

# It's the Built Environment that makes Shrewsbury Special

Shrewsbury is an unusually fine town, particularly in its wide range and high quality of architecture.

It is loved by residents and visitors alike. A host of national experts espouse its rare attractions. It was the venue for a RIBA Festival of Architecture in 1984. Its high-quality streets span 11 centuries, with many original buildings and distinct styles, including over 700 Listings - all within a large Conservation Area. Shrewsbury Civic Society constantly tries to protect this fine heritage, which constitutes the town's main attractiveness and is essential to its long-term economy through investment, business and tourism, as well as to the high quality of life for the residents and others.



While many owners zealously protect and enhance this excellence,



there are others who show insufficient care for their buildings or they allow the erosion of their authenticity. While recovering from lockdown, Shrewsbury needs to “build back better” to protect this long-term future. Any degrading could denude the town's unique values. However, a number of prominent buildings are suffering from long-running lack of care, undermining the efforts of others. Some of these neglected buildings are private, some are let and several are Council-owned. Timely maintenance, upkeep and enforcement have not been priorities. Shrewsbury under-values its architecture, however old it is. This is despite the usual high-quality observations of local Conservation officers.



The Civic Society's Report on Shrewsbury's Built Environment identifies this lack of care and apparent low valuation for the town's important buildings, from the Stew to the Shirehall. It shows how this is leading to degradation and loss of financial and amenity value, both for individual buildings and whole streets. It makes the case for maintaining our heritage better. Funding shortages will only increase the difficulties but, without good conservation, and sufficient

recognition of the town's quality it will erode. Strategies are needed now to avoid further heritage loss. The report has cost-effective recommendations.

An updated version has been distributed to Business Leaders, BID, the Big Town Plan, Shropshire Council and others.

The Society is happy to receive reactions about its content.

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The full report is available at the Planning Pages of [www.shrewsburycivicsociety.co.uk](http://www.shrewsburycivicsociety.co.uk)