THE PARK

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

Adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance
25th May 2000

CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

May 2000
Preface
This brief has been prepared in response to increasing pressure for development of sites within the sweep of The Park. It is intended to identify the constraints which are likely to be met in considering sites and to guide potential developers in the preparation of development proposals.

It is not an invitation to develop, and in many cases there will be no desire to do so. There may also be sites where the constraints are such that they preclude development entirely, but the provision of clear information will allow for the best possible judgements to be made at an early stage.
LIST OF APPENDICES AND MAPS

Appendix 1  Relevant Local Plan policies

Appendix 2  Suggested open space standards for residential development

Map 1  Area covered by this brief + Listed buildings and structures

Map 2  Roads and drives with junctions on The Park

Map 3  Townscape analysis

Maps 4 a & b  Historic maps
1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 **Status**
1.1.1 This brief has been prepared by Cheltenham Borough Council as local planning authority. Following public consultation, it has been adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance, which will be taken into account by the Council in the determination of planning applications for development within the area covered by the brief.

1.2 **Scope and purpose of the development brief**
1.2.1 The Park is within the Cheltenham Central Conservation Area and contains a number of listed buildings and structures. There is growing pressure in the area for various forms of development including infill, replacement buildings, and maximisation of plot use, any of which could affect the character and appearance of the area.

1.2.2 The purpose of the brief is to set a framework for development within the general area of The Park and to ensure that the form and design of development properly relates to the character and appearance of the conservation area, within the context of the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan.

1.2.3 This brief falls into two parts. The first provides general design guidance for the area in and around The Park. The second sets out specific additional guidance for the redevelopment of two adjacent sites in The Park (see map 1).

1.3 **Aims of the development brief**
1.3.1 The development brief is intended to achieve the following aims:

- to achieve a comprehensive and cohesive approach to development in the area
- to make best use of land in the interests of sustainable development
- to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area
- to achieve high standards of design for buildings
- to conserve, restore and enhance the Regency landscape through high standards of design
- to facilitate local circulation for pedestrians, cyclists, buses in the interests of sustainable transport.

1.4 **Responsibilities**
1.4.1 Gloucestershire County Council is the strategic planning authority for Gloucestershire. Cheltenham Borough Council is the local planning authority with responsibility for local planning and for determining planning applications within its area.

1.4.2 Gloucestershire County Council is the Highway Authority for Gloucestershire. Cheltenham Borough Council acts as its agent for highway matters within Cheltenham Borough.

1.4.3 Cheltenham Borough Council and the Environment Agency both have powers and responsibilities in respect of the Hatherley Brook and Moorend Stream.

1.4.4 Severn Trent Water are the Drainage Authority.
1.4.5 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the Council to “exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions, and the need to do all that it reasonably can, to prevent crime and disorder in its area.” The implications of this Act and the ensuing Crime Reduction Strategy will be wide-ranging and will be taken into account in considering any development proposals, together with the advice of the Police Architectural Liaison Officer.
2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Government Guidance

2.1.1 The Government provides Planning Policy Guidance, many aspects of which are relevant to development within this area. In particular:

- PPG1 (‘General Policy and Principles’) places emphasis on sustainable development, on mixed use development, and on the importance of high-quality design
- PPG3 (‘Housing’) indicates the Government’s determination to raise the national proportion of new homes to be built on previously developed land to 60%, to ensure that full and effective use is made of land within existing urban areas, and to create mixed and inclusive communities
- PPG6 (‘Town Centres and Retail Development’) sets out the principle of a ‘sequential test’ which gives priority to finding sites within town centres for uses which attract a lot of people, such as retail, offices and leisure
- PPG13 (‘Transport’), including the current consultation draft of proposed revisions, seeks to reduce travel, especially by private car, by fostering development in locations well served by public transport, and reducing standards of parking provision in new development
- PPG15 (‘Planning and the Historic Environment’) promotes protection of the historic environment and stresses the need for particular consideration to be given to development likely to affect listed buildings and their setting and the character and appearance of conservation areas

2.1.2 The Government also published aspects of its policies in Circulars, of which the following are particularly relevant: 5/94 (Planning Out Crime), 1/97 (Planning Obligations), and 6/98 (Planning and Affordable Housing).

2.2 Development Plans

2.2.1 In November 1999, Gloucestershire County Council approved the Structure Plan Second Review, which provides the strategic framework for development in Cheltenham until 2011. The Second Review recognises Cheltenham as a major urban area with a sub-regional role as an employment, shopping and service centre, and its proposals for development seek to strengthen this role in the interests of sustainability. The plan also places emphasis on retaining the unique historic and environmental character of Cheltenham.

2.2.2 The current local plan is the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan, which was adopted in December 1997. Its aims are to:

- conserve and enhance Cheltenham’s environment
- maintain a healthy economy
- help local people to be suitably housed
- create and maintain a high standard of amenity
• provide a safe and effective transport system, with a car restraint emphasis, focused on the protection and enhancement of the town’s environment.

2.2.3 The plan includes a number of detailed policies relating to development which will be relevant to the area covered by this brief, which are included as appendix 1. In general, these seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas and secure a high standard of design which complements neighbouring development. The list in appendix 1 is for guidance only and is not necessarily exhaustive.

2.2.4 No sites within the area are allocated in the plan for specific uses.

2.2.5 In December 1999, the Borough Council approved a Project Report for the Review of the plan.
3.0 GENERAL DESIGN GUIDANCE

3.1 Application
3.1.1 This section of the brief applies to the area of The Park, as shown on Map 1.

Historical Background
3.1.2 The Park Estate, as with most of Regency Cheltenham, owes its existence to the discovery of a spring. This spring was located on the junction of The Park with Park Place, on the site now occupied by Cornerways. The land was bought by Thomas Billings in 1831, and by 1833-4 was laid out in what was briefly to become ‘The Gloucestershire Zoological, Botanical and Horticultural Gardens’. By 1838 the zoological gardens had failed and the land was then sold to architect Samuel Whitfield Daukes, who converted the zoo into public pleasure gardens, and developed villas around the perimeter (see maps 4 a & b for historic material).

3.1.3 The area is characterised by the spatial sequence of tree lined gardens and avenues which provided a suitable setting and impending sense of arrival for those visiting the pleasure gardens. The semi-public nature of the pleasure gardens is the key to the understanding of their design, which is distinct from the newer public parks. The pleasure gardens were relatively select, providing a place for people to see and be seen.

3.2 Analysis of Current Situation
3.2.1 The Park as we see it today consists of a mix of original and substantial villas, whose uses vary but are mainly in residential or education-related uses, which are interspersed with later additions, some of which may be considered to be inappropriate in terms of scale and design to the earlier large elegant structures set in substantial plots.

3.2.2 The development of 2 college campuses has had a significant effect on the area, and the guidance set out in this brief will apply equally there as to individual sites on The Park.

3.2.3 In addition to the mix of buildings, there are other significant characteristics which in many cases are visually stronger than the buildings themselves. The tree-lined road and the density of planting on many of the plots gives a very green and wooded feel to the area in contrast with the developed, urban character of many of the surrounding streets.

3.2.4 Added to this are the surviving gateposts and railings from earlier times which add to the elegant, affluent appearance as one circumnavigates the Park. Sometimes in summer one hardly notices the buildings set back from their frontages behind their green screens.

3.2.5 From this analysis, the character of The Park as it was can begin to be understood, and the opportunities start to show themselves. How those opportunities may be dealt with is covered in the following paragraphs.
3.3 **Land Use**

3.3.1 The Park is primarily a residential area, although a substantial part is given over to the educational use of the Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, and Gloscat.

3.3.2 Where development occurs, residential use will generally be the only use permitted, in order to retain the character of the area and in the interests of sustainable development. The sole exception will be education and ancillary use in association with existing facilities, where this does not cause harm to existing residential character and amenity.

3.3.3 Residential development should comply with local plan policies HS 73 (as amended by the Borough Council in December 1999), HS 81 and RC 102. For residential development on sites over 0.5 hectare or involving 15 dwellings or more, the Council will negotiate for an element of affordable housing in accordance with DETR Circular 6/98 and Local Plan policy HS 73 as amended. The form in which provision for affordable housing is made will be a matter of negotiation between the Council and the developer, taking account of identified local needs and the characteristics of the site, although in general, the expectation is that the requirement for affordable housing will be provided on site.

3.3.4 Other uses ancillary to the residential character of the area will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

3.4 **Traffic and Parking**

3.4.1 Any development within the area covered by the brief may cause a change in the amount and type of traffic generated. The impact of any change will need to be assessed and considered as part of any planning application. (See section 4 for specific guidance on sites 1 & 2)

3.4.2 Similarly, if major developments are proposed elsewhere within this brief's coverage, the traffic implications will need to be evaluated.

3.4.3 The Council will resist any increase in the number of driveways onto The Park, or the wholesale upgrading of existing driveways, as this will erode and eventually destroy the special character of the area and will lead to an unsatisfactory highway network for both car and non car users. (See section 4 for specific guidance on sites 1 & 2)

3.4.4 The guidelines for access standards related to numbers of residential units for this area can be found in ‘Highway Requirements for Developments - Local Guidance and Standards for Gloucestershire’ (Gloucestershire County Council - April 1999)

3.4.5 Car parking should be provided in accordance with policy TP 130 and table 17 of the Local Plan as updated by recent Government guidance, including that in PPG3 and the draft PPG13. The levels of parking on particular sites will require discussion with the Council’s officers.

3.4.6 Parking to The Park frontage of existing or new buildings will be strongly resisted, in accordance with Local Plan policy BE 32.
3.5 **Features to be retained**

3.5.1 Listed buildings and structures within the area are shown on Map 1. These, together with other buildings which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area, should be retained, in accordance with Local Plan policy BE 13. Other features which should normally be retained are:

- hedges, trees and planting / wooded atmosphere (see Local Plan policy BE 9)
- railings and early gate posts (see Local Plan policy BE 16)
- generous space around buildings
- elegance
- a sense of appropriate scale

3.5.2 The inner part of The Park, which was designed as pleasure gardens, retains much of its openness and the Council would not wish to see this eroded. There are opportunities for restoration and enhancement, but the loss of further green space, other than as covered by extant planning permissions, will be resisted.

3.6 **Features to be restored or enhanced**

3.6.1 Opportunity should be taken where development is undertaken to restore or enhance the following features:

- enclosure to the central area
- hedges, railings, gates and gate posts
- planting, particularly substantial specimen trees of forest species
- spaciousness
- street furniture / lighting

3.7 **Redevelopment**

3.7.1 Local Plan policy BE 13 sets out circumstances for the demolition of buildings in conservation areas. Where it can be shown that an existing building makes no positive contribution to the conservation area and is inappropriate to its location in terms of bulk, scale, siting, or design, its redevelopment may be supported where it meets the requirements of Local Plan policy BE 8 (see Appendix 1).

3.7.2 In addition, proposals for redevelopment should:

- restore the correct scale / bulk / volume of built form in relation to The Park as a whole with substantial 'villas' to the frontage, and subservient structures behind.
- be of a high standard of design which will enhance the conservation area
- use materials and detailing of a high standard
- provide a ratio of open space to built form which relates to that of the principal villas of The Park
- satisfy the parking / access requirements of the Council (see 3.4.5 above)
- be for an acceptable use at an acceptable density
- address issues such as privacy / overlooking (see appendix 2)
- provide / retain planting and retain / strengthen the green character of the area
• provide / retain / restore means of enclosure appropriate to The Park
• make provision for the salvage of appropriate materials and artefacts from buildings to be demolished, in accordance with Local Plan policy GP 5.

3.8 Additional Development

3.8.1 Where there is space on the site of an existing building to accommodate additional development whilst retaining that building, proposals for additional development will be considered against the following criteria:

• features within the site to be retained
• relationship to surroundings
• relationship between existing building and its site in terms of space
• hierarchy of design
• access conditions

3.8.2 If the potential for additional development is accepted, a scheme should:

• respect the hierarchy of its location in terms of the design
• remain subservient to the main building on the site
• be of a high standard of design which will enhance the conservation area
• use materials and detailing of a high standard
• satisfy the parking / access requirements of the Council (see 3.4.5 above)
• be for an acceptable use at an acceptable density
• address issues such as privacy / overlooking (see appendix 2)
• provide / retain planting and retain / strengthen the green character of the area
• provide / retain / restore means of enclosure appropriate to The Park

Surface Water Drainage

3.8.3 Any change in surface water run off generation must be accommodated within the requirements of the Council’s Head of Engineering Services. Any increase in run off is likely to result in a requirement for surface water attenuation.

3.8.4 Hatherley Brook and the Moorend Stream tributary will require a 6 metre maintenance strip along the top of their banks, with an obstruction free access maintained. This should be incorporated and designed into any scheme as a positive feature. Consultation with the Environment Agency at an early stage is recommended.

3.8.5 As part of any development, these watercourses will also require upgrading to a standard capable of accommodating a 1 in 100 year flood event.

3.9 Design and crime

3.9.1 The design, layout and landscaping of any development should seek to make crime more difficult to commit, increase the risk of detection, and provide a safer, more secure environment (see paragraph 1.4.5 above.)
4.0 DETAILED GUIDANCE FOR SITES 1 AND 2 (Gloscat and Spirax Sarco)

4.1 Description / form of development
4.1.1 This part of the brief covers 2 sites on The Park which are currently owned by Gloscat and the Spirax Sarco Sports and Social Club (see map 1).

4.1.2 The prospective relocation and/or redundancy of the existing uses will provide a need for redevelopment and an opportunity to enhance the character of the conservation area.

4.1.3 Development of these sites will be subject to the design guidance in part 3 of this brief along with the following more specific guidance in this section.

4.1.4 The two sites need to be considered comprehensively in order that matters of layout, design, materials and access can be dealt with as a whole. Traffic generation / movement and infrastructure provision are also relevant to the whole and cannot be properly addressed in relation to piecemeal proposals. Phasing of construction may however be necessary.

4.1.5 Density will be determined by reference to the existing character of The Park in respect of frontage proposals, and PPG 3, paragraph 58 elsewhere and the principles set out in the general section of this brief.

4.2 Existing Features to be Retained

Buildings
4.2.1 The villa (formerly known as Glenmore) on the Gloscat site, whilst not listed, has some merit within The Park and may usefully be retained. This point may be the subject of discussion when a scheme is forthcoming. (Policy BE 13 refers.) The set back of the principal villas fronting The Park is illustrated by Glenmore and others of similar age. In order to retain / restore the character of the frontage, this ‘building line’ should be respected.

Trees
4.2.2 Trees within the conservation area are protected by legislation in addition to any which are the subject of a tree preservation order. One of the aims of this brief is to conserve, restore and enhance the Regency landscape of The Park, so any proposals which involve the removal of trees will be the subject of detailed scrutiny.

4.3 Traffic and Transport
4.3.1 There is a large area of potential development in these two sites. This development should be mainly served from one new vehicular access which must be to a fully adoptable standard. The location of this access shall be such that it will not result in conditions of highway danger relative to other existing or proposed accesses, and will not be harmful to the character of the conservation area. The intensification of the vehicular use of Merestones Road beyond current levels will be resisted, including the need to protect the access route to St James’s Primary School.
4.3.2 Any development layout must ensure that access into the site by pedestrians and cyclists is easy and convenient. This is likely to require the provision of securely designed non-vehicular access routes into the site for these modes.

4.3.3 Any significant development will require a Transportation Assessment. This must include an assessment of the effect of any additional traffic and an assessment of accessibility of the development by other means of transport than the car.

4.3.4 Development is likely to attract Section 106 requirements to contribute to sustainable infrastructure and services to ensure easy accessibility to various parts of the town by alternative means to the car.

4.3.5 Improved access and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists within the area of The Park will be required, to link with those existing or planned beyond the area.

4.3.6 Any significant development which is not for private residential use will require a Green Transport Plan.
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<tr>
<td>GP 5</td>
<td>Where appropriate, the Borough Council will only grant planning permission or listed building consent for the demolition or alteration of buildings where materials or artefacts which are to be demolished or removed and for which there is a market are conserved for re-use.</td>
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<td>BE 8</td>
<td>The Borough Council will only permit development in a conservation area where it: (a) preserves or enhances the character or appearance of that conservation area; and (b) is of an exceptionally high standard of design and finish appropriate to the character of the conservation area in height, scale, form, materials, colour, use and relationship to nearby buildings.</td>
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<td>BE 9</td>
<td>The Borough Council will only permit development in a conservation area where it does not detract, individually or cumulatively, from the green or open character, including private gardens, of the area.</td>
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<td>BE 13</td>
<td>The Borough Council will not permit the demolition or partial demolition of buildings or other significant structures in conservation areas unless: (a) they make no positive contribution to the special character or appearance of the area; or (b) the retention of the building is structurally and financially impracticable (taking into account all sources of finance, including associated development); or (c) there is an essential need in the town for development which cannot be accommodated satisfactorily by a different form of development or in a different location; or (d) the demolition serves to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, taking into account both the history and appearance of the building to be demolished and the contribution of any new buildings.</td>
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<td>BE 16</td>
<td>In conservation areas, the Borough Council will require: (a) the preservation of boundary enclosures in their original form; and (b) where new enclosures are proposed, their erection in historically appropriate form.</td>
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<td>BE 32</td>
<td>The Borough Council will require the visual impact of parked vehicles to be kept to a minimum in development proposals.</td>
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<td>GE 37</td>
<td>The Borough Council will not permit the development of green areas, open spaces and gardens which make a significant townscape and environmental contribution to the town, except for minor structures associated with the outdoor sports use of playing fields which are sited to minimise the impact on the townscape and environmental contribution of green space.</td>
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The Borough Council will permit housing development, including changes of use, where the proposals:

(a) make best use of the site consistent with the protection of the historic character and high quality environment of Cheltenham; and
(b) not have an adverse impact on the scale, amenity and privacy of other housing in the locality; and
(c) do not result in a loss of open space which makes a significant contribution to the character of the locality (see policy GE 37); and
(d) not detract from the green or open character of a conservation area and should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of that conservation area (see policies BE 8 and BE 9); and
(e) be consistent with other local plan policies and, in particular, meet the requirements of policy HS 81.

The Borough Council will seek the provision of an element of affordable housing in developments of 15 or more dwellings or sites of 0.5 hectare or greater, and which have easy access to local services and facilities and public transport.

The Borough Council will only permit residential development which:

(a) respects the character of the site, and the amenities of neighbouring development, in accordance with other local plan policies; and
(b) provides a high standard of layout and design ensuring protection from noise and other forms of pollution, adequate privacy, and a pleasing and safe residential environment for both existing dwellings and newly created units; and
(c) provides play space in accordance with policy RC 102; and
(d) provides an appropriate amount of amenity space; and
(e) provides car parking in accordance with policy TP 130 and the standards set out in Table 17; and
(f) ensures highway and access arrangements, including those for cyclists and pedestrians, are in accordance with policies TP 126, TP 127, TP 128 and TP 129.

The Borough Council will require provision to be made in residential development for play space in accordance with the standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population.

The Borough Council will require adequate provision to be made in development for motorists, pedestrians, public transport, cyclists and people with physical disabilities.

The Borough Council, in conjunction with the County Council, will not permit development where this would, directly or indirectly, create new accesses or increase use of existing highway access on to the main highway network, or at other points where it would be hazardous to road users, unless a satisfactory highway improvement has been carried out.

The Borough Council will only permit development where adequate provision has been made for the infrastructure necessary for the development to proceed.

The Borough Council will only permit development which makes provision for car, bicycle and lorry parking/servicing (or commuted
payments if appropriate) in accordance with the standards in table 17.
APPENDIX 2

SUGGESTED SPACE STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

a) Space between buildings
   • between 1st floor habitable rooms of units (new and existing) 21 M
   • between 1st floor habitable rooms and plot boundary 10.5 M

b) Amenity space
   • 1 bedroom house 50 sqM
   • 2 bedroom house 75 sqM
   • 3 bedroom house 130 sqM
   • 4+ bedroom house 195 sqM
   • 1 bedroom flat (high density) 20 sqM
   • 2 bedroom flat (high density) 25 sqM
   • 3+ bedroom flat (high density) 30 sqM
   • 1 bedroom flat (low density) 30 sqM
   • 2 bedroom flat (low density) 35 sqM
   • 3+ bedroom flat (low density) 40 sqM

(Source CBC Supplementary Planning Guidance - Amenity Space in Residential Development, Table 1 - see also table 2 for guidance on garden sizes and ‘public’ amenity space.)

c) Play space

In accordance with Local Plan Policy RC 102, provision for play space must also be made. Where this cannot be accommodated within the development, commuted sums will usually be required for off-site provision. Guidance on this matter is provided in CBC Supplementary Planning Guidance - ‘Play Space in Residential Developments’.
Map 1 - Area of Brief and Listed Structures

Area of Brief
Listed Buildings
Listed Gatepiers

The Park
Design and Development Brief

Cheltenham Borough Council