



## 3 Summary of Special Character

3.1 Wrexham Town Centre Conservation Area encompasses an historic market town with a character largely dominated by the 18th and 19th century architecture of the Georgian and Victorian periods. The majority of the buildings are two and three storeys high giving the town a "human scale" and an intimate urban

character. A number of factors contribute to the special character of the area and these are now outlined below:

### Medieval Street Pattern

3.2 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 evidence of medieval origins. The medieval streets radiate out from St Giles' Church to the north, east and west but not to the south as the River Gwenfro formed a natural barrier to development. 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.



### Pedestrian Links

3.3 The main streets in the centre are pedestrianised, which has changed their character dramatically over recent years from the previous traffic dominated hustle and bustle. An important feature of the town is its pedestrian permeability created by the important links which, are formed between the main streets by the old narrow streets and alleyways, and more recently by the footbridge connecting the Conservation Area with the Eagles Meadow shopping development. All are identified on figs. 2-6.

### Variety of Building Materials

3.4 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.



## Landmarks

3.5 Within the conservation area there are 4 key architectural landmarks:

St Giles's Church, The Wynnstay Hotel, The Talbot and the Border Brewery chimney on Tuttle Street. There are a further 3 key buildings which are particularly prominent: The Horse and Jockey Public House, and the Butcher's and General Markets.



## Focal Areas and Vistas

3.6 There are 3 focal areas, or convergence points at the junctions of the main streets in town, from where far reaching views through the town centre are obtained.

- The junction of High Street, Town Hill, Hope Street and Church Street.
- The junction of High Street, Hope Street. Chester Street and Charles Street.
- The junction of Hope Street and Queen Street.

There are also several important views looking into the Conservation Area and these include views from Madeira Hill, Salop Road, Bridge Street, St George's Crescent and from the Eagles Meadow shopping development.

## The Contribution Made by Unlisted Buildings

3.7 A number of the buildings within the conservation area are Listed as buildings of special architectural or historic interest, but the majority of 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.

These are indicated on figs. 2-6.

## Elevation Features

3.8 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.



## Trees and Green Open Space

3.9 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, where benches provide respite from the bustle of the town centre. It is enclosed within important walls, railings and gates with several mature trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders and fascinating tombs including that of Elihu Yale, many of which, are also listed structures.



