

CHELTENHAM

Local development framework

15. SYDENHAM CHARACTER AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

JULY 2008



Central Conservation Area

15. Sydenham Character Area Appraisal and Management Plan July 2008



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Key characteristics

This Character Appraisal of the Sydenham 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 varies throughout the area, with narrow historic terraced housing, spacious historic terraced housing, semi-detached historic villas and modern semi-detached housing, flats and bungalows;
- The area contains large numbers of Georgian and Victorian villas and terraces which form a distinct identity for Sydenham;
- A large number of buildings retain original ironwork which greatly enhances the historic character of the area;
- The listed terraced houses on Berkeley Place, Priory Parade and Oxford Parade contribute largely to forming the overall character and appearance of Sydenham. The terraces have distinctive architectural detailing and ironwork, are set well back from the road and historic gardens positioned along their length which provides an attractive setting. These elements combine to create a sense of grandeur and importance for the buildings.
- This character area contains over 190 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 the Sydenham 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;
- Setting and views;
- Enhancement of existing buildings and land;
- On-street parking.

Part 1 – Character Appraisal

Townscape Analysis Map of the Sydenham Character Area

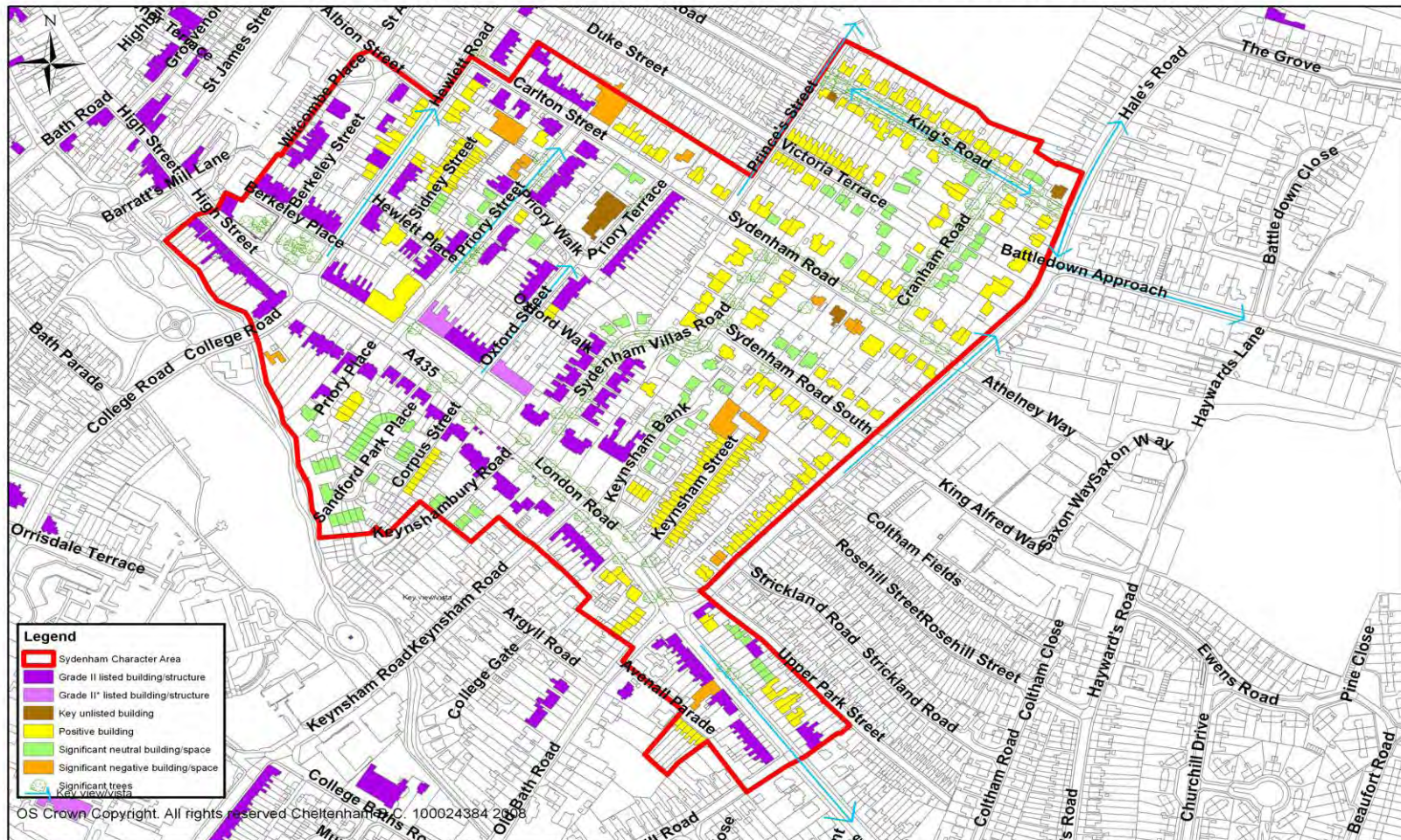


Figure 1 Townscape Analysis Map of Sydenham Character Area

1 INTRODUCTION

What is a Conservation Area

- 1.1 A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which 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. This project falls within part of the Sydenham Character Area. See Management Proposal 10 'Civic Pride' in the Part 2 Management Plan for further detail.

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.

Sydenham 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 Sydenham character area within Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area (see Fig. 2) have been based on the location of the A40 London Road to the south, the boundaries of the character areas of Fairview, Old Town, and St. Luke's to the north and west, and Hale's Road to the east.

Hale's Road also forms the boundary of the Central Conservation Area. Today, Sydenham is a predominantly residential area in the town, containing a small number of businesses and shops. Throughout the area there has been 20th century development, which frequently contrasts in size, materials and architectural design with the older buildings. There is also an area on Hewlett Road currently under development. Many historic buildings retain front gardens, ironwork and other period features, though a number have been removed over time.

Summary of special interest

1.15 Sydenham character area is special because:

- a) It contains over 190 listed buildings, including 10 Grade II* listed buildings. The number of listed buildings in an area of this size indicates a rich architectural and historical value.
- b) It retains many examples of historic ironwork. Original ironwork has frequently been removed, so these remaining features are particularly valuable and need to be protected.
- c) It contains a mixture of architecture from Georgian terraces to modern houses. This diversity provides Sydenham with a varied collection of architectural styles and ages of building.

Sydenham Character Area within the Central Conservation Area

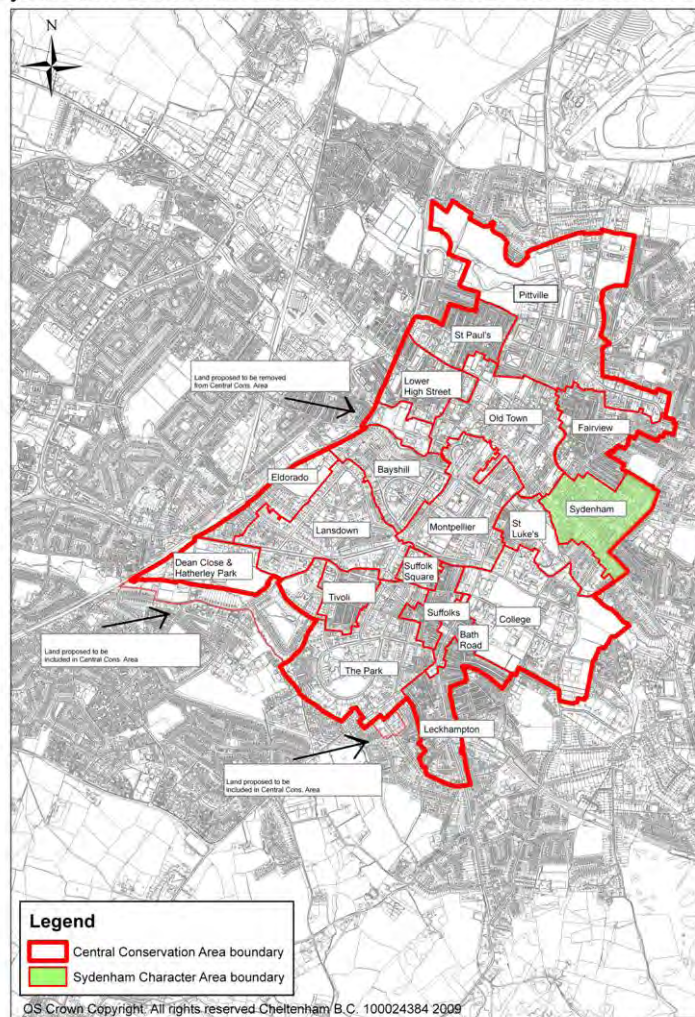


Figure 2 Sydenham Character Area within the Central Conservation Area

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 Sydenham Character Area

- 2.2 Sydenham is positioned to the east of Cheltenham's town centre. A small section of Cheltenham's High Street runs into the area, which joins on to the A40 London Road at its western end. The majority of streets in the area have a residential character and are set in an irregular grid pattern. Hale's Road and the A40 London Road are the main vehicular routes running through the area, forming the southern and eastern boundaries. There are three types of roads in the area; some roads are narrow with terraced housing, whilst some are wider and tend to be tree-lined, and some contain modern developments alone.
- 2.3 The **narrow roads** such as Corpus Street and Hewlett Place tend to feature:
- Few trees and small or no front gardens;
 - Terraced houses which often front directly onto the street which conveys a sense of enclosure;
 - Large amounts of on-street parking;
 - Houses which are set in narrow plot sizes.
- 2.4 The **wider roads** such as Sydenham Road North and London Road tend to feature:
- *"Busier roads (which) have an appropriately greater scale, owing to the height of the buildings lining them and the distance of the buildings back from the road"*;
 - Tree lined roads and medium to large front gardens;
 - Well spaced housing in medium sized plots;
 - Off-road parking is enabled through the plot size, though on-street parking is still much in evidence;
 - Occasional modern development in spaces between the older buildings.

¹ Jefferies, J. (1997) Cheltenham (Central) Conservation Area Character Appraisal District No 28 – Draft Report October 1996 no page no. given

2.5 The **modern developments** such as Keynsham Bank and Keynshambury Road tend to feature:

- A quiet residential character in the cul-de-sacs;
- Trees and small front gardens;
- Small car parks or drives, though on-street parking is still much in evidence;
- Buildings set back from the road in contained plots;
- Medium sized semi-detached houses or flats.



Figure 3 Corpus Street



Figure 4 Sydenham Road North



Figure 5 Keynshambury Road

Wider landscape setting

2.6 The Sydenham Character Area is surrounded on three sides by the urban development of the other character areas of the Central Conservation Area, and the area to the east on the fourth side is outside the Central Conservation Area. Views of the distant Cotswold hills can be seen to the north and east of the character area along Hewlett Road, Hale's Road, Oxford Street, Priory Street, Prince's Street and London Road. These views create a rural connection between the countryside and the urban area.

2.7 A small number of landmark structures are present, including Highbury Church, 80 Hale's Road, Stirling House, and 18-48 (evens) London Road. The presence of trees tends to restrict views of some of these larger buildings in the area. These larger buildings have a striking visual impact upon the street scene. Due to the layout of the character area and the character areas surrounding it, no buildings impose from outside or into the boundaries. The curving plan form of some of the streets prevents long vistas.



Figure 6 Highbury Church



Figure 7 Stirling House, High Street/College Road

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”.² 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.³ 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. Within the Sydenham character area there has been one find of “*An Anglo-Saxon iron spearhead from Sydenham Villas Road*”⁴ on the site of Underwood, recorded 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 cultural events such as the races and numerous cultural festivals as well as its legacy of Regency architecture, with trees, parks, gardens and public spaces.

² ‘Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey’ Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, 1975

³ ‘Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey’ Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, 1975

⁴ Gloucestershire Sites & Monuments Record – Summary Report for Area 5469 no pg. number

General history of the Sydenham Character Area

- 3.5 The historic development of the Sydenham Character Area, based on plans from 1820, 1834, 1897 and 2007 has been studied in writing this section, which is accompanied by a map of the historic development of the area (see Fig. 8).
- 3.6 The area included within the Sydenham Character Area dates from throughout the 19th Century, with the earliest buildings such as Oxford Place (now known as nos. 18-48 London Road) dating from 1809. Jeremy Jefferies explains how *“(Sydenham)...developed piecemeal, encapsulating that early extension of the High Street.”*⁵ There is also a small amount of 20th–21st century development scattered throughout the area.

Development by 1820

- 3.7 The 1820 Postmaster map of Cheltenham shows the High Street extending to the Old Bath Road where the London Road turnpike⁶ began. Berkeley Place had been laid out with 10 villas, and Berkeley Street is shown on the map, but had no development apart from two buildings where nos. 6 and 7 sit today. The opposite side of the High Street was developed almost continuously up to where Corpus Street is today, but with no further development beyond. Oxford Street is partially marked on the map, with Oxford Parade visible (now 38-48 London Road). There are eight terraced houses shown on Oxford Street. Keynsham Bank, a row of five villas, is shown where the road of Keynsham Bank sits today. Hewlett Road contains no development along the western side, whereas the eastern side is filled with terraces and a villa.

Development by 1834

- 3.8 A number of new roads had been laid out by this time, including Corpus Street, Priory Place, Priory Street, Priory Terrace and Carlton Street. No further development had taken place between Oxford Street and Keynsham Bank on the northern side of the High Street. On the southern side, Corpus Street was fully developed with terraced housing. The two villas at either side of the entrance to the road are shown, and Keynsham Place is marked. These villas remain today. Beyond Old Bath Road, there had been a small amount of development. This included seven terraced houses and four villas on the southern side, and several villas on the northern side. Priory Street and Priory Terrace were both laid out on open fields, though little development had taken place by this time. Priory Street had 16 villas constructed along its length, and Priory Terrace only had five completed terraced houses. The land on which Highbury Church sits today was undeveloped. Hewlett Place and Sidney Street had been laid out between Hewlett Road and Priory Street. Some of the terraced housing that is shown still remains, but a number of houses have been removed to make way for modern developments. Hewlett Street became developed along the western side with the row of buildings seen today, though some were still only planned in 1834. Berkeley Street contained a row of villas on its western half, and the gardens of the buildings on Hewlett Road on its eastern half. St. John's Church (now demolished) was built on the western side of the street and *“completed (in) 1829.”*⁷ Carlton Street was mostly undeveloped at this time,

⁵ Jefferies, J. (1997) Cheltenham (Central) Conservation Area Character Appraisal District No 28 – Draft Report October 1996 no page no. given

⁶ www.highways.gov.uk 'The Turnpike Road: 17th Century', Highways Agency

⁷ J. Hodsdon 'An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham' (1997) pg. 158

though Carlton Brewery (no longer in existence) was located between Hewlett Road and Priory Street. The only other buildings present at this time were houses which are now nos. 4 and 6 Carlton Road.

Development by 1897

- 3.9 The 1897 Plan of Cheltenham illustrates a number of new roads as having been constructed. These include Keynsham Road, Hale's Road, Sydenham Road (now known as Sydenham Villas Road), Sydenham Road North, Sydenham Road South, Prince's Street, King's Road and Victoria Terrace. Hale's Road was opened in 1847 after being repaired by Charles Hale; it dates from "...medieval times (when it was known) as 'the King's Highway'"⁸ and then as Gallows Lane on an 1806 map. This road is not marked on the 1820 map, and the 1834 map shows it as Coltham Lane. By 1897 there had been about half the present day development, consisting on villas and terraced housing. Keynsham Street is shown as being fully developed to the level seen today, with the exception of three gaps in the western terrace. A number of villas and terraced housing had been built on Sydenham Road, Sydenham Road North and Sydenham Road South. King's Road, Prince's Street, Victoria Terrace and Cranham Road were developed almost to the same stage as they are today, with few remaining gaps. Priory Street had not changed between 1834 and 1897, though Priory House on the corner with London Road was noted as 'Girls High School', and Hodsdon states that "By 1903 (it was) in use as part of the teacher training college."⁹ Priory Terrace had been entirely developed along its eastern side, and the space that is now occupied by Highbury Church remained undeveloped. A number of buildings had been built along Carlton Street, leaving only a small area left to develop opposite Priory Terrace.

Development in the 20th – 21st century

- 3.10 The area included in the Sydenham Character Area has experienced a relatively small amount of change since 1897. Roads constructed in the 20th century include Sandford Park Place, Keynshambury Road, and Keynsham Bank. These roads contain modern housing estates. A number of building demolitions have taken place however, including St. John's Church on Berkeley Street "in 1967"¹⁰. A small grassed area and part of the A40 Albion Street replaced St. John's Church. Whilst a residential apartment building known as Wellington Place replaced Mercian House, which was a 1960's office block and which in turn was built on the site of the demolished Priory House. Wellington Place is positioned on a prominent corner plot, on the junction of London Road with Priory Street. A post office depot was built on Carlton Street on the site of several unknown buildings opposite Priory Street although this has since closed and the site is currently used for car sales. The Carlton Brewery was replaced with a warehouse which in turn became a light industrial unit. It remains in use as a light industrial unit today. Hodsdon explains that "...Highbury Church in Priory Terrace (was) erected c.1932"¹¹ on the open space opposite the Priory Terrace houses. Throughout the area there have been modern houses built as infill development between older houses. This has been particularly apparent along Hewlett Road. Some of the larger historic properties have been sub-divided into flats. Along Sidney Street,

⁸ J. Hodsdon 'An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham' (1997) pg. 76

⁹ J. Hodsdon 'An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham' (1997) pg. 141

¹⁰ J. Hodsdon 'An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham' (1997) pg. 158

¹¹ J. Hodsdon 'An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham' (1997) pg. 84

“...many of the poor, terraced cottages have recently been re-built”¹² (towards the end of the 20th century).

Historical Development of the Sydenham Character Area

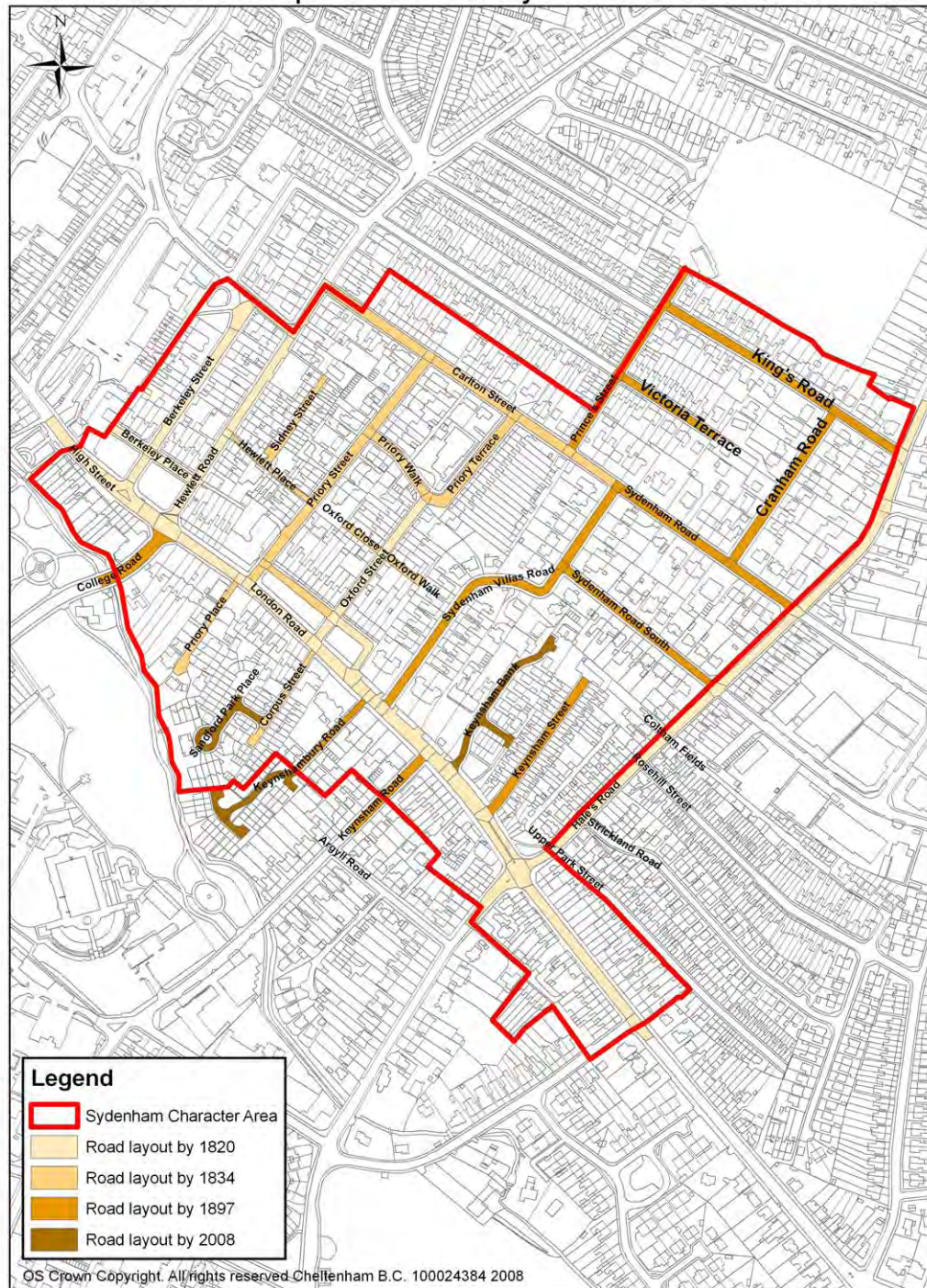


Figure 8 Historical Development of Sydenham Character Area

¹² Jefferies, J. (1997) Cheltenham (Central) Conservation Area Character Appraisal District No 28 – Draft Report October 1996 no page no. given

4 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

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

Public and private space

4.1



Figure 9 Trees within Berkeley Street

Public and private spaces, together with views out of, into and within the Sydenham Character Area impact on the area's character and appearance. There are a small number of narrow roads that create a sense of enclosure, but the presence of trees and other greenery helps to soften these spaces. The majority of the other roads are wide and the presence of trees in these locations creates a sense of space, especially on roads such as Corpus Street.

4.2



Figure 10 Front gardens on Sydenham Road North

The vast majority of houses have front gardens which create a distinct separation between public and private spaces. The front boundaries add to the sense of space as buildings are set back from the street rather than impose upon it.

4.3



Figure 11 Sandford Park Place

On modern developments such as Sandford Park Place, the buildings are set back from the road with a small front garden and/or drive.

Boundary Treatments

4.4



Figure 12 Railings on London Road

Buildings are separated from public space by the employment of various boundary treatments, which cause a visible and distinct division between public and private space. Boundary treatments predominantly take the form of attractive and traditional railings such as those on Sydenham Villas Road. The

retention of some historic railings and the introduction of replacement railings is a particularly special quality within the character area.

4.5



Figure 13 High brick wall at the rear of Berkley Place

Modern and traditional brick walls can be found throughout the area either as low or high level boundaries, predominantly at the side and rear of properties.

4.6



Figure 14 Hedging on Sydenham Villas Road

Hedgerow acts as an attractive boundary treatment, which softens edges between public and private space. Hedging also complements front gardens by enhancing the green environment in locales, for example on Sydenham Road North and London Road.

4.7



Figure 15 Poor wooden fencing on Hale's Road

Wooden fencing appears in a small number of spaces in the area and serves as an unattractive, hard boundary treatment and negative feature within the street scene.

Garden Space

4.8



Figure 16 Gardens on Sydenham Villas Road enclosed by traditional railings

Gardens, historically and today, 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. Trees and shrubbery in gardens help screen properties from public view, creating privacy. Many buildings have front gardens.

Key views and vistas (see Fig. 1)

4.9



Figure 17 View of Cotswolds from Hewlett Road

There are not very many distance views available in Sydenham, owing to the overall lack of streets with a long, straight plan form, presence of tall buildings and tree canopies. One distance view which is apparent is of the Cotswold escarpment viewed along Hewlett Road.

4.10 The views that can be seen are presented from a south-west to north-east direction, also looking along London Road and Sydenham Road North, and looking north along Hale's Road, Prince's Street, Priory Street and Oxford Street.

4.11



Figure 18 Vista along King's Road

Long vistas are presented along King's Road, Sydenham Road North and Sydenham Road South, though they do not frame views.

5 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Use of area and how use creates special interest

5.1 The Sydenham Character Area contains several different uses for the land and buildings within the area. This due to the close proximity of Cheltenham's town centre. Mixed uses create activity throughout the day and contribute to the special interest of the area.

Residential

5.2



Figure 19 Victoria Terrace – a residential street

Sydenham has been a primarily residential area since it was first developed in the early years of the 19th century, and the use remains dominant today. Many of the larger buildings have been converted into flats, though some remain as single residence dwellings. The mixture of medium sized terraced housing plots, large villa plots, and modern housing gives this area a variety

of housing styles, which could be described as “*transitional*”¹³ as one moves through the area, compared to the more uniform areas surrounding it such as Fairview and Cheltenham Central.

Commercial/Business

5.3



Figure 20 London Road shops

There is a small cluster of shops close to London Road's junction with Hale's Road, which include a betting shop and newsagents. These create pedestrian traffic which helps keep the area vibrant and generates noise and activity levels throughout the day.

5.4



Figure 21 Businesses in the character area

There is a small cluster of businesses at the eastern end of the High Street including offices and a nightclub. These help to create vitality during the day and evening.

5.5

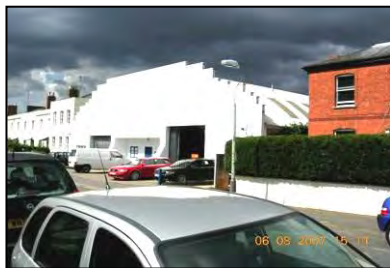


Figure 22 Depot in Carlton Street

There are a small number of commercial premises in isolated locations throughout the character area. There are several light industrial and car sales and repairs units. These form an important element in the variety of uses in the area which increase activity although they do create additional noise levels.

Highbury Church

5.6



Figure 23 Highbury Church

Highbury Church is a local landmark which generates activity and noise during times of worship. It also creates a sense of community and an important visual focal point. The space around it is unusual “...*particularly in relationship to the adjacent, two storey terrace and other small buildings adjoining it.*”¹⁴

¹³ Cheltenham Urban Character Area Partnerships (CUCAP) 'Character Area Statement: Sydenham and Coltham Fields' (2004) no pg. number given

¹⁴ Jefferies, J. (1997) Cheltenham (Central) Conservation Area Character Appraisal District No 28 – Draft Report October 1996 no page no. given

Road use

5.7



Figure 24 A40 London Road traffic

The A40 London Road carries a large amount of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, especially at rush hours. Historically it was part of the A40 London to South Wales route and it is an important approach to the town centre from the suburban development to the east. Hale's Road forms part of the eastern boundary of the character area and overall Central Conservation Area. Hewlett Road also carries a lot of traffic north to Fairview and south to College Road, the hospital and Leckhampton.

- 5.8 Berkeley Street forms part of the Cheltenham Inner Ring Road and consequently experiences high volumes of traffic at all times. This causes a number of issues, such as severance across the High Street and high noise levels. The Cheltenham Urban Design Framework Transport Strategy¹⁵ aims to alleviate the high levels of traffic and congestion in Cheltenham's town centre by redirecting traffic along other routes around the town centre. This work is being carried out as part of the Cheltenham Civic Pride project (see www.cheltenham.gov.uk for more information). The Transport Strategy suggests that the implementation of the Strategy would cause a 'beneficial' reduction in traffic levels along Berkeley Street during the morning and afternoon rush hour period.¹⁶
- 5.9 Some of the smaller residential roads become rat runs during rush hour periods.

Architecture and historic qualities of buildings

- 5.10 The buildings in Sydenham tend to be formal terraces and villas, though a small number of artisan terraced housing is present. The character area also contains "...coach houses and other mews buildings, converted and adapted to form single dwellings."¹⁷ Listed buildings in the area are comprised entirely of villas and large extensive terraces. Two grand terraces are Grade II* listed. The variety of architectural styles in the Sydenham Character Area gives the area a varied range of appearance.

Historic terraces

- 5.11 There are a range of terraces in Sydenham, from small artisan housing to imposing 4-storey Regency buildings. Many of the terraces are Grade II listed, though nos. 18-24 (evens) and nos.38-48 (evens) London Road are Grade II* listed. This listing marks these buildings of international importance. The historic buildings frequently have formal, classical facades.
- 5.12 Each row of terraces has unifying details such as ironwork, string courses, canopies, cornices, concealed parapet gutters and rustication at ground floor level. The unifying features differ slightly between each terrace, giving each terrace a unique quality.

¹⁵ Cheltenham Urban Design Framework, Transport Strategy – Traffic Impact Assessment (March 2007)

¹⁶ Cheltenham Urban Design Framework, Transport Strategy – Traffic Impact Assessment (March 2007)

¹⁷ Jefferies, J. (1997) Cheltenham (Central) Conservation Area Character Appraisal District No 28 – Draft Report October 1996 no page no. given

- 5.13 The unlisted terraces tend to be of a more modest design than those that are listed. The architectural detailing is generally restricted to a string course or cornice, and a concealed parapet gutter line at the front. Examples of this type of terrace can be found in Keynsham Street.



Figure 25 Listed terraced houses on Priory Parade, London Road



Figure 26 Terraced houses on Priory Terrace

Historic villas and semi-detached houses

- 5.14 Historic villas are found throughout the area, but most appear on London Road, Sydenham Villas Road, Sydenham Road North, Sydenham Road South, King's Road and Priory Street. They tend to be 3-storeys and set in a large plot with front gardens. Many are rendered, though some later villas are faced in red-brick. Often villas have unifying details such as bay windows, overhanging eaves and moulded door/window surrounds. A prominent pair of mid 19th century semi-detached houses with an identical design are positioned either side of the junction of Sydenham Villas Road and London Road. They act as a formal gateway into Sydenham Villas Road.



Figure 27 Historic terraced houses on Hale's Road



Figure 28 Historic semi-detached houses on Sydenham Road North

20th and 21st Century development

- 5.15 Infill development from the 20th and 21st century is apparent throughout the area. Many of these buildings sit on land between historic villas, though there are entirely new developments on Keynsham Bank from mid-1970s and Sandford Park Place from mid-1990s. Some of these more recent buildings complement the historic context of Sydenham, whilst others negatively contrast with it.
- 5.16 The flats in Sandford Park Place complement the nearby historic buildings with the materials used and by being positioned on a new estate behind the villas on London Road. Keynsham Bank contains buildings faced with brick, which sit out of place in the largely rendered surroundings. Nos. 1-4

Keynsham Bank are rendered and provide a screen for many of the brick houses, preventing views of them from the road. The modern flats on Priory Street date from the mid-1960s and negatively contrast with the historic villa nearby, by using unsympathetic architecture of an inappropriate scale and materials.

- 5.17 Wellington House comprises a block of 32 flats which were granted planning permission in 1998. The development is a landmark building in a prominent location which is in a reproduction Neo-Classical style of architecture.



Figure 29 Modern flats on Priory Street



Figure 30 Modern buildings in Sandford Park Place

Listed Buildings

- 5.18 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 190 listed buildings in the Sydenham character area. Some of these are listed as a group. There are three Grade II* listed terraces in Sydenham, the remainder are Grade II listed. The Grade II* listed buildings are displayed in the table below.

BUILDING/STRUCTURE	GRADE	DATE OF LISTING
Nos.18-24 (evens) London Road	II*	12/03/55
Nos.26-36 (evens) London Road with attached railings	II*	12/03/55
Nos.38-48 (evens) London Road with attached railings	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

- 5.19 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

- 5.20 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 the buildings, such as terraces, have a group value rather than on an individual basis. Please see the Index for further details about these buildings. Key unlisted buildings include –



<p>Ash House, Sydenham Road North because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (See <i>Index of Buildings of Local Importance</i>)  <p>Figure 31 Ash House, Sydenham Road North</p>	<p>Highbury Church, Priory Terrace because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (See <i>Index of Buildings of Local Importance</i>)  <p>Figure 32 Detailing on Highbury Church</p>
<p>80 Hale's Road because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (See <i>Index of Buildings of Local Importance</i>)  <p>Figure 33 80 Hale's Road</p>	<p>3 King's Road because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (See <i>Index of Buildings of Local Importance</i>)  <p>Figure 34 3 King's Road</p>

Positive buildings

- 5.21 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

- 5.22 Local details within the Sydenham Character Area collectively enhance the character and appearance of not just Sydenham but the whole of the Central Conservation Area. Interesting historic local details include –

<p>Pillar box, Sydenham Road North</p>  <p>Figure 35 Early 20th century pillar box on Sydenham Road North</p>	<p>Historic cast iron street nameplates – e.g. Keynsham Street</p>  <p>Figure 36 Historic street name plate, Keynsham Street</p>
<p>Historic Ironwork – e.g. Railings, canopies, and balconies found on buildings in Berkeley Place, Carlton Street, Priory Street, Oxford Street and Oxford Parade</p>	<p>Historic gate piers</p>

Materials

Building Materials

- 5.23 The use of buildings 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 limestone. 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.
- 5.24 Many buildings in Sydenham are brick built with render or brick facings. Historic buildings commonly have stucco and ashlar cladding on the front elevation with brickwork left exposed to the side and rear. Modern buildings are also faced in brick or render.



Figure 37 Ashlar faced terrace, London Road



Figure 38 Rendered villa, Sydenham Road North



Figure 39 Brick faced villa, London Road

Ground surface materials

- 5.25 There is a range of surface materials used in the area, though few are original or have any historic value. Roads are tarmac with concrete kerbs. Paving is predominantly concrete slabs or flags and tarmac. Some houses retain historic paving slabs in their front gardens, which helps to preserve the context of the building and enhance the historic environment.

Street furniture

- 5.26 There is little street furniture in the Sydenham Character Area, other than traffic signs. The busy A40 London Road contains utilitarian traffic signs which detract from the historical character of the area. They can be large and intrusive. A small number of benches sit in the green spaces in front of Berkeley Place and Oxford Place, whilst bins can be found along some of the wider roads such as London Road.

Contribution of trees and green spaces

- 5.27 Within the Sydenham Character Area there are a significant amount of private green spaces but relatively few public green spaces. The public spaces are located in front of the large listed terraces of Berkeley Place and Oxford Place on London Road. Despite this, the occurrence of public and privately owned trees and green spaces in the area greatly enhances the setting of a number of buildings, as well as the character and appearance of the area. Such spaces need to be well maintained and protected.

Street trees

- 5.28 Trees located within the grass verge of the public highway, commonly referred to as street trees, are found throughout the area, and are on almost every road. The density of trees is greatest along the roads to the north, along Sydenham Road North, Cranham Road and King's Road. The majority of trees are mature, adding to the sense of age and elegance throughout the area. Keynsham Street and Oxford Street are examples of tree-less roads, but trees are still visible from both of these roads. Many trees screen private properties from the road. Street trees on some roads such as King's Road create vistas by tunnelling views along the street. Species of trees vary throughout the area, resulting in an increased biodiversity. The trees along King's Road and Cranham Road are silver birches. Whilst lime trees prevail in Priory Street, Sydenham Villas Road, and Sydenham Road; and ash, holly and maple trees line Carlton Street. The modern development of Sandford Park Place is screened from Sandford Park by sycamore trees. Two noteworthy trees are the large Holm Oak outside 80 Hale's Road and the Wellingtonia on London Road. Large, mature cedar trees are found in front of the houses on the west side of Berkeley Place. These cedar trees form prominent features in the street and partially screen Irving Court. They contrast with the nearby ornamental cherry trees on the lawn in front of the houses on the east side of Berkeley Place.



Figure 40 Street tree on Sydenham Road North is a significant feature



Figure 41 Street trees on King's Road

Private green space

5.29



Figure 42 Private green space

The majority of buildings in Sydenham have the opportunity for green space in front gardens and many gardens are filled with hedges, bushes and trees. Whilst some have been paved and are used as drives, many still retain part of the garden as well as the drive area. Some gardens contain mature trees which are visible from the street and which enhance the street scene.

Other greenery

5.30 Modern developments contain various forms of greenery, such as the bushes and planting in small front gardens in Sandford Park Place. Trees are visible in Keynsham Bank. The western boundary of the Sydenham Character Area backs on to Sandford Park, which although not in the area itself, provides a large open space and an attractive setting for the Sydenham Character Area.



Figure 43 Sandford Park



Figure 44 Trees along Keynsham Bank

Negative factors

5.31 Due to high levels of development of the Sydenham 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** such as windows and railings has occurred within many historic buildings. Timber sliding sash windows have been replaced with uPVC windows, which sit out of context within the building and detract from its special qualities.
- b) The presence of **Velux roof lights** on historic buildings has eroded the visual quality of the historic roofscape. The introduction of some modern **dormer windows** also negatively impacts on the skyline, detailing and

built form of the historic houses. 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) The placement of the **car sales depot on Carlton Street** detracts from the overall visual quality of the road.
- d) Modern additions such as **satellite dishes and large aerials** damage the appearance of buildings and detract from their special historic and architectural qualities. These additions can often be visible from the public space, and damage the appearance of the area as well as the individual building.
- e) Boundary treatments such as **wooden fencing** damage the appearance of historic buildings and the area surrounding them.
- f) Some **modern buildings do not complement the context of the historic environment**, due to factors such as size, scale, design, and building materials. An example of this problem is nos. 30-34 Priory Street, which is a modern block of flats.
- g) **On-street parking** in most of the roads in the area is a visual distraction from the attractive buildings and open spaces.
- h) **Buildings that back onto the eastern side of Berkeley Street** have exposed rear elevations with poor boundary treatments in place. This creates an unattractive setting for the historic buildings and a poor quality street scene.
- i) **Berkeley Street** carries Cheltenham's Inner Ring Road and currently experiences high volumes of traffic throughout the day and evening. It leads to severance issues at the eastern end of the High Street, where the High Street becomes pedestrianised. (See 'Road use' paragraph in 'Uses' section for more detail).



Figure 45 Dormer windows on Sydenham Villas Road



Figure 46 On-street parking, Carlton Street

Neutral areas

- 5.32 Some areas within the Sydenham 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.

5.33



Figure 47 6 Sydenham Road North

A number of modern buildings, such as 6 Sydenham Road North and 15 Carlton Street use materials that contrast to the adjacent historic buildings. However, these modern buildings also tend to have a large amount of tree cover and greenery in their gardens which offsets the discordant visual impact of the contrasting building materials.

General condition of the area

- 5.34 The condition of the buildings in the Sydenham Character Area is generally very good, with very few requiring immediate attention of any sort, and no derelict or boarded up buildings in the character area. However, there are a small number of isolated areas in need of maintenance. For example, some historic buildings back onto Berkeley Street. Their rear elevations are exposed and poor boundary treatments contain the rear gardens. This creates a poor setting for the buildings and a poor street scene within Berkeley Street. It is very important that the physical condition of the historic buildings is preserved in order to retain not just Sydenham's, but Cheltenham's fine distinctiveness and identity.

Pressures and Capacity for Change

- 5.35 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.
- 5.36 Although there is little suitable undeveloped land, there is a constant pressure for redevelopment and intensification throughout the area.

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 Sydenham 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 Sydenham 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 5.31 'Negative factors' and 5.32 '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 Sydenham 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.

ACTION SD1: The Cheltenham Borough Local Plan states 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 Sydenham 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 SD2: In order to preserve and enhance the character and setting of the Sydenham 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 aerals, 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 aerals or satellite dishes, can detract from the character of the Sydenham 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 SD3: In order to preserve and enhance the character of the Sydenham 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 SD4: 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 many roads in Sydenham. 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 SD5: 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 trees 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 BE5 and CP3.

ACTION SD6: 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 Sydenham character area.

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

7 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 buildings and modern buildings, the Council will, where necessary, use enforcement or other planning powers (e.g. Section 215 notices) 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 SD7: The Council will use enforcement and other powers under Section 215 of the Planning Act to achieve the enhancement of poorly maintained buildings.

8 Setting and views

The setting of the Sydenham 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 SD8: The Council will ensure that all development respects the important views within, into and from the Sydenham 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.

Project proposals

9 Street furniture

The character area has a small 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 Sydenham Character Area. The presence of excessive or redundant street signs causes street clutter and is visually unattractive. The potential for additional signs throughout the Sydenham Character Area is a cause for concern because of its detrimental visual impact on the area.

The Civic Pride project is currently considering style, need, use and location of street furniture in order to achieve a consistent design and, to minimise clutter and maximise effectiveness. Although this project is largely outside the Sydenham Character Area, it is possible that there may be some consequential benefits.

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

ACTION SD9: The Borough 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 Sydenham character area.

10 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 part of the Sydenham 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

The Civic Pride Urban Design Framework is being developed as a Supplementary Planning Document alongside this Character Appraisal and Management Plan. 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. 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 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. The Civic Pride project has been developed in a manner which responds positively to the requirements of this Character Appraisal and Management Plan.

<p>ACTION SD10: The Council and its partners will ensure that the detailed design and implementation of Civic Pride projects will preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area in a manner compatible with the Character Appraisal for those parts of the area affected by it.</p>
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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 28 th July 2008
5). Suffolk Square character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
6). Eldorado character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
7). Dean Close & Hatherley Park character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
8). Tivoli character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
9). The Park character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
10). The Suffolks character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
11). Bath Road character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
12). Leckhampton character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
13). College character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
14). St Luke's character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
15). Sydenham character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
16). Fairview & All Saints' character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
17). Pittville character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
18). Lower High Street character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
19). St Paul's character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008

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