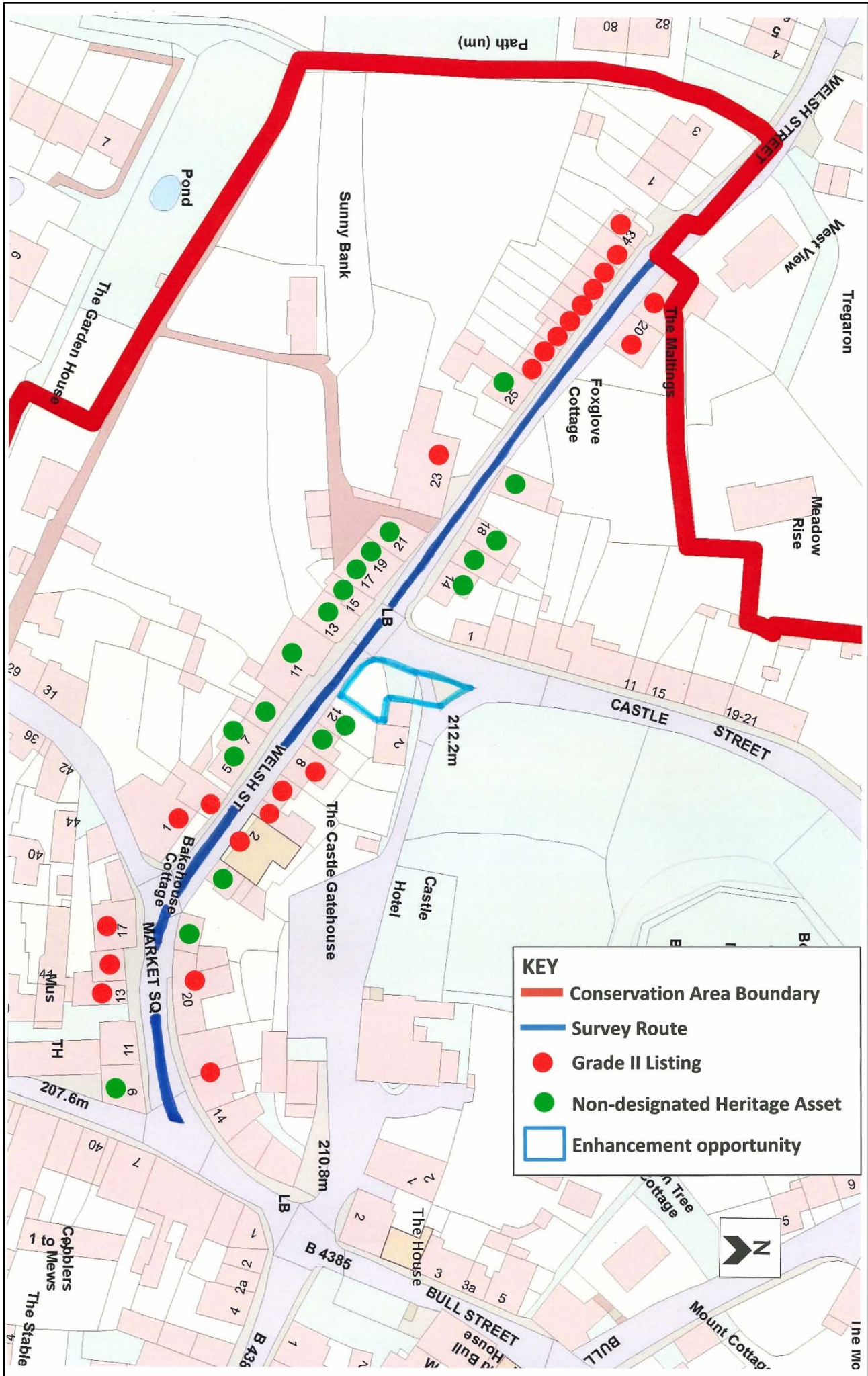


ZONE 3 SURVEY ASSESSMENT – Market Square and Welsh Street



varying height, red brick or painted blue, pink, or sage green. Another has a hop vine painted scrambling round it. Looking south of Yarborough House there is



another Victorian shop frontage, with decorative window lintels to the first floor. A shut entrance there has a flying freehold above and an ancient oak lintel with carving indicating a 17th century occupier.

Roj Williams sculpture above the door of Yarborough House

Decorative lintel on façade of house below Yarborough House on High St.



VN	N	O	P	VP
			X	
			X	

B. COMPONENTS of the STREETScape from Yarborough House towards Union St.

Standing in front of Yarborough House there is plenty of light from the High Street to the south and the immediate entrance to Market Square is quite wide. The **south side** frontage is broken further on by a cobbled pedestrian path and then by Union Street. These **3 openings provide dramatic glimpses** of the town and countryside beyond and provide relief from the **deep shadow** cast by the high and wide buildings onto what quickly becomes quite a narrow road.




These views are dramatic because the ground slopes steeply away south from Market Square, down a one-in-six hill. Historic buildings in the heart of the town are glimpsed: **from the High Street**, the mid-18thC Town Hall (Grade II* listed and recently renovated) and beyond it the Grade II* timber-framed Porch House – both buildings of national significance.



← *(Note the car parked half on the pavement. It was there for 5 minutes while the driver ran an errand)*

The view down the cobbles, is of the 16thC timber-framed jetty of the House on Crutches. **At the Union Street junction** the road also drops away dramatically, the narrow entrance revealing linked cottages arranged stepwise down the steep roadside with wooded hills rising behind them to the west.

On the **north side** the Market Square frontage is continuous, sunlit and attractive with some hanging baskets, a bench and features such as sets of steps with iron

VN	N	O	P	VP
				X
	X			
	X			X
				X
				X

	VN	N	O	P	VP
<p>handrails to the shop doors, some of which have Georgian or Victorian surrounds.</p> <p>Because the buildings are tall, broken only by vehicular or pedestrian routes, this area of the townscape feels quite ‘hard’. There are no gaps where gardens can soften the lines. Space is limited, but 2 hanging baskets, a planter on a pole (recently replanted) at the top of the cobbles, and several tubs outside a shop on the south side where the pavement widens briefly, soften the overall impression. The space was quite busy with both vehicles and pedestrians.</p> <p>Almost all the properties are dual use: commercial and residential, and most are open for business. There is a mix of retail – mostly browsing shops - selling gifts/crafts/furniture made in BC (3), antiques (2). There 2 bookshops (inc. Yarborough House), a restaurant, a takeaway and a café/B&B.</p> <p>Most buildings are well-maintained with interesting features, such as a recently uncovered late 19thC grocer’s sign above no.9, and 4 new swift boxes under the eaves there, which have all had active swift nests in 2019. Some are rendered and painted, others old red brick. Two or three properties do look as though they need some attention – surface repair and redecoration, but this does not yet suggest serious neglect or decay. Though most have a Georgian appearance, some shop fronts were remodelled by the Victorians, and there are buildings of an earlier date hidden behind most of the frontages on the north side of Market Square, which follows the line of the castle’s outer bailey wall built in the 12thC.</p>				X	
 <p>Because the pavements are, mostly, very narrow on both sides, pedestrians can feel ‘pressed in’ by the parked vehicles – especially on the north side where steps intrude onto the already narrow pavement. Parking and traffic management are big issues here. While parked cars rarely if ever encroach on</p>	X	X			
<p>the narrow pavements here, there is fierce competition for the few spaces in what is essentially a narrow medieval street. A resident stopped to explain to us that frequent gridlock had been mitigated by the painting of a continuous white line on a stretch of the north side of the highway to prompt drivers not to park opposite vehicles on the south side as this would block the road, especially for the regular vans delivering to various businesses. The effect was obvious as we returned.</p> <p>Speed, volume and fumes from traffic are rarely a problem due to the constricted space, which discourages both speed and volume. Were conditions to change however and traffic volume was increased, this would not only be detrimental to the experience of the historic street but would create major difficulties for pedestrians.</p> <p>This is not, on the whole, a space conducive to pedestrians ‘relaxing’. But, where proximity to a junction favours it – sun falls on the north side and there is a bit more space - there is either a bench where shopkeepers often sit together for a chat, or, outside the Poppy House cafe, 2 tiny tables with chairs either side of them.</p>	X		X		X

	VN	N	O	P	VP
<p>At the junction with Union Street, there is a concentration of overhead cables attached to no. 17. The cables are unsightly, but don't impinge too much on the senses because there is so much else to look at. This is a massive rendered building, with interesting Georgian features, such as tapered pilasters round the doorway.</p> <p>Yellow lines are painted on both sides of this junction to discourage parking too near to the very tight, narrow turn. On the north side the pavement disappears.</p>		X			
<p>C. DETAILED DESCRIPTION of SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS of the streetscape from Yarborough House towards Union St.</p> <p>All but one of the eight properties on this section of Market Square are recorded as historic assets; five are Grade II Listed and two are non-designated assets. This is an inviting space, full of historic interest and detail. There are differently presented groups of buildings, some rendered and painted in a variety of colours, others retaining the warmth of handmade red bricks. The shop fronts are mostly Victorian, with large paned windows, though no.16 has a more Georgian look with a curved multi-paned bay window.</p>  <p>There is a dentil course of bricks high up on no.11, picked out in ochre against dark green used for the windows too, all set in an ochre wall. This decoration really makes this building stand out. In the picture the grey painted frontage to the left shows one of 4 swift boxes installed under the eaves in 2017.</p>  <p>No. 13, across the cobbles is less well maintained. It has been redecorated but shows signs of the need for gutter or downpipe maintenance. Not easy on these very tall buildings of some age.</p> <p>This area is rarely very busy, but there are frequent comings and goings, if not of customers, then of neighbours, usually shopkeepers, outside talking to each other. This creates an informal, friendly atmosphere, which passers-by can easily join in. This summer the swifts from the new boxes were often heard screaming through what is in effect a 'canyon' created by the tall opposing groups of buildings, to the delight of their human neighbours.</p> <p>The highway and pavements are generally unremarkable tarmac. Odd areas with paving slabs or setts remain, but where there is often a sloping surface, tarmac is the most practical solution.</p>	VN	N	O	P	VP
		X			X
					X
					X
			X		



The old cobbled way that runs south, is difficult to date, but is visible in late 19thC photographs, and still has an oak handrail down the centre for safety. Some areas of setts have weeds coming up – from time to time these are sprayed. This is probably better than allowing them to take hold and establish, though dead vegetation is not that attractive. The feeling is of a natural, not ‘over-manicured’ or self-conscious space. People who live here like to spend time engaging with others more than impressing them

← The cobbles leading down to the House on Crutches have recently been sprayed to kill the weeds.



On the pavement nearby the weeds have been left. It is arguable that the dead vegetation is less attractive than the weeds, some of which are flowering and are attractive to bees and might be seen to complement the tubs of flowers.

As there is **no car park at this elevated level in the town**, accommodating cars is currently a necessary evil in this somewhat constricted space. Despite this great disadvantage, **this area of the town is very attractive**, because of the variety of historic buildings, the types of shops, the friendly feel and the stunning glimpses of the town and countryside, which all promise visitors the joy of discoveries to come.

VN	N	O	P	VP
		X	X	
			X	
	X			
			X	
				X

A. VIEW (ii) from Union St. to Castle St.

There is a long view to hills to the west. The focal point is a distant hillside and trees. The street is quite narrow near the junction and grows ever narrower, with varying height, almost continuous buildings facing each other. These are interesting buildings, probably 17th century but adapted to different later styles, but their proximity to each other gives a slightly oppressive feel to the middle of this stretch of Welsh Street. The street rises and therefore **parked cars and any traffic detract from the view**.

Traffic management has a major impact on (a) Pedestrians crossing the road or even trying to walk along it, as cars are parked part on and off the pavement on the south side. (b) Vehicles turning into or from Union Street and Castle Street, where cars might be parked on the pavement opposite either junction. Posts and road markings intended to keep these junctions as clear of parked cars as possible are evidence of the traffic issues they present.

VN	N	O	P	VP
			X	X
	X			
X				

VN	N	O	P	VP
	X X			
	X			
		X		
	X			
	X			

In winter the steepness of Union Street and Castle Street at these junctions increases the hazard. (c) Often having a row of parked cars, Welsh Street is effectively a single-track road between these junctions.

Where Union Street joins Market Square the north pavement disappears along the front of the Poppy House and the yard to the west of it. The pavement emerges again in front of Moat House (2 Welsh St.), BUT it is very narrow. Cars are constantly parked on the pavement to the south side of Welsh Street by residents **with no other option.**



Union St./Welsh St. junction, looking in the reverse direction



Welsh Street outside Moat House. Parked cars on left narrow the road

Reverse view:

Turning back at the Castle Street junction, the view up the incline of Castle Street is prominent. The vegetation above the parked cars on the east side of the street is the focus. It is an area of land for recreation, but little is visible but shrubs and some trees from this point.


In the immediate foreground is a patch of land beneath the copper beech around which there is no pavement.

View up Castle St. – parked cars create another single-track road



Looking back along Welsh Street the carriageway slopes down towards Union Street and seems to demand more attention, because traffic may be coming up behind you and as a pedestrian, with minimal pavements you are on shared space.

Once past the open, corner plot with the beech tree, is an opening beside no. 12, the first house of the terrace on the northern frontage. More is revealed from

	VN	N	O	P	VP
<p>this angle. A cottage can be seen built someway behind no. 12, on a lane that leads from Castle Street into the Castle Hotel car park. Beyond that, treetops are visible on what is clearly much higher ground.</p> <p>As you reach the Union Street junction you can see more of the rear of the Poppy House, parts of which look a little dilapidated. The yard at the back and the retaining wall/s – which might include remnants of the castle outer bailey wall are visible. High above these walls you can see parts of the building known as the Castle Gatehouse.</p> <p>At the junction you notice the street name signs are of different ages. The Union Street sign is 20th Century, and that for Market Square is ‘old’ - 19th Century or early 20th Century. There is a tiny old door at ground level and three blocked-in windows in the stone built 'extension' to the rear of no. 17 Market Square, quirky detail like this engages curiosity. The grit bin, for use in the winter on the steep slope here is an eyesore as it is covered in algae.</p>				X	
<p>B. COMPONENTS of the STREETScape from Union St. to Castle St.</p>	VN	N	O	P	VP
<p>On the east corner of Market Square/Union Street, no. 17 Market Square is a three storey, Grade II Listed Building whose stone outbuilding, also Grade II Listed, faces Union Street. The three blocked-in windows of the stone extension are remnants of the Window Tax, introduced by William II in 1696 and which lasted until 1851. It imposed a standard tax on premises with glazed windows with an additional levy according to the number of glazed windows on the property.</p> <div data-bbox="129 1243 655 1626">  </div> <div data-bbox="812 969 1189 1541">  </div> <p data-bbox="671 1547 1118 1621">The algae coated grit bin at top of Union Street presents an eyesore.</p> <p>On the west corner of Union Street is Black Lion House – a low old building which used to be a pub as did the Poppy House, close by on the opposite side of the road. Both are Grade II Listed buildings and may have medieval origins. Black Lion House, a former pub from 1762 to 1990, has a Georgian porch and attractive old wrought or cast-iron railings with plants entwined, enclosing a narrow strip of garden.</p> <div data-bbox="568 1785 1177 2123">  </div>					X
					X

Opposite is the imposing Moat House, also a Grade II Listed Building which in the 1700's was a pub. It is constructed of painted stone, two storeys, with a three-storey narrow central bay. Moat House also has railings enclosing a shallow front garden. Several steps lead up to the central front door. Sun lights up Moat House and the five terraced cottages which continue on the north side, their doors painted bright primary colours. No. 4 appears to have been a shop at one time but is now residential & linked to no.6. Three of the five are Grade II Listed Buildings, the remaining two are recorded on the Historic Environment Record as a non-heritage assets.



A pedestrian uses the carriageway as cars park on the pavement to enable traffic to move through the street.

After Black Lion House and the adjacent joined cottage, which is also a Grade II Listed Building, the nine buildings on the south side of the street are much taller and much closer to the carriageway. They are all three-storey and probably Georgian. They form a continuous line, dominating and shading the narrow street. All are recorded as non-designated heritage assets.

The pavement reappears on the north side of the carriageway BUT it and the pavement opposite are very narrow. Cars are constantly parked on the pavement to the south side by residents **who have no other option**.





There are only two properties in the southern terrace that lack distinction. No. 7 has plastic window frames to upper floors and right of door, despite its heritage classification and no. 11 looks quite neglected. In between, no. 9 provides relief with interesting window boxes and glimpses of light through the windows at the back of the house. On the north side differing roof lines are interesting – the buildings may have medieval origins with later frontages, which are Georgian or Victorian.



The exterior of number 11

VN	N	O	P	VP
				X
	X			X
			X	
	X			
	X			
			X	

	VN	N	O	P	VP
<p>On the corner of Castle Street is a patch of scrubby land, home to a lovely large copper beech. This land is enclosed by rusty, broken iron railings and there are odd self-sown tree saplings, - question: who owns this neglected area? It could be managed for wildlife and / or a seating opportunity created. It may benefit from the broken railing being removed or repaired, but too manicured a finish should be avoided.</p> <p>The scrub land with no. 11 opposite and no. 12 behind</p> 		X			X
<p>C. DETAILED DESCRIPTION of SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS of the streetscape from Union St. to Castle St.</p> <p>This is a fairly busy stretch of road with cars or people passing every few minutes. Residents and visitors (all ages) - stopped to chat, despite passing cars. Because of the road conditions – the narrow carriageway and lots of parked cars, the traffic was not fast moving. Birdsong could be heard, and the warm sunshine created a very pleasing impression, particularly as the Castle St. junction was approached.</p> <p>Here the ‘hard’ surfaces of the tall, south side buildings and highway were softened because the space opened up. The copper beech and vegetation around it also soften the streetscape. There is a pleasing view up Castle Street, steeply rising, with a continuous line of three storey houses on the west side. The frontages are not uniform, some are bare local stone others rendered and painted. They all have small front strips with mixed planting. These strips give straight onto the carriageway.</p> <p>This is another narrow road, with residents parking on the east side against the retaining wall for a piece of amenity land which is the site of the original 12th century castle. This parking again effectively creates a single-track road.</p> <p>Because the first house is set well back from the junction, a large area of sky is opened up criss-crossed here by cables radiating from a single post. The cables are not too intrusive, because the other elements of the view command more attention.</p> 		X	X	X	X

	VN	N	O	P	VP
<p>The narrowness of these ancient streets is an ever-present problem for 21st century traffic as evidenced by this lorry attempting to turn unsuccessfully onto Welsh Street after driving down Castle Street.</p>   <p>The lorry enters Welsh Street but cannot move any further without doing major damage to the terrace of properties, all of which are recorded as heritage assets.</p>	X				
<p>A. VIEW (iii) from Castle St. towards the hills.</p> <p>From Castle St., Welsh St. slopes away downhill and due to its narrow width and some overhanging vegetation it presents a series of views. The distant view at this point is of an extensive hill side – which is a patchwork of fields, hedges and trees, forming the focal point. The road itself is especially narrow here. There are yellow KEEP CLEAR signs on the road, though some people have ignored them and parked partly on them and partly on the south pavement (as along the previous stretch of Welsh St.).</p> <p>After no. 21 there is an access and footpath to land at the rear of the properties along Welsh Street. Beyond it, comes an imposing ‘mansion’, the Laurels, set at an oblique angle to the road, with a gated opening to the west. The street seems more spacious here because of the break in continuity of the building line and the fact that on the opposite side of the road, there is a long gap between houses where a retaining wall encloses gardens allowing a view of greenery and trees to the north.</p> <p>The view of the hillside is temporarily obscured by garden overhang and the angle of the road. Beyond the Laurels and another cottage, on the south side a continuous frontage is presented by a row of cottages, nos. 27-43 built close to the highway and giving onto a very narrow pavement. Records show that beyond these cottages there was once a turnpike gate and the lane was the ancient</p>	VN	N	O	P	VP
		X		X	X

	VN	N	O	P	VP
<p>drovers road from mid-Wales. The road would feel hard, narrow and enclosed were it not for the more open aspect of gardens on the north side, benefitting cottages nos. 27 to 33. Also, the view of hills to the west opens up again.</p> <p>Opposite nos. 33 – 43 are the Malt House and the Maltings. One a three storey Georgian house and the other a conversion of a working building to a residence, both are well-maintained. The Maltings marks the boundary of the Conservation Area. It is quite noticeable that the constriction of the streetscape ends here, the road is slightly wider and newer buildings beyond have been set back from, or at an angle to the road and are often built to lower heights, some being bungalows.</p> <p>Reverse view:</p> <p>The Malt House garden, which lies to the east of the house, is very extensive. There is hardstanding there for a car to be parked, which allows views of a rising grassy bank in the garden surrounded by trees and shrubs. Lit by the afternoon sun, this softens and enriches this aspect of the reverse view.</p> <p>Opposite, the Laurels is facing north-west and the frontage is more imposing from this angle. Details of the substantial painted wooden gatepost and wrought iron gate are visible from this approach, creating new interest.</p> <p>Perhaps a negative is the fact that now travelling up hill, the sky is a more prominent feature and against it are silhouetted the many telephone cables attached to dwellings and segmenting the sky.</p> <p>Exploring the gated access between no. 19 and the Laurels you first come to a large shared yard which provides an interesting view of the rear of 19, 17 and 15. They do not have a uniform structure and have all been altered at different times. One has a massive chimney, and there are several old red brick sheds.</p> <p>The path which leads off the shared back yard is narrow and interesting with an informal surface of gravel and grass. It is enclosed by red brick and stone walls, 1.5 -1.8m high. Trees and shrubs appear as you follow the path such as yews, holly and scented buddleia, with glimpses of gardens, occasional butterflies and the sounds of birds. This seems to be a very quiet, 'secret' path, with lots of wildflowers and garden 'escapees'.</p> <p>Large trees dominate further on and lead to another quite shady and damp footpath running east/west. It is part of a more extensive path network linking the conservation area to 20th century estates round the edge of town. It is surprisingly free of rubbish. There is a large graffiti 'tag' on the redbrick wall at the junction of the north/south path with the east/west one, indicating that all ages access this network. The path is beaten earth, not tarmac, emphasising the very natural feel of the whole area.</p>				<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>



	VN	N	O	P	VP
<p>Coming back through the gate to Welsh Street, and looking east, there is a nicely framed view across rooftops, of the Town Hall cupola. From here, the mature copper beech at the junction with Castle Street can be seen in its entirety and is very impressive. Nearing the Castle Street junction there is a dramatic view of trees on the Old Castle Land and surrounding the Bowling Green above it. This is on a large promontory which rises steeply to the north-east above Castle Street. You can imagine from this viewpoint how dominant the stone castle would have been at the top of this bank.</p>				X	
<p>B. COMPONENTS of the STREETScape from Castle St. towards the hills.</p>	VN	N	O	P	VP
<p>The spaces on both sides of Castle Street at its junction with Welsh Street are relatively 'open'. However, the narrowness of Welsh Street at this point and the continuous high building line, close to the road, further up Castle Street, make this area feel quite constricted. This is probably heightened by the shade created by the large copper beech tree on the east corner of the junction.</p>			X		
<p>The terraced dwellings on the south side of Welsh Street are all classified as heritage assets as are the four dwellings opposite them. Nos. 13, 15, 17 and 19 have some Victorian features, but these may be later additions.</p>			X	X	
<p>The gated access between no. 21 and the Laurels is not obviously a public right of way and when we visited had empty bins and recycling boxes by the gate (this may have been a rubbish collection day). The Laurels is a Grade II Listed, elegant Georgian mansion positioned at an angle away from the road. Built of stone, it is well maintained, with a stone columned porch and iron railings. The buildings in this locality are almost all residential, but the Laurels is a holiday let, though not obviously so. With interesting features such as the imposing porch, wrought iron railings and gate, and planting this building has a very attractive impact. There is a sense of space because opposite is another gap between buildings, with shrubs and trees.</p>					
<div data-bbox="571 1048 1193 1473" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="97 1621 753 2018" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Bishop's Castle Railway Co. for their employees. The railway operated from the 1st of February 1866 until December 1935. An additional property, no. 25,</p>					X

VN	N	O	P	VP
			<p data-bbox="114 138 1171 250">adjoins the terrace at the far end, adjacent to the Laurels. Whilst this is a little larger than the rest of the terrace it presents a more unassuming frontage. It is recorded in the Historic Environment Record as a non-designated heritage asset.</p> <p data-bbox="114 295 1184 519">The gabled dormer windows of the Victorian railway cottages have attractive sharp finials and scalloped, fish-scale tiles. The cottages are now privately owned and some rented out, with varying levels of upkeep. All nine are Grade II Listed properties and all are rendered and painted neutral shades. We learned from one occupant that none of them put out rigid waste bins or boxes, as the pavement is too narrow to leave such receptacles out.</p> <p data-bbox="114 564 641 788">Opposite these cottages are two more Grade II Listed properties: the Maltings (a converted, stone built, 'industrial' building, now a dwelling); and the Malt House, a wide and well-appointed three storey dwelling. It is rendered and painted in a pastel blue.</p> <p data-bbox="114 833 641 1182">With an opening and garden to the east which meets the more open aspect created by the Laurels opposite, this creates a sense of natural space in what is otherwise a narrow stretch of road. Though not as imposing as the Laurels, the well-proportioned and cared for Malt House, with its visible extensive garden adds to the sense of historic Georgian affluence in this part of town.</p> <p data-bbox="114 1227 1171 1653">The hillside is again visible and the railway cottage resident said she loved living there, close to the countryside but also very convenient for the town with all its amenities and cultural activities. It is quite noticeable that the constriction of the streetscape ends here, with newer buildings, beyond the Conservation Area, set back from, or at an angle to the road and often built to lower heights.</p> <p data-bbox="114 1729 1171 1841">As with the other stretches of Welsh St. described earlier, the narrowness of the highway and non-existent or very narrow, parked-on pavement, mean this is a space contested between pedestrians and cars to some extent.</p> <p data-bbox="114 1886 1155 2042">Only the infrequency of traffic because of the limited number of properties and destinations that lie in the rural area beyond this point and the low speed at which it is generally travelling, make it possible to confidently walk on the highway itself when necessary.</p> <p data-bbox="114 2087 1120 2123">It is noticeable that traffic management measures aimed to limit parking and</p>	<p data-bbox="1401 183 1423 219">X</p> <p data-bbox="1401 309 1423 344">X</p> <p data-bbox="1471 385 1493 421">X</p> <p data-bbox="1471 586 1493 622">X</p> <p data-bbox="1471 698 1493 734">X</p> <p data-bbox="1471 1115 1493 1151">X</p>
		X		



The Railway cottages with the hillside beyond

	VN	N	O	P	VP
<p>keep traffic moving are ignored to some extent by residents and / or their visitors. As are the rules about not parking on pavements.</p> <p>There is a general acceptance locally that these are necessary evils to accommodate aspects of modern living (most households owning at least one car), within the layout of a medieval town and its Conservation Area. It does mean that pedestrians need to be alert, nimble and give way to moving traffic.</p> <p>The constrictions of space combined with the need to accommodate traffic also means that, apart from possibly under the copper beech at the junction of Castle Street and Welsh Street, there is nowhere to install seating to enable the enjoyment of the historical setting and the visible landscape.</p>		X			
<p>C. DETAILED DESCRIPTION of SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS of the streetscape from Castle St. towards the hills.</p> <p>Every building in this short section of the street is classified as a heritage asset. Twelve are Grade II Listed buildings and the rest are recorded as non-designated heritage assets. Despite the often-continuous building line, there is a great deal of detailed variation in the built environment. Not all frontages align perfectly and heights also vary. Many houses are rendered and painted, mostly muted neutral or pastel shades but there are some with stone exposed and others entirely of stone or red brick. None of the properties gave an impression of neglect, though some were more recently decorated than others.</p> <p>Garden walls seem preferred to fencing – partly because of variations in ground level on this hillside, requiring solid retaining walls. These are a mix of stone or red brick – sometimes both and often attractive in their own right.</p> <p>There are more and larger gaps between the sets of buildings, and they offer views of natural landscaping, perhaps because the road here is approaching open farmland. We could hear a cockerel and wood pigeons calling and were told owls are often heard at night. There was a distant sound of machinery at one point -probably on a farm, but it wasn't intrusive.</p> <div data-bbox="730 1294 1169 1579" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Peacock butterfly sunning itself on the wall along the 'secret' path, accessed between no. 21 and the Laurals</p> <p>It is generally peaceful, but not deserted. The few people we met were happy to talk and the passing traffic was driven appropriately for the conditions.</p>				X	X

D. SPIRIT OF THE ZONE

The survey moves out from the built-up centre of the medieval town towards the open farmland to the west, offering stunning glimpses of the surrounding Shropshire hills. The contrasting styles and materials of the buildings and their embellishments are evidence of the centuries of activity that have created this town. The buildings and the views of countryside between them embody the town's history and sense of identity, which both locals and visitors value very highly.

All but 4 of the 46 properties that line the streets (91%) are historical assets. Of these, 23 are classified as Grade II Listed Buildings and the other 19 are listed on the Historic Environment Record as non-designated historical assets. This is undoubtedly a significant area of historical interest.

The informality of the presentation of the buildings, none too 'finished' or 'done up' so that their character is lost, is an essential feature of the town, as are: the visibility of nature all around, in the views of hills; flowering wildflowers along paths and pavements or growing out of walls; mature trees within and beyond the Conservation Area; the sound of birdsong, even in the densely developed streets; the activity of insects; and the welcome extended by many residents to wildlife such as birds and wild mammals.

Medieval elements may lie hidden in cellars and behind walls but features from the 17th century onwards are readily discernible. The affluence of Bishop's Castle in Georgian times is apparent in the pilasters and pediments around doorways, the use of cast and wrought iron on windows, walls and roof ridges and the progressively smaller windows from ground to second story in rebuilt façades. That the economy boomed here in Victorian times is also evident in several large plate glass shop fronts on Market Square; the decorative carved detail applied to them; the plaster decoration around the windows of some buildings; and the provision of nine railway workers' cottages in Welsh Street, with gabled, dormer windows, complete with fish scale tiles and pointed finial .

In Market Square properties combine commercial and residential functions. The rest of the zone is almost exclusively residential, with the odd property offered for holiday lets.

All parts of the zone illustrate the *influence of the topography* of this border area on the urban layout. Welsh Street, as the name suggests approaches the heart of Bishop's Castle (itself laid out north/south, down a rocky promontory), from the west, from another *higher* ridge of hills that also contained a wooden motte and bailey castle at Bishop's Moat. The road which enters the town has been cut through steep banks which confine it to a single-track road with passing places. It is not surprising that in past centuries there was nothing to be gained from widening this highway where it entered the town and that therefore the historic built environment of the Conservation Area severely constricts the street, making it very ill-suited to modern traffic.

The competition that results for the use of the narrow road (and pavements where they exist), is just manageable at current levels of use, but could become intolerable if there was any increased volume of traffic. It is this competition between traffic, parked cars and the needs of pedestrians which creates the most negative feature/s of this zone.

Throughout the zone the street facia reflects not only the style of its historical origins but also the continuing changes in style and usage of premises through time, right up to the current era. Today strong but sympathetically painted renders are used and metal work applied in the form of sculptures. There are only a couple of premises, both non-designated heritage assets, that show signs of neglect or inappropriate renovation.

There is one location that offers an opportunity for enhancement in a sensitive way. This is identified on the accompanying map at the corner of Welsh Street and Castle Street.