

CHELTENHAM

Local development framework

12. LECKHAMPTON CHARACTER AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

JULY 2008



Central Conservation Area

12. Leckhampton Character Area Appraisal and Management Plan July 2008



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Key characteristics

This Character Appraisal of the Leckhampton 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 valuable historic interest, with the area developing to serve the Cheltenham and Gloucester Tram-road in the early part of the 19th century;
- Large areas of dense artisan terraced housing which was built to serve the Gloucester-Cheltenham Tram-road and specialist shops on Bath Road form the dominant building type within the area;
- Leckhampton Road is an important approach road into Cheltenham from the south and is highly trafficked. This road is also part of the route for the tram-road from Leckhampton Hill, through Cheltenham on its route to Gloucester;
- Leckhampton Road contains mature trees along its length, which frame the road and have a strong visual presence in the street scene;
- There is evidence of a variety of historic local features within streets, for example, traditional street name-plates, historic street lamps, bollards and canopies;
- Extensive vistas of the Cotswold escarpment and Leckhampton Hill can be appreciated throughout the character area.

Key issues

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

- Control of new development;
- Loss of traditional architectural features on some historic buildings;
- Negative impacts of the presence of equipment or installations on or around buildings, such as large aerials or satellite dishes;
- Poor street furniture;
- Drives and loss of front gardens;
- On-street parking;
- Tree management;
- Boundary enclosures;
- Historic street lamps;
- Setting and views;
- Enhancement of existing buildings and land.

Part 1 – Character Appraisal

Townscape Analysis Map of the Leckhampton Character Area

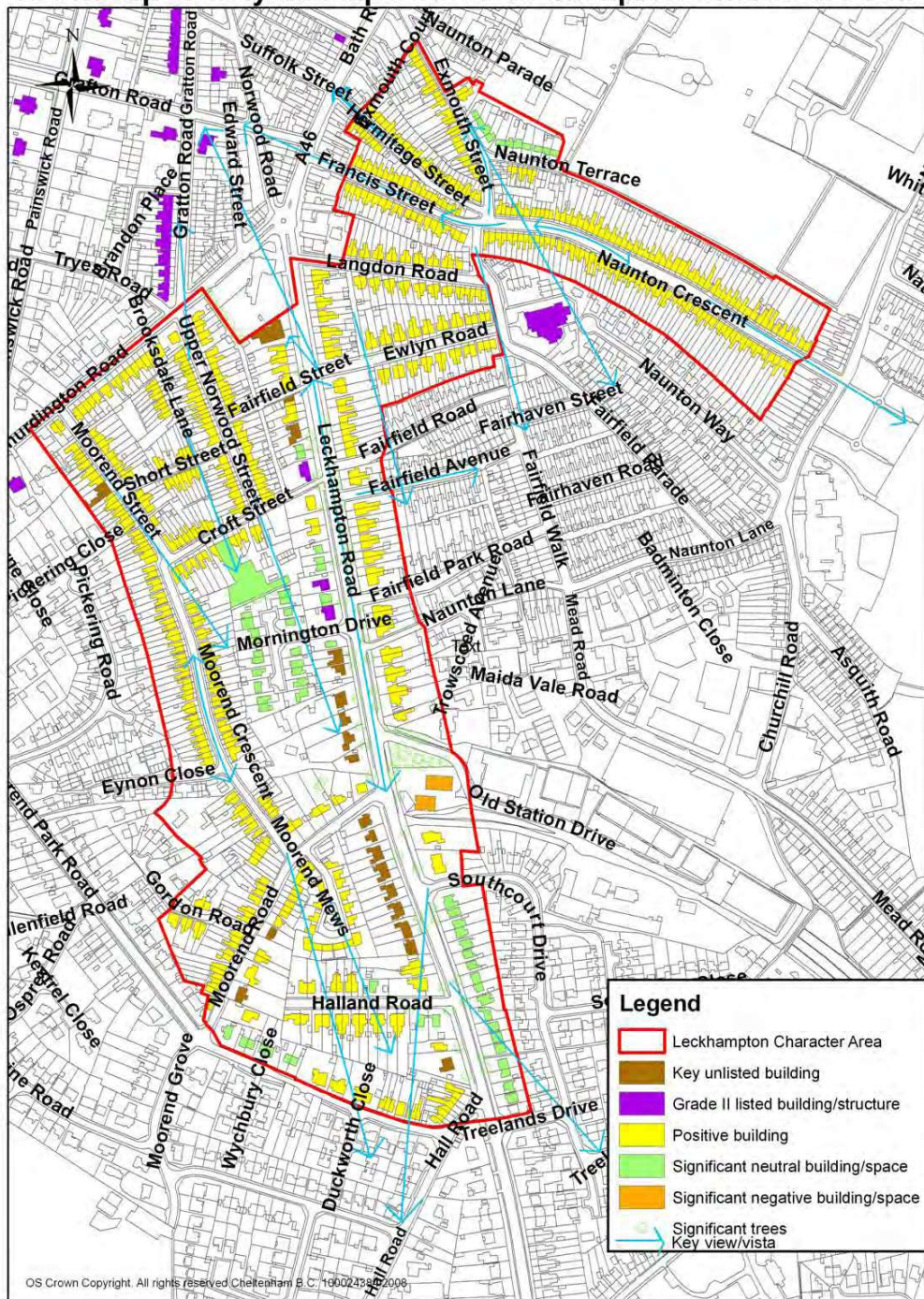


Figure 1 Townscape Analysis map of Leckhampton Character Area

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 3rd March and 14th April 2008. Following consideration of representations received it was adopted by Cheltenham Borough Council on 28th July 2008 as a Supplementary Planning Document. It will be used in conjunction with the Local Plan as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Planning context

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

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

- 1.8 Cheltenham's Civic Pride project aims to regenerate specific areas within the town. The project intends to develop and deliver public realm enhancement schemes and redevelop under-utilised council land including car-parks. More information on Civic Pride can be found at www.cheltenham.gov.uk Although this project is outside the Leckhampton Character Area, it is possible that there may be some consequential benefits.

The Central Conservation Area

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

Leckhampton 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 Leckhampton character area within Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area (see Fig. 2) have been based on the linear plan form of Leckhampton Road and the adjoining roads running at either side. The character area predominantly consists of the artisan terraced housing

built for workers associated with the tram road running to and from Leckhampton Hill in the 19th century.

Summary of special interest

1.15 Leckhampton character area is special because:

- a) The character area has valuable historic interest, with the area developing to serve the Cheltenham and Gloucester Tram-road in the early part of the 19th century;
- b) Large areas of dense artisan terraced housing which was built to serve the Gloucester-Cheltenham Tram-road and specialist shops on Bath Road forms the dominant building type within the area;
- c) Leckhampton Road is an important approach road into Cheltenham from the south and is highly trafficked. This road is also part of the route for the tram-road from Leckhampton Hill, through Cheltenham on its route to Gloucester;
- d) Leckhampton Road contains mature trees along its length, which frame the road and have a strong visual presence in the street scene;
- e) There is evidence of a variety of historic local features within streets, for example, traditional street name-plates, historic street lamps, bollards and canopies;
- f) Extensive vistas of the Cotswold escarpment and Leckhampton Hill can be appreciated throughout the character area.

Leckhampton Character Area within the Central Conservation Area

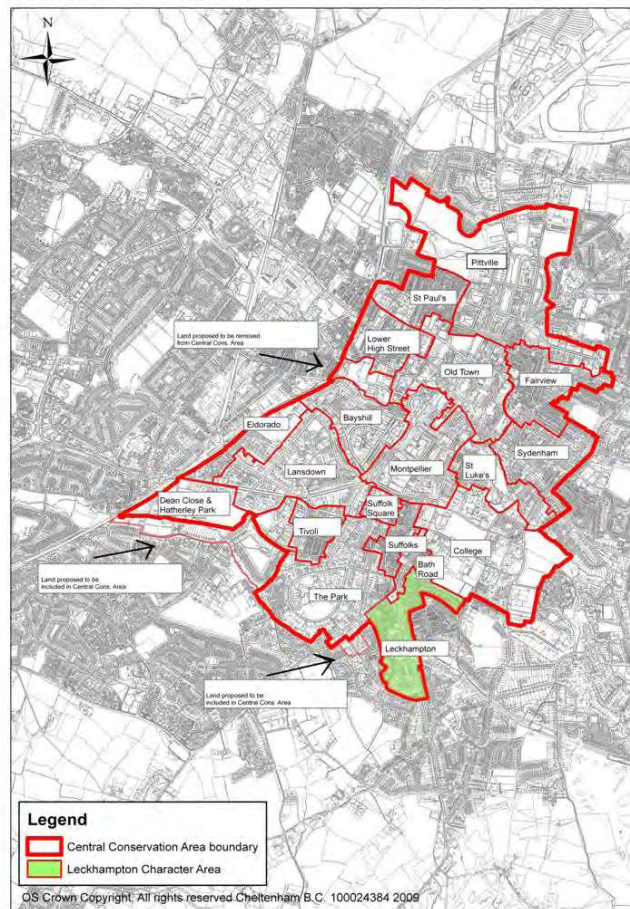


Figure 2 Leckhampton Character Area within the Central Conservation Area

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 Leckhampton Character Area

- 2.2 Leckhampton is positioned in the south of Cheltenham. The Leckhampton character area has a predominantly residential character and contains a mixture of historic and modern detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. The most common housing type is the 19th century artisan terraced housing which provides much of Leckhampton with a distinctive character. This housing is particularly prevalent in the north and west of the character area and was developed from the first half of the 19th century.

2.3



Figure 3 Grand historic houses along Leckhampton Road

Larger historic detached and semi-detached houses are frequently found fronting Leckhampton Road. Leckhampton Road itself forms an important and highly utilised vehicular route from the south. The combination of the mature tree-lined road and the historic houses set back in spacious plots provides a grand and formal sweeping approach into Cheltenham. The road has an extensive linear plan form, which runs from its junction with Bath Road in the north and joins the Old Bath Road in the south. From there the road becomes Leckhampton Hill and the land continues to rise as it runs through Ullenwood and Birdlip, then onto the peak of Leckhampton Hill itself.



Figure 4 Linear plan form of the tree-lined Leckhampton Road

2.4



Figure 5 Compact form of Naunton Crescent

In the northern part of the Leckhampton character area, the plan form is based on a comparatively tight grid pattern with extensive, compact terraced streets being the prevailing built form. In the southern part of the character area, the area generally has a looser plan form where modern and historic semi-detached and detached houses occupy larger plots.

Wider landscape setting

- 2.5 The Leckhampton character area is surrounded on all sides by the urban development of other areas within Cheltenham. The southern boundary of the Leckhampton character area follows that of the southern boundary of Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area. The northern boundary abuts the boundaries of the College, Bath Road and The Park character areas of the Central Conservation Area. Despite the high levels of surrounding development, views of the Cotswold escarpment and Leckhampton Hill are presented from the open spaces, long vistas and gaps between buildings to the south and east. These distance views create a rural connection between the countryside and urban area. Views of the faraway hills in turn reinforce and enhance the spacious character of the area, and provide a rural backdrop for some of the set pieces of architecture, such as the extensive terraces on Moorend Crescent and Emmanuel Church on Fairfield Parade (which is just outside the character area boundary).



Figure 6 View of Leckhampton Hill from Croft Lane



Figure 7 View of Leckhampton Hill along Moorend Crescent

- 2.6 A large number of both historic and modern landmark buildings with varying building heights are present within the Leckhampton character area. These include the Old School House and some large Victorian and Edwardian villas along Leckhampton Road, which include the Leckhampton Police Station. The buildings have a striking visual impact upon the street scene. Their presence enhances Leckhampton's historic character and creates a sense of atmosphere and architectural splendour.



Figure 8 Landmark buildings within Leckhampton Character Area

- 2.7 The linear form of many of the streets creates long vistas, whilst the terraces and street trees create a strong sense of enclosure and the open spaces provide a spacious atmosphere.

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”.¹ Many archaeological artefacts would have been lost during the expansion of the town in the 19th century, and so medieval and post-medieval finds have been very limited.
- 3.2 A few prehistoric remains have been found within the town, raising the possibility that people from Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age periods travelled or lived here. An Iron Age enclosure ditch was uncovered on the site of the present day Children’s Library in 1986-87. This indicates that an area of Iron Age occupation was likely situated nearby.² During the last 30 years, archaeologists have pinpointed several areas within the town which have been identified as likely areas of Roman occupation, and where Roman artefacts such as coins and pottery have been discovered. Within the Leckhampton character area, some finds have been made and recorded under the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record. These discoveries have included undated finds of a sword handle, blade and a dagger at 43 Leckhampton Road. The Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record, Summary Report for Area 15088 states a “*Reported find of a sword handle and blade and dagger 2 metres below ground surface in foundation trenches at 43 Leckhampton Road, Cheltenham*”.³
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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

- 3.5 The first documentary reference to Cheltenham itself occurs in an account of the Council of Cloveshoe held in 803. It is highly likely, given the archaeological finds and possible place-name derivation that Cheltenham was in existence as a farming village for a long time before the 8th century. Its status was raised to that of a market town in 1226 and the market played a key role in its economy for several centuries. From c.1247 Cheltenham was also a Liberty. Spa waters were discovered adjacent to the town in 1716 and after King George III’s visit to sample the waters in 1788, Cheltenham grew rapidly as a fashionable spa resort. The popularity of the town as a summer resort resulted in Cheltenham having a wealth of tree-lined walks and rides, squares and gardens. Its popularity led to expansion of the town away from the ancient High Street, and many fine classical style buildings were built for the growing population. The popularity of the spa waters waned from the middle of the 19th century, and Cheltenham developed other roles in the form of its growing importance as a major educational centre during the latter half of the 19th century. In turn this led to the development well into the 20th century of some acclaimed public schools and churches. Before World War II, light industry boosted the town’s economy. The establishment of GCHQ in

¹ ‘Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey’ Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, 1975

² ‘Pre-Regency Cheltenham: An Archaeological Survey’ Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, 1975

³ Gloucestershire Sites & Monuments Record - Summary Report for area 15088

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 Leckhampton Character Area

- 3.6 The historic development of the Leckhampton Character Area, based on plans from 1820, 1834, 1897 and present day is shown on the Historic Development map (see. Fig. 9).
- 3.7 Leckhampton originally comprised of a small village which was separate from Cheltenham and surrounded by agricultural land.
- 3.8 Leckhampton and its neighbouring settlements have Saxon names. Brooks states that "...*Leckhampton derives its name from the growing of leeks*".⁴
- 3.9 The parish of Leckhampton was owned by various families throughout its history. The National Gazetteer of 1868 claims Leckhampton was "...*formerly a market town under the Despencers, and came through the Giffards and Norwoods to the Fryes*".⁵ Terry Moore-Scott explains that the main employment for the residents of Leckhampton from ancient times up to the 19th century was "...*primarily arable crop growing, aimed at supporting the lords of the manors and their estates and at providing for the local inhabitants*".⁶
- 3.10 In 1809 an Act was passed which enabled the construction of the Gloucester and Cheltenham Tramway. The tramway was opened in 1811 which contained a branch line running from the top of Leckhampton Hill, along the west side of Leckhampton Road. The tramway then continued to follow the route of Andover Road to Westal Green, then along Queen's Road to Gloucester Road where it joined the main Cheltenham to Gloucester tramroad. Many farm workers came to take up employment in "...*quarrying (on Leckhampton Hill) and trades serving the burgeoning 'big houses' of Cheltenham*".⁷
- 3.11 Much of the built environment of Leckhampton predominantly dates from the latter part of the 19th century, into the 20th century. The artisan, vernacular houses and community grew up around, and served the tramroad. The tramway continued to operate up to the 1850s. These buildings provide Leckhampton with a distinct character today.

Development by 1820

- 3.12 The 1820 Postmaster map of Cheltenham does not feature Leckhampton. Leckhampton was a considerable distance away from the centre of Cheltenham where development was predominantly occurring along the High Street and on land on its north and south side at this time.
- 3.13 Author Terry Moore-Scott states that "*The historian Finberg suggested that in early medieval times, Leckhampton served as the 'home farm' for the royal manor of Cheltenham*".⁸ Hart explains that "...*most of the common fields of Leckhampton had been inclosed...by an Act of 1778*".⁹ The Inclosure Acts caused the fencing in of

⁴ R. Brooks 'The Story of Cheltenham' pg. 1

⁵ <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/GLS/Leckhampton/Gaz1868.html> no pg. number given

⁶ <http://uk.geocities.com/llhs@btinternet.com/publications/farms.pdf> no pg. number given

⁷ <http://uk.geocities.com/llhs@btinternet.com/publications/farms.pdf> no pg. number given

⁸ <http://uk.geocities.com/llhs@btinternet.com/publications/farms.pdf> no pg. number given

⁹ G. Hart 'A History of Cheltenham' (1965) pg. 154

open fields for owners to use or sell on for building purposes. Since ancient times, Leckhampton comprised a large arable farming community. Farms were in demand for dairy and meat produce to the rapidly expanding spa town of Cheltenham. This demand led to a switch from arable to pastoral farming which consequently led to unemployment among farm workers.

- 3.14 In 1811 the Gloucester and Cheltenham Tram Way was opened, with a branch running along Leckhampton Road to the quarries on Leckhampton Hill. Brooks states that "*Leckhampton quarries employed about fifty people, and supplied stone for the many churches that were built in the town in the nineteenth century*".¹⁰ Many of these people had been made unemployed by the pastoral farming industry.

Development by 1834

- 3.15 With the establishment of the tram road, Leckhampton began to develop in the first half of the 19th century as an area of attractive artisan housing, where many of the town's workers and trades people lived. It developed as part of an artisan community to service the Cheltenham and Gloucester Tramroad.
- 3.16 Many roads within the Leckhampton Character Area are featured on Merrett's 1834 map. These include Upper Norwood Street, Fairfield Street, Brooksdale Lane and Croft Lane. Some building is evident on the west side of Leckhampton Road. Fairfield Road and Naunton Lane are featured on the east side of Leckhampton Road, with a small amount of building featured on these roads. A field boundary marked the line of the future Naunton Crescent. Apart from the layout of these roads and the relatively small amount of development along them, the character area remained as undeveloped farmland at this time.
- 3.17 The Leckhampton quarries continued to remain very productive in the 1820s and 1830s, when large amounts of building work took place within Cheltenham.

Development by 1897

- 3.18 Up to the 1850s, the spread of building work in the south of Cheltenham had reached no further into Leckhampton than The Park, Moorend and Naunton. The rest of Leckhampton Parish remained as open farmland and fields. Terry Moore-Scott states that as the area developed further, many farmhouses "*...underwent conversion to residential homes...*"¹¹
- 3.19 By the mid 1850s, the effects of the falling demand for building stone and competition from newer railways led to the end of the old tram road from Leckhampton to Cheltenham and Gloucester. Little explains how the old tram road "*...did vital service till the coming of the steam railway in the 1840's.*"¹²
- 3.20 A large amount of development had occurred by this time along the west side of Leckhampton Road, with the construction of Victorian semi-detached and detached villas. Significant amounts of development in the form of extensive terraced streets for the artisan workers had become further established in the north east of the character area on open fields. The line of Naunton Crescent followed the line of a field boundary. These streets had a dense plan form.

¹⁰ R. Brooks 'The Story of Cheltenham' (2003) pg. 36

¹¹ <http://uk.geocities.com/lhs@btinternet.com/publications/farms.pdf> (no pg. number given)

¹² B. Little 'Cheltenham' (1952) pg. 51

- 3.21 Some notable houses in the area at this time included Fairfield House, Trowscoed Lodge and Ivymead. They were grand villas sited in large plots which have since been demolished.
- 3.22 St Phillip's School on Leckhampton Road is featured on the 1897 map, having been built in 1864. It provided an important community resource for the local population. Another important community resource was the library which was positioned on Moorend Road.
- 3.23 An unnamed school and Emmanuel Church were located on Naunton Terrace (on the 1884-93 map).
- 3.24 A section of the Banbury and Cheltenham railway line is seen on the 1897 Plan of Cheltenham cutting through open land in the character area, on a roughly east-west axis. This line was opened on 1st June 1881 and "*...in 1906, a loop was laid near Cheltenham, so trains avoided the main Cheltenham stations, stopping at Leckhampton Station*".¹³ This loop passed through the Leckhampton character area.

Development in the 20th and 21st century

- 3.25 Emmanuel Church on Naunton Terrace was demolished at the beginning of the 20th century. It was replaced with houses.
- 3.26 A number of modern housing developments have become established in the character area during the latter half of the 20th century and into the 21st century. These developments include the award winning Station Close residential development which is positioned on the site of the former Gloucestershire Ambulance Services NHS Trust.
- 3.27 A number of houses on the east side of Leckhampton Road, towards the southern boundary of the character area, were built on the site of a former nursery in the late 1960s and early 1970s.
- 3.28 Mornington Drive cul-de-sac development was constructed in the 1960s on a previously undeveloped site.
- 3.29 Leckhampton Station closed on the 15th October 1962 when passenger trains and goods services ceased to operate along the line. This site is now occupied by Liddington Trading Estate and is just outside the character area and Central Conservation Area.
- 3.30 Despite the spread of Cheltenham, parts of Leckhampton located outside the character area remain today as farmland. This conveys Leckhampton's important agricultural history. The extensive historic terraces of the 19th century continue to remain dominant in the area today, largely establishing the character area's historic interest and importance.

¹³ Gloucestershire Sites & Monuments Record – Summary Report for area 9308 no pg. number given

4 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

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

Public and private space

- 4.1 Public and private spaces, together with views out of, into and within the Leckhampton character area impact largely on the area's character and appearance. With the exception of the broad tree-lined Leckhampton Road with its generous front gardens, spaces are generally quite compact within the character area, due to a generally tight grid pattern of streets and dense housing. This creates a sense of contained space and enclosure. In contrast, Leckhampton Road has a wide and linear plan form. Historic houses positioned along the road in spacious plots, together with its plan form and the high number of mature street trees gives this road a spacious, grand character. Leckhampton Road allows spaces and views to open up.
- 4.2 Within the character area there is a hierarchy of buildings reflecting the hierarchy of streets. Larger, architecturally grander buildings front Leckhampton Road, which is the main road running through the character area on a roughly north-south axis. The artisan terraced housing is positioned behind these grand houses, on either side of Leckhampton Road. The historic terraced housing in the north east of the character area is set away from Bath Road, on its east side. The terraced houses are of a substantially smaller size than the grand villas fronting Leckhampton Road. These residential terraced streets have contained space and narrow roads which is exacerbated by high levels on on-street parking.



Figure 10 Houses on Leckhampton Road



Figure 11 Example of residential terraced street - Exmouth Street

- 4.3 Historically, Leckhampton's extensive terraces address the street in a uniform pattern within different spaces of the character area. For example, buildings along Leckhampton Road tend to have large front gardens and the houses are well set back from the pavement. A variety of boundary treatments are in place to contain the front gardens. This is in comparison with the terraced houses which predominantly have very contained front gardens but also employ a variety of boundary treatments to enclose this space. Occasionally houses front directly onto the street with no allowance for the implementation of boundaries due to lack of space. Buildings throughout the character area tend to follow a similar building line within their locality, which creates cohesion within the street scene.



Figure 12 Large front gardens along Leckhampton Road



Figure 13 Small front gardens along Ewlyn Road contained by brick walls

4.4



Figure 14 Croft Lane service lane

A small number of service lanes, including Brooksdale Lane, Croft Lane and Langdon Road Lane are found running between terraces in the character area. They contain garages and out-buildings.

Garden space

4.5

Gardens, historically and today, form an attractive, traditional frontage to both historic and more modern buildings. They provide a colourful, interesting setting and enhance the special qualities of properties and the street scene. Trees and shrubbery in gardens help screen properties from public view, creating privacy. Front gardens are predominantly evident along Leckhampton Road, where their presence is enabled through the wide plan form of the road and the positioning of building along the road. Ewlyn Road has contained front gardens but their size allows for planting which provides an attractive setting for the red-brick Edwardian semi-detached houses. Greenery found in the small front gardens along the majority of the terraced streets enhances the character and visual appearance of the street scene.

Boundary treatments

4.6



Figure 15 Unifying railings in Croft Street

The majority of buildings employ boundary treatments to act as a physical, distinct separation between the public and private realm. Boundary treatments take a variety of forms, which include iron railings, low enclosing brick walls, fencing and hedging. The railings and historic brick walls enhance the historic interest of Leckhampton character area.

4.7



Figure 16 Hedgerow acts as a soft boundary treatment

Hedgerow acts as an attractive, natural boundary treatment, which softens edges between public and private space. Hedging also complements front gardens by enhancing the green environment.

4.8



Figure 17 Poor boundary treatments in Hermitage Street

Both historic and modern brick walls are employed as a boundary treatment in some areas. A small amount of wooden fencing is present, which acts as a poor, unattractive boundary treatment.

Key views and vistas (see Fig. 1)

4.9



Figure 18 View down Francis Street stopped by buildings on Bath Road (note steeple of St Phillip & St James Church in background)

Medium and long distance views within Leckhampton character area occur because of the linear plan form of the streets. Extensive views are particularly prevalent down the streets which run on a roughly north-south axis. In comparison, distance views down roads which have a horizontal, roughly east to west plan form are frequently stopped by the presence of dense building on the adjoining roads at either end. Roads with shortened views include Fairfield Street, Short Street and Halland Road. Views down Hermitage Street and Francis Street are stopped by the shops on Bath Road to the west.

4.10



Figure 19 Glimpse of Leckhampton Hill down Leckhampton Road

Extensive views along Leckhampton Road in both a southerly and northerly direction are important in enhancing the character and appearance of the Leckhampton character area. The combination of the road's linear plan form, its mature tree growth and the extensive views of Leckhampton Hill rising in the background provides an important and attractive feature of the character area.

4.11 Views of the Cotswold escarpment and Leckhampton Hill are frequently evident from various spaces within the character area. The linear form of roads often enables such views to be prevalent. Such views are evident from Brooksdale Lane, Naunton Crescent, Langdon Road Lane, Moorend Street, Moorend Crescent, Upper Norwood Street and Station Close for example. Extensive vistas of Leckhampton Hill are particularly appreciated from Leckhampton Road. As the road gently rises in the south, panoramic views of the hill may be experienced through tree growth and over roof tops.



Figure 20 Extensive vista of Leckhampton Hill from Upper Norwood Street



Figure 21 View of Leckhampton Hill over rooftops of houses on Station Close

4.12



Figure 22 Naunton Park & Hays Cottages Almshouses (to left)

The view along Naunton Crescent in an easterly direction is particularly attractive as the view opens up to the expanse of Naunton Park. The view of the Hays Cottages Almshouses in the north-west of the park is important.

4.13



Figure 23 View of steeple of St Philip & St James Church from Leckhampton Road

The green copper steeple of St Philip and St James Church in the Park character area is displayed from various vantage points within Leckhampton character area. Such points are evident within Naunton Crescent, Francis Street, Leckhampton Road and Moorend Street. The steeple may be seen rising into the skyline and is a visually striking feature within the street scene in these localities.

5 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Use of area and how use creates special interest

5.1 The Leckhampton character area has several different uses. Mixed uses create activity throughout the day and evening and contribute to the special interest of the area.

Residential

5.2 Leckhampton character area is and has historically been a principally residential area, with Leckhampton as a whole surrounded by farmland. Today the character area accommodates a range of housing and tenure types from large detached and semi-detached family houses to compact terraces and a small number of flat conversions.



Figure 24 Various forms of residential dwelling within the character area

Commercial

- 5.3 There are a small number of commercial premises in the character area, which are an important contrast to the predominance of the residential housing. Examples of commercial premises include Cowle Smart Solicitors on Leckhampton Road, located in a converted villa; a dress agency on Leckhampton Road and the Somerset Arms public house, located on Moorend Street. 'Sign Studio' is located on Croft Street. These businesses generate noise and activity during the daytime and evening. The public house adds to the historic interest of the area.



Figure 25 Cowle Smart Solicitors office building on Leckhampton Road



Figure 26 Somerset Arms public house on Moorend Street

Industrial

- 5.4



Figure 27 View of Crooks Industrial Estate from Mornington Drive

The Crooks Industrial Estate is located off Croft Street. The use of the Industrial Estate and its units, with the accompanying noise and activity levels provides an important contrast to the overriding residential character of the area.

Road use

- 5.5 The Leckhampton character area is split in two by Leckhampton Road which physically divides the area to the east and west. In the south, the road merges with Old Bath Road to form Leckhampton Hill, which connects Cheltenham with Birdlip and the A436. It is therefore a busy road throughout the day and evening. Leckhampton Road also provides an important bus route into Cheltenham.
- 5.6 These diverse uses 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

- 5.7 Historic buildings within the Leckhampton character area consist of vernacular cottages, extensive artisan terraced houses, semi-detached and detached houses. The construction of these houses took place from the 1820s and 1830s, through the 19th century and into the 20th century. There has been some infill development, redevelopment and development on previously open land in the 20th and 21st centuries in the form of residential housing. Leckhampton character area's architectural character is

predominantly based in the modest artisan terraced housing of the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian periods. The uniformity and architectural detailing of these houses gives Leckhampton a distinctive character. This is particularly evident in the north east and west of the character area.

Historic terraces

- 5.8 The terraced houses are not listed, but contain important unifying characteristics which make them important and valuable as an entity within the character area.
- 5.9 The similar built form and detailing on the historic terraces creates unity and cohesion along the street. Terraces tend to be built following the same building line and are typically 2-storeys. They have contained front gardens, which are enclosed by various boundary treatments including railings.



Figure 28 Artisan terraced houses on Naunton Crescent



Figure 29 Artisan terraced houses

- 5.10 Although the majority of terraced houses are rendered, some sections of terrace are faced in red-brick, which create an interesting and attractive visual contrast within the street scene. Such examples include the Edwardian red-brick terraces on Naunton Crescent which have unifying features such as a black brick string course and distinctive brick detailing around doors and windows. Moorend Crescent also has a distinctive row of red-brick terraced houses.



Figure 30 Row of distinctive red-brick terraced houses on Naunton Crescent



Figure 31 Row of distinctive red-brick houses on Moorend Crescent

- 5.11 Unifying architectural features on the terraced houses generally include brick chimney stacks, slate roofs, some detailing around windows and doors, some sliding sash windows and some brackets.

Historic semi-detached and detached houses

- 5.12 The age, style, size and materials of historic semi-detached and detached villas tends to vary through the character area.

- 5.13 Historic villas which front Leckhampton Road date from the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian periods. The earlier buildings tend to be faced in render or ashlar, whilst the later houses are frequently faced in red-brick. A small number of buildings have been faced in stone. Their contrasting visual appearance creates interest and diversity within the street scene. The buildings do however, follow the same building line and contain substantial front gardens which establishes cohesion.



Figure 32 Render and brick faced villas within Leckhampton Character Area

- 5.14 Despite the variety of semi-detached and detached houses found along Leckhampton Road, Ewlyn Road and Langdon Road contain attractive late Victorian and Edwardian red-brick semi-detached houses. These houses have unifying characteristics and are therefore particularly dominant and distinctive within the street scene. Unifying architectural features include brick chimney stacks with black brick detailing, brackets, bay windows at ground floor level, brick pilasters, keystones and low enclosing red-brick boundary walls. The houses along Ewlyn Road, particularly, contain attractive front gardens, with the greenery contrasting well with the red-brick.



Figure 33 Unifying characteristics of houses on Ewlyn Road and Langdon Road

Architectural styles

- 5.15 There are a variety of architectural styles employed within building design, which reflect the influences and fashions at time of construction. The predominant architectural style is Neo-Classical, which is the typical style of the Georgian and early Victorian periods. This is displayed on the terraces and on many of the villas (including the three statutory listed villas) within the character area. Tudor Gothic style has been employed in the design of the former school and old school house on Leckhampton Road. Gothic Revival style has been used on some of the large red-brick villas on Leckhampton Road.



Figure 34 Tudor Gothic style of Old School House & Gothic Revival style of villas on Leckhampton Road

- 5.16 Construction materials, typical of the town, are slate roofs and brick walls covered with ashlar or stucco. The stucco facing on many terraces has been painted in pastel colours which add to the special qualities of the Leckhampton character area. Timber sash windows are present (although many have been replaced with uPVC) and roofs are of a fairly high pitch, compared to terraces of an earlier age which tended to have roofs of a flat or low pitch. Tall brick chimney stacks are also a characteristic.
- 5.17 Common architectural features are found on properties of a similar style, age and construction material. The unifying architectural features as described in the above paragraphs provide Leckhampton with a distinctive character and give buildings an important and valuable group identity.
- 5.18 Some of the front boundaries of the historic properties are defined by wrought iron railings, although many of these have been removed.

20th and 21st century buildings

- 5.19 Small amounts of infill development have taken place in the 20th century, taking the form of residential dwellings. Some sites have been redeveloped to contain modern housing and some recent development has occurred on previously undeveloped, open land.



Figure 35 Mornington Drive cul-de-sac

Mornington Drive comprises a 1960s cul-de-sac off Leckhampton Road. Houses in the cul-de-sac are semi-detached and bungalows. They are constructed from brick and set in landscaped grounds. Although the cul-de-sac does not sit particularly well in the historical context of the area, it is set well back from Leckhampton Road on lower land and is not visually dominant in any way.



Figure 36 1960s/70s houses on east side of Leckhampton Road

A row of detached and semi-detached houses are positioned on the east side of Leckhampton Road in the south of the character area. They were constructed from the late 1960s, into the early 1970s on a former nursery site. The houses are built on a small scale and follow a similar building line to each other and the older buildings along Leckhampton Road. They are constructed from a brown brick

and sited in compact plots. Greenery in the front gardens partially screens the properties from public space.

5.22



Figure 37 Station Close residential development

The residential cul-de-sac at Station Close, situated off Moorend Road, was constructed in the early years of the 21st century on the site of the former Gloucestershire Ambulance Services NHS Trust. It comprises a visually attractive development of 2 storey houses. The houses are rendered in pastel colours and have brick chimney stacks and contained frontages. These qualities allow the development to fit in well with the historic context of the area, in particular the surrounding historic terraced houses.

Listed buildings

5.23 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 three listed buildings within the Leckhampton character area. The three listed buildings are Grade II listed and are displayed in the table below.

BUILDING/STRUCTURE	GRADE	DATE OF LISTING
No. 29 Leckhampton Road	II	26/11/98
Norwood, No. 39 Leckhampton Road	II	05/05/72
No. 41 Leckhampton Road	II	26/11/98

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


Index of Buildings of Local Importance

5.24 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

5.25 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 these buildings make a positive contribution as part of a larger group. All key unlisted buildings in the table below are on the Index of Buildings of Local Importance, with the exception of the Somerset Arms public house on Moorend Street. Please see the Index for further details about these buildings. Key unlisted buildings include-

Former school, 3 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)	The Old School House, Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)
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	<i>Importance)</i>
15 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)	23/25 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)
45/47 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)	49 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)
51 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)	53 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)
55 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)	57 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)
Vine Court, 59 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)	Merton Lodge, 61 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)
63/65 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)	67/69 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)
71/73 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)	75/77 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)
79/81 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)	83 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)
St Cloud, 97 Leckhampton Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)	14 Moorend Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)
22 Moorend Road (See Index of Buildings of Local Importance)	<p>The Somerset Arms public house on Moorend Street because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The building occupies a large, double-width plot and is visually prominent within the street scene; • The public house has historic value; • It contains interesting features on the front façade, including lamps and a traditionally designed projecting sign on iron brackets and historic guttering; • The high number of hanging baskets on the front façade is an attractive feature which enhances the soft landscaping within Moorend Street.
	 <p>Figure 38 The Somerset Arms public house</p>



Positive buildings

5.26 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

5.27 Local details within the Leckhampton character area collectively enhance the character and appearance of not just the character area, but the whole of the Central Conservation Area. Interesting historic details include –

Historic street nameplates – e.g. Croft Lane	Historic iron railings
Canopies above doors e.g. evident in Short Street, Moorend Road and Leckhampton Road	Historic lamp posts e.g. in Croft Street, Moorend Street, Upper Norwood Street, Ewlyn Road and Langdon Road
Railings on Leckhampton Road close to former Leckhampton Railway Station site  <p>Figure 39 Railings around former Leckhampton Railway Station site</p>	ER VII post box (early 20 th century) on Naunton Crescent  <p>Figure 40 ER VII post box on Naunton Crescent</p>
Bollards – e.g. in Ewlyn Road	

Materials

Building material

5.28 The use of building materials reflects the availability of materials at the time of construction of historic buildings. Cheltenham expanded rapidly in the 19th century, and the readily available Lias clay and local sand allowed enough bricks to be produced to build most of the original spa town. The majority of these houses were built of locally-fired bricks, and were faced with either stucco or ashlar dressed Cotswold limestone. Much of the stone used in Cheltenham would have been quarried at Leckhampton Hill or Birdlip. Unfortunately neither of the quarries continues to produce stone. The painting of stucco in a uniform colour gave the town cohesion. Stone was also used to front the buildings. Many later Victorian and Edwardian houses were faced in distinctive red brick.

Ground surface material

5.29 There is a range of surface materials used throughout the area – few are original or have any historic value. Roads are tarmac, with concrete kerbs. Paving is predominantly concrete slabs or flags and tarmac.

Street furniture

5.30 There is a variety of street furniture within the Leckhampton character area.

5.31 There is a high amount of utilitarian street signage along some of the roads, in particular the highly utilised Leckhampton Road. This road also contains utilitarian bus stops and phone boxes, litter bins and a small number of benches.

- 5.32 Street lights along roads vary from being modern to historic and have differing designs.
- 5.33 Some of the older streets have attractive historic nameplates.
- 5.34 Several historic bollards are positioned throughout the character area and are particularly evident in Ewlyn Road.
- 5.35 There is frequently a high presence of overhead telephone wires in the residential streets, which are a visually unattractive feature in the street scene.

Contribution of trees and green spaces

- 5.36 Within the Leckhampton character area there are generally significant amounts of private green space but no specific areas of public green space, other than tree planting along streets. This is due to the distinctive residential character of the area and the overall high density of building.

Street trees

- 5.37 The main tree lined street within the character area is Leckhampton Road. The mature street planting has been enabled through the wide plan of this road and the presence of substantial grass verges. The dense tree growth is one of the road's most important features. Tree species primarily consist of lime and plane trees, with the presence of some silver birch and ash trees. The trees provide a sense of grandeur, atmosphere and importance along this busy approach into town from the south. They create a tunnel effect, which is heightened by the strong linear form of the road. The trees provide shade as they dominate views of the skyline, stretching over the road towards each other.



Figure 41 Mature statement trees lining Leckhampton Road

- 5.38



Figure 42 Small street trees along Ewlyn Road

Some small street trees are positioned along Ewlyn Road. They consist of ornamental flowering cherry trees. They are an attractive feature in the streetscape. The greenery is a striking contrast to the red brick of the houses. A significant lime tree is also located in the street in Gordon Road.

- 5.39 The streets containing dense terraced housing have a narrow plan form and cannot therefore accommodate the presence of street trees along pavements.

Private green space

- 5.40 Both historic and modern properties along Leckhampton Road are well set back from the pavement and have substantial front gardens. Although many have been at least partially converted into hard-standing, the presence of well maintained front gardens provides an attractive setting for properties. Some of the streets containing later Victorian and Edwardian houses, for example, Langdon Road and Ewlyn Road have contained frontages, but can accommodate greenery. However, the large number of earlier Georgian and Victorian terraced housing has smaller frontages which cannot accommodate significant amounts of greenery.



Figure 43 Front gardens along Leckhampton Road

- 5.41



Figure 44 Vegetation partially screens Croft Industrial Estate from Mornington Drive

The presence of cyprus trees and bushes are an important feature within Mornington Drive. They partially screen the unattractive corrugated iron roofs of the warehouses in the Croft Industrial Estate.

- 5.42 Modern houses at the west end of Naunton Terrace have attractive, well maintained front gardens which enhance the setting of the houses and the overall street scene. They majority of the front gardens have been wholly retained today, which is of particular value.
- 5.43 Dense greenery along the east side of Leckhampton Road, close to Old Station Drive, provides a natural screen for Liddington Trading Estate. (This trading estate is positioned on the former site of the Leckhampton railway station, just outside the boundary to the character area and Central Conservation Area).

Negative factors

- 5.44 Due to high levels of development of the Leckhampton 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**, particularly alterations to windows, has occurred within some of the historic buildings;
- b) The presence of large, projecting **Velux roof lights** on historic buildings has eroded the visual quality of the historic roofscape. Where there is evidence of historic roof lights or where new conservation roof lights may be appropriate, each case will be considered on its own merits;
- c) Modern intrusions in the form of **satellite dishes and large aerials** are also harmful to the overall appearance of buildings and detract from their special historic and architectural qualities. These additions can often be seen clearly from public space which harms the character and appearance of not just the individual buildings, but the area generally;
- d) A **small number of the historic buildings are in need of minor maintenance** e.g. re-facing and re-painting;
- e) **Some front gardens have been changed partially into hard-standing** for cars. This is most evident on Leckhampton Road where large front gardens enable the presence of car parking. This change has reduced the area of green and soft landscaped private gardens, and generally increased the hard urban appearance of the Leckhampton character area. It has resulted in a negative impact on the appearance of the area. However, where properties have retained their front gardens, there has been a continuing enhancement to the street scene;
- f) **Leckhampton Road** experiences high volumes of traffic movement throughout the day. The road acts as a strong divide between the eastern and western half of the Leckhampton character area. At times it can be difficult to cross due to high vehicular movement and the wide plan form of the road;
- g) A large amount of **on-street parking** is particularly evident within the residential streets of the Leckhampton character area. The historic houses do not accommodate for the modern-day car, hence cars are forced to park on the street. High levels of parking creates active streets, but focuses attention and activity on the road rather than the historic buildings and the open spaces between buildings;
- h) The modern residential development of **Leckhampton Place** comprises two blocks of flats, which do not sit well with near-by historic buildings. The blocks have been constructed on a grand scale and have a functional design which does not complement the older buildings in the area. A **small number of 20th century houses** are positioned between older properties **along the west side of Leckhampton Road**. They do not sit well among the grand historic buildings in terms of their size, scale, design and materials (see Townscape Analysis map);
- i) Some **boundary treatments**, in particular fencing, have a negative impact on the street scene and buildings. Some fencing is in need of maintenance;

- j) There has been some **loss of historic railings** which are an attractive and traditional form of boundary treatment;
- k) There is a strong visual presence of **overhead telegraph wires** throughout the area, particularly in the residential streets, which are aesthetically unattractive;
- l) Some **pavements** are in a poor condition, with cracked slabs resulting in uneven surfaces in places.

Neutral areas

- 5.45 Some areas within the Leckhampton 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.
- 5.46 The late 1960s/early 1970s houses on the east side of Leckhampton Road are seen to have a 'neutral' impact on the character area. The houses tend to have a functional design and the construction materials contrast to those found on historic properties. However, the row of houses is set back from the pavement within landscaped grounds which softens their impact upon the street scene. Their small size and scale does not detract from the larger historic buildings nearby.
- 5.47 Mornington Drive comprises a 1960s residential cul-de-sac development. The construction materials and functional design of the development does not enhance the character and appearance of Leckhampton. However, the cul-de-sac is set well back from Leckhampton Road on sunken land and is very contained. Landscaped gardens also soften the impact of the development on its locale.
- 5.48 The warehouses on Croft Industrial Estate, located off Croft Street, have a neutral impact upon the surrounding area. The corrugated-iron roofs of the warehouses are an unattractive feature from Mornington Drive. However, the Industrial Estate is positioned in a contained site, which is generally well concealed. It is also an interesting contrast to the predominance of residential housing in the surrounding area.

General condition of area

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

Pressures and capacity for change

- 5.51 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.

- 5.52 There is generally little capacity for new development on open land due to a very limited amount of suitable vacant land.
- 5.53 The replacement of Leckhampton Place, for example, 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.

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 Leckhampton character area's special historic character and appearance. It has been subject to public consultation. Part 2 was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document on 28th July 2008. It will inform the planning and other decisions of the Council.

The special qualities of the Leckhampton 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 5.44 'Negative factors' and 5.45 '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 Leckhampton 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. Management proposals

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 LK1: The Cheltenham Borough Local Plan states that new development shall preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. The policies of the Local Plan set out a general approach to the consideration of planning and related applications for development in conservation areas – they cover a range of issues including:

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

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

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

Some of the older buildings within the Leckhampton 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 LK2: In order to preserve and enhance the character and setting of the Leckhampton 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).

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 Leckhampton 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 LK3: In order to preserve and enhance the character of the character area the Council will:

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

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

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

4 Drives and loss of front gardens

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

reduce run-off, offer a more attractive setting for buildings and give a more sustainable approach than some current practice.

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

ACTION LK4: The Council will seek to limit the adverse impact of on-plot frontage parking by using its powers under planning and other legislation to secure the use of appropriate, traditional and complementary boundary and surface treatments which will in turn greatly reduce levels of surface water run-off.

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

5 Tree management

Where both public and privately owned trees are in existence, they contribute to enhancing the character and appearance of the street scene. They are a particularly striking feature in Leckhampton Road. 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 LK5: Cheltenham Borough Council will continue to maintain and protect trees by implementing Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) where appropriate, and replant with new trees when old trees die. Trees located in pavements or grass verges at the side of roads and which are designated as within the public highway are maintained by Gloucestershire Highways. Trees located in parks or green spaces within the conservation area are managed by Cheltenham Borough Council in accordance with best arboricultural practice.

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

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

6 Boundary enclosures

At present, some poorly maintained boundary treatments harm the character and appearance of buildings and the overall street scene. Increased use of

railings or trees and hedgerow as a 'soft' boundary treatment would enhance the historic qualities, character and appearance of the area. Additionally, trees and hedgerow contribute to biodiversity by providing wildlife habitats. If the same sympathetic boundary treatment were to be implemented along the length of a street where possible, this would enhance its character and appearance, by uniting properties within it.

See Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Policies BE 5 and CP3.

ACTION LK6: 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 Leckhampton character area.

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

7 **Setting and views**

The setting of the Leckhampton 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 LK7: The Council will ensure that all development respects the important views within, into and from the Leckhampton 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.

8 **Enhancement of existing buildings**

A small number of modern buildings fail to contribute to the preservation or enhancement of the conservation area. An example of this is the Leckhampton Place residential development. This development has some aspects which fail to respond to the historic context of the area. In the case of historic and modern 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 LK8: The Council will use enforcement and other powers under Section 215 of the Planning Act to achieve the enhancement of poorly maintained buildings.

Annex 1:

Cheltenham Central Conservation Area – list of Supplementary Planning Documents

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

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

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