



View towards the Wallands from Castle Precincts



Knapped flint and limestone in St Michael's Church



Sandstone setts, local bricks, and cast iron rain gutter made by John Every of Lewes (Cliffe)

On the eastern side of the river, Cliffe lies on the flat river valley with towering chalk cliffs and partially wooded hillsides creating a dramatic backdrop.

Despite some modern development on the edges of the town, Lewes retains its sense of enclosure by the South Downs with steep hills rising to heights of over 170 metres on both western and easterly edges. The Downs are now used for sheep grazing on the slopes and arable farming on the tops. To the north and south, along the flat valley of the River Ouse, are large open fields separated by deep ditches, largely used for grazing cattle. The river makes a notable contribution, meandering along the valley towards the sea at Newhaven, often heavily coloured with mud. Because the river is tidal and was once navigable beyond Barcombe, about four kilometres to the north of Lewes, the natural ebb and flow of the water is very much part of the character of the town, especially when viewed from Cliffe Bridge.

4.3 GEOLOGY

Much of the lower parts of the town, including Cliffe, are built on alluvial mud and silt deposits associated with the river. However, the underlying geology is basically chalk, evident in the abandoned quarries which surround Lewes. These supplied the chalk which was burnt to create lime for traditional mortars and renders. Flints can be found on the surface of the surrounding fields and have historically been picked to provide materials for building. Just outside the northern edges of the town, a narrow strip of greensand creates a gentle ridge along which a number of small villages such as Ditchling, Streat, East Chiltington, and Ringmer, were established, taking advantage of the natural springs which occurred. Further north, between Lewes and Uckfield, is flatter countryside, underlain with clay, from which the local bricks and tiles are produced.

5 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

5.1 OPEN SPACES, LANDSCAPE AND TREES

Lewes, whilst surrounded by attractive countryside, is not a rural village but a sizeable urban centre with the character of a town. The town centre is intensely built-up, with little space between the buildings, and private gardens largely screened behind continuous properties. There are fortunately many mature trees but overall the tree cover has been reduced by the effects of Dutch Elm and honey fungus disease and the 1987 hurricane. However, within the Lewes Conservation Area there are a number of open spaces, many with notable trees, particularly horse chestnut, beech and sycamore. Some of these are not open to the public but can be viewed from the public domain.

The most important open spaces are:



- The Paddock – a large field purchased in 1913 by a partnership of local developers (The Paddock Syndicate) led by J H Every (of Phoenix Ironworks) who had already (1905) purchased over 25 acres, forming part of the paddock, from John Parsons of Lewes, timber and slate merchant. Their ambition was to continue the residential development which had already happened in nearby streets such as Leicester Road and Bradford Road. The paddock was almost certainly part of the demesne park associated with the medieval castle, and was the preserve of the Houndean sheep flock until the 1860s, when the land came into the ownership of the Shelley family. The paddock is now divided into four separate spaces – Baxter’s Field; an open field once used for horse grazing; a playing field, used for school sports; and an area set aside for allotments, facing Paddock Road. Mature trees and informal spaces provide a rural character to this part of The Wallands estate;



- Castle grounds – the castle and its immediate surroundings are owned by the Sussex Archaeological Society and enjoyed as landscaped space and public gardens. The central area, used as a bowling green, is rented by the Lewes Bowling Green Society from the Abergavenny Estate. All of these spaces, some of which wrap around the castle, are extremely important in providing an appropriate setting for Lewes castle. There are some mature trees, especially to the north of Castle Precincts. There are also a number of privately owned houses which form part of the castle precincts;

- Southover Grange gardens – owned by Lewes District Council and open during the day as a public park. Refreshments are provided from the Grange. A knot garden has recently been planted in the former kitchen garden, and the main gardens contain a notable collection of old specimen trees and attractively planted beds, renewed annually. The Winterbourne stream flows through the garden although it is usually dry in the summer. Southover Grange is now used for a variety of purposes: a day-time nursery school, evening meetings, weekend events such as wedding receptions and private parties, and as the local Register Office, so the gardens are often full of wedding guests. This is a very popular garden, especially well used by students and young mothers with children;



- The site of Lewes priory – a large site owned by Lewes Town Council and administered by the Lewes Priory Trust, which is open to the public although most of the ruins are fenced off to protect them from vandalism. The site continues into the playing fields and the area of grass called The Dripping Pan, below the Mount. Most of this area is open to the public during the day. There are long lines of willows and several mature trees in the grounds;



Lewes Priory, viewed from The Mount

- The Pells Ponds and Water Meadows are owned by Lewes District Council and form part of the riverside which leads towards Malling. The area, laid out as a park to commemorate the golden jubilee of 1887, is an important wildlife preserve and is crossed by footpaths, with groups of informal self-sown trees and shrubs. The Pells Pool (1860) is the earliest such amenity in the country;



The Pells Ponds, looking towards the River Ouse

- Playing fields in The Paddock; off Mountfield Road; and just outside the conservation area next to Tesco's Supermarket;



The Railway Lands Public Information Board

- Just outside the conservation area boundary to the south-east of the town, the Railway Lands Nature Reserve is a significant local public open space and an important wildlife habitat. To the north-east, the Malling Downs Nature Reserve overlooks the town.

5.2 FOCAL POINTS, VIEWS AND VISTAS

Lewes has a notable setting in a gap in the South Downs with extensive views along the valley of the River Ouse to the north and south, and the sea at Newhaven can just be glimpsed on a bright day from Lewes castle. Views to the immediate west are curtailed by Lewes prison, but from Nevill Road can be seen the Downs and views northwards towards Offham and Mount Harry. To the east, views are contained by the chalk cliffs behind Cliffe with Mount Caburn beyond. Oblique south-eastern views along the valley towards Beddingham and Firle reveal further Downland vistas, including Firle Beacon.

Within the town, Lewes Castle acts as the primary focal point and views to and from the castle must be preserved and protected. Otherwise, almost every street contains an attractive view because of the undulating topography. Often these are constrained by tall flint walls or continuous rows of historic buildings. One particularly fine view is down School Hill, looking eastwards across the



Looking eastwards down School Hill

river to Cliffe and the Cuilfail Estate on the steeply-rising Downland above. Equally attractive views can be seen looking southwards from the High Street, over Southover, and northwards from the castle grounds, over the Paddock to the Wallands Estate and Ashdown Forest. From the bottom of St Swithun's Terrace a footpath leads along the line of the town walls, providing an excellent view over the roof of Southover Grange to Priory Crescent. A favourite point for contemplation for Lewesians is Cliffe Bridge, with its strategically placed public seating, allowing views over Harveys Brewery (and often a chance to sniff the smell of hops!) to the north and the curving River Ouse, with Stricklands Warehouse, to the south.

There are several 'focal points' in the town of which Lewes castle is the most significant, especially when viewed from a distance, and the War Memorial is particularly important in views up School Hill. Additionally, several of the parish churches are strategically placed in the street, providing a focal point to views: St Anne's, in the High Street; St John sub Castro in The Pells, and St Thomas's in Cliffe. Although outside the conservation area, views from Tesco's Supermarket, over the River Ouse towards the castle, are very important. The principal views, focal points, and focal buildings, are all marked on the individual Townscape Appraisal maps.

6 DEFINITION OF THE SPECIAL INTEREST

6.1 CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND USES

Lewes provides a range of employment possibilities and good quality local housing, though this can be expensive. The close proximity of Brighton, with its two universities, and good rail communications to London, make Lewes an attractive location for academics and other professionals. The town centre is in mixed uses, with commercial (offices, shops) premises interspersed with residential housing. Two large supermarkets, one inside the conservation area, and one just outside, provide a range of goods and help to bring visitors into the town. Retail uses are now more centred on the precinct area close to Cliffe Bridge, and although the High Street from the Town Hall to West Gate still provides a range of local specialised shops, the main Post Office, and some banks and estate agents it is notable that in 1980 the same area boasted a supermarket, two butchers, a greengrocer, fishmonger and baker.

Car parking is an issue with a new residents' parking scheme being introduced in 2004, which reduced the amount of free on-street parking. Despite its unpopularity with some locals and



Lewes House, headquarters of Lewes District Council

office workers, the scheme has freed up parking spaces in the town centre and in the surrounding streets. There is now a limited amount of long-term car parking for office workers off North Street, but this is a problem which will need further consideration. Industrial uses are now largely confined to sites outside the conservation area, apart from Harveys Brewery in Cliffe, and the low key manufacture of foodstuffs in Castle Ditch Lane.



The Crown Courts in the High Street

The main features are:

- County Town of East Sussex;
- Principal employers: East Sussex County Council, Lewes District Council, the police, the local NHS Trust, and Sussex Downs College;
- Law Courts (Crown Court, County Court and Magistrates' Court) all in the town centre;
- Professional offices (solicitors, doctors, etc) all to be found in the town centre;
- Specialist shops (jewellers, clothing, books);
- Centre of the Sussex Archaeological Society (SAS);
- Lewes castle, Barbican House Museum (both owned by the SAS) and the priory site are all important for tourism;
- Schools, colleges and universities within the town or near-by;
- Attractive and extensive suburbs, providing a range of housing;
- Harveys brewery is an important local business.

6.2 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER

Lewes has a rich and very varied architectural heritage with a many fine historic buildings providing the town with “*the best High Street in the country*” (Alec Clifton Taylor). There are over 675 listed buildings in the conservation area, and continuous groups of high quality listed buildings can be found in the town centre as well as Cliffe and Southover. Historic plots and boundaries have largely (but not always) been retained so that the historic grain of the settlement has not been adversely affected by backland or out-of-scale modern development, although new road schemes in the Cliffe area have had a detrimental effect on the historic plan form. The surviving grid pattern of streets in the upper part of the town is of note.

The best groups of early buildings are found in the High Street between Station Street and Rotten Row, with a number of early (14th and 15th century) timber-framed structures. There are also several timber-framed buildings of the 16th and 17th centuries in this stretch, often refronted in brick and mathematical tiles to give a Georgian façade. Further 15th and 16th century timber framed buildings are located in Cliffe. However, a systematic and detailed survey of the buildings within Lewes has never been carried out and no doubt much remains to be discovered.



These buildings are early timber-framed structures, despite their 18th century refacings

Most of the buildings facing the principal streets were built as houses and are therefore on a domestic scale, usually two or sometimes three storeys high, and very varied in roof form, materials and architectural detailing. Earlier buildings tend to have gables facing the street but



St Michael's Church, High Street

from the 18th century onwards, the roofs were turned to run parallel with the street, and the refacing of earlier buildings often resulted in parapets behind which small pitched gabled roofs can just be glimpsed. This results in a varied roofscape, with some exposed roofs and some hidden. Chimneys are important, often with large clay pots. The elevations are similarly varied, and can be faced in render, tiles, brick (red, grey or even yellow), mathematical tiles (red, black glazed, or painted), or timber boarding. Ground floor shopfronts, often added in the late 19th century, are common in the High Street and Cliffe. In between these domestic houses are the more prestigious, and much larger, religious, governmental and commercial buildings including the churches, chapels, and Law Courts, which provide a break in the small scale domestic character of the principal streets. In the town centre, nearly all of these buildings sit close to the back of the pavement, with no front gardens or front areas. The exceptions are Albion Street, a development of 1822, and a few of the houses on the north side of School Hill, which have basements and small front areas.

The principal townscape features are:

- Saxon twittens and grid-pattern street layout: these can be seen in the narrow alleys which stretch southwards from the High Street towards Southover: St Andrew's Lane, St Martin's Lane, Green Lane, and Paine's Twitten, all largely defined by high flint walls;
- A widening of the street at the junction of High Street and Station Street, representing the site of the former Sessions House;
- Lewes castle – mainly 12th (keep) and 14th century (barbican) structure with later alterations, particularly of the 18th century, built from flint with stone dressings;
- Remains of Lewes Priory: 11th century and later structures, built from imported stone and flint;
- Variety of early churches (St John's, Southover; St Thomas-a-Becket, Cliffe; St Michael's, High Street and St Anne's, High Street) dating from the 12th century onwards and built from flint or Sussex sandstone;
- Later churches: All Saints, Friars Walk – originally of c.1500, but rebuilt and extended in 1806 and 1883; St John-sub-Castro, The Pells – rebuilt in 1839;
- Non-Conformist churches and chapels: Quaker Meeting House, Friars Walk (1784); Jireh Chapel, Cliffe (1805); Methodist Chapel, Station Street (1867); Providence Chapel, Lancaster Street (1859 – mostly demolished); Presbyterian Chapel, Market Street (1865); Eastgate Baptist Chapel, Eastgate Street (1741); former Baptist Chapel, Eastport Lane (dating to the 18th and 19th centuries); Westgate Unitarian Chapel, High Street (1700);
- Early timber-framed houses: the earliest known examples are located in the High Street between Station Street and Rotten Row:
 - ~ 14th century – Hugh Rae shop, nos. 74 and 75 High Street;
 - ~ 15th century – the 15th Century Bookshop, High Street; Bull House, High Street;
 - ~ 16th century – Shelleys Hotel, High Street; nos. 174-5 High Street; Barbican House, High Street; White Hart Hotel, High Street; and Anne of Cleves House, Southover;
 - ~ Also many examples in the High Street and Southover of early (16th or 17th century) timber – framed houses which have been refronted in the 18th or early 19th centuries;
- Prestigious town houses, built in the 18th or early 19th centuries – many examples in the High Street, Southover and Cliffe, with good quality Georgian details;
- Late Victorian/Edwardian suburbs – red brick houses in the Pells and the Wallands.



Quaker Meeting House



Barbican House



Shelleys Hotel



Red brick houses in The Wallands (Prince Edwards Road)

6.3 BUILDING MATERIALS AND LOCAL DETAILS

Introduction

Lewes is notable for the variety of its local building materials – various types of flint, clunch (chalk blocks), lime (burnt from the chalk), sandstone, timber (framing and cladding), and bricks and tiles made from the local clay. Mathematical (M) tiles, invented in the 18th century to replicate brickwork, are another local feature. Bricks and M tiles can be red, yellow or a shiny black. Bungaroosh, a mixture of flint, lime, brick and general rubble is another material,



Slate and hand made clay tiles are often found in Lewes (Friars Walk)



A flint house in Keere Street

much used in Lewes and Brighton, which is rendered to replicate stone. Additionally, there is also some imported building stone, such as Caen limestone from north France and Quarr limestone from the Isle of Wight.

From the early medieval period onwards, roofs on the more modest buildings were usually covered in thatch, but for the more important buildings, Horsham stone slate or clay tiles were used. Steeply pitched roofs, covered in handmade clay tiles, are particularly prevalent in the town centre and Southover. From about 1810 cheap Welsh slate was brought in by sea, and became the preferred roof material – an importing business was established in Lewes in 1818.

Walling materials and details

The earliest buildings in Lewes were made from timber from the extensive forests of the Weald and because of this no evidence has yet been found of any Saxon buildings in Lewes. Similarly, it is possible that there were timber structures within the castle bailey but again, no remains have been found.

William de Warenne's castle was rebuilt from flint in about 1100 with some imported Caen stone for the dressings. The two towers were added to the keep in the 13th century and there have been many further changes over the centuries. Some of the flint work is laid in herringbone formation, an indication of early Norman work. The gatehouse is mainly 13th century and in around 1336 a new barbican was built in front of it, utilising green sandstone as well as flint.

Lewes priory was built from the 11th century onwards, using flint rubble, faced in Caen limestone from France and grey Quarr limestone from the Isle of Wight. Following the demolition of many of the buildings in the 16th century, this stone was robbed and re-used elsewhere in the



Lewes Castle



Lewes priory

town, particularly for Southover Grange, built in 1572 and faced with dressed re-used stone. Examples of this stone can be found throughout Lewes, set into buildings or boundary walls. Little of the original stone now remains on the priory buildings – most of what can now be seen is the rubble and flint core.

Timber and thatch was used for the lower status buildings in Lewes after the Norman Conquest, clay tiles gradually replacing the thatch, with Horsham stone slate for the churches and public buildings. Most of the buildings in Lewes until the 18th century would therefore have been built from timber, infilled with wattle and daub, a lime-based plaster held together with animal hair. Windows would have been simple, shuttered openings, or, for the higher status buildings, glass set in leaded cames (glazing bars), supported on a metal frame, would have been used. Some leaded light windows can still be seen in Anne of Cleves House, where a double-height hall is lit by a tall, mullioned and transomed window – although both were heavily restored by Walter Godfrey in the 1920s. These buildings would have had steeply pitched, gabled roofs, often facing the street, with large brick chimney stacks. Good examples can be found in Southover: no. 42 Southover High Street, with a surviving Tudor gable, and no. 55, with twin gables facing the street, covered in Horsham stone slate.

There are surprisingly few examples of fully exposed timber-framing but some can be found in the High Street and in Southover: The 15th Century Bookshop, no. 100 High Street; Anne of Cleves House, Southover High Street; and no. 51 Southover High Street – interesting for its early close studding. Hugh Rae's shop, nos. 74 and 75



No.55 Southover High Street (on left)



Fair Hall, Southover High Street

High Street is notable for its 14th century tracery window although the front is encased in a Georgian façade with a late-19th century shopfront. Fair Hall in Southover High Street has a part jettied façade facing St Pancras Road, confirming the existence of an early (at least 16th century) timber-frame, although the main street frontage is early 19th century.

Cobbled flint is used for a variety of buildings, including both high and low status buildings such as outbuildings, stores and other secondary structures. For instance, in 1583 Sir Henry Goring of Ovingdean erected a substantial flint mansion to the rear of Bull House, a timber-framed building of the 15th century. The inn continued to function, access being gained to the mansion through a timber-framed porch, employing caryatids in the form of crouching satyrs. The mansion was converted into the Westgate Chapel in 1700 by the local Presbyterians. Other flint buildings can be found throughout the conservation area including 18th and 19th century stables, stores and cottages. The County Record

Office, off Castle Precincts, was built in 1852 as a maltings for Beards Brewery and is faced in roughly knapped flints. In St Nicholas Lane, St John Street and the corner of West and North Streets are buildings constructed of beach-picked flint cobbles.

Knapped flint, rather than the courser flint cobbles, was another local material which became popular in the 18th and early 19th centuries – examples can be seen at St Michael's Church, High Street (1748), and at nos. 137, 139, 140 and 141 High Street, where finely cut squares of flint are decorated with brick or stone dressings. Less prestigious, but no less attractive, no. 41 South Street (The Old Union Masters House) is built from circular pieces of knapped flint, with red brick dressings.

In the 18th century, brick became more fashionable and more affordable as brick-making techniques improved. However, many property owners in Lewes merely refronted their existing timber-framed houses using render or mathematical tiles, which were fixed to horizontal boarding or less commonly battens to replicate the appearance of brick. These could be a variety of colours but in Lewes the most popular colours were red or black, the latter always glazed to give a shiny appearance. The best example is probably Bartholomew House (c1815) below the Barbican. This material could also be used to create curved walling so became very popular where bow windows were required, as the curve could be constructed in timber and then covered in M tiles (e.g. Castle Hill House, no. 76 High Street).

At the same time, casement windows were removed and replaced with tall sashes, and new



East Sussex County Council Record Office, Castle Precincts



No.66 High Street

front doors and doorcases added. A typical example is St Michael's House, no. 57 High Street, which contains a jettied timber frame, clad in painted mathematical tiles, which also form the curved bays in which are located elegant Georgian sash windows. A pretty doorcase leads through to the entrance hall off which is a curving 17th century newel staircase, leading to a fully panelled first floor room. St Michael's House forms part of a 16th century timber-framed range which includes no. 58. Mathematical tiles are similarly used on the upper storeys of nos. 171 and 172 High Street, another 16th century timber frame with red mathematical tiles, and no. 66 High Street, a similarly early timber-framed building with red M tiles, Georgian shopfront and doorcase, and interesting internal features including a very fine 18th century staircase and a chalk block lined cellar with a Tudor doorway into the front wall, indicating that the street level may once have been much lower. Southover Old House, in Southover High Street, is covered in lemon-coloured M tiles, concealing an earlier timber-frame, as is Fairhall, located further westwards along Southover High Street.

Unlike buildings before, which often had narrow gables and an informal plan form, Georgian buildings are wider and generally face the street with a central doorway and symmetrical front, often three, four or five windows wide. The main roof runs parallel to the street, often terminating in end chimney stacks. Any deviation from this pattern suggests that the building is older and has been refronted.

Stone is also present in buildings of the 18th and 19th centuries, although most of the stone is re-used. Green sandstone from quarries in Eastbourne can be seen on the side wall of Westgate House, no. 92 High Street, which was built in c1790 using stone salvaged from the recently-demolished West Gate. Caen stone was used to reface Dial House, nos. 220-221 High Street, and probably came from the priory or one of the eight churches which had been demolished in the town. New Caen stone was also used to face Newcastle House, originally built in 1680s but refurbished in 1717 and completely (and carefully) refaced by Sir Reginald Blomfield in 1929 in Portland stone. This now forms part of the Crown Court.

Chalk, or clunch as the harder type of chalk is called, can be used as a building material but is generally not very resistant to weathering. Today there are only a few buildings in Lewes to be built from chalk blocks, including The Old Poorhouse (1633) in Castle Banks, nos. 97 South Street onwards, and nos. 51 and 52 South Street, where red bricks form the window and door openings (no. 53 appears to be part of the same terrace but has been rendered).

Brick buildings in Lewes throughout the 18th and 19th centuries utilised a variety of different coloured bricks, although red and grey were the most usual. Often the red brick is mixed with semi-glazed grey headers, which are also sometimes used on their own. In the early 19th century, long terraces were built using these grey bricks with red brick dressings, most notably in Lansdowne Terrace (1838), Lansdowne Place (1827), Abinger Place (1830s) and later, in Grange Road (1860s). Sash windows, simple doorcases, and a minimum of decoration, are typical.



Nos. 51 & 52 South Street

Towards the end of the 19th century, bricks became increasingly cheaper and therefore more popular, so most of the new buildings in Lewes from 1875 onwards were built in brick, often made locally – there still is a brickworks at Newick, just ten kilometres to the north of Lewes. Styles varied, but leant towards the Sussex Vernacular Revival then popular, bringing back the use of steeply pitched roofs, tile-hung elevations, and false timber-framing. Good examples can be seen on houses in South Street, Cliffe; St Anne's Crescent; and The Pells. The King's Head Public House in Southover is an example of a late 19th century commercial neo-Tudor building. The use of red and blue brick, in a chequer pattern, was also popular and there are further good examples in Sun Street and Priory Street, dating to the 1820s. Many of the municipal buildings of the time also provided well detailed brick buildings, usually with Gothic details: the Fitzroy Library (1862); the School of Art, Albion Street (1874), which served as the town museum between 1933 and 1955 and as the public library between 1955 and 2005; and the Freemasons Hall, High Street (1868), with a mixture of creamy/yellow brick.

During the 18th and 19th centuries local builders used another building material known as 'bungaroosh', which they made by mixing flint rubble with old bricks and lime mortar. This had to be built in 'lifts', as it is not very stable, especially when wet. It was usually covered in a smooth lime render then lined out to replicate stone, then painted. It provided the neat, geometric

frontages so popular during the Georgian period, which could then be 'dressed up' with classical details: impressive doorcases and fanlights, huge sash windows, and moulded cornices and string courses. A good example is Priory Crescent, of c1840. This material was also used extensively in Brighton and Hove for the long terraces of late Georgian houses along the seafront.

After the 1920s and 1930s, when a local brown and red brick was still used for most new housing, materials ceased to be sourced locally so that from the mid-20th century onwards, new buildings lost any sense of belonging specially to Lewes. This is a trend which could be reversed if enough effort and money were put into the design and detailing of new buildings.

Roofs

Roofs were initially thatched, although the more prestigious were covered with Horsham slate, a sandstone from West Sussex, or clay tile. Horsham stone slates, sometimes laid in attractive diminishing courses, can be seen on St Anne's Church, Southover Grange, Shelleys Hotel, St Thomas' Church, nos. 159, 170 and 174 High Street, and Anne of Cleve's House, Southover High Street, where they are combined with clay tiles. These tiles, made locally, were cheaper and more resilient than thatch, and their use became fairly ubiquitous between the 16th and 18th centuries. Slate became more fashionable after the beginning of the 19th century, and Welsh slate from Penrhyn in Snowdonia was imported to



Priory Crescent



Southover Grange



Broomans Lane

Lewes by sea from 1810 onwards. A slate-importing business was established in Lewes in 1818, funded by the Clerk of the Peace as a sleeping partner.

Boundaries

Flint and the local red brick are also both used extensively for boundary walls. Typically, flint walls are made from field flints, roughly shaped, and bound together by lime mortar. Sometimes they are protected by pentagonal or dome shaped clay copings, once made locally and an important feature which are becoming increasingly hard to replace once damaged. Taller walls often have brick string courses to provide strength and stability. Good examples can be seen either side of the principal twittens: Green Lane, Paine's Twitten, Walwers Lane, Church Twitten and Broomans Lane, around Southover Grange (which also has some robbed Priory stone) and along Rotten Row. Some of these walls are in poor condition, and at the time of writing, The Lewes Buildings Preservation Trust currently offer private owners small grants towards the cost of repairing their flint walls.

Street railings

Like many historic places, Lewes suffered from the removal of traditional cast iron railings during World War II as part of the war effort. In some

places, such as St John's Terrace, railings were retained because they protected basement front areas and they now make a major contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Where an opportunity exists to reinstate these railings this should be done, subject to the correct materials and details being used.

6.4 BUILDINGS OF TOWNSCAPE MERIT

In addition to the conservation area's 675 listed buildings, a number of unlisted buildings have been noted on the Townscape Appraisal map as being 'Buildings of Townscape Merit'.

Buildings identified as having 'townscape merit' will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a *positive* contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. Where a building has been heavily altered, and restoration would be impracticable, they are excluded. Along with the listed buildings, Buildings of Townscape Merit help create Lewes' distinctive and interesting historic townscape. As recommended in Planning Policy Guidance 15:



Buildings of Townscape Merit in Pelham Terrace, The Pells



Buildings of Townscape Merit in Grange Road, Southover

Planning and the Historic Environment, the general presumption should be in favour of retaining all buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Any application to demolish a Building of Townscape Merit will therefore need to be accompanied by a reasoned justification similar to that required for a listed building. Permission should be given for demolition only if the applicant can provide proof that the building is beyond economic repair, and that an alternative use cannot be found. If permission is given for demolition, any replacement building will need to be of the highest possible design standard. Similarly, all applications for alterations and extensions will be very carefully controlled.

The District Council already has a Local List although there are no entries for Lewes. These are buildings of almost listable quality which because of their history and or architecture, are considered to be especially *locally* significant. Some of the Buildings of Townscape Merit identified in this appraisal may be suitable for 'Local' listing, but the more detailed assessment of these buildings will be subject to resources being available to carry out this work.

6.5 HISTORIC SHOPFRONTS AND ADVERTISING

There is a variety of shopfronts in the Lewes Conservation Area, many of them dating to the 19th century and several of outstanding interest. They are generally built from timber and painted, with traditional details including decorative pilasters which support a cornice and fascia, with a shop window below. These can be either modern (full plate glass) or sub-divided using mullions and transoms, sometimes with fine glazing bars. Stall risers, which protect the glass from the pavement, are also prevalent, and these are often divided into panels with mouldings, or are tiled. Most of the shops are located in relatively small historic buildings which were originally built as family houses – they are therefore modestly sized and on a domestic scale. There are a few exceptions, notably Woolworths in Cliffe High Street, which although located in a listed building, provides a wide 1930s shop front.

Lewes District Council has produced a Shopfront Guidance leaflet, advising owners on the correct methods of restoration and repair. Additionally, a recent HERS (Heritage Economic Regeneration) grant scheme, run by the Council with funding from

