CHELTENHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL



AUGUST 2026, VERSION 02

Cheltenham Central Conservation Area

Conservation Area Appraisal Overview Document

CHELTENHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

PURCELL

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Overview

Navigation

The Conservation Area Appraisal for Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area is made up of seven separate documents to ensure the relevant information is presented succinctly and is easy to navigate. It comprises an overview document and an individual character appraisal for each of the six character areas which make up the conservation area.

The overview document explains the relevant policy context, summarises the special interest of the Central Conservation Area as a whole, identifies boundary amendments, summarises the challenges and opportunities within the conservation area, and sets out a plan for the conservation area's future management.

The six character area appraisals provide more targeted assessments of character, special interest, challenges and opportunities for the each character area within the wider designation.

Conservation Area Appraisal: Overview Document

1.0 Introduction
Explains how to navigate between the various documents which comprise the Conservation Area Appraisal, explains the geographical scope of the conservation area, summarises its special interest, explains the purpose and scope of the appraisal and identifies relevant planning policy and guidance documents.

2.0 Assessment of special interest
Summarises the key characteristics and the history of the conservation area and explains why it is special.

3.0 Character areas
Details the various character areas within Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area.

4.0 Alterations to the conservation area boundary
Identifies proposed alterations to the boundary of the conservation area.

5.0 Summary of challenges
Summarises common challenges across the conservation area.

6.0 Opportunities For enhancement
Summarises where there are opportunities for enhancement within the conservation area.

7.0 Management plan
Identifies control measures associated with conservation area designation and provides recommendations for future management.

Character Area 1:
Town Centre

Character Area 2:
Planned Estates

Character Area 3:
Artisan Quarters

Character Area 4:
Bath Road and Suffolks

Character Area 5:
Historic Formal Suburbs

Character Area 6:
Institutional Quarters

Individual Character Area Appraisals

1.0 Introduction
Identifies which areas of the wider conservation area are included and explains the special interest of the character area.

2.0 Historical development
Explains how the character area relates historically to the wider designation and details how each part of the character area has evolved over time.

3.0 Assessment of special interest
Provides a detailed character assessment for the area, looking at elements such as architecture, materials, urban grain and configuration, key views, public realm, trees and open spaces, topography and archaeology.

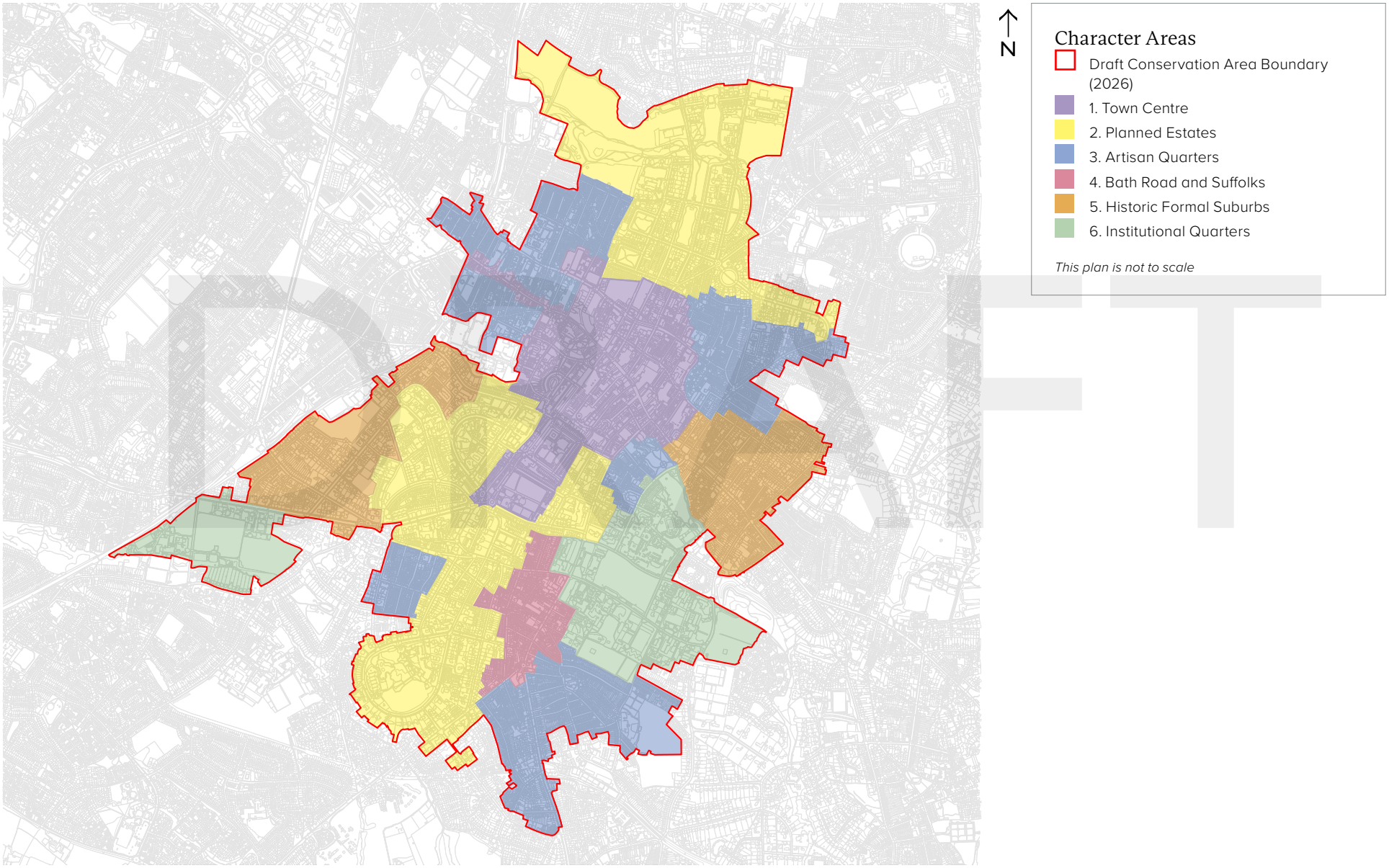
4.0 Heritage assets
Identifies designated and non-designated heritage assets within the character area.

5.0 Challenges
Identifies common challenges within the character area.

6.0 Opportunities for enhancement
Identifies opportunities for incremental change which will enhance the special interest of the conservation area, as well as specific sites or areas which may could be enhanced or redeveloped in the future to the benefit of the designation.

7.0 Future Management
Signposting to the more detailed management plan in the overview document.

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Character Areas
Draft Conservation Area Boundary (2026)
1. Town Centre
2. Planned Estates
3. Artisan Quarters
4. Bath Road and Suffolks
5. Historic Formal Suburbs
6. Institutional Quarters
This plan is not to scale

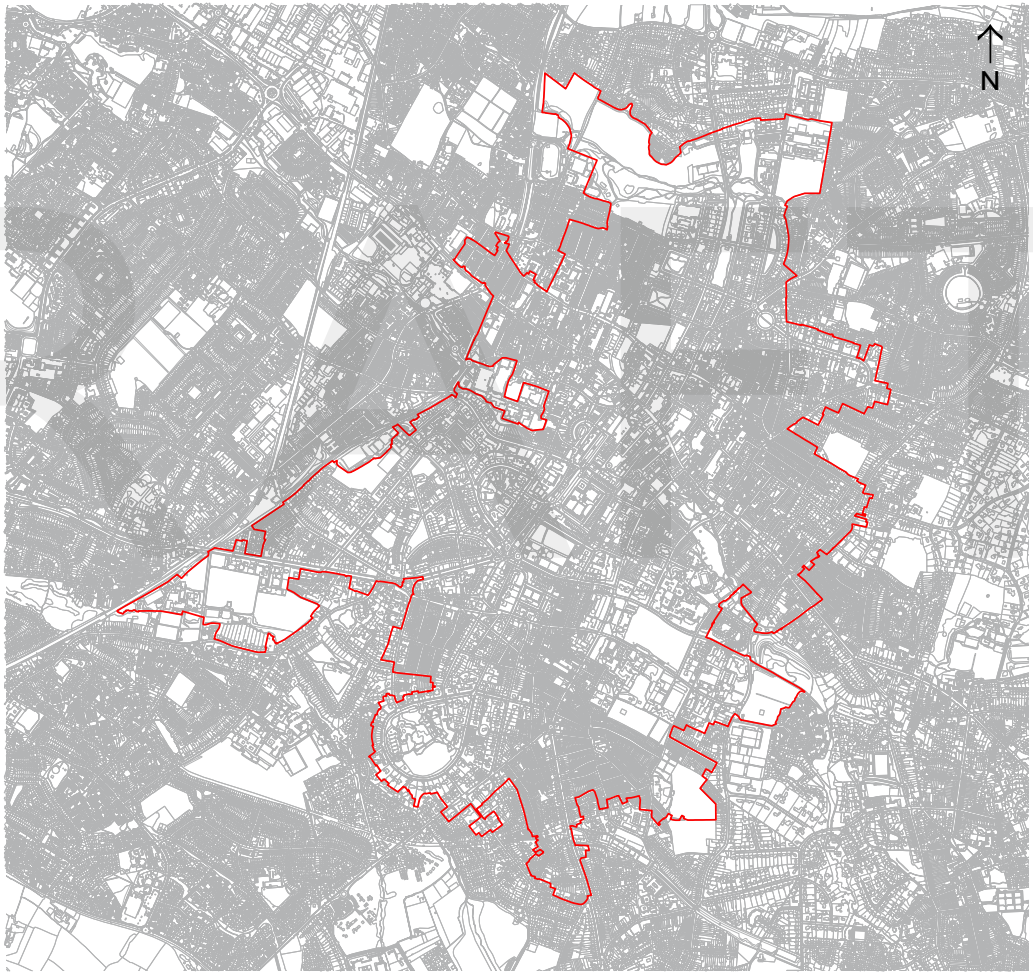
1.0 Introduction

1.1 Cheltenham Central Conservation Area

Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area was designated by Gloucestershire County Council on 28th May 1973 and its boundary was extended by Cheltenham Borough Council on 14th August 1987.

The conservation area was last appraised between 2007 and 2008, at which time the designation was sub-divided into 19 separate character areas, with an individual character appraisal produced for each area.

The central conservation area includes the whole of the town centre and most of the late-Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian extensions. It also incorporates Cheltenham College, Cheltenham Ladies' College, Dean Close School and Cheltenham General Hospital.



Central Conservation Area, as proposed in 2026.

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1.2 Summary of special interest

The special interest of Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area is derived from:

- The ability to read the origins of Cheltenham as a medieval settlement in the form and grain of the High Street and other narrow streets leading off this historic thoroughfare, which pre-date the establishment of the spa town.
- The survival of much Regency architecture which grew up around the Georgian pump rooms.
- The prevalence of complete, uniform terraces and architecturally coherent villlas from the 19th and early 20th centuries.
- The retention of the historic street plan and urban grain across much of the town.
- The number of open green spaces within the conservation area, from formal squares to institutional grounds, public parks and private gardens.
- Cheltenham's history as a leading Evangelical and educational centre, which is evidenced through the number of 19th-century churches, chapels and educational institutions found throughout the town.
- Associations with a range of nationally and locally important historic figures, including Regency architects, educational and religious reformers.
- Diversity in the scale, style and form of buildings across the conservation area, with the earliest buildings generally reflecting the Regency taste for Greek Revival architecture, and later buildings demonstrating Italianate, Gothic and Arts and Crafts influences.
- Numerous views of important streetscapes, landmark buildings, church spires and the surrounding landscape.

A more detailed assessment of special interest is provided in Section 2.0, and within the individual character appraisal documents for each character area.

1.3 Summary of challenges and opportunities

The key challenges facing the conservation area include:

- **Condition:** a lack of maintenance to some buildings and public realm features and inappropriate repairs in materials (such as cement) which are not compatible with traditional buildings.
- **Detracting features and loss of historic details:** loss of traditional timber windows, doors, shopfronts and boundary treatments, an excess of modern street furniture and poor-quality signage and advertising in some commercial areas.
- **Inappropriate modern development:** examples across most character areas where there has been some insensitive modern development which detracts from the special interest of the conservation area.
- **Development pressures:** pressure for development which, if not sensitively designed to respond to and enhance the established character of the conservation area, could depreciate its special interest.
- **Heritage at risk:** some buildings within the conservation area are on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register.
- **Traffic and parking:** busy thoroughfares, on-street parking and large public carparks have a detrimental impact on parts of the conservation area.
- **Pressures on trees and green spaces:** development pressures can combine with climate change to impact the health and resilience of trees and green spaces.

The key opportunities within the conservation area include:

- Appropriate maintenance and repair of failings elements.
- Prioritising the repair of timber windows over replacement, and carrying out future replacements with styles, methods and materials which enhance the character of the conservation area.
- Rationalising street furniture and external accretions (such as satellite dishes and TV aerials) on historic buildings.
- Replacement or alteration of unsympathetic shopfronts.
- Sensitive redevelopment or enhancement of sites which currently detract from the special interest of the conservation area.
- Public realm enhancements, including the introduction of additional greenery.

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1.4 Definition of a conservation area

A conservation area is defined as an *'area of special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.'*[01]

Conservation areas recognise the unique qualities of an area as a whole. This includes the contribution of individual buildings and monuments but also of other features, including topography, materials, spatial relationships, thoroughfares, street furniture, open spaces and landscaping. All these features contribute to the character and appearance of an area, resulting in a distinctive sense of place.

The extent to which a building, or group of buildings, positively shape the character of a conservation area derives not just from their street-facing elevations but also from the integrity of their historic fabric, overall scale and massing, detailing and materials. Rear and side elevations can also be important.

1.5 Purpose and scope of the Conservation Area Appraisal

It is a requirement under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for all local planning authorities to 'formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement' of conservation areas within their jurisdiction and for these documents to be periodically reviewed.[02]

It is important for local planning authorities to maintain an up-to-date strategy for the positive management of conservation areas so that they can be carefully adapted and continue to thrive. These public documents define and record the special interest of a conservation area and set out a plan of action for its on-going protection and enhancement.

Over time, conservation areas evolve and the integrity of characteristics which underpin their special interest may depreciate due to gradual alteration. It is therefore important to review and take stock of the character of a conservation area at intervals to ensure designation is still suitable and that the proper tools to manage change are in place.

Reviews often find that conservation area boundaries were previously drawn too tightly or include peripheral areas which do not contribute to an understanding of its character. Consequently, it is important to review the boundary and include/exclude buildings and spaces which do/not meet the requirements for conservation area designation.

This Conservation Area Appraisal seeks to:

- Record and analyse the special interest of the Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area;
- Recognise the designated and non-designated heritage assets which comprise the conservation area;
- Identify issues relating to condition and detracting features, as well as opportunities for enhancement; and
- Provide guidance for the positive management, preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.

Although this document is intended to be comprehensive, the omission of any building, structure, feature or space does not imply that said element is not significant or does not positively contribute to the character and special interest of the conservation area. The protocols and guidance provided in Section 7: Management Plan are applicable in every instance.

The assessments which provide the baseline information for this Conservation Area Appraisal have been carried out utilising publicly available resources and through on-site analysis from the public thoroughfares within the conservation area.

01 Section 69 (1), Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

02 Section 71 (1), Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

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1.6 Planning policy

Conservation areas were introduced in the United Kingdom under the Civic Amenities Act 1967. They are now governed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The National Planning Policy Framework (revised December 2024) sets out the overarching requirement for local planning authorities to identify and protect areas of special interest (paragraph 204).[03]

1.6.1 Local Planning Policy

The Cheltenham Plan

The adopted development plan for Cheltenham has three sources; the Joint Core Strategy 2017, the Cheltenham Plan 2020, and the saved policies of the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan 2006.

Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031

The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) was adopted by Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucester City Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council in December 2017. Of relevance to Cheltenham Central Conservation Area and the heritage assets located within the boundary are Policies SD7: The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and SD8: Historic Environment.

The Cheltenham Plan 2020

The Cheltenham Plan, which was adopted by Cheltenham Borough Council on 20th July 2020, provides the local-level development strategy for the borough. The policies relevant to the Bafford Conservation Area and the heritage assets within it are Polices D1, HE1, HE2, HE3 and L1.

Cheltenham Borough Local Plan 2006: saved policies

A number of policies from the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan (2006) are 'saved'. Those relevant to the St Mary's Conservation Area is policy RT 2.

Cheltenham Tree Strategy, February 2026

Cheltenham Borough Council published their revised strategy for the maintenance of trees across the town in February 2026. This strategy focuses on protecting, managing, and expanding the town's canopy cover to achieve net-zero by 2030, enhancing biodiversity, and mitigating climate change impacts

1.6.2 Emerging Local Policy – The Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Strategic Local Plan

A Strategic and Local Plan (SLP) is under development by Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucester City Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council. The SLP will provide an overarching planning strategy and cross-boundary strategic policies covering the whole area, and local policies for each authority.

Once adopted, the SLP will replace the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (adopted December 2017), the Cheltenham Plan (adopted July 2020) and the 'saved' retail policies within the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review (adopted June 2006).

1.7 Guidance

There is a range of available guidance from Cheltenham Borough Council and Historic England regarding the management and maintenance of the historic built environment:

- Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (Second Edition), 2019.
- Cheltenham Borough Council: Local Index Supplementary Planning Document, 2007.
- Cheltenham Borough Council, Regency Design Precepts.
- Historic England, Traditional Windows: Their Care, Repair and Upgrading, 2017.
- Cheltenham Heritage Action Plan, June 2026.
- Cheltenham High Street and Promenade Public Realm Toolkit (forthcoming).

1.8 Consultation and formal adoption

As of May 2026, stakeholder consultation has taken place in regards to Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area. Common issues and opportunities were discussed with the stakeholders present, along with a review of the existing conservation area boundary.

03 When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

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2.0 Assesment of special interest

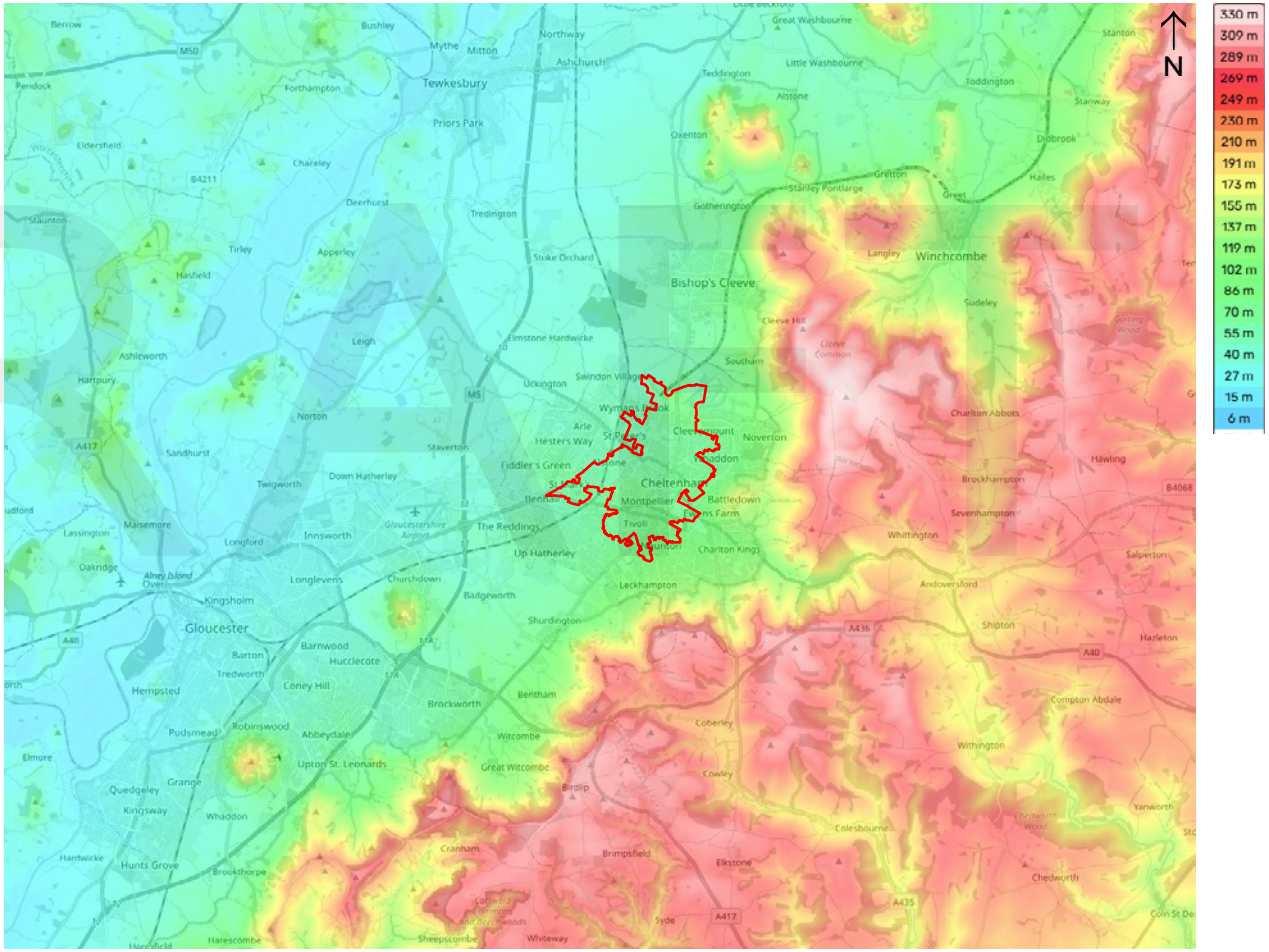
2.1 Location and setting

Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area lies at the foot of the Cotswold escarpment, which forms the western edge of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The steep topography which wraps around the eastern side of Cheltenham means that a strong sense of the town's setting is retained and illustrated by multiple views within the conservation area.

The boundary of the conservation area itself is surrounded by modern, suburban development. This is most prominent to the west of the boundary, whilst only a small amount of development separates the south-eastern boundary of the designation from the greenbelt.

An area of greenbelt land separates Cheltenham from Gloucester to the south-west and the large village of Bishop's Cleeve to the north.

Due to the steep topography to the north-east, east and south-east of Cheltenham, there are important elevated views into the conservation area on the approach to the town from these directions.



Topographic map showing the location of the Central Conservation Area and its relationship to its wider setting. The coloured key represents the relative elevation of the terrain both within the Conservation Area boundary and in its wider setting. Source: OpenStreetMap (ODbL)

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2.2 Summary history of Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area

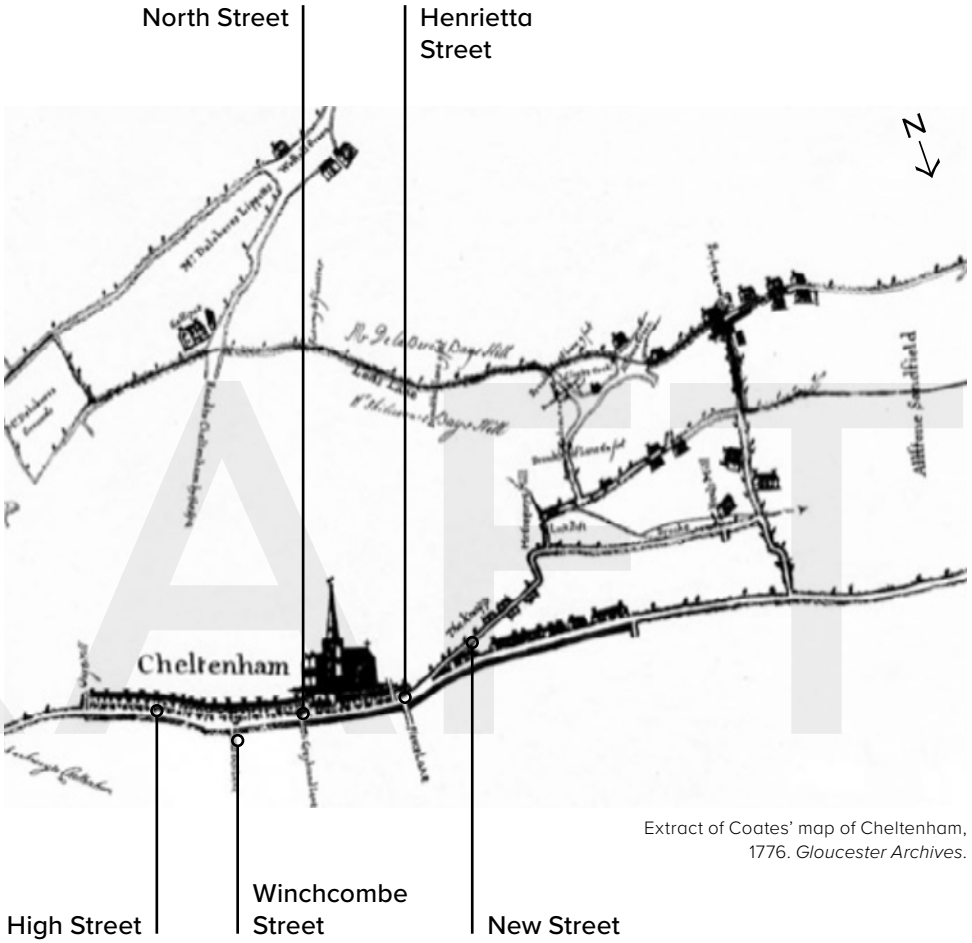
Roman activity is evidenced in the town through the discovery of Roman coins in Hanover Street, Pittville and High Street and a large quantity of Roman pottery behind St James' Square.[01]

The first documentary reference to Cheltenham itself occurs in 803. The name is thought to mean 'Celta's hemmed-in land', or possibly 'hemmed-in land by the hill called Celta'.[02] It is highly likely, given the archaeological finds and possible place-name derivation that Cheltenham was in existence as a farming village for a long time before the 8th century.

The Domesday Survey (1086) mentions five water and grain mills in Cheltenham, located along the River Chelt. Cheltenham became a market town in 1226 and the market played a key role in its economy for several centuries. A weekly market was held in the High Street until 1876, when all markets were removed to the Albion Brewery site north of Albion Street.[03]

The Norman Church of St Mary's, which is believed to stand on the site of an Anglo-Saxon minster, was re-built in the 12th century.[04]

Between the 13th to mid-18th centuries, the town consisted of one long street (the High Street) with linear development in the form of narrow burgage plots and lanes leading out of it on either side, into the adjoining fields and orchards. A survey of the town from 1776 shows lanes running off the High Street including Winchcombe Street (originally named Bell Lane), North Street (originally named Greyhound Lane), Henrietta Street (originally named Fleece Lane) and New Street.



Extract of Coates' map of Cheltenham, 1776. *Gloucester Archives.*

01 Gloucestershire County Council Historic Environment Record, Monument Nos. 5436, 5472 and 5475.

02 https://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk/

03 Gloucestershire County Council Historic Environment Record, Monument No. 20924.

04 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1386792?section=official-list-entry

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Mineral springs were discovered in 1716, in a field within the Bayshill area to the south of the historic core. In the 1730s, Bristol mariner Henry Skillicorne bought the land in this area and developed the site of the spring, building a modest pump room approached from the north by an avenue called 'Well Walk.'

In 1788 King George III visited Cheltenham to 'take the waters', residing for several weeks in Bayshill Lodge, a substantial building on the site of Sidney Lodge off Overton Road, which is now part of Cheltenham Ladies College. Skillicorne's spa subsequently became known as the Royal Well. The royal visit cemented Cheltenham's success as a leading spa and initiated large scale development both within and around the historic core.

By the beginning of the 1800s, Cheltenham was attracting thousands of visitors, and many new spas and assembly rooms were built to the south of the High Street. Many of these can be seen in Tovey's 1825 map of the town. Formal walks, rides and gardens were provided for visitors.



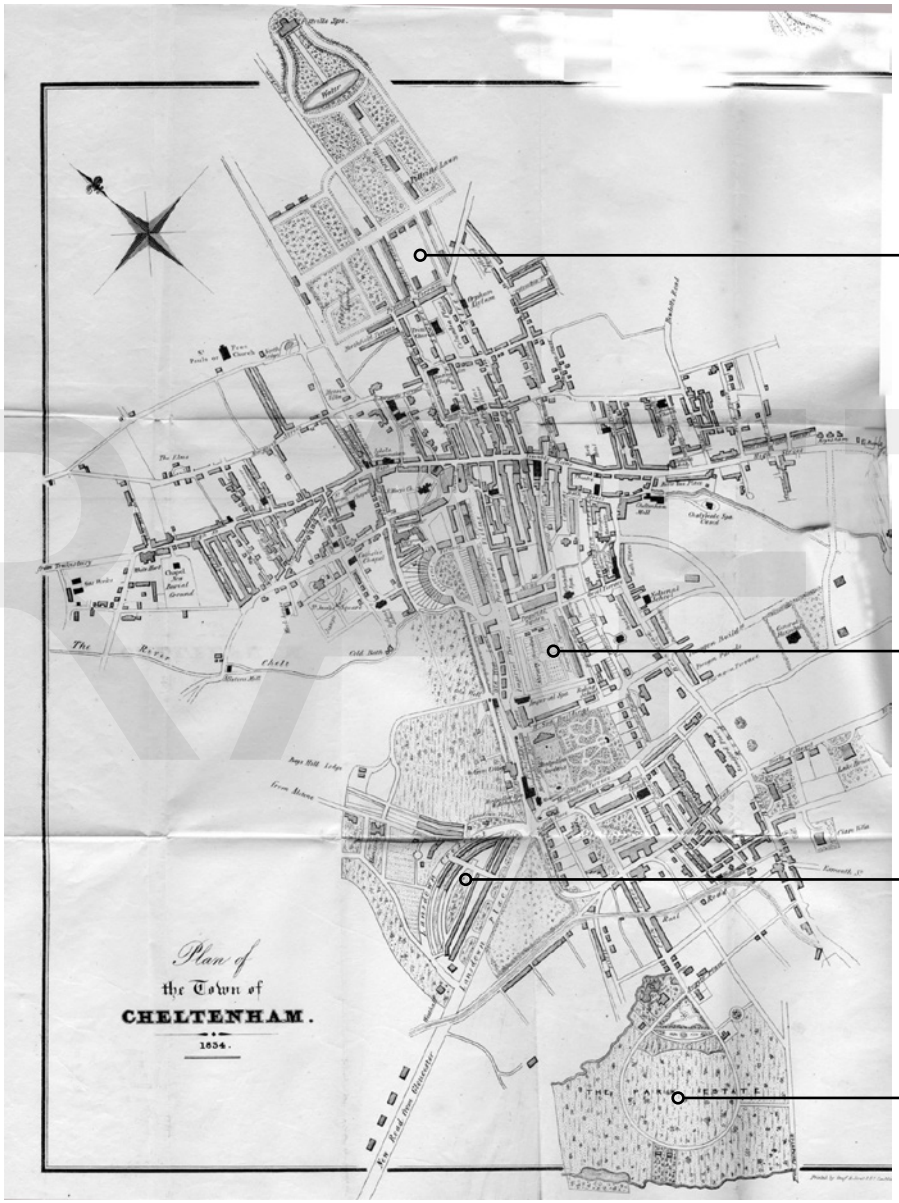
Cheltenham as shown in Griffiths' map of Cheltenham, 1825. *Wellcome Collection.*

From the early years of the 19th century, piecemeal development occurred on the gardens and orchards at the rear of the High Street and in the narrow lanes which led into the fields. The Enclosure Act of 1801 freed up land north of Albion Street, North Street and St Margaret's Road for development.

Alongside piecemeal residential development, several planned estates of various sizes were laid out in the 1820s and 1830s. These included Suffolk Square, the Park Estate, Bayshill and Lansdown to the south of the High Street, and Pittville to the north.

In 1810, the Cheltenham-Gloucester tramway opened to the south of the town, running along the present line of Leckhampton Road, Norwood Road, Andover Road and Queens Road before continuing on to the Gloucester Docks. The tramway encouraged the growth of artisan housing, trade and commerce around Bath Road.

The population of Cheltenham rose dramatically, from 3,076 persons in 1801, to 20,000 persons by 1826.



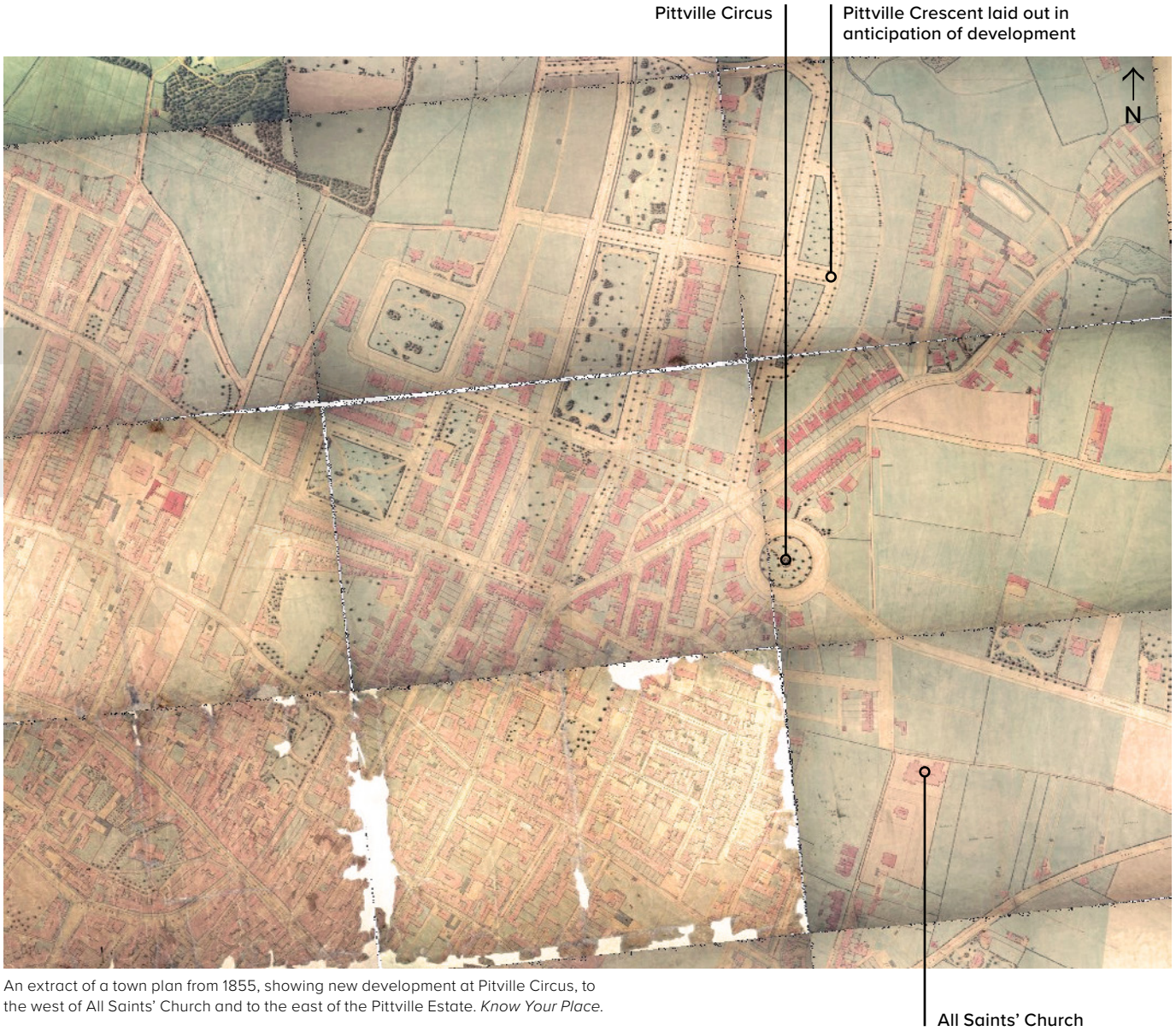
Cheltenham as shown in Davies map of Cheltenham, 1834. *John Lee, A New Guide to Cheltenham, and its Environs.*

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Improving transport links enabled industry to be brought into the town centre in the middle of the 19th century, as the popularity of the spas began to wane. The arrival of the railway station at Lansdown in 1840 and at St James' Square in 1847 facilitated industrial development in and around the town. A map produced in 1855 shows brick fields at the corner of Malvern Road and Gloucester Road to the south-west, sawing and flour mills north of Swindon Road and a brewery complex off Henrietta Street.

Cheltenham in 1855 had expanded in all directions since the 1834 map, with a new suburb having grown up around St Paul's Church to the north of the High Street, Pittville Circus and Prestbury Road laid out, All Saint's Church built with dense terraced development to the west, terraced streets to the north-east of Park Place and terraces and villas around Bayshill and Lansdown. The 1855 map shows the town in the midst of large-scale development, with many new roads laid out in anticipation of additional housing.

This map also shows many churches and chapels which had been constructed during the first half of the 19th century to accommodate the rapidly growing population. Under the tenure of Francis Close, curate of Holy Trinity between 1824 and 1856, Cheltenham became an evangelical stronghold.



An extract of a town plan from 1855, showing new development at Pitville Circus, to the west of All Saints' Church and to the east of the Pittville Estate. *Know Your Place*.

From the mid-19th century Cheltenham also developed a reputation for high-quality education, which was also partly driven by curate and later Dean of Carlisle Francis Close. Close took a particular interest in education, founding a number of National Schools and, in 1847, a Church of England Training School to instruct new teachers. Cheltenham College was founded in the 1840s to educate the sons of gentleman, and Cheltenham Ladies' College was founded in 1853. The College gained prominence under suffragist and educational reformer Dorothea Beale, who was appointed principal in 1858.

During the second half of the 19th century, residential development continued to expand Cheltenham in all directions. Large detached and semi-detached houses were built around Parabola Road in Bayshill and along Lansdown Road (now the A40) and St George's Road leading west towards the railway line.

New terraces were laid out at the corner of High Street and Gloucester Road. Pittville Circus Road was further developed with new villas in generous plots laid out on land shown as fields in the 1855 plan. Villas and terraces infilled empty space around Fullwood Park, stretching south-eastwards down towards Leckhampton.



An extract from the 1883 Ordnance Survey, showing Victorian development around Parabola Road and along Landsown Road.

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The Dean Close School buildings and their substantial grounds were laid out in the 1880s. The school opened in 1886 as a memorial to Francis Close, who served Cheltenham as a curate between 1826 and 1856, and was Dean of Carlisle from 1856 to 1881.

Between 1887 and 1901, Eldorado Road at the far west of the conservation area was laid out and developed with large, detached villas. The villas on Hatherley Road, which form the south-west boundary of the conservation area, were also built around this time. Many new terraces were constructed on the east side of Leckhampton Road to the south-east of the conservation area at the end of the 19th century, and Naunton Park Primary School was built in 1907.

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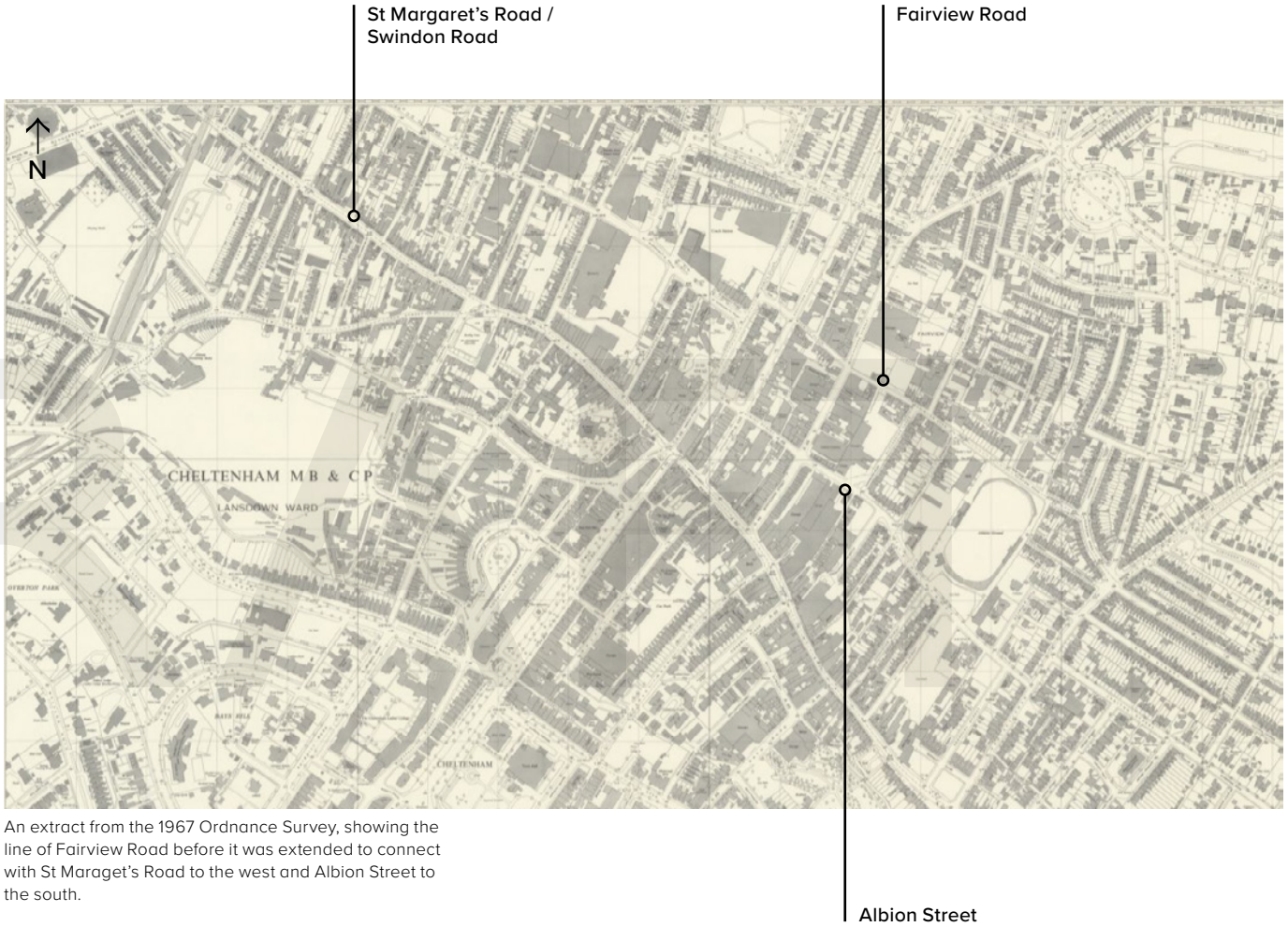


An extract from the 1901 Ordnance Survey, showing new institutional development to the south-west of the conservation area.

Although the historic character of Cheltenham is generally well preserved, modern development within and around the conservation area during the late 20th and early 21st centuries has, as in many historic towns across the country, inevitably altered aspects of its historic character. This has included commercial development within the historic core and the introduction of open and multi-storey car parks around the town centre.

The network of arterial roads through town has also evolved during the later 20th century. Since the 1970s, a new connection (Poole Way) was made between the High Street and Swindon Road at the western edge of the conservation area. Fairview Road, which runs roughly parallel to the High Street, was extended westwards to connect with St Margaret's Road and southwards across a late 19th-century athletic ground to connect with Albion Street.

Pockets of modern residential development are present throughout the conservation area, for instance Tom Price Close off Albion Street, Sheldon's Court and Sherborne Street off Fairview Road, Clarence Gate off Dunalley Street, Grove Street, Clark Way off St Paul's Road and Drake's Place off Malvern Road.



An extract from the 1967 Ordnance Survey, showing the line of Fairview Road before it was extended to connect with St Maraget's Road to the west and Albion Street to the south.

2.3 Summary special interest of Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area

Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area has special interest as a remarkably coherent example of a Regency spa town, which expanded and developed into a leading educational centre during the second half of the 19th century. This special interest is enhanced by the survival of planned estates and speculative development, the concentration and integrity of Classical, Gothic and Arts and Crafts inspired architecture, the relationship of the built environment to the many public parks and squares, and innumerable views within the town and out into the dramatic rural landscape beyond. Distinct but complementary character areas illustrate broad themes including past understandings of health, social etiquette and status, changing architectural tastes and religious and educational movements.

The origins of Cheltenham as a medieval settlement can be read in:

- The survival of the Norman Church of St Mary (Grade I listed) to the south of the High Street.
- The High Street with its narrow proportions and linear development pattern, alongside the partial survival of long and narrow plots typical of medieval urban settlements.
- The relationship between the High Street and other narrow streets leading north and south (New Street, St George's Place, Henrietta Street, North Street and Winchcombe Street) which pre-date the establishment of the spa town.

The significance of Cheltenham as a well-preserved Regency spa town is enhanced by:

- The survival of Regency architecture across the town centre and within important planned estates, where both the configuration of roads and streets and/or the integrity of original architectural compositions is well preserved.
- The integrity of the Classical architectural language across those parts of the town developed in the first half of the 19th century, with key features being vertical (i.e. taller than they are wide) sash windows with thin timber glazing bars, panelled timber doors under decorative fanlights, parapet roofs with Classical entablature and features such as columns, pilasters and porticos - particularly to historically higher-status buildings.
- A shared materiality across large swathes of the town, with prolific use of render and stucco on principal elevations, timber sash windows and doors, slate roof coverings, wrought and cast-iron railings and balconies and limestone copings/dressings to historic boundary walls where these survive.
- The retention of infrastructure associated with the original spa town, including the Pump Room at Pittville, and the Montpellier Spa and Rotunda.
- The retention of walks (such as the Promenade), squares and parks – which are directly associated with the social activities of those attending Cheltenham to 'take the waters' during the heyday of the spa town.
- A close relationship to national trends during the later 18th and early 19th centuries, when spa towns were widely promoted on health grounds and provided a new, fashionable forum for social interaction in high society.

The expansion of Cheltenham during the mid-late 19th and early 20th centuries is illustrated by:

- Coherent groups of terraces, semi-detached houses and villas on the outskirts of the town centre.
- A transition away from Georgian and early Victorian taste for restrained neo-Classical facades, parapet roofs and stucco in favour of increased architectural detailing, pitched roofs and exposed red brick.
- Later public parks including Naunton Park and Sandford Park.
- A proliferation of 19th-century churches, chapels and schools to serve a growing population.

The retention of the historic street plan and urban grain across much of the conservation area can be appreciated in:

- The historic town planning associated with the Regency and Victorian estates, where the arrangement, form and grain of both principal streets and service roads remains highly legible.
- Distinctive groups of densely packed artisan terraces, generally built around a modified grid plan.
- A coherent building line and consistent urban grain along roads which were developed speculatively and over a longer period (as in Sydenham and Christ Church Road in the Lansdown area).
- The line of Leckhampton, Norwood, Andover and Queen's Road, which denotes the original line of the early 19th-century Cheltenham-Gloucester railway and influenced the network of streets which grew up around it.

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Important green spaces include:

- The numerous squares which facilitate important views of historic buildings and lend a formal character to parts of the town centre and adjacent estates.
- Imperial Gardens, Montpellier Gardens and Sandford Park.
- The Grade II registered Pittville Park, which occupies a large swathe of the conservation area and illustrates the importance of promenading and 'taking the waters' during the Regency era.
- The grounds of Cheltenham College and Dean Close School, which establish a loose urban grain and facilitate many significant views of landmark buildings and the surrounding landscape.
- Private gardens of all sizes, which soften the streetscapes throughout the conservation area.

The evolution of Cheltenham into a leading Evangelical and educational centre, and its strong association with Francis Close, is illustrated by:

- The many churches and chapels associated with, founded or supported by Close including St Mary's (where he was rector for 30 years), Trinity Church on Portland Street and St Luke's Church.
- The number of educational institutions which were established in Cheltenham during the 19th century, a number of which were supported by Francis Close. These include Cheltenham College, Cheltenham Grammar School, Cheltenham Ladies' College, Dean Close School and a number of National Schools.

Alongside the connection with Francis Close, Cheltenham has a number of associations with other nationally and locally important figures including:

- A number of well-known Regency architects such as John Forbes, J.B. Papworth and R.W. and C. Jerread.
- Composer Gustav Holst.
- Educational reformer Dorothea Beale.
- Antarctic explorer Edward Wilson.

The architectural interest of the conservation area is enhanced by:

- Diversity in the scale and form of classical buildings, ranging from the monumental Greek Revival style Pump Rooms in Pittville Park, to the substantial villas and sweeping formal terraces around Bayshill, Sydenham, Landsdowne, Pittville, Montpellier and The Park, to the many sweeping formal terraces in areas of higher historic status to the more modest examples in areas such as Tivoli, Fairview, St Luke's and St Paul's.
- The clear evolution of architectural taste over the 19th century, with mid-late Victorian institutions championing the Gothic Revival and later suburbs (particularly Leckhampton and Eldorado) built with Gothic and Arts and Crafts influences such as steeply pitched gables, rich red brickwork and decorative bargeboards.
- The high number of historic timber sash windows which survive across the conservation area, along with many examples of fine wrought and cast ironwork in railings and balconies.

Important views within the conservation area include:

- A significant number of kinetic streetscape views, both designed (in the case of planned crescents in Lansdown and Montpellier for example) and fortuitous (as along the High Street).
- Views which incorporate open green spaces such as the those across the grounds of Cheltenham College and Dean Close School and towards the spires of the town centre churches from Sandford Park.
- Views of local landmarks (such as Pittville Pump Room, St Luke's Church and St Gregory's Church).
- Views out into the surrounding landscape from multiple locations, with the Cotswold escarpment at the edge of the Cotswold's AONB (to the north-east, east and south-east of the conservation area) being particularly prominent.
- Views into the conservation area from the steep topography to the north-east, east and south-east.

A detailed assessment of character and special interest is provided in each of the separate character area appraisals.

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3.0 Character areas

When last appraised between 2007 and 2008, the Central Conservation Area was divided geographically into 19 separate character areas. These character areas were not ascribed during the process of the appraisal, but taken from a draft Urban Design Framework produced for Cheltenham in 2001.

The 2026 appraisal determined that there is significant overlap in terms of what makes each of the previous 19 character areas special, with similarities in the age, style, form and typology of buildings, urban grain, plot size and usage (including other characteristics). These similarities span different districts within Cheltenham – there being many similarities, for instance, between artisan development in the St Paul's and Fairview area although these districts are not adjacent to one other.

The 2026 Conservation Area Appraisal proposes to significantly reduce the number of character areas from 19 to six, to reflect the findings of the new study and to more clearly articulate the shared characteristics which define the Central Conservation Area as a whole.

The current character area names are placeholders, pending feedback during consultation.

Character Area 1: Town Centre

Areas included:

- The High Street and those streets leading off the High Street to the north and south;
- A stretch (approx. 780m) of Swindon Road/Fairview Road/St Margaret's Road to the north of the High Street;
- The Promenade, Imperial and Montpellier Gardens and Montpellier Walk.

The special interest of the Town Centre character area is derived from:

- The origins of the High Street and several of the adjacent lanes – which illustrate Cheltenham's roots as a medieval town.
- Significant diversity of style and scale within the built form.
- The continuation of a strong commercial and recreational character.
- The prevalence of complete, uniform terraces.
- The geographical and historical relationship of the area to Cheltenham's Georgian pump rooms.
- Association with important figures from history including a number of prominent architects.
- Significant public open spaces.
- Views of important streetscapes, landmarks, and the surrounding landscape.

Character Area 2: Planned Estates

Areas included:

- Pittville
- Lansdown
- Suffolk Square
- Bayshill
- The Park

The special interest of the Planned Estates character area is derived from:

- The survival of planned regency estates associated with Cheltenham's heyday as a Georgian spa town.
- Well-preserved planform and configuration across the various areas.
- The prevalence of complete, uniform terraces and architecturally coherent villas.
- Associations with historic figures including notable architects from the Georgian and Victorian periods.
- The prevalence of green open spaces and trees.
- The continuation of a historic residential character.
- Views of important streetscapes, landmarks, and the surrounding landscape.

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Character Area 3: Artisan Quarters

Areas included:

- St Paul's
- The Lower High Street area
- Tivoli
- Leckhampton
- Fairview and All Saints
- St Luke's

The special interest of the Artisan Quarters character area is derived from:

- Significant numbers of uniform, artisan terraces with shared architectural details, materiality and building lines lending a strong sense of coherence.
- Some larger houses and villas, which contrast visually with the artisan terraces and demonstrate the historic hierarchy of the built form across Cheltenham.
- The survival of the the historic street plan and a characteristically dense urban grain across the various pockets of artisan development.
- Associations with a variety of historic figures, including well-known architects and Dean Francis Close.
- The continuation of a historic residential character.
- Views of important streetscapes, landmarks, and the surrounding landscape.

Character Area 4: Bath Road and Suffolks

Areas included:

- The southern section of Bath Road between Shurdington Road and Cheltenham College.
- The northern extent of Shurdington Road.
- A portion of Suffolk Road, Montpelleir Villas, Montpellier Grove, Sufoflk Parade, and Great Norwood Street.
- Numerous modest residential streets in and around this area.

The special interest of the Bath Road and Suffolks character area is derived from:

- The enduring combination of residential, commercial and recreational uses which has characterised this part of Cheltenham since the early 19th century.
- Notable groups of uniform, artisan terraces with shared architectural details, materiality and building lines lending a strong sense of coherence.
- Formal terraces and villas which illustrate the expansion of Cheltenham during the Regency era and contribute significant architectural interest through their uniform appearance and architectural features including Georgian sash windows and historic ironwork.
- The survival of the the historic street plan the ability to read the line of the Cheltenham-Gloucester tramway which follows the line of Norwood Road.
- An association with John Forbes who designed the majority of buildings on Montpellier villas.
- Views of important streetscapes, landmarks, and the surrounding landscape.

Character Area 5: Historic Formal Suburbs

Areas included:

- The Sydenham area.
- Areas of mid-late 19th-century residential development to the west of Lansdown and Bayshill, including the top of St George's Road, Western Road, Christ Church Road, Queens Road, Eldorado Road and the western third of Lansdown Road.

The special interest of the planned estates character area is derived from:

- The retention of several formal, highly coherent terraces associated with Cheltenham's heyday as a spa town.
- A number of generous houses and villas which retain many original architectural features.
- Significant diversity of scale and style within the built form.
- The continued legibility of the historic street plan and urban grain.
- Street trees and private front gardens, which contribute to a verdant formal character.
- The continuation of a historic residential character.
- Views of important streetscapes, landmarks, and the surrounding landscape.

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Character Area 6: Institutional Quarters

Areas included:

- Cheltenham College and its associated grounds.
- The Cheltenham Hospital site.
- The eastern extent of Sandford Park.
- Dean Close School and its associated grounds.

The special interest of the Institutional Quarters character area is derived from:

- The survival of historic institutional buildings, which inform the historic formal character of the area and lend significant architectural interest.
- Generous houses and villas from the mid-late Victorian and Edwardian periods, many of which retain original features.
- Diversity of scale and style within the built form.
- The continued legibility of the historic street plan and characteristically loose urban grain.
- A strong association with Dean Francis Close.
- A significant number of street trees and greenery within both public and private grounds.
- The continuation of a historic institutional and residential character.
- Views of important streetscapes, landmarks, and the surrounding landscape.



Montpellier Spa Road, Town Centre Character Area.



Pitville Pump Room, Planned Estate Character Area.



Christ Church Road, Historic Formal Suburbs Character Area.



Bath Road, Institutional Quarters Character Area.

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4.0 Alterations to the conservation area boundary

4.1 Reasons for review

In accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework and Historic England best practice guidance, the boundary of a conservation area should be periodically reviewed and suitably revised in accordance with findings made during this exercise.

The need to review the boundary can be in response to a number of factors: unmanaged incremental changes which have, over time, diluted the character of an area; the boundary may have been drawn too tightly originally; or the special interest of a feature may not have been evident to a previous assessor. Although it is principally the built structures that are recognised in amending the boundary, their accompanying plots often provide an important historical context which should be incorporated together with the building(s).

The boundary of Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area was last undertaken between 2007 and 2008. Some recommendations regarding boundary alterations were made at this time, although none were taken forwards.

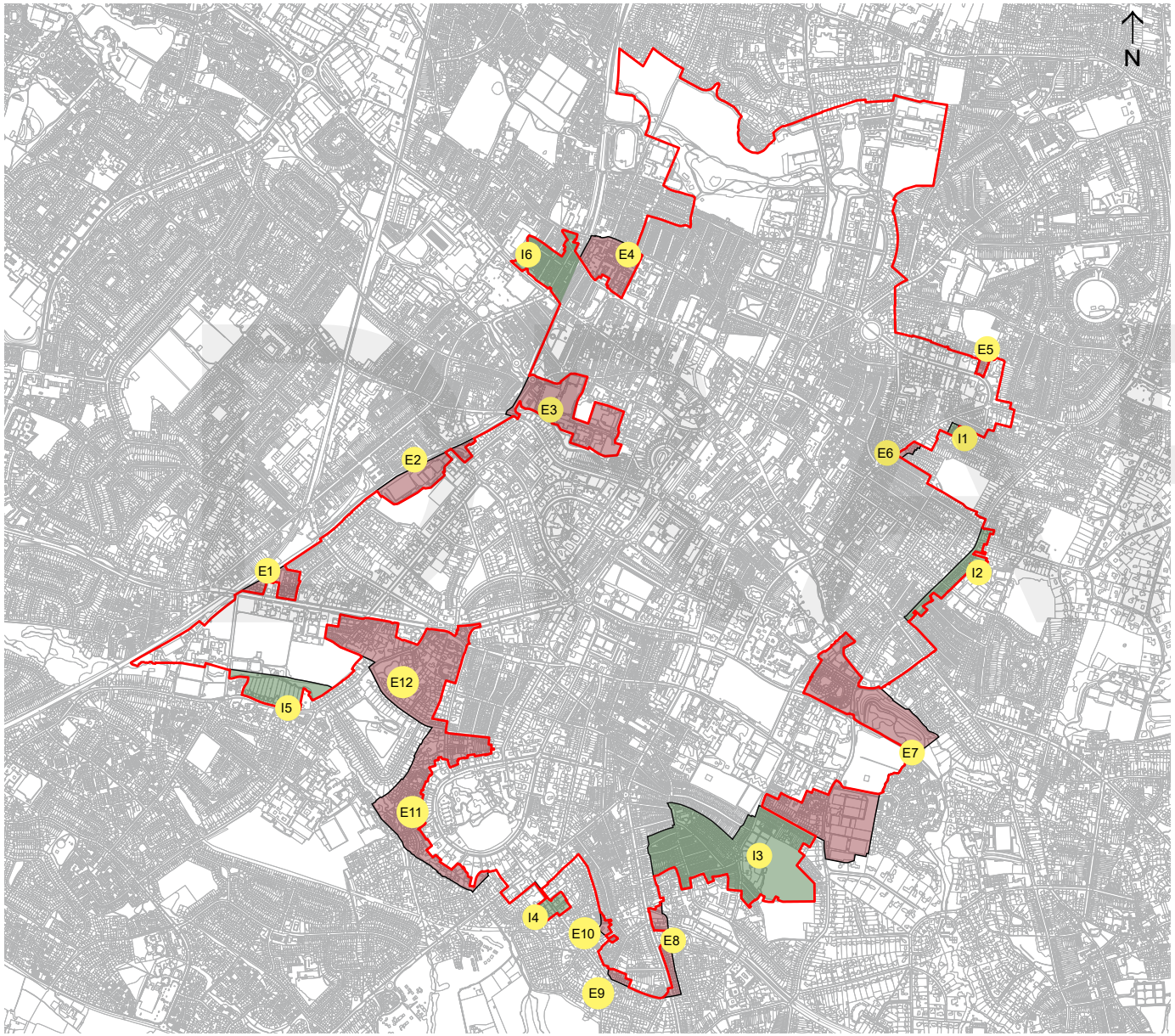
The following pages detail the proposed boundary changes to the conservation area. When considering the boundary changes, the following questions were asked:

- Does the location contribute to the identified special interest of the conservation area and/or the character area of which it is a part?
- If so, what is the particular contribution it makes? Does it:
    - demonstrate the architectural style?
    - illustrate an association with an important person or event which helped shape Cheltenham's history?
    - contribute to an understanding of the town's historic configuration?
    - form part of a wider architectural development, such as a group of terraces built at the same time, or a historic planned estate?
    - facilitate or form part of a key view within the town?
    - enhance the visual interest of the conservation area, for instance by providing open green space or mature tree cover?

A location which continues to enhance the special interest of the conservation area in one or more of the above ways is likely to be retained within the conservation area boundary, or brought into the boundary if it is not already included. Where the special interest of a location has been heavily eroded - perhaps through significant loss of historic buildings or features or significant modern development which has fundamentally altered the character of an area or severed it from its historic setting, there will be scope for removing an area from the boundary.

Where an area contains both contributing and non-contributing or detracting elements, these factors will be balanced to determine whether the location makes a sufficient contribution to warrant retention within the conservation area boundary without depreciating the integrity of the designation.

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Proposed boundary changes

- Current Boundary
- Proposed Boundary (2026)
- Included
- Excluded

This plan is not to scale

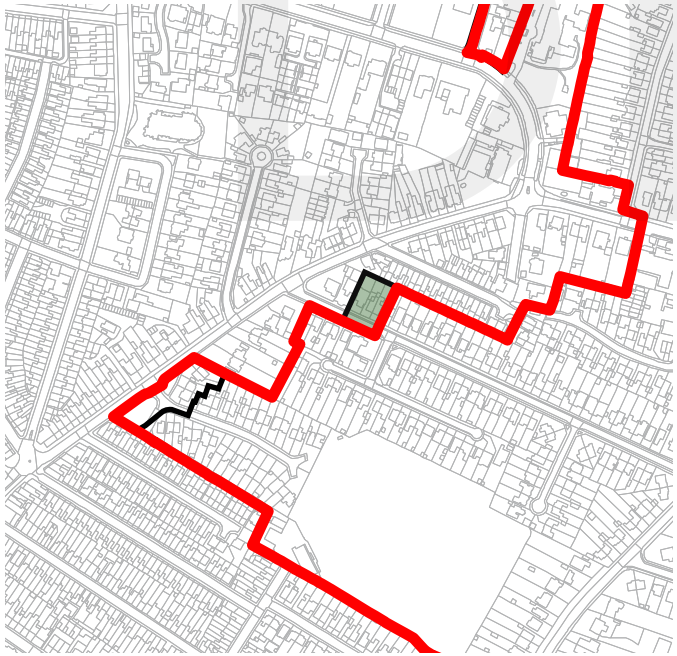
4.2 Proposed inclusions

I1: Extends the eastern boundary at Eldon Road very slightly to include two Victorian houses previously excluded from the boundary. Both buildings enhance the architectural interest of the conservation area through surviving features including prominent brick chimney stacks, limestone dressings, timber sash windows and surviving boundary treatments (brick walls and gate piers).

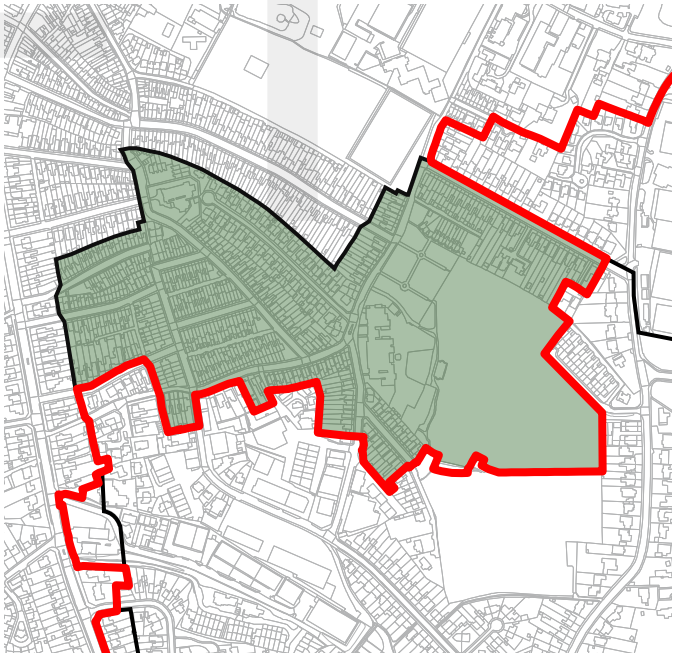
I2: Extends the boundary to capture historic terraces on east side of Hale's Road, including the early 20th-century almshouses.

I3: Captures Naunton Park, various listed and indexed buildings, historic terraced development and late Victorian/Edwardian villas to the west of Naunton Park. The style, scale and configuration of the artisan dwellings in this area is characteristic of much of the development within the Artisan Quarters character area. The consistent use of deep red brick, projecting bay windows and pitched slate-covered roofs creates a unified townscape and illustrates the expansion of Cheltenham at the end of the 19th century. Naunton Park is a highly valued and attractive open space which enhances the character of the conservation area and the surrounding historic buildings.

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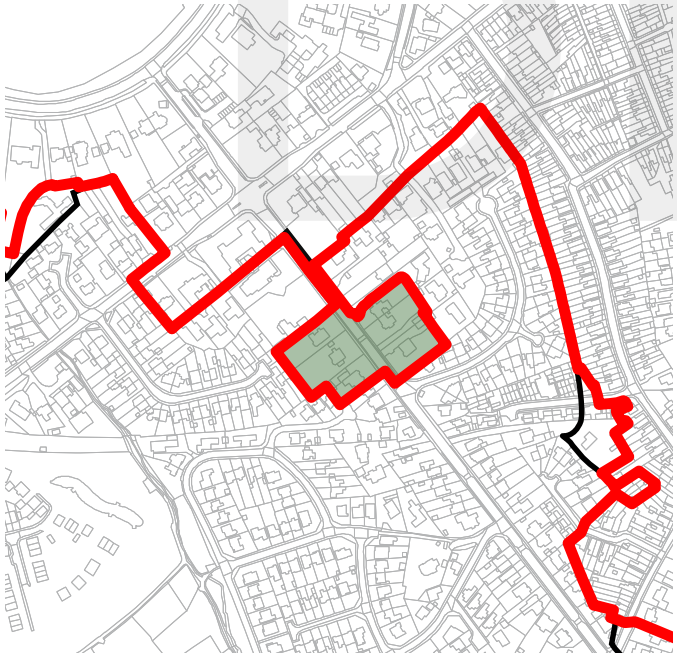


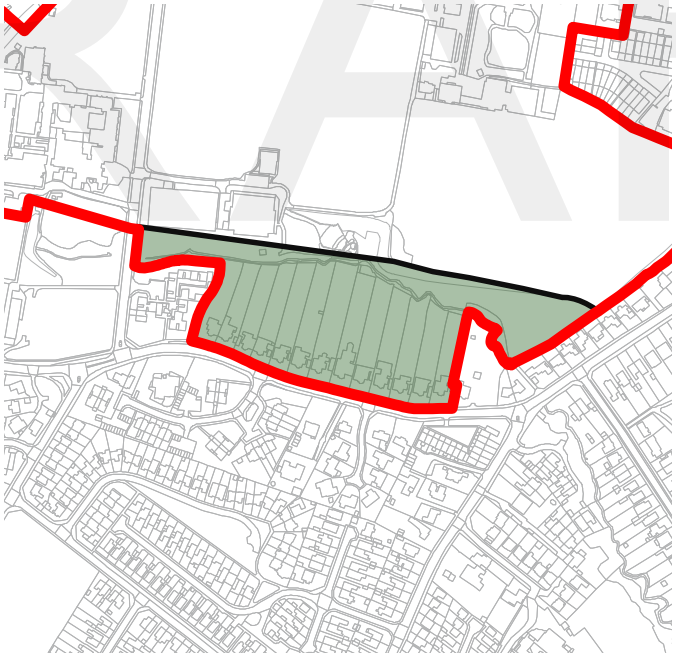
I4: Minor extension to capture the listed buildings at the bottom of Moorend Park Road.

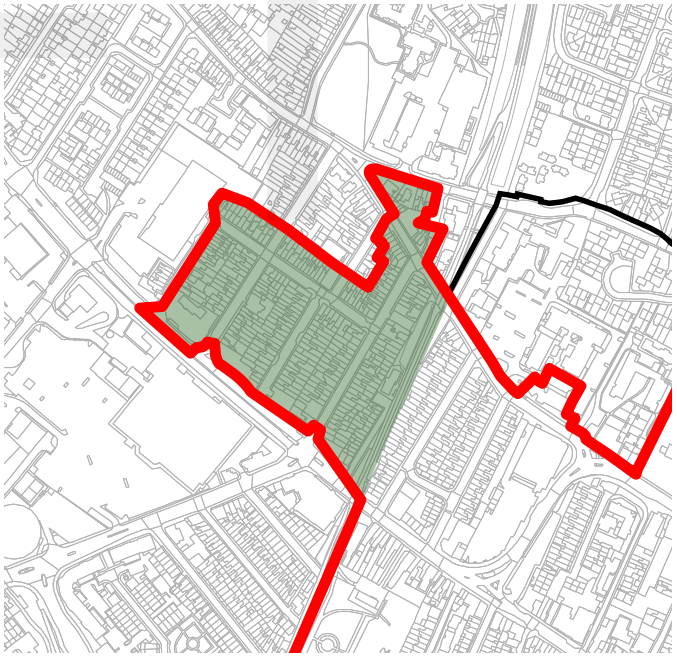
I5: Rationalises the boundary which formerly cut across the bottom of the Dean Close playing fields, and incorporates the well-preserved row of Edwardian villas at the southern boundary of the conservation area in line with 2008 recommendations.

I6: Extends the boundary to include early 19th-century development around Gas Green Baptist Church. The artisan terraces along Russell Street, Townsend Street, Charles Street, the south-western half of Cleeveland Street, Russell Place and White Hart Street were built in the first half of the 19th century. It is possible that the terraces were built to house workers at the adjacent gas works on Tewkesbury Road. The style, scale and materiality of these terraces are characteristic of the early 19th-century artisan development in St Paul's and much of the Artisan Quarters character area more widely.

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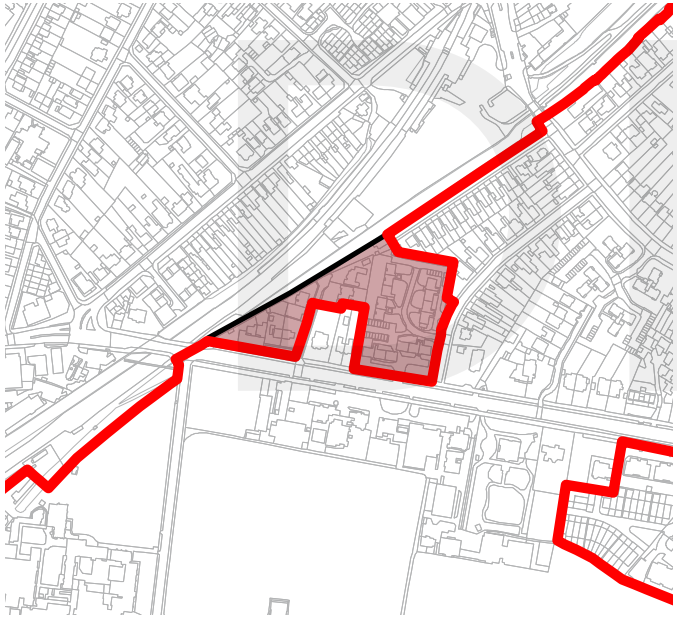


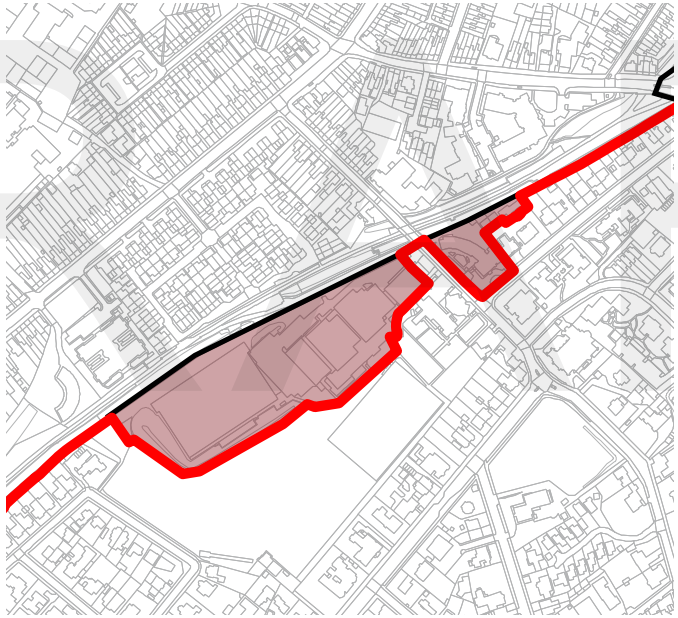
4.3 Proposed exclusions

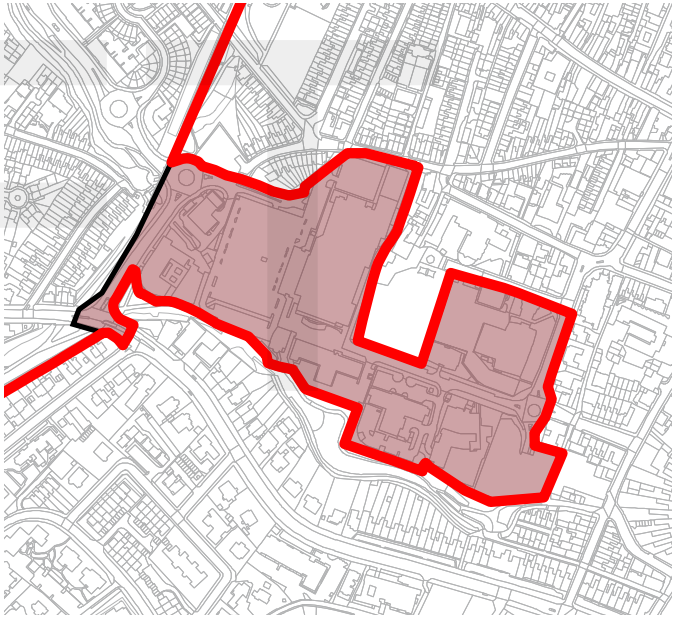
E1: Excludes the modern residential development north of Lansdown Road. This development makes no contribution to the special interest of the conservation area.

E2: Excludes a section of modern development on Malvern Road (including new-build development at Cheltenham Ladies' College Sports Centre) which makes no contribution to the special interest of the conservation area.

E3: Excludes a substantial area of modern commercial development around Jessop Avenue which makes no contribution to the special interest of the conservation area.



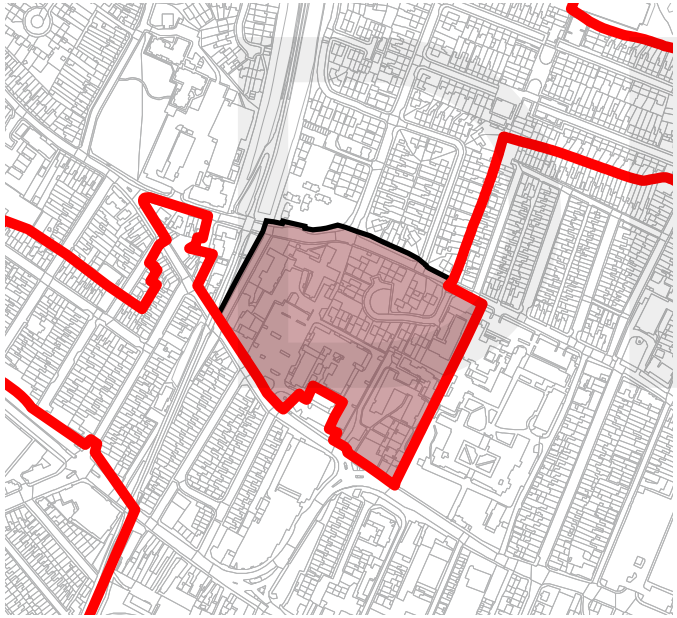


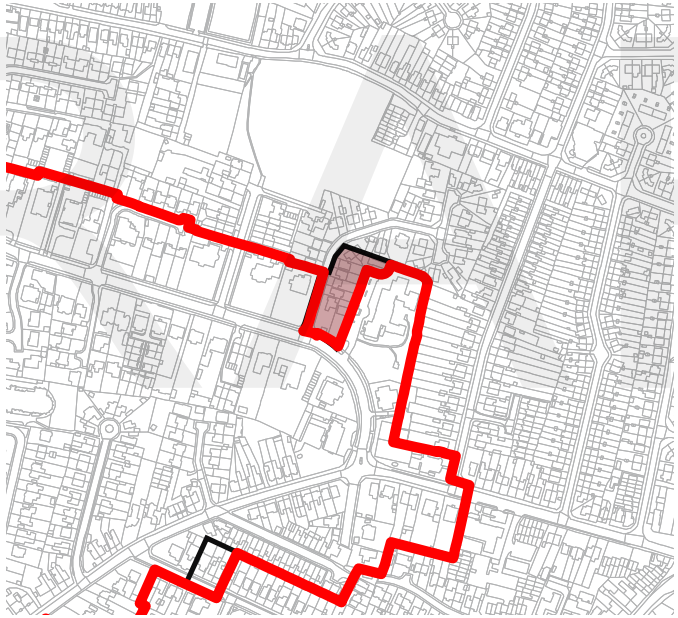


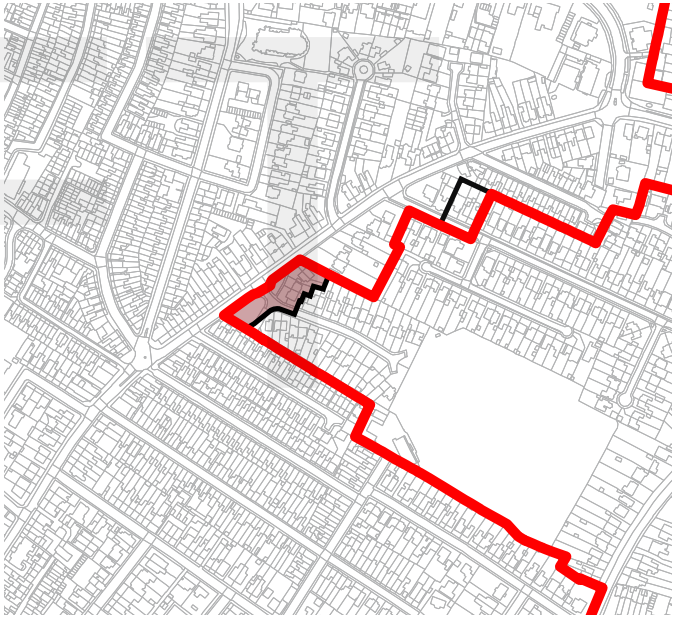
E4: Excludes modern development associated with the medical centre and modern residential development on the north side St Paul's Road but retains the Chapel (indexed) and the historic boundary wall which encloses it from the road.

E5: Excludes the small amount of modern residential development at Hayes Road.

E6: Excludes a small amount of modern development at Westdown Gardens.

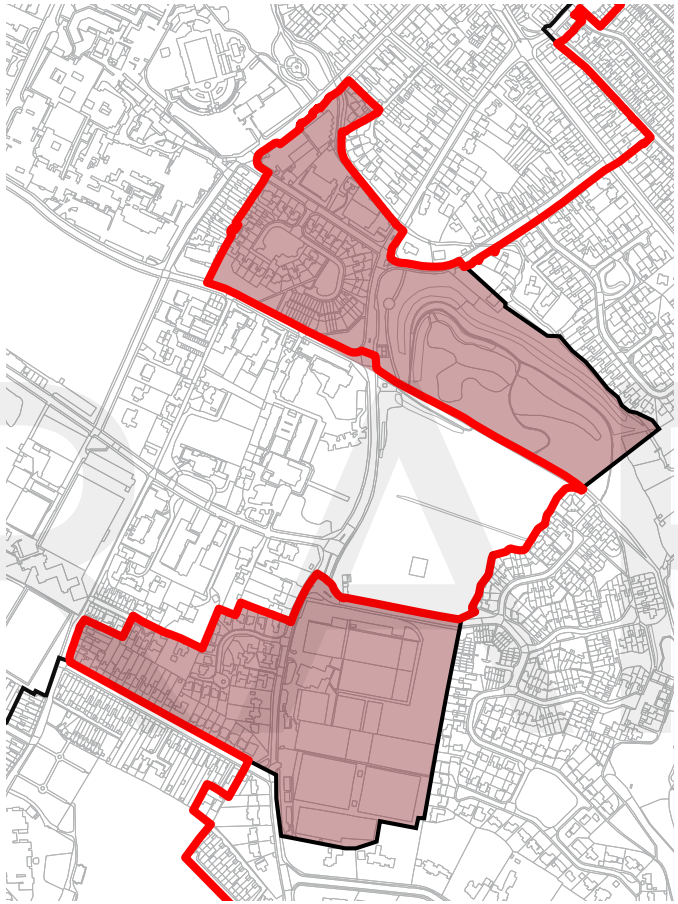






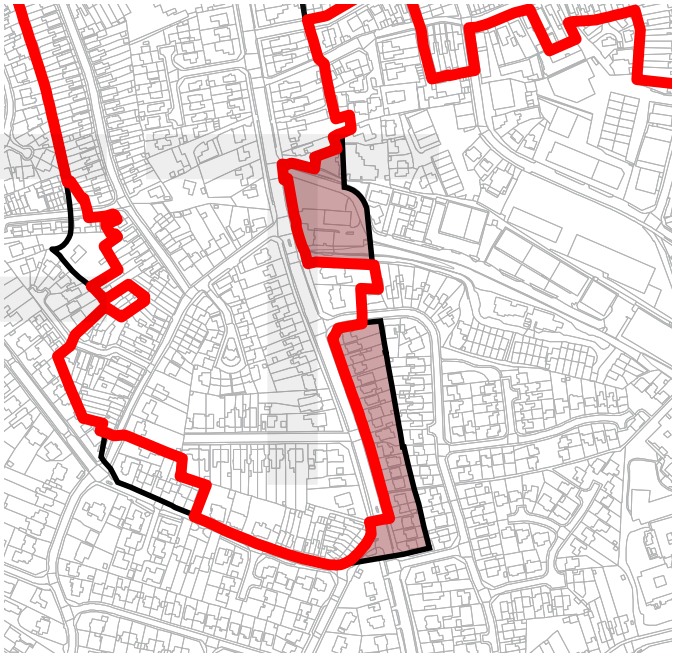
E7 (right):

Removes undeveloped open space at Cox's Meadow flood plain, alongside modern residential and civic development to the west which makes no contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. The former Cheltenham College Swimming Baths and the adjacent lodge (both Grade II listed) on College Baths Road would be omitted from the boundary; both buildings are statutorily listed and protected under planning law and policy. The recreation ground between Charlton Park Drive and Charton Park Gate would be removed – all buildings here are modern. 20th-century development at The Verneys (including 1960s development by Eric Lyons which whilst on the index is not characteristic of the conservation area) would be removed, as would modern development on the north side of Naunton Park Road.



E8 (below):

Minor rationalisation to remove modern development on the east side of Leckhampton Road which makes no contribution to the special interest of the conservation area.

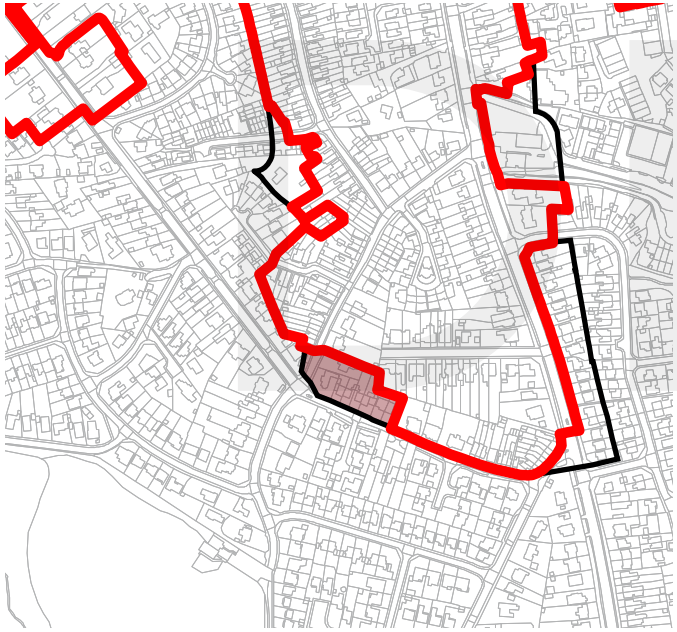


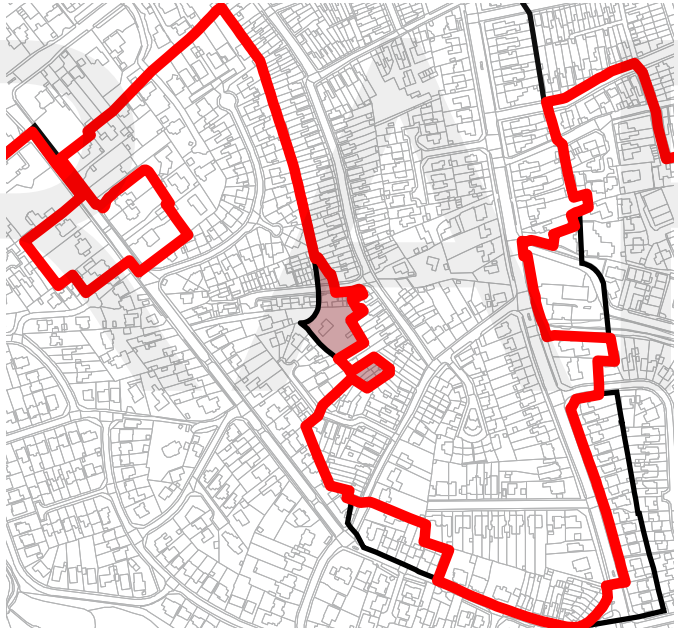
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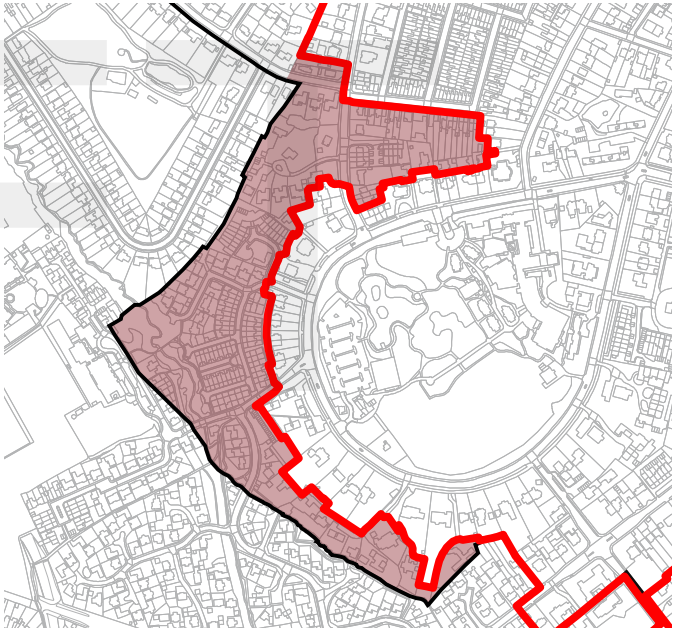
E9: Minor rationalisation to remove modern development off Moorend Road.

E10: Minor rationalisation to exclude modern development behind Eynon Close.

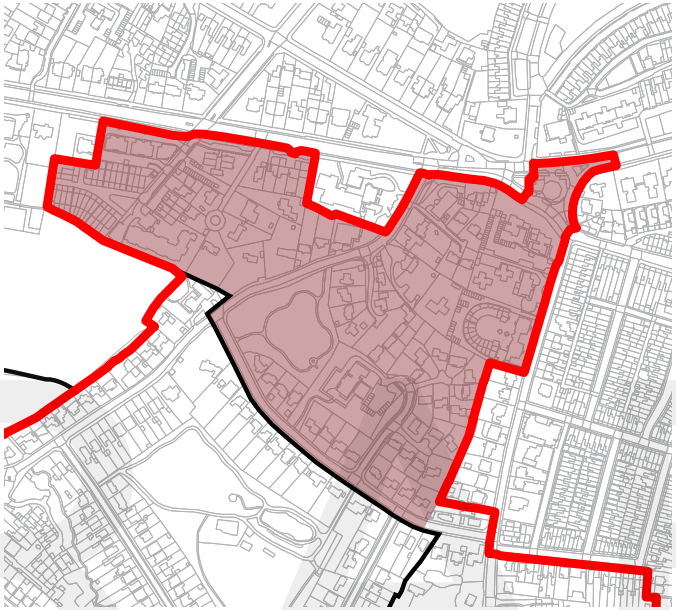
E11: Exclusion of modern development around the distinctive tear-drop shape of The Park, which makes no contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. All plots fronting The Park would be retained, as modern development within these plots generally respects the historic urban grain and helps to retain the original planform of the estate.







E12: Facilitates the removal of a large area of modern development between Hatherley Park and Lansdown Road. This adjustment would see Court Gardens removed from the boundary (designated Public Green Space and part of the setting of Grade II listed Hatherley Court). The Beauthorns and gate piers along Hatherley Road, which would also be removed, are also statutorily listed and therefore protected under planning law and policy. The two other historic buildings which would be removed are locally indexed. All other buildings in the area are modern and confer no special historic or architectural interest.



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5.0 Summary of challenges

5.1 Condition

The condition of buildings and spaces within the character area is variable. A high proportion of the buildings are well looked after; however, there are examples of structures of all typologies which are deteriorating. Many common problems could be easily addressed through regular maintenance or the appropriate repair.

Issues related to the condition of structures across the conservation area include:

- Localised examples of blocked gutters and downpipes, which can contribute to external staining and issues with damp, and can be managed with regular clearance of/improvements to rainwater goods.
- The use of cementitious materials (renders and mortars) which are inappropriate for traditional buildings and can cause or advance issues with damp and deterioration.
- Deteriorating boundary treatments requiring appropriate repair.
- Rotting joinery to some windows and shopfronts.
- Vacancy – which tends to exacerbate problems with condition when ventilation is limited and issues go unnoticed for longer periods.

5.2 Detracting features and loss of historic details

The special interest of the conservation area is heavily informed by the historic character of the buildings and streetscapes from the Regency, Victorian and Edwardian eras. Where historic details are lost and insensitive modern elements are introduced, this detracts from the special interest of the conservation area. Key issues include:

- The replacement of traditional timber framed windows with uPVC alternatives.
- The loss of historic boundary treatments such as brick walls and railings, and their piecemeal replacement with inappropriate modern alternatives such as breeze-block and shiplap fencing.
- Loss of historic front gardens to car parking.
- Street clutter in the form of CCTV camera poles, utilitarian streetlamps and a significant amount of traffic signage.
- The accrual of services such as security alarm boxes, satellite dishes and radio aerials.
- The loss of historic shopfronts and the introduction of inappropriate features such as box fascias and expansive float glass frontages.
- Internally illuminated signage.

5.3 Inappropriate modern development

There are some examples of modern development which depreciate the special interest of the conservation area through inappropriate massing and detailing. This is particularly notable around the town centre, which contains many 20th-century buildings of insensitive scale, massing and materiality. The various additions and extensions to Cheltenham General Hospital, within the Institutional Quarters character area, is another example where modern development has not enhanced the established character of the conservation area.

Most of the character areas contain localised examples of modern development which does not enhance the special interest of the Central Conservation Area. Further details can be found within the individual character area appraisals.

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5.4 Development pressures

It is acknowledged that there is pressure on housing numbers within the conservation area and that associated planning applications are likely to be submitted in the future. Although important to establish long-term occupancy and use for historic buildings, providing additional residential units within historic town centres, either by adding extensions or converting existing buildings, brings challenges including:

- Maintaining the character of the roofscape, which may be characterised by variation in height (such as on the High Street) or by consistency with low pitched roofs hidden behind parapets.
- Avoiding unsightly clutter to prominent elevations through giving careful consideration to the location and appearance of features such as fire-escape stairs, vents, flues and wastepipes.
- Avoiding the loss of historic features such as sash windows and/or the introduction of unsympathetic uPVC windows. Historic shopfront features should be retained in any conversion of retail buildings to residential use.
- Avoiding bulky and insensitive box dormers, which can appear overly dominant and disrupt the restrained character of the predominantly classical architecture.

The conversion of retail premises to residential use can have adverse affects on the character of streetscape through the loss of active commercial frontages. Conversions of this type can be appropriate in certain circumstances, but success usually depends on ensuring that historic features (such as shopfront windows and joinery) are retained in situ so that the original function of the shopfront remains legible.

Where new-build accommodation is proposed, the challenges will include:

- Preserving the integrity of views into and out of the conservation area.
- Avoiding visual competition with key local landmarks.
- Incorporating landscape improvements such as green spaces and street trees.
- Where relevant, ensuring the continued legibility of historic plot boundaries.
- Responding to the proportions of historic plots and frontages, architectural details, roofscapes and materiality.
- Enhancing the setting of surrounding heritage assets.

5.5 Heritage at risk

Historic England's Heritage at Risk (HAR) Register is the national programme for identifying designated heritage assets that are most vulnerable to neglect, decay, inappropriate change, or other threats. Updated annually, the Register provides an overview of the condition of England's historic environment and helps to prioritise action and resources to secure the long-term conservation of at-risk heritage assets.

The following buildings are included on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register:

- Holy Trinity Church, Portland Street (Grade II* listed). The building is listed as in poor and declining condition, with a high level of vulnerability.
- St Luke's Church, College Road (Grade II listed building). The building is listed as in poor but stable condition, with a medium level of vulnerability.

5.6 Traffic and parking

The volume of traffic varies widely across the conservation area, but there are areas where heavy traffic results in congestion, noise and barriers to pedestrian movement. This is most notable in the town centre, where the inner ring road is located. Where large car parks are present, these create significant gaps in the urban grain. On-street parking is a common challenge, detracting from the character of the streetscapes.

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6.0 Summary of opportunities

6.1 General opportunities

There is scope to enhance the conservation area through addressing the minor but altogether detracting elements such as external accretions, management of rainwater goods and the appropriate repair of failing elements. Incrementally addressing these issues will have a positive impact and enhance the conservation area.

Although many of the uPVC windows and doors which have already been installed are unlikely to require replacement in the near future, there is scope for any further replacement windows and doors to be carried out using styles, materials and methods that are better suited to enhancing the special interest of the conservation area. It would be especially beneficial for first-generation uPVC double-glazing, which is generally coming to the end of its life cycle, to be replaced with more suitable alternatives, rather than a more visually intrusive standard option.

The replacement or alteration of unsympathetic shopfronts would greatly enhance the special interest of the conservation area, as would the rationalisation of street furniture.

6.2 Areas of opportunity

As well as the many minor and individual instances where there is opportunity to improve the character of the conservation area, there are specific sites that present opportunities for larger scale interventions that could have a correspondingly substantial positive impact. These range from areas where a high concentration of relatively minor individual issues could be collectively addressed to particularly positive effect, or where more substantial development may possible (subject to sensitive proposals). In some instances, these sites align with allocations made within existing planning policy and could continue to inform future site allocations.

When successfully delivered, development within a conservation area responds to the proportions of historic buildings plots and frontages, existing architectural detailing, established roofscapes and materiality.

Successful, contextual design can be creative and contemporary, so long as it is rooted in a deep understanding of how a place develops and what makes it special. This also applies to developments within the setting of a conservation area.

Specific areas of opportunity are identified within the individual appraisals for each character area.

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7.0 Management plan

7.1 Control measures

In order to protect and enhance the conservation area, any changes that take place must conserve its character and special interest. Statutory control measures are intended to prevent development that may have an individually or cumulatively negative effect. Control measures within include:

- Planning permission will usually be required to totally or substantially demolish buildings or structure (including walls, gate piers and chimneys). This will also need a heritage statement (sometimes called a heritage impact assessment) as part of the application. Validation checklists detailing the supporting information required for various types of planning consent are available on Cheltenham Borough Council's website.[01]
- The extent to which permitted development (i.e. changes that are allowed without requiring consent from the local authority) may be restricted. For example, replacement windows, different elevational finishes or the installation of satellite dishes may require planning permission.
- Trees with a diameter of 75mm or greater, measured as 1.5m above the soil level are protected. Any work proposed to these trees require permission from the local authority by means of a planning application. This allows the authority to determine whether a tree preservation order (TPO) is necessary.

7.2 Conservation aims and best practice

There is no generally accepted detailed definition of 'best practice' in conservation: it is a term used to describe the management of change (including repair) so that the integrity and character of a historic site is not eroded or compromised. It is not the intention of conservation best practice to prevent change from happening: alterations can still be carried out but should be subject to additional scrutiny to ensure that the special interest of the conservation area is protected.

It is the purpose of this document to provide guidance that will help achieve these aims. Overall, any change in Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area should seek to:

- preserve its historical features;
- enhance, where possible, its special interest;
- positively contribute to its established character; and
- be high quality.

7.3 'Like-for-like'

A term that is frequently used in conservation is 'like-for-like' replacement or repair. This is frequently – and mistakenly – taken to mean that a modern alternative that generally echoes the style of the element removed is acceptable. However, this is not accurate or acceptable. Like-for-like should always be interpreted as an alternative that matches the historic element removed in terms of its material, dimensions, method of construction, finish, means of installation and any other feature specific to the original element, such that the modern replacement is hardly discernible from the original (accepting that its condition will be greatly improved where the original has failed beyond repair).

For example, modern uPVC windows in imitation of Georgian or Victorian-style sash windows but with false glazing bars and a top-hung casement opening mechanism do not constitute a like-for-like replacement for traditional timber-framed Victorian sliding sash windows, although they may appear stylistically similar.

01 https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-permission/make-a-planning-application/planning-application-supporting-information/

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7.4 Repairs and replacement

Repairs and replacement are inevitable with any building or site, regardless of age; however, within a conservation area, it is especially important that this is carried out sensitively to protect the historic fabric of its buildings and respect the character of the wider area. Key points to remember when looking to carry out repair work or install replacement features are:

- A method of repair that was suitable for one building may not be suitable for another. Repair and replacement should always be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Repairs using appropriate materials and techniques are always preferable over wholescale replacement.
- Where a historic feature has degraded beyond repair, replacement should be carried out on a like-for-like basis.
- Where seeking to improve failing modern features, a traditionally-designed alternative using appropriate materials is preferable. For example, the replacement of uPVC gutters and downpipes with lead, cast iron or coated aluminium alternatives that better reflect the traditional character of the conservation area.
- Cement-based mortars and/or ribbon pointing are harmful to historic brickwork and masonry. Repairs to any pointing should be carried out in a lime mortar after any cementitious mortar has been raked out. This will ensure the longevity of the historic built fabric.
- Due consideration should be given to the sustainability of the repair or replacement, i.e. what is its lifespan? What maintenance will be required to prolong this?
- Reversibility is an important consideration as better alternatives may become available in the future.
- Historic external detailing should be retained or, where damaged beyond repair, replaced on a like-for-like basis. This includes (but is not limited to): the texture and colour of render; size and colour of bricks used, and the bond in which they are laid; stone dressings; and chimneystacks.
- The reinstatement of historic features that have been lost is favourable. For example, re-exposing brickwork that has been rendered or painted over.
- The repair and replacement of windows can have a notable effect on the character and special interest of the conservation area, both positively and negatively. The aim should always be to retain historic windows wherever they survive, carrying out refurbishment work where needed to make sure they remain usable. Timber frames are preferable over uPVC for a number of reasons, mainly their comparative slimness and breathable quality which has a positive knock-on effect on the overall condition of the historic building. However, it is recognised that modern double-glazing is becoming increasingly well-designed to suit historic contexts and may be permitted, subject to their appropriateness.

7.5 Maintenance

Maintenance differs from repair in that it is a pre-planned, regular activity intended to reduce instances where remedial or unforeseen work is needed. The higher the levels of maintenance, the less need to carry out repairs. Regular maintenance activity should include annual gutter clearing, seasonal vegetation control and repainting external joinery with an oil-based paint. This is not an exhaustive list and each historic building will have its own specific needs.

Larger historic buildings and those which are listed may benefit from occasional condition surveys (usually around every five years) to highlight their individual maintenance and repair needs.

The maintenance requirement of a building will depend on its age, materials and susceptibility to wear. Historic England, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and other heritage bodies publish specialist guidance on the suitable maintenance and repair methods for different historic buildings.

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7.6 Trees

Trees are afforded protection within the conservation area and there are hundreds of tree preservation orders in place around Cheltenham (both within and outside conservation areas). Any tree surgery work should be carried out only once the relevant permission has been sought. Good arboricultural management can help to maintain the safety of trees and reduce potential conflict with the built environment around them. Such works should be undertaken in line with industry best practice in order to protect their physiological and structural health, as well as their amenity.

The Cheltenham Tree Strategy, published February 2026, provides further information and guidance around maintaining existing trees and planting new ones. The Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG) have also published resources on best practice to support the role of urban trees through the planning, design, construction and management of urban environments.[02]

Contact details for the trees team at Cheltenham Borough Council are provided in Appendix A.

7.7 Modern and new development

It is not the intention of conservation area designation to prevent new development or entirely exclude existing modern development where this is woven into a surrounding historic space. Instead, it puts in place a process whereby any proposals are more thoroughly studied to ensure that the special interest of the conservation area is protected and opportunities to improve its character are identified.

New development can range from entire new buildings to the introduction of new features, however small, on existing buildings.

New development within the setting of the conservation area should also be carefully managed as it has the potential to detract from its character and special interest. Any proposals will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis and take account of:

- The significance of any existing building affected.
- The impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, key buildings of individual heritage interest and/or positive contributors.
- How local features and materials can be incorporated into the new design.
- Whether or not any historical plot boundaries survive or could be recoverable.
- The impact of the overall scale, massing and design on the wider streetscape.
- The loss of any important rear/side elevations or views of these.
- Characteristic boundary treatments and planting.
- The potential for below-ground or built archaeology.
- Any other heritage or conservation constraints identified.
- The addition of new features on existing buildings can be detrimental to the individual buildings as well as the overall character of their wider setting if unmanaged. Specifically:
    - Television aerials and satellite dishes should not be fixed to principal or highly visible elevations, or chimneystacks.
    - Features such as external lighting and security cameras should be as discreet as possible.
    - Solar panels should be restricted to rear or secondary elevations, especially where a building forms one of a group.
    - Internal alterations can have an external impact; for example, staircases cutting across windows or the removal of chimneybreasts necessitating the removal of the associated chimneystack.

7.8 Sustainability

Maintenance and continued use of historic buildings is inherently sustainable. However, there are growing pressures to improve the energy efficiency of the country's historic building stock in order to reduce carbon emissions, particularly from heating which uses fossil fuel sources. Pressures to increase sustainability performance can be accommodated within the conservation area but will require a bespoke approach to ensure that the measures needed can be viably implemented without harm to its special interest.

02 https://www.tdag.org.uk/

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Straight-forward measures to improve building performance include:

- Refurbishing historic windows and doors to prevent drafts.
- Re-pointing external walls to prevent damp and air leaks.
- Maintaining rainwater goods.
- Improving and/or expanding green spaces.
- Inserting breathable insulation in loft spaces and suspended floor voids.
- Installing thick curtains or internal shutters.

Double-glazing is now available in slimline, timber frame units which are considerably more sympathetic within historic contexts than earlier versions. It will be necessary to obtain the relevant permissions to install double-glazing. Best practice will always be to retain historic windows wherever possible, with the installation of secondary units being an alternative to full replacement.

The installation of solar panels and other infrastructure such as electric vehicle charging points and heat pumps in a conservation area is generally acceptable, however they should not be installed in a location that is visible from any public highway, and their physical and aesthetic impact will need to be carefully considered and mitigated.

Historic England, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Royal Institute of British Architects and other bodies publish extensive guidance on the sensitive adaptation of buildings in response to climate change and sustainability challenges.

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Appendix A: Glossary

Terminology	Definition
Ashlar	Finally cut, dressed stone blocks used as a facing material.
Artisan	A worker in a skilled trade. In architectural terms, a building constructed to house artisans.
Arts and Crafts	An architectural movement popular in the late 19th and early 20th century, which promoted traditional craftsmanship and the use of local materials.
Art Deco	An architectural movement popular in the interwar period, characterised by geometrical shapes, vertical lines, rich materials and bold ornamentation.
Barge board	A decorative, non-structural wooden trim attached to the projecting edges of a gabled roof.
Classical	Architecture inspired by the buildings of ancient Greece and Rome - characterised by the use of columns and pediments.
Corbel	Stone, wood or metal bracket, often structural but sometimes decorative.
Cornice	A horizontal decorative moulding.
Fanlight	A small semicircular or rectangular light above a doorway.
Fascia	A horizontal band beneath the eaves of a building or over a shopfront.
Fenestration	Architectural terminology for windows and doors.
Gothic	Architecture inspired by the style of medieval churches - featuring pointed arches and tracery.

Terminology	Definition
Massing	Refers to the shape, form and size of a building.
Mullion	A vertical glazing bar on a window or window opening.
Parapet	A low, continuous wall that extends above the roofline.
Pilaster	A shallow, rectangular column projecting slightly from the surface of the wall, topped with a Classical capital.
Plat band	A horizontal architectural moulding which projects slightly from the face of the elevation.
Polite building	A building designed with regard for architectural fashion, often by an architect.
Portico	A projecting porch supported by columns.
Quoins	Masonry blocks to the corner of a wall - can be structural or aesthetic.
Rubble stone	Unfinished stone.
Stallriser	A platform below a shop window.
String course	A horizontal band of brickwork or masonry that runs across the external facade of a building.
Tracery	Division of openings with stone bars or moulded ribs.
Transom	A horizontal glazing bar on a window or window opening.
Urban grain	The pattern of building plots in an urban environment.
Vernacular building	A building constructed using local materials with limited or no regard for architectural fashion.

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Appendix B: Frequently asked questions

Frequently asked questions

Do I need planning permission for demolition and new development with a Conservation Area?

Planning permission will usually be required to totally or substantially demolish buildings or structures within a conservation area (including walls, gate piers and chimneys). Applications for demolition will also need a heritage statement (sometimes called a heritage impact assessment) as part of the application.

Consult with Cheltenham Borough Council to confirm whether planning permission will be required ahead of any new development.

Are there any additional restrictions on permitted development rights?

The extent to which permitted development (i.e. changes that are allowed without requiring consent from the local authority) may be restricted. For example, replacement windows, different elevational finishes or the installation of satellite dishes. Always confirm any restrictions with Cheltenham Borough Council before carrying out any works to the exterior of a building within the conservation area.

What are the implications of Conservation Area designation for tree works?

Trees with a diameter of 75mm or greater measured at 1.5m above the soil level are protected. Any work proposed to these trees require permission from the local authority by means of a planning application. This allows the local authority to determine whether a tree preservation order (TPO) is necessary.

Are there restrictions on advertising and commercial signage?

Advertisements and other commercial signage may be subject to additional controls and/or require planning permission. Contact planning@cheltenham.gov.uk before installing any advertising infrastructure or commercial signage.

How do I seek pre-application advice?

For pre-application advice on major developments, contact planning@cheltenham.gov.uk. A pre-planning application will provide guidance on what permission is required.

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