

Sites

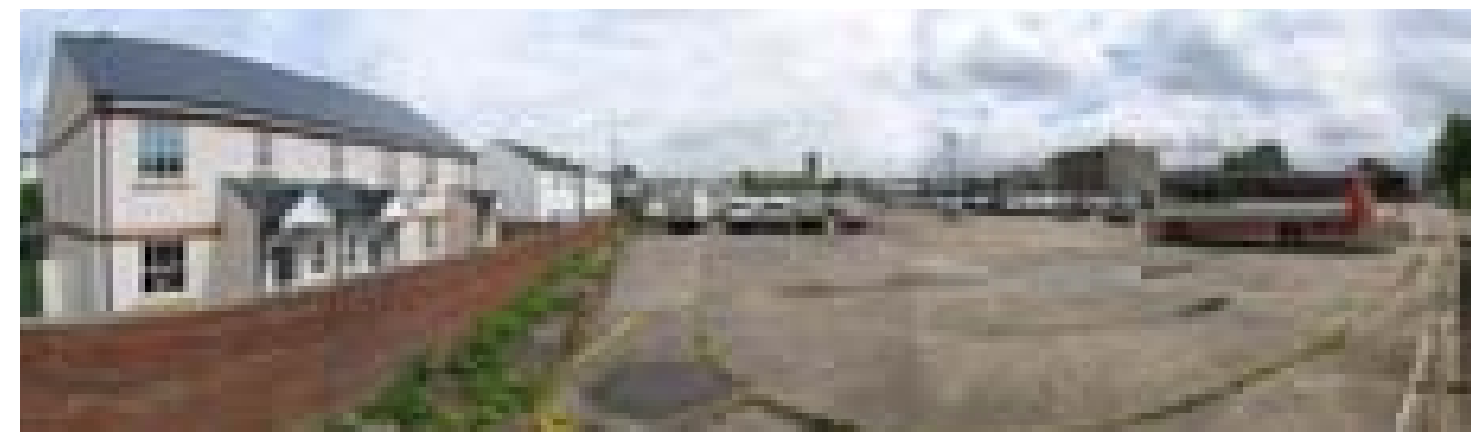
6.1 Introduction

This section includes a review of sites in public ownership in order to ascertain that the three sites identified in the Urban Design Framework Brief are the most viable to be taken forward for development. Based on the initial review of key sites, a more detailed review of the three preferred development sites is undertaken to ascertain key issues, constraints and opportunities to be addressed in forthcoming stages.

6.2 Sites in Public ownership

This review was focussed on the Cheltenham Borough Council's database of sites in their ownership. An initial sift of these CBC owned sites was undertaken, and a shortlist of sites was developed, based on larger sites within and abutting the study area. Preference was for vacant/undeveloped sites currently used as parking, as it was considered that the cost of replacing existing buildings would generally undermine the revenue potential associated with redevelopment. Nevertheless, a number of well located sites with buildings which are in use were also included to ensure that all potential options have been thoroughly considered, and that the potential for public realm impact through redevelopment could be maximised.

The location of sites is shown on Drawing 10: Land in Public Ownership. The review is summarised in the table which follows.



	Sites	Location & Potential Public Realm impact	Existing use	Adjacent uses	Proposals and Aspirations	Revenue impact	Comments
1	Chelt Walk / St James	Located on main pedestrian approach from rail station (Honeybourne Line)	Surface car parking	Office and residential. GCC owned shopfitters site is adjacent. Synagogue (Grade II*listed).	GCC proposals for shopfitters site. On route identified as being “in need of improvement” by Latham – and recognised as a key approach to the town centre.	£105K in parking revenues p.a	On key approach route. Opportunities to consolidate GCC and CBC landholdings. Key opportunity to enhance connectivity and public space link to central area. Key development opportunity
2	Clarence Street – Art Gallery. Museum and Library	Well located site, although hidden at present. Part of potential cultural precinct	Museum, Art gallery & Library with children’s library to the rear	St Mary’s listed church and churchyard	£ 4million enhancement scheme proposed for art gallery. Forms part of Latham’s cultural precinct. Improvements of St Mary’s churchyard & proposals for adjacent site		Not suited to redevelopment given existing uses, adjacent uses and proposals for adjacent developments which will contribute to the development of a “cultural precinct.” Replacement costs for public facilities would be significant.
3	Royal Well	Rear of Promenade	Bus station for rural services	Oldest Crescent in Cheltenham (Grade II* listed) used for offices. Council offices (listed) back onto site	Proposed for redevelopment by Latham. Strong public desire for change		Key site with significant development potential. Links to the wider area would need to be improved, and significance of surrounding development addressed. Issue of relocation of council offices to be considered as a potential option. Key development opportunity
4	North Place/ Portland St	North of High St – opportunity to improve N-S axis. Evesham Road - potential to enhance this approach.	Surface Car Parking	Listed Terrace – St Margaret’s Road	High profile	£547 K (Portland Street) + £271 K (North Place) in parking revenues p.a	Size, potential for positive public realm impact and profile are favourable. Development would need to generate sufficient revenue to compensate for loss of revenue from parking. Key development opportunity
5	St James St	Outer Ring Road Edge of study area. Limited ability to impact public realm	Surface Car Parking	School – potentially limits uses on site	None known	£ 415 K in parking revenues p.a	Not a high priority owing to edge location. Constraints (ring road and adjacent use) likely to undermine attractiveness to potential developers.
6	Town Hall and Imperial Gardens	Southern part of study area	Public green space – used for gathering and festivals	Commercial and residential	£4 million of investments proposed as part of the Cultural Strategy	£ 195 K in parking revenues p.a	Site of historic spa. Town Hall is Grade II listed. Used for festivals & outdoor gathering. Well used. Investment proposals indicate commitment to retention of current usage. Not appropriate for redevelopment.
7	Montpellier Gardens	Southern part of study area	Public green space	Commercial and residential. Grade I listed buildings	£ 1 million Heritage Lottery Funding restoration underway		Key element of greenspace provision in the town centre. Not appropriate for redevelopment.
8	St George’s Road	Outside of Study Area.	Surface Car Parking	Adjacent to Magistrate’s Court	Redevelopment/ reconfiguration of court buildings adjacent		Well located site for town centre parking, and for courts. Retention for parking would be consistent with Latham’s proposal to reduce through traffic in the town centre.

9	Rodney Road	Central location within the study area. Adjacent to River Chelt – potential to open up riverside for public access here	Surface Car Parking	Cambray Court - residential	Formed part of proposals for the Chelt Walk	£230 K in parking revenues p.a	Redevelopment would present an opportunity to address the River Chelt. Retention would be consistent with Latham's proposal to reduce through traffic in the town centre. Could be included in public realm improvements rather than redevelopment of entire site.
10	Bath Road Car Park	Outside of study area, adjacent to Sandford Park. Located on key approach. Potential to contribute to improved integration of Sanford Park with the town centre	Surface Car Parking	Park	None known. Latham recommends a 3 storey development to enhance approach to Sanford Park (although this would need to be balanced by (re)development of the site flanking the entrance on the opposite side	£131 K in parking revenues p.a	Well located on key approach route, but outside of Study Area. Retention would be consistent with Latham's proposal to reduce through traffic in the town centre. Full benefits of redevelopment could only occur with redevelopment of adjacent pub site. Potential option, but not a high priority.
11	Playhouse theatre	Located on main approach to Cheltenham	Community theatre and cultural venue	Commercial - retail	Key resource identified in cultural and arts strategies.		Relatively small site. Theatre, well used, highly valued community resource. Not suited to redevelopment.
12	Grosvenor Terrace	On Albion Street	Multi-storey Car Park	Residential	None known	£280 K in parking revenues p.a	Costs of replacement would be high. Retention would be consistent with Latham's proposal to reduce through traffic in the town centre.
13	Sherbourne Place	Albion Street Limited frontage	Surface car parking	Lumber yard	None known. Low profile. Outside Study Boundary	£111 K in parking revenues p.a	Not a strong contender for redevelopment owing to peripheral location , potential difficulty in stimulating developer interest, and low profile. Retention would be broadly consistent with Latham's proposal to reduce through traffic in the town centre.
14	High Street	High Street – very limited frontage	Surface car parking. Market	Residential, commercial	None known. Impacts on residential amenity would be a key consideration	£213 K in parking revenues p.a	Narrow site relatively constrained. Retention would be consistent with Latham's proposal to reduce through traffic in the town centre. Redevelopment would not significantly benefit the public realm.
15	Bowling Green	High Street/ Ambrose Street	Bowling Club Key element of green space provision in the town centre	Residential/ Commercial	None known		Key element of public greens pace to be retained.



The review confirms that the preferred development sites are Chelt Walk / St James; Royal Well and North Place / Portland Street. These sites offer the best opportunities for maximum impact in terms of urban design/ public realm priorities. They are also high profile, both in terms of their visibility/ position on approaches into the town centre, but also in terms of public aspirations for Cheltenham. In terms of their size, they offer significant opportunity for large scale redevelopment.

These three sites have the added benefit of being vacant, so that replacement buildings will not need to be provided (although a replacement bus facility is likely to be required for Royal Well). Combined, these sites generate revenue of more than £920K per annum from parking charges. The extent to which this can be offset through redevelopment will require close consideration. More detailed assessments of the individual preferred options are set out below.



6.3 Chelt Walk / St James

6.3.1 Analysis

The Site

The areas of the site in CBC ownership is 0.457 hectares in size. Clearly, the addition of County Council owned sites would be beneficial in terms of increasing the overall amount of land available for development.

It is currently in use as an informal surface public car park and while it provides street lighting and pay and display facilities, it is poorly surfaced with no marked bays.

The site slopes down from north to south, with a significant change in level, marked by a roughly landscaped slope at its northern end.

There is a boundary marked by railings between the car park and the open space, along the southern edge, marking the beginning of the Honeybourne Line. The western boundary with the office building is also clearly defined with low fencing and a hedgerow. Other boundaries are not clearly defined.

There is a semi-mature tree located within the site.

Location and Surrounding Uses

The St James site is located on the western edge of the study area. It lies approximately 500 metres from the main retail area and approximately 1,300 metres north east of the railway station.

To the west of the site lies a 5 storey modern office building, located on Jessop Avenue. This building contains surface parking and a circulation area for undercroft parking and landscaped grassland between the building and the site boundary. Beyond the offices, at the western Jessop Avenue, lies The Catholic School of Saint Gregory the Great and its astro-turf playing field and beyond that, Waitrose.

To the north of the site lies the Jessop Road / St. James' Square junction, with a 4 storey, post-war office building on one corner and smaller scale buildings (2 storey historic), converted to offices, on the other corner.

To the east of the site lies a mix uses. On the corner of St. James' Square is a 2 storey historic (Grade II Listed) stone building, converted to offices, with a small surface car park directly to its south. Further east lies a synagogue (Grade II * Listed), with small scale surface car parking and rear yards, gardens and servicing for St. George's Place properties, which are mainly 2 storey small scale commercial. There is a semi-mature tree located in the car park of the historic building.

The County Council owned "shopfitters' site" is located to the east, between the CBC owned car park and St George's Place, adjacent to Bayshell Inn. Gloucestershire County Council propose to redevelop this site to accommodate Registrar/ Coroner's services which are to be relocated as part of the refurbishment of the Magistrate's Courts on ST George's Road.

However, part of the site is surplus to County Council requirements, and the Council consider that the balance may be suitable for office development. Such development should be considered as part of any proposals for the St James' / Chelt Walk site. It is notable that in general, the County prefer to dispose of assets in excess of their requirements, rather than act as property developers themselves. The potential role of the County and their involvement in a potential joint venture for the development of this area will need to be discussed in future phases.

To the south east lies a cluster of Grade II Listed, 2 storey Victorian terraced houses (Little Bayshell Terrace), which back onto the River Chelt (open at this location). Some of these connect with foot bridges, over the River, onto a newly upgraded footpath / cycle path which connects St. George's Place with the Honeybourne Line route to the station.



To the south lies a vehicular turning area, which is at the end of Royal Well Lane and beyond that are the rears of the 3 storey properties fronting St. George's Road, which are mainly in office use. Pedestrian and cyclist access is also gained onto St. George's Road in this area.

To the south west lies a small area of open space which forms the beginning of the Honeybourne Line, along with a small, poorly maintained children's play area. There are also several mature trees in this location.

Vehicular Access

The site is not particularly accessible from the outskirts of the town and the M5 junction 11, with a vehicle journey via St. James' Square, St. George's Place, St. George's Road and Gloucester Road.

Access into the site is currently gained from a relatively recently constructed mini roundabout forming the fourth arm of the link between Jessop Avenue and St James' Square.

Public Transport Access

The site is not directly served by public transport services, although nodes at the Promenade, Royal Well, Clarence Street and towards the western end of the High Street remain within a 400m isochrone.

Pedestrian and Cyclist Access

The pedestrian route to the High Street would be via St. James' Square and St. George's Place but is not clearly defined.

The pedestrian and cyclist route to the railway station is well defined by the Honeybourne Line - a disused railway cutting, segregated for walking and cycling. Direct access into the site can be gained from the Honeybourne Line, although the distance to the railway station would exceed the typical distance walked to a station.



The site is also very close to the Royal Well bus station, although the long term future of this site is under review as part of this study. It is located next to the town's Waitrose store, surrounded by office development and is located within relatively close proximity to the town centre. It therefore benefits from good accessibility to a wide range of facilities and services within walking and cycling distance.

Pedestrian and cyclist routes are clearly defined through Jessop Avenue, connecting through to Waitrose. However, this is a no through route for vehicles. It is also particularly well placed for access to the existing signed cycle route to the north east, via Henrietta Place.

Parking

The site currently accommodates 90 parking spaces. It is likely that re-development could occur without any significant detrimental impact occurring as a result of the loss of these spaces. However, this should be explored as part of the overall parking strategy.



6.3.2 Design Principles

Reference should be made to the Chelt Walk / St. James' Site Analysis Plan at the end of this section. The design principles suggested below are derived from site visits and site analysis and should be considered in relation to new development uses and layout.

Latham

Latham Architects do not put forward proposals for the whole of the site. However, they express the opinion that there is currently a lack of frontage at the northern end of St. James' Square, where the existing car park access is located and suggest that a gateway building would be appropriate at the access point, with the existing mini-roundabout downgraded to simple priority junction. Colin Buchanan note that this could undermine the potential for effective access to the rest of the site and therefore could be counter-productive in terms of making best use of the site.

Vehicular Access

The main vehicular access point into the site will be from the Jessop Avenue / St. James' Square existing junction.

Public Transport Access

Pedestrian linkages between the site and bus stops need to be improved to make public transport a viable option.

Pedestrian and Cyclist Access

The site is well located and should be able to secure a high pedestrian and cycle mode share, subject to the availability of necessary facilities (e.g. parking). Pedestrian and cyclist access should be retained onto St. George's Road, the Honeybourne Line and onto St. George's Place. Consideration should also be given to new pedestrian and cyclist connections from the site to the east, creating better linkages with the town centre and through the site (from the Jessop Avenue junction to the Honeybourne Line).



Other improvements could include more conveniently located crossings over St George's Place and better cycle connections to the south and south west.

Parking

The proximity of the station and the town centre allow for reduced parking on this site. However, consideration should still be given to disabled parking, pick up and drop off areas, servicing and delivery, particularly if the site becomes publicly used. Underground parking could be investigated further, although consideration of proximity to the River Chelt should be given.

Building Heights

There is an opportunity to create a development of at least 4 storeys in height on this site, with potential for 5 storeys, subject to further analysis, at the northern end. However, 3 storeys would be more suitable at the southern end of the site and consideration should be given to the setting of nearby listed buildings.

Building Orientation

All building elevations need to address the public realm, with active frontages such as entrances and windows facing streets, footpaths / cycle paths and public open space. The slight southwards gradient could enable passive solar design, using heat and light gained from southern facing elevations to maximise use of energy efficiency.

Landmarks

While the northern corner of the site is relatively narrow, there is an opportunity to create a landmark feature in this location. This could be part of a building, such as an entrance hall, a sculpture, piece of art etc. This would be particularly beneficial if the site was to be in public use, as the corner feature would act as an orientation point and draw visitors along St. James' Square from St. George's Place and Knapp Road.



Views

There is a long view from within the site, northwards, towards St. George's Church spire. The spire can also be seen from the Honeybourne Line footpath on the southern side of the site and this, at present, provides the only visual connection with the town centre. Unless new visual connections, or direct and obvious footpaths and cycle paths can be created, which link into the town centre, retention of this view should be retained through the site. The key is for pedestrians and cyclists entering the town from the Honeybourne Line (station) approach being able to orientate themselves and clearly find the town centre, once they reach this site.

Amenity of surrounding uses / areas

The amenity of nearby residents and workers should be considered, although this will be of particular importance if the site becomes publicly used:

Noise - activity after hours, servicing, entrances to parking areas etc should be minimised in close proximity to properties in Little Bayshill Terrace. Increased use of the public footpaths and cycle paths used should be considered;

Privacy - Large windows that overlook Little Bayshill Terrace rear gardens / roof terraces should be minimised. Consideration of boundary treatments along the River Chelt, particularly along the existing footpath, in relation to rear gardens and the connecting footbridges should be given if this site becomes publicly used;

Day Light and Sun Light - Building heights, particularly at the southern end of the site should not obscure or overshadow Little Bayshill Terrace properties. Consideration should also be given for workers in Jessop House.

Thresholds / Boundaries

If the site becomes publicly used, thresholds and boundaries should allow for pedestrian and cyclist access at all times, particularly at the southern end as it is essential that visitors arriving by the Honeybourne Line after hours can clearly orientate themselves to the town centre. Gated development should be discouraged. Western and eastern boundary treatments should be considered in relation to impact of amenity upon adjacent commercial uses.

Landscape

Consideration should be given for any landscaped areas (hard or soft) within the site to successfully connect with the landscaped area at the southern end of the site. Further assessment should be undertaken to determine the value of the trees that exist on the site. New planting should be considered, particularly on thresholds, to soften impact upon adjacent uses and also to continue the green corridor created by the Honeybourne Line and the River Chelt in the site and on into the town.

Extension of Site Boundaries

In order to create the highest quality and fully comprehensive development, it is considered that the development of the site should be integrated with County proposals for the "shopfitter's site", and the redevelopment could incorporate land which is surplus to County requirement. There is an opportunity for public space creation and for a new pedestrian connection to be made onto St. George's Place, although its success would rely on continuation of this connection, eastwards, through to Royal Crescent and resolution of land ownership issues. Resolution of parking in this area, currently used by the adjacent commercial uses, would be required, with potential for dual use of parking associated with the new development for these users.



6.4 Royal Well

6.4.1 Analysis

The Site

The total area of the site in public ownership is 1.094ha and is currently in use as a bus station (long distance rural bus routes, rather than local routes) and a surface car park used by Council staff.

The bus station layout is based on a circular route that enters the site from St. George's Road at the southern end and leaves the site either by Chapel Walk at the southern end or onto Crescent Terrace at the northern end.

In the centre of the bus station is a small area of grassland, containing two mature trees. Clear pedestrian desire lines cross the grass. Smaller trees also exist on the grass verge between the bus station and Royal Crescent and in front of Crescent Terrace.

The surface car park is enclosed by wooden fencing. There is a semi-mature tree located at the southern end of the car park.

The site is mainly flat.

Location and Surrounding Uses

The Royal Well site is located fairly centrally within the study area, located approximately 350 metres to the west of the main retail area and approximately 1,400 metres north east of the railway station.

It is bound by Royal Crescent, a 3 storey Regency terrace (Grade II * Listed) to the west, an architecturally important Regency terrace. The Crescent is in use as offices and the area immediately in front of Royal Crescent is currently used for office parking. The Crescent also contains a surgery and club rooms. The Crescent is accessed from the north, via Crescent Terrace and Crescent Place.



Crescent Terrace and its 3 storey Regency buildings (Grade II Listed) lie to the north, also mainly in use as offices, small scale retail and other commercial premises.

Royal Well Road and the rear of the 4 storey Municipal Offices (Grade II * Listed) lie to the east (the main entrance into the building being from the Promenade). This unattractive rear façade, which has been subject to piecemeal extension, dominates the site. This Grade II* listed building has been substantially altered internally to accommodate Council uses. Nonetheless, concerns have been voiced about this building's fitness for purpose. Clearly, the redevelopment of this and other sites in the town centre presents an exciting opportunity for the development of new bespoke Council Offices (possibly combined with County functions) enabling this Regency building to be redeveloped for alternative uses as part of the redevelopment of the Royal Well site.

St. George's Road and the (mainly) 2 storey Cheltenham Ladies College, in use as a school, (Grade II Listed) lie to the south.

There is also a small car park located at the south of the site, bounded by Royal Well Place, Royal Well Road and Chapel Walk. Chapel Walk, which forms the site's south western boundary contains a mix of uses, facing the site, including a restaurant, a Chapel and a club room.

Vehicular Access

Vehicular access to the site can currently be gained from the south, via St George's Road. In addition, residents can reach the site from the north via Clarence Street and Crescent Place. The site is not particularly accessible from the outskirts of the town. The vehicle route in from M5 junction 11 would be via the A40, Montpellier Walk, Promenade and into Royal Well Road.

Whatever direction access is gained, it is currently necessary to travel north along Royal Well Road (two lane inner ring road, northbound only) and either turn right into the Promenade and back down onto the Inner Ring Road / southern portion of the Promenade, or to continue northbound along the one way inner ring road, from which it is possible to re-join the outer ring road either via North Place or Albion Road. This inner ring road generally reduces the attractiveness of the site as traffic flow is heavy, creating poor pedestrian and cyclist environments along this route and at crossing points.

Public Transport Access

The site currently acts as a key public transport arrival point as it includes the town's bus station and an important taxi rank. However, space within the bus station appears to be inefficiently used and the overall ambience detracts from the potential sense and quality of place which could be achieved in front of the Crescent.

In addition, bus services which call at the Promenade are also easily accessible and services which stop in North Street / Clarence Street and Pittville Street are within a comfortable walking distance. This essentially means that the site is highly accessible to services in all directions of the town centre.



Pedestrian and Cyclist Access

The site benefits from a central location and is highly accessible by foot from a wide range of facilities. A variety of pedestrian connections exist through to the Promenade and the High Street, although the main pedestrian route would be via Crescent Terrace. Employment opportunities and Waitrose are also located to the west of the site, within a short walking distance.

The site is well located for cycle routes to the town centre from the west (the NCN, the Honeybourne Lane and the railway station), the south west (Lansdown Road cycle route) and from the South (via Montpellier Gardens / Imperial Lane). Access can also be gained onto the Honeybourne Line, to the station, via the St. James' Square site, although connections via Royal Well Place and St. James' Place are unclear.

However, this beneficial location must be contrasted with the poor setting of the site at present. The environment of the site is dominated by car traffic on the inner ring road, a large amount of surface car parking. The rear Municipal Offices with its servicing and parking facilities dominates and contributes to an unattractive environment for pedestrian. Also, the legibility of routes from the site to the facilities around it is poor which impacts further on the site accessibility by foot.

Parking

The small car park consists of 47 spaces, for permit holders only during week days and open to the public at weekends on a pay and display basis.



6.4.2 Design Principles

Reference should be made to the Royal Well Site Analysis Plan at the end of this section. The design principles suggested below are derived from site visits and a site analysis and should be considered in the consideration of new development uses and layout.

Latham

Latham put forward proposals for the full pedestrianisation of the Royal Well site, including the creation of a central green area. They propose new frontage to the east of this public space, in order to enclose the rear of the Municipal Buildings and to provide enclosure and additional frontage to enliven that public space. They also made proposals that traffic should be able to pass the top right corner of the area, from the north of the Promenade.

Vehicle Access

It is considered that the strategic review of vehicular access within the town centre, and the removal of traffic from this part of the Ring Road is a pre-requisite for the redevelopment of this site. Close proximity of this site to the town centre would imply that vehicular access to the site could be confined to disabled, service and delivery access requirements.

Public Transport Access

Any option which included retention of the bus station would have the opportunity to create a pleasant arrival point for bus passengers with improved connectivity to surrounding areas. However, comparatively low levels of use of this facility and development opportunity costs would tend to indicate that the relocation of this facility is preferable. An alternative location will thus need to be found as part of the Transport Strategy in the next phase.

Pedestrian and Cyclist Access

As there are clear walking desire lines which cross the site, further investigation of pedestrian routes, destinations and flows would assist in the overall design of this area.

New pedestrian and cyclist connections through or around Royal Crescent and the Municipal Offices, onto Promenade could be considered, along with connections linking up with the Honeybourne Line.

Connections to the site from established routes would benefit from improvement. In particular, well placed additional crossings and improved linkages, such as over St George's Place (where the Honeybourne Line link meets the town centre), between Imperial Place and the site and from the end of the Lansdown Road cycle way should be considered. It should also be possible to improve connections to other cycle routes already available to / from the town centre (E.g. to the north east via Henrietta Street, perhaps via St George's Place).

Ensuring that new walking and cycling routes are attractive, well lit, and offer personal security is important to supporting evening use.

Parking

The proximity of the town centre allows for reduced parking on this site. However, consideration should still be given to disabled parking, pick up and drop off areas, servicing and delivery, particularly if the site becomes publicly used. Underground parking could be investigated further, although consideration of proximity to Listed Buildings should be given.

Building Heights

The future use, location of and therefore building footprint, on this site, will help determine building height. The site provides an opportunity for a building or buildings of up to 5 storeys in height, although storey height should be reduced on the southern and western edges, where there is sensitive setting and amenity of lower buildings.



Building Orientation

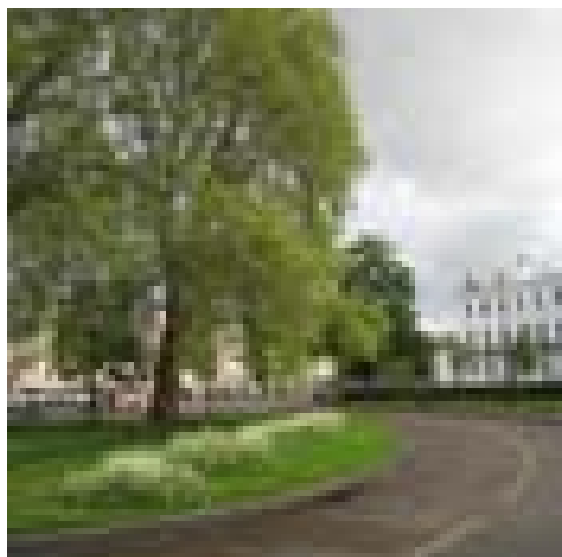
All building elevations need to address the public realm, with active frontages such as entrances and windows facing streets, footpaths / cycle paths and public open space. The rear of the Municipal Offices is an example of where a good relationship with the public realm has been neglected and it is along this elevation where attention for building orientation should be focused. Options for new development attached to the rear of the Municipal Offices should be considered, to create a frontage that positively enhances the public realm.

Landmarks

Many of the Grade II Listed buildings are considered to be landmark buildings; Royal Crescent and The Ladies College in particular. The new build part of the Municipal Offices frontage, overlooking the fountain is also considered to be a landmark, as this corner is important in terms of orientation, both for vehicles and pedestrians. However, as this new build part is not listed, it does not have to be retained in its current capacity if a redevelopment scheme improved pedestrian and cyclist orientation and created landmarks in other ways. It should be noted that landmarks need only be created if they add value to the use and understanding of an area.

Views

The only view of value is from within the site, southwards, towards the Ladies College. As the school buildings form the southern boundary of the site, they are a prominent visual landmark. Retention of this view should not restrict development proposals, although the value that is created by the building, which currently assists with orientation and understanding of proximity to the town centre and the Promenade should be considered.



Amenity of surrounding uses / areas

There are no immediately obvious residential areas within the site or the immediate area, although a detailed search has not been undertaken. Despite this, amenity of nearby workers (and residents if there are any) should be considered. This will be of particular importance if the site becomes publicly used: Noise - activity after hours, servicing, entrances to parking areas etc should be minimised in close proximity to sensitive properties; Privacy – new development should minimise large windows at upper floor levels that overlook existing properties. A minimum distance between any new development and frontages of Royal Crescent, for example, should be maintained; Day Light and Sun Light – new development should not obscure or overshadow existing properties, such as the front windows of Royal Crescent.

Thresholds / Boundaries

If the site becomes publicly used, thresholds and boundaries should be very clearly defined. If development maintains north / south pedestrian and cyclist linkages or creates new west / east linkages, then there needs to be very clear definition between public and private realm, particularly in front of Royal Crescent. At present, there is a distinctive hedgerow and large forecourt parking between the site and the Crescent, which may need to be reviewed alongside development proposals.

The other key threshold is the rear of the Municipal Offices but as mentioned, treatment of this boundary will depend upon the nature of development proposals.

Landscape

Consideration should be given to the small green area within the site and particularly the two mature trees which dominate the centre of the site. If the site was to become publicly used, development proposals would need to incorporate these trees into landscaped areas (hard or soft). The distinctive hedgerow and row of small trees defining Royal Crescent should also be considered, although is of less value than the mature trees. There are strong desire lines crossing the site so new landscaped areas need to consider these, to minimise trampling and maintenance problems.

Extension of Site Boundaries

In order to create the highest quality and fully comprehensive development, it is considered that development options for this site should include the possible redevelopment of the Municipal Offices themselves, including the forecourt and civic gardens, with consideration given to the relocation of the council offices and the redevelopment of this building for alternative uses. Clearly, it's Grade II* listed status will have an impact on how this building and its setting may be redeveloped. The Grade II listed status of the monuments on the Promenade will also impact on development proposals affecting the civic gardens. If redevelopment of the Municipal Offices is considered, it is essential that the entire block is considered in a holistic way, including the new build office building at the southern end of the block, which is not in CBC ownership. It will also be beneficial to include the carriageways of Crescent Terrace and Royal Crescent, so that a strategic review of traffic circulation, entry and exit points and parking can be undertaken and rationalised if necessary.



6.5 North Place

6.4.1 Analysis

The Site

The site measures 2.1 hectares in size and is currently in use as surface public car parking.

It is split into two areas, separated by North Place which runs through the site, north / south, between St Margaret's Road at the southern end and Clarence Road at the northern end. Traffic on this road is 2 way, mainly accessing the car parking areas and Northfield Terrace, with through traffic mainly using Portland Street. Vehicular access points into the car parking areas are via St Margaret's Road, North Place and Portland Street.

The site is completely flat, with hardly any distinguishing features, trees or landscaping within it. A high brick wall runs along the western edge of North Place, creating a clear separation between the western and eastern parking areas.

There are a few semi-mature trees located on the periphery of the car park, along St. Margaret's Road and Portland Street. A public convenience block is situated in the eastern car park, at its southern end.

Location and Surrounding Uses

The North Place site is located at the northern edge of the study area. It lies approximately 250 metres north of the High Street and is not really within walking distance of the railway station. The bus station at Royal Well is approximately 650 metres to the south, although the long term future of the bus station is under review as part of this study.

This site is bound by Northfield Passage and the rears of properties in Northfield Terrace to the north, by Portland Street to the east, by St. Margaret's Terrace and St. Margaret's Road to the south and Dowty House to the west.

Surrounding uses are mixed, characterised mainly by residential uses to the north and the edge of the commercial town centre to the south. Residential is located directly adjacent to the site, as 2 storey Victorian terraced houses, on Northfield Passage, Northfield Terrace and Clarence Court (to the north); within Dowty House, a historic (although unlisted) 2 and 3 storey building (to the west), within St. Margaret's Terrace, a 4 storey Grade II* Listed Regency terrace (to the south); within Clarence House, a 3 storey Regency building with a modern apartment complex attached at the rear (to the north east) and at the Upper end of Portland Street, within 3 storey Regency terrace (to the east).

Residential uses are also located on the southern side of St. Margaret's Road (within St. Margaret's Parade and at Pate Court), along with the new Brewery retail development (west of Oxford Passage), a 3 storey Chapel, and other small scale commercial uses.

Other uses on Portland Street include Holy Trinity Church, 2/3 storey offices within a Regency building and ground floor retail, with storage above (in part).

There is also a converted historic Chapel (Grade II Listed), now in use as a health spa and restaurant; entrance on North Place, at the south eastern corner of the site.

The rear gardens and parking areas of St. Margaret's Terrace back onto the site, separated by a high brick wall.

Vehicular Access

The site is in an important strategic location on the north side of the town, where the A435 Evesham approach from the north reaches the town centre and therefore acts as a gateway to the town from the north. St Margaret's Road (becoming Swindon Road / Tewkesbury Road to the west and Fairview Road to the east) forms part of the town's inner relief road, providing access west and east, although segregates the site from the town centre to some extent. Signalised crossings over the route are available at nearby junctions, but these do not correspond with the main pedestrian desire lines from the site.

North Place actually runs through and forms part of the site.

Portland Street, along the eastern boundary, becomes Evesham Road, north of the site and carries general traffic northbound onto the Evesham Road corridor.

Public Transport Access

Several bus services currently pass the site along North Place and Portland Street. These include Service D to Bishop's Cleeve and Hatherley (every 10 minutes, Monday to Saturday daytime), also linking the Racecourse Park and Ride and railway station, and Service A to Whaddon (every 10 minutes Monday to Friday daytime). "Flag" bus stops are provided on North Place and on Portland Street (southbound only) but no sheltered bus stop facilities are located in the close proximity of the site.

It is only a short walk from the site to bus stops located in Pittville Street and Clarence Street where numerous services stop. Even stops at the Promenade and Royal Well are only just beyond the desired maximum walking threshold to a bus stop (400m). However, these stops are located on the southern side of the ring road and therefore appear segregated from the site.

Pedestrian and Cyclist Access

The ring road currently severs the southern frontage of the site from the town centre. The most direct pedestrian routes between the site to the town centre fall along Bennington Street, North Place and Portland Street. The only traffic light controlled crossing close to the boundaries of the site is located at the St. Margaret's Road / North Place junction. A pedestrian refuge also exists on St. Margaret's Road, close to the junction with Bennington Street. In addition, there is a route available through the Brewery site, which can be accessed via a crossing adjacent to Monsoon Avenue. Other traffic light controlled pedestrian crossings are located near to the Brewery retail development (crossing St. Margaret's Road) and at the Portland Street / Clarence Road junction.



Each of the pedestrian routes is discussed in turn:

Bennington Street: Access is only available to general traffic at the north of this street (with a cycle link at its southern end). This means that the route is relatively lightly trafficked, with low vehicular speeds. However, there is no crossing between the site and Bennington Street, which makes the route inadequate and a less direct alternative preferable.

North Place: Staggered controlled crossings are available over the ring road at the North Place junction. These offer a satisfactorily safe pedestrian route. However, the route is currently unattractive, as this is a large junction, the stagger increases crossing times and the crossing is characterised by pedestrian barriers. In addition, this portion of the ring road currently suffers from heavy traffic.



Portland Street: The Portland Street junction with the ring road also benefits from a pedestrian crossing to the west of the junction. This involves a reasonable quality uncontrolled crossing over the left turn filter lane from the ring road to Portland Street, followed by a controlled link over the main carriageway. **Brewery Link:** The Brewery Link provides a useful route towards the western part of the High Street and to employment/commercial development in the vicinity of the St James' Square site. It is possible to walk along the pavement of the northern stretch of the ring road to a controlled crossing lying just before Monsoon Walk, before crossing and taking the Brewery Path.



Pedestrian routes to the north are also inadequate. The junction at the northern end of Portland Street is particularly badly designed, with a kerbed reservation between the main carriageway for northbound traffic and the southbound bus lane lying between the existing tactile paving strips, which would otherwise still be poorly aligned in their own right. There are no controlled crossings at this location.

Northfield Passage lies directly adjacent to the site to the north but does not, at present, directly connect into the site, although it comes out onto North Place at its eastern end. Recent residential development has taken place on Northfield Terrace, frontages of which actually address the footpath, rather than Northfield Terrace itself.

On Portland Street, there is no crossing at the end of North Place where it meets Clarence Street. However, Portland Street contains a cycle lane which runs southbound.

Linkages between the site and the cycle network are currently poor. Whilst the signed route to the north west is close by, there is no direct link to this route. Linkages to the north, are also poor as the main arterial A435 road is extremely busy, although opportunities exist for cyclists to travel via quietly trafficked streets, such as West Drive and Pittville Lawn. However, there appears to be a lack of continuity in these routes, which are dissected in places by busier routes. In addition, there are no controlled crossings to aid progress over these routes (Clarence Street for example). Similarly, linkages to the south are poor due to the severance of the ring road. There is no crossing to Bennington Street and even the North Place crossings over the ring road are problematic for cyclists due to the staggered central reserve which has a pedestrian barrier.

Parking

The site is currently used as two surface car parks. North Place car park has a capacity of 484 spaces and the Portland Street Car Park of 329 spaces. This equates to a total capacity of the two sites of 813 spaces. Whilst these sites are relatively conveniently located for traffic arriving from the north to park, it is considered that the proliferation and concentration of car parks to the north of the town centre could be adding to existing problems on this section of the ring road. The issue of whether and how many of these spaces could be retained within a new development requires consideration as part of an overall parking strategy for the town centre.

6.5.2 Design Principles

Reference should be made to the North Place Site Analysis Plan at the end of this section. The design principles suggested below are derived from site visits and a site analysis and should be considered in the consideration of new development uses and layout.

Latham

Latham propose redevelopment of the eastern of the two surface car parks on the site (located between North Street and Portland Street). They propose frontages onto both roads, along with frontages via development to the eastern edge of the western car park, which is currently bounded by a high wall. Latham proposes the removal of general traffic from Portland Street, with two way traffic retained on North Street, allowing a wide footway along the western side of Portland Street. Some aspects of this proposal may have clear merits, although it is considered that both car park sites should be considered together in order to guarantee a coherent redevelopment of this key gateway.

Vehicular Access

Vehicular access will need to be reviewed on a strategic basis, in relation to wider traffic circulation throughout the town centre. The close proximity to the town centre means that vehicular access to the site should be minimal, although disabled, service and delivery access will need to be considered.

Portland Street, along with St. Margaret's Road, are likely to remain as the key vehicular access points.

Public Transport Access

Improvements to public transport and how they would benefit the site should be considered in more detail.



Pedestrian and Cyclist Access

Pedestrian and cyclist crossings and route improvements will be necessary in association with development of the site, particularly on Portland Street and St. Margaret's Road.

There is also an opportunity to create a development which positively encourages cycling to and from the site and contains measures which make it easier to travel by bike and are safe and secure once on site. Depending on the use of the site, there may be opportunities to link into safe cycle routes to schools and other community facilities and into the wider cycle network of the town. It is clear that improvements would be required in order to integrate the site into the existing cycle network, particularly to overcome the severance of the ring road and to facilitate links to the north and west. Another consideration should be to provide a link between the site and the National Cycle Network via St Paul's Road, although indirectly.

Options for pedestrian and cycle access to the north west of the site should be explored (e.g. via Northfield Passage, which cannot currently be accessed from the car park). Opportunities also exist to improve the amenity of the Northfield Terrace residents and to make new connections into and through the site from the northern boundary.

Parking

The proximity of the town centre allows for reduced parking on this site. However, consideration should still be given to disabled parking, pick up and drop off areas, servicing and delivery, particularly if the site becomes publicly used. Underground parking could be investigated further, although consideration of proximity to Listed Buildings should be given.

Building Heights

The site provides an opportunity for buildings of up to 5 or 6 storeys in height. However, storey height should be reduced, as appropriate, on the peripheries of the site, where sensitivity to the setting of historic buildings and to the amenity of lower rise buildings should be considered.

Building Orientation

All building elevations need to address the public realm, with active frontages such as entrances and windows facing streets, footpaths / cycle paths and public open space. The site is large enough to incorporate its own internal network of streets and spaces and this will become apparent once the use is established and detailed design work commences. It is essential that existing properties are addressed within a new street pattern.

Opportunities exist to incorporate the Northfield Passage properties into an enhanced street or to front a new, widened public realm.

The rear of St. Margaret's Terrace will need to be carefully considered so that the historic terrace is fully integrated with any new development and there is clear definition between public and private space.

There is an opportunity to create a new, distinctive building line on Portland Street; one that complements the existing buildings and uses on the eastern side of the road. New buildings should be orientated so that they face Portland Street, creating a well defined street and safe and secure public realm.

Consideration of the orientation of new buildings adjacent to Clarence Court in the north eastern corner of the site should be given, to ensure that the both public and private realms are well defined and that amenity is not compromised.

Landmarks

Many of the Grade II Listed buildings are considered to be landmark buildings; Holy Trinity Church, St. Margaret's Terrace and Chapel Spa, in particular. The setting of these buildings should be considered so that they continue as important landmarks in this area. While the new buildings should be of a high quality design and finish, it should be noted that landmarks need only be created if they add value to the use and understanding of an area.

If the site becomes publicly used, there will be a requirement for visitors to be able to clearly understand how to get there from the town centre. It will also be important that the site makes visual connections with other visitor attractions in the town, such as through to Pitville Park to the north. The use of the site as a landmark, in enabling understanding and ease of orientation is therefore of more value than the creation of an iconic building that serves no purpose.

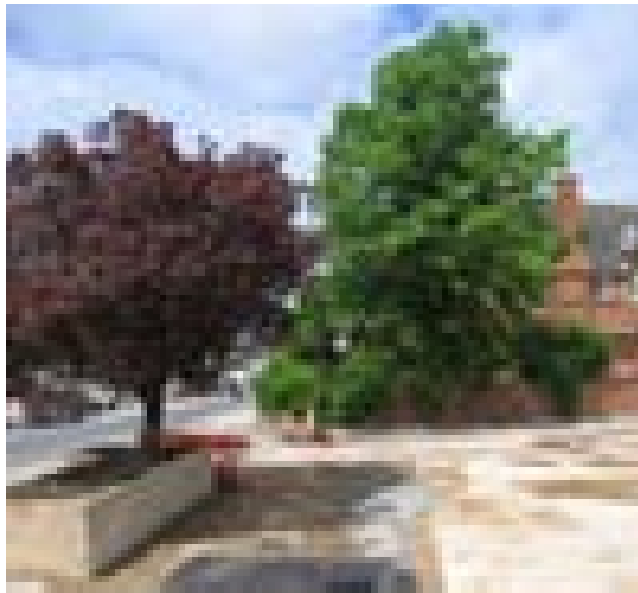
Views

Long views exist through the site in a north easterly direction towards the Cotswold hills. Retention of these views, if only in part would be of value to wider tourism of the town, as an impression is given that the countryside is not far away and this could encourage tourists to explore the area further.

Amenity of surrounding uses / areas

There are many residential areas in the immediate area surrounding the site, whose amenity should be considered in new development proposals. This will be of particular importance if the site becomes publicly used:

Noise - activity after hours, servicing, entrances to parking areas etc should be minimised in close proximity to sensitive properties, particularly near to Northfield Terrace and Dowty House;
Privacy – new development should minimise large windows at upper floor levels that overlook existing properties. A minimum distance between any new development and frontages should be maintained. This will be particularly important if the Northfield Passage was opened up as a street and along the western side of Portland Street;
Day Light and Sun Light – new development should not obscure or overshadow existing properties, such as the front and rear windows of properties in Northfield Passage and Northfield Terrace and the rear windows of St. Margaret's Terrace.



Thresholds / Boundaries

If the site becomes publicly used, thresholds and boundaries should be very clearly defined. If development maintains north / south pedestrian and cyclist linkages or creates new west / east linkages, then there needs to be very clear definition between public and private realm. The most crucial areas will be along Northfield Passage and at the rear of St. Margaret's Terrace as these two areas will become vulnerable once development is operational. The western boundary, close to Dowty House should also be considered to ensure that maximum safety for residents is provided.

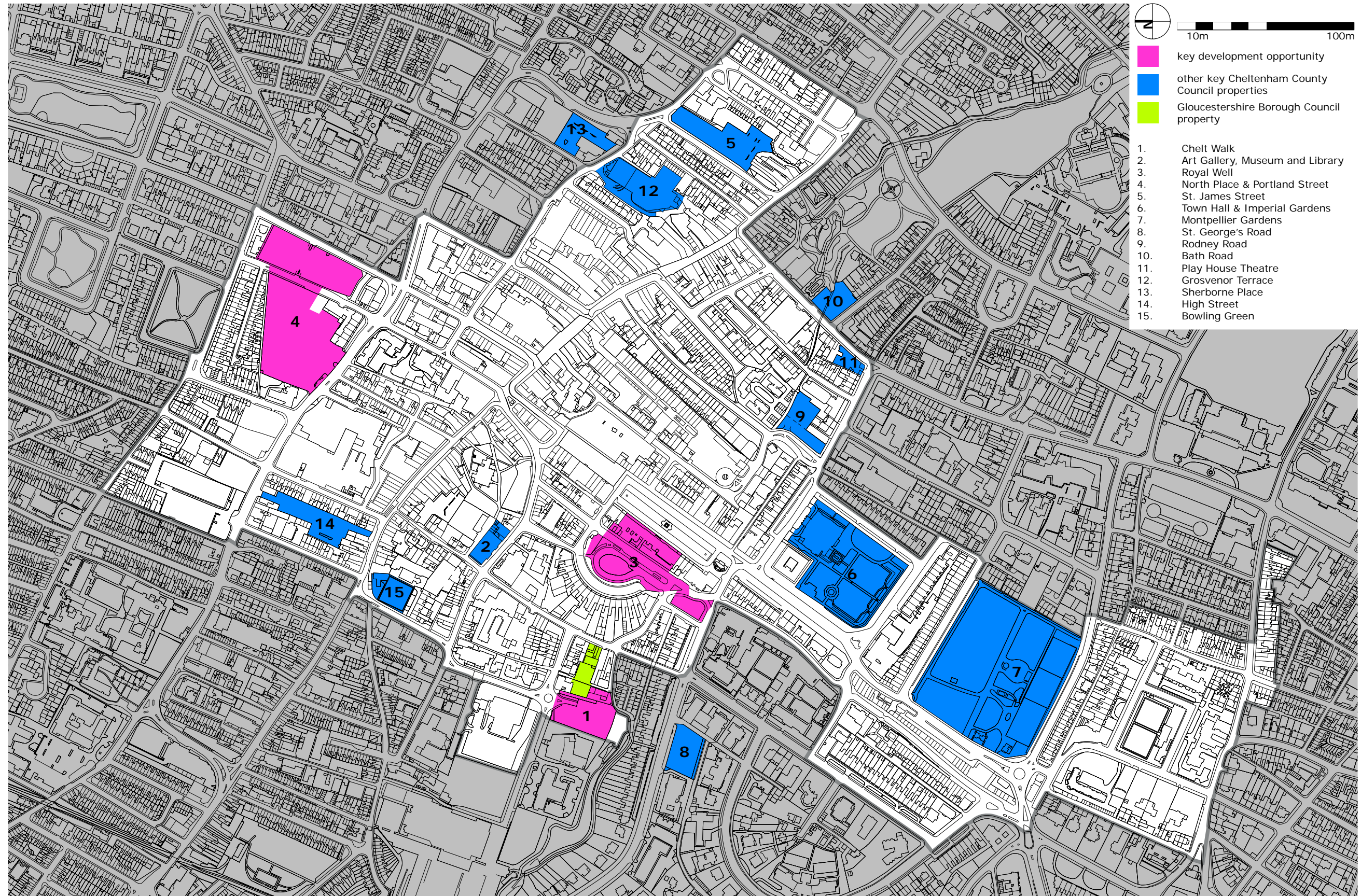
Landscape

At present, the site is very bare of significant vegetation, except for a few semi-mature trees on the periphery. There is an opportunity to increase greenery on the site and to make green linkages between existing and new pedestrian and cycle routes. In particular, the close proximity of Pittville Park to this site provides an opportunity for a green boulevard to be created along Portland Road which visually connects the park to the town centre, via the site. Landscaping will be proposed as appropriate when a use is finalised, although particular consideration should be given to the setting of Listed buildings and amenity of nearby properties. The site is large enough to include a new square or public open space which can accommodate hard and soft landscaping where appropriate.

Extension of Site Boundaries

In order to create the highest quality and fully comprehensive development, it is considered that the site boundary could be increased to incorporate the southern end of North Place and the area in use as a private car park, at the rear of St. Margaret's Terrace. In addition, the car park and area at the side of Chapel Spa should be included in the site. This corner of the site will eventually become an important gateway into the site and it will be essential that visitors can orientate themselves to the site from the town centre and beyond, to Pittville Park.





St. James' Site Analysis

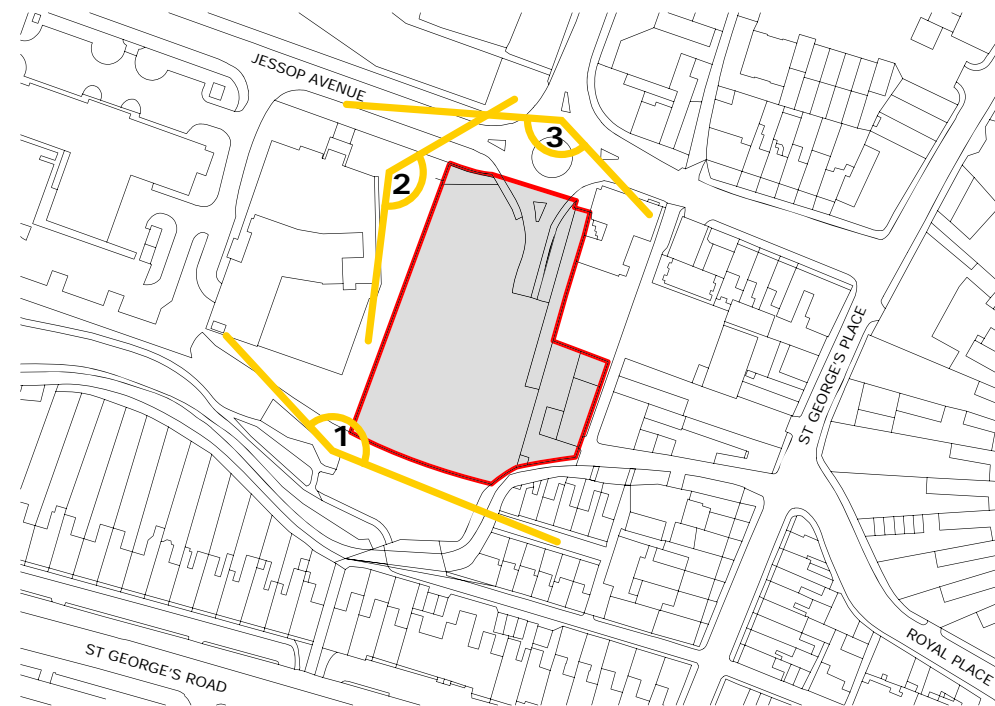


St. James' Photographic Analysis



1 View northwards from the southern site boundary

- Photograph shows public realm landscaping and foot path/cycle path connections in foreground (to be retained and enhanced).
- Proposals for site will need to address threshold between building and existing public realm in this area.
- Long view northwards to church spire to be considered.



2 View eastwards from existing office building to west of site

- Proposals for site will need to address threshold along western boundary and treatment of adjacent users.
- Northern part of site will need to address change in topography.

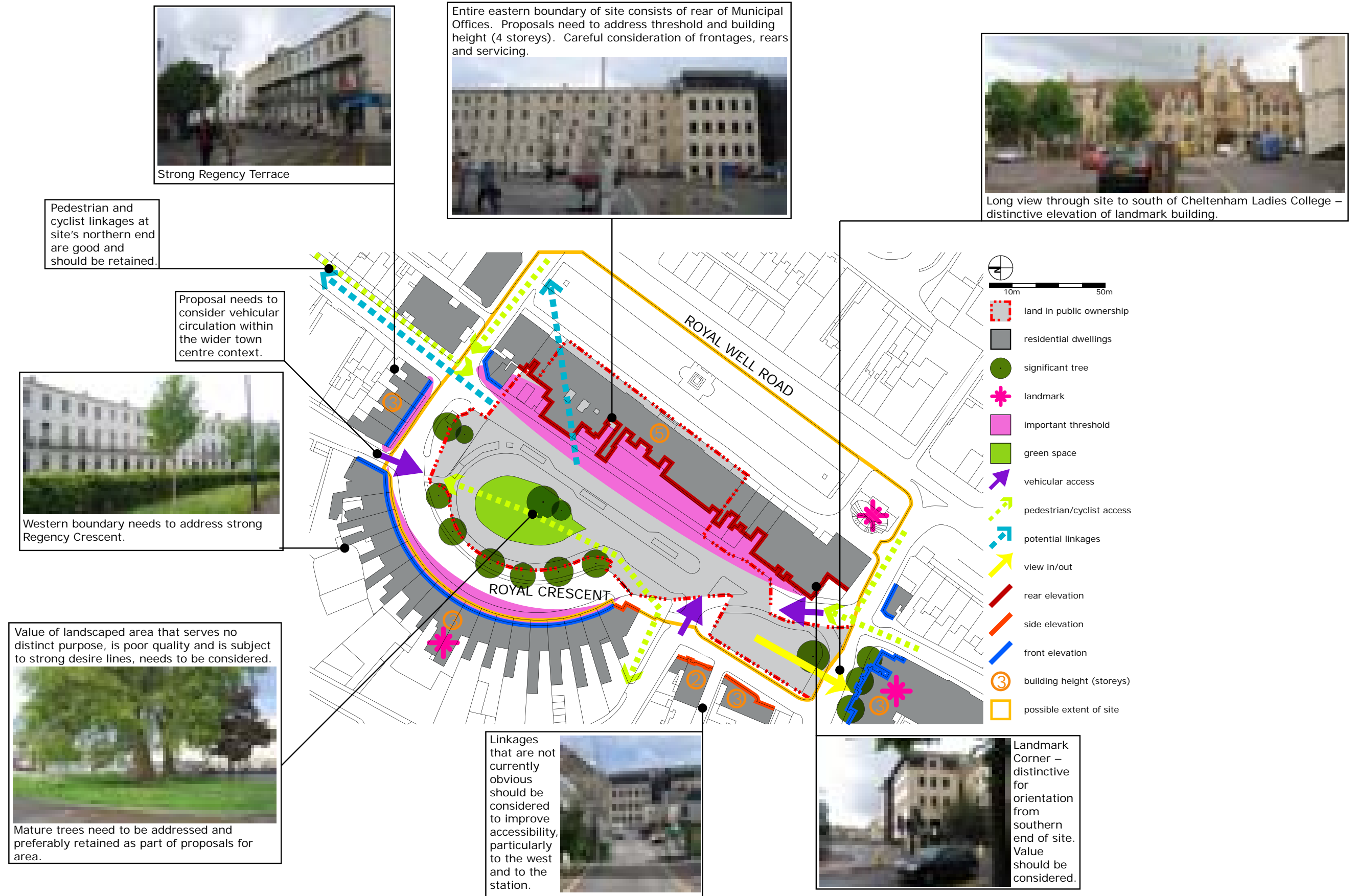


3 View southwards from St James' Square/ Jessop Avenue junction

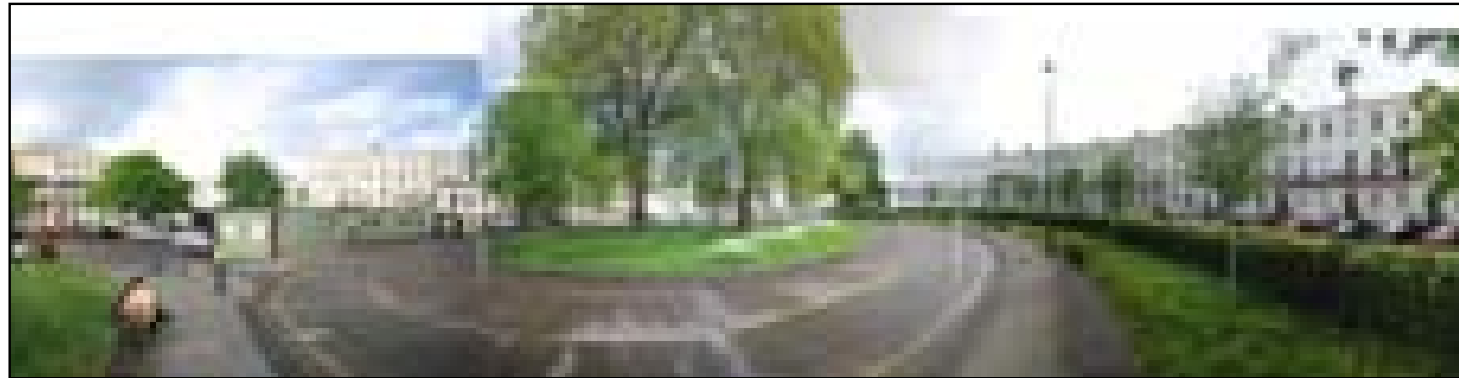
- Northern part of site will need to address potential for landmark
- Employment use at corner of St James' Square will need to be addressed as frontage is along its southern elevation (overlooking the site)



Royal Well Site Analysis

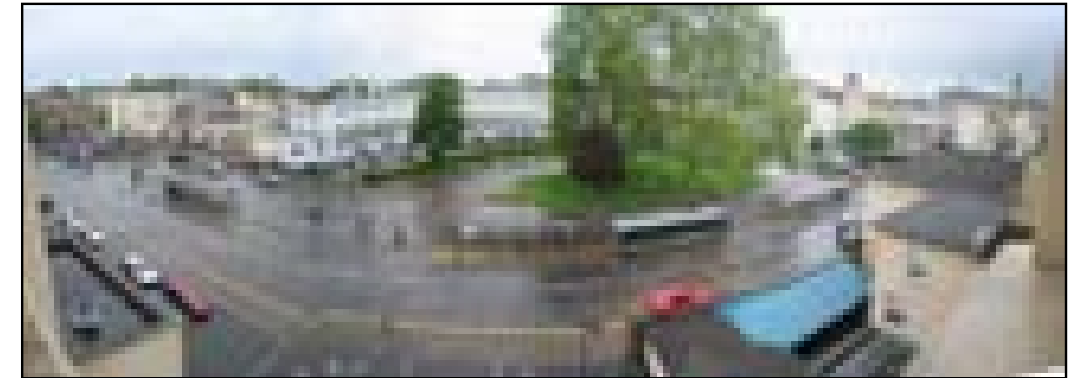


Royal Well Photographic Analysis



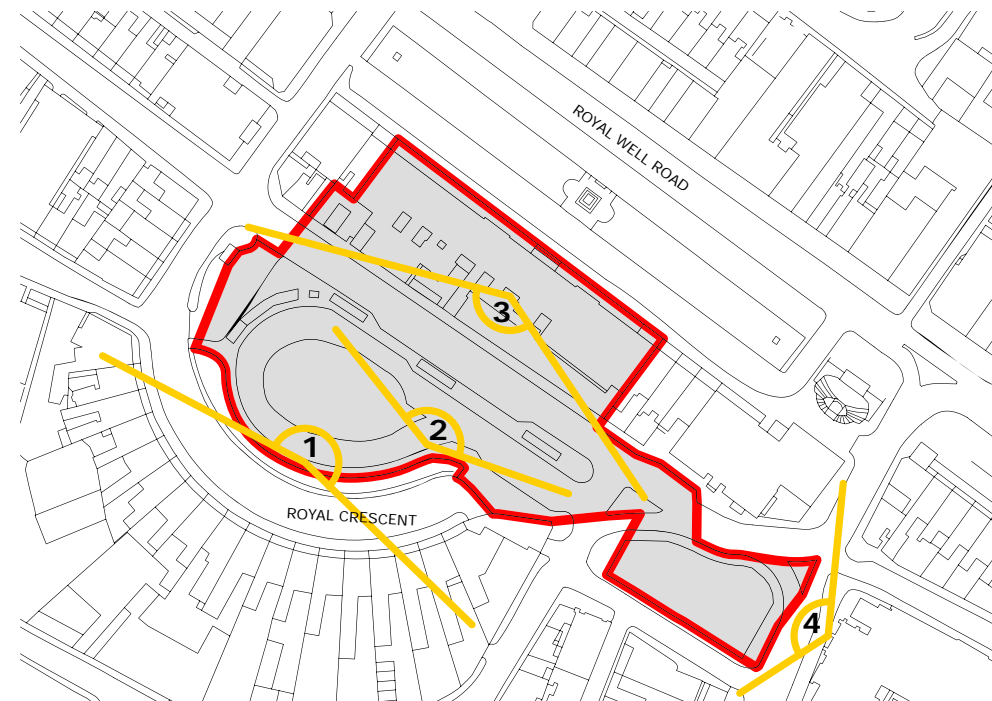
1 View eastwards towards the rear of the Municipal Offices

- View clearly shows that existing bus station is under-used and bus station buildings are poor quality.
- Strong sense of enclosure to the whole space, due to the 3 and 4 storey buildings encircling.



3 View westwards towards Royal Crescent

- Royal Crescent currently creates a barrier between the site and the town/station to the west.
- Underused landscaped central area, with distinct desire lines running through it (north-south).
- Mature trees are distinctive on the site.
- Poor pedestrian/cyclist environment.

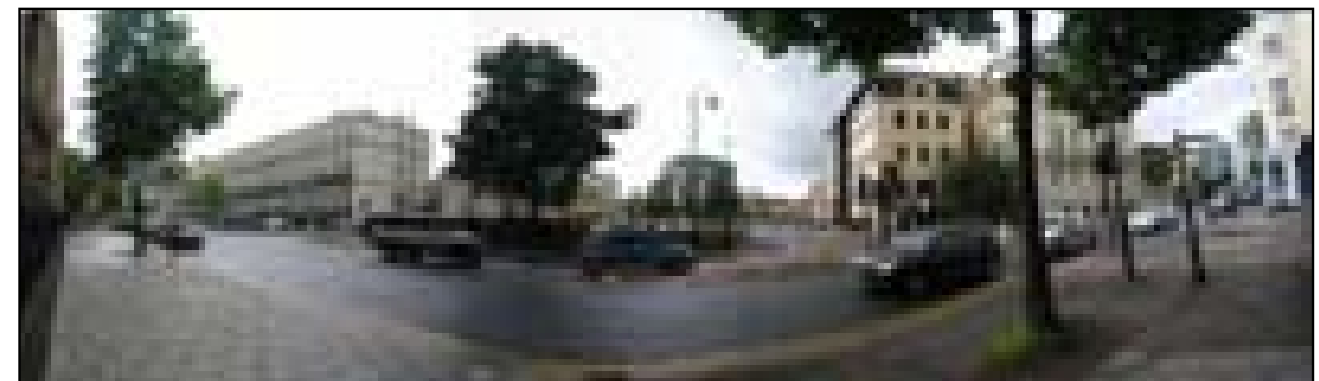
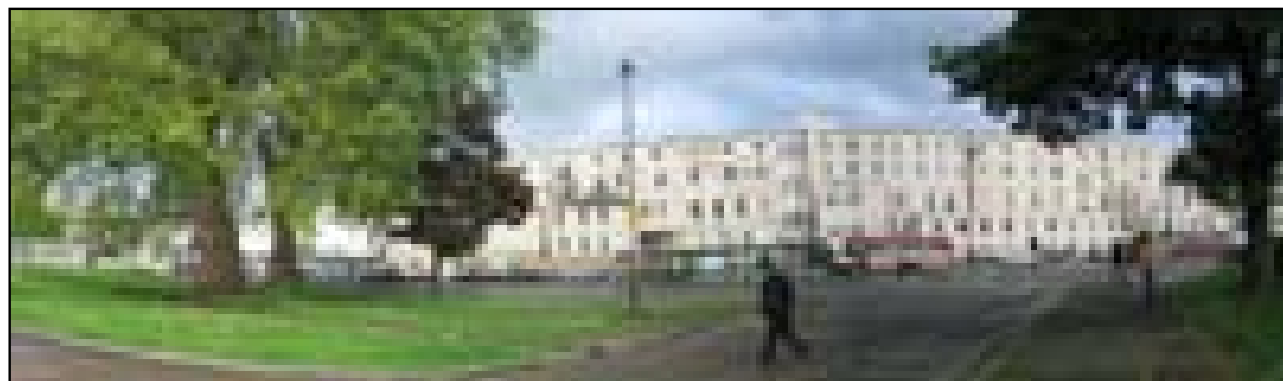


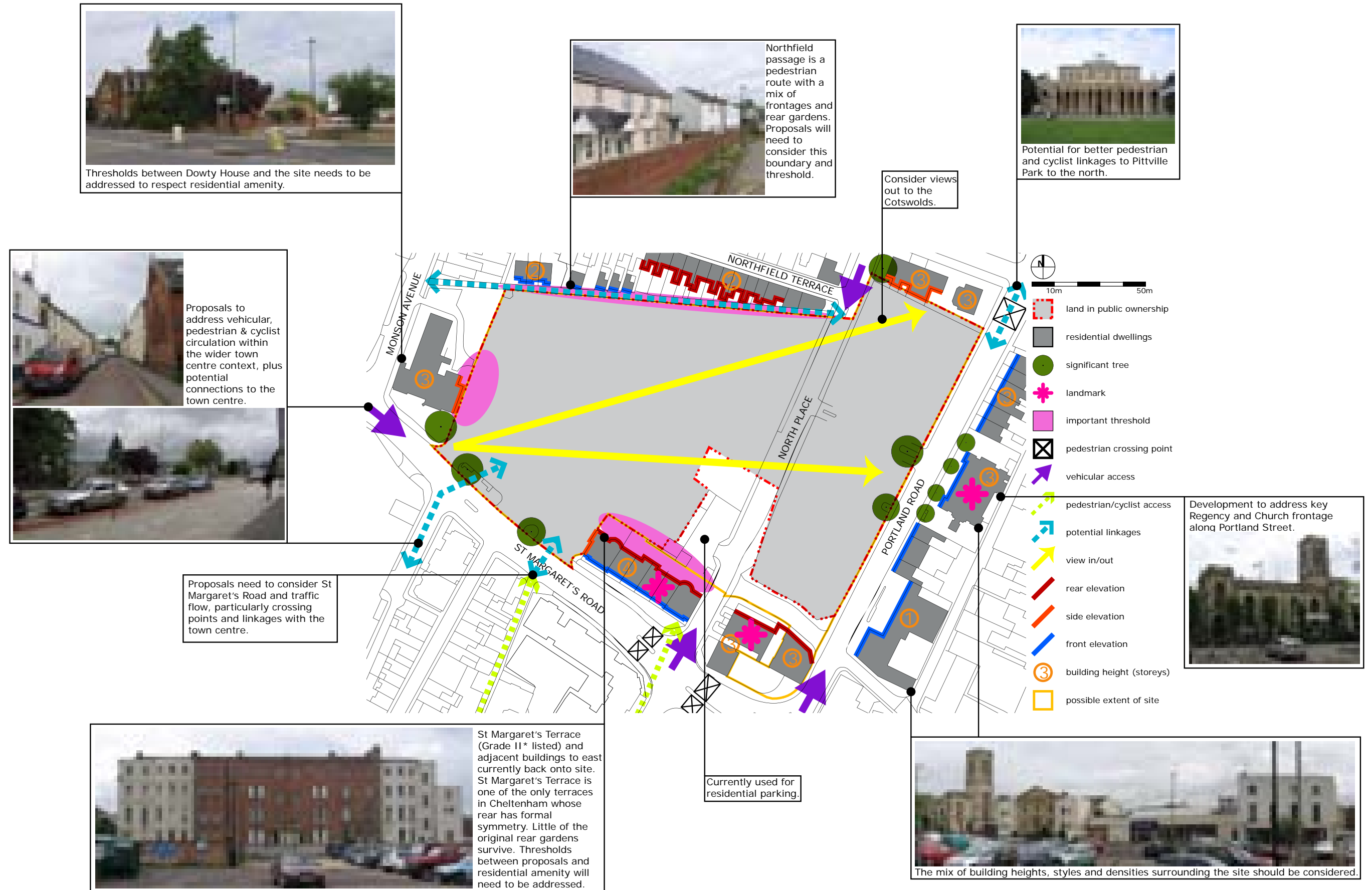
2) View eastwards towards the rear of the Municipal Offices

- Rear elevation fronting the space provides a poor quality pedestrian and cyclist environment.
- Royal Well Road is dominated by on-street parking and fast, one-way traffic.
- Rear elevation currently creates a barrier between the site and the town centre.

4) View northwards from Cheltenham Ladies College towards southern site boundary

- Office buildings at site's south eastern corner do not address the site, providing poor pedestrian and cyclist environment along Royal Well Road.
- Surface car park surrounded by fence at site's southern end does not enclose site nor provide any sense of place or arrival.





North Place Photographic Analysis



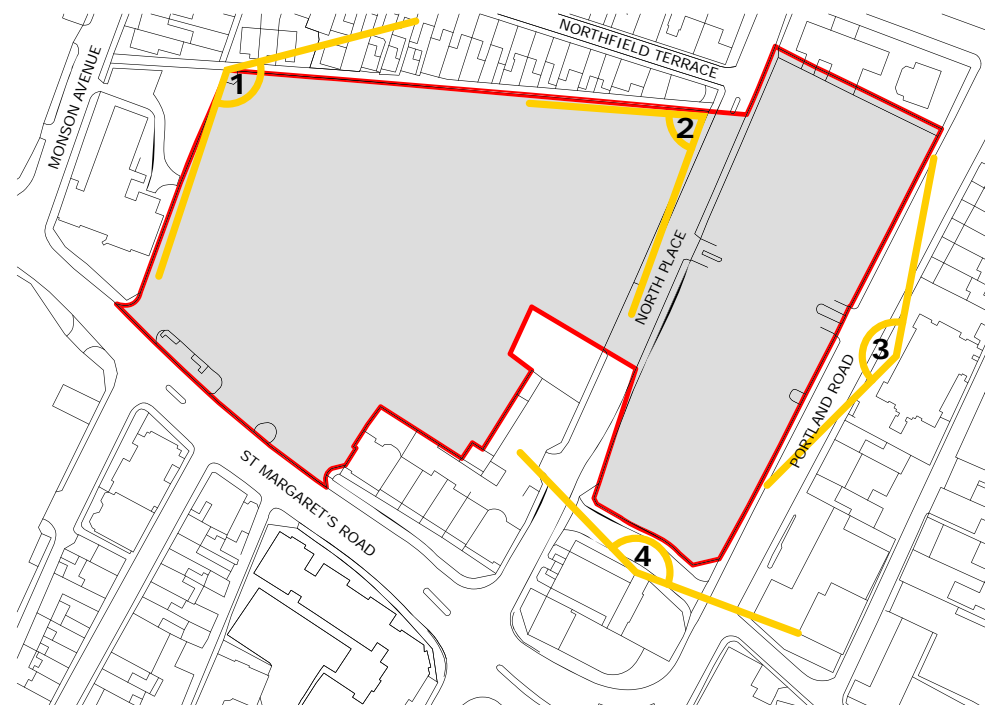
1 View south-eastwards across site

- Northfield Passage, with mix of frontages and rear elevations needs to be addressed
- Long views to Cotswolds
- Thresholds between site and residential amenity
- Mix of building heights



2 View south-westwards across western part of site

- Wall separating site, along North Place
- Note St Margaret's Terrace (rear elevation) dominates site's southern boundary
- New leisure complex is visually intrusive



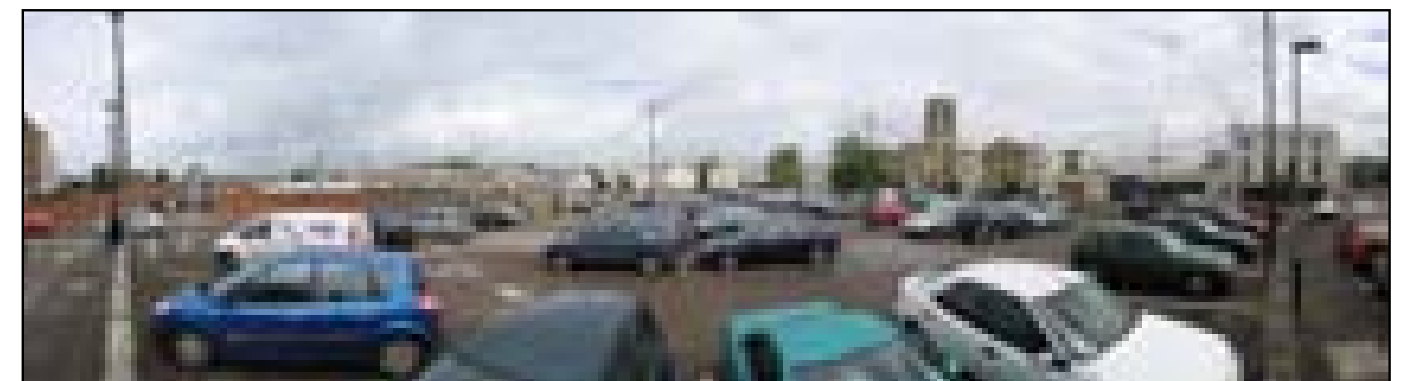
3 View westwards across site from Holy Trinity Church

- One way traffic travelling north in foreground – needs to be considered as part of wider traffic flows
- Regency buildings on southern boundary (rear elevation) need to be addressed



4 View northwards from Chapel Spa

- Dominance of church tower along eastern boundary
- Little trees or vegetation on site
- Mix of heights and styles of buildings on site periphery



7. Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

A significant amount of work has already been undertaken as part of the Civic Pride project, not the least of which is the Latham Studies. Subsequent to the Latham work the council has undertaken a range of initiatives and continues to pursue numerous projects which are fundamental to progressing Civic Pride.

The purpose of this baseline stage has been to: review and update the preceding studies; understand and integrate recent council initiatives; assess existing data, identifying gaps in the available information; fill the baseline data/ knowledge gaps through further analysis; and develop a solid rationale for intervention in future phases.

While the Latham work provides an inspiring point of departure for the Civic Pride project, the success of the initiative is dependent on several key factors, including:

- transport and traffic feasibility
- integration with economic objectives
- a clear planning strategy and programme which is compliant with current legislation and guidance
- a robust and financially feasible delivery and implementation framework

The baseline work has taken the Latham studies a step further by beginning to address transport and traffic issues, considering Cheltenham's economic position and potential; setting out a clear, compliant strategy by which project proposals can achieve statutory status; and developing the groundwork for financially feasible and implementable projects within the Civic Pride study area.

The tasks and analysis undertaken during this stage have been essential for the team to develop a shared view and appreciation of the cross-disciplinary issues and opportunities within the study area, as well as to develop a common vision for the way forward in future stages. Much of the analysis undertaken by individual workstreams has been focussed on developing a set of conclusions/ implications for forthcoming phases. Broad agreement to these conclusions from the Civic Pride officers' steering group is required before proceeding on to Phase 2.

7.2 Cheltenham's Economy

Despite the relative prosperity and affluence which characterises the town, pockets of deprivation persist, particularly in St Paul's which abuts the north western boundary of the study area. While the Civic Pride area is focussed on the town centre, intervention in the northern part of the study area will potentially to impact the environment of St Paul's. Public realm, urban design and transport initiatives, as well as development proposals should aim to improve the environment of the St Paul's area and provide better integration between this area and the town centre, thereby ensuring that this community is able to benefit from future investment in the Civic Pride area.

Civic Pride proposals should aim to harness growth in key employment sectors, particularly tourism and retail; the public sector and financial and business services. Public realm and transport initiatives, as well as development proposals for individual sites should focus on enhancing the potential of Cheltenham as a tourism and retail destination, and on boosting the growth of public sector employment. Maintaining good regional and sub-regional access (particularly by public transport, but also by car) as well as reducing congestion in the town centre is a central requirement. Public realm and urban design initiatives which reinforce Cheltenham's unique sense of place brought to bear by its heritage, architecture, green spaces, cultural and retail offer, will be critical to harnessing economic and employment growth.

In respect of development opportunities which support employment in key growth sectors, the possibility of the relocation of Council offices from the Promenade to new purpose built premises (possibly on the North Place site), presents an opportunity to interface with Gloucester Country Council's review and rationalisation of office accommodation.. Preliminary consultation indicated that there may be a coincidental interest between the Country and the Borough. This is to be explored in future phases. Similarly, if the Council offices were to be available for redevelopment, economic appraisal and demand analysis indicates that a new hotel may be appropriate in this location.



The reinforcement of the town's unique retail offer, including independent, specialist and high end fashion retail alongside its standard high street offer is considered key to future growth, and to maintaining and enhancing Cheltenham's position in the retail hierarchy in the face of competition from other retail centres such as Gloucester and Bristol. Retail development opportunities include the Beechwood shopping centre and Royal Crescent, as well as improved integration of the specialist shopping areas of Montpellier and the Suffolks with the town centre.

Tourism makes a significant contribution to the town's economy, and future public realm improvements and signage should include consideration of improving the visitors' experience of the town. The night time economy makes a significant contribution to Cheltenham's economy, and has close links with the tourism economy. Management of the night time economy is required to ensure that amenity and safety of residents is not compromised. The development of managed evening entertainment zones should be considered as part of the urban design strategy.

The skills gap within employment growth sectors, including tourism and hospitality, customer care and marketing is being addressed in part through the Sector Skills Council. It is considered that a programme aimed at establishing Cheltenham as a centre of excellence for service could complement and reinforce growth potential in the retail and tourism sectors. At the same time the utilisation of skills and knowledge of foreign workers could benefit the local economy, particularly in sectors where skilled workers are required. Recent research has shown that for many skilled migrants integration is slow as they tend to accept low skill jobs, working long hours with the result that they are slow to achieve proficiency in English and hence to contribute their skills and experience to the local economy. A targeted programme aimed at addressing this issue and integrating skilled foreign workers may be of benefit.

Cheltenham's buoyant housing market has associated affordability disbenefits. The development of publicly owned sites within the town centre offer a unique opportunity for the provision of affordable housing, potentially in excess of the Council's 40% target, provided this is feasible in terms of the required returns to be generated by development.



7.3 Transport Implications

The implementation of the Latham Study proposals is largely dependent on the removal of traffic from the inner ring road, the closure of the town centre to non-essential traffic and the relocation of the bus station at Royal Well. Capacity and feasibility assessments in relation to the above, as well as consultation with key stakeholders will be a priority for the development of alternative routes as part of the transport strategy proposals. The review of public transport provision, the rationalisation of bus routes and interchange opportunities will be an essential component of the transport strategy, with an emphasis on improving the level and quality of service, and increasing patronage.

Increasing congestion and safety issues on St Margaret's Road are a key concern. Congestion on this route will potentially be intensified with the removal of traffic from the inner ring road, impacting on the severance of St Paul's and future development of the North Place/ Portland Road site. A "quick wins" programme which is aimed at addressing traffic issues on this section of the ring road is proposed as a priority for the early part of Phase 2.

Cycling provision in the town centre has been identified as a key issue. In conjunction with the development of the public realm strategy, future phases will examine the potential for the provision of direct cycle routes through the town centre, avoiding areas of pedestrian priority, along with improved cycle parking facilities. Cycling occupies a high level of modal share and further increases could contribute to relieving congestion.

Improved pedestrian circulation and linkages within the heart of the town centre, as well as with Montpellier, the Suffolks, and St Paul's is a priority. The analysis indicates the main areas of pedestrian/ vehicular conflict as well as pedestrian desire lines and areas of inadequate/ non-existent crossing provision. These will be assessed against proposals for the removal of traffic from the inner ring road and public realm improvements in the forthcoming phases.

Servicing of retail outlets and other businesses is in the town centre is obviously key to their economic survival. Key routes required for servicing include Albion ST, Wellington St, and Rodney Road/ Regent St. The accommodation of servicing for existing and proposed development, reducing conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists will be a necessary consideration of the transport strategy. Consultation with retailers and occupiers is likely to be required.

Taxi rank (and public transport) provision needs to be rationalised in response to changes of use on the Royal Well site and the creation of zones for the night time economy.

Given that vehicular approaches do not correspond to off street parking provision, improved signage of clear and direct routes between approaches and parking areas is required, to reduce unnecessary traffic through the centre. Other aspects will include the management of on-street parking, taking into account safety and the impacts of parking on the streetscape and the public realm.



7.4 Urban Design Review

The character areas concept provides a useful starting point for the urban design strategy, which will focus on improving upon the strengths of individual character areas and remedying particular deficiencies within each in a co-ordinated manner. The consideration of public realm interventions in the study area in terms of the character area classifications will enable discreet areas of interest, as well as the distinct qualities and appeal of individual parts of the study area to be enhanced, contributing to the overall heritage, identity, and charm of Cheltenham. Recommendation in respect of character areas of Montpellier, Cheltenham Central and the Suffolks as set out in the Cheltenham's Conservation Area Guidance will be taken up as part of in the Urban Design and Public Realm Strategies.

However, recommendations developed by the Cheltenham Conservation Area Partnership (CUCAP) have relevance to St Paul's High St West End and Sandford which overlap and abut the study area. In keeping with the objective of ensuring the benefits of the Civic Pride initiative spill over into other areas and communities, CUCAP recommendations (particularly in relation to St Paul's) will form a key part of public realm strategy development.

In respect of streets and street scene, poor quality street scene is generally synonymous with high levels of traffic and poor pedestrian environments, as is the case with much of the ring road. The quality of Albion St, High St, East, Clarence St/ North Street, St James Street, and Grosvenor Street, as well as the northern end of the Promenade at Boots Corner is not considered to befit of a town of Cheltenham's stature. Focal areas for street scene improvements where street scene improvements will need to be addressed as part of redevelopment proposals include Royal Well/ Crescent Place and St George's Street as well as ST Margaret's Road and Portland Street.

A series of key nodes were identified, considering pedestrian flows, street function, and pedestrian desire lines. Building on the assessment of street scene quality, it is considered that the following nodes should provide a focus for future public realm intervention, based on baseline conditions: Boots Corner, High Street East End and West End, Southern End of the Promenade, Pitville Street/ Albion Street Junction.

A future public realm strategy should celebrate Cheltenham's history, reinvigorating the town's promenades, gardens, crescents and historic architecture; building on its heritage as a market town; recognising the role of the River Chelt; emphasising its identity as a centre for culture and education; using design intervention as a vehicle for historic interpretation; and re-inventing urban design and architectural principles derived from Cheltenham's Regency history into a design framework and design codes which address contemporary aspirations.

A key principle to be applied in the urban design strategy is re-inventing and updating the promenading tradition through the establishment of clear walking routes linking public spaces, gardens and key destinations, and reinforcing these routes with tree planting.

The potential contribution of art to the public realm and to Cheltenham's identity is to be a key consideration of the urban design strategy. However, in order for public art to make an impact it will need to be championed by all departments within the Council, and the community dimension will need to be fully explored. Development of the 3 key sites within the Civic Pride area provide a unique opportunity for the strong and creative integration of public art into the fabric of the town, providing an example for developers to follow. Further opportunities for public art are identified in the approach studies.

Green spaces are a defining dimension of the public realm in Cheltenham. There is a regular sequence of green spaces in a north-south direction between Pitville Park to the north of the study area and Suffolk Square to the south, which is reinforced by groups and avenues of trees along the Promenade. The east-west sequence of green space provision follows the line of the River Chelt. As the Chelt passes beneath the town in culvert, opportunities for celebrating this juxtaposition are lost. Greenspaces are generally well used and well liked, and there is a demand for additional provision for teenagers and young people.

The provision of additional green space should be a consideration of development proposals within the as part of development proposals in the northern part of the study area. Within the wider area, emphasis should be on enhancing existing green spaces, and improving the linkages between them.

The analysis of pedestrian signage indicates that information overload, irrelevance, a lack of integration between signage systems, and inflexibility undermines the contribution of current provision to legibility. Furthermore, it is considered that the current finger posts tend to pastiche regency and that this undermines identity and the Cheltenham “brand”.

A new approach is required which reflects Cheltenham’s enviable reputation as a locus for style and contemporary design, and which is sufficiently flexible to accommodate change as well as the requirements of disabled people. This should include a new “Cheltenham script” which would be used in all signage and printed material and which could contribute to the identity of the town. The overhaul and replacement of signage should be focussed on simple and elegant signage at key nodes and routes in the town centre, and at gateways on the main approaches into the town. The design review of signage will be implemented as part of the public realm proposals, such that co-ordinates suites of furniture, lighting, bins, bollards and signs can be considered as one piece.

Any viability of any proposed public realm intervention will need to be assessed in terms of both capital and maintenance costs. The transfer of Highways Agency responsibilities to the County will create a clear distinction between management responsibilities for highways versus other elements of the public realm and is a key factor in considering any long term management and maintenance. A co-ordinated approach with clear implications for budgetary responsibility for public realm maintenance responsibilities between the County and the District will be key to the success of Civic Pride in Cheltenham

Public realm improvement proposals should be considered in terms of the opportunities that substantial re-organisation and capital investment in the public realm will present for reducing maintenance costs. Considering capital costs of intervention only, without due regard for the long terms maintenance and replacement costs will serve to undermine the integrity of any proposed improvements over time and will undermine the sustainability of public realm investment.



7.5 Development sites

The review of the development potential of sites in public ownership has confirmed that the 3 sites identified as having development potential in the brief are those that should be taken forward, based on their size, potential contribution to the public realm and approaches into Cheltenham, as well as aspirations for the town. The more detailed preliminary site analysis indicates a number of design opportunities and issues. Other parts of the baseline study have contributed to the preliminary assessment of the development potential of these sites. This is summarised below.

St James’s Square

Preliminary indications are that this site may be appropriate for mixed use office development and/ or residential. Further detailed analysis will confirm levels of demand and the type of accommodation that might be suited to this site. Co-ordination with the County’s proposals for the shopfitters’ site will be essential, and will potentially open up opportunities for public space creation and for links through to St George’s Place, and beyond to Royal Well.

Royal Well

The relocation of the bus depot and the re-orientation of ring road traffic are critical to enable the redevelopment of this site. The possible relocation of the council offices would enable the redevelopment of the existing building, potentially as an upmarket boutique hotel. A new building on the back of the council office building could address Royal Crescent and the green area which fronts it. Market analysis suggest that retail and leisure uses may be appropriate in this location. Public space provision, including space for outdoor seating, gathering and events, should be considered, including performance and café culture.

North Place/ Portland Street

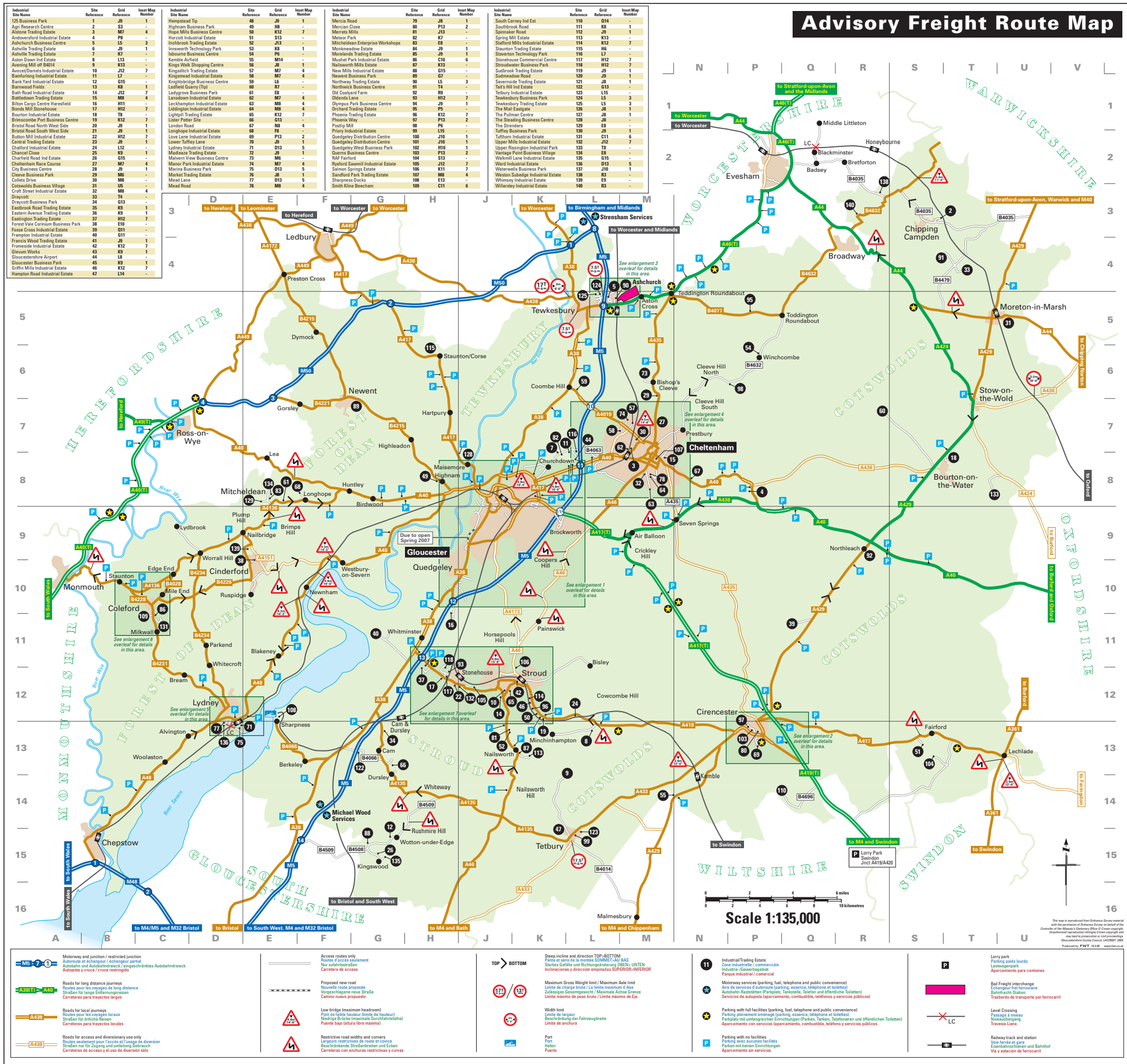
This is a potential site for a purpose built building to house Cheltenham and Gloucestershire Country Council offices. Public space provision and a pedestrian promenade route through this site should be considered, along with portential residential development.

7.6 Indicators of Success

Future phases will be focussed upon developing a transport, urban design and public realm strategy, along with development options for the 3 sites. It is imperative that option development is consistent with aspirations and objectives for Cheltenham. Building on the economic objectives set out in section 2 of this report, a set of indicators have been developed in accordance with the brief. These will be used to monitor and measure the success of implementation of Civic Pride proposals. The proposed indicators range from high level to specific and are set out below, ranging from high level to specific.

- Deprivation levels (particularly in St Pauls)
- Unemployment levels
- Training provision and skills gaps (particularly in the retail and hospitality sectors)
- Cheltenham's position in the regional and national retail hierarchy
- Growth and longevity of SMEs in Cheltenham
- Unemployment levels
- Number of businesses in the town centre
- Revenue from festivals and events
- Footfall in the town centre
- Number of small independent specialist retailers in the Civic Pride area
- Levels of inward investment in the Civic Pride Area
- Retail and tourism revenue spend in the Civic Pride Area
- Employment levels in the Civic Pride Area
- Public realm maintenance costs
- CBC revenues from redevelopment





Gloucestershire Advisory Freight Route Map

This map indicates the best available routes for heavy goods vehicles travelling in Gloucestershire. The map illustrates the locations of industrial and trading estates as well as lorry lay-bys and roadside facilities. The routes chosen as designated lorry routes have been agreed by the County Council. By encouraging drivers to use the routes indicated, lorry operators are assisting in avoiding environmentally sensitive areas and conflicts with local residents.

Know your vehicle height, weight and width

The map shows bridges on the lorry route network where the safe clearance is restricted partially or wholly below 16'3" (4.95 metres). It also shows bridges and roads with weight restrictions.

Please note there are signed height and weight restrictions which are not shown on this map. These are on other, non-lorry route roads.

If your height is greater than 16'3" (4.95 metres) and if you cannot lower your load must check out your route with the relevant highway authorities.

Contact:
Amey Mouchel on behalf of Highways Agency (Motorways and trunk roads)
Tel: (0121) 7881369 Fax: 08702 405954
Gloucestershire County Council (all other roads in Gloucestershire)
Tel: (01452) 425555 Fax: (01452) 426927

Email: structures@gloucestershire.gov.uk
For abnormally wide loads (of equal to or greater than 13'6"/4.1 metres for non-motorway use and 15'1"/4.6 metres for motorways), please contact Gloucestershire Constabulary.
Tel: 0845 0901234 Fax: (01452) 754127 allowing at least two clear working days notice.

Traffic reports

For Countywide traffic reports please tune into: BBC Radio Gloucestershire on 104.7FM and 1413AM or Severn Sound on 102.4FM

Any Comments

If you would like to make comments about his map please contact:
The Freight Quality Partnership, Transport Planning, Gloucestershire County Council, Shire Hall, Bearland, Gloucester GL1 2TH Tel: (01452) 426406
Email: FQP@gloucestershire.gov.uk

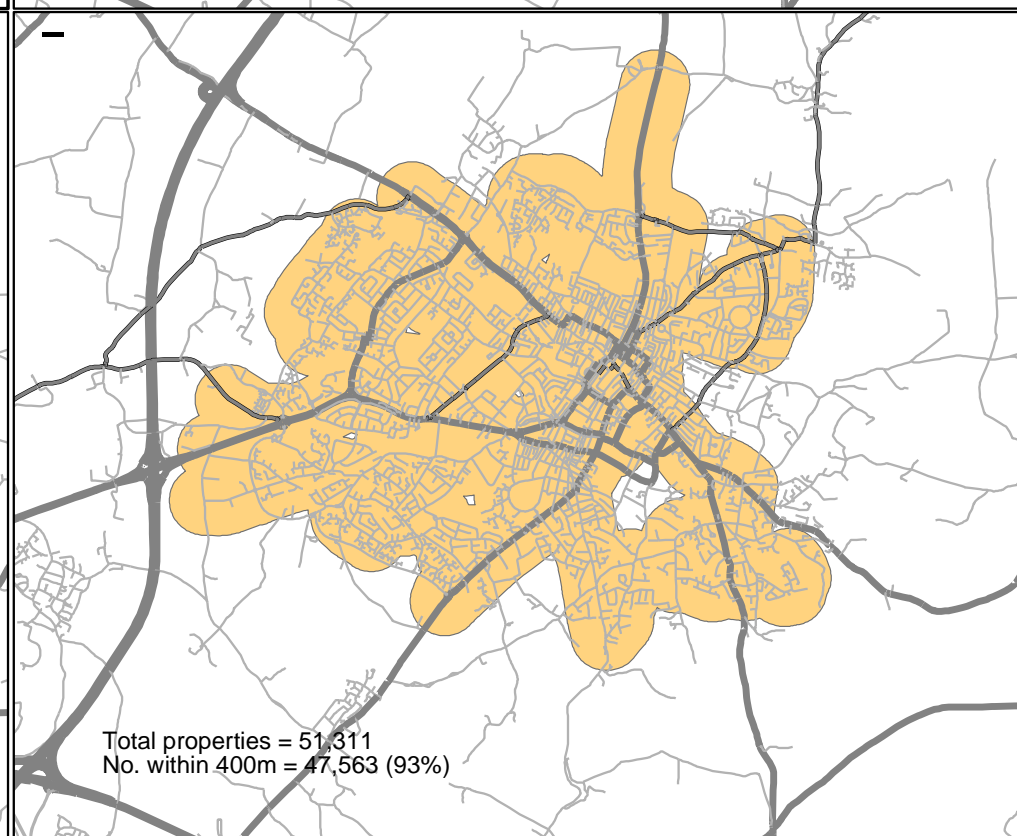
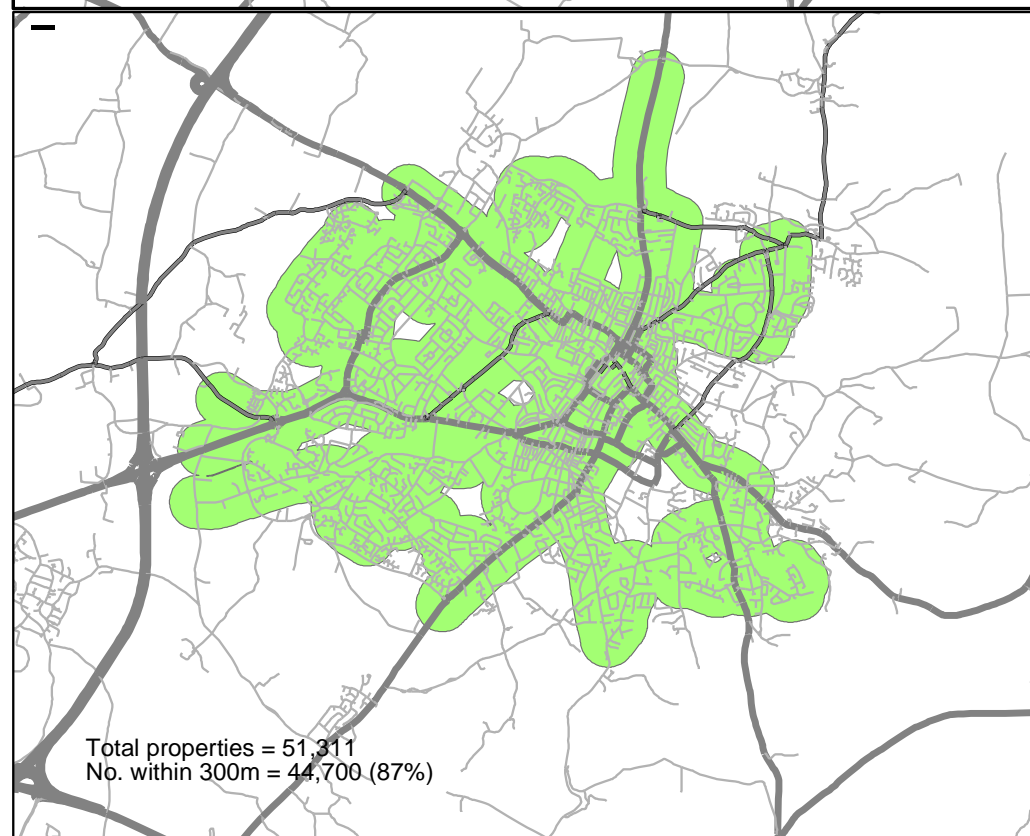
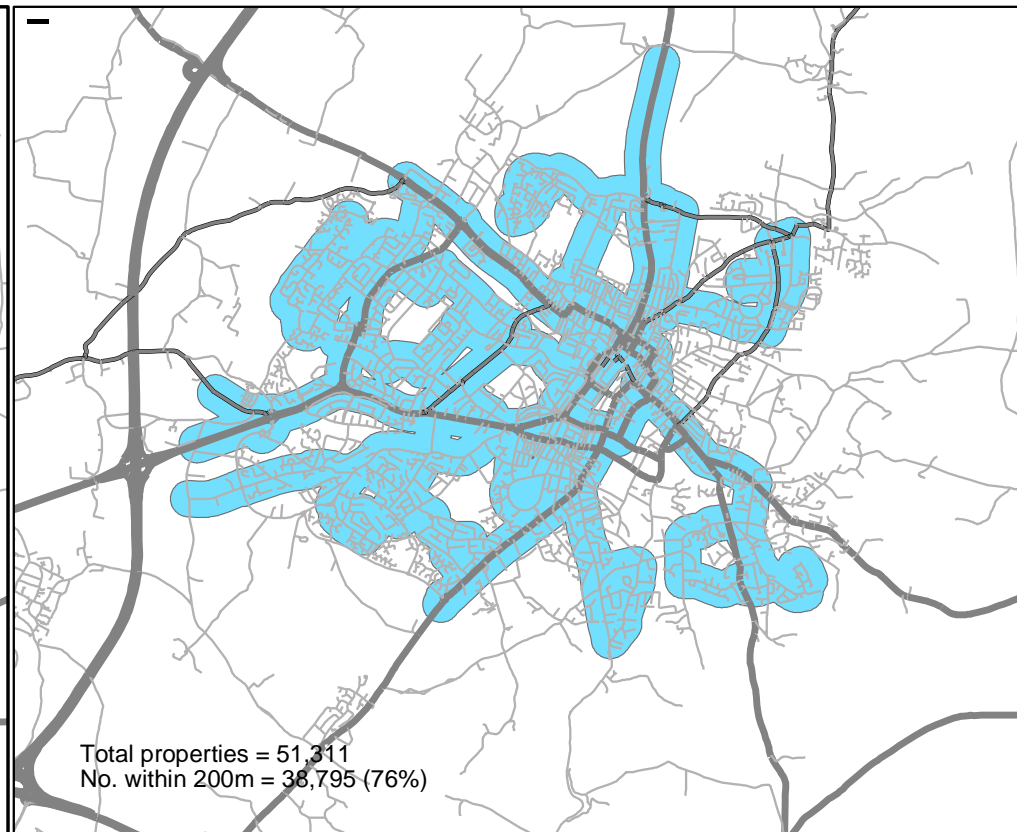
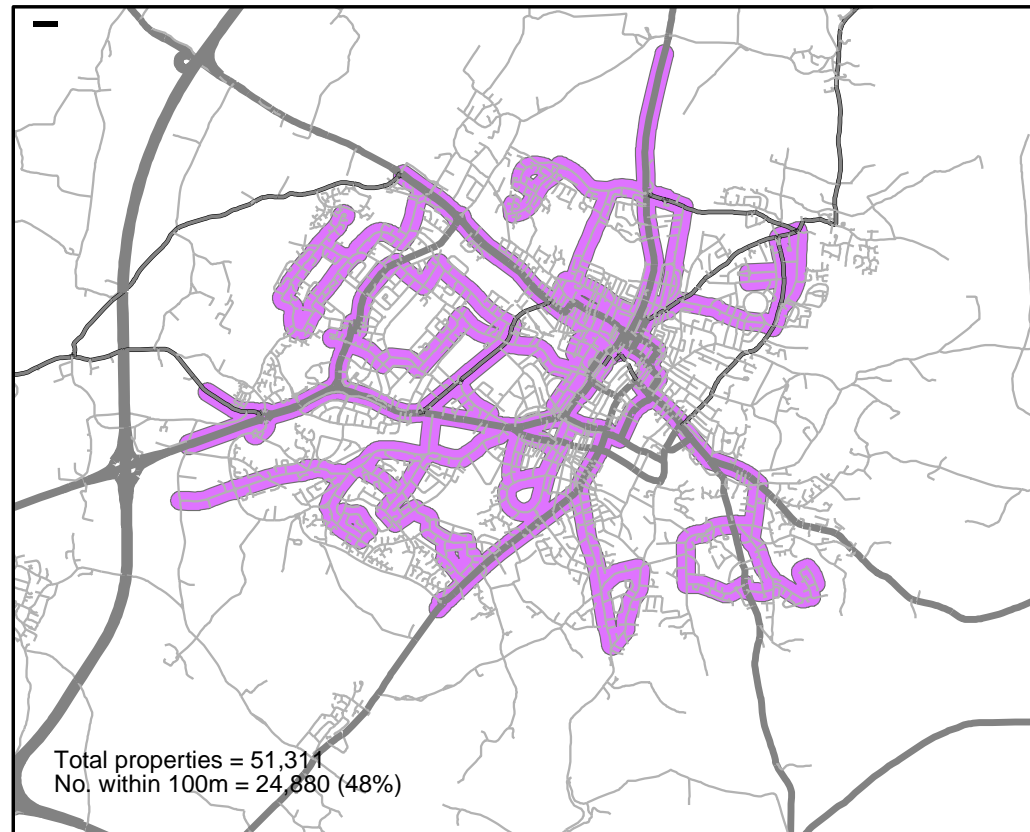
Developed and designed by the Gloucestershire Freight Quality Partnership
Produced and funded by Gloucestershire County Council



Gloucestershire County Council and the Freight Quality Partnership has produced this map in order to assist lorry drivers in Gloucestershire. Whilst every care has been taken to ensure all information is correct, Gloucestershire County Council can accept no liability for the inaccuracy of information. The County Council would be grateful to be informed of any inaccuracies which do occur so these can be rectified in future editions.

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Proximity to Bus Routes - 30 min Frequency or Less



This plan shows the extent of the households within Cheltenham that are within 100m, 200m, 300m and 400m of a bus route with a frequency of 30 minutes or less.

The number of households within the zones is calculated from property details held by Ordnance Survey and should be taken as indicative only.

Bus routes used to calculate this data include the main town centre services, as well as those between Cheltenham and Gloucester.

Those with frequencies of 30 minutes or less are: (Services 10, 27, 41, 46, 511, 94, 97/98, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, N, U, X94)

Total number of properties within the Cheltenham boundary = 51,311

Key

- Bus Routes 100m 30mins or less
- Bus Routes 200m 30mins or less
- Bus Routes 300m 30mins or less
- Bus Routes 400m 30mins or less

Notes

Information correct at time of issue.

**Proximity to
Bus Routes
(30min Freq or Less)**



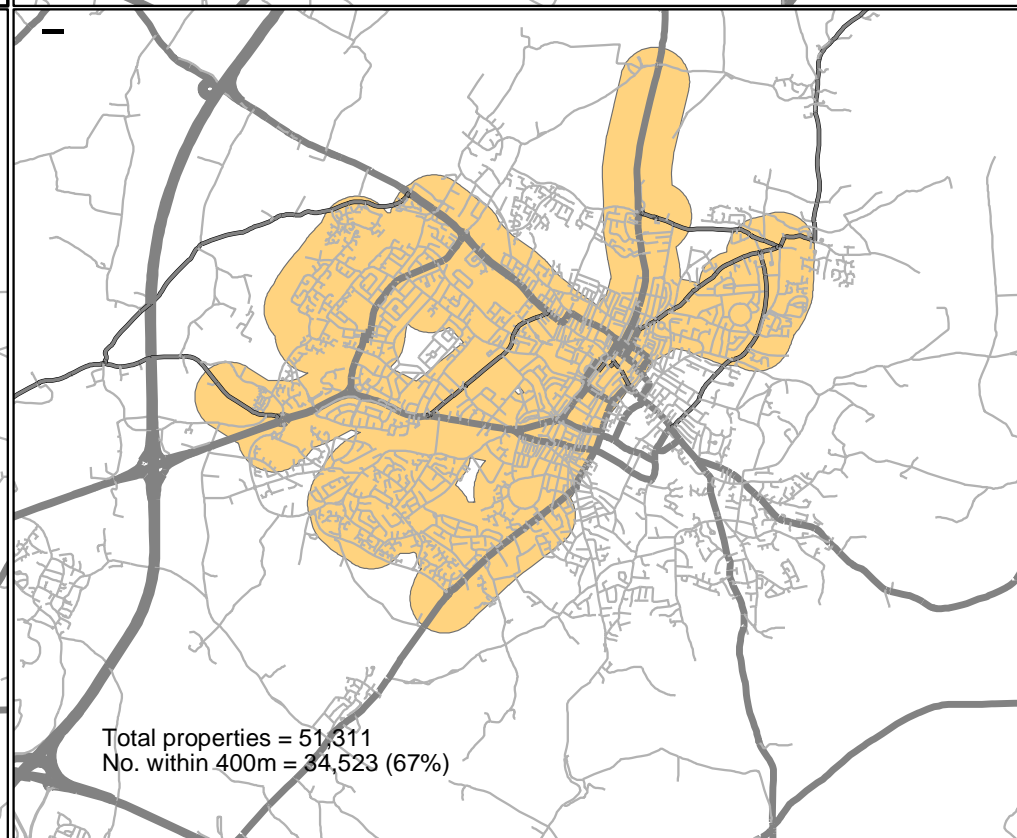
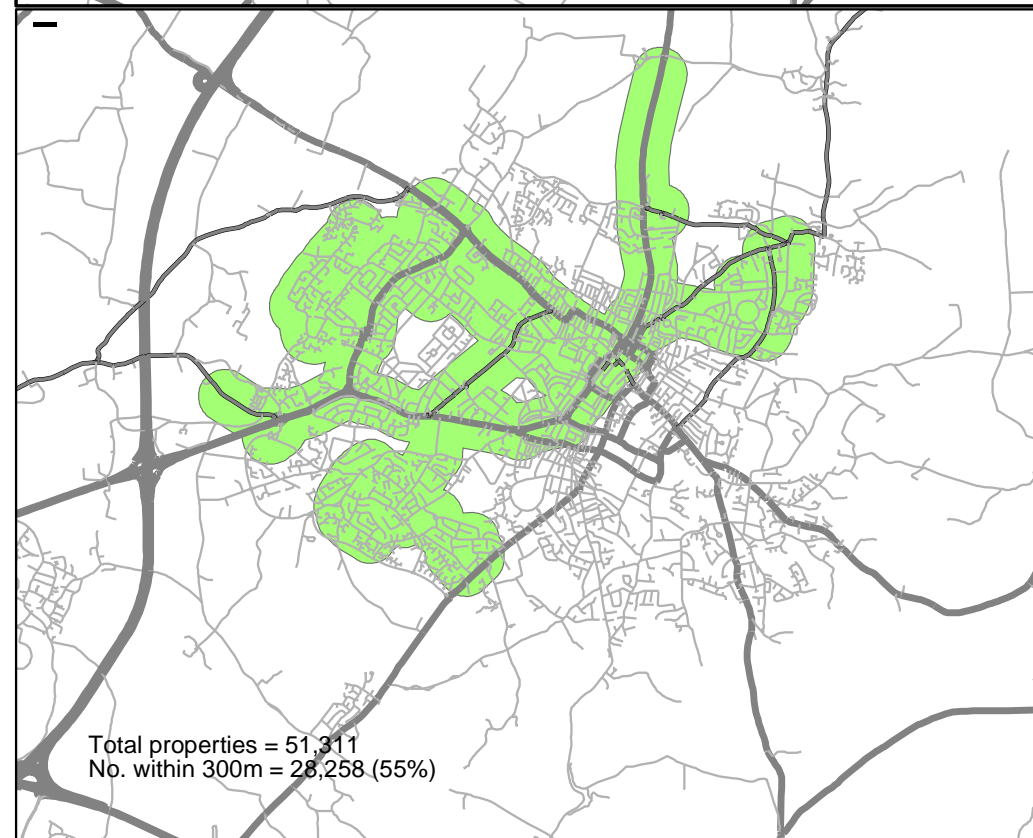
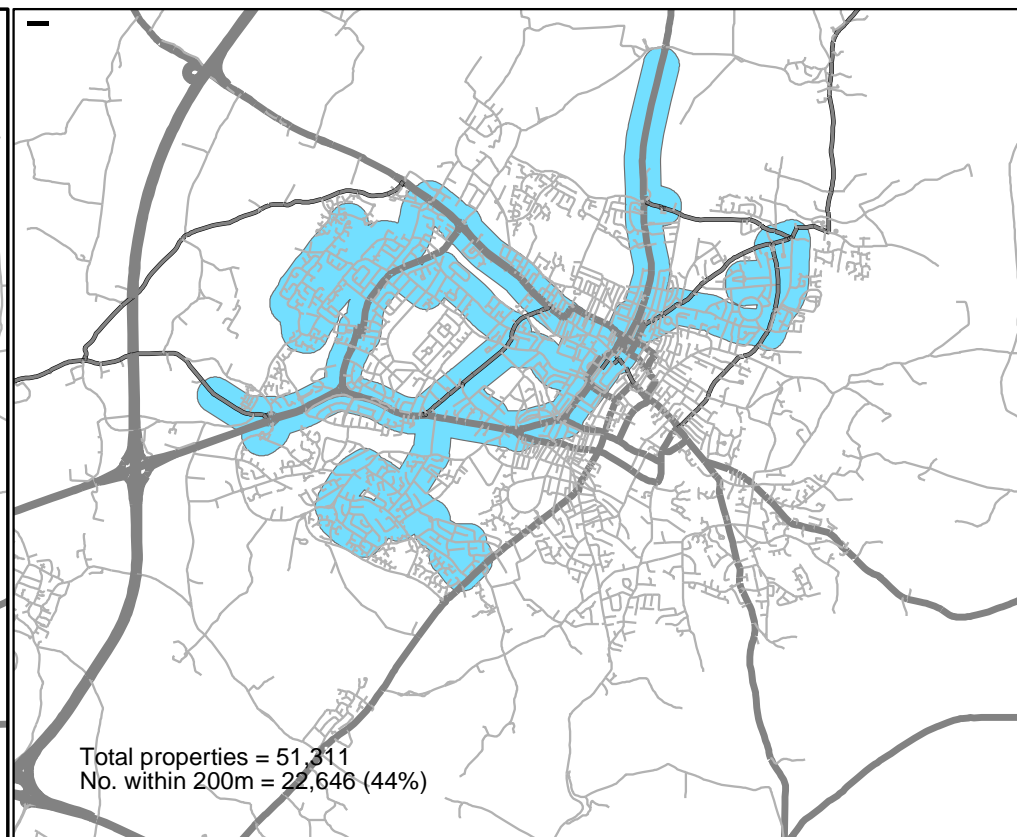
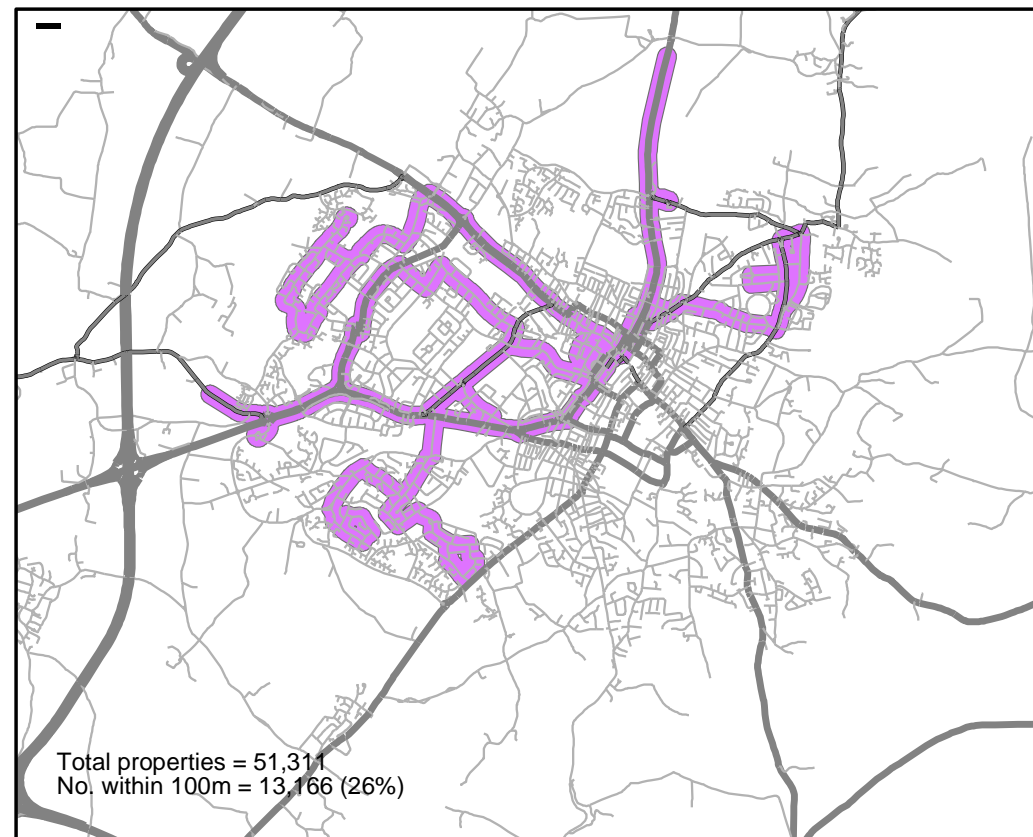
Date of Issue: 29 Jan 2006

Author: KAH

Scale: NTS

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Proximity to Bus Routes - 15 min Frequency or Less



This plan shows the extent of the households within Cheltenham that are within 100m, 200m, 300m and 400m of a bus route with a frequency of 15 minutes or less.

The number of households within the zones is calculated from property details held by Ordnance Survey and should be taken as indicative only.

Bus routes used to calculate this data include the main town centre services, as well as those between Cheltenham and Gloucester.

Those with frequencies of 15 minutes or less are:
(Services 511, 94, A, B, C, D, E)

Total number of properties within the Cheltenham boundary = 51,311

Key

- Bus Routes 100m 15mins or less
- Bus Routes 200m 15mins or less
- Bus Routes 300m 15mins or less
- Bus Routes 400m 15mins or less

Notes

Information correct at time of issue.

**Proximity to
Bus Routes
(15min Freq or Less)**



Date of Issue: 29 Jan 2006

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Scale: NTS

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Proximity to Bus Routes - All Services

