

4.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Wrexhams' medieval origins are evident in its street pattern which radiates out from the iconic, Grade I listed Church of St Giles to the north, east and west (to the south, the River Gwenfro formed a natural barrier to development). The plan form of the streets and alleyways, the long narrow "burgess" building plots and timber framed buildings such as numbers 5, 7, and 9 Town Hill, remain as further evidence of medieval origins.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, travelling merchants and fairs from as far away as Yorkshire, Manchester and Birmingham were held in the streets, which would have been widened to accommodate them. Wrexham boasts several streets which show evidence of being widened, namely High Street, Town Hill, Hope Street and Charles Street. Where these streets converge they enable important and far reaching views through the town centre.

In contrast, an important feature of the town is its pedestrian permeability created by the important links which, are formed between the main streets by the narrow alleyways and arcades, such as Bank Street, Temple Row, Central Arcade and Overton Arcade. Bank Street and Central Arcade, in particular are bustling with small independent shops which bring much character and charm to the town centre.

The precinct of St Giles' Church is an important green open space, the only one within the Conservation Area. It is an oasis of calm and tranquility, enjoyed by many visitors and local people alike. It is enclosed within important walls, railings and gates with a number of fascinating tombs including that of Elihu Yale, many of which, are also, listed structures. The precinct contains a diverse range of mature trees that are afforded additional protection through Tree Preservation Orders.

Typically, during the Georgian period, many of the medieval buildings were extended, adapted or re-fronted using the local sandstone or the local Abenbury brick combined with sandstone dressings, or alternatively, lined-out "stucco" renders. In the mid to late 19th century many important public and commercial buildings were erected using fine cut ashlar using both red and yellow sandstone such as the Former Trustees Saving Bank on the corner of High Street and Church Street. Also popular was the use of render combined with decorative stone features to window and door surrounds. By the Edwardian period, at the turn of the 20th century, the fashion was to use the local red Ruabon brick and terracotta. This miscellany of traditional building styles and materials together with more modern types contribute to Wrexham's unique blend of character.

Ornamentation and decoration are evident throughout the Conservation Area and make a significant contribution to its character. In particular terracotta mouldings, iron balustrades, decorative corbelling and wrought iron sign brackets, play a significant role in contributing to the visual quality of the Conservation Area.

A number of the buildings within the conservation area are listed as buildings of special architectural or historic interest, but many buildings are not. It is these commercial buildings which bind together and give cohesion to the character of the town centre and provide distinctive local character and appearance forming strong townscape groups. Many

retain early or original features, particularly to upper floors and whilst many shopfronts have been replaced over time, remnants can often be concealed behind later additions.

Amongst the traditional buildings within the conservation area there are key architectural landmarks which are prominent within the Conservation Area. These include St Giles's Church, The Wynnstay Hotel, The Talbot and the Border Brewery chimney on Tuttle Street. In addition The Horse and Jockey Public House, the Butcher's and General Markets are notable buildings within the town. Not only do they contribute to the visual experience but provide physical links to important historical associations and the development of the town in particular through trade and industry.

In recent years a number of new and independent businesses have been established within the area, restoring a sense of vitality to the town centre. Sensitive refurbishments have re-introduced character and brought empty buildings back into use and brought about much needed repair and maintenance.

These are the qualities which help to tell the story of the development of town and make up the distinctive character of Wrexham.