of the older buildings and this short length of street is lined with a combination of attractive listed buildings and more modern development of varying quality.

Topography & Views

The land is generally flat, though the road rises gently away from the town centre in a south easterly direction, along the ridge around which the River Avon sweeps through the town. Views are generally limited to those along the linear space of the street. The land is generally slightly higher on the south west side of the road, as it does not sit quite on the crest of the ridge. This prevents views across the river valley towards Rowden, though allows some views across the river valley towards Monkton Park. The pattern of development fronting the road has changed over time, particularly on the north-east side, and views across the river valley towards Monkton Park have changed with this. Today the views are defined by the streets that lead off London Road to serve recent backland development.

Fig 18.1: The approach from Avenue La Fleche is terminated by this fine terrace of weavers cottages, though some have lost boundary treatments and original windows. Note the flats to the left, the painted window surrounds, standard opening sizes and lack of chimneys giving them a chunky and cumbersome appearance.
Along London Road

There are no distinctive views or focal points south-east along the road and the general impression is of the road leading off into the distance lined by buildings. Looking towards the town centre, there is more to catch the eye. Unfortunately, there is little to provide an attractive entry into the town. The most attractive arrival is from Avenue La Fleche, where, on reaching the top of the ridge, one is presented with the fine listed terrace of Nos. 1-12 London Road and the interesting turret on the corner of Nos. 26-28 Queens Square (Fig 18.1). Unfortunately, the more diminutive block at Nos. 1-6 blocks all views across the river valley beyond.

On turning into The Causeway, and sharing similar views with those from London Road, one is presented with an amorphous and ill-defined townscape (Fig 18.2).

![Fig 18.2: The approach into The Causeway is far from an attractive entry to the town, the Kwik Fit and Vauxhall garages are dominant and unattractive features in the townscape. Overhead wires, poles and numerous lighting columns simply compound the overall effect.](image)

The slight curve in the road accentuates the unsightly array of single storey sheds occupied by Kwik Fit and the Vauxhall garage, their large signage and logos, parked cars, low walls, telephone poles and overhead wires and tall galvanised lighting columns. The scene is one of clutter, lacking any visual interest or quality of built form that shapes the space, in complete contrast to the townscape on the opposite side of The Causeway. This is despite The Causeway being a sign posted route to town centre parking, tourist information and leisure centre. The isolated listed building at No. 1 London Road and the derelict site and building at No. 9 London Road, together with the large tarmac area occupied by the roundabout, serve to add a degree of neglect and bleakness to this southern gateway to the town centre.

Diverging from the Causeway at the roundabout is The Butts. Between the two roads is the attractive Three Crowns pub, a local landmark, which would benefit from the removal of the paint from its frontage. The view along The Butts is notable for the view of the steeples of St. Andrews Church and St. Paul's Church on Malmesbury Road in close juxtaposition. The variety of roof forms and heights provides an attractive foreground to this view. Untidy rear elevations of buildings, overhead wires and tall standard galvanised lighting columns are all negative elements in this vi
Off London Road

In addition to the truncated view along Queen’s Square there are views across the river valley to Monkton Park at Larkham Rise, The Royal Oak site and the adjacent Phoenix works. The view along Larkham Rise offers a wide soulless vista of a wide road, tarmac and parked cars in the foreground. In the middle distance is the recent extension to the Monkton Park housing estate – houses packed close to each other with no vegetation to relieve them or provide a screen or softening transition between the estate and the river valley. The untended scrub of the river valley is also evident. Tree planting along Larkham Rise and in front of the new houses across the river could improve this view dramatically. The longer distance views are the most attractive consisting of the mature trees along the alignment of the former Calne branch railway and the hills above Tytherton beyond.

The view into the Royal Oak site is considerably more attractive. Houses beyond the site boundary in Larkham Rise help enclose the space and mature trees within the site soften these. In winter the trees allow limited views across the river valley. As with Larkham Rise, standard highway designs, materials and dimensions have a sterilising effect on the character of the street. The Phoenix works site is yet to begin construction, though it is envisaged that the slight kink in the road and the stepping down of the buildings with the gradient will provide a more successful solution than at Larkham Rise. Tree planting will also be important in the quality of the view.

General Character

The area is almost entirely residential, though the width of the road and scale of most of the buildings ensures it retains the character of a main road. The nursery at Nos. 47-49 is the only non-residential use. Nos. 9 and 78 (former Royal Oak pub) are both vacant listed buildings. No. 9 and its surrounding vacant site is in a state of dereliction and a particular eyesore in desperate need of restoration.

London Road remains a shorter and often quicker route into the town centre than the busy and circuitous Pewsham Way - the sign posted route into the town centre. Extensive traffic calming measures have recently been installed along the length of London Road to discourage through traffic, though it is envisaged that, despite this, and as Pewsham Way becomes busier, a certain amount of traffic will continue to use the road as a route to the town centre. The route is also the historic turnpike route and A4 trunk road to London and the dimensions of the road and scale and character of the buildings lining it reflect this, as does its strong sense of being a linear space and a road that leads the traveller onward. This is an important element of its character, and development and traffic management measures that dilute this character would be detrimental to the historic character of the street.

Buildings, Spaces & Townscape

North-east side

Leading off the roundabout is Queen’s Square, a modern development of 40 flats. The corner block is marked by a distinctive terrace and is suitably scaled for the street and space, being similar to the adjacent listed terrace at Nos. 2-12 London Road. Whilst the simplicity and proportions of the terrace at Nos. 1-12 gives it an elegant appearance, The bold and chunky architectural elements, lack of chimneys, uniformity of scale and
lack of entrances onto the street gives it a bland and soulless character in stark contrast to its neighbour.

Adjacent is No. 56, a single storey building containing two dwellings (Fig 18.3). The scale of the building is out of character with the rest of the street. Its combination of white render, bright brickwork, plain UPVC windows and doors, unfinished alterations and galvanised gates draw undue attention to a building that is unattractive, out of character and detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area.

Nos. 58-74, flanking the entrance to Larkham Rise are of little architectural note and are somewhat suburban in scale and character for the location. Being only two storeys, lacking chimneys and pitched roofed door hoods are some of the features that contribute to this. However, the development works considerably better than Queen’s Square. The appearance is simpler, scale more human, doors open onto the street with small garden and paved spaces, and the end houses with entrances on the corners add an element of interest. The buildings relate better to the street rather than turning their back on it. Between this and the former Royal Oak public house a new development has recently been completed on the site of the car park and garden (Fig 18.4).

Fig 18.3: This diminutive building is out of scale with surrounding housing and has a poor quality bland frontage. Redevelopment of this site could bring significant townscape enhancements.

Fig 18.4: This new development adjacent to the listed former Royal Oak pub takes its design cues from the pub, though is somewhat chunky in appearance. Unfortunately lack of attention to detail
make this a rather bland building – it has no front doors to the street, the most prominent features from the pavement being the plain railings and array of gas meter boxes.

The buildings are similar in scale to the pub and have distinctive mansard roofs. These are more successful than the Queen’s Square buildings and from a distance, are generally positive elements in the townscape. However, like Queen’s Square they relate poorly to the street frontage, having no entrances onto the street. The gravel space behind the plain railings is bland and dominated by meter boxes. Flat roofed dormers, large stained bargeboards and crude detailing around the windows are all elements that give the buildings a sterile appearance and lack of interest at closer inspection.

Beyond this, up to the edge of the Conservation Area is a group of three listed buildings. The former Royal Oak is an attractive building, currently vacant and in urgent need of restoration and re-use. Adjacent is No. 78, an elegant town house. Beyond the entrance to the former Phoenix works is Nos. 80-82, a short terrace of two dwellings with extension to one side (Fig 18.5). The extension replaces an earlier property and is generally in keeping with the character of the adjacent building. However, from the pavement the reconstituted window surrounds and modern pointing finish are evident. The generally attractive rubble stone terrace suffers greatly from inappropriate replacement doors and windows in stained timber effect plastic that is particularly detrimental to its character and appearance.

Fig 18.5: This listed building has a well executed extension but the character of the building is severely compromised by dark brown UPVC wood effect replacement windows and doors.

South-west side

On one corner of the roundabout and sitting within a large area of derelict scrub is the listed but derelict No. 9 (Fig 18.6). Despite its dereliction it still retains a simple and elegant façade with first floor balcony windows. A later bay has been added at ground floor. The building is in desperate need of restoration and on this prominent site has the potential to greatly enhance the image of this entrance to the town centre. The surrounding site would also accept some new development to the street front if not overbearing in scale compared to the listed building. Set well back from the street is the listed No. 45, its gated stone and railing frontage and varied roof form both positive and attractive elements in the street scene (Fig 18.7).
Fig 18.6: This listed house at 9 London Road has lain derelict for years. Has recently undergone repair work. This will improve the quality and appearance of the site on the approach from Avenue La Fleche & London Road.

Fig 18.7: No. 45 one of the number of listed buildings to be found in the street.

Adjacent is another listed building at Nos. 47-49, an attractive and well-proportioned town house. It is now a nursery and has a single storey side extension in character with and suitably scaled to the main house. The two huge Lleylandii dilute the positive impact of the house in the street in the front garden which obscure much of the frontage from view and by the loss of boundary railings.

Beyond this the wide parking area and entrance to Glendale Drive fragment the built frontage. This creates a large area of poorly defined bland tarmac and draws undue attention to the frontage of Nos. 2-4. On the opposite side of the entrance No.1 Glendale Drive and No. 1 Rural Gardens, sit in awkward and close juxtaposition to tone another, and being of brick, with gaps either side, they are particularly noticeable in the street frontage. Both are plain modern buildings of no architectural note, though No. 1 Glendale Drive manages to create some visual interest with sash windows and door hood. On the opposite side of the path giving access to the remainder of the Rural Gardens courtyard is an attractive semi-detached pair of houses dating from the late 19th Century. The pair are faced with coursed rubble stone with swn dressings and remain a positive element in the townscape despite the loss of original windows and railings.
Nos. 87-105 is an impressive three-storey listed terrace of townhouses (Fig 18.8). Their shallow depth, tall height and painted brick frontage in varied colours make them a distinctive and important element in the street. Loss of chimney pots and an end chimney stack, and some inappropriate and unauthorised replacement windows undermine the overall uniformity of the character of the terrace.

**Vegetation**
The street is a particularly urban space and generally devoid of any significant vegetation. The impact of vegetation is generally limited to longer distance views across the river valley. In the front garden of the listed Nos. 47-49 are two huge Lleylandii that obscure much of the frontage of the building and compete for prominence in the street scene with it. In addition, their solidity of form and suburban character ensure they have a detrimental impact on the character of the street in general.

**Materials**
The predominant building materials are Bath stone or limestone. Sawn stone is generally bare, rubble stone is either rendered or limewashed. Roof materials are either plain clay tiles, Roman clay tiles or slate. Modern buildings tend to be in imitations of these natural materials. Their regularity, larger mortar joints and uniformity of colour gives them a sense of starkness. This is particularly noticeable on the north east side of the street.

**Highway Infrastructure**
Street lighting is primarily by means of tall, two-tone green columns which are distinctly more attractive than the currently preferred bare galvanised finish. Their scale is also appropriate to that of the street in general and they help to emphasise the linear character of the space. However, the columns begin to become visually intrusive around the roundabout. Whilst there is not a large amount of highway signs in the area, those that exist are often an untidy agglomeration of more than one sign, in need of repair that could be better sited on existing lighting columns. Overhead wires are also a dominant element on parts of the street.