

Ludlow Heritage News

No. 21 SPRING 1994

Published twice a year by Ludlow Civic Society



The view of part of Ludlow livestock market in 1916, when the auctioneers were Davies and Edwards, shows that the site was already congested.

THE SUPERMARKET DECISIONS

'Ludlow has been saved' wrote Simon Jenkins in *The Times* in March of this year. Well, er, not entirely. It is true that the Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr John Gummer MP, did turn down both planning proposals examined at the public enquiry in March and April 1993; and the dismissal of one, the out-of-town Foldgate Lane site appeal, does mark a significant change in governmental planning policy which has naturally attracted national comment. However, the cattle market site development is a more complex and, for Ludlow, more important issue which the press has virtually ignored and which the minister has left open.

The local authorities involved differed as to whether the cattle market site application conformed with their respective planning policies. Shropshire County Council and Ludlow Town Council believed it did not and should be refused. But South Shropshire District Council, the actual planning authority, believed that the proposal did comply with both the structure and local plans, that it could be beneficial in both trading and service terms by way of spin-off trade and the increase in car parking spaces, and that, given certain improvements, it could enhance the site visually; moreover, the District Council, like Ludlow Town Council, favoured the transfer of

the cattle market to an out-of-town site which its planners had already approved. Consequently the application should be granted.

Broadly speaking, the Department of Environment's inspector agreed with the District Council's views; his report recommended that planning permission and conservation area consent be granted for the cattle market proposal subject to certain conditions. This report was published on the 31st of January of this year, simultaneously with the Secretary of State's response to it.

The minister agreed with the inspector on the main point: That in the absence of a new food-store of sufficient size it was likely that the 'trading strength' of Ludlow would continue to decline. However, he admitted that the development would have some detrimental effect on the existing shops in the town centre, but he considered that the cattle market scheme would draw less trade away than the out-of-town alternative, he also conceded that in terms of its location the site did not accord with Proposal 4 of the Ludlow Local Plan, which seeks development of the cattle market site as part of a comprehensive scheme for a wider area next to the town centre.

Nevertheless, the minister accepted that the cattle market site was suitable for a supermarket. But

Turn to page 2

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that was only half of it. He disagreed with the District Council and overturned his inspector's recommendations for two reasons which were strong enough to dismiss the application - and he specified two criteria which will have a crucial influence on future applications.

Because the cattle market site is in a sensitive location, partly inside the Ludlow Conservation Area, special attention has to be paid to preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of its context. In the minister's view, the proposed design did not satisfy this architectural requirement in two respects:

* First, the design did not reflect the general scale of buildings in the area because of its bulk, and the large and mainly flat roof would be out of sympathy with its surroundings.

* Second, he accepted the Ludlow Civic Society's evidence that the sweep of Corve Street forms one of the finest approaches to any English historic town; the gap in this facade made by the cattle market is an unsightly interruption to the almost continuous frontages. The minister agreed with the society that the proposals missed the opportunity of filling this gap, failed to promote the visual unity of the street, and were inappropriate in its urban setting. For these reasons, Mr Gummer refused the granting of planning permission.

However, the minister went a good deal further by specifying two prescriptive criteria for any future applications. He considered it essential that these should involve a building or buildings along the Corve Street frontage, and that the supermarket building itself should be of a less bulky appearance than the present proposal.

These two conditions have serious architectural implications: first, by bringing the building forward to Corve Street the access and turning circles for the delivery bays will almost certainly take up more of an already restricted site. It should be remembered that the proposed 195 customer car parking spaces fall well short of the usual planning requirement of 280 spaces for a 2800sq.m² store, despite the inspector's acceptance of the applicants method of calculating the car parking needs to suit themselves. The site may be the only one available for the supermarket but it is not really large enough for it, and having to move the building forward makes matters worse.

A possible way of resolving this issue was put to the District Council's economic and leisure committee in mid-February. The Chief Executive hinted that the site could be associated with a scheme for car parking which might be arranged in tiers up the slope of Portcullis Lane. He seemed to suggest that this might help the car parking needs if the supermarket site and of the town centre generally. The negotiations in progress involved not only Weatherstone Properties, the

sponsors of the unsuccessful cattle market scheme, but also Sovereign Land, a company which presented to Ludlow Town Council a proposal for the development of the larger area between Upper Galdeford and Station Drive in 1990/91. This does accord with the Town Council's preferred Proposal 4 of the Ludlow Local Plan and it will be a good step forward if the District Council is working towards it.

The second, crucial effect of bringing the supermarket building forward is that it is brought into the actual conservation area rather than lying just outside it; consequently, it will be subject to both the minister's criterion about bulk and the rigorous standards of materials, proportions, character and appearance which conservation area legislation demands.

The designers of any future scheme thus face a major architectural challenge. Supermarket design is governed primarily by the commercial optimisation of numbers of checkouts, aisles and car parking spaces, and the turning circles of heavy goods vehicles; moreover, the operators prefer to sell their goods in a totally enclosed, artificial environment; the aim is to enclose an efficient operation to enable the grocer to sell a wide range of goods more cheaply than his competitors.

But an off-the-shelf, conventional approach to this objective will not suffice for the Ludlow site. Thankfully, the minister has recognised that an elephant cannot be camouflaged with aesthetics, nor can the idioms of Georgian architecture be stretched over large windowless surfaces without punctuation. Any new design will have to blend the building into the essentially urban setting of Corve Street without recourse to pseudo-vernacular elements. Several ways of doing this can be suggested, and even a partially high-tech design need not necessarily be excluded. But whichever architects are eventually appointed they will need to avoid the pathetic bogus mansard roofs, false towers and lychgates of the earlier schemes; they will have to address, from first principles, the challenge of producing a first class work of contemporary architecture which complements the urban fabric of the town centre in a straightforward and understanding manner.

At the present time, the viability of any future supermarket proposal is uncertain, and a development comprising of a mixture of uses may yet prove to be more appropriate - and would be in the view of the Civic Society more welcome; but would-be developers will have to heed the message in the Secretary of State's decision and engage designers who have the ability to produce a proposal of far higher all-round architectural quality if any new application is not to receive the same response.

James Harris

Newspaper Extracts, 1742-1747

As part of my research on eighteenth-century Ludlow, I have been working through copies of *Aris's Gazette*, a Birmingham weekly newspaper published from 1741. This is more than thirty years earlier than the first newspapers published in Shrewsbury and Hereford. Though *Aris's Gazette* circulated throughout the Midlands, the first few years have revealed a number of Ludlow items. This was due to the zeal of Thomas Whittington, 'Teacher of Mathematics', who had been enlisted as the local correspondent and who received advertisements on behalf of the proprietor.

Several entries relate to properties. One of the earliest is an advertisement for letting what are now Nos. 54-56 Mill Street, a speculative devel-

opment by Henry Karver, owner and resident of Castle Lodge. Ludlow's reputation as a fashionable social centre was growing at this time, but it is interesting that Karver thought it worthwhile to advertise in this way. Another property advertised, in September 1745, was the Sheet Farm, owned and occupied by Somerset Jones, owner of The Feathers. He informed readers that he wished to retire and sought a tenant for the farm, which had a yearly value of £400. It consisted chiefly of 'very good meadow' such as would 'suit a grazier or a dairy man', but there was arable land not exceeding 80 acres. There was also 'a small Hop-yard but Poles sufficient to make a larger plantation'.



This detail from an early 20th century photograph shows Nos. 54-56 Mill Street. No. 54 (far left) had already been much altered by the insertion of a projecting bay and the removal of two windows from the second storey but Nos. 55 and 56 retain most of their original features.

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Aris's Gazette, 18 October 1742, page 4, column 2

Turn to page 4

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Pneumonic Cholera, in Ludlow, at a late period of the
After which will be a BALL.

Aris's Gazette, 6 May
1745, page 3, column

Obituary notices for Ludlow residents dying in the 1740s included that for the Rev. Blaney Baldwin, Rector of Croft, who lived at Oriel House in Broad Street. He was 'very much lamented by all his friends'. There is an interesting reference to 'Mr Jones, a considerable mercer', who died at Worcester in May 1743 whilst returning from London to Ludlow. This is William Jones, whose premises were on the north side of King Street, on the site now occupied by McIlroy's. It was reported that he 'left £10,000 or £12,000 behind him'. Another supposedly rich Ludlow resident was Samuel Waring, who died in late September 1744. He was described as 'an eminent wholesale Glover, reported worth £20,000, the Bulk of which he has left to his Nephew, Mr Samuel Waring, who continues the same business'. Waring's will confirms that he was a wealthy man, with estates at Cleeton, Coreley and Brimfield, and investments in the Bank of England and the East India Company. He lived at No. 15 Broad Street, the fine eighteenth-century house now occupied by the Cave family. This information is an important addition to the picture now being built up of Ludlow's glove-making industry.

Aris's Gazette also has news items on the less fortunate members of Ludlow society. There was the unnamed girl who, in August 1744, confessed to the murder of a bastard child, taking her gaoler 'to the Place where she was delivered, where under some Earth and Leaves were found the bones of two Children'. In the same month 'a poor labouring man was found hanging by his Bedside, quite cold'. Another scandal was that of William Garston, bricklayer, on whose premises in December 1742 was found plate taken from a house near Bishop's Castle. Also pursued by the law was John Davies, aged 31, a deserter from the First Regiment of Guards in 1747. He had been born at Ludlow but was 'known about the County as Tinker Davies', distinguishable for 'a remarkably sharp nose and wide mouth'.

Like all provincial newspapers, *Aris's Gazette* had many items relating the amusements of the wealthier sections of society. The races on 'the Old Field' at Bromfield took place on two consecutive days each summer, usually in late August or early September. There was one race a day, but with two or three heats for each race. Winning owners came from far afield, as in 1743, when Sir Watkin William Wynne of Denbighshire won the Fifty Pound plate with his bay gelding *Shapeless*. The extent to which the town had a communal cultural life at this time is still being researched, but musical events certainly occurred, such as the 'Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music' at the Town Hall on

Wednesday, 15th May, 1745, followed by a ball. Tickets, 2s 6d each – approximately a week's wages for a skilled artisan at this time – could be obtained from James Wilde's, then the town's leading bookseller, with his shop at No. 46 Bull Ring (now Lunn Poly). When a new edition of *A Journey to Llandrindod Wells* was published in January 1747, Wilde was one of nine named distributors, the others being in London, Bristol, Bridgnorth, Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton, Worcester, Kidderminster and Birmingham.

Like all provincial newspapers of the day, *Aris's Gazette* took items of national news straight from the London publications, but in 1745 and 1746, the years of the Jacobite uprising, the modern reader feels something of the passions of the day. As Prince Charles and his supporters marched south in November 1745, *Aris's Gazette* reported the mustering of loyal troops all over the Midlands, including 'the 500 Able Bodied Men raised for His Majesty by Lord Herbert at Ludlow'. Another aspect of the age – the stirrings of philanthropy – was apparent a few weeks earlier, when the Trustees of Salop Infirmary, having failed to 'hire a convenient House as first expected', had 'determined to build a proper house for the Reception of Patients'. Subscriptions in Ludlow were to go to Mr Somerset Davies, the lawyer who was at the heart of the town's affairs and who later rebuilt No. 27 Broad Street. With an alacrity enviable in the 1990s, the new infirmary was opened on 25 April 1747, being described as 'capable of receiving sixty patients'.

Eighteenth-century journalists had a taste for the sensational. On 6 June 1743 it was reported, for instance, that Thomas Beale of the Heath House – a member of Ludlow Corporation – owned a cow which had produced eleven calves in four years and five days, which ‘were all alive and of a good size and very beautiful Cattle.’ This was an amazing story in the 1740s, but to the modern historian it is evidence for agricultural improvement. A different kind of sensationalism is that revealed in the notice on 28 March 1743 for ‘the Salmon Spring near Ludlow’, which was to ‘open next week’. Readers are told that ‘the extraordinary Character it has acquired and the many cures it has performed will sufficiently demonstrate the great Benefit it may be of, especially . . . for . . . Scurvy, Inflammations, Tumors, Head-Ach, Gravel and all Cataneous Eruptions whatever’. Springs with medicinal properties were a fashion of the time, and there were several in the vicinity of Ludlow, but the writer has not previously encountered a Salmon Spring. Suggestions or information would be much appreciated.

David Lloyd

CASTLE SQUARE ENHANCEMENT

The demolition of the Town Hall in 1986 recreated a large open space in the centre of Ludlow. On the initiative of the Ludlow Town Council, a small committee has now submitted proposals for the enhancement of this area. These proposals are summarised here and the comments of readers are invited. A critique of the proposals by a Civic Society member, James Harris, is included elsewhere in this issue.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the enhancement committee were defined as follows:-

- * To make Castle Square as attractive an environment as possible, so as to make it a venue for a range of civic and community activities, to improve commercial viability and to attract tourists.
- * To preserve Castle Square as an open space, as stipulated in policy 66 of the Ludlow Local Plan, but to seek for ways of providing visual focal points at appropriate locations.
- * To reconcile the needs of pedestrians and motorised traffic in the best way possible, within the general policies suggested by the Ludlow Traffic Management Group.

Within this general framework the following specific objectives were defined:-

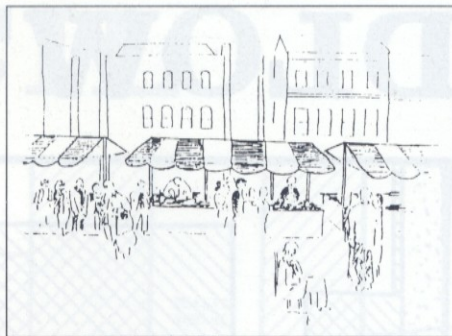
- * To ensure smooth traffic flow, with access to the Castle Street car park.
- * To meet the needs of pedestrians
- * To allow coaches to set down and pick up passengers.
- * To accommodate the market and to facilitate unloading and loading by stall holders.
- * To cater for the disabled.
- * To provide space for parades and other public occasions.
- * To set off to best advantage the many important buildings surrounding Castle Square.
- * To consider a possible site for a Royal British Legion war memorial of a design acceptable to the appropriate local authorities.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- * To follow the rectilinear nature of the Square and its adjoining streets and properties, taking into account their scale and compatibility.
- * The use of contrasting surface materials to differentiate functions but with a preference for natural materials.
- * The need for focal points and features.
- * Side streets to lead off naturally and to be included in the overall scheme.
- * The essential need not to be over elaborate or fussy.

TRAFFIC FLOW

The traffic flow should be to the North of Castle Square to facilitate access to the Castle Street carpark. This should be a one way system with traffic entering the Square from High Street and exiting down Mill Street, which is proposed as one way to its junction with Bell Lane.



THE STREET MARKET

The Street Market should be accommodated within the proposed enhancement, the area provided being just over 10% greater than at present. The temporary stalls should enhance rather than detract from the overall appearance of the Square.

THE SERVICE ROAD

A service road to the South of the Square has been included in the proposals. This road has several functions:-

- * To allow restricted (4 p.m. - 10 a.m.) access to shop fronts and market areas to facilitate deliveries and erection/dismantling of market stalls.
- * To allow access for emergency and security services.
- * To allow alternative traffic flow capability during routine or emergency County Council or Statutory Undertakers works.

THE BANDSTAND

Within the 'Design Flow' of the proposals a Bandstand has been included towards the Western end of the Square. This has been included mainly as a focal point at the intersection of the North-South and East-West axis. It was felt that a well designed feature in this position would enhance the vista up Mill Street as the Buttercross does to the vista up Broad Street. We believe that the proposed classical Doric design harmonises well within the existing architecture and will provide for various functions as well as adding a vertical interest to the proposed enhancement.

THE WAR MEMORIAL

Many Ludlovians, through the offices of The Royal British Legion have expressed concern for some years about the lack of a conventional War Memorial in the Town Centre. The need has been accepted by the Ludlow Town Council and we have defined a suitable position within the proposed enhancement for a Memorial. This position is on an East-West axis to further emphasise the axial design of Memorial-Bandstand-Castle entrance. A small committee of Ludlow Town Council, The Royal British Legion, Ludlow Civic Society and the South Shropshire District Council Conservation Officer has met several times regarding a War Memorial. The

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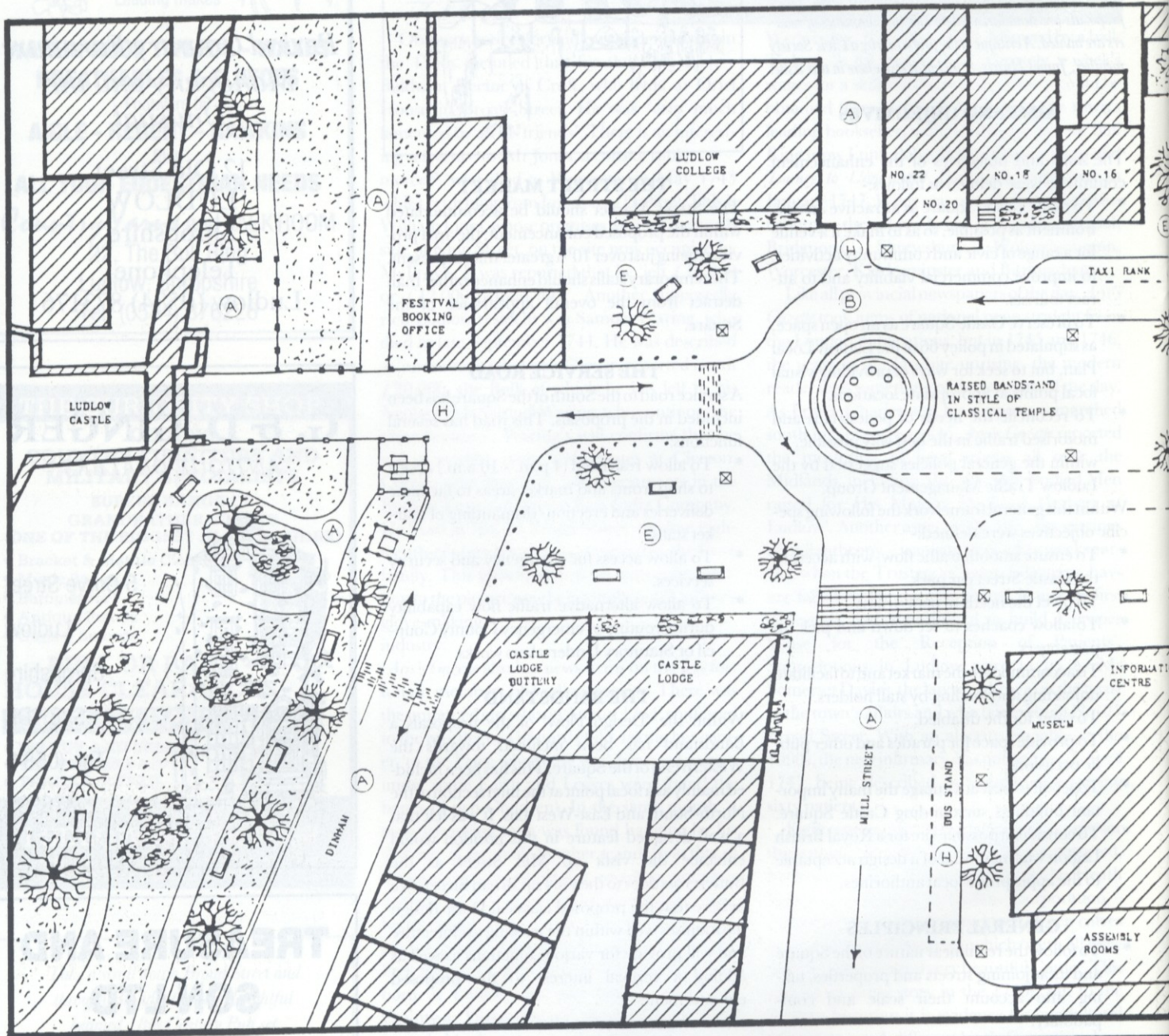
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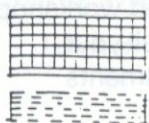
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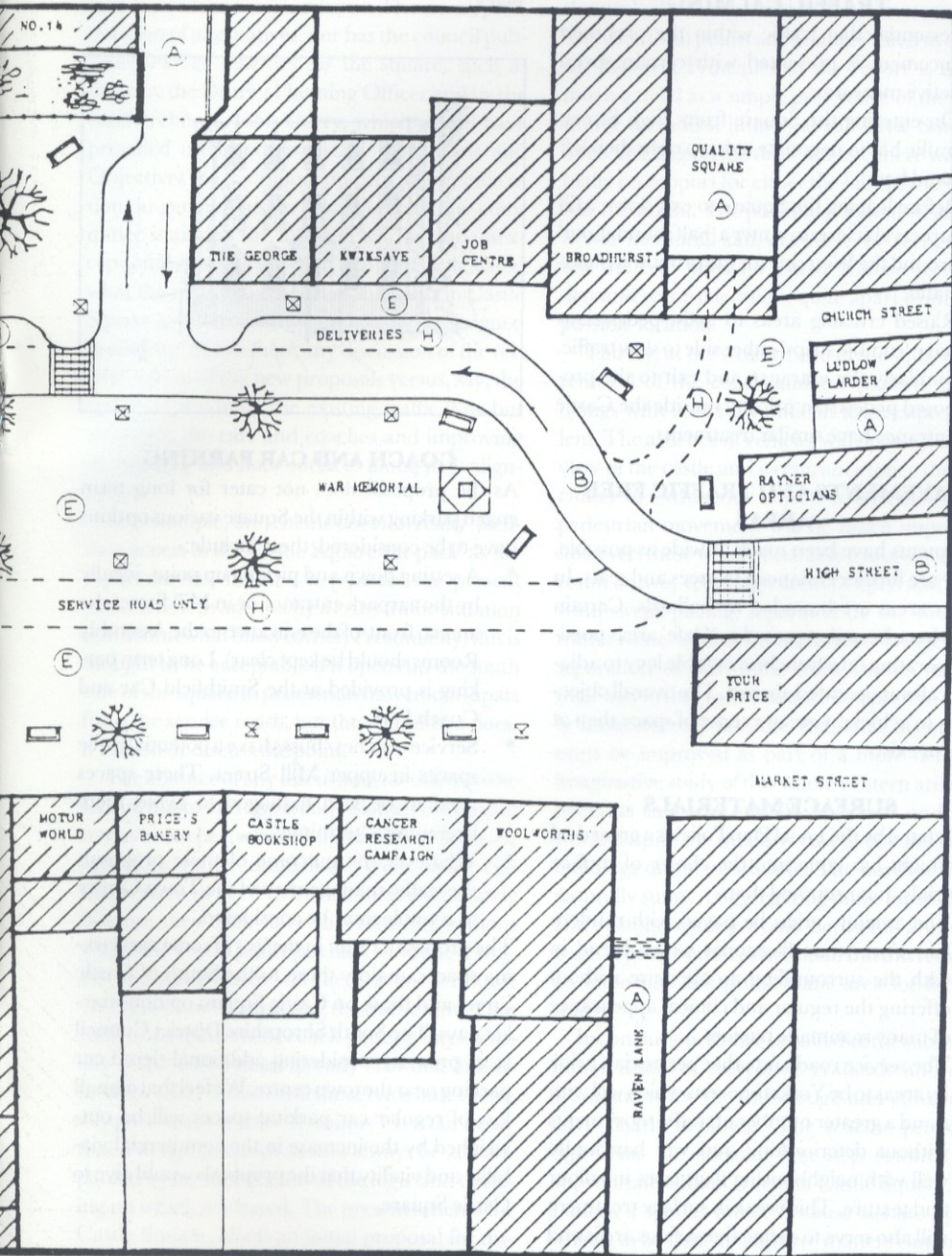


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BEHIND THE SCENES

The work of the Civic Society Committee that is visible to our members and the public consists of two editions a year of the *Ludlow Heritage News*, the series of seven or eight public meetings with guest speakers and one or two organised visits each year to places of historic or architectural interest.

However, behind the scenes the committee, through their monthly meetings are busy keeping an eye on planning developments in the town. Their official representative on the Ludlow Conservation Area Advisory Committee is James Harris, while your Chairman, Stephen Dornan is also on that committee as the representative of the Historical Research Group.

At every meeting of the Civic Society Committee current planning issues are discussed and many representations are developed and sent to the South Shropshire District Council's Director of Planning. In the last year these have ranged from 137 Corve Street (twice) to the Castle, and from flood lighting on the Linney to Nos. 9-16 Lower Broad Street.

In addition detailed representations have been written on a draft project for Sustainable Tourism, produced by Shropshire County Council and on the draft plans for the enhancement of Castle Square, a subject covered in depth in pages 5 to 9 of this extended issue. The Committee is always keen to hear the views of its members, and the editor of Ludlow Heritage News will be happy to print letters on subjects current at the time of going to press. Our next edition is due out in September 1994.

BOOKS OF LOCAL INTEREST

The following is a selection of the books available locally on Ludlow:

Faraday, M., **Ludlow 1085 - 1660: A Social, Economic and Political History** (Phillimore, 1991)

Francis, R. and Klein, P., **The Organs and Organists of Ludlow Parish Church** (1982)

Lloyd, D. **Country Grammar School: A History of Ludlow Grammar School through Eight Centuries against its local background** (1977)

Lloyd, D., **Historic Ludlow** (Studio Press, Birmingham, 1978)

Lloyd, D. and Acton, G., **Ludlow Walks** (Studio Press, Birmingham, 1982)

Lloyd, D., **The History of Ludlow Museum, 1833 - 1983** (1983)

Lloyd, D. and Klein, P., **Ludlow: A Historic Town in Words and Pictures** (Phillimore, 1984)

Lloyd, D. and King, R. and Sykes, M. **Ludlow Festival: The First Twenty Five Years** (1984)

Morris, R. and Hoverd, K., **The Buildings of Ludlow** (Alan Sutton, 1993)

Speight, M., **Ludlow in old picture post-cards** (Zaltbommel/Netherlands, 1983)

Webb, B., **Ludlow Album: A collection of old photographs** (Shropshire Libraries, 1981)

Weyman, J., **Ludlow in Bye-Gone Days** (1913, reprinted 1986)

Ludlow Research Papers, Studio Press Birmingham

1: Speight, M. and Lloyd, D., **Ludlow Houses and their residents** (1977)

2: Lloyd, D. and Moran, M., **The Corner Shop: History of Bodenham's from the Middle Ages** (1978)

3: Speight, M., **The Great House, Number 112 Corve Street, 1270-1980** (1980)

4: Lloyd, D., Howell, P. and Richards, M., **The Feathers** (1986)

5: Klein, P. and Roe, A., **The Carmelite Friary, Corve Street: its history and excavation** (1987)

The following books have important sections about Ludlow:

Clifton-Taylor, M., **Six English Towns** (BBC, 1978)

Girouard, M., **The English Town** (Yale University Press, 1990)

Hindle, B., **Medieval Town Plans** (Shire Archaeology, 1990)

Oman, C., **Ayot Rectory: A Family Memoir** (Hodder and Stroughton, 1965)

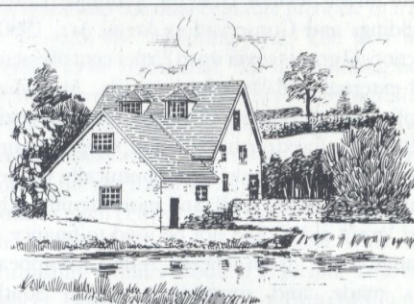
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