

SECTION 3 – UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

3.0 UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

This chapter describes the current condition of the Pittville Park. For ease of reference the site has been divided into character areas. See Fig 1.3

This section summarises the site's geology and topography, followed by a general description of each character area. This is followed by surveys relating to the ecology, vegetation (including arboriculture) and hydrology of the site as well as the views to and from the site.

It concludes with an analysis and assessment of the surviving remains of the historic park based upon a comparison of the surveyed features and historic mapping.

3.1 EXISTING CONDITION

3.1.1 Location, Geology Topography

Location

Pittville Park is located within the Pittville area to the north of Cheltenham.

Cheltenham is located on the outer edge of the River Severn flood plain and has a predominantly lower lying flat landscape. Towards the east, the Cotswold escarpment rises dramatically which provides the town with a significant character and setting.

Geology

The spa town is built on Lias clays and marls which sit upon triassic deposits. The lower Lias clays form the solid geology of the area and are considered to be a non-aquifer.

Pittville Park sits predominantly upon this geology, however, a part of the Marle Hill character area to the west of the park was historically used for clay extraction and for the subsequent production of bricks. When in c1950 the extraction had ended the redundant clay pits were used as a household and commercial waste tipping site. This practice ended in 1967 and the site was capped with a layer of clay and at that time Wyman's Brook was diverted into a culvert which runs east west under the park and Tommy Taylor Lane. There is a significant layer of 'made ground' in this area and contamination was discovered in the 1990's.

Topography of the Park

Pittville Park occupies the valley sides surrounding two ornamental lakes and Wyman's Brook.

To the south of the lakes, the Agg Gardner area has a gently north sloping topography with tree lines bunds towards the lower lake.

To the north of the lower lake Marle Hill slopes steeply towards the residential houses of Albermarle Gate. To the west of Marle Hill on the land once used as a residential and commercial tip, the topography is considerable more undulating than the central and eastern areas of Marle Hill.

Beyond the lower lake, west of Agg Gardner, the topography becomes undulating with man made, tree covered bunds becoming a predominant feature. It is believed that these bunds

were created from redundant spoil from the Leisure @ Cheltenham development and today contributes to the park's character and setting.

The park extends beyond Tommy Taylor's Lane towards the Midwinter residential area.

To the east of the A435 Evesham Road the topography of the park is softer. North of the upper lake the land slopes up gently towards the Pump Rooms with mature trees and shrubs providing the character of the park setting. To the south of the upper lake the Pittville lawns have an insignificant slope. Again mature trees and shrubs are the predominant feature and contribute the lawns character and setting.

The topography of the squares and crescents is similar to that of the Pittville Lawn and are predominantly flat. Once again mature trees and shrubs contribute to the overall character of these spaces

3.1.2 Character Areas

The following section will detail the current condition of the park by character area. The site based surveys identified 10 individual character areas within the boundary of Pittville Park. These character areas can be seen in Fig 1.3 and are as follows;

Character Area 1	Pump Room Lawns
Character Area 2	Upper Lake
Character Area 3	Pittville Lawns
Character Area 4:	Agg Gardner
Character Area 5:	Lower Lake
Character Area 6:	Marle Hill
Character Area 7:	Agg Gardner West
Character Area 8:	Squares Crescents
Character Area 9:	Pittville Gates

3.2 ECOLOGY REPORT OF SURVEY

3.2.1 Desktop Study

In addition to the background information summarised in section 1.0 the desktop study has obtained the following data for Pittville Park.

Statutory Designated Sites

Pittville Park does not hold any statutory designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are no statutory designated sites within proximity to the Park.

Non-statutory Designated Sites

There are no Key Wildlife Sites or Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust Reserves within the Park or the local area.

Protected Species

No records of protected species were reported for the specific Pittville Park area but the following records of protected species are reported for the 1 kilometre grid square the park lies within.

Species	Date of record	Location	Source	Legislation	Notes
Common Lizard	1972	Grid square SO9423	GCER	Bern App III Schedule 5 WCA (Killing, injury and sale only)	This record is over 35 years old and covers a 1 kilometre grid square.
Common Toad	1981	Grid square SO9523 and SO9424	GCER	Bern App III Schedule 5 WCA (sale only)	
Common Frog	1999	Grid square SO9424 and SO9523	GCER	Bern App III Schedule 5 WCA (sale only)	
Smooth Newt	1981	Grid square SO9523	GCER	Bern App III Schedule 5 WCA (sale only)	

GCER = Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records

WCA = Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

UK BAP Priority Species

In addition to Common Toad and Common Lizard (listed above) a number of UK BAP Priority Species of bird have been recorded at Pittville Park as listed in Table 2, Appendix 2

Other Priority Species recorded in the Park or the surrounding 1 kilometre radius include: -

Butterflies	Moths (continued)
Wall (a butterfly)	Blood Vein
	Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet
Moths	Shaded Broad-bar
Garden Dart	Pale Shining Brown
Small Square-spot	Dot Moth
Pale Eggar	Feathered Gothic
Lackey	Powdered Quaker
Oak Hook-tip	Shoulder-striped Wainscot
Small Emerald	Sprawler
Centre-barred Sallow	Knotgrass
Sallow	Dusky Brocade
Rosy Rustic	Mouse Moth
Crescent	Rosy Minor
Mottled Rustic	Deep-brown Dart
Dusky-lemon Sallow	Green-brindled Crescent
Grey Dagger	Dark Brocade
Spinach	Brown-spot Pinion
August Thorn	Beaded Chestnut
Brindled Beauty	White Ermine
Garden Tiger	Buff Ermine

3.2.2 2008 Ecological Survey: Introduction

The site has been compartmentalised into ten Character Areas for description purposes (See **Fig 1.3**). All target notes are annotated on **Fig 1.5** with reference of **Table 1, Appendix 2**). Photographs of features of interest are presented on **Fig 3.1** and **3.2**.

All tables, plans and photographs are cross-referenced throughout the report.

3.3 CONDITION SURVEY BY CHARACTER AREA

3.3.1 Character Area 1 Pump Room Lawns

Landscape

This character area is located to the north of Pittville Park and lies adjacent to the Pump Rooms. The Pittville Lawns slope gently south towards the Upper Lake. The character of this area is one of a mature parkland setting. The lawns to the south, along with spaces to the east, west and north are the setting for the Grade I listed Pump Rooms.



2007 Pittville Pump Room and Bandstand



2007 Mature Trees

Mature species such as Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus Hippocastaum*), English Oak (*Quercus Robur*) and Beech (*Fagus Sylvatica*) are present towards the outer edge of the lawns and towards the area boundary. There is an increasing selection of 'memorial trees' being planted between the mature trees. The memory trees species are wide ranging and appear to be planted in a haphazard manner.

To the east of the lawns the tree planting is predominantly of coniferous species such as Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*) and Yew (*Taxus baccata*)



2007 Eastern path

A plentiful supply of well maintained seating has been provided in this character area, comprising both wooden and wrought iron benches, in a variety of well chosen locations for optimum views of the Pump Rooms, The Upper Lake and internal views of the character area.



2007 Park benches

The grassed lawn is contained within a wide, bitmac surfaced path which runs around the perimeter of the character area. The bitmac surface is, in places becoming cracked and uneven and creates a harsh contrast to the softer mature planted landscape. To the north, around the Pump Room the path expands to form a large hard surfaced grey area

A wooden, circular bandstand is positioned to the north west of the lawn adjacent to the Pump Room. The bandstand is in regular use with a programme of band concerts.



2007 Bandstand

To the west of the Pittville Lawns is a large fenced off area which is occupied by the children's play area and aviaries. This is a very popular area for families with young children and older school children who use the park during their lunch breaks and after school. The equipment in the play area is understood to have been installed around 10 – 15 years ago and is looking tired and faded. Whilst there is a good range of equipment in the play area it caters predominantly for physical play and is aimed predominantly for younger children.



2007 Fenced play area

The play area has a bitmac and wet pour surface which is functional and safe but contributes little to the play value for the area. Some of the markings on the surface have become faded and worn so that they can no longer be distinguishable. The fenced area is accessed via two self closing gates; one is located to the south, adjacent to the toilet block and the other to the north west adjacent to the aviaries.



2007 Newer play equipment aimed at younger children's imaginary play

There are some newer items of equipment for younger children which provide potential for imaginary play. The planting within this area adds to the play value, with areas for hiding and exploration accessible to young children. There is good seating provision within the play area for supervising adults.

There is an area of kit for older children, located to the side of the play area which comprises one frame with swinging tyres, providing little play value other than swinging. There are tyres missing for the frame limiting the number of children who can use the equipment at any one time. A bark surface is provided beneath this piece of equipment which sits well in the parkland setting and softens the landscape.



2007 Equipment for older children

The surfaces within this area, whilst safe are becoming worn and are beginning to deteriorate. Grassed surfaces adjacent to the equipment is wearing, despite the provision of grass-crete.



2007 Worn grass surface in play area



2007 Worn play surface markings

A serpentine path leads up the gentle grassed slope towards the aviaries which stand to the north of this fenced area. Green iron railings separate the area from the busy A435 Evesham Road to the west. To the side of this path is a large expanse of grass which is ideal for free play and is popular with families and older children



2007 Play area and lawn

The aviaries were established in their current position in 1936 although the present buildings are a more recent addition. The collection of animals include rabbits, cockatiels, peacocks and chipmunks and have become a very popular attraction in the park. The upkeep and maintenance on the aviaries is the responsibility of the Parks team.



2007 Aviaries and chipmunk



Adjacent to the aviaries is a small garden, Centenary Gardens, built in 2000 to celebrate the 100th birthday of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. The garden is built in a buff coloured artificial stone material with a series of raised planting beds with benches between. The planting here is beginning to become overgrown and neglected with a number of the planting beds with bare soil. Interpretation panels are located on a cylindrical display board. The information is faded and in need of replacement.



2007 Centenary Gardens

Pump Rooms and Car Park

To the north of Pittville Park stand the Grade I listed Pump Rooms, built between 1825 and 1830 as the focal point to the pleasure grounds. Today the building remains a strong focal point within the park although mature vegetation has now begun to block important vistas to this historic building.

The Pump Rooms stand to the north of the Pump Room Lawns and vehicular access is via two entrance drives from the east and west. Today the building is surrounded by a hard, bitmac surface which is dissected only to the north west and north east by blocks of planting.

Eastern Approach

The East Approach Drive, off Albert Road is the main vehicular access point to the Pump Rooms. This narrow drive has residential houses and parking spaces to both sides and lead in to the park through iron gates. The gates stand within green iron railings of the same style as the rest of the park. These gates are permanently open. A wooden sign is positioned at

this gateway to announce arrival at the Pump Rooms, however, the board and writing are small and difficult to see, especially if arriving by car. Beyond the gateway, the building's east façade is visible, with the main entrance door visible within the colonnade.

Disabled parking spaces have been provided adjacent to this east colonnade, which detract from the vista between the East Approach Road and the Pump Rooms.



2007 Eastern Approach to the Pump Rooms



2007 View east along East Approach Drive

The gateway ironwork is showing signs of deterioration and gives a visual appearance of neglect. To the north and south, the bitmac road surface runs under a section of the ironwork. A lack of pedestrian or vehicular traffic here has enabled the colonisation of moss and weeds which continue to grow unchecked, adding to the visual appearance of neglect.



2007 East Approach Drive gateway

The bitmac surface between the gates has been repaired and replaced several times and the resulting 'patchwork' of colours again detracts from the visual appearance of this gateway space.



2007 Railings to north (above) and south (below)



There is a narrow pedestrian gateway to the south of the railings, which enables access directly from the pedestrian footpath running adjacent to East Approach Drive. The iron railings to the south of the gateway have a variety of posters and notices attached and give a cluttered appearance.



2007 Disabled parking adjacent to the Pump Rooms

Through the gates, the hard, bitmac surface adjoins the paving below the east colonnade. To the south a wide footpath leads down the slope towards the upper lake and to the south west, the same bitmac surface continues adjacent to the south façade of the Pump Rooms.

From the gateway a number of mature trees and shrubs are visible to the south of the Pump Rooms.



2007 East colonnade

To the north of the gateway, mature trees and shrubs provide a green backdrop to the car park. A dense, clipped Laurel (*Aucuba japonica*) hedge defines the planting bed adjacent to the Pump Rooms. Within the bed stands a mature Yew (*Taxus baccata*) and several Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*). A low, brown metal sign directs cars towards the car park.



2007 Planting to north east of Pump Rooms

The wide bitmac surface extends north through a pinch point created by mature planting to either side. The planting is clipped to form a dense barrier alongside the bitmac surface to allow vehicular passage, although it is difficult to establish the species and nature of individual shrubs as a result.



2007 Pinch point towards the car park

Sadly, this eastern gateway space does little to announce the arrival to the magnificent building of the Pump Rooms. There have been plans to replace the gates and railings at this eastern gateway and the latest design by Claire Stenson with help from Jeremy Jefferies is included within this conservation management plan at Appendix 6.

Western Approach

The approach to the Pump Rooms from the west is via the West Approach Drive, off Evesham Road. This entrance is not considered to be the main vehicular access point and the gates are closed and locked throughout the night.



2007 Western approach to the Pump Rooms



2007 View west along West approach Drive towards Evesham Road

The gateway is defined by green iron railings and gates in the same style as those found throughout Pittville Park. The ironwork is showing signs of deterioration and wear and detracts from the visual qualities of this gateway space.

The hard, bitmac surface runs up to and under the majority of this ironwork and as a result of little wear from pedestrians and vehicles, has been colonised by moss and weeds along with leaves and litter. This adds to the visual appearance of deterioration and neglect.

The hard, bitmac surface level is such that the gates have worn a groove into the surface with the process of opening and closing. The bitmac surface is also showing signs of deterioration and has been removed, repaired or replaced in sections.



2007 Ironwork at the western gateway

There is a narrow pedestrian gateway to the north of the ironwork which allow direct access off the pedestrian footpath along West Approach Drive.

A collection of signs and notices have been attached to the ironwork which gives a cluttered appearance.



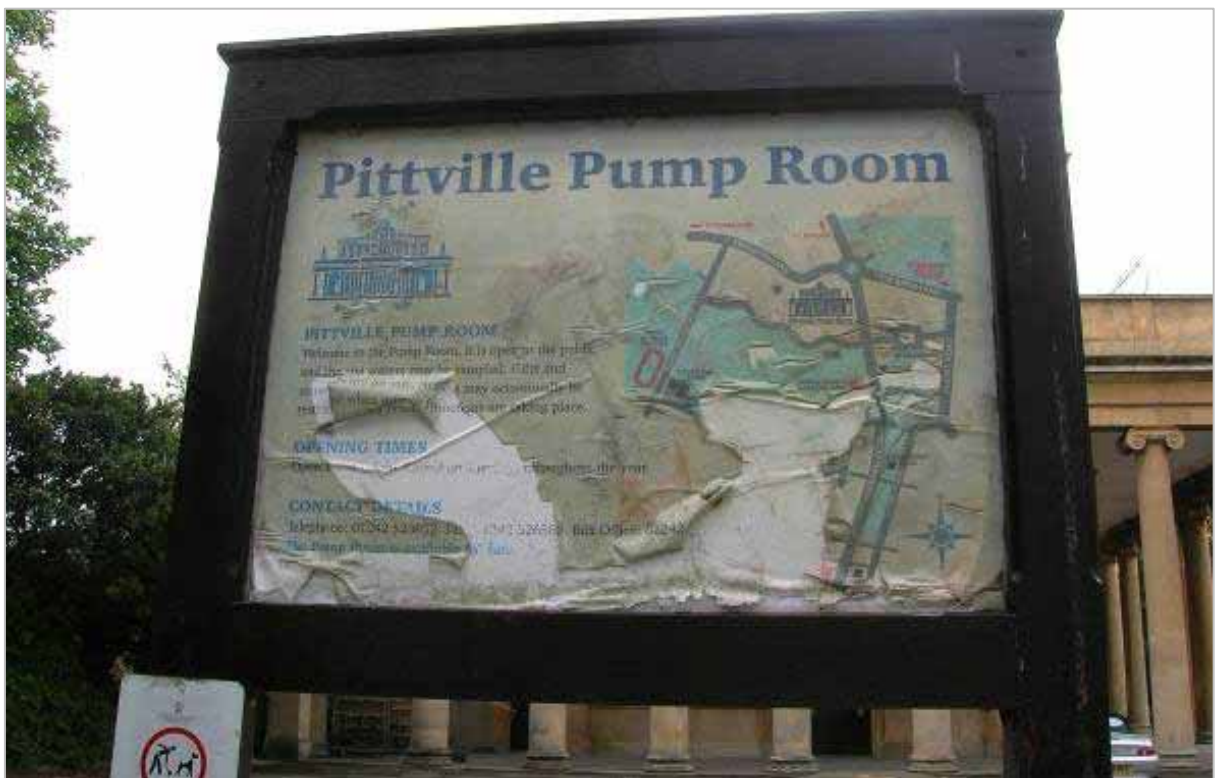
2007 Pedestrian gateway



2007 Gateway looking south west

The ironwork to the south of the gateway is bordered to the east by a grassed verge and mature trees.

A brown wooden sign is positioned close to the ironwork to announce the arrival at the Pump Rooms. The information displayed on the sign is dated and worn and gives the visual appearance of neglect. The sign would be difficult to read if arriving by car.



2007 Gateway signage



2007 Access ramp

The bitmac surface adjoins the natural paving slabs beneath the east colonnade of the Pump Rooms. This bitmac surface treatment is visually harsh adjacent to the softer natural paving and stonework of the Pump Rooms. A ramp has been installed to enable disabled access into the Pump Rooms.

The hard bitmac surface continues to the south west towards the play area and on to the upper lake. A row of black bollards prevent vehicular access beyond this point.



2007 Drive to the south west

To the north of the western gateway, the bitmac surface continues on into the car park, running between a pinch point created by mature planting to either side. A large mature Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), Lime (*Tilia x europaea*) and Strawberry Tree (*Arbutus unedo*) provide focal points within the planting adjacent to the Pump Rooms. Ground cover is provided by a combination of woody shrubs, which have been clipped to form a dense mat.



2007 Planting adjacent to the Pump Rooms

Car Park

The car park occupies the land to the north of the Pump Rooms and has sufficient space to park 150 cars. This car park is predominantly used by visitors to the Pump Room's events and festivals, along with providing additional parking for the nearby racecourse throughout race meetings.



2007 Car park from the Pump Room

The car park's bitmac surface has parking bays marked out in white, in an orderly pattern to achieve maximum parking spaces. Within the bitmac surface there are five semi-mature Norway Maple (*Acer plantanoides*) and a Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*) which stand within circular beds, edged with brick. These beds are randomly filled with either ground cover perennials or left as bare earth.

These trees are a welcome addition to the car park and go some way towards softening the hard bitmac surface throughout the car park.



2007 Planting circles within the car park

To the south western corner of the car park stands a mature Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) and Lime (*Tilia x europaea*). To the north of the car park, along the boundary with neighbouring residential properties stand several Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and a Norway Maple (*Acer plantanoides*).

The boundary to the west, north and east of the car park comprises densely clipped ornamental woody trees and shrubs. Maintenance here has been to maximise parking spaces at the expense of allowing the trees and shrubs to develop into their natural form. This dense boundary is impenetrable and identification of individual species and form is difficult.



2007 Boundary to the west



2007 Boundary to the east (above) and north (below)



The trees and shrubs which form the boundary to the north are of significant depth as to create a visual and audible screen between the car park and the residential properties along Walnut Close. Due to the impenetrable nature of this planted boundary, this area has not been fully surveyed for the purpose of this conservation management plan, although any development proposals here would require further survey work.

To the south the car park is defined by the rear buildings extensions to the Pump Rooms. Planted beds extend a short distance to the east and west of the building and are filled with a collection of mature woody trees and shrubs. Ground cover planting is provided by herbaceous perennials and grass. A collection of new shrubs are in the process of being established here.



2007 New planting



2007 Waste bins



2007 Exterior of Pump Rooms (above below)

To the south west, the car park contains a selection of waste bins, which appear to be randomly stored away from the main building.

A ramp leads from the car park level down towards the service doors to the Pump Rooms. A collection of beer crates, bottles and cleaning equipment is randomly stored within this area which visually detracts from the character of the Pump Room.



The hard bitmac surface extends to the building wall, with a series of slot drains to intercept surface water which is flowing towards the Pump Rooms. There is a build up of moss along the surface immediately adjacent to the building, which appears to be well established and adds to the general visual appearance of neglect.



2007 Southern extent of car park

A series of narrow steps leads from the car park down to the lower level courtyard and on to the Pump Room entrance via the east colonnade. A handrail is provided to one side only.



2007 Lower level courtyard (above and below)

The rear exit from the Pump Rooms is located off to the west side of this narrow courtyard.



To the east of this narrow courtyard is a low, red brick wall which retains a planting bed filled with mature shrubs and trees. Some new planting is in the process of being established here and sections of the wall have been recently replaced. Once established, this planting will provide a pleasant screen to the car park and interest for visitors who use this narrow courtyard space.



2007 New planting



2007 Car park looking south east



2007 Car park looking north



2007 Car Park looking west

Trees and Vegetation

There are a significant number of mature and historically important trees within this area, most notably; a group of three Yew and one Holm Oak close to the southeast corner of the Pump Room, the very large Turkey Oak on the east side of the main lawn to the south of the Pump Room, a fine specimen of Caucasian Wing Nut (east side of main lawn) and numerous Red Horse Chestnuts. All of these trees probably date back to the original plantings of between 1824 and 1830.

There are also a large number of young trees (planted within the last 30 years), which have in many cases been planted as commemorative trees for various local dignitaries. These tend to be concentrated at the west side of the main lawn, close to the footpath.

The general condition of trees within this area is good.

Ecology

The Pump Room Lawns comprise the downhill sloping grassland between the Pump Room and the Upper Lake. The grassland is amenity grassland; abundant and constant lawn species include Perennial Rye-grass, Daisy, White Clover and Dandelion with locally frequent areas of Bulbous Buttercup and Creeping Fescue. Lesser Celandine is present

locally beneath the large trees. The grassland is representative of the MG6 community of the NVC. Asphalt covered footpaths flank both side of the lawn and create a route from the Pump Room towards the Upper Lake.

Arranged over the lawns are standard trees of mixed ages. Of note is the presence of a mature Turkey Oak (**Target Note 1, Appendix 2** and **Photo 1, Fig 3.1**) which supports knot holes suitable for use by roosting bats. Other specimen tree species over the lawn include Silver Birch, Yew, Cedar, Holm Oak and Horse Chestnut; some of which have been planted as remembrance trees.

To the south of the Pump Room is a small bandstand (**Target Note 2, Appendix 2** and **Photo 2, Fig 3.1**)

Area 1 also includes a square area of amenity grassland adjacent to Evesham Road. There are no trees in the centre of the grassland but the western margin supports a row of trees including Silver Birch and the eastern margin is planted with a row of Horse Chestnut and Pedunculate Oak trees. To the south is a children's playground and to the north is an aviary. The aviaries support finches and there are enclosures of rabbits and chipmunks (**Target Note 3, Appendix 2**)

Adjacent to the aviaries are four raised planters with lavender shrubs (**Target Note 4, Appendix 2**).

The landscape setting to the east, west and north of the Pump Rooms was not surveyed within the context of this report.

3.3.2 Character Area 2 Upper Lake

Landscape

The gardens at Pittville were laid out from 1825 and the lake was formed when Wyman's Brook was dammed. Crossing points to the east and west were created with two stone bridges, which, it is believed, were designed by the architect John Forbes. There have been many repairs to the stone work but the bridges still remain today as a reminder of the historic significance of Pittville Gardens.



2007 East Bridge, Upper lake

The Upper lake is one of the significant landscape features in Pittville Park, occupying the lowest elevation of the park. The lake is surrounded by mature trees and provides a valuable focal point in the eastern park. The lake is home to a variety of ducks and waterfowl and is a valuable habitat for wildlife.

The lake edge is defined by a path which runs around the lake between the two bridges. This informal path is surfaced with compacted gravel to the south and bitmac to the north. The surface condition of the path is deteriorating in places and flood debris from the lake is contributing to this deterioration.



2007 Southern lakeside

To the south, the lakeside is contained by a medium height, green iron fence. Towards the eastern bridge there is a large area of planting which extends out from the lake side and contains an untidy collection of mature trees, shrubs and perennials. Towards the western bridge, again on the south of the lake, native grasses have taken a strong foothold between the fence and the lakeside and have now become so overgrown that they prevent a good view of the lake, bridges and the Pump Room to the north.



2007 Native grasses



2007 Edging deterioration

To the north the lakeside is open and the hard surfaced path runs parallel with the lakeside. An informal stone edging divides the path from the water and, in places, this has become worn and dislodged. Replacement pieces have been incorporated from a variety of sources which do not maintain visual continuity.



2007 Replacement edging material

The path continues to run almost parallel with the lake for around most of the northern edge, occasionally circling around mature trees which have been allowed to grow into the lakeside. From the southern shore, the vista towards the Pump Room has become partially blocked by mature trees.



2007 Pittville Pump Room becoming obscured by trees

To the eastern side of the north lakeside there is a well developed and mature rockery which is believed to date from 1890, with tree species including Cedrus, Thuja and Prunus surrounded by shrubs and perennials. Iron railings lead up a small flight of curved steps onto the eastern bridge.



2007 Steps to east bridge



2007 Rockery and eastern bridge

There is also a rockery towards the western bridge, which is also dated from 1890. This rockery is however far more overgrown and has lost all of its original definition.

There are a number of iron benches provided for park users around the lake area.



2007 Rockery and western bridge



2007 Upper Lake panorama

Trees and Vegetation

There are a significant number of mature and historically important trees within this area, especially the statuesque Weeping Silver Lime on the south side of the Lake and a Persian Ironwood on the north bank of the lake. All of these trees probably date back to the original plantings of between 1824 and 1830.

The general condition of trees within this area is good, although there is a lack of maintenance to some of the more densely planted sections around the lake, where self-set trees have been allowed to establish themselves and one or two undesirable species have been planted e.g. Lombardy Poplar on the south side of the lake.

In this area of the park, the views to and from the Pump Room are partially obscured by trees of low quality and landscape value.

Ecology

The Upper Lake is the upstream section of the lake located on the east side of Evesham Road. The lake has artificial, vertical stone clad banks and a silt and mud bed. Ivy-leaved Toadflax plants are growing amongst the stonework to form the OV42 Community of the NVC. Other plants within the stone banks include locally frequent clumps of Pendulous Sedge, local Water Avenas, Gipsywort, moss species and Forget-me-not plants.

At each end of the lake is a stone bridge (**Target Note 5, Appendix 2**).

No aquatic, semi-aquatic or emergent plants were noted within or around the lake.

The floating islands (described in section 1.2) supported rushy vegetation (the species were not identified owing to the distance).

Around the lake is a footpath, the footpath is bisected by irregular shaped borders planted with native trees exotic tree species (such as Persian Ironwood, Tulip Tree), shrubs, herbs including Ground Elder and bulbs such as Crocus, Tulips and Bluebell.

The majority of the borders are colonised by ornamental and exotic herb and bulb species. Local stands of Arum Lily (a native woodland herb) was recorded at **Target Note 6, Appendix 2**.

The lake supports a large number of fish of varying sizes. Brown Rat were frequently observed around the margins of the lake on both survey occasions.

At **Target Note 7, Appendix 2** is a split Willow tree. The tree is suitable for the support of roosting bats owing to the presence of woodpecker holes and cracks and anecdotal evidence suggests that a roost was once present. The tree is badly damaged. A bat box has been installed but this has been damaged by Squirrels (see **Photo 4, Fig 3.1**)

3.3.3 Character Area 3 Pittville Lawns

Landscape

The Pittville Lawns are located to the south of the Upper Lake, to the east of the A435 Evesham Road. The lawns run towards Cheltenham town centre and are surrounded by Regency and later Victorian villas, detached houses and terraced houses, many of which are listed as being of special architectural, historical or cultural significance. The lawns were originally fenced and the residents whose houses surrounded the lawns had keys. Between 1890 and 1954 there was an admission charge for entry into the lawns.



2007 Surrounding residential properties, Pittville Lawn North

The Pittville Lawns have been divided into north and south for the purposes of this landscape conservation management plan.

a. Pittville Lawns North



2007 Pittville Lawns

Pittville Lawns north runs from the Upper Lake south towards Cheltenham and is divided from Pittville Lawns south by Central Cross Drive. To the west is the busy A435 Evesham

Road whilst to the east runs Pittville Lawn which is a predominantly residential road adjacent to several large villas. This area was sometimes known as the Long Garden One

The north lawns have a central bitmac path which runs north-south through mature trees. To the edges of the lawns, parallel with the various roads which define the space runs an informal path, surfaced with compacted gravel.

The central path's surface is in good conditional generally with only a few areas where tree roots are pushing up through the bitmac. The informal paths however, are in a worse condition, with surface deterioration visible in a number of locations, especially the junctions with roads and hard surfaced footpaths such as at the corner of central Cross Drive, Pittville lawn and the north lawn.

Mature deciduous and evergreen trees are the predominant feature of the lawns and contribute significantly to the local landscape character of the Pittville area.

The trees are spaced sufficiently to allow good views of the surrounding villas and neighboring spaces.



2007 Mature Trees (above) Central Cross café (below)

The Refreshment Chalet stands to the side of Central Cross Drive. Designed by Joseph hall in 1901. Today, with its white walls and green woodwork it provides a focal point at the end of the north lawn.

It still serves refreshments today although the opening hours are limited and are dependant upon weather conditions.

There are a number of rubbish bins and a wheelie bin located close to the Chalet which are unsightly and detract from the architectural style of the building and the landscape setting.



During opening hours portable chairs and tables are put onto the surrounding lawns for the use of customers. This metal furniture is functional, fit for purpose and its portable nature is well liked by the customers who can arrange the seating to suit their needs.

There is a limited range of seating opportunities along the paths of the north lawns, all being provided by iron benches. There is no seating off the paths, under trees for instance. Rubbish bins have been provided at intervals along the central path. These bins are unsightly and tend to spoil any views or vistas within the setting. However, these bins are very much a necessity due to the large number of dog walkers and park users.



2007 north Lawn, central path

At the southern end of the lawns along Central Cross Drive, there are a number of cars which park on a daily basis. Often the cars park on the pavement, blocking access onto the lawns, especially for disabled users.



2007 Road and Pavement markings (above and below)

Visually intrusive road markings have been painted onto the pavement adjacent to the Chalet indicating a no parking zone, however, according to park users, this area continues to be blocked on a regular basis.



b. Pittville Lawns South



2007 Pittville Lawns south looking towards Cheltenham

Pittville Lawns South run south towards Cheltenham and the southern boundary is marked by Wellington Road. To the west runs the busy A435 Evesham Road and to the east the lawn is defined by Pittville Lawn. The northern boundary is defined by Central Cross Drive. This area was often known as the Long Garden Two.

The southern lawns differ from the northern lawns in the layout of the footpaths. Here the central footpath has been replaced with a sinuous, bitmac surfaced path which runs around the perimeter of the lawn, a short distance away from the various surrounding roads.



2007 Pittville Lawns South, path

To the west there is also a hard surfaced bitmac footpath which runs parallel to the A435 Evesham Road. This hard surfaced path is repeated to the north, running parallel with Central cross Drive and in the south, running parallel with Wellington Road. In places tree roots are distorting the bitmac surface, which may prove to become a tripping hazard in the future and contributes to an untidy and neglected atmosphere.



2007 Informal path adjacent to Pittville Lawn

To the east however, there is an informal path with a compacted gravel surface which runs parallel with Pittville Lawn. This informal path is showing signs of deterioration, especially at the junctions with roads and hard surfaced footpaths.



2007 Path deterioration

There are a limited number of iron benches provided along the footpath but no seating provision is made elsewhere in the space. There are a number of rubbish bins located at intervals along the paths, some have been damaged and are in need of replacement.



2007 Mature trees, Pittville Lawns South

The overall character of the lawn is enhanced by the mature deciduous and evergreen trees, both on the lawns and along the various surrounding roads. On this southern lawn the pattern of planning appears to be more random and views out towards the surrounding residences are blocked by the mature trees and shrubs. Some of the trees and shrubs are in need of maintenance work to check their growth and restore condition. The overgrown nature of some of the trees and shrubs gives an impression of danger and may lead to users becoming uncomfortable using this space.



2007 Junction with Pittville Lawn and Wellington Road



2007 Mature trees and shrubs block views out of the area

The only building in Pittville Lawns south stands adjacent to Central Cross Road to the north. It is a former air raid precaution control centre and was built in 1942. The building has had various uses and today is home to the 10th Cheltenham (All Saints) Scout Group.



2007 The Scout Hut (above and below)

The building sadly is an eyesore and makes no contribution to the character and setting of the lawns. The building is surrounded by a collection of overgrown shrubs which contribute to the neglected feel of the building.

There is a large expanse of bitmac which serves as a car park, not only for the occupiers of this building, but also for a few of the working population of Cheltenham who park here to avoid parking charges in the town centre.



Trees and Vegetation

This area consists of two rectangular pieces of land known as Pittville Lawns North and Pittville Lawns South. The two lawns are separated by Central Cross Drive.

Again, there are many large and mature trees, mostly located near to the edges of the gardens, some of which are of the original 1824 – 1830 planting. In the northern half the trees of most significance are; a mature Horse Chestnut, common Lime and Cedar of Lebanon, all located to the east side, whilst there no fewer than four large mature London Plane. A central path runs through this garden, and there are further, young to mature trees of various species planted to either side. There are no fewer than fourteen Yew trees of varying size, located throughout this garden.

In the southern half the footpath runs alongside the edge of the garden, with most of the trees to either side of it, leaving the central area relatively open. Here again there are several

large mature London Plane, and until recently two mature Holm Oak (one near the southeast corner has recently been removed for safety reasons).

The majority of the trees in these areas are in good condition

Ecology

Located to the south of the Upper Lake between Evesham Road and Pittville Lawn are the actual Pittville Lawns.

Pittville Lawns North

Pittville Lawn North is rectangular with marginal footpaths and a single central footpath. The lawns are amenity grassland composed from abundant and constant Perennial Rye-grass, Annual Meadow-grass, Daisy, Bulbous Buttercup, Dandelion and White Clover to form the MG6 community of the NVC.

The lawn supports mixed planted trees, some of which have reached maturity. Species include Plane, Holm Oak, Beech, Yew, Cherry, Silver Birch, Cedar and Lime. Crocus bulbs have been planted beneath the trees, particularly at the corners of the lawn.

The Central Cross Café building is located off the central path at the southern end of the lawn (**Target Note 8, Appendix 2** and **Photo 5, Fig 3.1**).

Pittville Lawns South

The southern lawns are similar to the north although the path is a circular route around the edges of the lawn. Standard planted trees of Holm Oak, Beech, Eucalyptus, Turkey Oak, Yew and Plane are present over the mown amenity grassland of MG7. In May 2008, the areas of the lawn where bulbs were planted remained unmown (as is standard practice to permit nutrients to return to the bulb for the following years growth) such areas of taller grassland supported an abundance of flowering herbs including Black Medick and grasses which are of value to common species of breeding butterflies such as Common Blue and Meadow Brown.

One building (Scout Hut) is present in the northern portion (**Target Note 9, Appendix 2** and **Photo 6, Fig 3.1**). The building is bordered by a trimmed, planted Cherry Laurel and Forsythia hedgerow.

3.3.4 Character Area 4: Agg Gardner

Landscape



The Agg Gardner recreation ground is located to the south of the Lower Lake on the Marle Hill side of Pittville Park with the St Pauls residential area immediately to the south.

To the west stands the Leisure @ Cheltenham sports centre whilst adjacent to the eastern boundary is Dunalley County Primary School.



2007 Western boundary with Leisure @ Cheltenham visible through the trees



2007 Eastern boundary with Dunalley County Primary School visible behind the trees

This grassed character area slopes very gently north towards the Lower Lake. Popular as a recreation ground, it has a significant amount of open green space which is used for sporting

and recreational purposes. A football pitch is often marked out here and local teams use the area for practice.



2007 The mature trees and bunds to the north form a boundary with the Lower Lake Character Area

To the north the boundary with the Lower Lake is defined by a series of low bunds and mature trees. Mature trees also form a line along the eastern boundary, beyond which an iron fence, with a newer and higher wooden fence immediately behind.



2007 Boundary treatment to the east

To the south the boundary is formed by the rear garden fences of the St Paul's area, and in places has an un-uniform and messy appearance.



2007 Boundary treatment to the south

There are excellent long distance views through the houses of St Paul's to church spires in Cheltenham town centre, which aids orientation and give an appreciation of the setting.



There are four gateways into the Agg Gardner area, all leading through the southern boundary off Marle Hill Road. Three of the gateways are narrow and were originally marked by Lodges for the old estate. Today the gateways not only allow open access to this open green space but also allow excellent views of the landmark church spires in Cheltenham.



2007 Gateway adjacent to Agg Gardner's Lodge



2007 St Paul's main gateway

There is only one hard surfaced path which runs along the boundary with the Agg Gardner West character area. This path leads from the St Paul's gateway in the south directly north into the park.



2007 Path through Sycamore Avenue

The path runs beneath an avenue of mature Sycamore trees (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) before it forks to the north-west towards the Leisure @ Cheltenham building and north-east towards the A435 Evesham Road. These paths run into the Lower Lake character area.



2007 Path running west towards Leisure @ Cheltenham



2007 Path running east towards A435 Evesham Road

Despite there being only one hard surfaced path in the character area, there are desire lines showing that people do walk through the area, on defined routes on a regular basis. These desire lines are particularly evident towards the eastern boundary of the area, where gateway openings in the boundary allow access through from the residential areas. It is interesting to note that historically there was a carriage drive here which passed over the Lower Lake via the Rustic bridge which was destroyed in 2004.



2007 Desire lines along eastern boundary (above and below)



There is an amount of rubbish which accumulates behind the residential houses and particularly around the St Paul's gateway, despite the provision of rubbish bins, which has a detrimental effect on the visual appearance of the park.



2007 The St Paul's gateway



2007 The Agg Gardner Pavilion

In 2007 the Pavilion which stands to the south of the recreation ground was refurbished and now provides changing facilities for users.

To the west of the character area, adjacent to the footpath, is a very small multi use games area (MUGA) which comprises a goal post and basketball net.

There are no seating opportunities provided for in this character area.



2007 Multi use games area

Trees and Vegetation

This parcel of land is bounded to the north by the lake footpath, to the east by the school playing field, and to the south by the St Paul's housing development. Most of this area is devoid of trees, being used as an open recreational area, although there are close planted mature groups of mixed broadleaf and coniferous trees to the north, and a now much depleted row of over-mature Beech along the eastern edge. The latter are of some concern from a health and safety viewpoint, and steps are currently being taken to address these issues. The general condition of the mixed species planting in the north is fair, although within the groups there are a significant number of Sycamore and Norway Maple which are in a poor condition, we think largely as a result of squirrel damage. There is one noteworthy tree amongst these, however, and that is a very large veteran Oak (189cm stem diameter) which could be over 200 years old



2007 Veteran Oak can be seen centre right, standing out amongst younger trees

Ecology

The Agg Gardner Recreation Ground is located to the south of the Lower Lake. The area is a large, flat, open expanse of mown, amenity grassland which meets the rear of the houses along Marle Hill Road. A fenceline marks the boundary with the houses there is no hedgerow or other planting. At the far western end of the amenity grassland a row of mature Sycamore and Lime trees flank the edge of the footpath.

At the eastern boundary of the amenity grassland is a linear strip of mature Sycamore, Beech and Horse Chestnut trees. The ground beneath the trees is colonised by grass species such as Cocksfoot. Amongst the trees are at least two tall stumps of mature trees (**Target Note 10, Appendix 2** and **Photo 7, Fig 3.1**).

The building within this part of the site is described in **Target Note 11, Appendix 2**.

3.3.5 Character Area 5: Lower Lake

Landscape

The Lower Lake was formed when Wyman's brook which occupied the valley was widened following an agreement between the Town Council and J.B. Winterbotham in 1891. Today the lake is a significant feature of the landscape of Pittville Park and makes a major contribution to the character and setting of the park.

For the purpose of this landscape conservation management plan, the Lower Lake has been divided into four sections, north, south, east and west.

a. Lakeside North



2007 North Lakeside

The north lakeside area runs from the Boathouse in the east to the western extent of the lake, where the footpath branches off to the south. To the north is Marle Hill, which slopes steeply upwards towards the Albermarle residential area to the north of Cheltenham. To the south is the Lower Lake.



2007 Boathouse from the east (above) and west (below)

The Boathouse was built 1894, slightly to the east of the site of the former boathouse constructed between 1855 –1857. The lake to the east of the Boathouse was turned into a children's boating lake in 1934, when the lake was shallowed and fenced.



At the time of writing the Boathouse, which provides light refreshments, ice-creams and tickets for golf, tennis and fishing was closed for the season. The children's boating lake has been closed for some time due to a contamination problem in the lake. Local park users feel that this valuable resource should be re-opened quickly.

The Boathouse is a timber framed construction which sits well within it's setting. The steeply sloping, tiled roof is covered in a layer of moss and in the autumn a thick layer of fallen leaves which, although possibly not ideal from a buildings perspective, allows the building to sit comfortably within the surrounding woodland. There is a small grassed, fenced off area to the west of the Boathouse which, it is believed is used for refreshments and picnic tables.

A hard surfaced bitmac footpath runs parallel with the lake, passing close by the Boathouse at this point. This is the only footpath in the character area and it follows a circular route around the entire Lower Lake. The surface treatment is well maintained and the footpath is sufficiently wide to allow park users to pass with comfort although cyclists using the footpath do cause temporary pinch points, especially where mature trees line the route.



2007 Footpath through character area (above) mature tree (below)



The character of this area is one of open parkland running into a lakeside environment. Mature trees to the side of the footpath extend onto Marle Hill and create seasonal interest as well as a valuable home for the park's wildlife.

There are a number of mature trees which extend down to the water's edge, some saplings have taken a foothold in the lakeside itself.



2007 North lakeside trees

Along the lakeside the vegetation is predominantly water-loving species such as Iris and Carex species. In places these native perennials are growing unchecked and are becoming overgrown. Views of the lakeside are restricted in places because of this growth however along most of the length of the north lakeside planting is in keeping with the setting and provides a valuable habitat for water-loving wildlife.

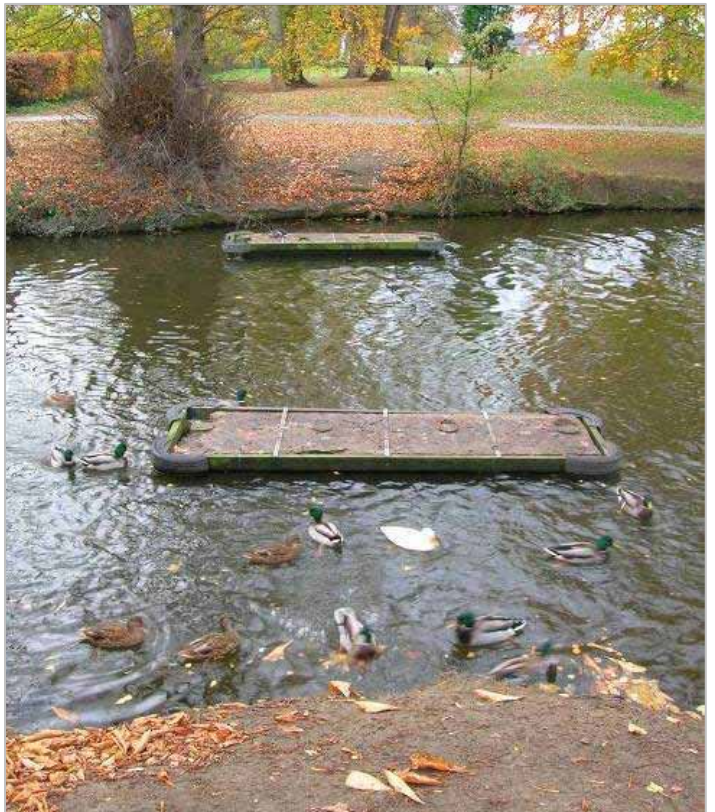


2007 North lakeside native plants (above) site of Rustic Bridge (below)

A bridge, known as the Rustic Bridge has provided a crossing point between the north and south lakeside since 1810, forming part of the route from Marle Hill House in the north to the Lodge House to the south of Agg Gardner Recreation Ground. The bridge has been repaired and rebuilt several times.

In 2004 the bridge was destroyed when it was hit by a stolen car and the only remaining feature of the bridge is the metal footings.

The Rustic Bridge, built at a natural pinch point in the Lower Lake is at a natural crossing point and investigation of the Character Areas to the north and south identified clear desire lines in the grass and illustrates how many people use this route.



Along the northern lakeside there are some seating opportunities, simple wooden benches and fallen trees have been used to create sustainable seating within the park.

Seating opportunities are however limited and benches and fallen trees tend to be a considerable distance apart and there is a lack of cohesion to style of seating provided on this western side of the Pittville Park.



2007 Sustainable seating (above) and rubbish bins (below)

Rubbish Bins are provided along the northern shoreline but tend to be located in one area rather than spread evenly across the site. Style and colour of the bins varies and there has been some vandalism on these rubbish bins. The prominent location of the bins tends to detract from the outstanding character of this area, whilst the need for rubbish bins is great a style should be chosen that is more in keeping with the surroundings.



There are a number of fishing jetties positioned along the northern side of the Lower Lake to allow easy fishing, especially for disabled users. There are no paths to link these jetties with the main footpath.

A buoyancy aid is provided close to the lakeside.



2007 Fishing Jetty

b. Lakeside South



2007 The south Lakeside from the north

The South Lakeside area runs from the A435 Evesham Road at the point where the Lower Lake begins, past the island in the lake towards the Leisure @ Cheltenham sports centre. As the lakeside turns north this area ends. To the south is the Agg Gardner recreation ground and beyond that Cheltenham town centre and to the north the Lower lake.

The character of the southern lakeside is more enclosed with a series of low bunds covered by mature trees and especially some old Cedars which give the character and setting to this area and are visible from a great distance as landmark trees.



2007 Tree covered bunds



2007 Footpath looking west

The footpath which takes a circular route around the lake has a more sinuous path to the south, winding around the mature trees and bunds and creating a more interesting user experience. Towards the centre of the lakeside, close to the island, the footpath divides to follow two different routes, one around a bund and close to the lakeside, the other follows a path between the bunds, eventually rejoining the first path.

The footpath has a hard bitmac surface and is in excellent condition. The width is sufficient to allow pedestrian users to pass with comfort although is slightly narrow to allow for pedestrians and cyclists to pass with ease.



2007 Footpath looking east towards the A435 Evesham Road



2007 South Lakeside looking east

There is a small island towards the south western lakeside which is covered almost entirely with mature trees, shrubs and perennial plants. The island is the home to waterfowl and Swans and is not accessible from the shore.



2007 Lower Lake Island

Towards the eastern section of this area, the lakeside is contained within a narrow strip of land. To the south are allotments and Dunalley County Primary School. The boundary is defined by a medium height iron fence with Beech hedging and tree saplings. In places the hedging is in poor condition and is in need of replacement.



2007 Boundary to the south



2007 Footpath looking east along the south bank of the Lower Lake and boundary hedge

At the eastern end of the boundary fence is a gateway leading into West Drive. The gateway is defined by a green iron railing fence and gate. The gate is padlocked but there is also a narrow opening to allow pedestrian and cycle access.

A hard, bitmac surfaced footpath leads off the main footpath towards this gateway and a sign directs the park users towards the gateway and south towards Cheltenham town centre.



2007 Gateway form West Drive

The ground rises significantly towards the eastern extent of this area, the footpath continues along on the lower ground around the edge of the lakeside. The higher ground is heavily planted and the boundary to the south is defined by the walls of neighbouring residential houses and rendered concrete walls.



2007 Planting to the east of the area

There are several pathways through this dense planting and an amount of litter indicating that it is a well used and hidden area within the park.



2007 Boundary wall

Provision for seating along this southern lakeside is poor with only two benches recorded. One of the benches has been created using the fallen trunk of a tree. This wood appears to be in an advanced state of deterioration and so does not provide a user friendly seating opportunity.



2007 Bench

c. Lakeside West



2007 Lower Lake from the west

The western lakeside area extends between the north and south lakeside area close to the Leisure @ Cheltenham sports centre. From this point there are views over the lake towards the island and towards both north and south lakeside.



2007 Lower Lake looking west

The hard, bitmac surfaced footpath continues around the lake to the west, taking a wide loop around the mature trees and small waterfall. The footpath divides here, with a path leading directly to Tommy Taylor's Lane in the west and the other looping around the lake, crossing a small bridge over Wyman's Brook and onwards along the southern lakeside.

Here the mature trees provide a dense canopy over the lakeside and waterfall which runs into Wyman's Brook.

To the north the ground rises steeply up Marle Hill and to the south is the Agg Gardener recreation ground. Further to the west is the Leisure @ Cheltenham sports centre and to the east the Lower Lake.



2007 Lower Lake paths

It is understood from park users and local residents that there is a considerable problem with young people driving cars and motorbikes into the park off Tommy Taylor's Lane and this footpath gives easy access into the park. These unauthorised vehicles are causing park users a great deal of concern, especially as the St Paul's residential area is very close to the park at this point. The park could and should be used as a recreational resource by all ages of that community however, parents are very anxious and afraid to let young children play in the park when such vehicles are frequent visitors.

A bollard has now been installed into the centre of the footpath close to the bridge which crosses Wyman's Brook. This measure is already proving inadequate as motorbikes can still pass by easily on the footpath and cars are now being driving across the grass adjacent to the Leisure @ Cheltenham sports centre.



2007 Tyre tracks in the grass close to the western lakeside made by unauthorised vehicles

The ground drops away steeply at the western most point of the Lower Lake, at the point where the Mill House originally stood. Shown on maps as early as 1834, the Mill House fell into disuse and after several major repairs and changes of use, was demolished in 1945.

The Weir, at the time of survey, was considered to be in structurally poor condition. Repair work has recently been completed, including the addition of pH neutral boulders.



2007 To the west the Lower Lake runs into Wyman's Brook

Today the waterfall remains but there is no indication of the Mill House that once stood there. The waterfall is an interesting feature which could be much improved by management and maintenance. Rubbish seems to accumulate within the rocks and is removed on infrequent occasions.



2007 Waterfall (above) Wyman's brook (below)



At the foot of the waterfall Wyman's Brook runs west as a small stream. To the south the bank of the stream is steep, rising into mature woodland and to the north there is a gentle gradient to the bank. Wyman's Brook, at the time of writing, was filled with rubbish and gave the appearance of being unmanaged.

Wyman's Brook runs under a concrete bridge which carries the footpath and on where it disappears underground into a culvert.



2007 Culvert



2007 South lakeshore looking east

Across the bridge towards the Agg Gardner recreation ground, the tree canopy is less dense and an open grassed area lies between the lakeside and the footpath. Tree saplings have begun to colonise the lakeside and some hang well over into the water.

There is only one bench provided for seating in this area, despite this being a good vantage point to survey the entire lake. Rubbish bins are also hard to find at this point, despite this area being popular with dog walkers.

A buoyancy aid is provided close to the lakeside at this south west point.

d. Lakeside East

The eastern lakeside is adjacent to the A435 Evesham Road and is the entry point to the Lower Lake area for the majority of park users. The area runs from the A435 Evesham Road towards the Boathouse on the north shore and to the West Drive gateway on the south shore.



2007 East Lakeside looking south west



2007 East Lakeside looking west



2007 East lakeside looking north

To the east the area is defined by the A435 Evesham Road with Pittville Pump Room Lawns, and the Upper Lake beyond. Crossing the A435 Evesham Road can be difficult, especially at times of busy traffic. A subway was built in 1892 to connect the two sides of the park, although originally an entry fee was charged to access Pittville gardens and a turnstile was installed to collect money from park users.

Today the subway is still a very useful means of getting from one side of the park to the other, however a steep slope to the east and poorly lit tunnel make the subway unappealing. To cross the road instead also involves a steep climb up to the road level via a narrow footpath.



2007 Subway entrance beneath the A435 Evesham Road

The subway was originally decorated with glazed tiles and later rendered with concrete. Artwork had been painted on the walls, however this is now mostly covered with graffiti, looking very neglected.



2007 Subway current visual condition

The lighting units within the subway are low and covered with a large square mesh box which is situated at around eye / forehead level and could potentially be a major hazard.

The lighting within the subway is poor and on darker days is barely adequate to light the passage.



2007 Subway art work and lighting

From the entrance point a hard bitmac surfaced footpath leads off to the west on both sides of the lake.

On the northern route the footpath crosses a small wooden bridge that was built to span Wyman's Brook in its canalised form as it passes under the A435 Evesham Road between the Upper and Lower Lakes.

The wooden bridge is wide enough to allow pedestrians to pass each other with comfort although the footpath is not wide enough for a cyclist to pass a pedestrian with ease. Two small wooden bollards have been installed to block vehicular access across the bridge.



2007 Wooden bridge over Wyman's Brook

Beneath the bridge, Wyman's Brook has been canalised between two natural stone retaining walls, creating an interesting water feature. This section of the Brook is clean and well maintained.



2007 Wyman's Brook

Wyman's Brook enters the Lower Lake beneath the wooden bridge. At this point the lake has been shallowed to create the Children's Boating pond.



2007 The Children's Boating Lake

On site visits there was a large amount of rubbish discarded into this section of the lake and on subsequent visits the rubbish had not been cleared.



2007 Rubbish in the Lower Lake (above and below)

Larger items such as shopping trolleys, sign posts and rubber tyres have also been seen in the Lower Lake.





2007 Footpath towards the north lakeside

The east lakeside area is predominantly planted with mature native trees which provide the area with a dense canopy throughout the summer months and give seasonal interest throughout the year.

The hard bitmac surfaced footpath runs around the mature trees towards the northern lakeside. There are desire lines under these mature trees indicating that park users walk within the area in direct lines rather than sticking to the sinuous paths. These desire lines are further enhanced by cyclists as there is evidence of narrow tyre treads in the soil.

The bitmac surface towards the north has an unusual u shaped addition close to the A435 Evesham Road at the point where the gates into the eastern park stand. This is a very logical point to have the entry gate into the western park but at present this is not in existence.



2007 Bitmac surface ends short of a possible entry point into the western park

Planting around the lake at this point is, in parts, becoming overgrown and is in need of maintenance to keep it in check.



2007 Planting around the eastern lakeside

Trees and Vegetation

This area encompasses the 'Lower Lake', including the island at its western end, and all the land immediately surrounding it. The banks of the lake are populated by numerous early mature Sycamore, Willow, Birch and a few other broadleaved species, many of which may be self-set, whilst the island is populated by dense trees and shrubs, and largely unmaintained. Further away from the lake there is a more diverse range of planting, including London Plane, Ash, Poplar, Lime, Norway Maple, Pine and yet more Sycamore, most of it early mature to mature. At the extreme eastern end of the lake where it narrows, the planting includes all of the above, but also Cypress, Larch, Holly and ornamental shrubs, particularly around the Rockery at the head of the lake. The ground around the northern end of the lake (where the boathouse is situated) is subject to high levels of occupation, especially during the summer months, and there is much evidence of soil erosion and compaction, a situation which will not favour the trees (See photographs below).



Ecology

The Lower Lake receives water from the Upper Lake via a culvert beneath Evesham Road (**Photo 8, Fig 3.1**). The Lower Lake is a long and linear and flanked by mature and semi-mature planted trees. At the eastern end is a small boating pool and a boathouse is located on the north bank (**Target Note 12, Appendix 2**).

The banks of the lake are steeply sloping and in some areas are vertical and reinforced by timber. In local areas particularly at the western end of the lake there are signs of erosion (see **Photo 9, Fig 3.1**). There are three timber platforms along the southern bank of the lake. The lake bed is lined with mud and silt.

No submerged or floating aquatic plant species were noted but emergent and marginal stands of Sweet Flag, Yellow Iris, Gipsywort, Great Willowherb and Pendulous Sedge occur locally particularly at the northern bank. The stands of emergent vegetation are representative of the S15 community of the NVC.

A number of dead tree stumps are present around the margins of the lake (**Target Notes 13 and 14, Appendix 2**). The margins of the lake support other mature trees including Plane, Sycamore, Beech, Alder and Lime. At the southern edge of the small boating lake Sycamore saplings, Dogwood and Hawthorn shrubs with an understorey of Lesser Celandine, Ground Elder, Ivy and Cow Parsley have colonised the steep banks where it is assumed less trampling by visitors occurs.

At **Target Note 15, Appendix 2** there are two bridge bases (see **Photo 11, Fig 3.1**). There is also one island in the lake, the island was used successfully by nesting Mute Swan in 2008 (see **Target Note 16, Appendix 2**).

At the western end of the Lower Lake is the outfall into Wyman's Brook. The outfall is an arrangement of concrete, brickwork and stone with steel reinforcement bars. The concrete has been damaged in some areas (see **Photo 12, Fig 3.1**).

3.3.6 Character Area 6: Marle Hill

Landscape

Marle Hill lies to the west of Pittville Park on land originally part of two estates, Marle Hill and The Holts. In 1894 the land was owned by the Cheltenham Town Council and had been formally agreed to be included into Pittville Park.

Marle Hill runs from the A435 Evesham Road in the east of Tommy Taylor's Lane in the west with an extension to the west of Tommy Taylor's Lane (see character area 7). To the south the character area abuts the Lower Lake and to the north the area is defined by the residential houses of Albermarle Gate.

For the purpose of this Landscape Conservation Management Plan this character area has been divided into three sub-areas; Marle Hill West, Marle Hill Centre and Marle Hill East.

a. Marle Hill West



2007 Marle Hill looking east

The western boundary of this area is defined by Tommy Taylor's Lane. To the north the area is defined by Albermarle Gate with the front gardens of residential houses beyond. To the south is the western end of the Lower Lake and the Agg Gardner West character area, which is divided from Marle Hill by a hard, bitmac surfaced footpath which leads east from Tommy Taylor's Lane towards the Lower Lake. To the east the central Marle Hill sub area.



2007 Tommy Taylor's Lane to the west and Albermarle Gate to the north



2007 Albermarle Gate and residential houses to the north

There are excellent long distance views from this area across Cheltenham to Leckhampton Hill in the south



2007 Lower Lake to the south with Cheltenham and Leckhampton Hill beyond

This grassland area has scattered mature and semi-mature trees towards the boundary to all sides. The ground is undulating, reflecting the former use as a source for clay extraction and later as a domestic and commercial refuse tipping site. The site ceased use as a tip in 1967 and as a result there is an element of 'made ground' here. Contamination of the area was discovered in the late 1990's. Since then there have been regular inspections of the site and readings are taken on contamination levels. Since 2002 there have been further inspection wells installed with soils and water samples taken and results evaluated against various UK standards and regulations in accordance with DEFRA and Environment Agency guidance. (Environmental Protection Act 1990)

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 Part 2a introduces a regulatory framework for contaminated land identification and remediation in England. The site was subsequently designated as a Special Site in 2003. (See Fig 1.3)



2007 Undulating grassland

There are no footpaths which run through this area, except those which run along the boundary with other areas. There is a narrow, hard surfaced footpath adjacent to Tommy Taylor's Lane which runs north-south alongside the road.



2007 Footpath alongside Tommy Taylor's Lane

To the north Albermarle Gate has a footpath adjacent to the residential houses only.



2007 Footpath alongside Albermarle Gate



2007 Footpath between Agg Gardner West (right) and Marle Mill West (left)

There are no seating opportunities within this area although there are a limited number of rubbish bins. There are four golf greens which are apart of the Approach Golf Course. The open nature of this parkland area with front facades of residential houses overlooking and a main road adjacent give this area a feeling of safety. The park is popular with dog walkers at all times of the day.



b. Marle Hill Centre

Marle Hill centre occupies the central position upon Marle Hill, with the Lower Lake to the south and the houses of Albermarle Gate to the north. To the east the boundary of this sub area is defined by the avenue of mature trees which locate the historic carriage drive which ran from Marle Hill House, across the Lower Lake towards Cheltenham via the Lodge House which stood on what was to become the Agg Gardner recreation ground. To the west the sub area abuts the Marle Hill west sub area.



2007 Marle Hill Centre looking west



2007 Eastern boundary defined by mature trees



2007 Footpath to the north of Marle Hill centre

The boundary to the north is defined by a hard, bitmac surfaced narrow path which stands upon the raised platform once occupied by Marle Hill House. Today the platform is occupied by the residential houses of Albermarle Gate. This footpath is not part of Pittville Park but is used by visitors to the park. This northern boundary is lined in places by mature and semi-mature trees and large shrubs which restrict visual access both into the park and to the residential houses.



2007 Overgrown shrubs



2007 Boundary to the north east of the sub area

To the north east of this sub area the boundary becomes delineated from the residential houses by mature shrubs and trees. This planting provides visual and seasonal interest along with a valuable habitat for wildlife.



2007 Cedar of Lebanon contributes to the character and setting of Marle Hill

Towards the centre of the raised platform is an open area of mown grass with mature specimen trees, especially a Cedar of Lebanon, which contribute the character and setting of this area. At this point the footpath loops around north and continues within the residential

houses, whilst the main footpath continues for a short distance to the east towards the boundary of this sub area.

The southern extent of this sub area is defined by a hard, bitmac surfaced footpath which runs east-west to the north side of the Lower Lake.



2007 Southern boundary of the sub area defined by footpath

This sub area is all south-sloping grassland with scattered mature and semi-mature trees to the outer boundary areas. The terrain here is gently undulating compared to the western sub-section, as it is believed that this sub area was not used as a household and commercial tip and so the ground is not 'made up' as it is to the west. There is a very clear visual line in the grassland which divides these two sub areas.



2007 looking south towards the Lower Lake



2007 Looking north-west towards Albermarle Gate and Residential houses

This sub area is well used by dog walkers; however there are no seating opportunities provided and no footpaths run through the area. The provision of rubbish bins is also poor in this area.

There are several golf greens within this sub area, part of the Approach Golf Course.

c. Marle Hill East



2007 Looking west over Marle Hill East

The Marle Hill East sub area is defined by the A435, Evesham Road to the east, Albermarle Gate to the north, the Lower Lake character area to the south and the western edge of the mature tree avenue which located the historic carriage drive from Marle Hill House.



2007 Eastern boundary, A435 Evesham Road

The boundary to the east is defined by a high green mesh fence which has been attached over the original park fencing which adjoins the A435 Evesham Road. This high fencing continues along the northern section of this boundary as is associated with the Approach Golf Course. A small, narrow gate provides access into the area off the road.



2007 Gateway off A435 Evesham Road

Along the boundary to the south, from the gateway, the fencing returns to the original, green park style. A small collection of semi-mature and mature trees are planted to the south of the boundary and provide visual and seasonal interest both for park and road users.

The boundary to the north is defined by Albermarle Gate and various boundary treatments. To the north west, within a small car park, the boundary is defined by a high wooden fence which backs on to the rear gardens of the residential houses.



2007 Car park and fenced boundary

To the north east of the area the boundary is defined by a wooden picket style fence and an evergreen Yew hedge. Sections of the hedge are missing and have been replaced with the wooden fence which, although giving an inharmonious and uncharacteristic feel to the boundary, is well maintained.



2007 North eastern boundary

Some rubbish is accumulating under this boundary hedge, possible blown by the wind from the rubbish bins.

A line of new, young trees have been planted along this boundary adjacent to the hedge.



2007 New trees along the northern boundary

To the south the boundary of the Marle Hill East sub area is defined by the Lower Lake, especially the Lower Lake East sub area's evergreen and deciduous mature trees and shrub belt which runs east-west to the north of the lake. This boundary makes a significant contribution to the character and setting of Pittville Park.



2007 Southern boundary, Lower Lake character area mature shrubs and trees

The boundary to the west of this sub area is defined by the mature trees which were originally planted as an avenue along the carriage drive to Marle Hill House. These trees are an important landmark within the park and contribute to the character and setting of the area.



2007 Western boundary



2007 Avenue of trees

There is only one formal footpath which runs through this sub area, leading from the entrance gate off the A435 Evesham Road and running adjacent with the tennis courts and skateboard park.

This narrow, hard, bitmac surfaced footpath rises up a gently slope towards the avenue of trees to the west. However it comes to a dead end well in front of the avenue.



2007 Path ends well short of trees



2007 Footpath looking east towards A435 Evesham Road

This sub area is popular with park users and desire lines in the grass reveal the extent of use.



2007 Desire lines in the grass beyond the tennis courts and skateboard park

There is a small car park with space for approximately thirty cars, to the north of this sub area, off Albermarle Road. The car park has an informal loose gravel surface and has a low metal fence to demark the parking limit. There are two gaps within this low fencing which allow park users to pass through, but no footpaths have been provided in this area.



2007 Albermarle Road car park

Rubbish bins are provided adjacent to each opening in the fence, which are sited in close proximity to each other. There are however, no seating opportunities close to this car park.



2007 Rubbish bin and low fencing

From the car park there is an excellent view south of this sub area and the distant Cotswold escarpment.



2007 View south (above) and golf green (below)

Pittville Park users are well provided for in this sub area with golf green which are part of the Approach Golf Course, three tennis courts and a skateboard park.



These courts are surrounded by a standard, pig mesh green fence and are located close to the boundary with the A435 Evesham Road.



2007 Tennis courts

There is one bench sited adjacent to the footpath to the north of the tennis courts. One other base for a bench is sited adjacent to the skateboard park, however the bench is missing.



2007 Bench facing the tennis courts (above) and missing bench (below)



It is understood that the three tennis courts were re-surfaced last year (2007) and on the occasion of each site visit were padlocked.

Bookings can be made at the Boat House, when open and not as indicated at the Golf Kiosk as this is no longer in existence.



2007 Sign in tennis courts

To the west of the tennis courts, in the space once occupied by more tennis courts, stand the skateboard park. This is a recent addition to the park and is popular with younger park users.



2007 Skateboard park

This area contains several pieces of equipment which have been installed directly onto the existing hard surface within the pig mesh fencing.



2007 Skateboard park equipment

There is graffiti on many of the pieces of equipment within this skateboard park and much of it is clearly visible from distances away within the wider parkland. This graffiti has a detrimental affect on the visual character of the park.



2007 Graffiti

There are two entrances to the skateboard park, one to the north and one to the south. As the terrain slopes gently to the south, there are steps leading down from the southern entrance directly onto the grass below. No footpath has been provided to lead to and from the skateboard area and as a consequence of popular use, the grass is now worn away. This wear is visually intrusive and combined with the poor condition of the steps and concrete footings to the skateboard area gives the appearance of neglect and decay.



2007 South entrance to skateboard park (above and below)



The general appearance of neglect is further highlighted by the incidence of bonfire sites which appear throughout the area.



Trees and Vegetation

This extensive area north of the Lower Lake, which comprises Marle Hill West, Marle Hill Centre and Marle Hill East, is bounded to the north by private housing, to the west by Tommy Taylor's Lane and to the east by Evesham Road. Much of this land is used as an informal golf course, and as such the planting is very limited and sparse. There are a significant number of young broadleaved trees along the southern edge, adjacent to the footpath, and a few mature trees dotted around the central part of the area, including a couple of Oak, a Horse Chestnut and two very old common Pear. Of particular note however, is the fine solitary specimen of Wellingtonia in the north east corner. There are two significant groups of trees here, one comprising around thirty early mature mixed broadleaved trees, to the west of the skateboard park, and another in the north comprising seven very large White Poplar. The latter is a particularly significant landscape feature, since the trees stand on some of the highest ground in the park and are clearly visible from numerous vantage points. There is also a newly planted (within the last 5 – 10 years) group of predominantly Pine and Birch on the north side of the tennis courts and skateboard park (presumably planted as screening).

Ecology

Marle Hill is split into three sections (west, central and east). The grassland has a southern aspect and slopes towards the lake. The habitats in all three areas are similar and comprise undulating amenity grassland consisting of Perennial Rye grass, Sweet Vernal-grass, Cocksfoot, Greater Plantain, Daisy, White Clover, Dandelion and Annual Meadow grass to form the MG7 community of the NVC. The grassland is closely mown and used for golf.

The western edge of the Marle Hill West grassland is planted with young standard Sycamore and Plane trees. The grassland is bordered to the north by the Albemarle Gate road, occasional trees and shrubs at the northern end of the Marle Hill west area include Cherry, Hawthorn and two large Poplar trees.

Approximately on the division point between Marle Hill west and Marle Hill centre is a line of mature Oak trees (**Target Note 17, Appendix 2**).

At the division between Marle Hill centre and Marle Hill east is a linear area of mature Horse Chestnut, Pedunculate Sweet Chestnut, Beech and Lime trees interspersed with younger

Silver Birch trees. This area creates a wildlife corridor between the lake and the houses to the north.

Further east is a fenced off skate park bordered by young planted Scot's Pine and Silver Birch trees.

3.3.7 Character Area 7: Agg Gardner West

Landscape

The Agg Gardner West character area runs from the Leisure @ Cheltenham sports centre and Tommy Taylor's Lane, east to the line of mature Sycamores (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) which form an avenue over the entrance path from the St Paul's residential area. The area extends north to the footpath which links the Lower Lake to Tommy Taylor's Lane and its southern boundary is defined by the high boundary fence which borders the St Paul's residential area. This character area forms the south western corner of Pittville Park.



2007 Leisure @ Cheltenham forms part of the western boundary

This character area is predominantly grassed parkland with scattered medium to mature trees. To the east the ground is flat, with man made bunds rising steeply to the south-west. The mature Sycamores (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) form a north-south avenue and continue to follow the hard, bitmac surfaced footpath when it splits to follow the southern Lakeside to the east and west.



2007 Sycamore avenue defines this character area to the east

Immediately to the west of the Sycamore avenue is a very small children's play area. This fenced area contains a limited amount of equipment which has a very low play value, only offering opportunities for physical play. The current equipment is beginning to look tired and neglected.



2007 Children's Play area

The surface treatment within the fenced area is grass with areas of wet pour under individual pieces of equipment. There are markings on the wet pour which are becoming faded.

There is one bench provided within the fenced area and one rubbish bin.

The landscape surrounding this play area, within this character area should provide a stimulating, natural environment for play, however consultation with park users and nearby residents has discovered that there is an element of fear and uncertainty in allowing children free access to this play area and surrounding landscape. This is due to the frequent misuse of Pittville Park by unauthorised vehicles, motorcycle riders and joy riders, who enter the park, drive at speed and then burn out stolen vehicles.



2007 Remains of a burnt out car

On site visits tyre tracks were observed in the grass within this character area. It is understood that unauthorised vehicles are driven into the park off Tommy Taylor's lane and along the hard, bitmac surfaced footpath, turning south and crossing the bridge over Wyman's Brook before heading for the Agg Gardner recreation ground. A bollard has been installed into this footpath on the bridge however, vehicles continue to enter the park and now drive straight across the hill adjacent to the Leisure @ Cheltenham sports centre.



2007 Tyre tracks made by unauthorised vehicles

To the west of the character area the ground rises significantly to the north. Here young to semi-mature trees have been planted within the grass covered hilltop. The ground then slopes down towards the north until it reaches the footpath which connects to Tommy Taylor's lane. This raised ground within the character area is possibly a man made feature created with spoil from the construction of the Leisure @ Cheltenham sports centre.



2007 Western hilltop

To the western boundary of this character area, adjacent to Tommy Taylor's Lane stand a group of Scot's Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). There is no footpath through these trees however, there are clear desire lines indicating that this is a popular route into the park at this point.



2007 Mature Scot's Pine along Tommy Taylor's Lane

There are no formal or informal footpaths through this character area, only those which border and define the area.

To the north is the hard, bitmac surfaced footpath which leads from Tommy Taylor's Lane towards the Lower Lake.

The surface treatment of this footpath is in good condition and the footpath is wide enough to allow pedestrians to pass each other in comfort, however it is not wide enough to allow cyclists to pass each other or for pedestrians to walk comfortably alongside or passing cyclists.



2007 Footpath leading east from Tommy Taylor's Lane

The footpath leading to the Children's Play area is well worn, with the gravel surface long disappeared and now appears as a desire line which leads from the main footpath is an indication that this is a well used route.



2007 Desire line to Children's Play area

There is a small strip of land within this character area which runs between the Leisure @ Cheltenham car park and the boundary fence of the St Paul's residential area.

There is a large amount of rubbish within this strip of land, which appears to originate from the houses beyond.



2007 Southern boundary

There are some mature trees, Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*) within this strip of land, which is part of the man made bund which surrounds the south western boundary with Leisure @ Cheltenham.

There are no seating opportunities or rubbish bins provided within this character area, except for those within the fenced off Children's Play area.

Trees and Vegetation

Known as Agg-Gardner West, and located to the north and east of the leisure complex, the northern part is almost entirely covered with close planted mixed broadleaved and coniferous trees (probably planted within the last 20 – 30 years), whereas in the southern half there are few trees of any particular note.

Ecology

The Agg Gardner west area is located at the western end of the Lower Lake. The area supports an undulating terrain of mounds colonised by mown amenity grassland and planted with scattered young trees including Lime, Walnut, Horse Chestnut, Silver Birch, Plane and Scot's Pine.

It is understood that this area can flood during periods of high water in the Lower Lake and Wyman's Brook.

3.3.8 Character Area 8: Squares and Crescents

Landscape

The squares and crescents at Pittville were laid out as private pleasure gardens for the surrounding residential houses, with restricted access only for those who had a key. These two squares and crescent went into the ownership of the town council in 1890, at the same time as the rest of the Pittville estate. All of the squares and crescent had formally laid out gardens which included tennis courts and croquet lawns, which were maintained until the second world war, when they were given over to allotment gardening to aid the war effort.

a. Wellington Square

Wellington Square is located to the south of Pittville Park, with its southern boundary defined by Wellington Road.

The residential fabric surrounding the square is made up of terraced houses and villas, all with gardens which face into the square. These gardens would have originally been enclosed by iron railings, however, these were largely removed during the second world war and were replaced by hedges, which, are now so high that they both physically and visually enclose the houses and the square.



2007 Wellington Square West



2007 Wellington Square

Boundary treatment surrounding the square is predominantly a high Holly hedge, interspersed in places by surviving sections of iron railing, along with random sections of wooden fence and chestnut pailing. This treatment, although successful in defining the space, gives the appearance of neglect.

Views out of the green space are, in places restricted to gateway spaces only due to the height of the boundary hedge.



2007 Iron railings visible within the hedge

The Holly hedge is, has, in places been colonized by tree spalings, Ivy and a selection of weeds and although there is evidence of spraying along the foot of the hedge, these invasive species are beginning to take a foothold and contribute to the overall appearance of neglect.



2007 Section of wooden fencing



2007 Chestnut pailing within the Holly hedge



2007 Wellington Square gateway

Access into Wellington Square is via gateways to the north, south, east and west sides. The gateways are defined by open sections of the hedge, by iron railings with gate missing and iron gates. The ironwork is in decline and is in need of renovation or replacement. The lack of unity in the gateway treatment also adds to the appearance of neglect.



2007 Wellington Square gateway with missing gate



2007 Gate (above and below)



To the outer edge of the boundary hedge, Wellington Square is tree lined, with wide grass verges to both sides of the perimeter road. The trees, several of which are mature, contribute to the sense of place and setting of the square.

The verge which encircles the square has, in places a footpath which runs adjacent to the boundary hedge. This footpath is surfaced with compacted gravel and is, in places becoming worn.



2007 Wellington Square north



2007 Wellington Square grass verge

There is however, in places, no footpath along the verge, which now displays clear desire lines indicating the amount of foot traffic. This lack of footpath also continues around the gateway to the west of the square, where foot traffic has worn away the grass.

Signage within the square is visually worn and also in a state of decay. Sloping signs detract from the visual qualities of the square and contribute to the overall sense of neglect.



2007 Gateway to the west with worn grass verge



2007 Wellington Square looking north west

Within the boundary of the hedge, Wellington Square is a mature green space filled with collection of trees and shrubs. The footpath leads from each gateway towards a path which encircles the square. This hard, bitmac surfaced path is in generally good condition although there are isolated sections which are becoming worn or being colonized by moss.



2007 Path surface (above and below)





2007 Trees and shrubs

Within this distinctive green space there is little seating provision. On the occasion of site visits in November 2007, this single bench was damaged.



2007 Wellington Square broken bench

There is also equally poor provision of rubbish bins, the only bins within the square located adjacent to two gateways and on the occasion of site visits, appeared to be full with rubbish accumulating around the base of the bins.



2007 Wellington Square rubbish bin

b. Clarence Square

Clarence Square is located to the south of Wellington Square, with its southern boundary defined by Clarence Road.



2007 Clarence Square looking west

As with Wellington Square, the residential fabric surrounding the square is made up of terraced houses and villas, all with gardens which face into the square. These gardens would again have originally been enclosed by iron railings, however, these were largely removed during the second world war and were replaced by high hedges which both physically and visually enclose the houses and the square. To the corners of the square run the adjoining roads.



2007 Junction of Clarence Square West and Clarence Road

The high hedge which defines the boundary of the green space is predominantly Holly with the addition of species which have been allowed to colonize. Invasive weeds have also been ineffectively managed and are now predominant within the hedge despite attempts at basal spraying.

The hedge is dissected in places by iron railings in varying degrees of repair, which contribute to a sense of neglect.

The hedge, which is well above head height, gives a overwhelming sense of enclosure to the green space with views out limited to gateway spaces.



2007 Iron railings within the hedge



2007 Clarence Square East railings



2007 Clarence Square South railings



2007 Wooden railings along Clarence Road



2007 North west gateway

Clarence Square differs from Wellington Square with the gateways positioned to the four corners, north, south, east and west rather than being located along the sides. The gateways are defined with ironwork in varying states of deterioration.



2007 North east gateway



2007 South west gateway

The sense of arrival into the green space varies according to the state of decay and surface treatment at each gateway. To the south west there is a hard surfaced bitmac path which leads into the square and surrounds the gateway to the south west corner, which enhances the sense of arrival and leads the visitor into the square. However, to the right, alongside Clarence Road, this hard surface soon gives way to a compacted gravel and dirt surface. To the left along Clarence Square West the hard surfaced path stops abruptly and the grass verge has no footpath. Clear desire lines within the grass indicate the amount of foot traffic along this verge and the clear need for a footpath.



2007 South east gateway

Despite the ironwork and gates at each of the gateways, the general appearance is that of neglect and deterioration.



2007 Ironwork

Beyond the boundary hedge a wide grass verge surrounds the square. This verge is filled with mature trees which contribute to the character and setting of the square. There is a narrow dirt footpath worn into the grass which runs along Clarence Square East between the northern gateways.



2007 Clarence Square East



2007 Clarence Square South

There is no footpath beyond the northern boundary however, well worn desire lines in the grass are an indication of the amount of foot traffic this strip of grass receives.



2007 Clarence Square North



2007 Clarence Square West

To the south western corner of the square stands a contemporary sculpture carved from wood, which provides an interesting focal point in the square which can also double as a seat.



2007 Clarence Square sculpture

It is disappointing to note that seating opportunities are not adequately provided for within this square. Rubbish bins are provided adjacent to entrance gateways only and they, along with signage in the square are covered with graffiti.



2007 Graffiti



2007 Clarence Square looking west



2007 Clarence Square looking south east



2007 Clarence Square looking north west

Within Clarence Square a collection of mature trees stand within the grassed setting, which give a parkland character to the square. Two magnificent, mature London Plane trees (*Platanus x hispanica*), one towards the centre of the square and one towards the northern boundary provide a sense of history and scale to the square. Their deciduous nature highlights seasonal change within the square.

c. Pittville Crescent North

Pittville Crescent lies to the east of Pittville Park, with north and south gardens being laid out alongside the gardens at Pittville as part of the private pleasure grounds for the residents of the estate. The gardens became public in 1954.

Pittville Crescent north is defined by Albert Road to the west and Pittville Crescent to the east. Central cross Drive extends east beyond Albert Road and dissects the north and south crescent, running to the south of the northern crescent.



2007 Pittville Crescent North, looking south west.

Albert Road and Pittville Crescent are predominantly made up of individual houses and villas, all with enclosed, mature gardens. There are a significant number of street trees along both roads which give a sense of vertical scale and age to the area.



2007 Houses along Albert Road

Pittville Crescent north is enclosed by a tall, 1.5m clipped hedge. The hedge has been allowed to randomly develop with colonizing shrubs remaining unchecked. This has resulted in an amalgam of species, including Holly, Ivy, Privet and Elm along with areas of Sycamore, Hawthorn and Ash. Beneath the hedge, a thriving understorey comprises Wood Avenas, Arum Lily and Bramble amongst other species.

This hedge defines the crescent but restricts both visual and physical access into and out of the crescent. The hedge is in good condition although its height, whilst acting as a successful physical barrier, could be seen as a threat to use, especially in the evening.



2007 Boundary hedge

Within the hedged boundary, the crescent comprises grassland with scattered mature and semi-mature trees including a Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), London Plane (*Platanus x hispanica*) and Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*). These mature trees give a sense of history to the crescent whilst providing visual and ecological interest throughout the year.



2007 Mature trees

Beyond the boundary hedge, the crescent is defined by a strip of amenity grass, running around the perimeter of the crescent. To the north and east, this strip of grass has no defined footpath however, to the west and south a narrow, hard, bitmac surfaced footpath runs between the hedge and the grass. Desire lines within the grass to the east are an indication that this grass is used as a routeway.

Along Pittville Crescent there is a hard, bitmac surfaced, pedestrian footpath to the east only, beyond a wide grassed verge.



2007 Pittville Crescent looking north west



2007 Pittville Crescent looking north with grassed verge alongside the road



2007 Looking north along Albert Road. Grassed verge and pedestrian footpath with boundary hedge to the east

Access into Pittville Crescent north is via a single gated entrance to the south adjacent to Central Cross Drive. The ironwork is in the same style as Pittville Park and shows the same degree of deterioration and feeling of neglect.

The gateway opens into the grassed crescent without a hard surfaced path. The result is a dirt covered entrance which detracts from the historic importance, character and setting of this space.



2007 Gateway into Pittville Crescent north



2007 Pittville Crescent north ironwork

There are no seating opportunities within Pittville Crescent north, although a rubbish bin has been provided adjacent to the gateway.



2007 Rubbish Bin

d. Pittville Crescent South

Pittville Crescent south is defined by Albert Road to the west and Pittville Crescent to the east. Central cross Drive extends east beyond Albert Road and dissects the north and south crescent, running to the north of the south crescent.



2007 Pittville Crescent south, looking north

The landscape setting for Pittville Crescent south is more open than the northern crescent, with fewer mature trees providing a canopy layer above the space. Again, the space is defined by a 1.5m dense clipped hedge which comprises several species and a well developed understorey (see Pittville Crescent north).



2007 Boundary hedge

Beyond the boundary hedge the crescent is defined by a grassed verge which runs around the perimeter of the space.



2007 Looking north along Albert Road, with boundary hedge to the east

This wide grassed verge to the west of the crescent adjoins Albert Road and contains mature street trees which contribute to the overall character of the setting. To the east, the grassed verge runs adjacent to Pittville Crescent.



2007 Looking north along Pittville Crescent

There is no hard surfaced pedestrian footpath to the east of the crescent, adjacent to Pittville Crescent, although there is a wide grassed verge beyond the road which contains mature street trees and a pedestrian footpath. Cars park alongside the grassed verges and give the setting a cluttered character.



2007 Looking west along Central Cross Drive, with Pittville Crescent south to the left.

To the north of the crescent, Central Cross Drive divides the space from Pittville crescent north. This road, which is predominantly used for car parking, also has wide grassed verges which contain mature street trees and a hard surface pedestrian footpath.

The gateway into Pittville Crescent south is via a gateway through ironwork adjacent to Central Cross Drive. The ironwork is in the same style as Pittville Park and is showing the same deterioration and sense of neglect.



2007 Pittville Crescent south gateway (above and below)

The gateway opens directly onto the grass of the crescent and as a result of the lack of hard surface a dirt track has been worn into the grass which detracts from the character and setting of this historic crescent.



Within the crescent, the grassed area contains mature and semi mature tree species, which are largely located to the centre of the space. The high nature of the boundary hedge creates an enclosed and secluded space which is clearly being used in inappropriate ways, presumably by local young people. There was, on the occasions of site visits, a large amount of rubbish, including empty alcohol bottles and cans, littering the grass surrounding the base of the mature Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*)



2007 Litter in Pittville Crescent south (above and below)



To the south of the crescent is a second, narrow gateway which leads out into Pittville Crescent and south towards Cheltenham town centre. This gateway is also defined by ironwork in the same style as Pittville Park and the surface treatment around the gateway shows the same level of deterioration and neglect.

A sign attached to the gate has been constructed from a previous road sign and gives a conflicting message when viewed from inside the crescent. (See Section 5.5)



2007 Gateway signage

There are no seating opportunities within Pittville Crescent south, although there is a bench located outside the boundary hedge, alongside Albert Road. A rubbish bin has been provided adjacent to the main gateway to the north.

Trees and Vegetation in the Squares and Crescents

Comprising four small separate gardens; Wellington Square, Clarence Square, Pittville Crescent North and Pittville Crescent South, these areas have relatively few significant or important specimen trees. The most likely reason for this is to do with their use as allotments during the second world war, when some of the original trees may have been felled. However, there remain a scattering of notable trees that were part of the original planting, namely; a large Holm Oak in the southern half of Pittville Crescent, one London Plane in the northern half of Pittville Crescent and two more in Clarence Square. Whereas there are few noteworthy trees in Wellington Square, there is an early mature Turkey Oak to the east side which has good long term potential. There are also a good number of young to early mature trees (some newly planted) in all four gardens.

Ecology in the Squares and Crescents

Wellington Square

Square area of vegetation surrounded by roads. The shape of the square is defined by a 2 metre high diverse, dense and trimmed hedgerow with Holly, Sycamore, Hawthorn, Garden Privet, Wych Elm, Elder, Horse Chestnut, Lilac, Yew and Beech. The hedgerow understorey supports some woodland herbs including Herb Robert and Wood Avens with Ivy, Cow Parsley, Bramble, Cleavers and Garlic Mustard (**Target Note 19, Appendix 2**).

On the exterior of the hedgerow are planted standard, semi-mature street trees of Sycamore, Ash, Lime, Silver Birch and Horse Chestnut over short, mown amenity grassland (MG7 community).

On the interior of the hedgerow the square contains short, mown amenity grassland with a network of asphalt covered footpaths leading to four access points through the hedgerow. Standard trees over the grassland include Walnut, Holm Oak, Yew and Silver Birch. Of note is a large, mature Turkey Oak (**Target Note 20, Appendix 2**) with under-planting of native and non-native shrubs including Dogwood and Spiraea.

Clarence Square

The habitats in Clarence Square are similar to Wellington Square. Again, the square is defined by a dense, trimmed species-diverse hedgerow (see **Target Note 21, Appendix 2**).

Standard planted street trees around the exterior of Clarence Square include Silver Birch and Sycamore. The interior of the square contains mown, amenity grassland bisected by asphalt covered footpaths and planted with standard trees including Cherry, Yew and Holm Oak. Of note is a large, mature Plane tree in the centre of the square (**Target Note 22, Appendix 2**).

Pittville Crescent North

Crescent shaped green spaced bordered by roads. The crescent shape is defined by a dense, trimmed hedgerow (**Target Note 23, Appendix 2**).

The interior of the crescent supports mown amenity grassland with constant plant species including Perennial Rye-grass, Daisy, White Clover, Daisy, Dandelion, Meadow Brome,

Greater Plantain, Annual Meadow-grass and Bulbous Buttercup. Standard trees within the Plane and Yew. Of note is a large, mature Plane tree (**Target Note 24, Appendix 2**).

Pittville Crescent South

Crescent shaped green spaced bordered by roads. The crescent shape is defined by a dense, trimmed hedgerow (**Target Note 25, Appendix 2**).

The interior of the crescent supports mown amenity grassland with constant plant species including Perennial Rye-grass, Daisy, White Clover, Daisy, Dandelion, Meadow Brome, Greater Plantain, Annual Meadow-grass and Bulbous Buttercup. Standard trees within the Plane and Yew. Of note is a large, mature Holm Oak tree (**Target Note 26, Appendix 2**).

3.3.9 Character Area 9: Pittville Gates

Landscape



2007 Pittville Gates

The Pittville Gates, dating from 1897 were added to stone piers which date from the beginnings of the estate. The original ironwork was replaced in 1932 and subsequently removed during the Second World War. The gates we see today date are replicas and mark the entrance to the Pittville Estate.

Pittville gates occupy a prominent position to the south of the Pittville Estate. To the north is Pittville Lawn, a quiet residential road with a mixture of Victorian and Regency houses. Pittville Lawn has no vehicular access from the south. To the south is Winchcombe Street and beyond Cheltenham town centre. To the west is Clarence Road and to the north-east Prestbury Road. There are a collection of small convenience shops clustered around this busy junction.



2007 View south to Winchcombe Street and Cheltenham town centre



2007 View west to Clarence Road



2007 Shops clustered around the junction of Prestbury Road, Clarence Road and Winchcombe Street.

Pittville Lawn to the north of the gates is not open to vehicles from the south. The gates stand back from the road beyond a wide paved area adjacent to the highway footpath. The paving looks faded and its style not compatible with such an important historic feature. The pavement dips adjacent to the gates to allow access across the road to a traffic island. There are numerous traffic signs and bollards which clutter the street scene at this point and detract from the magnificent gates.



2007 Pittville Gates from Winchcombe Street

There are six gate piers which make up the Pittville gates. Ironwork is added to the two outer gateways, although the gates are no longer in existence and the centre spans ironwork which does not open. Above the centre span further ironwork which announces the entrance to Pittville Park along with a coat of arms of Cheltenham.

The four outermost piers have tall lighting units on the coping? It is not known if these lights are operational.



2007 Concrete bollards

The two internal openings now have concrete bollards to restrict vehicular access. These bollards do not compliment the character and setting of the gates

The ironwork of the gates is beginning to look tired and in need of renovation.

To the north of the gates road markings signal a no parking area and areas of bitmac have been replaced to form a patchwork of surfaces. There is no consistency in the surface detail of this important area.



2007 Stonework

One box planter has been added between the wider of the western openings. There is a lack of symmetry with this single planter and whilst the plants contained within seem well maintained, the planter itself does not compliment the character and setting of the Pittville Gates.



2007 Pittville Gates looking south

Trees and Vegetation

There are no trees or vegetation surrounding these historic gates as paving and a bitmac surface surround the stone and iron work.

Ecology

The gates are constructed from stone and iron work. The small area is surrounded by hard-standing and has no ecological value. Owing to the absence of any features for wildlife this Character Area is not included within the remainder of the report.

3.4 ECOLOGY – WILDLIFE

3.4.1 Wildlife

An account of all wildlife (or signs of wildlife) recorded at the site in March and May 2008 is presented below; reference is also made to the reliable records obtained during the desktop study. The survey results are not absolute and where possible an assessment has been made with regard to the suitability of the habitats for other wildlife (particularly protected species).

3.4.1.1 Badger

No evidence of Badger activity was recorded at the site.

3.4.1.2 Bat species

3.4.1.2.1 The bat survey commenced at 2045 BST on the 22nd May 2008 (sunset was reported to be 2105 BST). The first bat contacts were detected at 2105 BST at the north-eastern corner of the Agg Gardner (near the tree stump at Target Note 10). The first detected species was a Noctule Bat. The proximity to sunset suggests that the Noctule Bats were detected near the roost (Noctule Bats typically roost in trees). Noctule Bats were constantly detected between 2105 and 2145 BST around the Lower Lake area.

3.4.1.2.2 At 2115 BST Common Pipistrelle Bats were detected over the Lower Lake.

3.4.1.2.3 From 2140 BST onwards Daubenton's Bats were detected foraging over the Lower Lake. The main areas of Common Pipistrelle and Daubenton's Bat activity were concentrated at the far western end of the Lower Lake and the central section of the lake (close to the bridge bases) both these areas support overhanging marginal trees which will attract the flying invertebrates for foraging bats.

3.4.1.2.4 Both Pipistrelle and Daubenton's Bat were also recorded foraging over the Upper Lake.

3.4.1.2.5 In summary: -

- a. At least three genus of bat (*Nyctalus*, *Myotis* and *Pipistrellus*) were recorded foraging over the habitats (particularly the lakes) at Pittville Park on the 22nd May 2008.
- b. The early detection of Noctule activity (at sunset) suggests that a Noctule roost may be present in one or more of the trees within the park.
- c. Many of the houses adjacent to the Park support features suitable for use by bats (particularly crevice dwelling Pipistrelle species) and the inter-relationship between the availability of habitats for foraging and potential roosting positions is of great significance.

3.4.1.3 Other Mammals

- 3.4.1.3.1 Grey Squirrel were recorded in Character Areas 5 (Lower Lake) and 3 (Pittville Lawns).
- 3.4.1.3.2 Brown Rat were frequently noted around the shores of the Upper and Lower Lakes.
- 3.4.1.3.3 Unfortunately during the torchlight survey for amphibian activity a dead adult Hedgehog was noted in the Lower Lake. The cause of death is unknown as Hedgehogs are known to be good swimmers and the banks around some margins of the lake would permit emergence from the water. Hedgehog are a UK BAP Priority Species.

3.4.1.4 Bird species

- 3.4.1.4.1 The tree and scrub habitats within the park are favourable for a diversity of passerine (perching bird species). The lakes create habitats for waterfowl species. As listed on **Table 2, Appendix 2**. 41 bird species were recorded at the park in May and March 2008. This includes 6 UK BAP Priority Species (3 species of UK BAP Priority Species were confirmed to be breeding in the Park (Dunnock, Song Thrush and Bullfinch owing to the presence of territorial behaviour, alarm calls and food).
- 3.4.1.4.2 Of the total 41 bird species recorded in March and May 2008, at least 23 species were confirmed breeding within the park habitats (owing to the presence of territorial behaviour, alarm calls and food).
- 3.4.1.4.3 Previously collated information obtained from a the County Bird Recorder for Gloucestershire reports an additional 41 bird species which have been recorded at Pittville Park between 2001 and 2008. The additional species are listed at the end of **Table 2, Appendix 2**.

3.4.1.5 Amphibians

The torchlight survey of the margins of the Upper and Lower Lakes did not detect the presence of any amphibians. The high abundance of fish (fish predate on tadpoles and newt larvae) and limited cover of aquatic vegetation limits the suitability of the water bodies for breeding amphibians.

3.4.1.6 Reptiles

No reptile species were recorded during the surveys. There are no records of reptile species within the park. The short mown grassland habitats and the more isolated habitats at the squares and crescents are not favourable habitats for reptile species.

3.4.1.7 Invertebrates

- 3.4.1.7.1 March and May are early in the survey calendar for the completion of an invertebrate survey. The survey concentrated on butterfly and dragonfly species; none were observed during the surveys.

- 3.4.1.7.2 It is likely that the abundance of fish species in the lakes has had an adverse effect on the diversity and abundance of dragonfly and damselfly species.
- 3.4.1.7.3 The short mown grasslands within the park do not provide favourable habitats for breeding butterflies. In the summer months it is likely that the park and the residential gardens in the local area are visited by feeding common butterfly species such as Large White, Small White, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock and Red Admiral.

3.5 BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES OVERVIEW

There are several buildings and structures within the park at Pittville, which are historically significant in the development of the park. Fig 3.2 Illustrates the location of these buildings and structures, whilst their origins within Pittville Park can be found in Section 2.

3.5.1 Pump Rooms

See schedule of condition attached at Appendix 4.

The impressive Grade 1 listed building known as the Pump Rooms provided the focus to the original Pittville estate and this focus continues today.

Standing to the north of the park, on raised ground, its Architect, John Forbes is said to have taken his inspiration for the building from the Ilissus temple.



2007 Pittville Pump Rooms

Its construction is brick with an Ashlar surface cover and to the west, south and east an impressive colonnade provides focal interest. A balcony looks out across Pittville lawns to the south, which is accessible from within the building, although structural problems are now restricting access.

The building is used for festivals and events within the town and has a large car park to the rear.

3.5.2 Central Cross Café

See schedule of condition attached at Appendix 4.

The Central Cross Café was built to replace Essex Lodge in 1902-3 by Messrs AC and S Billings to a design by the Borough Surveyor, Joseph Hall.

The building, painted timber frames with cladding and brickwork, has a unique style and character which contributes to the overall setting of Pittville Park.



2007 Central Cross Cafe

The café has limited opening hours, dependant upon the season and provides refreshments for visitors to the park. There is a limited amount of indoor seating, however, during good weather there are movable tables and chairs positioned on the adjacent lawns.

3.5.3 Boat House

See schedule of condition attached at Appendix 4

The Boathouse, situated on the north shore of the Lower Lake, was built in 1894 to replace a previous building which stood close by.

The design for the building was by the Borough Surveyor, John Forbes and it housed ten boats which were purchased locally.



2007 Boathouse

The building, of painted timber frames and cladding houses a small office to the front, with the main purpose being accommodation for boats. It's pitched, slate roof has a covering of leaf mould and moss which, adds to it's character and enables the building to sit comfortably within the surrounding landscape.

During opening hours, the Boathouse provides a selection of refreshments and ice creams, along with selling tickets for the golf course, fishing and tennis facilities.

3.5.4 Toilet Block

See schedule of condition attached at Appendix 4

The Toilet Block was re-furbished in 2001-2 as part of a scheme to build a larger facility which included office space and a heritage centre. Sadly those plans were postponed and the toilet block was built as a single unit.

This building, of painted timber and cladding, was built to replace former building which dated from 1960. The original separate blocks were located within the shrubberies to the north of the Pump Rooms. These toilets are conveniently located close to the children's play area



2007 Toilet Block

3.5.5 Scout Hut

See schedule of condition attached at Appendix 4

The Scout Hut was built in 1942 by SC Morris and Son as an air raid precaution control and report centre. After the war it became a store for the Park's Department until in 1982, a lease was granted to the 10th Cheltenham (All Saints) Scouts.

Constructed of painted brickwork and in-situ concrete, this building is functional yet visually out of place within it's historic setting.



2007 Scout Hut

A collection of mature ornamental shrubs have been planted to three sides of the Scout Hut which do go some way to camouflage the building, yet it's central location within Pittville Lawns does block north-south vistas.

3.5.6 Agg Gardner Pavilion

See schedule of condition attached at Appendix 4



2007 Agg Gardner Pavilion

The Agg Gardner Pavilion is located to the south of the recreation ground and occupies the site of the original shelter which was built in 1888. The pavilion was re-built in 1979 and has recently undergone refurbishment.

There are no hard surface footpaths leading to and from this pavilion, which results in users of the pavilions walking over grass. As a result, the surrounding grass has become worn away.

The exterior cladding to the building provides an excellent wall for ball games, although the light coloured cladding highlights all marks which may be considered visually intrusive.

3.5.7 Bandstand

Bandstand and iron works have not yet been included in the recently introduced cycle of borough council 20year maintenance programme. However, the bandstand is listed for annual inspection this financial year and will then enter the 20 programme. No timescale for a condition survey of the ironwork has yet been agreed.

The bandstand adjacent to the Pump Rooms was built in front of the building, in 1900 although it was relocated to it's present position in 1901.

The bandstand was restored in 1994-5 by the Cheltenham branch of the Royal Air Force Association.



2007 Bandstand

3.5.8 Gates

See schedule of condition for all ironwork in Pittville Park attached at Appendix 4

Bandstand and iron works have not yet been included in the recently introduced cycle of borough council 20year maintenance programme. However, the bandstand is listed for annual inspection this FY and will then enter the 20 programme. No timescale for a condition survey of the ironwork has yet been agreed.

There are 3 formal gateways into Pittville Park. The grand entrance to the estate is via the Pittville Gates which are located at the southern extent of Pittville Lawn.

See section 3.9



2007 Pittville gates

To the east of Evesham Road stand the most recent gates which were erected in 1953-4 as a gift from the Flora Fete Committee. These gates may have originated from another site in Cheltenham

See section 5.3



Evesham Road

The magnificent, Grade II listed gates which stand to the north of Pittville Lawn hang between octagonal gothic piers and a low stone wall which has iron railings above.

See section 5.3



2007 Gates off Pittville Lawn

3.5.9 Bridges

See schedule of condition for all stonework in Pittville Park attached at Appendix 4

The east and west bridges which provide a crossing point across the Upper Lake date from the 1820's.

The bridges provide valuable focal points within the east park and contribute the historic significance and aesthetic value within the park.



2007 Bridge to the east of the Upper Lake



2007 Bridge to the west of the Upper Lake

3.5.10 Ironwork (including smaller gates)

See schedule of condition attached at Appendix 4

Bandstand and iron works have not yet been included in the recently introduced cycle of borough council 20year maintenance programme. However, the bandstand is listed for annual inspection this financial year and will then enter the 20 programme. No timescale for a condition survey of the ironwork has yet been agreed.



2007 Ironwork

3.5.11 Weir

The weir and rockery at the western extent of the Lower Lake appear to date from the time when the Mill House was demolished in 1945.

Today this is an interesting feature which provides a contrast to the still water within the Lower Lake.



2007 Lower Lake Weir

3.6 SITE APPRAISAL

Pittville Park's extensive open space enables a series of views both within the park out beyond the boundary to Cheltenham and the wider landscape beyond. The following sections will set out the major short, medium and long distance views from key locations within the park. 3.6.3 will set out views which are afforded from the wider landscape looking towards Pittville Park.

3.6.1 Internal Views and Vistas

There are many excellent views and vistas afforded within the park due to its predominantly open landscape character and whilst the mature trees which contribute to that character block certain views, those with a deciduous nature afford seasonal glimpses through their canopy. See Fig 3.3

Arguably, the most significant vista within the park is from the south shore of the Upper Lake, looking north towards the Pump Rooms. Historic photographs and the 1845 plan of the proposed Pittville estate reveal this intentional vista. Today, trees and vegetation have matured to close this vista and it is only visible now when seasonal changes to vegetation allow glimpse through the canopy. The vista is further spoilt by the addition of a floating reed bed within the Lower Lake, installed to control algae levels; it is an important addition although sited in visually the wrong place.



2007 Pump Rooms vista



2007 Pump Room Lawns (above and below)

There are also short distance views across the Pump Room lawns, through the mature and semi mature trees planted here. The footpaths enhance sight lines and provide aid both legibility and orientation within the park. Seasonal change within the park further enhances these views for park visitors.



Excellent views over the west park are afforded from the Pump Room Lawns, especially within the fenced play area. Whilst there is no gateway here, there is good visual access into the west park and a narrow footpath beyond Evesham Road is visible and offers a sight line towards the mature trees which once lined the historic carriage drive between Marle Hill House and Cheltenham town centre.



2007 View towards the west park from play area



2007 View across play area towards Upper Lake

At the north west point of the fenced play area, there are views back across the grassed play area, Pump Room lawns and the mature planting around the Upper Lake.



2007 Views across the Upper Lake (above and below)



The long gardens or lawns extend south from the Upper Lake but do not line up with this vista. Originally planned as pleasure grounds, the 1845 plan shows random plantings with no formal vistas. Today, trees and vegetation have matured to close views within this area, although natural gaps between the trees do afford glimpses of neighbouring trees and the surrounding residential houses along Evesham Road and Pittville Lawn.



2007 Pittville Lawn North



2007 Pittville Lawn South

The footpath which circles the Lower Lake provides a good vantage point for short and medium distance views both across the lake and to the wider parkland beyond. As the grassland extends north west over Marle Hill, some excellent views can be found and it is possible to pick out remnants of the historic landscape within the park. Interpretation at such points would enhance the experience for the visitors to Pittville Park.



2007 North shore of Lower Lake looking west



2007 Directed view south west through mature trees



2007 View north west across Lower Lake

To the south west of the park is the Agg Gardner recreation ground which is adjacent to the St Paul's residential area. Views into the park are presented at the gateways which adjoin Marle Hill Road. Mature tree planting within the park, surrounding the Lower Lake can be a barrier to views, although seasonal changes do allow glimpses through the canopy, towards Marle Hill to the north.



2007 View north from southern park boundary

Glimpsed views of distant buildings and other features aid legibility and enable orientation and way finding within the park.



2007 Looking west from Agg Gardner recreation ground towards Leisure@Cheltenham

To the north of the park in the Marle Hill character area, the extensive open parkland enables excellent short, medium and long distance views.



2007 Looking east from Tommy Taylor's Lane



2007 Looking south west from Marle Hill East



2007 Looking south from Marle Hill Centre, towards the Lower Lake



2007 Looking west from Marle Hill Centre, towards Tommy Taylor's Lane



2007 Looking south west from Evesham Road



2007 Looking south east towards skateboard park



2007 Looking north east towards skateboard park

The squares and crescents associated with Pittville Park also give the opportunity for short and medium distance views, predominantly along the roads which define those spaces. Some limited views are available within the squares and crescents and are illustrated below.



2007 Clarence Square (above and below)



2007 Wellington Square



2007 Wellington Square



2007 Pittville Crescent north



2007 Pittville Crescent south

3.6.2 Views from the Site

The linear streets and road surrounding the Pittville Lawns afford good short and medium distance views. The north-south Evesham Road provides extensive views out of the park boundary.



In the west park, the open nature of the Agg Gardner recreation ground enables long distance views east towards the Cotswold escarpment. This view is also presented from Marle Hill, looking across the park, Evesham Road and the Pump Room lawns.



2007 Distant views of the Cotswold escarpment from the Agg Gardner recreation ground (above) and from Marle Hill (below)



Views south towards Cheltenham town centre are best achieved from Marle Hill, as its height above the park enables seasonal views through the canopy of mature trees. The distinctive church spires of St Mary's Church, St Paul's Church and Francis Close Hall are visible from the Agg Gardener recreation ground. Christ Church spire to the west is also visible from this point. Linear road patterns within the residential housing of St Paul's also enables views to these church spires.



2007 Long distance views to Cheltenham town centre



2007 The spires of St Mary's Church, St Paul's Church and Francis Close Hall (from left to right)

Pittville Gates stand to the south of the park and were designed as the grand entrance to the estate. Views from these gates today are limited to views along the surrounding roads.



2007 View south along Winchcombe Street from Pittville Gates

3.6.3 Views to the site from the wider landscape

The location of Pittville Park on the undulating flood plain of the River Sever restricts views into the park, apart from those afforded on higher ground. To the east of the park, on the Cotswold escarpment, a suitable vantage point offers long distance views over Cheltenham and features of Pittville Park can be distinguished and are highlighted below. See Fig 3.4



2007 View from Cotswold escarpment towards Pittville Park (above and below)



3.7 MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Pittville Park is under the ownership and management of Cheltenham Borough Council.

Management of Pittville Park must be considered within the context of all the parks and green spaces in Cheltenham. There are over 120 named parks and open spaces within the borough boundary, with 16 of those designated parks. Residential areas also have open green spaces, along with school grounds, all of which are cared for by a dedicated parks team with 42 staff.

The majority of the team are deployed to manage grassed areas of Cheltenham, with 30 team members split into individual teams to cover parks, schools, amenity, public realm and residential areas. Seasonal workers are required to supplement these teams.

There are 3 team members who manage and maintain almost all of the shrubs within Cheltenham, however, given the significant number of parks, gardens and open spaces, this maintenance must be limited. 3 team members are employed to plant up and maintain road side and city centre bedding displays, whilst 5 team members work within the nursery, growing bedding plants to sell on to other local authorities.

The parks teams also work hard to produce high quality floral displays for the Cheltenham in Bloom and Heart of England in Bloom competitions. Awards are always achieved and although these competitions take valuable time and monetary resources, they considered in some instances important in promoting Cheltenham as a tourist destination.

Pittville Park once has it's own dedicated team to maintain the landscape setting. Cut backs and amalgamation of teams led to this dedicated team being withdrawn. Today the teams are van based. There is also little formal training given to team members, other than a basic knowledge in horticulture. Specialist talents are encouraged wherever possible however budget restrictions often mean that team members have to cover a variety of jobs.

It is felt that the parks team is extremely hard working, dedicated and, at a senior level, familiar with and respectful of the historical significance of Pittville Park and its value to the residents of Cheltenham as an amazing ecological, recreational and educational resource. However, budget restrictions and staffing cuts have succeeded in restricting their ability to manage and maintain the park's historic fabric to a high quality. This in turn has lead to a deterioration in the landscape setting, removal of flower beds, wholesale cutting back of shrubs without respect for their form and habit, installation of inappropriate and haphazard styles of furniture and repair or replacement of worn structures with materials 'borrowed in' from other sites, which all contribute to a loss of the aesthetic character and setting of the park.