

Melksham

An urban design study for consultation including suggested proposals for Market Place, High Street, Bank Street down to the bridge over River Avon.



Melksham

An urban design study for consultation including suggested proposals for Market Place, High Street, Bank Street down to the bridge over River Avon.

Prepared by Melksham 1st & Colin Davis Associates

Melksham^{1st}

CJDA

Colin Davis Associates

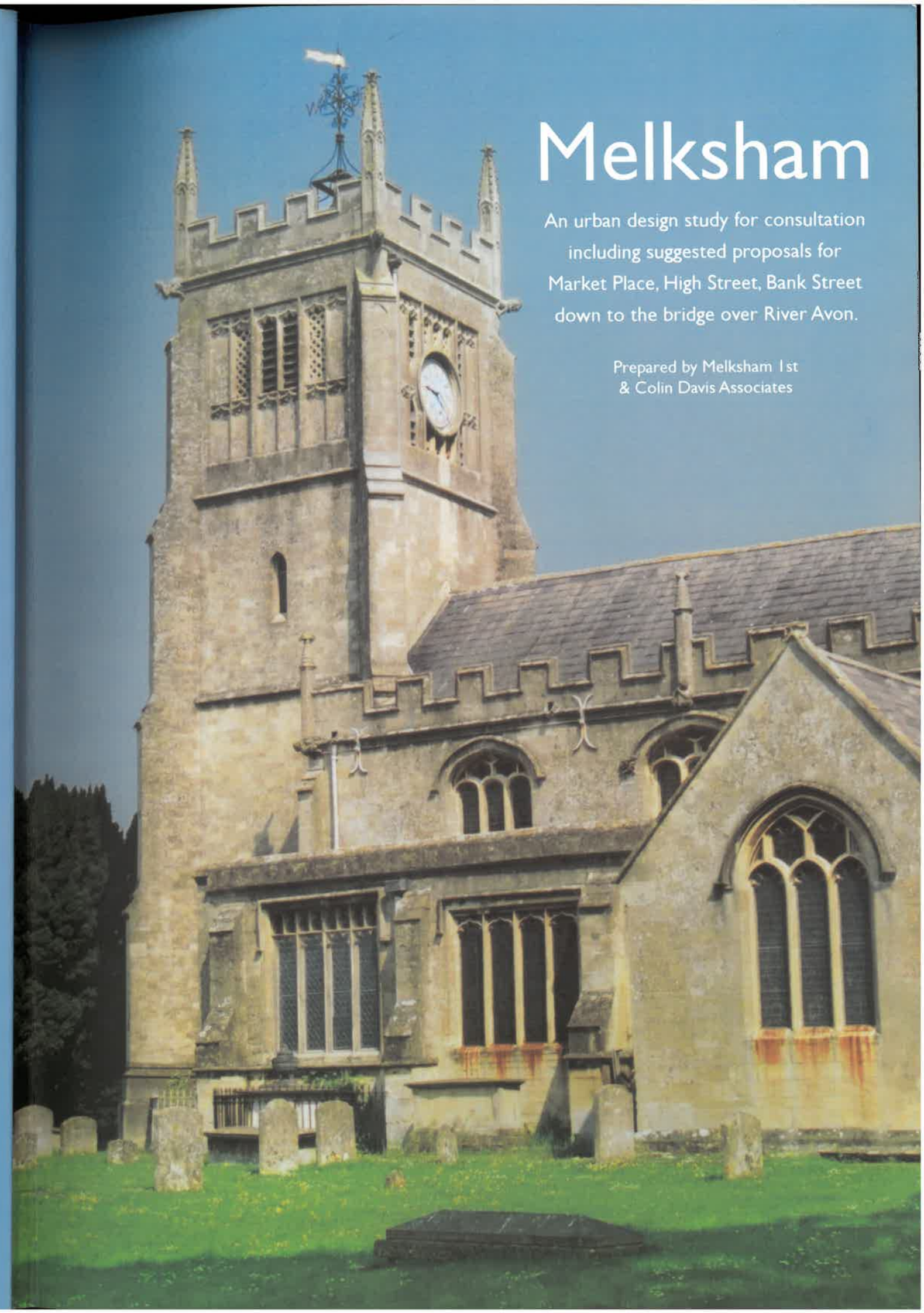

West Wiltshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Supported by

South West of England
Regional Development Agency

Melksham 1st 01225 899 265

Colin Davis Associates 020 8398 7837



Melksham

An urban design study for consultation
including suggested proposals for
Market Place, High Street, Bank Street
down to the bridge over River Avon.

Prepared by Melksham Ist
& Colin Davis Associates
November 2006

With the kind co-operation of:
South West Regional Development Agency
Wiltshire County Council
West Wiltshire District Council
Melksham Town Council
Melksham Chamber of Commerce
The clubs and societies of Melksham
Individual property owners and
businesses of Melksham

Executive Summary

This document has been produced by the urban design consultants Colin Davis Associates for Melksham Ist, a local organisation who's aim is to promote the improvement of Melksham. The study has been funded by the South West of England Regional Development Agency, with additional financial support by the West Wiltshire District Council.

In its present form, the report has no status. Its purpose is to stimulate informed debate. It has not been adopted by any of the three local authorities, but it has been prepared with their knowledge and their kind co-operation.

The report suggests a number of ways in which the street scene of Melksham town centre could be more pleasant and welcoming for both residents and visitors and therefore become more prosperous. Much of the charm of the town centre relies upon the variety of small independent shops and the suggestions in the report are intended to make them more viable.

The study begins with an analysis of the physical character of the town centre, its buildings, groups of buildings and the public spaces they form.

All the suggestions for improvements are understood to be within the current published policies and programmes of the three local authorities. They are grouped into projects that could be undertaken in the immediate, mid or longer terms.

The complexities of responsibilities are recognised. Many projects need the co-operation of more than one public agency or property owner. The project schedules on the final pages indicate which local authority is likely to be involved. But a theme of the report is that even small improvements are worthwhile, especially if they can be seen as part of a wider endeavour.

While some of the projects can be carried out easily and quickly, others will take more effort over a longer time. The detailed designs and illustrations for specific sites have no formal status. They are included merely to illustrate that with care and thought, some new development at key locations can enhance the total impression of the town.

Melksham Ist welcomes views on all the issues raised.

Contents

	Executive summary	2
	Forward	4
1.	Introduction	5
2.	Aims and objectives of the study	6
3.	Stakeholders	6
4.	History	7
5.	Townscape character analysis	8
6.	Vistas	10
7.	Spaces	14
8.	The streets & footpaths	18
9.	Listed & locally significant buildings	22
10.	Walking between shops	26
11.	Liveability - places where people meet	28
12.	Strategy for improvements	30
The projects		
13.	The projects. Immediate small scale improvements	32
14.	The projects. Medium term improvements	34
15.	The projects. Long term improvements	36
16.	Responsibilities	44
17.	Schedule of projects	44
18.	Next steps	51
19.	Consultation	51
	Acknowledgements	51

Forward

Melksham is a delightful market town and is an excellent base for visitors to the Wiltshire area, to Bath and the wider attractions of the Cotswolds.

Melksham 1st has a growing concern for the future of the town centre with specific regard to the economic viability of small retailers, local services as well as the larger superstores. All are key attributes to the area.

We feel that the quality of the built environment, the townscape, fine buildings and open spaces can be further improved for the benefit of local people and visitors and also for the viability of the commerce in the town.

The conclusion of this study is presented as a series of related yet manageable and achievable projects to enhance the future and to dovetail with other longer term projects already envisaged such as the improvements to the navigation on the River Avon. In this regard, improvements in the town centre will increase the attraction to visitors who might walk up from the river to the Market Place.

We gratefully welcome the participation and enthusiasm of our colleagues from the three local authorities, private companies and the organisations and people of Melksham. I feel sure that we are all clear in our intention to improve Melksham as a place to live, work and visit.

Lee Emery

Melksham 1st
1st floor
Crown Chambers
7 Market Place
Melksham
Wiltshire SN12 6ES

Tel: 01225 899 265
email: carolynbeale@melksham1st.org.uk
web: www.melksham1st.org.uk

Melksham^{1st}



Aerial view of Melksham Market Place



Strattons Walk, part of medieval long distance footpath system

I. Introduction

Background

Melksham's commercial and historic centre extends from Market Place, along High Street and down Bank Street and Bath Road as far as the bridge over the River Avon. Both the smaller independent shops as well as national high street banks and stores are situated along this route. Two supermarkets though close by, operate effectively as separate destination stores and are almost detached from the main high street shopping experience.

Many historically significant buildings and spaces survive but it is generally accepted that some of the more recent developments are not sympathetic to the historic character of the town centre. Some lack of maintenance contributes to the reduction of visual quality.

Vehicle traffic uses roads through the town centre for both local trips and to an extent, for longer journeys.

Past studies

Previous studies have highlighted the need for specific as well as more general and co-ordinated improvements. This report takes these into consideration and analyses new opportunities to provide a priorities list of achievable objectives for the immediate, mid and longer term. Care has been taken to break down the complexities of official responsibilities and to indicate precisely how and which agency would be likely to undertake each task. This should enable the translation of the recommendations of this study into actionable projects with agreed completion dates.

Previous studies consulted include:

- Melksham Town Centre. Integrated Transport Improvements. MouchelParkman March 2006
- Melksham Market Place - King Street Car Park MouchelParkman September 2005
- Melksham Town Centre Street Scene Audit MouchelParkman, April 2005
- Melksham Area Community Strategy 2004-2014

2. Aims and objectives of the study

This study was commissioned by Melksham 1st to:

- Appraise the street scene and liveability quality of Melksham town centre.
- Define a clear strategy for the implementation of immediate improvements, medium term interventions and long term development opportunities.
- Prepare schedules to identify key tasks as well as the likely implementation agencies and the means by which the recommendations may be carried out.

3. Stakeholders

The main stakeholders who will be responsible for, or have considerable influence in, undertaking the recommendations of the study, are:

South West of England Regional Development Agency
Wiltshire County Council
West Wiltshire District Council
Melksham Town Council
Melksham Chamber of Commerce
The clubs and societies of Melksham
Individual property owners and businesses of Melksham

4. History

The Market Place in Melksham, probably the most distinctive and recognised part of Melksham is the location for the Town Hall, home of the Town Council. Near it was one of the oldest and significant residences in Melksham. Henry Brouncker, a local wealthy clothier built his manor house on the west side of the Market Place in around 1550. Known as Place House or Court House, it was demolished in the late 1800s and the site was divided into building plots. The remains of the short private road can still be seen, to the west.

On the opposite side of the Market Place to the Town Hall was another substantial house: The Limes, previously known as Brunswick House. The two storey bay on the left of the original building can still be seen. The Aqualesure sports shop is now located on what was the front garden of the house.

The streets around the River Avon and up to the Market Place were the sites of small industries. Independent weavers worked at home in their cottages. Other local trades and crafts typical of a small market town, including tanners, blacksmiths and millers, occupied small workshops. Trades associated with local agricultural and the market were centred in the town. The small scale weaver's workshops gradually gave way to larger industrial companies using power looms. Eventually one of the riverside mills was used to house what became the Avon Rubber Company. The last mill by the town bridge closed in 1888.

The Market Place was an open area with a town pump complete with drinking cup for passing travellers. A well still remains and is thought to be located under the existing circular cover. Much of the fabric of the historic town remains today: the stone houses, shops and inns. Small circular and octagonal drying buildings used until the last century in connection with the weaving industry can be seen in Church Street and Lowbourne. The footpaths that gave short cuts across the fields to the church are still used in a modern setting. In the forecourts of some of the inns can still be seen the original stone paving, probably common in the wealthier parts of the town.



Melksham, 1896 plan
○ indicates Market Place



The Limes



Market Place from King Street

5. Townscape character analysis

A sense of completeness

The Market Place as the most recognisable space in the town centre is a good place to start an appreciation of the townscape character of Melksham. It symbolises the town and is the place from which most people get their bearings. If you arrive from the south by King Street or Spa Road it clearly indicates the beginning of the town centre. From here the town centre is a gentle meandering street formed of the High Street, Bank Street and Bath Road running north between mostly pleasant and distinguished buildings, down as far as the stone bridge over the River Avon and with interesting passages and spaces to the left and right.

The townscape objective is to identify the special characteristics of Melksham by looking carefully at the vistas, the distinguished buildings and groups of buildings and the spaces between them. Then to assess what could be done both to enhance what exists and improve, through well designed new development.

The following analysis notes relate to specific sites. They conclude with references to suggested enhancements or improvement projects which start on page 31.



Buildings surrounding the Market Place are a delightful mix of English styles, typical of many market towns



Church Walk leads to Canon Square

Opposite. Delightful architectural details can be found all round Melksham's town centre.

Local stone has been used to decorate public buildings and private homes. The classic Georgian proportions are complemented with topiary.



United Church, 2 High Street



10 King Street



16 Church Walk



Highfield House, 22 Union Street



26 Church Walk



Melksham Conservative Club, Bank Street

6. Vistas

The curves in the streets, starting at the crescent shape of the western side of the Market Place with the Town Hall at its centre, form a series of interesting vistas. The buildings that close each of the vistas, in both directions, or are on the outside of a curve in a street, are important in their contribution to the townscape character of Melksham. They should be respected in any future proposals. A plan showing the main vistas is on page 11.

The particular buildings are:

The Limes and 2 Market Place, on the south side of the Market Place, which close the vista from the High Street. The restoration of the stone buildings set behind gardens enclosed by traditional railings would reinstate the setting of the historic buildings. Projects 1a and 1b.

Former Kwik Save site and buildings on Market Place frontage. The improvement to the Limes and 2 Market Place could extend to the whole south side of the Market Place between Spa Road and King Street which at present looks either derelict or untidy. In order to have sufficient options for improvement the whole of the former Kwik Save site is included. Projects 2, 3 and 4.

5 Market Place, occupied by Blockbuster, is seen as part of the Town Hall group. It is a listed building and needs a more suitable and more modest shop sign. Project 9a.

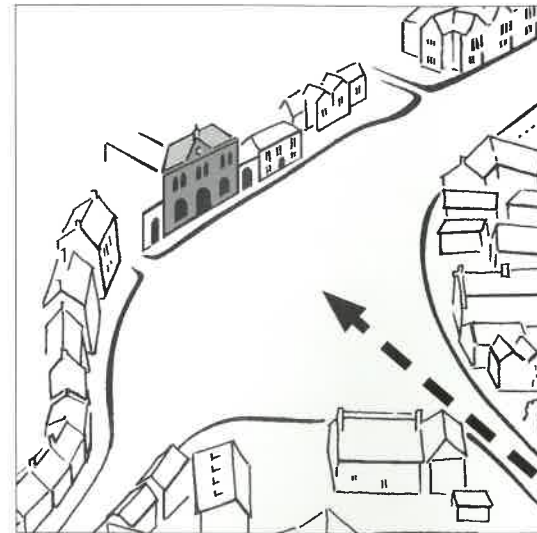
The Town Hall itself, which closes the vista from Spa Road. The replacement of the lost arch would help restore the elegance of this group of buildings. Project 6.

The foreground is equally important and is dealt with in our consideration of the Market Place as a space. Project 6a & 6b.

1 High Street, Lloyds Bank. A very substantial building which closes the view north across Market Place from King Street. No immediate work is required, merely the acknowledgement of the importance of this building in the street scene.

11 High Street, occupied by Kingstons, estate agents, on the south corner of Church Street, which closes the vista looking south from High Street. This modest building, characterises a small country town. Again no immediate work is required, merely the acknowledgement of its importance to the street scene.

14 and 16 High Street, occupied by Card Market Superstore and Baguette Bar, are important as they close the vista from Church Street. Though the buildings appear well maintained, their shop fronts are not appropriate for the total building and so when the opportunity occurs, should be redesigned. Project 16.



Buildings which close vistas have great impact on the quality of the street scene. Historic buildings at these locations should be well maintained. New developments on these sites should be subject to special planning guidelines



View of the Town Hall from Spa Road



Vistas in Melksham town centre

This plan indicates the main vistas with an arrow and the buildings which close the vista, with a heavy grey line. These buildings are very prominent in the street scene and should be considered with care.

53 and 55 High Street occupied by Lovejoys and 1 and 3 Bank Street occupied by Gompels, close the vista from Lowbourne. Most of these buildings are listed and they provide a welcoming approach to the town centre from the east. Some of the shop fronts could be more suitably designed for the historic buildings as a whole. Project 29a.

30 High Street, The Parson's Nose public house, 32 High Street the HSBC Bank, formerly the Midland Bank and 2 Lowbourne, the Natwest Bank. As a group they close the vista from Bank Street when approaching from the north. These buildings, including a non-listed but nevertheless distinguished former Midland Bank (currently HSBC) mark the change of direction in the town centre streets from High Street to Bank Street. They should be well maintained. Project 32a.

2 Lowbourne and 2-22 Bank Street on the north corner of Bank Street and Lowbourne, close the view looking north from the High Street. It was the site of the former George Inn, a public house and hotel. This site represents a real opportunity to redevelop in order to create new buildings which will reinstate the historic building line of the street and at the same time provide a worthy landmark for the town. Projects 30a & 30b.

The same group of buildings is seen on the outside of the curve looking south up Bank Street. The current low slung row of seventy's style shops with poorly maintained storage space above, does not do justice to its important position in townscape terms.

Church Walk seen from Bank Street. This view is intriguing. It seems to beckon a visitor to explore. It could be part of an interesting circular walk. The quality of the paving and its maintenance especially at the entrance from Bank Street is therefore important. Project 38.

The north corner of Bank Street and Union Street, which closes the view looking north from Bank Street and appears to be the site of a demolished building, possibly for road widening. The demolition has exposed the flank of the former Little Brook Bakery building, now the Webb Bakery. The site therefore has potential as a location for a landmark structure. Project 39.

Entrance to the town centre from the bridge. Here the name of the town appears to be Sainsbury's, certainly a useful service, but now the store is well established in the town, the sign appears somewhat intrusive. Project 51.

Approaching the old town from the industrial area one has the impression of simply a continuation of the same form of development. There are opportunities to more suitably mark the town centre entrance and also to maintain the historic lamps on the bridge itself to a higher standard. Projects 51 & 54.

View across the river to the rubber tyre company. This view is seen looking north from Bath Road and at present presents a very mundane industrial aspect. Should the opportunity occur, a distinguished even landmark structure might be welcome, though being visually subordinate to the bridge. Project 55.



11 High Street at the corner of Church Street



Church Walk seen from Bank Street



View from town centre to Avon Bridge with the flank of the former Little Brook Bakery at the corner of Union Street and Bank Street



Card Market Superstore and the Baguette Bar, on the High Street, close the vista from Church Street



View to Lowbourne junction and the Parsons Nose public house



View to town centre from Avon Bridge



Lloyds Bank, building is a prominent feature of the vista from King Street into the Market Place



2-22 Bank Street is a 1970's style building and a poor replacement for the St George Inn



View over Avon Bridge

7. Spaces

A plan of the main spaces are shown on page 15.

The Market Place, as the primary urban space in the town centre, was originally intended for a regular market which alternated with one in Trowbridge. It has now been reduced to a traffic roundabout and car park. However the Market Place is traditionally a place to enjoy, pause and meet with friends. It should be returned to that important social role.

Major renovations have been mooted and will be welcome. If, however for any reason they do not go ahead, there is an urgent need to tidy up the area immediately in front of the Town Hall. The clutter of sometimes poorly located and maintained street equipment: bus shelter, cycle racks, planters, signs and paving is the result of no single agency being proudly responsible for the totality. Each element will need to be considered and funded separately, yet the image of the town relies upon some extraordinary co-ordination and cooperation. Projects 7a, 7b, 8, 9a 9b, 10 & 11.

The significance of the Market Place can be enhanced with sympathetic street design and consideration to the historic buildings.

Spaces and open areas are tempting places to add street furniture and clutter.



When approaching the Market Place from the High Street the gentle curve that encloses the space becomes apparent. Reducing street clutter would enhance the space and help legibility



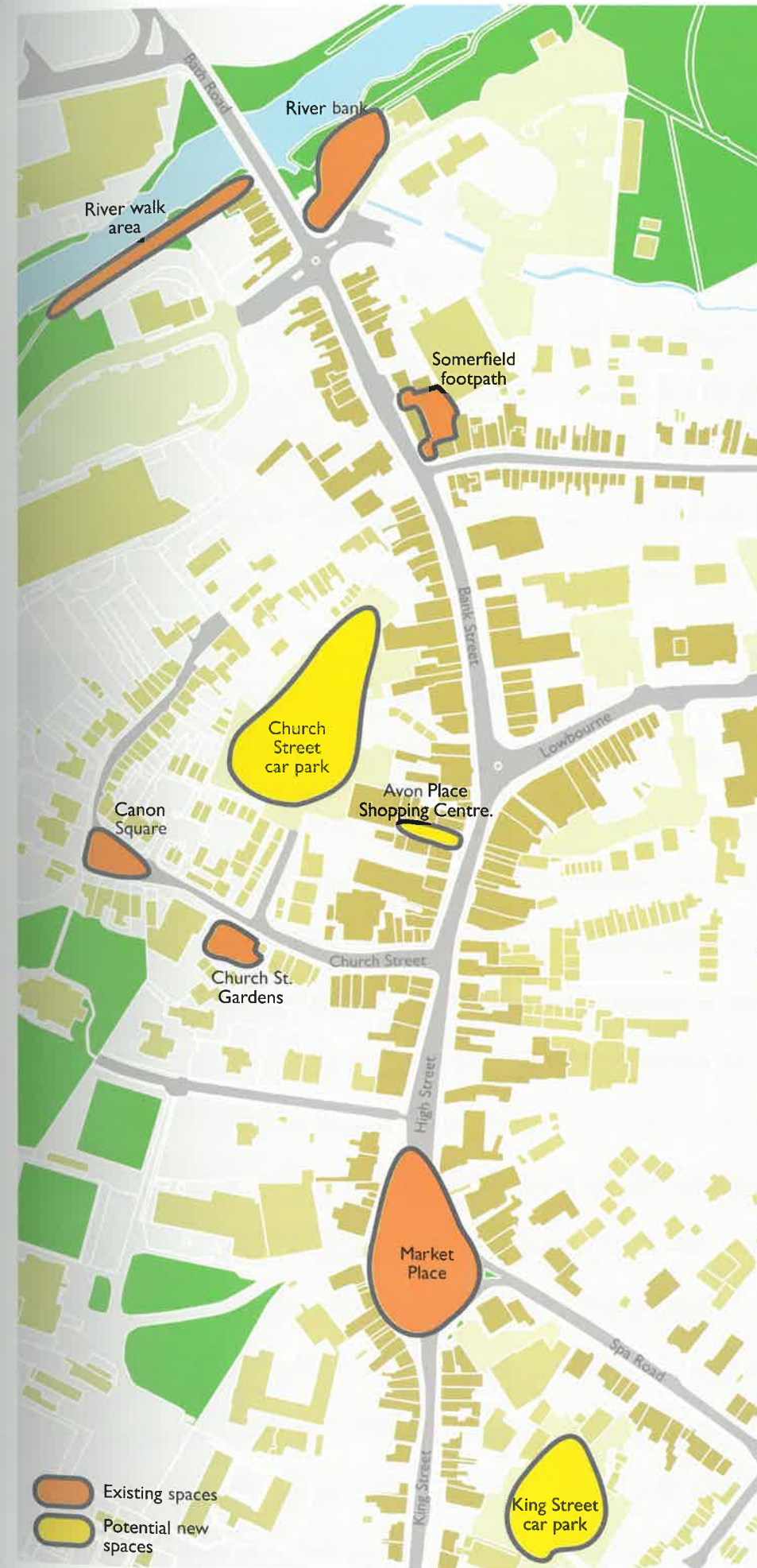
Market Place open area is currently used for car parking but could be restored to a usable amenity space



The cars parked in the Market Place detract from the gentle enclosing space created by its surrounding buildings



Reducing the clutter from Market Place would enhance the space



Melksham town centre spaces

The main spaces in Melksham are indicated in orange. Opportunities for improvements to other open spaces are shown in yellow. They vary in their size and use. These include the car parks. They are the places where people arrive by car. They give an important first impression of the town.

The other consciously designed urban space at the town centre is Canon Square, surrounded on three sides by well maintained traditional stone buildings.

A small public garden in Church Street is immediately east of the post office. This space feels pleasant yet could be more inspired by its unique location. It could be given some modest refurbishment, coupled with the provision of a better setting for the historic round shaped 'drying' building. Project 19.

Two of the open spaces associated with shopping developments: at the Avon Place Shopping Centre and Somerfield, could be more inviting. In both cases they are positioned between the High Street or Bank Street shops and a large supermarket. The objective to provide a more pleasant open space as part of the refurbishment or development is the purpose of projects 26 and 39.

Car parks

King Street car park needs to be far more welcoming, pleasant and have a greater feeling of safety brought about by being over-looked by the occupiers of adjacent buildings. These back-land sites in small country towns were frequently used as orchards and this might be a theme for future landscape treatment. Projects 13, 14, 15a & 15b.

The same comments would apply to Church Street car park with important additions. It is a larger car park and at a significant location in relation to the town centre. There are commercial buildings on more than one side. Its essential function as a back yard service access needs to be retained but its role as a welcoming town centre destination should be emphasised. As an immediate priority, suitably tidy boundary walls and gates are needed for the service accesses. But the entrances for customers to the surrounding shops and business premises should be more pronounced. Buildings should be seen to be facing and over-look the car park as they would a town square. This will increase the convenience for shoppers as well as their feeling of being welcome and safe. Project 27.

River Avon bank and river walk

In dramatic contrast to the busy High Street, Bank Street and Bath Road, is the relative calm and tranquillity of the river bank. The river has the potential to offer Melksham even more charming amenity spaces. Some minor tidying up immediately would be welcome and in the longer term a more imaginative use of the amenity. Projects 50 & 52.



The open space at the Avon Place Shopping Centre could be more inviting.



The small open space between Bank Street and Somerfield supermarket is well maintained but lacks any sense of character. Yet it is at an important position between the Bank Street shops and the Somerfield supermarket

Some of Melksham's pleasant spaces

Melksham has many delightful open spaces that are well maintained and used. These include the Church Street gardens, Canon Square and the river bank



Church Street gardens is a quiet space away from the main retail areas. The small water feature and well maintained planting ensure the tranquil experience with views of characterful historic buildings



Canon Square, is a planned space with a ceremonial role. The central monument and the human scale create an intimate space.



Picnic area on the river bank brings the country side into the town

Some spaces that could be improved

More recent spaces, while performing a practical function, are not well considered. They lack aesthetic vision to create pleasant surroundings that compliment the historic town character



Church Street car park is a large characterless open space. Designing the car park as a space with improved legibility for pedestrians would enhance the important central area



Entrance to Avon Place Shopping Centre from Church Street car park



King Street car park is a functional open space but could be made more pleasant with low planting and maintenance

8. The streets and footpaths

In townscape terms, streets and footpaths are spaces.

The High Street, Bank Street and Bath Road space is characterised by the traditional stone buildings being mostly positioned in an uninterrupted sequence, set tightly up against the back of the pavement, shown on page 19. The proximity of buildings to footpaths gives Melksham its character of a traditional market town. This continuity has been broken in a few places by new development being positioned too far back from the road, as at 2 to 20 Bank Street at Lowbourn junction. Project 30a.

New roads have been broken through the line of buildings to form the entrances to both the Sainsbury's and the Somerfield car parks. In each case the completeness of the townscape should be reinstated as much as possible. Projects 48 and 49.

The high pavement at Bank Street is a feature seen in several Wiltshire towns and villages. Old photographs show that it was not edged with a railing, though there seems to have been more steps down to the road along its length. Railings do not seem to be required for safety reasons and the high pavement is an interesting contribution to townscape character and worthy of retention. However the railings that do exist at the northern end of the high pavement are in need of maintenance or replacement in a more suitable design. The paved surface could be replaced in better quality stone without fear of it being damaged by heavy vehicles. Projects 36a, 36b, 37a, 37b.

Melksham has two historic east - west footpaths, which should be respected and carefully refurbished, shown on page 20 and page 21.

Church Street, leading to Canon Square is part of a historic long distance path to the parish church, stretching from some three miles to the east of the town across the fields and emerging at the High Street as Strattons Walk. Entry into Strattons Walk should be welcoming and the paving surfaces should be suitably reinstated. Project 21.

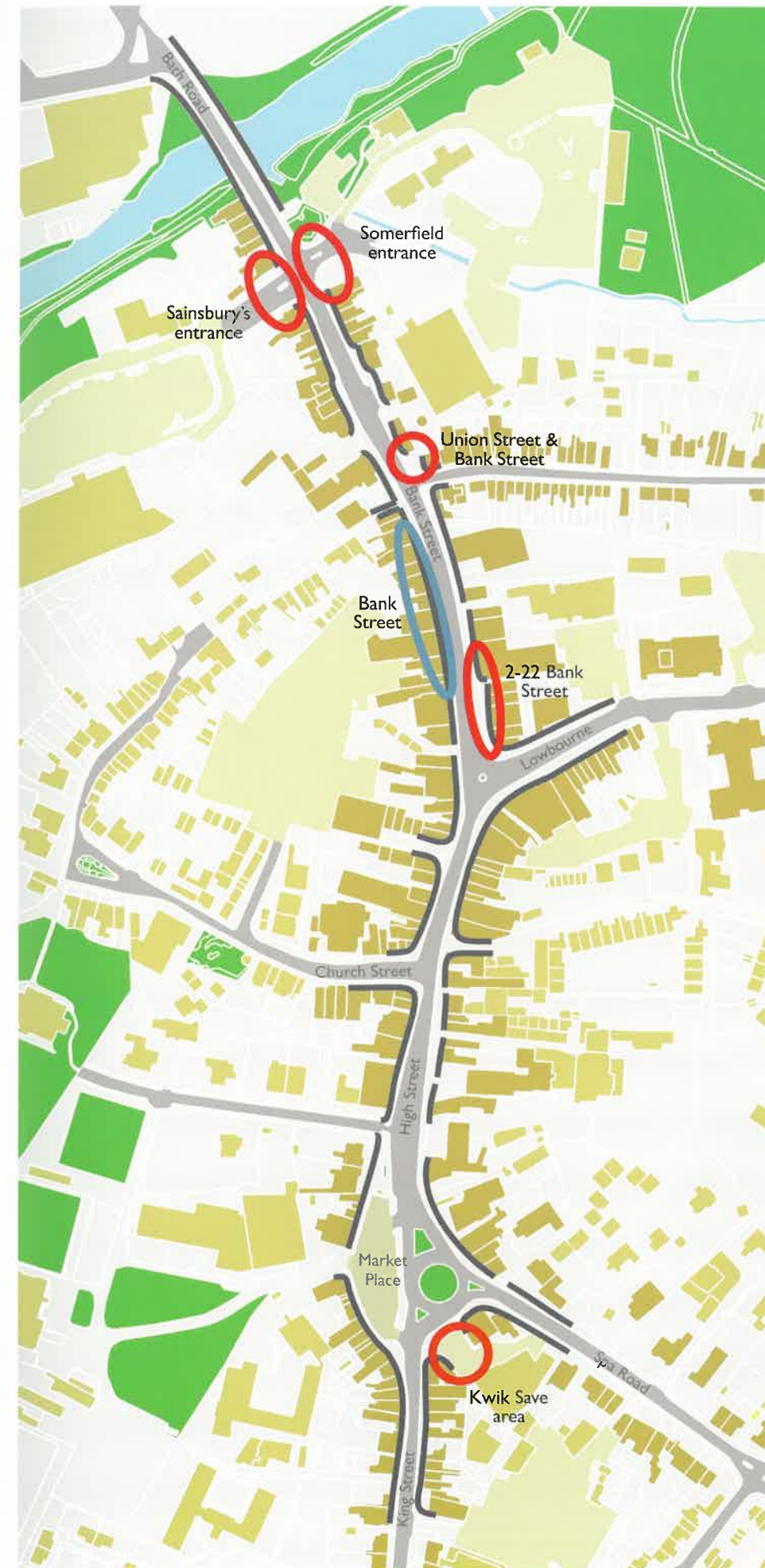
Church Walk, again leading to Canon Square and thence the parish church in fact stretches as a historic footpath across the fields from what is now Forest Road. The historic surfaces of Church Walk should therefore be reinstated. Project 38.



The shops on King Street front directly onto the pavement, enclosing the street space. Each building is slightly different creating a varied charming aspect



High level footpath on Bank Street is a historic feature creating a visual diversity within the street space



Melksham street character & enclosure

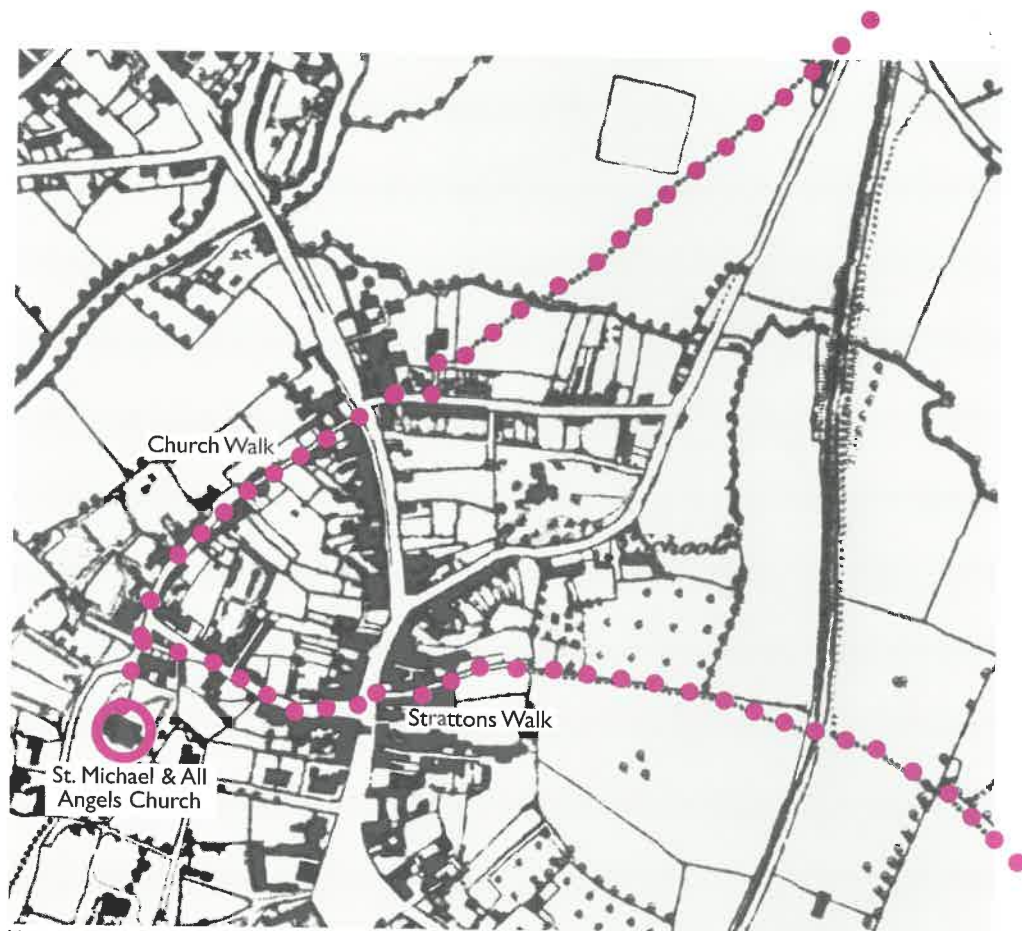
The High Street, Bank Street and Bath Road space is characterised by the traditional stone buildings. They are mostly positioned in an uninterrupted sequence, set tightly up against the back of the pavement. This line of buildings is shown as a dark grey line.

The high pavement at Bank Street is a feature seen in several Wiltshire towns and villages. It is indicated in blue.

New roads and developments have broken this traditional envelope, indicated in red.

Historic footpaths

The plan shows historic footpaths leading to the parish church.



Historic long distance footpaths emerge in the town centre as Church Walk and Strattons Walk



Church Walk leading to the parish church from the north east







Strattons Walk leading to the parish church from the east

Melksham footpaths

The plan shows how footpaths have evolved and new ones developed as new supermarkets have been built. Additional footpaths could be considered, indicated in dark grey.



-  Line of historic footpaths
-  Existing footpaths
-  Existing footpaths in need of improvements. see Ia, Ib, Ic & Id.
-  Proposed footpaths

9. Listed and locally significant buildings

In addition to their contribution to townscape character, many of the town's buildings are, in their own right, on the national list of buildings of historic or architectural interest. National policies give them protection and encourage their good maintenance as well as suitable settings in the local historic context. The location of statutory listed buildings is shown on page 23. Some important listed buildings include:

Melksham Town Hall

The Town Hall was built in 1847, with five distinctive arches. The arch on the left housed a butchers, while the arch on the right housed the town stocks. The stocks can now be seen at the Local History Museum, in the Rachel Fowler Centre. Refurbishment plans would no doubt consider the replacement of the missing arch. Project 6.



Melksham Town Hall

By its design, size and location, the Town Hall dominates the group of buildings in the Market Place. Thus its architectural prominence reinforces its social importance to the town. Designs for the improvement of the Market Place should reinforce that importance. Project 6a, 6b. & 8.

20 Market Place. Kings Arms public house

The Kings Arms, east of the Market Place, was a coaching inn and rendezvous for hunting. Royal Mail coaches left from here daily on their way to Exeter and London.

Rachel Fowler Centre

The building was formerly the Congregational Church, built in 1788. The lobby was enlarged in the 1920's. The original architect, Sir George Oatley, a Melksham man, also designed Bristol University. The building is now a thriving arts and social centre.

17 Bank Street. The Conservative Club

This building has been very well renovated and is an example of how other historic, though not necessarily listed, buildings in the town centre could be upgraded.



Conservative Club benefiting from recent renovation work



Kings Arms public house in the Market Place



Listed & noteworthy buildings

Melksham's listed buildings, shown in red, are complemented by many other non-listed buildings which make an important contribution to the townscape quality. Examples of such noteworthy buildings are shown in orange.

Other buildings which have local significance:

Though some buildings are listed as being of national historic or architectural importance, many more are built of local stone in a traditional style. When seen together, they make a huge contribution to the whole character of the street scene and give the town centre a feeling of completeness. They therefore have local significance. They are also shown on page 23 in orange.

However, a few more recent replacement buildings or additions have been built in styles which do not use the same visual language and with materials that seem of lesser quality than the majority of the town centre.

2-22 Bank Street intersection

As mentioned above. There are opportunities to redevelop this site more appropriately. Project 30a & 30b.

3 Bath Road. The Bear public house

Though the building is not listed, it is within the conservation area. The fine and seemingly original large stone setts at entrance are just outside the conservation area boundary. They should however be retained and reinstated especially if any service trenches are constructed under them. Project 41.

Bath Road. Little Brook Bakery building

Again not a listed building, but a building of character that adds to the townscape quality of Melksham. The recent horizontal fascia across the building breaks up the vertical rhythm and should be removed as shown on page 35. The incomplete signs letters should either be removed or correctly reinstated. Project 40.

Buildings in Bath Road adjacent to Sainsbury's access road

The row of shops immediately north of the Sainsbury's access road is faced in good quality stone with interesting decorations. It serves as an entrance to the town centre area. There are opportunities to improve this corner. More should be made of these modest buildings as they set the scene for the rest of the Bath Road and High Street. Projects 47 & 48.

Buildings facing Bath Road at the bridge over the River Avon

The understated entrance to the town is overshadowed by an anonymous roundabout junction and Sainsbury's sign on the plain flank wall. The existing shops do have a charm with delightful architectural features of columns, stone arch windows. Project 47

Unfortunately there are no buildings at key positions at the river end of the town centre, which would otherwise mark the entrance to the historic town centre. Project 51.

Lowbourn junior school

This substantial and characterful building stands well above the level of the road in a commanding position. It relates well to the street and also serves as reminder of the continuing development of Melksham. Should its use as a school no longer be required, the buildings should be retained and put to new uses. There are many examples across the country of such buildings being converted to residential or commercial use. Project 34.



The Bear public house with original large stone setts leading into the yard



Little Brook Bakery building could be improved by the restoration of the vertical architectural rhythm



Row of shops next to the Sainsbury's entrance has fine examples of stone work



Flowers in Focus has a charming floral display which enlivens the streetscape



Little Labels, a recently refurbished shop brings cheerful colour to the streets



L D Newman & Son, family butchers on Church Street. A traditional shop front contributes to town character

Shop fronts and shop signs

Many of the traditionally designed shop buildings in Melksham have modestly designed shop fronts and shop signs that relate exactly and charmingly to the total buildings. Some shop fronts however have been rebuilt so that their style and size totally outweighs the appearance of the complete building to the extent that they affect the visual completeness of the whole street.

Nationally accepted standards on quality shop fronts and signs should be adopted for the town centre of Melksham and applied and implemented whenever the opportunity occurs.

This need not only apply to historic or traditional buildings. The signs at the Avon Place Shopping Centre, for instance could be improved in the short term Project 24.



Aqueleisure building, shows little consideration for its historic location adjacent to The Limes and the Market Place open space



DAC Stationery in Bank Street

10 Walking Between Shops

The shops at Melksham are not in a single group that can be used by shoppers as a complete and comprehensive town centre shopping area. The local convenience shops, banks, building societies as well as the library, post office, clubs and pubs are at or near the High Street and Bank Street, the historic town centre. They are separate from the retail outlets north of the river and also from the two main supermarkets: Sainsbury's and Somerfield, though both are adjacent to the town centre. It would seem that each might benefit if it was possible to walk more easily to and from the supermarkets and the centre of the town. The diagram on page 21 shows that the distance separating them is not great and there are opportunities to create easier and more direct paths.

Ideally a direct link from Sainsbury's to the Church Street car park (as shown on this page) would be very convenient. However there are some practical difficulties. A more feasible link would be a new footpath stretching from the site adjacent to The Bear public house through to the rear of the Sainsbury's site. Project 42.

Similarly the paths to and from Somerfield could be more inviting. A new structure at the corner of Bath Road and Union Street is needed to mark the entrance to Somerfield. This structure should be well considered as it will be seen from the top of Bank Street, looking north. Project 39.



New footway to link Sainsbury's super market and the central car park in Church Street would help link shopping areas



The pavements at the Lowbourne junction are busy as this is the centre of Melksham's shopping hub



The corner of Bath Road and Union Street could house a purposeful structure and less street clutter. Project 39



Shopping areas

Melksham's primary shopping area is centrally focused between the library and the post office and indicated in orange. The shopping area does extend further to the north and south with more specialised shops and services.

-  Post Office & Library
-  Main Shopping Area
-  Secondary Shopping Area

8. Liveability - Places where people meet

A town centre can be appreciated by what it is like to live in or to visit. Is it a pleasure to walk about, to sit or to meet friends by chance?

Often these attributes are determined by the range of shops and attractions to visit and the quality of the spaces between them. In a small market town such as Melksham, there are usually local shops and services within a small area, easily reached on foot. Traffic should not be too intrusive and there should be places where pedestrians can sit or stand in comfort and of course in safety.

Walking routes

People like to walk directly to their destinations. But alternative routes give added variety and interest.

The plan on page 21 shows the footpaths that are used together with the ordinary pavements, as routes for walking about the town centre. The diagram also shows how with some adjustments, new walking routes could be established to encourage visitors to appreciate the town more fully. Other routes could be established to help people who come to the supermarkets at Melksham, to walk to other smaller shops and services in the town centre. Projects 39 & 42.

The position of the car parks and bus stops in relation to the shops is important as it determines how people walk around the town centre.

The footpath from Bank Street to Church Street car park could be made more welcoming. Project 29.

Entrance to the Sainsbury's development from Bath Road
As well as breaking up the continuity of the street frontage, the oversized access road into the Sainsbury's development with its large sweeps of road make it difficult for pedestrians to cross. The access road could be narrowed, a comfortable pedestrian crossing provided and the buildings of the street frontage reinstated as much as possible. Project 48.

Entrance to Somerfield development from Bath Road
The opportunities are similar to the access to Sainsbury's. A comfortable pedestrian path is required from the north and the vacant corner site should have the appearance of a market town. Project 49.



Market Place leading to the High Street



High Street provides many useful shops and services suitable for all



High Street is a place where chance meetings of friends and neighbours happens naturally



Bench near the bus stop on Bank Street



The Kings Arms offers a pleasant location for a drink and snack in a sunny corner



The small gardens on Church Street provide a sitting area with view of the circular old drying building

Somewhere to sit

A small town centre is usually full of interesting people and activities. Places to sit and watch the world go by are important. Some seats need to be comfortable for longer stays. Others can be quite informal, merely places to perch for a few minutes. Many certainly need to be in sunny spots, though an interesting or active view is often just as important. Project 23, 24, 39 & 43.

Places to meet friends by chance

Unlike a huge metropolis where everyone is a stranger, a small market town is a place where you frequently meet old friends and acquaintances. The plan on page 27 shows the places in Melksham where this already takes place and where, with some improvements it would happen more frequently in the future. This is especially true in the area between many of the convenience shops, the banks, library and post office, such as Chaloner Walk, Avon Place Shopping Centre and the High Street between Church Street and Lowbourne. Projects 23, 24, 25 & 26.

Melksham's superb skateboarding facilities are well used by locals youths to sharpen their skills. Many travel quite a distance to take advantage of the range of ramps and obstacles.



The skateboarding facilities are a well used amenity space by the youth of Melksham

12. Strategy for improvements

The objective of this study is to help improve economic viability, that is particularly for the local shops, to improve the town's vitality and to exploit to the full, the town's unique townscape qualities.

Though the suggested projects are co-ordinated, they can be implemented independently. They are organised into three categories depending upon timescales: immediate, medium and longer terms.

Immediate impact can be achieved through the small scale improvements or improved maintenance, at relatively low cost. Many could be achieved within a single year. The theme is that, though each project is seemingly not important in itself, when seen together they begin to make a considerable contribution to the appearance of the town centre.

Medium term improvements will have a more significant affect on the town but will require more investment and time to organise. To be realistic they could be expected to be completed within 2-4 years, depending upon agreements, permissions and funding.

The longer term projects relate to specific sites and are indications of where development would be welcome. Suggestions are given to show examples of how prominent sites could be redeveloped to improve the street scene and appearance of the town centre and increase its economic viability and vitality.

Melksham, like many small country towns is administered by a County, District and Town Council. Their responsibility in relation to the streetscape is complex. For instance, the Town Council provides flower boxes and bus shelters, the District Council provides cleaning services, while the County Council maintains the highway, pavements and traffic arrangements.

Cooperation by all three authorities is needed to improve the streetscape.



Phill Hart of West Wiltshire District Council stands by his litter bin.

John Crook, Town Clerk of Melksham Town Council is justly proud of his flower tubs.

George Kemp, on the right, Divisional Highway Manager of Wiltshire County Council and his colleague Andy Cadwallader, Area Highway Engineer, stand behind their traffic bollard.

The projects

Immediate small scale improvements



Medium term improvements



Long term developments



13. The projects.

Immediate small scale improvements

Market Place

The Market Place is expected to be renovated under the current proposals in the County Council's Integrated Transport Improvements. However, should for any reason these projects not take place, or be delayed, there are a number of small scale immediate improvements that could be put in hand.

2 Market Place

Relocate cycle racks, tidy up signs and planters. Project 3.

5 Market Place

Relocate cycle racks.

Up-date planters.

Replace parking restriction signs.

Redesign shop front to be in keeping with area.

Projects 7a, 7b, 8, 9a & 9b.

27 & 31 Market Place

Increase seating in a traditional local style. The Market Place is a natural place for people to find out about future events in the town. Notice boards and maps are helpful to guide visitors. Maintain bus shelters. Projects 10. Replace bollards and cycle racks etc. Project 11.

High Street

The area near the corner of Church Street is likely to be upgraded as part of the County Council's Integrated Transport plan. However, should that project for any reason not go ahead some immediate small scale improvements would be desirable: Tidy up the area at the pedestrian crossing paying attention to the barriers, bins, and finger posts. Project 22.

Avon Place Shopping Centre

In the short term the Avon Place Shopping Centre sign should be replaced/painted. Any 'A' frame pavement signs should be of the same style and size. The forecourt fronting Bank Street should be tidied and the cycle racks be relocated. Projects 24 & 25.

Bath Road corner with Union Street

The corner of Bank Street and Union Street is an open space leading to Somerfield supermarket. The replacement of the paving and signage in this area would improve it and could be carried out immediately. Project 44.



Market Place street furniture
Projects 7a, 7b, 8 & 9



High Street view from Church Street
Project 22



Avon Place Shopping Centre sign could be refurbished.
Projects 24 & 25



King Street car park has unnecessary duplication of signs.
Project 13



Footpath exit to King Street car park can be enhanced with a subtle design to highlight routes to shops and amenities.
Project 14



Tidy up King Street car park at the Coburg Square entrance.
Project 15b

Appearance and maintenance of car parks

Car parks may be considered as the entrance to a town. It is here where drivers complete their journey, leave their cars and look at the town from the point of view of a pedestrian. Car parks that appear welcoming are an asset to a town. Rather than being perceived as semi-neglected back land areas, they could become attractive destinations in their own right.

Pedestrian legibility can be enhanced with subtle design to highlight routes to shops and amenities.

King Street car park, action to include:

Resurface with public parking area clearly defined.

Resurface pedestrian accesses.

Widen access to Coburg Square and Market Place.

Consider relocating the ticket machine to a central location.

Improve lighting at entrances and exits, to Coburg Square, King Street and Market Place.

Rationalise, replace and align signs.

Consider a landscape scheme of trees. Projects 13 & 15b.

Church Street car park

This car park is used as the service access for several shops.

It therefore has a depressing feel and several prominent open yards are used for trade waste. In addition the footpath to the shops is not too inviting. Though many of these issues need to be tackled as part of mid or longer term projects, much can be done immediately. Some trees could be planted. The open service yards could be enclosed with tidy boundary walls. The derelict signs and gates should be removed or, if essential, replaced in a more tidy and pleasing form. Project 25.

Actions for a small scale tidying up could include:

Replacement of existing railings at the high pavement. At modest cost the railings could be replaced by a well designed planter.

Maintenance, that is repair and painting of benches.

Maintenance, that is repair and painting of bus shelters.

Maintenance of the areas at base of trees.

Provision of new planters for summer flowers, etc.

Removal of redundant signs.

Removal or painting of metal work adjoining street frontage

Projects 17a, 17b, 22, 24, 25, 43, 44, 45, 46 and 52.

11. The projects.

Medium term improvements

Market Place

The market place is recognised as the centre of the town. It was traditionally the social hub with market and seasonal fairs. Comprehensive improvements are expected as part of the County Council's Integrated Transport Improvements. Projects 6a & 6b.

Church Street car park and Chaloner Walk

Following on from the immediate improvements (above), the car park should be regarded as a major destination, almost as a town square. The pedestrian routes from the car park to Church Street or the shops should be upgraded. All buildings that face the car park should over time present a 'front' facade rather than a 'rear' aspect. It may be possible in the medium term for some shops to have direct access from the car park. Project 27.

Footpath from Bank Street to Church Street car park

The entrance to the footpath from Bank Street appears to be too narrow. It could be widened and made more welcoming. Project 29b.

Bank Street, high pavement

The high pavement is an interesting feature of Melksham. It could be resurfaced in traditional local materials. Project 36b

Church Walk

There is an opportunity to make this walk more inviting to visitors. Subtle signs indicating a circular walk would be useful. Project 38.

Bath Road corner with Union Street

The entrance to Somerfield is a cluttered and semi redundant open area. Opportunity for a well designed shelter structure with seating. Project 39.

Shop fronts and shop signs

Shop fronts and shop signs fall into this mid term group of improvements. There is a growing appreciation of traditional finishes to existing shops. Occasionally modern innovative designs are also appropriate. There have been some very successful renovations to shop fronts and signs in Melksham. This list indicates the opportunities for further reinstatement which will probably have to be taken over a period of time. The important point is that when renovations do take place, they are carried out in such a way that they respect the street scene characteristics of the town centre.

Some examples of the opportunities are:

2 Market Place, Aqualeisure. Project 1a.

5 Market Place, Blockbuster Video. Project 12.

14 High Street, Card Market Superstore. Project 16



Church Street car park has many shops backing on to it. They have the potential to improve this aspect. Project 27



Path leading from Church Street car park to Bank Street



Blockbuster Video in the Market Place. Project 12



The Card Market Superstore on the High Street. Project 16

Little Brook Bakery

Though not listed, the building is a traditional stone structure which could add dignity to the street scene. The main opportunity is to remove the modern horizontal fascia, in order that the vertical quality of the building is reinstated. Project 40.

Bringing back green landscape to the town centre

At present the noticeable green areas of the town centre are the open space at the River Avon, the gardens that can be seen from the main roads and the roundabout at the Market Place. There are opportunities to extend these green areas. The four car parks at King Street, Church Street, Sainsbury's and Somerfield could all contribute to the further greening of Melksham. Projects 14 & 27.

River area on west, near Somerfield

There is an opportunity for new tree planting and special use. Somerfield could be invited to sponsor the maintenance of area. Project 52.



Little Brook Bakery as it is



A visualisation of Little Brook Bakery with traditional vertical structure reinstated. Project 40

15. The projects

Long term developments

Sites suitable for special planning consideration to encourage development that assists the economic viability of the wider area:

The south side of Market Place, The Limes, 2 Market Place and the former Kwik Save site

In the longer term the former Kwik Save site on the Market Place together with its immediate car park and the adjoining The Limes and 2 Market Place, occupied by Aqualeisure, need to be considered together. There are opportunities to improve the appearance of the Market Place frontage, so that it is more suitable for its important location as part of the vista from the High Street and as part of the historic Market Place.

The Limes, a listed building, should have a more suitable setting and there are opportunities to remove the temporary looking front extension to 2 Market Place and recreate the garden in front of what was a stone house.

Parking in the forecourt could be re-located to the car park at the rear. Redundant sign posts and signs should be removed. Trees with light foliage and low maintenance planting would increase the appeal.

A new development with retail at ground floor and residential above should be designed to be a fitting contribution to the conservation area at this point.

In addition there needs to be a more pleasant public pathway which feels safe, from the King Street car park to the front of the buildings to replace the current dingy and narrow path.

A sketch of a suggested option is shown on the opposite page. Projects 1a, 1b & 2.

Melksham House, Assembly Hall, Blue Pool

With the possible re-location of the swimming pool to a new location at the edge of the town centre, this area could provide a new development site in a historic and central location. Development for residential use, guided by an urban design strategy, could ensure its historic character is maintained.



The Limes, on the south side of Market Place



Kwik Save footpath from King Street car park



Melksham House



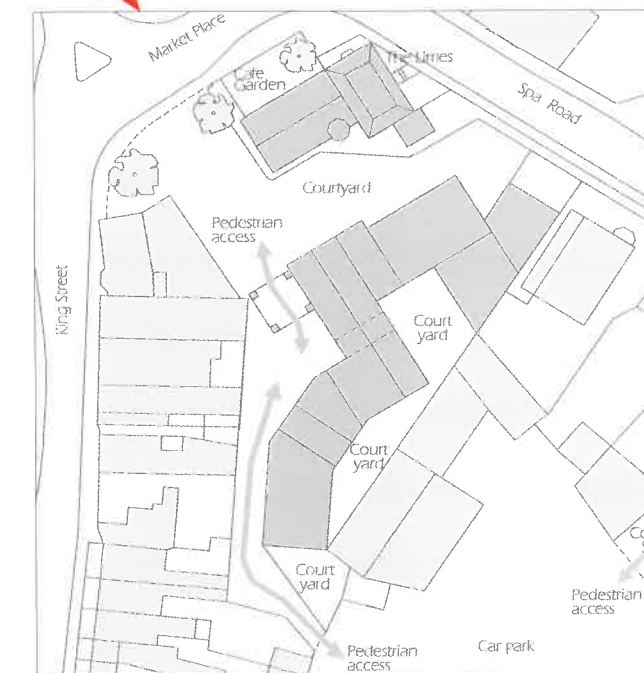
The Limes, 2 Market Place & the former Kwik Save site

The south side of Market Place could be improved through a combination of refurbishment and redevelopment. Projects 1a, 1b & 2.



Visualisation of possible future development.

View



The plan shows a suggested mix of residential and retail development with refurbishment of historic buildings. Dark grey areas are renovated buildings and new additions.

Avon Place Shopping Centre

Short term improvements have been described above. In the longer term there are opportunities to either refurbish and adjust the shopping centre or to redevelop it. In both cases the object would be to allow shoppers to walk more comfortably from the car park to the shops and through to the High Street, an important pedestrian route in the town centre.

The appearance towards and the access from the car park should be very welcoming. Two alternative sketch options are shown on the opposite page.

Projects 23 & 26.

Church Street car park

This area has been considered in the immediate as well as the medium term projects. In the long term all the buildings that surround the car park, through alteration or redevelopment should face towards the car park, thus emphasising its status and use as an important public space in the town centre.

Existing shops with rear access or boundaries abutting the car park could have entrances also facing the car park. Pedestrian rights of way should be made clear in the car park. Perretts Court should be brought into this design process.

At the rear of the Boots store, the boundary wall should be maintained and be of a similar character to the historic town centre. Project 27.

Land at the rear of 20 High Street, off Strattons Walk

The site includes Poulson's Yard. If redevelopment takes place, vehicular access should ideally be from Lowbourn rather than Strattons Walk. Strattons Walk itself should be made very attractive with priority for pedestrians.

Project 28.



The car park entrance to the Avon Place Shopping Centre is dominated by the Iceland sign and flank wall. It could be more welcoming. Project 24



Ad hoc parking and a group of recycling bins make an unfortunate entrance to the Church Street car park. Project 27



Poulson's Yard is one of many interesting yards behind the High Street. Project 28



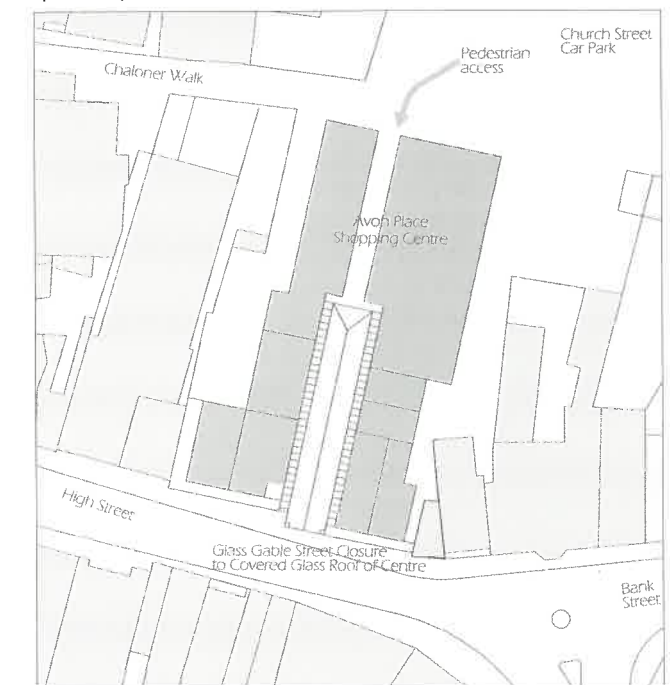
Avon Place Shopping Centre



Interim option for an improved central space. Project 23



Visualisation of interim development option for an improved central space. Project 23



New construction option with better access from car park. Project 26

Avon Place Shopping Centre

Improvement to the Avon Place Shopping Centre could transform the space for shoppers. They would be protected from the weather by a covered area.

2 – 22 Bank Street and 2 Lowbourne

There are several reasons to redevelop this site, its poor contribution to the image of Melksham, its position in important vistas and its potential for providing better accommodation for town centre retail and residential use.

This is a prominent corner site but lacking in any significant building to give character. The 1960's shops overpower the relatively low key yet more authentic row of shops opposite. This site would benefit from a long term development of a more impressive 3 to 4 storey building.

In addition the junction and road layout is wide, traffic speeds at the roundabout are relatively fast and so pedestrians feel threatened and are probably dissuaded from crossing both Bank Street and Lowbourne at this point. This in turn means that many people seem to prefer to use the west side pavement rather than the row of shops on the east, which probably affects the attractiveness of the shops. Help for pedestrians could be put in place in the longer term by allowing greater priority to pedestrians crossing both roads at this junction. A sketch of a suggested design is shown on the opposite page. Project 30a.



2-22 Bank Street is a prominent corner site but lacking in any significant building to give character. Project 30a



2-22 Bank Street & 2 Lowbourne

The Lowbourne, Bank Street junction lacks distinction.



A redevelopment of the retail uses with residential accommodation above could provide a new landmark for Melksham.

Lowbourne Junior School

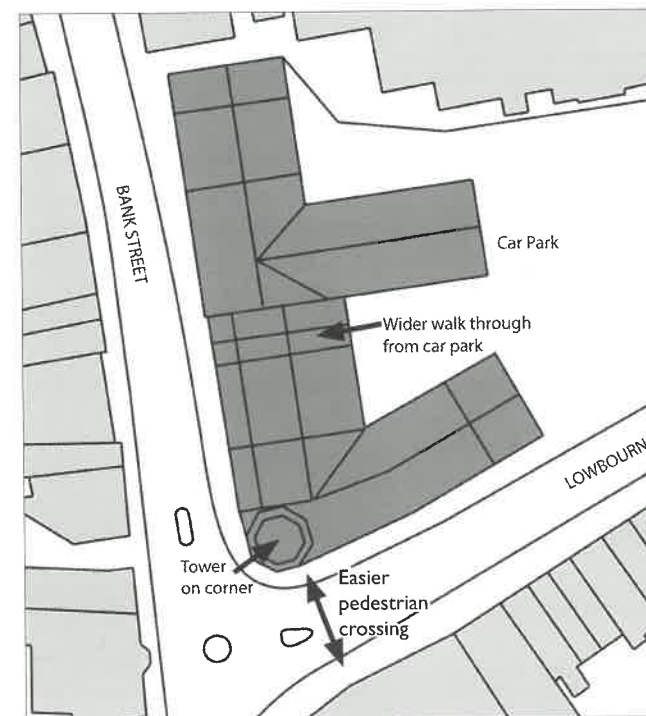
Built in 1900, Lowbourne school may be refurbished after a proposed school merger. The Victorian school building still exists with some lesser out buildings. Whatever is finally agreed for the site the buildings facing the street should be retained. Project 34.

Bath Road. Land to rear of the Bear public house

It appears that the site may be suitable to allow for a future more direct pedestrian link to the Sainsbury's car park from the shops in Bath Road. This would encourage collateral shopping, whereby shoppers at an edge of town centre superstore are able to also visit the adjacent local shops. Project 42.



Lowbourne Junior School is a characterful building which is worth preserving. Project 34



The plan of the new building option shows how it could be designed with the streetscape of Melksham in mind. For instance the ground floor could extend forward towards the street. A new tower at the corner would close the vista from the High Street. The width of the road could be reduced and a larger central refuge would aid pedestrians crossing to the shops on the east side. Project 30a.

Bath Road, approach to Sainsbury's supermarket
Shops on both sides of the approach road to Sainsbury's from Bath Road could be regenerated to give the junction more appeal.

On the south side, the Chop Suey House could be extended to follow the kerb round, reducing the appearance of a large plain flanking wall. On the north side, the corner shop (next to City Cars) needs to be renovated and used as a viable concern. First floor stone features on both of these rows of shops show that they are of good architectural quality and suitable to be kept as part of Melksham's street character. In the short term they need to be tidied but a longer term solution would follow. Alternatively a kiosk could be added to help turn the corner, as shown on page 43. Project 47 & 48.

Bath Road. Approach to Somerfield supermarket
On the south east bank of the river there is a unimposing amenity space suitable for refurbishment. An option for this area is a pavilion benefiting from a prominent location in the main vista from the bridge, seen when approaching the town centre.

The entrance to the Somerfield car park should have more character. This could be achieved with soft planting to keep the countryside feel to the area. Somerfield supermarket has a second pedestrian access at Union Street and Bath Road. This is a site which could also be suitable for a re-design and action in the short to mid term. Project 49.

Land between the river and the Sainsbury's car park may be a site for suitable residential / commercial development. The planning strategy could emphasise the need for good quality architecture as part of the Melksham river gateway.

Avon Bridge and the 'Gateway to Melksham'
The area running south from the bridge over the River Avon serves as the gateway to Melksham's old town. The distinctive character of the old town needs to be reinstated here in order to balance that of the more significant Market Place.

The area has the advantage of the river with amenity space and convenience shopping. Sympathetic renovation of the bridge lamps would improve the historic 1814 bridge. Project 53.

Travelling into Melksham over the bridge, the shop signs of Sainsbury's and Pets Town appear too dominant. The bridge has retained its simple structure as it was built in 1814 and would benefit from simple understated surroundings. A more sympathetic treatment of the shop signs would allow the bridge to keep its visual prominence and stature. An upgrade of this area could be linked to future plans to make the River Avon navigable. Pleasure boats would need moorings and visitors a safe access to the town. Projects 55.



Chop Suey, 15 Bath Road. The building has been sliced off to form the supermarket entrance



Entrance to Somerfield supermarket car park lacks identity relating to the character of Melksham. Yet it is a prominent view when seen by people approaching the town centre



The dominant signs of Pets Town and Sainsbury's could be more sympathetic to their surroundings

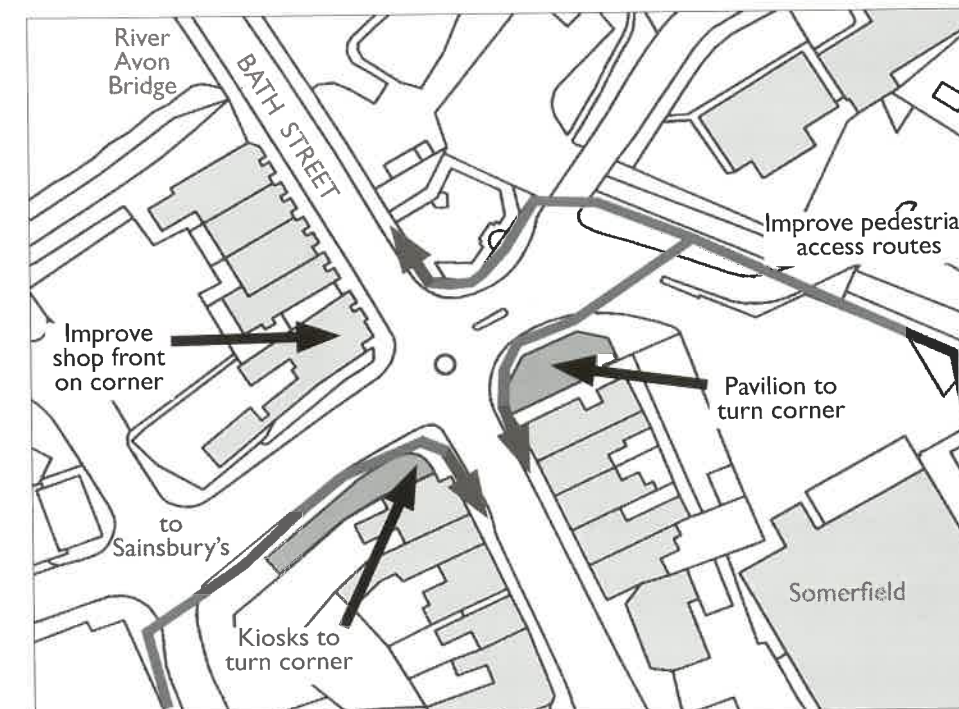


Entrance to Sainsbury's and Somerfield.

The traditional row of buildings, including some fine stone decoration has been broken through to form the supermarket entrance. Much of the character has been lost.



The visualisation shows how the entrance road to the supermarket could look like a normal street corner.



New in-fill development and more inviting, pedestrian friendly pavements and footpaths are suggested. Projects 48 & 49.

16. Responsibilities

Many people, looking at a shopping street in the centre of a small English town would probably think that all they see: the shops and the street, are looked after and maintained by either the shop owner, with respect to the shop building, or the council, with respect to the street.

In fact the shop fronts and shop signs may be looked after by the shop owner but the rest of the building could be in a separate ownership.

The maintenance of the street itself is far more complex. The County Council as highway authority, organises traffic, including all traffic lights, traffic signs and street parking signs, maintains the roads and pavements, including the railings at the Bank Street raised pavement, cycle racks and bollards, and provides the majority of street lighting.

The District Council manages the off-street car parks, deals with waste collection, litter bins and some street trees, as well as larger areas of planting. The District Council also has the very important function of planning authority and thereby controls all private development.

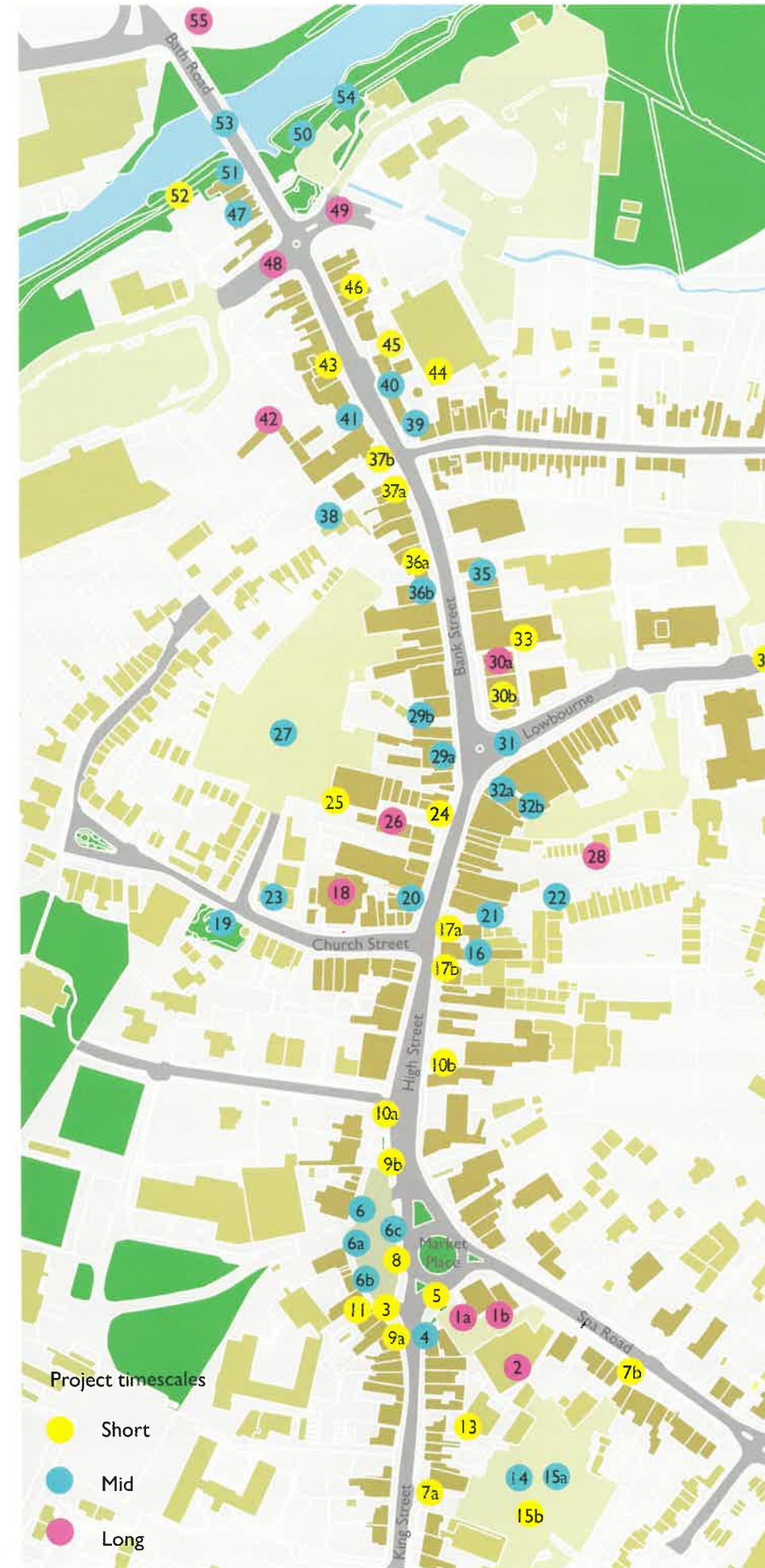
The Town Council is responsible for the garden in Church Street, flower tubs along the pavements, as well as some bus shelters and pedestrian direction or 'finger' posts.

Although the total appearance of the street therefore relies upon the co-operation of all three authorities, there is much that can be done on a very small scale, often by private owners. For instance carrying out minor maintenance and tidying up generally all that can be seen by the public, helps to convey a feeling that someone cares.

17. Schedules of projects

The analysis notes on the previous pages conclude with the reference numbers of suggested projects. In the following schedules, we have indicated which of the suggested projects can be carried out immediately as well as in the mid and longer terms. The schedules also indicate the local authority that is likely to be involved as service provider:

WCC	Wiltshire County Council.
WWDC	West Wiltshire District Council
Planning	West Wiltshire District Council's involvement as planning authority
MTC	Melksham Town Council
Owners	Individual property owners



Location of projects

The three categories relate to the timing of the likely implementation: immediate, mid and long term.

Ref. No.	What / Project	Why	Who, How, Agency	Time scale
KWIK SAVE AREA				
1a	Re-locate Aqualeisure	Renovate the vistas of the Market Place	Planning, Owners	Long
1b	Reinstate The Limes to residential appearance and replace black railings	Renovate the vistas of the Market Place	Planning, Owners	Long
2	Develop Kwik Save site to have smaller scale roof and windows, using local materials. Integrate more spacious path through to car park at rear	Introduce key vista for Market Place and views from Bath Road and High Street	Planning, Owners	Long
3	Refurbish planters etc	Improve Market Place area	WCC, MTC	Short
4	Redesign electronics shop front – reduce products stored on pavement	Improve Market Place area	Planning, Owners	Mid
5	Widen pavement	Improve pedestrian footpath	WCC, Highways	Mid
MARKET PLACE				
6	Town Hall - Reinstate lost arch	Reinstate historic character of building and vista	Planning, Owners	Mid
6a	Relocate Market Place car parking to King Street car park	Improve Market Place area	WWDC, WCC	Long
6b	Redesign planters in Market Place	To be suitable for new weekly / farmers market	WCC	Long
6c	Resurface Market Place area	Improve Market Place area	WCC, MTC	Mid
7a	Improve signage from road to King Street car park	Increase clarity of parking and relocate from Market Place	WWDC, WCC	Short
7b	Improve pedestrian signs to Market Place and Spa Road	Improve Market Place area	WCC, MTC	Short
8	Relocate taxi rank	Improve Market Place area	WCC	Short
9a & b	Maintain the cycle racks, parking sign and flower baskets / planters	Improve Market Place area	WCC, MTC	Short
10	Refurbish bus shelters	Improve Market Place area	MTC	Short
11	Replace bollards and cycle racks in traditional design	Improve Market Place area	WCC	Short
12	Redesign Blockbuster shop front	Reinstate historic character of building	Planning, Owners	Mid
KING STREET CAR PARK				
13	Improve car park entrance via King Street, integrate 'P' sign etc	Improve experience at the entrance to the town	WWDC	Short
14	Landscape area, resurface, improve clarity of public and private parking areas	Improve experience at the entrance to the town	WWDC	Mid
15a	Tidy barriers and railings - to Coburg Square	Improve experience at the entrance to the town	Planning, Owners	Mid
15b	Relocate pay meter to centre of car park lighting and bins, etc	Improve experience at the entrance to the town	WWDC	Short
CHURCH STREET 'T' JUNCTION WITH HIGH STREET				
16	Redesign Card Market Superstore shop front	Reinstate historic character of building	Planning, Owners	Mid
17a	Tidy traffic signal posts outside Card Market Superstore Mount on building	Tidy streetscape and reduce clutter	WCC	Short
17b	Tidy private fencing, remove barbed wire	Tidy streetscape and reduce clutter	Planning, Owners	Short
18	Possible redevelopment site: to be in-keeping with historic town	Keeping historic character	Planning, Owners	Long
19	Improve public area near historic round building	Keeping historic character	MTC	Mid
20	Widen paving outside grocer shop	Improve liveability	WCC	Mid
21	Strattons Walk. Tidy entrance area	Improve liveability	Planning, Owners	Mid
22	Strattons Walk. Replace tired signs and bins	Improve liveability	Planning, Owners	Short

Examples of areas for improvement



The Kwik Save and The Limes site is an area for improvement. By working closely together planners and owners could achieve a long term asset. Projects 1 to 5



Simply by reducing the parking in the Market Place, the historic buildings would become more prominent. Projects 6 to 12



Strattons Walk would be more pleasant for pedestrians if metal fencing was replaced with a well designed wall. Projects 21 & 22

Some delightful assets in Melksham town centre



Gate post in the Market Place and a view to the historic Kings Arms PH



Traditional style shop signage compliments the historic building of Hatto Barbershops in the Market Place



1 King Street's has been sympathetically refurbished

Ref. No.	What / Project	Why	Who, How, Agency	Time scale
AVON PLACE SHOPPING CENTRE				
23	Chaloners Walk. Improve signage and clarity of pathway	Improve liveability	WCC, Owners	Mid
24	Interim improvements to Avon Place Shopping Centre. New signage and tidier seating	Streetscape quality	Planning, Owners	Short
25	Interim improvements to car park entrance to Avon Place Shopping Centre. Reduce refuse clutter	Streetscape quality	Planning, Owners	Short
26	Rebuild of Avon Place Shopping Centre	Improve liveability & streetscape quality	Planning, Owners	Long
CHURCH STREET CAR PARK AREA				
27	Church Street car park landscaping and redesign, bringing the shop fronts to face the car park	Liveability - car parks should be a welcoming entrance to the town	Planning, Owners	Mid
HIGH STREET & BANK STREET				
28	Poulsom's Yard	In character redevelopment of Melksham	Planning, Owners	Long
29a	53-55 High Street & 1-3 Bank Street. Shop fronts in this area are main vista from Lowbourne. They should be well maintained and be in-keeping with the historic town centre character	Streetscape quality. Close vista from Lowbourne	Planning, Owners	Mid
29b	Footpath from Bank Street to Church Street car park. Improve access and signage for pedestrians	Improve liveability	WCC, WWDC, Owners	Mid
30a	Lowbourne & Bank Street junction redevelopment. Planning specification needed for key site within the townscape. To include footpath redesign after the construction of the proposed by-pass	Long term regeneration of Melksham	WCC, Planning, Owners	Long
30b	Interim maintenance would benefit area, including painting woodwork and fascias	Streetscape quality	Owners	Short
31	Improve pedestrian access across junction. Redesign pedestrian refuge and increase pedestrian priority	Improve liveability	WCC	Mid
32a	HSBC is the former Midland Bank building. It is a good quality building in a key junction and vista area	Streetscape quality	Planning, Owners	Mid
32b	Consider footpath, signage lighting etc. to car park at rear of Natwest Bank	Improve liveability	Planning, Owners	Mid
33	Improve pedestrian access to car park at rear	Improve liveability	Planning, Owners	Mid
34	Lowbourne Junior School. Retain existing character	Maintain existing character of town centre	Planning	Long
35	Entrance footpath to Labour Club buildings. Signage requires updating with attention to design and quality. Footpath railings could be better and surface re-placed	Streetscape quality	Planning, Owners	Mid
36a	Existing railings from higher level footpath to road level. Paint and tidy up	Streetscape quality	WCC	Short
36b	High pavement. Existing railings from higher level footpath to road level - replace with traditional black ironwork. Reinstate pavement in traditional materials	Reinstate historic character of town centre	WCC	Mid
37a	Existing railings from higher level footpath to road level near Church Walk. Paint and tidy up	Streetscape quality	WCC	Short
37b	Railings from higher level footpath to road level near Church Walk. Replace with black ironwork style as opposite style. Improve line of footpath	Reinstate historic character of town centre	WCC	Mid

Examples of areas for improvement



Avon Place Shopping Centre would benefit from short term modernising and consideration for long term redevelopment. Projects 24 to 26



The entrance to the Labour Club is functional but lacks design and materials that are fitting for a central location on Bank Street. Project 35



Areas of raised pavement are poorly maintained with railings and surfaces disrupted and not consistent. Project 36a to 37b

Some delightful assets in Melksham town centre



The view to Canon Square from Saint Michael and All Angels church



Characteristic octagonal building off Lowbourne



Historic bridge over River Avon

Ref. No.	What / Project	Why	Who, How, Agency	Time scale
CHURCH WALK & UNION STREET				
38	Improve entrance to Church Walk. Refurbish the original cobbles, improve lighting, maintain notice boards and signage	Streetscape quality	WCC	Mid
39	Corner site at Union Street and Bank Streets. Key vista site could become greater asset by redesign and refurbishment. Open corner site is currently attracting street clutter. This could be designed out	Streetscape quality	Planning, Owner	Mid
40	Little Brook Bakery is a key vista building with improvement potential. Southern flank wall is visible from Lowbourne junction. Character of the front of the building is in need of repair and maintenance. Shop design could be more in-keeping with character of original building and promote business inside	Maintain existing character buildings	Planning, Owner	Mid
41	The Bear PH has some original cobbles at the entrance to the car park. As a remaining historic feature they should be treasured and re-furbished. Maybe additional cobble area to increase impact	Streetscape quality	WCC	Mid
42	Land to the rear of the Bear PH has outline planning permission. Any future planning application should be encouraged to include a pathway to join the main Bath Road to Sainsbury's to increase pedestrian access	Improve liveability	Planning, Owner	Long
43	Bus stop with seating and bin needs to be maintained. Seating up-dated, planting trimmed	Improve liveability	WCC, WWDC	Short
ENTRANCE TO SUPER MARKET SHOPS				
44	Open space near Somerfield footpath from Bath Road is in need of general maintenance	Streetscape quality	WWDC	Short
45	Potential character building in local stone & style. To be noted as suitable to maintain character and quality. Although not within the conservation area boundary	Maintain existing character buildings	Planning, Owners	Short
46	Terrace of shops with good Victorian detailing. To be noted as suitable to maintain local quality and character	Maintain existing character buildings	Planning, Owners	Short
47	The broken group of character shops are worthy of consideration as a group. Those in a better state of repair show the delightful potential	Keeping historic character	Planning, Owners	Mid
48	Access to Sainsbury's with development potential and consideration to 47. See detailed plans and development suggestions	Improve liveability	Planning, Sainsbury's etc.	Long
49	Access to Somerfield with development potential and consideration to 51. See detailed plans and development suggestions	Improve liveability	Planning, Somerfield etc.	Long
RIVER AREA				
50	Open space and garden area on River Avon banks. An inviting and colourful design would help this area to be used by locals and to attract visitors	Improve liveability	WWDC	Mid
51	The main approach to Melksham town centre is the significant flank wall of Pets Town. Currently, large and plain with Sainsbury's advertising. This is a opportunity for promoting the historic character of Melksham with more sympathetic signage	Streetscape quality	WWDC	Mid
52	River walk. Improve signage	Improve liveability	WWDC	Mid
53	Avon Bridge. Understated design but good quality. Lighting needs maintaining and bridge could be cleaned	Improve liveability	WWDC	Mid
54	River may become more significant if plans to link canal are achieved. Plans to maximise this asset for the town should be considered, including sites for moorings, etc	Continuing growth potential of town	WWDC	Mid
55	Vista from town centre over the Avon bridge to the Industrial buildings should be considered. Likelihood for these businesses to need to change in the near future will create opportunity for the view to be considered - trees, vista building within a planning brief	Keeping historic character	WWDC	Long

18. Next steps

This document starts the process of consensus building.

The study is intended to emphasise the existing physical quality of the centre of Melksham. It points out that by further co-operation and the co-ordination of a series of separate projects, the town centre could be even more pleasant and welcoming.

The next step is to invite responses to the ideas and seek views in order to reach a consensus on the way forward, so that they may be conveyed to the agencies and organisations which are able to implement them.

19. Consultation

Please do let us know your views. Send them to Melksham 1st by post or by email.



Melksham 1st
1st floor
Crown Chambers
7 Market Place
Melksham
Wiltshire SN12 6ES

Tel: 01225 899 265
email: carolynbeale@melksham1st.org.uk
web: www.melksham1st.org.uk



Colin Davis Associates

Colin Davis Associates
23 Southwood Gardens
Esher
Surrey KT10 0DF

Tel: 020 8398 7837
email: colinjodavis@aol.com
web: www.streetdesign.info

Acknowledgements

Our thanks to the South West of England Regional Development Agency for funding the preparation of the study; to West Wiltshire District Council for their advice and for funding the printing; to the staff of Wiltshire County Council, Melksham Town Council and the members of Melksham Chamber of Commerce, for their kind co-operation, information and advice in the preparation of the study. The copyright of Ordnance Survey is acknowledged under licence LA08607X. Notes on the history of Melksham were taken from Around Melksham in Old Photographs, 1999, by the Melksham & District Historical Association, edited by Ken Merret.

Published November 2006