

CHELTENHAM

Local development framework

Central
Conservation Area
Montpellier
character area
appraisal and
● management plan

FEBRUARY 2007



Central Conservation Area

Montpellier character area appraisal and management plan FEBRUARY 2007



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Part 1 – Character Appraisal

1 Introduction

What is a conservation area?

- 1.1 A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is considered 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 appraisals for all conservation areas a Best Value Performance indicator for local authorities. This assessment should be reviewed every five years.
- 1.4 The appraisals provide an assessment of the character of conservation areas or their parts. This appraisal provides the basis for an accompanying 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 and open spaces).
- 1.5 This appraisal was subject to public consultation between 10th November and 22nd December 2006. Following consideration of representations received it was adopted by Cheltenham Borough Council on 23rd February 2007 as a Supplementary Planning Document. It will be used in conjunction with the Local Plan as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

The central conservation area

- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 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 and most of the Victorian, Edwardian and 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.

- 1.8 There is a 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 sub-divide it into 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.

Montpellier Character Area

- 1.9 In May 2001 the Council published a draft Urban Design Framework for Cheltenham, produced by Latham Architects (the “Latham Study”). It was never formally adopted, 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. The boundaries of the Montpellier character area within Cheltenham’s central conservation area have been drawn to encompass an area of Regency development from the late 18th century and first half of the 19th century, based around The Promenade and Bath Road and stretching south from the rear of the High Street to Montpellier Terrace. It contains formally laid out terraces and crescents, villas, the Promenade, Imperial and Montpellier Gardens, Royal Well and a tight network of streets to the rear of High Street.
- 1.10 Whilst locally, “Montpellier” would probably only be considered as the southern part of this character area, for ease of reference the name has been applied to the whole of the area under consideration, which has a number of unifying features.
- 1.11 The selection of the character area boundaries has no impact on the overall boundary of the central conservation area.

Summary of special interest

- 1.12 The Montpellier character area is special because:
- a. It contains predominantly Regency buildings with the presence of many complete and uniform formal terraces, large villas set within spacious grounds and Royal Crescent which may be regarded as the town’s first major piece of Regency architecture.
 - b. A number of spas were established within Montpellier in the early years of the 19th century, including the Montpellier Spa, Sherborne Spa and Cambray Spa. Their establishment played a quintessential role in the development of Cheltenham as a spa town;
 - c. Montpellier contains historically important public buildings including the Queen’s Hotel, Municipal Offices, Everyman Theatre and Cavendish House. These remain important and well used to the present day, and all are seen as landmark buildings which influence the character and appearance of Montpellier. The Montpellier Rotunda and Pump Room is particularly important in that it is Grade I listed;

- d. It has three important areas of public open space – the Long Gardens, Imperial Gardens and Montpellier Gardens. These formal gardens greatly enhance the character and appearance of the Montpellier, and the setting of surrounding buildings.
- e. In The Promenade it contains the town centre’s southern spine and one of the town’s most visually striking streets.
- f. It contains over 153 listed buildings and structures and some locally listed buildings and structures.

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/Gloucester Green Belt (to the west and north) and the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (to the south and east). To the west of Cheltenham is the River Severn, with the Forest of Dean and Wales beyond the Severn.

2.2 Montpellier is located immediately south of the High Street in the centre of the town.

General character and plan form of the Montpellier Character Area

2.3 Montpellier stretches between the rear of the High Street in the north and Montpellier Terrace in the south. It covers an area of predominantly early 19th century development around The Promenade and Bath Road. Its plan form is an offset grid pattern established at its highest level by these two streets, on an axis slightly off north-south. At a second level in the hierarchy, these main streets are linked east-west by three streets - Montpellier Terrace in the south; Montpellier Spa Road/Montpellier Drive; and Oriel Road centrally (the High Street, the northerly link, is outside the character area). Much of the higher level grid now carries the southern part of the town centre ring and approach road systems.

2.4 Inside this higher level grid at a third and fourth level are a series of streets and service lanes creating a finer grained network – again, principally on a north-south alignment but with disjointed east-west linkages.



Figure 1 Plan form of Promenade



Figure 2 Example of service lane – Back Montpellier Terrace

2.5 The character area also includes Royal Well. This is one of the oldest parts of the Regency town, now somewhat isolated from its neighbours, which have turned their backs on it, and further segregated because it now carries the route of the Inner Ring Road.

2.6 The River Chelt passes east-west through the centre of the character area. For much of its length here, it is culverted, and where it is open (in the east) it is largely hidden from public view and currently has little impact. The land north of the Chelt is flat, but to the south it gently rises giving the Queens Hotel, for example, an imposing slightly elevated setting in views along the tree-lined Promenade.



Figure 3 Royal Well bus station (Royal Crescent to *left*)



Figure 4 Elevated setting of Queen's Hotel

2.7 Across the character area as a whole there is a distinct shift in character. The tighter urban grain in the northeast quadrant loosens to the south and west giving way eventually to broad tree-lined streets and formal gardens. Terraces dominate, but the looser grain and larger urban block size historically allowed the introduction of villas, some now replaced with large office buildings.

- a. The northeast quadrant is comparatively fine grained, with
 - Small urban blocks;
 - A tight network of streets – although these are not necessarily narrow streets;
 - Little street planting – although some garden planting;
 - Few medium or distance views;
 - Terraces on narrow plots being the prevailing building form;
 - The small blocks give a little garden space, which in Cambray and Rodney Road would have been predominantly front gardens (now much given to car parking). Many of the blocks are so narrow they allow frontage to only one street.

b. Moving to the west, and particularly the south, this tight urban grain begins to loosen:

- The general pattern of development is less dense and the urban blocks are increasingly large;
- Streets are broader and longer;
- There are greater opportunities for planting in the street;
- Views begin to open up – both medium and long distance;
- Although terraces still predominate, the larger block size allows development of villas and larger detached buildings;
- Additionally, the larger blocks accommodate three significant public gardens along The Promenade – the Long Gardens and Imperial and Montpellier Gardens – of increasing size towards the south;
- In the south, between Montpellier Spa Road and Montpellier Terrace the axis changes to east-west;
- The land gently rises beyond the River, allowing, for example, Imperial Gardens a tiered effect; giving prominence to the Queens Hotel and the Broad Walk; and prominence to Montpellier Terrace.

2.8 Most of the area would historically have been in residential use, with retail and commercial uses concentrated around the High Street and, to a limited extent, the Rotunda. Now, retail dominates in the north, The Promenade and Montpellier Walk. Commercial uses concentrate in the centre of the area and, although there is some residential in Cambray and Wellington Street, most is concentrated in the south of the area.

Wider landscape setting

2.9



Figure 5 View of Cleeve Hill from Montpellier Street

Although Montpellier is in the centre of the town, there are frequent glimpses and views of Cleeve Hill and the Cotswold escarpment from open spaces and gaps between buildings creating a strong connection between the countryside and urban area – particularly in the slightly elevated south. Although the River Chelt, as it runs through the area, is largely unseen, both to the west and the east of the character area it is an important landscape feature, running through open space and linear parkland.

2.10



Figure 6 View of landmark Eagle Star from the Promenade

There are also a number of landmark buildings of varying height and scale which punctuate views of the skyline from within and outside the character area. These include the Queen's Hotel, Cambray Court, Municipal Offices and Cavendish House, but the most dominant is Eagle Tower. This 13 storey block was built in the late 1960's and is visible from both street level and upper floors in many parts of the town.

3 Historic development

Archaeology

- 3.1 It appears that some archaeological research has been conducted within Cheltenham and in-depth research can be found in "Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey". Many archaeological artefacts would have been lost during the expansion of the town in the 19th century, thus 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. 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. Some Roman coins have been unearthed in Montpellier. Other archaeological remains discovered in Montpellier include Civil War finds - buttons and coins of Royalists at Imperial Square and a possible mill site has been identified in Rodney Road. 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 assist in providing a basis for researching the origins and early development of Cheltenham, and contribute directly to a sense of place evident in the modern era.

Summary of Historic Development

- 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 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 Regency 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. This led to the development of some acclaimed schools and churches well into the 20th century. Before World War II, light industry boosted the town's economy and today, the town's attractions include fine shops, cultural events such as the races and numerous festivals and its legacy of Regency architecture and spaces.

General history of Montpellier

- 3.5 The historic development of Montpellier, based on plans from 1617, 1820, 1834, 1897 and the present day is shown on the Historical Development map.
- 3.6 Prior to the early years of the 19th century, Montpellier consisted of meadow land. It was bought by Henry Thompson in 1801, when Cheltenham was expanding rapidly as a fashionable spa resort. He laid out Montpellier in the early years of the 19th Century with attractive villas and terraces surrounded by spacious ornamental gardens, walks and rides. The walks and rides are reflected in Montpellier's current road pattern. It has long been one of the most attractive and fashionable parts of the town. Within Cheltenham, Montpellier was the first 'spa district' before Pittville.

Development by 1834

- 3.7 Much of Montpellier's plan was laid out by 1820, during the hey-day of Cheltenham's development as a spa town. Lanes such as the Colonnade and Sherborne Walks and Rides were formed. The Colonnade began construction in 1791, accommodating a row of houses, and The Promenade, adjoining it, was laid out in 1818 as a tree-lined ride towards the Sherborne Spa, following the route of the Sherborne Walks and Rides (previously a swampy lane). Development of the Imperial Hotel, villas and terraces in the Promenade followed from 1823. In later years, the Promenade and Sherborne Walks and Rides were connected to the Montpellier Spa and Rides, to the west of the Queen's Hotel, giving the Promenade its current alignment.
- 3.8 Many grand Regency terraces and villas were built in Montpellier character area as the town's popularity and population grew. Royal Crescent (1805 to 1825) is one of the earliest, built on the former Church Meadow. Buildings constructed at this time were generally large scale in large plots surrounded by open land. Some public buildings were also developed at this time.
- 3.9 Montpellier had several of the spas which were so important to the town. The first to be developed, in 1738 was the Old Well (on the current site of Cheltenham Ladies' College Princess Hall in Montpellier Street). In 1801 Henry Thompson built Hygeia House on Vittoria Walk. In 1804 he started dispensing mineral waters and Hygeia House became the original Montpellier Spa. In 1809 the spa and assembly rooms were moved to the site of the present Montpellier Rotunda. It had moved again by 1813 to the site of the Queen's Hotel, Promenade. In 1834, Cambray Spa was constructed on the corner of Rodney Road and Oriel

Road. These spas generated high activity levels in Montpellier making it a popular area during this period.

- 3.10 The present Imperial Square was laid out as a Nursery Ground from circa 1818. The open space was an important recreational resource enhancing both Montpellier's character and appearance. It contained the Winter Garden which was used for concerts and meetings throughout the second half of the 19th century, thus creating an important social setting for the square.

Development by 1897

- 3.11 Along with an improving transport industry, the road network within Montpellier had become better established by the end of the 19th century. Many more public and private buildings had been erected and, to cope with the need for a more developed infrastructure, some were beginning to change from their initial residential use. Along the Promenade, for example, buildings were converting to commercial uses, altering elements of its character, and Ormond Villas was converted into specialist shops in 1844. Cavendish House Silk Mercery Establishment, Cheltenham's oldest department store, was opened in the Promenade in 1826.
- 3.12 During this period, there was an increase in the number of public buildings in Montpellier, including churches and chapels, theatres, the New Club, many shops and the Post Office. This reflected Cheltenham's expanding popularity as a social, cultural and educational centre after use of the spa waters waned. Many buildings were adapted for civic purposes - the Imperial Hotel on the Promenade (later Imperial Club; currently Waterstone's book store), was converted to a Post Office in 1874 and Harwards Buildings, a Regency terrace, was converted to house the Municipal Offices in 1914.
- 3.13 Several college boarding houses, such as Cambray House had been established for the Cheltenham Ladies' College which was founded in 1853.
- 3.14 The Queen's Hotel was built in 1837 and opened in 1838 on the site of the Sherborne Spa (later named Imperial Spa), which was reconstructed on the corner of St George's Road. This caused a major change in the street scene of both areas. The Queen's Hotel, together with its adjacent stabling, occupied a large plot and was a landmark building which terminated an extensive vista from the Colonnade along the Promenade.
- 3.15 Montpellier Gardens, previously open land, were laid out as an ornamental pleasure ground for visitors to Montpellier Spa in 1830, providing a fashionable promenade and venue for public entertainment. Cheltenham Archery Club, established in 1856, met in Montpellier Gardens. The rides on the north and south sides of Montpellier Gardens had lodging houses built along them during the 1820s. Both Montpellier Gardens and the Winter Garden, were an important feature of Montpellier and a well used resource. The Winter Garden was built in 1879 as a large venue for concerts and exhibitions.

Development in the 20th – 21st centuries

- 3.16 During the 20th century, change of use of residential properties into shops and offices continued, reflecting the town's general development and the important position of Montpellier within central Cheltenham.

3.17 As needs and fashions altered, historic buildings continued to be demolished or converted to a variety of new uses and development within the established built up area has dominated:

- the New Club on the corner of the Promenade and Oriel Road now demolished and replaced by the Quadrangle offices;
- at least four buildings (including a pair of large Regency villas) on the land between Bath Road, Montpellier Terrace, Montpellier Parade and Montpellier Drive were replaced by the 13 storey Eagle Star Headquarters in 1968;
- the Sherborne/Imperial Spa, on the corner of St George's Road and the Promenade, became a Victorian upholstery and cabinet showroom which was demolished in 1937 to make way for a Cinema; which itself was demolished in the early 1980's and replaced by Royscot House offices;
- Montpellier Spa was converted to Lloyds Bank in the 1960s (part of it being converted to a bank much earlier than this);
- the Winter Garden was demolished between 1940-1943 (reputedly due to concern that they might attract enemy bombers). The Town Hall was built in 1902-3 in a location immediately to the north of the Winter Garden. It replaced Cheltenham's previous main venue, the Assembly Rooms, which were in the High Street. It contained the central Spa which unsuccessfully aimed to reverse the decline in popularity of Cheltenham as a health resort;
- the Rock House on Vittoria Walk, believed by Oliver Bradbury to be possibly Cheltenham's most idiosyncratic building, was demolished in 1978 and replaced by six maisonettes in 1979;
- Cambray House was built in about 1805 and became the first home of the Cheltenham Ladies' College. Cambray House was demolished in 1937 and Cambray Court was constructed on the site soon after the demolition;
- Cambray Chalybeate Spa, on the corner of Oriel Road and Rodney Road, was demolished in 1938. The spa building was replaced by a car park;
- Wellington Mansion was positioned between Bath Road and Wellington Street. It was built in about 1807 and was pulled down in 1843. It was converted in 1862 into a nursery garden;
- Royal Well chapel was opened for worship in 1866. The chapel was converted to a garage in 1936 and demolished in the mid 1960s. A car park now occupies this site;
- The historic Birdlip House on Bath Road was demolished.

3.18 Montpellier remains a fashionable area, its character strongly based on the fine Regency heritage where the elegance and formality of the 1830s is still evident, even where new buildings have been added and despite their occasional incongruity. The area is busy and vibrant, though the intrusion of traffic and the 21st century clutter detracts from its completeness and elegance.

3.19 Historical development of Montpellier character area

Historical development of Montpellier Character Area

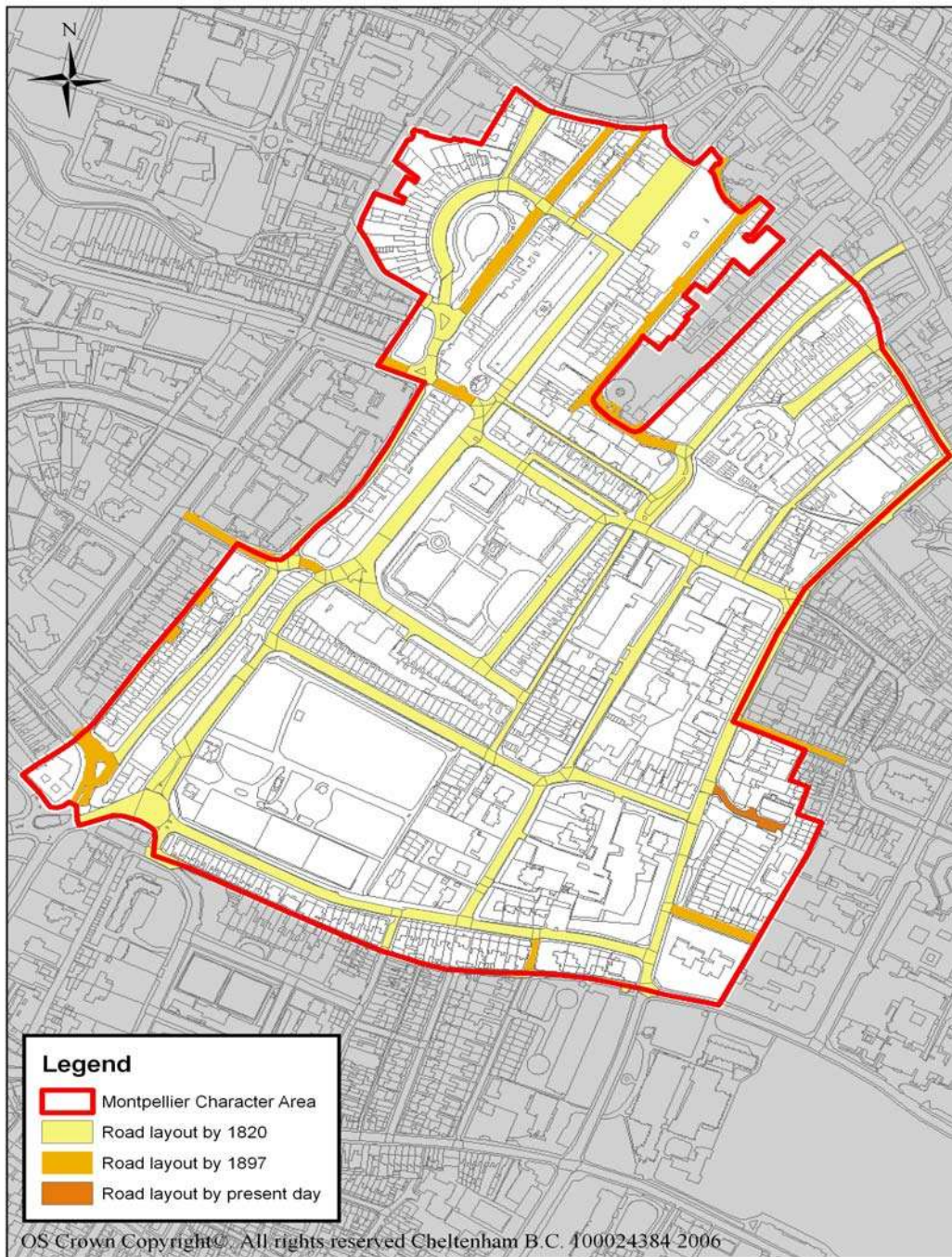


Figure 7 Historical development of Montpellier Character Area

4 Spatial analysis

The character and interrelationship of spaces within the area

4.1 The nature of the grid layout of the Montpellier character area is important in establishing the pattern and character of spaces.

4.2



Figure 8 Section of Ring Road

At the two highest levels of the grid system, the main north-south and east – west streets are an important part of the town centre approach and ring roads. As such traffic is a dominant feature of the space in these streets – noise, signage, markings and the presence of high traffic volumes. The ring road (which through the area runs along Bath Road, Oriel Road, St Georges Road and Royal Well) has fast moving one-way traffic and is a significant barrier to pedestrian movement into and out of the town centre

4.3



Figure 9 Junction of Promenade/Oriel Road/St George's Road

The offset nature of the grid creates a number of large spaces at junctions. Most are dominated by traffic and its associated clutter and are visually degraded and difficult spaces for pedestrians as a result. However spaces such as Royal Well, the Regent Street/Rodney Road junction and the junction of The Promenade, Oriel Road and St Georges Road have great potential for visual enhancement and pedestrian improvements.

4.4



Figure 10 Entrance to Regent Arcade car park

At the lower levels, the disjointed east-west links create tortuous journeys across the area, particularly north of Oriel Road. While there are some quiet spaces and streets created in this area, the street scene in Regent Street and Rodney Road between Oriel Place and the entrance to the Regent Arcade car park is a neglected and difficult pedestrian environment.

4.5 Where street space and block size allow, there is plentiful open space and street planting, but opportunities gradually decrease to the north. For example, following the tree-lined Promenade there is



Figure 11 Montpellier Gardens

- the verdant, treed space of Montpellier Gardens, with buildings set back and often viewing the park through trees;
- the more formal urban square of Imperial Gardens, with an apparently more immediate relationship between terraces on the south and east ;
- the linear green space of Long Gardens closely overlooked by the Municipal Offices; and
- the hard space outside Cavendish House with buildings immediately onto this square and its mature trees.

4.6



Figure 12 Tree lined Promenade

There is abundant tree planting in all of the more spacious streets. However The Promenade north of the Queens Hotel is particularly impressive, being lined with trees on both sides for its complete length – including a double row along the western pavement. However, north of Cavendish House all planting and public space provision stops until Clarence Square and Pittville Park.

4.7 The historic layout of buildings in Montpellier is in many respects an example of good urban design – buildings front the street and have their main pedestrian access points onto it; there is a high degree of overlooking of the public realm from the buildings; and there is a strong enclosure of streets and squares – even where there is considerable set back. This significantly enhances the quality of the streets and space. Historically they address the street in four different ways

- At back of footpath – generally in parts of the tighter grained north east, the northern Promenade and on Montpellier Walk and Montpellier Street. In the central Promenade, the housing (now shops) was originally constructed with gardens, but had “bungalow fronts” added, replacing the gardens and bringing them to the back of footpath.
- Across a basement void – usually with steps to the raised front door and wrought iron railings on a stone plinth; this occurs throughout the area.

- Across a front garden with various degrees of set back – short gardens (e.g. parts of Montpellier Terrace); mid-range (Cambray and Oriel Road); and long (e.g. Rodney Road, Bath Road and some of the villas). Again, the normal enclosure is railings, occasionally backed by planting.
- Behind a coach drive at some distance from the back of footpath. This happens on terraces (such as Royal Well and on Bath Road) and on Villas (the southern Promenade). Boundaries are normally wrought iron railings, often at back of footpath and on the building boundary.



Figure 13 Buildings addressing streets

4.8



Figure 14 Example of service lane

In addition, there are a number of rear service lanes. Often there will be a high brick wall between the lane and the property's rear yard (e.g. Montpellier Street at rear of the Promenade and rear of Montpellier Terrace). Occasionally, some of the terraces' buildings back directly onto the lanes, with rear yards open to them.

4.9



Figure 15 Intense parking in Rodney Road

While much of the historical setting of the frontage is intact, many front gardens have been given over to parking. This frequently has a detrimental impact on street scene – particularly where it is intense, as part of an office use. Rodney Road and the southern part of the Promenade have been poorly treated in this regard. In Rodney Road, the intense parking is coupled with almost complete removal of boundary treatments in one section, which has further downgraded the quality of the street and its enclosure. The Royal Crescent is now set behind a hard coach drive and, beyond that, the bus station,

creating a poor setting for the crescent and detracting from its special architectural and historic qualities.

4.10



Figure 16 Imperial Square

However, overall the historic and some of the modern developments generally benefit the streets and spaces by their enclosure. The terraces are imposing – generally at 3-storeys plus basement. Despite their length and strong uniformity, the window pattern and columns give a strong vertical rhythm which is a characteristic of the Regency town. This is frequently enhanced by a tall first floor window, often with a wrought iron balcony. The villas are set back in space and give a sense of grandeur. Some modern buildings have adopted these positive characteristics – particularly on the Broad Walk.

4.11 In the south east of the area, where historically there are villas, the buildings are set in space. In the block containing Eagle Tower, this space was much in evidence. It still exists, although internally much is given over to car parking, and the quality of the space here is much downgraded by the dominance of the Tower. On the Bath Road/Montpellier Terrace frontages, however, the Tower has been cleverly constructed and landscaped in a manner which retains the spacious frontage.

Key views and vistas

4.12 Montpellier has a range of long and medium distance views and vistas.

4.13



Figure 17 View of Cotswold Scarp and Eagle Tower from top of Montpellier Walk

As with much of the town there are glimpses of Cleeve Hill in several areas, through gaps between buildings and trees. This creates strong link between the built-up area and its rural surroundings and forms a welcome foil to the sense of enclosure generally experienced in a town. The nature of the views alters throughout the area – for example the rising land form south of the river allows extensive views of Cleeve Hill from the top of Montpellier Walk through trees; conversely, there is a pinched glimpse of the scarp from the Promenade at Cavendish House, along North Street.

- 4.14 The linear nature of the street pattern creates a number of vistas, often stopped by views of buildings. A long vista from the Promenade up to the Queen's Hotel is created through the linear plan form of the Promenade – the hotel's raised elevation contributes to its grandness and splendour. The offset junction at The Promenade and Oriel Road also creates stopped views along Oriel Road, where otherwise there might have been a cross roads.

4.15



Landmark buildings such as Eagle Tower, St. Andrews Church, the Town Hall, the Quadrangle, Municipal Offices and Cambray Court punctuate the skyline in different parts of the character area and are visually prominent buildings in their immediate context.

Figure 18 Landmark Town Hall & Quadrangle

5 Character analysis

Use of area and how use creates special interest

- 5.1 Montpellier has a variety of different uses due to its location within the bustling town centre and the accompanying high density of building and activity within. Mixed usage creates a dynamic street scene and contributes to the special interest of the area.

5.2



Figure 19 Shops on Montpellier Street

Two major uses in Montpellier are retail and catering. In Montpellier Street and Montpellier Walk there are many specialist, small sole-trader shops plus cafes, bars, pubs and restaurants. This blend of uses provides varying levels of activity and noise throughout the day - shops generating day-time activity and low noise levels; pubs and restaurants generating higher noise levels and significant activity in the evening and during weekends. The buildings between these two streets are interesting on two counts - their appearance on the Walk side is greatly enhanced by the presence of the caryatids which support the upper floors; whilst additionally, they uniquely have a frontage to both streets – generally with a single room width at ground floor. The Promenade generally has larger shop units housing national high-end shops (including fashionable boutiques) which give it a

special quality adding to its distinctiveness and grandeur.

5.3



Figure 20 Leisure uses on Montpellier Street

There are a number of offices located throughout the character area, for example in The Promenade, Rodney Road, Bath Road, Regent Street, Crescent Place and Imperial Square. Whereas some of these offices are housed within modern office blocks of various styles, others are located within converted Regency houses. This is evident along the Promenade (where the Municipal Offices are located) and Bath Road. These offices of all types bring economic power and prosperity to the area.

5.4

Montpellier contains large areas of housing. Extensive Regency terraces are positioned along Montpellier Spa Road, Royal Crescent, Imperial Square and Bath Road. The continued presence of a number of uniform houses and terraces enhances the character and appearance not just of Montpellier but of the central conservation area as a whole and contributes to its special qualities. A number of detached houses are evident, some set within large grounds. They often reflect the historic plot form of houses within Montpellier. The recent completion of a contemporary housing development on the site of the former Victory Club, has helped enhance this corner of Imperial Square. Flats are also located above Regency shops and in a number of modern blocks e.g. The Pavilions. Cambray Court is an interesting example of 1930's development, which is not a typical building of this historic area.



Figure 21 Municipal Offices



Figure 22 Royal Crescent

5.5

A range of civic and public buildings is provided in Montpellier through the presence of churches and chapels, social clubs, the Town Hall and two theatres. Many of these uses are housed within historically and/or architecturally important buildings. Some are listed which enhances the special interest of the character area. These uses can generate high noise and activity levels and are typical uses

within the centre of many urban areas. Their location close by each other helps to create a vibrant and vital mixed use area in the core of the town.



Figure 23 Cambray Baptist Church

5.6



Figure 24 Formal Imperial Gardens

Leisure pursuits are catered for at the extensive Imperial and Montpellier Gardens. These formal gardens are important not only for the setting they establish for surrounding houses, but for the quiet space they provide in the centre of the town, enhancing both the character and appearance of Montpellier.

5.7



Figure 25 Part of Ring Road

The Montpellier character area contains parts of the Inner Ring Road - which carries heavy volumes of traffic particularly in rush hour- and parts of approach roads from the south (Bath Road) and the west (Lansdown Road feeds Montpellier Walk and Terrace). Consequently there are high levels of traffic activity and noise throughout the day. The presence of these routes through the area has a significant impact on ease of pedestrian and cycle movement, which is particularly constrained in the south across Montpellier Walk and at the junction of the Promenade, St George's Road and Imperial Square. The routes also bring with them a plethora of highway signage and paraphernalia. They generally have a negative impact on the character and appearance of Montpellier.

Former uses within area and influence on plan form and building type

- 5.8 Former uses within the Montpellier character area shaped the historic layout and building type and are in many cases still evident in the present-day. This section highlights the dominant former uses and their influences.
- 5.9 During the hey day of Cheltenham's development as a spa town, Montpellier was used for leisure and pleasure purposes through the presence of the Botanic Gardens, Sherborne and Montpellier Walks and Rides and Crescent Gardens. These walks and rides have shaped the plan form of this area by establishing routes to the fashionable spas, and some of which later developed as streets and roads. The walks and rides and the spas, combined to make Montpellier a fashionable and exclusive area during the Regency period. Large residential villas for the wealthy, in spacious grounds, established a high class residential character by 1820.
- 5.10 Towards the middle of the 19th century, terraces had been erected in Rodney Road, Montpellier Spa Road, Cambray Place, Royal Crescent and the Promenade. Shops, hotels and villas had been erected to house the growing population. By 1850, much of the Promenade was devoted to professional or business establishments. Riding schools were also present and served as a leisure activity. The present plan form of Montpellier was advancing at this time.
- 5.11 By the end of the 19th century, many of the public buildings discussed earlier had been built. These catered for the needs of residents and attracted visitors to Cheltenham after the popularity of the spa waters waned. Cambray Spa and Montpellier Spa Baths were still in existence at this time but their popularity was on the decline. Further housing had been constructed together with developing services and facilities. By this time Montpellier was mainly used for housing and retail and had developed an urban character. The present-day plan form of Montpellier had to a large degree been laid out by this time.
- 5.12 Today Montpellier remains relatively unchanged since it was developed in the 19th century – with its street pattern largely intact and many original buildings remaining. This has created its unique character and special qualities.

Architecture and historic qualities of buildings

- 5.13 Montpellier's architectural character is strongly based in the fine Regency buildings for which Cheltenham is well known. The elegance and formality of the 1830s is still evident here today even where new buildings have been added. Some modern buildings have been successful in complementing historic ones. For example, in Imperial Square the Broad Walk development completes the historic built form of the Square. However, in some parts of the Montpellier area, other modern large scale blocks have been built in concrete and brick, by nature of their form, scale and material they rarely preserve or enhance the special architectural qualities of the area.



Figure 26 Complementary recent development in the corner of Imperial Square



Figure 27 The Quadrangle poorly addresses its historic surroundings

- 5.14 Architecture of the Regency period was constructed in a classical style, which was widely adopted from the mid 18th century onwards. Ancient Greek and Roman buildings were studied at this time and scale, proportion and symmetry were key elements of Neo-classical architecture.
- 5.15 Regency buildings within Montpellier are generally 3 or 4 storeys high. Construction materials, typical of the town, are slate roofs, ashlar or painted render walls in pale earth colours, and timber windows. Vertically sliding sashes are in place that emphasise the classically based proportion of the Regency style. Side and rear elevations tend to be exposed brickwork. Roofs in Regency buildings are low pitched, their structure is commonly hidden behind balustrading, cornices or parapets to give the appearance of flat roofs. Verandas and balconies often feature on Regency buildings, as do cornices. The facades of many Regency buildings have been altered in modern times with the change of use of ground floors into shops. Decorative iron railings outside buildings provide an attractive frontage and boundary treatment – they often guard basement areas. The uniformity of terraces throughout Montpellier creates a sense of strength, grandeur and cohesion.



Figure 28 Villa on Bath Road



Figure 29 Imperial Square terraces

- 5.16 Britain's growing economic strength in the late 18th and early 19th centuries led to a need for many new public buildings, as symbols of national pride and achievement. The classical style was seen as an architectural model, combining the right amount of dignity and grandeur with monumental and impressive scale. This style is evident in the Countryside Agency building in Crescent Place (formerly the police station) which features attractive Corinthian columns.

5.17



Figure 30 The Rotunda Walk

After the Old Well was established on the site of Cheltenham's Ladies College in 1738, the Montpellier Spa built by Henry Thompson, was erected in 1809. It was constructed on what is now the site of the Lloyds Bank, Montpellier Rotunda. The earliest building at Montpellier was the Pump Room. The present building is Grade I listed, being one of five Grade I listed buildings within Cheltenham Borough, meaning the building is of 'exceptional interest'. The Rotunda greatly enhances the historic character and appearance now just of the Montpellier character area, but of the central conservation area as a whole.

5.18 Montpellier Walk is unique in that the shops are separated by caryatids. There are thirty two of these armless ladies in total, based on classical Athenian statues. Two of them date from 1840 and are made from terracotta, while the rest were copied locally later in the 19th century, all except one, made of concrete and added in 1970. They greatly enhance the appearance of the buildings and add to the interest and character of the area.



Figure 31 Caryatids on Montpellier Walk

5.19



Figure 32 Architectural detailing on Queen's Hotel

Neo-Palladian influenced architecture is present at the Queen's Hotel. The Queen's Hotel has a very strong architectural design, with a resemblance to some of the classical Russian buildings in old St Petersburg. Its main façade has in the middle, a six-columned Corinthian portico above a base of rusticated arches. The model for its tall Corinthian columns is said to have been one of the Temples of Jupiter in Rome.

5.20



Some public and residential buildings are constructed of red-brick, predominantly built in the Victorian period. The Everyman Theatre was built in 1891 and designed by Frank Matcham, a famous Victorian theatre architect.

Figure 33 The Everyman Theatre

5.21 Although many streets contain extensive terraces creating cohesion in building height and scale, other roads in Montpellier such as Bath Road, contain buildings of varying heights, scales and usages. This creates a diverse and dynamic street scene.

5.22 There are over 153 listed buildings and structures within the Montpellier character area, creating a particularly rich architectural heritage. These buildings are used for both public and residential purposes. All listed buildings are Grade II with the exception of:

BUILDING	GRADE	DATE OF LISTING
Montpellier Rotunda & Pump Room, Montpellier Walk	I	12/03/55
Nos. 1-13 Imperial Square	II*	12/03/55
Nos. 14-34 Imperial Square	II*	12/03/55
Nos. 7-11 & 12-17 Montpellier Arcade, Montpellier Avenue	II*	12/03/55
No. 60 Claremont Lodge, Montpellier Spa Road which includes nos. 23 & 25 Vittoria Walk	II*	12/03/55
Bayshill Lodge (1, 2 & 3) & nos. 1-19 Rotunda Terrace, Montpellier Street	II*	12/03/55
No. 81 Montpellier Terrace	II*	05/05/72
Nos. 1-23 Montpellier Walk	II*	12/03/55
Nos. 1-4 Oriel Terrace, Oriel Road	II*	12/03/55

Nos. 99-119 Promenade which includes nos. 6 & 8 St George's Road	II*	12/03/55
Nos. 121 & 123 Promenade	II*	12/03/55
Nos. 125 & 127 Promenade	II*	12/03/55
Nos. 129 & 131 Promenade	II*	12/03/55
No. 133 Promenade	II*	12/03/55
Queen's Hotel, Promenade	II*	12/03/55
No. 73 Rodney Road	II*	12/03/55
Nos. 1-18 Royal Crescent	II*	12/03/55

Refer to www.cheltenham.gov.uk for full list descriptions.

Index of buildings of local importance

- 5.23 An Index of Buildings of Local Importance has been prepared. It will be used as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Contribution of key unlisted buildings

- 5.24 Many of the buildings within the Montpellier character area are listed, emphasising the area's special architectural and historic qualities. However, many are not listed, but encompass qualities of age, style and materials which are locally distinct and which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Key unlisted buildings include:

- a. The terrace of flats on **The Broad Walk** because:



Figure 34 The Broad Walk

1. The land was named The Broad Walk on Merrett's map of 1834;
2. In the second half of the 19th century, the land was used to accommodate stables for the Queen's Hotel. A pavilion was built on The Broad Walk in 1826 to house a Genoan marble fountain. The pavilion terminated The Broad Walk which remained an unkempt strip of land until 1995 when the terrace was constructed;
3. The terrace is of a neo-Regency style and complements the Regency terraces on the north and east sides of Imperial Square in terms of its size, scale and architectural features. Collectively, the

terraces provide enclosure for the Imperial Gardens and enhance the Garden's setting and appearance;

b. The neo-Regency terraces on **Montpellier Spa Road** because:



Figure 35 Montpellier Spa Road terraces

- Montpellier Spa Road dates from the first half of the 19th century. It originally accommodated lodging houses, constructed during the second half of the 19th century. Its name was changed from North Parade to Montpellier Spa Road at this time;
- Prior to the construction of the neo-Regency terrace at the east end in 1995, the land was the site of a garage. Previous to this, throughout much of the 19th century this land had been used as a riding school - riding along the Montpellier and Sherborne Walks and Rides was a popular recreational pursuit during the Regency period. This adds to the historic interest of this area;
- The neo-Regency terrace has been constructed sympathetically to the adjoining Regency terraces to the west, in terms of their size and scale. It has been designed to complement and look very similar to their Regency neighbours, therefore creating a strong sense of cohesion. They provide a continuation of the terrace to the Trafalgar Street junction;
- The terrace encloses the north side of Montpellier Gardens and provides an attractive setting for the Gardens, enhancing their character and enclosure.

c. **Royscot House** because:

- It occupies an important historic site. The Sherborne/Imperial Spa was moved from the front of the Queen's Hotel to this site in 1837. It was demolished in 1937 to make way for a neo-Georgian cinema named the Regal, later named ABC Cinema. Royscot House was



Figure 36 Royscot House

completed in 1987 at a cost of £3 million;

- The architectural design of the building is interesting. It has a period replica façade on the Promenade frontage and glass and concrete on the Royal Well facing elevation;
- The building occupies a visually prominent position on the corner of St George's Road and the Promenade; Neptune's Fountain located in front of Royscot House enhances its setting.

d. **The Courtyard** on Montpellier Street because:



Figure 37 The Courtyard

- The Courtyard consists of a two level shopping arcade based around a sunken piazza which adds to its interest;
- It accommodates a range of specialist shops which is consistent with the distinguished character and exclusiveness of Montpellier Street;
- The architecture of the Courtyard buildings and use of materials complements the Regency terraces along Montpellier Street;
- The Courtyard's size and scale signify that it is a landmark building which occupies a prominent position next to St Andrew's Church. A pedestrian walkway opposite the Courtyard connects Montpellier Street with Montpellier Walk. This permits views from Montpellier Walk towards the Courtyard.

e. **No's 8 & 10 Montpellier Parade** because:

- They were erected c.1900 and, as an example of Victorian residential building in the area, offer an interesting visual and character contrast to the dominance of Regency buildings and terraces;
- They contain interesting architectural features, including brick and tile hanging, canted bays and multi-hipped roofs;



Figure 38 No's 8 & 10
Montpellier Parade

- The buildings make a positive contribution to the street scene and varied townscape of the town.

f. **Rodney House**, on Rodney Road because:



Figure 39 Rodney Road

- It dates from the 1980s replacing a building from the 1960s. It has been designed sympathetically to fit with the historic context of the area;
- Its size and scale elevates its grandeur and dominance within the street scene;
- It occupies an important visual position on the corner of Regent Street and Rodney Road. This area is highly utilised by pedestrians and particularly vehicular traffic.

g. **24 Rodney Road** (currently Scena Bistro restaurant), because:



Figure 40 No. 24 Rodney
Road

- The building housed a bank at the end of the 19th century adding to its special historic interest;
- It has attractive and interesting architectural features, including Corinthian pilasters and a tripartite window influenced by Italian architecture;
- The building enhances the street scene and the area's character and appearance. This is particularly valuable as the east side of Rodney Road is less attractive than the west side which contains a Regency terrace (although this has been downgraded through poor

treatment of front gardens and boundaries);

- Its size and scale makes it visually prominent within the street scene.

h. **Ellenborough House** on the corner of Oriel Road and Wellington Street because:



Figure 41 Ellenborough House

- The building originally consisted of 3 terraces by the end of the 19th century;
- Previous to its current use as offices, it was a hotel. The façade was retained and the offices reconstructed behind;
- It is located close to the site of the Cambay Spa adding to this area's interest;
- The building occupies a visually prominent position on the corner of Oriel Road and Wellington Street;
- Its size and scale creates a sense of grandeur and importance.

5.25 Buildings within the grounds of Montpellier Gardens, which are valuable in enhancing the character and appearance of the formal gardens and Montpellier generally, include -

a. The **proscenium** is seen as a key unlisted building within the Montpellier character area because:



Figure 42 The Proscenium

- It was erected in the 1900s as changing rooms and for the storage of sports equipment. It also provided an open stage for shows;
- The proscenium is part of a group of park buildings serving Montpellier Gardens which are of cultural and historic value as an ensemble.

b. The **public convenience** is seen as a key unlisted building within the Montpellier character area because:

- It was erected in c.1930 in Art Deco style;



Figure 43 The public convenience

- It occupies a prominent position, being clearly visible from Montpellier Walk;
- The public convenience is part of a group of buildings serving Montpellier Gardens which are of cultural and historic value as an ensemble.

c. **The park lodge** is seen as a key unlisted building within the Montpellier character area because:



Figure 44 The Park Lodge

- It was built by J. P. Moore in 1876 for the park attendant adding to its historic interest;
- It has a number of interesting architectural features;
- The park lodge is part of a group of buildings serving Montpellier Gardens which are of cultural and historic value as an ensemble.

d. **The refreshment kiosk** is seen as a key unlisted building within the Montpellier character area because:



Figure 45 The refreshment kiosk

- It was erected in the 1930s for the sale of refreshments, adding to its historic interest;
- It has a number of interesting and attractive architectural features;
- The refreshment kiosk is part of a group of buildings serving Montpellier Gardens which are of cultural and historic value as an ensemble.

Local details

5.26 There is a rich heritage present within the Montpellier character area which collectively enhances the character and appearance of not just Montpellier but the whole of the central conservation area. Interesting historic local details include –

a.



Figure 46 Post box in Montpellier

Montpellier Parade - The Parade contains a GR VI post box which dates from the mid 20th century. This item of street furniture has strong local interest and enhances the historic character and appearance of the area. It is also an example of a traditional historic item of street furniture within British villages, towns and cities.

b.



Figure 47 Royal Well bus station

Royal Crescent bus station - A clock is located by the taxi rank in the Royal Well bus station. The clock dates from c.1950. It is four-sided, with Roman numerals supported by brackets atop a single pier. This item of street furniture has strong local interest and adds to the historic character and appearance of the street scene within this area.

c.



Figure 48 Example of 'Dragon and Onion' lamp post in Cambray Place

'Dragon and Onion' lamp posts – these lamps are present in Cambray Place, Regent Street and Trafalgar Street within the Montpellier character area, and St Mary's Churchyard, Church Street which is located in the central character area. They date from the late 19th century. The lamp post in Regent Street is older, dating from 1869. They were intended for electricity and are thus an early and elaborate example of their type. The motif displayed on them is taken from the coat of arms of the Borough which enhances their historic interest.

d.



Figure 49 Cast-iron pillar box on Montpellier Walk

A late 19th century **cast-iron pillar box** is located outside Hanover House on Montpellier Walk. It was designed by JW Penfold and is Grade II listed. Cheltenham has 8 of the 94 surviving Penfold-type Victorian pillar boxes reputed to remain in the country. This greatly enhances its special historic value and reflects the history of the area.

e.



Figure 50 Telephone boxes on the Promenade

In total, ten K6 **telephone boxes** are positioned on the Promenade and one is positioned outside the Salisbury Arms Public House on Montpellier Street. They were designed in 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and are all Grade II listed. These typically English telephone boxes enhance the historic interest of their locales and are visually attractive compared to the modern telephone boxes present in other streets.

f.



Figure 51 Lamp standards by Queen's Hotel

A **pair of historic lamp standards** are located to the south east of the Queen's Hotel at the top of the Promenade. They are Grade II listed, dating from c.1838. Gas holders on top survive, converted to electricity. These lamps are special in that they survive from the beginning of the Victorian period and flank the historic stable entrance of the Queen's Hotel, enhancing their historic interest.

5.27 Many statues, memorials and works of public art are located within the Montpellier character area. Many illustrate Cheltenham's history or are public art works typical of their period. Between them they enrich the area's historic interest and enhance its character. The Council is developing its public art strategy and has placed public art at the heart of its Civic Pride initiative.



Figure 52 Boer War Memorial

a. On the west side of the Promenade is sited a Boer War Memorial erected in 1907. It consists of a bronze statue of a soldier with names inscribed on the stone plinth and on steps. It occupies a visually prominent position on the corner of the Promenade and Crescent Terrace. This local detail is particularly important in that it illustrates the role Cheltenham played in this war which in turn enhances the historic interest of the area. Further south on the western side of the Promenade in front of the entrance to the Municipal Offices is the First World War memorial Cenotaph erected in 1921.



Figure 53 Crimean War Memorial

b. A Crimean War Memorial dating from the 1850s is erected at the top of the Promenade outside the Queen's Hotel. A large iron plinth contains names of soldiers. This Grade II listed structure is seen as 'a very rare and notable monument to the Crimean War' according to the list description. A cannon, taken at Sebastopol in 1856 formerly stood on the plinth but was removed and handed to the government during World War II to provide metal for armaments. This local detail is particularly important in that it illustrates the role Cheltenham played in this war which in turn enhances the historic interest of the area.



Figure 54 Edward VII statue & drinking fountain

c. The Edward VII statue and drinking fountain is located towards the top of Montpellier Walk close to Montpellier Rotunda. It is inscribed and dated 'ER 1914. In memory of HM Edward VII the Peacemaker'. This statue enhances the street scene of the area and contributes to its special historic interest.

- d. A Grade II listed bronze statue of Edward Wilson is located in the Promenade. It was erected in 1914. Edward Adrian Scott was the medical and artistic member of Scott's ill-fated South Pole expedition. He was born in Montpellier Terrace. This statue commemorates an historic local hero and its presence enhances the historic character and appearance of the area.



Figure 55 Edward Wilson statue

- e. A statue of William IV, dating from 1833 is situated in the Montpellier Gardens. The statue was erected by public subscription in 1833 to commemorate the Coronation of King William IV. It was moved from its original location in Imperial Gardens to the present site in 1920. It is a rare statue of this monarch which enhances its special interest.



Figure 56 William IV statue

- f. Neptune Fountain, situated on the corner of the Promenade and St George's Road was unveiled on 3rd October 1893. It was designed by Joseph Hall, the Borough Engineer. It is a highly artistic and theatrical statue consisting of Neptune drawn by four sea-horses, flanked by tritons blowing conches. It is based on Rome's Trevi Fountain. The fountain greatly enhances the special character of the Promenade and occupies a visually prominent position.



Figure 57 Neptune Fountain

- g. 'The Minotaur and the Hare' sculpture by Sophie Ryder is located in the paved area at the north end of the Promenade. It was acquired by public subscription in 1998. This modern sculpture is an interesting feature within the street scene of the Promenade.



Figure 58 Minotaur and Hare sculpture

- h. The fashionable boutiques and bars along Montpellier Walk are enhanced by the presence of caryatids separating properties. They were used in the construction of shops instead of pillars to support the richly carved cornices on their heads. There are 32 of these armless ladies, based on classical Athenian statues. Two of them date from 1840 and are made from terracotta, while the rest were copied locally later in the 19th century – all except one, made of concrete and added in 1970. They are not all the same either, giving them a 'quirky' nature which adds to the interest and character of the area.



Figure 59 Caryatids positioned along Montpellier Walk

- i. The Imperial Fountain is located at the east end of the Broad Walk on the south side of Imperial Square where it enhances the street scene and area's historic interest. This position was its original siting in a small stone pavilion. According to the inscription, the 'marble fountain was looted from Italy by the French in 1800. It was captured by the English while on its way to France and later sold to a Cheltenham solicitor, Thomas Henney. In 1826 Henney installed the fountain in a pavilion near the Imperial Spa, now the site of the Queen's Hotel. In 1834 it was moved to the Montpellier Gardens. It was repaired in 1902 and put on display in the town hall until 1926 when it was moved to the public library. It has now been restored and is on loan from Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum'.



Figure 60 The Imperial Fountain

Materials

Building material

- 5.28 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 stucco or 'Roman cement'. The painting of stucco in a uniform colour gave the town cohesion. Stone was occasionally used to front the buildings. Red bricks are also commonly used in the construction of boundary walls and in Victorian buildings. Modern office and retail buildings throughout the character area are constructed predominantly of steel or concrete frame, often with large glass frontages. Many of these buildings do little to complement the overall grand Regency setting and character of the area.

Roofing material

- 5.29 Many roofs on Regency buildings are flat or low-pitched. Their structures are commonly hidden behind balustrading, large cornices or parapets. Where pitched roofs are in existence on historic buildings, they are predominantly constructed from Welsh slate. Some roofs are hipped.

Ground surface material

- 5.30 There is a range of surface materials used throughout the area – few are original or have any historic value. Roads are tarmac, with concrete kerbs. There is the introduction of additional red surfacing in places, to highlight some parts of the town's developing cycle network – this does little to preserve or enhance the conservation area. Paving is predominantly concrete slabs or flags and tarmac. The use of small format (400mm x 400mm) concrete flags, with a bevelled edge has been adopted as a standard response to maintenance work in the central area generally. These are not characteristic and create a busy jointing pattern. The bevelled edge exaggerates the joint – which in traditional flags would have been comparatively small. Furthermore, these slabs have in recent years been laid with joints parallel to the kerb line. A large format flagstone jointed at right angles to the kerb has been traditionally used and is a better solution. While a concrete flag is acceptable, in some places slate and natural stones have been used (Forest Stone is a traditional local stone) and these can bring considerable enhancement. Paving materials are being reviewed as part of the Council's Civic Pride initiative.

Street furniture

- 5.31 There are many traffic signs in Montpellier, which is typical of a built-up urban area within the town centre, particularly where the main highway network runs through the area. This signage is largely evident on main roads within the area such as at the south end of Montpellier Walk which leads onto Lansdown Road (A40) and Bath Road which leads onto Shurdington Road (A46), both major approaches to the town. They can be large and intrusive and occasionally are

redundant or duplicate each other. The Council is currently reviewing directional signage throughout the town centre.

- a. Much of the other street furniture (pedestrian signs, bollards litter bins etc) is black in a “Victoriana” style. Most is cast iron, but bins and many bollards are plastic or recycled rubber. Pedestrian signage is generally topped by a cast pigeon. There is continuity in the choice of street furniture throughout the town. However, the choice of plastic and rubber materials fails to contribute to preserve or enhance the setting of the conservation area. Furthermore, the pedestrian signing is difficult to read for the partially sighted and the method of adding finer posts (one on top of the other) does create some very high signs. Street furniture is being reviewed as part of the Council’s Civic Pride initiative. Additionally, the Council is running a “declutter” initiative designed to review the need for street furniture and remove it where it is unnecessary.
- b. The style and design of street lamps varies greatly within the Montpellier character area. In places, historic, traditionally and elegantly designed lamp posts are joined by modern plain designs. There is a mix of modern and historic street lamps in the Promenade and Montpellier Street, which causes a lack of cohesion and uniformity and detracts from the area’s special qualities. In other roads, street lamps are of an elegant historic design and uniform along the street, enhancing the character and appearance of the street scene and its historic qualities. Montpellier Terrace for example contains uniform street lamps. Montpellier Gardens contain elegant historic lamp posts painted green which complement the gardens. They are traditional and formal in design. Bath Road, an historic street which pre-dates 1820, contains modern lamp posts which do not enhance the setting of its historic buildings nor the setting of Oriol Place. Ornate, historic ‘Dragon and Onion’ lamps are present in Trafalgar Street, Cambay Place and Regent Street. They date from the late 19th century, and give a common theme to these streets. A car-park adjacent one of these lamps in Trafalgar Street detracts from its attractive visual qualities.
- c. Benches within the Montpellier character area are predominantly of a wooden construction. These are mainly present in the Promenade, Imperial and Montpellier Gardens where they enhance the green environment and complement the presence of trees in these spaces.

Contribution of trees and green spaces

- 5.32 There are three significant green spaces in the Montpellier area - Long Gardens, Montpellier Gardens and Imperial Gardens. These follow a line, north south along Montpellier Walk and the Promenade, with Montpellier and Imperial Gardens each making use of large blocks in the area’s grid. Most of the wider streets in the south and west of the area have street trees. In the north and the east the tighter urban grain restricts opportunities for public green space and planting, although there is some private garden planting. The green spaces in this area are not only important as part of its character but fulfil an important civic function, being located in the town centre. They need to be maintained and enhanced

where necessary. Through the Council's Civic Pride initiative, a greening strategy for the less verdant parts of the Montpellier area is being considered.

- 5.33 The Imperial Gardens provide an important historic open space within Montpellier. They are present on the 1820 Post Office map, named as the Botanic Gardens with the Sherborne Walks and Rides running around the Gardens. This illustrates they were a valued piece of open land even at this time, despite there being substantial amounts of open undeveloped land in the first half of the 19th century. Today the Imperial Gardens consist of formal leisure gardens which accommodate an open air bar and are popular particularly in summer months. The presence of formal flower beds enhances the appearance of the Gardens. The Gardens form part of the setting of terraces on Imperial Square and the Queen's Hotel. Trees are present around the edges of the Gardens and species include ornamental cyprus, silver birch and flowering cherry. Their positioning around the edges provides a sense of enclosure and they soften the edges between the Gardens and Promenade pavement. To an extent they also soften the visual appearance of the Quadrangle and Town Hall. The lack of trees within the Gardens themselves permits views across them and creates a sense of openness and space. Medium and long distance views from the Promenade towards the Queen's and Imperial Square are enhanced by the positioning of the Gardens.



Figure 61 Open space of Imperial Gardens



Figure 62 Trees present in Imperial Gardens

- 5.34 Montpellier Gardens were laid out by Pearson Thompson (who owned the Montpellier Spa) and the Jearrad brothers (architects who designed Lansdown Crescent) in 1830, and covered 10 acres. They cover 9.5 acres today. The Gardens were previously called Montpellier Grounds, and originally called Red Acre Field, where in 1815 they were referred to as 'Thompson's Red Acre Field'. They were originally laid out as pleasure grounds for the exclusive use of patrons of the Montpellier Spa. Numerous additions were made in the following century before the gardens passed into municipal ownership, including the lodge, bandstand and proscenium buildings. Montpellier Walks and Rides and large villas in spacious grounds surrounded the Montpellier Gardens as shown on the 1820 Post Office map. Terraces were erected by 1834 on the north and south sides. With the positioning of the Montpellier Spa to the west of the Gardens, the area was well utilised for much of the 19th century. The Gardens historically provided a recreational resource by way of Cheltenham Archery Club which was established in 1856, meeting in the Gardens. Today, tennis courts to the south of

the Gardens provide a popular recreational resource. The presence of the William IV statue and historic structures adds to the historic and cultural interest of the Gardens and contribute to its character and appearance. The Gardens also provide an attractive setting for these features. Medium and long distance views are permitted across the Gardens through its flat plan form, creating a sense of space. Mature, well established trees within the Gardens include the species horse chestnut, lime, beech, wellingtonia, yew, cyprus and oak. This variety adds to the Garden's interest. Trees are situated throughout the Gardens and its edges, which provide screening to buildings and act as a boundary treatment by softening edges between the Gardens and pavements. The avenues consist of lime, copper, beech, plane and horse chestnut trees and the north- west section of the Gardens is its 'arboretum' area, which contains a variety of tree species. The Montpellier Gardens are currently undergoing restoration under the Heritage Lottery Fund, with a design based on their historic layout. Both the Imperial and Montpellier Gardens are extremely important historic open spaces within the Montpellier character area and need to be well protected and conserved.



Figure 63 Open space of Montpellier Gardens



Figure 64 Tennis courts in Montpellier Gardens



Figure 65 Trees within Montpellier Gardens

5.35



Figure 66 Trees within Promenade

The Promenade is tree lined on either side – with a double row of trees on the west. These mature, well established trees are important in influencing the character and appearance of the Promenade. Species comprise of oak, horse chestnut, plane, lime and tulip trees. Along the west side of Imperial Gardens on the Promenade are plane, silver birch, oak and lime trees. The upper part of the Promenade contains a fine and characteristic line of plane trees. Formal gardens outside the Municipal Offices enhance the setting of this Grade II* listed building and enhance its grandeur and importance. They also provide a setting for the statues situated along this strip of garden.

5.36



Figure 67 Greenery within Royal Well bus station

In the 19th century, the site of the present Royal Well bus station consisted of open land with trees and was named Crescent Gardens. A path ran through what is now a car-park in front of Royal Crescent. Hedgerow currently separates the car-park from the bus station and screens the two areas acting as a 'soft' boundary. Two large mature plane trees in the centre of the bus station dominate the area and enhance its character and appearance. They have historic value, dating from the time of the Regency spa. Two feature trees are also sited near to the hedgerow. The presence of these trees and hedgerow softens the 'hard' appearance of the bus station and enhances the setting of the striking Royal Crescent terraces. However, the space is poorly served generally by the bus station and Inner Ring Road. The Council's Civic Pride initiative is considering how the area can be enhanced.

5.37



Figure 68 Front gardens & hard-standing on villas

In the present day, the private gardens of many terraces have been converted into hard-standing for cars. However, villas (in Montpellier Parade and Vittoria Walk for example) have generally retained their large spacious gardens (with car parking often restricted to carriage drives). It is important that gardens are retained where possible as their presence enhances the character and appearance of not just the buildings, but the area generally, which is especially important due to Montpellier's urban character and close proximity to the town centre.

5.38



Figure 69 Lime trees with TPOs in grounds of the Pavilions

All trees within Montpellier are protected due to their position in a conservation area, however, many have Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) which demonstrates their importance and significance to their locale. Trees with Orders placed on them include the row of young limes within the grounds of the Pavilions, between Paragon Terrace and Sandford Road. They partially screen the flats from public space, and their presence in the area is valuable in that they provide an attractive contrast

to the commercial urban character of much of Bath Road.

- 5.39 No.'s 114-136 Bath Road are Grade II listed Regency terraces. In front and partially screening them is a row of limes and sycamores which have TPOs. They enhance the setting of these Regency buildings. Other TPOs have been placed on individual trees throughout the Montpellier character area.

5.40



An important cedar tree is an attractive feature located on the corner of Montpellier Terrace and Bath Road, within the grounds of Eagle Tower. This tree does much to enhance the setting of the tower.

Figure 70 Cedar tree within grounds of Eagle Tower

- 5.41 Hedges and trees provide an attractive boundary treatment and are used as such in several areas of the character area. They screen buildings creating privacy and enclosure, and separate public and private space.

Negative factors

- 5.42 Due to the intense activity and development of much of the Montpellier character area, considerable change has occurred over recent years, some of which has negatively impacted on the area's overall character and appearance. Negative factors and intrusions include:
- a. Traditional architectural features have been lost from some of the older buildings;
 - b. The conversion of some historic buildings to shops, which has led to some of them containing inappropriately designed shop frontages and fascias which do not complement the historic buildings. Alterations can detract from the appearance of historic buildings and cause loss of historic fabric;
 - c. The presence of replacement windows on some properties in uPVC and installation of modern roof lights erodes local building character;
 - d. Modern intrusions in the form of satellite dishes and aerials are also harmful to the overall appearance of buildings and detract from their historic and architectural qualities. These additions can often be seen

clearly from public space which harms the character and appearance of not just the individual buildings, but the area generally;

- e. A loss of front gardens to hard-standing for cars reduces private green space and removes boundary treatment and enclosure. It adds to the urban nature of the character area, negatively affecting its appearance. On-street parking, evident in many streets, can create vitality. However, if not properly managed it can contribute to congestion, visual clutter and detract from the character of the streets and buildings in the conservation area;
- f. A number of poorly designed modern buildings detract from the special qualities of the character area. Such buildings include the Quadrangle and some offices on Oriel Road and surrounding roads. These buildings tend to relate poorly to their historic context in terms of their size, mass and use of materials. This failure springs largely from a lack of consideration of issues of scale, mass, rhythm, plot form, set back and orientation. Oriel Road/Imperial Square has been particularly poorly served in this regard - with the Quadrangle, telephone exchange and Archant House next to Oriel Lodge all failing to properly consider their neighbours and wider setting. The Promenade façade of Cavendish House and all of the buildings directly behind it was demolished in the 1960s. The ornate façade was replaced by a utilitarian design with large panes of glass which fails to preserve or enhance the setting of the pleasing mix of proportions and styles in the historic buildings within the Promenade and adjoining Cavendish House. The Eagle Tower dominates its neighbours in a manner uncharacteristic of Regency town planning;
- g. A very small number of poorly maintained historic buildings detract from the special qualities of the character area and threaten to de-value its impressive and distinguished character – one in question is 81 Montpellier Terrace, on the National Buildings at Risk register;
- h. Aesthetically unattractive ground level and multi-storey car parks within the character area detract from Montpellier's character and appearance. There are a number of car-parks within the area due to its close proximity to the town centre. These are often located on historic sites, for example Rodney Road car-park on the corner of Oriel Road which historically was the site of the Fowler's Chalybeate Spa. The positioning of the entrance to the Regent Arcade multi-storey car-park next to a grand Regency building and terraces in Regent Street fails to preserve or enhance the character of the area;
- i. Much street signage is evident on the busy streets and in particular the ring road. Although signage is clearly needed due to the high volume of traffic passing through these roads, it fails to contribute to the preservation of the character and the setting of the conservation area. There is a programme of rationalisation of street signage;
- j. The presence of graffiti in the Montpellier area has a negative impact on its character. This often takes place on blank walls – which could be considered a design fault. Where it occurs, it can often lead to further degradation of the area. The otherwise pleasant footpath

connecting Cambray Place to Rodney Road, has graffiti on its brick walls detracting from its otherwise calm character.

Neutral areas

- 5.43 Areas within the Montpellier character area which neither enhance nor detract from the character or appearance of the character area, but have potential for enhancement include:
- a. Several modern housing and office developments are present within the Montpellier character area. These developments are typically situated on Bath Road and adjoining roads. They generally sit comfortably within their surroundings, and although they do not enhance the historic setting of the area, they do respect their neighbouring Regency buildings and are sympathetic to them in terms of their size, scale and architectural design.
 - b. Several car-parks are located throughout the character area due to its close proximity to the town centre. The 'hard' appearance of these car-parks could be enhanced to improve their overall appearance and allow them to sit more comfortably in their surroundings.

General condition of area

- 5.44 The condition of the built and physical environment of the Montpellier character area within the central conservation area as a whole is good. Montpellier's prosperity, magnificence and grandeur is demonstrable through the area's plan form, large number of listed residential, commercial and public buildings and the presence of the formal gardens.
- 5.45 Considerable amounts of revenue are generated from retail and commercial uses in the character area. Its location within close proximity to the town centre also means that high amounts of investment are made into public services and amenities.
- 5.46 High valuation of buildings, many of which are listed, means the majority of buildings are well maintained. This contributes to the area's character, appearance and value. It is important that the physical condition of the historic buildings is preserved in order to retain not just Montpellier's, but the town's distinctiveness and identity.
- 5.47 Some anti-social behaviour problems are apparent within the Montpellier character area, which is perhaps inevitable in a town centre location. Vandalism and graffiti for example are apparent, but measures have been taken to limit the problems through, for example CCTV cameras placed in car-parks, roads and on some commercial buildings. While there is clearly a need for these measures are kept in place and developed where needed, in-order to maintain a safe and secure environment and retain the special qualities of Montpellier, it is important that they are designed and positioned to minimise impact on the character of the area.

Problems, pressures and capacity for change

5.48 Today, the Montpellier character area experiences problems and pressures due to its intense commercial and residential use close to the town centre.

a. *Problems include –*

- Social problems;
- Some disrepair to a few buildings;
- Modern alternations to historic buildings and loss of traditional architectural features which damage the buildings' special qualities. Where possible, owners should be encouraged to retain original features and conserve rather than replace them;
- The construction of inappropriately designed modern development;
- Vehicular congestion and on-street parking.

b. *Pressures include –*

- High pedestrian and vehicular usage creating pressure on road systems and pedestrian spaces;
- Development pressures and lack of vacant land to develop on.

c. *Capacity for change -*

- 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;
- There is generally little capacity for new development on open land because there is little suitable land;
- The replacement of some inappropriate modern buildings with a more attractive well-designed development which is in keeping with the character of the area may be an option but careful consideration would need to be given to this. Some spaces such as car-parks would also benefit from enhancement.

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 the Montpellier character area's special historic character and appearance, and to consult the local community about these proposals. It is Part 2 which will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document and used as a basis to inform the planning and other decisions of the Council.

The special qualities of the Montpellier 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 5.42 'Negative factors' and 5.43 '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.

Both the Character Area Appraisal and the 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 Building & 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 directions

There are some buildings within the Montpellier 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 e.g. uPVC windows, 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 for works which include –

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

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

1 **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 majority of the Montpellier 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
- g. Development and enhancement opportunities at Royal Well

The Civic Pride Urban Design Framework is being developed as a Supplementary Planning Document. 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. It will be subject to public consultation at a later date. 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 (below) 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.

Action MP1: The Council and its partners will prepare and adopt as a Supplementary Planning Document an urban design framework for central Cheltenham through the Civic Pride project. When adopted, it will review this Management Plan to ensure compatibility.

2 **Control of Development**

It is essential that any development should preserve or enhance the setting of any adjacent historic buildings and existing landscape features and trees, and the overall special qualities of the character area. Therefore, careful consideration must be given to 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 does attempt to ensure that proposals respond positively to their context.

Action MP2: The Council will require new development to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area. Proposals should demonstrate a high quality of design and a proper consideration of context, including, inter alia, issues of:

Size	Plot width and form
Layout	Orientation
Height	Urban grain
Enclosure of streets and spaces	Massing
Materials	Frontage activity
Scale	Landscape
Design	

The Council will refuse planning permission or other consents for proposals which fail to meet these criteria or for:

- a. the demolition of any building or structure if its loss would damage the character or appearance of the conservation area
- b. the extension or alteration of a building where the change would damage the character or appearance of the conservation area;
- c. development which would be harmful to the setting or character or appearance of the conservation area;

- d. development which would adversely affect or result in the loss of important views, open spaces, tree cover or boundary features within the conservation area.

3 **Loss of traditional architectural features on some historic buildings**

Some of the older buildings within the Montpellier character area have been adversely affected by the use of inappropriate modern materials or details such as the replacement of original timber sash windows with uPVC, the loss of original timber front doors and introduction of roof lights which all erode local building detail and fail 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.

Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan Policy CP 3 relates.

ACTION MP3: In order to preserve and enhance the character and setting of the Montpellier character area, the Council will:

- keep under review the need to bring in additional planning controls over minor works in the conservation area through Article 4 directions;
- ensure that unauthorised development is subject to enforcement action;
- encourage owners to repair rather than replace original; and
- consider producing detailed design guidance and information regarding materials appropriate for use in the central conservation area.

4 **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 Montpellier 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.

Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan Policy CP 3 relates.

ACTION MP4: In order to preserve and enhance the character of the Montpellier character area the Council will:

- 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;
- use any planning powers to ensure that equipment or installations 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.
- To supplement this policy, the Council will prepare guidance on the design and implementation of renewable energy schemes.

5 **Enhancement of existing buildings**

Some buildings fail to contribute to the preservation or enhancement of the conservation area. In some cases, these are poorly maintained historic buildings. In other cases, these are modern buildings which have some aspect which fails to respond to its historic context. In the case of historic buildings, the Council may have to resort to the use of enforcement or other planning powers to achieve repair and preservation. On modern buildings, there are unlikely to be powers available, but encouragement of repainting in an appropriate colour or the introduction of planting to soften their impact may be an option.

Civic Pride is considering how this issue might best be addressed.

Action MP5: The Council will use its planning powers, where appropriate, and otherwise encourage the enhancement of poorly maintained historic buildings, this may include use of enforcement or other powers under Section 215 of the Planning Act.

The Council will consider the introduction of a project to encourage the enhancement of other buildings which fail to preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area.

6 **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 conservation area had front gardens with enclosing low railings, hedges or walls. 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. 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 MP6: 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.

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

7 **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, trees and hedgerow as a 'soft' boundary treatment would enhance the historic qualities, character and appearance of the area. 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, uniting properties within it.

See Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Policies BE 5 and CP3.

ACTION MP7: The Council will use its powers under planning and other legislation 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 Montpellier character area.

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

8 **Street furniture**

The character area has a large amount of street furniture (pedestrian signage, bollards, bins, seats etc). There needs to be a consistency of style to help create a cohesive identity for Montpellier. The presence of excessive or redundant street signage causes street clutter and is visually unattractive. The potential for additional signage throughout the Montpellier character area is a cause for concern in respect of its impact on the character of the character area and overall conservation area.

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 measure in historic environments. The Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan Policy BE 18 relates.

ACTION MP8: 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 town centre as a whole.

The Council will lobby the Highway Authority to minimise signage, markings and other street furniture in its traffic management projects. 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 Montpellier character area.

9 **Surface Materials**

Surface materials in the public realm are an important part of the character of the area. Whilst generally the most appropriate paving material would be a large format flag, ideally in stone, there may be opportunities to use alternative materials. This must be done as part of considered approach to the use of the location and the heritage context. Jointing is an important element in the impact of paving materials. Traditionally it would be at right angles to the kerb line, and any deviation from this approach needs to be properly considered and justified.

The Civic Pride project will address appropriate surface materials and their use.

Action MP9: The Council will require developments to adopt a considered, contextually sensitive approach to the selection and use of surface materials. It will lobby the Highway Authority to adopt such an approach in the implementation of capital and maintenance schemes.

10 **Tree management**

The presence of trees makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of parts of the Montpellier character area. They need to continue to be well protected and managed in the future.

ACTION MP10: The 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 County Council.

When a trees dies or is removed on land which is within the conservation area, the land owner has a legal obligation under section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to plant a replacement tree of an appropriate size and species. The Council will encourage owners to fulfill 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.

This proposed action will maintain the overall leafy character and appearance of the area. The creation of gaps within formal planted avenues of trees will also be avoided.

11 **Car parks**

At present, some car parks in the Montpellier character area are visually unattractive spaces, which detract from the overall character and appearance of the area. Through the Civic Pride Project, some car parks may be subject to re-development.

ACTION MP11: The Council will continue its programme of enhancement schemes where appropriate to soften and improve the overall visual appearance of car parks.

12 **Setting and views**

The setting of the Montpellier 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 MP12: The Council will ensure that all development respects the important views within, into and from the Montpellier 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 that due regard is paid to these views in the formulation of public realm works or enhancement schemes in accordance with Cheltenham Borough Local Plan.

13 **River Chelt**

The setting of the River Chelt flowing through the area could be improved. At present it runs between high brick walls which are covered in overgrown vegetation. The River is a potentially attractive feature within the built-up environment and could be enhanced by the removal of overgrown vegetation the introduction of appropriate hard and soft landscape treatments. The opening up of views of the River would benefit the character area. This is a topic under consideration through Civic Pride.

Action MP13: The Council will use opportunities through its planning and other powers to improve the setting of the River Chelt through the Montpellier Character Area.

4 Townscape Analysis map

Townscape Analysis map of Montpellier Character Area

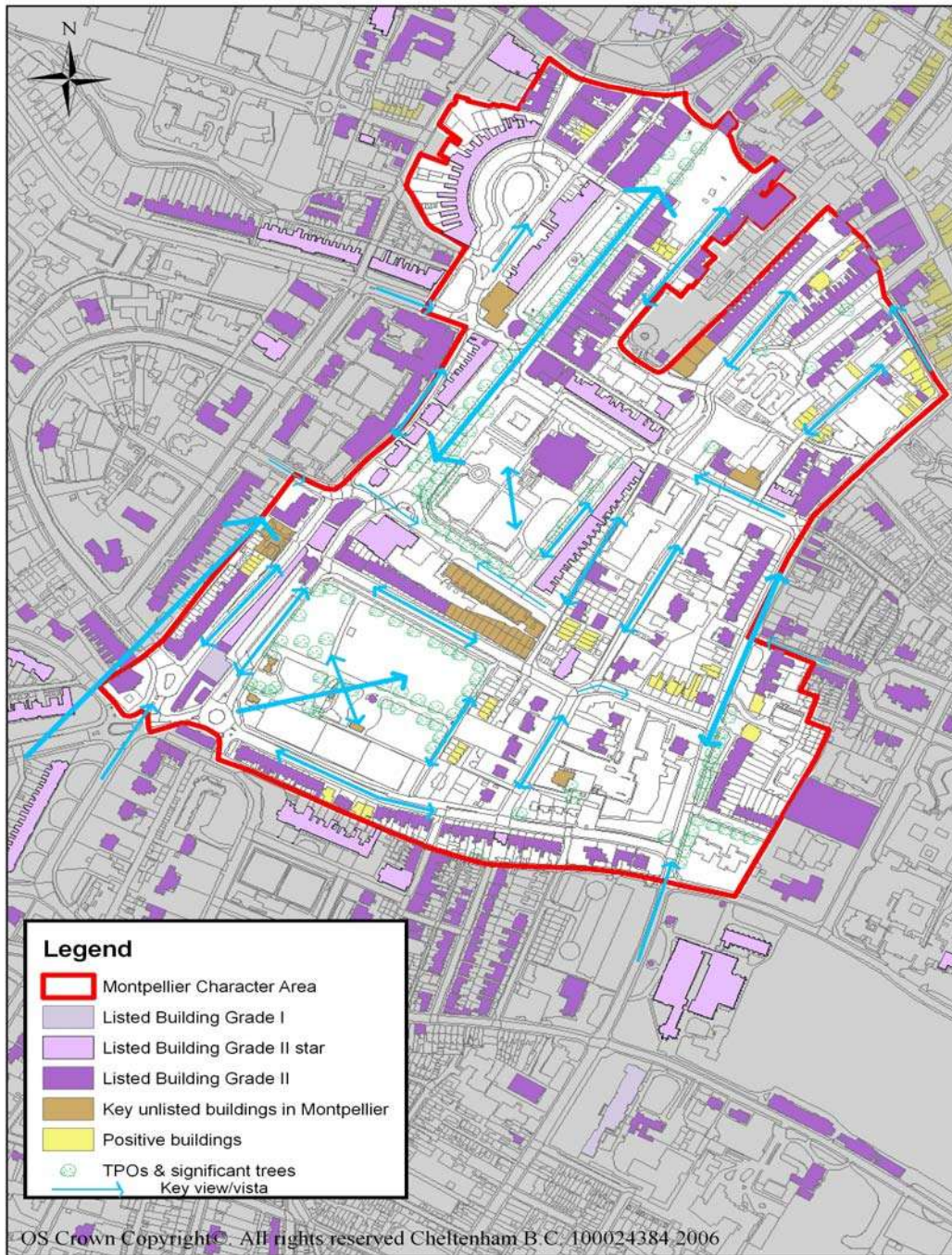


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