

CHELTENHAM

Local development framework

5. SUFFOLK SQUARE CHARACTER AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

JULY 2008



Central Conservation Area

5. Suffolk Square Character Area Appraisal and Management Plan July 2008



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Key characteristics

This Character Appraisal of the Suffolk Square Character Area within Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area concludes that the special interest of the area derives from the following key characteristics:

- Suffolk Square is one of the three "...most important new estates of the 1820s...",¹ developed when Cheltenham was in its most popular years as a spa town. It is one of few formal squares within the Central Conservation Area, which adds to its special qualities;
- The overall plan form of the square, presence of architecturally dominating buildings and central bowling green conveys a sense of grandeur and exclusivity;
- The square contains predominantly Georgian and early Victorian formally laid out villas and terraces which form a distinctive identity for the area. There is a high number of listed buildings within Suffolk Square including the Grade II* listed terrace of 12 houses along the northern side of the square;
- There is a high number of historic ashlar limestone and stucco over brick gate piers remaining in existence around the square. These act as a unifying feature, enhancing the special historic qualities of the character area.

Key issues

A number of problems and issues have been identified and have a negative impact on the character of Suffolk Square character area. These form the basis for the Management Proposals of the Management Plan in the Part 2 of this document and are summarised below:

- Control of new development;
- Loss of traditional architectural features on some historic buildings;
- Negative impacts of the presence of equipment or installations on or around buildings, such as large aerials or satellite dishes;
- Poor street furniture;
- Drives and loss of front gardens;
- Parking layout;
- Tree management;
- Boundary enclosures (including some poor hedging);
- Setting and views.

¹ S. Blake & R. Beacham 'The Book of Cheltenham' (1982) pg. 71

Part 1 – Character Appraisal

Townscape Analysis Map of Suffolk Square Character Area

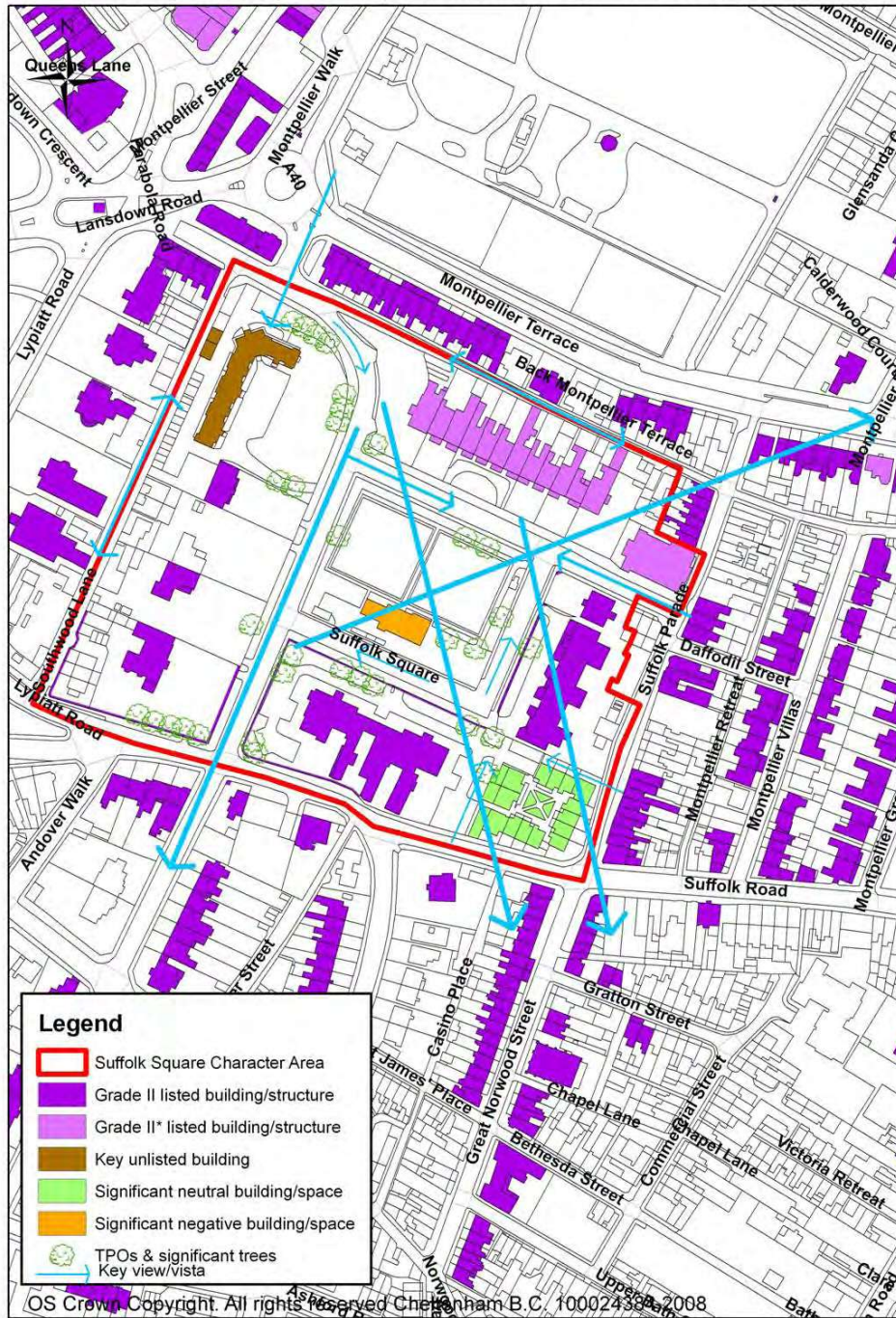


Figure 1 Townscape Analysis map of Suffolk Square Character Area

1 INTRODUCTION

What is a Conservation Area

- 1.1 A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, in which the character or appearance is seen to be worth preserving or enhancing. It is given special protection under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Government policy in relation to Conservation Areas set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15). This legal protection enables the best features of an area to be preserved and new buildings and street works to be designed in-order that they enhance the area.
- 1.2 Some building work which does not require planning permission (known as “permitted development”) can damage the special qualities of a Conservation area. “Article 4” directions can be applied by the planning authority to limit permitted development rights and thus give extra protection to particular buildings.

The need for an appraisal

- 1.3 PPG15 stresses the need for local planning authorities to make an assessment of the special character and appearance of all Conservation areas in their districts. The Government has also made the preparation of such assessment appraisals for all Conservation Areas a Best Value Performance Indicator for local authorities. These assessments should be reviewed by local planning authorities every five years.
- 1.4 This document has been split into two parts. Part 1 of the document forms the character appraisal which provides an assessment of the character of a conservation area or parts of it. This appraisal provides the basis for Part 2, which comprises a management plan which gives guidance on how the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance can be achieved. It also provides a sound basis for development control and other decisions made by local authorities (such as the design of highways or the appropriateness of the design of new buildings or open spaces).
- 1.5 Both parts of this document were subject to public consultation between 3rd March and 14th April 2008. Following consideration of representations received it was adopted by Cheltenham Borough Council on 28th July 2008 as a Supplementary Planning Document. It will be used in conjunction with the Local Plan as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Planning context

- 1.6 Cheltenham Borough Council has various adopted and emerging planning related documents. They can be found on the Council's website - www.cheltenham.gov.uk. Some of the documents are quite broad in their content, whilst others are thematic, site specific or area specific. However, all fall within the statutory planning framework and all are material considerations in determining planning proposals. All these documents together look at various aspects of the built environment and need to be read as a whole within a particular context.
- 1.7 This document is part of that overall framework. The Character Appraisal (Part 1) is one of a number of such documents each assessing the character

of parts of the conservation area and highlighting negative issues, which are then addressed through Management Proposals within the Management Plan (Part 2). In developing planning proposals, the Character Appraisal and Management Plan need to be considered along with advice, guidance and policy set out in other planning documents, be they general, thematic or spatially specific.

- 1.8 Cheltenham's Civic Pride project aims to regenerate specific areas within the town. The project intends to develop and deliver public realm enhancement schemes and redevelop under-utilised council land including car-parks. More information on Civic Pride can be found at www.cheltenham.gov.uk This project falls within the land of the Suffolk Square Character Area. See Management Proposal 8 'Civic Pride' in the Part 2 Management Plan for more detail.

The Central Conservation Area

- 1.9 Cheltenham is known as the most complete Regency town in England. It lies at the foot of the Cotswold scarp, where the valley of the River Chelt meets the Severn Vale. Currently the whole of the Cheltenham Borough area has a population of approximately 112,000 people.
- 1.10 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 Central Conservation Area includes the whole of the town centre, most of the Victorian, Edwardian and some of the later 20th century suburbs. It covers commercial, industrial, retail and residential areas, as well as the University campus complexes, some extensive school campuses and the hospital complex.
- 1.11 There is a Government requirement for existing Conservation Area boundaries to be re-assessed from time to time. Due to the size of the Central Conservation Area (reputedly the largest Conservation Area in Europe covering 600 hectares), it has been necessary to establish approximately 19 character areas. These have been appraised separately, in-order to identify their individual key components and in turn establish how each may best be preserved and enhanced.

Suffolk Square Character Area

- 1.12 In May 2001 Cheltenham Borough Council published a draft Urban Design Framework for Cheltenham, produced by Latham Architects (the "Latham" Study). It was never formally adopted by the Council, but has been a useful stepping stone for the development of a number of subsequent initiatives. It included a plan which divided the whole town into character areas and is the basis of the character area boundary used in this study.
- 1.13 The selection of the 19 character area boundaries has no impact on the overall boundary of the Central Conservation Area. Although as part of the work for the preparation of the character area appraisals, consideration has been given to possible boundaries of the Central Conservation Area being revised in the future as a separate piece of work.
- 1.14 The Suffolk Square character area within Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area (see Fig. 2) encompasses part of Cheltenham's formally planned

Regency development and is known as an attractive and popular residential area within Cheltenham.

- 1.15 The boundaries of the character area have been devised to encompass the formally laid out square with buildings around its sides. It forms a contained space which has a distinctive Regency character. The plan form of the square and its surrounding buildings largely contributes to the overall character and appearance of Suffolk Square and its distinctive identity.

Summary of special interest

- 1.16 Suffolk Square character area is special because:
- a) Suffolk Square is one of the three “...most important new estates of the 1820s...,”² developed when Cheltenham was in its most popular years as a spa town;
 - b) It is one of few formal squares within the Central Conservation Area, which adds to its special qualities;
 - c) The overall plan form of the square, presence of architecturally dominating buildings and central bowling green conveys a sense of grandeur and exclusivity;
 - d) The square contains predominantly Georgian and early Victorian formally laid out villas and terraces which form a distinctive identity for the area. There is a high number of listed buildings within Suffolk Square including the Grade II* listed terrace of 12 houses along the northern side of the square;
 - e) There is a high number of historic ashlar limestone and stucco over brick gate piers remaining in existence around the square. These act as a unifying feature, enhancing the special historic qualities of the character area.

² S. Blake & R. Beacham 'The Book of Cheltenham' (1982) pg. 71

Suffolk Square Character Area within the Central Conservation Area

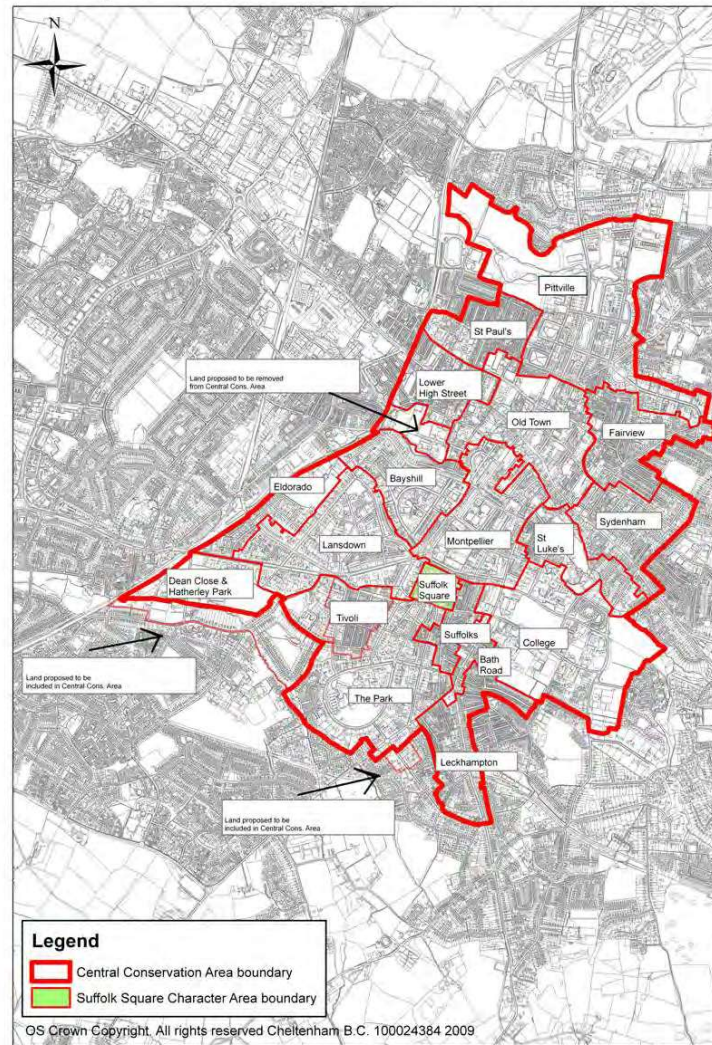


Figure 2 Suffolk Square Character Area within the Central Conservation Area

2 LOCATION AND SETTING

Location and context

- 2.1 Cheltenham is located in Gloucestershire. It is approximately 8 miles east of Gloucester, 40 miles west of Oxford and is immediately to the east of the M5 motorway. The town is set on low-lying land at the foot of the Cotswold scarp. Views of the Cotswold scarp from within the Conservation Area contribute to its character and setting. The town is surrounded by open countryside. Much of this is protected by the statutory Cheltenham and Gloucester Green Belt (to the west and north) and the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the south and east. To the west of Cheltenham is the River Severn, with the Forest of Dean and Wales beyond the Severn.

General character and plan form of the Suffolk Square character area

- 2.2 The Suffolk Square character area is located to the south of the town centre. It encompasses predominantly residential development from the Regency period. Most of the housing was established during the 1820s and 1830s. The dominance of formal terraces and large villas forms the general urban character of Suffolk Square.
- 2.3 The plan form is generally compact - however the central green space, wide roads, spacious gardens and large plot sizes combine to create a sense of space, grandeur, elegance and exclusivity.

2.4



Figure 3 West side of Suffolk Square



Figure 4 North side of Suffolk Square

Suffolk Square has a formal plan form which is an irregular square of approximately 70 metres x 75 metres. It is positioned between two busy roads which form part of the A40 through Cheltenham. Suffolk Square consequently experiences much on-street parking and vehicular use. The west side of the square is a heavily trafficked route to the town centre and A40 from the south. Although Suffolk Square predominantly has residential buildings, there are a small number of retail and commercial units in the form of 'Zizzi's' restaurant (former St James' Church) and Willoughby House Hotel. Recreational space is also provided through the centrally located bowling green.

Wider landscape setting

2.5



Figure 5 View of Leckhampton Hill forms an attractive setting for Faithfull House

The Suffolk Square character area is surrounded on all sides by the urban development present in other character areas of the Central Conservation Area. However, views of Leckhampton Hill presented from the open spaces and gaps between buildings create a rural connection linking the countryside and urban area. These long distance views of the hills in turn reinforce and enhance the spacious character of the area, and provide a rural backdrop for some of the set pieces of architecture such as Faithfull House, which is located on the east side of the square.

- 2.6 The majority of buildings within the Suffolk Square character area may be seen to be landmark buildings due to their size and scale. They have a striking visual impact upon the street scene. These include the large detached

and semi-detached villas on the west side of the square, the terrace of houses along the north side, the former St James' Church, Faithfull House and Montpellier House. There is generally a consistent building height amongst these buildings and they tend to be three to four storeys high. They dominate views of the skyline both from within and outside the character area. The linear plan form of Suffolk Square permits medium and long distance views, which creates a sense of space.



Figure 6 Examples of landmark buildings within Suffolk Square Character Area

3 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Archaeology within the town of Cheltenham

- 3.1 Some archaeological research has been conducted within the Borough of Cheltenham and in-depth research can be found in 'Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey'.³ Many archaeological artefacts would have been lost during the expansion of the town in the 19th century, and so medieval and post-medieval finds have been very limited.
- 3.2 A few prehistoric remains have been found within the town, raising the possibility that people from Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age periods travelled or lived here. An Iron Age enclosure ditch was uncovered on the site of the present day Children's Library in 1986-87. This indicates that an area of Iron Age occupation was likely situated nearby.⁴ During the last 30 years, archaeologists have pinpointed several areas within the town which have been identified as likely areas of Roman occupation, and where Roman artefacts such as coins and pottery have been discovered. Within the Suffolk Square character area, however, no finds have been noted under the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record. The "Chelt" element of Cheltenham's name is amongst a number of the very oldest names in the country – believed to be of pre-Celtic origin.
- 3.3 Archaeological remains unearthed provide a basis for researching the origins and early development of Cheltenham, and contribute indirectly to a sense of place evident in the modern era.

Summary of Historic Development of Cheltenham

- 3.4 The first documentary reference to Cheltenham itself occurs in an account of the Council of Cloveshoe held in 803. 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. Its status was raised to that of a market town in 1226 and the market played a key role in its economy for several centuries. From c.1247 Cheltenham was

³ 'Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey' Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum (1975)

⁴ 'Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey' Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum (1975)

also a Liberty. Spa waters were discovered adjacent to the town in 1716 and, after King George III's visit to sample the waters in 1788, Cheltenham grew rapidly as a fashionable spa resort. The popularity of the town as a summer resort resulted in Cheltenham having a wealth of tree-lined walks and rides, squares and gardens. Its popularity led to expansion of the town away from the ancient High Street, and many fine classical style houses were built for the growing population. The popularity of the spa waters waned from the middle of the 19th century, and Cheltenham developed other roles in the form of its growing importance as a major educational centre during the latter half of the 19th century. In turn this led to the development well into the 20th century of some acclaimed public schools and churches. Before World War II, light industry boosted the town's economy. The establishment of GCHQ in Cheltenham immediately after World War II has had an enormous impact on employment in the town. Today, the town's attractions include fine shops and events such as the races and numerous cultural festivals as well as its legacy of Regency architecture, with trees, parks, gardens and public spaces.

General history of Suffolk Square

- 3.5 Maps of Cheltenham dating from 1617, 1820, 1834, 1897 and present day have been studied in writing this section, and the map depicting the historic development of Suffolk Square character area accompanies this section (see Fig. 7).
- 3.6 The Suffolk Estate which included Suffolk Square was developed by James Fisher and "established in 1823."⁵ Hart states that "the Earl of Suffolk bought part of the de la Bere property which included the old Gallipot Farm..."⁶ in 1808. The farm was located on land within the Suffolk Square Character Area. The Earl of Suffolk died in 1820 and James Fisher, a hotelier, bought the estate.
- 3.7 James Fisher's Suffolk Estate was recognised as one of Cheltenham's three most important new estates in the 1820s. The other two estates were "...Pearson Thompson's Lansdown Estate, and Joseph's Pitt's Pittville Estate, both established in 1824."⁷ Blake and Beacham explain that "within these estates, however, comparatively few houses were built before the 1830s, as a national banking and financial crisis in December 1825 caused a serious hold-up in building activity between 1826 and 1831."⁸

Development by 1617

- 3.8 Prior to the 19th century, Suffolk Square character area remained as open, undeveloped land.

Development by 1820

- 3.9 Suffolk House (demolished in 1935) was the only building in existence within the Suffolk Square character area at this time. It occupied a large plot of land to the southwest of Back Montpellier Terrace. It was built in the early 1800's by the Earl of Suffolk for his own residence, on the site of the old Gallipot Farm. Gallipot Farm had medieval origins and was significant in the early years of the 19th century when Cheltenham was developing as a popular and fashionable spa resort. Other than the presence of Suffolk House, the character area remained as undeveloped open land. Part of the land within the character area boundary is not featured on the map, suggesting this area

⁵ S. Blake & R. Beacham 'The Book of Cheltenham' (1982) pg. 71

⁶ G. Hart 'A History of Cheltenham' (1965) pg. 150

⁷ S. Blake & R. Beacham 'The Book of Cheltenham' (1982) pg. 71

⁸ S. Blake & R. Beacham 'The Book of Cheltenham' (1982) pg. 71

may have been too remote from the main focus of development at the time to be of any interest to developers.

Development by 1834

- 3.10 By 1834 the plan form of Suffolk Square had been established. James Fisher developed the estate from 1823. Building work was well underway, with large villas and terraces positioned around the square. Villas had large back gardens with grand sweeping carriage ways along their frontage.
- 3.11 St. James' Church, completed in 1830, occupied a prominent position on the corner of Suffolk Parade and Suffolk Square. Rowe states that *"this church was built by private capital...in the simple Gothic style of architecture, and calculated to accommodate 1,500 persons."*⁹
- 3.12 The terrace along the north side was planned but only part realised at this time.
- 3.13 The square itself consisted of grass land with trees planted around its edges.

Development by 1897

- 3.14 By the end of the 19th century, further residential development had occurred along the east side of the square. Mews houses were positioned to the north of St James' Church. Otherwise the area remained relatively unchanged since 1834, with the southeast corner of the square remaining undeveloped. Terraces were completed along the north side of the square. In 1845, George Rowe claimed that *"the principal feature"*¹⁰ of Suffolk Square was St. James' Church.

Development in the 20th – 21st centuries

- 3.15 Two major residential developments have taken place in Suffolk Square in the 20th century. Bradbury explains that *"...Suffolk House (was demolished) in 1935..."*¹¹ and the present Suffolk House was constructed in 1936, consisting of a large block of flats. In the 1980's Suffolk Mews retirement homes were constructed adjacent to Roderic House. Bunwell House and Roderic House have become linked to form Montpellier House which was formerly occupied by Cheltenham Ladies' College as a boarding house, before becoming private flats. The three sets of semi-detached villas along the east side of Suffolk Square have become linked to form Faithfull House residential care home. Further mews houses and garages have been built in the grounds to the rear of the villas on the west side of Suffolk Square, along Southwood Lane.
- 3.16 Suffolk House was the first major house in Cheltenham to be demolished, and according to Oliver Bradbury, *"...set a precedent for the next forty to fifty years."*¹² It is particularly unfortunate that Suffolk House was demolished as it was the oldest building in the area, dating from as early as 1804. Author, Oliver Bradbury sees Suffolk House as being *"...among a wave of important early buildings..."*¹³

⁹ G. Rowe 'George Rowe's Illustrated Cheltenham Guide' (1845) pg. 80

¹⁰ G. Rowe 'George Rowe's Illustrated Cheltenham Guide' (1845) pg. 80

¹¹ O. Bradbury 'Cheltenham's Lost Heritage' (2004) pg. 96

¹² O. Bradbury 'Cheltenham's Lost Heritage' (2004) pg. 157

¹³ O. Bradbury 'Cheltenham's Lost Heritage' (2004) pg. 157

- 3.17 St James' Church was de-consecrated in 1974 and the parish incorporated into St Philip & St James'. St James' Church remained in use as a church hall until 2001 when it changed use to a retail unit. 'Zizzi's' restaurant was formed in the converted church in 2004 and remains here today.
- 3.18 The square green was developed into Ashburne bowling green by 1923 and remains in this use. It is the focal point of Suffolk Square.
- 3.19 The overall plan form of Suffolk Square was laid out by James Fisher from 1823 and remains vastly unchanged in present day, with the continued existence of the majority of Georgian and early Victorian buildings. Many of these properties have been converted into flats.

Historical development of Suffolk Square Character Area

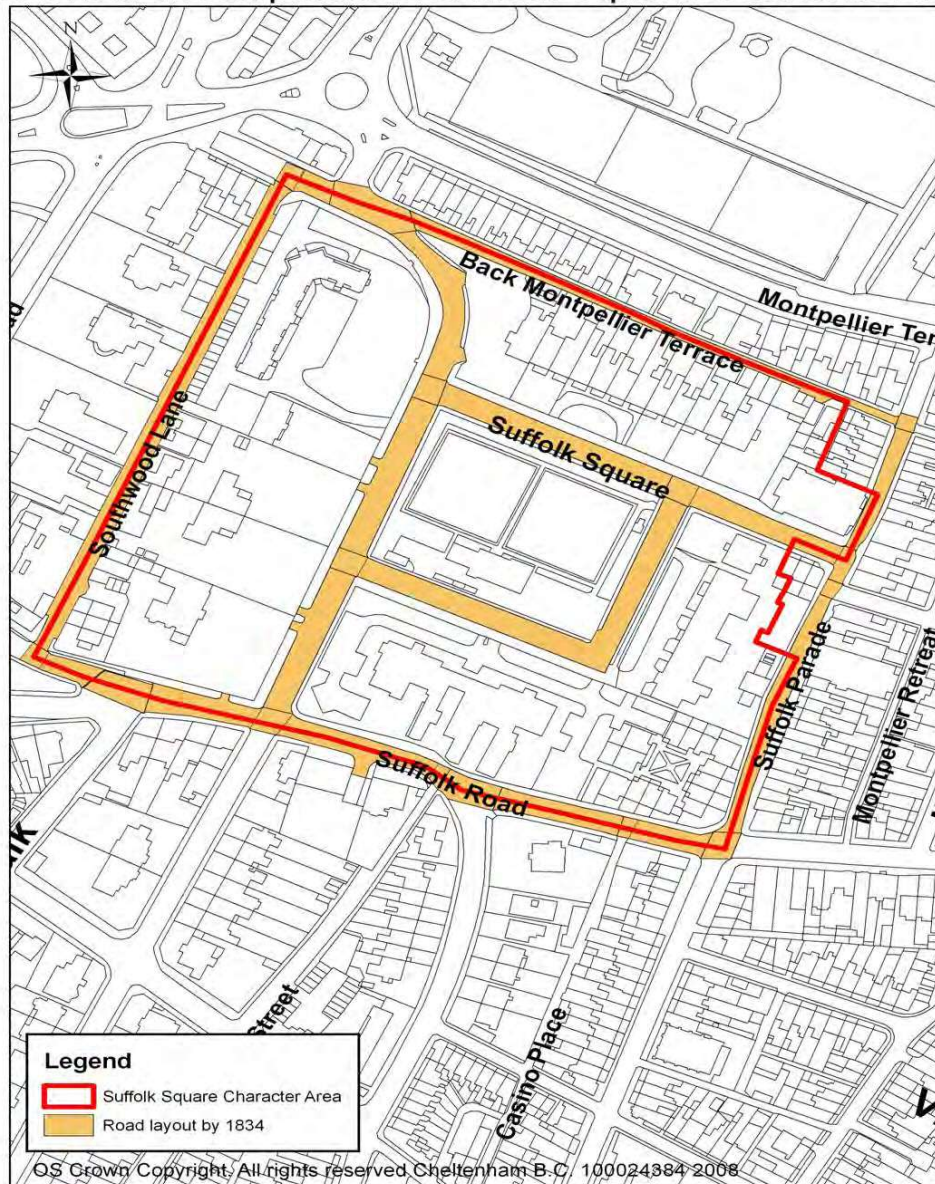


Figure 7 Historical Development of Suffolk Square Character Area

4 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

The character and interrelationship of spaces within the area and key views and vistas

Public and private space



Figure 8 Sense of space prevalent due to the plan form of Suffolk Square



Figure 9 Central green space around Suffolk Square



Figure 10 Buildings set back from public space within substantial grounds

- Public and private spaces, together with views out of, into and within the Suffolk Square character area impact significantly on the area's character and appearance. An overall sense of space is present within Suffolk Square. Its plan form largely determines this through the linear development of wide roads around a substantial square of green space and the positioning of buildings set back from roads within large grounds.
- Suffolk Square's central green space plays a quintessential role in establishing the plan form, character and appearance of the square, both historically and today. The road was formed around this historic space, with residential building on either side. The green establishes a sense of space and contributes strongly to the special qualities of the character area.
- The street form within Suffolk Square character area is linear, which permits medium and long distance views. These views reinforce the spacious quality in the area.
- Around the square, historic villas and terraces are set back from the public highway and pavement within large plots. This creates a grand setting and enhances the appearance of these buildings. It is apparent that more recent 20th century buildings such as Suffolk Mews and Suffolk House have adopted this historic pattern, being set away from the road in spacious grounds. In other areas there is little physical separation between public and private space in the positioning of buildings. This is evident with the small mews houses and coach houses in the grounds of the villas along the west side of the square. They front onto Southwood Lane. St James'

Church also fronts directly onto the road with no boundary treatment employed. This enables it to be visually prominent and distinctive but also informal and welcoming in character.

Boundary treatments

Various boundary treatments are used to enclose and contain space. Railings provide an historic boundary treatment, enclosing some buildings from the street and creating an attractive setting. Their frequent use unifies the square by creating cohesion. Hedging backs some railings along the north side of the square. High hedging is present around the bowling green where it creates exclusion and privacy. The presence of historic ashlar limestone and stucco over brick gate piers is a common feature in the street scene which enhances its character, appearance and historic qualities. Fencing and brick walls are another 'hard' boundary treatment containing the more recent developments of Suffolk Mews and Suffolk House.



Figure 11 Various boundary treatments found within Suffolk Square Character Area

Garden space



Figure 12 Example of a front garden on the west side of Suffolk Square

- Gardens, historically and in the present-day, form an attractive, traditional frontage to both historic and more modern buildings, providing them with a colourful, interesting setting and enhancing the special qualities of properties and the street scene. Gardens are particularly prevalent along the west side of the square where mature trees and planting develops character.

Bowling green



Figure 13 Ashburne Green bowling green

- The bowling green is an important formal space within the character area which provides an attractive historic setting for the surrounding properties. Although its hedges are high, when stood some distance from the square, it permits medium and long distance views over it, creating a strong sense of space.

Key views and vistas (see Fig. 1)

Distance views of Leckhampton Hill are apparent from the north and west sides of Suffolk Square. This forms a sense of enclosure to the urban area. Other views within the Square are truncated – but there are glimpses to Suffolk Parade shops and the rear of Montpellier Terrace.



Figure 14 Vista of Leckhampton Hill from west side of Suffolk Square



Figure 15 View of shops on Suffolk Parade, in The Suffolks Character Area

5 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Use of area and how use creates special interest

- 5.1 The Suffolk Square character area has several different uses due to its close proximity to Cheltenham's town centre. Mixed uses create activity throughout the day and into the evenings. This contributes to the special interest of the area.

Residential

5.2



Figure 16 Historic terraced houses



Figure 17 Suffolk Mews residential development

Suffolk Square is and has historically been a principally residential area. It contains Georgian and early Victorian terraced houses and villas. The majority of which have been converted into flats in multiple occupation. Collectively, these historic houses greatly enhance the character and appearance of as a whole not only Suffolk Square character area, but the Central Conservation area, by contributing to its special qualities. A number of 20th century flats and houses are present and set within large grounds, which reflect the historic plot form of houses within Suffolk Square. Some small scale modern residential properties have been erected to create infill development between mews houses and coach houses which front onto Southwood Lane.

Commercial / Business

5.3



Figure 18 Zizzi's restaurant in former St James Church

A small number of commercial uses exist within the Suffolk Square character area through the presence of 'Zizzi's' restaurant and Willoughby House Hotel. Shops and cafes on Suffolk Parade immediately adjoining the square also generate activity within the square. These buildings provide a valuable contrast to the dominance of residential properties by creating activity levels during varying times of the day.

Recreation

5.4

The Ashburne Green bowling green provides an important historic, recreational and social use within the area, creating a quintessentially English recreational resource. Its use generates calm activity in the daytime and summer evenings. The green also provides an attractive colour contrast to the 'hard' appearance of the surrounding roads and pavements.

On-street parking

5.5



Figure 19 High levels of on-street parking on the south side of Suffolk Square

There are large amounts of on-street parking within Suffolk Square, due to its close proximity with the town centre and shops and offices in the Suffolks character area. Although high levels of parking generate activity within the square, cars are visually prominent and unattractive, impinging on both sides of the roads. They detract slightly from the historic setting and little has been done to manage their appearance in the street scene.

Road use

5.6



Figure 20 Bus and cycle route on west side of Suffolk Square

The north side and particularly the west side of Suffolk Square is heavily trafficked as the road connects two sections of the A40. The west side connects to Suffolk Road (A40) in the south and via a roundabout to Montpellier Terrace (A40) in the north. It is an important local link in the network on the southern approach to the town centre. The wide road along the west side is also used as a bus and cycle route which increases activity levels along this road.

Architecture and historic qualities of buildings

5.7

James Fisher's architect Edward Jenkins designed the vast majority of buildings around Suffolk Square, with the architect JB Papworth advising on the design and construction of St James' Church. Papworth was a founder of

the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) in 1834 and was architect to the Grade I listed “Rotunda (on Montpellier Walk, which was) added (to the Montpellier pump room in) 1825-6.”¹⁴

- 5.8 Suffolk Square’s architectural character is strongly based in the fine Regency buildings for which Cheltenham is known. The elegance and formality of the 1830s is still evident here today.
- 5.9 The predominant architectural style used on buildings within the Suffolk Square character area is Neo-Classical, the exception being the former St James Church which is Regency Gothic.



Figure 21 Neo-Classical style of architecture found on Faithfull House



Figure 22 Regency Gothic style of architecture found on the former St James Church

- 5.10 The vast majority of historic buildings from the 19th century are statutory listed with S. Blake stating in the list descriptions that, “All the listed buildings in Suffolk Square form a very distinguished group”.¹⁵

Historic construction materials and architectural detailing

- 5.11 Properties in Suffolk Square are generally three storeys high with basements. Construction materials, typical of the town, are slate roofs, brick walls covered with ashlar limestone or stucco painted in cream or white colours and timber windows. The vertically sliding sash windows emphasise the classically based proportions of the Regency style. Some rear elevations are of exposed brickwork. Roofs are a mixture of mansard, double-pitch, hipped and some are hidden behind balustrading and great cornices.



Figure 23 Architectural detailing found within Suffolk Square Character Area



Figure 24 Rear elevations of terraced houses are frequently of exposed brickwork

¹⁴ Department of Culture, Media and Sport ‘Revised List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest’ Borough of Cheltenham 1998 pg. 601-2.

¹⁵ Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Ibid, pgs. 922, 923, 925-6, 927-8, 930, 931, 934, 935, 936, 937

- 5.12 Verandahs are an attractive feature on terraces – the terrace on the north side of Suffolk Square (Nos. 1-12) contains “...first-floor verandahs to each house with Carron Company double-heart-and-anthemion motif balustrade...”¹⁶ The first floor of Faithfull House “...has continuous Carron Company double-heart-and-anthemion balcony (and) area balustrade has double stylized heart motif.”¹⁷ These designs act as a unifying feature on properties, and are also evident on many other historic buildings throughout the town.



Figure 25 Balconies with Carron Company double-heart-and-anthemion motifs on Nos. 1-12 Suffolk Square (left) and Faithfull House (right)

- 5.13



Figure 26 Example of an historic gate pier within Suffolk Square

Decorative iron railings and original gate piers provide an attractive frontage and boundary treatment. Some of the gate piers are listed, the listings describing them as forming part of the setting of properties and each one part of a “significant group of piers in Suffolk Square.”¹⁸

Former St James’ Church

- 5.14 St. James’ Church (now ‘Zizzi’s’ restaurant) began to be constructed in 1825, designed in “Regency Gothic style...”¹⁹ Its size and architectural design enables it to be visually prominent within the street scene and provides an interesting architectural contrast to the predominance of the Neo-Classical style of architecture.

20th Century buildings

- 5.15

The main housing developments from the latter half of the 20th century consist of Suffolk House and Suffolk Mews. Suffolk House, dating from the 1930s, has been built on a grand scale rising 5 storeys and constructed of brick. It is designed in the Modernist style of architecture, which is quite rare in

¹⁶ Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Ibid, pg. 922

¹⁷ Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Ibid, pg. 931

¹⁸ Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Ibid, pgs. 924, 926, 932, 936

¹⁹ Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Ibid, pg. 937

5.16



Figure 27 Suffolk House flats

Cheltenham. Its size and scale makes it visually prominent within the street scene, particularly from the top of Montpellier Walk in Montpellier character area.

Suffolk Mews is a small scale development consisting of two storey residential properties, dating from the 1980s. It is constructed from red brick and attempts to complement the historic buildings through its size and use of materials, with the presence of quoins and some facades being painted in a natural looking stone colour.



Figure 28 Suffolk Mews residential development

5.17



Figure 29 Pavilion on Ashburne bowling green

The pavilion on Ashburne bowling green is of a plain functional design. Although it is small scale it does not sit particularly comfortably within its historic context in terms of its architectural design and materials.

Listed buildings

5.18 Listed buildings are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. All listed buildings due to their listed status are extremely important. There are over 22 listed buildings and structures within the Suffolk Square character area, which are listed below. (Many of these buildings are listed as part of a group).

BUILDING/STRUCTURE	GRADE	DATE OF LISTING
Nos. 1-12 (Consecutive) Willoughby (No. 1), & attached area railings to Nos. 2-12, Suffolk Square	II*	12/03/55
Parish centre for St Philip & St James, Suffolk Square	II*	12/03/65
No. 13 Acton & attached area railings, Suffolk Square	II	12/03/55
Boundary pier to Acton (No. 13), Suffolk Square	II	26/11/98
Faithfull House (northern part) & attached area	II	12/03/55

balustrade, Suffolk Square		
Faithfull House (central & southern parts) & attached area railings, Suffolk Square	II	12/03/55
Two pairs of gate piers with walls & railings to Faithfull House, Suffolk Square	II	26/11/98
Montpellier House (east part), Suffolk Square	II	01/03/55
Montpellier House (west part), Suffolk Square	II	12/03/55
Gate piers, boundary pier & walls to Montpellier House (both parts), Suffolk Square	II	26/11/98
No. 21 Fullwood Park, Suffolk Square	II	12/03/55
Gate piers & boundary wall to No. 21 Fullwood Park	II	26/11/98
Nos. 22 & 23 The Beeches (No. 22) & Bicknor (No. 23), Suffolk Square	II	12/03/55
No. 24 Raynsford, Suffolk Square	II	14/12/83

Refer to www.cheltenham.gov.uk for full list descriptions and www.imagesofengland.org.uk for photographic records.

Index of Buildings of Local Importance

- 5.19 An Index of Buildings of Local Importance has been prepared for Cheltenham. Buildings and structures on the Index are protected by a Supplementary Planning Document.

Contribution of key unlisted buildings

- 5.20 The large majority of buildings within Suffolk Square character area are statutory listed, due to the square's special historic and architectural qualities. A number of historic stables and outbuildings in the rear gardens of the grand terraces and villas along the west side of the square have been converted into mews cottages and coach houses. Many of these are curtilage listed.²⁰ These smaller ancillary historic buildings encompass qualities of age, style and materials which are locally distinct and which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the character area. Their vernacular design and use provides an interesting visual and architectural contrast to the grand, detailed designs of the villas and terraces fronting Suffolk Square.

²⁰ 'Fixtures and curtilage buildings – ie. any object or structure which is fixed to the building, or is within the curtilage and forms part of the land and has done so since before July 1948 – are also treated as part of the building for the purposes of listed building control' Department for Communities and Local Government Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment para. 3.2

- 5.21 Suffolk House is a key unlisted building which is on the Index of Buildings of Local Importance. Please see the Index for further details about this building.



Figure 30 Suffolk House

- 5.22 Coach House Mews is a key unlisted building in the grounds of Suffolk House. It enhances the historic interest of the area.



Figure 31 Coach House Mews

Local details

- 5.23 Local details within the Suffolk Square character area collectively enhance the character and appearance of not just Suffolk Square but the whole of the Central Conservation Area. Interesting historic local details include –

Iron verandas with Carron Company double-heart-and-anthemion motif balustrades	Historic gate piers
Sir Robert Smirke (1781-1867), a leading architect of the Greek Revival lived in the former Bunwell House (now part of Montpellier House)	

Materials

Building material

- 5.24 The use of building materials reflects the availability of materials at the time of the construction of historic buildings. Cheltenham expanded rapidly in the 19th Century, and the readily available Lias clay and local sand allowed enough bricks to be produced to build most of the original spa town. The majority of these houses were built of locally-fired bricks, and were faced with either stucco (also known as lime render) or ashlar limestone. Much of the stone used in Cheltenham would have been quarried at Leckhampton Hill or Birdlip. Unfortunately neither of the quarries continues to produce stone. The painting of stucco in pale cream and yellow colours to imitate stone gave the town cohesion. Red bricks are also commonly used in the construction of boundary walls and in the 1980s Suffolk Mews development.

Ground surface material

- 5.25 Roads are predominantly tarmac, although in pedestrian areas, concrete slabs or blocks are frequently used. Typically, there is whitelining as road markings and red surfacing on some cycle routes – these both add to visual clutter in the street scene.
- 5.26 Paving materials vary. Bitmac is much in evidence. Surface materials will be reviewed as part of the Civic Pride project and a public realm strategy published identifying suitable materials for appropriate locations.

Street furniture

- 5.27 There is a relatively limited amount of street furniture evident in the Suffolk Square character area, which is predominantly due to its contained size and principally residential use. Street furniture that is present within Suffolk Square is of varying quality which gives a frequently cluttered appearance. The Council has a small budget which is available to target cluttered areas and rationalise the amount of furniture and signage. Target areas are set on an annual basis. The Civic Pride project is undertaking a review of furniture and will report on style, clutter, colour and use.

Contribution of trees and green spaces

- 5.28 Within the Suffolk Square character area there are significant amounts of private green space but a very small amount of public green space. The greenery in Suffolk Square particularly enhances the setting of its properties and the street scene.

Ashburne Green bowling green

5.29



Figure 32 Ornamental trees visible within grounds of bowling green

The Ashburne Green bowling green is the dominant green feature within Suffolk Square. It is a private space in recreational use. The space has high significance and importance in establishing the basis for the whole form of the square. The green is surrounded by approximately seven to eight foot high hedging which totally encloses the bowling green from public space and view. Protruding above the high hedging are several ornamental trees which include cyprus and flowering cherry.

Private green space

5.30



Figure 33 Grounds of Willoughby House Hotel

The presence of front gardens provides an attractive setting for houses and gardens are particularly well established outside Willoughby House Hotel (No. 1) Suffolk Square and Nos. 22 and 23 Suffolk Square.

5.31



Figure 34 Greenery in front gardens along the west side of the square

High levels of greenery are present in the large front gardens of villas along the west side of the square. Trees in this area which have Tree Preservation Orders (T.P.O's) include beech, blue cedar and lime trees. The greenery screens properties and positively contributes to the character and appearance of the street scene on this side of the square.

5.32 Trees surrounding Montpellier House include ornamental silver birch and acacia trees. Hedging which grows over railings in-front of the terraces along the north side acts as a natural and soft boundary treatment between each terrace. However, some of this hedging has become overgrown and is currently in need of maintenance. Hedging and trees are also placed around Suffolk House where they partially screen the building.

5.33 Although not wholly retaining their front gardens, many properties on the square contain partially green frontages (frequently taking the form of hedging and lawn) with the presence of hard-standing. This is evident outside Acton and Montpellier House.



Figure 35 Partially green frontage outside Acton



Figure 36 Partially green frontage outside Montpellier House

5.34 Greenery evident along Back Montpellier Terrace and Southwood Lane enhances the bland functional appearance of the street scene within these locales.



Figure 37 Greenery evident within Southwood Lane

Greenery within 20th Century developments

5.35 The large expanse of lawn outside Suffolk House on the Suffolk Square side provides an attractive setting for the block of flats, enabling them to sit more comfortably within the street scene and historic context of the area. Similarly, greenery softens and partially screens the 1980s Suffolk Mews development on the south east side of Suffolk Square.



Figure 38 Expanse of lawn outside Suffolk House



Figure 39 Greenery within the Suffolk Mews development

Negative factors

5.36 Due to high levels of development of the Suffolk Square character area, modern changes and intrusions have, to a degree, negatively impacted on the area's overall character and appearance. Negative factors include significant negative buildings and spaces, which are identified as those buildings and spaces that detract from the character and appearance of the area but offer potential for enhancement. This identification may result from the visual prominence of the site, or the development's inappropriate scale, design or materials, amongst other factors. The identification of buildings as negative factors in this section and as significant negative buildings or spaces on the Townscape Analysis map is an indication of a need for improvement, not necessarily demolition. Negative changes and intrusions include –

- a) The **alteration and replacement of some original historic windows** in properties which causes loss of historic fabric;
- b) The presence of large, projecting **Velux roof lights** on historic buildings has eroded the visual quality of the historic roofscape. Where there is evidence of historic roof lights or where new conservation roof lights may be appropriate, each case will be considered on its own merits;
- c) The presence of **large aerials and satellite dishes**;
- d) **Many front gardens have been changed either totally or partially into hard-standing areas** for cars. This change has reduced the area of green and soft landscaped private gardens, and generally increased the hard urban appearance of the Suffolk Square area. It has resulted in a negative impact on the appearance of the area. However, where properties have retained their front gardens, there has been a continuing enhancement to the street scene;
- e) High levels of **on-street parking**. High levels of parking creates active streets, but in Suffolk Square it is poorly arranged and excessively heavy cluttering the street and detracting from the historic buildings and the open spaces between buildings;
- f) Some post-mounted **modern signage** placed within very close proximity to historic gate piers;
- g) Some **poorly designed and poor quality boundary treatments**;

- h) The **Ashburne Green bowling green pavilion** – this has a modern functional design which relates poorly to the historic space and surrounding historic properties;
- i) The **hedge around the Ashburne Green bowling green** – the high hedging is negative in that it restricts views of the bowling green and creates a loss of spaciousness;
- j) The **street scene in Back Montpellier Terrace** is compromised by some of the rears of terraces and garages here being in need of some maintenance.

Neutral areas

- 5.37 Some areas within the Suffolk Square character area neither enhance nor detract from the character or appearance of the character area but have the potential for enhancement. They tend to be visually prominent within the street scene. The identification of buildings as being neutral in this section and as significant neutral buildings or spaces on the Townscape Analysis map is an indication of a need for improvement, not necessarily demolition.
- 5.38 The Suffolk Mews development, which was constructed in the 1980s. Although it contrasts greatly in visual and architectural design to the grand Georgian and early Victorian villas and houses, it does successfully complement the historic properties through its use of materials, and is subservient in terms of its size and scale. The landscaping around the development softens its impact and partially screens it from public space and view.

General condition of area

- 5.39 Much of the building stock in the Suffolk Square character area is in good condition, reflecting high property values and prosperity within this popular and affluent residential area.
- 5.40 It is highly important that the physical condition of the historic buildings is preserved in-order to retain not just Suffolk Square's, but Cheltenham's fine distinctiveness and identity.

Pressures and capacity for change

- 5.41 The designation of the Conservation Area is not intended to prevent change, especially that which would enhance the character or appearance of the area. It seeks to ensure that future development is appropriate to the character of the area.
- 5.42 There is virtually no capacity for new development on land within Suffolk Square character area due to lack of such space and the contained size and formal plan form of the square.
- 5.43 The replacement of some inappropriate modern buildings (notably the bowling green pavilion) with a more contextually appropriate development which enhances the historic character of the area may be an option but careful consideration would need to be given to this.

Part 2 – Management Plan

1. Introduction

Purpose of the management plan

The purpose of Part 2 of this document is to present proposals to achieve the preservation and enhancement of Suffolk Square character area's special historic character and appearance. It has been subject to public consultation. Part 2 was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document on 28th July 2008. It will inform the planning and other decisions of the Council.

The special qualities of the Suffolk Square character area have been identified in the Character Appraisal which forms the Part 1 of this document. The Management Plan draws on the themes identified in sections 5.36 'Negative factors' and 5.37 'Neutral areas'.

The proposals are written with the awareness that, in managing Cheltenham's Conservation areas, resources are limited and therefore need to be prioritised. Financial constraints on the Council mean that proposals may take longer than is desirable to implement. However, the Council will continue to encourage improvements to the Conservation Area in co-operation with property owners, groups and local businesses. As such, the management plan can be considered to have three broad functions:

1 a control tool - its action points will be material considerations in decision making on applications for planning and related consents;

2 a project development tool - it identifies proactive work which can address some of the negative factors identified in the Character Appraisal. The responsibility for the work falls within the remit of various agencies (primarily Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council). Many of the projects do not yet have resources (funding, staffing etc) and few are programmed. However, their inclusion in this document is important because as an adopted document, the management plan can form the basis for bids for resources and programmed works;

3 a best practice guide - it establishes a series of action points to preserve and enhance the area's character. They should be considered in the design and implementation of all projects regardless of the need for permissions and who is undertaking them (public bodies, corporate bodies or private individuals).

Both the Character Area Appraisal and accompanying Management Plan will be subject to monitoring and reviews on a regular basis.

Legislative background

This document satisfies the statutory requirement of section 71 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 namely:

"It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas."

The document reflects Government guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' and policies set out in the Cheltenham Local Plan.

2. Article 4 (2) Directions

There are some buildings within the Suffolk Square character area which, although not listed, have qualities of age, style and materials which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the character area and Central Conservation Area. These properties are however vulnerable to future change. Some of which have already suffered from modern intrusions by way of alterations and inappropriate additions, for example uPVC windows and the erection of large aerials and satellite dishes.

There are a number of categories of minor works for which a planning application is not normally needed. This is known as *permitted development*.

Permitted development rights are more restricted in conservation areas and permission is required for works including -

- a addition of dormer windows to roof slopes;
- b various types of cladding;
- c erection of satellite dishes fronting a highway; and
- d there is a reduction in the size of extensions which have permitted development rights.

In order to protect the character of conservation areas, legislation allows local planning authorities to remove permitted development rights in parts of conservation areas facing on to the highway or open space by using Article 4 (2) Directions. These cannot be introduced through this Conservation Area management plan – the Council will need to embark on a separate process. However, it is advisable that the Council uses this document to identify areas of concern, where it may apply Article 4 (2) Directions. If introduced, these will provide long-term protection against unsympathetic alterations which have the potential to adversely impact on the character of the conservation area. The effect of a Direction would be that certain alterations to unlisted residential properties which formerly did not require planning permission would then need planning permission.

If introduced to cover this character area, an Article 4 (2) Direction will mean planning consent is required for a range of external works fronting a public space, including:

- a changes to windows, doors, chimneys and roofs;
- b the painting of previously unpainted walling;
- c the construction of external porches;
- d the provision and removal of walls, gates and fences.

3. Management proposals

The management proposals have been divided into two sections, comprising of: Development control proposals and project proposals which relate to specific areas.

Development control proposals

1 Control of Development

It is essential that any development should preserve the setting of any adjacent listed buildings and the existing landscape features and trees and

preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. Therefore, careful consideration must be given to the site including historic context and distinctive site features; as well as the size, scale, urban grain, layout, design, massing, height, plot width, frontage activity, landscape and materials in any such development. This does not dictate architectural style but helps deliver proposals which respond positively to their context with high quality design. Pastiche architectural styling, in which architectural historic elements are taken from different sources without being applied accurately, is not acceptable. However that is not to say that a variety of architectural styles, materials and forms of construction are not able to give interest within the conservation area and provided the new buildings are carefully designed it should be possible for them to have a harmonious and positive presence.

Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan policies CP3, CP7, BE1, BE2, BE3 and BE5 relate.

ACTION SS1: The Cheltenham Borough Local Plan states that new development shall preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. The policies of the Local Plan set out a general approach to the consideration of planning and related applications for development in conservation areas – they cover a range of issues including:

- new build
- extensions
- loss of green space
- impact on views
- demolition

In applying Local Plan policies, the Council will use the assessment of character set out in the appraisal accompanying this Management Plan as a basis for establishing the important aspects of context.

2 Loss of traditional architectural features on some historic buildings

Some of the older buildings within Suffolk Square character area have been adversely affected by alterations, for example, to original timber sash windows, which erodes local building detail and fails to preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area. The Council's document 'Living and Working in a Conservation Area– Some Questions You Might Ask' gives advice to building owners on their responsibilities.

The Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan Policy CP 3 relates.

ACTION SS2: In order to preserve and enhance the character and setting of the character area, the Council will:

- a. Keep under review the need to bring in additional planning controls over minor works in the character area through Article 4 directions;
- b. Use its powers to enforce against unauthorised development;
- c. Encourage owners to repair rather than replace original features;
- d. Consider producing detailed design guidance and information regarding materials appropriate for use in the Central Conservation Area;

e. Consider producing guidance to highlight to property owner's the importance of regularly maintaining gutters to ensure they function to their full potential, thus preventing ceilings and roofs collapsing due to heavy rain and blocked gutters.

In undertaking any works to buildings in the character area, owners should consider the implications for sustainable building practices. This could take a number of forms, including sustainable sourcing of materials and use of energy efficient designs. Additional information is available in the Council's supplementary planning guidance on Sustainable Buildings (www.cheltenham.gov.uk).

3 Equipment or installations (for example satellite dishes, large aerials, small scale renewable energy schemes and other such features)

The presence of various types of equipment or installations on or around buildings, such as large aerials or satellite dishes, can detract from the character of the Suffolk Square character area and in some cases the special architectural qualities of the buildings. There is also the potential for domestic wind turbines and other elements to impact similarly. To minimise their visual impact, they should normally be positioned away from public view or prominent positions; a judgment then needs to be made between this and the optimization of energy generation.

The Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan Policy CP 3 relates.

ACTION SS3: In order to preserve and enhance the character of the character area the Council will:

a. keep under review the need to bring in additional planning controls over equipment or installations in prominent locations in the character area through an Article 4 direction;

b. use any planning powers to ensure that equipment or installations are installed away from public spaces and views so as not to detract from views within the street scene and the overall character of the character area. This will look at balancing the visual impact against energy generations. Where the Council has no powers property owners are encouraged to position such equipment with regard to this guidance;

c. consider producing guidance regarding the design and siting of renewable energy infrastructure in the Central Conservation Area.

4 Drives and loss of front gardens

Very often the frontage of buildings in conservation areas is essential to the character of the conservation area. Historically, many buildings in the character area had front gardens with enclosing railings. Their gardens would be planted. The loss of front gardens to parking detracts from their historic setting. This can result from the nature of the materials used, the loss of boundary treatments, the intensity or volume of the parking or the loss of soft garden features which can cause a reduction in biodiversity and 'wildlife corridors'. The loss of front gardens in this manner is also an unsustainable form of development – increasing run off, reducing planting available for carbon fixing and encouraging car use. Where it is considered acceptable the use of brick or gravel instead of tarmac, with the retention of some garden

space and the use of appropriate boundary treatments would reduce run-off, offer a more attractive setting for buildings and give a more sustainable approach than some current practice.

Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Policy BE 7 states that 'Development which introduces or extends the parking of vehicles on forecourts or front gardens of buildings in conservation areas will not be permitted.' Where there is existing frontage parking which adversely impacts on the character and setting of the conservation area, a new planning application may give opportunities to renegotiate a more sympathetic solution.

ACTION SS4: The Council will seek to limit the adverse impact of on-plot frontage parking by using its powers under planning and other legislation to secure the use of appropriate, traditional and complementary boundary and surface treatments which will in turn greatly reduce levels of surface water run-off.

The Council will prepare a guidance note on sustainable design of front garden parking.

5 Tree management

The presence of trees makes an important contribution to the overall character and appearance of the Suffolk Square character area. Trees play an important role in reducing the effects of climate change through climate fixing, absorbing carbon dioxide and providing shade. They need to continue to be well protected and managed in the future.

ACTION SS5: Cheltenham Borough Council will continue to maintain and protect trees by implementing Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) where appropriate, and replant with new trees when old trees die. Trees located in pavements or grass verges at the side of roads and which are designated as within the public highway are maintained by Gloucestershire Highways. Trees located in parks or green spaces within the conservation area are managed by Cheltenham Borough Council in accordance with best arboricultural practice.

When a tree dies or is removed from land within the conservation area, because it was dead, dying or dangerous, the land owner has a legal obligation under section 213 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to plant a replacement tree of an appropriate size and species. The Council will require owners to fulfil their legal obligation for replanting with new trees, especially where the old trees have made a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. Where appropriate the Council may decide to serve a tree replacement notice under section 207 of the Act.

6 Boundary enclosures

At present, some poorly maintained boundary treatments harm the character and appearance of buildings and the overall street scene. Increased use of railings or trees and hedgerow as a 'soft' boundary treatment would enhance the historic qualities, character and appearance of the area. Additionally, trees and hedgerow contribute to biodiversity by providing wildlife habitats. If

the same sympathetic boundary treatment were to be implemented along the length of a street where possible, this would enhance its character and appearance, by uniting properties within it.

See Cheltenham Borough Local Plan BE 5 and CP3.

ACTION SS6: The Council will use enforcement and other powers under Section 215 of the Planning Act to secure the repair of poorly maintained boundary treatments and the reinstatement of traditional and historic boundary treatments to enhance the historic character of the Suffolk Square character area.

The Council will require the use of contextually sensitive boundary treatments on new developments where appropriate.

7 **Setting and views**

The setting of the Suffolk Square Character Area is very important. Any proposals for development will be required to demonstrate how the setting and long distance views, into and from the Character Area have been taken into account. The important views are identified on the Townscape Analysis map. The Council will seek to ensure that all development serves to respect these important views.

ACTION SS7: The Council will ensure that development respects the important views within, into and from the Suffolk Square character area. These views are noted but not exclusively identified on the Townscape Analysis map. The Council will ensure that these remain protected from inappropriate forms of development and redevelopment and that due regard is paid to these views in the formulation of public realm works or enhancement schemes in accordance with the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan.

Project proposals

8 **Civic Pride**

The Council, in partnership with the South West Regional Development Agency and Gloucestershire County Council, has commissioned the preparation of an Urban Design Framework for central Cheltenham, including the Suffolk Square Character Area. It will develop a comprehensive set of proposals for the area and will consider the following topics:

- a. Urban design
- b. Public realm enhancements
- c. Public art
- d. Street furniture
- e. Surface materials
- f. Traffic management

The Civic Pride Urban Design Framework is being developed as a Supplementary Planning Document alongside this Character Appraisal and

Management Plan. It includes parts of other character areas making up the town centre. Its brief ranges from a strategic overview to detailed issues, including development briefing and advice on public realm treatments. Part 1 of this document, the Character Appraisal, has been used to inform the emerging Civic Pride proposals.

Some of the Actions in this Management Plan will be developed further through the Civic Pride project and will be the subject of more detailed work – where this is thought to be the case, it has been identified. The Civic Pride project has been developed in a manner which responds positively to the requirements of this Character Appraisal and Management Plan.

ACTION SS8: The Council and its partners will ensure that the detailed design and implementation of Civic Pride projects will preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area in a manner compatible with the Character Appraisal for those parts of the area affected by it.

9 Street furniture

There is presently little street furniture apparent within the character area. With street furniture that is present, there needs to be a consistency of style to help create a cohesive identity for Suffolk Square. Adequate levels of seating and litter bins need to be provided to accommodate pedestrian needs.

The Civic Pride project is considering the issues of style, need, use and location in order to engender this cohesiveness, to minimise clutter and maximise effectiveness.

PPG 15 Section 5 gives additional transport measures in historic environments. The Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Policy BE 18 relates.

ACTION SS9: Through the Civic Pride project, the Council and its partners will develop and implement a street furniture strategy, which minimises clutter and brings a sense of cohesiveness to the area as a whole.

The Council will lobby the Highway Authority to minimise signage, markings and other street furniture in its traffic management projects. Where it is safe to do so it will liaise with the Highway Authority to remove redundant signage and street furniture and ensure that any new signage and traffic management schemes preserve and enhance the setting of the Suffolk Square character area.

10 Ashburne Green bowling green

The bowling green is currently enclosed by dense, high hedging. The hedging restricts views into and out of the bowling green and creates a sense of contained space. This in turn creates a loss of spaciousness in the central part of the character area.

ACTION SS10: The Council will encourage the removal of the high hedging around the bowling green and reinstatement of traditionally designed railings around the central space. The railings would permit views of the bowling green and establish a sense of space in this important square. Alternatively, the lowering of the existing hedge would to some extent permit views across

the bowling green and increase the sense of space. However, the reinstatement of railings would be the preferred option of the two.

Annex 1:

Cheltenham Central Conservation Area – list of Supplementary Planning Documents

19 character areas make up Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area. Each has a separate character appraisal and management plan. These comprise –

Title of document	Status
1). Old Town character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 23 rd February 2007
2). Montpellier character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 23 rd February 2007
3). Bayshill character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 23 rd February 2007
4). Lansdown character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
5). Suffolk Square character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
6). Eldorado character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
7). Dean Close & Hatherley Park character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
8). Tivoli character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
9). The Park character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
10). The Suffolks character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
11). Bath Road character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
12). Leckhampton character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
13). College character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
14). St Luke's character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
15). Sydenham character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
16). Fairview & All Saints' character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
17). Pittville character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
18). Lower High Street character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008
19). St Paul's character area appraisal and management plan	Adopted as a SPD on 28 th July 2008

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