7.12 Retail Edge

7.12.1 There are a number of specific issues associated with this area which reflect the backland character of this part of town. The problem in this area is the need to accommodate servicing for retail units and surface car parking for Town Centre visitors.

7.12.2 There are a number of good examples of infill development within this part of the town. The courtyard retail area developed at Bishop's Court provides an attractive and intimate setting for small retail units. The scale of this development is a fine example of how new development should resolve certain backland issues by providing active frontages.

7.12.3 For many people the car park represents the first impression of a place and should be considered as a gateway to the Town Centre. The image of the car park, and the experience of moving from car to Town Centre is a critical one in terms of the image of the town.

7.12.4 There are a number of car parks in the town which provide convenient access to the Town Centre as follows:-

- St John's Square Car Park
- Newlands Car Park
- Lodge Road Car Park
- New Street (adjacent to Tesco)
- Bowen Square
- Welton Road
- Chapel Lane
- Old Gas Works
- Primrose Hill
- West Court
- Chaucer Way
- Market Square (provides additional on street parking)

7.12.5 These car parks can be improved in a number of ways. Some sites have been identified as potential development sites in the TCV. For these sites it is important that the historic fabric of the town is considered as a basis for restitching these areas back into the traditional urban form structure.

Code

The enhancement of backland areas represents a major opportunity to improve the image and activity within the Town Centre. Design should ensure that:-

- There is a clear definition of public and private space, avoiding exposed rear boundaries and service areas adjacent to public space
- Defining a central public space usable for a range of activities
- Maintaining a strong degree of enclosure
- Increasing the degree of overlooking and natural surveillance over pedestrian routes from adjacent buildings
- Active building fronts to all pedestrian routes
- Defining the key pedestrian entrances to the space
- Maintaining and improving linkages to adjacent areas
- Any vehicle turning/servicing areas should be located away from the public side of the development.

High Street

KEY

- ✳ potential landmark
- ◢ improve surveillance
- ▨ redefine space
- ▬ upgrade boundary
- ⇡ improve pedestrian priority