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Inn Sites: Shropshire's Rural Public Houses

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Discovery, Innovation and Science in the Historic Environment



Inn Sites: Shropshire's Rural Public Houses

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SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a project that was designed to rapidly survey the extent and significance of the undesignated historic pub resource in Shropshire. It was commissioned by Historic England in 2021 and undertaken by TDR Heritage Ltd in collaboration with Shropshire Council. The report outlines the background to the project in terms of the social and economic factors affecting the County's public houses in the early 21st century and the reasons for it being considered at risk. It provides a detailed overview of the form and scope of the work and the methodology used to assess the historic building resource, including the identification of the assets which were in either current or former pub use, how they were surveyed, and observations about how the method was adapted and developed as the project was delivered. It also provides an overview of a range of community-focused learning opportunities, allied to the research, which were carried out, and assesses how effective they were at helping improve capacity, knowledge and heritage skills within local communities. In addition to providing a summary of the results of the project, the report also considers 'lessons learned' to help inform other projects of this type.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ARCHIVE LOCATION

Shropshire Historic Environment Record & Shropshire Archives, Shrewsbury.

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1 BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Shropshire's rural pubs as 'heritage at risk'

Shropshire's rural public houses are a significant feature of the county's past and present environment. In many locations they remain a critical village amenity, being central to the life and livelihoods of many agricultural settlements and are a key part of the tourist offer for the county. They are often linked with major attractions in rural areas of the county and are a valuable tool in encouraging walking, hiking and cycling that can positively contribute to the local economy.

In recent years, the rate of pub closures and pressures on urban and suburban buildings (in particular) have been the focus of work carried out nationally by Historic England, including through a substantial element of thematic designation review. These studies, largely carried out prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, noted that many of these buildings could be considered to be heritage at risk, given the pressures from closures, conversions and demolitions due to adverse trading conditions that had been occurring from 2009 onward.

However, in late 2020, discussions with Shropshire Council's (SC) Historic Environment Team highlighted that rural pubs in the County were emerging as a class of heritage at risk locally. In particular, through their work as a Local Planning Authority, they were starting to identify the county's unlisted public houses and those outside Conservation Areas as being 'heritage at risk' due to their unprotected status. Whilst economic change affecting this resource had been apparent prior to Covid-19, the impact of the pandemic on the viability of a wide range of hospitality business was being cited as a major potential issue for their future sustainability (BeerandPub.com 2020) and, although many Shropshire business were being assisted by local and national grant schemes, it seemed likely that an unpredictable and volatile economic recovery would significantly impact on the County's public houses. As many of these rural public houses were small-scale operations - often locally run, if not locally owned - the nature of the Lockdowns and socialising restrictions during 2020-21 meant that many felt unable to create Covid-secure environments and opted to remain closed during the pandemic - some did not reopen subsequently.

During this period of great uncertainty, brewing industry commentators also highlighted that a lot of pubs, many of which had been struggling to remain open before 2020, would have to review their financial viability and that this would inevitably put pressure on their physical assets. Concerns about the future of the public house as part of local communities were also being echoed by the Brewing and Hospitality industry. In 2020, Emma McClarkin, the Chief Executive of the British Beer & Pub Association, stated that 'the focal point of countless communities in every region of the UK could be lost forever, the social consequences of that do not bear thinking about'. In the same vein, the Chief Executive Officer of the major brewing company, Greene King, pointed to the impact of their potential loss in terms of 'pubs [being] the heartbeat of communities and play a key role in combatting loneliness and isolation'.

Meanwhile, in Shropshire – as elsewhere - the community pub movement had been growing as local people were becoming more aware of how ‘at risk’ their pubs were and a number of collaborative projects to save Shropshire pubs demonstrated a local appetite for understanding and preserving these assets in local communities (see pubisthehub.org.uk).

Planning for change

At the time of this project’s inception, in Shropshire there was limited local information available on the potential economic effects of lockdown losses, the prospect of a developing recession, changes in trading conditions that could intensify the pressure on pubs, and their impact on closures and sales. However, planning pre-application enquiries made to SC’s Historic Environment Team during 2020 highlighted the pressure on many of the county’s rural pubs, many of which had already been experiencing challenging trading conditions prior to Covid-19. These enquiries suggested that an expected loss of viability for a significant number of pub businesses in Shropshire would translate into proposals for change of use, residential development, as well as demolition. That same year, 28 public houses in the county of historic interest were recorded as being ‘For Sale’ on various commercial property sites and, although this was not necessarily an indication that change would be forthcoming, indicated the pressures on businesses at that time.

Between 2021-2022 proposals for residential development and building replacement were subject to the standard planning application process and a full application was needed for the demolition of pubs or other drinking establishments. Amendments to the planning Use Classes (enacted in 2021) maintained the requirement for consent for change of use. As part of the decision-making process in Shropshire, pubs requiring planning consent, and which had been identified as ‘heritage assets’ – including those identified on the Historic Environment Record (HER) as ‘non-designated heritage assets’ - were required to submit a standard assessment in accordance with Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and policies in SC’s Local Plan (SAMDEV 2015, 3.133) and mirrored in the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan.

However, the extent to which these assets were represented on the HER was highlighted in the Council’s HER Audit of 2020, sponsored by Historic England (Page and Carey 2020). This identified concerns with the ‘outline’ nature of a core of historic building records, including a number of records for public houses that had been identified through previous work, such as the South Shropshire Parish Survey, but even more fundamentally raised issues with gaps in data held on particular classes of built heritage, particularly for 19th century buildings which traditionally had been overlooked through national designation and other reviews. As such, it was clear that, without further work, there was no underpinning, consistent and robust evidence base that could ensure that appropriate further assessment of the impact of proposals on undesignated public houses could be effectively considered by the two local planning authorities.

Skills and public engagement

The Covid-19 pandemic also impacted badly on the employment prospects of young people in Shropshire. Figures from the Department for Work and Pensions indicated that, in 2020, the number of 18-to-24-year olds unemployed and looking for work in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin had more than doubled since the beginning of the year and stood at 3,915. To counter this, during the project design period, SC had been developing initiatives, such as the ‘Ladder to Shropshire’, which aimed to help bridge the skills gap.

At the same time, ‘community dialogue’ had been identified as a high priority for SC, who adopted a ‘Statement of Community Involvement’ in June 2021, as a framework for how the Council would involve people in the Development Plan-making process and in the determination of individual planning applications. These two issues had an underpinning relationship with activities in the project’s delivery phase, which were designed to complement existing Council structures and resources.

Previous research in Shropshire

Prior to 2021, the public house heritage of Shropshire had not been considered in a county-wide, systematic manner and the widest-ranging study for was a very selective sampling exercise undertaken in the early 2000s (Dobrzynski 2009). In addition, some limited studies had been undertaken in a handful of Shropshire’s market towns, such as in Shrewsbury, Bishop’s Castle and Bridgnorth, often by local enthusiasts. However, Shropshire’s rural public houses, inns and alehouses had not received the same attention and much of the published work focused on aspects of each public house’s social and cultural history, rather than the buildings themselves.

Wider national, regional and local studies also had tended to focus on particular aspects of public house history, such as pubs connected to a particular brewery (e.g. Frost 2008) or, through the work of CAMRA, inventories of aspects of pub culture such as interiors of particular interest (CAMRA Pub Heritage Group 2020).

Responding to Need

In response to these issues, and in collaboration with the Shropshire Council, in 2021 TDR Heritage put together a project proposal to help meet the needs of the Council in understanding the resource and the significance of undesignated historic public houses in the County, create a consistent dataset of these local heritage assets for County-wide and regional information needs, and establish a comprehensive and robust evidence base that would allow proportionate consideration to be given to these assets during decision making through the National Planning Policy Framework.

In addition, the project was designed to use rural pubs as a means of engaging local people with their heritage and carry out activities and training opportunities allied to the research that could help improve capacity, knowledge and heritage skills within local communities, with a particular focus on young people.

2 OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

Project Aims & Objectives

The overall aim of the project was to significantly expand the evidence base for rural public houses as ‘undesigned heritage assets’ across Shropshire Council (SC) and Telford and Wrekin Council Areas, including by working with Shropshire’s local communities.

It was intended to achieve this through the delivery of the following objectives:

1. The development of a consistent evidence base to assist with future planning decisions for undesigned historic public houses.

The most fundamental output for the project was to create a consistent and robust dataset for undesigned rural public houses across Shropshire, which would support SC and others involved in managing change in making informed decisions on planning applications that could impact on the character of this ‘at risk’ asset type, through residential developments, change of use and proposals for demolition.

2. Raising awareness and developing heritage skills in local people

The project also actively sought to develop skills and capacity building in local communities with a defined heritage slant. Part of this included providing learning opportunities for better understanding and communicating what makes heritage, why it is of value, and how it is protected through the planning system. It included working with volunteers of all ages but specifically provided incentivised learning opportunities for Shropshire’s hard to reach audience of young people and supported a paid training work placement for a local early career heritage professional to provide ‘on the job’ training and support for professional skills development in the next generation.

More widely, the project also aimed to provide the opportunity for local people to celebrate and highlight the contribution of community memories as part of understanding the significance of historic pubs for their communal value. This was to be through providing a forum for local groups and societies to participate in remembering, recording and sharing local heritage and to strengthen and re-ignite partnerships already established through a previous ‘Discovering Shropshire’s History’ project.

Scope of the project

The project focused on the rural unlisted pubs in Shropshire that fell outside of the county’s 127 conservation areas, as these had been identified as the least understood and least protected assets in terms of change through the planning system.

Synergies with other work

The Inn Sites project was commissioned at the same time as a second pilot project, 'Inns on the Edge', which was assessing public houses on Lincolnshire's coasts. It was intended that the development of these two projects in tandem, and the results arising from the two pieces of work, would benefit from being viewed in a wider, regional and national context and allow the comparison of a greater breadth of methods and contrasting contexts and data, as well as sharing of ideas and resources, where appropriate.

As such, both projects were set up to report to an overarching group of national stakeholders who represented the Historic England Midlands Region, the Campaign for Real Ale's (CAMRA) Historic Pubs group, the Brewing and Licensing Trade, the Pub is the Hub (a not-for-profit focused on community hubs), Shropshire Council and Lincolnshire County Council. The group was convened to meet at the start of both projects, with one interim and final meeting to discuss progress and findings.

Project stakeholders

As users of the product from this work, a key stakeholder and partner in the Inn Sites project was Shropshire Council, the local Unitary Planning Authority. The LPA was represented on both the Steering Group and Project Board. Those with a particular interest in the development and delivery of the project were the Historic Environment Records Officer, Planning & Conservation officers and the Shropshire Archive and Museum Service.

In addition to the stakeholders represented on the Project Board (see section 2.1), other local Stakeholders specifically involved in the community engagement strands of the project included Upskill Shropshire (Shropshire Council) and local education and skills providers and trainers.

3 ASSESSMENT OF THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Methodology

Pre-commission scoping

Prior to the commissioning of the project, and to support its scope and development, SC carried out a very rapid appraisal of three key datasets to help define the scope of the project. This involved a systematic, targeted review of historic mapping for these heritage assets using:

a. Historic (pre 1880s) settlements, outside of Conservation Areas:

This data was generated based on the Historic Landscape Characterisation for the county, and included hamlets, villages, isolated settlements as well as suburbs of some towns. It was rapidly reviewed against digital Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:10,560 (1880s) and 2nd edition 1:2,500 (1903) mapping, and it was noted where these areas contained a Public House (P.H.), Inn, Hotel or Beer House (B.H.) which was still extant as a physical structure in 2020.

1,080 historic settlement areas were reviewed and 161 areas were noted as containing at least one undesignated historic public house.

b. Premises Licensing data held by Shropshire Council's Public Protection Team:

Data supplied as point data for all licensed premises (as of August 2020) and containing core information on names, addresses and the type of establishment for all current licenced premises was rapidly reviewed to filter out 'other' licensed buildings, such as school premises and village halls. The remaining public houses were then checked against the outputs of the historic mapping and historic settlement review.

All extant public houses which were shown as buildings on the historic mapping were retained in the dataset, and it was noted whether they lay within historic settlements or not. This highlighted that a number of licensed establishments were in isolated positions, away from historic settlement cores.

54 licensed establishments were identified in this manner. 19 of these had not been previously noted as they lay outside of historic settlements.

c. Information held on public houses in the Historic Environment Record:

All data in the HER was reviewed for unlisted historic pubs, alehouses, hotels and inns. This was filtered using a Geographic Information System to create a dataset of assets which lay outside of Conservation Areas. 94 assets were recorded on the HER.

In total, the initial scoping work identified 251 assets (figure 1), for which SC created an excel datasheet for use by the Project Team, with associated GIS locational information and a full export of the HER data.

The spreadsheet identified:

- The identified name(s) of the public house and their address;
- A 1-line summary about the building;
- Where applicable, the HER number and a link to the Heritage Gateway record;
- A national grid reference (eastings and northings) which could be pasted into mapfinder searches (such as historic mapping)
- Parish
- Whether it was still known to be trading as licensed premises in 2020
- Whether it had been noted as being 'for sale'
- A short notes column for any observations picked up during the scoping work.

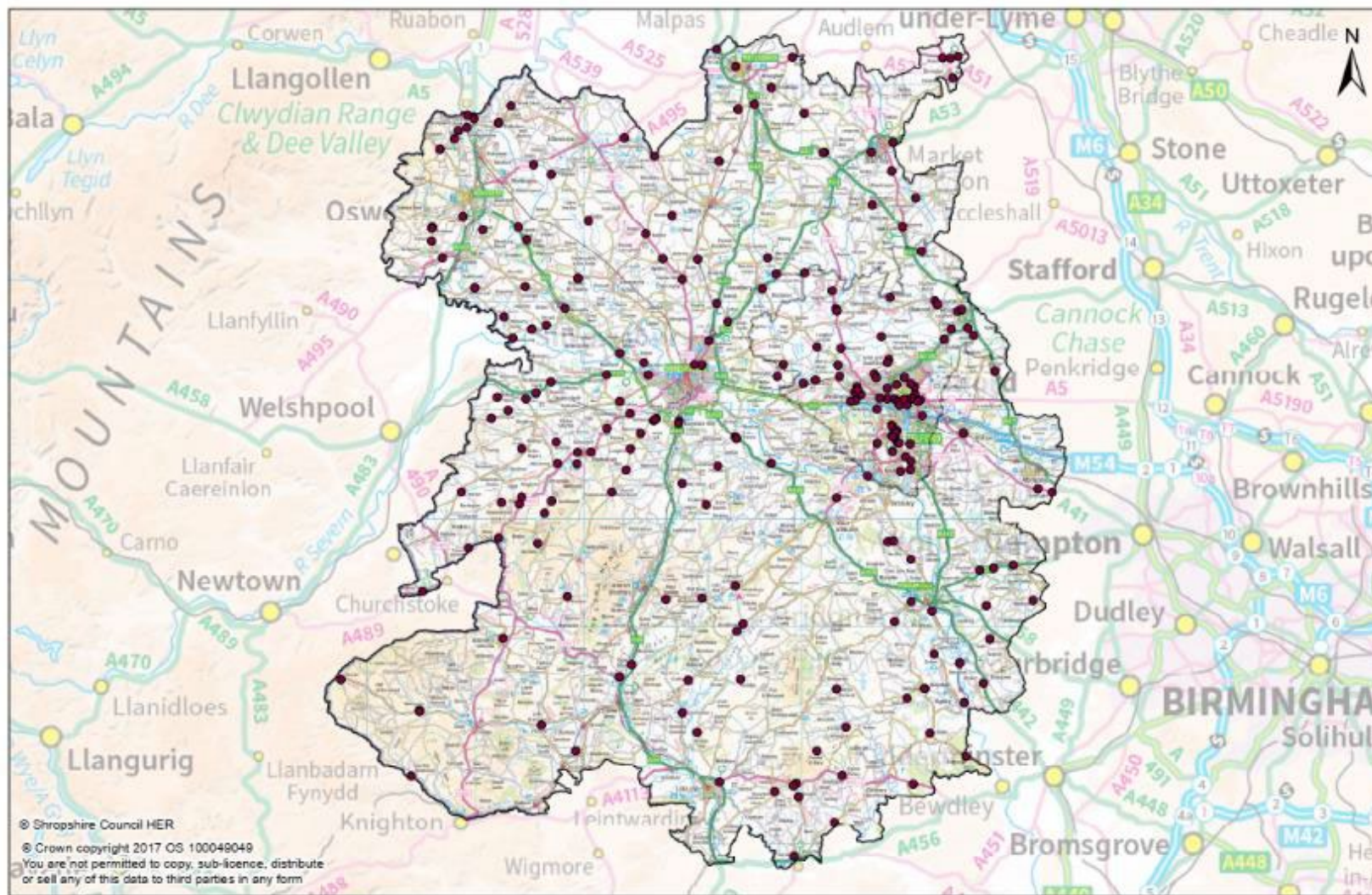


Figure 1: Locations of all 251 extant undesignated licensed and unlicensed properties identified at the initial scoping phase [Shropshire Council, 2021]

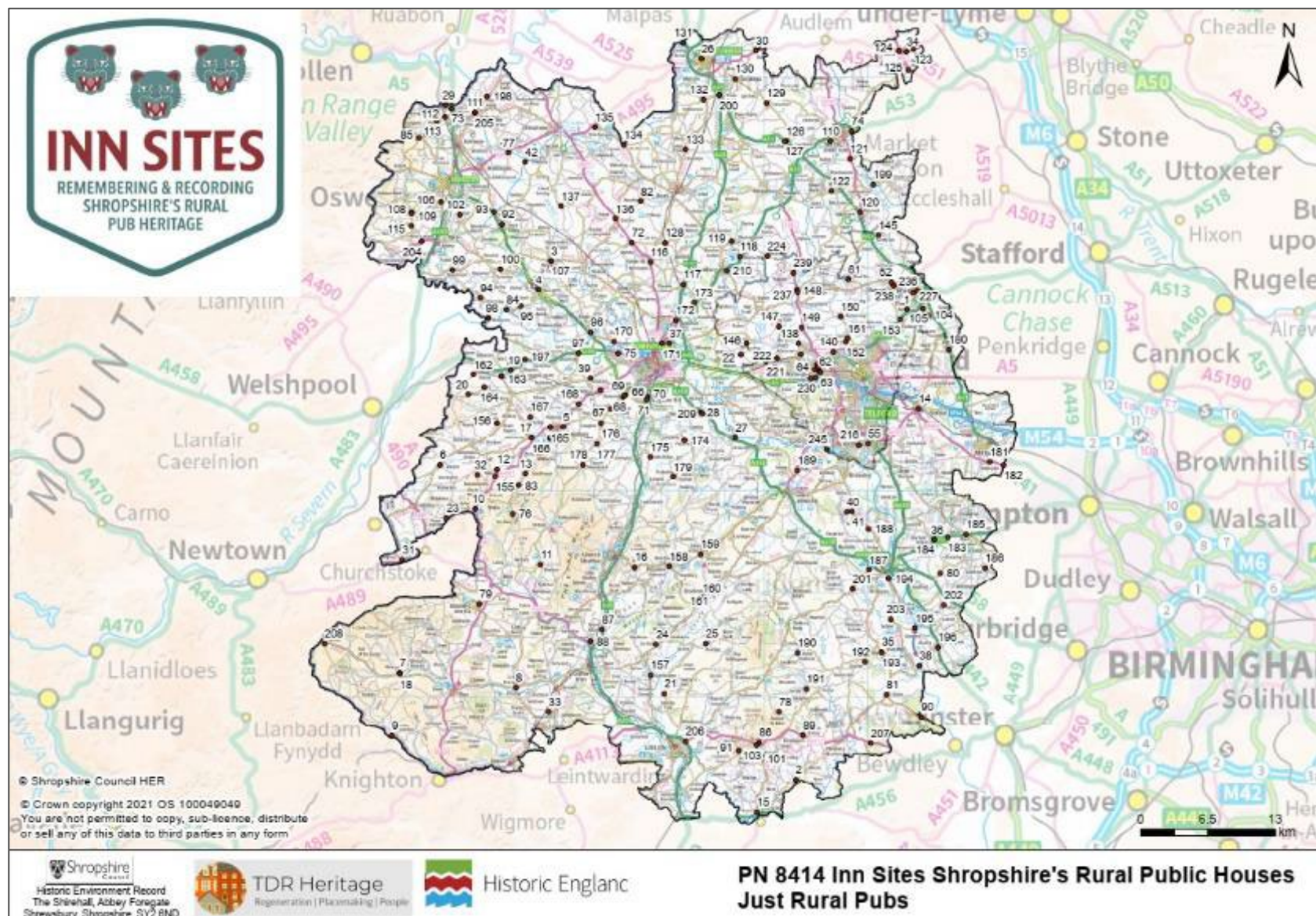


Figure 2: Locations of 198 project pubs – licensed and unlicensed -after additional filtering to remove urban and peri-urban buildings and duplicates [Shropshire Council, 2021].

Project Stage 1: Desk-based review of all data on historic public houses/former public houses

The project design was developed to allow the first stage of assessment work to be carried out as a remote (desk-based) review of all 251 identified extant assets – both licensed and unlicensed - using Google Streetview and historic and modern mapping available through sources such as OldMaps.co.uk and National Library for Scotland. This was for two main reasons – first to avoid implications for resourcing and budgeting for staff time, but secondly – and fundamentally - because travel restrictions and closures of offices imposed by COVID-19 in 2020-1 were expected to prevent visits around the county or to visit archives for much of that year.

To this end, the Project Team used the outputs of the pre-commission scoping work as the basis of the rapid appraisal although, as the project commenced, the licensing information was updated using data from March 2021, and an additional filter for 'Urban' was included in the outputs spreadsheet, based on land use designations of Urban and Peri-Urban, in order to ensure that the project retained its focus on 'rural' assets. This screened out some pubs that were located in more recently developed areas, particularly in the Telford District, and a small number of duplicates were identified. The revised total was 198 rural public houses, of which 124 were licensed in 2022 and 74 were unlicensed (figure 2).

Creating templates for data capture

The desk-based review aimed to carry out a rapid review and provide a description of all the 198 assets, including those that were now in alternative uses. This was intended to include the building's:

- depiction on historic mapping
- form - identifying the main building, the likely extent of physical alteration, and cartographic/extant structural evidence for associated structures including detached brewing/beer houses, stabling or cartsheds
- level of external alteration (based upon Google Street view, other web-based imagery (e.g. Geograph, Rightmove etc.)
- suggested date of construction and alteration, based on the external view and any correlating map evidence.

An additional set of columns was added to the scoping spreadsheet to capture a summary of this information and help support the generation of statistics about the rural pub resource at the end of the project.

When drawing up the project design, it had been anticipated that all of the results of the work (including the description of each building) would be primarily and rapidly captured in an excel spreadsheet, enabling a rapid export into the HER, and using dropdown options to improve consistency and speed of data entry. However, once the project had begun, SC's heritage team identified that a more involved 'record sheet' for each asset would be more useful for their needs as a planning

authority. In the light of this, an example from a historic pub project previously carried out in Bristol was agreed to be suitable, with some minor adaptation, and a word template was created for the Inn Sites project. This was then populated with information extracted and exported from the excel spreadsheet by SC (Appendix A).

Populating the Record Sheets

Using the record sheet template, a consistent approach was adopted for the desk-based assessment of both the licensed and unlicensed pubs. A 'formula' for writing the descriptions was developed which contained a brief introductory paragraph that noted the primary construction materials of the building, a high-level date and location (including its relationship with a settlement, road or other features). This was then followed by a description of the exterior of the building and any clearly associated structures, finishing with a summary of the changes to the form of the buildings and the site, based on an analysis of modern and digital OS historic mapping.

Use of Streetview

In almost all cases, the building descriptions were initially written using images from Google Streetview, with the aim of updating or amending the description for licensed properties after a site visit (Stage 2 of the project). Although this was largely successful, several issues were encountered with this approach. Perhaps most time-consuming to resolve was identifying the correct building in situations where much altered, unlicensed pubs had been converted into residential dwellings, particularly as the notation on historic mapping was not always clear as to which building was the 'public house' (etc). Similarly, there were difficulties locating some buildings where properties had been affected by major changes to the surrounding area which had caused the loss of reference points - in more than one example it was discovered that the public house had been completely demolished and rebuilt in



Figure 3: Image showing the Fox and Duck, Pave Lane in 1882, which was rebuilt on the opposite side of the road in the early 20th Century. The original public house is extant but is in residential use. [Ordnance Survey 1882 & 1954. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland <https://maps.nls.uk/index.html>].

a different location (but retaining the historic name) as part of road building schemes in the early and mid-20th century (figure 3).

Generally properties could be found through a comparison of historic OS mapping with modern aerial maps and there was a heavy reliance on the accurate grid references which had been created as part of SC's initial work. The National Library of Scotland's 'Side by Side' function was found to be useful, however the level of zoom and pixelation sometimes had an impact on clarity and some map regression and identification tasks were affected by the limited number of map editions that could be used with this functionality.

Further issues with Street View related to the rural nature of the project, as a small number of the pubs were located down no-through roads, on towpaths, or on lanes that had not been captured at all. Large areas of Shropshire also had issues with the currency of Street View imagery, with some images being very outdated and captured more than 10 years previously. Whilst the date of the available imagery initially this did not seem particularly problematic, as the project moved into the site visit stage to 'ground truth' and revise building descriptions, this presented real issues with having to amend descriptions to deal with often drastic changes to the pubs - in the intervening period a number of buildings had lost original windows (figure 4), gained major extensions and - in some cases - had been demolished completely.

Where possible, these updates were noted on record sheets and highlight the value of the project, although many of the alterations would have been outside of the planning system.



Figure 4: Affcot Lodge, near Church Stretton is an example of a pub that had undergone significant change between 2014 and 2021, notable when comparing photographs from the site visit against earlier images on streetview. In this instance a series of original windows in the ancillary building, which had originally replicated those in the main pub, had been replaced in uPVC. [Images © TDR Heritage, September 2021].

For a number of the properties which were not in Street View coverage, or where there were particular doubts over the location, a volunteer with the SC HER carried out some site visits to take some additional photographs. These were used by the Project Team to create initial descriptions.

Availability and use of mapping

When the project first commenced, as all archives were closed, the Project Team used both National Library of Scotland (NLS) and oldmaps.co.uk for the best coverage of digital historic Ordnance Survey mapping for the county. However, issues with copyright restrictions and reproduction of images meant that the Oldmaps could only be used as background research and, after they announced the closure of their website in mid-2021, the Project Team worked solely with NLS imagery.

Although the quality of the maps on NLS was better than on Oldmaps.co.uk, the range of the most useful scale of mapping - 1: 25in. - was more limited, generally to only the 1st (c.1880) and 2nd editions (c.1900), with one or two later editions available in the 6in. format. As a result, it was harder to spot less obvious changes to buildings or site form or pinpoint dates in which alterations had occurred.

To try and speed up the assessment, the team took screenshots from each available map, focussing on capturing the actual building and its immediate curtilage through the different epochs so that they could be quickly tabbed through or opened collectively in one screen. This proved to be quite a successful technique for carrying out the map regression exercise for the building itself. However, an image of the building in its wider geographic context was also needed to better understand its location and reason for its existence. Unfortunately, the data collection process captured this aspect of the building less well and, after a review, it was clear that there was a skills issue arising from team members being unfamiliar with mapping and levels of knowledge about how to consider the 'context' of a building in each instance. As such, during the assessment phase and quality assurance process, the 1st edition 6in. map was revisited to consider the topography and location of each building more effectively.

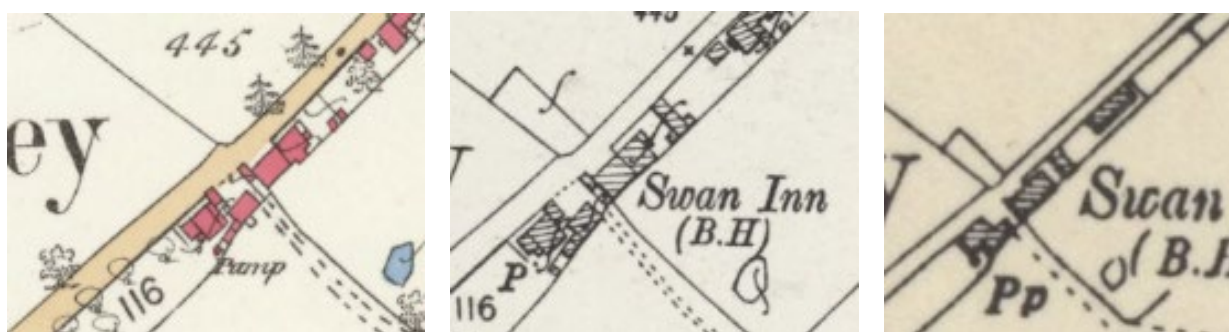


Figure 5: Swan Inn, Frodesley Shropshire – a former beer house (B.H) shown on Ordnance Survey mapping from left: 1882, 1902 and 1954 [Images: Ordnance Survey 1882; 1902; 1954. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland <https://maps.nls.uk/index.html>].

Team members noted that a positive outcome from using NLS was the availability of coloured first edition maps, which allowed greater differentiation between types of buildings – in terms of materials and permanency of structures - and resulted in it being possible to create more detailed descriptions of change in the map regression section.

As the Project Team did not have access to a GIS for their part of the project, the team used Historic England's Map version of 'Search the List' as the 'modern OS' layer to spot more recent change, as well as referring to aerial imagery from Google maps, which was reasonably simple to use and effective.

Completion of Stage 1

An image from the 1st Edition OS (sources from NLS) was included as a reference image in each of the record sheets, as well as the most recent view of the building from Street View.

Both during and at the end of this Stage, quality assurance was carried out for all licensed and unlicensed pubs by a single experienced historic buildings specialist to ensure the consistency and accuracy of each record.

For the 74 unlicensed pubs, after proofing and quality assurance, the record sheets were agreed to be complete at this point. Two unlicensed pubs could not be described as there was no image available. For the 124 licensed pubs there were a small number of cases where the lack of availability of images meant that the description was left until Stage 2 (site visit).

Stage 2: More detailed assessment of currently trading historic public houses/ vacant in pub use

After the completion of the record sheets, site visits were carried out to each of the 124 licensed properties. The aim of this was to:

- confirm that the information contained on the newly created record sheets was correct;
- identify any alterations/changes to the building that had not been picked up on Street View;
- assess any areas that were not visible on Street View, such as the side and rear elevations;
- capture up-to-date and a more complete set of photographs of all relevant buildings;
- confirm or amend vacancy, use or 'for sale' information, where this had recently changed;
- carry out a rapid 'buildings at risk' assessment to capture the level of threat to the asset and highlight any immediate issues that needed resolving

Organising visits

A map of all the licensed pubs was used to divide the county into seven geographical groups that could be managed through organised site visits (figure 6). Each group had a roughly equivalent number of pubs (approximately 20), although geographically some were much more dispersed as they were located in more

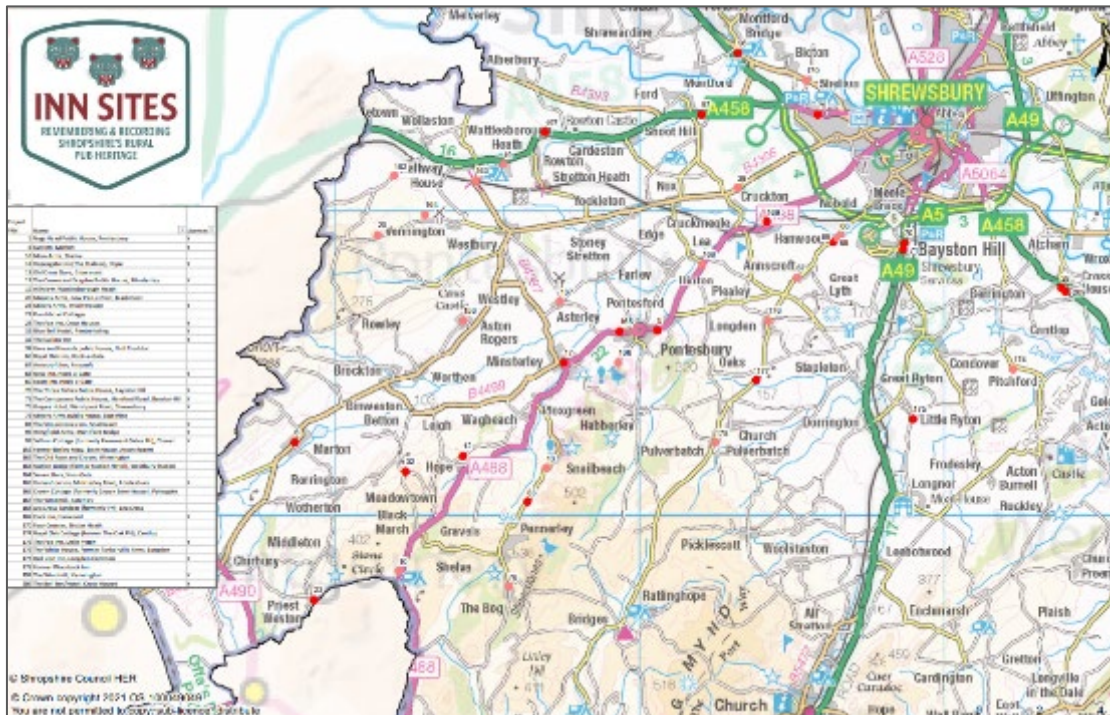


Figure 6: Map of licensed public houses, in 'Group 1' on the west side of Shrewsbury [Shropshire Council 2021].

sparingly populated areas, particularly in South West Shropshire.

An early discussion with the Project Board (and attempts to tie in with the Facebook campaign of community engagement work discussed below) had agreed the need to contact all pub occupiers (licensees/owners/tenants) prior to the site visits being carried out to remind them about the project, make them aware that someone would be visiting, and to reassure them about the intentions of the work and that access was not required. There was a marked lack of response to this engagement and it was difficult to know if any communications had been received. As a result, the team created a 'Project Pub' postcard (figure 7) as a means of having a handout to be able to leave contact details and information with either pub staff, or posted through doors if the pub was closed at the time of the visit.

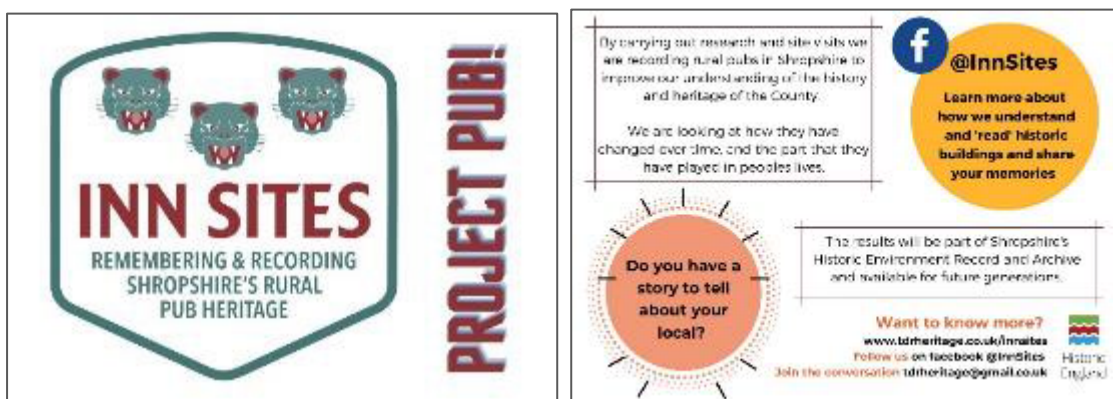


Figure 7: 'Project Pub!' Postcard created for site visits

For Covid-19 and budgetary reasons, the project had not been designed to carry out direct face to face engagement with publicans or customers during site visits, and instead had aimed to generate a 'conversation' and memory capture for pubs as part of the Facebook campaign. As such, it was not intended to use the site visits to capture oral history or information about each pub. However, as the first task on site visits was to announce the surveyor's presence on site, the opportunity was taken to share information where possible. As site visits were planned to be the most sustainable possible in travel, resource and carbon terms, groups of visits took generally place over a full day and this meant that many visits were completed when pubs were closed. Each group of site visits took an average of two days.



Figure 8: Sample of photographs captured on a site visit.

During the site visit, each pub was photographed from all elevations and, where appropriate, this included views / setting of the building and images of related or associated buildings. updated subsequently (figure 8).

During the site visits, each building description was checked and compared against the description that had been created as part of the desk-based assessment. Any changes were noted and the record sheet was subsequently updated.

Depending on the accessibility of the pub - and taking into account the safety of the project team - a rapid 'building at risk' survey was undertaken either during the visit or subsequently, using the photographs. This was based on the criteria laid out in Historic England's volunteer guidance: Historic England Condition Survey (2015) and considered the state of the roofs, rainwater goods, walls, joinery and any architectural features, as well as logging other factors such as use and vacancy (figure 9).

Condition assessment (2022)					
Elements					
	Very Bad	Poor	Fair	Good	Notes
Roof				x	
Architectural Details			x		Paint work is flaking in some places, particularly to the sills of windows and the timber finials.
RWG				x	
Doors Windows				x	
Walls/Gates/Railings			x		Good/fair – overall the pub walling is in good condition however the boundary wall brick work is starting to show areas of spalling.

Figure 9: Example of building at risk survey, which included noting any issues which needed to be addressed.

Out of a total of 124 licensed pubs, only two did not have a completed site visit: one due to safety concerns, as it was in a very remote area; the second was due to difficulties accessing it by foot and by car. An example of a completed building record for a public house licensed in 2021 can be found in Appendix B.

Stage 3: More detailed assessment for selected sites

The next stage of the building assessments was originally planned to include an internal inspection of a sample of 10 sites and the creation of an enhanced Level 1 - Level 2 building report for each of these assets. However, the additional requirements for Stages 1 and 2, as requested by the SC Historic Environment Team, meant that an enhanced level of record had generally already been achieved across the whole of the resource. In addition, early contact with owners of 10 identified pubs had resulted in a distinct lack of interest in participating further.

After internal discussions and a meeting with the project board, it was decided that 10 pubs would still be investigated and researched, but as part of the community engagement research strand (figure 10). This was adapted to accommodate the creation of 'pub profiles' for 10 sites as an output from the training events and the working with volunteers (*see below*). As the research roadshow was carried out in three locations across Shropshire, the 'top ten' pubs (as they became known) were chosen for their geographic spread across the county to try and make them relevant to attendees at different workshop, and for the character and significance of the building (as identified in Stage 1 and 2). The final selection included buildings thought to be of an early date with the likelihood of older historic fabric surviving; a

representative sample of different types and ages of pub according to the topography and history of the area in which they sat; and examples known to be 'between owners' or considered to be 'at risk'.



Figure 10(a): Inn Sites 'Top Ten' pubs were identified as a sample of sites across the county as the means of encouraging the volunteer researchers to create a richer social history for a sample of rural pubs in Shropshire. Four sites were chosen in South West Shropshire.



Figure 10(b): The 'Top Ten' pubs located in North Shropshire.



No 1. The Last Inn (Aston Tap House), Church Aston



No 186. Old Gate Inn, Heathon



No 187. The Punch Bowl (Hundred House), Bridgnorth

Figure 10(c): The 'Top Ten' sample pubs located in South East Shropshire.

The aim of each pub profile was to capture more about the pub from the point of view of the story of the people and communities who had frequented them. This included a wide range of information about its social history - from the publicans who ran them, the staff who worked there, and the beer that was served to whether any major events took place there – such as jubilee or coronation celebrations - or if the building had more than one role in the community.

A template (Appendix A) which could be populated with a set of standard information was created and introduced to potential volunteers as part of the research roadshow. A key component of this was the creation of a 'Story Timeline' in which the information was compiled in a chronological order to build up a narrative for each pub. Volunteers used online archive resources as well as visits to Shropshire Archives to access newspaper articles, tithe maps, trade directories, planning applications, historic photographs and licensing records, all of which helped build a picture of each pub. Some volunteers also met with the landlords and landladies to record oral histories.

Sources

In terms of sources, the researchers used British Newspaper Archives online (BNA) which allowed them to search newspaper articles for the pubs from as early as the

mid-18th century. Volunteers particularly enjoyed interrogating this resource, and in some cases were able to find a range of articles that provided additional insights into the social history of the public houses, helped complement the building descriptions carried out earlier in the project and highlighted the potential for further research.

Locating articles related to the right pub sometimes proved to be problematic, especially as some pub names were found in various locations across the county and researchers found that searching for pub names without a very clearly defined location took a considerable amount of time sifting articles to find the correct public house.

One positive output of using the BNA was that it was sometimes possible to build up a picture of the clientele and users of the pubs. Some newspaper adverts related to societies, such as the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows and other Friendly Societies, holding their meetings at pubs, and there were examples of other organisations meeting at a pub before heading off for shooting. Articles also reported instances of drunken behaviour, selling beer after the curfew 'through the back door', or theft.

Tithe map and award

Although it was originally intended that the county's Tithe map and awards would be accessed through Shropshire Archives, it was found to be more efficient to view the maps using the known eastings and northings in The Genealogist's online search facility. Whilst this allowed easy identification of the right location, the portal was found to be difficult to navigate and, overall, although finding the building on a tithe map in the archives may have been more time consuming, the project team agreed that this would have been a more worthwhile learning exercise for the volunteers and early career team members. As part of the finalisation of the pub profiles, it was also found to be necessary to acquire copies of the maps which could be reproduced as part of the project report without fear of copyright infringement. This was supported by Shropshire Archives who provided copies of images of field name maps which had been transcribed from the tithe map and award.

Trade Directories

The volunteer researchers also explored online trade directories using the University of Leicester's free digital service. This allowed both volunteers and the project team to quickly search for the name and place of the pub and search through the results. Although this exercise, did reveal much information, it did provide the volunteers and team with names of pub landlords and owners, which often provided a springboard for further work in the census returns.

Over a four month period, the project team worked closely alongside the volunteers to ensure consistency across the 10 profiles. Generally, the researchers found that there was quite a lot of variation in terms of available materials for each pub and some research returned hardly any information and had very few leads to follow, whereas others would have benefitted from more dedicated research. The

researchers also noted that pubs that belonged to a wider brewery or tied estate generally had more available background information, such as sales particulars or deeds, floor plans, and photographs.

Despite regular fortnightly meetings and close guidance, there was still some variation in the level of information compiled. This was largely due to volunteers often being driven by their interest in certain pubs or pub history in general, rather than the project need. This meant that some pub profiles had far more detail than others. For example, one volunteer was particularly interested in exploring census returns in great detail, but not very interested in the building itself and another volunteer was only able to commit to an oral history recording.

A deadline for volunteer input to the pub profiles was set and after this date, the project team carried out a rapid review of each of the profiles to identify gaps. Additional research was carried out to fill these, and generally had to focus on newspaper articles, tithe maps, personal stories and trade directories.

4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & TRAINING

The aim of the project engagement activities was to provide opportunities for developing heritage skills within local communities, in order to help them champion the conservation and enhancement of their local historic environment, particularly in the context of public houses ‘at risk’. However, it also aimed to deliver a skills development opportunity for an early career professional from the area and provide ‘on the job’ training through direct learning through participating in all aspects of the project’s delivery. The trainee was recruited from the Birmingham City University’s Historic Environment Conservation post-graduate course in March 2021 and worked part-time on the project until its conclusion.

Focussing on the project’s other specific engagement goals to reach different audiences, the engagement activity was split into mini projects that were delivered sequentially. Learnings from each activity informed the next. Volunteer recruitment was planned to be carried out in the early stages of developing the training to draw out particular groups and identify an approach that would ensure the participation of the core audiences, rather than a community call out/recruitment drive.

The project aimed to design engagement opportunities with partner organisations but to deliver them under the project brand. By promoting the events locally and holding events and activities in local pubs and community venues across Shropshire, the aim was to ensure the widest possible reach and proximity to project pubs. Discussions with Shropshire’s apprenticeship delivery team Upskill Shropshire had also highlighted the lack of available training opportunities in rural locations. Suitable ‘hubs’ for sessions were identified in Wem in the north, Bishop’s Castle in the south and Bridgnorth in the east.

Planned activities

The planned activities were as follows:

Activity 1: Remembering Our Pub Facebook campaign

Working with identified local heritage groups, this activity was intended to encourage the collection of local memories and stories about pubs in the area, delivered via Facebook, in order to provide a memory bank that could help to celebrate community culture and an archive of local knowledge and contribute to developing an understanding of the ‘communal value’ of individual assets.

Before setting up the Facebook page the project team developed a simple messaging hierarchy to ensure project communication was clear and inclusive and to create a project brand. This process led the team to change the original project title from ‘Last Orders’ to ‘Inn Sites’ which was felt to provide a more positive message, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and the difficult circumstances many project pubs would be operating in. Shropshire Council also indicated that developing a distinct brand would be an advantage to public communications about

the project, and avoid any wider planning and development enquires being misdirected to the TDR Heritage team.

At the start of the project in March 2021, an Inn Sites Facebook Page was set up as the key communication vehicle with the general public. All 150 project pubs were sent an email inviting them to follow the page, as were key contacts that had been collated as part of a project contacts database. A project postcard was also printed and distributed by the team during site visits to help highlight engagement activity.

Core social media content was planned on a fortnightly basis to help keep posts regular and varied. This also enabled different members of the team to administer the account.

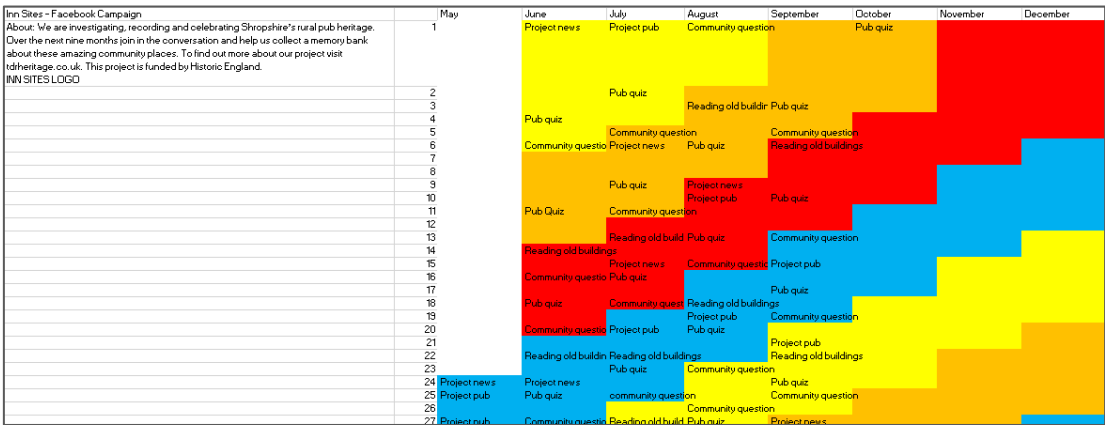


Figure 11: Snapshot of the initial Inn Sites Facebook planner, later replaced by using the Business Facebook Planner Tool

The content themes included project news, highlighting other local heritage and pub related stories, sharing volunteer research; Friday night pub heritage trivia, mini pub profiles, research tips and sources, pub jokes, pubs in art and popular culture, reading building tips, do you remember, guess the local pub game and seasonal pub stories.

Establishing a following took longer than expected, as did administering content. Although engagement was positive, very little information was posted about the 150 pubs that formed the core of the project and it soon became evident that the platform would not provide content to inform records or material to be used in the digital skills activities (or subsequently form part of the project’s archive). As such, the primary function of the page became a tool to raise awareness of pub heritage, provide a way of charting and logging project activity, and create a window to attract media attention. By the end of the project 170 people followed the page.



Figure 12: Example of an Inn Sites Facebook page post [Inn Sites Facebook page, November 2021].

Despite a disappointing level of new information being shared, there were nevertheless some enriching engagements. It was through the Facebook page that the team were put in touch with a longstanding local landlord in Bridgnorth who has been running pubs since the 1960s and claimed to have introduced chicken in a basket to Shropshire! As the pub was listed, and therefore not one of the project pubs, with advice from the Oral History Society a pair of trained oral history volunteers (who had worked on a previous Shropshire Archives project) were approached and spent time with the landlord recording his story and making it accessible to the project. Edits of his interview were then shared via Facebook and his oral history is a fascinating snapshot of running a pub in that period and

forms part of the project archive.

Activity 2: Research course roadshow

The second main strand of planned engagement activity related to improving capacity in research skills and understanding how communities could engage with the planning process.

At the outset it was envisaged that volunteer participants would be recruited and invited to attend a course of two workshop sessions, focussing on using online and archive resources to research heritage stories' – the communal value aspects of a subset of the pubs identified as part of the building survey work, and to highlight how this sort of research could help Local Planning Authorities manage the impact of development on heritage through the planning system. Courses were free and incentivised travel was to be offered to young people to encourage attendance.

Planning for the research roadshow took place early in the project whilst Covid-19 restrictions were still in place and the Project Board recommended that sessions should be planned with online delivery as an option. An outline of the sessions was shared with Historic England's Training Delivery Manager and the course was structured through a PowerPoint presentation which introduced sections and provided images of the research materials discussed. The aim was to keep presentations to no more than 30 minutes to enable participants to absorb information, raise questions and enter into discussions. The sessions were promoted as tasters although a number of participant feedback suggests that some attendees expected more in-depth information or training.

A digital and print flyer were produced to help promote the session. Details of the sessions were emailed to 90 local interest and heritage groups twice and a small article about the project and the sessions featured in the Bishops Castle Heritage

Research Centre newsletter. The session was well promoted by Shropshire Council's Communication Team using the Council's webpage which led to several local newspaper features and radio interviews.

To help promote the session to a younger audience, the team delivered an online presentation to Upskills Shropshire. However, despite initial enthusiasm, no suitable service users were found to participate. Contact was also made with other local skills providers and local schools/ colleges. The sessions were promoted internally by the Shrewsbury College Group and a travel voucher of £10 was offered to students enabling them to attend. Bookings were administered through Eventbrite.

The search for appropriate venues began during lockdown which did delay the planning period as venue staff were difficult to contact and numerous possible venues (such as pubs) were not open or in a position to take bookings. Ultimately, venues were chosen to reflect ease of access across the county, alongside their facilities for catering and ability to accommodate up to 15 people.

Originally it had been anticipated that the course would include six sessions (in three locations) but it was decided that three full days would be more cost effective and provide a better learning experience. As a result, the team ran three events across Shropshire during one week in September 2021. The day lasted five hours with lunch and refreshments being provided.

Each day was split into bite sized presentations with interactive tasks to help provide variety and momentum. Local speakers were contacted to provide a window into the practical application of research skills.

In Bridgnorth the case study speaker was local heritage enthusiast Caroline John who, as part of the Neenton Community Society, helped save the village's local pub The Pheasant. Local librarian Emma Spencer also attended the Bridgnorth session.

The speaker at the session in Wem was George Nash who provided a talk about the National Lottery Heritage Funded 'Tilley Timber' project and demonstrated how a local heritage project could generate funding and have a real-world application – the designation of a new Conservation Area in Tilley.

At Bishop's Castle two members from the Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource



Figure 13: Research Insights Workshop flyer.

Centre displayed exhibition boards, provided leaflets and gave a talk about their 'Lost Pubs of Bishop's Castle' project.

For all three events, the heritage planning perspective was provided by Giles Carey Historic Environment Records Officer from Shropshire Council. In two events this was by video (at Bridgnorth and Wem) and was delivered in person in Bishop's Castle.

During the workshops, the participants were invited to help research one of 10 identified project pubs further. Initially seven volunteers were recruited, which eventually became a productive team of three. One of these volunteers came to the project through Shropshire Council's 'Kickstart' programme (which provides funding to create new jobs for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long-term unemployment) having recently completed a placement at the Council and who was seeking further work skills opportunities.

The volunteers were tasked with researching and enriching the survey information being carried out as part of the wider project by the creation of pub profiles. Using a template created by the team, volunteers used online archive resources, site visits to archives and discussions with existing pub landlords to help create rich social and cultural history records. For each pub, a timeline was produced derived from information from census records, newspaper articles, tithe maps, trade directories, planning applications and licencing records. Some volunteers focused on a single pub and others helped contribute to several. A regular online evening meeting, held over four months, provided an opportunity for the volunteers to share findings and problem solve as a team. The outputs of their research was regularly shared via the Facebook page and an article about the work of the team also featured in the local media where a number of articles were published in the Shropshire Star, County Times, Border Advertiser, the Whitchurch Herald and even a newspaper in Gloucestershire.



Figure 14: Example of an Inn Sites Facebook page post, highlighting volunteer research [Inn Sites Facebook page, January 2022. Pub image from Street View, 2021].

Activity 3: Transferable digital skills for young people

In the project design the detail of the third project community engagement activity was identified as being dependant on discussions that would be carried out with partners when scoping the courses, once the project was underway, to ensure that participants had the most meaningful opportunities to learn new or improved essential digital skills (as set out in the 2019 essential digital skills framework), using the pubs as a backdrop. However, the original intended outcome of the sessions was to be a digital scrapbook of heritage information collated as part of the project and the sessions were planned to take place in the same locations as the research course to enable equitable access to young people across Shropshire with incentivised travel vouchers being offered.

Once the project had commenced, planning the digital skills offer began in consultation with Upskill Shropshire as it was anticipated that working alongside local learning and skills providers would help identify a group of young people to work with, rather than promoting sessions publicly. This involved delivering an online presentation to the relevant teams, including Shropshire Council's Children's Services, Early Help Team, Young persons not engaged in education, employment or training (NEETS,) Targeted Early Help, Virtual School, Enable, Enterprise and Careers Hub, Shropshire Graduate Programme, Kickstart Scheme, Apprenticeship Ambassador Network West Midlands and Ladder for Shropshire. At these sessions the project aims and objectives were outlined and potential options for how the sessions could be run to best suit the learners were discussed.

Initial feedback was positive with several teams registering an interest and there was a particular interest in promoting ‘soft skills’ as part of the sessions (such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, time management, initiative etc) to help enrich young people’s CVs. However, discussions also indicated that rather than design a collaborative session from scratch, time-poor Council teams would be better placed to promote a developed opportunity which they could offer directly to groups and individuals.

A Birmingham based digital trainer, Paul Stringer, an award-winning documentary filmmaker and photographer who also teaches at the University of Birmingham and mentors young filmmakers, was commissioned by the project to help to develop and deliver the training. The sessions were based around the National Standard for Digital Skills, as set out in the Department for Education’s Essential Digital Skills Framework and involved five skill standards including using devices and handling information, creating and editing, communicating, transacting and being safe and responsible online.

The sessions offered young people (aged 16 – 24) a crash course in making an Inn Sites social media advert using a mobile phone. By focusing on technology ‘in your pocket’ Paul aimed to show how to use familiar technology professionally (and that learning new skills doesn’t need to involve expensive equipment or applications).



Figure 15: Digital Skills e-flyer.

As the information collected about the project pubs via the Facebook campaign was very limited, it was decided that filming on location in project pubs would better provide suitable content. The session topics and tasks included covering the secrets of building a successful social media campaign, storyboarding, understanding audiences and platforms, being safe and responsible online and equipment and filming know how.

Initially it had been hoped to offer two sessions in three project pubs across Shropshire (each to be approx. two hours) with a follow up session in a central location for participants to work on editing. All films were then to be edited together by Paul with a film premiere event hosted for participants and stakeholders to launch the finished products before uploading to YouTube. However, sourcing venues and identifying participants once again proved problematic. The workshops were due to take place in early November 2021, however communications with Upskill Shropshire stalled and there were difficulties in finding project pubs willing to host the events so close to the Christmas period. (Due to the Covid-19 pandemic many postponed events at pubs had been rearranged for this period). As a result, the sessions were pushed back to January 2022 and focused on delivering a single day session in one location, the Punchbowl pub in Bridgnorth, which had good

space and availability. The follow-up editing session was booked at Shrewsbury Museum. All sessions were free, with lunch and a travel voucher of £10 offered to participants.

The January sessions were promoted heavily with mailouts sent to all schools, colleges (teachers at Shrewsbury College group recommended the sessions to their Photography and Media students in years 12 and 13) and other post-16 learning providers across Shropshire. The Shropshire Arts Team and other arts and heritage organisations helped to promote the sessions and a press release resulted in several articles in the local online papers and a Radio Shropshire interview. Five bookings via Eventbrite were made. The team was also approached by Enable Step-Up, a programme managed by Shropshire Council to provide person-centred support for 15–24-year-olds across Telford and Shropshire in community settings for employment, work experience, apprenticeships, education, and training experience, to deliver a closed session for their Telford group. However, despite conversations this collaboration did not take place.

Due to post-Christmas announcements about the rise in Covid-19 cases and the expectation of restrictions the digital skills events were postponed to the following month. Unfortunately, this led to several people being unable to make the new date. Further complications overshadowed the event when heavy flooding hit the Bridgnorth area in the days leading up.

The first workshop hosted at the Punchbowl Inn included a member of the volunteer research team and a long-standing Punchbowl staff member who were available for the filmmakers to interview during the afternoon. Lighting and microphones were provided to help participants enhance the quality of their footage.

Sadly, due to the availability of the young people involved, the live launch event did not take place. However, the edited film, containing a montage of six crafted films was subsequently made available on TDR Heritage's YouTube channel and was shown as part of the Pubs Symposium in July 2022. It can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sg4xMDsigwI>



Figure 16: Paul Stringer working alongside the young filmmakers. [Image © TDR Heritage 2021]

All of the events and activities carried out by the Project Team had an associated feedback and fed into the evaluation of the project which is summarised in Section 5.



Figure 17: Image of the edited film, containing a montage of six created films which was shown at the Historic England Pubs Symposium. [Image © TDR Heritage/YouTube 2022].

5 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The primary outputs of the project were the results of the assessment of the 198 historic pubs (see Appendix B) and the pub profiles of 10 pubs, as well as the creation of an archive of training material and the data collected by the project team, a summary of which is below.

Improvements to the Historic Environment Record

The rapid assessments of the 198 licenced and unlicensed premises resulted in the addition of 119 new records to the county's HER and updates to 79 records.

Condition of extant public houses in 2021 and levels of change

The project assessed the condition of 120 of the 124 extant undesignated pubs identified as licensed public houses in 2021. 106 were found to be in good overall condition. 11 were in fair condition, and two were in poor condition. One had been demolished.

Site visits in 2022 found 10 of the licensed premises (of 124) to be fully vacant. 104 were still in pub use and fully occupied. There was no geographic association with vacancy as they were located across the county. One former pub was in a new use as an Indian restaurant.

Other findings

The project design had originally included a thematic report which was expected to include an outline of the history of the development of the asset type in Shropshire, and to make key proposals for further work, including whether there were any recommendations for national designation. However, soon after the project had commenced it became clear that the nature of the buildings - selected for inclusion in the assessment because of their rurality and lack of designation - was a major limiting factor in being able to develop an understanding about the resource across the county. In particular, not including unlisted buildings in conservation areas meant that a high proportion of pubs and inns which had played a key role in Shropshire's historic settlements were excluded from the review. The removal of listed buildings had an additional impact on understanding how the resource had changed over time. In the light of these factors, it was agreed that the characterisation element of the final report should focus on identifying any emerging themes that had become evident from the work, after a rapid assessment of the data collected as part of the site visits.

Perhaps not surprisingly, given that the assets assessed by the project were outside the historic core of most settlements, project pubs were generally associated with some form of communication route, such as a road, and clearly were designed to service travellers. Although not numerically tabulated as part of the project, a significant number of pubs were located on former turnpike roads or at crossroads, but there were also a large number on smaller roads or tracks that provided access to the larger roads and turnpikes from smaller settlements (Turnpikes.org.uk).

There were also a number of premises which had been associated with canal or river crossings, including a small number which had formerly associated structures and wharfage on the Montgomery Canal and the Shropshire Union Canal.

However, in the dispersed early industrial settlements of the later 18th and 19th century, particularly in locations such as the Ironbridge and Telford area and the small mining areas north of Bishop's Castle, there were a number of public houses strategically placed (at their time of construction) either in small, dispersed groups of houses or emerging settlements related to mining or quarrying, some of which may have initially been squatter settlements. In these situations, an examination of old maps also seemed to show a notable scarcity, but similarity, in the type of services available to these settlers, which generally comprised a chapel, often directly adjacent to the public house, and a school.

The later 19th century public houses seemed to be generally found along roadsides in expanding villages or towns, outside of the historic core of a settlement – often close to railways, or in newer settlements that had developed from dispersed earlier industrial settlements, such as in the Ironbridge and Telford area in the east of the county.

During the assessment phase, the project team also began to notice that pubs that were located on main and/or turnpike roads in smaller settlements often seemed to be in close proximity to a post box or post office which may suggest that they had a relationship with the post chaise carriages that carried post in the 18th and early 19th centuries, as well as travellers.

One unexpected aspect of the research carried out by volunteers was learning more about a movement called the 'Peoples Refreshment House Association' (PRHA). The PRHA was founded in 1896 and leased pubs on reformed lines with the aim of encouraging temperance. A list of 61 pubs run by the association, published in 1907, showed a considerable aggregation of PRHA houses on the western side of the country and seven pubs were in Shropshire. Two of these were project pubs and had been owned by the Earl of Powis. At the peak of its powers, the PRHA controlled around 130 pubs across England, but interest in the movement waned and by 1962 the Association's freehold properties and leasehold interests were acquired by Charrington's Anchor Brewery (Dover Kent Archives 2021). This area of public house history in the county, particularly resonates with Shropshire's location as a border county with Wales and would certainly bear further research and investigation. This could include a broader review of the temperance movement and its associations with the buildings of the county.

Date of Public Houses

The likely dates of construction for all of the 198 public houses were tabulated and 17 of the 198 pubs were considered to be of potential 17th century origin and one of 16th century date. 10 of these were still licensed, and only two were considered to have had substantial alteration. Whilst the dating of these early buildings was often indicated by the arrangements of chimneys, plan form or timber framing, in some cases – usually where they had been identified as Grade III listings in the 1980s –

there was additional information in the HER about their interiors which influenced the potential date of construction where features were not evident externally.

Whilst only a limited number of buildings appeared to be of the early 18th century (12) and of these only seven were still licensed in 2021, a further 23 were thought to be of the mid-18th century. The survey noted an exponential increase in pubs attributed to the later 18th or early 19th century and these were by far the largest group of public houses covered by the project, representing around 50% (92) of the total (48 were licensed in 2021). Bearing in mind the relationship of project pubs with Shropshire's roads, it seems likely that the construction of many of these pubs related to the ongoing improvement of roads in this period, which is generally seen as the heyday of turnpike trusts, prior to the railway revolution in the later 19th century.

There were significantly fewer buildings (36) dating to the mid-late 19th century, with 23 still being licensed in 2021. 11 buildings were of the early- to mid-20th century and had, in some cases, been relocated to a completely new location as part of major road widening schemes including the A5 – keeping the name of the original pub. Nine of these were still licensed in 2021 and generally had very large car parks and were easily accessible from main routes through the county.

Historic integrity and change

In terms of their historic integrity, of the 198 properties, only 28 buildings had seen limited or no real change and had most of their original or historic features surviving. 19 of these properties were still licensed public houses.

Around 37% (73) had some features lost – these tended to be windows and doors, or original roof coverings. 48 of these buildings were still licensed public houses (25% of the total).

93 properties had seen substantial alteration, half of which (47) were still licensed premises.

Skills Development and Capacity Building

To understand the extent to which the project engagement activities had provided opportunities for developing heritage skills within local communities, help them champion the conservation and enhancement of their local historic environment, particularly in the context of public houses 'at risk', each of the training events included feedback from participants. This included the extent to which people attending training felt they had learned new skills and would be able to apply them in future.

Developing research skills

24 people attended the sessions in total and half of the attendees who participated in the following evaluation survey were over 65. Although this suggests that the session was of primary appeal to the retired and economically inactive, they were held on weekdays, albeit one was specifically tied into a day in which the main local school encourages its pupils to carry out extracurricular activities. The youngest attendee was in the 25 – 34 age group.

The learning objectives for this training event were to:

- understand the range of online research tools and how to use them
- understand how learning about local heritage can help us care and share for our local community
- foster an awareness of local research sources and resources
- learn how to log and reference historical sources
- provide a background to how heritage research can inform planning decisions about buildings in our communities today

14 attendees completed the evaluation survey (58%). Feedback from participants was largely very positive, with some learning objectives being more efficiently met than others. Particularly strong was the learning objective 'Understanding the range of online research tools and how to use them' where all attendees demonstrated increased learning. However, two individuals provided quite poor feedback scores - further investigation indicated that neither had fully understood the intention of the training and already considered themselves quite expert in these areas.

How far do you think the event has met the following learning objectives?				
Answer Choices	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot	Response Total
Understand the range of online research tools and how to use them	0.00% 0	50.00% 7	50.00% 7	14
How learning about local heritage can help us care for and share our past	14.29% 2	28.57% 4	57.14% 8	14
How to log and reference historical sources	14.29% 2	50.00% 7	35.71% 5	14
An awareness of local research sources and resources	7.69% 1	30.77% 4	61.54% 8	13

Figure 18: Feedback from 14 attendees who had attended the Research training in one of three venues across the county

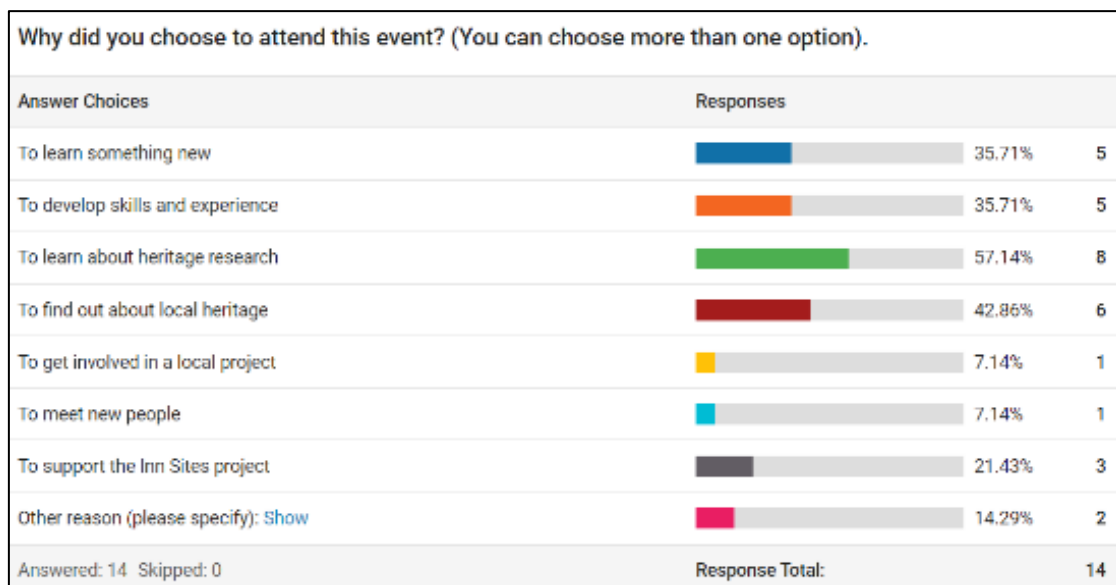


Figure 19: Feedback from 14 attendees who had attended the Research training in one of three venues across the county

Overall satisfaction rates were high with 69% of attendees who responded stating that the information presented in the workshop was ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’. When asked what their least favourite part of the event, comments tended to focus on the room arrangements at the venues, and a desire for opportunities for further learning (deeper learning).

Participant comments included:

“a really enjoyable and useful day.”

“Thoroughly enjoyed Tuesday – Very interesting and lovely people. Shall be happy to help if anything I can contribute”

“Thanks for yesterday. It was really insightful!”

“The enthusiasm of the staff was fantastic, as was the knowledge they shared.”

“It was all really interesting, and good to meet the other participants. But what was best for me was hearing that Shropshire Council wants the findings of the research to help them to make the best possible planning decisions about local areas - hopefully the pubs themselves, but also the neighbourhoods in which they are situated”

Transferable digital skills for young people

The first digital skills workshop was attended by seven young people, two of whom were accompanied by a parent. All but one of these participants attended the follow-up editing workshop in Shrewsbury the following weekend. None of the participants claimed the £10 travel voucher.

Two participants were young professionals working in marketing who had been recommended to attend the session by their employer. All of the young people provided a response to the feedback survey at the end of the first session. This showed that they had all heard about the session either via Facebook or word of mouth.

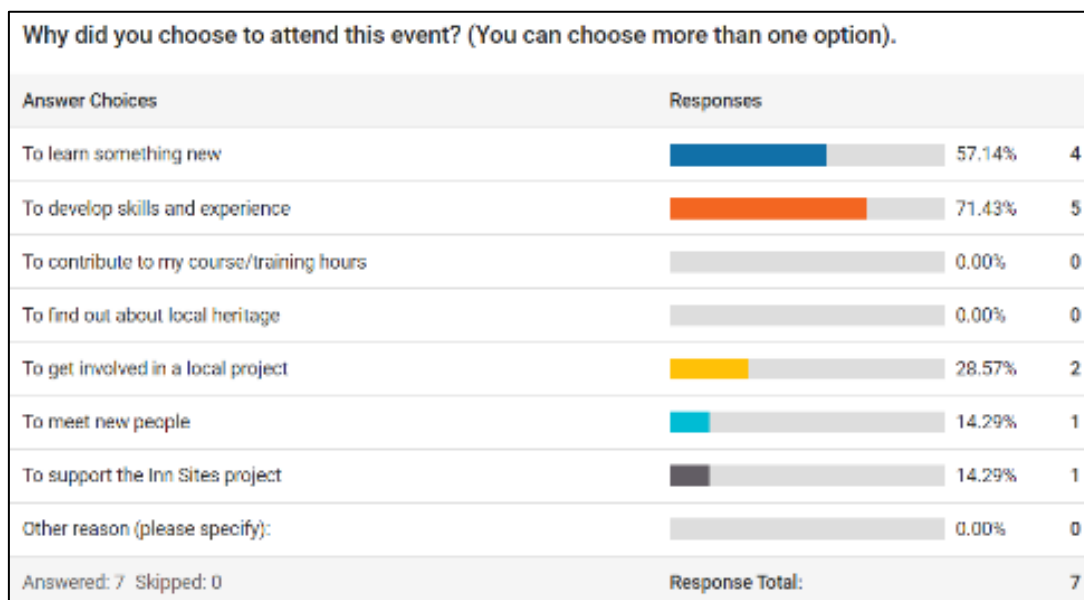


Figure 20: Feedback from young people who attended the first Digital Skills training session - filming at the Punchbowl Inn, near Bridgnorth

The sessions themselves were positively received by the young people who attended the event and the quality of Paul's training was highlighted by many. All of the participants either rated the sessions as 'Very Good' or 'Excellent'.

As part of the event evaluation, participants were asked to identify how far they felt that they had built the following skills.

- Using devices and handling information
- Creating media
- Editing media
- Communicating
- Being safe and responsible online
- Listening and observation
- Creativity

How far do you think the event has helped you build the following skills?				
Answer Choices	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot	Response Total
Using devices and handling information	0.00% 0	85.71% 6	14.29% 1	7
Creating media	0.00% 0	28.57% 2	71.43% 5	7
Editing media	60.00% 3	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	5
Communicating	0.00% 0	85.71% 6	14.29% 1	7
Being safe and responsible online	28.57% 2	57.14% 4	14.29% 1	7
Listening and observation	0.00% 0	14.29% 1	85.71% 6	7
Creativity	0.00% 0	28.57% 2	71.43% 5	7

Figure 21: Feedback relating to improved skills from the young people attending the first workshop for Digital Skills

The skills identified in the survey were linked to both events, with an expectation that all attendees completed the two sessions. The table above shows the scores for session 1 – editing and being safe online were aspects more fully covered in Session 2.

When asked for their ‘favourite part’ of the training, most participants identified the filming, but also cited other elements including teamwork, developing the idea, using the equipment, recording the interview with a practical application and videoing aspects of the pub.

Participant comments included:

‘[My favourite part was] filming and teamwork’

‘Working in social media we were expecting to have a basic knowledge of some of what was covered today (eg safety online) with aims to learn more in specific areas - this definitely happened!’

‘It opened my eyes to a world that I hadn't really considered before and made me see how a film can invoke a response in the audience.’

‘Don't have a least favourite part, enjoyed it all.’

‘Really impressed with the workshop, well thought out and delivered.’

‘Would just like to say that Paul was brilliant. He was engaging, taught without being patronising and gave great advice and support. A really great presenter.’

Sadly, due to the availability of the young people involved, the live launch event did not take place. However, the edited film, containing a montage of six crafted films was subsequently made available on TDR Heritage's YouTube channel and was shown as part of the Pubs Symposium in July 2022.

<https://youtu.be/Sg4xMDsigwI>

Work Based Learning Experience

In addition to the more community focussed activities, the final stages of the project collected a personal reflection on the impact of the project on the skills and development of the early career professional, as follows:

'Despite undertaking a Masters in Conservation of the Historic Environment, the real learning only began once I started this work-based learning opportunity with TDR Heritage. Prior to this, I had very little experience in working within the historic environment and found it difficult to apply what I was learning on my course, meaning that, although I could get a distinction in a module, the information ultimately never set in. In addition, due to the fast-paced nature of the MA, there was little time to explore and read around topics, meaning that my understanding was, almost all of the time, limited to what my assignment had been on. Working on this project provided me with me the time and space to fully immerse myself in learning, fully take my time - even when there perhaps wasn't the time, to ask questions, make mistakes, make them again and ask even more questions.

Throughout the work-based learning experience, I gained a wide range of skills including interpreting historic buildings, understanding historic maps, photographing historic buildings and rapid buildings at risk surveys. In addition, I also was given the confidence and ability to positively work with volunteers and partners.

At the start of the project, I only had a basic level of knowledge on how to describe a building, with a limited understanding of how to progress one step further and interpret what was seen. Similarly, I had incredibly limited knowledge and experience in using historic maps and 1st, 2nd and 3rd edition Ordnance Survey maps had to be explained, as well as the difference between 6" and 25". Gradually, I was able to explain and identify differences in the buildings and surroundings. During the initial site visits, it also became apparent that some mentoring and guidance was needed to improve the quality and composition of photographs, particularly where the aim was to capture images for building recording.

To gain a critical understanding of the ways in which historic buildings can be interpreted, several training exercises were employed by TDR. I had access to a comprehensive series of books, which were a good starting point in helping increase my terminology and vocabulary and made it easier to identify different elements on buildings. Once a good foundation had been built, and I was able to identify elements of the buildings, the next step was to be able to interpret this. This was achieved at first through direct training with close 1:1 mentoring, and then by 'learning through doing'. Through constant encouragement support and guidance,

by the end of the project, I also gained skills and confidence in analysing and phasing the historical development of a pub. However, I also learned that it is important that this skill has continuous work and practice to ensure that what has been learned and the time and energy spent in upskilling in this area is not lost.

Long term Legacy

As the project neared completion, the Inn Sites and Lincolnshire Inns on the Edge project teams collaborated on the development and delivery of a virtual symposium which included talks on identifying and assessing the undesignated pub heritage in each county and engaging local communities in that process. The symposium was held on Beer Day Britain in 2022 and was hosted by Historic England. It was aimed at an audience of heritage and licensing/brewing professionals and allowed both projects to share their experiences and 'lessons learned' in the context of their potential wider application. <https://youtu.be/ZnRF7kBOs7M>.

As the organisers of the symposium did not require attendees to register for the event there is no information available about the demographic or background of those who joined on the day. However, thumbnails of attendees on the recording indicate that there were around 25 attendees at the start of the event.

After the symposium, the recording was posted on TDR Heritage's website and promoted through TDR's LinkedIn account. In July 2023, 164 people had accessed the recording on Youtube.



Figure 22: Image from the 'England's Pubs: part of our history, part of our future?' symposium held in June 2022.

6 LESSONS LEARNED

Overall, the project successfully delivered a wide range of outputs in a period with a series of unprecedented challenges, including Covid-19. However, there were a number of lessons learned from the experience – both positive and negative – which are summarised below.

Assessing physical assets

- From the outset, the intention of the project - and the needs of the project partners - were clear that the core aim of the work was to fill gaps in the known resource and focus attention on pubs which had no protection through the planning system. However, this focus caused a number of issues. In particular, it was difficult to communicate the remit of the project to members of the public who could not understand why their 'local' had been excluded. Whilst the project team became well practiced in explaining the justification for the work, it remained an issue throughout.
- An allied issue with taking a selective approach - removing pubs in conservation areas (and even listed buildings) - from the resource - caused issues when trying to consider the overall character of pubs in the county. This was particularly notable in terms of the impact of not considering unlisted public houses in the core of historic settlements, which could still be considered rural. In a future project, if thematic issues are a critical consideration, then a different approach would be more meaningful – with a sample or wholesale review of pubs at a district, sample of parishes, or topographical level across a county to understand how different topographies, demographic, communication and industrial development has impacted on the resource, regardless of designation.
- The project design was developed after initial work had been carried out by Shropshire Council and this was particularly useful in scoping the work. However, there were some initial teething problems with some of the licensing data and in the definition of rural. As the project progressed the team needed to refine the original scoped buildings to exclude some which had historically been rural (at the time of the 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps) but had subsequently become located in modern urban areas. In this context, a clearer definition of rural would have been useful at the outset.
- At project design stage, the rapid assessment of each building had been anticipated as being delivered using a spreadsheet format, with a simple description of the building as an identifier and the use of dropdown boxes to assist rapid and consistent data collection. Once it had become clear that the end-users were keen for more visual aid and report, the format was adapted. However, this did have a considerable impact on the speed at which buildings were assessed and the level of detail recorded increased considerably. Being clear about the outputs to all users at the outset of a project and ensuring that they will be fit for purpose at the project design stage, would help avoid this situation in future projects.

- The project design was strongly influenced by the need for the work to be carried out as a rapid assessment of the existing resource. As a result, at the scoping stage, it was agreed the assessment phase would be limited to the use of OS historic mapping and would not carry out additional research – including of historic photographs or other maps. In practice and given that the assessments did become more involved than originally anticipated, the project team felt that the lack of opportunity to carry out limited additional research did impact on how quickly it was possible to understand change to some assets, or their age. The difference that this additional work made in understanding of aspects of change to the appearance was particularly noted when work on the pub profiles. These included a review of photographs held at the archive, and this greatly enhanced an understanding of some of the buildings and how they had changed over time. For any future projects, there does need to be some opportunity to carry out limited additional online research (at least), to include other online mapping and photographs to improve the results of the assessment.

Training and development needs

- From the outset, it was clear that there was a far greater need for training to develop core skills in the early career professional than had been anticipated before their recruitment. To some extent, this was resolved in terms of additional project resources – the timeline and budget were quickly reviewed and amended with the support of Historic England to ensure that there was sufficient time to be able to help develop skills. However, being able to suitably service the level of engagement and quality assurance needed to make it a meaningful training opportunity remained an issue for the project lead throughout and significantly impacted on the time taken to complete the project. Increasing the number of experienced staff who can jointly share responsibility for training would be a positive way of spread the load and manage this better in future – although the availability of skills in this area in the sector has a significant impact on this. Factoring-in more time for training and development at the start of future project should help identify skill requirements and plan better to overcome training needs and time pressures.

Community Engagement

- Although the engagement element of the project was led by an experience member of staff, well-practiced in developing and delivering community engagement activities as part of projects, the project team still found that there were a number of valuable lessons to be learned from this project.

Use of Social Media

- Building up a social media following from scratch was found to be very time-consuming and for a short project (of one year or less) the team found it did not justify the resources required. Creating an Inn Sites conversation may have been easier if it had been operated from an already established account, for example, a collaboration with Shropshire Archives, an established local history society or community Facebook Page (such as Shroppiemon's Shropshire pubs past'n'present or 'You know that you're from Shrewsbury when.....'). For future

projects, rather than hoping to establish a core of followers, a more campaign-based focus could well be more successful and would also help to highlight the time constraints of a project and create a sense of urgency or call to action.

- In its own right, and despite a considerable amount of content and regular updating, the Facebook page was not enough to encourage people to share their pub memories with the project, and nor was it suitable for all potential participants. Direct conversations with interested people indicated that the project's audience were more interested in wider and more active opportunities to boost their engagement with project pubs and, to make an impact across the wide rural area covered by the project, considerably more volunteer engagement and resources would be required in a future project. Clearly this project was also impacted by Covid-19 restrictions, but this could have included pop-up events in the project pubs, memory drops at pub locations and community venue or attendance at local history activities.
- Planning regular content in advance using the Facebook calendar tool helped to manage the account between team members and ensure a steady flow of posts. This then enabled the team to focus on responses and reactions. During the project the team researched the use of social media management tools (such as Hootsuite) to widen engagement potential.
- The team had a basic experience of managing and maintaining a social media campaign but also learnt through experience. On reflection, the impact of this strand of the project would have benefited from more expert training (either costed into the project or provided in kind by HE or SC) to help upskill the Project Team.

Developing and delivering the training offer

- Although the postcode sample of attendees to the research roadshow course was small it indicates that although some people were local to the three venues many travelled to the workshops from across Shropshire. Hosting sessions across the region may not have helped attract local audiences. Offering a digital version of the day may have assisted in reaching a more travel restricted demographic and younger people. Similarly, offering a shorter evening session may have attracted a younger demographic.
- Promoting the research roadshow course was more time consuming than anticipated (this may in part have been due to circumstances surrounding the pandemic, both in terms of people's reluctance to participate in in-person workshops). However, further resources allocated to a promotional campaign may have boosted attendance figures. In addition, a number of booked individuals cancelled either a day on the day of the sessions and a number of people booked did not attend. Future planning should consider oversubscribing sessions to anticipate this.

- Although a free lunch was certainly a draw to participants, organising catering at different venues and the waste of food due to lack of numbers made this an issue. Asking participants to contribute a small donation to cover refreshments might also help ensure less waste.
- Sourcing venues which offered in-house catering would help with event management.
- With an unknown venue and self-catering set up can take longer than anticipated. Due to lockdown restrictions the team was unable to visit venues beforehand. However, a site scoping visit would have been useful.
- Learning objectives were over ambitious, setting learning goals which are easy for participants to respond to ensures a more impactful learning experience. Content should be sense checked independently to make sure learning objectives match.
- Although the volunteer research team were highly skilled and enthusiastic, input was led by their interest in certain pubs rather than directed by project need. This meant that not all pubs on the top ten were fully researched, leaving the team to pick up on research gaps. A larger volunteer team, or a longer research period may have helped with this. Alternatively setting micro tasks which covered groups of pubs rather than individuals focused on one particular pub could have made research better spread.
- The digital skills offer was initially conceived as a taster to support existing learners (who were engaged with digital Functional Skills qualifications) and encourage new learners to seek accreditation. However, those who attended represented a wide skills range and aptitude. Clear messaging about target audience and learning levels is required to help ensure targeted promotion.
- The digital skills offer was time consuming to promote as was communicating with the venue pub. This may in part have been due to the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, however further resources were required to allocate to this area of work.
- The knock-on impact of postponing events led to varying availability of the digital trainer (who subsequently had other projects he needed to focus on). Subcontractor contracts need to consider flexibility of circumstances.
- Despite the sessions being difficult to fill, feedback from participants was positive. There is a lack of skills opportunities for this demographic and when engaged young people are committed and enthusiastic to participate.
- There was some feedback received from people who were disappointed that they did not fit in the age bracket targeted for the digital skills sessions and felt that

they had missed out on the opportunity. Digital engagement for an older demographic could also be considered.

7 CONCLUSION

The Inn Sites project was carried out over a period of 18 months in 2021 and 2022.

The work involved the rapid assessment of 198 public houses which had been identified as rural and undesignated pubs and which were either licensed as pubs in 2021 and had been recorded as pubs either on the Historic Environment Record, or identified as a 'pub' or beer house on 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps of around 1880. It excluded any assets located in the 127 Conservation Areas and the 327 listed buildings which could be identified as public houses or inns.

198 records were produced as a result of the rapid assessment, the aim of which was to provide more information to improve the understanding of the resource as part of the planning process. Additional social history research was carried out into ten of the pubs as a means of developing a greater sense of their cultural value.

The project found that a large proportion of the pubs had strong associations with historic communication routes and transportation through Shropshire. In particular, there were a large number of mid- to late-18th century pub buildings along both major and more minor roads, a date which coincides with the heyday of turnpikes and coaching routes. Pubs were also identified at junctions or intersections between canals and roads, often with wharfage often close by. Other services were also regularly found to be historically close to rural pubs, including post boxes, post offices and smithies in small settlements.

The project also found that the nature of pubs was closely linked to the local topography, industry and settlement. In the Ironbridge and Telford area, for example, pubs that were now considered to be in the middle of nowhere were related to historic quarries, industrial sites and wood/charcoal processing. Many of these were also found next to a non-conformist chapel. Similarly, later pubs, of the late 19th century tended to be associated with growing small towns and villages and there were a number of rebuilt pubs dating from the early 20th century which had been moved in advance of road widening schemes and rebuilt in new locations with plenty of space for motor coaches and car parking.

The second strand of the project considered pubs in terms of their cultural significance and their meanings for people, as well as carrying out capacity building for the wider heritage sector. Despite issues with Covid-19 throughout much of the project, it included delivering training and development opportunities based around pubs and upskilling an early career historic environment professional through a work placement. The training successfully reached a variety of communities across Shropshire and included young people who used historic pubs as a way of learning digital skills.

All records for the rapid assessment were lodged with, and incorporated into, the Shropshire HER in September 2022 and are readily accessed through the Heritage Gateway. The ten pub profiles and the project archive have been deposited with Shropshire Archives.

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APPENDIX A: TEMPLATE FOR RECORDING PUBLIC HOUSES

Inn Sites: Data Capture Form

Name:

Previous names:

Project ID: 1

HERPRN:

Location: [NGR]

Parish:

HER Description:

[including Heritage Gateway link if applicable]

Plan Form:

[1st edition Ordnance Survey showing overall plan form of building and associated structures Referenced including date].

Image

[Photograph from either Streetview or other sources. Referenced including date].

Building Description:

Based on desk-based review ☐ **Site visit** ☐

Use (2021):

☐ Licensed 2021

☐ Pub Use ☐ Other Use

☐ For Sale

☐ Vacant ☐ In Use

☐ Freehold ☐ Leasehold

Source:

Source:

Notes:

Condition Assessment (2021): Elements

	Very Bad	Poor	Fair	Good
Roof				
Parapets				
Chimney Stacks				
RWG				
Doors Windows				
Walls/Gates/Railings				

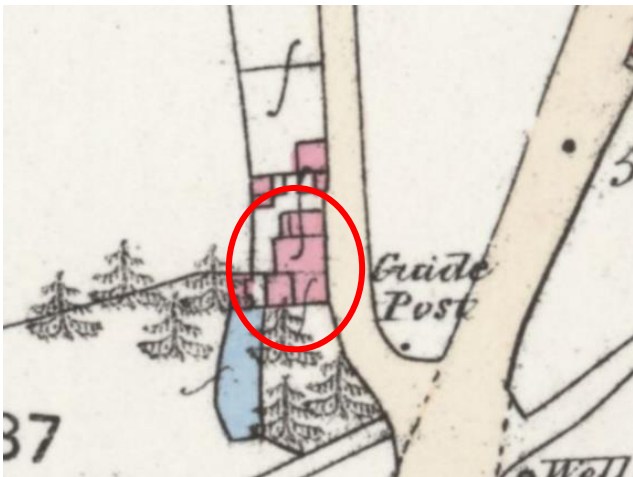
Overall Condition (2021):	Very Bad	Poor	Fair	Good

Notes:

Completed by:

Date:

APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE OF A RAPID RECORD CARRIED OUT ON A LICENSED PUBLIC HOUSE

Inn Sites: Data Capture Form	
Name: Barley Mow, Trefonen <i>Previous names:</i>	Project ID: 108 HERPRN: N/A
Location: 325989, 326800	Parish: Oswestry Rural
HER Description: N/A	
Plan Form: 	Image: 
Source: 1 st Edition Ordnance Survey (25") 1874 OS Map. [Accessed via National Library of Scotland].	TDR Heritage site visit, April 2022.
Building Description: Based on desk-based review ☒ Site visit ☒ A two-storey rendered brick building of possible late 18 th century/early C19 th date with a slate roof and two brick chimney stacks. The pub is located on Chapel Lane, close to the crossroads with the main Oswestry Road, in the village of Trefonen. The principal elevation fronts onto Chapel Lane and is of at least two different phases. The earliest phase is marked by the location of two brick chimney stacks, one to the southern gable and the other to the original north gable end and projects slightly forward. It has a dentilated brick course to the eaves and two modern timber bay windows and a timber panelled door under a segmental arched door frame to the ground floor, with two modern upvc windows to the first floor, which in 2010 were originally slightly recessed 4/8 timber sash windows with painted sills (Streetview, 2010). To the north, the later, single bay extension is rendered and has few architectural detail, but is also of two storeys with similar fenestration, although the window to the first floor is a modern top-opening 'sash' and there is a modern, single storey extension to the north elevation. Although both elements are shown on the 1 st edition OS map (1874), stonework visible in the northern gable indicates that this section has been partially rebuilt, or had an additional floor added in brick at a later date. To the north of the pub is a separate, small single storey building of painted brick and stone with a circular pitching hole to the road, and ?modern clock turret and later C19 th window openings. It is now in use as 'Offa's Dyke Brewery'. It is much altered but may be coeval with the pub. Historic OS mapping of 1874 shows a building of several units with two separate small outbuildings to the north, one of which is in the location of the building now used for Offa's Brewery. Mapping of 1901 suggests that the other building have been a piggery. There is also a small U-shaped building to the west, at the top of an associated plot of land with a pond and plantation area. This parcel had decreased in size by 1901, and was later shown on mapping of 1974 as containing part of Offa's Dyke. There was no change to the plan form by 1925, however by this point the building was referred to as 'Barley Mow Inn' Beer House. There is little available map evidence between 1925 and 1974, however by	

1974 the building had been slightly extended to the rear and was noted as a 'Public House'. The small piggery to the north had been demolished and a new building had been constructed, fronting onto the road. At some point between 1974 and the present day, the pub has been significantly extended to the rear.

Use (2021):

☒ Licenced	☒ Pub Use ☐ Other Use ☐ Vacant ☒ In Use Source: Site visit, April 2022	For Sale ? ☐ <i>Freehold</i> ☐ <i>Leasehold</i> ☐ Source:
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Condition assessment (2021)

Elements

	Very Bad	Poor	Fair	Good	Notes
Roof			x		Some copings are loose
Architectural Details				x	
RWG				x	
Doors Windows				x	
Walls/Gates/Railings				x	

Overall Condition (2021)

Very Bad	Poor	Fair	Good
			x

Completed by: Caitlin Osborne / Vicky Hunns

Date: 24/02/22



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