

CHELTENHAM

Local development framework



Central
Conservation Area
Old Town character
area appraisal and
management plan

FEBRUARY 2007



Central Conservation Area

Old Town character area appraisal and management plan FEBRUARY 2007



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Part 1 – Character Appraisal

1 INTRODUCTION

What is a conservation area?

- 1.1 A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, where its character or appearance is seen to be worth preserving or enhancing. It is given special protection under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Government policy in relation to conservation areas set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15). This legal protection enables the best features of an area to be preserved and new buildings designed sympathetically in-order that they enhance the area.
- 1.2 Some building work which does not require planning permission (known as “permitted development”) can damage the special qualities of a conservation area. “Article 4” directions can be applied by the planning authority to limit permitted development rights and thus give extra protection to particular buildings.

The need for an appraisal

- 1.3 PPG15 stresses the need for local planning authorities to make an assessment of the special character and appearance of all conservation areas in their districts. The Government has also made the preparation of such appraisals for all conservation areas a Best Value Performance Indicator for local authorities. This assessment should be reviewed every five years.
- 1.4 The appraisals provide an assessment of the character of conservation areas or their parts. This appraisal provides the basis for an accompanying management plan which gives guidance on how the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance can be achieved. It also provides a sound basis for development control and other decisions made by local authorities (such as the design of highways or open spaces).
- 1.5 This appraisal was subject to public consultation between 10th November and 22nd December 2006. Following consideration of representations received it was adopted by Cheltenham Borough Council on 23rd February 2007 as a Supplementary Planning Document. It will be used in conjunction with the Local Plan as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

The central conservation area

- 1.6 Cheltenham is known as the most complete Regency town in England. It lies at the foot of the Cotswold Scarp, where the valley of the River Chelt meets the Severn Vale. Currently the whole of the Cheltenham Borough area has a population of approximately 112,000 people.
- 1.7 Cheltenham’s central conservation area was designated by Gloucestershire County Council on 28th May 1973 and its boundary was extended by Cheltenham Borough Council on 14th August 1987. The central conservation area includes the whole of the town centre and most of the Victorian, Edwardian and later 20th century suburbs. It covers commercial, industrial, retail and residential areas, as well as the University campus complexes, some extensive school campuses and the hospital complex.

- 1.8 There is a requirement for existing conservation area boundaries to be re-assessed from time to time. Due to the size of the central conservation area (reputedly the largest conservation area in Europe covering 600 hectares), it has been necessary to sub-divide it into approximately 19 character areas. These have been appraised separately, in-order to identify their individual key components and in turn establish how each may best be preserved and enhanced.

Old Town Character Area

- 1.9 In May 2001 the Council published a draft Urban Design Framework for Cheltenham, produced by Latham Architects (the “Latham Study”). It was never formally adopted, but has been a useful stepping stone for the development of a number of subsequent initiatives. It included a plan which divided the whole town into character areas and is the basis of the character area boundary used in this study. The boundaries of this Old Town character area of Cheltenham’s central conservation area have been devised to encompass the historic core of Cheltenham’s layout, by incorporating key historic roads and the positioning of ancient buildings into its boundaries. The boundaries also encompass the retail sites of the Brewery and ‘Matalan’ and North Place car-parks, which are closely linked to the commercial core of the historic High Street and part of the town centre.
- 1.10 The selection of the character area boundaries has no impact on the overall boundary of the central conservation area.

Summary of special interest

- 1.11 This Old Town is special because:
- a. Cheltenham’s historic layout and street pattern is displayed;
 - b. Much of the ancient High Street is within this area;
 - c. This was the only main street in Cheltenham for centuries, indeed, the settlement was known in medieval times as Cheltenham Street;
 - d. Traditional burgage plots were developed from either side of the High Street, many of which are traceable today.
- 1.12 The Grade I listed St Mary’s Church is the oldest building in Cheltenham, with Norman origins. It is located in this area and significantly contributes to its character.
- 1.13 The area contains the sites of several notable lost buildings including the Assembly Rooms and the Plough Inn, both formerly on the High Street.
- 1.14 This character area encompasses a variety of architectural styles and ages, which have warranted the listing of many buildings. The architecture contributes significantly to the character and appearance of the area.

2 LOCATION AND SETTING

Location and context of Cheltenham

- 2.1 Cheltenham is located in Gloucestershire. It is approximately 8 miles east of Gloucester, 40 miles west of Oxford and is immediately to the east of the M5 motorway. The town is set on low-lying land at the foot of the Cotswold Scarp. Views of the Cotswold Scarp from within the conservation area contribute to its character and setting. The town is surrounded by open countryside. Much of this is protected by the statutory Cheltenham/Gloucester Green Belt (to the west and north) and the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (to the south and east). To the west of Cheltenham is the River Severn, with the Forest of Dean and Wales beyond the Severn.

General character and plan form of the Old Town Character Area

- 2.2 The character area encompasses the historic street form of Cheltenham, exemplified by linear development along the High Street prior to expansion in the Regency period. The medieval High Street has a distinctively different character to the Regency streets and spaces around it. Today, the character area has a compact plan form. It covers the retail core of the town along the High Street and residential, industrial and commercial development in adjoining streets.

Wider landscape setting

- 2.3 The area is surrounded on all sides by urban development within other character areas of the central conservation area. However, views of Cleeve Hill in the open spaces and gaps between buildings create a rural connection between the countryside and urban area.
- 2.4 A number of landmark structures with varying heights are present. These include the churches of St Mary and St Gregory and in particular their spires, which are attractive elements of the skyline both within and from outside the character area. These structures reinforce the historic character of the area and create a sense of place.



Figure 1 Linear plan form of Winchcombe Street



Figure 2 Wide, linear plan form of High Street



Figure 3 Long distance view of Cleeve Hill



Figure 4 St Mary's church

3 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Archaeology

- 3.1 It appears that some archaeological research has been conducted within Cheltenham and in-depth research can be found in "Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey". Many archaeological artefacts would have been lost during the expansion of the town in the 19th century, and so medieval and post-medieval finds have been very limited.
- 3.2 A few prehistoric remains have been found within the town, raising the possibility that people from Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age periods travelled or lived here. An Iron Age enclosure ditch was uncovered on the site of the present day Children's Library in 1986-87. This indicates that an area of Iron Age occupation was likely situated nearby. During the last 30 years, archaeologists have pinpointed several areas within the town which have been identified as likely areas of Roman occupation, and where Roman artefacts such as coins and pottery have been discovered. The "Chelt" element of Cheltenham's name is amongst a number of the very oldest names in the country – believed to be of pre-Celtic origin.
- 3.3 Areas of interest within and adjacent to the character area include a site behind St James' Square, where in the 1990's excavations revealed a large quantity of pottery. This suggested there was considerable Roman settlement in the town during the second and third centuries. Other archaeological remains discovered include a medieval field boundary and trackway on land adjacent Portland Street and St Margaret's Road; four possible Romano-British pits and several post medieval pits with pottery and tile fragments in St George's Place and Norman ecclesiastical remains on the site of the old wool and corn market house in the High Street.
- 3.4 Archaeological remains unearthed provide a basis for researching the origins and early development of Cheltenham, and contribute directly to a sense of place evident in the modern era.

Summary of historic development

- 3.5 The first documentary reference to Cheltenham itself occurs in an account of the Council of Cloveshoe held in 803. It is highly likely, given the archaeological finds and possible place-name derivation that Cheltenham was in existence as a farming village for a long time before the 8th century. Its status was raised to that of a market town in 1226 and the market played a

key role in its economy for several centuries. From c.1247 Cheltenham was also a Liberty. Spa waters were discovered adjacent to the town in 1716 and after King George III's visit to sample the waters in 1788, Cheltenham grew rapidly as a fashionable spa resort. The popularity of the town as a summer resort resulted in Cheltenham having a wealth of tree-lined walks and rides, squares and gardens. Its popularity led to expansion of the town away from the ancient High Street, and many fine Regency style houses were built for the growing population. The popularity of the spa waters waned from the middle of the 19th century, and Cheltenham developed other roles in the form of its growing importance as a major educational centre. This led to the development of some acclaimed schools and churches well into the 20th century. Before World War II, light industry boosted the town's economy and today, the town's attractions include fine shops, cultural events such as the races and numerous festivals and its legacy of Regency architecture and spaces.

Early Cheltenham and its origins

- 3.6 George Rowe states that, as a settlement located on the River Chelt, the town comprised the old Church, village inn, thatched cottages, the blacksmith's shop, the farm yard and pool. St Mary's Parish Church is likely to have been erected in the 12th century and remains the oldest building in Cheltenham. The Domesday Book also mentions five water and grain mills in Cheltenham, located along the River Chelt.

- 3.7 The first known record of Cheltenham can be found in an account of the Council of Cloveshoe, held in A.D. 803, concerning rents and profits of church lands at Cheltenham.

- 3.8 King Henry III granted the town the right to hold a market each Thursday, which is still held today on the High Street. Its role as a market town was a vital factor in its prosperity at this time. The town broadened its economy through the introduction of malting and brewing in the late 16th century and during the 17th century, by the cultivation of tobacco. The assessed population statistic for the year 1650 was 1575 persons.

- 3.9 Between the 13th to mid 18th centuries, the town consisted of one long street, the present High Street, with linear development in the form of narrow burgage plots and lanes leading out of it on either side, into the adjoining fields and orchards. Lanes running off the High Street included Winchcombe Street (originally named Bell Lane), North Street (originally named Greyhound Lane), St. George's Place (originally named Still's Lane), Henrietta Street (originally named Fleece Lane) and New Street, which were in evidence by the end of the 17th century.

- 3.10 Cottages sited along the High Street were of one or two storeys, some with dormer windows positioned in their roof slopes. Around this time, market buildings were erected in the High Street, with a Grammar School, Almshouses and the Plough Inn. By the early decades of the 18th century, several small chapels had been erected in the adjacent lanes.

- 3.11 The ancient borough remains the core of the present town, and the original road layout and development pattern has, to a large extent, determined the form and arrangement of the present town.

Development of Cheltenham during the Georgian & Regency period

- 3.12 Mineral springs were discovered in Cheltenham in 1716. After King George III's visit to Cheltenham in 1788 to 'take the waters', which were famed for their medicinal values, the town's popularity as a spa resort grew. In the early 18th century, Henry Skillicorne developed Cheltenham's first spa, namely the Royal Old Well. The early 19th century saw the town expand rapidly from a market town into one of the largest and most elegant spa towns in England. The majority of spas were positioned in the Montpellier Character Area and are further elaborated on within the Montpellier Character Area Appraisal.
- 3.13 In 1786 the Town Commissioners arranged the demolition of important old structures in the character area, including the 1655 Market House and the High Cross which stood at 'Boots Corner'.
- 3.14 From the early years of the 19th Century, piecemeal development occurred on the gardens and orchards at the rear of the High Street and in the narrow lanes which led into the fields. The Enclosure Act of 1801 freed up land north of Albion Street, North Street and St Margaret's Road for development.
- 3.15 Houses constructed on the High Street at the end of the 18th century varied greatly in height, form and description – low thatched cottages adjoined four-storey houses. The High Street was extended in an easterly direction towards the Cotswolds and many houses were either re-faced or re-built. Generally however, there was relatively little new building until the start of the 19th century, partly due to factors such as poor transport for building materials.
- 3.16 In the early 19th century, with the development of spas and improved transport, much building took place, and more houses were completed in St. George's Place. Incidentally, St. George's Place was the only vehicular thoroughfare on the southern side of the High Street until the 19th century, and was loosely known as "the coach road". The Colonnade, at the entrance to the future Promenade, opened in 1791 with six shops.
- 3.17 During the Regency period in the first half of the 19th century, the town expanded on either side of the High Street with the erection of pump rooms, formal walks and gardens and cultural buildings such as the theatre and libraries. These buildings were often in the then fashionable Regency style. These developments played an important role in shaping the appearance and layout of the town and influenced the present street plan.
- 3.18 The peak decades for both population growth and house building were the 1820s and 1830s. The population of Cheltenham rose dramatically, from 3076 persons in 1801, to 20,000 persons by 1826.

Development by the end of 19th century

- 3.19 During the 1820s and 1830s, in the heyday of the spas, the pace of change was rapid. Extensive building estates accommodating several hundred houses were planned and executed, sometimes only in part. Many new streets were established.
- 3.20 The growing population associated with this development, required the introduction of public services into the town, including health services, which

commenced in 1813, with the opening of the Cheltenham Medical Dispensary in Lower High Street.

- 3.21 Improving transport links enabled industry to be brought into the town centre. The arrival of the railway station at Lansdown in 1840 and at St. James' Square in 1847, facilitated the establishment of manufacturing in the town, and by 1850 Shackleford's Carriage Works was established in Albion Street. These works produced railway carriages, trucks and horse boxes for the Great Western Railway.
- 3.22 The popularity of the spas waned and the number of visitors declined from the middle of the 19th century, partly due to an increase in travel overseas, in particular to Continental spas following the end of the French Wars in 1815. The development of sea-side resorts and growing popularity of sea-bathing also contributed to a decline in visitors during this period. However, Cheltenham's role as a resort was supported by attractions such as walks and rides around the spas, assemblies, the theatre and the races.
- 3.23 From the mid 19th century, Cheltenham also began to develop its role as an educational and religious town and its popularity grew among the retired military. Its role as an educational centre of national reputation was based on the town's three public schools, its private schools, its teacher training colleges and its Grammar School. Many families sent their children to Cheltenham as boarders or settled in the town themselves, thus assisting in the occupation of houses and employment of servants. Many churches and chapels were established from the mid 19th century.

Development in the 20th – 21st centuries

- 3.24 The town's popularity continued to grow from the latter half of the 19th century and into the 20th century. The establishment of many churches, chapels and specialist shops attracted visitors, many of whom chose to reside in Cheltenham.
- 3.25 Several recreation grounds and parks were established in the early – mid 20th century, including, in 1902, the opening of the former Hampton's Gardens in Albion Street as an Athletic Ground.
- 3.26 World War I and World War II assisted in the development of the town during the early-mid 20th century. During both wars, many of the town's then empty houses were taken over by an arrival of temporary residents e.g. refugees and wounded soldiers. Wartime production of aircraft components stimulated the town's industrial development. During these years, light industry began to increase the town's economic base as well as exclusive shops and fine houses, its gardens, races and position as an inland resort. Today, Cheltenham has retained many of these attractions.
- 3.27 In the second half of the 20th century, new economies have been added in the form of offices, administration and conference facilities.
- 3.28 The festivals of Folk, Jazz, Music, Science and Literature, the Cheltenham Races, the National Hunt Meeting and the Cheltenham Gold Cup have international fame and attract hundreds of thousands of visitors to Cheltenham annually.

- 3.29 The Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum in Clarence Street is a valuable resource which holds an internationally important collection of material relating to the Arts and Crafts Movement, and attracts visitors from overseas.
- 3.30 This character area encompasses the historic core of the town. Its layout demonstrates expansion in the form of roads and development on the old burgage plots off the High Street, which occurred largely in the Regency period. Many of these Regency and later houses have been converted into shops and offices.
- 3.31 It is important to recognise that the character area contains two distinctive and very different types of townscape development, which provide it with a unique character. The ancient High Street developed to contain burgage plots, buildings fronting onto the street and a variety of building type, age and architectural style. This was due to the High Street developing over a long period of time. The surrounding Regency areas tend to be characterised by carefully planned linear road layouts, buildings constructed en-masse according to a unified plan, squares and crescents, and the presence of open green spaces and trees.

3.7 Historical development of Old Town character area

Historical development of Old Town Character Area

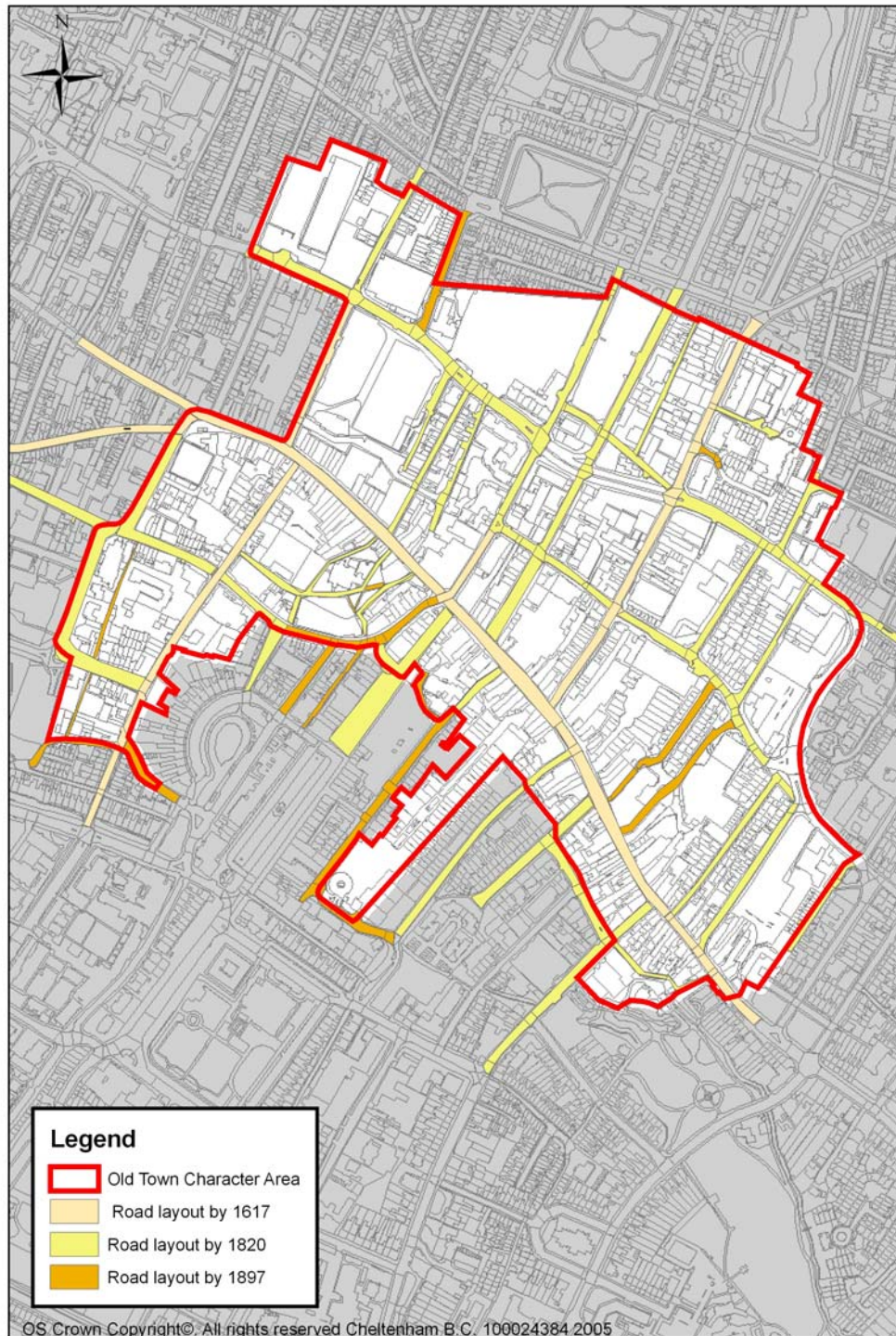


Figure 5 Historical development of Old Town Character Area

4 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

The character and interrelationship of spaces within the area and key views and vistas

- 4.1 Public and private spaces, together with views out of, into and within the Old Town character area define the area's character and appearance.
- 4.2 There is a high density of building in the character area and a lack of open land (typical of many town centres). However, in some instances, historic buildings are set back from the pavement, with frontages used as gardens and hard-standings for cars. An example is the terrace in St George's Square. Frontages have been retained on Gloucester Place and Grosvenor Place South where areas are contained by railings. These frontages and the attractive unifying railings define the character of these terraces.



Figure 6 Gloucester Place



Figure 7 Hard-standing outside the terrace in St George's Square

4.3



Figure 8 Bowling green

Railings are also used as a prominent boundary treatment enclosing the bowling green in Ambrose Street. High brick boundary walls are evident in much of the character area. Such walls are present in the car park off Monson Avenue and in the Henrietta Street car park (where the market is held), at North Place car park. High stone walls are found around Church Street.

- 4.4 The bowling green is an important open space within the area. It enhances the setting of houses on St Georges Square, and provides a quintessentially English recreational resource. This open space also offers medium distance views to the landmark Cheltenham Chapel and Cheltenham Library on Clarence Street, through gaps between buildings.
- 4.5 Views into the area from outside demonstrate its diverse nature in terms of the buildings' usage, age, size, density, construction material and architectural style. Due to the high density many buildings are terraced (for example in Albion Street and the High Street). Views out of the area are often blocked by tall Regency buildings.



Figure 9 Buildings fronting Albion Street

- 4.6 Narrow lanes run between the terraces, for example Albion Place, Northfield Passage, Grosvenor Place and Grosvenor Street. The vertical emphasis created by the buildings either side of the lanes, (many at least 3 or 4 storeys high) creates a strong sense of enclosure and lack of light. These lanes also experience relatively low noise and activity levels. In comparison, wider streets on High Street, Ambrose Street, St James Square, Fairview Road and Cambray Place create a sense of openness, with high noise and activity levels.

4.7



Figure 10 St Mary's Churchyard

St Mary's churchyard is an important space within the town centre. The churchyard is surrounded by high buildings with a sense of enclosure and is a potentially tranquil space. Lime and London plane trees around the edges of the churchyard provide enclosure.

4.8



Figure 11 Vistas of St Mary's Church from High Street

Views of St Mary's Church and its churchyard are evident from the narrow passages leading off the High Street. Views of church spires/towers including St Mary's, St Gregory's and Holy Trinity, dominate the skyline. Jenner Gardens, adjacent to Cheltenham Chapel also provides a setting for the chapel, although the graveyard has been poorly maintained and is in need of enhancement.

- 4.9 Long views are limited by curves in the road at Albion Street, Clarence Street and Church Street. However most have a straight layout which enables medium and long distance views. For example, long distance views are particularly evident along Winchcombe Street and Portland Street. There are

views of Cleeve Hill from the junction of Winchcombe Street and Prestbury Road. Northfield Passage provides short, medium and long distance views. The narrow passage leads the eye towards the horizon with glimpses of Cleeve Hill.

4.10



Figure 12 View of the Cotswold Scarp from St James Street

Fairview Road allows distant views over lower buildings towards the Cotswold scarp. The scarp can also be seen from North Place and there are panoramic views from St James Street, through gaps between buildings. The town's rural surroundings contribute to the special character of the central conservation area as a whole.

4.11



Figure 13 View of Holy Trinity Church and Cleeve Hill

The car parks within the character area create a sense of space, albeit compromised by the cars themselves. There are long views across the Henrietta Street car park and over St Margaret's Road towards Pittville. From the private car park at Monson Avenue, medium distance views capture the impressive Holy Trinity Church and there is a limited view of Cleeve Hill, beyond buildings.

5 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Use of area and how use creates special interest

- 5.1 The area has a variety of different uses. Mixed usage creates a dynamic street scene and contributes to the special interest of the area, which forms the historic commercial core of the central conservation area where people work, shop and live.
- 5.2 Important elements in the area are the retail industry and entertainment provision such as pubs and restaurants. These uses generate varying levels of activity and noise throughout the day - shops creating day-time activity and noise, and pubs and restaurants generating these in the evening, and particularly at weekends. The area is also used for outdoor recreational pursuits such as the bowling green. This is a cultural resource which enhances the area's special interest and provides a valuable open space in the built-up area.
- 5.3 There are a number of buildings in use as offices throughout the character area, for example in St George's Terrace and St George's Square, Bath

Street, Crescent Place, North Place, St George's Place and Ambrose Street. These bring economic activity and prosperity to the area.



Figure 14 Shops and entertainment providers along High Street



Figure 15 Offices in Crescent Place

- 5.4 Parts of the area are used for housing (for example the Regency houses on Jenner Walk, Grosvenor Street and Grosvenor Terrace). Flats are often located above shops. There are also modern flats in Fairview Road, St Margaret's Road, Winchcombe Street and Sherborne Street.
- 5.5 There is a range of civic and cultural buildings in the area. Churches and chapels, doctors' surgeries, schools, theatre, library and museum are examples. Many of these are housed within historically and architecturally important buildings, warranting their listing for their special interest.



Figure 16 Flats in Ambrose Street



Figure 17 Cheltenham Library and Art Gallery and Museum

- 5.6 There are potential development sites in the area and considerable redevelopment has taken place. For example the former car sales area on the corner of Winchcombe Street and Fairview Road, has been developed to house 100 student bed-sits. The development of the Brewery site between Henrietta Street and Bennington Street, aims to regenerate this area of the town.
- 5.7 Bence's Timber & Builders Merchants occupy a split site on Fairview Road. This site brings economic prosperity into the area, at the cost of noise and highway congestion and danger. There has been a saw mill and timber yard at this site since the late 19th century.



Figure 18 The Brewery



Figure 19 Bence's
Timber and Builders
Merchants

- 5.8 The character area covers parts of the Cheltenham Inner Ring Road which carries heavy volumes of traffic (particularly in rush hour).

Former uses within area and influence on plan form and building type

- 5.9 Former uses within the Old Town character area shaped the plan form and building type in their day and are still evident today. This section highlights the principal former uses and their influences.
- 5.10 Along the historic High Street in the medieval period, market houses were sited within burgage plots. The houses were of a simple vernacular design, which frequently had gables and were of a moderate size and scale. The back of burgage plots were developed from the first half of the 19th century.
- 5.11 During the Regency period, a number of new buildings were erected to accommodate the growing numbers of visitors and the rising population. Many of these Regency buildings were constructed as houses and public buildings. These included the Assembly Rooms, which were not the first to be located on this site. The Assembly Rooms were demolished in 1900 to make way for the present Lloyds Bank. More recently, many of these buildings have been converted to shops (some with altered frontages), sometimes with flats on their upper floors.
- 5.12 Industry has impacted on the plan form and building type within the area. The brewery on Henrietta Street opened in 1760 and closed in 1998. It has been replaced by a mixed-use complex. On the site of Tesco Metro there was an Elizabethan Grammar School which pre-dated the brewery. The Elizabethan School building was replaced by a Victorian Gothic one on the same site and then in the 1960s this whole section of the street was pulled down for the construction of the present Tesco/Wilkinson block.
- 5.13 The Clarence Street electricity sub-station, erected in 1895, was part of Cheltenham's first electricity supply. The palazzo-style building adds variety to the area. The saw mill and timber yard off the present Fairview Road covered a large area of land in the latter half of the 19th century, and the site is still in use today as a timber merchant's.
- 5.14 The Plough Inn, a popular coaching inn with an exceptionally large yard, occupied a site on the High Street. The Plough Inn dates from 1816, and was the second Plough Inn to be built on the site. The Inn was demolished to

make way for the Regent Arcade shopping centre which opened in 1985. The layout of the Arcade is directly influenced by the size of the Inn's curtilage.

Architecture and historic qualities of buildings

- 5.15 Buildings within the character area have a diverse range of uses, architectural styles, ages, sizes, scales and construction materials.
- 5.16 Many of the historic buildings are Regency, erected early in the 19th century. They were predominantly erected as houses. A number of public and commercial buildings were constructed during this period, of which some survive today. Many Regency buildings (in Clarence Street, High Street, St George's Square, Grosvenor Place South and Cambray Place for example) are three or four storeys high. Neo-Classically designed terraces are found on St James' Square. Materials are from the local palette, with roofs of slate, walls either ashlar or painted render in pale colours (cream or white) and sliding sash windows. Graceful ironwork is also apparent on the frontages of many buildings (although during World War II, much of Cheltenham's ironwork was removed).



Figure 20 Typical Neo-classically designed terraces on St James' Square



Figure 21 Neo-classically designed terraces on Cambray Place

- 5.17 Some historic buildings have been altered with modern shop-fronts and replacement facades. It is essential that alteration work does not adversely affect the character and appearance of buildings. Inappropriate alterations weaken local distinctiveness.
- 5.18 Some side streets and back lanes from the High Street are typically smaller in scale and contain Regency buildings (terraces in Bennington Street and Henrietta Street, for example).



Figure 22 Terraces in Bennington Street



Figure 23 Terraces in Henrietta Street

5.19



Figure 24 The Crescent Bakery in St George's Place

Red brick is used in Victorian buildings such as Bennington Hall, the Crescent Bakery and Dunalley School. There are several 20th century buildings with typical concrete frame and glass curtain wall construction.

5.20 Historic inns dating from the 17th and 19th centuries still retain their original use today and greatly enhance the historic character of Old Town. The Restoration Inn and the Swan public house are both positioned on the High Street and are Grade II listed. The Restoration Inn is a timber framed and rendered structure. The List Description reads that "together with Nos 54 and 331, the C17 fabric is the best-known pre-Regency domestic survival within the boundaries of the early town." (Revised List of Buildings of Special Architectural of Historic Interest, 1998).



Figure 25 The Restoration Inn



Figure 26 The Swan public house

5.21 Listed buildings are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. However, it is important to recognise that some non-listed buildings still have special character and that they contribute to the central conservation area . Their qualities need to be preserved and enhanced where possible.

5.22 All listed buildings within the character area are Grade II listed with the exception of:

BUILDING	GRADE	DATE OF LISTING
Church of St. Mary in Church Street	I	05/05/72
Church of St Matthew in Clarence Street	II*	14/12/83
Masonic Hall in Portland Street	II*	12/03/55
Church of St Gregory in St James's Square	II*	05/05/72
Synagogue in St James's Square	II*	05/05/72
St Margaret's Terrace in St. Margaret's Road	II*	12/03/55

Refer to www.cheltenham.gov.uk for full list descriptions.

Index of Buildings of Local Importance

- 5.23 An Index of Buildings of Local Importance has been prepared for Cheltenham. It will be used as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Contribution of key unlisted buildings

- 5.24 Some unlisted buildings have qualities of age, style and materials which are locally distinct and which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole.

- a. **Boots the Chemist**, on the High Street, is a key unlisted building within the area because:



Figure 27 Boots the Chemist building

- This building has architectural interest and contains unusual and interesting detailing above ground floor;
- It is in a classic revival style and incorporates such classical features as the set of four Ionic columns and pediment;
- The building occupies a prominent corner plot (often referred to as 'Boots corner'), sited on the corner of the High Street and North Street. It is a landmark building.

- b. **The Crescent Bakery**, on St George's Place, is a key unlisted building within the area because:



Figure 28 The Crescent Bakery building

- The building, although no-longer used as a bakery, demonstrates an important historic service which would have been widely used from the beginning of the 20th century, when it was constructed. This contributes to the character of the area and its historic interest;
- It occupies an important position, closing the view at the eastern end of St James' Square and forming a key component of the street scene in this area;
- The building is symmetrically designed and contains fine stone detailing, although the archway to the left is a later addition, formed in glass reinforced plastic.

- c. **Bradford & Bingley**, on the High Street, is a key unlisted building within the area because:



Figure 29 Bradford and Bingley building

- The building is a good example of late Victorian/Edwardian building and is of a type unusual in Cheltenham. It adds diversity to the street;
- It contains interesting architectural features e.g. the clock with ornate stone surround, attractive projecting rounded bay and weathervane;
- It occupies a corner plot on High Street and Cambray Place and its four storeys make it a prominent landmark.

- d. **Dowty House**, on St Margaret's Road, is a key unlisted building within the area because:



Figure 30 Dowty House building

- Built between 1865-6, the building was originally constructed as an orphanage for boys, providing local interest;
- It is designed in Gothic style of architecture with lancet windows and a high-pitched roof. The bell-tower is also an interesting feature. It includes details and building materials typical of Cheltenham's mid/late 19th century educational buildings;
- Its size and positioning makes it a landmark building which contributes to the character and appearance of this area;
- It provides an historical anchor in an area that is presently under-going regeneration.

- e. **St James Hotel**, on the corner of Clarence Street and Ambrose Street, is a key unlisted building within the area because:



Figure 31 St James Hotel building

- The building dates from 1870 and contains interesting and unusual architectural features including detailing of the window surrounds carved with foliage and fruit. This contributes to its character;
- It occupies a corner plot and its size makes it a landmark building.

- f. **The Fire Station and Engine House**, on St James' Square, are key unlisted buildings within the Old Town character area because:



Figure 32 The Fire Station & Engine House buildings

- The structures provide two historic examples of civil buildings which have strong significance to the development of the town;
- Both buildings have architectural merit, the Engine House including an interesting moulded name which is a distinctive feature of the street;
- The buildings add interest and diversity to the street scene of St James' Square and the townscape of the central conservation area as a whole.

Some local details

- 5.25 In the late 18th century, a puppet theatre named Sadlers' Wells Theatre was located in St George's Place. It was established in 1795 by Samuel Seward of Bristol. The puppet theatre operated for about 30 years. After Seward's death, it was re-opened in 1831 as the New Clarence Theatre. The buildings were demolished in 2006.
- 5.26 There is a memorial to Henry Skillicorne in St Mary's Church. Skillicorne was a particularly important local figure in the development of Cheltenham. As well as other enterprises, he turned the Bayshill spring into an attraction.

5.27



Figure 33 Railings along Ambrose Street side of bowling club

The railings on the Ambrose Street side of the Cheltenham Spa Bowling Club were erected as part of a road widening scheme in about 1881 to give better access to the Great Western Railway Station in St James' Square. These have local interest and add to the historic character and appearance of the area.

5.28



Figure 34 Model of aeroplane in Regent Arcade

A model of an aeroplane is on show at the Regent Arcade shopping centre, to commemorate the work of the Dowty Group within Cheltenham. The accompanying plaque reads –

'Britain's first jet aircraft, the Gloster E28/39 which had its maiden flight on 15th May 1941, was built on this site. Dowty – Cheltenham's largest industrial group – supplied the landing gear'.

The model was made and presented by Apprentices of the Dowty Group and the reference is to the assembly of the plane in a motor garage formerly on the site.

Materials

Building material

- 5.29 Building materials reflect availability at the time of the construction. Earlier buildings towards the west end of the High Street were simple vernacular cottages with wattle and daub construction on timber framing. Cheltenham expanded rapidly in the 19th Century, and the readily available Lias clay and local sand allowed enough bricks to be produced to build most of the original spa town. Many of these houses were therefore built of the soft, locally-fired bricks, faced only on the front with stucco. The painting of stucco in stone colours gave the town cohesion. Real stone was used to front the grander buildings.
- 5.30 Local red bricks were commonly used for boundary walls, which often show the effects of erosion. Many of the modern office and retail buildings are of concrete with glass frontage. These do little to complement the historic character of the area.

Roofing material

- 5.31 Regency roof structures are commonly hidden behind balustrades or parapets. These roofs are shallow-pitched, usually have hipped ends and are unobtrusive from street level. Welsh slate was the predominant roofing material.

Ground surface material

- 5.32 Roads are predominantly surfaced with Tarmac, although in shared priority and pedestrian areas, concrete slabs or blocks are used. Typically, white lining is used as road markings with red surfacing on some cycle routes. Both add to visual clutter in the streets.
- 5.33 Pavement materials vary. Tarmac is much in evidence. However, there are other materials including flags of various dimensions (generally concrete, but with York stone in prestige areas). The small 400x400 concrete slab is the standard “enhanced” material approved by the Highway Authority in conservation areas, but is of poor and variable quality. Its small size and bevelled edges pick out a strong joint line uncharacteristic of traditional paving and it is identified as unsuitable for use in conservation areas by English Heritage.
- 5.34 Surface materials will be reviewed as part of the Civic Pride project and a public realm strategy identifying suitable materials for appropriate locations will be published.

Street furniture

- 5.35 Street furniture is of varying quality and is often used in a random way – often creating a cluttered appearance. The Council has a small budget which is available to target such areas and to rationalise furniture and signs. Target areas are set on an annual basis. Although some themes are apparent, there is a variety of styles and colours of furniture in the streets.

- 5.36 The result is cohesion where there is consistency (e.g. the “pigeon” pedestrian signs and some benches) but discord elsewhere (e.g. bollards). This is to a certain extent inevitable – the furniture used has been installed over a number of decades and suppliers and fashions change. This may not be significant, as different parts of the town have different characters. However, the Civic Pride project is undertaking a review of furniture and will report on style, clutter, colour and usage.
- 5.37 There are, necessarily, many street signs in the area. On the Inner Ring and Northern Relief Road and approaches into the centre, highway signs can be large and their arrangement is often inefficient and intrusive. The Council currently has a project to rationalise traffic signs in the town centre which should improve the situation.
- 5.38 The design of street lamps varies within the area. Traditional and elegantly designed street lamps can be found in the High Street, around St Mary’s churchyard, Henrietta Street and Cambray Place. Decorative wrought iron railings around buildings enhance the area. The plain appearance of lamp posts in St James’ Square, St John’s Avenue, Ambrose Street and St Margaret’s Road reflects the age of these streets.
- 5.39 CCTV cameras are present throughout the area. This is inevitable considering the nature of the area and the presence of pubs and nightclubs. These cameras detract from the historic character and appearance of the area, and although they may be considered a necessity, they should be carefully located to minimise clutter and visual intrusion.

Contribution of trees and green spaces

- 5.40 There are very few public and private open green spaces within the area. Where they do occur, trees and green spaces in the area enhance its character and appearance. These spaces need to be well maintained and protected.
- 5.41  The open space within St Mary’s churchyard creates an attractive setting for the fine mediaeval church. Lime and London plane trees in the churchyard help to conceal the Church from outside, adding to the tranquillity of the space. They also shield noise from the High Street creating a peaceful atmosphere which attracts wildlife. Unfortunately, the churchyard has become an area for al fresco drinking and has an attendant maintenance problem.

Figure 35 Trees within St Mary’s Church yard


- 5.42  The Bowling Green is an important open space in the densely built-up area around Ambrose Street. It is an historic cultural resource, and the sight of bowls players on the green creates character by illustrating a traditional English past-time. The green presents an attractive contrast to the surrounding roads and

Figure 36 Setting of bowling green

pavements. A mature Horse Chestnut tree by the club house contributes to the scene.

5.43



Figure 37 Site of Barratt's Mill (formerly known as Cheltenham Mill)

Sandford Park and the River Chelt are adjacent to the southern boundary of the character area and both can be seen from Vernon Place. The River Chelt can be seen from Royal Well Lane. Although these open green areas border on the character area, they contribute to its attractiveness and enhance views both into and out of the area. The site of Cheltenham Mill (now known as Barratt's Mill and in use as a private house) in Vernon Place also provides a reminder of this once-important industry.

5.44



Figure 38 Private gardens in Chelsea Square

There are very few good-sized private gardens within the area. Properties that do have private gardens of a notable size are located in Chelsea Square in St George's Place, Gloucester Place and parts of Albion Street. These open spaces enhance their individual properties, but do little for the public realm due to their concealment, typically behind high walls.

- 5.45 Trees in Jenner Walk create a sense of place and contrast with the otherwise rather treeless streets in the locality. The old graveyard in Jenner Gardens to the rear of Jenner Walk is part of the setting of the chapel.

5.46



Figure 39 Row of lime trees with TPOs along Clarence Street

There are few trees with Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's). Those that do have TPOs include a row of lime trees along Clarence Street which enhance a terrace; a beech tree on the junction of St George's Place and St James' Square which is located in a prominent position; and a silver birch tree by the Friends Meeting House on Warwick Place which also occupies a prominent position and enhances the appearance of this area which is otherwise without trees or vegetation.

5.47



A long hedgerow with trees is present on St John's Avenue along the boundary of Bence's timber merchants. The hedgerow conceals a high metal fence and screens parts of the commercial premises. This vegetation acts as a foil to the built up area.

Figure 40 Hedgerow outside Bence Timber Merchants on St John's Avenue

Negative factors

- 5.48 As a busy commercial area, many changes to the built environment have occurred, some of which have been detrimental. Examples include:
- a. Loss of traditional architectural features within older buildings;
 - b. Replacement windows in uPVC and modern roof lights, which detract from the appearance of traditional buildings;
 - c. Satellite dishes and other aerials;
 - d. Loss of front gardens to hard-standing for cars;
 - e. Street parking in many roads;
 - f. Inappropriate shop frontages and fascias which do not complement historic buildings;
 - g. Poorly maintained structures, such as the 'Small Business Centre' building on Fairview Road and the 'Tripura House' next to the cinema on Winchcombe Street;
 - h. Graffiti and bill-posting in parts of the area (for example Grosvenor Place and North Place);
 - i. Unattractive gap sites awaiting development;
 - j. Poorly-designed 20th century buildings with inappropriate materials (Pittville Street, High Street and Winchcombe Street);
 - k. Multi-storey and surface car parks;
 - l. Street signs.

Neutral areas

- 5.49 Areas within the character area which neither enhance nor detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area , but have potential for enhancement include:
- 5.50 Modern developments such as blocks of flats at Pate Court, Sheldons Court and Wallace Apartments. Although these developments do not particularly enhance the character of the area, they generally sit comfortably within their surroundings;
- 5.51 The architectural style and age of buildings along the High Street is more varied than within the adjoining streets, due to the longer evolution of the area. In recent years, some developers have constructed buildings with the use of render which has often been painted white, and which copies many Regency buildings. This has resulted in an increasing loss of the variety of styles and building materials in the character area, which is one of its key

characteristics. Proposals for new developments within the area will be expected to reflect the variety of style and building material. This is highlighted in Management Proposal OT2 'Control of Development' within the Part 2 - Management Plan.

General condition of area

- 5.52 Much of the building stock in the character area is in good condition, reflecting high property values and the prosperity of the central commercial area. Good maintenance is a key requirement – particularly with typical historic buildings which are often rendered and have valley guttering.
- 5.53 CCTV coverage of the area is extensive and contributes to the safety of the environment. Nonetheless, vandalism and graffiti are evident here.

Problems, pressures and capacity for change

- 5.54 The area experiences many problems and pressures as a busy commercial quarter.
- a. Problems include –
 - Anti-social behaviour in the form of vandalism-related activity;
 - Poorly-maintained and vacant buildings (for example the empty 'Springbok' building on Albion Street and the 'Bar Med' building on Pittville Street);
 - Modern alterations to historic buildings and loss of traditional architectural features which damage the buildings' special qualities;
 - Vehicular congestion;
 - The severance of pedestrian movement around the town centre by the inner ring road and northern relief road;
 - Inappropriate modern development which has occurred adjacent or close to attractive historic buildings.
 - b. Pressures include –
 - High pedestrian and vehicular traffic levels creating pressure on road systems and conflict between modes;
 - Development pressures and lack of development land.
 - c. Capacity for change –
 - The designation of the conservation area is not intended to prevent change, especially that which would enhance the character or appearance of the area. It seeks to ensure that future development is appropriate to the character of the area;
 - There is generally little capacity for new development except as replacement for existing buildings;
 - The Civic Pride project will have a significant impact with the production of an Urban Design Framework, including a public realm strategy which may lead to a range of initiatives including:

- The enhancement of poor quality areas of public realm allowing the creation a series of linked and usable public spaces;
- Opportunities for the introduction of more public art;
- Rationalisation of street furniture;
- Consideration of use of colour in the character area;
- Traffic management issues.

Part 2 – Management Plan

1 Introduction

Purpose of the management plan

The purpose of Part 2 of this document is to present proposals to achieve the preservation and enhancement of the Old Town character area's special historic character and appearance. It has been subject to public consultation. Part 2 was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document on 23rd February 2007. It will inform planning and other decisions of the Council.

The special qualities of the Old Town character area have been identified in the Character Appraisal which forms Part 1 of this document. The Management Plan draws on the themes identified in sections 5.48 'Negative factors' and 5.49 'Neutral areas'.

The proposals are written with the awareness that, in managing Cheltenham's conservation areas, resources are limited and therefore need to be prioritised. Financial constraints on the Council mean that proposals may take longer than is desirable to implement. However, the Council will continue to encourage improvements to the conservation area in co-operation with property owners, groups and local businesses.

Both the Character Area Appraisal and the accompanying Management Plan will be subject to monitoring and reviews on a regular basis.

Legislative background

This document satisfies the statutory requirement of section 71 (1) of the Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 namely:

"It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas."

The document reflects Government guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' and policies set out in the Cheltenham Local Plan.

2 Article 4 (2) Directions

There are some buildings within the Old Town character area which, although not listed, have qualities of age, style and materials which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the character area and central conservation area. These properties are however vulnerable to future change. Some of which have already suffered from modern intrusions by way of alterations and inappropriate additions, for example uPVC windows and the erection of large aerials and satellite dishes.

There are a number of categories of minor works for which a planning application is not normally needed. This is known as permitted development.

Permitted development rights are more restricted in conservation areas for works which include:

- a. addition of dormer windows to roof slopes;
- b. various types of cladding;
- c. erection of satellite dishes fronting a highway;
- d. reduction in the size of permitted extensions.

In order to protect the character of conservation areas, legislation allows local planning authorities to remove permitted development rights in parts of conservation areas facing on to the highway or open space by using Article 4 (2) Directions. These cannot be introduced through this conservation area Management Plan – the Council will need to embark on a separate process. However, it is advisable that the Council uses this document to identify areas of concern, where it may apply Article 4 (2) Directions. If introduced, these will provide long-term protection against unsympathetic alterations which have the potential to adversely impact on the character of the conservation area. The effect of a Direction would be that certain alterations to unlisted residential properties which formerly did not require planning permission would then need planning permission.

If introduced to cover this character area, an Article 4 (2) Direction will mean planning consent is required for a range of external works fronting a public space, including:

- a. changes to windows, doors, chimneys and roofs;
- b. the painting of previously unpainted walling;
- c. the construction of external porches;
- d. the provision and removal of walls, gates and fences.

3 Management proposals

1 **Civic Pride**

The Council, in partnership with the South West Regional Development Agency and Gloucestershire County Council, has commissioned the preparation of an Urban Design Framework for central Cheltenham, including the majority of the Old Town Character Area. It will develop a comprehensive set of proposals for the area and will consider the following topics:

- a. Urban design
- b. Public realm enhancements
- c. Public art
- d. Street furniture
- e. Surface materials
- f. Traffic management
- g. Development and enhancement opportunities at Royal Well

The Civic Pride Urban Design Framework is being developed as a Supplementary Planning Document. It includes parts of other character areas making up the town centre. Its brief ranges from a strategic overview to detailed issues, including development briefing and advice on public realm treatments. It will be subject to public consultation at a later date. Part 1 of this document, the Character Appraisal, has been used to inform the emerging Civic Pride proposals.

Some of the Actions in this Management Plan (below) will be developed further through the Civic Pride project and will be the subject of more detailed work – where this is thought to be the case, it has been identified.

Action OT1: The Council and its partners will prepare and adopt as a Supplementary Planning Document an urban design framework for central Cheltenham through the Civic Pride project. When adopted, it will review this Management Plan to ensure compatibility.

2 **Control of Development**

It is essential that any development should preserve or enhance the setting of any adjacent historic buildings and existing landscape features and trees, and the overall special qualities of the character area. Therefore, careful consideration must be given to the size, scale, urban grain, layout, design, massing, height, plot width, frontage activity, landscape and materials in any such development. This does not dictate architectural style but does attempt to ensure that proposals respond positively to their context.

Action OT2: The Council will require new development to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area. Proposals should demonstrate a high quality of design and a proper consideration of context, including, inter alia, issues of:

Size	Plot width and form
Layout	Orientation
Height	Urban grain
Enclosure of streets and spaces	Massing
Materials	Frontage activity
Scale	Landscape
Design	

The Council will refuse planning permission or other consents for proposals which fail to meet these criteria or for:

- a. the demolition of any building or structure if its loss would damage the character or appearance of the conservation area
- b. the extension or alteration of a building where the change would damage the character or appearance of the conservation area ;
- c. development which would be harmful to the setting or character or appearance of the conservation area ;
- d. development which would adversely affect or result in the loss of important views, open spaces, tree cover or boundary features within the conservation area.

3 **Loss of traditional architectural features on some historic buildings**

Some of the older buildings within the Old Town character area have been adversely affected by the use of inappropriate modern materials or details such as the replacement of original timber sash windows with uPVC, the loss of original timber front doors and introduction of roof lights which all erode local building detail and fail to preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. The Council's document Living and Working in a conservation area – Some Questions You Might Ask gives advice to building owners on their responsibilities.

The Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan Policy CP 3 relates.

ACTION OT3: In order to preserve and enhance the character and setting of the Old Town character area, the Council will:

- keep under review the need to bring in additional planning controls over minor works in the conservation area through Article 4 directions;
- ensure that unauthorised development is subject to enforcement action;
- encourage owners to repair rather than replace original; and
- consider producing detailed design guidance and information regarding materials appropriate for use in the central conservation area.

4 **Equipment or installations (for example satellite dishes, large aerials, small scale renewable energy schemes and other such features)**

The presence of various types of equipment or installations on or around buildings, such as large aerials or satellite dishes, can detract from the character of the Old Town character area and in some cases the special architectural qualities of the buildings. There is also the potential for domestic wind turbines and other elements to impact similarly. To minimise their visual impact, they should normally be positioned away from public view or prominent positions; a judgment then needs to be made between this and the optimization of energy generation.

The Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan Policy CP 3 relates.

ACTION OT4: In order to preserve and enhance the character of the Old Town character area the Council will:

- keep under review the need to bring in additional planning controls over equipment or installations in prominent locations in the character area through an Article 4 direction;
- use any planning powers to ensure that equipment or installations away from public spaces and views so as not to detract from views within the street scene and the overall character of the character area. This will look at balancing the visual impact against energy generations. Where the Council has no powers property owners are encouraged to position such equipment with regard to this guidance.
- To supplement this policy, the Council will prepare guidance on the design and implementation of renewable energy schemes.

5 **Enhancement of existing buildings**

Some buildings fail to contribute to the preservation or enhancement of the conservation area . In some cases, these are poorly maintained historic buildings. In other cases, these are modern buildings which have some aspect which fails to respond to its historic context. In the case of historic buildings, the Council may have to resort to the use of enforcement or other planning powers to achieve repair and preservation. On modern buildings, there are unlikely to be powers available, but encouragement of repainting in an appropriate colour or the introduction of planting to soften their impact may be an option.

Civic Pride is considering how this issue might best be addressed.

Action OT5: The Council will use its planning powers, where appropriate, and otherwise encourage the enhancement of poorly maintained historic buildings, this may include use of enforcement or other powers under Section 215 of the Planning Act.

The Council will consider the introduction of a project to encourage the enhancement of other buildings which fail to preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area.

6 **Drives and loss of front gardens**

Very often the frontage of buildings in conservation area s is essential to the character of the conservation area . Historically, many buildings in the conservation area had front gardens with enclosing low railings, hedges or walls. Their gardens would be planted. The loss of front gardens to parking detracts from their historic setting. This can result from the nature of the materials used, the loss of boundary treatments, the intensity or volume of the parking or the loss of soft garden features. The loss of front gardens in this manner is also an unsustainable form of development – increasing run off, reducing planting available for carbon fixing and encouraging car use. Where it is considered acceptable the use of brick or gravel instead of tarmac, with the retention of some garden space and the use of appropriate boundary treatments would reduce run-off, offer a more attractive setting for buildings and give a more sustainable approach than some current practice.

Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Policy BE 7 states that 'Development which introduces or extends the parking of vehicles on forecourts or front gardens of buildings in conservation areas will not be permitted.' Where there is existing frontage parking which adversely impacts on the character and setting of the conservation area, a new planning application may give opportunities to renegotiate a more sympathetic solution.

ACTION OT6: The Council will seek to limit the adverse impact of on-plot frontage parking by using its powers under planning and other legislation to secure the use of appropriate, traditional and complementary boundary and surface treatments.

The Council will prepare a guidance note on sustainable design of front garden parking.

7 **Boundary enclosures**

At present, some poorly maintained boundary treatments harm the character and appearance of buildings and the overall street scene. Increased use of railings, trees and hedgerow as a 'soft' boundary treatment would enhance the historic qualities, character and appearance of the area. If the same sympathetic boundary treatment were to be implemented along the length of a street where possible, this would enhance its character and appearance, uniting properties within it.

See Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Policies BE 5 and CP3.

ACTION OT7: The Council will use its powers under planning and other legislation to secure the repair of poorly maintained boundary treatments and the reinstatement of traditional and historic boundary treatments to enhance the historic character of the Old Town character area.

The Council will require the use of contextually sensitive boundary treatments on new developments where appropriate.

8 **Street furniture**

The character area has a large amount of street furniture (pedestrian signage, bollards, bins, seats etc). There needs to be a consistency of style to help create a cohesive identity for the Old Town. The presence of excessive or redundant street signage causes street clutter and is visually unattractive. The potential for additional signage throughout the Old Town character area is a cause for concern in respect of its impact on the character of the character area and overall conservation area.

The Civic Pride project is considering the issues of style, need, use and location in order to engender this cohesiveness, to minimise clutter and maximise effectiveness.

PPG 15 Section 5 gives additional transport measure in historic environments. The Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan Policy BE 18 relates.

ACTION OT8: Through the Civic Pride project, the Council and its partners will develop and implement a street furniture strategy, which minimises clutter and brings a sense of cohesiveness to the town centre as a whole.

The Council will lobby the Highway Authority to minimise signage, markings and other street furniture in its traffic management projects. It will liaise with the Highway Authority to remove redundant signage and street furniture and ensure that any new signage and traffic management schemes preserve and enhance the setting of the Old Town character area.

9 **Surface Materials**

Surface materials in the public realm are an important part of the character of the area. Whilst generally the most appropriate paving material would be a large format flag, ideally in stone, there may be opportunities to use alternative materials. This must be done as part of a considered approach to the use of the location and the heritage context. Jointing is an important element in the impact of paving materials. Traditionally it would be at right angles to the kerb line, and any deviation from this approach needs to be properly considered and justified.

The Civic Pride project will address appropriate surface materials and their use.

Action OT9: The Council will require developments to adopt a considered, contextually sensitive approach to the selection and use of surface materials. It will lobby the Highway Authority to adopt such an approach in the implementation of capital and maintenance schemes.

10 **Tree management**

The presence of trees (although few in the Old Town area) makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of parts of the Old Town character area. They need to continue to be well protected and managed in the future.

ACTION OT10: The Council will continue to maintain and protect trees by implementing Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) where appropriate, and replant with new trees when old trees die. Trees located in pavements or grass verges at the side of roads and which are designated as within the public highway are maintained by Gloucestershire County Council.

When a tree dies or is removed on land which is within the conservation area, the land owner has a legal obligation under section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to plant a replacement tree of an appropriate size and species. The Council will encourage owners to fulfil their legal obligation for replanting with new trees, especially where the old trees have made a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. Where appropriate the Council may decide to serve a tree replacement notice under section 207 of the Act.

This proposed action will maintain the overall leafy character and appearance of the area. The creation of gaps within formal planted avenues of trees will also be avoided.

11 Car parks

At present, some car parks in the Old Town character area are visually unattractive spaces, which detract from the overall character and appearance of the area. Through the Civic Pride Project, some car parks may be subject to re-development.

ACTION OT11: The Council will continue its programme of enhancement schemes where appropriate to soften and improve the overall visual appearance of car parks.

12 Setting and views

The setting of the Old Town Character Area is very important. Any proposals for development will be required to demonstrate how the setting and long distance views, into and from the Character Area have been taken into account. The important views are identified on the Townscape Analysis map. The Council will seek to ensure that all development serves to respect these important views.

ACTION OT12: The Council will ensure that all development respects the important views within, into and from the Old Town character area. These views are noted but not exclusively identified on the Townscape Analysis map. The Council will ensure that these remain protected from inappropriate forms of development and that due regard is paid to these views in the formulation of public realm works or enhancement schemes in accordance with Cheltenham Borough Local Plan.

13 St Mary's Churchyard

The setting of St Mary's Church is very important, with the Church being the heart of the ancient High Street. At present, a combination of al-fresco drinking in the churchyard; evidence of graffiti and unattractive rear facades of buildings backing onto the churchyard contribute to providing the church with a poor setting.

ACTION OT13: The Council will continue to support the working of St Mary's Churchyard Initiative, which aims to enhance the area through proposals including maintaining existing through routes and desire lines and enhancing points of entry; encouraging interaction with the surrounding properties; encouraging increased public use; improving and enhancing the setting of the Church and strengthening the current identities of the Church and Churchyard.

A site to the west of the churchyard, just north of the Children's Library will probably be developed for residential and commercial use. The Council will ensure that any development fully addresses the issues surrounding the churchyard as highlighted above, in particular addressing issues of passive surveillance and calm activity.

The area of St Mary's Church and churchyard is likely to be considered by the Civic Pride project.

4. Townscape Analysis map

Townscape Analysis map of Old Town Character Area

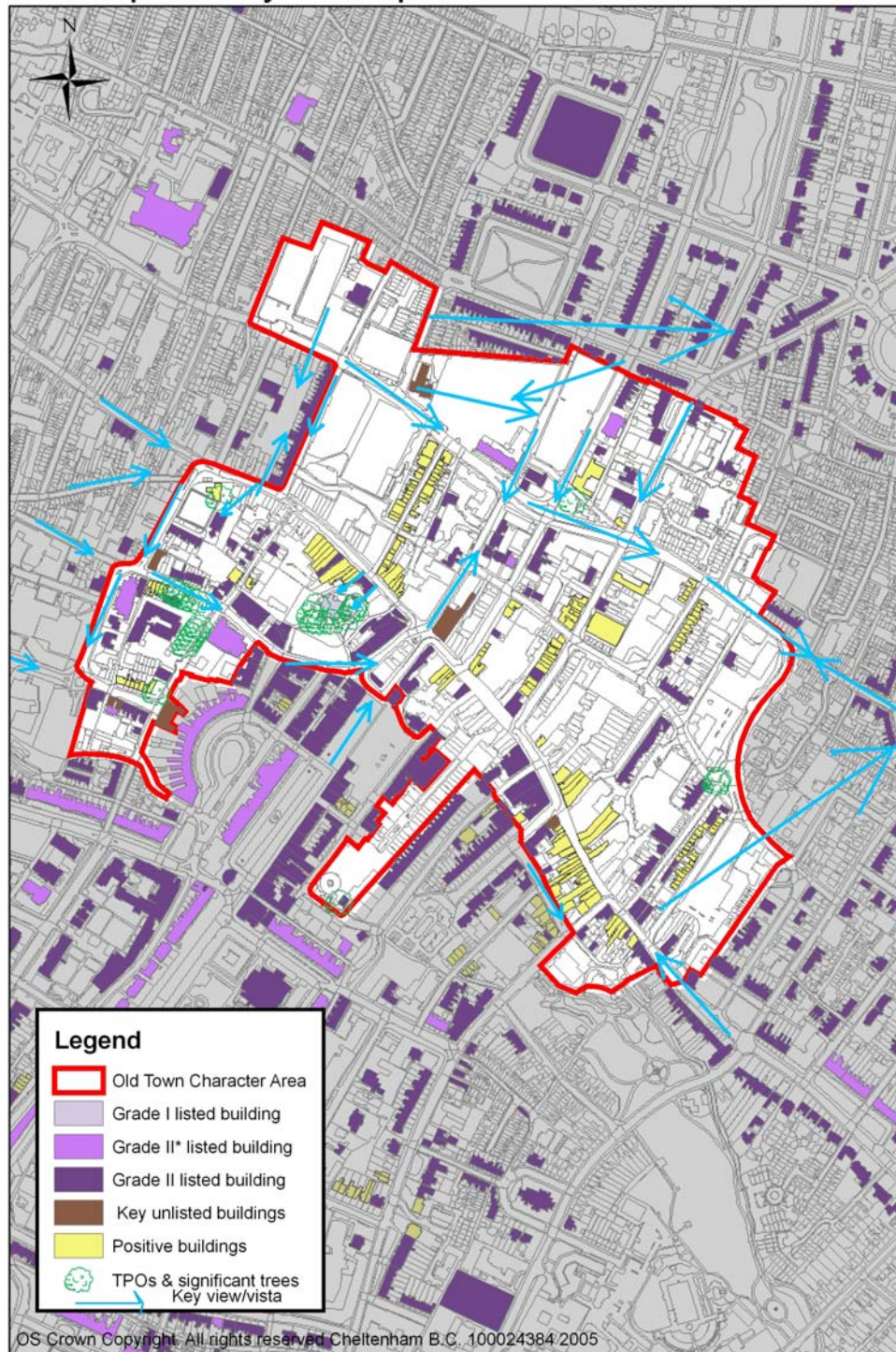


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