



Salisbury Civic Society
www.salisburycivicsociety.org.uk

STREETSCAPE – STREETS FOR ALL

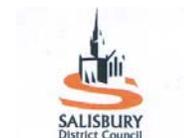
A SURVEY BY THE SOCIETY OF THE CENTRE OF THE CITY
OF SALISBURY

"Salisbury does not really belong to us. It has been given to us to look after for a few years, and we must make of it what we can until it is time to hand it on again. We are only the latest in a long line of occupants and we, like each of them, will leave our mark on the place, for better or for worse."

(John Chandler – "Endless Street")

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STREETSCAPE – STREETS FOR ALL

Salisbury is a beautiful Cathedral City, full of history and blessed with superb architecture. However, like so many towns and cities, the streetscape has become littered with a proliferation of traffic/parking signs, bins, bollards, guard rails, anonymous "black boxes" and road markings that have over time markedly reduced its character.

To quote English Heritage: ***“Retaining historic features keeps the streets’ individuality and helps create a sense of place. It can contribute to regeneration. Well designed, well ordered and well maintained streets are an expression of a confident and caring community. Chaotic and cluttered streets are a symptom of a community in decline with low self-esteem. Investing in quality solutions reduces maintenance costs and makes cleaning easier.”***

In November 2004 Salisbury Civic Society held an open meeting on this subject, well attended by Councillors, which was addressed by Ben Hamilton-Baillie who is a respected authority. At the end of a stimulating discussion the Society announced its intention to carry out a Streetscape survey of Salisbury in 2005.

This document is our report and is intended to increase public awareness and to promote public debate as well as to assist Wiltshire County Council, Salisbury District Council, all Public Utilities Providers and others in their endeavours to restore Salisbury to a more elegant and citizen friendly environment. There is already much that is excellent and, on a sunny spring morning, the city centre can be a joy. It is well worth improving even further. Although there is much that should be done quickly we hope that our survey will become part of the Vision for Salisbury project.

Our underlying principle was “less is more” and the team surveyed over 60 streets within the Ring Road to see what enhancements could be made. Enhancements would include the removal or rationalisation of seemingly unnecessary and intrusive items, such as some traffic/parking signs, bins, bollards, guard rails and anonymous black boxes, much of which seems to have grown like topsy without any coherent overall plan. Although we do not deal with paving explicitly there are many examples where flagstones and other distinctive paving materials have been removed and have simply been replaced with black top. This is contrary to the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, supplemented in July 2002 by a Code of Practice. Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to ensure that reinstatement is carried out using the same, or the closest possible match to, the original materials.

Bearing in mind that Salisbury City Centre is a 20 mph zone it might be helpful to consider some Street Facts published by English Heritage:

<p>Traffic lights are essential for road safety and reducing congestion at busy junctions</p>	<p>FALSE: Traffic lights are only necessary where streets are designed for vehicle speeds above 30 mph. They do not necessarily reduce accidents. Uncontrolled junctions encourage lower speeds and greater caution, and can reduce delays to vehicles and pedestrians. Across Europe, many traffic lights are being removed at busy intersections with positive results.</p>
<p>Unmarked objects in the middle of streets are a hazard to traffic</p>	<p>FALSE: Statues, fountains, trees and other landmarks can enhance road safety by emphasizing the unique identity of each place and forging a psychological link between the driver and his or her surroundings</p>
<p>Standardised road signs and markings are essential</p>	<p>FALSE: Standardised signs may be appropriate for trunk roads and motorways. In built up areas, often they have little effect on driver behaviour. Legible streets with their own distinctive identity and sense of place achieve safety through enhancing driver concentration</p>
<p>The only way to tackle poor driving, speeding traffic, or bad behaviour is to have more signs, tighter rules, and better enforcement</p>	<p>FALSE: Research and practice, both here and abroad, suggests that fewer signs and less control by authority allow social and cultural constraints to be more effective. Drivers become politer and rely more on eye contact to avoid other drivers.</p>

Guardrails are essential to improve pedestrian safety	FALSE: Barriers between pedestrians and traffic can encourage higher speeds and generate a false sense of security. They reduce visibility for children and people in wheelchairs and inconvenience all pedestrians. There is little evidence to suggest they improve long-term safety.
The only way to control parking is to use yellow lines and signs	FALSE: Some parking restriction signs are no longer legally required. And some towns have already adopted the simple principle, already widely used in mainland Europe, of identifying where you CAN park, rather than where you cannot. Yellow lines are unnecessary where parking would clearly cause an obstruction. Where used, they need be no wider than 50 mm.

Much of the thinking behind these "Street Facts" has informed our survey. Due to cost, copies of the printed report are available on limited distribution but the full report is available on request on CD and can be viewed on our website: www.salisburycivicsociety.org.uk We are very grateful to the City Centre Manager, whom we have consulted during the course of preparation of this report. Readers should note that she employs a City Centre Ranger who works very hard to maintain the face of the city. We do not criticise the work that is carried out simply that there is too much for the limited resources available.

CONCLUSIONS

BENCHES (p 8)

Generally speaking, benches have been placed where they are most useful. However many highlight the general "down at heel" feeling which results from lack of adequate resources for maintenance (vide Streetlamps and Litter Bins). The City Centre Ranger needs further support if his programme is not to be akin to the Forth Bridge.

BOLLARDS (p 10)

Salisbury city centre is littered with hundreds of bollards. The great majority seem to have been positioned at random since there is no evidence of an overall plan or even of their consistent use from street to street.

Those few bollards which perform a clear protective or safety function should of course remain. All others should be removed.

The parking area for only 53 cars in the Market Place is defined by no fewer than 52 metal and 11 wooden bollards. The sooner this public space is returned to all the citizens of Salisbury and their visitors, the better.

BUS SHELTERS & BUS STOP SIGNS (p 14)

Bus shelters at the busier bus stops in the city centre encourage the environmentally desirable practice of using local bus services.

Some bus shelters, due to being either excessively inset from the curb edge, or set on a narrow pavement, or both, impede pedestrian flow.

The bus shelters sited at each end of Fisherton Street are of a more "integrated" design inasmuch as they incorporate the bus stop sign and timetables.

COMMERCIAL SIGNS & HOARDINGS (p 17)

Hoardings should be discouraged, as should sponsorship advertisements on roundabouts.

COMMERCIAL WHEELED BINS (p 19)

A much tighter control of both the location and emptying routine of commercial wheeled bins is urgently needed.

CYCLE PARKING AND SIGNAGE (p 20)

The problem of inadequate cycle parking provision in the city centre is being addressed.

There are more pleasing cycle stand designs available.

Covered cycle parking and cycle / luggage lockers would be popular.

There is undue proliferation of signs and duplication of information already provided by road markings. The recent appearance of bright red National Cycle Route 24 & 45 stickers in historic city centre streets is particularly unfortunate

FLOWERS AND TREES (p 22)

Salisbury is rightly proud of its floral displays which are enjoyed by many during the summer months, but leave the city looking rather drab for the rest of the year.

The appearance of our city centre streets would be considerably enhanced by the presence of many more trees and shrubs. They offer significant environmental benefits and the claimed "problems" associated with them have long since been overcome.

GUARDRAILS (p 24)

The assertion that guardrails are essential to improve pedestrian safety has been shown to be false in that barriers between pedestrians and vehicles generate a false sense of security and encourage drivers to exceed the speed limit. Those which do not perform a clear safety function should be removed.

The Cheesemarket area, with its three light-controlled pedestrian crossings and extensive guardrails, needs a comprehensive re-design.

LITTER BINS (p 26)

Litter bins need to be numerous, strategically placed and, above all, used. Many, however, look very scruffy and in need of maintenance. The Close has a variety of bins which detract from the magnificent setting of the Cathedral.

PARKING AND LOADING SIGNS (p 27)

Too many signs are attached to their own posts, rather than to buildings or existing posts.

Unless there is a legal requirement to identify Loading Only, Disabled, Residents Only and Metered bays by both road markings and signs, road markings only (which can indicate the precise extent as well as the function of each bay) are preferable. See also ROAD MARKINGS.

PARKING METERS (p 29)

Parking meters are undoubtedly ugly in their own right and they also spawn a multiplicity of signs which are even more unsightly and carry instructions which insult the intelligence of a motorist.

No shop or service in the city centre is more than a few minutes walk from one of the 7 car parks within the Ring Road, which offer 2920 spaces. The SDC policy of continuing to provide metered on-street parking spaces is in urgent need of review.

PEDESTRIAN SIGNS (p 30)

No doubt the finger sign posts are in the main helpful, but only if they point in the right direction. Visitors to the city might find street plans in convenient locations more useful if these can be made vandal-proof. There are locations (the High Street and the Maltings) where visitors can purchase attractive town maps, but why not display plans as in the Close?

PLAQUES (p 33)

There are 33 plaques in the city centre. Given its considerable architectural and historic interest, this is too few.

ROAD MARKINGS (p 34)

The 20mph zone of the city centre could also become a controlled parking zone, where parking/loading is permitted only in marked areas. Double yellow lines would then become redundant.

Do not apply "A303 thinking" at junctions in the quiet back streets of, for example, much of the Eastern Chequers.

STREET CABINETS AND CCTV CAMERAS (p 35)

One must question the need for so many "street cabinets", as these (mostly anonymous) boxes which ruin our streetscape are called.

Planning controls, as to their location, size or colour, even in a conservation area, are clearly minimal, if they exist at all.

CCTV cameras and, more importantly, their ancillary equipment, should be located as unobtrusively as possible.

STREET NAMEPLATES (p 37)

For a major tourist area many road junctions in the city centre suffer from the inadequate provision of street nameplates.

Certain omissions suggest that the authorities have motorists, rather than pedestrians and cyclists, in mind.

STREET LAMPS (p 38)

Lights are necessary, but are their accompanying poles always necessary too? Some modern lights are unobtrusive, others, for example in the Market Place itself, are plain ugly. It is a pity that the city centre does not have some uniformity of lamp styles.

TELEPHONE KIOSKS (p 40)

It is a pity that so few traditional telephone kiosks remain. However the need for many of the telephone kiosks needs to be examined in light of the spread of mobile communications. Fewer, better sited, kiosks may be the answer.

TELEPHONE POLES (p 42)

We understand there is a policy to place all telephone wires underground - the sooner this is achieved and the poles removed the better.

TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN LIGHTS (p 43)

In a 20 mph limit zone the needs of pedestrians should take precedence over those of motorists.

Traffic lights, for whatever purpose, should be used sparingly and their supporting posts not obstruct the pavement.

Courtesy crossings work well in a 20 mph zone, but only in conjunction with a narrowed carriageway (as exists in Blue Boar Row) or pedestrian islands (as are needed at the eastern end of New Canal).

TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES (p 45)

There is no cohesive plan for traffic calming in the city centre. In other cities, for example Bury St Edmunds, the streets carry full-width cobble-type surfaces to alert drivers to the probability of encountering pedestrians as they enter shopping or tourist areas.

TRAFFIC SIGNS (p 46)

Within the Ring Road, visiting motorists are confused by the one-way system and have difficulty in finding direction signs to exit the city centre. And yet, the number and variety of traffic signs generally are a potentially hazardous diversion of drivers' attention. The mass of traffic signs in Salisbury was featured unfavourably on "South Today" on 29 September 2005.

MISCELLANY (p 49)

- **Parked Cars.** Parked cars and vans tend not to be regarded as "clutter", particularly by motorists. Nevertheless, they can do enormous visual damage in sensitive locations, such as, for example, the Market Place, in front of the Guildhall and SDC's Bourne Hill Offices and around Choristers' Green.
- **Private Signs.** Many handsome old buildings in the city centre, for example Pembroke House in Fisherton Street and some more recent ones, such as the "mews" developments in the Eastern Chequers, are defaced by a multiplicity of "private" signs, almost invariably relating to car parking, which verges on the paranoid.
- **Pavements.** Excessively narrow uneven pavements are a common feature of the city centre. All too often paving slabs are replaced by asphalt on completion of work on public services. There is long-standing legislation to prevent this practice, which only needs to be enforced.
- **Historic Features.** Historic features such as red pillar boxes, old-style street lights and even gas lamps are an all too rare a feature of the city's historic core. This is unfortunate, not least because it indicates a lack of historical awareness and civic pride.

BENCHES

There seem to be several different designs of benches around Salisbury but most appear to be in need of maintenance.. The majority of benches are conveniently located although on the smallish area along the Riverside Walk, behind Woolworths, there were as many benches as on the busy grassy area in the Maltings.

In the High Street two benches look rather disconsolately at each other:



There are a number of benches in the square outside the Guildhall and on Queen Street.

The majority of benches are conveniently located but there are a number of rectangular/backless benches on corners of streets. These can be dangerous as they are just the height to do damage to the shins of the unwary but they do have the advantage of choice of view.



Queen Street.

There are also benches strategically placed along the Town Path, around St Thomas's Square and in the Brown Street car park.



Brown Street Car Park

and attractive benches outside the Tourist Information Centre:



CONCLUSION

Generally speaking, benches have been placed where they are most useful. However many highlight the general “down at heel” feeling which results from lack of adequate resources for maintenance (vide Streetlamps and Litter Bins). The City Centre Ranger needs further support if his programme is not to be akin to the Forth Bridge.

BOLLARDS

Each short length of widened pavement used to form the Bedwin Street "chicane" is marked by up to four bollards, in spite of such street features being perfectly visible to any motorist travelling at 20mph in either natural or artificial light.



There are 11 bollards along the east (no parking) side of Pennyfarthing Street and 15 similarly positioned along Guilder Lane. They are placed at 6 metre intervals and certainly don't prevent cars or even Transit vans parking on the pavement, if this is indeed their purpose.



There is no obvious reason why some street corners qualify for up to four bollards and others have none.



Many, if not most, of the city centre streets suffer from a random distribution of bollards. They inconvenience pedestrians and are a hazard for the partially-sighted. It is almost as if the local authority had bought a job lot and had to put them somewhere. Those responsible for the recent re-development of Gigant Street seem to have had the same problem.



Another source of inconvenience to pedestrians, especially those pushing wheelchairs or prams, is that the bollards are excessively inset from the inner edge of the kerbstone. A bollard at the corner of Winchester Street and Rolleston Street, where only cyclists may turn left, is inset 120cm to virtually the centre of the pavement.



In contrast, the 4 removable bollards used to close off the central section of the High Street clearly do perform a useful function. As do the 3 removable bollards which allow Queen Street to become a pedestrianised area. They should be removed less often.

Defining the parking area in the Market Place appears to require 52 metal and 11 wooden bollards.



Another 22 wooden bollards define the boundary between Guildhall Square and the Market Place, which is already marked by a row of fine trees.



Two sets of wooden bollards on both Silver Street and Blue Boar Row serve little purpose other than to carry a small notice urging pedestrians to "Cross with Extreme Caution".



There are two bollards on the corner of Winchester Street and Guilder Lane to protect the overhanging first floor of a listed building from damage by turning lorries. A sensible use at last!



There is no doubt that the attractiveness of a streetscape bears a strong inverse relationship to the number of bollards.



CONCLUSIONS

Salisbury city centre is littered with hundreds of bollards. The great majority seem to have been positioned at random since there is no evidence of an overall plan or even of their consistent use from street to street.

Those few bollards which perform a clear protective or safety function should of course remain. All others should be removed.

The parking area for only 53 cars in the Market Place is defined by no fewer than 52 metal and 11 wooden bollards. The sooner this public space is returned to all the citizens of Salisbury and their visitors, the better.

BUS SHELTERS & BUS STOP SIGNS

There are examples of new bus shelters in New Canal, Blue Boar Row, Endless Street, Fisherton Street and elsewhere. They encourage the environmentally desirable practice of using local bus services.

Those along Blue Boar Row and at the junction of Bridge Street and Fisherton Street are set on adequately widened pavements and do not impede pedestrian flow.



The two bus shelters on Endless Street are excessively inset from the kerb edge of an inadequately widened pavement. This inset may be necessary to allow the buses to be manoeuvred into position to use their low-loading facility but, in combination with ill-disciplined queuing, the result is significant pedestrian obstruction and frustration.



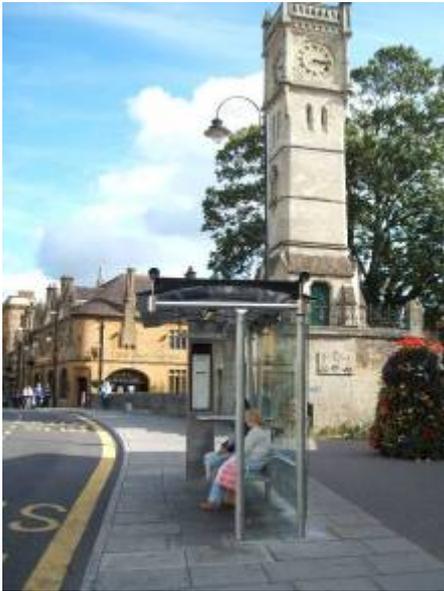
The widened pavement along New Canal is still not wide enough to accommodate the new bus shelters and the significant two-way flow of shoppers.

One bus shelter on New Canal significantly obscures the listed facade of the Odeon cinema.



The new see-through bus shelters, with seats, are functional and reasonably attractive visually. But do they really need to carry signs saying "No stopping at any time except local buses"?

One would have thought that bus stop signs and timetables could always be built into the bus shelter structure, or at least attached to it. This is certainly true of two of the bus shelters on Fisherton Street, at the junction with Bridge Street and outside St Paul's Church.



On Blue Boar Row, lamp posts are used excessively to carry bus stop signs, creating an unfortunate "totem pole" effect. More signs should have been attached to the bus shelters themselves. Moreover, on New Canal, where admittedly there are no convenient lamp posts, none of the bus stop signs or timetables is attached to the bus shelters, but are carried by six separate posts, albeit carrying hanging flower baskets for a few months in the summer.



Most bus stop signs and timetables are not of course associated with a bus shelter. These are usually reasonably unobtrusive, even after the recent addition of RTPI (Real Time Passenger Information), and the posts which carry them are usually located at the inner pavement edge or on a specially widened area of pavement, to minimise pedestrian obstruction.

The bus stop sign at the Arts Centre, on its own post, has recently "grown" a nearby, albeit slender, RTPI box. In these days of electronic miniaturisation, is such additional clutter needed? In contrast, the RTPI bus stop sign (and timetable) at St Osmund's School is attached to a lamp post and appears to require no additional box.



CONCLUSIONS

Bus shelters at the busier bus stops in the city centre encourage the environmentally desirable practice of using local bus services.

Some bus shelters, due to being either excessively inset from the curb edge, or set on a narrow pavement, or both, impede pedestrian flow.

The bus shelters sited at each end of Fisherton Street are of a more "integrated" design inasmuch as they incorporate the bus stop sign and timetables.

COMMERCIAL SIGNS AND HOARDINGS

This survey excludes shop fronts, which are already being considered by SDC.

Many obtrusive advertisements and hoardings are located on property that appears to belong to the railway - either at the railway station or alongside bridges. One such hoarding in the railway car park is so placed that it obstructs the view of the Cathedral on exiting the station.

Examples are:



South Western Road



Railway Station

Castle Street, both on the roundabout and under the railway bridge, is equally unattractive and this is one of the main entrances to the City.



Many posters appear to be advertising the same film, duplicating one another.

There are also very garish signs being attached to, for example, pub signs advertising Bed and Breakfast prices:



The public lavatory signs in the Market Place could be less obtrusive.



Sadly, the Close is not immune to playing host to some loud commercial signs which duplicate the information on the nearby finger-post.



Other poor examples:



Fisherton Street



SDC Offices



St Edmund's Church Street

CONCLUSION

Hoardings should be discouraged, as should sponsorship advertisements on roundabouts.

COMMERCIAL WHEELED BINS

Commercial wheeled bins are extremely unsightly and it is doubly unfortunate that they occur in their greatest concentration in the Market Place, particularly along Ox Row where they seriously detract from the visual amenity of flower basket holders and flower boxes. At the corner of Ox Row and Oatmeal Row they combine with anonymous black boxes, a redundant bollard and a semi-submerged electricity sub-station to form what must surely be the ugliest area in any city centre anywhere in the country.



Other commercial wheeled bins are left in the street for long periods, for example, in Chipper Lane outside Debenhams' service area, in Milford Street outside the Chapel Night Club and in New Street outside the New Inn. Establishments which cannot store their bins on their own premises should use other methods of waste disposal.



Commercial waste disposal in general needs a much more rigorous discipline. All too often packaging and other debris is left outside shops over the whole weekend. Collection timetables need to be strictly adhered to by both the creators and disposers of rubbish.



New Canal

CONCLUSION

A much tighter control of both the location and emptying routine of commercial wheeled bins is urgently needed.

CYCLE PARKING AND SIGNAGE

Cycle parking provision in the city centre usually takes the form of robust and functional "Sheffield Stands". They seem to be reasonably well sited in relation to need and the adequacy of provision is monitored by the SDC Joint Transport Team and COGS. Because cycles chained to railings, lamp posts and seats are an all too common sight, more stands are being installed.

There is no doubt that Sheffield Stands, as with other items of street furniture, if sited insensitively, can have an adverse effect on the streetscape. Other designs, such as the wheel-gripping type to be found outside Sainsbury's in the Maltings, are much less conspicuous but can damage cycle wheels and offer limited security.



Nevertheless, pipe can be bent and welded into an infinite variety of shapes, some aesthetically pleasing, others just plain fun. (Pictures from www.timberform.com)



Covered cycle parking, after an abortive attempt to introduce it into New Canal some years ago, is non-existent in the city centre. The number of cycles left in Market Walk on wet days is evidence of the need. As a major tourist destination, Salisbury should also consider the provision of cycle lockers, to accommodate cycles and luggage. These would require extremely careful siting (in car parks perhaps?) because they are undoubtedly ugly.



Signs which indicate that some (perhaps too many?) paths are shared by cyclists and pedestrians, are particularly useful.

In contrast to Market Walk, where there is a (non-standard) "No Cycling" sign at only one end, there is evidence of undue proliferation and duplication. For example, along the 150 metres of Avon Approach the same two signs, reminding cyclists to beware of oncoming vehicles and indicating that the cycle path and the road are in contraflow, are repeated three times, despite road markings which themselves make the situation abundantly clear. The direction signs at each end of Avon Approach are useful, but does one need to be reminded many times in between that one is on National Cycle Route 45?



The discrete but nevertheless clear white-on-black pedestrian finger signs in the High Street and elsewhere have recently been spoilt by the over-enthusiastic application of bright red stickers relating to National Cycle Routes 24 and 45.



CONCLUSIONS

The problem of inadequate cycle parking provision in the city centre is being addressed.

There are more pleasing cycle stand designs available.

Covered cycle parking and cycle / luggage lockers would be popular.

There is undue proliferation of signs and duplication of information already provided by road markings. The recent appearance of bright red National Cycle Route 24 & 45 stickers in historic city centre streets is particularly unfortunate

FLOWERS AND TREES

The city centre is noted for its floral displays which are enjoyed each summer by many residents and visitors. These displays mostly take the form of pyramid arrangements or large flower boxes placed on the pavements, plant containers which sit astride guardrails or baskets hanging mostly from dedicated multi-branch posts or shop-fronts.



The flowers are at their best for only about three months and for the rest of the year, the large flower boxes and multibranch posts look strange and unattractive.

One solution to this problem is to hang baskets from existing lamp posts. In this example at Water Lane off Fisherton Street, one post carries a "period" street lamp, a bus stop sign and hanging baskets.



Salisbury is blessed with wonderful green areas, with Elizabeth Gardens, the Greencroft and the Close only a few minutes walk from the Market Square. All are home to magnificent trees, with Elizabeth Gardens also having a wide variety of shrubs.

The trees in the Market Place itself really enhance the area, but the city centre streets generally lack trees or even shrubs.



This is a pity because trees and shrubs soften harsh streetscapes and can hide ugly features. They also absorb carbon monoxide and sulphur dioxide and attenuate noise. Ornamental species used extensively in other cities are non-fruiting and grow to a maximum of 20-25 feet. Root barriers are used at the time of planting to minimise the risk of either damage to public services or road or pavement disruption. In the case of existing trees these problems can be averted by the use of tree grilles or resin bound gravel, rather than yet more black top. A start might be made by lining the boundaries of Salt Lane and Brown Street car parks with trees and shrubs.



Tree grille



Resin bound gravel

CONCLUSIONS

Salisbury is rightly proud of its floral displays which are enjoyed by many during the summer months, but leave the city looking rather drab for the rest of the year.

The appearance of our city centre streets would be considerably enhanced by the presence of many more trees and shrubs. They offer significant environmental benefits and the claimed "problems" associated with them have long since been overcome.

GUARDRAILS

Guardrails reduce visibility, particularly for children and people in wheelchairs and especially if the guardrails carry flower boxes. An example of guardrails which actually increase the danger are those near Multiyork in Fisherton Street. Pedestrians are forced to walk into Summerlock Approach before being able to cross. At which point they cannot easily see vehicles coming around the corner from Fisherton Street.



Railings are necessary along the raised walkway under Fisherton railway bridge but those which are there at present, at one of the main entry points into the city centre, are extremely ugly and should be replaced. A short length of guardrail on the opposite side of the road is both ugly and useless. It offers no protection to pedestrians from articulated lorries negotiating the sharp turn from South Western Road to go under the railway bridge. In fact, the pavement is so narrow at this point that wheelchair and pushchair users are forced to pass outside the "guardrail".



The Cheesemarket area has three light-controlled pedestrian crossings and a mass of guardrails to encourage pedestrians to use these crossings. In fact, they tend to cross the roads wherever and whenever they wish, usually in complete safety because the traffic is often at a standstill. The whole area needs a complete re-design, to provide a much less cluttered and therefore more welcoming entry into the Market Place.



At the junction of Bridge Street and the High Street there is a guardrail of extremely heavy construction occupying a large area of pavement, the purpose of which seems only to be to protect one traffic/pedestrian light and its control box. Such a level of protection appears to be unique. Is it necessary? Also School Lane (which no longer serves a school) joins Bedwin Street at a point where the pavement has been widened considerably. Removal of the railings should be considered.



There are a few guardrails which serve a real safety purpose, such as those at the back of the Guildhall, around the two entrances which are below street level and the disabled access ramp.



CONCLUSIONS

The assertion that guardrails are essential to improve pedestrian safety has been shown to be false in that barriers between pedestrians and vehicles generate a false sense of security and encourage drivers to exceed the speed limit. Those which do not perform a clear safety function should be removed.

The Cheesemarket area, with its three light-controlled pedestrian crossings and extensive guardrails, needs a comprehensive re-design.

LITTER BINS

There are approximately 130 litter bins in the city, most of them of the black painted square box variety, and most in need of a coat of paint in spite of the heroic efforts of the City Centre Ranger. They appear to be placed appropriately but, inevitably, there are many people who drop rubbish. This is a problem all around Salisbury at present; little used under-maintained litter bins.



Winchester Street



Town Path

The Close has a variety of bins, not all of them are attractive.



Commendably, there are also dog litter bins around the city and in the Close. Red is eye catching but rather garish.

CONCLUSION

Litter bins need to be numerous, strategically placed and, above all, used. Many, however, look very scruffy and in need of maintenance. The Close has a variety of bins which detract from the magnificent setting of the Cathedral.

PARKING AND LOADING SIGNS

"Parking restriction signs in particular can be sited on buildings where appropriate, thus eliminating the need in many cases for a pole with a single sign."

Planning Policy Guidance 15 : Planning and the historic environment.

There are literally hundreds of signs in the city centre relating to Parking and Loading. Many streets have more than 20, including Salt Lane, which has more signs than on-street parking/loading spaces. Most of these signs are themselves quite small and relatively unobtrusive but the vast majority are attached to very visible 7cm diameter black steel posts. Some of these posts carry no sign at all. Very few signs are attached to lamp posts or to buildings.



This apparent reluctance to attach parking/loading signs to buildings is presumably because it requires the permission of the owner, which might cause delays in the implementation of a new on-street parking scheme. That the only buildings which carry parking/loading signs to any significant extent are those owned by WCC/SDC seems to bear this out. The only parking sign in St Ann Street not on its own post is attached to a listed building.



Nevertheless, although hundreds of parking/loading signs have been attached to posts rather than houses over recent years, there is no reason why, subject to adequate consultation, this process should not be reversed. But are these signs needed at all?

Loading and disabled parking bays are marked out by white dotted lines and carry road markings (outside the bays so that they are not concealed by parked vehicles) saying "LOADING ONLY" or "DISABLED". This information does not need to be, although it is, duplicated by signs.



Parking bays for residents are also marked out by white dotted lines and could carry road markings saying "RESIDENTS ZONE X", for example. This would allow the removal of literally hundreds of signs and, more importantly, almost as many posts, leaving a need for perhaps one notice at each end of each street used for residents' parking, explaining the permitted days/hours of use of the bays by non-residents.

Similarly, metered parking bays are marked out by white dotted lines and could carry road markings saying "METERED", thus allowing the removal of many more signs. All information relevant to the use of metered spaces could be on a single notice attached to the meter itself. See also PARKING METERS.

Since all motorists must be able to read a registration plate at 20 metres, a case can be made for road markings which are unrelated to safety being considerably smaller than is current practice.

CONCLUSIONS

Too many signs are attached to their own posts, rather than to buildings or existing posts.

Unless there is a legal requirement to identify Loading Only, Disabled, Residents Only and Metered bays by both road markings and signs, road markings only (which can indicate the precise extent as well as the function of each bay) are preferable. See also ROAD MARKINGS.

PARKING METERS

So long as the local authority persists in its policy of providing on-street parking spaces (in spite of there being 2920 spaces in off-street car parks within the Ring Road), the streetscape will continue to include parking meters. Some are positioned discretely (too discretely for some potential customers, we understand), others are all too evident.



The 146 on-street parking spaces are associated with no fewer than 23 parking meters and well over 100 signs. These meters serve from 16 to as few as 2 parking spaces, thus making recovery of the capital investment very slow by comparison with off-street car parks (e.g. Salt Lane car park with 162 spaces and only 2 meters). There have been no increases in on-street parking charges since meters were introduced in May 2002.

The many metered parking signs are sometimes attached to walls or lamp posts but more often to their own very substantial posts. These signs indicate hours of operation and maximum length of stay (which surely need appear only on the meter itself) and tell the motorist to "Pay at meter" and "Display ticket". An arrow points towards the meter which, with rare exceptions, is fully visible to anyone standing by the sign. A sign on a separate post adjacent to the meter states the blindingly obvious, i.e. "Pay here at meter" and reminds the motorist, in case he has already forgotten, to "Display ticket". All this desecration of the streetscape for 146 on-street parking spaces!



See also: **PARKING AND LOADING SIGNS**

CONCLUSIONS

Parking meters are undoubtedly ugly in their own right and they also spawn a multiplicity of signs which are even more unsightly and carry instructions which insult the intelligence of a motorist.

No shop or service in the city centre is more than a few minutes walk from one of the 7 car parks within the Ring Road, which offer 2920 spaces. The SDC policy of continuing to provide metered on-street parking spaces is in urgent need of review.

PEDESTRIAN SIGNS

This survey was done in Salisbury on a clear Sunday afternoon in late April - there was little traffic in the city and not too many pedestrians. In addition to looking at the positioning of the pedestrian sign posts (finger-type signs), the survey was approached with some thought as to how a visitor to Salisbury would fare with the present signs.

There are at least 26 finger signs in the City. Most are useful but some directions are misleading.

If arriving at the city from the Culver Street car park, the sign at the bottom of the entrance to the car park, on Gigant Street, points north to the City Centre along Gigant Street - you are then abandoned when you arrive at Milford Street, with no further signs.

As to the other car parks there were two in the Brown Street car park area, two in the Maltings, three in the Old George Mall. There were none at Lush House car park, nor at Salt Lane.

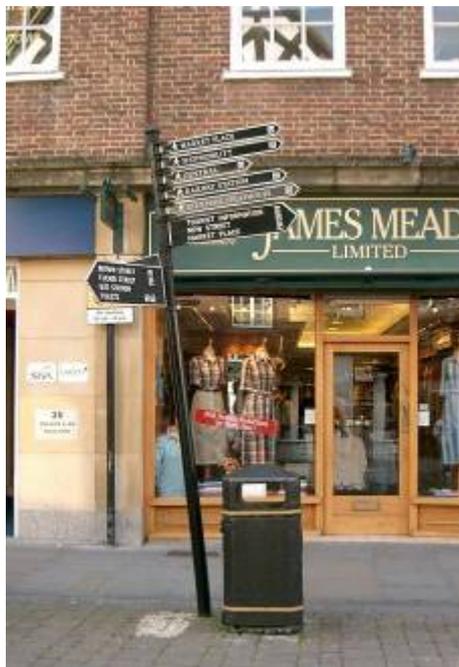
Arriving at the railway station on a Sunday afternoon would present problems unless you happened to arrive on Platform 2, where there is a tourist information stand.

If arriving in the city centre on the Park & Ride bus, there are no finger-posts where passengers alight from the buses.

There are, in addition to the pedestrian sign posts, street maps along the outside wall of the railway station on South Western Road and these, together with the tourist plans displayed inside the Close, are probably more helpful than some of the finger signs.

Except for two groups of signs attached to lamp posts along South Western Road, all finger signs had their own posts.

Some were in poor condition:



High Street

Others were misleading:



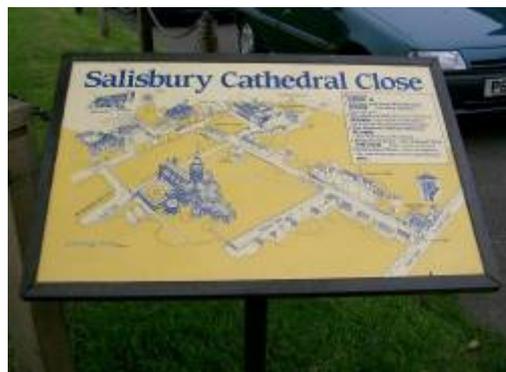
Cheesemartine - the sign to the Cathedral points from the Cheesemartine down Blue Boar Row.

Some were almost like a guide book:



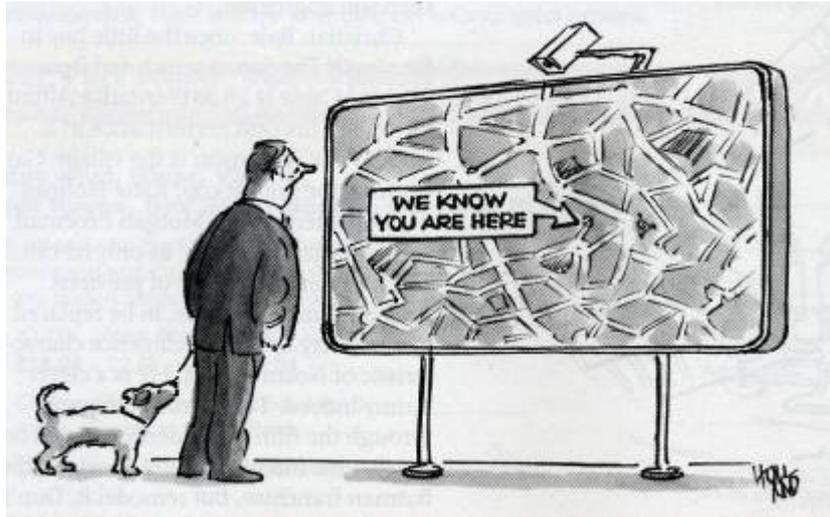
Fish Row/Queen Street

In the Close, there are finger-posts directing to places of interest within the Close, and to exits, as well as:



CONCLUSION

No doubt the finger sign posts are in the main helpful, but only if they point in the right direction. Visitors to the city might find street plans in convenient locations more useful if these can be more vandal-proof. There are locations (the High Street and the Maltings) where visitors can purchase attractive town maps, but why not display plans as in the Close?



(with acknowledgements to "The Oldie")

PLAQUES

Plaques convey a sense of civic pride, enhance the streetscape and are of considerable interest to visitors. Earlier plaques are mostly of a slate-type finish, supplemented by later blue discs by the Salisbury Civic Society as part of an ongoing programme.



A notable omission from the only statue in the Market Square is information about Henry Fawcett, other than that he was a professor of political economy at Cambridge.

A second edition of a leaflet "Salisbury Plaque Walks" is being prepared by Salisbury Civic Society

CONCLUSION

There are 33 plaques in the city centre. Given its considerable architectural and historic interest, this is too few.

ROAD MARKINGS

"Authorities' attention is drawn to the flexibility permitted in respect of no waiting lines : a narrower line of a different colour is permitted in environmentally sensitive areas. Consideration should be given to applying waiting restrictions to areas, where appropriate and removing yellow lines."

Planning Policy Guidance 15 : Planning and the historic environment.

A characteristic of our city centre, in common with many others, is that road markings appear to be needed both to indicate where parking/loading is permitted (using dotted white line "boxes") and to indicate where parking/loading is not permitted (using double/single yellow lines). This makes for unnecessary visual "clutter", as well as being a waste of paint.



Since a double yellow line means "No waiting at Any Time", surely all posts which carry signs to this effect could be removed tomorrow.

Single yellow lines do require a notice to indicate the hours between which no waiting is permitted, usually 08.00 to 18.00. However, there are relatively few single yellow lines on the streets in the city centre and because parking on double yellow lines seems to be tolerated before 08.00 and after 18.00, a second yellow line could be added and even more posts and signs removed.

Better still, why not follow the European lead and indicate only where parking/loading is permitted? This could be achieved by declaring, say, the 20mph zone also to be a controlled parking zone, with "gateway" features at all entry points (there are not that many) and signs reminding motorists that parking/loading is permitted only in marked areas. This would allow the removal of all double yellow lines within the controlled parking zone.

Whereas signs, road markings and even traffic lights, to indicate car and pedestrian priority, may be necessary at the more major junctions even in the 20mph city centre, there is gross overkill in the back streets of, for example, the Eastern Chequers. The removal of all "Give Way" road markings (and signs) on all the approach roads to "quiet" junctions would encourage driver caution, facilitate eye contact between drivers and with pedestrians and cyclists and introduce a greater feeling of calm and thereby enhance safety. We are dealing with narrow medieval streets here, not the A303.

CONCLUSIONS

The 20mph zone of the city centre could also become a controlled parking zone, where parking/loading is permitted only in marked areas. Double yellow lines would then become redundant.

Do not apply "A303 thinking" at junctions in the quiet back streets of, for example, much of the Eastern Chequers.

STREET CABINETS AND CCTV CAMERAS

The pavements of the city centre are littered with hundreds of metal boxes. Space does not permit a listing. They are invariably ugly and often are rusting and/or covered with graffiti. Many could be sited more discretely or to cause less obstruction.



These boxes come in a range of sizes, shapes and colours and they appear to be associated with:

- a) Traffic/Pedestrian Lights
- b) Telecommunications (BT & NTL?)
- c) CCTV Cameras
- d) Bus Stop Information Displays
- e) Air Quality Monitoring
- f) Power Supply to Stalls in the Market Place



Boxes which house traffic/pedestrian light control systems sometimes carry a "WCC Highways" label, in contrast to those which are assumed to be associated with telecommunications, which are almost invariably anonymous.

Whereas it is accepted that air quality monitoring equipment is bulky, but (unfortunately) necessary, the last decade has seen dramatic advances in the miniaturisation of electronic components, so why do so many of the other boxes have to be so big?



In spite of the strong adverse effect that boxes can have on the streetscape, those who install them seem to be subject to few, if any, planning regulations as to their location, size or colour, even in a conservation area. For example, there is a large black box in Rutherford Walk, by the side of the Guildhall, a listed building, which seems to service a CCTV camera via some very conspicuous "plumbing". Furthermore, at the opposite corner, near the Tourist Information Centre of all places, there is a particularly unappealing collection of clutter including two rusting boxes. Does the Local Authority have no control over such things?



CCTV cameras which require a wide angle of view should, wherever possible, be fixed to street lighting columns, with their ancillary equipment contained within the column. Other CCTV cameras may be attached to buildings, where they are usually less obtrusive. However, there is usually plenty of scope to tidy up their ancillary equipment.

CONCLUSIONS

One must question the need for so many "street cabinets", as these (mostly anonymous) boxes which ruin our streetscape are called.

Planning controls, as to their location, size or colour, even in a conservation area, are clearly minimal, if they exist at all.

CCTV cameras and, more importantly, their ancillary equipment, should be located as unobtrusively as possible.

STREET NAMEPLATES

Much of our Report is devoted to an over-abundance of undesirable street furniture (e.g. bollards, guardrails and parking signs). In contrast, this section deals largely with the under-provision of desirable street furniture, namely street nameplates.

The distribution of street nameplates in the city centre is haphazard. The number which is "appropriate" at any particular junction is clearly a function of its geometry. It is suggested that there are three main categories:

1. At a cross-roads where the street in question continues beyond under the same name (e.g. Brown Street crossing Milford Street): **Four**, one on each side of the street, both before and after the junction.
2. At the end of a street, where it terminates at a T-junction (e.g. Salt Lane ending at Greencroft Street), or where the carriageway turns left or right and assumes another name (e.g. Castle Street turning into Blue Boar Row), or where the street in question continues beyond a cross-roads under another name (e.g. St Edmund's Church Street becoming Pennyfarthing Street at Winchester Street): **Two**, one on each side of the street.
3. Where the street in question is joined by another street, from either the right or the left: **One**, opposite the joining street (e.g. Castle Street where it is joined by Chipper Lane).

There are a number of situations in which the number of street nameplates falls short of what is "appropriate". The reason for this may or may not be valid:

- Where it has been decided not to fix a street nameplate to a listed building, although there seems to be no consistency in this. An alternative is to mount it on two short posts at the inner pavement edge (e.g. the south-west corner of the junction of St Edmund's Church Street and Bedwin Street).



- Where there is no building to which to attach the street nameplate (e.g. the north-west corner of the junction of The Greencroft and Bourne Hill and the south-east and south-west corners of Salt Lane car park). Again, the street nameplate could be mounted on two short posts at the inner pavement edge
- One-way streets or no car entry streets (e.g. Rolleston Street from Winchester Street) offer an excuse to cut down on street nameplates, although cyclists and pedestrians, particularly visitors, still need the information.

An audit of 20 streets has shown that the provision of street nameplates at many junctions falls well short of what might be considered "appropriate".

CONCLUSIONS

For a major tourist area many road junctions in the city centre suffer from the inadequate provision of street nameplates.

Certain omissions suggest that the authorities have motorists, rather than pedestrians and cyclists, in mind.

STREET LAMPS

Street lighting is important and it would be good to see some uniformity of design in the relatively small city centre but there are a variety of styles in Salisbury - some modern, others "period", ornamental and anything in between. Discounting shopping malls, seven different types of lamps were noted. In one cathedral city (Lincoln), the historic core zone has been re-equipped with newly-cast replicas of the original Victorian street lights but fitted with modern lamps and reflector systems.



Bridge Street

Those attached to buildings are unobtrusive and, in the High Street, New Canal area, not unattractive. Wherever possible, particularly in the case of new build, lamp posts should be removed and the lamps attached to buildings.

It was noticeable that in the Maltings area, although the lamps were not down-lighters (which is understood to be the preferred method of street lighting), lamps were also used to provide hooks for hanging baskets. This is a practice that could be extended, instead of having individual hanging basket poles (e.g. corner of Queen Street/Milford Street) that look bleak for nine months of the year. Apart from the newer lamps, many are badly in need of a coat of paint.



Crane Bridge



Estcourt Road - the base of this lamp is as wide as the litter bin next to it.

And yet at the top of Winchester Street there is one charming light:



Some garish shop signs provide night illumination, for example the pizza shop in Endless Street, recently opened by the Mayor, and other street lighting is provided by decorative lamps outside hotels or bars.

CONCLUSION

Lights are necessary, but are their accompanying poles always necessary too? Some modern lights are unobtrusive, others, for example in the Market Place itself, are plain ugly. It is a pity that the city centre does not have some uniformity of lamp styles.

TELEPHONE KIOSKS

There are 27 public telephone kiosks within our survey area, 24 of modern design and only 3 traditional red ones. How has this been allowed to happen? Of these three, one is at the corner of Choristers' Green and the other two are outside a dilapidated building next to the main Post Office.



All the telephone kiosks are generally well distributed in terms of access by visitors, although The Maltings and Priory Square together are served by only one. In contrast, more than two of the four grouped together in the middle of the Cheesemarket are rarely in use at any one time.



Public telephone kiosks, not surprisingly, are absent from essentially residential streets.

Few, if any, are placed so that pedestrians are impeded. On the contrary, some are so discretely positioned that they are difficult to find



CONCLUSION

It is a pity that so few traditional telephone kiosks remain however the need for many of the telephone kiosks needs to be examined in light of the spread of mobile communications. Fewer, better sited, kiosks may be the answer.

TELEPHONE POLES

There are still a number of telephone poles in Salisbury, mostly situated in residential streets and with a considerable number of wires extending to nearby houses. Hopefully they will disappear in due course as they detract from the charm of the local streets - for example, Guilder Lane and Salt Lane, Pennyfarthing Street, Winchester Street and St Ann Street.

Some are obstructive - Love Lane has a telephone pole situated close to a street lamp, seriously obstructing an already narrow pavement outside a day centre. Elsewhere there are poles near the edge of the pavement greatly restricting the width.



CONCLUSION

We understand there is a policy to place all telephone wires underground - the sooner this is achieved and the poles removed the better.

TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN LIGHTS

Where lights are necessary to control traffic priority at major junctions, or used in association with a pedestrian crossing, the posts on which they are mounted need not and should not obstruct the pavement. Those in Catherine Street are particularly hazardous to pedestrians on what is already a very narrow pavement.



All three sets of lights at the Cheesemarket junction are frequently ignored by pedestrians because of excessive time delays.



The traditional Belisha beacon crossings such as those on Crane Bridge Street, Fisherton Street, South Western Road and Castle Street work well.



Fisherton Street

Synchronised traffic and pedestrian lights are necessary at busy traffic junctions.



High Street/Bridge Street

However, pedestrians at the junction of Catherine Street, Milford Street and Queen Street with New Canal have to take their lives in their hands since there is no pedestrian crossing of any sort at this point. This is a busy, wide and potentially dangerous crossing point from the **pedestrianised** Queen Street to the cinema, shops and bus stops on the south side of New Canal.

The courtesy crossing from Debenhams to the Market Square, across a narrowed section of Blue Boar Row, appears to work well without the necessity for lights

CONCLUSIONS

In a 20 mph limit zone the needs of pedestrians should take precedence over those of motorists.

Traffic lights, for whatever purpose, should be used sparingly and their supporting posts not obstruct the pavement.

Courtesy crossings work well in a 20 mph zone, but only in conjunction with a narrowed carriageway (as exists in Blue Boar Row) or pedestrian islands (as are needed at the eastern end of New Canal).

TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

The city centre, within the 20mph limit, employs a variety of traffic calming measures: road humps, traffic priority chicanes, traffic lights, pedestrian lights, pedestrian crossings with Belisha beacons, courtesy crossings, and pedestrianised areas.

Most humps are discrete and confined to the middle of the carriageway but their usually vicious profile encourages motorists to manoeuvre to try and straddle them, rather than slow down. Less commonly used in Salisbury, but widely used in other historic centres, are flat topped "speed tables" which raise the carriageway over its full width to pavement height via a 1:15 ramp. They are effective in slowing traffic and can double as a courtesy crossing. They are particularly popular with wheelchair and pushchair users.



Crane Bridge Road

The chicane system in Bedwin Street has come in for a lot of criticism. Furthermore priority on Bourne Hill is denied to traffic leaving Churchill Way. This photograph was taken early afternoon and does not illustrate the problem that occurs during rush hour, when there can be a dangerous back-up of traffic entering Bourne Hill from the Ring Road.



The courtesy crossing, with street narrowing in Blue Boar Row is a good example of traffic calming - few signs, wary pedestrians and more courtesy shown by drivers.

CONCLUSION

There is no cohesive plan for traffic calming in the city centre. In other cities, for example Bury St Edmunds, the streets carry a full-width cobble-type surface to alert drivers to the probability of encountering pedestrians as they enter shopping or tourist areas.

TRAFFIC SIGNS

"Traffic signs are only needed to direct drivers to their desired destinations or to particular facilities, warn them of hazards and indicate mandatory requirements. Signs which do none of these things may not be necessary at all, and much can be done to eliminate sign clutter simply by removing redundant signs, or by combining separate signs onto a single backing board. Regular "street audits" are valuable and local amenity societies may be able to help with these."

Planning Policy Guidance 15 : Planning and the historic environment.

Most directional traffic signs are on or outside the ring road, where their main purpose is to keep vehicles out of the city centre. The new signs to Central, Culver Street and New Street car parks, which also indicate spaces available, are invaluable in reducing city centre traffic congestion and pollution. Presumably to reinforce this aim, directional traffic signs within the ring road to the city centre are few.



At entry points to the city centre there are recent signs relating to parking restrictions. These are so detailed that they represent a potentially hazardous diversion of drivers' attention.



Too many directional signs are attached to their own posts, rather than to nearby traffic lights or street lamps. Most are clear enough in isolation but at many junctions (e.g. the eastern end of Blue Boar Row), there is an over-abundance of traffic-related signs.



Castle Street /Blue Boar Row

Tubular steel hoop frames may be used to mount essential traffic signs less obtrusively at low level. A 300mm diameter sign, rather than the standard 450mm, is understood to be acceptable. The use of reflective material removes the need for either internal or external illumination. In this particular example, the "Give Way" sign could have been fixed to the traffic light pole.



There are no signs, for example, at the junctions of New Street/Catherine Street, Catherine Street/Milford Street or High Street/Silver Street and one set very low and easily missed at the junction of Winchester Street/Brown Street, to indicate the route to the ring road. This, in combination with an extensive one-way system, is a cause of much unnecessary traffic circulation by "lost" car-borne visitors.

Ironically, at the southern end of Exeter Street, within sight of the ring road, there are two huge directional signs which address traffic leaving the city. These are extremely ugly when viewed from the rear on entering the city centre and also hide the attractive Bricketts Hospital.



Traffic calming measures in Bedwin Street and on Bourne Hill are responsible for a proliferation of signs.



Streets which carry a high volume of vehicular traffic also (necessarily?) carry many traffic signs. For this reason, Brown Street must be one of the most unattractive streets in the city. But even the quietest streets in the Eastern Chequers have been subjected to "A303 thinking" when it comes to traffic signs (see also ROAD MARKINGS).

CONCLUSIONS

Within the Ring Road, visiting motorists are confused by the one-way system and have difficulty in finding direction signs to exit the city centre. And yet, the number and variety of traffic signs generally are a potentially hazardous diversion of drivers' attention. The mass of traffic signs in Salisbury was featured unfavourably on "South Today" on 29 September 2005.

MISCELLANY

There are a number of features of the streetscape which do not fit readily into the categories used hitherto in this report but are nevertheless worthy of consideration.

- **Parked Cars.** Parked cars and vans tend not to be regarded as "clutter", particularly by motorists. Nevertheless, they can do enormous visual damage in sensitive locations, such as, for example, the Market Place, in front of the Guildhall and SDC's Bourne Hill Offices and around Choristers' Green.



Bourne Hill



Choristers' Green

- **Private Signs.** Many handsome old buildings in the city centre, for example Pembroke House in Fisherton Street and some more recent ones, such as the "mews" developments in the Eastern Chequers, are defaced by a multiplicity of "private" signs, almost invariably relating to car parking, which verges on the paranoid.



- **Pavements.** Excessively narrow uneven pavements are unfortunately a common feature of the city centre. All too often paving slabs are replaced by asphalt on completion of work on public services. There is long-standing legislation to prevent this practice, which only needs to be enforced (see p 3.)



- **Historic Features.** Historic features such as red pillar boxes, old-style street lights and even gas lamps are an all too rare a feature of the city's historic core. This is unfortunate, not least because it indicates a lack of historical awareness and civic pride.
- Other undesirable features of the streetscape range from the brutal razor-wire-topped wall around the BT building in Scott's Lane, to the half-buried electricity sub-station in the south-western corner of the Market Place, to satellite dishes on the front of houses in a conservation area.



Scott's Lane



- On a more positive note, now that the A-boards have been removed, the tables and chairs which remain outside the pubs and cafes along Ox Row, Oatmeal Row and Butcher Row are the sort of "clutter" which we want to see in the Market Square rather than parked cars.



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