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Swindon Village Conservation Area

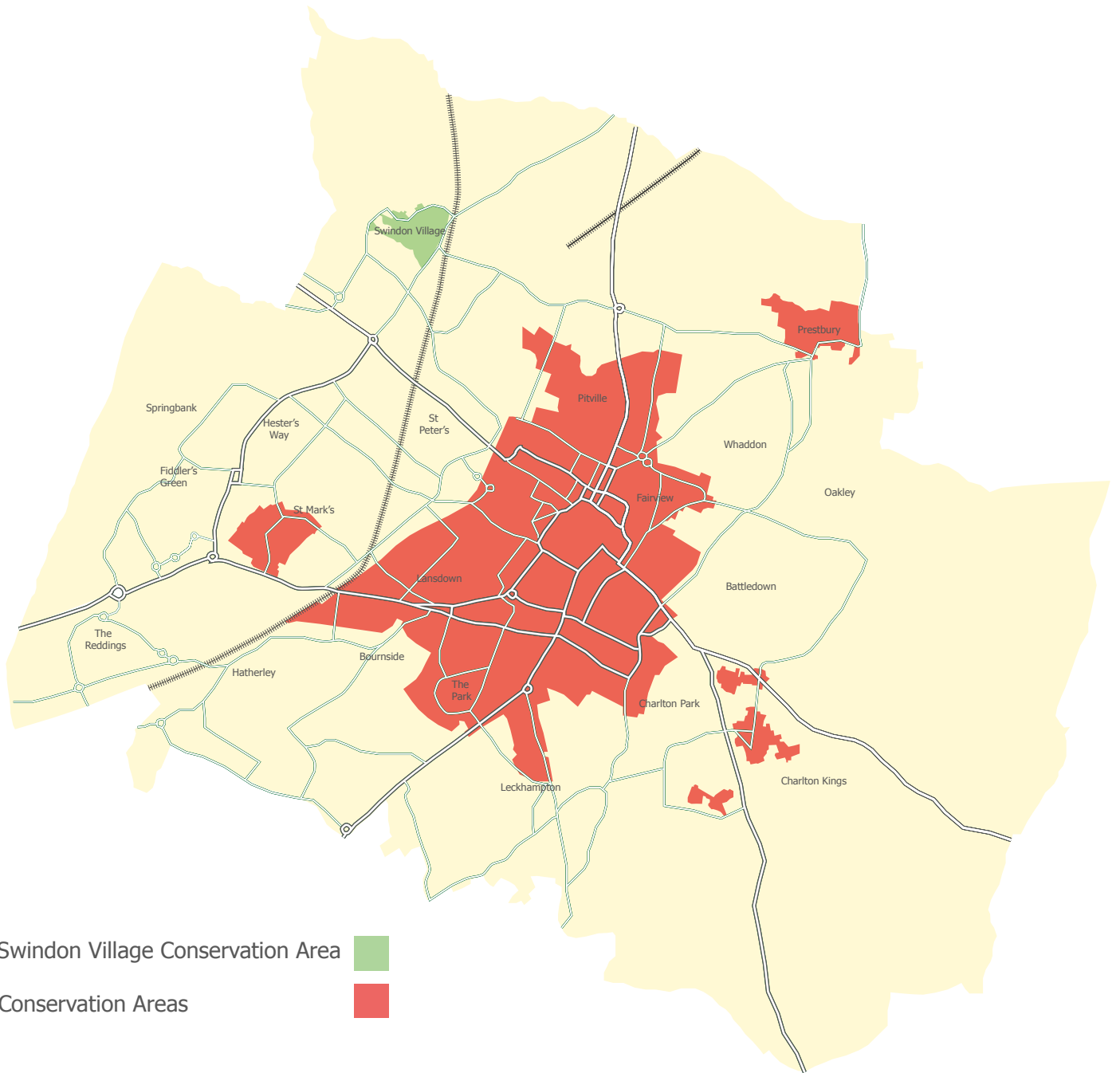
Character Appraisal and Management Plan

Cheltenham Borough Council
Planning Policy Team
Local Plan Draft Document
May 2017

The Swindon Village Conservation Area Appraisal is a draft document and will not come into force until the consultation stage is completed and they have been adopted by Cheltenham Borough Council. Any suggested boundary change will not take place until that time.

For any comments please contact localplan@cheltenham.gov.uk

For more information on the existing Conservation Area Appraisals please [click here.](#)



Swindon Village Conservation Area

Conservation Areas

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Map 1. The location of the Swindon Village Conservation Area and other conservation areas in Cheltenham

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Map 2. The boundary of the Swindon Village Conservation Area

1.0 Introduction

1.1 What is a conservation area?

1.1.1 A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The power to designate is given to councils through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Sections 69-78). Under section 69 local planning authorities must also review their conservation area from time to time. This document supersedes the previous appraisal and management plan which was previously reviewed in 2009.

1.2 What is a conservation area appraisal and management plan?

1.2.1 A Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is a document which supplements Cheltenham's Local Plan.

1.2.2 The appraisal aims to describe the special historic and architectural character of an area. A conservation area's character is defined by a combination of elements such as:

- Architecture
- Uses
- Materials
- Detailing
- Relationship between buildings and their setting
- Appearance and placement of buildings within their plots
- Key views and vistas
- Relationship between the street and the buildings
- Trees and green spaces

1.2.3 A Management Plan addresses the issues raised in the Appraisal and provides area specific guidelines, in addition to potential enhancement schemes are also explored.

1.3 Implications of Conservation Area Designation

1.3.1 Once designated proposals within a conservation area become subject to local conservation policies outlined in the council's Local Plan and national policies including the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

1.4 Community Involvement

1.4.1 To start an initial meeting with Swindon Village Parish Council took place in October 2016 aiming to outline the review process. Following this the draft version will be circulated for comment before a full public consultation in 2017 of both the Appraisal and gement plan.

1.5 Designation Background

1.5.1 Swindon Village Conservation Area was designated by Tewkesbury Borough Council on 22 November 1986 and designation was taken over by Cheltenham Borough Council on 1st April 1991 when the councils boundaries were revised. The area covers roughly 16 hectares.


1.6 Statement of Special Character

1.6.1 Swindon Village Conservation Area encompasses the historic core of the village, and despite its close proximity to Cheltenham still retains much of its distinctive village character through a visual dominance of historically and architecturally important buildings.

1.6.2 It has largely retained its historic planform with buildings located off Church Lane, along with a high concentration of statutory listed buildings with a diverse range of architectural styles which adds to the character and appearance of the area. Today the conservation area is largely surrounded by mid twentieth century developments, but despite this the village characteristic are still clearly evident.

1.6.3 The public realm adds to the significance of the Conservation Area, due to the lack of street clutter and the large number of mature trees located throughout the village. Historic boundary wall treatments also form an important element of the character and appearance of the conservation area and significantly contribute to the street scene. Open spaces form an important role in the conservation area; in particular this includes the St Mary's Churchyard, and open field behind. This is in addition to the playing fields which have considerable historical value as the former grounds of Swindon Village Hall.

Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal



This Appraisal defines the characteristics that make the conservation area special, including its wider context, historic development, townscape, streetscape and architectural character. It also describes the conservation area's current condition.



Map 3. Aerial photograph of the Swindon Village Conservation Area and surrounding area

2.0 Context

2.1 Location and Setting

2.1.1 Swindon Village Conservation Area is located in the historic core of the village, approximately 2 miles north west of the centre of Cheltenham. The village is set within a low lying landscape which is predominantly agricultural land. Today Swindon Village is largely overshadowed by the growth of modern Cheltenham, but still retains many of the village qualities.

2.1.2 Swindon Village's physical character has, to a large extent, been determined by the presence of the built environment, for example the raised railway to the east which has created a physical boundary for development. To the south of the village and Conservation Area there is a large industrial park which detrimentally affects the setting and contrasts the characteristics of Swindon Village with

regards use, building types, age, size and massing. Currently greenbelt is to the north and west, however these sites are subject to change in the coming months once the examination of the Joint Core Strategy is complete.

2.1.3 The Conservation Area contains 19 Grade II listed buildings and structures and 1 Grade II* listed building. There are also 3 buildings/ structures on the Index of Buildings of Local Importance (Local List).

2.2 Historic Development

2.2.1 The earliest written evidence of a settlement at Swindon Village is its presence in the Domesday Book of 1086, when it is described as a manor of less than a square mile under cultivation with some 13 families and 9 plough teams in residence. However, Swindon may have been in existence as a small village from



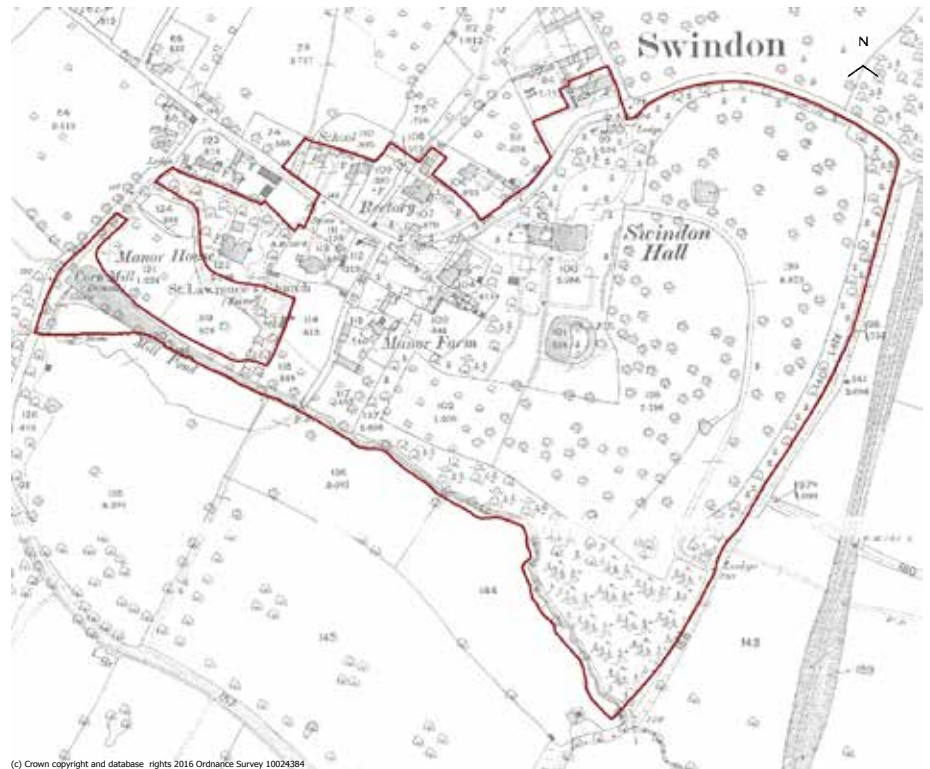
Fig.2.1 St Lawrence Church

as early as 909 when land in the area was granted by Aethelflaed to the Priory of St Oswald in Gloucester on its formation.

2.2.2 The earliest surviving building is the tower of St Laurence's Church, dating from the early 12th century, and today Grade II* listed (Fig. 2.1). It is one of only two six-sided towers in the county.

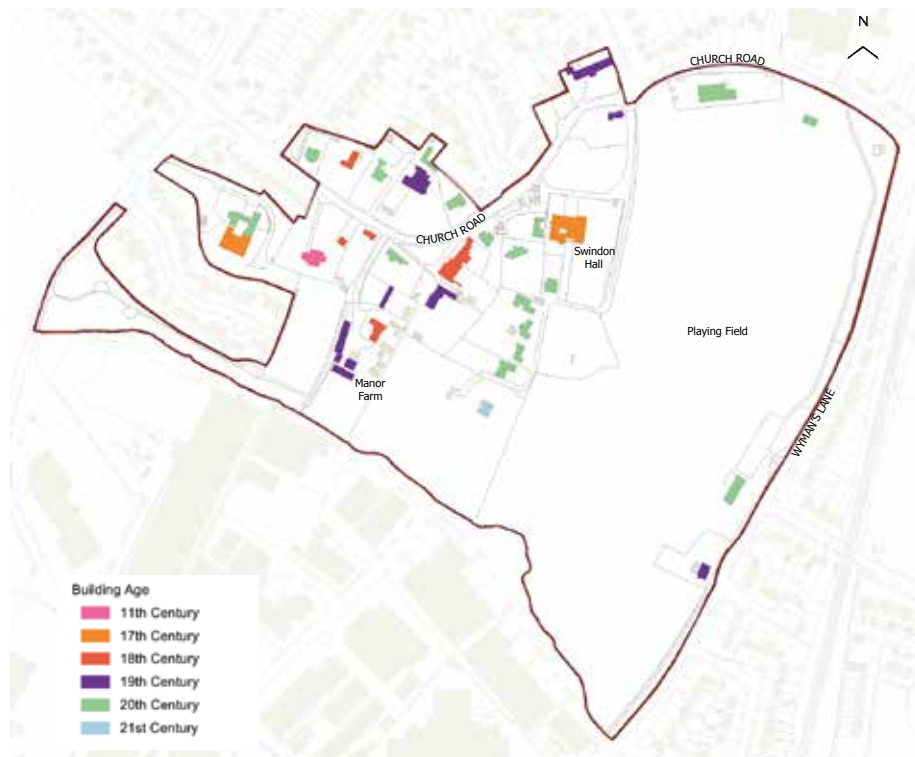
The remainder of the homestead, located just off Hayden's Lane, outside the conservation area marks the site of the now demolished Preist's Mill, later known as Bedlam Mill, with a history traceable from 1250. A second mill and mill pond was located on Wyman's Brook just to the south of the manor in the 15th century, but was removed in the late 19th century.

2.2.3 Parts of Swindon Hall and Swindon Manor date from the 17th century, however, both have been heavily altered and extended. The majority of the historic buildings date from the 18th and 19th centuries (Map 5). At this point much of the development remained clustered around the church, with fields, gardens and orchards surrounding them.



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Map 4. Swindon Village OS Map 1884-1893

2.2.4 In 1840 to the east of the Conservation Area the Birmingham and Gloucester railway was constructed. This encroached on open land, thus creating a strong visual impact, and an enduring boundary, largely preventing the growth of the village to the east. The current road layout dates from 1845, when Church Road was moved further north providing a more gentle curve around the grounds of Swindon Hall (Map 4).

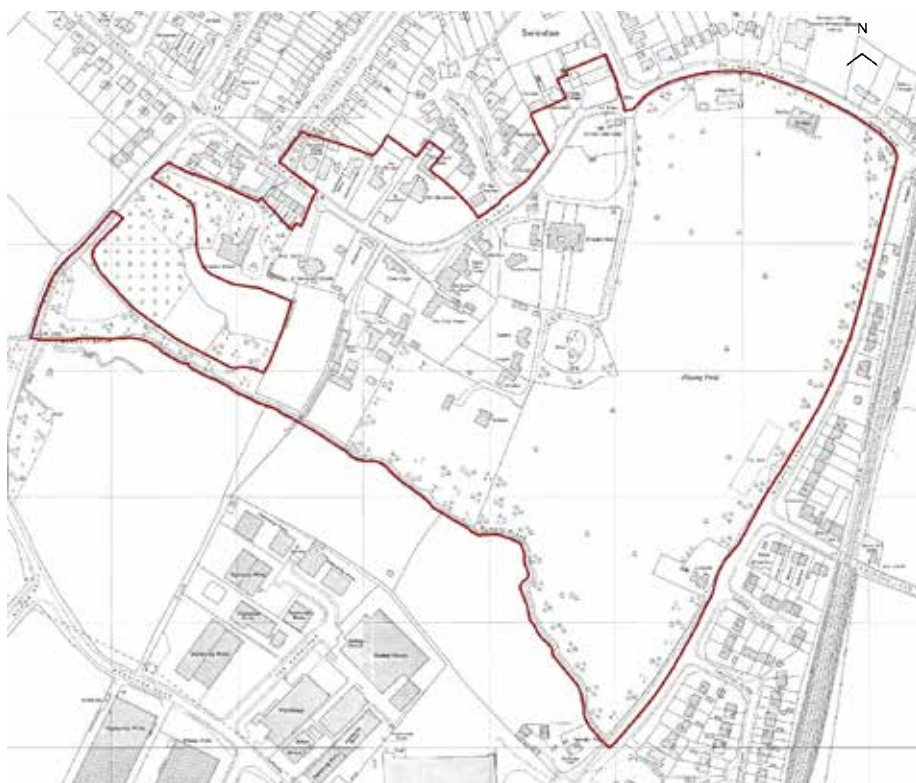


Map 5. Estimated Building Age within Swindon Village Conservation Area

2.2.5 The early 20th century saw very little change for Swindon Village, with the exception of rebuilding the school in 1908, located opposite the church. In addition, the drive from the former lodge, (Larkfield) on Wyman's Lane across the playing fields was removed.

2.2.6 During World War Two Swindon Manor, Swindon Hall and the current playing field were commandeered and used as a military camp and later as a camp for Italian Prisoners of War. At the same time, Shadow factories were erected on farm land near Tewkesbury Road and started the development of the industrial park. These were demolished in 1975.

2.2.7 After World War Two, the majority of the land south of Wyman's Brook was converted from market gardens and fields to industry and retail as Cheltenham expanded. This area continued to be developed in the 1980s and 90s and became the present day's Gallagher and Kingsditch retail parks. This has undoubtedly impacted the visual appearance of the village, but nevertheless Wyman's Brook, bounded by trees forms a natural yet distinctive boundary between the retail park and southern boundary of the Conservation Area.



Map 6. 1950s Swindon Village with encroaching development from Kingsditch Industrial Park and houses to the north of the Conservation Area.

2.2.8 A large area of open land was retained when much of the grounds of Swindon Hall were sold to the Borough Council in 1951 and became the present playing fields.

2.2.9 Since 1959, Swindon Village has expanded significantly and has seen a rise in populations and a large number of fields being developed into modern housing to the north of the conservation area. This has impacted on the character and surrounding landscape of the historic core of the village. Until this point Swindon Village had remained primarily an agricultural community with several farms continuing to operate.

2.3 Archeological Significance

2.3.1 A small number of insignificant archeological remains have been excavated within the village including Roman coins and a 1st to 2nd century sherd was found in a field adjacent to Manor Farm. The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archeological Society have also recorded a find of a Saxon brooch in the area of the Gallagher Retail Park/Swindon Farm.

2.3.2 Details of archeological finds in the area, including grid references of their location are held by the Gloucestershire County Council: Historic Environment Record Archive.

3.0 Townscape

Townscape is the arrangement and appearance of buildings, spaces and other physical features in the built and natural environments.

3.1 Layout and Planform of the Conservation Area

3.1.1 The conservation area's shape and layout is largely defined by the historic heart of the village which despite encroaching and infill development has generally retained its historic plan form, with Wyman's Lane allowing open views across the playing fields and the conservation area. Church Street has a gentle winding form creating staggered views throughout. Buildings have largely been developed along the edge of this main road.

3.1.2 Historic houses are loosely clustered around the Church of St Lawrence within large plots surrounded by mature trees in spacious grounds.

3.1.3 Housing outside the conservation area from the 1950s and 60s provide a juxtaposition to the informal layout of the conservation area and are located more densely together resulting in a more ordered layout.



Map 7. Figure ground Plan of Swindon Village Conservation Area

3.2 Land Uses

3.2.1 As of 2016, the land uses in the Conservation Area are predominantly residential with a number of community buildings throughout such as the St Lawrence's Church and the Sports Pavilion.

3.2.2 The agricultural roots of the village are also evident with Manor Farm House and the associated barns adjacent to the church in the centre of the conservation area (FIG.3.3).

3.3 Building Height and Massing

conservation area are generally two storey. The massing is relatively consistent throughout, with large detached houses set within spacious gardens (MAP 7). Swindon Hall and Swindon Manor are notable for their larger massing, which can be accounted for the fact that these were higher status buildings originally set within expansive grounds.

3.3.2 Manor Farm has a looser massing, associated with a mixture of agricultural barns and outbuildings.

3.4 Key Views

3.4.1 For the purpose of this character appraisal three types of views have been identified:

Linear Views- Long, straight views within the Conservation Area.

Local Views- These tend to be shorter and confined



Fig.3.1 Swindon Village Green

to a specific locality within the Conservation Area. They include views of landmarks, attractive groups of buildings, views into open spaces and square. Long Views- Long-distance views across the town, to key features or landmark buildings.

3.4.2 There are extensive views across the playing fields (the former grounds of Swindon Hall) of which provide glimpses of Swindon Hall and neighbouring properties (FIG.3.4).

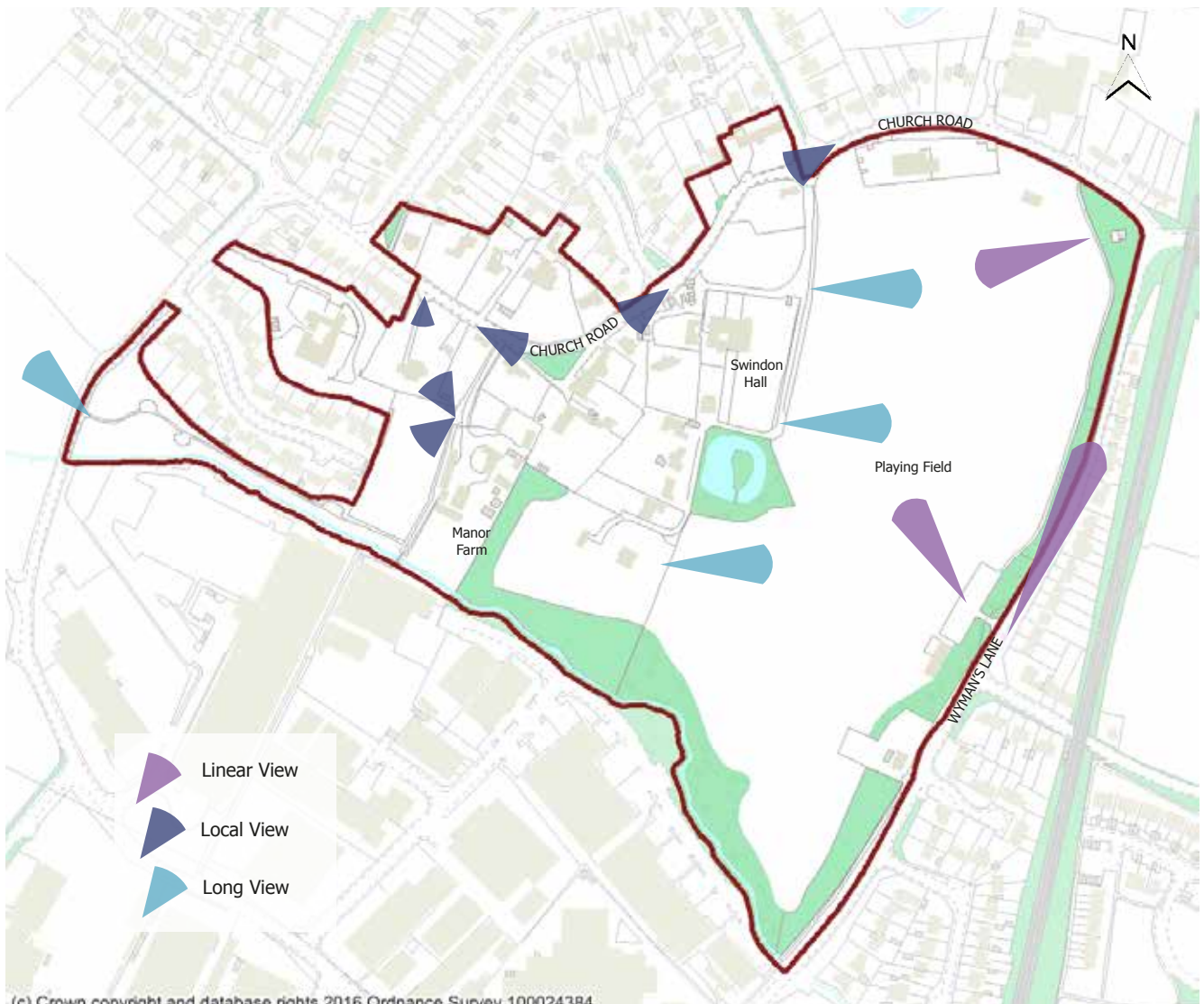
3.4.3 Although the village is surrounded by open land, the conservation area has largely been enclosed by mid 20th century residential and industrial developments to the north, west and south. The railway embankment largely blocks views to the east. Views from the south of the area are considerably impacted by recent industrial developments which although largely sheltered by trees detrimentally impacts the setting of the conservation area.

3.4.4 Linear views along Wyman's Lane and across the playing fields which feature mature

trees from an important element of the conservation area.

3.4.5 Local staggered views along Church Road are important (FIG.3.2, 3.5. &3.9). These often incorporate green spaces such as the village green (FIG.3.1) and areas of grass as the road meanders. Views are framed by the locally listed red brick wall running throughout a large proportion of the road. Views across the open fields to the south of the Church and from Church Road play an important part in the setting of the Church.

3.4.6 Long views to the east, over the tops of houses and railway embankment of the cotswold escarpment contribute to the character of the conservation area (FIG.3.6). Views to the west of include views over open fields which contributes to the rural character of the village (FIG.3.6 & 3.3).



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Map 8. Key views map of Swindon Village Conservation Area



FIG.3.2



FIG.3.3



FIG.3.4



FIG.3.5



FIG.3.6



FIG.3.7



FIG.3.8



FIG.3.9

4.0 Streetscape

Streetscape is the outward facing visual appearance and character of a street or locality.

4.1 Public Realm and Open Space

4.1.1 The quality of the public realm is generally of high quality, and despite encroaching development a strong village character is still evident throughout. Buildings are generally set back from the road within spacious, well established gardens.

4.1.2 The playing fields, formerly the grounds of Swindon Hall, make a key contribution to a sense of space with open views evident across over from Wyman's Lane overlooking Swindon Hall.

The moated site behind Swindon Hall is an important historic element of the landscape that enhances the setting of the hall and the overall conservation area (Fig.4.4).

4.1.3 The Green in the heart of the village is a notable open space, with a number of visually prominent listed buildings directly fronting it.

4.1.4 Wyman's Brook runs along the length of the conservation area and is set within mature trees which provide a physical barrier to the industrial park to the south which largely encroaches on the setting of the brook.

4.1.5 The roads and footways are asphalt and are generally in a good condition. Grass verges on the edge of the Church Road contribute to the rural character of the area.

4.1.6 Parking arrangements mainly includes

off road parking, either as part of a drive or a converted front garden. During peak school hours off road parking throughout Church Road is an issue. 4.1.7 Fields to the east of the Conservation Area whilst important in demonstrating the rural past are largely hidden from view by modern housing developments.

4.2 Street Furniture

4.2.1 Street furniture is generally limited, mainly including a post-box and benches. This adds to the rural character of the village demonstrable due to the lack of clutter. The cast iron kissing out just off of Church Road provides a strong link to the areas agricultural past.

4.2.2 Street signs are generally unintrusive and traditional black and white street signs make an valuable contribution to the character of the area (Fig.4.2). Furthermore, the locally listed granite horse trough outside Swindon Village



Fig.4.1. Historic Locally Listed boundary wall, Church Road



Fig.4.2 Moated site neighbouring Swindon Hall



Fig.4.3 Open and uncluttered streets



Fig.4.4 Hedge boundary treatments

Hall is an important element of the street scene. The lack of streetlights within the village helps to demonstrate the village character and distinctiveness from Cheltenham.

4.4 Boundary Wall Treatments

4.3.1 Traditional Historic boundary wall treatments of brick are common throughout the village of particular note, include two 19th century roughly 2m high locally listed brick walls running along Church Road (FIG.4.1). Other common boundary wall treatments include hedges along the edge of the playing fields and throughout the grounds of Swindon Hall and Lodge. Metal railings and associated gates also form a significant feature surrounding both Swindon Hall Lodge and St Lawrence Church.

4.5 Trees

4.4.1 Trees makes a significant contribution to the quality of the Conservation Area. The dominance of large tree groups and open spaces has to a large degree helped to maintain the rural character and appearance.

4.4.2 Mature trees are an important feature within the playing fields, which demonstrates the

historic importance of the site, formerly part of the grounds of Swindon Hall. Common species include; oak, field maple, scots pine, hornbeam, yew and horse chesnut. Mature trees situated in the grounds of The Old Rectory and Swindon Manor continue to create an impression of grandeur.

4.4.3 Trees along Church Road help to enhance the setting of the conservation area (FIG.4.6).

4.4.4 Significant tree groups within the grounds of Swindon Hall helps to conceal the building from neighbouring development, and includes yew, cedar and redwood. Trees surrounding the nearby moated site provide it with protection and create an attractive setting for nearby buildings.

4.4.5 Trees help to form a distinctive natural boundary between the village and Retail Park to the south of Wyman's Brook which helps to protect the setting of the conservation area.



Map 9. Boundary Wall Treatments and Significant Tree Groups

5.0 Architectural Character

5.1 General Architectural Character

5.1.1 The architectural character of Swindon Village Conservation Area is varied as a result of the gradual development of the village with buildings dating from the 11th century to today.

5.1.2 Houses vary in style, including Regency style buildings but also vernacular style buildings of a simpler design. The majority of buildings make a positive contribution to the area, however the area has seen considerable development and subdivision of plots since the 1960s.

5.2 General Condition

5.2.1 This section explains the contribution buildings make to the special architectural or historic interest of the area as outlined in Map 10.

A) Grade II* Buildings

5.2.2 One buildings is are Grade II* listed within Swindon Village Conservation Area therefore indicating that it is particularly important and of 'more than special interest'.

B) Grade II Buildings

5.2.3 12 Grade II buildings/structures are Grade II listed. These buildings are of 'special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them' and make a positive contribution to the area.

C) Locally Listed Buildings

5.2.4 Three buildings/structures are included on Cheltenham's Index of Buildings of Local Interest. These buildings, although not statutorily listed, have been identified as having a significant level of local value and considered to make a positive contribution to the special character of the conservation area. Demolition of these buildings is considered to constitute substantial harm and there is a presumption in favour of their retention.

D) Positive Unlisted Buildings

5.2.5 Buildings that positively contribute to the Conservation Area's overall character and appearance. Demolition of these buildings is considered to be undesirable to constitute substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Special attention should be paid towards preserving

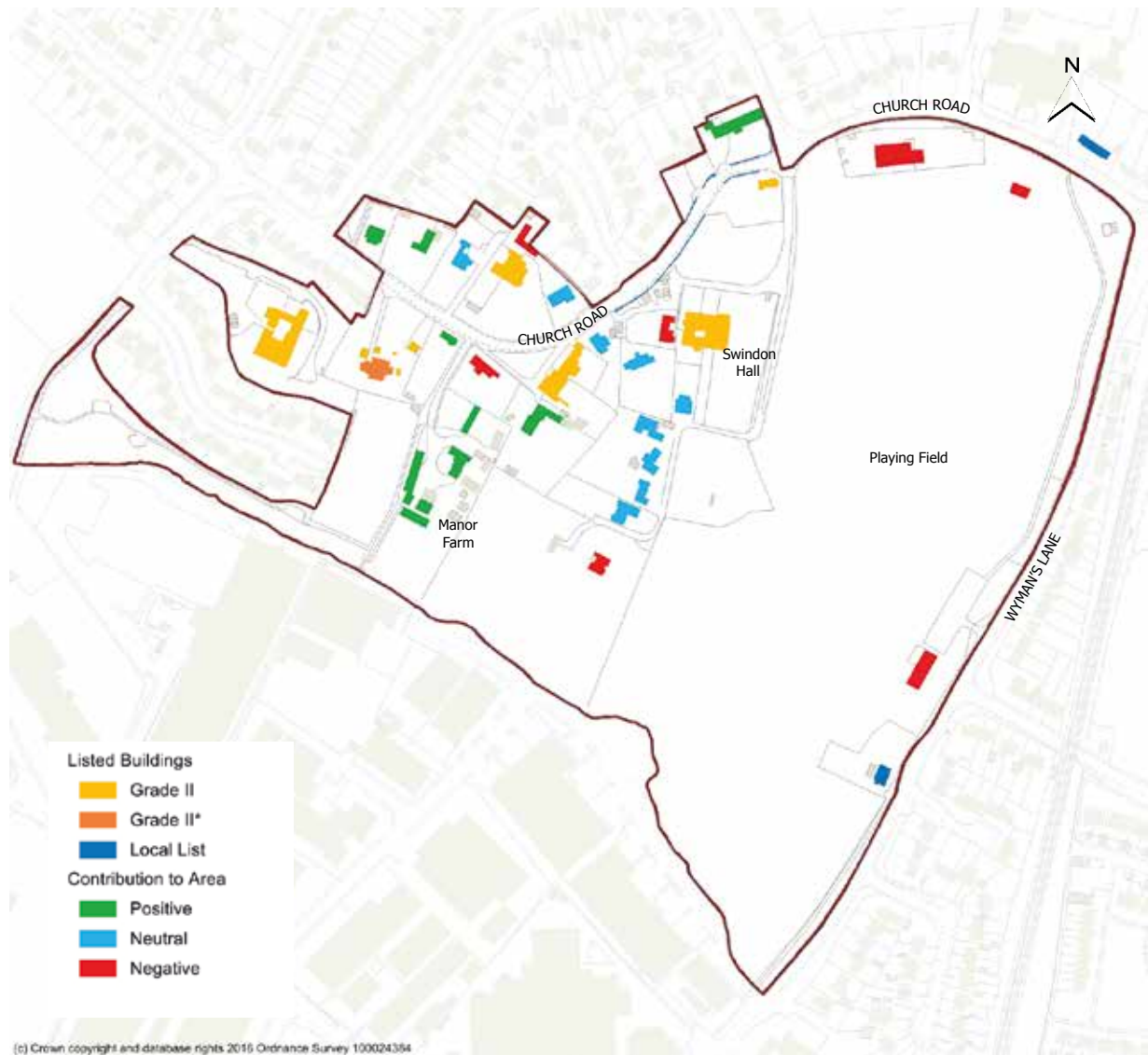
important historical features present on these buildings.

E) Neutral Buildings

5.2.6 A number of buildings in the area, particularly 20th century developments, do not positively contribute nor actively detract from the conservation area's special character due to out of proportion massing or the introduction of materials out of character with the area. In principle, redevelopment of these sites would not be resisted, provided the proposed replacement buildings adhere to the objectives of relevant planning policy and are of high quality design consistent with the Conservation Area's special character.

D) Buildings that Detract Away from the Areas Special Character

5.2.7 Some development detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area. In principle, redevelopment of these sites will not be resisted, provided replacement proposals are of a high quality design that will make a positive contribution to the conservation area.



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Map 10. Building Contribution Map

5.3 Architectural Analysis

5.3.1 The purpose of this section is to expand on the statement of special interest in Section 1.7 and to assess and analyse individual characteristics and prominent features found throughout individual streets that particularly contribute towards the areas special character.

Wyman's Lane

5.3.2 The lane forms the easterly boundary of the conservation area with key views evident across the playing fields.

5.3.3 On the west side of Wyman's Lane there has generally been little development with the notable exception being the locally listed Larkfield, a late 19th century red brick, two storey former gatehouse for Swindon Hall (Fig.5.1). The property marks the entrance of the original drive across the playing fields.

5.3.4 The Pavilion which dates from the mid twentieth century is largely out of character

with the conservation area due to scale and materials of the building.

Church Road

5.3.5 Church Road borders the playing fields before winding its way through the historic core of Swindon Village. Houses along Church Road are set back from the road within spacious gardens often with appropriate or historic boundary wall treatments.

5.3.6 Along the road outwith the conservation area contain mid twentieth century houses,



Fig.5.1 Larkfield, Wyman's Lane



Fig.5.2 Swindon Hall Lodge

and a school, with properties generally set back from the road. This also includes two locally listed semi-detached prefabricated timber houses imported from Sweden in the immediate years after World War Two due to the housing shortage.

5.3.7 The Grange, a two storey former stables and coach house for Swindon Hall has a visually prominent position in the centre of the village and marks entrance of the Conservation Area (Fig.5.2)



Fig.5.3 The Grange



Fig.5.4 Swindon Hall

5.3.8 Swindon Hall Lodge a mid-nineteenth century grade II listed building, constructed of brick with ashlar dressing forms a prominent feature within the streetscape. (Fig.5.2) Attached to the east are two pairs of rusticated ashlar gate piers which flank an ornate pedestrian gate and the surviving entrance drive to Swindon Hall.



Fig.5.5 Old Swindon House & Queen Anne Cottage



Fig.5.6 St Lawrence & The Old Rectory

5.3.9 Swindon Hall accessed by a private drive is grade II listed and dating from the late 17th century although it was considerably remodeled in the mid 19th century in a domestic revival style (Fig.5.4). The interior largely reconstructed post world war two as a result of fire damage in 1949.

hidden. The exception is Kyance which can clearly be seen from across the playing fields and is notable for its large massing.

5.3.10 Within the former grounds of Swindon Hall there has been a number of developments over past fifty years, largely these fit in well with the character of the conservation area in terms of size, materials and are low and relatively

5.3.11 Buildings on the Green make an important contribution when going through the village. This includes the late 18th century Old Swindon House and Queen Anne Cottage with its distinctive clay tile roof and gothic style glazing bars to the first floor (Fig.5.5).



Fig.5.7 Swindon Manor Farm



Fig.5.8 Barns at Swindon Manor Farm

5.3.12 Little Manor, is set back from The Green, but occupies a visually striking position seen from Church Road.

5.3.13 The Old Rectory and St Lawrence, both grade II listed, early-mid nineteenth century rendered Regency villas (Fig.5.6). These are set back within mature gardens that make a distinctive contribution to the street scene.

5.3.14 Swindon Manor Farm is set back from the road and comprises of a rendered 19th century farm house and an assortment of barns (Fig.5.7 & Fig.5.8). These are in a varied condition with a number in a semi-ruinous state. Nonetheless, this assortment of buildings demonstrate its historical development and rural character.



Fig.5.9 Church Cottage



Fig.5.10 Laburnman House

5.3.15 Church Cottage, located adjacent to the church is a visually distinctive thatched and timber framed building dating from the 18th century (Fig.5.9).

5.3.16 St Lawrence's Church is the only grade II* listed building in the village and is notable for its hexagonal shaped Norman tower (Fig.5.13). Dating from the 11th century, it was heavily altered in the 1840s.

5.3.17 Laburnam House while unlisted likely dates from the 17th century although has gone through numerous alterations and extensions (Fig.5.10). It is rendered with slate roofs and a good example of vernacular architecture.

5.3.18 The Old School House was built in 1908, sitting in a prominent position as you enter the conservation area from the west (Fig.5.11). The building today has been unsympathetically converted into residential use.

Manor Road

5.3.19 Swindon House, a large detached house dating from the 17th century, but largely rebuilt in the 18th subsequently extended and subdivided into separate dwellings in the 1990s (Fig.5.12) It is set within spacious grounds with mature trees overlooking St Lawrence's Church.



Fig.5.11 The Old School House



Fig.5.12 Swindon House



Fig.5.13 St Lawrence's Church

6.0 Assessment of Condition

6.1 General Condition

6.1.1 The overall condition of the Conservation Area is good with a high degree of care and maintenance demonstrated throughout. All of the buildings are occupied with the majority maintained to a high standard although a small proportion are beginning suffer from a lack of regular maintenance, which, if it continues, could lead to further deterioration. Furthermore, the barns at Manor Farm are notable for their poor condition.

6.1.2 There has been various incremental alterations which if continued could lead to damage within the conservation area. This includes the introduction of alarm boxes and satellite dishes on front elevations. Furthermore, there has been widespread replacement of original windows with uPVC which negatively contributes to the area.

6.1.3 The streetscape is in a good condition and traditional and historic boundary wall treatments throughout make a positive contribution. Open space is well cared for and continues to play an important role in the Conservation Area.

6.2 Key Threats

6.2.1 While insensitive development can instantly harm the conservation area's special character, negative change can often occur incrementally through alterations that do not require planning permission or that have occurred prior to the areas designation.

6.2.2 The quality of the public realm also has an impact on the area, but the apparent lack of street furniture adds to the village character.

6.2.3 The conservation area is under pressure from a number of changes, which could result in threats to its special character and appearance. Existing and potential future threats are outline in the box below, and are categorised as to whether they impact directly on buildings or the wider streetscape.

Threats to Buildings

- New development of a poor quality design/materials or inappropriate siting, scale and massing
- Subdivision of plots
- Poor maintenance of buildings
- Loss of historic features
- Replacement of historic timber windows with uPVC
- Installation of alarm boxes and satellite dishes visible from the street (Fig.6.3)

Threats to Streetscape

- Road traffic, particularly during school pick up and drop off (Fig.6.2)
- Poor quality surface materials
- Loss of boundary walls (Fig.6.1)
- New developmet affecting the setting of the conservation area



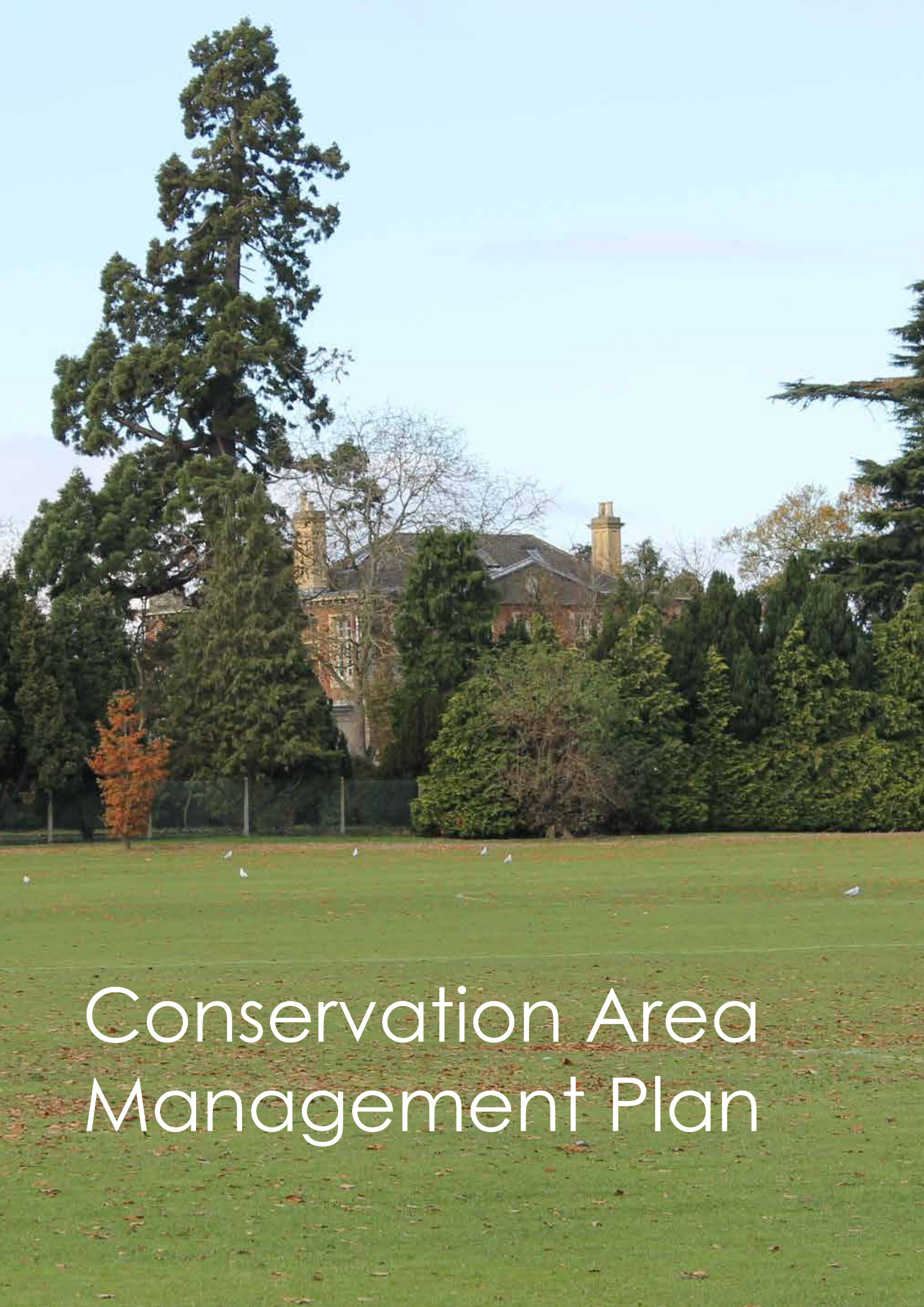
Fig.6.1 Loss of boundary wall



Fig.6.2 On street parking



Fig.6.3 Introduction of alarm boxes



Conservation Area Management Plan