

# Heritage Statement

Land off Oakhurst Rise, Charlton Kings



 Architectural History & Conservation

## Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Map Regression	5
3	Heritage Assets	10
4	Policy	30
5	Proposals	36
6	Heritage Impact Assessment	38
7	Conclusion	47
8.	Bibliography and References	48



## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Professor Timothy Mowl and Dr Carole Fry of AHC Consultants have prepared this Heritage Statement in respect of Land off Oakhurst Rise, Charlton Kings, for William Morrison (Cheltenham) Ltd. Timothy Mowl is Emeritus Professor of Architectural History & Designed Landscapes at the University of Bristol. Professor Mowl is a former English Heritage Inspector of Historic Buildings, Architectural Consultant for the Bath Preservation Trust and has served as President of Cheltenham Civic Society. Dr Fry is an independent historic buildings and conservation specialist. She was a Conservation Officer for twenty years, twelve of which she was the Principal. Her doctorate concerned the dissemination of Palladianism in this country; she combines, therefore, a sure knowledge of conservation legislation and practice together with a sound historical background in architectural history.

1.2 The purpose of the Statement is to present a historical analysis and architectural and landscape description of the development site, adjacent to St Edward's Preparatory School, to provide a chronological narrative of the site and that of the school, originally part of the pleasure grounds of a Regency villa named The Oaklands. This will be achieved through map regression, archival evidence and site investigation. This report will consider the likely impacts upon this heritage asset and other nearby heritage assets of the proposed development scheme for the site.

1.3 In line with advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as revised in 2018, this report will establish the significance of the Grade II\* listed St Edward's School and other relevant heritage assets, and the likely impact any schemes for developing the field to the north with housing would have on these heritage assets. The assessment undertaken comprises an examination of archival resources

and data related to the site and any relevant cultural heritage assets which may be affected, as well as fieldwork. Together these two strands of research have enabled an assessment to be made of any potential implications or impacts of the proposals upon these heritage assets.

1.4 The assessment carried out here has led to the re-design of the proposals for the site, taking on board the comments provided by Historic England and the Cheltenham Conservation and Planning Department. These comments were made in relation to outline application 17/00710/OUT. The current, proposed outline layout plan, which forms the basis of this application, also identifies mitigation where necessary and appropriate. Heritage features within the built environment are recognised as assets to both the local community and nationally and it is therefore appropriate to assess any likely effects upon such assets.

1.5 This assessment has referred to the legislative framework as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national and local policy as well as Historic England Guidance which has been used to inform the scheme.

1.6 The site is located on the eastern side of Cheltenham with a grid reference centred on NGR SO 96538 21610 and is approximately 4 ha in size. This grassed area has no current use. It is bounded to the north by the residential Birchley Road, to the south by St Edward's School, to the east by Ashley Road and to the west by Oakhurst Rise. The boundaries to the site are largely verdant in nature with hedgerows, trees and other mature vegetation along their lengths. The site itself slopes steeply to the north providing views to the south, across Cheltenham.

1.7 Within the site, on its eastern side, there are the remains of an icehouse which, as expected in a building of this type, is wholly located below ground. Its' position is marked by a vegetated mound. This icehouse once belonged to the villa known as The Oaklands, now St Edward's School. There are no other structures within the 4 ha site. It should be noted that although open in nature, the site lies within the urban context of Cheltenham, and is largely surrounded by well-established and in areas dense, residential development.

1.8 There are 125 listed buildings located within 1km of the site. The vast majority of these would not be affected by development proposals for the site and this report therefore focusses on those listed buildings where there could be an impact related to proposed development in this location. Given the planning history of the site and the comments received from Historic England and Cheltenham Council under 17/00710/OUT, it is considered most pertinent and helpful in

this Heritage Statement to consider those heritage assets potentially most affected by the development.

1.9 It should be noted that there are no registered World Heritage Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields wholly or partly within the site.

## 2.0 Map Regression



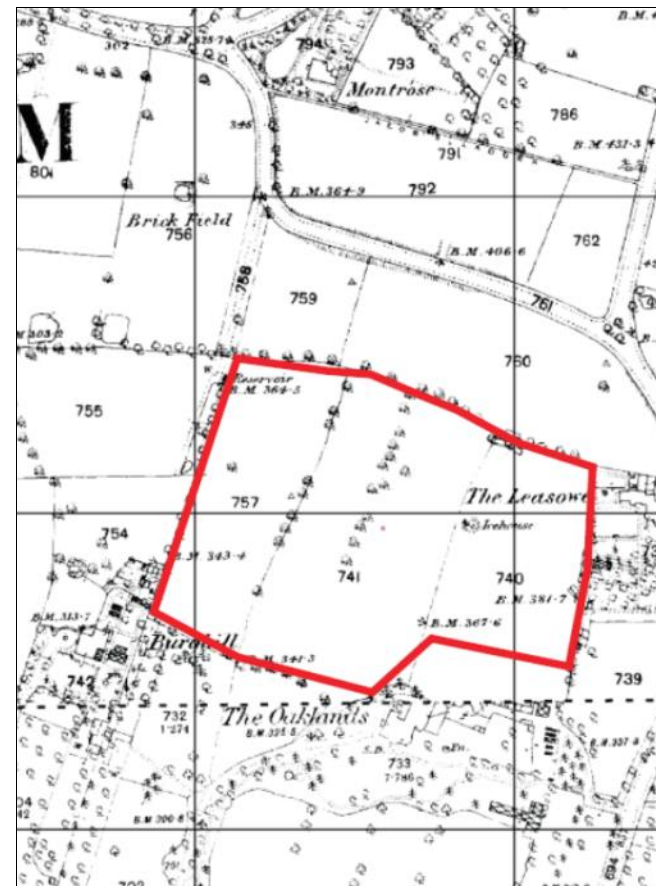
*Plate 1 The 1843 Tithe Map of the site*

2.1 The land that comprises the proposed development site was once fields, as shown in by the Tithe map of 1843 which shows the site, known then as 'Broad Battle Downs' (*Plate 1*).

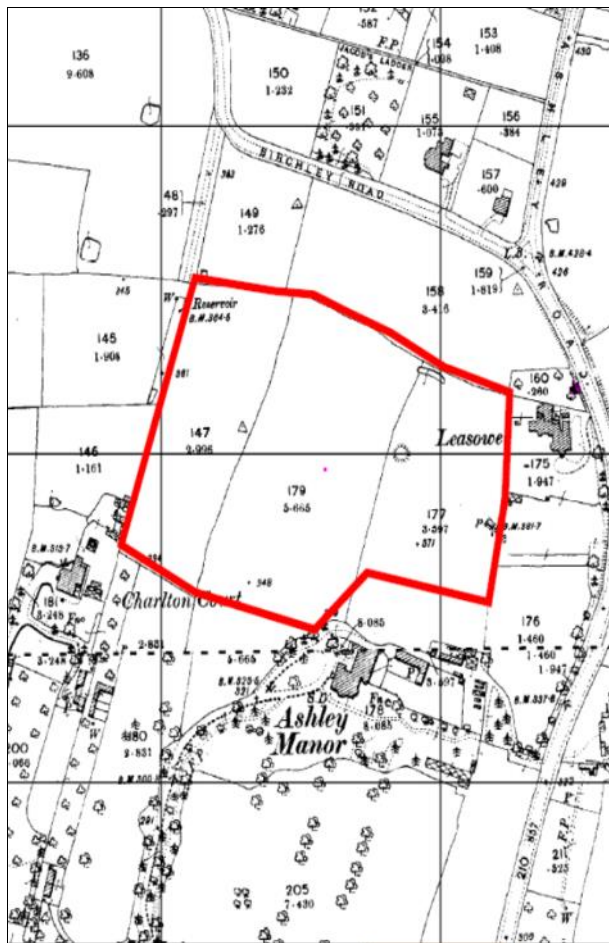
2.2 The first edition Ordnance Survey Map for the site (*Plate 2*) is dated to 1886-1887 and shows the open land to the north of The Oaklands, which villa had by now been constructed. The formal gardens of this villa are clearly shown as being to the south and east of the villa with the land to the north, the development site, remaining as undesigned, open land. A shelter belt of trees to the north-west of The Oaklands, creating a screen between the villa and the functional land to the north can already be seen at this time. The first Ordnance Survey map depicts the site as being comprised of three, separate, fields the most easterly being known as The Leasowes. The Icehouse is also shown.



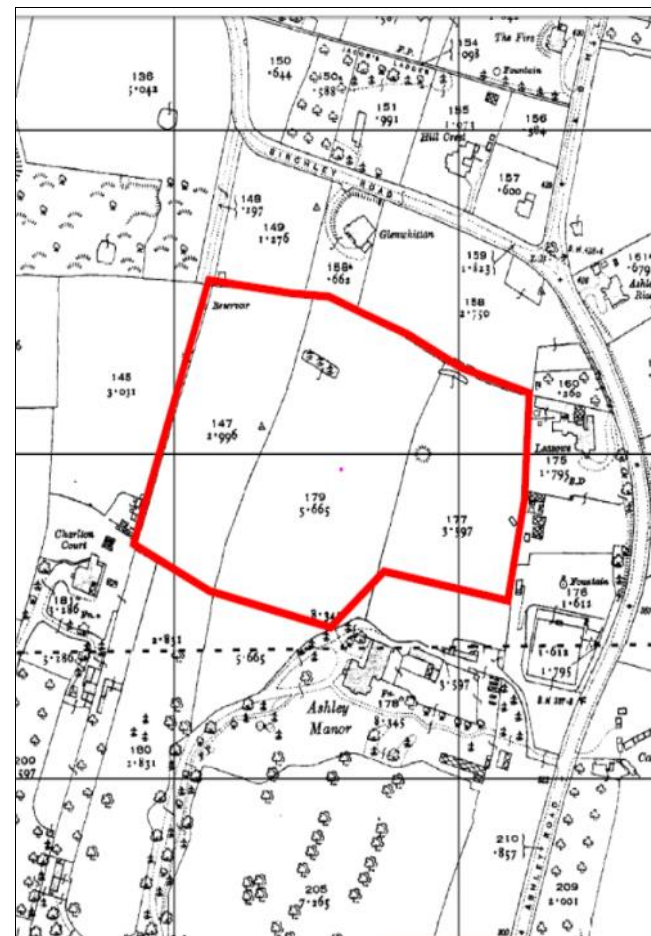
2.3 The second edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1903 (*Plate 3*) shows the site almost exactly as it appears in the first edition map but with fewer trees within the fields. The notable differences are that The Oaklands has been constructed to the east of the site along Oakhurst Rise, the main road for the estate in this area and that the shelter belt to the north and west of the villa of Oaklands (renamed as Ashley Manor at this time) has been strengthened.



*Plate 2 The first O.S Map of the Site (1886-1887)*



*Plate 3 The second edition (1903) O.S. Map of the site*



*Plate 4 The third edition (1923) O.S. Map*

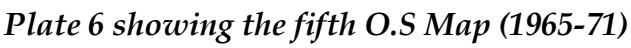


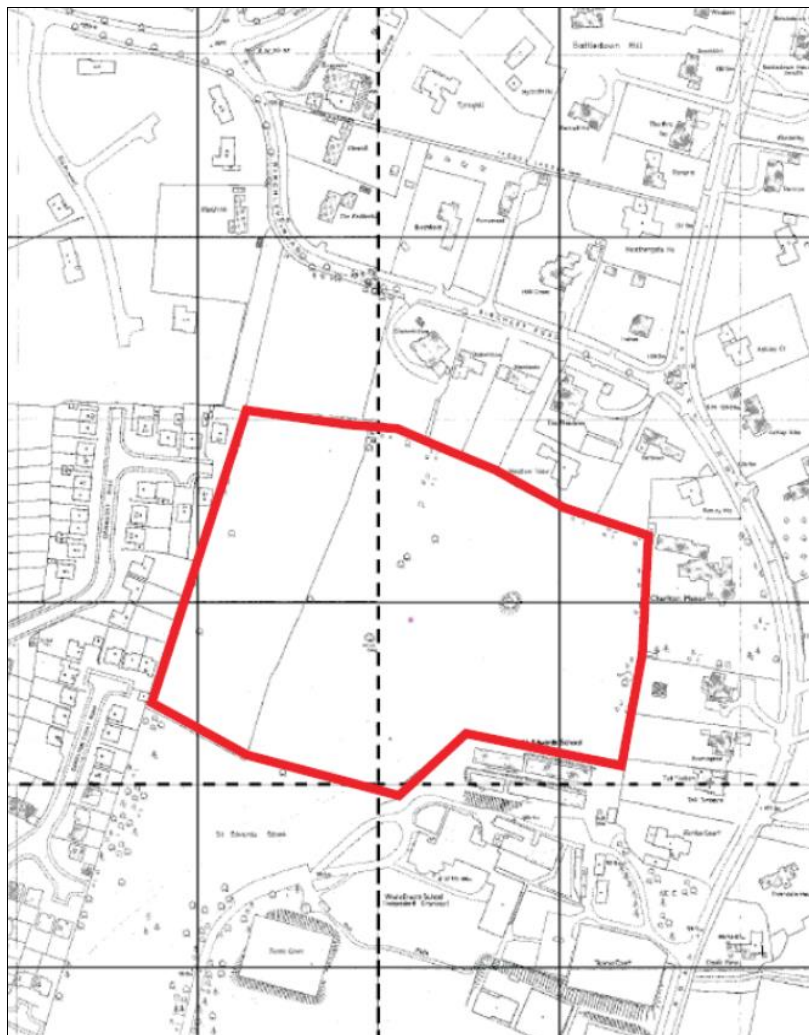
2.4 **Plate 4** shows the 1923 Ordnance Survey Map where it can be seen that Charlton Court Road has begun to be developed with other large houses. The development site is still comprised of three fields.

2.5 The 1954 Ordnance Survey Map is (**Plate 5**) shows little change from the 1923 Map. By the date of the 1965-71 Ordnance Survey Map, however, (**Plate 6**) many more dwellings have been built to the east and north of the site. The next the Ordnance Survey Map (1977-89) (**Plate 7**) shows how developed have become the roads to the east and north of the site such that the land, the subject of this application, has become surrounded by development. Relatively dense housing has also appeared to the west of the site.



*Plate 5 The fourth Edition (1954) O.S Map*





*Plate 7 the 1977-89 Ordnance Survey Map*

### 3.0 Heritage Assets

#### Architectural Description of The Oaklands (St Edward's School)

3.1 The Oaklands, now known as St Edward's Preparatory School, is located to the south of the development site. At Grade II\* it is the highest graded Heritage Asset that could be affected by the proposal. It was originally built in 1832 as a small villa named Woodlands, set within large grounds to the north of the London Road in Charlton Kings. Alexander Ogilvy's plain stuccoed villa was orientated north-south at the northern perimeter of its landscaped grounds between open fields to the north and to the south. Ogilvy sold the villa for £3,500 in April 1837 to the wealthy Cheltenham banker, Nathaniel Hartland, who commissioned the architect Charles Baker to extend the house between 1837 and 1838. The builder, Robert Williams, supervised the construction of Baker's brick and ashlar-fronted house, which was attached to Ogilvy's

original villa; this became the north-east wing of the new, aggrandised house.

3.2 The addition provided a grand entrance front on the west façade (*Plate 8*) with a central porch and a south front enlivened with a full-height bow decorated with Composite columns. The east façade was given an incongruous Perpendicular Gothic-style bay window and an oriel above in the late 1840s. The highly ornamented interiors date from 1837-8 and are a remarkable survival. They are eclectic in character, somewhat bucolic, but with an underpinning of Greek Revival detail. The interiors are what elevate the villa to its Grade II\* listed status (*Plate 9*).



*Plate 8 – West, entrance front of The Oaklands*





*Plate 9 – South Drawing Room, now Chapel*

3.3 The villa, which had been renamed Ashley Manor by the early 1900s, was set within a designed landscape approached from the south by a long sinuous, tree-lined drive extending from the London Road via two separate lodges (*Plate 10*).



*Plate 10 – 1903 Ordnance Survey Map*



3.4 The designed landscape around the villa is typical of the early nineteenth century, with its winding approach drive, lined with trees, those to the east acting as a shelter belt, a turning circle at the entrance front, further winding paths within shrubberies to the south-east of the house and a flower garden and greenhouse/conservatory – later rebuilt as an extensive glasshouse – for raising exotics to the east. Work was being done on the grounds while the house was being extended, and this continued until at least 1839. The ‘Conservatory’, marked as such on the 1846 estate map (*Plate 12*), was supplied by one Darby and cost the princely sum of £220. This underlines the importance given to the pleasure grounds in Hartland’s expenditure.

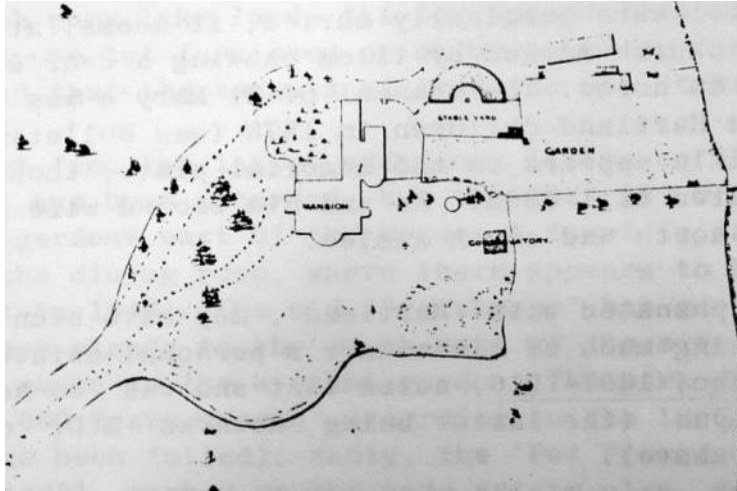
3.5 It should be noted that the north front of the villa was never treated as a show façade because it is partly built into the hillside and has little or no view. Indeed the land to the north has always been open fields, designated as ‘Broad Battle Downs’ on the 1843 Tithe Map (*Plate 11*). Within this area, the subject of

the present development proposal, is an icehouse mound surmounted by an oak tree. This relates to The Oaklands, as it was being fenced in with iron railings in 1847. It is still, however, a utilitarian structure rather than a polite embellishment to the landscape.



*Plate 11 – 1843 Tithe Map showing the site*

3.6 The original 1832 house would have had views to the east and west and a narrow view south from the return elevation. Once The Oaklands had been extended the original block became an adjunct to the service area close to a semi-circular-shaped stable range and further ancillary buildings to the north-east. This new configuration is clearly shown on the 1846 Estate Map (*Plate 12*).



*Plate 12 – 1846 Estate Map showing footprint after extension*

3.7 All the newly contrived views of the expanded villa would, therefore, have been from the double drawing room on the south front, which takes in a prospect of Leckhampton Hill (*Plate 13*), and from the east front, where the original dining room was enlivened by a Gothic bay window (*Plate 14*). There would have been some secondary, oblique views west towards Cheltenham from the upper floors of the west front. This is

important in determining the original vantage points from which the immediate landscape and the wider environs would have been enjoyed, and the likely impact upon those sightlines across the development site to the north.



*Plate 13 – View of Leckhampton Hill from the south front*



*Plate 14 – Gothic bay window on the east front*

### Charles Baker and John Buonarotti Papworth

3.8 Charles Baker (1791-1861), to whom Pigot's *Directory* refers as 'architect, civil engineer and land-surveyor', and whose trade card describes as 'Land and Timber Surveyor, Land Agent and Civil Engineer' was born in Painswick in 1791, but was working out of an office in Cheltenham from 1834 to 1844, at just the time when the villa at Charlton Kings was being extended. Together with E H Shellard, he was busy laying out the Bayshill estate in the town in about 1838 and may well have designed some of the street elevations on the terraces there and on Royal Well and St George's Road. He was also responsible for several Gothic churches in the area, so the east bay window at The Oaklands might well be to his design. He was, therefore, an assured designer of late Regency houses and, of particular significance to The Oaklands, a practitioner well versed in land management and surveying – prerequisites for garden and landscape design.

3.9 In the Regency development of Cheltenham, Baker was a minor, though important, figure. Of more consequence was John Buonarotti Papworth (1775-1847), a prolific architect and writer of national standing. He was extensively employed as a landscape architect and town planner and was responsible in Cheltenham for Lansdown Place and Crescent, Montpelier Pump Room and Montpelier Gardens. Of his several books on architecture, the most relevant to the site at The Oaklands is his 1823 *Hints on Ornamental Gardening*, which consists of a series of designs for garden buildings accompanied by '*Observations on the Principles and Theory of Rural Improvement*'. It is highly likely, therefore, that Baker would have been aware of Papworth's book – indeed, it was one of the most influential landscape gardening treatises of the later Regency period – and have followed its advice when laying out the grounds at The Oaklands.



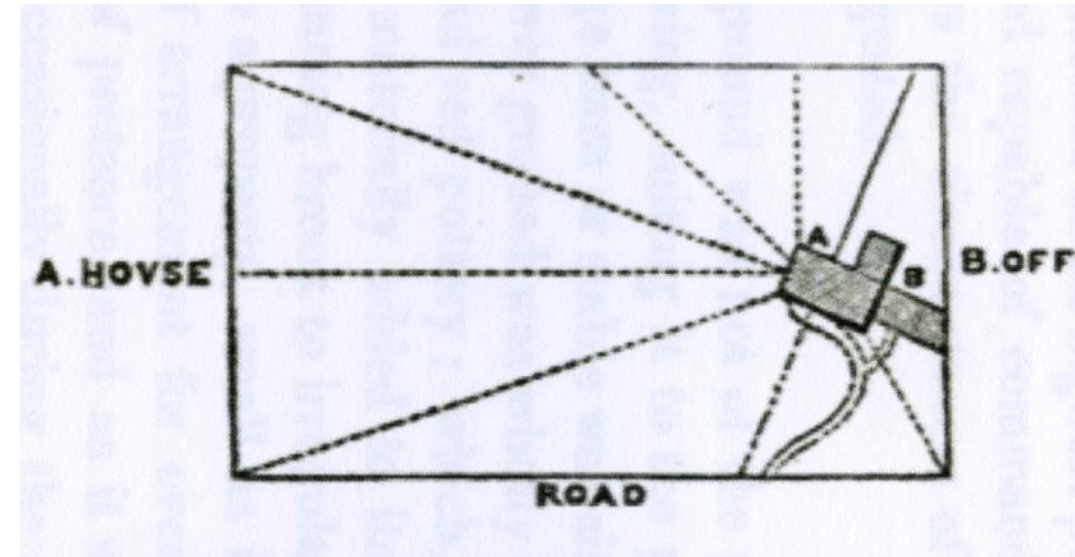
3.10 Papworth had himself been influenced by the landscape gardener Humphry Repton (1752-1818) whose published works and his celebrated 'Red Books' had, by his death in 1818, established Ornamental Gardening as the fashionable garden style of the period. Repton had argued for a judicious analysis of the terrain in any proposed scheme – its character, situation, the approaches and the views – and Papworth followed his lead.

3.11 However, instead of focussing on Repton and Papworth, Regency commentators on garden and landscape design, where the designed landscape at The Oaklands is concerned, the Historic England inspector has analysed it through the prism of Andrea Palladio's comments on the siting of a villa. This is not helpful, or relevant to the assessment of The Oaklands, since Palladio's Veneto villas were rural farms set within extensive agricultural land, rather than suburban villas close to a metropolis. In the case of The Oaklands,

therefore, Papworth's comments are far more pertinent. His views are almost contemporary with the building and extension of The Oaklands and are far more relevant than a sixteenth-century Italian source, however celebrated Palladio is within the architectural fraternity.

3.12 Unsurprisingly, given Baker's Cheltenham practice, Papworth's comments on the '*Situation of the House*' (Hints, pages 34-36) reflect precisely the siting and orientation of The Oaklands. While he accepts that it is '*impossible to devise rules that shall be universally applicable to every site*' the most important consideration must be the '*Situation of the House*'. It should be '*well placed upon the ground by which it is meant that it shall command all the advantages that the spot itself is capable of affording, with such others are to be obtained by views, openings, or shelter from the adjacent country, and from apartments so situated as also to receive the highest possible benefit of aspect; the mansion having free and well-regulated connexion with its offices and gardens*'. One of

Papworth's alternative plans is very close to the layout of The Oaklands (*Plate 15*). The house commands views from its north-west and south-west facades, and an oblique view from the corner of the east front, but none from the environs of the offices, which at The Oaklands face north towards the development site (*Plate 16*). Papworth also sketches in the ideal approach from the south via a serpentine drive. The sightlines 'diverge from points situate in the building most favourable to command views within its own compass of domain, and present the amplest opportunities for ornamental improvement'.



*Plate 15 – Papworth’s plan for siting a house for the best views*



*Plate 16 – View of development site to the north of the house*

3.13 The original approach at The Oaklands was consciously contrived, following Papworth's advice, to produce '*variety and change which is essential to perfection in gardening*'. Taking his cue from Humphry Repton, as well as from Papworth, Baker planned his tree-lined drive so that it would afford glimpses – Repton calls them '*peeps*' – of the house between the trees, to climax in a Reptonian '*burst*' at the apex of the turning circle. From here the grand entrance front with its pillared porch would come into view and there would be a secondary, oblique view to the bow on the south front. At no point would views of the fields behind the house be encouraged, as they were not part of the designed landscape and would have undermined, by their utilitarian nature, the polite '*ornamental improvement*'. This is reinforced by Papworth's remark about '*shelter from the adjacent country*'.

3.14 Repton had identified the need for this delineation between the highly artificial areas close to a house and its more

natural wider environs. In the chapter on Pleasure Grounds in his 1805 *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, he was particularly exercised by the previous generation's '*false and mistaken taste for placing a large house in a naked grass field, without any apparent line of separation between ground exposed to cattle and the ground annexed to the house*', which he considered should be '*under the management of art*'. Once this line of separation between the open fields and the ornamental areas by the house was accepted, '*advantage may be easily taken to ornament the lawn with flowers and shrubs, and to attach to the mansion that scene of "embellished neatness", usually called a Pleasure Ground*'. This would produce an '*object detached and distinct from the general scenery of the place*', one easily accessible from the house and enclosed by trees and shrubs (*Observations*, pages 99-101). English Regency villas were not sixteenth-century Italian farms and were not derived from the works of Palladio. Their ornamental grounds were intended to be intimate spaces, tree-sheltered and shrubbery-threaded; their views were

internal not external, and this is how they should be understood.

3.15 There might, perhaps, have been one point on the original approach to The Oaklands when the wider landscape could have been viewed to advantage, and that would have been at the turning circle apex. From there an oblique view north-east could be enjoyed, for its antiquarian resonance, of the Camp on Battle Down (*Plate 17*), but this would be all that would engage the interest of Regency visitors outside the

pleasure grounds to the north of the villa.



*Plate 17 - The site and the circular Camp to the north-east*

The original internal layout of the villa is also close to that proposed by Papworth as an ideal ground plan to take in views of the ornamental grounds. The entrance hall should be a suitably shadowy place, made the more so at The Oaklands

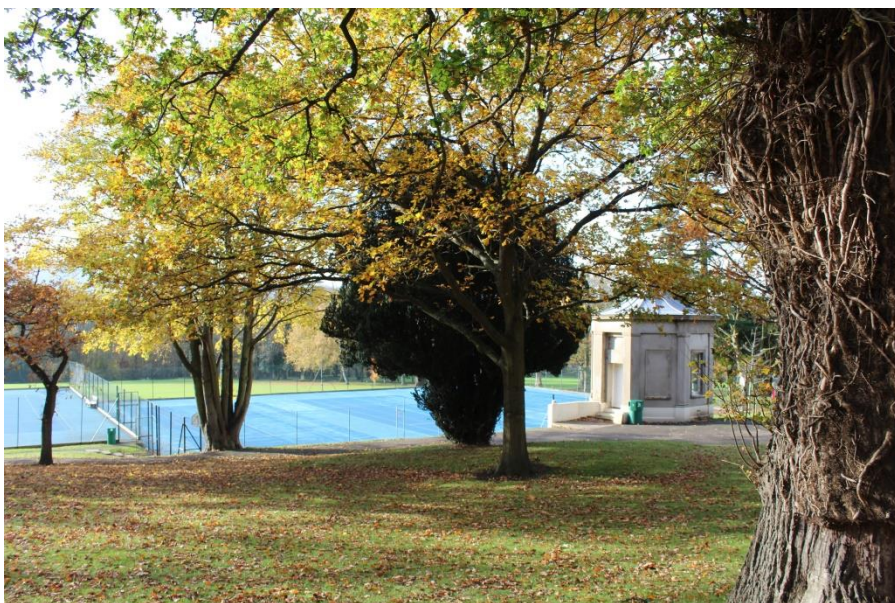


by its' siting on the west giving onto a drive, which is cut off from views, and thereby light, by a belt of trees. As a counterpoint, the drawing room should be on '*the South East, the best aspect for its occupancy*'. At The Oaklands the original drawing room faced almost due south with its ample bay giving views of the ornamental shrubberies, the flower garden and the glasshouses. There was a further, south-facing window in the original dining room (now the Headmaster's Study).

3.16 All contrived views at The Oaklands would, therefore, have been consciously aligned on the ornamental grounds surrounding the villa rather than on the wider landscape beyond, which remained open fields to both the north and the south. Again, this is completely different from the placing of Palladio's villas in the landscape, which were raised up in order to oversee the surrounding farmland. In determining whether or not a proposed housing development on agricultural land to the north, well outside the envelope of the

designed landscape, should be permitted, the Regency comments on house situation, internal room layout and the particular views enjoyed from them and other views to be appreciated within the pleasure grounds should be taken into consideration. These contemporary, early nineteenth-century aesthetic concerns, rather than any remarks made 260 years earlier by Palladio, should be given due weight in any assessment of impact to the listed asset such a housing development might pose.

**Architectural Description of the Grade II listed  
Summerhouse to the West of St Edward's School (NHL  
1386641)**



*Plate 18 Tented Summerhouse at St Edward's School c.1832*

3.17 This building is part of a set piece with the Grade II\* Oaklands and the Grade II listed gate piers, discussed below

(*plate 18*). An attractive, tented structure the building was restored in the 1990s but still retains its original form and can be easily read *in situ*. It was built in the mid-1830s as a garden pleasure building to complement Oaklands. It was listed in 1983 and the list description was amended in 1998. The association between the main house and this Summerhouse is still clear and visible in the grounds of the villa, now St Edward's School. It is in fact this architectural and historical link between the two structures which lends it most of its significance. The setting of this listed building has been, to some degree detrimentally affected by the school playing fields. These playing fields also negatively affect the setting of the main villa, though the impact on both listed buildings of the change in their immediate environs is not considered to be severe.

3.18 The building is octagonal in plan form and is surmounted by a tented roof. Its rendered brick walls are

articulated with pilasters at each corner and have alternately blind and open windows on each of its eight planes. The door of the Summerhouse faces east, towards the listed villa, strengthening the connection between the two buildings.

**Architectural Description of the Grade II listed Drive Piers at the Carriage Sweep to St Edward's School (NHL 1386640)**

3.19 The Drive Piers are located to the south-east of the Main Oaklands villa, now the school (*Plate 19*). They are dated to approximately 1832 and are part of the trio of listed buildings associated with this villa site. The piers are finished in ashlar work with a panel on each face. The value of these short Drive Piers is strongly associated with their historical link to the main house since their original function was to be a herald to the main house and to create a sense of arrival, lending formality to the villa.



*Plate 19 showing the drive piers*



*Plate 20 View towards Lexham Lodge*

**Architectural Description of the Grade II listed Lexham Lodge, (NHL: 1386600, Grade II).**

3.20 Lexham Lodge (*Plate 20*) has two main elevations: one facing Copt Elm Road and the other facing London Road. It is a mid-nineteenth century house now used as an office and is of

two storeys with a basement. Its' Copt Elm Road elevation consists of four bays. Its windows have moulded architraves with acanthus corbels to the cornices and attractive, tooled window sills. It is the architectural and historic interest of this building that makes up the bulk of its significance. Typical of the Victorian era it is highly architecturally finished and detailed and has both aesthetic and illustrative value.

3.21 In terms of its setting Lexham Lodge is surrounded by a dense urban area which necessarily erodes the feeling of space one might have originally gained from the grounds of this attractive listed building. This cramped setting that now exists around it limits the ability to appreciate how impressive it once would have been



**The Grade II listed Church of St Mary (NHL: 1386562) Grade II).**

3.22 This stone built church is late twelfth century in origin and was remodelled in the thirteenth, fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was restored between 1877 and 1878 by architect John Middleton who rebuilt the chancel and added a bay to the nave. Further extensions were added in 1898, 1917 and 1988. The Church was originally a chapel of ease to Cheltenham St Mary's Parish Church.

**Architectural Description of the non-designated heritage asset, Glen Whittan.**



*Plate 21 Glen Whittan*

3.23 This undesignated heritage asset (*Plate 21*) is located on Birchley Road to the north of the development site and



faces south towards it. A large residential, red brick building, this was constructed sometime between 1903 and 1923 since it appears on the 1923 Ordnance Survey Map. It has had a large ground floor extension added to the east side of the elevation which has detrimentally affected its' symmetry. This undesignated building is locally important both in terms of its architectural and historic value as well as its contribution to understanding the evolution and growth of the Battledown Housing Estate, which was still expanding well into the twentieth century.

3.24 Glen Whittan is large and imposing with its front elevation looking towards the development site. It is constructed of red brick and has a plain tile, hipped roof. Complete with crenellated towers, cast iron columns and four red brick stacks it is an attractive addition to the Battledown Estate. Architecturally it is of relatively low significance on a national level but is of interest locally.

3.25 The immediate setting of the building is made up of its garden and mature planting. However its wider setting does include the development site, as well as the other nearby buildings of the Battledown Estate.

**Architectural Description of the Grade II listed Charlton Manor, Ashley Road (NHL 1386539).**



*Plate 22 Charlton Manor*

3.26 This building was listed in 1983. It originated in 1864 but has several later additions which negatively affect its architectural integrity some of which are located on the side of the building facing the development site. Originally known as Simla Lodge this was the first of many buildings constructed on the Battledown Estate. It is of two storeys, constructed in stone rubble, laid to the then fashionable crazy pattern. It has some nineteenth century timber framing and a relatively ornate roof with large stacks. The front elevation faces east and has four window main range, with a single storey further range to the right. There are three windows with stepped and barge-boarded gables over, two of which are larger in size than as well as a small gabled dormer. To each side of the porch on this main elevation there are three light mullioned and transomed windows. The rear of the building faces west, towards the site the subject of this application. The northern gable is articulated with mock timber framing. This elevation is

marred by the number of twentieth-century extensions which spoil the architectural composition of the building (*Plate 22*).

3.27 This heritage asset is set within a well-defined plot which acts as a foil to the house and makes up its setting. The plot is small for the size of the building but is in keeping with the prevailing density and plot sizes of the other houses on this estate. The maturity of the plot and its domestic nature serve to reinforce the residential character of the house. The wider setting of the listed building is comprised of the other houses of the Battledown Estate as well as the development site which provides a historically-unrelated but semi-rural backdrop to the building. It is considered that the fields to the west of Charlton Manor (the development site) are not as important to its significance as are the other houses of the Battledown Estate, to which the Charlton Manor is inextricably, historically linked.

## 4 Policy

### National Policy

4.1 At the national level, the principal legislation governing the protection of the cultural heritage of the built environment is the Planning (Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings) Act 1990. The Act sets out the legislative framework within which works and development affecting listed buildings and conservation areas must be considered. This states that:

*“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses” (s66(1))*

4.2 Various principles and policies relating to cultural heritage and archaeology are set out in the National Planning

Policy Framework (NPPF) as revised in July 2018, which guide local planning authorities with respect to the wider historic environment. The following paragraphs from NPPF are particularly relevant and are quoted below:

*“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.” Para. 189.*

*“Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise.*

*They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.” Para. 190.*

*“In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.” Para. 192.*

*“Where a proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed*

*against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use” Para. 196*

*“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining an application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset” Para. 197*

*“Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within....the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably” Para. 200*

## **Government Guidance**

4.3 The ‘*Planning Practice Guidance*’ produced by the DCLG supports the NPPF (as revised in 2018). In terms of the historic environment it is clear that conservation of HAs is key and is one of the Core principles of the Planning system.

4.4 ‘*Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*’ produced by English Heritage (now Historic England) in 2008 is also relevant to this application. This guidance assists the decision maker in assessing a scheme by setting out the main, four heritage values which should be assessed in any scheme. These are evidential value, historical value, aesthetic value and communal value.

4.5 In March 2015 the PPS5 Practice Guide was withdrawn and its place three Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs) were introduced by English Heritage (now Historic England). The first of these was *GPA1: The Historic Environment*



in *Local Plans* which aims to guide to local planning authorities in helping them to make effective local plans. The second was *GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision Making* includes technical advice on the repair and restoration of historic buildings.

4.6 Most relevant to this application however is *GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* which replaces the guidance published in 2011. These three documents are supported by the Historic England Advice Notes in Planning which include HEA1: Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (February 2016), HEA2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets (February 2016), HEA3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans (October 2015), and HEA4: Tall Buildings (December 2015). *GPA1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans* (March 2015)

2.23

4.7 GPA3: *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (July 2015) usefully defines setting as ‘*the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve*’. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context. The guidance explains that setting is not a heritage asset, but that its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset.

4.8 While setting is largely a visual term, views will be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, setting, and the way in which an asset is experienced. The document is clear that setting can also be affected by other environmental factors such as noise, vibration and odour, while setting may also incorporate perceptual and associational attributes pertaining to the asset’s surroundings.

4.9 It states that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset, whilst weighing up the potential public benefits associated with a scheme. It is further stated that changes within the setting of a heritage asset may have positive or neutral effects. Historic England sets out its 5-step process' to assess the potential effects of a proposed development on the setting and significance of a heritage asset.

### **Local Policy**

4.10 A Joint Core Strategy is in place at Cheltenham Borough Council and is a partnership between Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council. This is the strategic development plan for the area up until 2031 and was adopted in December 2017. The policy which is relevant to this report is:

### **Policy SD8: Historic environment**

*"The built, natural and cultural heritage of Gloucester City, Cheltenham Town and Tewkesbury Town, historic settlements, smaller historic settlements and the wider countryside will continue to be valued and promoted for their important contribution to local identity quality of life and the economy.*

*Development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, having regard to valued and distinctive elements of the historic environment.*

*Designated and undesignated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced as appropriate to their significance and for their important contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place.*

*Consideration will also be given to the contribution made by heritage assets to supporting sustainable communities and local economy.*

*Development should aim to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets and put them to viable uses consistent with their conservation whilst improving accessibility where appropriate.*

*Proposals that will secure the future conservation and maintenance of heritage assets and their settings that are at risk through neglect, decay or other threats will be encouraged.*

*Proposals that will bring vacant or derelict heritage assets back into appropriate use will also be encouraged"*

4.11 Also relevant is the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review, adopted in June 2006. Since it was adopted the NPPF has been published, and due weight should be given to policies in the Local Plan according to the degree of consistency with the NPPF. Policy CP 3 is relevant here:

**'Policy CP 3: Sustainable Environment:**

*" Development will be permitted only where it would:*

*a) not harm the setting of Cheltenham (note 1), including views into or out of areas of acknowledged importance (note 2); and*

*b) not harm landscape character (note 3); and*

*c) conserve or enhance the best (note 4) of the built and natural environments; and*

*d) safeguard and promote biodiversity (note 5); and*

*e) not give rise to harmful levels of pollution (note 6) to land, air or water (surface or ground); and*

*f) minimise the risk of flooding (note 7)."*

## 5.0 Proposed Development

5.1 It is proposed to construct sixty-nine new houses to the north of The Oaklands, on the functional, open land that comprises the development site. These will consist of a range of different-sized units set in a low density layout, with large areas of open land interspersed between the units.

5.2 This new layout and proposal responds to comments from Cheltenham Borough Council and Historic England, made in response to the previous application, 17/00710/OUT. The scheme has been revised to reduce the number of proposed houses and create more of a feeling of space and openness in the design. The revised layout also shows that the proposed new houses have been pulled back, away from nearby heritage assets such as the listed St Edward's School to the south and Charlton Manor to the east, as well as the unlisted Glen Whittan to the north.

5.3 As seen on the revised plan, the proposals leave a large, undeveloped area within the eastern half of the plot in order to protect the historic Icehouse, once associated with The Oaklands Villa. This whole area would remain open as part of the scheme with sightlines between the Icehouse and its host villa remaining clear and unimpeded (except for where they are impeded by twentieth-century development carried out by, and already existing on, the school's land). This visual link has been created in response to comments from Historic England and Cheltenham Borough Council.

5.4 The boundaries of the development site are, in most places, already well planted or at least verdant and attractive. It is proposed that in certain areas the boundaries to the plot would be reinforced by additional planting. In particular this would be carried out to the east of the plot, directly adjacent to Charlton Manor. The re-planting of a green screen along this boundary, which was removed and has been replaced with a

low wall, will once again restore insularity and privacy to this Grade II listed building, screening it from the site. However, even were this screen not to be planted, it is considered that the revised layout means that the proposed development in this location would only have a minor impact upon the setting of the listed building: the low density houses proposed for this eastern edge have been pulled westwards and it is the rear gardens of the new houses that would face towards Charlton Manor, thus maintaining an open area, a buffer zone, between Charlton Manor and the new buildings. Again, this redesign has been carried out in response to Historic England's concerns about maintaining an area of openness as part of the wider setting of Charlton Manor.

5.5 Another area where planting would be reinforced is along the southern edge of the plot. As discussed above in this statement there was always a historic line of trees, a shelterbelt, planted on this boundary from the earliest days of the Villa's

existence. As explained this was planted to insulate the owners of the Villa from the functional nature of the Battle Down area of land, now the proposed development plot. As has been proven by historical research and map evidence, the shelter belt was deliberately planted to direct views *to* the south and east, and *away* from the north. Strengthening the shelterbelt here and once again shielding St Edward's School from views to the north is consistent with the original design intention for the Villa and would maintain the historic precedent of the site.

5.6 To the north of the plot planting would be introduced between the unlisted Glen Whittan and the development site to soften the view from Glen Whittan towards the potential new houses.



## 6.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

### The Oaklands Villa

6.1 As a Grade II\* listed building the Oaklands is potentially the most sensitive heritage asset that may be impacted by any development at the site.

6.2 The Oaklands dates from the early nineteenth century and has been subject to several extensions from this time on, almost all carried out in the twentieth century. The semi-circular Stable Block and courtyard built by Nathaniel Hartland, as seen in *Plate 12*, was replaced in 1888 and is particularly finely executed, with rubbed red bricks laid to English bond and fine pointing (*see Plate 23*).



*Plate 23 the 1888 Stable Block*

6.3 The impression today of The Oaklands, or St Edward's School, is of a very attractive Regency Villa which has been extended to the east and north by additions which, although appropriate for the school, have caused harm to the setting of this listed building. The intricate and highly decorative interiors, for which it is listed as Grade II\*, remain intact and greatly add to the status and interest of this historic building. However, the original impact of these grand interiors, which were meant to be viewed with the ornamental landscape as a back-drop, seen through the generously-proportioned windows of the Regency period, has been lessened by the changes to the setting of the building externally (*Plates 24 and 25*). It is important to note that one of the key themes of the Regency period was that of indoor / outdoor living. Houses were designed with very low window sills, or often windows were simply inserted from floor to ceiling. This was to 'allow the outdoors to come indoors', and vice versa; to reduce the

distinction between the internal and external and to allow the ornamental garden to decorate the internal house.



*Plate 24 View east from the listed building, marred by unattractive extensions*



*Plate 25 Looking north-south, towards the east extensions*

6.4 Before the extension of the school to the east, and the construction of the large, flat-roofed utilitarian block of the twentieth century (*Plate 25*), the grand reception rooms at The Oaklands would have been enhanced by sweeping, unimpeded views across ornamental gardens towards

Leckhampton and Cheltenham. Now, from the east and south these views are impaired; to the south by looking across a sea of blue tennis courts, where most of the ornamental gardens have been lost, and to the east by looking towards the modern school buildings that block this view. The Gothick oriel window of the Headmaster's Study, together with its window seat, was added in the 1840s and was specifically introduced to take advantage of the view of the grounds to the east. This view has been completely impaired by the addition of later school buildings.

6.5 However, the design intention of Hartland's house and its reception rooms is still clear and care must be taken to preserve these remaining views to the south and east, as well as the oblique views west, in the direction of the tree-lined driveway. In assessing the impact of the proposed development to the north of the Villa it has been very important to understand what the original design intention



was for the villa, in terms of how it was intended that it should interact with its own ornamental garden and with the landscape beyond, including the designed sightlines. This has been set out above. The view north can be seen at *Plate 26*.



*Plate 26 View North from rear of school, past pre-school, to field beyond*

Here, from the front, main entrance of the school, which is located on the west façade of the building, the land rises to the north such that, from this vantage point school, much of this land is not visible (*Plate 27*). The northern boundary of The Oaklands is a sparsely-planted treeline with a Victorian metal railing along the boundary. This treeline was once a more densely-planted shelter belt, specifically introduced by Hartland, to limit the views north, which were in any case naturally impeded by the rise in the land. This shelterbelt closed off views in this direction and instead directed the visitor's gaze towards the grand, west front and oblique views from the drive across the south façade of the building.

6.6 It is proposed that the historic shelterbelt, the remnants of which line the north-west section of the driveway, is reinstated with appropriate historic species in order to strengthen this landscape feature. Specimen trees of Oak and Scots Pine under-planted with Holly, Butchers Broom and

Laurel, would restore this important feature, restoring insularity and ornament to the house and garden. This shelterbelt was always intended to impede views north and focus them on the Villa instead so that visitors saw the grandeur of the house as they approached. Over time this tree belt has been thinned such that the strength of focus towards the house has been weakened and some views are now possible towards the previously- hidden, northern, agricultural land. This would restore the serpentine approach to the house, and protect The Oaklands from the effect of any glimpsed views of the proposed development to the north.

6.7 It can be seen, then, that the views north were always designed to be closed off. It was never intended that the visitor arriving at this Villa would see agricultural, utilitarian land to the north but that they would be engaged by the ornamental gardens immediately surrounding the house and by the house front itself. In this it can be seen that the views in this direction

were never of any significance to the house or the way that it was experienced in its setting. Today it can be argued that the land to the north forms part of the *wider* setting of the listed building. However, today's wider setting was never part of the planned setting for this listed building when it was constructed as a Regency Villa. Today's perceived wider setting to the building is therefore of low value and significance in interpreting this important asset.





*Plate 27 showing land to the north of Oaklands which rises steadily up.*

6.8 Walking behind the Villa and school buildings on the north side, one can see the level of twentieth century expansion that has taken place here, including the large single-storey Pre-School building. (See *Plate 28*). This building impedes any

views of the countryside to the north from the ground level of the Villa. From the upper floors of The Oaklands, however, the field can be more clearly seen (*plate 28*). This is considered not to be important to the setting of the house since, as explained, development in this location would have little or no effect on the designed views, since they were not intended to be in this direction. Along with the other twentieth century developments, the presence of the pre-school building has caused some harm to the original spacious setting of the Villa within its environs.



*Plate 28 Views of the development site from the upper floors of The Oaklands*

6.9 On approaching The Oaklands from the east, it is not possible to see the historic building, merely the twentieth century additions and car-parking. Similarly the twentieth-century buildings here block the view to the north towards the

development site such that no impact at all can be said to affect the historic villa from this direction.

6.10 It is therefore considered that, with the reinforcing of the historic shelterbelt, there would be very little or no harm caused to the setting of the historic asset. Any harm that is perceived would be on the low end of less-than-substantial

### **The Oaklands Summerhouse and Drive Piers**

6.11 The Summerhouse and Drive Piers, together with the Villa itself comprise the trio of listed buildings on the school site. Both the Drive Piers and Summerhouse would be directly shielded from the development site by the Villa itself. It is therefore considered that there would be very little or no impact at all on these listed buildings. It should be noted that their setting has been slightly impaired already by the insertion of formal playing fields to the east and south of the school (*plate 29*).



*Plate 29 Playing fields in landscape surrounding St Edward's School*

### **Lexham Lodge**

6.12 In terms of how this building interacts with the proposed development site, though not inspected internally, it is clear that there will be some views of the site from the upper

storeys of the house. However this visibility will be limited, due to the steeply rising topography of the site, and will therefore have a limited impact upon the setting of the listed building. Any impact here would be low.

### **St Mary's Church**

6.13 This attractive stone-built church is visible rising up through the skyline, above the relatively dense, urban area to the south of St Edward's School and still further south of the development site. Its' tower is visible in the local townscape as one of the tallest buildings in this part of Cheltenham. The listed church has already been surrounded by development, having a detrimental effect on what would once have been a much more rural setting. Further development to the north, at the proposed development site, would be visible from the tower of the church. However this view of the site would be limited due to the considerable distance of the church from the

site. Furthermore, any views of the new houses from the tower would be limited to a handful of people a year since the upper storeys of the tower are not accessible to the public as a vantage point, nor is the tower occupied. The impact on this listed building caused by the proposed new development would therefore be negligible.

### **Glen Whittan**

6.14 Glen Whittan is a non-designated heritage asset and, whilst of significance locally, does not have the same significance as a designated heritage asset. This building would probably be the most affected asset of all the assets discussed in this statement due to its proximity to the development site and its main elevation, which was designed to look towards the site (whereas St Edward's School and Charlton Manor have their rear, service elevations facing the site). However, the development scheme has been carefully designed such that the proposed new houses would not be

built up to the northern boundary of the site but would be set back, into the site. The generous gardens of the proposed houses along this boundary would act as a buffer between the non-designated asset, thus lessening the impact of the proposal. Nonetheless, a less-than -substantial degree of harm would be caused to the setting of this building.

### **Charlton Manor**

6.15 Charlton Manor is listed as Grade II and as described above is set in its own mature plot. This building has been substantially altered by a series of minor extensions in the twentieth century and its rear, site-facing elevation now has lost its original design integrity. The gardens have also been landscaped with and a hard boundary (a low wall) and swimming pool now existing between the listed building and the development site. As with St Edward's School there was never an historic intention to link Charlton Manor with the site, it was simply constructed there as the first house in the

Battledown estate of houses. However the development site does, now, comprise part of the wider setting of Charlton Manor. In this respect the development would cause a less-than-substantial degree of harm to the setting of the listed building.

## 7.0 Conclusion

7.1 It is considered that the revised layout for the proposed development has addressed the concerns of Historic England and the Council in designing a more spacious scheme which would leave large areas of the development site open. The relationship between the historic Icehouse and The Oaklands villa would also be protected.

7.2 Since the land to the north of The Oaklands was never part of its designed landscape and views from the villa were

actively designed to look *away* from this site, specifically excluded from the Regency Garden, it is considered that any perceived harm to the Villa's wider setting is of low significance and can only be considered as less-than-substantial harm. This is also considered to be the case for Lexham Lodge, the Church of St Mary's and Charlton Manor.

7.3 The most affected building would be the non-designated Glen Whittan, whose main elevation directly faces the site. However this is a non-designated asset and it is considered that the proposed screening along this stretch would mitigate any harm.

7.4 It is therefore considered that, subject to the Shelterbelt being restored, and the reinforcing of tree planting along the boundaries where relevant, there could therefore only be harm at the lowest end of the less-than-substantial scale caused to the pertinent heritage assets.



## Bibliography and References

Blake, S. (2013) A History of Cheltenham in 100 Objects

Hart, Gwen, (1965) A History of Cheltenham

Morduant Crook, John (1972) The Greek Revival

Paget, M. (1988) A History of Charlton Kings

Papworth, John Buonarotti, (1823) Hints on Ornamental Gardening (Observations on the Principles and Theory of Rural Improvement)

Pigot's Directory of Cheltenham, (1830).

Priestley, J B, (1971) The Prince of Pleasure and his Regency

Summerson, John (1993) Architecture in Britain 1530-1830.

Williams, A. and Martin, G. (2003) Domesday Book: A Complete Translation

## General

English Heritage National Heritage List

National Planning Policy Framework

Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council Joint Core Strategy (non-adopted)

Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan Second Review (2006)



