

The Archaeology of Wiltshire's Towns

*An Extensive Urban Survey*

# **MALMESBURY**

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# The Archaeology and History of Malmesbury

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Towns are an important component of the historic environment which have developed over many hundreds of years and are under constant development pressures. The archaeological resource within our historic towns is an invaluable and irreplaceable source of data about past societies and the evolution of our culture. Despite these factors the archaeology of many towns, especially the smaller market towns, is poorly understood.
- 1.2. In 1976 the D.O.E. sponsored a study of the archaeology of Wiltshire's historic towns, aiming to assess the relative importance of the towns at different points in time as a basis for future archaeological research. This resulted in the publication of "*Wiltshire Towns: the archaeological potential*" (Haslam 1976). Since then, the book has been one of the key references for archaeologists monitoring urban development and its impact in the county.
- 1.3. A massive increase in the amount of archaeological and historical data available and changes in legislation such as the introduction of Planning Policy Guidance note No. 16 have meant that a reappraisal of the situation is now due. The Extensive Urban Survey of Wiltshire has been commissioned by English Heritage, as part of a National programme, to address the need for a new assessment of urban archaeology in the county. The current structure of the historic county of Wiltshire is two-tier, with the County Council working in conjunction with the four District Councils (Kennet, North Wiltshire, Salisbury and West Wiltshire) and the new unitary authority of Swindon - historically part of the county. The survey aims to map the development of all of Wiltshire's and Swindon's historic towns (Fig. 1) and to assess the extent of the surviving archaeology and built heritage. It is also proposed that the threat of development on the historic environment within the county's towns will be examined.
- 1.4. The origins of urban centres in England reach back to the Iron Age. During the Roman occupation new, planned, urban centres were linked by an efficient road system. In the Saxon period, defended towns and royal boroughs were developed and later medieval towns grew around markets as economic conditions improved or were 'planted' as planned new centres.
- 1.5. As far as is known the first towns in Wiltshire appeared during the Romano-British period but all the known examples are now greenfield sites, although some may have given rise to nearby settlements. Most modern towns in the county have their roots as Saxon villages or defended settlements such as Cricklade and Wilton. Many of the villages grew into small towns after the Norman invasion, often focussed around a castle or market and in the early thirteenth century 'planted boroughs', in which individual plots of land were sold by the major landowner.

- 1.6. The definition of a town for inclusion in the survey follows the criteria laid out in Heighway (1972), by which the settlement must possess certain facilities such as defences, a mint, a market, a street plan, or a judicial centre, and demonstrate such urban attributes as high population, a diversified economic base or a central or key location. For the purposes of the survey, however, the towns should meet these criteria historically, even if they no longer do so. This allows, for example, the inclusion of the five known Roman towns in the county, and settlements such as the village of Heytesbury, which was developed as a planned town in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but which did not succeed as an urban centre. The full list of 34 towns included in the survey and the criteria for inclusion are included as Appendix 1. Malmesbury satisfies at least six of the criteria: It had urban defences (*criteria i*); it has medieval market (*criteria iii*); it had a mint (*criteria iv*); it has sustained a substantial population (*criteria vii*); it had clear burgage plots in the medieval period (*criteria ix*) and it had three parish churches and four monastic institutions (*criteria xi*).
- 1.7. The area of study in each town is defined by the size of the town as it stood in 1945, encompassing both the historic core of the town and the older industrial and suburban development. There is an emphasis on the earlier material, and the later Victorian and 20<sup>th</sup> century development are covered here only very briefly. Although more detailed than Haslam's report, in most cases each study remains no more than a brief summary of the data, and a guide to the location of more detail for other researchers. The extent of the study area for Malmesbury is depicted in Fig. 2.
- 1.8. The research into each town will be encapsulated into two reports: a summary and assessment of the data gathered and an outline strategy for future management of specified sections of the urban area. This first report is intended to provide a clear and up-to-date synthesis of the available archaeological and historical data for Malmesbury, with an assessment of the main areas of historic settlement in the town and of the potential and sensitivity of the archaeologically important areas. The assessment reports are compiled from four main data streams: geographical and geological sources for the location and topographical summary; secondary historical sources for the historical outline; recorded archaeological data for the sites and finds information; the archive of the Wiltshire Building Record (WBR) for architectural data. The architectural summary is not subject to the same level of research as the other three data streams, and the information presented in the reports is based upon evidence compiled from the existing WBR archive, updated in places by field visits to note non-listed buildings of historic interest, combined with the Department Of The Environment schedule of listed buildings.
- 1.9. This Assessment was prepared originally in 2002, with amendments from consultations added in 2004. Table1 (archaeological investigations) has been updated, but the results of these more recent events have not been assimilated. Valuable comments have been provided by Roberta Prince, Curator, Athelstan Museum).

## **2. LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY**

2.1. Malmesbury stands at the confluence of the Sherston and Tetbury branches of the Bristol Avon on a ridge of Cornbrash between the two rivers. The eastward flowing streams almost enclose the town, coming within 230m of each other at the north-west end of town and finally meeting at its south-eastern corner. Along both the east and west sides of the ridge, the land falls away sharply to the rivers, providing a natural defensive position which nonetheless seems to have been deliberately enhanced, at least along the eastern side. At the southern end the ridge slopes down to the water at a much shallower angle.

## **3. PAST WORK AND THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE**

### ***3.1 Introduction***

3.1.1. This is a desk-based study, using material available within the County Council Archaeological Service in Trowbridge; the Sites and Monuments Record; The Wiltshire Reference Library; the Wiltshire Record Office; and the Wiltshire Buildings Record. Historical data are generally drawn from secondary sources, normally the Victoria County History and histories of the individual towns, based on recommendations or specific requirements. Data on archaeological events and their results are drawn directly from the original reports or publications wherever these are available

3.1.2 The use of primary sources in the Record Office is restricted to maps and sometimes other pictorial material, which are consulted to locate individual entities and to trace the growth of the settlement.

### ***3.2 Historic Sources***

3.2.1 With its magnificent abbey and impressive situation, Malmesbury has naturally been the subject of a long and sustained historical interest, and sources consulted include works published between 1805 and the late 1990s. The earliest map to show any useful detail of the extents of the settlement is Andrews and Dury's 1773 county map, although no absolute detail is recognisable before the 1831 borough plan.

3.2.2 One pictorial source deserves special mention. The 1648 panorama is a document which has only recently come to light. It is an annotated painting, an aerial view of the fortified town of Malmesbury seen from the west which purports to show the borough as it was in October 1646, just before the defences pictured were demolished. This detailed record, although somewhat distorted in perspective, has facilitated a reasonable reconstruction of the Civil War defences when used with the town walls survey (Keystone 1994). The panorama is however without provenance, a matter of some concern considering the importance of the detail it depicts.

### 3.3 Archeological Work In The Town

3.3.1 The following is a list of known archaeological events based on the County Sites and Monuments Record, Excavations Record, and the Fieldwork reports kept in the County Archaeology Section in Trowbridge. Others have been added as a result of incidental mention in one of the above sources, and where there is enough information to get at least a general idea of the location of the event. The events are shown on Fig. 3.

Event	Year	Site Name/Location	Event Type	Excavator	Reference
001		Abbey	Excavation	H. Brakspear	(Brakspear 1912-13)
002	1977	31, Holloway	Excavation	A. Percy	(Percy 1979)
003	1986-7	Postern Mill	Excavation	Wilts. Rescue Archaeology Project	(Currie <i>et al</i> 1993)
004	1988	The Old Bell Inn	Excavation	WRAP; Thamesdown Archaeological Unit	(Anon. 1990)
005	1989	Abbey House	Excavation	Wessex Archaeology	(Anon. 1991)
006	1993	Library Car Park	Excavation	E. Toombs	(Canham 1993)
007	1998	Nun's Walk	Earthwork Survey	Mark Corney	(Corney 1998)
008	1994	Town Walls	Buildings Survey	Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants	(KHBC 1994)
009	1994	Town Walls	Conservation work	Minerva Conservation	(Minerva 1994)
010	1997	Backhill, Silver Street	Watching Brief	Bristol & Regional Archaeology Service	(BARAS 1997)
011	1998	Nuns' Walk, semi-circular mound	Geophysical Survey	Stratascan Ltd.	(Barker 1998)
012	1972	Abbey Tea Rooms	Watching Brief	Wiltshire County Council	(anon. 1973)
013	1993	Market Place	Watching Brief	AC Archaeology	(Hawkes 1993)
014	1994	Market Place	Watching Brief	AC Archaeology	(Hawkes 1994)
015	1996	Market Place	Watching Brief	AC Archaeology	(Hawkes 1996)
016	1998	Oxford Street	Watching Brief	Foundations Archaeology	(Foundations Archaeology 1998)
017	1996	Mill Lane	Watching Brief	Wessex Archaeology	(Wessex Archaeology 1996)
018	1997	Abbey House	Excavation	Central Archaeology Service	(Humble 1997)
019	1998	Tower House	Watching Brief	Bath Archaeological Trust	(Bell 1998)
020	1994	St George's Street	Watching Brief	Wessex Archaeology	(Wessex Archaeology 1994)
021	1999	Abbey Church	Survey	J. Sampson	(Sampson 1999)
022	1999	St Joseph's School	Excavation	Bristol & Regional Archaeology Service	(BARAS 2002)
023	2001	Back Hill	Watching Brief	Bristol & Regional Archaeology Service	(BARAS 2001)
*024	2002	Gloucester Street	Watching Brief	Cotswold Archaeological Trust	Cotswold Archaeological Trust 2002
*025	2003	4 West Street	Evaluation	Bernard Phillips	Bernard Phillips 2003
*026	2003	Abbey West End	Evaluation	Cotswold Archaeology	Cotswold Archaeology 2003
*027	2003	50 King's Wall	Evaluation	AC Archaeology	AC Archaeology 2003
*028	2003	Saxon House, High Street	Building Recording	Cotswold Archaeology	Cotswold Archaeology 2003
*029	2004	Abbey	Watching Brief	Foundations	Foundations 2004

**Table 1:** Archaeological Events and Interventions in Malmesbury. Reports flagged thus \* were received after the preparation of this Assessment, which was compiled in 2002.

#### **4 HISTORICAL OUTLINE**

4.1 This report is not intended to provide a major historical review of the history of Malmesbury, and the material included here relates mainly to events that might have had some impact on the archaeology of the town. The chief source of historical information for Malmesbury is the Victoria County History Volume XIV published in 1991, upon which, unless otherwise stated, the Historical Outline is based

4.2 The origin of the modern settlement of Malmesbury is generally credited to an Irish teacher, Maildulph, who founded a religious school there in the late 7<sup>th</sup> century. Luce (1979,4-5) quotes the 14<sup>th</sup> century *Eulogie of Histories* thus:

*"[Maildulph] came to rest under the castle of Bladon , called by the Saxons Ingleburne, which had been built by a British King... in the year 642".*

4.3 This fortified place – Caer Bladon – was the sparsely inhabited site of a former British city, according to the source, and had a relationship to another centre named Caer Dur – the king’s residence – believed to be Brokenborough (Haslam 1984, 111). Malmesbury thus appears to follow the pattern of re-use of Iron Age hillforts in the Saxon period as seen elsewhere.

4.4 The defences, whether pre- or post-Roman, apparently remained extant since the *Eulogie* mentions the presence of a (presumably Saxon) garrison from which Maildulph obtained permission to settle. Credit for the foundation of the abbey usually goes to one of Maildulph’s students, Aldhelm, who was buried there in 709. Aldhelm was a kinsman of King Ine, and the abbey received royal patronage from the beginning. The town presumably grew up around the abbey, which soon became wealthy and influential.

4.5 In 878 Malmesbury was sacked by the Danes. Shortly after this event, the hilltop town was fortified by Alfred and became one of the Wiltshire burghs in his campaign to protect the population against the ravages of the Danes. There is a reference to these defences in relation to a gift of land to the town by Athelstan (924 – 939, Haslam 1976, 35). A mint was established in the reign of Aethelred II circa 985, and later in the 10<sup>th</sup> century the abbey was rebuilt, although whether by the king or the abbot is not certain. Athelstan is reputedly buried in the Abbey. The town remained important and is the first Wiltshire borough covered in the Domesday survey before even the list of landowners in the county (Thorn 1979).

- 4.6 Early in the 12<sup>th</sup> century the abbey came under the influence of Bishop Roger of Salisbury, who defended the promontory by building a castle. Brakspear (1912-3) has suggested that the castle stood near the east gate, but most authorities agree that a location on the narrow neck of the promontory is most likely, adjacent to the church and the cloister and roughly where the Bell Hotel now stands. It is generally believed that Bishop Roger was also responsible for rebuilding the town defences, although written evidence for this is lacking. He may also have initiated the rebuilding of the abbey church.
- 4.7 The town was sacked in 1139, and appears to have been held for Stephen through the Anarchy that prevailed for the next twelve years. At the request of the monks and with King John's consent, the castle was pulled down in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. The manor, which had been seized by the crown, was returned to the abbey at this time..
- 4.8 The abbey dominated the religious life of the town, but there was a second house, the Priory of St John of Jerusalem at the south gate. There are also reports of a nunnery in Burnivale which was closed amid scandal in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Nearby at Burton there was the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalene, and on the hill at Whitchurch stood another ecclesiastical structure of unknown origin (pulled down in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to build the modern farmhouse which incorporates part of it).
- 4.9 The town received a charter in 1381, and was granted an annual five day fair in May on the feast of St. Aldhelm, which continued until 1540. Three more fairs were added in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. A Saturday Market was recorded in 1223 and continued until after 1635. Leland in 1542 reported a lively market around the Market Cross (Chandler 1993), probably the Saturday one, and more recently a Monday market was held there (Hodge 1968,25). A Thursday market at Westport was granted in 1252, perhaps also the location for the annual fair.
- 4.10 In 1539 the abbey was dissolved, and the buildings acquired by a local clothier, William Stumpe, who set up his looms in the disused churches. By 1542 he had given the nave of the abbey church to the town to act as the parish church. The nave of St Paul's had by that time been demolished, the tower was in use as a dwelling and the chancel served as the town hall. The town prospered, and in 1547, with the adult communicant population at 860, Malmesbury (with Westport) was still the third largest town in Wiltshire.
- 4.11 During the Civil War the town changed hands no fewer than six times, eventually being fortified and held by Parliament from 1644 (Hodge 1968,12). As part of the new defence scheme, St Mary's church in Westport was demolished, and houses in Abbey Row were blown up to prevent their use by snipers (ibid.). The church was later rebuilt but the houses were never replaced. In one location the sides of the ridge were cut back to form a cliff below the walls, according to the notes on the 1648 panorama. The defences were demolished by act of parliament in 1646.

- 4.12 Weaving and from the 14<sup>th</sup> century the woollen trade continued to be mainstays of the town's economy until the mid- 18<sup>th</sup> century and there were numerous mills on the rivers around the edges of the town. Glovers were also prominent. The cloth trade had revived by 1800, but during the 19<sup>th</sup> century silk and lace making had replaced cloth manufacture and several mills were engaged in the new specialist trade (ibid.,27). However, there are only 17 lacemakers recorded in the 1871 census, most having found work in the silk mills (information from Roberta Prince). Hodge notes that in this period there was still no public water supply, and that domestic wells were common in the town.
- 4.13 The population in 1801 stood at 1,107, and rose to almost 3,000 by the end of the century but by 1951 had dropped again to 2,510.

## **5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SUMMARY**

### **5.1 Introduction**

- 5.1.1 The following is a resume of the archaeological record of the town, drawn from the county SMR and the various excavation reports. Data on surviving buildings come from the Wiltshire Buildings Record unless otherwise stated. The bold print numbers in this section refer to entries in the Urban Survey database, and appear on the location maps in Figs. 4 - 8, which were created from the database and the SMR.

### **5.2 Prehistory(Fig 4)**

- 5.2.1 Until recently there has been little prehistoric activity recorded from the environs of Malmesbury. The earliest find in the town is a flint point, probably of Bronze Age date (MM001). There are a number of unprovenanced flint implements in the Athelstan Museum which may have been found in or near the town.
- 5.2.2 Haslam (1976,35) postulated the existence of an Iron Age hillfort as the precursor to the Saxon and medieval settlements. This idea was based partly on the observation that a bank along the edge of Nun's Walk is in part sealed beneath the town wall(MM010) and a report that a bank near the east gate contained vitrified deposits reminiscent of some Iron Age defences (MM002, Moffat 1805,101). The Nun's walk bank has been the subject of earthwork survey by Corney (1998), who concluded that it was likely to be either Saxon or Iron Age in date.
- 5.2.3 Additionally, Haslam cites the 14<sup>th</sup> century account of the origins of Malmesbury which involves a 'caer' or castle (paras 4.2 – 3 above), and further the finding of a gold stater and some Iron Age loom weights (MM003). The stater was found "near Malmesbury" and a silver drachma of similar age was unlocated in the district (Grinsell 1957,84). The loom weights, which could possibly date from a later period, were found in a burnt horizon of some antiquity:

*“on all sides of the hill on which the town stands is daily discovered a stratum of red earth intermixed with stones, bearing marks of the action of fire. In many places this stratum is buried under other strata and in it from time to time have been discovered fragments of badly burned bricks. In a recent excavation of the site of the ancient wall were discovered considerable quantities of these bricks... [they] were triangular, and perforated, perhaps for ... fastening... one to the other”* (B.C.T. 1831, 500).

5.2.4 Burnt deposits were observed at the base of the excavations in the library car park but with dating evidence believed to relate to phases of Saxon defences (MM050, Canham 1993). More recently the burnt layer has been recorded in association with Iron Age pottery during work related to the restoration of the walls in the area of St Joseph’s School, and this has been followed up in 2000 by a research excavation (MM052, BARAS 2002). The investigation revealed substantial defences of Iron Age date in this north-east quadrant of the town, with implications from the distribution of burnt deposits described above that these defences may have encircled the hilltop. This perhaps was a promontory fort, the standard form of the Iron Age hillfort in the Cotswolds, and its discovery confirms Haslam’s theory. The excavation revealed that the core of the Iron Age defence was a stone wall that had been substantially robbed in the Saxon period, perhaps to supply material for new defences.

### **5.3 Roman(Fig.4)**

5.3.1A hypocaust floor (MM004) was found in 1887 off Oxford Street and was the only evidence of a Romano-British building in the area of the town (Anon 1887). It was unfortunately not preserved. Haslam mentions that “pottery lamps and a flask” were found nearby (1976, 35), although other sources only locate them as “near Malmesbury” (Grinsell 1957,84).

5.3.2 Pottery and a coin were found in Medieval deposits during excavations on the Postern Mill site in 1986-7 (MM005) Currie *et al* 1993, and sherds of probable late Roman pottery were found below a Medieval burial in the abbey grounds (MM006). Bowen (2000, 20) refers to finds of Roman pottery in the same area. Further afield, a Follis of Valentinian I was found in Harper’s Lane in Westport (MM007) and several unlocated finds including another coin are recorded from the area.

### **5.4 Saxon(Fig.5)**

5.4.1 Although the impact of Alfred is clearly visible in the layout of the town’s street grid, defences of the period have proven elusive. The bank visible beneath the medieval wall along Nun’s Walk on the eastern side of the town (MM010) has been attributed to the Iron Age hillfort (Haslam 1976, Corney 1998), but excavations indicate that it overlies the burnt clay deposit and may date to between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries (Canham 1993). In the NE corner of the town at St Joseph’s school, the same

excavation that verified the existence of an Iron Age hillfort also exposed the remains of a Saxon limestone rampart (BARAS 2002, 12)

5.4.2 None of the surviving parts of the Abbey belong to the period of its Saxon foundation, but excavations in and around the market cross have unearthed a number of early burials (MM008). They are now believed to be Late Saxon with a radio-carbon date of 1020 +/- 50 (Hawkes 1993, 1994b, NWDC 1993). A nearby wall foundation (MM009) was of a similar date and presumably belonged to one of the monastic buildings (*ibid.* 1993). This is presumably a part of the burial ground of St Paul's church, located to the west of the Market Place.

5.4.3 The same work revealed a wide ditch running parallel to Oxford Street land infilled by the 12<sup>th</sup> century. This might possibly be interpreted as the northern line of the town defences established by King Alfred, but that assumes that the his defences left the abbey to fend for itself since. It is more likely that this was the northern defence of the Middle Saxon settlement. A garrison is on record (para 4.4), and the late date of the finds may simply indicate that the feature remained partly open adjacent to Oxford Street long after it became defunct.

5.4.4 In 1978 the remains of the Anglo-Saxon chapel of St Helen (MM049) were discovered converted to a house in Bristol Street (Rodwell 1989). These remains, part of the nave, date to the 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> century. No trace has been recorded of another church of Saxon origin, that described by Leland in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as "a little church adjoining the south transept" (Watkin 1956, 228). From this its location is reasonably fixed, but some mystery surrounds its name. Watkin has argued that this was the church of St Laurence (*ibid.*) and Bowen supports this (Bowen 2000). There is considerable confusion on the location of these early churches. William of Malmesbury states that Aldhelm built a church in honour of St Mary, and next to it another in honour of St Michael (Preest 2002, 247).

5.4.5 Excavations at the Postern Mill site (MM055, Currie 1993) revealed evidence of Late Saxon stone working and possible iron working.

## **5.5 Medieval (Fig.6)**

5.5.1 The medieval town was bounded by defensive stone walls (MM011), believed to have been erected by Bishop Roger of Salisbury (1136-9, para 4.7 above). Although much repaired and altered above ground at least, the line of the walls still survives for much of the circuit. The best-preserved section is along the east of the town besides the Nun's Walk (MM012). The remains of the castle, believed to have stood immediately to the northwest of the abbey, have completely disappeared. The only excavation on the site, in 1988, revealed no evidence of its existence (Anon 1990).

5.5.2 Malmesbury Abbey is largely a buried archaeological site extending over a significant proportion of the Medieval town. The abbey church itself

(MM013) together with a part of Abbey House are the only significant parts of the monastic complex that are still extant. It is essentially a late Norman church with primitive gothic elements and later Medieval windows. What survives is only around a third of the original church, part of the nave and a wall of the south transept. The cloister stood to the north of the surviving church and there was a small church or chapel attached to the end of the south transept (Chandler 1993,488). Much of the remainder is preserved in the grounds to the north and east of the church. A local architect and archaeologist, Harold Brakspear, undertook extensive excavations around the abbey in the early 1900s to clarify the ground plan (Brakspear 1912-13).

- 5.5.3 The burial excavated in the garden of Abbey House (Humble 1997) was apparently sited next to the lady chapel at the east end of the abbey. Part of the monastic reredorter (MM014) survives beneath the later Abbey House against the north wall of the site and some 13<sup>th</sup> century walling representing part of the abbey guest house survives in the Bell Hotel (MM015) west of the church.
- 5.5.4 None of the other medieval churches and chapels within the walls survive. The tower of the town church of St. Paul (MM016) survives just to the west of the c.1490 market cross (MM017). The nave had been demolished by 1530, when Leland visited, and the chancel was in use as the town hall. Part of another Medieval chapel wall survives in the fabric of 19 & 21, Bristol Street in Westport (WBR).
- 5.5.5 Between the Market Cross and the Abbey excavations revealed the floor make-up layers of a Medieval house (MM018), though its association or otherwise with the abbey is not known (Hawkes 1994a). Remains of a trackway or Medieval street were observed in the base of a service trench along the north side of Oxford Street next to the market cross (MM019, Foundations Archaeology 1998). In addition, a series of deposits that appear to represent the re-surfacing of the Medieval market place came to light, incorporating quantities of animal bone and pottery of 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century date (Hawkes 1993, 3).
- 5.5.6 In Abbey Row is St Aldhelm's Well, a Medieval spring and water supply (MM022). In the lower town area between the southern town wall and the river there is evidence of an early suburban expansion in the form of the 12<sup>th</sup> century St John's almshouses (MM023), a substantial part of which survives, and the remains of a Medieval courthouse nearby (MM024).
- 5.5.7 Outside the walls Medieval survivals include 65 & 69 Gloucester Road, originally a single 15<sup>th</sup> century hall house, and a chapel wall from 19 & 21 Bristol Street (MM049), both in Westport.
- 5.5.8 The excavation of the Postern Mill site in 1986-7 revealed several Medieval industrial features including a substantial 12<sup>th</sup> century hearth and two later ditches (MM025) which may relate to a Medieval mill. Nearby but across the stream lies Daniels's Well (MM026), a Medieval penitential pool and later a baptismal pool.

- 5.5.9 Several of the streets are mentioned in documents dating to the late 12<sup>th</sup> century (Gover *et al* 1939). Among these are High Street (Heystrete) (MM043), Ingram Street (Ingerameslane) (MM044), and Cross Hayes (Crossheys) (MM45), whilst outside the walls both Kyngeswalle (MM046) and Burneval (MM047) are 12<sup>th</sup> century forms. Market Cross, Silver Street, Holloway, and Oxford Street all appear on the 1648 panorama, as do Crosse Hay Lane (now St Dennis Road) and Hen Lane (now Oliver's Lane). The Horsefair in Westport (MM048) is first noted by Aubrey (1670) but like the others is probably medieval in origin.
- 5.5.10 Miscellaneous finds include a chalk spindle whorl from the Westport area (MM027) and a groat of Edward IV (MM028) found to the south-east of the town beside what is now the bypass. A pipeline crossing the fields from Halcombe to the west of the town revealed a single 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century potsherd (MM029) (Wessex Archaeology 1994).

## **5.6 Post Medieval/Undated (Fig.7)**

- 5.6.1 Fragments of the Civil War defences survive at various points around the walls notably a short section west of the old West Gate, south of Abbey Row (MM030), several lengths along Nun's Walk (MM053), and possibly also the portion north of Mill lane investigated by Wessex Archaeology (1996) (MM031). The tower platform or base on Nun's Walk (MM032) covered by the geophysical survey (Barker 1998) is another probable candidate for the 17<sup>th</sup> century defences. Another portion, along Burnivale (MM033), is clearly later than the defences shown on the 1648 panorama, as was a short section excavated in Back Hill (MM034). All portions of the wall have been extensively repaired, and much of the visible stone work today dates from the late 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- 5.6.2 The Post-Medieval remains in the Postern Mill excavations included the remains of the Mill itself, dumped in a ditch on top of what was interpreted as waste from either tanning or a slaughterhouse (or both) (MM 035). Excavation behind a house on Holloway in 1977 (Peacey 1979) uncovered the remains of an 18<sup>th</sup> century clay pipe kiln (MM036). Finally, a collection of 18<sup>th</sup> century pottery is recorded from a post-medieval well in the Garden of a house in Bristol Street, Westport (MM037).
- 5.6.3 Excavations on the site of the former Athelstan Cinema site discovered a small number of human bones, including part of a burial still in situ (MM054, Hawkes 1966). All are undated. More recent work (Cotswold Archaeology forthcoming) has recovered some 75 skeletons from the site.

## **5.7 Industrial (Fig.8)**

- 5.7.1 The wool and cloth trade which dominated the economy of the town has left its mark on the landscape in the shape of a number of industrial mills on the rivers encircling the promontory. The best preserved of these are, on the north side of the town, the Abbey Mill (MM038); to the east across

Cow Bridge, the Winyard Mill (MM039), converted more recently to a corn mill; and the Silk Mill (MM040) by St. John's Bridge in the south-east. The Postern Mill and the Mill Brewery next to the Sherston Water have now completely disappeared beneath a modern housing estate.

5.7.2 The railway (MM041) for the most part by-passed the town, just clipping the north-east corner of the defences by Nun's walk and tunnelling beneath that corner of the ridge. The line terminated at Malmesbury and the station and yard lay across the river to the north-east of Westport.

5.7.3 The Gasworks (MM042) is situated next to the river and its impact on the archaeology of the town is likely to be minimal. The Workhouse was located on the north-western edge of the town (MM051).

## **5.8 Built Heritage**

5.8.1 Malmesbury is a Cotswold market town characterised by a regular street pattern and houses built from limestone with Cotswold stone tile roofing. It was in origin a frontier to the kingdom of Wessex. The defensive posture of its hilltop location remains its dominant characteristic, as does the prominence of the abbey, still marked by its surviving church which commands town and surrounding countryside. Following the dissolution of the abbey in the mid-sixteenth century, much of its fine ashlar stone was re-used in town properties.

### **5.8.2 Saxon**

5.8.2.1 The very earliest buildings survive as fragments buried in later houses in the Westport area, outside the walled town, such as the mediaeval chapel wall now incorporated into 19 & 21 Bristol Street, and the 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century former chapel, possibly that of St Helen's, remodelled in the C17, now no.23 Bristol Street (grade II\*).

### **5.8.3 Twelfth Century**

5.8.3.1 Further to the south, also outside the bounds of the borough, is another rare survival. A small C17 grade I listed court house building at the rear of 27 St John's Street has been identified as possible conventual building belonging to the Hospital of St John. It has steeply battered interior walls, which appear to be original. This is one of four C12 listed structures in the town.

5.8.3.2 The VCH (vol. XIV) places the earliest recorded activity near the site of the present abbey church of St Mary & St Aldhelm, when Roger, Bishop of Salisbury built his castle in the 1130s. Surviving sections of the town wall are listed, although most have been extensively altered and rebuilt. The least altered section of the curtain wall to the castle is still extant as a perimeter wall to Munden's Close.

5.8.3.3 To Bishop Roger has been attributed the building of the grade I listed Abbey Church between 1118 and 1139, although it mostly dates from 1160-80. In the garden to the south of Abbey House in the Market Cross are the remains of a C12 arch, listed grade II\*, from the abbey, reset in the mid C16 as a garden ornament.

#### 5.8.4 Thirteenth Century

5.8.4.1 Abbey House, is a grade I listed building of c1540 now known to be a rebuilding of a late C13 structure, of which the undercroft remains. Now a hotel, the Old Bell was the abbey guest house, probably built by Bishop Loring in the C13 from the C12 remains of the keep. It retains a first floor hall and possibly the earliest domestic fireplace served by a flue in England.

#### 5.8.5 Fourteenth Century

5.8.5.1 In the Market Cross is no.6, The Apostles, the only building dating possibly from the late C14 or early C15. It is reputed to be an Hospitium to the abbey, retaining a bressumer support for an originally jettied front.

#### 5.8.6 Fifteenth Century

5.8.6.1 Of seven C15 buildings, nos. 65 & 67 Gloucester Road consist of an early C15 open hall house with arch bracing, now divided into two. The ridge and bracing details are identical to that in No.9 Oxford Street, also an open hall probably used as a Guild House of the Merchants Guild. The late C16 first floor at No.9 was removed during restoration.

5.8.6.2 Not far from No.9 is Tower House (grade II\*), a late C15 hall house with a mid C16 rear wing. The south wing was stabling and the building was a workhouse in the C18 until 1834, when Dr Player built the tower for an astronomical observatory.

5.8.6.3 Other buildings in Gloucester Street incorporating C15 structures are 3 & 5 (grade II\*), which use part of the former wall and other work from St Peter's church. No.8 (grade II\*), a former inn, now a house, is another possible abbey survival, said to have been built as another hospitium (see 27 St John's Street) with a first floor dormitory, now Gloucester Cottage, a separately listed building in Oliver's Lane which backs onto Gloucester Street. On the east side of Gloucester Street, the former C15 church tower to St Paul's church has been isolated and converted to a private dwelling. To the west is a C15 undercroft beneath a late C17 rear range at Nos.18 & 20. The undercroft was converted for use as a loop in the town wall.

5.8.6.4 The grade I Market Cross is late C15, or early C16, an elaborate example of its kind.

#### 5.8.7 Sixteenth Century

5.8.7.1 Dating from the dissolution is Culver House in Culver Gardens, a grade II\* building whose south face lies along the former town wall. Of four other buildings dating from the C16 is 38 Gloucester Street, which

has a jettied first floor. Of slightly later date is Westport House, Gloucester Road (late C16).

5.8.7.2 In the High Street two C16 buildings survive; Nos.14 and 20. Around 1600 is 80 Gloucester Road, altered in the late C18, and 92 High Street, both rubble.

#### 5.8.8 Seventeenth Century

5.8.8.1 52 buildings of all types dating from the C17 survive throughout Malmesbury, especially in the High Street, where there are 24 examples alone, mostly at the north-west end. The second largest concentration is a cluster of C17 houses against the south side of the High Street, the most notable of which is 92, a grade II\* house dating from C1600, which contains a fine early open well staircase. Other grade II\* houses from the C17 are Brewery House, Market Cross, a house with a fine main elevation dated 1672 and 6 Oxford Street, which has also has an exceptionally elaborate Jacobean open well staircase. Avon House, Abbey Row, a grade II\* building is listed as C17, but appears to date from 1798.

#### 5.8.9 Eighteenth Century

5.8.9.1 From the C18 the listed building count is almost doubled at 103 houses surviving. These are distributed throughout the town, but are especially dense in the lower half of the High Street, and the southern boundary of Cross Hayes, also going into Dennis Lane. Cross Hayes House, Cross Hayes is a grade II\* building dated 1728 with a fine ashlar front and fine original interior details including an open-well stair and panelled rooms. The King's House, King's Wall (GII\*) is an exceptional town house of C1705, and has a façade of provincial Baroque style. It is noted for its early use of sash windows on the main façade, the more conventional cross windows being used elsewhere.

#### 5.8.10 Nineteenth Century

5.8.10.1 The most numerous listed buildings date from the C19. Of 150 buildings of this type most are terraced or paired houses surrounding the town centre. Others tend to be institutional or commercial buildings in the town centre.

## **6 PLAN FORM ANALYSIS**

### **6.1 *Introduction***

6.1.1 Malmesbury has origins in prehistory. Confirmation of this has been available from recent investigations (BARAS 2002), and indicates that the theory put forward by Haslam and others that the hilltop was the site of an Iron Age fortification is correct (Haslam 1976, 35). The evidence of these prehistoric defences has come to light on the north-east quadrant of the town, with as yet no verification from other areas. It is in the nature of such Iron Age hillforts to make use of the full extent of naturally defensible ground, and this structure will therefore have followed the distinctive break in slope on the west, north and east sides of the town, and established defences – perhaps in depth - on the weaker southern

approach. It would be premature to attempt to map the Iron Age defences, and they do not feature here as a component. The extent and location of the area settled in the Iron Age within this enclosure presents even greater difficulty. However, the circuit of defences thus established may well have influenced all later systems.

6.1.2 With the exception of the Iron Age phase, therefore, the town has been divided into different plan components (settlement areas, church, market place, etc.) for each relevant period, and these are illustrated in the stated figures.

6.1.3 Table 2: Plan form components

COMPONENT	PERIOD OF ORIGIN	COMPONENT TYPE	FIGURE No.
COM1	Mid Saxon	Abbey Precinct	9
COM2	Mid Saxon	Settlement area	9
COM3	Mid Saxon	Defences	9
COM4	Late Saxon	Abbey Precinct	10
COM5	Late Saxon	Settlement area	10
COM6	Late Saxon	St Paul's Church	10
COM7	Late Saxon	St Laurence's Church	10
COM8	Late Saxon	Roads	10
COM9	Late Saxon	Possible line of defences	10
COM10	Medieval	Castle	11
COM11	Medieval	Abbey Precinct	11
COM12	Medieval	Market Place	11
COM13	Medieval	Settlement Area	11
COM14	Medieval	Organic development	11
COM15	Medieval	Horsefair Market	11
COM16	Medieval	Roads	11
COM17	Medieval	Town Wall	11

## 6.2 Saxon (Fig. 9)

6.2.1 **COM1 – Abbey Precinct.** The monastery founded by Maildulph in the 7th century is assumed to have occupied the same location that continued in religious ownership until the dissolution. The site is a high and prominent plateau, strongly defended by a steep cliff on its north side, but otherwise central to the hilltop and stopping well short of the scarps on east and west. There are no features within the clearly defined Medieval enclave which help to distinguish the extent of the early monastery. This component is therefore tentatively shown in the plan form as covering the same territory.

6.2.2 **COM2 – Settlement Area.** The likelihood that a service population grew up around the monastic establishment is discussed by Haslam (1984, 115), who suggests that this proto-urban settlement became 'a focus of local if not regional trading activity and of small-scale industrial production'. The southerly extension of the plateau on which the monastery sat offered ample room for a developing community, but

whatever form and features the early town developed would have been obliterated in the Late Saxon reorganisation. The area shown here is a crude estimate of the likely extent, utilising the southern margin of Cross Hayes as a distinctive feature in the town's layout that may have an early origin.

**6.2.3 COM3 – Possible Defences.** There is some possibility that the early town took steps to defend itself against the increasing Danish raids. The debate is in part inspired by the discovery of a substantial ditch on the edge of the Market Place (para 5.4.3) suggesting a stage in the development of the town defences that ran across the plateau excluding the monastery to the north. In a small excavation to the rear of the public library (east of Cross Hayes) there were signs of an early rampart sealed beneath an earth bank likely to represent the defences constructed by Alfred (Canham 1993). Thus the plan of such a defensive circuit would have extended out beyond the cluster of dwellings and workshops to pick up the line of the prehistoric defences on east and west. A north and south gate would be likely features, perhaps firming up the line of High Street at an early and formative stage in the town's growth.

### **6.3 Late Saxon (Fig.10)**

**6.3.1 COM4 – Abbey Precinct.** By c.900 the extent of the religious holding must have settled to the boundaries defined in part by the street layout. On east and west sides Gloucester Street and Holloway clearly flank the precinct, an alignment no doubt adopted and firmed up in the new defensive arrangements. The western limit of the component is portrayed here to the east of Mill Lane, in the belief that the construction of the castle in the 12th century resulted in a westerly bulge in the defended area represented now by Mill Lane.

**6.3.2 COM5 – Settlement Area.** The Late Saxon strengthening of the town's defences consolidated a street grid which had its origins in the simultaneous growth of monastic precinct and dependent settlement. The abbey controlled approaches from the north-west and north-east, the town the approaches from the south. The reorganisation of the early 10th century gave the town a distinctive Late Saxon layout, blocks of properties divided by a regular street pattern. The extent shown here is based largely on observations concerning the extent of the defences of the period ( see below, COM9), but the overall plot of boundaries in the town suggests a large rectangle of development from Oxford Street to Ingram Street in the south, and from Nun's Walk in the east to the top of the natural slope in the west just above King's Wall. The status of land in the north-east sector (east of the abbey precinct) is unclear. Plot boundaries of the classic type are not in evidence, and it may be that the area was held as a 'reserve' within the defended town, to harbour the rural population and its livestock in times of attack (see Extensive Urban Survey Assessment for Cricklade).

**6.3.3 COM6 – St Paul's Church.** Haslam (1976, 36; 1984, 116 - 7) notes that St Paul's is located just outside the original northern defences of the

town and must therefore have been established by the monastic order. He expresses the belief that St Paul's may have been the site of the original monastery, but this contrasts with a comment by William of Malmesbury that the headquarters of the monastery was in the church of St Peter (Preest 2002, 247). Whatever its origin, it appears to have been established with the townsfolk in mind, and was well located to become the Medieval parish church. No physical sign of its Saxon origin has ever been noted.

**6.3.4 COM7 – St Laurence's Church.** Mentioned by Leland in the 16th century (para 5.4.4) and described by him as adjoining the south transept of the abbey church. During archaeological evaluation on the site of the former cinema site (Hawkes 1994b and 1996), evidence of prior excavation to a considerable depth was found. It is possible that this represented the location of a crypt, and the plotting of St Laurence's as shown assumes this interpretation. The same excavation located human bones, including part of a burial still in situ (para 5.6.3)

**6.3.5 COM8 – Streets.** A number of streets and roads approaching the town were well established by the Late Saxon period, apparently reflecting the boundary of the monastic precinct and the early defences. There must remain some uncertainty over arrangements within the monastic site, since it would seem to have been much altered in the 12th and 13th centuries. As elsewhere, the street furnished a regular grid pattern that has characterised the town throughout its subsequent history.

**6.3.6 COM9 – Defences.** It may be assumed that Alfred's measures for protecting Malmesbury were designed to incorporate the monastic site within existing defensive features. His engineers may have looked also at the prehistoric banks and ditches surrounding the town and made decisions on how best they could be exploited. This may have been the moment in the town's history that the line of defence was taken out to the edge of north-eastern sector of the plateau, establishing a line where the Medieval north-east entrance to the town would be sited.

**6.3.7** The length of the circuit of defences established by Alfred is known from the early 10th century Burghal Hidage. The given figure of 1200 hides translates to some 1650-1870 yards (Freeman 1991, 131). The extent of the defences plotted in Fig. 10 is some 1295 yards. To reach the 10th century figure, a circuit occupying the full extent of the Medieval town wall would have to be assumed, potentially enclosing a substantial area. The concept of 'reserves' within the town has already been raised (6.3.2). If the calculation based on the hidage has any meaning, a greater circuit containing several such reserves might be envisaged.

## **6.4 Medieval (Fig. 11)**

**6.4.1 COM10 – the Castle.** In spite of interest and debate over many years (paras 4.6 and 5.5.1), the location of the castle erected by Bishop Roger is as yet unproven. On general topographic grounds a location on the

highest part of the plateau west of the monastic complex seems most likely. This location would dominate abbey, town and the surrounding landscape. Since the castle was relatively short-lived (para 4.7) it is unlikely that it developed much beyond a simple motte with surrounding ditch. There is therefore the possibility that its site was incorporated within the circuit of the 12th century town wall. The curving alignment of Mill Lane may be a reflection of this process, and on this basis the site of the castle has been placed east of Mill Lane.

6.4.2 **COM11 – Abbey Precinct.** The extent may have remained largely unchanged from the Late Saxon boundaries, with the possible exception of an expansion north-west to Mill Lane, if that street was not already the alignment of the defences in the pre-Conquest arrangements. Brakspear (1912-13) has indicated the likely use of the River Avon for fishponds.

6.4.3 **COM12 – Market Place.** The origins and development of the town's market place are problematic. Freeman (1991, 149) has analysed the documentary references, which speak of a market 'within and partly outside a graveyard', believed to be St Paul's church west of the Market Cross. This apparently was the situation until 1223, after which the 'New Market' came into being, assumed to be the present site around the Market Cross (ibid). Excavations in the area show this process underway (Hawkes 1993 and para 5.5.5), with a sequence of re-surfacing deposits belonging to the Medieval market sealing Late Saxon burials.

6.4.4 **COM13 Residential Area.** The plot boundaries within the town have their origin in the Late Saxon period (COM5, para 6.3.2). Their full extent, out to the town walls on the east and west sides of the plateau, is presumably the Medieval form of these burgh plots. The picture is that of a successful and prosperous town, with extramural settlement developing to augment the sizeable zone served by the street grid and enclosed within the town walls. Some difficulties remain over the development of the sector east of the abbey precinct, either side of Holloway. The concept of Late Saxon reserves is raised above, and if one such existed in this area, it may have remained a feature of the town, as occurred at Cricklade (see Extensive Urban Survey Assessment of Cricklade). The 1648 Panorama demonstrates that the Cross-Hayes was at least partially built over at the time, and it is likely that the open area there is of much more recent origin.

6.4.5 Within the town, the open area of Cross Hayes has the appearance of a market place forming an integral part of the Late Saxon layout. There are, however, no early documentary references to its use as a market place, and it seems inappropriately large in comparison to provision in other towns. The 17th century Panorama shows it partially built-over, but this could merely be infilling, subsequently perhaps removed.

6.4.6 **COM14 – Suburbs.** A similar configuration of plot boundaries can be seen to the south beyond the town wall and indeed beyond Lower High Street to the banks of the Avon. To the north-west, similar plots flank Abbey Row and may be used to define the extent of Westport, a

substantial Medieval suburb. A strip of activity is likely to have existed along the outer edge of King's Wall and Burnivale, where signs of industrial activity have been recorded from c.1000 onwards (para 5.5.8).

6.4.7 **COM15 – Horsefair Market.** from its plan clearly served the suburb of Westport, possibly the site of the Thursday market granted to Malmesbury abbey in 1252 (Freeman 1991, 149).

6.4.8 **COM16 – Roads.** Substantially the pattern established in the 9th or 10th century. Additions will have been the streets of Westport and presumably King's Wall and Burnivale developed from tracks to streets as trade and settlement grew.

6.4.9 **COM17 – Town Walls.** The alignment plotted here is taken from the Keystone Survey commissioned by North Wiltshire District Council in 1994 (Keystone 1994). This survey combined inspection of the fabric, photographic recording and documentary research in order to produce a section-by-section assessment of all elements of the walls, and constitutes the most definitive work on the walls ever conducted.

6.4.10 Keystone concluded that 'the historic town walls effectively no longer exist...the great majority of the walls examined during this survey date from after 1700' (p58). However, historic property boundaries have fossilised the line of defences and the 1648 panorama of Malmesbury (para 3.2.2) was a record of the town's defences 'as it stode fortified the 23 of Octobre 1646' (ibid.).

## **7 ASSESSMENT**

### ***Summary of Research***

7.1.1 The latest archaeological evidence from the eastern defences of the town confirm earlier suspicions that Malmesbury owes its existence to an Iron Age hillfort on the ridge between the two branches of the Avon. A 19th century report of a hypocaust floor remains unconfirmed by subsequent finds and researches, although a Romano-British presence on the site cannot be discounted. Numerous hillforts have exhibited traces of re-use in the Roman period, often for shrines.

7.1.2 The documentary references to the 7th century origin of the Saxon settlement have little counterpart as yet in archaeological discoveries. There are hints that the defences had a Middle Saxon phase, contemporary perhaps with the monastery founded by Aldhelm c.700.

7.1.3 The Medieval town incorporated the street pattern established by Alfred, but research to date has found no method of distinguishing original Late Saxon elements from Medieval enlargements and enhancements which the energetic Roger of Salisbury may have initiated.

7.1.4 The recent discovery of the panoramic view of the 17th century settlement (para 3.2.2) has considerably enhanced the state of knowledge of the old town and will become an essential reference for any future archaeological research in Malmesbury.

## **7.2 The Growth of the Town (Fig.12)**

7.2.1 Recent evidence shows that the story of settlement at Malmesbury began in the pre-Roman Iron Age, with the construction of a hillfort on the limestone plateau. Nothing is known of the extent of settlement within this site, nor of its economic basis or cultural connections. Even the size of the enclosed area is uncertain, although the reports of burnt or vitrified material from around the town suggest it enclosed the full extent of defensible territory. This would have a size of some 11ha, identical to the only other Wiltshire hillfort on the Cotswold limestone - Bury Wood Camp in the parish of Colerne.

7.2.2 The Eulogie (para 4.3) suggests that this was one of the hillforts refortified against the Saxons in the 6th century, recently overrun and now containing a Saxon garrison. Maildolph presumably came on the back of this re-occupation, establishing a school in the town and founding the monastery, was followed before 705 by Aldhelm. By the 10th century Athelstan dictated that the commoners live within the walls of the town (Haslam 1975, 35) indicating some degree of settlement dispersal beyond the defences, whilst at the same time showing that there was still undeveloped space within the town.

7.2.3 The fortification of Wessex towns by Alfred in the early 10th century almost certainly gave Malmesbury the street pattern that it has today. His review of the defences, however, can only be guessed at. It may be argued that Late Saxon town and monastery together could not have required all the space available on the hilltop (and possibly enclosed by Iron Age ramparts). Yet the calculation from the Burghal Hidage extent (para 6.3.7) equates to this greater enclosure, and perhaps Alfred rationalised the town's defences by embracing the full circuit of the prehistoric fortification.

7.2.4 Through the Middle Ages until the dissolution, the combination of abbey and town generated prosperity and growth, founded on trade in wool. The town walls built, it is assumed, by Bishop Roger were sited on the prominent crest of the scarp wherever possible, a visible manifestation of the town's vitality. The long burgage plots extend out to this line. It is clear also that extra-mural suburbs were growing up in Westport and next to the river at St. John's Bridge and below the postern gate. The resources of the R. Avon no doubt added to the town's prosperity and encouraged this extramural trend.

7.2.5 There is little evidence on which to judge the extent of change or expansion in the 16th and 17th centuries, although it is clear that by the end of this period there had been considerable encroachment onto

abbey land within the walls. Westport continued to grow, despite the destruction apparently caused during the Civil War.

- 7.2.6 During the industrial revolution several new cloth mills went up next to the fast flowing rivers around the town. Fortunately, industrial development inside the walls was minimal, although there was considerable rebuilding during the 18th century. Suburban development has accelerated in the late 19th and 20th centuries, greatly expanding Westport and spreading across the river to Tetbury Hill and Blick's Hill.

### **7.3 The Archaeological Potential**

- 7.3.1 One of the principal aims of this phase of the Extensive Urban Survey is to examine the archaeological potential of the town to assist with the development of a management strategy in the later phase of the project. Whilst all of the core town may be considered reasonably important archaeologically, it is necessary to try to highlight those areas of greater interest, either because of the importance of the remains or because better than average preservation is expected there.
- 7.3.2 The recent restoration work on the town walls has provided an opportunity to examine a number of issues relating to the defences, and preliminary results sound promising. The extent of the Iron Age fort is unknown. An argument has been set out above for an enclosure of the entire plateau as later defined by the town walls (para. 7.2.1), a clear priority for research. What of the interior ? Deposits and features contemporary with the prehistoric defences will be deeply buried and much truncated by later developments, but there will be survivals which could help to date and characterise the builders of the hillfort.
- 7.3.3 The exposure of these Iron Age defences was accompanied by some indications of the Saxon fortification. (para 5.4.1). The discoveries at St Joseph's appear to date to the Late Saxon period, presumably the work of Alfred, and this leaves undiscovered the re-vamping of the prehistoric rampart which must have marked the 7th century Saxon arrival on the hill. We need to know also the extent over which the Iron Age and Saxon systems ran together. The Middle and Late Saxon defences as plotted in figs. 9 and 10 are very tentative, but provide a starting point for testing by excavation or observation.
- 7.3.4 It has been suggested that the well-defined street system is in origin Late Saxon, enhanced and extended in the prosperous years of the Medieval period (para 6.4.4). Opportunities to examine the dating and development of property boundaries would be valuable, and might be sought in garden area away from street frontages – which are normally much disturbed and rarely available.
- 7.3.5 Within the abbey precinct it is unlikely that excavation opportunities will occur. The various re-buildings of the abbey through the ages will have left a palimpsest of ground plans, and it may be that advancing techniques of geophysical prospection may bring these out. Within the

precinct are also the sites of St Paul's and St Laurence's, the former apparently the original parish church. To the west – and still unlocated – is the site of Bishop Roger's castle, the nature of which is unknown.

7.3.6 As to the residential area, little or nothing has been established about the nature of the Saxon and Medieval dwellings that lined its numerous streets. There is specifically the issues raised above concerning the origins of Cross Hayes (para 6.45). It is likely that the stratigraphy is deep. Minor incursions such as extensions and service trenches reveal little more than 19th – 20th century debris. As with so many aspects of Malmesbury history and development, it appears that only carefully planned research excavations will extend current insight.

7.3.7 Parallel with these aspects of the old town's early history are similar questions concerning the extra-mural settlement of Westport. Here there are the remains of a Saxon chapel and clear evidence of a Medieval suburb, but the extent and form of occupation, particularly during the Saxon and early Norman phases, is still unknown.

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## **9 MAPS**

- 1773.** Wiltshire map series, No 16. Andrews & Dury.
- 1820.** Map of the county of Wiltshire. Greenwood (Chandler 1998).
- 1831.** Malmesbury, Plan of the borough.
- 1901.** Ordnance Survey, 2nd Edition, 1:2500 Series.
- 1924.** Ordnance Survey, 3rd Edition, 1:2500 Series.
- 1938.** Ordnance Survey, 3rd Edition (with revisions), 1:2500 Series.

## 10 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Towns included in the Extensive Urban Survey of Wiltshire, with reference to urban criteria defined by Heighway (1972).

	Town	Criteria
1	Amesbury	iii, xi
2	Bradford-on-Avon	iii, vi, viii, xi
3	Calne	iii,v
4	Chippenham	iii, viii, x
5	Cricklade	i, ii, v, xii
6	CUNETIO	i, ii, vi
7	Devizes	i, ii, iii, v, vi, vii, ix, xi
8	Downton	ii, iii, v
9	DUROCORNOVIUM	i, ii vi
10	EASTON GREY	i, vi
11	Great Bedwyn	iii, iv
12	Heytesbury	ii, iii
13	Highworth	ii, iv
14	Hindon	ii, vi, ix
15	Lacock	ii, iii, xi
16	Ludgershall	v
17	Malmesbury	i, iii, iv, xi
18	Market Lavington	ii, iii, v
19	Marlborough	ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii, ix, xi
20	Melksham	iii, vi
21	Mere	ii, iii
22	Ramsbury	viii, xi
23	Salisbury	i, ii, iii, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x, xi,
24	Sherston	ii, iii
25	SORVIODUNUM	i, vi
26	Swindon	iii, vii, viii
27	Tilshead	iii, v
28	Tisbury	vii, xi
29	Trowbridge	ii, iii, viii
30	Warminster	ii, iii, iv, vii
31	Westbury	iii, viii
32	Wilton	i, iv, v, vi, vii,
33	Wootton Bassett	ii, iii, v, viii
34	VERLUCIO	ii, vi

## Appendix 2: Urban Criteria set out in Heighway (1972)

- i) Urban Defences: A town, at some time in its history, might have a wall, or bank and ditch with wooden defences.
- ii) Internal Street plan: A town may be planned at any moment in its history; part of its street pattern may display evidence of deliberate planning, such as a grid lay-out. A street plan with provision for a market place will also distinguish a town.
- iii) Market: Perhaps the only indispensable criterion, although a market alone does not distinguish a town. The date of a market charter is usually taken in this study as indicating the date by which the place had become a town.
- iv) Mint: The existence of a mint often denotes a town.
- v) Legal existence: This aspect of the town was one of the first to be studied and formed the basis of most of the early studies of towns. It has long been evident that legal history, once a favoured method of study does not provide the only clue to urban origins, in which economic causes play an important part. However, the date of a borough charter or the dates of taxation at borough rates or of the town's parliamentary franchise may provide a date from which the place may be called a town.
- vi) Position: A town may have a central position in a network of communications and this can be a clue to its importance. This can be a difficult criterion to assess as it involves knowledge of the age of the road system in relation to the town itself, the past navigability of rivers, and other related problems.
- vii) Population: A town will often have or have had a high density and size of population compared with surrounding places.
- viii) Diversified economic base: Archaeological or documentary evidence might suggest a diversified economic base, particularly a concentration of various crafts in one area, and evidence of long distance trade. For earlier periods, only archaeological evidence can determine this; it is a reflection on the state of urban archaeology that so little is known of this aspect.
- ix) House plot and house type: The town-plan may show long, narrow 'burgage-type' plots; surviving houses will be urban rather than rural in form.
- x) Social differentiation: A town should contain a wide range of social classes and especially possess a middle class. House types, demonstrated in the earlier periods by archaeology, again form part of the evidence.
- xi) The presence of a complex religious organisation may also denote a town; i.e. the possession of more than one parish church or the existence of other institutions, especially monastic.
- xii) Judicial centre: A town may be a centre for courts of national or local status.

## **APPENDIX 3 - Listed Buildings by Schedule Category**

### **Grade I**

St Paul's Bell Tower, Gloucester Street, C15  
Abbey Church of St Mary and St Aldhelm, Market Cross, C12  
Abbey House, Market Cross, C12  
The Cross, Market Cross, late C15/early C16  
Court House, St John's Street, ?C12

### **Grade II\***

Avon House, Abbey Row, C17  
23 Bristol Street, C10/early C11  
Cross Hayes House, Cross Hayes, 1728  
Culver House, Culver Gardens, mid C16  
3 & 5 Gloucester Street, C15  
8 Gloucester Street, C15  
92 High Street, C1600  
King's House, 34 & 38 King's Wall, C1705  
Arch in garden to s of Abbey House, Market Cross, C16  
Old Brewery House, Market Cross, 1672  
6 Oxford Street, C17  
9 Oxford Street, C15  
Tower House, Oxford Street, C15  
1, 2 & 3 St John's Court, St John's Bridge, C12

## **Appendix 4: Buildings Survival by Century**

### Saxon/Norman

23 Bristol Street (C10/11, late C17)

### Medieval

Remains of chapel wall, Bristol Street

### **12th century**

Abbey Church of St Mary & St Aldhelm  
Castle wall of Munden's, Mill Lane  
Court House to rear of No.27, St John's Street  
Former town wall extending nw of Silver Street to rear of 28-34.

### **13th century**

The Old Bell Hotel, Abbey Row (13th, 15th/early 16th century)  
Abbey House, Market Cross (late C13)

### **Late 14th/15th century**

The Apostles, 6 Market Cross

### **15th century**

65 & 67 Gloucester Road (early)  
3 & 5, 8, 18 & 20 St Paul's Bell Tower, Gloucester Street  
Gloucester Cottage, Oliver's Lane  
9 & Tower House Oxford Street

### **Late 15th/early 16th century**

Market Cross

### **16th century**

Culver House, Culver Gardens, 16 & 18 High Street, Arch and walls in garden to s of Abbey House, Market Cross (mid C16)

Westport House, 116 Gloucester Road (late C16)

38 Gloucester Street

14, 20 High Street

### **Late C16/early C17**

80 Gloucester Road

17th century

92 High Street (C1600)

29 High Street, Kings Arms Hotel, 5 & 6 Oxford Street, (early C17)

?Avon House, Abbey Row

34 & 36 Bristol Street (core)

53 & 55 Burnivale (C1620)

9 & 11, 24, 25 & 27 High Street, 6 & 8 St John's Street (mid-C17)

2 & 4, Town Hall, Cross Hayes, 41 & 43 Foundry Road, 69, The Three Cups

Public House, Gloucester Road, 2, 3 & 5, 6 Gloucester Street

13 & 15, 19, 37, 39, 47 & 49, 95 & 97, 103, 107, 117, 119, 121, 123, 125, 133

High Street, 2 St Mary's Street

St Mary's Hall, St Mary's Street (1670-80)

46 High Street (1671)

Old Brewery House, Market Cross (1672)

Whychurch Farmhouse (C1675)

6 & 8, 12, Cross Hayes Lane, 45 & 47 Foundry Road, 11, 28, 30 Gloucester Street Old Brewery, Market Cross (late C17)

5, 7 High Street, 30 & 34 to 38 (evens) (late C17)

14, 16 & 16A St John's Street, 7 & 8 Silver Street, 20 & 42 Top End House, West Street (late C17)

Town wall and two towers, Mill Lane

### **Late C17/early C18**

87A, 88, 89, 93, 95 & 97, 98, 108 Gloucester Road

26 Gloucester Street

87 to 93 (odds) High Street

28 & 30 Oxford Street

2, 3 Oxford Street

6 & 8 Silver Street

1 West Street

### **18th century**

24 Gloucester Street, 10 High Street, 2 Oliver's Lane (early C18)

22 Horsefair (1703)

Kings House, 34 & 38 Kings Wall (c1705)

Cross Hayes House (1728)

6 St Mary's Street (1732)  
 30, 32 Cross Hayes, 23 Horsefair, 15 Oxford Street (mid-C18 & earlier)  
 34, 36 Cross Hayes, 22 Gloucester Street, 26 High Street, 2, 8 & 10 Kings  
 Wall 1 Silver Street (mid C18)  
 84 & 84A (1758) 20  
 36 & 38 High Street (1763)  
 Chest tomb approx 1m south of Abbey Church (1767)  
 70, 72 & 74 Abbey Row, Moravian Church and associated Manse, Oxford  
 Street, (1770)  
 37 Blick's Hill, 10 Foxley Road, 110, 112 Gloucester Road, 12 Gloucester  
 Street 44 & 46 St Dennis Road (mid-late 18th century)  
 Wall to Old Bell Hotel, Abbey Row, Building to rear of 30 High Street  
 (18th/19th century)  
 10 & 12, 11 & 13 Bristol Street  
 18, 20 & 22 Bristol Street (1778, 1807)  
 St Michael's House, Market Cross (1796)  
 23 & 25 Holloway Hill (1797)  
 Outbuilding to Whychurch Farm (1798)  
 53 & 55 Bristol Street, Building to rear of 28 High Street, Building to rear of 12  
 Cross Hayes, 45, 47, 96, 99, Gloucester Road, 46 & 46A, 50 Gloucester  
 Street, 48 St Dennis Road (late 18th century)  
 48, 50, 53, 54 High Street  
 2, 4, 42, 43, 43A, 56, 58, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 77, 79, 84, 94, 102  
 High Street  
 23 Culver Gardens  
 63, 78, 100 Gloucester Road  
 54, 56 Gloucester Street  
 29 Holloway Hill  
 2, 4 & 6 Ingram Street  
 1 & 2 Market Cross. 1 Market Lane  
 12 Chest tombs & gateway, Abbey church  
 Abbey Mill Bridge  
 4, 17 Oxford Street  
 10 & 12, 15, wall & store to no.29, Baskerville Bridge, St John's Street, 4, 16  
 St Mary's Street

### **Late C18/early C19**

42, 44, 48 Gloucester Street, 35, 37 & 39 Horsefair. 50 St Dennis Road, 18 &  
 20 St John's Street, 11 & 13, 16, 18 Silver Street

### **19th century**

33 Abbey Row, 1 Gloucester Street, 4 Market Cross, 3 Oxford Street (c1800)  
 104 & 106 Gloucester Road (1801)  
 Strict Baptist Chapel, Abbey Row (1802)  
 14 Gloucester Street (1803)  
 27 Abbey Row (1811)  
 Tomb in graveyard of Strict Baptist Chapel, Abbey Row (1823)  
 20, 20A, 22, 24 & 26 Oxford Street  
 5 & 7, 9 & 11, 13, 15, 19 & 23, 25, 27 & 29 Burnivale, 75 & 77, 79 Gloucester  
 Street, 19 & 19A, 21 Oxford Street (C1830)

29, 31, 66, 68, Abbey Row (early 19th c)  
 33 & 35 Blick's Hill; 3, 8 & 10 Burnivale (early 19th c)  
 2, 6 & 8, 7 & 9, 15 & 17, 16, 25, 27 & 29, 40, 46, 50, 52, 54 & 56, 66 Bristol Street, (early 19th c)  
 14 & 16, 26 St Aldhelm's Presbytery, 38, 40, 42, building at rear of 12 High Street, Cross Hayes, 2, 4 & 8 Foxley Road, 3 & 5 Gastons Road, 49, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 103, 105, 118 & 118B Gloucester Road (early 19th century)  
 1, 3, 12, 55, 57, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 96, 98, 100, 135, 137 High Street, 18, 29, 33 Horsefair, 16, 20, 24 & 26 Kings Wall, 22 to 32 (evens), 25 & 27, 37 & 41 St John's Street, 9 St Mary's Lane, 5 Silver Street, 4-12 (evens) West Street (early C19)  
 42 & 44, 48, 58 & 60, 61 62 & 64 Bristol Street, 26 Burnham Road, 42, 44, 46, & 48 Foundry Road, 24 & 26 Horsefair, 8, 10 & 12 Ingram Street, 14 Silver Street, 32 & 34, 36, 38 West Street (early-mid C19)  
 12 Foxley Road (C1840)  
 2-12 Gastons Road (1846)  
 Town Hall façade, Cross Hayes (1848)  
 19 & 20 Abbey Row, 34 & 36 - altered from C17, 50 & 53 Foundry Road, 4, 32, 34 Gloucester Street, 27, 31, The Retreat Holloway Hill (mid 19th c)  
 Gazebo at rear of no.43  
 22 Cross Hayes with gate pier (1851 & 1857)  
 3 & 5, 32 Bristol Street, 45, 59 High Street, Abbey House Water Tower, Market Cross (mid-late 19th c)  
 headstone in graveyard of Abbey Church (1861)  
 21 High Street, 25 & 27 Horsefair (mid C19)  
 3 High Street (c1866)  
 13 Burnham Road (late 19th century)  
 Foundry & forge  
 Mounting block outside no.1 Market Lane

### **20th century**

18 & 20 Cross Hayes (C1900)  
 K6 telephone kiosk, Cross Hayes (1935)  
 K6 telephone kiosk, Gloucester Road (1935)

### **Appendix 5: Architectural Trends and Materials**

The earliest buildings surviving are remnants of high quality monastic buildings and have walls of stone, those of the court house to the rear of 27, St John's Street, have a steep internal batter. The ashlar fire hood at The Old Bell Hotel, Abbey Row is the earliest example of a domestic fireplace with a flue, possibly in England, also giving one of the earliest houses with two floors. Another building with a first floor is 8 Gloucester Street, dating from the C15. The earliest indication of timber framing is at The Apostles, Market Cross, which had a jettied first floor. Some C15 arch-braced open halls survive. 65 & 67 Gloucester Street, and 9 Oxford Street share some identical details and both date from the early part of the century. Others are at Tower House, Oxford Street, and 8 Gloucester Street.

Re-used ashlar is noted as a feature of post-dissolution work in Malmesbury. A good example of this is Culver House, a mid C16 grade II\* house in Culver Gardens. The main walling construction is of coursed rubble but with reused ashlar and carved work for dressings. At least one example of a jettied house survives at 38 Gloucester Street, with a ground floor of limestone rubble. In the High Street two C16 buildings survive; No.14 is a timber framed building remodelled in rubble still retaining original sling braces to a collar truss roof. No.20 is a rubblestone example, much altered though again with a collar truss roof. Also in rubble is 80 Gloucester Road, which retains a four-centred arched stone fireplace, and 92 High Street, which retains a good central open-well stair with square newels.

A good many of the C17 buildings that survive are scattered throughout Malmesbury. The 24 examples in the High Street are all in limestone rubble, with ashlar or ashlar dressings. Some have timber framing at the rear, such as at 9 & 11, and 25 & 27 High Street, and have C18 or C19 shop fronts. The Kings Arms Hotel, dating from the early C17, has been altered in 1821 but retains a jettied gable. Elsewhere in Bristol Street and Burnivale, the C17 houses are also in rubble limestone. The most notable internal features surviving from this century are the fine open well staircases still extant at 92 High Street, and 6 Oxford Street.

Most of the listed C18 buildings are in rendered or limewashed limestone rubble for the lesser buildings, with more polite buildings being faced with squared and coursed limestone rubble or ashlar. Windows have flat or cambered heads, and most roofs have stone slates and brick stacks. Subsidiary details may include plinths, fanlights and bracketed canopies to main doors, railings, and basement features. The most numerous C19 buildings are similar, and tend to be terraces or pairs of houses, as are the later C18 houses. Almost all the C18 elevations are in stone, with the exception of 10 High Street, which appears to be in contemporary brickwork. Many more buildings, which now have exposed rubble walls, were probably once limewashed or treated with roughcast.

The later C19 houses tend to have interlocking tile or slate roofs. Notable buildings tend to be institutional or commercial. The town hall and former teacher's house are in Cross Hayes, dating from the early and mid C19. Another group is in Bristol Street, where there is a terrace of early C19 artisan housing.

It is evident that the High Street, which consisted of 16th, 17th, and 18th century houses and commercial premises at the time were refronted or rebuilt as shops as early as the mid C19. No.44 High Street has a narrow front of three storeys with a shaped attic gable and is of bright red brick with moulded brick decorations characteristic of C1900.