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Cover image of Malmesbury Abbey by JMW Turner 1826
i ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Appraisal has been prepared in close collaboration with a local working group set up in 2001 for the purpose. This is a sub-group of the Malmesbury Area Liaison Group, a forum of local interest groups drawn from Malmesbury's community, that are consulted by the District Council on townscape and conservation related projects in the town. The members of the working group were:

- Mrs L Bennett
- Cllr J Bowen
- Cllr C Vernon
- Mrs J Price
- Mrs C Pym
- Major T Tyler
- Mrs M Hill
- Mrs V Vernon
- Mrs N Grout
- Cllr P Goldstone

The following organisations were represented on the working group:

- Malmesbury Town Council (members)
- North Wiltshire District Council (members)
- Malmesbury Civic Trust
- Malmesbury Preservation Trust
- Malmesbury River Valleys Trust
- Malmesbury Chamber of Commerce
- Malmesbury & St. Paul Without Residents Association
- Wiltshire County Council
- Warden & Freemen of Malmesbury

The project was organised and managed by P Garrett, R Burrows, J Kashdan-Brown, D King and M Yallop at North Wiltshire District Council.

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ii PURPOSE OF THE APPRAISAL

Local planning authorities have a duty: 'from time to time, to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts'. Also, Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) 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 above 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, which include a district-wide Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document, Conservation Area Appraisals for each of the District's six towns, with accompanying Conservation Area Management Plans for each to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents. The Malmesbury Conservation Area Appraisal is therefore published to support proposed management strategies within the forthcoming Malmesbury Conservation Area Management Plan, which will; be the subject of public consultation prior to adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.
iii HOW TO USE THE APPRAISAL

This document is made up of four distinct sections, each of which focuses on a separate aspect of the Conservation Area. They may be used by parties whose actions have an effect on the character of Malmesbury.

Section One provides a general introduction to the Conservation Area, Conservation Areas in general and Local Plan policies. Details of policies affecting Malmesbury and an explanation of Conservation Area designation are followed by a summary of the historical and economic background of the town, perceived current pressures and their relevance to its continuing historical development. 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.

Section Two is a ‘plan-based’ analysis of the features which combine to create the general character of Malmesbury and whereby key features which contribute to the Conservation Area are identified. The analyses also give a guide to parts of the Conservation Area which are considered to exhibit the greatest concentration of character.

Section Three arguably the most important part of the Appraisal, divides the Conservation Area into a number of notional ‘Character Areas’ which are analysed in detail in terms of their contribution to the overall Conservation Area character.

Section Four contains good and bad examples of building details and suitable building materials and construction methods.
PART 1: CONTEXT

1.1 CONSERVATION AREAS

The Character of North Wiltshire

1.1.1 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 the business and growth that are vital to avoid stagnation, but also increases the pressure for development in existing towns and villages.

Why Conservation Areas are Designated

1.1.2 Conservation Area designation seeks to address the problem of the loss of local and regional identity and the degradation of valued historic environments. This, along with the need to halt the growing trend for “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.

1.1.3 Heritage is a vitally important component of quality of life in our towns and villages and, whether in the form of archaeology, historic buildings or the often characterful spaces between them is woven into the fabric of our lives.

1.1.4 It is easy to take this rich legacy for granted, yet heritage is a fragile resource. It is vulnerable to decay, both through natural weathering and from neglect, and is sometimes at risk from modern development. This vulnerability is all the more poignant since, by its nature, heritage is a finite resource and once lost it is gone for ever. It is a central canon of sustainability that we should hand on to our children a world in as good a condition as we found it, and no-where is this more urgently true than in the conservation of our heritage.

1.1.5 However, it must be remembered that heritage is a product of centuries of natural adaptation and change, and that this will continue. Few buildings exist now in the form in which they were originally conceived, and it would be wrong to try and mothball what remains. The scale of modern building and the rapidity of change, engendered by technology and economic prosperity, means that modern development poses a real challenge. Yet, properly guided, development also provides one of the best means to care for our heritage. Enlightened conservation allows for continuing, evolutionary change as well as for preservation.

1.1.6 There are, for instance, 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, follow fundamental architectural principles of scale, respect their neighbours and feature the proper arrangement and use of materials.

How Conservation Areas are Designated

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

1.1.8 A Conservation Area is often centred on listed buildings or other historical focal points, but there are no fixed criteria for their designation, and this reflects the fact that each is created by its own unique circumstances.

1.1.9 Some areas are entire settlements, others are only a part of a town or village. Some include wide tracts of surrounding land, whilst others are drawn tightly around the buildings. Groups of buildings and the spaces between them are considered, along with traditional walls, hedges, verges, paving, street furniture, trees and mature foliage. The topography and contours of the land are also important, as these can help create views and vistas.

The Effects of Designation

1.1.10 The Planning (Listed Buildings & 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 extends to the handling of development proposals outside the conservation area but which would affect its setting or views in and out.

1.1.11 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 regarding the effect of Conservation Area designation are:
a) Demolition of all or a substantial part of a building will normally need Conservation Area Consent in addition to the normal planning requirements.

b) Proposals for new buildings on whatever scale will be given close attention. Outline permission will not normally be granted. 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 must be given for significant works to most trees within a Conservation Area unless they are an immediate danger.

d) Certain types of development require planning permission which, if outside a Conservation Area, would not require such permission. The local planning authority is also able to make Directions withdrawing further permitted development rights affecting aspects of the external appearance of 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 may allocate grants for the conservation 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 detract from the character of the area.
1.2 THE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

1.2.1 Malmesbury Conservation Area was first designated in May 1971. The first review of the Conservation Area boundary was undertaken in November 1987. This led to the extension of the Conservation Area to an extended boundary, by including concentrations of historic buildings in the west of the town, the remains of the Medieval town walls and the Avon river valleys surrounding the town. The boundary was again reviewed as part of the preparation of this Appraisal and the boundary extended in March 2006 as follows:

A. Land to the North of Burnham Road (Nos 9-15a)
This area includes a number of attractive early 20th Century dwellings and a Baptist burial ground. At this point, the Victorian character of Gaston’s Road gently gives way to an early 20th Century feel. This place feels like part of the Conservation Area and the architectural quality of the buildings - relatively unmolested by inappropriate modern alterations - merits inclusion.

B. West and South West of the junction between Bristol Street and Foxley Road.
This area includes the Old National School, an imposing 1850s building and a significant local feature of the townscape. Apart from its architectural and historic merit, the school is not in use and inclusion within the Conservation Area will help ensure that any future redevelopment is carried out appropriately and sensitively.

Also included are Westhill House and Tanyard, of substantial size, local landmarks and of historic interest, as well as some open country which, as well as providing a rural setting for the town, affords views of it.

This area is subject to some development pressure and the extension of the Conservation Area will help ensure that the interest of the area is fully considered should further proposals be forthcoming.

C. Land to the South West of Westport Bridge.
This includes Trucklebridge, a large property set in the river valley and part of the magnificent view of the town and abbey as one approaches along Foxley Road from the South West. This edge of town setting, where rural meets urban, is very much part of the town’s heritage and should be conserved by inclusion the Conservation Area.

Like Tanyard, there has been some development pressure here and it is vital that this important part of the setting of the town should be reflected by inclusion in the Conservation Area.

1.3 HISTORY OF THE TOWN

1.3.1 The history of Malmesbury has been well documented elsewhere (see The Victoria History of Wiltshire, volume XIV Malmesbury Hundred, Oxford University Press 1991) and this section provides only a summary of the main stages in the town’s development and its present character.

1.3.2 Malmesbury occupies a steep hill almost encircled by the Tetbury and Sherston branches of the Bristol Avon and edged by a skirt of cottages following the stepped remains of the town walls of Alfred’s fortified Burgh of the 9th century. Although now a small town, in the late Saxon period it was an important defensive and ecclesiastical centre.
1.3.4 Early in the 12th Century the town was enclosed by stone walls by Bishop Roger, who also built a castle which reportedly encroached on a graveyard within a stone’s throw of the Abbey church. The walls may have partially followed the lines of Alfred’s earlier earthen bank defences.

1.3.5 The wall was still standing in the early 16th Century and reported by Leland in 1542. It probably suffered most damage during the Civil War and by 1800 had largely disappeared. Nevertheless, the boundaries of the plots behind the Bell Hotel, Holloway, Cross Hayes, Silver Street and Ingram Street, and above and below the lane called King’s Wall still retain standing structures of the former fortified walls.

1.3.6 A detailed study of the surviving fragments and the plan of the town walls was jointly commissioned by English Heritage and North Wiltshire District Council and the findings were published in November 1994. This set the framework for a long term programme of repair and restoration of the remains of the walls. Elements of this have already been undertaken, funded by the District Council, Wiltshire County Council and English Heritage. Future bids for funding will be necessary to continue and complete

1.3.7 During the 12th and 13th Centuries the presence of the Abbey and medieval town defences undoubtedly provided the town with good security which together with the demand for goods from the Abbey and its pilgrims fostered urban development and encouraged the growth of merchant traders. A guild of merchants had rights and lands and presumably played some part in the town’s government in the 13th Century. The burgesses’ privileges were confirmed in 1411, by a charter granted by Henry IV.

1.3.8 The range of trades in Malmesbury in the mid 13th Century is illustrated by the claim of the guild merchants to rights to sell cloth, leather goods, fish, sheepskins or hides within the town. A fulling mill was recorded in the late 12th Century and production of woollen cloth apparently remained Malmesbury’s chief industry throughout the later middle ages.

1.3.9 The main suburbs appear to have developed during the medieval period at Westport and Netherwalles and in the late13th century the walled part of the town was called Bynport to distinguish it from the suburbs.

1.3.10 Apart from the Abbey Church and the Market Cross there are not many buildings remaining that date from the medieval period. A small number are located within the former Abbey precincts, such as the Old Bell Hotel, part of which was formerly called Castle House. No. 9 Oxford Street is a gabled house of stone with a 15th Century roof and is likely to have been the guildhall of the guild merchants dating from the charter of 1411. A building that became the Green Dragon Inn and now the Rajah Restaurant at No. 6 Market Cross is considered to be 14th century. Tower House and No. 8 Gloucester Street incorporate later medieval structures.

1.3.11 The Abbey Church survived the Dissolution and replaced the ruined St Paul’s as the Parish Church. In 1561 buildings in the borough were said to be in great decay. Other monastic buildings were used as workshops by William Stumpe, a wool merchant and the purchaser of the Abbey buildings.
1.3.12 In 1547 the adult population of the town was estimated at 860, Wiltshire’s third largest town. The town continued to flourish as a centre for the cloth industry until around 1650, but thereafter references to the industry are less frequent.

1.3.13 By 1801 the town’s population had grown to 1,107 and had become defined as a borough. Turnpikes were opened in the late 18th Century which helped improve the roads and therefore trade. The woollen industry was revived around 1790 when Francis Hill built new cloth mills at Burton Hill near the town bridge. These later became the Silk Mills and engineering workshops in the 20th Century. The old Silk Mills were sold for conversion to flats in 1984.

1.3.14 New buildings in the town centre after around 1825 were chiefly commercial or institutional and most of the 19th Century expansion, which doubled the town’s population, was achieved by greater density of occupation. The railway arrived as a branch line from Brunel’s main line at Dauntsey in 1875, and closed in 1951 to passengers, and all traffic in 1962.

1.3.15 Markets and fairs continued from 1223 until the 20th Century but competition from Chippenham, Tetbury and Cirencester resulted in the closure of the cattle and general market in the mid 1960s. Domestic electrical goods were produced in the town in after the Second World War at Cowbridge and in the former mill brewery at Burnivale.
1.3.17 The town continues as a local service and commercial centre with a range of shops and businesses in the High Street and Abbey Row.

1.3.16 During the 1960s new housing was developed to the west of the old town with the building of Parklands and later White Lion Park. This has resulted in an imbalance of town to residential area sprawling over a mile from the town centre. Further development of Reeds Farm to the north of the town has increased traffic into the town centre and placed pressure on the parking.

Fig 8: This photograph shows the 1897 celebrations of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in Cross Hayes.

Fig 9: This photograph of Cross Hayes is from 1887.

Fig 10: Turner’s painting of Malmesbury Abbey of 1826. The foreground was the site of the railway station and is now occupied by the less idyllic industrial sheds and fire and ambulance stations.

Fig 11: The first edition 1886 Ordnance Survey map of Malmesbury. The only obvious modern intrusion into the form of the town is the railway line.

Fig 12: The 1844 Tithe map of Malmesbury.
1.4 THE TOWN TODAY

1.4.1 Malmesbury is a successful and generally thriving market town, with all the benefits, problems and pressures this brings. The success of Malmesbury rests primarily on the fact that the town has retained much of its unique historic character, with attractive traditional streets and many fine buildings. That this remains so is largely due to the topography of the town and it being surrounded on three sides by the two branches of the River Avon. This itself is also part of the unique character of the town. Undermining these essential features will risk undermining the vitality and viability of the town itself.

1.4.2 Malmesbury’s attractiveness has drawn tourists for a number of years, although the Abbey and, more recently, Abbey House gardens are the primary attractions. The success of the gardens has led to increased pressure for long stay car and coach parking and future provision of parking must take great care not to ‘kill the goose that lays the golden eggs’ by undermining the very character that people come to see.

1.4.3 The town is also a busy retail centre with a successful High Street, although some more peripheral shops have been lost in recent years. The historic form and layout of the town, whilst being part of its attractiveness, makes accessibility difficult. The town’s high car ownership, rural location and lack of comprehensive public transport network mean that there is continually high demand for spaces in the short-stay Cross Hayes car park. Whilst the car park is essential to maintaining the success of the High Street, it has a major visual impact on the quality of the largest open space in the town. There is opportunity for significant

Fig 13: A n aerial view of the town in 1967. The river and topography have limited expansion of the town to the north west and have enabled much of the character and form of the town to remain largely intact. At this time the town had lost its railway connection but as yet was without its bypass.
improvements to both the appearance of the car park and the buildings and businesses on its west side, that have the potential to help consolidate and strengthen the retail success of the town.

1.4.4 The industrial and commercial base of the town consists of a base of smaller businesses, both integrated within the town centre and on the Station Yard estate. The two largest single employers in Malmesbury in recent years, Dyson and Lucent Technologies, have seen significant recent changes. Dyson has partly relocated overseas and Lucent closed some time ago. Reliance on a small number of larger employers can create vulnerability within the economy of the town. This could be counter balanced if, as is the trend, more smaller business units become available. This could then lead to a more stable and local employment base. The former Nurden’s nurseries site on the A429 is also allocated as a new employment site for the town.

1.4.5 The attractiveness and prosperity of the town generate a high demand for housing as well as retail and commercial space. This pressure represents both a challenge and an opportunity. Good Planning, especially Development Control, will be essential in ensuring that Malmesbury continues to evolve in a way which secures a strong local economy while simultaneously preserving and enhancing an outstandingly fine heritage. Only the highest quality of new development, befitting the character of the town, will do this.

Fig 14: An aerial view of the town in 1991. The bypass can be seen to the east and further housing development can be seen to the north and the station yard has been redeveloped for industrial use.
2.0 General Character of the Town

2.0.1 The character of Malmesbury is derived primarily from its unique and dramatic location. The converging Tetbury and Sherston branches of the River Avon almost fully encircle the town, with Abbey Row running on a ridge between the two. The high land between the rivers gives the town an enclosed, almost island like feel. The site was a natural position for a fortified town and the medieval walls, as well as the topography and rivers, have ensured the town has retained a compact and close-knit urban form that has remained free from more modern, lower density redevelopment.

2.0.2 This intactness is a key component of Malmesbury’s character, and thus the river valleys are as an important component of the town as the built form itself. The valleys contain much mature vegetation that is important to the setting of the town. Most routes into the town provide, at some point a fine view of the Abbey Church. The river valleys and vegetation are important elements of these views, most notably when descending Tetbury Hill from the north, a view painted by Turner.

2.0.3 The town is constrained by the presence of the two rivers and their associated flood plains limiting expansion to higher ground on the north and north-west. It is sited some distance from other conurbations and serves a large rural area. It is on a crossing point of two important routes although the north-south road now represented by the A429 has become dominant. The former turnpike road from Oxford to Bristol running east-west has declined in importance since the demise of the coaching trade in the mid C19. It has left the legacy of a number of former coaching inns in the town centre and the name of Oxford Street on its route through the town.

2.0.4 The town is set on a high promontory overlooking the confluence of two branches of the River Avon, which surround the town on three sides. The town and abbey are visible from some distance away, the hinterland being fairly flat and level especially to the east and south.

2.0.5 Malmesbury’s intactness can also be seen in the way in which so many historic buildings survive, along with the historic street patterns and urban spaces. From within the town these features form the essence of its physical character. This gives a human scale to the place, which is best appreciated as a pedestrian. A number of key buildings also provide visual landmarks, contrasting with the majority of other buildings, due either to their architecture, scale or position. Most notable are the Abbey Church and Market Cross.

2.0.6 The shape of the town is unusual comprising a long linear main street on a north-south alignment terminated by the small nucleus around the Market Cross. There are two further nuclei at The Triangle and Horsefair respectively, originally small conurbations that grew separately from the main town centred on the abbey. The terraced streets in the centre tend to follow the contours around the hill overlooking the rivers and field beyond with steep alleyways leading up to the town centre. Most of the roads in the centre are narrow with sharp blind corners, some lacking pavements and footways at their narrowest points. The largest open space in the town is now the Cross Hayes, a later addition to the market facilities and the present site of the C19 Town Hall and car park. The houses are mainly 1.5 to 2 storey with some 3 storey dwellings interspersed among them. There are many different roof heights with frequent later additions of a variety of dormers.

Fig 1: Malmesbury’s prominent location set above two branches of the River Avon.

Fig 2: The typically diverse form of terraced housing in the town centre.
2.0.7 The long and important history of the town ensures that it is archaeologically significant. Due to its relatively intact state, most of the town’s archaeology remains undiscovered. It is therefore important that, when development does take place, that opportunity is taken for archaeological excavation where possible. An extensive urban survey of the town has recently been produced by the County Archaeological Service.

2.0.8 The general popularity of the town ensures that there is always a degree of development pressure. In such an historically intact town it is inevitable that much new development will be achieved by the re-use and renovation of historic buildings. It is important that this is achieved sensitively, as respecting the character of the buildings themselves will maintain and enhance the character that forms the basis of the town’s prosperity. Similarly, it is likely that standardised development solutions may not usually be appropriate in the historic core of the town, and that more imaginative and inventive means will need to be found to identify and secure new development opportunities that maintain and enhance its character and prosperity.

2.0.9 Many factors contribute to the character of a place, give it local identity and make it unique. Although summarised above, these are often difficult to identify comprehensively or quantify. There are however, certain features of a settlement that are key to its overall character, and go a long way in establishing its worthiness as a Conservation Area. This part of the Appraisal attempts to identify these feature by means of a series of maps under the following headings:

- Protected Buildings and Features
- Archaeology
- Open Space and Historic Routes
- Significant Foliage
2.1 PROTECTED BUILDINGS AND FEATURES

2.1.1 Malmesbury has one of the highest concentrations of listed buildings in the District, with 306 list entries (excluding tombs & gravestones) within the Conservation Area. These include six listed at Grade I and 14 listed at Grade II*. These are as follows:

**Grade I**
- Abbey Church
- Abbey House
- Market Cross
- Bell Hotel
- Medieval Hospital
- St. Pauls Bell Tower

**Grade II***
- No.25 & 25 Abbey Row
- No.23 Bristol Street
- No.28 Cross Hayes
- Nos.15-21 Culver Gardens (Culver House)
- Nos.3 & 5 Gloucester Street
- No.8 Gloucester Street
- No.92 High Street
- Nos.34 & 38 Kingswall
- Archway in Abbey House Gardens
- Old Brewery House
- No.6 Oxford Street
- No.9 Oxford Street
- Tower House
- Nos.1, 2 & 3 St. Johns Court
2.1.2 Buildings are added to the list for their special architectural and historic interest, representing the country’s finest historic buildings. They are grouped into three categories, of ascending importance. Grade II buildings are described as being of special interest which warrant every interest being made to preserve them, Grade II* buildings as being particularly important buildings of more than special interest and Grade I buildings are described as being of exceptional interest.

2.1.3 Listed buildings are concentrated in the historic core and form the backbone of the town’s built heritage as shown on the map on the previous page. Many more unlisted buildings of townscape value also contribute to the town’s historic character and form, and are often important to the setting and context of listed buildings.

2.1.4 Buildings are listed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Listing includes both the exterior and interior of a building, any object or structure fixed to or within a building or any detached pre-1948 structure within its curtilage. Listed Building Consent is almost always required from the Local Planning authority to carry out works to listed buildings. English Heritage is now responsible for the administration of the system.

2.1.5 Unlisted buildings of particular townscape value can also be given additional protection where they are considered at risk. Permitted development rights can be removed by the making of an Article 4 Direction. One such Direction covering several properties in Malmesbury was made by the District Council in 1993 and approved by the Secretary of State in 1995. Procedures for making directions are now more
streamlined. A review of the existing Direction and investigating the case for making a new one may now be appropriate.

2.2 ARCHAEOLOGY

2.2.1 Malmesbury has a long history as an important town and as a result is undoubtedly rich in archaeology, in terms of both existing above ground features, and hidden, sub-surface remains. The Extensive Urban Survey of the archaeology of the town, published in March 2000 by the County Archaeology Service provides a detailed account of the archaeological history and importance of the town.

2.2.2 The survey identifies all entries in the Scheduled Monuments Record and categorises them into four historical periods. These are shown on the map below.

As the town has remained built up throughout its history and retains many historic buildings, the opportunities for excavation have been comparatively rare and this is reflected in the low number of sites identified in relation to the overall archaeological importance of the town.

2.2.3 In addition the plan also shows the extent of the remains of the town walls, as identified in the Keystone Archaeology survey undertaken for the District Council in 2000. The majority of the remains are statutorily protected as either Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings.

2.3 OPEN SPACE, WATER, HISTORIC ROUTES

2.3.1 The rivers and their undeveloped valleys define the setting of the town and mark a distinct and clear transition
from urban to rural environment. The majority of the open land is protected by Local Plan Policy NE15. However, there are some areas, notably back land to buildings, which are not covered, yet make a significant contribution to the character of the valleys and the setting of the river and town. These areas are identified on the map below. Conversely, the policy area includes some dwellings that are clearly part of the urban area of the town. It may therefore, be prudent to reassess the boundaries of this policy area as part of the current review of the Local Plan.

2.3.2 The river tributaries themselves, with attendant riparian landscapes, offer picturesque and tranquil environments that are ideal and well used for informal recreation. A number of public footpaths exist in the valleys. These, along with permissive routes through Conygre Mead nature reserve, south of the Sherston Avon and St. Aldhelm’s Mead recreation area, and local streets, provide a network of pedestrian friendly routes in the river valleys. There is however, potential to improve links, such as linking across the river by the playground in St. Aldhelm’s Mead, improving routes through the nature reserve and possibly by utilising other paths and alignments.

2.3.3 A number of urban open spaces are to be found within the town and these, with their attendant activities are also important in defining its character as well as giving opportunities to appreciate the character of buildings and architecture. The character, size and importance of these spaces varies widely, from the large and busy Cross Hayes to the intimate and picturesque Market Cross and the domestic scaled Back Hill.

2.4 SIGNIFICANT FOLIAGE

2.4.1 An essential part of the character of the river valleys, and setting of the town, is the extensive mature vegetation it contains. Thus the majority of the vegetation is to be
found around and on the edge of the built up area. Large areas of vegetation are generally not a characteristic of the town centre, though the Abbey precinct is an exception to this. The setting of the Abbey from the north, across the river valley on the approach down Tetbury Hill is particularly characterised by the mature growth on the valley slopes. The most extensive vegetation is to be found along the Tetbury Branch of the river. The valley to the south-west is more open, with the vegetation mostly along the river banks.

2.5 Key Areas of Character

2.5.1 There are specific items which contribute to the overall character of a Conservation Area, the focus for preservation and enhancement for which it was designated. At a general level of the entire Conservation Area these have been illustrated in the map on the previous page.

2.5.2 By overlaying these separate components which contribute to the character or genius loci of the Conservation Area, a map has been derived below, which illustrates the overall ‘key areas of character’. This gives an indication of parts of the Conservation Area containing the greatest ‘density’ of contributors to its character.
PART 3: DETAILED CHARACTER ANALYSIS

3.0 CHARACTER AREAS

3.0.1 The general character analysis in Part 2 and the significant features, townscape analysis and detailed character analysis in Part 3 comprises the majority of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

Defining the Character Areas

3.0.2 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 Appraisal splits Malmesbury Conservation Area into nineteen 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:

1. Market Cross & Upper High Street
2. Lower High Street
3. Cross Hayes
4. Ingram Street & Silver Street
5. The Abbey, Abbey House & Gloucester Street
6. Oxford Street
7. Holloway
8. Abbey Row
9. The Triangle
10. Gloucester Road
11. Horsefair
12. Gastons Road & Burnham Road
13. Bristol Street
14. Burnivale
15. Kingswall
16. St. John’s Street
17. River Valley (Sherston Branch)
18. River Valley (Tetbury Branch)
19. Old Station Yard
Character Analysis

Character area analyses aim to describe how the features identified in Part 2 combine at a detailed and localised level to give the Conservation Area its special character.

Significant Features

3.0.3 Following on from the general character analysis in Part 2, 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.

Townscape Analysis

3.0.4 Each character area analysis is complemented with a townscape analysis plan. The townscape analysis identifies a number of features which together have a key defining role for the character of the town. The historic routes, still in use today, define the shape and form of the town. The buildings that line these streets are its public face and define the streets as spaces. They are also the expression of the town's architecture and a key element in its physical attractiveness and charm.

3.0.5 Although the townscape analysis primarily highlights elements that are positive in the townscape, a number of opportunities exist, even in the tightly knit urban environment, for development and redevelopment that could further enhance the character of the town and the Conservation Area. The past has seen some development that is inappropriate in form, scale density or materials to the prevailing historic character of the town. Such development should be avoided in the future with the help of the guidance in this Appraisal and opportunity be taken, where possible, to rectify past mistakes. A few particular locations where the townscape is notably unattractive have been highlighted and priority should be given to enhancing these areas.

Views and Panoramas

3.0.6 The compact nature of the town means that views out are often limited. Those that exist are often glimpse views or dramatic ones that serve to emphasise the unique topography.

The most important positive Views and Panoramas around the Conservation Area are listed below and in each of the relevant character area analyses.

Views

1. Views south from Tetbury Hill & mini-roundabouts to the Abbey
2. Views north up the High Street to Market Cross and Abbey beyond
3. Long distance view of Abbey from A429 from between Whiteheath farm & Home Farm
4. View south from High Street to row of Poplar trees along the river in St Aldhelm's Mead
5. View south-east from Back Hill to silk mills
6. View south east from Back Hill to open countryside
7. View of Tower House from river valley footpath to east
8. View east along Oxford Street to Tower House
9. View of Town Hall from Cross Hayes
10. View north from Market Place to St. Michael's House
11. View south to open countryside from footpath leading from Gloucester Street to Kingswall (Postern Gate)
12. View east to open countryside from between Nos. 26 & 34 Gloucester Street
13. View north along Gloucester Street to The Old Bell Hotel
14. View south along Gloucester Street to St. Paul's Bell Tower
15. Views east & west along Abbey Row
16. View west from Abbey Row to war memorial in The Triangle
17. View east from Bristol Street to Methodist Church
18. View north from The triangle to St Mary's Hall
19. View south from Horsefair to the United Reformed Church
20. Long view east from Dark Lane to St. Paul's Bell Tower
21. View south from Abbey Row by Jubilee Gardens to Daniel's Well and open countryside
22. View north-west along Kingswall to side elevation of Nos.34 & 38 (Kings House).
23. View south-east from bottom of High Street across river to silk mills

Panoramas

A. View east from Truckle Bridge on Foxley Road across meadows to the town slopes and skyline
B. View south-west from Abbey Row by Jubilee Gardens to open countryside
C. View east from Library car park to open countryside
Character Analysis

3.1.1 This area is dominated by the magnificent 15th Century Market Cross at the north end of the High Street. The road layout of the High Street and Oxford Street remains much the same as it was 1000 years ago. The Market Cross was part of an open market place that extended north in the 13th Century when the town encroached into the Monastery precinct. Previously Oxford Street marked the boundary between the town and Abbey. The main road from Oxford to Bristol passed through Malmesbury until the 18th Century. Ex-Coaching Inns abound in the town as a result of traffic along this route. The Kings Arms, the George (Veterinary Hospital), the Old White Lion (8 Gloucester Street) and the Green Dragon (Rajah Restaurant) are examples in Area 1.

3.1.2 There is a good range of retail outlets which reflect the fact that Malmesbury is the service centre for many surrounding villages. It is vital that this variety is retained and change of use, particularly to residential, should be strongly resisted. It is important that short term free on street parking is retained and maximising pavement widths where possible will help to maintain economical viability.

3.1.3 In general, the whole of the area emits an old world charm and character entirely befitting a thriving market town with its roots in medieval history. The wide variety of architecture and the “haphazard” broken roof lines add much to the character and attraction of the town centre, both to resident and visitor alike.

3.1.4 Many of the properties in the High Street seem to be better cared for on the ground level than at 1st and 2nd floor level – many just need redecoration, but some are in need of repair. These include the frontage over Nos 9-11 High Street which appears as if temporary repairs have been carried out, but not completed.

3.1.5 By far the most incongruous building in this area is that of the Co-operative store (No 8 High Street). The whole facade is completely out of character with its surroundings and is made even more visually unpalatable by being situated next to perhaps the finest example of early eighteenth century red brick building in the town. The frontage of Lloyds Chemists at No 28 is also out of keeping.

3.1.6 The style, composition and colour of a number of shop signs, particularly in cases where national chains seek to impose their corporate identities on historic buildings, often presents a jarring and visually discordant element to the street scene, giving the advertising undue prominence over the building as a whole. An example of this is Cancer Research (No 19) whereas Halifax (No 2) and Sports and Leisure (No 36) enhance their surroundings with well designed wooden painted signs.

3.1.7 The sides and rear of buildings, especially to the east side of the High Street could be improved. For example some of the shops along Griffin Alley present an unattractive first impression to visitors walking from Cross Hayes to the High Street. The side elevation of the Whole Hog (No 8 Market Cross) is another unattractive entrance for pedestrians coming from the long stay car park. The Market Cross area is very important as every visitor passes through it. Every effort must be made to ensure that buildings are well maintained, particularly windows and doors together with highway surfaces, signs, advertising and street furniture. Planning controls should be used to the fullest extent here.

3.1.8 A number of shops advertise using ‘A’ frame advertising boards. As well as giving a cluttered appearance to the street these are often obstacles to the visually impaired and to parents with prams, particularly on narrow pavements.

3.1.9 The proliferation of traffic signs and ugly street lighting mar the appearance of the area, particularly around the Market Cross and top of the High Street. The bollards by the Cross should be replaced with the original Ratcliffe type used elsewhere in the town.

3.1.10 There are a variety of small but important historical features in this area that should be retained. These include the stylish but redundant petrol pump arms attached to Hyams Garage (No 26), the cobbled entrances to the Kings Arms and the George and the...
truncated gas pipes that used to serve lamps on No 1 and No 2 High Street.

**Significant Features**

Views to the Market Cross and views out of the square such as the framed view to the Old Bell Hotel and back to the Market Cross. The pleasant pocket park created in the remains of St Paul’s Church.

View 2: Views north up the High Street to Market Cross and Abbey beyond.

View 4: View south from High Street to row of Poplar trees on far side of river valley outside town.

View 8: View east along Oxford Street to Tower House.

View 10: View north from Market Place to St. Michael’s House.

**Fig 3:** Part of the T junction at the top of the High Street opposite the Market Cross.

**Fig 4:** The varied building ages, heights and the variety of the roofs enhance the character of the High Street.

**Fig 5:** A more recent development juxtaposed with an older building in a prominent location at the top of the High Street.
3.2 AREA 2 - LOWER HIGH STREET

Character Analysis

3.2.1 The Lower High Street, as a gateway into Malmesbury, runs from the town bridge to St Dennis Lane. At first it is residential, but after about two thirds of its length, the commercial outlets begin on either side. This town approach is dominated initially by the block of apartments created from the old Silk Mills. Their window treatment, although practical, is a sad example of such conversions.

3.2.2 Immediately after the Mills, the weir to the left of the small Town Bridge, and the view of stone and plaster-clad terraced housing immediately ahead, including the Rose & Crown public house, herald the “market town”. Cucking Stool Mead, also on the left, emphasises the linkage of town and country, which is a major feature of the renowned setting of the town. The various styles of housing in this part of Lower High Street anticipate, to a large extent, the Conservation Area’s architecture generally, which has, in terms of scale, design and treatments, a wide variety of residential and commercial properties.

3.2.3 Once over the Town Bridge, the road veers to the left. (a “Lower High Street” sign has been replaced in the past fifteen years and now says “High Street”. It is recommended that this be changed back). For the next two hundred metres or so this stretch is overwhelmingly residential.

3.2.4 As the road veers left, there is a glimpse to the right of the different scale of terraced houses in St John Street. This view is marred by the parked cars in front of the dwellings. The scene contrasts jarringly with the open, uncluttered area opposite the street, starting with the Memorial Gardens and going across the river Avon. In contrast, parking requirements degrade the visual environment of St John Street. Ideally, alternative parking should be found, away from houses, as the Old Corporation has done behind the garages at the bottom of Back Hill. But that could be an unrealisable strategy.

3.2.5 From the St John Street-Lower High Street junction, the vista uphill is again short, some 140 metres. The road runs upwards and veers to the right at the junction with King’s Wall. This latter junction has recently (1999) been redesigned in order to improve pedestrian safety. It includes new, widened pavement treatments, including the marking of historical gateways in the form of insert plaques, and new bollards. No 77 is the remains of the south bastion. Houses on both sides of the road along this stretch are typically a mix of exposed stone and plaster fronts, with a variety of window treatments and coloured doors. The charm of this mix is immediate. It states clearer than many history books how the town has evolved.

3.2.6 Nearly every property has undergone restoration, and there has been a commendable amount here as elsewhere throughout the Conservation Area. Some have only been cleaned, such as the two properties opposite the Rose & Crown, adjacent to the Memorial Gardens. Architecturally, these two offer a conspicuous contrast with the Old Corporation almshouses dating from the 17th Century on the opposite side of the road, which have fully retained their character following sympathetic repair.

3.2.7 A notable feature of Lower High Street is the seamless joining together of small dwellings to form individual larger units as social requirements changed in the second half of the 20th century. This is particularly evident on the left, with, by way of contrast, much larger distinctive housing on the right. This mix gives a street scene full of interest.
3.2.8 Most buildings have stone roofing, with some slate treatments, which again adds considerably to the character. The irregular roof lines are particularly noticeable and is also of visual interest. Chimney stacks are varied and should be retained. TV aerials are not attractive but inevitable until an acceptable method to provide the same facility with a less-obtrusive system is available in town.

3.2.9 Further uphill, at the junction with King’s Wall where the road veers to the right, there is a glimpse along King’s Wall of restored terraced cottages and slightly further on, to the right, the fully restored approach to the town’s farrier. The wide entrance to the farrier’s driveway offers an interesting welcome visual break in the continuous terrace of attractive houses, although the road is so wide at this point that there is no sense of enclosure.

3.2.10 On the left, as the pavement narrows, houses of greater size again emphasise the diversity of the town’s architecture. The first of the town’s shops also appears. There are fewer than ten years ago. The former butcher’s shop has become residential, as have two former commercial premises opposite the Smoking Dog public house. In the main though, the existing shops present a flourishing promise to the street scene ahead.

3.2.11 Past Ingram Street on the right, retail outlets increase in number and size until St Dennis Lane, as it used to be called up to ten years ago, is reached. This is the start of the commercial heart of the town. Flats above shops are in the main occupied. Among the larger premises are the medical practice, a WH Smith’s outlet, several estate agents and various offices, mixed with small specialty shops.

3.2.12 The Old Bear House development on the left has its own off-street parking, as has the medical complex. These small complexes also add variety to the street scene.

3.2.13 As Lower High Street becomes High Street at the junction of St Dennis Lane, there is a considerable increase in vehicular domination of the street scene. This is, in part only, caused by the number and frequency of Post Office mail vans servicing the sorting office. It is said that these premises could change hands in the future. The integral parking here and at Gable House must be retained.

3.2.14 Most of the pavements and street lighting in Lower High Street would benefit from more sympathetic design treatments. In particular, the replacement of tall standard lamps with wall mounted “lantern” style lights as used elsewhere in the Conservation Area is indicated on visual grounds.

3.2.15 It is noticeable that large, heavy delivery vehicles frequently obstruct the upper reaches of Lower High Street. Many park partially on the narrow pavements. The result is cracked (and often therefore dangerous for pedestrians) paving slabs, and temporarily drastically reduced pavement space for pedestrians. Strategies to deal with this unsatisfactory situation, which is increasing annually, need to be identified by planners.

3.2.16 Since the mid 1980s, commercial “banner” shop signs have proliferated, and much damage has been done to the character and appearance of the area. Care is required, to limit size and control design in future.

3.2.17 Vigilance is required to preserve all significant trees within, and visible from the area, viz those along the river Avon. These trees are a constant reminder of the proximity of the open countryside, a central motif of the town.

3.2.18 To eliminate specific negative aspects of Lower High Street will require mainly minor improvements together with, crucially, sensitive strategic planning, in those aspects noted above. That said, the lively mix of small, medium and large residential and commercial buildings is a mix well worth perpetuating.

Significant Features

- The view of terraced houses from the bottom of the High Street climbing up the hill and round the bend. Architectural details remaining from previous commercial use e.g. doorway and window of No 58, Georgian doorway south of No 42 and Cycling Touring Club roundel on Smoking Dog pub.
- The varied roofline incorporating different types of chimneys and pots.
3.3 AREA 3: CROSS HAYES

Character Analysis

3.3.1 Cross Hayes is a large, active and vibrant open space. Historically this was a market place used for livestock until just after World War II. Most of the area is now occupied by the town’s main short-stay car park and this generates the majority of the pedestrian traffic between it and the nearby High Street. The pedestrian route to the High Street is Griffin Alley, narrow lined with ancillary buildings and a few shops. There is potential for enhancing the quality of this route.

3.3.2 Traffic is routed one way around the eastern and southern edges of the square. Buses and coaches use stopping places here and this together with parking and the many facilities around (Library, Roman Catholic church, Town Hall, shop and garage) give rise to significant numbers of pedestrians.

3.3.3 The main focus of the space is the Town Hall and tourist information centre on the north side. This is an agglomeration of buildings with good quality frontages dating from 1848 to 1927. The setting of the buildings has recently been enhanced with high quality paving and plans are progressing for the refurbishment and more efficient use of the site.

3.3.4 Although in the centre of town, Cross Hayes contains very few shops, buildings on the south and east sides being primarily residential. Whereas these generally provide a hard edge, facing the street and defining the enclosure of the space, the west side suffers in this respect. Much of this side of the space consists of the rear of properties facing the High Street, where ancillary buildings of low quality and status have been converted to commercial uses. The brown painted metal building of Hyams Garage is out of character.

3.3.5 This lends a poorly defined character to this side of the space and gives it a somewhat lop-sided feel. There is great opportunity to intensify the urban form of this side of the space with better quality buildings. Some rear yard entrances remain undeveloped and this appears incongruous in a town centre location and further weakens the definition and enclosure of the space.

3.3.6 Whilst the car park is a valuable and well used resource, the physical impact of the concentration of a large number of cars has a negative impact on the character and setting of the surrounding buildings. The quality of surfacing is also basic and the whole area defined primarily only by white lining. A redesign of the layout of the parking bays and surroundings would improve this area.

3.3.7 Some of the shop-fronts and commercial frontages are of poor quality, and the fenestration of a number of buildings is out of character with the buildings. Nos. 46-48 St. Dennis Lane would benefit from renovation and the Town Hall would benefit from the removal of overhead wires that are attached to it.

Significant Features

- The facade of the Town Hall, the Italianate no.22 (fig 2), no.28 & no.32 and St Aldhelm’s Church are all significant buildings that contribute to the area (fig 3)
- View 9: View of Town Hall from Cross Hayes
3.4 AREA 4: INGRAM STREET & SILVER STREET

Character Analysis

3.4.1 Ingram Street leads off to the right from Lower High Street as it rises uphill. It marks the line of southern town wall at an early period before the town expanded further down the slope. It is a narrow, straight and short street of considerably diverse architectural styles. Its greatest visually detracting feature, which dominates the overall appearance of the Street, is its much patched tarmac road surface and its modern pavement treatment. Replacing both with more sympathetic treatments would lift the whole quality of the Street to the considerable benefit of the townscape. In summer, the floral displays by the residents are noteworthy.

3.4.2 The first cottages to the left, some with their own up and over garage doors, are an evocative reminder of the size of social housing of the time. Window treatments, doors and colour schemes evoke an earlier way of life. The whole has considerable ‘atmosphere’. Cartmel Court (now flats) was the town’s first youth centre.

3.4.3 Opposite these cottages, the new build in redbrick is clearly their modern equivalent. However, the small development has its own inner courtyard parking for its residents, which helps to keep some cars off the road. The entrance to the courtyard offers an interesting glimpse of flowerbeds and an old wall.

3.4.4 The next one-third of Ingram Street is a greater mixture of styles, - a surprising number in view of the short length of the Street. First, the redeveloped block of flats, with again, their welcome inner courtyard parking, is in red brick. Unfortunately, street level doors are single-sheet glazed and do not enhance the building. Adjacent, older houses have either plaster covered facades or are of stone with mortar pointing and window treatments probably completed in the 1950s. This section ends with the opening on the left into a small, two-car parking area and a converted commercial premises opposite, again in red brick and integral parking.

3.4.5 The remainder of Ingram Street on the left consists once again of small cottages as seen earlier at the start of the Street. Fenestration and doors are appropriate. The rest of the houses in the Street differ in style and window treatments. A row of austere garages to the right allows a glimpse through to older housing and countryside beyond. At this T junction of Ingram Street/Silver Street/Back Hill, a row of three stone cottages are directly ahead. They are an appropriate backcloth to their immediate area. This view encourages pedestrians to walk towards them.

3.4.6 Turning left from Ingram Street into Silver Street, the stone, plaster and red brick facades again provide interest and variety to the townscape. The site of the town’s Saxon mint is said to have been here. There are several very different styles present, very close together. Red brick houses are neatly balanced in sheer size by the building with its plaster façade opposite them. Towards the top of Silver Street, the former Free Reading Rooms more recently used as a chapel and nursery face a newly-refurbished office with car parking spaces in front of it.

3.4.7 Returning to the junction, and turning right from Ingram Street into Back Hill, there is on the right a row of small cottages of comparatively recent date. The style is ‘dated’, but quaint. They are in style closely akin to the garages behind them but to little else in the area. Further along, two of the cottages on opposite sides have a sizeable garden area between them and other houses, which breaks up the run of terracing. The fenestration of some housing on Back Hill is in plastic.

3.4.8 The last part of Back Hill, from the steps onwards, has a small but welcome green open space, with small cottages on either side, the whole dominated by a plethora of overhead wires. The argument for their removal has been accepted by the local authorities and funding is being sought for their resiting underground. This would greatly enhance this area if achieved. At the top of Back Hill steps there is an open view of the countryside close by. The top of the steps marks the site of the Little Gate in the Town Wall which continues to the west.

Significant Features

- View 5: View south-east from Back Hill to Silk Mills
- View 6: View south east from Back Hill to open countryside.
3.5.5 Area 5 finishes at the old West Gate near the Old Bell Hotel. The road layout of Gloucester St, Oxford St and High St probably dates from Saxon times, the Monastery occupying the area to the north. The Castle is said to have been built on the site of the present Old Bell and possibly along Abbey Row; this being the weakest point in the Town's defences. The Old Bell was previously named Castle Inn with Castle House being the part nearest the Abbey. The juxtaposition of monks and soldiers cannot have been a happy one and in 1216 the Castle was demolished providing ample building stone for the Abbey's new buildings (probably Old Bell, Abbey House undercroft, Mill etc.).

3.5.6 Abbey House is built virtually on the Town Wall. The northwest boundary of Area 5 also follows the ramparts of the old Town Walls.

3.5.7 The Old Water Tower next to the Old Stables supplied the Town's water from approximately 1870 until the construction of the Crudwell Road tower in the 1950s. Now a private home, its position is on a narrow stonewall lined pedestrian passageway forming a dog leg into Oxford St.

3.5.8 The path leading north from No 14 Market Cross (St Michael's House) to the river is popularly known as Dove Lane. It descends by steps and slope to the river level. The Cloister Garden to the rear of the Abbey became a garden to Abbey House after dissolution but in 1981 was landscaped as a public open space. The paths...
are laid out to mimic the Cloister shape. The Abbey Steps leading to the long stay car park in the old station yard were renewed to commemorate the Millennium and incorporate brass plaques celebrating notable events in the town’s history.

3.5.9 The Vicarage is a modern mock stone block building built on land previously belonging to Abbey House. It is out of keeping with its neighbours but thankfully well screened.

Archaeology

3.5.10 Those areas previously the subject of a dig include; St Michael’s Court - new houses next to St Michael’s House (14 Market Cross) - more than 75 bodies were found dating to the 12th Century. They are thought to be part of the graveyard to the chapel of St Michael. Bodies were both sexes and all ages.

3.5.11 Abbey House garden - 13th Century grave found approximately where the eastern end of the Abbey would have been.

3.5.12 Abbey West End where the west tower once stood - no great evidence found, merely grubbed out stones.

3.5.13 Rear of Old Bell Hotel – remains of possible castle walls.

3.5.14 Cloister Gardens may prove interesting if excavated.

Building Materials

3.5.15 Most buildings are Cotswold stone or stone and render. Even the modern St Michael’s Court is dressed stone and render. No 16 Gloucester St is the notable exception with unusual red brick coursing. Nos18/20 are dressed stone with Nos24/26 random stone. Roofs are stone or slate. The pebbledash on No 48 is not appealing.

3.5.16 The Old Stables next to Abbey House are painted brick. Aldhelm House (14 Gloucester St) is totally rendered. The shop fronts at Nos. 34, 36 and 38 are of Victorian styling and are in keeping with their neighbours. No 52 Gloucester St has a wood and glass frontage remaining from its use as a garage. The wood is well cared for but a change to stone would improve the area. The new extensions to St Michael’s House have been done sympathetically with stone at the rear and render to the west.

Views and Landmarks

3.5.17 This area features in many beautiful views. St Paul’s Steeple is a landmark in many e.g. from the Old Bell towards the elbow of Gloucester St. The Abbey forms a backdrop from the Tolsey Gate and from between the new St Michael’s Court where the roof pinnacles are silhouetted against the sky. The Old Bell with its covering of Wisteria in June forms a wonderful vista from Gloucester St and the Abbey graveyard.

3.5.18 From St Paul’s Belltower through to the Market Cross and vice versa is an enticing view of picturesque Malmesbury. This contrasts with the equally enticing vista between 24 and 34 Gloucester St where the view is of the river valley and beyond to Westport with farmland to the horizon.

3.5.19 Standing in the graveyard the row of terraced houses in Gloucester St together with the buildings around the Market Cross encircle the outstanding feature of Malmesbury - The Abbey.

3.5.20 Walking down Dove Lane the broken arches of the Abbey tower soar up to the sky- a popular landscape for artists.

3.5.21 Through the lovely wooden gates of Abbey House the drive ends in an attractive plane tree and a glimpse of the house itself.

3.5.22 Once north of the Abbey, the views from the steps are varied. A long view to Gloucester Road can be obtained with the Abbey Mill in the foreground. Swinging round, the Industrial Estate in all its glory of galvanised roofs and steel structures with cars parked in rows is upsetting. However looking east to the river and Conygre Mead over the artificial fish ponds the view is attractive once again. One last view is of the Worthies from the rear of the Old Bell with the Hotel’s folly in the foreground.
Green Spaces and Trees

3.5.23 Three areas of open green space will hopefully be retained forever. The graveyard to the south of the Abbey and the line of trees to the east provide a sense of space which the Town greatly needs. The trees register against the skyline. Together with the silver birches in Birdcage Walk they are essential to the townscape of Malmesbury. Cloister Garden is one of the few areas of public open space in Malmesbury and should be retained as such. Lastly, Abbey House Gardens are open to the public and are renowned. Birdcage Walk is an essential area where visitors can sit and admire the Abbey.

3.5.23 To the rear of the Vicarage and Abbey House trees line the steep slope down to the river. These must be carefully maintained. As already mentioned, the large plane tree to the west of Abbey House forms an essential part of the landscape.

3.5.24 The Wisteria on the front of the Old Bell is a much photographed sight and should be preserved or replaced as long as possible.

Negative Points

The familiar negative points are here:-
A telegraph pole with lines extending to every side stands at the top of Abbey House drive outside the Old Stables. The battered street lamps here and down Abbey steps to the rear of Cloister Gardens need painting. The grass to the side and at the bottom of these steps is difficult to cut and collects litter easily.

The 1960/70s extensions to the rear of 18-56 Gloucester St were included in the Listing of these properties at that time. They do not enhance the appearance of the Town from Burnivale or the river valley.

Significant Features

The Abbey, St Paul’s Church, The Old Bell Hotel.

- View 11: View south to open countryside from footpath leading from Gloucester Street to Kingswall
- View 12: View west to open countryside from between Nos. 26 & 34 Gloucester Street
- View 13: View north along Gloucester Street to The Old Bell Hotel
- View 14: View south along Gloucester Street to St. Paul’s Bell Tower
- View 15: Views east & west along Abbey Row
3.6 AREA 6: OXFORD STREET

Character Analysis

3.6.1 This is a one-way street from the market Cross to the junction with Cross Hayes Lane and two way along the remainder towards Holloway. The first part is lined with small shops and business premises. There are some very fine old stone buildings, some rendered, with either stone or slate roofs and acceptable fenestration.

3.6.2 The Manor House (No 6) was converted into a shop in the early 19th Century and split into two units more recently. The shops signs are inappropriate for such an important listed building. The rear of the Town Hall, built as a Wesleyan Chapel in the 1880s, is currently rather dull and uninteresting and would benefit from particular attention in the redevelopment plans currently being progressed.

3.6.3 One building stands out as being in particular need of restoration and exterior improvement. This is the part of the Manor House (No. 6) next to the main building. Doors and windows are of poor quality and some are broken.

3.6.4 The Guildhall Bar at No 9 dates from the early 15th Century and boasts several medieval features. Having been a number of dwellings for a long period it still has the outlines of doors and windows along the Market Lane elevation. It has a charming small slit window.

3.6.4 Tower House is particularly striking with its early 19th Century tower, used by the Royal Observer Corps during World War II. The present garage accessed through large double doors is the main part of a 15th Century Banqueting Hall with original roof beams. With a former public house at its southern end and the northern part used as a workhouse prior to 1838 it has been combined into a large house with gardens running down to the town wall. The house was once a terrace as can be seen by it fenestration.

3.6.5 The former Moravian Church, built around 1770, fronts on to Lower Oxford Street whilst the Manse abuts it and faces Oxford Street. Both are undergoing a long restoration. The small schoolroom now serves the small congregation and there is a small inactive graveyard.

3.6.6 The public conveniences on the corner of Cross Hayes Lane have reused the wall of a former building. Around 50 years ago a former public house was demolished to widen the lane. The trees and shrubs alongside the Town Hall and in a bed on the corner provide vital greenery to be retained.

3.6.7 Nos. 28 & 30 on the corner of Oxford Street and Holloway provide an attractive end view to the road which is marred by the commercial dustbin stored in a prominent position in front of the building.

Significant Features

- The tower of Tower House, reminiscent of something from a Tuscan hill village (figs 1 & 2).
- The Moravian Church with its railings.
- The Manor House, 6 Oxford Street.
- View 8: View east along Oxford Street to Tower House
- Views to the Market Cross and St Paul’s Bell Tower looking west.
3.7 AREA 7: HOLLOWAY

Character Analysis

Topography

3.7.1 Leaving the Town to the north east, the road dips quickly down between high stone walls, through the remnants of the East Gate, round a blind bend and across the Tetbury Avon. Thus the name of Holloway was conceived. Above the road on either side is a flat plateau of land. Underground at the site of the old Gateway is the defunct railway tunnel.

3.7.2 To the south, at the top of the hill, is a short terrace of 19th Century cottages. A row of railings in front has recently been painted and mesh inserts added for safety. The pavement here leads to the St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School beyond which is the disused railway cutting and the old Town Wall. Another path drops down beside the other pavement leading down the hill and round the remaining bastion of the East Gate to the river.

3.7.3 From the hill top on the north side is an old stone building now used as parish administration rooms for the Abbey, conveniently in front of the vicarage. Abbot’s Gardens is an entrance to the left leading to The Retreat (a 19th Century house), 3 modern detached houses and 4 flats. These are well spaced and arranged attractively. Two more detached houses are built on the same level but front on to the road.

3.7.4 Once beyond the East Gate buttress the land levels out with two modern houses to the north (with large gardens surrounding) and one to the south. The road then crosses the river before climbing up again to the Cirencester Road.

Archaeology

3.7.5 In 2000, English Heritage funded an excavation of the Town Wall behind the Catholic School. Evidence of Iron Age walls was found. The East Gate bastion is due for repair under the same scheme and another dig is to be completed here.

3.7.6 It does not seem that any archaeological investigation was made when the houses of Abbot’s Gardens were built in the 1990s.

3.7.7 An investigation of the area covered by the ex-smithy and sheep dip may be interesting. Being just outside the Town Walls, it is likely that it has always been a commercial/industrial site.

History

3.7.8 The East Gate entrance to the Town probably dates from Saxon times or maybe Roman, this being the road to Cirencester. The actual gate was finally removed by the Turnpike Commission in about 1778.

3.7.9 Land including Abbot’s Gardens, the Vicarage, Hillside, East Gate Lodge and half of Abbey House garden was labelled as a Bowling Green in a survey of 1831. By 1840 the land had been divided up into parcels with no mention of bowling.

3.7.10 The Catholic School moved to Holloway in the 1930s from Cross Hayes. The land was previously the Kings Arms vegetable garden. The school backs onto the Town Wall and a path running along the outside of the Wall (known as Nuns’ Walk) connects it with the Catholic Church of St Aldhelm in Cross Hayes.

3.7.11 The Parish Rooms (moved from Cross Hayes in the late 1990s) are labelled ‘Old Squash Courts’ on a 1923 map but appear to be cottages in 19th Century maps.

3.7.12 To the east of the old Gate is an ex-industrial site combining an old smithy and tool repair shop. The buildings are still in situ. A small garden to the east of the road just north of the house Delmont is part of the site of the old Pumphouse. From 1870 to the 1950s this pumped water to the Town’s Water Tower near the Market Cross. A quite imposing brick and stone gateway with a substantial wooden door now leads to the rear of Delmont but was obviously part of the Pumphouse.

Building Materials

3.7.13 The Parish Rooms, Town Walls, terraced cottages and The Retreat are all Cotswold stone. Half of the cottages are stone roofed - a quintessentially Malmesbury feature. The modern dwellings of Abbot’s Gardens are stone but with concrete roof tiles. The house Penmellin is of dressed stone blocks with a dark concrete roof. It is rather stark.

3.7.14 Delmont is built of mock stone blocks but in grey not a Cotswold colour. The outbuildings are of red brick with breezeblock additions. The roofs are corrugated iron.

Views and Landmarks

3.7.15 Holloway is one of the most attractive approaches to the Town. One comes upon the East Gate suddenly after rounding a blind bend. Then, climbing up between old stone walls and taking another right angled bend, see ahead a view of Cross Hayes.
3.7.16 Conversely, leaving the Town and looking over the river at the Duke of York pub, the skyline is bare and ugly, denuded of its trees in 2004. However from the same spot, swinging round to your left, there is a lovely wooded copse on the south of the river with Conygre Mead to the north. To the right is Bicks Hill, again wooded with (further right) tall trees on the skyline which leads towards the eastern bypass (thankfully not visible). If you can see over the wall or through the gates of the ex-smithy, the remains of the old railway embankment are visible to the south.

Green Spaces and Trees

3.7.17 An attractive hedgerow screens the house Le Paz from the road. Penmellin would benefit from a similar screen. Tall trees are visible behind The Retreat and Abbot’s Gardens. These form part of the wooded south bank of the river. Well maintained, these form a good backdrop to the old Town Wall at this point.

3.7.18 Against the tall walls leading to the East Gate, on the south of the road, great efforts have been made to plant small gardens. These have the effect of softening the stone wall and improve the general appearance of the area.

3.7.19 The planting in Abbot’s Gardens is well done and efforts should be made to retain this, especially the trees.

Negative Factors

3.7.20 The first sight on the left approaching the Town via Holloway is the rusty roofed and part blackened ex-smithy buildings. Parts of the walls are breezeblock although the older part is red brick. These, together with the unsuitable building materials of the house Delmont, spoil this approach. Thankfully the eye is soon caught by the East Gate bastion at this point.

3.7.21 To the right, a broken stone wall on the north boundary of Penmellin should be rebuilt. The cars parked on the hatched lines on the left bend before the East Gate are a danger to traffic. The bend conceals a single track section of the road at the Gate. This is a dangerous piece of Highway management.

3.7.22 Looking back towards the river at this point, the bare skyline behind the Duke of York pub needs replanting and an ugly transformer in the field behind Delmont is an eyesore in the river valley.

3.7.23 The lamp posts are battered and ugly in Holloway as in many other parts of the Town. A yellow grit box in the driveway to Le Paz is hideous.

3.7.24 Continuing up the hill, the wooden fence forming the south boundary to East Gate Lodge is immediately noticeable. It should be screened or replaced with stone. It is not in keeping with the surrounding stone walls.

3.7.25 Lastly, the velux roof windows of the Parish Rooms are unsuitable and the broken door to the outbuilding needs repair.

Significant Features

• St Joseph’s School - a well built 1930s institution.
• The high stone walls and East Gate bastion.

Fig 1: View east down Holloway.

Fig 2: View of the site of the East Gate in the middle distance in Holloway.
3.8 AREA 8: ABBEY ROW

Character Analysis

3.8.1 Abbey Row is a narrow flat ridge running west-east from the Triangle to the site of the medieval West Gate at the Old Bell Hotel. It is the only access to the town without a river crossing and is an ideal position for a fortification to complement the town wall along the top of the escarpments. It was probably the site of a castle from Saxon to Norman times.

3.8.2 The ground drops down sharply either side of the ridge. To the north Mill Lane follows the line of the old Town Wall and leads down to the Tetbury Avon. To the south Betty Geezer’s Steps (named after the widow who willed them to the town) lead to Burnivale and thus to the Sherston Avon.

3.8.3 Terraced houses line the northern side of Abbey Row; those at the western end are in commercial use. The line is broken by the old Baptist Chapel and the junction with Mill Lane. To the south there are 3 breaks in the terrace. Between Nos 64 and 66a small gap provides a glimpse of the river valley. Next the sunken garden opposite and belonging to Avon House, home to a magnificent magnolia tree which delights passers-by every spring. Lastly the Jubilee Garden at the eastern end, a public seating area much valued in a town of few parks. The huge telephone pole with many overhead wires detracts from the attractive views.

3.8.4 Abbey Row is characterised by its stone walls interspersed with attractive railings which create a charming confined space, although pedestrians are endangered by swiftly moving traffic. Most buildings are of stone, either dressed (Avon House) or rough cast (Nos 66-74) with some render. The terraces are mostly 3 storey. A notable exception being Euclid Villas, Nos 62/64, 2 semi-detached ‘alpine’ style of 6-7 storeys set into the hillside.

3.8.5 The condition of the built environment is mainly good with some houses needing window repair or replacement (nos 37, 58 & 60). Nos 39-43 have been restored recently but unfortunately the upper windows are uPVC. The old chapel dating from 1802 needs maintenance. Its extension would benefit from rendering and the remains of a cottage by the road is an eyesore. The wall above Jubilee Gardens leans alarmingly. The shop sign at No 41 Abbey Row is garish and its illumination emphasises this at night.

3.8.6 Most roofs are stone except for Nos 58/60 and 62/64. The modern houses in Mill Lane have been step-trerrated to maximise their rear gardens. No 24 Mill Lane appears to be an old commercial premises which is in need of maintenance.

3.8.7 Abbey Row is a narrow busy throughfare with inadequate width paving. Although in the 20 mph zone with speed cushions the traffic is often too fast and too much for its surroundings.

Significant Features

1. A dramatic feature of this area is the sudden contrast between the enclosed views of Abbey Row/ Mill Lane and the panoramic vistas to the south and west over open countryside and the river valley.
2. Nos. 25 & 25a are 2 Grade II* buildings. There are 12 Grade II listed buildings in the area.

Fig 1: The view from the gap between nos.56 & 58 Abbey Row to the open countryside.

- View 15: Views east & west along Abbey Row
- View 16: View west from Abbey Row to war memorial in The Triangle
- View 21: View south from Abbey Row by Jubilee Gardens across the rooftops of The Maltings
- Panorama B: View south-west from Abbey Row by Jubilee Gardens to open countryside

Fig 2: Nos 19 & 21 Abbey Row, early 19th Century houses converted into 4 flats in 1968.
3.9 AREA: THE TRIANGLE

Character Analysis

3.9.1 Formerly called Sheepfair, the Triangle and Horsefair were Westport's market areas. A weighing machine was removed when the War Memorial was built in 1921. The original St Mary’s Church was destroyed during the Civil War and its replacement served as the Westport parish church until World War II. There has been a pub on the site of the Three Cups since the 15th Century, although the present building dates from 200 years later. There were other commercial premises including the Oddfellows Inn (49), Castle Inn (82), and a number of shops which have closed during the past century. This is an important crossroads, roads from Bristol and Gloucester meet here before entering the town.

3.9.2 The Triangle is active, attractive and cheerful. As the name implies, it is indeed triangular, measuring approximately 40 metres along the south side, 55 on the east and 70 down the west side. The central focus is the First World War Memorial, being an inscribed Celtic cross on a square plinth. The principal buildings being the Three Cups Public House, St Mary’s Hall and the old Methodist Church. The latter on the eastern side is a handsome Victorian building but is easily missed as it is crowded by its neighbours, slightly set back and only clearly visible from Bristol Street. There is a great variety of building styles, most are random rubble stone but there are examples of brick, limewash and render on stone as well as a range of different roof heights, gables and dormers. However it is generally harmonious.

3.9.3 Car parking is permitted on the west side with 13 parking spaces including two for the disabled. The disabled bays are under-utilised as users have to cross the busy road to reach the shops. No other parking is permitted with double yellow lines along each kerb.

3.9.4 The Triangle used to provide a useful secondary shopping centre for the western part of the town. The remaining businesses were the Three Cups and a General Store with a sub Post Office, Butchers, Fish Merchants & Greengrocers, Takeaway, Health Food shop and a Glaziers nearby in Abbey Row. Unfortunately the sub Post Office closed in April 2002, the General Store that December with the glaziers and health food shop shutting in 2004. Closure of these vital elements have put the future of the whole in doubt and every effort should be made to reopen them. St Mary’s Hall provides a valuable community function with a play school every weekday morning and other groups using it at other times.

3.9.5 Five roads meet at the Triangle. From the north comes Gloucester Road, from the south-west Bristol Street and at the south-east corner Abbey Row leads to the town centre. On the west side two lanes, Katifer Lane and St Mary’s Street lead to West Street and Horsefair respectively. This is a very busy junction with constant traffic during the day. Heavy vehicles using the B4040 (Gloucester Road & Bristol Street) have great difficulty in manoeuvring around the War Memorial that often suffers damage. This area is unsuitable for such traffic and it would be of great benefit to re-route the B4040 along Park Road and Corn Gastons.

3.9.6 The view along Abbey Row shows the west end of the Abbey framed by terraced houses to either side. The narrow gently sloping entrance of Bristol Street causes traffic problems but has a pleasant view of stone cottages. Katifer Lane offers an inviting prospect to be explored. Gloucester Road disappears over the brow with roofs visible, whilst St Mary’s Street despite its narrowness has an open aspect due to the small old churchyard adjoining it.
3.9.7 There is no room for further development here and it is difficult to envisage alterations to the existing buildings that would enhance the Conservation Area. There are examples of poor modern work, for instance the uPVC windows of 4 St Mary’s Street – further aberrations like this should not be permitted. There is scope for further enhancement, particularly by way of street furniture. The 20 mph zone signs are large but necessary at the moment – if the zone is extended they could be relocated to a less sensitive place. The tall lamp columns could be replaced with types more appropriate to the environment here, or wall hung if that is possible. Both the handrails in the pavement outside St Mary’s Hall as well as that leading to the hall could be improved. No 2 Bristol Street is a good example of an early 19th Century house but is suffering from a lack of maintenance which soon will put it at risk.

**Significant Features**

- St Mary’s Hall and the former Methodist Church
- View 16: View west from Abbey Row to War Memorial in The Triangle
- View 17: View east from Bristol Street to Methodist Church
- View 18: View north from the Triangle to St Mary’s Hall

Fig 3: View of The Triangle from Abbey Row.

Fig 4: Houses in Abbey Row.

Fig 5: St Mary’s Hall.
3.10 AREA 10: GLOUCESTER ROAD

Character Analysis

3.10.1 Gloucester Road is about 300 metres long and runs in a northerly direction down a fairly steep hill from the Triangle to Stainsbridge, curving first to the left and then to the right. In places the road surface has been built up above the original level. There is also a slope from west to east across the line of the road, and houses on the east side sometimes have a floor below street level, visible only from the rear across the Tetbury Avon. Those on the west have gardens that slope steeply upwards towards Foundry Road. This variation in level adds charm to the appearance of the road.

3.10.2 At the Triangle end of Gloucester Road there are old residential properties on both sides, many of which were at one time used as shops. In the section to the corner by Brooky Lane, nearly all these houses are listed. The only unlisted buildings on the east side of this stretch are Nos. 71 & 73. These are the only brick faced buildings here and are incongruous in appearance. This situation has been made worse by an insensitive recent rebuilding of No. 73, so that it no longer matches No. 71, although both were built together. Any opportunity to improve the appearance of these two buildings that might appear in the future should be grasped, as they are an important part of the street scene - when coming up the hill in particular.

3.10.3 Below Brooky Lane, Nos. 81-87 form a group of houses built in about 1880 which are again not listed. However these houses, although again of brick and much larger than any of the other buildings in their vicinity are themselves all still in quite good condition and form a particularly important part of the overall scene as seen from the Triangle. Consideration might be given to listing these, to try to ensure that they remain similar in appearance, although they are somewhat newer than most of their neighbours.

3.10.4 Opposite these, the listed group of small houses from Nos. 96-112 is particularly pleasing. The northern part of the road (after No. 112 on the West and No. 97 on the east) consists of a mixture of commercial buildings, sometimes now converted into houses, with some larger residential properties and more modern infilling.

3.10.5 Few of the buildings along this stretch are listed. Of those listed, Number 118B is particularly important because it closes the view from higher up the hill. [The roof of Highbridge is visible over it.] It should also be noted that Westport Granary, not listed and now converted into a house, is a particularly interesting building.

3.10.6 In this area it is difficult to pick out any buildings which could be improved, although any planning applications need to be reviewed for their overall impact and neighbourliness.

3.10.7 Outside the Conservation Area, the site of the Athelstan Garage, recently closed, on the corner of Park Road is a potential problem as this is crucial to the initial impression of Malmesbury gained by visitors from the north. At present there is a view of houses on the slope rising to Foundry Lane (Abbotswood outside the conservation area and Highbridge within it). It is important that this view be maintained, and that any new buildings on the garage site are not too large and do not dominate and hide this initial view of the town.

3.10.8 Gloucester Road is an attractive road, whose charm relies on its curves and it having a very wide variety of buildings and building styles, stone, brick and rendered, rather than a homogeneous collection of buildings of any one period. The road is of considerable significance for Malmesbury’s history, as is shown by the high proportion of listed buildings, some of which have ancient origins. The views of the rears of the
properties on the east side from across the Tetbury branch of the Avon are as important as the views from Gloucester Road itself: these views are covered in Area 19 from which they can be seen.

3.10.9 Most of the houses along the road are in good decorative repair - certainly on average a lot better than they were a few years ago - and no specific actions seem needed to improve them apart from those already mentioned. However, Gloucester Road is now the main road out of town towards Tetbury, although in the nineteenth century this route apparently ran up Shipton Hill into Foundry Lane and the Horsefair. The main problem with the road is the considerable amount of traffic it bears. This includes some very large lorries, as it is part of the sign posted route from Sherston along Bristol Street and up Tetbury Hill to either Tetbury or the main Cirencester to Chippenham road. [There is an alternative route along Park Road and Corn Gastons but this has its own problems.] The pavements have been narrowed and are only continuous on the eastern side, but even so the road itself is not wide and there are places where larger vehicles cannot pass. The curve at the top of Brooky Lane is particularly difficult.

3.10.10 It would be easy to recommend that the ban on heavy vehicles and the 20 m.p.h. speed limit already in existence in Abbey Row be extended to cover Gloucester Road. This would certainly greatly improve the environment here, but it is necessary to consider what would happen to other locations (outside the Conservation Area) if this were done.

3.10.11 The road also suffers visually from a collection of wooden poles and associated overhead wiring. All along the road there are telephone poles, and wires run across the road to individual houses while at the north end there are also overhead power lines. It would be a major improvement in appearance if all these could be buried. Other modern factors detracting from the appearance include tall black street lamp standards, and high TV aerials - and on Tuesday mornings bags of rubbish awaiting collection placed along the narrow pavements. Changes are currently proposed to the method of rubbish collection, but it is difficult to see how the appearance can be improved where terraced houses open straight onto the street. There are, however, no visible satellite dishes and these should certainly be discouraged.

3.10.12 Nearly all the pavements on the east side were relaid about 10 years ago, and are made of small zigzag shaped blocks with some gullies across them to carry rainwater. The pavements are in places difficult to navigate because of their narrow width and vehicle damage. On the west side there is only a pavement between Number 92 and Westport House, and this is made of the conventional paving slabs. At the entrance to the Triangle [just outside area 11] there is a cobbled strip that was meant to mark out that danger area, but this has subsided and is mostly covered with tarmac patches. Thus at present the visual appearance of the road and pavements is less satisfactory than that of the houses. This appearance could perhaps be improved by a comprehensive highway improvement scheme.

3.10.13 Visually the best view along the road on approaching the town is looking up the hill to the corner where No. 79 and its neighbours can be seen. This is effectively the introduction to the older part of the town for motorists coming from Tetbury Hill. In the opposite direction the best views are to that same corner, or from it looking downhill to where No. 118b closes the view.

Significant Features

- Westport House, 116 Gloucester Road.
- View through to river at the entrance to Stainsbridge House.
- Views up and down Shipton Hill.
### 3.11 AREA 1E: HORSEFAIR

**Character Analysis**

3.11.1 The Horsefair is a quiet, pleasant, triangular open space surrounded by houses. The name derives from a market in the 17th Century. The open space is divided diagonally by a minor road from the Triangle to Burnham Road which leads to the housing area on the west of Malmesbury. On either side are 23 hour parking spaces marked out by sett surfaces, and surrounded by good flower beds which are maintained by the residents. The pavements are wide.

3.11.2 The surrounding houses are all terraced, open directly to the pavements, and provide a variety of heights and façade surfaces. Dating from the 17th to 19th Centuries the majority are listed, are stone built and with a few rendered. The whole is harmonious, and very attractive. The variety of rooftops provides additional interest. On the south side, the silhouette of the United Reformed Church with its simple slender steeple and delicate belfry, provides a dominant view. From the top of West Street there is a view of stone cottages gently sloping downwards with a glimpse of open countryside on the skyline.

3.11.3 Burnham Road exits to the north west. A modern saddlers shop has good parking at the front, this provides a passing bay for the narrow road with parking permitted only on the south side. At the north apex of the triangle is No 40, the Bath Arms pub until 1957 and then an off licence until the mid nineties and now converted to a residence. This is a mid 18th Century building. Continuing clockwise is the junction with Foundry Road and an inviting view up the narrow lane. The east side comprises a variety of 2 & 3 storey stone terraced houses.

3.11.4 At the junction with St Mary's Street there is an attractive skyline view of the houses at the top of Gloucester Road and the Triangle. The street is single track, very narrow, all houses with street frontage, so it is important to maintain a “passing” width outside Barley Mow house, at the expense of the pavement here. The pavements on this road are grossly inadequate but cannot be widened. No 18, Hobbes Cottage is close to the birth place of the philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and there is a commemorative plaque on the wall. Over its garden is another view of the church and steeple.

3.11.5 Proceeding down St Mary's Street, next on the right comes the tranquil and inviting entrance to the United Reformed Church, built as a Congregational Church in 1867 in the gothic style with attached schoolroom. The main church structure is impressive with a spire on top of a columnar tower on the north east corner of the building and a “rose” window in the east front. Built of random stone with decorative stone window and door surrounds under a slate roof it is a fine example of late Victorian design. There is a long history of nonconformist worship in the Westport area, John Wesley visited frequently and a nonconformist chapel was first built in the Horsefair in 1788.

3.11.6 On the left of the church is a row of pleasant terraced brick and stone houses, Nos. 8-14. No. 14, the Minister’s house is attached to the church and is particularly attractive, 2 storey, one half turret to the roof on the right, and gable on the left. The remaining houses have a large communal front garden. On the east side of the street is Mansfield Terrace 1899, a terrace of 4 brick and stone 3 storey houses. At the southern end is St Mary’s Lane, a sloping narrow cut through to Gloucester Road.

3.11.7 The west side of the Horsefair is perhaps the most attractive. The south part of the terrace, Nos. 24 & 26, are 3 storey built in the early/mid 19th Century. No 28 is not listed. Next comes the jewel of the
Horsefair, Nos 30, 34, 36, and 38, a row of delightful C17 cottages with 5 gables. Although the windows of No 30 are uPVC, the design is sympathetic.

3.11.8 There are a number of enhancements that could be made, e.g. there is one tree, 2 more small trees could be planted. A network of overhead wires at the junction with St Mary’s Street is untidy, intrusive and should be removed together with an equally unpleasant cable pole at the corner on No 40. The door with glass panels of No 16 is unsuitable. The ½ glazed uPVC door of No 30 spoils the line of solid wooden doors of the other houses and should be replaced. The row of 3 garages on the south side is very shabby and their roofs particularly could be improved.

3.11.9 A narrow winding lane running approximately north from the north end of the Horsefair, Foundry Road has a mixture of buildings - small cottages and large terraced dwellings, red brick and stone built, old and new. In spite of being narrow and two way there does not seem to be any significant traffic problems. There is a turning area at the end of the northern part of the road.

3.11.10 On the right between No 43 and Stable Cottage is a gap with an attractive view across the river valley. Opposite No 52 there is a modern block of garages followed by a sharp right hand turn down a narrow steep winding hill locally known as Shipton Hill that leads to Gloucester Road. Shipton Hill is characterised by being bound by stone walls on each side of variable heights - up to 4 metres in parts, which effectively hides most of what is behind them. Beyond the turning are Nos. 45 and 47, the latter has a large street front garden with a lawn, and the gap in building offers a view across the valley.

3.11.11 At this point the view north up the road changes dramatically as the engineering workshops of Westport Foundry, Ratcliffe & Son, dominate the scene. This is a large group of red brick buildings on both sides of the road which houses the workshops of a sizeable garden machinery sales and maintenance business that has been in the ownership of the same family since 1870. The group of buildings on the east side of the road are listed Grade II and whilst of considerable architectural interest externally, are even more fascinating inside. The interior contains a wealth of mechanical engineering paraphernalia from a bygone age, including line shafting to lathes, pillar drill, fan for brass furnace and forge with early bellows in the west range. The buildings of red brick construction have some stone detailing and part were originally farm buildings. The listed building historical note describes this as "a fairly complete example of a rural town foundry, of which there are very few survivors". The street front railings are in need of some repair.

3.11.12 Foundry Road carries on past Ratcliffe’s where can be seen a mixture of houses ranging from the traditional picturesque to the uninspired modern. Nos 58-62 have uPVC windows and doors that would benefit from enhancement.

3.11.13 Katifer Lane is a dogleg single track residential lane connecting the Triangle to West Street. The buildings are mainly either coursed or random rubble stone, on street and terraced. The lane is quiet and traffic flow is minimal. There are no pavements and the character is evocative of old Malmesbury.

3.11.14 To the north leaving the Triangle is the blank side wall of the Three Cups Public House. At the end the pub car park, with garden pots, forms a pleasant open space. The terrace in St Mary’s Street and a tree can be seen. Next comes a small wooden gate, the entrance to the communal yard of Nos. 8-14 St Mary’s Street, situated behind the on street 2 storey terraced houses No. 3 & 7 Katifer Lane. No. 3 has brick arched lintels above the windows whilst No. 7 has wooden lintels.
Finally at the junction with West Street is a relatively large open space containing seven garages and a small shabby office/workshop. This abuts the side of the United Reformed Church with the windows visible above and to the right the rear of the minister’s house which is built onto the church. Although the garage area could be vastly improved, this open space must be retained to preserve the character of this area.

3.11.15 Returning down the Lane on the south side is the garage of No. 11 West Street. Next to this is No. 10 with an on street carport and somewhat dilapidated lean-to extensions on the side of the house. At the rear is No. 8, with access from the large yard behind No. 2. This yard contains eight garages much in demand in the town. From the yard are views of stone tiled roofs to the south and east and an evergreen tree. No. 2 has a porch and sash windows, and forms a terrace with the workshop of Stephens and Son, Joiners. There are 4 velux type windows in the roof of the workshop and 1 blocked window.

3.11.16 Continuing east down the lane is the blank rear wall of No. 2, and the workshop which has 2 vehicular entrances. At the end of the workshop is a narrow brick addition with wooden boarding, and a garage door - dilapidated and apparently unused. This workshop was once the Council cart shed with stables in the yard. The last house is called the Old Forge built of brick. It has a long window on the ground floor marking the old entrance to the forge. The adjoining parking space is backed by a tall wall, blocking any view. This side of the lane ends with the wonderfully distorted side wall of No. 88 the Triangle.

3.11.17 West Street, which was previously called St Helen or Ellen’s Lane, Chapel Lane and Milk Street, is a narrow lane running uphill and due north from Bristol Street terminating at the Horsefair. The Bristol Street end, up to Katifer Lane, is one way to vehicular traffic and only parking for a couple of cars is allowed. The upper half accommodates two-way traffic and car parking on one side is permitted.

3.11.18 This Street epitomises the dilemmas associated with conservation. Substantial renovations were completed here in the 1970s. The northern half of the terrace on the west, Nos. 14-22 were completely rebuilt. Only on close examination does one notice the different construction from their neighbours on both sides. However all of those are listed whilst Nos. 14-22 are not and are not even protected by Article 4 Directions. Therefore these houses could have uPVC windows and doors, change the type of roof and have any other permitted development carried out when it is likely that any such proposal nearby will be refused. This amply illustrates that listing as well as the application of Article 4 Directions is in need of urgent review.

3.11.19 Most of the houses are two storey cottages with many having been renovated in recent years. The design and construction is “traditional” with rubble stone walls and stone tile or modern flat and pantile roofs. There is considerable variation in architectural detail to be seen. About two thirds of the houses on the west side of the street are listed Grade II with only Nos. 1 & 22 Horsefair achieving the accolade on the east side. Dormers feature here mainly on the west side and towards the Horsefair end of the street and those of Nos. 18–22 are of particular interest. In the main the houses are early to mid 19th Century with some earlier. They are of coursed limestone rubble walls construction and with ridge brick chimney stacks much in evidence. Originally the dwellings were of small size resulting in some being combined in recent years to form units more appropriate in size for present day living requirements.

3.11.20 The front doors are mostly semi-glazed and, in the main, painted white along with all the window frames. No 20 has a brown door which stands out like a sore thumb. Wooden window and door lintels can be seen on Nos. 36 to 42 and No 42 has a string course above the first floor windows. The rainwater guttering and down-pipes are mainly grey PVC with some cast iron. Evidence of past lime-wash finish to the stonework is in evidence on Nos. 36-42.

3.11.21 About half way up the street there is a staggered crossroad with Katifer Lane going east and Grovers Court to the west. The modern development of sheltered housing in Grovers Court does little to enhance the view and is in stark contrast to the older buildings. Looking north from the Katifer Lane junction, the view is dominated on the east side by a large group of Victorian buildings which makes up the United Reform Church which is the most prominent group of buildings in the whole street.

3.11.22 Opposite the church is the most attractive group of older houses in West Street (Nos. 34, 36 & 38–42). In general, the most pleasing properties are on the west side of the street with the houses displaying significant uniformity in design and construction whilst those of the east side are less so with uPVC windows and doors detracting from the general uniformity of the scene.

**Significant Features**

- View 19: View south from Horsefair to the United Reformed Church.
- Nos 30-38 Horsefair.
- United Reformed Church.
- Westport Foundry.
3.12 AREA 12: GASTONS ROAD & BURNHAM ROAD.

Character Analysis

3.12.1 In 1831 (Maps by John Wilkins & Lt. Robert Dawson) it seems that only the eastern half of Burnham Road (known as Gastons Lane until the early 20th Century) existed. This presumably led as far as the graveyard of St Mary’s Church which is where the junction with Hudson Road is now. Gastons Road (then called Gastons Lane) began to be developed around 1845 when the first houses were built at its southern end. Originally Gastons Lane simply joined Horsefair to Bristol Road. Towards the end of the 19th century when Burnham House was built to the west of the right angled bend, the roads were separately named. During the whole period further housing has been built along both roads to produce a mixture of styles.

3.12.2 At the junction with Bristol Road, Gastons Road is 2-way, rising steeply between high stone walls. Immediately past the old Westport School (an imposing 1850s building which is worthy of listing and/or being included in the Conservation Area and being occupied again) the road bends and becomes single track. Still gradually rising, it has a snug feel with stone Victorian terraced houses on both sides – abutting the pavement on the east and with tiny front gardens on the west.

3.12.3 The view is attractive but spoilt by prominent overhead cables and many cracked paving slabs. A desirable enhancement would be to replace the large slabs with another surface and it was noted that the areas of small interlocking blocks had not suffered so badly from vehicular traffic. Midway up the road on the left hand side is an industrial unit which is screened from the south by conifers. It is an ugly collection of temporary-looking buildings which could be much improved by adding pitched roofs, different windows and screening shrubs.

3.12.4 As one reaches the northerm end the road (once more 2-way) opens out, the houses are modern and well set back from the pavement. It has lost its snug look and has an ordinary urban flavour as it joins Burnham Road.

3.12.5 The buildings on the east side of Gastons Road consist of groups of terraces. No 5 has a lovely small 6 pane leaded window at eave level which appears to be original from the mid 19th Century. No 9 is an end of terrace with an ugly breeze-block side/rear extension which appears unfinished. Nos 19-27 form an attractive terrace totally ruined by huge slate dormers on 19-25. Probably added in the 1980s, each is a different size & style leaving one to doubt that planning permission was obtained. Greystones is a 1950s bungalow with an ugly garage to the front that is out of keeping with the house and its surroundings. Nos 29-33 have retained the matching red brick rounded arches above all openings. The effect is spoiled by louvred windows at No 29. Nos 35-47 is an early 20th Century terrace all with similar sized modern porches and well kept continuous railing atop the small rounded front walls with gates. The symmetry of the whole is spoiled by dormer widows at 41 & 43.

3.12.6 Similarly, the west side of the street consists of groups of short terraces. Nos 2-12 are mid Victorian and listed. No 2 is particularly well kept (although the gable end date-stone is barely readable). No sash windows survive from the listing particulars. 8, 10 & 12 have hard-standing instead of front gardens which is evidence of modern life but detracts from the pleasure to be gained from this neat scene. Nos 1-7 The Mews are well built modern houses which have kept the terrace tradition of the road. Nos 14-24 are late Victorian with several original sash windows. No 14 has a large rear extension built of mock stone and the owners appear to be redesigning the front hard-standing, having demolished an attached garage. A satellite dish attached to the front wall does not improve the appearance. Nos 24/26 are a very well kept pair of red brick & white rendered semi-detached houses probably built in the 1920s. They have several attractive features including a deep overhang to the roof, well proportioned square bay windows and matching front railings. The prefabricated garage at No 24 is not in keeping. Nos 32-40 are 1960s built council houses (now probably privately owned). They appear large, well built & designed, each offset to its neighbour.

3.12.7 Approaching Burnham Road from Gastons Road one looks directly at a pair of stone clad early 20th Century houses, Nos 15 & 15a, on the north side of the road. To the east of them stands a disused Victorian Baptist burial ground, a modern house, then Nos 11/13 semi-detached and No 9 detached early 20th Century houses. None of these attractive dwellings are included in the Conservation Area. Yet to the south a range of modern houses, Nos 26a, 29, 30 & 31 do not merit being included.

3.12.8 Looking east from the junction one is struck by the lack of cohesion, the uneven spacing of buildings and the cluttered appearance of a narrow road permanently lined down one side with parked cars. There is a small car park formed from the yard behind Nos 1-5. Outside No 7 (H C Matthew & Son undertakers, a red brick house built 1900) is a telegraph pole groaning with power and telephone cables.

3.12.9 Apparently there was little development in a strip stretching about 100 yards west of the Horsefair before
1900 due to poor soil conditions. There were two burial grounds, the Baptist one to the north and St Mary’s now deconsecrated and levelled at the entrance to Hudson Road.

3.12.10 There is a pavement only on the south side of the road. Outside Nos. 18-26 the kerb is very high and to prevent danger to pedestrians an unsightly scaffold pole handrail has been added. This would look better painted black or better still replaced with something more in keeping with the surroundings, like the wrought iron railing of the gardens on the other side.

3.12.11 Nos. 1-5 were built in 1853 as a police station and associated housing. The building is a good example of provincial municipal architecture. It features plain ashlar stone blocks with stone lintels, mock ‘blind’ windows, a slate roof with tall stone chimneys and a large overhang to the eaves. The matching blue doors and modern uPVC windows enhance the appearance. There seems to be no reason why No 5 is not also subject to Article 4 protection. Nos 18-26, a terrace built c1880 (subject to Article 4 directions) have an odd appearance as the back doors lead onto the pavement. Originally there was a row of wash-houses that blocked part of the road which were demolished in the 1970s. The front doors and porches are to the south approached along a common path. The street appearance is ruined by large sewer pipes added to each property after the wash-houses were removed. These are multi-coloured as are the various types of windows.

3.12.12 The junction of Hudson Road with Burnham Road forms a wide pleasant green space with a bench on the site of the former graveyard. To the east there is a good view of 18-26 Burnham Road, the rear of a terrace in Horsefair, the United Reform Church spire and Bartons Close. To the west one sees the long gardens of Gastons Road and particularly the terrace of 25-47. Unfortunately these properties have odd garages at the ends of their gardens, 4 prefabricated and one built of blocks that are out of place in a Conservation Area. This is a quiet cul-de-sac which ends with wide verges next to the sheltered flats associated with Glovers Court. There are also a few modern houses in keeping with the locale. One unfortunate feature is the number of parked cars.

3.12.13 Bartons Close is a very short dead end beginning in West Street with old stone cottages. The ‘Barton’ probably has an old core but has been much changed over time and is now an unremarkable building. At the end and better viewed from Hudson Road are 3 detached 1950s bungalows built of mock stone.

**Significant Features**

- The old National Boys School, Gastons Road.
3.13 AREA 15: BRISTOL STREET

Character Analysis

3.13.1 The Saxon Kingway linked Cowage to Malmesbury and on to Chippenham. This route followed the line of Foxley Road continuing on across what is now a field through a ford and up Harpers Lane. Later this road crossed the river by Turketyl Bridge and was the main road towards Bristol until about the 17th Century. After then the road to Sherston became the more important route. In 1831 there was little habitation west of Milk Street (now West Street). There were a number of cottages close to the junction with Foxley Road, although a large terrace along Keen’s Hill was rebuilt in 1888 as Avon Terrace.

3.13.2 Approaching Malmesbury from south of the river on Foxley road, with the magnificent view of the town and Abbey across the fields, you enter the townscape after crossing Westport Bridge. To the west the Tanyard, over 200 years old but greatly altered in the 20th century is still an interesting building and it is difficult to understand why it is not in the Conservation Area or otherwise protected. The modern houses in front of you as you approach the Dark Lane junction are rightly not part of the Conservation Area but are reasonable examples of their type. As the road turns sharply right between high stone walls you glimpse Dark Lane to the left which appears to be a narrow country lane lined with stone walls with overhanging vegetation to the north. Whilst this part of Foxley Road is dangerous for pedestrians it also presents an obvious danger to vehicular traffic and it is probably because of this that no serious accidents have occurred here. The road curves to the left up a sharp slope to its junction with Bristol Street.

3.13.3 Bristol Street is the narrow main B road approach into Malmesbury from the west. It is a busy traffic route at all times of the day, evening and part of the night with cars, buses, farm traffic and large, sometimes articulated lorries. There are few bicycles .... it is too dangerous, except at the weekend in the absence of commercial traffic many riders use the Wiltshire Cycleway along here. Pavements are narrow, one person wide generally, and non-continuous on both sides. Pedestrians are forced into the roadway running the gauntlet of the heavy traffic.

3.13.4 It is noisy, dangerous and in summer a dusty place to live. Most cottages front onto the narrow pavement with no refuge or threshold between their public and private lives. There are few off road parking places and parking is rightly prohibited except at the top of Harpers Lane.

3.13.5 Visually it is a dramatic piece of townscape. As the road approaches the town its width is restricted by Westhill House before dipping down past the Gastons Road junction (where the Conservation Area begins) to Foxley Road. It then immediately twists left and right up a marked rise between two strongly intimidating terraces of 2 and 3 storey terraces built right onto narrow pavements. The northern one is even more emphasised with a significant length of high level pavement constricting the approach even more. At the top of this rise the road straightens out and ‘relaxes’ its oppressive character a little with some tiny front gardens and then, just short of West Street, with some sizeable front gardens above the pavement all to the north of the road. At West Street the northern 3 storey terrace is again abutting the pavement but with the space opening out at the top of Harpers Lane is no longer so intimidating. On the other side of the road the terrace of low 2 storey cottages appears dark as it is seen against southern light. It is virtually continuous from Foxley Road to Harpers Lane with an unfortunate major gap between Nos 48 and 50 and a further minor recess in front of the old Chapel.

3.13.6 There are only three views out from Bristol Street after the Foxley Road junction. The first to the north at West Street is a forbidding glance of sky between terraces crowding in. More significantly Harpers Lane affords distant views of the trees bordering the River Avon, but this is only fully appreciated when travelling westward. Finally there is the view through to the busy Triangle with the sloping junction of Burnivale disappearing to the right.

3.13.7 The whole street is a dramatic, dynamic urban space inducing strong movement through it particularly from the west. Cottages vary in height from low 2 storey on the southern side to substantial 2 and full 3 storey dwellings on the northern. This difference is emphasised by the slope across the road from north to south. The
cottages are all natural stone finished except 2 modern houses in the major gap on the southern side (mock stone) and a contrasting modern property at No 19. There are a few cottages close to the Triangle which are rendered, some of which are painted and one at No 17 in non-vernacular pebble dash. These add welcome variety to the street scene. Stonework is generally random rubble although some is coursed and one pair is ashlar finished. Other than these elements there are few relieving features such as quoins and porches and the whole street depends for its success on the consistent walling material counterpointed with the design of the painted joinery features. Roofs are generally not visible.

3.13.8 All buildings appear to be over 100 years old except for the shed between Nos 45 and 47, Badgers Trap and Norfolk House in the major gap in the southern terrace, the new house at No 19 and the garage to No 42.

3.13.9 There seems little potential for much new development affecting the Bristol Street elevations except possibly for the shed mentioned above and perhaps photovoltaic cells on the hidden roofs of cottages although consideration of the views from the valley towards this area would be paramount in deciding if this was appropriate. The most important enhancement that could be made here would be to tidy up the area at the junction with Harpers Lane. Existing car parking should be formalised, properly surfaced with bays marked. The pavements, particularly on the southern side could be greatly improved, as the present paving slabs are damaged. This is another street which would benefit from the removal of overhead wires. More attention could be paid to the treatment of service cables as the facades of Nos 31-37, which were recently rebuilt, have been spoilt by wires. New underground phone cables have been installed in January 2003 but the improvement has been marred by having several metres of cable nailed to the stonework.

3.13.10 Bristol Street rightly forms a significant part of the Malmesbury Conservation Area. However, there are anomalies in the protection afforded to it. Some Listed properties seem hardly worthy of the designation, while others, namely the old Chapel and Nos 47, 49 and 51 are not listed. Most but not all are protected by Article 4 directions.

The above situation is surprising and suggests that a thorough review of the protection given to this area needs to be reviewed.

**Significant Features**
- View 17: View east from Bristol Street to old Methodist Church in the Triangle.
3.14 AREA 14: BURNIVALE

Character Analysis

Topography

3.14.1 Harpers Lane rises from river level between allotments at the river edge up a grassy track to the junction with Bristol St and Burnivale. It passes storage sheds and a timber yard on its south side with stone walls embanking the gardens of 32–44 Bristol St to the north. Several cars use the junction area for parking.

3.14.2 Burnivale begins at this high point, quickly descending between a vertical stone wall on the north and stone terraced houses opening directly to the pavement on the south. The road is a roofless tunnel along its length with the exception of the widening half way into a block of garages. It is a quiet byway with little traffic, dead-ending at The Maltings housing estate.

3.14.3 Some cottages have stepped passageways between the terrace giving access to nos. 23 and 25, 35 – 47 Burnivale.

3.14.4 The area is low lying with strips of land behind the terraces to the river’s edge. The gardens flood in times of high rainfall, including the allotments accessed by gate between nos. 33 and 33a.

3.14.5 Opposite the garage block, access to the Town is by way of steep steps leading to Abbey Row at its junction with Gloucester St. Halfway up these steps are two houses on a plateau above Burnivale.

3.14.6 More garages have been built into a recess in the wall opposite nos. 51-59. Burnivale ends in a stone wall lined passageway leading to the sluice gate and weir. From here a path leads to the mill pond and water meadows on the south side of the river. Further access to Kings Wall is for pedestrians only.

Archaeology

3.14.7 Harpers Lane leads down to the Sherston Avon. In previous times a ford crossed the river at this point. This path may yield interesting finds.

3.14.8 Burnivale must have been the access route to an industrial site of long standing (see Bristol University archaeology dig results of late 1980s). The housing known as The Maltings now covers this site. Dwellings would have been built alongside this access road for workers on the industrial site. Any rebuild along Burnivale would merit historical investigation.

History and Character

3.14.9 Following the line of the Town Wall, Burnivale was probably part of a medieval bypass connecting the Triangle (site of later West Gate) to the South Gate at Lower High St. Harpers Lane connected Foxley Rd with Bristol St at least from Saxon times.

3.14.10 Improved access to Postern Mill Brewery (now The Maltings) forced the loss of No.4 Bristol St to road widening in the 1960s. Several cottages built against the Town Wall on the north side of the road (opposite No 23) were also lost to this cause. Their remains look like buttresses.

3.14.11 The ‘Birds Eye View’ of 1648 shows a row of houses on the site of the present terraces in Burnivale. Now these cottages are 2 storey with mostly dormer attic rooms on the riverside. They probably date from 18th to 19th century with older structures beneath.

3.14.12 The block of garages midway down Burnivale is thought to be the site of a Ragged School built by the local M.P. in the late 19th Century.

3.14.13 The stone steps leading up to Abbey Row are popularly called Betty Gezer’s Steps, financed by Elizabeth Gaze in the early 19th Century. The space between garages (opposite the new house called Ty Newydd near the end of Burnivale) was donated by Mrs Matthews for public use in memory of her husband. The Borough Council designated it as a turning space. A stone tablet set into the wall marks the spot.

3.14.14 The main characteristic of this area is the preponderance of stone walling, varying from waist high to three metres or more. Walls embank gardens and line the road. They fill the eye wherever you look.
Vistas and Landmarks

3.14.15 Views of the river are very limited as cottages line the road. The best panoramic vista is from the top of Betty Geezer’s Steps - a breathtaking view from the south to the west of the town. From here there is the best view of the beautiful river valley with open farmland beyond. To the extreme west is Bristol St leading to Sherston.

3.14.16 St Paul’s steeple fills the eye from the bottom of Harpers Lane and from the western end of Burnivale.

3.14.17 Looking north from halfway down Burnivale the view is of the steep escarpment embanked by stone walls leading up to the rear of houses on Abbey Row and Gloucester St. There are few long views down Burnivale as the tunnel effect together with curves in the road have a secretive effect.

Building Materials

3.14.18 Both houses and walls are mostly random rubble Cotswold stone. Notable exceptions are Nos18-22 Harpers Lane and 35-47 Burnivale which are of red brick. Ty Newydd between 57 and 55 Burnivale is of brown brick. Windows and doors of most houses are wooden framed on the street frontage. Stone roofs predominate with concrete tiles on the more modern houses.

Green Spaces / Trees

3.14.19 Essential green spaces are those of the riverbank which should be maintained at all cost. The allotments in Harpers Lane and on Burnivale help keep a green appearance and should be protected from development.

3.14.20 The plateau of garden belonging to 54 Gloucester St is very attractive and any attempt to erect sheds etc should be discouraged.

3.14.21 One large blasted and one living tree on the riverbank form an essential part of the landscape. A row of Poplars on the south skyline as viewed from the top of Harpers Lane give a finished effect to the horizon.

Negative Aspects

3.14.22 Ty Newydd spoils the symmetry of Cotswold stone walls. Its design, brown bricks and roof tiles are unsympathetic.

3.14.23 The dirty grey concrete render is unsuitable on 10/14 Harpers Lane. This together with the loose render of Nos25 and 29 Burnivale should be limewashed.

Significant Features

• The Bell Tower of St Paul’s Church is a significant feature of Burnivale as it is visible along its path
• The topography is another feature giving a powerful difference in level between Burnivale and Abbey Row
• A preponderance of high stone walls
3.15 AREA 15: KING’S WALL

Character Analysis

Topography

3.15.1 The path of King’s Wall follows a line beneath the old Town Wall. The ground rises from Burnivale to the north until 50 Kings Wall when it falls again to meet the High St at the old South Gate. The Maltings (housing dating from late 1980s) is built on a flat plain beneath high stone walls, approached by steps or slope from Kings Wall and overlooking the river to the west.

3.15.2 King’s Wall is a quiet byway only accessible by car from the Lower High St as far as the rear of the Kings Arms pub. From then onwards it follows a narrow pedestrian only route until the entrance to The Maltings. Vehicle access to St Aldhelms Mead and the playground is by steep slope beside No 48 Kings Wall.

3.15.3 To the east of King’s Wall are gardens set up high, embanked by stone walls. Several large recesses are used for parking and garages. The stone walls lining the west of the path are approximately 6 feet high and mostly in good condition.

3.15.4 King’s Walk is a roofless pedestrian tunnel between high stone walls linking Kings Wall to the High Street.

3.15.5 The many high stone walls give character to this area and should be protected.

Archaeology

3.15.6 The Maltings site was the subject of a Dig in the late 1980s after the demolition of old brewery buildings and a mill. It proved to have been an industrial site since Roman times at least. Unfortunately the Dig was done with minimal funding and only 2 trenches were dug prior to the present housing being built.

3.15.7 The path from King’s Wall through the Postern Gate to Gloucester St may bear investigation since this route is visible on the ‘Birds Eye View’ of 1648.

History and Characteristics

3.15.8 King’s Wall continues the bypass from Westport (Bristol St) to the South Gate at Lower High St, presumably avoiding tolls and curfew controls in medieval times. Apart from the Mill building at The Maltings and the Postern Gate this area appears empty on the ‘Birds Eye View’ of 1648. The burgage plots running west from the High Street now have 20th Century houses built at their ends such as Olivers House.

3.15.9 The Maltings (named for Luce’s Brewery established here in the 19th Century) has apparently been an industrial site since Roman times and maybe earlier. A large flat area next to a river is an ideal site.

3.15.10 King’s Walk (named for King Edward VII) is early 20th Century and gives access to the High Street.

3.15.11 Nos. 30/36 King’s Wall are the star attraction of this area. Dating from around 1700 the building has such style compared with surrounding dwellings although Kings Wall House is a good modern rival. No 30 is thought to have been a factory (maybe for gloves) in the 18th Century. The archway leading to the rear has been blocked by an extension to No 36. Nos. 40-48 may have been stables or servants’ quarters.

3.15.12 Nos. 2-28 King’s Wall is a continuation of the terraces built to accommodate the weavers from the Silk Mill/Woollen Mill in 19th Century and earlier.

Building Materials

3.15.13 The Maltings are stone and render and have been sympathetically built. Most of the 20th Century housing to the east is of stone blocks or rendered with a mixture of slate and concrete roofs.

3.15.14 Built in stone Nos. 1-7 King’s Wall has a variety of window styles, some conformity would be better and the least said the better about the 3 large ugly dormers. No 28 has been significantly altered compared to its neighbours Nos. 24 and 26. Rather than attic dormers, No 28 has become a full 2 storeys on the street frontage. The new stonework is rather brash compared to the others.

3.15.15 No 2 King’s Wall is rendered in dirty grey with
lime green and cream paintwork and is not in tune with its neighbours.

3.15.16 Velux roof windows are popular among the 20th Century houses.

3.15.17 All the older houses are built of Cotswold stone with mostly stone tiled roofs.

Views

3.15.18 At the junction with Burnivale, St Paul’s Spire is the centre of attention from the Postern Gate dog-leg path. From the small triangle of land above The Maltings a view of Bristol St and Westport is to be had. Unfortunately the houses of The Maltings allow no one but its residents to see the river.

3.15.19 At the top of the steps at the rear of the Kings Arms pub the view is panoramic over farmland to the south and west.

3.15.20 From the path any view is obstructed by high stone walls on either side.

3.15.21 Glimpses of the river valley are obtained from the steep path leading to St Aldhelm’s Mead. There is pleasant wooded area to be seen to the right before reaching the playground. One suspects this area might become the subject of a planning application which should be resisted.

3.15.22 As you approach the southern end of King’s Wall, the roadway widens and the view is of the curving terraces of Lower High St with the Silk Mill in the distance.

Green Spaces and Trees

3.15.23 An attractive orchard lies to the west of No 50 King’s Wall.

3.15.24 The green triangle of grass above The Maltings could be improved but provides a foil for the surrounding stone walls.

3.15.25 Gardens on the plateau to the east (rear of High St) are well kept and attractive. Their growth mostly screens the 20th Century housing.

3.15.26 The planting in The Maltings must be maintained as it enhances this open plan area.

Negative Factors

3.15.27 The green triangle of grass above The Maltings includes up-ended concrete slabs (remains of a surround for a bench) and a stunted lamp standard. The railings opposite also need repainting.

3.15.28 At the rear of the Kings Arms pub the lay-by is overgrown. A rusty pole and box, with no obvious use, obtrudes. The garage at the rear of 27 High Street is obviously unused. Access to it is overgrown with a vandalised sign nearby. Other garages built into the side of the Town Wall detract from its appearance.

3.15.29 The railings on King’s Walk (leading to High St) need repainting or replacing with something more elegant than the usual scaffold poles.

3.15.30 No 15 King’s Wall has dirty concrete pebbledash and plastic windows out of keeping with its frontage of well-kept dry stone walling.

3.15.31 The rear extension to No 48 is of modern stone cladding and rotten woodwork which spoils the rear view of No 30.

Positive Contribution

King’s Wall House should be listed to better protect it from change especially from the rear elevation overlooking the river.

Significant Features

• The panoramic view from the rear of the Kings Arms.
• Kings House and Kings Wall House.
3.16 AREA 16: ST. JOHN’S STREET

Character Analysis

3.16.1 St John Street runs from its junction with Lower High Street to Goose Bridge. Thereafter, Baskerville continues to the edge of the conservation area boundary, at the by-pass bridge. Approximately two hundred yards long, St John Street changes character before it reaches Goose Bridge. Thereafter, the architectural styles are examples of social development, characterised by, on the left, stone terraced housing and, en face, large detached more modern houses on the bank of the river.

3.16.2 Of particular note at the junction of St John Street and Lower High Street are the Old Corporation almshouses. These set the atmosphere of this initial part of the area, despite intrusive car parking immediately in front and on the slope on the opposite side of the street. These almshouses are an essential part of the character of the area and are worthy of particular conservation attention.

3.16.3 Cottages opposite the almshouses are well maintained and offer a variety of architectural styles, from the simple cottage to the taller, narrower houses, currently painted white, a short way further on. This initial area of St John Street has potentially great charm and interest. Unfortunately, car parking dominates the whole, and there would appear to be little hope of changing this. At the very least, everything else in the street scene should, by way of small compensation, be of the highest appropriate standard. For example, heavy white and yellow road markings are intrusive. Thinner lines are strongly recommended in all instances.

3.16.4 After approximately seventy metres, the street narrows considerably and a row of mixed terraced housing runs on one side of the street to the bottom of Back Hill steps. Once again, parked cars dominate the street scene. However, from the back Hill steps junction a little further on, the scene changes, with the vista opening up considerably.

3.16.5 Goose Bridge lies directly ahead, with the Tetbury Avon tributary running away from the observer towards the residential area of Baskerville. However, there are three elements in the area, which jar with the rest. The first is the pumphouse building to the left. This is well maintained but completely out of character with the area. There could not be a more disparate visual contrast between the building, the cottages on Back Hill and the splendidly restored town wall. It is recommended that such clashes between the modern and the old is avoided. The second is the intrusive overhead wiring. This problem, already long identified, requires resolution by the authorities.

3.16.6 The third visual intrusion is just prior to Goose Bridge on the right is a row of garages with well-weathered wooden doors and corrugated tin roofs, along the edge of the Old Corporation’s car park. The garages can perhaps claim a nostalgic charm for some, but they are lacking in architectural merit. Careful scrutiny by the planning authority of what might replace them will be needed if the present buildings are ever to be removed and the area enhanced.

3.16.7 Over the bridge, however, there is another, arguably more acceptable, nostalgic link with building standards of a comparatively recent era. The Bowls Club parking area and its wood clubhouse are what many expect to find in rural England. They offer a link with more recent town history, setting a nostalgic tone in the area in which they sit. The bowling green is an attractive, manicured space, with countryside clearly visible beyond. The area is quintessentially English and should receive protection and consideration as such.

3.16.8 Opposite the bowling green, on the far side of
the tributary, is a private garden of considerable size. Once again, this provides a welcome sense of space so very close to the town.

3.16.9 As Baskerville is approached, the former mill complex on the left heralds the start of the small residential area to follow. The steep bank further on throws the terraced housing there into prominence. The detached houses opposite the terrace have large gardens with mature trees, which are essential to the setting of the dwellings in the whole area. After the terrace, there are detached houses on both sides. The various styles sit happily cheek by jowl, despite obvious differences of period and style. However, any future applications for development on either side of Baskerville should be carefully scrutinised by the authorities.

3.16.10 In this sector, there is a clear break in the townscape at Goose Bridge. The openness of the subsequent area should be retained. In addition, many trees further on provide a verdant background to this part of town, once again linking town and country. Their careful husbandry is strongly recommended.

3.16.11 There are a variety of architectural styles and materials along the whole length of the area from the junction of St John Street with Lower High Street to the by-pass bridge. Stone roofs, of different heights, stone frontages, window treatments and coloured cladding, together with red brick buildings, echo the social requirements of the town’s recent history. These dwellings nestle comfortably in full view of the impressively restored town walls. ‘Quaint’ would not be amiss as a general description.

3.16.12 To the visitor and resident alike, this sector of the conservation area is rich in architectural variety. It also remains closely linked with the open countryside, a feature of Malmesbury much prized by its residents in particular. The attractiveness of the area would be increased by the removal of parked cars from in front of buildings, if suitable, close alternatives were at all possible. In the meantime, a more sympathetic approach to road markings is strongly recommended. In addition, whenever possible, encouragement should be given to the removal of corrugated iron roofing, still visible in the area. The area’s charm and diversity is worthy of suitable conservation measures and appropriate enhancement.

**Significant Features**

- View 23: View south-east from bottom of High Street across river to silk mills.
- 17th Century Almshouses.
- The Old Courthouse.
3.17. AREA 17 RIVER VALLEY
(TETBURY BRANCH)

Character Analysis

3.17.1 In this historic town built on a hilltop surrounded
on all sides by rivers and streams the river valleys are all
important. In the past they were a means of livelihood
and prosperity and in the present day are a significant
contribution to the character of Malmesbury and an
important public amenity enjoyed by the local
community and visitors to the town who often comment
upon the beauty of its River Walk.

3.17.2 There remain areas within the river valleys that
are still vulnerable to the danger of future development
and these have been highlighted where they are
considered to exist. Commencing at the Western end
of the area from Westport Bridge to St. John’s Bridge
(known locally as the Town Bridge).

3.17.3 Whilst the Tanyard and Truckle Bridge house
lie fractionally outside the designated area they are of
some considerable significance in that both are sizeable
properties with spacious surroundings lying directly
within the river valley. Both are attractive in character
contributing to the pleasant rural aspect of this edge of
the town. Both have been the subject of recent planning
applications for development. This has resulted in
outline planning permission being granted for a sizeable
development adjacent to the Tanyard. Should further
similar applications ever be successful in the future it
would amount to over development in the river valley
and would detract from the attractiveness of the area as
a whole. This long garden forms part of the flood plain
that protects Burnivale from excessive flooding.

3.17.4 The area from Westport Bridge to Daniel’s Well
is free of any development but forms part of
Malmesbury’s River Walk and has important and
attractive views of the gardens and rears of the buildings
along Bristol Street, Burnivale and Abbey Row a large
proportion of which are listed and all representing the
mix and match of styles and sizes that is typical of the
charm of Malmesbury, and is significant as one of the
most attractive views of the town from the river valley.

3.17.5 Applications for alteration or development to
any of these properties should be carefully monitored
in the future and there are some areas that should be
earmarked for concern as they could be targeted for
future development. Many of the houses have long and
some, very large gardens which extend down to the
river’s northern bank. While some of these would be
inaccessible to vehicles others have vehicular access and
extensive areas of land that could be vulnerable if the
restrictions on development within the river valleys
are not rigorously pursued. (The areas thought to be
most in danger have been highlighted on the map).

3.17.6 Daniel’s Well is part of the fascinating history of
Malmesbury, from here the views beyond the footbridge
into the town are of extreme importance, giving views
well described by Sir John Betjeman of the Abbey, the
bell tower of St. Paul’s and up to and including the rear
of buildings in Gloucester Street and Abbey Row (all
but two of which are listed). This is the very heart of
the Conservation Area.

3.17.7 From Daniel’s Well to the playground in the St.
Aldhelm’s Mead Recreation area the valley is basically
used as grazing land but incorporates a stretch of the
Malmesbury River Walk. On the northern town side
of the river is the modern development of the Maltings,
which the town has ‘learned to live with’ but still regrets
the demise of the ancient mill which was demolished
when the area was being developed. Architecturally the
development, although not in keeping with the character
of the town, is not entirely unpleasant and represents a
unified whole, but unfortunately the relaxing of certain
restrictions which were imposed when the development
was allowed, has resulted in a hotchpotch of differing
conservatories along the river frontage and sundry
disparate styles of fencing and hedging, on what was
designated to be an attractive communal open space
sloping down to the river’s edge.

3.17.8 At the eastern end of this development is a
property with a large orchard garden and vehicular access
to a lane leading to King’s Wall. This is an area under
pressure for development and has attracted a recent
application (later withdrawn) for eight dwellings on the
site, followed by another application for five houses that
was refused.

3.17.9 From the playground the river sweeps across the
character area to provide open space on either side.

Fig 1: View towards the town from Truckle Bridge.
River Walk passes on the south side to St John's Bridge. This area includes The Water Meadows, Parliament Row, Mount View and Priory Mews. The north side of the river comprises St Aldhelm's Mead and the Cuckingstool Mead.

3.17.10 Following the River Walk towards the Water Meadows the path follows the river over a small footbridge where a small subsidiary stream joins the main river (this area has partly changed hands during the fairly recent past and unfortunately indiscriminate grazing by young cattle has practically obliterated the stream from time to time). From here the path leads into the Water Meadows which are an important part of the flood plain. The lower reaches are marshy and damp and in the winter and early spring are often under water. This is an environmentally valuable area in as much as in the spring it supports a large display of Marsh Marigolds which are one of the attractions of this particular spot. Here the riverbank is home to a number of large willows maintained by the landowner and Civic Trust.

3.17.11 As the land rises from the Water Meadows to the south there is a caravan park housing a number of semi-permanent mobile homes. The owner who until recently lived nearby has moved away but has retained the land, he succeeded in obtaining planning permissions to convert the barn area near the original farm house into dwellings but although it is quite a modest development and less unsightly than the Dutch barns it replaced, there is nevertheless a danger that the whole area including the caravan site could become vulnerable to further ambitions for large development. However, as the whole landscape here is an integral part of the Malmesbury river valleys any such scheme should be resisted at all costs.

3.17.12 The row of houses facing the Water Meadows is of more recent construction but built in the same style as those of Parliament Row which are very much older; all are stone built, three storeys high and with mansard roofs. These, together with three or four cottages of varying age and style form quite an attractive group but alas! the more modern development behind them Priory Mews and Barley Close, although 'neat and tidy' has less architectural merit.

3.17.13 Crossing the footbridge alongside St. John’s Bridge to the north side of the river a path turns left and passes Cuckingstool Mead on the left to reach St Aldhelm’s Mead beyond. Cuckingstool Mead is a double paddock which has recently received considerable attention from the Environment Agency/Wessex Water who have set up a water flow measuring station on the site and in so doing have carried out a complete replanting of the whole area and extensive tree surgery to longer established trees. Walking along the path to the right there are fascinating glimpses of the rear of the cottages and small houses along Lower High Street and their gardens leading down to the stream which separates them from the whole of this section before it joins the main river at the Town Bridge.

3.17.14 St Aldhelm’s Mead is a recreation ground and here the land widens out stretching from the main river on the left to the stream on the right. Bordering the river at this stage is a long line of poplars, which will soon be reaching the end of their life expectancy. They are an attractive feature and already a subject of debate as to how they could best be replaced. Past this slightly narrower section the playing field widens out to house a football pitch with a 'Trim Trail' (seldom used) around its perimeter, after this, following the line of the river the land narrows again and this section includes a well equipped Play-Area for small children which is very popular. It is sectioned off with a sturdy fence and hedge and two gates making it a dog-free zone. An outer path leads to the exit where a path leads to the King’s Wall area of the town.

3.17.15 When walking through this recreation ground, to the right not only do we see glimpses of the cottages along Lower High Street but also the houses lining King's Wall. Included here are two major residences the large and historic King's House and its next door neighbour a more modern but quite imposing house with a garden leading down to the stream. (both of these will have been assessed in another section).

Significant Features

- View from Truckle Bridge to the Abbey.
- View from Daniel's Well to the town on the skyline.
- View of the town from the Water Meadow and Cuckingstool Mead.
3.18 AREA 18: RIVER VALLEY (TETBURY BRANCH)
Character Analysis

3.18.1 In this historic town built on a hilltop surrounded on all sides by rivers and streams the river valleys are all important, in the past as a means of livelihood and prosperity and in the present day as a significant contribution to the character of Malmesbury and an important public amenity enjoyed by the local community and visitors to the town who often comment upon the beauty of its River Walk. There remain areas within the river valleys that are still vulnerable to the danger of future development and these have been highlighted where they are considered to exist.

3.18.2 From Station Yard the area extends firstly eastwards and then southwards following the eastern perimeter of the town until it joins area 17 at St John’s Bridge and like area 17 takes in large sections of the Malmesbury River Valleys including an important ‘green corridor’ extending from Goose Bridge and Wynyard Mill and following the recently restored ancient Town Walls for the whole of its length.

3.18.3 From Goose Bridge eastwards area 18 also includes the ‘mix match’ of older and more modern properties along Baskerville as far as the bridge carrying the By-Pass (A 429) over the River Avon. It follows this same road northwards and southwards. Northwards it continues up to and including Blicks Hill where it leads back westwards joining up with Holloway at the Duke of York public house. Southwards it runs behind the Silk Mills to the large roundabout near Malmesbury Hospital. The amount of building in area 18 is relatively minimal compared to areas within the town itself but nevertheless includes some extremely important features as well as much vulnerable land within the river valleys.

3.18.4 Commencing at the South Eastern end of area 19 in Station Yard the first section of area 18 takes us briefly northwards following the short private road and the foot path of ‘Lovers Lane’ up to the high ground of the Wortheys where it turns eastwards following the War Ditch (an ancient boundary) to the Duke of York, a wooden building of poor architectural merit which replaced an earlier stone built much more attractive traditional Inn, which sadly was demolished. The attraction of the present building lies solely in its garden setting by the river at Holloway Bridge. This section only includes four buildings, three modern bungalows on the private road leading to the Wortheys and the Cricket Ground and the already mentioned Duke of York. To the south of the War Ditch boundary the remainder of the land runs eastwards following the river to Holloway and includes the Nature Reserve and public open space of Conygre Mead. This is in the process of being designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

3.18.5 This area is maintained and controlled by the Malmesbury River Valleys Trust, however the covenant placed upon it has been made over to the Official Custodian for Charities thus placing it into the safekeeping of The Charities Commission in order to protect it for the town in posterity. Conygre Mead (just over 6 acres) incorporates a very attractive riverside walk to Holloway bridge – (part of the town’s much valued River Walk) a central path through open land following the same direction, and a northern path on higher ground following the direction of the previously mentioned War Ditch. All these paths converge at a gate near the Duke of York. This is much valued area rich in wildlife. At each end of the riverside path in ‘The Mead’ are interpretation boards giving information about the history of the area, its importance to the town and listing many examples of flora and fauna be found within its confines.

3.18.6 Having followed the riverside path through Conygre Mead to Holloway Area 18 continues over Holloway Bridge and up Blicks Hill passing on the left three attractive old stone cottages (listed) of the same period as the original Inn before its demolition, and above and behind them dominating the higher ground is a later house, Avon Lodge, probably Edwardian, built of stone with a slate roof. Opposite these is a modern property with gardens leading down to the river, built before the so-called protection of the river valleys came into being. This is a building of fairly little character but not entirely unpleasant. Continuing up Blicks Hill there are two more properties on the right, ‘The Nuttery’ a fairly modern semi-detached bungalow redeemed by its extensive wooded grounds overlooking the river and beyond it at the top of the hill another older property which is the last house in this section before it joins the A429.

3.18.7 Returning to Holloway Bridge the path over
the stile (again part of the River Walk) continues through Long Meadow which lies between two branches of the river, past part of the old railway cutting into the next low lying pasture. Both of these fields follow not only the river but also the line of the Old Town Walls (recently the subject of considerable repair and restoration) they form a definite ‘green corridor’ of considerable importance and should be preserved at all costs. They are low-lying and the second of the two, leading to the Bowls Club and Wynyard Mill, is often flooded during winter months.

3.18.8 Approaching the Bowls Club and Wynyard Mill there is a bridge over the river where the eastern branch of the river passes through an old hatch turning westward before joining the stream which flows below the Town Walls. Shortly after this the resulting stream flows back along Baskerville to join the Sherston Avon. Between Wynyard Mill and Goosebridge lies the Bowls Club a popular and much used facility. The mill, one of Malmesbury’s ancient mills which has been the subject of considerable alteration over many years, has been eventually converted into three dwellings. It still maintains something of its original character although the addition of a proliferation of skylights in the roof has not done it any favours.

3.18.9 Continuing eastwards along Baskerville, on the left there is a terrace of three storied properties followed by a group of several more older houses, stone built with slate roofs probably built around the turn of the 19th to the 20th centuries. These contrast with the buildings along the opposite (southern) side of the road which are detached of late 20th century construction built along the river bank, the first built without planning permission some years ago and sadly creating a precedent which allowed further encroachment into the river valleys. This section of Area 18 concludes at the bridge over the river carrying the by-pass A429.

3.18.10 Returning back towards Wynyard Mill on the right hand side of the road is an ancient set of stone steps which is the start of a public footpath leading northwards. Towards the top of the slope to the right is an area of land running westwards (in all approximately 1 acre) which has been recently gifted to Malmesbury River Valleys Trust and is now established as another Nature Reserve. At its western end there are fascinating views of Malmesbury including part of the old Town Walls. The Public Footpath then continues across a field housing some agricultural barns, the subject of considerable planning controversy both past and present. This is an agricultural area with vehicular access only onto the very busy by-pass (A 429) and by a lane to the Sewage Works and the grazing land that surrounds them. It has always been agricultural land and should be retained as such. It should be highlighted as vulnerable to (industrial or other) development and this should be resisted at all costs.

3.18.11 Back to Baskerville, between the Granary and a bungalow (two modern properties on the riverside), the Tetbury Avon joins the Sherston Avon.

3.18.12 Goosebridge is one of the ancient entrances to the town at Back Hill steps. On the left are two well preserved cottages, but just beyond them Area 18 turns into Roundmead at the junction of which, on the left, is another cottage which is in a very poor condition and in need of sympathetic restoration. Also along this lane are three larger, older properties, well maintained, but with sizeable gardens which could be considered possible for future development. However, because they lie in the river valley and are subject to fairly regular flooding this should not be allowed. Also in this area is the site of the Old Gas Works, recently converted by the Old Corporation into a well planned and very useful car park area.

3.18.13 Finally, across the river lies the Avon Mills complex, the much documented site of the old town Silk Mills, now converted into private houses and apartments and forming an imposing and interesting entrance to the town. Sadly, behind the entrance the developers were allowed to add a terrace of modern dwellings along the riverbank. These were out of keeping with the rest of the conversion and have further sprouted a mis-match of conservatories at the rear which clutter their already small gardens and add nothing to the attractions of the riverbank in this area.

3.18.14 Behind the Avon Mills lies a large field, which has access to the Priory Round about and the A429 bypass. This has been considered on more than one occasion as a possible solution to Malmesbury’s urgent parking problems. If well landscaped it would not detract from the area and is close enough to the town to be within walking distance for all but the very aged or inactive. It could be considered as one option to help solve the town’s parking problems.

**Significant Features**

- View from Goosebridge to the town walls.
- Avon Mills - the first impression at the entrance to the town.
- St John’s Bridge
- Agricultural fields from the bypass in the east to the town walls on top of the escarpment in the west.
3.19 AREA 19: OLD STATION YARD

Character Analysis

3.19.1 Trains used the Station Yard until 1962 and although the railway line has gone the engine shed remains to the north end of the area. Since 1967 the railway site has been replaced by industrial development. The other side of the road is used for Malmesbury’s long stay car park. The green area all along the riverbank is owned and maintained by the District Council. An ambulance station and fire station are located at the end of Station Yard adjoining the river and Gloucester Road. In 1826 Turner painted Malmesbury Abbey from this area. You can still stand where he stood and see the broad prospect he painted. It is important that we retain as much as possible of this view.

3.19.2 At the foot of the steps going up to the Abbey is Abbey Mill. The house is exposed on all sides and it has been occupied by tenants for many years. Its location makes it an important building and any restoration should be carefully implemented. An old millrace has been stopped up behind the house. It is an untidy backwater beyond the weir, which is not cleaned and is usually full of old litter. It would be good if the millrace was re-instated and linked with the improvements which are being made in Abbey House gardens. The bridge linking the mill with the station yard is utilitarian and could be made more attractive by using railing similar to that over the road which rises to the Abbey.

3.19.3 From the south side of Station Yard one sees the back gardens of mostly large houses in Gloucester Road and Abbey Row. There are many large and interesting trees, which should have TPOs if they are not otherwise protected. Mundens Close has development capacity but should be protected. Its openness is a frame to the Abbey and the riverside. Brooky Lane is an attractive riverside footpath on the far side of the river. It is not well maintained and if an opportunity arose to replace the partial wooden fence with a stone wall it should be encouraged.

3.19.4 An attractive brick-wall with a Victorian summer house links the Victorian red brick houses facing Gloucester Road with the Station Yard. It should be protected. All the trees in the gardens of the Gloucester Road houses are important because they define and blur the edges between urban and rural.

3.19.5 The green riverbank is used as a path, dog walking area and general amenity area. The NWDC litter bins and red dog bins have become shabby. A very high quality of street furniture is needed here (and perhaps some marker for the place Turner stood when he painted the Abbey). The NWDC maintenance people should be reminded not to damage the trees when they cut the grass.

3.19.6 Stainsbridge Mill links to the Station Yard with a smart but utilitarian bridge which is not out of keeping with its industrial heritage. The roofs of the mill and its adjoining buildings are a mixture of roofing materials. Asbestos sheeting on the mill building is not attractive and should be replaced with what were presumably originally slate tiles.

3.19.7 The bungalow adjoining Stainsbridge Mill is out of keeping with everything around it. It would be more attractive if it had a hedge instead of a wire fence adjoining the river and trees to continue the pattern of vegetation further along the riverside. There is talk of the Fire Station and Ambulance Station being merged or moved. In this very sensitive area any new development should be severely restricted. It certainly should comprise low buildings, no larger than the existing footprints and for community use due to this being the centre of the town’s population. Tree planting should be encouraged and riverside access maintained.

3.19.8 On the left of the access road there are a number of houses built high on the cliff. They are stark and it is important that trees should be allowed to grow up around them to break their lines. Existing large trees along the cliff should be protected, such as the firs planted by the railway company over 100 years ago.

3.19.9 Ebley Tyres uses the old Railway Engine shed as well as modern nondescript buildings. The railway remnants need to be preserved. The space immediately on the left of the entrance (to the Station Yard, and owned by Ebley Tyres could be useful as a coach and lorry park despite having planning permission for housing. At present lorries tend to park along the roadsides over night and have been known to damage trees when they manoeuvre in and out.

Fig 1: The weir and river bank amenity area.
3.19.10 The temporary extension to the Station Road car park, situated on the grass between trees, seems to be under-utilised during the trial period. It appears to be full only during a popular auction at Hilditch & Co. Despite increased demand likely to result from new housing developments the introduction of car parking charges may decrease usage. It is likely that the extension will not be needed in the short term and this area can return to pleasant green space.

3.19.11 Parking charges that are too high could have a detrimental effect on the High Street. Both shop staff and customers will be put off by the cost. This situation will be exacerbated by the failure to control parking in other places (particularly along Station Road) and lower fees in the Cross Hayes car park. This may lead to more cars being parked in the town centre when it is much more sensible to direct most of the cars to this area.

3.19.12 As we move on along the road it is noticeable that what should be a magnificent view of the Abbey is spoilt by the late 1960s and 1970s industrial buildings. If these buildings are ever rebuilt they should be back as far as possible to improve the prospect of the Abbey from the road. The Copper Beech next to Lux should be protected. Some of the industrial buildings have planting between themselves and the road; this is to be encouraged. One building has very little planting and some derelict looking whitened windows. This could easily be improved. The Lux building would be softened by more intensive landscaping or some trees. The eastern facade of the Lux building has recently been improved.

3.19.13 The entrance to Conygre Mead, which is a pleasant nature reserve has recently been improved but perhaps an external gate would better define the entrance and link the developed station yard with the rural nature reserve.

3.19.14 The semi-derelict barn at the left edge of the Abbey bridge forms a very poor frame to an important gateway to the Abbey Steps and Abbey. The owner should be encouraged to tidy this area. It is an eyesore and has become a magnet for under-age drinking and other activity that creates future mess.

3.19.15 Finally the Abbey Bridge has been well restored with attractive railings. But the railings stop at the edge adjoining Abbey Mill and the river is framed by an ugly wire fence for about 20 feet. The bridge railing need to be extended as far as railings are needed. This area is deteriorating and the edge of the roadway is crumbling away and is becoming dangerous.

Significant Features

- View of the Abbey similar to that painted by Turner.
- A rich variety of trees on both sides of the river, at the bottom of the Gloucester Road gardens, on the eastern side of the river and on the escarpment behind the industrial units.

Fig 2: View south across the car park to the Abbey.

Fig 3: The former engine shed now in commercial use - a reminder of the railway heritage of the town.
4.0 SUMMARY

4.0.1 The Malmesbury Conservation Area Appraisal is primarily published as analysis and information to support proposed management strategies within the forthcoming Malmesbury Conservation Area Management Plan, which will be the subject of public consultation prior to adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document. Whilst the Management Plan will contain specific proposals to preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area that is defined in this Appraisal, the Appraisal itself should also be a useful and sound reference document to assist in making development control decisions.

4.0.2 Furthermore, English Heritage guidance published in 2006 also notes; “A local authority’s reasoning for designating a conservation area, as set out in a formal character appraisal published in support of a supplementary planning document, will be taken into account by the First Secretary of State in considering related planning appeals. Where asked to make a direction allowing a local authority to carry out urgent works to preserve an unlisted building in a conservation area, the First Secretary of State is more likely to do so where the area’s special interest has been clearly defined and published. This information will also be helpful to those considering investment in the area and can be used to guide the form and content of new development. If funding is sought for grant-aid, such as a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), an appraisal is necessary to demonstrate the value of the area. Beyond their use as planning tools, appraisals have a much wider application as educational and informative documents for the local community.”

4.0.3 The remainder of the final part of this Appraisal provides some examples of local design, materials and construction features which contribute (and some that do not) to character and appearance throughout Malmesbury Conservation Area.

4.1 LOCAL DETAILS

Building Elements & Details

4.1.1 There is a complete range of lintels & architraves consisting of timber, stone and brick, sometimes mixed. Where stone setts or brick are used as a lintel they are often cambered and this mimics the curve to be found on dormers. Occasionally keystones are used within a brick lintel. The ratio of stone to brick lintels varies within the conservation area, however the predominant material is stone.

Materials

4.1.2 The local river valleys provide clay for bricks and tiles and limestone outcrops naturally locally which with timber from Braydon forest nearby providing a diverse range of materials most of which are found here. The predominant building material in the town centre is random rubble stone for walls and boundaries. This is occasionally limewashed and ashlar, roughcast render is also apparent, and brick is rare but does appear on chimneys and occasionally lintels. Often where brick does appear to principal elevations it has been painted.

Construction Methods

4.1.3 There is evidence of older properties having timber frames, but rebuilding over the centuries has enclosed many of them in rubble stone. Brick, slate and clay tile is mainly C19 probably imported via the railway. Most stone is laid in random or regular courses, ashlar is less common and mostly found on the front elevations of the larger C18 and C19 houses. Some of the larger C19 houses have rangewor or rockface stonework.

Colour & Finishes

4.1.4 Colourwash is common on brickwork, some of the rubblestone having traditional limewash. Colours are mainly white or pale yellow with some reds.
4.1.5 There are limited occurrences of slate tiling and clay tiling. The colour of the clay tiling tends to blend in with the colour of the stone tiling and not to be the orange / red colour.

Roofs

4.1.6 Dormers in Malmesbury are of two distinct types, although variations do occur. The first looks, on first inspection, flat, however it has a shallow curved hood, as mentioned earlier, that mimics the arched lintel that can be found. The second consists of an apex to form a saddle. All dormers are flat in profile and either sit on the eaves flush or are set back and within the roof area.

4.1.8 Window openings are mainly Georgian double sashes of 4x4, 4x6, 3x4, 3x3, 6x6 panes etc. Examples can be found of full stone architraves, with and without keystones, stone label/hood and with mullions on prominent buildings. Mullions and drip moulds are rare. Windows & jambs are recessed to leave a thin profile of the sash and to add depth to the elevation. There are also a number of timber mullioned casements but few examples of the Bath window.

Doors and door openings

4.1.7 There is a wide variety of doors and lintels, many of the older properties having timber lintels with short hoods of stone or tile with thin iron brackets. Few original doors survive, although older styles are mimicked by recent replacements.

Windows

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4.1.9 Examples of inappropriate building materials and details

Fig 1: Pebble dash over limestone.

Fig 2: Cement render over limestone.

Fig 3: uPVC Windows in older buildings.