



# DEVIZES

devizes town centre  
area action plan



Kennet District Council  
Local Development Framework

# Devizes Town Centre Design Code

**Adopted June 2007**



## Planning Services

-  Development Control & Conservation
-  Forward Planning & Transportation
-  Building Control & Property Management





## Contents

Background .....	1
Introduction .....	2
The Development of Devizes the influence of the castle on the plan form of the town .....	4
Understanding the historic context .....	4
Existing Building Form .....	4
The Grain of the Town and Burgage Plots.....	5
Medieval Devizes to the 17 <sup>th</sup> Century .....	5
Development in the Georgian Period.....	6
Key Developments in the Victorian Period.....	7
Development in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century.....	8
The Legacy of Historic Devizes.....	9
Summary.....	10
Scope of the Design Code .....	11
Connections .....	12
Urban Design .....	13
Building Heights and Landmark Buildings.....	14
Urban Spaces.....	15
Green Spaces .....	16
The Public Realm .....	17
Principles of Good Practice .....	18
Ground Surfaces.....	18
Street Furniture .....	18
Traffic Management .....	18
Lighting.....	19



Sites Identified for Redevelopment or with Regeneration Potential.....	20
A Design Code and its use within the Emerging Local Development Framework .....	21
The Town/Conservation Area.....	22
The Wharf.....	23
Former Filling Station, New Park Street .....	25
Health Clinic, New Park Street .....	26
Central Car Park.....	27
Assize Courts .....	29
Other Potential Opportunity Sites .....	31
Kwik-fit in Estcourt Street .....	31
Former Post Office and Job Centre in Maryport Street....	32
Monday Market Street/New Park Street Junction .....	32
Sustainable Design and Construction .....	33
Biodiversity .....	34
Recognising the Design Process .....	34
Conclusions.....	35



## Background

This design code has been prepared as part of the process for producing the Devizes Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) and is intended to form part of that local development document. However, the revised programme<sup>1</sup> for preparing the AAP will delay adoption of the AAP until after the adoption of the local development framework core strategy in 2009. Pressures for development on key sites in the town centre are likely to arise before that date. Consequently, the Council has adopted the design code for the purposes of development control during the interim period.


Two earlier stages of community engagement on the visioning for the town centre, options for land uses and design issues took place during 2004/2005. The first of these was undertaken by consultants Gillespies on proposals for retailing, housing and car parking in the town centre. The second stage was undertaken by the Council and explored options for development to be taken forward in the AAP under the banner 'What's in Store for Devizes'. Details of these consultations are recorded in a separate document<sup>2</sup>. In March 2006 the Council considered the results of public consultation and resolved that seven action points should be followed to take the AAP forward. One of these actions was to prepare a design code. A draft code was prepared and approved for the purposes of consultation in December 2006. The code builds upon the work initiated by Gillespies but has been worked up in greater detail, capitalising on the local knowledge and understanding of the town. The brief for the project was to establish principles for development in the town centre and to consider how these might be applied on important potential development sites. It should be stressed that the code does not offer prescribed solutions for these opportunity sites. Rather, they demonstrate ways in which the principles could be applied.

Public consultation on the code was carried out between 5th March and 16th April 2007. Details of the consultations and

---

<sup>1</sup> Second revision to the Kennet Local Development Scheme. 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Devizes Town Centre AAP Statement of Community Engagement, Issues and Options Consultation, 2006



feedback have been included in a Statement of Community Engagement on the Draft Design Code.

## Introduction

The purpose of this design guide is to provide guidance on the design of new buildings and other development in Devizes town centre. It should be read in conjunction with the planning policies of the council and relevant central government Planning Policy Statements, in particular PPS 1.


This document continues the work undertaken by Gillespies (with others) in July 2005 and provides additional detail. It accepts the broad conclusions of the earlier work\* which were summarised as follows:

- Good urban form, high levels of enclosure, well-linked streets, fronts of buildings onto streets, glimpsed views, a variety of landmarks and a rich and varied layer of visual detail.
- Problems of traffic domination
- Lack of consistency and quality in the public realm
- Identification of key opportunities to enhance the town
- Exceptional but under-valued quality of the Market place
- Potential of the canal and canal side
- Opportunity to look at the landscape setting of the castle
- Potential to improve New Park Street
- Need to improve the pedestrian environment
- Car parking
- The night-time economy

\*(Baseline Review page 15)

This document identifies the specific characteristics of various phases of development in the town to highlight positive elements and show how the negative ones can be minimised or overcome.

There are vacant sites and opportunities for development within the town, all of which have the potential to add to the interest of



Devizes. The study sets out to look at and further explain the urban context as the background for decision making. The intention is that new schemes should be designed within this context to reflect the form and grain of the town taking into account historic boundaries, building heights and overall density.

This should not be taken to mean the use of a traditional architectural style but it does mean understanding the need to respect the context of Devizes and the requirement to make a positive contribution to the future form and architectural quality of the town.

Some of the buildings constructed in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Devizes are nearing the ends of their useful life and this provides opportunities for significant improvement, especially in New Park Street. The guidance in this document is intended to illustrate how this can be achieved.

Devizes is a thriving market town and a place of employment and enjoyment. Businesses come and go and this is a natural occurrence in town centres. An important consideration regarding changes to existing buildings is that new uses should be compatible with the buildings in which they are located and, where alterations are needed, that these respect both the character of the building and its wider setting.

References to earlier influences such as the references to the extent of Georgian and Victorian buildings are intended to show the overall picture and not exact detail. Illustrations are there to explain or convey a message and are not necessarily examples of "good practice".



## The Development of Devizes

### the Influence of the Castle on the Plan Form of the Town

The development of Devizes starts with the Castle because the present-day form of the town centre remains closely related to the influence of the Castle defences. Streets follow the lines of ramparts and ditches and the locations of the Churches of St. John and St. Mary reflect their original status: the Church of St. John built to serve the Castle and the Church of St. Mary to serve those outside.



*Aerial view of the town*

## Understanding the Historic Context

### Existing Building Form

Context is the character and setting of an area in which any building or development proposal is located. It covers natural as well as human history, the form of the settlement and of the



buildings and spaces. It also relates to the routes that serve the locality or pass by. Context includes uses and activities.

Although the plan of the town relates to the medieval period the predominant visual characteristic of central Devizes is the influence of buildings of the Georgian and Victorian periods and it is these that give the town its distinctive architectural form and style. 20<sup>th</sup> century development within the town centre has in places ignored the grain and context and is nowadays considered incongruous but the overall effect is relatively limited. The most obvious 20<sup>th</sup> century change has been the influence of vehicular traffic for delivery of goods and personal mobility with the resulting impact of vehicular traffic, whether parked or moving, on the street scene.

### The Grain of the Town and Burgage Plots

The plan below shows how the pattern of streets in the town centre relates to the defences of the original Castle and much of this pattern survives to the present day. Within this framework the sub-division of land into Burgage plots created relatively narrow frontages thereby dictating the scale of construction. The buildings on these plots, of different dates and architectural styles, give the town its individuality.



*Medieval Devizes to the 17<sup>th</sup> century*

### Medieval Devizes to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century

During the Medieval period trade in Devizes increased significantly. The town had a weekly market from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to serve the growing population. As time went on this led to a significant expansion of Devizes outside the castle with resulting extension of building activity. Amongst the present-day buildings of Devizes are a number of survivals from the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, some of these can still be seen to be medieval and others are hidden behind later work.



*The extent of the Medieval Town*

## Development in the Georgian Period

Buildings in the Georgian period represent a time of considerable prosperity and activity. This period brought about the construction of a number of houses of high quality, including Brownston House, Greystone House, Parnella House and 17 Market Place. Work was undertaken to enlarge the Congregational Chapel in Northgate Street and build the Old Baptist Chapel in Maryport Street. The New Hall (formerly the Cheese Hall) is an important public building of the time and Longs Stores an early industrial building.

In addition to building new the Georgians re-fronted a number of buildings, as is especially evident in St. John's Street and Long Street. There are additional scattered Georgian buildings not shown.



### Architecture

- well defined style
- emphasis on proportion and symmetry
- high quality construction



### Street scenes

- unified appearance
- clear rhythm
- limited choice of materials
- interesting alignments



### Spaces

- Well defined
- Attractive vistas
- Interesting skylines
- Importance of details



## Key Developments in the Victorian Period

A major influence on change in the Victorian period was the growth of administration and the construction of buildings for public activity. Victorian development and enterprise produced a number of landmark buildings and the Assize Courts, Devizes Prison (since demolished), and the Corn Exchange all date from this period. New buildings for worship were the Salem Chapel in New Park Street, the New Baptist Chapel in Sheep Street and the Methodist Church in Long Street.



### Industry

- purpose built to contain processes
- fit for purpose
- strong architectural



### Transport

- canal and later railway
- introduction of new activity and trade
- mass movement possible



### Public buildings

- designed for their function
- choice of styles
- no expense spared
- imposing

The other significant development was the emerging growth of transport and industry, in particular the construction of the Kennet and Avon Canal and the establishment of Improvement Commissioners with powers to undertake public works in the town. The railway arrived in Devizes in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was closed in the 1960s.







## Development in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Until the middle part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was relatively little change in the town centre but considerably more after the Second World War. Much of the development related to the expansion of retail activity and office use together with facilities (garages, filling stations etc.) to service vehicular transport. The provision of new housing and creation of spaces for car parks are all part of this period of evolution. As shown below much of the town centre was altered or affected by development or redevelopment during this time.



### Buildings

- no visual links with the existing fabric
- ignore street lines
- random choice of materials
- creation of "left-over" spaces



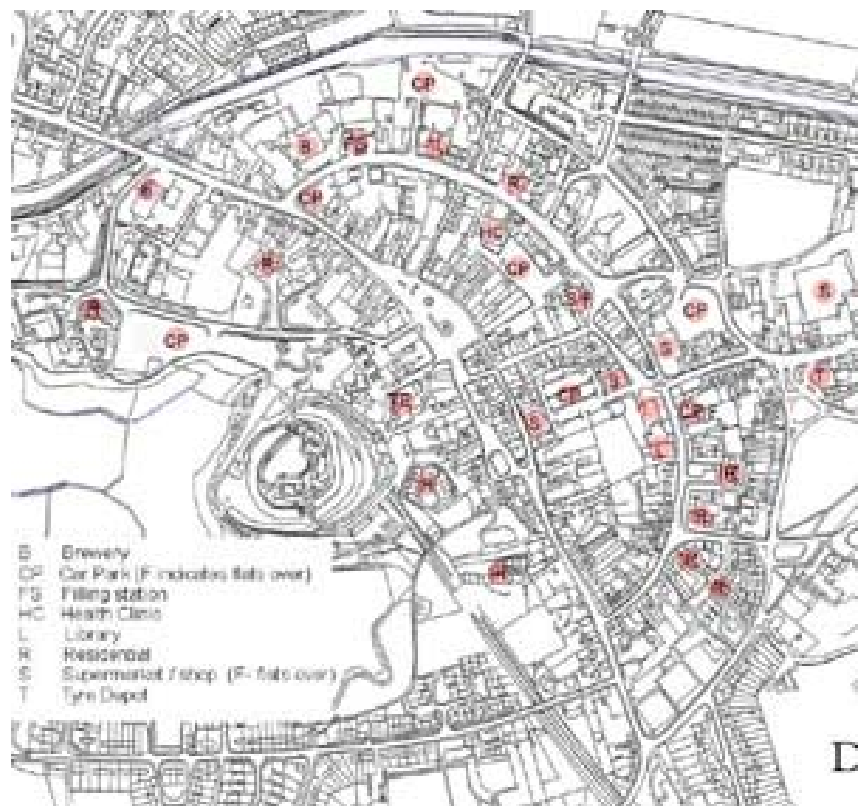
### Streets

- can retain sense of rhythm
- benefit from limited choice of materials
- variation in heights / roofline
- should maintain active frontages



### Spaces

- for vehicles rather than people
- frequent lack of definition
- 'left-over' space
- car dominant and unfriendly to pedestrians



## The Legacy of Historic Devizes


Devizes is a town with a remarkable architectural and historic legacy. The pattern of streets and spaces has survived almost intact for over 800 years and this, together with the 500 or so listed buildings, has created a town centre of individuality and distinction. The Devizes conservation area covers the whole of the centre of the town in recognition of the quality of architecture and importance of historic development and activity.



*Conservation area  
outlined in blue  
Listed buildings in red*

The range of buildings from the 15<sup>th</sup> century includes many of high architectural quality. Variations in the use of materials and details create interesting and attractive streets and views. Also within the town centre are examples of exceptionally high quality building craftsmanship.

The character of Devizes is mainly defined by its past which remains evident in the buildings, streets and spaces. The location, including landscape setting and trees, uses, commercial activity



and movement into and within the town are also an integral part of its character.


A Conservation Area Statement for Devizes was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 8 September 2005. This guidance includes a detailed assessment of historic character together with additional information on the interpretation and implementation of policies and proposals contained in the Local Plan. Copies are available from the Council Offices.

## **Summary**

Most historic places owe their layout to their original function and Devizes is no exception. In Devizes there are very strong links between the layout of streets and spaces and the history of evolution of the town, all of which needs to be recognised in planning the scale of acceptable change. By identifying the key elements it should be possible for these to be protected and enhanced as Devizes moves on into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many people can appreciate the quality of the town without necessarily being able to describe the reasons for this. The importance of the "feel" of the town is difficult to summarise but an essential part of good design. It is sometimes easier to identify those things that do not fit in than define the subtle features that make things look right.

The Market Place is of great importance to Devizes, not only because of its architectural and historic significance but for the contribution it makes to the economic, social and cultural life of the town. The quality of the Market Place derives from the strong relationship between the space and the buildings that frame it, enhanced also by the monuments within. It is important to cater for the needs of all who use the Market Place, not just those in vehicles but those on foot, cycling or simply enjoying the space and to maintain it as a flexible multi-purpose space.

The importance of the key opportunity sites identified in this Guide is the potential to enhance the town. Succeeding generations will have differing views on architectural styles but buildings of different periods can and should be compatible in design terms. Buildings



of quality will only emerge where the function is appropriate and in demand.

## Scope of the Design Code

The Design Code is intended to secure improvements in the design of new developments in Devizes and in the way existing buildings, streets and spaces are altered. It has to be appreciated that many of the problems within the town cannot be solved simply as design issues because they involve outside forces or agencies. This applies particularly to traffic problems and the impact of moving and parked vehicles. Streets should not be designed or modified just to accommodate the movement of motor vehicles because this will lead to a deterioration of the quality of the environment. Streets also need to be designed to meet the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users and this is particularly important if these modes of travel are to be encouraged as part of the government's sustainability agenda.

Provision of appropriate levels of car parking is essential for the well-being of the town but defining appropriate levels falls outside the scope of this document. The materials used in the construction of roads and footways or in their maintenance or upgrading; the impact of features such as traffic calming and pedestrian crossings and the level of dominance of vehicles in relation to new development are issues that this Code seeks to address.

The Council will take into account the guidance on the design of streets and spaces which is set out in the *Manual for Streets*, published jointly by the Departments for Transport and Communities and Local Government in 2007. Where appropriate the Council will also refer to *Car Parking: What Works Where* (2006) published by English Partnerships and Design for Homes which includes information of relevance to car parking in Devizes.

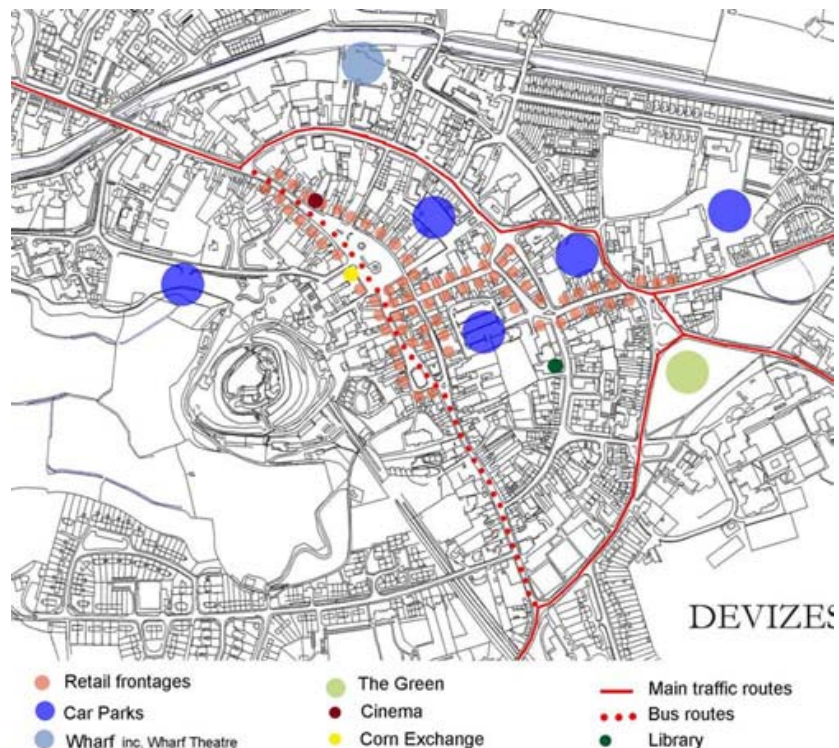





## Connections

Towns exist to allow people to live, work, be educated or simply enjoy life. They depend upon movement systems - roads, streets, footpaths and public transport routes, and also require utilities (water, electricity etc) which make urban life possible. These connections allow towns to link to the wider world. None of this exists in isolation and connections are a crucial component of urban character.

In order to flourish towns require good access and safe and attractive pedestrian and vehicle links between activities and sites and their surroundings. Understanding access and the way functions in towns relate one to the other is fundamental to successful development. New buildings and spaces need to be fully integrated into the fabric of the town not simply added on. Spaces need to be designed as places with a specific character and function.





Uses and activity are interlinked with movement between. Vehicular activity is either into or through the town with pedestrian movement for the most part along the main retail frontages.

The map illustrates the main activity generators although the patterns vary according to the time of day and the seasons. Market day on Thursday alters the pattern.

New development in the town needs to recognise and integrate with the movement patterns with opportunities taken wherever possible to enhance the experience.

## **Urban Design**

Urban design is the art of making places for people - places that function well and inspire pride and a sense of ownership in those who live and work there. The quality of urban design will help determine how easy it is to get around places, how safe they are and how enjoyable they are to spend time in. Urban design should:

- provide safe, comfortable and attractive places for people
- enrich the existing development
- make good connections through the town
- work with the landscape and townscape
- encourage mixed uses and a variety of activities
- promote and sustain economically viable development
- allow change to take place in response to future demands
- encourage high quality architectural design

## Building Heights and Landmark Buildings

Buildings in the core of the town centre are predominantly three-storey with a few buildings above this level: the occasional two-storey building can also be found. The scale and therefore the heights of buildings varies within this framework but Devizes has for the most part retained a consistency of development punctuated by key landmark buildings. The skylines created by roofs and rooftop features not only add interest to the street scenes and define spaces but may convey evidence of activity. Church towers, the Brewery, the Corn Exchange and the Shambles are evidence of this.

Buildings tend to diminish in height and scale away from the centre, and two-storey buildings predominate in the surrounding streets, although there are exceptions.



- variety in heights
- varied roof profiles
- monuments and features to punctuate the skyline
- add interest and identity to a space



- many landmarks denote functions or sometimes previous uses
- strong architectural form
- may be framed within a view or freestanding



- can be frontage or seen at a distance
- maintain rhythm of street
- heights vary according to scale
- corner buildings are often landmarks

## Urban Spaces

The Market Place is the key urban space in Devizes and the main feature that gives the town its character. Other spaces are less prominent but nevertheless notable, in particular the area centred on the Town Hall, Monday Market Street, and Devizes Wharf.



- Open space provides a setting to the surrounding buildings
- But dominated by cars
- Local landmarks help define the space



- Earlier functional space taken over to accommodate moving traffic
- Unfriendly to pedestrians
- Reduces attraction of using surrounding buildings



- Intimate closely defined space
- Strong contrast
- Location of buildings more important than individual style
- Flooring materials and details especially important

## Green Spaces

There are relatively few trees or green spaces in the town centre with the exception of the Churchyards of St. John and St. Mary. On the eastern edge of the centre are the Green, The Crammer and the surrounding parkland and, running across the northern edge, the green link formed by the banks of the Kennet and Avon Canal. The southern slopes of the Castle have little visual impact on the town centre.



- open space as the setting for an important building
- attractive route away from traffic
- links to several parts of the town



- well defined functional space
- comfortable for communication and recreation (in good weather and daylight)



- private space provides visual amenity to the public
- may also provide a setting for buildings



## The Public Realm

Streets exist not just to accommodate movement but as a space which everyone shares. Streets provide:

- circulation for pedestrians and vehicles
- access to buildings and the provision of light and air
- a link for utilities
- storage space especially for vehicles
- space for human interaction and social activity



- signs – and road markings
- are they all needed?
- in the right place?
- and an acceptable design?
- can the impact be reduced?

A comfortable and stimulating public realm that encourages social interaction requires detailed attention to the structure of a space and the elements it contains. This involves the surfaces, what is hard and what is soft, and what materials and details are used.



Spaces for vehicles and pedestrians require that the issues of security, street furniture, lighting and signage are looked on as elements in an overall picture and not as individual items. The introduction of public art and what forms of planting may be appropriate are also part of the larger picture.

- High quality materials / detailing
- Attractive setting for market activity
- Monuments and street art can have a major influence on how a space is used

Streetscape is the visual effect of the street or space as influenced by the design of the paved areas and as enclosed by buildings. Most people respond instinctively to the quality of streets in deciding where to live and where to spend their time. It will often influence where they shop and where they will seek leisure activities. Getting the balance right in the right place is critical to securing good development. Overall quality is significantly influenced by the way in which streets are managed, an aspect often overlooked.



- Railings may allow visual links and open views
- Traditional detailing makes for local distinctiveness
- Lack of clutter enhances quality



## Principles of Good Practice

### Ground Surfaces

Paving forms the foreground of almost every street scene and provides the context within which urban buildings are seen. To be attractive and effective paving schemes should:

- be related to the local context
- be simple avoiding the use of discordant shapes and colours
- in the town centre maintain (or restore) historic paving materials and details
- be designed to provide a setting relating to the uses around it

### Street Furniture

Good streetscapes and spaces are characterised by a minimum use of well-sited and well-designed street furniture creating a sense of visual order. This is achieved by:

- using designs that relate to the specific locality
- retaining historic street furniture which reinforces historic character
- minimising signage, with signs located where possible on existing features
- relating features to existing building frontages to give visual meaning

### Traffic Management

Traffic calming measures should be designed into new developments and where installed in existing street should not be visually obtrusive. Key considerations are:

- adopt a minimalist approach - physical measures should involve minimal visual interference with established street scenes.
- use traditional materials such as asphalt, pennant paving or sarsen setts. Coloured surfaces are too assertive and complex patterns quickly look dated.
- confine road markings to those essential for road safety





## Lighting

Lighting should always be appropriate to the context and its design should be directly related to the level of lighting required in a particular location. It needs to fulfil a number of functions including,

- enhancing the appearance of an area after dark
- reducing the number night time accidents
- making residents and street users feel secure
- assisting in the protection of property
- discouraging crime and vandalism

In Devizes particular attention needs to be given to the aesthetic quality of street lights and floodlights with care taken to avoid excessive lighting levels and light pollution. Lighting levels do not have to be constant during the hours of darkness and may be varied or in some cases switched off when not needed. Lighting columns should be carefully sited so as not to present a hazard or obstruct a view and in some cases light fittings may be best fixed to walls, buildings or other features.

To summarise the key issues to be considered are

- context
- lighting intensity
- scale and colour
- design of individual fitting and relationship with nearby buildings

Places and streets that have stood the test of time are those where traffic and other activities have been integrated successfully, and where buildings and spaces, and the needs of people, not just vehicles, shape the area. This is explained in considerable detail in the *Manual for Streets*, (see page 8) and developers will be expected to ensure that work to create or alter the public realm achieves the design standards set out in the Manual.

## Sites Identified for Redevelopment or with Development / Regeneration Potential

### Opportunities include:



#### 1 The Wharf and waterfront

- define characteristics and features to retain
- look at views and vistas
- examine how new buildings can enclose and help define spaces
- recognise effect of new build on skyline



#### 3 New Park Street

- gap site
- reinstate the building line
- minimise visual effect of vehicular access
- improve pedestrian links to surrounding areas
- relate heights to existing but seek variety

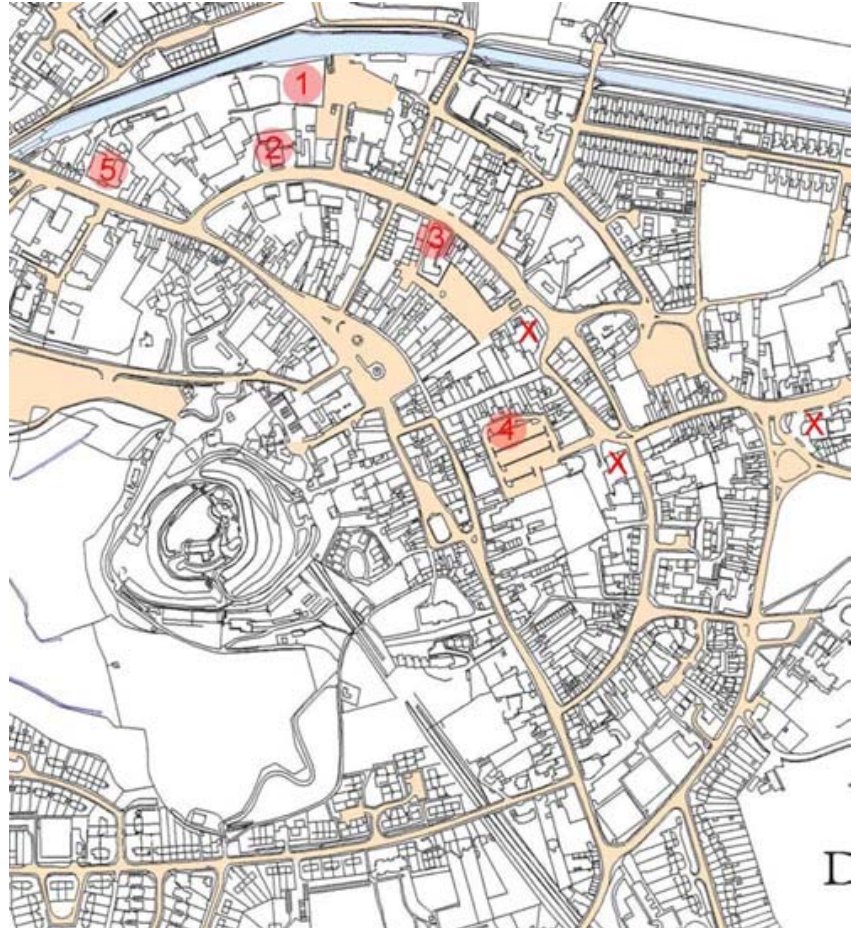


#### 4 The central car Park

- look at opportunity to enhance the space – especially for the pedestrian
- opportunity for new build to add to the retail take
- and improve appearance
- seek to reduce the impact of refuse collection

- 1 - Wharf                      2 - Former filling station   3 - Health clinic  
4 - Central car park   5 - Assize Courts

X - Long term opportunity sites





## A Design Code and its Use Within the Emerging Local Development Framework

A Design Code is a set of specific rules or requirements to guide the physical development of a site or a place. The aim of the design coding is to provide clarity as to what constitutes acceptable design quality and thereby a level of certainty for developers and the local community alike that can help to deliver good quality new development.

*This code is intended to determine:-*

- the character of the area as created by the quality of the layout, architecture and landscape
- the shape, dimensions, location and orientation of buildings and streets
- the design and layout of streets and how they accommodate people, cars, public transport, utilities, trees etc.
- how the open spaces and public realm, including parks, squares and streets, can be designed and maintained to a high standard and for safe use
- the mix of land uses particularly focusing on the density of development and the location of community facilities
- the quality and key principles of the design of individual buildings or blocks, including architectural principles, the use of certain materials in the buildings and public spaces and more detailed design requirements relating to individual components
- requirements relating to sustainability including orientation, adherence to standards of energy efficiency or the use of materials and methods of construction

Within Devizes is an established pattern of buildings streets and spaces such that the scale of new development opportunities will be relatively small, therefore in some cases not all of the above will apply. The concentration will be on securing successful integration with the existing fabric with buildings that are worthy additions to the architecture of the town.

The challenge is to address specific issues, problems and opportunities on all sites where development or redevelopment is proposed. This requires an analysis of the existing and a vision for the new making best use of the potential opportunities as follows:

### The Town/Conservation Area

Key observations	Specific measures
well defined urban form	maintain
high quality architecture (and detail)	new buildings of definable quality
style	avoid the use of arbitrary styles
attractive places and spaces	new development to enhance the town
- especially the public realm	
numerous links	reinforce links and improve quality
traffic impacts	examine how to minimise and calm

One of the key characteristics of Devizes is the relatively large percentage of independent retailers. Many properties are owner occupied giving greater commitment to the centre. Careful attention to the number, size and design of signs particularly fascia signs is necessary to maintain the quality of the town. National / multiple retailers will be expected to be flexible in the use of their 'corporate identity' and will need to view their designs in context.

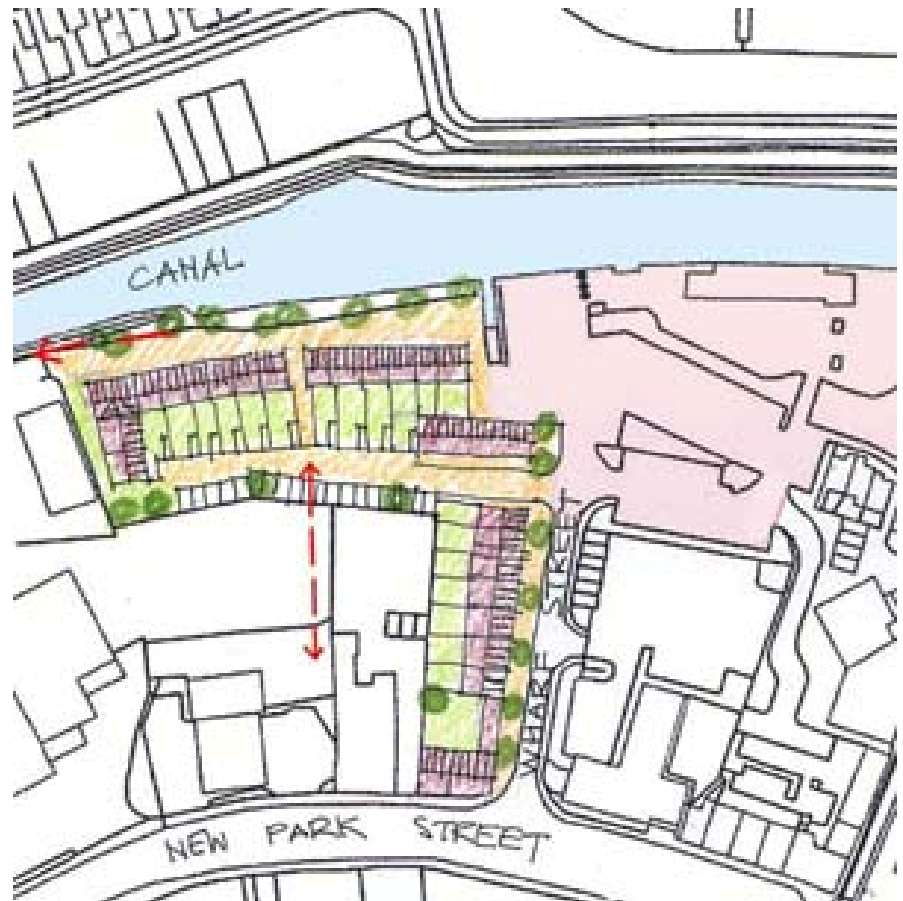
## 1 The Wharf



The view from New Park Street. New development on the west side needs to recreate Wharf Street as a linear space. The trees on the canal bank will act as a stop to the view.



Public uses are important. The spaces here need a coherent form with active building frontages.



- *Mixed residential - townhouses and apartments 2 and 3 storey*
- *South facing gardens*
- *Private and shared parking*
- *Trees to canal bank retained and new trees planted*
- *Buildings to re-form Wharf Street with line of trees to create a green link from New Park Street to the Wharf. Mix of residential with potential for craft / business uses on ground floor*
- *Desirable link to the filling station site and west to Northgate Street*
- *Redesign of car parking and green area south of the Wharf Theatre to improve the attraction of the Wharf as an interesting place to enjoy*
- *Vital to retain open space and public use*
- *Enhanced use of Theatre and Canal centre buildings to be investigated including the provision of additional leisure activities*

**Key Observations**

- under-used asset
- poor visual access
- vacant sites (former gasworks)
- attractive aspect to canal / green corridor
- long views to the town
- theatre
- moorings

**Specific Measures**

- maintain + enhance open space public use
- seek much improved access routes
- create street / avenue from New Park Street
- look at overall landscape to provide improved form and provide shelter
- look at creating new vistas
- maintain recreational activity (K+A Trust and Theatre)
- recognise and use the historical context
- identify and enhance biodiversity



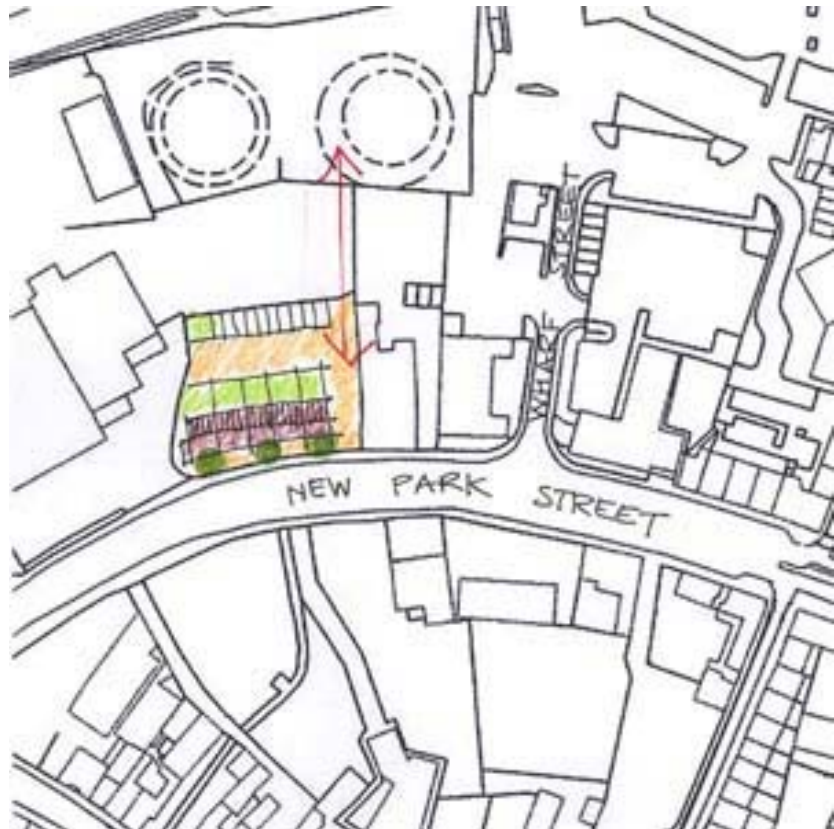
## 2 Former Filling Station, New Park Street



The site is especially prominent by being on the outside of the curve. This highlights the importance of the new building in the street scene.



The Crown is listed grade II listed - re-development must respect the quality and scale of the building and preserve its setting.



- Residential - 2/3-storey to Street front
- Particular attention to view of west gable
- Tree planting in widened footway
- Car parking to rear with potential for apartments over
- Desirable link to former gas works site

### Key Observations

- development potential
- disused
- gap in the street scene
- access / parking

### Specific Measures

- define uses
- demolish existing and redevelop
- rebuild along the street frontage - 2/3 storey
- On site parking provision but concealed



### 3 Health Clinic, New Park Street



There are a number of gap sites along New Park Street which have a negative impact and make poor use of their sites. At the Clinic site the new building is to be located on the back of the footway with links to the town centre.



The view from the car park. Buildings here need to be designed in the round to maintain active frontages on all sides and to enhance the space.



- *Residential*
- *3-storey to Street front, 2-storey to rear*
- *Car parking for shared use*
- *South facing garden*
- *Pedestrian link*
- *New Park Street to The Ginnell*
- *New access to or from the car park could be formed under the building or across the site*

#### **Key Observations**

- poor quality building
- under-utilised site
- long break in street frontage
- unattractive pedestrian route beside Longs Building

#### **Specific Measures**

- recreate the street
- active frontage
- vehicular access from car park
- create an attractive link with the network of movement within the town
- opportunity for relatively high building
- additional tree planting in car park

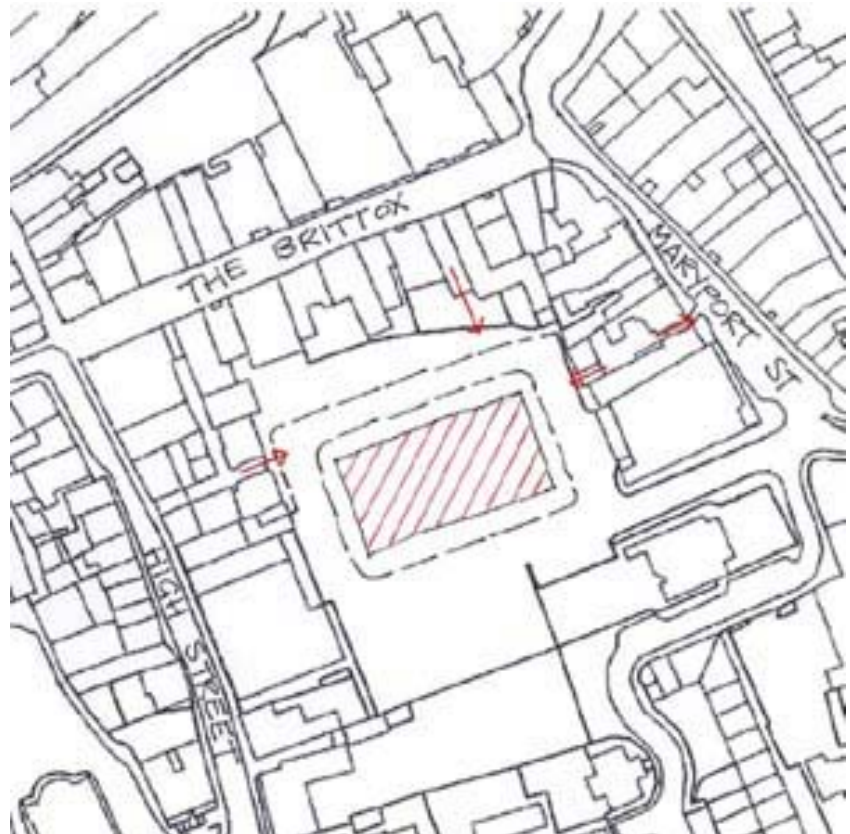
## 4 Central Car Park




Swan Yard form an attractive link from High Street to the car park. This is a focal point in pedestrian access to the town centre shops.



Servicing of buildings fronting The Brittox presents a particular design challenge.



- *Following consultation the Council has resolved that additional retail space would be appropriate on part of the Central car park. New retail units should follow the successful theme and mixed design principles established in the nearby Old Swan Yard*
- *To make the best use of finite town centre land development should make provision for retailing at ground floor with the option of mixed uses above including further retail office and residential*
- *Existing servicing routes around the car park must be maintained but where possible restricted to service / essential vehicles only space on north side of new building requires a northern edge with links to The Brittox*
- *If possible development should comprise small to medium size units to compliment the town's existing pattern of independent / niche retailing. The provision of only two or three large units on the site will not be acceptable*
- *Links shown are not 24 hour except to Swan Yard*

- 
- *The loss of some parking will be inevitable but an acceptable scheme will minimise this and explore ways of maintaining / creating as much parking on or near the site as possible*

**Key Observations**

- used also as service road and pedestrian link
- untidy (rear service areas)
- unattractive rear views of buildings (although some have attempted to introduce activity / link to the Brittox)
- trees provide visual relief
- attractive approach from Old Swan Yard

**Specific Measures**

- opportunity to much improve the pedestrian environment
- need to conceal refuse bins
- need to investigate / promote development potential on north side to hide unattractive back areas
- retain trees where possible
- reinforce links to surrounding areas / streets

## 5 Assize Courts



The former Assize Courts is a landmark building. Bringing the building back to use is a priority and this should include the enhancement of the setting.



Redevelopment of the land and buildings to the rear needs to be integrated with proposals for reuse of the Assize Courts. This would greatly improve the potential for the building.



1. *Redevelopment of former garage site linked to scheme for reuse of Assize Courts*
2. *Existing Forge retained*
3. *Opportunity for single storey new build to provide craft workshops / business use*
4. *desirable pedestrian link to the canal wharf*

- *Generally Retain existing planting and seek opportunities for new planning on the south side of the canal*

### Key Observations

- Important historic building
- blight
- poor links with the town
- unattractive setting marred by parked cars
- traditional paving to side access



***Specific Measures***

- retain / repair the building
- find new use or mix of uses
- seek pedestrian links along canal to the Wharf
- reinstate the setting and enhance the forecourt
- look at opportunity to add interest and activity



## Other Potential Opportunity Sites

In addition to the opportunity sites outlined there are other existing buildings that are nowadays considered to be out of keeping with their surroundings. These include Kwik-fit in Estcourt Street, the former Post Office and Job centre in Maryport Street and the block of shops and flats at the Monday Market Street / New Park Street junction. Redevelopment of these sites if/when the opportunity arises should follow the principles outlined in this guide.



***The Kwik Fit tyre depot on the corner of Estcourt Street and The Green***

### **Kwik-fit in Estcourt Street**

#### ***Observations***

- no design relationship with its site or surroundings
- 'left-over' space between building and site boundaries
- assertive signs and fascias
- inappropriate use on important approach to town centre
- dominance of hard standing and vehicles
- inefficient use of town centre site
- incongruous appearance when related to nearby historic buildings

#### ***Specific Measures***

- new building to be in context and to form a well defined corner
- opportunity to reinstate the street lines
- active frontage to add interest
- alternative residential or mixed use to make more efficient use of the site
- form of building and materials to be related to the setting
- exploit attractive views of The Green

## Former Post Office and Job Centre in Maryport Street

### Observations

- scale, form, appearance and materials out of keeping with the locality
- underused frontages
- does not contribute to the use or attractiveness of the busy daytime space

### Specific Measures

- opportunity for key building
- end of the view from Maryport Street looking south
- prominent corner site with potential for enhancement
- opportunity to improve the setting of the listed buildings particularly Handle House and the Baptist Chapel
- new build to present interesting roof outline (could be three storey)



**Former Post Office and Job Centre at the junction of Maryport Street and Sheep Street**

## Monday Market Street / New Park Street Junction

### Observations

- brutal 1960's style
- unattractive 'back' views presented to New Park Street frontage
- Scale, form and appearance out of keeping with the locality with negative effect on the skyline
- poor pedestrian environment
- low quality garages to car park access front
- in the view to St Mary's Church


### Specific Measures

- context to be recognised from all view points
- need to reinstate street frontages
- forms the end of the vista looking north-west along Maryport Street and key views from New Park Street
- another key corner site with potential for building of significant architectural interest on three sides
- scale form and materials to be selected to compliment the listed buildings in the locality



**Rear of 36-38 Monday Market Street as seen from New Park Street**





The lack of contextual design is clearly evident in all of these examples with great potential for improvement to enhance the immediate localities and the wider townscape. The principles outlined in *Building in Context* published 2001 by English Heritage and CABI have specific relevance to sites such as these.

## **Sustainable Design and Construction**

Large quantities of natural resources are used in the construction and maintenance of buildings and efforts need to be made to ensure that these resources are used efficiently. Development and redevelopment projects should achieve high standards of sustainability in construction and long-term management with the need for sustainability in all buildings as an integral part of the design process.

Where possible natural systems should be used to maximise comfort in and around buildings with attention given to the use of passive solar design and ventilation, shading, and landscaping. Energy efficiency, carbon neutrality and on-site energy generation are important considerations as are the efficient use of water, surface water management and the disposal of waste. In places there may be a conflict with the desire to use local energy generators, i.e. wind or solar power, and the conservation of the historic environment. It may be possible to find non-obtrusive locations for such items but this will not always be possible or appropriate

Those undertaking development in Devizes will be required to use the *Code For Sustainable Homes* and to meet the appropriate BREEM/Ecohomes standards. Ecohomes provides an authoritative rating for new, converted or renovated homes and covers houses, flats and apartments. It balances environmental performance with the need for a high quality of life and a safe and healthy environment. Many of the issues are optional, ensuring that Ecohomes is flexible enough to be tailored to a particular development.



## Biodiversity

Planning Policy Statement PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation sets out the Government's national policies on the protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system. PPS 9 identifies key principles and the accompanying guide outlines what is considered to be good practice. Planning for biodiversity requires:

- information about the biological resources of a site
- taking action to avoid adverse effects on wildlife species and habitats
- securing mitigation (if necessary by planning agreements)
- use of compensatory measures as a last resort
- the introduction of new benefits.

The design, layout and landscaping of new developments should be seen as an opportunity to enhance biodiversity, including where appropriate incorporating more biodiversity elements into buildings.

Networks of natural habitats provide a valuable resource and need to be protected and this applies especially to the green corridor of the Kennet and Avon Canal. Development alongside the canal or on the canal wharf must take into account the need to preserve and enhance the natural habitat.


## Recognising the Design Process

### 1 *Project brief and objectives*

A clear brief is the essential starting point in any design exercise. This should be in accordance with the overall planning policies of the Council and meet other essential requirements such as energy conservation and reducing the need to travel

### 2 *Appreciating the physical context*

All urban development takes place within an existing framework which must be understood before the design process starts. Some sites will be visually more sensitive



than others but virtually every site will provide an opportunity for good design.

3 *Creating the urban structure / making the connections*

Developments do not exist in isolation and need to be fully integrated with their surroundings. Physical and visual links are essential.

4 *Detailing*

Well considered and careful detailing will enhance buildings and spaces and this vital if buildings and spaces are to perform well.

5 *Making good use of consultation and encouraging dialogue*


Working to shared objectives can be a rewarding exercise and consultation should be seen as a positive force.

Dialogue is not intended to stifle initiative but to ensure that key objectives and requirements are met.

## Conclusions

This study is intended to demonstrate what constitutes acceptable design quality and thereby provide a level of certainty for developers and the local community in the process of delivering good quality new development. This requires an enlightened approach to design by those skilled in the process. Design is not an "add-on" to a predetermined solution or a façade to hide an otherwise inappropriate scheme.

Buildings within the urban core of Devizes need to be seen as component parts of the town where the external walls enclose internal space but are also the framework of streets and places. On occasions the facades are formal, as found in the Georgian period or are designed to provide a statement or visual stop at the end of a vista. There is a pressing need to avoid the creation of "left-over" space and all parts of a site or development should have a purpose or function. The creation of outside space - a place to feel comfortable in and enjoy, is a major challenge in urban development and especially in town centres.



In earlier years and especially with vernacular architecture many buildings appear "right" for the space but in more recent times the scale and style of new or replacement buildings has been seen to be too assertive and incongruous. This applies particularly to many of the post-war buildings, although there are in Devizes examples of more sensitive 20<sup>th</sup> century design such as the parts of the redevelopment of the Hare and Hounds site which front onto Bridewell Street.

It is a good principle that there is a relationship between the exterior form of a building and its interior planning and use. The use of a traditional approach to elevational design as a reaction against assertive architecture can look unconvincing especially where a large building is given artificial elevational breaks. More particularly there needs to be a positive relationship between uses and the public sides of buildings where function is clearly related to the street avoiding monotony or disinterest. Details should emerge from the overall design approach avoiding ready-made or contrived elements.

New development should be built to the highest practicable sustainable construction standards with special attention given to water conservation, energy efficiency and where appropriate on-site energy generation, taking the historic context into account.

It is the intention of the District Council that the planning system will encourage attractive new buildings, streets and spaces where the major objectives are to add value interest and enjoyment to the town and a positive environment for all. This document is part of the process.

October 2006

Maps used in this report are based on the Ordnance Survey and are Crown copyright.

All rights reserved Kennet District Council 100017656 2005