

CHELTENHAM

# Local development framework

## 18. LOWER HIGH STREET CHARACTER AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

JULY 2008





## Central Conservation Area

### 18. Lower High Street Character Area Appraisal and Management Plan July 2008



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### **Key characteristics**

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

- The Character Area has special historic value, dating from the Medieval period when the High Street was the only street in Cheltenham;
- The pattern and layout of streets varies throughout the area, with a predominance of compact artisan terraced housing mixed with modern terraced housing and semi-detached houses;
- Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens covers an extensive area, providing an open green space which is well used for recreation;
- A large number of retail businesses are located in the Character Area which contribute to its use and character today;
- The area contains large numbers of extensive Regency and Victorian terraced houses which form a distinct identity for the Lower High Street;
- A small number of buildings retain original features including ironwork which greatly enhances the historic character and special qualities of the area;
- This Character Area contains over 35 statutory listed buildings (some of which are grouped under the same listing) and some locally indexed buildings and structures, giving it a rich architectural and historic interest.

### **Key issues**

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

- Control of new development;
- Loss of traditional architectural features on some historic buildings;
- Negative impacts of the presence of equipment or installations on or around buildings, such as large aerials and satellite dishes;
- Poor street furniture;
- Tree management;
- Boundary enclosures;
- Enhancement of existing buildings and land;
- Setting and views;
- On-street parking;
- Car parks;
- Graffiti;
- Derelict buildings;
- Paraphernalia on road junctions.

# Part 1 – Character Appraisal

Townscape Analysis Map of the Lower High Street Character Area

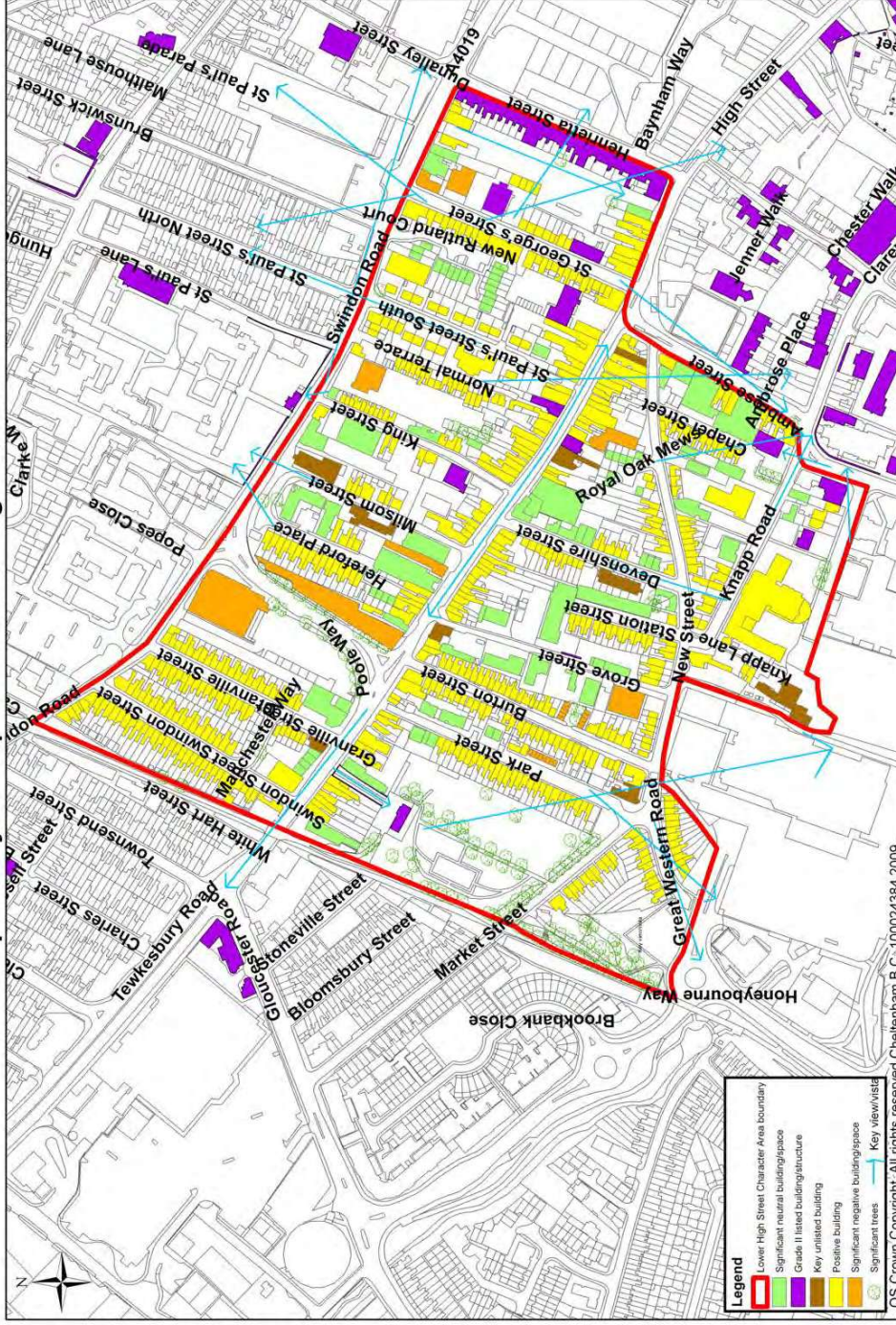


Figure 1 – Townscape Analysis Map of the Lower High Street Character Area

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

## **Planning context**

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

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

- 1.8 Cheltenham's Civic Pride project aims to regenerate specific areas within the town. The project intends to develop and deliver public realm enhancement schemes and redevelop under-utilised council land including car-parks. More information on Civic Pride can be found at [www.cheltenham.gov.uk](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk) This project falls within part of the Lower High Street Character Area. See Management Proposal 14 'Civic Pride' in the Part 2 Management Plan for further detail.

### **The Central Conservation Area**

- 1.9 Cheltenham is known as the most complete Regency town in England. It lies at the foot of the Cotswold scarp, where the valley of the River Chelt meets the Severn Vale. Currently the whole of the Cheltenham Borough area has a population of approximately 112,000 people.
- 1.10 Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area was designated by Gloucestershire County Council on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1973 and its boundary was extended by Cheltenham Borough Council on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1987. The Central Conservation Area includes the whole of the town centre, most of the Victorian, Edwardian and some of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century suburbs. It covers commercial, industrial, retail and residential areas, as well as the University campus complexes, some extensive school campuses and the hospital complex.
- 1.11 There is a Government requirement for existing Conservation Area boundaries to be re-assessed from time to time. Due to the size of the Central Conservation Area (reputedly the largest Conservation Area in Europe covering 600 hectares), it has been necessary to establish approximately 19 character areas. These have been appraised separately in-order to identify their individual key components and in turn establish how each area may best be preserved and enhanced.

### **Lower High Street Character Area**

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

the east. The western boundary of this character area derives from the western boundary of the Central Conservation Area, which follows the route of the old Great Western Railway Cheltenham and Honeybourne Line, which is now the Honeybourne cycle track. The southern boundary wraps around the terraced houses on the south side of Great Western Road, the buildings on Knapp Lane and buildings on the south side of Knapp Road. This line has been influenced by the decision to remove the area around the Waitrose development and Jessop Avenue from the Central Conservation Area. This area is proposed to be removed from the Central Conservation Area when a boundary review is able to take place.

- 1.15 Today, the Lower High Street comprises a mix of retail, light industry and residential land use. An important part of the area is occupied by Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens, which provides an attractive green public space in the busy urban area. There has been a significant amount of 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> century development throughout the Character Area. In some situations, the modern developments are a negative contrast to, and detract, from the historic buildings in terms of architectural style, size, scale and materials. A number of the historic buildings retain original features, such as ironwork, which contribute to the historic character and special qualities of the area.

#### **Summary of special interest**

- 1.16 The Lower High Street is special because:
- The Character Area has special historic value, dating from the Medieval period when the High Street was the only street in Cheltenham;
  - The pattern and layout of streets varies throughout the area, with a predominance of compact artisan terraced housing mixed with modern terraced housing and semi-detached houses;
  - Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens covers an extensive area, providing an open green space which is well used for recreation;
  - A large number of retail businesses are located in the character area which contribute to its use and character today;
  - The area contains large numbers of extensive Regency and Victorian terraced houses which form a distinct identity for the Lower High Street;
  - A small number of buildings retain original features including ironwork which greatly enhances the historic character and special qualities of the area;
  - This character area contains over 35 statutory listed buildings (some of which are grouped under the same listing) and some locally indexed buildings and structures, giving it a rich architectural and historic interest.

## Lower High Street Character Area within the Central Conservation Area

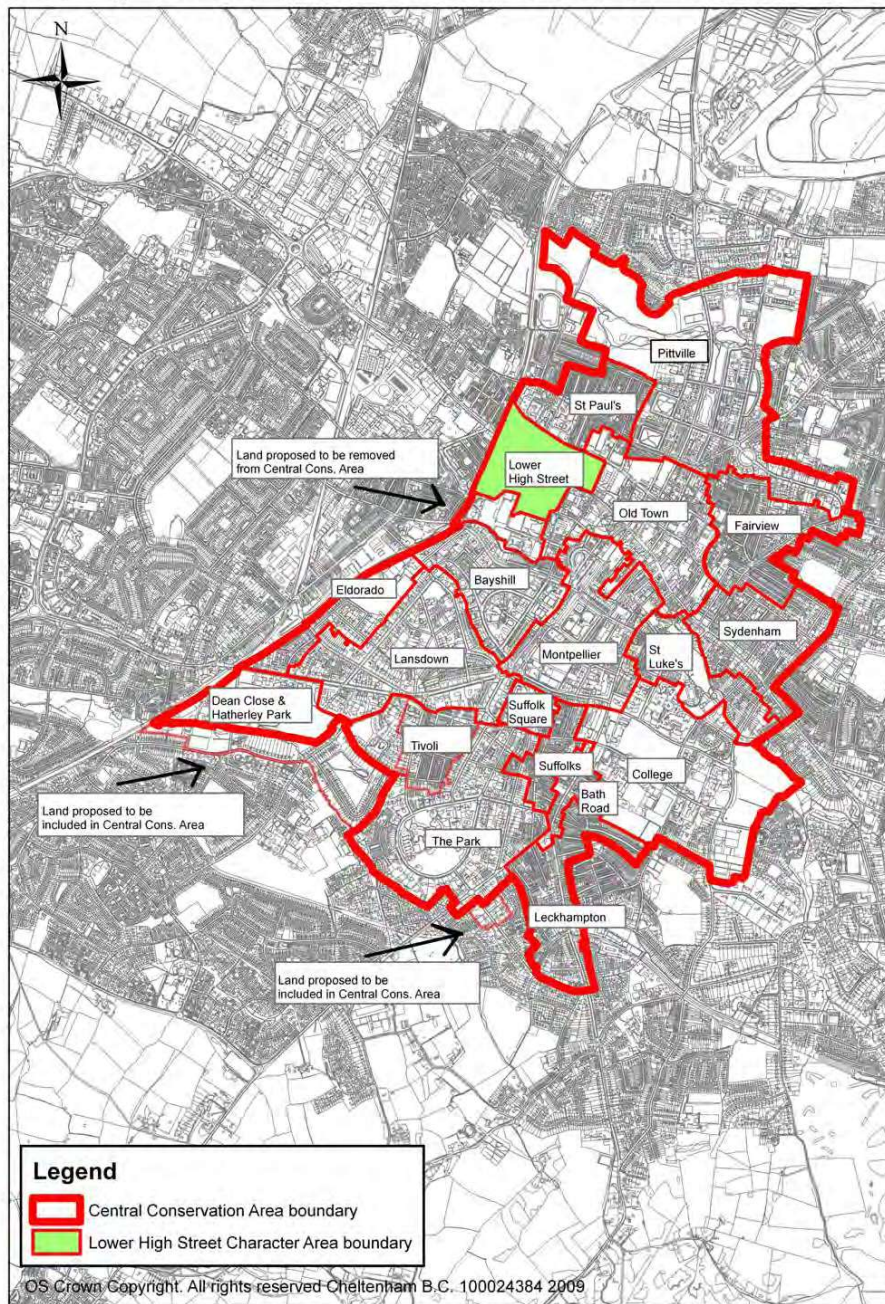


Figure 2 Lower High Street Character Area within the Central Conservation Area

## 2 LOCATION AND SETTING

### Location and context of Cheltenham

- 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 (AONB) to the south and east. To the west of Cheltenham is the River Severn, with the Forest of Dean and Wales beyond the Severn.

### **General character and plan form of the Lower High Street character area**

2.2 The Lower High Street Character Area is positioned immediately to the west of Cheltenham's town centre. Poole Way and Swindon Road are busy roads (being part of the Northern Relief Road) and join the A4019 Tewkesbury Road in the west. Swindon Road forms the northern boundary of the Character Area, serving as a distinctive boundary between Lower High Street and St. Paul's Character Area. The High Street runs through the centre of the Character Area, and is often congested by through traffic. The Lower High Street forms a distinct space, being closed visually to the west by the railway bridge which forms a strong visual barrier (where the Honeybourne Line forms the western boundary of the Character Area and overall Conservation Area) and closed visually to the east by a bend in the road at no. 269 High Street.

2.3 The roads in the Lower High Street Character Area tend to be narrow historic residential streets, which include Park Street and Devonshire Street. Jeremy Jefferies states that *"Park Street is unusual in...the conservation area...in having a consistent frontage on one side of the street. Its east side was never fully developed"* There are a small number of wider streets such as Swindon Road and the High Street. Roads tend to be set out in an irregular grid pattern.

2.4 Narrow roads running either side of the High Street such as Burton Street and Granville Street contain:



**Figure 3** Granville Street

- Compact artisan terraced housing;
- A predominance of residential terraced houses although there are some small scale businesses such as car repair garages present;
- Some modern infill development;
- Much on-street parking.

2.5 The wider roads such as the High Street contain:



**Figure 4** High Street

- Predominantly commercial land use;
- Some derelict buildings;
- Spaces are busy with both vehicular traffic and pedestrians;
- Much on-street parking;
- Jeremy Jefferies points out that *"building heights are inclined to increase towards the town centre, particularly to the east of no. 330 High Street."*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jefferies, J. (1997) Cheltenham (Central) Conservation Area Character Appraisal District No 28 – Draft Report October 1996, pg. 16

<sup>2</sup> Jefferies, J. (1997) Cheltenham (Central) Conservation Area Character Appraisal District No 28 – Draft Report October 1996, pg. 7

### **Wider landscape setting**

- 2.6 The Lower High Street is surrounded on all sides by urban development. To the north and east are positioned St Paul's and Old Town Character Areas. The ward of St. Peter's is located to the west, which lies outside the Central Conservation Area. The Waitrose development and offices around Jessop Avenue are located to the south. Some views of the Cotswold escarpment can be seen to the north and east over the lower roofs of buildings. Whilst views of Leckhampton Hill can be seen from Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens. These distant views create a rural connection between the countryside and the urban area.

Some landmark buildings are present, which include Normandy House on the High Street, St. Gregory's School on Knapp Road, Murray House on St Paul's Street South and the Hindu Community Centre on Swindon Road. Landmark buildings in other Character Areas are also visible, including St. Mary's Church and St. Gregory's Church in Old Town Character Area and St. Paul's Church in St Paul's Character Area.



**Figure 5** View of Leckhampton Hill from Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens



**Figure 6** The former Mission Hall (now the Hindu Community Centre) on Swindon Road is a landmark building

## **3 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **Archaeology within the town of Cheltenham**

- 3.1 Some archaeological research has been conducted within the Borough of Cheltenham and in-depth research can be found in "Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey".<sup>3</sup> Many archaeological artefacts would have been lost during the expansion of the town in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and so medieval and post-medieval finds have been very limited.
- 3.2 A few prehistoric remains have been found within the town, raising the possibility that people from Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age periods travelled or lived here. An Iron Age enclosure ditch was uncovered on the site of the present day Children's Library in 1986-87. This indicates that an area of Iron Age occupation was likely situated nearby.<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 'Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey' Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, 1975

<sup>4</sup> 'Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey' Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, 1975

- 3.3 Within the Lower High Street Character Area, a number of finds have been noted under the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record. These archaeological finds include evidence of a *“timber framed building at 341 High Street”*<sup>5</sup>; a *“Roman ditch and Saxon pottery found in Station Street”*<sup>6</sup>; *“post Medieval ditches excavated on the site of St Gregory’s School”*<sup>7</sup> and *“Roman coins found near to the site of the former St James’ Station”*<sup>8</sup>.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 Archaeological remains unearthed provide a basis for researching the origins and early development of Cheltenham, and contribute indirectly to a sense of place evident in the modern era.

### **Summary of Historic Development of Cheltenham**

- 3.6 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 classical style buildings were built for the growing population. The popularity of the spa waters waned from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Cheltenham developed other roles in the form of its growing importance as a major educational centre during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In turn this led to the development well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century of some acclaimed public schools and churches. Before World War II, light industry boosted the town’s economy. The establishment of GCHQ in Cheltenham immediately after World War II has had an enormous impact on employment in the town. Today, the town’s attractions include fine shops and events such as the races and numerous cultural festivals as well as its legacy of Regency architecture, with trees, parks, gardens and public spaces.

### **General history of the Lower High Street character area**

- 3.7 The historic development of the Lower High Street Character Area, based on plans from 1776, 1820, 1834, 1897, 1932 and 2007 is shown on the Historical Development map which accompanies this section (see Fig. 7). The Character Area originates from the Medieval period when Cheltenham was a market town. At this time the main street was the High Street and there were lanes running at right angles from the High Street and then ending in open fields. The High Street also runs through the Old Town Character Area and the two Character Areas together encompass the heart of ancient Cheltenham. Timber framed cottages were situated along the High Street within burgage plots. With the development of Cheltenham as a fashionable

<sup>5</sup> Gloucestershire Sites & Monuments Record – Summary Report for Area 21434 no page no. given

<sup>6</sup> Gloucestershire Sites & Monuments Record – Summary Report for Area 22102 no page no. given

<sup>7</sup> Gloucestershire Sites & Monuments Record – Summary Report for Area 21015 no page no. given

<sup>8</sup> Gloucestershire Sites & Monuments Record – Summary Report for Area 9405 no page no. given

spa town, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, extensive terraces sprung up along the High Street, which frequently were comprised of shops on the ground floor and living accommodation above. Terraced houses were also built in the narrow roads running to the north and south of the High Street. These houses were built for the artisan workers who served the wealthy who came to visit and live within the town. In the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, tram roads ran from the quarries at Leckhampton, transporting building material across the town to join the main line in the lower High Street by the coal wharf (where Tesco is now located). From there they ran on to Gloucester Quay. Industry was therefore very much prevalent in this area, and a number of slum houses were built for workers who lived in poor conditions where disease was common.

- 3.8 Jeremy Jefferies explains that “*the street layout, the form of buildings, the lack of ornament and of open space and the many interesting details of the historic fabric still bear clear testament to the particular functions of this essential...part of the Regency new town and of later development in Cheltenham (Central) Conservation Area.*”<sup>9</sup>
- 3.9 In the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries the Character Area continues to have a mixed residential and commercial character, with commercial premises being predominantly located along the High Street. The majority of timber framed buildings along the High Street have now been either substantially re-fronted or demolished. The Character Area today has a bustling character which is busy with shoppers and also as a residential area and vehicular route into and from the town centre.

#### **Development by 1776**

- 3.10 G. Coales and Son produced a map of Cheltenham’s road layout on July 10<sup>th</sup> 1776. This map depicts few buildings and roads being present within the Character Area at this time. By 1776 the length of the ancient High Street had been laid out and a number of houses were present along the High Street and New Street, which was marked on the 1776 map as *The Knapp*. By 1820, The Knapp had become known as New Street. The only other road in the Character Area was *Fleece Lane*, which was later named Henrietta Street. Hodsdon explains that this street was, for a long time, “...*the site of an animal pound and cattle market.*”<sup>10</sup> Swindon Road had existed since at least “...*1606 (and was known then as) Swyndones waye*”<sup>11</sup>, but is not shown on the map. The roads running roughly east to west (High Street, New Street and Swindon Road) were developed unusually early compared with the development of other predominantly residential streets, which were largely constructed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and which connected with these early roads.
- 3.11 An important site within the area was the ‘Friends Burial Ground’ in Grove Street. Land was acquired for a Quaker burial ground in the street shortly after 1703.

#### **Development by 1820**

- 3.12 By the time the 1820 Postmaster map had been published, this ancient area had become extensively developed. A number of roads had been laid out, namely King Street, Milsom Street, Devonshire Street, Grove Street, Ambrose Street, Market Street, Elmstone Street, Newman’s Place and Chapel Street.

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<sup>9</sup> Jefferies, J. (1997) Cheltenham (Central) Conservation Area Character Appraisal District No 28 – Draft Report October 1996, pg. 10

<sup>10</sup> J. Hodsdon ‘An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham’ (1997) pg. 81

<sup>11</sup> J. Hodsdon ‘An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham’ (1997) pg. 175

Swindon Road is present on the map and is marked as *Turnpike Road*. A toll bar was sited at the junction of the High Street with Gloucester Road, which is positioned just outside the boundary of the Character Area and Central Conservation Area.

- 3.13 The High Street was developed along its entire frontage by this time. It contained compact terraced buildings which were positioned in long, narrow burgage plots. Some of the ground floors of these buildings were occupied by shops. The previously open land to the north and south of the High Street had become enclosed following the Inclosure Act of 1801, which allowed the development of this land.
- 3.14 An important building set back from the High Street was Segrave House, later named Idminton House now known as Normandy House. The building was constructed “c.1810-20...”<sup>12</sup> and was originally built as a villa. However, according to George Rowe, it “...was built as a dispensary in 1813...”<sup>13</sup> and became Cheltenham’s first General Hospital and Dispensary.
- 3.15 Chapel Street, Ambrose Street, Henrietta Street and King Street were developed with artisan terraced housing along much of their length. Approximately half of Milsom Street had been developed with detached and semi-detached villas and terraced houses. Bethel Chapel was present at the end of Chapel Street, occupying the space now taken up by the CPS building. Ebenezer Chapel was positioned on King Street. It has been converted into residential accommodation and is now known as King’s Court.
- 3.16 New Street led to Upper Alstone Mill and Alstone Spa. The site of Upper Alstone Mill is now occupied by the petrol station on the Waitrose site. (The area around Waitrose and Jessop’s Avenue is proposed to be removed from the Central Conservation Area when the boundary is able to be reviewed in the future. More detail can be found in the Bayshill Character Area Appraisal). Upper Alstone Mill was a corn mill, being one of five Medieval mills within the town. Alstone Spa was positioned to the north of Upper Alstone Mill. Hodsdon states the spa was “active...from 1809 to 1834...”<sup>14</sup> Hart states the spa comprised “...an octagonal pump room and a small garden.”<sup>15</sup>

#### **Development by 1834**

- 3.17 Merrett’s map of 1834 conveys that further development had taken place within the Character Area. Much of this development shapes the Character Area today. Further roads had been laid out. These are St. Paul’s Street South, Hereford Place, Burton Street and Park Street.
- 3.18 The space occupied by Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens was named St. Mary’s new burial ground. Rowe explains how “*The ground was purchased in 1830...*”<sup>16</sup> and became a burial ground due to the overcrowded nature of the churchyard at St Mary’s. Park Street, Chapel Street, Ambrose Street, Burton Street, Henrietta Street and King Street were almost fully developed with artisan terraced housing. Grove Street and St. Paul’s Street South were partly

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<sup>12</sup> Department of Culture, Media & Sport ‘Revised List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest – Borough of Cheltenham’ (1998) pg. 415

<sup>13</sup> Department of Culture, Media & Sport ‘Revised List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest – Borough of Cheltenham’ (1998) pg. 416

<sup>14</sup> J. Hodsdon ‘An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham’ (1997) pg. 5

<sup>15</sup> G. Hart ‘A History of Cheltenham’ (1965) pg. 148

<sup>16</sup> G. Rowe ‘George Rowe’s Illustrated Cheltenham Guide 1845’ (1845, reprinted 1981) pg. 92

developed with terraced housing. Jeremy Jefferies explains that “*Grove Street...contained some of the town’s oldest and poorest housing.*”<sup>17</sup> A weighing machine was positioned in St Paul’s Street South.

- 3.19 Approximately half of Milsom Street and Hereford Place had been developed with artisan terraced housing. Knapp Lane was marked on the 1834 map as *Workhouse Lane*. A large workhouse infirmary was located on Workhouse Lane. Branch School on the High Street was situated next to the Royal Oak Inn.

### **Development by 1897**

- 3.20 The 1897 map shows most of the area being as built to the extent the Character Area is today. Devonshire Street School for Boys had been built in Devonshire Street in 1846-7 and St Paul’s Primary School was built in 1855-6 and positioned on Knapp Lane. A former ragged school<sup>18</sup> was built in Milsom Street in 1863-4 by well-known local architect John Middleton. It is interesting to note the relatively high number of schools within the Character Area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.21 Swindon Street and Granville Street had become fully built with compact and extensive artisan terraced housing.
- 3.22 Blake and Beacham state that “...in 1887 (*the Alstone Municipal Baths occupied*)...*the site of the old Alstone Mill.*”<sup>19</sup> These baths were marked as ‘Corporation Baths’ on the 1897 map. When the town’s new public pools opened at Pittville, the Alstone Baths were little used and eventually closed “...in 1975...”<sup>20</sup>
- 3.23 The General Hospital and Dispensary (currently known as Normandy House) on the High Street was extended in 1839 in-order to add further wards. In 1849 the hospital closed due to the opening of Cheltenham General Hospital in Sandford Road in 1848. Between 1853-6 the building was used as a hospital for officers injured in the Crimean War. In the following years, the wards were used as dormitories for female student teachers. The List Description explains that this was “...prior to the erection of Shaftesbury Hall (*in St Georges Place in c1869.*”<sup>21</sup>

### **Development by 1932**

- 3.24 For a period in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until mid 1960s Normandy House was the local Inland Revenue office and later became the offices for a holiday company. It still has an office use  
By 1932 the Character Area contained a small amount of further development. Station Street had been laid out with terraced houses along its west side. Great Western Road had become extended to meet with St. George’s Road. A saw mill was located to the south of Alstone Swimming Baths and a coal depot was located to its eastern side. A stone and timber yard were also located on Knapp Road. These industries were linked with the nearby St James Railway Station. The site of the timber yard on Knapp Road was the future site of St Gregory’s School.

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<sup>17</sup> Jefferies, J. (1997) Cheltenham (Central) Conservation Area Character Appraisal District No 28 – Draft Report October 1996, pg. 4

<sup>18</sup> Ragged schools is a name given to the 19th century charity schools in the United Kingdom which provided education and, in most cases, food, clothing, and lodging for destitute children. They received no government support. - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ragged\\_school](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ragged_school)

<sup>19</sup> S. Blake & R. Beacham ‘The Book of Cheltenham’ (1982) pg. 105

<sup>20</sup> R. Brooks ‘The Story of Cheltenham’ (2003) pg. 196

<sup>21</sup> Department of Culture, Media & Sport ‘Revised List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest – Borough of Cheltenham’ (1998) pg. 416

- 3.25 The Great Western Railway brought a number of cottages on White Hart Street (also known as White Hart Lane) which they “...demolished (in) 1903 in preparation for the railway embankment.”<sup>22</sup> This section of the embankment forms part of the western boundary of the Character Area and Central Conservation Area.
- 3.26 The area to the north of the High Street had been fully developed, the predominant built form being terraced housing. The area to the south of the High Street had also largely been developed with terraced housing.

### **Development by 2007**

- 3.27 Bradbury states that “...the former St Mary's Cemetery was razed for the Churchill Memorial Gardens in 1965.”<sup>23</sup>
- 3.28 The Lower High Street Character Area has seen much change since 1932. Slum clearances in the late 1930's removed a number of buildings from the terraced streets. Such streets included Grove Street and Hereford Place. The terraced houses removed on Grove Street have been replaced by light industry works and car repair garages.
- 3.29 St. Gregory's Catholic School off Knapp Road was built in 1936 and replaced a timber yard and several small buildings. The housing development of Royal Oak Mews was developed in 1994 on the site of the Royal Oak/Irish Oak public house's rear yard. New Rutland Court was also developed in 1994 on the site of the Head Quarters of the 1<sup>st</sup> Gloucestershire Royal Engineers, as is marked on the 1902 map.
- 3.30 Planning permission was granted in 1984 for the construction of the Royal Mail sorting office on Poole Way, on the site of a former depot. This sorting office generates activity in this locality throughout the day.
- 3.31 Swindon Road forms part of the Northern Relief Road and carries high volumes of traffic throughout the day. Significant levels of slum clearance also took place in the narrow residential streets which run between the High Street and Swindon Road. The north side of Swindon Road was also cleared in parts. Consequently, the area around Swindon Road became blighted and has only really begun to revive in recent years.
- 3.32 A number of historic buildings have been converted to different uses in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, the former St Paul's Primary School on Knapp Lane was “...converted to offices (in) 1988 by Gordon Milne Hogg (Architects).”<sup>24</sup> The Devonshire Street School and Schoolhouse in Devonshire Street was “...converted to housing in 1993.”<sup>25</sup>
- 3.33 A number of timber framed houses were demolished or re-faced along the High Street. Some terraced houses were demolished to make way for car repair garages on King Street, New Street and Milsom Street. A rare building estimated to be at least 400 years old in 1963, was situated between Henrietta Street and St George's Street immediately left of the public High Street car park. Historically it was number 168 High Street, which is now number 285, following renumbering of the High Street. It was a timber framed building positioned in a burgage plot. The building had a variety of historic

<sup>22</sup> J. Hodsdon 'An Historical Gazetteer of Cheltenham' (1997) pg. 194

<sup>23</sup> O.C. Bradbury 'Cheltenham's Lost Heritage' (2004) pg. 82

<sup>24</sup> Cheltenham Borough Council Index of Buildings of Local Importance, Item No. 310 (adopted by Full Council 28 June 2007) record no. 162 out of 422

<sup>25</sup> Cheltenham Borough Council Index of Buildings of Local Importance, Item No. 309 (adopted by Full Council 28 June 2007) record no. 78 out of 422

uses, which included being used “...as a farmhouse, inn, ‘music warehouse’ and bakery.”<sup>26</sup> It became “...the first Government post office in Cheltenham (in 1805).”<sup>27</sup> Its final use was as “...the ‘Old Rope Shop’ until 1967, when it was demolished.”<sup>28</sup> This Medieval building was replaced by the functional brick building housing ‘HFC Bank’.

- 3.34 Today, the Lower High Street character area retains its unique mix of commercial and residential units, which are contained in a variety of buildings. Evidence of its Medieval history remains apparent in the area, through the continued existence of the burgage plots and narrow lanes running from the High Street. These physical reminders strongly contribute to the character area’s special qualities and character.

Historical Development of the Lower High Street Character Area

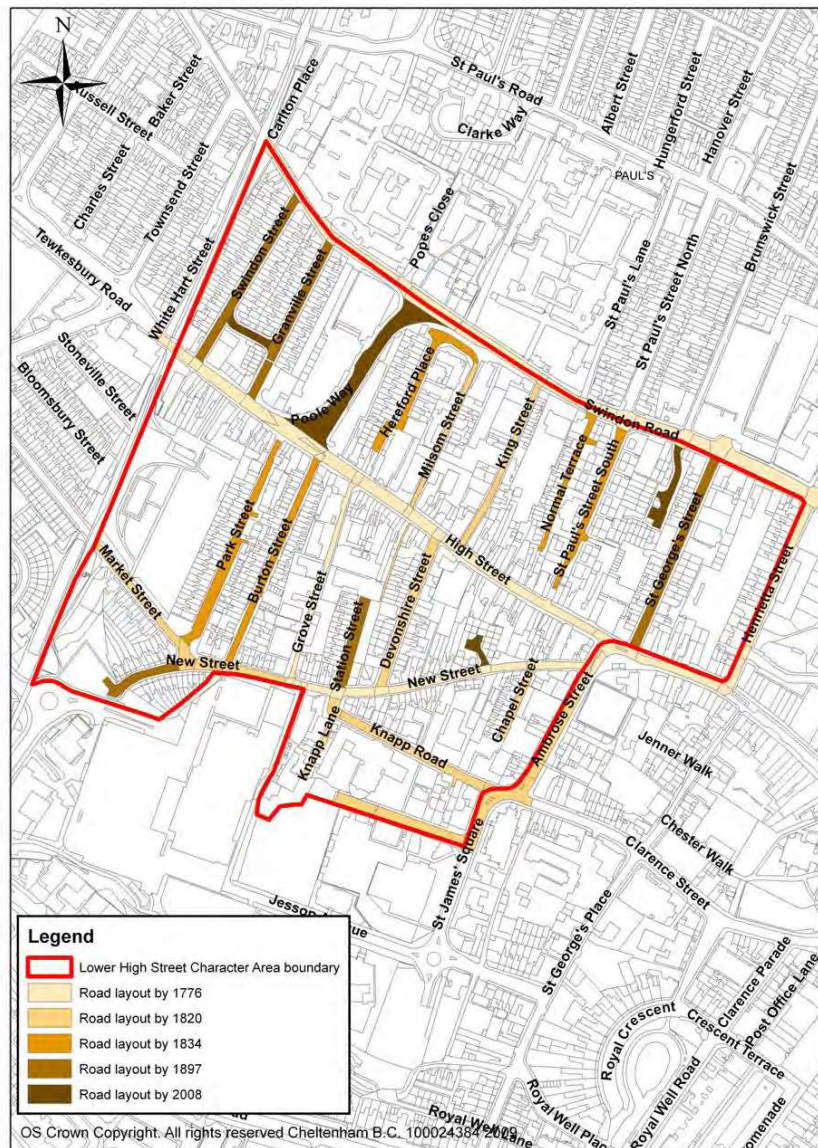


Figure 7 Historical Development of Lower High Street Character Area

<sup>26</sup> O.C. Bradbury 'Cheltenham's Lost Heritage' (2004) pg. 57  
<sup>27</sup> O.C. Bradbury 'Cheltenham's Lost Heritage' (2004) pg. 57  
<sup>28</sup> O.C. Bradbury 'Cheltenham's Lost Heritage' (2004) pg. 57

## 4 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

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

#### Public and private space

4.1



**Figure 8** View of St Gregory's Church spire from end of Market Street

Public and private spaces, together with views out of, into and within the Lower High Street Character Area impact largely on the area's character and appearance. Many roads in the area which run north and south of the High Street have are narrow and experience high levels of on-street parking. The other roads, including the High Street and Swindon Road are wide which enables distance views of landmark buildings such as the spires of St Gregory's Church and St Mary's Church and the tower of St Paul's Church. The width of Swindon Road and the space within Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens allows views of the distant Cotswold escarpment;

4.2



**Figure 9** Compact terraced houses on Swindon Street



**Figure 10** Red brick houses on St Paul's Street South

The residential streets within the area tend to be positioned both to the north and south of the High Street. The dominant built form is 19<sup>th</sup> century artisan terraced housing. These terraced houses often front directly onto the footpath or have very small front yards/gardens, which together with high levels of on-street parking, creates a sense of contained linear space within the street. In contrast, red-brick semi-detached houses of St Paul's Street South are set back from the pavement and have front gardens. This gives an apparent sense of space which together with the gaps between the houses enables views to open up;

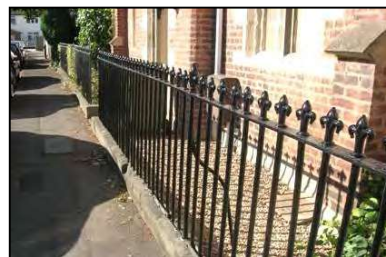
- 4.3 The junction of Poole Way with the High Street is a visually prominent area in need of some enhancement. The West End car park is a poor quality space. This area in general is a negative feature within the character area;
- 4.4 The junction of the High Street with Ambrose Street is another poor quality public space, which is in need of some enhancement. There is a high level of street clutter on this junction which provides a poor setting for positive spaces and buildings, such as the bowling green and Normandy House. In addition some of the shop fronts are decorated in garish colours and designs;
- 4.5 Buildings along Knapp Road and in the north-west corner of St James' Square have a mixed use and tend to be detached with are of a comparatively large size and scale to that of the terraced and semi-detached houses in the Character Area. These larger buildings, many of which are modern developments, are sited within substantial plots which create a sense of space;
- 4.6 Due to the dense urban grain of the immediate surrounding area, the extensive public space of the Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens is particularly valuable, Distance views of further the surrounding areas which include an attractive vista of Christ Church (in the Lansdown Character Area) can be seen from the Gardens. The gardens provide an important recreational space, and they enhance the character and appearance of the Lower High Street and contribute to its special historic qualities.

**Boundary treatments**

- 4.7 Some buildings are separated from public space by the use of various boundary treatments. These are a visible and distinct division between public and private space. Boundary treatments predominantly take the form of enclosing red-brick walls. A high brick wall forms part of the former Great Western Railway Cheltenham and Honeybourne Line. It acts as a distinct boundary, which encloses the west side of the Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens. Fencing acts as a poor, unattractive boundary. Some historic railings remain such as those around Wesley House in St. George's Street and the former schoolhouse in Devonshire Street. Historic railings are an attractive, traditional form of boundary treatment which permit views through them and enhance the appearance of streets;



**Figure 11** High brick wall of railway embankment



**Figure 12** Railings around former schoolhouse in Devonshire Street

- 4.8 Many of the historic terraced houses front directly onto the back edge of the pavement and therefore front boundary treatment is un-necessary;
- 4.9 Gardens, historically and today, form an attractive traditional front area to both historic and modern buildings, providing them with a colourful interesting setting and enhancing the special qualities of properties and the street. Trees

and shrubbery in gardens help screen properties from public view, which creates privacy. Front gardens can be found along St. Paul's Street South. Their presence is valuable in the overall appearance of the Character Area.

**Key views and vistas (see Fig. 1)**

4.10 There are views of landmark buildings both within and outside the Character Area from a number of vantage points throughout the Character Area. Such landmark buildings outside the area include the old gasworks on the corner of Gloucester Road and Tewkesbury Road (now part of the Tesco site); St Peter's Church, St Paul's Church and St Gregory's Church. Prominent landmark buildings in the character area include Normandy House, Wesley House and St Gregory's School;

4.11



**Figure 13** View of St Mary's Church spire from St George's Street

The spires of St Mary's Church and St Gregory's Church (in Old Town Character Area) can be seen from the open spaces and gaps between buildings throughout the Lower High Street Character Area. They are attractive and striking features within street scenes. St Gregory's Church also provides a striking vista stop along Ambrose Street from the High Street;

4.12



**Figure 14** Vista of St Paul's Church from St Paul's Street South

St. Paul's Street South forms an eye-catching, attractive vista of St. Paul's Church (in St Paul's Character Area).

4.13 The pedestrian bridge, constructed as part of the Waitrose development in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, connects sections of the Honeybourne Line (former Great Western Cheltenham to Honeybourne Railway Line). Although outside the boundary of the Character Area, the size and design of the bridge enables it to be a striking feature from Great Western Road;

4.14



**Figure 15** View from Park Street looking in a south-westerly direction

An interesting vista is experienced from the end of Park Street, looking in a south-westerly direction. The red-brick terraced houses on Great Western Road are striking features in the foreground. The mass of St James Apartments near to the Waitrose development can be seen rising behind the terraces. The tower of Christ Church can then be viewed behind the apartment block,

rising into the skyline. This particular view offers an interesting visual contrast between the different sizes, scales, ages, materials and architectural styles of these various buildings. In this specific context this variety is positive.

4.15



**Figure 16** View down Swindon Road of Cotswold escarpment

Views of the Cotswold escarpment and Leckhampton Hill can be appreciated from Swindon Road and Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens respectively. These views enhance the greenery within the generally hard urban landscaping of street scenes in the Character Area.

## 5 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### Use of area and how it creates special interest

#### Residential

- 5.1 The Lower High Street Character Area has historically been a residential and commercial area. The predominant historic built form is extensive artisan terraced houses which form a unique identity for the area. These houses have a compact plan form and are high in density;
- 5.2 Some infill development has taken place during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The impact of these housing developments e.g. Royal Oak Mews varies within different areas;
- 5.3 Some large modern purpose built blocks have been erected within the area such as numbers 19 and 20 Ambrose Street. This comprises a shop on the ground floor with three storeys of flats above.



**Figure 17** Terraces along St George's Street



**Figure 18** Royal Oak Mews development



**Figure 19** 19 and 20 Ambrose Street

## Commercial / Business

5.4



**Figure 20**  
Parker Court  
offices on  
Knapp Lane

A number of offices are located throughout the area in both modern purpose built blocks and in converted historic buildings. Normandy House, the former school in Milsom Street and the former St Paul's primary school in Knapp Lane have all been converted into offices;

5.5



**Figure 21** Commercial  
premises along the High  
Street

The entire length of the High Street in the Character Area is taken up by commercial properties. They have a major impact on the character of the area. They include estate agents, public houses, restaurants, fast food units, car sales garage, music shops and various other specialist shops. These commercial premises create a large amount of pedestrian movement along the High Street, which generates noise, activity and vitality in the area throughout the day and evening;

5.6

There are six public houses in the character area, which help to create a busy and lively atmosphere throughout the day and evening;

5.7

There are a number of car repair garages located throughout the area, which provide a contrast to the dominance of retail units. These garages produce traffic levels, noise and activity.

## St. Gregory's School

5.8



**Figure 22** St Gregory's  
School

There is one school which remains in its original use in the Character Area - St. Gregory's School. The presence of this building generates high levels of traffic in the mornings and afternoons, as well as noise and activity throughout the day. Together with the adjacent Catholic Church of St Gregory's, it also creates a sense of community within the immediate area as well as the wider area of the town. It is an important focal point.

## Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens

5.9



**Figure 23** Play area within Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens

This expanse of public park is a particularly valuable green space within its built-up surroundings. The gardens contain a playground and landscaped garden which provide a tranquil sanctuary from the noisy surrounding urban area.

## Road use

5.10 Swindon Road forms part of the Cheltenham Northern Relief Road and experiences heavy traffic throughout the day;

5.11



**Figure 24** Traffic congestion in Poole Way

Poole Way is part of the Northern Relief Road, which connects Swindon Road with the High Street. Poole Way experiences high levels of through traffic throughout the day.

5.12 Pedestrian movement is difficult across Poole Way, Swindon Road and the High Street. These are busy roads and also have the clutter of traffic lights, railings, barriers and other highway paraphernalia at junctions. As a consequence there is a tendency for the two sides of these roads to become severed;

5.13 The High Street also experiences a large volume of traffic throughout the day. This traffic frequently comprises through traffic travelling into and out of the town centre. Large delivery lorries often block parts of the High Street when making a delivery;

5.14 The other roads in the Character Area tend to be mainly used by the residents of the properties. Consequently there is much on-street parking outside the historic terraces. Some roads such as Park Street have garages along them. Relatively recent traffic management schemes have reduced the use some of these residential roads as "rat-runs".

## Other uses

5.15 In addition there is an assortment of other uses including:

- a) Community resources in the form of Cheltenham Community Projects on Grove Street and Cheltenham 1<sup>st</sup> Stop on High Street. These services are important in creating a sense of community within the area and developing community projects to enhance the area for its inhabitants;

- b) Royal Mail sorting office on Poole Way, which occupies a large space and is responsible for increased traffic flow along the road;
- c) A weekly market in the High Street car park between St George's Street and Henrietta Street. This provides an important community resource.

5.16 These all bring varying levels of activity throughout the day which greatly add to the character and vitality of this area.

**Architecture and historic qualities of buildings**

5.17 The dominant built form in the Lower High Street character area is the extensive artisan terraced housing. Most of this housing was established in the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and was developed on either side of the High Street. A small amount of development took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century through slum clearance programmes and the establishment of modern residential developments.

**Historic terraces**

5.18



**Figure 25** Terraced buildings with varying heights along the High Street

The historic terraces were built throughout the Character Area. They tend to comprise of modest two-storey terraces, although some three and four storey terraces are also present. The terraces along the High Street vary in height which creates an alternating roofline and a diverse and interesting street scene.

5.19 The majority are faced in render, although some are faced in red-brick. A small number of the terraces have parapet roofs; however houses frequently have one high, central ridge which results in chimneys being a prominent feature in streets. Some of the terraced houses have similar features and detailing, which includes sliding sash windows, continuous cornice and red brick chimney stacks. They do not have basements and have simple architectural detailing. These unifying characteristics create strong uniformity, along with the cohesion in rhythm, materials and mass within the street scene which contributes to a strong identity for the area.



**Figure 26** Rendered terraced houses on Market Street



**Figure 27** Red brick terraced houses on Nailsworth Terrace

5.20 Some terraces front directly onto the street whilst others are set back from the footpath and have small front gardens.

- 5.21 The terraced houses on Milsom Street and Normal Terrace have a modest, vernacular style to them, which adds to their character and charm.

5.22



**Figure 28** Detailing on historic shop front on Lower High Street

Several historic shop fronts remain in existence along the High Street. They have largely retained their historic architectural detailing and contribute to establishing the historic character along this ancient street. Their specialist uses (including a DIY store, music shop, sewing shop and radio and telephone shop) help to establish the unique character and special qualities of the Lower High Street.

5.23



**Figure 29** Listed terraced houses on Henrietta Street

All 32 terraced houses on the west side of Henrietta Street are Grade II listed. They were constructed as houses although the ground floors of many today have been converted into shops. The buildings provide an impressive element in the area's townscape. The terraces are predominantly 2 storeys high although to the left they are 3 storeys with a mansard roof. The terrace dates from "c1810-20..."<sup>29</sup> and is constructed from stucco over brick with a slate roof and brick chimney stacks. Unifying features among the terraces include sliding sash windows, fanlights above doors, low parapet with copings and first floor balconies (the majority of which balconies have now been removed). The 19<sup>th</sup> century "...shop fronts include...Nos 16, 18 and 19...each have 2-light windows with turned mullion and entablature..."<sup>30</sup>

### Other prominent historic buildings

5.24



**Figure 30** St Mary's Mission Hall, Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens

Other prominent historic buildings within the character area include St Mary's Cemetery Chapel, King's Court, the Christadelphian Hall, the former Chemistry nightclub on St James's Square, 304 High Street and Normandy House. The size, scale, footprint, architectural design and material of these buildings enhances the street scene in their individual localities. They also enhance the overall character and

<sup>29</sup> Department of Culture, Media & Sport 'Revised List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest – Borough of Cheltenham' (1998) pg. 377

<sup>30</sup> Department of Culture, Media & Sport 'Revised List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest – Borough of Cheltenham' (1998) pg. 377

appearance of the area and contribute to its special qualities.

### 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century development

5.25 Modern infill development is apparent throughout the area. New developments sit with varying degrees of success in the historical context of their area. The most notable housing developments are New Rutland Court off Swindon Road and Royal Oak Mews off New Street. Both developments date from the mid 1990's. Hereford Court on Hereford Place is another significant housing development which dates from the 1980s.

5.26



Figure 31 New Rutland Court

New Rutland Court was developed on the former site of the Engineer Volunteers Practice Ground. It consists of red brick houses set within a contained cul-de-sac. High numbers of parked cars dominate the development. The houses have a functional design and do not sit well within their historic surroundings.

5.27



Figure 32 Royal Oak Mews development

Royal Oak Mews comprises semi-detached houses and a terrace within a contained cul-de-sac. This site was formerly the rear yard of The Irish Oak public house (332 High Street). This development sits well within the historic context of the area in terms of its size, scale, setting, construction materials and architectural detailing.

5.28



Figure 33 CPS building on Ambrose Street

There are two substantial office blocks located on Ambrose Street. One of the two, the CPS (Creative Publishing Solutions) block, has a high level of glazing on its front elevation. Its roofline rises higher than the terraced houses positioned on either side, and it is of an inappropriate scale in relation to its surroundings. Consequently is a visually dominant building within the street scene which does not enhance the historic character or appearance of the area.

5.29



**Figure 34** Semi-detached houses on St Paul's Street South

There is a distinctive row of early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, red-brick, semi-detached houses along St Paul's Street South. The houses occupy the site of some demolished terraced houses and an area of open space. They have been constructed from red-brick and have red tiled roofs, tall red-brick chimney stacks, enclosing red-brick walls and front porches. The strong use of red-brick makes the houses visually striking and their unifying features create a strong positive identity. In addition their relationship to each other and their front gardens all combine to form an attractive street.

### Listed Buildings

5.30 Listed buildings are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. All listed buildings due to their listed status are extremely important. There are over 35 listed buildings in the Lower High Street Character Area. Some of these are listed as a group. All listed buildings are shown in the table below.

BUILDING / STRUCTURE	GRADE	DATE OF LISTING
West wall of former Friends Burial Ground, Grove Street	II	14/12/83
Nos. 2-28 Henrietta Street	II	14/12/83
Normandy House, High Street and attached railings	II	05/05/72
330 High Street and attached railings	II	14/12/83
331 High Street	II	26/1/98
St. Mary's Cemetery Chapel, Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens, High Street	II	12/03/55
Gates, piers and wall to St. Mary's Cemetery Chapel, High Street	II	05/05/72
King's Court and attached gates, King Street	II	05/05/72
Christadelphian Hall, Knapp Road	II	12/03/55
Nos. 47-50 (Consecutive) St. George's Street	II	12/03/87
Former Wesley Chapel, St. George's Street	II	05/05/72
Gas Nightclub (now former Chemistry Nightclub) St. James's Square	II	12/03/55
Ivanhoe and attached	II	12/03/55

railings, St James's Square		
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Refer to [www.cheltenham.gov.uk](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk) for full list descriptions and [www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk) for photographic records.



### Index of Buildings of Local Importance

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

### Contribution of key unlisted buildings

5.32 A number of buildings are not statutory listed and are therefore less important. However they do encompass qualities of age, style and materials which are locally distinct and which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the character area and Conservation Area. Some of the buildings, such as terraces, have a group value rather than value on an individual basis. Please see the Index for further details about these buildings. Key unlisted buildings include –

<p>Old School House, Devonshire Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See <i>Index of Buildings of Local Importance</i></li> </ul>  <p><b>Figure 35</b> Old School House, Devonshire Street</p>	<p>Former St. Paul's Primary School, Knapp Lane</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See <i>Index of Buildings of Local Importance</i></li> </ul>  <p><b>Figure 36</b> Former St Paul's Primary School, Knapp Lane</p>
<p>Former Ragged School, Milsom Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See <i>Index of Buildings of Local Importance</i></li> </ul>  <p><b>Figure 37</b> Former Ragged School, Milsom Street</p>	<p>Hindu Community Centre, Swindon Road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See <i>Index of Buildings of Local Importance</i></li> </ul>  <p><b>Figure 38</b> Hindu Community Centre, Swindon Road/Milsom Street</p>
<p>304 High Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See <i>Index of Buildings of Local Importance</i></li> </ul>  <p><b>Figure 39</b> 304 High Street</p>	<p>441 High Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See <i>Index of Buildings of Local Importance</i></li> </ul>  <p><b>Figure 40</b> 441 High Street</p>



<p>Various historic public houses which include: Irish Oak 332 High Street, Shamrock 386 High Street and The Cavern 93-95 New Street because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These public houses are displayed on the 1884 map of Cheltenham are therefore have historic interest and value;</li> <li>• The buildings themselves enhance the character and appearance of the street scene in their locales.</li> </ul>	<p>341 High Street because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This building is a good example of a surviving timber framed building within the town<sup>31</sup> and it therefore has special historic value;</li> <li>• The building appears to have had a shop on its ground floor before being converted to flats today.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Figure 41</b> Shamrock public house</p>	 <p><b>Figure 42</b> 341 High Street</p>

**Positive buildings**

5.33 Positive buildings are identified on the Townscape Analysis Map as those buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of each character area. They often have a collective group value. Although a small number of buildings in the overall Central Conservation Area are in a poor condition, they may still be identified as positive if the building itself makes a positive contribution. In comparison to positive buildings, key unlisted buildings tend to have individual value and qualities which make a greater contribution to enhancing the character and appearance of each character area.


**Local Details**

5.34 Local details within the Lower High Street character area collectively enhance the character and appearance of not just Lower High Street but the whole of the Central Conservation Area. Interesting historic local details include –

<p>Historic lamp posts on some roads, e.g. Knapp Road</p>	<p>Historic street bollards, e.g. in Knapp Lane and at the rear of the West End car park</p>
<p>Historic canopies, e.g. in New Street and Ambrose Street</p>	<p>Wilks Ironmonger masonry detail at first floor level, 343 High Street</p>
<p>Historic street name plates, e.g. Devonshire Street</p>  <p><b>Figure 43</b> Devonshire Street name plate</p>	<p>Historic entrance gate and wall to Friends Burial Ground, Grove Street</p>  <p><b>Figure 44</b> Gate and wall around Friends Burial Ground</p>

<sup>31</sup> Gloucestershire Sites & Monuments Record – Summary Report for Area 21434

Historic railings, e.g. in Knapp Road and Devonshire Street	Attractive ceramic tiling on entrance porches to some houses on New Street
Attractive ironwork on entrance gate to mosque, 416a High Street	Traditional and attractive shop fronts to some shops in High Street and Henrietta Street
Attractive ironwork grills on ATT shop at 380 High Street	



**Figure 45**  
380 High Street

## Materials

### Building materials

- 5.35 The use of building materials reflects the availability of materials at the time of construction of historic buildings. Cheltenham expanded rapidly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the readily available Lias clay and local sand allowed enough bricks to be produced to build most of the original spa town. The majority of these houses were built of locally-fired bricks, and were faced with either stucco or ashlar limestone. Many of the houses in the character area are also faced in red-brick. Many of the buildings along the High Street were originally timber framed buildings but the vast majority have been demolished or altered over the years. Number 341 High Street is seen to be the best surviving example of a timber framed building within the area.

### Ground surface materials

- 5.36 There is a range of surface materials used in the area, though few are original or have any historic value. Roads are concrete with concrete kerbs. Paving is predominantly concrete slabs or flags and tarmac. Some areas retain original flagstones which add historical value to the area, for example the Forest of Dean paving stones Normal Terrace passage to High Street. There are also areas of paint and red tarmac surfacing on some of the roads, which are a visual distraction within the historic area.

### Street furniture

- 5.37 There is a large amount of street furniture in the Lower High Street Character Area, including many traffic signs located at road junctions. The signs tend to be large and intrusive and do not enhance the historic character or appearance of the area. Highway paraphernalia, which include railings, bollards and traffic lights in Swindon Road; the High Street junction with Poole Way and the High Street and Ambrose Street junction, are visually and physically intrusive.
- 5.38 Both historic and modern bollards can be found on many streets throughout the area, including Phoenix Passage, Ambrose Street, New Street and High Street. The older street bollards enhance the historic character of the area.

- 5.39 Street lights vary in age, size and design throughout the area. Street lights within the residential streets tend to be of a smaller, more traditional design than those placed along the High Street and Swindon Road.
- 5.40 Functional litter bins can be found around the area, though most are concentrated around the High Street and Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens. Benches are also found within the Memorial Gardens.
- 5.41 The area has many busy pedestrian routes running through it. Consequently, there are also many pedestrian crossings.
- 5.42 Overhead telegraph wires can be seen on many of the narrow streets in the area. They are visually unattractive and detract from the setting of buildings.
- 5.43 CCTV cameras are located along the High Street. They have a functional design, which although seen as a necessity in this locality, does not enhance the character or appearance of the street scene.
- 5.44 There are a small number of posts along the High Street with flower planting containers on top of them. Some hanging baskets are also found fixed to large lamp posts. The colourful arrangements are an attractive visual contrast to the hard landscaping in the High Street.

### Contribution of trees and green spaces

- 5.45 Within the Lower High Street Character Area there is an overall lack of private green space due to the narrowness of the residential streets and also where there are front gardens they are small. The main area of public green space is the Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens. There is an atypical lack of trees throughout the character area, in comparison with other character areas in Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area.

#### Street trees

5.46



**Figure 46** Trees to left screen car park from Poole Way

There are very few street trees present within the area due to the narrow plan form of the streets and narrow pavements. Several tulip and plane trees are positioned along the eastern side of Poole Way where they are an attractive feature which partially screens and encloses the West End car park.

5.47



**Figure 47** Trees partially screen Post Office site from Poole Way

A row of trees is positioned around the southern and eastern boundary of the Post Office site on Poole Way. The high red-brick wall and some greenery partially screen the site from public view.

5.48



**Figure 48** Trees and hedging form southern boundary of Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens

A dense canopy of trees and hedging forms the southern boundary of the Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens. The vegetation stretches over the pavement on Market Street. This greenery is an attractive visual feature within the street.

5.49 Many rear gardens contain greenery in the form of trees or bushes, which can at times be viewed from the street. The greenery contrasts well with the colours of the buildings and is a valuable feature within the street.

5.50



**Figure 49** Greenery within front gardens along St Paul's Street South

Very little greenery at the front of buildings is apparent due to the lack of space available. However, an exception to this is the post-war houses on St Paul's Street South which are set back from the pavement and contain planting and parking space within the front gardens. The presence of trees and hedges within these gardens is an attractive visual contrast with the red-brick of the houses.

#### Other areas of greenery

5.51



**Figure 50** Greenery within Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens

Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens contains a large amount of greenery in the form of trees, bushes and lawns. It serves as an attractive recreational space within the character area. The planting greatly enhances the character and appearance of this space and the overall character area. The vegetation also plays an important role in providing wildlife habitats and fostering biodiversity. The formal planting which lines the footpath through the centre of gardens comprises a row of yew trees. These yew trees form an attractive and important feature in the park. They have, however, grown larger than is desirable and have lost their uniform shape. There are plans to prune these trees over the next three years to form a conical shape at an appropriate height. Around the children's play area, there are copper, sycamore, cyprus and redwood trees. The dense planting which encloses the southern boundary of the gardens consists of Robinia trees and Portuguese laurel hedging.

5.52



**Figure 51** Open grassland at the end of Great Western Road

There is one other area of open grassland which is located to the west of Great Western Road. Some trees are evident, positioned close to the Honeybourne Line. Species include Indian horse chestnut trees. This site enhances the greenery and space within this area.

- 5.53 The highway paraphernalia around the junction of Ambrose Street and the High Street provides a poor setting for the private green space of the bowling green (located in Old Town Character Area).

### **Negative factors**

- 5.54 Due to high levels of development of the Lower High Street character area, modern changes and intrusions have, to a degree, negatively impacted on the area's overall character and appearance. Negative factors include significant negative buildings and spaces, which are identified as those buildings and spaces that detract from the character and appearance of the area but offer potential for enhancement. This identification may result from the visual prominence of the site, or the development's inappropriate scale, design or materials, amongst other factors. The identification of buildings as negative factors in this section and as significant negative buildings or spaces on the Townscape Analysis map is an indication of a need for improvement, not necessarily demolition. Negative changes and intrusions include –
- a) **Loss of traditional architectural features** such as alterations to and removal of windows, cornices etc. has occurred within many historic buildings. In some cases, timber sliding sash windows have been replaced with uPVC windows, which are out of context with the historic building and detract from its special qualities;
  - b) The presence of **projecting Velux roof lights** on some historic buildings has eroded the visual quality of the historic roofscape. Where there is evidence of historic roof lights or where new conservation roof lights may be appropriate, each case will be considered on its own merits;
  - c) Modern additions such as **satellite dishes and large aerials** damage the appearance of buildings and detract from their special historic and architectural qualities. These additions can often be visible from the public space, and damage the appearance of the area as well as the individual building;
  - d) A **small number of historic buildings are in need of minor maintenance** in the form of re-facing and re-painting;
  - e) A number of **buildings in the area are disused**. They have been boarded up which creates an unattractive appearance. They can also be seen to attract vandalism which degrades the area;
  - f) Some **modern developments do not sit well within the historic context of the area**. They have a negative impact upon its character and appearance, through factors such as size, scale, footprint, massing,

architectural design and building materials. Such examples include New Rutland Court, the CPS building on Ambrose Street, the Royal Mail sorting office building, Hereford Court and St James Court;

- g) **Front gardens, where in existence, have been changed either totally or partially into hard-standing areas** for cars. This change has reduced the area of green and soft landscaped private gardens, and generally increased the hard urban appearance of the Lower High Street character area. It has resulted in a negative impact on the appearance of the area. Other issues also arise from the presence of hard-standing, such as an increase in surface run-off and a loss of wildlife habitat;
- h) **Some boundary treatments are in need of attention.** Historic railings have been removed around the Hindu Community Centre on Swindon Road and Milsom Street. The stone plinth remains, but the loss of the railings is a negative factor. There are also large amounts of timber fencing within the area, some of which is in need of maintenance. In some locations timber fencing has been used as a front boundary. The use of a fence in such a location is inappropriate and had led to a visual deterioration of road frontages;
- i) Some roads contain **utilitarian garages**, some of which are in need of repair. They are negative features, particularly when located near to historic buildings;
- j) **On-street parking** is evident within most of the roads in the character area. Although the cars create activity, they tend to focus attention on the road rather than the buildings and spaces;
- k) **Heavy traffic volumes and poor traffic flow** create pressure on road systems and pedestrian spaces. This is a particular problem along the busy stretch of the High Street;
- l) Large amounts of modern **street signs** are evident on traffic lights and highway infrastructure, especially on road junctions. Their functional design and frequent high density does not complement the setting of historic buildings, often within close proximity or the wider area;
- m) **Overhead telegraph wires** are visible in every street and are an unattractive feature in the streetscape;
- n) **Graffiti** is evident throughout the area on walls etc. It creates a sense of neglect and a run-down appearance within streets;
- o) **CCTV cameras** positioned along the High Street, are unattractive features within the street scene. Although they are seen as a necessity, their functional design does not enhance the overall character and appearance of the character area;
- p) **Litter** can be found scattered in the Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens. This creates a sense neglect and detracts from the special qualities of this important space within the Character Area;
- q) **Large billboards** positioned on the High Street are visually unattractive and do not enhance the character or appearance of the area;

- r) **The public car parks located adjacent to Poole Way (named West End car park) and between St George's Street and Henrietta Street (named High Street car park)** are prominent spaces within the character area. They are visually unattractive, with their 'hard' appearance acting as a poor setting for near-by historic buildings;
- s) Some **shop fronts have modern security shutters** which are an unattractive feature which do not complement the historic buildings.

### **Neutral areas**

- 5.55 Some areas within the Lower High Street character area neither enhance nor detract from the character or appearance of the character area but have the potential for enhancement. They tend to be visually prominent within the street scene. The identification of buildings as being neutral in this section and as significant neutral buildings or spaces on the Townscape Analysis map is an indication of a need for improvement, not necessarily demolition.
- 5.56 Some modern developments, such as the four terraced houses at the end of Hereford Place. Planning permission was granted for their construction in 1987. The form of these brick built houses, with their steeply pitched roofs, roof lights and parking forecourt is alien to the predominant form of the historic artisan terraces. However, the houses are not situated in a prominent location and their position at the end of the cul-de-sac, set back from Nailsworth Terrace, prevents them from detracting from the historic buildings.
- 5.57 The blocks of flats either side of the former historic Lloyds Bank building on the junction of Ambrose Street and New Street. Although these modern blocks are taller than the historic building, they generally sit comfortably either side of it and do not detract from its special historic qualities.
- 5.58 A number of industrial buildings on Grove Street are modern and functional in design. However, there are a variety of buildings located along Grove Street and these buildings generally sit comfortably within the street scene.
- 5.59 The late 20<sup>th</sup> century UPD House in Knapp Road is a modern pastiche design. Its architectural style does not complement the nearby historic buildings, but the building is set well back from public space.

### **General condition of the area**

- 5.60 The overall condition of the Lower High Street character area is generally good. However, there are a number of factors which have a negative impact upon the area and are in need of immediate attention. These factors are:
- 5.61 The poor condition of some historic buildings, which are in need of repainting and re-rendering;
- 5.62 The small number of derelict and boarded up buildings in the character area which negatively impact on its overall condition and make parts of the area visually unattractive.
- 5.63 It is very important that the physical condition of the historic buildings is restored and then preserved in order to retain not just the Lower High Street's, but also Cheltenham's fine distinctiveness and identity.

### **Pressures and Capacity for Change**

- 5.64 The designation of the Conservation Area is not intended to prevent change, especially that which would enhance the character or appearance of the area. It seeks to ensure that future development is appropriate to the character of the area.
- 5.65 There are a number of pressures on the character area, which include the intensification of sites, the piecemeal development of Grove Street and the constant change in use of the buildings along the High Street.
- 5.66 The replacement of some inappropriate modern buildings with a well-designed development which is in keeping with, and enhances 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 Lower High Street character area's special historic character and appearance. It has been subject to public consultation. Part 2 was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2008. It will inform the planning and other decisions of the Council.

The special qualities of the Lower High Street Character Area have been identified in the Character Appraisal which forms the Part 1 of this document. The Management Plan draws upon the themes identified in sections 5.54 'Negative factors' and 5.55 'Neutral areas'.

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

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

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

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

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

### **Legislative background**

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

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

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

## 2. Article 4 directions

There are some buildings within the Lower High Street 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 and permission is required for works including:

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

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

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

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

## 3. Cheltenham West End Partnership

Cheltenham West End Partnership was established in 2000. The Partnership comprises representatives from the voluntary sector, local businesses and statutory services. The aim of the Partnership is to improve identified housing and environmental problems around the Lower High Street and Tewkesbury Road areas. Schemes which have been introduced in this area include the improvement of ten local streets, the renovation of almost 200 properties and the redevelopment of small pockets of derelict land and buildings to provide

new housing and traffic management schemes and general improvements to pavements and street lighting.

The Partnership plays an important role in implementing regeneration schemes in parts of the Lower High Street character area. It is important that the Partnership continues to be supported by groups and Cheltenham Borough Council, in-order to continue its projects to enhance this area.

For more information on Cheltenham West End Partnership, visit [www.cheltenham.gov.uk](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk)

#### 4. Management proposals

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

##### **Development control proposals**

###### **1 Control of Development**

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

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

**ACTION LH1:** The Cheltenham Borough Local Plan requires new development to preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. The policies of the Local Plan set out a general approach to the consideration of planning and related applications for development in conservation areas – they cover a range of issues including:

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

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

## **2 Loss of traditional architectural features on some historic buildings**

Some of the older buildings within the Lower High Street 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 Local Plan policy CP 3 relates.

**ACTION LH2:** In order to preserve and enhance the character and setting of the Lower High Street Character Area, the Council will:

- a. Keep under review the need to bring in additional planning controls over minor works in the Conservation area through Article 4 directions
- b. Use its powers to enforce against unauthorised development;
- c. Encourage owners to repair rather than replace original features;
- d. Consider producing detailed design guidance and information regarding materials appropriate for use in the Central Conservation Area;
- e. Consider producing guidance to highlight to property owner's the importance of regularly maintaining gutters to ensure they function to their full potential, thus preventing ceilings and roofs collapsing due to heavy rain and blocked gutters.

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

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

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

The Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan Policy CP 3 relates.

**ACTION LH3:** In order to preserve and enhance the character of the character area the Council will:

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

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

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

#### **4 Tree management**

The presence of trees makes an important contribution to the overall character and appearance of the character area, due to the relatively small amount of trees that are present. The trees located within the Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens are particularly important and valuable features. Trees play an important role in reducing the effects of climate change through climate fixing, absorbing carbon dioxide and providing shade. They need to continue to be well protected and managed in the future.

**ACTION LH4:** Cheltenham Borough Council will continue to maintain and protect trees by implementing Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) where appropriate, and replant with new trees when old trees die. Trees located in pavements or grass verges at the side of roads and which are designated as within the public highway are maintained by Gloucestershire Highways. Trees located in parks or green spaces within the conservation area are managed by Cheltenham Borough Council in accordance with best arboricultural practice.

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

#### **5 Boundary enclosures**

At present, some poorly maintained boundary treatments harm the character and appearance of buildings and the overall street scene. Increased use of railings or vegetation such as hedgerow as a 'soft' boundary treatment would enhance the historic qualities, character and appearance of the area. Additionally, trees and hedgerow contribute to biodiversity by providing wildlife habitats. If the same sympathetic boundary treatment were to be implemented along the length of a street where possible, this would enhance its character and appearance, by uniting properties within it.

See Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Policies BE 5 and CP3.

**ACTION LH5:** The Council will use enforcement and other powers under Section 215 of the Planning Act to secure the repair of poorly maintained boundary treatments and the reinstatement of traditional and historic boundary treatments to enhance the historic character of the Lower High Street character area.

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

## 6 **Setting and views**

The setting of the Lower High Street 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 LH6:** The Council will ensure that all development respects the important views within, into and from the Lower High Street Character Area. These views are noted but not exclusively identified on the Townscape Analysis map. The Council will ensure that these remain protected from inappropriate forms of development and redevelopment and that due regard is paid to these views in the formulation of public realm works or enhancement schemes in accordance with the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan.

## 7 **Enhancement of existing buildings and land**

Some land and 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 will, where necessary, use enforcement or other planning powers (e.g. Section 215 notices) to achieve repair and preservation. Some land in the curtilage of buildings is poorly maintained and in a prominent location – here, it may be appropriate to use powers to achieve improvement.

**Action LH7:** The Council will use enforcement and other powers under Section 215 of the Planning Act to achieve the enhancement of poorly maintained buildings.

## **Project proposals**

## 8 **Street furniture**

The character area has a large amount of street furniture (traffic signage, bollards, bins, some seating etc). There needs to be a consistency of style to

help create a cohesive identity for the Lower High Street. The presence of excessive or redundant street signage causes street clutter and is visually unattractive.

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 and though that project is largely outside the Lower High Street Character Area, there may be some carry over benefits.

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

**ACTION LH8:** The Council will lobby the Highway Authority to minimise signage, markings and other street furniture in its traffic management projects. Where it is safe to do so it will liaise with the Highway Authority to remove redundant signage and street furniture and ensure that any new signage and traffic management schemes preserve and enhance the setting of the Lower High Street character area.

## 9 Car parks

At present, some car parks in the Lower High Street Character Area are visually unattractive spaces, which detract from the overall character and appearance of the area.

**ACTION LH9:** The Council will continue its programme of enhancement schemes where appropriate to soften and improve the overall visual appearance of car parks.

## 10 Grove Street

There is a potential for the piecemeal redevelopment of spaces on Grove Street. It is likely some of the current light commercial units will be redeveloped in a piecemeal fashion with residential units.

**ACTION LH10:** The Council will encourage a comprehensive approach to the redevelopment of plots in Grove Street and the treatment of the street and spaces within it. There will be better opportunity for the retention of some employment land as part of such a comprehensive approach. If resources allow, the Council will prepare an informal framework document to provide a cohesive and comprehensive structure to address issues of traffic movement, the layout of plots and the treatment of the street scene in Grove Street.

## 11 High Street/Poole Way and High Street/Ambrose Street junctions

These junctions provide a poor quality space, which is cluttered with road signs and markings, bollards and other traffic management paraphernalia. The spaces are a negative feature within the street scene and the overall character area.

**ACTION LH11:** The Council will lobby Gloucestershire County Council to address these spaces and remove any unnecessary paraphernalia to create a less cluttered appearance. The Civic Pride project is looking at improving

the space in the lower end of the High Street, around the junction of the High Street with Ambrose Street.

## 12 Lower High Street – Traffic and Public Realm

The Lower High Street experiences high levels of through traffic and congestion along its length. This frequently makes traffic movement difficult. The County Council has indicated that it will consider these issues through the Cheltenham Transport Strategy.

**ACTION LH12:** The Council will lobby Gloucestershire County Council to implement a traffic management scheme to effectively manage and improve traffic flow along the High Street and improve the situation for all users including disabled, pedestrians and cyclists.

## 13 Swindon Road

Swindon Road comprises a poor quality space which suffers from high traffic levels, congestion and severance. A high number of traffic lights and railings on the junction with Poole Way creates a cluttered appearance in the street. The County Council has indicated that it will consider these issues through the Cheltenham Transport Strategy.

**ACTION LH13:** The Council will lobby the County Council to build on the Civic Pride proposals for St Margaret's Road and look at the potential for enhancing Swindon Road through the implementation of an effective traffic management scheme and improvements to the street scene.

## 14 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 parts of the Lower High Street Character Area. It will develop a comprehensive set of proposals for the area and will consider the following topics:

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

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

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

**ACTION LH14:** The Council and its partners will ensure that the detailed design and implementation of Civic Pride proposals will preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area in a manner compatible with the Character Appraisal for those parts of the area affected by it.

## **15 Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens**

The Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens form a quintessentially important feature in the Lower High Street character area. Much of this character area comprises hard landscaping and a compact built form and therefore the presence of the Gardens greatly enhances the character and appearance of the Lower High Street area. The Gardens need to continue to be well managed to protect their special qualities and interest.

**ACTION LH15:** When resources permit, Cheltenham Borough Council will develop a management plan for the long term management of Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens. It is likely this will address the protection of features within the park and the long term planting and maintenance of the Gardens.

## **Annex 1:**

### **Cheltenham Central Conservation Area – list of Supplementary Planning Documents**

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

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

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