

CHELTENHAM

Local development framework

4. LANSDOWN CHARACTER AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

JULY 2008



Central Conservation Area

4. Lansdown Character Area Appraisal and Management Plan July 2008



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Key characteristics

This Character Appraisal of the Lansdown Character Area within Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area concludes that the special interest of the area derives from the following key characteristics:

- The pattern and layout of streets, the spaces between buildings, and the form of the buildings and use of quality building materials all complement each other. They combine together to give the area grandeur, elegance and spaciousness;
- The open green spaces and in particular the well established tree-lined streets greatly enhance its character and appearance and the setting of its buildings;
- The area contains large numbers of Regency and early Victorian formally laid out villas and terraces which form a distinct identity for the area. David Verey (in 'The Buildings of England: The Vale and the Forest of Dean': London: 1970) describes Lansdown Terrace as "*indubitably the most original terrace in Cheltenham*";
- Lansdown Crescent is unique because it is one of the few convex crescents in the country;
- This character area contains over 200 statutory listed buildings (some of which are grouped under the same listing) and some locally listed buildings and structures, giving it a rich architectural and historic interest.

Key issues

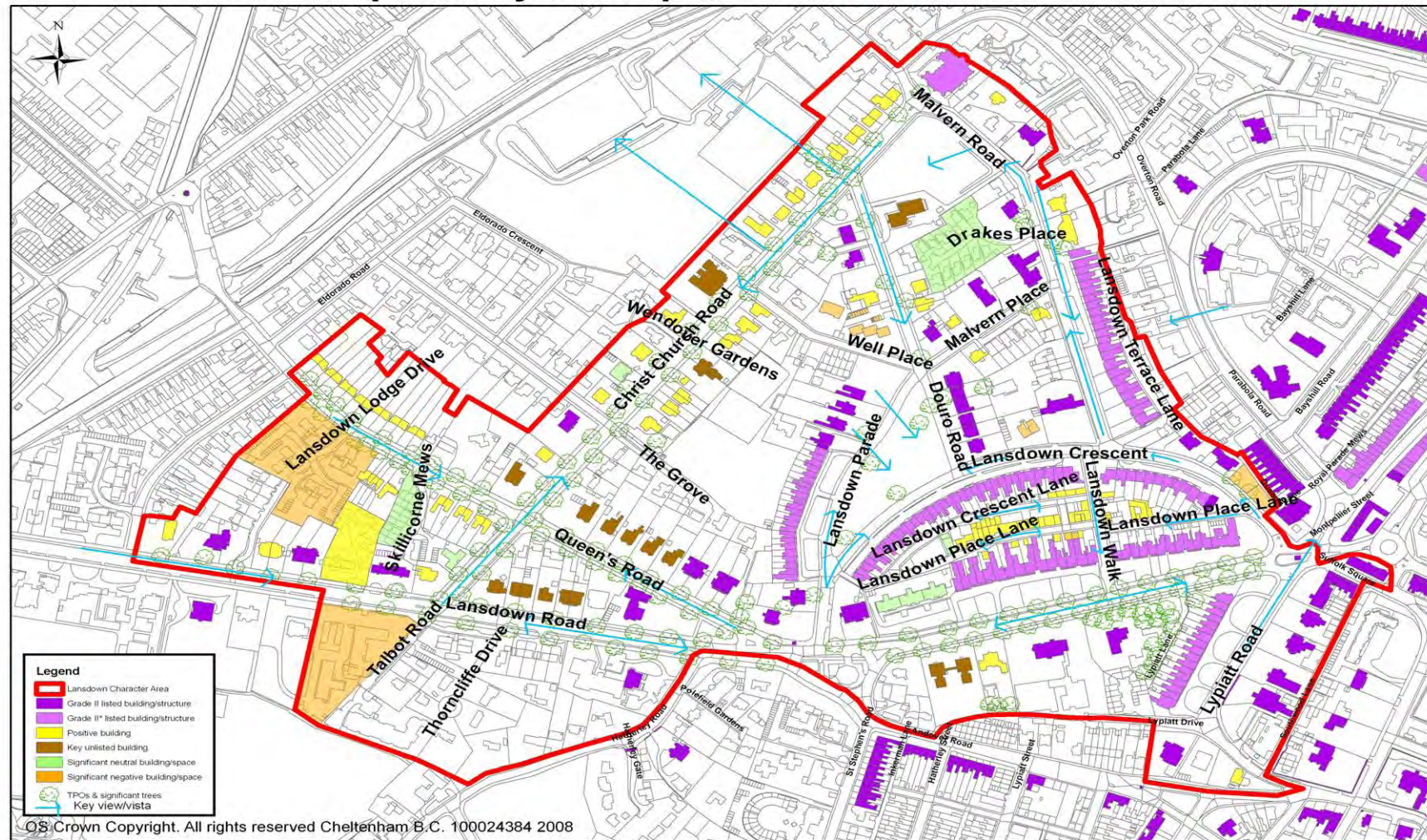
A number of problems and issues have been identified and have a negative impact on the character of Lansdown character area. These form the basis for the Management Proposals of the Management Plan in the Part 2 of this document and are summarised below:

- Control of new development;
- Loss of traditional architectural features on some historic buildings;
- Negative impacts of the presence of equipment or installations on or around buildings, such as large aerials or satellite dishes;
- Poor street furniture;
- Drives and loss of front gardens;
- Tree management;
- Boundary enclosures (including some poor hedging);
- Setting and views;
- Enhancement of existing buildings and land;
- Poor car parks;
- High visibility of dust bins.

¹ Pevsner 'The Buildings of England - Gloucestershire: The Vale and the Forest of Dean' 1970, pg. 142

Part 1 – Character Appraisal

Townscape Analysis Map of Lansdown Character Area



1 INTRODUCTION

What is a Conservation Area

- 1.1 A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, in which the character or appearance is considered 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 and street works to be designed 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 assessment appraisals for all conservation areas a Best Value Performance indicator for local authorities. These assessments should be reviewed by local planning authorities every five years.
- 1.4 This document has been split into two parts. Part 1 of the document forms the character appraisal which provides an assessment of the character of a conservation area or parts of it. This appraisal provides the basis for Part 2, which comprises a 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 decisions made by local authorities (such as the design of highways or the appropriateness of the design of new buildings or open spaces).
- 1.5 Both parts of this document were subject to public consultation between 3rd March and 14th April 2008. Following consideration of representations received it was adopted by Cheltenham Borough Council on 28th July 2008 as a Supplementary Planning Document. It will be used in conjunction with the Local Plan as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Planning context

- 1.6 Cheltenham Borough Council has various adopted and emerging planning related documents. They can be found on the Council's website - www.cheltenham.gov.uk. Some of the documents are quite broad in their content, whilst others are thematic, site specific or area specific. However, all fall within the statutory planning framework and all are material considerations in determining planning proposals. All these documents together look at various aspects of the built environment and need to be read as a whole within a particular context.
- 1.7 This document is part of that overall framework. The Character Appraisal (Part 1) is one of a number of such documents each assessing the character

of parts of the conservation area and highlighting negative issues, which are then addressed through Management Proposals within the Management Plan (Part 2). In developing planning proposals, the Character Appraisal and Management Plan need to be considered along with advice, guidance and policy set out in other planning documents, be they general, thematic or spatially specific.

- 1.8 Cheltenham's Civic Pride project aims to regenerate specific areas within the town. The project intends to develop and deliver public realm enhancement schemes and redevelop under-utilised council land including car-parks. More information on Civic Pride can be found at www.cheltenham.gov.uk Although this project is outside the Lansdown Character Area, it is possible that there may be some consequential benefits.

The Central Conservation Area

- 1.9 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.
- 1.10 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, most of the Victorian, Edwardian and some of the 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.
- 1.11 There is a Government 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 establish approximately 19 character areas. These have been appraised separately, in-order to identify their individual key components and in turn establish how each area may best be preserved and enhanced.

Lansdown Character Area

- 1.12 In May 2001 Cheltenham Borough Council published a draft Urban Design Framework for Cheltenham, produced by Latham Architects (the "Latham" Study). It was never formally adopted by the Council, 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.
- 1.13 The selection of the 19 character area boundaries has no impact on the overall boundary of the Central Conservation Area. Although as part of the work for the preparation of the character area appraisals, consideration has been given to possible boundaries of the Central Conservation Area being revised in the future as a separate piece of work.
- 1.14 The boundaries of the Lansdown character area within Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area (see Fig. 2) have been based on the historic Lansdown Estate, which dates from the early and mid 19th century. Today, Lansdown is an attractive and popular residential area in the town. The original Lansdown

Estate contains Lansdown Crescent, Lansdown Terrace, Lansdown Parade, Malvern Place, Lansdown Place Lane, Lansdown Place, Lansdown Walk, Lansdown Crescent Lane and part of Douro Road. The built form of the streets and spaces, and the individual buildings on these roads largely contributes to the overall character and appearance of Lansdown and its distinctive identity. Also included within the boundary is later 19th and 20th century residential development towards the west and north-west of the original estate, and some buildings on the south side of Lansdown Road, constructed in a similar period.

Summary of special interest

1.15 Lansdown character area is special because:

- a) The pattern and layout of streets, the spaces between buildings, and the form of the buildings and use of quality building materials all complement each other. They combine together to give the area grandeur, elegance and spaciousness.
- b) The open green spaces and in particular the well established tree-lined streets greatly enhance its character and appearance and the setting of its buildings;
- c) The area contains large numbers of Regency and early Victorian formally laid out villas and terraces which form a distinct identity for the area. David Verey (in 'The Buildings of England: The Vale and the Forest of Dean': London: 1970) describes Lansdown Terrace as "*indubitably the most original terrace in Cheltenham*"²;
- d) Lansdown Crescent is unique because it is one of the few convex crescents in the country;
- e) This character area contains over 200 statutory listed buildings (some of which are grouped under the same listing) and some locally listed buildings and structures, allowing it to have a rich architectural and historic interest.

² Pevsner 'The Buildings of England - Gloucestershire: The Vale and the Forest of Dean' 1970, pg. 142

Lansdown Character Area within the Central Conservation Area

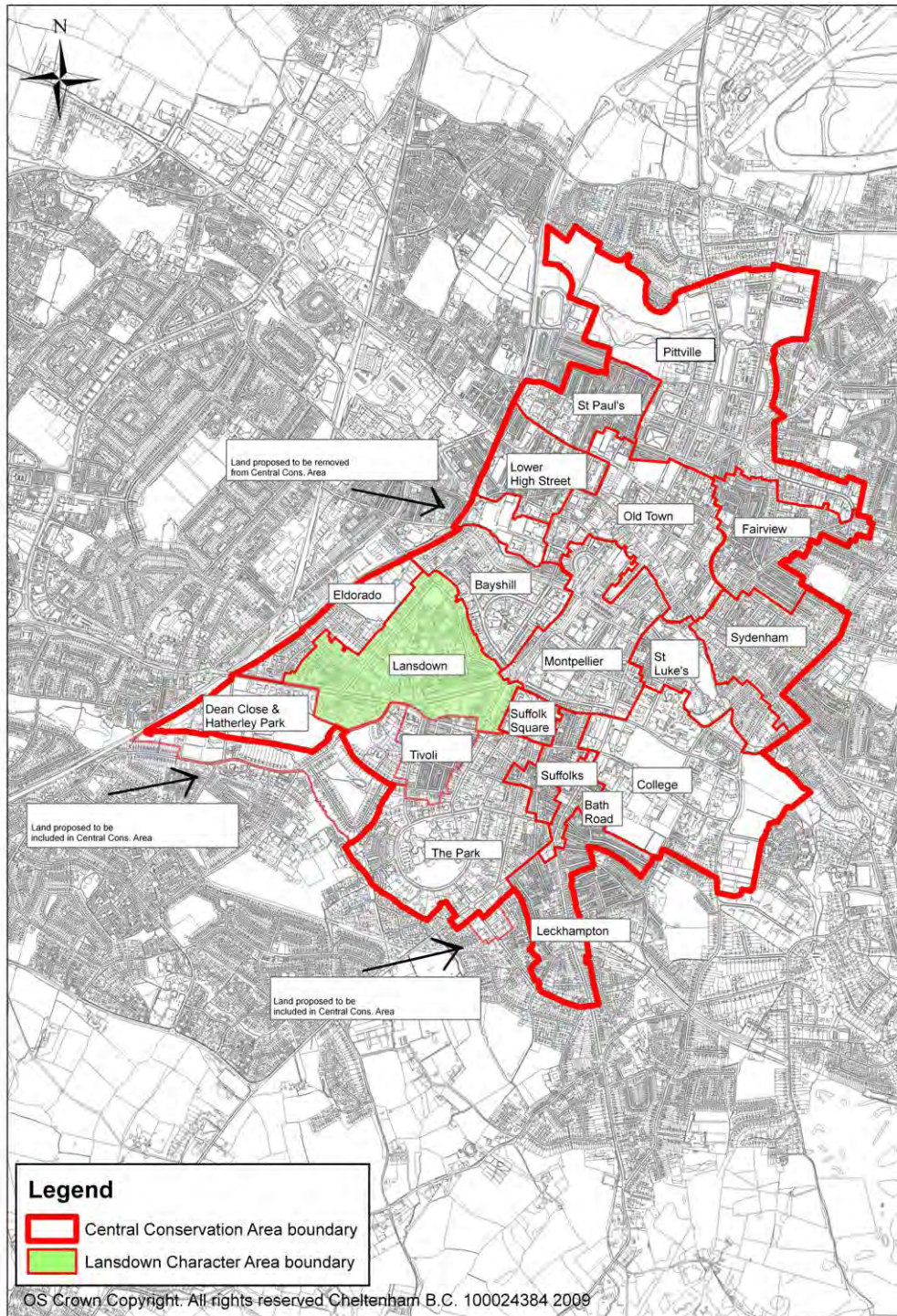


Figure 2 Lansdown Character Area within the Central Conservation Area

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 (AONB) 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 Lansdown Character Area

- 2.2 Lansdown is positioned to the south-west of Cheltenham's town centre. Lansdown Road forms a main approach road into the town from Gloucester and the M5 motorway to the west. Many roads in the area experience heavy traffic (in particular the A40 Lansdown Road and Queen's Road), as they connect to main roads out of Cheltenham and to the train station.
- 2.3 The Lansdown character area contains both Regency residential areas, the majority of which were built during the first half of the 19th century and later Victorian residential areas. The predominance of formal terraces, large villas and an impressive crescent which are all set in wide verdant streets, combine to establish the overall character of Lansdown. The formal street plan and many historic individual buildings set in their generous plots, which together formed the original Lansdown Estate, have been retained and are still very much in evidence today. The presence of wide and frequently tree lined streets, green open spaces forming public gardens, private sports grounds, large private gardens and large building plots combine to create a sense of spaciousness and grandeur. The List Description for Lansdown Crescent states "The Lansdown Estate is a notable example of suburban town planning"³.
- 2.4 The plan form of the Lansdown character area is based on a deformed grid pattern. The streets themselves display two different forms - the wide main roads and the narrow service lanes at the rear of the grand terraces. Their characteristics are explained in detail below –

- 2.5 The **wide main roads** tend to feature:



Figure 3 Vista of Christ Church along Christ Church Road

- Streets which are long and broad (e.g. Christ Church Road and Lansdown Road) with significant long distance views terminating in landmark buildings (e.g. Christ Church);

³ Department of Culture, Media and Sport 'Revised List of Buildings of Special Architectural Or Historic Interest' Borough of Cheltenham 1998, pg. 438

- There are greater opportunities for planting in the street (Christ Church Road is a particularly striking tree-lined street);
- The streets form large urban blocks within which:
 - terraces predominate to the south and east, often set behind a carriage drive (eg Lansdown Parade, Lansdown Terrace, Lansdown Crescent and Lypiatt Terrace);
 - villas and large detached buildings are present to the south and west, sited within spacious plots (particularly evident along Queen's Road and Christ Church Road);
- The space in the streets allows views to open up – both medium and long distance;
- Land gently rises to the north of the character area, enabling distance views of the countryside;
- There are two large areas of green open space. One is between Lansdown Crescent, Lansdown Parade and Douro Road. This is a public open space which provides a setting for a substantial part of Lansdown Crescent and a setting for all of Lansdown Parade and many of the large villas in Douro Road. This space enables the front elevations of these buildings to be appreciated from some distance away. The other open space is between the junction of Christ Church Road and Malvern Road and Christ Church Road and Douro Road. This is a private playing field for the Cheltenham Ladies' College and forms a setting for the front elevation of Christ Church.

2.6 The **narrow service roads** tend to feature:



Figure 4 Example of service lane – Lansdown Crescent Lane

- Service roads which run to the rear of buildings fronting the main streets particularly in the north and east, thereby splitting the urban blocks;

- The urban blocks are comparatively small;
- There is a tight network and layout of streets;
- Little street planting exists;
- Buildings front directly onto the street;
- There are few medium or distance views;
- Terraces on narrow plots are the prevailing building form in Lansdown Crescent Lane, Lansdown Place Lane and Lansdown Terrace Lane.

Wider landscape setting

2.7

The Lansdown character area is surrounded on all sides by the urban development of other character areas of the Central Conservation Area. However, views of the Cotswold escarpment, Leckhampton Hill and the Malvern Hills presented from open spaces and gaps between buildings



Figure 5 View of Leckhampton Hill from Malvern Road

create a rural connection between the countryside and urban area. These long distance views of the far away hills in turn reinforce and enhance the spacious character of the area, and provide a rural backdrop for some of the set pieces of architecture such as the spire of Christ Church.

- 2.8 A large number of both historic and modern landmark buildings with varying heights are present within the Lansdown character area. These include Queen's Court, Christ Church, Lansdown Hotel, St. Margaret's boarding house, Rutland Court, Lefroy Court, Gloucestershire Police Headquarters and Oakdene. The historic Lansdown Terrace, Lypiatt Terrace, Lansdown Parade, Lansdown Crescent and Lansdown Place are also collectively landmark buildings. They have a striking visual impact upon the street scene. These buildings dominate views of the skyline both from within and outside the character area. Some of the buildings enhance Lansdown's historic character and create a sense of atmosphere and rich architectural splendour. The linear form of many of the streets creates long vistas, whilst the terraces and street trees create a strong sense of enclosure and the open spaces provide a spacious atmosphere.



Figure 6 Examples of landmark buildings within Lansdown Character Area

3 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Archaeology within the town of Cheltenham

- 3.1 Some archaeological research has been conducted within the Borough of Cheltenham and in-depth research can be found in "Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey".⁴ 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.⁵ During the last 30 years,

⁴ 'Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey' Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, 1975

⁵ 'Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey' Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, 1975

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. Within the Lansdown character area, however, no finds have been noted under the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record. 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 Archaeological remains unearthed provide a basis for researching the origins and early development of Cheltenham, and contribute indirectly to a sense of place evident in the modern era.

Summary of Historic Development of Cheltenham

- 3.4 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 classical style buildings 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 during the latter half of the 19th century. In turn this led to the development well into the 20th century of some acclaimed public schools and churches. Before World War II, light industry boosted the town’s economy. The establishment of GCHQ in Cheltenham immediately after World War II has had an enormous impact on employment in the town. Today, the town’s attractions include fine shops and events such as the races and numerous cultural festivals as well as its legacy of Regency architecture, with trees, parks, gardens and public spaces.

General history of Lansdown Character Area

- 3.5 The historic development of Lansdown, based on plans from 1617, 1820, 1834, 1897 and 2007 is shown on the Historical Development map (see Fig. 7).
- 3.6 Blake and Beacham state that “...*Pearson Thompson’s Lansdown Estate (was) established in 1824*”⁶ Hart claims that “...*it is generally accepted that (Papworth) was responsible for the actual layout of the...Lansdown area...*”⁷ Blake and Beacham explain that “...*Pearson Thompson sold his interest in the estate to Robert and Charles Jearrad, who greatly altered the original plan, as designed by the London architect J.B. Papworth, and replaced it with a plan of their own...*”⁸ The Lansdown Estate was developed consisting of the Crescent, terraces and Italianate villas. Within the Lansdown Estate, “*comparatively few houses were*

⁶ S. Blake & R. Beacham ‘The Book of Cheltenham’ (1982) pg. 71

⁷ G. Hart ‘A History Of Cheltenham’ (1965) pg. 178

⁸ S. Blake & R. Beacham ‘The Book of Cheltenham’ (1982) pg. 71

built before the 1830s, as a national banking and financial crisis in December 1825 caused a serious hold-up in building activity between 1826 and 1831.”⁹

Development by 1617

- 3.7 Prior to the 19th century, Lansdown character area remained as open, undeveloped land. The 1617 map depicts a footpath crossing through the land of the future Lansdown Estate. The footpath runs from Leckhampton into the ancient town centre.

Development by 1820

- 3.8 The 1820 Post Office map of Cheltenham does not depict the area covered by Lansdown character area. This suggests the area remained undeveloped during the early Regency period. However, in 1801, major developer and banker Henry Thompson bought 400 acres of land on which Montpellier and Lansdown now stand.

Development by 1834

- 3.9 In 1824 Pearson Thompson inherited his father, Henry Thompson’s, land and began to develop Montpellier and Lansdown. He employed Papworth to design the Lansdown estate, described by David Verey as *“the first planned garden estate”*.¹⁰ From 1830, the Jearrad brothers took over the design and development of the Lansdown Estate. Although Papworth designed the layout of the Lansdown estate *“...the Jearrad (brothers)...greatly altered the original plan...and replaced it with a plan of their own...”*¹¹ Blake and Beacham explain that *“within these estates, however, comparatively few houses were built before the 1830s, as a national banking and financial crisis in December 1825 caused a serious delay in building activity between 1826 and 1831.”*¹² Blake and Beacham go on to explain that *“...at Lansdown no more than 16 houses were built by 1830.”*¹³
- 3.10 By the time Merrett’s map of 1834 was published, much of the Jearrad brother’s planned Lansdown estate was featured on the map and partially constructed. The detail shown on the map conveys the importance of the formally planned estate. The estate comprised the roads of Lansdown Crescent, Lansdown Terrace, Lansdown Parade, Malvern Place, Lansdown Place Lane, Lansdown Place, Lansdown Walk, Lansdown Crescent Lane and part of Douro Road. It is important to note that the building form of this planned estate significantly differs from the actual building form of the estate once it had been completed.
- 3.11 As the estate had only partly been constructed by this time, some roads including Lansdown Place, Lansdown Crescent and Lansdown Terrace had only part completed properties along them, with other planned properties stretching the remainder of the road. Service lanes including Lansdown Terrace Lane and Lansdown Place Lane were positioned behind the towering terraces, and contained some buildings. These buildings included coach-houses and stables.
- 3.12 Large villas in spacious grounds had been erected along the eastern side of Suffolk Lawn (now known as Lypiatt Road), with the western side remaining

⁹ S. Blake & R. Beacham ‘The Book of Cheltenham’ (1982) pg. 71

¹⁰ Pevsner ‘The Buildings of England - Gloucestershire: The Vale and the Forest of Dean’ (1970) pg. 59

¹¹ S. Blake & R. Beacham ‘The Book of Cheltenham’ (1982) pg. 71

¹² S. Blake & R. Beacham ‘The Book of Cheltenham’ (1982) pg. 71

¹³ S. Blake & R. Beacham ‘The Book of Cheltenham’ (1982) pg. 71

as open land. A footpath is featured on the map, connecting Gloucester Road to the Lansdown estate, running to Lansdown Terrace. Land within the Lansdown character area to the north, south and west of Lansdown Villas (now named Lansdown Parade) remained open and undeveloped at this time.

- 3.13 The Leckhampton rail road is featured on Merrett's map running across New Gloucester Road, along the route of the future Queen's Road. Stone was transported as building material from the quarry at Leckhampton Hill to Lansdown Railway Station (now known as Cheltenham Spa Station).

Development by 1897

- 3.14 The 1897 Plan of Cheltenham depicts relatively large amounts of development on all sides of the original Lansdown estate. The Lansdown estate had been completed although the Jearrad brother's original plan for the estate had not been fully realised. Surrounding roads and spaces had been established, including Christ Church Road, Queen's Road, Cheltenham Ladies' College Recreational Ground, Well Place and the remainder of Douro Road.
- 3.15 Lansdown Parade was predominantly developed as an extensive row of terraces, rather than semi-detached villas as planned by the Jearrads and depicted on Merrett's 1834 map. Neither was the whole of Lansdown Terrace developed as planned. Villas were erected in place of the planned continuation of the terrace up to Christ Church. The Italianate designed Lypiatt Terrace was constructed by this time, with work beginning on it in 1847. Christ Church was built 1837-40, in the early Victorian period, to serve the more affluent population of Lansdown.
- 3.16 In the latter years of the 1830s, Queen's Road was formed by the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway as a grand approach to Lansdown Station from the Lansdown Road. The line of the road followed the route already taken by the Leckhampton railroad.
- 3.17 The majority of buildings and roads in the area were laid out by the end of the 19th century and development within the Lansdown character area primarily consisted of extensive terraces, semi-detached and detached villas set within large spacious grounds and rear service buildings. The properties were designed for the wealthy, many of which were by this time attracted to the town with the growing reputation of the schools and popularity as a retirement settlement. A sense of space in the area was retained and is clearly shown on the map, despite relatively high levels of development.

Development in the 20th – 21st centuries

- 3.18 Some infill development, particularly within Christ Church Road, Queen's Road, Malvern Road, Douro Road and Well Place has occurred in more recent years of the 20th century. For example, the former Cypher's Nursery was closed in 1960 and Queen's Court was constructed around 1964 on part of that site.
- 3.19 Today the building use in the area remains predominantly residential. Some of the historic properties have been sub-divided into flats, some converted into offices and some of the larger buildings have been converted into boarding school accommodation. The Cheltenham Ladies' College has a significant presence in the area – with boarding houses, a playing field and tennis courts. Other buildings within the area include a hotel/public house,

4 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

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

Public and private space

4.1



Figure 8 Houses set within spacious grounds on Christ Church Road

Public and private spaces, together with views out of, into and within the Lansdown character area impact largely on the area's character and appearance. An overall sense of space is present within Lansdown. Its spacious plan form largely determines this through the linear development of wide streets and roads with the positioning of buildings set away from roads within substantial grounds.

4.2



Figure 9 Lansdown Terrace Lane service lane

In contrast to the sense of space prevalent in much of Lansdown, there are a number of service lanes at the rear of the grand historic terraces. Often there will be a high brick wall between the lane and property's rear yard, evident in Lansdown Crescent Lane and Lansdown Terrace Lane. The narrow service lanes contain small mews houses and garages which front directly onto the footpath. There is very little (if any) separation between public and private space within these lanes. This provokes a sense of enclosure as the terraces tower on either side of the lanes. Historically, they would have been utilised by servants of the grand terraces and, having a functional nature, their appearance is utilitarian.

- 4.3 The historic layout of buildings in Lansdown significantly enhances the quality of the streets and spaces. Historically they address the street in various ways including
- across a front garden with various degrees of set back enclosed predominantly by railings and hedgerow; and
 - behind a coach drive at some distance from the back of footpath. This occurs regularly on terraces (such as Lansdown Crescent, Lansdown Terrace, Lansdown Parade and Lypiatt Terrace). Boundary treatments are commonly railings, with or without hedging, often at back of footpath and on the building boundary.
- 4.4 Predominantly, modern buildings within the character area complement historic buildings in following the same building line, being positioned set back from the public space of the footpath and containing good sized frontages. A

sense of space and elegance is created through this plan form and the accompanying wide roads.

Boundary treatments

- 4.5 Various boundary treatments are employed within Lansdown character area. These include historic gate piers and railings, hedgerow and low brick boundary walls. These boundaries generally provide an attractive setting for buildings and act as enclosure. In contrast, some fencing acts as a poor, unattractive boundary treatment, of which some present is in poor maintenance.



Figure 10 Examples of boundary treatments found within Lansdown Character Area

Garden space

4.6



Figure 11 Front garden space along Queen's Road

Gardens, historically and in the present-day, form an attractive, traditional frontage to both historic and more modern buildings, providing them with a colourful, interesting setting and enhancing the special qualities of properties and the street scene. Mature front gardens are prevalent on Queen's Road and Christ Church Road. Trees in front gardens help screen buildings from public view and space, creating privacy. These gardens are of particular value in that they are located in a generally built-up area. While much of the historical setting of frontages is intact, many front gardens have been given over to parking. This frequently has a detrimental impact on the street scene. The development of poor settings detracts from the special historic and architectural qualities of buildings.

Key views and vistas (see Fig. 1)

- 4.7 The extensive linear street pattern, evident in many roads, permits medium and long distance views, which also contribute to a sense of space. Views are highly important in enhancing the character and appearance of Lansdown character area.
- 4.8 Medium and long distance views of the tower of Christ Church are prevalent from a number of areas both within and outside the character area. Its high tower punctuates the skyline and closes the view looking north along Christ Church Road. Long distance views of the countryside are prevalent over the

roofs of some buildings. Such views can be seen from Douro Road of the Cotswold escarpment. Glimpses of the Malvern Hills are displayed in spaces between buildings and trees along Christ Church Road, particularly visible across the low-lying Ladies' College playing field. Views of Cleeve Hill are presented from the end of Lypiatt Road looking down Montpellier Street. These views are important in establishing a rural connection and providing enclosure. In contrast, the curving form of roads, in particular Lansdown Crescent, restricts views as the crescent has a strong convex curving form. The slight concave cranked form of Lansdown Parade with its formal carriage driveway setting creates a visual stop across the open area of grass.

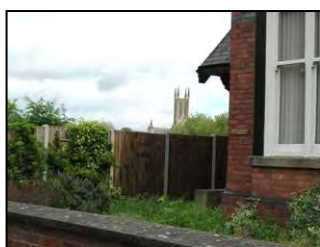


Figure 12 View of Christ Church from Eldorado Crescent



Figure 13 View of the Malverns from Christ Church Road



Figure 14 Curving form of Lansdown Crescent restricts views

5 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Use of area and how use creates special interest

- 5.1 The Lansdown character area has several different uses due to its close proximity to Cheltenham town centre. Mixed uses create activity throughout the day and contribute to the special interest of the area.

Residential

5.2



Figure 15 Lansdown Place terraces

Lansdown is and has historically been a principally residential area, which today accommodates a range of housing and tenure types from large detached family houses to small flat conversions. The residential character of Lansdown is a highly distinctive element of its identity. It is important its dominant residential character remains as Lansdown was planned historically as a residential estate. The large size of the historic properties has resulted in many buildings being sub-divided into flats, which is evident in Lansdown Crescent for example.

Commercial / Business

- 5.3 There are a number of offices located throughout the character area, the vast majority of which are sited in converted historic villas, terraces and some mews houses where workshops are also situated.

5.4



Figure 16 Gloucestershire Police Headquarters, Lansdown Road

The Gloucestershire Police Headquarters on the south side of Lansdown Road is situated on a large and visually prominent site on this westerly approach to the town. It occupies a converted Victorian villa and modern purpose built blocks. The modern buildings, although prominent, have no architectural or townscape merit. The site is constantly active and generates significant amounts of traffic.

Road use

5.5



Figure 17 Lansdown Road

Lansdown is on a main western approach to the town and close to the town centre. Consequently, while many of the roads within the estate are quiet, a few (Lansdown Road in particular) are very busy and others (e.g. Christ Church Road) are rat-runs, subject to lower, but significant, levels of traffic. Towards the east of the area, closest to the town centre, many roads also experience high levels of on-street parking.

Recreation

5.6



Figure 18 Triangular shaped green with Lansdown Parade in background

Recreational grounds are provided through the public triangular shaped green between Lansdown Parade and Lansdown Crescent; and private spaces at the Cheltenham Ladies' College tennis courts to the north of The Grove and the playing field forming the grounds of Farnley Lodge. Allotment gardens were previously present on the site of the tennis courts. These grounds (in particular the public green between Lansdown Parade and Lansdown Crescent) are important in offering an attractive setting for surrounding buildings, enhancing the character and appearance of Lansdown and providing important open spaces within a built-up area.

Other uses

5.7

In addition there is an assortment of other uses including:

- a) Christ Church – a focal point for the community drawing from across the town throughout the week;
- b) the Lansdown Hotel – a busy evening attraction;
- c) Airthrie School;
- d) small industrial and business uses in the back lanes providing daytime activity;
- e) a small number of shops;

- f) a dental practice; and
- g) parts of the University of Gloucestershire.

- 5.8 These all bring varying levels of activity throughout the day which greatly add to the character and vitality of this area.

Architecture and historic qualities of buildings

- 5.9 Buildings which make up the original Lansdown estate consist of formal terraces, crescents and large elegant villas. Most buildings date from the 1830s onwards. More recent residential buildings date from the 20th and 21st centuries. Lansdown's architectural character is strongly based in the fine Regency buildings for which Cheltenham is well known. The elegance and formality of the 1830s is still evident here today even where new buildings have been added. Some modern buildings have been successful in complementing historic ones in terms of their size, scale and positioning.

Historic terraces

- 5.10 The terraces are imposing – generally at 3-storeys plus basement. Despite their length and strong uniformity, the window pattern and columns give a strong vertical rhythm which is a characteristic of the Regency town. This was frequently enhanced by a tall first floor window, often with a wrought iron balcony. The extensive terraces create cohesion in building height and scale within their environments. They tower over vernacular buildings on Lansdown Place Lane and Lansdown Crescent Lane. By dominating the public spaces and principal road frontages, they displayed the social status and importance of the buildings' owners.



Figure 19 Lansdown Terrace



Figure 20 Lansdown Crescent

Architectural styles

- 5.11 There are a variety of architectural styles employed within building design, which reflect the influences and fashions at time of construction. Neo-classical architecture has been used on many Regency villas and on Lansdown Parade, which displays Greek Doric porches. The Italianate style is employed on Lypiatt Terrace and the Lansdown Hotel; Greek Revival style is found on Lansdown Crescent; Regency Gothic Revival in the Early English style is used on Christ Church; Gothic Revival architecture is employed on Aban Court in Malvern Road and an unusual property on Christ Church Road named 'Normanhurst' is designed in Dutch Baroque style. Prominent architects RW and C Jearrad designed much of the Lansdown Estate. Samuel Daukes designed Lypiatt Terrace.

Historic construction materials and architectural detailing

- 5.12 Construction materials, typical of the town, are slate roofs, brick walls covered with ashlar dressed Cotswold limestone or stucco painted in cream or white colours and timber sash windows. Roofs in many of these properties dating

from the 1830s are flat or low pitched. Their structure is commonly hidden behind balustrading, great cornices or parapets. Verandas and balconies are an attractive feature on Regency and early Victorian buildings, evident on many terraces of the Lansdown Estate. Lansdown Crescent has palmette and anthemion motif balconies and Lansdown Place contains Carron Company double heart and anthemion motif balustrade and openwork frieze which is also evident on Queen's Parade within the Bayshill character area. These features unite character areas and are typical features of Cheltenham's Neo-Classical architecture.

5.13



Figure 21 Historic stone plinth on Queen's Road. Note where the railings used to be.

Many of the front boundaries of the historic properties were defined by wrought iron railings, gate and sometimes gate piers. This metal work was set in a natural Forest of Dean stone plinth. Much of the metal work was removed as part of the war effort during World War II. However, some isolated items have remained, and much of the stone plinths are still in place.

Christ Church

5.14



Figure 22 Christ Church

Christ Church is a visually dominant civic building within the Lansdown character area. It is Grade II listed, dating from 1837-40 designed by architects RW and C Jearrad who developed the original Lansdown Estate. Christ Church was built as a proprietary chapel to accommodate about 2,000 people in anticipation of the expansion of the Lansdown Estate. According to the List Description, 'the distinctive and unusual proportions have attracted the attention of many architectural writers: Sir John Betjeman wrote that this is, 'one of the most successful buildings in Cheltenham externally'.¹⁴

20th Century buildings

5.15 Away from the original Lansdown Estate, 20th century residential properties on Queen's Road, Lansdown Road and Christ Church Road consist of a variety of styles, ages, sizes and construction materials which add variety to the street scene. Despite this diversity, these properties are set back from the road within large plots creating a consistent building line which is sympathetic to the form of the historic properties.

¹⁴ Department of Culture, Media and Sport 'Revised List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest' Borough of Cheltenham 1998, pg. 523-524



Figure 23 Examples of 20th century residential developments within Lansdown Character Area

Listed buildings

5.16 Listed buildings are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. All listed buildings due to their listed status are extremely important. There are over 200 listed buildings and structures within the Lansdown character area. Many of these buildings are listed as part of a group. All listed buildings are Grade II with the exception of:

BUILDING	GRADE	DATE OF LISTING
Nos. 2-12 (Consecutive) & attached area railings, Lansdown Crescent	II*	12/03/55
Nos. 13-47 (Consecutive) & attached area railings, Lansdown Crescent	II*	12/03/55
Nos. 1-23 (Consecutive) & attached area railings, Lansdown Parade	II*	12/03/55
Nos. 4-14 (Consecutive) Lansdown Place (terrace) & Montpellier Court & attached railings, Lansdown Road	II*	05/05/72
Nos. 15-29 (Consecutive) Lansdown Place (terrace) & attached area railings with wall at left, Lansdown Road	II*	05/05/72
Nos. 1-17 (Consecutive) Lypiatt Terrace & balustrades; area railings to Nos. 3 & 6, Lypiatt Road	II*	05/05/72
Nos. 1-23 (Consecutive) Lansdown Terrace, Evelyn Court, Regan House, attached railings & mews archway	II*	12/03/55
Christ Church & adjacent Church Hall	II*	12/03/55




Refer to www.cheltenham.gov.uk for full list descriptions and www.imagesofengland.org.uk for photographic records.




Index of Buildings of Local Importance

- 5.17 An Index of Buildings of Local Importance has been prepared for Cheltenham. Buildings and structures on the Index are protected by a Supplementary Planning Document.

Contribution of key unlisted buildings

- 5.18 A number of buildings are not statutory listed and are therefore less important. However they do encompass qualities of age, style and materials which are locally distinct and which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the character area and Conservation Area. Some of these buildings make a positive contribution as part of a larger group. All key unlisted buildings in the table below (with the exception of St. Margaret's boarding house) are on the Index of Buildings of Local Importance. Please see the Index for further details about these buildings. Key unlisted buildings include –

<p>Farnley Lodge (Cheltenham Ladies' College boarding house) (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)</p>  <p>Figure 24 Farnley Lodge</p>	<p>As group – Waldon House, Chelholm, Hazel Lea, Lanesfield House, Lansdown House and Laxton House (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)</p>  <p>Figure 25 Chelholm (as part of group)</p>
<p>St. Margaret's (Cheltenham Ladies' College boarding house):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The house dates from the early 20th century, thus enhancing the historic value of the area; • It is dominant within the street scene and being constructed of red brick, it is visually prominent. Relatively few red brick Victorian buildings are evident within the Lansdown character area which adds to its architectural interest and value; • It contains strong architectural features such as large bays, which project a sense of strength. 	<p>As group - Merrowdown and Eildon (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)</p>  <p>Figure 27 Eildon (as part of group)</p>

 <p>Figure 26 St Margaret's</p>	
<p>As group - 24 & 26 Christ Church Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)</p>  <p>Figure 28 24 & 26 Christ Church Road</p>	<p>As group - Nos. 11, 15, 17, 19, 21 and 23 Queen's Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)</p>  <p>Figure 29 Claren (No. 19) Queen's Road (as part of group)</p>

Positive buildings



- 5.19 Positive buildings are identified on the Townscape Analysis Map as those buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of each character area. They often have a collective group value. Although a small number of buildings in the overall Central Conservation Area are in a poor condition, they may still be identified as positive if the building itself makes a positive contribution. In comparison to positive buildings, key unlisted buildings tend to have individual value and qualities which make a greater contribution to enhancing the character and appearance of each character area.

Local details

- 5.20 Local details within the Lansdown character area collectively enhance the character and appearance of not just Lansdown but the whole of the Central Conservation Area. Interesting historic details include –

Historic gate piers	Mews-houses – “In 1931, George Dowty...set up his own business in a converted mews loft at Lansdown, to manufacture six internally sprung wheels for a Japanese firm.” ¹⁵ Dowty Engineering started in a mews-house in Lansdown Terrace
Historic mews archways on Lansdown Terrace	The Gordon Lamp

¹⁵ S. Blake & R. Beacham 'The Book of Cheltenham' (1982) pg. 123

 <p>Figure 30 Mews archway at the entrance to Lansdown Terrace Lane</p>	 <p>Figure 31 The Gordon Lamp, Lansdown Road</p>
19 th century pillar boxes	Historic lamp posts

Materials

Building materials

- 5.21 The use of building materials reflects the availability of materials at the time of construction of historic buildings. 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. The majority of these houses were built of locally-fired bricks, and were faced with either stucco or ashlar dressed Cotswold limestone. The painting of stucco in a uniform colour gave the town cohesion. Stone was also used to front the buildings. Much of the stone used in Cheltenham would have been quarried at Leckhampton Hill or Birdlip. Unfortunately neither of the quarries continues to produce stone. Red bricks are also commonly used in the construction of boundary walls and in Victorian/Edwardian properties. Within the Lansdown character area, bricks are also used in modern blocks of flats such as Queen's Court.
- 5.22 Whilst many of the front boundary metal railings have been removed outside historic buildings, the Forest of Dean sandstone plinths have been left in place.

Ground surface material

- 5.23 There is a range of surface materials used throughout the area – few are original or have any historic value. Roads are tarmac, with concrete kerbs. Paving is predominantly concrete slabs or flags and tarmac although some blocks have been used on pavements and private spaces and enhance the character and visual appearance of the area. Some pavement cross over areas contain historic sandstone paving slabs. Materials such as gravel are also used and are a sympathetic ground surface material, which complements the setting of buildings.
- 5.24 Historic kerb stones are found on roads including Malvern Road and historic Forest of Dean stone is evident in Lypiatt Road. Their presence enhances the character and appearance of the street scene within their locales.

Street furniture

- 5.25 There is little furniture but there are many traffic signs in parts of Lansdown, which is typical of a built-up urban area within close proximity of the town centre. This signage is largely evident on main roads within the area such as Lansdown Road (A40), Queen's Road and Christ Church Road. They can be

large and intrusive and occasionally are redundant or duplicate each other. The Council is currently reviewing directional signage throughout the town centre.

Contribution of trees and green spaces

- 5.26 As previously noted, the Lansdown character area has significant amounts of private green space (large gardens and recreation land) but comparatively little public green space - the main being the triangular plot between Lansdown Parade and Lansdown Crescent. However, the occurrence of public and privately owned trees and green spaces in the area greatly enhances its setting, character and appearance. Such spaces need to be well maintained and protected.

Impact of street trees

- 5.27 There is a strong presence of mature tree-lined streets throughout the character area, particularly evident along Lansdown Road, Christ Church Road and Queen's Road. Species include lime and plane trees along Lansdown Road, lime and horse chestnut trees along Christ Church Road and lime trees along Queen's Road. The presence of these well-established trees illustrates the importance of tree planting as part of the original scheme for the Lansdown estate. Their size helps establish grandeur and character within the area. The varying species and their colours also create interest and foster bio-diversity. The impact of trees upon the street scene is particularly apparent from the ends of Lansdown Road, Christ Church Road and Queen's Road, where extensive long distance views are prevalent. Along with enhancing character and appearance, trees perform another important function in screening properties from public space, acting as a 'soft' boundary treatment, establishing enclosure and privacy.



Figure 32 Street trees in Lansdown Road



Figure 33 Street trees in Queen's Road



Figure 34 Street trees in Christ Church Road

Other forms of greenery

- 5.28



Figure 35 Hedging employed as a boundary treatment on Lansdown Road

Other forms of greenery such as hedges and grass verges are characteristic and are attractive features and boundary treatments within Lansdown. Hedging is used as a natural boundary treatment to soften edges and enhance the setting of buildings.

Private green space

5.29



Figure 36 Front gardens in Christ Church Road

Private green space is particularly prevalent within Lansdown character area. Modern buildings such as Queen's Court and properties along Christ Church Road complement the historic plan form by being positioned within large grounds set back from public space. Neatly planted gardens enhance the setting of properties. In present day, many front gardens have been converted to hard-standing for cars. This is evident within most of the roads in the character area. It is therefore important that front gardens are retained where possible as their presence greatly enhances the character and appearance of not just the individual buildings, but the area generally.

Ladies' College playing field

5.30



Figure 37 Farnley Lodge playing field

The Ladies' College playing field at Farnley Lodge occupies a large plot of land and provides an attractive setting for Farnley Lodge. Although private land, it enhances the overall character and appearance of its locality, enhances the setting of Christ Church and contributes to a strong sense of space. The playing field permits medium and long distance views across it, noticeable through the railings on Malvern Road. Laurel hedging forms a 'soft' boundary along Christ Church Road and large horse chestnut and lime trees are present within the playing field grounds.

Triangular green outside Lansdown Parade

5.31



Figure 38 Triangular green forms attractive setting for Lansdown Parade

The triangular green outside Lansdown Parade forms a grand spacious setting for the terraces on Lansdown Parade and Lansdown Crescent. It creates a strong sense of space and permits views of these buildings to allow them to be appreciated in their full glory. Well established oak and silver birch trees also enhance the character by creating interest. On the original plan for the Lansdown estate (as illustrated in Merrett's map of 1834) it was predicted that villas would be built on this plot of



Figure 39 Triangular green forms attractive setting for Lansdown Crescent

land. However, the Plan of Cheltenham from 1897 shows this area remaining as open land. It is highly likely that the value of retaining this undeveloped plot of land was therefore recognised by this time. The play park on this site acts as a focal point where families may gather and activity is generated.

Negative factors

5.32 Due to high levels of development of the Lansdown character area, modern changes and intrusions have, to a degree, negatively impacted on the area's overall character and appearance. Negative factors include significant negative buildings and spaces, which are identified as those buildings and spaces that detract from the character and appearance of the area but offer potential for enhancement. This identification may result from the visual prominence of the site, or the development's inappropriate scale, design or materials, amongst other factors. The identification of buildings as negative factors in this section and as significant negative buildings or spaces on the Townscape Analysis map is an indication of a need for improvement, not necessarily demolition. Negative changes and intrusions include –

- a) **Loss of traditional architectural features**, particularly alterations to windows, has occurred within some of the historic buildings;
- b) The presence of large, projecting **Velux roof lights** on historic buildings has eroded the visual quality of the historic roofscape. Where there is evidence of historic roof lights or where new conservation roof lights may be appropriate, each case will be considered on its own merits;
- c) Modern intrusions in the form of **satellite dishes and large aerials** are also harmful to the overall appearance of buildings and detract from their special historic and architectural qualities. These additions can often be seen clearly from public space which harms the character and appearance of not just the individual buildings, but the area generally;
- d) **Many front gardens have been changed either totally or partially into hard-standing areas** for cars. This change has reduced the area of green and soft landscaped private gardens, and generally increased the hard urban appearance of the Lansdown area. It has resulted in a negative impact on the appearance of the area. However, where properties have retained their front gardens, there has been a continuing enhancement to the street scene;
- e) **High traffic volumes** create pressure on road systems and pedestrian spaces. This is a particular problem along the highly utilised A40 Lansdown Road;
- f) A large amount of **on-street parking** is particularly evident within parts of the Lansdown character area. This tends to happen in areas which are

within close proximity of the town centre. High levels of parking creates active streets, but focuses attention and activity on the road rather than the historic buildings and the open spaces between buildings;

- g) **Large, utilitarian blocks of flats** dating from the latter half of the 20th century in the area are often visually unattractive and do not sit well within their historic context. For example, Beaconsfield Court on Christ Church Road, Rutland Court on Douro Road and Albany House/Mayfield House/Regent House on Lansdown Road. Although the Queen's Court development is set back from the road in spacious grounds, its size, scale and footprint is alien to the historic buildings within close proximity. The modern building materials also do little to complement the historic buildings. However, it should be noted that several other residential blocks from this period, such as the Drakes Place development off Malvern Road, have been designed in a more sympathetic style to complement historic buildings within close proximity, and the overall character of the area;
- h) The **car park at the rear of Queen's Parade** and adjacent to a property called Pembury is an unattractive feature, which is very prominent when approaching the Lansdown area from the west. Its visually 'hard' appearance does not provide an attractive setting for part of Lansdown Crescent positioned opposite, or Queen's Parade which backs onto it;
- i) Some **boundary treatments**, in particular some timber fencing is in need of maintenance. Its appearance has a negative impact on the street scene of buildings. In some locations timber fencing has been used as a front boundary. The use of a fence in such a location is inappropriate and has led to a visual deterioration of the road frontages;
- j) A small number of **poorly maintained trees and hedging and poor species** can have a negative impact upon the street scene and provide a poor setting for properties by restricting views of them;
- k) Large amounts of modern **street signage** are evident on the main roads, in particular the highly utilised A40 Lansdown Road. Although signage is clearly needed due to the high volume of traffic passing along these roads, their functional design and frequent high density does not complement the setting of historic buildings often within close proximity;
- l) Large numbers of **dust bins** are left along Lansdown Crescent where the majority of its terraces have been converted into flats. They are visually unattractive and create a poor setting for the crescent. The dust bins detract from the special qualities of the crescent buildings;
- m) The **setting of the Lansdown Parade terraces** is generally enhanced and softened by a significant piece of green space between its carriage drive and Lansdown Road. However, at the west end, this space is heavily overgrown and detracts from the overall impact of this impressive terrace on entering the town.

Neutral areas

- 5.33 Some areas within the Lansdown character area neither enhance nor detract from the character or appearance of the character area but have the potential for enhancement. They tend to be visually prominent within the street scene. The identification of buildings as being neutral in this section and as significant neutral buildings or spaces on the Townscape Analysis map is an indication of a need for improvement, not necessarily demolition.
- 5.34 Several residential houses and blocks of flats dating from the latter part of the 20th Century, which are positioned on roads including Douro Road, Christ Church Road and Lansdown Road. These buildings do not enhance the historic setting of the area, but generally do not detract from the historic buildings within close proximity in terms of their size, scale, architectural design and materials. Examples include houses on Well Place, Hawthorns residential home in Christ Church Road, the Skillicorne Mews development off Queen's Road, the Drakes Place development off Malvern Road and William Burford House offices between Lansdown Crescent Lane and Lansdown Place Lane;
- 5.35 Some outbuildings and structures on Lansdown Place Lane including garages are in need of some repair work. They enhance the historic character of Lansdown and maintenance would improve their appearance and the overall street scene.

General condition of area

- 5.36 Much of the building stock in the Lansdown character area is in good condition, reflecting high property values and the prosperity within this popular and affluent residential area. A small number of conversions and workshops are in need of attention. Lansdown's magnificence and grandeur is demonstrable through a combination of factors including the area's plan form, large number of listed buildings and mature tree-lined streets.
- 5.37 It is highly important that the physical condition of the historic buildings is preserved in-order to retain not just Lansdown's, but Cheltenham's fine distinctiveness and identity.

Pressures and capacity for change

- 5.38 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.
- 5.39 There is generally little capacity for new development on open land due to a very limited amount of suitable vacant land.
- 5.40 The replacement of some inappropriate modern buildings with a well-designed development which is in keeping with, and enhances the character of the area may be an option but careful consideration would need to be given to this. Some spaces such as car-parks would also benefit from enhancement.

- 5.41 Many of the larger historic houses within Lansdown have been sub-divided into flats. This leads to intensification of the use of these buildings and increased pressure on resources and surrounding land for use as car-parking, bin storage etc.

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 Lansdown 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 28th July 2008. It will inform the planning and other decisions of the Council.

The special qualities of the Lansdown character area have been identified in the Character Appraisal which forms the Part 1 of this document. The Management Plan draws upon the themes identified in sections 5.32 'Negative factors' and 5.33 '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. As such, the management plan can be considered to have three broad functions:

1 **a control tool** - its action points will be material considerations in decision making on applications for planning and related consents;

2 **a project development tool** - it identifies proactive work which can address some of the negative factors identified in the Character Appraisal. The responsibility for the work falls within the remit of various agencies (primarily Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council). Many of the projects do not yet have resources (funding, staffing etc) and few are programmed. However, their inclusion in this document is important because as an adopted document, the management plan can form the basis for bids for resources and programmed works;

3 **a best practice guide** - it establishes a series of action points to preserve and enhance the area's character. They should be considered in the design and implementation of all projects regardless of the need for permissions and who is undertaking them (public bodies, corporate bodies or private individuals).

Both the Character Area Appraisal and 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 Buildings & 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 directions

There are some buildings within the Lansdown 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 e.g. uPVC windows, large aerals 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 and permission is required for works including:

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

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

The management proposals have been divided into two sections, comprising of: Development control proposals and project proposals which relate to specific areas.

Development control proposals

1 Control of Development

It is essential that any development should preserve the setting of any adjacent listed buildings and the existing landscape features and trees and preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. Therefore, careful consideration must be given to the site including historic context and distinctive site features; as well as 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 helps deliver proposals which respond positively to their context with high quality design. Pastiche architectural styling, in which architectural historic elements are taken from different sources without being applied accurately, is not acceptable. However that is not to say that a variety of architectural styles, materials and forms of construction are not able to give interest within the conservation area and provided the new buildings are carefully designed it should be possible for them to have a harmonious and positive presence.

Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan policies CP3, CP7, BE1, BE2, BE3 and BE5 relate.

In Lansdown, a high number of the historic buildings have been sub-divided into flats. This creates intensification of the use of buildings and added pressure on associated land and resources. Further sub-division of such buildings should ensure that the sub-division does not compromise the building or its associated land in a detrimental way.

ACTION LD1: The Cheltenham Borough Local Plan requires that new development shall preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. The policies of the Local Plan set out a general approach to the consideration of planning and related applications for development in conservation areas – they cover a range of issues including:

- new build
- extensions
- loss of green space
- impact on views
- demolition

In applying Local Plan policies, the Council will use the assessment of character set out in the appraisal accompanying this Management Plan as a basis for establishing the important aspects of context.

2 Loss of traditional architectural features on some historic buildings

Some of the older buildings within the Lansdown 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.

Cheltenham Borough Local Plan policy CP 3 relates.

ACTION LD2: In order to preserve and enhance the character and setting of the Lansdown character area, the Council will:

- a. Keep under review the need to bring in additional planning controls over minor works in the Conservation area through Article 4 directions;
- b. Use its powers to enforce against unauthorised development;
- c. Encourage owners to repair rather than replace original features;
- d. Consider producing detailed design guidance and information regarding materials appropriate for use in the Central Conservation Area;
- e. Consider producing guidance to highlight to property owner's the importance of regularly maintaining gutters to ensure they function to their full potential, thus preventing ceilings and roofs collapsing due to heavy rain and blocked gutters.

In undertaking any works to buildings in the character area, owners should consider the implications for sustainable building practices. This could take a number of forms, including sustainable sourcing of materials and use of energy efficient designs. Additional information is available in the Council's supplementary planning guidance on Sustainable Buildings (www.cheltenham.gov.uk).

3 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 Lansdown 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 LD3: In order to preserve and enhance the character of the character area the Council will:

- a. 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;
- b. Use any planning powers to ensure that equipment or installations are installed 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;

c. Consider producing guidance regarding the design and siting of renewable energy infrastructure in the Central Conservation Area.

4 Drives and loss of front gardens

Very often the frontage of buildings in conservation areas is essential to the character of the conservation area. Historically, many buildings in the character 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 the 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 which can cause a reduction in biodiversity and 'wildlife corridors'. 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 LD4: 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 which will in turn greatly reduce levels of surface water run-off.

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

5 Tree Management

The presence of trees makes an important contribution to the overall character and appearance of the character area. They are particularly important features in the street scene along the length of Lansdown Road, Queen's Road and Christ Church Road. Trees play an important role in reducing the effects of climate change through climate fixing, absorbing carbon dioxide and providing shade. They need to continue to be well protected and managed in the future.

ACTION LD5: Cheltenham Borough 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 Highways. Trees located in parks or green spaces within the conservation area are managed by Cheltenham Borough Council in accordance with best arboricultural practice.

When a tree dies or is removed from land within the conservation area, because it was dead, dying or dangerous, the land owner has a legal obligation under section 213 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to plant a replacement tree of an appropriate size and species. The Council will require 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.

6 **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 or trees and hedgerow as a 'soft' boundary treatment would enhance the historic qualities, character and appearance of the area. Additionally, trees and hedgerow contribute to biodiversity by providing wildlife habitats. 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, by uniting properties within it.

See Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Policies BE 5 and CP3.

ACTION LD6: The Council will use enforcement and other powers under Section 215 of the Planning Act 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 Lansdown character area.

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

7 **Setting and views**

The setting of the Lansdown 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 LD7: The Council will ensure that all development respects the important views within, into and from the Lansdown 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 redevelopment and that due regard is paid to these views in the formulation of public realm works or enhancement schemes in accordance with the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan.

8 Enhancement of existing buildings and land

Some land and 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 and modern buildings, the Council will, where necessary, use enforcement or other planning powers to achieve repair and preservation. Some land in the curtilage of buildings is poorly maintained and in a prominent location – here, it may be appropriate to use powers to achieve improvement.

Action LD8: The Council will use enforcement and other powers under Section 215 of the Planning Act to achieve the enhancement of poorly maintained buildings.

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.

Project proposals

9 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 Lansdown. The presence of excessive or redundant street signage causes street clutter and is visually unattractive. The potential for additional signage throughout the Lansdown 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 and though that project is largely outside the Lansdown Character Area, there may be some carry over benefits.

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

ACTION LD9: The Council will lobby the Highway Authority to minimise signage, markings and other street furniture in its traffic management projects. Where it is safe to do so 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 Lansdown character area.

10 Hedging

At present, hedging acts as a boundary treatment outside some of the terraces on Lansdown Place. It has become very overgrown and this creates a negative impact by restricting views of the impressive buildings.

Action LD10: The Council will encourage the selection of appropriate species in terms of size, scale, colour etc. which will complement the historic buildings by providing an attractive setting for them, whilst simultaneously permitting views of them. In places, vegetation needs to be trimmed and maintained in-order to permit views of buildings.

Annex 1:

Cheltenham Central Conservation Area – list of Supplementary Planning Documents

19 character areas make up Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area. Each has a separate character appraisal and management plan. These comprise –

Title of document	Status
1). Old Town character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 23 rd February 2007
2). Montpellier character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 23 rd February 2007
3). Bayshill character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 23 rd February 2007
4). Lansdown character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
5). Suffolk Square character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
6). Eldorado character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
7). Dean Close & Hatherley Park character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
8). Tivoli character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
9). The Park character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
10). The Suffolks character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
11). Bath Road character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
12). Leckhampton character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
13). College character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
14). St Luke's character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
15). Sydenham character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
16). Fairview & All Saints' character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
17). Pittville character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
18). Lower High Street character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008
19). St Paul's character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28th July 2008

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